



# Speaking of wine

By Russ Disotell

Christmas is hectic enough without worrying about what wine to serve. Relax, the Christmas bird is a wine friendly canvas. Just avoid overly dry, tannic reds and you should be fine. As a fail safe fall back position, serve your favourite wine or consider one of the following suggestions.

For our first selection let's stay close to home with Grange of Prince Edward, Pinot Noir 2013 (CSPC# 230227, \$16.95). Complex aromas of red berry fruit, vanilla and herbaceous spice are readily apparent upon opening and tantalizingly inviting. This Ontario charmer is medium-bodied, with absolutely superb balance, layers of flavour and a lengthy, complex finish. The palate is dominated by a blend of Bing cherry, cranberry and raspberry fruit, with just a hint of red currant and plum. Add in a dash of the spice exhibited on the nose and a light veneer of oaky toastiness and you have a complex, intriguing palate. The flavours are deep and rich with just the right amount of balancing acidity. A finish that has great

length and flavour tops off an eminently quaffable candidate for your Christmas table.

Masi Masianco is an Italian producer that has made a reputation on their Pinot Grigio offerings. Their Pinot Grigio and Verduzzo 2013 (CSPC# 620773, \$15.00) is a prime example and our next candidate to match with the holiday bird. Medium-bodied, soft and round with a plush texture, it will appeal to all palates, from sophisticated to neophyte. Citrus and tropical fruit aromas dominate the nose. Grapefruit, pineapple, peach and pear fruit mingle on the palate with just a whisper of black pepper. A firm citrus acidity provides a framework for the generous, forward fruit. The finish is bright, clean and refreshing. Everything you would want in a quintessential food wine.

Finally, something a little different. Laroche Viognier De La Chevaliere 2013 (CSPC# 377622, \$12.70) from France. Viognier isn't well known, which is a shame because it brings a lot to the table (pun intended). It has the most enticing nose, a blend of rich floral aromas (think acacia, orange blossom and jasmine) and exotic fruit, such as pineapple, kiwi and melon. But don't let the rich nose fool you; this is a versatile, well balanced, food friendly wine. Laroche matches peach, tangerine, apricot and almond flavours with a crisp, zesty acidity to produce superb balance. The palate is complex and multidimensional. The finish is palate cleansing and lingering. If you need a comparison think of an exotic Chardonnay with just a tad more depth of flavour.

**Merry Christmas and enjoy!**

*Russ Disotell enjoyed a twelve year career with the LCBO. He spent the last four years as Product Advisor in Vintages purchasing where he was a member of the buying panel and endured the arduous task of tasting products every week! Since leaving the Board he has written columns and articles on wine, helped develop wine lists and conducted wine tastings.*