



Splicing the Mainbrace

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Drinks for the Holiday Season

Traditional foods for the December holidays vary widely from place to place. Turkey and ham are widely regarded as traditional, but chicken, pork, and duck are also popular. Fish is traditional in a number of countries. The French in France favour oysters while the French in Quebec often cite tourtière as the seasonal dish. Parts of the UK hold to goose or roast beef as the Christmas dish of choice. All of which makes suggesting wines and beers to accompany the holiday feast a difficult and dangerous task.

But here are some tried and true food and wine pairings:

Turkey - Full-bodied Chardonnays are good accompaniments to turkey as are Beaujolais wines. So try **J. Lohr Riverstone Chardonnay** or **Fougères Beaujolais**.

Ham - **Lavit Rosado Brut** for sparkle or **Klingenfus Pinot Gris**.

Chicken - **Schoepfer Pinot Gris** or **Gravitas Unoaked Chardonnay**.

Roast pork - Our favourite for roast pork is **Moselland Bernkasteler Kurfurstlay Riesling** but **Klingenfus Pinot Noir** would be a close second choice.

Duck or goose - **Château La Sabatière** or **Canaletto Pinot Grigio**.

Fish - **Vionta Albariño**, **Cremisia Grüner Veltliner**, or **Yvon Mau Colombard-Chardonnay**.

Oysters - Oysters cry out for a sparkling wine such as **Bouvet Ladubay Brut**, **Aria Brut**, or **Castellblanch Brut Zero**. If you prefer a still wine, try **Château Ducla Entre-Deux-Mers**. If beer is your choice: **Warsteiner Premium Verum**.

Tourtière - **Yvon Mau Shiraz** or **Louis Roche Sainte Foy Bordeaux Rouge** for wines or for beer, **König Ludwig Weisbier**.

Roast beef - The Australian tradition argues for a big Shiraz such as **Sandalford Premium Shiraz**. Northern hemisphere custom suggests a full Cabernet such as **J. Lohr Seven Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon**.

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New Products (and Coming Soon)

Gravitas Sauvignon Blanc This New Zealand wine's bouquet is unmistakably that of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc - intensely aromatic with a strong entree of melons and passion fruit, moving through to gooseberries and an herbaceous note. It also has its own distinctive character - hints of mineral and citrus with more rounded acidity and an extremely long finish. A great compliment to fish and seafoods. (750ml, NLC, \$26.07)

Gravitas Unoaked Chardonnay This is a powerful yet elegant Chardonnay with aromas of ripe stone-fruit and yeasty complexity gained from lees contact. The fruit flavours are generous, supported by a creamy texture from partial malo-lactic fermentation. The wine has a long, dry finish that is beautifully balanced and will drink well for up to 3 years. (750ml, NLC, \$24.57)

Gravitas Reserve Chardonnay This is a powerful, complex Chardonnay with great fruit concentration and a very impressive length. Ripe citrus and peach fruit are balanced by a rich, creamy palate and a subtle oak flavour that adds complexity. (750ml, NLC, \$26.78)



Hill's Absinth is a triple distilled spirit, hand crafted in Bohemia since 1920. It contains Wormwood (Absinthium) and other plant extracts. There is an intriguing Czech Absinth Ritual traditionally performed in Prague.



Bottle and tasting kit are now available in Nova Scotia (500ml, NSLC, \$55.20)

Cline Ancient Vines Mourvèdre Redolent of dark plum, chocolate, eucalytus and a hint of oak, this juicy wine is delicious now and will age for well over a decade. This flavourful and soft wine pairs well with grilled lamb and pasta puttanesca. (Coming soon to New Brunswick; now in Newfoundland and Labrador: 750ml, NLC, \$22.62)

Cline Ancient Vines Zinfandel Big, jammy concentrated fruit and moderate tannins support nine months of aging in American oak barrels. This velvety smooth Zin offers flavours of dusty raspberry, blackberry, white pepper, coffee, and chocolate. (Coming soon to New Brunswick)

Château La Rame – Fourault Semillon and Sauvignon Blanc, this Bordeaux wine has a lovely, succulent and hugely rich marmalade nose. Clear, classic wafts of Botrytis. Rich and honeyed palate with balancing cleansing acidity. Orange blossom and honeyed finish. (500ml, ANBL, \$40.99)

Château La Caussade – Fourault A golden coloured wine with reflections of darker gold and green. A very attractive wine, with translucent shades. The nose is dominated by notes of honey and fresh mushrooms. The wine opens with notes of raisins, apricots, mango and pineapple, accompanied by further notes of plums and watermelon. With aeration, the wine lets a fresher and more incisive nature be uncovered. The same honey-like impression is found on the palate as was found on the nose. The wine is long and finishes with fresh and incisive notes. (750ml, ANBL, \$30.49)

Côtes du Ventoux – Louis Roche This is a great value Grenache-based Rhone blend with lots of fruit, and a nice balance. It has flavours of currant, cherry, and raisin, and aromas of black pepper, menthol, and licorice. This is a very food friendly wine which works well with roasted meats, ribs, meat loaf, and turkey dishes as well as vegetarian dishes based on eggplants. (Coming back soon to New Brunswick)

Canaletto Pinot Noir A fresh, easy-drinking Pinot Noir from northern Italy with a bright cherry/berry aroma and palate bursting with ripe summertime fruit. Soft and smooth, it is a good match for roast chicken, salmon and grilled meats. (750ml, NSLC, \$13.85)

Santa Tresa Rina Ianca Grillo Viognier A blend of Grillo and Viognier from Sicily, Rina Ianka has a

bouquet of tropical fruit and vanilla aromas, with a perfect balance of fruit flavours and citrus acidity on the palate. Try this wine with fish or light pasta dishes. (750ml, NSLC, \$13.54)

There is a communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken and wine drunk.

MFK Fisher - American food writer

A Portugese Holiday Dish

Spicy shellfish and sausage stew

- 30 ml extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ small red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 large tomatoes, peeled, seeded, chopped
- 250 ml **Canaletto Pinot Grigio** (750ml, NSLC, \$11.86; PEILCC, \$14.87)
- 350 ml bottled clam juice
- 500 gm small clams, scrubbed
- 1 fennel bulb, matchsticked
- ½ red bell pepper, matchsticked
- 1 small zucchini, matchsticked
- 500 gm mussels, scrubbed, debearded
- 500 gm chorizo sausage, matchsticked
- 120 gm Kalamata olives, pitted, halved
- 30 ml chopped fresh flat leafed parsley

Heat oil in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add onion; sauté 2 minutes. Add tomatoes; sauté 4 minutes. Increase heat to high; add wine. Boil until reduced by half, about 2 minutes. Add clam juice; simmer 3 minutes. Add clams; cover and cook 3 minutes. Mix in fennel, bell pepper, and zucchini. Add mussels, sausage, and olives. Cover; bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer until shellfish open, about 5 minutes (discard any that do not open). Sprinkle with parsley and serve accompanied by **Dom Teodosio Quinta de Sao Joao Batista Reserva** (750ml, NLC, \$14.05; PEILCC, \$15.30) or **Caves Velhas Romeira** (750ml, NSLC, \$12.88).

Prize winners in Moncton and Halifax

Seven prizes were awarded to wines represented by Mainbrace at the recent wine shows in Halifax and Moncton.

Sandalera from **Sandalford** in Western Australia won Platinum for best fortified wine at the NS Port of Wines Festival in late September. As the NSLC put it: "Sinfully delicious! This fortified dessert wine made from Pedro Ximenez and Muscadelle is a blend of vintages – some of which are more than 20 years old. The result is an incredibly intense wine brimming with nut, toffee and treacle aromas and dried fruit flavours." **Sandalera** should be available at selected NSLC stores in December at \$80+ per 500ml bottle. Also winners in Halifax were **Sandalford Protégé Shiraz** (Silver Medal), and **Moselland Nigra Riesling Brut** and **Sandalford Protégé Premium Classic White** (both with Bronze Medals).

In Moncton, the winners were **Saint Benoit Châteauneuf-du-Pape Soleil Festins** and **Sandalford Protégé Shiraz** (both with Gold Medals) and **Sandalford Protégé Cabernet Sauvignon** (Silver Medal).

Happy Cats are back in Newfoundland & Labrador

As a Christmas special, the Happy Cats are available in green and red this year. How traditional a colour scheme is that?



Kir Royale for Christmas

To 30 ml (more or less to taste) of **Supercassis Crème de Cassis** in a flute glass, add a fill up of sparkling **Bouvet Ladubay Brut**.

Wine Information Sources



Wine is made to be drunk but reading about it can enhance the pleasure. With December upon us, you may be thinking what can I give my favorite wine lover this year? Hopefully I can offer some suggestions. You can always go with the established writers like Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson

who have just released the Latest Edition of *The World Atlas of Wine*. The revised 4th Edition of *Sothebys Wine Encyclopedia* by Tom Stevenson is a similar reference book. In addition to those two there are numerous smaller Wine Guides from writers like Oz Clarke, Andrea Immer Robinson and the prolific Hugh Johnson. A particular favorite of mine is the *Top 10 Wines Series* from Vincent Gasnier, a Master Sommelier. Each Guide focuses on a different country; Italy and France are my top choices but he also covers Australia and the United States.

I am sure many of you may be familiar with the writings of Canadian Natalie MacLean now collected in her new book, *Red, White and Drunk All Over*. The American version of Natalie is Jennifer Rosen-her two books: *Waiter, There's a Horse in my Wine* and *The Court Jester Guide to Wine* are delightful. Most of the above mentioned publications can be purchased online or in your local Bookstore. Robin Garr, the man behind my favourite website www.wineloverspage.com has just released a collection of his short, concise but highly informative articles. Please note his book *30 Second Wine Advisor* is only available at www.amazon.com. A somewhat different type of wine book comes from the pen of Tony Aspler, one of Canada's best wine writers. His three wine themed books: *Blood is thicker than Beaujolais*, *The Beast of Barbaresco*, and *Death on the Douro* will satisfy both the wine lover and mystery fan on your list.

Many wine drinkers who are looking for introductory books often ask me for my recommendations. I suggest two books. For the complete novice I suggest the *Maran Illustrated Guide to Wine*. For those seeking some additional information my choice is *The Windows on the World Complete Wine Course* by Kevin Zraly. Both are user friendly, yet very informative.

There are almost as many wine books as there are grape types so I have just noted some of my choices. Books are not the only source for gaining insight into the wonderful world of wine. Maybe in another article I can point you in a different direction in your search for wine knowledge.

Stanley G. Laite

Wines to have on hand

One of the nicest features of the holiday season is having friends drop in. Here are some staples that are good sipping on their own and pair well with nibbles:

Tio Pepe Dry Sherry (white, dry) (750ml, ANBL, \$20.79; NLC, \$18.57; NSLC, \$19.61)

Painter Bridge Zinfandel (red, soft and spicy) (750ml, NLC, \$12.68; NSLC, \$12.79; PEILCC, \$14.39)

Oakley Five Reds (red, full and fruity) (750ml, NSLC, \$15.16)

Canaletto Montepulciano d'Abruzzo (red and full and fruity) (750ml, ANBL, \$13.79; NSLC, \$12.68; PEILCC, \$14.17)

Bleasdale Mulberry Tree Cabernet Sauvignon (red and full-bodied) (750ml, NSLC, \$23.58)

Gentle Hills Riesling (white and crisp) (750ml, NSLC, \$12.99)

Marques de Cáceres Rioja (red and fruity) (750ml, NLC, \$18.77)



Holiday Gift Ideas

Château de la Rivière Cuvée Aria This outstanding Fronsac wine reveals new oak, concentration, and depth. Creme de cassis aromas and flavors intermixed with hints of plums, prunes, cherries, and toast are found in this full-bodied, complex, chewy Merlot. It can be drunk young or cellared for 10-12 years. Impressive! This cuvee is an extravagant, serious wine designed to elevate the quality and reputation of this famous estate. (750ml, ANBL, \$97.72)

Segura Viudas Reserva Heredad Brut Just the right amount of fizz. The nose has a big wack of green apple with a light influence of bread and nuts. Very good balance, every thing is in its place. Very refreshing and enjoyable. While not as complex as many champagnes, there is a good deal of complexity to go with the green apple and lemon: almonds, walnuts and minerals. Long smooth finish that keeps you coming back for more. This is a sparkling wine for special occasions. Its pewter-based bottle makes it an attractive presentation wine or gift. (750ml, NLC, \$37.79)

Chateau Preuillac A gorgeous garnet-red colour with deep, intense purplish tints. This Cabernet Sauvignon from the Medoc (Bordeaux) has an intense bouquet with aromas of cooked fruit and a hint of vanilla and toast. Elegant on the palate with silky tannins. A long finish, spicy with nice fruity expression. (1500ml in wooden presentation case, NLC, \$66.06; 750ml, NLC, \$28.08)

Batasiolo Barolo 100% Nebbiolo in its subvarieties of Michet, Lampia and Rosé. The colour is deep ruby-garnet red that turns brick red with age. The nose is ethereal, intense, with notes of spices and dried fruits. Offers great finesse on the nose and palate, which is dry, full-bodied, imposing-yet-elegant, austere-but-velvety. Ideal for accompanying game, roasts and strong, ripe cheeses. (750ml, ANBL, \$38.99; PEILCC, about \$40)

Ars Vitis Riesling Qba Fine, fruity Riesling bouquet, well-balanced palate with hints of exotic fruit. This straight forward Qualitatswein is very crisp and refreshing. The "window bottle"

packaging features scenes from the Mosel Valley by artist and wine grower Heinz Ames, so this enjoyable wine also makes an excellent gift. It goes well with salads, chicken dishes and Asian cuisine, and can be enjoyed as an easy sipping wine or aperitif. (750ml, NLC, \$12.93; NSLC, \$15.66)

Moselland Avantgarde Dornfelder Medium bodied with dark colour and intense aroma of red and black fruit. The elegant bottle and tasty contents make this wine a fine gift. Serve it with pasta, beef or mild cheese. (750ml, NLC, \$15.24)

Moselland Avantgarde Riesling Trocken This is a 100% Riesling with fruity bouquet and peach and lemon aroma on the palate. The elegant bottle and tasty contents make this wine a fine gift. Serve it well chilled with chicken, pasta and salad or on its own. (750ml, NLC, \$15.24)

Yvon Mau 3-pack Varietals This is a special Christmas gift pack containing one bottle of each of **Yvon Mau Shiraz** (spicy flavours of plums and tart cherries with a soft tannin finish), **Yvon Mau Colombard-Chardonnay** (soft, full-bodied with great citrus flavours), and **Yvon Mau Cabernet Sauvignon** (spicy flavours of black fruits and olives). (3 x 750ml, NLC, \$33.39)

Yvon Mau Discovery Chest A wooden gift box contains 6 of Yvon Mau's fine wines: **Château Ducla Bordeaux Sauvignon Blanc 2006**, **Château Ducla Bordeaux Merlot 2005**, **Château Lavison Bordeaux Rouge 2005**, **Château Proms Bellevue Graves Rouge 2006**, **Château de la Haute Libarde (Côtes de Bourg) 2002**, and **Vieux Château Negrit Montagne St-Emilion 2004**. (6 x 750ml, NSLC, about \$155.)

Festival des Vins du Monde.



Beaucoup d'amateurs de vins se sont retrouvés lors du 17ième festival des vins et de la gastronomie du monde qui a eu lieu à Moncton du 28 octobre au 3 novembre dernier. Les efforts fournis par les organisateurs ont

permis de présenter aux visiteurs lors des sessions publiques, 340 vins de 14 pays dont le Liban.

J'ai eu l'occasion de pouvoir examiner les sélections et de voir qu'il y en avait pour tous les goûts, de moins de \$10.00 à plus de \$140.00 la bouteille. Les cépages et les millésimes se sont faits très intéressants. Il est important d'avoir un plan d'attaque pour pouvoir tirer le maximum de ce genre d'exposition.

Pour ma part je désirais en apprendre plus sur le Pinot Noir qu'il soit de la Nouvelle-Zélande, d'Espagne, du Chili ou d'Alsace. J'ai donc parcouru le monde à la recherche de ce Pinot. Il y a des saveurs particulières qui nous font voir le vin de manières différentes. La gamme de goût s'étirait du délicat à l'explosif, des tannins doux et feutrés aux secs et corsés. Autant l'Alsace nous ouvre un éventail de saveurs subtiles comme la framboise le cassis rouge et des notes d'épices que la Bourgogne projette des fruits mûrs à profusion ainsi que du chêne. Il est surprenant de boire tant de différences pour le même cépage.

Durant la deuxième journée de dégustation les Châteauneuf du Pape m'intéressèrent plus particulièrement surtout qu'il n'y en avait que 4 sur le lot. J'ai donc pu apprécier la complexité, la maturité et la stature de ces emblèmes de la science vinicole française. Un Châteauneuf se démarqua facilement des autres non par sa texture ou son caractère mais bien par sa couleur, en effet c'était le seul Blanc de l'exposition 100% Roussanne. Il causa beaucoup d'intérêts et de surprise. Tout simplement délicieux, de même que les trois rouges qui furent très difficile à départager à ce moment-là. Il y a jusqu'à 13 cépages dans un Châteauneuf du Pape, ceux qui étaient présents en nommaient 4; Le Grenache, le Mourvedre, le Cinseault et le Syrah à différentes quantités.

Un événement de cette envergure nous permet de voir la qualité du vin disponible pour nos marchés et de continuer à mettre les pressions qu'il faut pour inciter les monopoles à diversifier leurs stocks. Et par l'expérience de ces dernières années, les organisateurs et les agences auront beaucoup à faire pour surpasser la qualité des produits présentés.

Marc Paimpec, Sommelier



The role of **Mainbrace** is to market the beverage alcohol products that we represent to final consumers, to licensees, to private wine stores, and to the Provincial Government agencies of Atlantic Canada. We aim to enhance responsible enjoyment for consumers, to facilitate profitable sales for licensees and private wine stores, and to assist agencies in fulfilling their mandates.

For further information, contact:

Ann Trecartin or John Chamard, Certified Sommelier
Mainbrace International Limited
P.O. Box 27177
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 4M8
Canada
Phone 1-902-422-6193
Fax 1-902-423-4367
e-mail mainbrace@mainbrace.ca

Stanley Laite
Mainbrace International Limited
6 Conran Street
St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador A1E 5G8
Canada
Phone 1-709-368-1888
e-mail stanleyglait@nl.rogers.com

Marc Paimpec, Certified Sommelier
Mainbrace International Limited
20 Cliff Street,
Lakeville, Westmorland County,
New Brunswick E1H 1C8
Canada
Phone 1-506-227-0187
e-mail paimpec@gmail.com

The next issue of Splicing the Mainbrace is due in March 2008.

In the meantime, keep up to date on events at our web site:

www.mainbrace.ca

