

These wines make perfect gifts

One of the great joys of holiday gift giving to an appreciative wine drinker is in the great wealth of choices that one faces in any good store. Indeed, the experience may be a bit overwhelming, such is the wide range of choices.

This column will review what seems to be some of the outstanding gift choices this season. The focus will be on panache as well as quality for cost, in both still wines and sparkling wines. Initial recommendations of imported wines are by category rather than specific items. There have been two excellent vintages in recent years, both of which are just now becoming available locally.

They are 1982 Bordeaux, all of which are excellent value because of the vintage and the present status of the dollar. Excellent purchases could include the Chateau Palmer (\$30) or the Chateau Leoville Barton (\$11). The other prime vintage is the 1983 German wines across all categories, from spatlese through beerenauslese and ice wine.

Regarding the last, there is a \$600 Scharzhofberger Riesling Ice Wine by Ego Muller that can only be described as for the most select audience in the world. That's \$600 a bottle, not case, by the way. But the 1983 crush is uniformly good in the affordable range as well, comparable only to the 1976.

A FINAL category recommendation is the excellent value to be had in the chablis wines. Between \$6-\$12, great purchases may be made for the lover of these steely, austere whites.

Possibly the most spectacular issue now available from France is the Chateau Margaux '81, a most prestigious gift at \$50.

In the domestic field, read California. There are a great many attractive issues that warrant individual attention. Because of the more heterogeneous nature of California wineries, it is not possible to issue blanket endorsements of vintage years. Rather special issues by premium wineries will be noted.

Perhaps one of the most respected wineries is Acacia Winery from the cool, Burgundian-like region of southern Napa, called Carneros. The rolling hills and cooling fog from San Pablo Bay permit the growing of its excellent chardonnay and pinot noir. Both are now available locally and, in the nearly \$20-a-bottle range, are prime examples of the best of California. Acacia's efforts with the difficult pinot noir grape

are considered by many to be the best of their type grown in the United States.

Another highly esteemed Napa winery is Stag's Leap Wine Cellars. Its 1981 cabernet has just been released (\$17) along with a very costly Merlot (\$20). Both would honor Santa's efforts.

DUCKHORN VINEYARDS has just released its 1982 Merlot (\$20) and 1983 sauvignon blanc (\$14). Both have special reputations.

In the less heady atmosphere, the classiest gift would be had in from Slorybook Mountain Vineyards. It produces a standard issue at about \$9 and a premium at about \$2 more. Either would cheer the heart of any zinfandel lover.

The 1981 Kenwood Artists Series Cabernet has just been issued. This one carries an excellent vinicultural reputation and is graced by a lovely representation of the Golden Gate Bridge. The cost of this Kenwood series keeps rising dramatically until now we are at \$25 for this. A collector's issue, this will warrant saving a long time and should be reserved for the true California collector.

For chardonnay lovers, recent issues of Chalone and Edna Valley have just been released. They represent a kind of Rolls-Bentley marketing mentality, and the breeding is there. At considerably less cost, but still a wine of fine distinction, is the '83 Kendall-Jackson (\$9). A wine of rich butteriness, it also has a good acid balance, making it a lovely thing to own.

Inglenook, proudly boasting a new label, has a stunner in its 1980 Cabernet Sauvignon Limited Cask. It can be found at about \$14; do not pay the \$18 initially asked. At the lower price it is a real value for the connoisseur. Another cabernet of great class is the '79 Simi. At \$8, cheap enough to buy one for someone special and another to take home for yourself.

Finally, in the good-wine, classy-label department, there is the 1983 issue of Carneros Sauvignon Blanc. Buy one for a white wine drinker who wants and will appreciate something special. In the most unusual category, there is the "Bottle of Bordeaux" that is filled with barrel mat and chocolate corks. At \$10, you drink this one from the bottom.

PIPER SONOMA Tete de Cuvee 1980 is the most expensive (\$35) and re-



wine
Richard Watson

sides in the most elegant presentation package. The verdict is still out on the quality of this wine, but reviews have been favorable on its standard brut at half the price. Both Chateau St. Jean and Schramsberg are offering their usual \$20-\$25 bottles and will sell a lot over the holiday season.

However, better values and more thoughtful gifts may be had by selecting some less obvious, and sometimes less expensive, bottles. For example, Iron Horse Ranch and Vineyards has two beautiful wines, some of California's finest, in the \$20-a-bottle range, a blanc de blanc and a brut. These would be at the top of the wish list. Add to that the Scharffenberger, just released.

And there are others in the \$15-\$20 range. S. Anderson has a lovely blanc

de noir that is among the more distinguished in this price range.

Choices in the \$10-\$15 range are easy to settle on. One is the new Gloria-Ferraz issue from Sonoma, a non-vintaged beauty at \$11. It's very citrusy. Few of your recipients would know this one and should find great pleasure from it.

Finally, it is impossible, day in and out, to beat Domaine Chandon for value. A marvelous combination of French winemaking skills have blended with California grapes to produce a great brut and a most elegant blanc de noir. Chandon is always in good taste. I have seen bottles in stores recently at \$10, though \$14 is more common.

When considering gifts such as this, don't forget your spouse either. He or she should be glad to share.



Children's classic

Darkness frightens Chris Huskins and Deanna Dimercurio playing Hansel and Gretel in the Crossroads Productions live stage show of the classic fairy tale at 1 and 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 15, at Somerset Mall in Troy. Moses Goldberg has adapted the story, with much of the play improvised in response to children's participation. The performance is open to the public without charge.

Chapin brothers appearing in benefit

Tom and Steve Chapin, brothers of the late singer-songwriter Harry Chapin, will perform an evening of Harry's words and music in a benefit concert for the Michigan Voice at 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 21, in Flint's Whiting Auditorium.

Reserved tickets at \$7.50, \$8.50 and \$5.50 may be purchased at the Whiting Auditorium, 1241 E. Kewley. For phone reservations, call 239-6772. All proceeds from the "Christmas with the Chapins" benefit will go to support the publication of the Michigan Voice, an alternative newspaper.



THE BEAUTIFUL AND HISTORIC
Lansdowne
RESTAURANT

SUNDAYS 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Buffet Brunch
ADULTS \$9.95
CHILDREN: 5-10 yrs. 10%; under 5 yrs. 12%
Traditional Egg & Omelet Selections
Chef's Casseroles, Soups • Carved Beef & Ham
French Toast • Waffles • Fresh Pastries and more
201 W. Washtenaw
Downtown Detroit Behind Cobo Hall
258-6001 • Valet Parking
DETROIT'S RESTAURANT ON THE RIVER

REJOICE!
Celebrate the many good tastes of the Mon Jin Lau during the Holiday Season.

Ask about our group accommodations and catering available now for the holiday. Share our good tastes with a friend.

MON JIN LAU
Mandarin • Szechwan • Hunan • Cantonese
Exotic Spirits
Maple Rd. at Stephenson Hwy. • Troy
689-2332

Prime Time
For prime rib at the Northfield Hilton.

\$7.95 No hull — just a thick, delicious cut of juicy prime rib surrounded by tender mixed vegetables, steamed baked potato, fresh seasonal salad, complemented by a glass of full-bodied wine. Offer only on FRIDAYS at the Northfield Hilton.

X Northfield Hilton
5500 Crooks Rd. at I-75 • Troy, MI 45098 • 313-879-2100

Pearl's Garden
Serving the Finest in Chinese & American Cuisine
Luncheons • Dinners • Carry Out Orders
Chinatown Style Welcomed
Open 7 Days a Week
Mon.-Thurs. 11 AM-10 PM • Friday 11 AM-11 PM
Sat. 12-11 PM • Sunday 12-10 PM

469 S. Woodward • Birmingham
644-2913

Rip's Two for One Lunch & Dinner Specials

Monday-Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. • 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
With this Coupon, Expires December 20

Extended Cocktail Hours
Monday & Tuesday 4 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Wednesday Night - Ladies Night - Special Prices
Entertainment Wednesday - Saturday Evenings
Saturday - Happy Hour All Day Drinks Specials

908 W. Huron • One Block West of Telegraph • Pontiac

4 Cheers for the **NEW YEAR** At The **TROY HILTON!**
(See Both Sides)

Our Famous Summer Nights
Return for a **Big New Year's Eve Bash**
WITH *The Trinidad North Sea Band*

Tickets on Sale NOW!!! CALL 583-9000 Ext. 502 for information

\$15.00 per person
Includes:
* Party Favors & Nolemakers * Dancing * Light Snacks
* Continental Breakfast (YOU MUST BE 21)

Troy Hilton Inn • 1455 Stephenson Hwy. • Troy, MI 48064

Top Off Your Evening
...at the Haymarket.

Friday and Saturday, from 10 PM till 1:30 AM, wind down the evening dance to soft, classical jazz served up by the Jimmy Dixon Quartet featuring vocalist Gwen Wells.

Catch a late night bite—light foods and snacks, table-side salads, tempting desserts from the fruit and pastry cart. Cocktails and cappuccino.

As you'd expect, no cover, no minimum. Just a casual, comfortable conclusion to a wonderful evening.

TROY HILTON
1455 Stephenson Highway
Troy, Michigan 48064
583-9000

Come celebrate with us! **NEW YEAR'S EVE** Hyatt fest.

WOW! 5 BANDS* + "FOR ONLY \$25"

WOW! Our sixth New Year's Eve spectacular promises you five terrific bands for only \$25 savings! We have bands including Maynard Ferguson, plus a wide variety of great things to eat... from fun foods to gourmet experience.

Make a night of it! Rooms available by reservation, \$75 single or double occupancy. Offer good December 31, 1984 only. Call 593-1414.

WOW! The internationally-famous Maynard Ferguson to dance to — or just listen to and enjoy! The big band sound that's coming back and coming on strong.

2 rock bands to blow you away! Everything is moving with an avalanche of rock, featuring the Teen Angels and Vidiot.

We're showing our Colours! Come see the Ball and Colours in the Regency Ballroom. Expect it to be crowded: these guys are great!

WOW! Savor the flavor of Hyatt! Make reservations at one of our outstanding restaurants. La Rotisserie, Giulio & Sons or La Rotisserie. Call 593-1414.

We'll put you on top! The top level at the Hyatt let's you dance the night away when you step out on the dance floor at the Rotunda.

Make your reservations now! Call 593-1414.

HYATT REGENCY DEARBORN
IN FAIRLANE TOWN CENTER 593-1414