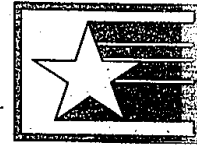


Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



Thursday, November 21, 1985 O&E

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Choose these wines for holiday turkey

WE ENTER the traditional, end-of-year holiday season and once again are, hopefully, aware of the many things for which we can truly be thankful. A very small one, but important nonetheless, is the huge array of wine choices we have to add a certain zest and joie to our dining and giving repertoire.

The next few of these columns will be devoted to the season, this one focusing on consuming. Subsequent ones will look at both consuming and giving wines appropriate to their respective settings.

The Thanksgiving repast is, in most households, an overindulgence in a variety of courses, the main one being either turkey or, less frequently, ham. It is in these two culinary beasts that our wine recommendations aimed.

But first, the aperitif. That with which we precede our meal should not be a drink that is too filling, for obvious reasons. No beer. Hard spirits only if one is so inclined.

I PROPOSE a dry sherry (a sound Spanish fino or a nutty amontillado would be excellent) or, better, a sparkling wine, the world's true drink of celebration. To select from the vast numbers of choices available is not easy, and the differences in cost are almost staggering. Sparkling wines can be had for as little as \$3.50. (Pay no more if you are going to mix it with anything) or for as much as anyone would care to pay. There are many elegant ones to be had in the \$60-\$70 range. And higher.

The only admonition I offer is not to overvalue your guests' palates. If they do not appreciate a fine champagne don't give them one. Doing so with a large gathering can be a wasted ex-



wine
Richard Watson

ercise in largesse. Any of the Pinot noirs, the Lemby Brut, a Paul Masson can be had in the \$6 range. If they like sweet, give them an asti or newly released Almaden Golden Champagne.

To go a bit higher and a lot drier, there are Alexander Bonnet Brut and, of course, either of the Domaine Chandon, which are among America's finest. To go above \$20, consult with your wine merchants.

Now to the main event: the Thanksgiving dinner wine. The idea is to find a wine that complements the meat, one that does not dominate or clash with the other. The matter is not one of red or white wine as a choice. Some reds will not do with either turkey or ham, nor will some whites. It is a fairly well established maxim that both meats respond well to the same wines, thus simplifying this column somewhat.

The herbaceous, somewhat veggie tannic spiciness of both cabernet sauvignon and sauvignon blanc contrast most unfavorably with the gaminess of turkey and the smokiness of ham. Save them for veal, some beef and perhaps fresh ham. Riesling and chenin blanc are too sweet and petite sirah too bold.

BEST SELECTIONS are made from two groups of reds, the related pinot noir-gamay family and zinfandel; chardonnay is the only white that will do the job. The last has a clean firmness of

structure, good fruit often accentuated with oak overtones, that complements the meats. There is already enough complexity in turkey and ham without adding yet another dimension.

Now to red wine choices. Whether from the prestigious Burgundy region of France or from its southern extension in the Beaujolais, the red grapes produce a soft, compact wine whose brightness seems to serve nicely. Some of the better beaujolais wines can be especially appropriate to this meal. The same applies to most California pinot noir, gamay noir and gamay beaujolais wines. The differences between and among this horribly complex set of wines notwithstanding, they all offer sound consideration.

An excellent variation on these are the nouveau wines released just ahead of Thanksgiving each year (thoughtful of the French). This year the date is Nov. 21 in France; it will be earlier in the American wine scene.

Finally, my personal choice for turkey-lare: zinfandel. The best of them have a berrylike freshness of full flavor, almost spicy but not very demanding. They are clean and forthright but with hints of something more — calms down the liveliness of the meats very nicely.

Next time, or soon, we will begin to explore wine as gifts for the seasons; cheap wines that look and taste expensive.



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only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. This project is funded in part by a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. For more information, call Interlochen's Creative Writing Division at 276-9221.

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