



Retail Education

By Harriet Lembeck



Springing into Wine

It's time to think Spring-Going-On-Summer. Time to guide your customers when they are thinking play and longer days, as well as more relaxed nights. Here's your chance for introducing wines from less famous regions and explaining their flavors.

Develop a list of quick suggestions. You want wines that are 1: **Chillable**. That means whites, of course, plus rosés and sparklers. But don't forget the reds. Many reds benefit from some chilling, and they need less time in the frig. 2: **Uncomplicated**. These should be wines that are easy to drink, and don't require thought about "structure." Forget oak, tannins and high alcohols for now. 3: **Freshness**. Look for the wines with lively flavors, meaning the acidity of a squeeze of lemon or lime. CO2 will also serve this purpose, from lightly carbonated wines to fuller double-fermented sparkling wines. 4: **Ease of service**. Don't overlook screw caps, which are gaining more acceptance. Then there's bag-in-the-box wines, which come in an unbreakable package and are perfect for poolside. Their light weight makes them easy to carry. Further, the interior shrinks to fit any leftover wine, keeping out air. 5: **Keep them interesting**. Introduce "new" grape varieties from around the world which your customers may not have tried before. 6: **Choose wines that work with a variety of foods**. Summertime means simple entertaining, and not a course-by-course food and wine pairing. 7: **Keep the price down**. You'll make it up in volume.

Here are some of my favorites for this time of the year. You can surely add more. Starting with white, head to the Loire Valley. I recommend a dry Muscadet de Sevre et Maine from Jean Aulénier, and a slightly sweeter Vouvray (Chenin Blanc grape) from Remy Pannier. Go north and south of the main regions of Burgundy, and check out Xavier Florent Chablis "Marly" in the north, and Louis Jadot Macon-Villages to the south. These are the original un-oaked Chardonnays that have become such a fad. For some light effervescence, Famega

Vinho Verde from Portugal is perfect, and low in alcohol. For more bubbles, Paul Cheneau's Spanish Cava, in its colorful "Lady of Spain" bottle wrap, can take your customer from brunch to supper, at a very fair price. A newer entry from Spain is the extremely aromatic Botani from Jorge Ordonez. It is a dry Muscat from Malaga, and will perk up simple foods. Rieslings are natural food wines, and there are great examples from NY State, Washington State, New Zealand, Alsace and Germany. Check out Anthony Road, Dr. Konstantin Frank and numerous others from the Finger Lakes in NY, and "Urban" a *Qualitätswein* wine from St. Urbans-Hof in the Mosel-Saar-Ruwer in Germany.



Paul Cheneau's "Lady of Spain" cava.

Roses, with their tinge of red, are classed as red wines. A favorite of mine is Gran Feudo from Navarra, Spain, made from the Grenache grape. Going deeper into the red colors, look at Rioja, Spain for anything in the *Joven* category. These are fruity, young, well-priced wines with no regulations on aging. Fonseca's Periquita (Castelao grape) from Portugal has been around for 150 years. Talk about longevity! A lightly oaked little beauty is Centine, made at the Castello Banfi property in Tuscany. It's an IGT with Sangiovese and Bordeaux red grapes. Pinot Evil (Pinot Noir grape, obviously) is a welcome addition from Corsica. It comes in a "premium wine cask," which is a euphemism for its 3L box. Get outside with the region of Nemea's Agiorghitiko (that's the grape) from Greece – and think Greek Games. Il Bicyclette from the Pays d'Oc, made from Syrah without the bite, reminds you to cycle or spin. Don't overlook the several fruit-filled *Crus* Beaujolais from Georges Duboeuf as well. California Zinfandels can be user-friendly – try s/k/n, which stands for screw kappa napa, or, from Sonoma County, there's Liar's Dice, produced by Murphy-Goode. And when you're ready to head for the movies, think Claret Diamond, a Napa Valley blend by Francis Ford Coppola. □

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