

## SEASONAL TIPS AND TRADITIONS OF A SOMMELIER



*By Kristen Ordonez*



With the winter holidays already in full effect, there's no better way to liven up some of the traditions of the holiday season than to uncork a bottle of wine. However, whether it is for a casual get-together among friends or the annual holiday party, figuring out which wines go with certain foods can sometimes build more stress during this busy time of year. What better way to alleviate the stress than through some wine pairing tips from a seasoned sommelier? *Kris Margerum*, Head Sommelier at Auberge du Soleil and the genius behind the newest Wine Series event for the first residential Auberge Beach Residences & Spa in Fort Lauderdale, has several interesting tips that he follows with his own family every year.

**Bring something that *you* would enjoy.**

One of the easiest ways to enjoy a nice bottle is to bring a type of wine that *you* want to enjoy, no matter the level of appreciation of the rest of the group. In other words, do not skimp on quality just because some of the attendees may not be super wine savvy. These are the people you love, so it is best to spend time with them over a good bottle of wine.

**Set out a plate of sushi.**

For the holidays, my extended family has a couple of interesting traditions. First is that everybody cooks and we are all assigned tasks to do. After a bit of culinary work we take a break with, of all things, sushi. We all enjoy this with a glass of off-dry German Riesling.

This year I am planning on bringing a 2010 J.J. Prum “Wehlener Sonnenuhr” Kabinett from the Mosel. The off-dry notes and acidity pair wonderfully with the heat of the wasabi that we all love to have with our sushi. It is a refreshing and unique tradition that we all look forward to.



### **Don't forget the soup.**

Another practice my family follows during the holidays is starting with a soup course before the main course. For this, we always prepare a pumpkin peanut butter soup. Over the years, I have matched this course with many wines including White Burgundies, Californian Chardonnays and Viogniers. This year, I am bringing a 2015 Truchard Roussanne for the Carneros District in Napa Valley.

### **Pair wines with the usuals.**

The main course of many holiday meals tends to be the traditional turkey with all the usual sides like stuffing, potatoes, gravy and veggies. Here, I generally bring one bottle of a fuller bodied chardonnay for the non-red wine drinker(s) and several bottles of medium bodied reds.

### **Don't be afraid to pair dessert with dessert.**

Pumpkin Pie is paired this year with a dessert wine from my cousin Doug's winery, the 2014 Margerum “Late Harvest” Viognier – Santa Barbara County.



### **If all else fails, try these wines this holiday.**

Here's my lineup for 2016:

- 2014 Hamilton Russell – Chardonnay – Hemel en Aarde Valley – Walker Bay-South Africa
- 2009 Williams Selyem “Ferrington” Pinot Noir – Anderson Valley-Mendocino
- 2011 St. Cosme “Valbelle” Red Rhône Blend – Gigondas-France
- 2014 Ghost Block “Pelissa” Zinfandel – Oakville-Napa Valley