

# Wines with a Twist

*Finding the perfect pairings that you can be thankful for this holiday season.*



It can sometimes be difficult to figure out which wines to serve with dinner, but with a little know-how, you can pair your meal perfectly. Photos courtesy of John Kerr

by John Kerr  
Contributor

**M**y favorite holiday is just around the corner. And if your day is like ours, you'll soon find your kitchen crammed with friends and family, and a spill over crowd of sports fans planted in the TV room. Thanksgiving is a jumbled smorgasbord of dishes gathered over generations that vary as much as the crew assembled in your home.

The annual conundrum— which wines to serve with the diversity of tastes and textures present at this unique feast. Look for wines with higher acidity, alcohol below 14 percent and little oak. The good news is that these wines are often not the most expensive ones. So, save that big, bad oaked Bordeaux you spent your bonus on for another occasion.

Yes, you can serve just one wine to carry you from appetizers through pumpkin pie — if you're pouring the bubbly. Sparkling wines bring elegance and amazing food-pairing versatility that really shine on Thanksgiving. If you're willing to splurge, serve a champagne with an ample dose of Pinot Meunier. But you can't go wrong with Belstar Prosecco, around \$12.99 for this Asheville favorite. Light and elegant with oh so tiny bubbles, its clean fruit flavors will play nice with any food.

If you're not looking for one size fits all, it's time to turn to the traditional wines of Thanksgiving. We'll pay homage to the tried and true standards of the day. But I'll suggest a few others

to consider if you're feeling a bit adventurous.

Let's talk reds. The traditional favorites in most homes are Pinot Noir and Beaujolais Nouveau. Pinot Noir's pretty fruit and earthy undertones show well with turkey and stuffing. It's hard to find a great Pinot under \$20, but Cooper Hill usually comes in around \$17.99. This wine offers rich red fruit with good acidity that carries through on a long cherry finish.

Beaujolais Nouveau is a fun, quickly made wine. It's always released in late November, just in time to join your feast. But for more in your glass, pour a "regular" Beaujolais such as Raisins Gaulois for about \$14.99, with dried cranberry and a lively acidity that caters well to our truly American meal. Or consider a Rhone wine. They bring a spicy edge to the table, and the peppery notes of Syrah will dance well with an herb infused stuffing. Cuvée Elisabeth fits the bill right near \$12.50.

Don't forget the Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling. These white wines rule this day with their crispness and wonderful fruit. Frisk Prickly Riesling at about \$11.50 gets the job done with its bright acidity and slight effervescence.

If you want to shake up the table but maintain perfect pairing power, toss in an Albariño or Viognier. Albariño Do Ferreira — should be around \$23.95 — will remind you of a fine California Chardonnay. And Delas at about \$10.50 is a classic Viognier with fresh peach and tropical fruit floating in a rich, creamy texture.

Now keep it flowing through dessert by pulling out the Port. Its sweetness and viscosity can support the spices and rich flavors of pumpkin and pecan pies. Pour a white port, something your guests have probably never tried. One of the best is Ramos Pinto — usually around \$18.99.

In the end, Thanksgiving is about celebrating our blessings. So, raise your glass and toast to the good life.