

# The New York Times

THE POUR

## Wines, Spirits and More to Bring to Any Holiday Gathering

Selecting the right bottle is never easy. Here are some recommendations for all types of people and parties.



By [Eric Asimov](#)

Every year around now, we test the proposition that it's better to give than to receive. The challenge is what to give.

For those who enjoy wine or other alcoholic beverages, the answer is often a bottle. But not always, and choosing a bottle is not simple. Cost is important, as is the nature of the event, your relationship to the recipient and their interests.

Sometimes, as with host gifts, these bottles are not intended to be opened and shared, unless specified in advance. Recipients may choose to do so, but it should never be expected. In other cases, bottles are your contribution to a gathering, where they are meant to be opened and enjoyed.

Here are a few recommendations of wine and more, for gifts, holiday parties and gatherings of all sorts.

## The Best Bottle for the Host

Champagne is the all-purpose host gift, never inappropriate and universally welcomed. But prices have skyrocketed in the last few years. Here are a few options.

### **\$50 to \$60**

[Lanson](#) Champagne Brut Black Label NV

[Deutz](#) Champagne Brut Classic NV

[Pierre Moncuit](#) Champagne Moncuit-Delos Extra Brut Blanc de Blancs NV

### **\$65 to \$85**

[Louis Roederer](#) Champagne Brut Collection 245 NV

[Pierre Péters](#) Champagne Brut Cuvée de Réserve Blanc de Blancs NV

[Dhondt-Grellet](#) Champagne Extra Brut Dans un Premier Temps NV

### **Blowout**

[Krug](#) Champagne Brut Grande Cuvée NV

### **Budget**

[Raventos i Blanc](#) Conca del Riu de Arnoia Rosado 2023 (It's not Champagne, but it's delicious bubbly.)

## The Best Bottle for a Boss

A gift for a boss is tricky. A thoughtless or insignificant choice conveys a lack of respect, while an exorbitant gift might seem obsequious. If the boss in question likes wine, Champagne is always good (though not the blowout or budget choices). But spirits seem to me to be weightier — more, well, boss. Here is a solid selection of bottles that are satisfying but not too extravagant.

## Scotch

[Highland Park](#) Orkney Islands Single Malt 12-Year

[Ardbeg](#) Islay Single Malt 10-Year (If your boss like smoky, peaty malts.)

## Bourbon

[Michter's](#) US-1 Kentucky Straight Bourbon

## Rye

[Sazerac](#) Straight Rye Whiskey

[Heaven's Door](#) Refuge Straight Rye Whiskey (If your boss is a Bob Dylan fan, Dylan was a founder of Heaven's Door.)

## Rum

[Neisson](#) Organic Blanc Rhum Agricole

## Mezcal

[Del Maguey](#) Chichicapa

## The Best Bottle for the Office Party

Some office parties are more like potlucks than dinner parties, so you would expect your offering to be opened and poured. These gatherings can be large and informal, and a good but modest bottle, or all three, would make a lovely contribution. All are around \$20 for a liter bottle.

## White

[Brand](#) Pfalz Riesling Dry 2023

## Orange

[Gulp Hablo](#) Spain Orange 2024

## Red

[La Boutanche](#) California Red Blend 2024

## The Best Bottle for Friends

At a gathering of friends, you would expect your contributions to be opened and poured. Here, you need to evaluate the size and nature of the group. For four

friends, say, a bottle or two will do. For larger groups, two or three bottles. Magnums would be especially festive but are not always easy to find. If thirst-quenching bottles are called for, the bottles I suggested for the office party would do. But here are a few other ideas, all under \$30 a bottle.

## White

[Ciro Picariello](#) Fiano di Avellino 2024

[Martha Stoumen](#) California Post Flirtation White 2023

[Sierra de Toloño](#) Rioja Blanco 2024

## Red

[Domaine M & C Lapierre](#) Vin de France Raison Gaulois 2024

[Ampeleia](#) Costa Toscana Unlitro 2023

[Guímaro](#) Ribeira Sacra Mencía 2023

## The Best Bottle for the Holiday Party

How do holiday parties diverge from other gatherings? By explicitly marking the holidays, they inspire a different, more celebratory spirit. Guests may not know each other but are united in their desire to revel. Any of the beverages above, especially the Champagnes, would be welcomed, but if they seem too dear, here are some less expensive sparkling wine alternatives, all under \$35 a bottle.

[Lambert de Seyssel](#) Savoie Le Petit Royal Blanc de Blancs NV

[Catherine et Pierre Breton](#) Vouvray Brut La Dilettante NV

[Roederer Estate](#) Anderson Valley Brut NV

## The Best Gift for the Wine Geek

What do you give to the person who knows far more about wine than you do? Not wine. People with expertise tend to have firm opinions and pronounced likes and dislikes. It's too easy to miscalculate and innocently displease. Give these people a good book, some [touch-screen gloves](#) or one of these [cool gifts](#), anything but wine.