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wine o'clock



Last month FAIRLADY tested SA's best sparkling wines in our annual Consumer Awards, and **Pongrácz Rosé R100** and **Boschendal Grande Cuvée Brut 2007 R109,95** came out tops. To find out who the finalists were, visit www.fairlady.com.

Let's face it, life is a thirsty business... May your glass always be half full (of a decent vintage).

festive fizz

I love the Pavlovian effect that popping open a bottle of bubbly has on guests – it's the signal for heels to be kicked off and collars loosened (if only metaphorically), and gives everyone that little frisson so necessary for a raucous soirée. It is therefore mandatory for silly season celebrations. As with any hedonistic endeavour, it's best not to apply any rules, but there are a few good-to-knows that will enhance your enjoyment:

- **Make sure your sparkling wine is well chilled** – a few hours in the fridge will do the trick (no more though).
- **To pour**, hold the bottle by the base with your thumb inside the indentation.
- **Serve it in a flute** – the bubbles are less likely to disperse than in a wider 'saucer' glass.
- **Between top-ups**, store the bubbly in a bucket of ice.
- **Feel free to drink a dry** ('brut') bubbly with your food – it pairs well with our roast Christmas chicken with apple, sage & fennel stuffing on page 130.
- **The smaller the bubbles**, the better. The long train of tiny, rising bubbles pick up flavour and aroma molecules that literally explode in your mouth.



PLATTER'S ON YOUR PHONE

You can now download SA's top wine guide onto your iPhone or Android. It includes everything the printed version has – ratings, vintages and producers – plus you can rate wines and share your favourites. The GPS-enabled maps will certainly come in handy if you find yourself roaming the winelands. Available from the Apple iStore for \$10,99 (about R95).



WHAT TO DRINK: summer quaffers

December is a time of slip-slops, braais, informal gatherings and plenty of food and drink. For such occasions, you don't really want to have to think too hard about matching your wine with your food. Here's our pick of versatile, easy-going crowd-pleasers.

WHITE

- **Kleine Zalze Chenin Blanc 2011 R42,50:** citrus, litchi, guava, pineapple, peach.
- **Asara Sauvignon Blanc 2012 R55:** Gooseberries, asparagus and kiwi.
- **De Meye Unwooded Chardonnay 2011 R54:** green apple, melon, butterscotch. Particularly good with our warm seafood salad on page 132.

ROSÉ

- **Haute Cabrière Tranquille R47,50:** a Pinot noir and Chardonnay blend with fresh fruit flavours and a dry finish. Lovely with the tomato tarts recipe on page 131.

RED

- **Elgin Vintners Pinot Noir 2010 R88:** Cherry, strawberry, violets. Serve slightly chilled with our Christmas gammon on page 128.

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Shopping malls are a bun fight over Christmas, and the snaking queues are enough to drive anyone to, er, drink, so it's the perfect time to discover the joys of buying wine online: you can browse at your leisure, buy wines at cellar door prices (sometimes at substantial

discounts), and have the wine delivered to your door at a convenient time – usually for free.

Try these:

- www.getwine.co.za
- www.salewine.co.za
- www.wine.co.za/shop
- www.carolineswine.com

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