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What to drink now: 6 holiday wine recs from Bartolotta's Katie Espinosa

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Reference this list of both white and red options when planning your holiday meals.

All week long we will be featuring holiday recipes, local gift guides and more during "Home for the Holidays Week" brought to you by Sendik's Food Market. Your trusted, local grocer.

Stuck in a wine rut? Or just looking for something more interesting to pair with your next meal? We've got your number. For this series, we'll talk to some of the best and most qualified wine experts in Milwaukee and getting recommendations for wines that you should be drinking right now.

There's no time like the holidays for festive meals accompanied by delicious wines. But, finding the perfect wines to go with holiday meals can sometimes be a challenge. So we spoke with Katie Espinosa, unit director and certified sommelier with the Bartolotta Restaurants, to get some of her best recommendations for affordable holiday wines.

Espinosa is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame who joined Bartolotta's in 2002 as a server at Lake Park Bistro. After moving on from Lake Park Bistro, she gained managerial experience (and wine knowledge) at Ristorante Bartolotta, as well as Mr. B's Steakhouse. She joined the team at Bacchus in 2011, where she took oversight of not only the restaurant's operations and staff, but also its extensive, award-winning wine list (which tops out at over 800 bottles).

On a personal note, Espinosa is married to another Bartolotta's all-star, Chef Zach Espinosa, who currently oversees operations for all three new restaurants at the Mayfair Collection. The Espinosas have a dachshund named Mr. Riley.



Ferrari Rose Trentino, Italy

"It is true, I could not put a list together without a sparkling wine on it! Outside of Italy, most people associate Ferrari with the luxury sports car, but in Italy, Ferrari is synonymous with top quality sparkling wine. Like Champagne, this is made in the traditional method, where the secondary fermentation happens in the bottle. Made from about 60% Pinot Noir (called Pinot Nero in Italy) and 40% Chardonnay, it ages for more than two years on the lees giving it a creamy, persistent flavor with delicate bubbles. It finishes elegantly with notes of marzipan, white flowers and currants. This is a great substitute for rose Champagne, which is frequently (at least) 50% more expensive, for even entry level wines."

Pairings: It can be drunk at any point of a meal, or on its own. It will pair well with oysters and shellfish, salads or middle courses, meat – both red and white, and of course, cheese or fruit-based desserts."

Price: Around \$25 retail

Trimbach Riesling Alsace, France

"The winery dates to 1626 and this wine comes from one of the oldest families in Alsace. I love Riesling, and this one is no exception! It is a magical grape that ranges in style from very dry to very sweet. I find Rieslings from Alsace to be drier than their German counterparts, making them an exceptional pairing with food. This is a clean wine, with notes of green and yellow apple, delicate white flowers and stony minerality. Trimbach is a popular producer, so it should be easy to find, but if not, I like Hugel, too."

Pairings: "Dry Riesling can match with any course in a meal, which makes it incredibly versatile. Pair it with fish, pork, poultry, Asian food, slightly spicy food, salad, fruit and fruit pastries."

Price: Generally between \$20 and \$25 retail

Vincent Girardin Vieilles Vignes Meursault Burgundy, France

"Burgundy can be a daunting choice for someone who is not familiar with the intricacies of the region. Most wine is labeled by a place name, not a grape. Almost always, white wine from Burgundy is Chardonnay and red wine is Pinot Noir. A producer's hand plays an important role in quality, and that is why I chose this wine. I find Girardin's wines to be lovely, balanced and a true reflection of the grape with a strong sense of place. This 100% Chardonnay is rich on the palate without being overly oaky or sticky. It has beautiful notes of citrus, spice with a nerve of acid that holds it all together. It has a moderate level of alcohol, making it easy to drink."

Pairings: "This wine pairs well with seafood, hard cheese, poultry/fowl, white beans, polenta and butter sauces."

Price: "Burgundy can get expensive, very quickly, and this one is a bit of a splurge, but with the quality Girardin puts into all of his wines, I find this to be a very safe bet." Retail price is likely to be between \$45 and \$50



Siduri Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands, California

"Adam and Dianna Lee founded Siduri in the 1990s as a result of a love for Pinot Noir. They make wine from many top vineyards in California and Oregon. Some are pretty hard to find, so I picked one that is consistently outstanding and available. This is a slightly full-bodied and fleshy style of Pinot Noir with red and black fruits, cinnamon, nutmeg, and dried herbs on the finish. I love the bright cherry notes and spice undertones that follow until the last sip."

Pairings: "Pair this with poultry, duck, salmon, mild curries, lentils and grilled vegetables."

Price: About \$30 retail

Marchesi di Barolo Tradizione Barolo, Italy

"Today, the fifth generation is at the helm making these legendary wines. A few years ago owners, Anna Abbona and her daughter, Valentina, did a wine dinner with us at Bacchus and I have forever been in love with their wines. This wine is 100% Nebbiolo, and for Barolo, it is reasonably priced. It has an intense aroma of perfume, spice, rose petals, tart red fruit and balsamic. This wine is one to ponder and linger over."

Pairings: "This Barolo is very dry with a big structure and pairs well with red meats, anything braised, truffles and hard, aged cheese."

Price: Generally \$40-\$45 retail

Dunahm Cellars, Trutina Columbia Valley, Washington

"This is a gorgeous blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Petit Verdot and Syrah. It is a great wine with dark fruit flavors like blackberry, cassis and currant. It shows a good amount of oak to balance the fruit, along with the acid structure Washington wines are known for. I love recommending this wine to anyone asking for a California Cabernet. You get all the richness without the price tag."

Pairings: " This wine would be great with grilled meats, steak, lamb and short ribs."

Price: Generally under \$30 retail