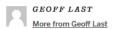


Wine bargains to carry you through the holiday season



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Almost anyone who loves and collects wine will tell you that much of the pleasure derived from a great bottle is in the sharing.

Consider the romances that have been kindled (and sometimes ended) over a bottle or two and how effortlessly the problems of the world are resolved, "in vino veritas" (in wine, truth), as the Latins would say.

There is an implied intimacy in the sharing of wine that is unique because it is often tied to the enjoyment — and sharing — of food. I love cooking and drinking wine with friends and family but when left to my own devices I will likely snarf back a toasted tomato sandwich standing over the kitchen sink (perhaps with a glass of good dry German Riesling, just to aid digestion).

As the holiday season descends, we tend to do a lot more entertaining than is usual and as such I traditionally offer up a selection of delicious, well-priced wines to help get you through, here are the candidates for this year.

Louis Bouillot Cremant de Bourgogne Cremant Brut Rose — \$23

In a civilized world, decent bubbles are an essential part of any festivity and the Louis Bouillot is a really decent bottle of sparkling wine for the price. It is made from Pinot Noir in the traditional Champagne method, offering up some spicy red fruits with a lively mousse with some toast and brioche notes.

