

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

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WINE

Hey, big spender (and everyone else)

We poll the experts for the season's best picks

The leftovers are in the fridge, the turkey's a mere memory, stores are hanging out their shingles extra early.

It's time to shop. And wouldn't it be great if you had an expert to consult for your holiday wine shopping? Hunting for a Wii or a diamond pendant is hard enough, but wine lovers have a remarkably finicky streak — trust me, I know this fact intimately well — which means you have about as much luck choosing the perfect wine as grabbing a random CD for the music lover in your life. (In



Madeira

Madeira evokes a romantic vision of clipper ships, bewhiskered gentlemen and cut glass decanters full of rich, golden ambrosia. The purposeful oxidation of this fortified wine allows its enjoyment to the last drop without worry of time or temperature, so a bottle will provide many, many pleasurable evenings. Malmsey — also known as Malvasia — is the richest and sweetest of the more commonly produced Madeira styles. The Rare Wine Co. partnered with Vinhos Barbeito to create the affordably priced Historic Series, with each bottling named for a U.S. city where Madeira was popular during the 19th century. The most recent — the NV New Orleans Terrantez Special Reserve (\$62, Spanish Table, Berkeley and Mill Valley) — was created to recognize and raise funds for Katrina survivors. Terrantez is the fifth and very rare grape of Madeira, which is slowly making a comeback. There's toffee and a touch of smoke on the nose; its rich palate is delicately sweet but has bracing acidity and finishes dry.