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Sommelier Thanksgiving Day Sips

Wine Enthusiast tapped top wine experts from around the country to find out their ultimate wine and Thanksgiving dinner pairings.

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BY MELANIE NAYER



The turkey is roasting, the stuffing is simmering and the sweet potatoes are browning. Thanksgiving dinner is about to be served. But while you're salivating over the scents coming from the kitchen, don't forget the most important ingredient: the wine. So what pairs well with the various flavors on the table? W.E. tapped top sommeliers from around the country to find out their ultimate wine and Thanksgiving dinner pairings.

Sommelier: Allison Foote, Rialto Restaurant at The Charles Hotel (www.rialto-restaurant.com)

Wine recommendation: 2010 Robert Sinskey Abraxas Vin de Terrior Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard

Pairs well with: "To avoid a redundant Thanksgiving dinner menu scheme, I like to pair wines that are expressive and show fragrant, high-toned fruit that suggest a sense of seasonal flavors. The Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc and Gewürztraminer blend is a perfect pairing for not only roasted turkey, savory stuffing and harvest vegetables, but its floral component would work well with soft cheeses and dried fruits."

Sommelier: Jeffrey Andrus, Charlie Palmer at The Joule, Dallas

Wine recommendation: 2009 Robert Foley Vineyards Charbono

Pairs well with: "This wine never fails to delight and intrigue. Its huge, dark, candied berry aromas, dense textures and spicy character delight serious red wine drinkers. Its light, almost non-detectible, silky tannins enamor the less frequent red wine drinkers in the group. What's especially exciting about this wine is how well it pairs with items containing sweet components, like cranberry sauce, candied yams and sweet glazed ham. Not only does this wine excel with Thanksgiving foods, it has the ability to become even more explosive in its aromas."

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Sommelier: Sean Meyer, [Destination Cellars](#)

Wine recommendation: NV H. Billiot Brut Rosé Champagne

Pairs well with: "There are few things in the world of wine I'm more thankful for than a well-crafted rosé Champagne. The perplexing juxtaposition of richness of flavor with the delicate texture given by acidity and fine bubbles makes it delightful as an apéritif and for most of what graces our Thanksgiving table. Turkey? Check. Cranberries? Sure! Wild Mushroom Stuffing? Yes, Please!"

Sommelier: Ian Cauble, Navio Restaurant at [The Ritz-Carlton](#), Half Moon Bay

Wine Recommendation: 2009 Marcel Lapiere Morgon Beaujolais Cru

Pairs well with: "Lapiere's Morgon Gamay exhibits flavors of tart red cherry, fresh cranberry, dried roses, crushed rocks and dried herbs, which fit perfectly with roasted vegetables. At my home this means red beets, onions and roasted squash. The body of Cru Beaujolais is on the lighter side with bright acidity, low tannin structure and very earth driven flavors balanced with a very creamy texture. This unique lighter structure and balanced fruit allows the flavors of the vegetables and the wine to be experienced in their purity without either the food or wine dominating the experience."

Sommelier: Dwayne Savoie, [The Setai South Beach](#)

Wine recommendation: 2010 Felton Road Bannockburn Vineyard

Pairs well with: "While many Thanksgiving turkey recipes are best suited for white wines, lighter reds like Pinot Noir have a distinct red berry characteristic that mimics the turkey's traditional accompaniment, cranberry relish. This Pinot Noir in particular pairs easily with various fragrant spices and light side dishes, such as sweet potatoes."

Sommelier: Jake Daniken, [Mercat a la Planxa](#)

Wine recommendation: 2008 Alvaro Palacios "Finca Dofi"

Pairs well with: "The wines of Priorat are very spicy and full-bodied, and they pair excellently with the traditional stuffing and slow-roasted turkey. This wine is a blend of Garnacha, Cariñena and some Cabernet Sauvignon to round it out. The predominant sweet and spicy notes from the Garnacha help complement the flavors of fall spices on stuffing while at the same time match up to the sweetness of cranberry sauce."

Sommelier: Dan Mages, Head Sommelier, Urban Farmer at the Nines Hotel

<http://www.urbanfarmerrestaurant.com/>

Wine recommendation: 2009 Hawks View Cellars Pinot Noir.

Pairs well with: "The Hawks View 2009 Pinot Noir pairs exceptionally well with plum glazed turkey and plum gravy. The wine's intense cherry fruit layers nicely with the plummy sweetness of the turkey gravy, while the wine's racy acidity and pillowy tannins enrich the elusive flavor of a turkey's five-spice rub. The Pinot's cherry fruit also pairs favorably with a bright cranberry-fig chutney, and the wine's earthy qualities enhance and elevate the nuttiness of a chestnut, prune and pancetta stuffing."

Sommelier: Thomas Turner, [Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort](#)

Wine recommendation: 2009 Vintners Vognier

Pairs well with: "The Vognier is so well-balanced we enjoy the bottle with a nicely sized piece of pumpkin pie. The creamy texture of the wine complements the cinnamon and nutmeg spice of the pie."

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