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Etiquette of taking wine to a dinner party

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(Photo: Steve Prati)



On wine

Wine and dinner parties go together; that's a given in many circles. What is less sure is the etiquette for giving (and receiving) wine in social situations.

Here are some general guidelines to consider:

A bottle of wine presented to the hosts should be considered a gift, and as such, the hosts should feel free to do as they wish with the wine — whether that means putting the bottle away for later or opening it at the time.

Make it easy for everyone and just tell your host, "this is for your cellar." Of course, none of this applies if you have collaborated ahead of time with the host to bring a wine to pair with a special dish. The conversation might go something like this: "Come on over for Italian Saturday night." "Can we bring the wine?" "Of course." "Great, we have a nice bottle of **Gabbiano Classico Chianti** we'd love to share." My kind of friend.

Finding a nice bottle of wine to please (or impress) your host doesn't have to be a challenge. Here is a short list of suggestions covering a range of styles and prices (leaning a little heavier on cellar-worthy reds).

Lander-Jenkins Cabernet Sauvignon, 2014: Family winery, and it shows. Lush, silky fruit. Over delivers on flavor and value. \$15.