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Outside the Wine Box: A Beginner's Guide to Buying Wine

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In the film *Grumpier Old Men* (Warner Brothers, 1995), Walter Matthau's character Max, brings his love interest Maria, played by Sophia Loren, a box of wine he is thrilled with the box pouring from a unique tap! While the scene gives the viewer a chuckle, many dates may not be as entertained as Maria was. Maybe you are like Max and don't know the ins and outs of wine, or perhaps you are only familiar with red, and white, Merlots, and Chardonnays? There are many wines in-between and overlooked by the unseasoned purchaser of wine. The next time you stand in the wine aisle of your favorite shop or attempt to read the wine list at the local bistro, look for the wine varieties not commonly listed on a box. Just a few small details about wine from www.winebaskets.com could impress your Max or Maria.

There are many red wines that, with a quick study, can make anyone seem like a connoisseur. Learning keywords to describe wines will make purchasing wine a less stressful task. An easy favorite is Sangiovese. This wine is considered the most prevalent grape of the central area of Italy. It is light in color red wine with notes of cherry pie, anise, and tobacco. These flavors combine a hometown feel, with an exotic twist. The flavors bring to mind a grandpa enjoying bites of his wives fresh baked sweet pie, while simultaneously enjoying a cigarette. A Pinot Noir is much darker in hue, but easy to find on store shelves. The flavors are full of fruit tones. A common word used to describe a Pinot Noir is "jammy." This grape is the oldest grape variety known. Now with two uncommonly thought of reds in your arsenal, you are ready to shop!

There are many white wines outside of the common glass of Chardonnay. Pinot Blanc is similar in color and flavor but rolls off the tongue in a fancier sense. Pinot Blancs tones are sometimes spicy, and can lean to the herby side, making for a sexy feel. The notes can also be citrusy. When ordering with a discerning waiter over your shoulder, ask for a Pinot Blanc with tones of crisp green apple. Another uncommon white wine is the floral Viognier. This white wine is strong on the nose with its intense floral scents of white peach and honeysuckle. It is very food-friendly winemaking it easy to order with any meal.

Next time you are on the wire to order or purchase some wine, that is not run of the mill, bring these four varieties to mind. You may or may not impress your date, but you will have the confidence to order off of even the most intimidating wine lists. There is a good feeling about knowing what you are ordering and anticipating the taste. This knowledge gives you a one-up over guessing and avoids the faux pas of purchasing the trendiest bottle or the one with the fancy tap.

Image:  Kelsey Knight

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