THE PANEL
How to Transform Influence Into Impact

ALL TALK
Commonwealth Club CEO Gloria Duffy

HAMILTON HOLIDAY
Cast & Crew's Gift Guide

BOTTLING HISTORY
Day in the Life of a Napa Harvest

SanFrancisco

DECEMBER 2019

The gift options for the wine lover on your holiday list are plentiful; for starters, a decanter is a must-have.

Wine Gifts

Good grape ideas that will give your loved ones joy year-round.

BY IAN DEVEREUX WHITE

G3 BY GOOSE RIDGE | $15

What I love about the G3 Series of wines by Goose Ridge (gooseridge.com) is that the winery is family owned; the wines are well made and crowd-pleasing; and you can get the chardonnay, merlot, red blend or cabernet for the same price. This isn't a wine to impress the annoying wine snob in your life, but you're supporting a nice family, and you ain't going to break the bank.

I cherish the look of joy on a loved one's face when the bow comes off of a carefully chosen holiday gift. So, when a present yields ambivalence, bafflement or disappointment, it can sour me for what feels like a vintage. To spare you that awkward moment, I'm arming you with everything you need to bring cheer to your wine- and booze-loving friends and family.

WINES

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HOUSLEY BRANDY | $45
The Housley family (housleynapavalley.com) has been in the Bay Area for six generations and Napa Valley for over 50 years. And while their focus is wine, they have "come to love a good brandy" and chosen to use Napa grapes and work with Napa Valley Distillery on their brandy to keep things local and pay homage to their Bay Area roots. It's unique, made from wine grapes, and you can visit Housley in Napa and meet the makers.

INNISKILLIN VIDAL ICEWINE | $50
Made in Canada and easily found, despite being relatively limited in production, Inniskillin's (on.inniskillin.com) icewine is sweet but not syrupy, and full of the rich flavors and fruity aromas of citrus and peach. A delicious treat, this half bottle comes in a shiny gift box, provides many servings, and you can also pour it over ice cream if you want to indulge in an intoxicating desert.

DOMAINE DE LA RIVIÈRE-2017 MIDDLE REACH VINEYARDS PINOT NOIR | $75
Domaine de la Rivière's (domaineriviere.com) very limited production pinot (only 135 cases) is complex, full-bodied, elegant, silky, balanced and gently spiced. It receives high scores, is made by a very small producer and will almost definitely make a lasting impression on even the most educated wine drinker.

BV PRIVATE RESERVE GEORGES DE LATOUR CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY | $145
Most wine drinkers have heard the name BV (bvwines.com) and have likely seen bottles everywhere from the local market to the reserve list at their favorite steakhouse. Since BV wines are extremely diverse and well-known, this is not the right wine for a wine snob. But it is the perfect gift for a new collector, and those who appreciate history and aren't stuck on boutique brands. Whatever the case may be, this wine is as good as good gets, so give it with pride.

STERLING VINEYARDS IRIDIUM CABERNET SAUVIGNON | $275
Iridium is one of the rarest metals on Earth and Iridium cabernet is extremely limited and the rarest wine made by Sterling Vineyards (sterlingvineyards.com/iridium). This Napa Valley winery is fun to visit because it has expansive views and you get to ride an aerial tram. And this bottle is shiny, heavy, beautiful and bold; its heft is known to provoke a lively reaction.

TOYMAKER CELLARS "TOY CHEST" | $1,200
If you're really looking to impress, reach out directly to the winery (info@toymakercellars.com); ask for Steven; and reserve one of only 25 beautiful limited-edition chests containing four vertical vintages (2012-15) of Toymaker. This Napa Valley Diamond Mountain cabernet sauvignon will impress anyone. It's on theme, and the wood boxes are handcrafted by Work Training Center Inc., who provides job and life skills to adults with developmental disabilities.

TOYS

CORAVIN MODEL ONE | $200
This killer little device from Coravin (coravin.com) draws wine out of the bottle without popping the cork and replaces it with a gas that keeps the rest fresh in the bottle. So you can sample a bottle from your collection to find out if its ready, enjoy just a glass of your most coveted vino or debunk the "don't want the bottle to go to waste" excuse for drinking more.

WINE DECANTER | $49-$499
There are a million different wine decanters, and they range in size, shape and price and do the same thing: aerate your wine. The air smooths out rough edges and makes intense wines more drinkable. Choose your decanter based on style and avoid squares and rectangles. And if they don't use it for wine, they can always use it as a vase!