

WINE

G U I D E



Wine Racks: More Than Storage

Sure, wine racks do a great job of displaying your favorite bottles, but they can also serve as a design element within nearly any room of your home.

From eclectic and funky to timeless and vintage, they come in all shapes, sizes and designs to fit the needs of wine connoisseurs. They can hold one bottle, or several thousand.

Some are uniquely sculpted and inspired by abstract architecture, while others feature more contemporary and modern touches.

STORAGE STRATEGY

There is a definite strategy in how most wine racks hold your bottles. They are generally designed for a bottle to be stored on its side with a slight downward slant. This keeps the wine in contact with the cork, which keeps the cork from drying out and disallows oxygen to pass through and spoil the wine.

For this reason, you should avoid racks that are made to hold your wine in an upright position.

MATERIALS

Wine racks come in nearly every material imaginable. Some are crafted from reclaimed wood, while others are comprised of steel.

When choosing a rack for your home, ensure its strength under pressure, especially if you need it to



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hold a large number of bottles. Ask your retailer more about the company that produces its wine racks and, if it's a major investment for you, do some follow-up with that business about how it weight-tests its racks.

This will give you total con-

fidence in your new wine rack's ability to perform under pressure.

FUNCTION AND FASHION

On the floor or on the counter? Screwed into the wall or

hanging from the ceiling?

There are countless ways to display your new wine rack, limited only by the manufacturer's specifications and your creativity.

Wine racks are about more than storage. Capable of being your living room cen-

terpiece or your kitchen accessory, they are the perfect complement to many design schemes.

Their wide range of available colors and textures will help you find the perfect rack to accentuate your furniture, countertops or paint palette.

A Look at Chardonnay

The proof is in the pudding. And the grapes. Chardonnay remains the most popular white wine in the United States, with increasing sales every year over the past decade, according to the Wine Institute.

The grape's versatility and ability to integrate into a variety of taste complexities make it the base of the go-to wine for many people across the country – and the world.

Internationally, more than 400,000 acres are devoted to growing Chardonnay grapes. And not only are people growing and consuming Chardonnay grapes, they are talking about them, too.

According to market analysts from the Wine Market Council, Chardonnay was the most-talked-about varietal across social media over the past two years.

THE HISTORY OF CHARDONNAY

Some historical references note initial U.S. plantings of the Chardonnay grape may have started in the 1800s.

But because of inexperience with the grapes and challenges with climate and weather, production remained limited until years later. In fact, WineInstitute.org identifies Chardonnay's popularity surge as occurring one century later in the 1970s.

U.S. GROWTH

The world's production of Chardonnay grapes is catalyzed by California, which produces 90 percent of the United States' wine.

Chardonnay grapes represent the state's most widely planted wine grape with more than 95,000 acres reported in 2012 to the Department of Food and Agriculture.

California's climate and soil make it the ideal location for grape-growing, as many locations across the nation try to replicate the state's wine abilities by importing its grapes into their own growing operations.

DESCRIPTORS

Fans of Chardonnay are familiar with the wine's most distinguished descriptors – green apple, fig and citrus flavors.

Its aroma and acidity are also widely recognized attributes for the multitude of crisp and refined Chardonnay wines.

Due to the grape's general neutrality, Chardonnay wines are often aged in oak to produce their trademark overtones.



DIY Wine Gift Baskets

From weddings to birthday parties, homemade wine baskets make the perfect gift to mark any special occasion.

They show the recipient that you care. They also allow you, the gift-giver, to exercise your creative muscles when putting them together.

Use your eye for design when choosing your basket, box, materials and decorations that will all combine to form a one-of-its-kind gift for that special someone.

ACCESSORIZE

You want to make the wine-drinking experience as easy as possible for your gift recipient. It is a gift, after all, and little to no effort should be required to enjoy it.

So along with your one – or two – bottles of quality wine, be sure to include a corkscrew, wine stopper, coasters, napkins and a couple of glasses in the basket. Many more unique accessories are also available at your local winery or craft store, so look around for other options.

PERSONALIZE

DIY wine gift baskets offer the perfect opportunity for you to include hand-written poems, notes or letters with messages of love and friendship.

You can also include concert tickets or romantic



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homemade coupons for things like foot rubs or date nights for someone you love.

Gift cards to local fine wine shops or massage parlors can also add an extra bit of luxury to your basket.

DON'T FORGET THE FOOD

When adding food to your gift basket, you can go with the classic cheeses, fruit, salami and crackers that go so

well with most types of wine.

More unique options include bags of fresh whole nuts or chocolate-covered fruit. You can also get creative and add all of the ingredients of your favorite recipe.

Find a recipe – like spaghetti – that requires a little of the wine be added to the sauce. Include a handwritten recipe card with instructions to really put this gift basket over the top.

Accessories for Wine Lovers

There are many products on the market made to enhance the wine-drinking experience. And with the wine industry booming and serving a growing target audience, makers of wine accessories are always looking to set themselves apart.

This fierce competition has led to quality products and cheaply made ones, as well, so do your research before paying big bucks for the next big thing.

Some wine traditionalists will tell you that all you need to enjoy the wine-drinking experience are a bottle and glass, but some of the following accessories have definitely carved out a niche in the wine market.

WINE COLLAR

The perfect accessory for the clean and tidy drinker, a wine collar fits around the neck of the bottle and absorbs any drips that may run down after pouring. The collar helps in preventing stains on tablecloths, countertops and picnic tables.

TASTEVIN

These small and shallow saucers are industry mainstays used by winemakers and sommeliers when judging wine. They are generally designed with a shiny, textured inner surface to catch light and allow for testers to see through the wine.

WINE JOURNAL

It's hard keeping up with the wines you have tried on various trips and vacations. Why not write them down? A wine journal will help you maintain and update lists of your favorite wines, as well as information on their producer, region, price and your personal rankings.



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WINE THIEF

Home winemakers can't live without a wine thief, which is manufactured with glass or food-grade plastic and used in wine production. Its purpose is to remove a small amount of wine from fermentation devices for testing.

WINE STOPPERS

These invaluable tools are more of a

necessity than an accessory. Stoppers close leftover wine bottles before refrigeration, helping to keep wine from going stale. They come in many shapes and colors, but are mainly produced from cork, rubber or plastic materials.

WINE COOLER

No, not the low-alcohol, artificially flavored variety. Wine coolers are essential in keeping your favorite reds

and whites perfectly chilled on picnics, camping trips and outdoor barbecues.

WINE CLIP

Designed to remove potential impurities, the wine clip fits over a wine bottle and acts as a magnetic filter. Producers of these accessories claim that clips work to stimulate and enhance the taste of wine.

Wine Aerators: It's in the Air

Why swirl when you can aerate? Wine aerators expand the surface area of wine, allowing the air and wine to mix.

This results in an enhanced aroma and expanded profile, all in a matter of minutes.

A handy tool for wine-lovers looking for big flavor in a short period of time, aerators are easy to use, clean and store. Their popularity took off in the late 2000s, as many regions across the country also saw their wine production and winery growth explode.

More time spent at wineries and breweries helps people pick up industry tricks, trades and tools, and sparks their own interest in trying them at home.

THE BASICS

Wine aerators are small devices that come in a variety of shapes, sizes and designs. They work by increasing wine's exposure to oxygen and causing aeration to impact the liquid's makeup.

These handy tools offer an alternative to swirling and decanting, which some people find too time-consuming to reach optimum effects.

HOW TO USE ONE

Aerators are not only convenient to store, they are also

easy to use. Simply hold your aerator above your glass while you pour wine through the top of it.

As the wine passes through, it mixes with air as bubbles are sent to the glass. The tool works to improve the taste and finish of your wine, more so than swirling or decanting.

It is handy and time-efficient, the perfect accessory for a quick, casual meal.

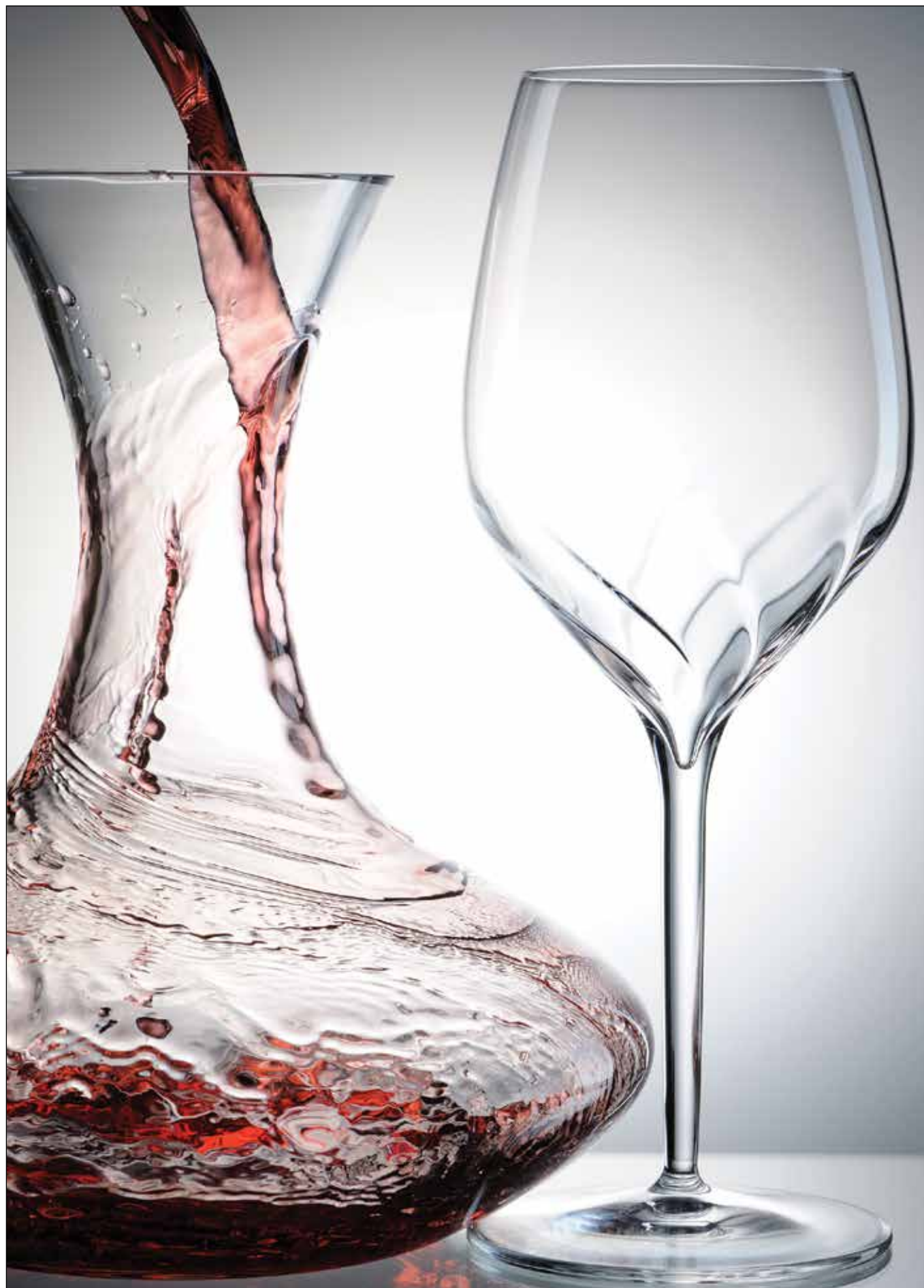
DIFFERENT STYLES

There are a number of styles of wine aerators on the market. Injection-style acrylic models are most common, designed with a wide tube that gradually narrows.

In-bottle and decanter-top aerators are also available and growing in popularity because of their effective designs.

Some single-glass aerators come equipped with a movable spout that adjusts to different sized and shaped wine glasses.

Once you find an aerator that works best for your wine-serving needs, you will be well on your way to improving the overall taste of your favorite varieties.



Wine and Anti-Aging

Red wine is as delicious as it is powerful in its impact on aging. A recent study found that a compound in the skin of grapes could be an antidote to aging by slowing down the process and even staving off disease.



This study supports the decade-old one that discovered resveratrol – found in red wine – has strong anti-aging effects.

Resveratrol has been linked to protection against obesity, diabetes and bad cholesterol, and has been found to improve vascular function by preventing blood clotting and plaque formation in arteries.

HOW IT WORKS

The recent study conducted by Harvard Medical School shows that resveratrol stimulates production of a serum that blocks diseases by speeding up the cell's energy production centers known as mitochondria.

Researchers identify resveratrol as a naturally occurring antioxidant that is found in grapes and cocoa.

HEART HEALTH

Protecting your heart is obviously a main objective as you age. Moderate consumption of red wine on a regular basis may be a preventative against coronary heart disease, according to some scientists.

Red wine reduces production of harmful cholesterol while boosting high-density cholesterol.

DISEASE CONTROL

Through various studies, resveratrol has been shown to protect against a slew of diseases, including Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Its antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties have also been shown to prevent harmful cellular damage that is often the root of many debilitating diseases.

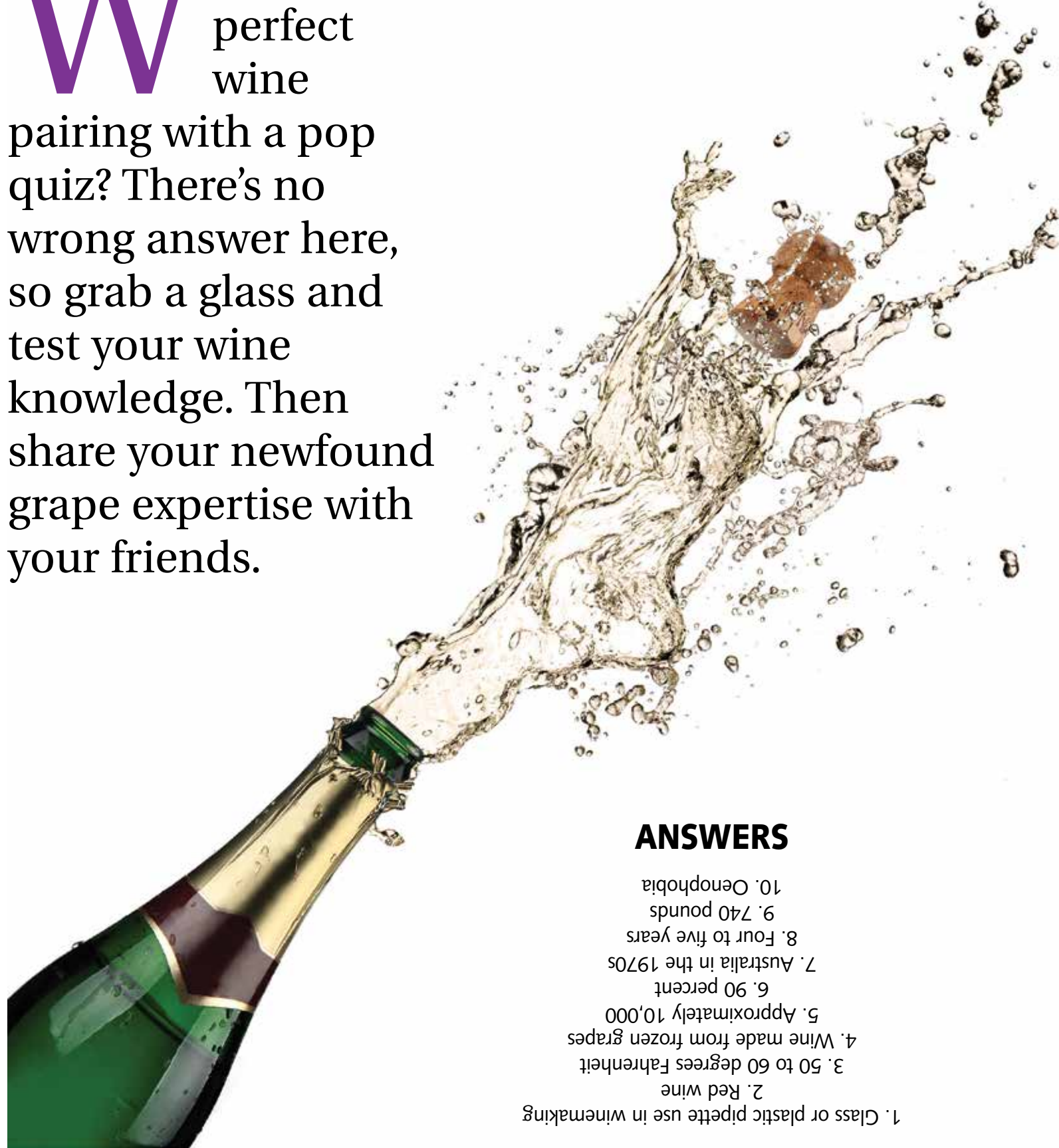
MODERATION IS KEY

No, adding more wine to your diet doesn't necessarily mean fewer wrinkles. The opposite is true, according to some experts. Excessive amounts of wine can make you look older and feel more sluggish.

Instead, enjoy one glass of red wine per day. According to some researchers and physicians, it is the single most important action you can take to slow down aging.

Pop (the Cork) Quiz!

What is the perfect wine pairing with a pop quiz? There's no wrong answer here, so grab a glass and test your wine knowledge. Then share your newfound grape expertise with your friends.



ANSWERS

1. Glass or plastic pipette use in winemaking
2. Red wine
3. 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit
4. Wine made from frozen grapes
5. Approximately 10,000
6. 90 percent
7. Australia in the 1970s
8. Four to five years
9. 740 pounds
10. Oenophobia

1. What is a wine thief?
2. What type of wine represents the biggest percentage of restaurant sales?
3. What is the optimum serving temperature for red wine?
4. The Germans invented Eiswein ... what is it?
5. How many different varieties of wine grapes exist around the world?
6. What percentage of U.S. wine is produced in California?
7. What nation developed wine in a box, and when?
8. How long does a crop of newly planted grape vines take to grow before it can be harvested?
9. How many pounds of grapes can fit into a standard barrel of wine?
10. People who have an intense fear or hatred of wine suffer from what?