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Uncorked: A sampling of wine for Thanksgiving

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Thanksgiving 2014 has already had a trial run at my dinner table. Wines were sampled and Thanksgiving side dishes were served. This week, four wines from the dinner are featured. All are ready to be opened immediately and with lower alcohol and fresh acidity, they play very nicely with food....

Plus, a holiday wine tasting and annual wine celebration usher in the holiday season.

Adam Mason wanted the fruit flavors in the Mulderbosch, Steen Op Hout Chenin Blanc 2011 (\$13.99), to be recognizable.

The winemaker for the South African estate used a touch of oak to add some weight to the mouthfeel. But, it's the citrus, orange zest and tropical fruit notes that are really special. They played well with sharp cheeses and would be great with every course at a Thanksgiving dinner.

"The benefit of barrel fermenting a portion of the Chenin is not so much derived from the contribution of subtle oak flavors than the complexing effect on the wine's palate," Mason said. "I find the barrel fermented component provides a savory richness and texture to the wine, akin to umami, if you like. As I am not keen on overwhelming the fruit character of the Chenin, I split the oak usage 50/50 between new and neutral barrels. In the end the new oak contribution to the wine is only about 5 percent."

[Redacted text block]

















What to buy

Sojourn Cellars, Wohler Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, 2012 (\$48): This wine is full of complexity and well structured. Red cherry and strawberry fruit notes give way to a wet leaves finish. There's hints of tea and spice on the nose. A silky mouthfeel.

Domaine Eden, Santa Cruz Mountains Cabernet Sauvignon, 2010 (\$34.99): This is a friendly, very approachable hillside wine that goes great with food. The tannins are smooth and easy going; the viscosity is perfect. There are flavors of ripe plums, sage, a touch of eucalyptus and a green peppercorn note on the finish.

Where to go

Cuvee Cellars Wine Shop and Wine Bar, Thanksgiving Wine Tasting, 7 to 9 p.m. Nov. 21

Sample more than 20 wines at the fine wine shop at 545 S. Spring Road in Elmhurst. Cuvee has a great selection on the shelves and a posh and inviting ambiance. Cost is \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. Visit www.cuveecellars.com or call 630-833-2300.

Galena Cellars 30th Annual Nouveau Weekend, Nov. 21 through 22

The celebration to honor the the first wine from the 2014 vintage will take over downtown Galena for the 30th straight year. Look for a report on my first trip to Nouveau next week. For more information, visit www.nouveaueweekend.com.

- James Nokes writes a bi-weekly wine column for the Daily Chronicle. He's been tasting, touring and collecting in the wine world for several years. Contact him at news@daily-chronicle.com.