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THE BA TURKEY DAY WINE GUIDE: ALL KILLER, ALL \$15 OR LESS

Knowing even one single thing about wine puts you way ahead of the crowd on Thanksgiving, also known as the day your Aunt Judy confesses total ignorance about wine, your mother agrees with her, and your jerky cousin who spent a semester in Florence opines that *all* the wine is better in Europe--but then you walk in the door with a couple of terrific selections, looking like a hero, and, unknown to all, keeping your finances nicely under control.

That's where we come in. All of these wines have sticker prices of \$15 or less. They also meet the two key requirements of Turkey Day wines: First, they pair with the rainbow of flavors that appear as part of the Thanksgiving spread, from turkey to chipotle sweet potatoes to pecan stuffing. Second, they're crowd pleasers. Thanksgiving wines need to suit the whole table, so this is not the time to pull out the obscure French bottle that boasts notes of tar and pine mulch and appeals only to sommeliers bored with life and in search of the wine world's two-headed frogs. This is the time to make everyone happy. Which doesn't mean you can't have superelite tastes and also please your guests. Peruse this list and you'll find something for everyone, from the most advanced wine enthusiast to the most intimidated novice.

BONNY DOON VINEYARD 2009 CONTRA

* *Why it's delicious:* Earthy, with tobacco and enough tangy cherry fruit to keep it balanced, this big, dark red is made of old-vine Carignan, a notoriously tough and pugnacious grape, then blended with a grab bag of other California hearties, all of which leads to a wine that tastes alive, vital, and robust.

* *Why it's cool:* Made by Randall Grahm, who's the founder of Bonny Doon and the Henry James of American wine (that is, unspeakably important and superbrainy, and also kind of talky). Contra is Grahm's attempt to make a serious American table wine: something affordable but big and interesting too.

* *Snob appeal, to wine snobs:* High. Bringing Randall Grahm wines to a party is like sitting at a college coffee shop with a copy of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* on your lap. You're deep!

* *Snob appeal, to the clueless:* Low. People used to drinking Kool-Aid wines may find this too intense, like a Justin Bieber fan's reaction to the Flaming Lips.

- Dara Moskowitz Grumdahl

Dara Moskowitz Grumdahl has won 5 James Beard awards for food and wine writing, her latest book is *Drink This: Wine Made Simple*.

<http://www.bonappetit.com/blogsandforums/blogs/badaily/2011/11/affordable-thanksgiving-wines.html#ixzz1e0Fjh3ro>



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