

Make sure the wine is wedding day perfect

Brides and grooms want their big day to be special for them and their guests. One way to make it special is to serve good wine. You taste and select the food and the cake for your wedding, so why shouldn't you do the same with the wine?

Before you start shopping for wine, you need to check with the venue where your reception will be held and make sure they allow alcohol on the premises. If so, the number and types of wine available will depend upon where you live. If you live in an area with several vineyards, you will probably have more choices. When selecting wine for your reception, you need to take several factors into consideration, including the preferences of your guests, the time and length of your reception, the type of food served, and most importantly, your budget.

The guests you invite to your reception will play an important part in your decision. How many actually drink wine? Do they enjoy drinking a glass or two, or do they just sip enough to be social? Do they prefer red, white or dessert wine? Would most of them be happier with beer? Would they care if you didn't serve any wine? Answering these questions will give you some idea as to what kind of and how much wine to order.

The time of year and day you are having the reception can also influence the wine you serve. In the summer at an outdoor reception, you will want to keep guests cool and serve lighter, refreshing wine. In the winter, you will want to keep guests warm and serve red wines instead of white. People are likely to drink less in the afternoon, so if you are having an afternoon wedding, you may need less wine.

Are you serving chicken, beef or fish at your reception? The wine and food should go together. Unless you have daring guests who like to try new things, you should stick



to old favourites like Merlots or Chardonnays.

You have enough things to spend money on at your wedding. Don't go overboard with the wine. Negotiate with your caterer or supplier to get the best deal you can. Find out what kind of package deals they offer. If you are planning to use an outside wine supplier, look for one that will give you a good deal and allow you to return unopened bottles.

There is no sure way to determine how much wine you will need. The average bottle provides four to six glasses, and you will probably need half a bottle per guest. Chances are you will not use all of the wine, so don't let waiters open all of the bottles at the start of the reception. As the reception draws to a close, tell the waiters not to open any more bottles.

There is no reason why you have to take out a mortgage to serve good wine at your reception. With all the choices available, the hardest part will probably be limiting your choices. To make the selection process easier, consider throwing a wine-tasting party and inviting some of the wedding party and guests over. After all, they are the ones who will be drinking the wine. Offer several different choices in brown bags with labels. The favourites will be the first bottles empty.

—By Ronda Addy

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