



## A Cold Duck you can drink

Sparkling red wines are not all that common, and that is why they will add fun to your party.

Sun, Jan 20, 2008

The Sunday Times

### **Barristers Block Sparkling GSM 2005, \$42**

I'VE never had qualms about sipping a glass of sparkling wine, whether it's Champagne, Prosecco or Cava. Yet when I was handed a glass of sparkling red wine (in all its fiery red glory) a few years ago, I was hesitant.

Sparkling red wine seemed just too much like an abomination (like genetically modified food). Shouldn't all wines with bubbles be made from a white wine base?

Then again, it was never cast in stone that sparkling wine can only be white.

For those who are quick to dismiss this as a gimmick by the New World players, the roots of sparkling red wine actually stem from Europe.

Usually made from leftover wines, the original German name "kalte ende", which means leftover wines, was changed to "kalte ente", which translates to Cold Duck. Cold Duck became the name of a sparkling red wine in the United States in 1937 and was produced using the same German method of mixing unfinished wine in bottles with Champagne.

The American recipe, made from one part Californian red wine to two parts New York sparkling wine, resulted in a sweet, red wine with carbonated fizz that shot to fame in the 1970s. Variations of tongue-in-cheek names, such as Cold Turkey and Stork, subsequently appeared.

It was, however, the Australians who took this sparkling red wine syndrome to another level.

A new generation of sparkling red wine producers has taken to crafting sparkling red wines with the same attention that goes into Grand Cru Champagne - by using the best fruit. The difference is that the grape skins are left in the fermenting juice for the colour instead of being removed immediately (as in sparkling white wine).

Some of them have also adopted bottle-fermentation methods, instead of carbonation, which gives the sparkling wine more elegant bubbles.

After having tasted a couple of sparkling red wines, am I more used to the idea by now?

Well, Champagne, Proseccos and Cavas are still my default sparkling, but a sparkling red wine once in a while does add fun to a party.

### **Taste test**

A crown of white foam. A sweet entry on the palate with aggressive bubbles before the dark fruit flavours settle in. A fun wine, drink chilled.

### **Pair with**

Serve this at a barbecue. It'll get people talking.

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