

Spring/Summer 2014

# CRAFT & CORK





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# welcome

From coast-to-coast, Canadians embrace the summer months with open arms. That's why for this issue of Craft & Cork, we've rounded up everything that makes this season special. Whether you want to update your outdoor living space, host a memorable party, plan an adventurous vacation or rediscover your city, we've got you covered. And of course, we've included a number of ideas for integrating craft winemaking into your summer experiences. From a crisp, light white to a full-bodied red, let's savour it all this season.



*Cofette Ojlan*

Editor-in-Chief

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# out & about

Shopping local is more than a trend, it's the future. By choosing handcrafted, homegrown or locally cared-for products, not only are you supporting a small business, you're enriching your life. Without a doubt, local goods come with more value, freshness and character than the alternatives. This summer, discover what your city has to offer by taking your senses on a tour of the area. Here are five suggestions to get you started.

## taste



While the nostalgia of a favourite family recipe can be comforting, you can't beat the excitement that comes from tasting a flavour for the first time. Hit up a local farm, market, greenhouse or grocer; pick out new-to-you products or produce, and pack a picnic that showcases their flavour or texture.

## smell



From the freshly mowed grass on our lawns to the sunscreen on our shoulders and the burgers on our grills, the scents of summer are distinct and decadent. Popping into your local florist is a great way to support a local business and stimulate your sniffer.

## touch



You don't need to be creative to get crafty, you simply need to be willing to try. Why not visit an RJS Craft Winemaking Academy store and let the in-house experts be your guide? It's a chance to stimulate your senses, make something from scratch, stock your cellar and savour the fruits of your labour!

## hear



One of the easiest ways to shake up your summer, and your senses, is to strap on your sandals and head out for a stroll. Walking a few blocks gives you a chance to tune in to the people and places around you. Are the birds chirping, children laughing or sprinklers spritzing?

## see



Turn your afternoon into an adventure by exploring an antique store near you and discovering the treasures within. The brass sparkles and copper shines, while the knotted wood hides age-old secrets and the patina preserves the memories of summer days gone by. You might find the perfect piece to bring home.







# on the weekend

**Tapas** – a simple, small-plates approach to food where grazing and conversation is encouraged – is at the heart of Spanish cuisine. High-effort entertaining is replaced with low-effort fun, and when you're surrounded by friends on a summer afternoon, isn't that what you most want? Combine these tapas recipes and Spanish-inspired décor ideas, craft a batch of Top Hat Chile Cabernet Sauvignon and host your own backyard fiesta.

## Red wine braised chorizo sausage:



- \* 1 lb dry Spanish chorizo, pricked several times with a fork
- \* 1 bottle Top Hat Chile Cabernet Sauvignon
- \* 6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- \* 6 sprigs fresh oregano
- \* 3 bay leaves
- \* 1 tbsp orange zest

**Step 1:** Put all ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer, turning once until the sausage is tender and plump and the liquid is reduced by about half. Discard oregano sprigs and bay leaves and let stand for 5-10 minutes.

**Step 2:** Place the chorizo on a cutting board and cut it diagonally into ¼-inch thick slices. Place the sausage back in the pan and simmer on a low heat for 5 minutes. Put the sausage and the cooking liquid in a shallow serving dish and serve with toothpicks.

**Pair with:** *Top Hat*  
Chile Cabernet Sauvignon





## *Spanish décor ...*

is rich, featuring lots of colour, beautiful ceramics, intricate patterns, rustic materials, and splashes of white. If you want your guests to feel like they've been transported to the streets of Madrid or Barcelona, incorporate these easy decorating ideas!





## feta cucumbers:

- # 2 cucumbers (about 1 pound each), peeled and sliced into 1-inch thick discs
- # 3 oz block of feta cheese, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
- # 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- # 1.5 tsp sherry vinegar
- # 1 tbsp fresh oregano leaves, chopped
- # 1 tbsp fresh mint leaves, chopped
- # 1/4 tsp kosher salt
- # Pinch of freshly ground black pepper

**Step 1:** Place cucumber slices onto a serving plate and top each slice with a cube of feta.

**Step 2:** In a bowl, whisk together the remaining ingredients to form the dressing. Drizzle over.

**Pair with:** *En Primeur*  
Spain Cabernet Sauvignon



## garlic shrimp:

- # 3/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- # 6 garlic cloves, minced
- # 1/2 tsp dried red pepper flakes
- # 1/4 cup minced flat-leaf parsley
- # 2 lbs shelled and deveined medium shrimp
- # Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- # Crusty bread, for serving

**Step 1:** In a large, deep skillet, heat the olive oil until simmering. Add the garlic, red pepper flakes and parsley and cook over medium-high heat until garlic becomes fragrant, stirring constantly. Add the shrimp and cook, flipping once, until they are pink and begin to curl (about 3 to 4 minutes).

**Step 2:** Gently season with a crunchy sea salt and transfer to a serving bowl. Serve with crusty bread for dipping.

**Pair with:** *Glad Hatter*  
Italy Pinot Grigio Style







# nights to remember

Wine is a go-to hostess gift, but runs the risk of feeling impersonal. If you're craving ideas that are more memorable and lasting, consider these fun, thoughtful packages. They all start with a bottle of your own, personally crafted wine — because what makes more of an impression than something you've made yourself?



## *white wine sangria*

Head to your local craft or discount store to find a simple pail. In it, place a bottle of your own Cellar Classic Winery Series Pinot Grigio, club soda and white grape juice, as well as grapes, oranges and peaches – all the fixings for white wine sangria!



## *instant picnic*

Give your host a reason to get outside and make memories by bringing them their own personal picnic. To pull it together, take a beautiful dishcloth and use it to bundle a bottle of *En Primeur French Voignier*, a small loaf of artisanal bread, a wheel of triple cream Brie and a jar of preserves, such as caramelized onions or fig jam.





## *delightful dessert*

The combination of chocolate and red wine is one of life's most divine pleasures. Pass that experience along by taking some brown craft paper and wrapping bars of interesting chocolates, like those flavoured with chili, orange or sea salt. Include a bottle of Cru Specialty Black Forest Cake and enjoy giving a gift of decadence!

*on location:*

Sorrento,  
Venice, Milan,  
San Gimignano  
& Montalcino

*italy*



"IT'S NO SECRET THAT ITALY is home to some of the world's greatest wines and is a bucket-list location for almost every winemaking enthusiast, but there's more to this beautiful country than its famed wine regions. Having enjoyed them myself, I guarantee these five experiences are worthy of your vacation scrapbook... *and* your summer daydreams!"

– Colette O'Hara



## Region: Amalfi Coast

There's no better place to start your vacation than Sorrento. Warm and leisurely, the pace in this part of the country is deliberately unhurried. Its relaxed approach is most distinct during the evening *passiagetta*, the daily "event" that calls people out of their homes and into the centre of town (the *piazza*) for an evening stroll, generally between 7 and 9 p.m.

Between the exquisite surroundings and beautiful people, all moving at the pace of gently swaying trees in the wind, participating in this Italian tradition will quickly (or rather, *slowly*) set the mood for your trip.

## Region: Tuscany

Spend at least three days in this region to get the full, rich Tuscan experience, which is nothing short of a blissful assault on the senses. One of the most dramatic happenings is in the historic centre of San Gimignano where about a dozen working bell towers collectively chime in unison at scheduled times throughout the day. Standing in the piazza when this happens is both oppressive and exhilarating, not to mention memorable. You'll want to check the bell tower schedule to be sure you don't miss it.



Photo credit >



## *Region: Veneto*

It's in the evening that most of the magic happens in Venice, one of the world's most sublime cities. A Gondola trip down the storied canals is a must-do, and it is simply glorious after dark. The streets and canals are eerily quiet, the lights from apartments and hotels illuminate the shadows just enough to make things visible, and the echos of the Gondoliers gently bellowing out to one another is nothing short of enchanting.

Want to elevate the experience even further? Sample a bottle of local Pinot Grigio and share it with your travelling companions.









## Region: Lombardy

With churches and popes aplenty, everywhere in Italy feels spiritual. One quintessential but must-do activity is viewing Leonardo da Vinci's, *The Last Supper*, which you'll find in the financial city of Milan. To make it truly extraordinary, start your day with a viewing. An early morning journey through the normally busy city streets, combined with an 8 a.m. visit to the Santa Maria delle Grazie (where the painting currently resides), will be an ethereal experience.

## Spotlight: Fattoria dei Barbi



Countless wineries, big and small, pepper the Italian countryside. Picking just one to visit is nearly impossible, but you certainly won't regret making time for the award-winning Fattoria dei Barbi. Owned by one of Siena's noble families and located in Montalcino, the restaurant here is exceptional and the region's wine, Brunello made from Sangiovese grapes, is world famous. Be sure to set aside several hours for the visit and meal.

These travel tips have no doubt fired up your imagination and left you longing for an Italian experience. Crafting a bottle of Cellar Classic Winery Series Super Tuscan will bestow the feeling of an Italian vacation – and it can be enjoyed at home.







# at home

Want to spruce up your patio, brighten up your backyard or bring a bottle of wine you crafted yourself to an upcoming pool party? These items are so fun, functional and affordable, you'll be tempted to buy them all!



Freshen up your home cooked meals with homegrown herbs. Terracotta planters in unique shapes will also look great on the patio.

Can't wait to spend an afternoon lounging around? Wooden beach chairs will help you pass the time in comfort *and* style.



Jazz up your summer nights with some vinyl – a retro turntable will be the hit of the party!

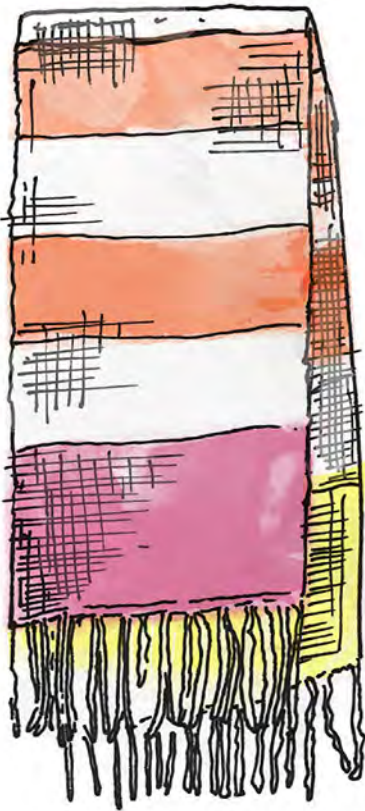




With intense flavour, enhanced bouquet and bold character, this premium wine kit can bring elegance to your home cellar in just eight weeks.



Look for plates that are a conversation piece, and if they are like these, they'll be great for diners of all ages.



From the picnic to the beach, a colorful cotton throw is a must-have for summer enthusiasts on the go.

Pop some sliced cucumbers or berries into a porcelain pitcher and hydrate like you're at the spa.



*in the cellar*





Cellaring time allows elements in a wine to integrate and develop a delicate balance – below are some tips to help with aging your craft wine.

## light

Constant exposure to light produces chemical reactions in wine that cause it to deteriorate. Ultraviolet light has the greatest effect, and white wines and champagnes are the most vulnerable. Try to keep the cellar dark when not in use.



## humidity

A relative humidity of 50-70% is the acceptable range. Insufficient humidity may cause corks to dry out, lose their elasticity and thereby allow air to get into the bottle. Too much humidity (over 70%) can cause mould to grow on corks. At its extreme, that can destroy a wine.



## temperature

A temperature of 12-15°C is ideal for allowing the wine to age steadily without risking premature ageing or oxidation. A constant temperature is key to steady ageing.



# *in the cellar: pairings*

The season of spontaneous gatherings and unexpected adventure has finally arrived. Stock your wine cellar with your favourite varietals of wine you have crafted yourself and you'll be ready for whatever the summer days have in store.

Curious to know what type of wine goes best with which activities? We've pulled together three perfect pairings for you:



## **LAZING IN THE HAMMOCK OR POOLSIDE**

A crisp Chardonnay, rich with aromas of pineapple, melon and peach to savour, is the perfect companion for a relaxing afternoon. Its slight tartness will awaken your palate while hints of vanilla, cloves and butterscotch will make a sunny day even sweeter.





## PLAYING CROQUET IN THE BACKYARD

Sunshine-fueled afternoons call for something light, bright and refreshing. A Riesling, with its slightly off-dry and balanced acidity, and flavours of citrus, floral and honey, guarantees your wine will be as fun as your day.



## CHATTING AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

When you want to feel cozy and relaxed, a Cabernet Sauvignon will provide the comfort you're looking for. A full-bodied option, this wine has an aroma of blackberries, sweet vanilla, and fresh violets with cherries, pepper, spice, and rich tannins filling the palate.



# *in the cellar: D.I.Y. ideas*

What better way to customize handcrafted wine than with unique, personalized labels? Here are a few ideas to get you started:



## **CHALKBOARD BOTTLE**

.....  
This playful approach requires you to apply chalkboard paint to the exterior of your bottles (either in a label-sized space or the whole bottle), and then use chalk to add the varietal and other information.



## **BURLAP TAGS**

.....  
Grab a roll of burlap, jute string, a permanent marker and a sturdy hole-punch. Cut the burlap to the size of a gift tag (about 2" x 3"), punch a hole in the top (about ½ an inch down), use the marker to label the tag, and affix the finished label by looping the string through the hole and draping it over the neck of the bottle.



# join the conversation

Whether you're a novice or an expert winemaker – or simply a master wine taster – you're certainly not alone. Canadians are more passionate than ever about wine and craft winemaking. It's time to not only join the conversation, but join the growing tribe of Canadians who have made craft winemaking a part of their social occasions.





## craft winemaking

For over 50 years the RJS Craft Winemaking team has been helping both amateur and seasoned winemakers perfect the art of crafting wine.

RJS Craft Winemaking is a division of Constellation Brands Canada, Inc. - the number one producer and marketer of wine and wine related products in the world.

You're invited...

Visit any of our RJS Craft Winemaking Academy stores this summer for savings on **Top Hat** products in June and **Glad Hatter** products in July.

**Top Hat** Glad Hatter  
by Glad Hatter

