

Bringing Home the Gewurz

By Courtney Cochran, Wine Consultant and Sommelier

As the proportion of women making up America's workforce nears 50 percent, it should come as no surprise that women are using their disposable income to buy more wine than ever before. But what *is* a surprise is the way in which they're doing it.

Recent studies show that women not only purchase more than 70% of all wine, they also tend to make more adventurous decisions when buying. Rather than just bringing home the bacon, today's women are also bringing home esoteric and little heard-of varietals such as Gewurztraminer, Gruner Veltliner, and Viognier.

Why, you might ask? No one's exactly sure, but lots of conjectures have been made. Leslie Sbrocco, female wine personality and author of the award-winning book *Wine for Women*, explains that women tend to "focus more on the taste and style of wines" rather than on ratings.

It may be that women, who are the driving force behind this country's \$3.5 trillion retail business, tire of Chardonnay just as they tire of last season's now played-out clothing lines. This preference for new styles would certainly explain the recent backlashes that have contributed to widespread ABC (Anything But Chardonnay) gripes and *Sideways*-inspired Merlot boycotts.

Sbrocco says that women are also more likely than men to take into account the advice of friends and store clerks when deciding which wines to buy. I've found that most wine store personnel, wary of the ubiquitous Chardonnay-Cabernet-Merlot product mix from which consumers rarely stray, will jump at the opportunity to recommend a bottle off the beaten path.

Oftentimes, their recommendations include unique varietals such as Gewurztraminer (Guh-verts-tra-mee-ner), a white grape of German origin with a distinctively spicy quality. "Gewurz" literally means spice, and wines made from this grape show distinctive spice and floral aromas as well as a food friendliness that matches well with Asian foods and hearty fall fare alike.

And so if women like Gewurz and men prefer Cab, are the sexes fated to remain on opposite sides of the wine appreciation divide? Hardly. Not all women prefer esoteric wines while men content with the staid old guard selections. Rather, wine drinkers in general are an adventurous lot, and while some may have a greater proclivity for new wines, it does not necessarily follow that others—men and women alike--won't try them too.



There are a number of ways to please all sorts of palates under the same roof. Here are a few suggestions: 1) alternate who chooses the wine from night to night; 2) buy smaller bottles such as splits and half bottles that include just a glass or two of each wine, allowing you to consume different kinds of wine without waste; 3) embrace change—you never know when going for the Gewurz might just make your old casserole sing a new tune.

To find retailers that carry adventurous wines and can ship them to your area, visit www.wineaccess.com.

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