

# Forbes



## CONVERSATION-STARTING WINE GEMS FOR THE THANKSGIVING TABLE

BY JILL BARTH OCT 29, 2021

Thanksgiving can be a wine pairing challenge, but you know that already. Chefs and home cooks alike have grown weary of the task of putting a new spin on the wine menu for this traditional meal. Since all the dishes are generally served up family style, with people filling every inch of their their plate with all their favorites, there's not really a graceful way to present wine in any semblance of course pairing. So we often look for the most crowd-pleasing and food-friendly bottles and have at it. Eat, drink, and be merry.

But there is another way to look at this. What if the wines served prompted conversation, if they were part of the connection we build when we sit down to share a festive meal with friends and family? Take the pressure off that perfectly tuned pairing and instead pour easy-to-enjoy bottles that have interesting backstories. Here are a set of conversation-starting wines that will be lovely with the meal, meanwhile adding a side of chat to bring everyone together.

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### FOR A COOL HISTORICAL TWIST, TRY RUSACK SANTA CATALINA ISLAND VINEYARDS ZINFANDEL 2018

The first of two suggested Zinfandels (by coincidence), this one sparks interest because of where it is grown. There are eight coastal channel islands in central and southern California – one of which is Santa Catalina Island, where this wine originates. The Rusack team actually propagated cuttings from vines on neighboring Santa Cruz island, which had survived wild after being abandoned during prohibition. With permission from the The Nature Conservancy, these Santa Cruz Island Zinfandel vines are at now home in Rusack's El Rancho Escondido vineyard on Catalina Island. Restrained, elegant, balanced.

