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FOOD & WINE **ADVICE**

How to buy wine for a party on a budget

to a consistent taste profile, so taste the same year-in, year-out. And they can be poured as cocktail wines with nibblies or with a proper meal.

Of course, it's always a nice idea to have a sparkling wine on hand too when entertaining. But the trick is getting the sugar level right. You want something that tastes dry but not bone-dry.

Bone dry sparkling wine such as Brut Nature Champagne can seem searingly sour to the uninitiated. Meanwhile, sweeter styles can be equally off-putting — especially to seasoned drinkers used to dry wines. So, look for bubbly with residual sugar levels that range between about nine and 13 grams/litre to be safe — about the same level as Brut Champagne. To find a wine's sugar content, check its product page at LCBO.com. The site notes this information for every wine it sells.

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One bottle sure to please is the **NV Bottega Vino Dei Poeti Prosecco DOC from Italy** (LCBO 897702 \$14.45 till Dec. 1, reg. \$15.95). It shimmers with suggestions of pear, apple, almond and honeysuckle shot through with delicate bubbles and bright, mouth-watering acidity. The 13 grams per litre of sugar just polishes the edges of this elegant sparkling wine. Score: 90



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