

Gifts and Goofiness

(Number 59 in a series of opinionated articles about grapes and wine by John Smith)

Ideally, this article would appear in time to serve as a guide for buying that ideal holiday gift for your favorite wine lover, but the catalogs for these exquisite gifts only arrive in December, and the publication schedule of this fine journal requires writing a few months ahead. Instead of thinking of it as somewhat late for the past gifting season, try to think of it as properly early for 2008.

Goofy Glasses

We wrote some years ago about the silliness that accompanies many of the glasses people use as temporary wine containers, but advances in the state of the art since then have demanded that we update the choices available to you. Of particular note is the new rage: stemless glasses.



These are perfect for you if you feel the need, like everyone else, to be totally different, or if you especially enjoy drinking your wine from a glass smudged all over with fingerprints. Among other suppliers, they are available from Riedel, who for decades have provided the opportunity to buy expensive glass things you never really knew you needed.

Another new offering is the “float” wine glass, where the beverage occupies the space between two glass cylinders, thus mystifying all in attendance.



The prize for useless technological innovation, thanks to advances in light-emitting diode technology, goes to the new and improved glowing wine glass.



According to the retailer, each glass can be set to one color, to unify your décor or salute your favorite sports team, or you can select the changing color mode, where the glass will slowly fade through seven different colors. Yet others will flash brightly in one or multiple colors, but no supplier need be listed, because Google will return about 102,000 results if you search for “glowing wine glasses.”

If you just can't stand to drink alone but can't find human companions, there's a wine glass set called Pet Plus with a thoughtfully tilted glass that allows your canine friend to drink along (whenever he's not using the toilet).



Finally, if you have withdrawal symptoms whenever you're out of sight (or hearing) of a wine glass, you can order this doorbell that swings a delicate hammer to announce your guests in proper style.



The Necessities

It may look like a wine glass, but it's really a personal winemaker, four feet high and sold by that company "offering the best, the only and the unexpected for 159 years: Hammacher Schlemmer." They say: "The system automatically monitors the entire winemaking process including fermentation, Brix (grape sugar level), and temperature, and wirelessly transmits the information to a PC...Includes an oak storage barrel for additional aging, siphon, and 48 bottles, with an easy-to-read LED and 4-button control panel. Requires Windows Vista, XP, or 2000 and a USB port for wireless key. Install in a ventilated area." All this for only \$5,999!



And really, now, how could you sign the mortgage on your new boutique winery without one of these? It's a pen, made meticulously from the staves of barrels from Chateau Lafitte Rothschild, and available for just \$1,650.



And let's not forget our beer-drinking friends, because they need special gifts, too. Here's a dual-purpose tool — if the cap won't come off easily with one end, use the other one to make sure you can access your favorite ale.



You need to decant that brash, young Pinot Noir, but should you use an ordinary, flask-shaped decanter? No! You need this creative, modern construction of laboratory glass tubing to properly impress your thirsty guests.



Everyone needs a bottle holder, and this one is a long-awaited version of that popular country mailbox welded-chain theme.



What to wear?

What well-dressed oenophile would appear at a formal event without the proper attire? The only correct black-tie suit to wear to the Napa Wine Auction is this, termed the “Corkxedo” and made from 891 corks. Start collecting corks to make yours now!



And finally, for Halloween, you’re going to need that one costume that says “I love wine (and I’m really sophisticated)!” so here it is: the champagne bottle costume.

