

Let wine lift

According to the 1976 *Wine Marketing Handbook*, total U.S. wine sales in 1980 will be double 1970 figures. The major reason for this projected growth is that members of the 25-to-44 age group will increase from 53.7 million today to 71.1 million in 1985. This group is of particular interest to the club manager because they are and will remain the first truly "wine conscious" generation of United States citizens.

Their ability to buy wines, to enjoy them, will be unprecedented. Members of this group will command a heavy share of the nation's total disposable income and will spend more of that income for discretionary purposes than members of any other age bracket.

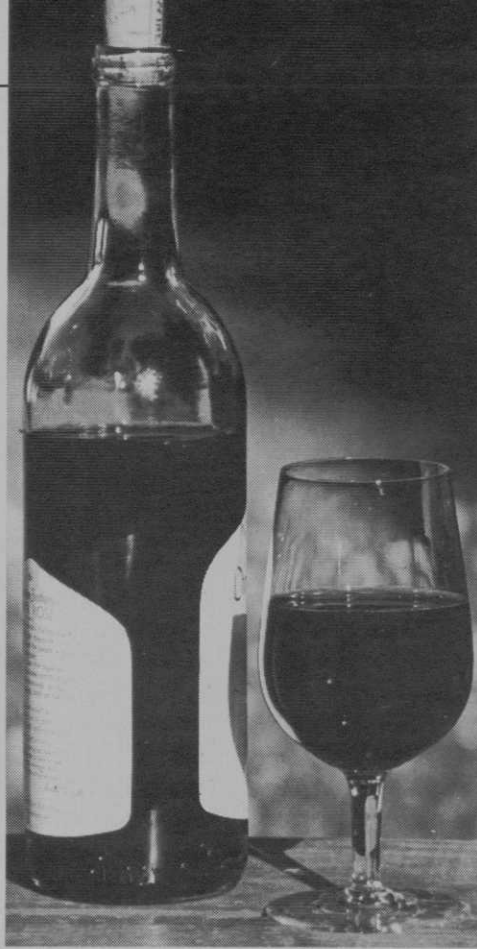
What is evolving, then, will prove to be an enormous new *entertainment and occasions* market.

Leisure time = spending time

The term "leisure-time" spending obviously covers a multitude of activities, but it is certain that "dining out" will represent a large part of it. It is definite that this area will offer unprecedented opportunities for wine marketing, especially if club managers can be persuaded to follow more reasonable pricing policies.

The opportunities ahead lie in volume rather than price. There is great promise in the evolving market, but one that can be realized fully only through an effective stimulation of a greater "frequency rate" of wine use among those in the 25-through-44 market. Price increases necessitated by actual additional costs and actual tax increases must be passed on to the consumer, of course, but potential volume will be threatened by any price movement beyond that point.

The second obstacle to substantial increases in wine sales is the lack of sufficient consumer education. In a recent survey sponsored by *The Ladies Home Journal*, a large number of the respondents reported they were uncertain of how to choose a wine and what to serve it with, and they generally lacked sufficient help both



by David C. Ludwig

in retail stores and in restaurants in resolving such uncertainties.

On-premise, retail personnel then must be given a more useful and certain knowledge of wines so that they may educate the consumer. By far the most effective means of stimulating sales is through informed oral assistance to the customer. It has often been pointed out that if every waiter or waitress merely suggested a bottle of wine at each table, there would be a tremendous gain in wine sales. These facts clearly demonstrate the need for continuous educational programs for all members of the service staff. In other words, the staff should make "having wine tonight" a familiar, comfortable everyday occurrence for the consumer. This is best accomplished by using fewer generalities and more facts.

Once is not enough

It has always been agreed among wine marketers that the goal of considerably higher per capita usage depended upon inducing more frequent use of wines with meals. The club manager should be particularly conscious of this information because there is really no limit on the possible future extent of wine-sale expansion in the U.S., due to the fact that we still rank near the bottom in per capita use of wine, as compared to the great majority of other nations. Both Italy and France, for example, use 17 times

your profits

more wine per person annually than the U.S.

A further illustration of this situation comes from a recent *Newsweek* poll whose results showed that less than 43 percent of the respondents (473 from a total sample of 1,119) drink wine once a week or more, only 21.8 percent drink wine twice a week, and fewer than 14 percent drink wine three times a week.

Another important finding of this survey was that of those responding only 37 percent said that they drink wine once a week or more when dining out.

These findings seem to confirm what most wine marketers accept as a fact: that too many restaurant proprietors still charge what the traffic will bear, rather than adopting a realistic pricing policy at a time when customers are willing to order wine more often, if encouraged. A fundamental characteristic of the American consumer is that he or she, even if not particularly knowledgeable about wine, is reluctant to pay \$15 or \$20 for a bottle of wine that can be purchased for one-third of that in a package store. It is actually preposterous that a restaurant should charge three or four times the price asked by a liquor store for a bottle of wine, especially when it is realized that the store price to the consumer embodies a 30 to 40 percent markup on the price paid to the wholesaler.

Another often overlooked area where "use frequency" may be increased is dessert wines. It must be remembered that dessert wines have a special function among wine types and that they must compete with distilled spirit types, particularly cordials/liqueurs.

After-dinner and special-occasion uses of dessert wines should be specified, and there are other possibilities. It has been suggested that presenting dessert wine as a before-dinner drink offers possibilities for promotional exploitation. In this connection it is well known that there are many consumers who do not like the taste of hard liquor. It is there-

fore logical to assume that many of these consumers can be induced to have a glass of dessert wine before dinner rather than a cocktail.

The sale of champagnes and sparkling wines will also greatly benefit from more creative marketing. To this end a two-way approach seems indicated. Sparkling wines can be sold as distinct and distinctly pleasurable table wines, devoid of their past rather "snobbish" images. Champagne, on the other hand, should continue to be promoted as a very special product for use on special occasions, but the interpretation of what is a special should be greatly broadened.

Marketers of champagnes and sparkling wines must also price their offerings sensibly. Too many restaurant proprietors price their champagnes and sparkling wines out of the reach of average couples except for use on very special occasions. Yet it is obvious the on-premise profit potential lies now in the "occasion market" — not in high prices, but in mass sales.

Service as promotion

Merely keeping a close check on prices and having your staff suggest wine to customers will increase your revenues very little if knowledge of proper presentation and serving techniques is lacking. The following information should go a long way toward insuring correct and expedient service for your customers if you are prepared to thoroughly familiarize your staff, as well as yourself, and conduct periodic checks to determine if these guidelines are being followed. Please remember that correct service is your most effective form of wine promotion.

After your members or guests have been escorted to their seats, your server should ask if they would care for a wine aperitif as well as the more traditional cocktails.

After a decent interim for your diners to consume their drinks, your server should present the menu and the wine list. As your server does this, he or she should suggest that a bottle of one of your fine wines will enhance their enjoyment of your superior food.

It's all in the list

Your wine list now becomes your most

effective selling tool. Its composition, of course, will be determined by what is available in your area and eventually by the preferences of your regular clientele. Two facts, however, remain valid regardless of your area or the nature of your clientele. If the majority of the entrees on your menu are, for example, in the \$5 to \$10 price range, the majority of your wine offerings should also be in this range.

People are extremely reluctant to spend \$15 for a bottle of wine to accompany a \$6 entree, no matter how fairly the wine may be priced. Furthermore, people will not order what they cannot pronounce. You, of course, can merely list your selections numerically and have your customers order by number. This system unfortunately takes some of the romance out of ordering wine and, therefore, one of the reasons many people had in ordering it in the first place. A simple and more educational solution to this problem could be accomplished as follows:

"Glasses should hold at least 10 ounces and should be filled only half-way."



ANYPLACE GOLF CLUB'S LA CARTE DES VIN

Red Burgundy	one/half bottle	full bottle
1971 Chambertin, Joseph Drouhin (shahm-bear-tan)	\$6.00	\$10.75
1969 Bonnes Mares, Louis Jadot (bon mar)	\$7.50	\$14.25

As you will note, the first information listed is the year of the vintage. In this case the vintage is 1971 for the Chambertin and 1969 for the Bonnes Mares. The middle entry noted is the name of the wine, and the name on the right is that of the shipper. The figures on the extreme right are the prices for a half bottle and full bottle of these wines. The words directly under the name of the wines are their phonetic pronunciations.

I have deliberately included half- as well as full-bottle prices. Keeping a supply of half bottles on hand is a valuable sales device, particularly when one diner at a table is having fish or poultry and another is having red meat. You could, of course, have your server recommend a bottle of rosé as a compromise, but this is a rather mundane and boring choice at best.

If you are going to offer a selection of American and other European wines in addition to French wines, and I suggest that you do, please list them by country of origin as well as color even if they carry generic place names. For example, in California, Australia, and several other areas it is customary to give famous place names to some of their lesser wines — e.g. Burgundy, claret, and Chianti for the reds and Chablis, sauterne, and Rhine wine for the whites. While many of these wines may be pleasant enough, comparison with the better wines from the famous wine-producing areas of Europe will certainly put them at an unfair disadvantage.

By listing wines from various countries and from distinct areas within these countries separately on your list, you will not only provide a valuable educational service to your customers, but you will also encourage them to experiment with higher-quality and higher-priced wine types.

Dessert, champagne, and sparkling wines should, of course, remain

separate on your list and your wine list should be returned along with the regular menu when it is time to order dessert. This is another occasion whereby merely having your staff suggest a sweet wine or champagne may affect a substantial increase in your wine revenues.

Do list champagnes and sparkling wines as the separate entities that they are. True champagne may come only from that small area of France some 90 miles east of Paris. It is a great pity that many people who enter a restaurant with the intention of ordering a bottle of true champagne end up consuming an inferior and less profitable substitute. If one of your members or customers expresses a desire for champagne, make sure your server calls his attention only to that part of your list that offers the genuine article. You always have, after all, the option of referring him to the other sparkling wines if the purchase price of your champagnes seems a bit too rich for his blood.

How to serve wine

Assuming that you have assembled your wine list and familiarized your staff with it, you are now ready for the second step in your promotional efforts: proper service.

Most of the elements of service that apply in the home are equally valid in clubs and restaurants. If you wish to insure that your customers will consume as much wine in your club as they do in their homes, it is necessary that you make it as comfortable for them as possible.

When one of your members or guests orders a bottle of wine, it is imperative that it get to the table at the same time as the food it is meant to accompany. This is particularly important if it is a bottle of white wine that is meant to accompany a first course that you may have prepared ahead of time.

On the subject of white wine: it should be chilled, but not too cold. On the average, 2 hours in the refrigerator will do for dry white wines, while sauternes and sweet champagnes will take 4 to 5 hours. If you are planning to use ice buckets to chill your wines, you should realize that most of these devices are usually not deep enough for a bottle of wine — especially Ger-

SOME ADVICE ON WINE STORAGE

To store wine properly you do not necessarily need a proper cellar, but the closer you come to one the longer you will be able to store your wines without risk of damage.

The first rule, of course, is to lay your wines on their side so that the cork is kept moist and expanded, thus preventing air from entering the bottle. Ideally, wines should be kept at a constant 55° to 60° F., away from daylight and vibrations. You should remember that evenness of temperature is at least as important as the temperature itself, up to a point, because constant fluctuations of heat and cold will hasten a wine's maturation and eventual decline. Therefore, keep wines away from boiler rooms, steam pipes, or kitchen ovens. Don't store wines in a place where they will be subject to a lot of knocking about, such as closets or utility rooms. Be sure to keep wines away from direct exposure to daylight which seems to decompose them in a short time. If the temperature of your storage area stays much above 70°, you should limit yourself to no more than a 6-month supply.

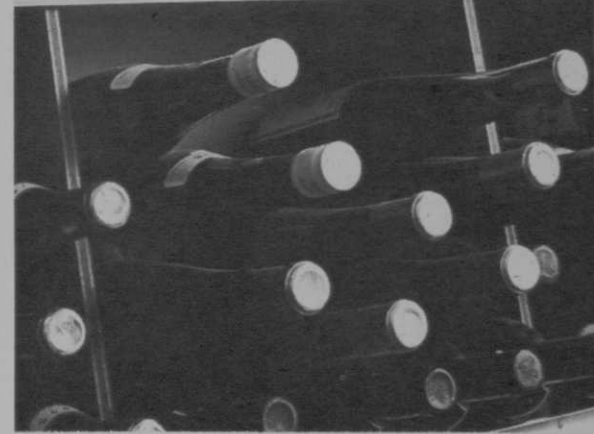
If you are considering purchas-

ing wine racks, make sure that the bottles will not lie at a downward angle, neck lowest. The corks will be kept moistened, but any sediment in fine red wines will slide toward the cork and may adhere to it. You would thus serve your guests cloudy wine from their first glass.

man or Alsatian wines. You should, therefore, measure these receptacles carefully before purchase to insure that your guests will not be drinking their first three or four glasses of wine at room temperature because of a too-shallow bucket. On the other hand, if the white wine is meant to accompany the main course you should not place it in an ice bucket at the beginning of the meal, especially if you have had it under refrigeration for several hours, because this excess chilling will effectively numb the wine.

Red wines are served at room temperature and usually in a wine basket, because an older red wine lying on its side in a cellar will have thrown a harmless but unattractive deposit. The correct procedure here is to move the bottle carefully, always on its side, from its bin to a wine basket, and then bring it to the table without disturbing the sediment. This procedure will, if done correctly, alleviate the need of standing the bottle upright for 2 or 3 hours so that the sediment will settle to the bottom.

Unfortunately, what usually happens in far too many club restaurants is that the waiter grabs the bottle any which way and carries it carelessly to the serving station. There he pops the bottle into a waiting basket



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and brings it to the table. To make the farce complete, some waiters insert a corkscrew by rotating the bottle in its basket. When opening any wine except champagne, always twist the cork and not the bottle.

After the wine has been brought to the table in the proper manner it should, ideally, be decanted. Contrary to what you may have been led to believe, this is not a particularly time-consuming or complicated procedure. Decanting a wine simply involves transferring it from its original bottle to another container so that you may serve it completely brilliant and unclouded to the very end, and at the sacrifice of only an ounce or two of wine. To accomplish this, after you have opened the bottle, remove all of the foil so that you get an unobstructed view of the wine as it pours out through the neck of the bottle. Hold your decanter firmly, as it will contain a full bottle of wine, and transfer the wine slowly in one motion — otherwise the sediment will wash back and forth. Traditionally, the neck of the wine bottle was held over a candle so that you might see when the sediment begins to come over into the decanter and, therefore, you would realize when to stop pouring. Nowadays most tables are lit by electricity

and because the heat of a candle is not going to do an old wine any good: you can just as easily pour against a bright light.

What's in a glass?

Wine glasses, and this is particularly important when serving older red wines, should hold at least 10 ounces and should be filled only half-way. This size and portion are recommended because they permit a wine to be swirled to thereby release its bouquet and flavor.

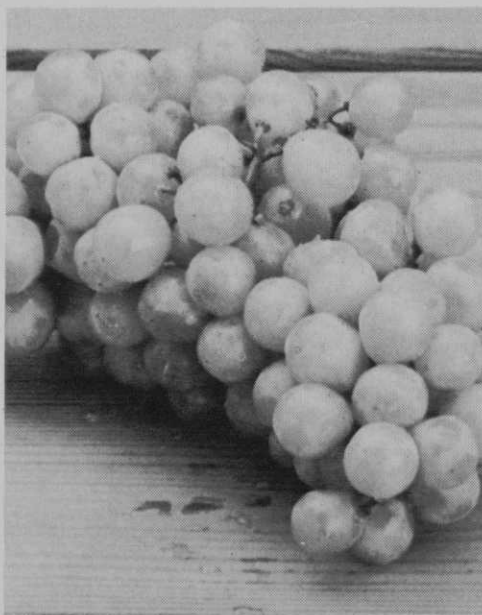
White wine glasses may be a bit smaller, say 8 ounces. Those ubiquitous 3-ounce glasses should never be used to serve any wine, however, not only because they do not permit the wine to be swirled, but also because they convey a stingy and mean impression.

Almost every major wine region has its traditional glass, just as it has its traditional bottle, but it is completely unnecessary to have different glasses to serve and enjoy wine. The tulip-stemmed, clear glass, with a bowl the shape of an elongated U, slightly tapered at the top, with a capacity of at least 8 ounces — is now universally accepted for both red and white wines. The wine glass is always placed on the table directly behind the knife. If you do use glasses of two different sizes, the smaller one, used for white wine, is placed behind the knife and the larger one, used for the red wine, is placed to its right. If you serve two reds, the better wine should be served in the bigger glass.

It is worth pointing out that the so-called champagne glasses so often used in restaurants — wide, shallow, sherbet type — are in fact the worst of all. Their flat, wide bottom surface dissipates the bubbles very quickly, and they are clumsy and unwieldy. The flute — a curved glass tapering to a point at the base — or the traditional elongated V, are both better glasses, as is the all-purpose tulip-shaped wine glass. If the bubbles rise from a single point at the base of the glass, they will last longer and present a more attractive appearance.

Open with care

Not only are inappropriate glasses generally used for champagnes, the



method of service as well is often incorrect. The usual method is to grab the neck and start tugging at the cork. This means that the heat of the hand is applied to the narrowest part of the bottle, which is under the greatest pressure, and the tugging only serves to increase that enormous pressure. Instead, put a napkin between the hand and the bottle (this is also a safety measure, if a bottle should ever crack) and first remove the foil and then the wiring. The bottle should be pointed away from yourself or anyone else, because once the wire is loosened, the cork may explode out. Be especially careful of a bottle that has just been carried from somewhere else, as this agitation will have increased the normal pressure. Hold the cork firmly in your other hand and twist the bottle away from the cork. The cork should come out easily. As the cork comes out, the bottle should be at a 45° angle, so that a larger surface of wine is exposed to the atmosphere and there is consequently less chance of pressure building up at the neck and wine spilling out of the bottle.

When a customer has ordered any bottle of wine, the waiter should always show him the bottle before opening it to make sure the wine is exactly the one he has ordered. Wine is always presented from the customer's left and poured from his right. It is a good idea, if an older wine has been ordered, to check the air space between the cork and wine, or *ullage*, as this is called, before you bring the

wine to the table. If the space is much more than an inch, this is a good indication that a wine may be oxydized or maderized. *Oxydized* is the term used for a red wine that is too old or out of condition. *Maderized* is the term used for a white wine in either of these states.

When opening a bottle of wine you do not intend to decant, whites or roses, cut the capsule or foil at the bottom of the bulge in the neck and remove it. Wipe the top of the bottle and remove the cork without twisting the bottle. In the case of chilled wines wrap a napkin around the bottle so that the heat of your hand will not warm the wine. After you have removed the cork, squeeze the end that has been in contact with the wine and sniff it. The cork should be sound and should smell of wine, not cork. If the cork smells sound, hand it to the customer for his inspection.

The waiter should then wipe the inside of the neck of the bottle and pour about an ounce into the glass of the host. If that person happens to be eating a salad or relish at the time the wine is poured, politely suggest that he have a piece of bread or cracker before he tastes the wine as the vinegar in a salad will adversely affect the taste of any wine. The host should then hold the wine glass against a white background to check the color, swirl the wine in the glass and then smell it to check its bouquet, and finally roll it around in his mouth to check its taste. If you have stored your wine properly (see sidebar) and have purchased it from a reputable distributor or wholesaler, all should be well and the host will tell you to pour. The waiter then goes around the table and fills each glass half-way, starting with the ladies.

Occasionally, a novice oenophile will mistake the woody taste of a young red wine for corkiness. Actually, corky wine is very rare and easily detected — it's a wine contaminated by a faulty cork and tastes strongly of cork rather than wine. It is a good idea, even in these instances, to remove the wine with your apologies and replace it with another bottle. The wine may be recorked and refrigerated for several days, then used either for cooking or as "bar wine." □