

Mood-Boosting Wines

Feeling down? Let these cheerful wines turn that frown upside down.

By [Courtney Cochran](#)

This time of year - and this year in particular (sheesh) - there's a laundry list of things that could be getting you down. Lost jobs, money worries and holiday stress are just a few of the icky items that could very well be a drag on your otherwise sunny mood. Happily, we're here with a list of wines known for their mood-boosting powers, all packaged into a convenient list. So, should you need them, we offer not just a few but 10 reasons to stay cheerful this wintry season.

Tokaji

This little-known sweet wine from Hungary is one of the great delicacies of the wine world - and when you're down, a delicacy is just what your WineCountry doctor orders. For our top prescription for a mood boost, match up this unique toffee-, apricot-, and vanilla-flavored charmer with a Snicker's bar. A splurge in itself, Snicker's matches the wines' flavors just so, making for a perfect hi-lo pairing.

We like: [Royal Tokaji Wine Co. Tokaji Aszu 5 Puttonyos](#) (\$40)

"Pizzacola"

This frothy, red, essentially dry sparkler from Italy's characterful Lambrusco grape might as well have "happy wine" stamped on its label. Not only does it partner perfectly with casual-delicious pizza, it's also delightfully well priced. Watch for bright notes of maraschino cherries, red currants and spice, and be sure to pick up a second bottle - it tends to be habit-forming, in a very good way.

We like: [Ca Berti Lambrusco Grasparossa di Castelvetro "Robusco"](#) (\$12)

Superhero



Leave it to Bonny Doon to create a wine with a superhero on the label (which is supercheerful, natch) and a tasting note describing it as "unusually complex, earthy and full of *la dolce vita*." To partake, pick up a bottle of this imaginative, Ital-inspired red blend of 52% Sangiovese, 33% Syrah and 15% Cinsault - and get ready to sip your way back to (super) sanity. On, Doon!

Check it: 2007 [DEWN Super Tuscan](#) (\$15 ON SALE; reg \$28)

Tequila

Let's face it: Sometimes a sour mood calls for something stronger than vino. And when "strong" is a must, there's really only way to go - Tequila! In order that your palate remain at least somewhat unscathed by this transgression, look to a hand-crafted, super high quality *blanco* tequila like Fortaleza (fittingly, Fortitude in *español*). Smooth, classy and earthy, it's the definition of *subtle* strength Amen.

Get some: [Tequila Los Abuelos "Fortaleza"](#) (\$50)

Night Train

When down, why not embrace your mood with an ironic cocktail - in this case, one made with an ingredient known as "bum wine"? Enter "[Return of the Bird.](#)" a cosmo-like concoction crafted from the likes of super cheap Night Train wine, Rose's Grenadine Syrup, lime and a Ginger Ale float. When served very cold, it's rather palatable, and - most important - guaranteed to provoke belly laughs.

Get some: [Night Train Express](#) (\$4)

Sangria

There's something undeniably fun about making Sangria, Spain's festive, fruit-spiked cocktail with a red wine base. For the biggest mood boost, we recommend making it with pals (fab excuse for a party, right?), and we also like using Lindman's Lambic Framboise beer or a red bubbly for an extra boost of carbonation. Short on time? No worries: pick up pre-made sangria from Target.

We like: [Target Red Sangria Wine Cube](#) (\$12 and up)

Moscato d'Asti

We admit it: we're guilty of excessively plugging this lightly frothing, sweet Italian white - but we're not stopping now since we think it's the very definition of mood boost in a bottle! And given Moscato's temptingly low alcohol (just 5.5%), there's really no reason NOT to partake of this exotically perfumed, superbly balanced romp of a wine when in a funk - especially since it means you can drink MORE.

We like: [2008 Saracco Moscato d'Asti](#) (\$16)



Square One

Again, we get it: Sometimes only a stiff drink will do. So for another wine fan-friendly spirit (proof: sommeliers love it), look to Square One's expertly crafted "Botanical" bottling, a Gin-like rye spirit that's infused with a choice medley of rose, pear, chamomile, coriander and citrus (but not juniper, key in Gin). Delicious and highly aromatic, it's also highly likely to turn your frown around.

Get it: [Square One Botanical Organic Specialty Spirit](#) (\$35)

Freakout

A word of advice: When you're down and out, don't freak out - though you may want to try sipping on Freakout, a super fresh new white blend that's as calming as its name is, well, not. From Napa's Ital-focused Luna Vineyards, this innovative blend of Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio offers plenty of crisp pear, cool melon, white flower



and mandarin - and it's priced just right.

Get it: [2007 Luna Vineyards Freakout Napa Valley White Wine](#) (\$15)

SPLURGE

Call it your own personal bailout: Sometimes you just need to treat yourself to an insanely good bottle you'd never otherwise buy. If this is the case, we recommend that you pony up for a bottle of Scarecrow, Napa's newest "it" cult Cab. Sure, at \$500 it's a bit of a splurge, but then again - you're *worth* it. (Now: Tip back your glass and repeat this over and over again while sipping). Cheers!

Get it: [2005 Scarecrow Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (\$500)