

Wine is Best Savored, Not Saved

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Don't keep putting off opening that “special” wine

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A common problem among wine lovers is the accumulation of bottles of wine waiting around for “special occasions.” Sometimes a bottle is “special” because of the price, purported excellence, rarity, or maybe because of memories associated with who gave it, why it was given, or why it was purchased. Perhaps it is “special” just because the bottle has been with you awhile—the years pass, but the “right” moment to open it hasn’t arrived. This is a “first-world” problem, to be sure, but a problem all the same—especially for those of us who’ve amassed many cases of assorted “special” bottles over the years.

To cope with just such a problem, back in 2000, wine writers Dorothy J. Gaiter and John Brecher, then of the *Wall Street Journal*, came up with something they call, “[Open that Bottle Night](#)” (OTBN)—encouraging their readers to finally “open that bottle” so they could enjoy such

special bottles with friends or loved ones, rather than wait forever for that elusive “special” moment. Thus OTBN was established for the “last Saturday in February,” whatever date that happens to be.

Gaiter and Brecher encouraged readers to send them letters sharing their OTBN experiences—and the letters came in by the thousands. OTBN has been a worldwide phenomenon ever since. As they related in a wine-blog interview back in 2010, just a few months after they had retired their hugely popular column: “There’s sentiment and romance out there—much more than you might think from reading the daily news—and we think OTBN taps into that. In addition, there is just so much cant and snootiness surrounding wine. OTBN gives people a license to enjoy a bottle of wine for what it really is: an enjoyable, tasty beverage with some really good memories attached to it.”

OTBN is a fun concept, but what about those of us for whom once a year simply doesn’t cut through the accumulation of bottles quickly enough? This problem can be especially acute for folks with significant wine cellars holding dozens, if not hundreds, of “special” bottles being kept until they (hopefully) reach their peak maturity.

To cope with this particular variant of the same issue, Yossie Horwitz came up with his own particular version of OTBN, called the Rosh Chodesh Club (RCC). Incidentally, Horwitz is also a widely recognized kosher wine aficionado—he tastes around 3,000 kosher wines annually. Folks like Horwitz have way too many wines for OTBN to make much of a dent. So, he launched the RCC.

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Yossie Horwitz

Rosh Chodesh is the Hebrew title given the first day (sometimes two) of every new month in the Jewish calendar. Rosh Chodesh is marked monthly by the birth of a new moon and accorded the status of a “minor” holiday in Jewish tradition.

“The idea behind the RCC,” notes Horwitz, “was to provide a monthly opportunity for a select group of true wine lovers to get together and share some terrific wines in a relaxed, friendly and intimate environment.” Though it began as just a small, local gathering of 10 friends, Horwitz shared his concept and his successful first RCC experience with his followers.

Indeed, for those not yet ‘in the know,’ Horwitz writes a weekly newsletter/weblog “on Israeli and kosher wine, wineries, and other oenophilic goodies,” that he calls *Yossie’s Corkboard*.

An attorney by day and wine writer by night, Yossie has been producing his newsletter for well over a decade, though he had been collecting kosher wine for even longer than that. On top of his newsletter—which has an ever-growing readership well over 8,000-strong, the Israeli-born, New York-based Horwitz dabbles in various kosher wine projects, writes freelance occasionally, and also serves as one of the judges in *The Jewish Week’s* annual Kosher Wine Competition—the only annual kosher wine competition in the United States. [For better or worse, I’m also one of the judges.]

As Horwitz recently noted, there are to his knowledge more than 15 “franchises” of RCC around the world including in such places as New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Miami, Strasbourg, London, Israel, and Toronto.

“Having all of those great bottles stored away is meaningless unless you actually drink them,” he rightly insists, “and doing so with like-minded wine lovers enhances the experience significantly.”

Whether or not one establishes their own local RCC, or simply initiates their own regular, or semi-regular, version of OTBN, the core idea ought to be embraced by every wine lover.

Don’t keep putting off opening that “special” wine! If you wait long enough, that wine will begin to decline—dying slowly, unappreciated. There is something particularly sad about this all too common practice of “loving” a wine to death.

This past Rosh Chodesh Kislev, we enjoyed the following bottle: **Tenuta Monchiero, Barolo, DOCG (Piedmont, Italy), 2010** (\$50): This fabulous, elegant, complex, old-world Nebbiolo-based wine grown around the Serralunga d’Alba commune exhibits herbal and dark fruit aromatics, mushroom, cedar wood, and an inviting savory, meaty quality, followed on the velvety, medium-bodied palate by notes of dark and red berry fruits, charcuterie, and thyme, all balanced by decent acidity, and still-tight, mouth-coating tannins. Though it will easily improve even more over the next six or seven years, this is simply gorgeous now.

L’Chaim!

Recommended For You

