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Women's Health

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Think Inside the Box

Tasty, environmentally friendly, and kind to your wallet, today's boxed vinos prove that good things come in square packages.

By Brittany Risher

Call them juice boxes for adult palates: Boxed wines are back, and unlike those that debuted in the '70s (which were produced to help make cheap wine even cheaper), these new vintages are as good as many of those with corks. "Even high-end wineries are putting the same wine in bottles and boxes, so you can save a few bucks without sacrificing quality," says Laura Maniec, master sommelier and cofounder of Corkbuzz Wine Studio in Manhattan.

Not only do boxes take less money and energy to manufacture and ship but their design also cuts down on other waste: The vacuum-packed inner bag shrinks as it's emptied, keeping wine-destroying oxygen out, so opened vino lasts for up to six weeks, compared with two to three days for a bottle. But with these crowd-pleasing sips, you may not have to worry about having leftovers.

From the Tank Vin Rouge

\$40 for 3 liters

Blended wines allow the best qualities of each grape to shine through, explain Mike De Simone and Jeff Janssen, editors at *Wine Enthusiast* magazine. This French blend of grenache, syrah, and carignan creates a palate that's rich with cherries, violet, and black pepper.

PERFECT PAIRINGS:

The strong fruit and spice flavors go well with kicked-up nuts or chips with salsa.



Silver Birch Sauvignon Blanc
\$24 for 3 liters

Not overly complex, this versatile New Zealand white has a zesty freshness and tinge of grapefruit and other citrus. "It's super-refreshing on a hot day and goes with any seafood," making it the ideal sip on the porch of your vacation rental, says Leslie Sbrocco, author of *Wine for Women*. **PERFECT PAIRINGS:** Its herbal kick complements grilled asparagus and salads, and the tanginess is a sure bet with goat cheese.



Bandit Moscato
\$5 for 500 milliliters

Light and crisp, this California dessert wine tastes of orange blossom, honey, and dried apricot. Drink it chilled, "but not ice-cold or you'll lose the nuance of the flavor," says Jenssen. And even though it's not bubbly, it's festive enough to use as a toasting wine. **PERFECT PAIRINGS:** The light fruit aromas accent the richness of cream-based desserts such as lemon meringue pie, crème brûlée, or vanilla ice cream.



Black Box 2010 Monterey County Chardonnay
\$25 for 3 liters

A fresh-tasting white made from California grapes, this is a mix of mango flavors and toasted pineapple with just a hint of spice. It's a picnic go-to for De Simone and Jenssen: Chill the box a few hours before, put it in a cooler, and you're all set. **PERFECT PAIRINGS:** The full body holds its own with potato chips and onion dip, and the oaky accents bring out the smokiness of grilled chicken breasts.



Pinot Evil Pinot Noir
\$24 for 3 liters

This light-bodied French pinot smells and tastes of red berries, and chilling it in a tub of ice on hotter days will bring out the fruitiness, says Sbrocco. "It is an excellent wine for the transition to summer as the temperature rises." **PERFECT PAIRINGS:** The wine's softness won't overpower Brie and crackers, and because it's acidic, drinking it with acidic foods such as salad tossed in vinaigrette will make each seem less tart.



Bodegas Osborne Seven Red Wine
\$22 for 3 liters

Turning on the AC doesn't mean you have to say good-bye to red wines. This medium-bodied Spanish blend goes well with grilled fare that has a hint of smokiness, such as salmon, pork, or portobello mushrooms, but isn't so heavy that it's not refreshing, says Sbrocco. **PERFECT PAIRINGS:** Grilled pizza, because the wine's freshness matches that of the tomato sauce. Or strong dark chocolate.



Big House Red
\$22 for 3 liters

Don't let this "kitchen sink" blend scare you—yes, there are more than 14 different grapes here, but the rich, bold, and jammy fruit flavors are surprisingly balanced. "It's wonderful for get-togethers because it's full-bodied enough to pair with heartier party foods," says Sbrocco. **PERFECT PAIRINGS:** Grilled pizza, because the wine's freshness matches that of the tomato sauce. Or strong dark chocolate.

Stir It Up

Perfect for summer: Create a batch of this refreshing drink from Kim Haasarud, author of *101 Sangrias and Pitcher Drinks*.

STRAWBERRY MOJITO SANGRIA

- 8 large mint sprigs, plus 12 for garnish
- ¾ cup lime juice (about 1 medium lime)
- ½ cup agave syrup
- 8 cups sauvignon blanc
- ½ cup peaches, sliced
- 10 strawberries, sliced
- ½ cup lemon-lime seltzer
- 12 lime wheels, for garnish

➤ Serve in wineglasses and garnish each with fresh mint and a lime wheel.

MAKES 12 SERVINGS.
Per serving: 180 cal, 0 g fat, 16 g carbs, 0 mg sodium, 0 g fiber, 0 g protein

Screw the corkscrew. Boxed wine makes party cocktails easy and affordable.

- In a pitcher, muddle mint with lime juice and agave.
- Remove mint, then add wine, peaches, and strawberries. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours.
- When ready to serve, stir well and add seltzer.

