

Mulled wine a good way to warm up

By Yvonne Lorkin

GROWING UP in Hastings in the early 90s, getting 'mulled' meant something entirely different to warming up a pot of wine.

While pot may have been involved in some way, it's a far cry from fast forwarding a decade or two and whipping up a batch of something warm, delicious and alcoholic to offer to friends who decide to drop by.

Instead of feeling obliged to open bottles of your prized and rather pricey red wine, you can still slake their thirsts by doing something rather superb with a classy cask of Veluto Rosso or those caskskins you've hidden out in the shed.

The history of mulled wines dates back to medieval times where wines were named Ypocras or Hipocris after the physician Hippocrates. Mulled wine was thought to be extremely healthy; hardly surprising considering the drinking water at the time was seriously less than sanitary.

These heated, alcoholic drinks helped sustain human health through the cold winter months and probably helped them forget how miserable medieval times actually were.

I've included my favourite mulled wine recipe but to start, here are some mulled wine rules:

1. Any red wine will do, but don't spend much money because you're going to change the taste

considerably. As long as the wine has good, fruity characters and a nice, spicy body to it then it will be perfect for mulling. I like to use shiraz, merlot, and Spanish tempranillo.

2. Never let the wine boil. If it's boiled, it's spoiled. The flavour of the wine/spice combination will deteriorate if the mixture reaches boiling point, so keep an eye on things.

Mulled wine

2 lemons | 2 oranges | 2 bottles of red wine | ½ tsp nutmeg | 5 cloves | ½ cup brandy or cognac | ½ cup brown sugar | herbal or citrus tea (if you feel so inclined) | water (to dilute if it's too strong) | 1 cup orange juice | 4 large cinnamon sticks

Cut oranges and lemons into slices. Pour the red wine and orange juice into a saucepan and gently heat. While heating, add fruit, nutmeg, cloves and brandy and cinnamon sticks. Keep an eye on the mixture and wait until it becomes hot to the touch. At this point you could blend in the sugar and adjust the taste with water or tea.

— **Serves 4 grown-ups**

If you can't stand the idea of 'cooking' your wine, don't worry, I've tried a couple of fantastic wines this week that just might suit you better.

WINE TASTES

Graham Norton's Own Shiraz 2017, \$18.99

★★★★ ½

Irish TV personality Graham Norton has teamed up with two Kiwi guys from Invivo wines to produce a shiraz from South Australia — how's that for multinational relations! This is a bonza little bottle that's deliciously spicy and saturated with blackcurrant and plum flavours and fleshed out with muscular, yet woolly tannins. www.glengarrywines.co.nz



Baron Philippe De Rothschild Mapu Merlot 2015, \$20.50

★★★ ½

This is a moreish little merlot from Rothschild's Chilean wine operation that hits the quaffable spot. Savoury, roasting pan juices, pepper and baked plum and berry flavours combine with grippy, dusty tannins and a lengthy, leathery finish. Nice and meaty classic South American characters here.

www.kahurangiwine.com

