

## Holiday Gift Ideas for Wine Drinkers Abound

With the holiday season upon us, the sky (and your budget) is virtually the limit when it comes to finding a wine to give (or receive from) that special person.



**John BROWN**

Today, I'll provide you with a listing of some of my favorite cabernet sauvignons from the exceptional 2007 and 2008 vintages (note to my friends: please feel free to pass this along to my wife).

However, before I get to the wine recommendations, here are some wine-related gift ideas, including a stocking stuffer or two, for the wine-stained person in your life. Keep in mind that many statewide wine specialty shops are excellent resources for not only excellent bottles, but also for many of the wine-related gifts mentioned below.

I've noted it before, but in my opinion, the absolute best wine reference book is the "World Atlas of Wine" by **Hugh Johnson**. It is a compendium

of everything you need to know about wine, including information on specific grapes, wines and regions, as well as label descriptions, and the culture and history of wine. Check for it at your local bookshop or online.

Joining a wine-buying club is a unique way to explore a variety of wines from around the world with the convenience of regular door-to-door shipping or shopping. There are clubs geared for a variety of wine lovers from beginners to collectors. Talk to your local wine retailer about offerings they may have or go to: <http://www.cawineclub.com/wine-of-the-month-club-links> to find the best club and price for you.

Finding a place to store your special wine is always a challenge. One pretty neat option is the Wine Enthusiast six-bottle touch screen wine refrigerator. This adjustable, temperature-controlled wine refrigerator is a great gift for those who don't have a lot of storage space, but want a reliable place to keep their special bottles. Check it out at: [www.wineenthusiast.com](http://www.wineenthusiast.com). The refrigerator costs \$100 with free shipping.

The aesthetics of sipping wine in crystal is oftentimes a very expensive proposition. However, the good folks at **Masterpiece Crystal** in Jane Lew craft about the best reasonably priced wine vessels around. The hand-made lead-free crystal glasses and carafes come in various shapes and sizes. Go to [masterpiececrystal.com](http://masterpiececrystal.com) and check out these works of art or call 304-884-7841 to order direct from the factory.

For the manual dexterity challenged wine drinkers in your life, you might slip a container of Wine Away in that Christmas stocking. Wine Away is a red wine strain remover that cleans up and clears out those stains that so often appear on your clothes or carpet when people like me are attempting to sip and speak at the same time. Shop for it locally or simply **Google** "Wine Away" and find it online for about \$10.

Not surprisingly, I like to keep track of the truly special wines I have consumed. Using Label Off is one of the best ways to remove and collect those special wine la-

bel. Label Off splits the printed surface of the paper from the adhesive backing leaving a laminated label to place into your wine catalog. \$10.

The 2007 and 2008 vintages for cabernet sauvignon in Napa Valley are very special and are wines that will continue to improve for a decade or more. These little lovelies are opulent, full-bodied, rich and balanced. Here are some 2007 and 2008 cabernets you might wish to procure for that special person in your life: **Caymus Special Selection**; **Joseph Phelps Insignia**; **St. Supery**; **Shafer Stags Leap**; **Newton Napa Valley**; **Clos Du Val**; **Vineyard 29**; **Franciscan Napa Valley**; **Anderson's Conn Valley**; **Robert Mondavi Napa Valley**; **Rudd Mount Veeder**; **Beaulieu Georges De Latour Private Reserve**; and **Cliff Lede Vineyards Stags Leap**.

They range in price from about \$35 to \$100 a bottle.

Happy Holidays!

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## An Ounce of Prevention Worth the Price to Medicare

Medicare often has been criticized for only paying for short-term illness and injury. Although this remains the general rule, there are actually quite a few "preventive medicine" services now covered by Medicare. And now that the Affordable Care Act has been upheld by the **Supreme Court** and the election is over, it is a fitting time to review the numerous preventive services covered by Medicare, some of which were added thanks to "Obamacare," and all of which are now covered by Medicare and other insurances, also thanks to the ACA.



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When Medicare was initiated in 1965, it specifically did not cover any kind of routine physicals or preventive screenings. But over the past 37 years, because of the evolving importance and acceptance of preventive medicine, several exceptions providing for specific preventive services were subsequently added to the covered benefits of Medicare Part B. Most recently, the ACA added an "annual wellness visit" under Medicare. Consequently, Medicare now pays for most commonly performed cancer and other screenings.

### What's Covered

Medicare has covered cervical cancer screenings, including Pap smears and pelvic exams, since 1990, while breast cancer screenings have been covered by Medicare since 1991.

Medicare has covered colorectal cancer screening since 1998. Tests may include fecal occult blood testing, screening sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy or barium enema.

A digital rectal exam and PSA blood test to screen for prostate cancer are covered in all men aged 50 and older once every 12 months. It should be noted that **American Cancer Society** guidelines suggest men older than 50 should be offered prostate cancer screening but only with a life expect-

tancy of greater than 10 years and with understanding of the risks and uncertainties of such testing.

### Other Screening Tests

In addition to cancer screenings, Medicare now covers several other screening tests, specifically for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, glaucoma and osteoporosis.

Cardiovascular disease screening refers to a cholesterol/lipid profile rather than tests for actual cardiovascular disease such as an ECG or stress test, though a screening ECG may be ordered in association with the Initial Preventive Physical Examination. Other cardiovascular tests remain noncovered for routine screening in asymptomatic patients.

Diabetes screening includes fasting or postprandial plasma glucose for any individual at risk for diabetes (including anyone older than 65). Individuals with prediabetes may be tested twice per year, and those without prediabetes may be tested once per year. Diabetic testing supplies, therapeutic shoes and inserts and insulin pumps also are covered, along with self-management training and medical nutrition therapy.

Glaucoma testing, including an eye exam and intraocular pressure measurement, is covered by Medicare once every 12 months for beneficiaries at high risk for glaucoma, people with diabetes or anyone with a history of glaucoma.

Osteoporosis screening via bone mass measurements covered by Medicare include **FDA**-approved radiologic procedures to evaluate bone density in estrogen-deficient women at clinical risk for osteoporosis. Other eligible risk groups include any individual with vertebral abnormalities, receiving long-term steroid therapy or being treated and monitored with an approved osteoporosis drug.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm screening is the most recently implemented Medicare screening benefit, effective 2007. Beneficiaries must be

males aged 65 to 75 and must have smoked at least 100 cigarettes or manifest other risk factors.

### Vaccinations

Medicare Part B now covers three recommended adult immunizations — influenza, pneumococcal pneumonia and hepatitis B. Any and all other federally recommended vaccinations are covered under Medicare Part D since 2008. One pneumococcal vaccination for patients older than age 65 is generally considered to provide sufficient coverage for a lifetime, but Medicare also will cover a one-time booster vaccine for high-risk persons if five years have passed since their last vaccination. Influenza vaccine is recommended in all adults 50 years and older and all healthcare workers. Hepatitis B vaccination is also covered by Medicare, but only for beneficiaries considered to be at high risk for the disease (those with end-stage renal disease or hemophilia, immunosuppressed patients, homosexual men and residents of institutions for the mentally handicapped). The new shingles vaccine is also recommended once for all adults older than 60.

### Initial and Annual "Physicals"

In addition to the aforementioned specific screenings and vaccinations, Medicare Part B now covers two new types of routine exams, though these are not exactly the traditional "annual physicals" typically conducted by physicians. Other than the initial preventive physical and annual wellness visit, Medicare covers no other periodic or routine examinations.

The Initial Preventive Physical Examination (also known as the "Welcome to Medicare" exam) was established in 2005 subsequent to the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. This optional exam, covered only once per beneficiary per lifetime, must be performed during the first 12 months (formerly six months) of Medicare Part B coverage (i.e. usually at 65-66 years old). This exam includes several mandatory elements: a comprehensive medical and social history, review of risk factors for depression, functional

and safety assessment, a focused physical exam including height, weight, blood pressure and visual acuity and education and counseling regarding any issues identified in the previous elements and regarding other available preventive services under Medicare. The IPPE may be performed by a physician or qualified physician assistant, nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist.

The annual wellness visit is another new type of routine/annual examination established by Obamacare. This optional visit may be performed one year after the IPPE and then annually. Rather than a routine physical it is really a compilation of geriatric and risk factor assessments, culminating in "personalized prevention plan services." The following components must be included: updated medical and family history, list of current providers and suppliers of medical care and equipment, height, weight, blood pressure and other measurements as deemed appropriate, detection of cognitive impairment and depression and review of functional ability and level of safety. A list of risk factors and scheduled preventive services and referrals should then be produced for the patient.

In conclusion, Medicare has appropriately evolved with modern medical practice to include most commonly recommended preventive screenings and vaccinations. Of course, virtually any test or examination may be done and billed to Medicare when medically necessary and accompanied by a relevant diagnosis. However routine physicals or any routine or screening tests other than those specifically discussed above are not covered by Medicare. Clinicians and patients should take advantage of these new and evolving Medicare-covered benefits to foster preventive health at any age.

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