

A seen in:  
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## A holiday sure thing: Sweets for the sweet

**B** UZZ: Hey, Marnie, I need some help. Last Thanksgiving, my mother-in-law served us a \$30 cabernet sauvignon with the turkey and sweet potatoes. I was polite (don't want to make the missus mad), but the cab was terrible. I'm gonna bring a better one this year. Got any suggestions?

**Marnie:** Yes, I do, Buzz. I suggest you come up with a different plan entirely. If your family's holiday recipes follow the traditional American pattern, serving any kind of dry wine is just a recipe for disaster.

**Buzz:** You mean we gotta do white wine with turkey? I love dark meat and figured a red goes with that.

**Marnie:** No, the color of the meat isn't the problem. Neither is the color of your cabernet. The issue is how much sugar we add to festive holiday foods.

**Buzz:** Every Thanksgiving dinner I've been to has sweet potatoes with melted marshmallows, and sweet cranberry sauce.

**Marnie:** Historically, sugar was a rare and expensive treat, so



### CHEAP BUZZ

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it makes sense that we'd celebrate special occasions with a sugary splurge. That helps explain almost everything on the traditional Thanksgiving menu.

When there's all this sugar in the food, though, it throws normal dry wines under the bus, leaving them tasting sour, thin and bitter — kind of like how toothpaste can ruin the taste of your orange juice in the morning.

**Buzz:** Wow, I never thought of that. What a drag. What should we serve instead?

**Marnie:** The solution is pretty simple — fight fire with fire. The best way to work around the intense sweetness found in Thanksgiving foods is to counteract it with wines of equal sweetness. For red wine lovers, this can be tough, since most reds are quite dry, but there are more red blends out there these days that

feature noticeable sweetness. Or you could try a throwback, like sweet, bubbly lambrusco.

**Buzz:** That's what I drank at 21 when I knew nothing about wine. As a grown-up now, I don't like cheap, sweet wine.

**Marnie:** Trust me — it sounds crazy, but sweet wines don't taste sweet with sweet foods. They cancel each other out on the sensory level, and each tastes drier together than they would apart.

But if you just want to enjoy your in-law's nice cabernet, you could try my secret sommelier shortcut: Sweeten up any red wine and make it Thanksgiving-friendly by adding a healthy splash of port wine when dinner's ready.

**Buzz:** I love port! But some of my boating friends think it makes me a leftist.

Marnie Old is a local sommelier and wine author known for practical advice with real-world relevance. Buzz's musings are interpreted by *Daily News* Assistant Managing Editor Gar Joseph.

## STATE STORE PICK OF THE WEEK

**Saracco Moscato d'Asti**

**Piedmont, Italy**

**PLCB Item No. 6463**

**\$14.99**

Sweet, frothy moscatos, made in the image of the semi-sparkling wines of Italy's Asti region, have been all the rage in recent years among newcomers to wine. That's thanks to their vibrant flavors of hyper-ripe white peaches and their seductive scent of honeysuckle and jasmine. But, as wine drinkers explore, they tend to acquire a taste for drier styles, in part because dry wines are so food friendly. What many don't realize is how brilliantly well-made moscatos partner with the exact same foods that clash with dry wines — not just Thanksgiving dishes, but with anything where sugar or spice play a strong role, from southern comfort food to Asian cuisine. Stock up on this delicious beauty before the extended family gathers for the holiday. Not only will its sweet-tart fruity flavor appeal to every generation from grad students to grandmas, but at only 5 percent alcohol, you won't feel all that guilty pouring yourself a glass at noon when they start to drive you to drink.

— Marnie Old

