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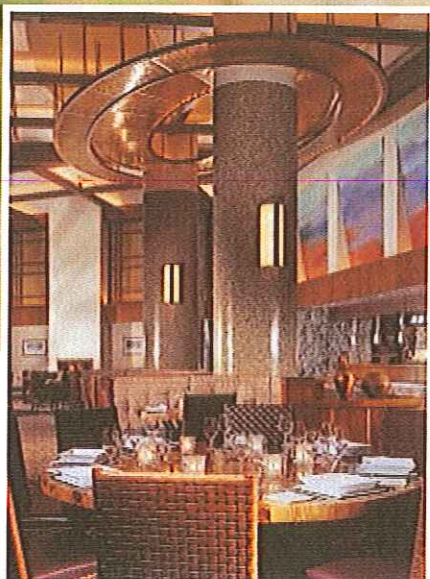
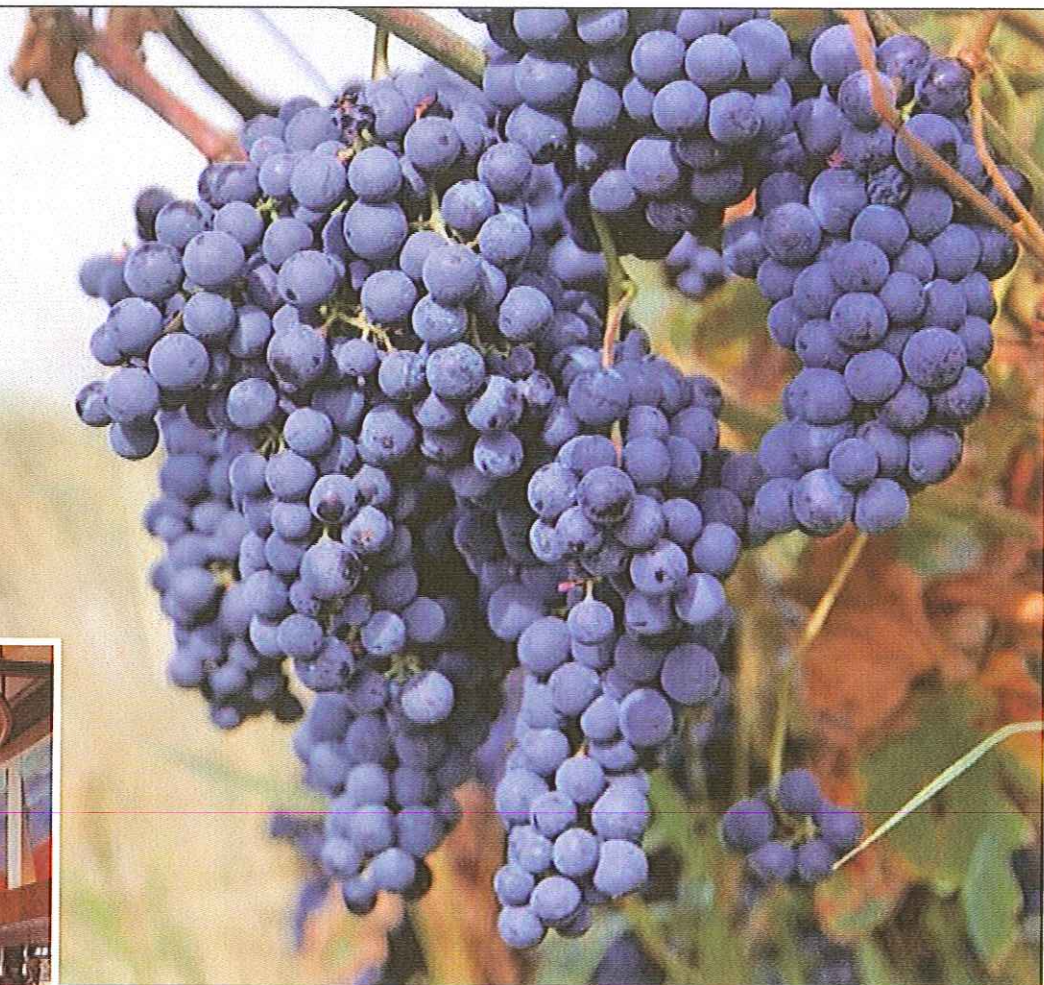
## Making an Impact

Captain Chesley Sullenberger and his wife Lorrie have used the "Miracle on the Hudson" to promote airline safety and individual empowerment **pg 20**



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## Resort Food & Beverage



# THE GRAPE CONNECTION

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT WINE CAN TAKE RESORT F&B TO THE NEXT LEVEL

By Andrea Doyle

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### READER ROI

- Cheapest isn't always best
- Keep it local
- Balance is key

Most agree that a dinner is not complete without wine. It elevates the experience to the next level. Enthusiasts argue wine is a form of art, a sensory experience that pays tribute to Mother Nature.

When choosing the best wine for your next function, look for those that are terroir-driven, that have a sense of place. Locally made wines fit this bill perfectly, and many are eco-friendly as well.

"Today, most states in the U.S. are actually making wine. Some purchase grapes from other areas of the country that have better climates to grow great grapes," explains Tiffany Sawyer, the executive chef at Stowe Mountain Lodge in Stowe, VT. "It has never been easier

to find great locally produced wine."

There is so much high-quality wine being produced all over the world that it is not necessary to break the bank when looking for wine that will impress your guests. But remember the cheapest isn't always the best choice.

"When selecting wines, meeting planners should stick to moderately priced wines. Today's consumer is more knowledgeable and interested in wine and will appreciate the effort," says Sawyer. "When planning your functions, remember to talk to the chef, sommelier, or F&B manager, who will help. It's important to be upfront about what your budget is."

Although choosing the house wine

The Whiteface Lodge has a sommelier who created an apres dinner flight program and will help select the perfect wine for your function

may save time, Karen Feketis, the director of catering at the Washington Hilton, in Washington, DC, doesn't recommend it. "Wines really need to complement the food that is being served. Don't default to the house wine. For just a few more dollars, you can get a nicely paired wine at a moderate price," she advises.

When planning a group function, Feketis recommends budgeting for two glasses per person as a minimum. A nice touch is to list each wine being served in the program or menu. Your guests will realize much thought went into the selections.

A sommelier is a great resource when choosing wine. Many are also available to address your group, and it will not cost you a dime. Plus, if the group takes away a tip or two about wine, it will make your event that much more memorable.

If your group is meeting for the first time, there are a few ways to help get conversations flowing among the attendees. Scott Waller, sommelier for The Whiteface Lodge, in Lake Placid, NY, suggests breaking the ice with champagne. "It's a smart choice to be



served prior to dinner as it brings a celebratory feeling. Also, champagne has a lift to it that brings people to a relaxed place," says Waller.

It is important to be aware of the range of guests' tastes and wine aptitudes, adds Waller. "My recommendation is to select a wine that covers a

range of flavor profiles. Planners should ask for a wine that has mass appeal," explains Waller.

Examples include lightly oaked Chardonnays. Varietals such as Chenin Blanc, dry Rieslings, and Viognier also offer aromatics that may be new and refreshing. For red wines, Waller recommends blended wines that combine the flavor profiles of several varietals without taking the strong qualities of one individual wine.

"Pink" wine is gaining in popularity, but this is not the pink Zinfandel of days past. "The new pink wine is created by keeping the skins on for a short time during pressing, to get some color and tannins to create a wonderfully structured wine," says Sawyer. Sangria is also making a comeback. A plus is you can mix in less expensive wines.

Red, white, or pink, wine adds a level of sophistication to any event. SM

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