

## **Memories Preserved on Cork**

It's not just about the wine. Sure, we all enjoy a light, crisp glass of white, or a full-bodied red. We like the way wine tastes and how it enhances the flavor of food. But unless you're a true wine connoisseur, you probably remember much more about what you were doing and who you were with from the last time you drank wine, than the vintage or grape it came from.

One of my close friends has an interesting tradition for memorializing the good times she and her spouse have enjoyed with friends over wine. A wicker basket sits on her coffee table, filled with corks from past social events. On each cork, they record the date, who they were with, and where they were when they enjoyed that bottle of wine.

If you dug through the basket, you'd find a fair number of corks inscribed with my name. The cork from a fruity Chardonnay celebrating my promotion; the cork from an earthy cabernet commemorating the night I left my career to pursue new interests. Many corks are saved from all the casual evenings we gathered with friends; couples laughing and sharing as our children played outside.

The highlights of our friendship are the many vacations we've shared. Corks spark memories of wines we've enjoyed from Missouri's Lake of the Ozarks, Minnesota's ski resorts, and most of the cities that host the Midwest's major league baseball parks.

So, how do you remember great times with your friends? Do you keep a photo album on the coffee table filled with shots of your special occasions and the corresponding wine labels? Or, perhaps you record your memories in a diary or journal? Or, a blog? Tell us about your traditions and we'll post them to our website to share with your fellow wine lovers.

Make Mine Wine is the source for wine lovers who want to get the most out of life. The companion on-line resource, Great Times with Wine, brings you more test-kitchen perfected recipes, taste panel recommendations, food-wine pairings, restaurant reviews and travel suggestions. Check back often!

And, if you decide to use the basket of corks idea—here's one little tip: If the basket starts to get full, you might want to hide it when your mother (or mother-in-law) comes to visit!

- Jennifer Richards

## **The Harvest Dinner**