



# Karen Page and Andrew Dornenburg's Wine Pairings for Candy Canes and Gingerbread Houses

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published: Mon., Dec. 19 2011 @ 10:31AM



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Fancy some Moscato d'Asti with your candy canes?

Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and New Year's are just around the corner, meaning holiday feasting is soon upon us. And with holiday eating comes holiday boozing. Now, some holiday celebrations call for downing whatever bottle of bubbly is in the fridge, but for a perfect gourmet pairing, we got in touch with Karen Page and Andrew Dornenburg, authors of [the Flavor Bible](#) and [What to Drink with What You Eat](#). Their most recent tome, [the Food Lover's Guide to Wine](#), is a handy compendium and reference guide encompassing everything you need to know about vino and wine producers around the world. We gave them five favorite holiday treats and asked them what wine they'd pair with them and why.

**Gingerbread Houses:** "When we look to pair dishes, we deconstruct them and break them down to their elements," explains Karen. "So gingerbread is ginger, molasses, and clove. We're always looking to see what the primary flavors are. It's really spice-driven, so that makes me think of a Gewürztraminer,

especially a late harvest one. If I couldn't find that, I'd recommend an orange muscat." Karen's top picks that're widely available include the Essensia and Electra muscats from Quady.

**Candy Canes:** "Candy canes are pretty intense," notes Andrew. "They basically equal peppermint." It's a tricky flavor to match, but he suggests going for a food-friendly Moscato d'Asti, which has "bubbles and a nice sweetness." As he notes, "It's just a food-friendly wine that can stand up to peppermint." Their favorites include Vietti and Saracco. "We've never met a Moscato d'Asti we didn't like," adds Karen. "You can never go wrong."

**Eggnog (because why not double fist):** Karen notes that a Moscato would work for this thick beverage, but she prefers pairing it with another rich flavor, emphasizing holiday decadence. She deconstructs the eggnog into custard flavors - "It's like drinking crème brulee" - and one of her favorite wines to pair custards with is Sauternes. "Not Chateau d'Yquem, but Climens or Barsac." Adds Andrew, "Also, when you think of these styles of dessert wines, they have lots of orange notes and that works well with whiskey and brandy, which are in eggnog."

**Fruitcake:** "When we do the deconstruction, it comes down to a boatload of dried fruit and nuts," explains Karen, adding that one of the best pairings for both dried fruit and nuts is a tawny port. "Typically we like to start at 20 years of aging." Although many ports are pricey, Andrew recommends Warre's Otima, which is priced in the low twenties. "Port is a great deal," he explains. "It's a perfect seasonal wine and I think people don't drink enough port."

**Latkes** - "We're talking potatoes, rich, and fried, and that says bubbles," explains Andrew. "And we'd go with kosher bubbles that can cut through the richness and fat. It'll really help lighten the dish." So what kind of bubbly does he recommend? "Yarden Blanc de Blanc [from Israel] is just a great glass of bubbles." Sounds like it's time for a holiday feast.

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