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Wines so good, you'll lick the glass

Embrace the flavors of the sweet

By Bill St. John

If you are a proponent of sweet wine — heck, even if you merely enjoy it — you face The Great American Wine Wile.

On the one hand, more Americans than not eschew sweet wine — even when it isn't sweet. ("No, thank you. I don't like riesling because it's sweet." And yet, most riesling isn't sweet.) As a result, wines that are sweet on all fours — wines in which a spoon will stand — languish on store shelves, in basements, on the restaurant back bar.

On the other hand, ironically, and without being conscious of it, most Americans gravitate to wine with some sweetness to it. They "talk dry, but drink sweet," as the adage has it. Why don't we just 'fess up? Sweet wines are delicious, as absolutely delicious as sucking your fingers clean of melting chocolate or wiping your chin of the juice of a ripe peach. We eat candies with abandon and chug pop by the gallon, while pretending to be "above" drinking sweet wine. C'mon.

Whole families of sweet wines await. What follows describes those families and recommends some tasty wines from among them.

Stop!

Sometimes the winemaker puts a halt to fermentation by creating an environment hostile to the yeasts — for example, by bringing the fermenting vat to near-freezing temperatures, or by adding an arresting element such as sulfur. Many semisparkling moscatos from Italy begin this way.



**2009 Cascinetta Vietti
Moscato d'Asti, Piedmont, Italy**
Fragrant of peach, gingerbread and rose water; slightly sparkling; very low alcohol and refreshing slight sweetness; perfect with ripe fruit or as aperitif. \$15 (750 ml)