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## A Day for Wine? Mark Oldman Will Help You ‘Drink Like a Billionaire’

From champagne to Chardonnay, Mark Oldman helps you professionalize your taste in wine.

by [Jesse Kornbluth](#)

The first time I had lunch with Mark Oldman, I didn't return home until 4 PM. My wife's reaction: "No way you were having lunch with a man for three hours." So I invited Mark to dinner. We talked until midnight — with not a word about wine. Because he's that interesting.

And he's that interesting as a writer. Wine brings out the bore in most writers; it unleashes the imp in Mark. His first book, *Oldman's Guide to Outsmarting Wine: 108 Ingenious Shortcuts to Navigate the World of Wine with Confidence and Style*, set a tone that's unique in wine writing: brash and helpful in equal measure. Who else would tell you what to drink the day you get out of prison — or on your deathbed? Or tell you what to buy at Costco? And serve up "fifty best buys under \$15?"

His second effort, *Oldman's Brave New World of Wine: Pleasure, Value, and Adventure Beyond Wine's Usual Suspects*, is the first wine book to quote a book and a movie title. Again, he's a rule breaker: "Anything you can't pronounce is a good value." A truth teller: "Only 2% of the wines on sale will get better with age." And a consumer advocate: "The more popular a wine is, the more likely customers must pay extra for that demand."

His new book is "*How to Drink Like a Billionaire: Mastering Wine with Joie de Vivre*." The book video gives an overview:





But that doesn't convey the flavor of the book. Start with the cover: Oldman opening a bottle of champagne with a sabre. Then the quote at the start of the book: "We are all mortal until the first kiss and the second glass of wine." And the mission statement ("to relieve drinkers of wine's pretentiousness") and the Hemingway quote ("Write drunk, edit sober"). And then he's on to advice. "Curb thy swirl." Put your hand over the glass as you swirl? News to me. As what makes great wine great. Why Portuguese reds should be big. And when is the best time to drink champagne. [For Oldman, that's easy: any time.] In short: This is the cheekiest, most fact-packed cheat sheet in all of winedom. [To buy the book from Amazon, [click here](#). For the Kindle edition, [click here](#).]

Oldman has kindly served up nine key suggestions. You might raise a glass to him.

1. "Avoid wine by the glass. If your table plans to drink three or more glasses of wine, it's less expensive to order a bottle."
2. "A wine's price is often inversely proportional to how easy it is to pronounce. Chardonnay is rarely a good deal, but the Moschofilero and Gewürztraminer have to be virtually given away."
3. "Your go-to red in an Italian restaurant should be Primitivo. It is a low-cost, unpretentious, luscious red from Italy's sunny south. Everyone loves it."
4. "To smoke out the gems on a wine list, ask your server what the chef drinks when he or she is off-duty."
5. "When at home, designate a 'house white,' 'house red,' and 'house bubbly' – and call them that."
6. "When giving wine as a gift, attach an explanatory note and a 'consume by' expiration date. It makes the gift more special and encourages the recipient to seize the day."
7. "Never fear dropping ice in a glass of everyday wine, even if it is red. Drinking your reds a bit cooler will focus the flavors. All the pros do it."

8. “Visit wineries that require a reservation. You are more likely to have a special experience there, as you are if you signal your intention to buy something during your visit.”

9. “Any wine shop or restaurant stocking Beaujolais Nouveau in July works for the forces of darkness. It goes flat by March or April.”