

BY TERI CITERMAN



# What's your wine sign?

**A**fter being single for most of my life and married for nearly 1/74th of it, I still find I do some of my best and happiest drinking alone. It's not that I don't want to drink with others, but sometimes it conflicts with the desperate want for an altered reality in which to deal with those very others.

That aside, wine is of the earth, the air and the water. Mix it up with a bit of fire and you've got the perfect astrological concoction to ring in the new year. And what's a new year without a little guidance from the stars?

If you're a **Capricorn** (like the German and I), you know what I mean when I say, "Wound tight with notes of pessimism and caution." Patient and ambitious, Caps need solid structure, high standards and some level of fiscal oomph. Unmistakably, a bottle of Pinot. **Cooper Mountain 2005 Pinot Noir "Old Vines"** is the perfect pairing for a grudging goat. It's not slick but has a sophisticated French, rustic confidence. With fireworks of black and red berry and alfalfa tip sprinkles, this wine shows rugged earthiness from its igneous rock core.

A natural contrarian, **Aquarians** are honest and humanitarian, inventive and intellectual. With far-reaching attitudes, they can sometimes be overwhelming, though a rich, textured glass of **Walter Dacon 2005 C'est Syrah Beaux** can easily soften the edge. This warming, deliciously winter wine is lean and lush with a deeply hypnotic lively spice balanced with sweet surrender. Umm-ummm good — it should say it right on the label.

Not a monster of the deep nor a chicken of the sea, **Pisces**, the fish, is an imaginative, sensitive soul who can be a bit indecisive and mistaken for a sacrificial lamb. And what goes better with fish or lamb — sacrificial, grilled or otherwise — than **Gordon Brothers Family Vineyards 2005 Merlot**, a glass of wet asphalt coupled with new car scent. It's the St. Bernard of wines — blueberry and toasty with a shot of blackberry and a bit of choke-your-cherry on the finish.

Don't we all wish we had a little **Aries** in us? Full of adventure, energy and courage, Aries' wit is as quick as its temper. Though its enthusiasm teeters on impulsive self-indulgence (You say it like it's a bad thing!) this fervent ram needs a daredevil wine. Enter **Woodhouse Family Cellars 2003 Dussek Syrah** with its blackest fruit mixed with black licorice, this dark glass of juiciness stands up and shouts, "Let's do it again!" — whatever "it" might be.

The bounty of the bull is patience and reliability. Persistent and determined, **Taurus** finish what they start. Inflexible, yes. Impulsive, no! The perfect designated drivers, the resentful Taurus may end up dropping off fellow drinkers at precisely the wrong house if rubbed wrong. Slip them a glass of **CedarCreek Platinum Reserve 2005 Pinot Noir** with supple aromas of Black Forest cake swirling forward. Though subtle and steadfast, this wine takes the bull by the horns.

And then there is **Gemini**. The twins. Pure schizophrenia. (After dating a few, I feel qualified to make this assessment.) Wine for a Gemini needs to be whimsical, witty and light, lest this tense sign gets nervous. **Vin Du Lac's 2004 Chardonnay** is a creamy sweet-and-sour balance of vanilla and butterscotch on

the back of your tongue. Scrumptious — even for the sometimes superficial Gemini.

**Cancer**, the receptive crab — full of love and emotion, albeit a bit clingy and moody. A **Barrister 2005 Cabernet Franc** provides a fortuitous steadiness with its plush depth, like a layered sweet plum cobbler and jammy "big boy"-ness. Throw a dollop of whipped cream in your mouth and call it a day.

**Leo** is generous and warmhearted, broad-minded and expansive with strutting, show-off tendencies. You know who you are. When Leos get a little too full (of themselves), a sturdy Cab will reel them in. **Januik Winery's 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon** overflows with ripe currant, blackberry and chocolate. When the dream of the blue turtles meets the king of the jungle, the contrast can invite supple combustion.

With the eye of a hawk, **Virgos** have a meticulous sensibility and Capricorn-like standards. They're full of trivial tidbits because of their anal yet intelligent examinations of all things from all angles. On their quest for perfection, they can be seen as harsh or fussy. In walks the perfect **Willamette Valley Vineyards 2006 Riesling**. Crisp and clean, just the way a Virgo likes it, with soft citrus wafting in the air. This mouthwatering wine is precisely balanced, as if a Virgo made it himself.

Romantic and charming, you can spot **Libras** at a party by the way they hold their bubbly — as well as the crowd. Sociably suave and easygoing, Libra wants to be of the same mind as everyone, lest appear disagreeable. Hard to do even for a super-sign, but with a glass of **Garry Oaks 2005 Blanc de Noir**, it might be possible. This vivaciously dry rosé has a vivid Pinot Noir berry and cherry with Zweigelt sporty spice, perfect for every effervescent occasion — even with the most disagreeable of sorts.

With dramatic determination, **Scorpio** is the sexiest of the bunch. The "cool factor" of these strong, silent types is just simply out of reach for most of us. They've got that hard-to-put-your-finger-on magnetism and choose an intricate blend as their drink of choice. A glass of **DiStefano's 2004 Meritage**, please? That "should I untie you now" ripeness mingled with chewy tannins makes for a chocolaty cedar, black cherry and berry explosion. Lay it down 'cause this one's got a few years.

Friends are God's way of apologizing for our family, and a **Sagittarius** is a good choice to add to the mix. Sagittarians are positive, good-humored, straightforward and optimistic — to the point of sometimes being blind. While signs like Leo demand "people like me" — with Sags, you just can't help it. Their glass is always half full with something bold and elegant. **Northstar 2004 Merlot**, muscular with raspberry, chocolate and smoky mocha and a jovial mouth of pure glee, fits the bill.

Cheers to 2008.

*With sass and attitude, TERI CITERMAN is a Seattle dweller and an eager wine enthusiast. She is a contributing writer to the Puget Sound Business Journal, the Portland Business Journal and Northwest Best Places Travel Books.*