

Choosing Wine Gear You'll Really Use

BY TIM GAISER

It's true that you need nothing more than a corkscrew and a glass to enjoy a bottle of wine. But that raises the question: which corkscrew and which glass? There's no shortage of options. You don't have to look very hard to find a dizzying assortment of gorgeous, steeply priced,

and often impractical wine doodads—I personally have plenty of fancy wine tools that don't do anything but collect dust. Truth is, the wine accessories I use on a regular basis are decidedly not fancy; in fact, most of them are outright bargains. Here they are:

Decanters

Decanters are a must for separating the sediment from older red wines and aerating young bottles of red wine to soften the tannins and make them more enjoyable. Decanters can be plain, ornate, or oddly shaped. Riedel's Cabernet decanter offers the best of all worlds with its elegant design and functional shape, plus it's very affordable. The 37½-ounce model is \$39, and the 64-ounce model is \$64.50 at 67wine.com (888-671-6767).

Corkscrews

There are hundreds of kinds but only two that I use:

The Pull Tab (far left) is my go-to corkscrew. I use it 99.9% of the time, as do most of the wine pros I know. It has a handle that fits well in most hands, a Teflon-coated auger for ease of use, and a two-level hinge that will remove any cork easily (provided you pull straight up). And it's only \$8.99 at ChefDepot.net (630-434-7768).

Screwpull's table model (left) could be the ultimate corkscrew. Even a novice can use this corkscrew without struggling. And it works even on those bottles with brittle, crumbly corks, so it's a lifesaver when you're opening an old bottle of wine from the cellar. It's \$19.95 at IwaWine.com (800-527-4072).