



Winexpert Gamay Nouveau Party Planner Checklist

Nouveau-style wines are light, purple-pink, fruity, and considered by wine snobs to be 'easy drinking', usually accompanied by a nose-in-the-air attitude. The truth is that they're joyful wines, consumed for sheer pleasure. No heavy tannins, no need to break out the look-sniff-sip-spit wine-tasting moves, just pour, enjoy, repeat. Add happy guests, low-effort, delicious food, and you'll have everything you need for a sophisticated but un-pompous, classic get-together. Don't think of it as a 'tasting': think of it as a great excuse for a party. Here's how to pull it off with flair.

The Party Vibe

Casual, conversational, fun and definitely stylish, but with a certain *je ne sais quoi*. How you say? Ah, oui: Not trying too hard. Pretty up your house with fresh flowers and candlelight, but don't get too fussy. Think stand-up, move-around party, not sit-down dinner, and don't gather people around and walk them through a tasting. Your everyday white plates are fine, and both stemware and rustic tumblers will do for the wine. Disposable cocktail plates are okay, though for a more eco-friendly option, try super-stylish biodegradable bamboo plates, or renting plates from a party supply house. (BONUS: you return them as-is and don't have to wash them!)

Step One:

Start your Winexpert Seasonal Release Gamay Nouveau!

Then, decide:

- Who is the party for? Friends, family, winemaking pals?
- When is the party? Date, day of the week, time of day—make sure it's scheduled for when the Gamay is ready to drink, so plan on six to seven weeks after you pitch your yeast. The third Thursday in November is traditional, but make the date work for you.
- Where is the party going to be?
- How many people are you inviting?
- What type of party is it? Brunch, lunch, hors d'oeuvres, buffet or sit-down meal? Remember, Gamay Nouveau isn't just for breakfast any more!

Let's Start Planning Your Party!

- Make list of people to invite.
- Mark the date on your calendar.
- Send invitations (by mail, e-mail, Tweet-up, e-vite or phone).
- Plan menu
- Make shopping list (food, paper goods, and decorations).
- Plan cooking schedule: Determine what can be made ahead and frozen, day before, and that day, and what you are buying already prepared.
- Make list of equipment needed (do you need to rent or borrow chairs and tables?).
- Plan the layout of the rooms. (Make sure all the food tables are not right on top of each other to ensure smooth flow for people to mingle.)
- Plan music
- Plan lighting.
- Buy or make a centerpiece or other decorations.
- Ensure you have enough cleaning supplies for before and after the party.
- Make a checklist of what you are making with appropriate cooking equipment needed for each recipe.
- Make sure you have all the platters and serving pieces you will need.

During the Party

Make sure you've got

- Coat rack (hangers or a separate room to put coats)
- A place to put boots or umbrellas
- Ice, and enough ice buckets or coolers to keep your Nouveau chilled
- Cocktail napkins (have enough for 2 per person)
- Toothpicks
- Candles
- Paper towels
- Extra toilet paper, guest soaps, paper hand towels and potpourri (for powder room)
- Plates and cutlery (appetizer, salad, dinner, dessert)
- Glasses: Nouveau can be drunk out of anything, so be creative. The French serve it in one-pint 'Pot' glasses, but chunky water glasses, cheap wine glasses or jelly jars work great. No Styrofoam cups though!
- Other glasses for water and soft drinks, and coffee cups
- Silverware (remember all of the courses, a fresh spoon or stirrer is necessary for coffee)
- If grilling, check the tank/charcoal/lighter fuel, bug spray, and citronella candles
- Coffee and assortment of tea bags
- Cream and sugar
- Salt and pepper
- Corkscrews! Have more than one, as a broken corkscrew is a tragedy.

- Cameras, spare memory or film if you use it
- Garbage bags
- Dishwashing soap
- Club soda (for any thing that may spill, a great spot remover)
- Space to chill your Gamay. It only takes soda 20 minutes to chill on ice. A large tub or picnic cooler can be used in a back room.
- Picture taking. Get some shots of the party set up before your guests arrive. You may also want to designate a photographer to get good shots during the party, of folks having fun and toasting the Nouveau. Remember, you'll need pictures to submit for your prize.

Consumables

Your food and wine menu will be taken care of, but there are other things you'll need:

- Ice. There's no such thing as too much ice. You'll need lots for coolers and ice buckets.
- Soft drinks, juice, tea and coffee. Make a pot when guests arrive and set it out with cream, sugar, and artificial sweetener. Take care of your designated drivers!
- Music. You don't have to hire a 15-piece band (although that would be totally **awesome**), but you should have a stereo system and a selection of party music. French chanteurs et chanteuses like Charles Aznavour, Serge Gainsbourg, Edith Piaf, Françoise Hardy, Jane Birkin, Stéphane Grappelli, Django Reinhardt, Plastic Bertrand, Gypsy music or any sort of party tunes that you enjoy are all good. If your collection isn't geared towards festive sounds, borrow from friends or have guests bring their favorites for a musical potluck. There's always a closet DJ in the crowd.
- Lighting. Overhead lights can really harsh a mellow party. Keep lighting dim and indirect. Create dramatic pools of light in key areas by clustering choirs of candles together, balling up Christmas lights and setting them out in bowls. If you're a real party maven you could install a mirror ball with pin spot—they're surprisingly affordable. Black lights should be avoided, because they instantly reveal who has fake teeth and who's wearing a white bra under her sweater.
- If you have a fireplace, light a fire to inject any party with relaxed elegance.
- Decorations. You don't need piles of balloons or miles of crepe paper—that's for a high school prom. But it's nice to have flowers, candles (always unscented), and event-appropriate visuals, such as a poster of the Seine or even a basket of baguettes and berets.

Notes On Party Equipment

- Paper goods. Buy cups, heavy-gauge plates, and napkins in various sizes, and don't forget the forks and knives. Even if you're using your own glassware and tableware, you should have stacks of cocktail napkins on hand for use as coasters, grease blotters, spill wipers, and olive pit receptacles.
- Ashtrays. Even if you're banishing smokers to the back porch, have plenty of these on hand.
- Wine cooler. An antique copper kettle is the most attractive option. A galvanized aluminum garbage can isn't as pretty, but if you can line it with a heavy-duty garbage bag it will get the job done. The ugliest of all are those plastic coolers that get hauled to sports games, but that might fit in if your party is more of an ironic low-rent theme!
- Trash cans. Keep a large trash can in the kitchen as well as strategically placed smaller trash cans so that guests can easily rid themselves of plates, napkins and the like. This will make your job of cleaning up a lot easier after the party.
- And don't forget...corkscrews, bottle openers, stirrers, cocktail shakers, ice bucket and tongs, cutting boards, and enough sharp knives to handle meats and cheeses at the buffet and anything else that needs cutting up.

One More Thing

Have the number of your local taxi or Safe Ride Home service posted beside your phone and make sure those who need it use it. You don't need an excuse to have a party, but there's no excuse for partying and driving, and Winexpert wants everyone to have a safe, fun time.

And do remember to have fun: the best parties are those where the host has as much fun as all the guests, and the best question a guest can ask is, 'When are you going to do this again!'