

Ten Design Tips: Expand Your Horizons!

by Design Expert: Michael Green



An educator, importer, writer, consultant and retailer, Michael was *Gourmet Magazine's* Wine & Spirits consultant for 19 years. He has been a guest on Food Network's *Emeril Live* and *Cooking Live* as well as *CBS Marketwatch*, NPR and Clear Channel radio. He has been featured in many national publications including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Times-Picayune*, *Business Week*, *U.S. News and World Report* and *House Beautiful*.

Michael believes searching for a fine wine can be a parallel journey to defining good design choices, as he explains here with his ten tips on how to **Expand Your Horizons**.

Ten Tips From Michael Green:

1. Use unique stemware:

Open your mind to using beautiful and functional glasses. Always be adventurous in choosing a variety of shapes and colors that may add to the drinking experience. A good traditional wine glass should offer a generous bowl, thin rim, and an ample stem. If you're looking for the alternative options, try a juice glass or martini glass even for wine. Care for your stemware with very hot water, but no soap as residue can leave unwanted flavors behind.



2. Use bottles as part of the décor and color inspiration

Think of your bottles as accessories to the dinner table. Labels, glass color, and bottle style all are decorative elements, so show off your bottles on the table or bar for visual interest and as a conversation starter.

3. Create a proprietary drink and name it something special

Have fun with this one. Theme your drink to celebrate your guests, occasion, or just your mood. Color names from a Benjamin Moore paint deck are a fun and unexpected source for some good ideas. So don't hold back! Why not have a berry filled cocktail called Gypsy Love (2085-30)?

4. Choose bottles by their label design to add surprise

When you're lost in the aisles of your favorite wine and spirits shop, try something new by design. Look for the most interesting bottle or the most outrageous label and enjoy the surprise that may await you inside the bottle, too.

5. Create a takeaway menu for your guests that includes wine & spirits

Share your ideas with others by giving them a list of what food, key ingredients, and wine or spirits they sampled at your get together. It's a great keepsake and is quite memorable.

6. Use color as your guide for what special drinks you'll serve

If you're stumped as to what drink to serve, consider the colors you'd like to see on the table. In the same way you would create a centerpiece by design, look for colorful ingredients that set the mood. Fruits are a wonderful place to start for a pop or touch of color and can work well in a drink.

7. Engage in a conversation with your local wine educator/sommelier

To cultivate a true appreciation and understanding of wines, brush up on the topic with a local expert. Sommeliers are well versed in many aspects of their craft and a good one is often willing to share the information.

8. When dining out consider getting the wine list in advance

Many restaurants are able to share their wine list in advance of your visit so you can actually look into them and plan an exciting journey for the evening.



9. Theme the color of the wine to the color of your food

Keep in mind that you're creating a combination of sensations when you pair food and wine. The smell, sight, and taste will all come together for your experience. If it's an important night, plan ahead and experiment before deciding which wine style and color is right for the event.

10. Explore the joys of Rose wines and Champagnes

Often, these categories are overlooked but can offer amazing flavors and colors. Play with Rose wines and Champagnes often rather than waiting for a special occasion.

