



June 22, 2006

New bottles let you bring bubbly to the beach

Want to turn your picnic into an elegant outing? Jon Bonné takes a look at Champagnes and wines that let you leave the corkscrew at home

The explosion of options in box wine will serve you well, too. For sheer convenience, the one to beat remains the single-serving Three Thieves Bullet, but Boisset's French Rabbit — a series of collapsible, earth-friendly 1-liter boxes — offers similar convenience and slightly better wine. Sourced from vineyards in France's Languedoc and Roussillon regions, the pinot noir and merlot aren't bad, despite being on opposite ends of the chic scale, and the cabernet sauvignon was impressive.

French Rabbit 2004 cabernet sauvignon vin de pays d'Oc (\$10, Boisset America): A bit leathery, both as in saddle leather and fruit leather. Scents of dried branches amid the usual oak. Surprisingly subtle and mouthfilling, with a medium-light weight and a clean finish. Way above average for the category.

French Rabbit 2004 pinot noir vin de pays d'Oc (\$10, Boisset America): It's hard to find pinot in a box, probably because it's such a persnickety (and expensive) grape. And yet this one works, once you push past a slight burnt smell in the fruit. Surprisingly tart and fresh, dominated by strawberry jam and cola. Paper-cup pinot.