

TREASURE

magazine

BY JAMES PATRICK KELLY

Boiseans are learning more about wines and are seeking out varieties that suit their palates and their pocketbooks.

Wine drinking has become in vogue lately. People in general (not just connoisseurs and sommeliers) have started to read reports in wine magazines about viticulture regions and are seeking out particular wines of interest — more so than ever before.

Here is a look at some new area wine stores offering trendy gifts this holiday season:

LA CANTINA SOCIALE

3395 N. Cole Road, Boise

377-0224, www.lacantinasociale.com

La Cantina Sociale opened less than two years ago in the Cole Village Shopping Center.

In addition to lots of Italian wines, the store boasts a small vinateria (wine bar with light fare) and rows of foodstuff from Italy.



Giuseppe Veneziano, owner of La Cantina Sociale, and one of his favorite customers, Shoko Asay.

It also has resident Italian wine guru Giuseppe Veneziano, an animated guy from Sicily who manages the place.

La Cantina, as everyone calls it, specializes in Italian wines, ranging from the northern peaks of Piedmont to the sunny stretches of Sicily. Great wines meant for the home cellar are the norm here.

"We deal in wines that aren't found anywhere else in town. Some of our wines are

one of a kind," says Veneziano, referring to a bottle of 1994 Gaja Barbaresco worth at least \$700.

Don't worry, though. La Cantina has more affordable wines, like \$30 bottles of Chianti Classico, \$15 bottles of dry rosato and \$7 bottles of Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon.

The holiday season is a good time to sip bubbly, especially fruity and dry Prosecco from Italy's Veneto region (bottles range from \$15 to \$25).

Veneziano loves to help people pair wines to specific dinners. This former chef knows just as much about food as he does about wine.

"You come in, and I'll set you up with the perfect wine for your Christmas meal," Veneziano says.

La Cantina also sells gift baskets (prices start at \$25) of Italian wine and specialty food during the holidays.