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DESIGN



WINED AND DESIGNED

Sommelier Caitlin Stansbury weighs in on the carafe craze.

Pour Sports

Form, function or flat-out failure? Sommelier Caitlin Stansbury puts designer decanters to the test

By Kate Parham | Photography by Ji Shin

Wine decanters are the current craze on almost every designer's hit list this year, with more carafes flooding the accessories market every month. So how to separate the legit gadgets from the worthless gizmos? We turned to Caitlin Stansbury, owner of Wineocology, a consulting firm that helps restaurants like Tasca Wine Bar and Bastide craft master wine lists. After sampling the good, the bad and the simply whacked-out, Stansbury's fave was **Crate & Barrel's Vinturi Red Wine Aerator**, which costs less than \$40. As for the others? Here she spills on A-list aeration.



THE CONTRAPTION Claudio Colucci's Carafe Un Verre, \$115, aplusstore.com.

THE CLAIM Mouth-blown from a single piece of glass, this carafe claims that as the bottle is emptied, the wine glass within remains full. While allowing the wine to aerate, the decanter also serves as a "poetic visual" on the table.

THE SKINNY "Total BS. It only holds 15 oz., so you can't even decant an entire bottle of wine. Also, if you want to actually drink the wine, you'd have to completely upend the decanter, causing violent splashing through the neck."

THE BOTTOM LINE "There is a complete lack of function, and it's not even that pretty."

THE CONTRAPTION The Strange Decanter, \$1,470, the-strange-decanter.blogspot.com.

THE CLAIM The wine is aerated, but it's not an oenological instrument. The first benefit is to perfectly show the color of the wine. It's a sculpture that becomes very lively during the filling and pouring processes.

THE SKINNY "This is not a functional piece of equipment. It's a piece of art. The biggest problem with this is that there is not a lot of surface area exposure, so there's no aeration once it's in the decanter."

THE BOTTOM LINE "This is a stunning piece of art. If you're looking for something functional, this is not it."



THE CONTRAPTION Tord Boontje & Emma Woffenden Transglass Decanter, \$96, greenergrassdesign.com.

THE CLAIM Made from recycled wine and beer bottles, the decanter has raw edges that are sanded and polished.

THE SKINNY "These are beautiful and ecofriendly, but also pretty pointless. Wine bottles are colored to protect the wine from light. So when you do pour your wine, you want to see the color, which you can't do here. Secondly, this is actually a wine bottle, so the surface area is the same, which means the wine will not aerate more than it would in a normal bottle."

THE BOTTOM LINE "I would buy these, but for something other than wine." ■



THE CONTRAPTION Riedel Duck Decanter, \$279, williamssonoma.com.

THE CLAIM An elongated shape provides a generous surface area and the wide mouth simplifies filling, while the curved handle makes the well-balanced vessel comfortable to hold.

THE SKINNY "It's outstanding for aeration because you can see the surface area. Also, the ease of pouring into the wide mouth is very easy to work with and adds a lot of visual design impact to the table." **THE BOTTOM LINE** "By far the most functional to aerate and pour from. Pouring action is very beautiful off the edge. I prefer Riedel's Swan decanter because it's more compressed so it doesn't eat up table space and it's like pouring with a laser. Functional, dramatic, gorgeous. Perfect."

