

 UNITED  
**HEMISPHERES**

February 2007  
Greensborough, NC  
Circ: 401,137

goodspirits

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## Hearts and Bubbles

Looking to lift a glass to love in honor of Valentine's Day, our wine expert invites you to enjoy a bit of effervescence as he pours his heart out on the topics of champagne and romance. / **By Bill Marsano**

“**IN THE SPRING A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY LIGHTLY** turns to thoughts of love.” We have Alfred, Lord Tennyson's word on that. As poet laureate of England under Queen Victoria, he'd have known.

Or would he? He was late to pitch woo, being a ripe 27 before making eyes at his future wife, Emily Sellwood (he was all of 41 when they married), and, in choosing spring, late in the calendar, too. Valentine's Day starts the proposal season, at least in the U.S., where they average about 6,000 a day until V-Day buds with 200,000-plus. Now, it's that time again, so let's broach the bubbly in merry salute...

Because most bubbly is far too dry for dessert, choose sweets from Italy's Piedmont: Brachetto d'Acqui, and white Asti and Moscato d'Asti. Prettily pink Brachetto is simply made for chocolate; Asti and Moscato—no longer the cloying, cheaply made stuff of yore—are light and blissfully fragrant (and low in alcohol, too). A fine (if expensive) Canadian alternative is **Inniskillin Sparkling Ice Wine**.

There you are—all the things to do. Now here's one thing *not* to do. No matter who counsels otherwise, no matter how clever you might think it, do not put the ring in her glass. There's something deeply unromantic about choking, gagging, back-slapping, the Heimlich maneuver, and calls to 911.