



THE POUR PRO

Fernando Beteta at Nomi.



Wine Spectacle

Form or function? Nomi's master sommelier spills the secrets on the latest design crop of wine decanters

By Kate Parham

Photography by John Sturdy

Wine decanters, the designer objet de l'année, have been flooding the home accessories market faster than we can even uncork a bottle. But with the ridiculous variety of shapes, sizes and pouring options, how does one even begin to separate which gadgets lead by a nose and which gizmos are better off left in the cellar? We've enlisted Fernando Beteta, the master behind the wine list at the award-winning Nomi Restaurant, to spill the goods on A-list aeration.



THE CONTRAPTION Claudio Colucci's Carafe Un Verre, \$115, aplusrstore.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 "It's like having a fork in your stove. You can't drink out of that. It doesn't even look like it really works. Plus, it would be a nightmare to clean."

THE BOTTOM LINE "For \$115, no way! You don't want to even put any wine inside. It's like those bottles with the ships in them."

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

THE CLAIM More than just a decanter, this is a piece of sculpture that perfectly marries form and function.

THE SKINNY "Looks like a Christmas antler ornament. It's got a pretty cool design, very fragile. But in terms of wine, I think it's more about presentation. Not really going to decant because the amount of air at the top is very, very small."

THE BOTTOM LINE "Pure beauty. If you like that kind of art or want something to show off, it's fine. But it's not going to do much for the 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 very comfortable to hold.

THE SKINNY "Well, it will actually work. You would find it in a fine dining restaurant used by somebody who needs a little extra help with pouring. Remember, you want to decant wine to let it breathe. This one has that. And you could put it on the table because it's so elegant. Riedel is the expert at making decanters and they make some for \$60-\$70 that work just as well."

THE BOTTOM LINE "If you're willing to fork out almost \$300 for a decanter, you better have some really serious wine to put inside."

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 "This is a pretty straightforward pitcher. It looks like it should just be for water. One thing I always try to tell people is to appreciate the color of wine. With the colored tint of the bottle, you can't do that. You're not really decanting because you're just pouring one bottle into another: \$100 down the drain."

THE BOTTOM LINE "It's a broken wine bottle that won't decant. The color won't enhance your fine wine experience. Just no." ■

