

# Wine is mothers' liquid helper

By Joel Stein, Time

It took nearly a year after having our son for my lovely wife Cassandra to get her body back to where it was before. It took nearly three years to get her drinking back to where it was before. For a while, she and her new-mom friends met once a week at the playground to watch their kids and have cheese and wine.

"Being a stay-at-home mom is isolating," she told me. "If you're chilling out with other moms, it's social. I guess we could have been meeting for tea, but that seems a lot more dorky and a lot less fun."

I considered telling her that supervising a child should be more job-like than Studio 54-like. But that would mean she could start questioning every crucial two-hour work lunch I go to at high-end restaurants.

Moms drinking wine is now too normal to question. On Facebook the group Moms Who Need Wine has more than 640,000 subscribers. OMG I So Need a Glass of Wine or I'm Gonna Sell My Kids has 127,000. Stefanie Wilder-Taylor took mom drinking so far, through her blog and best sellers Naptime Is the New Happy Hour and Sippy Cups Are Not for Chardonnay, that she eventually had to admit she had a problem and quit.

Last year, Clos LaChance wines asked a California court to declare that its MommyJuice line did not infringe on the trademark of rival wine Mommy's Time Out.

These are not the kinds of wines Cassandra would take to the playground, because while I might silently object to her drinking wine while watching our son, I'd get more upset about

her drinking mediocre wine while watching our son.

But if you're looking for American reds and whites at around \$10 per bottle, "they're perfectly nice," says Ray Isle, executive wine editor of Food & Wine. "It's not a wine I'd stick away in a cellar and age. But they're going for the opposite: you're supposed to drink it while your child is an infant."

Starting this month, one of the biggest American wineries is marketing directly to moms of young kids. Chateau Ste. Michelle in Washington has begun a Facebook campaign asking women to customize an equation to sum up what makes them want a glass. ("Me + a glass of wine – juice boxes + quiet time for 15 minutes = My Chateau.") The ads – -tagline: "It's where you become you again" – will run in places women go when they're stressed out about taking care of their family, including Food Network magazine, parents.com and Rachael Ray's website.

The idea is that wine is the new Calgon bubble bath, or the new Valium.

Winemakers are marketing heavily to moms partly because a lot of women are moms, and wine is the female drink of choice: 52 percent of women pick it as their favorite alcoholic beverage, compared with 20% of men. (The numbers for beer are almost the exact inverse.) That's why Francis Ford Coppola Winery sells sparkling wine in a can with a straw attached – no lipstick smudges – and French and Italian wineries sell boxed wine in containers shaped like purses. It also explains why there is so much pinot grigio.

The push to sell wine to moms also reflects changes in how we view motherhood. A proliferating number of mommy blogs portray stay-at-home parenting as a gritty daily struggle. If a factory worker deserves a cold beer after a long day on the floor, then these women deserve their pinot grigio. Chateau Ste. Michelle's message to moms is that they can remain fun,

chardonnay-swilling party girls in their off-hours, which seems fair. I don't want Cassandra just to be a mom all the time. If that means she has to brown-bottle it at the park with some cheese and crackers, I'm O.K. with that. But personally I don't think I could have a bad enough day at work to touch something called MommyJuice.