

## Getting Saucy

**Sisters Barbara Nowak and Beverly Wichman** are charming, enthusiastic, and so in tune with one another that their frenetic dialogue and tendency to finish each other's sentences seem like dinner table banter. Don't let that fool you; they also know a heck of a lot about wine and have made it their mission to take the perceived stuffiness and pretense out of enjoying a good glass.

"Beverly and I did a radio show in Nashville for five years and it was all about food, wine, and restaurants, and we interviewed so many wine makers and sommeliers that people started calling in and asking us about wine," says Nowak. So the

two collaborated on a wine guide aimed at demystifying wine, particularly for women.

### DIALING IN

Fee: \$3,000 plus travel and cost of wine

Speaking engagements came directly out of the book tour. "We bought a van for a dollar, we painted it purple, and our metal sculptural artist friends made a grapevine for the luggage rack... We drove around the country doing wine tastings, book signings, radio and TV spots, and that was our first introduction to speaking for groups," explains Nowak. "People who were intimidated about wine seemed to get a lot out of it because we have a non-threatening, humorous approach to the whole thing."

The Sisters speak at "everything from women's organizations on the social side to corporations such as American Express to trade organizations to graduate schools," says Nowak. They are also in demand for holiday parties, spouse programs, and executive training events.

"We love our restaurant etiquette program because there is so much to learn," says Wichman. "I've realized that even the presidents of companies sometimes don't have a clue [about proper behavior]. I've seen people passed up for promotions because they lack social savvy, so we love doing that program."

"Part of what we do is show people how to fake it," adds Nowak. "We give them tricks to at least look like they know what they are doing even if they are not well versed in wines." One such trick is to know that Riesling and Pinot Noir pair well with virtually any meal. "We have called these two 'the sluts of the wine world' because they are indiscriminate about what they are paired with," says Nowak.

"We have one program where we teach wine lingo and provide different associations for remembering terms," says Wichman, who finds that sports associations work particularly well: What do football and a champagne bottle have in common? You punt the ball and the indentation at the bottom of the bottle is called the punt.

The Saucy Sisters also offer a blind taste-test teambuilding activity; the program is a popular cocktail hour substitute because it limits the number of drinks people have while keeping them entertained.

**By Kinley Levack**

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