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THE NEXT BIG THING
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TRASH BASH

Pushing the reset button on your outdated entertaining accouterments provides all the provisions for throwing the perfect party. Here's how to turn your spring cleaning session into the soiree of the season.

WHITTLE DOWN YOUR WINE

The first bottles to pop are the ones that have been sitting out in the open for several years. If not kept in a wine fridge or climate-controlled cellar, chances are they're not at their best. Obviously, don't hinge your whole party on these questionable quaffs—instead, have some guest-worthy bottles as backups.

HOLD THE BEST TASTE TEST EVER

For wine that's stored properly, it's time for one of the most fun things wine drinkers can do: open a few prizes so you and your guests can gauge how they're aging. In general, Bordeaux from the 1990s are approaching primetime. Those from the early 2000s may be showing well, too. Any white Burgundies from before 2006 are crying out to be tasted, as are your Rioja or Ribera del Duero reds from 2000 to 2008. Barolos from the late 1990s can arguably go much longer, but if you have the collection, dive in and test those delicious vintage waters.

ATTACK YOUR SPICE RACK

If you're like most people, your spices are probably out of date and dulling your dinners. Ground spices like nutmeg and allspice have a maximum shelf life of four years, while oregano and other dried, leafy herbs like parsley and basil should be replaced every two years. Buy some chicken legs and thighs, add pinches of the aforementioned spices, a few onions and carrots, some chili flakes and paprika and enough stock to cover for a simple stew that goes well with most red or white wines.

TAKE A FINAL HOME PLATES STAND

Your collection of rag-tag mismatched plates, bowls, glasses and wine stems you've been using regularly for years don't really have sentimental value, they've simply just hung around too long. Cut the cord and replace them with matching sets. To honor their stalwart (but style-less) service, send them off to thrift store heaven with proper pomp by using them for this, their final fête.