

DRINKREPORT ANGELA DANSBY

SUMMER WINE... AND THE DRINKIN' IS EASY

"Summer wine and the drinkin' is easy. Fish are grillin' and the spirits are high. Oh, you're not very rich, but for good wine you're a-lookin'? Then hush, little baby, below are wines to buy..."

It's a new twist on Porgy and Bess, but an old one for vintners that know you don't have to spend big bucks on great wines. Summer offers the perfect excuse to try new varietals like Riesling or Pinot Grigio instead of the same ol' Chardonnay. In fact, a good rule of thumb for the season is ABC - Anything But Chardonnay. Rich whites like this are not refreshing in the heat. Foods eaten in summer tend to be lighter, so lighter wines are better choices. "Very aromatic, crisp, non-oakey whites and rosés that finish dry combat humidity in the Midwest," says Todd Hess, wine director at Sam's Wine and Spirits. "Their high acidity levels make them refreshing as well. For red wine, go for non-oakey, fruit-driven varietals."

Of course, summer is synonymous with grilling and picnics. Aromatic whites go well with grilled seafood and vegetables. Rosé goes well with grilled beef. Picnic items like cured meats, olives, and smoked salmon go well with varietals like Sauvignon Blanc and Beaujolais. And Asian cuisines go well with summer wines at large. "I love summer," says





Jim Freveletti, owner of Hue Wine Brokerage (wineman2u@sbcglobal.net) in Chicago. "It inspires me to try many different beautiful white and red wines that I would not normally drink. I look for wines that have enough flavor to be in balance with their acidity level and that are big enough and crisp enough to handle a variety of foods." Hess recommends drinking summer white wines colder than normal at about 45 F. Sticking a bottle in an ice bucket for 30 minutes will do the trick. Slightly chill summer reds to 50-56 F with about half an hour in the refrigerator. "Since cooler temperatures decrease wine flavor, you want naturally aromatic wine," Hess notes.

"In general, you want to avoid wines that are high in alcohol; stay below 14 percent." Summer wines lose their expressive fruit as they age, so you want to buy summer wines as young as possible. Since they don't gain anything from aging look for 2003 and 2004 vintages. Because white and rose wines are not meant to be aged, they often come with plastic screw caps. This eliminates their risk of being corked (smelling and/or tasting like cork due to a rotten or broken cork). FYI Sam's offers to replace corked bottles.

4TH OF JULY: RED, WHITE, AND YOU

"To know wine is to drink wine," Freveletti says, "and trying different varietals shows that there is a perfect wine for every occasion." So when it's hot and the porch becomes the dining room, what wine should you serve? Freveletti recommends Riesling, the "king of white wine grapes," Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, rosé, Beaujolais, and Pinot Noir. White Austrian wines, which have lower alcohol content (11%) than normal (12-14%), are also great in the heat as well as a number of lesser-known varietals from Europe and the Southern Hemisphere. "At 4 pm on a Saturday when you're finished in the garden, **Riesling** is the perfect wine to drink and relax," Freveletti says. "It gives a wide range of flavors, including an aroma of wildflowers, and is a great varietal that everyone should experience. "**Sauvignon Blanc** has great acidity, usually with citrus and

DRINK REPORT CONTINUED



green apple notes and grassy undertones. There are so many really good Sauvignon Blancs for good value. The varietal is perfect for light salads with shrimp and crab as well as grilled or sautéed fish dishes." Regarding **Pinot Grigio**, Freveletti recommends wines from Italy's Delle Venezie that are light and flavorful with great acidity. "Pinot Grigio is a great wine for inexperienced drinkers, but there are also some very serious Italian whites, such as Gavi di Gavi from the Cortese grape, which is one of my favorites," he says. Romance the **rose** this summer as it goes well with a variety of food, including seafood, steak, spicy foods, salads, and even barbecue. Provence, France has become home to several fine rosés, notes Hess. **Beaujolais**, produced

from the Gamay grape, is the quintessential summer red wine. It's light, fragrant and fruity, complementing summer salads and grilled foods, such as salmon, chicken, and hamburger. New this year for your picnic basket are Georges Duboeuf Beaujolais 2004 Minis. Packed in fours (187 ml each), the six-ounce minis amount to a regular bottle of DuBoeuf's Beaujolais-Villages. Last but not least on your to-drink list this summer should be **Pinot Noir**, which came to fame in the movie "Sideways" last year. California vintners say the movie hugely boosted Pinot Noir sales. "I am so happy people are finally discovering this varietal because it's fantastic," Freveletti says. "The 2003 U.S. vintage is one of my favorites."

AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS THIS SUMMER

The fun of summer wine tasting is not only trying different varietals, but also the same varietals by various winemakers and countries. Below are international picks by Hess and other wine gurus for quenching your thirst this summer. Most bottles are not more than \$20, and many countries offer great options. Major wine retailers in Chicago carry most or all of these varietals. Recommended labels with price points (rounded to the nearest dollar) are in parentheses.

DRINK REPORT CONTINUED

ARGENTINA – Torrontes (Santa Julia; \$6)

AUSTRALIA – Riesling (Pikes Clare Valley 2003; \$14)

CHILE – Sauvignon Blanc (Veramonte; \$8)

FRANCE – Chasselas (Schoffit "Vieilles Vignes Cuvee Caroline" 2003; \$14),

Chenin Blanc (Thierry Nerisson Vouvray 2001; \$15), Gamay (Georges Duboeuf Beaujolais-Villages 2004; \$10/750ml, \$9 four-pack minis; Lapierre Morgon; \$17), Pinot Auxerrois (Welty Alsace; \$13), Pinot Noir (Les Caves des Colombe Bourgogne Rouge; \$18), rosé (Chateau Grand Cassagne "Costieres de Nimes" 2004; \$9 and Domaine du Joncier Cotes-du-Rhone 2004; \$15 and Sauvete Touraine; \$11), rosé champagne (Drappier "Vintage Brut" 1999; \$35), Sauvignon Blanc (Cherrier Sancerre; \$22), Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon (Chateau Bonnet; \$8), and Ugni Blanc (Domaine de Pouy; \$7).

GERMANY – Riesling (J & HA Strub Niersteiner Brckchen Kabinett 2002; \$12)

GREECE – Moschofilero (Boutari "Cambas" Mantinia 2003; \$12)

ITALY – Arneis (Vietti Piedmont; \$17), light-style Chianti (Rosetti "Velio" 2002; \$10), Dolcetto (Camerano Piedmont; \$12), Falanghina (Villa Carafa Villa Carafa Campi Flegrei 2003; \$12), Moscato and Malvasia (Canei Vino Bianco; \$4, mildly effervescent), Puglia (Torre Quarto rosato; \$10), rosé (Canei; \$4 and Torre Quarto rosato; \$10), and white blends (Frascati Fontana di Papa; \$5, Soave Gini; \$15).

LUXEMBOURG – Riesling (Clos des Rochers Grevenmacher; \$13)

NEW ZEALAND – Sauvignon Blanc (Brancott Marlborough 2004; \$10, Cottesbrook; \$8, Kim Crawford Marlborough 2004; \$17, and Tohu Marlborough 2004; \$13)

SPAIN – Albarino (Lagar Cervera; \$13), Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé (Miguel Torres Santa Digna; \$10), rosé blend (Marques de Caceres Rioja 2004; \$6), Verdejo/Viura (J&F Lurton Blanca Rueda 2004; \$10), and Viura (Menade Cuvee Reserve; \$8).

UNITED STATES – Chenin Blanc (Chappelet Napa Valley; \$12), Gewurztraminer (Heart of the Vineyard Michigan NV; \$9), Pinot Grigio (Francis Coppola Diamond Bianco), Pinot Noir (Gary Farrell Russian River 2002, Patricia Green; \$19), rosé (Vinavera 2004; \$15, Storybook Mountain Zin Gris; \$16), Sauvignon Blanc (Vinavera Unoaked 2004; \$15, Geyser Peak 2004 and Kenwood Sonoma County 2004; \$13), and sparkling whites (Gruet Brut New Mexico NV; \$13, Coppola Sofia Mini Blanc de Blancs Four Pack; \$20).

A RAY OF SANGRIA

Fruit-filled, icy sangria can help beat the heat this summer. Canei Sangria of Italy (\$4) is a sparkling, fruity red wine that is perfect in a sangria recipe, as a wine spritzer, or on its own. However, any inexpensive, fruity, and light wine will do for DIY sangria.

Several Chicago bars with Spanish twists also offer sangria by the glass and pitcher. **Sangria** (901 W. Weed) upholds its namesake with red, white, champagne, white peach, raspberry, and mango sangria (\$18-\$20 pitcher). Another sangria hub is **Café Ba-Ba-Reeba!** (2024 N. Halsted), which has peach, black raspberry, passion fruit, cava, white, and red sangria (\$18 pitcher). **Nacional 27** (325 W. Huron) has passion fruit, mango, cava, red, and white sangria (\$19 pitcher). **Bordo's Eatery & Sauce** (2476 N. Lincoln) offers white, red, and mango sangria (\$20 pitcher). Traditional red and white sangria is available at **Emilio's Tapas** (444 W. Fullerton, \$20 pitcher), **Mas** (1670 W. Division, \$7 glass), and **Sal & Carvao** (739 N. Clark, \$7 glass). **Coobah's** (3424 N. Southport) has red sangria pitchers for \$5 on Tuesday nights (\$6 glass/\$16 pitcher the rest of the week). **Japonais** (600 W. Chicago) has "Fresh Peach Sangria" for \$10 made of Ozeki sake, Cointreau, Marco Negri Moscato di Asti, passion fruit, and fresh lime juice.

SANGRIA *D.i.Y.*

- 1 orange, sliced thin
- 1 lemon, sliced thin
- 2 tablespoons superfine granulated sugar
- 1 bottle chilled dry red wine (no oak, \$6-7)
- 1/2 cup cognac
- 1/4 cup orange liqueur, such as Grand Marnier or Cointreau
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 cup chilled seltzer or club soda
- Ice cubes

Recipe courtesy of Gourmet via FoodTV.com


In a bowl, muddle the orange and lemon slices together with the sugar using a wooden spoon. Add the red wine, cognac, orange liqueur, and orange juice. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Transfer to a punch bowl. Chill until ready to serve and then stir in seltzer and ice cubes.



DRINK REPORT CONTINUED

Ice Dreams

It is sooo hot outside yet you can't eat another bite of ice cream. We have a great idea – try drinking your ice cream. And for some of these concoctions you can enjoy your ice cream with a kick.



Chill out and satisfy your sweet tooth at the same time with decadent ice cream drinks at **Sal & Carvao** (739 N. Clark, 312.932.1100). The Frozen PB&J is a new twist on a childhood favorite made by using Frangelico and Chambord blended with vanilla ice cream and garnished with raspberry sauce. Also a really delicious treat is their Coco Loco Coconut with blended vanilla ice cream, dark cream de cacao, and Malibu coconut rum. Both are signature chill-out cocktails and cost around \$8 each. Sal & Carvao also serves up classic ice dreams, like the Grasshopper (vanilla ice cream, white Godiva chocolate liquor, and dark crème de menthe) and Brandy Alexander (brandy, dark Godiva chocolate liquor, and a vanilla ice cream).

Martini Ranch (311 W. Chicago, 312.335.9500) is offering its own version of Starbuck's Frappuccino with Starbuck's liquor (yes, the company is now moving into the alcohol business). This yummy and refreshing frap is made with vodka, white and dark chocolate liquors, then shaken with ice, and rimmed with cocoa powder (\$8). **scene**

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ICE CREAM

D.i.Y.

The Road Runner

- 2 Shots Absolut Vodka
- 1 Shot Amaretto
- 1 Shot Cream
- 1 Shot Coconut Cream
- 1 Scoop Vanilla Ice Cream

Blend all ingredients with crushed ice until smooth. Pour into a martini glass and enjoy.