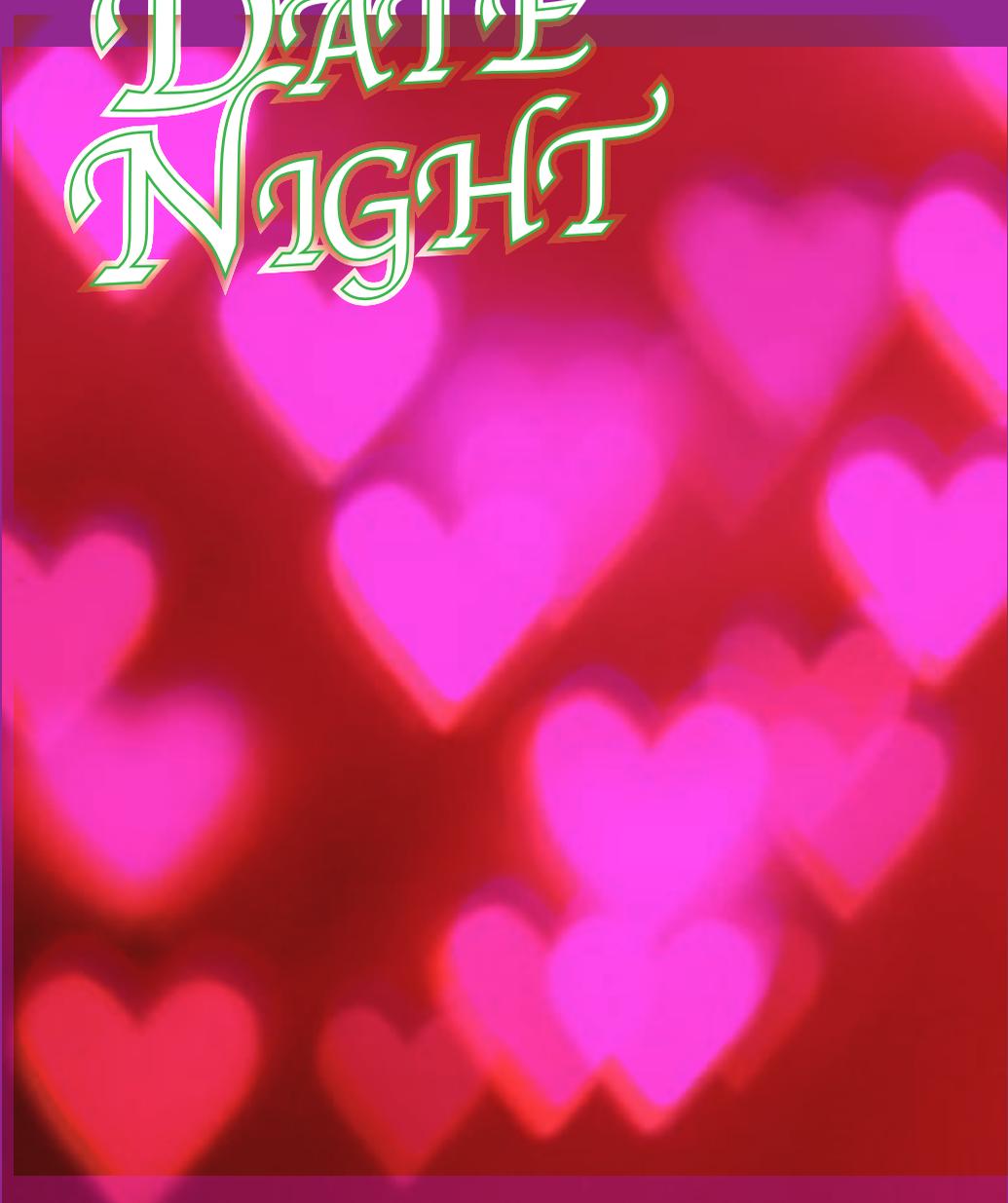


thebacklabel®

A monthly wine journey curated for adventurous souls

# DATE NIGHT





# MODERN DATING

BY LOGAN LEE

DATING IN THE MODERN WORLD IS NOTHING short of a challenge. We have all this technology that has us swiping left and right, but it doesn't feel as though the age of the dating app is making for a great age of actually dating. I feel like the dating situation may even be worse here in NYC. We're loaded up with hyper-competitive and ambitious people perpetually holding out for the next better thing. But there is so much to enjoy right here... in the present.

Instead of exhaustively swiping our way to finding the perfect mate, we might just need more quality time with our friends, family, and ourselves. Wine is a great companion for all the above. That is our goal each month. To make each shipment compelling, sometimes provocative, educational, and always a lot of fun. February is Cupid's month to launch his love arrows, so we're inspired to tackle "date night."

We think "date night" can be with your mom, a book, your BFF, maybe even your dog... as well as with that someone special. Date night can be at a white tablecloth restaurant, at a dive bar, wine bar, or cooking in a super tiny apartment. No matter how you want to look at it, a bottle of vino, some good food, and a friend can make for an excellent evening.

For this month's pairings, we sought out Penguin Random House's cookbook team for some awesome recipes for two. We think we've found the perfect new cookbook for this month's pairings: *Healthier Together: Recipes for Two—Nourish Your Body, Nourish Your Relationships*.

And we've scouted some of our favorite wine bars across the country that make for a great date night if you're planning your next getaway. We've always believed wine is a good excuse for travel and these wine bars in Austin, Charleston, Chicago, LA, Miami, and beyond make for excellent excuses for a road trip!

Let's not forget about the juice! We don't think this month's wine selections will disappoint either... we've snagged an uber dry rosé Cava (of course, we need some pink wine for Vday) dubbed Anna Codorníu, a name that represents the oldest family business in Spain. We've got some amazing juice from two spots in Italy — Sicily and Abruzzo, a Sauvignon Blanc from South Africa that is as good as anything you'll find in Sancerre, and a couple reds from South America to keep you warm even in the Polar Vortex.

Cheers to sharing some excellent vino this month! Even if it's just you and your pup on the sofa with Netflix.



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# WINE BARS ARE KINDA MAGIC

BY WA CREW

A LOT OF MAGIC CAN HAPPEN when two people sit at the bar. From the fanciest to the divey-est, all bars — especially wine bars — are pretty great for a first date or any other date. On a first date it helps to have that bartender behind the bar. It's kind of like an ally in conversation. It's just enough of a third person to spark the main conversation between you and your date. Secondly, sitting side by side is just better i.e easier to share food and flirtatious incidental contact.

Here are some of our favorite wine bars. Now it's up to you to create some magic at the (wine) bar...

## POPS FOR CHAMPAGNE, CHICAGO, IL

601 North State Street at Ohio

It goes without saying that this wine bar has a specialty... bubbles! The bar is known as the place “where Chicago Celebrates,” and it must have been pretty rowdy when the Cubs won the World Series. The vibe

is a slightly more upscale version of a wine bar that sports a selection of 250 bottles of sparkling wine, some delectable bar snacks, and, on most nights, you'll find live music.

*Pro tip: The sparkling wine cocktail menu is damn good.*

## BIN 152, CHARLESTON, SC

152 King St

Bin 152 is exactly what a wine bar should be. If you believe that in simplicity lies perfection, then this is your spot. The bar top is made from a refurbished bowling alley lane and the setting is a mix-match of simple antiques. The main attraction is the wine. The list is comprised of 200 wines by the bottle and 40 wines by the glass! The menu solely consists of some ridiculously good baguette and a diverse selection of cheese and charcuterie. Super simple and perfectly delicious.

*Pro tip: Sit at the bar and ask for wine suggestions. Only good things will happen.*

## MAX'S WINE DIVE, AUSTIN, TX

207 San Jacinto Blvd

This will be the only spot on this list that specializes in something other than wine. It has killer vino, but damn, the fried chicken almost knocks the vino off center stage. It is a good thing that not much pairs better than sparkling wine and fried chicken. The original location is downtown Austin, TX and they've also opened their doors in San Antonio, Houston, and Denver. The ambiance is come-as-you-are casual

and the bar is packed with as much energy as it is stocked with excellent wine.

*Pro tip: To be redundant... get the fried chicken and sparkling wine!*

## HOTEL BIRON, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

45 Rose Street

“They” say the West Coast is the best coast. We're not sure about that... but we'll give it to them when it comes to America's wine! California makes some of the best juice on the planet and San Francisco is right in wine country's backyard. This wine bar doubles as an art gallery. It has a casual vibe that makes it great for a date, catching up with friends, or hanging with a book by yourself. It is nearly impossible to feel out of place at this spot.

*Pro tip: Put your name in for a table at Zuni Café and split a bottle of vino with your friends at Hotel Biron while you wait for a table. It might be a two bottle wait, but that's just fine!*

## LA COMPAGNIE DES VINS SURNATURELS, MANHATTAN, NY

249 Centre Street

Do not let the fancy French name fool you. It translates to something about natural wine... Natural wine is all the rage in NYC's wine scene right now, and, mostly, natural wine is delicious. This place isn't cool because it stocks a lot of natural wine. This wine bar is awesome because they do not take themselves too seriously. We highly suggest going on the early side of a Friday evening

to see the entire staff rocking Hawaiian shirts. Sit at the bar and just let the team pour your way through the wine list.

*Pro tip: Play the mystery bottle game. If you can blind taste and guess the right bottle, you'll win delicious wine.*

## JUNE, BROOKLYN, NY

231 Court Street

This wine bar, located in the Carroll Gardens neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY, might have the best ambiance of any wine bar, period. This is definitely a date spot, but maybe date number 2 or 3 because it might look like you're trying too hard to impress. It kinda feels like you're walking into the set of a Wes Anderson movie, but with an amazing wine list.

*Pro tip: The outdoor patio is the perfect spot for rosé in the summer.*

## LE CAVISTE, SEATTLE, WA

1919 7th Avenue

Seattle might be better known as the birthplace of grunge rock and the home of Amazon and Microsoft, but the state has real wine chops and the crew behind Le Caviste have dreamed up the perfectly cozy French wine bar. Nestled in a quiet nook of bustling downtown Seattle, you'll find a wine bar with a big selection of French vino priced for everyday drinking. The wine list is made up of only independent wine producers and farmers! This is a place to bring your parents if you want to prove you can be a grownup.

*Pro tip: Charcuterie board, for the win.*



## 2017 POGGIO ANIMA "ASMODEUS" NERO D'AVOLA SICILY

100% Nero d'Avola

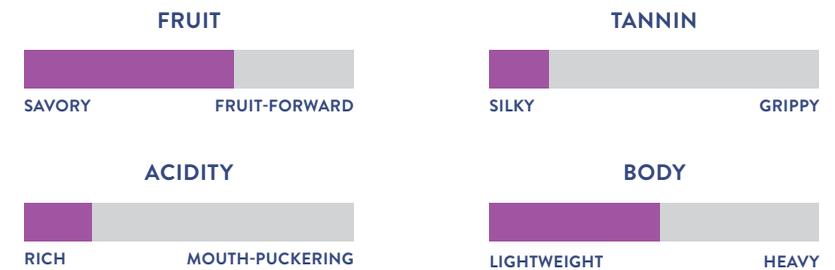


Roaming a backyard Sicilian garden of blackberries, plums, and herbs while snacking on licorice



Plush and generous like the leather seat of an Italian sports car driving through fertile farmlands of dark fruit

**MOOD:** Learning how to make pasta from scratch with a bit of a dance move in your step courtesy of Breakbot's Baby I'm Yours



**N**ero d'Avola is one of our all-time fave, fave, fave grapes! It typically makes wine that is bold, big, and jammy without being over the top. One might argue this grape is a lusty and guilty pleasure, and, of all of the varieties of Italy, Nero d'Avola is as lustful and pleasurable as it gets. And many argue that Italians evoke a life of romantic fantasy more than most. This vino is rich, peppery, and opulent.

The juice is dark garnet with notes of ripe plums, leather, garrigue, and pepper on the nose, with ripe black cherry and a touch of candied berry on the palate. Your sip finishes with fruit and a subtle licorice note with soft gripping tannins that bring the party completely together. Now back to your favorite Italian dream destination! Hope to see you on the beaches of Capri soon...



This jammy Italian red wine is perfect with classic Italian red sauce dishes. We're thinking baked lasagna with a classic bolognese.

# A RISOTTO FOR EVERY SEASON

The brilliance of risotto lies in its versatility, but few recipes actually play up that fact. Here I give you one base recipe, and four seasonal mix-ins to modify it. Eating with the seasons is a great, easy way to get healthier: not only do you connect more with the land on which your food is grown, but when it's local, food is cheaper and doesn't lose nutrients in transit. Consider joining a CSA or visiting a farmer's market with a Healthier Together partner, and then curling up that night with some risotto. Have one of you handle the base risotto, while the other does the seasonal mix-ins.

## SERVES 2

**4 cups vegetable broth**

**2 tablespoons ghee**

**1 small onion, finely chopped**

**1 garlic clove, minced**

**¼ teaspoon fine-grain sea salt**

**1 cup arborio rice**

1. In a medium pot over medium-high heat, bring the vegetable broth to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and cover.
2. Meanwhile, in a large pot, melt the ghee over medium heat. Add the onions, garlic, and salt, and sauté until the onions are translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the rice and sauté, stirring, for 3 to 5 more minutes, until the rice is translucent at the edges. Pour in about 1 cup of the warm broth and cook, stirring occasionally, until the broth is completely absorbed, about 5 minutes. Add another cup of broth and repeat until all the broth has been used up, making sure it gets absorbed between each addition, and the risotto is al dente.
3. Stir in your desired seasonal ingredients. Divide the risotto between 2 bowls, garnish as directed, and serve.

## CRANBERRY GINGER BUTTERNUT SQUASH

Preheat the oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, toss 2 cups of 1-inch cubes butternut squash and 1 cup of fresh cranberries with 2 tablespoons of honey, 2 tablespoons of avocado oil, ½ teaspoon of fine-grain sea salt, and 1 tablespoon of minced fresh rosemary. Arrange in a single layer on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and bake until the cranberries pop and the squash is fork-tender, 20 to 30 minutes. Make the risotto according to the base instructions, but add 1 tablespoon of minced, peeled ginger when you sauté the onions and garlic, and put a sprig of rosemary into the vegetable broth so it infuses while the broth boils, then discard it. Stir the butternut squash mixture and 1 tablespoon of grated orange zest into the finished risotto.





## 2017 BOYA PINOT NOIR

LEYDA VALLEY, CHILE

100% Pinot Noir



A picnic of uber ripe strawberries and soaking in the sun on a Chilean beach



Simple, youthful, and a light finesse of jammy red fruit finishing with Earl Grey tea

**MOOD:** Listening to Feel Alright by Poolside and searching for your next guilty pleasure Netflix show to binge



**T**he Garcés Silva family is a pioneer of the coastal Leyda Valley in Chile, an area which is aesthetically stunning with rolling hills of vineyards that flow into the Chilean beaches on the Pacific Ocean and is home to some amazing Pinot Noir vineyards. These guys are producing juice that is just as good as anywhere in the world, but for an everyday drinking price point!

This pinot is made using fruit that is harvested early, in order to achieve a very bright, low alcohol, and fresh wine. The nose is dominated by the intensity of strawberry, red cherries, and spring flowers. The palate is medium bodied with supple tannins, good natural acidity, and fresh berry fruits towards the finish. It is well balanced, clean, and expressive. This is a red wine that won't wear you down with too much body or oak, but it'll warm you up and bring a touch of freshness at the same time.



This light red wine is a super versatile wine that can be paired with lighter meats like roasted chicken or seared flakey fish.



## GINGER-BASIL BONE BROTH RAMEN

**SERVES 2**

**Fine-grain sea salt, plus more to taste**

**2 bundles (about 6 ounces) uncooked**

**soba noodles**

**½ cup packed fresh basil leaves**

**1 (13.5-ounce) can full-fat coconut milk**

**1 cup pastured chicken bone broth or**

**vegetable broth**

**4 garlic cloves, minced**

**3 tablespoons Thai green curry paste**

**1 teaspoon peeled, minced ginger**

**1 cup sliced shiitake mushrooms**

**2 cups torn tatsoi, kale, or chard leaves**

**Juice of 1 lime**

**4 green onions, white and light green**

**parts only, roughly chopped**

**Sriracha, to serve**

1. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add a small palmful of salt, then add the soba noodles. Cook until just al dente, about 30 seconds less than package instructions, then drain and rinse well.

2. Meanwhile, set aside a few nice-looking basil leaves for garnish. Add the remaining basil leaves to a blender with the coconut milk and blend on high until very smooth.

3. In a large pot, bring the broth to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low and add the garlic, curry paste, ginger, mushrooms, tatsoi leaves, and basil coconut milk. Cover and let simmer for 3 minutes, or until the leaves have wilted and the mushrooms are just soft.

4. Remove the pot from the heat and add the lime juice and cooked soba noodles, then taste and add more salt as needed. Divide the ramen between 2 bowls and garnish with green onions and the reserved basil leaves, plus sriracha, if desired.

**TIP:** The bone broth that comes in Tetra Paks is essentially flavored water. In order to get all the gelatin and minerals (which is where the gut-soothing benefits live), you want to buy bone broth directly from a butcher, or the kind found in the freezer section.



## 2015 CASARENA ESTATE RED BLEND

MENDOZA, ARGENTINA

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Malbec



Blackberry and bitter chocolate pie with a spiced graham cracker crust



Fresh and complex as bold juicy fruit melts into black peppercorn and vanilla

**MOOD:** Facetime-ing your bff for an overdue catch-up session with Why (Remix) by Sean Mendes featuring Leon Bridges playing in the background



**T**he crew at Casarena Estate are making some super unique wines in Mendoza, Argentina. Only 300 cases of this blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec are available in the United States and we're pumped to be able to share this winter warmer of a red wine with the WA community. "Casarena" literally merges two Spanish words "casa" (house) and "arena" (sand), and the name is a tribute to the business's restored 1930s winery made of sand-colored stone and the sandy soil that the estate is built on.

The grapes are hand harvested and the wine is juicy, bold, and packed with ripe fruit like plums, cherries, and blackberries. On the palate is a juicy, spicy wine with lovely inner-mouth energy and umami character due to its dense, smooth flavors of dark berries and black peppercorn. Your sip finishes with substantial dusty, ripe tannins and subtle lingering fruitiness.



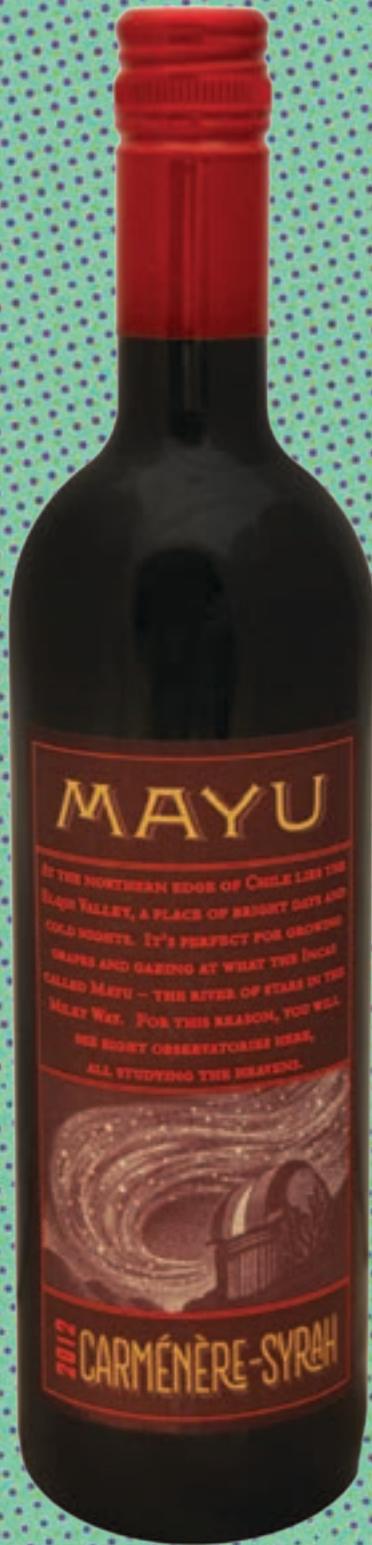
Chinese immigrants to South America have created some delicious East meets West fried rice with Argentine skirt steak and soy sauce that is perfect with this vino.

## A RISOTTO FOR EVERY SEASON

### HEARTY SHALLOT & MUSHROOM

*See page 10 for base recipe*

Melt 2 tablespoons of ghee in a large pan over medium-high heat. Add 2 minced shallots and cook, tossing vigorously, for 1 to 2 minutes. Add 4 cups of your favorite chopped mushrooms, toss to coat, then cook, stirring occasionally, until they start to release their liquid, 4 to 5 minutes. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of fine-grain sea salt, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper, and stir as the last of the liquid is released from the mushrooms. Deglaze the pan with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of dry white wine and simmer until most of the wine has evaporated. Stir into the finished risotto.



## 2015 MAYU CARMÉNÈRE-SYRAH

ELQUI VALLEY, CHILE

55% Carménère, 45% Syrah



Fresh and intense dark fruit wrapped in a vintage leather binocular case



Lush, velvety, and juicy with strawberries, blackberries, and plums doing the Electric Slide

**MOOD:** Playing a long game of Cards Against Humanity with friends listening to Apollo by St. Paul & the Broken Bones by a raging fireplace



The Olivier family started Viña Mayu in 2005 and is the first business to bring premium winemaking to northern Chile's Elqui Valley. This part of the world is known for some of the most gorgeous stargazing possible, and Mayu is actually an Incan word for the Milky Way. While Chile is producing some top-notch vino, your taste buds might get confused by the juice's Italian winemaking characteristics.

On the nose, the juice brings a big and vibrant blackberry and plum punch. The sipping is velvety and it's like ripe fruits invited some additional guests to the party including a pinch of spice and a dash of vanilla. This party is getting cozy near a big fireplace with a bundle of sage tossed in with the wood.



Pair this with olives... maybe an awesome mezze platter of hummus, a variety of olives, artichoke hearts, and roasted eggplant.



## COFFEE HAWAII-CRUSTED LAMB WITH ROASTED & PICKLED ONIONS & FENNEL

**SERVES 2**

**FOR THE ONIONS AND  
FENNEL**

**1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced  
(reserving**

**leafy fronds and roughly chopping  
them**

**to make 1 tablespoon)**

**1 medium red onion, halved and  
sliced**

**into half-moons**

**1 tablespoon avocado or olive oil**

**½ teaspoon fine-grain sea salt**

**1 teaspoon whole black  
peppercorns**

**1 tablespoon fennel seeds**

**1 tablespoon maple syrup**

**½ cup apple cider vinegar**

**FOR THE LAMB**

**1 tablespoon ground coriander**

**1 tablespoon ground ginger**

**1 tablespoon fennel seeds**

**½ teaspoon ground cloves**

**½ teaspoon ground cinnamon**

**2 tablespoons ground coffee**

**1 teaspoon fine-grain salt**

**1 teaspoon freshly ground black  
pepper**

**½ rack (about 1 pound) of lamb,**

**frenched**

**1 teaspoon avocado oil**

1. About 30 minutes before you're ready to cook, take the lamb out of the fridge. Let it sit at room temperature while you prep the vegetables.

2. Make the fennel and onion salad: Preheat the oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

3. On the prepared baking sheet, toss the fennel slices with two-thirds of the onion slices, the oil, and salt to coat. Arrange in a single layer. Set aside.

4. Bring to a boil in a small pot over high heat ½ cup of water, the peppercorns, fennel seeds, and maple syrup. Turn off the heat and let the mixture cool for 5 minutes. Place the remaining sliced onions in a small bowl or a 16-ounce glass jar and pour in the apple cider vinegar. Add the cooled spiced water. Let the mixture sit until you're ready to serve, at least 20 minutes (or up to 1 month in the fridge).

5. Make the lamb: Mix together the coriander, ginger, fennel seeds, cloves, cinnamon, coffee, salt, and pepper in a large bowl. Pat the lamb dry. Rub the avocado oil all over the lamb to coat completely, then add the lamb to the spices, turning to coat and pressing to adhere. Let sit for another 15 minutes at room temperature.

6. Meanwhile, begin roasting the vegetables in the preheated oven. After 15 minutes, place the lamb on a separate baking sheet and place it in the oven. When the vegetables are golden brown at the edges and the lamb reaches 145°F on a meat thermometer, about 15 minutes later, remove both from the oven.

7. Drain the pickled onions and toss them with the roasted vegetables and reserved fennel fronds. Divide the salad between 2 plates. Let the lamb rest for 5 minutes before cutting it apart into individual lollipops and serving over the salad.

**TIP:** What the heck is frenching lamb? Frenched lamb simply means removing the meat from the rib. You can ask for this in almost any butcher shop—it simply makes for a nicer appearance, and it's easier to cut apart the Hawaii-crusted lamb chops later. If you can't find frenched lamb, using a normal rack of lamb is totally fine!

# Cathedral of Cava

BY LOGAN LEE



**CODORNÍU IS THE OG** of Spanish sparkling wine aka Cava. I don't mean like one of the originals. I mean it is **THE** original Cava of Spain. The family's initial vineyard was established in 1551 about 50 miles west of Barcelona. That isn't a typo. They got started in the mid-1500s, which is barely just after Columbus sailed the ocean blue. The family's wine biz is the oldest family-owned business in Spain and it is the 17th oldest family business in the world.

Here's how it all came together in a quick 500 years...

## **1551 - IN THE BEGINNING**

The history of the Codorníu family goes back to the year 1551 with the first records of Jaume Codorníu's winemaking.

## **1659 - A MARRIAGE COMBINES WINEMAKING FORCES**

Anna Codorníu is the last of the descendants of Jaume Codorníu who carried the family name, and in 1659 she married Miquel Raventós combining two families of grape growers.

## **1872 - SPANISH BUBBLES AKA CAVA IS BORN**

Josep Raventós produces the first sparkling wine in Spain using the traditional method.

## **1915 - CODORNÍU CELLARS AKA THE CATHEDRAL OF CAVA IS FINISHED**

Twenty years after they were first conceived, the new cellars opened 50 miles west of Barcelona. The structure is a prime example of Catalan modernist architecture and is recognized with tons of awards and global acclaim.

## **1984 - A BRAND NEW CAVA**

One of Spain's most recognized Cava brands is Anna de Codorníu — a tribute to the last heir holding the Codorníu family name.

## **2002 - CAVA INNOVATION CONTINUES**

The first Cava rosé, made with all Pinot Noir grapes, is released. Sparkling wine + rosé means minds blown!

As you sip through your box this month, take a quiet sec to remember why wine is so different from most products we all consume. This bottle got its start nearly 500 years ago and seems to just be getting better and better!



## 2017 POGGIO ANIMA "GABRIEL" PECORINO

ABRUZZO, ITALY

100% Pecorino

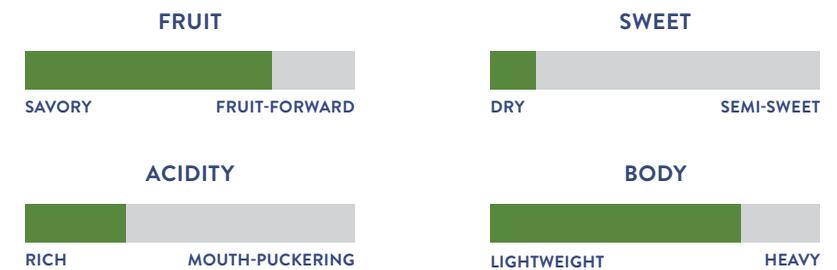


A fresh fruit picnic of citrus, melons, and pears in a flowery meadow



Rich and decadent fruit with a slight honey drizzle and a salty finish

**MOOD:** Hunkering down during a blizzard in PJs, flannel, and as many blankets as possible jamming to Saturdays by Twin Shadow featuring HAIM



**P**ecorino is quite an old grape but is just recently coming into fashion as a grape that stands on its own instead of being included in Italian table wines or blends. But what came first — the cheese or the grape? The word Pecorino actually comes from the sheep that have been herded in this part of Italy since ancient times. Shocking! The vino does pair well with its cheese namesake.

The juice is a luxurious, bright straw color and has a delightful muscularity on the palate. This density takes you on a ride through pear and apple orchards that ends with a welcoming salty, lemon zest. This bottle is a perfect white wine for these cold and lazy winter Saturdays when you don't want to go outside and a comforter fortress on the sofa is the perfect place to be all day long.



Pair this Italian wine gem with all the Italian cheeses starting with Taleggio, Ricotta, Burrata, Gorgonzola, and of course, Pecorino!



## SWEET CORN & THYME CUSTARD WITH THE WORLD'S BEST SIMPLE SALAD

**SERVES 2**  
**FOR THE CUSTARD**

**High-heat oil, for greasing**  
**1 cup canned full-fat coconut milk**  
**1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves,**  
**roughly chopped**  
**1 cup corn, fresh or frozen and**  
**thawed**  
**½ teaspoon fine-grain sea salt**  
**Pinch of cayenne pepper**  
**(optional)**  
**1 medium egg plus 2 medium egg**  
**yolks**

**FOR THE SALAD**

**4 cups salad greens**  
**¼ teaspoon fine-grain sea salt**  
**Grated zest and juice of 1 Meyer**  
**lemon**  
**(can sub regular lemon)**  
**1 garlic clove**  
**3 tablespoons olive oil**

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F. Lightly grease two 6-ounce ramekins.
2. Fill a pie plate or a small casserole dish (big enough to fit both ramekins) with about 1 inch of water (it should come halfway up the sides of the ramekins when they're placed in the dish, and place it in the oven to warm.
3. In a medium saucepan, bring the coconut milk, thyme, corn, salt, and cayenne, if using, to a simmer over medium-high heat. Transfer the mixture to a blender and blend until creamy and smooth. (You can also use an immersion blender.)
4. In a large bowl, whisk together the egg and egg yolks. Whisk in a few large spoonfuls of the corn mixture, just until incorporated. Repeat, adding a bit of the corn mixture to the eggs and whisking to combine, until all the corn mixture has been incorporated. Divide the mixture evenly between the greased ramekins.
5. Carefully place the ramekins in the dish and bake for 30 to 35 minutes, until set. Let cool for about 10 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, make the salad: In a large bowl, toss the greens with the salt. Add the lemon zest and garlic clove, and toss to combine, massaging with your fingers so the garlic is evenly distributed. Toss in the lemon juice, evenly coating the greens with it, then drizzle the olive oil down the sides of the bowl, before tossing so the greens are evenly coated.
7. To serve, divide the salad between 2 plates, putting it off to one side. On the other side, either place the custard still in the ramekin, or unmold them onto the plates.



## ANNA DE CODORNIU BRUT ROSÉ NV PENEDÈS, SPAIN

70% Pinot Noir, 30% Chardonnay



Elegant bubbles popping across a lush strawberry field



Candied orange blossom-y and citrusy goodness with an affluent finish

**MOOD:** It's Sunday morning brunch time and your playlist starts with LCD Soundsystem's oh baby



**T**he Codorníu family basically invented Spanish bubbly aka Cava. The fam kicked things off way back in ole 1551 with their original winery aka the "Cathedral of Cava" located about 50 miles west of Barcelona. The company is the oldest family business in Spain, and we mean it when we say the catchphrase "practice makes perfect" when it comes to these guys making sparkling vino.

This bottle is named after the last heiress to hold the family's surname and was released in Spain 25 years ago. If you've ever visited Barcelona, you've probably sipped these deluxe bubbles while adventuring around Las Ramblas. The juice is delicate and elegant with perfectly fine bubbles and lush notes of strawberries, cherries, and hints of green apple and Bartlett pear.



The cliché of strawberries dipped in chocolate is a cliché because it's a delicious pair and even better with these bubbles!

## **A RISOTTO FOR EVERY SEASON**

### **ZESTY LEMON WITH ZUCCHINI, CORN & BASIL**

*See page 10 for base recipe*

In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of highheat oil over medium heat. When it shimmers, add 1 cup of diced zucchini, 1 cup of fresh or frozen corn, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of fine-grain sea salt. Sauté until the zucchini is golden brown and crisp-tender, about 6 minutes. Stir the zucchini-corn mixture, the grated zest and juice of 1 lemon, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of chopped fresh basil into the finished risotto. Garnish each bowl with a large basil leaf.



## 2016 BLACKWATER "HIGH ROLLER" SAUVIGNON BLANC

WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

100% Sauvignon Blanc



Juicy Fruit's new sour gooseberry and honeysuckle-flavored gum



Mom's infamous lemon curd-green apple bars smushed against a chalkboard during detention

**MOOD:** The tune Trying To Be Cool by Phoenix blares as you're primping in front a full length mirror and making sure you look damn good for date night



**W**ine geeks refer to winemaker Francois Haasbroek as “Midas” because the guy just has a knack for finding grapes that make ridiculously gulpable wines for an unbeatable price. South Africa’s winemaking history is centuries old, but the winemakers from the country are just starting to put their fingerprint on the international wine industry. This bottle will make you think of elegant French SB like Sancerre, but with a Southern Hemisphere flare that is quite unique.

This vino is a blend of Sauvignon Blanc grapes from two vineyards hand selected by Haasbroek. On the nose, the juice is an enticing sour juiciness of green apple Now and Later’s that you dropped on a fresh cut lawn during a summer water gun fight. The palate is bell pepper, lemon curd, and tart green apples all cuddled up with a chalky, slate-like minerality that lingers until the next sip.



Learning as much as possible about all the oysters available at Whole Foods, then practicing your shucking skills because this vino is perfect with shellfish.



## OUR GO-TO CHILAQUILES

**SERVES 2**

**4 (6-inch) corn tortillas, cut into  
8 triangles each (like pizza slices)**

**4 teaspoons avocado oil**

**¾ teaspoon fine-grain sea salt**

**4 medium eggs**

**1 teaspoon chili powder**

**1 teaspoon ground cumin**

**½ teaspoon garlic powder**

**½ teaspoon onion powder**

**¼ teaspoon smoked paprika**

**1 small yellow onion, chopped**

**1 (15-ounce) can black beans,  
drained and rinsed**

**½ cup salsa**

**1 lime, cut in half**

**2 green onions, white and light  
green parts only, sliced**

**¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro**

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. On a large baking sheet lined with parchment paper, toss the corn tortilla triangles with 2 teaspoons of the oil and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt. Bake until golden brown and crispy, 8 to 10 minutes, flipping the tortillas and rotating the pan halfway through.

2. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, beat together the eggs, chili powder, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder, smoked paprika, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt until very smooth.

3. Heat the remaining 2 teaspoons of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until they begin to brown, about 3 minutes. Reduce heat to low, then add the black beans and cook until the beans are warmed through and the onions are translucent, about 8 minutes.

4. Add the cooked tortilla chips and the egg mixture, stirring to coat the chips with the egg, and cook, stirring constantly, until the eggs are set, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the salsa and stir to coat the tortilla mixture evenly, before removing the skillet from the heat. Divide between two plates and top each with the juice from half a lime, and half of the green onions and chopped cilantro. Serve immediately.

**TIP:** If you don't want to turn the oven on, you can use pre-made tortilla chips (although it will be less healthful, as the ones here are baked, not fried). Just look for an organic version since most corn is GMO and heavily sprayed, and thick-cut chips so they don't turn to mush.



## 2017 BOYA SAUVIGNON BLANC

LEYDA VALLEY, CHILE

100% Sauvignon Blanc



A spilled pineapple fruit cocktail on a bouquet of Calla Lilies and White Tulips



A lime-y tinged goodness with a refreshing and salty sea breeze finish

**MOOD:** A hot tub party after an awesome day skiing and the first tune is Gimme Shelter by The Rolling Stones



**T**he ocean can be a bit of a magical ingredient in life and in winemaking. Not a lot of things compare to a great day on the beach. These Sauvignon Blanc grapes literally have a prime location with a front-row view of the Pacific Ocean. The sea breeze helps protect these berries from heat and humidity, which means all the flavor stays locked in the grape. The harvest is done completely by hand, as is the selection of bunches and grapes to preserve premium quality wine in the bottle.

The nose is packed with fresh white flowers and pineapple with hints of mango and passion fruit. The palate is well-balanced with acidity and a 7UP-esque limey-ness making the wine a sipping addiction. Just like it is 5 o'clock somewhere, it is also summer somewhere and this bottle has the power to take you back to a sunny day on the beach..



The saltiness of the ocean in this Sauv Blanc is perfect for mussels steamed with garlic, parsley, and maybe a little white wine.

## **A RISOTTO FOR EVERY SEASON**

### **MINTY PESTO WITH PEAS & SQUASH BLOSSOMS**

*See page 10 for base recipe*

Make a batch of the Mint and Cilantro Pesto on page 42, subbing in basil for the cilantro. Once the risotto is done, stir in the pesto sauce and 1 cup of thawed frozen peas. Chiffonade 4 squash blossoms and sprinkle them over the risotto before serving.

# WEIRD WINE WORDS

BY TREVOR BARATKO AND KAITLIN OHLINGER

**ASTRINGENCY:** The degree of astringency (how much a wine makes your mouth pucker) depends upon the amount of tannin a wine has absorbed from the skins and seeds of the grapes. 'Astringency' sounds like you have problems being regular. And that's something no one wants to ponder while sipping on a Burgundy.

**OENOPHILE:** A wine aficionado or connoisseur. You're an oenophile. Really? Just say you dig wine, that you love where it takes you. That it's so damn alive, and move on. Plus, "\_\_\_phile" makes people think of only one thing. So stop.

**TERROIR:** French for "soil." The physical and geographical characteristics of a particular vineyard that give the resultant wine its unique properties. Terroir is a central term when it comes to the science and essence of wine. But there's no way around it: the word is overused, abused, and often touted simply as a fallback. Don't know what to say about this wine? Comment on the 'terroir.' We don't mind the word when used smartly, but it's always wise to elaborate. Tell us just what it is about the terroir you so fancy or risk facepalms wherever you go.

**HERBACEOUS:** An aroma or flavor similar to green; often an indication of underripe grapes or fruit grown in a cool climate. "Gnarly! This Pinotage is totally herbaceous!" Cool story, bro.

**OPULENT, ELEGANT, REFINED:** The problem with terms like these is the vibes they put out. If we're to move wine past the traditional nature of boring, rich, stuffy old timers swirling and spitting, we need to shift the verbiage away from terms like elegant, opulent or, refined.

**SUPPLE:** A term used to describe smooth, balanced, and quick wines. There are plenty of words that tag a wine as well-balanced, smooth, or structured. We need less, not more. More importantly, when I think of supple — generally meaning "bending and moving easily and gracefully; flexible" — I think of Anastasia Steele, and that's a thought I'd rather not interrupt.

**RS.** An abbreviation for Residual Sugar: So to keep this explanation short n' sweet and bearable, just remember that all grapes start out containing sugar. During winemaking, yeast cultures eat the sugar and turn it into alcohol. A winemaker can decide exactly how much sugar to leave in a finished wine by stopping the fermentation (alcohol making) process.

**STEMMY:** A "stemmy" wine would be a wine that had some or all of its stems fermented in with the grapes during winemaking (known as whole cluster fermentation). So what exactly does "stemmy" taste like, and is it good or bad? That's a bit subjective. Most might describe a "stemmy" taste as green, maybe a bit tannic, possibly even bitter. But it can also provide a nice backbone, or even just something to make your brain go "hmmm... what's that?" It's a piquing of interest. But hey, it's okay if you're not into it.

**CORKED: AKA WET CARDBOARD.** Once you smell the corked smell, you will always smell it. There is some science behind that — it has to do with your detection threshold versus your recognition threshold. Yadda yadda yadda... it means, your nose "learns" how to recognize a smell. A corked wine is a wine that is contaminated by a chemical called TCA. It's created when naturally occurring fungus found in cork (cork is, after all, a tree) come into contact with certain chlorine agents used in sanitizing equipment. That's all it takes, like Superman and Kryptonite. The TCA bastards then essentially kill all the good flavors in the wine and you get nothing but musty basement, moldy dish towels, and wet cardboard. Yuck.

**BARNYARD:** Imagine you're on a date. Your date orders a bottle of wine, takes a big inhale of it and says "Ahhh.. it's so barnyardy!" and smiles. You may want to quickly vanish into thin air. How could this person think a barnyard smells good? Am I on a date with an Amish person and I just don't know it? What does this person's apartment look like if he (or she) thinks a barnyard smells good? Don't get too carried away. You're on a date with a wine person! Truly, describing a wine as "barnyardy" is pretty much just what it sounds like; the wine has "The Funk." You don't have to like The Funk. But don't rule it out completely. The Funk is common in parts of France, and is often thanks to a yeast called *Brettanomyces*. A dash of "Brett" can be quite compelling: sweaty leather, hay, horse barn, cured meat and even — I'll just come out and say it — cow poop. If you grew up in an area that had farms, you may be one of those people that enjoys the smell of manure as you drive past a farm with your windows down. Like me. Maybe these smells just make some people nostalgic? Who knows. All I'm sayin' is, give The Funk a chance

# GLOSSARY

## ACIDITY

Gives wine a bright, crisp, tart taste and is essential in keeping a wine balanced — acidity balances out sweetness. You can gauge how acidic a wine is by taking note of how much you salivate after your first sip of wine. More saliva = more acid.

## BODY

Describes how heavy wine feels on the palate. When determining body, picture the difference between how skim milk feels in your mouth versus how heavy cream feels. If a wine feels like skim milk, it has a lighter body. If it feels more like heavy cream, it has a full body. Acidity, sweetness, tannin and alcohol all affect the body of a wine.

## DRY

A “dry wine” is one that does not have a sweet taste. However, even if a wine is technically dry, it can still have a considerable amount of residual sugar that’s concealed by a higher acidity. Example: unsweetened is technically “dry.”

## FRUITY

Commonly confused with sweetness (because we affiliate fruit with sweetness), “fruity” describes the presence of fruit flavors in wine. To better understand fruitiness in wine, imagine unsweetened iced tea with lemon squeezed in it. The tea has a fruitiness from the lemon but is still dry because it’s unsweetened.

## SWEETNESS

A wine’s sweetness is measured by the amount of naturally occurring sugar — Residual Sugar (RS) — that’s left in the wine at the end of the fermentation process. This sweetness is ranked from bone dry (Brut Nature) to very sweet (doux) and can usually be detected by a slight tingling sensation on the tip of the tongue.

## TANNIN

The astringent or “grippy,” almost drying, feeling a red wine leaves in your mouth. A wine’s tannin level is determined by how long the pressed juice sits with the grape seeds and stems, which is where tannins are naturally found. Example: think about how your mouth feels after drinking unsweetened black tea — also high in tannin.

# THANKS FOR BEING A MEMBER! DID YOU KNOW...

## THE WINE

We’re constantly tracking down, taste-testing and selecting authentic bottles from winemakers around the world — wines that are new to us and hopefully new to you, too. We curate authentic wines rather than bulk blending so that you can truly experience the diverse world of wine.



## ADD YOUR FAVORITES

Discovered something you love in your box? Browse our wine shop and stock up on your favorites. Members get exclusive discounts on the wine shop (up to 25% off!) AND free shipping (when you select “No-Rush” shipping at checkout). Hurry! They go fast.

## MEMBERSHIP FLEXIBILITY

More in the mood for only red (or white) wine this month? Switch the type of wine you want to receive. Swimming in wine right now and need a break? Log in to manage your membership to fit your wine needs. P.S. We’re now offering 6 packs of all white or all red!



## PERKS PERKS PERKS. ALL ABOUT PERKS.

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WINE AWESOMENESS