



thebacklabel®

French Harvest

wineawesomeness.com

A MONTHLY WINE JOURNEY CURATED FOR ADVENTUROUS SOULS



thebacklabel®

EDITOR **ALEXANDRA PASTRON**

ART DIRECTOR **ANDREW PARRIS**

WINE EDITOR **HEATHER GORDON**

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS **MORGAN KATZ, PAIGE VILLIARD**

DESIGNER **CARSON RITCH**

CONTRIBUTOR **VICKI DENIG, KIM BUSSING**

COPYRIGHT © 2017 WINE AWESOMENESS INC.
270 LAFAYETTE, SUITE 1105 NEW YORK, NY 10012

thebacklabel.com
wineawesomeness.com

THIS MONTH'S RECIPE PAIRINGS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



Morels French Steakhouse & Bistro merges classic steakhouse with innovative and unique culinary technique. Located in The Palazzo Resort on the Las Vegas Strip, the restaurant's menu boasts some of the finest wet- and dry-aged steaks complimented by more than 400 varieties of curated French and California wines. Details also include a full iced seafood bar, over 60 artisanal cheeses from around the world and an array of classic desserts, from a trio of crème brûlées to gourmet macaroons.

CONTENTS

- 3** WHAT HARVEST REALLY LOOKS LIKE — VICKI DENIG
- 5** BEAUJOLAIS IS BAE — MORGAN KATZ
- 7** 2016 COMTE DE LANGERON, BEAUJOLAIS VILLAGES
- 9** 2016 CHATEAU ALLEGRET, BORDEAUX
- 11** 2015 CANTEPERDRIX, VENTOUX
- 13** FRENCH WINE APPELLATIONS — MORGAN KATZ
- 15** 2016 MEDIMER, PIQUEPOUL
- 17** 2016 CHATEAU ALLEGRET, ENTRE-DEUX-MERS
- 19** 2016 MEDIMER, VIOGNIER
- 21** 2016 DOMAINE LAFFITTE, CÔTES DE GASCOGNE
- 23** WHAT ARE NOBLE GRAPES? — KIM BUSSING
- 25** DIY: RED WINE TIE DYE

GIVE FREE WINE, GET FREE WINE.

Visit www.wineawesomeness.com/refer to make it happen.



WHAT HARVEST REALLY LOOKS LIKE

BY VICKI DENIG

HARVEST IS THE MOST anticipated time of year on the viticultural calendar. For winemakers, this is the culmination of it all, the moment where months and months of back-breaking work will finally show the literal fruits of these dedicated producers' labor. Wood-cutting, leaf-pruning, cellar upkeep, and endless amounts of monitoring sugars and acids have finally led up to this cathartic, glorious moment where grapes will finally be plucked from their mother roots and brought back to the winery to make the magic happen. Wait, did we just say glorious? Back up for a second.

Harvest is a lot of things, though glorious is arguable. Days begin before the sun rises and finish long-after it goes down. Fingers are snipped from cutters, leaving little v-shaped scars etched into the skin. On warm days, the sun feels stronger than any Mediterranean beach could provide, beating down atop your skin with nowhere to hide; on rainy days, the cool droplets coagulate into your clothes, causing you to shiver beneath the weight of your all-too-drenched jacket. Your body will constantly want to collapse beneath the never-ending fatigue. And the idea of a day off? Good luck.

As you can imagine, harvest looks different all over the world, not just from a topographical standpoint, but also from a technical one. Will the producer choose to hand-harvest fruit or implement the use of machines? Will the work remain within family and friends, or will outside labor be solicited? Should grapes be harvested the first week of the month or three weeks into it? Each winery has their own unique way of finding the answers to these questions- which in the end, is what makes harvest so fascinating.

For many, this year's harvest began at a record-early timing. Warmer temperatures worldwide caused grapes

to reach optimal ripeness levels earlier than usual, forcing many producers to begin the harvest frenzy weeks before the usual start date. Although I was planning to survey harvest in the Maconnais region of Burgundy in early-mid September, I found myself scrambling to get on the train from Paris to Macon on Monday, August 28th; harvest had officially begun that morning.

Everything they tell you about harvest (such as the statements listed above) are true; mornings are early, days are long, and the long-awaited rest of night seems to never come. Fingers bleed, knees get cut open, and the radiating pain that develops in your lower back is no joke. Seriously, friends and family will spend the evening slowly massaging the pain out of one another's spines - just for it to come back the next morning, of course. Meals are heavy, snacking is essential, and you never, ever pass up the opportunity when someone hands you a coffee.

What they don't tell you, though, is the emotional aspect that comes into harvest, especially amongst family members working together. I witnessed friends in the vineyard make each other laugh until they cried, soaking up the countless joys that come from working in such a tight-knit group. On the other hand, I've seen a father and son fight, to the point of beer bottles being thrown against cement walls, ending with one family member storming off into the cellar, vowing to never work with the other again. There isn't a less stressful time at a winery than harvest, and as you can imagine, emotions run high.

But the joys of harvest far outweigh the dramas of what the time of year can bring. Working together to harvest what mother nature has provided us with is the most gratifying and beautiful way to connect with those around you, but to also remember the roots that bring life to our planet each and every day. Though harvest might look different with every vintage, the core values of passion and teamwork remain.



BEAUJOLAIS IS BAE

BY MORGAN KATZ

IN FRANCE, IT'S difficult to walk more than a few feet without stumbling into another wine region. While there are numerous famous wine regions in the country, each one is special and produces wine unique to that region. Nestled between Burgundy and the Rhone Valley is a wine region that was first cultivated by the Romans thousands of years ago that has since seen times of both triumph and turmoil.

Although Beaujolais sits between two major regions, it still holds its own and isn't just another French wine AOC appellation. The region distinguishes itself in that it is one of the few in the world to concentrate primarily on one grape varietal, (98 percent of the region is Gamay).

Gamay was originally grown in Burgundy until the Duke of Burgundy, Philippe the Bold, banned the grape from his

region on account of its bitterness and general hatred of the grape. But the ban couldn't have been better for it. Growers in Beaujolais accepted gamay with open arms, and the granite, limestone and clay terroir of the region suits it perfectly.

The grape produces a light-bodied red wine with low tannin, high acidity and notes of cranberry, tart cherry and raspberry. Other varietals are grown in Beaujolais such as Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Aligoté, which are used to make tasty Beaujolais Blanc and rosé. Interestingly enough, these white grapes can also be used in red blends but can only consist of 15 percent of the final product.

These varietals are used to make the three classifications of wine that come from Beaujolais: Beaujolais AOP, Beaujolais Villages AOP and Cru Beaujolais. Within the Beaujolais AOP comes a unique style of wine called Beaujolais Nouveau, which is what really brought attention to the region back in the 19th century.

Beaujolais Nouveau is extremely unique as it is produced, bottled and ready

to drink a mere six to eight weeks after harvest. These young wines were originally intended for harvest workers to drink when celebrating the end of harvest, but soon enough, bottles started popping up in restaurants and cafés in the surrounding cities. The style of wine has since become so popular, a third of the region's production is dedicated to producing it.

But the style's popularity almost led to the region's downfall. Because of the Nouveau craze, the region devoted almost all of its production to Nouveau and when people started losing interest, it left the region virtually in ruins by the late '90s. But a small group of local winemakers started producing higher quality wines, reviving the region and showing its capacity for sophisticated wines beyond Nouveau.

Beaujolais Villages is the next step up in quality. There are 38 villages that produce these wines, and because of the area's complex terroir, the wines have a unique minerality to them - making them higher in quality than standard Beaujolais wines.

Cru Beaujolais wines are high-quality reds that drink like Burgundies but at a fraction of the cost. The wines come from 10 vineyards in the area, each of which has its own appellation designation because they're that good. They are Brouilly, Chénas, Chiroubles, Côte de Brouilly, Fleurie, Juliéas, Morgon, Moulin-à-Vent, Régnié and Saint-Amour. Although these wines come from areas close in proximity, they all display different flavor profiles (hint: why they're their own appellations), are more sophisticated and have the ability to age well over time.

French wine options are abundant, we know, but Beaujolais is special. It has a winemaking culture that extends for centuries, the dedication and determination to the region to bring it back from the brink of extinction and the unique ability to specialize almost its entire space on a single grape. Clearly, it's got a lot of character. Keep Beaujolais in mind the next time you feel like a light-bodied, juicy French red for a fraction of the cost - or just head on over to pg. 7 to see the one we're crushing on this month!

2016 COMTE DE LANGERON, BEAUJOLAIS VILLAGES

100% Gamay



- Beaujolais Villages, France
- Raking autumn leaves on the front lawn.
- Quiche Lorraine
- Cooler Couleur (ft. Yelle) - Crookers



- Youthful ripe red fruit wafting in the air of the season's first farmer's market.
- Bright Bing cherries and fresh white flowers floating in a Dr. Pepper can.
- The fruity finish on this juice is the perfect fit for creamy fare like this class Quiche Lorraine.

Think of Gamay as the more value-driven version of Pinot Noir. When hailing from France, they are both on the lighter body side of things and both have vibrant, red fruity characteristics. Quick tip: When you think of body think skim milk vs. 2% milk vs. whole milk on a scale of light to big body wines.

Gamay is from Beaujolais, which is right next to Burgundy. This version of the varietal is exactly what we mean by the value-driven version of Pinot Noir. Your mouth will think you've found Graceland aka adult cherry cola. This wine is fresh, youthful and immediately ready for sipping, making Gamay truly the wine you want on hand for everyday wine leisure times.



QUICHE LORRAINE

MAKES 8 SLICES OF QUICHE

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 egg yolks
- 2 oz comte-gruyere cheese
- 1 pinch of black pepper and salt, to taste
- 2 oz chopped smoked apple bacon
- 1 oz chopped onions
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1 whole egg
- 2 oz melted butter
- ½ cup water, room temperature

PREHEAT oven to 300 degrees.

COMBINE all flour, whole egg, melted butter and water in a bowl.

MIX by hand until desired dough consistency is reached.

COAT pie dish with non-stick vegetable spray. Press dough evenly into dish.

PLACE in oven for 15 minutes. Remove and set aside.

SAUTÉE bacon and onions together in pan until onions are golden brown. Slowly add cream, egg yolks, cheese and black pepper into pan.

WHISK together.

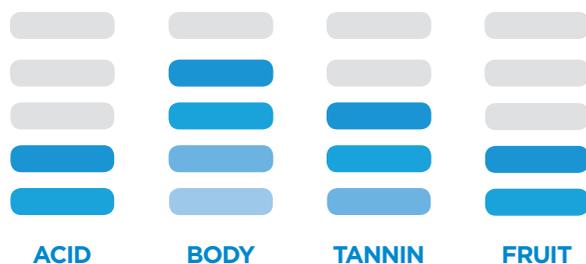
FILL crust with mixture and place in oven for 1 ½ hours or until shells are golden brown color.

2016 CHATEAU ALLEGRET, BORDEAUX

40% Merlot, 60% Cabernet Sauvignon



- Bordeaux, France
- Getting in the spirit by shopping for holiday sweaters.
- Croque Madame
- Be Mine - Alabama Shakes



- Overripe raspberries and black tea. Nutmeg, cinnamon and a touch of mulled butter.
- Huge tannins that cover the side of your cheeks deep into the back of your palate.
- You need a meal that won't fold under the weight of this wine, and a Croque Madame is up for the challenge.

Raymond and Genevive Jaubert established Jaubert Vineyard in 1970 after Raymond inherited Chateau Landonnet, which had been in his mother's family for 200 years. They quickly expanded their vineyard and now have four properties under their name. Keeping with the tradition, their children are learning the family wine business that will someday be their own.

This Bordeaux tastes like the full richness of a bass drum bellowing in the Thanksgiving parade. Pinecone-like earthiness, wet river rocks, toasted red apple skins, wet cinnamon sticks and a touch of leather. A surefire hit for the cool winter months. Big, burly and bold as a left tackle, this bottle is made to keep you warm from your tongue to your toes.



CROQUE MADAME

MAKES 1 SANDWICH

- 2 oz mayonnaise
- 2 slices sourdough bread
- 3 tbsp butter
- 4 oz comte-gruyere cheese
- 4 oz sliced smoked ham
- 1 whole egg
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 oz onions, chopped
- 1 oz parmesan cheese
- Salt, to taste

MELT butter then add heavy cream over low heat, whisk and cook until it reaches a boil.

ADD in salt, onions, garlic and 2 oz of comte-gruyere, whisking until cheese is melted.

REMOVE from heat and cover.

SPREAD mayonnaise on both sides of sourdough bread then sprinkle evenly with leftover comte-gruyere and parmesan.

TOP with sliced smoked ham then close the sandwich.

PLACE sandwich in panini press until bread is golden brown.

FRY egg until whites are just set and yolks are still runny, about 3 minutes.

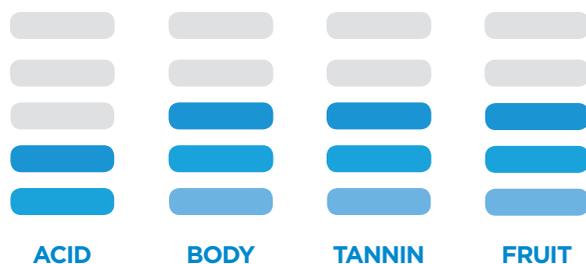
TOP sandwich with sauce and sunny-side up egg and serve immediately.

2015 CANTEPERDRIX, VENTOUX

Carignan, Grenache, Syrah



- Rhône Valley, France
- Dancing on hills somewhere the Von Trapp family might be.
- Mushroom Souffle
- Cherry Hearts - The Shins



- Sweet spice, nutmeg and fresh ground black pepper. Wet soil covered with raspberry jam.
- Fresh earthy mushrooms, rye bread and strawberry jam with soft sandpaper-like tannins.
- This is a food-friendly wine that will really pair with anything - but earthy mushrooms are its speciality.

Two wine cellars came together merging the best parts of each to become Demazet Vignobles - the producer of this wine. In the Provencal region, “mazet” is a word used to describe a small house that is common to the area, and “demazet,” or “deux mazets” (two houses) recognizes the union of these two houses.

Rhône wines are known for being big, but not too too big. You could say they are the Goldilocks of the wine world, just right. Tastes like Fresh earthy mushrooms, rye bread and strawberry jam. Smashed boysenberry pie and soft potting soil. Damp wood, with a touch of spice and grit. This wine feels warm and plush on your tongue, pressing soft, worn down sandpaper-like tannins into the sides of your cheeks.



MUSHROOM SOUFFLE

MAKES 1 SOUFFLE

- 1 cup egg whites
- 1 tbsp cornstarch
- 3 tbsp butter
- 3 oz comte-gruyere cheese
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 oz onions, chopped
- 2 dried morel mushrooms
- Salt and pepper, to taste

MELT butter in saucepan then add heavy cream over low heat, whisk and cook until it reaches a boil.

ADD in salt, onions, garlic and 2 oz comte-gruyere, whisking until cheese is melted.

REMOVE sauce from heat and cover.

PREHEAT oven to 350 degrees.

PLACE dried morel mushrooms in bowl and soak in hot water for 5 minutes. Remove and place on a towel to dry.

PLACE eggs and cornstarch in mixer while the morels are drying. Mix on low setting until egg whites are foamy, frothy and firm. Remove and place in a mixing bowl.

ADD the remaining comte-gruyere cheese, sliced morel mushrooms and 1 oz of prepared sauce and mix.

SCOOP mixture and pile up high on a ceramic souffle bowl.

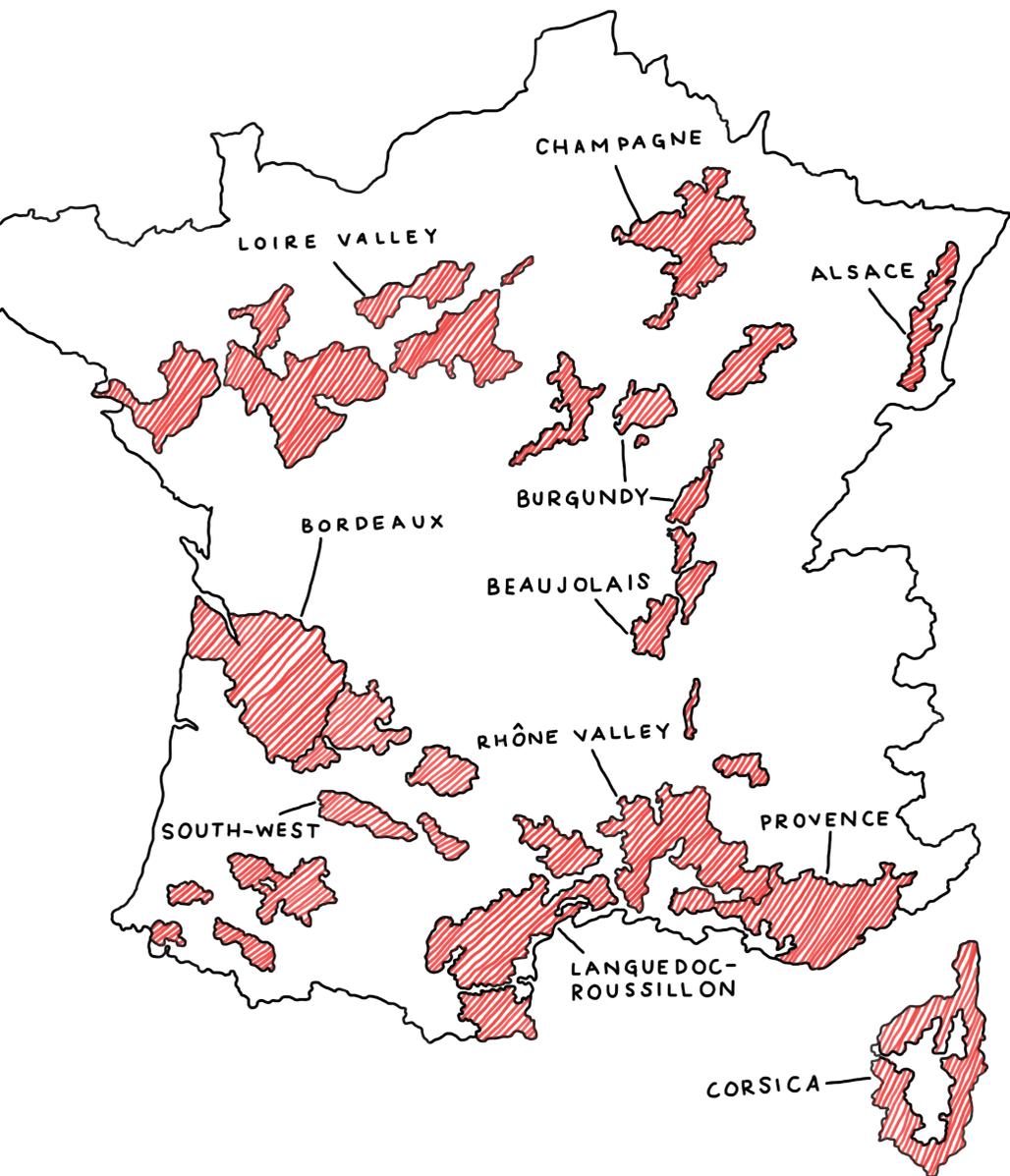
PLACE in oven for 20 minutes or until the souffle is golden brown.

REMOVE souffle from oven and serve with the remaining sauce on the side.

FRENCH WINE APPELLATIONS

BY MORGAN KATZ

ILLUSTRATION TAMARA RAHOUMI



ALSACE

A wine region close to the German border, Alsace has seen both French and German sovereignty due to both World Wars. Because of this, the area has a strong influence from both countries making for some tasty wine. Riesling with its sweet or dry personality and Gewürztraminer with its aromatics are the two key players in Alsace.

BEAUJOLAIS

Between the regions of Burgundy and the Rhone Valley sits Beaujolais. The region is unique in that it specializes in one grape, Gamay, and produces a style of wine, Beaujolais Nouveau (see pg. 7), made to be drunk just six to eight weeks after the grapes are picked.

BORDEAUX

Along France's southwest coast, Bordeaux is known for its red wines (like on pg. 9) made from a blend of grapes whose vines also originated in the region - Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. These wines are typically fruity with notable minerality and finish with mouth-puckering tannins, which allow the wines to age for years.

BURGUNDY

Burgundy demonstrates the best versions of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay as it is the birthplace of both grapes. While many may associate Burgundy with red wine, the region is also home to Chablis, also known as the place to find some of the best unoaked Chardonnay out there.

CHAMPAGNE

Everyone knows there is only one true bubbly that can be called Champagne and that's the sparkling that comes from the region itself. Within Champagne, there are five regions that make bubbly using only Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay grapes.

CORSICA

Formerly ruled by Italy, the small island off the coast of France has significant influence from both countries. The majority of the island's wines are made from Vermentino, an herbaceous white wine with hints of smokiness, and Nielluccio (or Sangiovese) which is

commonly seen in the form of a rosé with a richer style in Corsica.

LANGUEDOC

In the south of France along the border of Spain, Languedoc-Roussillon predominantly produces blends. Combinations of Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre and Carignan make for full-bodied reds while blends of Grenache Blanc and Picpoul yield tasty unoaked whites.

LOIRE VALLEY

The Loire Valley is just a few hour's drive from Paris and is praised for its diversity. It produces everything from casual everyday wine, to some extremely high-end bottles, to varieties ranging from extremely tart, to sparkling that can easily stand up against bubbly from Champagne.

PROVENCE

Rosé, rosé, rosé. That's usually the only thing people can think of when they hear Provence, and with good reason. The region located in the south of France is famed for its rosé, as 88 percent of its production is dedicated to the pink juice, and is the only region completely devoted to it (there's even a research institute for rosé there!).

RHÔNE VALLEY

The Greeks brought viticulture to this area back in the 4th century BC, so you know the wines from the area are good. The area is most notable for the red blends from Southern Rhône (like on pg. 11) and Syrahs from Northern Rhône.

SOUTH WEST

The vast South West region primarily churns out white wine, but is an extra special region because it produces the "vin de pays," or country wine of France, which is a simpler version of the "vin de table" or table wine that's served across the country.

2016 MEDIMER, PIQUEPOUL

100% Piquepoul



- Languedoc, France
- Catching the first snow on your tongue, bundled head to toe.
- Salad Niçoise
- Lay It On Me - Vance Joy



- Dewy sage and fresh trimmed suburban grass, wet sidewalk chalk and white rose petals.
- Light body, chuggable and briny. Crisp and clean with a length that doesn't linger.
- The vinegar in this Salad Niçoise will bring out the nuances of this easy drinker.

Piquepoul is a light-skinned grape we don't frequently see, but down in the Côtes de Thau area, close to Languedoc, it's fairly common. Piquepoul, along with Cinsault, is one of the oldest grapes from the area - so winemakers are no stranger to the grape and know how to turn it into some tasty juice.

Because Piquepoul is a lesser-known grape, you can easily find it for a steal. The perfect wine for the scrappy, hungry, go-getters of today - the people who need a glass of wine to help them chill in between hustling like there is no tomorrow. With a low ABV, it will relax you after a long day without hurting you the next morning, and it's bone dry so you can keep on sipping all night long.



SALAD NIÇOISE

MAKES 1 SALAD

- 5 oz mixed field greens
- 1 oz french green beans
- 1 oz fingerling potatoes
- 1 oz cherry tomatoes
- 1 oz red onions, chopped
- 1 oz red and green bell peppers, sliced
- 2 hard boiled quail eggs
- 1 tbsp salt
- 3 white anchovies
- 4 oz ahi tuna
- 1 oz olive oil, plus more for searing
- 1 oz balsamic vinegar
- Salt and pepper, to taste

HEAT skillet on medium high heat with olive oil and sear both sides of ahi tuna.

REMOVE from heat and sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.

PLACE french green beans in a pot and cover with water. Add salt and bring to a boil. Cook until green beans are just crisp. Place in a cold water bath.

PLACE potatoes in a pot and cover with water. Add 1 tbsp of salt and bring to a boil. Cook until potatoes are tender. Place in a cold water bath.

WHILE the potatoes are cooking add 1 oz olive oil and 1 oz balsamic vinegar in small mixing bowl and whisk to make the dressing.

PLACE all remaining ingredients in a mixing bowl and toss with balsamic vinaigrette.

PLACE salad in a large bowl then add the sliced seared ahi tuna, fingerling potatoes and green beans.

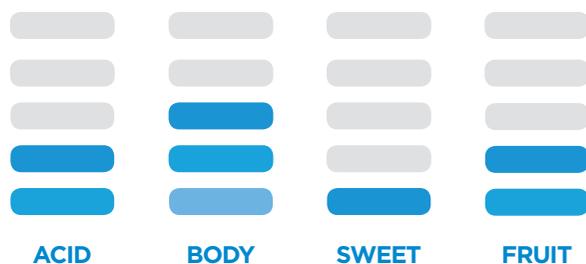
GARNISH with quail eggs and serve

2016 CHATEAU ALLEGRET, ENTRE-DEUX-MERS

70% Sauvignon Blanc, 30% Sémillon



- Bordeaux, France
- Spending hours alone with just you and a bottle of wine.
- Classic Profiteroles
- All The Small Things - Blink 182



- Toasted bread topped with white flowers, wet grass and a touch of an underripe peach.
- Round and full mouthfeel with an acidic edge that hits the back of the palate hard.
- This is the perfect wine to pair with a pastry - forget afternoon tea, are we right?

Raymond and Genevive Jaubert established Jaubert Vineyard in 1970 after Raymond inherited Chateau Landonnet, which had been in his mother's family for 200 years. They quickly expanded their vineyard and now have four properties under their name. Keeping with the tradition, their children are learning the family wine business that will someday be their own.

The Sauvignon Blanc in this blend adds a kaleidoscope of tropical warm weather fruits and flowers. This wine is for the summertime dreams trapped in a cold climate. A medium-bodied wine, which tastes like licking a migration of monarch butterflies (yeah, you read that right). Smells of hibiscus and tropical floral notes, like walking through plumeria trees.



CLASSIC PROFITEROLES

6 PROFITEROLES

- 6 oz whole milk
- 3 oz water
- 5 oz butter
- 6 ½ oz all purpose flour
- ½ oz sugar
- 4 whole eggs
- Ice cream, for serving
- Chocolate sauce, for garnish

PREHEAT oven to 325 degrees.

HEAT milk to a boil then add water, butter and sugar and stir until sugar and butter are completely mixed in.

ADD eggs and flour in a mixer and mix on low setting. Slowly add the milk to the mixture until doughy consistency is reached.

PLACE dough in a pastry bag and squeeze onto flat baking tray.

BAKE in oven for 30 minutes or until cream puffs are golden brown.

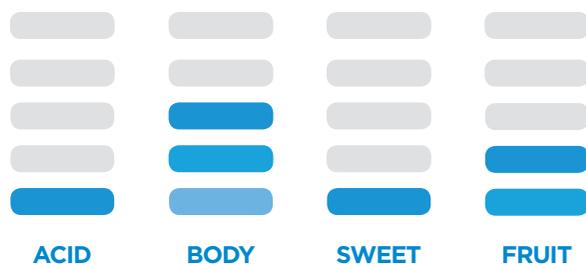
ONCE done, remove and cool. Slice in half and scoop in your favorite ice cream flavor and serve with chocolate sauce.

2016 MEDIMER, VIOGNIER

100% Viognier



- Languedoc, France
- Sitting in a rocking chair with an old blanket on a chilly night.
- Passion Panna Cotta
- Nervous - Gavin James



- Holiday spices and dried rosemary. Wet orange, crisp leaves and dried Gerber daisies.
- Tastes like yellow flowers with a hint of tapioca. It's plush, soft and full.
- This smooth and creamy Passion Panna Cotta will keep with Viognier's mellow vibe.

The wine region of Côtes de Thau - from which this Viognier hails - sits along the Etang de Thau lagoon, close to Languedoc. The area primarily focuses on producing white wines like Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Grenache Blanc - which makes this single-varietal Viognier a rare find for the area.

This wine smells like dryer sheets and feels like falling into a giant pile of fresh warm laundry someone else is going to fold. This large-bodied white makes your palate feel like it is wrapped in yellow custard colored flannel. It is plush, soft and full like taking a drink of whole milk. The perfect white to warm you on chilly winter nights when your Netflix fire isn't doing the trick.



PASSION PANNA COTTA

MAKES 8 PANNA COTTA

PANNA COTTA

- 4 ½ cups cream
- 1 cup sugar
- 12 sheets gelatin
- 3 cups coconut puree
- 1 tsp salt

ROASTED PINEAPPLE

- 1 oz pineapple
- 6 ½ tbsps pineapple juice
- 1 oz vanilla bean
- 2 tbsps brown sugar
- 1 oz salt

PASSION PINEAPPLE GELÉE

- 1 ¾ cups passion fruit purée
- 6 ½ tbsps water
- 1 ¾ cups sugar
- 4 sheets gelatin
- 1 tsp salt

CHERRY SAUCE

- 2 cups Maraschino Cherry juice
- 1 tsp salt

PREHEAT oven to 350 degrees.

COMBINE cream and sugar for Panna Cotta and purée for 20 minutes.

ADD gelatin last. Place into mold, and refrigerator for 2 hours.

DICE and combine pineapple with vanilla bean, brown sugar, pineapple juice and salt for Roasted Pineapple. Roast in oven for 20-25 minutes.

REMOVE from the oven and reduce to make a sauce over medium-high heat until it coats the back of a spoon.

COMBINE all ingredients for Passion Pineapple Gelée in a pot over medium heat. Add gelatin last and cook for 15 to 20 minutes. Combine with Roasted Pineapple and cook until it has consistency of caramel.

PLACE in oven for 20 minutes. Remove and allow to cool.

COMBINE the ingredients for Cherry Sauce and set aside.

PLATE the Panna Cotta and coat with the Roasted Pineapple.

DOT with Passion Pineapple Gelee and Cherry Sauce. Serve immediately.

2016 DOMAINE LAFFITTE, CÔTES DE GASCOGNE

70% Colombard, 30% Ugni-Blanc



- Gascony, France
- Walking along a cold overcast coast breathing in the fog.
- Mussels Meuniere
- Gooley - Glass Animals



- Smells like freshly bloomed white Easter lilies drizzled with fragrant raw honey comb.
- Tart lemon curd and snow peas. Light body with acidity that puckers the back of the jaw.
- There's nothing quite as heavenly as this zingy white and a steaming bowl of fresh seafood.

The Laffitte family has lived in Gascony, France since the 15th century, so they're familiar with the land. Each generation only had one son to pass the property down to throughout the centuries, until now. Two brothers, Christophe and Sebastien, have continued the family legacy of making wine in their hometown.

This is the kind of wine that you can spend late nights with howling at the moon and begging for an endless summer. A white that doesn't need to be paired with the perfect meal, it's fine by itself...but matching it up with some light seafood wouldn't be a bad idea either. Smells like dried apricot skin and wet sand. Tastes like licking midnight dew drops off soft Kelly green leaves.



MUSSELS MEUNIERE

MAKES 1 POT

- 2 oz butter
- ½ lemon, freshly squeezed
- 1 tsp garlic, chopped
- 1 whole shallot, sliced
- 1 oz fresh tarragon
- 4 oz white wine
- 2 oz clam juice
- ½ oz parsley, chopped
- 20 large black mussels
- Salt and pepper, to taste

HEAT and melt butter in sauté pan. When butter is melted sauté the shallots and garlic.

ADD tarragon, white wine and clam juice and bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer.

ADD the mussels for 5 to 10 minutes or until the shells open.

STIR in the chopped parsley and season with salt, pepper and lemon juice.

POUR mussels into a large bowl and serve.

WHAT ARE NOBLE GRAPES?

BY KIM BUSSING



IF ANYONE'S EVER told you there's no way to become a wine expert in a week, they're lying. Kind of. Familiarizing yourself with the noble grapes won't net you a sommelier certificate, but knowing the major varieties can give you a taste of (almost) the entire wine spectrum.

What makes a grape noble?

Good question. Technically, the term refers to international, recognizable varieties that reliably produce high-quality wine, are widely planted in major regions, and are the backbone of the industry. These are grapes that are known for being particularly good at expressing the terroir of wherever they're grown – i.e., a Chardonnay from Chablis will evoke lemon and apple while one from South Australia will be tinged with notes of mango.

After that, things get a bit murky, with some experts claiming only six make the list, while others argue seven or even 18 varieties earn the distinction. The controversy is primarily due to what constitutes "international and recognizable." This often translates to what grapes are most universally popular. Those who fall on the more conservative side of the vino spectrum also believe that grapes such as Tempranillo, which don't fare well outside of their traditional growing region, should be excluded.

But the times they are a changin' as plantings diversify, wine production increases, hybrids are born and drinkers branch out. Don't see your favorite red or white grape below? As history has shown, this list is mutable and there are plenty of leaders in the wine world who don't shy away from change.

THE ORIGINALS

For traditionalists, you're looking at Merlot, Cabernet, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Riesling. For the slightly edgier traditionalists, add in Syrah. It's no coincidence that all but one of those originated in France centuries before, and Riesling, despite its German beginnings, encountered success in the Alsace region.

This is partly thanks to a great marketing campaign enacted unwittingly by King

Louis XIV: the monarch developed such a reputation for extravagance and luxury that the rest of the world started to crave all things French, including the wine. It's also partly due to France's long wine history – the French have centuries of winemaking under their belt, far more than most of the rest of the world. The vines started to wind their way far outside of France, making them ubiquitous, well-known and beloved. They were labeled cépage noble, or, roughly, noble grapes.

Now, different varieties have taken root and are starting to establish themselves as prominent, though some still don't recognize them as noble. But why limit yourself to just seven grapes when there's so much more wine to discover (and drink)?

THE NEWBIES

Those that are slightly more inclusive have some additional varieties they consider to be "international and recognizable," and earn the title of Noble. On the red end, from lightest to darkest, Grenache, Sangiovese, Nebbiolo, Tempranillo and Malbec are welcome additions. Incorporating grapes from Spain and Italy, the updated range encompasses light, fruity wines with smooth tannins to heavier tannins and bolder, richer flavors.

From lightest to richest, the new whites include Chenin Blanc, Moscato, Gewurztraminer, Sémillon and Viognier. Chenin Blanc introduces zesty, floral notes, German Gewurztraminer brings in honey and ginger, and with Sémillon comes dry, medium-bodied wines fragrant with citrus.

Tasting these grapes will broaden your wine knowledge and expose you to a more nuanced understanding of the leading red and white varieties. While this is only a peek into the dizzyingly vast world of wine, it provides a fairly comprehensive introduction to different notes, tannins, and color, and your own preferences.

Grab a glass and forego the textbook: this is the kind of education everyone can get behind.

DIY: RED WINE TIE DYE

BY THE WA CREW

WHEN HARVESTING GRAPES to make wine the likelihood some of the juice will get on and stain clothing is extremely high, if not impossible to avoid. These stains can be extremely difficult to remove and cause a great deal of frustration. So, instead of dealing with all of that headache, we've decided to roll with the punches, because when life gives you grapes, you make wine! In this case, when you get red wine on your clothes, make the best of it and tie dye it with more of the juice!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- White cloth items to dye
- 10 bottles of red wine
- Rubber bands
- 10 quart stock pot
- Baking sheet

HOW YOU'LL DO IT

TWIST the item into the pattern of your choice and tie in place using rubber bands.

POUR the wine into the large stock pot and turn heat to medium. Bring to a boil then turn off the heat.

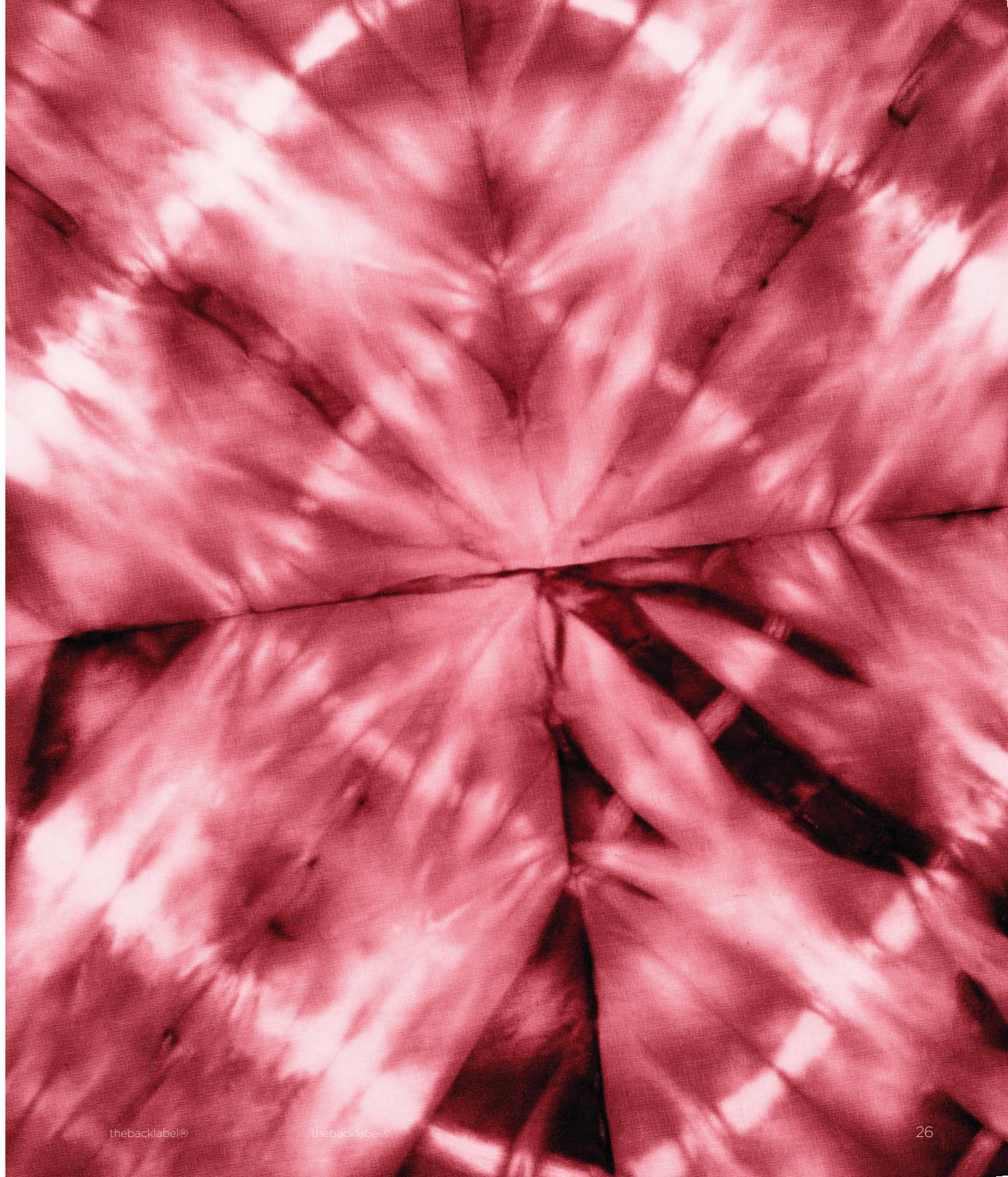
LOWER the item slowly into the pot and fully immerse in the wine. Allow the item to sit in the wine for at least 4 hours (or overnight for a deeper color). Stir the mixture roughly every 4 hours.

REMOVE the item from the pot, wringing it out lightly and place on a clean baking sheet.

PREHEAT the oven to 170 degrees and put items in for 20-30 minutes or until dry. Check on items every 10 minutes.

PLACE on an old towel after items have dried in the oven. Transfer to an ironing board (keeping the towel between the ironing board and the dyed-item to prevent stainage). Iron the items to ensure the color is entirely set into the fabric.

HAND WASH items in warm water to release any loose dye. Rinse in cold water. Enjoy!



Share your @wineawesomeness experience using #wineallthetime for a chance to win your next month free!



WINE AWESOMENESS®