



thebacklabel®

A MONTHLY WINE JOURNEY CURATED FOR ADVENTUROUS SOULS

harvest

WINEAWESOMENESS.COM



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HARVEST

BY LOGAN LEE

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR this year!?!?! If you turn on the news for any length of time, it may seem the country is divided and tearing itself into little fiefdoms. But even in these turbulent times, we can all agree to celebrate harvest! Or at least we can sip on a bit of vino to take the edge off! And it's always helpful to have extra bottles of vino on hand to deal with crazy "Uncle Carl's" political tirades, but that's why you can lean on WA. We've got enough wine to even drown out the whole family cray cray.

Since we started WA 7 years ago, we've been incredibly fortunate to scour the globe for some amazing wine. That search has allowed us to visit these amazing places during harvest and not much is more exciting than seeing the process of getting all the grapes from the vineyards into the wineries. This month we've reflected on all the harvest trips we've taken and compiled some of the most delicious glamour shots from our vineyard archives and included a handful of delicious fall dishes.

For the reds this month we've got a real global adventure of a lineup. We found some stellar vino out of Australia including a Tempranillo, Shiraz, and Cab. We've got a handful of biodynamically produced wines from Austria, and we've gotten a bit off the grid with a super tasty organic red from Hungary.

Now on the white vino... we're criss-crossing the globe with two Chards, one from California and the other from South Africa. It is so fun tasting the same grape side by side, and it always amazes me how much of a difference the little magic grape environment makes on the juice. We've lined up a super fun Hungarian bottle that is 100% hand harvested

and organic, made from a rare, indigenous grape called Zenit. And we end with an uber dry Cava from Spain!

It takes a ton of laborers, winemakers, and staff to turn the little magic grapes into the delicious vino we all crave! Enjoy the vineyard photography, a few recipes, and most importantly all the wine!

As always, thanks for trusting us with some juice selections!

Cheers,

Logan



4 REASONS TO DRINK ROSÉ WITH YOUR TURKEY

BY HEATHER GORDON

WHEN HOSTING A Thanksgiving feast you are given a mammoth task as tastemaker. This comes with a heaping side of decisions like if you should make a turduckin or just a turkey? Or, is deep-frying your bird really worth a possible fire or hospital visit? Rest easy my friend, because when it comes to the wine we have one word for you: Rosé.

Hear me out! Rosé is not just a 'fun in the sun, summer love' kind of wine, she is so much more than that. Here are a few reasons why rosé will turn a drab turkey dinner into a Thanksgiving to remember.

SO FRESH AND SO CLEAN

With a Thanksgiving spread that is loaded with platters of food more rich and buttery than the last, it is good

to have something to brighten up your palate. In this sense rosé is like your funny relative that has perfect comedic timing. It can lighten any mood just when you thought you were overwhelmed. Having a crisp clean and refreshing wine between bites is key.

IT'S NOT JUST SUMMER WATER

"Summer water" is a term most often used for a Provence (a region in the south of France) style rosé that is usually the shade of a watered down Sweet'N Low packet. These wines are perfect for summer, they are dangerously chuggable and immensely refreshing. But that's not the only variety of rosé.

We are here to tell you there is such a thing as "year-round" rosé. These

wines come in many different shades, from diverse regions, made from a plethora of grapes. They offer a deep connection, more depth of flavor and better pairing ability. You can find these wines from California, many regions throughout Italy and Corsica.

GO BOLD

Bolder rosés are wines that have had more skin contact during the maceration of the grapes in the winemaking process, this gives the wine a little more zipp and jazz. Bolder rosés have more robust flavor in them. Clad with herbaceous, spice box and mineral notes that give these wines great depth and food partnership. Also, for those of you that love a big-ass tannic red, it's not unusual for these wines to have a grippy tannin as well.

MAKE IT SPARKLE

Thanksgiving in my house is a very special occasion and that calls for the bubbly! A rosé Cremant from France is a beautiful way to cheer the ones you are thankful for, is half the cost of Champagne but with all the elegance and class. Cremants are made in méthode traditionnelle which means that their second fermentation is in the bottle. This is the same way that Champagne is made.

This Thanksgiving put your mind at ease and grab a case (or a bottle) of a beautiful rosé and throw the turkey bash that no one will ever forget! We believe in you.



2012 NASHWAUK TEMPRANILLO

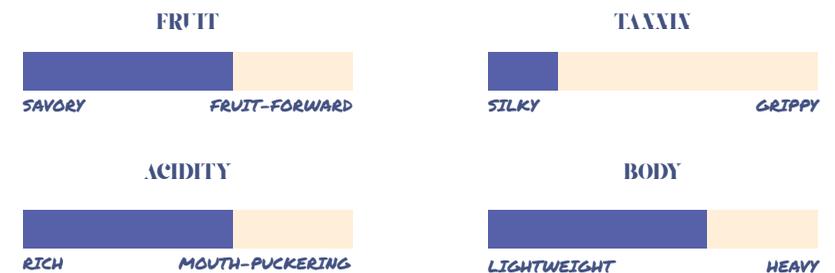
MCLAREN VALE, AUSTRALIA

100% TEMPRANILLO

NOSE: Like an afternoon stroll through a Moroccan spice market filled with cloves and star anise

PALATE: The spice market boasts exotic produce with black cherry, licorice, and sarsaparilla, ending with hints of savory, earthy flavors.

MOOD: The chilly temperatures of fall have you determined to throw some logs on the fireplace. You're cozied up under your favorite blanket as you hit play on the first of many classic movies on your watchlist.



Yeah, yeah... we know Tempranillo hails from Spain, but you know what's cooler than being cool (enter Outkast tunes)... It's grapes from another place turning into wine in a far-off land AKA Australia in this case. These vines were planted in the McLaren Vale wine region in Australia in 2000 and we're super impressed with how well the grapes are taking to their adopted home.

These Tempranillo grapes are all hand-harvested and these little berries produce an elegantly complex wine that begins like a walk in a fine spice market in an exotic, far-off land. The palate is smooth and velvety with bright, ripe black cherries slow dancing with some red licorice all over your mouth.



This red is prepared to take on every spice in the pantry. Hit the market in search of some delicate lamb chops and season them with a mishmash of North African flavors for an international twist on a beautiful cut of meat.



2014 CLARE WINE CO. CABERNET SAUVIGNON

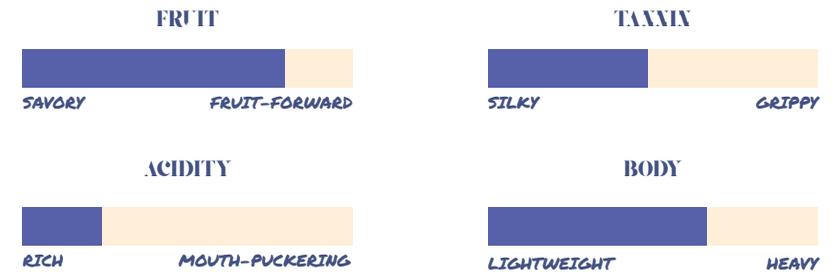
CLARE VALLEY, AUSTRALIA

100% CABERNET SAUVIGNON

NOSE: Cedar wood and dried fruit like exploring an enchanted forest

PALATE: Cherries and blackcurrants greet you as a touch of mint looms sneakily in the shadows. Gentle tannins make your food pairing a perfect match.

MOOD: Late in the afternoon you're inexplicably compelled to roam the outdoors and catch the sunset from your secret spot.



Every bottle of wine is so very different than a Budweiser, a PBR, or even a Coca-Cola Classic. We think all are delicious, but in the most literal way possible, wine is affected by climate and weather. This quaffable Cab started its journey during harvest in 2014, which started out scorching hot and turned into downpours of rain, monsoon style, which complicated turning these magic berries into wine for our dinner tables!

While the harvest was a big challenge, the wine is super easy drinking! The nose has notes of an awesome cedar-like Bonsai tree perfectly manicured by the Karate kid himself combined with sun-dried cherries and red raspberries. The nose is a bit woody, but the palate is black cherry, black currants, and blackberries with the slightest touch of mint.



Despite being so easygoing, this Cab is a dream for super hearty dishes. Comb through the cookbooks and blogs to find a low maintenance beef pot pie recipe that you can let bake while you sit back and relax.



2012 WARRAMATE SHIRAZ

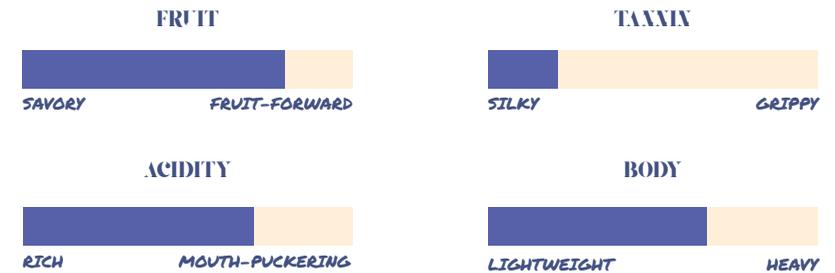
YARRA VALLEY, AUSTRALIA

100% SHIRAZ

NOSE: Cherry and violet with a hint of eucalyptus, like a party at the spa.

PALATE: Succulent red fruits have a tussle until fine tannins and licorice spice arrive unexpectedly and diffuse the juicy altercation.

MOOD: It's your turn to DJ at the campfire and you've got just the playlist for a crisp night of drinking around the open flames. You've made sure everyone has a full glass before you hit play and get the vibe on your level.



The Warramate vineyard was established in 1970 on a spectacular north-facing slope overlooking the central Yarra Valley in Victoria, Australia. Fast forward a few decades... and on a cool, nearly fall morning, a big crew of Aussies hit the vineyards and picked these Shiraz grapes with their bare hands. They didn't know it 7 years ago, but this harvest is standing the test of time AKA this bottle is damn good.

The juice has just enough body that your mouth notices that little extra weight of the juice (it's like 2% milk vs skim), which is succulent and like layers upon layers of fresh and ripe, red fruit. The vino literally bursts with juiciness but also keeps itself together with roundness on the palate that says we're here to party but we're not gonna be drunk at the company picnic.



This vino is juicy with a substantial body — perfect for a dealer's choice of thick-cut red meat. Elevate the casual and try your boujiest spin on the classic steak and potatoes. Fresh herbs and plenty of butter are welcomed guests at the party.



2017 EVOLÚCIO BLAUFRÄNKISCH

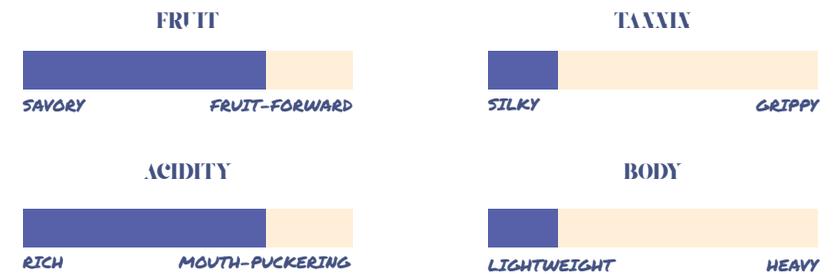
WEINLAND, AUSTRIA

100% BLAUFRÄNKISCH

NOSE: Sun-drenched raspberry jam opens up for your favorite DJ — smooth, funky blackberry

PALATE: Tangy, funky and tart, this wine tastes like the first cool day of fall after a relentless summer

MOOD: Lounging in a giant pile of Autumn leaves, you and your friends can't contain your random fits of laughter as you take turns belting out the verses of your favorite fall banger.



This bottle might just be the best use of the word funk cause this wine is all about funk. Blaufränkisch, also known as Pinot Noirs' funky-ass little sibling who rocks the trendy threads, has all the dopest dance moves and gives off the "I don't give a damn" cool vibe. This grape is native to the cooler climate in Austria which shows in its glistening and bright acidity. Imagine freeze-dried raspberries, cherries, and red currants slowly melt across your mouth into a state of funky sublime-ness aka deliciousness!

Poppy and electric in your mouth, it brightens up every inch of your palate. It makes you feel like you're on an extended vacation, in a beautiful place where it is eternally early fall, wrapped in your favorite worn-in flannel button-down. With its beautiful acidity and light body, this wine is ideal for pouring a brimming glass and inviting friends over to wrap yourselves in blankets and play in a huge pile of autumn leaves.



This wine will be great for making fancy leftover turkey sandwiches with cool kid Asian ingredients like hoisin and garam masala.



2018 HIDDEN VINEYARDS ZWIEGELT

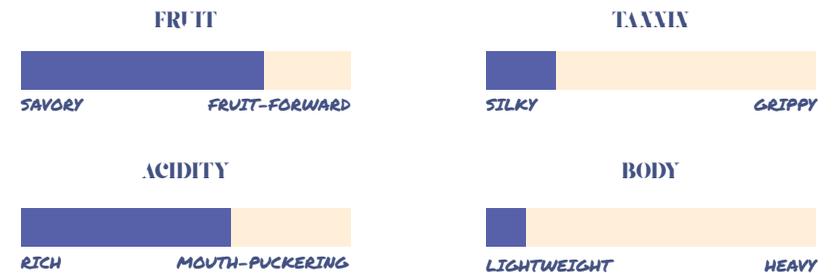
WEINLAND, AUSTRIA

100% ZWIEGELT

NOSE: Dark cherries and cassis marinated in the best flat Dr. Pepper you've ever tasted

PALATE: A guilty pleasure of lush ripeness becomes more complex with silky smooth tannins and a faint touch of spice

MOOD: Grabbing takeout and heading to your chicest friend's fancy apartment courtyard for a mood-boosting dinner date to start off the work week.



Two grapes walk into a bar... well, not exactly. But in 1922, a scientist took two of Austria's finest red grapes, St. Laurent and Blaufränkisch, and crossed them together to make Zweigelt, which is now the most planted varietal in Austria. The grape is really the best of both of its parents. The St. Laurent gives it that nice ripe cherry, while the Blaufränkisch imparts the spice.

The wine is velvety smooth and the body is definitely on the lighter end of the spectrum making it gulp-able without weighing you down during all the holiday meals on your calendar this season. As you sip, your brain might think you've found dark cherry Kool-Aid, but a more complex and only-for-adults version. And by adults, we just mean 21 and older. No judgments on your inner child making an appearance this holiday season.



One of the more versatile red wines around making it a great holiday season wine because it pairs with roasted turkey or chicken, ham, and the tofu mold that only your guests from Brooklyn eat.



2015 WENINGER ORGANIC RED

SOPRON, HUNGARY

58% MERLOT, 28% PINOT NOIR, 14% SYRAH

NOSE: Like a rhubarb and strawberry pie, fresh out of the oven

PALATE: Juicy and fruity with rhubarb, strawberry, and red raspberry. Deliciously drinkable like adult Hawaiian Punch.

MOOD: You've navigated your way safely onto your makeshift rooftop hangout with some healthy snacks along for the ride. The warm sun is mingling with an ever-so-cool breeze. It almost feels like summer again.



If you've been around Wine Awesomeness long enough, then you know we like to get off the grid from time to time. So much good wine is being made across the world that it would be a shame to only stick to the paths well-traveled. For this edition of the "path less traveled" we've found a gorgeous winery on a slope overlooking Lake Fertö on the Hungarian side of the border looking back at Austria.

This giant lake makes for an excellent summer vacay spot for the people of Vienna and for some epic grape-growing conditions, which you can taste for yourself in this tasty blend of Pinot Noir, Merlot, and Syrah. The grapes are 100% organic, biodynamically farmed, and hand-harvested. The nose is all about ripe and bright red fruit like rhubarb, strawberries, and red raspberries. The palate is juicy, fruity, and generous.



Get all your favorite goodies together for a hearty board of charcuterie to pair with this Hungarian red blend. The forward fruitiness is asking for salty red meats and sharp cheeses.

EATS



SEASON'S HARVEST SALAD

FARM-TO-TABLE RECIPES COURTESY OF NICKOLAS MARTINEZ, HEAD CHEF AT FORGAGERS

- 1 cup red quinoa, rinsed well
- Sprig thyme
- Sprig rosemary
- 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2-3 cups mixed vegetables such as green beans, Romanesco, cauliflower, beets, winter squash or peppers
- 1/2 cup mustard greens
- 1/2 cup swiss chard
- 1/2 cup kale torn into pieces
- 1/4 cup basil, cut into chiffonade
- 1/4 cup mint, cut into chiffonade
- 2 radishes, thinly sliced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- LEMON MARMALADE
- 6-10 whole lemons
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup water

PREHEAT oven to 250°F.

WRAP lemons in foil. Oven roast for 8 hours. Remove and allow to cool. Remove pulp and push through strainer to remove seeds. Scrape white pith from skins and discard. Slice skins into strips.

ADD lemon pulp and skins to honey and water in a saucepan and simmer over low heat until thick and jammy. Allow to cool.

HEAT quinoa in a saucepan over low-medium heat until aroma is released. Add water, salt, rosemary and thyme, bringing all to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cover. Let cook for 12 minutes.

REMOVE quinoa from heat, and let sit with the lid on while vegetables are prepared. Remove rosemary and thyme from quinoa and discard. Fluff quinoa with a fork and fold in 1 tablespoon lemon marmalade.

SLICE beets thinly with a mandolin. Cut vegetables into small cubes. Sauté all vegetables except greens over high heat with a 1/4 cup olive oil. Remove from heat and set aside. Char greens in the hot pan.

TOSS the vegetables and greens with the quinoa.

Top with mint and basil chiffonade. Garnish with microgreens and slivered radish. Serve warm or at room temperature.



SMASHED AND SEARED BEETS WITH CHIMICHURRI AND GOAT CHEESE CREMA

SERVES 4 | THE VEGETABLE BUTCHER BY CARA MANGINI • WORKMAN PUBLISHING • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHEW BENSON

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup (4 oz) goat cheese, at room temperature
- 3/4 cup heavy (whipping) cream
- Fine sea salt
- 1 1/2 cups small to medium beets
- 1 1/4 cups apple cider vinegar
- 2 garlic cloves, halved
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 tbsps extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cups baby arugula
- CHIMICHURRI
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves, thick stems removed
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves
- 1/4 cup ground cumin

COMBINE the vinegar, garlic, red pepper flakes, oil, parsley, cilantro, basil, and cumin in a food processor or blender and puree until they are fully incorporated. Transfer the mixture to an airtight container and chill until ready to serve, at least 2 hours or up to 2 days.

WHISK together the goat cheese, cream, and a pinch of salt in a medium-size bowl. Cover the crema with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve, up to 3 days.

PLACE the beets, 5 cups of water, the cider vinegar, garlic, bay leaf, and 1 tsp of salt in a medium saucepan and bring to a steady simmer over high heat. Reduce the heat and simmer, partially covered, until the beets are tender at their center when pierced with a paring knife, 35 to 50 minutes, depending on their size.

REMOVE the beets from the poaching liquid and let them cool to the touch. Discard the bay leaf. Use a paring knife to trim extra-long tails. If you wish, cut off the tops just under the stem. One at a time, place the beets between 2 salad plates and press down just enough to smash and slightly flatten but not break the beets. (Don't worry if they do break apart or if some skin peels off as you handle them.)

HEAT the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until it begins to glisten. Add the beets and let them cook undisturbed, flipping just once, until the skin is crispy and caramelized, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

SPREAD the goat cheese crema in the center of a serving bowl or divide it among individual plates. Pile the beets on the goat cheese crema and spoon the chimichurri generously over them. Top with the arugula and another drizzle of chimichurri.

NOTE: This smashing technique works wonders on boiled unpeeled new potatoes and small Yukon Gold and fingerling potatoes, too. Serve them on their own or with Horseradish Cream and chives.

ROASTED SWEET POTATO WITH CHICKPEAS, GOAT CHEESE, AND CORIANDER

SSERVES 4 | PHOTO: FOOD52/BOBBI LIN

- 2 sweet potatoes, large
- 2 tbsps olive oil
- 100 grams chickpeas
- 200 grams goat cheese
- Lemon juice, to taste
- 1 handful fresh coriander

PREHEAT oven to 400° F. Cut the sweet potatoes in half lengthwise. Brush the top and skins with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Place the sweet potatoes cut side-down on a baking tray with parchment paper. Roast for 45 minutes, or until completely cooked through.

TAKE the sweet potatoes out of the oven. Turn them over and use a fork to make little insertions in their soft flesh. Season with salt and pepper.

DIVIDE the chickpeas and goat cheese over the four halves and place them back into the oven for about 10 minutes, or until the goat cheese has melted.

TAKE the sweet potatoes out of the oven, drizzle with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil, some lemon juice to taste, and add the coriander. Serve and enjoy!



ROASTED CHICKEN WITH PAN GRAVY

SERVES 4 | BY GIA COPPOLA

- 1 Six Pound Whole Chicken
- Olive Oil
- Salt
- Pepper
- 5 Cloves Garlic, smashed
- Handful Rosemary Sprigs
- 1/4 Cups Red Wine
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire Sauce

FOR THE CHICKEN: Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Wash chicken and pat dry.

Rub chicken down with olive oil so it's lightly coated.

Season whole chicken (including cavity) with salt and pepper. Gently loosen skin and slide smashed garlic cloves and rosemary sprigs in.

Roast chicken for an hour and a half or until the juices run clear when you cut between the leg and thigh.

FOR THE GRAVY: Remove the chicken from the roasting pan and set aside.

Set pan to medium-low heat on the stove.

Add the wine and Worcestershire to the pan and stir scraping off the brown bits incorporating them into the sauce. Let the sauce continue to simmer while the wine cooks down until the alcohol has been cooked off and sauce is reduced.

Remove from heat and serve with chicken.



2017 THE ATOM "HALF-LIFE" CHARDONNAY

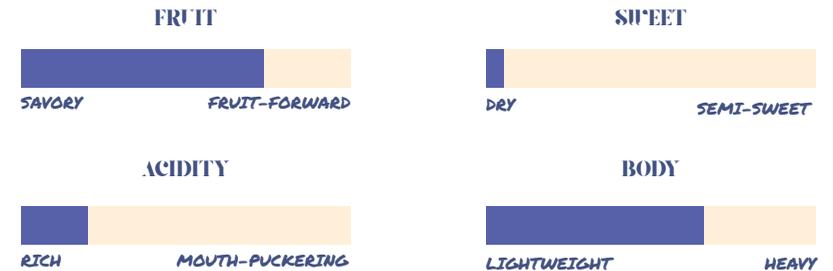
CALIFORNIA

100% CHARDONNAY

NOSE: Stone fruit, lemon zest and coconut, like a boozy luau

PALATE: Tangy fruit dissolves into caramelized sugar, baking spices and a hint of smoke transport you to the dessert course on an island getaway.

MOOD: You finally saved up the money for that trip to Hawaii and you're not about to waste a damn second doing anything but drinking a whole bottle of vino by the ocean.



() ne of the early mottos at the WA offices was "Chardonnay doesn't have to suck!" This quip was based on how much California Chardonnay is on the market that tastes like oak and butter got together for an over-the-top and super tacky get-together. Chardonnay is so much more than oak and butter.

The crew behind The Atom brand have sourced top-notch Chardonnay grapes from specific coastal vineyards in California and turned the lush grapes into an excellent vino with very scientific and technical winemaking skills. In honor of the science of winemaking, the team named this bottle "Half-Life." The juice is a balanced coalescence of ripe stone fruit, apple blossoms, lemon zest, and toasted coconut that greet the palate and dissolve to rich caramelized sugar, baking spices, and a touch of smoke.



Take the island vibe and run with it! Queue up slow roasted pineapple pork for some thoughtfully garnished tacos with plenty of smoky hot sauce on top.



2017 MERWIDA CHARDONNAY

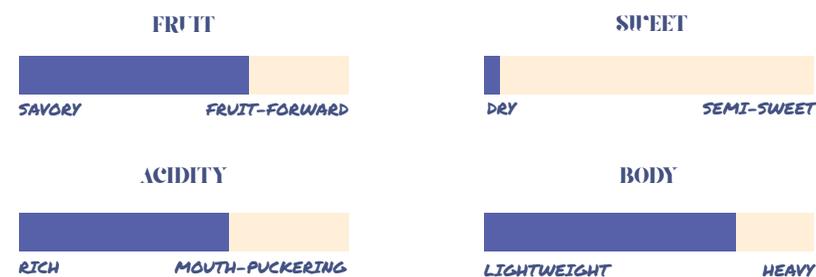
WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

100% CHARDONNAY

NOSE: Limey and tropical, like hang gliding through a citrus orchard.

PALATE: A kiss of ocean saltiness that ends with yellow pear, butterscotch, and tropical citrus.

MOOD: Taking a super brisk walk along a seaside trail with a backpack full of treats. The portable speaker never leaves your side as you gain a new appreciation for nature.



The area around Capetown on the Western Cape of South Africa is some of the oldest dirt on the planet. This little corner of the earth is a haven for outstanding winemaking because the climate is warm days, cool nights, and constant salty ocean breezes.

This Chard has such an elegant, full, and lush feel in the mouth. Swish it around and you can taste everything that is gorgeous about the Western Cape i.e. sunsets on Chapman's Peak, stunning views of Table Mountain, and sunny days on the beach where the Indian meets the Atlantic ocean. The palate is limey with a perfect touch of ocean saltiness that ends with yellow pear, butterscotch, and tropical citrus.



This Chard is a slamdunk with bright, rich flavors. Transform leftover roasted chicken into a curry full of Asian spices and smooth coconut milk.



2018 HIDDEN VINEYARDS ZENIT

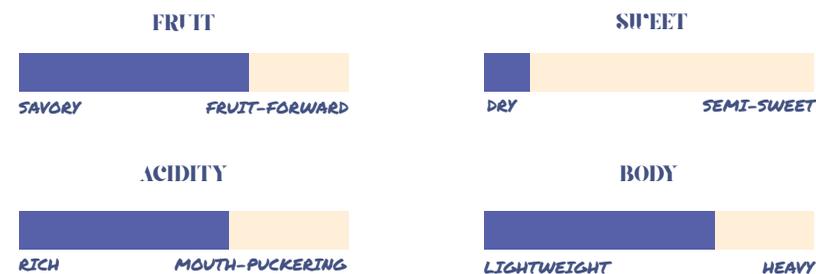
SOPRON, HUNGARY

100% ZENIT

NOSE: Delicate white and yellow flowers like a walk in the modern day garden of Eden

PALATE: A lush and lingering mouth feel that transitions effortlessly to exotic fruit like lychee, melon, and jackfruit.

MOOD: Rain wasn't in the forecast but a persistent drizzle won't possibly bring you down as you pop on 50 First Dates and enjoy Adam Sandler in his prime.



Many vineyards in Hungary are farmed with a deep respect for nature, yet some of them remain unknown and lie hidden in obscurity. Zenit is a rare white grape you've probably never heard of. We've scoured the globe for really cool wines and this little magic grape from Hungary is brand new to us too. It was too good for us to pass up the opportunity to share with the whole WA community.

These vineyards in Hungary are organically and biodynamically farmed, and all the grapes are hand-harvested. As we first sipped this vino we couldn't help but notice how awesome the wine literally smelled. The nose is like the most elegant white and yellow flowers on the planet. The palate is lush with enough body that the juice lingers on the cheeks and ends with an exotic fruit i.e. lychee, melon, and jackfruit finish



Track down a few filets of succulent white fish and get your Iron Chef on with zesty spices, a squeeze of citrus, and pink peppercorn for a hint of spicy sweetness.



BASCA CAVA, NV

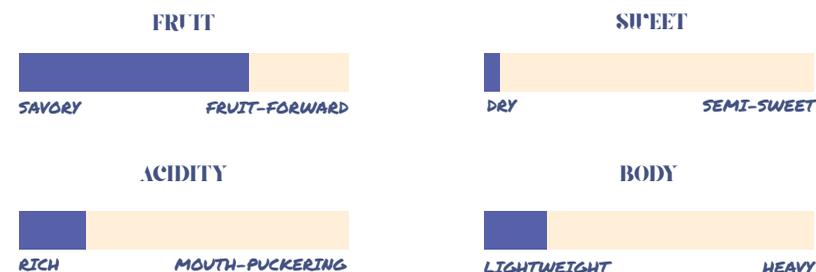
PENEDÉS, SPAIN

40% MACABEO, 30% XARELLO, 30% PARELLADA

NOSE: Zesty, lemony, and bright, like a citrus firework show

PALATE: Lively and floral fruit provide a zippy tang, with elegant bubbles and not too much sweetness for a balanced, craveable finish.

MOOD: Your friends are running a pickup beach volleyball game and you agreed to tag along if you could sit on your beach towel and catch a quick tan.



Cava is one of the best things to come out of Spain since tapas. We know, we know... tapas are delicious, but not much can be better than sipping on Spain's version of sparkling wine at a cool bar in Barcelona or while planning your dream trip to Spain! The name of Cava comes from the Catalan word 'cave' AKA cellar. Catalonia is the Northeast region of Spain that is home to ridiculously good wine, beaches, soccer, and obvi... Barcelona.

The dirt in this region is mostly limestone and the mild climate along the Mediterranean coast makes for primo winemaking conditions. The juice is a delectable pale yellow color, but the sipping is elegant and rich minus all the sugar with an unmistakable personality. It'll be hard to stop the bubbles flowing once you pop the cork because it delivers lots of lively, lemony, floral fruit with a clean, zesty finish that makes everyone crave for one more glass.



Don't be afraid to step outside your culinary comfort zone and try your hand at some homemade empanadas. This bubbly is versatile so grab whatever meats, veggies, and seasonings sound good for your very own shareable smorgasbord.



DIY: BLOODY MARY BAR

BY JENNIFER NELSON

HAIR OF THE DOG, amuse bouche, liquid lunch. Call it what you will, but one thing's for certain: no brunch is complete without a Bloody Mary.

In fact, there's really no better way to celebrate the myriad possibilities of brunch than with this deep red beverage. At Buttermilk Channel in Brooklyn, we know a thing or two about serving the hungover masses – so we know all about Bloody Marys.

Every day we serve a bevy of tomato-spiked cocktails with house-infused vodkas and artisan garnishes served alongside. The list of Bloody Mary combos goes on and on. While high-brow additions like antipasti and oysters are always a nice touch, we get that they're unlikely in a last-minute brunch situation. That's OK. You needn't look further than your corner bodega to build a great Bloody Mary and take your brunch to the next level.

THE BASICS

A jar of pickles

A bottle each of a potato vodka, dry gin and golden tequila (so that your guests have options)

THE MIX

MAKES ABOUT 1 PITCHER

One 16-ounce can tomato juice

1 cup horseradish, plus more to taste

1/8 cup celery salt

1/8 cup ground black pepper

1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce

20 dashes Tabasco

Lemon juice, to taste

Salt, to taste

THE GARNISHES

Lemon-Celery Salt: Zest the rind of 2 small lemons into a half cup of kosher salt and 1 tablespoon celery salt. Mix well and serve in a shallow bowl.

Lime Salt: Zest the rind of 2 limes into a half cup of kosher salt. Mix well and serve in a shallow bowl.

Potato Chip "Salt and Pepper": Place 3 heaping handfuls of potato chips into a separate plastic bag with 1 tablespoon of black pepper. Crunch until contents are fine. Taste, and add more pepper if necessary. Mix well and serve in a shallow bowl.

Classic Skewers: Using a toothpick, alternately skewer green beans, olives and onions. Serve on a small plate.

Citrus: Quarter 3 lemons and 3 limes (Note: these are not the same lemons and lime you zested). Place in a serving bowl.

Egg-and-Beet Skewers: Boil one dozen eggs for about 11 minutes. Once done, drain them, peel them and place in a large mixing bowl with a drained can of beets. In a separate sauce pan, bring 1 cup each of sugar, water, apple cider

vinegar and beet juice to a boil. Pour mixture over eggs (you want the liquid to cover the eggs and beets), then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for one to 24 hours (the longer the better). When done, the whites will have taken on a beautiful magenta color and a delicious, tangy flavor. Halve the eggs, then skewer them on a toothpick with a small beet.

Voilà! Brunch is served!

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.

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