

# thebacklabel<sup>®</sup>

A monthly wine journey curated for adventurous souls

## HARVEST





# HARVEST IS MAGIC

BY LOGAN LEE

HARVEST IS THE MOMENT of truth and the culmination of a year's worth of work coming together all at once. It is very easy to forget that wine is an agricultural product. It's very different than a Coke or a Budweiser! What is in our glass literally tastes and smells different because of the weather and how the teams behind each winery handle the picking season. The best wines come from a place with interesting and compelling stories behind the juice.

Harvest is also the sign that the holidays are coming! Which either elicits childhood-like nostalgia and sense of joy or strikes fear in your heart. Maybe a little of both. Whether we like it or not, the holidays are coming! We've all been told since we were little tikes that the real meaning of the holiday season isn't gifts or decadent pumpkin pies, but it is really about what we are all thankful for! We're thankful for all the humans out there that work like crazy to make wine.

This month's wine selections from Chile, Argentina, California, Spain, and Australia will either elevate your holiday spirit and/or take the edge off those awkward family moments. The Aussie sparkling red wine is sure to be a conversation starter for any of your holiday moments. For this issue's pairings, we chatted it up with Pure Wow. Their editorial team is in the game of elevating everyday life and their favorite holiday dishes will definitely inspire you to get beyond the same old, same old.

In addition to making sure you are stocked up with awesome vino and some holiday recipe pairings, we're taking the opportunity to show what it takes to make sure all our glasses are filled with great wine.

To get you a glimpse behind the scenes... All the photos in this edition of thebacklabel are from several wine adventures. Next up, one of our favorite somms, Jess Arnold, takes us into the daily grind of harvest. Arnold is a certified sommelier with restaurant experience in San Francisco and NYC who ditched the suit to join the wine production ranks. And finally, we chatted with Wine Folly founder, Madeline Puckette to get the lowdown on all the different professions on a winery. It is quite amazing to see how many jobs there are in the vineyard and on the winery.

Enjoy the wine sipping and make sure to count your lucky blessings this holiday season.

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# FROM SOMM TO SOIL: WHY WORKING HARVEST IS WORTH IT

BY JESS ARNOLD



I FIRST DISCOVERED THE WORLD OF WINE while living in San Francisco. There's no doubt that my proximity to Napa and Sonoma fostered an osmotic and perhaps alcohol-fueled education. But most of all, I was astounded that an agricultural product could be so delicious, diverse and dynamic.

"Wait, the spot on a hill where these grapes grow will make them taste different than the grapes growing at the bottom of that same hill?" Pour me another glass and don't stop talking.

After taking a wine education course and working in a Napa tasting room, I moved to New York. I enrolled in an intensive sommelier training course. I lined up a job at a restaurant with an award-winning list. I was set up to try some of the best wines in the world and attend portfolio tastings from massive wholesale distributors. As I tasted these wines — some of which showed ethereal beauty and complexity that confounded my brain cells — the seemingly simplest of questions popped into my mind: how do they make this stuff?

No one around me could give me an adequate answer. Of course, we all knew how a bottle of wine is made theoretically, but I wasn't satisfied. I was taught to identify wines based on deductive tasting; alcohol and acidity levels, fruit, earth aromas, and oak usage were the clues that taught me about what was in my glass.

What about the influence of the land and the person that made it? How do wineries and winemakers find their styles? How are changing trends affecting regions steeped in tradition? It became clear that I couldn't taste a wine, fill in a chart, and find the answers I was looking for. I passed my exam, then left New York to be a harvest intern.

Out in Sonoma, I discovered two months worth of 18 hour days. I accepted that nobody would ask questions like "have you used a power tool before?" I was taught at least three "perfect" techniques for coiling a hose and slept soundly knowing my fingers were still attached to my hands. To describe harvest as 'intense' would be an understatement, mostly though, it's just beautiful.

Early mornings alone in the vineyard are revelations, much like seeing and tasting the fruit I cultivated as it settled into fermentation vessels. Nicknames are abundant.

Connections are made. Then comes the daily interaction with the juice: punch downs and pump overs, basic testing, tasting, and smelling. All facilitate an awareness of each vat's identity. I can close my eyes and visualize a map of all 60 tanks full of fledgling wine.

These days, this is what I think about when I drink a glass of wine. I think of the grape growers and winemakers who have brought something to life — not as laborers or booze makers but proud parents. When I was studying to be a sommelier, I missed all these things.

I had never seen grapes as characters that live alongside the passionate people who take the time to carefully coax them into becoming wine. Now, I am deeply fortunate to be one of those people. I can revisit the sights, sounds, and scents of a wine's creation when I sip it. With my questions (mostly) answered and all our wines going to bed in their respective barrels, it's finally time to indulge in an ironic post-harvest tradition: a few well-deserved beers.



## 2014 J. BOUCHON BLOCK SERIES CABERNET SAUVIGNON

### MAULE VALLEY, CHILE

100% Cabernet Sauvignon

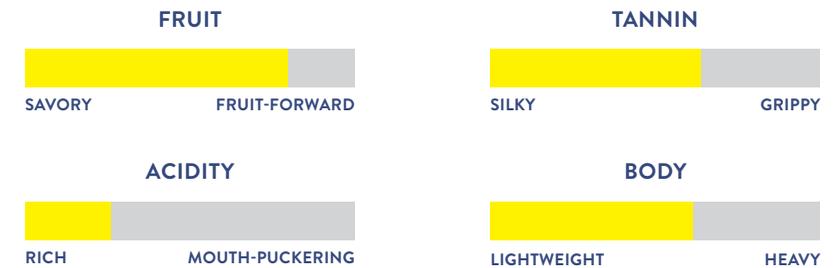


Who dropped the dried herbs in the strawberry jam???



Adding real deal vanilla extract to a juicy cherry, currant, and cinnamon pie filling

**MOOD:** Organizing your life and your Amazon shopping list on a Sunday evening while listening to The Lemon Twigs' *As Long As We're Together!*



**T**annin is one of the more strange parts of articulating the taste of a wine. Wine words like 'nose' and 'palate' seem relatively self-explanatory, but with is a tannin — does it have a taste? A color?!? Well, we're lucky that this Cab has some serious tannin, and we hope it will help all of us better describe the wine we want to imbibe.

The simplest way to think about tannin is literally how sticky or how much grip the wine has on the inside of your cheeks. More grip usually means the wine will taste drier. The J. Bouchon will definitely grip the inside of your mouth and the straightforward juiciness and touch of spice and vanilla will linger so long they might need a lease near your tongue.



Steaks. Hanger steak. Filet Mignon. T-Bone. Skirt steak. Strip steak. Flank steak. Ribeye. You get the picture. This is the perfect wine for steak night.



## SPICY TURKEY ENCHILADAS WITH PUMPKIN SEEDS

6 SERVINGS

### INGREDIENTS

- Nonstick spray, as needed
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 bunch green onions, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced
- 3 cups shredded leftover turkey (or chicken)
- 2 cups shredded Monterey jack cheese
- One 28-ounce can red enchilada sauce
- 12 small corn tortillas
- 6 radishes, thinly sliced
- ½ cup pepitas (roasted and salted pumpkin seeds)
- ⅓ cup fresh cilantro leaves

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Grease a 9-by-13-inch casserole dish with nonstick spray.

2. In a medium skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the green onions, garlic and jalapeño and sauté until tender and fragrant, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl and then stir in the turkey and one-third of the cheese.

3. Pour half of the enchilada sauce into the casserole dish. In the same skillet you used for sautéing, lightly warm 2 or 3 tortillas at a time, about 1 minute per batch.

4. Fill each tortilla with a heaping ¼ cup of the turkey filling and then wrap tightly into a log and place in the casserole dish. Repeat with the remaining tortillas and filling.

5. Pour the remaining sauce over the enchiladas and top with an even layer of the remaining shredded cheese. Bake until the sauce is bubbly and the cheese is melted, 25 to 30 minutes.

6. Serve immediately, garnished with radish slices, pepitas and cilantro.



## FLEGENHEIMER BROS. "OUT OF THE PARK" SPARKLING SHIRAZ, NV MCLAREN VALE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

96% Shiraz, 4% Cabernet Sauvignon

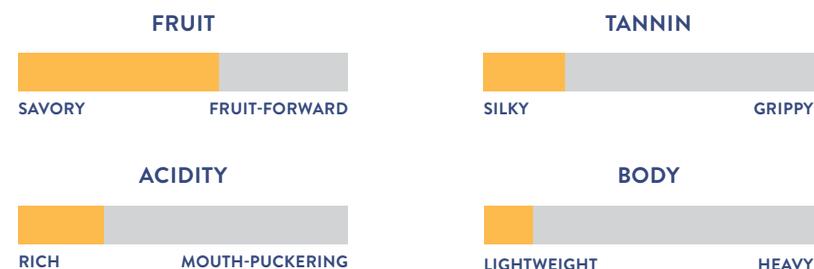


Blueberries, allspice, and succulent herbs walk into a bar...



A frenetic Stop & Shop parking lot with loitering spices and boysenberry

**MOOD:** You've warrior-ed your way through the week and Saturday night arrives... The first song on the night's playlist is Glorious Warrior by Electric Guest and the first wave of your crew rings the apartment buzzer.



The Hammerschlag family arrived in the port of New York in the late 1800s from Germany. An American love story blossomed when a young Hammerschlag lad met a lovely lady of the Flegenheimer family in NYC around the turn of the century. Two immigrant families combined with one super-sized "Hammerschlag-Flegenheimer" wedding invite! This family started a wine business back in 1876 that all but shut down in 1919 because of prohibition.

Fast forward three generations and Benjamin Hammerschlag has resurrected the family biz with some incredible vino. This sparkling Shiraz displays a vibrant lush garnet color and a bouquet of rich berry fruits, dark cherries, and soft lingering hints of integrated oak. It's bright, juicy with red fruits and plum, balanced with silky tannins and a velvety smooth finish.



This sparkling wine sings with some creamy blue cheeses. A good baguette is just delicious and gives off the air of sophistication. It's the best 3 bucks you can spend in Whole Foods. Snag some blue cheese. We're big fans of Stilton and Roquefort.



## CRANBERRY, BRUSSELS SPROUTS AND BRIE SKILLET NACHOS

6 SERVINGS

### SWEET POTATOES AND BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Nonstick spray, as needed

1 red onion, diced

1 large sweet potato, peeled and diced

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary

1 teaspoon garlic powder

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 cups shredded brussels sprouts

### NACHOS

Tortilla chips, as needed

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup prepared cranberry sauce

1 cup shredded white cheddar cheese

8 ounces Brie cheese, thinly sliced

Freshly ground black pepper

Fresh parsley, for serving

1. MAKE THE SWEET POTATOES AND BRUSSEL SPROUTS: Preheat the oven to 400°F. Lightly grease a baking sheet with nonstick spray.

2. Spread the onion and sweet potatoes on the baking sheet and drizzle evenly with the olive oil. Toss with the rosemary and garlic powder; season with salt and pepper.

3. Roast until the sweet potatoes are tender and beginning to brown, 12 to 15 minutes. Add the shredded brussels sprouts to the baking sheet and toss well to combine. Return the baking sheet to the oven until the veggies are golden brown all over, 7 to 10 more minutes.

4. MAKE THE NACHOS: Arrange the tortilla chips in an even layer in a large skillet. Dollop three-quarters of the cranberry sauce all over the chips. Top with three-quarters of the vegetables. Arrange the white cheddar and Brie in an even layer on top and then finish with a layer of the remaining cranberry sauce and vegetable mixture.

5. Transfer the skillet to the oven and bake until the cheeses are very melted, 15 to 18 minutes. Remove the skillet from the oven and serve immediately, garnished with freshly ground black pepper and parsley.



## 2011 ALANGE TEMPRANILLO

RIBERA DEL GUADIANA, SPAIN

100% Tempranillo

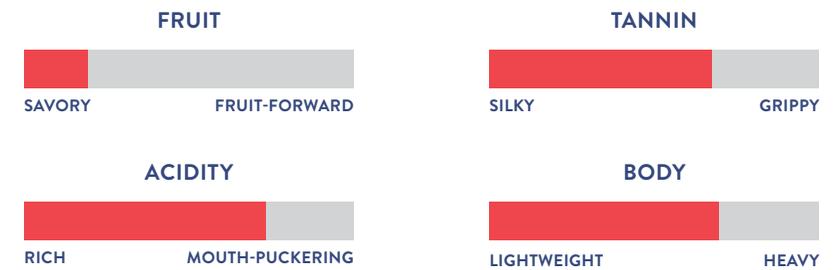


Nutmeg, cherries, and tobacco matched on Bumble



A velvety smooth melted Wendy's "dark red fruit flavored" Frosty

**MOOD:** The moment at dinner when everyone is halfway through their first glass of wine and noise escalates as everyone laughs more and talks louder. John Newman's Love Me Again is barely audible in the background.



One of the biggest misconceptions about wine is that the older the bottle, the better it is. Nearly all wine is meant to be consumed now. It actually is not meant to age unless the bottle is just the premium of the premium. Younger wines are vibrant, fresh, and loaded up with fruit, but older bottles not meant to age are like atrophied fruit that keeps missing gym time. It's not young anymore, and those muscles are gettin' flabby.

But in wine, like the English language, there are exceptions to every rule. Aging is no one's friend — unless you're George Clooney. Not too often do we come across a Mr. Clooney, but we have in the case of this bottle. The Alange has 8 years of age. Characteristics to take note... the wine is starting to take on colors of rust and the vibrant dark fruit becomes more complex with notes of earth, tobacco, and leather.



Spanish wines ache to be paired with something smoky! Think Mexican stews, BBQ, a dope chili, or literally anything that touches the grill!



## STUFFING MUFFINS

12 SERVINGS

**½ loaf crusty bread, cut into  
⅓-inch cubes**

**6 tablespoons melted butter,  
divided**

**1 large sweet onion, diced**

**4 celery stalks, diced**

**2 garlic cloves, minced**

**½ cup chopped fresh parsley**

**2 tablespoons chopped fresh  
thyme**

**2 tablespoons chopped fresh  
rosemary**

**2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage**

**Salt and freshly ground black  
pepper**

**2½ cups turkey, chicken or  
vegetable broth**

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a 12-cup muffin tin.

2. In a large bowl, toss the bread with 4 tablespoons of the melted butter.

3. Pour the remaining 2 tablespoons melted butter into a large skillet and heat over medium heat. Add the onion and celery, and cook until the vegetables are tender, 4 to 5 minutes.

4. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, 1 minute more. Stir in the parsley, thyme, rosemary and sage. Season the mixture with salt and pepper.

5. Pour the onion and celery mixture over the bread and toss well to combine. Add the broth and toss well to coat. Let the mixture sit 10 to 15 minutes to absorb the liquid, tossing occasionally.

6. Divide the stuffing evenly among the prepared muffin cups. Bake until the tops are golden brown and crusty, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes before serving warm.



## 2014 FOUNT GRENACHE BATCH NO. 1

NORTH COAST, LODI, AND SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

75% Grenache, 23% Carignan, 2% Syrah



Abercrombie 'Woods' fragrance slightly wafting over cranberries rolled in white pepper



Accidentally stomping into a woody basket of freshly picked strawberries, cherries, and red currants

**MOOD:** The in-real-time realization that Ryan Adams covered an entire Taylor Swift album when you play 'Welcome to New York' for your one friend that's a super music geek.

### FRUIT



### TANNIN



### ACIDITY



### BODY



**N**ot every wine comes from an estate. That means for every wine, you can't just pull up to a winery surrounded by grapes and assume the wine being made in that winery is from the grapes surrounding that winery. Enter Peter Eastlake...

A WA fave, a Food & Wine Mag Somm of the Year, and one not afraid to shake things up, Eastlake knows all the secret spots for grapes in California. He lives in Sonoma and regularly rides around with some serious rock n' roll spilling out of his ride on the hunt for quality grapes. We'd call this concept simply thinking outside the box or American ingenuity. Eastlake's magic is in this bottle as he tapped into his secret spots for Cali grapes from Sonoma and the surrounding regions of Lodi and North Coast. This bottle is all about the kind of strawberry and cranberry jam you'd find at a farmers' market, perched on a wooden barrel for display.



If you have a big a\*\* Le Creuset pot, now is your time to break it out and braise some meat. But any pot and lid will work. Braising is just searing the meat and then stewing it slowly in a closed container. Pork, chicken, and beef are all fantastic braised. Add a side of mashed potatoes for a truly hearty meal.



## MAPLE-HERB ROASTED TURKEY LEGS

4 SERVINGS

**4 turkey legs**

**Salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**3 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary**

**2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme**

**¼ cup sage leaves**

**⅓ cup turkey or chicken broth**

**⅓ cup melted butter**

**½ cup maple syrup**

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Place the turkey legs in a large casserole dish.

2. Season the legs with salt, pepper, rosemary and thyme. Sprinkle the sage evenly throughout the dish.

3. Pour the broth into the base of the dish. Stir the butter and syrup together to combine, and glaze each leg twice.

4. Roast the legs until they are golden and fully cooked, 1 hour 30 minutes to 1 hour 45 minutes. Baste every 15 to 20 minutes with the maple butter. You should have just enough to baste one last time when they come out of the oven.

5. Let cool 10 minutes before serving.

## WHAT DO VINEYARDS DO WITH GRAPE LEFTOVERS FROM HARVEST?

**HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED** what happens to that stuff left over after grapes have been squished of their juice? No? Well, we wondered. All those leftover seeds, skins, and stems actually have a technical term: pomace. Pomace actually has many uses and is repurposed for many products. Have you ever used grapeseed oil for cooking? That's made from the seeds from pomace. Have you ever sipped on grappa after a meal? Yep, made from said byproduct as well.

Grape skins are composed of cellulose, tartaric acid, fermentable sugars, and tannins. These chemical compounds can then be processed into all types of things like cream of tartar, food coloring, animal feed, and powdered tannin extract. Some wineries actually have enough leftover byproduct to sell off as is, while others use it themselves to make their own products. Here are some of the most common uses of the leftover pomace after harvest.

### RIPASSO

The Italian wine Ripasso, from the Veneto region, is Valpolicella wine fermented a second time with the grape skins from the pomace of Amarone wine to enhance its flavor. Both Valpolicella and Amarone are wines from the Veneto region, although Valpolicella is the major wine from the region.



Amarone wine is a dry (sometimes sweet) red that resulted from over-aging a sweet Italian wine called Recioto from the same region. The grapes that produced Recioto were also partially dried before fermentation to add a complexity of flavor. So the partially dried grapes from the pomace of Amarone are then added to Valpolicella during the second fermentation to create Ripasso, meaning “re-pass” or “go over again.”

### GRAPESEED OIL

For every 300 gallons of wine made, one gallon of grapeseed oil can be produced as a byproduct. Grapeseed oil has become popular in recent years given its health benefits (essential fatty acids and vitamin E) and its extremely high burning point (420°F!). Obviously, it's made from grape seeds, which results from the pomace. It's either expeller pressed or chemically

extracted. During chemical extraction, hexane is used as a solvent for extraction, whereas for expeller pressed oil the process uses a tool called an expeller, which is a big screw, that tightens and squeezes the seeds until the oil runs out; although, one seed renders such little oil that chemical extraction is most profitable.

### GRAPPA

The Italian brandy is a distilled spirit made from the pomace that is fermented then slightly heated. After most of the liquid has evaporated, what remains is the final grappa product. Certain criteria in the EU says that no water can be added during the process, so the pomace must be distilled using a steam distillation process so the pomace doesn't burn. Traditionally, grappa is served as an after-dinner digestive — but we're always down to break the rules from time to

time.

### GLUTEN-FREE FLOUR

Multiple companies have even been making flour from grape seeds. The flour, either 100 percent made from grape seeds or a blend, has been gaining attention not only because it can be gluten-free but also for the antioxidants like bioflavonoids and polyphenols. One company, AprèsVin from Yakima Valley in Washington State, makes four types of flour from the seeds of Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot, and Riesling. The process goes like this: the seeds are separated from the pomace and dried out. Once the water is expelled, the seeds are pressed for grapeseed oil. The remaining solid part of the seeds after the oil is pressed hits the flour mill.



## 2017 LATÚE BLANCO CASTILLA LA MANCHA, SPAIN

100% Airén

 Bagging green apples, peaches, and bananas in the produce aisle

 Exoskeleton juice box

**MOOD:** Carefree dancing and singing in a fancy glass shower filled with steam and heat to Don't Turn the Lights On by Chromeo



**W**e're always intrigued when we hear about a wine co-op producing interesting wine. In the 1950s, 131 Spanish wine producers pooled their resources together to start the San Isidro Cooperative. A co-op is basically the Airbnb of the wine world or a shared winery. These 100+ wine pros all chipped in so they had a place to make wine they believed in.

Well ahead of their time, this winery focused on indigenous Spanish varietals and producing certified organic vino including this here bottle. The Latue Blanco is 100% Airén. The grape is almost only found in Spain, the wine is certified organic, and we think you'll find it quite slurp-able once you pop it open. It's like snacking on banana chips while hunting for fresh green apples and peaches in the produce aisle.

 When your aunt wants to spend some quality time together and she always makes baked brie inside of a pie crust for the occasion, you should really think about bringing this wine over.



## PUMPKIN PIE STUFFED FRENCH TOAST

6 SERVINGS

**Nonstick spray, as needed**

**1 large loaf challah bread**

**3 slices leftover pumpkin pie**

**4 large eggs**

**1¼ cups whole milk**

**½ cup sugar**

**1½ tablespoons pumpkin pie spice**

**1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**

**4 tablespoons unsalted butter,  
melted**

**Confectioners' sugar, for serving**

**Maple syrup, for serving**

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 9-by-13-inch casserole dish with nonstick spray.
2. Slice the challah into 6 even pieces (they will be quite wide). Use a small serrated knife to make a horizontal slit in each piece of bread; don't cut all the way through.
3. Spoon 3 to 4 tablespoons of leftover pumpkin pie (mostly filling, but it's OK if some crust gets in, too) into the slit in each piece of bread.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, sugar, pumpkin pie spice and vanilla extract.
5. Gently dip each piece of bread into the egg mixture, allowing it to soak up some of the custard, and then transfer it to the prepared baking dish.
6. Drizzle the butter over the bread and then transfer the casserole to the oven. Bake until the top is golden and crisp, 20 to 25 minutes.
7. Let the French toast cool for 5 minutes before serving. Garnish with a sprinkling of confectioners' sugar and serve with maple syrup.





## MACARONI AND CHEESE IN ACORN SQUASH BOWLS

4 SERVINGS

### ACORN SQUASH

4 small acorn squash

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

### MACARONI AND CHEESE

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 sweet onion, minced

2 garlic cloves, minced

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

2½ cups whole milk

1 pound short pasta

2 cups shredded white cheddar cheese

1 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme

1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

### TOPPING

½ cup panko bread crumbs

¼ cup Parmesan cheese

2 tablespoons melted unsalted butter

1. **MAKE THE SQUASH:** Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. If the squashes don't sit flat, slice a small amount off the base of each to level it out. Cut around the stem of each squash and remove the top. Scoop out and discard the seeds inside. Rub the inside of each squash with the olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

3. Transfer the squashes to the baking sheet, replace their tops and roast until the flesh is tender but not so soft that it begins to collapse, 20 to 25 minutes.

4. **MAKE THE MAC AND CHEESE:** In a large saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, 1 minute more.

5. Add the flour to the saucepan and cook, stirring constantly, about 2 minutes. Add the milk gradually, whisking to incorporate. Bring the sauce to a simmer and cook until it thickens, about 2 minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat.

6. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook according to the package's instructions. Drain well.

7. Put the sauce back on the stove over medium-low heat. Stir in the cheddar and Monterey Jack until melted. Add the mustard, nutmeg, thyme and sage; season with salt and pepper. Stir in the pasta, tossing well to coat in the sauce.

8. Divide the mac and cheese among the prepared acorn squash bowls.

9. **MAKE THE TOPPING:** In a medium bowl, stir together the bread crumbs, Parmesan and butter. Sprinkle the topping over the mac and cheese. (At this point, you can wrap the squashes in plastic wrap and refrigerate them for up to two days before baking and finishing.)

10. Bake until the sauce is bubbly and has thickened slightly, 15 to 20 minutes (20 to 30 minutes if baking from the refrigerator).



## ONEHOPE, CALIFORNIA BRUT SPARKLING WINE, NV NAPA, CALIFORNIA

100% Colombard

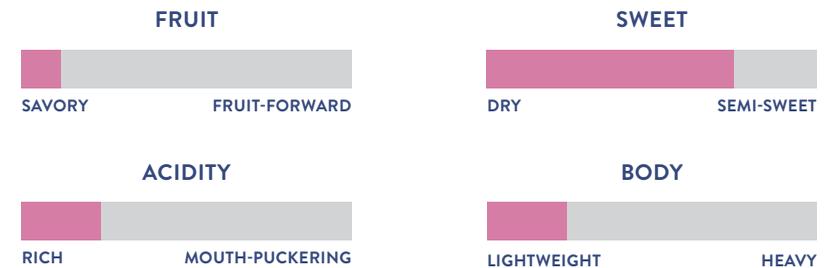


Fresh green apple and ripe nectarine baked into a pie



Peaches, sweet berries, and pear linger on the palate with a rich finish that makes you feel fancy

**MOOD:** Your night ends with a sweaty bang as you pile into a friend's apartment for a late-night dance party featuring Troye Sivan's My My My! on repeat.



Over the last few years, sparkling wine has become quite the trend in California, having earned its seat at the bar. While we at WA know that sparkling wine isn't just for celebrating special occasions, ONEHOPE's California Brut Sparkling Wine has us raising our glasses to toast another cause. With each case of this bubbly sold, ONEHOPE will donate 25 meals to a child in need. All the more reason to order an entire case of bubbly!

On the nose, this lightly colored sparkling is bursting with fresh green apples and ripe nectarines, with just a whisper of freshly baked bread passing through... kinda like grandma accidentally spiked her cookies! Your first sip holds succulent peaches, sweet berries, and pear with a finish that's creamy, rich, and refreshingly bubbly.



Nothing — we repeat — nothing goes better with sparkling wine than fried chicken. KFC, Church's, or the divey chicken shack on the side of town you don't visit too often will all make this sparkling juice hum a beautiful tune!



## MINI MASON JAR APPLE PIES ARE ADORABLE AND DELICIOUS

### 6 MINI PIES

**4 tablespoons unsalted butter**

**2 Honeycrisp apples, peeled and chopped (or other baking apple, such as Granny Smith or McIntosh)**

**½ cup brown sugar**

**3 tablespoons all-purpose flour**

**2 teaspoons cinnamon**

**½ teaspoon ginger**

**½ teaspoon cloves**

**1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**

**2 packages store-bought pie dough (4 circles total)**

**1 egg**

**1 tablespoon water**

**½ teaspoons turbinado sugar**

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Have ready six ¼ pint (½ cup) mason jars on a baking sheet.

2. In a large sauté pan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the apples and sauté until nearly tender, 4 to 5 minutes.

3. Add the sugar, flour, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and vanilla extract, and sauté for 2 minutes more. Let the mixture cool to room temperature.

4. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough until it is flat and slightly thinner than it originally was. Cut the dough into six 3-inch circles and six 2-inch circles.

5. Press a 3-inch circle into a mason jar, pressing it firmly to the base and sides and taking care not to poke holes in the dough. Trim any excess from the top edge with a paring knife. Repeat with the remaining 3-inch circles and jars.

6. Scoop the cooled filling into the pastry-lined jars, mounding it about ½ inch over the top rim.

7. Place the 2-inch rounds over the filling and tuck the edges under so they meet the edge of the jar. Crimp the edges with your fingers or a fork. Chill the pies for 10 minutes.

8. While the pies chill, whisk the egg and water together to combine. Brush the egg wash over each pie top, and then sprinkle the top of each with ½ teaspoon turbinado sugar. Cut small vents into the top of each pie with a paring knife.

9. Bake until the pies are golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool for at least 10 minutes before serving.



## 2015 WITCHES CAULDRON CHARDONNAY

MENDOZA, ARGENTINA

100% Chardonnay

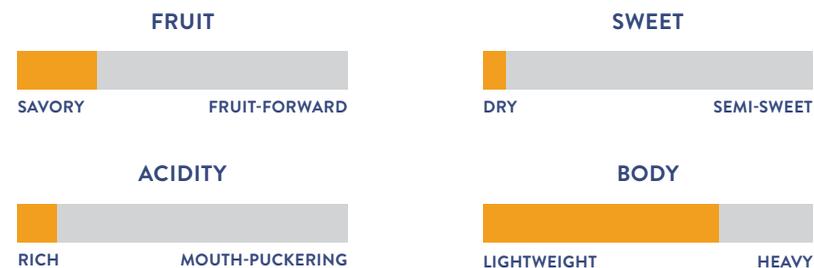


Cut wedges of apples wrapped with honeysuckle petals



A wedding bouquet of white flowers morphed into gentle potpourri

**MOOD:** Going deep down an Instagram rabbit hole searching for travel inspo from your favorite internet celebs



**M**endoza, Argentina is a high elevation desert. Sitting at the base of the majestic Andes Mountains, this famous wine region has long sunny days and brisk nights that make it an ideal place. The glacial water melting (sometimes too fast) from the mountains provides Mother Nature's perfect irrigation system all the way to the vineyards. You get the picture. Mendoza has it going on when it comes to making grapes aka wine.

The crew behind Witches Cauldron produce less than 1,000 cases of this Chardonnay per year. That ain't a lot and the small quantity means they pack in the quality. The juice will ignite your senses and take you on a little flavor ride to the wine's homeland. Your flavor ride includes honeysuckle, apple, and all kinds of white flowers. Bring some soft cheese like Camembert and crackers for the ride. Cheese plate, stat!



Calling all soft cheeses! This Chard isn't loaded up with oak and butter, so complement the wine with creamy goodness. Think Camembert, Fontina, or Brie. Or some Velveeta shells and cheese!



## THE BEST POTATOES AU GRATIN EVER

8 SERVINGS

**5 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided**

**1 sweet onion, thinly sliced**

**3 garlic cloves, minced**

**1 tablespoon grainy mustard**

**2 cups half-and-half**

**2 pounds potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced**

**Salt and freshly ground black pepper**

**½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg**

**¾ cup grated Gruyère cheese**

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Grease a 9-by-13-inch casserole dish with 1 tablespoon of the butter.

2. In a large pot, heat the remaining 4 tablespoons butter over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until tender and translucent, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, 1 minute more.

3. Stir in the mustard. Add the half-and-half and bring to a simmer. Add the potatoes and simmer for 4 to 5 minutes. Season with the salt, pepper and nutmeg.

4. Pour the potato mixture into the prepared casserole dish and spread into an even layer. Top with the cheese in an even layer. (The dish can be stored, covered, in the refrigerator at this point if you want to prepare it ahead.)

5. Bake until the cheese is golden, the sauce is bubbly and the potatoes are easily pierced with a fork, 25 to 30 minutes (add 5 to 7 minutes if baking after storing in the refrigerator). Let cool 5 minutes before serving warm.



# WE SALUTE YOU, WINE PROS!

AS A CELEBRATION OF HARVEST and everything it takes to go from grape to glass, we had a fun chat with one of our favorite wine bloggers, Madeline Puckette of Wine Folly. Puckette is one of a kind and her book, *Wine Folly: The Essential Guide to Wine*, might be the best way to learn about wine outside of actually just tasting it. She gave us the lowdown on all the jobs involved in making wine!

In the vineyard... It is easy to forget that wine is an agricultural product! And it starts in the vineyard. Vineyard jobs are for true outdoor lovers and these pros are responsible for growing the grapes

**Viticulturist earns \$50k to \$85k per year** and knows the ins and outs of the science behind the grape growing.

Now once those grapes are ready for harvest time, then the winemaking team snaps into action.

**Winemaking Director \$150k** - This is the top person at the winery!

**Winemaker \$90k-\$125k**

**Assistant Winemaker \$55k-\$80k**

**Lab Manager / Enologist \$65k-\$85k** - the science behind winemaking is intense and enologists are the humans that get into all the geeky beakers and chemistry stuff.

**Cellar Master \$60k-\$80k** - Once the grapes are harvested and vinified (fancy word for making wine), wine typically spends some time in the cellar either in barrels or bottles.

Wine doesn't sell itself, even though we think it probably could... but once the wine is bottled and ready for drinking, then this team gets to work!

**Operations Director \$60k-\$110k**

**VP of Sales ~\$200k**

**Sales Manager \$50k-\$115k**

**PR and Marketing Manager - \$110k**

**Tasting Room/Wine Club Manager \$40k-\$56k**

So the next time you're enjoying an excellent glass of wine, just remember how many peeps it takes to get this deliciousness to your glass!

# 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.

Free shipping, exclusive member discounts on wine, the discovery experience... could there be more? Yes! Get excited and read on.

## Refer friends for more wine!

Just share your referral code — which can be found on your account dashboard online — and when your friend signs up, you get \$25 in your account! It’s as simple as that.

Keep an eye out for a new member perk each month!

Don't forget to check us out on social and share your monthly wine experience!





WINE AWESOMENESS