



thebacklabel®

A MONTHLY WINE JOURNEY CURATED FOR ADVENTUROUS SOULS

TAPAS



thebacklabel®

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EATING AND DRINKING OUR WAY TO FALL

By **LOGAN LEE**

WELL... it's been a helluva summer over here at the Wine Awesomeness HQ. We hope you guys have had some fun too, checked out a beach or two, and sipped on some rosé to beat the heat. Over the last few editions of our wine club, we've been working super hard to expand our wine selections. You may have noticed we've pushed beyond offering six wines with a bigger mix of red, white, rosé, and the occasion bubbly. This month, we're hitting a record with 11 wines. But the goal remains the same... find awesome bottles from around the globe from real winemakers with great stories and never any B.S. private labels made from bulk juice.

Amping up the number of our selections means more wines for you guys to try with a better selection from all the coolest wine regions from across the world. If you haven't already, I'd encourage everyone to check out the WA Wine Shop at wineawesomeness.com/shop.html. We've added our version of wine sections... meaning you can shop the rosé aisle, peruse all the French wines, or hit up New World wines from Argentina and Chile!

Now on to the goodies we've found for y'all for September!

For the vino, we've curated juice from New Zealand, Australia, Spain, France, Italy, and Portugal. We've picked out the last rosé of the season and it hails from rosé's home base AKA Provence, France.

Now to pair up all that juice, we decided we'd celebrate a Spanish dish that now has become an entire style of cuisine... Tapas! We're featuring 4 tapas from some kick-ass chefs like Bobby Flay from Food Network. We also put our research caps

on to find out more about the origins of the tapa, and we didn't anticipate so many stories about the beginning of the iconic dish.

To put an exclamation point on the September edition of our wine club, we teamed up with the crew at One Hour Cheese to learn how to make farm fresh cheese rounds, which happen to be a perfect topping for tapas!

Peace out, summer, and onto autumn! We hope you enjoy the delicious ride!

LL

FUN FACTS: TAPAS

By WA Crew

WHAT IS A TAPA?

A tapa (Spanish pronunciation: [taa-puh]) is often eaten as an appetizer or snack here in the US, but the word translates to a small dish of any kind of Spanish cuisine.

The word "tapas" is derived from the Spanish verb tapar, "to cover", a cognate of the English top. Using a cover (maybe a slice of cheese or ham) was a practical measure meant to prevent fruit flies from hovering over drinks like sweet sherry. The primary meaning of tapa is cover or lid, but it has, in Spain, also become a term for this style of food.

RIDDLE ME THIS... WHAT'S THE ORIGIN OF TAPAS?!

According to *The Joy of Cooking*, the original tapas were thin slices of bread or meat which sherry drinkers in Andalusian taverns used to cover their glasses between sips.

Another popular explanation says that King Alfonso XIII stopped by a famous tavern in Cádiz (Andalusian city) where he ordered a cup of wine. The waiter covered the glass with a slice of cured ham before offering it to the king, to protect the wine from the beach sand, as Cádiz is a windy place. The king, after drinking the wine and eating the tapa, ordered another wine "with the cover."

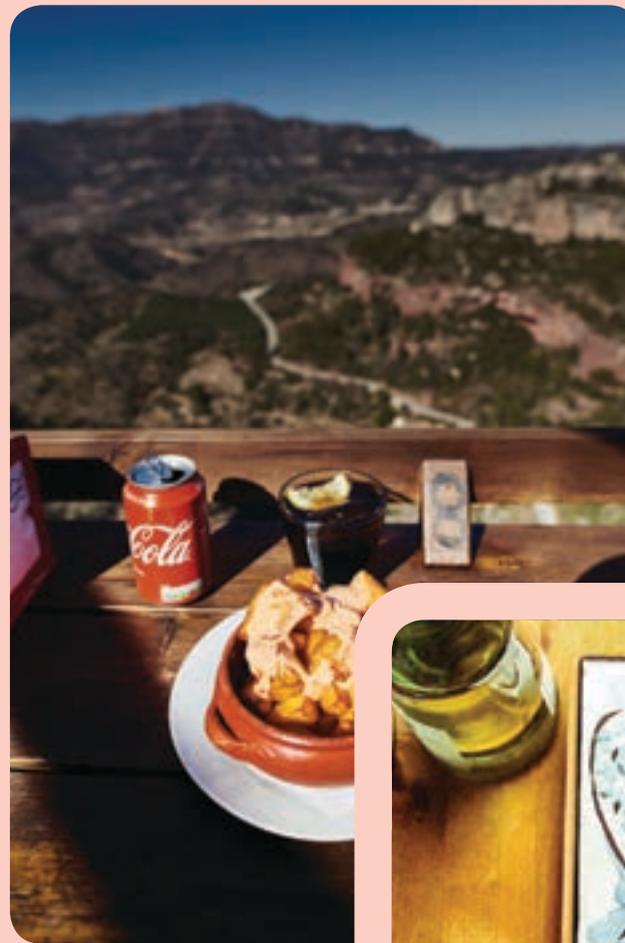
One of the most popular stories claims that, back in the 13th century, King Alfonso X of Castile found that, while he was recuperating from an illness, he could only eat and drink in small amounts — resulting in one of the first forms of a tapa.

In eastern Portugal, it's claimed that shepherds used to cover jugs of fresh water or wine with bread slices to protect it from snakes.

WHERE IS THE TAPA TODAY?

The tapa evolves with the discovery of the New World as Conquistadors bring home tomatoes, sweet and chili peppers, corn, and potatoes, which were readily accepted and easily grown in Spain's climate.

And if you want to judge the best tapas in the world, there's only one place to go. There are many tapas competitions throughout Spain, but there is only one National Tapas competition, which is celebrated every year in November.





2016 CHILL WINE CO. RED

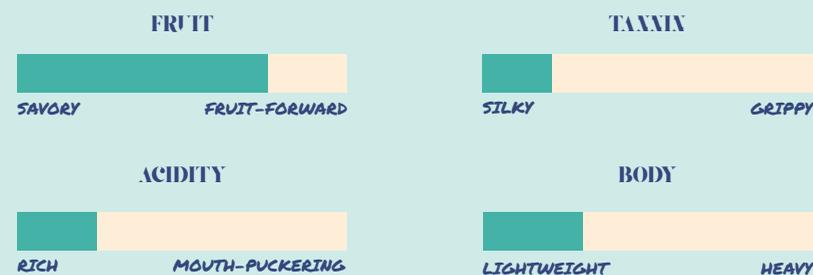
HAWKE'S BAY, NEW ZEALAND

100% Merlot

NOSE: Simple (in the best way), lush ripe plums begging you for a sip

PALATE: Easy like a Sunday morning as the ripe red fruit fades into subtle exotic spice with a hint of cardamon and clove

MOOD: A marathon of 90s guilty pleasure pop music... queue up NSYNC and Britney Spears for an evening without a philosophy or politics lesson. We chillin' all evening long.



longtime motto at WA is "it's just grapes." AKA wine doesn't need to be too complicated or so sophisticated for normal humans to love it! This principle is 100% embodied by the crew behind Chill Wine Co. from New Zealand. First off, their name is "Chill," which is basically like saying let's not overthink everything that is so cool about wine. This is wine you pop open on Wednesday when work was just a little too much and you need straight up "no thinking required" enjoyment.

The juice is from Hawke's Bay in New Zealand, which is known for stony and gravel soils that produce lush, jammy flavor-packed grapes. Next time you need to completely veg out on the sofa and stream Netflix all night long, then this is your go-to bottle. Be careful — it's light, lush, and very gulp-able. Plus, this vino is certified sustainable and vegan!



If a red wine could ever scream summer, then it would be this bottle. It's perfect with any lighter meat off the grill. We paired it up with some sauced up & grilled Terriyaki wings!



2013 V. MITOLO AND SON "WAVEFORM" SHIRAZ

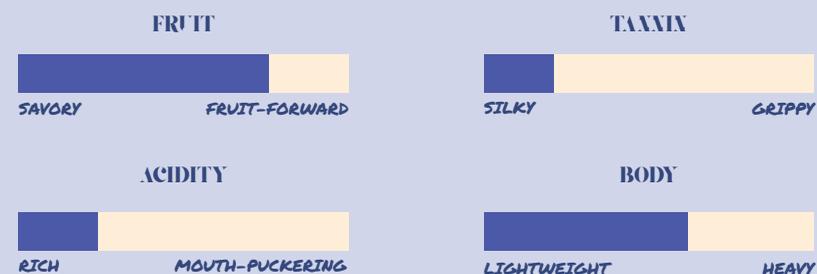
MCLAREN VALE, AUSTRALIA

100% Shiraz

NOSE: If a fresh fruit market opened in the middle of a hipster coffee shop

PALATE: A velvet-y, sensory awesome contradiction of freshly ground coffee, dark chocolate, black pepper and cray cray ripe cherries

MOOD: Playing rockstar dress-up with face paint rocking to Empire of the Sun's Walking On A Dream... the tune is a necessity since the vineyard owner was in the band!



Fun fact... the main guy behind this wine and winery was the drummer in Empire of the Sun, which is awesome, but even more awesome is that this wine is bangin' good! The Mitolo family migrated to Australia from Italy a few decades ago and brought with them some serious winemaking chops from the motherland. Eventually, the fam settled in McLaren Vale, which is in the state of South Australia, Australia, and is super well known in wine nerd circles for producing awesome juice.

This Shiraz is definitely one of those wines hailing from Australia that's got some buzz. This vino has everything you want in Shiraz from Australia, which is basically just Syrah but with a Southern hemisphere twist. This bottle is complex with notes of black pepper, dark chocolate, and a touch of menthol that fade away into very ripe red fruit that lingers with a deluxe, velvety finish.



Beef satay, Aussie style.... meaning skewers of red meat deliciousness are marinated for a couple of hours in coconut milk and curry!



2017 RAW RED BLEND

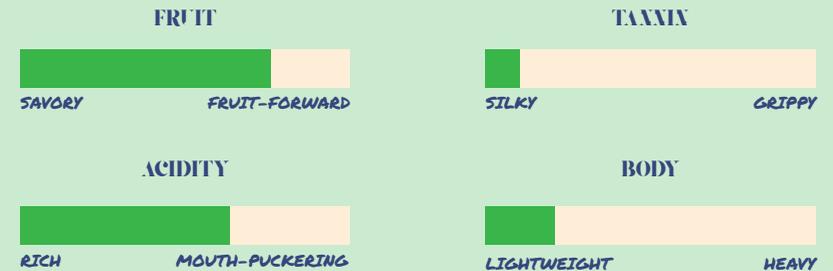
THE VILLAGE OF VILLANUEVA DE ALCARDETE IN THE HEART OF LA MANCHA, SPAIN

Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo, Merlot blend

NOSE: Subtle notes of spice and dark chocolate preview uber bright ripe red fruit

PALATE: Bing cherries and the freshest strawberries of all time create a red wine love child

MOOD: Building a list of your favorite 80s movies while jamming to Wham!'s Club Tropicana! If you don't have a Tom Cruise flick on the list, then we've got beef!



In 1954, a ton of Spanish winegrowers aka 131 of them got together united by a determination to produce awesome and indigenous Spanish wines to sell across Spain. The group founded the San Isidro Cooperative, which is kinda like a wine Airbnb meaning that the production costs were shared by this crew of wine pros. They built a locals-only wine collaboration, but fifty plus years later, these winemakers have decided to open up the club to winos across the world.

Meet RAW Red which is a Really Awesome Wine blend of the classic Spanish grape, Tempranillo, along with Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. The juice is amazingly young and fresh because it is aged in stainless steel tanks and skips the oak making this wine as easy as the perfect summer day. The nose is vibrant with subtle notes of spice and dark chocolate and the sippin' is an uber ripe and dark fruit explosion of flavor.



Serve it with a slight chill and check out an amazing sunset while sitting around a big table of friends snacking on tapas.



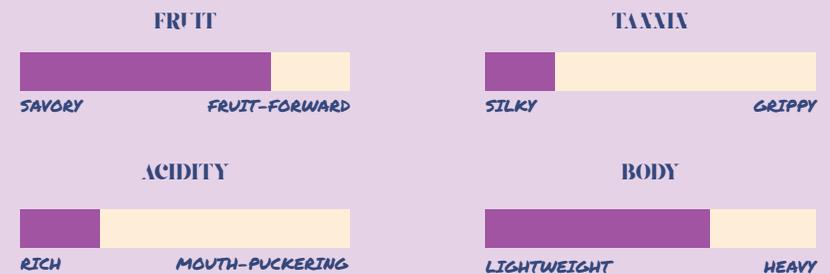
2016 CHATEAU LAMOTHE-CASTERA BORDEAUX CUVÉE "MARGAUX" BORDEAUX, FRANCE

85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot

NOSE: Temptingly fruity and suave with big aromas of vanilla, ripe cherry, vibrant fresh blackcurrant, and blackberries.

PALATE: Smooth on the palate and notably dry with bright and tart acidity, soft velvety tannins, and a round body that's silky and generous, certainly easy to enjoy.

MOOD: Impressing your crew by bringing this bottle over to the next dinner party and queuing up Vampire Weekend's cover of Bruce Springsteen's I'm Going Down. You'll be the boss of the vino and the tunes!



This winery AKA Chateau Lamothe-Castera is located in the tiny village of Roquebrune in the Bordeaux wine region of France. In the 15th century AKA the 1400s, this winery got its start, so they've had a lot of practice producing kick-ass juice. Today, it is sustainably farmed and run by Claire and Renaud Jean. The property is 190 acres and the vineyards are composed of 30-year-old vines Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot, which we've got the privilege of sipping on and passing on to you.

It's amazing what several hundreds of years of practice can do and you can taste all that experience and craft in every sip. The juice is delicate, soft, smooth and velvety with a nose marked by the flavor of small ripe red fruits, spices, and of vanilla. The palate is like the softest pillows made of ripe bing cherry dusted with clove and pepper delicately laying on your tongue. You can't have too many bottles of this Bordeaux on hand.



Reds from Bordeaux pair super well with salty and fatty meats. Instead of slacking over an open fire roasting a rack of lamb, order your fave lamb dish from the best Greek restaurant in your 'hood. Pour a glass and put your feet up.



2016 SCOPA SANGIOVESE

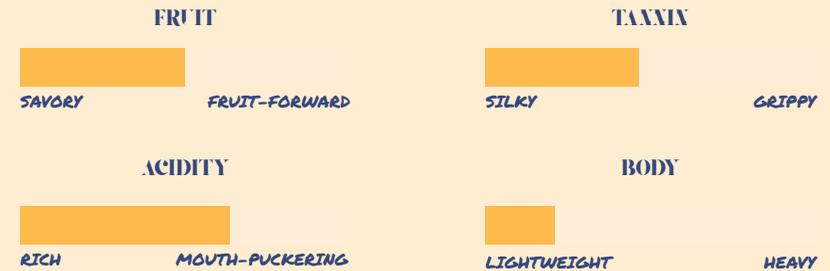
TUSCANY, ITALY

100% Sangiovese

NOSE: If Dr. Pepper made a wine this is what it would smell like. Bright and fresh cherry cola wafting right out of the bottle.

PALATE: Bold tannins envelope the cheeks with notes of sun-dried fruit and tart cherries

MOOD: Enjoying some old school Ella Fitzgerald like her classic tune They Can't Take That Away From Me while waiting on that pizza delivery... then it's jammies, Netflix, and wine.



This wine takes its name from a card game commonly played in Italy. Scopa means "to sweep" because of the way you clear the board of cards. These games often take place on the street and lively conversations about life are almost as much a part of the game as the cards. Scopa also has a slang meaning in parts of Italy, meaning to have a casual night of meaningless love with someone... Of course, the Italians have a word for that.

This Sangiovese, a classic Italian wine grape, is easily approachable and effortless, but also over-delivers, especially for the price point. The juice is excellent for everyday, casual, not overthinking it drinking with bold tannins, sun-dried fruit, and deep red cherry notes that pair well with hearty, Italian family-style dinners like pasta w/ bolognese and meatballs. But this might be best paired with a pie from your favorite pizza place and sweatpants for a cozy weeknight hang out with a new movie.



Wednesday aka hump day evening has arrived and you're barely surviving the week. Pepperoni pizza delivered + this bottle of wine and your sofa = exactly what you need to make it to Friday.



2013 WARRAMATE PINOT NOIR

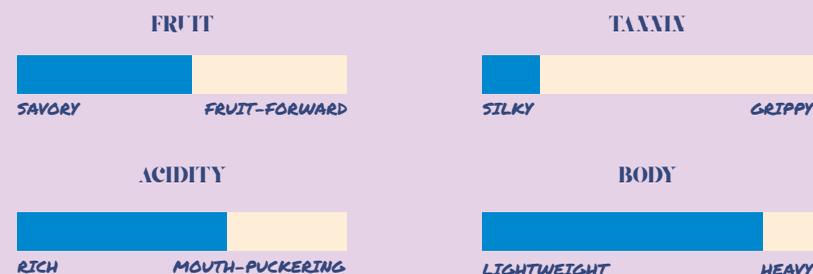
YARRA VALLEY, AUSTRALIA

100% Pinot Noir

NOSE: A fresh basket of strawberries and cherries smushing petals of lavender and violets

PALATE: Tart cherry fruit framed by subtle cedary oak with a delightfully long finish

MOOD: An acoustic singalong celebrating summer turnin into fall with John Mayer strumming out Queen of California



The Yarra Valley is the name given to the region surrounding the Yarra River in Victoria, Australia. One of Yarra's first wave of modern-day wineries, Warramate was founded in 1970, which may not be as old as some of the 15th-century wineries we work with in France, but in Aussie terms, these are old vines! The style is resolutely traditional, with crisp acid and a wiry backbone. Then there's cedary oak, tart cherry fruit, and a long and crisp finish.

Warramate Wines is a small, independently owned vineyard founded by Jack and June Church, who first started planting vines in 1969 after an extensive search throughout Victoria for a plot that would be suitable for their dream vineyard. The family business has steadily grown over the decades and took home a major award for Australian Winemaker of the year in 2017. The sippin' is easy on this Pinot compared to some overly jammy Aussie juice, so don't be surprised if the bottle gets emptied quickly.



This Pinot Noir is perfect with a classic hamburger, but we got cray with a loaded Aussie burger topped with lettuce, tomato, cheddar cheese, onions, bacon, grilled pineapple, a runny fried egg, pickled beet, and chili mayo sauce. The food coma is coming...

EATS

PAPAS BRAVAS

RECIPE COURTESY OF BOBBY FLAY

- Olive oil
- 1/2 small red onion, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 3/4 cup prepared mayonnaise
- 1 large plum tomato, halved, seeded and roasted until soft
- Few dashes hot pepper sauce (recommended: Tabasco)
- Splash aged sherry vinegar
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 large Russet potatoes, parboiled, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- Flat-leaf parsley leaves

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Place a baking sheet in the oven.

Heat a tablespoon of oil in a small saute pan over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the paprika and cook for 30 seconds. Let cool slightly.

Combine the onion mixture, mayonnaise, tomato, hot pepper sauce, and vinegar in a food processor and process until smooth, season with salt and pepper. Scrape the mixture into a bowl, cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow the flavors to meld.

Heat 2-inches pure olive oil or canola oil in a large high-sided, heavy-bottomed skillet until it begins to shimmer. Add the potatoes, season with salt and pepper and cook until golden brown on all sides. Remove the potatoes to a paper towel-lined plate for a moment to drain the excess oil. Carefully remove the hot baking sheet from the oven, put the potatoes on the pan in an even layer and bake until crisp, about 10 minutes. Remove the pan and season the potatoes with a bit more salt. Transfer to a platter and drizzle with some of the aioli and garnish with parsley leaves. Serve hot.

HAM AND CHEESE CROQUETTES

RECIPE COURTESY OF CLAIRE ROBINSON

- 1 cup leftover plain mashed potatoes
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour, plus more as needed
- 1/2 cup finely shredded Gruyere cheese, about 1-ounce
- 1/2 cup very finely diced cooked ham or country ham, about 2 ounces
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil, for frying

In a bowl, mix the potatoes, 1/4 cup flour, cheese, and ham with a large rubber spatula until combined. Season with salt and pepper, to taste and divide the mixture into 8 equal portions. Rub your hands with a small amount of flour and form the portions into small flat disks about 1/2-inch thick. Use just enough flour to keep the potatoes from sticking to your hands, but do not coat them completely.

Heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-low heat. Shallow-fry the croquettes, turning once, until golden brown, about 4 minutes per side. Remove from the oil and drain on a paper-towel lined plate. Let the croquettes cool for about 5 minutes before serving.

Cook's Note: This recipe doubles easily if you have enough leftover potatoes.

GAMBAS AL AJILLO

RECIPE COURTESY OF BOBBY FLAY

3/4 cup olive oil

3 tablespoons freshly chopped thyme leaves

1 1/2 tablespoons ancho chili powder

6 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped

24 large shrimp, shelled and deveined

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

Heat the grill to medium.

Whisk together 1/4 cup of the oil, 2 tablespoons of the thyme, ancho powder and chopped garlic in a small bowl. Skewer the shrimp and brush with marinade.

Place the remaining 1/2 cup of the oil in a small saucepan, add the sliced garlic and cook until the sliced garlic is lightly golden brown. Remove the garlic slices with a slotted spoon to a plate lined with paper towels. Reserve the oil.

Increase the heat of the grill to high.

Remove the shrimp from the marinade, season with salt and pepper and grill until golden brown on each side, about 1 1/2 minutes per side.

Remove the shrimp from the skewers, transfer to a platter and drizzle with some of the reserved garlic oil and the garlic chips. Sprinkle with the remaining thyme and garnish with oregano leaves.

ALBONDIGAS AKA SPANISH MEATBALLS

RECIPE COURTESY OF AARON MARTINEZ

1/4 cup masa harina mixed with 1/4 cup warm water

1 pound ground beef

1 garlic clove, minced

4 tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

3 garlic cloves

1 tablespoons flour

2 quarts fresh homemade beef or chicken stock

1/4 cup chopped scallions, both the white and the green parts

1 large tomato, roasted, peeled and chopped (If you are unable to find truly ripe tomatoes, add 4 tablespoons canned tomato sauce.)

2 Anaheim or California long green chiles or jalapenos, roasted, peeled, and chopped

3 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro, leaves only

3 tablespoons chopped fresh mint, leaves only

Combine masa harina with warm water. Mix ground meat with prepared masa, salt, pepper, garlic. Make meatballs about 1-inch round, about the size of a walnut. Set aside.

In medium saute pan heat 2 tablespoons lard or oil over medium heat. Add 1 whole garlic clove. Let cook for 20 seconds, press with back of a cooking spoon to release the flavor. Remove the garlic. Set aside.

Brown the flour in the lard until dark golden color, about 1 minute. Heat stock in soup pot or large Dutch oven until warm and add flour mixture. Bring to a boil and lower heat to simmer stock for 5 minutes. Taste and correct seasoning.

Heat remaining 2 tablespoons lard or vegetable oil in large frying pan, add chopped scallion, tomato, chiles and the reserved 2 garlic cloves, minced, stir well to combine. Cook for 2 minutes and add to stock. Add cilantro and mint and simmer for another 5 minutes. Add the meatballs to the stock and simmer over low fire for 15 minutes or until done.



2018 CICADA'S SONG

PROVENCE, FRANCE

50% Grenache, 50% Mourvedre

NOSE: The loveliest white flowers giving you butterfly kisses

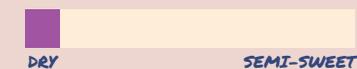
PALATE: Round and vivacious with bright, tart raspberries that linger with a super refreshing finish

MOOD: A long summer afternoon lounging in the backyard with friends as Chris Stapleton's Friendship is humming in the background.

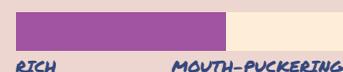
FRUIT



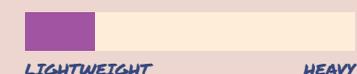
SWEET



ACIDITY



BODY



Provence, France, is the home of rosé and we've found a bottle that nearly sings about where it's from. Provençal folklore tells us that the cicada was sent from heaven to sing, waking people from their afternoon naps and signaling a return to work. The Cicada's Song is more impetuous. It emanates soulfully from your glass, inviting you to enjoy life like an endless summer vacay in the South of France or just on a beach chair in your backyard. A rosé that is perfect for a lazy afternoon and sharing stories of potential adventures.

The juice is a brilliant, light pink with aromas of fresh red fruits and freshly cut white flowers. On the palate, the wine is round, fruity with a bright, mineral-y vivacity that ends with a very refreshing finish. Each sip is so refreshing it's like dipping into a cool pool right when your body gets just a little too hot from sitting out in the sun.



Cheese + meats, repeat. We rolled some salty Serrano ham around sticks of Manchego cheese, which is an American twist on some classic South of France fare.



2017 CHILL WINE CO. SAUVIGNON BLANC

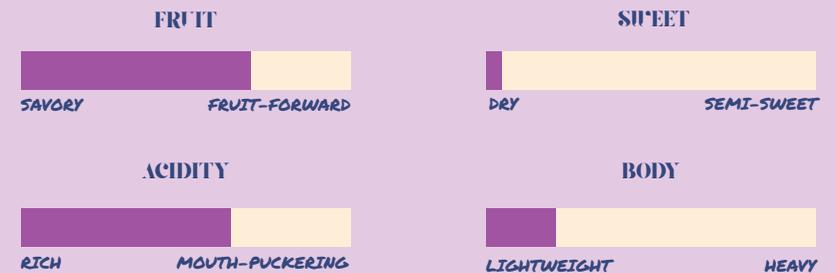
HAWKE'S BAY, NEW ZEALAND

100% Sauvignon Blanc

NOSE: Kiwis and passion fruit dashed with fresh cut basil and lemon zest

PALATE: Clean and fresh stone fruit melt away with a crisp finish like the freshest mountain water around.

MOOD: A productive Sunday afternoon cleaning up the apartment and singing along with Leon Bridges' tunes like That Was Yesterday.



It's "Just Grapes" is a long time WA motto. It simply means that wine is delicious and you shouldn't think too hard about how to describe it. Just enjoy it. The crew behind Chill Wine Co. has a very similar mentality. They're all about using wine to connect us all, from the story in the vineyard to the cheers between friends. They believe wine is to be shared and we're pumped to share their Sauvignon Blanc with you.

This juice hails from the gorgeous vineyards of Hawke's Bay, New Zealand. It's certified sustainable, vegan, and environmentally friendly. People from New Zealand are affectionately called Kiwis, so it is perfectly fitting that the nose on this juice is dominated by fresh tropical fruit like kiwi, passion fruit, and star fruit. The sipping is like a dash of fresh basil sliced over the fruit that leaves a beautiful herbaceous lingering finish. It's just grapes though. So pop the bottle and enjoy it with your crew.



Pair this Sauvignon Blanc up with fresh seafood dishes that have some spice. We created a shrimp tapas dish with Peri Peri hot sauce!



2018 SCOPA PINOT GRIGIO

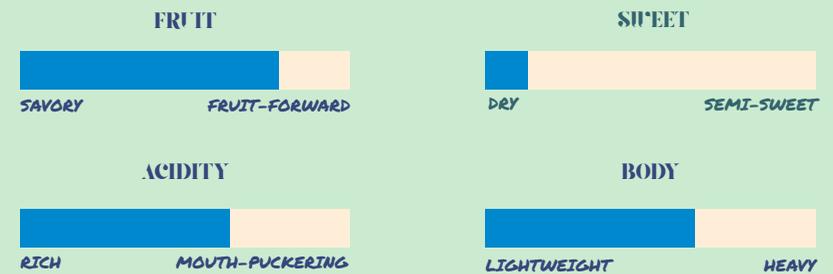
VENETO, ITALY

100% Pinot Grigio

NOSE: Tropical melon and kiwi play an understatedly important role alongside mineraly, neutral, and clean notes

PALATE: A refreshing rush of underripe fruit is followed by slight bitterness, white flowers and river-rock minerality.

MOOD: Sliding into a dream world with the sublime tunes of Lana del Rey's new album Norman F***ing Rockwell!



Pinot Grigio is the wine that everyone likes to hate on. Maybe it's because your mom liked it and therefore there's no way it can be cool. This is not your mom's PG. The great thing about this grape is that it's one of the few white grapes that actually has color in its skin.

What that means is that the finished wine has a tinge of copper or pink to it (look very very closely). While Pinot Grigio is notorious for having a bitter finish, this wine uses that to its advantage. That slight bitter presence leads to a savory tinge that balances out the fresh tropical fruit on the nose. Overall, this wine possesses subtleties, but is as fresh as spring water, and as such, it can pretty much go with anything.



Slice up a crusty loaf of sourdough bread and slather on an uber triple cream cheese like Mt. Tam from Cowgirl Creamery, which is their signature cheese. It's a smooth, creamy, elegant triple-cream that is perfect with this bright Pinot Grigio.



2018 ARIOS LOUREIRO

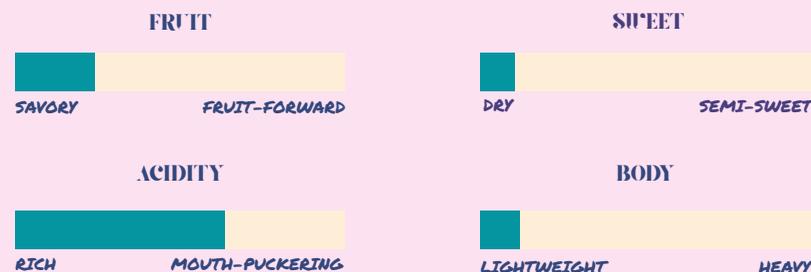
MINHO, PORTUGAL

100% Loureiro

NOSE: White peaches, star jasmine, and early morning rain. Fresh and light with grassy citrus.

PALATE: Light-bodied with an electric acidity. A bit earthy with citrus and freshly cut grass.

MOOD: This is the wine you want to smuggle onto the beach and sneak stealthy sips of as you walk down the boardwalk to find that perfect spot in the sand. “Feel Good Inc.” is playing through your speakers making you truly feel good, wishing the moment never ends.



This wine is made entirely from the Portuguese varietal Loureiro, which means “laurel” in Portuguese, and hints at the distinctive aroma of berries and flowers the grape produces. The varietal has been in Portugal for quite some time and there’s evidence of it dating back to the late 18th century. The grape is often used to make blends, so the fact that this is a single varietal wine is pretty special.

The wine’s body is very light, but its prominent acidity keeps it bright and lively. Some of the citrus notes are similar to Sauvignon Blanc but its body and style are all its own. Loureiro is known for its aromatic notes of laurels in addition to bright citrus and refreshing acidity, all of which can be found in this wine. Because plantings of Loureiro have recently declined, it’s hard to find in the modern market, but when you do, it’s a beautiful treat. Enjoy this wine on a day you want to spend every minute outside and see why we think it’s so special.



Pairing this wine with a dish like trout stuffed with salty serrano ham will help keep its zippy acidity in check.



2017 RAW WHITE BLEND

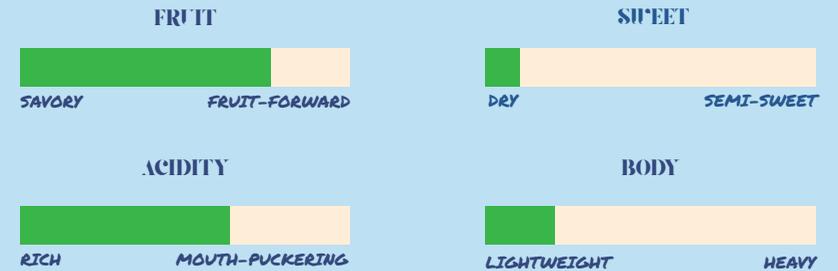
THE VILLAGE OF VILLANUEVA DE ALCARDETE IN THE HEART OF LA MANCHA, SPAIN

50% Verdejo, 45% Airén, 5% Sauvignon Blanc

NOSE: Hand squeezing fresh citrus while standing ankle deep in a river stone-bottomed mountain stream

PALATE: Jumping into that chilly mountain stream right after taking a bite of a fresh peach

MOOD: Soaking up the last few days at the beach jamming to At The Beach by The Avett Brothers



In 1954, a ton of Spanish winegrowers aka 131 of them got together united by a determination to produce awesome and indigenous Spanish wines to sell across Spain. The group founded the San Isidro Cooperative, which is kinda like a wine Airbnb meaning that the production costs were shared by this crew of wine pros. They built a locals-only wine collaboration, but fifty plus years later, these winemakers have decided to open up the club to winos across the world.

Meet RAW Wines also known as Really Awesome Wines. We featured their first rosé release for international markets this past spring and we are back for more! The RAW White is a blend of iconic Spanish grapes Verdejo and Airén along with some classic Sauvignon Blanc. The nose is fresh-squeezed citrus fruit dripping over chalky, river stones and the sippin' is peachy and flowery with a steely and crisp finish.



Pretending you're a badass Spanish chef and whipping up Croquetas de Jamón. The creamy ham and cheese is basically trying to ask this white vino out on a date.



FARM-FRESH ROUNDS FROM ONE-HOUR CHEESE

SOME STORE-BOUGHT CHEESES that are labeled “raw” do not completely qualify for that designation, because though they are made from raw (i.e., unpasteurized) milk, they are heated above 115°F, the highest temperature that a food can be heated to maintain raw status. Plus, heating milk above 115°F, whether before or during the cheesemaking process, kills off many of the enzymes and bacteria that make raw milk so flavorful and nutrient-rich. I was intrigued by the idea of making a truly raw cheese so that I could fully enjoy the benefits of raw milk.

If you add an acid to warmed (near the cow’s body temperature) raw milk, it results in a quick and tender farmers’-style cheese, like this one, that truly demonstrates how much easier it is to make cheese with fresh milk!

This cheese gets its tang from the lemon juice, which just adds to the ultra-fresh flavor. It melts well, and though you lose some of the live enzymes when that happens, it’s nice to have that option with such a fast process. It’s so fast that you can easily make and eat this entire batch all within a half hour. Yes, I said and eat!

DIY: FARM-FRESH ROUNDS

INGREDIENTS

½ gallon raw whole cow’s milk

1 tbsp flake salt

½ cup plus 3 tbsps lemon juice, freshly squeezed and strained of pulp

Supplies

3-quart stockpot

1 tablespoon

½ cup

Large mixing spoon

Cooking thermometer

Gloves (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Pour the milk into the pot.

2 Add the salt to the milk and stir it well so it dissolves.

3 Heat the salty milk on low to medium heat until it reaches 105°F.

4 Pour the ½ cup of lemon juice into the pot (reserve the additional 3 tablespoons) and stir thoroughly as you heat the milk to 110°F.

5 The curd will start to form into waves, with a texture resembling a poached egg. If you see no separation between curds and whey, add the extra lemon juice one tablespoon at a time, stirring and waiting 30 seconds for clear curd formation.

6 Turn off the heat as soon as you see coagulation. Confirm that the temperature has not risen and carefully dip your clean hands into the pot to gather and press the curd into (roughly) 3-inch rounds.

7 Gently press out the remaining whey while forming the cheese into rustic mini-wheels (think, plump patties). Applying light pressure will yield tender slices. Firm pressure will result in moist crumbles.

8 You should be able to shape about three 3-inch rounds. That’s it! Your Farm-Fresh Rounds are ready to slice or crumble onto your favorite dish.

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!



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WINE AWESOMENESS