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Grapevine

Price Chopper Plaza 1355 New Scotland Road Slingerlands, NY 12159
518.439.5535 slingerlandswine@yahoo.com www.slingerlandswine.com

Store Hours: Mon – Sat, 9 – 9 & Sun, 12 – 6

Exploring the Vine: The Many Faces of Chardonnay

Chardonnay seems to be one of those wines that has absolute devotees or naysayers — both steadfast in their resolve. Within that, devotees frequently fall into either the Old World or New World style of Chard lovers. As polar as are opinions about Chardonnay, so are the styles in which they're made. It is a rich white, and typical characteristics it displays are creamy, buttery, nutty, tropical, citrusy, lemony, apple-y, flinty or minerally — depending on where the grapes are grown and, of course, the methods used to make the wine. There is more consistency in texture than in flavor — rich, round and soft, but that, too, can vary.

Chardonnay is both delicate and rich, and its delicacy can easily be overwhelmed by heavy handed wine-making. One of the most notable influences is the resulting level of toastiness, oakiness or vanilla notes, depending on whether it is fermented and aged in steel or oak barrels — and within that, where the oak comes from and the age of the oak. Oak can dominate the wine if it is fermented or aged in too new barrels or for too

long. Degree, if any, of malolactic fermentation and presence of lees also make a difference. Blended with other varietals, its aroma and flavor can easily be lost.

The grape also absorbs the influences of soil and climate. Even on a small scale, as within the Burgundy region of France, it can be crisp and flinty coming from Chablis, fleshy and buttery from Meursault. California and Australian Chards tend to exhibit riper fruit flavors with more tropical notes than those from the cooler climates of Burgundy, South America, Washington or New York. A cooler growing season causes slower ripening and requires longer time on the vine; increased length of time encourages a more balanced sugar to acid balance than warmer regions. Whatever the flavor profile, Chardonnay is unmistakable due to its supreme balance of sugar and acid, its full body and smooth texture.

This beauty and balance comes with a price; the vines are shy-bearing, susceptible to disease and require diligent pruning. The grapes are relatively small, thin-



Chardonnay leaves are easily recognizable thanks to the subtle, less indented vein that runs through the center and the roundish shape of the leaves -- an indicator of the "gold" that is to come from the grapes, maybe?

skinned and fragile. This sensitivity requires that Chardonnay grapes be tended to with a larger degree of care and subjected to more subtle winemaking than heartier grapes.

Historically, California Chards have tended toward the big, buttery and oaky end of the scale; and that has been in good part due to satisfying the American palate. Some California winemakers these days, though, are veering toward Old World leaner styles, letting the natural properties of the grape and the particularities of the varying micro climates of the sub-regions shine through.

Whether you are a diehard fan of Old World or New World, oaky or unoaked, ripe and round or clean and flinty, you owe it to yourself to check out the myriad differences of each. Well matched with cheeses, salads, shellfish and chicken dishes, you have a whole spectrum of options to explore and favorites to discover. ♦

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15% off all Wine —
Every Bottle,
Every Day!!!

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Value Priced Wines from the 90's Club — Fine Wines Rated 90 or Above...Under \$20.00

Lan Rioja Reserva 2004.....	90 pts. WS	Spain.....	\$15.99	(reg \$18.99)
Marques de Casa Concha Cabernet Sauvignon 2007.....	91 pts. WS	Chile.....	\$16.99	(reg \$19.99)
Layer Cake Malbec 2008.....	90 pts. RP	Argentina.....	\$13.99	(reg \$15.99)
Monte Antico Sangiovese/Merlot/Cabernet 2006.....	90 pts. WS	Tuscany.....	\$ 9.99	(reg \$11.99)
Bogle Cabernet Sauvignon 2007.....	90 pts. WE	California.....	\$10.29	(reg \$11.99)
Marquis Philips Shiraz 2008.....	91 pts. RP	Australia.....	\$12.99	(reg \$14.99)
Louis M. Martini Napa Cabernet Sauvignon 2006.....	90 pts. RP	Napa.....	\$19.99	(reg \$23.99)
Solanera Monastrell/Cabernet/Tinotera 2005.....	91 pts. RP	Spain.....	\$11.49	(reg \$13.99)
Bodegas Bilbainas Vina Zaco Tempranillo 2006 Top 100 (WS).....	90 pts. WS	Spain.....	\$11.99	(reg \$13.99)
Thorn Clarke Shottfire Shiraz 2008.....	90 pts. RP	Australia.....	\$18.99	(reg \$22.49)
Kaesler Stonehorse Shiraz/Grenache/Mourvedre 2007.....	90 pts. RP	Australia.....	\$14.99	(reg \$17.99)
Chateau Malmaison Merlot/Cabernet 2006 Top 100 (WS).....	90 pts. WS	Bordeaux.....	\$16.99	(reg \$19.99)
Santa Ema Merlot Reserve 2007.....	90 pts. RP	Chile.....	\$ 9.99	(reg \$11.99)
DaVinci Chianti 2007.....	90 pts. WE	Tuscany.....	\$10.99	(reg \$13.99)
Michael & David '7 Deadly Zins' Zinfandel 2007.....	90 pts. RP	Lodi.....	\$13.59	(reg \$15.99)
Louis M. Martini Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon 2007.....	90 pts. RP	Sonoma.....	\$10.99	(reg \$13.99)
Las Rocas Garnacha 2007.....	90 pts. RP	Spain.....	\$10.29	(reg \$12.99)
Newton Napa Cabernet Sauvignon 2007.....	91 pts. WE	Napa.....	\$17.99	(reg \$21.99)
Edmeades Mendocino County Zinfandel 2007.....	90 pts. RP	California.....	\$16.49	(reg \$XX.99)
Marquis Philips Sarah's Blend 2008.....	91 pts. RP	Australia.....	\$12.99	(reg \$14.99)
Woop Woop Cabernet Sauvignon 2007.....	90 pts. ST	Australia.....	\$ 9.49	(reg \$10.99)
Selection Laurence Feraud Seguret Cotes Du Rhone Villages 2007.....	90 pts. RP	France.....	\$14.49	(reg \$16.99)
Armador Cabernet Sauvignon 2007.....	90 pts. WE	Chile.....	\$ 8.49	(reg \$ 9.99)
Trapiche Broquel Malbec 2007.....	91 pts. WE	Argentina.....	\$11.99	(reg \$13.99)
Casajus Vendimia Tempranillo 2005.....	92 pts. RP	Spain.....	\$16.99	(reg \$19.99)
Artesa Carneros Chardonnay.....	90 pts. WS	Carneros.....	\$15.49	(reg \$18.29)
Trimbach Riesling 2007 Top 100 WS.....	91 pts. WS	Alsace.....	\$15.99	(reg \$18.99)
King Estate Pinot Gris 2008 (Top 100 WS).....	90 pts. RP	France.....	\$13.59	(reg \$15.99)
Chateau Ste. Michelle Chardonnay 2008.....	90 pts. RP	Washington.....	\$ 9.99	(reg \$11.99)
Snoqualmie Naked Riesling 2008.....	90 pts. WE	Washington.....	\$ 8.33	(reg \$ 9.99)
Tikal Patriota 2007.....	92 pts. RP	ARG.....	\$16.99	(reg \$19.99)
Beaulieu Vineyard Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2006.....	90 pts. WS	Napa Valley.....	\$15.99	(reg \$18.99)
Gascon Malbec 2008.....	90 pts. WE	Argentina.....	\$10.49	(reg \$12.99)
Catena Malbec 2007 (Top 100 WS).....	91 pts. WS	Argentina.....	\$16.99	(reg \$19.99)
The Stump Jump Shiraz by d'Arenberg 2008 (Top 100 WS).....	90 pts. WS	Australia.....	\$ 9.99	(reg \$11.99)
Luzon 2008.....	90 pts. RP	Spain.....	\$ 8.49	(reg \$ 9.99)
Loosen Bros. Riesling 2008 (Top 100 WS).....	90 pts. WS	Germany.....	\$ 9.99	(reg \$11.99)
Crios Torrontes by Susana Balbo 2009.....	90 pts. RP	Argentina.....	\$13.59	(reg \$15.99)
St.-Michael-Eppan Pinot Grigio Alto Adige 2008 (Top 100 WS).....	90 pts. WS	Italy.....	\$12.99	(reg \$14.99)
Perrin & Fils Vinsobres Les Cornuds 2007 (Top 100 WS).....	91 pts. WS	France.....	\$17.99	(reg \$21.99)

Sterling Vintner's Collection

(California)

Chardonnay 2008, Meritage 2008,
Sauvignon Blanc 2008

\$92.29 12-btl purchase

- **\$25.00** Mail-in-rebate

\$67.29 Final Cost

(reg \$119.99)

Save \$52.70 per case

\$5.60 per 750 ml bottle (reg \$9.99)

Final cost per bottle after discount & mail-in-rebate

Save \$30 with Mail-in-Rebate on 12-bottle Mix 'n Match purchase of...

Clos du Bois Chardonnay 2008.....\$10.99.....(reg \$14.99)

Blackstone Merlot 2007.....\$ 9.39.....(reg \$10.99)

Toasted Head Chardonnay 2008.....\$11.99.....(reg \$13.99)

Terrazas de los Andes Malbec 2008

(Argentina)

\$99.99 12-btl purchase

- **\$36.00** Mail-in-rebate

\$63.99 Final Cost

(reg \$119.99)

Save \$56.00 per case

\$5.33 per 750 ml bottle (reg \$9.99)

Final cost per bottle after discount & mail-in-rebate

Save \$24 with Mail-in-Rebate on 12-bottle purchase Rodney Strong Wines — All on Sale

Sonoma Chardonnay 2008.....\$ 9.99.....(reg \$13.99)

Chalk Hill Chardonnay 2007.....\$13.99.....(reg \$19.99)

Sonoma Cabernet Sauvignon 2007.....\$13.69.....(reg \$16.99)

Knotty Vines Zinfandel 2007.....\$16.39.....(reg \$18.99)

Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 2008.....\$16.99.....(reg \$19.99)

Charlotte's Home Sauvignon Blanc 2007.....\$12.99.....(reg \$14.99)

More Great Sale Prices + Mail-in Rebates = Fabulous Savings

Save \$40 with Mail-in-Rebate on Mix 'n Match 12-btl purchase of (We'll feature these wines at our tasting on Friday, 4/9 from 4 to 7 pm. Stop in and taste!)

Simi Sonoma Chardonnay 2007.....	\$12.99.....	(reg \$15.99)
Simi Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2006.....	\$17.99.....	(reg \$22.99)
Franciscan Napa Cabernet Sauvignon 2006.....	\$18.99.....	(reg \$24.99)
Wild Horse Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignon 2006.....	\$14.99.....	(reg \$19.99)
Robert Mondavi Carneros Pinot Noir 2007.....	\$20.99.....	(reg \$24.99)
Robert Mondavi Napa Valley Fume Blanc 2007.....	\$12.99.....	(reg \$16.99)

Mark West

Pinot Noir

\$119.99 12-btl purchase

- **\$24.00** Mail-in-rebate

\$95.99 Final Cost after rebate

(reg \$143.99) Save \$48.00 per case

\$7.99 per 750 ml bottle after discount
& mail-in-rebate
(reg \$11.99)

More Great Rebates!

Gnarley Head

Red Zinfandel & Pinot Noir

\$99.99 12-btl purchase

- **\$30.00** Mail-in-rebate

\$69.99 Final Cost after rebate

(reg \$119.99) Save \$50.00 per case

\$5.83 per 750 ml bottle after discount
& mail-in-rebate
(reg \$9.99)

Natura

(Made w/ organically grown grapes)

Sauvignon Blanc 2009, Chardonnay 2009, Carneros
2008, Gewurztraminer 2008, Merlot 2008

\$102.99 12-btl purchase

- **\$25.00** Mail-in-rebate

\$77.99 Final cost after rebate

(reg \$119.99) Save \$42.00 per case

\$6.49 per 750 ml bottle

Final cost per bottle after discount & mail-in-rebate
(reg \$9.99)

Woodbridge by Robert

Mondavi 1.5 ltr bottles

Mix 'n Match 6 bottles???

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay,
Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot

\$71.99 6-btl purchase

- **\$12.00** Mail-in-rebate

\$59.99 Final Cost after rebate

(reg \$83.99) Save \$24.00 on 6 bottles

\$9.99 per 1.5 ltr bottle after discount & mail-in-
rebate
(reg \$13.99)

Bolla 1.5 ltr bottles

Mix 'n Match 6 bottles

Valpolicella, Bardolino, Pinot Grigio, Sangiovese,
Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon

\$65.99 6-btl purchase

- **\$15.00** Mail-in-rebate

\$50.99 Final Cost after rebate

(reg \$83.99) Save \$33.00 on 6 bottles

\$8.49 per 1.5 ltr bottle after discount & mail-in-
rebate
(reg \$13.99)

April Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: Rodney Strong Chalk Hill Chardonnay 2007 (CA) \$13.99 (reg \$19.99) 90 Pts (WE) Butter-cream, toast and vanilla mingle with pineapple and pear fruit, yet is balanced with crisp acidity and mineral elegance.

Damian: Barton & Guestier Chateauneuf-du-Pape 2007 (Rhône) \$20.99 (reg \$25.99) Aromatic and racy, with cigar box aromas, tobacco and cherry stone. Rich and concentrated on the palate, it has a long spicy finish.

Denise: Louis Jadot Savigny-les-Beaune 2006 (Burgundy) \$26.75 (reg \$31.49) A mellow, perfumed blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc; fresh, fragrant slightly floral fruit flavors and aromas; supple texture, crisp finish.

Ian: Rosenblum Zinfandel 2007 (Sonoma) \$14.99 (reg \$18.99) Rich, ripe and layered with blackberries, raspberries, spice, and a touch of earth, supported by excellent acidity and smooth tannins.

Graham: Myuge Cabernet 2006 (Napa) \$25.99 (reg \$31.99) With coffee notes, toffee, and tremendous red fruit, this is one delicious Cab! Nice balance with integrated tannins, medium body and good acidity.

James: Catena Malbec 2007 (ARG) \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) 91 Pts & Top 100 (WS) Sleek and polished with alluring mocha, raspberry and black plum on the palate, it is medium-bodied and plush on the palate.

Michele: Veramonte Sauvignon Blanc 2009 (CH) \$8.49 (reg \$9.99) Aromas of peach, citrus, herbs and flowers. Tasting notes of citrus, melon and herb flavors that linger on the palate and end with a crisp finish.

Wine Tastings Fri, 4-8 & Sat, 2-6

Fridays: 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30: New Arrivals:
Taste our newest finds and discover your new favorites!

Sat 4/3: Easter Wines: We'll have a line-up of wines geared toward the traditional Easter ham dinner.

Fri 4/9: Treasure Trove Wines: Simi, Franciscan and Mondavi wines, all with a \$40 case mail-in-rebate. Too good to miss! (See page 3 for list of wines.)

Sat 4/10: Chardonnay & Company.: Sample a variety of different style Chardonnays from different parts of the globe and a few lighter reds to mix it up a bit.

Sat 4/17: 90-rated Reds: Our 90s rated section showcases some amazing gems. Come in and try a few of our newest.

Sat 4/24: Staff Picks!: Come by and taste a few of our favorites at our terrific staff picks tasting.

Sat 5/1: April Showers Bring May...Rosés, of course!
We'll welcome May with a garden of Rosés.

We had the privilege in March of hosting a tasting of wines by Scagliola winery with winemaker Maggiorino Scagliola and son Giovanni. Located on a hill at San Siro in the Piedmont region of Italy and started by their grandfather, the estate is run today by brothers Maggiorino and Mario Scagliola. Following the tasting, we -- and the many of you who joined us -- enjoyed a terrific wine dinner at Sam's Restaurant in Albany. A memorable evening, indeed. Thank you to all who attended!

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Check out Our Ongoing Store Specials

Mix & Match — Three for \$24.99 on select bottles
The 90s Club — Wines rated 90+ Pts for under \$20
Wine & Spirits offers year-round custom made gift baskets and a variety of wine bar gifts and accessories: Riedel glasses, foil cutters, corkscrews, decanters, wine stoppers and wine bags.

Wine News, Events or Musings

Working Hard to Keep Wine out of Stores

The struggle to keep wine out of grocery stores is looking good, but the battle isn't over. As special thanks to all of our customers who continue to support us in this endeavor, we will continue to discount all our wine 15% indefinitely. Please keep up the good work by e-mailing the Governor, Assemblymen and Senators.

A sincere thank-you to all of you from all of us at Wine & Spirits of Slingerlands.

Get ready for *Celebrating New York Wine Month* in the May 2010 issue of *Grapevine*.

Food & Wine

Sheila's Favorite Spring Minestrone

1 large onion, chopped
3 carrots, thinly sliced
2 celery stalks, chopped
2 leeks, cleaned and chopped, white and light green parts only
3 garlic cloves, chopped
1 lb. Italian style chicken sausage, loose
5 c low-sodium chicken broth
1/2 c Four Vines (unoaked) Virgin Chardonnay
4 c chopped Savoy or green cabbage
1 (15 oz) can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
3 plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1/2 c farro or barley
2 Tbsp tomato paste
3 c baby spinach
1 c frozen peas
1/4 c chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/4 c chopped fresh basil
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp black pepper

1. Spray a large Dutch oven with nonstick spray and set over medium-high heat. Add onion, carrots, celery, leeks, garlic and sausage; cook, stirring frequently, until vegetables are softened, 8-10 minutes. Add broth, wine, cabbage, beans, tomatoes, farro and tomato paste; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer until farro is tender, 30 minutes.
2. Stir in spinach, peas, parsley, basil, salt and pepper. Simmer, uncovered, until the spinach is wilted.
3. Serve with crusty, warm bread and chilled glasses of Chardonnay. Bon appetit!