



July 2014

Grapevine

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Taking a Fresh Look at Sauvignon Blanc



Just 200 kilometers south of Paris, Pascal Jolivet winery has over 120 acres of vineyards spread across the appellations of Sancerre and Pouilly Fumé.

Revered by fans, reviled by foes, and largely seen as the *other* white wine, Sauvignon Blanc is as different from Chardonnay as Mary Ann was from Ginger. A more than worthy white, it warrants a closer look.

With origins going back to the 18th century in Bordeaux, Sauvignon Blanc's name was derived from *sauvage*, French for 'wild,' and *blanc*, meaning 'white.' Indigenous to the region, it is believed to be a relative of the closely named Savagnin Blanc from the Jura region. Keeping with its wild nature, Sauvignon Blanc spontaneously cross-bred with Cabernet Franc, giving birth to the beloved Cabernet Sauvignon.

Crispness and refreshing acidity are hallmarks of Sauvignon Blanc. The grape, though, requires tough love to manage its predilection for growing leaves over fruit. It develops an incredibly dense canopy that has to be pruned with an iron hand to make sure the grapes see enough sun. If it

isn't, the wine can have too-strong vegetal flavors. Most Sauvignon Blancs are meant to be consumed young. While a few can sustain a few years aging, generally they don't improve and should be enjoyed sooner than later.

Sauvignon Blanc is grown most widely in France, the US and New Zealand, though it is grown in other parts of the world, too. Like other wines, each region's terroir and winemaking methods sets one Sauvignon Blanc apart from the others, markedly. Climate, soil composition, temperature used for fermentation, length of time the must is in contact with the skins during maceration, type of container — oak, concrete or stainless steel — used for aging and whether the wine is blended all contribute to these differences.

Sauvignon Blanc from France comes mostly from Bordeaux and the Loire Valley, where Pouilly-Fumé and Sancerre are neighbors. Those from the Loire Valley are not

blended, but are pure Sauvignon Blanc. From Bordeaux, including the Medoc and Graves, it is often blended with Semillon and Muscadelle; these grapes are also what make up sweet Sauternes. When blended with Semillon, a much fleshier grape, it is much more suited to partial or full oak aging, but oak isn't a given. **2013 Chateau de Bonhoste Bordeaux Blanc \$10.19.**

Prior to the phylloxera epidemic that wiped out French vineyards in the late 1800s, most of the Loire Valley's Sancerre region was planted with Pinot Noir. When vineyards were replanted, Sauv Blanc was the grape of choice, grafted to American rootstock in order to resist further attacks from the North American pest. The grape thrived, and it is white Sancerre that people are familiar with today; though both are grown there, an 80/20 ratio of Sauvignon Blanc to Pinot Noir, both are fantastic. **2013 Domaine Martin \$17.49; 2011 Pascal Jolivet \$19.99.** From Tours in the Loire Valley, **2013 Clos de la Grange Touraine Sauvignon \$11.99.**

The grape has a long history in California that dates back to the 1880s, when the first cuttings are believed to have come from Chateau d'Yquem in southern Bordeaux and planted in a Livermore winery. Though it fell out of fashion in California and the US for years, Robert Mondavi breathed new life into the wine, producing the oak-aged Fumé Blanc. This reincarnation paved the way for many other American winemakers to take on Sauvignon Blanc, and today it is thriving in the US. The California style is less

grapefruity than New Zealand, offering more herbal and lemongrass flavors. **2013 Kendall Jackson Avant \$10.19; 2013 Joel Gott Sauvignon Blanc \$11.49.**

New Zealand began growing it in 1970. The climate, which has been likened to that in Bordeaux, is ideal for the grape, which is better suited to cooler climates. New Zealand's intense sunlight with a large ultraviolet component is believed to affect the grape's flavor profile, potentially responsible for those telltale notes of grapefruit and gooseberries. **2013 Tablelands 90 Pts (WE) \$10.99; 2013 Oyster Bay \$10.99.**

Though to a smaller degree, Sauv Blanc is grown with success in other areas of the world, namely Australia, South America and South Africa. A shining example from Australia is the **2013 Groom 'Adelaide Hills' 89 Pts (WS) \$12.99.** And there are many more to check out.

If you are a Sauvignon Blanc lover, do yourself a favor and compare their different incantations from region to region. And if you loathe the stuff and haven't yet given it a chance, try a couple of our suggestions and see if you don't just find one you like. ♦

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

Did you know...

White wines are often served too cold, which dumbs down their flavors. Try taking it out of the refrigerator 30 minutes ahead of time to experience it fully.

Wine Tastings Fri, 4-7 & Sat, 2-5

Fri 7/11: Staff Picks: We'll taste the fabulous line-up of July Staff Picks. Check them out, below. This is a 'Don't Miss.'

Sat 7/12, 7/19, 7/26 & 8/2: New Arrivals: We'll pour a stellar selection of our latest, greatest discoveries.

Fri 7/18: California Dreamin': Wines from California... from Sonoma and Napa to Lodi and Santa Barbara.

Fri 7/25: From James Taylor to the Ballet: Wines to suit your Summer concert picnic. Whether your pairing with roast chicken, shrimp or sandwiches, we've got you covered.

Fri 8/1: Joe's Unheralded, Unrated Gems, Revisited: This tasting was such a hit, we'll pour more terrific wines not rated by the experts — wines that deserve attention, with or without ratings.

News & Our Latest Goings-on

Have We Ever Promised You a Rosé Garden?

Yes, we have; and we're here to promise again. People often confuse White Zinfandel with Rosé; and while both have their fans, if you're among them, you're not going to appreciate the confusion. With no disrespect to White Zin or its lovers, Rosé is different, and it deserves a chance. Made from red wine grapes but much lighter, due to the winemaking process, it is enjoyed all over Europe and the US. Served chilled, it is a crisp and refreshing answer to Summer and all kinds of Summer fare, from salads and salmon to red meat. Our Rosé garden is always growing and changing and is comprised of a variety of wines to suit every taste. Dubious? Ask us about it and taste it with us. Every tasting this month will feature a Rosé.

Pristine Melon Ball

A refreshing drink to beat the heat...

Makes 4 drinks

4 oz Pristine Vodka

4 oz Midori liqueur

3 oz orange juice

8 Fresh scooped melon balls

mint leaves for garnish, optional

Combine Vodka, Midori and orange juice in a shaker, add melon balls, let soak fifteen minutes. Remove melon balls and freeze until solid. Add ice to Vodka mixture, shake and strain into chilled glasses. Add frozen melon balls and, if desired, garnish with mint leaves.



One-Pot Pasta with Pancetta, Peas & Sauvignon Blanc

Sheila's new favorite pasta dish

STEP 1 In a large, straight-sided skillet, heat 1 Tbsp oil with pancetta over medium heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until golden and crisp, 4-5 minutes. Remove pancetta to a paper towel-lined plate. Pour off all but 2 Tbsp of fat.

STEP 2 To the pan, add onion and stir over medium-high heat until golden, about 2 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds more. Add wine and cook for one minute, scraping bottom of the pan. Add broth, pepper flakes, 1/2 tsp salt and a few grinds of pepper. Bring to a boil, then add pasta and stir to combine. Cover, lower heat, and simmer for 9 minutes. Remove lid, add peas and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the pasta is al dente and the liquid is reduced and coats pasta (3-5 minutes more). The peas should still have a bit of crunch.

STEP 3 Remove the skillet from the heat, and add the reserved pancetta, half the cheese, the lemon zest and juice, the remaining Tbsp oil and the mint. Stir to combine, taste for salt and pepper. Serve immediately with extra mint and Parmesan. *Enjoy with Ian's July Staff Pick, below!*

2 Tbsp olive oil, divided
6 oz. pancetta or bacon, diced
Half a small onion, thinly sliced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 c Sauvignon Blanc
3 1/2 c chicken broth
1/4 tsp dried red pepper flakes
Coarse salt and ground pepper
12 oz. orecchiette pasta
10 oz. sugar snap peas, cut into 1/2" pieces
1 c grated Parmesan cheese, divided
Zest & juice of half of a lemon
1 c chopped mint + extra for garnish

July 2014 Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: 2012 Waterbrook Chardonnay (Columbia Valley) \$10.19 (reg \$11.99) 90 Pts (WS) Fresh green apple and lemon zest, with notes of butterscotch and toasted almonds. Perfect for steamed clams and melted butter.

Ted: 2011 Mazzocco Zinfandel (Healdsburg) \$20.99 (reg \$24.99) Robust and jammy, backed by aromas and flavors of black cherry, plum and spice. Pair with a grilled ribeye steak and corn on the cob with chipotle butter.

Joe: 2012 Tenuta Delle Terre Nere Etna Rosso (Sicily) \$15.39 (reg \$17.99) 93 Pts (WA) Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio make up the blend, w/ dried herb, dried fruit and balsam notes. Pair with a simple pizza Margherita.

Bill: 2012 Les Baux de Provence Mas de Gourgonnier (Provence) \$11.99 (reg \$13.99) A blend of Grenache, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Carignan with notes of cherries and anise, and a soft finish. Pair with Provencale ratatouille.

Graham: 2013 Ferrari Carano Fumé Blanc (Sonoma) \$12.99 (reg \$14.99) This Sauv Blanc is aged in French oak and stainless steel; it has a supple mouthfeel and notes of apple, citrus and peach. Try with grilled shrimp Caesar salad.

Damian: 2011 Ruca Malen Malbec Reserva (Mendoza) \$14.49 (reg \$16.99) Well-structured dark plum, blackberry and tobacco flavors, with a dense core of mushroom and savory herbal notes. Pair with thick, grilled pork chops.

Ian: 2012 Matanzas Creek Sauvignon Blanc (Sonoma) \$14.49 (reg \$16.99) 92 Pts (RP) Grapefruit, nectarine and melon aromas, with a palate of lemon thyme and oyster shells. Enjoy with pasta with pancetta and peas, recipe above.