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Grapevine

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The Pleasure of White Wines in Winter



White wines pair beautifully with salmon, shellfish, poultry, cream sauces, bean stews, pork and rich cheeses. Medium to full bodied whites shine, even in Winter's chill.

While the verdant ground cover and first fallen leaves have given way to a white blanket of snow, there's no reason we should cease to enjoy white wines — it's just a matter of choosing whites that are more appropriate for winter. Riesling, cool climate Chardonnay, Muscadet, Vouvray, and Sparkling wines are all delicious choices.

Ideal winter white wines have full body, rich flavor, and intense minerality. Though this last can sometimes be confusing, it's as often used to describe what a wine is *not* as well as what it is. It may mean that there is an aroma, flavor or texture that is *not* oaky, *not* fruity or *not* herbal, or that it has acidity without being too sharp or tangy. Minerally wines often come from grapes grown in soil that is rich in limestone, shale, granite or volcanic ash.

For starters, let's look at *Riesling*, especially that which hails from Germany or upstate New York's Finger Lakes. Riesling's spectrum goes from dry to sweet and has more body and acidity to stand up to rich foods. Spicier curries can take a sweeter Riesling, while a drier wine would go well with

herb-rubbed pork tenderloin. Consider Germany's Weingut Johannishof Charta \$13.59 (reg \$19.99) or from the Finger Lakes, the 2012 Ravines Dry Riesling \$13.69 (reg \$15.99) 91 Pts & #33 on WS Top 100.

Chardonnay grown in a cool climate has the benefit of slow-ripening grapes that develop their fruit flavors with time, not scorching sunshine. And the style of winemaking matters. That aged in stainless steel, like those made in Burgundy's Chablis appellation, have subtler fruit, higher acidity and more minerality than oak aged wines. Chardonnay from California's cooler climates — where wind, fog and ocean breezes keep temperatures lower and ripening slower — also encourage more acidity and fruit notes to harmonize with winter fare, even with some oak aging. With roast chicken or risotto, leaner Chards like 2011 Isabelle et Denis Chablis \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) or Sonoma's 2011 Pip Chardonnay \$15.39 (reg \$17.99) would be terrific.

Muscadet, made from the Melon de Bourgogne grape, comes from France's western Loire Valley region near the

Atlantic coast. Grown in soil rich in granite, the wine possesses tang and substance, resulting from a technique called *sur lie*, whereby the wine is left for a time on the spent yeast cells. An excellent example is the 2011 Sauvion Muscadet Sevre-et-Maine \$9.99 (reg \$11.49). With notes of saline, tanginess, minerals, flowers and pears, it shines with shellfish.

Vouvray is under-appreciated, but it's a beautiful wine with medium to full body and a range of aromas and flavors from stone and citrus fruits to honey and almonds. Like Riesling, it ranges from dry to sweet styles. As with all French wines, save for those coming from Alsace, Vouvray is the name of the appellation, not the grape, which is Chenin Blanc. Vouvray is an enchanting, small town in the Loire Valley — land of some of France's most famed chateaux. For a sweeter style but with plenty of acidity to live up to poultry or rich potato dishes, try 2011 Sauvion Vouvray \$8.99 (reg \$10.99) or another Loire Valley gem and much drier interpretation of the grape, Bourillon Dorleans 'La Bourdonnerie' \$16.99 (reg \$19.99).

Finally, when isn't Champagne or sparkling wine appropriate? It's not just for celebrations, unless you consider every day a celebration. Whether you opt for Champagne — which, as you know, comes from the area in France bearing its name — or one of the many delicious sparkling wines from anywhere else, a glass of bubbly is always appropriate and the most food friendly of wines. Consider the Paul Goerg 'Tradition' Premier Cru Brut \$27.99 (reg \$32.99), a Grower's Champagne — a designation given to wines made by the grape grower. For a delicious sparkling wine, you can't go wrong with California's Mumm Napa Brut Rose

\$16.99 (reg \$19.99) or Spain's Vilarnau Brut Rose Cava \$12.99 (reg \$14.99).

Here in the Northeast with our long, blustery winters, we would be robbing ourselves and our warming dinners to forgo the pleasures of white wine. That is not to say that those garnet gems aren't a sight to behold and another kind of gift, but there's no reason we can't enjoy both. So for the next snowstorm, light a fire, let the pot bubble away on the stove and open a bottle of your favorite white wine. ♦

Did you know...

Soil, climate, drainage, sun exposure, local winds all comprise what the French call *terroir*. Ultimately *terroir* is about environmental factors that can affect how grapes grow and, therefore, how a wine tastes. Wines that come from a specific place — a single vineyard, for example — tend to express that place's *terroir*, whereas a wine that uses grapes from a broader area is more likely to show the flavors and character of the grape. Both can make good wines. What's exciting about *terroir* wines is the tremendous amount of variety available — there are millions of vineyards out there and more than enough opportunity to experience both.

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

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

Sat 1/11: Around the World for \$10.99: A global sampling of winter whites and ravishing reds — all for \$10.99!

Fri 1/17: January Whites: We'll pour a spectrum of winter whites, perfect for cold weather fare.

Sat 1/18: Wine Tour of Europe: Join us for a tour of wines from France, Italy and Spain.

Fri 1/24: California Gold: Gold was discovered on this date at Sutter's Mill in California in 1848. Come in and taste with us and discover your own gold in a glass.

Sat 1/25: Australian Wines in Honor of Australia Day: Australia was settled on January 26, 1788. Let's toast the Outback with some of their fantastic wines.

Fri 1/31: Staff Picks: A stellar line-up of what the Wine & Spirits of Slingerlands staff likes to drink.

Sat 2/1: Wines for Super Bowl Sunday: Wines for all of your favorite football noshes, paired with Sheila's Kahlua Chili, of course!

Welcoming Wine & Spirits of Slingerlands' newest addition...

Joe Maloney brings over 25 years of professional food and beverage success and his experienced palate to Wine and Spirits of Slingerlands. He loves to talk about food and wine pairing and all things wine related, so the next time you're in and in need of a suggestion, take the opportunity to meet Joe and let him help you out.



Join Our Email Club Sign up as a member of our email club! We'll send weekly emails to let you know what we'll be pouring at the weekend tastings, Bellini's Tuesday specials-wine pairings and any special events. You'll receive a free bottle of wine from the Three-fer section during your birthday month when you bring in a copy of the email.



Potato Leek Soup

Recipe adapted from Food Network

8 cups chicken stock
6 russet potatoes, peeled and cut into large pieces
4 leeks (whites only), thoroughly cleaned and sliced
3 stalks celery, roughly chopped
1 bay leaf
1 1/2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh thyme
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 cup heavy cream

Directions

Put the chicken stock, potatoes, leeks, celery, bay leaf and thyme in a large pot and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Simmer until the potatoes are soft, 15 to 20 minutes.

Remove the bay leaf. Using an immersion blender (or in batches in a blender or food processor), blend the soup until smooth. Pour the soup into a medium pot; add the cream and simmer until the soup has thickened, about 20 minutes.

Enjoy with chilled glasses of Chablis or your favorite un-oaked Chardonnay.



Snowshine

Sunshine in a snowstorm...
Sheila's Special Winter Drink

6 oz Grey Goose Vodka
2 oz Cointreau
6 oz Ruby Red grapefruit juice
Maschio Brut Prosecco
orange slices for garnish

Combine first three ingredients in a shaker with ice. Shake well and pour into chilled martini glasses and top each with a generous splash of Prosecco. Garnish with orange slices and toast to sunshine in winter with friends around the fireplace.



January 2014 Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: 2012 Mer Soleil Silver Unoaked Chardonnay (Santa Lucia Highlands) \$21.99 (reg \$25.99) The crisp mineral essence of a classic Chablis and the tropical elements found in Chardonnay of the Pacific coastline balance smoothly in this elegant wine. Beautiful with creamy potato leek soup.

Damian: 2011 D. Bosler 'Bird's Nest' Pinot Noir (Casablanca Valley, Chile) \$11.99 (reg \$13.99) Smooth and delicate with ripe cherry, floral and blackberry flavors. Medium-bodied, it would go well with garlicky lamb chops.

Graham: 2010 Graziano Zinfandel (Mendocino) \$13.49 (reg \$16.99) Deep aromas of blackberry and spice with hints of toasty oak, combined with uplifting flavors of sweet plum and ripe raspberry, with a generous mouth-feel. Rich tannins and a long, lingering finish. Fantastic with a Dijon and green peppercorn encrusted steak.

Ted: 2010 Clos la Coutale Cahors (Cahors, FR) \$12.99 (reg \$14.99) An 80/20 blend of Malbec and Merlot, it is an intense wine that juggles elegant rusticity with everyday drinkability. Blackberry and plum flavours are joined by rustic earthy notes and smooth black tea tannins. Serve with hearty herb-flecked, pork-spiked bean stew.

Joe: 2012 Le Cantine Di Indie Langhe Rosso (Piedmont) \$10.99 (reg \$12.99) A 50/30/20 blend of Nebbiolo, Barbera and Dolcetto it is aromatic of plums, black cherries, rose petals, tar, camphor and potpourri. Aged in both oak and stainless steel to maintain the fruits' freshness, it would be delicious with pasta with a rich Bolognese sauce.