



Grapevine

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Figuring Out Sauvignon Blanc



While far less Sauvignon Blanc than Chardonnay is consumed in the US, it is as fiercely loved a white wine by its fans, as is its more tropical-, buttery- and sometimes oaky-tasting counterpart. Considered by many to have less pedigree, Sauvignon Blanc has plenty of merit and, made with reverence for the grape, can be made into a White worthy of praise.

Sauvignon Blanc elicits many cries of dislike, yet people will profess to love Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé or Fumé Blanc, even though they are all made from the same grape. Sauvignon Blanc can be round, tropical and medium-bodied; or it can be leaner

with more acidity and grapefruit or herbal and mineral notes. Grown in cooler climates, mineral and herbal characteristics predominate; while in warmer areas, melon and citrus are more apparent. Most should be drunk young to capture the true acidity and fruit flavors, although some — like Loire Valley — can withstand aging, with proper cellaring.

New Zealand in the 1980s started a Sauvignon Blanc revolution when it began producing wines emphasizing grapefruit, gooseberry, lychee and in some cases, grassiness and asparagus — the latter two being more Californian in style, when made to respect the grape's natural

tendencies. Though Cloudy Bay (\$25.49) ignited a new era in New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, Brancott is the wine's birthplace.

Graves, a sub-region of Bordeaux often blends the grape with Semillon, and the soil imparts a stony, graphite scent, with subtle notes of lemon and often with a richer texture than most Sauvignon Blanc. This grape duo also results in one of the world's great dessert wines, Sauternes.

The rolling green, Chateau-bedecked hillsides of Loire Valley — a mere 30 minute train ride from Paris — is where the purest expression of Sauvignon Blanc can be found. Here the grape is grown in seven quite different regions — Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé and Touraine among them. The flinty, herbal notes are delightful with shellfish, and many of the wines have aging potential, not so with all Sauvignon Blanc. The wines are not blended and are aged in stainless steel, resulting in crispness, acidity and mineral complexity.

The grape also does well in South Africa, where the soil imparts a bit of melon. South Africa has over 10,000 acres of Sauvignon Blanc vineyards and, with ideal growing conditions, produces some delicious wines. Chile produces pleasant fruit-driven Sauvignon Blancs, offering up crisp, citrus, apple and tropical notes, and the wines are a great value.

In 1967, US vintner Robert Mondavi introduced Fumé Blanc, an oak aged Sauvignon Blanc, in order to differentiate it from the sweeter wines

produced in the US at the time. That distinction warmed wine drinkers to Fumé Blanc, even if not all of them understood its origins. While Mondavi pulled away from the sweeter wine that people were used to, oak aging gave it roundness, certainly not the same as Chardonnay, but closer to it in style.

Barrel fermenting or oak aging, used with an extremely light hand, can yield beautiful Sauv Blancs — as in Ferrari Carano Fumé Blanc (\$13.59). Cakebread Cellars (\$28.39) uses a touch of oak, but the wine's natural acidity and fruit are respected, resulting in a graceful, balanced wine.

Sauvignon blanc, at its best, is a great fish wine. Its flavors stand up to and complement the flavors of most seafood, and its acidity cuts through and neutralizes the natural oiliness of fish. It is also a terrific match for cheese. In the Loire, for instance, Whites are often paired with chèvre.

Unlike other Whites, Sauvignon Blanc's identity is that of a brisk, vibrant wine at its best when consumed young. Certainly, some winemakers try to make the grape taste unlike itself, in the process losing its distinctiveness. If you embrace Sauvignon Blanc as a bracing, invigorating, food-friendly wine, rather than as a second rate impostor of another grape, it is delightful and more than worthy of some attention. Whichever style you favor, this winning White is worth some investigation. ♦

Look for 'Perfectly Pinot Noir' in the September 2012 Issue of *Grapevine*.

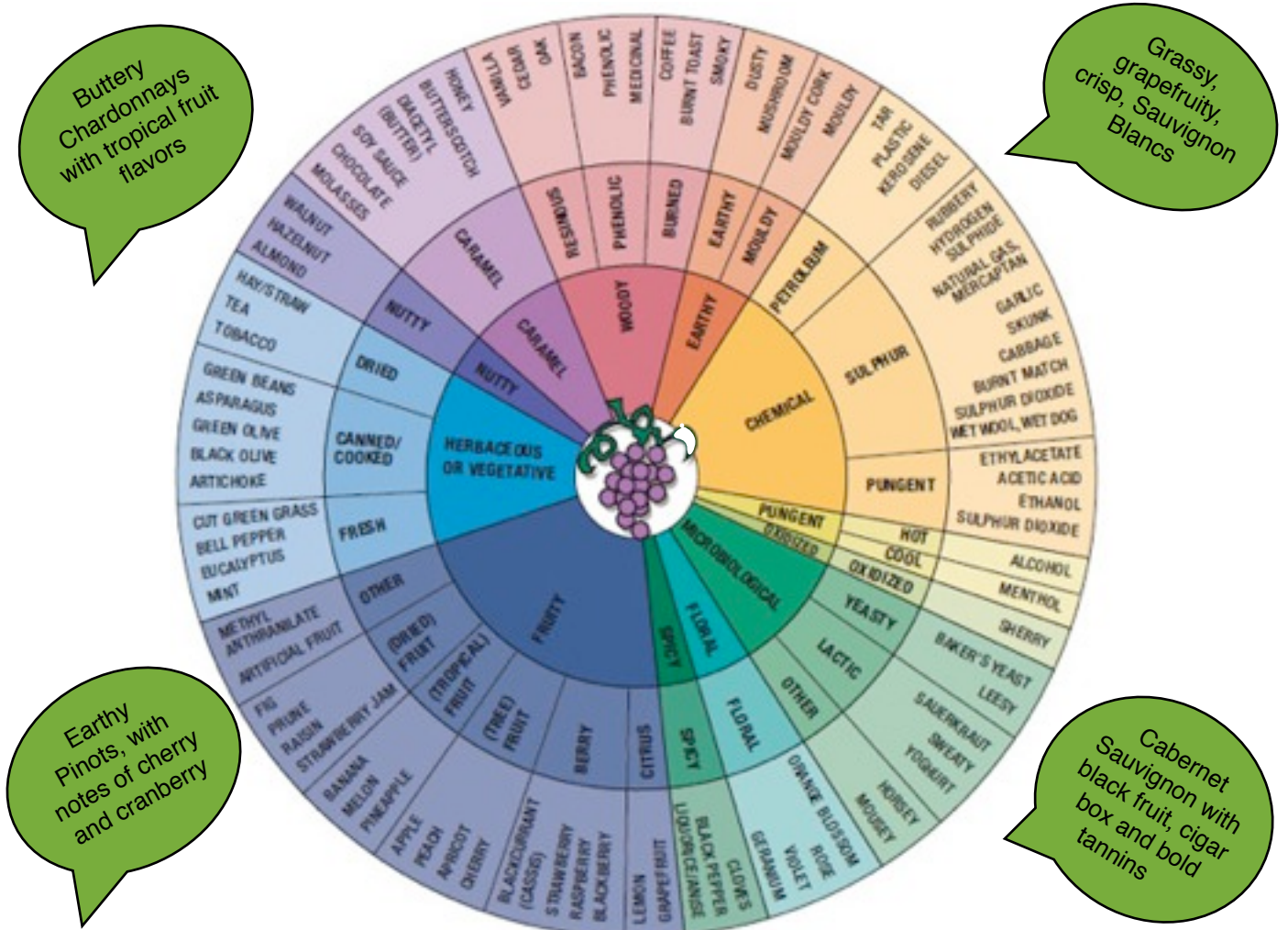
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| Chateau de Pena '09 | 90 pts. RP | Roussillon | \$ 8.49 | (reg \$ 9.99) |
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| Dei Rosso Di Montepulciano '10 | 90 pts. ST | Tuscany | \$13.69 | (reg \$16.99) |
| Descendientes de J. Palacios '09 (Top 100 WS #26) | 93 pts. WS | Spain | \$17.49 | (reg \$20.49) |
| Dehesa La Granja '05 | 91 pts. RP | Spain | \$18.99 | (reg \$21.99) |
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| Dona Paula Estate Malbec '10 | 90 pts. WS | Argentina | \$12.99 | (reg \$14.99) |
| Emmolo Sauvignon Blanc '10 | 91 pts. WE | Napa Valley | \$12.99 | (reg \$14.99) |
| Evodia Garnacha '10 | 90 pts. WA | Spain | \$ 8.49 | (reg \$10.99) |
| Green & Red Zinfandel Chiles Mills Estate '09 | 90 pts. WS | Napa Valley | \$19.99 | (reg \$23.49) |
| Guigal Cotes du Rhone '09 | 90 pts. RP | Rhone Valley | \$12.99 | (reg \$14.99) |
| Guigal Gigondas '07 | 94 pts. RP | Rhone Valley | \$23.99 | (reg \$27.99) |
| Kaesler Stonehorse GSM '08 | 91 pts. RP | Barossa Valley | \$16.99 | (reg \$19.99) |
| Knez Anderson Valley Pinot Noir '10 | 91 pts. ST | California | \$23.49 | (reg \$27.99) |
| Koehler Santa Ynez Valley Chardonnay '09 | 91 pts. WE | California | \$14.49 | (reg \$16.99) |
| Las Rocas de San Alejandro Garnacha '09 | 90 pts. RP | Spain | \$10.29 | (reg \$12.99) |
| Layer Cake Shiraz '09 (WE Top 100) | 91 pts. WE | Australia | \$13.59 | (reg \$15.99) |
| Liberty School Cabernet Sauvignon '09 | 90 pts. WE | California | \$11.99 | (reg \$13.99) |
| Lioco Sonoma County Chardonnay '10 | 90 pts. ST | California | \$17.99 | (reg \$20.99) |
| Mac Murray Ranch Chardonnay '09 | 90 pts. WA | California | \$13.59 | (reg \$15.99) |
| Mac Murray Ranch Pinot Noir '09 | 90 pts. WE | Sonoma Coast | \$15.39 | (reg \$17.99) |
| Marques de Casa Concha Carmenere '09 | 91 pts. WE | Chile | \$15.39 | (reg \$17.99) |
| Marques de Casa Concha Cabernet Sauvignon '09 | 90 pts. WS | Chile | \$15.29 | (reg \$21.99) |
| Marques de Casa Concha Chardonnay '09 | 90 pts. WS | Chile | \$13.99 | (reg \$19.99) |
| Marques de Riscal '05 | 90 pts. WA | Spain | \$13.99 | (reg \$15.99) |
| Martin Codax Albarino '10 | 90 pts. RP | Rias Baixas | \$12.49 | (reg \$14.49) |
| Michael & David 7 Deadly Zins '09 | 90 pts. RP | California | \$13.99 | (reg \$16.99) |
| Michele Chiarlo Barbera d'Asti Superiore Le Ormé '09 | 90 pts. WS | Italy | \$10.99 | (reg \$12.99) |
| Monte Hiniesta Tinta de Toro '09 | 91 pts. WA | Spain | \$11.49 | (reg \$13.49) |
| Morgan Twelve Clones Pinot Noir '10 | 92 pts. WS | California | \$23.99 | (reg \$27.99) |
| Mount Beautiful Pinot Noir '09 | 90 pts. RP | New Zealand | \$18.29 | (reg \$21.99) |
| Mr. Black's Concoction GSM '07 | 91 pts. RP | Australia | \$15.99 | (reg \$18.99) |
| Mumm Napa Brut Prestige Sparkling Wine (Top 100/WS) | 90 pts. WS | Napa Valley | \$15.99 | (reg \$19.99) |
| Pascal Jolivet Sancerre '10 | 90 pts. WS | France | \$21.49 | (reg \$24.99) |
| Perrin et Fils Gigondas la Gillé '07 | 92 pts. RP | France | \$28.99 | (reg \$34.99) |
| Quinta do Portal Colheita | 93 pts. WE | Portugal | \$15.99 | (reg \$18.99) |
| Quinta do Portal Mural Reserva '07 | 91 pts. WE | Portugal | \$ 8.49 | (reg \$ 9.99) |
| Seghesio Zinfandel '10 | 93 pts. WS | California | \$19.99 | (reg \$22.99) |
| Shoofly Shiraz '10 | 90 pts. WS | Australia | \$ 8.49 | (reg \$ 9.99) |
| Splendore '07 | 90 pts. RP | Spain | \$12.99 | (reg \$14.99) |
| Tenuta Le Calcinaie Vernaccia Di San Gimignano '11 | 91 pts. ST | Tuscany | \$12.99 | (reg \$14.99) |
| Thomas Goss Cabernet Sauvignon '10 | 90 pts. IWC | Australia | \$12.99 | (reg \$14.99) |
| Tikal Patriota Bonarda/Malbec 2008 | 92 pts. RP | Argentina | \$17.99 | (reg \$20.99) |
| Torbreck Woodcutter's Shiraz '10 | 90 pts. RP | Barossa Valley | \$18.99 | (reg \$22.99) |
| Trivento Golden Reserve Malbec '08 | 90 pts. RP | Argentina | \$17.99 | (reg \$20.99) |
| Two Hands Angels' Share Shiraz '09 | 92 pts. WS | McLaren Vale | \$21.99 | (reg \$25.99) |
| Xabec '08 | 92 pts. RP | Spain | \$12.99 | (reg \$15.99) |

Drink wine, and you will sleep well. Sleep, and you will not sin. Avoid sin, and you will be saved.
Ergo, drink wine and be saved. *Medieval German saying*

Wine Wheel Taste Descriptions & Wine-Food Pairing Chart



| Red Wine Pairing | | | White Wine Pairing | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Red Varietal | Appetizers | Main Course | White Varietal | Appetizers | Main Course |
| Cabernet Sauvignon | Carpaccio, pungent cheeses | Beef, duck, lamb, venison steaks | Champagne & Sparkling | Brie, mini cheese souffles, oysters | Quiche, Dover sole, <i>anything at all</i> |
| Merlot | Antipasto, aged cheeses | Veal & rich sauce, sweet sausage, blackened tuna | Chardonnay | Scallops, crudites, hummus, mild cheeses | Roast chicken, pork tenderloin, lobster & butter, crab bisque |
| Zinfandel | Prosciutto with melon, skewered spicy chicken, Swedish cocktail meatballs | Barbequed anything, spicy tomato sauce, spicy sausage & peppers | Sauvignon Blanc | Oysters, crab cakes, crostini with goat cheese | White fish, lobster, salmon, sword fish, broiled chicken breast |
| Pinot Noir | Creamy cheeses, baba ghanoush, roasted vegetables | Veal, dark chicken, turkey, fillet mignon, ham, salmon, lentils | Pinot Grigio | Ceviche, ahi tuna tartare, tomatoes & mozzarella | Risotto, grilled chicken breast, salads, boiled crab |
| Syrah & Cotes du Rhone | Crostini with tapenade and anchovies, stuffed mushrooms, foie gras | Beef Bourguignon, lamb, pasta with rich, meaty tomato sauce | Riesling | Shrimp & spicy Asian sauce, steamed clams, creamy cheeses | Roast pork with apples, baked glazed ham, spicy Asian dishes |

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

Sat 8/4, 8/11, 8/18, 8/25 & 9/1: New Arrivals: Taste our new discoveries that are sure to become old favorites.

Fri 8/3: Sauvignon Blanc & Co.: We'll taste Sauvignon Blanc, along with Cabernet Sauvignon and a Cab Franc.

Fri 8/10: Wines from the 90s Club: Our 90s Section is ever expanding, and we want you to experience these gems.

Fri 8/17: Staff Picks: We love this tasting! Come in and taste the latest favorites of our staff, and see who you agree with.

Fri 8/24: Travers Wine Tasting: The Travers is tomorrow, so come in tonight and find a few bottles to share with friends.

Friday 8/31: Labor Day Barbeque Wines: We'll have a nice lineup of end of Summer wines for your barbeque.

Never underestimate what can happen at a wine tasting. For those of you who don't know, Renee — our Friday night wine tasting host and writer of Sheila's monthly newsletter — got married this past June to Mike, whom she first met at a wine tasting right here in the store back in 2009. After some hmmm'ing and hawwing, they finally started dating and realized they wanted to get married. It was a beautiful wedding with lovely French hors d'oeuvres and dinner at Epicurean Bistro & Wine Bar in Latham, and an incredible selection of French Champagne and wines...not to mention, lots of family and friends — including many from the store. And we'd be remiss not to mention that Sheila more than nudged them together. Thank you, Sheila!



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Mo's Divine Corn Salad

Courtesy of customer, Maureen Naughton

6-8 cooked corn on the cob
(leftover is fine)
1 small red onion
2 avocados
2 medium tomatoes
3-4 springs cilantro or basil
1/2 cup toasted walnuts
Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 Tbsp good balsamic vinegar
1/4 cup favorite Sauvignon Blanc



Slice corn from cob into a large bowl.

Chop onion, tomatoes, avocados, cilantro and walnuts and add to bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste; toss with oil, vinegar and wine.

Chill or serve immediately with warm French bread, brie and chilled glasses of Sauvignon Blanc.



Sangria Flora

1 bottle of Sauvignon Blanc
1 cup St.-Germain Elderflower Liqueur
2 fresh peaches
5-6 fresh strawberries
6 fresh raspberries
1 bunch fresh grapes



Stir ingredients in pitcher or carafe; chill 15 minutes. Serve in ice filled glasses, and imagine you are at a French cafe with friends. Makes 4 cocktails.

Join Our Wine of the Month Club...

Puzzled as to what to give as a gift? Looking to treat yourself? Try one of our monthly Wine Club gifts, starting at just \$29.99 per month. Billed monthly at \$29.99, or pre-paid:

3 months: \$89.95, 6 months: \$179.70 or 12 months: \$359.40

August Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: The Calling 'Dutton Ranch' Chardonnay '10 (Russian River Valley) **\$23.99** (reg \$27.99) A rich, smooth wine with subtle hints of oak and crisp flavors, it's bright and refreshing with an elegantly full-bodied finish.

Damian: Mt. Beautiful Sauvignon Blanc '10 (New Zealand) **\$13.99** (reg \$16.99) A full bodied dry Sauvignon Blanc with grassy aromas. On the palate it has a clean fresh gooseberry and white currant notes, with crisp acidity.

Denise: Ferrari Carano Fume Blanc '11 (Sonoma) **\$13.59** (reg \$15.99) Made from Sauvignon Blanc, it has luscious fruit flavors of pineapple, melon, pear grapefruit and lime, with hints of kiwi, guava and a touch of grass.

Graham: Chateau St. Jean Merlot '07 (Sonoma) **\$14.99** (reg \$16.99) 93 Pts (WE) This stunning Merlot shows vast berry, currant, mocha, licorice and cola flavors, wrapped into superfine tannins and balanced with fine acidity.

Kris: Hanging Vine 'Parcel 22' Pinot Noir '11 (St. Helena) **\$11.99** (reg \$13.99) Cherry fruit with a hint of cedar, clove and spice. Medium-full body with silky tannins, it is nicely balanced with a long finish. Pair with grilled salmon.

Ted: Box Head Shiraz '10 (Mc Laren Vale) **\$9.99** (reg \$11.99) Like a nice French Rhone, it is well balanced with juicy black fruit and spicy black pepper. A perfect partner to grilled, barbeque spare ribs.

Renee: Mulderbosch Rose '11 (South Africa) **\$8.49** (reg \$9.99) Made from Cabernet Sauvignon, this Rose has aromas and flavors of strawberries and raspberries. It is a beautiful summer sipper. Perfect with crab cakes or grilled chicken.