

Welcome to the end of summer! School's back in session and schedules are returning to normal. It's a nice mix this month with whites that will pair well with the heat and eclipses, and reds that will pair well with grilled foods and eclipses. I'm noticing a theme here. Enjoy!

Cheers, Herb

P.S. - My non-Wine Club selection for the month is the **2015 Vattan Sancerre**. This is the perfect August white to battle the heat. It's crisp, clean and refreshing with a complex flavor – gooseberry, passionfruit and a plethora of mineral. Both fruit and mineral components are in balanced abundance. This is a great choice!

2016 Haras de Pirque Reserva Chardonnay (Maipo Valley, Chile)

Tasting Notes: This Chilean Chardonnay is a breath of fresh air. It's the perfect antidote to a sweltering summer. This Chardonnay has a bright and fresh aroma of tropical fruits with an emphasis on bright tangerine. It's fresh and flavorful on the palate with gobs of stone fruits and more tangerine fruit. This white has balancing acidity (need to tame this fresh fruit) and great concentration of flavor. The fruit to acid ratio is near perfect with this one. The finish has crisp peach fruit, nice intensity and good length.

Food Pairing: This style of unoaked Chardonnay is great with summertime food, which tends to be lighter bodied. Pair this white with lighter chicken dishes or anything with a fruit glaze.

2016 Finca las Moras Alma Mora Sauvignon Blanc (San Juan, Argentina)

Tasting Notes: I'm enjoying this hybrid-style of Sauvignon Blanc that's not too dry and not too ripe. The Alma Mora is from the San Juan region in west central Argentina and has an aroma of crisp citrus and tropical fruits. The predominant flavor on the palate is ripe melon, but there's good acidity, too. The mid-palate shows a softer texture, with drier citrus fruits and a nice hint of Viognier-like perfume. The finish is flavorful with tropical fruits and nice length.

Food Pairing: This SB has enough unique flavor to serve alone or as the starter wine for your next dinner party. It could also be paired with any whitefish dish.

2016 Atlantique Cabernet Franc Rose (Loire Valley, France)

Tasting Notes: I like this Rose because it is not from Provence. There's nothing wrong with Provence rose, but it's nice to have a change now and again. The Atlantique is 100% Cabernet Franc from the Loire Valley and has a nice aroma of bright strawberry fruit that's slightly tart. It's full-flavored on the palate with bright cherry and rhubarb fruit. There's nice weight and concentration on the mid-palate with a good balance between ripe fruit and acidity. The finish is very good with rhubarb fruit and great length.

Food Pairing: As with all roses, they're great straight out of the fridge. Otherwise, try this as an aperitif wine or pair with grilled foods or fried chicken. Rose is a very versatile food wine, so you really can't go wrong with your pairing.

2014 Sandrone Dolcetto D'Alba (Italy)

Tasting Notes: This is an interesting version of Dolcetto, a secondary grape in the Piedmont region. Dolcetto means "little sweet one" in Italian, but I think that's a bit of a misnomer here because this version is tempered in the ripeness department. It's a bit more earthy, which pairs nicely with the black fruit component. This red starts with an aroma of baked berry fruits, light spice and humus/earth notes. It's bright on the palate with dried, black fruits, especially blackberry. As this wine aerates, which I recommend, the acidity diminishes and the fruit emerges and evolves into more blue fruits. The Sandrone is lithe on the palate with a nice fruit/earth balance. The finish is medium-bright with black fruits and medium-length.

Food Pairing: This red has enough fruit and structure to pair with heavier-bodied foods. I'd pair this with medium-bodied pork or beef dishes.

2013 Bodegas Ateca Atteca Old Vines (Calatayud, Spain)

Tasting Notes: The Atteca is 100% old vine Garnacha from Calatayud and sees 10 months of aging in French oak. I like the intensity with this red. It has a big aroma with lightly baked, dark raspberry fruit. This Garnacha is thick and rich on the palate with ripe raspberry fruit. This is a riper style, but not overripe, and there's enough acidity to provide some balance and structure. The finish is fuller-flavored with ripe tannins, dark red fruits - more brambly fruits - and decent length.

Food Pairing: This is a fuller-flavored red with some body, so I don't think you'll overwhelm the wine with your pairing. This red can pair nicely with fuller-bodied meat dishes.

2014 The Velvet Devil Merlot (Washington State)

Tasting Notes: This is a great testimonial to the quality of Washington State Merlot, which grows exceptionally well in this state. The quality to price ratio of Washington Merlot is much better than most Cabernets from California. This example has a ripe, dark plum aroma. It's clean on the palate with medium-ripe cherry/berry fruit and hints of vanilla. There's a rounder texture on the mid-palate with nice dark fruits. It has good acidity throughout, which provides great structure. The finish has ripe cherry fruit, medium tannins and nice length.

Food Pairing: This is a versatile food wine and can pair with just about any weekday meal. Try this with pizza, burgers or chicken or pork off the grill. It's a great medium-bodied wine for just about any medium-bodied meal.