

Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S MONTHLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY

STORE HOURS



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Cannery Row
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JUNE REFERRALS



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Wine with Burgers



Summer is finally here! Many of us will feel summer's call to fire up the grill soon. And chances are pretty good that before long you're going to feel a craving for America's favorite warm weather indulgence...hamburgers!

You've probably heard that if you have wine with a burger, there's no reason to crack open anything but some non-expensive red. As, of course, the all-American way is to have a beer with your burger. But let's counter by arguing, and firmly arguing, that there's no need to downgrade your wine selection just because you're serving burgers.

Let's initially stick with consideration of the traditional principal substance of a burger — ground beef. So if we are just considering beef and bun, we could compare our vino choices to what they would be for a traditional steak. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and even Chardonnay come to mind. But there aren't too many people that stick with a plain burger, so let's go a step further.



We all know that hamburgers come in many shapes and forms and this is precisely where you should consider pairing your wine with the fixins. As with other foods, how you complement your hamburger could be what you remember most about your tasty burger. And while Cabs and Merlots could still be options, there are many other avenues to explore.

Let's start off with what is likely the most common burger topping or condiment of them all — ketchup. Tomatoes are naturally tannic, acidic, and in the form of ketchup we have added sweetness. Pairing a slightly acidic and/or slightly sweet wine with low tannins, while keeping in mind the backbone of the burger, the beef, could turn out to be a delectable venture. Sangiovese and Aussie-style bright Syrahs are solid choices in the red category. A white such as Albaniño or even off-dry Rieslings or Gewürztraminers can be good calls. A semi-dry rosé would likely not disappoint.

Mustard is always popular as well and keep in mind that mustard comes in many differing forms- yellow, brown, spicy, deli-style...so consider this as well when you pick your wine. Chardonnay can be wonderful with mustard. And if you're a barbeque sauce on your burger

type, the tangy spice of the sauce could pair nicely with a Zinfandel or a fruity, full-bodied Syrah.

Another thought: how about a slightly chilled red wine? Some traditionalists out there may never consider such a thing, but some red varietals actually are surprisingly pleasant with a slight chill to them, which will bring out fruitiness in some reds. This is also a bonus for red-lovers as in hot weather it will be refreshing. Varietals to try include Pinot Noir, Merlot, and Malbec.

Of course, many don't even consider a burger to be a burger without a slice of melted cheese on it. The addition of cheese may or may not have grandiose impacts on a burger's ultimate showing, all depending on the choice of cheese. For example, a mild cheddar combined with other flavor elements may not really leave much of an impression more than adding some gooeyness to the meat. However, add something powerful like blue cheese and due consideration is definitely required. Consider that dry-style Rieslings



Continued Inside

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

MORGAN - 2014 Cotes du Crow's



Morgan Cotes du Crow's is a blend from central and southern Monterey County. Here, the fog burns off early, allowing ample sunshine to warm temperatures to the mid to upper 80's during the summer and fall. The rising warm air draws the cool winds from Monterey Bay in the late afternoon. By nighttime, temperatures cool to the low 50's.

This Rhone-style blend has a rich ruby red color, highlighted with purple edges. Coffee cake, dates, and raspberry aromas jump out of the glass. The wine is medium-bodied with soft tannins; it offers a mouthful of pomegranate, black cherry and cranberry.

Its weight and balance make it a perfect pairing with anything off the grill.

53% grenache, 47% Syrah

6,600 Cases Produced

14.2% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2018

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

CRU - 2012 Arroyo Seco Chardonnay



The 2012 CRU Arroyo Seco Chardonnay is comprised from two vineyards in the Arroyo Seco Appellation. Both the Marks and Cobblestone Vineyards are located just west of highway 101 in the Greenfield area. The vineyards receive daily coastal influence channeled down the Salinas Valley. The fruit from both vineyards were whole cluster pressed and settled for 24 hours without any SO₂ to allow the enzymatic browning reaction to occur. After setting, the wines are racked and inoculated in tank with yeast prior to transfer to barrel for barrel fermentation. The lees were stirred periodically they help with mouth feel and flavors.

Intense notes of green apple, nectarine, and jasmine. The palate is elegant and expressive with ripened nectarine, peach, pineapple and guava. The French oak is well integrated throughout the whole tasting experience.

100% Chardonnay

307 Cases Produced

14.4% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2017

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

SCHEID - 2012 50/50 (Club Red)



Scheid's 2012 50/50 blend is comprised of four vineyards. Their San Lucas Vineyard, a primo spot that is located about equidistance from Hames Valley to the south and Mesa del Rio/Scheid to the north, is home to both Cabernet and Syrah. Here, the long, warm days and cool, breezy evenings produce lively reds that burst with ripe, fleshy fruit. The balance of the Cabernet hails from Hames Valley, aka Cab Country. Hames is characterized by a high day-to-night temperature differential, with a variation of up to 50° quite common.

Lots of sunshine is a must for top-notch Cabernet, while the dramatic nighttime cooling helps to preserve the balance of the fruit and maintain acidity. The balance of the Syrah is from Mesa del Rio and Scheid-Arroyo Seco, cool climate vineyards that are Syrah heaven, producing a wine with subtle spiciness, intensity and concentration.

50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 50% Syrah

408 Cases Produced

13.9% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

MORGAN - 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Club Blanc)



Morgan's Sauvignon Blanc is a proprietary blend of classic Sauvignon Blanc, Sauvignon Musqué, Semillon, and Albarino. The classic Sauvignon Blanc clone offers typical sweet grass flavors while Sauvignon Musqué is a cultivar that we prize for its aromatic intensity and citrus and tropical fruit flavors. Semillon, another noble Bordeaux varietal, adds richness and depth. A small bit of Albarino in the final blend adds interest and minerality.

The 2014 Sauvignon Blanc features aromas of apple, nectarine, and cantaloupe. Flavors of white peach, and lemon-lime with a streak of minerality are lively and refreshing. The small touch of oak lightly accents the bright acidity and adds an elegant texture.

An incredibly food-versatile wine; a natural match for shellfish, seafood, and lighter summer fare.

62% Sauvignon Musqué,

6,500 Cases Produced

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2017

28% Sauvignon Blanc, 9% Semillon, 1% Albarino

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued



are a nice match to blue cheese in the white category and red wine lovers may want to reach for a Cab or a Zin in this culinary situation.

The addition of sautéed mushrooms will add earthiness to your burger. One can find earthy characteristics in a multitude of red varieties, especially in Pinot Noirs. Adding onions? Whether you grill them first on their own will make a huge difference. Grilled onions will caramelize and will exhibit sweetness, while raw onion slices will increase acidity and add to the presence of spice.

Lettuce? It's not even worth a mention on its own as lettuce's most common taste is that of water and any wine will taste just fine next to water. Pickles? Actually, if you're having wine with your burger pickles are one topping you may want to avoid altogether, or at least significantly limit. Too much pickle on your burger can rob your palate of the mélange of flavors it may experience otherwise, wine or no wine involved.

Of course, the most important thing is for you to enjoy whatever wine you personally prefer with your burger. However, we recommend that the next time you fire up the grill and toss on some burgers that you consider the whole sensory package of the hamburger experience before you pop open just any bottle of red wine you happen to have around.

Bryce Ternet - is a contributing editor and is the author of: "The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula."

RECIPE

Tapas Plate with Marinated Chickpeas

Ingredients

1 15-ounce	can chickpeas, rinsed
1/2 cup	raisins
1/4 cup	chopped roasted red peppers
1/4 cup	chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
2	scallions, sliced
3 tablespoons	olive oil
	kosher salt and black pepper
1/2 pound	Manchego cheese, sliced
1/4 pound	thinly sliced Serrano ham or prosciutto
1/2 cup	mixed olives
1/2 small	loaf country bread

Directions

In a medium bowl, combine the chickpeas, raisins, roasted peppers, parsley, scallions, oil, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper.

Serve with the cheese, ham, olives, and bread.

Serves 4



VISITING Varietals



GRENACHE

Pronunciation: gruh-NAHSH

This sun-worshiping grape gets ripe and loves hot, dry weather. Popular in California, Spain (called Garnacha), Australia and the southern Rhone region of France, Grenache is the primary grape in regions such as Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Tavel, and Priorat. It's often tamed by less fleshy, more structured grapes like Syrah, Mourvedre or Tempranillo - Grenache is the "G" in GSM blends of Australia. Also, because of its thin skins and high ripeness level, Grenache is ideal for producing delicious yet dry rose wines.

High sugars give this grape character and ensure a full-bodied wine, but lower levels of acid and tannin enhance its candidacy as a blender. Intensive pruning on older vines gives Grenache enough structure to maintain its balance as a sole varietal, which is popular - and successful - in California, Australia and sometimes Spain, but many vintners rely on blending to keep this alcohol-happy grape in check. Typical flavors of Grenache are jam, spice, dried fruit, earthiness and some pepper, depending on where it's grown. Old vine Grenache makes an intense and distinct dry wine, and in regions like Banyuls, a delicious, fortified dessert wine.

The unmistakable candied fruit roll-up and cinnamon flavor is what gives Grenache away to expert blind tasters. It has a medium to full weight in taste, but has a deceptively lighter color and is semi-translucent. Depending on where it's grown, Grenache often lets off strong smells of orange rinds and ruby-red grapefruit. When Grenache is grown in Old World regions such as Côtes du Rhône and Sardinia, it can have herbal notes of dried oregano and tobacco.

CHEESE

Varietals



PORT SALUT

Pronunciation: POHR sah-LOO

Port Salut is a semi-soft pasteurized cow's milk cheese from Pays de la Loire, France, with a distinctive orange rind and a mild flavor. The cheese is produced in wheels approximately 23 cm (9 inches) in diameter, weighing approximately 2 kg (4.4 lb).

Though Port Salut has a mild flavor, it sometimes has a strong smell because it is a mature cheese. The smell increases the longer the cheese is kept — this however does not affect its flavor. It can be refrigerated and is best eaten within two weeks of opening.

The cheese was developed by Trappist monks during the 19th century at Port-du-Salut Abbey in Entrammes. [1] The monks, many of whom had left France during the French revolution of 1789, learned cheese-making skills to support themselves abroad, and brought those skills back upon their return after the Bourbon Restoration. The name of their society, "Société Anonyme des Fermiers Réunis" (S.A.F.R.), later became their registered trademark, and is still printed on the wheels of Port Salut cheese.

In 1873, the head of the abbey came to an agreement with a Parisian cheese-seller granting exclusive rights of distribution, and the cheese soon became popular. The abbey sought trade protection, and eventually (in 1959), sold the rights to a major creamery. The cheese is now produced in a factory; the characteristic smooth rind the result of a plastic-coated wrapper. [2] The rind is edible, but is made of wax and detracts from the flavor of the cheese.





Handmade Port Salut cheese or "Entrammes" cheese is still produced by various monasteries throughout the French countryside.

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