

**Forbes**

# The Best Wines For Springtime's Bounty Of New Foods

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I'm not fond of people who serve me produce out of season, like the tasteless, sinewy asparagus people eat all year long and tomatoes that were picked in the middle of January. I therefore look forward with baited breath to what springtime brings to market, and I love nothing more than to match up wines appropriately. Now's the time for strawberries, radishes, peas, arugula, basil, mint, fennel, morels, apricots, cherries, dandelion greens, fava beans, fiddlehead ferns, new potatoes and rhubarb to come out. (Artichokes are also in season but, despite the earnest efforts of some wine writers to match them with wines, none really work.) And spring lamb is readily available and at its best. Here are some wonderful match-ups.



**MacRostie Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 2018** (\$20)—At 14.5% alcohol, this is considerably more powerful than most Chardonnays, even from California, but, if you like this style, with pronounced oak and vanilla, this well-priced Sonoma example is your best choice for lobster with clarified butter, bluefish and soft-shell crabs.

**Domaine Weinbach Famille Faller Sylvaner 2017** (\$25)—Grown around the Clos des Capucins in Alsace, the sylvaner grape has to be of high quality to achieve distinction, and it does in this wine. Its floral character is enchanting, its velvety feel on the palate and the good acid and dryness will go splendidly with fiddlehead ferns and minted dishes.



**Tenuta Regaleali Cataratto Antisa 2018** (\$22)—This Sicilian medium-bodied white gives you a good blast of acid up front and the southern sun provides ripeness, all to the good for any spicy foods that contain peppers or Mediterranean spices.

**Tasca Perricone Guarnaccio 2017** (\$15)—Very clean, pronounced balanced flavors and acid complement each other, and a burst of fruit all mean this will go with dishes that may contain balsamic vinegar, like swordfish or some other seafood. The Guarnaccio grape is fermented in stainless steel and spends 12 months in used French oak barrels, and while increasingly planted in western Sicily, it is fairly new to the market and well worth trying at this very reasonable price.

**Domaine de Cala Rosé 2019** (\$17.50)—Chef Joachim Splichal of the Patina Restaurant Group found his ideal vineyard in Brignoles in Provence, planted with Cinsault, Grenache, Syrah and Rolle, to which he has added Carignan and Grenache Blanc to make a remarkably complex, 12.5% alcohol, stainless-aged rose that will go with spring salads, tuna, even strawberries for dessert.

**Dry Creek DCV Estate Block 10 Chardonnay** (\$34)—A more restrained Chardonnay at 13.8% alcohol, more in line with Burgundian models, this Russian River Valley wine from 18-year-old vines has a lot of creaminess, backed by pleasing acid and citrus, so that with any grilled seafood this season it will be in complete harmony with the olive oil and lemon components.

**Mi Sueño Syrah 2016** (\$55)—Syrah is fast gaining favor in Napa Valley, where Cabernet Sauvignon rules, and this example is 100% Syrah (no other Rhone varietals), making it a singular style with admirable ripeness and the forward fruit and tangy minerality the varietal should provide. If you find morel mushrooms in the market, or pick them up in the forest, this is the wine to uncork and enjoy.



**Gagliole Pecchia Colli della Toscana Centrale IGT 2015** (\$190 to \$200)—Another fine example of how the IGT (geographically typical) appellation works at its best, for this relatively unfamiliar wine from Tuscany is remarkable for its body, boldness and soft tannins from 100% Sangiovese, making it a good match for a grilled sirloin. But it's alcohol level is high at 15.5%, and the next day I found it had lost a good deal of its initial charm. So enjoy it all in one evening.

**Zenato Alanera Rosso Veronese IGT 2016** (\$13)—Although pesto made with spring's basil is a Ligurian dish, it is made all over Italy, and it is best enjoyed with a wine not too complex but still with enough tannin and bite to go with the peppery quality of the basil, garlic and pignoli nuts in the sauce. This Veronese wine will go well, and it is quite versatile as a springtime al fresco wine. For \$13 it is a high achiever.



**Tenuta Saint'Antonio Famiglia Castagnedi Amarone della Valpolicella Selezione 2015** (\$45)—Most Amarones don't taste the way they once did, which is not necessarily a bad thing since some were oxidized on purpose. But this example has the best of the old ones. There's a leathery flavor on the palate, good tannins and a long finish, making it a good marriage with roast pork or suckling pig.

**Lievland Bushvine Pinotage Paarl 2018** (\$15)—Pinotage tastes nothing like any other varietal, and its best expression is in South African wines, as this shows in its assertiveness up front, the pleasant vegetal flavors and the acid that makes it wonderful with roasted baby lamb this season.

**Costantia Glen Three 2015** (\$30)—Imitating a Bordeaux blend, this South African mix of 62% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc and 13% Cabernet Sauvignon gives proof of the complexity that can be achieved outside of Europe while demonstrating its own character and softness, which means it will go well with buttered peas and new potatoes.

**Yarden Galilee Golan Heights Cabernet Sauvignon 2016** (\$27)—If you want to smell the big, bold essence of Cabernet Sauvignon, one whiff of this will tell you of its depth and a sip will give you plenty of tannin that will allow this wine to age well. Now more than three years old, it's starting to mellow, and with Israeli/Middle Eastern dishes like hummus and other vegetable purees, as well as goat and lamb, this will make an impression.

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