

The Best Wines for Spring and Summer 2020

By
Kyle Swartz
-
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Winter is winding down and warmer weather cannot get here fast enough. As retailers begin looking for what wines they will feature come spring and summer 2020, our wine panel picked their favorite sippers for that imminent time of the year.

As always, these selections include brief tasting notes, a rating and the wine's retail price (**which varies from store to store and market to market**). If you're a beverage professional who would like to learn about participating in our panel, please contact *Beverage Dynamics* editor Kyle Swartz at 763-383-4400 x2225, or email him at kswartz@epgmediallc.com.

Our wine panels from last year included:

- **The Best Wines of 2019**
- **Moscato**
- **American Wine**
- **Pinot Noir**
- **American Wines**
- **Cabernet Sauvignon**
- **Rosé**

Five Stars

(97) Chateau Puech-Haut Tête de Belier 2017 (France)

Produced from four different white varieties, this blend has all the components of a world-class wine. Wonderful notes of tree fruit, with a hint of alluring spice. Very nice weight and texture on the palate, with a bright, focused and lingering finish. (\$44)

(95) Domaine St. Romain Jongieux (France)

A lovely, complex wine, at a great price, which can allow you to introduce your customers to a wine region and grape variety they may not know. They may not be familiar with the jacquère grape variety, or the Savoie region in eastern France. But, once they taste this wine — with its bright and fresh focused fruit — they'll be thanking you for the new discovery. (\$16)

(95) Yealands Estate S1 Single Block Sauvignon Blanc 2018 (New Zealand)

The first smell to the first taste gives you an indication of how special this sauvignon blanc is. A bright pop of grass and grapefruit greet your tongue with

an absolute explosion of freshness. The acidity is energetic, yet controlled, and the combination of amazing fruit gives you one of the most complete start-to-finish experiences you will ever have with a sauvignon blanc. (\$29.99)

(95) Terre di Chieti Vellodoro Pecorino 2018 (Italy)

Pecorino may be the name of a cheese, but it really shines as a grape variety. Wonderful focus, bright and clean. The nose and palate both reflect its complexity and quality. Match it with a wide range of dishes: it is versatile and delicious. (\$16.99)

(94) Marqués de Cáceres Brut Cava (Spain)

Produced from Macabeo, one of Spain's most famous indigenous grape varieties, the grapes are gently pressed and fermented at lower temperatures to preserve the grape's elegance and character. A great wine to enjoy with a meal, or just to celebrate life. (\$14.99)

(94) KG3 Cabernet Napa 2017 (CA)

Plenty of lush, layered raspberry and black cherry notes dominate this cabernet. Along with the fruit focus there are complex notes of chalk, cinnamon and black pepper with some soft tannins on the finish. (\$49.99)

(94) Galil Mountain Winery Blanc de Noir (Israel)

Bright and clean, this rosé is produced by the press method and fermented at very low temperature, ensuring that the delicate fruit aspects remain intact. Exceptionally versatile, it is an excellent match for a wide variety of dishes. (\$17.99)

(94) Cuvaision Pinot Noir Swan 2017 (CA)

Certainly a vintage to remember, as this was some of the last fruit harvested before the devastating California wildfires. This is from their "small lot" series, and reflects the intense Burgundian approach Steve Rogstad follows to produce his very best offerings. Rich, supple mouth feel, subtle spice notes, beautiful pale color and intense berry aromas. (\$69.99)

(93) Primarus Pinot Gris 2018 (OR)

Pinot gris from Oregon can walk a fine line: not as rich as the Alsatian style, but with more body and fruit than most Italian pinot grigio. The Primarus maintains a great balance among fruit, texture and weight. Aged in steel, it's a great alternative to over-oaked whites, with exceptional versatility. (\$14.99)

(93) Gustav Lorentz Cremant d'Alsace Brut Rosé (France)

A lovely sparkling wine, almost indistinguishable from a rosé from Champagne. After spending more than a year "sur lie," the wine has all of the complexity, flavor and texture that you would expect from a much more expensive bottle. Match it with grilled white meat, seafood or cheese. (\$29.99)

(93) Icon by Waterbrook Estate Viognier 2018 (WA)

A complex and lovely wine, showcasing what the viognier variety can bring when it's treated well. Great focus, with excellent texture, the peachy and citrus aspects of the wine are balanced with a touch of spice. Try it with something a little spicy to spotlight its quality. (\$24)

(93) Samuel Robert Rosé Willamette 2019 (OR)

Under the obvious, fresh red fruit lies a gorgeous tension that stems from the sweet fruit flavors and the exceptional dry finish of the wine. This push and pull adds another dynamic to this rosé that is rare amongst its peers. (\$14.99)

(93) Foppiano Sauvignon Blanc (CA)

A beautiful example of how elegant and focused sauvignon blanc can be when the fruit is treated with respect in the vineyard and winery. Great varietal character, with focus and texture. A great match with nearly any dish you might choose to pair with it. (\$19.99)

(93) Alexander Valley Vineyards Rosé 2018 (CA)

This thirteenth release certainly predates the rosécraze, and just keeps getting better and better. Who would ever think we could have this much fun with sangiovese? Beautiful color, zippy acidity, no heavy oak finish. Crisp watermelon notes compliment a hint of soft minerality. Delightful wine for spring BBQ's. (\$19.99)

(93) Domaine Des Quatre Routes Muscadet Sèvre et Maine Sur Lie 2018 (France)

Muscadet has a well-deserved reputation for bright, clean and textured white wines. This is a great example. Perfect for seafood, and a host of summer dishes. It has a gentle acidity that allows it to work with fattier dishes, but is also soft enough to match with nearly everything else. (\$14)

(93) A to Z Rosé 2018 (OR)

Fill your picnic basket with some fruit, cheese, a baguette and a bottle of this vibrant American rosé. Mouthwatering, balanced acidity bursting with wild strawberry, honeysuckle and rose petals. Full, smooth finish. (\$16.99)

(93) San Gregorio El Vergal Tempranillo 2018 (Spain)

The nose offers intense aromas of ripe black cherry and raspberry followed by wet tobacco and cloves. On the palate, nutmeg, vanilla and crushed black peppercorns follow the lush fruit leading to a long, 30+ second finish. (\$10.99)

(93) Vennstone Pinot Noir Tri App 2017 (CA)

Winemaker Joe Wagner has figured out a magical formula involving three appellation sources, each offering something unique to the wine. Built on the success of his past pinots, Vennstone is a true powerhouse. (\$19.99)

(92) Tesoro della Regina Pinot Grigio 2018 (Italy)

Packed with flavors of apple and citrus, this is a pinot grigio that leads the pack in quality. Farmed from impeccable vineyards, the generations of winemaking experience comes through in every glass. The brightness of the wine allows for exceptional food pairings. Bravo! (\$16.99)

(92) Pine Ridge Chenin-Viognier 2018 (CA)

Crisp and mouth-watering palate bursting with pear, pomelo and orange blossoms. Clean and lively finish. Great with shrimp, steamed clams and light salads. (\$12.99)

(92) Browne Family Vineyards Grenache Rosé 2018 (WA)

The conditions for growing grapes in Washington allow for a wide range of successful wines produced from different varieties and styles. This rosé of grenache is a prime example. Bright and clean, the nose and palate feature a broad spectrum of fresh fruit and floral notes. Try with some cheese, or a richer dish, as the bright acidity will provide great balance. (\$18)

(92) “The Expedition” Sauvignon Blanc 2018 (WA)

A long summer in 2018 provided the perfect conditions for a wine that is complex, bright and well suited for food. The acidity is well balanced by the fruit and texture. It will match a wide range of summer style foods. (\$16.99)

(92) Chateau de Chaintres “Les Sables” Saumur Champigny 2018 (France)

100% cabernet franc, indigenous yeast fermentation. A snappy red with notes of red fruits and black pepper. (\$20)

(92) Val Do Sosego Albarino Rias Baixas 2019 (Spain)

Floral aromas of honeysuckle combine nicely with peach flavors on the palate to drive this elegant and vibrant wine. This is a rich wine that has a powerful, mineral-laced finish. (\$16.99)

(92) Rock View Pinot Noir Reserve Monterey 2016 (CA)

With bright raspberry and cranberry notes all over the palate and nose, this medium-bodied pinot noir is plush and has a lively texture. Nice herbal notes add complexities and depth to the fruit-forward focus. (\$17.99)

(92) Rock View Chardonnay Reserve Mendocino 2018 (CA)

A rich, full chardonnay with a creamy texture that weaves its way through the nose and palate. Ripe apple and pear notes are fresh with hints of apricot jam and honey hiding in the secondary notes. Complex wine, great finish. (\$24.99)

(92) 69 Miles Chardonnay Yolo County 2018 (CA)

Shaved coconut, pineapple and melon notes on the nose and palate give way bright lemon peel, and pear flavors. Some vanilla and caramel apple give the wine weight and complexities on the finish. Not one to miss. (\$19.99)

Four Stars

(91) Borrasca Prosecco DOCG NV (Italy)

Lovely notes of white flower and ripe peaches on the nose meld nicely with a savory mineral taste and mouthfeel. Bright and tight green apple flavors drive the wine home, creating finesse, and a lengthy finish. (\$16.99)

(91) Laudato Pinot Grigio Veneto 2019 (Italy)

With aromas of white spring flower on the nose, this clean, citrus-laced wine is refreshing and interesting. Some round complexities show with slight Bartlett pear and tangerine notes. The tangy acidity holds it all together. (\$17.99)

(91) Dr Heidemanns Riesling QBA 2018 (Germany)

On the palate, a touch of residual sugar fills out this razor-sharp mineral-laced wine. The stars of the show are the ripe nectarine and melon flavors that pop out of the glass. (\$12.99)

(91) Borrasca Rose Cava NV (Spain)

Full of red berries and rose petals, the nose is absolutely intoxicating. On the palate, flavors of fresh raspberry and cranberry are complemented with baked bread, adding another layer of complexity and intrigue. (\$9.99)

(91) Louis Jadot Beaujolais Villages 2018 (France)

Crowd-pleasing Gamay. Bright, juicy red fruits with mild tannins and balanced acidity. Give it a slight chill to enjoy with your grilled summer specialties.

(\$10.99)

(91) Invivo X Sarah Jessica Parker Sauvignon Blanc 2019 (New Zealand)

Blended by fashionista, entrepreneur and wine-lover Sarah Jessica Parker, this Marlborough wine pops on the palate with refreshing flavors of grapefruit, gooseberry, key lime, kiwi and passion fruit. The acid is nicely balanced with the concentrated weight of the wine. (\$21.00)

(91) Latitud 42 Rioja Ecologico 2018 (Spain)

Fresh raspberry and red plum are the focus of this bright, fruity Rioja. Spice, pepper and tobacco notes add a complex side to this wine, and help it punch above its weight class. (\$11.99)

(91) Alexander Valley Vineyard Gewurztraminer 2019 (CA)

Great introduction to the organic world of wine. The styles have varied over the years, but this release is a homerun. Classic spice notes, great minerality and lively acidity make this a standout for the ABC (Anything But Chardonnay) occasions. Apple, pear and citrus notes lead to great drinkability. Fun wine to brown bag with your wine-group friends. (\$19.99)

(91) Valserrano Rioja Blanco 2018 (Spain)

This barrel-fermented white Rioja has a full-yet-zippy palate to balance out the oak complexities. Lots of lemon peel, apple and stone fruit flavors are littered all over the palate and lengthy finish. (\$15.99)

(91) Mumm Cuvee Napa Brut NV (CA)

What a wonderful way to start any weekend from one of the early French/Cali pioneers. Over 50 different vineyard sites provide the best fruit for this cuvee. 45% chardonnay, 45% pinot noir and a unique addition of 10% pinot gris and pinot menuier. Rich notes of citrus, apple, vanilla and yeast dominate. Perfect for weekend brunch menus. (\$29.99)

(90) J. Lohr Flume Crossing Sauvignon Blanc 2019 (CA)

This is a very consistent performer from the Lohr portfolio. Kristen Barnhisel works her magic with the best blocks of grapes and a personalized stainless and oak aging regimen. Classic citrus notes compliment herbal and floral flavors. Great compliment to pork tenderloin from the grille. (\$19.99)

(90) Centerpiece Pinot Noir 2017 (CA)

Juicy tones of strawberry and raspberry define this approachable pinot noir. The texture is smooth, lightly grippy, and brings out the bright fruit notes front and center. (\$7.99)

(90) Casal Garcia Vinho Verde (Portugal)

The perfect patio wine: light, crisp and refreshing, with a pleasing spritz. Low alcohol makes this easy to enjoy all summer. Enjoy as is, or add some seltzer to make a spritzer. (\$7.99)

(90) Joel Gott Pinot Gris 2018 (OR)

Fresh, bright and refreshing best describe this pinot gris. This wine is exactly the expressive profile you would expect from an Oregon pinot gris. (\$16.99)

(90) Governors Bay Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough 2019 (New Zealand)

Fresh peach and honeysuckle add a delicious complexity to the passion fruit and citrus fruit flavors. This wine is clean, pure and extremely precise. (\$12.99)

(90) Firebrand Chardonnay 2019 (CA)

So much going on at such an amazing price. Bold flavors of oak, vanilla and tropical fruit are held together by a citric-freshness that offers incredible balance. (\$9.99)

(90) Il Duca Imperial Peach NV (Italy)

Amazingly versatile and refreshing, this semisweet wine is full of surprise and delight. Flavors of fresh, juicy peach slices with a hint of honey and mint make this wine irresistible. (\$14.99)

(89) Le Hautes Noelles "He-Ho" 2018 (France)

A blend of cabernet franc, grolleau noir and gamay. A light, bright red with cherry, strawberry and a hint of rose petal. A juicy slammer built for summer. (\$15)

(89) Cuvaision Sauvignon Blanc 2017 (CA)

One of the most uniquely styled wines we tasted. 100% fermented in concrete-styled eggs (Beton method), and then aged 11 months on the lees. Rich, full-bodied, creamy and unctuous. 100% estate grown, produced and bottled. A very unique wine from a special combination of premium AVA's (Napa, Los Carneros). (\$44.99)

(89) Martin Ray Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 2017 (CA)

A wonderful balance of savor and acidity combine in harmony with this chardonnay. Granny Smith apple notes compliment the subtle butter hints, all packaged together to offer a pleasing mouthfeel and refreshing finish. (\$16.99)

(89) Firesteed Pinot Noir 2018 (OR)

A lighter style pinot for the novice, but be warned that this will set the par pretty high for this price point. Classic Pacific NW interpretation of the classic grape of Burgundy. Stainless fermentation produces beautiful color, and purity of fruit, with subtle hints of spice and minerality. Perfect with pork or seafood. (\$21.99)

(89) Decoy Sauvignon Blanc 2018 (CA)

What was once just a spin-off program for Duckhorn quickly evolved into its own standalone label. A little over a decade later, this sauvignon blanc can easily stand on its own. Sourced from prime vineyard sites, with an emphasis on Dry Creek and Alexander Valley AVA's. Enjoy this with chicken dishes or fresh Gulf seafood. (\$24.99)

(88) Skylark "Pink Belly" Rosé 2018 (CA)

100% grenache, intentionally made to mimic Provence rosé. Ripe citrus, berries, red licorice, pepper and spice on finish. (\$18)

(87) Firesteed Pinot Gris 2018 (OR)

Wonderful Pacific NW interpretation of the classic gris grape. Lighter in style but blessed with a touch of gewürztraminer in the final blend. Brisk acidity, light minerality, and great floral notes. Perfect with grilled salmon. (\$20.99)

Feature image by [Sylvie](#) on [Unsplash](#).

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