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12 Wines for Welcoming Spring

It's time to pull (and pop) the corks on bubbly, rosés, and light whites and reds

March 23, 2015 | 01:30 AM By Roger Morris, Special Contributor

★★★★★ 1 rating



The latest offering from Chandon in the Napa Valley is perfect springtime drinking, alone or in Delices-Chandon sparkling cocktails

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Each year, as March approaches April, the “terroir” that is our brain tells us it’s time to rethink our eating and drinking habits. We won’t need to accumulate any more body fat to help us make it through long, cold nights, nor do we need to fuel our souls with hearty red wines of a certain alcohol. We are given the signal to “lighten up.”

For wine drinkers, that means we crave more zest and less zoom. While we want fruitiness to dance across our palate, we also want some acidity, a touch of bitterness, something undefinable called

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“minerality,” and lots of prickly spiciness to keep us excited. That generally means white wines that are not weighted down by oak or an unctuous body, but are instead, as the French say, “fresh” in their crispness and lightness. It also means drinking more sparkling wines and tart rosés (the veal to red wine's beef). But it doesn't mean we have to give up reds, just that we need to scrape away their tannins and high alcohols.

Are we ready to drink? Here is a case of spring wine, ready for your consideration (prices may vary from location to location).

Chandon “Délice” California Sparkling Wine NV (\$22). A new offering from this famed Napa Valley producer using the traditional Champagne mixture of grapes (chardonnay, pinot noir, pinot meunier), it is just a little sweeter than the winery's Brut but still has a nice crispness. Drink it solo, as a spritzer, or in fruit-flavored cocktails.

Lucien Albrecht Crémant d'Alsace Brut Rosé NV (\$20). A soft and creamy pinot noir-based bubbly, it has palate-pleasing strawberry fruit with good finishing acidity and intense bubbles.

Chêne Bleu Ventoux Rosé 2013 (\$30). A syrah and grenache blend with lots of skin contact for complexity of fruit and nice spicy edges.

Saget La Perrière “La Petite Perrière” Vin de France Rosé 2014 (\$16). A quite tart “food wine,” one that will enhance a variety of pasta salads, among other dishes.

Marco Felluga Russiz Superiore Collio Sauvignon 2013 (\$28). Very lively and somewhat light in body, with rich flavors and texture. Gamey and spicy – enjoyable by itself or with food.

P. J. Valckenberg Pfalz Gewürztraminer 2013 (\$14). Good, spicy aromas and flavors of peach and tangerine, pleasantly plump and a tad sweet – a natural with mildly spicy Asian foods.

Tenutae Lageder “Porer” Alto Adige Pinot Grigio 2013 (\$25). Lively and lean, with good apple flavors and lots of savory dried spiciness. The character of this wine should appeal to gin lovers.

Terras Gauda “Abadía de San Campio” Rias Baixas Albariño 2014 (\$19). Riper flavors than most albariños, with good minerality and citrus notes – quite nice.

Austerity Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 2013 (\$16). A light wine, very floral, with powdery pastel flavors and aromas of cherries and berries – like a fresh spring breeze.

Geyser Peak California Pinot Noir 2012 (\$15). A pleasant if less serious pinot with the pastel fruitiness of various ripe berries and some light bitters at the edges.

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Gilles Louvet Pays d'Oc "Mon Pré Carré" Marselan 2012 (\$16). Made from a grape that is a cross between cabernet sauvignon and grenache, this Marselan has flavors of tangy cranberry and rounded blackberries. Though light in body, it has good tannins, good balance, and finishing savory notes.

Hahn Central Coast GSM 2013 (\$12). A 60/37/03 blend of grenache, syrah and mourvèdre, it offers a vibrant blend of berry aromas and flavors, mainly cherries and blueberries, that are creamy and mellow without being overly fruit-forward. Good closing acidity.

This article was originally published March 20, 2015

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Roger Morris writes about wine, food, and travel for several publications including *Robb Report*, *Wine Enthusiast*, *Intermezzo*, *Sante'*, *Sommelier Journal*, *Beverage Media*, *Drinks*, *Drinks Business (UK)*, *Plaisirs de Vivre (Canada)* and *Sommelier News*. He also contributes to the regional publications *The Hunt*, *Signature Brandywine* and *ccdwell.com*. Morris is also author of the blog, *Been There Tasted That*, and may be contacted at londonbritain@msn.com.

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