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The Best Memorial Day Wines To Kick Off Summer



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Dining & Drinking



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Memorial Day, the first long weekend of warm weather, is the official kick off to summer and drinking al fresco. Whether you are enjoying the weekend at the beach, hanging out by the pool, taking in the Indianapolis 500, or hovering over the smoker, these wines will pair perfectly with your weekend plans, and quench your thirst all summer long.

Antão Vaz

This white grape variety hails from Portugal's warm southern wine region of Alentejo, making it ideal for summer. It offers lively aromas of tropical fruit,

citrus, stone fruit, and minerality, often wrapped in crisp acidity. It produces a well-structured wine. Lovers of Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, and Gruner Veltliner, add this grape to your repertoire.

2018 Esporão Colheita DOC Alentejo, Portugal (\$13): Crafted of 100% Antão Vaz; straw yellow in the glass; aromas of bright citrus, lemon peel, green apple and pear, fresh picked herbs; light and bright on the palate, touch of textural richness with racy acidity. Pair with pasta, pork, or poultry.

2017 Paulo Laureano Vinhas Velhas Private Selection White Wine DOC Alentejo, Portugal (\$20): Crafted of 100% Antão Vaz; vibrant notes of tropical fruit, fresh picked herbs, and lemon curd; minimal aging in French oak adds depth, texture, and elegance. Pair with summer soup, seafood, or a glass.

Grillo

This white grape variety originates in Sicily. Once famed for its use in Marsala, it has come into its own, being produced as a dry, off-dry, and even sparkling wine. It dazzles with aromas of tropical fruit, stone fruit, ripe melon, white and yellow flowers, and honey. It is medium-bodied with crisp acidity, and, depending where it's grown, can include notes of salinity from the Mediterranean Sea. Another great white for lovers of Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Grigio.

2018 Donnafugata Sur Sur DOC Sicilia (\$11): Crafted of 100% Grillo; inviting aroma of spring in a basket, including fresh picked peaches, white plums, and summer wild flowers; light, bright, fruity, and refreshing; easy to enjoy. Pair with a summer soup, egg or chicken salad, or poultry.

2016 Gorgi Tondi Kheirè DOC Sicilia (\$13): Crafted of 100% organic Grillo: aromas reminisce of stone fruit, fresh cut grass, lemon blossom, and brine; light in texture with herbaceous notes and salinity on the palate, elegant and refined. Pair with quiche, poultry, or seafood pasta.

Vermentino

This white grape is Mediterranean in origin, prominent in Sardinia, Corsica, and Southern France, where it is known as Rolle. It is a diverse grape, amenable to

different styles of winemaking. Classic aromas include citrus notes of lime and grapefruit, green apples and pears, floral notes, and almonds. It can also have notes of salinity and minerality, depending on where it is grown. When aged in stainless steel it is crisp and lively, oak aging increases its complexity, elegance, and body. Another great white for lovers of Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Viognier, and Chardonnay.

2017 Field's Family Delu Vineyard Lodi, USA (\$21): Crafted of 100% Vermentino; Notes of fresh picked lemons, lemon verbena, wild herbs, and briny minerality; basically it smells like the sea, keep in mind it's from Lodi; fermented in tank and aged in neutral French oak barrels delivers a heightened texture and elegance, lean acidity follows through to the finish. Pair with summer veggies, seafood, shellfish, cheese, or a glass.

2017 Troon Vermentino Applegate Valley Oregon, USA (\$18): Crafted of 100% Vermentino; savory aromas of salted lemon, apricot, white flowers, sea salt, bitter almond; on the palate its long and lean with a striking elegance, salinity, texturality, and acidity complete the sip. Pair with cheese, seafood, shellfish, or a glass.

Gamay

As a cousin of Pinot Noir, this red grape is light-bodied and offers similar aromas as its cousin—bramble berries, forest floor, red flowers, and dusty earth. It's ease, fruitiness, and affinity to being slightly chilled makes it an ideal summer sipper.

2017 Georges Dubeouf Beaujolais-Villages Selection Beaujolais, France (\$11): Crafted of 100% Gamay; inviting cherry color with purple hues; aromas of red and black berry, spice, and violets delight the nose; harmonious on the palate with integrated tannins that offer a silky mouth-feel, and bright acidity making this a BBQ friendly wine.

2016 Aberrant Cellars LÜK Havlin Vineyard Gamay Noir Willamette Valley, USA (\$30): Crafted of 100% Gamay without any carbonic maceration; rich black fruit, bold spice, smoke, and dusty earth; bigger and more earthy than a typical Gamay with grippy tannins and long acidity, perfect with a steak.

Alicante Bouschet

Originally from France, this grape has found a home in southern Portugal's Alentejo region. It offers jammy fruit forward notes of black and red fruit, spice, smoke, dark chocolate, dried tobacco, and vanilla. Drinkers of Zinfandel, Shiraz, Nebbiolo, and Cabernet Sauvignon take notice, this is your new favorite big red.

2013 Herdade do Mouchão Vinho Tinto Alentejo Portugal (\$60): 90% Alicante Bouschet, 10% Trincadeira; inviting aromas of rich, dark fruit, baking spice, dusty earth, cured meat, eucalyptus, and dried roses; bold yet refined with silky tannins and structure, elegant with long aging potential. Pair with red meat.

2014 Herdade de Sao Miguel Alicante Bouschet Alentejo, Portugal (\$19): 100% Alicante Bouschet; brooding notes of dark fruit, spice, black licorice, smokey leather; rustic on the palate with grippy tannins and great structure, a savory wine to pair with burgers, steaks, and brats.

Cinsault

This black grape variety comes from the hot, dry climate of the south of France. Typically a blending grape in the Rhône Valley, Languedoc, and Provence for rosé, Cinsault is slowly increasing in popularity on its own in parts of California. In Lodi, Cinsault hails from vines planted in 1886 in the Bechthold Vineyard. The wine is a light-medium bodied wine with notes of red berries, violets, and black tea. Like Gamay, it can be enjoyed slightly chilled in the summer time and pairs with a variety of foods.

2017 Turley Wine Cellars Bechthold Vineyard Cinsault Lodi, USA (\$24): 100% Cinsault, sweet black and red fruit, crushed violets, baking spice, fresh and bright with high acidity. Pair with seafood, pork, or poultry.

2017 Michael David Winery Ancient Vines Cinsault Lodi, USA (\$25): 100% Cinsault; inviting notes of tart red fruit, violets, and white pepper; lively and bright, this wine delivers elegance with seamless integration. Pair with anything summer.



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I write about my three passions: wine, food, and travel. I explore the globe through the lens of a wine glass—preferably full—celebrating the communal experience of wine... **Read More**
