

# A new way to choose summer whites

By [Mark Vincent/Daily News correspondent](#)

GHS

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It's summer and most wine lovers are drinking chilled white wine to survive the hot weather. With so many out there, which ones are worth buying?

Here's a new way to decide.

We typically ask whether a wine is dry or sweet, as if knowing that alone will guide us. Now, thanks to several wine authors, there's a better way to categorize and select wines for chilling out this summer.

Both white and red wines can be categorized into logical styles. Once you know which style or styles you like, you'll enjoy other wines within the category.

While each style is unique, any grape variety can span multiple styles, depending on what the winemaker does with it in production.

Here are distinct categories of white wines that appeal to wine lovers:

## Fresh light white

Perfect for summer and very food-friendly, fresh light whites are usually good values that come from neutral grapes. They'll be light in body (think watery, but not too thin) and are truly dry, with aromas and flavors that are mostly subdued. Subtle flavors of citrus, apple and minerals are typical, but will be dimmed if served too cold.

They are crisp and fresh, meaning the wine has high acidity, not a bad thing provided all other elements are in balance. Thanks to their acidity, they complement fish and seafood superbly. Fresh light whites are for quaffing; they're great aperitifs.

Wines that fall into this category are unoaked Chablis, Orvieto, pinot blanc, pinot grigio, Pouilly Fume, Sancerre, Soave, sauvignon blancs that aren't too intense, Trebbiano d'Abruzzo, and viura from Spain.

I recommend pinot blanc from Trimbach (\$14) or Kuentz-Bas (\$17), pinot grigio from Santa Margherita (\$18-22), and Soave Classico from either Pieropan (\$17) or Inama (\$15).

## **Smooth medi-white**

With more body, usually from a tad more alcohol, these smooth whites are almost never too acidic, too sweet or too oaky. That makes them an ideal starting point for new wine drinkers and puts them among the most popular wines.

These medium-body wines include many inexpensive, oaked chardonnays. The better ones can be almost creamy and smooth, without being too rich. There's also a sub-category (subtle earthy white) offering subtle earthy, mineral flavors. They reflect the terroir they are grown in and provide contemplative drinking to connoisseurs and the wine adventurous. Very food-friendly, they complement risotto, chicken Caesar salad, grilled swordfish and quiche.

Oaked white Bordeaux; Chilean, Macon, and unoaked Australian chardonnay; Fiano, Oregon pinot gris, inexpensive Viognier, often fall within this category.

Among my favorites are King Estate pinot gris (\$14), Domaine Talmard Macon chardonnay (\$14), and Pine Ridge chenin blanc-Viognier (\$14).

## **Aroma-white**

Among my favorite wines are aroma-whites, easily recognized by their wonderful and very distinct aromas. Bursting with flavor and extroverted personality, these superb food wines match challenging foods, such as salads, curries and spicy Asian cuisine. Other pairings are potato salad, soft cheeses, baked ham and smoked fish. Due to their robust flavors, they're also great choices without food.

Included in this category are albarinho, arneis, fiano, Gewurztraminer, gruner veltliner, muscat, Riesling, Torrontes, vermentino and Viognier.

I recommend Laurenz V Singing gruner veltliner (\$12-\$13) and Domaine Weinbach Gewurztraminer (\$49).

## **Rich full white**

At the top extreme, rich full whites include some of the most prestigious (think top dollar) wines from Burgundy and California. These full-bodied whites are known for power and intensity, making the best of them wines for special occasions, not regular drinking. New World versions will be rich, buttery and smooth with flavors of peaches, vanilla, tropical fruit, apricot and cream.

The top grand and premier cru Chablis and pricey white burgundy and California chardonnays fall within this category. While dominated by chardonnay, other grapes create rich full whites: viognier (in better versions), wines based on Marsanne and even a handful of oaked sauvignon blancs. They pair perfectly with creamy sauces and rich foods, such as chowder, lobster or monk fish.

My more affordable recommendations are chardonnay from Jordan (\$30) and Casa Lapostolle (\$14) and Viognier from Calera (\$28), Ascheri (\$17) or Alamos (\$15).

Most folks, including bars and restaurants, serve whites too cold, dulling their aromas and flavors. Chill them, but not too much, or let them warm up a bit; the subtle flavors will come through to delight you and your guests.

Enjoy.

*Mark P. Vincent is a Framingham resident who has a passion for wine. His column runs in Food & Dining on the third Wednesday of the month. Contact him at [winewisdom@yahoo.com](mailto:winewisdom@yahoo.com) or visit his blog at [winewisdom.blogspot.com](http://winewisdom.blogspot.com).*

### **Try these summer whites**

Where to find some of the recommended varieties

#### **Fresh light white**

Trimbach pinot blanc: Fifth Ave, Julio's, Vin Bin, Wine Cellar of Silene

Kuentz-Bas pinot blanc: Panzano

Santa Margherita Soave Classico: Fifth Ave, Julio's

Pieropan Soave Classico: Panzano, Wine Cellar of Silene, Fifth Ave

Inama Soave: Panzano

#### **Smooth medi-white**

King Estates pinot gris: Fifth Ave, Vin Bin

Domain Talmard Macon chardonnay: Fifth Ave, Vin Bin

Pine Ridge chenin blanc-Viognier: Vin Bin

#### **Aroma-white**

Laurenz V Singing Gruner Veltliner: Fifth Ave, Vin Bin

Domaine Weinbach Gewurztraminer: Fifth Ave, Highpoint Wines, Julio's

#### **Rich full white**

Alamos Viognier: Julio's, Vin Bin

Ascheri Viognier: Panzano

Casa Lapostolle chardonnay: Julio's

Calera Viognier: Fifth Ave

## Jordan chardonnay: Highpoint Wines

### **Store key:**

Fifth Ave (Framingham/Millis)

Highpoint Wines (Westborough)

Julio's (Westborough)

Panzano (Southborough)

Vin Bin (Marlborough)

Wine Cellar of Silene (Waltham)

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