

Wine, etc.: Try these 10 last-gasp-of-summer wines

Tom Marquardt and Patrick Darr have been writing a weekly, syndicated wine column since 1985. See their blog at moreaboutwine.com. They can be reached at marq1948@gmail.com. (Capital Gazette)

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We know, it's still hot out there. The kids are back in school, the leaves haven't even fallen and the deck is still beckoning us to get outdoors. Don't give up those summer wines yet. There are lots more to enjoy.

We are excited to find new, crisp and simple wines that take the edge off those humid happy hours. These wines have good acidity and austere flavors that perfectly complement grilled chicken and vegetables or seafood with citrus sauces and marinades.

Even some of the lighter-body red wines do well in the heat, especially when they are chilled to 60 degrees.

Hold on to your zinfandels and cabernet sauvignons. Here are 10 unique last-gasp-of-summer whites:

Chehalem Three Vineyard Pinot Gris 2016 (\$20). From Oregon's Willamette Valley, this tasty and pure pinot gris has luscious pear and peach flavors. Slightly sweet on the finish.

E. Guigal Cotes du Rhone Blanc 2016 (\$15). Pear and kiwi highlight this blend of many white grapes from the Rhone Valley. Good mineral notes and bright acidity make it a great foil for summer heat.

Pieropan Soave Classico 2016 (\$20). Simple yet elegant with apple and pear notes, a dash of peach and sharp acidity. It would marry well with lightly seasoned fish.

Left Coast "The Orchard" Pinot Gris 2017 (\$18). Floral, apple aromas give way to pear and melon flavors with a dash of mineral. Perfect drink with grilled chicken.

Feudi di San Gregorio Rubrato Aglianico 2015 (\$20). Aglianico is the grape grown in the Campania region of southern Italy. Vastly underestimated, it makes a rich and concentrated wine with red berry flavors. Ruby in color, hence the name "rubrato."

Feudi di San Gregorio Falanghina 2017 (\$23). We loved this unique wine made entirely from falanghina grapes grown in Campania, Italy. It delivers robust floral aromas, intense and bright stone fruit flavors, crisp acidity and hints of mineral and spice. Great alternative to your normal white plonk.

Oremus Tokaj Mandolus Dry Furmint 2016 (\$25). We love furmint from Hungary. Every time we try one we are amazed by its intensity and richness. This one from Oremus doesn't disappoint. Soft and naturally sweet, it reveals stone-fruit flavors.

Domaine Lefage Cuvee Centenaire Cotes du Roussillon 2015 (\$13). This is a steal. The blend is 80 percent old-vine grenache blanc and grenache gris, plus young-vine 20 percent roussanne. Like most white wines in the Roussillon, this is steely brisk with mineral notes to augment the citrus flavors. Consider this a must buy for those of you who like their white wines austere and crisp.

J Vineyards & Winery California Pinot Gris 2017 (\$20). To keep this wine fresh, the producer eschews the common malolactic fermentation that disguises a lot of the bright fruit flavors. The result is a clean, pure pinot gris with apple and pineapple notes supported by a nice mineral backdrop.

Les Dauphins Cotes du Rhone Reserve White 2016 (\$10-12). This mostly grenache blanc southern Rhone blend is an enjoyable summer thirst quencher. Elements of peach and lemon dominate in a very refreshing white wine.

Summer rosés

Rosés can be enjoyed year-round, but it's in the warmer temperatures that their crisp and fruity personality excel. Provence is the epicenter of the rosé movement. Here are several that explain why they are the best:

Chateau de Berne Inspiration 2016 (\$22). This wine's bright acidity makes it the perfect foil to hot weather. You can ice it down without losing the fresh cherry and strawberry flavors. Distinctive square bottle.

Urban Provence 2016 (\$22). Simple fruit flavors with surprising complexity and balanced acidity. Beautifully etched bottle.

Domaine Tempier Bandol 2016 (\$40). We visited this estate earlier this year and enjoyed all of the wines. Alas, they are on tight allocation in the U.S and are more commonly found in restaurants than stores. However, Domaine Tempier and its neighbor Domaine Ott are the model for Bandol rosé makers. They are impeccably made with balanced acidity, exquisite flavors and long finishes. The salmon-tinted Tempier rosé leans on mourvedre with help from grenache, cinsault, carignan. Peach and strawberry flavors.

Domaine de Cala Coteaux Varois en Provence 2017 (\$16). This spritely rosé exudes charm from start to finish. Beautiful salmon color, serene red berry fruit, balanced acidity and nice finish. The blend is grenache, cinsault, syrah and rolle grape varieties.

Chevalier de Lafoux Côtes de Provence Sainte Anne 2017 (\$14). Peach and red fruit flavors with a dash of clove.

Maison Saint Aix Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence 2017 (\$16). Grenache, syrah and cinsault make up the blend in this generous, flavorful rosé. Strawberry and cherry flavors.

Mathilde Chapoutier Grand Ferrage 2017 (\$25). From the well-respected Chapoutier house, this prestige rosé is a step up from your average rosé. It is a blend of grenache, syrah, cinsault and rolle grapes. Flavors include peach, orange and cherries.

Wine picks

Gaja Sito Moresco Langhe 2015 (\$50). From one of the most respected winemakers in Piedmont, this is largely a blend of nebbiolo and barbera with a dash of merlot and cabernet sauvignon. Very round in the mouth with sweet dark fruit and herbal notes. Very approachable, it is the latest in Gaja's super blends.

Freelance Wines Coup de Grace Red Blend 2015 (\$30). From the Lodi region, this wine is a blend of old vine zinfandel, petite sirah, petit verdot and cabernet franc. Forward, soft mouthfeel with oodles of ripe black berry and plum flavors.

Department 66 “Others” Red Wine 2015 (\$25). David Phinney, the genius behind The Prisoner, has done it again. After falling in love with the sheer beauty of Maury in the Roussillon region (France’s Department 66), he bought a lot of old vine grenache, syrah, mourvedre and carignan to launch Department 66. These wines are big with silky tannins and complexity. We liked this red blend for its lavender and spicy nose and blueberry, plum, cocoa flavors. The **Department 66 D66 2014** (\$38) is also a stunner. Nice spice notes to complement the blueberry flavors and earthy character.

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