

Try a splash of whites and pinks by pool

It's beyond me why people drink the hard stuff in the summer. It's fun. But drinks high in alcohol leave a sensation of heat in the back of your mouth and in your chest. On the other hand, wine that is grown in a cool climate delivers low alcohol (under 12.5 percent) and the high acidity that creates a cleaner, lighter taste.



On Wine

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 Special for The Republic

A great poolside white ... or pink ... served chilled, will leave a wonderfully refreshing feeling.

Poolside whites should also be wines that will taste good in a plastic cup. While plastic is important for safety around the pool, it doesn't do much to enhance your sipping experience.

I looked among California, German and South African wines, for wines simple enough not to be destroyed by this inorganic vessel but powerful enough to compete with fruit punch and soda pop.

2010 Mulderbosch Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch, South Africa (\$14-\$16) — I love the wines of South Africa in general and Mulderbosch in particular; its Sauvignon Blanc is a stand-out favorite. This Chenin Blanc is shiny silver and straw yellow. The aroma has a mild hint of grass with warmer exotic and tropical notes. The taste is round and lively. It has a lot of depth with some oak, baking spice and earth. 88 points.

2010 Buehler Vineyards White Zinfandel, Napa Valley, Calif. (\$8-\$11) — White Zinfandel has long been a pariah in any wine lovers circle. The mere mention elicits chuckles. But, there always has been one standout. It's the hand-crafted beauty from Buehler. The wine is rich and pretty. The flavors are balanced and refreshing. It's a darn good rosé on any measure! 89 points.



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KEY TO THE RATINGS

- 100:** A perfect wine.
- 95-99:** Excellent.
- 90-94:** Extremely good.
- 85-89:** Very good. A solid, well-made wine and a good value.
- 80-84:** Good. Fine for everyday entertaining and large parties.
- 75-79:** A soundly made wine for everyday drinking.

2009 Chateau d'Aqueria Rosé, Tavel, Rhone Valley, France (\$16-\$19) — This is a very solid and consistent example of Southern Rhone rosé. It's made from a variety of grapes, mostly old-vine Grenache. The color is a beautiful salmon pink, and the character is crisp and a little spicy with some nice floral and a touch of pure rose fruit. 86 points.

Sparkling wines and Champagnes are always crisp and refreshing in the heat. These two notables will cover you with one for everyday and one for special occasions.

Vietti Moscato d'Asti, Piedmont, Italy (\$12-\$14) 375ml — The best moscato made. Period. This wine screams summer with 5.5 percent alcohol and superior wine making. It has a light, refreshing and crisp character with pleasant spritz and some natural sweetness. Quaff on. 94 points.

NV Taittinger, Brut, Champagne, France (\$34-\$44) — This is a great choice because it is all Chardonnay and has less fizz or bubbles, making it creamy and light. 90 points.

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