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What to Pair with Easter Dinner



By [Carson Demmond](#) Posted March 23, 2016

Wines for ham, lamb, and all things green.

Easter weekend has always seemed like the kickoff point for reintroducing spring ingredients to the dinner table. For wine, that translates to a similar mood shift, although I'll admit I usually start craving brighter, more fruit-forward bottles even earlier and have a tendency to stock my fridge with Muscadets before most people have even hung up their winter coats.

That doesn't mean that full-bodied reds have to be set aside; it simply means to look for ones that have an inherent sense of freshness. Lamb, after all, is the preeminent Easter main, and what could be better with that than a savory, Rhône-inspired wine? There's really only one rule: purity and aromatics win

out over power and oakiness. Here are a few wines that will really let the flavors of your early spring dinner shine through:

For Ham

2014 Julien Sunier Fleurie (\$28)

There is little else so perfectly suited to spring flavors than the exuberantly fruity profile of Gamay, and Sunier's Fleurie is a great example. Grown on a steep, granite-laden slope surrounded by forest, it has an intense, mouthwatering mineral concentration and the fresh fruit tang of wild strawberries.

2014 Arnot-Roberts North Coast Trousseau (\$36)

Don't be fooled by its paleness in the glass, this Trousseau is packed with flavor. The grapes hail from the Luchsinger Vineyard in the Clear Lake AVA, adding to the wine's red fruit core a cool herbal lift of acidity that has become the hallmark of the duo's wines. (It also makes them incredibly food-friendly.)

2013 Resonance Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton District Pinot Noir (\$60)

The first release from the new Jadot venture in Oregon's Willamette Valley, this Pinot pairs the iron-like underpinnings of top-notch Pommard with the ruby sheen of New World fruit. It's all roses and herbs on first whiff, gaining in complexity and spiciness as it takes on air.

For Lamb

2011 Clos Cristal 'Hospices de Saumur' Saumur-Champigny (\$28)

While the Cabernet Franc wines of Chinon in France's Loire tend towards more serious structure and savoriness, those from nearby Saumur-Champigny have always felt somehow *lighter*. This one, from organically grown vines planted on sandstone, is like a silky homage to mixed berries, with a fresh eucalyptus-like finish rather than the green pepper notes frequently associated with the grape.

2014 Domaine Gramenon ‘Poignée de Raisins’ Côtes-du-Rhône (\$24)

Poignée de Raisins translates to “fistful of grapes,” and that’s exactly what this wine tastes like. It’s Grenache in its purest, most unadulterated form: bright, brambly, and eminently gulpable.

2014 Clonakilla Hilltops Shiraz (\$26)

From one of the cooler winegrowing regions in New South Wales, this Shiraz is worlds apart from the jammy renditions of the Barossa Valley. Although it exudes the darker fruit (think blackberry) associated with the variety, it does so in a way that feels lithe and lifted, with an herby-gamey savory quality ready for any roast.

For Peas, Asparagus, and Other Spring Greens

2014 Domaine Mittnacht Frères ‘Cuvée Gyotaku’ Vin d’Alsace (\$24)

A blend of biodynamically farmed Pinot Blanc and Riesling, with small amounts of Muscat, Pinot Gris, and Gewurztraminer, this wine is like a patchwork of aromatic elements – from Asian pear to chamomile to white peach – with a bracing acidity that makes it an easy match for virtually any produce.

2014 Vietti Roero Arneis (\$20)

Arneis, arguably Piedmont’s most notable white grape, produces bright, fragrant wines reminiscent of white flowers and green almonds. This one, from famed Barolo producer Vietti, comes off of 25-year-old vines in the Santo Stefano area.

2014 Château Gravelle-Lacoste Graves Blanc (\$18)

This Bordeaux Blanc is the perfect transition into warmer weather whites. While Sauvignon Blanc lends citrus character, aroma, and acidity, Sémillon comprises the majority portion of the blend, giving it more concentration and texture than many other whites in its category.