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Tarbell on wine: Summer wine selections

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by [Mark Tarbell](#) - May 21, 2012 01:11 PM

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The heat is on. We've passed the triple-digit mark and there's no turning back now.

As you brainstorm ways to keep cool in the next few months, be sure to include some wine experimentation. You can hunker down in the air conditioning with any of these wines and almost forget what lurks outside.

2010 Selbach "Incline" Riesling, Germany (\$10-\$12): You know I love Rieslings. This one has all the qualities of a perfect QBA Riesling: it's low in alcohol, high in ripe apple tartness, and has just a faint impression of sweetness. It's a vibrant, refreshing wine from a great producer. Try it with some sweet seared scallops on a hot summer's night. 87 points.

2009 Dutton Goldfield "Dutton Ranch" Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County, California (\$30-\$33): This wine is a terrific New World choice. The color, tinged with yellow and lime, has great clarity and viscosity. The aroma is complex with some classic California tropical fruit, some smoke and toast and a touch of minerality. The taste is rich with fruit, oak and toast. This is a very well made and balanced California Chardonnay. The fruit acid gives it life and structure. 91 points.

2007 Silver Oak Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, California (\$65): A perennial favorite, the only tough thing about Silver Oak Alexander is the price. It's a smooth-drinking, top-shelf wine that will also age beautifully. It has a deep ruby color with dark red tones in the center, and the aroma is seductive -- juicy red fruit with layers of cedar and cinnamon. The flavor is soft and ripe and has hints of earth with a strong, woody finish. 90 points.

2008 Verget Macon-Charnay "Le Clos Saint-Pierre," Burgundy, France (\$22): This is a stunning example of what a lesser-known Macon vineyard can do with Chardonnay. It's round, rich, and warm with enough beautiful tartness to make it shine with food pairings. You will love it with lobster! 90 points.

2008 Miner Wild Yeast Chardonnay, Napa Valley, California (\$47): This is the best of New World and Old World Chardonnay. It's rich, toasty and buttery with a good base of tartness and structure to make it a giant balanced treat. Try this with scallops and roast chicken. It has some of the famed power of a Napa Chard but with a depth and elegance more often found in top Burgundies. 92 points.

2009 Michel Magnien Pinot Noir, Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire, France (\$14-\$16): Like a race car, this is a Pinot with power, structure and zip! It's forward drinking, not too tight, and has soft red currant and black cherry fruit around it. And I love that it's named Grand Ordinaire, because that's exactly what it is -- a great ordinary wine. 89 points.

2011 Vietti Moscato d'Asti, Piemonte, Italy (\$14): I cannot say enough good about this particular 5.5 percent alcohol giant. Vietti takes Moscato d'Asti to a new level of greatness. This lovely golden wine has light, soft effervescence. The aromas are of apple and clover honey with a touch of fresh aromatic cooking herbs. The flavor has all

the sweetness of aroma with a nice structure of citrus underneath to keep it clean. It's good with sweet food, spicy food, salty food and chocolate. 91 points.

Reach Tarbell, owner of Tarbell's in Phoenix, at wine@tarbells.com.

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Key to the ratings

- 100: A perfect wine.
- 95-99: Excellent. Worth looking for.
- 90-94: Extremely good. A standout in its class.
- 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.



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