

5 Red Wines You Can Drink All Summer Long

June 06, 2009 by [Danielle Robinson](#)

Several Wine Suggestions and Food Pairings for the Summer Months

Most people decide to give up red wine once it gets hot out and switch to just beer or white wine. There's no need to do that! There are many excellent reds that can be consumed even when it is 90 degrees out! It is recommended to chill down these wines slightly (10 minutes in an ice bath or 30 mins-1 hour in a refrigerator) before serving with your favorite BBQ, grilled meats, pasta salads and hot dogs!

1. **100% Grenache (preferably un-oaked)** from the Languedoc of France or Spain. Grenache, when the vines are young and the wine fermented in stainless steel, are fruity, fresh, dry and very appropriate for the hot weather! Check shelf-talkers or ask your local shop for suggestions. Brands to look for: **Le Drunk Rooster**, Las Rocas, Higuera, Cuvee de Pena.

2. Zweigelt or Blauer Zweigelt. Yes, hard to pronounce (zw-eye-gelt or blauw-er zw-eye-gelt) is a great Austrian red wine. Most bottles run around \$15. Imagine your favorite Pinot Noir, but a little lighter and a touch earthier. Chill it for an hour in the fridge before serving with your favorite grilled meats and you won't be disappointed. Brands to look for: Berger (a one-liter version) or Sattler.

3. French red blends. There are so many to choose from, but look for a Cotes du Rhone, Vin de Pays de Vaucluse, the Cotes de Ventoux and the Languedoc regions. They have so much to offer. 2007 was an excellent vintage for the Rhone valley and the grapes ripened nicely, bringing well balanced fruit and integrated tannins. Look for one based on Syrah or Grenache, which covers the majority of production.

4. New Zealand Pinot Noir. The southern hemisphere is truly gaining in popularity, not only for its quality but for its incredible values. Some come from New Zealand, and the Pinot Noirs that the Kiwis produce are wonderful. Unfortunately, at an average price of over \$15 a bottle, many would not be considered great values, but the quality is there. As most Pinots are grown in cool climates within New Zealand, the ripening and resulting color in most cases is slightly lighter than what you would expect from a California Pinot Noir. But, don't let this get to you, as these wines have tons of flavor! These wines also tend to be better than average values on a well constructed wine list. Brands to look for: Mud House, Spy Valley, Spinyback, Muddy Water, Alpha Domus.

5. California Merlot. This may be a controversial #5, but it needs mentioning since Merlot has fallen so much in popularity since the release of the movie Sideways. So many people say, "I love all wine but Merlot"; "Give me anything but Merlot". Honestly, a young, fruity Merlot is perfect for summertime sipping. Keep it under \$12 and keep an open mind, have it with some burgers and potato chips and you won't be disappointed. Many more expensive Merlots will be too full bodied for the weather!

Some other summer red wine options to possibly try: Beaujolais from France, Barbera D'Asti from Italy, Montepulciano from Italy, Washington State Syrah. It is worth trying any of the red wines mentioned above at your next cookout!

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