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Wine for warm weather



with Nick Shill

WELL here we are, May nearly gone, June just round the corner and have we any sign of some warmer weather?

I can't answer that, but I was really hoping to be talking about barbecue wines this week!

I am going to try this week to help you find some real summer wines.

What are we actually looking for in these so called summer styles? Well, lightness and freshness in the whites is for sure the main drive.

The thing is to find whites that respond well to chilling. Iced whites that turn the glass frosty can certainly look good at a party but can often be a disappointment when it comes to taste. The reason is often wines we think will be good are in fact not flavoursome enough to stand the chilling. So what is the answer?

Look for big flavours. Sauvignon Blanc could be the right place to start, closely followed by unoaked Chardonnay. Southern

Hemisphere wines are generally best because they are normally fuller and more interesting.

So here you are standing in the aisle of a supermarket looking for a good white to choose for your summer party. Look in the New Zealand, Australian or South African sections for unoaked Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

If you want to try something a little different go for the cool climate Rieslings like Australia's Clare Valley or even New Zealand Marlborough Valley where you will be rewarded with clean zingy citrus and crisp acidity.

Whites from northern France and in particular the Loire Valley tend to be more delicate and don't like

being over chilled, so you end up with no flavour.

I have made some sweeping generalisations here.

I am not saying that French wines aren't any good for chilling. Southern France has lots of whites made in hotter conditions. Have a look at any Pays d'Oc Chardonnay and even better white Rhone. **Luberon** would be a great choice served cold in the garden.

Don't forget sparkling wines. Go for cheaper styles such as Cremant de

Bourgogne, Cava, Prosecco and stick them into a big bucket of ice.

There is nothing better than a glass of bubbles after a long day earning a crust. It puts the whole world into a better place.

Reds for summer can sometimes be a little more challenging. I tend to look at fruity styles for my own consumption without too much alcohol.

High alcohol wines tend to give off their spirit more obviously when they are warm (over 70 degrees) and this is quite off-putting.

Lighter wines like Beaujolais, Pinot Noirs from France and Italy and Sangiovese from Puglia can be fantastic.

The star of the show for summer to me is rosé.

Production of rosé now is much more diverse and winemakers understand that there is a market for dry fruity wines that are going to be drunk with friends for fun. That is the key - fun!

This is another wine for the ice bucket - served in frosted glasses I seriously can't imagine anything more stylish.

Look at Spanish Rosado made from Monastrell and Tempranillo with bright vivid pink colour. Or subtle salmon pink Provence Rosé made from Mourvedre and

Grenache.

Australian producers are catching on too. Pinot Noir from the Yarra Valley is soft and delicate.

I can go on about this forever - the main thing is that we enjoy our hard-earned leisure time with something nice and it is good to experiment a bit.

Here's to some better weather - hopefully we won't have to get on an aeroplane!



SURELY NOTHING BETTER:
Enjoy a glass of bubbly after a hard day at work