


# BOTTOM LINE PERSONAL

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## Best Summer Wines

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### (EASY TO DRINK, CHEAP TO BUY)

Summer is the time for what I call porch wines. These lighter wines—red, white and rosé—can be served cool, or even colder, and offer relief from the heat. They're the kind of wine that you can enjoy on the porch (or anywhere!) after work, on a lazy weekend day or with lighter summer food such as salads and grilled chicken and fish. What to look for...

### LOWER ALCOHOL

Typically, red wines—especially red wines from California and Australia—are 14% or 15% or more alcohol. Many dry white wines—especially those from France and Italy—are less than 13% alcohol. Lower alcohol content on a hot day is the difference between a refreshing swallow and feeling worn out from the wine after just a glass

and a half.

**Red: Pedroncelli Friends (\$10).**\* Yes, it's an odd name, but this blend of four grapes (40% Merlot and 20% each Zinfandel, Syrah and Petite Sirah) delivers more than \$10 worth of value. It's a dry wine with red berry jamminess and soft tannins and just 13.9% alcohol, a small but significant reduction in alcohol content and a revelation by California standards.

**White: La Fiera Pinot Grigio (\$10).** Many Italian Pinot Grigios taste like tonic water with a splash of alcohol, but the La Fiera has more going on than the usual grocery store plonk and for about the same price. Look for pear fruit, a little bit of minerality and surprising freshness. And the alcohol? Only 12.05%.

### CRISP AND FRESH

Some white wines, such as heavily oaked Chardonnay, can be as heavy as some red wines. A porch wine such as New Zealand's Matua Sauvignon Blanc (\$10) or an unoaked Chardonnay such as the French Cave de Lugny Mâcon-Villages (\$10) is more summery, with lighter fruit flavors such as pineapple, grapefruit, lime and green apple. Other choices...





**White: Domaine du Tariquet Classic (\$10).** This French wine, from the less known Gascony region, is made with grapes that most of us have never heard of—Ugni Blanc and Colombard. The Tariquet always is crisp and full of citrus flavors and has a very appealing white grapiness and even some tropical fruit.

**Sparkling: Segura Viudas Brut Cava (\$8).** This sparkling wine from Spain may be the best bubbly value in the world. It's dry (brut in sparkling wine terms means dry), with white fruit and lime flavors. The bubbles are small and tight and last as long as the bottle does.

### REDS AND ROSÉS WITH WHITE WINE QUALITIES

Most red wines aren't crisp or refreshing because they're not supposed to be. They have tannins and oak aging, which contribute to their heft, and are why they traditionally pair with heavier, cold-weather food. Porch reds and rosés are made with softer, less harsh grapes and have less dark fruit flavor. These include Spanish and French wines made with Grenache, a grape that likes hot weather.

**Red: René Barbier Mediterranean Red (\$6).** How this Spanish red blend, made with Merlot and Tempranillo, can be this well-made at this price is a mystery. Look for rich cherry fruit, tannins that are noticeable but don't make your jaw clench and a surprising balance. Chill this for 20 minutes in the refrigerator, and you've just defined what makes a porch wine work.