

Secretly Group Wine Pairings 2020



Cults “Host” – Sparkling Vouvray

The cork and cage: a simple machine that imprisons frenzied CO₂ inside a bottle of sparkling wine. But the limits of control are easily exploited. Just a twist here and a pull there and we have liberated a glorious raw energy. Sparkling Vouvray from the Loire Valley is made exclusively from Chenin Blanc and is a buoyant, exuberant alternative to Champagne, Cava, or Prosecco. Like the still versions, bubbly Vouvray ranges in sweetness from dry (Brut) to sweet (Sec). The character can vary widely depending on the producer, but most will exhibit spiced pear, quince preserves, and green apple. Reverb-saturated candied ginger and honey show up in some versions, others favor a square-wave mineral-driven style. Pulling a cork of Vouvray is a magic-trick: watch smiles emerge on every face.

Selections:

Catherine & Pierre Breton “Elle est pas bulle la vie?” Pétillant Sec
Domaine Vigneau-Chevreau Brut Methode Traditionnelle (NV)
Chateau Moncontour Brut Methode Traditionnelle (NV)

Cutworms “Nobody Lives Here Anymore” – Madeira

Seeking to be lost at sea. The setting sun has cooked the wine in barrels low-and-slow, like Carolina BBQ. What was perfectly drinkable wine is turning into Madeira, beautifully articulated violence. Intended heresy. The path from grape to Madeira is marked by transformative abuses: fortification (like Port), controlled heating, and purposeful oxidization of the wine. The flavors and aromas become freshly baked oatmeal raisin cookies, roasted walnuts, flamed orange peel, fresh tobacco, figs, and burnt sugar. Madeira styles play out like the seasons or time of day. They are conveniently named for the grapes used, driest to sweetest: Sercial (sunrise, spring), Verdelho (afternoon, summer), Bual (evening, autumn), and Malmsey (gloaming, winter). Blends of these are widely available, just find a reputable producer and avoid options found in the cooking-wine section. Dry styles are for dancing in the kitchen and served chilled, while sweeter versions are best kept for firesides, blankets, and beach thinking at sunset.

Selections:

D'Oliveira 5 Year Medium Dry NV
Rare Wine Co. Historic Series Boston Bual NV
Broadbent Rainwater NV

Kevin Morby “Sundowner” – Viognier

On an indistinct evening, ectoplasm of smoke and floating dust is illuminated in well-defined rays of orange light cutting through the window shade. Practiced love letters lay crumpled, sprinkled across the floor; the wording is almost perfect. Almost. The Viognier just poured expands from the glass to fill the room, redolent with aromas of honeysuckle and peach. Like love, Viognier is better savored than discussed – it can be hard to frame with language. It is also hard to grow and to vinify, and is a grape that speaks distinctly of its terroir. The best location, beyond argument, is the northern Rhone Valley, specifically Condrieu, but find quality offerings from Australia, Central Coast California, and Oregon. The truest versions are rich and oily, sumptuously exuding tropical fruits, apple, canned tangerine, potpourri, and streaks of white pepper. Viognier mysteriously blends the languid with the vibrant, slowing time for rumination.

Selections:

Yalumba Samuel's Garden Viognier (Eden Valley, South Australia)
Cristom Estate Viognier (Eola-Amity Hills, OR)
Chateau de Saint Cosme Condrieu (Rhone Valley, France)

Photo Ops “Pure at Heart” – Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG

What is the secret intensity in a droplet waiting to fall? How can you capture and share the mounting space before a hesitant crescendo? Elusive-ness in wine is rarely regarded as noble – we tend not to listen to quiet truths. Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG is a wine from Sicily (Cheer-a-swolo, not to be confused with deep-hued rosatos of mainland Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo). It appears as a blend of Nero d'Avola and Frappato. The Frappato leads aromatically with fresh-cut violets, rose petals, and Marasca cherry; Nero carries the low-end, lending blackberry compote, plum, pomegranate, dried herbs, and sometimes olive tapenade. These wines do not rush to impress with a barrage of tannin or extraction; conversely, they wait for you to meet up at a halfway point, and are so much the richer for celebrating the purity of restraint, delay, control.

Selections:

Valle dell'Acate Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico DOCG
Donnafugata Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG “Floramundi”
Occhipinti Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG “Grotte Alte”

Junglepussy “Jp4” – Tannat

Dancing along the spectrum between impenetrable diamond and ephemeral warmth of sunlight is a shifting particle that exists in its own dimension, defying dichotomy. This particle is Tannat. Less a wine grape and more a cosmic enigma, like a dying star whose core is so compact it can't be contained and eventually explodes. Wines from Tannat require a spoon. When hailing from its ancestral Southwest France (the Madiran), the juice is unyielding and eloquent. From its transplanted home in Uruguay, Tannat is the wily ingredient in the dessert course of Wonka's Magic Chewing Gum. Robed in weighty opaque purple velvet, aromas and flavors of stewed plum, cola, cherry liqueur, espresso, and wood smoke abound. Tannat sets people on edge because it is, like all true genius, unbridled and rebellious. Share often, but wisely.

Selections:

Bodega El Porvenir Amauta Absoluto Tannat (Salta, Argentina)
Bodega Aranjuez Tannat (Tarija, Bolivia)
Chateau Peyros Vieilles Vignes (Madiran, France)

