

### Super Wine Picks for Super Bowl Sunday



The game of champions is upon us this weekend, and since I do not have a proverbial dog (or Colt or Panther) in the upcoming football fight, I have been trying to find a theme to rally around. And then I heard a story on CBS news.

It appears that the location of this year's Super Bowl festivities in California is having a profound effect on the beverage of choice at Santa Clara's Levi's Stadium. The stadium will serve 16 wines in the general concession area at the big game, and 100 different California wines in the suites. That is a lot of wine! Good thing that the stadium is less than 90 minutes away from several of the most popular wine growing regions in the world.

Even though beer has long been the king of sports outings and football tailgates, evidently more consumers are turning to fancier game-time spreads and, therefore, wine appears to be gaining in popularity, both in the stadium and in the house. And, for the first time in the National Football League's history, the NFL is licensing a Super Bowl wine. Even the NFL knows a good thing when they see (drink?) it.

So, if you're hosting a Super Bowl party this weekend, and you want a couple of wines that will fit right in, try a few of these selections. You won't even need to choose sides – unless, of course, you want to.

If you're rooting for the Carolina Panthers, then the **2014 Panther Creek Pinot Gris** from the Willamette Valley in Oregon is worth cheering for. This aromatic white wine is clean, crisp and elegant, with aromas of honeysuckle and white Gardenia on the nose. The initial flavors of bright apple soon evolve into green melon, Meyer lemon and custard. Light and zippy on the palate, it has a nice balance between acid and fruit that develops a long finish. This Pinot Gris is the perfect foil for chicken wings. **\$20**

If the Broncos are your team, then you'll want to saddle up with the **2014 Wild Horse Winery & Vineyards Pinot Noir** from the Central Coast of California. This perfumed wine has aromas of ripe cherry, pomegranate, and a hint of rosemary. In the mouth, it displays lush flavors of strawberry pie that unfold into a rich, velvety finish featuring cranberry and cherry and a touch of nutmeg. This would be delicious with salmon, roast beef, or crab-stuffed mushrooms. **\$20**

And for those of you who are neutral, but want a fun wine to pair with traditional Super Bowl Sunday fare, try the **2009 The Federalist Dueling Pistols from Dry Creek Valley in Sonoma, California** – which represents a duel between two powerful varietals; zinfandel and syrah. Aromas of dark cherry and violets fill the nose. In the mouth, zinfandel contributes juicy red cherry/berry notes while the syrah provides structure and hearty flavors of blackberry and mocha. The peppery, powerful finish would be a perfect partner with spicy chili and barbecued ribs. **\$35**

Remember that NFL wine license? Well, if you are a serious collector of wine and/or sports memorabilia, you'll want to get your hands on a bottle of **2013 Freemark Abbey Winery Fiftieth Reserve** from the Spring Mountain Napa Valley. The limited, one-of-a-kind, small production wine features the NFL's gold 50th anniversary logo and the Vince Lombardi Trophy. It is a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Petit Verdot grapes, crafted by my friend, winemaker Ted Edwards, specifically for Super Bowl 50. The wine is dark, yet approachable, with a depth of rich, black fruit. It is available for a limited time online at [www.Fiftiethreserve.com/SuperBowl](http://www.Fiftiethreserve.com/SuperBowl). **\$100**