

Red, White and Boom: Fourth of July Wines Part One



Celebrating the birth of our nation in our nation's capital is about as patriotic of an experience as it gets. Between the National Symphony Orchestra playing on the lawn of the Capitol and the fireworks on the Mall, it's enough to make one want to give the Washington Monument a big hug.

It's also traditionally hot, hot, hot, so moving the cooking duties from the kitchen to the grill keeps the house cool and the patriotic mood high.

Here are a couple of red and white wines that offer a range of flavors that will provide plenty of star spangled pairing power for a variety of grilled and barbeque fare to put a little sparkle in your Fourth of July. Next week, I'll cover a few wines that will create a BOOM in your glass.

One of my favorite wines to break out on America's birthday is the one grape America calls its own; zinfandel. The **2012 St. Francis Zinfandel Old Vines** from Sonoma Valley, California has amazing balance and finesse. The fragrant nose of red cherry, pepper and licorice is a tantalizing precursor to the full, ripe flavors of black cherry, red plum and boysenberry fruit on the full-bodied frame. Charismatic hints of licorice, thyme and dried sage slide in on the lengthy finish and would work wonders with dry-rub barbeque ribs.

\$16

Another big red wine that will stand up to spicy grilled meats is the **2013 Paringa Shiraz** from the famous Hickenbotham family in Australia. The wine receives virtually no oak treatment during production, so its intense aromas of blackberry and black currants are shines brightly on the nose. Flavors of blackberries and dried fruit mingle with subtle spices, black pepper and cloves. The medium-bodied finish features notes of chocolate covered espresso beans. Perfect with steaks or burgers. **\$12**

Lest we forget that seafood has a prominent place on the grill, white wines definitely have a place at the Fourth of July table. The **2013 Matanzas Creek Sauvignon Blanc** from Sonoma strikes the perfect balance between thirst quencher and grilled-food moving buddy. Aromas of grapefruit, pineapple and melon are buoyed by steely citrus on the nose. On the palate, tropical fruits - think guava, papaya and pineapple - dominate the front of the palate but are kept light and bright, thanks to the refreshing acidity. Perfect with grilled shellfish or snapper. **\$13**

And for the ultimate thirst-quencher, a wine I have sung the praises of in the past is the **Non-vintage Casa Bianchi New Age White Wine** from Argentina. Pour the well-chilled wine over ice and then add a squeeze of lime for an incredibly refreshing aperitif. A blend of 90 percent Torrontes and 10 percent Sauvignon Blanc, the citrusy-based wine provides a wonderful backbone for flavors of peach and nectarine to shine through. The slight fizz gives a revitalizing boost to the palate. **\$8**