

I've had the pleasure of living in South Carolina for ten years. Prior to that I was a New Englander, living in the Boston area. To be a successful New Englander, one was obliged to obey certain sacred laws: be a loyal fan of the local sports teams, always wear a white dinner jacket after Memorial Day, and never drink red wine in the summer months. Can you imagine the shock to my system when I actually saw someone consuming red wine in August at a local restaurant in Beaufort? How could I possibly survive here?

This is really a tough assignment, but as the saying goes, "Someone has to do it." I got into lazy habits with white wine for summer, always ordering the "same old, same old" without putting much thought into it. Then along comes the idea of a chilled red wine. I thought, "why not give it a try?" I went to a web site that I trust and there before me was a mountain of work to do. First I was directed to select an area that develops red wines on the "lighter side." These would be wines that are light in texture without sacrificing flavor. A light wine can be found anywhere on earth, however we do not have to travel that far just to satisfy a thirst for a chilled red wine. We live in a location where shopping it's quite easy to find a wine that will satisfy. Let's take a look.

I would first look for a Pinot Noir that is grown in a cool climate such as Oregon, Long Island or New York State. Serve the Pinot as an aperitif or with the meal. If your bottle of Pinot is at room temperature, chill it in the refrigerator for two hours or in the freezer for 15 minutes. What have you just done? You have created an ideal option for lighter summer drinking. TIP, and I encourage you to try this: Say you're going out to dinner at a restaurant that you know fairly well. Call the restaurant a few hours before your reservation time and ask to have your selection of wine chilled. If everything goes as planned, Your Duck Confit dinner will be just fine.

We can duplicate the above process by using wines made from grapes such as Sangiovese, Nebbiolo, Tempranillo or Lambrusco. There are other grapes that are good candidates for chilling, however the grapes mentioned above are the most popular and readily available. One example would be Sangiovese. This is the grape that gives us all of our Chiantis. There are literally hundreds of Chiantis, produced on the lighter side, that could be considered for chilling. (Just stay away from Chianti Classico. You want this at room temperature.) Make sure that the Chianti is a recent vintage. Place in the refrigerator for no more than two hours and Voila! You have a terrific wine that can be served as an aperitif or with dinner.

Let's look at one more example, a wine that's familiar to all – Marques de Caceres, a Rioja Crianza. I like to imagine that the winemaker crafted this wine with chilling in mind, and that the wine would be served with a meal or just a Tapas. If you have never tried a chilled wine until now, I recommend that you start with Marques. You will experience a wine that has bright red color, intense bouquet of plum and cherry and tastes of tea and spice. The finish is medium with flavors of chocolate and oak. This wine will definitely enhance your backyard barbecue. Your neighbors will wonder what you are up to.

WINESPEAK

I hope that chilling your reds is a twist that you will try. I was reluctant at first, however I soon discovered that chilling can actually be beneficial, especially to the simpler and less expensive red wines. (I must credit a wine writer named Sarah Jane Evans with teaching me this concept.) This is how I sorted it all out. I confined my thinking to the lighter wines that I mentioned above and I set aside the heavy reds that I serve in the colder months. I stayed in the \$18-\$24 range . . . sometimes less. On the day of the party I chilled the wines no more than two hours in the fridge and followed up by making an ice bucket available. It is that simple. If someone wants to fill their glass with ice and then pour wine over the ice, so be it. There are no more Victorian rules.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.