

AGED WINE

- Wine is made up of about 85% water, 12% alcohol and 3% other compounds such as acids, phenols, minerals, esters and glycerol
- As wine ages, oxygen works on the wine, tannins precipitate and drop out, and flavor/aroma compounds evolve, changing the total profile of the wine
- Tannin, acid, sugar and alcohol play together in a wine to contribute to its overall structure and improve its longevity
- Provenance is essential to a wine's evolution: where and how was the wine stored?
- Ideal cellar conditions: dark, cool (around 55°F), humid, sturdy, clean
- Tools for aged wine service: cradle, corkscrew or Ah-So, funnel and strainer, decanter
- Pairing suggestions: more subtle and delicate foods, earth-driven flavors

1) Schloss Schönborn Rudesheimer Berg Schlossberg Riesling Spätlese '97 – Rheingau, Germany

- Riesling is one of the most age-worthy grapes in the world due to its high acidity; as it ages it develops richer, more honeyed and “petrol” notes
- Rheingau region is based on slopes along Rhine River; sunshine reflects back from water and warms vines, making for fuller style of wines
- Schönborn family has owned some of these vineyards in the Rheingau since 1300s
- 1997 in Germany was a very ripe year with little botrytis; wines are softer, fruitier

2) Kalin Cellars Semillon '97 – Livermore Valley, California

- Semillon is one of the grapes of white Bordeaux (both dry and sweet styles); also popular in Australia, though relatively rare in California
- Semillon is medium bodied with high acidity, often noted for herbal notes, a “waxy” mouthfeel and a great ability to age
- Kalin's Semillon vines in the Livermore Valley (50 miles inland from San Francisco) were planted in 1880s from cuttings from Château d'Yquem in Sauternes
- Kalin's winemaking style is for aging: They release when they feel the wines are ready (usually 5-10 years after vintage), not in order by vintage on a set schedule



3) López de Heredia Viña Tondonia Reserva '96 – Rioja, Spain

- White Rioja made from local grapes Viura with Garnacha Blanca, Malvasia Riojano, Maturana Blanca along with international varieties Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc
- Viura grape is medium bodied with good acidity, often noted for nutty notes
- The tradition in Rioja is for aging wines extensively before release (both red and whites): whites require at least six months in cask and a total of two to four years
- López de Heredia is one of the most traditional producers in the region, regularly aging their wines beyond the requirements
- 1996 a good vintage tempered by rains before harvest; it followed two excellent vintages, but López de Heredia thinks this was best balanced, elegant of the three

4) Terrabianca Piano del Cipresso '88 – Tuscany, Italy

- Terrabianca is in Tuscany, where Sangiovese grape rules: this is 100% Sangiovese
- Sangiovese known for wines with tart red fruit notes, high tannins and high acidity, making it very age-worthy
- This comes from sites both in Chianti (hills) and Maremma (coastal); soil is a combination of sand, clay and chalk
- 1988 was the first year wine was made at Terrabianca; it was one of the best vintages of the decade in Tuscany, with ripe, concentrated grapes yet good balancing acidity

5) Temple Bruer Meritage '96 – Langhorne Creek, Australia

- “Meritage” is a blend of Bordeaux varieties, mostly Cab Sauvignon, Merlot, Cab Franc
- Langhorne Creek is in warm South Australia, tempered by Southern Ocean and Lake Alexandrina; soil is alluvial silt and sand over clay and limestone
- Temple Bruer is run by David Bruer, a former chemist now devoted to making wine without chemicals; winery is organic and low-intervention
- 1996 was a legendary vintage in South Australia, with huge quantity and very high quality, structured and concentrated fruit

6) Château la Nerthe '98 – Châteauneuf-du-Pape, France

- Châteauneuf-du-Pape can be made from a blend of 13 grapes: mostly Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre
- Château la Nerthe has been in the area since 1560; purchased by the Ricard family and has been making wine since 1985
- Soil is a base of sand and clay covered by region’s famous *galets*, which retain and radiate heat from sunlight onto the vines
- 1998 was one of the region’s most lauded vintages, setting off a string of “greats”; it’s known for big, bold, concentrated wines

