

SHADES OF CHARDONNAY

FROM LIGHT AND
LIVELY TO REFINED
AND LUSCIOUS,
THERE'S A WINE
THAT'S JUST RIGHT
FOR YOUR TASTE.

BY RICHARD SWEARINGER
PHOTOGRAPH BY GREG SCHEIDEMANN

The wall of chardonnays at the grocery store can be a bit puzzling: Dozens of choices; nothing to go on but labels. Luckily, selecting an appealing bottle is simple when you take into account your favorite flavors. Taste buds are different in everyone—some people like their wines a little sweeter or fruitier and some people like theirs drier or more lemony.

Winemaking 101: Chardonnay is one of the most versatile grapes. Wines made from it can range from light, clean, elegant, and citrusy to rich and full with a touch of sweetness. The good news is that there are great choices for every preference. Turn the page for some top picks. There's also a short

MATCH GAME

Which wine is for you? Answer these questions, created with the help of wine expert Tim Hanni of www.winequest.com, to match your taste preferences to the flavors found in wine.

1. I prefer my iced tea

- a. the sweeter the better b. plain is perfect

2. On a salad, I'd rather have

- a. creamy ranch dressing b. a great vinaigrette

3. Coffee is better

- a. with cream and sugar b. black

4. Diet sodas are

- a. just not my favorite b. taste just fine

5. When it comes to salt on my food

- a. love it, pass the shaker b. less is definitely more

YOUR ANSWERS

Mostly A: Look to the fruity wines on our Richer and Fuller list.

Mostly B: The drier Lean and Lively chards will be your faves.

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quiz (*left*) you can take that will help you narrow down the kind of wine you'll enjoy.

Wines from our Lean and Lively list are best with spicy foods, salsas, and grilled fish, as well as meals that feature flavors like the pestos and vinaigrette in our "Garden to Table Basil" on page 210.

Wines on the Richer and Fuller list, with their aromas of tropical fruit and butterscotch, are great partners when serving roast chickens and buttery corn on the cob, or grilled seafood, such as salmon steaks and halibut. Both kinds of wine are wonderful with mild cheeses, especially goat cheeses, as well as fruit salads. ♫

RECOMMENDED WINES

LEAN AND LIVELY

- Barton & Guestier 2002 Chardonnay, \$6

The wine to stock up on for summer. Light with crisp apple-pear flavors. www.aboutwines.com

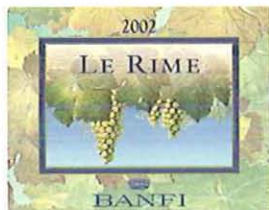


▪ **Hardys Stamp of Australia 2003 Chardonnay, \$7**

Inexpensive and cheerful, this wine has a refreshing lemony bite. www.pacwine.com.

▪ **Banfi Le Rime 2002, \$9**

Flowery, slightly sweet, and light, this Italian import is a wonderful alternative to white zinfandel. www.castellobanfi.com.



▪ **Georges Duboeuf 2002 Saint-Véran Chardonnay, \$12**

An icy crispness with a faint scent of honey proves ideal for serving with the Basil-Walnut Cream Cheese recipe on *page 248*. www.winesellersltd.com.

▪ **Seifried Unoaked 2003 Chardonnay, \$15**

A newcomer to America, this New Zealander offers a lively, refreshing combination of grapefruit-passion fruit flavors. www.robertwhaleselections.com.

▪ **Olivier Leflaive 2002 "Les Sétilles" Bourgogne Blanc, \$15**

The subtle flavors of citrus, pear, and a hint of nuts make this medium-bodied French import a wine to pair with an elegant dinner. www.frederickwildman.com.



RICHER AND FULLER

▪ **Viño Los Vascos 2003 Chardonnay, \$10**

The flavors of tropical fruit, such as mango and banana, plus just a touch of sweetness make this Chilean import a great afternoon companion. www.pasternakwine.com.



▪ **Mirassou Central Coast 2002 Chardonnay, \$11**

A lavishly fruity wine that combines the tang of a great red apple with just a hint of toasty oak flavor. www.mirassou.com.



▪ **Eshcol Ranch 2001 Chardonnay, \$12**

All the great things that make people love chardonnay: a little sweetness, buttery, oaky, and pineapple flavors. www.eshcolranch.com

▪ **Rodney Strong 2002 Chalk Hill Estate Chardonnay, \$13**

Dinner plan: Fresh-caught fish, a heap of grilled vegetables, and a bottle of this exquisitely balanced blend of oak, pineapple, and vanilla flavors. www.rodneystrong.com.

▪ **Chateau Souverain 2002 Sonoma County Chardonnay, \$14**

Paired with the Cold Roasted Salmon from *page 245*, this California wine shows why this style of slightly sweet, buttery, toasty wine is so popular. www.chateausouverain.com.



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www.bhg.com/chardonnay