

What to Drink at Summer's End

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I cover the world's best hotels, restaurants and wine.



DUBLIN, IRELAND - JULY 10: Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex raise a toast as they attend a Summer Party at the British Ambassador's residence at Glencairn House during their visit to Ireland on July 10, 2018 in Dublin, Ireland. (Photo by Pool/Samir Hussein/WireImage)

Summer, I'm told, will end and the heat will lift, but I'm hedging my bets by drinking a lot of lighter bodied wines and spirits and trying out some well-priced bottlings I've never had before.

LES DAUPHINS CÔTES DU RHONE RÉSERVE BLANC 2016 (\$9)—Very, very few wines

under ten dollars have the charm of this blend of 65% Grenache, 15% Marsanne, 10% Clairette and 10% Viognier from the Southern Rhône, matured two to six months, resulting in a very fresh, lively wine with good aromatics, particularly from the Viognier, and a touch of sweetness. I enjoyed it with pre-dinner nibbles and straight through with a main course of grilled red snapper.





ALPHA ESTATE AXIA RED 2014 (\$20)—Although Greek whites are among the best wines for summer, the country's reds tend to have a lighter body than those of western Europe, and this 50-50 blend of Xinomavro and Syrah spends seven months on the lees to gain structure, but twelve months in oak softens the tannins of the Xinomavro, while the Syrah brings rich fruit to the mix. Very good with lamb, as you'd expect from a Greek wine.





Alpha Estate Axia 2014 shows how far Greek winemaking has come in the past decade/Alpha Estate

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INAMA VIN SOAVE CLASSICO 2017 (\$15)—After Bolla had enormous success with Soave in the late 1960s, a tsunami of inferior Soave hit the global market and, with few exceptions, were not worth drinking. Inama, whose family owners date to the 1960s in Soave production, make this fine example without using any oak aging, so it's as fresh, fruity and sprightly as the varietal can be. At 12% alcohol it's easy to drink, perfect with sushi.

ÉMILE BEYER PINOT GRIS TRADITION 2016 (\$18)—As one of Alsace's premier estates, dating back to the 16th century in Eguisheim, Émile Beyer has 42 acres of vineyards, one-third classified as Grand Cru. This is a Pinot Gris with good body, a pleasing 13.5% alcohol, and a decided sweetness of style with none of the acrid notes of so many Italian Pinot Grigios. It's made to chill well and be served with melon and ham or with cheeses and fruit.

SCAIA ROSATO 2017 (\$13)—A pale-colored Italian rosé with summery qualities of peaches and pears and a good acidity for balance. Made by the Castagnedi family of Veneto from Rondinella grapes at 12.5% alcohol, it is what a simple rosé should be at a reasonable price, with more aromatics than so many other bland examples.

ARGYLE RESERVE PINOT NOIR 2015 (\$30)—Argyle was one of the first Oregon wineries I ever visited, where I discovered that the terroir out there was very promising for growing Pinot Noir. Now, decades later, Argyle is one of the Willamette Valley's finest producers, and this Reserve Pinot Noir, with 14.1% alcohol, blending grapes from three vineyards, shows the care that goes into achieving such a balance of intensity without being musclebound. And I approve of the screw cap!



Papa's Pilar Rum evokes the name of Ernest Hemingway's Havana boat the Pilar.Hemingway Rum Company

PAPA'S PILAR PLATINUM BLONDE RUM (\$30)—I suppose the Hemingway Rum Company out of Key West, where Papa Hemingway moored his boat *The Pilar*, got permission to use the late author's name for this line, which has a dark as well as a blonde version. Hemingway's own rum of choice was Bacardi white or, in Cuba, Havana Club. In any case, what I liked about this pale rum, at 92 proof, aged in Sherry casks, is that it has a fine balance between white rum and dark, making it ideal for a Daiquiri, my drink of choice year round.

John Mariani is an author and journalist of 40 years standing, and an author of 15 books. He has been called by the Philadelphia Inquirer, "the most influential food-wine critic in the popular press" and is a three-time nominee for the James Beard Journalism Award. For 35 ye...

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