

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING NEW



Babylonstoren Sparkling Chenin Blanc

Varieties: 100% Chenin Blanc

Region: Paarl, Western Cape, South Africa

Fun Fact

Chenin Blanc is South Africa's most planted grape variety, and Babylonstoren has become one of the country's most stylish producers. The estate is also a working farm and garden that dates back to 1692, blending modern design with Cape Dutch heritage. Sparkling Chenin is still a relatively rare style, and Babylonstoren's version is made in the traditional method (like Champagne), offering elegance with a local twist. South Africa's old Chenin vines produce wines with real depth and a unique sense of place.

Tasting Notes

Bright and energetic with notes of green apple, lemon zest, white peach, and hints of brioche. Fine bubbles, crisp acidity, and a dry, mineral finish create a refreshing and refined sparkling wine experience.

Why I picked this wine

If you love Champagne or Cava but want something off the beaten path, this wine is for you. Babylonstoren's Sparkling Chenin Blanc delivers serious finesse with an approachable price point. It's zesty and vibrant, making it perfect as an aperitif or with sushi, tempura, or goat cheese salads. The estate itself is a destination – combining wine, food, gardens, and art – and their wines reflect that creativity. Use this bottle to kick off a brunch, toast a Tuesday night, or convert a friend to South African wine. It proves that Chenin is as versatile as Chardonnay when made with care. Its clean, orchard-fruit profile and creamy mousse are an easy sell for sparkling fans.

Service

Serve very well chilled at 43–46°F. Pop and pour in a big-bowled glass.

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Lyrarakis Crete Vilana Pirovolikes

Varieties: 100% Vilana

Region: Alagni, Crete, Greece

Fun Fact

Vilana is one of Crete's signature white grapes, known for its freshness and citrusy character. Lyrarakis is a pioneer in reviving native Greek varieties and identifying top vineyard sites. The 'Pirovolikes' vineyard is a high-altitude site on the island of Crete, which offers cooling breezes that preserve acidity. Greece is home to over 300 indigenous grapes, and wines like this prove why Greek whites are becoming the somm world's obsession.

Tasting Notes

Pale straw yellow with aromas of lemon blossom, white grapefruit, and crushed seashell. Light-bodied and crisp with a saline edge and refreshing citrus-driven finish.

Why I picked this wine

If you're into crisp whites like Albariño, Muscadet, or Vermentino, Vilana is a discovery worth exploring. It's zippy, dry, and ideal with seafood – think grilled octopus, shrimp skewers, or tzatziki with pita. Lyrarakis is a family-owned winery dedicated to showcasing Greek heritage through clean, terroir-driven wines. This bottle is pure sunshine and sea breeze – perfect for summer gatherings or Greek-themed dinners. Introduce it to your friends by serving it with a mezze platter or lemon-herb chicken. It's an easy intro to Greek whites without diving into the funkier styles like Retsina. Plus, the story of an island vineyard revived with love makes for a great toast.

Service

Serve chilled at 46–50°F. A medium white wine glass works well.

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Legado del Moncayo Campo de Borja Garnacha Blanca

Varieties: 100% Garnacha Blanca

Region: Campo de Borja, Aragón, Spain

Fun Fact

Garnacha Blanca is the white-skinned sibling of the red Garnacha (Grenache) grape and is mainly found in northeastern Spain and parts of France. Campo de Borja is often called the 'Empire of Garnacha' due to its concentration of old-vine Garnacha plants. Legado del Moncayo works with sustainably farmed vineyards at the foot of the Moncayo mountain, which brings cool nighttime temps for acidity retention.

Tasting Notes

Medium-bodied with aromas of pear, peach skin, almond blossom, and wet stone. The palate is round but fresh, with stone fruit, green almond, and a hint of bitter citrus on the finish.

Why I picked this wine

White Garnacha isn't on most people's radar, and that's why this wine is so fun to pour. It has the texture of a white Rhône but with brighter acidity and a Mediterranean soul. Serve it with tapas – manchego, olives, or grilled vegetables – and watch how it sings. It's also delicious with paella or seafood pasta. This is a wine that shows off Spain's diversity and its ability to offer both value and character. Legado del Moncayo makes honest, expressive wines that punch way above their price point. Use this to introduce friends to the lesser-known side of Garnacha and watch their curiosity spark.

Service

Serve at 48–52°F. Best in a glass with a bit of bowl to highlight texture.

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Lucien Reymond Sancerre Rosé

Varieties: 100% Pinot Noir

Region: Sancerre, Loire Valley, France

Fun Fact

While Sancerre is best known for Sauvignon Blanc, it also produces elegant rosés and reds from Pinot Noir. Sancerre Rosé is a lesser-known gem – often showing the finesse of Burgundy with the freshness of the Loire. The region's limestone soils lend bright minerality to both red and white wines. Lucien Reymond focuses on clean, terroir-driven wines that highlight the natural beauty of Sancerre.

Tasting Notes

Pale salmon pink with aromas of strawberry, red currant, and crushed rose petals. The palate is dry and crisp with notes of raspberry, citrus zest, and a flinty, mineral finish.

Why I picked this wine

If you enjoy Provence rosé or cool-climate Pinot Noir, Sancerre Rosé is a perfect bridge. This bottle is fresh, savory, and refined – perfect for spring dishes, summer salads, or fall appetizers. Lucien Reymond captures the stony character of Sancerre with elegance and grace. Serve this with goat cheese, grilled salmon, or Niçoise salad to see it shine. It's a wine that speaks softly but confidently, showing off French restraint. Use it to introduce your rosé-loving friends to a more structured, food-friendly style.

Service

Serve well chilled at 46–50°F. Use a white wine or universal glass.

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Mustiguillo Mestizaje Tinto

Varieties: Bobal (majority), with Garnacha, Syrah, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon

Region: El Terrerazo, Valencia, Spain

Fun Fact

Bobal is a native Spanish grape that was long overlooked but is now celebrated for its deep color, freshness, and aging potential. Mustiguillo was the first estate in Spain to earn Vino de Pago status for a single estate outside of mainstream regions like Rioja or Ribera. The estate farms organically in the high-altitude vineyards of El Terrerazo, creating wines of intensity and lift. Mestizaje means 'blend' or 'fusion' – reflecting both the blend of grapes and cultures in this bottle.

Tasting Notes

Rich aromas of dark berries, violets, and sweet spice. The palate offers ripe black cherry, cocoa, and herbs with silky tannins and vibrant acidity. Smooth yet structured with a long, spicy finish.

Why I picked this wine

This wine is a showstopper for the price – deep, plush, and modern without being over-the-top. If you like Rioja, Rhône blends, or even California red blends, Mestizaje hits the mark. Mustiguillo's Bobal-based wines are a revelation: fresh and lifted despite their power. This is a red that pairs beautifully with burgers, grilled sausages, or even roast chicken with mole sauce. It's bold enough for a crowd but smart enough for a wine geek. Introduce it at a casual dinner party and ask guests to guess the grape – few will get it, but everyone will want more. A great way to explore Spain's native varieties and innovative producers in one glass.

Service

Serve at 60–65°F. Decant for 30 minutes for best expression. Use a Bordeaux-style glass.

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Bosman Family Nature & Sun Grenache Noir

Varieties: 100% Grenache Noir

Region: Wellington, Western Cape, South Africa

Fun Fact

Grenache Noir is thriving in South Africa's Mediterranean-style climate, and the Bosman family is leading the way with a natural, no-added-sulfur approach. The 'Nature & Sun' range focuses on minimal intervention, pure fruit, and sustainability. The Bosman family has been farming in the Western Cape for over 200 years and is Fair Trade certified. This wine is made with spontaneous fermentation and gentle handling to preserve purity and energy.

Tasting Notes

Light ruby color with aromas of red cherry, cranberry, and wild herbs. The palate is juicy and bright with soft tannins, fresh acidity, and a hint of peppery spice. Elegant and easy-drinking with a natural, raw edge.

Why I picked this wine

This Grenache feels like a mix of Beaujolais and Southern Rhône – light but flavorful, fresh but earthy. Perfect for chillable red fans or those who enjoy natural wine styles. Serve it slightly cool with charcuterie, grilled veggies, or spiced chicken. It's a red you can serve all year – summer picnic or fall stew. Use it to start a conversation about sustainability and natural wine without scaring people off. It's an honest wine that overdelivers for its price and origin. Great for both casual sipping and thoughtful food pairings – a true modern classic from South Africa.

Service

Serve slightly chilled at 55–60°F. A universal or Pinot Noir glass is ideal.
