

Barbara is my next door neighbor. I saw her yesterday in her garden celebrating her first tomato of the season. It was indeed a beauty; so red, so big and ready for the salad she was making for lunch. Without hesitation, and with the column in mind, I recommended a chilled Sauvignon Blanc to accompany her noontime fare. That's what I am: a good neighbor always ready with an appropriate wine suggestion, all of which gives me an entrance into the next section of my wine column.

Here we go. Last week I left off with Riesling. Let's continue with Pinot Gris a.k.a. Pinot Grigio or Grauburgunder. Pinot Gris is grown all over the planet, however, in the US, the states of Oregon and Washington lead the way for our domestic supply of grapes. (Pinot Gris and Pinot Grigio are the same grape.) Pinot Gris is on the sweet side and yields a very pleasant spice flavor. Stylistically Pinot Grigio can be made to yield a very distinctive and pleasant citrus flavor. It is well worth a try.

Next up for summer is Albarino, a favorite of mine. Albarino comes to us from the wine region of Rias Baixas, located in Spain just above Portugal. During the 1980-1990's we saw Albarino burst onto the worldwide retail market. Prior to this period, for literally hundreds of years, Albarino was kept inside the Rias Baixas region and consumed by the locals, who didn't realize what a lucrative source of income that they had. Enter modern technology and modern transportation, accompanied by the reputation that the wine is superior in quality and the perfect companion to seafood, and you have quite a recipe for success. Albarino is very wallet friendly (\$17-\$30) even though the grape is difficult to grow and low in yield. Enjoy the flavors of lime, vanilla, peach and honey.

After you grow tired of Albarino You should try Gruner Veltliner. "Gruner" has only been around for 25-30 years. During that time it has achieved a reputation for superior quality and become the top white wine of Austria. It is a dry white wine with flavors of green vegetables. On the nose you will discover a flavor of white pepper. Gesundheit!

I visited the TA CA RON (TA CA RON is unique play on words that stands for Tobacco Cafe and RUM) store a few days ago. TA CA RON is located on Route 170 near the Beaufort Jasper Water Co. Juan Carlos had a special going on three white wines that he wanted to present for

the summer season. The first is called Tricky Rabbit. It is 90% Sauvignon Blanc and 10% Carmenere. Tricky Rabbit Wines are new innovations because they mix varietals that are not normally mixed. From this wine you will experience fresh citrus fruit, pineapple and fresh herbs on the nose, a balanced mouthfeel of tangerine lime and grapefruit, and a finish of citrus and mineral.

Juan's second wine is called Senda Verde from Bierzo, Spain. The wine is produced from Godello grapes grown on vines exceeding 40 plus years, from unique regions in northern Spain that follow the 43N Parallel, stretching from coastal Galicia eastward along the northern coastline. In contrast to the rest of Spain, this area is lush and green from oceanic and geological influences. The region is referred to as "Espana Verde" or Green Spain. The wine is full-bodied with a nose of ripe melon and orange peel. On the palate the flavors are peach and nectarine.

The third wine is a Vina La Playa from the Colchagua Valley in Chile. The wine is a blend of 85% Viognier and 15% Chardonnay. Melon and honeysuckle on the nose with crisp green apple and peach on the tastebuds. This is a wine that pairs well with pork, pasta, fresh salmon, shellfish, spicy food and soft cheese. It appears to be the workhorse of food pairing.

I very much enjoy shopping at TA CA RON. It's the whole experience. Like other retailers Juan tastes the wine before it even hits the store. However, you can also bet that he has travelled to many of the wineries, which means that he has met the winemaker. In meeting with the winemaker he has had a golden opportunity to discuss blending and other options. Visit Juan at the store. His stories will keep you interested.

I almost forgot! Try a sparkler such as a Prosecco or a domestic Sparkling wine. They match very well with just about any summer cuisine.

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In discussing the white wines above, I double-checked to make sure that they were available in the Lowcountry. Happy to say that they are. But there are many other whites. The list is very long. My recommendation is to have some fun shopping at your favorite store; keep asking the retailer "anything new?" I am 100% convinced that he'll have something to show you that you

will enjoy.