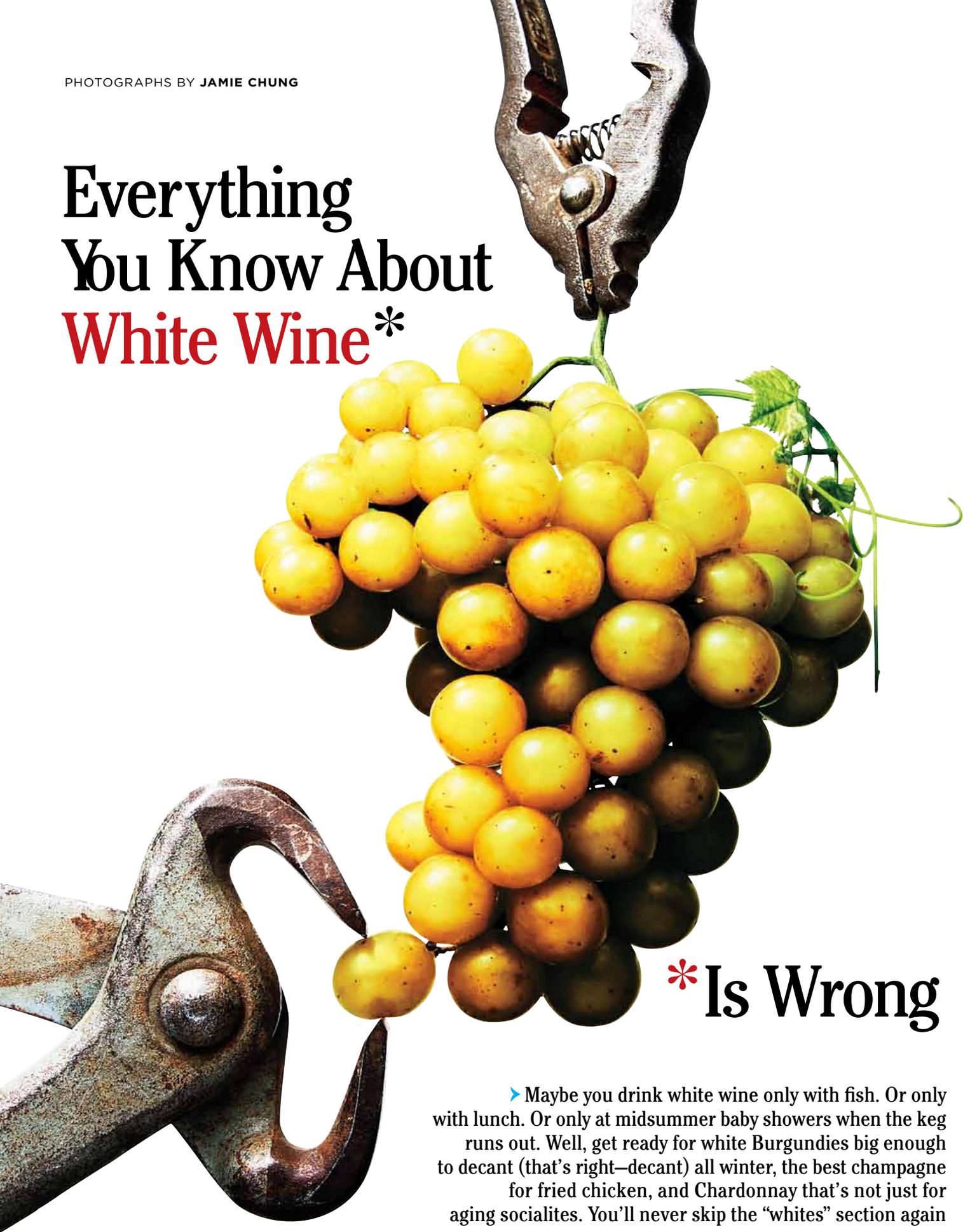


Everything You Know About White Wine*



*Is Wrong

▶ Maybe you drink white wine only with fish. Or only with lunch. Or only at midsummer baby showers when the keg runs out. Well, get ready for white Burgundies big enough to decant (that's right—decant) all winter, the best champagne for fried chicken, and Chardonnay that's not just for aging socialites. You'll never skip the "whites" section again



“The only thing red wine does better than white is stain your clothes.” —ALAN RICHMAN



Dry-aged strip steak? Have some Chardonnay.

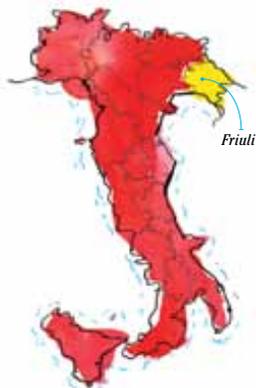
Mario Batali
chef and restaurateur

“Yes, white wines can have a huge, brawny structure. I even like to eat them—I mean drink them—with steak. California Chardonnays are great for this. Look for one that has some oak but also fruit and acid. Kistler is a widely available producer whose wines totally strike that balance.”

SOME WHITES ARE WORTH TRAVELING FOR.



THE BEST WHITE WINES in the world—I’m not backing down from this—come from an area in northeastern Italy bordered by Slovenia and Austria known as Friuli. Tourists haven’t yet savaged this region, so it’s with some reluctance that I urge a trip there, ninety miles due east of Venice, for a full immersion into a viticultural bizarro world of grape varietals



(Malvasia Istriana, Ribolla Gialla, Pignolo, Schioppettino, Refosco) and producers (Venica, Keber, Toros, Princic, Picéch, Moschioni) you’re unlikely to encounter back home.

In this rippling and (at times) high-altitude territory abutting the Alps to the north and the Adriatic to the south, you can happily drink fine red wines all day, but you’d be an idiot for doing so.

The microclimates are instead hot-wired for whites that tremble and whirl in your mouth like a meth-crazed ballerina.

And my God, the aromas. The Sauvignons hit you with a Sambuca waft, while the Tocais give off the nose of bitter almonds and the Malvasias (my favorite) a hypnotic whiff of sea salt and peaches. These wines bring out the best in prosciutto, pastas, and seafood of all types. They’re clean, bracing, electric. They’re practically all I drink. Hell, they’re practically all I think about.

—ROBERT DRAPER



White wine is not just for white tablecloths.

*In fact, it's the perfect partner for all the greasy goodness you usually wash down with beer. We asked **Matthew Mather**, wine director of Frasca and Pizzeria Locale in Boulder, Colorado, to pick out the right whites for all our favorite stoner food.*—ANDREW RICHDALÉ

FRIED CHICKEN

“The last thing you want when you’re licking your fingers is a super-austere wine, so try a higher-dosage champagne that’s not bone-dry. Vilmart & Cie Grand Cellier MV (\$75; Fig. 1) has a sweet—not too sweet—creamy texture that really sticks to that delicious salty crust.”

PIZZA

“Bring some acid to the party with a really bright white wine: Italians such as Verdicchio from Collestefano or Fiano from Antonio Caggiano. Their zippiness goes with any pizza, from a fancy one with mussels to a plain old Margherita. These also have a low alcohol content, which is important if the pizza’s spicy. Hot food makes wine taste way more alcoholic.”

BURGERS

“You can’t shoot an elephant with blow darts; you need a pretty huge wine to stand up to grilled beef. Grüner Veltliner—look for ones put out by Emmerich Knoll (\$39; Fig. 2)—can be savory and smoky and have a glycerin-like quality. It’s powerful stuff.”

YOU SHOULD BE DRINKING WHITE ALL YEAR.

Especially after Labor Day. Lee Campbell, sommelier of Reynards in Brooklyn, breaks down a bottle for every season. —ANDREW RICHDALÉ



FALL You're gearing up for serious eating. Jurançon from Basque Country is nutty, rustic, and perfect for foie gras or game. Stick to ones on the dry side, like Larredya's.



WINTER Pop open a Chablis from Alice et Olivier De Moor. The minerality makes sense in the frosty months. Plus, it's perfect for oysters, which are best this time of year.



SPRING Try a *pétillant naturel*, a sparkler made by an ancient French method that renders bubbles softer than champagne's. It's like a jolt of happiness.



SUMMER A spritzly Italian *frizzante* is ideal for beach drinking. It has just a hint of fizz. Look for Bera Vittorio e Figli's super-light, sort of fruity Arcese.



Fig. 1
Finger-lickin'-good champagne.



Fig. 2
A Grüner Veltliner that packs a punch.

YOU ONLY NEED ONE WHITE-WINE GLASS.

» **Bretton Lammi**, the sommelier in charge of 60,000 bottles at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, on why the Spiegelau *Vino Grande* is his go-to white-wine goblet

“We have some of the busiest bars in the country, so you can bet we did our homework in terms of durability and strength. These things are pretty damn tough. I use red glasses for white Burgundy and bigger wines, but these are perfect for everyday white drinking. I even use them at home for champagne.”



SPIEGELAU
Two-piece
Vino Grande
set, \$25

Your taste in reds will serve you well.

Jon Rimmerman spends his days chasing down the world's most thrilling, hard-to-come-by wines for Garagiste—his must-read daily e-mail blast. We asked him to convert your hard-won red-wine tastes to white

YOUR USUAL	YOUR REASONING	YOUR CLEAR CHOICE
(Red) Bordeaux	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You're at a place in life where you no longer like surprises. What you do like: moderate alcohol, something that goes with grilled and roasted meats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chardonnay from Australia's Yarra Valley and Macedon Ranges. You're getting exceptional quality and far more personality than most domestic Chardonnay.
Napa Cabernet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You love power, massive fruit, and a tannic structure that carries a big stick. Subtle <i>terroir</i> and a sense of place? Not so much. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White Hermitage made from Marsanne and Roussanne. It can be thick and serious and structured—especially with age.
Châteauneuf-du-Pape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You like a big whiplash of high-octane fruit without the density of Cabernet, and you take your aromatics seriously. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc, for all the aforementioned reasons and because it's the most overlooked wine in the world.
Rioja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You enjoy red wine but don't want to be overwhelmed by it. Rough tannins and excessive alcohol irritate you; oak does not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portuguese Vinho Verde. The good ones have just a touch of residual sugar, which balances the stony freshness of Portugal's slightly effervescent “green wine.”
Oregon Pinot Noir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can do without a two-by-four of oak to the head with every sip. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oregon Chardonnay. The depth of expression and balance that the northern latitude provides are uncannily similar in Oregon Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

“Most older winemakers I know drink more white wine than anything else. It's taken them a lifetime of devoted drinking to get there, so don't feel bad if it takes you some time, too.”

—STEVE WILDY, beverage director, the Vetri Family of Restaurants





One of the best whites ever is back from the dead.

Arianna Occhipinti, the It girl of the wine universe, shares the secrets to her groundbreaking vino

“Up until recently, the ancient varietal **Albanello** was abandoned. We replanted it at my vineyard in Sicily for our **SP68 Bianco** wine. It’s fresh and light, like rosemary and thyme. What makes it really special, though, is that it only comes from one place: my home.”

Riesling is the world’s most important grape.*

*According to Paul Grieco, America’s most important sommelier

➔ **AT THE FIRST STROKE OF SUMMER—midnight, June 20—the sommelier Paul Grieco was standing on a chair at Hearth restaurant in Manhattan, clad in brand-new suede lederhosen. He was evangelizing to his loyal followers about, what else, the German varietal that he believes makes the greatest—most underrated, most versatile, surprising, and consistently delicious—food wine on the planet.**

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Grieco began. “*Riesling* consumers and *faaaans* of this great grape.” He held the words *Riesling* and *fans*; his timbre was gospel. “We declare the Summer of Riesling 2012 officially open!” Grieco raised his glass and bowed his head, touching his ZZ Top–lite goatee to his lederhosen’s bib. The crowd cheered.

This is the fifth consecutive summer in which Grieco will shun all other whites by the glass and pour only Riesling at his five Terroir wine bars across the city, all of which he and chef Marco Canora own, along with Hearth. “Convictions are greater enemies of truth than lies,” Grieco said, opening longneck bottles. “That’s Nietzsche. The conviction about Riesling that most people hold is that it’s *only* sweet. We know that is actually *not* the case. Ninety-five percent of Rieslings are dry.”

There are, of course, other grapes in the world, but the way Grieco sermonizes about Riesling you wouldn’t know it. (He sometimes concedes that Chenin Blanc is

second best.) His goal? To decode a misunderstood wine with a complex classification system. He’s making sure we don’t miss out just because we don’t all read German.

Sure, there are sweet versions (Troockenbeerenauslese and Beerenauslese, for example), but even these are balanced by high acidity. Where Riesling gets most surprising to the uninitiated is with its Spätlese and Kabinett varieties. Grieco swirled a 1990 Spätlese from Günther Steinmetz in his glass, sipped it, smacked his lips. “Holy shit,” he said, “where did that sugar go?” The wine tasted of buttery smoke; Grieco remarked that it goes well with barbecue. Next up, a glass of Leitz Spätlese from 2010—rich, mouthwateringly acidic. Grieco smacked his lips even louder. “This is a 2010, ladies and gentlemen.” He paused for emphasis. “I urge you to get as much of the 2010 vintage from Germany as you possibly can. In hundreds of years of winemaking, we have never, ever seen a year this good.” —HOWIE KAHN

DECANTERS AREN'T JUST FOR BIG-ASS REDS.



RIEDEL Merlot decanter, \$40

“If you have a fancy decanter that you reserve for blue-chip reds, get your money’s worth by using it for white wines, too. See how they open and evolve with time and temperature. Because remember: White wine is just wine.” —STEVE WILDY



Don’t chill so hard.

“Not all white wine should be ice-cold. When you taste a wine at thirty-six degrees, you experience cold before anything else. Lean, acidic wines (think Albariño) should be served well chilled. But many whites don’t reach their peak until the forty-degree range, some as late as fifty. With the more complex varietals—Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc—you’ll get much more out of the wine if you leave it on the table. It’s not an exact science. Try it cold. Try a glass in twenty minutes. Find out where you like it the most, then put it back on ice to keep it there.”

—TIFFANY DAWN SOTO, beverage director, Four Seasons Hotel Baltimore

No white after red?

Complete b.s.

Who even came up with this? They do it in Burgundy and Alsace all the time. If they can do it, so can you.

The GQ Champagne Room

IF YOU'RE ABOUT TO DRINK CHAMPAGNE, IT'S PROBABLY FOR THE WRONG REASON.

• **Are you toasting a bride and groom?** A waste. You'll take one sip and let the rest go flat. **Serving it with caviar?** A mistake. Salty fish eggs obliterate the taste. **Drink a blanc de blancs as an aperitif, with nibbles of Parmigiano-Reggiano.** Nothing works better with seafood on ice or chicken off the grill than champagne. **Drink a nonvintage brut with sausage.** Champagne should never be served with every course—all that carbonation goes right up your nose. **However, it does go with almost any course.**—ALAN RICHMAN

"For champagne, give me a tumbler, a Mason jar—anything but a flute. They're cumbersome to drink from, precarious at the table, and just a little bit obnoxious."—HELEN JOHANNESEN, wine director, Animal, Los Angeles

YOU'LL SAVE SERIOUS CASH IF YOU GO WITH A PRIZEWINNER FROM... GQ'S BLIND BUBBLY TASTE-OFF

• **THE GOAL** To select the best nonvintage champagne on earth.

• **THE PROCESS** We asked five champagne fanatics to bring their two favorite bottles for a ten-champagne throwdown. At 11 a.m.

• **THE RULES** No rosé, nothing over \$70 retail, and no vintage champagne—the stuff from epic years that gets stamped with a date and a higher price tag.

• **THE PANEL** Locanda Verde's Laura Wickiewicz, Eva Zorad of September Wines & Spirits, Joe Campanale from Dell'anima,

GQ correspondent Alan Richman, and GQ associate editor Stan Parish.

• **THE CONTENDERS** Mostly grower champagnes, the product of what's been called champagne's indie movement. These are small-batch bottlings by farmers who make wine themselves instead of selling all their grapes to the champagne houses that sponsor polo tournaments. Also: a bottle of Bollinger, a good mass-market bubbly; and a bottle of (much cheaper) Crémant de Bourgogne, made in Burgundy in the same style and with the same grapes as champagne.

1 WINNER Ulysse Collin Blanc de Blancs "Wow," reads Joe Campanale's only tasting note. A clear winner at \$67.

2 Bollinger Pick one up at your nearest discount-liquor warehouse for less than \$50.

3 R.H. Coutier Brut Tradition NV Elegant, assured, and at around \$40 a bottle, a straight-up steal.

VIDEO ↓
 SEE PAGE 70 FOR INSTRUCTIONS



Fig. 3
The most fragrant wine in the world? We say yes.



Fig. 4
A must-drink bottle from—wait for it—Long Island.



White Burgundy—not red—is the wine of rock stars.

Beastie Boy turned wine blogger Mike D on becoming a white guy

“White Burgundies are great at dispelling the myth that only red wines have the potential for incredible complexity and sophistication. Like most people, I had that misperception. But then I had the good fortune of tasting some of the best whites from Burgundy, and I was blown away by the layers of flavors and the nuances. Because really, there’s no cap on how complex, esoteric, or ethereal white wine can be. As you work your way up the food chain, especially with white Burgundies, you get these very complex situations jumping off all within one bottle. It’s really about how much you’re willing to spend. Your man purse is the only limit.”

But you can get your white Burgundy fix on a budget.

Kermit Lynch, the big kahuna of American wine importers, on where to find deals in wine's most rarefied terroir

2010 Reuilly “Les Pierres Plates”—Domaine de Reuilly, \$17

“The soil contains decomposed shellfish, just like the Grand Cru vineyards of Chablis, but the grape, as in Sancerre, is Sauvignon Blanc. It is one of the Loire’s greatest whites at the table.”

2010 Bourgogne Vézelay “La Châtelaine”—Domaine de la Cadette, \$24

“The vineyard is between Chablis and the Côte de Beaune, and this white Burgundy’s style reflects its location. You’ll find it in all the hip ‘natural wine’ bistros of Paris.”

2010 Saint-Véran “Les Pommards”—Domaine Robert-Denogot, \$36

“Here’s an impeccable bottling from a so-called ‘lesser’ appellation: a little-known white Burgundy from the region that produces Pouilly-Fuissé.”



Burgundy



Fig. 5
Pace yourself. This Malvasia goes down fast.



Fig. 6
Radikon makes radical whites that look, well, orange.



SOME OF THE BEST WHITE WINES AREN'T WHITE AT ALL.

Restaurateur and wine obsessive **Joe Carroll** explains why his list at Brooklyn's *St. Anselm* is stocked with orange wines

And our new favorite white is almost a red.

"Orange wine is essentially the opposite of rosé. It's made from white grapes, but the juice is left to ferment with the skins for anywhere from a few days to a few months. The result is a coppery color and rich, earthy tannins that have much more in common with red than white. Tasting a wine like this for the first time is a complete mind-fuck—it messes with any ideas your brain has about wine. The method is ancient, but recently it's made an enormous comeback everywhere from Friuli and Slovenia to Long Island, New York."

FIVE TO TRY

◀ **Fig. 3 Scholium Project The Prince in His Caves**, \$45
"This is 100 percent California Sauvignon Blanc and probably the most aromatic wine on the planet. You can smell it two tables away when it's opened."

◀ **Fig. 4 Channing Daughters Envelope**, \$40
"This producer from Long Island is probably the best in the country when it comes to orange wines, and the Envelope, mostly Chardonnay, is soft and accessible."

▲ **Fig. 5 Donati Camillo Malvasia Secco**, \$21
"A sparkling orange from the Emilia-Romagna

region. The bubbles give it a lightness and freshness that make it downright gulpable."

▲ **Fig. 6 Radikon Jakot**, \$51
"This stuff, made from Tocai Friulano, is savory, tannic, oily, sharply acidic, and super-aromatic—different from any red or white you've ever had."

▶ **Fig. 7 Gravner Anfora**, \$67
"Josko Gravner is the default leader of this movement, and his wines are perhaps the classic example of the style, fermented in clay amphorae buried in the ground, just like in the olden days."

• Quick winemaking lesson: White wine can be made from red grapes, the juice separated from the skins as soon as it's pressed. And that's sort of what white-hot winemaker Maggie Harrison is doing here. Her Erratica, \$50 (Fig. 8), is made from Pinot that's macerated on the skins until just before the wine becomes a full-blown red. The result is a balancing act—you get all the freshness of a white, with the structure of a red wine beginning to emerge. Basically, it's two great wines in one.—STAN PARISH



Fig. 7
The OG of orange wines.



Fig. 8
Red? White? Who cares! It's amazing.