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# 2010 spring wine guide: Fine pours for picnics

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By The Oregonian

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A picnic is our favorite way to break up a day of wine tasting. But what to drink? We chose some tempting takeout foods and asked four local wine pros to pair them with affordable Northwest wines:

### Fried chicken and toasted-pecan spoonbread

Country Cat, 7937 S.E. Stark St.

**2009 Cowhorn Spiral 36 White Table Wine, Applegate Valley (\$22):** This is great picnic food, warm or cold. The chicken (a recipe from chef Adam Sappinton's granny) is a winner with the wine's blend of marsanne, roussanne and viognier. The Spiral 36 has a subtle viscosity, a honey-and-ripe-fruit nose, and a balanced acidity that lingers on the palate. It also has legs to stand up to the rich chicken meat, and it carried my palate through to every finger-licking bite. Great value.



Randy L. Rasmussen, The Oregonian

-- Kimberly Paley

### 2008 Hawks View Cellars Carabella Vineyard

**Chardonnay, Chehalem Mountains (\$20):** It's a challenge to pair a wine with fried chicken because of the richness of the oil and the delicacy of the meat, but a lightly chilled chardonnay with great acidity, like the Hawks View, stands up perfectly. Winemaker Ryan Harms forgoes the typical oak and malolactic treatment, which focuses the ripe core fruit that holds up to the salt and the richness of the breading but won't overwhelm the meat. The tangy acidity will cut right through the oil, leaving you salivating for the next bite.

-- Toni Ketrenos

### 2008 Lange Estate Chardonnay, Willamette Valley (\$16):

There's a happy-go-lucky, Creamsicle quality to Jesse Lange's ebullient chard that makes you want to sip it all evening long. Maturation in neutral stainless steel means this wine isn't oaky; instead, spritzy honeydew and papaya create a juicy counterpoint for salty and fatty fare while a rich, smooth mouth feel contrasts satisfyingly with the crunch of the chicken's crust. Whether you pick up the '08 or the '09 (being released as we go to print), don't be afraid to pair this equal-opportunity wine with everything from a ketchup-slawed hot dog to an elegant almond tart.

-- Katherine Cole

### 2008 St. Innocent Vitae Springs Vineyard Pinot Gris, Willamette Valley (\$20):

Like a sundress discovered at the back of a winter closet, the Vitae Springs pinot gris reminds me that it's almost summer. It's the perfect wine for a picnic of fried chicken enjoyed outdoors (hopefully) in beautiful weather. With added weight and texture from eight months of lees aging, the wine has enough heft to stand alongside deep-fried chicken. But most important, the wine has the zippy acidity to cut through the richness of the food. In addition to aromas of orchard blossoms, white peaches and ripe apples on the nose, there's stony minerality and hints of baking spice that add to the

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complexity of each palate-cleansing sip.

-- Mimi Martin

**Cheese and charcuterie**  
Foster & Dobbs, 2518 N.E. 15th Ave.

**2009 Abacela, Albariño, Umpqua Valley (\$20):** Cured meat is a vice to me -- and really hard to resist! It has all the components: sweet, spicy and smoky that begs for a refreshing, bracing white wine, and this albariño is just the thing. Its unique minerality enhances the salty meat, and the wine is rich enough in body and texture yet light enough that you can enjoy several glasses. The acidity breaks down the fat in the charcuterie and carries the palate with a zesty citrus finish. The young, grassy mouth feel transports the palate to a richer, peachy body where the wine and meat meet.

-- Kimberly Paley

**2009 Barnard Griffin Sangiovese Rosé (\$12):** It's hard to go wrong with a dry but fruit-filled rosé for sipping outdoors. I'm especially fond of this Washington rosé's mouth-watering strawberry fruit, tangy citrus and herb notes. Sangiovese has an affinity for salami and pâté, a quality that it doesn't lose when made as a rosé. The concentration of fruit will stand up to the salt and richness of cured meats, and then the acidity will wipe your palate clean.

--Toni Ketrenos

**2008 Angel Vine Les Collines Vineyard Zinfandel, Walla Walla Valley (\$22):** If you like to top your meat with a sweet chutney, try a ripe, fruity zin the next time charcuterie is on the table. Angel Vine, a new Carlton-based winery that sources fruit from Washington, bottles five different zinfandels (one goes by the Italian title "primitivo") and is exploring this grape to a degree previously unseen in the Northwest. Despite succulent aromas and flavors of ripe blackberry, plum and black currant, the Les Collines bottling is balanced and medium-bodied, making it a versatile accompaniment for food.

-- Katherine Cole

**2007 Grochau Cellars Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley (\$21):** A picnic requires a lighter wine, bright with acidity and layered with summer fruit flavors. Grochau's pinot noir, with notes of strawberry, red cherry and brambly berry fruit, fits the occasion perfectly. Pack your basket with an assortment of meats -- serrano, coppa, soppressata, bresaola -- and enjoy how the wine changes with partnership. The charcuterie's spicy, sweet, and/or smoky character will be well supported by the pinot's red fruit flavors, and the meat will also help to enhance the savory layers of charred wood and fresh compost that linger in the background of the wine.

-- Mimi Martin

**Cold sesame noodles**  
New Seasons, various locations

**2008 Matello Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley (\$19):** Call me crazy, but I enjoyed this accessible wine from Marcus Goodfellow with this dish. The wild cherry flavor profile and grip of tannin embraced the nutty-tasting sauce. The herbaceous savory finish, bright acidity and red currant bite was a delightful surprise for the spicy noodles. The wine initially filled my palate with complex wild berry tastes and lingered with a cool finish to enhance the oiliness of the sauce. An unusual discovery that made me throw out any rule book!

-- Kimberly Paley

**2009 Charles Smith Kung Fu Girl Riesling (\$12):** This riesling from Washington's Columbia Valley has the balance of a kung fu master. There's a slight trace of sweetness that will hold up to the ginger, garlic and chiles, but not enough to weigh it down. The zingy acidity cuts through the richness of the oil and sesame seeds, then the wine finishes with a lingering note of minerality that's hard to find in Northwest riesling.

-- Toni Ketrenos

**Momokawa Organic Junmai Ginjo Sake (375 ml; \$7.50):** What could be a more perfect accessory for your picnic basket than cold sesame noodles? The answer is a half-bottle of sake with an easy screwcap. This medium-dry sipper is creamy on the nose, with floral, citrus and fino sherry on the palate. Throw an ice pack in that picnic basket so you can enjoy this baby well-chilled.

-- Katherine Cole

**Bahn mi**  
Best Baguette, 8308 S.E. Powell Blvd. and 3635 S.W. Hall Blvd., Beaverton

**2008 Trisaetum Riesling, Willamette Valley (\$24):** The heart of the Vietnamese bahn mi is all [oregonlive.com/.../fine\\_pours\\_for\\_picni...](http://oregonlive.com/.../fine_pours_for_picni...)

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about jolting flavors, and the pickled and spicy vegetables loved this wine. The riesling has a surprisingly rich and viscous palate with a hint of oily texture that marries well and charms the complex flavors of the sandwich. The acidity is just biting enough to cool the spices in the pickled veggies. The wine finishes with ripe melon and fleshy fruit flavor profiles. I tasted both vegetarian and spicy grilled pork versions of the sandwich with the Trisaetum, and they were both winners.

-- Kimberly Paley

**2007 Quady North Steelhead Run Vineyard Viognier (\$19):** It takes a special combination of lush tropical fruit and lifted citrus tones to balance the complex flavors stuffed into a bahn mi. The Quady has mouth-filling ripeness of mango and papaya that stands up to the pork and pâté, while the zesty lime notes harmonize with the tang of the pickled vegetables and cilantro. The exotic nose will keep your interest long after the sandwich is gone. This is one of the Northwest's most balanced viogniers, exotic but still lively.

--Toni Ketrenos

**2008 Love & Squalor Willamette Valley Riesling (\$18):** Whether you like your bahn mi filled with pâté and pork or taro and fried tofu, this Old World-style riesling will make a mouthwatering accompaniment. Its classic nose of petrol and minerals contrasts with a delicately tart palate of melon, green apple and yellow plum. The bright lemony finish has the acidity to complement a wide variety of flavors, from sour to savory to spicy. Fresh, lean and delicately spritzzy, this is a wine that works for all occasions -- midday, aperitif or just anytime. Look for the similar (if slightly drier) 2009 vintage on store shelves soon.

-- Katherine Cole

**2008 Anne Amie Vineyards Cuvée A Amrita White Wine, Willamette Valley (\$16):** The challenge of selecting a wine partner to pair with Vietnamese bahn mi is finding a wine that can go toe to toe with the sandwich's classic toppings of fresh chiles and shredded pickled veggies. The answer is a wine big enough in fruit flavors to balance the heat and saltiness of these toppings, but with enough acidity to stand up to the sandwich's briny pickles. With concentrated aromas and flavors of melon, peach and jasmine, the Cuvée A Amrita is not intimidated by the flavor-packed bahn mi. The pairing reveals additional flavors of ginger and baking spice in the Amrita and enhances the cilantro note of the sandwich -- a perfect partnership.

-- Mimi Martin

### Bratwurst

Super Dog, 1033 S.W. Sixth Ave. and 1438 S.W. Park Ave.

**2009 Evesham Wood, Blanc du Puits Sec, Willamette Valley (\$16):** This Alsatian-style blanc, a blend of pinot gris and gewurztraminer, is a great value. Russ Raney has made a crisp, floral, very approachable wine that drinks well with the grilled sausage. It cooled the palate and married all the components of this German-style fare. The wine has hints of honeysuckle that match the rich, flavorful, spicy meat, tangy mustard and sauerkraut flecked with caraway. The understated minerality and moderate acidity actually distinguished the kick of the mustard. Full bodied, not too sweet, great wine for the grill.

-- Kimberly Paley

**2007 J. Scott Pinot Blanc (\$15):** This style of pinot blanc seems to be inspired by those of Alsace, France, so it's no coincidence that it pairs so well with pork bratwurst. It has round core fruit and honeydew melon tones with a lingering floral finish. The fruit is succulent with the meat, while the tangy acidity adds lift and a good counterbalance to any mustard and sauerkraut you might add.

--Toni Ketrenos

**2007 Brian Carter Cellars Oriana, Columbia Valley (\$24):** Finding a wine to drink alongside bratwurst is one thing, finding something that can also balance the brat's mustard and sauerkraut condiments is something else entirely. This is a challenge that's best tackled head on, with a bold, flavor-dense wine like Brian Carter's unconventional white blend, Oriana. A unique combination of viognier and roussanne (both Rhône varieties) and riesling (a cool-climate grape that is rarely blended), the wine emphasizes the intensely aromatic character of the grapes, with prominent notes of peach, apricot and honeysuckle dominating the nose. These notes reappear on the palate in enough concentration to balance the spiciness of the mustard and the saltiness of the kraut. A hint of sweetness further harmonizes all the components -- softening the heat and salt -- and ensures that everyone plays nicely.

-- Mimi Martin

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