

Robb Report

The 9 Best Napa Valley Chardonnays to Drink This Summer

Outstanding bottles to get you through the dog days.

By MIKE DESIMONE AND JEFF JENSSEN | JULY 14, 2023

Despite the cries of the ABC (Anything But Chardonnay) crowd, the green grape from Burgundy still reigns supreme among white wine varieties worldwide. Napa Valley Chardonnay was the first American version to rise to prominence thanks to the bottle from Chateau Montelena that took first place at the 1976 “Judgement of Paris” tasting. It remains a favorite among wine lovers today, although it comes in several different styles due to terroir and winemaking preference.

While many interpretations of Chardonnay from Napa are still the creamy, barrel-aged expressions that wine lovers have come to expect, many producers have dialed things back a bit and are utilizing what is described as a “judicious” amount of oak. There seems to be a preponderance of Chardonnay from the region that is bottled and labeled as “unfined and unfiltered,” two processes that help to remove small particles from wine. Often used in large-production wines, these practices may also remove some delicate aromas or flavors and are less prevalent in small-batch, artisan wines.

Ranging from lean and racy to full bodied and oaky, Napa Valley Chardonnay pairs well with a wide variety of foods, from oysters and chilled seafood to creamy pastas and risottos to roasted chicken or grilled veal chops. Here are nine to enjoy this summer.

Tor 2021 Cuvée Torchiana Beresini Vineyard Chardonnay Napa Valley California

Grapes for this fascinating Chardonnay are grown in a single three-acre vineyard that produces clusters much smaller than average, but the winemaking team feels that they make dense and rich wines because of the high skin to juice ratio. The team maintains that this produces “wines with structure wrapped around a core of dense fruit.” We couldn’t agree more—the wine is bright gold in color with intense aromas of white citrus blossom, white peach, and dried dandelion. It is full bodied with flavors of lemon curd, egg custard flan, and toasted hazelnut with a persistent velvety finish. Drink now or lay down for three to five years.

