



Rick's Grape Skinny

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*“Hide our ignorance as we will, an evening of wine soon reveals it!”
(Heraclitus)*

R U A Rutter?

How to Get Out of a Wine Rut!

If I've heard it once, I've heard it a thousand times – “I'm afraid to try new wines because I might not like them!” OK...I get that...but you need to get this! You just might like a different wine!! Just curious...wow would you ever know that you don't like a wine if you don't try it?!

For what it's worth, all of you who tend to drink the same wine all the time – and you know who you are -- you're what we more experienced enthusiasts affectionately refer to as *rutters*! Sooo...for you beloved *rutters*, it's high time to reenergize your youthful curiosity, don that coat of courage and commit to trying a handful of new and different wines. There's a wondrous world of wine out there to explore...and like all great adventures, they begin with that fearful and wobbly first step. Jump in and don't worry! Hey...you can always cook with it!! 🍷

Rx for Rutters

I'd be willing to bet that the preponderance of *rutters* amongst us fall into two principal groups: those who prefer Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc; and those whose preferred quaff is either Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot or Pinot Noir. Those are certainly fine and noble grapes and wines...and to boot, they're among the top ten most popular wines in the world. But...to help you take that first bold step into wild and wooly new vineyards, here are three grapes and wines for those who are white wine *rutters* and three grapes and wines for you red wine *rutters*. And remember...this drill is not to develop a new wine rut for you to settle into! Rather, it's an adventure in extending your wine horizon and expanding your wine knowledge in a painless and hopefully delicious way. And who knows, you just might discover a new fave!

For White Wine Rutters

1. *Albariño* - An über delicious and delectable grape and wine from the Galicia Region of Spain where it's also über popular. It's called Alvarinho in Portugal...so try either...or both! What does that tell you!?!? *Delizioso!*
2. *Chenin Blanc* -- An ancient and delicately fruity varietal that has gained renewed respect and popularity worldwide. In France, the wines from *Vouvray* are 100% *Chenin Blanc*. South Africa leads the “New World” in *Chenin Blanc* production...where it's known locally as the *Steen*. It's a super versatile wine!!
3. *Torrontés* -- Argentina's Signature white grape and wine. It's crisp, fruity and distinctively delicious! Hardly ever >\$12!

For Red Wine Rutters

4. *Garnacha* – One of Spain's principal red grapes and wines...and always a super value! It's known as *Grenache* in most other parts of the world...and...it's the single-most-planted grape worldwide! What does that tell you!?!? *Delizioso!*
5. *Monastrell* – Also known widely as *Mourvèdre* – and as *Mataró* in Australia -- it's a key import from Spain that aside from being a superb, rich and delicious wine, it's always a superb value to boot!
6. *Petite Sirah* – One of the most deeply colored and intensely flavorful red grapes and wines you'll find...period. Known as the *Durif* in Australia, you'll not often see that name in the US. In any case, *Petite Sirah* is one of my favorite grapes and wines -- for what that might be worth!

There are countless other white and red wines that *rutters* can try of course...but these are tried and true alternatives that are known to help *rutters* get “unstuck!”



Toast of the Month

Feliz Cinco de Mayo! ¡OLE!

“¡Arriba! (raise glass), ¡Abajo! (lower glass), ¡Al centro! (hold the glass in front of you), ¡Pa’ dentro! (or ¡Adentro!) (drink from glass). It boils down to -- Up, Down, in the Middle...then Inside!” ¡Salud!
(Traditional Cinco de Mayo Toast)

The Monthly Bunch

Reds

Monastrell – aka Mourvèdre and Mataró
Hécúla 2013 --

Supple, Succulent, Sensual, and Sensational!
(Yecla, Spain)/\$12-\$15) -- From one of Spain’s most respected growing regions, Yecla, and the esteemed *Bodegas Castaño*, this is not only a delicious and artfully crafted wine...it’s also a great value! The *Monastrell* grape is known worldwide for its essential succulence...and with nearly 50% of the world’s acreage being grown in Spain, it should be no surprise that some of the best *Monastrell* wine in the world hails from Spain. With endeavors that are 100% dedicated to the perfection of making wine from the *Monastrell* grape, *Bodegas Castaño* sets the bar! Founder and Chief Winemaker, Ramon Castaño Santa, is one of Spain’s foremost pioneers in the wine industry and he’s been a key player in Spain’s overall success in the international wine market. To optimize and showcase the fruit, this vintage was aged for only 6 months in “experienced” American oak. And believe you me, the result is something you’ll admire...and soon be telling others about! ¡Salud!
www.bodegacastano.com/

Blend

Borsao Berola 2012 Rich, Complex and Delish!
(D.O. Campo De Borja -- Borja Spain)/\$14-\$18
From the Bodega in Spain that is known as the King of the Empire of *Garnacha*, this exquisite cuvée beautifully showcases why Bodega Borsao has earned worldwide respect and admiration. This luscious vintage is a delicious union of 80% *Garnacha* and 20% *Syrah*. Aged for 14 months in a combination of Bordelaise French and American oak...it spent an additional year of rest in bottle before being released. The result is an intensely flavorful, fruit-forward, soft, and rich wine that

drinks like wines twice or three times its price. It’s an exemplary wine and a great value for the money.
<http://bodegasborsao.com/borsao-berola-usa/>

Rosé

Mulderbosch Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé 2015 Rich, Vibrant Acidity, Luscious, and Flavorful!
(Stellenbosch, South Africa)/\$12-\$14 -- This is one of those special and very versatile rosés that you can enjoy with virtually any cuisine! To boot, it’s also one of the few rosés that is routinely available year-round! Woo Hoo! I’ve found that it pairs particularly well with spicier dishes, including pork and beef barbeque...even Asian fare. And I love, love, love it with any expression of salmon! South Africa’s Cape Winelands Region is known for producing some of the best and most flavorful grapes in the world...and believe you me, Head Winemaker, Adam Mason, has ensured that’s just what goes into making their 100% *Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé*! Gesundheit!
www.mulderbosch.co.za

White

Chenin Blanc – aka *Steen* in South Africa
Domaine Pichot 2014 Off-Dry, Bright & Crisp!
(Vouvray Appellation – Loire, France)/\$12-\$15 – In a few words...this is a fragrant, vibrant and wonderfully versatile white wine! It’s also one of those “old school” varietal wines that we Americans used to drink by the gallon...until *Chardonnay* shoved it aside without looking back. But trust me, it’s not the same wine by a long shot! That said however...if you just can’t stand the thought of drinking...or telling someone you drank...*Chenin Blanc*, you can also refer to it as *Pineau de la Loire* or *Steen* -- as it’s known in South Africa! To achieve great balance and to ensure this wine is distinctive and distinguished from its competitors, it’s aged in used French oak for six months. You owe it to yourself to try this awesome wine. Yum!
<http://www.domaine-pichot.com/>

Rick's Signature Sangrias



The beauty of these basic **Sangria** recipes is that they are as **delicious** as they are **easy to make**. And they just get better as you personalize them with your own ambitious mixtures of ingredients! From my experience, it's "almost" impossible to add a wrong ingredient here...so just think about favorite fruits, distilled spirits and liqueurs that typically mix well...and have a ball concocting your own personalized Signature **Sangria**! There is no drink recipe in the world that is more versatile and risk-free than Spain's most famous export -- their universally popular **punch of life...Sangria! ¡Olé!**

Sangria Rojo

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Bottle of red wine -- Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz, Zinfandel, Malbec, Monastrell, Garnacha, Tempranillo, Dornfelder, etc. Even Lambrusco or a "Sweet Red" wine is fine, but you might not need added sugar! For a lighter **Sangria**, you may want to use a Rosado or a Rosé – a pink or blush wine!
- 1 Lemon cut into wedges
- 1 Orange cut into wedges
- 1 Lime cut into wedges
- 8 to 12 Maraschino Cherries – no stems
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- 2 (maybe 3...OK 4 or 5) Shots Brandy, Apple Jack, Apfel Schnapps, a "designer" flavored Vodka, Rum (White, Dark or Spiced), or Ruby Port. In any case, **just be sure to taste as you concoct!**
- 2 Cups Ginger Ale or Lemon-lime Soda...or Club Soda for a less sweet **Sangria**. **Adding Cava, Champagne or other Sparkling wine instead makes it Sangria Rojo Espumante!**

Sangria Blanco

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Bottle of white wine (Riesling, Albarino, Torrontes, Pinot Grigio, Gewürztraminer, Viognier, Chablis, Chenin Blanc, etc., etc....even Chardonnay if you insist...but I'd stay away from Sauvignon Blanc if I were you!)
- 1 Lemon cut into wedges
- 1 Orange cut into wedges
- 1 Lime cut into wedges
- 8 to 12 Maraschino Cherries – no stems
- ½ Cup Sugar (feel free to add more once you taste test...just be sure to stir well and dissolve it all!)
- 2 (maybe 3) Shots Triple Sec, Grand Marnier, Cointreau, or other Orange Liqueur – taste as you concoct!
- 2 Cups Ginger Ale or Lemon-lime Soda...or Club Soda for less sweet **Sangria**. **Adding Cava, Champagne or other Sparkling wine instead makes it Sangria Blanco Espumante!**

INGREDIENT VARIATIONS:

For either **Sangria Rojo** or **Sangria Blanco**, don't hesitate to consider using fresh sliced strawberries, peaches, apples, a handful of fresh blueberries, raspberries, kiwi, or pineapple, a shot or two of vodka, gin, brandy, or rum, a cup of ginger beer, 7 Up/Sprite, or extra fruit juice of your choice, etc., etc.! Famed Chicago Master Sommelier Alpna Singh even suggests a couple of Cinnamon Sticks! It's time to create your very own **Sangria Obra Maestra – Sangria Masterpiece!**

PREPARATION:

Pour wine into a large pitcher or punch bowl and squeeze the juice wedges from the lemon, orange and lime into the wine. Toss in the fruit wedges (leaving out seeds to the extent possible) and add sugar and selected spirits. **CHILL OVERNIGHT if you can...for it makes it so much better...and add ginger ale, club soda or sparkling wine just before serving...over lots of ice!** If you can't wait for the overnight component and would like to serve it right away, start with chilled wines if possible and/or stir in a handful of ice cubes. After it's mixed...**pour over lots of ice** and ENJOY! **¡Salud!**