



Grapevine

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Price Chopper Plaza
1355 New Scotland Road Slingerlands, NY 12159
518.439.5535 slingerlandswine@yahoo.com

Celebrating Summer with Italian Whites

The last full month of Summer is upon us and so we celebrate the easygoing tempo of the season with Italian whites. Subtle, yet brimming with acidity, elegant dinner partners, yet divine with no more company than the right glass, they are a study in beautiful contrasts.

Founded in 1977, *La Spinetta* means *top of the hill*. The **2017 La Spinetta Vermentino** from Toscana is sourced from 15-year-old vines, fermented in stainless steel with natural yeasts and aged five months on the lees. Aromas of pears and lilacs segue to a palate of bracing acidity with a mineral finish. \$14.49

Around 1979, brothers John and Harry Mariani, owners of the 18th Century estate Vigne Regail, acquired the **Principessa Gavia Gavi** estate, devoted exclusively to the Cortese di Gavi grape. According to legend, the area was named for Gavia, daughter of the 6th Century King of the Franks, who fell in love and ran away with a guard in her father's court. The **2017 Principessa Gavia Gavi** is a royal expression of the Cortese grape, with aromas of apples and pineapple offering a heady preamble to the dry finish. \$15.29



Hillside vineyard in medieval San Gimignano, Siena, Tuscany.

Nestled between the hills and the sea along the Adriatic Coast, Umani Ronchi comprises a total of 210 hectares of vineyards in Marche and Abruzzo, where they are known for growing Montepulciano and Verdicchio grapes. The **2016 Umani Ronchi Pecorino**, meaning *grape of the sheep*, is a native Adriatic varietal that historically was blended with other grapes before falling out of fashion. Thanks to the Bernetti Family, the Pecorino grape was revived with excellence, owing to sustainable farming and progressive winemaking. The grape is known for its clean acidity and, true to its namesake, is an excellent pairing for Italy's rich, salty Pecorino cheese, which the sheep happen to eat, hence its name. Fermented in stainless steel and aged four months, it has elegant floral aromas and ripe fruit flavors with a mineral-tinged finish. \$12.49

Located in the south of Italy with the Mediterranean to the west, Campania claims among other spectacular places to visit, the Amalfi Coast and Naples. It also happens to be home to **Cantina del Taburno**, situated at the base of Mount Taburno, an inactive volcano. Their **2016 Falanghina del Sannio** is made with grapes grown on a hilly vineyard northeast of Naples. Falanghina is a wine of subtlety, much like Muscadet in that way, and must be handled with lightness, allowing the varietal's aromas of citrus, flowers and almonds to shine. Fermentation and aging in stainless steel accomplishes just that, resulting in a wine of restraint, yet soft and approachable. \$12.99

Vernaccia di San Gimignano was the first wine in Italy to be awarded DOC status in 1966, and was then upgraded to

DOCG in 1993. A fragile-skinned grape that is vulnerable to breaking during ripening, Fontaleoni uses sophisticated, modern equipment to prevent breakage, enabling it to get to the stage of gentle crushing in tact. Vernaccia is also gifted with soft, subtle flavors that, like Falanghina, can be overshadowed if manipulated too much. The **2017 Fontaleoni Vernaccia di San Gimignano** is organically farmed and sees a slow, cool fermentation, yielding a crisp, elegant wine with lemon, white peach and firm acidity. \$12.99

It's understandable to have your favorite Summer standards and to stick to them, but if you want to venture out and discover some terrific and different whites during this last gasp of pure Summer, look to Italy for inspiration. You won't be disappointed. ♦

Incredible Savings!
15% off all Wine —
Every Bottle,
Every Day!!!

Did you know... Production of Vernaccia di San Gimignano started in the 13th Century. An exclusively hilly territory, its soils date back to the Pliocene, 6.8 – 1.8 million years ago.

Wine Tastings Friday, 4-7 & Saturday, 2-5

Days not mentioned will feature New Arrivals.

Fri 8/3: 90s Wines are always welcome

Fri 8/10: August Staff Picks...your ticket to ride

Fri 8/17: Italian Whites from the August Newsletter and a couple of Italian reds, just because

Fri 8/24: Wines for Travers Day at Saratoga, 8/25

Sat 8/25: Spanish Sizzlers for a barbecue

Fri 8/31: Reds, whites and rosés...why not

Sat 9/1: Labor Day picnic and barbecue wines

Cowboy Caviar *Adapted from Tip Hero*

3 c seeded, diced Roma tomatoes, about 1 lb
1 ½ c corn kernels, sliced off the cob
1 c seeded and diced bell pepper, any color
¾ c red onion finely diced
1 – 15-ounce can black beans, rinsed and drained
1 – 15-ounce can black-eyed peas, rinsed and drained
1 jalapeño, seeded and minced, optional
¾ c chopped cilantro
2 avocados, sliced
½ c olive oil
2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
2 Tbsp fresh lime juice, about 1 lime
1 tsp honey
1 tsp cumin
1 clove garlic, pressed or minced
1 to 2 tsp salt, or to taste
¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper

In a large bowl, add the diced tomatoes, corn kernels, diced bell pepper, diced red onion, black beans, black-eyed peas, and minced jalapeño. Stir to combine.

In a small bowl, add the olive oil, red wine vinegar, lime juice, honey, cumin, minced garlic, salt and black pepper. Whisk the dressing ingredients together until well-combined.

Pour the dressing into the large bowl over the veggies. Add the cilantro, and stir to combine. Taste and adjust the seasoning, if needed. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour, or overnight to blend flavors.

Serve chilled or at room temperature, with sliced avocado or corn chips and Brian's staff pick, below.



Provence Cooler

The perfect Summer cocktail made for sun-porches and sunsets, wherever you are on the globe.

1 ½ oz vodka
1 oz fresh lemon juice
1 oz simple syrup
4 basil leaves
2 blackberries
6 oz your favorite Rosé wine

Add the vodka, lemon juice and simple syrup to a chilled shaker. Muddle the blackberries with the mixture. Add the basil leaves and ice, and shake vigorously. Add the rosé and strain over fresh ice into two Collins glasses. Garnish with basil leaves and skewered blackberries. Celebrate an ode to Summer.



August 2018 Staff Wine Picks

Sheila: 2016 Lake Sonoma Winery Chardonnay (Russian River Valley) \$12.99 (reg \$14.99) Grapes grown in the cool, foggy Russian River Valley yield beautiful notes of citrus and tropical fruits, while small barrel oak aging lends a delicious note of vanilla bean and a buttered toast. *Alaskan King crab legs and corn on the cob

Ian: 2015 Educated Guess Merlot (Napa County) \$17.99 (reg \$20.99) Blended with small amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, it is aged 15 months in French oak; aromas and flavors of wild berries, cassis, figs and milk chocolate with seductive weight and a rich mouthfeel. *Grilled flat iron steak with blue cheese butter

Brian: 2016 Herència Altés Garnatxa Negra (Spain) \$9.49 (reg \$10.99) 91 JS Certified organic grapes from low yielding vines are picked at optimum ripeness and aged five months in concrete, preserving the Garnacha's natural acidity and red berry fruit without overshadowing it. *Cowboy Caviar, see recipe above

Ted: 2017 Jean Perrier et Fils Apremont Cuvée Gastronomie (Savoie) \$11.49 (reg \$13.99) From the Savoie region of France comes this delightful white made from Jacquère. Aged in stainless steel, it is clean, refreshing and almost tangy with juicy pear and green apple flavors. *Bay scallops poached in white wine and butter

Bill: 2016 Michel Sarrazin et Fils Pinot Noir (Bourgogne) \$16.99 (reg \$19.99) Made with sustainable farming practices, fermented with native yeasts in temperature controlled cement tanks and aged in new and seasoned oak, this wine has classic Bourgogne lightness with incredible notes of spice and earth. *Grilled duck breast

Erika: 2016 Joseph Drouhin La Forêt Chardonnay (Bourgogne) \$10.99 (reg \$12.99) Blended from grapes grown in the finest appellations at the tops of high slopes near a forest, the wine is aged partially in stainless steel and partially in seasoned oak, giving it nuances of citrus, honey and subtle vanilla. *Fresh corn risotto