

125+ AMERICAN CHARDONNAYS REVIEWED

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# WINE ENTHUSIAST

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## ALL-AMERICAN CHARDONNAY

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CELEBRATE SUMMER WITH OUR COUNTRY'S MOST POPULAR VARIETY

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## The ABCs of Pairing

# Aromatic

These spicy, floral and distinctive white wines are made for summer. But their extroverted personalities require extra care at the table.

BY MIKE  
DESIMONE &  
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**A**romatic whites are known not only for their vibrant fruit flavors—like citrus, apple, pear, apricot and mango—but also for their strong aromas of flowers and spice. Their vibrant scents and flavors are often best showcased by vinification and aging in stainless steel or other neutral vessels.

Some of these grape varieties originated in one part of the world, like Riesling (Germany) or Pinot Gris (France), and are now widely grown throughout both hemispheres. Others remain fairly entrenched in one place, like Torrontés (Argentina) or Fiano (Italy).

Growing conditions vary widely for these grapes. Some thrive in cool climates, while others are nurtured by the warmth of the Mediterranean basin. Some grow in decomposed slate, others in volcanic soils. Regardless of their differences, these varieties share one thing in common, an impressive growth in popularity.

The rise of aromatic whites can be tied to two trends: the increasing popularity of international dishes that combine hot spice and sweet notes, and consumer curiosity about a growing list of wine regions and varieties.

The same qualities that make aromatic whites so desirable to drink, including pronounced floral and spice notes, can make it challenging to pair them with food, especially if one flavor dominates, such as rose petal or Chinese five-spice powder. Balance is the key; whether in dry, off-dry or sweet versions, fruit, flowers and spice must be balanced by acidity and minerality.

“Intense aromatics and flavors can overpower more delicate dishes or clash with a dish’s flavors,” says Jennifer Simonetti-Bryan, a Master of Wine and co-author of *Pairing with the Masters* (Delmar Cengage Learning, 2012), slated to be released in August. “However, as with most things in life, when there is more risk, that risk can be rewarded. When highly aromatic and flavorful wines are paired with cuisines of equal intensity, they make for quite bold pairings.”

Whatever your choice of food—Asian, Indian, cheese, charcuterie or barbecue—there’s an aromatic white that will make a perfect match.

### **Chatham Codfish, Fricassee of Purple Potatoes, Shiitake Mushrooms and Toasted Fava Beans in a Ginger Aromatic Sauce**

*Recipe courtesy David Bouley, chef and owner of Bouley Restaurant, New York City*

**Salt, to taste**  
**12 purple fingerling potatoes**  
**2 tablespoons butter, plus**  
**1 pound butter, softened**  
**and cut into 1-inch cubes**  
**1 cup shiitake mushrooms, sliced**  
**Pepper, to taste**  
**1 cup fresh fava beans**  
**2 tablespoons safflower oil**  
**2 teaspoons ketchup**  
**1½ ounces balsamic vinegar**  
**2 ounces soy sauce**  
**3 ounces ginger juice**  
**Juice from ½ of a fresh lime**  
**4 codfish fillets, 6 ounces each**  
**½ cup Wondra flour**

In a large pot set over high heat, bring 3 cups salted water to a boil. Add the potatoes and cook until tender. Drain the potatoes using a colander, and when cool, peel and cut into ½-inch-thick slices. Set aside.

Heat 2 tablespoons of butter in a medium sauté pan and cook the mushrooms until tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and set aside.

Toast the fava beans in a medium-hot pan with the oil, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Let the favas

brown slightly, then set aside.

In a medium saucepan, heat the ketchup, vinegar, soy sauce and ginger juice. Bring to a simmer and whisk in the remaining butter bit by bit, or use a handheld blender. Finish with lime juice and set aside. Keep warm.

Heat a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Season the fish with salt and pepper and dredge lightly in Wondra. Cook the fish skin side down and turn over after a crust forms, about 3–4 minutes. Once turned, allow the fish to cook for another 3 minutes.

Rewarm the vegetables, combine them together and arrange them in the center of a dinner plate. Place the cooked fish on top. Whisk or blend the sauce with a handheld blender until frothy. Spoon the sauce over the fish and serve immediately. *Serves 4.*



### **Wine Pairing**

Adrien Falcon, Bouley’s wine director, recommends pairing this dish with François Villard’s 2010 Les Terrasses du Palat Condrieu. “The discreet, elegant bouquet has a wonderful expression of spice and floral notes,” he says. “The salinity of the wine pairs well with the codfish, and the acidity of Viognier is a wonderful match for the fava beans.”

PHOTO: JON VAN GORDER

# Whites

