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The warmer spring weather means barefoot entertaining is as good as back. This is officially the start of impromptu dining season, when it's totally acceptable to drink champagne with fish and chips on the beach, and when you can forget about that microwave meal in front of the telly and picnic at an outdoor cinema instead. It's the season when long, lazy lunch barbecues roll into long, lazy late-night barbecues – a season when all of the above should be encouraged, and often.

But wherever and whatever you're eating, chances are it's going to be warm, so think about the types of wines you

would like to sip on. Delicious as they may be, if the sun is beating down, it's best to steer clear of heavily wooded whites. Similarly, full-bodied whites from warm climates – often prone to higher levels of alcohol – are also worth avoiding, as these tend to suffer in the heat. And forget those richly fruited reds that kept us fat and happy during the cooler months – these wines are not only high in alcohol but rich in tannin, too.

Instead, think about the kind of food you're eating at this time of year; much of it is deliberately light, fresh and clean, so wines that run along similar lines will often prove to be the most successful, not to mention the most refreshing, options.



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white

9. Ad Hoc Wallflower Riesling 2009 \$18, Mount Barker, WA

Wallflower is not only drinking beautifully now, but also represents fantastic value for money. From a pretty nose of lime skin, jasmine and ginger to a steely and citrus-charged palate, this delivers in spades. Try it with fried snapper and green papaya salad.

10. Dr Loosen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett 2008 \$35, Mosel, Germany

Smells of mandarin, apple and spring flowers make way for a delicate mouthful of wine — made in the dramatically steep Wehlener Sonnenuhr vineyard — that's just this side of dry. If your local Thai or Vietnamese happens to be BYO, take a bottle or two.

11. Chalmers Vermentino 2009 \$25, Murray Darling, NSW

Smells of pear, almond and beeswax lead to a mouthful of wine that's restrained, lemony, long and dry. Serve it with a platter of olives, semi-dried tomatoes, salami, pecorino and crusty bread.

12. Clonakilla Viognier Nouveau 2009 \$30, Canberra District, ACT

This displays a type of freshness and charm rarely associated with this variety, so expect to find smells of orange peel, lime and dried apricot. Distinctly less alcohol keeps the palate vibrant, zippy and fresh. Drink it with pan-fried flathead tails and a big green salad.

13. Maddens Rise Chardonnay 2008 \$25, Yarra Valley, Vic

With smells of grapefruit, nectarine and cashew, this chardonnay shows real freshness and finesse, with texture, length and intensity of flavour only adding to the wine's appeal. A great accompaniment to Sunday's roast chicken.

14. De Bortoli Sauvignon 2008 \$40, Yarra Valley, Vic

You'll find smells of guava, dried mango, cashew and oatmeal, while the palate is soft and intense, with mineral-like texture and a long, drying finish. Enjoy it with pan-fried scallops and pangritata.

red

15. Red Claw Pinot Noir 2008 \$18, Mornington Peninsula, Vic

Combining smells of dark, plummy fruit, earth and spice, this red has a fine, silky palate with incredible intensity of sweet cherry-ish fruit, vibrant acidity and a wash of fine tannin to finish. Goes down well with Chinese roast duck, greens and rice.

16. William Downie Pinot Noir 2008 \$55, Gippsland, Vic

This pinot noir is rich and pure, with fine mineral texture, silky tannin, and flavour that seems to go on forever. Drink it with sucking pig.

17. Álvaro Castro Dão 2007 \$30, Dão, Portugal

Expect a dense and compact nose of dark plum, violets and liquorice, while in your mouth it's plush, forward and all the more drinkable, thanks to the absence of oak. Chargrilled lamb cutlets with hummus and lemon are ideal.

18. Château Guiot 2008 \$30, Costières de Nimes, France

Smells range from wild raspberry to dried woody herbs, while zero oak influence makes it all the more delicious. Brilliant with all the charred and sticky things the barbecue can manage.

19. Plantagenet Shiraz 2006 \$45, Great Southern, WA

Smells of sweet black cherries, wood smoke and pepper are here. The palate is full and seamless, with plenty of inky dark fruit and a terrific balance between tannin and acidity. Save it for Christmas Day's slow-roasted rib of beef with all the trimmings.

sweet

20. Innocent Bystander Moscato 2009 \$12, Vic

Assembled from muscat gordo blanco, and taken from selected growers throughout Victoria, this has smells of fresh grape juice, pear and apple. In your mouth it's squeaky clean, a little sweet and ever so slightly fizzy. Sip it alongside strawberry or lemon gelato.

21. Mount Horrocks Cordon Cut 2007 \$30, Clare Valley, SA

This drop is packed with smells of lime marmalade, candied pineapple and spice, while the palate is rich with sweet limy fruit, tangy acidity and a long, clean finish. Drink it with lemon tart and quality vanilla ice-cream. ●