

# 10 summer SIPS

The weather is warming up and the countdown to Christmas is almost underway. **Christine Salins** has compiled a list of some top drops to help you celebrate summer.

**A**s the days get longer and the weather warms up, it's time to think about tweaking wine lists with styles and varietals that pair well with lighter dishes. We've come up with a selection that hits the right note for summer drinking.

## **Logan 2015 Moscato, \$20**

Logan previously made its Moscato from gewürztraminer but this year, for the first time, it has used muscat blanc à petits grains grapes, which are more intensely flavoured at a lower sugar level. What does that mean for consumers? Well, for one, it means they can imbibe with less guilt, as the wine has just 6.5 percent alcohol. Oh, and it tastes delicious too.

## **Ladies Who Shoot Their Lunch 2014 Riesling, \$34.95**

Are you game for this? A fun wine with serious intent, this quirkily labelled wine features a woman and her dog going hunting. Its creators suggest it goes beautifully with wild game and it certainly has the personality to intrigue, delight or divide the most ardent Riesling hounds. It comes from the Strathbogie Ranges in Victoria and is flinty and fresh with notes of lime, lychee and rose petal. It's an interesting wine, not least because it was fermented on lees in oak, which, although common in France's Alsace region, is unusual for Riesling in Australia.

## **Domaine Chandon 2015 Pinot Gris, \$25**

Pinot Gris is the fastest growing white varietal in Australia; people seem to love its floral aromatics and interesting textures. When Domaine Chandon bought its Whitlands Vineyard in Victoria a couple of years ago, it came with a parcel of Pinot Gris. "It turns out that this little

patch delivers Pinot Gris with wonderful floral aromas," says winemaker Dan Buckle. "We're very happy with this one." Richly textured with bright natural acidity, it comes from one of the best vintages for early varieties in the region since 2002.

## **Windowrie 2015 'The Mill' Verdelho, \$18**

While Pinot Gris is having a dream run, Verdelho is the straggler at the rear, which is a pity as it is ideally suited to summer drinking with its lime and honeyed notes, and naturally high acidity. Cowra, in the NSW Central Ranges, produces some of Australia's best examples, and Windowrie is one of the region's most esteemed producers. With zesty passionfruit and tropical notes, this one's a great alternative to Sauvignon Blanc.

## **Briar Ridge 2015 Limited Release Fiano, \$28**

This exciting new addition to the Briar Ridge range is crisp, youthful and zesty with lively ginger, citrus and hazelnut notes. Made by the talented 2014 *Gourmet Traveller* Young Winemaker of the Year, Gwyn Olsen, it's one of only a few examples of this Italian variety in Australia. Definitely one to put on the list for summer.

## **Bremerton 2013 Batonnage Chardonnay, \$32**

Light summer dishes of salmon, tuna and chicken pair nicely with an expressive Chardonnay like this one with its creamy mouthfeel, restrained oak and stonefruit, spice and citrus notes. Batonnage refers to the stirring of the lees which gives the wine added complexity and a deliciously long finish, making it stand out in a crowd of upfront one-dimensional whites.

## **Richard Hamilton 2013 Lot 148 Merlot, \$21**

The last thing you want to drink in the height of summer is a heavy, full-bodied red. This Merlot from South Australia's McLaren Vale has elegance and finesse with subtle oak and soft tannins. With generous sweet fruit, it tastes of cherries and plums with a bit of nutmeg to spice things up.

## **Margan 2014 Shiraz, \$25**

Winemaker Andrew Margan reckons the reds that came out of the Hunter Valley's Broke Fordwich sub-region in 2014 were the best since 1965. The fruit for his Shiraz comes from 40 year old vines yielding less than one tonne per acre, concentrating the fruit and producing a rich, spicy palate with hints of raspberry. A terrific food wine.

## **Red Feet 2012 Sangiovese, \$35**

Victoria's King Valley has become one of Australia's premier regions for Sangiovese and this example from one of the newest producers in the region, Red Feet, is worth keeping an eye out for. Easy drinking and medium bodied, it's a bright, racy wine with touches of Cherry Ripe chocolate and spice. Great with Italian, lamb and vegetarian dishes.

## **Topper's Mountain 2012 Red Earth Child, \$38**

Food-friendly Spanish and Italian varieties come together in this rich and velvety blend from the New England region of NSW. About 60 percent Tempranillo, with Nebbiolo, Tannat and Barbera rounding out the flavour profile, it has hints of dark chocolate and cinnamon. You wouldn't want it for lunch in the blazing sun, but coupled with a hearty pasta dish or risotto it hits the spot beautifully. Cheers.