

TASTINGS\ DRINK THIS

KATNOOK ESTATE SAUVIGNON BLANC 2009
(Coonawarra) \$28; 13.5% a/v ★★★★★
Food match: Roast chicken with spring greens

I often find sav blanc a bit one-dimensional and was pleased when the complex vegetal aromas of green beans and pea shoots, Granny Smith apples and lychee wafted up from the glass. European in style, it has subtle flavours of gooseberry, passionfruit, minerals and limes and a long finish. Unusually for a sav blanc, this will improve with a little more time in the bottle.

PARAMOOR CHARDONNAY 2009
(Macedon Ranges) \$22; 13.3% a/v ★★★★★
Food match: Roast chicken with a white wine and garlic gravy

This wine is a good example of Macedon chardonnay – and one worth seeking out. It has complex aromas of nectarine, melon, almonds and a hint of toasty oak. It's a light straw colour, with bright fruit flavours of white stone fruit, new season's apples, nuts and grapefruit acid. It's a neat, well-balanced wine with a lovely mouthfeel and excellent length for the price.

KOORYONG MASSALE PINOT NOIR 2008
(Mornington Peninsula) \$28; 13% a/v ★★★★★
Food match: Roast chicken with root vegetables

I'm yet to have a 2008 pinot noir from the Mornington Peninsula that I don't like – and I've tried quite a few. This is Kooyong's entry-level offering, and it's great value. It displays rich aromas of plum, cherry, and raspberry with a little spice and minerality. It has a food-friendly acid backbone that is well supported by flavours of cherries and strawberry with earthy and gamey notes.

KNIGHT GRANITE HILLS SHIRAZ 2004
(Macedon Ranges) \$32; 15% a/v ★★★★★
Food match: Roast chicken with rosemary and garlic potatoes

This wine spent three years maturing in oak barrels and a similar amount of time in the bottle but it's no oakly monster. In fact, it's a rather elegant wine with a fair degree of aged complexity. It has smells of cherries and plums, hints of black pepper and some well-integrated oak poking its nose out. There are mellow flavours of blackberry and raspberry and none of the alcohol heat that often shows up in wines of 15 per cent alcohol. It will age for a few more years, but why wait?

5★ OUTSTANDING 4★ REALLY GOOD 3★ GOOD 2★ OK 1★ NOT WORTH IT



REVIEW\ DECANTER



Toast to a roast

AT HOME, we have started what I hope is the beginning of a great tradition in our young family – a weekly roast chicken dinner.

It's our 19-month-old daughter's favourite meal, especially when the bird is served with a rice and pea pilau, and I'm not one to disappoint my little girl.

A roast chook is so versatile when it comes to matching with wine. It is easy to change the way a chicken is served to suit your favourite wine.

I'm sure we are not the only family out there that has a weekly roast chook. Everyone has their favourite way of roasting a chicken (for me, it's 45 minutes breast-side down before turning to brown off the breast skin) but it's essentially a simple dish; you can change the seasonings that flavour the chicken as well as what you serve on the side, but the chicken will still taste like, well, chicken.

Food and wine matching can be a bit chicken-and-egg: do you match a wine with the meal or tailor what you cook to suit the wine you want to drink? I prefer the latter. Especially when it comes to roast chicken.

In the past few weeks I've been experimenting with different wines and trimmings to go with the chicken and have found some great matches.

SAUVIGNON BLANC
Sauvignon blanc's herbaceous and vegetal characteristics go really well with a chicken covered in herbs or a bird served with vegies such as French beans and asparagus. West Australian semillon sauvignon blanc also fits the bill here. Kiwi sav blanc has had a dramatic affect on WA semillon blends recently, and there are some great bargains out there.

CHARDONNAY
A leaner style of chardonnay, such as those from cooler climates, with lemon and stone fruit characteristics, suits a simply roasted chicken with garlic and gravy made with some extra chardonnay and the pan juices.

VIOGNIER
With its floral, peach and apricot aromas and creamy, fleshy texture, viognier is a bold enough white to stand up to richer styles of roast, such as those with butter and herbs tucked under the skin, or try a chicken with a traditional stuffing plus some dried apricots.

PINOT NOIR
Pinot and duck is the classic match, but it's also a wine that goes well with chicken. Pinot noir is a good match with earthy root vegetables such as beetroot, celeriac and parsnip. Look for an example that displays earthy, forest-floor notes.

SHIRAZ
Find a cool-climate, medium-bodied shiraz that has red fruits such as cherry and peppery notes. Blockbuster shiraz styles overpower delicate chicken flavours and won't do here. Shiraz works best with chickens roasted with leafy herbs including thyme and rosemary, as well as roast vegies such as pumpkin.

I'll keep experimenting with roast chicken and wine matches and, hopefully, I'll have perfected it by the time our daughter is old enough to enjoy a glass of wine on a Sunday night. \

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LOVE A BARGAIN? **BLUE POLES VIOGNIER 2009** (Margaret River) \$17.50; 13.7% ★★★★★
Food match: Roast chicken with butter and herbs

Viognier is often described as a buxom wine – with its large and seductive flavours – but this wine is more Kate Moss than Pamela Anderson. It's aromatic, with aromas of orange blossom, viognier's trademark apricot and some smoky notes. It's bright with crisp, refreshing acid and flinty, citrus flavours.

