

# Greetings Wine Lovers

Well, spring seems to finally be in the air. We got a little tease of it a couple weeks ago, but then it turned cold and windy on us and pushed us back into winter. As we move deeper into April the forecast looks to improve and spring appears to be ready to settle in for good... and hopefully will stay with us for awhile before the blistering humidity of summer hits.

If you are planning to take advantage of the beautiful spring weather, and spend some time outdoors, why not make it a party? Having a "Spring Garden Party" is a great way to start the spring/summer season... not to mention the perfect opportunity to connect with friends that have been in winter hibernation. Light, refreshing spring wines, and appetizers, are just the right prescription to rid those winter blues... and having a "Garden Party" creates just the right opportunity to enjoy these light, refreshing wines and get motivated for the happy time of year to begin.

Let's take a minute and talk about some great spring wines for your garden party. Personally, I love light, crisp, refreshing spring wines this time of year and one of my favorite wines for the spring season is a wine known as "**Vinho Verde**", (*Vee-no Ver-dee*).

Vinho Verde is a white wine from Portugal and is simply known as "Vinho Verde". It literally means "Green Wine" because the grapes are harvested just before they're fully ripened. The wine is dry, crisp and refreshing, and has just a slight bit of "spritz". Think of it like a nice crisp white wine with just a small touch of club soda. It's a delicious, refreshing wine that is perfect by itself, or with light appetizers. It really is refreshing!

Another white wine I really enjoy in the spring is from the Piedmont region of Italy. The wine is called "**Gavi**" (*Gaa-vee*) or "**Cortese di Gavi**" (*Core-tay-see dee Gaa-vee*). It's made from the Cortese grape and is dry, crisp and refreshing... perfect for the spring and summer months. I particularly enjoy it with spring and summer salads that use mixed greens, arugula or spinach. Toss in some grape tomatoes and onions or scallions, artichoke hearts, or hearts of palm, perhaps some sliced pears, maybe some gorgonzola cheese... finish it off with



vinaigrette and pour yourself a glass of nice, crisp, dry and delicious Gavi and sit back and enjoy. Gavi is a great wine with light, cold, spring appetizers.

For red spring wines I enjoy those that lean toward being lighter in style, and that are dry wines with good acidity... wines that aren't overripe or full of fruit or spice. I prefer wines that can be consumed without food, or those that match well with lighter spring picnic type foods such as cured meats, smoked fish and assorted cheeses.

I really enjoy wines from **Beaujolais** (*Bow-joe-lay*) in the spring. Now I'm not talking about that "fad" wine that is released the 3rd Thursday in November each year... the wine we know as "Beaujolais Nouveau"... I'm talking about the wine that's available year round... the wine known as **Beaujolais**, or **Beaujolais Villages**.

Within the Beaujolais region in France there are ten more "area-specific" village-wines known as the Beaujolais "Cru". These 10 "Beaujolais Cru" wines are named for the village/area they originate in such as: Beaujolais "Morgon" or Beaujolais "Moulin A Vent" and they range in weight from lighter to more mid-bodied to more full-bodied.

For our "Spring Garden Party" I prefer the lighter "Cru" of Beaujolais such as "**Beaujolais Brouilly**"

(*Brew-ee*) or "**Beaujolais Fleurie**" (*Flur-ee*). They're great spring sipping wines that have just the right mix of aroma, texture, flavor and acidity, and are great wines with "Garden Party" fare... or simply by themselves.

I also enjoy a good glass of Italian "**Barbera**" (*Barbear-rah*) or "**Dolcetto**" (*Dole-cher-toe*). Barbera and Dolcetto are both wines (and named after grapes) from Italy. They are lighter in style with good acidity and work very well with antipasti dishes, cheeses, cured meats and spring-time fare.

You will mostly find Barbera listed as "Barbera" or Barbera d'Asti" (Barbera from the town/province of Asti... in Italy), or "Barbera d'Alba" (Barbera from the town/province of Alba... in Italy).

You will mostly find Dolcetto also listed as either "Dolcetto" or "Dolcetto d'Alba" (Dolcetto from the town/province of Alba in Italy).

These are some of my favorite spring time wines that go well with, or without food. So grab a glass of Vinho Verde, or "Beaujolais Fleurie" and celebrate the beginning of this wonderful time of year with some of your closest friends by planning a "Spring Garden Party."

**About the Author:** Joe Lertch, is the proprietor of the Vineyard Wine Bar, Bistro & Bottle Shop in Havre de Grace. If you are interested in learning more about wine, Joe regularly holds wine appreciation classes and Meet the Winemaker Events at the wine bar. For more information contact Joe directly at 443-502-2551, or check out their website at [www.thevineyardwinebar.com](http://www.thevineyardwinebar.com)