



WINE ENTHUSIAST[®]

MAGAZINE

JULY 2010

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A NEW SPIN ON THE BOTTLE

For summer, these on-the-go wines make portable libation easy.

Forget that debate on cork versus screwcap: There's a whole new world of wine packaging to consider, which can reduce shipping weight, fuel usage, container waste—and the burden in your backpack or picnic basket. Whether you are headed to a mountain, a meadow or the open water, lighten the load by carrying your wine in something other than a glass bottle. California's Three Thieves "Bandit" wines were the first to come in Tetra Pak cartons, which are 70% paper. Their Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot, and Pinot Grigio are available in three sizes: 1 liter, 500 ml, and single-serve 250 ml juice boxes, so if you and your friends can't agree on a grape, you can enjoy wine by the glass from a box. France's Boisset Family Estates (the people who brought us French Rabbit, also in Tetra Pak,) are entering the alternative packaging race with Yellow Jersey. French wine from the Pays d'Oc region, in a convenient PET plastic bottle. Whether you choose Pinot Noir or Sauvignon Blanc, you can be sure that a misstep on the hiking trail won't result in a wet daypack full of broken glass. The folks at South Africa's DGB are really thinking outside the box with the introduction of Douglas Green Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon in 3-liter plastic pouches. The bright, fun graphics immediately make you think of summertime, and the easy-carry handle and simple spout will make these refreshing wines the hit of your next family outing. If your day at the beach calls for a little bubbly, celebrate with Coppola Winery's Sofia Blanc de Blancs Mini, a California sparkling wine in a bright pink 187 ml can, each with its own straw. With any one of these on hand, you'll be down a little more than just body weight this swimsuit season.

—MIKE DESIMONE AND JEFF JENSSEN



VINO GAMING

8-BIT VINTNERS PAYS HOMAGE TO WINE AND VIDEO GEEKS.

If the proliferation of bars with Wii games like *Guitar Hero* and *Deer Hunter* is any indication, pairing alcohol with video games is not a completely new phenomenon. With 8-bit Vintners, wine combines more directly with the pixelated pastimes. The Walla Walla-based winery was founded by Mike James, a longtime wine lover and self-proclaimed geek, who teamed up with Washington winemaker Casey McClellan to blend his passions together. The name and label design is a throwback to the modest computing power of Nintendo and other retro consoles, beloved by old-school gamers.

Their first wine, called *Player 1* and released in September 2009, is a red blend composed of Syrah (50%), Tempranillo (30%), Cabernet Sauvignon (10%), Carmenere (5%) and Malbec (5%), with all fruit sourced from vineyards mostly

in the Walla Walla Valley and Wahluke Slope. Though James, a true techie (and graduate of Walla Walla's Center for Enology and Viticulture), admits that anything requiring intense eye-hand coordination—such as *Call of Duty* or other first-person shooters—doesn't mix well with multiple glasses, his suggested game pairings for *Player 1* include *Mega Man 2* on NES or *Shadow of the Colossus* for PS2.

Fellow gamers are obvious target drinkers though the ultimate 8-bit customer can be interpreted more broadly. According to James, "my wine is for anyone who spent time trying to save a princess or fit odd shaped blocks together."

Player 1 wine is available for sale at 8bitvintners.com and at select restaurants in the U.S. A white blend—to be called *Player 2*—is in the works.

—KATHLEEN MCKENNA

COOKING WITH ROCKSTARS

Wine savvy music fans can marry two loves by tuning into *Cooking with Rockstars*, a video podcast in which host and producer Jennifer Robbins explores the culinary prowess of indie musicians from Rufus Wainwright to Spoon's Britt Daniel. In addition to revealing favorite recipes and cooking techniques of top rockers, the show features concert clips, links to albums and more. Though not exactly gourmet (think Jack Black's Dorito Burrito), the dishes are fun, easy-to make and offer a homey glimpse into a lifestyle not typically associated with domestication. cookingwithrockstars.com —Susan Kostzewa

Brian Viglione, drummer for the Dresden Dolls, prepares the Viglione Family Sauce in his kitchen in Massachusetts.

