



Basic Juice Article
Drink. Different.

by: *Beau Jarvis*

After a dozen years of using my generic PC, which resembled a beige shoebox, I decided I needed a change. I bought an Apple Mac – sleek, stylish, almost sexy. I now actually look forward to using my computer. I feel more creative. I'm glad I tried something new. The same can be said for wine. Many of us get in the habit of drinking “safe wines,” a wine that is familiar and dependable. That's all fine and good. But what about the 300 or so other mystery bottles sitting on the shelf in the wine shop? There are excuses to help us avoid most of them: Too expensive – the California PowerCabernet “Chateau Schwarzenegger” for \$99. Too indecipherable – the Gothic scripted German Riesling that looks like it was just unearthed by Indiana Jones. Of course the excuse that many of us use is, “Look. I like what I like. Get off my back.” When you experiment in the world of wine you can easily get burned. A friend of mine recently grabbed a red wine with a flashy label and a pleasant name. After her first sip, she gasped, “Is this poison?” Yes, experimentation does have its drawbacks. However, it also has its rewards. So put down your glass of Chardonnay and trust me. I'll help you safely explore some unique bottles of the wine world and Drink. Different.

Globalization is a bad thing for wine. You can now find Merlot from Italy that just as easily could have come from Washington or California. Some wineries have adopted hi-tech methods that often result in good, but fairly generic wine. One country that still makes unique wine is Portugal. Many Portuguese wines are made using native grape varieties. They offer great flavors and are food-friendly to boot. Try Ramos Pinto *Duas Quintas* (\$9). It's a bold red wine that doesn't put your mouth in a tannic vice grip. This wine has a great nose of blackberry and strawberry. In the mouth a little spice springs to life, while your tongue is coated in velvet. A very rewarding experiment indeed.

So you don't want to (figuratively) cross the Atlantic for wine? Jaunt on up to Oregon. There are great Pinots in Oregon: Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir. Try Elk Cove

Pinot Gris (\$14). This white wine is one of my favorite domestic discoveries. It offers a lovely bouquet of scents: cinnamon, clove, apricot, peach and honeysuckle. A sip of Elk Cove is mouthwatering with citrus and fresh peach flavors. You could spend a whole evening sipping and admiring this wine. There are many more wines that make for rewarding experimentation: *Malbec* from Argentina, Aussie *Semillon*, *Primitivo* from Italy's heel, South African *Pinotage* – I could go on and on.

Who knows, maybe a little wine experimentation will inspire you to turn over a new leaf. You'll be a free spirit. You'll quit work and begin writing the great American novel. Of course once you get a wicked case of writer's block after typing the line, "It was a dark and stormy night...." you might come to the realization that trying new wine is a nice alternative to a midlife crisis.

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