



Speaking of wine

By Russ Disotell

Do you hear that sound? It's barbecues being rolled out onto decks and patios for another grilling season. Grills are being oiled, covers washed and propane tanks checked as family cooking returns to the great outdoors. Now, just add a few go-to wines for the season. Here are a trio of wines from three different regions, made with three different grape blends, but sharing one important characteristic. Outstanding quality at a very reasonable price.

Let's start with a Chardonnay from the Alto Adige/Veneto region of Italy, nestled against the Alps in the north end of the country. Lagaria Chardonnay Vigneti Delle Dolomiti 2013 (CSPC# 404483, \$13.55) tantalizes from the start with alluring aromas of peach, nectarine and vibrant tropical fruits. This is an unoaked Chardonnay, in the style of the Alto Adige, and offers bright fresh fruit and zesty acidity in a medium-bodied package.

You can expect lemon zest, pineapple, peach, pear, Granny Smith apple and pineapple fruit with just a whisper of

herbaceous spice. There is near perfect balance between the components, with a nice round mouth feel to the wine, followed by a crisp citrus finish with good length. You might want to keep a few bottles of this versatile beauty on hand to match with chicken, veal, pork, freshwater fish or seafood, especially calamari. Pasta with white sauce and cheese also comes to mind.

Switching to the red side of the ledger, we move to the Rhone region of France and Lavau Cote Du Rhone Villages 2011 (CSPC# 421024, \$13.70). An easy drinking blend of Grenache and Syrah. The nose is open and lush with blackberry, cherry and spice aromas dominating. The medium to full-bodied palate has wonderful complexity with red currant, raisin, cherry and plum fruit, augmented with chocolate and licorice flavours and herbaceous sage-like spice. The finish is lengthy, flavourful and dry. Match this superb Rhone with any and all manner of grilled red meats, from steak, to gourmet burgers, to your special rib recipe.

The last of our trio takes us to Chile and the Errazuriz Estate, Pinot Noir 2014 (CSPC# 226696, \$13.95, King Street LCBO). A New World Pinot that has an Old World sensibility, stressing structure and finesse. Errazuriz is medium-bodied with a lush texture and a complexity not usually seen at this price point. It's tart cherry, raspberry, plum and red berry fruit, with vanilla spice and a slight smokiness blend are seamlessly refreshing and food friendly acidity to produce a spectacular red for the barbecue. Partners include veal, pork, salmon, tuna and chicken. Enjoy! **LH**

Russ Disotell enjoyed a twelve year career with the LCBO. He spent the last four years as Product Advisor in Vintages purchasing where he was a member of the buying panel and endured the arduous task of tasting products every week! Since leaving the Board he has written columns and articles on wine, helped develop wine lists and conducted wine tastings.