

# The Best Wine Pairings To Serve With Your Next Barbecue

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*I cover what's interesting in wine, spirits, food, and travel.*

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Wine is a better pairing with barbecue than beer, at least that's how two-time James Beard award-winning Sommelier and Editorial Director at [SommSelect](#), David Lynch sees it. He cites acidity as the main reason but concedes, "That's the short answer. Acidity cuts fat, and BBQ is typically pretty fatty stuff. To me, the ideal pairing for a plate of BBQ ribs, pulled pork, chicken, etc. would be a bright, fruity Cru Beaujolais from France. These are high-acid, low-tannin, low-alcohol reds with bright (but not overripe) fruit. That's the sweet spot. Rich food counterbalanced by a lighter-weight red with energy; that's the play."

Yet, those full-bodied reds are also welcome to the party. Richer reds make the cut when it comes to barbecue adds Lynch; “Two that I often recommend with barbecue—especially the saucier, smokier styles—are California Zinfandel and Australian Shiraz or Grenache.” And, there is even a place for rosé lovers in the barbecue pairing game, explains Lynch, “Dry rosé is a fantastic choice, especially with some of the barbecue styles where vinegar plays a more prominent role: you need plenty of crisp acidity to counter that.”

The moral of the story is to think unconventionally and experiment with different things—if only to give you a reason to host more barbecues. Below are some additional (personally road-tested) pairing suggestions for to add to your summer wine shopping list—most are sold online if you cannot source them in a store.

### ***Lighter to Medium bodied reds:***

**Grégoire Hoppenot, Fleurie “Les Moriers,” Beaujolais, 2019:** One of Lynch’s offerings on SommSelect, they characterize it as having notes of black raspberry, red and black cherry with a thread of dried herbs, black pepper, and crushed stones. Just the right amount of juicy freshness to temper the fat in barbecue. \$35 online at SommSelect

**Umani Ronchi, San Lorenzo Rosso Conero, 2019:** Italy’s eastern shores are home to the 100% Montepulciano fruit used to make this charming, medium-bodied red wine. Rosso Conero is one of the region’s prime vineyards. Silky tannins, fully-integrated notes of black cherry, tobacco and vanilla. A great deal too. \$21.99

**Minus Tide Valenti Vineyard Syrah, 2019:** This cool climate syrah hails from the Valenti Vineyard along Mendocino Ridge—where you'll find less pricey land but fine climate and terroir for making precious gems such as this one—juicy and ripe with fresh bursting fruit followed by a more somber finish, medium tannins and a gentle mouthfeel. Love this with some spicy ribs. \$39

**Marchesi Alfieri, “Alfiera” Barbera d’Asti, 2018:** Densely woven flavors with superior structure and a silky texture. A fabulous red wine with a nice savory freshness to stand up to shredded pork barbecue sandwich, or even a platter of grilled vegetables. \$31

**Michaud Sangiovese, 2016:** This rich, mouth-watering red is a revelation from venerated winemaker Michael Michaud. Cultivated in the Chalone appellation, which is a geographer's delight, it boasts terroir with remnants of ancient volcanic soils that sits atop shifting tectonic plates. The wine shows intense red fruits of cherry and pomegranate with a vibrant wire of acidity to keep it savory and interesting. Perfect with a grilled steak. \$42

**Vietti Dolcetto d’Alba Tre Vigne 2020:** Fermented and aged in stainless steel, Vietti's Dolcetto retains a brilliant juicy freshness that marries well with barbecue. Blackberry and raspberry fruit notes, soft tannin and nice balance of acidity and body. \$24.99

***Richer, more full-bodied red wines:***

**Talosa Filai Lunghi, Nobile di Montepulciano, 2017:** Spice dense Nobile that gives off world class structure and heft. Pair it up with a heavy hitter—such as a grilled ribeye.

**Cembali Nero d'Avola, 2016:**

bush trained vines in Sicily. Aged five years, it shows plummy jam notes on the edges, a dark fruit core and loads of spice. Wonderful with a smokier barbecue sauce.

**Vina Pomal Reserva, 2015:** A 100% tempranillo wine, this bottle shows abundant dark and juicy berry fruit, baking spice and warm leather notes. Lovely with a shredded pork barbecue sandwich.

***Always Rosé*****Gamble Family Vineyards Rosé, Napa Valley, 2021:**

Grapes from some of Gamble's favorite Napa Valley vineyards combine to create a richly textured rose wine with notes of strawberry and cherry. Made from Oakville cabernet sauvignon, and a bit of Napa Valley cabernet franc, merlot and petit verdot. It is fermented for five months in stainless steel. \$26

**Bollinger Rosé:** A richly textured and complex sparkling rose that brims with notes of raspberry and wild strawberry. A layer of buttery, toasted brioche lends the wine depth, enough depth to stand up to a plate of ribs. One of the finer rose expressions from Champagne. Maybe drink the bottle first and then start the barbecue? (\$103 avg price)

***A Cool & Unusual Red:***

**Luretta Gutturnio Superiore, Emilia-Romagna, 2018:** A fabulous blend of Barbera and Bonarda that brings together freshness and bold flavor. Redolent with ripe red fruits and notes of warm spice, this red has the heft to support a rich barbecue sauce tempered with enough structure and acidity to keep things fresh and interesting. \$30.

## **Lynch's Best Practices for Pairing Wine with BBQ:**

1. Keep your red wines cool. Depending on the wine, in fact, you might consider throwing the bottle in the cooler with the beer. 50-55 degrees is ideal but you can go lower (refrigerator temp is typically around 40 degrees, which is a little cold, but it'll rise quickly once the bottle is out).
2. Fancy glassware and other formalities associated with wine tend to go out the window with barbecue—especially considering a lot of the food is meant to be eaten with your hands.
3. Large formats are your friend: A barbecue is a great time to serve wine in magnum or jeroboam—it looks cool and accommodates larger groups of people.
4. Consider the setting: If it's a hot daytime barbecue at the beach, you'll likely want to choose different (i.e. lighter, more refreshing) wines that if it's a backyard dinner that's a lot cooler.



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