



## Australian Good Food

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# Tell me about white blends

Mixing varieties makes wines that shine, and it's a bright idea to drink them young, says wine guru **Matt Skinner**.

### What's to like about them?

While the practice of blending grapes is frowned upon in some parts of the world, in Australia it's about as common as putting cheese with Vegemite. For example, a shot of merlot can soften and round cabernet sauvignon's hard edges, while sauvignon blanc can add zip and aromatic freshness to semillon.

### What are the different kinds?

The most common white blends combine sauvignon blanc and semillon, a style made famous by the Margaret River. More exciting blends are those incorporating riesling, savagnin, pinot gris and gewürztraminer.

### What blends would I like?

Lovers of crisp, fruity, dry whites should try sauvignon blanc and semillon. If you prefer a fuller, dry white, look for Rhône-influenced styles that combine varieties such as roussanne and viognier.

### How do I drink white blends?

White blends make terrific partners with food. Try lighter styles with simple grilled fish, calamari and fresh salads. Fuller examples are well suited to roast chicken, chargrilled pork chops and classic veal schnitzels.

### What can I drink now?

Most white blends are best consumed in their youth. Try to drink them within two years

of production, if not sooner.

Styles that incorporate aromatic grapes such as sauvignon blanc or viognier gradually lose freshness after about one year in the bottle.

### Please explain... TEXTURE

For me, wine is just as much about texture as it is about aroma and flavour. Every wine has a different mouth-feel. Some are light and crisp, while others are rich and oily. This is how we describe the texture of wine. Given that many blends of white and red wine are assembled from a number of different grape varieties, picking out familiar smells can become a little more difficult. Textures – a combination of sweetness, acidity, tannin, body and alcohol – can be easier to describe.

### DRINK THEM WITH...

- Smoked chicken salad, page 31
- Calamari with cannellini bean puree, page 48
- Buckwheat pasta, page 55

### MY FAVOURITES

#### 1 Big & beautiful

2008 d'Arenberg The Hermit Crab Viognier Marsanne, \$17

#### 2 Tried & tested

2010 Ad Hoc Straw Man Sauvignon Blanc Semillon, \$22

3 Aussie classic 2010 Evans & Tate Classic Dry White, \$18

4 Weird & wonderful 2010 De Bortoli Reserve Release EZ, \$36

5 Incredible value 2010 Peter Lehmann Layers White, \$16

