

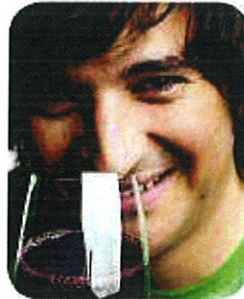


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Matt Skinner Uncorked

Blended families



**Ad Jibe Straw Man
Sauvignon Blanc
2010**

Margaret River, WA, \$22

A cracking blend of semillon and sauvignon blanc, where smells of restrained tropical and citrus fruit sing alongside those of leafy summer herbs, peas, green peppercorns and minerals. In the mouth it hits rich and focused, with taut citrus-like fruit balanced by fine, zippy acid.
 Sip with spinach and ricotta pie.

**Krinklewood Mixed White
2010**

Hunter Valley, NSW, \$16

Verdelho, semillon and chardonnay make up this three-way mixed white from biodynamic stars Krinklewood. Expect to find a bright and pretty nose of ripe pear, spiced apple, lemon and dried herb, while on the palate it's rich and utterly delicious.
 Drink it with smoked trout and broad bean salad.

**Eden Road The Long Road
Barbera Cabernet 2009**

Hilltops/Canberra, \$21

Last year's Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy winners continue their line of good form with a delicious drink-now blend of Piedmont native barbera and star of the red-grape world, cabernet sauvignon. Expect a dark and juicy nose of blackberry, quince and rhubarb, while the palate hits lush and intense with dark fruit, racy acid and a long finish.

From bacon and eggs to Dolce & Gabbana to tennis doubles heroes the Woodies, history has seen its fair share of great combinations, where the grand total far exceeds the combined sum of its parts and whose success you can't really explain – they just work.

The same principles apply to wine. Some of the world's greatest drops are composed of two or more grape varieties – cabernet and merlot, semillon and sauvignon blanc, chardonnay and pinot noir.

In saying that, the practice of blending grapes is far from a new one, and in Europe, where most wines are labelled regionally (as opposed to by variety, as we do in Australia), many wines contain upwards of two or three grape varieties. And while both Bordeaux and Champagne are obvious examples, the practice is nowhere more famous than in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, where a dizzying 13 grape varieties are permitted within the final blend.

Slightly less extreme, Australian winemakers have championed the pairing of cabernet with shiraz, sauvignon blanc with semillon, and increasingly a handful of Euro-styled, locally made red-and-white blends containing three or four different grapes. These often incorporate some older oak in an attempt to create wines with greater texture and complexity – wines that sit as comfortably alongside food as they do simply being slugged back in summer.

Compatibility with food aside, there are a couple of good reasons for blending different grapes together. For example, a shot of merlot can help soften and round cabernet sauvignon's hard edges, while sauvignon blanc added to semillon can add real zip and freshness.

And then there's the fact that if you're working to a budget, blending grapes can be a good way to reduce your costs. It's like adding sauce to a pie, jam to a doughnut, you to your better half; the end result is usually far more exciting than the individual components on their own.

With great combinations in mind, here are three of the best new blends to add to your shopping list.