

# New libations

Austrian wines take the stage in the States. Plus: top kosher selections for a Passover seder *By Karen MacNeil*

THE CURRENT INFLUX of Austrian wines is one of the most exciting developments in American wine culture.

Austrian whites are among the crispest, most vivacious wines from Europe. One exciting example is *grüner veltliner* (GREW-ner VELT-leaner), which is dry, thrilling, and crisp with a white pepper spiciness. Try a chilled *grüner veltliner* with our Pork Schnitzel with Noodles and Browned Cabbage (find recipe at [CookingLight.com](http://CookingLight.com)) for a classic Austrian food and wine pairing. Austrian rieslings, which are equally famous, are as clean, pure, fresh, and minerally as a mountain stream. They are very dry, like *grüner veltliner*, and often have just a hint of peach and apricot, which makes them a nice match with spring fare. Any good wineshop is bound to have Austrian white wines, and they're perfect for spring dishes. Look for any of these producers: Bründlmayer, Hirsch, Pichler, Prager, or Kracher.

Austrian reds are juicy and fruity, almost like American zinfandels, but with less alcohol. The best, *zweigelt* (ZVHY-gelt) and *blaufränkisch* (BLOUGH-frahnk-ish), are terrific with grilled steak. *Zweigelt* is juicy and rich, while *blaufränkisch* is more muscular, with dark-berried fruit and a nice surge of spice. Austrian reds are a bit more difficult to find in the United States than whites, as there are no widely available producers, but that is changing. So be on the lookout for any Austrian *zweigelt* or *blaufränkisch* you find, and give it a try.

*Karen MacNeil is author of The Wine Bible and Wine, Food & Friends, host of the PBS series Wine, Food, and Friends with Karen MacNeil, and chairperson of the Professional Wine Studies Program at the Culinary Institute of America in Napa Valley, California. Product prices vary.*



## Great glasses

Even if Austrian wine is new to you, Austrian glassware may be an old friend. Austria is the home of Riedel (rhymes with "needle"), the crystal manufacturer many believe produces the world's finest wineglasses. The firm, which has been run by 11 generations of the Riedel family, enjoys a worldwide reputation for creating wineglasses designed to maximize the taste, bouquet, and appearance of wines.

## Kosher wines

In honor of Passover, here are top picks from my recent tasting of *mevushal* kosher wines. *Mevushal* wines are flash pasteurized under a rabbi's supervision; Jewish law allows them to be handled and consumed by Jews, as well as by non-Jews, and still retain their kosher designation. Most kosher wines sold in the United States are designated as *mevushal* or *mev* on the label.

**Abarbanel Riesling**  
2004 *Mevushal* from  
Alsace, France (\$20),  
is a delightfully fresh,



light white with delicate hints of apricot. Try it with sautéed chicken and mushrooms.

**Herzog "Special Reserve" Chardonnay**  
2005 *Mevushal* from  
California's Russian



**River Valley** (\$30). This is an elegant, medium-bodied wine with spicy, toasty vanilla aromas and flavors.

**Baron Herzog Old Vine Zinfandel** 2005 *Mevushal* from Lodi, California (\$13), has lovely



aromas of fruit preserves and the deep essence of ripe blackberries, spice, vanilla, cedar, and eucalyptus.

**Dalton Shiraz "Oak Aged" Not *Mevushal*** 2005 from Upper Galilee, Israel (\$20), boasts



dense, rich blueberry-blackberry, meaty, spicy, vanilla flavors with a great structure and a crushed velvet texture.

**Galil Mountain "Yiron" Not *Mevushal*** 2003 from Galilee, Israel (\$20), is a cabernet-



merlot blend with blackberry and cedar notes, and hints of vanilla and balsam, compatible with red meat. ♡