



**WINEENTHUSIAST**  
MAGAZINE

# BUYING GUIDE

## JUNE/2013

An old Chenin Blanc vine in the Chinon appellation of France's Loire Valley.

### **BUYING GUIDE**

**2 LOIRE VALLEY**

**15 SOUTHWEST FRANCE**

**17 OTHER FRANCE**

**18 NORTHERN ITALY**

**26 SPAIN**

**30 PORTUGAL**

**31 AUSTRALIA**

**32 ARGENTINA**

**34 CHILE**

**40 CALIFORNIA**

**57 OREGON**

**60 WASHINGTON**

**64 SPIRITS**

**65 BEER**

FOR ADDITIONAL RATINGS AND  
REVIEWS, VISIT  
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## BEER

### WELCOMING THE WIT

**W**ith long days at the beach and outdoor entertaining ushering in summer, now is the time to stock up on refreshing styles of beer, like light lagers, pale ales and easy-drinking IPAs. But perhaps the most iconic style for the season is wheat beer. This light-bodied, yet oh-so-satisfying glass of gold is sure to quench your thirst while simultaneously offering complexity and depth of flavor.

Belgian wheat beers (aka witbier, witte, wit, white) are especially welcome during the summer months, when their assertive carbonation, crisp citrus notes and delicate spice aromas provide a refreshing counterbalance to warm weather.

In the U.S., wheat beers have become increasingly popular, and many domestic brewers release summer seasonals made in that style. Normally pale to golden in color, with a substantial head, citrus-dominant wheat flavors and brisk carbonation, American versions often take

traditional European styles and add their own twist: a unique spice, an unusual hop, a special brewing technique.

Because many wheat beers are bottle conditioned, it is common to find some sediment at the bottom of the bottle. To ensure a proper pour, empty half of the beer into a glass and then swirl the remaining liquid in the bottle before emptying what remains. In this way, any of the delicious yeast sediment that might have settled to the bottom of the bottle can be fully enjoyed.

Enjoy your favorite wheat beers while summer lasts—they're perfect partners for light fare, like salads, grilled chicken or fish.

But if wheat beers aren't your thing, there are plenty of other seasonally-appropriate styles worth trying. Be sure to check your local distributor for the latest releases, and visit *buying guide.winemag.com* for reviews of more worthy selections.

*Prost!*

—LAUREN BUZZEO

**93 Ayinger Bräu-Weisse Hefe-Weizen (Hefeweizen; Ayinger Brewery, Germany).** This beer is a classic, showing all of the hefeweizen hallmarks: cloudy golden color in the glass with a huge, frothy head, gorgeous lacing and upfront aromas of wheat, banana, yeasty spice and lemon. The body is smooth and creamy yet clean, lifted by medium carbonation. On the palate, flavors of wheat-bread dough and earthy spice dominate, followed by notes of lemon peel, pepper and clove on the finish. This is an easy-drinking selection of moderate alcohol that's perfect for summer sipping. Pair it with barbecued or grilled chicken, mild cheeses or summer salads. Merchant du Vin.  
**abv:** 5.1% **Price:** \$4/500 ml

**93 Brasserie du Bocq Blanche de Namur (Witbier; Du Bocq Brewery, Belgium).** This is a well-made, traditional Belgian witbier that's new to the Merchant du Vin portfolio, having just launched in the U.S. this May. Named after Princess Blanche of Namur—who married King Magnus of Sweden in 1336 A.D.—this wit shows forward scents of orange peel, underripe pear, coriander, clove, soft pepper and clean wheat. Those notes follow through on the light- to medium-bodied palate, with additional nuances of licorice and earthy spice that linger onto the finish. The bright carbonation and brisk citrus flavor, as well as the low alcohol, make this a great warm-weather selection. Merchant du Vin.  
**abv:** 4.5% **Price:** \$10/750 ml

**92 Ayinger Urweisse Authentic Bavarian Dark Weizen (Dunkelweizen; Ayinger Brewery, Germany).** The nose of this dunkel boasts soft caramel and roasted malt notes, with additional hints of raw dough, fresh banana and baking spice. The rich mouthfeel is full-bodied and round, almost chewy, with intense wheat and yeast flavors that are lifted by medium carbonation. The finish is clean and refreshing. Overall, this is well balanced, flavorful and remarkably accessible. Merchant du Vin.  
**abv:** 5.8% **Price:** \$4/500 ml

**91 Herrmannsdorfer Schweinsbräu Weisse (Hefeweizen; Reidenburger Brauhaus, Germany).** This organic hefeweizen is balanced and easy-drinking, with sessionable alcohol and a clean close. It pours a cloudy amber-mahogany color, with forward scents of fresh bread, ripe banana, light caramel and clove that carry through with similar intensity to the medium-weight mouth. The texture is full, but medium carbonation keeps the palate fresh. A hint of grassy bitterness remains though the finish. Magellan Wine Imports, Inc.  
**abv:** 5.2% **Price:** \$4/500 ml

**90 Port City Optimal Wit (Belgian-style Witbier; Port City Brewing Company, VA).** Brewed with coriander, orange peel and grains of paradise, this is a well-balanced, smooth and immensely drinkable witbier that any fan of the style can appreciate. The nose and mouth are wheat-driven, but accents from the spice bill are there to add depth and complex-

ity. Lemony briskness complements the flavors of clove and pepper on the close, ending slightly dry but clean.  
**abv:** 5.0% **Price:** \$11/12 oz 6 pack

**90 Samuel Adams White Lantern (Belgian-style Witbier; The Boston Beer Co., MA).** BBC is on a roll, and just won't stop churning out new offerings. This crisp wheat beer is a welcome addition to its seasonal lineup. Named for the lanterns used on the ships that carried spices back to Belgium in the 17th century, it harmoniously balances the yeasty and spicy characteristics of a white ale with sweet notes of tangerine. Additional aromas of biscuit, soft grass and a hint of pineapple add depth to the nose. The mouthfeel is full but not overdone, with complementary medium carbonation. Flavors of white pepper and coriander carry on long into the finish.  
**abv:** 5.5% **Price:** \$9/12 oz 6 pack

**88 Full Sail Brewer's Share Wendell's Weizen (Weizenbock; Full Sail Brewing Company, OR).** For Full Sail's Brewer's Share series, each brewer picks a local charity or organization to receive a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the beer. This one's brewed by assistant packaging supervisor Wendell Bryant, and the benefitting charity is the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute. A malty weizenbock (a dunkelweizen of bock strength), this shows its power with slightly booze-inflected aromas and flavors of raw bread dough, banana, ripe tropical fruit, toasted nut and caramel malt. Spicy accents of clove and pepper remain through the close. It's a sipping beer, for sure. Enjoy it on a cool summer night or cellar some until fall.  
**abv:** 7.2% **Price:** \$5/22 oz

**87 Hangar 24 Orange Wheat (Fruit Beer; Hangar 24 Craft Brewery, CA).** This interesting wheat beer uses whole, locally grown oranges throughout the brewing process. These complement the style, which often features prominent citrus characteristics. The result is a lively, orange-dominated brew that offers secondary accents of wheat cracker, grass and very faint sweet spice. Light, slightly sweet and refreshing, this is one to enjoy in the sun on hot summer days.  
**abv:** 4.6% **Price:** \$9/12 oz 6 pack

**85 Double Take Belgian White (Belgian-style Witbier; Brewmaster's Choice, NY).** This is a light and easygoing wheat beer that's a good session selection. The aromas are clean and soft, with just faint suggestions of wheat, grass and sweet spice. Medium carbonation lends the palate a brisk and lively feel, followed by a short but clean finish laced with a delicate orange-rind flavor.  
**abv:** 5.4% **Price:** \$9/12 oz 6 pack