

AUG 11, 2016 @ 04:45 PM 516 VIEWS

## Napa Valley's Answer to Summer is Sauvignon Blanc



Four Napa Sauvignons to Drink in the Heat. (Photo by Lauren Mowery)

For those of you on the East Coast, the weather this week has been as insufferably hot and swampy as the backwaters of Louisiana in July. And when you're trying to keep cool in the Bayou, a robust, tannic Napa Cab is probably the last wine you want in your glass. But Californians have also endured their share of seasonal heat waves. So, if you're a diehard Rutherford drinker from New York or live in the thick of wine country, what do you sip during the dog days of summer? Sauvignon Blanc.

Napa Valley Sauvignon should have broad appeal, but it's still a relatively unsung category. Chardonnay gets all the glory, although both remain tucked deep into the shadow of Cabernet. Yet Sauvignon Blanc performs well in the climate and soils of the region. And for those who passionately dislike (I stop short of using the word "hate") the grassy, pungent style associated with the cooler climates of France or New Zealand, California's warm weather and sun-soaked days produce a fruitier, even happier, expression.

According to winemaker Jim Close of Gamble Family Vineyards, Yountville is the sweet spot for this aromatic white. As one of the more southern AVAs, "it's warm and sunny enough for the green herbaceous flavors to dissipate yet cool enough at night that the zesty, zingy acid is retained" he said.

**Gamble Family Vineyards, Gamble Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc, 2015, \$25**

Just a few sprigs of Sauvignon's characteristic herbaceousness are tucked between notes of lemon curd, guava, and stone fruit. Despite being fermented in barrel, the wine has superb focus and energy, with vibrancy and freshness on the long finish. Would marry well to a summer vegetable pasta salad, chilled and drizzled with fruity olive oil and lemon juice.