

SAINT GOOSE

Volume 56: Que Syrah, Syrah: Fall Is Here

October 2026

The temperatures are dropping, the days are getting shorter, and suddenly we're reaching for wines with a little more texture, spice, and soul. Fall is officially here, and this month we're embracing it with a lineup that doesn't follow any particular rules.

We're traveling from the cool, salty Atlantic coast of Spain to the limestone and volcanic soils of southern Australia, through the Barossa Valley, into a little-known corner of France's Rhône Valley, down to South Africa, and finally back to the Rhône. Along the way we'll taste everything from crisp Albariño and textured Chardonnay to fragrant Grenache and three very different expressions of Syrah.

There isn't one grape, country, or winemaking style tying October's wines together. And that's kind of the point. These are simply six wines that feel right as summer gives way to fall.

Que Syrah, Syrah. Whatever will be, will be. And hopefully, it'll be delicious.

Thanks for being a part of The Flock.

Wine #1 2024 Columna Albariño

2 Bottle + 4 Bottle Mixed

Varietal: 100% Albariño
Region: Rías Baixas, Galicia, Spain
Taste: Lemon zest, quince, pear skin, jasmine, citrus pith, wet stone
Elevage: Indigenous yeast fermentation; aged in stainless steel
Serve: Chilled
Pairings: Oysters, grilled shrimp, sushi, fish tacos

Columna comes from Condado do Tea, the warmest of the five subzones of Rías Baixas. Located inland along the Miño River and just across the border from Portugal, Condado do Tea produces a slightly broader and more generous expression of Albariño than the intensely maritime wines found closer to the Atlantic.

Winemakers Alberto Orte and Rodri Méndez work with pergola-trained vines planted in the 1970s on granite and alluvial soils. After a short cold maceration, fermentation occurs naturally with indigenous yeasts and the wine remains in stainless steel, preserving Albariño's bright fruit, floral aromatics and naturally refreshing acidity.

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Albariño has thick skins that help it thrive in Galicia's wet Atlantic climate, and its combination of citrus, stone fruit, flowers and saline minerality makes it one of the world's great seafood wines. Across the Miño River in Portugal, you'll find the same grape under another name: *Alvarinho*.

Wine #2 2025 Patrick Sullivan Chardonnay

4 Bottle Mixed

Varietal: 100% Chardonnay
Region: Limestone Coast, South Australia
Taste: White peach, lemon, lime, grapefruit, hazelnut, subtle toast
Elevage: Fermented in tank and barrique; approximately 25% new oak
Serve: Chilled
Pairings: Roast chicken, scallops, grilled fish, mushroom risotto

Patrick Sullivan is one of the names associated with Australia's newer generation of site-focused, minimal-intervention winemakers. For this Chardonnay, Sullivan looks to the Limestone Coast of South Australia, sourcing fruit from Mount Gambier, Coonawarra and Wrattenbully.

This is fascinating Chardonnay country. The vineyards lie within one of the world's largest volcanic plains, with shallow volcanic topsoil sitting over limestone and basalt. The combination of relatively cool conditions and unusual geology helps Chardonnay retain plenty of acidity while developing generous fruit and texture.

The grapes are whole-cluster crushed and pressed before fermentation in a combination of tank and barrique, with roughly 25% new oak. The result walks the line between two Chardonnay extremes: it's neither lean and austere nor heavily oaked and buttery. Instead, expect bright citrus and white peach balanced by a little creaminess, nuttiness and smoky oak.

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Wine #3 2022 Seppeltsfield Grenache

4 Bottle Reds

Varietal:	100% Grenache
Region:	Barossa, South Australia
Taste:	Strawberry, red cherry, plum, rosewater, dried herbs, anise
Elevage:	Short skin contact during fermentation; 3-4 months in stainless steel
Serve:	Cellar Temperature
Pairings:	Pork sausage, duck, barbecue chicken, mushroom pizza

Founded in 1851, Seppeltsfield is one of Australia's most historic wine estates. The property is famous for its extraordinary collection of fortified wines, old vineyards and the historic 1888 Gravity Cellar, which remains part of the winemaking operation today.

This Grenache comes from Seppeltsfield's Great Terraced Vineyard, where bush-trained Grenache grows in soils containing slate, quartz and ironstone. The wine is made with a surprisingly gentle hand: only about a week on the skins followed by a short three-to-four-month rest in stainless steel rather than oak.

The result represents the modern face of Barossa Grenache. Instead of the big, ripe and heavily extracted wines once associated with the region, producers are increasingly treating Grenache almost like Pinot Noir: emphasizing perfume, red fruit, freshness and delicate tannins. Try this one slightly chilled and watch how beautifully the strawberry, floral and spice notes emerge.

Wine #4 2022 Domaine Gallety Rouge

4 Bottle Reds

Varietal:	50% Grenache, 50% Syrah
Region:	Côtes du Vivarais, Ardèche, France
Taste:	Blackberry, black cherry, violet, black pepper, garrigue, sweet spice
Elevage:	21-day maceration; 14-15 months in oak barrels
Serve:	Cellar Temperature
Pairings:	Braised beef, lamb, roast pork, grilled sausages

Domaine Gallety is one of the benchmark producers of Côtes du Vivarais, a small and relatively unknown appellation west of the Rhône River in the Ardèche. Alain Gallety established the domaine with his father in 1974 and began farming organically in 1979, long before organic viticulture became fashionable. Today the estate is run by Alain and his son David-Alexandre.

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Côtes du Vivarais sits where the southern Rhône begins climbing toward the Massif Central. Its predominantly clay-limestone soils and slightly cooler conditions give Grenache and Syrah a different personality than you'll find farther south around Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

The Gallety Rouge is an equal blend of Grenache and Syrah from vines approximately 40-45 years old, with remarkably low yields of around 25 hectoliters per hectare. Grapes are harvested by hand, macerated for about 21 days and then aged 14-15 months in oak. Grenache supplies generosity and fruit while Syrah contributes darker fruit, pepper and structure, producing a Rhône red with both richness and freshness.

Wine #5 2024 Brookdale Mason Road Syrah

2 Bottle + 4 Bottle Mixed + 4 Bottle Reds

Varietal: 100% Syrah
Region: Paarl, South Africa
Taste: Violet, red cherry, plum, black olive, smoked meat, black pepper
Elevage: Natural fermentation; 8 months in French oak barrels and large foudre
Serve: Cellar Temperature
Pairings: Lamb chops, smoked pork, steak, grilled mushrooms

Brookdale Estate sits in a secluded valley beneath South Africa's Du Toitskloof Mountains in Paarl. Winemaker Xander Sadie's approach is less about making the massive, sun-drenched reds people sometimes associate with South Africa and more about freshness, perfume and savory complexity.

The Syrah is hand harvested in individual parcels and fermented naturally in open-top fermenters. A portion of the fruit goes into fermentation as whole bunches, adding aromatic lift and savory character. After fermentation, the wine completes malolactic fermentation in barrels and large foudres before spending another eight months in a combination of 300- and 500-liter French oak barrels and 2,500-liter foudre.

This is a great example of why Syrah has become such an exciting grape in South Africa. It combines New World fruit with characteristics we often associate with the northern Rhône: violets, black olive, smoked meat and pepper. The tannins remain fine and the acidity surprisingly bright, making this much more elegant than its warm-climate origins might suggest.

And remember: Syrah and Shiraz are the exact same grape. Producers increasingly use "Syrah" when they want to signal a fresher, more savory and Rhône-inspired style, while "Shiraz" traditionally suggests a riper and more powerful expression.

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Wine #6 2024 J.L. Chave Sélection "Mon Cœur"

4 Bottle Mixed + 4 Bottle Reds

Varietal:	Grenache & Syrah
Region:	Côtes du Rhône, France
Taste:	Black cherry, plum, blackberry, pepper, anise, garrigue
Elevage:	Traditional Rhône vinification with fruit sourced from multiple southern Rhône terroirs
Serve:	Cellar Temperature
Pairings:	Beef stew, grilled lamb, roast pork, aged cheese

Few names carry more weight in the Rhône Valley than Chave. The Chave family's winemaking history dates to 1481, spanning 16 generations. Today Jean-Louis Chave produces some of the world's most celebrated wines from the legendary hill of Hermitage in the northern Rhône.

J.L. Chave Sélection is Jean-Louis' négociant project, allowing him to work with fruit outside the family's estate holdings while applying the same philosophy and attention to detail. "Mon Cœur," meaning "My Heart," is his interpretation of Côtes du Rhône and is generally built around approximately equal parts Grenache and Syrah from several carefully selected southern Rhône terroirs.

Grenache brings warmth, ripe fruit and generosity, while Syrah contributes color, pepper, darker fruit and structure. The result is classic Rhône: ripe black cherry and plum layered with herbs, pepper, anise and savory spice.

It's also a fitting place to finish this month's tasting. After experiencing Syrah alongside Grenache in the Ardèche and then on its own in South Africa, we return to the Rhône and one of its most historic families for a fuller, warmer expression of the grapes.