

DAILY FOOD**Weekend Wine**

Olema Cab, great with a steak

BY WES MARSHALL, 12:16PM, TUE. JUL. 31, 2018

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With temperatures soaring, we'd certainly forgive you for looking for something icy to drink this weekend. In the wine world, that means whites or rosés. I have to admit, I've been grabbing good quality Pilsner beers like the ABGB Industry Pils. Or a nice cold Live Oak Hefeweizen.

But after the sun goes down and we get a cold snap into the mid-90's, it's time for lighting the charcoal and grilling some meat. That's when I will happily drink an American Cabernet. However, with this particular varietal, you have to follow me on a buying strategy.



Since we'll be having it with food, I have zero interest in an over-the-top fruit bomb. Also, wine should be affordable, and the good news is that Cabernet's price often co-varies with jamminess. In other words, many of the most food-friendly American Cabs tend to be medium priced, in the \$15-\$25 range. These wines all have distinct dark currant aromas, usually with a touch of vanilla aroma from oak.

My usual strategy is to head to the Washington State section, because this is a type of wine they really understand and you can get something like a Chateau Ste. Michelle, Waterbrook, or Columbia Crest Grand Estate wines for about \$15. One wine from California that has recently caught my attention is the Olema Cabernet Sauvignon. If the name is new to you, perhaps you would know their owners, Amici Cellars. They mix grapes from three Sonoma areas, all of which are well known for their Cabs: Alexander Valley, Dry Creek, and Rockpile.

Don't expect one of the Port-like monsters you get with an expensive Napa Cab. Those wines do well in tastings because they are so over-the-top that they will always stand out in a crowd. That's fine if you are a judge that takes a small sip then spits it out. But if you and your lover intend to split a bottle with a grilled ribeye, I promise you'll be happier with a medium-bodied, well-made wine like the Olema. This will run about \$25, which certainly isn't cheap, but it is at least approachable. Instead of spending the equivalent of a car payment at a steak house, get a bottle of Olema Cab, a thick ribeye, a sack of charcoal, and a wedge salad with some home made blue cheese dressing. You'll be out \$50 max, and it will taste better and be more fun. It's not too early to start planning a picnic right now!

*Photo Courtesy of the Winery*