



## WINE NOTES

By Dorothy J. Gaiter and John Brecher

### TEX-MEX MIX

Is there a wine that goes well with Mexican food, particularly Tex-Mex? Texans live on this stuff and I was wondering if there was room for wine with a food that typically is consumed with either beer or tequila?

—*Michael Cotter, Denton, Texas*

When we think about wines that pair well with Mexican food, we think fruity, refreshing and informal. To us, that means Beaujolais as the red and Sauvignon Blanc, perhaps from Chile, as the white. We'd serve the Beaujolais chilled, or at least at cool room temperature. In both cases, get the wines as young as possible. They'll generally cost around \$10 a bottle or less. But keep this in mind, too: Many of us order Chinese beer at Chinese restaurants, Japanese beer at Japanese restaurants and Mexican beer at Mexican restaurants. How about, next time you have Tex-Mex food, trying to pair it with a wine from

Texas or Mexico? They are still hard to find in many areas of the country, but wines from both Texas and Mexico have come a long way in the past decade and some passionate, committed vintners there really need your support. For Mexican wines, we've found Sauvignon Blanc to be the best bet, and it pairs well with the food, too. The Texas industry is now large enough that you might have a pretty good selection where you live. In fact, we just picked up the phone and called a store in Fort Worth called Put a Cork in It and asked owner Chris Keel which of the 25 Texas wines he sells would pair best with Tex-Mex. He suggested a \$12 wine called Wichita Red from Wichita Falls Vineyards & Winery that he described as smooth, with soft tannins and a little sweetness because "you're not wanting something big and bold and spicy." His white choice, a \$7 Chenin Blanc from Fall Creek Vineyards, has good acidity and minerality and would be "great with chicken fajitas," he told us.

**THE SKINNY ON SULFITES**  
I have some friends who say sulfites are added to U.S. wines and are not present in European wines. I say that sulfites are a natural byproduct of winemaking and are present in all wines; it is just that U.S. law requires that the bottle say it has sulfites.

—*Al Moore, Plano, Texas*

You're right, Al. Your friends have fallen for one of the great urban myths of wine, right up there with "Two-Buck Chuck is really overproduction Lafite." Actually, the European Union adopted regulations, effective November 2005, that require wines made and sold in Europe to be labeled with a sulfite warning, highlighting the long-undeclared practice of sulfite use in France and other European countries. Tell your friends to pay up.

—*Melanie Grayce West*

*contributed to this column*

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