

in the summer it's just really refreshing."

For the next few weeks, Marché's seasonal apéritif is Monmousseau Brut with a rhubarb-vanilla syrup (which West also uses in a rhubarb sour with vodka and Meyer lemon). West says the drink is a way to showcase the housemade syrup without distracting from it with other ingredients. "You can see how it reacts with the bubbles, and you can explore the nuances of that ingredient, so you can taste the rhubarb, the vanilla, the acids, all those complex flavors integrating, and they just sit on the canvas of Champagne."

The apéritif is a wonderful drink with an unusual flavor, and it shares space in the Champagne cocktails section of the menu with both West's concoctions and classics of the genre, including the Kir royale (named for a mayor of Dijon, France) and the French 75, which takes its name from a piece of WWI French artillery and is apparently ripe for experimentation. The new Jo Fed's lists on its online menu a variation called the Fifth Avenue 75, which adds Grand Marnier to the mix, and at Bel Ami, Morgenthaler's menu includes an absinthe-washed French 75 that gives an extra sharpness and kick to the drink.

West's drink menu also includes the Champagne julep, an inspired variation on the mint julep. "I love bourbon and mint and sugar, but sometimes you just want mint and sugar — but you still want a drink out of it, and not just water," West says. "It's an active, tall, elegant looking thing ... not too sweet." His seasonal apéritif shifts every few months, appropriately, and might include pear brandy in the winter or a blackberry coulis with basil in the summer. "Our menu is about celebrating bounty in seasonal offerings, and the cocktail menu is an exact reflection of that concept," he explains.

Marché and Bel Ami aren't the only places making Champagne drinks, which offer a relatively low-alcohol summer treat that does just what Amanda Hesser, writing in *The New York Times* in 2001, suggests a hot-weather quaff ought to do: "A summer drink should be fleeting, not sustaining," she writes. "It should slake your palate, cool you off and give you a whiff of alcohol without knocking you off your feet."

West expands on that idea, saying, "It's ideal for summer to have something cold, bubbly and spritzly with some

seasonal great ingredients in it, or just nice produce." The classic bellini, a blend of Prosecco and peach puree, appears on Café Lucky Noodle's online menu; in West Eugene, Azul offers sparkling wine drinks with raspberry coulis or mango puree.

Of course, it's not too hard to find a combination of wine and fruit in the summer: Plenty of places offer sangria, the Spanish, summery wine, brandy and citrus beverage. But for the sake of space and variety, we'll leave sangria alone for the moment (it does, after all, usually come in a pitcher rather than a cocktail glass, though that changes in some restaurants) after noting that Davis' Restaurant has a delicious-sounding white wine sangria available, and Irala's Mark Zolun says his restaurant does sangrias with both red and white wines as occasional summer specials.

At the moment, Marché's bar menu is one of the few places nearby where you'll find a non-sangria drink made with non-sparkling wine: the bicyclette, an apéritif composed of Campari, dry white wine and soda. In this recipe, says West, "You're not really doing anything to the wine. You're just using it for what it is and making it work." Morgenthaler notes, "I don't get many orders for those, but worldwide it's still a very popular drink."

The bicyclette is a bright, vibrant red; with sweetness and herbal flavors from the Campari (the Italian apéritif flavored with herbs and fruits) and the dry sauvignon blanc with which West makes the drink, it is, as he suggests, a drink for nursing as you settle in and relax before dinner.

Across Fifth Avenue at Chanterelle, you might, if you time your visit properly, find yourself in possession of a glass of vin de pamplemousse, a citrus-wine apéritif that's probably infrequently made at home as it takes considerable planning ahead. Chef Brendan Mahaney found the recipe in one of the Chez Panisse cookbooks (*Chez Panisse Fruit*), but as he describes the preparation, it's clearly not a precise, recipe-required sort of thing: "I make it in big batches. Six bottles of crisp white wine, about a 750 ml bottle of vodka, some vanilla beans and a cup of sugar... then you chop up a bunch of citrus: various types of grapefruit, three of each, ruby and white. You'll want some oranges in there. You can use caracara, you can use some Meyer lemon or regular lemon. We've put kumquats in before."

After the fruits are sliced (peel and all), they're stirred into the booze and covered with a plate (to keep the fruit submerged). "Then you let it sit in a cool dark spot for about a month," Mahaney says, "and then you have a refreshing beverage." (A *New York Times* recipe gets a bit more specific, instructing readers to let the mix sit for 40 days and to stir it once a day.) Chanterelle recently finished off a batch of vin de pamplemousse, but Mahaney's got more in the works. He notes that the citrus is best and easiest to come by as winter comes to a close, "but then we wait for a month and we hope for nicer weather" in which to enjoy the drink.

Finding recipes that involve non-sparkling, non-fortified, non-aromatized wine can be a bit of a hunt. *Food and Wine Cocktails 2008*, the annual collection of some of the best new recipes put together by *Food and Wine* magazine, lists in its "Wine, Beer and Apéritifs" chapter 10 bubbly beverages and two with still wines (a vanilla-pecan cocktail which calls for "crisp white wine" and a cobbler made with ruby port), and a few drinks with a bit of wine (a Lillet here, a viognier there) turn up throughout the rest of the book. Portlander Mittie Helmich's *The Ultimate Bar Book* offers a few dozen fortified wine recipes, but of just plain wine, there are only eight, and one of those is the white wine spritzer. Though it doesn't turn up in either of these books, brave souls might try the calimocha — half red wine and half cola — which one blog dubs "the ambrosia of misguided Spanish youths."

Perhaps the simple reason there aren't too many popular mixed drinks made with still wine, especially red, is that wine's flavors can be too rich and complicated to play well with others. *Mr. Boston's Platinum Edition* explains, "It's true that there aren't many cocktails that employ classical varietal wines like chardonnay, cabernet or merlot ... but wine is a broad term for several subcategories," into which fall the likes of Fernet-Branca, Dubonnet and Lillet. And then there are those wines which some of us may occasionally forget are wines, like, oh, vermouth, which falls into the "Wines and Fortified Wines" category of *The Ultimate Bar Book* when it's taking center stage rather than playing its more familiar supporting role in most martinis and Manhattans. As

further reading:



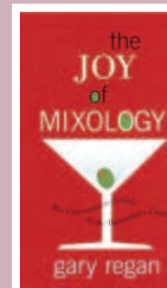
Food & Wine Cocktails 2008. Food & Wine Books, 2008. Paperback, \$14.95.

Imbibe! From Absinthe Cocktail to Whiskey Smash, a Salute in



Stories and Drinks to "Professor" Jerry Thomas, Pioneer of the American Bar, David Wondrich.

Perigree Books, 2007. Hardcover, \$23.95.



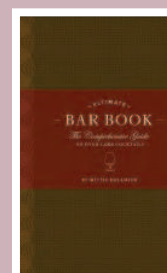
The Joy of Mixology, Gary Regan. Clarkson Potter, 2003. Hardcover, \$30.



Raising the Bar, Nick Mautone. Artisan, 2004. Hardcover, \$27.50.



The Savoy Cocktail Book, Harry Craddock. Pavilion, 2007. Hardcover, \$19.95.



The Ultimate Bar Book, Mittie Helmich. Chronicle Books, 2006. Hardcover, \$19.95.

CHAMPAGNE JULEP



COFFEE COCKTAIL



SPARKLING COSMOPOLITAN

