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FOOD & WINE

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THE CHRONICLE'S WINE SELECTIONS *Napa Valley Sauvignon Blancs*

Sauvignon Blanc is an excellent, versatile wine to pair with food. Here are the panel's top picks from the 32 Napa Valley Sauvignon Blancs tasted for this week.

Wine	Price	Rating	Body	Dryness	Comments
2001 Girard Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc	\$15	★★★	Light	Dry	Grapefruit, lemon and tangerine on the nose and palate; some mineral flavors; clean finish, good acid and fruit balance. Limited distribution.
2001 Groth Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc	\$14	★★★	Medium	Dry	Sweet citrus, lean fruit with slight oak, dense, rich, excellent texture; balanced fruit, moderate acid and finish.
2000 Honig Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc	\$14	★★★	Light	Dry	Ripe grapefruit, peachy, apricot aromas, tangerine and roasted nuts; light simple fruit, notes of red bell pepper; good acidity, nice balance.
2001 Markham Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc	\$13	★★★	Light	Dry	Very clean and well balanced; nice citrus notes of lemon and grapefruit, crisp melon, fig aromas and flavors; nice mouth-feel, good acid and length.
2001 Mason Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc	\$17	★★★★	Medium	Dry	Floral nose, honeydew, Meyer lemon, grassy with some mineral; creamy fig and banana flavors; well-balanced acidity; lengthy finish.
2000 Robert Mondavi Napa Valley/Stag's Leap District Sauvignon Blanc	\$23	★★★½	Light	Dry	Citrus, lemon zest, herbal; mineral and red bell pepper notes; New Zealand-style gooseberry; almonds and marzipan on finish; good balance.
2001 St. Suprey Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc	\$16	★★★½	Medium	Dry	Good varietal character, lemongrass nose with peach & apricot, grapefruit & melon aromas & flavors, grassy; balanced, good acidity & length.
2000 Van Asperen Vnyds Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc	\$12	★★½	Light	Dry	Ripe, opulent nose; floral, Key lime, citrus, lime-stone, grassy flavors; some weight on palate, well-integrated fruit and acid, good balance and length.
2001 White Oak Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc	\$18	★★★½	Light	Dry	Grapefruit, Meyer lemon & tangerine aromas & flavors, bright, light, clean, flinty stone; good mouth-feel, balanced, nice length. Limited availability.

Sean Crowley, sommelier, Campton Place, San Francisco; Aaron Luna, independent wine consultant; Susan Pey, consulting wine Director, Il Fornaio restaurants, San Anselmo; Craig Sandler, owner, Solano Cellars, Albany.

RATING KEY

★★★★ Extraordinary ★★★ Excellent ★★ Good ★ Fair
Wines listed above are generally available but may not be in all stores. To locate them, start with your local wine merchant, but also try larger stores and supermarkets.