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What wine goes with barbecued steak? Two words to know

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McClatchy Newspapers

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As the summer grilling season peaks, the American code of hospitality requires that you invite your posse to your patio and slap a few steaks on the grill.

But what's the best cut to char, and the best wine to serve with it? This is important, because red meat and red wine may be the finest duet in existence. Fred and Ginger. Brangelina. All that.

But it's complicated. The USDA says the three best steak grades in order of quality are prime, choice and select. Tops in tenderness, juiciness and flavor. The other grades – standard, commercial, utility, cutter and (shudder) canner – you wouldn't wish on your Weber. Within each grade, a lot of red-meat lovers rank the cuts in this order: ribeye (or Delmonico), hanger, flatiron, skirt and porterhouse (which is a filet alongside a New York strip).

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it's bad for you. But as one blogger put it: "Fat makes stuff taste good!!" Because of that fat, there's only one wine that will handle the situation: [cabernet sauvignon](#).

Cab has lots of tannin and acid – both astringent agents that strip the fat from your tongue and refresh your palate. And many doctors say – although it seems awfully convenient – that red wine helps your body deal with the fat.

So the choice is yours. If you decide to go ahead, here are some nice cabs I've tasted recently.

Highly recommended:

- 2009 Robert Mondavi Cabernet Sauvignon, Oakville District: aromas and flavors of black plums



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and bitter chocolate, big, ripe tannins, smooth finish, a quintessential grilled steak wine; \$45.

- 2010 Bonterra Cabernet Sauvignon, Mendocino and Lake Counties: intense aromas and flavors of black cherries and black pepper, ripe tannins, smooth finish; \$16.
- 2009 Ferrari Carano Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Mountain Vineyards, Alexander Valley: aromas of toasty oak, flavors of black raspberries and earth; \$46.
- 2009 Frenchie Cabernet Sauvignon "Louis XIV," Sonoma/Napa: aromas and flavors of black currants and mocha, rich and smooth, long finish; \$30.

Recommended:

- 2009 Parducci Small Lot Blend Cabernet Sauvignon, [Mendocino County](#): aromas and flavors of black cherries and caramel, soft and smooth, a good grilled cheeseburger wine; \$12.
- 2009 Mettler Family Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, Lodi: full-bodied and full-flavored, with aromas and flavors of black raspberries and coffee; \$25.
- 2010 Justin Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, [Paso Robles](#): hint of oak, flavors of black cherries and licorice: \$26.

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