

## Eight Totally 'Merican Fourth of July Wine Pairings

A safe space for declaring your independence from beer.



Even though the Fourth of July means day drinking, day drinking doesn't have to mean breaking out the kegerator. Wine and grilling go together like, well, fog and summer. (Two quick hints: Sparkling wine is easy to pair with appetizers, salad, and salmon. And zinfandel is a classic pairing for barbecue, and can be served chilled on a hot day.) So don't be shy—ditch that stars-and-stripes beer koozie and break out the red, white, and pink.

**Dish:** Grilled lamb chops and burgers

**Wine:** Raymond Merlot, \$24

A well-made Napa Valley merlot like Raymond's gives you the juicy spiciness of zinfandel with the boldness and tannic structure of a cab. That makes it the perfect balance of two of the best wines for grilled red meats (pinot can be great too). Generally underappreciated and underpriced, merlot is not the prom queen that it used to be, but that's all the better for you. Expect plum and blackberry notes from this tasty wine, which provides a nice contrast to the heartiness of lamb or burgers.