



# WINE WITH SOME DOUGH

and tannin: Back off of my cheese and tomato. By JORDAN MACKAY

**W**ith the continuing proliferation of quality pizzerias opening in SF (Beretta, the second Pizzeria Delfina and the upcoming Flour + Water, to name a few), “pizza wine” is finally being taken seriously.

But the perfect wine for a pizza is a rare and beautiful thing. While this is not a complicated pairing, it requires that a delicate balance be struck—a balance of juiciness, fruit and acidity. A fruity wine matches the mouthwatering tang of tomato sauce; acidity cuts through the unctuousness of mozzarella; and juiciness quenches the thirst brought on by a crust.

Personally, what I *don't* want is a wine riddled with tannin and a lot of oak, something red wines often have in abundance. Producers think this is what consumers want—but not me, and definitely not with my pizza. (Plus, using fewer expensive oak barrels on a wine can help with the final essential element of a good pizza wine: It should be cheap!)

One of my favorite pizza-wine lists is at Gialina in Glen Park. It's tiny (nine bottles), but most of the wines are perfect. The list is all-Italian, which owner Sharon Ardiana tells me is by design. “I love French wines too—I just think Italian wines go best with pizza,” she says, adding that

**“The perfect pizza wine is a rare and beautiful thing. While it's not a complicated pairing, it requires a balance of juiciness, fruit and acidity.”**

most American wines don't seem to fit the bill either. I can't disagree. American and Spanish wines tend to be oaky. French wines are often more savory than fruity. Italian wines, when they get it right, are spot on.

For instance, when I visited Gialina, its list featured the Montepulciano d'Abruzzo from Umani Ronchi, and it was perfect—low in tannin, with some spice and gushing with berry. Another wine, the Ventoso from Piazzano, a blend of Tuscan varieties, was juicy and alive with acid. But you can't just write a blank check to Italy. There are more than enough oaky, over-ripe Montepulciano d'Abruzzos out there, so select carefully. But generally speaking, Ardiana recommends reds from Tuscany, Sicily and the Abruzzo. When it comes to whites, she is in love with Verdicchio, a minerally white from Le Marche. “It's just a crisp and clean wine that goes well with pizzas that feature more-bitter vegetables, such as radicchio.”

Of course, there are no hard and fast rules, as a pie can be topped with anything from pineapple to clams and everything in between. At least that's how Carlos Arboleda, the wine buyer for Pizzetta 211, looks at it. His list is decidedly eclectic, featuring French and Italian wines and even one from California—a Zinfandel, which is the way to go if you want to buy American. x

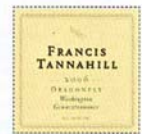
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## BOTTLE REPORT

THREE TO DRINK NOW



**Lynmar Estate Sonoma Coast Syrah 2006 (\$37)**  
Pinot specialist Lynmar lends its expert touch to Syrah, leading to a wine that gets everything wonderful out of the grape—violets, blackberries and earth. Ashbury Market Wine Shop, 205 Frederick St., 415-682-3800



**Francis Tannahill Dragonfly Gewürztraminer 2006 (\$25)**  
Off-dry with notes of honey, flower pollen and lots of exotic spice, it's got enough acidity to make the mouth water. Arlequin Wine Merchant, 384 Hayes St., 415-863-1104, arlequinwinemerchant.com



**Tangent Sauvignon Blanc Edna Valley 2006 (\$10)**  
Grapefruit, green apple and fresh-cut grass spark this SB, which displays surprising minerality for a Californian. Hennessy's Wines and Spirits, 545 Second St., 415-348-1432, gourmetwines.com

### THE MONTHLY MIXER THE DRINK: FLEUR DU MONDE THE BAR: ZINNIA THE BARTENDER: JACKIE PATTERSON



1 1/4 ounces Don Julio Blanco tequila



3/4 ounce Domaine de Canton Ginger



1/2 ounce German Riesling (Kabinett)



Pour everything into a shaker, add ice and stir clockwise until chilled. Strain into a chilled martini glass and garnish with a grapefruit peel.

