

# Summer's Favorite Jug Wines

By Stacy Briscoe


TRAVEL-FRIENDLY JUGS AND GROWLERS ARE hallmarks of summer in Wine Country. No longer the place where low-quality plonk gets, well, plonked, jug wines are perfect for picnics and beach trips and days spent on the go. And at a few area wineries, local drinkers can head back to the source for refills—a happy errand if ever there were one.

“Growlers are perfect any time of year, but thrive in spring and summer,” says Kailey Priest of Kivelstadt Cellars in Sonoma. “No need to worry about bringing a wine opener with you—you just pop the top and enjoy.” The winery’s refillable jug wine program was created by founder Jordan Kivelstadt to reduce waste produced from wine bottles. The refillable growler program now saves the winery over 6,000 pounds of waste every year. And there’s a bonus for consumers’ wallets as well, says Priest. “The price to fill the growler is the same as the price of a bottle of wine, however, our growlers are 1-liter, versus a 750 ml bottle, so it’s a bit more bang for your buck.”

“Jug wines are a nod to enjoying wine in a more casual, relaxed setting ... [it’s] unpretentious, approachable, and fun,” says Johanna Holm of Larson Family Winery in Sonoma. Larson’s jug wines are available in 1-liter glass bottles and—new this summer—500 ml bottles. While Larson doesn’t yet offer refills, the staffers do say they notice customers upcycling the distinctively chunky, pop-top bottles into carafes and flower vases.

In downtown Sonoma, Cochon Wines’ tasting bar offers multiple wines on tap, along with 1-liter growlers that have proven popular with guests looking for wines to picnic with on the nearby Sonoma Plaza. Owner and winemaker Adam Webb likes to choose crisp, refreshing whites and rosés for his jug wine program, and occasionally a “highly fruited, juicy red” like the Cochon Cherry Bomb.

The jug wine program at Preston Farm & Winery in Dry Creek Valley is important to founder Lou Preston. “He wants to make wines similar to those his neighbors and mentors made in the early 1970s,” explains the winery’s Ken Blair. Four decades later, Preston still sells his “Guadagni Red,” an old-school blend of traditional Dry Creek grapes, including Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, and Carignan, in large 3-liter jugs. The style, as well as the vessel, is a nod to tradition and local agrarian history. Blair says most customers are Sonomans looking for an easy-drinking red wine as a regular dinner-table staple.

“It’s not necessarily about what’s in the jug, but about tapping into a spirit that lives on,” he says. 



## TAP INTO THE PICNIC SPIRIT

### KIVELSTADT CELLARS

#### KC Labs Zinfandel

Bright cranberry and raspberry flavors in a low-alcohol summer wine.

**PAIR WITH:** Sushi compliments the wine’s crisp freshness.

**PRICE:** \$27 for 1 liter

**HOW TO BUY:** Purchase in the tasting room or order online for pickup.

22900 Broadway, Sonoma. 707-938-7001, kivelstadtcellars.com.

### COCHON WINES

#### Cochon Cherry Bomb

An old-vine Grenache that undergoes a partial carbonic fermentation for simple, extra fruity summer sipping. Best served lightly chilled.

**PAIR WITH:** Grilled hot dogs right off the barbecue.

**PRICE:** \$32 for 1 liter; \$4 deposit on the first bottle; deposit waived when growler is returned.

**HOW TO BUY:** Available at the tasting room only.

531 1st St E, Sonoma. 707-934-8157, cochonwines.com.

### LARSON FAMILY WINERY

#### Wingo White

A blend of Gewürztraminer and Pinot Grigio with notes of floral and citrus.

**PAIR WITH:** Grilled chicken with *herbes de Provence*.

**PRICE:** around \$20 for 500 ml.

**HOW TO BUY:** Purchase in the tasting room or online for pickup, refills not offered.

23355 Millerick Rd, Sonoma. 707-938-3031, larsonfamilywinery.com.

### PRESTON FARM & WINERY

#### Guadagni Red

A traditional red table wine based on California’s heritage grape, old-vine Zinfandel

**PAIR WITH:** Summery food-truck fare like barbecue, tacos, or falafel.

**PRICE:** \$52 for 3 liters

**WHERE:** Purchase online; pick up at the winery.

9282 West Dry Creek Rd, Healdsburg. 707-433-3372, prestonfarmandwinery.com.