

## Inside Trader Joe's Podcast Transcript — Trader Joe's Wine Club: Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand

*[Upbeat music begins.]*

Matt: Oh, dear Sauvignon Blanc, you are so misunderstood.

Tara: What's to misunderstand? I love Sauvignon Blanc.

Matt: Well, I do too. It's just that sometimes people think that all Sauvignon Blanc is the same.

Tara: Or that it's only a summer wine. I drink Sauvignon Blanc year-round.

Matt: I'm drinking Sauvignon Blanc right now.

Tara: Me too. We have a Sauvignon Blanc recommendation to share on this special Wine Club mini episode of *Inside Trader Joe's*.

*[Theme music begins without two bells at a neighborhood Trader Joe's.]*

Matt: Let's call this meeting of the Trader Joe's Wine Club to order.

*[Gavel pounding.]*

Tara: With us to talk about Sauvignon Blanc is Brian from our wine team. Brian, welcome back.

Brian: Thanks, everybody.

Matt: Hello.

Brian: Appreciate you having me.

Tara: And you have a specific recommendation for us today?

*[Theme music fades.]*

Brian: We do. We do. We have the Raorao Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough, New Zealand.

*[Light upbeat music begins.]*

Matt: Now, word is that you are a fan of Sauvignon Blancs of New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs.

Brian: I am.

Matt: So you were involved in bringing this label to stores. Why?

Brian: We identified there are certain varietals that maybe resonate more with others, but we realized that the Sauvignon Blanc brings an amazing different variety and palette that maybe others don't. We initially introduced the Raorao back in 2018. And kind of with the resurgence of the Sauvignon Blanc variety, we're having it come back this spring and summer. So we're really excited to get it back in our stores.

Matt: I mean, it is a grape, a varietal, as you say, that's grown in lots of places around the world. But I think of New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs as really supercharging people's interest in Sauvignon Blanc in general, and people love what has come to be the signature stylistic parts of a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc. So, what are those things that we would expect from a classic New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc?

*[Music transition.]*

Brian: That crisp kind of liveliness. It's going to be nice, vibrant, refreshing acidity. You're going to get something like green apple, citrus, but then there's also that quintessential grassiness. If you really want something that kind of stands out and wakes your palette up, Sauvignon Blancs, specifically those from New Zealand, really check all the boxes. I mean, just that tart grassiness, that vibrance is really what you're going to find with this one specifically.

Tara: And the Marlborough region of New Zealand, it's famous for Sauvignon Blanc, right? The climate there, the soil there.

Brian: Really great fertile soil. There's an abundance of sun. But in the evening, where the temperatures start to cool, that's where that magic really happens, specifically with this grape. The sun, it kind of gets its juices going. But in the evening when it cools down, the grape itself kind of contracts a bit. It gets that nice skin, everything kind of aligns, and that's why you get such great flavor.

Matt: It's interesting because New Zealand is on the other side of the planet. It's in the Southern Hemisphere, so they're contra seasons. They're growing time, harvesting time is opposite of what we would think of in the Northern Hemisphere. So New Zealand wines, the vintages are often the earliest to market. You'll see something where it's like, "Wow, so soon." Sometimes you even see the same calendar year, and it's because they're harvesting earlier than we would here in the Northern Hemisphere. I feel like how they pick the grapes, or maybe more importantly when they pick the grapes, is a big determinant of this flavor as well. I don't think that they let the grapes get as ripe as maybe some other growing regions do.

*[Music transition.]*

Brian: Yeah, the Sauvignon Blanc grape obviously comes originally from France. But I think the folks in New Zealand really figured out the secret sauce there, even though French Sauvignon Blancs and even California ones are great.

Matt: Mm-hmm.

Brian: Personally speaking, I think they hold the bar the highest. You think of Champagnes from France, maybe Bay Cabs from Napa Valley, Sauvignon Blanc, to me, New Zealand is the marquee region.

Tara: It's a really great example of that concept of terroir.

Brian: Mmm, exactly.

Tara: All of the environmental implications of how and where the grapes are grown has so much to do with the flavor of the wine. And when you have the same grape where you said like it's been in France forever, and it's been in California, and it's gone to New Zealand in the last 50 years or so, all three of those regions make really good Sauvignon Blanc, and they all taste entirely different.

Brian: They do. Absolutely.

Matt: If there's a challenge for this area in New Zealand, I think it's getting their other wines noticed. I mean, there are some Pinot Noirs from this same area that are fantastic. But I think it's going to take some further exposure for people to think of them first and foremost. I'm also amazed that, and it took a while, but New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs probably single-handedly ushered in screw cap closures for wine bottles to be thought of as okay, as even nice, as even desirable or preferable to cork. And that felt like a real signature move, and I think it was pretty bold. Before then, lower price point, probably lower quality wines were associated with having a screw cap. And now, very, very different.

Tara: So we're talking about Raorao Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough, New Zealand. What do you serve this with?

*[Music transition.]*

Brian: So Sauvignon Blanc, traditionally you're looking kind of at tomato-based dishes, pastas. A lot of it though will kind of lean towards the leaner sides. So you're looking at fish, chicken. So traditionally I would think if you're doing some kind of pasta dish with a fish. I mean, I've even said before, like an oyster, something like that is truly my favorite. Something that has brightness of its own, but I absolutely love, kind of, that Mediterranean-type cuisine. Spicy, like any kind of Thai or Asian, this Sauv Blanc pairs incredibly well. I've even paired it with Mexican before. I think, kind of, those same similarities, maybe a little bit of herbaceousness, a little bit of spice. It really goes well with that. And the one thing I was thinking actually, I've kind of had it on my wish list and now doing this, I think I'll probably do it this weekend, is I love poke, poke bowls. And I'm wondering how our Raorao Sauv Blanc would maybe pair well with a spicy tuna poke bowl.

Matt: I was thinking about something similar. You mentioned Mexican cuisine. I'm thinking of like aguachiles or ceviche.

Brian: Absolutely. Yes.

Matt: That would be interesting because you have from limes or other citrus that bracing acidity. It could work perfectly with this kind of Sauvignon Blanc.

Tara: I really like New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc with Thai food...

Brian: Mmm.

Tara: ...and with Indian food, but I think I might try it with Mexican food. I think that's a really interesting thing. Right now, I think I just want to try it. Do you want to try some, Matt?

Matt: Sure.

Brian: Let's do it.

Tara: Do a little taste?

*[Music transition. Unscrewing cap. Pouring wine into glasses.]*

Tara: Brian is doing the honors and giving us a little pour here. Thank you. It smells like passion fruit.

Brian: Yeah, you get...

Tara: With like a little tropical fruits.

Brian: Absolutely. And the first thing that hits me is that grass.

Tara: Yeah.

Brian: I think of being a little kid, and I can't remember what they're called. But you remember picking those grass and you would chew on it?

Tara: Oh, yeah.

Matt: Sour grass.

Brian: Sour grass, yes! And I loved that as a kid. Raised in an Italian house, always had antipasto. We always had the Italian vinaigrette. I remember literally being there with my siblings. And at the end of the dinner, we would take our spoons, and we would drink the vinaigrette Italian dressing just because of the acidity and how it'd wake up your palate. And I think as I got older, I looked for flavors that do that. I think that's why it resonates so much with Sauv Blanc just because it pops so much and kind of clears your palate.

Matt: Yeah. If you have had a classic New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, this is right down the middle of your expectations perfectly.

*[Music transition.]*

Matt: It has that brightness. It has what some would say is a minerality that, kind of, smells almost like wet stones in a positive way. And it's just bracing. There's that freshness. I like your idea of, it just wakes up your palate.

Brian: Yeah.

Matt: It's like a little alarm clock going off.

Tara: This wine will be in all of the Trader Joe's stores around the country that sell wine.

Brian: Yes.

Tara: Throughout the spring and summer this year.

Brian: The value is absolutely amazing. I'm pretty sure we're going to be about \$4.99 just about everywhere. And I think that's one of the other reasons why the Sauv Blanc is such an amazing wine. You do not need to spend a lot of money. I mean, given some of the bestsellers we have in our stores that are absolutely amazing, most of those are under \$10. And to find a varietal from its marquee region that has that great of a value, and we just have multiple in the store that you can select from. And maybe some have more fruit, a little bit more grassiness, but it's absolutely approachable. It's just such a great option.

Tara: Yeah, and that \$4.99 price, now it might be a little bit more in some regions because there are circumstances outside of our control when it comes to pricing of wines, but that's a staggeringly good price for a wine that tastes that good. I mean, it's a really good example of a Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc.

Brian: Absolutely.

Tara: So if you're looking for this one in the store, it's Raorao, R-A-O-R-A-O, so Raorao. And in Māori, the language of Indigenous New Zealanders, it means lowlands or meadow. The label definitely looks like sort of classic Māori design artwork with the sea turtle.

Matt: Looks like a sea turtle.

Tara: It looks like a little sea turtle on the label. It looks nice. It tastes nice.

Matt: It's great.

*[Transition to closing. Closing music begins.]*

Tara: I'm Tara Miller.

Matt: And I'm Matt Sloan. The current Trader Joe's Wine Club recommendation for Sauvignon Blanc is...

Brian: Raorao Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough, New Zealand, the 2023 Vintage.

Tara: We'll have another Trader Joe's Wine Club Mini Episode for you soon.

Matt: And more *Inside Trader Joe's* episodes about just about everything in the store.

Tara: We are going to be busy. Until then, thanks for listening.

Matt: And thanks for listening.