

A special wine pairing and book club guide for

THE HIGH SEASON

A NOVEL BY JUDY BLUNDELL



Wine Pairings

Recommended Pairings for Sipping While Reading and Discussing *The High Season*



ROSÉ

Beautiful people on their fifth glass of rosé, celebrity couples looking glum for just a moment. . . .

They don't call rosé summer in a bottle for nothing. A complex rosé blend made from Merlot grapes, such as the Wolffer Estate Rosé (2017), sets the tone for the perfect juicy but complicated beach read. What could be more complex than Ruthie's life? Maybe a 50% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, 6% Pinot Noir, 5% Sauvignon Blanc, 3.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Riesling, 0.5% Gewürztraminer blend.



PINOT NOIR

Everyone looking up into the darkening sky, breaths held.

An explosively aromatic and balanced red, like the Erath Pinot Noir from Oregon (2015), is the perfect accompaniment for the bold yet balanced Ruthie that emerges in the last events of the novel. If you're feeling fancy, you might try the award-winning Osprey's Dominion Pinot Noir from the North Fork of Long Island (2014).



CHENIN BLANC

"Bad day?" She nodded. "The worst. Plus, I'm at a party where people say things like 'this is a gorgeous Sancerre.'"

Sancerre, wine made from Sauvignon Blanc grapes in France's Sancerre region, has a bad reputation for being snooty and unattainable. . . . Much like the guests at a particularly unpleasant afternoon party. The more affordable Sauvignon Blanc from other areas in the Loire valley, like a Vouvray, are just as tasty, and the perfect pairing for weathering this awkward scene.



CHAMPAGNE

"Maybe we'll come by later," Penny said. "For a glass of gorgeous wine," Ruthie said.

Champagne is appropriate for beginnings, endings, celebrations, defeats, and everything in between. Raise a glass to Ruthie and end things on a sparkling note with a glass of French Champagne or another sparkler, such as the ONEHOPE California Brut.

Questions and Topics for Discussion

THE HIGH SEASON

A NOVEL BY JUDY BLUNDELL

Ruthie has the perfect life. She just has to give it up every summer. In a beach town overrun with vacationers, Ruthie—a year-rounder who moves aside for “the summer people”—feels like a bit of an outsider. When her life is upended one fateful summer, she must fight to save everything she holds dear—her family, her house, and her career.

1. At the beginning of *The High Season*, Carole tells Ruthie to “Just try to be . . . a little less you.” Being herself is a theme that Ruthie constantly struggles with—what moments do you think sparked the biggest changes in Ruthie’s character throughout the novel?
2. In *The High Season*, we meet two types of people: the “summer people” and the “year-round people.” Think about how each of these groups live their lives and connect with one another. While the differences may be obvious, how are they similar to one another? Do you think the characters can see these similarities for themselves? Why or why not?
3. The antique watch never stayed on one person’s wrist for long over the course of this novel—first landing in Ruthie’s possession, then Lucas’s, Doe’s, and briefly Lark’s. What were the intentions of each character when they took it? What did the watch mean for each of them?
4. It dawns on Ruthie that she has not been acting like herself when she realizes how much she’s been ignoring Jem. On the flip side, Jem has also been hiding her feelings from her parents. Do you think the outcome at the end of the novel would have been different for Jem if Ruthie, or Mike and Adeline, were paying more attention?
5. Throughout *The High Season* almost all the characters are caught lying at some point. How does each character justify their lies? How did this affect your reading of each character?
6. Lark tells Doe that “You have to look for goodness just like everybody else.” Is this sentiment true for all of the “summer people” in the novel? What about the other characters?
7. What does Doe learn about herself through her relationship with Lark? And vice versa? How do they grow together as a couple?
8. Why would Mike say his marriage to Ruthie failed? What would Ruthie give as the reasons? Do you think Adeline and Joe end up being better partners for both characters, and if so, why?
9. Do you feel the family handled the discipline of Lucas? What lessons were learned?
10. If you were in Ruthie’s shoes, how would you have responded to Jem’s confessions at the novel’s end?
11. Which characters in *The High Season* get the ending they deserve? Do you think Ruthie gets a happy ending?



@JUDYBLUNDELLBOOKS #THEHIGHSEASON #SIPANDREAD