

The Region

SANTA BARBARA, CA

First Blush

Some of California's finest grapes, from the lauded Lodi Wine Country and other vineyards throughout the state, are now being used to make premium nonalcoholic beverages with the brand name "First Blush."

Crafted with Cabernet, Zinfandel, Merlot and Chardonnay grapes, the juice is all-natural, with no added sugar or preservatives. Aromas and flavors range from blackberry, black cherry and black currant in the Cabernet juice to raspberry, strawberry and cranberry in the Rosé.

Manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$3.79–\$3.99 per 16-ounce bottle.

The premium varietal-juice line was launched in May by Santa Barbara–based First Blush Inc., with the product being rolled out this year nationwide in select delis, restaurants and grocery stores, including Whole Foods Markets.

The Cabernet, Merlot and Rosé flavors may be a nonalcoholic way to get what some studies show are anti-aging and cancer-fighting antioxidants, such as resveratrol, found in red varieties,



Nonalcoholic First Blush comes in four varieties.

says company co-founder Aris Janigian.

Janigian is also a noted novelist and humanities professor who returns to his family's Fresno farm each year to help with the grape harvest.

"For too long, the finest grapes have been used only for wine production," he stated when he announced the First Blush launch. "We believe premium-quality grapes should be enjoyed as pure and simple juice."

First Blush is donating 5 cents from each bottle purchased to nonprofit groups such as FasterCures. Contact: 805-969-8700; www.firstblushjuice.com. —Michele Andrus Dill