

Great <\$25 Wines
From the Wine Database of Rick Brusca
Vers. October 2018

****** RED WINES ******

About the ratings. Although many magazines, web sites, and commercial retailers rate wines, the most influential are probably three magazines: *The Wine Enthusiast*, *Wine Spectator*, and *The Wine Advocate*. *The Wine Enthusiast* magazine reviews over 1000 wines for each issue; not all are published, but all are available at their web site. *Wine Spectator* reviews 400-1000 wines per issue (and their wine editors taste about 20,000 wines annually). Both use a traditional 100-point scale, and both use panels of professional wine tasters. Tastings are usually done blind, in flights organized by varietal, appellation, or region, and often begin with a wine previously rated, which is tasted non-blind as a reference point. A typical tasting-session comprises 20 to 30 wines. *The Wine Advocate*, launched by wine critic Robert M. Parker in 1978, also reviews many wines in each issue. The magazine's success allowed Parker to quit practicing law in 1984, and to devote himself full-time to wine (we should all be so lucky). In 2012, a majority stake in *The Wine Advocate* was sold to investors from Singapore, with a plan to go from print+online, to fully online; however, this has not yet happened. The role of Editor-in-Chief went from Parker to Lisa Perotti-Brown, and a second editorial office opened in Singapore. Following lead wine critic Antonio Galloni's departure from *The Wine Advocate* in 2013, new core critics were recruited. Others also review wines, by specific regions, for the magazine, but (as of 2015) Parker continued to do the reviews for northern California (e.g., Napa-Sonoma) and Bordeaux. Robert Parker's influence in the global wine business has been so powerful that some wineries have been accused of making wines tailored strictly to his tastes. *The Wine Advocate* uses Parker's rating scale, which goes from 50 to 100 points (much like the American educational grading system).

My ratings more or less follow the style of *Wine Spectator*. Overall, my scores can be summarized as follows:

95-100 points: A great, or classic wine.

92-94 points: An outstanding wine, of superior character and style.

90-92 points. A very good wine.

87-89 points: Good, perhaps with some special qualities (and often a value wine).

Below 87 points: An unsatisfactory wine. I generally don't bother to rate these.

My personal philosophy is to re-purchase only 92 pt or higher-rated wines for my personal enjoyment, and these are the ones I recommend to my wino friends. But, of course, my ratings are influenced by my own personal tastes, which, I think, appreciate the best of both the Old World and New World styles of winemaking. However, I admit a preference for wines in which the flavors of

both the grapes and the soil are evident, while at the same time appreciating acidity and dryness when appropriate (and eschewing fruit-forward or sweet wines, unless, of course, they are dessert wines).

Some wine tasting terms

Old World. European wines.

New World. Not from Europe.

Varietal. The different types of wine grapes (all of which are varieties of the species *Vitis vinifera*)

Acidity. The puckering sensation and tart flavor in wines; a crucial component to food-friendly wines.

Tannin. The drying sensation found in many red wines (may make your lips feel like they stick to your teeth).

Residual sugar. The amount of sugar left in the wine after alcoholic fermentation.

Sweet. A wine with a high amount of residual sugar.

Dry. The opposite of sweet; a wine with low residual sugar.

Body. The feel (viscosity and weight) of a wine on the palate.

Structure. The combination of acidity, tannin, sweetness, and fruit intensity.

Complexity. The number of layers of flavor discernable in a wine. Good complexity and structure usually co-occur in a wine.

Finish. The length and quality of the taste after you swallow (or spit).

Legs. The rivulets of wine that roll down the inside of the glass when it is swirled. Legs comprise a complex phenomenon related to the rate at which liquids evaporate and the difference in surface tension between the wine's water and alcohol contents. Legs have nothing to do with how "good" a wine is.

Oak. Many wines are aged in oak barrels, or casks. Almost all oak barrels are either from Europe (usually France) or from the New World (usually the U.S.). French oak barrels are more or less the gold standard for barrels in the case of both red and white wines—and their price reflects that fact. A new French oak barrel from a top cooperage costs around \$1,000, while a new American oak barrel costs about \$600. Though barrel makers source oak from all over the world—notably Russia, Hungary and Slovenia—French and American oak barrels are the two most important types and they lend some very different characteristics to wine. American oak tends to give more obvious, sweet notes of vanilla and coconut (thanks to a higher concentration of something called lactones in the American species of oak), while tighter-grained French oak contributes more restrained savory-spicy notes. "Toasting" describes the process of flavoring a barrel and also reducing the astringency of the oak by placing the inside of the newly-made barrel directly over a flame. Winemakers can order barrels toasted to their specifications—light to medium, medium-plus or heavy toast; the process stops short of outright charring—directly from the barrel producer or their barrel salesman.

A cautionary note about cheap wines

Unlike food and medicine, alcoholic beverages in the U.S. aren't covered by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This means winemakers don't have to disclose exactly what is in their wine; all they have to reveal is the alcohol content and whether the wine has sulfites or certain food coloring additives. The huge wine conglomerates (e.g., Treasury Wine Estates, Gallo) that produce millions of bottles of wine annually for the mass-market go to great lengths to produce inexpensive wine that taste good to the masses. They use focus groups of tasters in blind-sampling tests to find ways to flavor their wines, just the way snack-food producers do. They can chemically change the pH, color or even the texture, "dry the wine out," or pretty much whatever they want to do to meet their goals. They are typically low acid, fruit-forward, and high in sugar; these wines are not made to age (just the opposite of what a great wine should be). There are more than 60 government-approved additives that can be used to make wine. These are generally the wines that sell for under \$10/bottle, and they often use words like lush, silky, or soft on the labels. Many of the blended wines fall into this category (e.g., Ménage à Trois, California Red Wine).

Name	Year	RCB's Ranking	Comments	Price (Typically Total Wine, BevMo, Costco, or online)
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Cabernet Sauvignon (from anywhere in the world except Bordeaux), including "Bordeaux style" New World wines

Cabernet Sauvignon is the most widely planted wine grape in the world, and more quality wines are made from this grape than any other. Most wine enthusiasts regard it as the preeminent classic red grape variety, and wines made from this grape are some of the most complex, majestic, age-worthy wines in the world. The wonderful wine writer Karen MacNeil describes Cabernet Sauvignon wines as, "like the awkward kid who grows up to be a Nobel laureate, and sexy to boot." The grape probably originated on Bordeaux's Left Bank, where it achieves its ultimate expression in full-bodied, elegant, and age-worthy Bordeaux wines that may be blended with Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Petit Verdot (and sometimes also with Malbec and Carménère, although today these are rarely used). California Cabs are also typically blended, usually more-or-less Bordeaux-style (only ~4% of California Cabs are unblended). But, by law, a wine labeled Cabernet Sauvignon in California must be at least 75% Cab. Cabs are usually oak-aged and maintain enough acid and tannin to age well (bottle aging is generally recommended to consumers). Cabernet Sauvignon is considered one of the world's "noble red grapes." Genetic work

suggests it is the product of a [chance?] crossing between Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc (in the 17th century or 18th century) in southwestern France. The color is intense, to inky (~1:12 skin-to-pulp ratio), usually with flavors of black currants, cassis, green bell peppers, and deep red berries. Cabs pair well with high protein dishes (e.g., red meats), and in these cases the proteins actually soften the tannins in the mouth. California cabs, especially from Napa, Sonoma and Paso Robles, are some of the best (and most expensive) in the world, recent premier years being 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2010. For California, Robert Parker (and his “replacement protégé” Antonio Galloni) gave top 2010 ratings (96-100 pts) to the following California Cabs: Screaming Eagle (~\$1600), Harlan Estate (~\$850), Schrader (~\$400), and Colgin (~\$600).

Not all Cabs are notable, of course. Many modestly priced Cabs are made in a simple, “easy-drinking” style, and these lack the depth, power, and intense expression of the great Cabernet Sauvignons (“great Cabs” being, for example, fist growth Left Bank Bordeaux, Sassicaia from Italy, or the top Napa Cabs such as those mentioned above). In fact, in today’s competitive wine market, the lower-end California Cabs aren’t even aged in oak barrels (they have oak chips submerged in them for a period of time). The majesty of the great Cabs is that they are wines possessing both power and elegance, seemingly opposite ends of a spectrum that, in the best of conditions, give them a transcendent grace and can bring tears to your eyes. Some of my favorite, affordable California Cabs are: Forman (both Napa and Howell Mtn), Phillip Togni, Beaucanon Estate (not the Longwood), Beaulieu Vineyard BV Georges de Latour, Private Reserve, Bennett Lane Reserve, Beringer, Knight’s Valley Cab, Courtney Benham Stags Leap District, Cyrus, Alexander Valley Bordeaux blend, Dalla Valle Vineyards, Deguello, Dominus Estate, Dutcher Crossing Taylor Reserve Cab (Dry Creek Valley), KG3 Cab (Petite Fleur Winery, St. Helena, Napa Valley), Lancaster Estate (Alexander Valley), Pahlmeyer (Napa), Stags’ Leap (Napa) [not to be confused with Stag’s Leap], and Stagecoach Vineyard-Palmeri (Napa Valley).

Alexander Valley Vineyards	2009 2013	92 93	A solid, typical Napa-style cab; very smooth, but with a somewhat weak nose and only a modest finish; mid-palate is rich and mellow (likely due to blended-in Merlot).	\$17
Alterra, Alexander Valley (Winemaker’s Reserve)	2006	92	This Alexander Valley Alterra tops their Napa Cab. All the depth of a good Cabernet, but with an herbal-spicy overtone and excellent finish. Delicious.	\$20
Alterra, Spring Mountain	2008	92	A bit light, with a weak nose, but balanced and delicious.	\$20
Angeline, Napa (Napa Valley)	2008 2011	92.5 93	An excellent cab, worthy of cellaring. On par with Franciscan.	\$12-\$14
Angeline, Stags Leap District (Napa Valley)	2008	93.5	On par with Franciscan; an excellent Napa cab	\$23

Anselmo, Vigne, Stags Leap Cab (Napa Valley)	2007	95	Outstanding; dark, rich, complex, explosive aromas and flavors.	~\$25 (online)
Anselmo, Veloce (Napa Valley)	2007	93.5	Fruit forward & velvety, yet very balanced and with a great finish (high notes on finish). Needs 24 hrs to breath.	~\$25 (online)
Apex Cellars, Columbia Valley Cab (WA)	2013	93	Somewhat fruit-forward, but not overly done or too sweet. Good structure and tannins and finish. Delicious. A cut above Franciscan.	\$22-\$27
Aramis Vineyards, Black Label Series, McLaren Valley, Australia	2007	92	A very good cab in the Bordeaux style.	\$20
Beaucanon Estate	2004, 2005 2006 2009	94.5	Once an outstanding cab, exceeding Franciscan, Angeline and Starmont; more exuberant, big, and unrestrained. Needs to breath a few hours, then explodes with tangy fruits. Excellent with fish, lamb, cheese. The post-2012 vintages have fallen short.	\$25-\$28
Beaucanon Estate, Longwood, Napa	2009 2010 2013	93 88 94	BIG, bold, complex. Nothing subtle about this cab. The 2010 was a disappointment (and even seems to be variable from bottle to bottle). 2013 was outstanding.	\$22-\$30
BV (Beaulieu Vineyard), Rutherford Cab (Napa, CA)	2001	93.5	Tasted in 2018. Weak nose, but good balance and complex flavors. Classic Bordeaux style.	\$23 (on release) \$100 (in 2018)
Beringer, Knight's Valley Cab (Sonoma)	2012 2013 2014	94.5 95.5 ?	Hard to believe this is a Beringer. A perfectly balanced Bordeaux-style Cab, with a fine nose and long finish. Delicious.	\$17-\$40
Callaghan Vineyards (AZ)	2008	92	A straightforward, honest Cab from a fine winemaker, Kent Callaghan, in the Elgin/Sonoita area of Arizona.	\$22-\$25
Calcareous, Twisted Sisters, Central Coast Cab	2007	93	Similar in flavor and finish to Franciscan, but much bigger and bolder. One of the biggest wines for the price.	\$20
Calcareous, Twisted	2010	93	An excellent cab; full-bodied, well-rounded, fine finish,	\$18-\$20

Sisters/Twisted Paso, Paso Robles Cab	2012 2015	93 90	perfect fruit and tannins. The 2015 slipped and was too fruit forward.	
Cape Mentelle (Margaret River area, SW Australia)	1990	93	An excellent cab. Complex, medium fruit, good structure. 13% alcohol. Tasted in 2012 (22 yrs old).	~\$20
Casa Napostelle, Rapel Valley, Chile	2016	93	An excellent Cab; well balanced, rich fruits but not sweet nor fruit-forward, delicious. A bargain at the price point.	~\$15
Clayhouse Vineyard (Paso Robles, CA)	2009	92	Rated 92 based solely on quality of the vintage. However, this is a very jammy/fruity wine.	<\$20
Clos du Val	2005 2012	94 93	An excellent cab, along the lines of Franciscan but because of the blend having smoother Bordeaux-like overtones; 85% Cab Sauvignon, 6% Cab Franc, 5% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot. A great price for a good wine.	\$25
Cobblestone, Napa Valley	2003 2007	94 94	Wow; but subtle. How does Cobblestone do this with their wines? Excellent! This is a great wine for the price.	\$25-\$30
Cobblestone, Atlas Peak, Napa	2006	93	A fine wine, though a bit overpriced. High in tannins and alcohol (15% EtOH). Only for the serious cab drinker.	\$25-\$30
Francis Coppola Claret	2012 2014	91 89	Alleged to be made in the Left Bank Bordeaux style. Although Coppola winery is a bit of an entertainment showcase for Sonoma County, wine maker Corey Beck clearly knows his stuff. The 2014 faded quickly upon opening.	~\$20
Cosentino Winery, "The Cab" (Healdsburg, Sonoma Co., CA)	2009	93	An outstanding, classic Sonoma-style cab. Deep, spicy, rich, lingering on the palate in a wonderful finish. Expect prices to go up on this wine.	\$13
Courtney Benham, Stags Leap District	2006	94.5	Excellent cab from the Stags Leap district; with age, could be a 96.	2006 = \$30 2007 = \$20 2011 = \$27
Cru, by Vineyard 29	2012	92.5	A delicious cab; light fruit, decent tannins, balanced.	<\$20
Cruz Alta Reserve 100% Cab (Mendoza,	2007 2008	91 91	From hi elevation grapes (3300 ft), this is fine Cab for the price, though a bit fruit-forward for my taste. This is a	\$12-\$18

Argentina)	2013	88	rewarding 100% Cab from the Mendoza region, aged 10 months in French oak, with deep, complex colors and flavors and good tannins; should age well.	
Cruz Alta Reserve (Mendoza, Argentina)	2008 2012	93 92	From high elevation grapes (3300 ft); 100% Cab. Deep, rich, smoky, unique. Aged in 100% French Oak for 10 months.	\$14-\$20
Dan Aykroyd (DeLoach), Discovery Series (Sonoma, CA)	2007	93	An excellent cab from DeLoach, from a great year in California.	\$19
Daou (Paso Robles)	2014	85	Ugh. Sweet and fruit-forward; too much Merlot in this wine!	<\$20
Desert Wind Cab, Wahluke Slope, Columbia Valley (WA)	2009	94.5	An excellent cab; full-bodied, well-rounded, great bouquet and finish.	~\$20
Donn Olimpia 1898, Tageto (Tuscany)	2012	92.5	A delicious Super-Tuscan of Bordeaux blend. Made from grapes grown in the coastal appellation of Tuscany (Costa Toscana IGT). 90 pts from Wine Spectator.	~\$20
Dreaming Tree	2012	93	A delicious Cab that is a collaboration between the winemaker at Simi and Dave Matthews (the musician). Somewhat fruit-forward, but well balanced with good oak and acid.	\$11-\$14
Dry Creek (Dry Creek Valley, Napa Region)	2008 2009 2010 2012	94 95.5 94.5 91	Deep, full, rich, balanced, perfect tannins. Delicious.	\$16-\$22
Dutcher Crossing, Proprietor's Reserve Cab (Dry Creek Valley, Geyserville, CA)	2010	94	84% Cab, 16% Syrah. Double-gold winner.	\$25-\$30
Franciscan	Any	93	Subtle and sophisticated; compared to Buchanan,	\$20-\$22

	year		Franciscan is a symphony, Beaucaanon a circus (WMB). This fine winery consistently produces an excellent and affordable Cab, rich and silky with Napa-style fruits but not too fruit-forward or too sweet. Great nose, balance, and finish.	
Franciscan Estate, Napa Valley	2008 2014	94 93	Even though '08 isn't the best year for Napa cabs, their '08 is stunning. Big, bold, tannins, yet with just enough berry to smooth it all out into the perfect cab. This year, apparently, Franciscan added the word "Estate" to their label.	\$20
Freemark Abbey Cab (Napa)	2009	93.5	An excellent, classic Napa cab from a venerable winery (producing wine since 1886).	\$25-\$30
Frei Brothers Reserve, Alexander Valley Cab	2007 2010 2013 2014	91 91 91 90	A medium-big Cab that is deep and complex, yet velvety smooth. Let it breath for a few hours. From northern Sonoma.	\$18-\$20
Gérard Bertrand, Réserve Spéciale Cabernet Sauvignon	2016	93	A delicious, California-style, organic Cab from the south of France.	<\$20
Gordon Brothers, Columbia Valley (WA)	2005 2008	90 92	A fine, full-bodied, rich cab; slightly too fruit-forward for our taste, but not a "fruity" wine. The 2005 "Tradition" vintage was lacking sophistication and depth.	\$23
Gundlach Bundschu	2006	95	An outstanding cab; velvety, yet rich, complex and satisfying, with a great bouquet and great finish. One of the few 95 pt Cabs you'll ever find under \$40.	\$25-35
Hess, Napa Allomi Vineyard (purple label)	2005 2006 2012	93 93 93	"Napa Valley Estate Grown"	\$20 - \$25
Hess Select, North Coast Cab	2010	92	Will surely improve with a few years in the cellar.	\$14
Hook & Ladder, Sonoma Co., Russian River Valley Cab.	2007 2010	94 94	Excellent. Big, bold, complex, textured, delicious.	\$25

Estate Bottled.				
Jade Mountain	2009	92	A small cut below Franciscan.	<\$20
Joel Gott #815, St. Helena	2009 2012 2013	91.5 92 91.5	An excellent Cab, but in the classic New World/California style and somewhat fruit-forward. Relatively big, yet still smooth and complex. Moderate tannins, low acid.	\$13-\$16
Joseph Carr (Napa Valley)	2009	92	A small cut below Franciscan; big and bold; delicious.	\$18
Josh Cellars (Joseph Carr Wines), Family Reserve Cab	2014	93	An excellent Bordeaux-style California Cab. This is a \$60 Cab! 93% Cab, 5% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot. Sourced from vineyards throughout California.	\$17-\$20
Justin Winery, Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles)	2007 2008 2012 2013 2014	94 92 92 91 91	From the good bouquet to the delicate finish, this is a decent cab blend from the Paso Robles region. A bit of zing, OK balance, but a bit weak on acid and tannins. Fairly fruit forward (probably ~25% Merlot).	\$20-\$22
Kestrel, Falcon Series (Columbia Valley, WA)	2010	92	A fine, rich, velvety cab in the fruit-forward Bordeaux style. Likely high in Merlot. Not my favorite, but I'm sure others would appreciate it.	~\$20
Kinneybrook, Sonoma Valley	2007 2009	93 93	A fine Cab in the classic Napa style, decently balanced between fruit and tannins.	\$20-\$22
Ladera, Napa Valley Cab	2005 2009	90 92	Slightly fruit-forward, medium body, medium tannins, medium complexity. This cab has a unique flavor that Wendy preferred but RCB was confused about.	~\$25
Langetwins, Estate Grown Cab (Lodi, CA)	2008	92	A fine Cab for the price.	\$13
Layer Cake, 100% Cab Sauvignon, Napa Valley	2007 2010	94.5 90	This is a BIG, layered, delicious cab. Recommended for people who like big reds. Semi-dry, light fruit-forward, velvety. 2010 was still too young to open.	\$15
J. Lohr Cab	2009	92	A very good Cab at a reasonable price.	<\$20
Lone Birch Cab, Yakima Valley, WA	2013	92	Unique flavor; slightly fruit-forward but not too sweet; rich berry flavors, light oak.	<\$20
Maddalena, Paso	2007	92	Medium oak, light acid, weak nose, good finish.	<\$20

Robles				
Maipe Cab, Reserve	2009 2011	92 92	A solid Cabernet with good nose and finish, good tannins, just the right level of fruit.	\$17
Mankas, Suisun Valley, CA	2007	93	A big bold delicious Cab from a region I know nothing about.	\$18
Mascota BB (“Big Bat”)	2013	92	A big, bold, aromatic 100% Cab from 3900 ft vineyards in the Uco Valley of Mendoza. Aged 18 months in French oak, and 12 more months before going to market. This high-tannin Cab will easily last 20 years in the cellar. We tasted it in 2018.	~\$25
Miguel Torres, Manso de Velasco, Gobernado Vineyard (Curico Valley, Chile)	1995	93	An unusual nose and flavor for a Cab, but very good.	~\$15
Momentos, Reserva (Cachapol Andes D.O.)	2013	92.5	A medium-to-big-bodied, bold, deep, well-balanced Cab. Good fruit, but not too sweet.	<\$20
Montes Alpha, Apalta Vineyard (Colchagua Valley, Chile)	2007 2011	93.3 XX	Akin to Veloce, a fine slightly fruit-forward Cab from a great Chilean winery. Big, balanced, smooth, wonderful bouquet and great finish	\$17-\$20
Montoya, Napa Valley	2007	92	An excellent Cab. Fruit-forward yet still dry and complex with a fine finish.	\$17
Neethlingshof Cab (Stellenbosch)	2011	92	A rather uniquely flavored Cab from South Africa’s Cape Region. Dry, medium-big, vanilla-oak, black currants.	<\$20
Olema Cab	2011 2012	92.5 92	An excellent cab, with the flavors, bouquet, and structure of a Left Bank Bordeaux. However, it is weak on the finish. But a great bargain at \$23.	\$23
Odonata, Prolific Cab	2015	93.5		~\$25
Pacheco Ranch Winery (Novato, CA)	2002 2005 2006 2006	94 93 93.5 93.5	2002: Delicate, moderately well-balanced, semi-dry. 2005: Strong mid-palate but very well-balanced and rounded. 2006: Similar to the ’02.	\$25-\$40

	Reserve		<p>2006 Reserve: Outstanding.</p> <p>Pacheco wines are 100% Cab+Cab Franc, and dry farmed. A small family operation (dad, mom/Debbie, nephew) that has been around since 1970. Tastings by appointment only. Winemaker is Jamie Meves. I do not think these wines are sold retail anywhere so you have to make an appointment and find the place (which isn't easy).</p>	
<p>Porta Cabernet Sauvignon Gran Reserva, Estate Bottled, Aconcagua Valley (Chile)</p>	<p>2007 2008 2010 2014</p>	<p>93 93 93 92</p>	<p>A big, full, rich-bodied, complex cab from the Aconcagua Valley. Nose and first taste excellent, taste big and bold (probably a 100% cab), but finish leaving a bit of a powdery taste on the palate. Good tannins, big structure, and hi alcohol. Not for the faint-of-heart, this wine can hit you over the head like a two-by-four. Serve it with red meat (or chocolate covered strawberries).</p> <p>The Porta Winery produces three types of cabs, each from a different valley in central Chile (Aconcagua, Maipo and Rapel). The three valleys are located ~500km south of Santiago, around 37° south (about the same latitude S as Napa is N). The 2007 Aconcagua won a silver medal at the 2008 Japan Wine Challenge (Steve Spurrier, of the famous “Judgement of Paris,” was Chairman of the Japan Wine Challenge from 2001 to 2011, when that Porta won a silver medal). Check out Porta’s B&B, a colonial mansion in a beautiful setting at the foot of the Andes. The Porta Winery is a subsidiary of Dos Andes Wines, which owns 9 wineries that include some other, better known Chilean/Argentinian wineries, like Veranda (one of our favorites, actually), Chaltén, and Finca Roja.</p>	\$15-\$20
Proletariat, Cab	2014	92	<p>A fine Cab from a winery in Walla Walla that specializes in producing “fine wines at affordable prices.” Most of their wines are from WA grapes, but their Pinot Noir comes from Willamette Valley grapes. The Cab is</p>	<\$20

			medium-full bodied, with good fruit; slightly on the fruit-forward side; modest nose and finish, but well balanced.	
Ravenswood, Gregory Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Valley)	1994 1996	95 94	The 94 and 96 were both ~20 years old when tasted. Both were excellent Cab/Merlot blends (~75% - 25%). Although the nose isn't especially bright, the wine is full-bodied and well structured. However, both faded quickly, so drink during the first hour after opening.	~\$25 (on release)
Ravenswood, Rancho Salina Vineyards (Sonoma Valley)	1994	93	Cab, Merlot, Cab Franc blend. Tasted in 2018. Great nose and good wine, but faded quickly after opening.	~\$25 (on release)
Raymond, Napa Valley Reserve Selection	2007 2011	94 90	The 2007 (a great year in Napa) is big, bold, full-bodied, good tannins, high acid, complex, elegant finish. The best of everything. The 2011 was weak, though still a decent Cab (faded fast; lost most the essentials 24 hrs after opening).	\$25
Ravenswood, Pickberry Vineyards (Sonoma Valley)	1994 1996 1997 1998 1999	95 93 93 94 93	All tasted in 2018 (~20 yrs old). The Pickberry Vineyards Cabs were spectacular. Right-Bank in style, they often had a bit of Cab Franc added. All years had good nose and balance, but the 94 is a standout. These are classic Bordeaux-style wines. They should be drunk ~1 hour after opening, which is when they're at their prime (they start dropping fast after that). The 96 was slightly corked (in 2018), and the 97 higher in EtOH	~\$25 (on release)
Santa Helena, Valle Central Varietal, Cab Sauvignon	2014	92		<\$20
Santo Stefano (Rutherford), Estate Grown, Napa Valley	2009	90	An excellent cab and a real bargain. Good tannins, strong "Napa taste," fine finish, high acid.	\$15-\$20
Seabiscuit Ranch, Superfecta Meritage (Mendocino County, CA)	2008	94	A pleasant Bordeaux-style blend of 71% Cab Sauvignon, 18% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot, 5% Cab Franc. Although the nose is weak and the taste somewhat fruit-forward, this is a substantial wine with enough tannins to satisfy.	\$25-\$30

			Better than almost any French Bordeaux available in the U.S. for under \$30.	
Silverpalm	2010	89	Quite nice, but certainly not worth buying a second time.	\$16-\$20
Simi Reserve, Sonoma	1995	94 on opening; falling to 92 within 2 hours	Probably the best Simi makes (tasted in 2018; 23 years in the bottle).	\$25-\$30
Souverain, Alexander Valley	2004 2005	92 90	Alexander Valley (the largest valley in Sonoma Co.) competes with Napa for the finest vineyards and wines (especially Cabernets and Chardonnays; but the Zinfandels are also excellent). Vines date from the 1850s. The Souverain Winery has a 60-year history, but their vineyards are 120 years old. Long viewed as a classic California Cab at a value price.	\$15 - \$18
Souverain, North Coast	2010	93	A classic North Coast cab; rich black cherry and plumb (but not fruit-forward), chocolate; excellent finish. Note that in 1986, when Beringer bought Souverain, they added the word “Chateau” to the Souverain brand name, although this doesn’t always appear on the labels.	\$14
Stratton Loomis, Napa Valley	2006 2008 2009	92.5 94.5 94	An excellent wine; rich and satisfying, great finish, made in the Napa tradition.	\$20-\$30
Susana Balbo Signature Cabernet (Mendoza, Argentina)	2008	94	An outstanding cab by Susana Balbo, made in the Bordeaux style. Remarkably similar to Napa’s “Twenty Bench.” Big nose; bright; light tannins with good fruit balance; fine finish. An elegant wine. Excellent with hard dry cheeses.	\$20 (on-line,) \$26 Total Wine
Stanza (Lodi, CA)	2007	93.5	A big, rich, well-rounded Cab at a great price.	\$17
Starmont, Napa Valley	2007	92	A rich, fairly full-bodied Napa Cab akin to Franciscan.	~\$20
Sterling, Diamond Mountain Ranch	2005	93	A rich and satisfying Cab, with good complexity and finish. Medium tannins, medium fruit. We enjoyed this	\$25-\$30

Vineyard (Napa)			cab 2012; WM rated it 94, RCB rated it 93.	
Tobin James, Notorious (Paso Robles)	2008 2010 2012 2013	94 93.5 93 90.5	A big, rich, lightly-fruity, silky, fulfilling cab with an outstanding finish. The price on this fine wine is beginning to rise. Differs from Twenty Bench in being more zesty and fruity, whereas Twenty Bench is more staid and Bordeaux-like. The 2013 was much more fruit-forward than previous vintages, perhaps signaling a corporate shift to more commercial “California-style” Cabs.	\$20
Twenty Bench	2007 2012 2014	93.6 94 94	A consistently good cab in the Bordeaux style (though with bigger fruit, but not as much as typical New World Cabs). These seem to need only 2-3 years in the bottle before becoming superb and drinkable, with perfect balance and great finish. A blend of Cab Sauvignon, Malbec, and Petit Verdot. The wine experts rate these wines 90-91 pts, but I think they are undervaluing them. Less fruit and more minerals than Franciscan.	\$15-\$20
Vigilance (Geyserville, Sonoma Co.)	2007 2009	90 92.5	An excellent cab for the price. At \$12/bottle, this wine is a good investment to cellar. Rich, complex, slightly spicy, good tannins.	\$11-\$13
ZD, Napa	?	94	Similar to Franciscan. (Their “Abacus” sells for ~425.)	~\$20-\$25

Zinfandels

Zinfandel was one of the first grapes grown in California in the post-Spanish colonial era of winemaking. Some of the vines growing today date back to the 1800s. It has been said that the first Zin vines were brought from the East Coast in 1852 by nurseryman Frederick Macondray. The grape was planted extensively in California during the Gold Rush years. But in the early years, it was used to make inexpensive wines, including, beginning in the 70s, a very popular sweet wine called “white zinfandel.” Today’s California Zins are appreciated for the fine red wines they produce, which range from delicate to bold, and complex to simple, and are often high toned and with a bright tang of pepper, herbs and spices. Zin vines produce fruit profusely in their early years, and they also make good wines across a broad range of California’s climates and elevations, attributes giving them an edge for production models that rely on quick returns on investment. Like Merlot, Zins survived the prohibition years due to two exceptions in the Volstead Act: one

sanctioned sacramental wine, the other permitted individual home winemakers to produce 200 gallons/year (the equivalent of a thousand 750-ml bottles). New World Zinfandel grapes are genetically identical to Old World Primitivo grapes, popular in Italy, but they are thought to have originally been from the Croatia region. The first batch of California “white zinfandel” was made by accident in 1975, when Bob Trinchero (at Sutter Home Winery) was making a dry white Zin and the fermentation stuck before the yeast had eaten all the sugar! But the success of “white Zin” in the 70s probably saved many vines that are still used today for California’s best red Zinfandels. The term “old vine” has no legal meaning, and some labels use it for vineyards as young as “over 35 years in age.” One advantage to consumers is that the best Zins cost far less than the best Cabs! People who prefer Old World varietals might not care for California Zins, due to their strong fruit flavors, but the best of them (e.g., Cass Special Edition Paderewski Zin, Peachy Canyon Westside Zin, Maragas Legal Zin Horse Heaven Hills, St. Amant Old Vine Zin (Marian’s Vineyard, Lodi), Tobin James Dusi Vineyard, Dry Creek Heritage Vine Zins) are not fruit-forward or sweet, yet still offer up their rich fruit flavors in complex ways.

Alderbrook Zin	2003	93	Outstanding. Strong competition for Dry Creek, Heritage and Estancia. Great price on a 7 year old Old Vine Zin (tasted in 2010).	\$17
Avenel Cellars, Dry Creek Zin	2007 2009 2013	93 93 93	A great Zin for the price; full-bodied and satisfying with complex flavors and good finish, yet very mellow; complements steaks, burgers, and even grilled or blackened salmon. Would cellar well.	\$17
Calcareous, Twisted Sister, Main Squeeze (Paso Robles, CA)	2007 2008	92.5	42% Cab, 37% Syrah, 21% Zin. A fine wine for the money. Good nose, and a depth and modest complexity; a bit weak on the finish. Needs a few hours to breath before drinking. High alcohol.	\$20
Castro Cellars (Paso Robles, CA)	2007	94	An excellent Zin at a reasonable price. Open it several hours before drinking.	<\$20?
Chiles Canyon, Green & Red Zin	2011	92	Good tannins, good fruit (but not fruit-forward or overly sweet), weak nose but great finish.	~\$20
Cline, Ancient Vines (Contra Costa Co., CA)	2014 2015	92 90	A big, dark, high-alcohol Zin, probably not meant to age. Black cherry, strawberry, chocolate. If you like your Zins powerful, but not too sweet, this is a killer wine.	\$15
Cosentino, Cigarzin (Hearldsburg, CA)	2008	94	An excellent Zin; rich with berries yet dry enough to satisfy.	<\$20

Courtney Benham, Dry Creek (Geiserville, CA) Zin	2006	94	One of the best Zins for the money	\$16
Dominican Oaks (Napa)	2010	92	A fine, medium-bodied Zin. Good balance with good oak, fruit, cherries and a hint of chocolate.	\$17
Dry Creek Heritage Vine Zin	2006 2014 2015	91 96 93	If this isn't the perfect Zin, it comes very close. Great nose and delicious fruits, but not too fruit-forward or sweet. Complex, with a lingering finish that keeps changing flavors. A delicious wine for New World style Zin lovers. The '06 and '15 were not as bold as the '14.	\$17-\$21
Earthquake Zin, Lodi Appellation	2012	94	An exceptional Zin. Big and gold, well rounded, fantastic finish.	\$18-\$22
Elena (Sonoma Co., CA)	2008	92	Great Zin for the price!	\$12
Estancia Zin, Paso Robles	2006	92	Not unexpectedly (from Estancia), this Zin competes well with those from the Dry Creek region. Great price for a very good Zin.	\$10
Forchini Winery, Old Vine Zin, Proprietor's Reserve (Dry Creek Valley, Healdsburg, CA)	2011	93.5	Made from 100 yr old vines, aged 20 months in American oak. Delicious; an outstanding Zin.	\$25-\$30
Hullaballo (Lodi)	2011	92	A fine Zin for the money.	~\$20
Lava Cap Reserve Zin	2005	93	A fine Zin from the El Dorado area of central CA; velvety and complex; decent tannins; good alcohol content.	<\$20
Macchia, Old Vine Zin (Lodi, CA)	2009 2014	90 89.5	A perfectly good table wine. Although a bit on the fruit-forward side, the flavors are excellent.	\$20
Maragas, Swingin' Zin	2012 (Tasted in 2017)	89-92	An Old World, Primitivo-style Zin that is 95% from 67 year-old Zin vines and 5% from Oregon Malbec. Aged 3 years in American Oak. Delicate, yet flavorful and satisfying. Delicious. Light enough to pair with fish, yet robust enough for a hamburger meal. The 2 bottles we tasted differed considerably in taste.	~\$20

Montoya Zin	2012	93	An excellent Zin for the price. Balanced, not too fruit-forward, delicious.	\$12-\$15
Oak Ridge, Ancient Vine (Lodi, CA)	2007 2009 2012 2013 2015	93 93 92 92 90	A big-bodied Zin with a unique flavor; somewhat dry, yet characteristically fruit-forward, not too sweet. A pleasant Zinfandel.	\$25
Oak Ridge Zin (Lodi, CA)	2012	93	Medium-bodied but still very satisfying; slightly acidic; low alcohol flavor; fruit-forward, but not too fruity.	\$13-\$15
Opolo Vineyards, Summit Creek Zinfandel (Paso Robles, CA)	2009	93	A fine Zin at a good price. Decent structure and body.	\$20
OZV (Old Zin Vines), Lodi (CA)	2013	93	A very big and flavorful Zin, rich with fruits and complex depth, but not too sweet. This is an excellent Zin at a great price.	\$22
Parducci, Small Lot Blend Zin	2012	93.5	An elegant, well balanced Zin with perfect fruit and a lush but complex finish. Parducci is an 80-yr old family run winery that claims to be carbon neutral and use sustainable wine-growing practices.	~\$15
Peirano Estate Vineyards, The Immortal Zin, Old Vine (Lodi, CA)	2013	92	Excellent. Perfect balance between fruit, tannin, and acid. A deep dark rich fragrant Zin.	\$14
Poggio Basso, Primitivo (Puglia, Italy)	2013	92	An excellent Primitivo. Big-bodied but with elegance and depth.	~\$20
Seghesio, Sonoma Co.	2002 2011 2013	92 94 91.5	This baby's got a punch, let it breath for 24 hours; a big, complex Zin; delicious.	\$20
Seven Deadly Zins		92	Surprisingly good blend of Zins from 7 California vineyards. Expect some variation year-to-year.	~\$15
Sobon Estate, Rocky	2006	93	A delicious Zins we've tasted; decanting is best. Full-	\$20

Top (Amador Co.)	2013	93	bodied, yet still light on the palate. Hi alcohol at 14.5%	
Sobon, Old Vine Zin	2007 2008	93	Outstanding; slightly peppery, zingy, beautiful finish. Sobon makes some of the finest Zins in California. At \$13, an exceptional bargain.	\$13
Sobon, Rezerva, Amador County, Paul's Vineyard	2009	95	A unique, rich Zin with stunning bouquet and outstanding finish. Worth every penny!	\$25
Sobon, Dry Creek	2007	95	One of the best Zins we've tasted; rich, deep, complex, outstanding finish.	\$25-\$30
Sobon Fiddletown Zin	2007 2008 2010 2012 2013 2014	93 96 96 94 91 95.5	Another excellent Zin from Sobon, the "King of Zins"; this one needs to breath 24 hours. The 2010 was one of the best Zin we've ever tasted! Full-bodied, yet light on the palate. The 2013 fell, coming out too sweet and fruity.	\$20-\$25
Sobon, Zinfandel Reserve (Amador Co.)	2006	93	Another great Zin from Sobon. Sprightly and light-dry, but with enough fruit to make everyone happy.	~\$20
Soda Rock, "Wentworth" Zin	2010	93	A sweet Zin; oaked for 17 months.	\$25-\$30
Sterling Vineyards, Central Coast Zin	2009	93	A good Zin for the money. Fairly big, velvety yet dry.	<\$20
Titus, Napa Valley	2007 2012 2013 2014	93.5 93.5 93 89	Big, lush, peppery, with a bit of zing and a beautiful finish. Brothers Eric Titus (grower) and Phillip Titus (winemaker) are the second generation for this small but prestigious winery with just 40 acres of vines (just N of St. Helena). This is a more elegant Zin than the Tobin James (especially after breathing), though not as big as the Tobin James (which hits you over the head like a 2X4). Titus makes far better Zins than Cabs! The 2014, however, was not good.	\$25-\$30
Tobin James, Ballistic (Paso Robles)	Any year	94.5	This Zin is Tobin James' flagship varietal wine; spicy, big, full-bodied, complex, peppery, and leaves you	\$13-\$20

			wondering if it's a blend! Balanced and satisfying. Great consistency year after year. Expect this wine to increase in price. The 2012 was a bit off.	
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Malbecs

Amancaya, Malbec-Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza, Argentina)	2008 2013	94 91	Produced in the Mendoza Region through a partnership between Argentine winemaker Nicolas Catena and Domaines Barons de Rothschild (Lafite). This is a nice starter wine, ruby-red, strong bouquet, somewhat in the Bordeaux style, but so interesting in flavor and aroma that it gives one pause. 50:50 blend of Cab and Malbec.	\$14 (on-line)
Cupcake Vineyards, (Maipo, Mendoza, Argentina)	2014	91	A deep, rich, fruit-forward Malbec with lots of chocolate & plums. Good oak, velvety texture. Might be too fruit-forward for those who prefer a dryer Malbec. From winemaker Jessica Tomei, a Californian who grew up in an Italian-Greek family (Viticulture & Enology degree from UC Davis).	<\$20
Fabre Montmayou Malbec, Viñas Viejas, Reserva (Mendoza)	2008 2012 2014	93 93.5 92	An excellent Malbec. Big and bold, lush and thick. 90-93 pts by the wine professionals. An excellent Malbec for the price.	\$12 (online)
Finca Adalgisa, Lujan de Cuyo (Mendoza, Argentina)	2011	94	An outstanding Malbec. Perfect balance of tannin and fruit. Nice nose, long finish. Dark fruits and cassis.	~\$25
Flichman, Paisaje de Tupungato (Mendoza, Argentina)	2010 2012 2013 2014	91 88-89 91 93	A big, rich, Malbec with intense flavors of dark berries. Good nose, great finish. A blend of Malbec, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, aged in both French & American oak for 12 months (and in the bottle for 6 more before release). They threw everything they had at this one, but it probably needs a few years in the cellar. Ya gotta like 'em BIG to drink this baby! However, the 2012 was a disappointment. The 2014 was excellent; elegant, warm, balanced.	\$15-\$20
Luigi Bosca, Luján de	2009	93.5	An excellent Malbec.	<\$25

Cuyo				
Piattelli Vineyards, Grand Reserve Malbec (Mendoza, Argentina)	2008	94	A big, full, dry Malbec; excellent.	\$14-\$20
Powers, Columbia Valley (WA)	2015	92	A big, rich, lush Malbec.	~\$20
Probus (Cahors, France)	2006	92	A good French Malbec; balanced, dry, good nose. Unlike Argentine and California Malbecs, French Malbecs are generally not too fruit-forward.	\$18
Rigal, “Original Malbec” (France)	2016	92	Delicious, full-bodied, great finish.	<\$20
Saracina Winery, “Skid Row” Vineyard Malbec (Hopland, Mendocino, CA)	2010	93	Inky purple, dark fruits, medium tannin; a rich earthy wine that could cellar for many years.	\$25-\$30
Valle las Acequias (Mendoza, Argentina)	2005	94	Big, complex, rich, velvety; excellent.	<\$25

Pinot Noirs (CA)
(For French Pinot Noirs, Red Burgundies, etc. see “French wines”)

Pinot Noir is the red wine grape of Burgundy—medium-bodied, high acid, red-berry flavors with perfumed aromas that evolve and change with age. It is a difficult grape to grow, thin-skinned, fragile, demanding cool climates and great care, and producing low yields. Its wines tend to strongly reflect the terroir. The grape's tendency to produce tightly packed clusters makes it susceptible to rot, and it thus requires diligent care and management. The thin skins and low levels of phenolic compounds produce mostly lightly colored, medium bodied, low tannin wines. The typically high acid of Pinot Noirs allows it to pair well with almost any food (and also allows it to age long and well). It is grown extensively in Oregon and New Zealand. In California, it is grown mainly in the Carneros, Central Coast, and Russian River Valley regions. Many of the grapes used throughout California are now coming from the Santa Lucia Highlands (Salinas Valley). The Pinot Noir grape is also used in many types of Champagne, and in some white wines (in Burgundy, as well as in Oregon and California). One of the “noble red wine grapes,” this variety was probably created at least 2000 years ago. The name is derived from the French words for *pine* and *black*; the *pine* alluding to the grape variety having tightly

clustered, pine cone-shaped bunches of fruit. It's difficult to find a really good Pinot Noir for under \$40, although some options are listed below. The best Pinots we've tasted might be Argyle Wines Reserve and Dobbs Family Estate Winery, both from Willamette Valley (OR).

A very interesting study published in 2016 (in the journal *GSA Today (Geological Society of America)*) documented the effect of *terroir* on Pinot Noir wines (from Willamette Valley, Oregon). You've always heard that low-fertility soils produce the best wines ("treat vines mean, to keep them keen") and this study tells us why—low nutrient soils (which also tend to be acidic soils) stress the vines just enough that they put more effort into "future generations" (i.e., into the fruit) than into above-ground vine growth. The study was very well done, with good statistical support. Also of interest was the lack of correlation between wine pH and sugar or alcohol levels. And also the correlation between highly-rated vintages and lack of rain in October, but a lack of correlation between vintage quality and total annual precipitation! Thus, the best Pinot Noir grapes (in Willamette Valley) come from vines growing in soils that are not overly-fertile (low pH) and are stressed by a dry spell just before harvest. The article also describes the inverse correlation between soil pH and wine pH; low pH soils produce high pH wines, which have a more well-rounded taste. So, we can taste the earth in our wines!

Bergström, Cumberland Reserve (Willamette Valley, OR)	2015	94	An excellent, big, juicy Pinot at a great price.	\$25-\$30
Cardwell Hill Cellars, Estate Bottled Willamette Valley, OR	2007 2011	92 92.5	As Pinot's go, this is a darn good one. Good bouquet, good finish, and with more complexity than most. Although light, in both color and depth, this is a surprisingly good Pinot. Lots of strawberries.	\$18
Coelho winery, Atracão Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley, OR)	2013	92	A very good Pinot, well-balanced, flavorful, though on the light side.	~\$20-\$25
Craggy Range, "Zebra Vineyard," Central Otago, New Zealand	2007	93.5	A big, elegant Pinot, with a terrific nose and balanced taste. 91 pts in Robert Parker's Wine Advocate.	\$25-\$60
Dahlia Pinot Noir Reserve, Monterey County (CA)	2008	93	This is best Pinot's we've tasted (and it was only 2 years old at tasting). Full-bodied, rich, fruit forward but not sweet, with a Zinfandel-like finish. At \$23, a real bargain.	\$23
DeLoach Vineyards,	2011	93.5	An excellent Pinot.	~\$20

Russian River Valley Pinot Noir				
Estancia, Pinot Noir	2011	92.5	Very very good; needs more age and better breathing (this was a restaurant selection). Excellent bouquet; richer than most inexpensive Pinots.	<\$20
Evening Land, Bourgogne Rouge (Sonoma, CA)	2011	92.5	100% Pinot Noir grapes from vines imported from Burgundy.	\$25
Evening Land, Edna Valley, Spanish Springs Vineyard	2011	93.5	Outstanding; high acid, low alcohol; strong cherries; dark and lush. Perhaps the best Pinot made by this Pinot-specializing California winery.	\$35
Josh Cellars (Joseph Carr Wines), Pinot Noir	2013	92	An excellent and inexpensive Pinot!	\$15
Meiomi Pinot Noir	2013	92	A blend of grapes from Monterey, Sonoma and Santa Barbara Counties. Medium-bodied, rich, dark cherries.	\$17
Moshin Vineyards (Russian River Valley, CA)	2008	94	Big, complex, excellent finish.	\$25
Odonota Pinot Noir	2014	93	A fine wine from a small, boutique winery. Owner and winemaker is Denis Hoey; tasting room manager is Nolan Cutler. These guys are growing a lot of Rhone varietals too.	~\$25
Oregon Territory Pinot Noir	2014	93.5	A big, rich Pinot, with lots of raspberries on the palate.	~\$25
River Road	2013	92	A surprisingly decent Pinot for the price.	\$12-\$14
Scott Paul, La Paulée (Dundee Hills, Oregon)	2009	95	A fine Pinot with some depth, not too fruity. Named after the traditional harvest celebration (Paulée) in Burgundy. The wine is made from grapes grown in the Maresh Vineyard in Dundee Hills.	\$20 (on-line)

Shiraz/Syrahs

Called Syrah in France and the U.S., but Shiraz in Australia and New Zealand, this grape yields rich red wines that age well. In France, it's home is the Northern Rhone Valley (where it is probably indigenous), although they are increasingly grown in southern

France as well (it is usually blended wherever it is used in France, although the best, from the Hermitage Appellation, are less frequently blended). The beautiful red wines of Barossa and Hunter Valleys, and McLaren Vale (Australia) are mostly Shiraz, where the warmer climate produces bigger bolder flavors. Shiraz is often blended with Cabernet Sauvignon. Flavors typically with raspberries, lavender, rosemary, and pepper. Like Pinot Noir, Syrah is a high-acid wine, but it has higher tannins than the thin-skinned Pinots. French Syrahs are usually herbal, floral, minerally, and subtle; the New World (and Oz) Shiraz's are typically bolder and more fruit-forward. One of the "noble red wine grapes." For French Syrahs, see "French Reds, Cotes du Rhone."

Abacela, Syrah, South Face Block Reserve	2009	93	An excellent, big Syrah from an award-winning Oregon winery that specializes in Spanish varietals. This full-bodied wine is rich and very well balanced. Hi acid, hi tannin, peppery, bold.	\$20-\$30
Clarendon Hills	2001	97	One of the best Syrahs we've tasted; excellent nose, deep, rich, complex flavor; wonderful finish. We enjoyed this in 2011.	\$25-\$30
The Colonial Estate, Explorateur Old Vine Shiraz (Barossa Valley, Oz)	2006	94.5	An exceptional Shiraz. Rich, elegant, balanced, delicious.	\$25-\$30
D'Arenberg, The Dead Arm (McLaren Vale, Oz)	2001	92	A big fruity Shiraz.	\$25-\$30
Dutcher Crossing, Proprietor's Reserve (Dry Creek Valley, Geyserville, CA)	2011	94	100% Syrah, all estate grown; cherries, high tannins, elegant. At \$28, this is a ganga wine deal!	\$25-\$30
Elderton, Exclusive Estate Wine (Barossa Valley, Australia)	1994 2008	92 93	Weak nose; a bit on the sweet and light side; not as smooth and silky as many, but none-the-less still quite good.	\$25
Evans & Tate, Metricup Road (Margaret River)	2010 2011 2012	93 92 91	A super Shiraz, with good balance and great depth, and a long lingering finish. The 2011 & 2012 vintages fell a bit; needs to breath for a few hours.	\$15
Foggy Veil (Santa Barbara Co.)	2013	93.5	A delicious blend of 75% Syrah/25% Grenache from foggy coastal vineyards of Southern California. The long	~\$25

			growing season gives the grapes time to ripen well. Big, rich, strawberries and leather.	
Jip Jip Rocks (Padthaway, South Australia)	2011	93.5	An excellent Shiraz; perfectly balanced, velvety, textured, delicious.	\$16
Klinker Brick Syrah Farrah (Lodi)	2013	92	A velvety-rich, deep, flavorful Syrah.	\$16-\$18
Line Shack Syrah	2014	92	An excellent Syrah at a great price. From vineyards in California's new "San Antonio Valley" appellation (in the warm interior of southern Monterey County).	\$14-\$18
Mi Sueno (Napa)	2005	93	Velvety yet textured; not too complex; dry; good finish.	\$25-\$30
Mitolo, Jester (McLaren Vale, Oz)	2011	90	A good Shiraz. Big, balanced, great finish. Needs to breath for 24 hours.	\$19 (on-line)
Red Knot, Signature (McLaren Vale, Australia)	2012	92	This Shiraz is so big that it might be too much for many wine enthusiasts. Lots of strawberries and blackberries, and strong oak. Highly aromatic. Almost hits you over the head like a baseball bat.	\$14
Rockbare (McLaren Vale, Oz)	2004	93.5	Dry, big, delicious. With hits of eucalyptus.	\$25-\$30
RoxyAnn Winery (Rogue Valley, OR)	2012	92.5	Dark, smooth, polished, and big enough to satisfy anyone's taste in a Syrah. 14 mos. in new French and American oak. This fine, small winery was founded by Jack Day, grandson of Hillcrest Orchard founder Reginald Parsons. Current winemaker is Kent Barthman.	~\$25
Rubus (Barossa Valley, Oz)	2010 2014	92.5 93.5	A big beautiful Shiraz. Labeled "low yield," this is 98% Shiraz and 2% Viognier.	\$18-\$20
Shingleback, D Block Reserve (McLaren Valley, Australia)	2002	92	Medium nose, excellent balance, good structure, fairly complex.	\$25-\$30
Step Rd., Langhorne Creek (Oz)	2006	94	An outstanding Syrah; deep purple, rich in complexity, fine opening and perfect finish. The strong, fleshy fruit flavor is perfectly balanced and not too sweet.	\$20
Thorn-Clark, Shotfire,	2011	92.5	An excellent Shiraz, bold and with plenty of balanced	\$18-\$20

Barossa Valley Shiraz	2012	93	fruit. 90 pts by Robert Parker.	
Tobin James Syrah, Rock n Roll	2010	93.5	Another home run by Tobin James. This is one of the biggest and boldest Syrah's I've tasted. And at 15% EtOH, this baby's a killer wine.	\$20-\$23
Winter's Winery	1985	95	Elegant, complex, distinct barnyard aroma, 12.5% alcohol.	\$25-\$30
Wolf Blass, Yellow Label (Le Classique), Langhorne Creek, McLaren Vale	2016	92	An excellent Shiraz.	~\$20

Petit Syrahs

Even though the origins of this grape are in France, California may be the place to look for the best expressions of Petite Syrah. The "Petite" in the name refers not to the size of the vines but rather to the size of the grapes. In fact, the high skin to juice ratio that accompanies the small berries allows Petite Syrah to produce wines with high tannins and acidity, components that give them the ability to age well, and drinking a young Petite Syrah wine can be an experience in super-tannin flavors. The grape was first developed in the 1870s in France's Rhône region, the result of a cross between Syrah and a relatively minor Rhône variety, Peloursin, the resulting grape being called Peloursin in France (but Petite Syrah in the New World). This rationale for this cross was to give Syrah a greater ability to resist mildew. But the resulting grape never really caught on in France, in part because the tendency to mildew was replaced by susceptibility to gray rot in the humid Rhône region. California's climate is considerably drier, and the grape tends to thrive there, from Mendocino all the way to the Mexican border.

For a number of years, Petite Syrah was primarily used as a blending grape, thanks to its deep color and fairly intense tannins. It is frequently blended into Zinfandel for added complexity, body, and to tone down the tendency of Zins toward "jammy" fruit. More recently, the grape has been bottled as a single varietal wine. On its own, Petite Syrah forms wines with dense blackberry fruit character, mixed with black pepper notes, licorice, smoked meats and tar. Like other big, red wines from California, Petite Syrah pairs well with steaks, roasts, and game.

Cakebox (Paso Robles, CA)	2014	92	Big, bold, rich and delicious. An excellent blend of 98% Petite Syrah, 1% Zinfandel and 1% Syrah. Almost inky dark, rich,	\$10
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			tannic, deep cherries. This is an unusual wine; only for those who like their reds very big.	
Earthquake, Petit Syrah (Lodi, CA)	2010	94.5	Big, bold, delicious. One of the best PS I've tasted. Thanks to Pete Kresan for turning us on to this kick-ass wine.	\$20-\$25
La Jota Vineyards, Howell Mtn. (Napa)	1994	97	A deep, rich, complex Petit Syrah. Perhaps the best we've had; Jane & Malcolm Parker served us this, July 2011.	<\$25
Peirano Estate (Lodi, CA)	2009 2011 2012	92 89 93	One of the better Petit Syrahs we've enjoyed. The 2011 was a disappointment, but the 2012 kicked ass. Big, bold, deep rich fruits, perfect tannins, bit nose, long finish.	\$15
Peterson (Sonoma)	2007	97	Outstanding; one of the best, and most unique Petit Syrahs we've tasted. Rich deep bouquet matched by equally unique taste.	<\$25
Ridge, Lytton Estate (Dry Creek Valley, CA)	2015	94	A perfect Petit Syrah! 97% Petite Syrah.	~\$25

Merlots (excluding Bordeaux)

“Originally” from Bordeaux, and grown there in large quantities for blending with Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc in the famous Bordeaux red wines (now used less and less for blending Left Bank Bordeaux wines, but still bottled as 100% Merlot, or blended, in most Right Bank Bordeaux wines). It dominates the wines of Pomerol and St-Émilion (on Bordeaux’s Right Bank), and this is where Merlot achieves its greatest triumph as a silky-smooth, plummy wine that lasts for decades. The Pomerol Region may be the highest calling for Merlots, and here the great stalwarts like Pétrus, Vieux Château Certan, and Château Trotanoy are bottled. California Merlots are typically soft in tannins and far more fruit-forward than Bordeaux Merlots. In fact, in California most Merlots are insipid wines and poor excuses for what Merlot can achieve. The typically lush, velvety texture and fruit-forward (blackberries and plums), and low acidity of Merlots make them “favorites of the masses” (e.g., “Three-Buck Chuck” is usually a Merlot). Someone once said of Merlot, “always a bridesmaid to Cabernet Sauvignon, never a bride” (whoever said that had not tasted a Pomerol). One of the “noble red wine grapes.” The lushness comes from the strong mid-palate of these wines.

Apex Cellars (Columbia Valley, WA)	2010	93.5	A bright, fruity, Syrah-like Merlot.	\$25-\$30
Backstory Merlot (Parlier, CA)	2009	92	Few New World Merlots are worth drinking; this one is.	\$25-\$30

Deer Creek (Selma, OR)	2009	92	A decent New World Merlot, if one must drink a Merlot.	<\$25
Frog's Leap, CA		94.5	One of the best Merlots we've had yet. Velvety, yet with a big balance and lots of vanilla.	Occasionally <\$30
Georis Winery, Carmel Valley (CA)	2014	93	An excellent, earthy Merlot.	\$30
Kendall-Jackson, Vintner's Reserve (Sonoma County)	2008	93	Bigger and far better structured than most California Merlots, with more complexity and less fruit than most.	~\$20
La Prendina, Merlot (Garda), Merlot	1996	93	Plums & chocolate; a light Merlot that is quite different from French or California versions (85% Merlot, 15% Rondinella).	\$20 on release (the 1996 was selling for \$15-\$90 in 2014)
Peterson, Dry Creek Valley Merlot	1998	92	Jammy, good fruit, low acid. A soft but delicious Merlot.	\$25
Ravenswood, Sangiacomo Vineyard Merlot	1992	93.5	An excellent Merlot that is balanced and Bordeaux-like. Not too fruit-forward, nor too sweet; dried cherries.	Occasionally <\$30
Stag's Leap Merlot	2007	92	As California Merlots go, this one is great. The deep, lingering bouquet is Cabernet-like, and the texture is far better than most other Merlots we've tried. If you want to drink Merlot, here's a good place to start.	Occasionally <\$30
Tobin James	2010	93.5	An excellent Merlot from a good winery; although very fruit-forward (as Tobin James unfortunately now makes most of their wines), the balance with oak and acid still makes this a delicious wine.	\$16

Red Blends (not Bordeaux blends)

Allegrini+Renacer, Enamore Red Blend (Mendoza, Argentina)	2011	92.5	A delicious, big blend of Malbec, Cab Franc, Cab Sauvignon and Bonarda grapes that are sun dried before fermentation, and aged in French oak barriques for 12 months. This wine is well structured and elegant. A bit on the sweet side, but	\$20 (online)
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			not like an Amarone.	
Alterra Grand Mélange	?	92	Alterra knocks another one out of the ballpark with this unique blend; far bigger than most Bordeaux wines (or California “Meritage” wines) with depth and good finish.	\$15
Avenel Cellars, Napa Red Wine	2008 2012	93.5 93.0	A jolly blend of Cab Sauvignon and 4 other (secret!) varieties. Rich, bright, satisfying, dry cherries.	\$22-\$25
Blackstone, Sonoma Reserve, “Rubric”	2006	93	An outstanding blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petite Verdot, Syrah, Cab Franc, Petite Syrah and Tannat. The smoothness of Bordeaux, but the depth and fullness of a Napa Cabernet. Rich and satisfying.	~\$20
Calcareous, Twisted Sisters Main Squeeze	2010	94	A delicious blend (69% Syrah, 19% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Zinfandel) by this fine Paso Robles winery.	\$20
Cass, Rhone Blend (Paso Robles)	2004	95	An outstanding blend of 70% Mourvedre, 30% Grenache, in the southern Rhone style (as good as any French Rhone wine we’ve tasted!), from a fine Paso Robles winery.	\$25-\$30
Cass, Rockin’ One	2013	93	A delicious blend of 41% Mourvèdre, 29% Grenache, 24% Syrah and 6% Petite Sirah. GSM with a bang.	\$25-\$30
Colby Red Blend	2014	93	A big, bold, delicious blend of 5 grapes; perfect fruit, not too sweet, great finish.	<\$20
Columbia Crest, Horse Heaven Hills, H ₃ Red Blend (Les Chevaux)	2012	92	A delicious blend of 75% Syrah and 25% Merlot. Good acid and balance, great finish.	~\$20
Courtney Benham Paso Robles “Vin D’Eliza”	2006 2010	93.5 93.5	The 2006 is a delicious and spicy blend of 40% Syrah, 36% Grenache and 18% Mourvedre. The 2010 was a silkier, fruitier blend of 26% Carignane, 24% Cinsaut, 20% Mourvedre, 18% Grenache, and 12% Syrah. This is a great <\$20 experimental wine!	<\$20
Finca los Maza, Tonconology Cab-Syrah blend (Mendoza, Argentina)	2011	93	An exquisite estate-bottled blend from Mendoza. 60% Cab, 40% Syrah, 12 mos. in French & American small barrels. Fruits, chocolate, pepper. Medium-to-big.	\$14
Grochau Cellars, Tinto	2012	94.5	An extraordinary blend of Tempranillo, Syrah, Mouvedre, Grenache and Viognier by an Oregonian winery that sources	~\$20

			most of their grapes (for this wine) from the Columbia Valley, Washington state. The bouquet is huge, flavor exotic and complex, the finish wonderful. www.gcwines.com	
Giguere Family Vineyards (J.L. Giguere), Matchbook Tinto Rey/Red Table Wine (Zamora, California)	2006	94	A stunningly delicious, rich, complex blend of 40% Tempranillo, 35% Syrah, 17% Cab Sauvignon, 5% Petite Syrah and 3% Graciano. The finish is one of finest I've tasted in a red wine; keeps you coming back for more. NOTE: Recent genetic work has shown that Graciano and Mouvedre are not the same grape.	\$16
Hook & Ladder, Station Ten Red Wine (Sonoma Co.)	2006	92	Not as good as Hook & Ladder's "Tillerman," but still a fine wine and great value. Best 24 hrs after opening.	\$16
Hook & Ladder, The Tillerman, red table wine (Sonoma, Russian River Valley)	2007 2010 2011 2012	94 93.5 93.5 93.5	This is an excellent Super Tuscan style blend of 51% Cab, 24% Cab Franc, 15% Merlot, 10% Sangiovese. The de Loach family started this vineyard in 1970 with 24 acres of old-vine zinfandel, but have grown it to ~400 acres today. Their "Tillerman" blend is their best-known red. The grapes for this one all come from their Healdsburg fields (Napa).	\$16
McDowell Valley Vineyard, Coro Mendocino	2004	92	This unique blend of 60% Zinfandel, 20% Syrah, and 20% Petit Syrah creates an easy-drinking, flavorful, summer red table wine.	<\$20
Montgras Reserva, Cab/Syrah, Colchagua Valley, Chile	2008	92	Here is a 50-50 Cab-Shiraz blend that knocks your socks off. Terrific bouquet, rich in the mouth, strong finish. Let it breath several hours (or decant) before drinking.	\$9-12
Montgras Quatro	2007	92	A nice blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Carmenere and Syrah. Needs to breath for several hours (starts out at an 89, but reaches a 92 after breathing)	<\$20
Mount Baker, Proprietor's Reserve Grenache-Syrah	2009	93	An excellent Rhone-style blend. High in acid, dry, great nose and finish.	\$25-\$30
Newton, Napa Valley Claret	2006 2012	90 92.5	Great depth and finish; a bold blend that far exceeds typical Bordeaux style blends (or Meritages) from California. 43% Merlot, 41% Cab, 9% Cab Franc, 4% Petit Verdot, 3%	\$16

			Syrah.	
Owen Roe, Sinister Hand (Columbia Valley, WA)	2009 2011	93.5	70% Grenache, 26% Syrah, 2% Mouvedre, 2% Counoise. Delicious, dry, tannins, complex; let it breath for 24 hrs.425	\$25-\$30
Peterson Winery, Dry Creek, AgRaria, Big Barn Red	2002	95	Rich bouquet, complex flavors, strong finish; an outstanding big bold red blend.	<\$25
Peterson Winery, Zero Manipulation, Mendocino Red Table Wine	2007	93	A delicious blend of 82% Mendocino Carignane, 6% Mendocino Petite Syrah, 6% Dry Creek Valley Syrah, and 6% Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel. One of the best, and most unique CA blends I've tasted. Unfined and unfiltered.	\$13
Shenandoah Vineyards, Reserve, Amador Co., Barbera	2006 2007	93 92	A delicious table wine and one of Shenandoah's flagship wines; good depth.	\$20
Soda Rock, Entourage	2009	94	Zin, Petit Syrah, Grenache, Syrah. A beautiful Rhone style blend.	\$25-\$30
Tribunal, Red Wine (Kenwood, Sonoma Co., CA)	2010	92	A Trader Joe's special; fruit forward, but still a pretty tasty wine with enough depth and oak to be satisfying.	<\$15
Two Hands, Brave Faces (Barossa Valley, So. Australia)	2008	93	A delicious and unique blend of 50% Grenache, 30% Shiraz, and 20% Mataro.	<\$20
Vigilance, Lake County Red Wine – Cimarron (Kelseyville, CA)	2010	93	A fine and mighty blend of Zinfandel, Syrah, Petit Syrah, and Cab Sauvignon. Aged 12 mos. in oak, this big wine is smooth and velvety, yet rich and satisfying. A great wine with red meat or pizza.	\$25-\$30

Italian Reds, Piedemonte: Barolos, Barbarescos, and Nebbiolo

Barolos and Barbarescos are made from Nebbiolo grapes in the small Piedmont region in northern Italy. Barolo wine, usually “bigger” than Barbarescos, is made in several towns, including Barolo, La Morra, Castiglione Falletto, and Serralunga d’Alba. This manifestation of the Nebbiolo grape is one of the richest and most dramatic, and Barolo wines have been referred to as the “King of Wines” (or the “Wine of Kings”). Deep in complexity, and high in tannins and

acidity, many wine enthusiasts prefer wines that are softer and fruitier than Barolo. Generally speaking, good Barolos are somewhat expensive (~\$40 and up), and inexpensive ones are a disappointment. These wines were made for aging, and the longer they lie in wait the better. The heavy tar-rose bouquet grows with time, and the vintages that are heavy with tannin need time to soften (the fermenting wine may sit on the skins for 3 weeks extracting tannins).

Barreri Rovatí, Barbera D'Asti, Superiore	2011	92	A light Barbera, but rich with flavors of dark berries; decent structure and balance; great finish.	~\$15
Carino, Vigneto Rocche, Barolo	1990	96	Excellent. Very mellow; perhaps at its peak in 2014.	\$25-\$30
Damilano, Marghe, Langhe Nebbiolo	2014	93.5	An excellent, medium-bodied but well balanced Nebbiolo from the Piedmont.	~\$20
La Loggia, Barbera d'Alba	2008	90	A light, but pleasant Barbera from the white truffle region of d'Alba.	<\$20
Mauro Sebaste, Barbera d'Alba (Santa Rosalia, Italy)	2007	93	Very dry, but with good texture and depth; significantly improves with breathing.	<\$25
Pio Cesare, Barolo	2009	93.5	A delicious Barolo, but not up to the Clerico or Carino.	~\$25-\$30
Paolo Scavino, Barolo	1990	92	Stingy, high notes, cherries and intense tannins. Tasted in 2014 and it was on the point of turning bad	\$23 (upon release) \$135-\$500 in 2014
Pietro Rinaldi, Monpiano Barbera	2016	94	A exceptional Barbera. Perfect balance, great nose and finish. Delicious.	~\$25
Produttori del Barbaresco (probably a "second wine" from this coop)	2006	94	The Produttori del Barbaresco coop maintains 250 acres for Nebbiolo vineyards and produces ~500,000 bottles annually. They make a first and second wine, and also some single-vineyard wines. It is a well-known, high quality winery.	\$25-\$30
Renato, Corino Barolo	1990	96	A wonderful rich wine with a stunning bouquet; very sophisticated; evokes thoughtfulness.	\$25-\$30
Rosa dell 'Olmo, Barolo	2011	93	A big, delicious, balanced, just-the-right-fruit, peppery Barolo. At this price point, an excellent deal.	\$14 (Trader Joes)

Italian Reds, Sicily

Bucecci, Myrina, Nero d'Avola	2013	91	An excellent, medium-bodied, fruit-forward Nero. Plums, figs, a bit earthy.	\$13
COS, Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico	2012	93	A Nero blend. Medium weight on opening, but grows in complexity quickly. The Cerasuolo di Vittorias are Sicily's only DOCG wines.	\$20 (Sicily) \$30 (U.S.)
Curatolo Arini, Paccamora, Terre Siciliane	2014	92	Medium-big bodied; good fruit (raspberries & strawberries), somewhat earthy. An excellent Nero for the price. The Arini winery makes very good reds and whites, mostly from the Marsala region. They have been making wines since 1875.	\$13
Cygnus, Tenuta Regaleani, Nero d'Avola	2011	92	A blend of Nero d'Avola and Cab Sauvignon. Big, earthy, smooth.	\$20 (\$17 in Sicily)
Donnafugata, Sedàra, Nero d'Avola (Marsala)	2009 2012	87 93	Blended with Syrah and Merlot. A soft and velvety wine; the 2012 is bigger and more satisfying. Fermented strictly in cement vats (no oak).	\$19
Donnafugata, Tancredi Sicilia Rosso (Marsala)	2011	94	70% Nero d'Avola; 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. Tancredi is the jewel of the 150-year-old Donnafugata winery. Big luscious nose, sweet and tart blend of berries on the palate, lush texture, ends with soft tannins. An excellent wine (one of Clark Blake's favorite Italian wines).	\$25 - \$35
Epicuro, Nero d'Avola	2009	92.5	Velvety, pleasant on the palate, so-so finish but quite nice.	\$19

Feudo Maccari, Saia, Nero d'Avola	2010 2012	91 92	A big, delicious Nero. Dark and sour red cherries, spices, oak, and a velvety palate of lush concentrated fruit. Good acid and tannin. Weak nose but good finish. Grown on volcanic soil.	\$25
Firriato, Chiaramonte, Nero d'Avola	2009	93	Excellent.	\$14 (Sicily)
Gulfi, Nerobufaleffi	2009	92	Weak nose, but good fruit. An earthy peasant wine typical of Sicily.	~\$20
Narké, Nero d'Avola	2012	92	Medium-big; delicious. From Principe di Corleone.	\$12 (Sicily)
Terre, Nero d'Avola	2007	94	A big, delicious, deep, excellent Nero.	<\$25
Tripudium, Vino Rosso (Marsalla District)	2011 2012	94.5 93	A blend of 35% Nero, 35% Syrah, and 30% Cab Sauvignon. Well balanced, medium bodied, complex, delicious; lots of berries and spices. Good acid and tannin. A great wine for \$12.	\$12

Italian Reds, Others

Almost all Italian wines are high acid, which tends to produce delicate wines (Italians seem to love them that way), and not always oaked nor necessarily high in tannins. Most Tuscan wines are made from Sangiovese grapes and are light wines (e.g., Chianti), but a few are bolder (e.g., Brunello), and some of the new ones are rich complex blends called “Super-Tuscans” that can have virtually anything in them (but usually Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon, along with other grapes). Overall, there are more than 1000 varieties of wine in Italy. The highest government rated wineries are DOCG (only ~35 wineries), the next is DOC (~300 wineries), and the lowest is the IGT (regional indications).

Allegrini, Palazzo della Torre (Verona)	1992 2006	94 89	An outstanding wine; rich, but easy to drink. 13% alcohol. 70% Corvina Veronese, 25% Rondinella	\$20 (on-line)
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			and 5% Sangiovese. A portion of the fruit for the wine (30%) is left to air-dry on racks (Amarone-style) until December, when it is fermented and subsequently added to the rest of the wine, which is fermented normally. Robert Parker rates the 2006 vintage at 90 points. NOTE: The 2006 was not to my liking and by 2016 it was over the hill.	
Allegrini, Amarone	1995	97	Delicious. High notes, not too sweet. Tasted in 2007.	<\$25
Antinori, Santa Cristina Rosso	2010	92	This wine has an unusual bouquet and flavor. But it's big and bold and interesting. Let it breath for quite a few hours. A blend of 60% Sangiovese, and 40% Cab, Merlot and Syrah. Antinori is a 600+ yr old Tuscan winery that helped revolutionize the Italy's wine industry in the 1980s. That era saw the rise of Super Tuscan wines, blends of international grapes, a major change from the very rigid wine classification system that regulated grape varieties used in specific regions. This very interesting wine actually started as a Chianti in the 1940s, but is now a blended Super Tuscan. It is soft and balanced with smooth tannins but plenty of structure and red fruit flavors.	~\$10
Antinori, Santa Cristina, Toscana	2011	91	Antinori's Santa Cristina Tuscan red blend. A classic Sangiovese-based, Tuscan-style, medium-bodied red wine that goes perfect with pastas and pizzas.	~\$15
Antinori, Santa Cristina Chianti Superior	2010 2012 2013 2014 2015	93 90 93 94	An excellent Chianti from a fine wine-maker. Rich, full-bodied yet velvety; just enough fruit, but semi-dry. Far more depth and complexity than most Chiantis. A great bargain at just \$13 (Total Wine).	\$13
Antinori, Villa Antinori, Toscana	2005 2012	93 90	A beautiful Super-Tuscan from the vineyards of Antinori. 60% Sangiovese, 20% Cabernet	<\$16

			Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 5% Syrah. 12 months in oak. Big, complex, perfect balance. This is what Antinori can do when they put their mind to it! But, alas, the 2012 fell short.	
Aquila d'Oro, Toscana, "Dry Red Tuscan Wine"	2009	92	An excellent, very light, but dry, "Super Tuscan." Great with pizza and pastas.	<\$25
Arduini, Montepulciano D'Abruzzo	2015	91	A very good, inexpensive Montepulciano.	<\$20
Argiano NC Rosso Toscano	2008 2010	94 93	An excellent Super Tuscan blend from a fine winemaker. 40% Cab Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 20% Syrah, 20% Sangiovese. Big, balanced, velvety fruits.	\$19
Banfi, Rosso di Montalcino	2011	92.5	A solid Montalcino; balanced, medium-big, tasty. Needs to breath for a few hours.	~\$20
Benati, Etna Rosso, Rossodiverzella	2013	92	Made from the typical Etna grape, Nerello Mascalese, with some Nerello Cappuccio added.	\$16 (in Sicily)
Bigi Winery, Vipra Rossa (Orvieto, Umbria)	2011	93.5	This satisfying vin rossa is a very big wine; a blend of Sangiovese, Montepulciano and Merlot, it offers both satisfying balance and a powerful organic experience. The name "Vipera" was inspired by Monaldeschi della Vipera, one of Orvieto's historical noble families. The varietals are vilified separately in stainless steel, and a portion of the wine is aged in French oak. Cherries, berries, spices. Serve with big meat dishes and strong cheeses.	<\$20
Bolgheri, Tenuta Guadoal Tasso, Il Bruciato	2012	95	A stunning blend of 65% Cab, 20% Merlot, 15% Syrah.	\$25-\$35
Canneto Vino Nobile, Reserva	2007	94	A delicious, big wine from Montepulciano; perfect balance, great tannins and oak. Vin Nobile di Montepulciano is a red wine with a DOCG status produced in vineyards surrounding the town of Montepulciano. These wines must be made from at least 70% of the local Sangiovese variety (<i>Prugnolo</i>	\$25-\$35

			<i>Gentile</i>), and may be blended with Canaiolo Nero and smaller amounts of other local varieties such as Mammolo. Aged in oak for 2 years (3 if a riserva). This wine should not be confused with Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, which is made from the Montepulciano grape in the Abruzzo region of east-central Italy.	
Cantina Miglianico (Miglianico, Italy), Mellianum, Montepulciano D'Abruzzo	2007	92	A deep blood-red, extra dry, full-bodied Montepulciano d'Abruzzo. Drinks best with <u>rich</u> pasta dishes or juicy steaks. Ya gotta be a serious red wine lover for this one.	\$15
Cantina Zaccagnini, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo	2010	93	A delicious, mellow Montepulciano. Good tannins, low alcohol. Perfect for pasta.	\$11
Capostrano, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo	2012	90	Rich, full, lush; best after open 12 hrs (mellows and blends the tannins).	<\$20
Carpineto, Chianti Classico	2014	93.5	A small cut above Antinori's Santa Cristina Chianti. Bright cherries, soft oaks.	\$25-\$30
Casisano-Colombaio, Rosso di Montalcino	2008 2009	93 93.5	A darn good Montalcino red. A tad on the light side, but nonetheless consistently good drinking. Fine with pasta, soup, cheese, etc., but too light for meat dishes.	\$17
Castello della Paneretta Chianti, Classico	2009	93	Solid. Classico.	\$25
Casone Toscana (Tenuta Poggio al Casone, Famiglia Castellani), Tuscan red wine.	2012	93.5	80% Sangiovese; 20% Syrah. A big, delicious Super-Tuscan style red from Toscana.	\$12
Cecchi, Storia di Famiglia Chianti Classico	2014	93	An excellent Chianti; big, dry yet with deep fruit, rich.	~\$25
Col di Lamo di Giovanni Neri, Rosso di Montalcino	2015	94	An excellent, rich, Tuscan-style 100% Sangiovese.	\$60 restaurant price; probably ~\$25 retail (if you can find it)
Conte di Bregonzo, Amarone della Valpolicella	2006	92	A good Amarone is good to find, and this one is very good.	\$20

Elio Grasso, Barbera de Alba	2008	92	The typical gritty/ashy Barbera style is moderated by a light fruit-forward flavor and a rich complexity.	<\$25
Feudi di San Gregorio, "Rubrato" Aglianico (Campania)	2011	92.5	This Aglianico is intense with berries & peppers, fresh on the palate, soft and balanced, with low tannin but high acid (very dry). Weak finish. Grown on volcanic soil, un-oaked. Probably needs at least 5-10 years in the cellar, as I believe most Aglianicos do.	\$25
Firriato, Le Sabbie Dell'Etna, Etna Rosso	2011 2012	92.5 89	The 2011 is a stunning wine from the slopes of Mt. Etna. A classic Mt. Etna blend of Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio grapes. The 2012 is a disappointment.	\$20-\$30
Fontanafredda Briccotondo, Barbera (Piedmont Region)	2007	92	Cherries, big vanilla, high acid, soft tannins. This is a very nice Barbera, if you can find it.	\$11 (on release)
Gabbiano, Chianti Classico	2005 2009	93 93.5	An outstanding Chianti; deep, rich, fulfilling. This one is a bargain at \$12!	\$12
Grifone Primativo	2012	89		
Grifone Sangiovese	2009 2011 2013	89 94 93	The 2009 was almost a good wine, but fell short. The 2011 & 2013 are superb.	\$6
Grifone Chianti Riserva	2009 2012	92 89	A mild, easy-drinking Chianti. Great wine for pizzas.	\$7
Incanto, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano	2005 2010	92 91	An excellent Montepulciano, with good flavors and finish; not as robust or dry as a Montalcino or Brunello, but still good. Far better than the Poggio alla Sala Montepulciano.	\$11
Incanto, Chianti Classico Riserva	2005	92.5	A superb Chianti from a good label at an excellent price.	\$11 (TJs)
Isole e Olena, Chianti Classico (Tuscany)	2007	93	A rich, deep, full-bodied Chianti by an excellent Tuscan vintner.	<\$25
La Castellina, Chianti Classico	2007	94	An excellent Chianti.	\$23-\$25
Quercia, Montepulciano d'	?	94	An excellent Montepulciano.	~\$20

Abruzzo				
Querceto, L'aura, Chianti Classico	2008 2013	94 93.5	An excellent Chianti; big, rich, with a great finish.	<\$20
La Valentina, Montepulciano D'Abruzzo	2006	82 92	This needs more research. The first bottle was great (92), but the second bottle (white label) was not (82)!	~\$15
'Oro, Vino Nobile Montepulciano	2009	92	Big, bold, gutsy. We drank this in 2016, and it went bad in 24 hours; so be prepared to finish the bottle quickly with older vintages. 92 pts by Wine Spectator.	\$20
Fratelli Tedeschi, Valpolicella, Capitel dei Nicala	1997	94	A rich, dry, classic Valpolicella from Verona. 30% Corvina; 30% Corvinone; 30% Rondinella; 10% Molinara, Rossignola, Oseleta, Negrara, Dindarella. This wine is produced using a traditional Veronese technique: raisin-drying of the grapes (the grapes, placed in wooden crates for about one month, lose about 8-10% of their weight in the drying process).	~\$20 (on release)
Giovanni Almondo Barbera d'Alba Valbianchéra	2006	92	First night: lots of jam-infused zing. Second night: a solid backbone of richness with deep fruity undercurrents. This is a jewel from the Piedmont, coming from a single vineyard of Barbera Vabianchéra. This is no wine for weenies. The deep purple color and pine needle aromas combine with a bright energetic taste and firm finish.	\$18 (on-line); probably ~\$40 if you can find it in a store.
Il Valore, Chianti Reserva	2006	92.5	A darn good Chianti, not as light as most Chiantis, but still tasty and easy to drink; great bouquet and finish.	\$7
Il Valore, Marchese de Petri, Sangiovese "Giovani"	2008	90.5	A rich and balanced Sangiovese that will no doubt age exquisitely.	<\$10 (TJs)
Leone de Castris, (Vintivinicoltori dal 1665), "Five Roses," Primo Rosato Salento	2010	94		<\$20 (in Italy)

Le Volte, Dell'Ornellaia (Tuscany)	2011 2013	93 93	A superb, big, rich Super Tuscan. 50% Sangiovese, 40% Merlot, 10% Cab. The Dell'Ornellaia estate was originally established by Marchese Lodovico Antinori, but is now owned by Marchesi de' Frescobaldi. 90 pts by Wine Spectator, Bronze medal from International Wine Challenge, Special Commendation from Decanter World Wine Awards.	\$25-\$30
Masciarelli Montepulciano D'Abruzzo	2007 2009 2013	92 92 90	An outstanding wine for the money; great bouquet, well-structured, fine finish. Medium-bodied, dry, delicious.	\$10
Masseria del Fauna, Apoglia, Primativo	?	92	A very smooth Primativo, mellow, dry, good tannins.	~\$25
Melini, Morellino di Scansano	2009	94		<\$15 (in Italy)
Michele Alois Vineyards, Trebullanum, Casavecchia, Terre del Volturmo	2010	93	An excellent wine, dry, high tannin, soft dark grape flavors.	<\$25
Miglianico Il Fondatore, Montepulciano D'Abruzzo	2009	93	A delicious, medium-bodied Montepulciano with great balance and tannins. We drank the 2009 in 2016 and it was delicious.	\$18
Monsanto, Chianti Classico	2008	92	A classic Chianti; medium-bodied, tasty, dark cherries, perfect with pizza or pasta.	~\$20
Negroamaro Grape, Salice Salentino, La Corte	2008	92.5	A unique wine with deep rich complex flavors, slightly fruit-forward but high in tannins; barnyard; tasted this in Charleston (Wild Olive Cucina Italiana, John's Island).	\$25
Pozzi Barbera Oltrepo Pavese	2008	92	This fine Barbera wine is made from 100% Barbera Oltrepo Pavese. At \$13/bottle, this is a grand bargain indeed.	\$13
Querceto Toscana, Tuscan Red Wine	2007	92	This is a fine Sangiovese wine, deep in texture and full on the palate; blended with 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Merlot.	\$9 - \$17
Rocca delle Machie Chianti,	2004	92.5	Now THIS is a good Chianti!	\$20

Reserva	2006			
Rocca delle Macie "Sasyr" Sangiovese/Syrah	2006	92	Much more complex and satisfying than Rocca delle Macie's Chiantis. Went from a 90 to a 92 with 24 hrs breathing.	\$15
Ruffino il Ducale, Toscana	2006	93.5	A very pleasant Super-Tuscan by a venerable old wine company. 60% Sangiovese, 20% Merlot, 20% Syrah.	\$13
Ruffino, Riserva Ducale, Chianti Classico Riserva	2009 2011	93 92.5	An excellent Chianti Riserva, with a sprightly and rich flavor. The 2011 is much tamer than the 2009.	\$22
Saladini Pilastris, Rosso Piceno Superiore, Vigna Monteprandone	2006	93.3	A blend of Tuscan Sangiovese grapes gives this full-bodied wine a zest, flavor and finish unlike any others. From the Monteprandone region. Another fine wine from the respected Saladini Pilastris winery. For some reason, this one fades fast; drink it within 24 hrs of opening.	\$17
Salice Salentino, Sampietrana Vigna delle Monache, Riserva	2006	92		<\$15 (in Italy)
San Andrea, Chianti Classico	2012 2014	92 90	An excellent Chianti at an unbelievable price! Rich, medium-bodied, elegant. Far better than the Riserva!	\$14
San Andrea, Chianti Classico Riserva	2007 2011	92 92	A very good Chianti, light as Chiantis are, but more rounded and flavorful than most.	\$18
Tenuta di Arceno, Chianti Classico	2012	93	An excellent Chianti. Full bodied.	~\$20
Tenuta di Trecciano, Chianti Senesi Riserva (Terra Rossa)	2012	93	A big, dry, fruity-but-not-sweet, elegant wine with good structure and strong tannins. 100% Sangiovese grapes from the 16 Ha Trecciano Estate, 16 km SW of Siena.	\$17
Tenuta di Reniera, Chianti Classico	2007 2011	93 92	An outstanding Chianti; 100% Sangiovese; rich and textured, with a great finish.	\$22-\$25
Tenuta di Reniera, Chianti Classico, Riserva 2012	2012	92	An outstanding Chianti; 100% Sangiovese; rich and textured, with a great finish.	\$25

Tenuta Sette Ponti, Crognolo	2010	95	Wow. A beautiful wine from Tuscany; 100% Sangiovese. Like an elegant Brunello.	Costco=\$25 Total Wine=\$39
Tre Vigne, Vietti Barbera D'Asti	2007	91	Easy on the palate, yet with enough depth to satisfy; medium-bodied; fruity, bright, elegant, balanced, fine finish.	~\$20
Villa Carafa Casavecchia, Terre del Volturno	2002	93	A suave, dense, deep wine, rustic in flavor with corky earthy overtones.	<\$25
Volax, Sangiovese	2009 2010	92.5 92	Crisp, pleasant, delicious.	<\$20
Zenato, Alanera Rosso (Valpolicello)	2015	92	A peppery-spicy blend of Corvina, Rondinella, Corvinone, Merlot, and Cab Sauvignon. Dry but with good fruit, light and easy drinking. Delicious. Parker gave it 90 pts.	<\$15

Italian Reds – Brunellos di Montalcino

It's hard to find a good Brunello di Montalcino for under \$40-\$50, and the best ones are in the hundreds. Here are six, affordable, good ones that I've stumbled upon.

Caparzo, Sangiovese Toscana	2013	92	85% Sangiovese, 5% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot, 5% Alicante. A well-balanced, easy drinking Tuscan red.	<\$20
Casalino, Brunello di Montalcino	2004	94	I've never met a Brunello I didn't like. There must be some bad ones, but I've yet to find any of them. At \$30, this is a real bargain Brunello. Deep, rich, complex, satisfying.	\$25-\$30
Casanova, Brunello di Montalcino, Nero	2005	96	Deep, intense, medium dry yet slightly fruit-forward; an outstanding Brunello.	~\$25-\$30
Uvaggio, Proprieta Sperino, Coste della Sesia (Lessona)	2007	94	This piedmont wine is a blend of 65% Nebbiolo, 20% Vespolina, and 15% Croatina. Delicious.	\$25-\$30
Vasco Sasseti (VS) Rosso di Montalcino	2006	91	A very drinkable, mostly Brunello blend from Montalcino.	\$18

Vignafra, Barba, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo	2007	93.5	An excellent Montepulciano, bit, rounded, with deep cherry and coffee flavors, dry and satisfying.	\$16
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WINES OF FRANCE. Wine has been produced in France since the 6th century BC, and they have long had some of the strictest laws for wine production in the world (they were the first country to legislate a system of viticulture practices to regulate wine quality). France is the largest producer and consumers of fine wine in the world. There are over 2 million acres of vineyards in France, half are dedicated to wine authorized as AOC (the top ranking), and there are over 300 different AOCs. The best-known wine regions of France are Champagne, Loire Valley, Alsace, Burgundy, Jura, Savoy, Rhone Valley, Provence, Languedoc-Roussillon (in the Montpellier Prefecture, on the Mediterranean coast of SW France; with over 740,000 acres of vineyards, this is the biggest wine-producing region in the country), Bordeaux and the Southwest. In general, Champagnes from France (which all come from the Champagne region) are more complex, drier, and more full-bodied than the sparkling wines from California. For the French, Champagnes are all about blending. One of the best, reasonably priced is *De Venoge Cordon Bleu Brute Select* (~\$40; 91 pts Wine Spectator); 50% Pinot Noir, 25% Chardonnay, 25% Pinot Menunier. Perhaps the best Champagne I've tasted is the 1996 Dom Pérignon. Alsace ("Ahl-Zass") is best known for its dry white wines (the driest whites in all of France), and their Pinot Gris and Riesling are some of the best in the world. Their proximity to Germany has influenced their viticulture, and they also make great Gewürztraminer. Italy's Pinot Grigio (same grape as Pinot Gris) is, in contrast, a much sweeter fruitier wine. French Rosés are also typically dry (unlike California Rosés, which are sweet), and some of the best come from Provence (e.g., *Domaine Fontanyl Rosé de Provence* is an excellent, super-dry \$15 Rosé).

COTES DU RHÔNE WINES

Despite the current fame of Bordeaux and Burgundy, the most notable French wines in the ancient world came from the Rhone Valley. Pliny the Elder, the 1st-century author and naturalist, praised the wines of Rhône in his *Natural History*. Generally speaking, wines from the northern Rhone Valley (which grow in a more continental climate) are superior to those of the south. Although there is no strict classification system, there are national regulations for the wines of the Rhone Valley, and specific vineyards, called *climats*, are typically shown on the label. The main varieties are 3 whites (Viognier, Marsanne, Roussanne) and Syrah. Viognier is an aromatic white grape that smells of stone fruit and honeysuckle. The Viognier from Condrieu is fermented and matured in French oak, but elsewhere in the Rhone it is usually unoaked and drunk young. The other white Rhone grapes, Marsane and Roussanne, are mostly blended together. Northern Rhone Syrah is a benchmark traditional style, making deep dark, rich, and meaty wines. Hermitage

is the most famous and best-regarded Rhone appellation. The wines of southern Rhone are planted amongst fields of herbs, and it is said that their spicy scents are blown across the vineyards to infuse the wines of this region. Here the climate is more Mediterranean and the main red grape variety is Grenache (called Garnacha in Spain). The best-known region of southern Rhone is Châteauneuf-du-Pape (pronounced “chateau-do-pop”), and those are listed separately below; they are almost always GSM wines, with Grenache being the majority grape. In southern Rhone, the wines are blended with up to 13 grape varieties. On the opposite bank of the Rhone river from Châteauneuf-du-Pape is Tavel, home to one of the best dry French roses. Do not confuse these roses with the terrible, sweet blush wines common in the U.S. market; these are beautifully fruity but bone dry, with great complexity and finesse. The wines of Taval may include Grenache, Mourvedre, Cinsault, Syrah, and sometimes Clairette and Bourboulenc grapes. The color comes from brief skin contact or the addition of dark juices from red grape vats (a method called *saignée*). These wonderful roses are produced only in small quantities, so they can be difficult to find. The roses from Provence, to the south, are somewhat similar.

In all, twenty-one wine grape varieties are grown in the Cotes Du Rhône region. The main white wine varieties are Bourboulenc, Clairette Blanche, Grenache Blanc, Marsanne, Roussanne, and Viognier. One of the main red varieties is Grenache Noir. Cotes du Rhone wines are complex blends that are regulated by the government of France in a rather archaic and complicated fashion. Red and rose wines are made from Grenache Noir, Syrah, Cinsault, Carignane, Cunoise and Mourvedre grapes. A maximum of 20% white varieties may be used in the roses. All reds grown south of Montélimar must contain a minimum of 40% Grenache, and may contain up to 5% white grapes. A red from anywhere in the appellation must contain a minimum of 15% Syrah and/or Mourvedre. The whites must contain a minimum blend of 80% Clairette, Grenache Blanc, Marsanne, Roussanne, Bourboulenc and Viognier. Ugni Blanc and Picpoul Blanc may be used as secondary varieties. Because of this huge variety in blends and styles, Cotes du Rhone wines vary greatly in flavor, depending on the village of origin and the wine-maker.

Mourvèdre is a particularly interesting grape, and its fermented juices produce rich meaty wines. Native to Spain (where it is known as Monastrell), it has been a staple in Rhone for centuries. Phylloxera’s arrival in the late 19th century was particularly devastating to Mourvèdre grapes, and when the vineyards were replanted most producers of Châteauneuf-du-Pape chose to replant with varieties easier to graft, such as Grenache. Thus, for decades, Mourvèdre was found in France almost exclusively in the sandy (and Phylloxera [an aphid]-free) soil of Bandol, on the Mediterranean coast, where it is bottled both as a red wine (blended with Grenache and Cinsault) and as perhaps the world’s most coveted dry rosé. Beaucastel is still distinctive among Châteauneuf-du-Pape regional wines for using an unusually high percentage of Mourvèdre (up to 35% in some vintages). Mourvèdre came to California as Mataro (likely named for the Catalan village where it originated) in the mid to late 1800s. Mourvèdre is a great blending component;

its structure and mid-palate richness compliment the openness and warmth of Grenache and Syrah, and the three are often blended together (the “GSM, or Grenache-Syrah- Mourvèdre, wines”).

There are two official subregions of **Cotes du Rhone wines**:

1. *Côtes du Rhône septentrional* in the northern part of the region from Vienne to Valence. The vines are cultivated on very steep slopes making the harvest extremely arduous. The grapes are manually picked and have to be hauled up the hillside on trolleys, a feature that adds to the price. Syrah is the dominant red grape in this area.
2. *Côtes du Rhône méridional* from Montélimar to Avignon in the southern latitudes, produced by 123 communes. The wines here are anchored by Grenache Noir but typically include other grapes such as Syrah and Mourvèdre. The reds range in color from deep crimson and ruby to almost purple and are generally full-bodied with rich but smooth tannins, though Lirac and others from the right bank tend to be somewhat lighter.

Côtes du Rhône-Villages Wines

Further up the scale from the Côtes du Rhône AOC, the Côtes du Rhône-Villages AOC is produced by 95 authorized communes in the departments of the Ardèche, the Drôme, the Gard, and the Vaucluse. The appellation includes approximately 3,000 hectares under cultivation. The Grenache grape is required to be present at not less than 50%, with 20% Syrah and/or Mourvèdre. A maximum of 20% of other authorized varieties is permitted. The minimum required alcoholic strength is 12%. About 20% of the wine produced in the southern Rhone region qualifies for the Côtes du Rhône Villages designation.

Côtes du Rhône Villages (named village) Wines

Next in the hierarchy, 18 of the Côtes du Rhône Village appellations are authorized to include their village name on the label. With approximately 6,500 hectares under cultivation. Current regulation includes following villages: Cairanne, Chusclan (red and rosé only), Gadagne, Laudun, Massif d’Uchaux (red only), Plan de Dieu (red only), Puyméras (red only), Roaix, Roschegude, Rousset-les-Vignes, Sablet, Saint Gervais, Saint Maurice, Saint-Pantaléon-les-Vignes, Séguret, Signargues (red only), Valréas, and Visan. At the most demanding level of distinction, a total of 16 crus are allowed to be recognized by their village name without requiring the mention of Côtes du Rhône on the label. With the unique exception of Chateau-Grillet, a white septentrional within the AOC Condrieu, a feature of the nomenclature of CDR wines is that at the top level they are named only after their villages, and not after châteaux as is usual for

Bordeaux wines.

Caves de Tain, Crozes Hermitage	2009	93	100% Syrah. The “Crozes Hermitages” are less expensive than the “Hermitages,” but often quite good. This one is velvety smooth, semi-dry, with smoky-mineral overtones and a great long finish.	\$20
Château de Nages, Costières de Nimes, Red Rhone Wine (Nimes Rouge V)	2010 2012	92 92.5	A fine classic Rhone wine, blending 50% Grenache and 50% Syrah, both from old vines. This wine captures the essence of Rhone wines. Once opened, drink within 24 hours.	\$14
Domaine le Clos des Lumieres Cotes du Rhone	2015	92	Big, rich, intense. A perfect CMS blend. Elegant, with loads of cherries and chocolate.	~\$15
Domaine Court de Mautens. Rasteau.	1999	93.5	Tasted in 2017. Excellent.	<\$25
Domaine de la Curnière, Vacqueyras	2012	94.5	Another outstanding Cote du Rhône GSM: 60% Grenache, 25% Syrah, 15% Mourvèdre. Big, rich, delicious. The wines from the Vacqueyras appellation, along the banks of the River Ouvèze, in the southern Rhône Valley are a mixed bag, and this region is often considered the “little brother of Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Gigondas; but this one is one of the best we’ve had from this AOC.	\$14
Domaine Le Péage, Gigondas	2012	94	A stunning GSM from a small AVA (next to Châteauneuf du Pape). 80% Grenache, 15% Syrah, 5% Mourvèdre. A gift of Boyer & Stan, 2018.	\$25-\$30
Domaine Gourt de Mautens, Rasteau	1999	92	An excellent blend of Grenache, Carignan, Mourvèdre, Syrah, Vaccarese, Terret Noir and Counoise. This wine is fermented without destemming, in truncated wood tanks, and then matured 2-3 years in cement tanks and/or barriques. The wine is dry, well-balanced, and light.	\$25-\$30
Domaine Grand Veneur, Les Champavins, Cotes du	2007 2014	94 93	An outstanding Rhone Valley blend of 70% Grenache, 20% Syrah and 10% Mourvèdre. Big and bold (unlike typical Rhones), with lots of pepper and spice. From some of the finest	\$24

Rhone Villages			vineyards in the valley, owned by the family since the 1826.	
Domaine de la Presidente, Grands Classiques Cotes due Rhone	2011 2012	93 92.5	An excellent Cotes du Rhone, bigger and more balanced than most, and at a great price.	\$10
Buti Nages, Costières de Nimes, Chateau de Nages, Vin Rouge (Vin de la Valle du Rhone)	2010	93.5	A delightful, unoaked, Rhone blend of 45% Grenache, 45% Syrah, and 10% Mourvèdre. Soft on the palate, yet with crisp fruit flavors that are balanced and not too sweet. Dark berries, wild herbs, licorice.	\$10
Cave de Rasteau, Rasteau de Rasteau (from Rasteau Village, Rhone)	2011	94	A big delicious Rhone wine from the appellation just north of Châteauneuf du Pape. 70% Grenache, 20% Syrah, 10% Mourvèdre.	<\$20
Domaine des Vialles, Cote du Rhone	2007	93	A traditional Rhone GSM: 65% Grenache, 25% Syrah, 5% Carignon, and 5% Mourvèdre. Light, dry, somewhat acidic (no doubt from the Carignon). Would be a great pizza wine.	\$15
J.V. Fleury, Crozes-Hermitage	2010 2012	92 92	An excellent 100% Syrah, in the traditional French style. Medium-bodied, supple, light fruits, good balance. J.V. Fleury is said to be the oldest continuously operating winery in the Rhone Valley.	\$22-\$27
Krikland (Costco) Label, Côtes du Rhône Villages	2009	93	An excellent Côtes du Rhône from winemaker Patrick Lescq (one of the top vintners in the region).	<\$20
Les Halos de Jupiter, Nimes Rouge (Costieres de Nimes, Provence)	2009	93	A classic Rhone red. Super velvety, easy drinking, perfect balance of fruit-tannin-acid. Won't hit you over the head with aroma, but if you like Rhone or Provence wines, this one is great (especially for \$11). But, you must let it breath for 24 hrs.	\$13
Le Clos du Caillou, Bouquet des Garrigues	1998 1999	94 93	An unfiltered, medium-dry, well-balanced Cotes du Rhone blend. The '99 needs 3-4 hrs to breath.	<\$25
Les Hauts du Fief, Crizes-Hermitage, 100% Syrah (Rhone Valley, France)	?	94	A fine, well-balanced Syrah, with a modest finish.	<\$25

Olivier Ravoire, Vacqueyras	2007	92	Medium-bodied (by California standards; full-bodied by French standards), good balance between fruit and acid/tannins. A fine Rhone Valley table wine.	\$17
Rasteau, Les Hauts du Village, Côte du Rhône Villages	2007	90	A delicious Côtes du Rhône GSM wine: 45% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache, 25% Syrah.	\$20
Pierrehenrimorel, Signargues Cotes-du-Rhone Villages Red Wine	2011	92	An excellent Côte du Rhone blend of 50% Grenache, 25% Syrah, and 25% Mourvèdre (the classic GSM blend). Ripe black berries with a spicy finish, very smooth. From the village of Signargues in the southern Rhone Valley.	\$14
Pontificis, (Languedoc-Roussillon)	2012	92.5	A perfect blend of Grenache-Syrah-Mourvèdre. Velvet with spicy little kick.	\$11
Saint Cosme, Syrah	2011	92.5		~\$20
Sca les Vignerons D'Estezargues	2009	92	An excellent, presumably 100% Grenache (Côtes du Rhône Villages).	<\$20
Soiree D'Automne, Vacqueyras	2005	93	A solid Côte du Rhone from near the Luberon region.	\$19
Terres Brulles, Cornas Region	1995	95	With that Old World bouquet, this medium-bodied 100% Syrah is a delicious & vibrant wine with strong raspberry overtones. Definitely one of the best Rhone wines we've tasted.	\$25

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Wines

These wines are typically majority Grenache, with some Syrah and other varietals added depending on the region. They do not age as well as Cabs, Merlots, or Bordeaux, and if the bottle is more than 10 years old it likely needs to be drunk soon after opening.

Chateau de Beaucastel, Châteauneuf-du-Pape	1990 2011	95 94	1990 was a great year for Châteauneuf-du-Pape wine, and this elegant Ch Beaucastel reflects that. Terrific nose, bright delicious flavors. Tasted in 2018 (the 1990 was 28 years in the bottle; the 2011 only 7 years).	~\$85 on release. 1990: ~\$300 (in 2018) 2011: ?
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Clos des papes, Châteauneuf-du-Pape	2001	93	Tasted in 2018. Bright, not perfect balance but quite nice and with a decent finish.	?
Clos Saint-Jean Deus ex Machina, Châteauneuf-du-Pape	2003	93	Big, rich, balanced, delicious. Tasted in 2018 (15 years in the bottle) and it needed to be drunk asap.	?
Caves Saint-Pierre, Châteauneuf-du-Pape	2009	94	A delicious and classic southern Rhone. 60% Grenache, 15% Mourvèdre, 15% Cinsault, and 10% Syrah.	?
Clos Saint Michel Châteauneuf-du-Pape Reserve	2010	94	This is a 93 pt (Wine Advocate) GSM blend (30% old vine Syrah, 40% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre). Full-bodied with great concentration; the best fields are handpicked for this vintage; aged 1 year in French Oak.	\$~40
Domaine du Pegau, Châteauneuf-du-Pape	2000 2001	93 92	An excellent Châteauneuf-du-Pape, but with a slightly bitter aftertaste. <u>Very</u> Old World flavor. Faded about 2 hours after opening the bottle.	?
Xavier Vignon, Châteauneuf-du-Pape	2007	93.5	A classic GSM. Mellow, bright, low acid, light oak and strawberry jam overtones. Would be a great pizza wine. A bit over-priced.	\$35

French Reds, Bordeaux

Permitted blend varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Carménère

NOTE: Good Bordeaux wines under \$20 are nearly impossible to find, and one can actually waste a lot of money trying to do so. I recommend starting at the \$30 level at least and asking for advice on reasonably priced vintages. A brief guide to Bordeaux wines can be found on my website

(http://rickbrusca.com/http___www.rickbrusca.com_index.html/Other_Interests_files/Bordeaux%20wines.pdf).

Beau Soleil, Pomerol (Right Bank)	2000	91.5 pts in 2013; 94 pts in 2016	In the 3 years from 2013 to 2016, this wine went from being a bit weenie and astringent to being excellent. High notes, good tannin, nice strawberries but still a dryish Bordeaux. Parker = 88 (no doubt not enough fruit for Parker).	\$25 (on release) \$47 in 2016 (online)
Cette Cuvée, Bordeaux, Grand Vin de Bordeaux	2009	93	Surprisingly good for a 2-yr old Bordeaux. Should be stunning in 10 or 15 years.	<\$15 (in France)

Château de Camarsac, Bordeaux Superieur	2014	91.5	Elegant, black currants and cherries, medium-bodied. 92 pts by Wine Enthusiast.	\$15
Château Clos de la Vieille Église, Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux (Right Bank)	2011 2012	91 93	This excellent, and generally underrated Bordeaux from a not-well-known winery is a real bargain if you can find it at the low end of its price range (Total Wine=\$20). A blend of Merlot, Cab Sauvignon, and Cab Franc, the flavors are classic Bordeaux but with a bigger richer quality (no doubt due to the Cab Franc).	\$25-\$100
Château de Cruzeau (Pessac-Leognan)	2010	90	A good, inexpensive Bordeaux.	\$23
Château de Ferrand, St-Émilion, Grand Cru	2010	92.5	77% Merlot, 10% Cab Franc, 13% Cab Sauvignon. A delicious Right Bank Bordeaux from the family-owned and operated estate of Château de Ferrand (the family is the Bich family, creators of the “Bic pen”). This is a ripe fruit-dark chocolate, full-bodied, well-balanced wine. Drinkable now, but will only improve with age. An excellent Bordeaux at a screaming price!	\$28-\$31
Château Montet (Right Bank)	2009	93.5	Certainly one of the better Merlots we’ve tasted. Light, velvety, but with a well-rounded mouth and nice acid finish. Possibly 100% Merlot.	~\$25-\$30
Château la Tonnelle (Haut-Medoc)	2011	92	60% Cab, 35% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot. Smooth, light fruit, light oak, overtones of black cherries. A great Bordeaux to drink with beef dishes.	\$18
Château Féret Lambert, Grand Vin de Bordeaux, Superieur	2010	93	A fine, Right Bank Bordeaux, in the traditional velvety style. 90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon.	\$25
Château Fourcas Dupré, Medoc	2010	92	The Fourcas Dupre winery dates to 1843, and has 46 hectares of vines. The Left Bank Pyrenees gravel soils produce fine red wines of the traditional Bordeaux style	\$25

			(44% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot).	
Château Labégorce, Margaux (Haut-Medoc)	2010	94	Ratings: 2009=89 pts, 2010=91 pts, 2011=90 pts, 2012=89 pts. Wine Enthusiast=94pts; James Suckling=93 pts. A traditional Left Bank Bordeaux blended with 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 45% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot and 6% Cabernet Franc. This wine MUST breath for ~12 hrs before drinking (or at least decant and give it a few hours).	\$25 on release, ~\$45 in 2014
Château Lafon-Rochet (St.-Estèphe, Left Bank)	2005	93	With a classic Bordeaux bouquet, low in oak, not fruit forward, good balance of tannin-acid-fruit. Strong minerality and “higher notes.” Medium-bodied.	\$40
Château Larcis Ducasse (St.-Émilion)	2009	94.5	An elegant Right Bank Bordeaux; perfect balance. Parker rates this one 96 pts.	?
Château Larrivet Haut-Brion (Pessac-Léognan) Left Bank	2014	92.5	Medium bodied, good fruit but classically dry and minerally, good balance, big spicy pepper flavors, modest bouquet. Although we tasted this wine (a gift from K. Boyer) in 2017, it tasted like a 10 yr-old Bordeaux.	\$30-\$40
Château Paloumey, Cru Bourgeois (Haut-Medoc)	2009	92	A delicious Left Bank Bordeaux with light fruits, good tannins, and fine finish. 51% Cab, 49% Merlot.	\$25
Château Roques Mauriac, Grand Vin, Bordeaux Supérior	2010	92	An unusual blend for Bordeaux: 50% Cab Franc, 40% Merlot, 10% Cab Sauvignon. Delicious, only lightly fruity (despite the label, which claims “elegant fruity profile), dry with wet granite on the palate.	~\$20
Château du Retout, Cru Bourgeois (Haut-Medoc)	2010	92	Great nose, good tannins, good balance, decent finish. Dried cranberries. 84.4% Cabernet Sauvignon; 15.6% Merlot.	~\$20
Château Smith Haut Lafitte, Le Petit Haut Lafitte	2012	90	A second wine of Smith Haut Lafitte. 55% Cab, 45% Merlot. Aged 14 months in oak. Suckling=91, Wine Spectator=91, CellarTracker=90. This wine sneaks up on you. There is so much Merlot in it, it is almost velvety and shallow on first taste; but then, given time, I began to get the excellent balance and subtle complexity. Actually better	\$25-\$45

			after open for 12 hours.	
Château St. André Corbin, Gironde	2006	92	A fine Bordeaux, with just the right amount of tannin and fruit.	~\$25-\$30
Château Sociando-Mallet (Haut-Medoc, Left Bank)	2005	91	Parker gave this wine 91-92 pts. It has big minerals, dark color, black currant undertones, large on tannins and long on finish. Very dry (probably high acid and tannin). Great nose, good balance, minerally.	\$15 in 2005; \$50-\$60 online in 2014.
Château Tour Bayard (Saint-Émilion) (Right Bank)	2005	94.5	70% Merlot, 25% Cab Franc, 5% Malbec. Superb Bordeaux; dark plums, big oak, light tannin, soft and elegant.	\$23 in 2005; \$45-\$90 in 2016 (online)
Château la Tour de Bessan, Margaux (Haut-Medoc)	2010	93	93 pts by Wine Enthusiast. "One of the three properties owned by Marie-Laure Lurton, Tour de Bessan's 2010 is a firm, smoky wine, dark and firm in character. It has weight, a solid and rich feel and a juicy black-currant note. The finish shows both aging potential and attractive fruitiness." (Wine Enthusiast). Reviewers have suggested this 2010 is the best wine made by Marie-Laure Lurton since she took over the winery 20 yrs ago. This vintage is 64% Cab Sauvignon, 33% Merlot, 3% Cab Franc. This wine MUST breath for ~12 hrs before drinking (or decant and give it a few hours).	\$30
Chevalier de la Prado, Saint-Julien, (Left Bank)	2004	94	Excellent!	<\$15 (in France)
La Croix du Casse	2000	93 in 2013; 95.5 in 2016	Excellent. Rich, mildly astringent in 2013 but perfect in 2016; strong tannins in 2013 have mellowed perfectly by 2016. Parker = 93.	\$25 (on release) \$35-\$60 in 2016 (online)
Sociando-Mallet, Haut-Medoc (Left Bank)	2000	96 in 2013; 94 in 2016	An excellent Bordeaux; soft at first, but builds as it breaths; very well balanced, strong tannins; let it breath 24 hours. Might be slipping a bit by 2016. Parker = 91=92.	\$25 (\$45-\$90 in 2016, online)
Yon Figeac, Saint-Émilion (Right Bank)	2000	95.5 in	A stunningly good Bordeaux; velvety yet balanced and with just enough boldness (well, about as much as a Bordeaux	\$25 (on release)

		2013; 98 in 2016	ever has). Improved noticeably between 2013 and 2016.	\$25-\$65 in 2016 (online)
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Other French Reds (including the Loire Valley & Languedoc-Roussillon Regions)

Note that most of the wine made in the Languedoc region is still labeled *vin de pays* or *vin de table*, but quality appellations include Corbières, Minervois, Fitous, Faugères, and Saint-Chinian. A typical Languedoc red is a blend of Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre (known as a GSM wine in the trade).

Corbières, Provence	2006	93	A delightful blend in the traditional Provence style of Syrah and Mourvèdre. Exported under the label of “Gérard Bertrand, Sud de France.” The perfect wine for a warm summer lunch or early dinner on the patio.	~\$25
Cuvee Signee Chinon, Loire	?	90	An excellent 100% Cab Franc crafted in the Chinon region. This is a very focused, though light, Cab Franc, with cherry and plum, and tobacco leaf; strong finish; high tannins requires decanting or opening 24 hrs before drinking. For \$12, it’s hard to beat this one (if you like pure Cab Francs). Even though the winery’s name is “Cuvee Signee” (Cuvee is French for “blend”), this baby is 100% Cab Franc.	\$12
Domaine Pignard, Beaujolais	2011	90	An easy-drinking, pleasant Beaujolais (Gamay).	\$10
Domain Duriac Cote-de-Brouilly	2011	92.5	A Gamay-Beaujolais. A distinctive wine with flavors of strawberry and raspberry; a big nose. Light, and a bit on the sweet side.	\$17
Gérard Bertrand, Château L’Hospitalet La Reserve. La Clape (Coteaux du Languedoc)	2010	92	This is Gérard Bertrand’s flagship red wine. A blend of 30% Grenache, 40% Syrah, and 30% Mourvèdre; aged 12 months in French oak barrels. This wine-maker, Bertrand, (and this winery, Château L’Hospitalet) were rated No. 1 in Europe in 2013. Recommended to be	\$20

			served at 60°F.	
Les Baux de Provence, Mas de Gourgonnier	2006	94	A great Syrah (?) from the Baux area of Provence.	<\$25
Orchis, Vin de Pays des Côtes Catalanes, Red Wine	2011	94	70% Grenaches, the rest mostly Carignan. This is a superb, big, perfectly balance, delicious red wine from the Languedoc-Roussillon region of SW France.	<\$25
Saumur Champigny, Domaine de la Perruche, Appellation Saumur Champigny Controlée. Loire Valley.	2010	92	A delicious and unique Cab Franc (possibly with a small percentage of Pinot d'Aunis/Chenin Noir, or even some Carmanere).	<\$25
Saumur, Reserve des Vignerons, 100% Cab Franc (Loire Valley)	2005	92	Black currants and raspberries. A lighter Cab Franc than most I've tasted, but delicious.	\$11 (on release)
Vieilles Vignes, Vacqueyras	2007	92	The perfect Grenache (75%)-Syrah (25%) blend. Older vintages need to be drunk within 24 hours of opening.	<\$20

Spanish Reds

Spain's wine history dates back to at least 1100 BC, but it was the French who created modern Spanish viticulture, when they began moving to Spain during the *Phylloxera* crisis in France. Today, Spain has more vineyard area (over 4 million acres) than any other country, and is third behind Italy and France in terms of volume of wine produced. Spain's 4-tier wine classification includes: Vino de Mesa (table wine); Vino de la Tierra (equivalent to France's Vin de Pays); Denominación de Origin, or DO (a designated quality wine region); and DOCa (a classification given only to three regions that are considered to produce the highest quality wines (Rioja, Priorat, and Ribera del Duero). The Rioja DOCa area is located mainly along the Río Ebro in the NE of Spain. The name comes from Río Oja, a tributary of the Ebro. Although the Rioja DO was established in 1926 (and the DOCa in 1991), wine has been made in this region since before the Roman occupation (>2500 years). The Rioja DOCa is divided into three subzones: La Rioja Alavesa in the NW; La Rioja Alta in the SW; and La Rioja Baja in the E. Rioja wines tend to be made in a Bordeaux style, being greatly influenced by winemaking practices introduced by French families in the 1800s. Tempranillo is the primary red grape used, although Garnacha Tinta (Grenache), Mazuelo (Carignan), and Graciano are also allowed.

Perhaps the most common Spanish wines found in the U.S. are Tempranillo, Rioja (blends heavily relying on Tempranillo grapes), and occasionally Garnacha (Grenache), and Priorat (Priorato). Riojas are classic Old World wines that tend to be rustic country wines, unique in flavor, and generally quite reasonably priced. Priorats come mainly from SW Catalonia, and these can be powerful red wines. The Priorat area is characterized by its unique terroir of black slate and quartz soil known as *llicorella*.

Spain's DO is roughly equivalent to Italy's DOC and Portugal's IPR. Spain's DOC is roughly equivalent to Italy's DOG and Portugal's DOC.

Acústic Cellars, Montsant (DO Montsant)	2008	93	This is an excellent wine from Catalonia. 45% Garnatxa (Grenache), 55% Samsó (Cariñena/Carignan). High in alcohol, well balanced, Rhonelike in flavor. Aged 10-12 mos. in French oak. Organic.	<\$25
Bodegas Atalaya, Laya, Almansa	2015	92	A delicious blend of estate-grown Spanish grapes (Garnacha Tintorera & Monastrell).	~\$10
Dios Ares, Rioja Crianza	2011 2012	92.5 92	An excellent Rioja (100% Tempranillo) even though just a Crianza, aged 12 mos. in French oak. Medium-bodied, bright cherry flavors, good balance, delicious. A great wine for the price.	\$14
Baronia del Montsant, Flor d'Englora, roure (Montsant, Spain)	2009	92.5	An excellent blend of 60% Grenache, 35% Carignan, 2% Merlot, 2% Syrah, and 1% Ull de Llebre. Dark and rich, yet light on the palate, this is a savory medium-bodied wine. Aged 4 mos. in oak. Grown at the foot of the Montsant, in the Siurana Valley.	\$14
Bodegas Osborne, "Tempra Tantrum"	2008	93	"Tempra Tantrum" is a blend of 60% Tempranillo/40% Cabernet Sauvignon. This is a very tasty, full-bodied Spanish wine that goes especially well with dry cheeses and steaks.	~\$20
Cala Blanca Tempranillo	2008	91.5	A fine, inexpensive Tempranillo from the La Mancha region.	\$10
Campo Viejo Rioja Gran Reserva, Tempranillo	2002 2004 2007	94 94 93	Excellent, as good as the Marqués de Cáceres, Rioja Reserva. Balanced, smooth, dry, plush tannins, light but pleasant nose. Strawberries, cherries, earth. Spain's Grand Reserves are aged 6 years (minimum of 2 years in oak) before released. This	\$17-\$22

			wine is 85% Tempranillo, 10% Graciano, 5% Mazudo.	
Casado Morales, Rioja, Selección Privada	2005	93	A well-balanced Rioja, light and easy drinking, but with the big side of the Rioja grape shining through.	\$23
Castillo de Clavijo, Gran Reserva, Rioja	2001	91	A light-weight entry into the Gran Reserva Rioja competition; this is a “Pinot Noir” of Tempranillos!	\$20
Castillo de Monséran, Cariñena, Aragon	2010	90	A high-elevation Garnacha. Rated “Best Buy” by Wine Enthusiast magazine. A good Garnacha, but not very well balanced and with a poor finish. But, for \$10 a good deal.	\$10
Clos Barenys, Reserva (Cab-Merlot)	2003	93	This fine Bordeaux-style Cab-Merlot blend is delicious, full and rich, with a stunningly grand bouquet and great finish.	\$24
Viña Eguía, Rioja (Tempranillo), Reserva	2007 2009	93 93	A very good Rioja Reserva at an exceptional price. Classic Tempranillo. Big, bold, deeply textured. Could remain cellared for another 10 years.	\$10
El Prado Tempranillo	2008	91	A great blend of 70% Tempranillo & 30% Cabernet Sauvignon; from Valencia; deep, rich, wonderful aftertaste. Doesn't keep once opened; drink it all the first day/night!	~\$10
Enebral, Toro, Tinta de Toro	2009	92	100% Tinta de Toro variety of Tempranillo grape, this wine is big and bold. 11 mos. in new French oak.	\$15
Evodia Calatayud, Old Vine Garnacha	2009 2012	92 92	A fine Garnacha made from 100+ yr old vines at 2400-3000 ft elevation. Slightly fruit-forward, decent tannins, great bouquet, refreshing. Great bargain wine!	\$8
Evoché Garnacha, Bajo Aragón	2009	94	A delicious, snappy Garnacha with both earthy and flowery flavors.	<\$20
Finca Sobreño Estate, Toro, Red Wine	2005	92	This fine, oak-barrel aged, Tempranillo wine is made in the Toro Region of Spain (where Tempranillo is called “Tinta de Toro”).	\$18
Galena, Priorat	2004	94	A blend of 35% Granacha, 15% Carignan, 25% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon. Soft tannins, well balanced, elegant on the palate.	\$42
Iugiter, Priorat	2004	94	A delicious Priorat with deep but mellow tones and strong finish; highly drinkable. A gift from Kim Duffek.	?
Marqués de Cáceres, Reserva, Rioja Region,	2002 2004	92 94	An exceptional wine, made from select Rioja region Tempranillo grapes aged in French oak barrels. No doubt the	\$20-22

(Tempranillo)			Gran Reserva is even better, but I've not yet found it in Tucson. These older ones don't last more than about 24 hours once uncorked.	
Montecillo, Rioja Gran Reserva	2001	94	An excellent Tempranillo wine from the Rioja region, 12 years old when we drank it. Went bad in ~36 hours (as older wines can do).	\$20
Numantheria, "Termes," Tempranillo (Toro, Spain)	2011	94		<\$25
Opta Calzadilla Tempranillo	2005	93	An exceptional Tempranillo with abundant bouquet and strong finish; 70% Tempranillo, 20% Grenache, 10% Syrah.	~\$20
Palacios, Les Terrasses Priorat	2007	95	A rich & complex Priorat; enjoyed at Vivace's Restaurant.	<\$25
Ramírez de la Piscina, Rioja (Gran Reserva)	1996	93	A fine Rioja, with clean fruit and leather; mellow; great nose.	<\$25
Red Guitar, Old Vine Tempranillo-Garnacha (Navarra, Spain)	2008	92.5	A delicious blend to two classic Spanish wines, deep berry flavors with enough tannins to cut the sweetness and create a full-bodied wine.	~\$15-\$20
Reves, Priorat (Spain)	2006	92	A fine Priorat; zesty and tasty; light, yet with complexity.	\$10
Salvador Poveda, Toscar Monastrell, Reserva (Alicante)	2004	92	A big, delicious, full-bodied wine made from the Monastrell grape (<i>aka</i> Mourvèdre in France) in the Alicante Region of Spain.	<\$25
San Alejandro, "Las Rocas" Garnacha (Cataluna)	2005	92	A fine, inexpensive Garnacha.	<\$20
Solar de Castro Rioja, Vendimia Seleccionada	2009	93	A fine, rich, tangy Rioja, with an excellent bouquet. Best several hours after opening.	\$15
Tierra Aranda, Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero)	2009	93.5	This is an excellent Tempranillo, in the best tradition of the Ribera del Duero region.	\$18
Tesoro de Bullas, Monastrell (=Mourvèdre)	2009	92	As good as a good Rhone that is heavy on the Mourvèdre, but half the price of most good Rhone wines. The nose and flavor is slightly sharp, but tasty, and the finish long.	\$14

Tres Picos, Borsao, Garnacha	2008	92	A solid, deep-bodied Garnacha that, with a few years, should be outstanding; a good investment.	?
Valserrano, Rioja Reserva	2007 2010	95 93	One of the best Rioja's we've enjoyed. Rich with flavors across the palate, with a great finish. This is another "Alfio Moriconi Selection" (Total Wine's VP for European Imports and Sales), which are virtually always good wines at great prices (especially those from France, Spain and Italy). 90% Tempranillo, 10% Graciano. Aged 2 yrs in French and American oak.	\$17
Viña Olaya, Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero)	2013	93	An excellent Tempranillo; big, balanced, good finish.	<\$20

Portuguese Wines

Callabriga Douro	2010	90	Deep, rich, tangy. Blend uncertain, but with a distinct Rioja-like flavor.	\$18
Paseo, Red Wine	2011	92	An easy-drinking, delicious blend of Castelão, Camarate, Tinta Aveda and Touriga Nacional grapes. Medium-bodied; reminiscent of a Pinot Noir.	\$15
Quinta da Leda, Callabriga Douro (Portugal)	2009	92	12 months in oak. A mellow and tasty red wine with great character.	\$17

Arizona Red Wines

Arizona is beginning to produce some quite decent wines, but few of them are in the <\$20 range. It wasn't until **Callaghan Vineyards** (Elgin) scored rave reviews from Robert Parker that people began to take notice of AZ wines. Kent Callaghan's wines have received a number of high-80s scores, and a whopping 92 from Parker on their 1993 Buena Suerte Cuvee; they have also been served several times at White House dinners and the winery was designated an "Arizona Treasure" (by Gov. Janet Napolitano). The appearance of Dick Erath dabbling in AZ wines has also caught people's attention (Erath is best known for being a pioneer Pinot Noir wine maker from Oregon). Other up-and-coming AZ wineries include: **Dos Cabezas Wineworks** (Elgin), originally founded by Al Buhl in 1995 but purchased in 2006 by Todd & Kelly Bostock and his parents Frank and Paula Bostock; Todd Bostock's **Cimarron Wines**; rock band frontman-turned-winemaker Maynard Keenan's **Merkin Vineyards, Arizona Stronghold, and Caduceus Cellars**;

Keenan & Eric Glomski's **Page Springs Cellars**; Sam Pillsbury's **Pillsbury Wine Company**; Rob Hammelman's **Sand-Reckoner Winery**; Scott Dahmer's **Aridus Winery**; **Village of Elgin Winery**, with their famous "Tombstone Red wine (founded in 1982 by Bill LeTarte and his daughter and son-in-law Kathy & Gary Ellam, the latter having a degree in oenology from the Univ. of Bordeaux- they still foot-stomp their reds!); Kief-Joshua Vineyards (two brothers and their mom); **Wilhelm Family Vineyards** (established by Karyl and Kevin Wilhelm); **Arizona Hops & Vines** (sisters Megan Austin Haller and Shannon Austin Zouzoulas); **Flying Leap Vineyards** (incorporated in 2010 by Marc Moeller and Mark Beres), who bought the former Canelo Hills Vineyard in Sonoita). Arizona Stronghold wines are made in Camp Verde, Arizona.

Arizona Stronghold, Nachise Red	2015	92	An excellent blend of 46% Syrah, 26% Grenache, 13% Petite Syrah, 10% Mourvèdre, 5% Counoise. Lively, medium-bodied, rich, good fruit and balance.	\$25
Callaghan Vineyards, Caitlin's	2001 2004 2008 2009 2013	90, 93.5 94 94.5 94.5	A superb blend of Cab Sauvignon, Cab Franc, and Petite Verdot. This is an elegant, well-balanced, happy wine made in the Bordeaux style. Kent Callaghan is a master blender. The 2009 & 2013 are a homeruns.	\$25-\$45
Callaghan Vineyards, Claire's	2007 2009	89 93	Smooth, elegant, polished, unique. A blend of 54% Mourvèdre, 23% Syrah, and 23% Zinfandel.	\$22
Callaghan Vineyards, Lisa's	2007	92	Big, semi-dry, long finish. A blend that includes Malvasia.	~\$30
Callaghan Vineyards, Cimarron. Anglianico.	2015	92	An excellent Anglianico.	~\$30
Callaghan Vineyards, Back Lot	2008	93.5	46% Mourvèdre, 36% Syrah, 10% Zinfandel, 8% Grenache. Big nose, well-balanced, spicy.	~\$30
Callaghan Vineyards, Buena Suerte	1997 2001 2002 2007	92 93.5 92 90	A big, bold wine that can take another 5-10 in the cellar. A blend of Cab Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Merlot, and Zinfandel (varies depending on year). 16.4% alcohol. This wine would be too big for some folks. In 2007 Kent added Merlot to the blend, which gave it too much sweetness. In the 1997 blend he used only Merlot and Cab. (1997 was a great year for grapes in Elgin). The 2001 is a homerun; great nose, lively flavor, fruit-forward but with enough tannins to dampen that.	~\$30
Callaghan Vineyards, Padres	2005 2007	93.5 89	The 2005 is 39% Tempranillo, 31% Petit Verdot, 19% Cab Sauvignon and 11% Cab Franc. It is hi tannin, has a great nose, and is delicious.	~\$35

	2013	?	However, the 2007 is 58% Tempranillo, 25% Petit Verdot, 17% Cab Franc. Although it is a Jefferson Cup Gold Medal winner, and is intense and powerful, it lacks balance and is too sweet.	
Callaghan Vineyards, Cab Sauvignon	1991 1997 2001	89 93 95	The 1991 was Kent's first Cab vintage, and the first AZ wine to be rated by Robert Parker (87 pts); it's almost too old to remain in the bottle. The 1997 (also rated 87 by Parker) is smooth and seamless, with good tannin and acid, and well balanced. The 2001 is superb (95 pts), with a great nose and a big, bold palate that is elegant. 2001 was an excellent year for Elgin cabs.	~\$30
Callaghan Vineyards, Petit Verdot	2012	95	With flavors of big bold purple grapes, this is a delicious wine. One of Kent's best.	\$45
Callaghan Vineyards, Tannat	2012	92	A unique and delicious wine from Kent's own vineyards. Big tannins; caramel overtones.	~\$40
Callaghan Vineyards, Tempranillo		92	Made from California-grown grapes. You gotta like Tempranillos to like this one.	\$15
Cimarron Primativo (Cochise Co.)	2011	92.5	A delicious Zinfandel, slightly fruit-forward, from vines grown at 4300 ft in the Chiricahua Mtns.	<\$25
Dos Cabezas, El Norte (Cochise Co.)	2010 2013	91.5 91.5	A delightful blend of 41% Grenache, 33% Syrah, 21% Mourvèdre, 5% Counoise. Smooth & delicious.	\$24-\$26
Kief-Joshua Vineyards, Tempranillo (Elgin, AZ)	2009	92	A fine Tempranillo.	<\$20
Keeling Shaefer, Mourvèdre (Cochise Co.)	2012	93	Soft and velvety, plums & black berries, slightly fruit-forward (but delicious). Grown at 5000 ft.	

Chilean Red Blends (other than Cabernet Sauvignon-dominant wines)

Casa Lapostolle, Clos Apalta, Colchagua	2000	93.5	A rich blend of Carménère, Merlot, and Cab Sauvignon. Great nose. A well-balanced, elegant wine. Tasted in 2016.	\$90
Casa Silva, Los Lingues Vineyard, Colchagua	2012	89	92% Carménère, 8% Petit Verdot. An odd wine; edgy, yet somehow elegant. Tasted in 2016.	\$20
Montes, Purple Angel, Colchagua	2007	90.5	A smooth, delicious, Carménère-dominant (+Cab) wine that is dry and on the tannic side. Tasted in 2016.	\$60

Neyen, Espiritu de Apalta, Colchagua	2003	95	A delicious Carménère-Cab blend (Carménère dominant). Big fruit, perfect balance, very Bordeaux-like. Tasted in 2016.	\$80
Palo Alto Reserve, red blend	2008	94	A rich, happy blend of Cab, Carménère and Shiraz. Wonderful; guaranteed to make you smile.	<\$20
Veranda, Cabernet-Carménère, Estate Bottled-single vineyard, Colchagua Valley, Chile	2008	95	Utterly delicious; complex, vivacious, velvety (but without being weenie); keeps you coming back for more. Not as big as a pure Cab, nor as elegant as a Bordeaux—somewhere in-between	\$15-\$18
	2009	95		
	2012	94		
	2013	93		

Mexican Reds

Generally speaking, Mexican wine making still has a long way to go. The best are probably made in northwest Baja California, particularly in the Guadalupe and Santo Tomás Valleys. Monte Xanic Winery (founded by Hans Backoff in the Guadalupe Valley) promotes itself as the first maker of high-quality Mexican wines, but I am so far under-impressed. Even their top-of-the line \$50 wines are modest at best. Note that California law allows 5 cases of wine to be driven across the border into the U.S.

L.A. Cetto, Reserva Privada Nebbiolo (Valle de Guadalupe, BC)	2006	92	A fine Nebbiolo; not up to the Santo Tomás reserve Nebbiolo, but still very good.	~\$20 (in Mexico)
	2007	92		
	2010	92.5		
	2011	93.5		
Santo Tomás Winery, Tempranillo-Cabernet (Valle de Santo Tomás, Baja California)	2013	93	An excellent, if unusual 50:50 blend from this fine old winery, aged 8 months in French oak barrels.	~\$20 (in Mexico)
Valle del Sol, Red Blend (Cab Sauvignon-Petit Verdot-Merlot blend)	2016	92.5	An excellent red wine from the Valle de Guadalupe, Baja California. Might not be able to find this in the U.S.	~\$25

Other Interesting Reds

Abacela, Tempranillo	2009	93	This is about as good as a Tempranillo gets. Mellow, pleasant, rich. The taste of Spain. Abacela (Umpqua Valley, OR) makes fabulous wines from Iberian grape varieties. It won the “Winery of the Year” award for Oregon in 2013. However,	\$15
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			their non-Spanish grape varieties are not nearly as good.	
Abacela, Tannat	2010	93.5	Although native to SW France, the Tannat grape is now grown in Spain and has also become the “national grape of Uruguay.” This Tannat is aged 21 months in French oak, giving it a deep fruit-anise-earthly flavor. Let this little baby breath for 24 hours, to smooth out the high tannins.	<\$20
Abacela, Garnacha.	2011	94	Blended with 25% Syrah, this little baby knocks your socks off with its high tannin and acid, combined with bold fruit flavors for an extremely well-balanced wine.	<\$20
Alexander Valley Vineyards, Homestead Red Blend	2014	93	An unusual blend of red grapes for northern Sonoma Valley. Generous in flavors and body, good bouquet and good finish. A delicious wine. 45% Merlot, 34% Zinfandel, 5% Cab Sauvignon, 2% Syrah. 14% alcohol.	<\$20
Anakena Carménère, Single Vineyard (Rapel Valley, Chile)	2007 2009 2010	94 93 93	Outstanding. Spicy velvety, light earthy overtones, pepper, good finish. A light but delightful wine. A relative of Cabernet Sauvignon, Carménère was one originally from the Bordeaux region of France (where they once used it in Bordeaux blends). But the phylloxera epidemic in the mid-1899s killed most of the Carménère vines in Europe. The grape was “rediscovered” in Chile in 1994, when what was thought to be Merlot vines turned out to be 100+ yr-old Bordeaux Carménère vines. Since then, Chile has adopted Carménère as their signature grape and is now the world’s largest producer of these wines. But, today you can also find Carménère vineyards in France, Italy, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S.	\$12
Anakena Enco Reserve Carménère	2011	92	Full bodied, rich, velvety, great finish. Could rise to a 93 or 94 after 10 years in the cellar.	\$10
Beaucanon Estate, Cab Franc (Napa, CA)	2005	94	Outstanding. Big, rich, complex, tangy.	\$25
Beaucanon Estate, Cuvée Louis Cab Franc	2006	94	Outstanding. Big, rich, complex, bold, loads of tannins (let this baby breath 24 hrs). Overtones of roses and black tea.	\$25

(Napa, CA)				
Bella Luna, Barbera Lot One (California)	2006	94	A classic Barbera, gritty/ashy, but with a deep complexity that provides excellent structure and tannins.	~\$25
Brick House, Ribbon Ridge Gamay Noir	2011	94	This Gamay Noir (=Gamay Beaujolais) is high in acid, with dried plums and modest tannins. Delicious.	\$25
Calcareous, Vin Gris of Malbec (Paso Robles, CA)	2012	92	Unique in flavor.	\$25
Cass, Viognier (Paso Robles, CA)	2012	90	Zesty citrus and kumquat. Good all the way through, from start to finish.	\$25
Cass, Marsanne/Roussanne (Paso Robles, CA)	2012	93	This wonderful Rhone blend is unique and typifies the creative genius of Cass Winery. An excellent wine.	\$27
Cass, Grenache (Paso Robles, CA)	2011	92	Delicate, medium-bodied. A classic Grenache.	\$33
Chateau Rauze Lafargue, Primières Cotes de Bordeaux	2008	90		\$12
Château Los Boldos, Cuvée Tradition, Carménère (Chile)	2009	91	A fine Carménère; an excellent match with pasta or pizza. Would probably age very well.	\$11
Cline Family Cellars, Ancient Vine Mourvèdre (Contra Costa Co., CA)	2015	90	A very tasty, and rarely bottled, presumably 100% Mourvèdre.	<\$20
Coe Cellars, Sangiovese (Yakima Valley, WA)	2012	91	An excellent Sangiovese from a gringo trying to make great Chianti wines in Washington state. 2012 was a great year for vineyards in Yakima Valley, and this lightly-oaked Sangiovese is terrific. This particular vintage was made at the Holloran Vineyard Winery in West Linn, Oregon. It won a gold medal at the 2014 NW Food and Wine Festival.	~\$25
Cosentino Winery, "Franc," Cabernet Franc	2007	93	A fine, big Cab Franc, with the typical complex acrid flavors of this grape. Cosentino has been producing Cab Franc for	\$15

(Woodbridge, CA)			~25 years. If you're a Cab Franc lover, you'll like this classic wine.	
Courtney Benham, Cabernet Franc (Diamond Mountain District)	2009	94	A fine wine, strong in nose, full in the mouth, widely balanced, and with an exquisite finish. Silky but with good acids and moderate tannins.	\$15
Courtney Benham, Cabernet Franc, Sonoma Mountain	2011	94	Another home run for CB winery. Big, bold, gives you pause to wonder what's going on inside that bottle.	<\$20
Courtney Benham, Lucca Red Wine (Napa Valley, CA)	2007	92.5	A tasty, zingy red blend (grape varieties undisclosed) that goes good with just about any dish; not too heavy, but not too light. Although fruit-forward, this is a pretty well balanced blend. A winner at just \$13!	\$13
Cruz Alta, Bonarda Reserve	2011 2012	94 92	Deep, very rich, dark, lush, jammy plums. Outstanding. Bonarda wine from Argentina, <u>genuine</u> Bonarda Piemontese, is, as the name suggests, a red Piedmont grape which is now somewhat rare in its native Italy. Experts are divided as to whether Argentine Bonarda is indeed actually Bonarda Piemontese, or if it's Bonarda Novarese (another Piedmont grape also known as Uva Rara)—the confusion is not helped by the fact that there are several other varieties that are sometimes known as Bonarda. But, Argentine's vines are NOT the Lombardy grapes also known as Bonarda Oltrepo Pavese. Whichever it is, Bonarda was until recently the most widely planted wine grape variety in Argentina. It has only recently been surpassed by Malbec. Despite this abundance, it has not traditionally been used to produce varietal wines—being used instead for bulk production of table wines—though there are some notable and outstanding exceptions to this pattern (Cruz Alta, for examples, makes a fantastically rich and delicious 100% Bonarda; on the other hand Ksana Bonarda is god-awful). In most Argentine vineyards, Bonarda is one of the last grapes to be harvested. Bonarda	\$14

			wines can be lighter-bodied and fruity, full of cherry and plum flavors, with light tannins and moderate acidity. However with concentrated fruit from older vines, and especially when oak aged, Bonardas can also be big, fruity, dense and tannic wines with deep color and fig and raisin characteristics—such is the case with Cruz Alta’s fine 100% Bonarda wine.	
DeLille Cellars, Columbia Valley Red Wine	2014	94	This is a first-class, Right-Bank Bordeaux-style blend of Merlot, Cab Sauvignon, Cab Franc, and Petit Verdot. It is rich and deep and balanced, with a wonderful finish. Dark berries, jams, leather. DeLille Cellars (winemaker Regan Jasper) apparently makes wines only for the upscale restaurant trade. The bottle we tasted was from North Restaurants in Tucson (AZ), one of the Fox Concept Restaurants.	\$25
Evodia, Garnacha	2011	93	A darn good, inexpensive Grenache.	~\$20
Fireblock, Old Vine Grenache (Clare Valley, Australia)	2009	94.5	One of the best Grenaches we’ve had. As with most Grenaches, it is fruit forward, but well-balanced with moderate tannins and acid. Not a beef wine, but certainly great with cheese or just by itself. Produced with dryland viticulture methods.	\$18
Forchini Winery, Papa Nonno Tuscan Style Red Wine (Healdsburg, CA)	2011	92	Despite the name, this wine has no Tuscan grapes in it; it’s called “Tuscan style” because it blends in some white grapes as is often done with Chianti wines (in Tuscany)! This is a co-fermented blend of 60% Zin, 26% Carignane, 4% Cab, and 10% mixed white grapes. Aged 18 months in neutral French and American oak. An easy-drinking, delightful wine.	\$25
Kief-Joshua Vineyards, Tempranillo (Elgin, AZ)	2009	92	A fine Tempranillo.	<\$20
KWV Pinotage (So. Africa)	2007	90	Despite the size of the KWV enterprise, this Pinotage consistently holds its place among the best in the world.	\$12
Lange Estate Winery, Pinot Gris Reserve (Dundee Hills, Western	2012	94	An excellent Pinot Gris.	\$24

Willamette Valley, OR)				
Lost River Winery, "Cederosa" (Columbia Valley, WA)	2009	93	A delightful blend of Cab Franc and Merlot.	<\$25
Maragas, Tempranillo (Applegate Valley)	2014	92	An excellent Tempranillo (100%?) made in the Old World style, aged in French oak. Delicate, yet rich and flavorful. Dry, oaky, smoky. This unique, boutique winery produces wines in Oregon and Washington (winery is in Walla Walla).	~\$20
Michael David Winery (California), Petit Petit	2015	92	Lodi Appellation blend of 85% Petit Syrah, 15% Petit Verdot. Delicious and unique.	~\$20
Mount Baker, Limited Release Cabernet Franc	2010	92	Light and delicious.	\$23
Mount Baker, Limited Release Tempranillo	2012	93	A bold wine for a Tempranillo. Very good.	\$20
Odonata, Black Darter GSM	2015	92	An excellent GSM wine by owner/winemaker Denis Hoey.	\$35
Odonata, Remembrance	2015	92	75% Petit Syrah, 25% Grenache. Superb.	~\$30
Odonata, Sangiovese Rosé	2015 2017	94 93	A beautiful Rosé at a great price. Peaches, stonefruits, minerals.	\$20
Odonata, Durif Petit Syrah	2014	93	Now <u>this</u> is a great Petit Syrah.	~\$30
Page Springs, Vino del Barrio Rojo	2011	93	A delicious blend of 53% Syrah, 22% Petit Syrah, 16% Tempranillo, 7% Alicante, and 2% Mourvèdre.	<\$20
Panilonco, Chief of Lions, Carmenère Reserve (Colchagua Valley, Chile)	2009	93	An outstanding Carménère at under \$20.	\$19
Phebus MMC Red Wine. Mendoza (Argentina)	2015	93	This is a delicious, estate-bottled blend of 70% Malbec, 15% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. Excellent finish, perfect fruit-tannin balance and overall balance;	<\$20
Pisano, Río de Los Pájaros Tannat Reserve	2013	92.5	A darn good Tannat. Very big, high acid, hi tannin. Not for everyone.	\$14
Porta Reserva	2010	92	An excellent Carménère from an excellent winery. Light and	\$10-\$20

Carménère (Maipo Valley, Chile)	2015	91	easy to enjoy, yet with enough tannin and structure to keep it interesting. A fine pasta or chicken wine. Lots of dark berries and black pepper; light oak and tannin. Elegant and easy drinking.	
Ribera Vineyards Counoise (Columbia Valley, WA)	2009	92.5	This one gets an extra half-point for the rarity of the grape (Counoise: “coon-waz”). This little-known Rhone Valley grape is a component of many Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines, and comprises about 10% of the Beaucastel rouge. This Ribera Vineyards Counoise has moderate alcohol and tannins, combined with good fruit and aromatics, with spicy overtones and a lot of acid. This is a unique and delicious wine with a sprightly essence. It’s very big!	<\$20
Santa Rita, Secret Reserve Red Blend	2013	91.5	A delicious blend of 53% Cab Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 15% Syrah, 7% Petit Verdot, 3% Carménère. Strong fruit, bold flavors, nice finish.	<\$20
Saracina Winery, Atrea “The Choir” (Hopland, Mendocino, CA)	2011	93.5	A 50:50 blend of Viognier and Roussanne. Dry, fruity-spicy, great finish. An excellent wine for the price. This is the old Fetzer Winery. The Fetzer family sold the name and label in 1992, and it was resold to Concha y Toro (the huge conglomerate from Chile). Saracina is now the winery label of John Fetzer, who is CEO. His sibs and he have divided up the land, but he runs the winery. Their wines are still excellent and very well priced.	\$20
Sobon, Sangiovese (Amador Co., CA)	2009	93.5	A big Sangiovese, but far mellower than the Tuscan versions. Delicious.	\$10
Sobon Barbera (Amador Co., CA)	2010	93.8	This fine Barbera has the depth and body expected from this Italian grape, but lacks the ashy-gritty texture of many Piedmont versions. The fruit is perfectly balanced, the nose is good, and the finish is superb. An excellent wine for the price.	\$13
Sobon, Roussanne (Amador Co., CA)	2012	92.5	A delicious Rhone white wine made with sustainably-grown grapes in Plymouth (CA).	\$17
Spier Pinotage, Vintage Selection (South Africa)	2013	90	A very good Pinotage.	\$18

St. Francis Claret (a California Bordeaux-style blend)	2009	93	If you like Right Bank Bordeaux, or “Meritages,” or Merlots, this is your wine. A blend of Merlot, Cab Sauvignon, Cab Franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot in which the Merlot (36%) dominates to give a light fruit, but full-flavored and balanced blend. Note that Bordeaux wines are typically called “clarets” in Great Britain.	\$15
Tablas Creek, Patelin de Tablas	2011	90	52% Syrah, 29% Grenache Noir, 18% Mourvèdre, 1% Counoise. A Provence-style table wine.	\$20
Tobin James Tannat-Tempranillo blend	2014	92	This is a most unusual blend of 57% Tannat and 43% Tempranillo, both from vineyards in Paso Robles. This is a huge, inky-purple, explosive wine that isn’t for everyone.	?
Vallon des Sources, Vacqueyras	2006	91.5	A delicious Cru des Cotes du Rhone, with good flavor, depth, and finish.	\$16

CHARDONNAYS (including White Burgundies)

Originating in Burgundy, this is now probably the most widely planted white wine grape in the world, and certainly the most popular (a “noble white grape”). This is still the main white wine grape of Burgundy and it plays a crucial role in Champagne and other sparkling wines (although Pinot Noir vines outnumber Chardonnay vines in Burgundy 3 to 1). The grape’s flavor is relatively neutral (even somewhat bland), so the wine’s flavor varies greatly by region, *terroir*, and the winemaking techniques used, running the gamut from dry crisp and steely, to rich and tropical fruity. When grown in cooler climates, flavors of green fruits predominate; moving through to tropical fruits in warmer regions. Some of the Chardonnays from Marlborough (New Zealand) have a grapefruit & green-grass, Sauvignon Blanc-like flavor to them. When oak-aged, Chardonnays become buttery and fruity; when aged in stainless steel, they become crisp and less fruity and green apple flavored. In-between is the perfect balanced Chardonnays, often referred to “elegant Chardonnays” (e.g. Cambria, Katherine’s Vineyard; Chateau Montelena, Napa Valley; Mâcon-Villages, Louis Jadot; Rodney Strong, Chalk Hill; Pahlmeyer, Napa Valley). DNA fingerprinting research at UC Davis suggests that the Chardonnay grape is the result of a cross between the Pinot and Gouais Blanc (Heunisch) grape varieties. About three dozen clonal varieties are grown in France alone, most of which were developed at the University of Burgundy (in Dijon). Chardonnays lack much of an aroma, especially the European ones.

Name	Year	RCBs Ranking	Comments	Price (usually Total)
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				Wine or Costco)
Acacia, Carneros California Chardonnay	2016	89.5	Full-bodied, rich, tangy fruit and minerals, almost elegant.	<\$25
Amici, Sonoma Coast	2014	91	An excellent, elegant Chardonnay.	\$25
Angeline (California)	2013	90	A tasty Chard, with good balance between oak and minerals, though a bit on the oak-buttery side (very similar to La Crema, but less expensive).	\$9-\$12
Ardèche, Louis Latour	2015	92	An elegant Chardonnay with great balance and finish.	<\$20
Beringer, Napa	2016	92	An elegant, balanced, Chardonnay, leaning slightly toward the oaky-buttery side of things, but not too much.	\$16
Boekenoogen, Santa Lucia Highlands Estate Chardonnay	2016	90	90 pts by Wine Enthusiast. Vanilla, melon, lush; long finish.	\$45
Cambria, Katherine's Vineyard	2008	94	An elegant, Pahlmeyer-style Chard, with good balance between oak and steel. Stone fruits and green grapes, mixed with champagne. At \$14, this is a tremendous wine.	\$15
Casa Madero (Mexico)	2014	94	An excellent, elegant-style chard.	~\$25
Chalk Hill	2012	90.5	A delicious, elegant Chardonnay with a dry chalky texture beneath perfect fruits.	~\$20
Chateau Montelena, Napa Valley	2009 2010	93.5 94	A fine Pahlmeyer-style chard, with overtones of both oak and steel. Elegant, but not up to Pahlmeyer.	\$43
Cloudy Bay	2013	94	Reminiscent of La Crema, but with the green-grass & grapefruit of Sauvignon Blancs from Marlborough. A big, bright, grapy, elegant Chardonnay. Excellent.	\$25-\$30
Clos du Val, Carneros	2011	92	An excellent, though highly-oaked Chardonnay. If you like big oaky wines, this is your baby.	\$20-\$25
Courtney Benham, Napa Reserve	2011 2012 2014	93 94 92	An outstanding, elegant Chardonnay, with just enough oak. Another homerun by Courtney Benham. Similar to La Crema, but without the heavy lush creamy texture of La Crema.	\$15-\$25
D'Autrefois Chardonnay	2016	91	An excellent Chardonnay with classic Burgundy balance, light oak, and crisp finish.	\$10

Domaine Faivelley Montagny (Burgundy, France)	2012	93.5	An elegant, classic white Burgundy. Semi-dry, lots of minerality, apricots. Modest nose. Needs to breath at least 4 hours before drinking. 13% EtOH.	\$25-\$20
Frei Brothers, Sonoma Reserve (Russian River Valley)	2016	93	An excellent, elegant, slightly on the oaky side Chard from a fine and venerable old winery.	~\$15
Excelsior, Hands Chardonnay (Robertson Winery, Western Cape, South Africa)	2014	92	Earlier vintages of this Chard were mediocre, but the 2014 is superb (different wine maker? different grape source? great growing year?). An elegant Chardonnay, with flavors of green grapes and hay.	\$10
Hook & Ladder, Russian River Valley (Sonoma)	2012	92	Although slightly on the too-fruity/too-oaky side, this is a delicious Chardonnay. Balanced, great nose and finish, distinctly California-style.	\$20
Isabel Mondavi, Carneros Chardonnay	2014	95	The perfect Chardonnay? Pretty close. Perfect balance of oak, fruit, and tannins. Moist grapefruit and mandarin oranges.	\$25-\$30
The Jack (Columbia Valley, WA)	2015	90	A tasty, White Burgundy-style Chardonnay.	<\$20
Kendall-Jackson, Grand Reserve	2013	92.5	An excellent Chardonnay at a good price.	\$13
Kendall-Jackson, Jackson Estate, Camelot Highlands Chardonnay (Santa Maria Valley)	2012	93.5	An outstanding, elegant Chardonnay.	~\$25
Kim Crawford (Marlborough, NZ)	2010 2016	90 92	A delicious unoaked semi-elegant wine. The 2010 was a bit boring, but the 2016 was excellent—well rounded, full, delicious. Unoaked.	\$16
Kinneybrook (Sonoma)				\$16
Kistler “Les Noisetiers” (Sonoma)	2011 2012	95 95	Grapes are whole-cluster pressed into 30% new French Oak for fermentation via indigenous yeast; bottled unfined and unfiltered after 10 months in the barrel. Elegant, perfectly balanced, unique, high acid, long finish. Delicious.	\$45-\$60
Markham Chardonnay, Napa	2016	92	An elegant Chardonnay, mostly from the Markham Estate vineyards. The oak is toasty, the taste minerally and exuberant. Perfectly	\$15-\$20

			balanced.	
Martin Ray, Los Carneros	2010	92	Good, solid, but nothing special. Slightly oaky.	\$20
Martin Ray, Napa	2013	94	An outstanding Chard, perfectly balanced with just the right oak Vs steel, with overtones of green grass and apricots. Elegant.	\$18
Meiomi Chardonnay	2015	92	Nicely balanced, not too fruity nor too oaky.	\$12
Mondavi, Private Selection (Monterey Co.)	2016	92	Aged 2 months in used oak whisky barrels. An excellent Chardonnay, balanced, perfect fruit, whisky-tempered oak. Delicious.	\$7-\$11
Montmain, Grand Cru (Chablis, France)	2004	91	An elegant Chardonnay with a weak nose and green apple overtones.	\$31
Morgan, un-oaked (Monterey)	2014	92	An elegant Chardonnay.	\$28
Mount Baker, Barrel Select Chardonnay	2012	93.5	A fine Chard from Yakima Valley grapes. Complex, with green apple and steel. Aged 50% in oak, 50% in stainless steel.	\$15
Old Cannery Row, Raymond Ranch	2013	93	A good, elegant-style Chardonnay. A bit weak on depth and finish, but still very good.	\$18
Pacal Bouchard, Chablis "Le Classique"	2012	93	Delicious. Green apples, butter, big. A semi-dry white Burgundy from Chablis (eastern France) made from Chardonnay grapes.	\$25
Pahlmeyer (Napa)	2009	96	A big elegant Chardonnay; not too much oak but also not too steely; light gold with green hues; full-bodied, modest tannin, serious Chardonnay. Peach, pear, honeysuckle, strong minerality. A stunning Chard.	\$60-\$70
Patrick Javillier, Bourgone "Cuvee des Forgets"	2011	94	A delicious Chardonnay. Rich & complex; grapes, apples, spice and butter. Big and somewhat creamy.	\$25
River Road, Sonoma	2015	92.5	What a surprise; this inexpensive Chardonnay is elegant, has depth, and a great finish. Green apples, green grapes, and sweet hay.	\$14-\$18
River Road, Mills Cuvée Reserve	2015	92	An elegant Chardonnay, but not quite as satisfying as the less expensive Sonoma variety.	\$23-\$26
River Road, Russian River Valley, Sonoma	2015 2016	92 91	Dryer and chalkier than the regular Sonoma. Delicious. A great wine for the price.	~\$15
River Road, RRV				\$18

Reserve Chardonnay				
Rodney Strong, Chalk Hill	2009	93	Along the lines of Pahlmeyer, with a good mix of oak and steel.	\$14
Ropiteau, Les Plants Nobles, Chardonnay (Burgandy)	2016	94	An outstanding White Burgandy, with little or no oak, soft balanced fruits, great finish. At this price, buy a case!	\$11
Sourverain, North Coast (CA)	2011	93.5	An excellent elegant Chardonnay. Great wine for the price.	\$11
Stags' Leap, Napa Valley	2016	93.5	An excellent, elegant Chard from a fine winemaker.	\$20
Stuhlmuller (Alexander Valley)	2009	92	An elegant Chardonnay, somewhat buttery-oaky but also somewhat dry and with sufficient tannin.	~\$25
Talbot Kali Hart Santa Lucia (Talbot Vineyards)	2012	91	Big, semi-eloquent.	\$19
Talbot, Diamond T Vineyards (Santa Lucia, CA)	2012 2013	93 94	Big grape nose, but not fruit-forward in taste; oak and fruit in perfect balance. An elegant Chardonnay. Big body with lots of citrus.	\$50
The Calling, Dutton Vineyards	2013	93	91 pts by both Parker and the Wine Enthusiast. Big, rich, balanced, perfect fruit, perfect oak (not too much), not a sweet or buttery Chard, but an elegant one.	\$25-\$45
Undivided (France)	2015	92	A fine, big, elegant Chardonnay at a great price!	\$13

Sauvignon Blancs

(Including Bordeaux & other French Whites made from predominantly Sauvignon Blanc grapes)

Sauvignon Blanc grapes yield dry, crisp, acidic, and intensely aromatic wines, commonly with grass and grapefruit flavors (in contrast to the apple flavors that tend to dominate Chardonnays). If over-oaked, Sauvignon Blancs can also become flat and syrupy (e.g., Mondovi Fumé Blanc). They should be served well chilled. The Loire Valley (France) is the heartland of this grape, where it produces medium-bodied zesty whites (e.g., Sancerre wines). Also widely planted in Bordeaux, it is now being bottled as a varietal, or blended with Sémillon (and can be either dry or sweet). The Sauvignon Blancs from Marlborough (New Zealand) are some of the most powerful and aromatic of the variety, with vibrant grapefruit, gooseberry, mown green grass, and exotic fruit flavors. Aging in oak barrels subdues the rich gooseberry/nettle flavors that normally characterize this variety and tends to produce a more bland wine

(in Bordeaux and California). Robert Mondavi created the name “Fumé Blanc” when he wanted to create a new style of Sauvignon Blanc in California—one drier than the previously popular sweet style. He made the name up from Pouilly-Fumé, one of the most popular dry-style Loire Valley Sauvignon Blancs. The term is only used in America. The term “fumé” means “smoke,” but it has nothing to do with a smoky flavor, instead referring to the morning fog that covers the Loire Valley “as thick as smoke.” Any smoky flavor in Sauvignon Blanc would have to come from aging in toasted oak barrels, not from the grapes themselves. Sauvignon Blanc considered one of the “noble white grapes.” Kevin Judd (under his Greywacke label) is now bottling an “alternative Sauvignon Blanc” called “Wild Sauvignon,” because it is made using wild yeast. Judd is the winemaker who put Cloudy Bay and Marlborough Sauvignon Blancs in general on the map; he now works under the Greywacke label. The epitome of this variety in the Old World may be Pouilly-Fumé and Sancerre wines of the Loire Valley (both can be exquisite). Don’t expect California Sauvignon Blancs to taste anything like the ones from Marlborough, or Europe necessarily; for a good California SB you need to shop around (I recommend Beaucanon, Grgich Hills, Joel Gott, and Simi).

Name	Year	RCBs Ranking	Comments	Price
Allan Scott (Marlborough, NZ)	2012	93	A very good SB in the classic Marlborough style. Lots of green apple.	\$13
Beau-Rivage, White Bordeaux	2013	93	A delicious, classic white Bordeaux (Sauvignon Blanc + Semillon). Green grapes, green grass, slight lemon.	<\$20
Beaucanon Estate (Napa Valley)	2009	94	One of the best of the California Sauvignon Blancs, from one of the best wineries in Napa.	\$18
Bernardus, Signature Griva Sauvignon Blanc (Santa Lucia Highlands, CA)	2016	93	Clean, crisp, tropical fruits, lime and grapefruit. An excellent California Sauvignon Blanc.	\$30
Brancott Estate (Marlborough, NZ)	2011 2012	93.5 94.5	Very big nose and great body. Complex flavors of grass, green apple, passion fruit, and grapefruit. Slightly on the sweet side, with a light effervescence. Good acid. A real bargain given the price. Grapes sources (not grown on their own vineyards), so there is some variation from year to year.	\$9-\$11
DeLille Cellars, Chaleur Estate (Columbia Valley, Washington)	2013	94	An excellent Bordeaux-style blend of 65% Sauvignon Blanc and 35% Semillon grapes. Grapefruit, grass, fruit.	\$80

Chasing Venus (Marlborough, NZ)	2014	92	An excellent, classic Marlborough. Similar to Kim Crawford.	\$12-\$14
Chateaux Bélingard (Bergerac)	2013 2014	92 92	A tasty blend of 60% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Muscadelle, and 20% Semillon. The grassy flavor of the Sauvignon Blanc is tempered with the grapy flavor of the Muscadelle (a variety not closely related to Muscat). This is a high acid, tart wine with strong yellow-grape flavors. Delicious, and best served very cold.	\$10
Château Coucheroy Blanc (Pessac, Bordeaux)	2011	93	An excellent, 100% Sauvignon Blanc from the small Coucheroy estate in Pessac. Delicious, tangy, grassy, fruit.	\$18
Château Doisy-Daëne	2013	93	An excellent Sauvignon Blanc-Semillon blend.	\$25
Château Lafite (Barons de Rothschild), Prestige Selection White Bordeaux	2012	90	60% Semillon, 40% Sauvignon Blanc. Tasty, but cannot compare to the best white Bordeaux. NOTE: generally speaking, Semillon grapes produce lighter but richer wines than Sauvignon Blanc grapes (which are heavier, but not as deep and rich as Semillons).	\$15
Château La Louviere, Blanc, Pessac (Bordeaux, France)	2009 2011	88 97	An oak-aged blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon grapes from the Pessac-Leognan region (which was carved out of the Graves region in 1987). This is one of the best white wines we've ever tasted. It somehow captures both the big oaky essence and a steely crispness (green apples and kiwi fruit); truly an elegant wine. NOTE: white Bordeaux are not made every year; only during the best years.	\$35 \$45
Château Rochemorin, Blanc, Pessac- Léognan(Bordeaux, France)	2011	92	Similar in style to La Louviere, but not as stunning.	\$23
Château Clos Floridene Blanc, Grand Vin de Graves (Bordeaux)	2011	93	Similar to La Louviere, but not as stunning. Over-priced.	\$30
Cloudy Bay (Marlborough, NZ)		96	The best! Bright grass and grapefruit flavors, great body. Nose surprisingly shallow. Extremely well balanced and	\$22-\$25

			rounded. Crisp acids.	
Clos du Val, Bordeaux style white wine (Napa)	2013	91	A decent Bordeaux-style white (Sauvignon Blanc + Semillon)	?
Cottesbrook (Marlborough, NZ)	2012	92	A quite decent, inexpensive SB from Marlborough	\$10-\$12
Cupcake Vineyards (Marlborough, NZ)	2012 2015	93 93	An unexpectedly “different flavor” of Marlborough Sauvignon Blancs, but very good. Fruit forward, but yet steely and crisp.	\$7-\$9
Dog Point (Marlborough, NZ)	2011	94	Almost as good as Cloudy Bay, but with a unique flavor. Delicious; worth the price.	\$23
Domaine de la Vauvise, Sancerre, Le Trois Terroirs	2015	90	A delicious unoaked (or lightly oaked?) white from the Loire River Valley (grape variety not known, but probably Sauvignon Blanc). Excellent bouquet, light raisins, full-bodied; complex.	
Domaine Vacheron (Sancerre, France)	2004	93	An excellent unoaked (or lightly oaked?) Sauvignon Blanc from the Loire River Valley. Excellent bouquet, light raisins, full-bodied; complex; balanced.	\$40
Drylands	2011	92	This Sauvignon Blanc has a strong sour green apple flavor, which I like but many people might not. The nose is excellent and the flavor complex	\$14
Duckhorn Vineyards (Napa Valley)	2014	92	A delicious Sauvignon Blanc that tastes like a Chardonnay!	\$22
Emmolo, Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc	2016	92	Jenny Wagner, youngest child of Chuck Wagner (of Caymus fame) is winemaker at Emmolo, a family with a long history in Napa Valley. Grandfather Salvatore Emmolo started a grape rootstock nursery in Napa in 1923. This is a delicious wine with a hit of citrus and lots of grapefruit and honeysuckle.	<\$25
Fernlands (Marlborough)	2016	92		\$16
FernRidge (Marlborough)	2014 2016	87 94	The 2014 was not good, but the 2016 was excellent (93+ pts by Wine Orbit). I love that it isn't awash in green grass and grapefruit, the way Marlboroughs typically are. This is an	\$12-\$15

			elegant SB.	
Grey Rock (Marlborough, NZ)	2012	92	Worthy of drinking; in the Marlborough tradition.	\$14
Greywacke (Marlborough, NZ)	2011 2016 2017	94 95 99	Modest nose and flavor; kiwi fruit, grapefruit, green grass. Made by the winemaker who used to make Cloudy Bay (when it was most famous). An outstanding Sauvignon Blanc and one of the best white wines I've ever tasted.	\$17-\$20
Grgich Hills, Fumé Blanc	2013	93	An outstanding Napa Sauvignon Blanc from the winemaker whose Chardonnay won the famous Paris tasting. Strong acid and citrus, deep big aroma and flavors.	\$27
Harvé Baudry "Romana", Sancerre	2015	92	A delicious Sauvignon Blanc from the Loire Valley (France). Rich tropical fruits and minerals. Probably unoaked.	<\$20
Joel Gott (CA)	2011	93		?
Kemblefield (Marlborough, NZ)	2012	90	Unique nose; Chardonnay-like flavor.	\$10-\$12
Kim Crawford (Marlborough, NZ)	2012	93	Excellent; classic Marlborough with grass and grapefruit, big on the palate. One of Total Wine's "Best 20 Wine Pics" for 2013. Good body.	\$11-\$16
Les Monts Damme's Sancerre (France)	2001	90	This Sancerre is at the end of its life; one more year and it would be undrinkable. A sweet, mellow, fruity dessert wine.	\$32
Long Boat Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough, NZ)	2011	95	The second best – or maybe the third best!	~\$20
Loveblock (Marlborough, NZ)	2012	94	This is Kim Crawford's new winery, since he sold his name to The Constellation Group. This little baby is exquisite, with sharp kumquat and grapefruit, and overtones of peach and fig. The initial palate is white peach. Long juicy finish.	\$20-\$25
Matthews	2013	92		?
Matua Valley (Marlborough, NZ)	2011	92	An excellent SB for the price! But, if you can pop for \$18- \$20, go for Cloudy Bay, Dog Point, Dashwood, Kim Crawford, or Beaucanon.	\$7-\$9
Mohua (Marlborough)	2013	92.5	An excellent SB, in the Cloudy Bay style.	~\$14
Montes (Colchagua	2013	94	An excellent SB, with grassy-grapefruit overtones similar to	\$15

Valley, Chile)			Marlborough SBs. This young winery has quickly made a name for itself, for its first-rate reds and whites. A fantastic wine deal at just \$15/bottle.	
Nobilo, Regional Collection (Marlborough, NZ)	2012	92	A fine, affordable Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, but not up to the standards of Greywacke or Cloudy Bay or Kim Crawford.	\$9 - \$10
Nobilo, Icon (Marlborough, NZ)	2011 2014	93	Close to Cloudy Bay in flavor; full-bodied, complex tropical fruits & herbs; green grass & grapefruit; good finish. An excellent Sauvignon Blanc.	\$18
Oyster Bay (Marlborough)	2017	93.5	Rich in multilayer flavors. An exceptional bargain.	\$10
Reef Ridge (Marlborough, NZ)	2017	93	A distinctive SB from Marlborough, lacking the typical strong grapefruit/green grass flavors of the region and tasting more like a very big version of a White Burgandy. RCB likes it very much; WM misses the typical Marlborough flavors.	\$10
Simi, Sonoma Co., CA	2012	94		\$12
Sobon Estate (California)	2012	90	A fine Sauvignon Blanc, so far as California goes.	\$9
Spottswood (Napa/Sonoma)	2016	95	One of the very best CA Sauvignon Blancs we've ever tasted.	? ~\$30
Starborough (Marlborough)	2012	94	Crisp, sour green grass, kiwi.	\$8
St. Luke's (Marlborough)	2006	93	Starborough-like.	\$8
Supéry, Napa Valley	2011 2016	91 90	A crisp, stainless steel fermented Sauvignon Blanc. Light; grapefruit & green grass.	<\$20
Te Muna Road Vineyard, Craggy Range (Martinborough, New Zealand)	2005	92	Light fruit, semi-steely, gooseberries. Needs to be served very cold. Not as good as the Marlboroughs.	\$22
Tuatea (Marlborough, NZ)	2017	92	An excellent SB in the Marlborough style. Bright, refreshing, grapefruits and green table grapes.	<\$20

Vavasour (Marlborough, NZ)	2014 2016	94 94	A superb SB from Awatere Valley in the Marlborough region. Big nose, big classic green apple-grass-grapefruit flavors. Excellent finish.	~\$20
Villa Maria	2010	93	Modest nose; fantastic flavors of green apple; a tad on the sweet side.	?
Whitehaven (Marlborough)	2015	92.5		\$15

OTHER WHITES

Rieslings produce light, fragrant wines with high acidity and low alcohol levels. They range from bone dry and minerally, through lusciously sweet and fruity. Rieslings are rarely oaked. Germany grows more Riesling than any other country and is responsible for many of the most impressive examples. Riesling is often considered one of the “noble white grapes.” **Sémillon** is the main grape in the legendary sweet wines of Sauternes in Bordeaux, which are usually made by blending in some Sauvignon Blanc. The Sémillon+Sauvignon Blanc blend is also fermented in oak to produce the popular dry white wines of Bordeaux. Sémillon grapes make remarkable dry (un-oaked) white wines in Australia’s Hunter Valley that age well. Sémillon is considered one of the “noble white grapes” (along with Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc).

Name	Year	RCBs Ranking	Comments	Price
Abacela, Alvarero	2013	94	An excellent Alvarero (a wine variety made by only a few vintners in California)	~\$25
Albino Armani, Pinot Grigio (Valdadige, Italy)	2014	92	Dry, mineral, medium nose. A good Pinot Grigio.	\$19
Amancay Winery, Torrontés, Reserva (La Rioja, Argentina)	2014	94	The Torrontés grapes are sourced from La Rioja (Argentina), well known for its fine vineyards. This is a superb, delicious, intense wine with mandarin, rose petals and tropical fruit flavors. Great nose, great finish.	<\$20
Antinori, Santa Cristina Bianco				\$10-\$12
Beauregard, Pinot Gris	2016	91.5	A delicious and uniquely-flavored Pinot Gris. The	\$25-\$30

(Regan Vineyards, Santa Cruz Mountains, CA)			Beauregard Winery is where the old Bonny Doon Winery used to be, ~30 mins. N of Santa Cruz off Hwy 1. Most of their wines are just so-so, but their Pinot Gris is superb.	
Bertani, Due Uve	2012	94	50% Pinot Grigio, 50% Sauvignon Blanc. This delicious wine offers up the best flavors of these 2 classic grape varieties, in perfect balance. Fermented (skins off) in stainless steel until bottled. Tangy Sauvignon Blanc on the nose and tongue, balanced with sage, peach and green pepper. Tangy and crisp, with a nice finish. Bertani has been making fine Italian wines since 1857.	~\$20
Boekenoogen, Carmel Valley Estate (CA) "Bell Ranch" Viognier	2016	94	Floral with peach overtones; long finish; not too sweet at all; delicious.	\$35
Buti Nages, Costieres de Nimes, Chateau de Nages (France)	2010	93	An excellent blend of 60% White Grenache and 40% Roussanne from the most southerly appellation of the Rhone Valley wine region. Crisp, minerally, green apples and grapes; reminiscent of Marlborough Sauvignon Blancs.	\$11
Bodegas Naiades, 100% Verdejo (La Seca, Spain)	2007	93.5	A fine Chardonnay style Verdejo; velvety; reminiscent of La Crema Chardonnay.	<\$25
Bodegas Nekeas, Vega Sindoa	2011	93.5	75% Viura, 25% Chardonnay. A curiously delicious Piedmont (Italy) white wine.	~\$25
Brancott Estate, Pinot Grigio (Marlborough, New Zeland)	2016	92	An excellent, full-bodied, somewhat on the sweet-side Pinot Grigio.	<\$15
Chateau Ste. Michelle, Austral White Wine (Columbia Valley)	2013	90	A delicious blend of southern Rhone grapes: 51% Marsanne, 44% Viognier and 5% Roussanne. Curiously, this wine has a Sauvignon Blancish flavor. Bright, light but with substance (13.5% EtOH), stone fruits and green grass.	\$24
Colomé, Torrantés (Salta, Argentina)	2009	93	This is an interesting wine (grape) that is somewhat Sauvignon Blanc-like in flavor. Flavors of coriander, lemon, straw, honey, and orange. Almost a dessert wine due to the residual sugar (?). These grapes are grown at	\$18

			5500-7500 ft. elevation.	
Donna Chiara, Greco di Tufo (Campania)	2013	93.5	Pale yellow color, taste of fresh crisp apples. Delicious.	\$16
Evolution, white wine blend	undated	92	A tasty little blend. Lush, but not too sweet or too fruit forward. Probably Chardonnay based, probably not oaked.	<\$20
Kudos Pinot Gris (CA)				\$14
Roero Arneis (Giovanni Almondo), Bricco della Ciliegie (Monta, Italy)	2013	95.5	A delicious and unique white that Tony Vickers turned us on to.	~\$40
Conundrum, California White Wine	2012	93	A delicious and uniquely flavored proprietary blend by this creative Rutherford wine maker.	\$17
De Angelis, Lacrima Christi del Vesuvio (Campania)	2013	93.5	A classic Lacrima Christi, blending Caprettone and Falanghina grapes. Tanzer says, "You'll rarely, if ever, taste a bigger Lacrima Christi than this one." Honey yellow color, sweet, a perfect desert wine.	\$16
Deltetto, Langhe Favorita Servaj (Italy)	2011	94	Crisp and clean, similar to an elegant Sauvignon Blanc. Produced by the Deltetto family in Canale, near Barbaresco, Alba, and Barolo in the Piedmont Region (who also make the Barbera, Tocche delle Marasche).	~\$25
Fess Parker Viognier (Santa Barbara County)	2013	93	Pronounced "Vée-own-yay." Peaches and light oak; low acid. Delicious and easy drinking.	<\$20
Finca Nueva, Rioja Blanco	2013	89.5	A unique wine of 100% Viura grapes, barrel fermented and aged 4 mos. in French Oak. The strong acidity is balanced by the silky texture and strong fruit flavors of green grapes, grapefruit, and passion fruit. A nice lunch wine or seafood wine.	\$11
Flying Nymph (Paso Robles, CA)	2013	94	A delicious blend of 65% Roussanne and 35% Marsanne, in the traditional Rhone style. Medium-dry; fresh fruits and flowers.	?
Gattavecchi Vernaccia di Gimignano (Tuscany)	2017	90	A unique and delightful white wine made of 100% Vernaccia grapes.	\$13
Kudos, Pinot Gris	2014	91	Dried peaches and raisins; big fruit; big nose.	\$13

(Willamette Valley, OR)				
Gattavecchi, Vernaccia di San Gimignano	2013	92	100% Vernaccia grapes. An excellent wine, with great bouquet and balance. Perfect with appetizers, risottos, and seafood.	<\$20
King Estate, Pinot Gris (Willamette, Oregon)	2012	94	One of the best Pinot Gris we've tried. Dry and clean, but with nice fruit and a rich balance.	\$14-\$18
Kung Fu Girl, Riesling (Columbia Valley, Washington)	2013	92	A very good Riesling suitable either as a pre-dinner wine or with seafood or salad. Just sweet enough to unmistakably be a Riesling, but not so sweet as to be considered a dessert wine. Delicious green grapes and apple flavors.	~\$20
Le Bouchot, Cuvee Silice, Pouilly Fume (Loire Valley, France)	2005	93	100% Sauvignon Blanc; citrus, lemons, delicate, delicious.	\$24
Luquet S. Veran Vers le Monts				\$15-\$18
Maragas Blanco	2015 2016	90 94	A unique blend of organically grown white grapes from this small family winery (locations both in OR and WA). This white wine is fruit forward, yet dry and appealing. Usually blending Chardonnay, Muscat, and Sauvignon Blanc.	~\$25
Mount Baker, Estate Grown Siegerrebe	2012	92	Another interesting white wine grape variety from this fine winery in Everson (WA), near Bellingham. This is a Riesling-like, semi-sweet wine (Siegerrebe is a German grape).	\$17
Mount Baker, Limited Release Semillon	2012	91	A decent Semillon.	\$15
Mount Baker, Limited Release Viognier	2012	92	100% Viognier. Overtones of honeysuckle. A very pleasant, dry wine.	\$17
Poco Collina, Gelard Vineyard, Pinot Blanc (Oregon)	2014	93	This is a delicious, exotic white Pinot Noir wine that is dry, rich, steely, with grapefruit and stonefruit flavors.	~\$20
Prinz von Hessen Riesling (Rhingau,	2004	93	Perhaps only in Germany do you find steely, high-acid, NOT sweet Rieslings. This one is excellent, with citrus and	\$17

Germany)			a great nose. A great wine to pair with fish or chicken. This one could age like a red!	
Pisano Río de Los Pájaros, Torrontés (Progreso, Uruguay)	2015	91	Average nose, ample fruit, good balance, lingering finish. The nose is strong with fruit, but the taste does not match it, being dry and light, with overtones of orange blossoms.	\$15
River Road Pinot Gris (Sonoma County)	2015	91	Good nose and fruit flavors; melons.	<\$20
Salvard, Sauvignon Blanc/Chardonnay blend (Loire Valley, France)	2012	92.5	A delicious, Marlborough-like white from the Loire Valley. Grass, grapefruit, spicy fruits.	~\$20
Sauvignon Winery, Domaine Pierre a Feu (Touraine, Loire Valley)	2009	94	100% Chenin Blanc, but not like any California Chenin Blanc! This wine has an exceptional bouquet, with flavors of green grapes, green apples, and quince. This is a very big Chenin Blanc!	\$15
Torrontes	2013	92	Excellent	<\$10
Val do Sosego, Albariño (Rias Baixas, Spain)	2011 2013	93 93	A unique and delicious white wine. Somewhat tart, but not bitter; dry and very crisp on the palate. Refreshing. Perfect balance of fruit-acid-alcohol. Apparently 100% Albariño grapes. Great value.	\$15
Villa Cerrina (Italy)	2016	92	A delicious blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio. Light and crisp. Perfect with salad or seafood for lunch or on a warm summer evening. From the Delle Venezia wine district, in the far NE of Italy.	\$25
Pietro, Vernaccia di San Gimignano	2013	90	100% Vernaccia grapes. A very good San Gimignano, though with weak bouquet and imperfect balance. Serve with appetizers, risottos, and seafood.	<\$20
Podere la Casa Rosssa, Vernaccia di San Gimignano	2013	91.5	A delicious San Gimignano white wine, dry crisp and tasty.	<\$20
Whidbey Island Winery, Island White (Washington)	undated	93	A delicious secret blend of white wine grapes.	~\$20

