



*Here's to good times
and better friends.*

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OF FRANCE

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APRIL 2020



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TOP POURS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Take Time to *Make Time*

**Wente Vineyards’
“Make Time” movement
prioritizes loved ones,
loving one’s self ahead of
the day-to-day.**

WENTE
VINEYARDS

Reds, whites and rosés are wine country’s come-hither lures and the basis for truly memorable times. And while the layered minerality of a Sauvignon Blanc or lustrous finish of a vintage Cab may endure, it’s often those with whom those wines were shared that make the real difference, elevating an experience and creating memories to last a lifetime. Wine is the vehicle, but as with most things in life, people are what it’s all about.

This reality is not only understood by the family behind Wente Vineyards but embraced and woven into the Livermore Valley winery’s very DNA. At Wente, “Make Time” is more than a motto, it’s a full-scale movement and an ever-present, multi-faceted reminder to prioritize what is of the utmost importance—family, friends, health, wellness—and make the conscious effort to break away from the everyday in order to enjoy life to the fullest.

To help facilitate that, Wente employees are issued Make Time Off (MTO) hours to disconnect in order to reconnect with their loved ones. There are no set rules other than that the time be devoted to making time for something important to the person using them. In many cases, it’s to spend time with loved ones.

“In this day and age of social media, we feel like we are perpetually in touch with just about everyone we’ve ever known from high school friends to family members,” says Fifth Generation Winegrower Aly Wente. “But it’s a bit of an illusion and there is no substitute for real-life, one-on-one time with those we care about.”

Wente controller Rhea Wolst—a devoted wife and mother of two with a demanding job—took that sentiment to heart, using some of her MTO to “play hooky” on a Wednesday. She invited her best friend since third grade to join her and they proceeded to share a leisurely spa day complete with lunch, wine and some much-needed catching up. Reconnection over meals, shared activities and vacations are common MTO scenarios. Also common is the propensity for these experiences to have a domino effect, leading participants to continue to connect on a more regular basis after the first get-together.

But not every facet of Make Time is about long-lost acquaintances. Many are about cherishing those closest to us in new or more meaningful ways. It can be as simple as taking some time to write a loving thank-you note as Aly Wente recently did for her husband (a gesture he reciprocated at a particularly poignant time for





SPECIAL PROMOTION

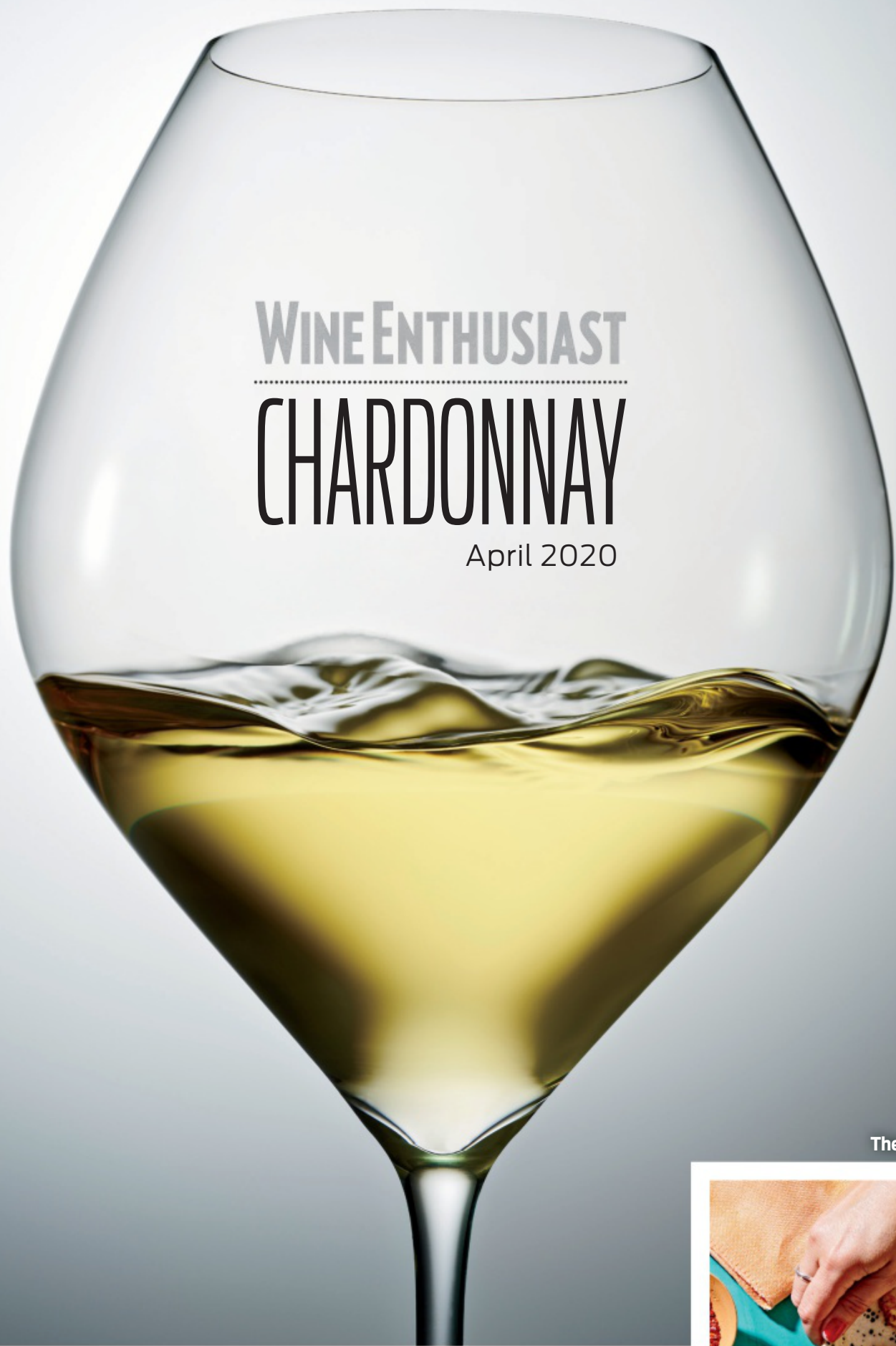
her) or unplugging from all forms of technology in order to be fully engaged at baseball games as CEO Carolyn Wenté did with her son as he was growing up. Every action has the potential for life enhancement, often as much for the one making time as the subject of their attention.

Make Time made such a profound difference for everybody at Wenté Vineyards, they felt inspired to extend it to their patrons. The general public is welcomed to visit Wenté's [maketime.us](https://www.maketime.us) site to sign up for daily tips on how to make time for meaningful connections.

Around the same time Wenté expanded its movement, the company overhauled its Livermore Valley wine and food experience, stripping away much of its higher-end, white-linen motif to create an environment more suited to communalism and easy interaction over wine; the type of place that would be optimal for the quality conversation and catching up encouraged by Make Time.

"Make Time is all about creating a better quality of life and more joy," says Aly. "People thrive off legitimate connections and communication. We get that and love that we can, in some small way, play a part in providing that."





WINE ENTHUSIAST
CHARDONNAY
April 2020

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Cover Photo by Sam Kaplan



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SHARE THE JOURNEY



Mon • Frere [mohn frer] *n.*

The person or people with whom you share all of life's highs, lows, unforgettable moments and lots and lots of good wine.



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CAMPAIN FINANCED ACCORDING TO EU REG. NO. 1308/2013



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GO FOR THE GOLD

Versatile and ever-evolving,
Chardonnay makes for a supreme pour.

Long considered the country's go-to white, Chardonnay's popularity shows no signs of fading. Beyond its legacy in both American and international soils, the variety only continues to flourish and evolve. As a category, it offers styles, price points and perspectives that speak beautifully to the needs and wants of wine drinkers in the modern world.

As a category, Chardonnay offers styles, price points and perspectives that speak to the needs and wants of wine drinkers in the modern world.

In this issue, we're celebrating the importance of Chardonnay across the globe. From France to South Africa, California to Australia and much more, our editors explain what makes the grape unique in each region and tap need-to-try wines from top area producers. Turn to page 40 for their cheat sheet and take it as your foolproof guide to going deep.

Speaking of deep dives, it's time to take your Prosecco intel to the next level. On page 52, Italian Editor Kerin O'Keefe outlines the variety's premier tier, Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore D.O.C.G. Grown on the hillsides across 15 communes in the Treviso province in Veneto, these elegant, savory wines can be drunk now or cellared for years to come.

Shifting back to the U.S., Spirits Editor Kara Newman takes you on a tour through Tennessee

Whiskey country on page 70. Featuring top distilleries and the best places to eat, drink and dance, you'll get the insider's view of a travel gem that's ideal for lovers of culture and whiskey pours.

While we're on the topic of travel, this issue's article by Lifestyle and Entertaining Editors Mike DeSimone and Jeff Jenssen takes you on a tabletop tour of the Middle East. Check out page 76 for contemporary recipes from three top chefs that highlight the flavors of Israel, Turkey and Morocco, with discovery wines to match.

Also in the issue: Saké's new generation (page 58); everything you need to drink, eat and see in Verona, Italy (page 24) and an interview with musician and Tequila producer Rita Ora (page 30).

Cheers!



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COMING NEXT MONTH



Wine & Pop Culture

From the big screen to the boob tube, your car radio, the red carpet and beyond, wine is undoubtedly a part of pop culture. We'll round up the greatest hits, ask stars for their preferred pairings and investigate how and why celebrities make their own wine.

Champagne's Third Grape

If you think quality Champagne is all about Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, think again. Pinot Meunier, the sparkler's other grape, is finally bubbling into the spotlight. Discover producers to look for and bottles to pop open now.

The Magic Soils of Ribbon Ridge

This tiny sub-AVA is home to an astonishing number of Oregon's finest boutique wineries. The secret? According to producers, it's in the dirt. We'll dig up all the details and provide a guide to area.

Top Toscana IGT

With so many excellent bottlings on the market, this well-known category can be a minefield. We'll give you the lowdown on the top red wines currently available and share just what makes them so special.

Petite Sirah Is Anything But

As northern California winemakers increasingly reach for Petite Sirah, now is the time to get acquainted with the richly structured, tannic wines it creates. Learn about growing regions, producers and best bottlings to try.

The Global Sandwich

Almost every country has its own delicious take on the sandwich. We'll give you recipes for stacked, stuffed and toasted hand-helds made around the world, and tell you which wines will be the best match for them.



BEST VINEYARD IN THE WORLD



Awarded by THE WORLD'S BEST VINEYARDS ACADEMY,
formed by nearly 500 wine experts, sommeliers, and luxury travel
correspondents from across the globe, that examined the wine, the
gastronomy, the environment, the staff, the view, and everything that
makes a visit a rewarding experience.



• 100 •
PTS.

ROBERT PARKER'S WINE ADVOCATE

Issue 245 End of October 2019

THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT Chardonnay?

Follow us @WineEnthusiast

It may be the most popular white wine in the world, but we're willing to bet there's a lot about the beloved grape that will still surprise you. If you're ready to take your knowledge from beginner to expert, read on to discover how to learn more.



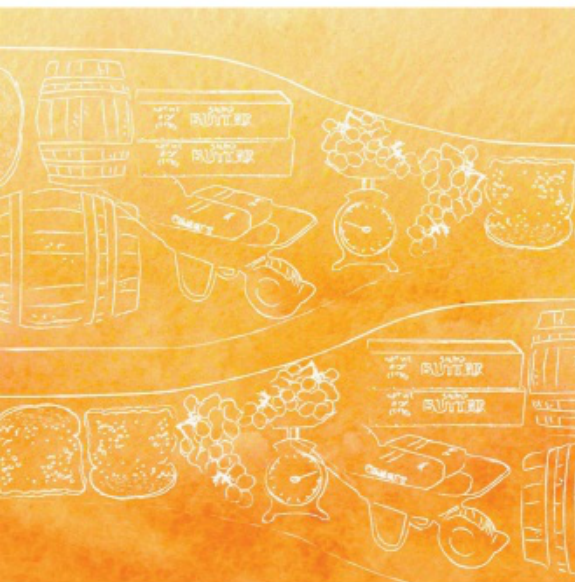
THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CHARDONNAY

Are you curious how the grape's flavors develop from primary to secondary? Wondering about the effects of oak barrels versus wood chips or staves? Consider this your first stop on the way to wine enlightenment. You'll find everything from the finer points of malolactic fermentation to food pairing tips. Get started by visiting winemag.com/chardguide



WHY DOES CHARDONNAY TASTE THE WAY IT DOES?

Butter. Green apple. Citrus. Flint. Popcorn. It seems almost any adjective can be used to describe Chardonnay. But what are winemakers' tricks to coaxing such an array of flavors out of a single grape variety? Learn what's behind your favorite glass at winemag.com/chardtaste



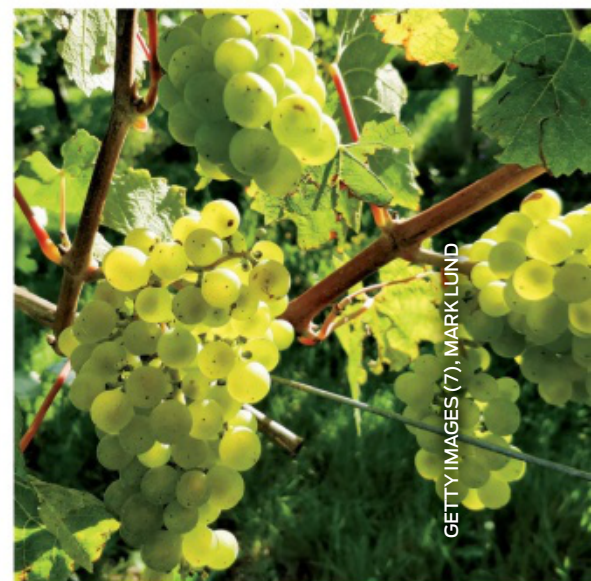
HOW TO CREATE A PROFESSIONAL CHARDONNAY FLIGHT

If you've nailed the basics and formed some preferences, fine-tune your Chardonnay palate. Whether you want to compare Old World to New, oaked to stainless-steel aged, or cool climate to warm climate, we'll show you how to create a flight that will educate and impress at winemag.com/chardflight



STOP READING AND START SIPPING

Talking about wine can only take you so far. Discover 18 of our favorite Chardonnays from the past year, across a range of price points and styles, and get tasting. Organized by which bottles to cellar and what to sip now, you'll find it all at winemag.com/chardshop



GETTY IMAGES (7), MARK LUND

BOGLE

VINEYARDS

AMERICAN WINERY OF THE YEAR WINEENTHUSIAST



**OUR GRANDFATHER
TOOK A CHANCE.**

We watched as our parents gave it all they had. Today, we follow in their footsteps.

**WE'VE DEDICATED
OURSELVES** to improving quality year after year, and growing grapes sustainably for the next generation.

**WITHOUT YOU, NONE
OF THIS IS POSSIBLE.**
From our entire family and staff, thank you for making us Wine Enthusiast's American Winery of the Year.

—WARREN, JODY & RYAN BOGLE
*Sixth Generation Farmers
and Third Generation Winegrowers*



THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY WINE STAR AWARDS

The industry's luminaries come together in San Francisco.



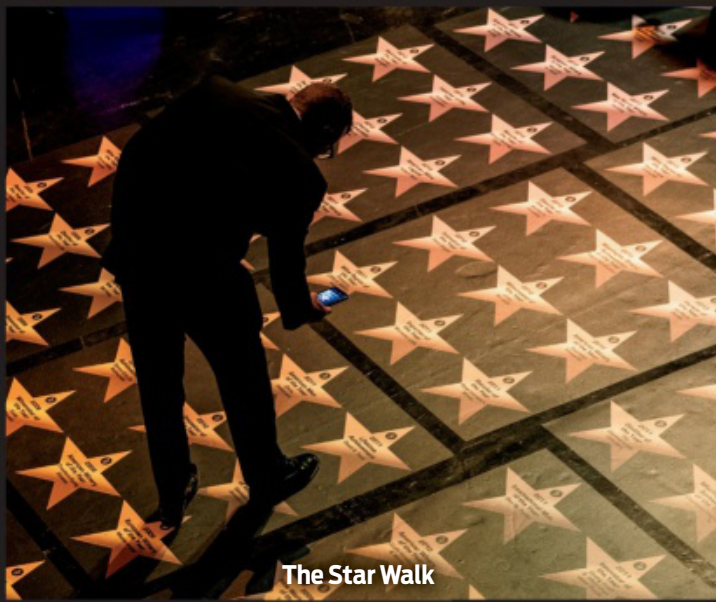
Back row, from left: Jon Bon Jovi, Hampton Water, Wine and Culture Award; Richard Bergsund, Wine.com, Retailer of the Year; Jesse Bongiovi, Hampton Water, Wine and Culture Award; Frédéric Rouzaud, Maison Louis Roederer, Importer of the Year; Alexander Vik, Viña Vik, Winery Experience of the Year; Gérard Bertrand, Hampton Water, Wine and Culture Award; Nicolas Poniatowski, Trapiche, New World Winery of the Year; Carrie Vik, Viña Vik, Winery Experience of the Year; Diego Herrera, Trapiche, New World Winery of the Year; Miguel Torres Maczassek, International Wineries for Climate Action, Social Visionary Award; Michael Haney, Sonoma County Vineyards, Wine Region of the Year; Daniel Pi, Trapiche, New World Winery of the Year; Warren Bogle, Bogle Vineyards, American Winery of the Year; Jody Bogle, Bogle Vineyards, American Winery of the Year; Ryan Bogle, Bogle Vineyards, American Winery of the Year. Middle row, from left: Andrew Stiltner, Oregon Solidarity, Innovator of the Year; Justin King, Oregon Solidarity, Innovator of the Year; Katie Jackson, International Wineries for Climate Action, Social Visionary Award; JP Valot, Oregon Solidarity, Innovator of the Year; Brent Stone, Oregon Solidarity, Innovator of the Year; Michael Osborn, Wine.com, Retailer of the Year; Gregory Balogh, Maisons Marques & Domaines, Importer of the Year; Laura Maniec-Fiorvanti, MS, Corkbuzz, Sommelier/Beverage Director of the Year; Claudia Vecchio, Sonoma County Tourism, Wine Region of the Year; Karissa Kruse, Sonoma County Winegrowers, Wine Region of the Year; Alberto Tasca, Tasca d'Almerita, European Winery of the Year; Francesca Nonino, Nonino, Spirit Brand of the Year. Front row, from left: Christine Clair, Oregon Solidarity, Innovator of the Year; Jim Bernau, Oregon Solidarity, Innovator of the Year; Francis Ford Coppola, The Family Coppola, Lifetime Achievement Award; W.E. Publisher and CEO Adam Strum; W.E. Chief Brand Officer Sybil Strum; Linda Reiff, Napa Valley Vintners, Person of the Year; Elisabetta Nonino, Nonino, Spirit Brand of the Year; Giannola Nonino, Nonino, Spirit Brand of the Year





Entering the Palace of Fine Arts

One thousand guests representing the best and brightest of the wine, spirits and beer industry gathered in San Francisco for the 20th annual Wine Star Awards gala. A cocktail party kicked off the black-tie event at the storied Palace of Fine Arts. There, guests enjoyed a Hall of Fame of past honorees, plus wine, beer and spirits offered by the winners. The awards presentation included a performance by Jon Bon Jovi, whose Hampton Water label received the Wine and Culture Award. The ceremony honored such titans as Person of the Year Linda Reiff of Napa Valley Vintners; Francis Ford Coppola, who received the Lifetime Achievement Award; and Bob and Marie Gallo of The Bob & Marie Gallo Foundation with the Philanthropy Award, for its ongoing work supporting conservation and the arts. This year's event also recognized International Wineries for Climate Action, founded by Jackson Family Wines and Familia Torres, with the Social Visionary Award.



The Star Walk



President/CEO Gregory Balogh, Maisons Marques & Domaines; President and CEO Frédéric Rouzaud, Maison Louis Roederer; W.E. European Editor Roger Voss



VP of Operations Amanda Wittstrom Higgins, Ancient Peaks; Chief Brand Officer Cynthia Lohr, J. Lohr Vineyards



President and CEO Bob Torkelson, Trinchero Family Estates; W.E. VP of Media Jacqueline Strum



Founder/Winegrower Jim Bernau; Winery Director Christine Clair, both of Willamette Valley Vineyards



W.E. Chief Strategy Officer Erika Strum; Senior VP of Corporate and Social Responsibility Katie Jackson, Jackson Family Wines; Chairman and Proprietor Barbara Banke, Jackson Family Wines; W.E. Chief Brand Officer Sybil Strum



CEO Marc Taub, Palm Bay International; Adam Strum;
CEO Carolyn Wente, Wente Vineyards



The After Party



VP and CFO Ryan Bogle; Director of Public Relations
Jody Bogle; President and Vineyard Director Warren Bogle,
all of Bogle Vineyards



The Star Walk



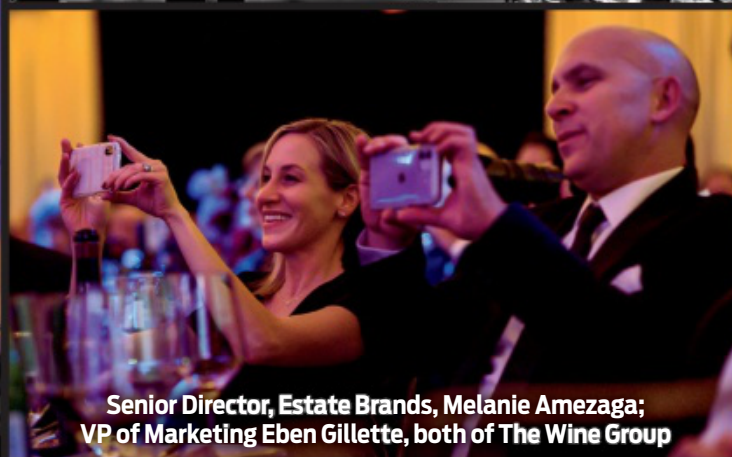
Co-proprietors Christopher Jackson and Julia Jackson,
Jackson Family Wines



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Katie Jackson; W.E. Editor-in-Chief Susan Kostzewa



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President and CEO Claudia Vecchio, Sonoma County Tourism;
W.E. Contributing Editor Virginie Boone



Senior Director, Estate Brands, Melanie Amezaga;
VP of Marketing Eben Gillette, both of The Wine Group



Alberto Tasca, Tasca d'Almerita;
W.E. Italian Editor Kerin O'Keefe



Francis Ford Coppola; Jon Bon Jovi



Chief Winemaker Daniel Pi, Trapiche Wines; W.E. Contributing
Editor Michael Schachner; Owner Diego Herrera, Trapiche Wines



CEO Giancarlo Bianchetti, Fetzer Vineyards; Winemaker
Sebastian Donoso, Bonterra Organic Vineyards;
Director of Organic Vineyards Joseph Brinkley,
Bonterra Organic Vineyards; Global Marketing Director
Rodrigo Maturana, Fetzer Vineyards



Elisabetta, Giannola and Francesca Nonino, all of Nonino



Founder Alex Guarachi, Guarachi Wine Partners, and daughter Sofia Guarachi



Adam Strum; Winemaker Gina Gallo, E. & J. Gallo Winery; Co-founder Bob Gallo, The Bob & Marie Gallo Foundation; VP John Gallo, Gallo Glass Company



Co-owner and National Sales Director Justin King, King Estate



Assistant Winemaker John Duckett; Winemaker Maggie Kruse; CEO John Jordan; Damon Mattson; Director of Marketing and Communications Lisa Mattson, all of Jordan Winery



Winemaker Gérard Bertrand, Hampton Water; Jon Bon Jovi; W.E. Managing Editor Lauren Buzzeo; Jesse Bongiovi, Hampton Water



The Hall of Fame

President and CEO Linda Reiff, Napa Valley Vintners

EXPLAINING WINES *from* SPAIN FOUR GRAPES TO KNOW

IF YOU LIKE
SUBTLE UNOAKED
PINOT GRIS...
Pinot Gris



...YOU'LL LOVE **ALBARÍÑO**
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AROMATICS AND
DELICATE
TEXTURE.



IF YOU'RE A FAN OF
TART, HERBAL
SAUVIGNON BLANC...



...YOU'LL ADORE **VERDEJO'S**
LUXURIOUS MOUTHFEEL AND
TANGY TROPICAL FLAVORS.



DO YOU ENJOY SOFT
RIPE REDS LIKE
MERLOT OR SHIRAZ?



THEN YOU'LL FALL FOR
GARNACHA'S
MEATY FLAVORS OF STRAWBERRY JAM
AND WHITE PEPPER.



TEMPRANILLO

FROM SPAIN
HAS IT ALL...



IT COMBINES
MALBEC'S FRUITY
CHARM,
WITH THE EARTHY
COMPLEXITY
OF PINOT
NOIR,



AND
AGES AS
GRACEFULLY
AS
CABERNET.

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our **crush**
THIS MONTH

SPRING INTO CHARDONNAY

With the equinox upon us, this ever-agreeable white is the grape we've all got our eyes on. And wine lovers aren't the only ones: Artisans of all kinds are making the most of signature notes like butter, bread and green fruits. Flip the page for 10 new ways to try it this season. >>

NEW WAYS TO CHARDONNAY

Other products made with, or perfect for, our favorite spring pour.

BY
SARAH E.
DANIELS

PHOTOS BY
TOM ARENA



Wine Enthusiast Double Wall Flared Tumblers; \$39.95 for 4; wineenthusiast.com

With a unique flared rim, these tumblers offer the illusion of liquid floating in the glass. Even better: They help maintain your drink's optimal temperature.

Sonoma Chardonnay Iced Tea; \$8.50; republicoftea.com

Maybe you're sober curious. Perhaps you're cutting back. Or maybe it's only 9 a.m. Regardless of your reason for forgoing actual wine, this tropical, peachy and alcohol-free beverage is made with Chardonnay grape skins instead of tea leaves.

Chardonnay Antioxidant Bubble Bath; \$24; olavie.com

Made with oils and extracts from Chardonnay grape seeds combined with organic botanicals, this nutrient-rich bubble bath promises all the pampering of a wine country getaway without leaving home.

Chardonnay Vinegar; \$12.95; brcohn.com

Vinegar is one of the first "other" uses for wine grapes. This modern example is made from Chardonnay wine mixed with vinegar before it's aged and fermented in small oak barrels. The result is bright, crisp and floral. It will add a refreshing twist to any salad dressing or finishing garnish.

Chardonnay Cotton Candy; \$7.99; homebrewing.org

Looking for a nostalgic sugar rush? Merge the childish fanfare of a carnival with all the over-21 fun to be found inside a wine bottle when you crack open this quirky, light-as-air treat.



Double-Wall Iceless Wine Bottle Chiller; \$19.95; wineenthusiast.com

Ditch the ice in lieu of sleek lines and modern design elements. The thermal-insulated walls of this acrylic bottle chiller will keep your wine cool for up to three hours.

Chardonnay Barrel Aged Candle; \$32; shop-rewined.com

Fill your home with some of Chardonnay's most beloved warming aromas: vanilla, butter, oak and hazelnut. Hand-poured in Charleston, South Carolina, this natural soy wax candle even comes in a barrel-inspired, acacia wood vessel.

Brent's Chardonnay Wine Brittle; \$12.95; anettes.com

Dinner guests, rejoice! Here's an ideal hostess gift. Spanish peanuts partner up with Chardonnay, butter, vanilla and a pinch of salt to create this crunchy yet melt-in-your-mouth candy. The elegant, slender packaging makes it present-ready.

Mercer's Red Raspberry Chardonnay Wine Ice Cream; prices vary; mercersdairy.com

Available in pints, one-serving cups and assorted scoop shops across the country, this premium ice cream infuses an oak-aged Chardonnay with red raspberry purée. A head's up, however: It can contain up to 5% alcohol by volume (abv), so this treat is reserved for those 21 and over.

Mandarin Chardonnay Bar Soap; \$9.95; napasoap.com

Enliven one of even the most ordinary moments of your day with the light and crisp scents of this Chardonnay-infused soap. Also made with mango and kukui oils, its delicate citrus aroma balances out the expected characteristics of the wine variety.

In case you haven't looked at your calendar—or out your window—recently, spring has officially begun. And you know what that means: So, too, has Chardonnay season.

Sure, we enjoy Chard and other white wines all year long, but there's just something about bright yellow sunshine and a promise of dining outside in the days to come that makes a glass of the stuff seem that much more appealing.

One of the most popular grape varieties worldwide, Chardonnay is celebrated for its ability to produce outstanding pours in cool, moderate and warm conditions alike. It creates an array of dry styles that range from light, lean and elegant to full-bodied, rich and buttery, and lends necessary balance to delicate bubbly.

And thankfully, its flexibility goes for more than just wine: Chardonnay's signature flavors and aromas lend themselves to all manner of food and other items as artisans increasingly infuse it into products outside of the vinous world. Below, 10 other ways we'll begin embracing Chardonnay this season.

GEORGIA NATIVES

Here are 13 of the country's indigenous grape varieties to help grow your vinous knowledge.

Are your friends impressed when you recite all the varieties allowed in a bottle of Bordeaux? Then it's time to up your game and get to know at least a handful of the 500-plus native grapes grown in Georgia. One of the world's oldest wine-producing countries, it's blessed with a wide array of indigenous varieties and a tradition of small-batch, handcrafted wines fermented and aged in clay *qvevri*. Ahead, 13 of the most common varieties to get you started. —Mike DeSimone



REDS

Aladasturi is notable for its pale ruby color, delicate tannins, soft body and low alcohol levels.

Aleksandrouli can be used alone or blended and typically creates high-acid wine with flavors of black cherry and raspberry.

Chkhaveri is vinified into a pale red wine with subtle fruit flavors and strong spice notes. It's also used for semisweet sparkling wine.

Ojaleshi translates to "growing on a tree." Its wines are semisweet with red fruit flavor and peppery notes.

Saperavi is Georgia's leading red grape variety. Bold and fruity with strong acidity, it can be made into dry or semisweet wine.

Shavkapito means "vine with a black cane." It produces full-bodied wines with delicate aromatics.

Tavkveri produces a medium-bodied dry red wine, but it can also be found in off-dry or rosé styles.

WHITES

Chinuri means "excellent" or "the best." It has high acidity and is made into sparkling wine.

Kisi yields straw-colored wines that offer flavors of pear, apricot and green tea.

Mtsvane Kakhuri is used for high-quality dry wine in the Manavi appellation. It also gets blended with Rkatsiteli in the wines of Tsinandali.

Rkatsiteli is Georgia's No. 1 white grape and makes up 43% of white plantings. It's the main grape in white wines from Kakheti, known for their bright citrus flavors, soft spice and gentle aromatics.

Tsitska has flavors of melon, peach and pear, with notes of honey and high acidity.

Tsolikouri wines are full-bodied with good mouthfeel, strong minerality and a floral lift.

Learn more about Georgia's role in natural wine at winemag.com/georgia-natives

MIKEL CASAL

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Crisp, Light, Refreshing

SHERRIED TREASURE

The fortified wine makes for a dazzling Daiquiri.

At The Bamboo Room, a bar hidden within Chicago tiki lounge Three Dots and a Dash, guests are greeted with a snack-sized, two-sip Daiquiri, also known as a Snaiquiri, over shaved pineapple ice. This is a lower-octane alternative to a traditional Daiquiri made with rum. “A bolder Sherry stands up pretty well,” says Kevin Beary, beverage director of the venue. He opts for manzanilla Sherry, a dry, saline style, preferably aged under a blanket of yeast called flor. Note: This recipe makes a single full-sized serving, double what Beary serves guests.

—Kara Newman



SHERRY DAIQUIRI

Kevin Beary, beverage director, *Three Dots and a Dash* and *The Bamboo Room*, Chicago

- 2 ounces manzanilla Sherry (Beary uses Bodegas Alonso Velo Flor Manzanilla)
- 1 ounce lime juice
- ½ ounce Martinique *sirop de canne* (store-bought simple syrup made with sugarcane from Martinique)

Lime wheel, for garnish

In cocktail shaker, combine all ingredients, except garnish, with ice. Shake well, and double-strain into coupe glass. Garnish with lime wheel floated atop drink.

To make mini “Snaiquiris,” divide the recipe above between two small cordial glasses without garnish.

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VERONA

This ancient Italian city boasts fantastic wine, cuisine and culture.

Famous for opera performances that are held in the city's 1st century Roman Arena and as the home of the world's most famous fictional lovers, Romeo and Juliet, the Verona of today is also a must-visit destination for fine wine. Located in northern Italy's Veneto region, the city boasts a lively restaurant and wine bar scene, and Vinitaly, the country's most important annual wine fair. Explore around town and use it as a base to tour some of boot's most celebrated wine country just a short drive away. —Kerin O'Keefe



Fine Dining and Wining

No visit to Verona would be complete without a meal at the city's wine-centric, seminal eatery **Antica Bottega del Vino**. Situated in the heart of the city and with roots that date to the 16th century, it's cool and loaded with character. It's also almost always packed, thanks to delicious, traditional dishes and one of the best wine lists in Italy, rocking 4,500 labels and more than 18,000 bottles. Don't miss upscale **Ristorante Maffei** in Piazza Erbe, either. Besides its elegant ambience and excellent cuisine, the well-stocked wine cellar boasts about 6,000 bottles and more than 400 labels. The focus is on local wines, but there's also great names from the rest of Italy and France. With its vast international wine list of more than 800 top labels and fantastic dishes, **Caffè Dante Bistrot** is another must.

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: VERONA FIERRE / PHOTO ENNEVI; COURTESY OF ALLEGRI ESTATES; ALAMY; GIORGIO MERIGHI FOR VIVAVINO; COURTESY OF SIGNORVINO; COURTESY OF PIEROPAN; FACUNDO GIOVANNINI





Vivavino



Archivio

Casual Bars with Bites

Verona's most popular wine bar and shop, local chain **Signorvino** sells only Italian wines, stocked with more than 1,500 labels to choose from for an aperitivo, enjoy alongside a bite or take home. For a drink or informal dinner, **Rivamancina** offers wine, cocktails, fine spirits and casual bites. Don't miss its savory buffet, Aperitivo all'Italiana. A little over three dollars, it's one of the best deals in the city. Stop in at the small but incredibly hip **Archivio** in the historic district, where you can enjoy craft cocktails, local beers and the friendly, knowledgeable staff.

Bottles to Go

A number of excellent wine shops can be found throughout the city. One of the best is **Vivavino**, where you'll find more than 400 labels, many of which are local. It also has a concept area dedicated to wines made by artists and musicians like rock star Sting and opera star Andrea Bocelli. For top choices sourced from throughout the province, **Bacco Verona** is the place to go. The small shop is jam-packed, and the knowledgeable staff can offer great suggestions for newbies and experts alike. Opened in 2016 by wife-and-husband team Lia Servadio Voltan and Marco Crivellaro, **Winefriends** sells more than 700 different labels with a focus on natural, organic and biodynamic wines.

Vinitaly and the City

Each April, Verona hosts one of the world's most important wine fairs, Vinitaly. The event is only open to trade professionals, so the show's organizers also hold Vinitaly and the City. Held in the historic city center, it offers tastings and events for the public. This year's event runs April 17–20.

Head to the Hills

Less than 30 minutes from Verona is the heart of Veneto's wine country. It's home to Amarone della Valpolicella, one of Italy's premier red wines, and Soave, the country's vibrant, iconic white with surprising aging potential. Make a reservation to tour and taste at top Amarone Classico producer **Allegrini Estates** and its gorgeous, Renaissance-era Villa della Torre Allegrini in Fumane. Other great estates to visit in the Valpolicella

area include historic houses **Cesari** and **Pasqua**. In picture-perfect Soave, visit renowned winery **Pieropan** and try its mineral-driven Calvarino made with Garganega and Trebbiano di Soave grown in volcanic soils. Make sure to visit storied estate **Gini** in Monteforte d'Alpone as well, where you should sample La Frosca, made with 80- to 100-year old vines, also planted in volcanic soil.

Signorvino



Pieropan



'RONI TALES

Beloved on pizzas across the U.S., pepperoni is an Italian-American invention. The peppery, cured, air-dried sausage, i.e. salami, is softer and finer-grained than the spicy *salame* of Italy (where ordering *peperoni* will get you bell peppers on your pizza). Americans eat more than 250 million pounds of it per year, most of which is probably on pizza, but it's delicious anywhere you might use bacon or salami. Try adding it to a grilled cheese or piled onto a "PLT" sandwich, layered in lasagna or mac and cheese, diced into salads or served on charcuterie and cheese plates. Its powerful flavors go well with many wines.

—Nils Bernstein

◆ SPICY

Made with mild red chile powder, pepperoni's spiciness is more flavor than heat. **Sangiovese** has high acidity that can refresh the palate from its intense flavor, and its bright savory hint of cooked tomato make it a natural with pepperoni pizza.

◆ FUNKY

Traditionally, pepperoni is made mostly of pork, with a small percentage of beef. Like the best salamis, that slightly funky pork flavor is what shines through. A dry **Lambrusco** makes a classic pairing with Italian cured meats, perfect where pepperoni is highlighted, like on a salumi platter.

◆ FATTY

Tannins and fats are friends. Fat softens coarse tannins, while tannins cleanse the mouth. To that end, **Taurasi** offers the most elegant expression of the rustic and tannic Aglianico grape, and its hints of game and leather work well with pepperoni.

◆ SMOKY

Pepperoni isn't typically smoked, but the paprika seasoning and aging process give it a subtle smokiness that can be accentuated by the right wine. Made from Cabernet Franc, red **Chinon** wines usually show light, sweet smokiness along with flavors of chile pepper that merge with the pepperoni's spices.

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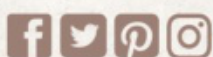
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ALTERED EFFECTS

Learn how non-alcoholic wine can bring the buzz (hint: it's weed).

Non-alcoholic wine has evolved far past grape juice to be sipped with a pinky out. The growing category now offers complex and full-bodied beverages, some with an intoxicating twist: tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the principle psychoactive component of cannabis.

Aaron Silverstein, the managing director of non-alcoholic wine and beer supplier BevZero, says improved alcohol-removal technology paved the way for these weed-spiked wine offerings.

With important vinous elements like aromatic compounds, the only thing missing would be the intoxicating element, which is where cannabis comes in.

But how does it get there?

Rebel Coast uses technology that encapsulates the cannabinoids in a substance that allows them to be emulsified with water, says CEO and Cofounder Josh Lizotte.

"This process has three key benefits: It makes the THC act water soluble, dramatically increases the bioavailability and absorption rate, giving about a 15- to 20-minute onset time, and it does not fall out of solution," he says.

Wines made by Rebel Coast offer about 10 milligrams (mg) of THC per glass. In states like Colorado and California, where cannabis is legal and regulated, that's akin to "a single serving."

House of Saka uses nanoemulsion technology, which is similar to Rebel Coast's approach but with smaller particles, to add about 5 mg THC per glass to bottlings like Sparkling Pink, which mixes Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay grapes.

Cynthia Salarizadeh, the company's founder and president, likens the process to crafting DIY salad dressing.

"What [nanoemulsion does] is stabilizing what you'd call a droplet," says BevZero's Silverstein. "It's a mixture of THC in the different [substances] that stabilize in water to such small sizes...they're actually absorbed sublingually under your tongue."

The process makes cannabinoids "highly bioavailable and absorbed into your system immediately," says Salarizadeh, in contrast to the typical two-hour window that edibles can take. This gives the beverages near-instant effects, fitting for individuals who might avoid or cut back on alcohol but still seek a slightly altered effect. For those canna-curious folks who are new to the herb, instantaneous effects can also help them understand their personal dosing. Additionally, if you find yourself a little too elevated, these drinks "leave your system more quickly, which also makes it more sessionable," says Salarizadeh. —Beca Grimm

Improved alcohol-removal technology paved the way for weed-spiked wine.



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HOW TO BOTTLE PROSPERITY

The multitalented and ever-moving **Rita Ora** hits pause to talk making Tequila and toasting life's possibilities.



Born in Kosovo but raised in London, Rita Ora's eclectic entertainment career began with open-mic sessions at her father's pub. Today, the pop icon is widely known for songs like "R.I.P." and "How We Do (Party)," as well as for collaborations with Liam Payne, Charli XCX and other hit artists.

In between, however, she's done everything from hosting television shows and tackling big-screen acting roles, to working with fashion brands like Adidas and coaching singers on *The X Factor UK* and BBC's *The Voice*.

In 2019, she added yet another role to her dynamic resume: chief creative partner and shareholder of Próspero Spirits. But Ora says she is "more than just a spokesperson" for the brand, which is made by Stella Anguiano, one of the first female Tequila distillers, and produced at the Don Roberto Distillery in Jalisco.

That perspective has already paid dividends: The añejo offering of Próspero earned a remarkable 97 points in a *Wine Enthusiast* blind tasting and landed in the 2019 Top 100 Spirits list.

Ora took a rare breath to check in with us, share more about the project and talk about what's coming next for her. —Kara Newman

What are you up to right now?

It feels like I am always on the go. I've been really busy prepping my album and sharing my new music

with fans. I recently did the *Masked Singer* in the UK and finished up a movie with Michael Caine that will be coming out soon, which was very exciting. I've also been working on expanding Próspero to the UK market. I can't wait to have it in my dad's pub.

What made you decide to launch a Tequila and not, say, a whiskey?

There is just something about the taste of Tequila. It's an amazing mix of savory and sweet. The freshness and bite that it has, along with all the nuanced flavors, is what separates it, you know? Of course, what also drew me to launching this particular Tequila was the ability to work with Stella Anguiano.

"I've done many different partnerships, but, with this one, it was important to me to be more than a spokesperson. I felt very strongly about investing myself in this spirit."

Obviously, I love drinking Tequila, but it was more about collaborating with someone who is so passionate about what they do. She is so inspiring and is one of the few female master distillers in the business. In whatever medium I'm working in, I want to surround myself with the best, and there is no better partner than Stella.

What was it like to create Próspero?

The collaboration process was a great experience. Coming on board as the creative director



Want to learn more about Rita Ora? Visit winemag.com/rita-ora

of the brand, as well as being a shareholder, has really been a rewarding experience because I get to be so hands-on with everything. I've done many different partnerships before, but I felt, with this one, it was important to me to be more than just a spokesperson. I felt very strongly about investing myself creatively and financially in this spirit. In addition to working

and got to sit down with Stella to discuss the creation of a spirit. We spoke about the different flavors used in our three expressions, as well as how the aging process works. Her knowledge and attention to detail is out of this world, and it has been amazing to work with both her and Roy. It's been extremely rewarding to use my creativity in a new venture, but the most rewarding part by far is seeing people enjoy the Tequila.

What does the name Próspero mean to you?

For me, it's all about prospering and thriving. It's a celebration of living your life the way you want. When people drink it, I want them to toast to their accomplishments and feel the freedom of possibility in their lives.

What are you working on next?

I'm always working on something. This year, I've been promoting my album, acting in new projects, collaborating with new fashion brands and obviously focusing on the success of Próspero. This summer, I'll be doing more festivals, too. Booked and busy—just the way I like it.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

At the beginning, the most challenging part was working in a whole new medium. There was a lot for me to learn about this business. I'm privileged to have some pretty great teachers. Early on, I took a tour of the distillery in Mexico

MASTERING MONTEPULCIANO

Discover the range of the most prolific red wine from Italy's Abruzzo region.

Montepulciano is one of the most planted grapes in Italy, yet a surprising amount of confusion surrounds the variety.

Its name alone is disorienting. While it bears the name of a Tuscan town, it's not at all tied to wines made there. Instead, Montepulciano's home is on the eastern side of the Apennines. It takes root in Marche, Molise and northern Puglia, but it's most ubiquitous in Abruzzo.

Vineyard location is key, as Montepulciano needs a long, temperate growing season. In Abruzzo, the sweet spot is in the foothills of the Apennines, which benefits from brisk air rolling down the mountains and warm breezes coming off the Adriatic Sea. But Montepulciano is grown in all four of the region's provinces to different results.

Most regional production happens in the southern province of Chieti, where the warm, seaside climate typically yields soft, fruity, easy-drinking bottlings, though bolder exceptions exist. Pescara and Teramo, provinces in central and northern Abruzzo, boast more day-to-night temperature variations that lengthen the ripening process, help grapes maintain acidity and contribute to lifted and well-structured wines. They display hallmark notes of ripe cherry alongside crushed herbs and tobacco.

Regardless of origin, bottlings are usually labeled under the regionwide Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC). Its monolithic nature can make it difficult to tell where fruit was grown. To better pinpoint the source, look for single-vineyard wines or small family estates, or seek out the few Denominazioni di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCGs) that guarantee provenance. —Alexander Peartree



SIX TO SAMPLE

Feudo Antico Riserva; \$35
From the Tullum DOCG in Chieti, this is opulent, ripe and hedonistic.

Illuminati Riparosso; \$18
This is a great entry-level offering sourced from a family-owned estate in Teramo.

La Valentina Bellovedere Riserva; \$41
A structured yet polished single-vineyard wine, this hails from Pescara's Terre dei Vestini subzone.

Nicodemi Notari; \$23
This is a sturdy yet richly fruited wine from clay-streaked soils in the Colline Teramane DOCG.

Tiberio; \$20
From vines more than 50 years old, this is a crisp and crunchy unoaked Montepulciano.

Valle Reale Vigneto di Popoli; \$22
Sourced from a mountainous vineyard, this shows delicate and more subtle, herbal nuances.

SERVE IN STYLE



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NOT JUST SPRING CHICKEN

This classic coq au vin recipe is evergreen.

This is a traditional version of the French stew, with one genius addition: fresh croutons. To stay the classic course, use a bottle of red Burgundy to make this, though any dry red will also work. —Nils Bernstein

COQ AU VIN

Courtesy Jamie Malone, chef/owner, Grand Cafe, Minneapolis

- 1 5–6 pound chicken, cut into 8 pieces
- 1 bottle red Burgundy, or other dry red wine
- ¼ pound slab bacon, diced
- 8 ounces small white button mushrooms, stems trimmed
- 16 frozen pearl onions, thawed
- 2 carrots, peeled, cut into ¼-inch coins
- Salt and pepper
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- ¼ cup brandy
- 1½ tablespoons flour
- 1 bouquet garni (recipe follows)
- Chicken stock, if needed
- ¼ cup minced flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tablespoons minced chives
- 1 cup toasted sourdough croutons

One day prior to cooking, place chicken in large bowl or pot, and submerge in wine. Cover and store in refrigerator.

When ready to cook, remove chicken from wine. Reserve liquid. Pat chicken dry. Warm Dutch oven over medium heat. Cook bacon until fat begins to render. Add mushrooms, pearl onions and carrots. Cook until bacon crisps, and vegetables become brown and tender. Transfer to plate. Set aside.

Season chicken with salt and pepper. Add to pot and brown on all sides, working in batches, if necessary. Transfer to plate. Set aside.

Add 2 tablespoons butter to pot, followed by diced onion and celery. Cook until onion browns. Add brandy, and stir until evaporated. Stir in flour. Pour in reserved wine, scraping browned bits from bottom of pot. Add chicken and bouquet garni. If meat is exposed, add enough stock to cover. Reduce heat to low. Cook, covered, for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

Remove chicken. Strain liquid, and return to pan. Boil sauce until thick enough to coat spoon. Whisk in remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Return chicken, bacon and vegetables to pot, and heat through. Serve topped with parsley, chives and croutons. *Serves 4.*

BOUQUET GARNI

Wrap 4 **thyme sprigs**, ½ bunch **parsley**, 4 **bay leaves**, 4 **cloves** and 1 tablespoon **peppercorns** in cheesecloth. Tie with kitchen twine.

Looking for tips on how to butcher a chicken? Visit winemag.com/coq-au-vin

WINE PAIRING

Domaine Badeur-Mimeur 2014 Château de Chassagne-Montrachet Rouge

“This wine has a lovely structure with moderate acid and a nice tannic grip to complement the richness of this dish,” says Scarlett Carrasco Polanco, wine director/sommelier at Grand Cafe.



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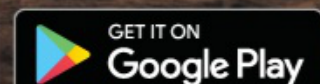
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STAY WEIRD

Did you ever wish your wine-tasting adventure could last all day and then into the night? Easy peasy, just book your overnight accommodations in the nearest tree, grain silo or helicopter. From a swanky Airstream trailer to a renovated boathouse, the following quirky lodging options show there's more to wine country travel than ultralux resorts.

—Susan G. Hauser



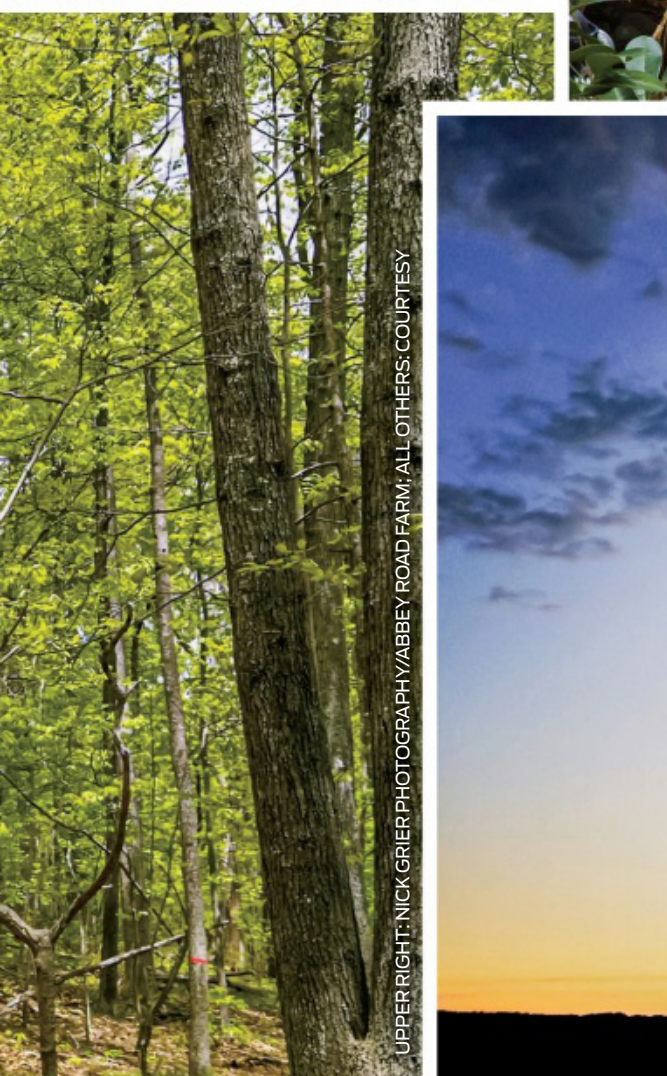
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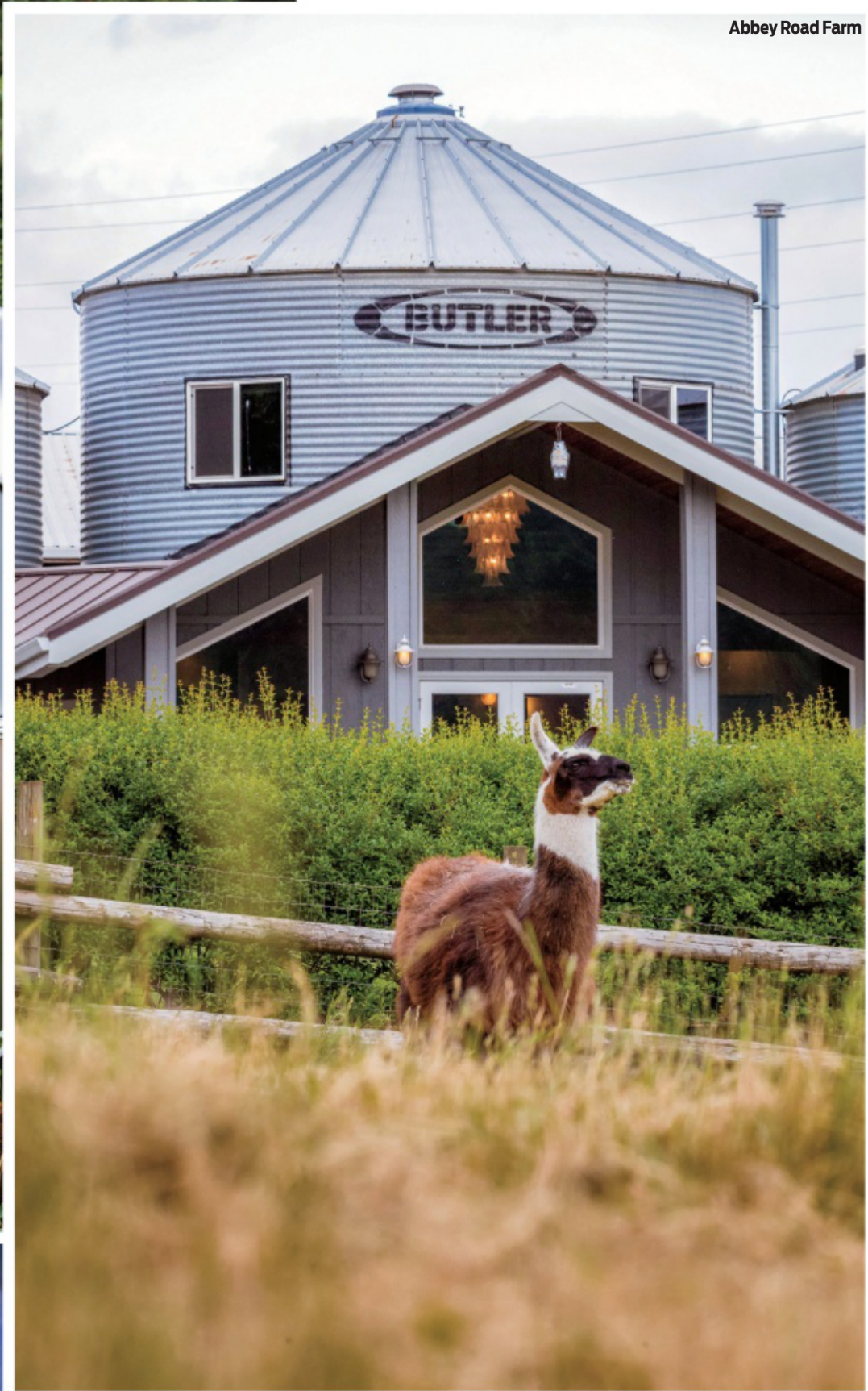
Helicopter Cottage



Trillium Treehouse



UPPER RIGHT: NICK GRIER PHOTOGRAPHY/ABBHEY ROAD FARM; ALL OTHERS: COURTESY



Abbey Road Farm

TRILLIUM TREEHOUSE LINDEN, VA

Hold tight to your wine bottles as you climb the ladder to this treehouse, just down the road from Linden Vineyards and close to more than nine other wineries. A true camping experience equipped with battery-powered lights, the cozy quarters overlook a 120-acre farm.

HELICOPTER COTTAGE MORRIS, CT

A fully restored 1968 U.S. Coast Guard helicopter, its rotor blades embedded in the ceiling, is the defining feature of this cottage at Winvian Farm. You'll find a luxe bed and bath just outside the fuselage, while the aircraft's unchanged cockpit sits adjacent to a little lounge area. The resort restaurant has a large wine cellar, while three wineries, two distilleries and six breweries are nearby.

ITHACA BOAT HOUSE ITHACA, NY

After a day on the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail, snooze overnight on the lake, literally. Formerly an actual boathouse with an artist studio, the two-story building has been converted into two apartments. Each unit offers a full kitchen, cable, WiFi and use of the wraparound deck atop Cayuga Lake.

AUTOCAMP RUSSIAN RIVER GUERNEVILLE, CA

At this Sonoma County camp, 24 Airstream trailers are equipped with plush bedding, spa-inspired bathrooms and landscaped campsites. There's also 10 luxury tents that surround a modern clubhouse with communal dining and gathering areas, plus a wine and snack shop.

ABBHEY ROAD FARM CARLTON, OR

Sleep in the round in one of five suites that are housed in three grain silos. Wake up to breakfast prepared by the innkeepers, Daniel and Sandra Wilkens, who also co-own Portland restaurant Quaintrelle. The farm is right in the heart of the Willamette Valley, with more than 100 tasting rooms, including its own, in the vicinity.



Ithaca Boat House

BEYOND BORDEAUX BASHING

It's time to stop the back talk and relish the region's variety and sheer drinking pleasure.

Throughout the last decade, Bordeaux bashing has been all the rage in Paris, New York City and San Francisco. Top Paris restaurants even went so far as momentarily delisting selections from France's largest wine region in favor of offerings from the Loire, Beaujolais and, above all, Burgundy.

Their claim was that Bordeaux was too snobby, too expensive and too out-of-touch with the new world of natural wines. That was only partially true in the beginning, and now it's less and less the case.

The effect, however, has been devastating for the myriad of small, less well-known estates that have upped their game in recent years.

Despite increases in overall quality, dramatically in some instances, and the use of sustainable, organic and biodynamic techniques that have been aided by a succession of favorable vintages, their reward has largely been a precipitous decline in sales and prices for their wines.

What is the reality? To date, I've tasted more than 500 red wines from 2016 and 2017 with excellent scores of 90–93 points. More than half are priced at \$30 and under; more than 100 are \$20 or less.

Wine-world naysayers love to chide the prices of the top 50 or 100 Bordeaux wines. Yet, my tastings show more than 120 Bordeaux reds from the 2016 and 2017 vintages with scores from 85–92 points at Best Buy prices from \$8 to \$15. It's hard for any other region to beat that.

It's true that future vintage import prices may increase slightly, depending on

Every year, I taste hundreds of Bordeaux bottlings that are good to excellent, relatively low in alcohol and well priced.

U.S. government tariff resolution. But once resolved and leveled out, it's not likely that these value-minded wines would exceed reasonable rates.

Reports in French newspapers and the French business journal *Les Echos* suggest that simple Bordeaux wines, or those from Bordeaux or Bordeaux Supérieur, are now selling in barrel for less than bottled water. Oversupply in a falling market and decreased demand have combined in a disastrous way.

Certainly, this is no way to make a living, and many smaller growers are suffering. Worse, it's not a reflection of the quality of what is being sold, as exemplified by recent ratings and reviews. Every year, I taste hundreds of these bottlings and they are good to excellent, relatively low in alcohol and well priced.

Don't let the unknowing pretend to know everything about good Bordeaux. Spend hundreds of dollars if you want, as a 100-point Bordeaux can be spectacular, but look at *Wine Enthusiast's* scores and especially the Best Buy recommendations—that is where real Bordeaux satisfies the palate and the wallet, and is an absolute pleasure to pour.



European Editor
Roger Voss has been reviewing Bordeaux wine for more than 20 years and values the region's wonderful diversity, from the top growths to the regional blends and everything in between.

GETTY IMAGES, VOSS: ALAIN BENOIT

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WINE COMPANY

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WINEENTHUSIAST

2018 VINTAGE, DEC. 2019 ISSUE

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Your cheat sheet to the best this beloved grape has to offer.



It's easy to have a love-hate relationship with Chardonnay.

Crafted in almost every major wine-producing country, the world's most popular white wine is made in a range of styles, from lean, racy and unoaked, to ripe, rich and unctuous. It can also express an array of terroir-influenced elements, from stony minerality to salinity, and even herbal tones.

Chances are you've had at least one that you loved and at least one that you most certainly did not. But with such beauty and diversity, one should never dismiss the versatile variety as a whole—which is why it's a good thing that you've got us.

We've highlighted the best Chardonnay-producing regions and top pours across a scale of stylistic preferences and site expressions to help you home in on the ones you'll enjoy most.

So, what are you waiting for? Forget the days of the ABC (anything but Chardonnay) and embrace your next glass of liquid gold.

BY THE EDITORS OF *WINE ENTHUSIAST*

PHOTOS BY SAM KAPLAN

BURGUNDY

There is no doubt that today's two archetypal styles of Chardonnay were born in Burgundy, in the northerly outpost of Chablis and the heartland of the Côte de Beaune.

The former represents steely precision and slenderness without obvious oak influence. The latter offers creamy yet chiseled and well-defined expressions of place, and is considered the benchmark for where the grape reaches its greatest heights.

But Chardonnay country extends even farther, to the Côte Chalonnaise and the Mâconnais in southern Burgundy, where it yields profound wines from near identical soils that exemplify great value.

In that roughly 60-mile stretch from the most northerly vineyards in Chablis to the southernmost in Pouilly-Fuissé, fruit expression changes according to ripeness. Notes of yellow citrus, green apple and pear are common in northern pours, while more southerly expressions can present riper examples of apple and pear that venture toward Mirabelle plum, peach and even melon.

White Burgundy is especially prized for its ability to reflect a sense of place.

For more than a thousand years, generations of growers developed an intimate knowledge of each site. They traced minute changes in the soils which help explain the existing patchwork of single vineyards.

Burgundy sits on a Jurassic ridge of a former seabed that created various layers of limestone. These layers are mixed with clay, which, along with aspect and altitude, constitute the variations between sites.

To understand the differences between all the single vineyards can be confusing. The labels in Burgundy, however, are quite straightforward. Bottles are distinguished as regional, village or single-vineyard wines. Regional appellations like Bourgogne Blanc are the simplest wines, but they can represent great value.

Village appellations are graded into wines that carry either a collective village name or single-vineyard, either a *premier cru* (first growth) or *grand cru* (great growth), designation. Chablis and all the villages of the Côte d'Or work this way. Some villages have reputations for certain characteristics, such as the sculpted precision of Chassagne-Montrachet and Puligny-Montrachet, or the creamy richness of Meursault.

The Grands Crus of Montrachet and Corton are considered the pinnacle of white Burgundy. Capable of maturing for decades, these wines command serious price tags.

The Premiers Crus of Rully and Montagny in the Côte Chalonnaise, or village appellations in the Mâconnais, like Pouilly-Fuissé, Saint-Véran and Viré-Clessé, bring structure and depth at more affordable prices. —Anne Krebiehl, MW



STYLING BY MEGUMI EMOTO



95 Vincent Girardin
2016 Corton-Char-
lemagne; \$239, Cellar Selec-
tion. Vineyard Brands.

94 Domaine Berthe-
lemot 2017 Abbaye
de Morgeot Premier Cru
(Chassagne-Montrachet);
\$74. Fine Terroirs LLC.

94 Domaine Faiveley
2018 Champ Gain
Premier Cru (Puligny-
Montrachet); \$120. Fred-
erick Wildman & Sons,
Ltd.

94 Xavier Monnot
2017 Les Charmes
Premier Cru (Meursault);
\$136. Craft + Estate-
Winebow.

93 Antonin Rodet
2018 La Bressande
Premier Cru (Rully); \$40.
Baron Francois Ltd.

93 Domaine Billaud-
Simon 2018 Montée
de Tonnerre Premier Cru
(Chablis); \$65. Frederick
Wildman & Sons, Ltd.

93 Château Vitallis
2017 Les Perrières
(Pouilly-Fuissé); \$38. David
Milligan Selections.

93 Jean-Claude Boisset
2016 En Remilly
Premier Cru (Saint-Aubin);
\$55, Editors' Choice. Boisset
Collection.

93 Joseph Drouhin 2017
Clos des Mouches
Premier Cru (Beaune); \$185.
Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.

93 Louis Jadot 2016
Fourchaume
Grand Cru (Chablis); \$51.
Kobrand.

93 Maison Champy
2018 En Caradeux
Premier Cru (Pernand-
Vergelesses); \$65. Folio
Fine Wine Partners.

93 Stéphane Aladame
2016 Les Vignes
Derrière Premier Cru
(Montagny); \$42. Becky
Wasserman Selections.

California NAPA & SONOMA

Chardonnay's meteoric rise in America can be traced to the vision and winemaking of several Napa and Sonoma minds, like Fred McCrea, Mike Grgich, Richard Arrowood and Jess Jackson.

The 1952 Stony Hill Chardonnay is often considered one of the first modern Napa Valley cult wines. But think about this: When the McCreas planted Chardonnay from Wente cuttings on their Spring Mountain estate in the 1940s, the grape didn't exist in the Napa Valley.

Stony Hill's appeal was its hands-off style, which incorporated no malolactic fermentation or new oak. It represented a leaner, more elegant style that's finally coming back into vogue. Along with Chateau Montelena and Mayacamas, the winery was among the first producers to prove Chardonnay from Napa and Sonoma could be world-class in style and pedigree.

Thirty years later, Kendall-Jackson's Vintner's Reserve would popularize it beyond anyone's wildest dreams. The bottling remains the top-selling wine in America today.

It's a somewhat confusing category, at once capable of being the most memorable wine you've ever had and a cliché.

While still wildly popular, Chardonnay in Napa and Sonoma trends more specialized and site-specific. Grape growers and winemakers now give it the same thought and scrupulous attention once reserved for Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir.

Increasingly, like with Pinot Noir, this means to search for cooler climates that better coax out the white wine's savory and quenching aspects of minerality, salinity and acidity. Often, these have been marred by too much ripeness or oak.

Such effort shows in some of our favorite selections, which come from relatively cool sites and small producers. Additional names to look for include Ramey Wine Cellars, Kistler Vineyards, Gary Farrell Vineyards & Winery, J. Rochioli Vineyards & Winery, Hanzell Vineyards, Donum, Wayfarer, Hartford Court, Benovia, LaRue and Arista. Single-vineyard designates from Hyde Estate Winery, Hudson Ranch or Ritchie Vineyard are also well worth seeking. —*Virginie Boone*



96 Lynmar Estate
2017 Susanna's
Vineyard Chardonnay
(Sonoma Coast); \$60.

95 Mayacamas 2017
Chardonnay
(Mount Veeder); \$50,
Editors' Choice.

94 DuMol 2017
Wester Reach
Chardonnay (Russian
River Valley); \$56.

94 Dutton-Goldfield
2017 Rued Vine-
yard Chardonnay (Green
Valley); \$55.

94 Kosta Browne
2017 One Sixteen
Chardonnay (Russian
River Valley); \$85.

93 Ancien 2017
Musque Char-
donnay (Coombsville);
\$42.



California CENTRAL COAST

On one hand, as younger generations of winemakers look to Europe for inspiration, there's an exciting explosion of wines that rely more on racy acidity and chalky tension to translate terroir. Many times, these are more concerned with texture than taste, yet the flavors can be stunning as well. They range from brisk stone fruit and Asian pear to citrus rind, sea salt and, yes, even savory hints of toasted almond and butter.

"I'm seeing the re-emergence of the fresh style," says Eric Johnson, winemaker for Talley Vineyards. He's made wine in San Luis Obispo County for 13 years. "The consumer is reacting favorably because there has been some consumer pushback on the big, oaky, viscous Chardonnays that, frankly, California is known for."

On the other hand, there remains plenty of area thirst for classic California Chardonnays, those rich, buttery, often nutty versions usually framed by ample oak and, when done well, still lively in citrus. The comforting opulence that made Chardonnay the most popular wine in America shows no sign of disappearing.

"I see a return of a riper, more plush style, but with balanced acidity," says David Coventry, who's made Chardonnay for around 22 years. He currently produces six different vintage bottlings for Talbott Vineyards in Monterey County. "Balance is the call of the day. I like to say, 'Wines aren't over-oaked. They are under-wined.'"

As in much of life, the best wines fall somewhere in between the two extremes. They marry the zesty qualities that form within the region's cooler wine-growing areas to the grape's natural viscosity. These harness more lush fruit, spice and wood elements.

Santa Barbara County does this particularly well. "Even in the oak-driven styles, the acidity we see out here is rarely lost," says Wynne Solomon, winemaker at Peake Ranch Winery. —*Matt Kettmann*

95 Sandhi 2017 Bentrack Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills); \$45.

94 Peake Ranch 2017 Sierra Madre Vineyard Chardonnay (Santa Maria Valley); \$50.

94 Rhys 2017 Horse-shoe Vineyard Chardonnay (Santa Cruz Mountains); \$79.

94 Talley 2017 Rosemary's Chardonnay (Arroyo Grande Valley); \$50.

93 Talbott 2017 Sara Case Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Chardonnay (Santa Lucia Highlands); \$52.

90 J. Lohr 2017 Arroyo Vista Chardonnay (Arroyo Seco); \$25.

WASHINGTON

Chardonnay has a long history in Washington, with the first vines planted in 1964. But in some respects, the state is still looking to establish its identity with the grape.

Washington seeks to get out from underneath California's giant shadow. Its undulations in style have undue influence, and an ocean of Chardonnay crowds Washington shelves.

Chardonnay is the state's most produced white variety, and trails only Cabernet Sauvignon overall. Styles can vary from racy, stainless-steel wines to 100% new-oak fermented and aged offerings, and everything in between. There is, however, a consistent thread.

"I think we are much more elegant than California, just across the board, with a higher level of acidity," says David Rosenthal, white winemaker for Chateau Ste. Michelle.

There are a number of reasons why the grape succeeds here. The ever-warm Columbia Valley, where the vast majority of the state's wine grapes are grown, provides lush, ripe fruit flavors, while cool nights preserve natural acidity. This yields wines often fuller in style than their peers from Burgundy, but lighter and graced with more acidity than many offerings from California. As always with Washington, the wines can also provide superb value.

While the state is awash in good Chardonnay, there are fewer great bottlings than one might expect. Many producers instead focus on red wines that command more money.

In 2012, Rick Small of Woodward Canyon Winery said ruefully that "there may be 10 Washington producers that are working seriously with Chardonnay." Things seem to be changing, though. Several Chardonnay-dedicated projects have launched, new producers have been trying their hands and growers explore novel terrain.

The bottom line: Washington's Chardonnay story is not yet fully written, but its compelling plot keeps you turning the page and looking forward to each forthcoming chapter. —Sean P. Sullivan



94 House of Bones
2017 Celilo
Vineyard Chardonnay
(Washington); \$45,
Editors' Choice.

93 Ago 2018 Celilo
Vineyard Char-
donnay (Columbia Gorge);
\$32, *Cellar Selection.*

93 Sixto 2016 Roza
Hills Chardonnay
(Washington); \$55,
Editors' Choice.

92 Januik 2017 Cold
Creek Vineyard
Chardonnay (Columbia
Valley); \$30, *Editors'*
Choice.

91 Woodward Canyon
2018 Chardonnay
(Washington); \$44,
Editors' Choice.

89 Merf 2017
Chardonnay
(Columbia Valley); \$13,
Best Buy.

OREGON

Sandwiched between California and Washington—and their prodigious array of stylish Chardonnays—Oregon's classy efforts can easily be overlooked. Yet, as a much-lauded producer of world-class Pinot Noir, why can't Burgundy's iconic white wine grape also thrive in Oregon? In fact, it does.

The state's Chardonnay renaissance began quietly with the introduction of Dijon clones to the Willamette Valley almost 30 years ago. Decades later, with experimentation in clonal selection, site development and improved winery practices accomplished, the subtlety and intensity of Oregon's best versions differentiate them from the crowded West Coast competition.

In ripe, balanced vintages such as 2016 and 2018, they retain vivid acidity, which brightens rich stone-fruit and tropical-fruit flavors. It also allows winemakers to cut back significantly on the percentage of new French oak used.

In cooler vintages like 2017, the grape's inherent transparency and elegance punches up the aromatics, bringing nuances of soil and site, herb and earth, along with crisp citrus fruit. Some winemakers try to enhance these qualities with all-stainless, concrete egg and clay amphorae-fermented wines, which prove that barrel aging is only an option, not a requirement, for complexity.

The warmer, drier climate in Southern Oregon's Rogue Valley amplifies tropical fruit flavors and yields round, forward wines that still retain moderate acidity. On the cool northern border demarcated by the Columbia River, the wines are leaner, with high-acid fruit flavors of citrus and green melon.

Chardonnay's epicenter, however, is the northern Willamette Valley, where producers have found success with native yeasts, mix-and-match fermentation vessels and non-intervention winemaking. Here, clonal and block selections abound, along with vineyard and appellation-specific bottlings.

Excellent wines can be found at all price points. The 2016 and 2018 vintages are superb, but fine examples from 2017, which are generally more lightly ripened, are not hard to find. —Paul Gregutt



95 Domaine Serene
2016 Côte Sud
Vineyard Chardonnay
(Dundee Hills); \$80,
Editors' Choice.

94 Walter Scott
2017 X-Novo
Chardonnay (Eola-Amity
Hills); \$65, *Cellar Selection.*

93 Bethel Heights
2016 Estate
Chardonnay (Eola-Amity
Hills); \$32, *Editors' Choice.*

93 Lemelson
2016 Reserve
Chardonnay (Willamette
Valley); \$30, *Editors' Choice.*

91 Pike Road 2018
Chardonnay
(Willamette Valley); \$18,
Editors' Choice.

90 Eola Hills 2016
Chardonnay
(Oregon); \$15, *Best Buy.*

AUSTRALIA

Despite some lingering stereotypes, the days of ripe, heavily oaked Chardonnay are long gone in Australia. While the style pendulum swung briefly to the opposite side in the early 2000s, which spawned a slew of ultralean Chablis imitations, modern Aussie “Chardy” has found a beautiful and delicious middle ground. Quality has never been higher.

Chardonnay is grown across Australia, but those who fly the flag highest come from moderate-to-cool regions. These areas either scrape the edge of the ocean, like Tasmania, Margaret River in Western Australia, and Victoria’s Mornington Peninsula and Yarra Valley, or are perched high in hills and mountains, like Adelaide Hills in South Australia and the Canberra District.

Selections from these key regions tend to be elegant and linear, with delicate citrus fruit. In warm, inland regions like Barossa in South Australia and Hunter Valley in New South Wales, fruitier, rounder expressions often prevail. Across the board, though, the wines express less oak and more acidity, texture and complexity.

Regional expressions are evident, but the wines generally reflect a helping hand in the winery. Where later harvests, full malolactic fermentation and new American oak barrels were once popular choices here, modern versions are now handled more gently. Techniques employed include earlier picking, use of native yeasts and little or no malolactic fermentation.

Instead, texture may be enhanced through aging on gross lees and/or a combination of new and old French oak barrels. Within a frame of freshness and texture lie other style choices, like the Aussie penchant for reductive Chards that yield struck match and seashell aromas. This polarizing style is becoming better managed to create a subtler expression. —*Christina Pickard*



95 Cullen 2017 Kevin John Willyabrup Chardonnay (Margaret River); \$109, Cellar Selection. Old Bridge Cellars.

94 Forest Hill 2017 Highbury Fields Chardonnay (Great Southern); \$20, Editors’ Choice. Hudson Wine Brokers.

92 Leeuwin Estate 2017 Prelude Vineyard Chardonnay (Margaret River); \$36. Old Bridge Cellars.

91 Henschke 2017 Croft Chardonnay (Adelaide Hills); \$75. Negotiants USA—Winebow.

91 Moorooduc 2016 Chardonnay (Mornington Peninsula); \$38. Little Peacock Imports.

90 Yering Station 2018 Little Yering Chardonnay (Yarra Valley); \$16. Rathbone Wine Group.

NEW ZEALAND

If Sauvignon Blanc, with its adolescent confidence and upfront charm, is New Zealand's workhorse white wine grape, Chardonnay can be considered its more grown-up cousin, calm and collected with layers and complexity.

Once the most planted grape variety in the country, Chardonnay currently makes up just 7% of New Zealand's total wine production. But much of that is made with a pronounced focus on quality rather than quantity.

The skinny shape of the country's two islands means that no vineyard is farther than 80 miles from the ocean. Cool temperatures and long hours of sunshine allow Chardonnay to grow practically everywhere, which yields elegant and fruity expressions etched in salty minerals with or without oak influence. The best can age for decades.

In the warmer regions of the North Island, like Hawke's Bay and Gisborne, Chardonnay is generally fragrant, fruity and lusciously textured, with premium bottlings destined for the cellar.

In the far north, just outside Auckland, Kumeu River Wines has carved its reputation for Chardonnay. Its premium bottlings can be tightly wound and austere when young, but morph into multifaceted beauties over many years.

Moving south, as temperatures drop, the style tends toward lighter-bodied, higher-acid selections with more citrus and mineral characters. Wairarapa, Marlborough, Nelson and Central Otago all grow it, with producers like Otago's Felton Road renowned for the variety.

Perhaps the most exciting potential for Chardonnay in the South Island is the limestone-strewn Pyramid Valley area of North Canterbury. There, boutique producers like Pyramid Valley Vineyards and Bell Hill have worked magic with the grape. —C.P.

96 Pyramid Valley 2016 Field of Fire (North Canterbury); \$90, Editors' Choice. Pyramid Valley.

93 Ata Rangi 2016 Craighall Chardonnay (Martinborough); \$45, Editors' Choice. Verity Wine Partners.

93 Kumeu River 2018 Estate Chardonnay (Kumeu); \$34, Editors' Choice. Wilson Daniels Ltd.

91 Mt. Beautiful 2017 Chardonnay (North Canterbury); \$23, Editors' Choice. Mt. Beautiful USA.

90 Giesen 2017 Chardonnay (Hawke's Bay); \$15, Best Buy. Pacific Highway Wines & Spirits.

90 Te Mata 2017 Elston Chardonnay (Hawke's Bay); \$35. Wine Dog Imports.

SOUTH AFRICA

Thanks to its global familiarity, marketability and highly versatile nature, Chardonnay can be found throughout virtually all of South Africa's winelands. Such varied growing conditions welcome a range of wine styles and expressions affected not just by different soils and climates, but also winemaker preference and influence.

Robertson is one of the top Wine of Origin (WO) appellations for Chardonnay. Conditions in the region are characterized by cold winters and dry, sunny summers, while cool afternoon breezes from the Agulhas coast deliver significant day-night temperature shifts. Soils high in limestone and clay assist in water retention. Together, these factors result in slow, steady ripening and high natural acidity.

Hemel-en-Aarde is another prominent region that produces high-quality selections. Situated within Walker Bay, one of the coolest winegrowing areas in the country, it boasts a maritime climate ideal for the production of fresh, elegant and well-balanced wines.

Planted between 650–1,300 feet above sea level on diverse soil types largely composed of varying sedimentary rocks, Chardonnay here benefits from oceanic influence and cooling breezes. These factors allow it to retain vibrant natural acidity throughout ripening. That freshness is partnered with just-ripe fruit tones and varying site expressions that result in layered wines of great finesse and complexity.

Elgin, another cool-climate WO, boasts vineyards between 820–1,300 feet above sea level. It's home to benchmark Chardonnay producers Iona, Lothian Vineyards, Paul Cluver Wines and Richard Kershaw Wines, all of which produce fresh, balanced expressions marked by white-fruit flavors.

It's in the riper, yellow-fruited Chardonnay camp that you'll find the wines of Stellenbosch. With nearly 31,000 acres of vines, the climate here is generally warm and dry, which yields ripe fruit aromas and concentrated flavors. Breezes from False Bay cool vines from late afternoon until morning to help preserve the grape's natural acidity and balance the abundant fruit tones. —Lauren Buzzeo



92 Cap Maritime 2017 Chardonnay (Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley); \$54. Vineyard Brands.

92 Capensis 2016 Chardonnay (Western Cape); \$80. Majestic Imports.

92 Glenelly 2018 Estate Reserve Chardonnay (Stellenbosch); \$25, *Editors' Choice*. Cape Classics.

92 Lismore 2017 Estate Reserve Chardonnay (Greyton); \$69. Kysela Père et Fils.

92 Tokara 2018 Reserve Collection Chardonnay (Stellenbosch); \$27, *Editors' Choice*. Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.

91 De Wetshof 2019 Bon Vallon Chardonnay (Robertson); \$23. Broadbent Selections.



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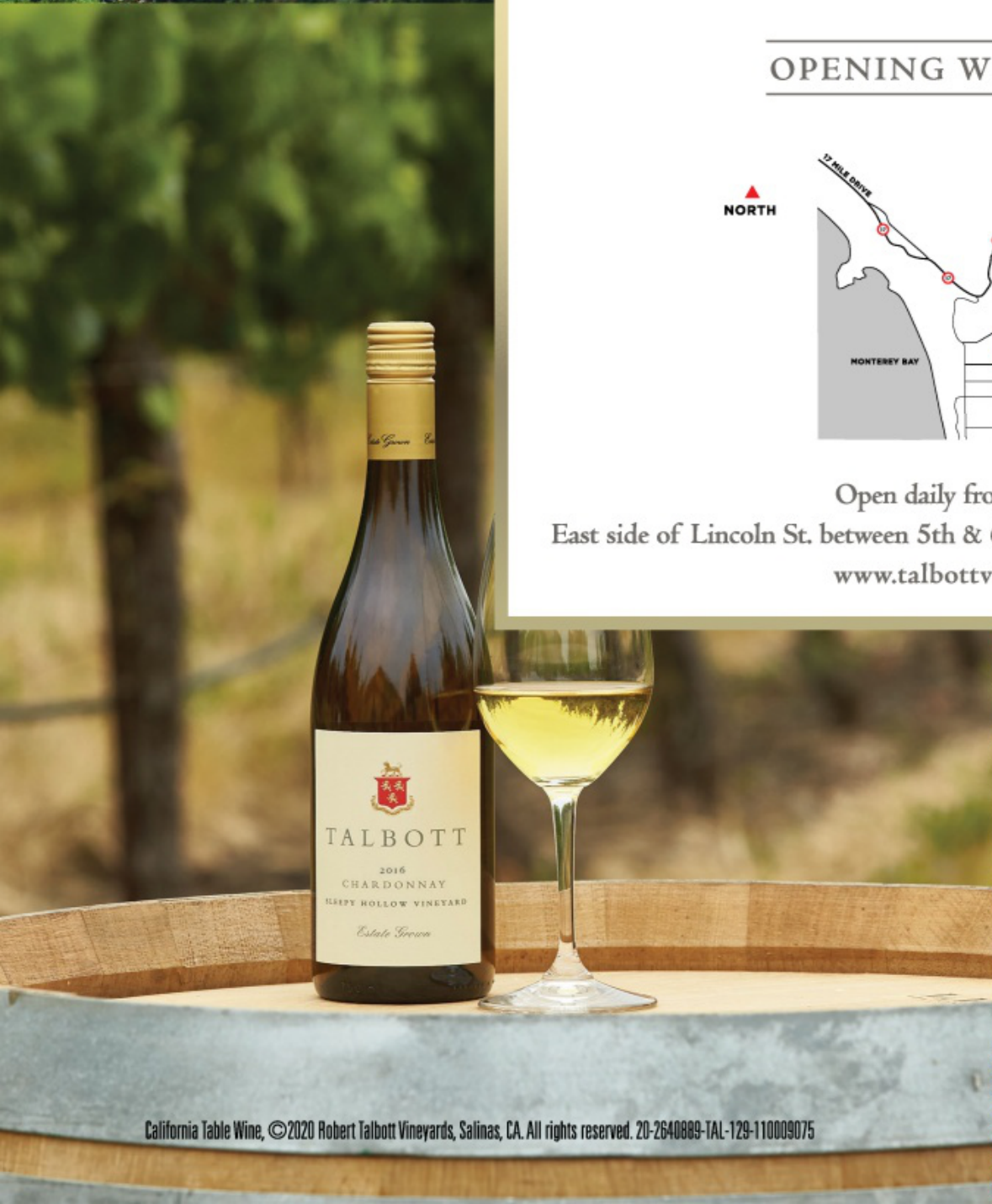
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PROSECCO

PROSECCO SUPERIORE

Everything you need to know about the region's premiere appellation.

Imagine steep Italian hillsides carpeted with dense vineyards known for manual harvests, a long history of winemaking, old vines and some surprisingly ageworthy bottlings. This is the Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore denomination, where a number of producers make silky, world-class sparklers. As Prosecco has become almost synonymous with cheap, cheerful bubbles, you'd be forgiven if you didn't realize that they are not all the same. While Prosecco DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) is largely made from low-lying plains in an enormous growing zone that spans two regions and nine provinces, Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore D.O.C.G. (Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita) hails from hillside vineyards across 15 communes in the Treviso province in Veneto.

Winemaking here traces back centuries. Italy's first enological school was founded in Conegliano in 1876. Today, the appellation has more than 3,400 growers, predominantly small, family run operations, most of which sell grapes to the area's approximately 430 winemaking firms.

In 2009, the appellation recognized 43 Rives, the local name for hillsides that have distinct characteristics.

In April 2019, it became the largest denomination in Europe to ban the herbicide glyphosate. A few months later, the stunning hills of Conegliano Valdobbiadene were proclaimed a UNESCO World Heritage Site, just the 10th in the world registered under the cultural landscape category.

The best wines and a focus on highlighting its unique growing area challenge Prosecco's homogeneous, easy-breezy image. Top bottlings are creamy yet crisp, savory and elegant, and can boast unexpected staying power. Here's everything you need to know about these superior Proseccos.

BY
KERIN
O'KEEFE

Winemaking and Styles

The native grape Glera is the main variety of the appellation. It must account for at least 85% of the final wine, although many producers use it exclusively. Other local varieties, such as Glera Lunga, Verdiso, Perera and Bianchetta Trevigiana, are also allowed.

Unlike Italy's *metodo classico* or traditional-method sparklers that undergo secondary fermentation in the bottle, nearly all Proseccos undergo this process in large, pressurized tanks called autoclaves.

Known as the Martinotti or Charmat method, second fermentation in this production process starts after sugar and yeast are added. The technique highlights Glera's perfume, freshness and balance between acidity and sugar.

Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore comes in four distinct versions: extra brut, brut, extra dry and dry. These are classified according to residual sugar (RS) levels measured in grams per liter (g/L). Extra brut, created in 2019 as the eventual replacement for *dosaggio zero* and brut nature, is the driest, as it ranges from 0–6 g/L of residual sugar. Next comes brut, which contains 0–12 g/L residual sugar, while extra dry can have 12–17 g/L residual sugar. Although it may seem counterintuitive, dry is the sweetest version, clocking in at

anywhere between 17–32 g/L of residual sugar.

Extra brut and brut bottlings boast citrus, mineral, herb and white stone-fruit sensations, and they can accompany an entire meal. Sweeter versions show varying degrees of green apple, white peach and candied notes. Extra dry, considered the most iconic expression, is ideal as an aperitif, while dry, the least common version, is best paired with tarts and dried pastries.

Another style variation is called *col fondo*, which refers to the sediment at the bottom of the bottle. Although the *col fondo* name was never official, this is the original Prosecco style. These traditional bottlings undergo secondary fermentation in bottle as opposed to in autoclaves. Then, instead of being disgorged, they're bottled on their lees.

Racy, bone-dry and with a pronounced bread-crust character, classic *col fondo* is *frizzante*, with a maximum 2½ bars of pressure. Anything over three bars of pressure is labeled *spumante* and offers more exuberant bubbles.

Two producers trademarked the name



“colfondo,” so most others have dropped the term from their labels.

Last August, the consorzio for Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore announced that the official name for this style would be Sui Lieviti, which translates to “on the lees.” But new guidelines necessitate a minimum of three bars of pressure, or a *spumante* classification, as opposed to the traditional *frizzante*.

“In my opinion, this would distort the historical origins of the wine, so we'll continue to make *frizzante rifermentato in bottiglia* [refermented in bottle],” says Winemaker Christian Zago, who, along with his sister, Marika, owns Ca' dei Zago. Their expression of this style is one of the very best.

Additionally, only Sui Lieviti wines can be labeled as brut nature. Other bottlings with this dryness level produced by the Charmat method must now be labeled as extra brut.

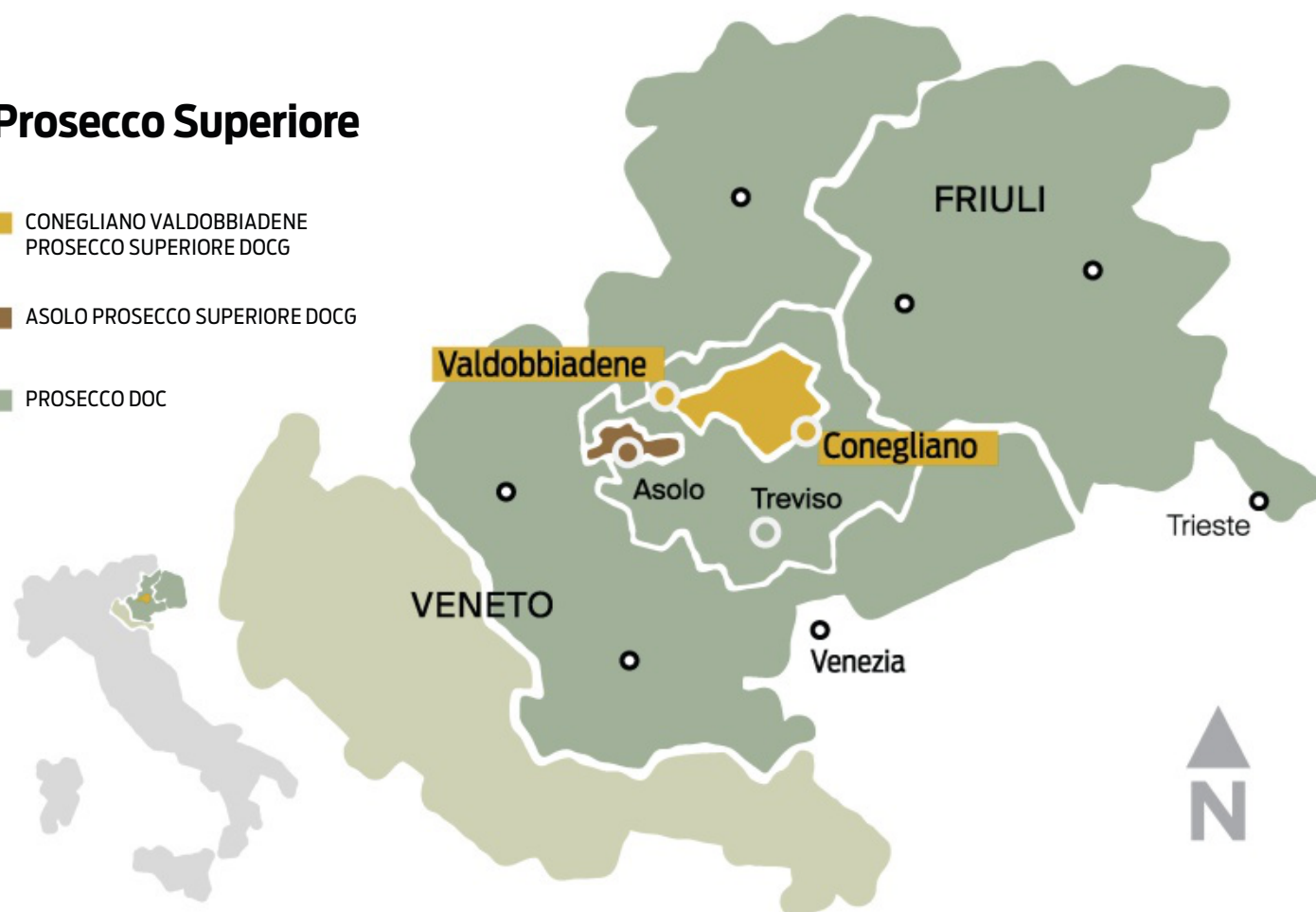
The Hills Are Alive

Prosecco producers rely on the same main grape and production techniques, but Conegliano Valdobbiadene's magnificent growing zone and winemaking tradition sets it apart.

Located between Venice and the Dolomites, the hilly area extends between the two

Prosecco Superiore

- CONEGLIANO VALDOBBIADENE PROSECCO SUPERIORE DOCG
- ASOLO PROSECCO SUPERIORE DOCG
- PROSECCO DOC



MAP: CONSORZIO DI TUTELA DEL VINO CONEGLIANO VALDOBBIADENE PROSECCO. WWW.PROSECCO.IT



Clockwise from left: fermenters at Ca' dei Zago; harvest in the hills of Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore; Elena and Enrico Moschetta of Bianca Vigna

towns that give the denomination its name. The area boasts a stunning network of hills, valleys and ridges. Some cultivated hillsides are so steep, grape growing is considered heroic viticulture, and almost everything is done by hand.

If vineyards in the plains require an annual average of 150 hours of labor per hectare (roughly 2½ acres), that figure rises to 600–800 hours for vineyards in Conegliano Valdobbiadene, where slopes can range from 164 to 1,640 feet above sea level.

Vineyard altitude plays a major role in Prosecco Superiore. Not only do grapes up higher stay fresher than those in lower areas, frequent breezes keep berries healthy. The high altitude generates significant day-night temperature shifts, which intensify grape aromatics and complexity.

Soil is equally fundamental. In the gently rolling hills near Conegliano in the east, soils

are rich in clay, with stones and sandstone, which yields rounder, fruit-forward expressions. In the steeper, higher slopes of the west around Valdobbiadene, the historic heart of production, soils are predominantly sandstone and conglomerates. Its wines tend to be more floral, linear and mineral driven.

Le Rive and Cartizze

In 2009, the denomination identified 43 Rives, the local name for often-precipitous hillsides. It was done to recognize the superior quality of grapes from some of the appellation's steepest slopes and highlight the growing zone's varied terroirs. Each Rive vineyard area is situated in a single commune and possesses specific characteristics, a result of a combination of exposure, soil and microclimate.

Permitted yields are lower for Rive Proseccos, 13 tons per hectare, as opposed



to 13.5 tons for straight Prosecco Superiore. Grapes must be harvested by hand, and the vintage year will always be stated on the label. Under the new rules, wines made under the Rive category cannot be released before March 1 of the year after the harvest.

Rive bottlings have gained popularity, but it's all relative. Of the denomination's total

output of more than 90 million bottles, Rive-designated selections account for just over 2.5 million.

“Large producer-bottlers are less inclined to produce Rive wines because they’re made with lower yields, must be vinified separately and need more time in the cellar,” says Enrico Moschetta, winemaker at BiancaVigna, which he owns with his sister, Elena.

The dynamic firm produces its Rive di Soligo and Rive di Ogliano from estate-owned grapes. Rather than leave in residual sugar that could mask the unique terroir of each Rive-designated bottling, BiancaVigna vinifies these selections completely dry to showcase their distinct microzones.

“We currently make our Grande Cuvée del Fondatore Motus Vitae Rive San Pietro di Barbozza, dedicated to my father, Giulio, as a brut nature,” says Elvira Bortolomiol, CEO and vice president of Bortolomiol, a family operation. Her father created the first brut Prosecco in 1960. “Not only does this more rigid style distinguish itself from the classic extra dry, but it best expresses the rigid aspect of the Rive hillsides.”

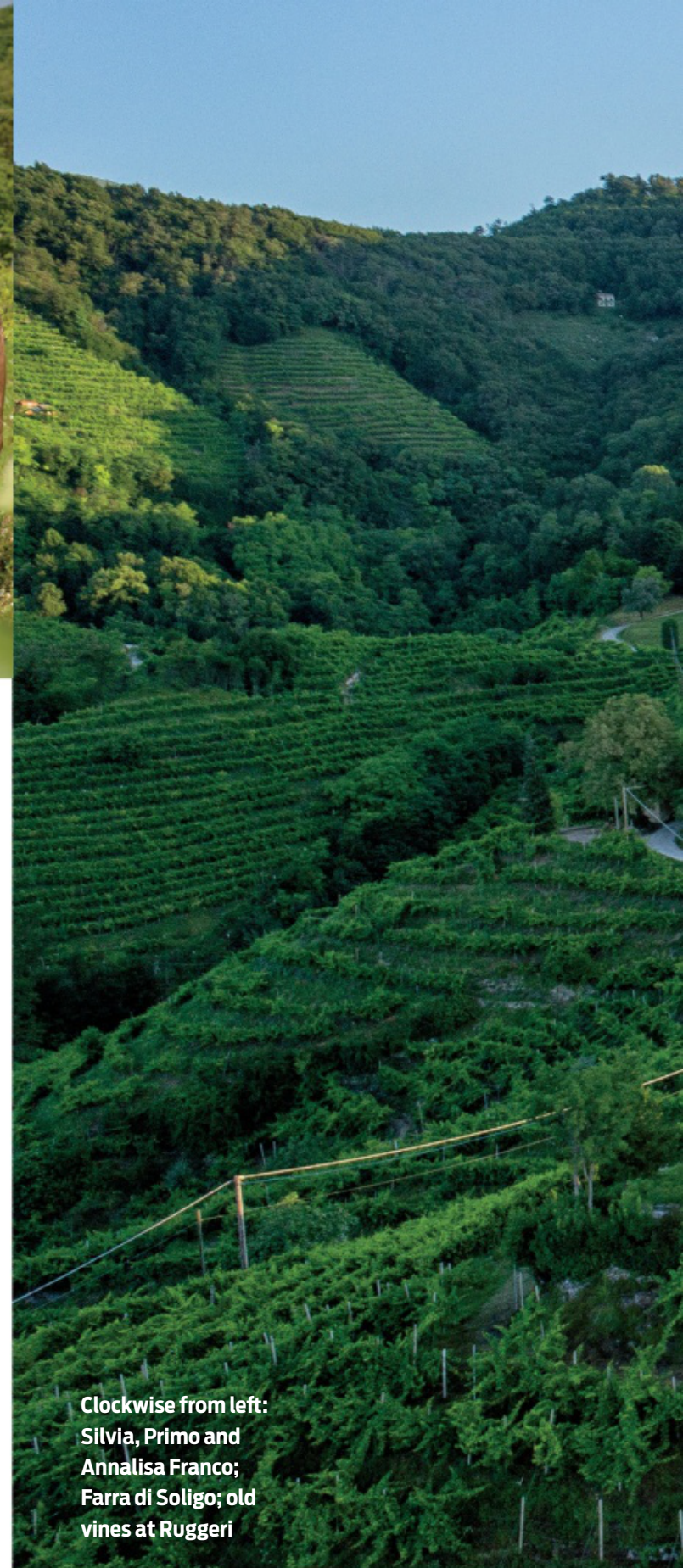
Cartizze, nestled among the steepest slopes in Valdobbiadene, is the most famous hill in the denomination. Thanks to its mild microclimate and ancient soils, this small



subzone has had its own regulations since 1969. It has the lowest permitted yields at 12 tons of grapes per hectare.

Grapes from this celebrated slope make creamy, vibrant wines reminiscent of green apple, white peach, candied citrus and almond. The traditional Cartizze style is dry, but a few producers now make extra dry and brut, which includes Villa Sandi, one of the first to do so.

“I didn’t want to limit Cartizze to a dry version for desserts, but wanted to make a brut to enjoy during the whole meal,” says Giancarlo Moretti Polegato, owner of Villa Sandi. The winery’s silky single-vineyard



Clockwise from left: Silvia, Primo and Annalisa Franco; Farra di Soligo; old vines at Ruggeri

Super Superiores to Try

95 Nino Franco 2018 Vigneto della Riva di San Floriano (Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore). Terlato Wines International. **Editors’ Choice.** abv: 12% Price: \$29

94 Ca’ dei Zago 2018 Rifermentato in Bottiglia (Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore). Ethica Wines. **Editors’ Choice.** abv: 11% Price: \$30

93 BiancaVigna 2017 Rive di Ogliano Brut Nature (Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore). Indigenous Selections. **Editors’ Choice.** abv: 11.5% Price: \$23

93 Ruggeri & C. 2018 Vecchie Viti (Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore). WinesU. abv: 12% Price: \$40

92 Bisol 2018 Crede Brut (Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore). Wilson Daniels Ltd. **Editors’ Choice.** abv: 11.5% Price: \$25

92 Borgoluce Rive di Collalto Brut (Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore). The Sorting Table. abv: 11.5% Price: \$30

92 Villa Sandi 2018 La Rivetta Brut (Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze). Folio Fine Wine Partners. abv: 11.5% Price: \$42

91 Bortolomiol 2017 Grande Cuvée del Fondatore Motus Vitae Rive San Pietro di Barbozza Brut Nature (Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore). Wine Warehouse Imports. **Editors’ Choice.** abv: 12% Price: \$24

90 Albino Armani NV Extra Dry (Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore). Saranty Imports. abv: 11% Price: \$20

89 L’Antica Quercia 2018 Matiù Brut (Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore). Ethica Wines. abv: 11.5% Price: \$25

89 Sommariva NV Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore. Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. abv: 11.5% Price: \$20

89 Zardetto NV Long Charnat Brut (Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore). LLS-Winebow abv: 11.5% Price: \$28

rendition hails from La Rivetta, in the heart of the celebrated hill.

Old Vines and Ageworthy Wines

Old vines aren’t uncommon in the denomination, and some growers tend up to 100-year-old vines. Most farmers replace single plants as they die, but to grub up whole vineyards on the perpendicular slopes, especially near Valdobbiadene, is rare.

These old vines impart complexity and surprising longevity.

“Our Vecchie Viti is made with vines



LEFT: NINO FRANCO, ABOVE: ARCANGELO PIAI, RIGHT: RUGGERI

averaging 80–90 years old,” says Isabella Bisol, who runs the Ruggeri winery along with her father, Paolo and her brother, Giustino. “These old vines yield only a few bunches, but lots of concentration.”

She says that refrigeration and steel tank technology that became widely available in the 1990s allows them to leave the base wine on its yeasts for six months, which lends even more complexity. A recent tasting at the winery that extended back to a remarkable 2005 proved the wine’s aging potential.

Nino Franco, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019, produces Rustico, named the top wine on “The Enthusiast 100

of 2019” list. It’s another firm that believes in the aging potential of the denomination’s superior offerings.

Primo Franco, the owner and winemaker who runs the firm assisted by his daughter, Silvia, and wife, Annalisa, was one of the pioneers who produced top-quality bottlings through new planting techniques, old clones and careful winemaking.

A vertical tasting at the winery in 2015 back to an extraordinary 1992 Primo Franco bottling, and a tasting last year of a complex



2000 Rive San Floriano Brut, prove that when crafted with precision, Prosecco from these hills show remarkable evolution, depth and personality.

SAKE'S

NEW GENERATION

These five brewers are breathing new life into Japan's traditional beverage.

BY ANNA LEE C. IIJIMA



The Japanese saké industry is at a dramatic crossroads.

A heightened craft saké movement, augmented by ever-evolving technology, means saké is arguably better than it ever has been. And as exports hit record highs annually, the U.S. market has unprecedented access to Japan's best bottlings.

Simultaneously, however, younger generations of Japanese drinkers have become detached from the beverage. Instead, they opt for beer, spirits, wine or to simply drink less. As Japan's traditional saké demographic ages at a rapid pace, domestic sales have plummeted by one-third since the mid 1970s. There are now approximately 1,400 breweries in Japan, a 35% reduction from just 25 years ago.

The future of saké depends on new consumers discovering the category and a new generation of brewers. Bold, entrepreneurial and globally focused, these Japanese producers aim to make saké innovative, regionally distinct and sustainable.



Takahiro Nagayama

Brewery: Nagayama Honke Shuzo

Brand: Taka

Region: Yamaguchi

Notions of terroir and regional identity are rarely clear cut when it comes to saké. It's something that Nagayama, the fifth-generation *kuramoto* (president) and *toji* (master brewer) of his namesake Taka brand, is intent to change.

It's often surprising to consumers, Nagayama says, that most producers don't grow rice, the key ingredient to saké. Rice, unlike grapes, can be distributed easily over long distances to brewers. Most contemporary saké producers contract a variety of rice from farmers throughout Japan.

A globetrotter with a deep appreciation for wine, Nagayama spent years seeking out small natural-wine producers in France, particularly Burgundy. He felt a kinship with winemakers like Philippe Pacalet, who's dedicated to the pursuit of distinctive terroir and low-intervention winemaking.

"Agriculture is at the heart of saké making," he says. "It doesn't make sense to produce saké with rice from faraway places when talented rice growers are right here."

Determined to make saké from local ingredients, Nagayama contracted neighboring farmers to grow specialized saké rice. Eventually, he established his own seven-acre field in his hometown of Ube. The superpremium Yamadanishiki rice he grows is reserved for his flagship Domaine Taka brand.

"I wanted to hone into the personality of saké that can only be produced here," he says.

The area's water supply also lends character to the flavor profile. Groundwaters drawn from deep below Nagayama's brewery are rich in calcium, filtered through the region's vast network of limestone caves. This minerality, he says, lends a bracing dry edge to his saké.

Unlike most contemporary producers, Nagayama produces only junmai styles of sake, fermented from rice and water with no fortification by distilled alcohol.

"Distilled alcohol for fortifying saké is typically made from sugarcane," he says. "It removes a sense of place or purity from saké. At Taka, we're rediscovering our traditions. We're peeling back the layers to reveal their true essence of things, and then refining them."

COURTESY OF NAGAYAMA HONKE SHUZO (2)

Miho Imada

Brewery: Imada Shuzo

Brand: Fukucho

Region: Hiroshima

As both kuramoto and toji of Fukucho, Imada is among just a handful of women who head a saké brewery. In an industry dominated by men, her gender often takes top billing in the flurry of media coverage she's inspired.

For Imada, however, being a woman isn't really the story. Especially in Hiroshima, where her family brewery has existed since 1868, "there's a real sense of meritocracy in the saké industry," she says. "Anyone who works in this industry knows how difficult it is to make saké, and whether you're a man or woman, you gain respect based on your ability."

It's ingenuity as both a brewer and entrepreneur that has elevated her company's brand, Fukucho, within Hiroshima's renowned saké industry.

Imada's hometown, Akitsu, is the birthplace of the highly refined ginjo style of saké that developed in the late 19th century. In the early 1990s, however, Fukucho was in deep crisis.

"Our business was dominated by inexpensive *futsu-shu* [table saké], and the brewery was crippled with debt," she says. "If we were going to survive, we had to improve our brewing skills, focus on quality ginjo production and embrace the kind of research and experimentation that Hiroshima was known for."

Through trial and error, Imada spearheaded an array of innovative projects. One of the most prominent initiatives was incorporating a nearly forgotten rice.

After she obtained seeds of Hattanso, a historic regional variety that had all but disappeared more than a century ago, she spent about a decade learning to grow the grain and then use it to brew high-quality saké. Imada Shuzo is the only producer in Japan known to make saké from this flavorful, umami-rich rice.

In recent years, she also developed a hybrid yeast starter that merges ancient fermentation techniques that rely on ambient lactic-acid bacteria with the speed and efficiency of modern yeast starters.





Norimasa Yamamoto

Brewery: Heiwa Shuzo

Brand: Kid

Region: Wakayama

“Most of my friends in their 20s and 30s aren’t drinking saké,” says Yamamoto, the fourth-generation kuramoto of Heiwa Shuzo, his family brewery.

Younger Japanese are skeptical about whether the beverage is cool, he says. “Saké seems like something drab that old men drink, or something you get drunk on in an izakaya.”

But Yamamoto had always planned on leading the family business. After studying economics in university, he took a brief detour in the startup world as a management consultant. The experience proved invaluable, and would ultimately help transform Heiwa

Shuzo into one of the most dynamic breweries in Japan.

When Yamamoto returned to the brewery, the saké industry was in rapid descent. “Our company was almost entirely dependent on selling mass-produced, cheap saké sold in paper cartons,” he says.

As large producers set benchmarks on prices, small and medium-sized producers like his were caught in a deflationary spiral.

To survive, the company needed to change course completely, he says, with a focus on small-volume craft production. Yamamoto was intent on “creating something distinct to Wakayama and Heiwa Shuzo.”

He wanted to rebuild and reinvigorate the brewery’s corporate culture. The goal was to inspire employees to take pride in their work

and encourage them to communicate and exchange ideas.

The flagship brand he launched is Kid, which reads “Ki-do” in Japanese. Buoyantly fruity and easy-drinking, Kid offers an accessibility he hopes will engage younger generations. The name combines two words: *kishu*, a historic name for Wakayama, and *fudo*, a word akin to terroir.

Last year, Yamamoto cosponsored an ethanol-fueled rocket launch into space, powered in part by Kid saké. A special-edition saké, called Sora He, which means “to space,” was released to crowdsource the launch.

The rocket climbed 42,000 feet before it plummeted back to earth. “It wasn’t a complete success,” says Yamamoto cheerfully, “but a dream we realized collaboratively.”

Rumiko Obata

Brewery: Obata Shuzo

Brand: Manotsuru

Region: Niigata

Whether in Japan or oceans away, “our saké tells the story of Sado,” says Obata, the fifth-generation kuramoto of Obata Shuzo. Sado is a hauntingly beautiful, isolated island off the coast of Japan’s Niigata prefecture. Its remoteness has served the isle well historically, establishing it as a place of exile.

With big dreams to see the world, Obata left Sado to study law at a top Tokyo university. After graduation, she started a globetrotting career promoting Hollywood blockbusters. But back on the island, the way of life she knew was increasingly upended.

While Japanese saké consumption was in the midst of its dramatic downswing, Sado itself, with a rapidly aging and dwindling population, also seemed to be diminishing.

Obata was struck by how both the brewery and Sado were in such peril. When her father fell ill, she returned to the family brewery in 1995 with her husband, Takeshi Hirashima.

“Through saké making, I wanted to connect the world to Sado,” she says. The couple committed themselves to reinvent Manotsuru, their brand, as a premium saké that paid homage to the culture, terroir and history of the island.

Sado is as famous for its outstanding oysters as it is for its rice production, so the brewery sources much of its rice from a local farmer whose fields are fertilized with local oyster shells and water drawn through oyster-shell filters.

“The oyster shells add mineral content to the fields and purify the water,” says Obata. These farming practices also reduce chemical fertilizers and pesticides that endanger the Japanese crested ibis, a near-extinct wading bird that once flourished on the island.

In recent years, the couple developed a rare 10-year-old koshu, or aged saké, matured in inky depths of Sado’s historic gold mines. They also converted a shuttered local elementary school into a second brewery in 2014. The Gakko Gura (school brewery) now hosts groups of apprentices who come to Sado to learn about saké making, but also the unique terroir, culture and history of the island.





Yasuhiko Niida

Brewery/Brand: Niida Honke

Region: Fukushima

In 2011, to commemorate Niida Honke's 300-year anniversary, Yasuhiko Niida, the brewery's 18th-generation kuramoto and toji, made a long-awaited announcement.

"From 2011, Niida Honke would produce only *shizenshu* [natural saké]," he says.

As with natural wine, there's no legal definition for the term *shizenshu*, and it's increasingly applied to a range of saké. But Niida Honke uses the classification to emphasize that it uses only organic rice grown without pesticides or chemical fertilizers. It is the first brewery in Japan to produce all of its sake this way.

The brewery also only uses water sourced

from local mountain springs or well water collected from its own land. Roughly 70% of its saké is fermented via ambient yeasts, a bold departure from most modern breweries that rely on highly selected cultured yeasts.

For Niida, though, memories of this proud milestone are marred by unimaginable disaster. On March 11, 2011, northeast Japan was pummeled by a deadly magnitude-9.1 earthquake. In Fukushima, a subsequent tsunami triggered a catastrophic meltdown of a nuclear powerplant.

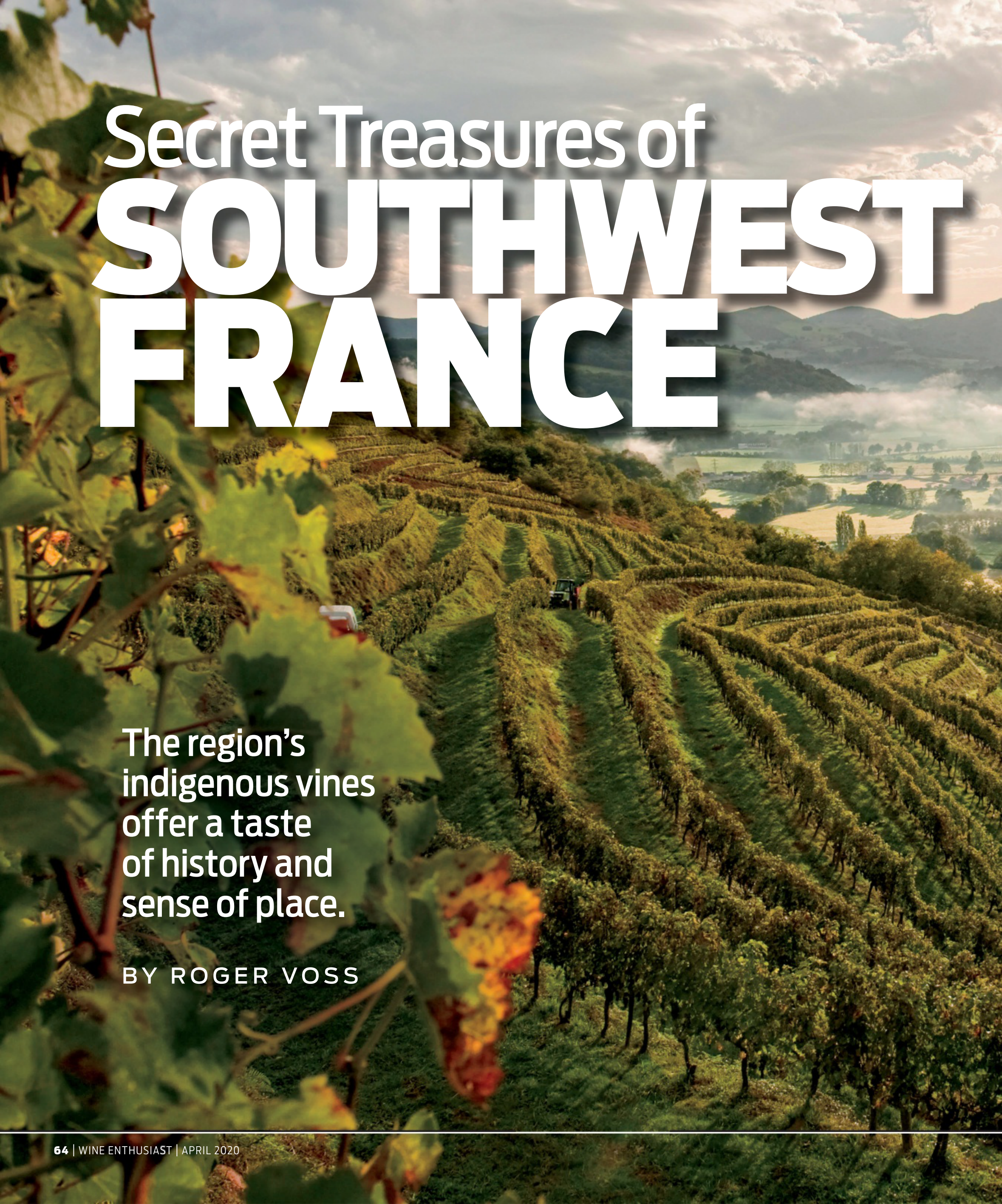
Located outside the nuclear exclusion zone, the brewery was spared loss of life or substantial damage. Regardless, the disaster devastated the area's saké industry. Fukushima brewers struggled to convince consumers

that their saké was safe, despite painstaking radioactivity testing.

This was a time of deep reflection for Niida. "With a legacy of 300 years behind me, I considered what I was leaving for the next hundred years," he says.

His commitment to *shizenshu* was reinforced by a vision of sustainability. Since the disaster, he ceased the brewery's reliance on nonrenewable energy and resources, and set out to protect his village's rice fields. As aging farmers were forced to abandon their fields, Niida has been determined to maintain them.

Today, the brewery farms 16 acres of certified organic rice fields cultivated without pesticides or fertilizers. His goal is to become fully sustainable by 2025.



Secret Treasures of **SOUTHWEST FRANCE**

The region's
indigenous vines
offer a taste
of history and
sense of place.

BY ROGER VOSS



A

ncient vines are an undeniable link between place and grape, and they serve as the bedrock of wines from Southwest France. Many of these grew wild; others found places where they

would thrive after Roman soldiers or medieval troubadours carried them through hills and valleys.

Eventually, some of these indigenous varieties traveled the world. Grapes like Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Malbec and Tannat are rooted in this hidden gem of a region.

The Southwest's native niches are bound by the Atlantic to the west and approach the Mediterranean in the east. They follow rivers from the Pyrenees border with Spain and the Massif Central northwest to Bordeaux and Bayonne.

This land also holds stories of grapes rarely found elsewhere, the cast of which is enormous.

Some of these varieties have the makings of international fame, like aromatic white Petit Manseng and red Fer Servadou. Others are tiny productions from old vines made by obsessed producers.

Some local varieties that all but disappeared are now being revived by growers who revel in the DNA of their local grapes and vineyards. They seek to modernize tradition, not break with it. Such rediscoveries are met with great excitement.

In Gascony, near the western edge of the Southwest, the local cooperative, Plaimont, identified an ancient vineyard that was being farmed by one of its members and campaigned for it to be declared a French historic monument.

The cooperative is also behind an astounding experimental conservatory vineyard of forgotten and even completely unknown vines, called the Conservatoire Ampélographique. Microvinifications, small batches that test what's possible, are made from many of the 37 varieties highlighted. Two grapes, Manseng Noir and Tardif, have even been turned into commercial wines.

Plaimont is not alone. About two hours east, in Gaillac, growers Robert and Bernard Plageoles rescued red Prunelard and white Ondenc from likely extinction. In the Côtes du Marmandais, approaching the northwest boundary, star grower Elian da Ros has shown the potential of red Abouriou.

These and other growers working within the region's largely unknown vineyards have proven that they don't need international varieties or fashions to follow—they have their own grape varieties and unique wine styles. Read on to learn about some of the rare and native gems they're using to create Southwest France's most distinctive bottlings.

1 Petit Manseng

Petit Manseng is arguably one of the finest white grapes in France. It produces the most ethereal sweet wines and, at the other end of the scale, makes rich, dense and powerful dry whites.

When tasting a sweet Jurançon, made from 100% Petit Manseng that's grown in vineyards in the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains, the first thing you might notice is a range of flavors from lime to nectarine, sugar and honey.

The next thing that presents itself is acidity, which prevails no matter how sweet or rich the wine. It creates something that is mineral, complex and seriously ageworthy.

Sweet Jurançon is produced from small, concentrated, non-botrytized berries that can stay on the vine until December.

In Jurançon Sec, the dry version, Petit Manseng is often partnered in smaller parts with its cousin, Gros Manseng, named such because of its bigger berries. The result is wines that are ripe, rich and concentrated in notes of nuts and spice, but they retain the grape's inherent acidity. This quality, partnered with the wine's concentration, allows them to age well.

Wine to Try: 95 Domaine Cauhapé 2014 Noblesse du Temps (Jurançon); \$82, *Editors' Choice*

3 Loin de l'Oeil

In the lexicon of unusual grape names in the Southwest, this one rates fairly high. Known in the local dialect as *L'En de l'El*, Loin de l'Oeil translates to "far from the eye." The variety's bunches are on long stalks far from the bud, or eye.

Gaillac, northeast of Toulouse, is the home of Loin de l'Oeil. A hotbed of unusual grapes, a range of wine types and styles are produced there, but this is a true specialty, and shines when showcased in the area's sweet wines and dry blends.

Sweet versions, called Gaillac Doux, are well made and hard to resist. Loin de l'Oeil loves botrytis, which reveals honeyed aspects with impressive intensity and overall balance.

Dry versions of the variety yield light yet delicious apple and citrus as well as spice aromas and flavors. If blended with Mauzac, its usual partner, minerality and white stone fruits come into play within a richer, more full-bodied style.

Wine to Try: 92 Domaine Rotier 2015 Renaissance Vendanges Tardive (Gaillac Doux); \$30

2 Petit Courbu

All 160 acres of Southwest France's Petit Courbu are grown in Gascony and the appellation of Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh, which translates to "vineyards in the country." The area is better known for being home to the Tannat vineyards of the Madiran appellation.

Many of the same producers known for powerful Madiran reds also make a small amount of white wine, mainly Petit Courbu blended with Petit Manseng. They work with the variety for good reason: This is a grape that should be better known, as the wines are elegant, aromatic and rich.

Dry bottlings of 100% Petit Courbu, like one made by leading Madiran producer Alain Brumont, reveal ripe pear and nutmeg flavors, with intense acidity and a texture reminiscent of apple skins.

Sweeter versions have touches of botrytis as well as honey and dried fruits. Blends made in a dry style bring in honey and kiwi for a sweet yet crisp impression.

Wine to Try: 88 Vignobles Brumont 2016 Château Bouscassé Les Jardins de Bouscassé Petit Courbu (Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh); \$22



4 Mauzac

This is the chameleon white grape of the Southwest. Whatever style it is that you seek, Mauzac can supply it. There are dry, sweet and sparkling wines, of course, but one style in particular is a Gaillac specialty: *méthode ancestrale*.

Gaillac *méthode ancestrale* sparkling wines are produced from a technique that extends at least to the 16th century. It calls for the wine to be bottled before the first fermentation is finished. It's a low-cost and risky method, as bottles can explode, but it leads to a low-alcohol, medium-sweet sparkling wine ideal for apéritifs. With high acidity and crisp fruit flavors, Mauzac is perfect in these pours.

Apart from that delicious exception, Mauzac also shines in dry wines, both still and sparkling. It often boasts floral aromas as well as ripe pear and melon flavors, with a light touch of pepper. Sparkling wines that have some age offer mature almond flavors that soften the grape's natural acidity.

Wine to Try: 88 Domaine du Moulin NV Méthode Ancestrale (Gaillac); \$18



1 Négrette

Négrette is a grape with distinct personalities. It can be soft, supple and fruity, ready to enjoy young; it's been described as the "Beaujolais of Toulouse." On the other hand, it can also make ageworthy, rich, wood-aged wines, sometimes blended with Syrah, Malbec or Cabernet Sauvignon.

Go to a bar in the city of Toulouse, and it's the local fruity wine served by the glass. In a wine shop, you can encounter the more heavy-hitting pours. As you leave town, you pass the vines as the road climbs out of the Toulouse basin going northwest.

Like so many of the varieties in Southwest France, Négrette is a very site-specific grape. It's planted almost exclusively in the Fronton appellation, where it appreciates the hot and relatively dry climate.

Négrette produces wines that are instantly attractive, with violet aromas, black plum flavors and often a plush, generous texture. The pricier wines, aged in wood and boasting more pronounced tannins and black-fruit tones, have more intensity and structure, which allows them to mature well for five years or more.

Wine to Try: 90 Vignobles Arbeau 2018 On l'appelle Négrette (Fronton); \$15, *Best Buy*

2 Abouriou

The Southwest seems to specialize in the rescue of grape varieties from oblivion, following the theory that you never know what they could do if they are not given the chance. Abouriou is a prime example.

The grape almost disappeared in the early 1800s and was rescued later in the century. It remains pretty experimental, with less than 900 acres in production.

Almost all of those vines are in a small appellation that was also revived, thanks to an enterprising cooperative and a handful of growers who have now begun to promote Abouriou as their own unique offering.

The area, called the Côtes du Marmandais Appellation d'Origine Protégée (AOP), is just southeast of Bordeaux and is planted mainly with Bordeaux varieties. But Abouriou, with its distinctive dark color, light acidity and juicy black fruits pierced by an herbal character, shines in every blend where it's found, as well as in the few 100% Abouriou wines from the region.

Wine to Try: 91 Lionel Osmin & Cie 2016 Abouriou (Côtes du Marmandais); \$15, *Best Buy*

3 Duras

Duras is a grape variety whose roots may date as far back as the 15th century. It's fairly unadventurous, having almost never left the vineyards of Gaillac and Millau, northeast of Toulouse.

If you seek a deeply colored, high-alcohol and somewhat rustic wine, however, Duras is your grape. Those characteristics are also why it's rare to find it on its own. But blend it with Brauocol (Fer Servadou) or Syrah, and it adds power and backbone to the final wine.

Duras is often the reason why the reds of Gaillac can age so well, thanks to its penchant for providing firm structure and longevity.

The variety is direct and assertive, yet it speaks of place, with sappy tannins and black fruits warmed by the same Mediterranean breezes that are such an influence in both Gaillac and Millau. It yields classic Southwest wines, with a taste that could only come from one place. Perhaps that's why Duras never traveled.

Wine to Try: 90 Domaines des Terrisses 2016 L'Orée du Domaine des Terrisses (Gaillac); \$22

4 Fer Servadou

This grape has quite an identity crisis. In Gaillac, it's known as Brauocol. In Madiran, it goes by Pinenc. In Marcillac, it's Mansois. The name Fer Servadou seems reserved for when it's grown in the Garonne and Dordogne valleys. These names highlight the intense regionality of vines in the Southwest.

Like so many grape varieties here, Fer Servadou is ancient, likely domesticated from wild vines. For a long time, its ancestry showed in poor clones. Recent improvement in clonal selection, however, has created an equal improvement in the resulting wines, and its popularity has grown across the entire region.

Today, it's generally blended with other local varieties like Tannat in Madiran, or Duras in Gaillac, though it occasionally surfaces as a 100% varietal wine. Such bottlings exhibit black-fruit characteristics, structured tannins, spice and smoky flavors.

Wine to Try: 88 Domaine Laurens 2018 Cuvée Pierre Rouges (Marcillac); \$15



WINES OF SOUTHWEST FRANCE (4)



On the Tennessee Whiskey Trail

Kentucky's southern neighbor has its own style when it comes to booze and tunes.

BY KARA NEWMAN
PHOTOS BY JASON MYERS

H

ow to define Tennessee whiskey?

"It's Bourbon, with an extra step," says Fawn Weaver, CEO/Cofounder of Nearest Green Distillery in Shelbyville, which makes Uncle Nearest whiskey.

Like Bourbon, Tennessee whiskey is made with at least 51% corn and aged in new charred oak barrels. That "extra step" is filtration through sugar-maple charcoal, also known as the "Lincoln County Process," which can last a few minutes or a couple of days. It helps to mellow the spirit, which, of course, must be made in Tennessee.

Here, music and whiskey are intertwined. The spirit's served at honky-tonks, distilleries and performance spaces that often flank tasting rooms. Even legendary crooner Frank Sinatra was famous for his love of Jack Daniel's.

This all makes Nashville, or "Music City," a logical place to start exploring Tennessee whiskey. Plenty of distilleries are within its limits, while some of the biggest producers are located only about an hour or so away. Take a spin through the state's capital, hillsides and horse farms to score distillery-only bottlings, and don't miss some of the best food and music that the area has to offer.



History lesson at Nelson's Green Brier Distillery



SIP

Start with a history lesson at **Nelson's Green Brier Distillery**, a sprawling urban facility in the Marathon Village neighborhood. It's owned by brothers Charlie and Andy Nelson, whose great-great-great grandfather made whiskey at a distillery that closed when the state adopted Prohibition in 1909. After years of working with sourced distillate, the brothers released their first in-house bottling in 2019, a sour mash modeled on the family recipe. Even the label looks like the vintage bottles.

Bars abound, but **Attaboy Nashville**, an offshoot of New York City's famed speakeasy, is particularly worth a visit for cocktail lovers. Try the Black Barrel (rye, amontillado Sherry, Averna amaro and Angostura bitters). Meanwhile, **Bourbon Steak Nashville** offers vintage whiskeys that include rare Tennessee bottlings from the 1960s through '80s in addition to a strong wine list.

The next day, rent a car, crank some country tunes and drive about an hour or so to **Nearest Green Distillery**. The distillery and its Uncle Nearest





Opposite page, clockwise from left: Bourbon Steak Nashville; Nearest Green Distillery; Sherri Moore of Nearest Green Distillery. This page, clockwise from top left: Attaboy; Nelson's Green Brier Distillery; Nicole Austin of Cascade Hollow Distilling Co.; George Dickel Tennessee Whiskey; Cascade Hollow Distilling Co.



whiskeys are named for Nathan “Nearest” Green. Born into slavery, he distilled whiskey in the 1850s and taught a young Jack Daniel the craft. Stop in on a Saturday to take the Founders Tour with Weaver. It concludes with drinks at Toppy’s, a bar named for Weaver’s prized thoroughbred. (The distillery is built on a former horse farm.)

From there, a short drive to Tullahoma brings you to **Cascade Hollow Distilling Co.**, where distiller Nicole Austin makes George Dickel whiskey. Her debut offering, Bottled in Bond, was one of *Wine Enthusiast*’s Top 100 Spirits of 2019. The facility, nestled among breathtaking mountains and streams, is worth a visit as-is, but plan ahead for a tour of the heritage distillery.



Clockwise from bottom left: Rolf and Daughters (2); Hattie B's (2); country hams at Husk; Bastion (2)



EAT

Arriving in the city, make a beeline for Nashville hot chicken. It's fried chicken bathed in fiery hot sauce, often served on a soft bun or sliced bread with pickles. Expect a wait at iconic spots like **Prince's Hot Chicken** or **Hattie B's**, where heat levels range from "Southern" (no heat) to incendiary "Shut the Cluck Up!!!"

After dark, **Bastion**, in Nashville's Wedgewood-Houston neighborhood, sometimes referred to as "WeHo," has multiple dining and drinking options. The more casual, raucous Big Bar serves just one dish: spectacularly loaded nachos. It connects to a hidden restaurant in back, where Josh Habiger serves an elaborate omakase-style menu to 24 lucky diners per night (reservations highly recommended).

Upscale **Husk** is located in a historic 19th-century mansion in the Rutledge Hill neighborhood. Its mantra: "If it doesn't come from the South, it's not coming through the door." Here, Chef Sean Brock celebrates Southern staples like Carolina shrimp and ham from the Bob Woods Tennessee smokehouse served alongside local produce and enhanced by herbs plucked from kitchen's own garden. The one exception is its lauded, international wine list. Among the cocktail choices, try the Return To Form (Nelson's Tennessee Whiskey, cinnamon miso, lime juice, amaro and apple bitters).

In the funky Germantown area, communal tables and industrial chic define laid-back **Rolf & Daughters**, which combines whole-animal butchery with hearty rustic pastas and a playful wine list. Chef/owner Philip Krajeck also owns **Folk**, an upscale pizza restaurant that features pies with creative toppings like fermented potato or clams.

PLAY

For music lovers, there's no shortage of activities. The iconic **Grand Ole Opry** is a must-see for country music fans. Afterward, visit the Jack Daniel's bar at the Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center nearby, or take a ride to **The Fox Bar & Cocktail Club**, about 15 minutes away. The latter boasts a full-on Old Fashioned menu. Its signature, the Fox Old Fashioned No. 4, is made with Tennessee whiskey, of course, plus a splash of amaro.

Nashville's downtown honky-tonk scene is another popular destination. **Robert's Western World** is famed for live bands, cold beer and fried bologna sandwiches. Next door, **Tootsie's Orchid Lounge** is another local institution. It has operated almost continuously since 1960 and was featured in the Loretta Lynn biopic, *Coal Miner's Daughter*.

Follow that with a visit to nearby **Downtown Sporting Club**. There's live music here as well, along with axe-throwing lanes, arcade games and a rooftop bar. There, you can indulge in the Bougie Jack & Coke (Jack Daniel's, lemon, vermouth, grenadine, Coca-Cola).



Clockwise from left:
Robert's Western
World, outside and
inside; Grand Ole
Opry; Downtown
Sporting Club





Fresh & Familiar

Three chefs give us their interpretations of Middle Eastern dishes, plus local wines and international bottles to complement them.

PROP STYLING: VANESSA VAZQUEZ



BY
MIKE DeSIMONE
& JEFF JENSSEN

PHOTOS BY
TED &
CHELSEA
CAVANAUGH

FOOD STYLING BY
JAMIE KIMM

Considered among wine's ancestral homes, the countries of the Middle East and North Africa have recently experienced renewed international interest in their vinous output. As bottlings from Turkey, Morocco, Israel and more make their way stateside, chefs from these countries keep pace, serving their own versions of the foods they grew up with.

On the following pages, you'll find contemporary recipes rooted in tradition and pairings to help you explore the region now. There are also wine options from other parts of the world that offer equal opportunity to expand your horizons.

Fried Cauliflower with Herbed Labneh

Michael Solomonov is a five-time James Beard Award winner. The Israeli-born chef is co-owner of several Philadelphia restaurants. Flagship Zahav is known for its small plates; he says that this is its most popular item. If you can't find labneh, Greek yogurt is an adequate substitute.

Courtesy Michael Solomonov, chef and co-owner, CookNSolo restaurant group, Philadelphia

- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped**
- ¼ cup fresh dill, chopped**
- ¼ cup fresh chives, chopped**
- ¼ cup fresh mint, chopped**
- 1 clove garlic, thin-sliced**
- 1 cup labneh**
- Kosher salt, to taste**
- Canola oil, for frying**
- 1 head cauliflower, broken into florets**

Mix herbs, garlic and labneh in large glass bowl until well combined. Season with salt, to taste. Transfer to smaller serving bowl. Refrigerate until ready to use.

In heavy bottomed pot over medium heat, warm 2 inches canola oil until it registers 375°F on candy thermometer. Fry cauliflower in small batches until golden brown and crisp. Drain on paper towels. Season generously with salt. Serve with herbed labneh. Serves 4.





Pair It

Jeffrey Bartash, Zahav's manager/sommelier, recommends **Recanati 2017 Marawi**, an indigenous grape rediscovered in Israel and Palestine. Its rich body is complemented by acid and minerality on the finish, which will hold up to the earthy cauliflower and creamy labneh.

Vilarnau NV Brut Reserva Cava offers bright fruit flavors and more complexity. It can stand up to the rich texture of labneh as well as the depth of flavor of cauliflower and herbs.

Muhammara Spread

At Leyla on Manhattan's Upper West Side, Istanbul native Met Kaba prepares modern versions of dishes eaten in Turkey. Walnuts and pomegranate molasses come together with a little bit of peppery heat in his take on this all-purpose dish. Leave it on the table throughout the meal to slather on bread, and then to spread it on vegetables or meat.

Courtesy Met Kaba, executive chef, Leyla, New York City

- 14 ounces walnuts, shelled**
- 1 cup panko**
- 1 tablespoon sweet pepper paste**
- 1 tablespoon hot pepper paste**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 red peppers, seeded and cut into 1-inch chunks**
- 2 cloves garlic, roasted**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cider vinegar**
- 3 tablespoons pomegranate molasses**
- 1 tablespoon paprika**
- Salt and black pepper, to taste**
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme**

Process walnuts and panko in large bowl of food processor. Pulse 1 minute, or until well combined. Add all other ingredients, except thyme, and process until smooth, approximately 1–2 minutes. Transfer to clean bowl. Garnish with thyme. *Serves 4–6.*

For another version of muhammara, visit winemag.com/muhammara-dip



Pair It

Murat Akinci, Leyla's general manager, prefers **Selendi 2017 Sarnıç Cabernet Franc** from Turkey. Grown at high altitude, this wine is vibrant and spicy. Its rich berry flavors and moderate tannins are a great match to muhammara's bittersweet walnut and red pepper flavors.

Another Cabernet Franc, this one from France's Loire Valley, **Sauvion 2017 Chinon** has soft tannins, cherry and green pepper flavors, and strong acidity. It's ideal alongside muhammara's sweet and spicy qualities, as well as the astringent character of walnuts.



Beef Cheeks with Roasted Root Vegetable Jam

At his San Francisco Moroccan restaurant, Mourad, Chef Mourad Lahlou combines fresh California ingredients with the beloved dishes of his homeland. Although the beef cheeks he serves at Mourad would be prepared in a tagine along with the vegetables, sous vide allows for more even cooking and consistent texture. If you don't have a circulator, the braising technique below will still yield deliciously tender results.

Courtesy Mourad Lahlou, executive chef/owner, Mourad, San Francisco

- 6 5- to 6-ounce beef cheeks or other tough cut of beef, trimmed**
- 1 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste**
- 1 tablespoon black pepper**
- 1 pound yellow beets, diced into 1-inch cubes**
- 1 pound purple-top turnips, diced into 1-inch cubes**
- 1 pound celery root, diced into 1-inch cubes**
- 1 pound rutabaga, diced into 1-inch cubes**
- 1½ cups dry white wine**
- 4 cups carrot juice**
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 4 red onions, small dice**
- 3 cloves garlic, thin-sliced**
- 2 cups tomato purée**
- ¼ cup berberé spice blend**
- 1 teaspoon fine-ground Aleppo pepper**
- 2 tablespoons Sherry vinegar**
- Parsley, for garnish (optional)**

Season beef cheeks with salt and pepper. In cast-iron pan over high heat, sear until browned on both sides. For sous vide method, transfer to bag, seal and cook at 164°F for 16 hours. If braising, set aside.

For either cooking method, heat oven to 375°F. Place vegetables on baking tray. Roast until fork tender, approximately 25 minutes. Remove from oven, and let cool.

Meanwhile, in heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat, bring wine to boil. Add carrot juice and return to boil. Lower heat and simmer until reduced by one-third.

Add olive oil to large Dutch oven over medium heat. Cook onions and garlic until translucent. Add carrot juice mixture, and cook for about 10 minutes. Add tomato purée, berberé blend, vegetables and beef cheeks, if braising. Cook over low heat for 1 hour. Season with Aleppo pepper, Sherry vinegar and salt, to taste, just prior to serving. Top with beef cheeks, if sous vide, and garnish with parsley, if using. *Serves 6.*



Pair It

Tara Patrick, wine director at Mourad, suggests **La Ferme Rouge 2016 Terre Rouge**, a Rhône-style red blend from Morocco. She says the richness of the meat and the rustic nature and slightly sweet character of the root vegetables pair perfectly with the earthiness and fruitiness in the wine.

A South Australian wine with bold fruit flavors and touches of spice, **Yalumba 2017 The Y Series Shiraz** also complements the down-to-earth flavors of the roasted root vegetables. Meanwhile, silky tannins dissolve on the palate with each bite of well-marbled beef.



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Vineyards of Riesling overlooking the Mosel River in Germany.

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GERMANY

2017 and 2018: two distinct vintages of quality

The German wines that dominate the U.S. market today are a fantastic study of two very distinct vintages, 2017 and 2018. In broad strokes, both vintages are part of a succession of the good to spectacular growing seasons that have accompanied increasingly hotter climates throughout Europe. At the same time, their differences remind us of nature's footprint on each bottle and the challenges and glories experienced by winegrowers.

In movie terms, the 2017 German vintage was a thriller—a nail-biting rollercoaster of calamity, suspense and surprise. German winegrowers will remember 2017 as a succession of hair-pulling and erratic weather conditions.

An unusually warm spring jumpstarted an early growing season. Young vines were too vulnerable to withstand sudden spring frost and suffered disruptions in flowering. Yields throughout Germany were decimated, but a dry, hot midsummer encouraged small but intensely concentrated grapes. As harvest approached,

however, rain and hailstorms triggered the spread of the fungus, botrytis.

The resultant wines are miniscule in production and vary widely in quality. Yet for Germany's best growers, and particularly for Riesling producers, 2017 has turned out to be

a surprisingly good vintage. The best wines are intensely concentrated and a bit nervous in youth. With time, they will reveal themselves as serious wines with penetrating extract, sharpness and spice.

By contrast, the 2018 vintage is an epic romantic comedy that has instantaneous international appeal and a heart-swooning finish. This

vintage was marked by a long, dry and consistently hot summer that produced powerful, ripe wines with ample fruit and structure. They are sunny, charming wines that are approachable in their youth. And while many worried that such an intensely hot, dry vintage would yield fat, blowsy wines, they've maintained freshness and balance, too. Cheers! —Anna Lee C. Iijima

Their differences remind us of nature's footprint on each bottle and the challenges experienced by winegrowers.

RIESLING GROSSES GEWÄCHS

95 August Kessler 2017 Lorchhausen Seligmacher Riesling GG Grosse Lage (Rheingau).

Wet river rocks and steel extend into rose petal, white peach and honeysuckle in this effusive, complex dry Riesling. It's full bodied yet silken and spry, elevated by tangy lime acidity and a pristine mineral edge. Lovely already but it will improve through 2030, and likely further. Vineyard Brands. *Editors' Choice.* —A.I.

abv: 13%

Price: \$110

95 Dr. Loosen 2017 Ürziger Würzgarten Dry Riesling GG Alte Reben (Mosel).

Hints of smoke, struck flint and spice accent this gorgeously honeyed, intensely concentrated dry Riesling. Tangerine, quince and lemon flavors are rich and reverberating, edged by thrilling lime acidity and long, earthen finish. Fantastic already but it should gain

complexity through 2030 and likely longer. Loosen Bros. USA. *Editors' Choice.* —A.I.

abv: 12.5%

Price: \$54

95 Schmitt's Kinder 2017 Randersackerer Pfälben Grosse Lage Riesling GG Trocken (Franken).

Delicate notes of yellow peach and jellied quince gain intensity from nose to palate here, edged by steel and a bracing acidic backbone. Full bodied and creamy on the midpalate, it's a deeply satisfying, pristinely fruity wine that should gain mineral complexities with time. Lovely already but it should improve through 2030. Rudi Wiest Selections. *Editors' Choice.* —A.I.

abv: 13%

Price: \$67

94 Dr. Loosen 2017 Erdener Treppchen Dry Riesling GG Alte Reben (Mosel).

Zesty lime-pith and lemon aromas introduce this filigreed dry Riesling. It's medium bodied but silky and supple, flooding the palate with crisp-tart yellow-peach and

tangerine flavors. Crushed minerals and a fringe of fresh green herbs accentuate its spry, invigorating feel. It drinks well already but should gain depth and texture from 2022 and improve well through 2030. Loosen Bros. USA. *Cellar Selection.* —A.I.

abv: 12.5%

Price: \$54

94 Pfeffingen 2017 Weilberg Riesling GG Trocken Gold Cap (Pfalz).

The nose here is subdued suggesting barely a whiff of crushed stone, but there's an abundance of zesty lemon, tangerine and grapefruit on the palate. Dry and full bodied, it's a dense, richly textured wine with a firm, steely finish. Tasted at the end of 2019, it's still quite closed. Hold till 2023, it should gain even more breadth through 2030. Rudi Wiest Selections. *Cellar Selection.* —A.I.

abv: 13.5%

Price: \$56

93 Dr. Loosen 2017 Graacher Dompropst Dry Grosse Lage Riesling GG (Mosel).

Whiffs of blossom, honeycomb and lemon perfume this luminous dry Riesling. Plush white-peach and Meyer lemon flavors are intensely ripe but balanced by brisk lime acidity and a pleasant bite of astringency. Compared to Loosen's other 2017 GG's, its plump fruit profile lends approachability in youth but it should gain complexity with age as well. Loosen Bros. USA. —A.I.

abv: 12.5%

Price: \$54

93 Dr. Loosen 2017 Graacher Himmelreich Alte Reben Dry Riesling GG (Mosel).

Earthen shades of smoke and struck slate mingle into flavors of lime sorbet and crisp nectarine in this sleek, medium-bodied Riesling. Refreshingly dry and briskly concentrated, it's a bit closed in its youth but should gain greater complexity and mouthfeel from 2022 and improve longer still. Loosen Bros. USA. *Cellar Selection.* —A.I.

abv: 12.5%

Price: \$54

93 Pfeffingen 2017 Herrenberg Riesling GG Trocken Gold Cap (Pfalz).

Tasted in late 2019, this gripping, full-bodied Riesling offers concentrated white-grapefruit and lemon flavors anchored by layers of earth, struck minerals and spice. Dry and racy, it needs a bit more time to open and meld. Hold till 2023. It should improve through 2030 and hold much further. Rudi Wiest Selections. *Cellar Selection.* —A.I.

abv: 13.5%

Price: \$56

93 Prinz von Hessen 2016 Johannisberger Klaus Riesling Grosses Gewächs (Rheingau).

Enticing whiffs of smoke, hazelnut and dried sage mingle into succulent lime and lemon here. It's dry and lusciously full bodied but calibrated by spine-tingling streaks of acid and minerality. It should improve through 2030 and hold further. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —A.I.

abv: 13%

Price: \$45

Continued on page 103

The Wine Enthusiast Buying Guide

The Buying Guide includes ratings and reviews of new-release and selected older beverage alcohol products evaluated by *Wine Enthusiast Magazine's* editors and other qualified tasters. Regular contributors to our Buying Guide include Tasting Director Alexander Peartree, Editor-in-Chief Susan Kostrzewa, Managing Editor Lauren Buzzee, Assistant Tasting Director Fiona Adams, Contributing Editors Michael Schachner, Anna Lee C. Iijima, Christina Pickard, Mike DeSimone, Jeff Jenssen and Spirits Editor Kara Newman in New York; European Editor Roger Voss in France; Italian Editor Kerin O'Keefe in Switzerland; Contributing Editor Anne Krebiehl in England; Contributing Editors Virginie Boone, Jim Gordon and Matt Kettmann in California; Contributing Editors Paul Gregutt and Sean Sullivan in Washington; and Beer Editor John Holl in New Jersey.

If a wine was evaluated by a single reviewer, that taster's initials appear following the note. When no initials appear following a wine review, the wine was evaluated by two or more reviewers and the score and tasting note reflect the input of all tasters. Unless otherwise stated, all spirit reviews are by Kara Newman and all beer reviews are by John Holl.

Each review contains a score, the full name of the product, its suggested national retail price, its alcohol (abv) as reported to us by the submitter and a tasting note. If price or alcohol content cannot be confirmed, NA (not available) will be printed. Prices are for 750-ml bottles unless otherwise indicated.

TASTING METHODOLOGY AND GOALS

All tastings reported in the Buying Guide are performed blind. Typically, products are tasted in peer-group flights of from 5–8 samples. Reviewers may know general information about a flight to provide context—vintage, variety or appellation—but never the producer or retail price of any given selection. When possible, products considered flawed or uncustomary are retasted.

ABOUT THE SCORES

Ratings reflect what our editors felt about a particular product. Beyond the rating, we encourage you to read the accompanying tasting note to learn about a product's special characteristics.

Classic 98–100: The pinnacle of quality.

Superb 94–97: A great achievement.

Excellent 90–93: Highly recommended.

Very Good 87–89: Often good value; well recommended.

Good 83–86: Suitable for everyday consumption; often good value.

Acceptable 80–82: Can be employed in casual, less-critical circumstances.

Products deemed Unacceptable (receiving a rating below 80 points) are not reviewed.

SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

Editors' Choice products are those that offer excellent quality at a price above our Best Buy range, or a product at any price with unique qualities that merit special attention.

Cellar Selections are products deemed highly collectible and/or requiring time in a temperature-controlled wine cellar to reach their maximum potential. A Cellar Selection designation does not mean that a product must be stored to be enjoyed, but that cellaring will probably result in a more enjoyable bottle. In general, an optimum time for cellaring will be indicated.

Best Buys are products that offer a high level of quality in relation to price. Wines meriting this award are generally priced at \$15 or less, and are designated Best Buys after surpassing a specific quality-to-price ratio benchmark.

SUBMITTING PRODUCTS FOR REVIEW

Products should be submitted to the appropriate reviewing location as detailed in our FAQ, available online via winemag.com/contact-us. Inquiries should be addressed to the Tasting & Review Department at 914.345.9463 or email tastings@wineenthusiast.net. **There is no charge for submitting products.** We make every effort to taste all products submitted for review, but there is no guarantee that all products submitted will be tasted, or that reviews will appear in the magazine. All samples must be accompanied by the appropriate submission forms, which may be downloaded from our website.

LABELS

Labels are paid promotions. Producers and importers are given the opportunity to submit labels only after the reviews have been finalized and assigned to a specific issue. Labels are reproduced and printed along with tasting notes and scores. For information on label purchases, contact Denise Valenza at 813.571.1122; fax 866.896.8786; or email dvalenza@wineenthusiast.net

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100 Quinta do Vale Meão 2017 Douro. This is the latest release from an estate that was founded in the 19th century by the legendary Dona Antónia Ferreira at a time when the upper Douro was almost inaccessible. This wine continues the line of magnificent wines created by her descendants. It is structured and dense yet poised. The rich dark fruit has melded with the tannins, although both will take much more time to fully develop. Drink 2023–2030. Deutsch Family Wine and Spirits. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$99



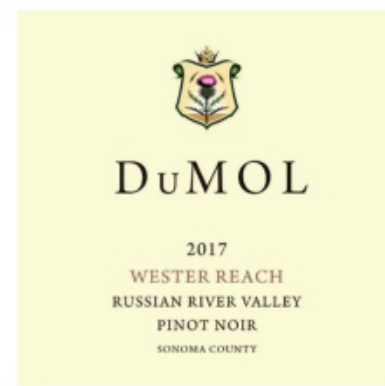
100 Terre Rouge 2016 Ascent Syrah (Sierra Foothills). This is a grand, ageworthy wine from consistently stellar Winemaker Bill Easton. It delivers flavors of smoked plum, dry-aged beef and blueberry-blackberry compote wrapped in a velvety structure of superfine tannins and a full feel, while lighter, intricate spice elements weave through from the first whiff to the lingering finish. Best from 2026–2036. **Cellar Selection.** —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$90



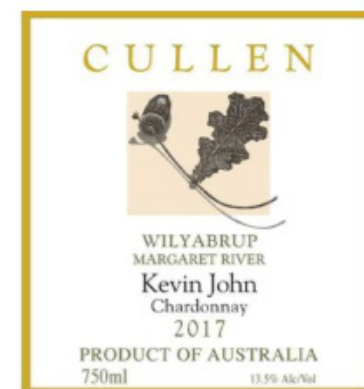
97 Dutton-Goldfield 2017 Devil's Gulch Vineyard Pinot Noir (Marin County). This wine pits superfocused fruit against a taut frame of fine-grained tannins and nervy acidity for excellent balance. Aromas of fresh black cherry, black tea and forest floor lead to lively rhubarb and sour cherry backed by richer nuances that emerge on the finish. Best through 2027. **Cellar Selection.** —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$72



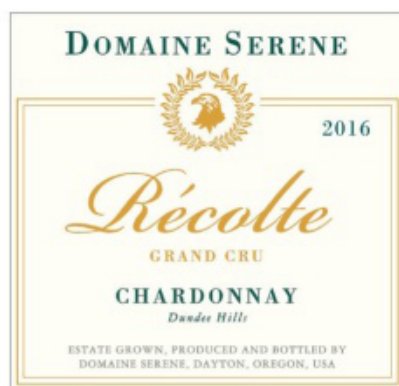
96 Domaine Serene 2016 Grace Vineyard Pinot Noir (Dundee Hills). Fully ripened grapes are maxed out yet don't seem over-the-top jammy. Black cherry, fig, cassis and a touch of raisin combine to create a rich and complex base. Then come streaks of licorice, smoke, char and espresso, all seamlessly integrated in a wine with awesome power and length. Cellar through 2030. **Cellar Selection.** —P.G.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$195



96 DuMol 2017 Wester Reach Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Made from four stellar sites within the appellation, this stunning wine shows rich red and blue fruit. Spice and forest floor tones intertwine alongside firm, supple tannins and balanced acidity, finishing with impressive length and intensity. —V.B.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$69



95 Cullen 2017 Kevin John Wilyabrup Chardonnay (Margaret River). This highly lauded wine from one of Margaret River's greats is crafted for the long haul. It shows notes of oyster shell and ground white pepper, with lemon and pineapple rinds at the fore. The palate offers a beautiful texture, length and outstanding complexity. It would be a crime to drink this now when such rewards are sure to come to those who wait. Drink 2022–2035. Old Bridge Cellars. **Cellar Selection.** —C.P.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$109



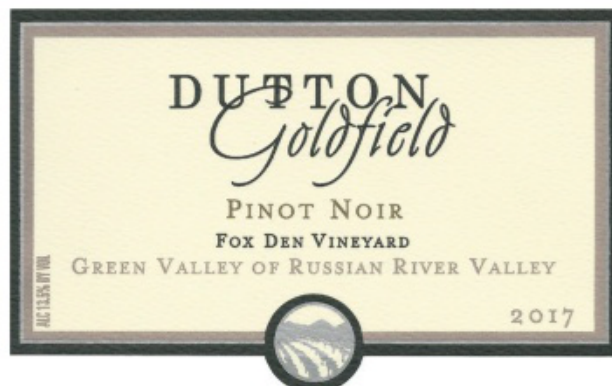
95 **Domaine Serene 2016 Récolte Grand Cru Chardonnay (Dundee Hills).** This barrel-fermented, full-bodied reserve is plump and juicy. Rich and layered, it compounds flavors of baked apples, pears and peaches with butter, toasted nuts and a refreshing blast of seashell minerality. —P.G.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$135



95 **Dutton-Goldfield 2017 Azaya Ranch Vineyard Pinot Noir (Petaluma Gap).** This wine is an eye-opener, offering dazzling fruit flavors and a vibrant texture that wakes up the palate. Concentrated cherry and strawberry flavors follow aromas of freshly crushed berries, rosemary and baking spices for a broad spectrum of complexity. Best through 2027. *Cellar Selection.* —J.G.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$62



95 **Dutton-Goldfield 2017 Dutton Ranch Emerald Ridge Vineyard Pinot Noir (Green Valley).** Tangy and compelling, this is a complex, intensely earthy wine, with wisps of dried herb and fresh sea air. The palate offers a mix of orange, blueberry and raspberry, with persistent acidity. Baking spice, dried herb and forest floor accents meld with the rounded, supple tannins. —V.B.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$68



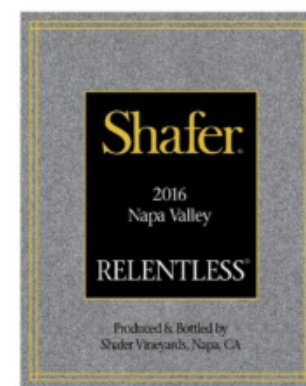
95 **Dutton-Goldfield 2017 Fox Den Vineyard Pinot Noir (Green Valley).** Tones of grapefruit, strawberry and red cherry kick off this immensely textured, expressive wine from a site along Stoetz Ridge above Occidental. Warm spice dots the landscape of lively freshness and supple tannins, with depths of flavor and balanced richness. —V.B.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$62



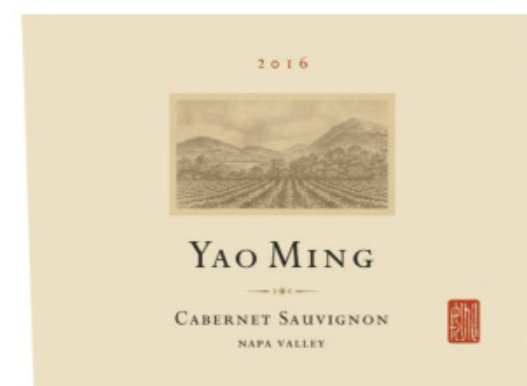
95 **Dutton-Goldfield 2017 Redwood Ridge Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).** From a 32-acre site above Annapolis, this is a gorgeously memorable wine that is dark and brooding in the glass. It unveils slowly to show rose, stem, lavender and sage as well as crisp red fruit. Lifted yet structured in feel, it shows power and intensity in perfect tandem with grace and balance. —V.B.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$62



95 **Emeritus 2017 Hallberg Ranch Estate Grown Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley).** With Winemaker David Lattin now at the helm, this vintage packs a punch of grace and power. Rose, lavender and earth tones accent a juicy black-cherry core, with crisp acidity sitting alongside a hint of nutmeg. *Editors' Choice.* —V.B.
abv: 13.7% **Price:** \$40



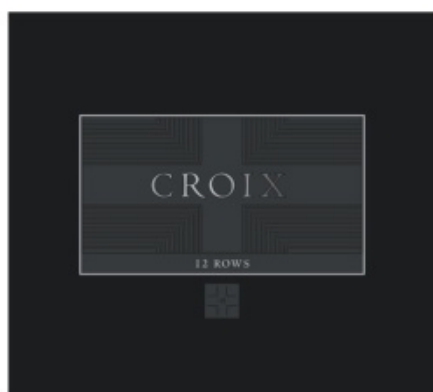
95 **Shafer 2016 Relentless (Napa Valley).** This combination of 90% Syrah and 10% Petite Sirah is memorable in its mix of wild herb and violet. Bright, thick layers of blackberry and blueberry dance along a mineral-laden core of crushed rock, wet stone and supple tannins. —V.B.
abv: 15.8% **Price:** \$95



95 **Yao Ming 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** This is a brawny, generous and powerful wine that holds its full-bodied concentration in check, showing a balanced approach to oak and tannin. Black cherry, currant and cocoa powder are accented by toasted oak and lingering black pepper, nutmeg and cedar on the finish. —V.B.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$95



94 **Allegrini 2013 La Poja Corvina (Veronese).** Made from 100% Corvina, this structured, velvety red opens with enticing aromas of black-skinned berry, cedar and tobacco. The full-bodied, balanced palate offers blackberry jam, Morello cherry, licorice and black pepper alongside fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Drink 2021–2031. LUX Wines. *Cellar Selection.* —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$95



94 Croix 2017 12 Rows Ritchie Vineyard Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). Soft and seductive yet lifted, this wine offers elegant layers of baking spice, white flower, apple, melon and lemon. A juicy, lengthy finish wraps up the bold, full-bodied experience. —V.B.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$75



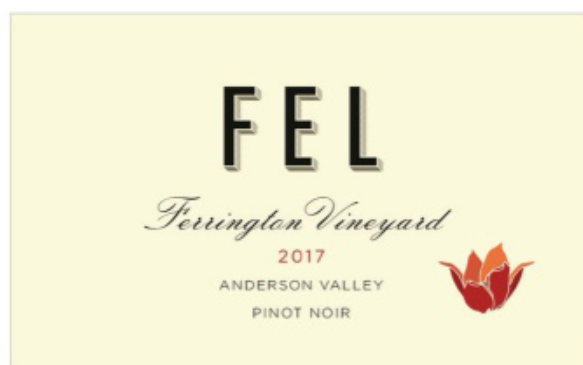
94 Domaine Serene 2016 Aspect Pinot Noir (Dundee Hills). This wine is a blend of barrels from a number of the estate vineyards, offering a snapshot of the entire property rather than single-vineyard focus. It's densely layered in pomegranate, raspberry and Bing cherry fruit, buoyed by balanced acidity and finished with muscular yet ripe and polished tannins. It closes out with tones of black tea, espresso and smoke. —P.G.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$125



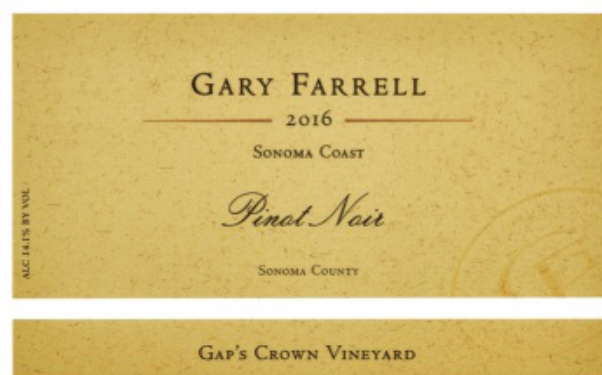
94 Dutton-Goldfield 2017 Docker Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Mendocino County). Concentrated fruit flavors are wrapped in a firm, well-polished texture of fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity in this wine. Bright acidity propels vibrant flavors of black cherry and black tea across the palate and through the finish. It is quietly powerful and well structured for mid-term aging. Best through 2025. —J.G.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$68



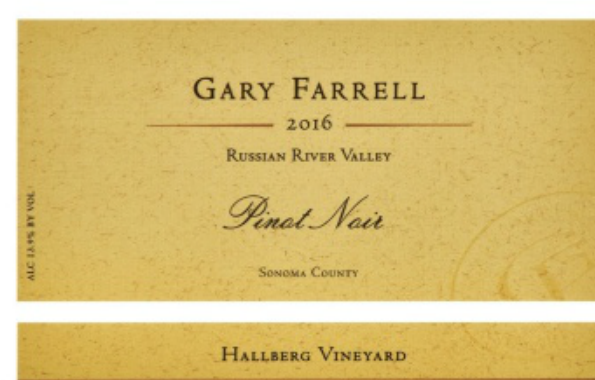
94 Dutton-Goldfield 2017 McDougall Vineyard Pinot Noir (Fort Ross-Seaview). From a site 1,100-feet up on a ridge overlooking the Pacific Ocean, this wine offers rich cherry and strawberry tones alongside dried herbs. A balanced framework of lifted acidity propels it along. —V.B.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$68



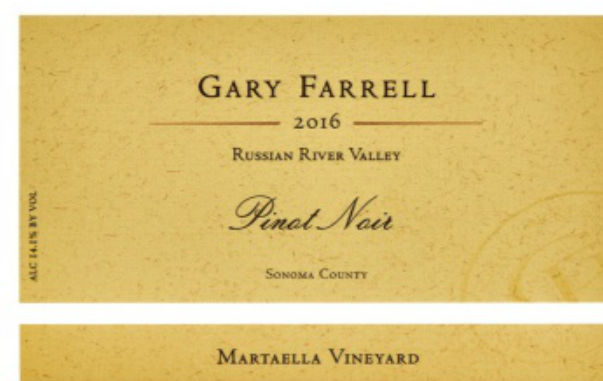
94 FEL 2017 Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley). Luscious, delicious fruit and spice notes coat the palate and linger nicely on the finish of this concentrated, layered and luxurious wine. It's full in feel, integrating rich tannins with layers of ripe fruit and subtle baking spice, making it tempting and delicious. *Editors' Choice.* —J.G.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$65



94 Gary Farrell 2016 Gap's Crown Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). From the wind-swept site at the heart of the Petaluma Gap, this wine offers tones of wild strawberry, blueberry and blood orange. The thick, concentrated body is lifted by firm tannins and bright acidity, while the finish lingers on a forest floor tone. —V.B.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$80



94 Gary Farrell 2016 Hallberg Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). This lush wine offers layers of orange, rhubarb and spice. Black tea and clove chime in, showcasing the beauty and intensity of this wine's personality. —V.B.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$55



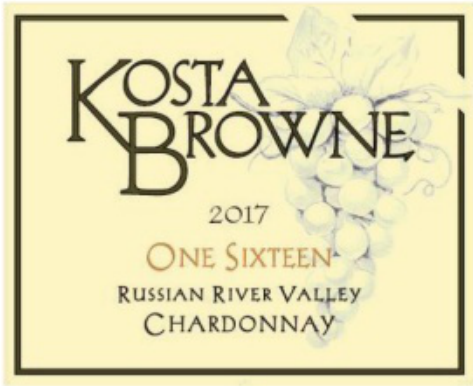
94 Gary Farrell 2016 Martaella Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Earthy tones of tree bark and forest floor carry this textured red from a site in the Laguna de Santa Rosa. Soft, rounded layers of supple tannins support a foundation of orange, rhubarb and black cherry laced in cardamom and nutmeg. —V.B.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$65



94 Giant Steps 2018 Tarraford Vineyard Chardonnay (Yarra Valley). Sourced from 30-plus year-old vines in a south-facing vineyard, this single-vineyard expression gets the balance of texture, flavor and acidity just right. Tones of minerals and sea salt weave between citrus, melon and well-managed oak. The palate is an expertly built combo of pristine acidity, a smooth texture and supportive oak. The finish is chalky and long. Drink now–2030. Old Bridge Cellars. —C.P.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$45



94 J Wrigley 2018 Acceptance Block Estate Chardonnay (McMinnville). This wine is deeply imbued with a rich mix of lime, grapefruit, green papaya and melon flavors. It remains full-throttle through the palate and on into a lingering, mouth-coating finish. A lovely seam of caramel snakes through as it trails off. *Editors’ Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$35



94 Kosta Browne 2017 One Sixteen Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). From a blend of sites in the appellation, including Keefer, Zio Tony and Ritchie, this is a bright, salty and broadly expansive white that’s gorgeously aromatic in wet earth and rose petal. The flavors are fruity in peach and pear, with a richness that is honed by the complementary acidity. —V.B.
abv: 13.8% **Price:** \$85



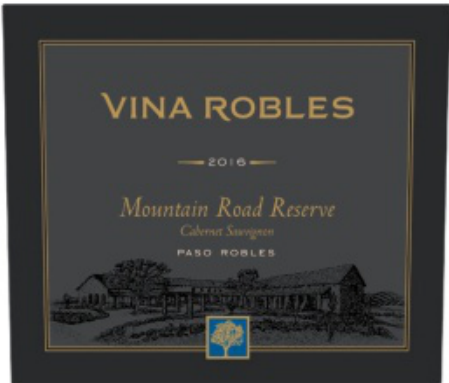
94 Kukkula 2017 Aatto (Adelaida District). This blend of 45% Counoise, 35% Mourvèdre and 20% Grenache is a nice antidote to richer Paso Robles styles. It begins with fresh and floral aromas of potpourri, hibiscus, rose petal and pomegranate before opening up into a palate of cranberry, red flowers and sagebrush. *Editors’ Choice.* —M.K.
abv: 15.4% **Price:** \$45



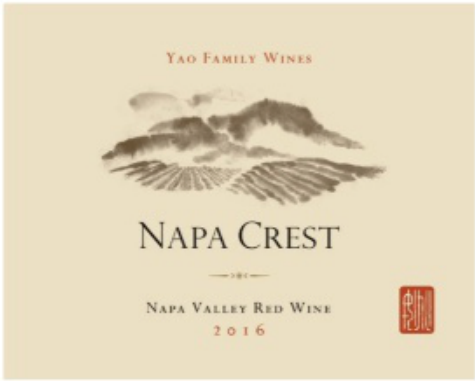
94 Lava Cap NV Love Wave Estate Bottled Angelica (El Dorado). This is a memorable, nutty and sweet wine that’s thick and rich, packed with flavors so concentrated that they linger for minutes on the finish. It’s wonderfully honeyed, followed by layers of creamy peach, apricot, almond and butterscotch. *Editors’ Choice.* —J.G.
abv: 19% **Price:** \$40/500 ml



94 Three Sticks 2017 Alana Vineyard Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). The second vintage of this single-vineyard designate, this white is floral, salty and supportive in oak, with a youthful grip. Apple, melon and crushed rock complement a lifted freshness of acidity and mineral earthiness. —V.B.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$75



94 Vina Robles 2016 Mountain Road Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). Grown on the winery’s Adelaida Springs Ranch, which is 12 miles from the ocean at 1,700 feet in elevation, this is a rich and unctuous take on Cabernet that spent 20 months in new French oak. Hedonistic aromas of black cherry, cocoa, cappuccino and fudge cake lead to a palate that’s expertly structured by polished tannins. Flavors of tiramisu and berry-compote sing on the palate. —M.K.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$54



94 Yao Family Wines 2016 Napa Crest Red Wine (Napa Valley). This wine combines 68% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot and 10% Petit Verdot, and is aged 16 months in French oak, half of it new. Bright yet supple on the palate, it offers vibrant flavors of cassis, cedar and sweet tobacco. *Editors’ Choice.* —V.B.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$48



93 Barra of Mendocino 2017 Estate Grown Petite Sirah (Mendocino). Smooth and sophisticated, this wine shows great polish and suppleness despite the firm tannins that come with the variety. Dense flavors of blueberry and blackberry are lightly accented by vanilla and cinnamon, while a creamy mouthfeel soothes the palate. Best through 2029. *Editors’ Choice.* —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$22



93 Blue Rock 2017 Baby Blue (Sonoma County). This juicy wine is a blend of 47% Cabernet Sauvignon and 28% Merlot, with smaller amounts of Petit Verdot, Syrah, Malbec and Cabernet Franc. Grippy, youthful tannins lend structure and length around tones of integrated oak, rich blueberry and strawberry. *Editors’ Choice.* —V.B.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$29



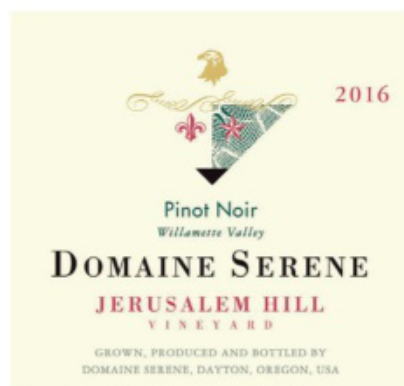
93 Croix 2017 Starlings' Roost Morelli Lane Vineyard Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). Named for the many birds that inhabit the site, this vineyard-designate wine displays a creamy intensity of crème brûlée, baked pear and vanilla cream tones. The hearty midpalate is defined in rich toasted oak and pineapple. —V.B.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$75



93 Darcie Kent Vineyards 2016 Madden Big Petite (Livermore Valley). This dark-hued, concentrated and full-bodied wine offers a supple mouthfeel and a lingering finish. Powerful blackberry and blueberry flavors flood the palate while lifted acidity and fine-grained tannins frame it all. Best from 2024. *Cellar Selection.* —J.G.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$50



93 Domaine Serene 2016 Grand Cheval Red Wine (Oregon). A blend of Dundee Hills Pinot Noir and Walla Walla Syrah, this counterpoints the winery's numerous Pinot Noirs with a most interesting fusion of flavors. Initially bursting with juicy raspberry fruit, it continues to add blueberry, lemon rind and a touch of orange marmalade, all buoyed by ample acidity. Drink now–2025. —P.G.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$85



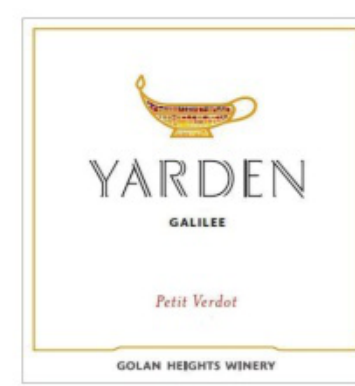
93 Domaine Serene 2016 Jerusalem Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Eola-Amity Hills). This remains the only estate vineyard located outside of the Dundee Hills. It's a fine counterpoint to the numerous Dundee Hills cuvées, matching concentrated raspberry, plum and blackberry fruit to sweet spices and trailing hints of earthy elements. It finishes with a lick of chocolate. —P.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$95



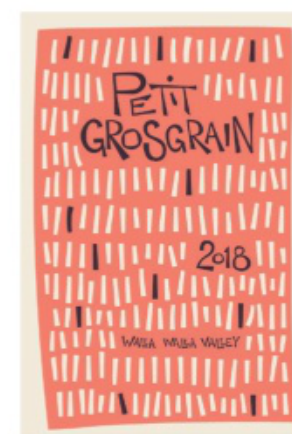
93 Domaine Serene 2017 Clos de Lune Vineyard Chardonnay (Dundee Hills). Firm, even sleek flavors of apple and white peach cut a precise path down the palate. There's a gentle touch of fresh herbs, and the barrel impact is moderate. It gets better and better the longer it's open. Drink through 2028. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$75



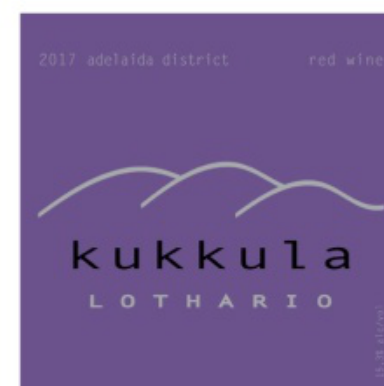
93 Epiphany 2017 Gypsy (Santa Barbara County). This blend of 33% Counoise, 29% Grenache, 18% Mourvèdre, 16% Cinsault and 4% Syrah is quite dark and brooding, with earthy aromas of crushed stone, tar, dark strawberry and red currant. The palate packs in mulberry, charred berry, roasted lamb and strong pepper spice. *Editors' Choice.* —M.K.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$29



93 Golan Heights Winery 2016 Yarden Petit Verdot (Galilee). Inky-violet in the glass, this wine has aromas of black plum and anisette. Polished tannins coat the palate alongside flavors of blackberry, pomegranate, cherry preserves and clove that lead into a salted butter-toffee finish. Kosher. Yarden Wines, Inc. —M.D.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$39



93 Grosgrain 2018 Petit Grosgrain (Walla Walla Valley). Mourvèdre makes up 43% of this wine, with the rest Syrah (34%) and Grenache (23%). The aromas start out high register, with notes of herb, dried flower, peppery spice and blue fruit. The palate is simultaneously flavorful and deft, with tart acidity and a long, drawn out finish. This is extremely impressive stuff, with exquisite balance and an outrageous value to boot. *Editors' Choice.* —S.S.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$24



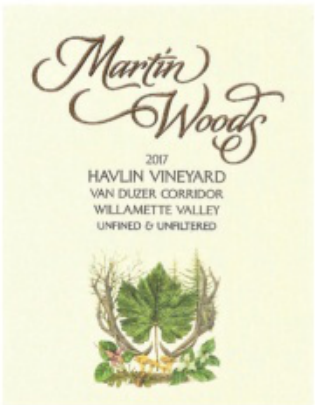
93 Kukkula 2017 Lothario (Adelaida District). Deep and sultry aromas of baked black plum, Christmas spice and gravel pop on the nose of this blend of 57% Mourvèdre and 43% Grenache. Elegant layers of dark-purple fruit and flowers meet with rose petal, earth and savory game on the fresh, acid-driven palate. —M.K.
abv: 15.3% **Price:** \$55



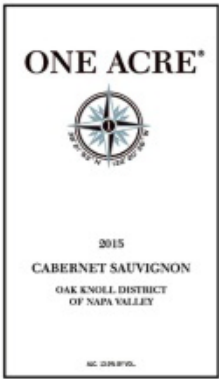
93 Lytle-Barnett 2015 Blanc de Blancs (Willamette Valley). This wine is elegant, toasty and brimming with fresh flavors of Asian pear and crisp apple. It was first vinified in neutral French oak and then finished in the traditional Champenoise method. Some pretty toast accents remain as highlights. Drink through 2030. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$80



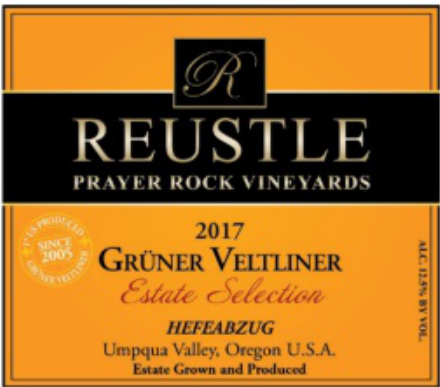
93 Marchesi Antinori 2015 Villa Antinori Riserva (Chianti Classico). Aromas of wild berry, pipe tobacco, mint and eucalyptus shape the nose along with whiffs of French oak. On the linear, elegantly structured palate, tightly knit, fine-grained tannins wrap around ripe black cherry, red currant, star anise and toast. Drink 2022–2030. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$35



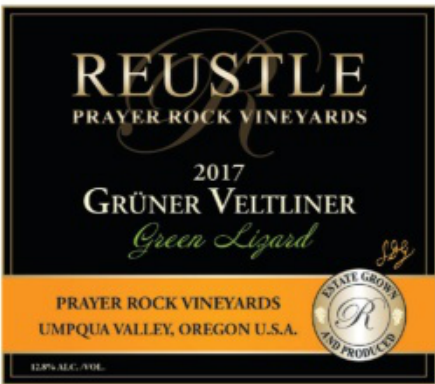
93 Martin Woods 2017 Havlin Vineyard Unfiltered & Unfiltered Pinot Noir (Van Duzer Corridor). From a late-ripening, cool-climate site, this wine deftly incorporates subtle herbal accents with bright, lively cranberry and raspberry fruit. A 50-50 mix of French and Oregon barrels was used, almost entirely neutral. The wine is spicy and focused, showing the care and craft of Winemaker Evan Martin, who used 20% whole clusters in the ferment. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$35



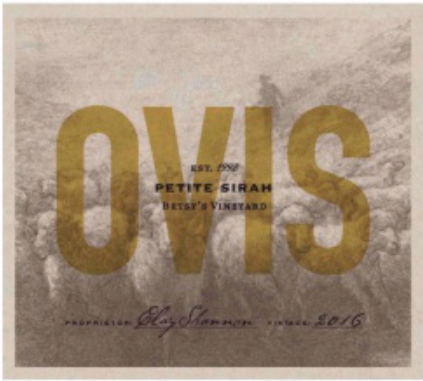
93 One Acre 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon (Oak Knoll District). This generous, balanced and softly textured red tastes of cassis and cherry, with bright, fresh acidity at its foundation. Tannin and oak are well integrated and wrap around the fruit to provide structure and quiet power. —V.B.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$85



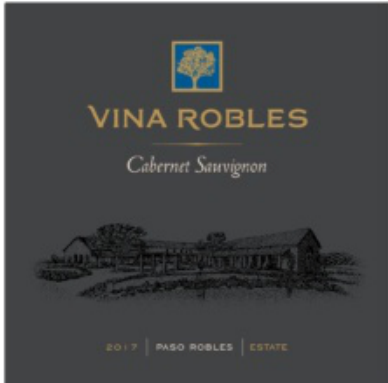
93 Reustle 2017 Prayer Rock Vineyards Estate Selection Hefeabzug Grüner Veltliner (Umpqua Valley). This wine is rich, dense and bracing, offering a compelling, fruit-laden palate of kiwi, grapefruit, lime and pear. It's all set upon a beautifully textured mineral foundation, making it utterly refreshing. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$26



93 Reustle 2017 Prayer Rock Vineyards Green Lizard Grüner Veltliner (Umpqua Valley). This wine is creamy, rich, leesy and packed with flavors of ultrafresh citrus fruits. It offers ample texture and freshness lifted by brisk acidity and citrus rind. —P.G.
abv: 12.8% **Price:** \$32



93 Shannon Ridge 2016 Ovis Betsy's Vineyard Petite Sirah (High Valley). This robust, full-bodied wine does a great job of matching power to power. Sophisticated oak spices seem to smooth over any rough edges in this concentrated and tannic wine, giving it enticing complexity as well as deep fruit flavors. Best from 2024. —J.G.
abv: 15% **Price:** \$60



93 Vina Robles 2017 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). This wine delivers loads of Paso Robles richness at a fair price, starting with lush aromas of black cherry, caramel and mocha cream. The palate starts soft and inviting, with more cherry and caramel, then firms up with tighter tannins and penetrating acidity. *Editors' Choice.* —M.K.
abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$26



92 Allegri 2016 La Grola (Veronese). A blend of 90% Corvina Veronese and 10% Oseleta, this offers aromas of black-skinned berry, tobacco and roasted coffee bean. The full-bodied, balanced palate delivers ripe black plum, licorice and black pepper alongside fine-grained tannins. Drink through 2025. LUX Wines. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$35



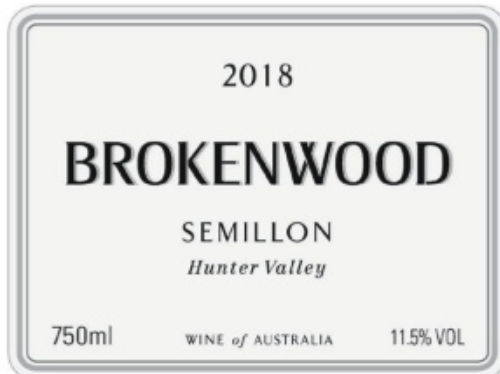
92 Angove 2018 Grenache-Shiraz-Mourvèdre (McLaren Vale). This wine balances plush red fruit with flowers, mint, savory spices and graphite. Taut, fine-grained tannins weave between bright yet ripe fruit through to a long, herbal finish. Drink now–2028. Trinchero Family Estates. —C.P.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$25



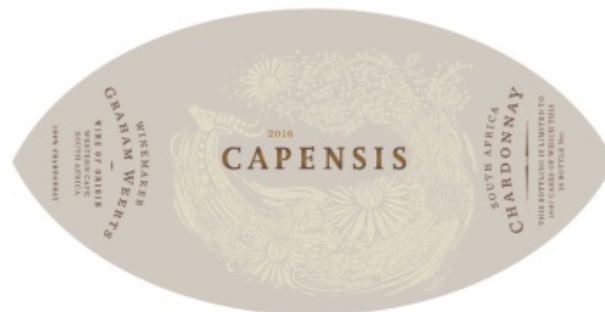
92 ArmAs 2013 Reserve Karmrahyut (Armenia). Dark ruby to the eye, this wine has a nose of fruits of the wood, violet and bramble. Flavors of raspberry, blackberry, mocha, clove and violet are set amid plush tannins. There is a nice floral lift on the smooth finish. Golden Grape ArmAs LLC. *Editors' Choice.* —M.D.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$28



92 Banshee 2018 Sauvignon Blanc (Sonoma County). Floral in honeysuckle and stony in texture, this wine has a balanced sense of weight and ripeness, offering lovely layers of pear and Meyer lemon. Fleshy and fruity in all the best ways, it has surprising complexity and length. *Editors' Choice.* —V.B.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$20



92 Brokenwood 2018 Semillon (Hunter Valley). A classic Hunter Semillon from a classic producer, this youthful, laser-focused wine wraps citrus peel, lemon-lime, beeswax and honeysuckle in a chalky-textured cloak lifted by bright acidity. Crisp, fruity and textural, the finish is long and mouthwatering. Let the acidity burrow its way further into the wine, and drink 2021–2030. Old Bridge Cellars. *Editors' Choice.* —C.P.
abv: 11.5% **Price:** \$20



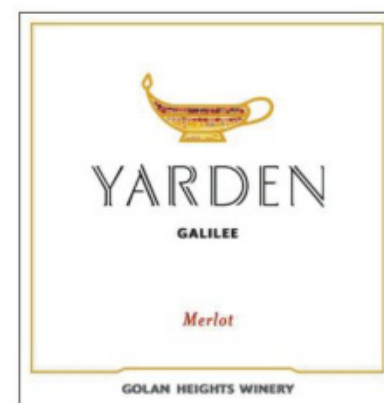
92 Capensis 2016 Chardonnay (Western Cape). Enticing notes of pencil shavings and sweet spice are front and center on the nose, with additional aromas of baked apple, pressed yellow flowers and orange oil. The palate shows great balance, with a bright seam of acidity that keeps the apple and orange fruit pure and focused. Lovely accents of toasted brioche and wood spice carry the enduring finish. Majestic Imports. —L.B.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$80



92 Crū 2018 Clone 828 Sierra Madre Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). Lush, fresh and clean aromas of baked plum and Bing cherry make for an inviting, fruit-driven nose in this clonal selection. It's bouncy and playful on the sip, where bright raspberry and Bing cherry flavors ride a river of tangy acidity. —M.K.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$70



92 Domaine Serene 2017 Evenstad Reserve Chardonnay (Dundee Hills). This delicious wine is packed with a rich mix of tropical fruits, lush caramel and lightly toasted nuts. It fires on all cylinders as far as what most folks look for in a high-end Chardonnay, with an added burst of lively acidity. Never heavy, it continues through to a long finish of elegant, graceful, seamless flavors. —P.G.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$65



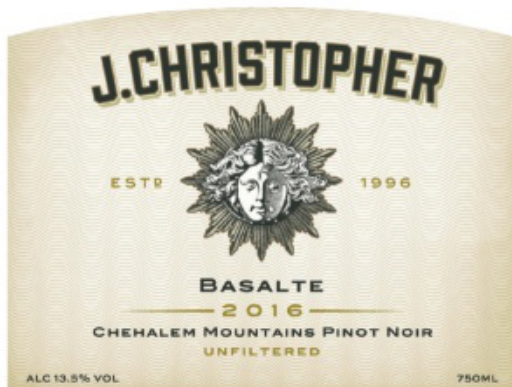
92 Golan Heights Winery 2016 Yarden Merlot (Galilee). Deep violet-red in the glass, this wine has a bouquet of black cherry and violet. Restrained tannins offer a matrix for flavors of black cherry, strawberry, anise, clove and milk chocolate that unite on the smooth finish. Kosher. Yarden Wines, Inc. —M.D.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$31



92 Haden Fig 2017 Freedom Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). From 20-year-old Pommard vines, this silky, powerful wine is packed with a mix of plum, blackberry, black cherry and citrus. As with all of Haden Fig's 2017 Pinots, the overall balance and structure are indicative for this lighter vintage. —P.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$36



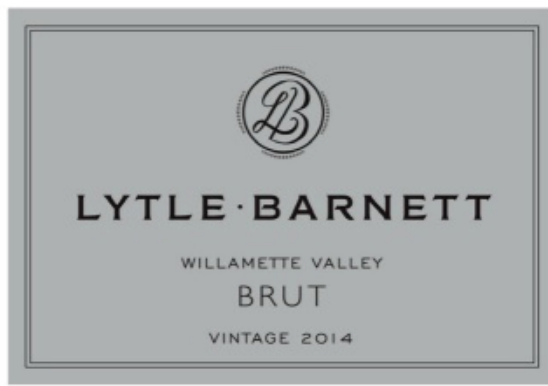
92 Hearst Ranch 2017 Randolph Red Wine (Paso Robles). Complex aromas of red currant and blackberry meet with herbs and charred caramel on the nose of this blend. The palate is framed by polished tannins and firm acidity, offering a cherry paste flavor alongside lingering pinches of cinnamon, clove, allspice and nutmeg. —M.K.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$25



92 J. Christopher 2016 Basalte Unfiltered Pinot Noir (Chehalem Mountains). Scents of rock and wild berry, along with beetroot and lavender, introduce a complex wine with terrific appeal. This is the sort of wine that rewards your attention with nuanced details. At the same time it's accessible and food-friendly, with good length and overall balance. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$30



92 King Estate 2018 Domaine Estate Grown Made with Biodynamic Grapes Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley). This wine is 100% estate-grown from biodynamically farmed, fermented entirely in stainless steel. No oak is wanted or needed here, as the fruit is sensational, with penetrating flavors of lime and lemon. —P.G.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$29



92 Lytle-Barnett 2014 Brut (Willamette Valley). This is made from 70% Pinot Noir and 30% Chardonnay, separately fermented in neutral French oak, and then finished in the traditional Champenoise method. It's toasty and fresh, showing the ripeness of the vintage while keeping the fruit in check so as not to override the elegance, acidity and finesse of the finished wine. —P.G.
abv: 12% **Price:** \$80



92 Lytle-Barnett 2013 Brut Rosé (Eola-Amity Hills). This rosé is 100% Pinot Noir from a cooler vintage. It was pressed quickly and fermented in stainless steel, then finished in the traditional Champenoise method. A pretty pale-copper color, it's a vivid, fresh, tongue-tickling wine, touching lightly upon flavors of apple and strawberry, buoyed with bright acidity. —P.G.
abv: 12% **Price:** \$80



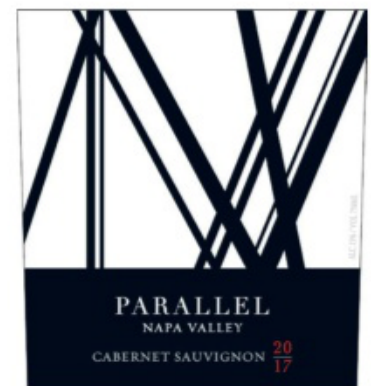
92 Marchesi Antinori 2016 Marchese Antinori Tenuta Tignanello Riserva (Chianti Classico). Alluring aromas of cranberry, pomegranate and oak-driven spice shape the nose. The aromas follow through to the elegant, savory palate along with vanilla, star anise and a hint of coconut while bright acidity and supple tannins provide support and finesse. Drink 2021–2028. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. *Cellar Selection.* —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$45



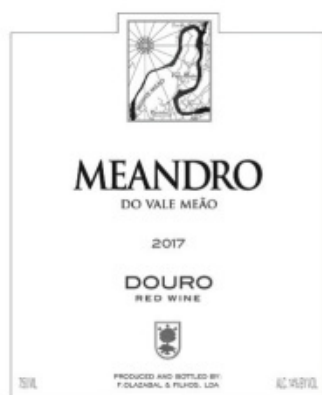
92 Mettler Family Vineyards 2017 Epicenter Old Vine Zinfandel (Lodi). This wine is big but graceful, practically overflowing with tasty, ripe berry and cherry flavors, and revealing delicious baking-space accents as it opens in the glass. It feels smooth and luxurious in texture and has a lingering finish. —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$25



92 Mettler Family Vineyards 2017 Estate Grown Petite Sirah (Lodi). Generous tones of oak spices saturate this full-bodied wine, with cinnamon, vanilla and chocolate aromas and flavors to complement the blackberry and dark-chocolate core. It is firmly tannic but nicely filled out with seductive flavors. Best after 2024. —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$25



92 Parallel 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Savory, herbal and thick in brawny concentration, this powerful wine is darkly layered in blackberry, black currant and wild raspberry. Clove, dried herb and a twist of sage figure into the midpalate, adding complexity and welcome intrigue as generous oak layers throughout. —V.B.
abv: 15% **Price:** \$110



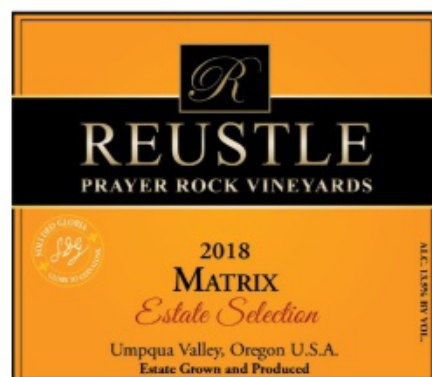
92 Quinta do Vale Meão 2017 Meandro do Vale Meão (Douro). The second wine of the great Vale Meão estate in the Douro Superior, this is impressive in itself. A lifted violet note permeates the rich berry fruit. It is a rich, concentrated wine that should age further. Drink from 2021. Deutsch Family Wine and Spirits. *Editors' Choice.* —R.V.
abv: 14% Price: \$25



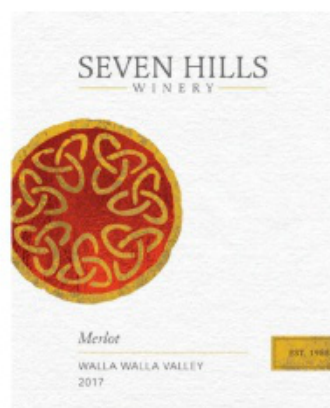
92 Recanati 2018 Shiraz (Upper Galilee). Dark red-violet in the glass, this wine has aromas of cassis, plum, black pepper and violet. It offers supple tannins and flavors of bright cherry, raspberry and rose petal, with a nice burst of cranberry on the finish. Kosher. Palm Bay International. —M.D.
abv: 13% Price: \$17



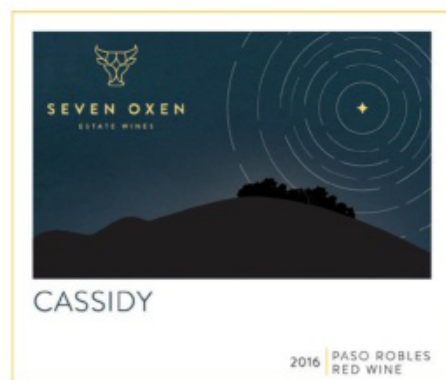
92 Recanati 2017 Reserve Petite Sirah (Galilee). This deep ruby-colored wine offers a bouquet of black currant and caramel. On the palate, there is a nice mix of fruit and cooling herb flavors such as cassis, black cherry, plum, mint, licorice and clove. Deft tannins linger on the eucalyptus finish. Kosher. Palm Bay International. —M.D.
abv: 14% Price: \$32



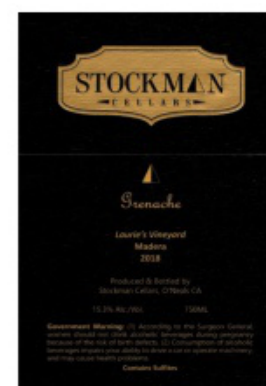
92 Reustle 2018 Prayer Rock Vineyards Matrix Estate Selection (Umpqua Valley). A big burst of peachy fruit starts off this soft, round, full-bodied white blend. There are nine grapes in the mix, none dominant. Lovely details of Meyer lemon, orange and tangerine follow, with a lively, spicy finish. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 13.5% Price: \$24



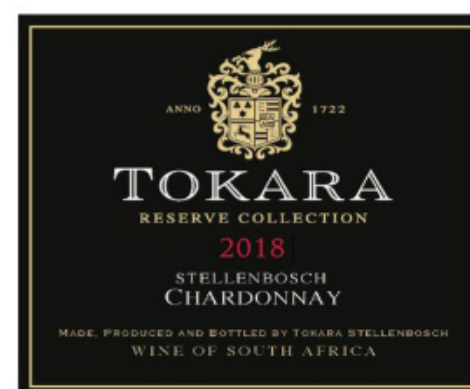
92 Seven Hills Winery 2017 Merlot (Walla Walla Valley). The aromas provide appeal, with notes of pure raspberry, red currant, baking spice and milk chocolate. The medium-bodied palate shows a sense of deftness to the fruit and barrel flavors. It's a terrific example of the variety. *Editors' Choice.* —S.S.
abv: 13.4% Price: \$25



92 Seven Oxen 2016 Cassidy Red Wine (Paso Robles). Candied pomegranate, rose petal, plump plum and licorice show on the nose of this blend of 70% Grenache and 30% Mourvèdre. The palate is complex and plush, with ripe berry and plum flavors that are back by earthy spices, leathery tannins and persistent acidity. —M.K.
abv: 15% Price: \$48



92 Stockman 2018 Laurie's Vineyard Grenache (Madera). Juicy, concentrated and well balanced, this full-bodied wine is packed with ripe red and black fruits, and well structured with moderate tannins and good acidity. It has spicy graphite and tobacco aromas, a generous, mouthfilling texture and an attractive ripeness in flavor. —J.G.
abv: 15.3% Price: \$30



92 Tokara 2018 Reserve Collection Chardonnay (Stellenbosch). This wine offers enticing aromas of wood-grilled apple, orange peel, peach pit, baking spice and pie crust. They're forward and pronounced, but not overly so, offering a harmonious medley of fruit and spice. The medium-weight palate offers more of the same, framed by lively acidity and a vibrancy that lends energy and lift through the long and spicy close. Dreyfus, Ashby & Co. *Editors' Choice.* —L.B.
abv: 14.5% Price: \$27



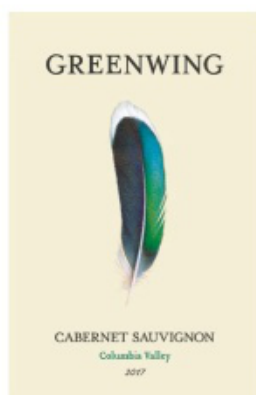
91 Angove 2018 Warboys Vineyard Shiraz-Grenache (McLaren Vale). Still youthful, this will take some time in the glass or decanter for the toasty oak, red berry fruit and graphite aromas to make their way out. The palate is equally restrained. There's power here, but it's held firmly in check by taut, drying tannins. Savory, earthy notes are prominent, but the concentrated red fruit shares the stage with ease. Drink 2022–2035. Trinchero Family Estates. —C.P.
abv: 14.2% Price: \$75



91 Chapter 24 2017 The Flood Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). The texture and detail elevate this wine, although the fruit is rather light and there's a whiff of tack room leather. Tones of black cherry, cola and a dusting of ash anchor the palate, with a dash of cold-brewed coffee through the finish. —P.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$61



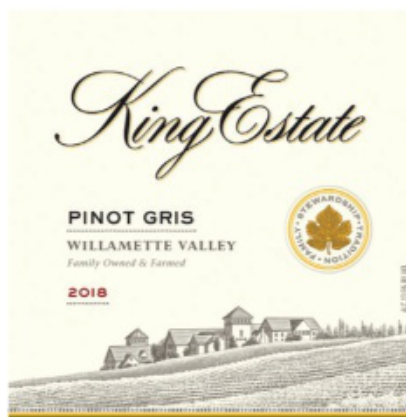
91 Compton Family 2017 Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). Previously bottled under the Spindrift Cellars label, this has been rebranded as Compton Family, with the same winemaker and ownership. It remains a fine blend of separately fermented lots from different vineyards. Brambly berry, dried leaves and a whiff of tobacco are among the highlights, along with a streak of citrus. It shows impressive depth and elegance. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$22



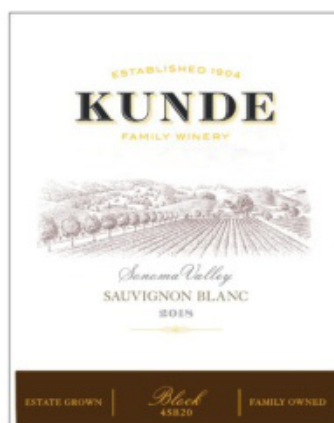
91 Greenwing 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley). This is a new Cabernet Sauvignon project from the folks at Duckhorn, doubling down on Washington to go along with their Red Mountain focused Canvasback brand. The aromas mesmerize in notes of café au lait, black currant, plum, bay leaf and spice. The palate is deft in style, full of well-balanced, creamy-feeling flavors of coffee, spice and cherry, with lightly grainy tannins backing it up. It's a lovely mix of fruit and barrel. *Editors' Choice.* —S.S.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$30



91 Harmony Cellars 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). Clean lines of black cherry, gravel and slate pick up an umami kick of soy on the nose. The palate is earthy and mineral driven, yet with vibrant flavors of blackberry and cherry as well. —M.K.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$29



91 King Estate 2018 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley). This baseline Pinot Gris really shines in this vintage. It's bursting with freshly cut pear that feels fleshy and textured. Juicy highlights of citrus boost the mouthfeel and add further liveliness to the finish, which ultimately resolves a papaya tone. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 13.4% **Price:** \$19



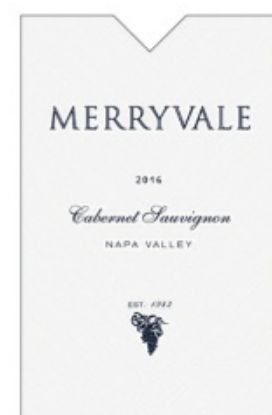
91 Kunde 2018 Block 4SB20 Estate Grown Sauvignon Blanc (Sonoma Valley). From an estate-grown block, this wine is effusive in fennel and dried herb on the nose. The palate is all about peach and wet stone, with a twist of lemon, the whole offering length, depth of flavor and texture. —V.B.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$25



91 LangeTwins 2017 One Hundred Vineyard Petite Sirah (Jahant). Concentrated and fresh in flavor, this wine is packed with exuberant blackberry and blueberry jam. Everything from fig and earth aromas to black pepper accents make it complex without being heavy or stiff in feel. —J.G.
abv: 15% **Price:** \$32



91 Lytle-Barnett 2013 Blanc de Noir (Eola-Amity Hills). Clean and light, the base wine, all Pinot Noir, was fermented in stainless steel and then finished in the traditional Champenoise method. Though seemingly similar to the rosé from the same vintage, this wine is a bit more simple, with tart apple fruit flavors and a clean, crisp finish. —P.G.
abv: 12% **Price:** \$80



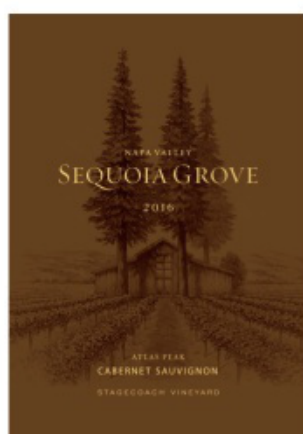
91 Merryvale 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This well-made wine offers an experience of supple, smooth and hearty dark fruit, with a moderate amount of toasted oak. Blended with 13% Merlot, 6% Malbec and 4% Cabernet Franc, it is earthy and robust in sage, dried herb and violet. *Editors' Choice.* —V.B.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$65



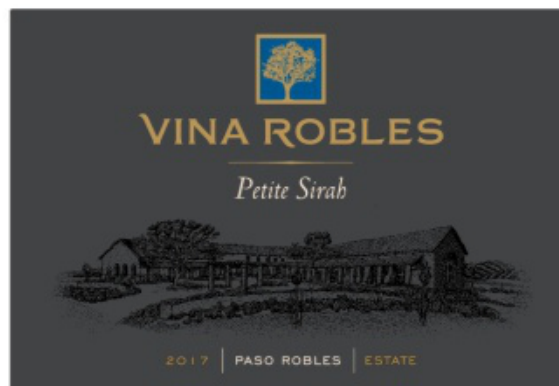
91 Michael David 2016 Earthquake Zinfandel (Lodi). This alluring wine offers beautifully ripe blackberry and black-plum flavors, with accents of baking spices and warm cedar for a layered and indulgent expression of the variety. A full body and a mouthfilling presence emphasize the delicious fruit and oak-spice elements. —J.G.
abv: 15.5% **Price: \$26**



91 Oak Farm 2018 Chardonnay (Lodi). Smooth, rich and layered, this full-bodied wine is hard to resist due to subtle, spicy complexity. It offers a lush mouthfeel and deep fruit flavors that grow on the palate and echo on the finish. *Editors' Choice.* —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price: \$17**



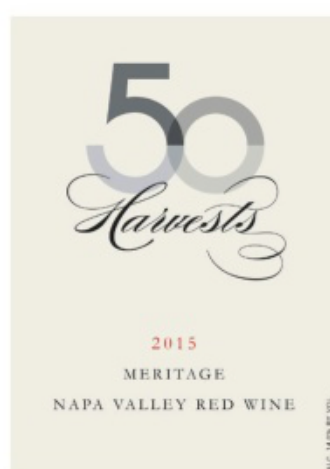
91 Sequoia Grove 2016 Stagecoach Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Atlas Peak). From the mighty mountain site, this red is herbaceous, bright and savory, with a dense, grippy texture. It is structured and powerful, offering robust tones of red currant, cherry and plum, with lasting notes of crushed rock and dark chocolate. —V.B.
abv: 14.6% **Price: \$100**



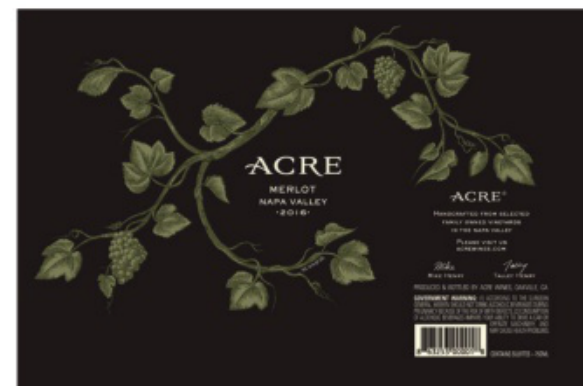
91 Vina Robles 2017 Estate Petite Sirah (Paso Robles). Concentrated aromas of black plum and elderberry get a slight peppercorn lift on the nose of this bottling. Dried leather, berries, pepper and crushed slate flavors arise on the palate. —M.K.
abv: 14.5% **Price: \$29**



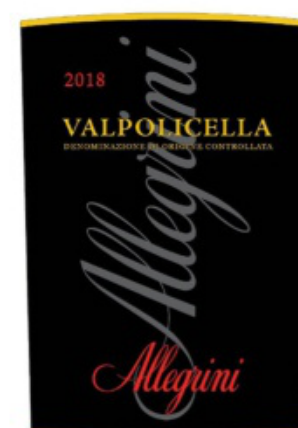
91 Wente 2018 Morning Fog Estate Grown Chardonnay (Livermore Valley). This is a ripe and lush wine that stays well balanced and refreshing while offering plenty of plump pear, cream and baking spice flavors. A good streak of acidity lifts the mouthfeel and positions the fruit flavors front and center. *Editors' Choice.* —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price: \$18**



90 50 Harvests 2015 Meritage (Napa Valley). This red is a blend of 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Cabernet Franc and 12% Merlot. Together, they offer a juicy full-bodied palate of rounded cassis and cherry, with a grippy tension of oak, cedar and dried herb. —V.B.
abv: 14.8% **Price: \$60**



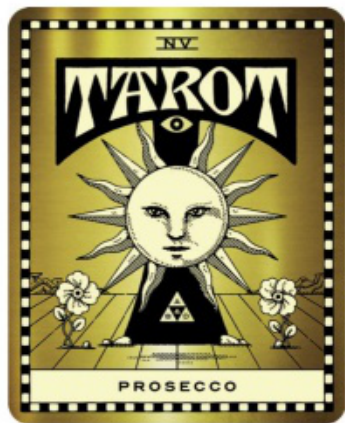
90 Acre 2016 Merlot (Napa Valley). A 100% varietal wine from vineyards in Oak Knoll, this is earthy in tones of ash and crushed rock, with concentrated red fruit at the core. Plum, cherry and raspberry highlight the fruity opulence and extend on the long, generous finish. —V.B.
abv: 14.9% **Price: \$32**



90 Allegri 2018 Valpolicella. Inviting aromas of red-skinned berry, violet and dark spice emerge from the glass. The savory, bright palate offers ripe red cherry, nutmeg and star anise alongside polished tannins and fresh acidity. It's made to be enjoyed young so drink soon. *LUX Wines. Editors' Choice.* —K.O.
abv: 13% **Price: \$17**



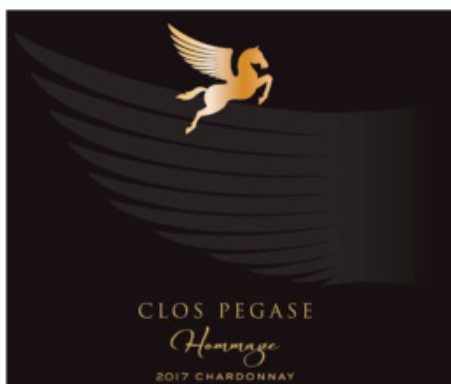
90 Allegri 2016 Palazzo della Torre (Veronese). Ripe dark berry, underbrush and spice aromas lead the nose. The savory, balanced palate offers dried black cherry, star anise and a touch of cinnamon alongside velvety tannins. Enjoy through 2024. *LUX Wines.* —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price: \$25**



90 Alpha Box & Dice NV Tarot Prosecco (Murray-Darling). This approachable sparkler offers attractive apple, pear and citrus notes backed by flowers and honey. The bubbles are bouncy and long-lived, buoying bright apple flavors. AB & D LLC. —C.P.
abv: 10% **Price:** \$20



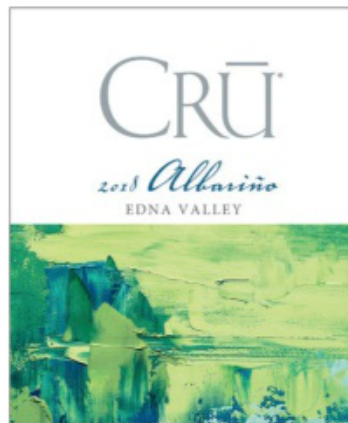
90 Bischöfliche Weingüter Trier 2018 DOM Off-Dry Riesling (Mosel). Layers of slate, wet stone and smoke linger from nose to finish into this easy-drinking but vivacious Riesling. Just a shade off dry, it balances juicy tangerine and grapefruit sweetness against zesty lemon peels and a thrilling edge of acidity. The finish is brisk and steely. Drink now–2024. Delicato Family Wines. —A.I.
abv: 11.5% **Price:** \$28



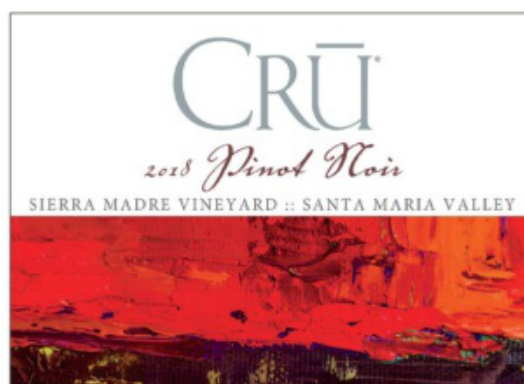
90 Clos Pegase 2017 Hommage Chardonnay (Carneros). This barrel-fermented white is rich and lush on the palate, with full-bodied layers of stone fruit and melon. Accents of vanilla and nutmeg mark the palate and lead to a creamy honey finish. —V.B.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$45



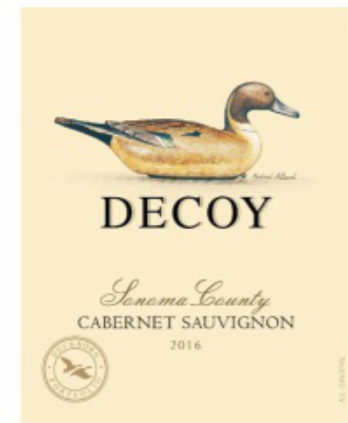
90 Colter's Creek 2017 Rocinante (Lewis-Clark Valley). A blend of Mourvèdre, Graciano and Malbec, this wine is pale in color, reminiscent of a Pinot Noir. The aromas show notes of fresh herbs, cherry, cranberry, white pepper and Satsuma orange. Light, peppery flavors follow, accented by bright acidity. It shows a lot of delicacy and should shine at the dinner table. Pair it with grilled lamb and chimichurri. *Editors' Choice.* —S.S.
abv: 13.3% **Price:** \$36



90 Crū 2018 Albariño (Edna Valley). Tightly wound aromas of melon, lime and grapefruit rind meet with white rocks, ash and ripe pear on the dynamic nose of this bottling. It's sharply acidic and citrus-driven on the palate, where flavors of grapefruit juice and rounder pear flesh prove pleasant. —M.K.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$20



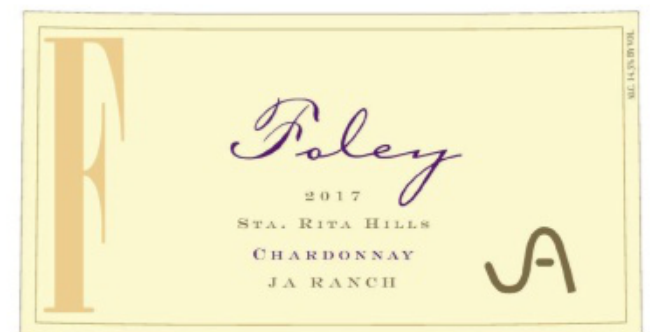
90 Crū 2018 Sierra Madre Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). Plump aromas of Bing cherry, hibiscus and cinnamon are opulent and creamy on the nose of this single-vineyard expression. The palate offers very pleasing flavors of cranberry and tart red plum, with elegant hints of thyme. —M.K.
abv: 12.9% **Price:** \$50



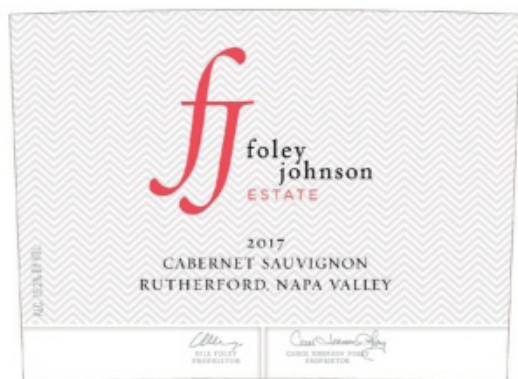
90 Decoy 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma County). This is a well-made, widely distributed wine, rich and refined in black olive, currant and dried herb. Smooth on the palate, it is well integrated and boldly flavored in lasting black fruit, mint and sage. *Editors' Choice.* —V.B.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$25



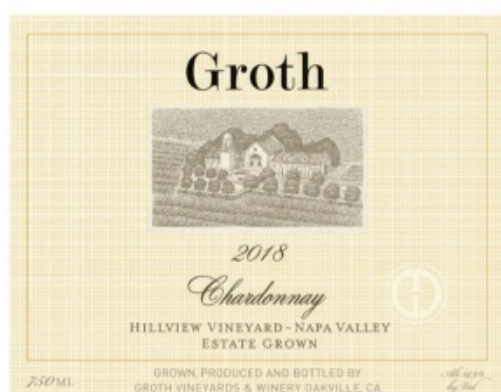
90 Ferrari-Carano 2016 PreVail West Face (Alexander Valley). Combining 66% Cabernet Sauvignon with 34% Syrah, this wine succeeds in delivering robust, hearty red-fruit flavor within a foundation of earth and tar. While big boned, it is also soft and supple in tannin, finding common ground in finishing notes of coffee and *garrique*. —V.B.
abv: 15.4% **Price:** \$70



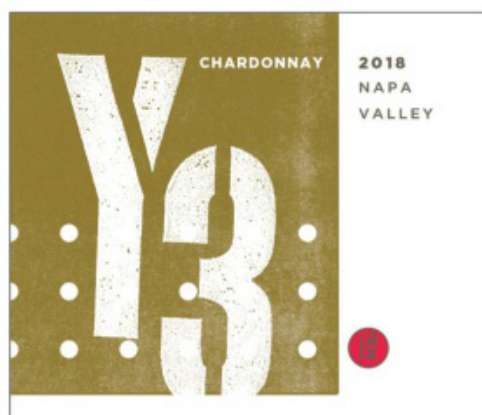
90 Foley 2017 JA Ranch Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills). Rich aromas of butter cream, salted caramel and a touch of tangerine pith make for a generous but dynamic nose on this bottling. There is compelling grip to the palate, where lemon and orange rind flavors play with oak and browned butter. —M.K.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$45



90 **Foley Johnson 2017 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford).** Textured and dense, this is a rewarding red wine that's blended with 14% Merlot and smaller amounts of Petit Verdot and Petite Sirah. Bright plum, cassis and cherry work well with the thick tannin profile and spicy oak. —V.B.
abv: 15.2% **Price:** \$50



90 **Groth 2018 Hillview Vineyard Estate Grown Chardonnay (Napa Valley).** This wine offers creamy elements of melon and stone fruit. It has a richness of pronounced oak that works well with the soft texture and overriding opulence. *Editors' Choice.* —V.B.
abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$35



90 **Jax 2018 Y3 Chardonnay (Napa Valley).** Fermented in concrete and then aged in neutral barrels, this white is juicy and densely concentrated. Caramelized apple and pear flavors are lifted by bright acidity, yielding an unfettered expression of fruit. —V.B.
abv: 13.2% **Price:** \$20



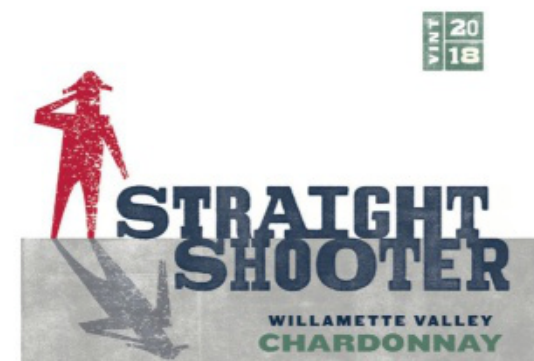
90 **Kendall-Jackson 2018 Vintner's Reserve Chardonnay (California).** Fruity, smooth and slightly spicy, this medium-bodied wine is a crowd-pleaser. Still one of the best Chardonnays with the broad California label designation, it offers delicious peach, ginger and vanilla flavors, and a good balance between ripeness and crispness. *Editors' Choice.* —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$17



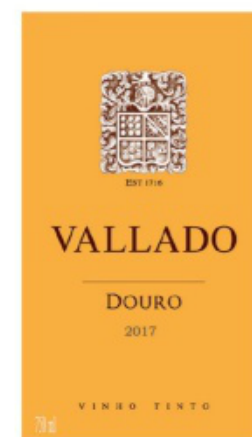
90 **Left Coast 2018 Truffle Hill Estate Chardonnay (Willamette Valley).** This is a tangy, lightly toasty white wine. Fermented in 80% neutral oak and 20% new French oak puncheons, it mixes in fresh apple, melon and white radish, spiced up by a dash of cinnamon. —P.G.
abv: 13.1% **Price:** \$24



90 **Left Coast 2017 Cali's Cuvée Estate Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley).** Production is up and quality consistent for this palate-pleasing wine. Flavors of raspberry and pomegranate anchor a well-balanced palate alongside details of dried tea and tobacco leaves. Aged in 15% new French oak, it finishes with lightly grainy but moderate tannins. —P.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$24



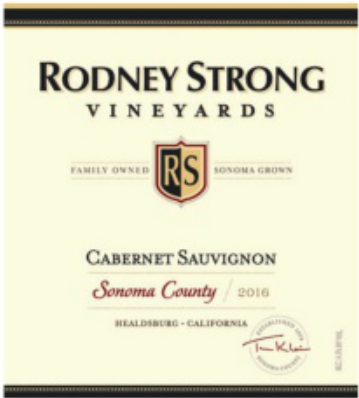
90 **Maison L'Envoyé 2018 Straight Shooter Chardonnay (Willamette Valley).** A good choice in an affordable Oregon Chardonnay, this young wine matches baked apple and pear fruit to a highlight of caramel. There's a buttery character alongside a slight hint of mint. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 13.2% **Price:** \$17



90 **Quinta do Vallado 2017 Vallado Tinto (Douro).** Some wood aging has given this wine its smooth, generous character. Firm tannins and blackberry fruits go together along with a rich texture and plenty of acidity to balance. Quintessential Wines. —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$23



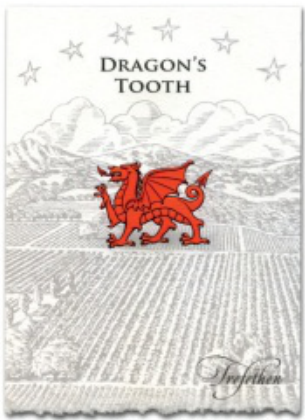
90 **Renwood 2017 Premier Old Vine Zinfandel (Amador County).** Hints of wood smoke and black pepper accent the deep, dark fruit flavors in this full-bodied and firmly textured wine. The concentrated berry core is framed by moderate tannins and a good touch of acidity. —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$20



90 Rodney Strong 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma County). Brawny blackberry, dark cherry and raspberry make for an inviting entry into this impressively likable wine. It is smooth, rounded and rich in feel. Touches of vanilla and baking spice season the whole, building to a velvety finish. *Editors' Choice.* —V.B.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$20



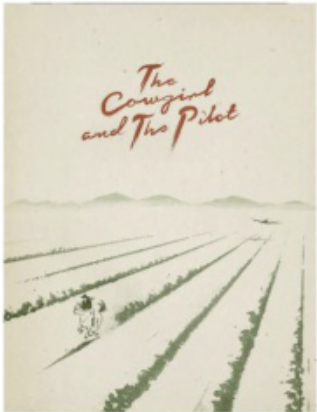
90 Terra d'Oro 2017 Zinfandel (Amador County). An attractive, sunbaked earthiness gives this full-bodied wine a distinctive edge as it pours out deep blackberry and grilled plum flavors that ride the mouthfilling texture. It's a warming, hearty wine with personality. —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$18



90 Trefethen 2017 Dragon's Tooth (Napa Valley). This combines 54% Malbec with 25% Cabernet Sauvignon, 16% Petit Verdot and 5% Merlot for a forceful red of powerful concentration. Sweet oak and burly black fruit combine around a spicy, meaty midpalate, with firm tannins extending on the finish. —V.B.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$65



90 Trefethen 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon (Oak Knoll District). This classic, elegant wine is food friendly and demure in red fruit and dried herb. Sinewy layers of integrated tannin and oak give it a cohesive feel on the lengthy, graceful palate. —V.B.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$65



90 Trefethen 2016 The Cowgirl and The Pilot Merlot (Oak Knoll District). Made from estate-grown fruit, this is a new offering from the historic producer that honors the founders of the winery. Herb, clove, bark and black tea give it a savory edge alongside a crushed rock element. —V.B.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$90

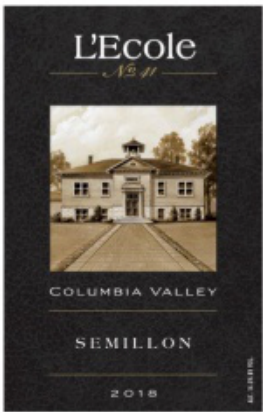


90 Wente 2018 Riva Ranch Vineyard Estate Grown Chardonnay (Arroyo Seco). Daffodil, white flower, Asian pear and almond aromas make for a clean and crisp nose in this single-vineyard expression from the pioneering family. It's lively and fresh in flavors of honeydew, pear and sea salt. —M.K.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$22



90 Ziata 2017 Chardonnay (Carneros). This crisp wine tastes of lemon zest, grapefruit and tangerine, with lively, fresh acidity. Integrated oak contributes underlying richness and contrast, finishing on an apple skin note. —V.B.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$55

BEST BUYS



91 L'Ecole No. 41 2018 Semillon (Columbia Valley). Generous aromas of fig, kiwi and freshly spun cotton lead to a full, flavorful palate that brings a sense of texture and richness. It stretches out on the long, warm finish. *Best Buy.* —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$15



91 Parducci 2016 Small Lot Petite Sirah (Mendocino County). This wine offers rich fruit flavors that are warm and saturated enough to nicely match the thick, tannic texture. Blackberry, black pepper and wood smoke flood the full-bodied palate. Best through 2026. *Best Buy.* —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$14

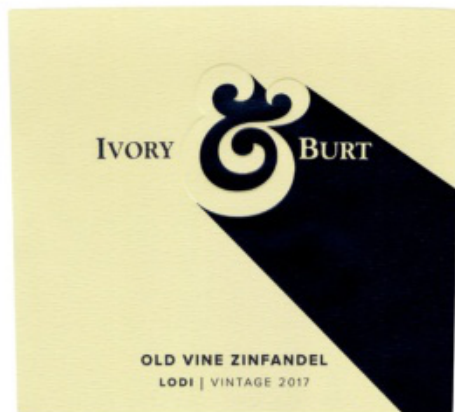
BEST BUYS



90 Bogle 2016 Petite Sirah (California). Full-bodied and intensely flavorful, this inky, dark wine is soaked in ripe blueberries and blackberries, with a lightly tannic texture. It's a great choice when the occasion calls for an assertive, lush and approachable wine. **Best Buy.** —J.G.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$12



90 Girasole 2018 Hybrid Red (Mendocino County). The pure expression of ripe blackberries in this jammy, uncomplicated but full-bodied wine is fun to taste. It wraps mild tannins around the potent fruit flavors, with a hint of black pepper. **Best Buy.** —J.G.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$14



90 Ivory and Burt 2017 Old Vine Zinfandel (Lodi). This wine nicely captures the lively side of the variety as it shows off vivid raspberry, blackberry and bramble aromas. Ripe but bright fruit flavors are accented by baking spices and black pepper on the palate, while firm acidity and mild tannins balance it all. **Best Buy.** —J.G.
abv: 15% **Price:** \$15

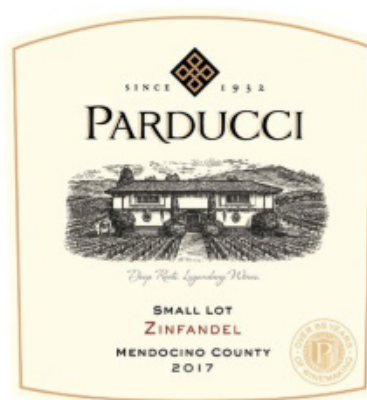
BEST BUYS



90 Martin Ray 2018 Sauvignon Blanc (Russian River Valley). This is a stainless-steel fermented and aged white wine that delivers earthy elements of mushroom and wet stone surrounded by stone fruit and Meyer lemon. Light, crisp and bright, it has nice balance and nuance. **Best Buy.** —V.B.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$15



90 McGuigan 2018 The Plan Chardonnay (South Eastern Australia). This young Chardonnay bursts with aromas of freshly sliced lemon, lime and peach, with an underlying oyster shell saltiness. The palate is well-balanced in elements of chalk, zingy acidity and ripe citrus fruit. Palm Bay International. **Best Buy.** —C.P.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$11



90 Parducci 2017 Small Lot Zinfandel (Mendocino County). It's hard to beat this medium- to full-bodied wine for lively, fresh fruitiness and zingy balance. Bright red-cherry, blackberry and raspberry notes fill the aroma and flavor, while good acidity and light tannins make for a nicely gripping texture. **Best Buy.** —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$14

BEST BUYS



89 Gen5 2018 Sauvignon Blanc (Lodi). This crisp, light-bodied wine practically explodes with aromas of fresh herbs, citrus fruits and smoked meat. Tangy acidity and a clean finish add to its appeal. **Best Buy.** —J.G.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$11

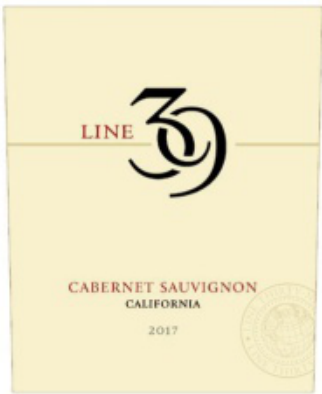


89 Line 39 2017 Pinot Noir (California). This is a solidly built, well-balanced wine that offers cranberry and red-cherry flavors, light tannins and a touch of crisp acidity. It's quite firm and snappy in texture, which yields an appetizing mouthfeel. **Best Buy.** —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$11



88 Indaba 2018 Chardonnay (Western Cape). This smells crisp and clean right off the bat, with medium-intense aromas of orange, yellow melon and ripe pear. The palate is light and easy-drinking, with ample acidity and flavors of baked pear and melon rind that lend subtle spice and a pithy bitterness through the medium-length close. Cape Classics. **Best Buy.** —L.B.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$12

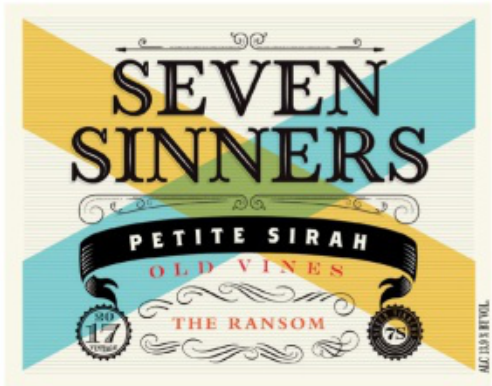
BEST BUYS



88 Line 39 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). This is a smooth and silky medium-bodied wine that wraps indulgent flavors of blueberry compote and raspberry syrup in a rich coating of fine-grained tannins. It's ripe and easygoing from start to finish. *Best Buy.* —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$11

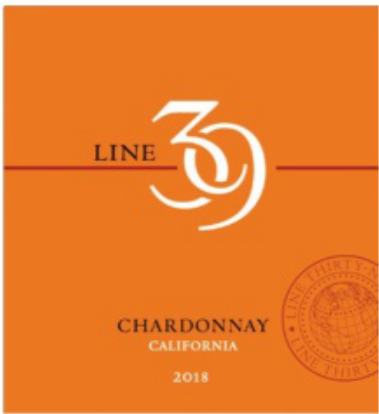


88 McManis 2018 Estate Grown Certified Sustainable Petite Sirah (Lodi). This potent, black-colored wine sends up cocoa and cola aromas, floods the palate with intense blackberry and smoke flavors and wraps them in a warm blanket of soft tannins. It's a lip-smacking, tooth-staining wine that's been tamed just enough to enjoy. *Best Buy.* —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$12

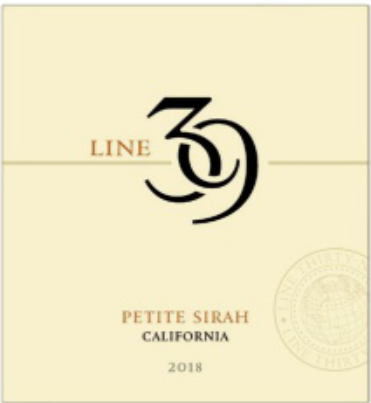


88 Seven Sinners 2017 The Ransom Old Vines Petite Sirah (California). Aromas of wood smoke, molasses and dried black figs are followed by ripe flavors of blackberry jam and blueberry. Lightly smoky, oak-spice accents add some complexity but don't interfere with the massive black-fruitiness of this wine. *Best Buy.* —J.G.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$13

BEST BUYS



87 Line 39 2018 Chardonnay (California). This is a good, ripe and fruity wine that's soft in texture. The medium to full body shows pleasant melon and ripe apple flavors. An extra creaminess coats the palate. *Best Buy.* —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$11

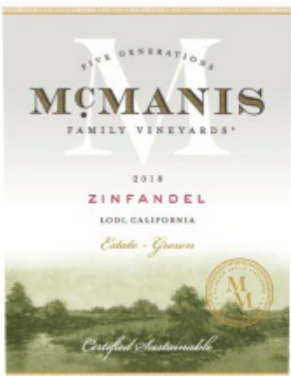


87 Line 39 2018 Petite Sirah (California). Strong aromas of wood smoke and charcoal coat ripe blackberry flavors in this full-bodied wine. Very firm tannins tighten up the mouthfeel. *Best Buy.* —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$11



87 Line 39 2018 Sauvignon Blanc (California). An earthy, flinty aroma and crisp citrus flavors give this medium-bodied wine an assertive character. It shows tangy acidity, grapefruit and lemon notes and light herbal accents. *Best Buy.* —J.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$11

BEST BUYS



87 McManis 2018 Estate Grown Certified Sustainable Zinfandel (Lodi). This wine is ripe and juicy, offering concentrated blackberry and blueberry aromas, rich fruit flavors and a hint of spicy oak. It's plush in texture and pretty soft in tannin. It's interesting that 15% of Teroldego and 8% of Petite Sirah were blended in. *Best Buy.* —J.G.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$12

SPIRITS



93 Barrow's Intense Ginger Liqueur (USA; Proof of Concept, Brooklyn, NY). Look for a cloudy pale lemon hue, with a sweet ginger aroma and a hint of lemon peel. The viscous palate opens sweet and finishes long and warming, with plenty of gingery zing, a mouthwatering citric quality and flurry of white pepper sparks.
abv: 22% **Price:** \$32



92 Misceo Coffee Liqueur (USA; Allied Wine, Ellenville, NY). This vodka-based liqueur looks, smells and tastes much like sweetened espresso. The bold palate is not too overbearing on the coffee notes, allowing pleasing caramel to emerge along with a refreshing mentholated exhale. Would be dynamite in espresso martinis. Kosher.
abv: 35% **Price:** \$35

RIESLING TROCKEN

94 Schmitt's Kinder 2017 Randersackerer Ewig Leben Riesling Trocken (Franken). Light footed and finely filigreed, this dry, dancing Riesling offers piercing white-peach and lemon flavors edged by steel and honey. It's a gorgeous wine that's irresistible now but should gain complexity through 2030 and hold even further. Rudi Wiest Selections. —A.I.
abv: 11.5% Price: \$42

93 Schäfer-Fröhlich 2017 Schiefergestein Riesling Trocken (Nahe). Dusty minerals and bracing white grapefruit collide from nose to palate in this revitalizing dry Riesling. Its citrus flavors are mouthfilling, edged by zesty hits of salt and stone—a refreshing Margarita-like sip to enjoy now through 2030. Rudi Wiest Selections. —A.I.
abv: 13% Price: \$48

93 Schloss Lieser 2017 SL Helden Riesling Spätlese Trocken (Mosel). Intense minerality takes center stage in this delicate dry Riesling. Flavors of lime and tangerine are concentrated but racy, edged by a whisper of petrol and deep veins of slate and smoke. It's dancingly light on its feet but silky and lingering. It is thrilling in its youth but is likely to gain complexity from 2022 and improve further still. Rudi Wiest Selections. *Editors' Choice.* —A.I.
abv: 12% Price: \$38

92 Domdechant Werner 2018 Hochheimer Dompräsenz Riesling Trocken Erste Lage (Rheingau). Rejuvenating whiffs of lemon verbena and eucalyptus accent lemon and grapefruit in this full-bodied Riesling. The palate is quite mouth-watering, anchored by zippy streaks of lemon and lime acidity. This dry wine is lovely now but is likely to hold through 2030. Miller Squared Inc. —A.I.
abv: 13% Price: \$35

92 Domdechant Werner 2018 Hochheimer Kirchenstück Riesling Trocken Erste Lage (Rheingau). While the nose is demure, flavors of tart tangerine and white grapefruit abound in this dry full-bodied Riesling. It's vibrantly fruity but structured by crisp lemon-lime acidity and a firm, steely frame. It drinks beautifully already but will hold through 2030. Miller Squared Inc. —A.I.
abv: 13% Price: \$30

92 Pfeffingen 2017 Ungstein Terra Ross Riesling Trocken (Pfalz). This is an irresistibly pretty wine, wafting of blossoms and lemon zest. It's buoyantly juicy but dry in style, edged by bracing acidity and lingering touches of spice and tannin. This drinks beautifully already but is substantial enough to improve through 2027. Rudi Wiest Selections. —A.I.
abv: 13% Price: \$32

91 Fritz Haag 2018 Riesling Trocken (Mosel). Dazzling mineral and earth tones lend gravitas to buoyantly fruity grapefruit and tangerine in this dry, ethereal Riesling. It's vivacious and spry,

finishing on a breathless spray of lime. Drink now through 2024. Loosen Bros. USA. —A.I.
abv: 12% Price: \$20

91 Rudolf Fürst 2017 Pur Mineral Riesling Trocken (Franken). Spice and smoke lend piquant top notes to concentrated lemon and quince in this dry, medium-bodied Riesling. It's a slender, focused wine, anchored by zesty acidity and a firm mineral undertow. Approachable already but it should hold well through 2025. Rudi Wiest Selections. —A.I.
abv: 11.5% Price: \$25

90 Domdechant Werner 2018 Guts Riesling Trocken (Rheingau). Hints of spring blossom and lemon zest introduce this bright, thirst-quenching Riesling. It's dry in style but bursts with fresh white-peach and grapefruit flavors. The finish is marked by revitalizing acidity and a strike of steel. Lovely now but it should hold well through 2025. Miller Squared Inc. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% Price: \$19

90 Robert Weil 2018 Riesling Trocken (Rheingau). Invigorating and spry, this light-bodied dry Riesling suggests pristine lemon and grapefruit flavors accented by layers of smoke, cut stone and dried herb. It's a thirst-quenching, stately wine that's ready to enjoy now but should hold through 2025. Loosen Bros. USA. —A.I.
abv: 12% Price: \$20

CHIANTI CLASSICO GRAN SELEZIONE

97 Castello di Ama 2016 Vigneto La Casuccia Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). Mature black-skinned berry, rose, tilled soil and a balsamic whiff of eucalyptus shape the nose. The bright, elegant palate has energy, tension and depth, delivering ripe wild cherry, red plum, licorice and crushed botanical herb. Taut, fine-grained tannins lend polished support while fresh acidity keeps it balanced. A gorgeous wine. Drink through 2031. The Sorting Table. *Cellar Selection.* —K.O.
abv: 13.5% Price: \$250

96 Castello di Ama 2016 San Lorenzo Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). A blend of 80% Sangiovese, 13% Merlot and 7% Malvasia Nera, this opens with aromas of black- and red-skinned berry, pipe tobacco, tilled earth and a whiff of new leather. Elegant and taut, the palate shows tension, verve and finesse, delivering juicy Marasca cherry, crushed raspberry, licorice and hints of French oak. It's balanced, with polished, fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Drink 2021–2036. The Sorting Table. *Cellar Selection.* —K.O.
abv: 13.5% Price: \$NA

96 Castello di Ama 2016 Vigneto Bellavista Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). Aromas of black-skinned fruit, dark spice and sunbaked soil mingle with whiffs of camphor and forest floor on this enticing blend of 80% Sangiovese and 20%

Malvasia Nera. The elegant, structured palate delivers black plum, ripe black cherry, star anise and crushed mint while firm, polished tannins provide support and finesse. It’s well balanced, with bright acidity, while an earthy hint of game gives the finish depth. Drink 2023–2036. The Sorting Table. —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$250

94 Castello di Albola 2016 Solatio Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). This 100% Sangiovese boasts enticing scents of fragrant purple flower, new leather, black-skinned berry, star anise and a balsamic whiff of camphor. Smooth and elegant, the vibrant palate offers succulent black cherry, raspberry compote, licorice and cinnamon alongside taut, fine-grained tannins. Thanks to high vineyard altitudes, it has great freshness and balance for the scorching vintage. Drink 2022–2031. 1821 Fine Wines & Spirits. *Cellar Selection.* —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$90

93 Ruffino 2016 Romitorio di Santedame Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). Intense aromas of red berry, eucalyptus, leather and tobacco lead the nose on this fragrant blend of 90% Sangiovese and 10% Colorino. The juicy, structured palate doles out pomegranate, red cherry, clove and cinnamon alongside firm, fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Enjoy 2022–2030. Constellation Brands, Inc. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$NA

93 Valiano 2015 Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). Made with 90% Sangiovese and 10% Merlot, this single-vineyard bottling boasts aromas of ripe dark-skinned fruit, violet, cocoa and earthy whiff of truffle. Elegantly structured, the linear palate delivers crushed blackberry, Morello cherry, licorice and a hint of roasted coffee bean framed in velvety tannins. Drink 2021–2027. Foley Family Wines. —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$NA

93 Volpaia 2015 Il Puro Casanova Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). Aromas of mature plum and black cherry mingle with whiffs of French oak and scorched earth. The full-bodied palate evokes dried cherry, prune, toasted hazelnut and tobacco alongside velvety, enveloping tannins. Drink through 2027. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —K.O.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$NA

RISERVA

95 Volpaia 2016 Riserva (Chianti Classico). Varietal aromas of violet, plum and black-skinned berry shape the nose on this fragrant, polished red. On the fresh, delicious palate, velvety tannins accompany juicy wild cherry, crushed raspberry and baking spice. It’s nicely balanced, with bright acidity. Wilson Daniels Ltd. *Editors’ Choice.* —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$35

94 Felsina 2016 Rancia Riserva (Chianti Classico). Mature black-skinned berry aromas mingle with balsamic whiffs of eucalyptus, new leather and a hint of violet. Taut and linear,

the elegant palate delivers ripe Marasca cherry, brown spice, exotic incense and a minty finish. It’s balanced, with fresh acidity. Drink 2022–2036. Polaner Selections. —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$60

93 Cinciano 2015 Riserva (Chianti Classico). This 100% Sangiovese opens with enticing aromas of black-skinned berry, underbrush, violet, and leather. The delicious, structured palate delivers ripe black cherry, raspberry, tobacco and black pepper alongside bracing but refined tannins. It’s balanced, with fresh acidity. Drink 2021–2029. Noble Harvest, LLC. —K.O.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$38

93 Istine 2016 Levigne Riserva (Chianti Classico). Made with organically grown Sangiovese, this offers aromas of dark-skinned berry, violet, cooking spice and new leather. The vibrant, structured palate delivers juicy black cherry, licorice and tobacco alongside fine-grained tannins and firm acidity. Drink 2022–2031. Oliver McCrum Wines. *Cellar Selection.* —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$50

93 Marchesi Antinori 2015 Villa Antinori Riserva (Chianti Classico). For full review see page 92.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$35

92 Felsina 2016 Berardenga Riserva (Chianti Classico). Aromas of exotic spice and black plum mingle with notes of wild herb and a whiff of oak. On the tight elegant palate, firm close-grained tannins support red cherry, pomegranate, chopped mint and star anise while bright acidity lends balance. It’s still youthfully austere so give it time to fully develop. Drink 2024–2036. Polaner Selections. *Cellar Selection.* —K.O.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$35

92 Marchesi Antinori 2016 Marchese Antinori Tenuta Tignanello Riserva (Chianti Classico). For full review see page 94. *Cellar Selection.*
abv: 14% **Price:** \$45

BEAUJOLAIS
SAINT-AMOUR

94 Domaine de la Pirolette 2017 La Poulette (Saint-Amour). One of a pair of single-vineyard wines, this was aged in concrete eggs for 16 months. Open and ripe, it has a smooth texture that belies the firm tannins underneath. Structure, black fruits and richness all come together. Let the wine age until 2021. David Bowler Wine. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$34

93 Domaine de la Pirolette 2017 Le Carjot (Saint-Amour). This single-parcel wine was partially aged in wood for 16 months. That has brought spice to the perfumed fruits and rich tannins, giving the wine plenty of aging potential. The finish shows

the youth of the wine, with hints of licorice that will soften as it matures further. Drink from 2021. David Bowler Wine. —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$34

92 Domaine Chardigny 2018 Clos de la Folie (Saint-Amour). Wood aging has given this wine an impressive extra dimension. Along with the ripe black-cherry fruits, the wine has spice and a generous texture of perfumes and richness. It is fuller than a typical Beaujolais cru, but it is attractive and will be ready from late 2020. American B.D. *Editors’ Choice.* —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$25

92 Domaine de la Pirolette 2018 Saint-Amour. Bright strawberry aromas mark this wine immediately. The structure of the palate is typical of the appellation, giving shape and density to this ripe, fruity wine. Drink from 2021. David Bowler Wine. —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$24

92 Domaine des Chers 2018 Arbre de Vie (Saint-Amour). Aging in large wooden barrels has marked this wine with spice and a light touch of toastiness that contrasts with the ripe black fruits and good acidity. The aftertaste continues the theme of richness and generosity. Drink the wine from late 2020. Alain Junguenet Selection. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$45

92 Pascal Berthier 2018 Esprit de Séduction (Saint-Amour). This ripe wine is textured, with light tannins and generous black fruits. It is concentrated, with a good future as it smooths out and releases the fruitiness. Drink the wine from 2021. Jerome Selection. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$20

FLEURIE

94 Château du Châtelard 2016 Renaissance (Fleurie). Now approaching maturity, this wine is intense, rich with coffee as well as dark fruit flavors. Its tannins and concentration come from the selection of parcels of old vines. With its good acidity, this smoky, perfumed wine is ready to drink. Wineberry America LLC. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$NA

93 Château du Châtelard 2018 Cuvée les Vieux Granits (Fleurie). Celebrating the granitic soil of the northern Beaujolais, this young wine is strongly mineral in texture. Firm tannins and dark black fruits are lit by perfumes and rich black-plum flavors. The wine needs to age, so drink from 2021. Wineberry America LLC. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$NA

93 Domaine Anita 2018 Les Moriers No. 3 (Fleurie). This small-production wine comes from one of the top vineyard sites in Fleurie. Perfumed, it has richness, intensity and the makings of

opulence. This wine will benefit from aging. Drink from 2021. AP Wine Imports. —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$28

93 **Domaine de Roche-Guillon 2018 Clos de la Tour (Fleurie).** This powerfully structured wine has dense tannins and vibrant black fruits. Its richness and touches of spice and smokiness are part of a ripe wine that will age. Drink from 2021. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$30

93 **Domaine Dubost 2018 Le Vivier (Fleurie).** This wood-aged wine comes from one of the best areas of Fleurie. Perfumed with violets and with dusty tannins, it has a sumptuous character, packed with ripe black fruit. This is a wine with aging potential, ready to drink from 2021. Kindred Vines. *Editors' Choice.* —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$26

93 **Lucien Lardy 2018 Les Moriers (Fleurie).** A vineyard planted by the current owner's grandfather in 1911 has produced a strongly textured, firm and concentrated wine. With its dark fruit and solidity, the wood-aged wine is ready to age. Drink from 2021. Zancanella Importing Co. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$30

93 **Yohan Lardy 2018 Le Vivier (Fleurie).** Produced from 70-year-old vines and aged in wood, this wine has great potential. The tannins and succulent, ripe black fruits are already impressive. They will come together well over the next year, so this wine will be best from 2021. Bonhomie Wine Imports. *Editors' Choice.* —R.V.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$25

PORTUGAL RED WINES LISBOA

94 **Quinta do Monte d'Oiro 2015 Reserva (Lisboa).** This classic northern Rhône blend has great structure and strong hints both of current richness and a fine future maturity. The wine is beautifully concentrated, bringing in spice from wood aging and a juicy black-fruit character. The wine is likely to be ready to drink from 2022. Alt Wines. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$60

93 **Companhia das Quintas 2016 Quinta de Pancas Reserva (Lisboa).** This showpiece estate in the heart of the Lisboa region has produced

a serious, dense wine that has rich tannins, black fruits and potential. The wine, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Touriga Nacional and Syrah is both firm and ripe, dense and fruity. Drink this fine wine from 2021. Sarmento's Imports. *Editors' Choice.* —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$30

93 **Quinta de Sant'Ana 2015 Homenagem Baron Gustav von Fürstenberg (Lisboa).** This wine is a very fine blend of Merlot and Touriga Nacional. Now at its peak, this wine, made only in good years, has fine secondary flavors, rich tannins, spice and wood. It is ready to drink. Wine Authorities. —R.V.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$38

92 **Quinta de Sant'Ana 2015 Touriga Nacional (Lisboa).** This is an impressive wine. Its expression of Touriga Nacional brings out perfumes, rich tannins and dense black fruits. Wood aging has added spice to the mix. The wine is ready to drink, but will continue to age. Wine Authorities. —R.V.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$38

92 **Quinta do Pinto 2014 Estate Collection (Lisboa).** Now mature, this is a rich blend of five different grapes. Its richness comes from the dense texture as well as the backdrop of tannins. With a dry core well in place, and juicy vegetal

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and spice flavors, the wine is ready to drink. Cru Selections. —R.V.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$18

91 Companhia das Quintas 2016 Quinta de Pancas (Lisboa). The 11 months in wood have given this rich wine a powerful structure. It has also brought out the jammy blackberry fruits, the ripe tannins and wine’s density. This is a bold wine, packed with tannins, perfumed fruit and structure. Drink from 2021. Sarmento’s Imports. —R.V.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$50

91 Quinta do Monte d’Oiro 2017 Syrah (Lisboa). From a producer that specializes in Rhône varieties, this pure Syrah is rich, elegant, spicy. It has a fine structure as well as juicy, rich black fruits. There is a smoky, leathery edge that hints at future maturity. Drink from 2021. Alt Wines. —R.V.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$16

ALENTEJANO

95 Fitapreta Vinhos 2015 Preta Cuvée David Booth (Alentejano). Produced in memory of David Bruce, one of the founding partners of the winery, this is a rich, very southern wine. Its warm, mature character has a solid foundation in rich berries that are now showing secondary flavors, supported by the tannins. The wine is very fine, ready to drink now. Olé Imports. —R.V.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$111

94 J. Portugal Ramos 2015 Estremus (Alentejano). This is a serious wine from a small parcel of vines that is flecked with marble in the soil. By no means mature, the wine’s density and power is impressive. The strong mineral texture goes with the rich oak and black-fruit flavors to give a wine that has a long-term future. Drink from 2022. —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$150

93 Cortes de Cima 2014 Reserva (Alentejano). The five years of aging has given this wood-matured wine authority and richness. It is totally ready to drink with its generous tannins, spice and juicy acidity. It is an impressive wine. Tri-Vin Imports. —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$110

93 Fitapreta Vinhos 2017 Palpite Reserva (Alentejano). Powerfully rich in feel, this dense wine is full of black fruits that combine with ripe tannins. The wine’s power is impressive, happily partnered with a fresh aftertaste. Drink from late 2020. Olé Imports. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
abv: 15% **Price:** \$48

91 Companhia das Quintas 2016 Portas da Herdade Reserva (Alentejano). It is the 50% Alicante Bouschet in the blend that gives this wine its richness and deep color. The wood aging has softened the tannins while deepening the wine’s concentration. Still developing, the wine should be ready from 2021. Sarmento’s Imports. —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$20

91 Cortes de Cima 2015 Petit Verdot (Alentejano). A fine, perfumed wine, full of ripe tannins and dense black fruits, this brings out all the virtues of this Bordeaux grape. It brings concentration, a balance of blackberry fruits and a fine structure. Drink the wine now. Tri-Vin Imports. —R.V.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$65

91 J. Portugal Ramos 2017 Quinta da Viçosa (Alentejano). Blending Aragonez with Syrah gives a richly smooth-textured wine. The wine comes from a single quinta in the region of Estremoz. Its tannins and bountiful black fruits are ripe and full bodied. Drink from 2022. MundoVino–Winebow. —R.V.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$40

GREECE

MALAGOUSIA

90 Giannikos 2018 Windmill Malagousia (Peloponnese). This wine has spritely grapefruit, lemon and pear tones but plenty of complexity and structure, too. Layers of flavor and acidity unfold on the palate, making it a wine for contemplation and savoring. It finishes with a touch of apricot. Terroir Wine Group. —S.K.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$20

90 Mylonas 2018 Malagousia (Attica). This wine’s subtle nose offers a whiff of rose and peach, with floral and pear flavors offering a balanced and refined palate. It is a crowd pleasing pour with a soft touch. Diamond Importers Inc. —S.K.
abv: 12% **Price:** \$NA

88 Avantis 2018 Estate Malagousia (Evia). This wine offers a burst of pear and rose aromas, with rich tropical fruit flavors on the palate and a chalky finish. Slightly simplistic in flavor profile but effective, this is a great everyday white that would be delicious with a brie or a creamy cheese. Dionysos Imports Inc. —S.K.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$16

SAUVIGNON BLANC

92 Alpha Estate 2018 Sauvignon Blanc (Florina). This wine starts with a beautiful nose of tropical fruit and fresh herbs. On the palate, its grapefruit and citrus flavors are wrapped in a soft smokiness, and the finish ends with a bit of structured snap. Overall, this is a wine with an excellent balance of refinement and punch. Diamond Importers Inc. —S.K.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$22

90 Alpha Estate 2017 Sauvignon Blanc (Florina). This white offers a brisk, lemony nose, with a touch of dried herb and lemon peel. Its linear style is tart, clean and cuts like a knife. Diamond Importers Inc. —S.K.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$19

90 Kir-Yianni 2017 Samaropetra Estate Grown Sauvignon Blanc (Florina). This elegant pour starts with a mineral-focused nose of wet slate. On the palate, lots of saline and smoke arise alongside brisk acidity, with some exotic fruit on the back palate. It leaves an appealing, lingering flavor of saline and fruit on the finish. Diamond Importers Inc. —S.K.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$NA

89 Alpha Estate 2018 Fumé Kaliva Single Block Sauvignon Blanc (Florina). Aged 7 months in barrique, this white begins with an orange marmalade and lemon compote nose. It’s fruity in style but with an appealing smoky finish. The overall character is mouthfilling but its clean edge keeps it lively. Diamond Importers Inc. —S.K.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$33

89 Lykos Winery 2016 Panseloines Dry Sauvignon Blanc (Central Greece). This white offers a juicy, vibrant nose of pineapple and citrus. A brisk saline and lemon combination carries the structured palate, leading to a spicy finish. Wine Universe Corp. —S.K.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$NA

ARGENTINA

MALBEC

92 Terrazas de Los Andes 2015 Single Vineyard Las Compuertas Malbec (Mendoza). Ripe, chunky black-fruit aromas are swathed in minty oak and vanilla, while accents of black olive and prune are part of the nose. A round, full palate is enlivened by tartaric kick before going quiet, while ripe berry, prune and cassis flavors finish flat and dense. Drink now. Moët Hennessy USA. —M.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$65

91 Infinito 2015 Winemaker’s Selection Malbec (Mendoza). A saturated dark-purple color and heady aromas of raisin and blackberry push this Malbec to the cusp of overripe. Sappy extraction means the palate feel is heavy, while jammy blackberry and prune flavors are a throwback to 15 years ago, when size and ripeness dominated the Malbec scene in Argentina. While this is fleshy and big on the finish, elegance is not part of the formula. Drink now. W. Direct. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$42

91 Tikal 2015 Amorio A Blend of Malbecs Paraje Altamira Malbec (Mendoza). A deep-purple color sets up grapey, slightly reduced blackberry aromas that are forceful but not nuanced. The same can be said for a flush palate that’s full of exotic berry, spicy oak and cassis flavors. On the finish, this bullish Malbec remains lusty and fruit-packed; drink through 2023. Vine Connections. —M.S.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$33

90 Casa Natal 2015 Reserva Malbec (Mendoza). A dark-purple color and bright plum and cassis aromas, with a note of iodine, open this

sappy, tannic, grapey Malbec. Deep plum and cassis flavors are gamy and foxy, while rubbing tannins make a fleshy finish feel grabby. Drink through 2022. W. Direct. —M.S.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$38

88 Bodega Goulart 2015 M The Marshall Reserva Single Vineyard Old Vines Malbec (Mendoza).

Earthy berry aromas are outmatched by resinous oak on a nose that offers stalky fruit, wood grain, clove and asphalt scents. An edgy palate feels resinous, while this mostly deals flavors of wood and oak spice. Dry tannins and oak-based clove and cardamom leftovers control the finish. Opici Wines. —M.S.

abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$25

88 Bressia 2017 Sylvestra Malbec (Mendoza).

Neutral aromas are capped with crusty berry darkness. Juicy acidity and skins-driven tannins make for a rough palate, while plum and red-berry flavors are mostly pure and free of oak. A fresh finish wraps up this high-energy Malbec. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$17

CALIFORNIA

MERLOT

95 La Jota Vineyard 2016 Merlot (Howell Mountain).

This tremendously impressive red wine is blended with small amounts of Petit Verdot and Tannat and given 20 months in French oak, a good majority of it new. Reductive at first, it expands to show root beer, cedar and dried herb in a classically structured and hugely concentrated frame of big tannin and weight. Enjoy 2026–2031. *Cellar Selection.* —V.B.

abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$85

94 Mt. Brave 2016 Merlot (Mount Veeder).

This is a brawny, herbal and structured wine from the great appellation, as wild and challenging as its provenance. Cedar, dried herb and clove surround dense black currant, licorice and brambly blackberry, with sinewy tannin and toasted oak in abundance. This will do well in the cellar; best 2026–2031. *Cellar Selection.* —V.B.

abv: 15.1% **Price:** \$80

90 Acre 2016 Merlot (Napa Valley).

For full review see page 97.

abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$32

90 Beaulieu Vineyard 2017 Merlot (Napa Valley).

Demure plummy red fruit is wrapped in thick, concentrated layers of body and ripeness in this well-made, approachable wine, which is richly seasoned in toasted oak-influenced baking spice and vanilla. —V.B.

abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$25

90 Kendall-Jackson 2016 Vintner's Reserve Merlot (Sonoma County).

Herbal, meaty and generously fruity in plum and dark cherry, this wine is approachable and deeply concentrated, with

ample complexity around its soft, supple tannin profile and integrated oak. The finish is textured and dusty in crushed rock. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$24

90 Trefethen 2017 Estate Grown Merlot (Oak Knoll District).

Deeply evocative of red fruit, dried herb and cedar, this soft supple wine offers an elegant style of complex structure and approachable texture and weight. Balanced and impressively quiet, it finishes in a woody note of oak. —V.B.

abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$45

90 Trefethen 2016 The Cowgirl and The Pilot Merlot (Oak Knoll District).

For full review see page 100. —V.B.

abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$90

90 V. Sattui 2016 Merlot (Napa Valley).

This is a supple red with small additions of Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec and Petit Verdot. Mocha chocolate, clove and integrated oak ride a foundation of supple tannin and soft, lengthy texture. —V.B.

abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$39

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BUYINGGUIDE

ZINFANDEL

93 Bedrock Wine 2018 Schmiedt Road Zinfandel (Lodi). Great focus and a sense of purity make this full-bodied wine stand out from the pack. It offers gorgeous blackberry and bramble aromas, a lively but concentrated palate packed with more berries and black currants. Fresh acidity and moderate tannins set it up as a fine palate-cleanser and will help it age. Best through 2026. *Cellar Selection.* —J.G.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$42

93 V. Sattui 2017 Pilgrim Vineyard Old Vine Zinfandel (Lodi). This opulent, full-bodied wine made from 64-year-old vines offers luxurious, ripe berry flavors that drench the palate, subtle oak spices for complexity and a seamless texture from the first sip to the long, lingering finish. *Editors' Choice.* —J.G.
abv: 15.5% **Price:** \$39

92 Broken Earth 2017 Vineyard Select Zinfandel (Paso Robles). Clean blackberry sorbet, vanilla ice cream and crushed slate aromas make for a complex and inviting nose on this bottling. It's clean and expressive on the palate as well, offering dark strawberry, creamy vanilla and strong spice notes, with just enough tannin and acid to conclude the finish. —M.K.
abv: 16% **Price:** \$29

92 Lorenzi Estate 2016 Reserve Zinfandel (Temecula Valley). Black-plum extract, lavender, candied pomegranate and cinnamon-roll aromas make for a hedonistic entry to the nose of this bottling. Strong licorice and blackberry flavors are framed by oak on the rich, pleasing sip. —M.K.
abv: 15.3% **Price:** \$55

92 Mettler Family Vineyards 2017 Epicenter Old Vine Zinfandel (Lodi). For full review see page 94.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$25

92 Starr 2016 Phil's Selection Zinfandel (Sierra Foothills). This concentrated and full-bodied wine blends herbal, earthy accents with appealing blackberry flavors, mild tannins and a sense of depth on the palate. It offers enticing complexity, great structure and a long finish. —J.G.
abv: 15% **Price:** \$24

OREGON

PINOT GRIS

92 Dion 2018 Pinot Gris (Chehalem Mountains). It's a shame there isn't more of this aromatic and thoroughly captivating, estate-grown white wine. Bold Honeycrisp apple and pear fruit flavors carry a whiff of marshmallow, and fermentation in all-stainless tanks means that lovely fruit

remains unshackled by any barrel influences. Drink through 2021. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$19

92 Foris 2018 Pinot Gris (Rogue Valley). There isn't another estate-based winery in Oregon that delivers such excellent wines at these prices. This textural, mineral-drenched wine hints at honeysuckle, lemongrass and fresh spring herbs. The fruit centers on white peach and peppery daikon radish. The balance, harmony, texture and length are impressive. *Best Buy.* —P.G.
abv: 14% **Price:** \$14

92 King Estate 2018 Domaine Estate Grown Made with Biodynamic Grapes Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley). For full review see page 94.
abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$29

92 Maysara 2018 Arsheen Pinot Gris (McMinnville). A penetrating pungency amps up the herbal side of the grape here, adding the spicy character that is more often found in Sauvignon Blancs. The fruit flavors mix lemon, melon and juicy pineapple. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$18

92 Winter's Hill 2017 Reserve Pinot Gris (Dundee Hills). This is a block selection, fermented in both barrels and stainless steel. Deep, delicious fruit flavors plow down with lush, freshly cut pear front and center. There's a whiff of coconut, perhaps from the barrels, and trailing notes of pepper and red hot candy. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 13.4% **Price:** \$29

91 King Estate 2018 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley). For full review see page 96. *Editors' Choice.*
abv: 13.4% **Price:** \$19

91 Westmount 2018 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley). Though not as ripely fruity as the excellent 2017, this surpasses it with a crystalline focus on apple, pear and kiwifruit. It's framed in textural flavors of skin tannins, adding dimension and crisp detail through the long finish. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.
abv: 12.6% **Price:** \$20

90 Aubichon Cellars 2017 Sur Peaux Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley). In 2017 the winery changed its Pinot Gris rosé to an orange wine, with a French moniker that translates as "on the skins." It's a barrel-fermented wine from the excellent Lazy River vineyard. Soft and approachable, its buffed fruits hint at tropical flavors. As with all orange wines, which are orange due to intentional oxidation, this is best consumed within a year of its release. —P.G.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$45

90 Panther Creek 2018 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley). There's nothing too fancy here, but the wonderfully fresh flavors of pear and grapefruit really shine. All-stainless fermented, it shows a finishing touch of lemon zest as it fades. —P.G.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$20

WASHINGTON RED BLENDS

93 Avennia 2017 Gravura (Columbia Valley). Cabernet Sauvignon (47%) and Merlot (42%) make up the heart of this wine, with Cabernet Franc providing its soul. The aromas impress, with notes of bay leaf, thyme, graphite, dark coffee, raspberry and spice. The palate is classically styled and exquisitely balanced, bringing a sense of sophistication and detail, with plentiful cherry and herb accents. There's lovely sense of complexity. Firm, slightly green tannins back it all up. Just a baby now, it wants some time in the bottle to grow up. Best from 2024 to 2032. *Cellar Selection.* —S.S.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$40

93 Avennia 2017 Justine (Yakima Valley). Grenache (61%) is in the lead on this wine, followed by Mourvèdre (23%) and Syrah. Alluring aromas of raspberry, blueberry, thistle, herb, smoked meat and black pepper are followed by lush, achingly pure red and blue fruit flavors, accented by a lovely sense of spicing. It's deft but pure. Smoked meat and black pepper notes linger on the extremely long finish. The balance throughout is impressive—a complete stunner. Best from 2023 to 2030, with good life beyond that. *Editors' Choice.* —S.S.
abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$40

93 Grosgrain 2018 Petit Grosgrain (Walla Walla Valley). For full review see page 91. *Editors' Choice.*
abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$24

92 Involuntary Commitment 2018 Red Wine (Columbia Valley). This side project from the folks at Andrew Will is consistently one of the best values in the state. A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot, with coffee, cherry and savory herb aromas out front. The palate brings a sense of balance, intensity, depth, purity and sophistication. —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$20

92 L'Ecole No. 41 2017 Estate Grown Merlot-Cabernet Franc (Walla Walla Valley). This wine is equal parts Ferguson and Seven Hills Vineyards and is similarly split between these two varieties. The aromas are locked up at present, with notes of graphite, cedar, barrel spice, coffee, dried herb, cherry, cranberry and anise coming out with coaxing. Plump, ripe fruit flavors follow, accented by vibrant acidity and enough tannic structure to go the distance. It flat out impresses. Best 2023–2033. *Cellar Selection.* —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$39

92 L'Ecole No. 41 2017 Ferguson Estate Vineyard (Walla Walla Valley). Cabernet Sauvignon (60%) and Merlot (28%) comprise the majority of this wine, with Cabernet Franc (7%) and Malbec rounding it out. Aromas of dried leaf, savory herb, dark chocolate, cassis and dried thyme draw you into the glass. The palate shows a sense of pol-

ish to the classically styled cranberry and cherry flavors. Lively acidity and brawny, slightly green tannins back it all up. Oak spices linger on the finish. It has the acidity and tannin stuffing to go the distance and then some. Best after 2025 with a long life beyond that. *Cellar Selection.* —S.S.
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$65

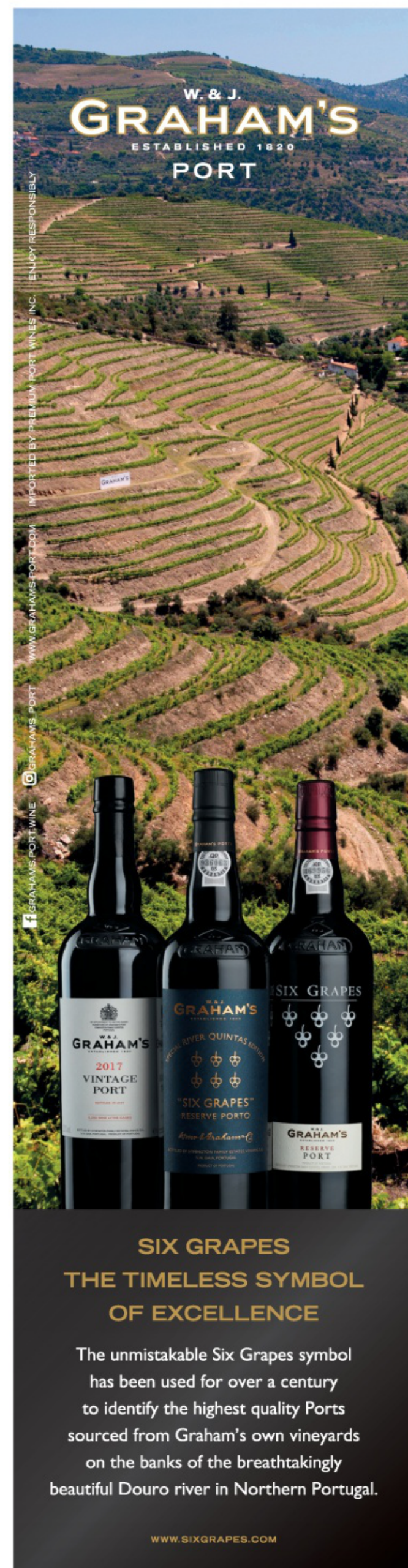
92 Mark Ryan 2017 The Dissident (Columbia Valley). Cabernet Sauvignon makes up almost two-thirds of this wine and Merlot a quarter, with the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. The aromas offer notes of dark and red raspberry, red currant, roasted coffee bean, dried herb and flower. Fruit and barrel flavors coat the palate, showing a sense of depth, with a creamy feel upping the interest. *Editors' Choice.* —S.S.
abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$40

91 Ott & Hunter 2016 Saratoga Whidbey Island Landmark Series (Columbia Valley). Syrah comprises half of this wine, with the rest Mourvèdre (30%) and Grenache. With the fruit coming from Boushey, Elephant Mountain and Sugarloaf vineyards, the aromas seem a bit bunched up out of the gate, expanding to show notes of blueberry, freshly ground black pepper and spice. A full but not overweighted feeling palate follows, with abundant black pepper accents. It has a lovely sense of grace. Give it some time open to see it at its best. —S.S.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$35

91 Reininger 2017 Mr. Owl's Red (Walla Walla Valley). Cabernet Sauvignon comprises 56% of this wine, with the rest Merlot (19%), Syrah (19%) and Petit Verdot. The aromas are effusive, with notes of orange peel, fresh flower, cranberry and cherry. A full-feeling palate follows, with the cherry flavors brightened by tart acidity and supported by firm tannins. Coffee notes linger on the finish. The sense of structure is lovely. Best after 2024. —S.S.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$20

91 Sin Banderas 2017 Red (Yakima Valley). Syrah makes up two-thirds of this wine, with the rest Mourvèdre. The aromas intrigue, with notes of herb, orange oil, anise, dark chocolate and cherry. A full, lightly creamy-feeling palate follows. Cranberry notes linger on the finish. It has a long life in front of it. —S.S.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$32

90 Brian Carter 2015 Trentenaire Red Wine Blend (Columbia Valley). This is always one of the more interesting wines in the state, a Petit Verdot (55%) dominant blend, rounded out with Cabernet Franc (19%), Cabernet Sauvignon (10%), Merlot (10%) and Malbec. I am not aware of another like it. Aromas of roasted coffee bean and green herb are out front, followed by notes of dark chocolate, spice, herb and cherry. Barrel flavors are forward at present, but there's plenty behind them to pull it off. Petit Verdot's unique acid and tannin structure carry it. It should have a long life in front of it. —S.S.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$50



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SPIRITS

Anise spirits: absinthes, anisettes, sambucas and more

The category of anise spirits is broad reaching. It encompasses a number of spirits types that deserve attention, but don't always receive it.

For starters, sambuca and anisette are two spirits that seem interchangeable, yet are not. Since Italian producer Meletti makes both, we asked producer Matteo Meletti to briefly outline the differences, which basically boils down to production and regulation.

Sambuca is regulated by the European Union, while anisette is not. "So when a company produces sambuca, it has to follow some strict rules, while Anisette is more open recipe," says Meletti. This may have to do with the fact that anisette is a much older product, dating back to the 18th century, while Sambuca is more recent.

Sambuca is made from a distillate of star anise or green anise. Anise is always the main ingredient, and the liqueur also must meet minimum sugar (350 g/L), alcohol (38% abv) and anethole (anise aroma) content requirements.

"When a company produces sambuca, it has to follow some strict rules, while anisette is more open recipe."
—Matteo Meletti

By comparison, anisette (sometimes seen as anisetta), is also an anise distillate, but it can be made with other ingredients in addition to anise. "Without restrictions, each formula can be very personalized," says Meletti. Anisettes can range widely from citrusy and bright to distinctly earthy and molasses-driven to even sweet and spicy.

How do you drink these liqueurs? For those seeking an intro to anise, producer Poli has an excellent suggestion called *rasentin* in Italian. This ritual consists of rinsing the coffee cup with a dash of Sambuca after having a good espresso.

Other anise-laced spirits covered this month include absinthe from France, Switzerland and California, as well as mastiha from Greece and some interesting pours from Spain. In addition to reviews of anise spirits, you'll also find coverage on other liqueurs and aperitivos, including Fernet and a ginger-based liqueur.

Cheers!

—Kara Newman

94 Atxa Pacharáan Sierra de Orduña (Spain; T. Edward Wines & Spirits, New York, NY). With its bright rosy hue and dried cherry fragrance, few would guess this liqueur is made with three different types of anise, blended with a maceration of sloe berries. This classic Basque spirit is light-bodied and tart, suggesting dried cranberry and cherry, finishing with barely-there hints of anise and eucalyptus. Sip or mix.
abv: 25% **Price:** \$40

93 Poli Elisir Sambuca (Italy; Winebow, New York, NY). More complex than most sambucas, this light, moderately sweet liqueur opens with bright licorice on nose and palate. Hints of vanilla and spice play against a backbone of warming anise, finishing with mild rosewater on the exhale.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$35

92 Meletti Anisetta Dry (Italy; Opici Wines, Glen Rock, NJ). Recommended by the producer

for cocktails, this higher-octane, lower sugar anisette offers a bright orange peel aroma and fruity-spiced palate that finishes with brisk cayenne and cinnamon, fading off into an earthy aniseed hint.
Best Buy.
abv: 42% **Price:** \$25

90 Kleos The Mastiha Spirit (Greece; Park Street Imports, Miami, FL). This clear spirit offers a slight floral aroma tinged with pine. The full-bodied palate is distinctly sweet, opening with vanilla sugar and echoing the pine-y hint from the aroma, layered with mouthwatering cucumber and cinnamon tingle. Created by a former bartender, the bottle is covered with cocktail recipes.
abv: 30% **Price:** \$36

90 Meletti Sambuca (Italy; Opici Wines, Glen Rock, NJ). Look for a mild licorice aroma with a hint of espresso. Each sip is palate-coating and relatively sweet, reminiscent of Good and

Plenty licorice candies, finishing with an assertive hint of spice and alcohol heat that cuts through the sweetness. An easy-sipping dessert pour. **Best Buy.**
abv: 42% **Price:** \$25

89 Bottega Sambuca (Italy; Palm Bay International, Boca Raton, FL). Anise aroma, with hints of licorice and warming spice. The palate feels quite light, and shows robust licorice and lime finishing long with flashes of black pepper and clove.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$30

89 Larusée Verte Green Absinthe (Switzerland; PM Spirits, Brooklyn, NY). Pours out olive drab, then louches to a lively light green. The aroma entices with a sweet floral note, while the palate is bolder, reverberating with anise overload and a tingly finish. Hit the right water-to-liqueur balance and the flavor profile becomes a bit more delicate and refreshing, tinged with fresh celery. Made with a neutral beet spirit base blended with a dozen herbs and aromatic plants.
abv: 65% **Price:** \$127

89 St. George Absinthe Verte (USA; St George Spirits, Alameda, CA). Released in 2007, this was the first U.S. absinthe produced after the ban was lifted. The yellow-green liquid louches to milky yellow. With plenty of star anise evident on nose and palate, look for hints of lime, lemon balm, fennel, tarragon and a gingery tinge that yields to a long licorice finish. Made with a brandy base.
abv: 60% **Price:** \$60

OTHER LIQUEURS

94 Ambrosia Aperitivo (USA; Don Ciccio & Figli, Washington, DC). The bittersweet, grapefruit-y flavor of this rosy-red craft liqueur lands somewhere between Campari and Aperol. It pours fairly viscous, and plays well with ice, bubbly mixers, or gin; ideal for Negroni fans. Launched in 2019.
abv: 15% **Price:** \$31

93 Barrow's Intense Ginger Liqueur (USA; Proof of Concept, Brooklyn, NY). For full review see page 102.
abv: 22% **Price:** \$32

92 Misceo Coffee Liqueur (USA; Allied Wine, Ellenville, NY). For full review see page 102. Kosher.
abv: 35% **Price:** \$35

90 Meletti Fernet (Italy; Opici Wines, Glen Rock, NJ). A stomach settler and a breath freshener, this liqueur is full-on minty from first sip straight through to exhale. The moderately bitter midpalate offers hints of dark chocolate, espresso and allspice. There's a passing resemblance to thin-mint cookies if you squint.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$35

BEER

Ales from the wild

Wild ales have been around since the beginning of beer. When sweetened water was exposed to natural yeast in the air, fermentation occurred, and the resulting liquid was found to have a pleasing effect on the drinker. Over the centuries since, recipes have been developed, yeast strains have been identified and harvested, and beer has emerged as the beverage we know and love today.

The majority of the beer brewed around the world is done in sterile locations, where brewers know the kind of yeast they add to their sweet brewing liquid, known as wort, to achieve the desired flavor outcome.

As the craft beer industry has evolved over the last few decades, a handful of brewers began to experiment with “wild” ales, or spontaneously fermented beers. This can come from breweries exposing their wort to the open, ambient air, allowing naturally occurring yeast to inoculate the beer. This is usually done through the use of coolships, which are shallow stainless-steel pools where hot wort is pumped

from the brewhouse and allowed to cool in a room that is exposed to the elements, usually through a few open windows.

Usually, this means healthy amounts of *Brettanomyces* or *Pediococcus* aid in the fermentation, along with the more standard *Saccharomyces Cerevisia*. Over time, if a brewer chooses to reuse barrels for aging these beers, a

If a brewer chooses to reuse barrels for aging these beers, a distinct house culture develops.

distinct house culture develops, giving a beer a taste specific to the brewery. Most brewers will also add yeast to the bottle before packaging to help with additional flavor evolution and provide an extra pop of carbonation through secondary fermentation.

Brewers can also use mobile coolships that can be transported to far-flung locations, like parks, mountain tops or even nearby vineyards to pick up local yeasts, giving the beer a true sense of place. While there are many fine examples of brewers that are using cultivated strains, there’s a certain romance that comes with opening a bottle that was created by the environment. Cheers! —John Holl

92 Allagash Windfall (American Wild Ale; Allagash Brewing Company, ME). The playful nose evokes white peach-ring candy, but the first sip reveals so much more than a penny candy-store treat. The sugary but still tart fruit, fuzzy skin and all is there, adding a lip-smacking quality and eagerness for more. It’s like late summer in a glass, with a graham cracker sweetness, a little vanilla and a salty caramel ribbon that weaves between it all. It’s the peaches that will bring you back to this beer time and time again, and all is forgiven if, based on the freshness of the fruit, you think there’s a little juice running down your chin. Finishes dry with just a little spice and hay, and a kind dose of acidic citrus.
abv: 6.5% Price: \$16/375ml

92 Russian River Supplication (American Wild Ale; Russian River Brewing Company, CA). This tastes like settling into a comfortable leather easy chair. Bottled in 2014, this is soft and worn and has improved with age. You can feel the curved

edges of this ale that has spent the better part of a year resting in Pinot Noir barrels and sour cherries. The fruit gives it a pleasing tartness that isn’t harsh. Mellow tobacco notes appear at the top, it has a bit of a salty middle, and finishes dry and a little wood ashy.
abv: 7.7% Price: \$13/375ml

93 Speciation Laurentian Series: Lake Michigan (American Wild Ale; Speciation Artisan Ales, MI). Lilac and orange blossom greet the nose from the first sniff. It’s delicate, like a spring breeze with a touch of daffodil in the background along with a little lemon and earthy meadow grass. Dark golden in color and clear, it has a tart funk that appears on the back end of the sip, which encourages more to follow. The brewery named this series of beers after the Great Lakes watershed, and each batch is brewed and cooled near one of the massive bodies of

water. This one, created at Lake Michigan, was aged in a single oak puncheon.
abv: 5.5% Price: \$32/750ml

91 Barrique Recolté Blanc (American Wild Ale; Barrique Brewing, TN). Slightly acidic and bursting with savory white grape, this copper-colored ale ignites the salivatory glands. With a subtle oak finish, this ale was fermented on handpicked white Muscadine grapes for a year and has a soft, slightly prickly carbonation from bottle conditioning. As it opens up, white peach, kiwi and starfruit emerge to add additional complexity.
abv: 7.1% Price: \$NA/500ml

90 New Glarus 2019 Flanders Sour (Flanders-style Red Ale; New Glarus Brewing, WI). A lovely combination of ripe black cherry, sprightly balsamic vinegar and a dash of sweet cola form the bouquet. Garnet in color with a thin tan head, an apple tartness comes and quickly goes with each sip. The 2019 version of this spontaneous ale is a combination of young beer and three-year-old stock and was carbonated in the bottle. It deserves to be paired with a hearty stew.
abv: 6.5% Price: \$13/12 oz 4 pack

90 Odd Breed El Cuate (American Wild Ale; Odd Breed Wild Ales, FL). A sweet earthiness, full body and dry finish are the pillars of this beer. It’s peppery and dry, with a strawberry candy-like sweetness that would otherwise be out of place, but here it works to bring together many different building blocks. At times an aged lime character emerges and then quickly retreats. The brewery used barrels that originally held California Sauvignon Blanc and then later Tequila. The result is a high-octane wild ale that doesn’t reveal its boozy character until well after the bottle is empty.
abv: 11.5% Price: \$28/750ml

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GRAPE VINES AND FAMILY TREES

For writer **Shelby Vittek**, wine and genealogy came together on a trip to Austria.

We spend a lot of time discussing wine grape pedigrees, but what about our own genealogy as it relates to wine?

I first started to think about this during a journey through Austria's eastern border regions last year. I've always loved Austrian wines, especially precise, minerally Grüner Veltliner and juicy, spicy Blaufränkisch, and I wondered if my genetics made me predisposed to do so.

I'd recently joined the growing number of people—more than 26 million and counting—who have spit into a DNA kit and sent it off for analysis. The results arrived a week before my trip. My ethnicity was estimated to be more than 80% Eastern European, which came as no surprise. I've always been told that my ancestors immigrated to the U.S. from Austria, Poland and what was then Czechoslovakia. But my results also led me to details that hadn't been passed down through the generations.

As we drove from winery to winery through the Weinviertel, Carnuntum, Neusiedlersee and Burgenland regions, I'd pass time on my Ancestry app digging for more clues. I was especially curious about my great-grandfather, who I knew very little about other than he was from Austria.

Somewhere along the tour, I found proof: a ship passenger record that listed his birth location as Steiermark, Austria, otherwise known as Styria, a wine region known for its Sauvignon Blanc.

On the last day, we ate lunch at Schloss Kapfenstein, a castle that overlooks the rolling, forest-filled hills of Styria. I was reminded just how complex the world of wine can be, how deeply a glass can link us to other people and places.

There I was, in the general area my great-grandfather had left more than a century ago for a new life in America, one that would eventually lead to my return to his homeland. I couldn't help but be drawn in by the romance of it all. I had searched for some hint of myself in a glass of Sauvignon Blanc, something that tied me to this place, to my family and to my infatuation with wine.

Before this epiphany, I never imagined being able to retrace my roots through wine. Now I'm eager to return to Europe to travel through regions in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia, to explore the other parts of my own wine pedigree.

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March 2020



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