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WINE ENTHUSIAST

NEW WORLD WINES

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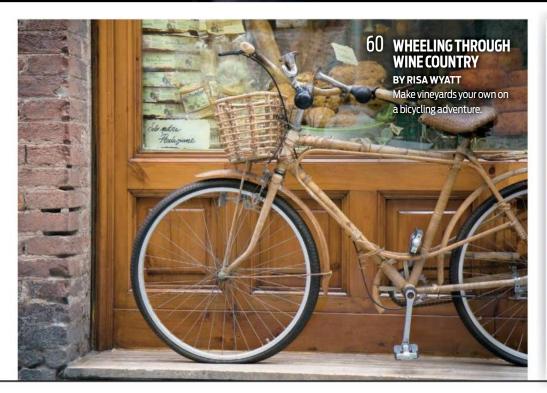
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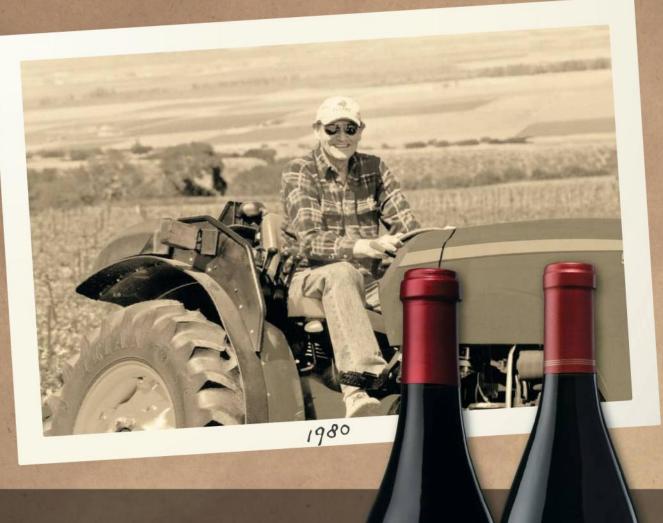






Wine on the rocks

A Visionary Moves To California



a MAN, his FAMILY and the DREAM

In 1980, while touring Monterey County's majestic mountain hillsides, Nicolaus "Nicky" Hahn and wife Gaby, discovered two former ranches recently planted to vineyards. While the area was not known for grape growing, its soils were ideal and the cool climate perfect for producing wines of distinction. It was then and there that Nicky set out to make signature wines worthy of international acclaim.

Today, the Hahn family farms over 1,100 acres of certified sustainable vineyards, primarily planted to Pinot Noir, in the Santa Lucia Highlands and Arroyo Seco appellations. They also proudly welcome their children and second generation to the company helm. Nicky saw the future of Monterey County Pinot Noir — one can taste the journey and experience the place in every bottle.



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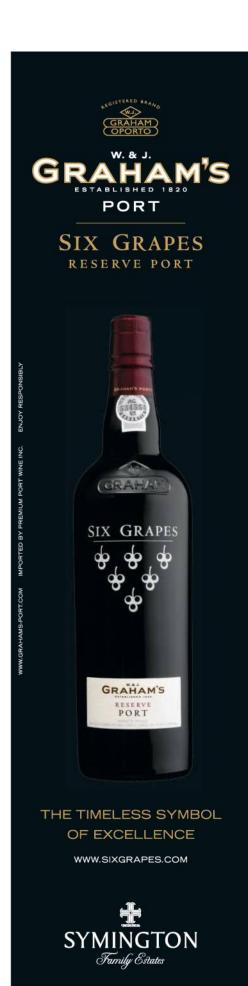
Private-label pours



REACH THE HIGHEST SUMMITS



MENDOZA · ARGENTINA



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Turn to the New World for some of the planet's most intriguing wines.

his issue, we celebrate the innovation and excitement that vintners in the New World are bringing to the table. From Australia to South Africa to South America and beyond, these incredibly diverse and high-quality wines are changing what we drink every day, at prices that encourage experimentation. Check out pages 38, 44 and 50 for our deep dives into some of the New World's most dynamic regions.

Our commitment to bringing you discovery pours, in addition to reporting on the world's most coveted and classic choices, drives our tasting program at Wine Enthusiast. Our team of 18 expert, global tasters reviews more than 22,000 wines a year—more than any other magazine—and we continue to expand to pursue the best recommendations the wine world has to offer.

We invite you to scan the magazine and get to know the faces behind the pens, and follow them as they delve into regions both far-flung and familiar. Make sure to engage them at the social media handles listed for each of them. Let them know what you think about the wines you love...and help us keep the dialogue going.

Cheers!



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To learn more about our tasters go to: http://www.winemag.com/editors/

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The Wine Lover's Guide to Rome

Visiting the Colosseum, Vatican City and the Trevi Fountain will leave any tourist hungry and thirsty. We share the best places in Rome to eat and drink, from tried-and-true restaurants to trendy wine bars.

Tuscany's Noble Wine

Italian Editor Kerin O'Keefe updates readers on the latest releases of Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, a denomination whose time has (re)arrived. One of Italy's great DOCGs, the wines today show unparalleled elegance, complexity and personality.

Sicilian Cuisine

The crossroads of the Mediterranean, Sicily has experienced Spanish, Greek and Northh African influences, giving it one of the world's most exciting and diverse culinary traditions. Here's how to bring that experience home, with bold wine pairings to match.

Over the Border in the Pacific Northwest

Winemakers in Oregon and Washington are blurring lines in their pursuit of grapes, sourcing fruit from unique sites to broaden their arrays of wine offerings. Contributing Editors Paul Gregutt and Sean Sullivan team up to tell you who's doing it best.

Chile's Vintners Head South

Some of the most exciting wines in South America are coming from deep in Chile's south, where century-old, dry-farmed vines are being tapped for unique bottlings of Cinsault, Riesling, Malbec and País from Maule, Bío Bío and Itata. Contributing Editor Michael Schachner reports.

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THE DEEPEST ROOTS GROW NOBLE VINES

For centuries, vintners have singled out individual vines that produce exceptional grapes. A select few have been granted numbers to distinguish them. 337 is a revered vine selection from the grand châteaux of Bordeaux, now grown in Noble Vines' family-owned vineyards in Lodi, California.





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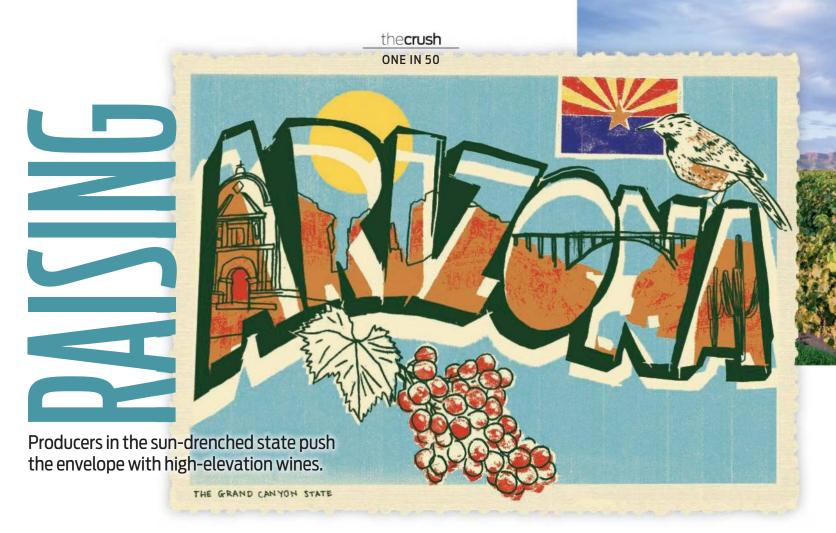
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OUT**CTUSh**THIS MONTH ONE IN 50: ARIZONA When pressed to name U.S. states that produce wine, other than the four largest—California, Washington, New York and Oregon—many people are stumped. But the answer is easy: any state. All 50 produce wine. Our "One in 50" series takes an occasional look at those states under the winemaking radar. This month we look at Arizona, surprising and superlative.



saguaro cacti, dry deserts and roadrunners come to mind upon the mention of Arizona, it's time to think again. The Copper State is home to some 210 mountain ranges and one of the snowiest cities in the country (Flagstaff). It's also one of the oldest continuously farmed regions in the Americas.

Part of that agriculture includes a robust wine industry centered around three regions: Sonoita/Elgin, Willcox (home to about 74 percent of the state's vineyards) and Verde Valley.

Spanish missionaries may have planted grapes in Arizona during the 16th century, but its modern wine industry took off in the 1980s, led by the University of Arizona's Dr. Gordon Dutt, who performed much of the early research in the '70s, mapping the state's soils and climate zones and likening them to Burgundy's conditions. In 1979, he opened the state's first commercial winery in Sonoita. Others followed.

Among those pioneers was Kent Callaghan. His parents bought land in Elgin in 1979, and Kent and his father, Harold, planted the Buena Suerte Vineyards in 1990.

"There was literally nothing going on in the industry," he says. "I think there were three other vineyards in the area. There was not a lot of creative thinking...planting basically what you'd plant in California."

Callaghan has come a long way, as have Arizona wines in general. His current winery, Callaghan Vineyards, was named an Arizona treasure in 2006 by former Gov. Janet Napolitano, and his wines have been served at the White House three times.

Callaghan has also mentored many local winemakers, including Eric Glomski, who calls him "the Ironman of winemaking."

When Maynard James Keenan, best known as front man of the rock band Tool, and himself a descendant of Northern Italian winemakers, started Caduceus Cellars and Merkin Vineyards in Verde Valley in 2004, the local wine industry got its star turn.

Glomski, founder of top-ranked Arizona vineyards Page Springs Cellars and Arizona Stronghold Vineyards, attributes the success of the past decade to winemakers

"understanding the landscapes and what grapes grow well there."

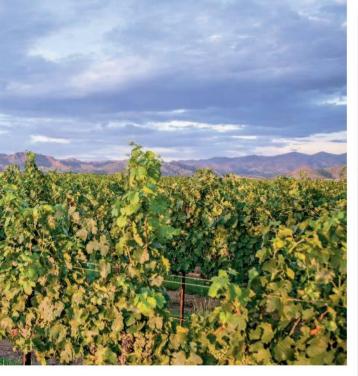
HEIGHT MATTERS

With its diverse topography and elevation ranging from 3,200 to 5,000 feet (the average elevation for vinegrowing here is 4,300 feet), Glomski says that while Arizona looks like parts of the Rhône Valley, Italy and Spain, "there are some notable differences that we're learning to manage, and some of us have gotten our butts kicked in the assumptions we've had wrong.

"I think over time we're going to see continued experimentation. There's so much diversity—I think we'll be able to grow more grapes," he said.

Michael Pierce, director of enology at Yavapai College's Southwest Wine Center, says the first wave of plantings included popular varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Colombard. Then, he says, "Arizona had to become true to itself."

"Established regions have styles that I think winemakers kind of have to answer to because of customer expectations," he says.



"We don't have to do that here. It's nice to be and work here and establish a winemaking tradition. We're looking for the one that will produce world-class wines that people will know have come from Arizona."

Calling those local offerings "wines of character," Callaghan says "Our area does not make wines for everyone."

"These are not fruit forward," he says. "They have tannin and structure from the red soils and fruit in the background. They are dense, burly wines that age well and, in our case, need age. They're not flashy upon release." But, he added, "The wines tend to be distinctive and tend to be high quality."

GOING FOR QUALITY

Though a 2013 USDA survey reported plantings of 35 grape varieties, Rodney Keeling, president of the Arizona Wine Growers Association and owner of Keeling Schaefer Vineyards, says "The Rhône collection is probably the biggest in Arizona right now."

"We're very grassroots, very experimental... planting every variety and seeing what shakes out—we're just trying to discover the varieties that work for quality wine," he says.

Pierce perhaps summarizes the collective mindset of producers.

"We're not looking to do one-off things, kitschy stuff you buy with your fudge when you go on the Pink Jeep tour," he says, referring to a popular local touring service. "We're creating these things that no one thought were here."

-Lana Bortolot







A DREAM OF A DRINK

With herbal notes and an unexpected splash of pineapple, this cocktail will send you on a flight of fancy.

French, rêver means "to dream," and this fresh, herbaceous drink certainly encourages reverie. At Tempo Dulu, a bar at the Danforth Inn in Portland, Maine, tropical-inspired drinks accompany Michael McDonnell's modern Asian fare. A splash of pineapple is a subtle nod to tropical inspiration.

The main ingredient is blanc (or bianco) vermouth, a fast-growing category that features relatively bold, sweet and oxidized notes like golden raisin, baked pear and spice. An ounce of caraway-accented aquavit adds backbone, while yellow Chartreuse adds subtle herbaceous sweetness. At Tempo Dulu, the drink is sometimes served in a tiki mug. It's pretty enough to sip from a cocktail glass, too, inspiring dreams of warmer spring days to come.

RÊVER

Courtesy Trevin Hutchins, Tempo Dulu, Portland, Maine

- 1 strawberry, halved lengthwise
- 2 fresh sage leaves
- 11/2 ounces Dolin Blanc vermouth
- 1 ounce Krogstad aquavit
- 1/2 ounce yellow Chartreuse
- 1/2 ounce pineapple juice





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"It's an avenue for us to connect and personalize our concept and talk about why we're different than other Italian restaurants in town," says McDaniel.

Such partnerships are becoming more common. Adam Petronzio, wine director for Oceana in New York City, worked with Brooklyn's Red Hook Winery to develop Oceana Cuvée, a 60-40 blend of Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. And, in Los Angeles, sommelier Matthew Kaner introduced an exclusive Pinot Noir he created with Willamette Valley's Brooks Wine for his two

wine bars. Covell and Augustine.

He also features a Super Tuscan that he custom-blended with Fattoria Lornano in Siena, Italy.

While having these wines creates a certain mystique that pulls in customers, it also lets

Kaner support wineries he loves.

creates a certain

in customers.

"I have years of experience with those people," says Kaner. "They've chosen to let my places be an outlet for their wines."

Many restaurants are creating private labels, some with specific sourcing, like Dallas' Sixty Vines, which teamed with veteran Sonoma Winemaker Bill Knuttel to create six premium tap wines with grapes from Sonoma vineyards under the restaurant's Vine Huggers label.

Kamal Kouiri, wine director at Molyvos in New York City, has built an extensive wine list by seeking out wines that are unlikely to be served anywhere else. He travels to Greece each year to discover small-production wines using little-known indigenous grapes, and has introduced more than 80 hard-to-find wines to his guests.

"It gives winemakers a chance to show their wines," he says. "It's like Molyvos is a platform to launch these wines."

At Coda di Volpe, the restaurant, that advantage is driven home with an occasional complimentary glass of the wine of the same name in lieu of Prosecco. McDaniel says though they don't produce the wine, "It's a reflection of who we are and what we're about."

"Even though it doesn't have our name on it, it's our wine," he says.



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YEAR

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INCL MATO MALBEC RESERVE ARGENTINA

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PAIR IT

"Everyone drinks this with a Guinness," Mallol says. It's not the dish for fancy pairings, even at a great cocktail bar. "Or an Irish Coffee would work." See winemag.com for an Irish Coffee recipe.

RISH FRY AND SMLING

This traditional breakfast will make the morning after St. Paddy's Day a little easier.

he award-winning Dead Rabbit Grocery and Grog in New York City is best known for its cocktails. But its Full Irish Breakfast is so popular that the restaurant began serving it for lunch during the week, in addition to weekend brunches.

Chef Joe Mallol adds some herbs and spices, but sticks to a classic formula. "If you go to Ireland, they don't really do corned beef," he says. "This is more traditional."

—Layla Schlack

FULL IRISH BREAKFAST

Courtesy Joe Mallol, corporate chef, Dead Rabbit Grocery and Grog, New York City

+ ON THE PLATE:

EGGS, cooked any way you like

BANGERS (Irish sausages)

TOAST

RASHERS (back bacon)

BLACK AND WHITE PUDDING (Irish blood and oatmeal sausages)

- **◆ BAKED BEANS**
 - l (16-ounce) can pork and beans
 - 1 apple, small diced
 - 1 small yellow onion, diced
 - 1 green bell pepper, diced
 - 1 tablespoon barbecue rub (your favorite brand, or see winemag.com/irishbreakfast for recipe)
 - ¼ cup barbecue sauce
 - 1 tablespoon yellow mustard
 - 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
 - 1/2 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
 - 3 strips bacon, chopped
 - Salt and pepper, to taste

Heat oven to 325°F. Combine all ingredients in medium pot over low heat. Cook for 30 minutes. Pour into baking dish, and bake until sauce is thickened, 1 hour. Serves 6.



In medium sauté pan over low heat, melt 4 tablespoons butter. Sweat 2 tablespoons chopped shallots and 1 tablespoon chopped garlic for 5 minutes. Over high heat, add 4 cups of mushrooms in bite-size pieces (preferably a mix of button, shiitake, portobello and oyster), and sauté for 15 minutes. Deglaze pan with 2 tablespoons Madeira. Add 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook another 5 minutes. Serves 6.

* ROASTED TOMATOES

Heat oven to 350 °F. Halve 3 pounds **tomatoes** vertically. In large bowl, toss with 2 tablespoons chopped **garlic**, 2 tablespoons chopped fresh **basil**, 1 tablespoon chopped fresh **thyme**, 2 tablespoons extra-virgin **olive oil**, and **salt** and **pepper** to taste. Place on cookie sheet. Roast for 25 minutes, or until soft and lightly browned. *Serves 6*.

PENNY DE LOS SANTOS; STYLING: PRANCES BOSWELL



IPA OUTSIDE THE BOX

These bottles are edgy and ambitious.

ndia pale ale can be as restless as a caged bird, forever ready to fly in unexpected directions. Governed by brewers' creativity and heavy (or not) hand with hops, as well as the hop varieties used, IPAs can trend as

I bitter as political discourse, or drift more tropical than a beach cocktail. But now, brewers are turning to other ingredient additions and brewing techniques to offer something new. Meet and drink the latest generation of IPA spinoffs.

-Joshua M. Bernstein







Six New Hop Varieties to Know

- O Idaho 7
- African Queen
- **8** Loral
- **10 Hallertau Blanc**
- 6 Azacca
- **6** Ekuanot

For more intell on hops and IPAs, visit winemag.com/ipa

India Pale Lager

OG 15.25 PLATO ABY 6.5%

JACK'S ABBY

Brewers are fast realizing that cold-fermenting beer with lager yeast fashions a clean, brisk platform for hops alight with pine, citrus and tropical fruit. Snappy and aromatic, India pale lagers (IPLs) are less sweet and more refreshing than their ale analogues. TRY: Jack's Abby Hoponius Union, a lager awash in citrusy, island-vibe flavors.

Brettanomyces

Brewers are taking IPAs on a funky ride with feral Brettanomyces yeast, which give a rustic-farmstead character. Brett can toss off fruity, tropical bouquets and tastes, while also lending an acidic or sour bite to the palate. TRY: The dry, earthily complex Crooked Stave Artisan Beer Project's Hop Savant from Colorado.

Wood-Aged

"Fresh is best" is the guideline for IPAs, as their flavors and scents rapidly dull. But brewers looking to crush such beliefs are seasoning IPAs in barrels once used for whiskey or wine, adding a baseline depth as foil to hops' bright fragrances. TRY: Gigantic Brewing Company's Pipewrench, accentuated by three months in Ransom Old Tom Gin barrels.

Milkshake

Lactose, not ice cream, serves as the secret scoop in these velvety IPAs. Dairy-derived, unfermentable sugars supply sweetness and boost the body of these dessert-inspired IPAs.

TRY: Urban Family Brewing Co.'s Limesicle. The Seattle brewery uses 200 pounds of limes per batch to concoct this zesty, lactose-crammed IPA.

The winery THAT LAUNCHED

wine region.

The legendary André Tchelistcheff helped bring our first vintage to life in 1967.

In 1967, Ste. Michelle Vintners

Sauvignon, with guidance and

produced its first Cabernet

support from the legendary international

It was the release that put the Washington state

wine industry on the map. Still, there were skeptics in those days. "Wine from Washington?" sniffed one sarcastic critic. "What side of the

Undeterred, the early pioneers of Washington

winemaker André Tchelistcheff.

Potomac do the grapes grow on?"

and 14 designated appellations.

A DISTINCTIVE VARIETAL WINE

Ste. Michelle lineyards

COLUMBIA VALLEY

Cabernet Sauvianon

The 50th Anniversary Special Bottling.

We're flattered, but we don't spend a lot of time polishing our medals. Our goal is to blend craftsmanship with innovation to create exceptional wine experiences. Whether it's a connoisseur opening a bottle of 92-point Cabernet Sauvignon from our Canoe Ridge Estate at a dinner party, or a newbie discovering a Columbia Valley Riesling at our

Chateau Ste. Michelle has enjoyed considerable acclaim, with 22 "Winery of the Year" honors (Wine & Spirits) and 18 "Top 100 Wines" designations (Wine Spectator). Our landmark chateau near Seattle is one of the most

Summer Concert Series.

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visited wineries in the world.



Washington state's terroir shares similarities with the great regions of Bordeaux.

France

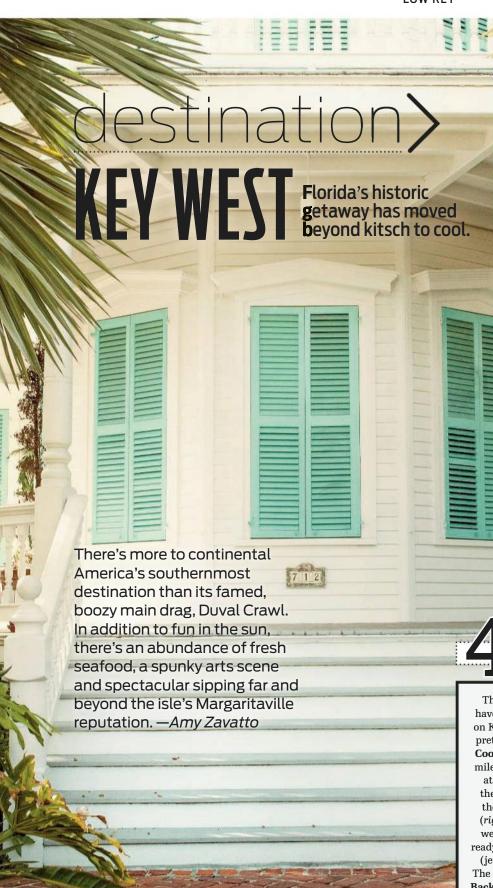
wine understood the state's potential-with growing regions that share the same latitude and similar terroir as the great French Bordeaux vineyards. Fifty years later, Washington is the nation's No. 2 producer of premium wine with more than 50,000 acres planted, nearly 1,000 wineries in operation

So let's toast our first 50 years. But only as motivation to produce even more remarkable Chateau Ste. Michelle wines, moments and memories in the next 50.

Cheers. The best is yet to come.



the**crush**

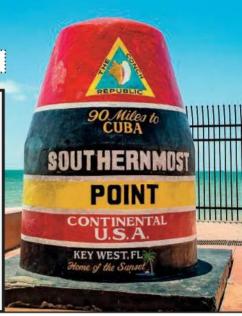


shop ere he still alive, the rum-loving Ernest Hemingway might be a regular at the tasting bar of Paul Menta's Key West First Legal Rum Distillery. Florida cane sugar provides the backbone for the 10 rums made in this former Coca-Cola bottling plant. (Can't tote those bottles? The distillery will ship them.) Mark Gambuzza's Uva Wine Shoppe (above) offers 200-plus biodynamic, small-production bottles for sale. There's also a chill wine bar, where pleasurable pours complement cheese and charcuterie. Across the street, well-appointed gents will appreciate the fine linen shirts at Assortment, but it's the nautical-themed, hand-embroidered Smathers & Branson flasks, key chains and belts that will serve as a lovely reminder of your balmy break from reality.

■ hour getaway

The surrounding waters have an indelible influence on Key West, so cruising its pretty perimeter is a must.

Cool Key West offers a 28-mile jet-ski tour with stops at beautiful mangroves, the Sambo coral reef and the Southernmost Point (right). Book at least two weeks in advance and be ready to work up an appetite (jet-skiing is hard work). The fresh seafood at Louie's Backyard is a perennial fave.



see

or \$10 a day, nab a coaster bike from We Cycle on Southard Street. From there, head southwest to the bike paths at Civil War-era Fort Zachary Taylor (below), and ride among the wild, 54-acre grounds that rim the beach. Pedal back up to Margaret Street and visit the historic Key West Cemetery. Points of interest include the resting place of barman "Sloppy" Joe Russell, as well as the city's famed hypochondriac, B.P. "Pearl" Roberts, whose epitaph reads, "I told you I was sick." Watch anglers cast for snapper at the White Street Fishing Pier, or relax amid the rare tropical plants, cascading orchids and shady palms at the Key West Garden Club. If performances are your thing, book tickets at the recently renovated **Key West Theater**, which hosts national acts like Alan Cumming and Grammy-winner Marc Cohn. And be sure to stop in for a rollicking nightcap beneath the parachute-strewn ceiling at the classic Green Parrot Bar, where most nights of the week you'll hear great live music in genres ranging from rockabilly to Delta blues.

West is known as a world-class fishing haven. It also offers abundant fresh produce and Latin-flecked culinary influences. Indulge in oysters at the Thirsty Mermaid (above) on Fleming Street. Alternatively, the green gazpacho with a Key West pink-shrimp centerpiece is a tangy kick-off to the locally sourced seafood menu. Grab a seat at a hot-pink ironing board-turned-table at Pescado food truck, stationed in the Chevron parking lot on Truman Avenue. It serves up outstanding fresh seafood sandwiches, bacon-jam-slathered burgers and tamarind iced tea. At **Bien Key West**, nab a succulent slow-roasted pork shoulder sandwich smothered with sweet sautéed onions and creamy aioli. If you're craving pizza, Onlywood tops its Neapolitan-style pies with house-made mozzarella, then cooks them in a wood-fired oven.

eat



void the plastic cups of Duval Street for proper craft cocktails at 2¢ on blink-and-miss-it Applerouth Lane. Try the "Oh Captain, My Captain," a tasty tropical storm of Flor de Caña rum, house-made ginger shrub, fresh lime juice and coconut water. The bar at the **Orchid Key Inn** (*left*) is steps off Duval, but its tucked-away feel and giant jar of fresh pineapple-infused vodka makes for a civilized respite. On Caroline Street, in the back of craft-beer spot The Porch, is Caroline's Other Side, whose boutique size belies its multitude of whisk(e)y options, among other rarefied spirits. Jimmy Buffett made Key West synonymous with his signature anthem "Margaritaville," and you shouldn't miss the salt-rimmed version at **Pepe's**, where bartenders squeeze limes in a giant juicer. Don't skip the sunset views and excellent Hemingway Daiguiri at Hot Tin Roof, named for Key West's other literary regular, Tennessee Williams.

Four ways rye whiskey is breaking the rules.

Aging Gracefully: New Mexico may not seem like whiskey country, but producers there are experimenting with "desert-aged" ryes, which create whiskies with surprising floral, citrus and spice-cake notes.

TRY: Turley Mill Cask Strength
Single Barrel Straight Rye Western
Whiskey (KGB Spirits, Alcalde, NM,
\$90). Aged six years, this unusual
whiskey offers tons of vanilla, orange
peel and spice. It's cask strength,
so dilute to taste.

hen we talk about rye whiskey, we often nod toward the past: pre-Prohibition cocktails and speakeasy culture. But now the bold and spicy spirit is trending and coming back into its own. That includes a lineup of next-gen styles that are definitely not your grandpa's rye.

To be called rye whiskey, the spirit's grain bill must be made at least 51 percent rye, but the final product can vary widely depending on how it's aged.

"Rye is expressive," says Jessie Duré, bar manager of whiskey-focused Chumley's in New York City. "You can get something super light and minty-fresh, or really full-bodied with cooking spices like cinnamon and clove, and both are enjoyable to sip on."

While we still have a soft spot for familiar rye whiskies (like Rittenhouse, Sazerac and Bulleit), here's a look at four ways that rye producers are pushing boundaries. —Kara Newman

Super Proofs: Although rye whiskies often are bottled with relatively high alcohol levels, a growing number are taking cues from Bourbon and Scotch and rolling out bottles at cask strength. That means bolder flavor, but you'll want to add water, ice or both to taste.

TRY: Redemption Barrel Proof Straight Rye Whiskey (Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits, White Plains, NY, \$80). Aged eight years and bottled at a stunningly high 122 proof, look for concentrated espresso, toffee and clove.

TURLEY
MILL
single barrel
STRAIGHT RYE
STERN WHISH

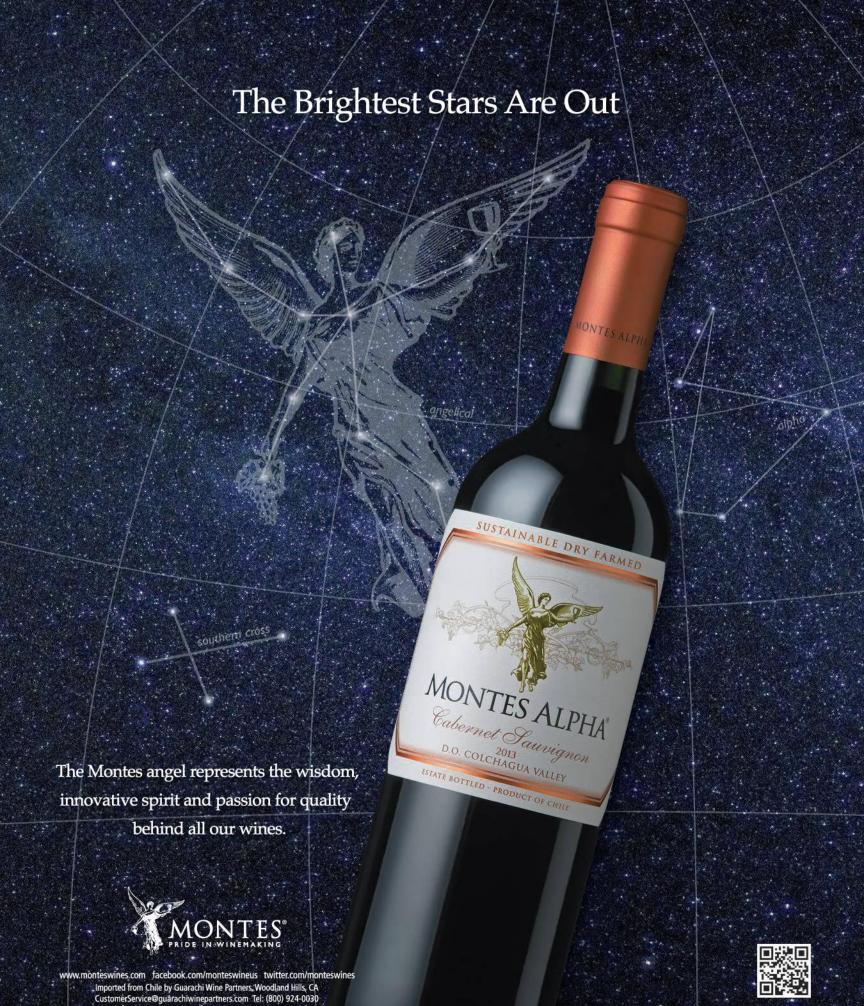
AD RIVE RVOLUTION RYE

Amazing Grains: Just as bakers are obsessed with heirloom grains, so are distillers. Look for rye varieties like Merced, Hazlett or Abruzzi. Some bottles, like Vermont's Revolution Rye, use a mix of these heirloom ryes.

TRY: Revolution Rye (Mad River Distillers, Warren, VT, \$50). Three rye varietal grains, a portion of which is malted and roasted "chocolate" rye, create deep toffee and orange peel flavors. 4.

Fine Finishes: After the traditional aging process, some producers are giving rye a turn in barrels that previously held fortified wines such as Madeira, Sherry or Port. It softens the whiskey and adds an unusual layer of flavor.

TRY: High West Yippee Ki-Yay
(High West Distillery, Park City, UT,
\$65) is made with a blend of straight
rye whiskies finished in casks that
once held vermouth and Syrah. Sip
or mix into Manhattans.



STELLAR CELERY

Read on for hot stalk tips.

elery is often an unglamorous workhorse in crudité platters, vegetable soups and green juices, but it can take on a starring role, if only given the chance. Classics like celery gratin and Waldorf salad are back in fashion, and dishes like the Celery Victor (a chilled marinated-celery salad) at San Francisco's Cockscomb have gained cult status.

Some favorite celery snacks can be reinvented as terrific entrées. If you loved it with peanut butter as a kid, try stir-fried celery with Thai peanut sauce. Do you enjoy the celery sticks and blue cheese dip that come with Buffalo wings? A chopped celery salad topped with crumbled blue cheese and spicy grilled chicken breast offers similar taste and crunch.

"We work with all different forms of celery," says Kate Jacoby, co-owner of Philadelphia's vegan restaurant Vedge. "We pickle crunchy wedges for garnishing cocktails, grill the hearts, fold chopped leaves into vinaigrettes, even cook the stalks down into a syrup to churn into a salty-sweet sorbet."

-Nils Bernstein

PAIR IT

Delicious raw or cooked, celery's versatility means there's no shortage of complementary wines. "For fresh, raw uses of celery, I would keep it classic, with a bright, snappy Grüner Veltliner or dry Riesling," says Jacoby, who oversees Vedge's extensive wine list. "If grilled or braised, coaxing out its deeper flavors, I would lean toward a high-acid Loire red like a funky Cabernet Franc or juicy Grolleau."

For celery recipes, go to winemag.com/celery.







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European Editor, Wine Enthusiast Magazine



December 2016

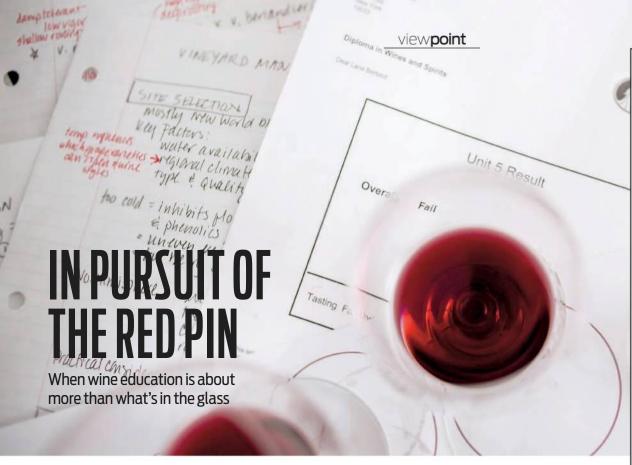
Forbes Summer 2016



Food & Drink

Twenty Top Roses For Summer 2016 05-18-16, Nick Passmore Nick Passmore

IMPORTED BY LUNEAU USA, WESTPORT, CT



have the blue pin, and I have the green one. But what I really want is the red one. The one that will distinguish me from the mere wine hobbyist. The one that says I endured six segments of British-style education (rote memorization and testing), countless hours of creating charts and flashcards of the world's wine regions, of tasting and sweating the details.

And the real rub: Red isn't even my favorite color.

The real drive is to be taken seriously in an industry that has a fair number of poseurs.

There's more I don't care for in my program of study, formally called the Wine & Spirits Education Trust, or WSET. There's the arcane system of grading papers with the British examiners' cryptic and schoolmarm-like remarks: "It is not enough at this stage to state basic facts and expect to pass."

Those sommelier movies have nothing over the three-year diploma program in which I'm enrolled. The pressure is equally intense and the expectations perverse. I spend weekends holed up with The Oxford Encyclopedia of Wine, one of several weighty tomes of required reading,

and cannot taste a wine-even for pleasurewithout mentally rolling through the tasting grid: "Medium intensity and body, medium+ acid, silky and integrated tannins, hints of vanilla, sweet baking spices."

Still, I am slogging through, in part because hubris has gotten in the way of common sense, and also because misery loves company: I have an excellent study/tasting group with whom I have swirled and spat, analyzed, cried and panicked.

But the real drive is to be taken seriously in an industry that has a fair number of poseurs. It's a small triumph to attend a technical tasting and come up with a note more descriptive than "delicious." It's cool to trek though a vineyard and talk about trellising, pruning and soils instead of taking selfies with the grapes.

All those hours of study make a difference when I sit at a producer's table in France or Italy or Spain, and instead of small talk, we have a conversation about the trials of producing wine under challenging conditions. Or discuss how to hang on to a tenuous heritage, whether that's an ancient parcel of land or an arcane grape.

And it makes a difference if, on a return visit, those producers remember you because you had enough schooling to understand and respect the intricacies of their work and honor their tradition.

That's when the lost weekends, the hair pulling and teeth grinding are worth it.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Several organizations offer wine-study programs, with varying costs. Here's a rundown of the most popular.

Wine & Spirits Education Trust

Based in London, this is the industry's oldest academic accreditation. It offers four levels of certification and culminates in the WSET Diploma. There are 45 approved program providers in the U.S. (including Puerto Rico). Students range from hobbyists to journalists and wineindustry professionals. Nominal: DipWSET upon completion of the diploma.

Court of Master Sommeliers

Also based in London and offered in the U.S., the court's three levels of certification lead to the Master Sommelier Diploma, a rigorous program chronicled in the documentaries Somm and Into the Bottle. With an emphasis on service, this program is popular with dining/ hospitality workers. Nominal: MS upon completion of the diploma.

Master of Wine

Said to be the most difficult wine credential in the world, due to the program's rigor, scope and self-teaching platform. Need evidence? There are only 353 Masters of Wine in the world. The curriculum includes a series of papers, blind tastings (36 wines) and a first-year assessment exam that evaluates your potential for success. Nominal: MW upon completion of all exams and course work.

Society of Wine Educators

This is a series of self-study certification programs that allow successful candidates to become "certified specialists" in wine and spirits, as well as educators. Exams are taken at approved testing centers and comprise 100 multiple-choice questions, which cover service, the business of wine, viticulture, wine laws and regions, and elements of tasting. Nomimals: CSW, CSS, CWE, CSE.



With five WSET exams down and three to go, Senior Editor Lana Bortolot sees a dim light at the end of the tunnel.

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TURNING POCKSINTO



A cobblestone corner of the Walla Walla Valley yields otherworldly pours.





BY SEAN P. SULLIVAN

PHOTOS BY COLBY KUSCHATKA

Rocks region pioneer
Christophe Baron
didn't set out to
discover a new winegrowing territory
when he first moved
there from his native
France in 1993. In
fact, he didn't really
look to live in the
Walla Walla Valley,
which straddles the
Oregon-Washington
border, at all.

"Being crazy about Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Burgundy, my goal really was to work in the Willamette Valley," he says. But the only job he could find there was working harvest.

When a friend told him about a longer-term position opening up in Walla Walla, he did what any person might do in those pre-internet days. He looked at an atlas.

"I looked at Walla Walla, and I looked at the Willamette Valley, and said, 'Sure,' " he recalls. "I thought it was very close. I figured I'd be going to the Willamette Valley every weekend."





hat Baron didn't realize
at the time, however,
was that the two areas
are more than five
hours apart.

"My first weekend off, I drove my convertible from Walla Walla to the Willamette Valley, and I realized for the first time how big the country was," he says with a laugh.

Baron spent a year there, followed by a series of stints in the Willamette Valley, Australia and New Zealand. In the spring of 1996, he returned to the U.S. to purchase land in the Willamette Valley's Dundee Hills. On the way, he made a fateful stop back in Walla Walla.

"Everywhere I went, I brought my French wine atlas," Baron says. "I showed a friend the stones of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. He said, 'I know where there's stones like that.'"

Baron was intrigued. Early the next morning, he and his friend made the 20-minute drive down to the town of Milton-Freewater, on the Oregon side of the Walla Walla Valley. They came to a field littered with cobblestones.

"I bent over and grabbed a few stones and said, 'Well, this is it,' " says Baron. "I knew

right then I was going to buy the land and plant a vineyard."

Rocky beginnings

Baron's knowledge of the stones of Châteauneuf-du-Pape and experience with cobblestone soils in New Zealand told him he was on to something.

"I knew I had something special in front of me," he says. "I knew that the stones would produce great fruit and be able to create great wines."

Not everyone was so sure.

"I remember many people saying, 'I don't think he knows what he's doing.' " says Richard Funk, owner of Saviah Cellars in Walla Walla. "People thought he was crazy."

The area, which would later come to be referred to as The Rocks, is a former riverbed of the Walla Walla River. The soil is studded with fist-sized basalt cobblestones washed down from the Blue Mountains to the east. Long known for its apple and cherry orchards, wine grapes hadn't been planted in the area for generations.

Planting the vines wasn't easy. The rocky soil required 50-pound crowbars to pry through the stones.

"It was a lot of work," says Baron. "I didn't know anybody. I didn't have any equipment. I came with all of my savings, and thankfully, I was able to get some vines. I was starting really from scratch as a French guy coming to Walla Walla."

At his first vineyard, Baron focused on Syrah.

"That was the new thing at the time in Washington," says Baron. "And I knew that it would grow well there, because Syrah transpires terroir."

Initially, people didn't support Baron's efforts, but opinions changed once they tried his early wines.

"When I tasted those first Syrahs, I thought, 'It must be some French technique,' " says Funk. "There was an aromatic profile that was so different and so unique from anything else that I was tasting."

Baron's wines inspired more people to plant vineyards in The



Rocks, which Baron prefers to call The Stones. The area would become known for its distinctive aroma and flavor profile.

"Typically, when people talk about wine, they talk about the fruit," says Trey Busch, winemaker and co-owner of Sleight of Hand Cellars in Walla Walla. "Well, fruit is like the eighth or ninth adjective when you're smelling Rocks wines. It's all savory characteristics. It's meat and brine and olive and saline and mineral and bacon fat."

The wines are also notable for an earthy quality initially referred to as "Cayuse funk," after Baron's first winery, Cayuse Vineyards. Now, it's simply known as "Rocks funk." The





naturally high pH gives the wines a distinct mouthfeel.

"They're soft and silky and plush and lush," says Chad Johnson, co-owner and winemaker at Dusted Valley Vineyards. "Very hedonistic."

The science of stony soils

Why exactly are these wines so distinctive? It's the stones, of course.

"It is a fundamentally different soil type than the surrounding agricultural area," says Kevin Pogue, a geology professor at Whitman College in Walla Walla, and head of VinTerra, a vineyard consulting service. "Most of the surrounding soils are granitic in nature.

"Because the Rocks and the surrounding soil are derived from basalt, the soils are much higher in iron, magnesium and titanium," he explained. "So it's chemically different, it's texturally different and it's also excessively drained, because it's pretty much all coarse-grained material."

Pogue says that the rocks have unique thermal properties, too, their dark color absorbing the sun's heat and transmitting it into the deeper layers of the soil. This leads to an earlier budbreak than the surrounding areas of the valley.

The stones also radiate heat up toward

grape clusters during the day.

"I measured temperatures in grape clusters in grapes trellised a couple of feet above the rocks, and the grapes get considerably warmer than grapes trellised two feet above grass-covered vineyards in the surrounding hills," says Pogue.

That contributes to the unique ripeness and structure obtained in the region's wines.

While Rocks Syrahs have telltale aromatic and flavor characteristics, the wines also show some intriguing variations. These differences are best explored through the single-vineyard Syrahs that Baron produces for his three wineries, Cayuse Vineyards, No Girls and Horsepower Vineyards.

"For me, it's all about each site and the personality and individuality of each site," says Baron. "That has been my goal since Day One. That's what I am completely obsessed by."



Harnessing the terroir

Though The Rocks are distinctive and capable of making wine of stratospheric quality—more than 50 of Baron's wines have earned 95 points or more from *Wine Enthusiast*—working there presents challenges.

"It's very expensive to plant and farm in the area," says Funk. "You're beating the tar out of your equipment, and it's hard on your people."

Johnson agrees. "Everything is literally almost twice as hard, because you can't drill anything and it's hard to drive posts. Everything costs that much more."

The area is also susceptible to spring and fall frosts and hard winter freezes. As a result, wind machines, which help prevent frost damage, are common, and some growers bury vine canes to protect them from harsh winters.

While Syrah is unquestionably the star, varieties like Grenache, Tempranillo and Cabernet Sauvignon have also excelled.

"The Grenache is more distinctive than anywhere else in the world," says Baron. "It's completely unique."

In 2015, The Rocks area was awarded its own appellation, The Rocks District of Milton-Freewater American Viticultural Area (AVA),



Rock Out With These Bottles

96 Horsepower 2013 The Tribe Vineyard Syrah (Walla Walla

Valley). This wine is aromatically brooding but precise, with notes of umami, black olive, smoked ham, crushed violets, funk and peat. The flavors are hefty and concentrated—with notes of fire pit and wet stone—while showing earth-shaking depth and intensity. The finish stretches out as long as you care to count. This is a complete knee buckler.

abv: 13.6% Price: \$120

95 Cayuse 2013 Cailloux Vineyard Syrah (Walla Walla Valley).

The aromas are perfumed and expressive, with notes of crushed flowers, brown stems, black olive, sea salt, smoked meat and funk. The flavors are dense and intense, but still with a silky feel. It's a classic example of this producer, with a finish that just won't quit. **Editors' Choice.**

abv: 13.8%

Price: \$80

94 Delmas 2014 SJR Vineyard Syrah (Walla Walla Valley).

Viognier makes up just over 8% of this wine and it shows itself with perfumed aromas of flowers and orange peel, along with brown stems, freshly ground herb, black olive, mineral and whiffs of smoked meat. The palate is all about texture and layers, while never losing its exquisite sense of balance, gliding on the extended finish. Superb stuff, with an emphasis on elegance.

abv: 14%

Price: \$65

94 K Vintners 2013 Rock Garden Syrah (Walla Walla Valley).

Coming off The Rocks District, this wine displays high-toned aromas of brown stems, crushed violets and black pepper along with a light meat and olive streak. The flavors are poised and layered, showing a mixture of red and black fruits with abundant savory accents. The crazylong finish flat out impresses.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$60

No Girls 2013 La Paciencia

Walla Valley). The aromas pop with notes of fresh flowers, smoked meat, stems, mineral, smoke, white pepper and an earthy funk. The flavors dance on the palate, with mouthwatering fruit and savory notes

that lead to an outrageously long finish. It's equal parts elegance and intensity.

abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$75

94 Saviah 2013 The Funk Estate Syrah (Walla Walla Valley).

The aromas of this wine pop, with notes of fresh flowers, green herbs, olive brine, coffee, grilled asparagus, gravel and a touch of smoked meat lurking in the background. The fruit and savory flavors are plush and palate-coating in feel, with floral and smoked meat notes persisting on the finish. It's a very pretty interpretation of the area, with a compelling sense of balance. Editors' Choice.

abv: 14.2% Price: \$60



named after the closest town. A subappellation of the Walla Walla Valley that's wholly contained in Oregon, the 3,767-acre area now has 300 acres under vine.

"It was my desire to make it the most terroir-driven appellation in the country," says Pogue, who was contracted to write the AVA application by a group of local winery and vineyard owners. "It's 97 percent one soil series. It's remarkably consistent in terms of soils, aspect, slope and elevation all of the principle characteristics that come together to make terroir."

While dozens of other producers now make wines from The Rocks, Baron has a years-long waiting list to purchase his wines. Still, he continues to innovate.

For his recent Horsepower Vineyards project, the vines are planted at three-foot intervals, which makes for a vine density of 4,840 vines per acre. That far outdistances the 1,000 vines per acre that's typical in the Northwest. Because of the tight spacing, the rows are ploughed by draft horse.

"I am always trying to push the boundaries," says Baron. "Push and push and push and push. Trying to really see how far we can go in terms of creating true vin de terroir, a wine of terroir."

Now, 20 years in, Baron believes he's just getting started.

"As a vigneron, I've just scratched the surface. For me, the wines are very good, but they can be so much better."

La Rata 2013 Red (Walla Walla Valley). Grenache takes the lead, making up 60% of this wine, which was co-fermented with Cabernet. Generous aromas of earth, white pepper, herbs, flowers, funk, smoked salt and crushed strawberry lead to a palate chock-full of smoked meat and savory flavors. It shows a beautiful sense of elegance and grace that belies the richness and length of the fruit and savory flavors. Editors' Choice.

abv: 13.3% **Price: \$70**

Dusted Valley 2014 Tall Tales Stoney Vine Vineyard Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). Coming from the winery's estate vineyard in The Rocks District, this aromatic brooder shows notes of crushed flowers, wet

stone, orange peel, brown stems and dark fruit, along with light smoked meat accents. The palate boasts generous fruit and savory flavors that linger on the finish.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$60

Proper 2014 Estate Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). The aromas jump up, with mesmerizing notes of fresh herbs, green olive, violets, orange peel, smoked meat and huckleberry. The palate shows a light but pillowy texture alongside flavors that carry on the finish. It's all about subtlety.

abv: 14.1% **Price: \$48**

Reynvaan 2013 In the Rocks Vineyard Estate Syrah (Walla

Walla Valley). The aromas pop with notes of wet gravel, mineral, funk, olive tapenade and high-toned flowers. The flavors are palate coating yet light and restrained, with generous savory and umami flavors that draw out on the finish. It has a very pretty sense of texture and precision—all about elegance.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$70**

Sleight of Hand 2014 The Psychedelic Stoney Vine Vineyard Estate Syrah (Walla Walla Valley).

Coming off The Rocks District, this wine displays somewhat reserved notes of ember, smoked meat, green olive, wet stone and smoke, leaning hard into the savory. The charcuterie, smoke and licorice flavors coat the palate, stretching out on the finish.

abv: 13.7% **Price: \$60**

Buty 2013 Rediviva of the **Stones Rockgarden Estate** Red (Walla Walla Valley). A blend of Syrah (80%), Cabernet Sauvignon (14%) and Mourvèdre, this opens with aromas of wet gravel, herb, smoke, funk, nori and black olive that are followed by plentiful, soft, generous savory flavors that bring a lot of intensity and appeal. The finish lingers.

abv: 13.9% Price: \$60

CATCHAN AUSTRALIAN CAB

Don't be left at the taxi stand. Often overlooked by American consumers, Australian Cabernet Sauvignons offer compelling competition for Napa and Bordeaux alike.

BY JOE CZERWINSKI

PHOTOS BY PAUL JOHNSON

The best-selling varietal red wine in the United States is Cabernet Sauvignon.

But if you check the shelves of your local wine retailer or the wine list of your neighborhood hangout for Australian options, prepare to be disappointed. Shiraz has deservedly been the dominant force in the American market for decades.

Yet, with a bit of persistence, consumers who seek out Australian Cabernet Sauvignon (and Cab-based blends) will be rewarded with wines that can challenge international classics, often at lower prices. Just know that for many of the top wines, quantities that reach the American market can be limited. Hesitation might mean that someone else grabs your Cab.



Margaret River

Three hours south of Perth, this underappreciated wine region has long been a weekend refuge for that city's affluent residents and surfer dudes alike. Commercial viticulture here turns 50 years old this year, celebrating the 1967 plantings at Vasse Felix. Other early pioneers include Cape Mentelle, Cullen, Leeuwin, Moss Wood and Woodlands.

Interest in Margaret River was spurred by John Gladstone, a state horticulturist who argued that the maritime climate was ideally suited for Bordeaux varieties. Robert Mondavi was a huge supporter of those early efforts. He repeatedly visited Margaret River and offered advice to the Horgans at Leeuwin Estate and the Watsons at Woodlands. Given how geographically isolated the region is, that's testament to the potential for fine wine.

The long trip pays off with access to stunning beaches, a bounty of locally produced foods and, of course, the world-class Cabernet Sauvignons (the Chardonnays can be great, too). That point is driven home at the annual International Cabernet Tasting, held at Cape Mentelle.

In November, at the 34th edition of the event, several of Margaret River's wines made a strong showing in a 20-wine blind tasting. The entrants included benchmarks like Château Margaux, Ornellaia and Chateau Montelena, plus Australian legends Houghton Jack Mann and Wynns John Riddoch, all from the 2013 vintage. Online readers can find my report at winemag.com/capementelletasting.

The mild climate features warmer days than Bordeaux, yet cooler ones than Napa, and the wines tend to fall between those extremes stylistically. Current Margaret River releases are never overripe, yet they avoid overt green characteristics. When the wines show herbal notes, they're pleasant hints of bay leaf and sage.

"The wines are soft but have those bay leaf and olive edges that say Margaret River," says Mark Bailey, winemaker at Howard Park. Alcohol levels rarely exceed 14 percent. Oak use, which varies by producer, is generally balanced by fruit intensity. Although most of the wines show ample power, the calling card of the region is elegance.

"I want layers and I want intrigue," says Sarah Morris, co-owner of Si Vintners. "We're getting more and more confident, and picking earlier and earlier."

The result is a group of Cabernet-based wines that James Halliday, Australia's well-known wine critic, considers his country's best. While other parts of the country can make terrific Cabernet Sauvignon, I'd agree that Margaret River is Australia's most consistent region for top Cabs.

Fortunately for those who can't (or won't) make the 30-plus-hour trip, a growing number of the region's wines are available in the United States. Whether it's the result of renewed efforts at quality from the establishment, upstarts with innovative viticultural practices or small producers that push the boundaries of low alcohol and minimal intervention, these wines reflect a new energy in the region.



Cape Mentelle 2012 (91, \$72)

Cherubino 2010 (94, \$54)

Howard Park 2012 Abercrombie (94, \$90)*

Leeuwin Estate 2012 Art Series (92, \$60)

Moss Wood 2011 Moss Wood Vineyard (95, \$84)

Vasse Felix 2013 (93, \$43)

Xanadu 2013 (93, \$29)

*30% Margaret River, 70% Mount Barker







Coonawarra

Once, this was Australia's Cabernet star.

It still offers the terra rossa soils and temperate climate that made it famous, but at least for the moment it's been eclipsed by Margaret River's success. Expansive vineyards and a lack of labor resulted in shortcuts like machine pruning and, even more disastrous from a quality standpoint, minimal pruning. Excessive vegetative growth led to fruit shading and green aromas and flavors in the finished wines.

Today, decades of vineyard mismanagement are gradually being reversed, and quality is on the rise. Leading the way are the same big companies that many blamed for Coonawarra's decline.

Sue Hodder, senior winemaker at the iconic Wynns of Coonawarra, admits that the region has faced some challenges.

"The 1990s were a dream decade in terms of climate, but we'd let our vineyards go too long without proper care," she says.

More recently, the efforts of Allen Jenkins, viticulturist at Wynns, have revived quality, says Hodder.

"There are fashions or trends or styles that we can see over time-leafy '80s, bigger '90s," she says, but the goal is always "medium-bodied wines that age well."

As part of the same corporate ownership as Penfolds, Hodder's team at Wynns has influenced that company's viticultural practices. Penfolds consistently draws a portion of its high-end Bin 707 Cabernet Sauvignon from Coonawarra.

Coonawarra Cabernet also goes into the company's very limited Bin 60A (blended with Barossa Shiraz) and Bin 620 (blended with Coonawarra Shiraz).

Like Penfolds, other notable producers truck fruit from Coonawarra to wineries elsewhere. St. Hugo, a recently revived label under the same ownership as Jacobs Creek, makes its Coonawarra Cab in the Barossa, and Yalumba's The Menzies is also made there. Jim Barry brings fruit up to Clare Valley. Local wineries who currently export to America include Balnaves, Di Giorgio, Katnook Estate and Penley Estate.

Whether from Margaret River, Coonawarra or one of the many other Australian regions that produce high-quality Cabernets, most of the prices remain accessible, at least relative to competition from Napa or Bordeaux. None of the 11 wines pictured in this story retails for more than \$100.

To date, only a few Australian Cabernets (or blends) have crossed that price barrier, but expect that number to increase as word about the quality of the wines spreads. The time to add these future collectibles to your cellar is now.

Other Aussie Cabernet Regions

GREAT SOUTHERN

One of Australia's legendary Cabernets comes from this portion of Western Australia, which includes the inland Frankland River region: Houghton's Jack Mann Cabernet Sauvignon, named for the winemaker who created it. Other wines of note include offerings from Frankland Estate. Howard Park and Plantagenet.

CLARE VALLEY

The site of Taylor's, sold in America as Wakefield Estate. was selected based on its suitability for Cabernet Sauvignon. An inland region, its cool nights preserve acidity, although the hot days sometimes mean a warm note creeps into the wines, and often there's a touch of eucalyptus. Other wineries worth seeking out include Grosset, Jim Barry and Kilikanoon.

BAROSSA VALLEY

Even this hotbed of Shiraz produces Cabernet Sauvignon. Because of the region's warmth, often these are wines built on ripeness and power, not dissimilar to the Shiraz. That bold, dry-red tendency meshes well with the house style at Penfolds. Throw in what may be the world's oldest Cabernet Sauvignon vines, and its occasional releases of Block 42 Kalimna Cabernet are special, indeed.

EDEN VALLEY

Eden Valley is best known for its Riesling, but it's also home to some of the country's finest Shiraz. That doesn't leave much room for Cabernet Sauvignon. Still, cooler temperatures than those found on the Barossa Vallev floor mean that the few that are made typically retain more perfumed varietal character. Henschke's Cyril Henschke is the obvious one to seek out, while Yalumba's FDR1A blends Eden Valley Cabernet and Shiraz to good effect.

ADELAIDE HILLS

This cool-climate region is increasingly planted to Pinot Noir and white grape varieties, but Cabernet can perform well in some warm, north-facing pockets like near The Lane's cellar door and winery in Hahndorf. Its 2012 19th Meeting Single Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon marries richness with complex spice notes and enough structure to warrant cellaring through 2025.

McLAREN VALE

In a region that seems able to grow virtually any grape variety, Cabernet Sauvignon isn't known as traditional or cutting edge. It lives somewhere between those extremes, normally only a small part of most wineries' production. Producers to seek out include Fox Creek, Hickinbotham, Kay Brothers, Mitolo, Penny's Hill and Wirra Wirra. If you enjoy a superripe, nearly over-the-top style, Mollydooker's Gigglepot will scratch that itch.

LIMESTONE COAST

This region includes Coonawarra, Mount Benson, Mount Gambier, Padthaway, Robe and Wrattonbully. After Coonawarra, American consumers are most likely to find wines from Padthaway. Wines from Henry's **Drive Vignerons and Morambro** Creek are solid bets, if often marked by eucalyptus notes from the region's large gum trees. Casella's 2007 "1919" Cabernet (the current release) shows the potential of Wrattonbully.

LANGHORNE CREEK

For years, fruit from Langhorne Creek was the secret sauce that lent silkiness to some of South Australia's biggest regional blends (and it still does). Now, it's gaining increased recognition in Cabernet Sauvignons made outside the region like Noon's Reserve and Heartland's Directors' Cut. Local wineries Bleasdale and Bremerton also make notable Cabernets.

YARRA VALLEY

Now primarily known for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, Swiss vine pioneer Paul de Castella originally sourced Cabernet Sauvignon from Bordeaux's Château Lafite for his vineyards back in the 1850s. The few Cabernet-based wines that remain are some of Australia's most sought after for their coolclimate elegance: Mount Mary Quintet and Yarra Yering Dry Red Wine No. 1.



Meet the pioneering leaders of the country's most innovative wine projects.

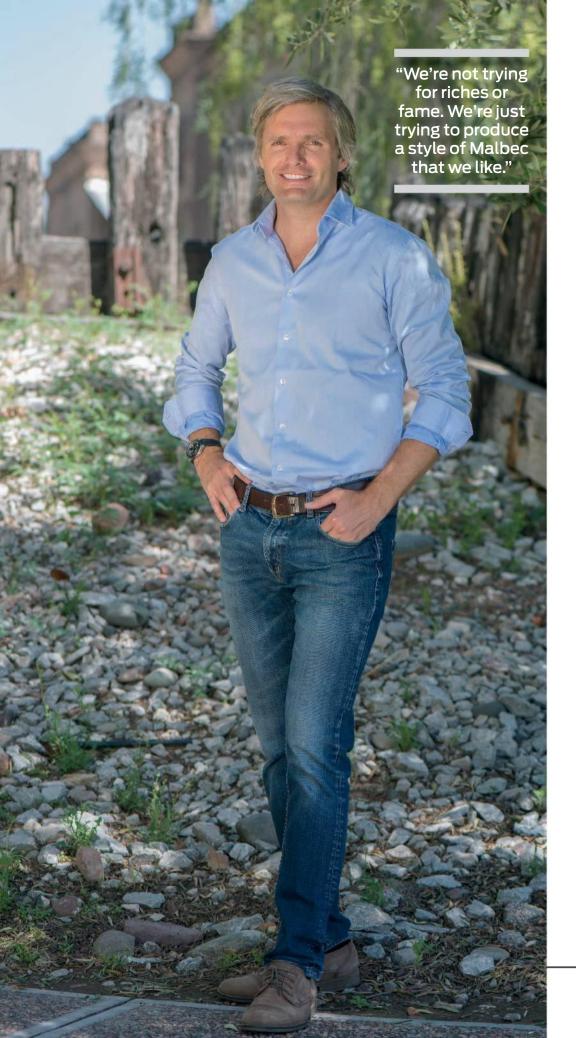
BY MICHAEL SCHACHNER
PHOTOS BY GUSTAVO SABEZ



From the choicest subzones of Mendoza's Uco Valley, a new crop of small-batch Malbecs is forcing tasters to reconsider the basic parameters of Argentina's signature wine. Meanwhile, along the banks of the Río Negro in Patagonia, a small winery with big aspirations is turning the obscure Trousseau grape into an entirely New World wine.

Along the windy coastline south of Buenos Aires, where wine grapes have heretofore never been grown, one of Argentina's top winemakers is crafting Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and other cool-climate wines from a fledgling vineyard situated fewer than four miles from the Atlantic Ocean.

These are the kinds of new and intriguing wine projects that are redefining Argentinean wine. Here, we put the spotlight on a few of those who are spearheading these welcome efforts.



Who: Andrés Blanchard

Projects: Bodega Cuarto Dominio and Blanchard y Lurton Where: Uco Valley, Mendoza

Andrés Blanchard grew up in San Martín, a sun-baked commune in eastern Mendoza known for volume production. His family, made up of immigrants from France and Spain, has grown grapes in this part of Argentina since they arrived from Europe three generations ago.

While respectful of the business, Blanchard long ago decided that to gain a fuller perspective of wine and the world, he would have to travel.

"It was 2001, and Argentina was in deep economic trouble," he says. "I had to get out. I had to learn about the world of wine in a place with variety. So I studied viticulture and wine marketing in Spain, and worked retail in London."

With international experience under his belt, Blanchard returned home in 2007. He first was in charge of exports for François Lurton's stable of properties. That led to a commercial job at Bodega Catena Zapata and a rekindling of an old friendship with Javier Catena, who Blanchard had played rugby with in college.

Relying exclusively on a vineyard in La Consulta that Catena owns, the two started Bodega Cuarto Dominio (Fourth Generation) in 2009. Blanchard has steered the label into a 35,000-case brand, about 40 percent of which is sold in Argentina.

"We're not trying for riches or fame," he says. "We're just trying to produce a style of Malbec that we like, one that's both traditional, but fresher than what Mendoza is known for."

In addition to Cuarto Dominio, Blanchard bottles white wine in conjunction with Lurton. The project, Blanchard y Lurton, produces a blended white from Tocai, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio and Viognier called Grand Vin, as well as a less-expensive blend of Tocai, Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier.

Recommended Wines

Cuarto Dominio 2014 Malbec (Mendoza); \$40

Blanchard y Lurton 2014 Grand Vin (Vista Flores);\$30

Who: Daniel Pi

Project: Trapiche Costa y Pampa

Where: Chapadmalal, Buenos Aires Province

Daniel Pi is the head winemaker for Trapiche, one of Argentina's biggest wineries and a global export powerhouse. But overseeing the production of value-priced varietal wines is not why Pi is so highly respected in his native Mendoza.

What makes Pi special is his unbridled enthusiasm for experimentation. Several years ago, Pi was one of the first to bottle high-end Malbec identified by vineyard name. He also makes wines called Imperfecto and 314 with his son and daughter.

What makes Pi special is his unbridled enthusiasm for experimentation.

But it's Costa y Pampa—a project Pi has taken on for Trapiche in an unknown area called Chapadmalal, 250 miles south of Buenos Aires near Mar del Plata—that deserves a closer look. Named after the coast-line that gives way to millions of acres of sprawling grasslands used for cattle grazing, Costa y Pampa produces fewer than 4,000 cases of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Gewürztraminer.

Pi calls the terroir in Chapadmalal "South Atlantic." "I think it's like Long Island in the U.S., or Galicia in Spain," he says. "It's a maritime spot."

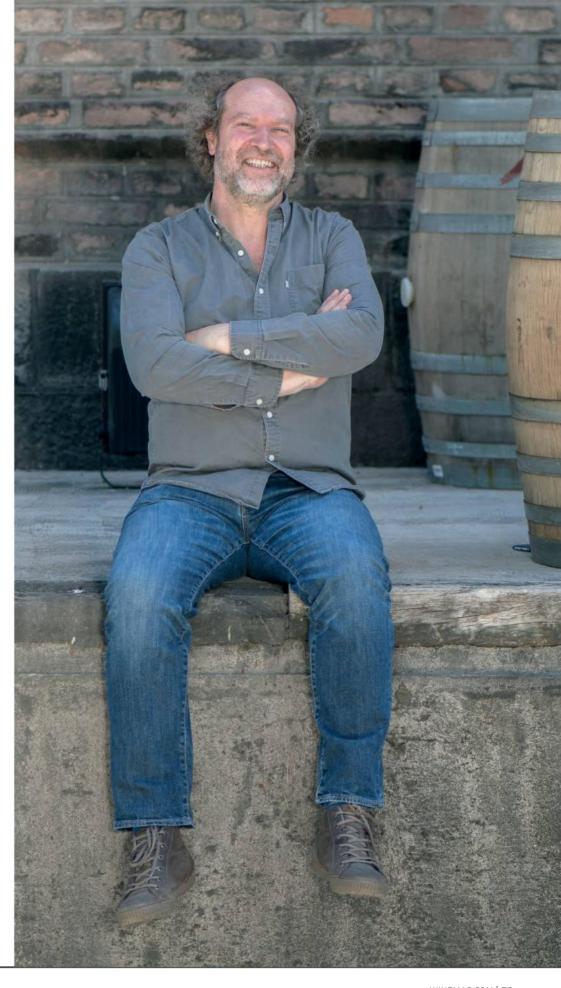
At the 62-acre vineyard he helped plant in 2009 less than four miles from the ocean, the soils are "loessic," says Pi, meaning windblown silt and sand. It's a dry-farmed vineyard, thanks to the heavy rains that pelt the Argentine coast, and it relies on poplar trees to break the wind.

The 2014 vintage was the first for Costa y Pampa, while its 2015 crop was lost to frost. The 2016s are currently on the market, and they merit a serious taste.

Recommended Wines

Costa y Pampa 2016 Pinot Noir (Buenos

Costa y Pampa 2016 Chardonnay (Buenos Aires): \$20



Who: Santiago Bernasconi

Project: Bodega Aniello

Where: Upper Río Negro Valley, Patagonia

Along the banks of the Río Negro in dry, windy Patagonia, Santiago Bernasconi and his two partners have slowly ramped up production at Bodega Aniello, named after the grandfather of one of Bernasconi's associates.

In just its fifth year, Aniello bottles three levels of wine that emphasize freshness and red-fruit flavors, hallmarks of Río Negro offerings.

"We had grown tired of the M&M [Malbec from Mendoza] conversation and wanted to pursue diversity."

"We had grown tired of the M&M [Malbec from Mendoza] conversation and wanted to pursue diversity," says Bernasconi. "Ours is defined by our proximity to the Río Negro, one of the few rivers in Argentina that never dries up. We have heterogeneous soils: gravel, sand and clay. It makes for some interesting wines."

The 006 line, which includes Malbec, Merlot and Pinot Noir, is named for the original vineyard that Aniello purchased in 2011.

"On the paperwork, it reads 'Chacra 006,' " says Bernasconi "Chacra means a plot of land, and this one had no name, just a number."

Aniello's midtier varietal Malbec and Merlot wines blended from various vineyard plots are good, and a white wine made from Pinot Noir is unique within Argentina. But the wine most worth seeking out is a Trousseau made from vines planted in 1932.

"People taste this grape from the Jura in France, and the wine is light and feminine," says Bernasconi. "Ours is fuller in body, more voluptuous and fruity."

Recommended Wines

Aniello 2014 Vino de Parcela Unica Trousseau (Patagonia); \$60

Aniello 2015 006 Riverside Estate Malbec (Patagonia); \$20



SANTA JULIA

- ARGENTINA -



Who: Gerardo, Juan Pablo, Gabriel and Matías Michelini

Project: SuperUco Where: Uco Valley, Mendoza

The brothers Michelini—Gerardo, Juan Pablo, Gabriel and Matías (pictured)—are well known in the Mendoza wine scene. They're also popular in the restaurants of Buenos Aires, where they hand-sell their Mendoza boutique wines: Zorzal, Gen de Alma, Via Revolucionaria and SuperUco.

The Michelinis helped the international-leaning Doña Paula brand gain traction more than a decade ago. In recent years, they've turned their attention to bottling mostly unconventional blends, biodynamic Malbecs and various cutting-edge wines, including a skin-contact Torrontés and a low-alcohol Chenin Blanc fermented in concrete eggs.

While a few of the Michelini wines exported to the U.S. are well out of the mainstream, there's no denying the quality of SuperUco, which began in 2012 as a collection of three biodynamic Malbecs.

"SuperUco is the union of me and my three brothers," says Gerardo. "We are all very different, but united behind the same idea: to make wines that are emblematic of the Uco Valley and that reflect the places where the grapes are grown. Perfection, such that it can be attained, is only available through natural processes."

One of the SuperUco wines hails from calcareous soils in Altamira, a spot that each year climbs the hierarchy of top Argentine wine-growing regions. Los Chacayes, in Vista Flores, is the source for SuperUco's fullest, ripest, most traditional Malbec, while Gualtallary, a subsection of Tupungato, represents high-elevation (nearly 5,000 feet) viticulture and winemaking.

"Each of these wines is made in the same manner, yet while there are differences between each wine, they all display freshness, elegance and complexity," says Gerardo. "Above all, that's what we want to show."

Recommended Wines

92 SuperUco 2014 Michelini Sammartino Calcáreo Río de Los Chacayes Malbec (Valle de Uco); \$40

SuperUco 2014 Michelini Sammartino Calcáreo Coluvio de Altamira Malbec (Valle de Uco); \$40





As third generation winegrowers, our family is proud of where we've come from – but even more passionate about where we are headed.





Who: Jeff Mausbach and Alejandro Sejanovich

Where: Uco Valley, Mendoza

Jeff Mausbach (pictured, far left), a gregarious guy from Omaha, Nebraska, had been the head of wine education for the Catena group of wineries when I met him in 2001. Since 2010, he's been making wines with Alejandro Sejanovich (left), a former vineyard manager with Catena.

TintoNegro is a project that concentrates on the Uco Valley, located to the immediate south of Mendoza city and the established subzones of Vistalba, Agrelo and Perdriel.

"TintoNegro wines are meant to reflect the heart and soul of Mendoza Malbec," says Mausbach. "The portfolio explores the terroirs where Malbec does best. Gradually, we have isolated vineyard sites with interesting soil profiles. Our winemaking techniques aim to showcase the heights of concentration and complexity that Malbec can aspire to."

The TintoNegro wines hail from the Finca La Escuela vineyard in the Paraje Altamira section of Uco. The vineyard is fewer than 20 acres—small by Argentine standards—with four distinct soil types: gravel, stones, sand and silt. TintoNegro bottles a Malbec from each soil type as well as a blend.

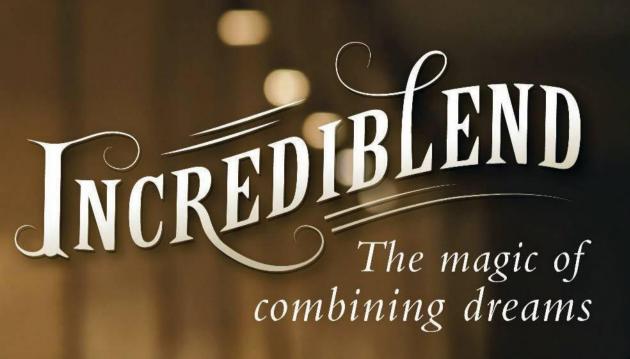
"Each plot offers different levels of water retention," says Mausbach. "Silt is the heaviest and coolest, sand is the most coarse and driest. The stony soils are lowest in yields, with higher acidity and an herbal aromatic profile. Gravel refracts our abundant sunshine, creating higher temperatures in the vineyard, dark berry flavors and sweet spice aromas."

The four wines show notable differences in aromas, structure and flavors, but also similarities. La Grava's dark-fruit flavors and structured tannins are textbook Malbec. However, the four-plot blended wine, Finca La Escuela, ranks as TintoNegro's most complete and complex Malbec.

Recommended Wines

TintoNegro 2013 Finca La Escuela Estate Grown Malbec (Mendoza); \$40

TintoNegro 2013 Finca La Escuela La Grava Malbec (Mendoza); \$30



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POINTS
JAMES SUCKLING





WHEELING THROUGH

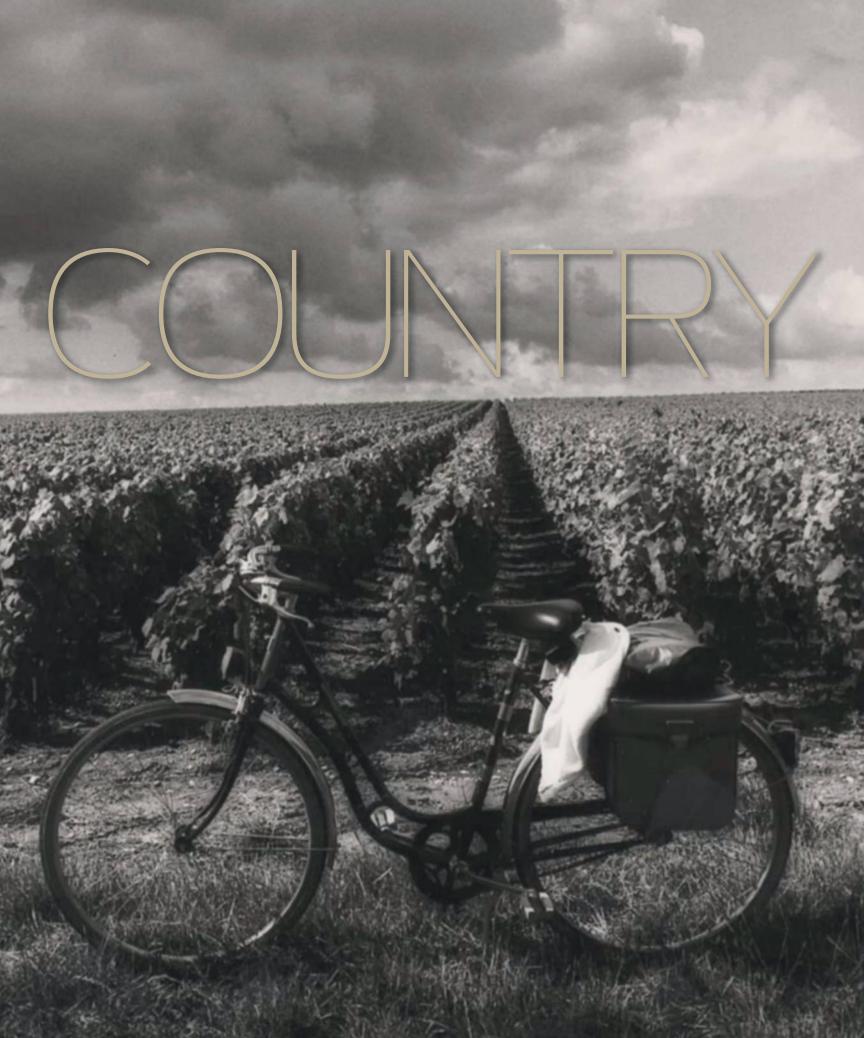
Make vineyards your own on a bicycling adventure.

BY RISA WYATT

Become a living part of vineyard landscapes with a bicycle adventure around some of the world's legendary wine regions.

Itineraries range from DIY day excursions on designated wine trails to guided weeklong explorations that feature gourmet meals and accommodations at top-rated hotels. Routes uncork a premier blend of experiences: breathtaking countryside views, quaint villages, castles and museums, all amplified by the adrenaline rush of coasting from one extraordinary vineyard to the next. Exhilarated by the sounds and scents of the region, you'll savor the flavor of every sip.





FRANCE | Burgundy

he appellations of Pommard, Volnay, Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet, and Chassagne-Montrachet—some of the most celebrated origins of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir wines—come to life along La Voie des Vignes (The Way of the Vines). This easy-pedaling route runs 13 miles, from Beaune to Santenay. Vineyard vistas mingle with pastures of pale-beige Charolais cattle, and simple, half-timbered cottages with imposing chateaus.

Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes achieve greatness in their historic home, which produces 100 Appellation d'Origine Protégée (AOP) wines. One hallmark of Burgundy is the concept of climat: Each vineyard (some walled by stone, some not) has its own name and acknowledged characteristics of soil and weather. Some are barely the size of a suburban backyard and

many have belonged to the same families for generations.

A bastion first of the Gauls and later the Romans, the region became the seat of the powerful dukes of Burgundy during medieval times. Surrounded by ramparts, Beaune is known for its annual wine auction and the Hôtel-Dieu (founded 1443), roofed with multicolored glazed tiles. Dating to the 11th century, the Château de Meursault estate features vast caves. Its biggest cellar can house 800 barrels.

Cyclists can reward their exertions with the lavish local cuisine, which includes escargots, gougères (cheese puff pastries) and, of course, boeuf Bourguignon.

For Information:

La Voie des Vignes: beaune-tourism.com/discover/ nature-hiking/cycling-voie-des-vignes







CHILE | Casablanca, San Antonio and Colchagua Valleys

hile is a land of extremes. It stretches 2,700 miles long, but it's just 110 miles at its widest point, squeezed between the Pacific Ocean to the west and the snow-capped, 13,000-foot Andes Mountains to the east. That multiplicity of landscapes yields an eclectic array of wine grapes: from cool-climate-loving Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc to warmweather baskers like Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenère (Chile has 98 percent of the world's plantings of this variety).

Upscape Travel delves deep into several of Chile's most lauded wine regions on a sevenday, six-night biking adventure. The route covers the Casablanca Valley (with visits to Kingston Family Vineyards), San Antonio Valley (Matetic Vineyards) and Colchagua Valley (Viña Estampa, Viu Manent, Neyen, MontGras and VIK). Riders also sweep down the Ruta de Fruta (Fruit Highway) to the dramatic Pacific coastline.

Memorable meals explore the pairing possibilities of top Chilean wines with deli-

cacies like fresh local oysters, grilled sea bass and steak marinated in anise and sea salt. Accommodations range from a restored 18th-century hacienda to a casually luxe beachfront retreat.

Gear up to visit during the best seasons in Chilean wine country: spring (October to February) and fall harvest (March to May).

For Information:
Upscape Travel: upscapetravel.com





AUSTRALIA | McLaren Vale

estled between the Mount Lofty Ranges and the Gulf St. Vincent's sandy beaches, McLaren Vale lies 20 miles south of Adelaide in South Australia. Thanks to its Mediterranean climate, McLaren Vale is one of the country's premier wine-producing districts. Best known for Shiraz (roughly half of the area's production), McLaren Vale also earns renown for Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon. Varieties on the horizon include include Fiano, Vermentino, Tempranillo and Sangiovese.

Several tour operators offer guided trips from Adelaide, with routes designed for maximum downhill coasting. The adventure often begins at Kuitpo Forest, where riders might share the road with kangaroos and koalas. From there, a gentle descent down Willunga Hill arrives in McLaren Vale for wine tasting.

The itinerary can include cellar doors (Aussie-speak for tasting rooms) like Kangarilla Road, with its views that sweep across vineyards to the sea; Angove, a fifth-genera-

tion winery founded in 1886; and Samuel's Gorge, which overlooks the Onkaparinga River National Park and produces Grenache, Shiraz, Mourvèdre and Tempranillo.

Detours might also include visits to a microbrewery, a stop for fresh-made chocolates or a swim at the beach. It all adds up to a very g'day, indeed.

For Information:

Escapegoat Adventures: escapegoat.com.au Tour de Vines: tourdevines.com.au



ITALY | Tuscany

journey through Tuscany's Chianti region, between Florence and Siena, reveals medieval towns, castles, churches and acre upon acre of vineyards. Cultivated in central Italy for millennia, Sangiovese rules here. A vineyard diva, the finicky but versatile grape produces wines that range from pasta-and-pizza-loving Chiantis to powerfully elegant Brunello di Montalcino and Chianti Classico.

Bike routes blend tasting opportunities with UNESCO World Heritage Sites

perched on the hilltops. The route from San Gimignano to Siena is one of the loveliest passages, following country byways past olive groves and rows of cypress. A walled city crowned by towers, San Gimignano is a charmer. Famous for the Palio horse races through its main square each summer, Siena houses a 13th-century cathedral, one of the finest Gothic churches in Italy.

With some signicant climbs along the way, the region is best pedaled on guided tours, which offer support vans to shuttle

riders out of trafficked cities and up to the ancient hill towns. Cyclists will be glad they're working up appetites, as Tuscany is the home of regional specialties like Pecorino cheese, ribollita (a vegetable and bread soup) and bistecca alla fiorentina (a thick cut of steak from the special Chianina breed of cow). Stops at regional wineries like Il Borro are a welcome treat along the way.

For Information:

Backroads: backroads.com Bike Florence & Tuscany: bikeinflorence.com



COCKTAILS OF THE CARIBBEAN

Learn the stories behind your favorite sips of sunshine.





BY KARA NEWMAN
PHOTOS BY TODD HUFFMAN

Even if an island getaway isn't on your calendar, you can still sip cocktails created at sun-soaked bars and resorts. In fact, many of the cocktails we know and love originated on tropical islands. Take an armchair tour of some of the Caribbean's beautiful beaches—cocktail in hand, of course—and learn the stories behind some of your favorite drinks.



PUERTO RICO

The Piña Colada

This blender drink was created at San Juan's Caribe Hilton. There's some debate about who created it, but the honor generally goes to Ramón "Monchito" Marrero Perez, one of the Caribe Hilton's early local bartenders. As the story goes, Perez experimented for three months in 1954 before he created a drink that he said captured the sunny, tropical flavors of Puerto Rico in a glass.

Another bartender at the hotel, Ricardo Garcia, is credited for adding strained pineapple juice and naming the drink. (Literally translated from Spanish, $pi\tilde{n}a$ colada means "strained pineapple.") Garcia was also the first person to serve the drink in a hollowed-out coconut.

Piña Colada

Courtesy Caribe Hilton, San Juan, Puerto Rico

- 2 ounces white rum, preferably Puerto Rican
- 1 ounce coconut cream
- 1 ounce heavy cream
- 6 ounces fresh pineapple juice

Fresh pineapple wedge and maraschino cherry, for garnish

In a blender, combine all ingredients, except garnishes, with ½ cup crushed ice. Blend for about 15 seconds, or until smooth. Serve in a 12-ounce glass. Garnish with pineapple and cherry.

If You Like Piña Coladas:

The Piña Colada was created in 1954, but we can't forget the 1979 Rupert Holmes song "Escape (The Piña Colada Song)," which again popularized the drink. Although Holmes admitted he had never tried a Piña Colada before he wrote the song—the original line was "If you like Humphrey Bogart"—the lyric stuck. It was so popular that the record company added the parenthetical subtitle later because people were calling radio stations requesting "The Piña Colada song."





PANAMA

Bird of Paradise Fizz

This drink is a bit of an outlier. It showcases gin, and it hails from Panama, which is part of the Caribbean region, but not one of the islands. Still, it's delicious and a perfect example of what a Caribbean cocktail can be.

This pretty pink sipper makes an appearance in *The Gentleman's Companion*: Around the World With Jigger, Beaker and Flask (Derrydale Press, 1939), written by globetrotting mixologist Charles H. Baker. The drink originated at the Strangers Club in Colón, once a popular watering hole for weary travelers who sought passage through the Panama Canal Zone.

"We always have found welcome there during the [12 or so times] we have been in the 'Zone' going west to east, or vice versa," wrote Baker, where this vibrantly hued drink provided "a colorful, eye-filling experience."

Bird of Paradise Fizz

Adapted from Beachbum Berry's Potions of the Caribbean (Cocktail Kingdom, 2013) by Jeff Berry

- 3 ounces dry gin
- 11/2 ounces lime juice
- 1 ounce heavy cream
- 3 teaspoons raspberry syrup
- 1 tablespoon egg white
- 3 dashes orange flower water
- 1 ounce club soda (more if desired)
- 1 tropical flower, like bougainvillea, for garnish

In a cocktail shaker, combine gin, lime, cream, raspberry syrup and egg white with plenty of crushed ice. Shake well, and pour unstrained into a tall glass, leaving some room at the top. Add orange flower water, top with soda and stir. Garnish, and serve with a straw.



Rum By Any Other Name: Through history, some of the names for rum have included rumbullion, grog, killdevil, demon water, pirate's drink and Nelson's blood.

JAMAICA

Planter's Punch

In the Caribbean, punch began as something enjoyed by the plantation owners, or "planters," hence the name. Variations pop up all over the islands, but Planter's Punch became linked strongly to Jamaica in the 1920s. Myers's Rum started to sell a Planter's Punch Rum formulated for the drink. Planter's Punch served at the upscale Myrtle Bank Hotel in Kingston, and Titchfield Hotel in Port Antonio also popularized it.

Follow the classic sing-song punch template: one of sour, two of sweet, three of strong, four of weak (the latter is often tea, fruit juice or even dilution from ice, as below). Some folks also add "a touch of spice to make it nice." The recipe below is inspired by Jamaica's classic.

Planter's Punch

Courtesy Smuggler's Cove, San Francisco

- 3 ounces aged Jamaica rum, like Appleton Estate Signature Blend
- 1 ounce lime juice
- 3/4 ounce SC Demerara syrup*
- 1/4 ounce St. Elizabeth Allspice Dram
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters

Mint sprig, for garnish

Combine all ingredients except garnish in a blender with 12 ounces of crushed ice and 4–6 regular ice cubes. Pulse 3–5 seconds, then pour into a Collins or highball glass (strain out the large chunks of ice, but allow some ice to fall into the glass). Garnish with mint sprig.

SC DEMERARA SYRUP

1 cup Demerara sugar

3 cups granulated sugar

In a saucepan over high heat, bring 2 cups of water to a boil. Add Demerara sugar, and stir vigorously with a whisk until the sugar dissolves, about 1 minute. Add the granulated sugar and stir vigorously until dissolved, about 1 minute. Remove from heat and let cool. Store in a lidded bottle or other sealed container in the refrigerator. The syrup will keep for several weeks.

FARM TO TABLE, VINE TO GLASS

This meal pairs California ingredients with unexpected wines from nearby.

HRTY-SEVEN

BY JIM GORDON

PHOTOS BY
PENNY DE LOS SANTOS



Farmstead Cheese en Croute

This twist on a baked brie *en croute* (in pastry crust) was inspired by ingredients available from vintner Jean-Charles Boisset's gourmet boutique, Atelier by JCB, in Yountville, California. While this recipe takes a little more work than the big, oozing mess you get with a whole wheel of Brie in the traditional version, it makes a finger-friendly appetizer so rich that you won't need more than two morsels per person.

Find where to get the cheese at *tolumafarms.com*, or substitute another bloomy-rind, soft-ripened cheese.

PAIR IT

These baked puffs use a creamy Marin County farmstead cheese blended from sheep, cow and goat milk. The crisp **Thirty-Seven Wines 2015 Albariño** was grown in the adjacent Sonoma Coast AVA, where the cool maritime climate is as healthy for sensitive wine grapes as it is for pampered dairy animals. The wine retains plenty of acidity amid layers of quince, white peach and lemon, so it quickly recharges the palate after each glorious cheesy bite.

CHEESE AND OYSTERS? WELCOME TO TOMALES BAY

THIRTY-SEVEN

BARIÑO

A wonderful day trip from San Francisco, the Sonoma Marin Cheese Trail connects six cheese makers located near scenic Tomales Bay. The trail includes the famous **Cowgirl**

Creamery and Tomales Farmstead
Creamery, whose Teleeka cheese is used for
the pastry filling. The beautiful drive goes over
the Golden Gate Bridge and along Highway 1
through Marin County. The route passes several
oyster farms, including favorite Hog Island, and
continues into Sonoma County and the Russian
River Valley. Beware big mid-day crowds at the
oyster bars whenever the fog clears.

Courtesy Atelier by JCB, Yountville, California

- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry
- 4 ounces prosciutto, sliced thin and torn into 2-inch pieces
- 4 ounces Tomales Farmstead Creamery Teleeka, cut into 12 pieces
- 1 egg
- 2 apples, quartered, cored and cut into ¼-inch slices (optional)

Thaw puff pastry according to directions on box. Keep refrigerated until ready to use.

Heat oven to 400°F. Dust work surface lightly with flour. Lightly dust both sides of pastry sheet with flour.

Using rolling pin, roll sheet to twice its original size. Cut the dough into 12 squares with a pizza wheel or sharp knife. Divide prosciutto among squares. Top prosciutto with cheese in center of each pastry square.

Fold corners of each square over cheese, and firmly twist corners together at top.

In small bowl, beat egg with 2 teaspoons cold water. Brush surface of pastry with egg wash. Place pastry on baking sheet lined with parchment paper or silicone mat. Bake until browned on top, about 15 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes.

Serve with a side of apple slices, if desired. Serves 6.

Portuguese-Style Steamed Clams

When Portuguese immigrants arrived in Northern California around the turn of the 20th century, they found Dungeness crab easy to catch along the Pacific coast in Sonoma and Mendocino counties. They also discovered abundant shellfish, like clams, that could be harvested during low tide. This recipe, a classic from San Francisco's Hayes Street Grill, is quick and easy to make. It incorporates spicy Portuguese-style chouriço sausage and tomatoes, which make it richer and deeper than simple clams. It works as a starter, but it's substantial enough for a main course.

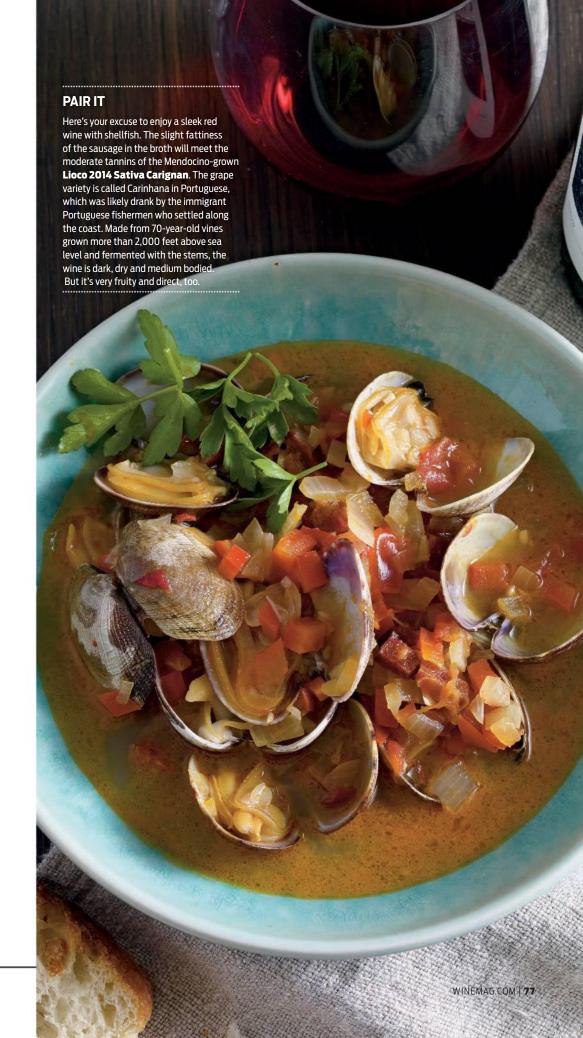
Courtesy Patricia Unterman, Hayes Street Grill, San Francisco

- 1/3 cupoliveoil
- 1 tablespoonmincedgarlic
- 2 cups chopped yellow onion
- 3 cups chopped red bell pepper
- 8 ounces chouriço or Spanish-style chorizo, diced
- 11/2 cups dry white wine
- 5 cups fish or chicken stock, preferably homemade

Dried red pepper flakes, to taste

In large sauté pan or skillet, warm oil over medium heat. Add garlic, onions, pepper and sausage. Sauté until sausage is browned, about 12–15 minutes. Add wine and scrape bottom of pan with wooden spatula. Add stock, and cook until mixture is slightly thickened. Using slotted spoon, skim any fat off surface. Add pepper flakes to taste, and add chopped tomato. (This can all be done ahead of time and refrigerated until just before serving time.)

About 15 minutes before serving, bring broth to boil. Add clams and cover skillet. Cook until clams have opened, about 6–10 minutes. Ladle into individual bowls. Garnish with parsley. Serve with toasted or crusty bread, with spoon for broth and fork for clams. Serves 6.







Slow-Roasted Leg of Lamb

Food and wine pairings don't get any more local than this one. Both the lamb for this tender, slow roast and the grapes for the suave Tempranillo were raised on the Six Sigma Ranch in California's scenic Lake County. Infused with fresh herbs and lemon juice, this dish makes a statement when you have several guests to feed. Even better, thanks to its long roasting time, the entrée is virtually foolproof. The recipe comes from Rachel Ahlmann, whose family owns Six Sigma.

Courtesy Rachel Ahlmann, Six Sigma Ranch, Lower Lake, California

- 1 medium yellow onion, sliced
- 1 bone-in leg of lamb (4-5 pounds)
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 10 sprigs fresh rosemary, divided
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons coarsely ground black pepper
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup dry red wine

GROWING GRAPES AND GRASS-FED MEAT

Rachel Ahlmann not only perfected the roast lamb recipe, but she's also in charge of raising the lambs, pigs and cows on the sprawling 4,300-acre Six Sigma Ranch near Lower Lake, California. She rotates the pigs and sheep between pastures, cares for orphaned lambs and doctors the sheep when needed. West Coast readers can contact Rachel to order grass-fed beef and lamb, and pastured pork from sixsigmaranch.com.



Heat oven to 400°F.

Rinse and dry lamb. Arrange onions on bottom of roasting pan, and lay lamb on top. Rub lamb with lemon juice. Remove leaves from 5 rosemary sprigs and chop. Pat chopped rosemary leaves and garlic evenly over meat. Season with salt and pepper.

Roast lamb for 30 minutes. Cover roasting pan tightly with aluminum foil. Reduce heat to 300°F. Cook for 3½ hours. Transfer lamb to carving board. Let rest, covered, for 20 minutes before carving.

After transferring lamb, place roasting pan on stove burners over medium heat. Add remaining rosemary sprigs, chicken stock and wine. Stir with wooden spoon until sauce thickens. Season with salt and pepper, if needed. Strain sauce and reserve. Slice lamb and serve with sauce drizzled over top. Serves 6–8.

PAIR IT

Dense, tannic wines like Tempranillo cut through the fattiness of the lamb, while the ripe, saturated fruit and tobacco flavors merge with the earthy, savory essence of the roast. The current release, **Six Sigma 2013 Christian's Reserve Tempranillo (Lake County)**, makes a great match, but the 2006 vintage would be even more sublime.

Coconut and Almond Macaroons

It's not hard to love a macaroon dipped in chocolate, especially made with California almonds. As good as these are from your local bakery, they are much better when fresh and homemade. Terri Prosperi makes these classics at her ranch in Madera. It's where her family grew almonds for many years and continues to grow Muscat grapes for nearby Quady Winery's sweet wines.

Courtesy Terri Prosperi, Denis Prosperi Farms, Madera, CA



- 31/2 cups sweetened flaked coconut (or unsweetened, for milder flavor), divided
- 1 cup thinly sliced almonds
- 7 ounces sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 2 large egg whites
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Sea salt, to taste

- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 2 teaspoons vegetable shortening

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Combine 1½ cups coconut and sliced almonds. Spread evenly on baking sheet. Toast, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 13 minutes. Transfer to bowl, and let cool.

In same bowl, add remaining coconut, condensed milk and almond extract. In separate bowl, using electric mixer on high speed, beat egg whites and kosher salt until soft peaks form. Using rubber spatula, gently fold egg whites into coconut mixture.

Using large spoon, place tall mounds of dough, about 2 inches in diameter, about 2 inches apart on baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Lightly sprinkle each mound with sea salt. Bake until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Transfer to wire rack. Let cool completely.

Line baking sheet again with parchment paper. In double boiler, melt chocolate and shortening together until smooth. Dip top of each cookie into chocolate coating. Transfer to prepared baking sheets. Refrigerate cookies until chocolate sets. Refrigerate in airtight container until ready to serve. *Makes about 18*.

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2013 vintage 2014 vintage 90 PTS 9I PTS



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BEST OF YEAR

Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

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WINE ENTHUSIAST

BEST OF YEAR

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2013 vintage 2014 vintage 9I PTS 9I PTS

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*Caucasia, based on Calendar Year 2015 Malbec exports and domestic shipments.



WINEENTHUSIAST BUYINGGUIDE



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CALIFORNIA

The 2013 vintage in Napa Valley: Cabs and beyond

Many winemakers

will tell you the

2013 vintage

is particularly

stunning, though not

always immediately

approachable.

o Jean Hoefliger, winemaker of Alpha Omega Winery in Rutherford, Napa Valley is the most consistent climate he's seen in

It's true. The climate in Northern California has been remarkably consistent and generous over the last several years. The stretch of vin-

tages from 2012 through 2016 is a run of warm, relatively calm grape-growing years the likes of which even longtime Napans say they've never seen before.

Many winemakers will tell you the 2013 vintage is particularly stunning, though not always immediately approachable. Unlike 2012 and 2014, 2013 is a boldly structured, bigtannin year, speaking as much

to California's tenacious drought as the warmth of the sun.

So far, the highest scoring wines tend to come from the southern end of the Napa Valley, up through the Oakville and Stags Leap District AVAs. This may be because they were able to retain more acidity in the warm, dry year and feel more pleasurably balanced in their youth.

That said, my top-rated Cabernet from the vintage up to now is from Spottswoode (98 points), an estate-grown beauty from St. Helena, one of the warmest appellations of all. Despite concentrated fruit and ample tannin, it retains rose-garden grace. It should age well for decades.

> While 2012-2016 looks to be a string of serious successes for Napa Cabernet, other varieties tell a similar tale. Merlot makes its case in 2013 bottlings from Venge Vineyards, La Jota Vineyard and Pahlmeyer, while Robert Biale Vineyards is allowing Winemaker Tres Goetting to try new things with old vineyards, resulting in a lineup of dialed-in single-site Zinfan-

dels; Biale's 2013 Royal Punishers Petite Sirah is also worth a look.

So don't be shy about picking up all the Napa reds from 2013 you can find-though they may not be drinking at peak now, they show the stuff that cellaring dreams are made of.

Cheers!

-Virginie Boone

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

95 Jarvis 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A designation used only when a vintage deserves, this reserve is definitely worthy. Almost a decade after bottling, it offers an intensity of chocolate, cinnamon and clove against soft, mellowed and structured tannin. Dusty sage and a bramble of blackberry complete the picture. It may have another five to seven years of beauty left within, but why wait? -V.B.

abv: 14.5%

95 Ramey 2013 Pedregal Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). This wine was co-fermented with 15% Petit Verdot from the same rocky, hillside site. The two varieties marry seamlessly in the glass, exuding a distinct perfume of forest mushroom and violet. Though pronounced in structure the wine is also soft and round, with a dotting

of dried herb and a considerable length of clove and dust. It's rich, intense and memorable. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$200**

B Cellars 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (St. Hel-94 B Cellars 2015 Capetines Sacring.

ena). This 100% varietal wine from the Lewelling Vineyard is a blockbuster, providing a showy demonstration of ripe richness that's gorgeously lush. Christmas plum pudding, clove and cinnamon lurk behind a chalky underbelly of firm tannin and black licorice, finishing fresh in the glass. -V.B.

abv: 14.9%

94 Jada Vineyard & Winery 2014 Passing By Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles Willow Creek District). For full review see page 86. Cellar Selection.

abv: 15.5%

94 Les Belles Collines 2013 Les Sommets Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 86.

abv: 14.6%

Mattucci 2013 Bentley Ironworks Cabernet pening on the nose and palate of this bottling that it can hold one's attention for hours. Rich aromas of cola, cocoa, coffee, dred black cherry, oregano, black pepper, dried herbs and slow-roasted beef lead into a palate packed with peppercorn sauce, tangy dried berries and hints of ancho chile-chocolate. After wading through layers of herbs, the finish is minty. Editors' Choice. -M.K.

94 Pahlmeyer 2013 Red (Napa Valley). A powerfully rich and concentrated Bordeauxstyle blend of 81% Cabernet Sauvignon with smaller percentages of four other Bordeaux varieties, this wine presents itself as juicy and fresh on entry, with high-toned sparks of cranberry, cherry and cassis. It takes on more strength and structure as it opens, suggesting its worth for the cellar. Hold until 2023-2028. Cellar Selection. -V.B.

abv: 15.2% **Price:** \$175

94 Ramey 2013 Annum Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This beautiful wine includes 9% Cabernet Franc that gives a lift of floral violet and grainy cedar. Classic all around in its etchings of coconut shavings, graphite, spice and dust, the fruit is additionally savory in bright red currant and a crunch of cassis, with an underpinning of soft, succulent blackberry. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$100

Acumen 2013 Mountainside Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 88. Editors' Choice.

abv: 14% Price: \$60

B Cellars 2013 Ehrlich Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). Perfumed in lavender and sage, this vineyard-designate highlights wellcrafted flavors of dried cherry and blueberry, the texture soft and interwoven in spicy oak. A bite of peppery tannin storms the lengthy finish, giving the already full-bodied wine an extra hit of richness and concentration. -V.B.

abv: 14.9% **Price: \$118**

Bell 2013 Clone 337 Unfiltered Cabernet Sau-3 Bell 2013 Clone 337 Similar Service See page vignon (Rutherford). For full review see page 88. Cellar Selection.

abv: 14.5%

Golden Triangle 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles Willow Creek District). For full review see page 88. Cellar Selection.

abv: 15.1% **Price: \$70**

Continued on page 105

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/Senior Editor Lauren Buzzeo, Executive Editor Susan Kostrzewa, Managing Editor Joe Czerwinski, Contributing Editors Michael Schachner, Anna Lee C. Iiiima, 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; and Contributing Editors Paul Gregutt and Sean Sullivan in Washington.

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 Lauren Buzzeo.

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.

Superb 94-97: Excellent 90-93: ry Good 87–89:

Classic 98-100: The pinnacle of quality. A great achievement. Highly recommended.

Good 83-86:

Often good value; well recommended. Suitable for everyday consumption; often good value. Can be employed in casual, less-

Acceptable 80-82:

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 Web site.

LABELS

Labels are paid promotions. Producers and importers are given the opportunity to submit labels, which 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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Iron Horse 2003 Joy! Estate Bottled Sparkling Wine (Green Valley). This is an incredibly beautiful and yes, joyful, sparkler, made from equal parts Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. This particular offering was disgorged in July 2016. It positively impresses in minerality, complemented by a more fulsome sense of lemon, apple and hazelnut on the creamy palate, leaving a rich trail of silk on the finish. -V.B.

abv: 13% Price: \$250/1.5 L



Iron Horse 2012 Wedding Cuvée Estate Bottled Sparkling Wine (Green Valley). An offering meant to toast all manner of celebrations, this wine wows, blending 78% Pinot Noir with 22% Chardonnay in a near-perfect union. Dry and beautifully floral, it opens in a bouquet of marzipan, peach and honey. The mousse is fine, while supporting acidity lends a lemon peel and grapefruit lift. The memory imprinted on the palate will linger long after all the toasts to the happy couple-or whatever else you're celebrating-have been made. -V.B. abv: 13.5% Price: \$44



Schramsberg 2008 J. Schram Rosé (North Coast). This is a beautiful, complex and complete wine, from the delicate, spiced raspberry aroma through the creamy, nuanced finish. Subtle but well-defined fruit flavors like white cherry and raspberry pulse across the palate, buoyed by an ultrafine effervescence and lively acidity. But the texture is smooth around the edges, lending a sense of extra depth and layering to this extraordinary bottle. Just coming into its own now, it will improve through at least 2020. Cellar Selection. -J.G.

abv: 13.1% Price: \$150



95 Cordant 2014 Presqu'ile Vineyard Syrah (Santa Maria Valley). Winemaker Tyler Russell sources the fruit for this bottling from an extremely cool-climate vineyard. Tons of freshpressed boysenberries meet with wood ash, underripe berries, black olives, rosemary, roasted lamb and Mediterranean spices on the nose. Tart black-plum skin is layered with bay leaf, rosemary, thyme, crushed peppercorn and charred beef on the dynamic palate. -M.K.

abv: 14.3% Price: \$42



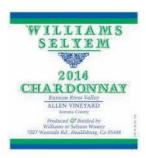
La Jota Vineyard 2013 Merlot (Howell Mountain). The La Jota and W.S. Keyes vineyards are the sources for this classically styled wine that is intense and alive in minerality. Clove, black pepper and mountains of dried herb are front and center between firm, dusty tannin and oak. The texture is plush and velvety on the palate, with plenty of length on the finish. -V.B.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$85



San Felice 2013 Il Grigio Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). Smooth and delicious, this boasts enticing scents of violet, berry, leather, tilled soil and aromatic herb. The radiant, elegant palate offers ripe red cherry, crushed raspberry, white pepper and licorice, while a note of pipe tobacco closes the finish. Polished tannins and bright acidity provide balance and structure. Drink 2018-2025. San Felice USA. Editors' Choice. -K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$55**



95 Williams Selyem 2014 Allen Vineyard Chardonnay (Buscles St. donnay (Russian River Valley). Allen Vineyard grapes have the maturity and complexity to impart a boldly balanced roundness of lemon curd. fig and apple, plus a searing undercurrent of salty minerality. With substantial weight, and texture for miles, it remains bright and fresh in the glass, with a lingering impression of cinnamon toast. -V.B. abv: 14 7%

Price: \$58



El Lugar 2014 Rincon Vineyards Pinot Noir rose petal, raspberry, hibiscus and slate make for a lovely entry to this wine from a historic vineyard in southern San Luis Obispo County. Made from just the 2A clone, it has refined cranberry-fruit flavors laced with eucalyptus oil and Earl Grey tea. -M.K. abv: 13.7% Price: \$46



Gloria Ferrer 2005 Carneros Cuvée (Carne-94 ros). Disgorged in October 2015, this sparkler opens with sublime green-apple tones, offering both tartness and stony minerality. A crisp, lemony mousse adds freshness and vibrancy to the complex hazelnut and brioche characteristics. This wine has long legs and memorable completeness. -V.B.

abv: 12.5% **Price: \$75**



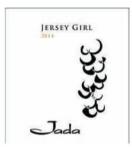
94 Golden Triangle 2013 Syrah (Paso Robles Willow Creek District). It's a good thing Garagiste Festival cofounder Stewart McLennan caught the winemaking bug. This delicious bottling shows black current, plum, blueberry, fennel, lavender, vanilla and gingerbread spice on the nose. Elegant purple-flower elements kick off the palate, and then come waves of blueberry-chiffon cake, blackberry juice, sea-salt caramel and a touch of vanilla. —M.K.

abv: 14.9% **Price: \$55**



J. Lohr 2013 Cuvée St. E (Paso Robles). The most easily accessible of J. Lohr's Bordeaux series, this Cabernet Franc-led ode to Saint-Émilion opens with caramel, vanilla and crème de cassis on the lavish nose. There is ample structure on the palate, with medium tannins, but it's soft enough to enjoy now, with rich fudge, clove and chai flavors laid across tasty black fruits. -M.K.

abv: 14.9% **Price: \$50**



94 Jada Vineyard & Winery 2014 Jersey Girl Syrah (Paso Robles Willow Creek District). Elegant aromas of gingerbread spice, baked blueberry, blackberry and vanilla show on the nose of

this layered bottling. Flavors are well integrated and presented atop a soft but noticeable structure, thick with lavender, beef, black currant and allspice on the finish. -M.K.

abv: 15.5% Price: \$55



94 Jada Vineyard & Winery 2014 Passing By Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles Willow Creek District). This is an extracted and dark style of Cab, showing tar, black pepper, espresso, deep purple fruit and loam on the nose. Baked black plum, elderberry and blackberry fruits show strongly on the palate, which is made deliciously complex by mocha, coffee syrup and cracked pepper accents. Mouthcoating tannins ensure a long cellar life; it should cellar well through 2034. Cellar Selection. -M.K.

abv: 15.5% **Price:** \$65



Jada Vineyard & Winery 2014 WCS Jack John (Paso Robles Willow Creek District). Plush black-currant aromas meet with light licorice and a plum-pudding note on the nose of this 70% Grenache, 28% Syrah, 1% Mourvèdre and 1% Viognier blend. It dries up tightly on the palate, showing blackberry alongside strong licorice and violet elements, all framed by a chalky structure. -M.K. abv: 15.5% **Price: \$75**



94 Les Belles Collines 2013 Les Sommets Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This smallproduction wine is dense in currant and licorice tones, both generous and lengthy on the palate. Firm tannins lend solid structure, with ample acidity to balance. A clove flavor adds depth to the fruit and lingers on the enduiring finish. -V.B.

Price: \$90 abv: 14.6%



Macauley 2014 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valmakes for an thrilling entry into this bold, voluptuous wine. Full bodied and exuberant from start to finish, it's marked by well-defined offerings of spicy cardamom and wild strawberry, finishing lush and round. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price: \$75**



ANTINORI

Marchesi Antinon 2013 2014
This blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Sangiovese and 5% Cabernet Franc opens with intense aromas of black-skinned fruit, purple flower, oak and exotic spice. The taut, elegant palate offers black currant, black cherry, chopped mint and white pepper alongside bright acidity and polished, fine-grained tannins. It's still youthfully austere, so give it time to fully develop. Drink 2020-2033. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. Cellar Selection. -K.O. abv: 14%

Price: \$325



Marchesi Antinori 2013 Tignanello (Tos-blend of 80% Sangiovese, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc opens with enticing scents of red woodland berry, new leather, Asian spice and a touch of menthol. The youthful palate delivers red currant, wild cherry, star anise and clove alongside a backbone of firm acidity and polished, tightly wound tannins. It will age majestically; drink 2020-2033. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. Cellar Selection. -K.O. **abv:** 13.5% Price: \$105



94 Mt. Brave 2013 Merlot (Mount Veeder). From a site that reaches up to 1,800 feet and dates back grape-growing wise to before the Civil War, this wine is bold and beautiful. It's a study in dusty leather, black pepper and cigar, allowing sauvage, savory aspects to speak louder than fruit. Full bodied and robustly structured, it offers a memorable Tahitian-vanilla note on the finish. —V.B.

abv: 15% **Price: \$75**



Nelle 2014 Grenache (California). Intrigu-94 Nelle 2014 Orenache Community on ing layers of fruit and herbs interplay on having have the delicious nose of this bottling, showing bay leaf, thyme, oregano, pepper, hibiscus and cherry. The palate is rich and savory, with more of the same roasting herbs as well as fig, black olive, black pepper, fennel and purple-flower flavors. It's quite rich and delicious. -M.K.

abv: 15.2% **Price: \$36**



Santa Carolina 2012 VSC Assemblage Santa Caronna 2012 (Cachapoal Valley). This dark, concentrated blend of five grapes opens with spicy aromas of coffee, black fruits and toasty oak. If the palate is a touch firm, airing or more time in bottle will soothe that. Tar, spice, olive, herbs and black-fruit flavors are deep and seamless, backed by licorice and chocolate on the finish. Drink through 2023. Carolina Wine Brands USA. Editors' Choice. -M.S.

Price: \$40 abv: 15%



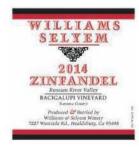
The Vineyard House 2014 Estate Grown Chardonnay (Napa Valley). Pear and anise introduce this robust, voluptuous wine that's brimming in high-toned acidity. It becomes more lengthy and complex as it develops in the glass. Touches of baked pineapple provide a tropical edge amid wintertime nutmeg and spiced lemon. This is a beautiful, fullbodied wine that's lush and memorable. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$75**



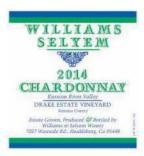
94 Two Sisters 2014 Courtney's Vineyard Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills). From heritage clones of Wente and Mt. Eden, this top-end Chardonnay from the Foley family offers salted peaches, hazelnuts and crushed sea shells on a nose that recalls a steady sea breeze. It's light and brisk on the palate, with yellow pear, nectarine and lemon salt, all wrapped by a grippy texture. Excellent by itself, it would pair with foods from shellfish to roasted chicken. -M.K.

abv: 14.1% **Price: \$55**



Williams Selyem 2014 Bacigalupi Vineyard 24 Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). This is a lovely, full-bodied wine from a historic vineyard site on Westside Road. Bready and brambly, it offers a juicy, exuberant palate that's rich and layered in blackberry, coffee and a persistent backdrop of white pepper. It's structured and balanced, with a deft twist of dusty dried herb. -V.B.

abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$58



Williams Selyem 2014 Drake Estate Vineyard 94 Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). This Guerneville-area estate is one of the last picked by the producer, and it delivers enviable depth and complexity. Highlights include a dollop of apricot jam beside rich honeycomb and toasty oak. Juicy acidity supports its creamy tendency toward tropical flavor, as streaks of citrus fiercely protect its freshness. -V.B.

abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$65



Acumen 2013 Mountainside Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This new project from the heights of Atlas Peak involves Steve Matthiasson as both viticulturist and winemaker, having had to take over the reins from the late Denis Malbec. It shines in bristling acidity, dusty tannin and a beautiful floral aroma of violet. Notes of chocolate, fig and cigar sit atop a pillowy, complex structure, while vanilla lingers on the finish. Editors' Choice. —V.B.

abv: 14% **Price: \$60**



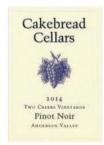
Baileyana 2014 Firepeak Chardonnay (Edna Valley). Burgundy-raised vintner Christian Roguenant gets to show his stuff in this line of Firepeak wines. Wet cement, honeysuckle, crisp Asian pear and the slightest hints of tropicality show on the nose, while the palate offers yellow grapefruit, lemon skins, squeezed lime and lime-blossom flavors, wrapped around nervy tension. Editors' Choice. -M.K.

abv: 14.3% **Price: \$28**



Bell 2013 Clone 337 Unfiltered Cabernet 93 Bell 2015 Clone 35, Sauvignon (Rutherford). From the Georges III Vineyard in the heart of the appellation, this 100% clonal-specific wine is juicy and generously seasoned in blackberry, tobacco and black pepper. With a huge presence on the palate, it finishes with dried herb and anise. Cellar through 2023. Cellar Selection. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$160



Cakebreau 2014 1 Wo Cocco.

Noir (Anderson Valley). Great fruit concen-**Cakebread 2014 Two Creeks Vineyards Pinot** tration and depth give power to this full-bodied wine from Cakebread, better known for its Napagrown Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay. Not tricked up with too much oak, it tastes energized, deep and layered. Black cherry, rhubarb and cedar fan out across the palate, lingering a long time on the finish. Best from 2018. Editors' Choice. —J.G. abv: 14.9% **Price: \$42**



El Lugar 2014 Bien Nacido Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). From the Pommard and Martini old-vine clones in a special corner of this historic vineyard, Winemaker Coby Parker-Garcia presents elegant raspberry fruit spiced by sagebrush, bay leaf and mulling spices for a pretty and vivacious nose. The palate clings to an earthy grip, with forest-floor flavors meshing into baked cranberry, sour cherry, roasted beef, iron and white pepper. —M.K.

abv: 13.4% **Price: \$46**



Poley 2014 Kanthu Santa Name Name (Sta. Rita Hills). Light on the nose, this hopeysuckle, shows delicate aromas of Asian pear, honeysuckle, squeezed lemon wedge, fresh coconut flesh and a tiny bit of butter. The palate is also demure yet delicious, with lightly poached apples, squeezed lime and a chalky textural grip. -M.K.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$30



Giesen 2013 The Fuder Single Vineyard Selection Matthews Lane Sauvignon Blanc (Marl-

borough). Fuder is German for a large wooden vessel, used in this case for the fermentation and aging of wine. Hints of struck-match complexity mark the nose, giving way to notes of grilled nectarine. The wine is full and rich in the mouth, with a mouthwatering finish that marries stone fruit and pink grapefruit into a stunning finale. Pacific Highway Wines & Spirits. -J.C.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$55



Golden Triangle 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles Willow Creek District). Extremely dark in the glass, this bottling by a

founder of the popular Garagiste Festival shows blueberry, black currant, dark chocolate, graphite and soft licorice on the nose. Deep and lavish but not overripe on the palate, flavors of anise, elderberry and black currant hang from a grippy structure bolstered by strong acidity. Drink 2018-2028. Cellar Selection. -M.K.

abv: 15.1% **Price:** \$70



Iron Horse 2011 Classic Vintage Brut Estate Bottled Sparkling Wine (Green Valley).

Meant to showcase the producer's classic style, this is made from 74% Pinot Noir and 26% Chardonnay, the lots chosen for their fruit forwardness. Succulent peach speaks quietly around bright floral aromas, while a richer undertone of hazelnut biscotti comes into play on the smooth palate. -V.B.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$42



J. Lohr 2013 Cuvée Pau (Paso Robles). This Cabernet Sauvignon-based ode to Pauillac improves immensely as it sits open for days, suggesting great ageability. Black currant, gravel, teriyaki and dark chocolate show on the nose, leading into a palate that is tightly wound with chalky tannins. Flavors of black fruit, charcoal, pencil shavings and coffee slowly emerge. Drink 2019-2033. Cellar Selection. -M.K.

abv: 14.9% **Price: \$50**



J. Lohr 2014 Hilltop Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). This appealing wine is widely available. Blueberry, vanilla cream and gingerbread make for an inviting nose. The palate packs layers of intriguing, ripe and easily lovable flavors: baked strawberries, vanilla ice cream, blueberry sauce and baking spice. Editors' Choice. -M.K.

abv: 14.9% Price: \$35



Jada Vineyard & Winery 2014 Hell's Kitchen (Paso Robles Willow Creek District). Freshpressed blackberry and strawberry meld into vanilla, milk chocolate, minty herb and gravel on the nose of this lavish blend of 57% Syrah, 33% Grenache, 7% Mourvèdre, 2% Tannat and 1% Viognier. Flavors are well rounded, with blueberrycream sauce, dark plum, fig and touches of mint and sweet basil. -M.K.

abv: 15.5% **Price: \$55**



Kokomo 2014 Cuvée Red Wine (Sonoma County). Perfumed and high-toned, this is an impressively crafted and priced blend of 35% Merlot, 24% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Malbec, 16% Grenache and 5% Petite Sirah. It shows a peek into each variety's personality, luxuriating in black pepper, leather, meat and black jam, with a juicy lushness to the palate. -V.B.

abv: 14.1% **Price: \$26**



Lava Cap 2014 Estate Bottled Cabernet Sauvignon (El Dorado). Pure, concentrated grape flavors fill up this full-bodied and wellbalanced wine. It's a pleasure to smell and taste the black currant and cherry character, deftly and lightly accented by baking spice. The velvety texture fills the mouth and propels those flavors through a lingering finish. It will drink best after 2018. Editors' Choice. -J.G.

abv: 14% **Price: \$28**



93 Lincourt 2014 Rancho Santa Rosa Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills). Light but inviting wood aromas from oak to acacia show on the nose of this bottling, along with red-pear skins, vellow-grapefruit pith and the slightest touch of marshmallow. The sip is more about chalky grip and the tightly woven texture than blunt flavors, with enough sour Key-lime and pink-grapefruit touches to entertain the palate. -M.K.

abv: 14.1% Price: \$30



Lincourt 2014 Rancho Santa Rosa Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Hibiscus, rose, juniper, clove, marjoram and graphite aromas all show on the nose of this Foley family wine, which is light yet powerful in finesse and depth. Plummy fruits meet with incense, pine needle and herbal, forest-floor intrigue on the palate. -M.K.

abv: 14.1% Price: \$30



Mazzei 2012 Mix 36 (Toscana). Made entirely from Sangiovese, this polished red opens with aromas of red berry, violet, sunbaked earth and a whiff of thyme. Structured and smooth, the palate delivers juicy red cherry, cinnamon and clove alongside fine-grained tannins. Drink through 2023. Palm Bay International. -K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$70



Mazzei 2012 Philip (Toscana). Made entirely from Cabernet Sauvignon, this stylish wine opens with aromas of red berry, Mediterranean herb and cedar. The juicy, elegantly structured palate doles out red currant, black raspberry, licorice and white pepper alongside silky tannins. Drink now-2024. Palm Bay International. -K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$50**





Poggio al Tesoro 2012 Dedicato a Walter (Bolgheri Superiore). Made entirely from Cabernet Franc, this structured and polished red opens with intense varietal aromas of black currant and grilled bell pepper. The plush, full-bodied palate delivers cassis, plum, violet and licorice framed in velvety tannins that leave a smooth texture. A note of dark chocolate closes the finish. LUX Wines. $-\mathrm{K.O.}$ **Price: \$90** abv: 14.5%



R&A Pfaffl 2013 Altenberg Reserve St. Laurent (Niederösterreich). Fine red-cherry notes are perfumed by the more decadent aroma of candied Amarena cherries. The palate reveals hints of conifer and white pepper, framing the mellow but surprisingly textured and dense body. This is sumptuous in oak and concentrated for a St. Laurentbut the fruit is at perfect pitch. This needs further bottle age; drink 2019-2028. Esprit du Vin. -A.K. abv: 14% **Price: \$40**



Santa Rita 2012 Casa Real Estate Bottled 93 Santa Rita 2012 Cust 1100 - - - Old Vines Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley). This top-shelf Cabernet never fails, and in this warm year the wine is dark in color, with lush yet precise aromas of graphite, fresh blackberry, bak-

ing spices and forest floor. A deep palate is just racy enough, while spicy flavors of cassis include integrated herbal notes. Closing flavors of coffee and chocolate, along with soft tannins, make this approachable now and best through 2022. Palm Bay International. Editors' Choice. -M.S.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$85

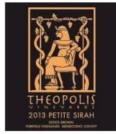


Soulmate 2009 Estate Nebbiolo (Santa Cruz Mountains). This bottling of the classic Italian variety hits the right notes, with cherry, rose and tar on the nose, along with hints of sandalwood and incense. It's smooth on the palate, with dried cherry flavor and touches of chocolate, dried mint and caramel on the finish. It's still young and the firm tannins ensure a long life. Drink 2018-2029. Cellar Selection. -M.K.

abv: 14% **Price: \$70**



Tenuta Sette Cieli 2012 Indaco (Toscana). A Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc, this opens with aromas of ripe blackberries, Mediterranean herbs and cedar. The firmly structured palate doles out layers of black currants, blackberries, white pepper and licorice alongside chewy tannins. Drink through 2022. Wilson Daniels Ltd. -K.O. **abv:** 14% **Price: \$50**



Theopolis 2013 Estate Communication (Yorkville Highlands). Black pepper and Theopolis 2013 Estate Grown Petite Sirah boysenberries put oomph into this dark-colored and firmly structured wine. While vivid and concentrated, the fruit, spice and dark-chocolate flavors are not sweet, but beautifully dry and appetizing, made to pair with a rare steak or tender osso buco. It will drink best from 2019. Cellar Selection. -J.G.

Price: \$38

abv: 14.8%



Vanessa 2012 Syrah (Similkameen Valley). For those who want a little funk in their Syrah, this conjures up flavors reminiscent of wines from the Rocks District in Walla Walla. Credit the rocky soil of this Similkameen Valley vineyard, which delivers dense, well-knit flavors of red and purple fruits, smoke, tanned leather, tobacco and licorice. Concentrated flavors of raspberry purée hold down the core. Vanessa Vineyard. Editors' Choice. -P.G.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$34



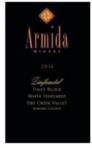
Viña Requingua 2012 Potro de Piedra Family Reserve Single Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon-Cabernet Franc (Curicó Valley). Smooth, spicy blackberry, cassis and licorice aromas include hints of heat and fresh asphalt prior to a full, wide palate. Spice, black currant, plum and peppery flavors end with toast, chocolate and a light warmth reminiscent of the nose. Drink this stacked Cabernet through 2024. Puerto Viejo Wines. Editors' Choice. -M.S.

abv: 14.7% Price: \$30



Grown Pinot Noir (Carneros). There's no doubt this estate-grown wine is at first funky on the nose, a mix of forest, mint and farmhouse cheese. It develops in the glass to embrace its quirks, complementing them with vibrant acidity, ripe texture, and hints of orange, rhubarb and spicy clove. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$50



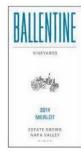
Armida 2014 Tina's Block Maple Vineyards Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). From a block planted in 1910 consisting of hearty portions of mixed blacks, this wine is abundantly floral in rose petals, with a plummy core dusted in smoky oak. The tannin structure is sizable, while the wine is full of leather, cigar box and black pepper accents that weave within the ripe fruit. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$48



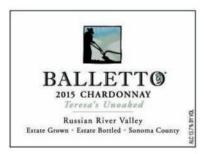
Artezin 2014 Old Vine Zinfandel (Mendocino **County).** "Wow" is the first word that comes to mind when tasting this superconcentrated and immensely fruity wine. It practically overwhelms the nose and the palate with ripe, jammy boysenberry and blackberry, sprinkled with licorice and black-pepper nuances that add attractive complexity. It's a big wine all the way, but not extreme in alcohol. Editors' Choice. -J.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$18**



Ballentine 2014 Estate Grown Merlot (Napa Valley). Handfuls of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot figure into this wine, a lovely, mediumbodied beauty that finds balance in its measured use of oak. Vanilla, plum and bold jolts of pepper and cinnamon combine well on the lengthy palate. —V.B.

abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$35

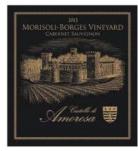


Balletto 2015 Teresa's Unoaked Estate Grown Estate Bottled Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). This is a delightful wine, crowd pleasing and complex. It benefits from its lack of oak by focusing on its lifted fruit-a twist of freshsqueezed lemon and grapefruit-its acidity nicely measured and not one-dimensional. The crisp freshness is complemented by a hint of white rock and subtle lushness on the back palate. -V.B.

abv: 13.7% **Price: \$20**



Brancaia 2012 Ilatraia (Toscana). Made from 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Petit Verdot and 20% Cabernet Franc, this has inviting aromas of ripe black-skinned fruit, forest floor and a whiff of cedar. The dense, polished palate delivers ripe black cherry, clove, licorice and tobacco. Firm, refined tannins provide support. E & J Gallo. -K.O. abv: 14.5% **Price: \$70**

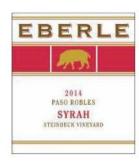


Castello di Amorosa 2013 Morisoli-Borges Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford). Compost aromas open this vineyard-designated wine, a full-bodied, densely concentrated exploration of juicy black licorice, coconut and dust. Soft and lengthy, it develops slowly in the glass, providing a vibrant showcase for the site. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$145

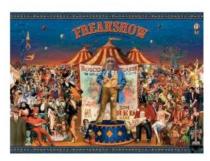


Duckhorn 2013 Three Palms Vineyard Merlot (Napa Valley). An integrated, powerful wine from a famous northern Napa Valley site, this wine offers notes of baked plum and cherry wrap around the structured, spicy oak. Lingering accents of a pepper, clove and graphite grace the finish. -V.B. abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$95



Eberle 2014 Steinbeck Vineyard Syrah (Paso Robles). Tarry, gamy aromas provide an intriguing entry into this bottling from pioneer Gary Eberle's winery, founded in 1982. The nose also conveys charred blueberries, thyme, rosemary and lavender. Leathery, rustic flavors show on the palate, alongside hints of boysenberry, cracked peppercorn and roasted venison. -M.K.

abv: 15% **Price: \$28**



Freakshow 2014 Red (Lodi). Dark, dense with fruit flavor and thickly tannic, this full-bodied wine is a monument to concentration, ripeness and richness. Massive tannins are matched by huge jammy fruit, with a sense of layering and depth that is impressive and satisfying to experience. Editors' Choice. -J.G.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$20



Georges Duboeuf 2015 Domaine de la Vigne Romaine (Moulin-à-Vent). From five different parcels in Moulin-à-Vent, this cru wine is a structured representative of the appellation. With some wood aging, the wine has gained extra richness to add to the generous black currant and berry fruits. Drink this concentrated wine from 2019. Quintessential Wines. -R.V.

abv: 13% **Price: \$25**



Giesen 2013 The August 1888 Sauvignon 92 Blanc (Marlborough). Another high-end Sauvignon Blanc that sees some oak aging, this is a rich, ripe wine, loaded with nectarine and citrus fruit. The oak framing is barely noticeable, but serves to highlight the silky texture and adds a pleasant grilled note on the long finish. Pacific Highway Wines & Spirits. —J.C.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$40



2 Greywacke 2014 Pinot Gris (Marlborough). Full bodied, rich and carrying a bit of residual sugar, this is a fine example of the variety's potential in Marlborough. Smoky, grilled-pear notes add hints of honey and melon on the palate, where despite its richness, the wine soars into a long, velvety finish. Drink now-2020, at least. Old Bridge Cellars. —J.C.

abv: 14% **Price: \$25**



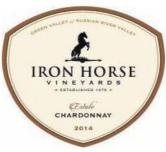
Hess Collection 2013 The Lion Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Mount Veeder). A new, high-end offering from this producer, this wine is made to celebrate and luxuriate in the appellation, which it does in its ying-yang of dark chocolate and cedar. Bright acidity uplifts a soft, creamy texture and firm, subtle tannin, allowing the blackberry bramble to speak. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$175



Hunt & Ryde 2013 Old Vine Zinfandel 92 (Sonoma County). Named for his sons Hunter and Ryder, this is part of Guy Fieri's small wine project based in Sonoma County. The partnership with Winemaker Guy Davis of Davis Family Vineyards sources from three old-vine sites, including Doug Rafanelli's, to make a balanced wine marked by savory black olive, black pepper and a strong current of Italian deli aromas and flavors. Pillowy tannin and a shot of tobacco add nicely to the whole. -V.B.

abv: 14.1% **Price: \$40**



Iron Horse 2014 Estate Chardonnay (Green Valley). This is a tart, sublime still wine from the sparkling wine-producer's estate. With lovely acidity, it's lemony fresh yet lush on the palate, developing further flavors of nectarine and salty pretzel that finish crisp and stony. -V.B.

Price: \$29 abv: 13.6%



Iron Horse 2012 Rainbow Cuvée Estate Bot-92 Iron Horse 2012 Names Control Valley). After tled Sparkling Wine (Green Valley). three years in tirage, this 78% Pinot Noir-22% Chardonnay sparkling blend reveals complex golden apple crisp and honeycomb notes. An homage to diversity, vanilla and peach purée tones add to the flavor of this richly rewarding, lively wine. -V.B. abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$65



Iron Horse 2011 National Geographic Ocean Reserve Blanc de Blancs Estate Bottled Sparkling Wine (Green Valley). A portion of the proceeds from sales of this dry sparkler helps support marine protected areas and sustainable fishing. Tart and doughy, it imparts a bite of vanilla biscuit, apple pie, orange peel and lime. A streak of minerality gives it plenty of life atop the medium body. -V.B.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$50**



Koyle 2013 Royale Los Lingues Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley). Spicy aromas of balsam wood, tobacco and sawmill work well with ripe but reserved red-berry scents. Tight, tannic but also fresh as opposed to drying, this Cabernet from a cool year delivers a classic set of herbal berry, plum and wood spice flavors. A ripped finish is dry and oaky now, with core fruit resting for the future. Drink 2018-2028. Quintessential Wines. Cellar Selection. -M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$26**



Les Belles Collines 2015 Pinot Gris (Califor**nia).** Crisp, clean flavors of apple and apricot shine in this medium-bodied, lively and dry white, an ideal companion at the table. A sly finish of lemon peel adds to its refreshment, and it's best enjoyed now. Editors' Choice. -V.B.

abv: 14.1% **Price: \$25**



Les Belles Collines 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Softened by 10% Merlot, 3% Malbec and 1% Petit Verdot, this is a medium-bodied, elegant wine, with highlights of coffee, cedar and cherry-vanilla. Classic elements of cedar and dried herb complement firm, solid tannin. -V.B. **abv:** 14.5% **Price: \$70**



Lucienne 2014 Doctor's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands). Sultry black cherry, clove and crushed graphite show on the nose of this single-vineyard study from Winemaker Paul Clifton. That baked black-cherry power arises strongly on the palate as well, with lots of allspice and star anise. The wine finishes crisp, wiping the palate clean. -M.K.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$50**



Lucienne 2014 Smith Vineyard Pinot Noir 92 (Santa Lucia Highlands). Baked black cherry, rare roast beef and light sage aromas show on the dynamic, earthy nose of this bottling by Winemaker Paul Clifton. Garrigue is prominent on the tip of the sip, with strong but not overripe black cherry and plum flavors. These lead into forest floor, juniper, pine needle and mulling spice on the finish. -M.K. abv: 14.5% Price: \$50



MacPhail 2014 Pratt Vineyard Vine Hill Road Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). This is from a fantastic vineyard site in the Laguna Hills neighborhood of the appellation, and the second vintage of this particular selection from this producer. Generous lemony oak meets toast within a robust body of complex layers and salty caramel. —V.B.

abv: 14.3% **Price: \$45**

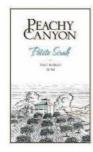


92 MontGras 2012 Ninquén Mountain Vine-yard Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah (Colchagua Valley). Aromas of olive, coffee, oak, cassis and plum are strong all along the way. This is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Syrah, and it's firm and grabby, but a touch jammy in the middle. Textbook Chilean flavors of plum, berry, olive and spice finish long, smooth and complex. Drink through 2022. Esprit du Vin. -M.S.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$50



Palencia 2014 Syrah (Yakima Valley). Alluring aromas of blackberry and barrel spice lead to ripe, full-bodied black-fruit flavors, showing beautiful depth and a long finish. It packs a hefty punch while never losing its sense of balance. —S.S. abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$36



Peachy Canyon 2014 Petite Sirah (Paso Robles). Deep and hearty black cherry, vanilla, cola and black-pepper aromas make for a lush, imposing and yet classic nose on this bottling. It's simultaneously soft and powerful on the palate, with black-cherry foam, crème de cassis, vanilla custard and melted milk-chocolate flavors set against a backbone of vibrant acidity and plush tannins. It's a decadent mouthful. -M.K.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$32



Pine Ridge 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Pine Riuge 2013 Cascinet 2013 Leap District). Softly mellow yet surprise charge charges ingly powerful, this 100% varietal wine speaks loudly to its sense of place, born of a region known for combining elegance with sheer force. Cherry and plum highlight a supportive layering of subtle oak, while the gravely texture is juicy and lengthy, a mix of ageworthy complexity and instant appeal. -V.B. abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$125



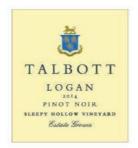
R&A Pfaffl 2013 Burggarten Reserve Zweigelt (Niederösterreich). Beautifully poised notes of ripe red and black cherry are emblematic of the Zweigelt grape and are expressed here with conviction. Peppery spice shimmers everywhere on nose and palate. There is a grippy tannin structure and the spicy support of oak. This is fresh and solid and only just now hitting its stride. Impressive and totally moreish. Esprit du Vin. -A.K.

abv: 14% Price: \$40



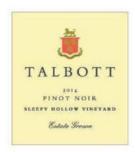
Stags' Leap Winery 2013 Ne Cede Malis Estate Grown Petite Sirah (Stags Leap District). This perennial head-turner lives up to its pedigree in this vintage, offering a full-bodied, lush and plush experience characterized by soft layers of dark cherry, blackberry, vanilla and a seasoning of cinnamon. The vines are head-trained within a block planted to many other varieties, 15% of which make their way into this wine. -V.B.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$115



Talbott 2014 Logan Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Estate Grown Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands). This offers a great taste of an iconic vinevard for less than \$30. Tart cranberry, bay leaf and sagebrush make for an expressive nose. The palate is laced with thyme, sage and more bay-leaf as well as nutmeg, which all sit atop dark red, almost-purple fruit, making for an intriguing combination. Editors' Choice. -M.K.

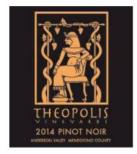
abv: 14.6% Price: \$27



Talbott 2014 Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Estate Grown Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands).

Savory spice meets with lavish fruit on the nose of this bottling, conveying smashed figs, baked mulberries, smoked meats, oregano, gingerbread and black pepper. Baked mulberries also show on the palate, where vanilla, allspice, star anise and clove make for a rich, dessert-like palate. -M.K.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$42**



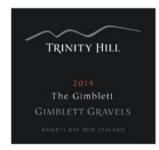
Theopolis 2014 Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley). This intriguing and multifaceted wine is a great discovery. Beautifully made in a slightly rustic style, it offers abundant forest floor and clove aromas while dealing out black tea, rhubarb and tart cherry on the palate. Drink from 2018 for the most enjoyment. -J.G.

abv: 14.9% **Price: \$42**



Thirty-Seven Wines 2015 Pinot Gris (Sonoma Coast). This impressive white was fermented in equal parts concrete and stainless steel, retaining a lush texture and vibrant minerality. Night-blooming jasmine exudes from the glass before revealing well-defined layers of spiced lemon, peach and white pepper. -V.B.

abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$22



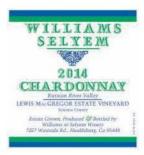
Trinity Hill 2014 The Gimblett Gimblett Gravels (Hawke's Bay). At almost half Cabernet Franc (49%), this is slightly leafier than what most producers are pulling out of the Gimblett Gravels. The balance is Cabernet Sauvignon (39%), with small amounts of Merlot (9%) and Malbec (3%). The tobacco, chocolate and cassis notes are carried by medium body and a firm, dry texture. Drink 2019–2030. Terroir Life. Editors' Choice. —J.C. abv: 13.5%

Price: \$35



Vanessa 2012 Meritage (Similkameen Valley). West of the Okanagan valley, Similkameen Valley is being touted as the next great Canadian wine region. If these first releases from Vanessa are typical, they are right on track. This Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cab Franc blend is a supple and sensuous wine, with well-integrated flavors of fig, black cherry, brambly berry, roasted coffee and mocha. It's sturdy, layered and balanced, with a hint of smoke from aging 18 months in a mix of French and American oak. Vanessa Vineyard. -P.G.

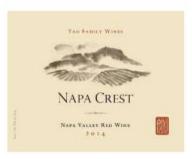
abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$32



Williams Selyem 2014 Lewis MacGregor Estate Vineyard Chardonnay (Russian River

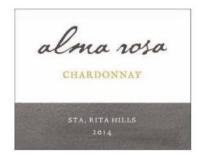
Valley). This is the inaugural vintage of a new estate wine, from a 30-acre property on Eastside Road across the Russian River from the winery. Pear compote, anise and lemon candy wrap around voluptuous layers marked by green apple and orange peel, offering richness and weight in hearty measure. —V.B.

abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$65

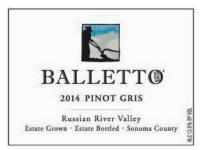


Yao Family Wines 2014 Napa Crest (Napa Valley). This is a Cabernet Sauvignon-driven blend, with 25% Merlot and 12% Petit Verdot. Generously oaky and ripe, it offers textured layers of graphite, cigar and cedar. An exciting sideshow of spicy Mexican chocolate accents deeper, darker shocks of black cherry. -V.B.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$48

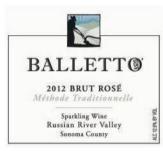


Alma Rosa 2014 Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills). Quite light and restrained on the nose, this bottling from Richard and Thekla Sanford shows pithy Key lime and scratched grapefruit-skin aromas. There is a decent sizzle of acidity to the palate, with lime rinds, pith and juice playing together. Touches of almond and flint add interest. -M.K. abv: 14.1% **Price: \$28**



Balletto 2014 Estate Grown Estate Bottled Pinot Gris (Russian River Valley). From one of the few producers to grow and make this variety in the appellation, this was fermented in both neutral oak and stainless steel. It's focused and viscous, with a tropical opening of Tahitian vanilla built around white peach, lemony acidity and a fresh, crisp texture. -V.B.

abv: 13.8% **Price: \$18**



Balletto 2012 Brut Rosé Méthode Traditio-91 Balletto 2012 Blot Rose Melley Valley).

From entirely estate-grown Pinot Noir (70%) and Chardonnay (30%), this dry sparkling is vivacious and fun, crisp in apple, pear and raspberry. Lively, lemony acidity lifts the palate. Complementing the freshness is the rounded plushness of ripe fruit and an earthy accent. Editors' Choice. -V.B.

abv: 12.9% **Price: \$42**

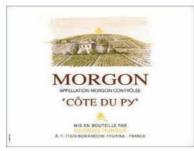


Bianchi 2012 Syranot Pinot Noir-Syrah-Petite Sirah (Central Coast). Pronounced like "Cyrano," this blend of 63% Petite Sirah, 28% Pinot Noir and 9% Syrah successfully mingles these distinct varieties. Crushed mulberry, strawberry and black plum meet with thyme and mintchocolate-chip aromas on the nose. The palate shows similar flavors, yet is more subtle than a typical Petite Sirah, with a plush mouthfeel. -M.K. abv: 15.3% **Price:** \$26



Black Stallion 2013 Limited Release Merlot (Napa Valley). This bold, full-bodied wine is understated in its layering of cassis, currant and juicy black cherry, with hints of clove and smoked meat. It's well balanced, with an enduring and evolving finish. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$40



Georges Duboeuf 2015 Côte du Py (Morgon). A family-owned vineyard on this famous slope in Morgon supplies the grapes to Duboeuf for the wine. It is structured and dense, full of black plum and berry flavors. Acidity cuts through the tannins, resulting in a wine that will age well. Drink from 2019. Quintessential Wines. Editors' Choice. -R.V. **abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$22



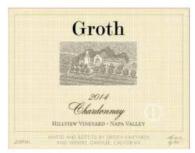
Duboeuf 2015 Georges Jean-Ernest Descombes (Morgon). The Descombes family has farmed vines in this appellation since the French Revolution and Jean-Ernest Descombes supplied one of Georges Duboeuf's first Morgon wines in 1968. The latest generation has produced a ripe and fruity wine with a balanced structure. It is dense in tannins that will soften over the next year. Drink from 2018. Quintessential Wines. -R.V. **abv:** 13% **Price:** \$22



Giesen 2013 The Fuder Single Vineyard Selection Dillons Point Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). Some struck-match aromas bring pleasant complexity to the aromas of vanilla and tangerine,

then ripe citrus, smoke and vanilla take over on the palate. This is a full-bodied, fully ripe wine, without that intense pungency that marks many Marlborough Sauvignon Blancs. Pacific Highway Wines & Spirits. —J.C.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$55



Groth 2014 Hillview Vineyard Chardonnay (Napa Valley). This is a thick, rich and layered white from Oak Knoll District-grown estate fruit. It's inviting, with lemon chiffon, baked pineapple and anise. Medium bodied and not afraid to be robust, wet-stone minerality brings it together. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$30**



Hess Collection 2014 Allomi Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This full and smoothly soft wine blended with 10% Petite Sirah, 7% Malbec and 3% Petit Verdot is aged in American oak, a quarter of it new. It pleases in bright red currant, cassis and wisps of blackberry, both approachable and sophisticated. Velvety black licorice meets smoky campfire on the finish. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$32



J. Lohr 2013 Cuvée Pom (Paso Robles). From the winery's Bordeaux study series, this Merlot-based blend shows roast beef, smoke, lilac, violet, lavender and shy black-cherry fruit on the nose. There's more fruit on the palate, with blackberry paste. However, the rigid tannins don't open up easily. Notes of crushed volcanic rock, espresso, dried herbs and leather are subtle. -M.K.

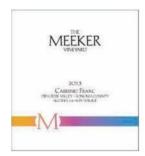
abv: 14.9% Price: \$50



Martin Ranch 2012 Thérèse Vineyards Estate Martin Rancii 2012 Therease Called Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Cruz Mountains).

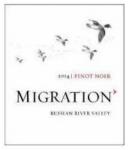
Done in the classically savory Santa Cruz Mountains style, this bottling shows black and red licorice on the nose along with blueberry and blackberry fruit. It's brisk on the palate and still wound up tightly, with blackberry, peppercorn and black-olive flavors lifted by dried herbs. -M.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$49**



Meeker 2013 Cabernet Franc (Dry Creek Valley). This 100% varietal wine is sourced from Pedroni Vineyard on Dry Creek Road. It shows classic elements of cedar, currant and an herbaceous streak. It remains bright in acidity and supportive in tannic strength, balancing between ripeness and structure, -V.B.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$45



Migration 2014 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). This wine has lovely, inviting aromas of baking spice and earth. Full-bodied flavors of blueberry and raspberry are supported by spicy oak. Its boldness and density is met by fresh cranberry, while a tease of vanilla complements the other characteristics. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$38



Monte Smith 2014 Pauli Ranch Barbera (Mendocino). This is a handsome wine all the way, from the lightly spicy aromas through the layered fruit, chocolate and cinnamon flavors, to the moderately tannic and lingering finish. With its great balance and mouthwatering flavors, it will be a tasty addition to almost any meal. Editors' Choice. -J.G. **Price:** \$22 abv: 14.8%



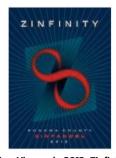
Mumm Napa NV Blanc de Blancs (Napa County). This is made from 80% Chardonnay and 20% Pinot Gris. It offers an impressive commingling of preserved lemon, burnt orange peel and apricot, meeting crisp acidity and floral undertones along the way. Light and bright, it's a food-friendly option, as well as good go-to solo. -V.B.

abv: 12.5% **Price: \$22**



Mumm Napa NV Brut Prestige (Napa County). The winery's signature sparkler, this blend of equal parts Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, with touches of Pinot Gris and Pinot Meunier, dazzles in rounded oak and a soft texture marked by grapefruit zest and fresh nectarine. Crisp and vibrant, it becomes richer on the finish, showing a spark of honey-baked brioche. -V.B.

abv: 12.5% Price: \$24



Ottimino Vineyards 2013 Zinfinity Zinfandel (Sonoma County). From a selection of its best vineyards across the county, this producer showcases a majority of the variety with 16% Petite Sirah, all aged in French oak, 25% of it new. Black olive, spicy leather and cinnamon make for a bold, dry and boisterous wine that's entirely enjoyable, integrated in terms of both tannin and oak. -V.B. abv: 14.5% Price: \$20



Parducci 2014 Reserve Grenache (Mendocino). Extremely flavorful and wonderfully exotic, this full-bodied wine has intense fruit flavors like raspberry and rhubarb, with a host of interesting accents recalling cedar, white pepper and clove. The mouthfeel is warm and rich, tannins are soft and easy, and the finish lingers nicely. Editors' Choice. —J.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$27**

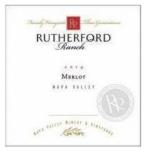


Peachy Canyon 2014 Vortex Zinfandel (Paso Robles). Concentrated strawberry, black cherry, cinnamon-laced latte, licorice and mocha converge in an intriguing and beautiful nose from this legendary Zin winery. The structure is immediately apparent on the palate, framing smoked strawberry, oregano and dill flavors. It's full of plush, ripe fruit, but seemingly bone dry. -M.K.

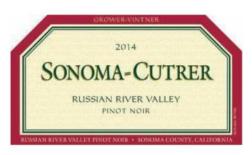
abv: 14.9% **Price: \$38**



Replica 2015 Retrofit Chardonnay (North Coast). This wine is subtle in aroma but extremely generous in texture. It seems to start out slow and then floods the palate with very ripe but not sweet flavors like kiwi, pear and honeydew melon on a nicely viscous, pillowy texture. -J.G. abv: 14.5% **Price: \$20**



Rutherford Ranch 2014 Merlot (Napa Valley). Dusty Mexican chocolate meets black plum, cherry and pomegranate in this light-bodied, rounded wine that's juicy and delicious. It's well balanced and approachable now, so drink up. -V.B. abv: 13.5% **Price: \$26**



Sonoma-Cutrer 2014 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). A bright, lovely layering of cherry and strawberry strikes first, before a jolt of rose perfume finds its complement in an earthy lilt of salt and forest. Sandalwood enhances the intrigue and complexity of this medium-bodied wine. -V.B. abv: 14.2% Price: \$30

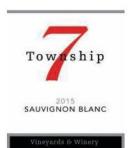


Stags' Leap Winery 2013 Petite Sirah (Napa Valley). A lofty violet perfume meets bold black pepper in this lively, fresh and memorable wine, which blends smaller amounts of Syrah, Grenache and other Rhône varieties. Blackberry, blueberry and leather form a reel of highlights that is soft enough to enjoy now. -V.B.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$45



The Calling 2014 Fox Den Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Bold, juicy dark cherry and cola drift along a bed of rose petals. Ripe and full bodied, this wine manages to be soft and spicy on the midpalate, then delivers a lengthy, complex finish that's girded in structured tannin. -V.B. abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$62



Township 7 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Okanagan Valley). Opening with classic peavine aromas, this is a bright, fleshy and pungent wine that should delight fans of Loire Valley-style Sauvignon Blancs. Rich, cascading flavors of fig, pear, grapefruit and star fruit keep the mouthfeel lively. Just 10% was barrel-fermented, the rest in stainless. Township 7 Vineyards & Winery. Editors' Choice. -P.G.

abv: 13% Price: \$18



Urlar 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Gladstone). Fig, nectarine and grapefruit notes mark this as a ripe style, without much of the herbal pungency found in Sauvignon Blancs from Marlborough. It's medium bodied, with a silky mouthfeel and a long, harmonious finish. Drink now. Atlas Imports. Editors' Choice. -J.C.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$16



Acacia 2013 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Tightly wound and floral, this wine has bright acidity with earthy cola and clove accents. Medium bodied, with some heft on the palate, it's ripe and rewarding in cherry and berry fruit flavors. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$60



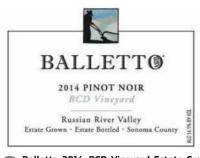
Acacia 2013 Thornton Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This wine is big in tannin, extracted and full bodied, with dense blueberry and maple syrup at its core. For fans of a rich style, it will impress for its ripe, dark fruit and sizable yet velvety mouthfeel. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$50



Angeline 2015 Reserve Pinot Noir (Mendocino). This lively, well-balanced wine offers great value. Delicious fruit and subtle spice notes extend from the aromas through the substantial flavors and on through the finish. Fresh acidity and a touch of tannic structure make it especially appetizing. Editors' Choice. - J.G.

abv: 13.9% **Price: \$18**



Balletto 2014 BCD Vineyard Estate Grown Estate Bottled Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Velvety-smooth and rich in red plum and strawberry, this medium-bodied, varietally honest wine is textured and complex. It's well-crafted and balanced, with a lingering finish. -V.B.

Price: \$42 abv: 14.1%



Balletto 2014 Sexton Hill Vineyard Estate Grown Estate Bottled Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Light in color and body, this is a coolclimate-influenced wine full of spice and life. It offers a mixture of rhubarb, strawberry and black tea, dusted in cardamom. The wine's spicy tones carry through to the medium-length finish. -V.B. **abv:** 13.6% **Price: \$42**



Broken Earth 2015 Verdelho (Paso Robles). There is tons of potential for this varietal in the hot eastern reaches of Paso Robles. Light peach and Pink Lady apple aromas start off the easy-toenjoy nose. The palate shows more layers, starting with ripe peach and then firming up on citrus pith, sour apple and tangy pear. A gravelly minerality and rising texture on the finish complete the picture. Editors' Choice. -M.K.

abv: 13.9% Price: \$24



Buehler 2014 Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). Searing acidity supports apple blossom and quince in this complex, light-bodied and entirely delightful wine. As it opens in the glass, it gets more velvety and tense, finishing on a refreshing bite of anise. Editors' Choice. -V.B. **abv:** 13.9% **Price: \$18**

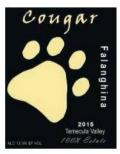


Chalk Hill 2013 Clara's Vineyard (Chalk Hill). Cabernet Sauvignon meets Malbec and Petit Verdot in this hearty, big-boned red. Dark and stormy, it offers a wealth of juicy black fruit, leather and tobacco wrapped around sizable tannin. Peppery clove and chocolate round out the finish. It will drink best 2018-2023. Cellar Selection. -V.B. abv: 15 5% **Price:** \$85



Château de Campuget 2013 1753 Syrah (Costières de Nîmes). The right bank of the Rhône (the Gard department) is known for its Syrah. This is a fine example, packing plenty of plum and garrigue into a full-bodied, well-structured wine. Dried herbs, cocoa powder and espresso mingle on the still-firm finish. Drink 2018-2025. Dreyfus, Ashby & Co. —J.C.

abv: 13% **Price: \$18**

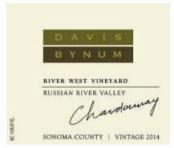


Cougar 2015 Falanghina (Temecula Valley). Finding new varietals is always fun, and this take on an ancient grape from Campania, Italy, offers promise in warm Temecula. Crisp Anjou and Asian pears show on the nose, along with salt, Gala apple, white flowers and gravel. Sharp citrus appears on the palate, with lime pith, pink-grapefruit juice and a chalky, seashell component. Editors' Choice. -M.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$28**

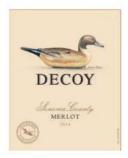


CULT 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). While obviously not a "cult" wine, this fullbodied bottling has just what the varietal should offer in terms of ripe fruit, spice, a firm and moderately tannic texture, and a mouthfilling presence. Its strengths lie in good balance, tempting layers of flavor and a lingering finish. Editors' Choice. -J.G. **abv:** 14.2% **Price: \$20**



Davis Bynum 2014 River West Vineyard Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). From a site on Westside Road, this vineyard-designate boasts a rich experience aromatically and flavor-wise, revealing graham cracker, peach, lime and green apple alongside salty acidity. The oak (34% of it new French) plays a pleasant, supportive role, adding a note of brioche. -V.B.

Price: \$25 abv: 14.5%



Decoy 2014 Merlot (Sonoma County). This straightforward wine delivers a lot of flavor for the price. The juicy, rounded layering of dark cherry, dried herb and cedar works within a lightbodied, mellowed context of balanced acidity and fruit. -V.B.

abv: 13.9% **Price: \$25**



Fattoria La Vialla 2015 Barricato Bianco (Toscana). This unfiltered, cloudy wine offers aromas of lime and yeast. A blend of Chardonnay (80%) and Viognier (20%), it's grown according to the principles of biodynamic viticulture. The juicy palate doles out white peach, vanilla and lemon, closing on a toasted hazelnut note. T. Elenteny Imports. Editors' Choice. -K.O.

abv: 14% **Price: \$22**



Foley 2014 Steel Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills). The winery's annual stainless-steel bottling, this is showy rather than reserved, with ripe Asian pear, tropical flowers, sweet apple blossoms, pineapple and a bit of vanilla on the nose. Nicely fresh, it's bright on the palate, with a sizzle of acidity and grippy chalkiness that frame the poached-pear palate. -M.K.

abv: 14.3% Price: \$30



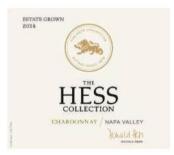
Foxtrot 2013 Foxtrot Vineyard Pinot Noir (Okanagan Valley). Though pale in color, this is a tannic and flavorful wine with an earthy underpinning. Lightly spiced red-fruit flavors unfold and gather strength midpalate. This nicely captures the elegance of Naramata Bench Pinot Noir. Foxtrot Vineyards. -P.G.

abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$50



Gehricke 2014 Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). Pungent earth and a tease of potato skin add to a perfumed nose of brambly blackberry and strawberry, surrounded by big, grippy tannin. Full bodied, it develops further flavors of vanilla, cinnamon and dried herb. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$30



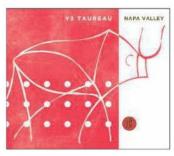
Hess Collection 2014 Estate Grown Chardonnay (Napa Valley). The producer pulls from its estate Su'skol Vineyard for this wine, which opens in an aromatic flirtation of sweet honeysuckle, revealing the site's abundance of musqué clone. Crisp on the entry and midpalate, it shows a full-bodied style as it opens-notes of pear and fig are wrapped between spicy nutmeg and a viscous bite of oak on the finish. -V.B.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 14.4%



Hess Collection 2014 Lion Tamer Red Wine (Napa Valley). A new offering from this producer, this wine blends 55% Malbec with 15% Zinfandel, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Petite Sirah and 8% Merlot. It satisfies in rich, rounded flavors of blueberry pie, cranberry and clove, with an underlying streak of dark chocolate. Medium acidity supports an appealing full-bodied juiciness. —V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$40



Jax 2014 Y3 Taureau (Napa Valley). This is an impressive blend of 45% Merlot with 25% estate-grown Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Syrah from Stagecoach Vineyard and 10% Biale Zinfandel. It comes together seamlessly in a twist of structured blackberry, leathery tannin and tomato leaf, priced to be enjoyed by many. Editors' Choice. -V.B. abv: 14.5% **Price: \$20**



Jean-Luc Colombo 2012 La Divine (Côte Rôtie). Full-bodied and richly textured, this isn't a prototypically delicate Côte Rôtie, but it's still very enjoyable. Clove and black olive notes are backed by plummy fruit, capped off by a long, dusty finish. Drink now-2025. Palm Bay International. -J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$90



La Crema 2014 Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast). This juicy, medium-bodied wine offers a mix of crisp lemon meringue and richer notions of pear compote and biscotti. Grapes are sourced from a range of vineyards, including Saralee's. -V.B. abv: 13.5% **Price: \$23**



La Crema 2014 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This lush wine offers true value, deeply flavored in strawberry and cherry. A tannic foundation supports the fruit beside black tea, clove and a twist of orange and cranberry, with a soft and smooth texture. -V.B.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$25



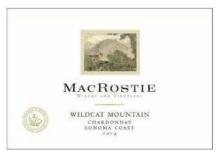
Lawer 2015 Betsy's Vineyard Viognier (Knights Valley). This lively white is floral in honeysuckle aromas, while creamy, rounded layers of apricot play on the full-bodied palate. A spicy nutmeg chaser closes things out. Well balanced and accessible, this is ready to drink now. -V.B.

abv: 14.7% Price: \$24



Lucienne 2014 Lone Oak Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands). Rounded strawberry fruit, clove and vanilla show on the nose of this single-vineyard bottling from the Hahn family of wines. Baked red cherry, cocoa spice, nutmeg, allspice and more clove pop on the palate and linger through the close. -M.K.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$50



MacRostie 2014 Wildcat Mountain Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast). This wine has a voluptuous rich-oak character, complemented by ripe apple and full-bodied concentration. It celebrates a warm, generous vintage in its ability to offer plenty of fruit and acidity, delightfully balanced by a lime chaser. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$40

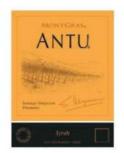


Maxville 2014 Cabernet Franc (Napa Valley).

Rounded in texture, this wine boasts a juicy midpalate and well-integrated oak tones. Cigar, tar, cranberry, currant and a pleasing bouquet of violet give it lingering character and a lasting impression.

—V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$67



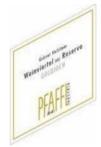
MontGras 2014 Antu Syrah (Colchagua Valley). Loam, berry, lavender and spice aromas are all welcoming. This is full in body—solidly structured and tannic. Savory to the max flavors of peppery berries finish tight and juicy. Drink through 2020. Esprit du Vin. —M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$23



90 Oyster Bay 2016 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). This ticks all the Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc boxes: cut grass, snow pea, nectarine and citrus, all bundled into a medium-bodied wine that comes across as dry, silky and refreshing. Delegat USA, Inc. —J.C.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$16



R&A Pfaffl 2015 Goldjoch Reserve Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). Gently savory hints of yeast on the nose lead to an easy, refreshing palate. This is light, with notes of citrus and pear, but it has a concentrated core and comes with a clean, moreish finish and harmonious balance. Esprit du Vin.—A.K.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$40



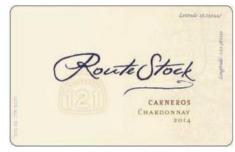
90 R&A Pfaffl 2015 Zeiseneck Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). The savory, yeasty nose comes with a hint of spicy sandalwood. The palate echoes this rounded harmonious spiciness and plays more to those mellow tones than to the shades of fruit. The body comes with a lovely, inviting and appetizing light-footedness. The finish is long and clean. Esprit du Vin. —A.K.

abv: 12% **Price:** \$18



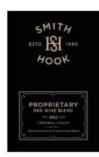
90 Rocca delle Macie 2013 Roccato (Toscana). A blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon in equal parts, this opens with aromas of black-skinned fruit, cedar and a whiff of espresso. The polished palate doles out juicy black plum, white pepper and licorice alongside ripe tannins. Palm Bay International. —K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$57



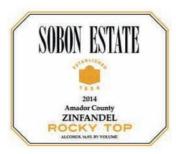
90 RouteStock 2014 Route 121 Chardonnay (Carneros). Fresh and complete, with subtle oak and ripeness, this white shines in a lilt of pear, lime and tangerine, showing plenty of minerality. It remains bright despite medium weight. *Editors' Choice*. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$16



Smith & Hook 2013 Proprietary Red Wine Blend (Central Coast). Dark and hearty in the glass, this blend of Merlot, Malbec, Petite Sirah and Cabernet Sauvignon is lush and inviting to the nose, with milk chocolate, caramel, black cherry and crème de cassis aromas. The palate shows tobacco and coffee tones as well as black cherry, black currant and elderberry fruit, with tannins that settle in softly. —M.K.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$25



Sobon Estate 2014 Rocky Top Zinfandel (Amador County). Rich, spicy aromas and flavors of black cherry and cedar make this fullbodied wine from one of the longest-running wineries in California's Sierra Foothills hard to resist. It has a feeling of breadth and depth on the palate alongside lush layers of tasty fruit. Editors' Choice. —J.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$18**



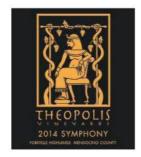
SOLID 2012 Proprietary Red (California). Bold, well structured and nicely dry, this wine has plenty of dark-red color, appetizing blackcherry and wild-berry aromas, and ample but not overripe fruit flavors. A full-bodied, grown-up kind of wine, it doesn't overdo anything and will be great at the dinner table. -J.G.

Price: \$25 abv: 14.4%



Sonoma-Cutrer 2014 Winemaker's Release Owsley Single Block Estate Bottled Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Earthy and brimming with black tea, this is an exotic, medium-bodied wine. The palate starts off tangy in cranberry and strawberry flavors, with a hint of mint, while a forested, mushroomy underbelly provides extra complexity and a savory component. -V.B.

abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$50



Theopolis 2014 Symphony (Yorkville Highlands). Generous aromas of rose petal and lemon zest meet dry but fruity flavors recalling crisp kiwi and apricot in this dramatic, flavorful wine made from the Symphony grape variety. The texture is crisp and tangy, and the flavors are vivid. Editors' Choice. —J.G.

abv: 12.8% **Price:** \$22



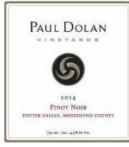
Volpaia 2012 Balifico (Toscana). Made from 65% Sangiovese and 35% Cabernet Sauvignon-organically farmed-this polished red opens with aromas of black-skinned fruit, violet and Mediterranean herb. On the full-bodied palate, tobacco and aniseed accent a core of ripe black cherry, while firm tannins provide support. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —K.O.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$65**



Paul Dolan 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Potter Valley). Good balance and subtle flavors make this full-bodied wine quietly attractive and versatile with food. It tastes fresh, like white peaches, and has mild hints of herbs and lemon along with richer notes of honeydew melon on the finish. Editors' Choice. —J.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$15**



Paul Dolan 2014 Pinot Noir (Potter Valley). Nuanced and smooth, this reasonably priced wine comes from a lesser-known inland valley that has a moderately cool climate. The wine pours on plenty of ripe cherry and berry flavors to complement the suave, spicy aromas. Editors' Choice. -J.G.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$20



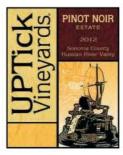
(Brunello di Montalcino). This opens with subdued aromas suggesting sour berry, clove and a touch of leather. The accessible, straightforward palate offers morello cherry and a hint of star anise alongside polished tannins. Drink through 2019. Misa Imports. —K.O.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$25**



Tinto Rey 2015 Estate Bottled Verdejo (Dunnigan Hills). This medium-bodied wine brings delicate floral aromas and tangy white-cherry flavors, along with a full mouthfeel and appetizingly dry finish. Hints of earth and mineral add interest, complementing the fruit flavors. -J.G.

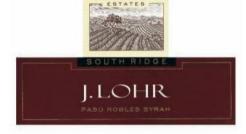
abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$18



85 Uptick Vineyards 2012 Estate Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). This is an abundantly ripe wine, big in oak and tannin, with a streak of earthy compost. A tinge of spearmint brightens the palate, while persistent acidity graces the close. —V.B.

abv: 15.5% **Price:** \$49

BEST BUYS



J. Lohr 2014 Estates South Ridge Syrah (Paso Robles). This bottling offers gingerbread cake, baked blueberry and smoked pork on the nose. It's soft on the palate, with finely polished tannins imparting a plush texture. Black plum, strawberry and a touch of mint mark the palate. The structure shows itself just enough on the finish. Best Buy.—M.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$15



Bianchi 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Monterey County). Wet cement, pear flesh, lemon pith and white flowers make for a classic base to the nose of this bottling, but the intriguing chive-like herbs take it to another level. There is a nice textural grip to the palate, with brisk flavors of grass, stonefruit flesh, lime peels and chopped herbs. The sizzle of acidity grows into the finish. Best Buy.—M.K.

abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$12

BEST BUYS



90 J. Lohr 2014 Estates Los Osos Merlot (Paso Robles). This Merlot is dark in the glass, with lots of oak, vanilla and caramel aromas against a black-cherry and chocolate-cake backdrop on the nose. Soft and chalky tannins frame the sip, where blueberry, vanilla and chocolate-cream flavors prove lush and inviting. Best Buy. —M.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$15



Murphy-Goode 2015 The Fumé Sauvignon Blanc (North Coast). Fresh aromas, vivid citrus flavors, elegance and poise make this an attractive wine. It has a balance that is easy to enjoy and keeps calling for more sips, with pleasant notes of citrus and green fruit throughout. Best Buy. —J.G. abv: 13.5%

Price: \$14



Whiplash 2015 Red Wine (California). Concentrated flavors and a richly tannic texture make this dry wine more sophisticated and interesting than many other red blends. It combines cranberry, black cherry and cinnamon notes for a mouthfilling and harmonious impression. Best Buy.—J.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$15

BEST BUYS



Belle Ambiance 2015 Chardonnay (California). This is not an attention-getter, but a mild-mannered, reasonably balanced wine that will happily pair with dishes ranging from seafood to roast chicken. It has faint apple and vanilla aromas, mild apple and lemon flavors, and a lingering, lightly spicy finish. Best Buy. —J.G.

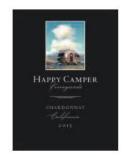
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$10



Belle Ambiance 2014 Pinot Noir (California).

A lively, oak-spice aroma leads into bright red fruits and cinnamon tones on the palate. A smooth but lively texture completes the picture for this medium-bodied wine. Best Buy.—J.G.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$10



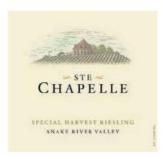
Happy Camper 2015 Chardonnay (California). This medium-bodied wine blends lively citrus and crisp apple aromas with just-richenough pear, apple and butter flavors for good balance. Satisfying and refreshing, it will be great with many different dishes. Best Buy. —J.G.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$9

BEST BUYS



Mirassou 2015 Pinot Grigio (California). Smoothness and subtlety come with a texture just rich enough to be interesting, without damping down the acidity that makes this lightbodied wine refreshing. It offers flavors of crisp green apple and a touch of pear. Best Buy. -J.G. **abv:** 12.4% **Price:** \$12



Ste. Chapelle 2015 Special Harvest Ries-Ste. Chapette 2013 Special ling (Snake River Valley). Aromas of ripe peaches, white flowers and fresh jasmine explode from the glass. The wine tastes sweet but still shows delicacy, with enough acid to balance it all out. Best Buu. -S.S.

abv: 12.5% Price: \$10



HandCraft 2015 Artisan Collection Dark Red Wine (California). This delicious, fruity, lightly sweet wine blends ripe berries and black cherries on a smooth, supple texture. A touch of lip-smacking tannin balances it out. Best Buy. -J.G. **abv:** 13.5% Price: \$9

BEST BUYS



Oveja Negra 2015 Reserva Estate Bottled Chardonnay-Viognier (Maule Valley). This Chardonnay-Viognier blend is a touch viscous in feel but honest as a whole, with floral and melon aromas. Mild flavors of white flowers, orange and green herbs are light in intensity, but are coupled with a sense of roundness on the palate. Old Bridge Cellars. Best Buy. -M.S.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$11



Santa Rita 2015 120 Sauvignon Blanc (Colchagua Valley). Grassy, slightly green aromas are fresh and suggest cactus pad. This is easy on the palate, with flavors of citrus fruits and green herbs, such as tarragon and rosemary. A crisp finish is just solid enough to maintain integrity. Palm Bay International. Best Buy. -M.S.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$8

SPIRITS



The Tyrconnell 16 Year Old (Ireland; Beam Suntory, Chicago, IL). This new single malt, debuting in March 2017, has a fresh, grassy scent, a drying feel and plenty of bold flavor. Think rounded almond, subtle vanilla sweetness and coconut cream pie, finishing with a burst of citrus- and ginger-peel zing.

abv: 46% Price: \$100

SPIRITS



The Pogues (Ireland; MS Walker, Somerville, MA). "The official Irish whiskey of the legendary band," this robust spirit is made at West Cork Distillers, one of two remaining 100% independently owned and operated distilleries in Ireland. The aromas suggest stone fruit and a whiff of smoke. The palate also shows smoke, plus dried apricot richness and a mouthwatering saline finish. A mix of whiskies aged 5 to 10 years. Best Buy. abv: 40% **Price:** \$40



Brothership Irish-American Whiskey Aged 10 Years (Ireland/USA; Millstone Spirits Group, Philadelphia, PA). This unusual bottling comprises 55% Irish whiskey and 45% American whiskey, both 10 years old. Look for a citrusy aroma with a hint of smoke. The palate shows lots of bright tropical fruit, lemon curd and pear, with a whiff of smoke, and finishing with drying oak and ginger heat. Sip or mix.

abv: 45% **Price:** \$50



The Dubliner Irish Whiskey (Ireland; Prestige Beverage Group, St. Paul, MN). A blend of single-malt and grain whiskeys, this has a relatively light, approachable profile. The aroma is bright, fresh and grassy, with hints of white peach and smoke. The palate shows subtle sweetness, layering peach, lemon and grapefruit peel with almond, oak and coconut, plus a mouthwatering, spicy gingercinnamon finish. Best Buy.

abv: 40% **Price: \$27** **93** J. Lohr 2013 Cuvée Pau (Paso Robles). For full review see page 89. Cellar Selection.

abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$50

93 J. Lohr 2014 Hilltop Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). For full review see page 89. Editors' Choice.

abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$35

93 Lava Cap 2014 Estate Bottled Cabernet Sauvignon (El Dorado). For full review see page 89. Editors' Choice.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$28

Pine Ridge 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Howell Mountain). This is a juicy, complete and full-bodied showcase for the variety from this mountainous appellation, known for its ability to impart sizable structure and concentration. It delivers that here, integrating firm tannin into a complex, lengthy portrait of ripe, brambly blackberry, black currant and a powerful dose of cigar box. —V.B.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$125

Ramey 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Sites from throughout the valley contribute to the lovely layering of this accessible wine, softly structured and classically inspired in its dried herb and distinct purity of cassis. Delicate despite its ripeness and power, it leaves a smoky hint of sweet tobacco on the finish. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$62

92 Brilliant Mistake 2013 Taylor Family Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District).

This is the inaugural vintage for this producer, a husband-and-wife team in partnership with wine-maker Maayan Koschitzky, who also works with Philippe Melka. The vineyard-designate is lush and powerful, a full-bodied, tannic representative of an amazing growing year. Mint, black olive, blackberry and cigar highlight the sensual texture, enriched in dark chocolate. —V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$85

Q2 Castello di Amorosa 2013 Morisoli-Borges Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford).

For full review see page 91.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$145

92 Gundlach Bundschu 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Valley). The producer sources primarily from its historic Rhinefarm Estate Vineyard for this wine, a rich expression of the variety opaque in color. Meat, black pepper, leather and tobacco give it a velvety lushness and concentration buoyed by complex, savory components. The lengthy finish is all about bittersweet chocolate. —V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$50

92 Hess Collection 2013 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Mount Veeder). A hearty 18% Malbec is part of this wine, from the producer's appellation estate. Clove, cedar and graphite kick

things off on the nose, before youthful tannin give breadth and depth to the ripe blackberry, cherry and blueberry. The wine is soft and seductive on the finish. —V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$65

92 Hess Collection 2013 The Lion Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Mount Veeder). For full review see page 92.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$17

92 La Honda Winery 2013 Salinian Block Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Cruz Mountains). This bottling is a great representation of the savory style that's typical of the Santa Cruz Mountains, but with enough rounded, approachable ripeness that it will appease those seeking juicier wine as well. Aromas of blackberry, blueberry, spicy vanilla and sharp cinnamon-allspice lead into a black and white pepper-laden palate, full of ripe elderberry, blueberry and elderflower. Editors' Choice. —M.K.

abv: 13.7% **Price:** \$3

92 La Voix 2013 Ecstasy of Gold Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Barbara County). Dried elderberries and plum skins meet with cocoa, soy, cracked peppercorn and hoisin sauce unfold on the nose of this wine, made by Steve Clifton. The teriyaki and black-plum sauce touches kick into high gear on the palate, where roasted ancho chilecocoa flavors prove quite savory and tasty. Editors' Choice. —M.K.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$65

92 Les Belles Collines 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 93. abv: 14.5% Price: \$70

Malibu Rocky Oaks 2014 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (California). One of the more promising wines coming out of the newer Malibu area, this Cab that is boosted by 10% Merlot and 4% Cabernet Franc. It shows deep blueberry, black currant and black olive on the nose, along with dill, pepper, spearmint and caramel-laced fudge. The intriguing palate offers black olive, black pepper and dark, deep fruit. It's well structured and tasty, like a salt- and pepper-crusted steak. Editors' Choice. —M.K.

abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$30

Oakville Winery 2013 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). This lovely wine from the producer's Pelissa Vineyard is perfumed in roses, while offering a soft, velvety texture that's restrained in terms of tannin and oak. Clove, graphite and white pepper develop in the glass, adding to the wine's classical nature. —V.B.

abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$50

Pine Ridge 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District). For full review see page 94. abv: 14.9% Price: \$125 **92** Rendarrio Vineyards 2013 The Rocker Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). From Clare Ranch Vineyard in the Templeton Gap, this bottling by Ryan Render shows rounded notes of boysenberry and cooked blackberry on the nose alongside strong licorice and mocha aromas. Blackberry and boysenberry also arise on the sip, with olive, pepper and pretty violet floral flavors, all framed by a solidly dry structure. —M.K.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$40

Vinum Cellars 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Impressive at any price, but especially notable at this cost, this 100% varietal red is a testament to the power and concentration of the vintage, integrated with a push of tannin on the back of the tongue. Spicy clove and pepper ride a wave of cassis, dark cherry and chocolate, needing time to unwind in the glass. It will do well in the cellar through 2028. Cellar Selection. —V.B.

abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$37

92 Wood Family Vineyards 2013 Especial Cabernet Sauvignon (Livermore Valley). This is a concentrated, substantive wine with great structure and layers of flavor that taste wonderful now and should improve with time. It coats the palate with rich black cherry, light oak spices and a hint of chocolate, while the full body makes it mouthfilling and luscious. It will drink best from 2019. Cellar Selection. —J.G.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$52

Alyris 2013 The Audition Take 1 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This is a purely varietal, estate-grown wine from Mount George, cave-aged for nearly two years in all-new French oak. Generously expansive on the palate, it offers full-bodied richness around a thoughtful layering of clove, juicy black cherry and savory red currant, lingering on the finish. —V.B.

abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$85

Bell 2013 Clone 6 Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford). From a section of the Beckstoffer Georges III vineyard originally planted by Beaulieu Vineyard in 1928, this wine exalts in this particular clone that imparts classic elements of forest floor and dried herb. Intense and smooth, with a backbone of chalky tannin, the fruit shines in black plum and cherry. —V.B.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$250

Bell 2013 Longtable Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Mount Veeder). Soft and round, this 100% varietal wine made from two clones is juicy and fresh in acidity, a sense of restraint allowing it to sconvey more than just fruit. Cassis, black pepper, cedar and a slight streak of menthol combine nicely on the palate, intertwining on the lengthy finish. —V.B.

abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$150

Garnet Vineyards 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). Winemaker Alison Crowe does

BUYINGGUIDE

it again, managing to provide delicious and interesting wine at a tremendous value. Deep red strawberry, black pepper, graphite, black plum, chocolate, licorice and dried chiles show on the nose. The sip brings rounded black cherry fruit lifted by anise, dark chocolate and a touch of olive flavors. Editors' Choice -M K

abv: 13.8% **Price: \$20**

Grassini 2013 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Happy Canyon of Santa Barbara). Black cherry, licorice, loamy soil and a touch of roasted beef show on the nose of this bottling from a beautiful estate in the eastern Santa Ynez Valley. Black cherry, dried dill and fennel, coffee bean and slightly bitter dark chocolate come across on the palate that is still quite young with sticky tannins, though very easy to sip already. -M.K.

abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$80

Hess Collection 2014 Allomi Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 96. abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$32

Honig 2013 Bartolucci Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (St. Helena). An herbal undertone lurks beneath richer, layered concentrations of big tannin and toasty oak in this 100% varietal wine. Meaty and bold, it highlights the variety's ability to be extracted, fruity and nuanced in dried herb, cedar, graphite and sage. -V.B.

abv: 15.1% Price: \$100

La Honda Winery 2012 Lonehawk Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Cruz Mountains).

Deep strawberry, blackberry, black olive and oregano show on the nose of this bottling that comes from a vineyard 1,100 feet above the town of Saratoga. The 100% American oak treatment makes for a savory sip, with bay leaf, white pepper, cracked peppercorn and olive, all bone dry and mouth-drying in tannins. -M.K.

abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$42

Martin Ranch 2012 Thérèse Vineyards Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Cruz Mountains).

For full review see page 96.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$49

Piña 2013 Ames Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). Winemaker Anna Monticelli coaxes soft, leathery layers of graphite and red cherry from this 100% varietal vineyard-designate Cab. Aged in French oak, 67% new, it shows ripeness and density, with a pleasant structure and good length on the finish. -V.B.

abv: 14.9%

Wrights Station 2012 Bates Ranch Vineyard

From a vineyard just below Mt. Madonna, this bottling offers deep blackberry and black-pepper spice, with herbal oregano, thyme and touches of pasilla chile on the nose. It's quite herbaceous in that typical mountain style, with bay leaf and dried basil set against dry elderberry fruit. -M.K.

abv: 13.6% **Price: \$44**

Bell 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). With a perfumed nose of rose and toasted oak, this wine is thick in red fruit, dense oak and a welcome undercurrent of bright acidity that helps keep it fresh in the glass. Small amounts of Merlot, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc and Malbec are all within. -V.B.

abv: 14.2% **Price: \$55**

CULT 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). For full review see page 99. Editors' Choice. abv: 14.2%

Gallo Signature Series 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For this well-made, robust wine, the producer taps into multiple vineyard sources, including William Hill and Monte Rosso. Hung around a focused structure, it offers classic elements of dried herb, clove and graphite, with significant tannin that persists through a lengthy finish of toasty oak. -V.B.

abv: 15% **Price: \$50**

Mersenne 2013 Dalla Gasperina Vineyard Mersenne 2013 Same Same Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford). From an organically farmed vineyard, this rich, full-bodied wine offers flavors of baked plum, cherry and chocolate cake, taking on an edgy flirtation with toasted oak. It finishes with a sprinkling of black pepper and nutmeg, ready for a giant steak. -V.B.

abv: 15.3% **Price: \$59**

Mount Veeder 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This is a brawny, leathery expression of the variety, explosive on the palate in brambly blackberry and black cherry. Leather, coffee and tobacco give it additional edge and savory qualities that work within its full-bodied, ripe and rich context. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$44

Sean Minor 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This smooth, lean red attractively delivers above its price point. Tart in clove and currant, it finishes with a whiplash of mocha. -V.B. abv: 13.5% Price: \$22

Terlato 2013 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District). A substantial addition of 18% Merlot and smaller touch of 2% Cabernet Franc contribute to the heartiness and warmth of this wine that is tight in tobacco and graphite, with a smattering of coconut. Bittersweet chocolate, clove and dried herb contribute aroma and full-bodied flavor. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$80

Casto Oaks 2013 Gardner Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Sierra Foothills). Nicely balanced and classically styled, this dry wine is cedary and spicy in aroma, and full of plum and red-cherry

flavors shaded by light herbal, savory accents. Not very full-bodied, it has a trim, agile texture and appetizing fine-grained tannins. -J.G.

abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$19

Grassini 2015 Caperner The nose on this Canyon of Santa Barbara). The nose on this Grassini 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Happy bottling is a tad weak compared to other wines from the same estate, with a dense but shy black currant nose. The palate is wrapped in an extreme tannic structure, so it will need some more time to allow the pleasant black cherry, blueberry and charredmeat flavors to shine. -M.K.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$65

High Valley 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (High Valley). This very good go-to wine can stretch from weekday meals to special occasions. The aromas are ripe and fruity, shaded by light oak spices. Flavors are abundantly plummy and the texture is nicely firm and moderately tannic. —J.G.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$30

Husch 2015 Capetiles Colored docino). Layered fruit and spice flavors plus Husch 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Mena firm, dry texture will make this medium-bodied wine a good pairing for all kinds of big proteins. It has black cherry and plum aromas, firm, finegrained tannins and a lip-smacking finish. -J.G.

Price: \$23

Wood Family Vineyards 2014 Cabernet Sau-Wood Family Villeymore Valley). Full bodied and with good, gripping tannins to make the texture appetizing, this wine is very dry and nicely complex. Moderate cranberry and dark chocolate flavors are accented by hints of sage and black olive-classic Cabernet traits. —J.G.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$38

Barbed Wire 2014 Winemaker's Reserve Lot No 9 Cabernet Sauvignon (North Coast).

This is a well-behaved, medium-bodied, dry wine. Good doses of ripe fruit and oaky spices in the aroma and flavor are carried on a firm structure of supportive tannins and fruit acidity. Everything balances out well and the price is right. Editors' Choice. - J.G.

abv: 13.5%

Buck Snack 2014 Capeting.

County). Ripe fruit flavors like prunes and **Buck Shack 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Lake** raisins, and a soft, smooth texture make this wine easy to drink as it spreads across the palate and fills the mouth with flavor. Relatively light in color, it is gentle in texture compared to many of its peers with more tannin, and should be popped and enjoyed soon. —J.G.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$32

Charles Krug 2013 Family Reserve Generations (Napa Valley). This is a full-throttle, Cabernet Sauvignon-based, Bordeaux-style blend, all from estate-grown grapes. It is huge in velvety texture, though moderate acidity props up the bold-



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ness of the blackberry jam and meaty characteristics, all dotted with black-pepper accents. -V.B.

abv: 15.2% **Price:** \$60

(Alexander Valley). Made in a lush, fullbodied style, with 10% Petit Verdot and 5% Cabernet Franc, this wine delivers in deep, concentrated flavors of blackberry, currant and dried cherry, the oak integrated and toasty. Sumptuous hits of mocha and dark chocolate add to its richness. -V.B. **abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$29

Dry Creek Vineyard 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Dry Creek Valley). This is a remarkable value, over-delivering in terms of its varietal characteristics of cola, cinnamon, grippy tannin, black pepper, cedar and leather. Medium bodied and approachable, it's right for the table or cock-

abv: 14.5%

tail party, able to please a range of palates. Editors'

Choice. -V.B.

Duckhorn 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Sinewy leather, tobacco and dried herb intertwine on the thick, full-bodied palate in this unfussy red that should appeal to a broad spectrum of tastes. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$72

Great American wine company, and saving draws net Sauvignon (California). This wine draws Great American Wine Company 2014 Cabera lot of its flavor power from oak, which is evident from the spicy, cinnamon aroma to the lightly sweet maple flavor and finish. Not too full bodied, it is also light in tannins and rather easy on the palate. -J.G. abv: 13.5%

J. Moss Wines 2012 Spicer Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District). This soft, round and juicy wine is ripe and full bodied, a good representative of the vintage. It shows brambly black fruit, mocha and hints of coconut flakes that endure through the finish. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$70

Malibu Rocky Oaks 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). Dark hibiscus, deep red cherry and rare roast beef show on the nose of this wine from Malibu that is fragrant but fairly light in aromas. Pencil shavings, baked blackberry and a touch of clove show on the sip, which is juicy and interesting. -M.K.

Price: \$25 abv: 14.4%

Medlock Ames 2014 Bell Mountain Estate Mediock Affies 2017 Seminary (Alexander Valley). With 11% Petit Verdot, this hearty, full-bodied red shows crunchy, high-toned cranberry and elements of black pepper, pencil shavings and dried herb. A toughness of leather dives into the tobacco-laden finish. -V.B.

abv: 14.7% **Price: \$48** Oberon 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa County). This lightly crafted, affordable red blends in smaller percentages of Merlot, Petit Verdot and Syrah. It works as a soft, approachable and rounded experience of moderately tannic black cherry and cola, with a streak of black pepper, graphite and cedar mixed within. -V.B.

abv: 13.7% Price: \$25

Robert Mondavi 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). Toasted coconut meets a big grip of tannin and wood in this full-bodied wine that offers moderate acidity. Tobacco leaf, currant and graphite dance around the edges of rich black cherry compote. -V.B.

abv: 14.5%

Trotter 1/16 2013 Oak Canyon Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A 100% varietal wine from grapes sourced in Coombsville, this offers cranberry, currant and clove in equal measure. This tiny-production project features tightgrained tannin and a dusty texture built around moderate acidity and body. -V.B.

abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$75

CABERNET FRANC

Galvan 2013 Russo Family Vineyard Cabernet Franc (Solano County). This is a big, concentrated and lush-textured wine, bolder and thicker than many of its peers and beautifully laced with dark berry, dark chocolate and cardamom flavors. The mouthfeel is full and gripping, as the many layers of fine tannins coat the palate and help the rich flavors linger on the finsh. -J.G.

abv: 14.4% **Price: \$36**

Jarvis 2015 will Jarvis Science In the Franc (Napa Valley). This wine is named Jarvis 2013 Will Jarvis' Science Project Caberfor the producer's son and his real-life 8th-grade project making one small barrel of wine. It continues on the theme, blending in 5% Merlot and aging again in new French oak, all small barrels. Meant to be enjoyed young, it shows a youthful exuberance of smoked wood, pillowy tannin, peppercorn and dried herb. —V.B.

abv: 14.3% Price: \$140

Meeker 2013 Cabernet Franc (Dry Creek Valley). For full review see page 96.

abv: 14.7% **Price: \$45**

Maxville 2014 Cuscons For full review see page 101. Maxville 2014 Cabernet Franc (Napa Valley). abv: 14.5%

Raggiar 2014 Estate Cabanasia, this full-Foothills). Bold and substantial, this full-

bodied and firmly tannic wine has a good core of ripe black berry and black cherry trimmed with lighter cinnamon and vanilla notes from oak. It's very attractive in a firm, palate-gripping way. -J.G. abv: 14.2% **Price: \$26**

Prima Materia 2013 Cabernet Franc (Califorbodied, well balanced and rich, with soft tannins to give it heft. Flavors run to black cherry, clove and cinnamon. The great sense of polish and composure make it a pleasure to drink. -J.G.

abv: 14.3% **Price: \$26**

St. Supéry 2013 Estate Cabernet Franc (Rutherford). Cedar dust, dried herb, currant and graphite combine effortlessly in this restrained wine, subtle in buried tannin. It shows voluptuous body with moderate acidity and a ripeness on the finish. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$65**

Jarvis 2012 Estate Grown Cave Fermented Cabernet Franc (Napa Valley). This is a 100% varietal wine grown entirely on the producer's estate. Aged nearly two years in all-new French Nevers oak, it shows a tinge of smoke-campfire nearly-from the barrel, followed by a reduced expression of blueberry and herbes de Provence. Firm, integrated tannins don't distract. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$105

Rutherford Hill 2013 Cabernet Franc (Napa Valley). This is a simple, soft and quite floral wine, showing a wealth of dusty tannin and fullbodied power. Cedar and pomegranate are the highlights that ride a textured wave of chalky oak. -V.B. abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$45

William Harrison 2012 Estate Cabernet Franc (Rutherford). This 100% varietal wine offers a simplicity of blueberry, black licorice and chocolate wrapped in integrated tannin and oak. Full bodied and ripe, it softens in the glass to a rounded finish. -V.B.

abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$65

MERLOT

95 La Jota Vineyard 2013 Merlot (Howell Mountain). For full review see page 85.

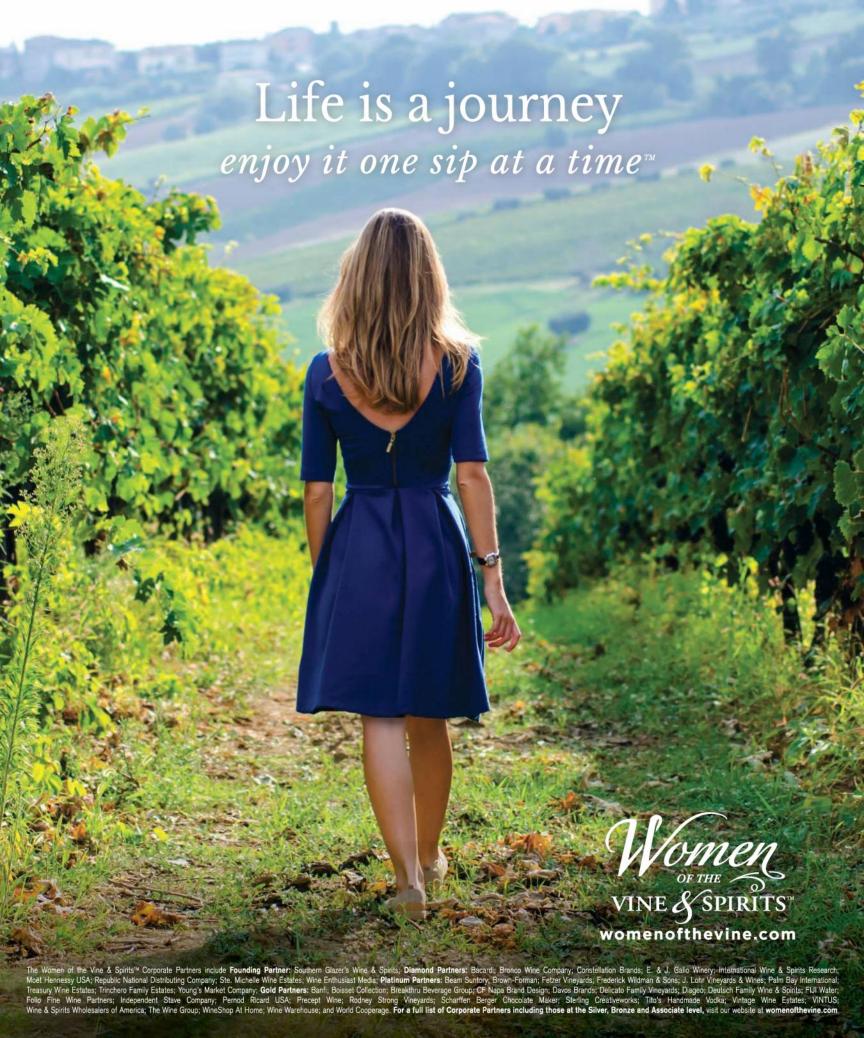
abv: 15% **Price:** \$85

94 Mt. Brave 2013 Merlot (Mount Veeder). For full review see page 87.

94 Pahlmeyer 2013 Merlot (Napa Valley). The wine launched cinematically by Robert Redford in "Indecent Proposal," this delivers a succulently memorable and seductive mix of crisp cassis and meaty rare beef, a sanguine underpinning that gives it intrigue. Full bodied and ripely crafted, it is completely satisfying in its classical components of sage and cedar, with a lingering lust of chocolate-covered cherry. -V.B.

abv: 15.2% **Price:** \$85

Duckhorn 2013 Merlot (Carneros). This Duckhorn 2015 menor comments of the lower state of



BUYINGGUIDE

Hyde Vineyard, a meticulously farmed and magical site. With a rich nose leading the way, it shows dusty licorice and chocolate plum. Voluptuously well crafted, it finishes in a lengthy tinge of baking spice. -V.B.

abv: 14.9% **Price: \$72**

Jarvis 2012 Estate Grown Cave Fermented Reserve Merlot (Napa Valley). The third reserve by this producer made of this variety, this is 100% estate and varietal. It unfurls in fireplace smoke, red and black berry, leather and tobacco, with an edginess of cedar and herb. The texture is soft and integrated around a full-bodied concentration of flavor. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$200

Ballentine 2014 Estate Grown Merlot (Napa Valley). For full review see page 91.

abv: 14.6% Price: \$35

Duckhorn 2013 Three Palms Vineyard Merlot (Napa Valley). For full review see page 91. **abv:** 14.5%

Black Stallion 2013 Limited Release Merlot (Napa Valley). For full review see page 95. abv: 14.8%

J. Lohr 2013 Cuvée Pom (Paso Robles). For full review see page 96.

abv: 14.9% Price: \$50

Jarvis 2012 Estate Grown Cave Fermented Merlot (Napa Valley). Enviable structure marks this lovely wine that appears to have been made in a slightly reductive style. Light oak, a bouquet of dried herb and vanilla ride along a mediumbodied texture that's soft and silky, with a panache of juicy blackberry and current on the finish. -V.B. abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$95

Rutherford Ranch 2014 Merlot (Napa Valley). For full review see page 97.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$26

Y Rousseau 2013 Pépé Cavedale Vineyard Mer-Y Rousseau 2013 repe careana. lot (Moon Mountain District Sonoma County).

Named for the producer's French grandfather, Pépé is peppery in clove and Mexican cinnamon, with an abundance of black cherry. Made in small amounts, it shows a softness around its rounded edges of structure and moderate body of acidity, finishing with length and grace. -V.B.

abv: 14 2% **Price: \$50**

Decoy 2014 Merlot (Sonoma County). For full review see page 99.

abv: 13.9% **Price: \$25**

Ehlers Estate 2013 Merlot (St. Helena). From entirely estate-grown fruit and blended with 5% Cabernet Franc, this is a soft, full and well-structured wine, sanguine in currant, cassis and a dusting of brambly raspberry. Inviting, it finishes in a pleasing note of mocha. -V.B.

abv: 14.2%

J. Lohr 2014 Estates Los Osos Merlot (Paso Robles). For full review see page 103. Best Buy.

abv: 13.5%

Price: \$15

Mill Creek 2013 Merlot (Alexander Valley). Juicy black plum and milk chocolate combine for a richly lush, soft and mild experience in this approachable wine, ripe and seasoned in a sprinkling of black pepper. -V.B.

abv: 14.7% **Price: \$32**

Saddleback 2014 Merlot (Oakville). This is a thick, rich and chocolate-laden wine, soft and generously ladened with tannin. Cigar, cedar and dried sage remind one of its varietal intent, while its medium-bodied size allows for plushness on the palate. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$45

Duckhorn 2013 Merlot (Napa Valley). From a range of sites, including the producer's own Three Palms Vineyard, this wine is muted in spiced plum and a trace of gunpowder, as well as dried herb and mountaintop cedar. Dense and generous in tannin, it's soft and potently round. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$54**

Bench 2014 Merlot (Knights Valley). A light, bright version of the variety, this soft and herbaceous wine mixes a subtle richness of toasted oak and dark chocolate with black plum and cherry. It retains its acidity well, showing a tightness of structure with enough approachability. -V.B. abv: 13.7% Price: \$24

Dry Creek Vineyard 2013 Merlot (Dry Creek Valley). This youthful, tannic wine needs time in the glass to unfold, benefiting from the additions of 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. A reductive style shows slightly on the nose before streaks of soy, leather and tobacco provide plenty of savory elements with which to play. -V.B. **abv:** 14.5% **Price: \$26**

Duckhorn 2013 Rector Creek Vineyard Merlot (Napa Valley). A full-bodied expression of the variety, blended with 5% Cabernet Sauvignon, this soft, rounded wine is dense in blueberry and currant, with a complexity of leather, pencil and soy. A pinpoint of reduction on the finish gives it a tinge of bitterness. -V.B.

abv: 14.5%

Valley). A mild current of cinnamon, clove and tobacco provide a spicy entry into this wine, backed up by a fruity mid-palate. Medium weight and body give it some power and substance, while on the finish, it comes under an herbaceous light. -V.B. abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$27

PETIT VERDOT

Boeschen Vineyards 2013 Estate Petit Verdot has but one acre of this variety, and he puts it to tremendous use here, in this tamed, food-friendly expression of a robust grape. This vintage is his first single-bottling of PV. Soft, integrated tannin supports juicy black currant and a svelte layering of dark chocolate, punctured by an arsenal of beautiful violet aromas. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$95

Jarvis 2010 Estate Grown Cave Fermented Petit Verdot (Napa Valley). This wine takes a light approach to a robust red grape, in this case mellowing it with the addition of 15% Merlot. It remains buoyant on the palate and well structured, a combination of black olive, toffee, chalky tannin, juicy blackberry and blueberry. It allows for a richness of flavor without ever going overboard in texture or weight. -V.B.

abv: 13.4% **Price:** \$120

Concannon 2013 Reserve Petit Verdot (Livermore Valley). Juicy blackberry and boysenberry flavors fill out this deeply colored, bold-tasting, full-bodied but not oaky wine. More fruit nuances and concentration develop with each sip, and the richly tannic texture coats the sides of the mouth, propelling the ripe fruit through the finish. It's a great way to enjoy this Bordeaux grape variety bottled on its own instead of in a blend, as usual. -J.G.**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$32

St. Supéry 2013 Dollarhide Petit Verdot (Napa Valley). Full bodied and fully concentrated, this estate-grown wine showcases black tar, licorice and black cherry, well-developed flavors that ride a luxurious texture of grippy tannin and toasty oak. Dark as night, the flavors are protracted and extensive through the finish. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$50

William Hill Estate 2013 Benchland Series Petit Verdot (Napa Valley). This big, brawny red has a baked quality to the fruit, a richness of blackberry, blueberry and tobacco leaf that's surrounded by lush, velvety and integrated tannin. Subtle in oak, it speaks to power and concentration of the grape itself. -V.B.

abv: 15.2% **Price:** \$55

Peju 2013 Petit Verdot (Napa Valley). This 100% varietal wine is dense and heavy on the palate in a generosity of tannin and concentrated black fruit. Lingering notions of cedar, dried herb and tar provide a tinge of bitterness as it develops in the glass. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$42

Midnight 2012 Synnove Petit Verdot (Paso Robles). Just-plucked blueberry, cedar and fermenting-grape aromas show on the dusty nose of



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this dark and heavy bottling. Boysenberry, turned earth and coffee beans show on the palate that is framed by chalky tannins, finishing on a touch of vanilla. -M.K.

abv: 14.8% Price: \$44

Parducci 2013 Reserve Petit Verdot (Mendocino). This is a dark, intensely astringent wine with so much grape and oak tannin that it's challenging to enjoy now. Since PV is known as a grape that provides color and tannin in Bordeaux wines, it's no wonder that it's so stiff today. It will drink best after 2020. -J.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$30**

ZINFANDEL

Robert Biale 2014 Stagecoach Vineyard Zin-94 fandel (Napa Valley). From the only producer to source Zin from this famous vineyard, this wine is abundant in a complexity of baked bread, blackberry jam and vanilla, with endless depth on the palate. Fresh and juicy, it balances its fruitiness with mountain-sized tannin strength and concentration. -V.B.

abv: 14.7% **Price: \$52**

VGS Chateau Potelle 2013 Zinfandel (Mount Veeder). Perfumed in a wildness of violet and lavender, this beautiful wine is rich and smooth on the palate, both textured and layered. Seductive in its hint of leathery white pepper, it develops brambly blackberry-compote flavors as it opens in the glass. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$65

Williams Selyem 2014 Bacigalupi Vineyard Williams Selvent 2017 Selection. For full Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 87.

abv: 14.9% **Price: \$58**

Robert Biale 2014 Valsecchi Vineyard Zinfanfrom a Vineburg-based site is full bodied, ripe and voluptuous with a light dusting of black pepper and clove. Within its cradling of dense concentration, an underbelly of acidity allows for freshness within the power. -V.B.

abv: 15.5% **Price: \$58**

Alyris 2014 The Audition Mount George Estate Zinfandel (Napa Valley). Peppery, brambly, integrated and balanced, this impressively layered and complex 100% varietal wine highlights the grape's ability to be fruity, spicy and soft all at the same time. -V.B.

abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$35

Armida 2014 Tina's Block Maple Vineyards Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). For full review see page 91.

abv: 14.8% **Price: \$48** **92** Artezin 2014 Old Vine Zinfandel (Mendocino County). For full review see page 91. Editors' Choice.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$18

Haraszthy 2013 Indian Springs Ranch Reserve Zinfandel (Sonoma Valley). This sultry, big-boned wine offers deft aspects of black pepper and dried herb atop a softly layered touch of brown sugar. Richness is there, as is a voluptuous flirtatiousness, yet it remains dry and dusty on the palate and classically varietal. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% **Price: \$34**

Hunt & Rvde 2013 Old Vine Zinfandel (Sonoma **County).** For full review see page 92.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$40

Jaxon Keys 2013 Estate Michael's Reserve 92 Jaxon Reys 2013 Estate (Mendocino). In this wine, a distinct and delicious blackberryjam aroma is backed up by concentrated and pure fruit flavors. But the balance is good and dry, and the wine has a mouth-filling texture buoyed by finegrained tannins and full body. This is a wonderful example of a flavor-packed but sophisticated dinner wine from this varietal. -J.G.

abv: 14.6% **Price: \$24**

92 Novy 2014 Limerick Lane Vineyard Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). This showcases a highly sought-after vineyard site known for its tension of big, bold, ripe fruit and notable acidity. Red currant, cranberry and leather find a well-composed rendering of leathery clove and other lively hits of spice, including black and white pepper. -V.B. **abv:** 14.9%

🕤 Ottimino Vineyards 2013 Biglieri Vineyard Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). From a dryfarmed vineyard planted more than 50 years ago, this 100% varietal wine is highlighted in compost, leather and graphite. Well structured, with firm, strong tannins, it offers a tartness of pomegranate and black cherry along with a complexity of savory tobacco leaf. -V.B.

abv: 14.8% Price: \$37

Rosenblum 2012 Carla's Reserve Zinfandel (Contra Costa County). Luscious and sleek in mouthfeel, and drenched with wonderful fruit flavors, this wine is a beauty. It has ample ripe fruit flavors like boysenberry and cherry pie without being literally sweet, while a sense of quiet concentration lasts on the lingering finish. It is structured with enough fine-grained tannin to age gracefully, so it's best to drink after 2019. Cellar Selection. -J.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$25**

Sequum 2013 Kidd Ranch Zinfandel (Napa Valley). Leathery at its core, this small-production wine is subdued and relatively restrained, showing bold, juicy layers of strawberry and cranberry. It offers enviable structure and ability to age. It will drink best 2023-2028. Cellar Selection. -V.B. Price: \$40

Ancient Oak Cellars 2012 Pagnano Vineyard Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). From estategrown grapes, this impressive bottling is moderately spicy, showing a floral flair on the nose. Medium bodied and soft on the palate, it shines in a depth of plum, leather and black pepper. -V.B.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$35

Black Saint Peter 2014 Old Vine Zinfandel 91 (Lodi). An earthy, black-pepper aroma and classic blackberry, raspberry and brambly spice components make this a fine example of Zinfandel. It is full bodied, mouthfilling and generous in flavor, benefitting from good acidity and moderate, finegrained tannins for structure. Editors' Choice. - J.G. **abv:** 14.4% **Price: \$17**

Graziano 2013 Zinfandel (Mendocino County). An unusual level of flavor concentration and density of texture make this wine substantive in mouthfeel, intriguing in depth, and a good wine to age for a few years. It has touches of sage and sweet oak in the aroma, plus full-bore flavors of blackberry and black cherry on the palate. With great structure due to firm tannins and acidity, it will be best to drink after 2019. Cellar Selection. -J.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$19**

Novy 2014 Carlisle Vineyard Zinfandel (Rus-91 Novy 2014 Cause Sincy 2015 Sian River Valley). Dried sage and a hint of saddle leather highlight this dry, dusty wine noteworthy for its bright, buoyant acidity and layering of red currant. It delivers plenty of full-bodied flavor within a complex, approachable experience. -V.B. abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$34

Ottimino Vineyards 2013 Zinfinity Zinfandel (Sonoma County). For full review see page 97. **abv:** 14.5%

Peachy Canyon 2014 Vortex Zinfandel (Paso Peaciny Canyon 20...
Robles). For full review see page 97. **abv:** 14.9% Price: \$38

Beekeeper Cellars 2014 Secret Stones Madrone Spring Vineyard Zinfandel (Rockpile). Smoky and abundant in brambly blackberry and black cherry, this is a soft, ripe and leathery wine from a dry-farmed site. Black olive and black pepper contribute additional complexity and spicy intrigue, while measured acidity keeps it grounded. -V.B. abv: 14.9% **Price: \$65**

Gehricke 2014 Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 100. **abv:** 14.8% Price: \$30

Mike and Molly Hendry 2014 R.W. Moore Vineyard Zinfandel (Coombsville). From a terrific, old-vine site in the heart of the southernlying appellation, this is a mild-mannered, juicy



BUYINGGUIDE

wine, structured and balanced despite the abundance of ripe red fruit. Cinnamon and pepper complement the restrained nature of the brambly cherry. -V.B.

abv: 15% Price: \$38

Ottimino Vineyards 2013 Rancho Bello Vineyard Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). This is a 100% varietal wine aged in French oak from a dry-farmed site. It begins with a heady rush of ripeness before finding a balance between acidity and concentration. Soft layers of cherry, berry and white pepper combine expertly for a delicious expression of the grape. -V.B.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$33

Quivira 2014 Black Boar Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). Measured oak cradles spicy pepper and a richness of vanilla-kissed black cherry and blackberry in this bold, full-bodied wine, that yes, would pair deliciously with wild boar. -V.B.

abv: 14.8%

Rosenblum NV Vintner's Cuvée XXXVIII Zinfandel (California). This old favorite has an excellent new release. A classic style of Zin, it surrounds generous fruit and spice flavors with a firm texture and appetizing tannins. It starts with light black pepper and sage aromas to complement the rich blackberry and raspberry fruit, and finishes with lingering nuances of spice and berry. Best Buy. -J.G. abv: 13.9% **Price: \$14**

Sobon Estate 2014 Rezerve Zinfandel (Amador County). Fragrant, spicy oak aromas blend with ripe raspberry and blackberry flavors in this full-bodied, almost-sweet tasting wine. All that spice and fruit fills out a soft, velvety frame shaped by light tannins, an almost thick texture and elevated alcohol. —J.G.

abv: 15.4% Price: \$24

Sobon Estate 2014 Rocky Top Zinfandel (Amador County). For full review see page 102. Editors' Choice.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$18**

Wood Family Vineyards 2014 Big Wood Zin 20 Zinfandel (Livermore Valley). This wine has that wonderful but hard-to-pin-down Zinfandel essence that's extremely fruity but also uniquely spicy and brambly. It blends together ripe raspberry, creamy vanilla and red cherry on a smooth, nicely viscous and very full-bodied frame that helps the finish linger. —J.G.

abv: 16.1% **Price:** \$32

Kendall-Jackson 2014 Vintner's Reserve Zinfandel (California). Powerful fruit flavors and a firm, high-octane feeling on the palate make this a big, imposing wine. It offers tasty, ripe boysenberry-jam flavors, moderate tannins and a lip-smacking finish. —J.G.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$17

Mattucci 2014 Primitivo (Paso Robles). Quite dark in the glass, this is very fruitforward on the nose, with blueberry sauce, tart plum skin, turned loam and vanilla aromas. Ripe blackberry fruits mix with licorice on the palate, where rising acidity and soft but present tannins also offer up roast-beef flavors. -M.K.

abv: 15.2% **Price: \$30**

Jaxon Keys 2013 Estate Mae's Block Ravazzi Vineyard Zinfandel (Mendocino). This big, bold wine has the taste profile of a Port but is not so sweet or full bodied. Deeper than usual in color, it's concentrated to the point of overripeness in aroma. Rich on the palate with flavors like blackberry syrup and dark chocolate, it should be perfect as an afterdinner wine. -J.G.

abv: 15.1% **Price: \$32**

Novy 2014 Papera Ranch Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). Fruity in wild strawberry and cherry, this is a straightforward, lightly spiced wine from a marquee old-vine site, complete with dusty tannin and softly integrated oak. -V.B.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$34

Sobon Estate 2014 Cougar Hill Zinfandel (Amador County). Smoky, toasty oak aromas and flavors give a flamboyant personality to this full-bodied wine. It smells literally like wood smoke and toasted French bread, while flavors recall jam spiced with cloves and cinnamon. These are all tasty elements, and this wine will be a hit with oak lovers. -J.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$18**

Sobon Estate 2014 Old Vine Zinfandel (Amador County). Very ripe, very fruity and practically oozing across the palate, this full-bodied and very fairly priced wine tastes sweet and lightly tangy. The berry and plum flavors are quite concentrated, keeping the wine focused on fruit and freshness. Best Buy. -J.G.

abv: 14.7% **Price: \$13**

PETITE SIRAH

5 Carlisle 2014 Palisades Vineyard Petite Sirah (Napa Valley). This wine impresses from first pop, a complicated, well-crafted exploration of full-bodied flavor and brambly beauty. Blueberry pie, violet and cigar tease the nose as they follow through on a soft, supple layering of fine-tuned texture. But it's the stony minerality and undeniable coaxing of white pepper that imprint the memory. This wine should only get better through 2034. Cel $lar\ Selection. - V.B.$

abv: 15.4% **Price: \$50**

Sobon Estate 2014 Rezerve Petite Sirah (Amador County). This big, brawny, boisterous wine is firing on all eight cylinders as it generates powerful and concentrated fruit flavors. Rich, warm tannins partner with a thick, velvety texture

and lingering finish. It has that exuberant fruitiness of some Zins but with more blueberry and dark chocolate, plus considerable heft and depth. Best through 2023. Editors' Choice. -J.G.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$24

Theopolis 2013 Estate Grown Petite Sirah (Yorkville Highlands). For full review see page 90. Cellar Selection.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$38

Mauritson 2013 Madrone Spring Vineyard Petite Sirah (Rockpile). This wine is 100% varietal, aged entirely in French oak. Shy at first, it allows room for an earthy element of compost and is dark and brooding all around, with sizable, tamed, chalky tannin. Leather, black pepper, licorice and cinnamon all make an appearance, adding to the wine's complexity and likability. -V.B.

abv: 14.75% Price: \$41

Peachy Canyon 2014 Petite Sirah (Paso Robles). For full review see page 93.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$32

🕤 Stags' Leap Winery 2013 Ne Cede Malis Stags: Leap Willer, 2010 Estate Grown Petite Sirah (Stags Leap District). For full review see page 94.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$115

Jaxon Keys 2013 Estate Allie Key's Vineyard Petite Sirah (Mendocino). Mouthfilling, mouthcoating and full bodied, this dark-colored wine blends ripe but not sweet blackberry and black-cherry flavors with dark chocolate and baking-spice nuances for a complex and delicious taste profile. It's rich enough in flavor and viscous enough in texture that the abundant tannins seem to be absorbed, and the mouthfeel is soothing. Best from 2018-2023. Cellar Selection. -J.G.

abv: 14.7% Price: \$40

Stags' Leap Winery 2013 Petite Sirah (Napa Valley). For full review see page 97.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$45

Wolff 2014 Petite Sirah (Edna Valley). This is a fascinating show of what a cooler climate can do to this usually unctuous grape. Aromas of Mediterranean spices, olives, leather, fresh forest herbs, rose hips, dewy thyme, raw beef, black pepper and soy lead into a sip full of gamy funk. Think rare lamb and venison, set against tart elderberry and pine sap, that coat the mouth with sticky tannins. Editors' Choice. -M.K.

abv: 13.9% **Price: \$28**

Jacob Franklin 2012 Hayne Vineyard Petite Sirah (Napa Valley). Aged in all-new American oak, this vineyard-designate is light bodied and restrained, a nice surprise for the variety. Soft, simple and bright, it shows a warmth of plum cake and Christmas spice, ending in a rainfall of black pepper.



A nuanced, quiet wine, it should be enjoyed in its youth. —V.B.

abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$75

Minker Brick 2014 Petite Sirah (Lodi). This wine has all the deep, dark color and firm tannins that are expected, but it pleasantly sweetens the blackberry flavors ever so slightly and smooths the edges in terms of texture, for a big wine that's also quite friendly. —J.G.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$25

SYRAH

95 Cordant 2014 Presqu'ile Vineyard Syrah (Santa Maria Valley). For full review see

abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$42

95 Stolpman 2014 Originals Syrah (Ballard Canyon). Very savory aromas of roasted lamb, bacon fat, teriyaki and crushed pepper meet with light blueberry and a touch of mint on the nose of this delicious, well-rounded bottling by winemaker Sashi Moorman from the vineyard's oldest blocks. The palate kicks off with a zesty acidity, then come waves of black pepper-crusted beef roast, oregano, bay leaf, dark plum fruit and lavender. The solid structure ensures cellar potential but it's ready to drink today. Editors' Choice. —M.K.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$42

Terre Rouge 2013 Sentinel Oak Vineyard Pyramid Block Syrah (Shenandoah Valley). This gorgeous, concentrated, mouthfilling wine is delicious to sip now but will certainly improve in the cellar for a decade or more. Tempting black cherry and boysenberry flavors seem to swell in the mouth, while light baking-spice and black-pepper accents weave in and out. Even on the finish it keeps surging with dark fruits and spices. Cellar Selection. —J.G. abv: 14.5% Price: \$40

Alta Colina 2013 Toasted Slope Estate Syrah (Adelaida District). Roasted and raw beef, dried strawberry, crushed marjoram and salt-and-pepper seasonings show on this Syrah. Extremely dark in the glass, it's bolstered by 4% Grenache, 4% Mourvèdre and 2% Viognier. Elderberry fruit kicks off the palate, following by pepper, coffee grinds, espresso beans and dark-chocolate sauce, surrounded by grippy tannins. —M.K.

abv: 15.5% **Price:** \$48

Baker & Brain 2014 Le Mistral Vineyard Syrah (Monterey County). The nose on this wine from the dynamic duo of Fresno State professor/winemaker Matt Brain and custom-crush manager/winemaker Josh Baker is well integrated, showing layers of dark berries, soy, dried violets, candied blueberry and a touch of caramel. It's soft and plush on the palate, with touches of milk chocolate, candied grapes and licorice. —M.K.

abv: 15.5% **Price:** \$42

94 Golden Triangle 2013 Syrah (Paso Robles Willow Creek District). For full review see page 86.

abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$55

Hecho por Ruben 2012 Harrison Clarke Vineyard Syrah (Ballard Canyon). Ruben "The Grape Whisperer" Solorzano may need a new cellar-oriented nickname if he keeps turning out such excellent bottlings. This offers lots of white and black pepper on the nose alongside thyme, rosemary, black plum, licorice, black olive, roast beef and Mediterannean spice. The palate packs thyme, peppercorn, dried sage, black and green olive, espresso and green coffee beans atop underripe blackberry and strong elderberry flavors. —M.K. abv: 14.5% Price: \$55

94 Jada Vineyard & Winery 2014 Jersey Girl Syrah (Paso Robles Willow Creek District).

For full review see page 86.

abv: 15.5% **Price:** \$5

94 Stolpman 2014 Angeli Syrah (Ballard Canyon). As the Stolpman family's top-of-the-line bottling each vintage, this wine impresses on all fronts. Candied boysenberry, dried lilac, snapped dark chocolate and hints of dried mint show on the nose. The entry into the palate is refined and soft with juicy mulberry and elderberry fruit plus touches of thyme and forest floor. Firm but polished tannins and a decent dose of acidity ensure long drinkability. Drink now-2029. Cellar Selection. —M.K.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$68

Wedell Cellars 2012 Manchester Vineyard Syrah (Arroyo Grande Valley). There's a lot to love in this bottling for those who enjoy coolerclimate Syrah. But the tons of cracked black pepper, asphalt and gamy funk meet with enough elderberry and lavender to appeal to others as well. The palate packs a wide array of flavors, from anise to lavender to cracked peppercorn, with savory tar, dried elderberry and even some elderflower showing as well. —M.K. abv: 14.5% Price: \$70

Caliza 2013 Syrah (Paso Robles Willow Creek District). Dark in the glass, this wine by Carl Bowker offers fragrant vanilla, baked blueberry, a touch of pepper and coffee-cocoa foam on the rich and inviting nose. Hearty blueberry and blackberry fruit flavors are lifted by baking spice, bound to a tart, tannic, black-plum-skin-like structure. —M.K. abv: 15.7% Price: \$62

93 Foxen 2014 Tinaquaic Vineyard Syrah (Santa Maria Valley). Violets, bacon fat and caramel sauce are drizzled across blueberry and olallieberry fruits on the nose of this bottling from Billy Wathen and Dick Dore. The palate is expertly integrated and deep with flavors of blackberry, pepper dust, tart black-plum skins, cocoa powder and roasted pork. It conveys classic Syrah flavors, done with grace. —M.K. abv: 15%

Price: \$48

Foxen 2014 Williamson-Dore Vineyard Syrah (Los Olivos District). Dark boysenberry, dried lilac and the slightest touch of tar show on the nose of this bottling, one of the first that Foxen has labeled with the new Los Olivos District appellation. Tart plum skins and elderberry show on the sip that is structured by solidly dry tannins accented by flavors of lavender and thyme. —M.K. abv: 14.4% Price: \$46

93 Rendarrio Vineyards 2013 The Lost Ones Syrah (Santa Barbara County). A very rich nose offers blackberry syrup, crème de cassis, crushed pepper, lilac, light asphalt and soy sauce on this bottling by Ryan Render. The palate is well integrated, with black cherry and black plum enlivened by licorice, crushed marjoram and cinnamon that lead into ginger snaps and a milk-chocolate finish. —M.K.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$34

Stolpman 2014 Estate Grown Syrah (Ballard Canyon). Dark aromas of black currant and black olive meet with charred beef and supple herbs of dill and anise on this wine's excellent nose. The sip is very full and hefty in body, allied with a juicy acidity and fruity character of concentrated blackberry that's imminently appealing. More elegant touches of lavender, rosemary and incense round out the palate. —M.K.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$30

92 Eberle 2014 Steinbeck Vineyard Syrah (Paso Robles). For full review see page 91.

aby: 15% Price: \$28

92 Lynch Wines 2013 Strummer Syrah (Sierra Foothills). Concentrated, well structured and not too full bodied, this is an almost architectural wine in how it fills out the palate and clings to the taste buds. It has an appetizing texture due to fine-grained tannins, a sense of ripeness without overripeness, plus deep and layered fruit, coffee and black-pepper nuances. —J.G.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$25

92 Nelle 2014 Syrah (California). Blackberry and ripe elderberry meet with white pepper and thyme on the nose of this bottling by winemaker Tyler Russell. It's soft and syrupy on the sip, with rich blueberry, blackberry and a touch of kirsch made more interesting by a hint of anise and mint on the finish. —M.K.

abv: 15.8% Price: \$36

92 Stolpman 2014 Hilltops Syrah (Ballard Canyon). Deep notes of elderberry and pepper meet with roasted lamb on the somewhat reductive nose of this bottling. The structure is a bit rigid at this early date, giving a lengthy frame to flavors of deep purple fruit, brown baking spices and a touch of vanilla. —M.K.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$48



91 Beckmen 2013 Block Six Purisima Mountain Vineyard Syrah (Ballard Canyon). Deeply concentrated mulberry, fig and violet aromas arise alongside black pepper, roast beef and lavender on this classically styled bottling from a small part of the Beckmen family's mountaintop vineyard. Flavors are elegantly layered, with dark olallieberry fruit, roasted fennel and gingerbread spice. —M.K. abv: 15.3% Price: \$60

J. Lohr 2014 Estates South Ridge Syrah (Paso Robles). For full review see page 103. Best

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$15

Buy.

90 Foxen 2014 Toasted Rope Syrah (Santa Ynez Valley). Rustic aromas of blackberry, leather, pepper, dried violet and a light tar show on the nose of this appellation-blend bottling. Cocoa and dark elderberry appear on the sip, along with dried herb. It's a light style of Syrah, but vibrant and versatile. —M.K.

abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$44

Malibu 2014 Syrah (California). There is a lot of promise in this bottling from a single vineyard 1,200 feet above the Malibu coast. Baked blackberry, red plum and sultry strawberry notes appear alongside savory roasted beef and herbs. There's enough pepper on the palate to indicate Syrah, but the fruit is lighter than usual, with bramble and raspberry lifted by touches of fennel and dill. —M.K.

abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$30

Pianetta 2013 Syrah (Monterey). This bottling is fresh and herbal on the nose, with sagebrush, charcoal and charred lamb aromas as well as a touch of red fruit. Dried oregano and marjoram mix with pepper, charred beef and rosemary on the palate.—M.K.

abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$32

Rideau 2014 Thompson Vineyard Syrah (Santa Barbara County). Bright purple flowers, boysenberries, tar and a waxy, fruit-coating aroma show on the nose of this bottling from a vineyard near Los Alamos that is known for Rhône varietals. Tart boysenberry, plum, raspberry and elderberry appear on the sip, which is strong in acidity. Touches of white pepper, oregano, anise and charcoal accent the finish. —M.K.

abv: 15.1% **Price:** \$39

Rideau 2014 Estate Syrah (Los Olivos District). Baked red cherry, crushed clove, iron and rose petals make for standard aromas on this bottling, although they are fairly light and simple here. There is a sizzle of acitity on the palate, where juicy strawberry and olallieberry flavors are easy to enjoy, made more complex by graphite and cedar touches. —M.K.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$44

GRENACHE

94 Hecho por Ruben 2012 Kimsey Vineyard Grenache (Ballard Canyon). Ruben "The Grape Whisperer" Solorzano leaves the vineyard to try his hand in the cellar, and the results are magical. Deep rose and fresh lilac aromas make for an extreme florality, followed by blackberry and blackplum scents. Purple flowers also show on the palate, where a nice sizzle of acidity unleashes candied grape flavors and a spicy pepper element. —M.K. abv: 14.5%

94 Nelle 2014 Grenache (California). For full review see page 87.

abv: 15.2% **Price:** \$36

92 Cordant 2014 Wills hills Vineyard Grenache (Paso Robles). This is not a dainty Grenache, with boysenberry syrup, purple flowers, vanilla, clove cream and Christmas spices redolent on the nose. It's rich on the palate, with blackberry syrup, baked blueberry and vanilla, but also reflective of the variety, with violet, clove, pepper and a touch of asphalt. —M.K.

abv: 15.5% **Price:** \$42

Herman Story 2013 On the Road Grenache (California). This is a hearty and quite delicious wine, although nuances of the Grenache grape are overshadowed by richness. Roasted duck, bacon fat, smoked pork loin and freshly sliced filet mignon show on the nose, with violet and blueberry-syrup touches. The palate offers licorice, pepper, blueberry sauce and a very soft texture. —M.K.

abv: 16.1% Price: \$48

Parducci 2014 Reserve Grenache (Mendocino).
For full review see page 97. *Editors' Choice*.

abv: 14.5%
Price: \$27

Iron Hub 2013 Estate Bottled Grenache (Shenandoah Valley). Very tasty, this full-bodied but not heavy wine has an earthy, irony vein running through ripe fruit and black-pepper flavors, giving it unusual complexity. The balance is good, lending a smooth but lively feeling on the palate. —J.G. abv: 14.9%

Price: \$25

Rideau 2014 Estate Grenache (Los Olivos District). Quite light in the glass, the aromas on this bottling are also a bit weak, with cinnamon and red fruits emerging with patience. It's light and lithe on the palate, with candied cherry, rose petals and tons of cracked pepper making for a lengthy, grippy sip. —M.K.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$38

BARBERA

91 High Valley 2013 Barbera (High Valley). This wine from a small, high-elevation district in Lake County adds fresh cherry and raspberry aromas

to rich, softly spicy fruit and oak flavors. Smooth and easy in texture, it's supported by good acidity and moderate tannnis in a style for which Barbera is well known in Italy. *Editors' Choice*. —J.G.

abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$28

Monte Smith 2014 Pauli Ranch Barbera (Mendocino). For full review see page 96. Editors' Choice.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$22

Naggiar 2014 Reserve Barbera (Sierra Foothills). Deep color and lots of concentration make this full-bodied wine stand out. It has smoky, black-peppery aromas along with ripe but not sweet blackberry and black-cherry flavors. Firm tannins add texture. This boldness needs rich food for a pairing. —J.G.

abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$37

Pianetta 2013 Barbera (Central Coast). Allspice, cinnamon cookies and nutmeg kick off the nose of this bottling, then come turned earth and blueberry fruit. Hearty blueberry and blackberry fruits show on the sip alongside coffee grinds and cooked meats. It's quite hearty in structure, but fruity all around. —M.K.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$34

Enotria 2012 Barbera (Mendocino County). Mellow, smooth and lightly spicy, this wine is well balanced and polished. It shows lots of berry flavors plus a bit of cedar and cinnamon while cleansing the palate with good fruit acidity and light tannins. *Editors' Choice*. —J.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$19

Oak Farm Vineyards 2014 Barbera (Lodi). Apropos of the winery name, this wine has a beautiful oak blanket wrapped around its cherry and raspberry flavors. Clove, cinnamnon and cedar aromas lead to mulled-wine characteristics on the palate. It's a very perfumed and attractive wine for oak lovers. —J.G.

abv: 14.8% **Price:** \$25

WASHINGTON

CHARDONNAY

Kerloo 2015 Calling Club Exclusive Chardonnay (Columbia Gorge). Fermented and aged in neutral French oak with full malolactic fermentation, the aromas are light, with notes of green apple and mineral. The freshly squeezed lemon acids are tart and racy, capped off by a lightly creamy finish. Pair it with food to see it at its best. —S.S.

abv: 12.7% **Price:** \$48

Balancing Act 2015 Chardonnay (Washington).
Baked apple and baking spice aromas lead to a lightly creamy palate capped off by a tart, lemony finish. It provides a lot of appeal. Best Buy. —S.S.
abv: 13.5%
Price: \$12



Disruption 2015 Chardonnay (Washington). Most of this wine comes from esteemed Evergreen Vineyard in the Ancient Lakes appellation. It charms with aromas of green apple, Bosc pear and mineral. The flavors are medium bodied and pure, with a lightly creamy feel and a zing of acidity stitching it all together. The balance is spoton. Best Buy. —S.S.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$13

Forgeron 2014 Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). Winemaker Marie-Eve Gilla has a knack for making quality Chardonnay. This one brings aromas of crème fraîche along with pineapple and other tropical fruits. The palate shows restraint. —S.S. abv: 13.7%

Ryan Patrick 2015 Rock Island Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). Aromas of baked apple, spice and pear are followed by full-bodied almost unctuous fruit and barrel flavors. Baking spice flavors linger on the finish. —S.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$20**

Airfield Estates 2015 Chardonnay (Yakima Valley). Cantaloupe and spice aromas are followed by light tart fruit flavors that linger. The flavors are quite elegant but it shows a lovely sense of balance. -S.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$15**

Marshall Davis 2015 Chardonnay (Columbia followed by creamy-feeling fruit flavors that taper slightly toward the finish. —S.S.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$29

Ryan Patrick 2015 Naked Chardonnay (Colum-Ryan Patrick 2013 Hance Similar and apple bia Valley). Vibrant aromas of pear and apple lead to a creamy, full-feeling palate. It's a strong example of the variety and style. Best Buy. -S.S. abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$12

Boomtown 2015 Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). This wine brings aromas and flavors of pear along with light tropical accents. The concentration dips toward the finish. -S.S.

abv: 12.9% Price: \$19

Liberty Lake 2015 Tahija Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). Closed-up aromas are followed by lightly creamy pear flavors. It finishes tart. -S.S.

abv: 13.9% Price: \$20

VIOGNIER

Gård 2014 Grang Masse Masse Vineyards Viognier (Columbia Valley). Barrel Gård 2014 Grand Klasse Reserve Lawrence notes are prominent, with aromas of Creamsicle and baking spice. The palate is broad and dry with stonefruit and barrel flavors. It provides intrigue but the wood seems to get in the way at times. -S.S. **abv:** 14.1% **Price: \$22**

Hawkins Cellars 2015 Barrel Select Viognier (Columbia Valley). The flower and peach aromas are quite subdued for the variety. The stone-fruit flavors provide more generosity while still displaying elegance. —S.S.

abv: 13.8% **Price: \$24**

Ott & Murphy 2014 Viognier (Rattlesnake Hills). The aromas are light, with notes of spice, apricot and lime zest. The peach flavors feel broad while still retaining a sense of balance. -S.S. abv: 13%

RIESLING

Gård 2014 Grand Klasse Reserve Lawrence fumed aromas of lime rind, white flowers, thyme and baking spice are followed by bone-dry flavors that lead to a tart finish. It possesses an almost creamy feel, showing light oak influence. -S.S. abv: 13.6%

Vino La Monarcha 2015 Riesling (Ancient Lakes). This is an aromatic wine, with scents of green melon candy, lime zest, white flow-

ers and white peach. It drinks off dry, with stonefruit flavors brightened by zippy acidity leading to a mouthwatering finish. Best Buy. -S.S.

abv: 12.7% **Price: \$15**

Ryan Patrick 2015 Olsen Brothers Vineyard Riesling (Yakima Valley). Lime, slate and floral aromas lead to an off-dry palate, with generous amounts of stone-fruit flavors. Floral notes persist on the finish. Best Buy. -S.S.

abv: 12% **Price: \$12**

Pacific Rim 2014 DIY NIESHING, Select of anneal. to bone-dry fruit flavors. It provides a lot of appeal. Best Buy. -S.S.

abv: 12.5% Price: \$11

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Dusted Valley 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Dusted valley 2013 Capellics 2013 (Columbia Valley). The aromas are pitch black, with notes of blackberry and black cherry along with high-toned spices. The flavors are full and ripe, with blackberry notes lingering on the finish. -S.S.

abv: 15 1% Price: \$42

Lauren Ashton Cellars 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain). Aromas of cocoa, dark cherry, baker's chocolate and graphite rise up from the glass. The flavors are dense and full, with firm chewy tannins backing them up. It should only improve with additional time in bottle. Best after 2020. Cellar Selection. —S.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$50**

Palencia 2014 El Viñador Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain). The aromas bring notes of dark cherries and exotic spice. The palate is big and bold, with a mixture of fruit and barrel flavors backed by firm slightly dry tannins. It needs some time to settle in, with the wood currently a bit primary. -S.S. **abv:** 14% Price: \$50

Airfield Estates 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon 90 Airfield Estates 2017 Carlon (Yakima Valley). The aromas suggest notes of herb, vanilla, wood spice, plum and dark fruit. The palate is restrained in style, full of dark-fruit and barrel flavors and lightly grainy tannins. -S.S. abv: 14.1% **Price: \$18**

Airfield Estates 2014 Reserve Cabernet Sau-Airfield Estates 2017 (1820). High-toned aromas vignon (Yakima Valley). High-toned aromas of cocoa, barrel spice, vanilla and dark fruit lead to plentiful, focused fruit and barrel flavors. The flavors linger on the finish. —S.S.

abv: 14.4% Price: \$30

Balancing Act 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Washington). Deep blue and black-fruit and spice aromas lead to a soft silky palate loaded with fruit flavors. It's a perfect example of the approachability of this vintage. -S.S.

abv: 14.2% **Price: \$18**

Disruption 2014 Capellines on this ington). The variety is unmistakable on this Disruption 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Washwine, with its aromas of black currant, black cherry, dried herb and spice. The palate is fruit filled but well structured, with tart acids and a firm squeeze of tannin. Dark chocolate notes linger on the finish. —S.S. abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$15

Boomtown 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley). Blue and red-fruit aromas lead to lightly styled cherry flavors. Herb accents run throughout. -S.S.

abv: 14.1% **Price: \$19**

Keira 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley). A blend of Stillwater Creek and Conner Lee Vineyard fruit, this wine brings aromas of dried cherry and cranberry. The flavors are restrained but still show depth, seeming a bit dried out. —S.S. **abv:** 13.9%

Liberty Lake 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain). The aromas are subdued, with notes of spice, mineral and black fruit. The palate is reserved in style, supported by a frame of firm somewhat gruff tannins. —S.S.

abv: 13.9% **Price: \$33**

MERLOT

Tamarack Cellars 2014 Merlot (Columbia Val-Tamarack Lenais 2017 mel. 2. [ley). Aromas of cocoa, milk chocolate, spice and red berries are followed by tart luscious red-

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cherry and chocolate flavors. It shows a pleasing sense of balance. -S.S.

abv: 14.3% **Price: \$28**

Vino La Monarcha 2013 Merlot (Columbia aromas are followed by tart luscious cranberry and cherry flavors. It comes off as a bit oaky but it still brings a lot of appeal. —S.S.

abv: 14.9% **Price: \$20**

Airfield Estates 2014 Merlot (Yakima Valley). Raspberry, plum and light herb aromas are followed by a flavorful palate, speckled with vanilla and other spices. Grainy tannins provide support. -S.S.

abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$18

Boomtown 2014 Merlot (Columbia Valley). Aromas of red fruit and herb are followed by light but pure cherry flavors. It provides a lot of easy-drinking appeal. -S.S.

abv: 14.6% **Price: \$19**

Liberty Lake 2011 Merlot (Red Mountain). Barrel aromas are out front with notes of wood spice, vanilla and cocoa followed by dark cherries and herb, starting to show a bit of age. The palate is fruit filled but shows the restraint of the vintage. The oak seems a bit overweighted. -S.S. abv: 13.8% **Price:** \$25

GRENACHE

92 Kerloo 2014 Upland Vineyard Grenache (Snipes Mountain). All aged in neutral hogsheads and puncheons, this wine displays mesmerizingly pure laser-focused aromas of raspberry, kirsch, white pepper, lemon zest, fresh flowers and dried herb. The palate brings a dazzling sense of freshness and purity-like drinking a bowl of fresh fruit. A velvety texture only adds to the intrigue. It's a sensational effort. Editors' Choice. -S.S.

abv: 13.7% **Price:** \$40

Palencia 2014 Grenache (Yakima Valley). Palencia 2014 Orenaem , ...
Light aromas of raspberry, coriander, vanilla and barrel spice are followed by ripe rich red-fruit flavors that glide on the finish. A pillowy mouthfeel only heightens the interest. —S.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$36**

Ott & Murphy 2013 Sugarloaf Vineyard Grenache (Rattlesnake Hills). Intriguing aromas of fresh herb, potpourri and red fruit are followed by juicy but restrained raspberry flavors. It shows a lovely sense of balance, tapering slightly toward the finish. -S.S.

abv: 13% **Price: \$28**

Rocky Point 2014 Boushey Vineyard Gre-ROCKY POINT ZUIA BOOSILS, nache (Columbia Valley). Bright aromas of raspberry, cherry and orange peel are followed by

full-throttle flavors that still display a sense of elegance. It shows some warmth on the finish. -S.S. abv: 15.2% Price: \$48/500 ml

Ryan Patrick 2013 Reserve Northridge Vine-yard Grenache (Wahluke Slope). This wine is made in a ripe forward style, with lightly volatile aromas of apple, plum and dark raspberries. It's full bodied and pulls no punches as generous red and black-fruit flavors with cocoa accents show some warmth on the finish. -S.S.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$35

SYRAH

Dusted Valley 2014 Tall Tales Stoney Vine Vineyard Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). Coming from the winery's estate vineyard in The Rocks District, this aromatic brooder shows notes of crushed flowers, wet stone, orange peel, brown stems and dark fruit, along with lightly smoked meat accents. The palate boasts generous fruit and savory flavors that linger on the finish. -S.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$60**

Kerloo 2014 Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). This wine mostly hails from Les Collines, with a splash of fruit from Upland Vineyard (12%) rounding it out. Aged in neutral oak, it displays brooding aromas of black pepper, plum, smoked meat, parsley and fresh violets. The plum and savory flavors bring a rich textured feel all the while displaying exquisite freshness. -S.S.

abv: 13.8% **Price:** \$40

Kerloo 2014 Les Collines Syrah (Walla Walla ✓ Valley). Fermented with 100% stems and aged in neutral French oak, this textbook example of this top Syrah site brings aromas of smoked meat, purple fruit, crushed violets and fresh parsley along with other green herbs. The palate's über-fresh fruit and savory flavors are supported by tart bright acids. This one will only get better with some bottle age and will truly shine at the dinner table. Best from 2022 through 2030. Cellar Selection. -S.S.abv: 13.8% **Price: \$40**

Palencia 2014 Syrah (Yakima Valley). For full review see page 93.

abv: 14.9%

Saviah 2014 Reserve Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). A blend of Funk (60%) and Watermill vineyards-both in The Rocks, this wine opens with brooding aromas of crushed flowers, plum, coffee, funk and tapenade, along with meaty undertones. The palate is soft and silky but full in feel, providing a lot of texture that keeps the interest high. The finish lingers. -S.S.

abv: 14.7% **Price: \$45**

Dusted Valley 2013 Scannel (Columbia Valley). The aromas are bright, with Dusted Valley 2013 Stained Tooth Syrah notes of huckleberry, blueberry, dried violets, orange

peel, olive and moist earth. The palate is brings an elegant styling, full of fruit and savory flavors with light meaty streaks running throughout. -S.S.

abv: 14.9% **Price:** \$36

Ott & Murphy 2013 Boushey Vineyard Syrah (Yakima Valley). Aromas of mineral, dried herb and plum are followed by fruit flavors that display depth and purity. It shows a lovely sense of elegance. -S.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$36

Chelan). The aromas are enticing, with Tildio 2013 Estate Grown Syrah (Lake notes of dark plum, clove and vanilla, with the latter becoming more prominent over time. The fruit and barrel flavors show a sense of poise and polish. The oak seems a bit heavy handed at times but there's plenty of delicious fruit underneath. -S.S.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$38

Airfield Estates 2014 Syrah (Yakima Valley). The aromas are quite light, while the purple-fruit flavors are sappy and generous. If the aromas start to express themselves it could move up a notch. —S.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$18**

Boomtown 2014 Syrah (Columbia Valley). Boomtown 2014 Sylun (Communication Plans Boomtown August 1997) Dark berry, huckleberry, wood spice and cocoa aromas are followed by palate-coating blue and purple-fruit flavors. -S.S.

abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$19

Hawkins Cellars 2014 Reserve Syrah (Columbia Valley). The aromas are light, with notes of baking spice and black and blue fruit. Tart cherry flavors linger on the finish. -S.S.

abv: 14.6% **Price:** \$36

RED BLENDS

93 Latta 2013 Latta Latta (Columbia Valley). A new offering from this winery, this wine is a blend of 58% Grenache, 23% Syrah and 19% Mourvèdre hailing from Upland and Freewater Rocks vineyards. It brings mesmerizingly pure aromas of kirsch, white pepper, boysenberry, black plum and raspberry, along with a hint of barrel spice. The flavors show depth and texture, with coffee notes lingering on the finish. It's a stunner, especially at this price. Editors' Choice. -S.S.

abv: 14.1% Price: \$30

Dusted Valley 2013 Wallywood (Columbia Valley). A blend of Syrah (62%), Petite Sirah (25%) and Mourvèdre, this no-holds-barred wine offers aromas of potpourri, orange peel, peppery spices and dark fruit. It's ripe and full bodied with a finish that lingers. —S.S.

Price: \$42 abv: 15.7%

Gård 2014 Vaucluse Lawrence Vineyards (Columbia Valley). A blend of Syrah (68%), Grenache (29%) and Viognier, this wine brings pungent, directly appealing aromas of smoked meat, blue fruit, black olive, orange peel and high-toned flowers. The blue and black-fruit and smoked-meat flavors are silky and well constructed with a finish that lingers. Editors' Choice. —S.S.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.7%

Dusted Valley 2014 Squirrel Tooth Alice Red Mourvèdre (63%), Grenache (27%) and Syrah. The aromas pop, with notes of freshly ground black pepper, black fruit and herb. The palate is action packed with juicy dark-fruit flavors that stretch out on the finish. -S.S.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$39

Forgeron 2013 Façon Rouge (Columbia Valley). This wine is just under half Syrah with the balance near equally split between Mourvèdre and Grenache. Peppery spices and sappy dark-fruit aromas are followed by juicy dark-fruit flavors that persist. It shows a very pretty styling. —S.S.

abv: 14.4% **Price: \$35**

Palencia 2014 Casa Amarilla (Yakima Valley). Grenache makes up 60% of this wine with Syrah (30%) and Mourvèdre rounding it out. Light aromas of exotic barrel spice, herb and dark fruit are followed by rich lusciously textured cherry flavors that coat the palate from end to end. One wants a bit more aromatically but the palate more than makes up the difference. -S.S.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$36

Saviah 2014 Une value nea read Valley). This wine is a blend of Cabernet Sau-Saviah 2014 Une Vallée Red Wine (Walla Walla vignon (56%), Merlot (33%) and Cabernet Franc. Aromas of milk chocolate, cherry, herb and moist earth give way to soft supple palate-coating fruit and barrel flavors. It shows a lot of elegance and refinement. Editors' Choice. -S.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$35

Airfield Estates 2014 Dauntless Red Wine (Yakima Valley). Merlot (73%) takes the lead on this wine, which is rounded out by Malbec (12%), Cabernet Sauvignon (7%), Petit Verdot (4%) and Cabernet Franc. Aromas of herb, barrel spice, pencil lead and red and black fruit are followed by plump yet elegant fruit flavors backed by chalky tannins. It shows a lot of restraint. -S.S. abv: 14.1%

Lauren Ashton Cellars 2013 Proprietor's Cuvée (Columbia Valley). Cabernet Sauvignon makes up over 70% of this blend with the balance Merlot, Petit Verdot and Malbec. It shows aromas of dark cherries, licorice and brooding black fruit that at times seems slightly dried out. The palate shows elegantly styled dark-fruit flavors that linger on the finish. —S.S.

abv: 14.6% Price: \$65

Disruption 2014 Red Wine (Washington). A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Malbec, this wine is fresh and fruit filled, with aromas and flavors of plum and black current, sprinkled with light barrel spices and mocha tones. It shows a lovely sense of balance and poise that kicks it up a notch. Best Buy. -S.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$15**

Lauren Ashton Cellars 2013 Cuvée Arlette (Columbia Valley). Principally Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon along with smidges of Malbec and Petit Verdot, this wine offers subdued aromas of dark coffee, herb, blackberry and graphite. The coffee and cherry flavors are lighter in style, tapering slightly toward the finish. —S.S. **abv:** 14.6% Price: \$55

Lauren Ashton Cellars 2013 Cuvée Estelle (Columbia Valley). Merlot (64%) takes the lead on this blend followed by Cabernet Sauvignon (27%) and Petit Verdot. Light aromas of red and black fruit and herb are followed by sweet cherry flavors. It shows a lot of elegance. -S.S.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$40

Ott & Murphy 2013 L'Entente (Columbia Valley). Syrah makes up three-quarters of this wine, with the balance Mourvèdre (20%) and Petit

Sirah. Lightly volatile aromas of cherry and black pepper are followed by elegantly styled plum and spice flavors. It provides a lot of intrigue. -S.S. ahv: 14% Price: \$41

Charles & Charles 2015 Syrah Post No. 35
Blend Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah (Columbia Valley). This 70-30 blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah brings fruit-filled aromas of plum, herb and cherry. It packs a mouthful of fruit flavors, with firm lightly astringent tannins providing support. It needs some time to stretch its legs. —S.S.

abv: 13.9% Price: \$14

Columbia Winery 2013 Legacy Red Blend (Horse Heaven Hills). Cabernet Sauvignon makes up just over two-thirds of this blend with the balance Merlot, Malbec, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Aromas of vanilla, cocoa, dill and cherry lead to restrained fruit and barrel flavors, with the tannins showing some grit. —S.S.

abv: 14.2%

Keira 2014 G-S-M (Columbia Valley). This wine is 60% Grenache, 35% Syrah and 5% Mourvèdre. Vanilla aromas are prominent along with prune and other dried fruit. Fruit and barrel



flavors intermingle on the palate, with the fruit seeming dried out. -S.S.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$28

Ryan Patrick 2015 Redhead Red (Columbia Valley). Aroma of freshly cut red apple, raspberry and cherry are followed by sweet jammy red and black-fruit flavors. It goes down easily. —S.S. abv: 13.5%

Price: \$15

Aromas of dried fruit and barrel spice lead to tart, slightly dilute seeming fruit flavors backed by lightly gritty tannins. It seems a bit evolved for its age. —S.S.

abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$28

IDAHO

RIESLING

Ste. Chapelle 2015 Special Harvest Riesling (Snake River Valley). For full review see page 104. Best Buy.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$10

Cinder 2015 Off-dry Riesling (Snake River Valley). Vibrant but slightly reduced aromas of canned pear, jasmine, flowers and peach are followed by off-dry-leaning sweeter fruit flavors. It brings appeal but needs more acid to stand it up. —S.S. abv: 12.2% Price: \$18

Sawtooth 2015 Estate Grown Riesling (Snake River Valley). Bright aromas of honeysuckle, honey and ripe peach lead to mediumsweet fruit flavors. The concentration isn't all there but there's still much to enjoy. —S.S.

abv: 12.3% **Price:** \$13

Snake River 2013 Arena Valley Vineyard Riesling (Snake River Valley). Aromas of honeyed peach and lime leaf are followed by off-dry flavors. It needs more acid to stand it up. Best Buy. —S.S. abv: 12.1% Price: \$10

CHARDONNAY

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2014 Single Vineyard Chardonnay (Snake River Valley). Toast, lime and nut butter aromas lead to full-bodied but well-balanced kiwi and pineapple flavors that carry on the finish. The concentration wavers at times but there's plenty to hold interest. —S.S.

abv: 13.4% **Price:** \$18

Sawtooth 2014 Estate Grown Chardonnay (Snake River Valley). The aromas are generous, with notes of red apple, melon, pear and spice. The palate is lightly creamy in feel, very varietal, with a kiss of oak providing accents. Best Buy.—S.S. abv: 13.9%

Price: \$12

Sawtooth 2013 Estate Grown Chardonnay (Snake River Valley). Aromas of butter, pear and pineapple are followed by a somewhat lightweight but still flavorful palate. Tropical flavors linger on the finish. The concentration doesn't all seem there but what is provides plenty of interest. —S.S. abv: 13.5%

Price: \$13

SYRAH

Cinder 2014 Syrah (Snake River Valley). The aromas are generous, with notes of blueberries and cream along with an herbal grace note. The flavors show a fine sense of purity along with an appealing texture. The oak shows a bit prominently at times. —S.S.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$29

Telaya 2014 Syrah (Snake River Valley). This wine provides plenty of aromatic intrigue, with notes of wet stone, black pepper and umami. The savory and citrus flavors are quite restrained, showing a lot of elegance. —S.S.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$30

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2014 Single Vineyard Syrah (Eagle Foothills). One of the first bottles to bear the name of this new growing region, the aromas are light with notes of baking spice, cherry, vanilla and Red Vines. The fruit flavors are sweet and supple, backed by lightly grainy tannins. —S.S. abv: 14.6% Price: \$30

RED BLENDS

Cinder NV Cabernet Sauvignon 67% Merlot 19% Malbec 14% (Snake River Valley). The aromas are fruit forward and pleasing, with notes of plum, spice, tangerine peel, dark fruit and green herbs. The palate brings a sense of elegance and subtlety, showing a deft touch. —S.S.

abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$29

Telaya 2014 Turas (Snake River Valley). This wine opens with notes of cedar, toast, black olive and smoke, with the Syrah showing prominently. The palate is quite restrained in style, with tart acids framing the fruit and savory flavors nicely. Floral and orange peel flavors round out the finish.—S.S. abv: 13.9%

Price: \$32

3 Horse Ranch Vineyards 2013 Syrah 80% Mourvèdre 20% (Snake River Valley). Unusual aromas of freshly rubbed herb, peppery spice, plum and pencil eraser lead to a supple full-feeling palate with a coffee-filled finish that lingers. It has nuances that hold the attention. —S.S.

abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$23

Sawtooth 2013 Estate Grown Skyline (Snake River Valley). Dried black and red-currant, green herb and vanilla aromas are followed by plummy fruit flavors that provide appeal. Best Buy. -S.S.

abv: 13.8% **Price:** \$12

Williamson Vineyard 2012 Harvest Moon Red (Snake River Valley). This wine is a blend of 40% each Mourvèdre and Syrah along with 15% Petite Sirah and 5% Viognier. Aromas of orange zest, flowers, raw meat and peppery spices lead to a soft palate, full of citrus flavors that seem a bit out of balance but that still provide intrigue. —S.S. abv: 14.1% Price: \$20

OTHER RED WINES

Telaya 2014 Mourvèdre (Snake River Valley). The varietal is unmistakable, with generous amounts of freshly ground black pepper along with lemon twist, herb and raw meat. The medium-bodied palate brings more of the same, with fruit and savory flavors that provide intrigue. —S.S. abv: 14% Price: \$35

Huston 2013 Merlot (Snake River Valley).
Pleasing aromas of raspberry jam and spice

lead to soft plump raspberry and cranberry flavors. It's fruit forward and brings a lot of enjoyment. —S.S. abv: 14.2% Price: \$27

Bitner 2012 Erletxe Tempranillo (Snake River Valley). Brooding aromas of earth, tobacco, spice and red fruit lead to plentiful savory tobacco and mesquite flavors. It seems a bit dried out. —S.S. abv: 13.2%

Price: \$27

Sawtooth 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Snake River Valley). The aromas bring notes of herb, sweet tobacco and ash. The plum flavors are tart and full in feel, with the tannins giving a (quite) chalky squeeze. —S.S.

abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$16

87 Snake River 2012 Arena Valley Vineyard Cabernet Franc (Snake River Valley). Aromas of dried and fresh herbs, whole green pepper and tobacco lead to tart savory cranberry and citrus flavors. It trails toward the finish. —S.S.

abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$20

Williamson Vineyard 2011 Reserve Petite Sirah (Snake River Valley). The aromas of tilled soil, white pepper, lemon grass and citrus provide intrigue. The palate brings a big squeeze of dry tannins along with tart acids. —S.S.

abv: NA Price: \$35

Williamson Vineyard 2012 Sangiovese (Snake River Valley). Aromas of herb, tobacco, tire rubber and leather lead to soft-feeling citrus and savory flavors. There are some interesting things going on but the variety seems hard to find. —S.S. abv: 14.4% Price: \$18

NEW YORK

CHARDONNAY

Hound's Tree 2015 Chardonnay (North Fork of Long Island). Fresh and fragrant, this luscious Chardonnay bursts with flavors of pink grapefruit, lemon and apple. It's ripe and yielding in texture but pertly balanced in acidity, finishing on a lingering bite of astringency. Drink now through 2020. —A.I.

abv: 13.4%

Price: \$24

One Woman 2015 Chardonnay (North Fork of Long Island). Fresh white grapefruit and peach flavors abound from nose to finish in this elegantly balanced Chardonnay. It's juicy and quaffable with a rich, expansive mouthfeel, yet nuanced by subtle hints of mineral and toast. Enjoy now through 2020. —A.I.

abv: 12.8% **Price: \$28**

Glenora 2015 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Ripe red apple, lemon and caramelized sugar scent this enticingly fragrant Chardonnay. On the palate, fresh apple and citrus flavors are backed by a rich slightly clingy backdrop of vanilla cream. A fresh hit of lime and hints of wood and spice mark a moderately long finish. Drink now through 2019. -A.I.

abv: 13% Price: \$16

- Kontokosta 2014 Orient Chardonnay (North Fork of Long Island). Buoyantly fragrant, this voluptuous Chardonnay bursts of mango, guava and berry aromas. The palate is a bit more subdued, suggesting fresh apple and pear. Fruity, fresh and uncomplicated, it's balanced neatly by a flash of acidity on the midpalate. Drink now through 2019. -A.I. abv: 13.5% **Price: \$22**
- Rooster Hill 2015 Chardonnay (Finger Rooster Hill 2013 Similar to Cakes). While the nose is intensely oaky, wafting of dark toast, smoked nuts and spice, the palate of this Chardonnay is surprisingly fresh with crisp apple and pear flavors. It's a rounded, voluptuous wine that neatly balances the richness and complexity of oak against fruit. Drink now through 2021. -A.I.

abv: 13.8% **Price:** \$16

- Standing Stone 2015 Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Judiciously balanced notes of toast, spice and vanilla augment crisp red apple and lemon tones in this brisk Chardonnay. Cutting minerality on the midpalate lends an invigorating freshness through the finish. Drink now through 2019. -A.I. abv: 12.3% **Price:** \$16
- Chateau Lafayette Reneau 2014 Proprietor's Reserve Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Oak tones of spice, smoke and toasted wood show prominently on this Chardonnay, juxtaposed against muted apple and pear flavors. Glimpses of pretty

white floral and citrus lend freshness to the palate, amplified by zesty acidity and a sexy tinge of vanilla on the finish. Of the two bottles received for sampling, there was noticeable bottle variation with one showing signs of premature maturation. Drink now through 2019. —A.I.

abv: 12.5% **Price: \$17**

Jamesport 2014 Estate Chardonnay (North Fork of Long Island). Waxy citrus peels and pressed apples waft on the nose of this Chardonnay. Flavors of apple and pear cider are a bit muted, but it's elegantly composed, marked by brisk acidity and a pleasantly bitter tone on the finish. Drink now through 2020. —A.I.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$22**

Lamoreaux Landing 2014 Reserve Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Fresh lemon perfume juxtaposes delicate toast and spice notes on this briskly balanced yet full-bodied Chardonnay. It's not deeply penetrating, but crisp apple and pear flavors brighten the palate. The finish lingers on a silken vanilla tone. Drink now through 2021. -A.I. **abv:** 12.9% **Price: \$25**

Stony Lonesome 2015 Estate Reserve Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Intensely fruity, almost tropical, on the nose, this juicy Chardonnay is chock full of fresh pineapple, melon and mango flavors. While not complex, it's a fun, widely appealing wine marked by bright acidity and luscious mouthfeel. Enjoy now through 2019. -A.I.

abv: 12.7% **Price: \$16**

Treleaven 2013 Silver Lining Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Dusty mineral tones mingle amidst zesty lemon and apple in this particularly light-bodied white. Zippy and brisk, it's a lean but properly concentrated Chardonnay that finishes with vigor and vibe. Drink now through 2019. -A.I. abv: 11.2%

PINOT GRIS/GRIGIO

Thirsty Owl Wine Company 2015 Pinot Gris Thirsty UWI WINE COMPANY, ——
(Finger Lakes). Pristinely fresh apple and pears are cutting and crisp in this dry Pinot Gris. Texturally, it's luscious and expansive, yet maintains a keen balance of acidity as well as a crisp mineral finish. Enjoy now through 2019. -A.I.

abv: 13% **Price: \$15**

- Fresh apple, lemon and pear flavors are Ventosa 2015 Pinot Gris (Finger Lakes). accented by a hint of smoked nuts in this bold, fullbodied Pinot Gris. Rich and a bit creamy in mouthfeel yet balanced briskly, it's a satisfying white with wide pairing appeal. Drink now through 2019. -A.I. abv: 13.6%
- Martha Clara 2015 Island Series Pinot Grigio (North Fork of Long Island). Hints of caramelized sugar lend warmth to this fresh fruity wine full

of nectarine and grapefruit flavors. It's rich in body with a luscious, mouthfilling cling off set by sunny tangerine acidity. Enjoy now through 2018. -A.I. **abv:** 13% **Price: \$22**

Billsboro 2015 Sawmill Creek Vineyards Pinot Gris (Finger Lakes). Savory, smoky tones lend a shadowy feel to fresh apple and pear flavors in this dry medium-bodied Pinot Gris. It's not deeply concentrated in fruit but refreshing and easy going. Drink now through 2018. —A.I.

abv: 12.6% **Price: \$16**

86 Glenora 2015 Pinot Gris (Finger Lakes).

Zesty red apple and lemon notes are marked by touches of smoke and nuts in this easygoing Pinot Gris. Dry in style, it's not deeply concentrated on the palate but refreshingly citrusy. The finish is brisk and clean. -A.I.

abv: 12.5% **Price: \$15**

GEWÜRZTRAMINER

Standing Stone 2015 Gewürztraminer (Finger Lakes). Bursts of fresh lychee and pink grapefruit are tinged with lemongrass and rose petals on the nose of this classically perfumed Gewürztraminer. It's bold in body and alcohol, and a bit dense in mouthfeel, yet balanced tautly with zesty acidity and a shimmer of salty mineral on the finish. It's a lovely wine now but should hold nicely till at least 2021. —A.I.

abv: 13 7% **Price: \$19**

Treleaven 2013 Gewurztraminer (Finger Lakes). From delicate grapefruit to lychee and guava, fruit flavors gain concentration from nose to palate in this rich almost tropical Gewürztraminer. Bold and lusciously textured, it's slightly warming on the palate yet balanced, finishing with sizzles of spice and lemon-lime acidity. Drink now through 2020. —A.I.

abv: 13.9% Price: \$17

Lamoreaux Landing 2015 Gewürztraminer (Finger Lakes). Voluptuous and a bit brawny, this ebulliently perfumed Gewürztraminer is hardly a wall flower. It's lavishly fruity, bursting of sun-kissed grapefruit, lychee and white-peach flavors. Yielding acidity and a richly dense mouthfilling texture leave a lingering kiss of warmth on the finish. Drink now through 2019. -A.I. **abv:** 13.9% **Price: \$15**

Thirsty Owl Wine Company 2015 Gewürztraminer (Finger Lakes). While ripe nectarine and grapefruit notes are bold on the nose, the palate of this medium-bodied Gewürztraminer is a bit demure. It's a refreshing easy-drinking white, however, offering delicate hints of lychee, citrus and guava flavor. Drink now through 2019. -A.I.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$19

GRÜNER VELTLINER

Dr. Konstantin Frank 2015 Grüner Veltliner (Finger Lakes). Asian pear and white-grapefruit notes are cutting and spry from nose to palate in this light-footed Grüner Veltliner. While delicate in concentration, invigorating acidity and brisk texture invigorate the palate. A hint of smoke meanders through a long finish. Drink now through 2019. -A.I. abv: 12% **Price:** \$15

Fulkerson 2014 William Vigne Grüner Velt-Fulkerson 2014 William vig... It is tone to this and alpine breeze lend a cool refreshing tone to this zesty Grüner Veltliner. While delicate in body and concentration, it's spry lime and grapefruit flavors are invigorating. Drink now through 2019. —A.I. **abv:** 12% **Price: \$14**

One Woman 2015 Grüner Veltliner (North Fork of Long Island). Dusty mineral tones accent fresh apple, pear and green plum in this fullbodied Grüner Veltliner. Its rippling mouthfilling texture is pleasing, offset pertly by zesty lime acidity on the finish. Enjoy now through 2019. -A.I.

abv: 13.1% **Price: \$25**

Lamoreaux Landing 2015 Grüner Veltliner (Finger Lakes). Delicate but savory apple and pear aromas extend to the palate of this big-bodied Grüner Veltliner. While texturally bold, dense even, the palate is anchored neatly by brisk acidity. Fruit flavors are not deeply concentrated but it's a satisfyingly rich wine to enjoy now through 2018. —A.I.

abv: 13.2% Price: \$20

BACO NOIR

Hudson-Chatham 2014 Middlehope Casscles Vinevards Baco Noir (Hudson River Region).

This perfumed floral red made from Baco Noir, an underappreciated French-American hybrid grape, offers surprising depth of complexity and finesse. Hints of dark char, porcini and spice mingle amidst prettier tones of violet and black cherry. It's crisp and lively on the palate, edged by layers of fine feathery tannins and a crush of granite on the finish. Ready to drink now, but tuck a few bottles away to enjoy from now until 2022 if you can. Editors' Choice. —A.I.

abv: 12% **Price:** \$25

Hudson-Chatham 2014 Old Vines Masson Place Vineyard Pulteney Farm Baco Noir (New York). Lusciously rich black-cherry preserves are juxtaposed by a puckery tartness in this structurally bold Baco Noir. It's rich and velvety on the palate with lingering tones of spice, vanila and wet earth on the finish. Drink now through 2020. —A.I. **abv:** 12% **Price: \$25**

Hudson-Chatham 2014 Reserve Casscles Vineyards Baco Noir (New York). Despite its

delicate body, there's a fleshy unctuous feel to this forward red. Bright black-cherry and plum flavors are straightforward yet pristine on the palate, edged by hints of granite and toast. Taut, medium-grained tannins mark a moderately long finish. Drink now through 2019. —A.I.

abv: 11.5% Price: \$25

CABERNET FRANC

Damiani 2013 Barrel Select Cabernet Franc (Finger Lakes). Ample toast, cinnamon and cedar gild this intensely ripe concentrated Cabernet Franc. It's a lusciously textured wine, full of fleshy blackberry and plum flavors. Velvety tannins, brisk red-currant acidity and meandering traces of smoked meat and game contribute finesse and depth. It's ready to drink now but should improve further through 2023. -A.I.

abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$43

Harbes Family Vineyard 2014 Cabernet Franc (North Fork of Long Island). Wisps of thyme and sage lend herbaceousness to this otherwise plump, densely fruity wine. It's chock full of luscious black-cherry and plum flavors, held taut by firm tannins and crisp cranberry acidity. Velvety and smooth, it's a pleasurable wine to savor through a long spiced Graham-cracker finish. Enjoy now through 2025. Editors' Choice. —A.I.

abv: 13% **Price: \$29**

Paumanok 2014 Cabernet Franc (North Fork of Long Island). Spice and green pepper notes accentuate ripe luscious blackberry and cassis flavors in this classically inspired Cabernet Franc. Fine tannins and fresh cutting acidity lend vibe to the midpalate. Fleshy and ripe yet pleasantly herbaceous, it's ready to drink now but should hold well through 2022. —A.I.

abv: 12.5% **Price: \$28**

Red Newt Cellars 2012 Glacier Ridge Vineyards Cabernet Franc (Finger Lakes). Richly extracted black cherry and cassis flavors flood the palate of this bold bruising Cabernet Franc. It's a nuanced wine despite its voluptuousness, accented by hints of leather, spice and lavender. Tannins are big and unyielding now but ripe enough to integrate with age. Hold till 2020. Cellar Selection. -A.I. abv: 13.9% **Price: \$35**

Anthony Nappa 2015 Bordo Cabernet Franc (North Fork of Long Island). Anthony Nappa's Bordo highlights Cabernet Franc at both its most savage and feral, but also vulnerable state. Black-cherry and plum flavors are plump and fleshy on the palate but layered in dark shadowy swathes of char, smoke, bramble and herb. Bold and expansive on the palate, it finishes softly, wrapped in fine feathery tannins. It's ready to drink now but should hold well through at least 2024. -A.I.

abv: 13.7% **Price: \$20**

Hound's Tree 2015 Cabernet Franc (North Hound's Iree 2013 Case......
Fork of Long Island). Exotic streaks of licorice and cinnamon spice bolster this full-bodied forward Cabernet Franc. Ripe blackberry and cherry flavors are approachable and plump yet elegantly anchored by fine firm tannins and brisk acidity. It's ready to drink now but should hold well through 2020. —A.I.

abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$28

coconut waft boldly from nose to finish on this lavishly oaked Cabernet Franc. There's plenty of concentrated red-cherry-preserve flavor on the palate too though, tinged by savory touches of herb and bramble. It's rich and full bodied with firm tannins bracing the finish. Drink now through 2023. —A.I. abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$20

McGregor 2013 Reserve Cabernet Franc (Finger Lakes). Slightly muted tones of black cherry and plum preserves are accented by wet soil, mushroom and coconut in this rustic yet elegant Cabernet Franc. Ripe fruit is contrasted by vibrant acidity, rigid tannins and a pleasant bite of astringency that persists through the finish. Drink now through 2022. —A.I.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$25

MERLOT

Paumanok 2010 Tuthill's Lane Vineyard Merlot (North Fork of Long Island). Intense blackberry and plum perfume burst from the glass of this bold concentrated red. It's a rich lavishly textured wine but keenly balanced in acidity and gilded by subtle layers of spice and toast. While delicious already, it's still brawny in its youth and should meld out gorgeously with more maturation. Drink 2021 through 2026. Cellar Selection. -A.I.

abv: 13.9% **Price: \$75**

Paumanok 2013 Grand vindos Fork of Long Island). A marker of Long Island's exceptional 2013 vintage, this exceptionally ripe yet complexed and balanced Merlot offers long aging potential. It's deeply concentrated in fruit, boasting ruddy, ripe streaks of black cherry and plum off set by brisk acidity and fine, penetrating tannins. Shades of dried herb, autumn leaves and mushroom lend finesse and elegance. It's tasty now but should improve further from 2020 through 2025. Cellar Selection. —A.I.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$40

Keuka Spring 2015 Merlot (Finger Lakes). Gorgeous rose, plum and bramble notes perfume this exceptionally fragrant Merlot. Its complexity extends through the palate with bright cherry and plum flavors bolstered by savory nuances of olive and dried herb. Crisp acidity and fine persistent tannins guide a long finish. Editors' Choice. -A.I. **Price: \$19**

Paumanok 2013 Merlot (North Fork of Long Island). Paumanok's standard-label 2013 Merlot shares much of the same ripe ruddy fruit intensity of the Grand Vintage bottling. Lighter in body and a touch crisper on the palate, it's an elegant and nuanced yet more approachable wine. Taut with tannins and still tightly wound, it will still benefit from cellaring through 2022. Cellar Selection.—A.I. abv: 12.5% Price: \$28

Hound's Tree 2015 Merlot (North Fork of Long Island). Intense aromas of vanilla and sweet spice waft throughout this ripe voluptuous Merlot. Ruddy rich flavors of plum preserves and black-cherry cola penetrate deeply on the palate edged by fine persistent tannins. Bright cranberry acidity lends freshness, lingering nicely on the finish. Drink now through 2023.—A.I.

abv: 13.4% **Price:** \$28

RED BLENDS

Paumanok 2014 Assemblage (North Fork of Long Island). While a shade brighter and brisker than the 2013 Assemblage, this gorgeously composed Bordeaux blend offers invigorating bursts of blackberry and plum flavors nuanced with spice, vanilla and fur. It's full bodied and texturally quite satisfying, yet stately, framed by crisp cranberry acidity and penetrating tannins. It's delicious now, but should gain further complexity and depth from 2020–2030. Cellar Selection. —A.I.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$50

Paumanok 2013 Assemblage (North Fork of Long Island). Decadent yet finessed, this intensely ripe, concentrated wine brims with fleshy flavors of black plum and cassis. Tart cranberry acidity and complexities of olive, savory spice and granite push the palate into greater depths. The finish is long, marked by fine firm tannins. It's lovely already, but should meld beautifully from 2020–2030 and further. Cellar Selection. —A.I.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$50

Anthony Nappa 2013 Tocca Ferro Reserve (North Fork of Long Island). Whiffs of cinnamon, savory spice and cedar accentuate this intensely ripe, almost pulpy bend of Cabernet Franc and Malbec. It's richly deeply concentrated yet anchored by a backbone of pert cassis acidity and fine penetrating tannins. The finish lingers long on a scintillating thread of vanilla spice. —A.I.

abv: 13.8% **Price:** \$50

Barnstormer 2015 Proprietor Red Cabernet Franc-Merlot (Finger Lakes). Blackberry and bramble tones are laced with cinnamon and vanilla on this perfumed blend of Cabernet Franc and Merlot. It's ripe in fruit flavor, but sprightly in body and acidity, giving it a lean refreshing demeanor. Fine tannins and warming vanilla and spice notes linger through a long finish. —A.I.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$23

Billsboro 2014 Sawmill Creek Vineyards Cabernet-Syrah (Finger Lakes). Savory slightly rustic tones of forest floor and bramble lend complexity to this elegant blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Peppery spice and dried herb flavors meld into tart red cherry and plum on the palate. It's rich in body yet balanced neatly with a taut frame of acidity and fine persistent tannins. Drink now through 2021. —A.I.

abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$28

Paumanok 2014 Festival Merlot-Cabernet (North Fork of Long Island). While it shares the same ripe rich fruit intensity of Paumanok's more expensive reds, there's a distinctly green tone to the Festival marked by shades of herb, bramble and green pepper. It's approachably juicy, yet complex, with pert acidity and a tight frame of tannins. Drink now through 2021. —A.I.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$20

Treleaven 2014 Meritage (New York). A whiff of violet florals accents ripe black cherry and plum in this luscious silken-touched red. It's fleshy and juicy on the palate but maintains a spry zesty backbone of acidity. Robust yet integrated tannins frame a lingering finish. Enjoy now through 2025.—A.I.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$26

Hudson-Chatham 2013 Empire Reserve (New York). Rich and languid on the palate, this is an inviting approachable red blend made from roughly equal proportions of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Baco Noir. Ripe red-cherry and plum flavors are offset by sunny cassis acidity and fine-grained tannins. The finish is marked by pleasant notes of savory herb. Drink now through 2021. —A.I.

abv: 12% **Price:** \$25

Rooster Hill 2015 Meritage (New York). Fleshy black-plum and cherry flavors are cloaked in layers of dark toast, smoke and spice in this boldly structured red. A blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, it neatly balances Merlot's softness with crisp refreshingly herbal expressions of Cabernet. The finish is marked by bramble and elegant fine-grained tannins. Drink now through 2022.—A.I.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$23

Heron Hill 2014 Eclipse (New York). Primary flavors of luscious cherry, berry and plum reverberate throughout this fleshy red blend. Sunny acidity and a silken rounded mouthfeel lend to a juicy and easy-drinking demeanor. Fine but persistent tannins lend structure to a vanilla-spiced finish. Drink now through 2019. —A.I.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$17

CANADA

RIESLING

Cave Spring 2014 CSV Estate Bottled Riesling (Beamsville Bench). There is a refreshing minerality underscoring this tightly wound wine. Fruit flavors of grapefruit, lime and white melon carry a hint of spice. There's penetrating acidity, only slightly muted by the 13 g/L of residual sugar. Cave Spring Cellars. —P.G.

abv: 11.5% **Price:** \$26

Cave Spring 2014 Riesling (Niagara Peninsula). Slightly spritzy, this zesty effort puts a mineral base under flavors of fresh lime and mixed citrus. There is enough residual sugar—18 g/L—to offset the bracing acids, without turning the wine overly sweet. Cave Spring Cellars. —P.G.

abv: 11% **Price:** \$15

Cave Spring 2014 Estate Bottled Riesling (Beamsville Bench). This tastes quite dry, though the residual sugar comes in at 12 g/L, enough to tilt some Rieslings toward off dry. The fruit is a bit thin, with flavors of celery and white peach. The mouthfeel is refreshing, with wet stone minerality and plenty of tart acids. Cave Spring Cellars. —P.G. abv: 11%

SAUVIGNON BLANC

Township 7 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Okanagan Valley). For full review see page 98. Editors' Choice.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$18

Township 7 2015 Blue Terrace Vineyard Reserve Sauvignon Blanc (Okanagan Valley). Sourced from a single vineyard on Oliver's North Bench, this was fermented and aged in one-quarter new French oak barrels. The time in oak has somewhat muted the snappy vitality of the fruit (some tasters might argue it has simply rounded it off). Grassy hints of fresh asparagus remain, and with peppery herb, juicy gooseberry and citrus peel. Township 7 Vineyards & Winery. —P.G.

abv: 13.6% **Price:** \$23

PINOT GRIS

91 Township 7 2015 Naramata Estate Vineyard Reserve Pinot Gris (Okanagan Valley). Rich and creamy, this barrel-fermented (in neutral oak) wine has appealing flavors of pear tart, grapefruit and coconut cream pie. The bracing acids compensate for all the lush creamy flavor, and the result is darn near irresistible. Township 7 Vineyards & Winery. —P.G.

abv: 13.2% **Price:** \$23

90 Laughing Stock 2015 Pinot Gris (Okanagan Valley). This wine may surprise you with its rich round full-bodied fruit. It's not the racy, high-acid style you might expect from a BC winery-rather it pumps up the flavors with pear, peach and papaya front and center, clean and fresh. Fermentation took place in a mix of oak, concrete egg and steel. Laughing Stock. **Best Buy.**—P.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$15

CHARDONNAY

Burrowing Owl 2015 Chardonnay (Okanagan Valley). Half barrel fermented, and all oakaged (roughly two-thirds new), this cloaks the lush fruit flavors of pineapple, peach and nectarine in a wash of caramel. The wine remains well proportioned, with acids and barrel toast playing a supporting role. Burrowing Owl. —P.G.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$30

Foxtrot 2014 Four Shadows Chardonnay (Okanagan Valley). This barrel-fermented Chardonnay offers subtle layers of flavor, weaving hints of leafy green herb, lemon skin and oil, together with suggestions of white peach. It's structured for drinking now and through 2021, with an elegant frame and modest proportions. Foxtrot Vineyards. —P.G.

abv: 13.4% **Price:** \$41

RED BLENDS

94 Laughing Stock 2014 Portfolio (Okanagan Valley). Portfolio is a full-on, five-grape, Bordeaux-style blend—half Merlot. Dark, dense and textural, it's loaded with blackberry and black cherry fruit, swathed in baking spices, cinnamon and mocha. The tannins are beautifully managed, and it should drink magnificently through the mid-2020s. Laughing Stock. *Cellar Selection*. —P.G. abv: 14.9%

Price: \$40

Q2 Laughing Stock 2014 Blind Trust (Okanagan Valley). The impenetrably obscure label design makes this difficult to find, but once your hands are on the bottle, it's smooth sailing. A "second label" Bordeaux-style blend, this delicious, fruity and distinctive wine puts a wrap of tangy citrus around black cherry, coffee and licorice components. Malbec is the principal grape, with smaller amounts of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cab Franc. Laughing Stock. Editors' Choice. —P.G.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$25

92 Vanessa 2012 Meritage (Similkameen Valley). For full review see page 94. abv: 14.2% Price: \$32

Burrowing Owl 2013 Meritage (Okanagan Valley). A well-rounded, five-grape Bordeaux-style blend, the emphasis here is on forward-fruit flavors that mix tart berry with lemon and

orange-tinged acids. It's made for near-term drinking, a most pleasant wine, though without the gravitas for long cellaring. Burrowing Owl. —P.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$45

OTHER RED WINES

Vanessa 2012 Syrah (Similkameen Valley). For full review see page 90. Editors' Choice. abv: 14.5% Price: \$34

Burrowing Owl 2014 Malbec (Okanagan Valley). This delicious and distinctive take on the grape as a pure varietal impresses with its solid core of purple plum and blueberry fruit. Aromatic accents of lemon and green tea continue into the palate as well, and the lengthy finish is fresh and multi-dimensional. Burrowing Owl. Editors' Choice.—P.G.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$32

Burrowing Owl 2014 Cabernet Franc (Okanagan Valley). This pure varietal bottling spent 18 months in oak, emerging perfectly proportioned with deftly integrated flavors of berry and herb, and a touch of fresh snap peas. The tannins carry the characteristic green olive notes, and the finish offers the scent and flavor of ground coffee as well. Overall a very fine effort. Burrowing Owl. —P.G.

abv: 14.7% **Price:** \$34

Burrowing Owl 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Okanagan Valley). This hits the herbal side of the grape gently, with a solid base of black cherry. There's a nice suggestion of orange peel also, and the overall impression is of a complex, sophisticated, well-balanced but relatively light style, in keeping with the strengths of this northern climate. Drink now through 2025. Burrowing Owl. —P.G. aby: 14.5%

Burrowing Owl 2013 Merlot (Okanagan Valley). Smooth and fruity, yet complex and complete, this excellent wine offers ample acid and polished tannins around pretty red fruits. Notes of citrus and spice, tobacco and toast linger through a satisfying finish. Burrowing Owl.—P.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$32

Burrowing Owl 2014 Syrah (Okanagan Valley). The scents and overall sense of this wine point clearly to its varietal specificity, with smoky notes of tea leaf, coffee, umami and red licorice. The light fruit flavors are a tutti-frutti mix, and it's styled for immediate enjoyment. Drink now through 2022. Burrowing Owl.—P.G.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$34

CHILE

SAUVIGNON BLANC

Loma Larga 2016 Lomas del Valle Sauvignon Blanc (Casablanca Valley). Lime and greenapple aromas are tight and stony. Bright, juicy and chiseled on the palate, this tastes of wet stones, lime and bell pepper. Citrusy residual flavors along with a note of bitter citrus pith make for an honest finish. Winery Direct. —M.S.

abv: 13.2% **Price:** \$18

San Pedro 2016 Castillo de Molina Reserva Sauvignon Blanc (Elqui Valley). Pungent, pure aromas of citrus and tarragon are appealing. This feels upright and tangy, with bright, driving acidity. Grapefruit, lime and jalapeño flavors finish juicy, with leftover citrus notes and a dash of white pepper. Shaw-Ross International Importers. Best Buy.—M.S.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$11

Estampa 2015 Reserva Sauvignon Blanc (Colchagua Valley). A controlled mix of citrus and herbaceous aromas are what we've come to expect from Chilean Sauvignon Blanc. This one kicks into gear with slightly salty flavors of white grapefruit and lime. A crisp finish meets all norms. For what it's worth, this contains some Viognier and Chardonnay American Estates Wines, Inc. —M.S. abv: 13% Price: \$20

Leyda 2016 Reserva Sauvignon Blanc (Leyda Valley). Celery, lettuce and lime aromas are cool and green. This is showing tangy, snappy acidity in support of lime, tarragon, sage and scallion flavors. A fresh, racy finish is fitting. MundoVino—The Winebow Group. —M.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$16

Leyda 2014 Lot 4 Sauvignon Blanc (Leyda Valley). Briny, vegetal aromas of asparagus and jalapeño lead to a viscous palate with blazing coastal acidity. Flavors of lime and tangerine are offset by vegetal bell pepper and asparagus notes, while this feels round, oily and smooth on a finish with good acidic cut. Drink now. MundoVino–The Winebow Group. —M.S.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$40

Be Martino 2015 Legado Reserva Sauvignon Blanc (Casablanca Valley). Pungent briny citrus aromas announce a lean, tangy palate. This edgy SB features zesty, sharp citrus and green-herb flavors, which are typical for Casablanca. A dilute finish displays watered-down snap. Broadbent Selections, Inc. —M.S.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$20

Siegel 2016 Crucero Collection Sauvignon Blanc (Curicó Valley). A common mix of snappy citrus and green-herb aromas announce a chunky, still-vital palate with pink grapefruit, tan-

gerine and passion fruit flavors. A mild medium-acid finish suggests drinking this as soon as possible. Kysela Père et Fils.—M.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$13

Valdivieso 2015 Valley Selection Gran Reserva Sauvignon Blanc (Leyda Valley). Crisp aromas veer towards fresh bell pepper and tangerine peel. This feels minerally but also like extracted grape skins. Mixed citrus and green-herb flavors end with a stony lasting feel. Wine Bridge Imports. —M.S. abv: 12%

Price: \$17

DV: 12% Price: \$1

Viña Bisquertt 2016 La Joya Gran Reserva Sauvignon Blanc (Colchagua Valley). Citrusy aromas include pithy notes and a metallic hint of tin. This is more chunky in feel than tight, with moderate snap and acidity. Flavors of citrus fruits and green herbs end with mild acidity. Prestige Beverage Group. —M.S.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$15

Autoritas 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Central Valley). Dusty white-fruit and citrus aromas are more than adequate but nonspecific. This feels round, with salty citrus flavors. A modest finish is doing its best to stay fresh and vital. Pacific Highway Wines & Spirits. Best Buy. —M.S.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$10

Casas del Bosque 2015 Reserva Sauvignon Blanc (Casablanca Valley). Pungent pyrazine-heavy aromas of bell pepper and asparagus are typical for this winery. A chunky palate is oily in feel, while vegetal-leaning, green flavors of pickled citrus fruits end with a salty note. Southern Starz, Inc. —M.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$13

Blanc (Curicó Valley). Clean pear and apple aromas come in front of a citrusy palate with just enough shearing acidity to keep things balanced. Ringing, lasting lime and orange flavors are slightly briny, while this finishes solid and zesty. Apollo Fine Spirits.—M.S.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$12

Montes 2016 Classic Series Sauvignon Blanc (Aconcagua Costa). Cool-climate pyrazinic aromas are punchy and feline. This feels good but weaker and more dilute than in most years. Briny, pickled citrus flavors follow the nose, while this ends lean and green but solid enough. Guarachi Wine Partners. —M.S.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$13

Santa Rita 2015 120 Sauvignon Blanc (Colchagua Valley). For full review see page 104. Best Buy.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$8

Santa Carolina 2016 Reserva Sauvignon Blanc (Leyda Valley). Briny citrus and grapefruit aromas are controlled. This feels simple and a

bit hollow, while pyrazine-based flavors of grape-fruit and green veggies finish bland, with lingering citrus notes. Carolina Wine Brands USA.—M.S. **abv:** 12.5% **Price:** \$11

Santa Luz 2015 Alba Sauvignon Blanc (Central Valley). Gritty citrus aromas are oily but adequate. This basic SB tastes of citrus and green vegetables. Beyond that, it's mostly fresh in feel. Craft + Estate—The Winebow Group. Best Buy.—M.S. abv: 12.5%

Price: \$10

Blanc (Maipo Valley). Waxy, slightly mealy white-fruit aromas set up a pulpy citrusy palate. This offers salty orange and yeasty flavors in front of a finish that's struggling to stay fresh. Drink immediately. Best Buy. —M.S.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$10

Viña Marty 2014 Ilaia Sauvignon Blanc (Central Valley). Lightly vegetal aromas suggest asparagus. This feels round and chunky but not lazy or flabby. Flavors of citrus and citrus peel include bitter notes, while this tastes outright pithy on the finish. Drink now. Wines & Beyond Import. —M.S. abv: 13.5% Price: \$11

CHARDONNAY

Special Chardonnay (Limarí Valley). Melon and citrus scents blend with notes of crushed vitamins and lanolin. This feels round and smooth, with acidic kick that helps maintain balance. Melon and creamy flavors lead the charge, with a briny hint in the background. Drink now. Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC. —M.S.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$18

Morandé 2014 Gran Reserva Chardonnay (Casablanca Valley). Aromas of orange peel and citrus pulp are oily but not oaky. This is chunky and seems to be starting to fade. Salty citrus flavors are mild, while controlled saltiness persists on the finish. Drink now. Grupo Belen USA. —M.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$25

Cousiño-Macul 2015 Chardonnay (Maipo Valley). Apple aromas are standard, clean and direct. This everyday Chardonnay feels plump, with modest acidic boost. Peach, melon and mild salty flavors finish solid, with no added complexity. MundoVino-The Winebow Group. Best Buy. —M.S. abv: 13.5% Price: \$10

Pura 8 2013 Reserve Chardonnay (Rapel Valley). Lanolin and squash aromas indicate that this is fading. The palate is wide and fleshy but lacking in a focal point. Flavors of spiced pumpkin and aged apple are a bit like holiday pie, while modest acidity on the finish ensures that this is bland on the exit. MHW, Ltd. —M.S.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$16

Chilensis 2015 Reserva Estate Bottled Chardonnay (Maule Valley). Basic apple, melon and bready aromas are fine but not distinct or complex. Ditto the palate, which feels balanced but highly basic. Simple papaya and melon flavors finish flat. Old Bridge Cellars. Best Buy. —M.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$10

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Cono Sur 2013 20 Barrels Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley). Dense, baked and mulled blackberry and cassis aromas include bold but classy oak notes. This feels seamless except for raring tough tannins, while flavors of toast, graphite and spiced blackberry finish smooth and chewy, with a sense of lushness despite lasting residual tannins. Drink through 2025. Vineyard Brands. Editors' Choice. —M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$35

93 Santa Rita 2012 Casa Real Estate Bottled Old Vines Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley). For full review see page 90. Editors' Choice.

abv: 14.1% Price: \$85

Q2 Concha y Toro 2013 Don Melchor Puente Alto Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Puente Alto). Initially this smells foxy, with jumpy untamed berry and plum notes racing across the nose. After the aromas come around, this is hard and choppy on the palate, while herbal black-plum and carob flavors finish more lushly than before, but still fairly tannic. Drink through 2023. Excelsior Wines. —M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$120

92 Koyle 2013 Royale Los Lingues Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley). For full review see page 93. *Cellar Selection*.

aby: 14.5% Price: \$26

92 Ventisquero 2012 Enclave Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley). Earthy aromas include herbal notes, a hint of tomato sauce, asphalt and dusty berry fruits. This has a raw tannic exterior but is softer in the middle. Flavors of saucy, herbal plum and blackberry come with notes of tobacco and olive, while this is drawing and gritty on the finish, with a roasted quality. Drink through 2024. San Francisco Wine Exchange. —M.S.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$75

91 Lapostolle 2013 Cuvée Alexandre Apalta Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley). Dark spice, rubber, tree bark and herbal black-fruit aromas are congruent. This big tough tannic Cabernet is layered but hard as nails. Flavors of black fruits, chocolate, fig and dark spices finish with toughness and charred oak. Drink through 2024. Terlato Wines International. —M.S.

abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$24

San Pedro 2013 Cabo de Hornos Cabernet Sauvignon (Cachapoal Valley). Earthy balsamic

aromas become more tarry and oaky the longer this sits. In the mouth, the tannins are fierce and extremely dry. Flavors of toast and raw wood are big players, while minty, chocolaty berry notes are also in play. This seems more woody than fruity, with dry rough tannins pushing the finish. Drink through 2026. Shaw-Ross International Importers. Cellar Selection. -M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$60**

Agustinos 2013 Escorial Limited Selection Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley). A big blanket of oaky, chocolaty, minty aromas sits on top of herbal plum and cassis scents. No surprise that this is a big wine with loud plum, blackberry and spice flavors, but it's also a bit awkward in feel. On the finish, this spreads apart at the seams, leaving no cushion for scorching acidity and hard tannins. Drink through 2021. Apollo Fine Spirits. -M.S. **abv:** 14% Price: \$40

Echeverria 2012 Founder's Selection Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley). Soft stewy raisiny aromas are not problematic but they do suggest a wine that's a bit overripe, which isn't surprising for 2012—a notoriously hot year. A heavy palate is a touch mushy but also tannic. Candied flavors of cherry and cassis are raisiny, while this is plodding and chocolaty on the finish. Ararat Import/Export Co. LLC. -M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$40

Undurraga 2014 Sibaris Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley). Uncomplicated berry and plum aromas are easy to process. This everyday Cabernet feels complete despite showing rubbery grabby tannins. Lightly herbal plum and berry flavors finish tight, bright and fresh. Maritime Wine Trading Collective. -M.S.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$18

San Pedro 2014 1865 Single Vinevard Cab-San Peoro Zuit 1993 Single ernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley). Roasted smoky berry aromas are good but nothing special. This feels alive and wiry, with grabby tannins and prodding acidity. Roasted spicy plum and berry flavors finish dry, spicy and in good shape. Shaw-Ross International Importers. -M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$18**

Alcance 2014 Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Maule Valley). Berry, raw oak and graphite aromas lead to a rock-hard drying palate with fierce tannins. This tastes of oaky salty plum and berry, while a woody finish is overtly tannic and borderline abrasive. Majestic Imports. -M.S.

In Situ 2014 Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Aconcagua Valley). Rubbery berry aromas come with a note of raw oak. On the palate, this is drawing and hard, with drying tannins. Jammy berry flavors are generic and a bit hot, while hard tannins reappear on the finish, which has a natural but raw tomato character. Joseph Victori Wines. -M.S.

abv: 14% **Price: \$15**

Undurraga 2014 Aliwen Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Chile). Smoky nuances of campfire and hickory are detectable on a nose that's anchored by generic berry scents. This is medium in body, with juicy fresh acidity. Snappy piquant red-fruits turn spicy and peppery on a steady finish. Maritime Wine Trading Collective. -M.S.

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

Chilensis 2014 Reserva Estate Bottled Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley). Drv herbal red-berry aromas are generic all the way. This feels a bit grabby and hard, while medicinal plum and raspberry flavors rank as herbal. Minty spicy flavors control the finish on this standardissue Cabernet. Old Bridge Cellars. Best Buy. -M.S. abv: 13.5% Price: \$10

Santa Ema 2014 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley). Lightly herbal blackberry and cassis aromas come with strong notes of olive and oak-based clove. Oaky prune and raisin flavors have tartaric and animal notes, while this is grabby and tannic as well as acidic on the finish. Guarachi Wine Partners. -M.S.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$14

Santa Luz 2015 Gran Reserva Corte Cabernet Santa Luz 2013 Grant Valley). Grapy berry and raisin aromas include notes of baking spices. This feels wide but wiry, with tartaric acidity at the core. Generic berry flavors end with a dry drawing finish. Craft + Estate-The Winebow Group. -M.S. abv: 14% **Price: \$12**

Ventisquero 2014 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley). Generic cherry and berry aromas are lightly herbal, jammy and medicinal. This mid-tier Cabernet is fresh and fair, nothing more. Everyday red-plum and cherry flavors end with a touch of leafy greenness. San Francisco Wine Exchange. -M.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$13**

Agustinos 2015 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon Agustinos 2015 neserva carcalles (Maipo Valley). Raisin and berry aromas set up a medium-bodied palate. Herbal, lightly greenberry flavors revert to raisiny and leafy on a lively but middle of the road finish. Apollo Fine Spirits. Best Buy. -M.S.

abv: 13% Price: \$10

Aresti 2016 Special Release Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Curicó Valley). This early 2016 release smells like a scented sandalwood candle. In the mouth, things are sticky and scratchy, while olive and herbal berry flavors finish with little to no change. Vinamericas Selections. -M.S.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$15

Bossy Boots 2014 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Maule Valley). Herbal aromas of tomato leaf and thyme feed into a crisp raw palate. Leafy herbal flavors of tomato and dried green herbs finish with raw tannins that scratch. Think of this like you would basic Bordeaux. Vinaio Imports. -M.S.

abv: 14% **Price: \$12**

CARIGNAN

Meli 2013 Carignan (Maule Valley). Concentrated cool aromas of herbal plum and berry along with lemon peel announce this firmly tannic, medium-bodied Carignan. Toasty herbal blackberry flavors include a note of black olive, while this tastes spicy, savory and wild on the finish. Global Vineyard Importers. -M.S.

abv: 14% Price: \$17

Alcance 2013 Vigno Carignan (Maule Valley). Chunky rubbery aromas of black plum form the first act. This feels big and wide, with grabby tannins. Flavors of toast, burnt oak, licorice and blackberry finish woody and with scratchy tannins. Teplin Nuss. —M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$35**

Meli 2014 Carignan (Maule Valley). Floral Meli 2014 Carignan American Cherry and plum aromas are inviting. This Carignan is fleshy and wide in body, with high acidity. Plum and berry flavors are clean and presentable, while this hits with a shock of acidity on the finish before quieting down. Global Vineyard Importers, -M.S.

abv: 14% Price: \$17

CARMENÈRE

Koyle 2014 Gran Reserva Confee blend chagua Valley). Aromas of black coffee blend Koyle 2014 Gran Reserva Carmenère (Colwith lightly herbaceous, spicy notes of olive and green herbs as well as plum and currant. A fresh moderately big palate tastes of spicy red plum, tomato, oregano and chocolate. On the finish, this retains a spicy dry character. Quintessential Wines. -M.S.

abv: 14% Price: \$17

Morandé 2014 Reserva Carmenère (Maipo Valley). Spicy leafy red-berry aromas open this Carmenère. On the palate, this smacks with dry hard tannins. Flavors of herbal cherry and black plum finish with a touch of heat and abrasive yet chewy tannins. Grupo Belen USA. -M.S.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$15

Root:1 2014 Carmenère (Colchagua Valley). Raspberry, plum and currant aromas are darkened by a mild note of asphalt. This feels round but also fresh and lively. Flavors of plum and spiced currant finish dry and focused. MundoVino-The Winebow Group. Best Buy. -M.S.

Price: \$12 abv: 13.5%

Estampa 2014 Estate Carmenère (Colchagua **Valley).** Tarry, gritty, spicy plum aromas are common for Carmenère. This contains some Malbec, and the wine feels wide, grabby and a bit lush. Foxy, gamy, herbal berry and olive flavors finish spicy, with notes of oregano and basil. American Estates Wines, Inc. -M.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$15

Viña Marty 2012 Pirca Carmenère (Maule Valley). Spicy berry, bath soap and graphite aromas are a bit hard to understand. Somewhat raw and pinched in feel, this tastes of spicy plum and tomato. On the finish, peppery notes of hard spice and plum are solid, as is the closing feel. Wines & Beyond Import. -M.S.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$13

Casas del Bosque 2014 Reserva Carmenère (Rapel Valley). Earthy spicy black-fruit aromas come with toasty, almost caramelized oak scents. This is drawing on the palate, so much so that it feels collapsed. Wood-dominant flavors of herbal black plum, coffee and carob finish candied and dry, with grabby tannins. Southern Starz, Inc. -M.S. abv: 14%

Oveja Negra 2012 Single Vineyard Carmenère (Maule Valley). Spiced plum, vanilla and sandalwood aromas add up to something nice. This feels good enough, with nothing demanding about the palate. Spicy berry and olive flavors are typical of the variety, while this feels dry and tastes a bit woody on the finish. Old Bridge Cellars. Best Buy. -M.S. **abv:** 14% Price: \$11

MALBEC

Walle Hermoso Zuit Liegius Plum Malbec (Colchagua Valley). Earthy plum Valle Hermoso 2014 Elegido Gran Reserva and berry aromas come with hints of rubber and animal. This is a saturated chewy dark Malbec with salty blackberry and savory oak flavors. A spicy blackened well-oaked finish is balanced and healthy. Graziano Imports. -M.S.

abv: 14% **Price: \$18**

Santa Carolina 2014 Reserva de Familia Malbec (Rapel Valley). Aromas of mint and licorice complement raisin and jammy berry notes on this extracted Malbec that feels flabby around the edges despite a shot of core acidity. Flavors of prune and blueberry come with savory notes, while this lacks structure on the finish. Wolf Group. —M.S. **abv:** 14.5% Price: \$20

Concha y Toro 2014 Serie Riberas Gran Reserva Ribera del Tinguiririca Malbec (Marchigue). Grapy but generic black-fruit aromas open this wide bulky Malbec that's high in acidity. Salty grapy flavors are plump but simple, while this finishes with a toasted element and blocky weight. Banfi Vintners. -M.S.

abv: 14% Price: \$17

Junta 2014 Momentos Reserve Malbec (Curicó Valley). Campfire, animal, horseradish and berry aromas make for a slightly difficult nose. This Malbec feels pinched, with tannic pull. Salty black-fruit flavors finish similar, with popping acidity that keeps this lively. Apollo Fine Spirits. -M.S. abv: 13% **Price: \$12**

Valle Secreto 2014 Key Malbec (Cachapoal Valley). Gritty horsey berry aromas lead to a medium-bodied, basic palate. This tastes of blackberry and savory spices, while the finish is mild in flavor and short on length. AWDirect (The Wine Trees Portfolio). -M.S.

abv: 14% Price: \$16

MERLOT

Alcance 2014 Gran Reserva Merlot (Maule Valley). Minty oaky aromas of baking spices share space on the nose with earthy black plum and berry notes. This feels tannic and resiny while the oaky spicy berry flavors finish with force and drying tannins. Majestic Imports. -M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$22**

Finca Patagonia 2014 Reserve Merlot (Maule Valley). Gritty black-fruit aromas come with notes of bell pepper and green herbs as well as coffee grounds. A snappy, tough, drawing palate delivers peppery, blackened spice and herbal berry flavors prior to a crisp, tight finish with fresh acidity. Halby Marketing. —M.S.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$16

Château Los Boldos 2014 Grand Reserva Merlot (Cachapoal Valley). Plum, tomato and animal aromas feed into a tight, pulling, tannic palate. Salty and savory plum and berry flavors end with dry tannins and an overall scratchy feel that's rugged but stout. Evaton, Inc. -M.S.

abv: 14% Price: \$17

Cousiño-Macul 2014 Merlot (Central Valley). Basic but clean plum and cherry aromas show a note of orange peel. This is quite tannic for an everyday red, while cassis, plum and prune flavors end tannic, spicy and slightly herbal. MundoVino-The Winebow Group. Best Buy. -M.S.

abv: 14%

Santa Helena 2014 Reserva Merlot (Central Valley). Gritty marginally ripe plum aromas smell a bit like a wild field. This feels full but pushy, with roughness to the palate. Herbal plum and blackberry flavors finish minty and slightly green. Misa Imports. -M.S.

abv: 14% **Price: \$20**

SYRAH

MontGras 2014 Antu Syrah (Colchagua Valley). For full review see page 101.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$23**

San Pedro 2014 1865 Single Vineyard Syrah (Cachapoal Valley). The spicy, borderline herbaceous and gritty aromas are plenty expressive. This feels round and deep, with good balance, while herbal savory flavors of roasted berry and tea finish dry and clampy. Shaw-Ross International Importers. -M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$20**

Syrah (Colchagua Valley). This dark con-Viña Bisquertt 2015 La Joya Gran Reserva centrated Syrah is loaded with spicy black-fruit aromas. The mouthfeel is hard and tannic as well as fresh, racy and juicy. Spiced plum, cherry and blackened gritty flavors turn peppery on a tannic finish. Prestige Beverage Group. -M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$15

Viña Tabalí 2014 Pedregoso Gran Reserva Syrah (Limarí Valley). Oaky chocolaty aromas and candied berry notes make for a rich opening. This is tannic and bracing in feel, with peppery, herbal berry flavors that are fully oaked. A dark toasty finish offers some residual cream and chocolate. Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC. -M.S. abv: 14% **Price:** \$15

Santa Ema 2013 Barrel Select Syrah (Cachapoal Valley). Oaky aromas of graphite, vanilla, berry fruits and plum lead to a firm clampy high-acid palate with oak-rich flavors of spiced plum and currant. Mildly green, minty flavors close out a drawing tight finish. Guarachi Wine Partners. -M.S. abv: 14% **Price: \$13**

86 Alta Cima 2013 Speical Edition Reserva Syrah (Lontué Valley). Angular plum and berry aromas are rubbery. This Syrah feels wide and blocky, but solid. Black-fruit flavors finish with drawing tannins and a shot of black coffee. Global Alliance Corp. Best Buy. -M.S.

abv: 13.5%

De Martino 2013 Legado Reserva Syrah (Choapa Valley). Aromatically speaking, this is shaky due to murky earthy berry aromas that suggest peanut butter. In the mouth, this is compact and fairly full. Collapsed berry and plum flavors include notes of gritty earthy spice, while this is blocky and pounding on the finish. Opici Wines. -M.S. **abv:** 13.5%

Price: \$15

Finca Patagonia 2015 Expedicion Syrah (Maule Valley). Bright but basic plum, spice and leather aromas are uncomplicated. This feels grabby and rugged, with chewy tannins. Leafy redfruit flavors offer a jammy side note, while this finishes with dry, scouring tannins. Halby Marketing. -M.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$12

Santa Rita 2015 Reserva Syrah (Maipo Val-86 ley). Spicy grassy aromas of catmint are matched by unusual clove scents. A tough rubbery palate is where you'll find spicy blackberry and green-herb flavors. Pulling tannins are the driving force on this wine's choppy clipped finish. Palm Bay International. -M.S.

abv: 13.5%

Price: \$13

RED BLENDS

Santa Carolina 2012 VSC Assemblage Santa Carouna 2012 (Cachapoal Valley). For full review see page 87. Editors' Choice.

abv: 15% Price: \$40

Dark in color and extracted on the nose, with prune, cassis and chocolate aromas, this Carmenère-led blend feels full and plush, not tannic and rough. Blackberry, balsamic notes and spice flavors finish long, ripe and spicy. Drink this meaty wine through 2023. American Estates Wines, Inc. Editors' Choice. -M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$56**

Cabernet Franc (Curicó Valley). For full review see page 90. Editors' Choice.

abv: 14.7% Price: \$30

MontGras 2012 Ninquén Mountain Vine-92 Monturas 2012 Minigos... (Colchagua Valley). For full review see page 93.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$50

Viña Tabalí 2012 Payen Syrah-Cabernet Franc (Limarí Valley). Aromas of spiced blackberry, tar, wood smoke and herbs are complex and on target. This Syrah (with 10% Cab Franc) feels big and wide, with screechy acidity and rubbery tannins. Dark peppery berry flavors are a bit salty, while this is compact on the finish. Drink through 2022. Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC. -M.S.

abv: 14%

Espiritu de Chile 2015 Winemaker's Selection Assemblage (Colchagua Valley). Blackberry, sandalwood soap and licorice are the key aromas on this mystery blend that's full and grabby on the palate. Black plum, berry and chocolate flavors finish with a creamy note of mocha and lingering peppery spice. Vinamericas Selections. -M.S. **Price: \$21** abv: 14%

Ventisquero 2012 Vertice Apalta Vineyard Carmenère-Syrah (Colchagua Valley). Woodsy earthy berry aromas share the nose with fresh-cut oak scents. This Carmenère-Syrah blend

feels lively and juicy, not heavy or flat. Dark spicy berry and plum flavors include notes of olive and oak, while the finish is spicy and tastes of olive and tobacco. San Francisco Wine Exchange. -M.S.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$37

Aresti 2012 Family Collection (2012) Oaky aromas of coconut, balsam wood and Aresti 2012 Family Collection (Curicó Valley). vanilla control the nose on this Cabernet blend that's raw, rugged, acidic, tannic and grating on the palate. Big biting flavors of plum, oak grain and vanilla finish with screechy acidity and snap. Drink through 2021. Vinamericas Selections. -M.S. **abv:** 14.5%

Price: \$35

Casas del Toqui 2012 Codigo (Cachapoal Valley). Floral aromas of violet, lemon peel, Graham cracker, plum and boysenberry stray from normal. This Cabernet-led blend feels wide, jammy and little soft in the center. Herbal blueberry flavors are slightly unfocused, while this is lush and jammy but lacks spine on the finish. Winery Direct. -M.S. abv: 14%

Cono Sur 2015 Organic Cabernet Sauvignon-Carmenere-Syrah (Chile). Saucy black-fruit aromas are beefy, dense and spicy. In the mouth, this blend of Cabernet, Carmenère and Syrah is chunky, with hard tannins. Herbal spicy black-fruit flavors include tea and coffee notes, while the finish tastes herbal and peppery, with a leafy aftertaste attributable to the Carmenère. Vineyard Brands. Best Buy. -M.S.

Price: \$14 abv: NA

Concha y Toro 2015 Marques de Casa Concha Old Vines (Cauquenes Valley). This magentacolored blend of old vines of Cinsault and País smells like raspberry chewing gum, latex and dried spice. Despite looking translucent, this feels tight, with abrasive tannins. Jumpy raspberry and spice flavors are atypical for Chile, while nutmeg and plum notes drive a grabby finish. Excelsior Wines. -M.S.

abv: 12% **Price: \$22**

Aresti 2015 Special Release Reserva Carmenère-Syrah (Curicó Valley). Demanding aromas of coffee grounds, tomato sauce, herbs and black fruits are normal for Carmenère and Syrah. With choppy, aggressive tannins and oaky flavors of herbal plum and berry fruits, this tastes somewhat green, minty and spicy on the finish. Vinamericas Selections. Best Buy. -M.S.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$12**

Odfjell 2012 Capítulo by Odfjell Carignan-Cabernet Sauvignon-Malbec (Central Valley). Despite herbaceous aromas of eucalyptus and thyme, this choppy, grating blend of Carignan, Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec offers forward bold plum and currant flavors along with can't-miss herbal notes. This is aggressive on the finish, with mild heat and raw tannins. Epic Wines. -M.S. **abv:** 14% **Price: \$15** **NEW ZEALAND**

SAUVIGNON BLANC

94 Brancott 2013 Chosen Rows Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). This special Sauvignon Blanc is only being released in top vintages. The first was the 2010; the 2013 is the second vintage. Fermented in oak, it offers up complex aromas of pencil shavings and grapefruit, followed by hints of toast, cedar, red currants and gooseberries. It's a ripe, weighty style, but it carries those traits without a hitch, gliding seamlessly through a long, silky, mouthwatering finish. Pernod Ricard. Editors' Choice. -J.C.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$75**

Giesen 2013 The Fuder Single Vineyard Selection Matthews Lane Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). For full review see page 88.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$55**

93 Te Mata 2015 cape cress (Hawke's Bay). This has come to epitomize the Hawke's Bay style of Sauvignon Blanc, typical in it's ripe fruit and oak treatment. Hints of vanilla and cedar frame passion fruit and pink grapefruit notes, then leave a lingering impression of Creamsicle behind on the silky-textured finish. Wine Dogs Imports LLC. Editors' Choice. —J.C.

abv: 14% Price: \$30

Giesen 2013 The August 1888 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). For full review see page 92.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$40

Cloudy Bay 2013 Te Koko Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). The most recent release of Te Koko seems tamer, more controlled than some previous vintages. It's Graves-like in style, offering up toast, vanilla and passion fruit notes, ample weight and a fine, silky finish that goes on for minutes. It embodies elegance and precision in place of wildness and raw power. Moët Hennessy USA. -J.C. **abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$60

Giesen 2013 The Fuder Single Vineyard Selection Dillons Point Sauvignon Blanc (Marlbor-

ough). For full review see page 96.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$55

Marisco Vineyards 2016 The Ned Waihopai River Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). This medium-bodied Sauvignon Blanc is slightly leafy in style, but balances that with lush citrus fruit. The crushed tomato stalk and grapefruit come together in a dry, harmonious finish that's mainstream delicious. Drink now. Marisco Vineyards USA. Best **Buy**. —J.C.

abv: 13% **Price: \$13**

Marisco Vineyards 2013 Craft Series Pride & Glory Waihopai River Sauvignon Blanc (Marl-

borough). There's a subtle oak component to this wine, hinting at toast and vanilla, but the main thrust of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc remains intact, driving forward with sweaty, pungent notes, prickly pear and pink grapefruit. Drink it over the next couple of years. Marisco Vineyards USA. -J.C. abv: 13% Price: \$40

Opawa 2016 Sauvignon Blank,
Pungent, leafy and loaded with passion fruit Opawa 2016 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). on the nose, this is green, but in a good way, balancing those notes with just enough pineapple and citrus flavors. For a medium-bodied wine, it shows remarkable creaminess on the palate. A long, tomato-stalk-accented finish completes the picture. Drink now. Negociants USA, Inc. Best Buy. - J.C. abv: 13% **Price:** \$15

Urlar 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Gladstone). For full review see page 98. Editors' Choice.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$16

Cloudy Bay 2012 Te Koko Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). The 2012 vintage was a cool one in Marlborough, and it shows in this wine, especially when compared to the fine, elegant 2013 Te Koko. This is grassy and herbal, even hinting a bit at green peas, yet still offers a compelling texture and ample length. It may even outlive the 2013, even if it doesn't quite reach the same heights. Moët Hennessy USA. -J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$60**

Foxes Island 2013 Belsham Awatere Estate Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). This medium-bodied Sauvignon Blanc showcases some of the leafy, nettle-like character the Awatere is known for, but balances that with ample grapefruit and even a hint of red berries. It's clean and refreshing on the finish, a fine representation of grape variety and site. Esprit du Vin. -J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$32

Glazebrook 2016 041°S 174°E Regional Reserve Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).

These entry-level Sauvignons rarely improve with age, so drink this one up before the end of 2017 for its exuberant notes of passion fruit and gooseberry. It's medium in weight, with perhaps a tickle of residual sugar, but finishes crisp and long, with mouthwatering acids. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. Best Buy. -J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$15

Loveblock 2016 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). Gooseberries and yellow plums mark the nose of this medium-bodied wine. Some grassy-herbal elements add freshness and nuance, while the finish is long, dry and filled with stone fruit. Drink now. Terlato Wines International. -J.C. abv: 13.7% **Price: \$22**

Oyster Bay 2016 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). For full review see page 101.

abv: 12.5% Price: \$16

Savor 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). This is a rather light-bodied wine for its genre, but one that boasts remarkable freshness and purity of fruit. Passion fruit and cut-grass aromas lead into flavors that include white grapefruit, gentle herbal notes and stone fruit. Versatile as an apéritif or alongside any fish or shellfish. The Wine Group. —J.C.

abv: 12.5% Price: \$16

Barker's Marque 2015 Arona Certified Sustainable Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). Certified Sustainable applies to almost all New Zealand wines these days, so it's a bit of a gimmick to

place it so prominently on the label, but what's in the bottle is very good. It's got those "good green" notes of snow pea, a hint of struck flint and tart pineapple flavors that linger on the finish. It's only light in body, but concentrated in flavor. International Vines, Inc. Best Buy. -J.C.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$13

Hunter's 2015 Jane Hunter Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). More restrained—and therefore more versatile with food-than many other Marlborough Sauvignon Blancs, this wine combines hints of cut grass with citrus on the nose. Grapefruit and nectarine take over on the palate, while a hint of bitter greens emerges on the finish. Drink now. Merchant Vintner Imports. -J.C.

abv: 13% **Price: \$15**

The Crossings 2010 Succession with pastere Valley). Bright and tropical, with pastered flavors The Crossings 2016 Sauvignon Blanc (Awasion fruit and pink grapefruit aromas and flavors. They come together in a plump, medium-bodied wine that finishes soft and easy-a true crowdpleaser. Deutsch Family Wine and Spirits. -J.C. abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$15

Yealands 2016 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). This is a bit austere and linear, but the tradeoff is that it's refreshingly brisk and long on the finish. Tart citrus-think grapefruit-forms the core of the wine, garnished by hints of struck flint. Palm Bay International. -J.C.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$15

Black Cottage 2016 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). Struck flint offers an extra dimension to this wine's aromas of nettles and snow peas, while white grapefruit flavors line the medium-bodied palate, finishing with hints of pineapple and fresh greens. Domaine Select Wine & Spirits. —J.C.

abv: 13% **Price: \$15**

Cottesbrook 2016 Sauvignon Blanc (Marl-CottesDrook 2010 Substitution fruit aromas come together in this medium-bodied wine. A silky texture carries celery leaf and citrus flavors through the slightly bitter finish. Saranty Imports. —J.C.

abv: 12.5% **Price: \$15**

Frenzy 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (South Island). Frenzy 2015 Sauvignon Black Sweaty and pungent, this is an aggressively aromatic wine with ample intensity. Fresh greens and passion fruit flavors finish dry, even a bit austere, without excessive weight or ripeness. Drink now. Wilson Daniels Ltd. -J.C.

aby: 12 5% Price: \$14

Giesen 2016 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). This clean, crisp, medium-bodied Sauvignon Blanc boasts standard regional notes of tomato leaf and white grapefruit without going too far into the tropical-fruit spectrum. Drink now. Pacific Highway Wines & Spirits. -J.C.

abv: 12.5% **Price: \$15**

Grey's Peak 2015 Waipara Sauvignon Blanc (Waipara). Sourced from a region along the eastern coast of the South Island, this is fresh and greenish on the nose—think green onion, cut grass, lime—yet riper-tasting, offering hints of stone fruit and melon. It's a pleasant mix that finishes soft and easy. Drink now. American Estates Wines, Inc. -J.C. **abv:** 13.5%

Nobilo 2015 Regional Collection Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough). This wine presents an intriguing mix of green, nearly vegetal, aromas and tropical and stone fruit. It's plump and mouthfilling, then finishes on a ripe, honeyed note. Drink now. Constellation Brands, Inc. -J.C.

abv: 12.5% **Price: \$13**

Vinterra 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Waipara). As Marlborough becomes increasingly planted-out and pricy, expect to see more wine from Waipara, a region along the South Island's eastern coast. This light-bodied Sauvignon Blanc is somewhat neutral, but does show some attractive lime zest and grapefruit shadings. Drink now. Kysela Père et Fils. -J.C.

abv: 12% Price: \$16

PINOT GRIS

Greywacke 2014 Pinot Gris (Marlborough). For full review see page 92.

abv: 14% **Price: \$25**

Wairau River 2014 Pinot Gris (Marlborough). Made in a clean, refreshing style, this is a medium-bodied wine that bursts with aromas and flavors of pear, melon and ginger. A pineapple note on the finish adds zest and freshness. Drink now. Terlato Wines International. - J.C.

abv: 14% **Price: \$21**

Crawford is the leading Sauvignon Blanc in the U.S., but it turns out Winemaker Anthony Walkenhorst

knows a thing or two about making Pinot Gris as well. This dry, medium-bodied wine is partially fermented in acacia barrels. Baking spices, like cinnamon and clove, add welcome nuance to the fresh pear and pineapple flavors. Constellation Brands, Inc. —J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$28

Yealands 2016 Pinot Gris (Marlborough). This plump, dry-style Pinot Gris features plenty of fruit, which ranges from apple to pear and through to pineapple. The finish comes with a cool, refreshing note and ample length. Palm Bay International. —J.C.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$15

Giesen 2016 Pinot Gris (New Zealand). Is it possible for a wine to taste like a blenderized bowl of fruit salad? That comes close to describing this mix of pear, melon and pineapple. It's medium bodied and seems almost sweet, then finishes clean and refreshing. Pacific Highway Wines & Spirits.—J.C.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$15

Kim Crawford 2016 Pinot Gris (Marlborough). This wine starts with typical Pinot Gris aromas of apple, pear and ginger, then picks up some citrusy flavors on the palate before ending on a note of orange zest. It's medium in weight, with a dry, silky feel as it glides across the palate. Constellation Brands, Inc. —J.C.

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

Marisco Vineyards 2016 The Ned Pinot Gris (Marlborough). Made with some skin contact, this ramato-style, pink-hued wine is distinctive in the glass. Apple, pear and berry notes make a quick impact, then fade equally quickly on the finish, leaving the palate refreshed. Drink now. Marisco Vineyards USA. —J.C.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$13

Mt. Beautiful 2014 Pinot Gris (North Canterbury). This is a reasonably rich, concentrated example of Pinot Gris, but one that seems a bit repressed aromatically. It hints rather than suggests at fig, pear and melon, before ending on a weighty note. Mt. Beautiful USA. —J.C.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$19

RED BLENDS

95 Squawking Magpie 2014 SQM Gimblett Gravels Cabernets/Merlot (Hawke's Bay). This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (62.5%), Mer-

Inis blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (62.5%), Merlot (25%) and Cabernet Franc (12.5%) is aged in one-third new French oak for 10 months, resulting in a lovely marriage of vanilla and cedar with cassis. The wine is youthful and primary, but the oak and fruit are seamlessly integrated, blending baking spices and chocolate into the mix. Richly textured, with a long finish, this wine is delicious now, but should age well through 2030. Veedercrest. Editors' Choice.—J.C.

abv: 13.8% **Price:** \$79

92 Trinity Hill 2014 The Gimblett Gimblett Gravels (Hawke's Bay). For full review see page 94. Editors' Choice.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$35

Craggy Range 2014 Sophia Gimblett Gravels (Hawke's Bay). Nineteen months in 40% new French oak has left a strong mark on this wine, imparting it with notes of cedar, graham crackers, baking spices, toast and some drying, woody tannins. Cassis fruit backs up all those oaky sensations, but will likely remain a background player, so drink it while it retains a sense of freshness, now through 2025. Kobrand. —J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$95

RHÔNE VALLEY

CÔTE RÔTIE

94 E. Guigal 2011 Château d'Ampuis (Côte Rôtie). The essence of the appellation smokes out from the glass, offering hints of cracked pepper, bacon, clove and leather. It's reasonably full-bodied for Côte Rôtie, with feral, smokedmeat flavors, ample spice and plenty of the concentrated plummy fruit. Tannins are silky, making this approachable now, but likely capable of aging well for at least 10–15 years. Vintus LLC. Editors' Choice. —J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$75

E. Guigal 2012 Brune et Blonde de Guigal (Côte Rôtie). The 2012 vintage was reasonably warm, and this wine is ripe and creamy in texture, with ground clove and cracked pepper notes accenting plummy fruit. Vanilla and bacon notes chime in on the slightly dusty finish. Drink now-2025. Vintus LLC. —J.C.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$78

Olivier Ravoire 2011 Côte Rôtie. This is a ripe, somewhat creamy style of Côte Rôtie, with potent mocha notes complementing hints of clove, olive and plum. The tannins are silky-supple on the finish, so don't hesitate to pop a cork soon. Drink now-2021. Wine Warehouse Imports. —J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$65

90 Jean-Luc Colombo 2012 La Divine (Côte Rôtie). For full review see page 100.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$90

Domaine de Bonserine 2012 La Viallière (Côte Rôtie). Lovely aromas of black olive and dried spices (cinnamon and clove) are followed by dark, earthy flavors. It's full in the mouth and a bit creamy in texture, with supple, velvety tannins on the somewhat abbreviated finish. Europvin USA. —J.C. abv: 13.5% Price: \$60

SAINT-JOSEPH

94 Tardieu-Laurent 2013 Vieilles Vignes (Saint-Joseph). This wine combines ample fruit concentration with generous oak in ideal proportions. Peppery herbs and red berries get a boost from vanilla and baking spices, while raspberries linger on the tannic finish. Drink 2020–2030. Wilson Daniels Ltd. *Editors' Choice*. —J.C.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$49

Domaine Jean-Michel Gerin 2013 Saint-Joseph. Leather and scorched fruit lead the way, slowly unfolding to reveal plummy, rich flavors accented by baking spices. This is full bodied and slightly dusty in texture, with a long finish marked by hints of bacon. Drink now-2025. Esprit du Vin. Editors' Choice. —J.C.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$32

Gilles Flacher 2013 Les Reines (Saint-Joseph). Classic northern Rhône aromas of smoke, espresso and black olive set the stage, followed by layers of dark fruit and spice. The finish is softly dusty, brimming with plum and licorice notes. Full-bodied, concentrated and supple, this is ready to drink now, yet should age well through 2025 or so. Bird Rock Imports. —J.C.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$44

Gilles Flacher 2012 Terra Louis (Saint-Joseph). From a granitic section of the appellation, this wine features bacony notes layered over black cherries and cedar. Hints of black olive, brown sugar and baking spices add nuance. The wine is medium to full in body, with supple tannins that finish on a dry, dusty note. Drink now-2025. Bird Rock Imports. —J.C.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$60

E. Guigal 2013 Saint-Joseph. For many consumers, Guigal remains a reference point for Rhône wines. This Saint-Joseph is a fine example, showcasing black-cherry fruit, earth and leather notes. It's firmly structured, with crisp acids as well, and should drink well for up to a decade or more. Vintus LLC. —J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$34

CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

For once, I wasn't able to pick this wine out as a Tardieu-Laurent. The oak is reined in, leaving the focus on plummy yet savory notes of coffee and black olive, mint, clove, licorice and chocolate liqueur. It's full-bodied, firm and intense, with a long finish framed by dusty but ripe tannins. Drink now—2025+. Wilson Daniels Ltd. Editors' Choice. —J.C. abv: 14.5%

Price: \$58

92 Domaine de Nalys 2013 Le Châtaignier (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). Clove, leather and

cherry aromas lead the way, followed by more of the same flavors on the palate, joined by hints of darker, plummier fruit. This full-bodied blend of 95% Grenache and 5% Mourvèdre has some dusty tannins, but they're balanced by ample fruit, at least for the moment. Drink now-2025. Baron Francois Ltd. —J.C.

abv: 15%

Price: \$60

Domaine Lucien Barrot et Fils 2013 La Sousto 92 Châteauneuf-du-Pape). This full-bodied, fleshy wine fits the typical Châteauneuf-du-Pape mold, delivering ample black-cherry and plum fruit, then layering atop hints of Mexican chocolate and baking spices. Drink now-2025. Wine Wine Situation LLC. Editors' Choice. -J.C.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$55

Tardieu-Laurent 2013 Vieilles Vignes (Châ-**L** teauneuf-du-Pape). Bigger, richer, oaken and more structured than T-L's regular Châteauneuf-du-Pape, this cuvée flirts with being just too much. Vanilla, cedar and plum cake aromas, licorice, plum, and cocoa on the palate have a lot to recommend them, while the muscular midpalate and firmness of the tannins on the finish suggest agreeability but not much charm. Try after 2020? Wilson Daniels Ltd. Cellar Selection. - J.C.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$91

Sélection Laurence Féraud 2013 Châteauneufdu-Pape. This wine displays attractive notes of bay leaf and thyme typical of the region, but they overshadow the cherry fruit. Some leathery flavors also show up on the palate. There's a silky mouthfeel, finished off by cocoa-powder-like tannins. Drink now-2025. Hand Picked Selections. -J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$63**

VENTOUX

Marrenon 2014 Capella (Ventoux). This dark-hued blend of Syrah and Grenache shows ample length and suppleness to go along with aromas of fresh herbs, black cherries, espresso and black olives. It'd be a fine casual pairing for burgers or pizza. USA Wine Imports. —J.C.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$16

Alain Jaume et Fils 2014 Les Gélinottes (Ventoux). Masses of black cherries and blackberries ultimately come across as a bit simple, but satisfying. There's plenty of flavor in this mediumbodied red, and the fruit is fresh rather than confected, with a hint of cocoa on the finish. Drink now-2020. Kysela Père et Fils. -J.C.

abv: 8333% **Price:** \$15

Marrenon 2014 Orca Vieilles Vignes (Ven-from 90+-year-old vines, aged for 12 months in oak. It's medium to full in body, with supple tannins and crisp acids. Notes of barrel char and cherries finish dry, with a rustic edge. USA Wine Imports. -J.C.

Ravoire et Fils 2014 Domaine De Yves (Ventoux). A blend of Syrah, Grenache and Carignan, this medium- to full-bodied red features bright aromas of cherry, herb, chocolate and espresso, but turns dry and dusty-textured on the finish. Drink now. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. Best Buy. -J.C.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$10

Domaine de Fondrèche 2014 Ventoux. In a vintage that circle. vintage that yielded some attractive, supple wines, this wine stands out for its extraction and toughness. Chocolate, plum and clove notes are framed by firm tannins that come across gritty and hard on the finish. Domaine Select Wine & Spirits. -J.C.

abv: 14% **Price: \$20**

COSTIÈRES DE NÎMES

Michel Gassier 2013 Les Piliers Syrah (Costières de Nîmes). A super bargain, this is a concentrated, structured glass of gamy Syrah. Black cherry liqueur, black olives, espresso and meaty flavors combine on the full-bodied palate, finishing with a hefty dose of smoky goodness. Drink now-2025. Saranty Imports. Editors' Choice. -J.C. abv: 13.5%

Château de Campuget 2013 1753 Syrah (Costières de Nîmes). For full review see page 99.

abv: 13% **Price: \$18**

Château de Nages 2013 Vieilles Vignes (Costières de Nîmes). Open-knit and approachable, this is a warm, velvety wine. Cedar, chocolate and cherry notes glide easily across the palate. Drink now-2020. Saranty Imports. -J.C. **abv:** 15%

Château de Nages 2013 Buti de Nages (Costières de Nîmes). Superripe cherries and plums burst from the glass in this engagingly fruity, quaffable red. The tannins are supple, while hints of cocoa and black olive add enough complexity to warrant coming back again and again. Saranty Imports. Best Buy. -J.C.

abv: 14% **Price: \$13**

Sélection Laurence Féraud 2013 Costières de Nîmes. Cherries, leather and earth all mingle on the nose and palate of this medium-bodied wine. It's a pleasant, easy-to-drink offering, even if it's not terribly concentrated or complex. Drink now. Hand Picked Selections. -J.C.

Price: \$16 abv: 13%

CÔTES DU RHÔNE

Alain Jaume et Fils 2014 Haut de Brun (Côtes $\mbox{du Rhône).}$ This blend of 60% Grenache, 30% Syrah and 10% Cinsault would be a crowd favorite if more than 700 cases were available in the U.S. The black cherry fruit is punched up by hints of herbs and cracked pepper, there's ample weight but great freshness and zest, and the finish is long and complex, showing off hints of licorice, pepper and dusty earth. Drink now-2020. Kysela Père et Fils. Best Buy. -J.C.

abv: 14% **Price: \$15**

Rhône). Readers looking for a widely available from long heen M. Chapoutier 2014 Belleruche (Côtes du able, fairly priced Côtes du Rhône have long been able to depend on Chapoutier's Belleruche, and the 2014 vintage is no exception. It's medium bodied, with fresh plum and cherry fruit and hints of licorice and garrigue. Drink it up by 2020. Terlato Wines International. -J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$16**

H to H 2014 Homage to Heritage (Côtes du Rhône). This crisp, lively red shows off the herbal notes of Provence—what the French call garrique—and tart cherry fruit. It's less ripe than many Côtes du Rhône wines, but bright and mouthwatering. Drink now-2020. Saranty Imports. Best Buy. -J.C. abv: 13% Price: \$10

Les Collines 2014 Côtes du Rhône. Hints of sweaty saddle leather, cherries and dark chocolate mark the nose and palate of this wine. This medium-bodied wine doesn't show much in the way of tannins, making it easy to drink now and probably best drunk up before 2020. Sancan Merchants, -J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$12

TAVEL

93 Château de Segries 2013 1022 mouthfilling and round, with ample melon and berry fruit, a sprinkling of dried spices and minimal herb notes. It actually drinks almost like a red wine for its weight and berry-scented richness, but remains refreshing on the long, mouthwatering finish. Drink now. Kysela Père et Fils. Editors' Choice. -J.C. **abv:** 14.5% **Price: \$22**

Château d'Aqueria 2015 Tavel. The 2015 Tavels are almost uniformly excellent, so it's no surprise that this bottling, from a large estate excels. Crushed stone and strawberry notes mark the nose, while the full-bodied palate folds in hints of savory, olive-like complexity. Drink now. Kobrand. Editors' Choice. -J.C.

abv: 14% Price: \$20 **91** Les Vignes des Prêcheurs 2015 Tavel. Fullbodied for a rosé (as Tavel should be), this wine boasts plenty of cherry-berry fruit, but also appealing, complex notes of fresh thyme, ground clove and aniseed. Drink this blend of 60% Grenache, 20% Cinsault, 10% Syrah and 10% Clairette (a white grape variety) over the rest of 2017. Saranty Imports. —J.C.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$22

90 Chateau de Manissy 2015 Cuvée de Lys (Tavel). A surprising 30% of this wine is Clairette, a white grape variety. Perhaps that accounts for the wine's apparent freshness. Hints of crushed stone mark the nose, while the ripe flavors suggest peaches and berries, tailing away slowly on the finish. Drink this mouthfilling rosé over the rest of 2017. Weygandt-Metzler. —J.C.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$18

Domaine de la Mordorée 2015 La Dame Rousse (Tavel). Despite Christophe Delorme's untimely passing before the 2015 harvest, this Tavel stands as a fine testament to his family's perseverance. It's full, round and rich, with cherry-berry fruit and hints of peach and crushed stone. Drink it over the rest of 2017. Kysela Père et Fils. —J.C.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$26

TUSCANY

BOLGHERI SUPERIORE

Guado al Tasso 2013 Bolgheri Superiore.

Made with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot,
Cabernet Franc and a drop of Petit Verdot, this polished linear red has aromas of black-skinned fruit,
bell pepper, coconut and toasted oak. The vibrant,
elegantly structured palate offers black currant,
chopped herb, clove and licorice alongside finegrained tannins. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —K.O.
abv: 14.5%

Price: \$125

Poggio al Tesoro 2012 Dedicato a Walter (Bolgheri Superiore). For full review see page

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$90

Ornellaia 2013 Bolgheri Superiore. A blend of 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 38% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 7% Petit Verdot, this opens with aromas of red currant, fragrant purple flower and exotic spice. The currant aroma carries over to the austere palate along with cranberry, chopped herb and French oak. With its backbone of firm acidity and assertive close-grained tannins, it already boasts finesse but will need years to soften and develop. Drink 2021–2028. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —K.O.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$240

Poggio al Tesoro 2013 Sondraia (Bolgheri Superiore). Aromas of black currant and a whiff of bell pepper slowly emerge on this hearty

blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Concentrated and robust, the palate offers cassis, black cherry, licorice and the heat of evident alcohol alongside big velvety tannins. LUX Wines. —K.O.

abv: 15% **Price:** \$50

Campo alla Sughera 2013 Arnione (Bolgheri Superiore). In this blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot, you'll find delicate aromas of cassis and allspice together with an herbaceous note. The smooth palate delivers mature black-skinned fruit alongside rounded tannins. Curious Cork Imports LLC. —K.O. abv: 14.5% Price: \$55

Fornacelle 2013 Guarda Boschi (Bolgheri Superiore). Made with 40% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Cabernet Franc, this opens with subtle aromas of black currant and baking spice. The palate offers red plum and vanilla alongside grainy tannins. Tradizione Imports. —K.O. abv: 14.5% Price: \$45

BOLGHERI

92 Ca' Marcanda 2013 Camarcanda (Bolgheri).

Black currant, exotic spice, grilled bell pepper and fragrant purple flower are some of the aromas you'll find on this elegant blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. The vibrant linear palate delivers raspberry, red currant, licorice, French oak and vanilla alongside bright acidity and fine-grained tannins. Terlato Wines International. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$145

91 Guado al Tasso 2013 Cont'Ugo (Bolgheri). Made entirely from Merlot, this offers subtle aromas of plum, French oak, menthol and a whiff of chopped herb. The round accessible palate shows blackberry jam, star anise, clove and mocha alongside lithe tannins and vibrant acidity. Enjoy 2018–2023. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —K.O.

abv: NA Price: \$60

Tenuta dei Pianali 2011 Coronato (Bolgheri). Underbrush, Mediterranean herb, sunbaked soil and a whiff of sea breeze are some of the aromas you'll find on this blend of 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc and 10% Petit Verdot. The round chewy palate offers dried black cherry, star anise, grilled bell pepper and espresso alongside velvety tannins. Enjoy over the next several years. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —K.O.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$4!

90 Ca' Marcanda 2014 Promis (Bolgheri). Aromas of underbrush, cut grass, Mediterranean scrub, red currant and spice take center stage along with a hint of menthol. The soft approachable palate offers blackberry, black currant, star anise,

vanilla and white pepper alongside bright acidity and supple tannins. Terlato Wines International. —K.O. abv: 13% Price: \$48

Donna Olimpia 1898 2014 Millepassi (Bolgheri). Made with 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot and 5% Cabernet Franc, this bold wine opens with aromas of black currant, cedar and exotic spice. The concentrated palate delivers blueberry jam, graphite, anise and clove alongside assertive tannins that leave a firm finish. Majestic Imports. —K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$58

90 Le Macchiole 2013 Rosso (Bolgheri). Made with 50% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc and 20% Syrah, this offers aromas of red plum, black currant and clove. The savory palate delivers black cherry, blueberry jam and licorice alongside smooth silky tannins. Vintus LLC. —K.O.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$32

Ca' Marcanda 2014 Magari (Bolgheri). Aromas of dark-skinned fruit, toast, mint and a whiff of espresso lead the nose on this Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc blend. The straightforward palate is on the lean side, offering raw red currant, coffee and star anise alongside firm acidity. Close-grained tannins leave a drying finish. Terlato Wines International. —K.O.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$60

Le Macchiole 2014 Rosso (Bolgheri). Aromas of black currant, French oak, coconut and espresso lead the nose on this polished easygoing Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Syrah blend. The soft accessible palate doles out black cherry, mocha and black pepper alongside supple tannins. Enjoy soon. Vintus LLC. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$32

Ambrogio e Giovanni Folonari 2015 Campo al Mare (Bolgheri). Made with 60% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot, this offers aromas of underbrush and prune. The dense palate delivers dried black cherry, espresso and a hint of licorice alongside chewy tannins. Drink through 2018. Kobrand. —K.O. abv: 14.5% Price: \$32

Donna Olimpia 1898 2014 Bolgheri. Made with 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot and 5% Cabernet Franc, this has aromas of dark-skinned berry, cedar and a whiff of exotic spice. The dense palate delivers black cherry and white pepper alongside round tannins. Enjoy soon. Majestic Imports. —K.O.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$NA

87 Guicciardini Strozzi 2014 Campo al Capriolo (Bolgheri). A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Syrah, this opens with delicate aromas suggesting black-skinned fruit and a whiff of cooking spice. The easygoing palate delivers

black currant and leather alongside round tannins. Montcalm Wine Importers. —K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$26

Fornacelle 2015 Zizzolo (Bolgheri). Made with 60% Merlot and 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, this has a shy nose that eventually gives up whiffs of plum and scorched earth. The simple and zesty palate delivers black-skinned fruit and a hint of cedar. Enjoy soon. Tradizione Imports. —K.O. abv: 14%

CHIANTI CLASSICO

95 San Felice 2013 Il Grigio Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). For full review see page 85. Editors' Choice.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$55

94 Fontodi 2013 Vigna del Sorbo Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). Initially closed, this elegant vibrant red slowly reveals alluring aromas of mature black-skinned fruit, French oak, violet and a whiff of new leather. The full-bodied polished palate delivers ripe black cherry, chopped mint, star anise and pipe tobacco alongside a backbone of fresh acidity and velvety tannins. It's still young and will be even better after a few more years in the cellar. Drink 2020–2033. Vinifera Imports. Cellar Selection. —K.O.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$80

93 Casa al Vento 2013 Foho Riserva (Chianti Classico). Elegantly structured, this opens with enticing scents of red berry, blue flower and a whiff of tilled soil. The vibrant palate is loaded with finesse, offering crunchy red cherry, strawberry, star anise and a hint of mineral alongside silky tannins and bright acidity. Drink through 2013. Votto Vines Importing. —K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$40

92 Castelli del Grevepesa 2012 Panzano Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). Made entirely with Sangiovese, this linear red opens with inviting aromas of pressed violet, iris, dark-skinned berry and a whiff of cake spice. The taut elegant palate offers succulent wild cherry, cranberry, white pepper and chopped herb set against firm refined tannins and fresh acidity. Drink 2018–2023. Votto Vines Importing. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$50

Q2 Castello di Bossi 2012 Berardo Riserva (Chianti Classico). Aromas of chopped mint, underbrush, spiced berry, toast and a whiff of iris take shape on this savory, approachable wine. Made entirely with Sangiovese, the ripe round palate offers dried cherry, raspberry, truffle and licorice framed in supple tannins. It finishes on a savory, almost salty note. Drink through 2020. Leonardo LoCascio Selections—The Winebow Group. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$30

91 Rocca di Castagnoli 2012 Poggio a' Frati Riserva (Chianti Classico). New leather, blue flower, wild berry and a whiff of oak-driven spice lead the nose. The savory chewy palate offers mature black cherry, raspberry, star anise, clove and menthol while lithe tannins provide polished support. Drink through 2019. Regal Wine Imports Inc. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$32

Gasa al Vento 2014 Aria (Chianti Classico). Fragrant and refined, this vibrant red boasts enticing scents of violet, wild berry, tilled soil and a whiff of new leather. The bright palate delivers juicy red cherry, crushed raspberry and a hint of dark baking spice alongside zesty acidity and polished tannins. Votto Vines Importing. Editors' Choice. —K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$30

Renieri 2013 Chianti Classico. Aromas suggesting toasted oak, sunbaked earth and a whiff of pressed violet lead the nose. The smooth, easygoing palate offers black raspberry, grilled herb and a hint of star anise alongside polished tannins and fresh acidity. Drink through 2018. Michelangelo Selections. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$20

Rocca delle Macie 2013 Famiglia Zingarelli Riserva (Chianti Classico). This linear red has attractive aromas of fragrant blue flower, red berry and chopped herb. The taut medium-bodied palate offers dried black cherry, red currant, white pepper and a note of dried sage alongside fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Palm Bay International. —K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$26

Triacca 2012 La Madonnina Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). Initially shy, the nose eventually reveals subdued aromas of dark berry, sunbaked earth and blue flower. The medium-bodied palate offers mature black cherry, anise and a hint of crushed herb while rounded tannins provide the framework. Drink through 2019. Wine Emporium.—K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$26

Canonica a Cerreto 2012 Chianti Classico.

Aromas of cassis, chopped herb and licorice lead the nose and carry over to the medium-bodied palate along with dried cherry and espresso. Finegrained tannins provide the framework. Drink soon to capture the remaining fruit. Holiday Beverage. —K.O. abv: 14%

Price: \$30

Castellani 2013 Campomaggio (Chianti Classico). Blue flower, tilled soil and darkskinned berry aromas lead the nose along with a balsamic note. The fresh enjoyable palate offers ripe black cherry, black raspberry, crushed herb and anise alongside smooth tannins. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —K.O.

abv: 12.5% Price: \$28

Gagliole 2013 Rubiolo (Chianti Classico). A blend of 90% Sangiovese and 10% Merlot, this easygoing red has aromas of underbrush, truffle, black plum and a whiff of toast. The soft round palate is already rather evolved, offering dried black cherry, clove and a hint of raisin alongside soft, supple tannins. It's extremely approachable, so enjoy soon. Vias Imports. —K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$20

La Castellina 2011 Squarcialupi Riserva (Chianti Classico). A blend of 90% Sangiovese, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Merlot, this opens with earthy aromas of truffle, scorched earth, violet and a touch of dark spice. The palate offers dried black cherry and ground pepper alongside fine-grained tannins. It also shows the heat of the vintage, so drink soon. Total Wine & More. —K.O. aby: 14% Price: \$39

Poggio ai Mandorli 2012 Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico). A blend of Sangiovese, 5% Merlot and 5% Syrah, this exhibits subdued aromas of underbrush, toast, French oak, chopped herb and prune. The ripe approachable palate offers dried cherry, pomegranate, leather and a funky hint of game alongside pliant tannins. Drink through 2019.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$30

D'Aquino Italian Importing Co. Inc. -K.O.

Renieri 2012 Riserva (Chianti Classico). The nose is initially shy but eventually reveals blue flower, toast and a hint of baking spice while the easy-drinking palate offers juicy wild cherry, white pepper and a note of grilled herb. It's soft and easy drinking, with polished tannins. Michelangelo Selections. —K.O.

abv: 14% Price: \$NA

Rocca delle Macie 2014 Tenuta Sant'Alfonso (Chianti Classico). This has aromas of darkskinned berry, blue flower, cooking spice and oak. The bright palate offers dried cherry, licorice and coffee framed in rounded tannins and firm acidity. Palm Bay International. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$26

Triacca 2012 La Palaia (Chianti Classico). A blend of 85% Sangiovese and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, this has subdued aromas suggesting scorched earth, coffee bean and a whiff of dark spice. The round palate offers dried black cherry, espresso and a hint of cake spice framed in pliant tannins. Drink soon to capture the remaining freshness. Wine Emporium. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$24

Bonacchi 2013 Casalino Riserva (Chianti Classico). Blue flower, iris, used leather and woodland berry aromas float out of the glass. The easygoing palate offers red cherry, white pepper and a hint of anise accompanied by soft relaxed tannins. Drink through 2017. Total Wine & More. —K.O. abv: 13% Price: \$15

Carpineto 2015 Chianti Classico. This opens with floral aromas of violet, iris and a whiff of sunbaked earth. The straightforward palate offers wild black cherry and a hint of dark spice alongside polished tannins. Enjoy through 2018. Opici Wines. —K.O.

abv: 13% Price: \$20

Triacca 2014 Bello Stento (Chianti Classico). This straightforward informal red offers aromas of dark berry and moist soil. The soft palate displays raspberry jam and a hint of dark spice. It's easy drinking, with supple tannins. Wine Emporium. -K.O.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$16

Castello di Bossi 2013 Chianti Classico. Forest floor, porcini mushroom, violet and a whiff of chopped herbs lead the nose on this simple red. The straightforward palate is on the thin side, offering red cherry, a suggestion of clove and a hint of game alongside relaxed, loose-knit tannins. Leonardo LoCascio Selections-The Winebow Group. -K.O.

abv: 14% Price: \$20

MONTECUCCO

Poggio Stenti 2013 Tribulo (Montecucco). Aromas of black cherry, tilled soil and a hint of dark spice lift out of the glass. The palate offers juicy wild cherry, cinnamon and white pepper while smooth tannins lend a polished texture. Romano Brands. -K.O.

abv: 14% **Price: \$30**

- Campinuovi 2014 mioneeeee 60% Sangiovese, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Merlot, this has a rather shy nose that slowly reveals aromas of fresh red berry, chopped herb and a whiff of espresso. The palate delivers black currant and white pepper notes accompanied by fine-grained tannins. Integrity Wines LLC. -K.O. abv: 13.5% Price: \$NA
- Campinuovi 2014 Montecucco. Made with organic grapes, this has subtle aromas of red cherry, leather and blue flower. Solid and fresh, the palate offers tart cherry, star anise and clove framed in supple tannins. Integrity Wines LLC. -K.O. **abv:** 13.5% Price: \$NA
- Poggio Mandorlo 2011 La Querce (Montecucco). Raspberry jam, prune and cake spice aromas unfold on this blend of 90% Sangiovese and 10% Merlot. The accessible palate offers dried black cherry, fig, star anise and toast alongside finegrained tannins. Matchvino. -K.O.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$25**

Poggio Mandorlo 2010 La Querce (Monte-Poggio manuolto 2010 _____ cucco). Made with 90% Sangiovese and 10% Merlot, this opens with aromas of prune and baking spice. The straightforward palate offers

dried black cherry, raspberry jam and toast alongside fine-grained tannins. Matchvino. -K.O.

abv: 14.5%

Assolati 2012 Montecucco. The nose isn't very expressive but eventually shows suggestions of leafy underbrush and sunbaked earth. The solid palate offers raspberry, tart cherry and a hint of ground pepper alongside firm tannins. Langdon Shiverick. -K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$23

Collemassari 2012 Poggio Ombrone Riserva (Montecucco). Hints of menthol and leather lead the nose on this robust red. The hearty, monolithic palate offers dried black cherry, clove and a hint of tobacco alongside firm tannins. You'll also detect the warmth of evident alcohol on the close. Domaine Select Wine & Spirits. -K.O.

abv: 15% **Price: \$67**

Palmoletino 2012 Scarafone (Montecucco). Made with 90% Sangiovese and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, this has subdued aromas of toast, underbrush and sunbaked earth. The round approachable palate offers mature black cherry and hints of cake spice. Vi Wines. -K.O.

abv: 14.5% **Price: \$15**

Peteglia 2012 Montecucco. You'll find subtle aromas of red cherry, scorched earth and clove on this solid red. The full-bodied palate delivers dried black cherry, tobacco and walnut. Fine-grained tannins leave a firm finish. Luisa's Selects. —K.O. **abv:** 14.5% **Price: \$25**

MORELLINO DI SCANSANO

92 Fattoria Le Pupille 2012 Riserva (Morellino di Scansano). Smooth and delicious, this opens with scents of rose, violet, perfumed berry, new leather and baking spice. The poised mediumbodied palate offers layers of juicy Marasca cherry, raspberry and star anise while silky tannins lend polished support. Drink through 2018. Leonardo LoCascio Selections-The Winebow Group. -K.O. abv: 13.5% Price: \$30

Fattoria Le Pupille 2012 Poggio Valente Riserva (Morellino di Scansano). This opens with aromas of black-skinned berry, blue flower, French oak and a balsamic whiff of menthol. The smooth, refined palate offers dried black cherry, dark spice and chopped herb alongside supple tannins. Leonardo LoCascio Selections-The Winebow Group. -K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$45

Poggio Argentiera 2013 Capatosta (Morel-Poggio Argentiera 2005 lino di Scansano). Fresh and polished, this opens with scents of wild berry, crushed aromatic herb and a whiff of violet. The bright linear palate offers wild cherry, anise and baking spice alongside

fresh acidity and lithe tannins. Enjoy through 2018. Dillman Wine Merchants. -K.O.

abv: 14% Price: \$22

Terre di Talamo 2012 Tempo Riserva (Morellino di Scansano). Made with 85% Sangiovese, 5% Alicante, 5% Cabernet and 5% Syrah, this opens with aromas of violet and Mediterranean brush. The juicy palate doles out black cherry, licorice and black pepper alongside supple tannins. Drink through 2019. Michelangelo Selections. $-\mathrm{K.O.}$ **abv:** 14% Price: \$NA

Val delle Rose 2013 Poggio al Leone Riserva (Morellino di Scansano). Fresh and easygoing, this opens with scents of berry, blue flower and a whiff of baking spice. The light-bodied, simple palate offers tart cherry, black currant and a hint of espresso alongside soft, not very persistent tannins. Terlato Wines International. -K.O.

abv: 14% Price: \$35

Bruni 2015 Marteto (Morellino di Scansano). This pretty red has an alluring fragrance of iris, violet, brown spice and crushed berry. The easygoing palate offers juicy black cherry, white pepper and a hint of espresso while lithe tannins lend support. Vias Imports. -K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price: \$22**

Guicciardini Survey 2013 (Morellino di Scansano). Enticing floral Guicciardini Strozzi 2015 Titolato Strozzi aromas of fragrant blue flower mingle with whiffs of fresh berry. On the easy-drinking savory palate, notes of white pepper and orange zest accent a core of wild cherry while supple tannins lend soft support. Drink through 2017. Montcalm Wine Importers. -K.O. abv: 14% **Price: \$23**

La Selva 2015 Morellino di Scansano. Sunbaked earth, mature black-skinned berry and brown spice aromas take center stage. The round easygoing palate doles out dried Marasca cherry, blackberry and a hint of star anise. Pliant tannins lend easy drinking support. Bon Vivant Imports. -K.O.

abv: 14% **Price: \$18**

La Selva 2013 Colli dell'Uccellina Riserva (Morellino di Scansano). Made with 85% Sangiovese and 15% Merlot, this has aromas of violet, black-skinned berry and a whiff of baking spice. The round, chewy palate offers ripe morello cherry, red currant, white pepper and a hint of game. Supple tannins and bright acidity give it an easy-drinking vibe. Bon Vivant Imports. -K.O.

abv: 14.5%

Marchesi de' Frescupata acc...
Riserva (Morellino di Scansano). Wild berry, dark brown spice, French oak and underbrush aromas lead the way. The medium-bodied palate displays ripe black cherry, cranberry, vanilla and dried aromatic herb alongside taut, tightly wound tannins. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —K.O.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$25

Poggio Argentiera 2015 Bellamarsilia (Morellino di Scansano). Fragrant and enjoyable, this offers aromas of ripe berry, Mediterranean herb, pressed violet and a whiff of pine forest. On the round easygoing palate, savory notes of brown cooking spice accent a core of red cherry and black raspberry. Enjoy through 2017. Dillman Wine Merchants. —K.O.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$14

Serpaia di Endrizzi 2010 Dono Riserva (Morellino di Scansano). Forest floor, menthol, espresso, cranberry and pressed violet aromas take shape in the glass. The lean linear palate shows dried sour cherry, licorice and coffee bean alongside assertive close-grained tannins. Even though the tannins are still firm, drink sooner rather than later to capture the remaining fruit. Artisan Wines, Inc. —K.O. abv: 14.5% Price: \$30

Val delle Rose 2015 Morellino di Scansano. This opens with aromas suggesting underbrush, scorched earth, chopped herb and dried berry. The straightforward palate delivers concentrated black cherry, black currant and dark spice set against rounded tannins. A coffee note signals the close. Terlato Wines International. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$20

Castellani 2015 Guadalmare (Morellino di Scansano). Woodland berry, blue flower, dried mint and a whiff of sunbaked soil take center stage on this easy-drinking red. The straightforward palate offers ripe red cherry and ground pepper alongside round, supple tannins. Mission Wine Company. —K.O.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$15

87 Cecchi 2015 La Mora (Morellino di Scansano). Mature dark-skinned berry, sunbaked earth and pressed blue flower aromas come together on this charming red. The easy-drinking palate doles out ripe black cherry, raspberry and clove while supple tannins provide the relaxed framework. Terlato Wines International. —K.O.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$18

Pattoria Le Pupille 2014 Morellino di Scansano. Delicately scented, this racy light-bodied red opens with whispers of blue flower, moist earth and woodland berry. The vibrant straightforward palate delivers raspberry, red cherry and a sprinkling of baking spice alongside zesty acidity and polished tannins. Drink now. Leonardo LoCascio Selections—The Winebow Group. —K.O.

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

Massi di Mandorlaia 2013 Mandorlaia Riserva (Morellino di Scansano). Aromas recalling Mediterranean brush, fresh violet, moist soil and a toasted note lead the way. The straightforward pal-

ate offers juicy wild cherry, dried sage, espresso and a hint of anise alongside lithe tannins. Enjoy soon. Downey Selections. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$34

Rocca delle Macie 2015 Campo Maccione (Morellino di Scansano). This bright, easygoing red opens with aromas of wild berry, violet and a hint of scorched earth. The enjoyable no-frills palate offers red cherry, raspberry and a hint of ground pepper framed in supple tannins. Enjoy through 2017. Palm Bay International. —K.O.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$16

Coli 2015 Morellino di Scansano. Fruity aromas of dark berry and scorched soil lead the nose on this informal red. The simple easygoing palate offers morello cherry and a hint of dried herb alongside soft, fleeting tannins. 8 Vini, Inc. —K.O. abv: 13%

Serpaia di Endrizzi 2014 Morellino di Scansano. Violet, iris, red cherry and a whiff of baking spice aromas carry over to the light-bodied, straightforward palate. It's easygoing, with supple tannins and bright acidity. Artisan Wines, Inc. —K.O. abv: 13% Price: \$19

Terre di Talamo 2013 Tempo (Morellino di Scansano). Here's a simple red with subdued aromas of red berry and a whiff of forest floor. The lean slightly diluted palate shows dried black cherry and a hint anise alongside soft, rather fleeting tannins. Drink now. Michelangelo Selections. —K.O. abv: 13.5%

Price: \$14

AUSTRIA

BI AUFRÄNKISCH

Heinrich 2013 Goldberg Reserve Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). This is still tightly closed: There are merely some notions of iron oxide on the nose, but otherwise this is brooding and mysterious. The palate, however, has something majestic and sumptuous about it—a warm heart of ripe and aromatic black and red cherry. This just needs to breathe and will unfurl like crimson velvet on your tongue. While this can be approached now as it is beginning to mellow, this will be even better in the years leading up to 2020. Very moreish. Weygandt-Metzler. —A.K.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$50

Jalits 2014 Szapary Reserve Blaufränkisch (Eisenberg). This is still very tightly coiled: the nose says little and the palate holds on tight to its beautifully pure blueberry fruit. There is lip-smacking freshness and a very finely woven tannin structure but this impressive wine does need time to come into itself and relax its fruit. There is something profound and stony about this, something mysterious,

brooding and wild. Cellar this and then rejoice. Drink 2020–2035. KWSelection.com. —A.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$34

Prieler 2013 Goldberg Blaufränkisch (Leithaberg). Very smoky notes of oak become apparent first. This needs some air to open more, when the initial smoke is followed by dark sumptuous floral-tinged berries. The peony-scented blueberry and bramble note is highlighted on the palate by fine freshness. The tannins are ultrafine and gentle, while the wine is full bodied but still taut. This is for the longer run. Drink 2020–2030. Skurnik Wines, Inc. —A.K.

abv: 15% Price: \$NA

93 Artner 2014 Kirchweingarten Reserve Blaufränkisch (Carnuntum). Sumptuous oak flavors of cinnamon, blueberry notes and spicy pepper make for an impressive olfactory trio. The palate comes across as velvety but fresh, echoing these same flavors, emphasizing pepper and blueberry. The structure is big and bold and fully supported by oak, but the crunchy fruit freshness holds the balance. This has a fruity finish and would need some hearty meat to be drunk now. Otherwise drink 2019–2029. Vintage Epicure. —A.K.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$45

Gunter Triebaumer 2014 Reserve Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). Soft aromatic notions of red cherry and blueberry, along with white pepper, rise from the glass. The palate brims with tart crunchy ripe fruit and emphasizes blueberry. There is a light touch here and lovely fluidity—the tannins are like starched velvet. This is refreshing and very elegant. It's neither light nor heavy, but just right and medium bodied, perfect for subtle cuisine. Magellan Wine Imports. —A.K.

abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$40

Prieler 2014 Blaufränkisch (Leithaberg). Rich vanilla notes of fine oak drape around dark fruit and iron oxide on the nose. The palate delivers the juicy fullness of crushed blackberry and bramble, along with the characteristic white pepper notes of Blaufränkisch. The fruit is aromatic and also has a cinnamon-tinged blueberry note. The body is smooth and flows with very soft tannins and immense freshness. Skurnik Wines, Inc. —A.K.

abv: 13% Price: \$NA

Heinrich 2015 Vom Weingebirge Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). Very dark, iron-oxide-tinged fruit lures you in. There also is a lot of pepper on the nose. The palate is full of dark crushed fruit: juicy blackberry, aromatic blueberry and red cherry. The tannins are supple and there is lovely freshness to the palate. This is vibrant, juicy, smooth and aromatic. Drink now-2022. Weygandt-Metzler. —A.K. abv: 13%

91 Nittnaus Anita und Hans 2014 Blaufränkisch (Leithaberg). The nose is still closed and just gives us a whiff of white pepper. The palate is beau-

BUYINGGUIDE

tifully slender and has a lighter touch of just-ripe blueberry and red cherry. There is a gentle silky grip and a lot of refreshing tart and delicious fruit. While 2014 was not an easy vintage for reds, this acquits itself with sassiness and grace. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —A.K.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$45

Heinrich 2015 Vitikult Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). Dark, chocolaty, juicy and rounded blackberries and blueberries take over completely on nose and palate. This is sumptuous, but not heavy and really vibrant with dark aromatic fruit. There is a hint of cinnamon and a touch of pepper on the mellow palate. Enjoy the rich exuberance. Weygandt-Metzler. —A.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$27

ST. LAURENT

Johanneshof Reinisch 2014 Frauenfeld St. Laurent (Thermenregion). Something floral and soft hovers above the fruit. There also is the rich hazel presence of fine oak. The fruit is beautifully luminous: very aromatic red cherry is drenched in the soft vanilla of oak. The tannins are silky but dense. White pepper shimmers everywhere, supported by the inherent freshness of the palate. This still needs time. Drink 2020–2030. Circo Vino. —A.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$40

93 R&A Pfaffl 2013 Altenberg Reserve St. Laurent (Niederösterreich). For full review see page 90.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$40

90 Stift Klosterneuburg 2014 Ausstich St. Laurent (Thermenregion). The dark red fruit is enveloped in the rounded, rich and chocolaty scent of oak. The palate shows a lighter side with delicate fruit of a red-cherry nature. Freshness sumptuous oak and red-cherry notes marry well. This is lovely now, but just a few more months in bottle will allow it to knit together more. Drink now through 2020. Boutique Wine Collection. —A.K.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$25

RED BLENDS

Peinrich 2011 terra o. (Burgenland). A roasted rich note of espresso and grilled pumpkin appears first. The palate is still dense with rich dark-berry fruit. This is full bodied but pervaded by freshness. The finely woven tannin structure is still very firm, very grippy, even though the fruit underneath it begins to show. This is now five years old and has barely begun its trajectory. Lovely now if you like full-bodied wines. Drink now through 2030. Weygandt-Metzler. —A.K.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$75

Gunter Triebaumer 2014 Blaufränkisch-Cabernet (Burgenland). A touch of roasted coffee clings

to the nose, otherwise it wants to give little away. The taut palate barely shows the dark fruit, so tight is it with a fine-grained tannin structure. This is dense and sumptuous, but has ample freshness as a counterweight. It still needs to mellow and show its fruit. Drink 2018–2025. Magellan Wine Imports. —A.K. abv: 14% Price: \$20

93 Netzl 2014 Anna-Christina (Carnuntum). The full-on blueberry fruit of Zweigelt is very evident on this peppery, vibrant and fresh-faced blend. There is structure from Cabernet that gives a

blend. There is structure from Cabernet that gives a firm backbone, but the plummy fleshiness of Merlot and the juiciness of crushed blueberry, tinged with cinnamon and white pepper brings oodles of joy. This is concentrated but totally approachable and chock-full of fruit. KWSelection.com. —A.K.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$65

92 Hillinger 2014 Hillside (Burgenland). The nose is still closed: There is just a hint of dark fruit. The palate lightens with expressive and finely drawn fruit. There is pepper-tinged red cherry, fine notes of cranberry and red currant. The fruit here is beautiful and taut; there is freshness, tension and real elegance. Tannins are supple and fine, and the body is unforced and fresh. KWSelection.com. —A.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$29

Netzl 2014 Edles Tal (Carnuntum). There is a dark brooding smell of black cherry and dark fruit of the forest, all held together with the chocolate tinge of smoky oak. The body is more fresh faced and lets the aromatic expressive fruit speak: It is juicy and vibrant, with a lovely pepperiness. The tannins are velvety and dense, but there is mellow flow and ample aromatic freshness. This strikes a good balance between sumptuous winemaking and pure fruit. KWSelection.com. —A.K.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$39

OTHER RED WINES

92 Gunter Triebaumer 2014 Gillesberg Cabernet Franc (Burgenland). The nose is tightly closed, yet there is the suspicion of fine fruit. The grippy palate brims with peppery dark-plum fruit and very fine distinct tannins that give this a taut, rigid frame that still needs to relax. This is unusual in so far that it is a Cabernet Franc from Austria, grown on slate. It works well: The tannic structure and fruit are fully expressed. This needs bottle age and will blossom into a far more relaxed and fruitful wine. Drink 2020–2030. Magellan Wine Imports. —A.K. abv: 13.5%

Price: \$47

92 R&A Pfaffl 2013 Burggarten Reserve Zweigelt (Niederösterreich). For full review see page 94.

abv: 14% Price: \$40

Artner 2014 Steinacker Reserve Zweigelt (Carnuntum). The sonorous smoke and cinna-

mon-tinged tone of oak surrounds this wine. On the palate, there is a sumptuousness that marries well with the full red-cherry fruit of Zweigelt. Beautifully edged with pepper, this is fresh but full bodied. Crunchy now but it will relax and mellow with time. Drink 2018–2022. Vintage Epicure. —A.K.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$45

SAUVIGNON BLANC

91 Lackner Tinnacher 2015 Ried Steinbach Sauvignon Blanc (Südsteiermark). A very slight
notion of hazelnut hovers on the fresh nose. The
palate comes with wonderful citric intensity of
ripe lemon and a dash of lime. That same smoky
hint stays on the palate throughout, adding an
extra dimension. The finish is pleasantly long and
refreshing. MS Walker. —A.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$40

Neumeister 2015 Klausen Sauvignon Blanc (Vulkanland Steiermark). Aromatic hints of tomato leaf and pea shoots make for a highly appetizing nose. The concentrated body adds lovely notions of ripe mirabelle plums and combines fulsome fruit with ample zest. The midpalate maximizes these flavors and leaves you with a very refreshing finish. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.—A.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$38

90 Lackner Tinnacher 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Südsteiermark). Mossy freshness and fragrance appear on the shy subdued nose. The wonderfully slender and sprightly palate is fresh and delicate. There is something subtle and lithe about this, which is very uplifting. The finish is refreshing and clean. MS Walker. —A.K.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$19

PINOT GRIS

Meinklang 2015 Graupert Natural Pinot Gris (Burgenland). Gorgeously lifted rich notes of orange zest fill the nose of this beautiful "orange" wine. Fermented on skins, it has all the elegance of white wine, combined with the tannic structure and backbone of red. Made from pink Pinot Gris grapes, this lends itself beautifully to this treatment and leaves us with an intriguing, concentrated, fresh and whistle-clean wine of great expression. Savor its salty orange-scented length. KWSelection.com. —A.K. aby: 13% Price: \$29

Meinklang 2015 Graupert Pinot Gris (Burgenland). There is a wonderfully aromatic element of something floral and tropical on the nose of this unusual Pinot Gris. The fruit expression is very ripe, reminiscent of melon and juicy pear, highlighted with pineapple and fresh lemon, but there also is ample zesty freshness for balance. If you thought you had tasted all that Pinot Gris has to offer, taste this one, which was created from unpruned vines left to their own devices and

bearing deliciously few clusters of delicious fruit. KWSelection.com. -A.K.

abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$19

PINOT BLANC

Prieler 2015 Pinot Blanc (Leithaberg). This is all about understatement: there is a waft of oyster shell on the nose, nothing more. The palate, however, displays ample depth of stony, almost salty intensity. There is nothing obvious about this wine, just depth and concentration that will take time to come into their own. This needs bottle age and will come out nutty, poised and rounded. Drink 2019–2030. Skurnik Wines, Inc. —A.K.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$NA

Prieler 2015 Ried Haidsatz Pinot Blanc (Leithaberg). A sonorous touch of vanilla lends its smoky aspect to the bright fruit of this intriguing Pinot Blanc. The palate, which is compact, streamlined and concentrated, revels in those smoky notes and will need time to unveil its gentle white-currant fruit. Lemony freshness preserves everything. This is one for the long run. Drink 2022–2030. Skurnik Wines, Inc. —A.K.

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

92 Ebner-Ebenauer 2015 Alte Reben Weissburgunder (Niederösterreich). This slender but expressive Pinot Blanc is possessed of a wonderfully light touch. Right now, yeasty tones still swing alongside the bright stone fruit but this will soon come into its own and show off the slender but distinct and food friendly nature of Pinot Blanc. Revel in the subtle stony depth and elegance of this wine. Its long finish tells you everything. Winemonger. —A.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$28

Netzl 2015 Bärnreiser Weissburgunder (Carnuntum). The nose is a very inviting and attractive mix of bright blossom honey and ripe lemon peel: the palate follows with rounded richness that is streamlined by lovely unobtrusive freshness. It's a generous but harmoniously balanced wine and certainly a very good take on the much underrated Pinot Blanc grape. KWSelection. com. —A.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$33

Martinshof 2015 Reserve Weissburgunder (Niederösterreich). A smoky, almost meaty tone of hazelnut is the first impression on the nose. This smokiness carries over onto the lemon zest, which defines the palate. This is poised and streamlined and will stand its gentle but firm ground at the table. Carlo Huber Selections. —A.K.

abv: 13% Price: \$NA

Hillinger 2015 Terroir Pinot Blanc (Burgenland). At present, the full hit of generous oak holds sway over this wine, bathing everything in shades of warm vanilla. The palate responds to this with freshness and some concentration at the core.

If you love the flavors of oak and generous roundedness, you will love this. KWSelection.com. —A.K. aby: 13% Price: \$35

CHARDONNAY

Anton Bauer 2015 Kreuzgang Chardonnay (Wagram). The merest touch of apricot caresses the vanilla and hazelnut notes of fine oak. The palate, on the other hand, conveys power and concentration, held tight and taut by lemon freshness. This will take a little while in bottle to unfold and should entice lovers of Chardonnay with its combination of bright freshness and lush fruit. KWSelection.com. —A.K.

abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$39

91 Gunter Triebaumer 2015 Geyerumriss Chardonnay (Burgenland). A wonderfully concentrated nose of hazelnut and fresh apple draws you in. The palate comes in with bundled freshness of lemon and bright precision. This is taut now, but will open up in good time. Lovers of unusual interpretations of Chardonnay are in for a treat. The lemony purity just lasts and lasts. Drink 2028–2025. Magellan Wine Imports. —A.K.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$30

Graf Hardegg 2015 Steinbügel Chardonnay (Niederösterreich). A hint of honey on the nose immediately gives the impression of richness. The palate obliges with mellow softness and generous vanilla and yellow plum notes. The texture is soft: lovers of creamy Chardonnay will be in heaven. World Wine Headquarters.—A.K.

abv: NA Price: \$39

OTHER WHITE WINES

Beder 2015 Traminer Smaragd (Wachau). Honeysuckle and lychee, peach and damask rose: These are the tell-tale aromas of Traminer. Here they acquire the extra precision and drive of the Wachau: fragrant grapefruit peel counters the decadent richness of the flavor and gives verve and life to all the aromatics. The finish is dry, satisfying and long. This will age well. Drink now through 2030. Slocum & Sons, Inc. —A.K.

abv: 14% **Price:** \$30

92 Johanneshof Reinisch 2015 Satzing Rotgipfler (Thermenregion). There is something both earthy and berry fruited on the nose: both dried and fresh fruit shine with richness. There is a totally unusual, lovely bitter edge to this fruit, like a marzipan richness at the edge of tart but with ripe fruit. Take this into your treasure chest of vinous curiosities: It more than deserves its place. This is dry but rich, tart but generous, and comes with its very own strong and forceful personality. Circo Vino. —A.K. abv: 14%

Neumeister 2015 Steintal Roter Traminer (Vulkanland Steiermark). The heady florality of damask rose is joined by powerful earthy forces to acquire a rich autumnal touch of ripe fruit and fragrance. The palate is wonderfully dry, precise and fresh: There is enough acidity here to brighten every last corner of flavor. This is both ethereal and earthy, elegant but firm, fragrant and fresh—from the first whiff to the last vestige of flavor on the tongue. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —A.K. abv: 13.5% Price: \$38

Johanneshof Reinisch 2015 Satzing Zierfandler (Thermenregion). Hints of fresh and dried white currant chart their course along a fault line of freshness. This Zierfandler, a real Austrian rarity, is a lip-smacking wine of great personality. The palate is both slender and generous. Savor this

abv: 14% Price: \$40

slowly and wisely. Circo Vino. -A.K.

Lackner Tinnacher 2015 Ried Eckberg Morilon (Südsteiermark). For now, flinty reduction rules the nose. The palate is threaded with freshness and ease. Mellow hints of oak echo in the lemony brightness and convey the sunny but cool climate of Styria perfectly. This is elegant, light and thankfully not overdone. The finish is pure apple. MS Walker. —A.K.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$25

90 Lackner Tinnacher 2015 Ried Gamitz Gelber Muskateller (Südsteiermark). The gentlest hints of honeysuckle and orange blossom flit about the nose. They have a fleeting teasing quality that makes you want to sip. The palate is rich, textured and almost oily, but saved by freshness and structure. Have this while the aromas are at their charming peak. MS Walker. —A.K.

abv: 13% **Price:** \$40

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SPIRITS

Meet the new, complex Irish Whiskey

When did Irish

whiskey become so

complex, dark and

intense?

raditionally, Irish whiskey has been praised for its approachable nature: gentle, fresh flavors, easy to mix into cocktails, affordably priced.

But that's no longer a given. The question that popped up over and over during this month's tastings: When did Irish whiskey become so complex, dark and intense?

Perhaps it's the influence of raucous American whiskeys and moody Scotches. The bottles of Irish now filling out shelves include special cask finishes (not just former Bourbon and Sherry casks, but also Malaga, Bordeaux, Madeira, even rum barrels) and

longer aging times (16, 18, 21 years and up).

Many of these are limited editions offered with lofty price tags. For example, look to Midleton's Dair Ghaelach bottling (\$270), a blend of 15- to 22-year-old whiskeys aged in barrels made of wood from one of 10 sustainably grown and harvested trees (the tree number is listed on the label). Noble endeavor or marketing gimmick? Either way, it's delicious.

Perhaps this change was inevitable. "The

perception that Irish whiskey is merely smooth and accessible—now we think that is almost insulting," says Bernard Walsh, chairman of the Irish Whiskey Association and founder of Walsh Whiskey Distillery. "We want to rise above that and show we are more complex." Mission accomplished.

Of course, plenty of light, grassy, fruity

Irish bottlings are still available too. Knappogue Castle 12 Year Old Single Malt or Kinahan's Blended surely would please traditional palates; so would a fun new bottling from Celtic rock favorite The Pogues.

As the category continues to evolve, Walsh recently traveled to Washington, where he and the Irish Ambassador to the U.S., Ann Anderson, met with U.S. government agencies and the Distilled Spirits Council. Their request: Give Irish whiskey protection as a geographic designation, similar to Bourbon.

In the meantime, Irish whiskey continues to surprise and delight, whether your taste runs to fruity and grassy or caramel-forward and intense.

—Kara Newman

96 Midleton Very Rare Irish Whiskey (Ireland; Pernod Ricard USA, New York, NY). Complex, robust, and hard to put down, this sipper offers big, buttery, toasty flavor. Look for crème brûlée and custard, caramel apple and brioche rounding into a gently spiced finish. Limited production.

abv: 40% **Price:** \$160

Barr an Uisce 1803 Single Malt Irish Whiskey (Ireland; Niche Import Co., Cedar Knolls, NJ). Balancing fruit, spice and oak, this 10-year-old whiskey offers enticing orchard and stone-fruit aromas warmed by a whiff of butterscotch. The palate opens with zingy baking spice and winds into a long exit with citrus peel and buttery brioche. A splash of water tames the spicy heat, but still leaves plenty of sprightly flavor.

abv: 46% **Price:** \$80

95 Green Spot Single Pot Still Irish Whiskey (Ireland; Pernod Ricard USA, New York, NY). The

bold, fruit aroma suggests fresh-cut apples and honeysuckle, while the silky palate offers deep, bold flavor. Look for dark honey and clove, edging into tea, oak and cocoa midpalate. Apple freshness brightens the dry finish. An ice cube is the only adornment needed for this well-structured, tasty sipper.

v: 40% Price: \$6

94 Midleton Dair Ghaelach (Ireland; Pernod Ricard, Purchase, NY). Made with a range of 15- to 22-year-old whiskies, this big, flavorful bottling will remind some of bourbon. Look for a rich amber color and caramel scent, and a robust palate with tons of vanilla, peach and a warming cocoa and espresso-tinged finish. Add a splash of water to balance out the high proof. Note: Each label is marked with the number of the tree (sustainably grown and harvested) from which the barrel was made, making this an ideal gift for an environmentally minded whiskey lover.

abv: 58.2% **Price:** \$270

Tullamore Dew Single Malt 18 Years Old (Ireland; William Grant & Sons, New York, NY).

A quartet of casks (Bourbon, Sherry, Port, Madeira) provide a spice-cake-like sipper. The complex, drying palate opens with candied citrus peel and almond, warms up with hints of molasses, ginger and vanilla, and finishes with rounded toffee, cocoa and spice. **abv:** 41.3% **Price:** \$110

Malt (Ireland; Castle 12 Year Old Single Malt (Ireland; Castle Brands, New York, NY). The aroma is enticingly bright and fruity, like fresh pears, while the palate is silky and mellow. A fruity core is layered with vanilla, hints of salted butterscotch and buttery croissant, plus a light sprinkle of cinnamon and clove. Best Buy.

abv: 40% **Price:** \$42

93 Powers John's Lane Release Aged 12 Years (Ireland; Pernod Ricard USA, New York, NY).

A dark, moody, almost Scotch-like take on Irish whiskey. The concentrated aroma suggests caramel and vanilla. Meanwhile, the velvety palate starts at caramel but quickly deepens to dark chocolate, molasses and coconut, teased at the edges by campfire smoke and mint, finishing with anise and black pepper heat. Think of s'mores held a little too long at the fire and you get the idea.

abv: 46% **Price:** \$70

The Tyrconnell 10 Year Old Sherry Cask (Ireland; Beam Suntory, Chicago, IL). Break out the water and ice, because this Sherry-finished single malt is packing plenty of alcohol heat. That said, there's also plenty of flavor: vanilla and butterscotch, plum and dried apricot, plus baking spice and a whiff of smoke in the finish.

abv: 46% **Price:** \$75

Jameson The Cooper's Croze (Ireland; Pernod Ricard USA, New York, NY). This new blended Irish whiskey is intended to showcase flavors imparted by the barrel. (A cooper makes barrels; a croze is a tool used to cut grooves in the barrel.) Look for a bright, fresh scent layered with fresh pear and sweet vanilla, which is echoed on the palate. Adding water coaxes out more vanilla, crème brûlée and baking spice. A real sipper, this whiskey warms all the way down.

abv: 43% **Price:** \$70

Years (Ireland; Craft + Estate—The Winebow Group, New York, NY). This golden whiskey has a gentle honey aroma and complex, layered flavor. Look for waxy honey, white flowers, dusty plum and black pepper tingle, finishing long, with a brisk, drying feel. abv: 46% Price: \$69

Slane Irish Whiskey Blend (Ireland; Brown-Forman, Louisville, KY). An easy, elegant sipper, look for a gentle vanilla-caramel-almond profile on the nose and palate as well as a silky feel. Mild baked pear and dried apricot midpalate wind into a cinnamon and clove finish. Sip or mix. Best Buy. abv: 40% Price: \$30

BEER

Red and wild

ild beers (those fermented with wild yeasts and bacteria) have gone mainstream. Well, maybe not totally mainstream, but they're certainly enjoying a moment, with many beer drinkers turning to the style to experience exciting, eye-opening beers.

American wild ales are particularly popular. They are a result of American brewers tak-

Among the

best and most

renowned

selections are

Belgium's Flanders

red ales.

ing classic European styles and techniques stateside, oftentimes creating their own specialized equipment (like coolships, a type of fermentation vessel) or adding fruits or spices.

Many domestic breweries are looking for ways to meet this increased demand. The team at The Bruery, for example,

recently created a new brand line, called Bruery Terreux, with a dedicated space, equipment and staff to concentrate on farmhouse-style wild and sour ales. The result is more unique bottlings, like the playful Frucht line and the Oude Tart with Boysenberries reviewed below.

But for many, European "wild" styles are sacred, and among the best and most renowned

selections are Belgium's Flanders red ales. The style is epitomized by the beers of Rodenbach brewery, founded in 1836. These brews reflect regional brewing traditions—the beer is aged for up to two years, often in huge oak vessels which contain the wild yeasts and bacteria needed to sour the beer, and old and young beers are blended to balance sourness and acidity.

Typically light- to mediumbodied, with mahogany-like coloring, they are notorious for pronounced sour, tart and fruity aromas and flavors produced by wild yeast strains and bacteria. Those characteristics are balanced by a malty core and rich fruit flavors. A tannic texture and dry finish come

from oak aging. They are complex beers that are frequently compared to fine red wines in their acidic and textural attributes, and can often age gracefully for years after release.

Whether you're eager to taste new-school pours or turn to the tried-and-true classics, it's hard not to enjoy such wild explorations.

Prost! —Lauren Buzzeo

Rodenbach Caractère Rouge Limited Edition Ale (Flanders Red Ale; Brewery Rodenbach, Belgium). This is a selection that, if you find it, should absolutely not be missed. It starts with Rodenbach's Vintage Ale, which is macerated with cranberries, raspberries and sour cherries for six months and then refermented in bottle. The result is a stunning, complex and remarkably balanced beer. A gorgeous ruby-mahogany color, with a light head that falls fast, it leads with vibrant scents of fresh whole cherry and berry that are accented by waves of oak and sour fruit. The palate is forward in flavor, yet surprisingly smooth and refined, with medium carbonation and refreshing sour acidity that balance the ripe red-fruit characteristics. The elegant finish boasts notes of dried cherry, raspberry, cocoa and wood that linger long. It's not over-the-top in any one trait, and is a beer that exemplifies how poised and well-composed a fruited Flanders ale can be. Latis LLC.

abv: 7% **Price:** \$23/750 ml

Rodenbach Grand Cru Ale (Flanders Red Ale; Brewery Rodenbach, Belgium). For many, Rodenbach's Grand Cru is the benchmark Flanders red, or at the very least, a top example of the classic Belgian style. A mix of 1/3 young ale and 2/3 two-year-old ale that's aged in oak foeders, it pours a slightly muddied, dark mahogany-cherry color, with a tan head that fades fast. Tart, wild notes of vinegar, green apple, leather, barnyard and musty oak dominate the nose, while fruity tones of dark cherry and fig offer support. The mouthfeel is alive and invigorating, yet smooth and accessible, with great acidic lift and freshness that are countered by slightly plush red-fruit flavors and lingering toasted-wood and oak-spice accents. Soft, fine tannins frame the dry finish. Latis LLC.

abv: 6% **Price:** \$16/11.2 oz 4 pack

96 Rodenbach Vintage 2013 Limited Edition Ale (Flanders Red Ale; Brewery Rodenbach, Belgium). A foederbier, or single-foeder beer, this

vintage release was aged for two years in foeder No. 149, the 59-year-old foeder that was selected by Brewmaster Rudi Ghequire as the top performing vat of the year. It is a well-balanced and complex brew, showing its youth right now in assertive acetic characteristics, tannic texture and tight, wiry red-fruit tones, suggesting it is a beer that will evolve and mature well through 2019, at least. Currently, dried cherry, raspberry, Granny Smith apple, toasted oak, sour funk and balsamic vinegar notes dominate, with accents of wood spice and lemon oil on the dry, pleasantly astringent finish. Sour yet smooth on the palate, it's supported by just-enough sweet fruit tones. Latis LLC.

abv: 7% **Price:** \$19/750 ml

Bruery Terreux 2016 Oude Tart (Flanders Red Ale; Bruery Terreux, California). This selection, a Flemish-style red ale aged in red-wine oak barrels for up to 18 months, is an excellent American interpretation of the traditional Belgian style. It's currently drinking quite young and austere, pouring a rich mahogany color with initial fruity aromas of tart cranberry and cherry that are laced with hints of Bretty funk, vinegar, vanilla and oak. The smooth yet lively palate offers more of the same, though the fruit veers towards a darker spectrum (think plum, date and fig) coupled with notes of caramel and toasted oak before turning back towards lively, sour red-fruit characteristics and a leathery accent on the long close.

abv: 7.7% **Price:** \$20/750 ml

Bruery Terreux 2015 Oude Tart with Boysenberries (Flanders Red Ale; Bruery Terreux, California). This brilliant dark-pink pour is made from Terreux's Oude Tart Flemish-style red ale, with over two gallons of boysenberry purée added to each barrel during the final stage of aging. The result is a vibrant and fruit-forward beer, with intense scents of fresh boysenberry and raspberry that are hit by musty oak, earth and wild funk. The palate follows through on the fruity aromas, lifted by tart notes of balsamic and lactic acid that enliven the rich fruit flavors and smooth buttery-oak tones. The round mouthfeel boasts ample carbonation, while soft tannins and notes of vanilla and leather grace the finish.

Rodenbach Classic Ale (Flanders Red Ale; Brewery Rodenbach, Belgium). Don't let the fact that this is Rodenbach's "entry-level" beer deter you—while it's the most approachable and accessible of the bunch, it's certainly not light on flavor or experience. A blend of 75% young ale and 25% two-year-old ale aged in oak foeders, it pours a hazy brown color, with mahogany-red glimmers. The bouquet is bright and fresh, brimming with ripe raspberry and strawberry aromas that are accented by hits of forest floor, vinegar and wild funk. The palate is light and refreshing, with medium carbonation and abundant flavors of tart green apple and white grape. Rich accents of caramel, vanilla and sweet spice dance softly on the end. Latis LLC.

abv: 5.2% **Price:** \$13/11.2 oz 4 pack



THE JOKE'S ON ME

A satiric wine writer thinks twice about being taken seriously.

2016, Donald Trump was elected President of the United States, the Chicago Cubs won the World Series, and the HoseMaster of Wine won a Louis Roederer International Wine Writers Award. Which was the unlikeliest? The answer is (D): all of the above.

For the past six years, as part of my prison release program (I received a 10-year sentence for impersonating a sommelier, which is what I thought sommeliers do), I've been writing a satiric wine blog called HoseMaster of Wine. There's a chance you've heard of me. I'm relatively famous in the wine business, sort of like how Pauly Shore is a celebrity. Proof there is no God.

I began my blog after being stunned by the misinformation and lack of talent in most wine blogs. I went after wine bloggers relentlessly, somewhat famously remarking that wine blogs were just the attention-barking of lonely poodles. There are still upset poodles that won't hump my leg.

Bloggers were easy targets. Once I had rediscovered my comedy writing voice (it turned out to be behind the refrigerator), I began to use it on more famous wine targets. I insulted accredited masters with abandon. I lampooned every great wine writer, as well as Jay McInerney.

In the grand tradition of satire, I didn't hold back on the profanity, raucousness, tastelessness or buffoonery. I wrote for myself, which isn't easy when you're functionally illiterate. I never pulled punches, and my background in the wine business gave me some authority. Slowly, I was discovered. I became infamous.

You might be surprised to learn that wine blogs don't make any money. They're

like your brother-in-law: They exist to call attention to themselves and borrow cash. I write for the simple pleasure of creating something that will make people laugh. But not at themselves, because who likes that? No, we're meant to laugh at other people (that's why they exist, after all). Turns out most people in the wine business are like Chardonnay—thin-skinned and white.

Four years ago, the great British wine writer Tim Atkin, MW, asked me to write a monthly piece for his website. He insisted I nominate myself for a Louis Roederer International Wine Writers Award. I told him that I was more likely to win the Kentucky Derby—then be put out to stud.

One day last year, I awoke to a message from Tim that I was on the short list for an award alongside writers the caliber of Andrew Jefford and Jane Anson. Which is like Howie Mandel having a byline in the *New York Times*. It was an honor to be nominated, but I really wanted to win. Let's face it, just being nominated is for losers.

The awards ceremony was held in London. I didn't attend. I was told that when my name was announced as the winner, a great roar of approval went up. I attribute this to indigestion. The room was filled with famous people in the wine business, nearly all of whom I had insulted. Yet, I was named "Online Communicator of the Year."

The art of satire was finally given a seat at the wine-writing table. It just goes to show you that insulting people, belittling people and adopting an arrogant stance will take you right to the top. You know, I hate to complain, but Trump stole my act.

A recovering sommelier, Ron Washam writes the syndicated HoseMaster of Wine column.

...Wines have feelings, too, you know.

The Somms are a strange people, only recently discovered by Westerners. Little is known about where they originated...

Not all of you will want to wade through this sentimental garbage. I don't blame you

They want to know how I decide what numbers I give to wines. Let me just say this. It's none of your damn business. It's not.

The Sommish are a superstitious people. They stroke Coravins for luck, knowing they don't really work.

I pissed off folks at the Court of

Master Sommeliers enough that



















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