

Wine Spectator

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WINE VALUE OF THE YEAR

SMART BUYS

**Editors' Picks for
\$40 and Under**

TOP 10 WINE VALUES TO BUY NOW

NEW YORK WINE EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

PLUS

Portugal Tasting Report

Vintage Port Tasting Report



Sparkling and favorite white varieties from California and New Zealand, reds from Italy and Argentina, an Oregon Pinot Noir—all are on offer among our Top Values picks. Turn to page 52 for the stories behind each of them, starting with our Value of the Year.



52 Top 10 Values

COVER STORY

52 Top 10 Wine Values Finding a terrific bottle of wine at a great price can be easier said than done, so our editors have done some of the homework for you in this annual story, highlighting 10 wines that stand out for their combo of quality, affordability and availability. Coming from around the world, they represent their growing regions at their most budget-friendly, and there's something for every palate. Taking top honors is our Wine Value of the Year: a California red from a historic producer • *Tim Fish, Alison Napjus, Aaron Romano, Bruce Sanderson and MaryAnn Worobiec*

60 150 Smart Buys From the coastal reaches along the Pacific to the mountainous terrain of the Andes to the fertile river valleys of Central Europe, there are countless wine regions worthy of exploration. But who wants to overspend as they seek out their next go-to bottles? Let this expansive compendium of recently reviewed wines, handpicked by our well-traveled editors, be your guide. All score 90 or more points and cost \$40 or less (many of them much less), overdelivering on quality for the price • *Kristen Bieler, Tim Fish, Alison Napjus, Aaron Romano, Bruce Sanderson and MaryAnn Worobiec*

Features

TASTING REPORTS

82 Portuguese Shopping Spree Opportunity knocks for consumers as the country's table wines, both reds and whites, reach new heights of quality while prices remain affordable • *Alison Napjus*

90 Port, Young and Old When choosing among the 2022 Vintage Ports, single-*quinta* bottlings dominate among the top wines, while a cadre of newly released tawnies have been aged to maturity and are ready to drink • *James Molesworth*

EVENTS

28 New York Wine Experience The 43rd annual gathering reunited wine lovers and wine luminaries for a weekend of awe-inspiring tastings and info-packed seminars • *Mitch Frank, with Collin Dreizen, Owen Dugan, Julia Larson, Kenny Martin, Keith Newton, Dana Nigro, Olivia Nolan and Robert Taylor*

The **TOP 10** **VALUES** of **2024**

Our editors spotlight the best-priced wines of the year

There is no single formula for identifying great value when it comes to wine. Growing conditions, vintage variations, winemaking styles and personal tastes can all change from year to year, making any hard-and-fast rules difficult to pin down. What is clear is that a range of high quality wines are being made around the world at affordable prices. That's why, for the fourth year in a row, we've enlisted *Wine Spectator's* team of editors to select the top values of the past 12 months. How do producers making such good wines keep their costs down and their production figures up? It's different from region to region, but our process of selection focuses on wines that express the distinctive character of a specific appellation or variety while keeping prices low through innovative methods in the vineyard and cellar.

This list is capped by our choice for Wine Value of the Year. All of the wines rated 90 points or higher on *Wine Spectator's* 100-point scale, cost \$40 or less and were made in large-enough quantities to be widely available. From Sonoma to Tuscany to Mendoza, the wines on this list all showcase top-tier winegrowing regions at their most budget-friendly, each of them finding a way to overdeliver on quality for the price. We hope you'll take this opportunity to explore a new category or find your next go-to bottle.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
JEFF HARRIS

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Roederer Estate

Brut Anderson Valley NV | 93 | \$32 | CALIFORNIA

This California outpost of Champagne Louis Roederer not only produces a consistently top-rated sparkling wine with its L'Ermitage bottling, but also makes one of the state's most reliable values with this non-vintage Brut Anderson Valley. "Your non-vintage is your bread and butter," says winemaker Arnaud Weyrich, who blends in some of his best juice and oak-aged reserve wine for the NV bottling. "Even if it's a good vintage, you have to hold back some of the best lots to keep your non-vintage to the standard." The winery relies on 620 acres of estate vineyards in the remote Anderson Valley of Mendocino County. Cool evening temperatures and fog from the Pacific Ocean lend vibrant acidity to the grapes. A blend of 60% Chardonnay and 40% Pinot Noir, this bottling was aged on the yeast in bottle for nearly two years. 85,000 cases made. —T.F.



Ruffino

Chianti Classico
Ducale Riserva 2019

92 | \$25 | ITALY

Founded in 1877, Ruffino is one of Chianti Classico's historic estates. Its *riserva* was first produced in 1890, one of the few wines aged in chestnut barrels for a year before release. The Duke d'Aosta was so impressed with this wine that Ruffino became the supplier to the Royal House of Savoy. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the company, Ruffino dedicated its flagship *riserva* to the duke with the 1927 vintage, thus beginning the Ducale Riserva label. Selected grapes are sourced from Ruffino's estate vineyards in Chianti Classico. Additional grapes are purchased through growers with long-term relationships controlled by a Ruffino agronomist. The blend is 80% Sangiovese, plus 20% Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Colorino from Ruffino's estates. After fermentation in stainless steel tanks, the Sangiovese is aged in 10,000-liter oak casks, while the other grapes are aged in 2-year-old *barriques*, all for about one year. Additional aging occurs in concrete vats for six to eight months, plus three months in bottle before release. From the excellent 2019 vintage, this Chianti Classico is hitting its stride now. 75,000 cases imported. —Bruce Sanderson

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Argyle

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley
2022 | 92 | \$28 | OREGON

Argyle was part of the second generation of Willamette Valley wineries that arrived in the late 1980s and followed in the footsteps of 1960s and '70s pioneers such as Eyrie and Adelsheim. Located in the city of Dundee, the winery continues to be one of Oregon's most dependable Pinot Noir producers, and this

Willamette Valley bottling is the best bargain in the portfolio. The 2022 comes from all four of Argyle's estate vineyards, sources that span the entire valley. Winemaker Nate Klostermann ferments the Pinot in hundreds of small lots. "Between our Lone Star and Spirit Hill vineyards in the Eola-Amity Hills, Giving Tree Vineyard in Polk County, and Knudsen Vineyard in the Dundee Hills, we have built a vineyard program that showcases the diversity of the Willamette Valley," Klostermann says. Spirit Hill provides acid and tannins. Knudsen lends silky and floral notes. Lone Star offers richness and roundness, while Giving Tree provides the wine with its darkest fruit. 55,000 cases made. —T.F.

