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## RIOJA

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- 10 PRODUCERS TO WATCH
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Bodegas LAN  
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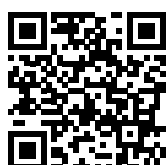
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*Rioja is among America's most consumed foreign wines, with a reputation for stylistic consistency forged by traditional methods over time. Now, joining the old guard is a new wave of producers exploring micro-terroirs and a range of winemaking techniques.*



32 Special report: Rioja

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Cover photograph by Lucy Schaeffer





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### OUR TOP-SCORING WINE THIS ISSUE

Château Pichon Longueville  
Lalande Pauillac 2022  
**98 POINTS, \$234**

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## WINE SPECTATOR'S PRIVATE GUIDE TO DINING

WORLD'S BEST RESTAURANTS FOR WINE



Angela DeCenzo  
Lazy Bear, known for its selection of aged California wines, won its first Grand Award in 2024.

### 16 Standout Wine Restaurants in the San Francisco Bay Area

With one of the country's strongest dining scenes, San Francisco is flush with culinary options. These 16 *Wine Spectator* Restaurant Award-winning spots each boast stacked wine lists alongside picture-worthy plates sure to

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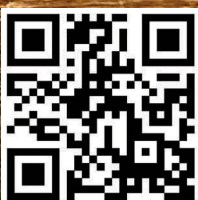
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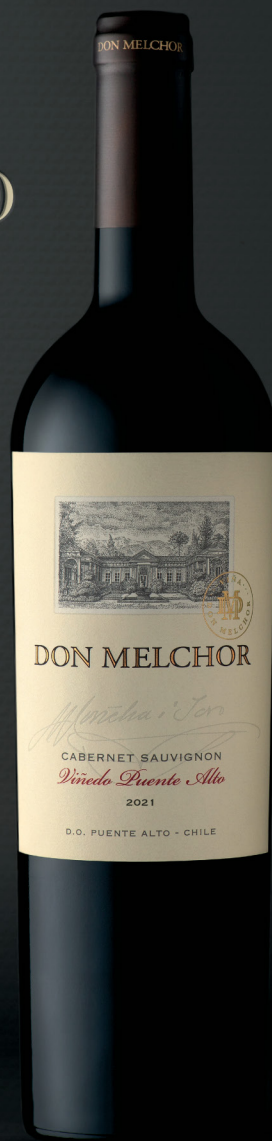


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DISCOVER MORE





## Rioja Reigns in Spain

**T**he wines of Spain, including those of its iconic Rioja region, have long been the subject of an annual tasting report in the pages of *Wine Spectator*. They also feature prominently on many of our trademark lists, including the Top 100. In 2020, Bodegas Marqués de Murrieta, one of the founding wineries in Rioja, was awarded the Wine of the Year honor for its Tempranillo-based red Rioja Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva Especial 2010 (96 points, \$139). However, the last time that we took a deep dive and focused specifically on Rioja on our cover was Oct. 15, 2012.

Given the excitement over the 2021 vintage in Rioja and the fact that the region is coincidentally celebrating 100 years since its formal recognition in 1925, I dispatched senior editor Alison Napjus, lead taster on the wines of Spain, to pay a visit. For this issue's cover story, she shares what she discovered throughout a week of tasting, touring and meeting with many wine producers, 10 of which are profiled in greater depth.

"My recent trip and my tastings in the past year really pushed the boundaries in my mind of what I consider 'Rioja.' I think top traditional bodegas are offering wines in an expected style but with unexpected depth and subtle distinction. At the other end of the spectrum there are many new wineries and winemakers influenced by travel to Burgundy, Rhône and Germany," she says.

Napjus paints Rioja as a dynamic region with an expanding range of wine styles and ever greater quality. You can learn more about Rioja's traditional designations along with the emerging focus on *terroir*, reflected in more site-specific bottlings, including single-vineyards, beginning on page 32.

For her formal tasting report, beginning on page 50, Napjus blind-tasted more than 300 wines from Rioja in our New York office. Because cellar aging is a common practice for the region, they span vintages across two decades. But the quality of the 2021 vintage eclipses any previously reviewed by *Wine Spectator*, earning a classic rating of 97 points overall. These are wines you don't want to miss.

**T**he news is equally bright from Bordeaux, where senior editor and lead taster James Molesworth rates the newly released 2022 vintage 95 points on the Left Bank and 97 on the Right Bank. It's a reminder of how quickly fortunes can turn, following on the heels of a dismal 2021. Having blind-tasted and reviewed nearly 400 wines for his report, Molesworth writes that the overall strength of the 2022s is clear, crowned by his "wine of the vintage," Cheval Blanc, earning 99 points. This achievement is even more impressive considering its production of 6,845 cases and reasonable price



of \$670. Bordeaux fans will find many more reasons to celebrate across Molesworth's list of recommended wines from this beautiful vintage, beginning on page 66.

Not to be outdone, Chile also chalks up its best vintage in recent memory. Having tasted more than 140 wines from the 2021 vintage overall, our lead taster on the wines, senior editor Aaron Romano, rates the year 95 points. A trio of newly released 2021s top this report's list of recommended reds from the vintage, all three scoring 95 or more points and priced at \$170 or less. Romano also looks at some 2022s, another year showing excellent potential.

Finally, I am happy to welcome chef Tom Colicchio back to our pages with a handful of recipes from his new book. I think you will find them perfect for spring and to pair with many of the exceptional wines in this issue.

Marvin R. Shanken  
Editor and Publisher



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## Grand Award Winner Tribeca Grill Closes

BY JULIA LARSON

In 1990, on a sleepy corner of Lower Manhattan's Tribeca neighborhood, chef and restaurateur Drew Nieporent (the force behind fine dining venues Montrachet and Nobu) and Academy Award-winning actor Robert De Niro caused a stir with the opening of Tribeca Grill. In the decades that followed, the *Wine Spectator* Grand Award winner's dining room was filled with Hollywood stars, wine world legends and lovers of the good life. Now, those days have come to an end. After an announcement in February, the restaurant served its last meal March 1.

"People love these [fine dining] institutions, but this generation [of diner] in New York City, for whatever reason they don't revere them," Nieporent told *Wine Spectator*. "Tribeca Grill is a place that's lasted 34 years; our food's good, our wine is good, we have spectacular staff, but there's got to be a time to move on. Just like a Broadway show: There's a time to open, there's a time to close."

To Nieporent and longtime wine director David Gordon, the closure of Tribeca Grill is indicative of larger changes in fine dining. More guests are looking to outer boroughs like Brooklyn and Queens to dine, Nieporent says. Gordon also mentions inflation and higher labor costs.

In its first years, Tribeca Grill only had 60 wines on its list, says Gordon. He made it his mission to expand, cementing the restaurant's place in the Manhattan wine scene and earning *Wine Spectator*'s prestigious Grand Award every year since 2002.

"With the publicity from *Wine Spectator* and the Grand Award, it propelled us again to be as much of a wine destination as it was a celebrity food destination," said Gordon. An array of characters came in—from basketballers looking for iconic bottles to wine industry stars hosting dinners. "Bruce Springsteen came in and played in our party room for 200 people on more than one occasion," said Gordon. "Everybody you can imagine: Mick Jagger, Paul McCartney ... [it] makes it a little more interesting than just when my family comes here."

The restaurant was known for elevated New American dining, such as pan-roasted Amish chicken with feather-light whipped potatoes, butternut squash ravioli with sage and brown butter, or the decadent



From left: Owners Drew Nieporent and Robert De Niro, wine director David Gordon and managing partner Marty Shapiro



Tribeca Grill earned the *Wine Spectator* Grand Award in 2002.

"Daily Burger" topped with a cheese-and-ale sauce and bacon-onion jam. With its brick-lined interior, sizable oak bar and tiled floors, it managed to pair a uniquely Manhattan blend of fine dining and comfort.

The wine program focused on exceptional selections—particularly from the Rhône and Châteauneuf-de-Pape—and

great value. Over the years, Tribeca Grill jump-started the careers of dozens of wine industry leaders, each graduating from the "David Gordon School of Wine." "The most important thing I taught them was to not be snobby about wine and to treat our customers with respect no matter what they ordered," said Gordon.

Is this the final chapter? Nieporent said there are no plans for the 100-year-old building, which is owned by De Niro, or the multiple levels of space Tribeca Grill occupies, which is owned separately by the restaurant. But media reports have said that chef and restaurateur Jean-Georges Vongerichten is in talks to take over the space. Vongerichten operates dozens of restaurants across the globe, including his eponymous Grand Award winner, Jean-Georges in Manhattan. Vongerichten would not comment on any potential deal.

"[We're] losing a restaurant that stood the test of time, and that was part of the food and wine community of New York," said Nieporent. "But New York is just a great city. I spent 34 years—which is half my life—with this restaurant. I'm so very proud of it, very happy." □



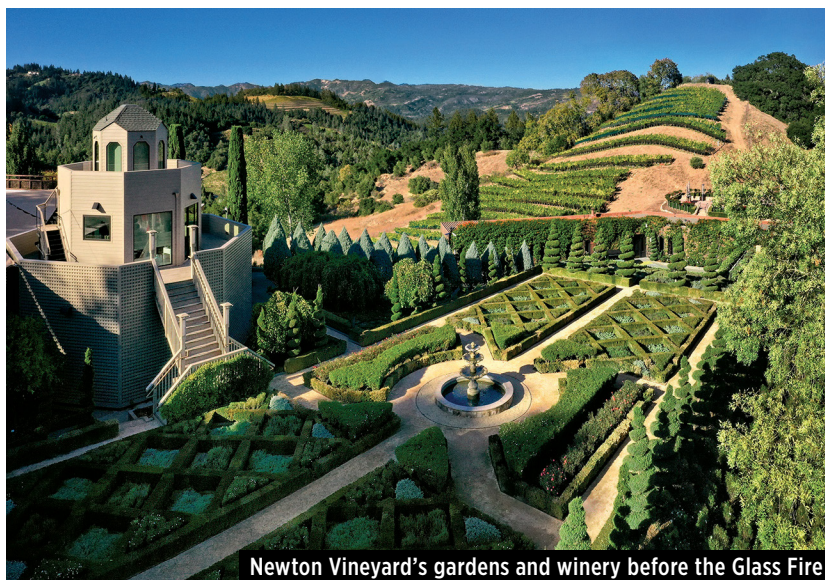
# Napa's Historic Newton Vineyard Will Close

In a brief statement to its wine club members, Napa's Newton Vineyard announced Feb. 13 that the winery is permanently closing. "We have cherished every moment spent crafting exceptional wines and sharing them with our dedicated wine club members," the announcement read. The winery, owned by luxury giant LVMH since 2001, was destroyed in the 2020 Glass Fire and has been making wine in a temporary space since. The statement cited the fire as the reason ownership made the difficult decision.

Newton was founded in 1977 by Peter Newton, an English journalist, Oxford-trained lawyer and paper magnate. With the help of then-wife Su Hua, he built Newton into a jewel of a boutique winery at the base of Spring Mountain, just uphill from St. Helena. LVMH acquired a majority stake in 2001. Peter Newton died in 2008 at 81, and his family held on to a 10% ownership stake.

By 2020, the estate had 74 acres of vines divided into 70 different blocks, most on steep hillsides ranging in elevation from 500 to 1,600 feet and planted primarily to Cabernet Sauvignon. The winery also owned estate vineyards in Mt. Veeder, Yountville and Carneros. LVMH had invested \$10 million to renovate the winery and convert the vineyards to certified organic farming.

But it was Newton's Unfiltered Chardonnay that had perhaps the biggest impact on the industry. A bold wine, originally made by winemaker John Kongsgaard, it would become a benchmark.



Newton Vineyard's gardens and winery before the Glass Fire

The Glass Fire tore through the property, leaving only 5 acres of vines remaining. The staff announced plans to bring the property back to life and opened a temporary tasting room in Calistoga to welcome guests. There was no indication the brand would disappear. LVMH owns other Napa properties, including Colgin, Joseph Phelps and Domaine Chandon.

—MaryAnn Worobiec

## IN MEMORIAM



### Martine Saunier

Martine Saunier, who brought the wines of Burgundy's Henri Jay and Domaine Leroy and Châteauneuf-du-Pape's Château Rayas to America as a trailblazing importer, died Feb. 9 from lung cancer. She was 91.

Saunier had an exceptional palate for wine, a clear vision and a fierce determination to follow her own path. Born in Paris in 1934, she spent summers in the Mâconnais, the southernmost region of Burgundy, where her aunt had vineyards. As a child, Saunier never missed

a harvest and followed the winemaker around the cellar. After studying business, she took a job in public relations with Japan Airlines at its Paris offices. After meeting her future husband, a doctor from San Francisco, she moved to the West Coast of the United States in 1964.

Getting a job with a Bay Area wine importer, Saunier made her debut buying trip to France in 1969, touring the wine regions in a Volkswagen. She began selling wines from Burgundy and the Rhône Valley to a mailing list of doctors and lawyers back in the U.S. She took a second mortgage on her house and, with \$80,000, founded Martine's Wines in 1979. "I was sure, absolutely convinced, I could create a market for really great, top-quality estate-bottled French wine," she told *Wine Spectator* in a 2020 interview.

In 2009, Saunier was contacted by documentary film producer David Kenard, who was interested in making a film about four wine importers who impacted the U.S. market. They eventually collaborated on four films on wine regions. Saunier is survived by her stepsons, Jeffrey Cregg and Huey Lewis.

—Bruce Sanderson



### Peter M.F. Sichel

Peter M.F. Sichel's life was the stuff of cinematic thrillers, complete with a daring escape from Nazis, tours as a spymaster for the CIA and a respected career as a wine executive and educator. Sichel died Feb. 24. He was 104.

Born in 1922, in Mainz, Germany, Sichel grew up in a Jewish family

that owned the H. Sichel Söhne wine house. When the Nazi party took control of Germany, his parents left for France. Peter was interning at the Bordeaux office in 1940 when the Germans conquered France, and he was imprisoned. He escaped, traveling through Spain and Portugal before reaching the United States. When the U.S. entered the war, Sichel enlisted and, with his fluency in German, was assigned to the Office of Strategic Services, the government's fledgling espionage agency. Soon he was recruiting German POWs dissatisfied with the Nazi regime. After the war, Sichel continued his spy work for the CIA.

In 1959, Sichel retired and returned to New York City, where his family's wine company was now based. He helped to build a U.S. market as consumers' curiosity about table wine grew. Among the highlights was the worldwide success of Blue Nun, a medium-dry white wine Peter's marketing campaign touted as a wine you could drink "right through the meal" without worrying about what food you paired it with. Annual U.S. sales reached a high of 1.25 million cases in 1984.

He spent his later years as an author and wine educator, self-publishing his memoir in 2016. In 1989, *Wine Spectator* awarded Sichel the Distinguished Service Award. He is survived by his daughters Bettina and Sylvia and five grandchildren.

—Mitch Frank



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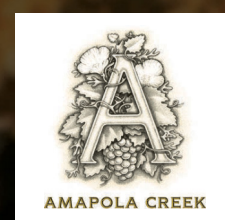


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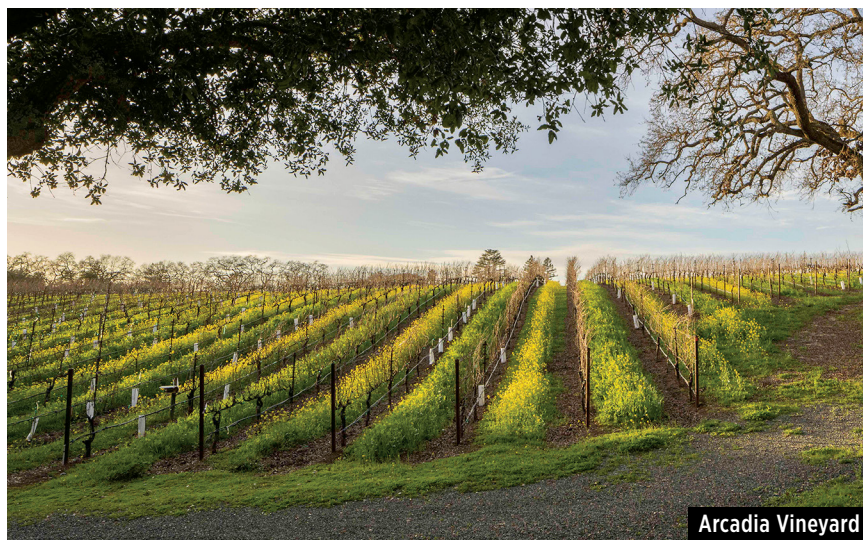
# Antinori Family Purchases Napa's Arcadia Vineyard

**M**archesi Antinori, the Tuscany-based wine company and owner of Napa's Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, has purchased Arcadia Vineyard from the family of the late Warren Winiarski, bringing a key source of grapes for the Stag's Leap operation under the winery's complete control. Arcadia Vineyard is a 135-acre property with 84 planted vineyard acres divided among Cabernet Sauvignon (58 acres), Chardonnay (23) and Merlot (3). The purchase price was not disclosed.

"We are very excited," Piero Antinori told *Wine Spectator*. "For us it is quite important, as it completes the Stag's Leap project, and in this way we'll be able to follow the project in the Antinori tradition, controlling the grapes from vineyard to production."

Warren Winiarski purchased Arcadia Vineyard in 1996 from Mike Grgich's business partner, Austin Hills of Grgich Hills Estate, as a source of Chardonnay grapes for his winery. After the sale of Stag's Leap in 2007 to a partnership between Antinori and Chateau Ste. Michelle, the Winiarski family retained Arcadia Vineyard and continued to provide grapes to the winery. Winiarski placed the property into the Land Trust of Napa County in perpetuity, so it can never be developed. Antinori purchased full control of Stag's Leap in 2023.

Excluding some fruit that was sold over the years to John Kongsgaard for his Chardonnay, the vineyard has provided fruit solely to Stag's Leap since Winiarski's purchase, history that was not lost on the venerable Antinori, who represents the 25th generation of his



Arcadia Vineyard

family to produce wines in Tuscany. "As Warren always used the grapes for his Artemis and Chardonnay bottlings, we feel this brings the Stag's Leap Wine Cellars history full circle," said Antinori.

The vineyard is located at the foot of Mount George, on the east side of Napa Valley in the Coombsville AVA, which has gained prominence for both Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay. "We think, with global warming, this area of Napa is becoming very, very interesting," said Antinori. "Coombsville gives wines in my opinion that [are] based mostly on elegance, with intensity. It has personality."

—James Molesworth

## IN BRIEF

### A New Home for Sullivan Rutherford Estate

The owners of Sullivan Rutherford Estate are breaking ground on a new winemaking facility at their 26-acre property in Napa Valley. The building has been designed by renowned architect Hans Baldauf of BCV Architecture + Interiors and Orla Huq Regan of Orla Studios and will be completed in June 2026.

"We are thrilled to officially launch the next phase of this historic estate," said Juan-Pablo Torres-Padilla, managing partner for the winery, which was founded five decades ago by James O'Neil Sullivan. Torres-Padilla's family firm purchased Sullivan Rutherford Estate in 2018. The original winery was designed by

the late John Marsh Davis, who also designed the Joseph Phelps and Chateau Souverain (now Rutherford Hill) wineries in the 1970s. Baldauf, who refers to Davis' style as "wood expressionism," plans to build off that for the new facility.

The new facility will feature a mix of stainless steel and concrete tanks, an open-plan cellar and a non-intrusive pump system that will rely mostly on gravity to facilitate movement through the winemaking process. "It's a winemaker's dream," said winemaker Jeff Cole. "My team and I will be able to forecast the needs of each of our three estate vineyards—Sullivan Estate Vineyard, Criscione Vineyard, and our Merlot- and Cabernet Franc-focused vineyard in Soda Canyon—with even more accuracy."



Sullivan Rutherford Estate

### Vida Valiente Supports Aspiring Stanford Students

One Napa Valley winery is making a difference in the lives of aspiring college students. On Jan. 24, Vida Valiente, a St. Helena-based winery, conducted its third annual Vida Valiente Foundation charity auction in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. The event raised more than \$2.34 million for the Vida Valiente Foundation, which awards scholarships to dozens of talented first-generation, low-income



Vida Valiente founders Hayes Drumwright, Susana Cueva Drumwright, Nancy Kaplan and Sam Kaplan at the 2025 Vida Valiente Foundation auction

students in partnership with Stanford University.

Vida Valiente was founded in 2021 by philanthropists and entrepreneurs Hayes and Susana Cueva Drumwright and winemakers Sam and Nancy Kaplan. The couples were already working together at Napa's Memento Mori. Susana is a first-generation daughter of immigrants, and she and Hayes conceived both Vida Valiente Winery and its foundation as a way to support students with similar backgrounds.

In the first year, the foundation was able to accept 33 students for scholarships. Today, they are providing scholarships to 119 students. With the money raised at this year's auction, the foundation plans to accept 55 to 60 students.

—Mitch Frank



# Napa Barrel Auction Raises \$3.3 Million

BY CHRIS CARDOSO

When the final gavel struck at this year's Premiere Napa Valley Auction, the mood in the room was celebratory as attendees felt optimistic about the future of Napa Valley wines thanks to the promise of the 2023 vintage and the support of the people who make up the wine industry. This year's auction, held on Feb. 22 in the Barrel Room at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone in St. Helena, raised \$3.3 million in support of the Napa Valley Vintner's (NVV) mission to promote and protect the valley.

"We're thrilled with this year's auction results," said NVV president and CEO Linda Reiff in a statement. "The support shown speaks volumes about the dedication of our trade partners and the exceptional quality of the 2023 vintage."

Premiere Napa Valley kicks off three days prior to the auction, when trade members travel to the valley from around the world to taste wines and network with vintners. It's a chance to catch up with some of the world's top winemakers and get a first taste of the latest vintage. Like Burgundy's Hospices de Beaune, Premiere's barrel auction is for members of the wine trade, though consumers can source the wines through bidding retailers. The wines sold, which come from primarily the 2023 vintage but also the 2024, are made exclusively for auction, donated by the wineries and go solely to the winning bidder.

This year's sale offered 194 lots, sold in five-, 10- or 20-case increments. Sixteen lots were collaborations between multiple wineries or winemakers. The highest price for a lot of red wine was \$64,800 for five cases of Simon Family Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Vine Hill Ranch Vineyard 2024. The highest white wine bid was \$22,000 for five cases of Hudson Vineyards Chardonnay Carneros Trillium 2023. Other high bids went to wines from The Mascot and Quintessa, plus a joint lot between Davies, Diamond Creek, Diamond Mountain, Dyer, Lokoya and Wallis Family Estate. Reds from Robert Mondavi Winery and white wines from Schramsberg, Vineyard 7 & 8 and Domaine Chandon also were among the top lots.



Meaghan Steele, VP at Sotheby's, takes over auctioneer duties during Premiere Napa Valley 2025.



Guests from the wine trade bid on rare lots from revered Napa wineries.



Andy Erikson of Favia (left) greets guests at Premiere Napa Valley 2025.

Sotheby's conducted the auction. Although 2025 did not set the record for highest total—that was \$6 million, raised in 2016—the \$3.3 million total was 10% higher compared with last year's sale. The increase was partially due to the higher number of lots offered this year, but it was also because of the excitement over the 2023 vintage.

The NVV is a nonprofit trade association with 539 vintner members that has promoted Napa wines and the community since 1944. It also hosts the annual Auction Napa Valley each summer. The group has invested \$230 million in public health care and environmental advocacy efforts since its founding. "[We are] grateful for the continued collaboration with our trade partners and the strong sense of community felt here this week," said Reiff. NVV will host next year's Premiere Napa Valley auction on Feb. 16, 2026. □



# In Utah, Finding Success in the Rub

BY DAVID GIBBONS

**T**he Beehive Cheese Co. success story is full of improbable elements that render it unique among American artisan producers.

Founded 20 years ago by two men with zero cheesemaking experience, Beehive is the only family-run creamery in Utah to earn international acclaim, which it did via the unlikely vehicle of flavor-added, rubbed-rind cheeses. Its signature cheese and perennial bestseller, Barely Buzzed, coated with espresso coffee and lavender, heads an artfully crafted lineup wherein the underlying cheese and judiciously applied “extras” each enhance the other, yielding deliciously balanced results.

The masterminds behind Beehive’s ascent are Pat Ford and Tim Welsh, brothers-in-law from Ogden. (Welsh married his high school sweetheart, Ford’s younger sister Kari.) They launched second careers as cheesemakers in 2005, in their forties.

That first year, they made about 500 pounds of cheese; by their third, they’d achieved modest profitability. Today, Beehive is among the larger U.S. specialty firms, with 45 employees turning out approximately 1.5 million pounds annually.

It’s a truly complementary partnership. Ford, a twinkle-eyed natural salesman, was for years the face of the franchise, with Welsh the behind-the-scenes operations and finance anchor. Paradoxically, it’s Ford who privately leads the more straitlaced Mormon lifestyle, while Welsh is the proverbial wild-and-crazy guy. (He drinks wine and coffee.)

“I’m a foodie, the kind who’ll drive 50 miles for a ripe peach,” says Welsh. “I’m also the total nutjob who thought of this idea. Who would start a cheese company not having taken any microbiology classes and with no knowledge of the industry?”

Indeed, who would slather one wheel with coffee and lavender and another with honey and sea salt? That’s exactly what Welsh did in early 2007. That summer, the former, which was named via an internet contest, earned a blue ribbon in the American Cheese Society competition, the first of many prizes won by Beehive cheeses and a catalyst for more rubbing experiments.

Beehive’s base cheese, Promontory, is an outstanding Cheddar on par with other U.S. category leaders such as Milton Creamery’s Prairie Breeze. The recipe came from Utah State University’s Western



Barely Buzzed receives its coffee-and-lavender rub.



Pat Ford and Tim Welsh

Dairy Center, where Ford and Welsh took a cheesemaking course while concocting their business plan. Made by a traditional slow process using Jersey cow milk, which has a relatively high fat content (around 5%), it has an appealing, creamy profile with moderate flavor intensity. “We call it an Irish-style Cheddar,” says Ford. Beehive’s

longtime supplier of high quality milk is Logan-based Gossner Foods, a large contract producer that sources from a network of 300 local family farms.

Early potential consumers of Barely Buzzed were reluctant, even resistant. “When I used to work the farmer’s markets, it was fun to see people’s reactions,” recalls Ford. “I’d ask, ‘Do you want to try our cheese? It’s got coffee and lavender on it.’ They’d say, ‘I don’t think so,’ and I’d say, ‘Yes you do.’ And when they did, they’d really like it.”

By the early 2020s, Beehive’s creamery in the Ogden suburb of Uintah (“you-WIN-tah”) had reached capacity. Ford and Welsh, determined to stay independent, worked out a deal to replicate Promontory at Gossner’s southern Idaho creamery. The cheeses are still rubbed, aged and packaged at Beehive’s original facility.

Both partners’ children grew up working at Beehive. Since 2019, four of them, now in their early thirties, have transitioned to running the business, all but guaranteeing its small-town family legacy. Britton Welsh and his brother Hayden are president and operations manager, respectively; Oliver Ford and his sister Avery are in sales.

*David Gibbons is co-author of Mastering Cheese*



Red Butte Hatch Chile

## A TASTE OF THE BEEHIVE STATE

**BARELY BUZZED**—For a nanosecond, the bitter coffee-floral lavender combo prompts a “What? Why?” reaction that quickly resolves to “Oh, yeah—I get it!”

**SEAHIVE**—Part of the original rubbing experiment, it’s subtle and kid-friendly with a hint of sweetness and a slightly salty finish.

**TEAHIVE**—Earl Grey tea leaves add a refreshingly sweet, vegetal accent with a hint of citrus to form a lovely duet.

**QUEEN BEE PORCINI**—The top American cheese at the 2021 World Cheese Awards, its richness is amplified by the earthy umami of the mushrooms.

**RED BUTTE HATCH CHILE**—The hot New Mexican peppers highlight the creaminess of the cheese and bring everything into sharp focus.

*Additional variations are flavored with Kentucky Bourbon; a Cajun spice blend; and apple-walnut smoke. Welsh recommends pairing Beehive’s cheeses with a medium-bodied Zinfandel or Merlot. All are available at [beehivecheese.com](http://beehivecheese.com) for \$34.99 for two 12-ounce wedges; selected cheeses are also available at [igourmet.com](http://igourmet.com) and [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).*



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# The Power of Pimentón

Discover the allure of Spain's essential, fragrant spice

BY AARON ROMANO

**B**ob Dylan wrote about hot chile peppers in the blistering sun in Durango," waxes Andy Nusser, chef and partner at Best of Award of Excellence-winning restaurant Casa Mono in New York, of his fascination with pimentón, a seasoning essential to Spanish cuisine. "Franciscan monks sang about them, too, and brought seeds back from the New World," he adds.



Chef Andy Nusser

Peppers have long had cultural significance around the globe. In Spain, farmers have cultivated an array of peppers since Columbus returned with capsicums from the New World more than 500 years ago and have been producing pungent pimentón from them ever since.

Pimentón (Spanish for paprika) is a powerful ingredient—a far cry from the ubiquitous grocery store paprika. Analogous to the more commonly known Hungarian paprika, pimentón is

steeped in tradition and has varying gradations. What usually distinguishes the emblematic Spanish ingredient is its smoky essence.

However, Spain does produce two kinds of pimentón. The less-common Pimentón de Murcia hails from southeastern Spain and is typically made using a sweet pepper, which is dried in the warm Iberian sun. "This pimentón is not smoked, making it a Revlon

lipstick red with a less savory, sweeter flavor," explains Nusser.

But the pimentón that often excites chefs is the smoked version, the finest of which is Pimentón de La Vera, grown and produced in the lush and fertile La Vera Valley, at the feet of the Sierra de Gredos Mountain range in central Spain. Here, a specific handful of sweet and spicy peppers are slowly dehydrated in smokehouses before being ground into a fine, vibrant, russet-red powder. "The complex flavor is bitter-sweet-smoky-hot, hitting on all four cylinders. A zero to 60 in your mouth," says Nusser.

Both types are protected under Spanish law, akin to the country's wine grape Denominación de Origen, and both come in three gradations (see below), making them a versatile spice in the kitchen. "Pimentón can go well with anything on the menu," says Nusser, recalling a visit to Spain in which he was tasked with cooking dessert for guests. "I invented something made from all my factory gifts that day: an ice cream sundae with arrope, almonds and pimentón."

Of course, more traditionally, pimentón is used in famous Spanish recipes, including paella, patatas bravas and chorizo. At Casa Mono, Nusser uses it in a variety of ways, including with shellfish (as in recipe at right), in salads and sprinkled on tortilla española. Depending on the dish, a pinch or a dusting is all you need for the assertive spice, but its transformative power can elevate humble plates and enliven complex dishes.

## HOW TO GET IT

Prices vary by source but typically range from \$5 to \$12 for a 2.5-ounce tin.

tienda.com; despanabrandfoods.com; amazon.com

## VARIETIES OF PIMENTÓN

Nusser says there are no rules, and you can use any of these interchangeably, noting that Pimentón de Murcia pairs particularly well in chicken and fish recipes, while La Vera works best with hearty meats like pork, beef and lamb.

### PIMENTÓN AGRIDULCE

Agridulce means bittersweet. This type combines sweet and spicy peppers. It has some kick but is pleasantly piquant, with a hint of sweetness.

### PIMENTÓN DULCE

A sweet variety utilizing sweet, mild peppers, and perhaps the most commonly used. You'll find both smoked and unsmoked versions. This is the typical style of Pimentón de Murcia, which is unsmoked and has a bright, lively flavor.

### PIMENTÓN PICANTE

While picante denotes spicy, the peppers used for this version are not supremely hot, like cayenne. This pimentón is for those who want a little fire with their smoke.





**MUSSELS WITH CAVA AND CHORIZO**

*¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
8 ounces Spanish chorizo, skin removed  
and discarded, meat coarsely diced  
and then ground in a food processor  
6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced  
1 tablespoon sweet pimentón  
3 pounds Prince Edward Island mussels  
1 bottle Cava (750ml)  
6 scallions, white and light green parts,  
thinly sliced*

**1.** Heat the olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat.

**2.** Add the chorizo and sauté until the fat is rendered and the meat crisps, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook another minute. Stir in the pimentón and then add the mussels and the Cava. Cover with a lid and cook for 5 to 7 minutes, until all the mussels have opened. (Discard any mussels that remain closed after 7 minutes.)

**3.** Using a slotted spoon, transfer the mussels to a large bowl. Pour the cooking liquid over them, scatter the scallions over the mussels, and serve with lemon wedges. Serves 6.





# Meet the Muscadet Elite

BY KRISTEN BIELER

When craving a complex, textured, powerfully structured white wine, few people reach for a bottle of Muscadet. The flood of simple, lean wine from this western Loire region in decades past trained most wine drinkers to expect nothing more than a crisp white that (famously) pairs well with oysters.

Yet just like the cold Atlantic squalls that blast its vineyards, the winds of change have been blowing through Muscadet Sèvre et Maine, the wine's most important and largest appellation. A determined group of ambitious producers has been dialing into the assets of the place—a single noble grape variety, old vines, unique geology, a tradition of long aging on lees—and turning out serious, intensely mineral, cellar-worthy wines that check a lot of the same boxes as great Burgundy at a fraction of the price.

"Melon de Bourgogne is a grape that is not very aromatic, so it will tell you the place it is from," says François Lieubeau, the sixth generation to helm Famille Lieubeau, with his sister, Marie, and brother, Vincent. The winery is a leader in Muscadet's quality-driven movement. The only variety permitted for Muscadet, Melon de Bourgogne, is *terroir*-transparent and reflects the mosaic of sheer rock it is planted on. Soil types range from ancient gneiss and orthogneiss to granite, schist and volcanic rock, which explains Muscadet's steely structure and smoky minerality. "You can also taste our connection to the ocean," says Lieubeau. "The Atlantic imparts a saltiness you can feel in the wines."

The arrival of an official *cru* system, which began in 2011, has proved an important engine driving Muscadet's renaissance. So far, 10 of Muscadet's superior villages have been identified in the classification system, each highlighting a specific soil type that results in a distinctive wine expression.

Cru Clisson is mostly granite and yields dense, substantial wines, while Cru Château-Thébaud features sandy clay and gneiss, which gives salty, refined versions. "The *cru* system has helped us understand who we are and it has helped us push quality even higher," says Lieubeau, whose family was instrumental in its creation.

One of the original pioneers of single-*terroir* Muscadet is Domaine



**91 | \$37**  
**Joseph Landron**  
Muscadet de Sèvre et  
Maine Le Fief du Breil  
2018



**91 | \$28**  
**Domaine de l'Ecu**  
Vin de France White  
Orthogneiss 2022



**91 | \$28**  
**Famille Lieubeau**  
Muscadet de Sèvre et  
Maine Goulaine 2019



**90 | \$23**  
**Michel Brégeon**  
Muscadet de Sèvre et  
Maine Sur Lie 2023



**90 | \$32**  
**Vincent Barbier et  
Cécile Perraud**  
Muscadet de Sèvre et  
Maine La Haye  
Fouassière 2020



The Lieubeau family farms old vines in the rocky, granite soils in Muscadet Sèvre et Maine, where the Loire River meets the Atlantic. Their wines are among the region's finest.

de l'Ecu, founded by the late Guy Bossard, who bottled his wine by soil type for decades. Fred Niger purchased the estate in 2010 and carries on the tradition, calling out rock types on his chiseled, densely packed Orthogneiss and Granite cuvées. (Ever the nonconformist, he chooses to label his wines Vin de France instead of the appellation.)

Importantly, the *cru* system also doubles down on Muscadet's tradition of long

aging on the lees, a process which imparts textural richness and salty, flinty intensity. While simple Muscadet may undergo three months of lees aging, *cru*-designated wines must see 24 months or more. Lieubeau's Château-Thébaud cuvée spends three years on its lees, with regular stirring (*bâttonage*), which amps up the round, rich nuttiness. "We are looking for more texture," says Lieubeau. "The lees bring so much body to the wine, you don't need oak."

The extended lees aging contributes to ageability. Serious Muscadets are built for the cellar, showing more complexity as they mature. A stunning example is the late-release 2018 Le Fief du Breil cuvée from Jo Landron, one of the region's leading lights. From 50-year-old vines on sheer granite and flint, it spends 36 months on lees.

Whatever you think about Muscadet, it's a wine that will surprise you with its penetrating deliciousness. Like its affordably priced peers, it delivers more wine than you paid for—another welcome surprise indeed. □



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E DELLE FORESTE





## Rioja Introductions

This selection from Rioja spans a number of vintages, including the excellent 2021. The whites are based on the Viura grape; the reds are based on Tempranillo, often with Graciano, and in the Valdemar Inspiración, Graciano and Maturana Tinta.

**BODEGAS BHILAR** Rioja White 2022 (92, \$21) Silky, fragrant; raw almond, mandarin orange peel, dried white cherry, honeysuckle, mint

**BODEGA SIERRA DE TOLOÑO** Rioja Raposo 2021 (91, \$28) Wild raspberry, pomegranate purée, pink peppercorn, crushed thyme, rosemary, mineral; plush, expressive

**BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS** Artuke Rioja Pies Rotos 2022 (91, \$23) Enticing, tense; black raspberry, warm fig, violet, mountain herbs, stony mineral

**BODEGA SIERRA DE TOLOÑO** Rioja White 2023 (90, \$21) Yellow peach, passion fruit, smoked almond, honeysuckle, ground ginger, wild rosemary; vivid, aromatic

**BODEGAS BERONIA** Rioja Reserva 2020 (90, \$25) Cassis, baked cherry fruit, tea rose, thyme, licorice, smoke, warm spices; structured, harmonious

**BODEGAS HERMANOS PECIÑA** Rioja Señorío de P. Peciña Crianza 2018 (90, \$25) Fresh, focused; ripe raspberry, cherry, violet, white pepper, earth, iron, wild sage

**BODEGAS IZADI** Rioja Reserva 2021 (90, \$20) Black currant, herbed olive, black licorice, iron, loamy earth; sleek, savory

**BODEGAS SIERRA CANTABRIA** Rioja Crianza 2021 (90, \$25) Fresh, crisp; wild strawberry, ripe cherry, peach skin, sage, milled white pepper

**BODEGAS VALDEMAR** Rioja Inspiración 2021 (90, \$25) Black cherry, black raspberry, mocha, toasted cumin, vanilla, loam; generous, creamy, balanced

## Bordeaux Buys

This group of well-priced Bordeaux showcases the excellent 2022 vintage. The first two are Cabernet Sauvignon-based, the rest rely on Merlot, plus other Bordeaux grape varieties.

**CHÂTEAU GRAND-PUY** Ducasse Pauillac 2022 (94, \$40) Muscular, energetic; mulled black currant, black cherry, game, sweet bay, licorice, earth, cast iron

**CHÂTEAU LATOUR-MAR-TILLAC** Pessac-Léognan 2022 (94, \$40) Red and black currant preserves, warm tar, alder and chestnut. Dark tobacco and leather; solid, compact

**CHÂTEAU CÔTE DE BALEAU** St.-Emilion 2022 (93, \$29) Sleek, stylish; mulled black cherry, black currant, chestnut, violet, alder, warm earth

**CHÂTEAU CANTELYS** Pessac-Léognan 2022 (92, \$23) Gently mulled plum, black cherry, currant, licorice, bay leaf, tobacco leaf, cedar, alder, earth

**CHÂTEAU CLAUD-BELLEVUE** Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022 (91, \$25) Juicy, firm; blackberry, boysenberry paste, roasted apple wood, black licorice, violet, graphite

**CHÂTEAU MONCETS** Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022 (91, \$25) Bright, lacy; raspberry, cherry coulis, rose hip, iris, chalky

## Cruisin' Coastal Chile

If you're new to wines from Chile, think of California with its coastal appellations, valleys and hillside vineyards, then add a diverse group of grape varieties.

**VIÑA SANTA CAROLINA** Carmenère Rapel Valley Reserva de Familia 2021 (92, \$25) Dense, fresh; cassis, black raspberry, red currant, floral, tobacco, loam, salty

**BALDUZZI** Carignan Maule Viejo Encachao Grand Reserve 2022 (90, \$18) Black raspberry, red currant, plumeria, white pepper, clove, chicory, dark chocolate; aromatic, rich

**VIÑA LONGAVÍ** Carignan Maule Valley iGlup! 2023 (90, \$18) Balanced, energetic; brambly raspberry, Santa Rosa plum, loamy, licorice, dried herbs, hibiscus

**VIÑEDOS TERRANOBLE** Carménère Maule Valley Azara 2022 (90, \$19) Plum, cherry, mineral, herb; refined, suave

**LAPOSTOLLE** Sauvignon Blanc Rapel Valley Grand Selection 2023 (89, \$15) Lively, fresh; finger lime, peach, jasmine, lime zest, ginger

## Italian Trio

This red and two whites, from Tuscany and the country's northeast, respectively, deliver flavor and character at reasonable prices.

**CASTELLO DI MONTERINALDI** Chianti Classico 2021 (93, \$32) Supple, juicy; cherry, pomegranate, iron, wild Tuscan scrub

**MARCO FELLUGA** Ribolla Gialla Collio Maralba 2023 (91, \$23) Creamy pear, star fruit, pickled ginger, verbena, chalk, pink grapefruit sorbet; fresh, well-knit

**MARCO FELLUGA** Pinot Grigio Collio Mongris 2023 (90, \$21) Lithe, mouthwatering; ripe nectarine, pineapple, guava, grated ginger, blood orange zest, honeysuckle



**LA RIOJA ALTA** Rioja Viña Alberdi Reserva 2020 (91, \$25) **SMART BUYS** Lively, harmonious; baked cherry, raspberry, cocoa powder, red licorice, tobacco, smoke, vanilla

## SPECTATOR SELECTIONS

### HIGHLY RECOMMENDED



**95 DOMAINE DE LA CÔTE**  
Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Bloom's Field 2023 \$105 CALIFORNIA

Mulberry and raspberry fruit leads the way here, with flashes of iris and hibiscus, and there's a rapier of fresh acidity for spine. The lovely pinpoint finish has a steady persistence.

### COLLECTIBLE



**95 SAN GIUSTO A RENTENNANO**  
Sangiovese Toscana Percarlo 2020 \$179 ITALY

Aromas of vanilla and toasty oak are prominent, with black cherry, blackberry and plum fruit shining in and elements of iron, tobacco and wild herbs adding complexity. Beefy tannins need time to resolve, while the lingering finish promises fine evolution.

### SMART BUY



**95 CLOS MARSALETTE**  
Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$30 FRANCE

A flamboyant style, with white nectarine, apricot and lemon gelée, hints of anise, pineapple and bitter orange. Rich, but with tensile strength. Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon.

### BEST VALUE



**90 BODEGAS BERONIA**  
Rioja Crianza 2021 \$15 SPAIN

Well-balanced, animated by plum skin acidity, with mineral crushed mulberry and blackberry fruit and herbed black olive notes, hints of vanilla and graphite. Light tannins define the finish. Tempranillo, Garnacha, Mazuelo.

### IN THIS ISSUE'S BUYING GUIDE

You'll find **51 classic wines** and more than **385 outstanding wines** from among reviews of **nearly 500 new releases**. Tasting notes and scores for those wines, along with **hundreds of additional wines** reviewed since our last issue, can be found at [WineSpectator.com](https://www.winespectator.com) using the Wine Ratings search, a members-only service.

— Bruce Sanderson



# Taking a Risk Begets Dynamic Change

“When you go for too much, you lose the little things,” said Aymeric

de Gironde. “The idea is to pull back a bit and get further into the details. To bring minerality, and the soils here are unique, into the wine.”

De Gironde told me that back in 2019 during a visit to Château Troplong-Mondot in St.-Emilion. De Gironde had been hired by the new owners to give the property a fresh direction. The previous owners (the Valette-Pariente family) had pristine vineyards—that wasn’t the issue. During their tenure they had leaned into a riper, fuller-blown expression of the wine though. In some years, that dovetailed perfectly with the vintage—the stunning 1998 is a prime example. In other years, however, the style easily dominated the overall impression of the wine. The wines weren’t bad, but they were a bit opaque and more about the hand of the winemaker than a pure expression of place.

That’s where de Gironde came in. Aiming for a wine that was more transparent of the site, he set to tweaking a lot of things in the cellar. Among them was doubling the number of tanks while reducing their size for a more detailed vinification. He also dropped the percentage of new oak and worked to finish the blends just after their malolactic instead of later, typically just before bottling, a technique that is thought to help the wine integrate more fully during its *élevage*.

Today these are considered simple changes, and they’ve been employed at an increasing number of estates. At the time, though, they were risky. Changes to how a vineyard is farmed or a wine is made don’t show up right away. In terms of the consumer, that could mean years after a shift is initialized. And if it doesn’t work out? Well, you don’t want to be the one responsible for damaging the reputation of a well-known estate. It takes years to establish a track record and build a brand.

But wine is about risks. The wine world wouldn’t be where it is today without them. When you stop taking risks and just do the same thing you’ve always done, you get passed by.

I recently opened a bottle of the ’18 Troplong-Mondot, the



*The Bordeaux vanguard, including Troplong-Mondot, have implemented changes to make wines of focus and drive.*

first full vintage under de Gironde’s direction. It proved that the risks were more than worth it. The wine was full of life—not surprising since a six-year-old Bordeaux is still young. But it was its energy that stood out. It wasn’t just rich or youthfully fruit-filled. It had tension and vibration. Its fruit was copious, but pure and fresh. And there was a distinctly ferrous minerality rippling underneath, extending the lengthy finish. I rated it 94 points back on release and it more than acquitted itself.

Troplong-Mondot is now decidedly among the vanguard in Bordeaux, a growing cluster of estates that have embraced holistic farming practices, tweaked their approaches in the cellar and are producing wines of focus, freshness and drive.

I’ve written before about how ground zero for the vanguard is in St.-Emilion, and primarily atop the limestone plateau, where châteaux Canon, Clos Fourtet, Bélair-Monange, Beau-Sejour Bécot, Berliquet and Pavie-Macquin have been among those

leading the charge. The ranks are growing, too, with Beauséjour, now under the guidance of Joséphine Duffau-Lagarrosse, showing the results of dramatic changes. It’s ironic that St.-Emilion, formerly the epicenter of the *garagiste* movement that aimed for wines of power and extraction in the 1990s, is now the home of this new, lighter-handed approach.

There are ripple effects outside of this cluster as well. Château Cheval Blanc has made hands down the wine of the vintage in 2022. A warm and sunny year, 2022 resulted in wines of richly layered fruit. Had this vintage come around 10 or 15 years ago, there would have been many excellent wines, but I suspect also more than a few overly muscular, top-heavy versions as well. By pulling back a bit, as de Gironde noted, Cheval Blanc and a few other prominent estates are making the most dynamic wines they’ve ever made, including both Château Palmer in Margaux and Château Pichon-Lalande in Pauillac.

The vanguard is where the action is in Bordeaux. The risks they took are paying big dividends, and they are starting to pass by those estates that rely on the status quo.

*Senior editor James Molesworth has been with Wine Spectator since 1997.*



# A Deeper Dive Into Don Melchor

“I have a surprise,” said Enrique Tirado during a recent visit to our Napa offices. The CEO and winemaker for the reigning *Wine Spectator* Wine of the Year, Viña Don Melchor, retrieves a bottle with a red foil and a white label with “DM01” written vertically in gold and red letters.

“After 35 years of this parcel concept, where Don Melchor is the best blend from the different parcels, in 2022, we decided to create a new wine, Las Parcelas,” he explains.

Releasing a new wine is relatively commonplace for most wineries, but when you have a nearly 40-year legacy of creating one wine from one vineyard, doing something new is significant. Even with the Wine of the Year crown achieved, Don Melchor remains resolute in delivering extraordinary wines and positioning itself as Chile’s vanguard in the world of wine.

The Don Melchor Vineyard lies in one of Chile’s most famous *terroirs*, Puente Alto, a subregion within Maipo Valley. The 314-acre vineyard, comprising primarily Cabernet Sauvignon, with small amounts of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, is divided into seven primary parcels and further subdivided into 151 microparcels. Each is separated based on the mosaic of Andean soil—an alluvial mix of stone, sand and clay. Don Melchor is always the best composition from each year, usually containing 60% to 70% of the vineyard’s grapes.

Tirado points out that this new wine is not a second wine in the Bordeaux sense, where wine is made from younger vines or unused lots. “The idea is to make a wine that expresses one specific parcel,” he says. “Sometimes we have a section that we don’t use in the final blend. When we taste alone, we say, ‘Oh, this one is very good, it must be in the final blend,’ but then when we try it, it doesn’t work,” explains Tirado.

Those lots that didn’t make the final cut in past years were repurposed into other Concha y Toro wines (Don Melchor’s parent company). “In the 2022 vintage, I realized it was time to enhance the beauty of each parcel and bring them to life with their own individuality,” says Tirado.



*A new wine from the reigning Wine of the Year producer examines specific parcels of the renowned Chilean vineyard.*

For the 2022 vintage, Tirado started with parcel one, which is fitting as it is the oldest planting in the vineyard, rooted in 1979 with ungrafted vines sourced from Don Melchor’s original massal selection, which originated in Bordeaux and was brought to Chile in the 1880s. Further, when Tirado arrived at Don Melchor in 1997, he knew the key to the vineyard’s success was dividing it, and the first map he drew to reflect sub-division was parcel one.

Tirado acknowledges that the entirety of parcel one, which is segmented into 11 microparcels, is not used; just certain lots, plus a trace (12% Cabernet Franc) from other parts of the vineyard. “The idea is to keep the parcel as an expression, but we can also add small amounts from different parcels, but the wine still expresses the character from parcel one.”

After decades of working intimately with the vineyard, Tirado knows the distinctive expressions of each section. For him, the 17.5

acres of Cabernet Sauvignon in parcel one always has a lot of red fruit character and floral notes and shows a lot of finesse, for which he considers its contribution essential in shaping a typical Don Melchor. The wine goes through a similar *élevage* to the Don Melchor and ages 15 months in French oak barrels—64% new and 36% second use.

When compared to the 2022 Don Melchor, there’s no mistaking that they’re akin. Yet the DM01 shows slightly more tension midpalate than a typical Don Melchor and is imbued with fresh raspberry and red currant flavors; definitely a more elegant interpretation.

The first Las Parcelas Series was released in March of this year. It retails for \$120, and just 500 cases of this limited-edition wine were produced. Each year, the label will showcase one of the seven parcels. Tirado says the 2023 vintage will feature parcel seven, and 2024, number five. While the idea is to show each parcel, it is all dependent upon how the wines show when Tirado works through the blending process. “Next year, it could be parcel one again,” he posits.

*Senior editor Aaron Romano has been with Wine Spectator since 2012.*



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REDISCOVERING

# RIOJA

The village of Elciego is home to Marqués de Riscal's original 1860 bodega and Frank Gehry's 2006 City of Wine addition (right).

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO



# TRACKING THE EVOLUTION OF SPAIN'S ICONIC REGION AND ITS WINES

By Alison Napjus

**A**cross Spain's many appellations and wine styles, bottlings from the Rioja region are far and away the most familiar to Americans. Rioja arrives to U.S. shores in volumes that ensure its presence on store shelves and restaurant wine lists. It's the only Spanish wine type that ranks among America's most consumed foreign wines, in a group with New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc and Italian Chianti.

And bottlings of Rioja offer incredible breadth, with versions ranging from easy-drinking to complex and ageable, and price tags from \$10 to \$1,000 per bottle.

Rioja's success in the U.S. is largely based on recognized winery names offering wines of generally consistent quality and at volume—not an easy feat to achieve. That dependability is attractive to consumers, especially for those purchasing outside of their usual comfort zone.

Rioja's stylistic consistency may come at a price. Innovation and experimentation in the vineyards and cellars are present but implementation sometimes takes a back seat to meeting the expectations for consistency. Detractors argue that Rioja has lost its soul, becoming a brand more than a dynamic wine representing a distinctive tapestry of soils, people and places.

In the past 10 to 20 years, the wine world as a whole has





Telmo Rodríguez, longtime advocate of *terroir*-driven wines, produces his Bodegas Lanzaga's top bottling from the 4.7-acre Las Beatas vineyard.



increasingly embraced *terroir*-driven examples, with wineries offering more single-vineyard or even single-parcel bottlings. The movement lends weight—or at least additional attention—to the claim that Rioja, known for blending grape sources from throughout the region to achieve scale, is more commodity than artisanal product. But producers in Rioja are far from untouched by the trends of other leading wine areas around the world.

An overhaul of labeling regulations in 2017 now allows wineries to give emphasis to Rioja's subregions, villages and even *cru* vineyards. Producers large and small are looking for abandoned vineyards to resuscitate and ways to prolong the life of Rioja's wealth of old vines. Microvinifications of single plots or parcels are widespread in the region's wineries, for edification before blending but also increasingly for bottling as solo wines. And a new wave of boutique producers determined to map Rioja's *terroirs* is bringing dynamic energy to the region as a whole.

The fight for Rioja's soul is less of a pitched battle with a winning and losing side than it is an expansion of Rioja as we've known it in recent decades. Although it's happening slowly and heralds change, this expansion offers greater granularity and definition to the region, giving consumers more to explore and enjoy. It's an evolution, not a revolution, and the moment for wine lovers to rediscover this rich wine realm should start right now.

## THE BEGINNING AND BORDEAUX

Alongside some of Rioja's old-vine vineyards, visitors can find *lagares*, stone cisterns for wine production introduced by the invading Romans in the second century BC, a testament to the longevity of wine production in the region.

In more recent history, records indicate a thriving wine industry in the 16th through 18th centuries. Archives show that the 1580 production from what is today Rioja Alta, the region's western most subzone, totaled the equivalent of nearly 600,000 cases. Small, underground cellars were common in Rioja's villages, with as many as 250 cellars for 300 growers in the 1600s.

Telmo Rodríguez is one winemaker who has put Rioja's historical infrastructure to use for his modern needs. Rodríguez left Rioja and his family's La Granja Nuestra Señora de Remelluri winery in the 1990s to explore winemaking in different parts of the world. He returned to Rioja in 1998 to found his own Bodegas Lanzaga estate, with aging of some of the winery's labels completed in an underground cellar in the village of Ollauri.

"I came to Ollauri because I wanted to understand what was the origin of Rioja—what was the *terroir*; I wanted to see the old, traditional cellars," recalls Rodríguez. "I saw this cellar and I realized it was perfect, with many of the components mimicked by modern cellars today," he says, highlighting the cellar's natural temperature and humidity control and its gravity-fed workflow, among other features. The cellar, which



was abandoned in the 1970s, additionally still supports abundant natural yeast, allowing Rodríguez to eschew inoculating with cultured yeast strains during winemaking and potentially capturing more of Rioja's historic flavors.

Rodríguez is one of the forerunners of Rioja's movement toward more *terroir*-driven wines, through the lens of connecting the region's past with one of its potential future paths. He founded Lanzaga to create "a wine from a village" akin to those winemakers of the 1700s.

Taking that expression a step further, in 2011 Rodríguez bottled his first single-site wine from the 4.7-acre Las Beatas vineyard (2021: 95 points, \$375). "What is traditional Rioja? The blend?" poses Rodríguez. "Champagne is a blend," he says, chuckling, "but we find Clos de Mesnil quite interesting," acknowledging Krug Champagne's revered single vineyard as a successful exception among a tradition of blending.

Rodríguez seeks to recover what he considers Rioja's heyday, an interpretation that recalls the region's wines during the 17th and 18th centuries. But for most students of wine, today's Rioja—both wine style and industry infrastructure—has its origin in the late 19th century, heavily influenced by France's Bordeaux.

Two of modern Rioja's founding fathers spent time in Bordeaux to study advances in winemaking during their exile from Spain due to the political turmoil leading up to Queen Isabel's ascension to the Spanish throne in 1844. Upon returning to Spain, each man began wine production using Bordeaux's "modern" techniques, including fermentation and aging in oak.

Luciano de Murrieta García Lemoine, the Marqués de Murrieta, produced his first wine in 1852, then later established a

winery estate at Ygay, south of the town of Logroño. From 1850 to 1860, D. Guillermo Hurtado de Amézaga, later the Marqués de Riscal, constructed a bodega in the village of Elciego, including chambers for barrel aging à la Bordeaux; the winery's first vintage was 1862.

"In Rioja and at Marqués de Riscal, the 19th century was very tightly tied to Bordeaux," says Hurtado de Amézaga's descendant Luis Hurtado de Amézaga, head winemaker and technical director at the winery today. "The Marqués de Riscal lived in Bordeaux for 40 years; Jean Pineau, from Bordeaux, was the first winemaker at Marqués de Riscal; and we continued the tradition of French winemakers until my grandfather [assumed the position]."

In 1867 the vine louse phylloxera swept through France, devastating the country's vineyards and further integrating Bordeaux's relationship with Rioja as the French region's wine merchants turned to Rioja.

"Rioja's historic wineries were created to be substitutes for high-end Bordeaux, when phylloxera meant there was no Bordeaux," says Maria José López de Heredia, who is the fourth generation helming her family winery, R. López de Heredia Viña Tondonia, with siblings Mercedes and Julio.

Founded in 1877, López de Heredia was one of many new bodegas to ride the incredible boom, especially in the town of Haro in northwestern Rioja, where a railway connecting the seaport of Bilbao, on Spain's northern coastline, facilitated export to France.

Bordeaux's technique of oak fermentation and aging became firmly entrenched in Rioja. A large cooperage was built in Rioja, and the American colonies provided a less-expensive alternative



Founded in 1877, R. López de Heredia Viña Tondonia thrived during the Rioja wine boom that resulted in part from a lack of Bordeaux wines during France's phylloxera outbreak. At the time, most Rioja wineries adopted Bordeaux techniques of oak fermentation and aging, leading to the region's age-based classification system, which Tondonia retains.



to French oak. The use of oak would ultimately spur a classification system that would come to define the region's wines, basing release dates and labeling on the length of time the wine was aged—*crianza*, *reserva* and *gran reserva*.

## CREATING AN IDENTITY

Despite Rioja's historical ties to Bordeaux, today the structure of the region's wine industry shares many similarities with that of France's Champagne.

Rioja's 13,500 growers drastically outnumber the 750 wineries producing and selling wine commercially, mirroring Champagne's symbiosis of vine growers and *grandes marques* houses. Blending grape varieties and vineyard sources allows both Champagne's and Rioja's wineries to produce at a large scale, under a few well-recognized labels. A regulated aging regimen is applied to all of Champagne's wines and to many examples

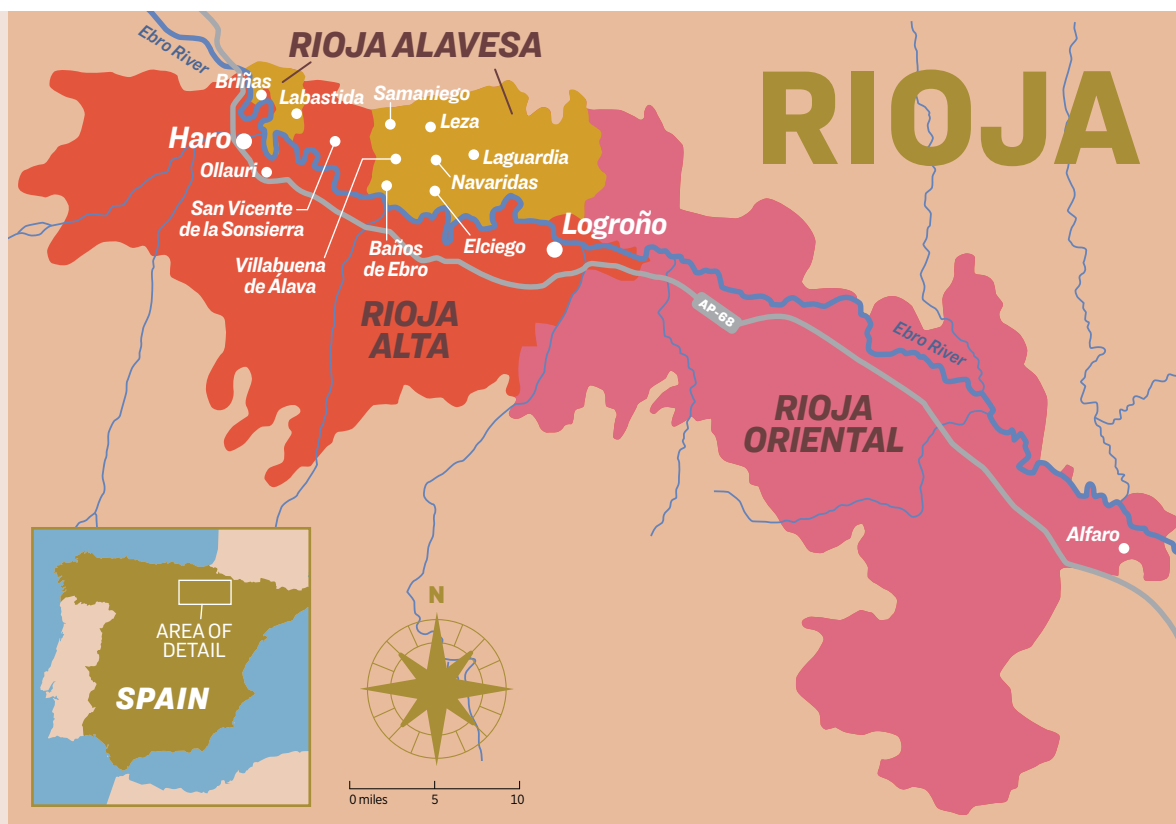
from Rioja, resulting in larger wineries in both regions that store millions of bottles at a time in their cellars. And historically, wineries in both regions strived to produce a recognizable house style, although Rioja achieves this without the multi-vintage blending approach of Champagne.

"The big challenge is to make the same style of wines for many years to come. [It should be] that in 20 years' time, the 2024 will taste the same as the 2004 does today," says Juan José Diaz, head winemaker at family-owned Bodegas Faustino. The 2004 Gran Faustino I Gran Reserva (93, \$100) is an entirely new label released to the market for the first time this year. It's a selection of barrels originally vinified for the winery's I Gran Reserva bottling (2016: 92, \$37), elaborated as the separate Gran Faustino label due to the success of the 2004 vintage.

Faustino, established in 1861, is the region's biggest vineyard-holder with over 2,000 acres of vines; they also purchase grapes

## Mapping Rioja

The Rioja DOCa (*Denominación de Origen Calificada*, or denomination of qualified origin) spans more than 60 miles from its eastern to western limits, separated into three subzones: Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Oriental. As a whole, Rioja's geography is defined by the Ebro River, with its tributaries forming seven valleys, and the Sierra Cantabria mountain range. The mountain foothills provide elevation for the region's vineyards and protect against significantly cooler, wetter weather from the Atlantic Ocean just to the north.



**TOTAL VINEYARD ACRES:** 163,612

**RED GRAPES:** Tempranillo (88% of plantings), Garnacha, Graciano, Mazuelo and Maturana Tinta

**WHITE GRAPES:** Viura (66%), Tempranillo Blanco, Verdejo, Sauvignon Blanc, Garnacha Blanca, Chardonnay, Malvasía, Maturana Blanca and Turruntés

**VINEYARD ALTITUDE RANGE:** Primarily 1,000 feet to 1,800 feet, with plantings up to 2,950 feet

**SOIL:** Varied, with a predominance of limestone but incorporating clay, iron, alluvial components

**ORGANIZATION:** 571 wineries across 144 villages

### Rioja Alta

**ACRES:** 68,841 | **VILLAGES:** 18

Rioja's westernmost subzone encompasses vineyards typically situated at higher altitude than the region's other two subzones. The terroir layers clay with iron and limestone, and at lower elevations, closer to the Ebro River, alluvial soils are common. On average, the area's Atlantic climate offers even-keeled temperatures throughout the year and moderate rainfall. These factors combine to promote wines that are generally more elegant in style, with brighter acidity.

### Rioja Alavesa

**ACRES:** 32,549 | **VILLAGES:** 77

Rioja Alavesa is made up of two non-contiguous areas, both north of the Ebro River and located northeast above Rioja Alta. Clay-limestone soils

dominate the vineyards, which are often terraced and/or divided into small parcels. Conditions are more humid and cooler on average in Alavesa, and the resulting wines offer vivid acidity and more definition.

### Rioja Oriental

**ACRES:** 62,222 | **VILLAGES:** 49

Rioja Oriental, or "eastern" in Spanish, was formerly known as the Rioja Baja for its generally lower-elevation vineyards. The area lies east of the city of Logroño, primarily to the south of the Ebro River, and it benefits from a Mediterranean climate that supports the wide plantation of Garnacha (versus Tempranillo's dominance in Alta and Alavesa). Oriental's predominantly clay-, iron- and alluvial-based soils, warmer and drier climate and lower-elevation vineyards produces wines with fruit-forward character and more weight and structure.





Bodegas Faustino is Rioja's largest vineyard holder, with more than 2,000 acres of estate vines. Its vast cellars hold some 60,000 barrels and up to 9 million bottles, with a focus on *gran reserva* bottlings.

from growers to meet 20% of their production needs. In relative terms to Champagne, they might be considered Rioja's Moët & Chandon. The winery is also a staunch traditionalist, upholding Rioja's aging regimens for much of its lineup of wines. They boast roughly 60,000 barrels and 9 million bottles in the cellar at any given time.

The impact of longer aging in oak undoubtedly benefits Faustino's implied goal of equalizing flavor profile and structure from vintage to vintage. Common elements include baked and dried fruit, tobacco and spice flavors, supple tannins and lively acidity. In the hands of a skilled winemaker long oak-aged Riojas can be incredibly nuanced and profound.

Yet Rioja's use of an aging regimen to define and in many ways epitomize its wines has been far from an unqualified success.

The aging terms prevailed as identifiers for the wines during many difficult historical periods: the collapse of Rioja's export market in the late 1890s when the Bordelais returned to the wines of their own vineyards; World War I, the Spanish Civil War and World War II; poor vintages; other economic and political upheavals; and the influence of technologically driven, often industrialized winemaking common in regions around the world during the 1960s and 1970s.

Not all wineries were able to successfully navigate these challenges, and

lesser-quality wines from poor vintages or high-yielding vines, for example, didn't benefit from long or over-aging. Such examples served as more of a detriment to the Rioja appellation's name and image.

## FOLLOWING FASHION

Lesser-quality wines aside, in the later part of the 20th century Rioja's traditional style fell out of fashion. Napa Cabernets, heralded vintages from Bordeaux and super Tuscans were ascendent, popularizing fruit-driven wines of power and richness.

Marqués de Riscal was the first Rioja producer to offer an alternative in a similar camp. "It was tough in the '70s and '80s in Rioja," says Hurtado de Amézaga. "Riscal decided to launch a new wine in 1986, the Baron de Chirel, the first 'special wine' of Rioja." Conceptually it diverged from traditional Rioja: aged only two years and in new French oak, a focus on grape sourcing from select top vineyards and the inclusion of about 15% Cabernet Sauvignon with the Tempranillo. "It was the idea of our American importer at the time, to produce something a little thicker, a little new oak, a little more structure."

A wave of producers came to the fore in the 1990s offering wines in a newer, what was considered "modern" at the time, style, including Finca Allende, Bodegas Roda, Abel Mendoza, Artadi, Rodríguez's Bodegas Lanzaga, Bodegas

# Aging Rioja

Rioja was established as an official Spanish DOCa (appellation of origin) a century ago. Labeling terms based on aging were common beginning in the 1900s, but an official system wasn't standardized until 1980. It's still the primary system used by most of Rioja's historic bodegas and this strong association has helped to define the region's wines.

To the region's benefit, the classification terms *crianza*, *reserva* and *gran reserva* are relatively easy to understand. Every bottle of Rioja includes a color-coded label strip on the back of the bottle with the term  *cosecha* (harvest), and the vintage year next to the DOCa emblem. If applicable, *crianza*, *reserva* or *gran reserva* is listed above *cosecha* and may also appear on the main front and/or back label.



### Crianza

#### BRIGHT RED APPELLATION STRIP

Aged a minimum of two years, with at least one year in oak barrels for red wines and six months for white and rosé wines.



### Reserva

#### DARK RED APPELLATION STRIP

Aged a minimum of three years, with at least one year in oak barrels and six months in bottle for red wines. Aging for white and rosé wines is a minimum of two years with at least six months in oak barrels.



### Gran Reserva

#### DARK BLUE APPELLATION STRIP

Aged a minimum of five years, with at least two years in oak barrels and two years in bottle for red wines. Aging for white and rosé wines is a minimum of four years with at least six months in oak barrels.



### Cosecha

#### GREEN APPELLATION STRIP

All other still table wines from Rioja bear the term *cosecha* and the vintage date on the appellation strip, without an indication of aging. These wines are collectively known as "generic" wines or "cosechas." They encompass everything from easy-drinking, early-release bottlings from bodegas otherwise labeling under the aging system to more serious versions from wineries opting to label under an origin-based system. (See "Defining Rioja," page 39.)





Bodegas Muga was among the first wave of producers to introduce wines in a then-modern style, including its Torre Muga in 1991. In general, such wines sought riper fruit at harvest and aged in new French oak à la Napa Valley.

Fernando Remírez de Ganuza, Viñedos del Contino and more. The Eguren family, owners of the more traditionally focused Bodegas Sierra Cantabria, launched Señorío de San Vicente, a single-estate wine produced exclusively from 44 acres of vines in the La Canoca vineyard and aged for two years in primarily French oak. Bodegas Muga released the first vintage of their modern-styled Torre Muga bottling in 1991 and Aro bottling in 2000.

Collectively these wineries and their wines were more focused on specific vineyard sources for a bottling, even if they were not yet labeled as such. The winemakers largely adopted techniques common to Napa and Bordeaux at the time: seeking riper fruit at harvest, extending maceration and aging in new French oak as opposed to Rioja's traditional use of American oak. And although Baron de Chirel was originally labeled as a *reserva*, many of these versions eschewed Rioja's classification system of aging. They bottled under a generic back label for young wines, *cosecha*, but charged prices that outpaced many of the region's *gran reservas*.

At first Rioja's new wave wines were well-received, living harmoniously for the most part alongside the region's traditional examples. But in the mid-2000s the wine world's palate began to shift again, with critics decrying examples from Rioja and many other regions as over-oaked fruit bombs. Although Rioja's producers didn't abandon the new approach altogether, they softened it: less canopy management in the vineyard, limiting extraction, cooler macerations, less toast on their oak and the use of larger or more neutral oak vessels.

"We see that classic in Rioja is always the same wines, but modern keeps on changing," says Guillermo de Aranzabal, managing director of traditionalist bodega La Rioja Alta. In the 1990s La Rioja Alta joined other new wave Rioja producers with the establishment of their Torre de Oña estate outside the village of Paganos in the Rioja Alavesa subzone. Since 2005 they have conducted extensive soil studies at the property, leading to the release of the winery's single-vineyard Finca Martelo bottling (2019: 91, \$40). "Torre de Oña is a *terroir*-driven philosophy, while La Rioja Alta seeks a consistent style," summarizes de Aranzabal.

## FORGING AHEAD

Rioja's exploration of style in the 1990s and early 2000s paved the way for yet another evolution, across all the region's offerings. For traditional wines, this means a new spin to bring them more in line with today's palates.

"I think we are improving the wine.

It's a little softer in color, a little bit more vibrant," says La Rioja Alta winemaker Julio Sáenz, speaking about the winery's introductory Viña Alberdi bottling. "But also we're looking for fruit character. And with all of our wines we're working with wood, but less present, more integrated. [The Viña Alberdi] is aged for only two years, but it still has great aging capacity.

And that same pursuit of brighter wines with more fruit and elegant depth has also found application to a growing number of *terroir*- and site-specific examples. Like Champagne's *récoltant-manipulants*, or grower producers, Rioja's small growers produce wines primarily from family vines that they own and tend themselves. While the wines of Rioja's small growers can't compete with larger-volume offerings widely available in the market, they're rapidly adding depth and dimension to the region as a whole.

"Nowadays, we want wines that are pure, without any makeup. We prefer a finer style, more acidity, more fruit. We want wines for pleasure," says Arturo de Miguel, who helms his family winery Artuke with his brother Kike.

"From 2009 through 2015, my mind was very conditioned by my studies. I used a lot of oak, 20 to 25 days maceration. I had

"NOWADAYS, WE WANT WINES THAT ARE PURE, WITHOUT ANY MAKEUP. WE PREFER A FINER STYLE, MORE ACIDITY, MORE FRUIT. WE WANT WINES FOR PLEASURE."

—Arturo de Miguel



# Defining Rioja

After decades depending primarily on the aging classification system on labels to distinguish a winery's lineup (see "Aging Rioja," page 37), the Consejo Regulador, Rioja's regulatory council, announced an alternative based on a wine's origin in 2017, with amendments in 2024.

The aging classification system works best for wineries producing wines that source fruit from a broader geographical range of vineyards to create wines in a consistent style, often at larger volume. The new origin-based system closely follows Burgundy's model, with labeling encompassing everything from wines sourcing fruit from a subregion through to single-vineyard bottlings.

Prior to the new regulations, producers utilizing more specific grape sources for their wines were not legally able to indicate that source on the label. This caused widespread discontent, particularly as the trend toward single vineyard and *terroir*-driven examples has been gaining momentum in the broader world of wine.



**Zone Wines:** Labels listing one of Rioja's three subzones—Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Oriental—indicate a wine produced entirely from grapes sourced within the given subregion.

**Village Wines:** Labels listing one of 144 approved municipalities indicate a wine produced entirely from grapes sourced from vineyards in and around the municipality. This category was first identified as *Vino de Municipio* in the regulatory council's 2017 changes, reflecting the governmental term for the area around a given village. The classified term was updated to *Vino de Pueblo* ("village wine") in 2024 to highlight a more *terroir*-driven approach to classification. Labels can read both *Vino de Pueblo*, indicating the classification, as well as an indication of the vines' location via the term *Viñedo en* ("vineyard in") plus a village name; for example, *Viñedo en Labastida* ("vineyards in the village of Labastida").

**Single Vineyard Wines:** Labels listing a delimited vineyard recognized by the regulatory council, along with the term *Viñedo Singular* ("single vineyard"), indicate a wine produced entirely from grapes sourced from the specified vineyard.

a lot of discussions with my father, who was very traditional," says de Miguel, who finished his enological studies and experience working at other wineries before joining his father in 2009. Beginning with the 2016 vintage he revamped his approach, producing what he calls "a more traditional style," vinifying white and red grapes together and utilizing old barrels, and later including single-parcel bottlings in their lineup. "[During my travels to other wine regions] I saw the possibility of producing other styles of wines, with the inclusion of other grapes, using stems and with other types of barrels."

"Today winemakers travel much more than they did 30 or

40 years ago. And when you see the best, you feel compelled to try and reply," says Eduardo Eguren, son of Marcos Eguren, who owns a number of leading Rioja estates with his brother Miguel Ángel (Sierra Cantabria, Señorío de San Vicente and Viñedos de Párganos). In 2018 Eduardo Eguren established his own winery, Cuentaviñas, producing wine from 27 acres of vineyards, a combination of acreage inherited from his maternal grandfather as well as sites he leases from his father and uncle.

"I said to myself, 'What do I want in my life: a new project, or to follow the family path?'" explains Eduardo Eguren. "I decided I wanted to do a project to show how different soils produce different stories in wine." Eguren produces one white and five red Rioja wines (plus one from Ribera del Duero), including four single-vineyard bottlings. The Rioja Los Yelsones 2021 (94, \$300) from the La Rad vineyard is a top example.

"Now in Rioja, there's something happening, there's going to be a big change, with a change in the generations," enthuses Eguren. "For me, change began in the 1990s with my family and others building up quality. But then it stagnated. From 2015, 2016, change began again with young producers. It's changing the landscape of Rioja."

Jose Gil, whose first vintage was 2016, produces six wines with his wife, Vicky, under their Vignerons de la Sonsierra label, including two village wines and three single-vineyards from 42 acres of vines, about a third of which they own. Previously, Gil worked at his family winery, Bodegas Olmaza. "It was incredible learning from my grandfather, my father and uncle. But when I saw some vineyards mixed in the tanks with others—incredible vineyards—it was my dream to be able to bottle these separately. It's a dream I share with Vicky, to show these vineyards, to make wine with humility," says Gil.

Diego Magaña Tejero, who only started his Rioja project in 2021, also used experiences working at his family winery, Bodegas Viña Magaña in the neighboring region of Navarra, to inform his future direction. The first stop was northwestern Spain's Bierzo, where he produces wine under his Dominio de Anza label. But making wine in Rioja was always the dream.

"In Bierzo, I'm more free. But here in Rioja, there's a legacy. You have to do your own vision, but with respect," says Magaña, who produces his six wines from 11 acres of vines, from sources he owns and purchased fruit.

"It's not always about buying vineyards," he clarifies. "It's also about buying the grapes and telling the story of this area. Maybe if I don't buy these grapes now, we'll lose the vineyard, we'll lose the patrimony." Magaña touches on the fact of Rioja's aging population of vine growers, many without a new generation to take over the family vineyards, spurring Rioja's small growers and large bodegas alike to take up the work.

And it is not only a younger generation leading the charge from the vineyards.

"I feel like for many years we were pushing against a door, and now, finally, the door is opening a little bit more," says Maite Fernández, who owns Bodega Abel Mendoza with her husband, Abel Mendoza.

Mendoza decided to redirect his family's bulk wine business in 1988. Even at the young age of 17 he had been considering a



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2018

**100 points**

Jeb Dunnuck

2016

**100 points**

The Wine Advocate

The Wine Independent

Le Figaro

2015

**100 points**

Jeb Dunnuck

2010

**100 points**

The Wine Advocate

The Wine Independent

Jeb Dunnuck

Yves Beck

2009

**100 points**

The Wine Advocate

The Wine Independent

Jeb Dunnuck

Bettane & Desseauve

2005

**100 points**

The Wine Advocate

Jeb Dunnuck

Wine Spectator

The Wine Independent

2000

**100 points**

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Maite Fernández and Abel Mendoza of Bodega Abel Mendoza have increased the number of individual bottlings they make without upping overall production, sourcing 40 plots across 57 acres of vines.

different path for several years. “More isn’t better. Less is always better. Every year is a blank page, and to make the picture, you take the different components and you paint your own interpretation,” says Mendoza. Although production volume at the winery hasn’t increased over the years, the number of bottlings has, as Mendoza makes wines that he feels express Rioja in its many facets—both its soils and its styles.

“From 40 different plots spread over three different villages and 57 acres of vines I can usually make 18 to 19 different bottlings,” he adds. “For us this project is a form of life. Now we are an example, with some young people following our behavior.”

“More and more, Rioja is focused on vineyards. For us it has always been like this, but now you can find young people very focused [on this aspect] of Rioja. It’s a new wave that’s diversifying Rioja’s panorama,” says Carmen Pérez-Garrigues.

Though Pérez-Garrigues first commercial release of her 2018 and 2019 Villota wines (bottled under Viñas del Lentisco)

was only in 2021, she and her family have played an important role in Rioja’s history. Her father—Ricardo Pérez-Villota—and Mateo José Madrazo Real de Asúa, father of Viñas del Lentisco’s current winemaker, Jesús de Madrazo Mateo, formed a partnership with CVNE winery in the 1970s that created the Viñedos del Contino estate on 400 acres of land owned by the Pérez-Villota family. In 2013, looking to the future, Pérez-Garrigues convinced her father to leave the partnership with CVNE, taking with them about 280 acres of land, including 240 under vine.

“My father thought I was mad at first. But I knew if I was going to continue, I wanted to continue in a different way,” explains Pérez-Garrigues. The new path includes production of the single-vineyard Viña Gena bottling (2022: 92, \$60). “So we are not the new, young blood, the young people. But I really like their bravery,” says Pérez-Garrigues.

“Even if we are older than they are,” says winemaker de Madrazo Mateo, “We have the same passion.”

Telmo Rodríguez, frustrated by Rioja’s labeling regulations that would not allow him to express on the label the wine in the bottle, its source and *terroir*-driven expression, addressed the situation with not quite legal lengths for some of his wines. For Bodegas Lanzaga, he highlighted *terroir* by redacting “Lanziego” from the phrase “Viñedos Propios in Lanziego” on the front labels of his Lanzaga and LZ bottlings. (Lanziego is still clearly readable under the black redacting mark.) And since the inception of his Lindes project, produced at his family winery La Granja Nuestra Señora de Remelluri, Rodríguez willfully included the village name on the labels. The range of Lindes’ six wines focuses on the distinctive expression of the fruit sourced from vines in and

around the named village.

In 2017, Rodríguez and others were able to finally push through new regulations for Rioja’s labels. Producers can still use the classic *crianza*, *reserva* and *gran reserva* terms if they so choose. But they can also highlight Rioja’s subzones, its specific villages and single-vineyard sites.

Rodríguez’s labeling efforts were not about marketing, but about finding a way to identify for consumers the work he had been doing for decades to showcase Rioja’s *terroir*. “We have *grands crus* in Rioja. [In the past] we abandoned the best places for more fertile land at lower, [more accessible] elevations. It all starts here, in the vineyard. To talk about a place, to talk about a taste, to talk about a profile.”

“I think the key now is the new generation,” says Rodríguez. “We have the *terroir*. We have the market—a consumer who is ready for quality wine. We’re going to rebuild a map that understands the beauty of Rioja—in all its diversity and different places.” □



# RIOJA'S LEADING LIGHTS

WINEMAKERS BRINGING THE REGION'S *TERROIRS* TO THE FORE

By Alison Napjus



Sandra Bravo

## Sandra Bravo

Born and raised in Rioja, owner-winemaker Sandra Bravo, 42, traveled widely after studying first in Rioja then Toulouse, France. Working in wineries in Bordeaux, Chianti, Marlborough and California added breadth and experience to her view of wine and winemaking. But it was a seven-year stint as a vineyard manager in Spain's Priorat region that had the most influence on Bravo.

"Working in Priorat ... gave me an open point of view to see Rioja, my home, with other eyes, [to show] all the potential from the amazing vineyards that we have," says Bravo. She worked in particular with Ricard Rofes, a winemaker known for his meticulous plot-driven approach at Priorat's Scala Dei winery.

In 2012, it was time to return to Rioja. Bravo started working 2.5 acres of rented vines in the village of Rivas de Tereso. The small plots of old vines, planted in calcareous soils and located at an elevation of 2,130 feet, recalled her experiences in Priorat but within the framework of Rioja.

Bravo's budding winery grew quickly, with locals offering her additional vineyards

Photographs by  
Markel Redondo

to rent and farm for her project. Today she owns 25 acres of vines, farming organically and incorporating many biodynamic practices. The 4,600-case production occurs at a rental facility in Villabuena de Álava. Bravo's lineup includes nine wines, with three reds incorporating aging in clay amphorae, a rarity in Rioja.

"Sierra de Toloño is my life project. It was very hard in the beginning as a young woman in a very traditional place as is Rioja," reflects Bravo, looking back. But then, looking forward, she adds, "Rioja has the best conditions to make great wines ... It's time to show all that potential, with new projects from people that have studied, have traveled and that are prepared to make great quality wines. That's the future of Rioja."

### BODEGA SIERRA DE TOLOÑO

92	Rioja White Nahikun 2023	\$38
91	Garnacha Rioja La Dula de Altura 2022	\$30
91	Rioja Camino de Santa Cruz 2021	\$45
91	Rioja Raposo 2021	\$28
90	Rioja White 2023	\$21
90	Tempranillo Rioja 2022	\$21



## Eduardo Eguren

Most winemakers like nothing better than talking about their *terroir*. But Cuentaviñas owner and winemaker Eduardo Eguren is a serious rock jock, easily tracing 65 million years of history to explain the soil below his feet.

Eguren, 39, comes by it honestly; his father, Marcos Eguren, with brother Miguel Ángel, began exploring site-specific expressions from Rioja 30 years ago. After completing enological studies and stages at Artadi in Rioja, Domaine de la Côte in California and other wineries, Eguren worked at his family's estates in Rioja and neighboring Toro. But in 2018, when he inherited three plots of old vines from his maternal grandfather, he felt the drive to create his own expressions of *terroir*.

"I wanted to do a project to show how different soils produce different stories in wine," says Eguren, who named his new winery Cuentaviñas, a play on the Spanish word for storyteller, *cuentacuentos*. "We're trying to push, to move things, to be different. Great wineries—my family, the Mugas, for example—are doing their own great work. But for all the rest of us, this kind of *terroir*-driven situation is giving new breath [to Rioja]."

From the initial 6 acres of inherited vines, Eguren has expanded to 27 acres, some of which he leases from his father and uncle. His wife, Carlota, is a partner in the winery, which produces one white and five red Rioja wines, including four single-vineyard bottlings, and one Ribera del Duero from 9 acres of vines. The Rioja wines are produced at a winery in Logroño but aged in the village of Peciña, where Eguren's grandfather was born, and where he hopes to eventually move all aspects of the winery's production.

"The most important thing is to create your own identity," Eguren sums up. "I don't want to make a copy of anything else, but to express the real identity of where I work."

### CUENTAVIÑAS

94	Rioja Los Yelones 2021	\$300
93	Rioja El Tizado 2021	\$350
92	Garnacha Rioja CDVIN 2021	\$90
92	Rioja Alomado 2021	\$80

## Marcos and Miguel Ángel Eguren

Brothers Marcos and Miguel Ángel Eguren might well be labeled Rioja's original *terroirists*. After growing and selling grapes for three generations, their father, Guillermo Eguren, founded the family's Bodegas Sierra Cantabria winery in 1957, later bringing his sons into the fold. Today the brothers helm the winery as winemaker and general manager, respectively.

But in 1991, Marcos, now 66, and Miguel Ángel, now 61, made waves with the establishment of their Señorío de San Vicente winery. Rather than sourcing grapes from numerous locations, blending, aging and bottling multiple labels under Rioja's established aging classification system, the new winery released just one wine from 44 contiguous acres of vines. It was the first commercial example of a site-specific wine in Rioja's history.

"We're pioneers in single-vineyard wine production in Rioja,"



Eduardo Eguren

says Marcos, unabashedly. "San Vicente was a pure revolution when it came to the market—a totally different concept. After it was accepted by the market, we classified all our vineyards by quality and changed production to be based on this."

That meant adapting work in the vineyards to each site's specific needs and employing different materials in the winery to best elicit distinct expression from the fruit character of each site, ranging from stainless steel to concrete to multiple types and sizes of oak vessels. Today Sierra Cantabria's 15-wine lineup includes bottlings that follow Rioja's traditional blended approach, but also five single-vineyard wines, including the winery's prestige cuvée, Amancio, from the old-vine La Vegailla vineyard.

And after the success of Señorío de San Vicente, the Eguren brothers doubled down in 1998 when they chiseled out two plots from the family holdings for production of wines for a new winery, Viñedos de Párganos. The 4.4-acre La Nieta vineyard is the source of grapes for the winery's flagship bottling of the same name, while the El Puntido vineyard supports production of three additional labels.

"Rioja has lots of diversity—the soils, the microclimates," reflects Marcos Eguren. "It allows for many different styles and if you work well in the vineyards and in the winery, you can get beautiful complexity and freshness."



### VIÑEDOS DE PÁGANOS

96	Rioja La Nieta 2021	\$275
95	Rioja El Puntido 2021	\$70
94	Rioja El Puntido Gran Reserva 2013	\$120
92	Tempranillo Rioja Calados del Puntido 2020	\$55

### SEÑORIO DE SAN VICENTE

94	Rioja 2021	\$85
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### BODEGAS SIERRA CANTABRIA

96	Rioja Amancio 2021	\$180
95	Rioja Finca El Bosque 2021	\$190
95	Rioja Mágico 2021	\$1,000
93	Rioja Gran Reserva 2016	\$50
92	Rioja Reserva 2017	\$39
92	Rioja Única Reserva 2020	\$42
91	Rioja Colección Privada 2022	\$65
91	Rioja White Organza 2022	\$44
90	Rioja Crianza 2021	\$25
90	Rioja White 2024	\$27
88	Rioja Rosado 2024	\$20

## Jose Gil and Vicky Fernández

In just five years, husband-and-wife team Jose and Vicky (Fernández) Gil have rapidly expanded their nascent Vignerons de la Sonsierra winery from its 500-case production in 2020 to 2,500 cases today. Winemaker Jose Gil attributes the growth to production from 17 acres of vineyards they rent in addition to the 12.5 acres the couple owns, but also to practical concerns. Both Jose, 34, and Vicky, 35, left secure, salaried positions behind after the 2020 harvest; it was time to make their joint side project official.

Vicky's background is in hospitality in Bilbao and in Madrid, where she met Jose in 2018. Jose spent a decade working at his family's Bodegas Olmaza winery, but began experimenting during that time using the grapes of two parcels owned by his grandmother to produce wine in an ancient cellar in the village of San Vicente de la Sonsierra. The first official vintage was 2016, and today the winery's lineup includes six wines: a white, two village-based versions and three single-vineyards.

Jose's travels prior to joining the family winery ultimately informed his decision to focus on *terroir*-based wines of his own.

"I studied winemaking and viticulture in Rioja, but then I

traveled a lot, especially in Burgundy and in Germany," explains Gil. "I love their way of life, of working the vineyard, of selling your wine and explaining different *terroir*, and I think we have that possibility here."

For production, which takes place at a facility in Briones, Gil favors whole cluster or partial destemming, and fermentation in stainless steel or concrete vessels. He tries to delay malolactic fermentation to the extent possible so that it can take place at lower temperatures, "to capture more fruit, color and depth in the finished wines," says Gil. Aging occurs in the cellar in San Vicente de la Sonsierra. After initially utilizing 225-liter barrels, Gil tried 300-liter casks in 2018 before settling on 500-liter barrels in 2020. "It's just the right size for our wines."

### VIGNERONS DE LA SONSIERRA

93	Rioja Jose Gil Paraje La Canoca 2022	\$74
92	Rioja Jose Gil Paraje El Bardallo 2022	\$74
91	Rioja Jose Gil Viñedos en Labastida 2022	\$52
91	Rioja Jose Gil Viñedos en San Vicente de la Sonsierra 2022	\$52

## Diego Magaña Tejero

"If I need to put a one-word explanation on my life, I can say that from age 21, it's 'WINE,'" says Diego Magaña, now 42. That singular focus took Magaña to work at Bodegas y Viñedos O. Fournier in Ribera del Duero, Vieux Château Certan in Bordeaux and his family's winery in nearby Navarra, Bodegas Viña Magaña. In 2014, he began producing under his own label, Dominio de Anza, in northern Spain's Bierzo appellation.



Vicky Fernández and Jose Gil





Diego Magaña Tejero

But in 2016, Magaña bought 2.4 acres of vines, with part of the site originally planted in 1900, located outside the village of Laguardia in Rioja. “[The San Ginés vineyard] was the first I was able to buy. Always, it had been my dream to be in Rioja.”

Since then, Magaña has rooted himself in Rioja, slowly expanding his vineyard holdings to just over 11 acres. He also purchases grapes to reach his 2,500-bottle production, considering it an imperative not only for his growing business but also for the support of Rioja’s grapegrowers and his own understanding of the region’s *terroir*.

“It’s unlucky when you are not in a situation to inherit vineyards. But it’s lucky because this means I can find and buy exactly what I want to buy,” says Magaña, explaining that he always vinifies plots separately. “Even if I need to [blend vineyard sources] to fill a vat, I keep a separate barrel of each parcel, just to understand [its attributes.]” He bottled San Ginés separately for the first time with the 2020 vintage, when he truly felt there was something distinctive to show from the site. “After four years, you really know how [a plot] performs, irrespective of vintage character.”

Magaña works in tight quarters, rented garage space just outside of Laguardia, to produce this young winery’s range of six wines: one white and five red. Although he adapts winemaking to the site and to the vintage, a percentage of whole-cluster fermentation is common, always in large, open-topped oak vats, with aging primarily in neutral 500-liter French oak barrels.

#### DIEGO MAGAÑA TEJERO

<b>93</b>	Rioja Anza Carramonte 2022	<b>\$75</b>
<b>92</b>	Rioja Anza San Ginés 2022	<b>\$52</b>
<b>90</b>	Rioja Anza CDVIN 2022	<b>\$52</b>
<b>89</b>	Rioja Anza 2022	<b>\$30</b>

#### Abel Mendoza and Maite Fernández

For Abel Mendoza, changing directions at his family winery was not only a compulsion, it was a must.

“My grandad made wine for bulk sale, it was a way to survive in a rural village,” recalls Mendoza, now 64. “But at 17, I was not sure what to do. Previously, a big winery reneged on the payment of a bulk wine contract, [then my father was suddenly very ill] and so I had to change my life. I had to stop playing soccer and I had to take over. We had a new house, we had required payments. It was very difficult times.”

Despite his uncertainty in the moment, Mendoza felt more confident in the potential of his family’s vineyard holdings in and around his home village of San Vicente de la Sonsierra and the villages of Ábalos and Labastida. He decided to begin commercial production from his own vines, establishing his namesake winery in 1988.

“I thought that if I was right—if things went well—I knew it would be because of me, not because of anybody else. If things went wrong, I would have only myself to blame.”

In 1989, Mendoza married Maite Fernández, now 62, who



joined him in his fledgling winery, learning enology while Mendoza focused on the vineyards. Today, each of the 40 different plots among the winery's 57 acres of vines is vinified separately, requiring a wide variety of fermentation and aging vessels, both in size and material, in the winery. The husband-and-wife team typically produces almost 20 different wines each vintage, showcasing Rioja's local red and white grape varieties beyond Tempranillo and eschewing the traditional system of labeling wine under the aging classification system.

Among the white wines, 5V is a blend of five different grapes, but the winery also bottles single-variety versions of each grape and skin-contact examples. The reds include the introductory Jarrate labels and the Selección Personal bottling, the best Tempranillo plot each vintage. And the Grano a Grano labels are produced from a selection of the best grapes from multiple plots, individually destemmed by hand, berry by berry.

**BODEGA ABEL MENDOZA**

93	Graciano-Garnacha Rioja Grano a Grano 2020	\$100
92	Graciano Rioja Grano a Grano 2020	\$100
92	Rioja Selección Personal 2019	\$65
92	Rioja White 5V 2021	\$65
92	Rioja White Fermented on Skins 2022	\$55
92	Tempranillo Rioja Grano a Grano 2020	\$100
91	Tempranillo Blanco Rioja 2022	\$55
91	Torrontés Rioja 2022	\$55
90	Garnacha Blanca Rioja 2021	\$55
90	Malvasía Rioja 2022	\$55
90	Rioja Jarrarte 2017	\$40
90	Viura Rioja 2022	\$55
89	Rioja Jarrarte Carbonic Maceration 2020	\$20
89	Rioja White Jarrarte 2022	\$20

**Arturo and Kike de Miguel**

In 1991, after decades selling grapes to large bodegas, fourth-generation grower Roberto de Miguel decided to produce and bottle his own wine for sale from his 40 acres of vines. He rode the wave of change in Rioja at the time, leaving behind not only the traditional bodegas but also the traditional classification system based on aging.

“Many years ago we decided to leave behind *crianza*, *reserva*, *gran reserva*. For us it was more important to show our vineyards,” recalls Roberto’s son, Arturo de Miguel.

Arturo, now 43, who began working with his father in 2009,



Arturo de Miguel (left) and his father, Roberto de Miguel

would ride another wave of change, taking the winery fully to the production of *terroir*-driven examples. Today he and his agronomist brother Kike, 37, who joined the family winery in 2010, bottle seven wines from 69 acres of vines located primarily in Baños de Ebro, with additional holdings in San Vicente de Sonsierra, Ábalos and Samaniego. The lineup includes two village wines (one from 100% carbonic maceration), a white wine, two single-vineyard bottlings and, finally, two single-plot versions.

Arturo admits the path wasn’t always a clear one, given the influence of his enological studies in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when maximum extraction via long maceration periods and 200% new oak were all the rage. But beginning in 2009, a three-year soil study of the winery’s 32 plots helped to change his mind about how his winemaking could best express *terroir*.

“We decided to elaborate each plot separately. If the style of the finished wine was similar [to another], we put it in the village wine. If the wine was a little higher, [a little more distinctive] we made a single-plot bottling,” says de Miguel.

The first single-plot wine from the Finca de los Locos vineyard was produced in 2012, and in 2016 Arturo transitioned winemaking to something more traditional in style. Today he partially destems fruit, maceration periods are shorter and cooler than when he started, and he uses stainless steel or oak for fermentation and aging, depending on the wine, with limited or no new oak.

**BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS ARTUKE**

94	Rioja Paraje El Meadero El Escolladero 2022	\$80
93	Rioja La Condenada Paraje Camino del Ciego 2022	\$80
92	Rioja Finca de los Locos Paraje Peñaescalera 2021	\$60
92	Rioja Paso Las Mañas Paraje El Chorro 2022	\$41
91	Rioja Pies Rotos 2022	\$23
91	Rioja White Trascuevas 2021	\$45
89	Rioja Artuke 2023	\$16



## Carmen Pérez-Garrigues

First released in 2021, Viñas del Lentisco's Villota wines are relatively new additions to Rioja's offerings. But owner Carmen Pérez-Garrigues, 56, remembers playing and climbing trees during her childhood with Villota winemaker Jesús de Madrazo Mateo, 60, on the Finca San Rafael estate, where Pérez-Garrigues's great-grandfather settled in 1930.

The Finca San Rafael estate later became CVNE's Viñedos del Contino winery, established as a partnership between the Pérez-Villota family and CVNE in 1973. Contino was the first bodega in Rioja to produce wine from a single estate instead of multiple fruit sources from throughout the region. But as Pérez-Garrigues' father, Ricardo Pérez-Villota, approached retirement, Pérez-Garrigues looked ahead and saw a different path.

In 2013, the father and daughter left the Contino partnership to found a new project, Villota. They took with them 280 acres of land from the original 400-acre estate, of which 240 acres are planted to vineyards on three levels located on a meander in the Ebro River.

"As we look for the personality of Villota, and why we started a new project, you have the expertise of many years of working this estate. But you open your mind and think, 'Where are we now?' [in order] to look with new eyes on a landscape. [You give] a new interpretation, with our personality, to this place."

It was Pérez-Garrigues's grandfather, an agricultural engineer, who transitioned Finca San Rafael's land from cereals and other products to vineyards, with vineyard plantings ranging from 1930 to 1990. From this wealth of old vines Pérez-Garrigues produces six wines for the U.S. market, three reds and three whites, using grapes from only 126 acres of vines and

selling the rest of the fruit. De Madrazo Mateo, formerly the winemaker at Contino, vinifies varieties for each bottling separately in stainless steel; depending on the wine, he utilizes 225- and/or 500-liter French oak for aging, from 10% to 20% new for the Villota labels, up to 50% new for the single parcel Viña Gena bottling.

### VIÑA DEL LENTISCO

92	Rioja Alavesa Villota Viña Gena Viñedo Singular 2022	\$60
91	Rioja Alavesa Villota 2022	\$37
91	Rioja Alavesa Villota Selvanevada 2022	\$25
91	Rioja White Alavesa Villota 2022	\$37
89	Rioja White Alavesa Villota Selvanevada 2022	\$25

## Telmo Rodríguez

"I've been doing things a little bit illegally the whole of my life," states Telmo Rodríguez, 63, winemaker at his own Bodegas Lanzaga winery and his family's La Granja Nuestra Señora de Remelluri estate in Rioja. It's a color-outside-the-lines mindset that has bolstered Rodríguez during his multi-decade career advocating for the exploration and production of wine from Spain's great *terroirs*.

At first that vocation took Rodríguez away from Spain. He studied enology at the University of Bordeaux, then spent time at wineries in Burgundy, the Rhône and beyond. When he returned to Spain in the 1990s he established Compañía de Vinos Telmo Rodríguez with his friend Pablo Eguzkiza, producing wine from old vines in Valdeorras, Málaga, Toro and other then-virtually unheard of parts of Spain.

Rodríguez returned to Rioja in 1998 and founded Bodegas Lanzaga. He was determined to employ a Burgundian model for his wines, decrying the loss of Rioja's connection to its specific *terroirs* amidst the blending and long aging in wood common under the aging classification system.

"We don't have a very clear idea of what Rioja is. It became a brand, and in a way we lost the contents—it became a transparent logo," says Rodríguez. "We need to bring back all the contents that we lost—what was a vineyard, what was a village."

Despite the fact that listing village or vineyard names on a Rioja label was illegal until Rodríguez and others pushed through changes to the region's labeling regulations in 2017, he opted to redact the information from Lanzaga's labels. (It's still clearly visible.) Today the winery's lineup includes three village wines and four single-vineyard bottlings, all fermented with



Carmen Pérez-Garrigues and Jesús de Madrazo Mateo



natural yeast in concrete or open-topped wooden vats and aged in neutral oak barrels.

In 2009 Rodríguez took over winemaking at his family winery, Remelluri, working with his sister, viticulturist Amaia Rodríguez Hernandorena. Shortly thereafter, the siblings launched their Lindes project, a range of six wines produced in partnership with local growers to express the character of specific villages. All were labeled with the individual village name; again, not exactly legal. And although the estate's primary bottlings are labeled as *reserva* and *gran reserva*, since its founding in 1967 by Rodríguez's father, the wines were notably always produced entirely from vineyards surrounding the winery outside the village of Rivas de Tereso as opposed to blending distant sources.

"All my life I've been restoring, not inventing," muses Rodríguez. "My country has so much inside [to show]."

#### LA GRANJA NUESTRA SEÑORA DE REMELLURI

<b>94</b>	Rioja Gran Reserva 2015	<b>\$140</b>
<b>93</b>	Rioja Lindes Peciña 2020	<b>\$51</b>
<b>93</b>	Rioja Reserva 2016	<b>\$56</b>
<b>93</b>	Rioja White Alavesa 2021	<b>\$140</b>
<b>92</b>	Rioja Lindes Salinillas de Buradón 2020	<b>\$51</b>
<b>91</b>	Rioja Lindes Ábalos 2020	<b>\$51</b>
<b>91</b>	Rioja Lindes Rivas de Tereso 2020	<b>\$51</b>
<b>91</b>	Rioja Lindes San Vicente de la Sonsierra 2020	<b>\$49</b>
<b>90</b>	Rioja Lindes Labastida 2020	<b>\$37</b>

#### BODEGA LANZAGA

<b>95</b>	Rioja Las Beatas 2021	<b>\$375</b>
<b>93</b>	Rioja La Estrada 2021	<b>\$140</b>
<b>92</b>	Rioja Tabuerniga 2021	<b>\$125</b>
<b>91</b>	Rioja Lanzaga 2020	<b>\$50</b>
<b>90</b>	Rioja LZ 2022	<b>\$35</b>

## David Sampedro and Melanie Hickman

For husband-and wife team David Sampedro, 49, and Melanie Hickman, 48, owners of Bodegas Bhilar, it's all about the vines.

After formative years spent working with his uncle in the vineyards around the village of Elvillar, Sampedro studied oenology and agronomy before returning to Elvillar to found his own winery in 1999, working 7 acres of vines. In 2006, Sampedro began introducing his organically farmed vines to biodynamic practices, virtually unheard of at the time in Rioja.

"I started to practice [biodynamics]," says Sampedro, remembering that it was slow going at first. "[But then] I felt more natural acidity in my wines; I saw the [cover crops] in our vineyards change. That is when I became a believer."

In 2008, Sampedro met American Hickman, a serious enophile then working as a pharmaceutical sales representative in Hawaii. The couple later wed and Hickman joined Sampedro at the winery.

Over the years, total acreage has grown to 42 acres, always in Elvillar. "It might be arrogant, but after working in Burgundy, in Germany, I came back here and said, 'Elvillar has enough *grands crus* to make separate, distinctive wines, without blending

anything.' " Though Elvillar boasts few wineries, historically its grapes and bulk wines commanded top prices in the region. Among Bhilar's 33 parcels Sampedro cites the variation he finds in soil type, microclimate and elevation (1,310 to 2,300 feet).

Of the 42 acres, Hickman owns almost 20 acres independently, producing her own wines bottled under the Bodegas Bhilar winery with the addition of her signature to the front labels and referred to as the Eterea Kripani line. Separately, Sampedro produces bottlings from unique *terroirs* throughout Spain under his DSG Vineyards brand.

After years vinifying the wines in their garage, the couple inaugurated an eco-conscious winery on the outskirts of Elvillar, powered by wind and solar energy only. Utilizing concrete tanks for fermentation and primarily 225-liter and 500-liter French oak *barriques* for aging, Bhilar's current lineup includes four single-vineyard bottlings and six village wines, with three white wines in the mix.

#### BODEGAS BHILAR

<b>92</b>	Rioja Phincas 2020	<b>\$33</b>
<b>92</b>	Rioja White Bhilar 2022	<b>\$21</b>
<b>90</b>	Rioja Phinca Hapa Elvillar Melanie Hickman 2021	<b>\$42</b>
<b>89</b>	Rioja Bhilar Viñedos en Elvillar 2022	<b>\$21</b>



David Sampedro and Melanie Hickman



# RIOJA

SPAIN'S SIGNATURE  
WINE REGION IS  
THRIVING, OFFERING  
BOTH TRADITIONAL  
AND DYNAMIC  
MODERN BOTTLINGS






# RISING

By Alison  
Napjus



Photograph by  
Lucy Schaefer





La Rioja Alta winemaker Julio Sáenz makes up to three *gran reservas* in the best vintages.

The days are sunny but cold on a January trip to Rioja. The vines are bare, and the landscape's patchwork of soils is now clearly visible. Deep red, iron-laced plots fade into others of a dark-rose hue, indicating more limestone; vineyards of pure white calcareous soil sit alongside parcels of gravelly, dark brown alluvial earth. The Ebro River and its tributaries wind through the vineyards; the Sierra Cantabria mountains rise beyond.

Rioja is visually stunning, and its diversity and majesty are reflected in the region's wines.

In the past year I've reviewed more than 320 wines from Rioja, about 85% of them reds. These included many examples from bodegas long-established in *Wine Spectator's* blind tastings. Most are bottled and labeled according to Rioja's traditional classification system, based on oak- and bottle-aging regimens. But this special report additionally focuses on bottlings that eschew the traditional classifications; many of these versions are *terroir*-driven examples, sometimes labeled with their subzone, village or vineyard names. It's a fascinating array of wines that reveals the breadth that Rioja's winemakers are capable of today.

Showcasing the enticing possibilities of that breadth, 10 wines in this report earn classic ratings of 95 points or higher on *Wine Spectator's* 100-point scale.

Rioja is traditionally known for its elegant reds classified by age as *crianza*, *reserva* or *gran reserva*. (For more about these terms, see "Aging Rioja," page 37.) Standouts include La Rioja Alta's graceful Rioja 890 Gran Reserva 2010 (95 points, \$275) and Bodegas Marqués de Murrieta's sophisticated Rioja Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva Especial 2012 (95, \$280).

Rioja producers that classify their wines by age typically blend multiple vineyard sources and strive for a consistent style from vintage to vintage. This is very much the case at La Rioja

"2021 IS A TURNING POINT IN THE HISTORY OF RIOJA. THE WINES SHOW A SPECIAL, FRUIT CHARACTER TYPICAL TO THE FRESHER, NEW STYLE OF RIOJA."

Julio Sáenz

Alta, where the cellars hold eight vintages' worth of inventory; their in-house cooperage makes 4,000 barrels a year.

The 890 Gran Reserva 2010 blends Tempranillo (95%) and Mazuelo (2%) from estate-owned vineyards in the villages of Briñas, Labastida and Villalba with Graciano (3%) from the winery's Montecillo vineyard in Fuenmayor. The wine was aged from spring 2011 to spring 2017 in 225-liter American oak barrels and then in bottle for an additional five years prior to release, spread out in batches over four years. It is La Rioja Alta's prestige cuvée, one of three *gran reservas*, and only made about three times per decade. The first bottles of the next 890, from the outstanding 2011 vintage, will be released later this year.

"[Compared to our other *gran reservas*,] the 890 should always be a very structured wine in style, long and tannic and textured [on the palate]," says La Rioja Alta winemaker Julio Sáenz. "890 is velvet, the 904 is silk," compares managing director Guillermo de Aranzabal.

In 1852, Luciano de Murrieta García Lemoine, the Marqués de Murrieta, was the first to produce what was then known as a Bordeaux-style red, a blend aged in French oak barrels. But today fruit for the winery's flagship bottling, Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva Especial, is sourced entirely from the 98-acre La Plana vineyard, planted in 1950. For the 2012 vintage, Murrieta winemaker María Vargas separately vinified and aged the



Tempranillo (81%) and Mazuelo (19%), but both aged for almost three years in 225-liter oak barrels; American oak for the Tempranillo and French for the Mazuelo. After blending, the wine aged an additional 20 months in concrete tank before being bottled in 2019 and released in the U.S. in 2024.

In the 1990s, several prominent Rioja producers felt constrained by the traditional classification system at a time when the international palate was leaning toward wines of greater concentration and weight, something that long-aged *reservas* and *gran reservas* couldn't deliver. Bodegas Muga was among those who sought to answer the call of this then-modern style, launching the Torre Muga label (2020: 93, \$140) in 1991 and Aro in 2000.

The Rioja Aro 2021 (96, \$450) shines for its depth and focus, effortlessly integrating rich flavor and muscular tannins. Aro's power is amped by the inclusion of 30% Graciano, buttressing the Tempranillo. The Tempranillo is sourced from several vineyards, while all of the Graciano comes from the Baltracones vineyard, a cool, high-altitude site (1,500 feet). Aro is only made in vintages that allow full maturation of the late-ripening Graciano. "Baltracones is a high-altitude site planted by my grandfather," says Muga head winemaker Isaac Muga. "It used to be three times per decade [that the Graciano] ripened enough; now it's more like five to six times per decade."

Wines classified by aging regimen lie at one end of the Rioja spectrum; Muga's blends lie somewhere in the middle. At the other end of the Rioja spectrum are wines defined by origin and *terroir*. Most of this report's highest-rated wines are products of this relatively new site-specific philosophy. And thanks to new regulations announced in 2017, some of them now label their wines with recognized vineyard names, or *viñedo singular*. (See "Defining Rioja," page 39.)

The first of this group is Álvaro Palacios' Rioja Oriental Quiñón de Valmira Viñedo Singular 2022 (96, \$550), an enticing wine that shows great purity and seamless integration. The 100% Garnacha is sourced entirely from the 7.4-acre Valmira vineyard near the Bodegas Palacios Remondo winery in Alfaro, on the eastern edge of the Rioja Oriental subzone.

Famed Priorat winemaker Álvaro Palacios took the helm at his family's Palacios Remondo when his grandfather died in 2000. He set about revitalizing the estate and, as he'd done in Priorat, fermenting different sites separately in order to better understand their potential.

"Álvaro was working very hard to find an icon wine from Rioja," says Isabel Palacios Osua, Palacios' export director, explaining that Palacios was sure Rioja had within it a site to be a sister wine to his signature L'Ermita bottling from Priorat.

"He saw Valmira," says Lola Palacios, who joined her father about a year ago after completing her studies and internships in California and France. "And he has this superpower to see the quality of the wines by looking at the vineyard."



Marqués de Murrieta's Vicente Dalmau Cebrián-Sagarriga and his longtime winemaker María Vargas crafted one of this report's top-rated *gran reservas*.

Palacios fermented the fruit from Valmira separately for more than a decade before bottling it for the first time with the 2014 vintage; its first official commercial release followed with 2015. Prior to 2014, the Valmira wine was blended into Palacios Remondo's Propiedad label (2021: 94, \$55).

Another Rioja vigneron searching for potentially iconic vineyards was Telmo Rodríguez. He looked first to Rioja's old terraced properties, typically found at higher elevations. Many such vineyards were abandoned in the second half of the 20th century in favor of more fertile, easier-to-work locations. "They're the *grands crus* of Rioja," suggests Rodríguez of these high-altitude old vineyards.

In 1990 he purchased the 4.7-acre Las Beatas vineyard, planted to a field blend of several dozen varieties. "I found this vineyard," says Rodríguez. "It was very inspiring."

Situated at about 1,800 feet in elevation, above the village of Briñas in Rioja Alta, Las Beatas was likely originally planted around 1900. Rodríguez's restoration of the property has included a replanting program employing a *sélection massale* from the original vines.

When Rodríguez founded his Bodegas Lanzaga winery in 1998, he blended Las Beatas into other wines for more than a decade before creating a standalone bottling in 2011. The 2021 Rioja Las Beatas (95, \$375) is a testament to Rodríguez's belief in the unique vineyard, offering concentration and structure,



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but with a sense of poise and fine integration.

This report's remaining top single-vineyard wines come from brothers Marcos and Miguel Ángel Eguren. Three are from their family's original winery, Bodegas Sierra Cantabria, established by their father in 1957, and two from their smaller Viñedos de Párganos winery, founded in 1998. Today the siblings own almost 400 acres of vineyards, allowing them to utilize only estate-grown fruit at their three primary wineries. (In addition to Sierra Cantabria and Párganos in Rioja, the Eguren family also owns Señorío de San Vicente, the Dominio de Eguren négociant business and Teso La Monja in Toro.)

From Bodegas Sierra Cantabria, the Rioja Finca El Bosque 2021 (95, \$190), from the 3.7-acre, 50-year-old vineyard of the same name, shows finesse and fluidity. The 100% Tempranillo spent about 18 months in new oak *barriques*. The 2022 Finca El Bosque (94, \$200) was also rated for this report.

Also from Sierra Cantabria are two single-vineyard wines that do not include the vineyard name on the label, the statuesque Rioja Amancio 2021 (96, \$180) and the refined and focused Rioja Mágico 2021 (95, \$1,000).

Amancio sources its 100% Tempranillo fruit entirely from the 41-acre La Veguilla vineyard, planted between 1966 and 1981. Mágico is a field blend from the 2.9-acre El Vardallo vineyard, first planted more than a century ago. The blend is primarily Tempranillo (60%) with 20% Garnacha, other red varieties and about 10% white varieties. Originally the varieties were fermented separately and used for other wines, but in 2010 winemaker Marcos Eguren vinified them together and found the resulting wine to be "magic."

Viñedos de Párganos was founded with the goal of highlighting two exceptional vineyards, La Nieta (4.4 acres) and El Puntido (62 acres), each planted in 1975. Both sites are clay with limestone over a base of sandstone, but La Nieta also layers up to a foot of sandy top soil. The 2021 Rioja La Nieta (96, \$220), aged 18 months in new French oak *barriques*, is rich and expansive; the 2021 El Puntido (95, \$70), aged 16 months in new French oak, shows concentration and lovely equilibrium. The 2022 La Nieta (94, \$300) was also rated for this report.

The 2021 vintage is the common thread among this report's top wines. We'll have to wait for the vintage's *reservas* and *gran reservas*, but wines such as the Aro, as well as the many *terroir*-driven examples and even Rioja's easy-drinking reds and whites are evidence that 2021 is one of Rioja's best



When Priorat star Álvaro Palacios took over his family's Palacios Remondo in Rioja in 2000, he revitalized the estate with a focus on more site-specific winemaking.

vintages yet in the 21st century. "It's a miracle vintage," says Eguren, echoing several producers I spoke to about 2021.

Following a hot, dry 2020, water reserves were restored during the ensuing winter when snowstorm Filomena dumped 10 feet of snow in some parts of Rioja. Budding began in early April and conditions were good, with little rainfall through May.

A series of strong rainstorms during flowering, at the end of May and into early June, raised mildew concerns. "But it never made an appearance in 2021," says Eguren. July and August were extremely dry, although late-September rains renewed fears of rot.

"In October, the climate changed radically—very cold, very sunny, no rainfall—which slowed down but extended the ripening," says Eguren. "It was glorious to see all the grapes coming into the winery in perfect condition; beautifully ripened and in perfect health. We went from fear to joy—a miracle vintage."

"It's the kind of vintage that all of us want, every year," says Lola Palacios. It's a sentiment derived from the quality of the fruit at harvest and the character of the resulting wines. But producers were also happy with a slightly larger crop in 2021, about 5% to 10% above average.

La Rioja Alta winemaker Julio Sáenz holds the outstanding 2001 and classic 1964 vintages up to 2021 for comparison. Although he prefers 2001, he feels the

### Rating Red Wine Vintages in Rioja

Year	Score	Notes	Drinkability
2021	97	Warm, dry summer and cool, clear conditions at harvest yielded harmonious wines with depth of flavor, polished tannins and a sense of finesse	Drink or hold
2020	93	A hot year with a reduced crop; excellent conditions during harvest resulted in elegant wines with good tension and restraint	Drink or hold
2019	92	Stable conditions led to focused wines with aging potential	Drink or hold
2018	89	Cooler weather produced fresher wines; some inconsistencies	Drink
2017	87	A difficult growing season led to inconsistent wines	Drink or hold

**Vintage ratings:** 95-100, classic; 90-94, outstanding; 85-89, very good; 80-84, good; 75-79, mediocre; 50-74, not recommended  
**Drinkability:** "NYR" means most of the wines of the vintage are yet to be released; "drink" means most of the wines of the vintage are ready to drink; "hold" means most of the ageworthy wines have yet to fully mature.



character of 2021 fits the modern-day profile of the region's wines.

"2021 is a turning point in the history of Rioja," says Sáenz. "The wines show a special, fruit character typical to the fresher, new style of Rioja."

The vintage has already yielded many highly rated wines that collectors should seek, and 2021 will continue to do so over the next decade or more as longer-aged examples reach the market. But the already clear overall strength of the vintage means consumers can buy with confidence and, in many cases, prices have held steady for these higher quality wines, creating good value opportunities.

At 94 points and under \$100, Bodegas Palacios Remondo's silky Rioja Oriental Viñas Viejas de la Propiedad 2021 (\$55) is a baby version of the winery's highly rated single-vineyard wine; it's all about precision and harmony. The Señorío de San Vicente Rioja 2021 (\$85) is a counterpoint, initially muscular and compact but opening in the glass to show a lovely range of fruit, mineral and savory aromas and flavors.

Under \$50, look for Bodegas Muga's sculpted Rioja Reserva 2021 (92, \$39) and Bodegas Artevino's fragrant, structured Rioja Orben (91, \$45).

Many of Rioja's best values are found among the traditional bodegas' *crianzas* and *reservas*, examples that partner consistent quality, good availability and solid pricing. A trio of 90-point wines offers fine versions in this vein: The Bodegas Beronia Rioja Crianza 2021 (\$15) is well-balanced and animated; the Bodegas Izadi Rioja Reserva 2021 (\$20) is sleek and savory; and the Bodegas Sierra Cantabria Rioja Crianza 2021 (\$25) is fresh and fruit-driven.

Outside of the 2021 vintage, a trio of Rioja *reservas* at 93 points also offer good availability and high quality. Look for CVNE's Rioja Imperial Reserva 2020 (\$52), Bodegas Roda Rioja Roda Reserva 2020 (\$55) and La Granja Nuestra Señora de Remeluri Rioja Reserva 2016 (\$55). For less than \$30, try the 2017 Rioja Gran Reserva (92, \$28) from Bodegas LAN, the Rioja Pies Rotos 2022 (91, \$23) from Bodegas y Viñedos Artuke and the Rioja Reserva 2020 (90, \$23) from Baron de Ley.

Although the lion's share of this report's wines are red, Rioja's white wines are increasingly intriguing. This is true for the wine drinker, but also for Rioja's winemakers, many of whom are showing greater interest in the category. Among smaller producers, that might mean bottling a white for the first time; for the larger wineries, that interest is manifesting in expanding lineups of white wine labels.

"There's great potential for the whites from Rioja," says Arturo de Miguel, winemaker at Bodegas y Viñedos Artuke, which he runs with his brother Kike. "The really good thing is that



Brothers Marcos (left) and Miguel Ángel Eguren account for five classic-scoring single-vineyard wines in this report, from two of their family wineries. With 400 acres of vines, they use only estate fruit across their lineup.

we have a lot of really old vineyards for the whites."

Historically, Malvasía was Rioja's favored white grape, although many of the old vineyards that de Miguel refers to are field blends. Viura is the leading white variety today, typically dominating the blend or bottled solo. But de Miguel warns that this growing interest in Viura may come at a cost. "In the last five to six years, a lot of people have planted white vineyards, and they will be in the market in the next five to six years. It could be a very dire situation [if wineries rely only on] the quality of the young vineyards."

Future issues aside, consumers should expect to find a spectrum of wine styles among the whites as well. It's a benefit for those who want to explore and experience different expressions, but a challenge when faced with an unfamiliar wine. Traditional examples employ long aging in oak while more straightforward examples are fermented and aged briefly in stainless steel. In between are examples utilizing *bâtonnage* and lees contact to bolster textural richness and expression, skin-contact versions, and oak-influenced bottlings.

Standout examples range from the long-aged R. López de Heredia Viña Tondonia Rioja White Viña Gravonia Crianza 2015 (94, \$49) to the bright, snappy and easy-drinking El Coto de Rioja Rioja White 2024 (86, \$12). Also look for Bodega Sierra de Toloño's firm and focused, mineral-driven Rioja White Nahikun 2023 (92, \$38) and Bodegas Valdemar's rich, oak-aged Rioja White Conde Valdemar Finca Alto Cantabria Viñedo Singular Old Vines 2023 (91, \$44).

Rioja is poetically known as "The Land of 1,000 Wines." With a wide variety of styles, a broad range of vintages and distinctive expressions from wineries large and small, the time for wine lovers to rediscover Rioja is now.

Senior editor Alison Napjus is Wine Spectator's lead taster on the wines of Spain.



# Alison Napjus' Top Recommended Wines From Rioja

More than 300 wines were reviewed for this report. A free alphabetical list is available at [WineSpectator.com/RiojaAlpha053125](https://www.winespectator.com/RiojaAlpha053125). WineSpectator.com members can access complete reviews for all wines tasted using the online Wine Ratings search.

WINE	SCORE	PRICE	WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>BODEGAS MUGA Rioja Aro 2021</b> Rich, enticing core of blackberry coulis and plum sauce, mouthwatering acidity and muscular tannins. Tempranillo and Graciano.	96	\$450	<b>BODEGAS MUGA Rioja Prado Enea Gran Reserva 2016</b> Powerful but poised, with dense tannins around focused baked black plum, green olive, fig cake and ground coffee. Tempranillo blend.	94	\$110
<b>VIÑEDOS DE PÁGANOS Rioja La Nieta 2021</b> This gorgeous red delivers a tapestry of cherry preserves, blackberry paste, tangerine peel, tar, black licorice, tobacco and chai spices.	96	\$275	<b>LA GRANJA NUESTRA SEÑORA DE REMELLURI Rioja Gran Reserva 2015</b> Leads with elegant baked cherry and currant fruit, revealing layers of sweet tobacco, mocha and loamy earth. Tempranillo blend.	94	\$140
<b>ÁLVARO PALACIOS Rioja Oriental Quiñón de Valmira Viñedo Singular 2022</b> Enticing and elegant, with pureed raspberry and strawberry, plus a pronounced mineral presence. Focused and fragrant.	96	\$550	<b>MARQUÉS DE RISCAL Rioja Frank Gehry Selection 2019</b> Shows concentration and subtle power, with a beam of black currant alongside fresh, loamy earth, dried mint, olive and dark chocolate.	94	\$668
<b>BODEGAS SIERRA CANTABRIA Rioja Amancio 2021</b> Classy, broad-shouldered and statuesque, fleshed out by blackberry coulis and crushed mulberry fruit with dark chocolate accents.	96	\$180	<b>SEÑORIO DE SAN VICENTE Rioja 2021</b> Muscular, revealing a concentrated range of ripe black currant and black cherry fruit, with a fleshy hint of green olive.	94	\$85
<b>BODEGA LANZAGA Rioja Las Beatas 2021</b> Poised and perfumed, with lovely rosemary and blood orange peel accenting the concentrated blackberry, plum skin, tar and black olive.	95	\$375	<b>BODEGAS FAUSTINO Rioja Gran Faustino I Gran Reserva 2004</b> Aging gracefully, with remarkable vibrancy and focus to creamy baked cherry and sweet tobacco flavors. Tempranillo blend.	93	\$100
<b>BODEGAS MARQUÉS DE MURRIETA Rioja Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva Especial 2012</b> Sophisticated, with plum compote, raspberry fruit and espresso notes balancing generosity with finesse. Tempranillo and Mazuelo.	95	\$280	<b>BODEGAS LAN Rioja Edición Limitada 2022</b> Fresh and focused, with ripe cherry and currant fruit flavors meshed with dense, fine-grained tannins. Tempranillo blend.	93	\$60
<b>VIÑEDOS DE PÁGANOS Rioja El Puntido 2021</b> Offers a rich profile of blackberry paste, plum sauce and black licorice, with nutmeg, graphite and dried thyme notes.	95	\$70	<b>DIEGO MAGAÑA TEJERO Rioja Anza Carramonte 2022</b> Stylish, with chalky underlying tannins and flavors of black raspberry paste, pomegranate puree and black olive.	93	\$75
<b>LA RIOJA ALTA Rioja 890 Gran Reserva 2010</b> Aging gracefully, integrating tobacco and loamy earth with sculpted tannins. Enticing through the plush finish.	95	\$275	<b>BODEGA ABEL MENDOZA Graciano-Garnacha Rioja Grano a Grano 2020</b> Bright acidity enlivens a dark core of blackberry paste, mountain herbs and black olive in this integrated red. Graciano and Garnacha.	93	\$100
<b>BODEGAS SIERRA CANTABRIA Rioja Finca El Bosque 2021</b> Rich and expressive with steeped black cherry, raspberry ganache, oolong tea and mineral flavors. Sculpted by dense, fine-grained tannins.	95	\$190	<b>BODEGAS MARQUÉS DE MURRIETA Rioja White Capellanía 2019</b> This intriguing white broadens to reveal layers of toasted almond, honey, tangerine peel, baked pear, dried mint and beeswax.	93	\$120
<b>BODEGAS SIERRA CANTABRIA Rioja Mágico 2021</b> Refined tannins offer a taut frame for currant, mandarin orange peel, rooibos tea, loam and dark chocolate. Tempranillo blend.	95	\$1,000	<b>LA GRANJA NUESTRA SEÑORA DE REMELLURI Rioja White Alavesa 2021</b> Lovely, layered white with a rapierlike spine of acidity enmeshed with creamy patisserie pear, green fig and persimmon fruit flavors.	93	\$140
<b>BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS ARTUKE Rioja Paraje El Meadero El Escolladero 2022</b> Seamlessly knits supple tannins and blood orange peel acidity with an enticing range of ripe blackberry and black cherry fruit.	94	\$80	<b>BODEGAS RODA Rioja Roda I Reserva 2019</b> Long, supple and harmonious, with ripe black cherry and currant laced with cocoa powder and dried thyme. Tempranillo blend.	93	\$78
<b>VIÑEDOS DEL CONTINO Rioja Viña del Olivo 2021</b> Rich, with tobacco and ground coffee aromas and black cherry coulis, loamy earth and cocoa powder on the silky palate. Tempranillo blend.	94	\$163	<b>VIGNERONS DE LA SONSIERRA Rioja Jose Gil Paraje La Canoca 2022</b> Fragrant herbs and spices are layered with baked mulberry and cherry fruit in this concentrated red with muscular, fine-grained tannins.	93	\$74
<b>CUENTAVIÑAS Rioja Los Yeliones 2021</b> Seamless, with raspberry ganache, warm cherry and fresh earth. Glides effortlessly across the palate, revealing depth and focus.	94	\$300	<b>VIÑEDOS DEL CONTINO Rioja White San Gregorio 2021</b> A sleek, graceful white, with well-honed acidity defining a rich range of quince paste and dried apricot flavors.	92	\$54
<b>CVNE Rioja Imperial Gran Reserva 2018</b> Harmonious, with lush mulberry and cherry fruit nicely trimmed by plum skin acidity and fine, sinewy tannins. Tempranillo blend.	94	\$100	<b>BODEGA ABEL MENDOZA Rioja White 5V 2021</b> Refreshing acidity and flavors of dried pear, almond skin and mountain herbs, plus a racy streak of salinity. Shows focus and length.	92	\$65
<b>R. LÓPEZ DE HEREDIA VIÑA TONDONIA Rioja White Viña Gravonia Crianza 2015</b> A traditional white, with dried white cherry, Marcona almond, baked pineapple, vanilla, fern and lemon thyme notes. Long and distinctive.	94	\$49	<b>BODEGAS MIGUEL MERINO Rioja White 2022</b> Vibrant, with lip-smacking acidity and layers of poached apricot, tangerine peel, Marcona almond and vanilla. Viura and Garnacha Blanca.	92	\$45



## Alison Napjus' Recommended Value Wines From Rioja

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WineSpectator.com members can access complete reviews for all wines tasted using the online Wine Ratings search.

WINE	SCORE	PRICE	WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>BODEGAS PALACIOS REMONDO</b> Rioja Oriental <b>Viñas Viejas de la Propiedad 2021</b> Silky, with pinpoint balance and harmony to boysenberry, baked cherry, dried lavender and star anise notes. Supple, fine tannins.	94	\$55	<b>VIÑA DEL LENTISCO</b> Rioja Alavesa Villota Selvanevada 2022 Pleasingly plump chopped black plum and raspberry flavors are reined in by sinewy, fine-grained tannins. Tempranillo blend.	91	\$25
<b>LA GRANJA NUESTRA SEÑORA DE REMELLURI</b> Rioja <b>Reserva 2016</b> Bright and buoyant, with macerated blackberry and black plum skin flavors and fragrant leather and dried flowers. Tempranillo blend.	93	\$56	<b>BODEGAS REMÍREZ DE GANUZA</b> Rioja Fincas de Ganuza <b>Reserva 2016</b> A fragrant, focused red, offering a pure, juicy beam of dried raspberry and cranberry fruit. Creamy, spiced finish.	91	\$40
<b>BODEGAS SIERRA CANTABRIA</b> Rioja Gran Reserva 2016 Lovely, with weight and concentration to the creamed black cherry, plum skin, mineral and lavender notes. Tempranillo and Graciano.	93	\$50	<b>LA RIOJA ALTA</b> Rioja Viña Alberdi Reserva 2020 Hints of tobacco, smoke and vanilla are a fragrant thread winding through the baked cherry and raspberry fruit.	91	\$25
<b>BODEGAS BHILAR</b> Rioja White Bhilar 2022 This silky white offers flavors of raw almond, mandarin orange peel and dried white cherry. Viura and Grenache Blanc.	92	\$21	<b>BODEGAS VALDEMAR</b> Rioja Conde Valdemar Reserva 2018 Plush, with saturated cherry and boysenberry fruit flavors accented by vanilla, licorice, iron and cured tobacco notes. Tempranillo blend.	91	\$30
<b>MARQUÉS DE CÁCERES</b> Rioja Gran Reserva 2016 Warm spice and licorice notes lace chopped cherry, green olive, sweet tobacco and vanilla flavors. Tempranillo blend.	92	\$40	<b>BODEGAS BERONIA</b> Rioja Crianza 2021 Well-balanced, with a dark, mineral base underscoring crushed mulberry and blackberry fruit. Tempranillo blend.	90	\$15
<b>BODEGAS FAUSTINO</b> Rioja I Gran Reserva 2016 Leans to tradition without forsaking concentration or fruit. Fragrant with tobacco, vanilla and milled white pepper. Tempranillo blend.	92	\$37	<b>BODEGAS IZADI</b> Rioja Reserva 2021 A sleek, savory style, with firm tannins and a sanguine underpinning of iron and loamy earth, plus a touch of black licorice.	90	\$20
<b>BODEGAS LAN</b> Rioja Gran Reserva 2017 Aromatic, with star anise, dried thyme and mocha winding through a core of ripe black cherry and boysenberry. Tempranillo and Graciano.	92	\$28	<b>BARON DE LEY</b> Rioja Reserva 2020 Fresh and elegant, with a lively mix of wild cherry, pomegranate puree, rose hip and red licorice flavors. Tempranillo blend.	90	\$23
<b>BODEGAS HERMANOS PECIÑA</b> Rioja Señorío de P. Peciña Reserva 2016 Fresh and harmonious, with enticing, savory underpinnings of leather, sweet smoke and eucalyptus. Tempranillo blend.	92	\$35	<b>BODEGA SIERRA DE TOLOÑO</b> Rioja White 2023 Vivid and appealing. Crackles with lively acidity and flavors of yellow peach, passion fruit and smoked almond.	90	\$21
<b>BODEGAS RAMÍREZ</b> Rioja Ramírez de la Piscina Selección Reserva 2020 Reveals fragrant dried flowers, eucalyptus, star anise and mocha, with flavors of plumped cherry and baked plum.	92	\$40	<b>BODEGA SIERRA DE TOLOÑO</b> Tempranillo Rioja 2022 Balanced, offering supple tannins enmeshed with a lively range of brambly blackberry and mulberry fruit flavors. Spiced finish.	90	\$21
<b>BODEGAS TOBÍA</b> Rioja Selección de Autor 2019 Plush and aromatic, with generous ripe black currant, dried thyme, cocoa powder and mineral notes. Tempranillo blend.	92	\$30	<b>BODEGA ABEL MENDOZA</b> Rioja White Jarrarte 2022 Lively guava and pineapple fruit flavors underscored by a savory thread of dried sage and smoke. Bright and creamy. Viura blend.	89	\$20
<b>BODEGAS ARTEVINO</b> Rioja Orben 2021 Hints of black licorice, violet and tobacco offer a fragrant overtone for this structured red. Well-spiced finish.	91	\$45	<b>BODEGAS OLARRA</b> Rioja Cerro Añon Crianza 2021 Balanced and well-knit, layering fine tannins with creamed black cherry and plum sauce notes. Tempranillo blend.	89	\$18
<b>BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS ARTUKE</b> Rioja Pies Rotos 2022 Enticing, with appealing aromas and flavors of black raspberry coulis, warm fig, violet and mountain herbs. Tempranillo and Graciano.	91	\$23	<b>BODEGAS ONTAÑON</b> Viura Rioja 2021 A creamy, leesy mix of poached peach, almond pastry, lemon curd and thyme with a tang of salty minerality.	89	\$20
<b>BODEGAS RAMÓN BILBAO</b> Rioja Gran Reserva 2016 Fresh and fluid, this well-spiced red shows flavors of pureed mulberry, black olive, game, vanilla, toast and singed alder.	91	\$37	<b>BODEGAS MONTECILLO</b> Rioja Crianza 2020 Easy-drinking, with light tannins and a well-spiced mix of ripe cherry and plum fruit accented by licorice. Tempranillo and Garnacha.	88	\$14
<b>CVNE</b> Rioja Cune Reserva 2020 Integrates creamy tannins and orange peel acidity with baked cherry, fig cake, dried thyme and warm brown bread. Tempranillo blend.	91	\$29	<b>BODEGAS MUGA</b> Rioja Rosado 2023 This pale pink rosé is fresh and appealing, with delicate hints of ground ginger and white blossoms. Garnacha blend.	88	\$18
<b>BODEGAS LAN</b> Rioja Reserva 2019 Ripe black cherry and black plum fruit are laced with lavish hints of vanilla, tar and cedar. Tempranillo blend.	91	\$22	<b>BODEGAS HERMANOS PECIÑA</b> Rioja White <b>Señorio de P. Peciña 2021</b> A salty white, with snappy acidity. Hints of cinnamon, anise and rosemary lace flavors of persimmon, dried white cherry and vanilla wafer.	88	\$18
			<b>EL COTO DE RIOJA</b> Rioja White 2024 A snappy, easy-drinking white, offering star fruit and peach skin flavors, with lemon thyme, floral and vanilla hints. Viura blend.	86	\$12





2022

# Bordeaux

an **INSTANT**

# Classic

Everything came together  
in a vintage marking  
the dawn of a new era

BY  
JAMES  
MOLESWORTH

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEEPIX STUDIO

Cheval Blanc's Pierre-Olivier Clouet shifted farming practices in 2019 to mitigate heat. Those efforts paid off with the top-rated 2022 Bordeaux.





**I**n 2022, a confluence of years-long efforts presented Bordeaux with an opportunity for the ultimate comeback vintage. The region's widespread bedrock of old vines has steadily acclimated to Bordeaux's shifting climate with the help of improved vineyard management, and a bevy of new and updated cellars are allowing vignerons to handle their fruit with greater detail than ever before.

2022 is an exciting vintage that will have an exceptionally bright spotlight on it, as it follows a difficult and lackluster 2021, so cue the Bordeaux hype machine. But the hype for France's most prominent wine region is mostly warranted this year: 2022 is a no-brainer classic.

"I consider 2022 the best vintage in my 55 vintages," says Christian Moueix, the respected owner of an elite group of





Like many of Bordeaux's elite properties, Château Léoville Barton in St.-Julien recently invested in a state-of-the-art new cellar and was rewarded with a classic-rated 2022.

Right Bank properties that includes châteaux Trotanoy, La Fleur-Pétrus and Bélair-Monange.

The 2022 confluence also marks an inflection point. Consistently warm, dry conditions yielded a crop of generously fruited reds that provides an interesting comparison to an older vintage lauded for its heat-influenced wines: 2003. That vintage was feted upon release—the wines were ostentatious and exotic right out of the gate. But some wines were off-kilter and top-heavy, burdened by high alcohol and hamstrung by deficient structure. Many of those 2003s cratered with time. It's been a long learning curve since, but dividends are being paid.

"Why 2022 is better managed than 2003 is because in 2003 it was thought that maturity was an exponentially increasing curve. We waited for days and days for grapes to concentrate under the sun," says Julien Viaud, the lead consulting enologist who has run Laboratoire Rolland since 2020 and works with dozens of estates throughout Bordeaux. "Now we know [maturity] has an optimum, like a Gaussian curve, whose peak defines the quality of the vintage. We are reaching balance before what was considered 'good' 20 years ago, and so in 2022 the maturity is sharper."

I've tasted numerous 2003s over the past few years and their progression in bottle has not been positive. Many wines show overt fruit that veers to jammy in profile. Notes of *torréfaction* and oxidation have taken a toll on many wines as well. There are some notable and compelling exceptions, such as the *grands*

*vins* from châteaux Montrose and Leoville Las Cases. But overall, the 2003s should now be approached with caution; I've accordingly adjusted the 2003 vintage ratings for the Left and Right banks to 89 and 88 points, respectively.

Nearly a generation after 2003, the 2022s show copious and showy fruit profiles that at times obscure their structure. But the wines aren't top-heavy or off-kilter at all. Instead, they maintain balance, freshness and definition. Rather than aiming for wines that just have "more," the Bordelais have adapted while their vines have acclimated. The 2022s are set up for both immediate gratification *and* beneficial cellaring.

There are two slight blemishes on the vintage. First, I don't see the 2022s as being quite as long-lived as a classically structured year such as 2010, the vintage that remains the current benchmark for Bordeaux. Second, it is not consistent throughout the region, with some awkward wines that do show the heat of the year. But these aren't enough to hold 2022 back from its modern-day classic status; serious wine lovers should plumb deeply.

**L**eading the way in 2022 is the Château Cheval Blanc St.-Emilion 2022 (99 points, \$670), which nearly oozes with loganberry, boysenberry and blackberry compote notes that give its core an almost outsized feel. It has weight, but there's restraint and focus, as touches of warm loam, licorice root and smoldering tobacco keep it well-grounded. There's cut and drive, too, even though it's a dense and slow-moving

wine, with alder smoke, Turkish coffee and bittersweet cocoa checking in. Amid all that, there's a lilting black tea and violet backdrop at the very end, adding grace and sensuality. It's a marvelous expression of this distinctive vintage, and a benchmark for the estate, which under director Pierre-Olivier Clouet has embraced new farming practices since 2019 that emphasize better soil health while lowering soil temperature. Clouet felt quality was so high for the estate in 2022 that no second wine was culled from the crop. Instead, there's a hefty 6,845 cases of the *grand vin*. Not only is it the wine of the vintage, but Cheval Blanc is now arguably the poster child, from cellar to vineyard, for the new Bordeaux that has crystalized in 2022.

"We discovered the vintage in the blending," says Clouet. "Not during the vinification. Super dry and super warm year, so everything on paper at harvest told us it would be a new 2003. But it's not. It's balanced and fresh. Weather during bud-break was dry and warm, so the vines had to acclimate early in the season. With the reduced water, canopies were lighter, berries were small and growth was slow, but the vines were able to ripen. We picked three-quarters of our Merlot crop in August, and we had never [before] picked anything in August ever."

"In the end, the key was the *élevage*. It was a fragile wine, with very [low acidity], yet the freshness was there. So we cut the *élevage* down to 12 months because we felt the wine was ready at that point," explains Clouet. "I am convinced about two things: Cover crop has completely changed the way the vines handle



water [stress], and the fact that we also make a white wine now helps us to see the vintage earlier and think outside the box. Without those changes, 2022 would have just been another 2003 or 2020 for us, two vintages which I do not appreciate personally because they are too excessive.”

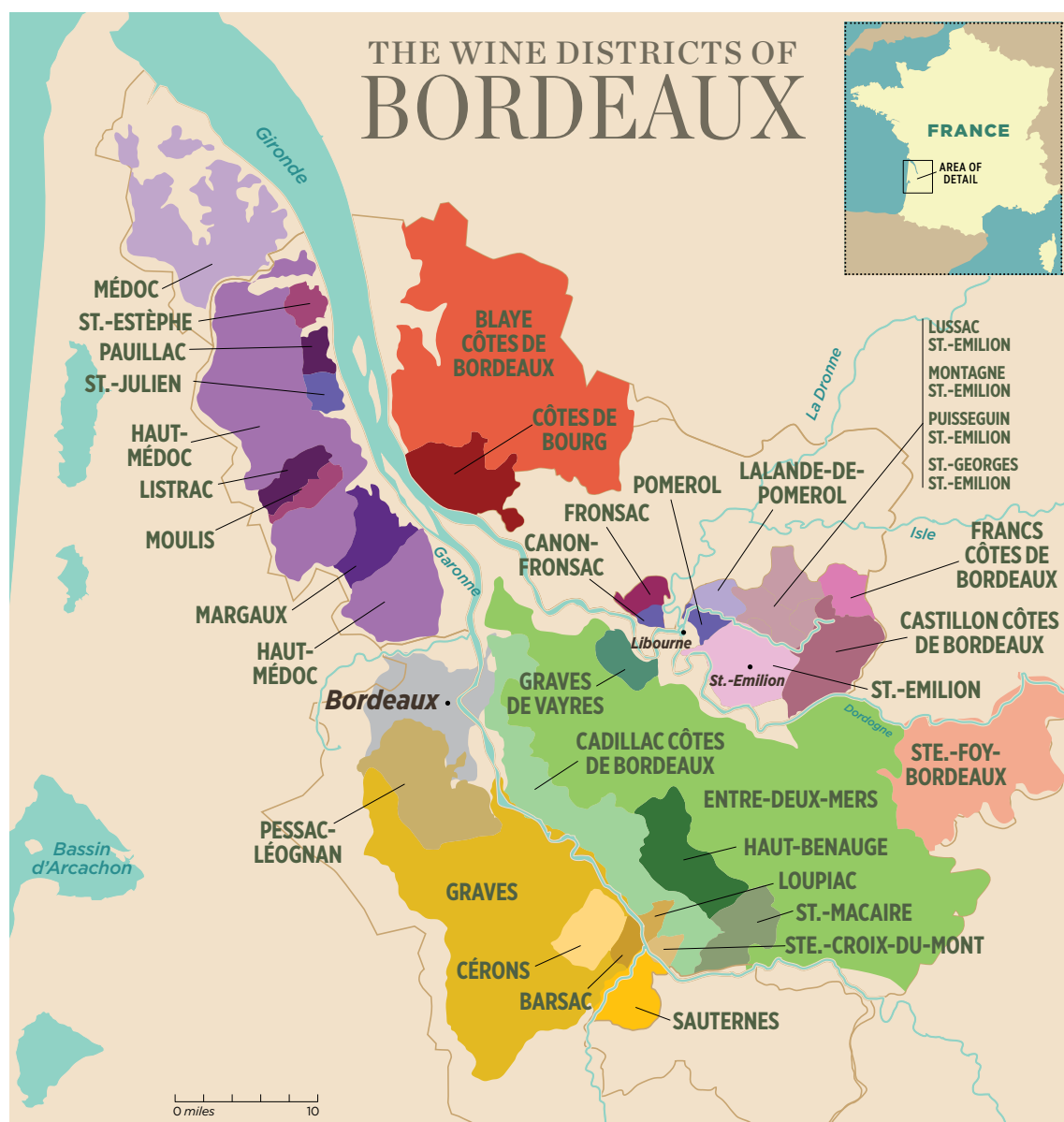
Giving the Cheval Blanc a run for its money is the Château Pichon Longueville Lalande Pauillac 2022 (98, \$234), which strikes an imposing figure. Director Nicolas Glumineau continues his hot streak here, with a 2022 that brims with dark currant, blackberry and black cherry preserves. Sweet tobacco, licorice snap, chestnut, violet and ink notes work harmoniously through the long, crumpled velvet finish. A late humus echo provides a beautiful counterpoint, which just makes you want to go right back and start the experience all over with another sip.

A handful of perennial top estates—Cos-d’Estournel, Léoville Barton, Léoville Las Cases, Palmer, Pétrus, Pichon Baron and Trotanoy—all earned 97 points for their *grands vins*.

spent seven weeks in late 2024 blind-tasting more than 420 wines from Bordeaux in *Wine Spectator*’s New York office. You could get whiplash comparing 2022 to the difficult 2021, when only 56% of red wines reviewed earned outstanding ratings of 90 points or more. In this year’s report, 233 of the 320 reds reviewed earned 90-plus points, a dramatic jump to 72%. Additionally, no 2021s earned classic ratings (95 points or more on *Wine Spectator*’s 100-point scale), a first since 2013. In stark



Joséphine Duffau-Lagarrosse took over her family’s estate in 2021; Beauséjour is now part of the vanguard of St.-Emilion estates leaning into fresher-style wines.



contrast, there are 40 classic-rated 2022 reds in this report.

Counterintuitively, Merlot played a standout role in 2022 despite the warm and dry weather pattern. The thin-skinned and early-ripening grape would seem to have been disadvantaged in 2022, but instead delivered beautifully pure fruit with alluring floral aromatics. Not to be outdone, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc also succeeded mightily, as they typically relish such conditions.

Overall for the reds, tannins are copious but refined and supple, allowing the fruit to drape seductively. Acidities are low, but there is a feeling of freshness in the wines. Alcohols are in the normal range and don’t stick out. The result is a bevy of terrific offerings from both banks of the Gironde. Thanks to its reliance on Merlot, though, along with greater consistency, I tilt the vintage slightly in favor of the Right Bank.

Based on the results of my tastings, I rate the 2022 vintage 97 points for the Right Bank and 95 points for the Left Bank. Additionally, dry whites are deliciously plump and engaging, while the sweet wines of Barsac and Sauternes also performed well, earning an overall vintage rating of 94 points.

The microview of the 2022 vintage is that it was dry from the start, a factor that proved critical during the growing season. The macroview is that it was yet another dry vintage in a lengthy run of dry vintages. What rain there was



At Château Giscours, quality was so high across the board in 2022 that director Alexander van Beek eschewed the second wine entirely.

fell at opportune times, in June and August, allaying stress early on and maturity blockages down the stretch. And while it was excessively sunny and warm, it was not overly hot.

“June, plus July, August and September, the total amount of sunshine was 1,175 hours. That put 2022 far ahead of 2018 and 1990,” notes Moueix. “Heat and sunshine are different parameters. In 2003 there were 15 days over 95° F in August and the heat was unexpected. In 2022, there were three serious heat waves, but the summer was not as hot altogether. Moreover, I think that the vines are intelligent and have a memory. Consequently, they adapt.”

Moueix’s Château Trotanoy Pomerol 2022 (97, \$413) offers thumping bass in the form of black currant and blackberry reduction notes coiled tightly within a cast iron frame, while sweet tobacco, alder and chestnut accents create a seductive backdrop on a finish redolent of smoldering earth. His Château La Fleur-Pétrus Pomerol 2022 (96, \$289) is loaded with warmed raspberry compote, boysenberry pâte de fruit and damson plum coulis, along with streaks of tobacco leaf, chestnut leaf and graphite, while its long finish shows a great underlying tug of warm earth.

Pomerols as a whole in 2022 are rich, lush and seductive in feel, with the Pétrus Pomerol 2022 (97, \$5,999) and Château Petit-Village Pomerol 2022 (96, \$137) among the highlights. There are some eye-opening buys to be had as well, including the Château Feytit-Clinet Pomerol 2022 (95, \$68) and Château Nenin Pomerol 2022 (95, \$71).

“It’s imperative to put this vintage into context,” says Thomas Duclos, a consulting enologist for OenoTeam, which counts St.-Emilion’s Beau-Séjour Bécot among its clients. “2022 comes after about 10 vintages when rainfall has rarely been in line with the three-year average. The vintage has surely benefited from a sort of adaptation, vintage after vintage. But also an increase among vineyard team skills, a reduction of systemic soil work and the conservation of cover crop are developments that [help conserve water] and reduce the temperature of the soils. Also no de-leafing or green harvesting, as the ensuing quantity of grapes is a way to keep freshness in such an extreme vintage. Otherwise, we would not have had this superb 2022.”

The Château Beau-Séjour Bécot St.-Emilion 2022 (96, \$85) is a shining example of the vintage as its violet, iris and rose hip aromas dart to the fore while flavors of sleek raspberry and red currant preserves race along. It’s almost flattering, but there’s a subtle, chalky tension piercing the finish, which sails through.

Beau-Séjour Bécot is among the vanguard in St.-Emilion



leaning into a fresher style, a group that includes Clos Fourtet, Château Canon, Château Troplong Mondot, Château Canon-La Gaffelière and Château Beauséjour, among others.

“2022 was an extreme vintage due to the heat and drought conditions. The silver lining, however, was that we had a season with no disease pressure,” says Joséphine Duffau-Lagarrosse of her first full vintage at the helm of Beauséjour, where she’s adopted a natural grass cover crop and limited canopy management practices. The Beauséjour Duffau-Lagarrosse St.-Emilion 2022 (94, \$168) is a very poised wine, as it captures the showy mulberry, linzer and cassis fruit of the vintage, but keeps a restrained feel while gilding it with rose petal, hibiscus and rooibos tea notes. Its long, filigreed finish lets a pretty chalk note echo amid the fruit.

It seems as if St.-Emilion’s hangover from the *garagiste* years has worn off. While some estates still

produce wines in a more extracted vein, their numbers dwindle each year. Other producers that have embraced the “less is more” philosophy and earned classic ratings in 2022 include Pavie Macquin, Valandraud and the surging La Gaffelière.

2022’s quality is also compelling beyond the Right Bank’s two glamor AOCs. Value plays can be had in Fronsac, where the Château Moulin Haut-Laroque Fronsac 2022 (93, \$35) will deliver a lovely drink over a decade of cellaring. Other AOCs, including Lalande-de-Pomerol and Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux, add to the depth of delicious offerings in 2022. Domaine de l’A (93, \$50), Château Côte de Baleau (93, \$29), Château Montlandrie (93, \$28), Château Les Cruzelles (93, \$33) and Clos Puy Arnaud (93, \$36) are among the best buys in the vintage.

Success abounds on Bordeaux’s Left Bank as well in 2022, though not quite as consistently as on the Right Bank.

“Rain was in the form of thunderstorms, which can explain some of the variability, as their abundance differed greatly from one area to another,” notes Axel Marchal, professor at the Institut des Sciences de la Vigne et du Vin (ISVV) and a consulting winemaker in Bordeaux. “It’s certain, though, that with the practices of 20 years ago applied to 2022, we wouldn’t have had the same wines, with the same balance.”

“So much has changed since 2003,” says Alexander van Beek, director of Château Giscours in Margaux. “From big to bigger to ‘less is more,’ through freshness, energy and precision.”

As at Cheval Blanc, there was no second wine made in 2022

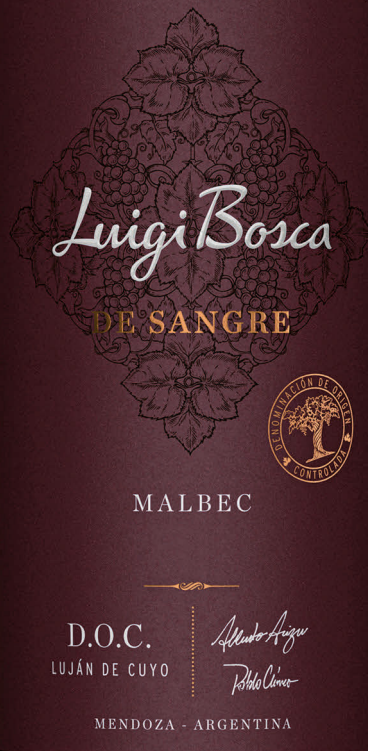


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Malbec surprises those who  
**Dare to**  
explore it.



*Luigi Bosca*

SEIZE THE UNEXPECTED



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at Giscours. With quality so high across the board, van Beek was able to oversee production of 15,000 cases of Giscours Margaux 2022 (95, \$68). The wine shows warmed cassis and plum notes at the core, while lilting lilac, violet and iris accents stream throughout. It's a pitch-perfect example of the vintage profile.

At neighboring Château Palmer, the results of a decade-long shift to biodynamic farming combined with old vines dovetailed perfectly. The Palmer Margaux 2022 (97, \$397) is an expressive and well-delineated wine, with singed iris, ink and alder accents followed by dark currant, blackberry and black cherry paste flavors that are both lush and racy in feel. With extra warm paving stone and dark tobacco girding the finish, the wine shows the vintage's combination of floral lift and showy fruit, all married to a growl of real *terroir*.

"I am still so surprised, remembering the season, to see how the wines are powerful and harmonious at the same time," says Palmer director Thomas Duroux. "Old vines were really a key, I believe. Soils in healthy condition are another."



The Peyronie family and consultant Julien Viaud (right) have placed Pauillac's Château Fonbadet among the growing number of Bordeaux properties embracing more holistic farming practices. The estate fashioned its best *grand vin* to date in 2022.

## Rating Bordeaux Vintages

### Left Bank (Médoc, Pessac-Léognan)

2022	95	A new paradigm for Bordeaux. Season was very warm and dry from the start, staying consistently so through harvest, with just the rains needed in June and August. All major varieties performed well. Reds have fleshy fruit, with fresh and pure aromas. More consistent than the 2018-'20 trio	Drink or hold
2021	84	The most heterogeneous vintage since 2000; crop was second smallest of this century following a severe spring frost and heavy midsummer rains. July and August were cooler than normal; warmish September saved the day, barely. Most wines are modest in scale, with herbaceous and austere personalities that will mature earlier. A handful of successes	Drink
2020	93	The run continues of high quality yet heterogeneous vintages. A rainy winter provided ample water reserves, but the rain stretched into spring, leading to severe mildew pressures. Summer turned hot and dry, and harvest ran early, spurred by the heat. Some excellent wines, though others show grainy textures and slightly muddled fruit	Hold
2019	93	Summer was extremely hot and dry, but well-spaced rains prevented maturity blockage, with a late-running harvest after a mid-September rain favoring Cabernet Sauvignon. Wines are richly fruited, but tannins are the issue; the best are refined, others slightly austere. Upper Médoc is the highlight, but very heterogeneous overall	Hold

### Right Bank (Pomerol, St.-Emilion and Satellites)

2022	97	Season was very warm and dry from the start, staying consistently so through harvest, with just the rains needed in June and August. Not as warm as 2020, with cooler nights. Merlot excelled; Cabernet Franc also relished the season. Wines are very aromatic and expressive, with Pomerol hedonistic and St.-Emilion well-defined. More consistent than the Left Bank. A beautiful vintage	Hold
2021	84	As with the Left Bank, this is the most heterogeneous vintage in a generation, with a small crop due to frost and an extremely rainy June. Temperatures were cooler than normal in July and August, while warm September weather saved the day, barely. Yields lower than on the Left Bank; Pomerol edges out St.-Emilion overall	Drink or hold
2020	92	Another imperfect and heterogeneous season. A rainy winter gave vineyards ample water reserves, but rain stretched into spring, leading to severe mildew pressures. Summer turned hot and dry, but the Right Bank escaped the heavy August rain, with Pomerol stoniest; clay soils were key	Hold
2019	92	A similar growing season to the Left Bank, with hot and dry conditions and heat waves in June and July favoring cooler <i>terroirs</i> with good water retention—Pomerol with its clay soils and St.-Emilion with its limestone, both yielding superb wines. Very inconsistent outside of the elite areas	Hold

### Rating Barsac & Sauternes Vintages

2022	94	A dry and warm growing season meant no disease pressure and healthy, frankly ripe grapes. Botrytis didn't arrive until after mid-October and then spread quickly, forcing producers to move fast. Wines are tropical and unctuous in feel, with good energy and definition, but lack the complexity of classic vintages	Drink or hold
2021	89	A severe spring frost decimated the crop for sweet wine producers, with very few wines made. The versions that were produced offer bright, juicy, solidly built profiles, but without the extra complexity of top years	Drink
2020	89	Hail early in the season clipped the crop (there is no Climens, for example), while the dry second half hampered the growth of botrytis. Wines are juicy and tropical in profile, but without the range of an outstanding year	Drink or hold
2019	91	A hot, dry growing season led to ripe and healthy grapes, but only a single wave of botrytis, rather than multiple waves, with many growers making just one <i>tri</i> . Wines are ripe, juicy and fresh in profile, despite the hot year, but they lack the complexity of top vintages with multiple <i>tris</i>	Drink or hold

Notable older vintages: 2016, 2015, 2010, 2009, 2005, 2003, 2000, 1995, 1990, 1989, 1988, 1986, 1985, 1982, 1970, 1961, 1959, 1953, 1949, 1947, 1929, 1900

A score range indicates preliminary analysis based on barrel samples.

**Vintage ratings:** 95-100, classic; 90-94, outstanding; 85-89, very good; 80-84, good; 75-79, mediocre; 50-74, not recommended. **Drinkability:** "NYR" means most of the wines of the vintage are yet to be released; "drink" means most of the wines of the vintage are ready to drink; "hold" means most of the ageworthy wines have yet to fully mature.





Château Guiraud director Sandrine Garbay made an outstanding 2022 Sauternes thanks to a quick harvest following a heavy wave of late-season botrytis.

While prominent names dominate the top wines, there are signs of Bordeaux's shift in the emergence of less-prominent châteaux as well. At Château Fonbadet, where Laboratoire Roland's Viaud has been consulting since 2018, the Pauillac 2022 (92, \$50) is the estate's best *grand vin* to date. It's a slow but steady-moving wine with a warm and caressing profile of cassis and plum reduction notes that are supported by supple cedar and tobacco nuances along with a sleek iron note. Owned by the Peyronie family, Fonbadet also makes a small cuvée sourced from its old vines. The Fonbadet Pauillac Par Pascale Peyronie 2022 (93, \$100) delivers a richer, more fruit-driven expression, offering dark plum and blackberry compote flavors laced with notes of bay leaf, sweet tobacco, alder and warm earth.

"The danger in 2022 was to exceed the ripe tannins and bright aromas. In a hot vintage it is always better to harvest a little early than a little late," notes Viaud. "So we harvested quickly."

St.-Julien offers a cluster of exceptional wines, including the *grands vins* from châteaux Talbot (96, \$68), Branaire-Ducru (95, \$55), Léoville Poyferré (95, \$125), St.-Pierre (95, \$67) and Beychevelle (94, \$99). At the northern limit of the Left Bank, St.-Estèphe is among the more consistent of the major AOCs. While its standout troika of châteaux Cos-d'Estournel (97, \$260), Montrose (96, \$195) and Calon-Ségur (96, \$140) continue to lead, the gap is narrower in this vintage. The Château Phélan Ségur St.-Estèphe 2022 (95, \$60) and Château de Pez St.-Estèphe 2022 (94, \$48) will reward fans of classically styled, mineral-accented Bordeaux.

**M**ore than 80 dry white wines are included in this report, and fans of these bracing, herb-inflected Sauvignon Blanc-based wines will enjoy the vintage. The fruit is plump but the feel is vibrant, with accents of thyme, tarragon and verbena brightening the wines.

Château Smith-Haut-Laffite earned its highest rating ever for its white, with the Pessac-Léognan White 2022 (97, \$169) giving a shimmering display of salted butter, shortbread, lemon curd, singed almond, honeysuckle and creamed white peach flavors. The Château Couhins-Lurton Pessac-Léognan White 2022 (93, \$50) has a lot to offer, with juicy acidity carrying a delicious set of white peach, lemon peel, quinine and verbena notes, while a subtle *sel gris* note adds spine and tension on the finish. Of the 81 dry whites tasted, an impressive 51 earned ratings of 90 points or better.

Sweet wines also performed well, but 2022 is not a classic year for Sauternes and Barsac. The dry conditions held back the spread of botrytis, with the picking of some *passerillage* grapes (shriveled, but without the noble rot *Botrytis cinerea*) in September. Botrytis growth did kick in after rain in October, but quickly, and without the ensuing waves of infection that result in multiple pickings and more complex wines.

"The sun-dried grapes only represent about 20% of the final blend," says Sandrine Garbay, director of Château Guiraud in Sauternes. "Fortunately, we had enough rain to help botrytis from mid-October to the end. We did have to pick very quickly to avoid too much concentration."

In Barsac, where limestone soils yield racier sweet wines, conditions were similar.

"We ended up with the most rapid proliferation of botrytis ever witnessed," says Aline Baly, whose family owns Château Coutet. "The key to success was being patient at the beginning, and then very reactive to not miss the window for picking."

The Château Guiraud Sauternes 2022 (94, \$60) offers a juicy and fresh core of delightfully ripe peach and yellow apple fruit that plays nicely with honeysuckle, ginger and jasmine through the finish. The Château Coutet Barsac 2022 (95, \$50) has the ripe, unctuous profile of the vintage as it pumps out orange blossom, peach, apricot and pineapple upside-down cake notes that are seamlessly stitched with bitter almond and bitter orange threads.

**F**or Bordeaux, 2022 is just what the doctor ordered. The region has been hit hard by problematic recent vintages, general economic headwinds and the ongoing waning interest in Bordeaux's annual *en primeur* campaign.

Whether or not Bordeaux can reassert itself in the U.S. marketplace remains to be seen, as the specter of tariffs presents yet another hurdle (at press time, the federal government's proposed tariffs on European goods had yet to be formalized). But in the meantime, Bordeaux has clearly acquitted itself when it comes to what's in the bottle, parlaying the warm, sunny and dry 2022 growing season into a superlative vintage that marks the start of a new era for Bordeaux.

*Senior editor James Molesworth is Wine Spectator's lead taster on the wines of Bordeaux.*



# James Molesworth's Recommended 2022 Bordeaux

Nearly 400 2022s were reviewed for this report. An alphabetical guide begins on page 68; an online version is available at [WineSpectator.com/BordeauxAlpha053125](https://www.winespectator.com/BordeauxAlpha053125). WineSpectator.com members can access complete reviews for all wines tasted using the online Wine Ratings search.



Château Pichon Longueville Lalande

## TOP-SCORING LEFT BANK REDS

WINE	SCORE	PRICE	WINE	SCORE	PRICE
CHÂTEAU PICHON LONGUEVILLE LALANDE Pauillac 2022	98	\$234	CHÂTEAU MONTROSE St.-Estèphe 2022	96	\$195
CHÂTEAU COS-D'ESTOURNEL St.-Estèphe 2022	97	\$260	CHÂTEAU RAUZAN-SÉGLA Margaux 2022	96	\$114
CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE BARTON St.-Julien 2022	97	\$90	CHÂTEAU TALBOT St.-Julien 2022	96	\$68
CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE LAS CASES St.-Julien 2022	97	\$350	CHÂTEAU BRANAIRE-DUCRU St.-Julien 2022	95	\$55
CHÂTEAU PALMER Margaux 2022	97	\$397	CHÂTEAU CANTENAC-BROWN Margaux 2022	95	\$59
CHÂTEAU PICHON BARON Pauillac 2022	97	\$188	CHÂTEAU GISCOURS Margaux 2022	95	\$68
CHÂTEAU CALON-SÉGUR St.-Estèphe 2022	96	\$140	CHÂTEAU LANGOA BARTON St.-Julien 2022	95	\$50
DOMAINE DE CHEVALIER Pessac-Léognan 2022	96	\$75	CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE POYFERRÉ St.-Julien 2022	95	\$125
CHÂTEAU GRAND-PUY-LACOSTE Pauillac 2022	96	\$80	CHÂTEAU PHÉLAN SÉGUR St.-Estèphe 2022	95	\$60
CHÂTEAU LYNCH BAGES Pauillac 2022	96	\$147	CHÂTEAU SMITH-HAUT-LAFITTE Pessac-Léognan 2022	95	\$135
CHÂTEAU MALESCOT-ST.-EXUPÉRY Margaux 2022	96	\$69	CHÂTEAU ST.-PIERRE St.-Julien 2022	95	\$67

## TOP-SCORING RIGHT BANK REDS

WINE	SCORE	PRICE	WINE	SCORE	PRICE
CHÂTEAU CHEVAL BLANC St.-Emilion 2022	99	\$670	CHÂTEAU PAVIE St.-Emilion 2022	96	\$400
PÉTRUS Pomerol 2022	97	\$5,999	CHÂTEAU PETIT-VILLAGE Pomerol 2022	96	\$137
CHÂTEAU TROTANOY Pomerol 2022	97	\$413	CHÂTEAU BÉLAIR-MONANGE St.-Emilion 2022	95	\$225
CHÂTEAU BEAU-SÉJOUR BÉCOT St.-Emilion 2022	96	\$85	CHÂTEAU CANON-LA GAFFELIÈRE St.-Emilion 2022	95	\$89
CHÂTEAU CANON St.-Emilion 2022	96	\$175	CHÂTEAU FEYTIT-CLINET Pomerol 2022	95	\$68
CLOS FOURTET St.-Emilion 2022	96	\$150	CHÂTEAU HOSANNA Pomerol 2022	95	\$198
CHÂTEAU LA FLEUR-PÉTRUS Pomerol 2022	96	\$289	CHÂTEAU NÉNIN Pomerol 2022	95	\$71
CHÂTEAU LA GAFFELIÈRE St.-Emilion 2022	96	\$79	CHÂTEAU PAVIE MACQUIN St.-Emilion 2022	95	\$94
LA MONDOTTE St.-Emilion 2022	96	\$192	CHÂTEAU VALANDRAUD St.-Emilion 2022	95	\$160



# James Molesworth's Recommended 2022 Bordeaux

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## TOP-SCORING DRY WHITES

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>CHÂTEAU SMITH-HAUT-LAFITTE</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>97</b>	<b>\$169</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU PAPE CLÉMENT</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>96</b>	<b>\$140</b>
<b>DOMAINE DE CHEVALIER</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>95</b>	<b>\$114</b>
<b>CLOS MARSALETTE</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>95</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU BOUSCAUT</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU CARBONNIEUX</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU CHEVAL BLANC</b> Bordeaux White Le Petit Cheval 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$135</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU COS-D'ESTOURNEL</b> Bordeaux White 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$208</b>

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>CHÂTEAU COUHINS-LURTON</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DOISY DAËNE</b> Bordeaux White 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DE FRANCE</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LATOUR-MARTILLAC</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LESPALT-MARTILLAC</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU MALARTIC-LAGRAVIÈRE</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$68</b>
<b>DOMAINE DE LA SOLITUDE</b> Pessac-Léognan White 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$28</b>

## TOP-SCORING BARSAC AND SAUTERNES

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>CHÂTEAU D'YQUEM</b> Sauternes 2022	<b>97</b>	<b>\$NA</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DE FARGUES</b> Sauternes 2022 (from barrel)	<b>95-98</b>	<b>\$NA</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU COUTET</b> Barsac 2022	<b>95</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DOISY DAËNE</b> Barsac L'Extravagant 2022 (375ml)	<b>95</b>	<b>\$220</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LAFAURIE-PEYRAGUEY</b> Sauternes Crème de Tête 2022	<b>95</b>	<b>\$165</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU SUDUIRAUT</b> Sauternes 2022	<b>95</b>	<b>\$72</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU CLIMENS</b> Barsac 2022	<b>94</b>	<b>\$NA</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DOISY DAËNE</b> Barsac 2022	<b>94</b>	<b>\$70</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU GUIRAUD</b> Sauternes 2022	<b>94</b>	<b>\$60</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DE MYRAT</b> Barsac 2022	<b>94</b>	<b>\$48</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LAFAURIE-PEYRAGUEY</b> Sauternes Coeur de Terroir 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$85</b>

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>CHÂTEAU DE RAYNE VIGNEAU</b> Sauternes 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU SIGALAS RABAUD</b> Sauternes 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$58</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU BASTOR-LAMONTAGNE</b> Sauternes 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$35</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU CANTEGRIL</b> Barsac 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$30</b>
<b>CLOS HAUT-PEYRAGUEY</b> Sauternes 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$55</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LA TOUR BLANCHE</b> Sauternes 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU NAIRAC</b> Barsac 2022	<b>91</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU SUDUIRAUT</b> Sauternes Castelnau 2022	<b>91</b>	<b>\$48</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LA TOUR BLANCHE</b> Sauternes Emotions de La Tour Blanche 2022	<b>90</b>	<b>\$45</b>

## SMART BUYS

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>CHÂTEAU GRAND-PUY DUCASSE</b> Pauillac 2022	<b>94</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LA GRAVE À POMEROL</b> Pomerol 2022	<b>94</b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LATOUR-MARTILLAC</b> Pessac-Léognan 2022	<b>94</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU ORMES DE PEZ</b> St.-Estèphe 2022	<b>94</b>	<b>\$38</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DE PEZ</b> St.-Estèphe 2022	<b>94</b>	<b>\$48</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU SIRAN</b> Margaux 2022	<b>94</b>	<b>\$40</b>
<b>DOMAINE DE L'A</b> Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU CARBONNIEUX</b> Pessac-Léognan 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CLOS PUY ARNAUD</b> Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$36</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU CÔTE DE BALEAU</b> St.-Emilion 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$29</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LES CRUZELLES</b> Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$33</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU FONROQUE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU GLORIA</b> St.-Julien 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE POYFERRÉ</b> St.-Julien Château Moulin Riche 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$34</b>

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>CHÂTEAU MONTLANDRIE</b> Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$28</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU MOULIN HAUT-LAROQUE</b> Fronsac 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$35</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU OLIVIER</b> Pessac-Léognan 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DU TERTRE</b> Margaux 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU LA VIEILLE CURE</b> Fronsac 2022	<b>93</b>	<b>\$35</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU BROWN</b> Pessac-Léognan 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$49</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU CALON-SÉGUR</b> St.-Estèphe Château Capbern 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$35</b>
<b>CLOS DE L'ORATOIRE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$42</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DALEM</b> Fronsac 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$29</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DE FERRAND</b> St.-Emilion 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$45</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU FONBADET</b> Pauillac 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU JOANIN BÉCOT</b> Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$35</b>
<b>CHÂTEAU DU RETOUT</b> Haut-Médoc 2022	<b>92</b>	<b>\$25</b>





Château Bélair-Monange

# Alphabetical Guide to 2022 Bordeaux

Nearly 400 2022s were tasted for this report. An in-depth analysis begins on page 58.  
WineSpectator.com members can access complete reviews using the online Wine Ratings search.

WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>DOMAINE DE L'A</b> Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$50	93
<b>CHÂTEAU D'AGASSAC</b> Haut-Médoc 2022	\$25	88
<b>CHÂTEAU D'AIGUILHE</b> Bordeaux White 2022	\$30	89
Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$25	92
Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux Seigneurs 2022	\$20	91
<b>CHÂTEAU ALCÉE</b> Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$23	89
<b>CHÂTEAU MARQUIS D'ALESME BECKER</b> Margaux 2022	\$55	94
<b>CHÂTEAU ANTHONIC</b> Moulis 2022	\$35	89
<b>L'ARCHANGE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$100	90
<b>CHÂTEAU D'ARCINS</b> Haut-Médoc 2022	\$30	87
<b>CHÂTEAU BASTOR-LAMONTAGNE</b> Bordeaux White Confidence 2022	\$20	92
Sauternes 2022	\$35	92
<b>CHÂTEAU BEAU-SÉJOUR BÉCOT</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$85	96

WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>CHÂTEAU BEAUREGARD</b> Pomerol 2022	\$85	93
<b>CHÂTEAU BEAUSÉJOUR</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$168	94
St.-Emilion Croix de Beauséjour 2022	\$50	89
<b>CHÂTEAU BEL AIR PERPONCHER</b> Bordeaux Reserve 2022	\$20	87
<b>CHÂTEAU BÉLAIR-MONANGE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$225	95
<b>CHÂTEAU BELGRAVE</b> Haut-Médoc 2022	\$50	90
<b>CHÂTEAU BELLEGRAVE</b> Pauillac 2022	\$80	93
<b>CHÂTEAU BELLEVUE</b> Bordeaux Supérieur 2022	\$20	88
<b>CHÂTEAU BERLIQUET</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$63	92
<b>CHÂTEAU BEYCHEVELLE</b> St.-Julien 2022	\$99	94
<b>CHÂTEAU BIBÉY</b> Bordeaux White 2022	\$20	87
<b>CHÂTEAU BLAINAN</b> Médoc 2022	\$25	91
<b>CHÂTEAU LE BON PASTEUR</b> Pomerol 2022	\$75	94

WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>CHÂTEAU LE BOSQC</b> St.-Estèphe 2022	\$44	92
<b>CHÂTEAU BOURGNEUF</b> Pomerol 2022	\$70	93
<b>CHÂTEAU BOURNAC</b> Médoc 2022	\$20	88
<b>CHÂTEAU BOUSCAUT</b> Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$45	91
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$50	93
<b>CHÂTEAU BOUTISSE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$37	89
<b>CHÂTEAU BRANAIRE-DUCRU</b> St.-Julien 2022	\$55	95
<b>CHÂTEAU BRANON</b> Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$90	92
<b>CHÂTEAU BRONDEAU DU TERTRE</b> Entre-Deux-Mers 2022	\$15	88
<b>CHÂTEAU BROWN</b> Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$49	92
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$49	92
<b>CHÂTEAU CADET-BON</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$43	93
<b>CHÂTEAU CALON-SÉGUR</b> St.-Estèphe 2022	\$140	96
St.-Estèphe Château Capbern 2022	\$35	92



WINE	PRICE	SCORE
St.-Estèphe Le Marquis de Calon-Ségur 2022	\$41	91
CHÂTEAU CANON-LA GAFFELIÈRE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$89	95
CHÂTEAU CANON		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$175	96
St.-Emilion Croix Canon 2022	\$60	88
CHÂTEAU CANTEGRIL		
Barsac 2022	\$30	92
CHÂTEAU CANTELYS		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$23	92
CHÂTEAU CANTEMERLE		
Haut-Médoc 2022	\$40	91
CHÂTEAU CANTENAC-BROWN		
Margaux 2022	\$59	95
CHÂTEAU CAP LÉON VEYRIN		
Listrac 2022	\$29	88
CHÂTEAU CAP ST.-MARTIN		
Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$18	89
CHÂTEAU CAPET-GUILLIER		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$60	91
St.-Emilion Château Tour de Capet 2022	\$30	88
CHÂTEAU CARBONNIEUX		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$50	93
Pessac-Léognan La Croix de Carbonnieux 2022	\$25	90
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$50	93
Pessac-Léognan White La Croix de Carbonnieux 2022	\$25	87
CHÂTEAU CERTAN DE MAY		
Pomerol 2022	\$123	94
CHÂTEAU DE CHAMBRUN		
Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$35	89
CHÂTEAU LA CHANDELLIÈRE		
Médoc 2022	\$16	90
CHÂTEAU DE CHANTEGRIVE		
Graves 2022	\$30	88
LA CHENADE		
Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$26	92
CHÂTEAU CHEVAL BLANC		
Bordeaux White Le Petit Cheval 2022	\$135	93
St.-Emilion 2022	\$670	99
DOMAINE DE CHEVALIER		
Bordeaux White Clos des Lunes Lune Blanche 2022	\$20	89
Bordeaux White Clos des Lunes Lune d'Or 2022	\$50	90
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$75	96
Pessac-Léognan L'Esprit de Chevalier 2022	\$40	92
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$114	95
Pessac-Léognan White L'Esprit de Chevalier 2022	\$41	92
CLARENDELLE		
Bordeaux White 2022	\$20	86
CHÂTEAU CLAUD-BELLEVUE		
Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$25	91
CHÂTEAU LA CLÉMENCE		
Pomerol 2022	\$50	93
CHÂTEAU CLIMENS		
Barsac 2022	\$135	94
Bordeaux White Asphodèle 2022	\$60	90
Bordeaux White Lilium 2022	\$119	92
Bordeaux White Petite Lily 2022	\$35	91
CLOS DE L'ORATOIRE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$42	92
CLOS DE LA VIEILLE ÉGLISE		
Pomerol 2022	\$90	93
LE CLOS DU BEAU-PÈRE		
Bordeaux White 2022	\$50	89
Pomerol 2022	\$55	93

WINE	PRICE	SCORE
CLOS DU CLOCHER		
Pomerol 2022	\$70	94
CLOS DU MARQUIS		
St.-Julien 2022	\$82	93
CLOS FLORIDÈNE		
Graves 2022	\$30	89
CLOS FOURTET		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$150	96
St.-Emilion La Closerie de Fourtet 2022	\$37	90
CLOS HAUT-PEYRAGUEY		
Sauternes 2022	\$55	92
CLOS LUNELLES		
Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$30	90
CLOS TE		
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$30	95
CLOS PUY ARNAUD		
Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$36	93
CLOS ST.-MARTIN		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$97	92
CHÂTEAU DE CLOTTE		
Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$35	88
CHÂTEAU LA COMMANDERIE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$37	92
CHÂTEAU LA CONNIVENCE		
Pomerol 2022	\$400	92
CHÂTEAU CORBIN		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$39	91
CHÂTEAU CORMEIL-FIGEAC		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$49	87
CHÂTEAU COS LABORY		
St.-Estèphe 2022	\$45	92
CHÂTEAU COS-D'ESTOURNEL		
Bordeaux White 2022	\$208	93
Bordeaux White Pagodes de Cos 2022	\$75	90
Médoc G 2022	\$35	89
St.-Estèphe 2022	\$260	97
St.-Estèphe Les Pagodes de Cos 2022	\$65	92
CHÂTEAU CÔTE DE BALEAU		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$29	93
CHÂTEAU COUHINS-LURTON		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$40	90
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$50	93
CHÂTEAU DE LA COUR D'ARGENT		
Bordeaux Supérieur 2022	\$18	88
CHÂTEAU COUTET		
Barsac 2022	\$50	95
Bordeaux White Opalie 2022	\$45	91
St.-Emilion 2022	\$75	89
CHÂTEAU LE CROCK		
St.-Estèphe 2022	\$36	93
CHÂTEAU CROIX DE LABRIE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$99	91
CHÂTEAU LA CROIX LARTIGUE		
Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$35	93
CHÂTEAU LES CRUZELLES		
Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$33	93
CHÂTEAU DALEM		
Fronsac 2022	\$29	92
CHÂTEAU DASSAULT		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$69	93
CHÂTEAU DE LA DAUPHINE		
Fronsac 2022	\$25	92
CHÂTEAU DAUZAC		
Margaux 2022	\$75	94
Margaux Aurore de Dauzac 2022	\$40	92
DENIS DUBOURDIEU DOMAINES		
Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux Pure 2022	\$20	89
Sauternes Liason 2022	\$27	89

WINE	PRICE	SCORE
CHÂTEAU DESMIRAIL		
Margaux 2022	\$50	92
CHÂTEAU DESTIEUX		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$36	92
CHÂTEAU DOISY DAËNE		
Barsac 2022	\$70	94
Barsac L'Extravagant 2022 (375ml)	\$220	95
CHÂTEAU LA DOMINIQUE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$54	93
CHÂTEAU L'ÉGLISE CLINET		
Pomerol La Petite Eglise 2022	\$58	92
CHÂTEAU DE FARGUES		
Sauternes 2022	\$NA/Barrel	95-98
CHÂTEAU FAUGÈRES		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$44	92
CHÂTEAU FÉRET-LAMBERT		
Bordeaux Supérieur 2022	\$19	91
CHÂTEAU DE FERRAND		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$45	92
CHÂTEAU FEYTIT-CLINET		
Pomerol 2022	\$68	95
CHÂTEAU FLEUR CARDINALE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$51	92
St.-Emilion Intuition de Fleur Cardinale 2022	\$35	88
LA FLEUR DE BOÜARD		
Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$55	90
CHÂTEAU LA FLEUR-PÉTRUS		
Pomerol 2022	\$289	96
CHÂTEAU LA FLEUR		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$45	90
CHÂTEAU FOMBRAUGE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$33	91
CHÂTEAU FONBADET		
Pauillac 2022	\$50	92
Pauillac L'Harmonie de Fonbadet 2022	\$39	89
Pauillac Par Pascale Peyronie 2022	\$100	93
CHÂTEAU FONROQUE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$50	93
CHÂTEAU FONTENIL		
Fronsac 2022	\$40	91
CHÂTEAU FOURCAS DUPRÉ		
Listrac 2022	\$30	89
CHÂTEAU FRANC LA ROSE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$32	88
CHÂTEAU FRANC LARTIGUE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$45	89
CHÂTEAU DE FRANCE		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$37	92
CHÂTEAU LA GAFFELIÈRE		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$79	96
CHÂTEAU GARRAUD		
Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$40	89
CHÂTEAU LE GAY		
Pomerol 2022	\$125	93
CHÂTEAU GISCOURS		
Margaux 2022	\$68	95
CHÂTEAU GLORIA		
St.-Julien 2022	\$50	93
CHÂTEAU LA GRÂCE DIEU		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$39	92
CHÂTEAU GRAND BARRAIL LAMARZELLE FIGEAC		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$42	90
CHÂTEAU GRAND CORBIN MANUEL		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$45	90
CHÂTEAU GRAND CORBIN		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$35	90



WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>CHÂTEAU GRAND JEAN</b> Bordeaux Supérieur 2022	\$25	89
<b>CHÂTEAU GRAND MAZEROLLES</b> Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$15	89
<b>CHÂTEAU GRAND-PUY DUCASSE</b> Pauillac 2022	\$40	94
Pauillac Prélude à Grand-Puy-Ducasse 2022	\$30	89
<b>CHÂTEAU GRAND-PUY-LACOSTE</b> Pauillac 2022	\$80	96
<b>CHÂTEAU LES GRANDS CHÊNES</b> Médoc 2022	\$23	90
<b>CHÂTEAU LA GRAVE À POMEROL</b> Pomerol 2022	\$45	94
<b>CHÂTEAU LES GRAVIÈRES</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$25	88
<b>CHÂTEAU GUILLEMIN LA GAFFELIÈRE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$37	87
<b>CHÂTEAU GUIRAUD</b> Sauternes 2022	\$60	94
<b>CHÂTEAU HAURA</b> Graves 2022	\$25	90
<b>CHÂTEAU HAUT CONDISSAS</b> Médoc Prestige 2022	\$59	90
<b>CHÂTEAU HAUT ROCHER</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$60	91
<b>CHÂTEAU HAUT SELVE</b> Graves 2022	\$35	89
Graves Les Acacias 2022	\$45	88
Graves White 2022	\$35	90
<b>CHÂTEAU HAUT-BATAILLEY</b> Pauillac 2022	\$64	94
Pauillac Verso 2022	\$39	89

WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>CHÂTEAU HAUT-CHAIGNEAU</b> Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$40	92
<b>CHÂTEAU HAUT-COLOMBIER</b> Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$40	87
<b>CHÂTEAU HAUT-MAURAC</b> Médoc 2022	\$30	91
<b>CHÂTEAU HERVÉ-LAROQUE</b> Fronsac 2022	\$21	92
<b>CHÂTEAU HOSANNA</b> Pomerol 2022	\$198	95
<b>CHÂTEAU DE LA HUSTE</b> Fronsac 2022	\$22	92
<b>L'IF</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$172	93
<b>CHÂTEAU JARR</b> Bordeaux White 2022	\$27	86
<b>CHÂTEAU JEAN FAURE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$49	91
<b>CHÂTEAU JEAN FAUX</b> Bordeaux White 2022	\$35	91
<b>CHÂTEAU JOANIN BÉCOT</b> Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$35	92
<b>CHÂTEAU KIRWAN</b> Margaux 2022	\$60	94
Margaux Charmes de Kirwan 2022	\$30	91
<b>CHÂTEAU LA CROIX CHAIGNEAU</b> Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$25	89
<b>CHÂTEAU LABÉGORCE</b> Margaux 2022	\$35	92
<b>CHÂTEAU LAFAURIE-PEYRAGUEY</b> Sauternes Coeur de Terroir 2022	\$85	93
Sauternes Crème de Tête 2022	\$165	95
<b>CHÂTEAU LAFFITTE-CARCASSET</b> St.-Estèphe 2022	\$32	91

WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>CHÂTEAU LAFLEUR-GAZIN</b> Pomerol 2022	\$58	92
<b>CHÂTEAU LAFONT MENAUT</b> Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$20	90
<b>CHÂTEAU DE LAGARDE</b> Bordeaux Les Hauts de Lagarde 2022	\$19	87
<b>CHÂTEAU LAGRANGE</b> Pomerol 2022	\$45	91
<b>CHÂTEAU LAGRAVE</b> St.-Emilion Le Second 2022	\$19	87
<b>CHÂTEAU LAJARRE</b> Bordeaux Supérieur 2022	\$20	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LALANDE</b> St.-Julien 2022	\$70	90
<b>CHÂTEAU DE LAMARQUE</b> Haut-Médoc 2022	\$30	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LANGLET</b> Graves 2022	\$35	88
Graves White 2022	\$35	89
<b>CHÂTEAU LANGOA BARTON</b> St.-Julien 2022	\$50	95
<b>CHÂTEAU LANIOTE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$50	92
<b>CHÂTEAU LAPLAGNOTTE-BELLEVUE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$40	92
<b>CHÂTEAU LAROSE PERGANSON</b> Haut-Médoc 2022	\$34	87
<b>CHÂTEAU LAROSE-TRINTAUDON</b> Haut-Médoc 2022	\$29	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LAROZE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$33	92
<b>CHÂTEAU LARRIVAUX</b> Haut-Médoc 2022	\$20	89






# AN INSTANT CONNECTION RISERVA DUCALE ORO



There are moments you wish would never end, shiny and precious like Gold, where every connection is powerful and intense. Ruffino Riserva Ducale Oro Gran Selezione is our most exquisite wine that celebrates Italian excellence. Made for your golden moments.

# RUFFINO

1877

 CAMPAIGN FINANCED ACCORDING TO EU REG. NO. 2021/2115

 MINISTERO DELL'AGRICOLTURA DELLA SOVRANITÀ ALIMENTARE E DELLE FORESTE 

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WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>CHÂTEAU LARRIVET HAUT-BRION</b>		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$40	92
Pessac-Léognan Les Demoiselles de Larrivet-Haut-Brion 2022	\$35	88
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$42	92
Pessac-Léognan White Les Demoiselles de Larrivet Haut-Brion 2022	\$35	90
<b>CHÂTEAU LASCOMBES</b>		
Margaux 2022	\$80	91
Margaux Chevalier de Lascombes 2022	\$50	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LATOUR À POMEROL</b>		
Pomerol 2022	\$120	93
<b>CHÂTEAU LATOUR-MARTILLAC</b>		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$40	94
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$45	93
<b>CHÂTEAU DE LAUSSAC</b>		
Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$20	91
Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux Cuvée Sacha 2022	\$30	92
<b>CHÂTEAU LÉCUYER</b>		
Pomerol 2022	\$120	89
<b>CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE BARTON</b>		
St.-Julien 2022	\$90	97
<b>CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE LAS CASES</b>		
St.-Julien 2022	\$350	97
St.-Julien Le Petit Lion 2022	\$75	94
<b>CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE POYFERRÉ</b>		
St.-Julien 2022	\$125	95
St.-Julien Château Moulin Riche 2022	\$34	93
St.-Julien Pavillon de Léoville Poyferré 2022	\$35	93
<b>CHÂTEAU LESPULT-MARTILLAC</b>		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$30	92
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$40	93
<b>CHÂTEAU LESTAGE SIMON</b>		
Haut-Médoc 2022	\$25	89
<b>CHÂTEAU LA LOUVIÈRE</b>		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$55	93
<b>CHÂTEAU LUC DE BEAUMONT</b>		
Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$12	88
<b>LURRA</b>		
Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$NA	91
<b>CHÂTEAU LYNCH BAGES</b>		
Pauillac 2022	\$147	96
Pauillac Echo de Lynch Bages 2022	\$51	91
<b>LYNSOLENCE</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$32	91
<b>CHÂTEAU MALARTIC-LAGRAVIÈRE</b>		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$52	93
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$68	93
<b>CHÂTEAU MALBAT</b>		
Bordeaux 2022	\$12	88
<b>CHÂTEAU MALESCASSE</b>		
Haut-Médoc 2022	\$20	88
<b>CHÂTEAU MALESCOT-ST.-EXUPÉRY</b>		
Margaux 2022	\$69	96
<b>CHÂTEAU DE MALLERET</b>		
Haut-Médoc 2022	\$30	88
Haut-Médoc Le Baron de Malleret 2022	\$22	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LA MARZELLE</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$55	93
<b>CHÂTEAU MAUVESIN BARTON</b>		
Moulis 2022	\$20	91
<b>CHÂTEAU MAYNE-VIEIL</b>		
Fronsac 2022	\$16	87
<b>CHÂTEAU MAZEYRES</b>		
Pomerol 2022	\$40	92
<b>CHÂTEAU MEYNEY</b>		
St.-Estèphe 2022	\$38	92

WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>CHÂTEAU MONBOUSQUET</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$57	94
<b>CHÂTEAU MONCETS</b>		
Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$25	91
<b>LA MONDOTTE</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$192	96
<b>CHÂTEAU MONGRAVEY</b>		
Margaux 2022	\$50	92
<b>CHÂTEAU MONTLANDRIE</b>		
Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$28	93
<b>CHÂTEAU MONTLISSE</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$17	90
<b>CHÂTEAU MONTROSE</b>		
St.-Estèphe 2022	\$195	96
St.-Estèphe La Dame de Montrose 2022	\$40	91
<b>CHÂTEAU MONTVIEL</b>		
Pomerol 2022	\$46	92
<b>CHÂTEAU MOULIN DE MALLET</b>		
Bordeaux 2022	\$13	88
<b>CHÂTEAU MOULIN DU CADET</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$29	89
<b>CHÂTEAU MOULIN HAUT-LAROQUE</b>		
Fronsac 2022	\$35	93
<b>CHÂTEAU DE MYRAT</b>		
Barsac 2022	\$48	94
<b>CHÂTEAU NAIRAC</b>		
Barsac 2022	\$50	91
<b>CHÂTEAU NÉNIN</b>		
Pomerol 2022	\$71	95
Pomerol Fugue de Nénin 2022	\$33	89
<b>CHÂTEAU OLIVIER</b>		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$45	93
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$45	92
<b>CHÂTEAU ORMES DE PEZ</b>		
St.-Estèphe 2022	\$38	94
<b>CHÂTEAU PALMER</b>		
Margaux 2022	\$397	97
<b>CHÂTEAU PALOUMEY</b>		
Haut-Médoc 2022	\$40	89
<b>CHÂTEAU PAPE CLÉMENT</b>		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$94	94
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$140	96
<b>CHÂTEAU PAVIE MACQUIN</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$94	95
<b>CHÂTEAU PAVIE</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$400	96
St.-Emilion Arômes de Pavie 2022	\$107	90
<b>CHÂTEAU PEBY FAUGÈRES</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$162	92
<b>CHÂTEAU PETIT-VILLAGE</b>		
Pomerol 2022	\$137	96
<b>PÉTRUS</b>		
Pomerol 2022	\$5,999	97
<b>CHÂTEAU PEY LA TOUR</b>		
Bordeaux 2022	\$18	88
<b>CHÂTEAU PEYMOUTON</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$26	87
<b>CHÂTEAU DE PEZ</b>		
St.-Estèphe 2022	\$48	94
<b>CHÂTEAU PHÉLAN SÉGUR</b>		
St.-Estèphe 2022	\$60	95
<b>CHÂTEAU PIBRAN</b>		
Pauillac 2022	\$39	93
<b>CHÂTEAU PICHON BARON</b>		
Pauillac 2022	\$188	97
Pauillac Les Griffons de Pichon Baron 2022	\$46	92
Pauillac Les Tourelles de Longueville 2022	\$45	93

WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>CHÂTEAU PICHON LONGUEVILLE LALANDE</b>		
Pauillac 2022	\$234	98
Pauillac Réserve de la Comtesse 2022	\$57	93
<b>CHÂTEAU PICQUE CAILLOU</b>		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$70	92
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$80	92
<b>CHÂTEAU PIPEAU</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$40	91
<b>CHÂTEAU LA POINTE</b>		
Pomerol 2022	\$46	92
<b>CHÂTEAU PONTET-CANET</b>		
Pauillac 2022	\$125	94
<b>CHÂTEAU PORTE CHIC</b>		
Pomerol 2022	\$35	89
<b>CHÂTEAU POTENSAC</b>		
Médoc 2022	\$29	91
<b>CHÂTEAU POUJEUX</b>		
Moulis 2022	\$40	90
<b>CHÂTEAU LA PRADE</b>		
Francs Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$20	91
<b>CHÂTEAU DE PRESSAC</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$45	92
St.-Emilion Château Tour de Pressac 2022	\$32	89
<b>CHÂTEAU PRIEURÉ-LICHINE</b>		
Margaux 2022	\$55	91
Margaux Confidences de Prieuré-Lichine 2022	\$30	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LE PRIEURÉ</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$58	92
<b>CHÂTEAU PUYBLANQUET</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$67	91
<b>CHÂTEAU PUYGUERAUD</b>		
Francs Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$20	88
<b>CHÂTEAU RAUZAN-DESPAGNE</b>		
Bordeaux 2022	\$19	87
<b>CHÂTEAU RAUZAN-SÉGLA</b>	\$114	96
Margaux 2022		
Margaux Ségla 2022	\$50	90
<b>CHÂTEAU DE RAYNE VIGNEAU</b>		
Sauternes 2022	\$50	93
<b>CHÂTEAU DE REIGNAC</b>		
Bordeaux Supérieur 2022	\$40	89
<b>CHÂTEAU DU RETOUT</b>		
Haut-Médoc 2022	\$25	92
Vin de France White Le Retout Blanc 2022	\$25	91
<b>CHÂTEAU LES REUILLES</b>		
Bordeaux 2022	\$11	86
<b>CHÂTEAU REYNON</b>		
Cadillac Côtes de Bordeaux 2022	\$18	88
<b>CHÂTEAU REYSSON</b>		
Haut-Médoc 2022	\$30	90
<b>CHÂTEAU DE ROCHEMORIN</b>		
Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$45	89
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$30	91
<b>CHÂTEAU ROCHEYRON</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$110	93
<b>CHÂTEAU ROLLAN DE BY</b>		
Médoc 2022	\$30	89
<b>CHÂTEAU ROLLAND-MAILLET</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$27	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LA ROSE PERRIÈRE</b>		
Lussac-St.-Emilion 2022	\$35	90
<b>CHÂTEAU ROUGET</b>		
Pomerol 2022	\$52	92
<b>CHÂTEAU ROZIER</b>		
St.-Emilion 2022	\$35	91
<b>DOMAINE DES SABINES</b>		
Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$35	90



WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>SAINTAYME</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$22	91
<b>CHÂTEAU DE SALES</b> Pomerol 2022	\$40	91
<b>CHÂTEAU SANSONNET</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$48	92
<b>LA SERGUE</b> Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$65	91
<b>CHÂTEAU LA SERRE</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$57	90
<b>CHÂTEAU SIAURAC</b> Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$19	88
<b>CHÂTEAU SIGALAS RABAUD</b> Bordeaux White 2022	\$50	91
Sauternes 2022	\$58	93
<b>CHÂTEAU SIRAN</b> Margaux 2022	\$40	94
Margaux S de Siran 2022	\$25	92
<b>CHÂTEAU SMITH-HAUT-LAFITTE</b> Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$135	95
Pessac-Léognan Le Petit Haut Lafitte 2022	\$35	92
Pessac-Léognan Les Hauts de Smith 2022	\$32	92
Pessac-Léognan White 2022	\$169	97
Pessac-Léognan White Le Petit Haut Lafitte 2022	\$42	92
Pessac-Léognan White Les Hauts de Smith 2022	\$40	90
<b>DOMAINE DE LA SOLITUDE</b> Pessac-Léognan 2022	\$35	88
<b>CHÂTEAU SOUTARD-CADET</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$32	88
<b>CHÂTEAU ST.-ANDRÉ CORBIN</b> St.-Georges-St.-Emilion 2022	\$50	90
<b>CHÂTEAU ST.-PIERRE</b> St.-Julien 2022	\$67	95
<b>CHÂTEAU SUDUIRAUT</b> Sauternes 2022	\$72	95
Sauternes Castelnau 2022	\$48	91
<b>CHÂTEAU TALBOT</b> St.-Julien 2022	\$68	96
St.-Julien Connétable Talbot 2022	\$31	92
<b>CHÂTEAU MARQUIS DE TERME</b> Margaux 2022	\$51	94
<b>CHÂTEAU DU TERTRE</b> Margaux 2022	\$45	93
Margaux Les Hauts du Tertre 2022	\$25	92
<b>CHÂTEAU TEYSSIER</b> Bordeaux Supérieur Pezat 2022	\$20	88
St.-Emilion 2022	\$25	89
St.-Emilion Château Laforge 2022	\$50	87
St.-Emilion Le Dôme 2022	\$300	92
St.-Emilion Vieux Château Mazerat 2022	\$130	90
<b>CHÂTEAU LE THIL</b> Pessac-Léognan Comte Clary 2022	\$28	91
<b>ETS. THUNEVIN</b> Bordeaux Mauvais Garçon 2022	\$20	88
St.-Emilion Clos Badon 2022	\$65	92
<b>VIRGINIE THUNEVIN</b> Bordeaux 2022	\$17	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LA TONNELLE</b> Haut-Médoc 2022	\$20	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LA TOUR BLANCHE</b> Sauternes 2022	\$50	92
Sauternes Emotions de La Tour Blanche 2022	\$45	90
<b>CHÂTEAU LA TOUR CARNET</b> Haut-Médoc 2022	\$40	89
<b>CHÂTEAU LA TOUR DE BY</b> Médoc 2022	\$18	91



WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>CHÂTEAU LA TOUR DE MONS</b> Margaux 2022	\$25	89
<b>CHÂTEAU TOUR DES TERMES</b> St.-Estèphe 2022	\$37	91
<b>CHÂTEAU TOURNEFEUILLE</b> Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$60	91
<b>CHÂTEAU TREYTINS</b> Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022	\$30	90
Montagne-St.-Emilion 2022	\$28	89
<b>CHÂTEAU TRIANON</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$60	91
<b>CHÂTEAU TROCARD</b> Bordeaux Supérieur Monrepos 2022	\$18	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LES TROIS CROIX</b> Fronsac 2022	\$39	92
<b>CHÂTEAU TRONQUOY-LALANDE</b> Bordeaux White 2022	\$50	90
St.-Estèphe 2022	\$40	92
<b>CHÂTEAU TROPLONG MONDOT</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$140	94
<b>CHÂTEAU TROTANOY</b> Pomerol 2022	\$413	97

WINE	PRICE	SCORE
<b>CHÂTEAU LA VAISINERIE</b> Puisseguin-St.-Emilion 2022	\$20	89
<b>CHÂTEAU VALANDRAUD</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$160	95
St.-Emilion Virginie de Valandraud 2022	\$45	90
<b>CHÂTEAU VERMONT</b> Entre-Deux-Mers La Grande Cuvée 2022	\$26	88
<b>CHÂTEAU LA VIEILLE CURE</b> Fronsac 2022	\$35	93
Fronsac La Sacristie de la Vieille Cure 2022	\$28	90
<b>CHÂTEAU VIEUX MAILLET</b> Pomerol 2022	\$70	90
<b>CHÂTEAU LA VIOLETTE</b> Pomerol 2022	\$331	93
<b>CHÂTEAU VRAY CROIX DE GAY</b> Pomerol 2022	\$89	91
<b>CHÂTEAU YON-FIGEAC</b> St.-Emilion 2022	\$39	92
<b>CHÂTEAU D'YQUEM</b> Sauternes 2022	\$350	97



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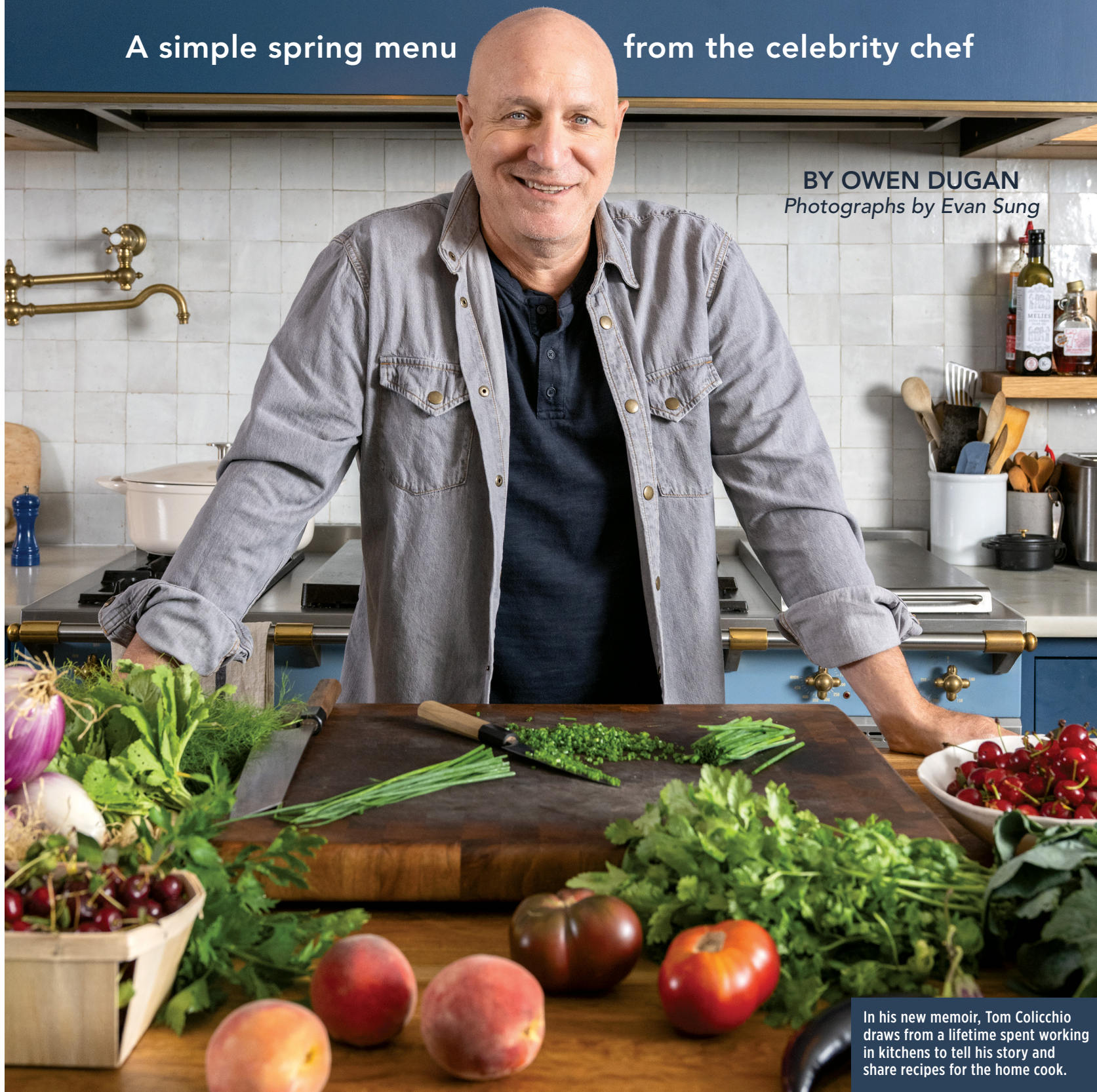
# THE CRAFT OF CHEF TOM COLICCHIO

A simple spring menu

from the celebrity chef

BY OWEN DUGAN

Photographs by Evan Sung



In his new memoir, Tom Colicchio draws from a lifetime spent working in kitchens to tell his story and share recipes for the home cook.

**T**om Colicchio might be the most recognized chef in the U.S. thanks to his role as a judge on *Top Chef* since it began in 2006. Previously, he worked with some of food's great eminences—Thomas Keller of

the French Laundry, Per Se and more and Danny Meyer of Union Square Café, Gramercy Tavern and the Shake Shack chain among them—before becoming an eminence himself, first with his New York City flagship, Craft, and then at times





Tom Colicchio's New York flagship, Craft

## COLICCHIO RESTAURANTS

### CRAFT

43 E. 19th St., New York  
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craftrestaurant.com

### SMALL BATCH

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(516) 548-8162  
smallbatchrestaurant.com

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**Best of Award of Excellence**

**Best of Award of Excellence**

approaching 20 others across categories and the country. He also used his position to form the Independent Restaurant Coalition to support the industry during the pandemic.

But as he explains in his new memoir *Why I Cook*, co-written with Joshua David Stein, he has pulled back and simplified, applying a lifetime of learning to more straightforward pleasure. (He currently has five restaurants, two of them *Wine Spectator* Best of Award of Excellence winners.) Likewise the recipes below, from the book, which has about 60, are elegant and smart but also refined and simple.

Colicchio grew up in Elizabeth, New Jersey, in a family with somewhat slender means but blessed with scrappiness. His father was always on the lookout for the next hustle and his grandfather, who lived next door, grew tomatoes and zucchini in plastic buckets and taught young Tom crabbing and clamming in Barnegat Bay. He started to drift in his teenage years with the usual distractions and what he today diagnoses as ADHD. His father gently encouraged his interest in cooking. When at age 14 he got a job at the food stand at a local swimming club, everything clicked. He could not only handle the pace; he improved the food. He says, "I had found my lane."

In the book, Colicchio displays great clarity and self-awareness as he works in ever more impressive kitchens all while maintaining the stereotypical bad-boy chef lifestyle. He was hired at Rakel, an ambitious new restaurant where the chef was Thomas Keller. Colicchio succumbed to the pressure and quit angrily: "This was me coming to a realization about myself: I chafed under someone else's rules, whether they made sense or not. I was feeling the itch

to go out on my own and be my own boss."

His first three-star review as executive chef came in 1990 at Mondrian, but the restaurant never got in the black. After discussions and a location search with Danny Meyer—and the birth of Colicchio's first son—he became a partner in a highly anticipated new restaurant called Gramercy Tavern. After a few struggles, they achieved three stars from *The New York Times*.

As Meyer planned more restaurants, including Eleven Madison Park, he restructured the business, reducing Colicchio's share. When another space opened nearby, Colicchio jumped, and for a time was running the Gramercy kitchen while planning and building what would become Craft. While the former delivered what Colicchio calls "high touch food," meaning a number of elements plated just so, food at the latter pulled back and focused simply on the flavor of the thing, presented simply. As Colicchio recalls, "The ADHD brain flourishes when it fires on all cylinders, and I remember this as a time of happy inventiveness as I seamlessly moved between concepts, each feeding the other."

On its 2001 opening, Craft was as mobbed as Gramercy had been and after just a few months was awarded three stars. On top of that, Colicchio was engaged to marry filmmaker Lori Silverbush in the fall. They spent their honeymoon volunteering at Ground Zero: "I cooked the midnight shift in the boat's galley kitchen, shoulder to shoulder with a Cantonese cook from Flushing and a couple of pizza guys from Bay Ridge."

As recovery began he expanded, with Craftbar, Craftsteak in Las Vegas and the 'wichcraft sandwich shops. More offers for partnerships came and he said yes to too many, which did not lead to success. He recalls, "As these deals appeared I leapt on them for the same reason that 9-year-old me sold cans of soda at the Feast of St. Rocco back in Elizabeth: because I could, a far cry from diving into a project from a place of curiosity and a desire to evolve creatively."

## WINE SPECTATOR MENU

### Mortadella With Fava Beans, Celery, Rhubarb and Blood Orange Vinaigrette

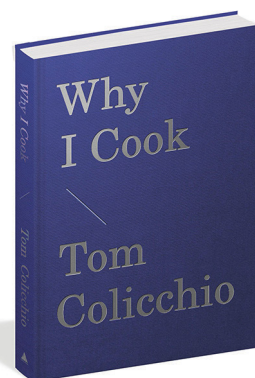
Cleto Chiarli Lambrusco  
di Sorbara Secco

### Pasta With Spring Vegetables

Elvio Cogno Nascetta

### Marinated Roasted Swordfish With Meyer Lemons and Rosemary

Valdicava Rosso di  
Montalcino



ALL RECIPES EXCERPTED FROM *WHY I COOK* BY TOM COLICCHIO (ARTISAN BOOKS). COPYRIGHT ©2024



*Top Chef* brought him broader renown. He even remade a faltering Craftsteak into Colicchio & Sons, which was more representative of the complex dishes he judged on the show. In a recent conversation, he said: “Part of it is getting older. You simplify, but then you also start to question your relevance, so you have to show people you can still do high touch food.”

Colicchio has used his platform for the betterment of the country and the industry. He produced his wife’s film *A Place at the Table*, which shows three people’s struggles with food insecurity. “We had more than enough food to feed everyone in America healthfully and well,” he says. “But a series of poor policy decisions was keeping us from doing it.” When the pandemic hit and his businesses were shuttered overnight, the devastation of firing his staff led him to start the Independent Restaurant Coalition, which in 2022 succeeded in getting \$28.6 billion from Congress to benefit thousands of restaurants.

Today he runs a tight business and makes more room for home. The cooking he does there, where he has a garden and fishes regularly, is direct, as shown in the recipes below. He has been a wine lover for decades, and every place he cooked

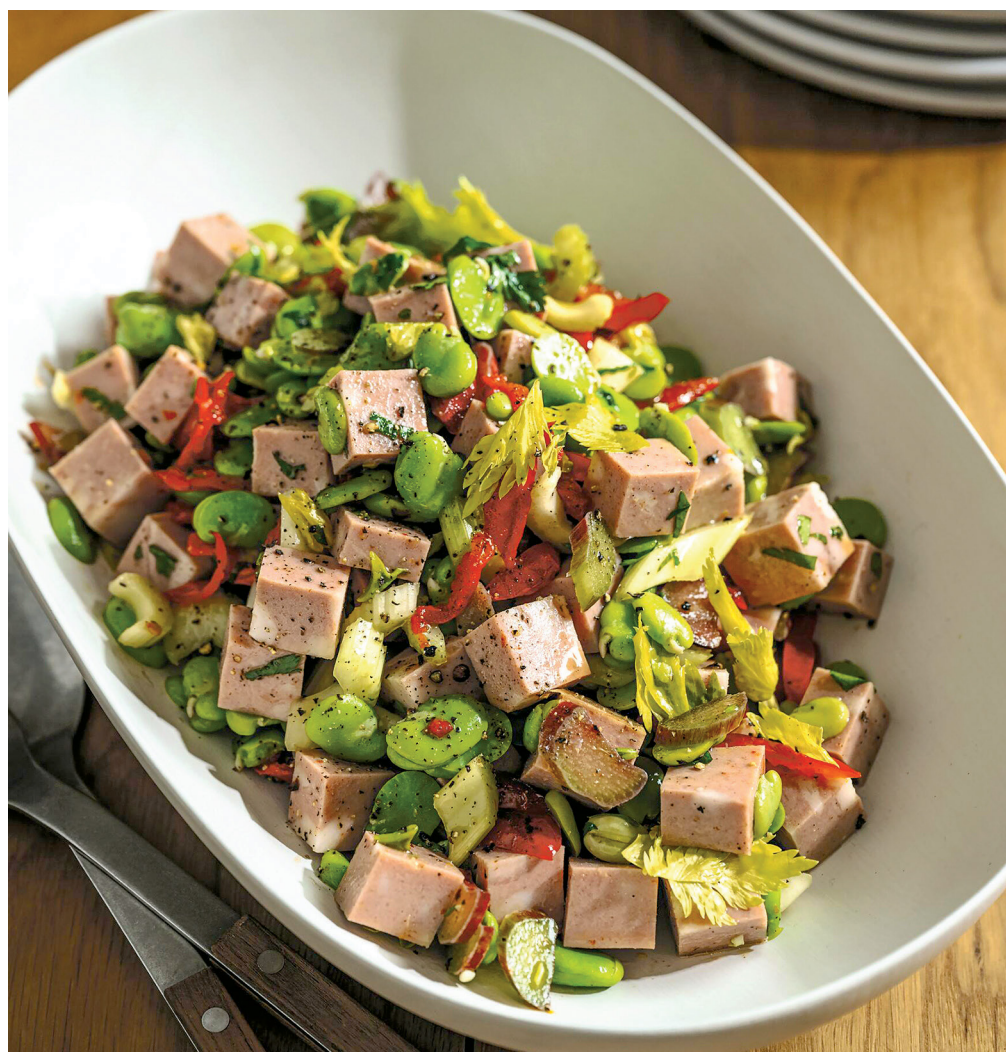


Can he still cook complex, refined dishes? Sure. Does he? “What did you have for dinner last night?” he asked recently. “I had roast chicken, broccoli rabe, roasted potatoes with fennel, red onion and herbes de provence. Fifteen minutes prep, 40 in the oven. It’s delicious, it’s good.”

offered an excellent list. “It started when I was the chef at Mondrian,” he said recently, recalling that for a stretch he oversaw the list there too. “They did a lot of wine dinners in the private dining room. They always wanted discounts. I would say, ‘OK I’ll do that, but only if I get to taste every single wine.’ I gave myself a good wine education that way.”

*Why I Cook* proves the old maxim that the more you’ve done the less you have to do.

## Mortadella With Fava Beans, Celery, Rhubarb and Blood Orange Vinaigrette



“This is the perfect salad for a buffet since it thrives at room temperature and holds up well. It can also be made ahead, but do not add the vinaigrette until you’re ready to serve, as the acid will turn the fava beans brown.”

—CHEF TOM COLICCHIO

2 rhubarb stalks, sliced  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup)  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, plus 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar  
 Kosher salt  
 1 cup shelled fresh fava beans (see Notes)  
 Grated zest and juice of  $\frac{1}{2}$  blood orange (see Notes)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil  
 Freshly ground black pepper  
 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 pounds mortadella (see Notes), cut into  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch chunk  
 4 celery stalks, cut into  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices (about 2 cups)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Peppadew peppers, drained and chopped  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped celery leaves  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped fresh parsley  
 1 tablespoon crushed Calabrian chile pepper (optional)

**1.** In a bowl, combine the rhubarb and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vinegar. Sea with salt. Let sit for 30 minutes to make a quick pickle, then drain. (Reserve the vinegar for another use.)

**2.** Set up a bowl with equal parts water and ice and keep nearby. Bring a medium



pot of salted water to a boil for blanching the fava beans.

**3.** Blanch the fava beans in the boiling water for 3 to 4 minutes, until tender with no crunch. Drain and place in the ice bath. Drain and peel the beans by gently squeezing them between your fingers until they pop out of their skins. Set the favas in a bowl.

**4.** To make the vinaigrette, in a bowl, whisk together the blood orange zest and juice, olive oil, and remaining 2 tablespoons of vinegar. Season generously with salt and black pepper.

**5.** In a serving bowl, toss together the mortadella, celery, quick-pickled rhubarb, Peppadew peppers, fava beans, celery leaves, parsley and Calabrian chile (if you want to give the salad a little heat). Season

with salt and black pepper. Add the vinaigrette, toss everything together, and serve at room temperature. *Serves 6 to 8 as an appetizer.*

#### Notes

- *If you don't have fava beans, you can use snap peas that have been quickly blanched and then thinly sliced.*
- *If you can't find a blood orange, any orange will work.*
- *My favorite mortadella has pistachios in it. If you can't find this, add ½ cup pistachios to the mix.*
- *Ask your butcher for two ¾-inch slices of mortadella that are about 1 pound each, then cut the slices into cubes.*

## WINE PICK

**//** Traditional Emilia Romagna pairing of Lambrusco, but specifically a drier, vibrant version to complement the blood orange vinaigrette. **Lambrusco di Sorbara Secco** from **Cleto Chiarli** is a good choice and widely available. **//**

—Cheron Cowan,  
Beverage director at Craft

#### WINE SPECTATOR ALTERNATES

Medici Ermete Secco Lambrusco  
Reggiano Arte e Concerto 2023 (90,  
\$26); Cleto Chiarli e Figli Secco  
Lambrusco Grasparossa di Castelvetro  
Nero Noir 2023 (89, \$18)

## Pasta With Spring Vegetables

**//** When the garden gives you vegetables, it's best not to stand in the way. That's the idea behind this simple pasta. Find your own ratios, substitute your own vegetables. Just make sure you have more pasta than peas. It is, after all, pasta with spring vegetables, not spring vegetables with pasta. **//**

—T.C.

Kosher salt

1 pound pasta (any shape)

2 cups shelled fresh English peas

2 spring garlic stalks, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced

Freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 cup pea tendrils, chopped

¼ cup fresh mint, chopped

½ cup freshly grated pecorino cheese

½ cup ricotta cheese

**1.** Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat for the pasta.

**2.** Add the pasta and cook according to the package directions. About 2 minutes before cook time ends, add the peas and garlic to the water and allow them to cook with the pasta until the pasta is al dente.





**3.** Reserving 1 cup of the pasta water, drain the pasta and vegetables and return to the pot over medium heat. Season heavily with pepper. Add the olive oil and butter and mix until combined.

**4.** Add some of the reserved pasta water, a little at a time, to achieve a saucy consistency. Turn off the heat and add the pea tendrils and mint. Add half of the pecorino, more salt and pepper, and mix everything together.

**5.** Portion the pasta into bowls and top each with 2 tablespoons of ricotta. At the table, pass the remaining pecorino, salt and pepper. *Serves 4.*

## WINE PICK

// A fresh white to complement the peas, but also with some richness to stand up to the cheese. **Elvio Cogno Nascetta** offers citrus and pomaceous fruits, but also subtle floral and sage qualities in the finish. //

—C.C.

### WINE SPECTATOR ALTERNATES

Elvio Cogno Langhe Nascetta Del Comune di Novello Anas-cëtta 2023 (90, \$28); La Spinetta Timorasso Colli Tortonesi Piccolo Derthona 2023 (90, \$36)



## Marinated Roasted Swordfish With Meyer Lemons and Rosemary

// There are few fish that can rival the robust meatiness of swordfish. In this recipe I use a marinating technique I learned at the Quilted Giraffe. By separating the fish from the marinade with cheesecloth, you get all the flavors but don't have to worry about removing any bits of garlic or shallot that might burn. This recipe is quick to make, but you'll need to allow time for it to marinate. //

—T.C.

## MARINATED SWORDFISH

*¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
2 sprigs fresh rosemary  
1 shallot, minced  
4 swordfish steaks (6 to 8 ounces each)*

### TO FINISH

*2 lemons, cut into thick rounds  
2 sprigs fresh rosemary  
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
Kosher salt*

**Marinate the swordfish:** In a small bowl, mix together the olive oil, garlic, rosemary and shallot.

**1.** Pour the marinade into a shallow baking dish to cover the bottom. Cover with a single layer of cheesecloth and place the swordfish steaks on top of the cheesecloth. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the fridge to marinate for 24 hours.

**To finish:** Preheat a grill or large grill pan over medium-high heat.

**2.** In a bowl, toss the lemon rounds and rosemary sprigs with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and season with salt. Grill, turning occasionally, until browned, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the lemons and rosemary to a plate.

**3.** Remove the swordfish from the marinade. Season the swordfish steaks on both sides with salt and drizzle with the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil.

**4.** Grill the fish, flipping once, until golden brown and the internal temperature reads 130° F to 140° F, 3 to 4 minutes per side.

**5.** Transfer to a platter and serve with the grilled lemons and rosemary. *Serves 4*

## WINE PICK

// This is a meatier fish and the roasted aspect can lend towards a wine with more structure. Sangiovese would be great, specifically a **Rosso di Montalcino** or a **Vino Nobile di Montepulciano**. Both styles are lighter expressions of Sangiovese, with fine tannins and fresh acidity while retaining herbal aspects in the finish. **Valdicava Rosso di Montalcino** and **Avignonesi Vino Nobile di Montepulciano** are ones to try. //

—C.C.

### WINE SPECTATOR ALTERNATES

Uccelliera Rosso di Montalcino 2021 (92, \$36); Caparzo Rosso di Montalcino 2022 (91, \$27)



# Chile at the

*Standout vintages in 2021 and now 2022 put a spotlight on the country's diverse offerings from top terroirs* | BY AARON ROMANO



France's Domaines Barons de Rothschild (Lafite) invested early in Chile, buying Viña Los Vascos and its 640 acres of vines in the Colchagua Valley in 1988. The estate is a perennial source of outstanding reds and value whites.



# Pinnacle







Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc star in Vik's flagship blend, from the Millahue subregion of Chile's Cachapoal Valley, but its Carmenère is deservedly earning more and more attention.

Chile's benchmark 2021 vintage put South American wine on a new pedestal, most evident by the 2021 Viña Don Melchor being named *Wine Spectator's* 2024 Wine of the Year. And vintners are cementing that elevated status with a stellar 2022.

Wine lovers have noticed the quality ascent, and after a string of sluggish years, sales of Chilean wines are once again on the rise. At a time when most other countries have seen declines, bottled still wine exports to the U.S. increased an impressive 18% in 2024, totaling more than 4.7 million cases. Additionally, Chile grew 8.9% in value over that time.

The spotlight on Chilean wine has never shined brighter; now it's vintners' responsibility to capitalize on the moment, and they aren't taking the charge lightly. The country has wrestled with its reputation as a source for cheerful, inexpensive wines while trying to gain footing as a quality leader. "We know we have a great opportunity," says Enrique Tirado, CEO and winemaker for Viña Don Melchor. "We have momentum, and we're working hard, not only at Don Melchor but also Chile as a country."

For Emily Faulconer, technical director for Familia Chadwick, relevancy starts with availability. "For the consumer to have the opportunity to try Chilean wines, to pick a bottle from a wine list in a restaurant or at a wine-shop, depends on how we position our wines in the market. There's a big challenge for us as a county."

Since my previous report ("A Benchmark Year in Chile," May 31, 2024), I've reviewed fewer than 150 wines in blind tastings at our Napa office, considerably fewer than in recent years. About a quarter of the wines tasted represent the 2022 vintage, with the remaining split mostly between 2023 and 2021. In my overall tastings of more than 100 2022s in this and previous reports, approximately 50% of

Chile's reds notched 90 points or more, preliminarily putting the year on pace for a classic rating. (Too few wines have been tasted to confirm a final rating at this stage.) However, based on the additional outstanding 2021s reviewed for this report, that vintage merits a bump from its initial 94-point rating and now rates a classic 95 points on our 100-point scale.

While the ratings point to exceptional quality, Faulconer notes that the vintage shouldn't be discussed generally. "Personally, I'm very fond of the 2022 vintage, although it is very site-specific," she explains. Faulconer joined Familia Chadwick, which includes Viña Seña, Viña Errázuriz and Viñedo Chadwick, in 2023 following six harvests at Viña Carmen and has the perspective of having produced the wines there while also learning the ins and outs of the estates in the Chadwick portfolio over the past two years.

"When I started digging into 2022, I started to realize that the numbers were completely different to the perception that we had as a vintage," she says, underscoring that the general impression was that 2022 was warmer because

of the warm spring that followed a very dry winter. Yet in Maipo, the data revealed that it was, in fact, cooler than 2021, which was considered a cool year. "But if I look at Panquehue, where the Errázuriz winery is—inland Aconcagua—it was warmer than average."

Cristián Vallejo, chief winemaker for Vik, in Cachapoal Valley's Millahue subregion, concurs with Faulconer. "In the past 10 years, [2022] was the coolest," he says, citing data from Chile's Ministry of the Environment showing that Chile's median temperature in 2022 was a half-degree Celsius (nearly a full degree Fahrenheit) lower than 2021. "Half a degree sounds like not that much," adds Vallejo. "[But] half a degree is a lot, and those little changes make big changes in nature."



In 2023, Emily Faulconer left Viña Carmen to become technical director for Viñedos Familia Chadwick in Aconcagua.

Viña Don Melchor's Tirado points to data collected from the winery's experimental Sundial Vineyard in Maipo Valley's Puente Alto, where cold and heat stress and productive hours are measured. In 2022, few hot or cold extremes resulted in 68% of the daylight hours considered "effectively productive," meaning ideal conditions for ripening and maintaining acidity and pH. Tirado says high percentages of effective daylight hours are generally an indicator of excellence. "If you have more productive hours, you have more phenol compounds and wine with more richness," he explains.



Comparatively, 2021 had 65% effective hours. When asked how much difference that makes, Tirado said the effective hours are just one way to compare vintages. For example, the warm 2020 vintage had 58% effective hours, and 32% of the hours included heat stress. Yet, that year also saw yields down, which helped concentration. “You need to build in more information about the yields, pick times and maceration times, but as ’21 and ’22 are so similar, here is very important data that can point to the richness and the purity in the aromas and the flavors. 2022 shows the same balance [as 2021], but with richer layers.”

**W**hen it comes to comparing 2022 to 2021, it’s a bit of splitting hairs. Ultimately, if you’re a collector of Chilean wines or interested in exploring, there’s never been a better time, as this pair of recent vintages together exemplify Chile’s efforts toward balance, structure and purity.

In general, 2021s show tremendous freshness and finesse, with more pronounced herb and spice aromatics and graceful textures. Many of the 2022 wines match 2021’s flair, often with an added measure of concentration and density, and in general, the 2022s are more expressive on the palate, with pure flavors and fine, tannic backbones.

Among the top-rated 2022s from Maipo Valley are two wines from Puente Alto. Viñedo Chadwick Puente Alto (95 points, \$390) is a multilayered, commanding and well-defined Cabernet with dense, structured tannins; Viña Don Melchor (95, \$185) is elegant, nuanced and equally concentrated, with well-formed tannins. Other leading Maipo estates, including Viña Almaviva, Viña Santa Rita and Viña Carmen, also made outstanding 2022s. Outside of Maipo, Vik’s La Piu Belle Cachapoal Valley (93, \$89) is an outstanding Carmenère-based blend; Vallejo continues to increase the percentage of Carmenère because of how expressive the grape is proving.

Chile’s outstanding reds aren’t limited to the high-end bottlings. One of Chile’s hallmarks over the years has been its ability to deliver quality wines at reasonable prices. Chile is punching above its weight in every category, and the tremendous value is accentuated in vintages like 2022 and 2021.

The Viña San Pedro Sideral Cachapoal Valley 2022 (93, \$25) is an attractive value-oriented Cabernet-based blend, as is the



Viña San Pedro winemaker Gabriel Mustakis oversees the brand’s top cuvées, including the Cabernet-based Altair, Cabo de Hornos and Sideral bottlings.

savory and rich Baron Philippe de Rothschild Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Escudo Rojo Origine 2021 (92, \$28). For Carmenère, the Viña Santa Ema Amplus One (93, \$30) from Peumo has now notched 93 points in back-to-back vintages, offering an exciting example of the grape’s alluring potential.

Diversity remains a calling card for Chile.

The broad range of wines and prices includes enthralling 2022 old-vine Sémillons from Garage Wine Co. (92, \$55) and Los Vascos (92, \$45); fresh Sauvignon Blancs from Viña Tabali (2024, 90, \$30), Viña Leyda (2023, 89, \$20) and Casas del Bosque (2024, 89, \$14); bold Syrah from Viña Montes (2022, 91, \$25) and LaPostolle (2021, 93, \$100); and energetic Carignanes from Viña Carmen (2023, 92, \$18), Odfjell (2021, 92, \$150) and more.

Not to be overlooked, several late-release 2021s recap the quality of that vintage. Among them are Clos Apalta Apalta (96, \$170), Vik Millahue (95, \$149), Viña Montes Alpha M Apalta (95, \$130) and Los Vascos Le Dix Colchagua Valley (94, \$75).

Exploiting the success of these two vintages in the U.S. market will be critical for Chilean vintners, as 2023 was a return to a warm growing season, including one of the hottest autumns on record in Chile, and was exacerbated by drought as well as wildfires in the Maule, Itata and Bío Bío regions.

As Chilean wines continue to gain appreciation, vintners are torn on whether consumers are ready to appreciate the nuances of Chile’s distinctive *terroirs*. Some believe wine has become too focused on specificity, making it overly complicated, and that it should be more approachable for the average consumer. Others evoke Faulconer’s sentiment that each vintage presents too much variation across the country’s diverse subregions to



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Reviving neglected old-vine parcels is part of Garage Wine Co.'s ethos in Chile's Maipo and Maule valleys.

accurately ascribe a score to the country as a whole, believing that focusing on Chile's amazing diversity from a fascinating range of *terroirs* is the path forward.

"Ten years ago, it was all about Maipo and Colchagua, and

there was not much information about the other D.O.s," says Vallejo. "It's clear that in every different corner in this country, you can have something special. For me as a winemaker, what I love is to show the flavor of this place. When I talk with my

colleagues, we agree that we have to spend more time together to show that the main characteristic of Chile is diversity."

Faulconer agrees. "I think Chile is more confident in what we know and what we need to do to achieve the quality and the style of wines that we're aiming for. The next area is specialization in specific sites, and my impression of what is most valuable is a collaboration between brands; in that sense, it would be more about the site interpreted by different producers."

When it comes to expanding relationships and reinforcing Chile's presence, particularly in the U.S. premium wine sector, Faulconer says edification is paramount. "We still must educate about Chile; but I'm convinced we have a huge opportunity to please the U.S. market with our wines."

*Senior editor Aaron Romano is Wine Spectator's lead taster on the wines of Chile.*

Rating Red Wine Vintages in Chile

2022	NYR	An extremely dry vintage alleviated by a moderate season which allowed optimal development; wines show excellent concentration, balance, purity and structure	Drink or hold
2021	95	A mild year, with significant rainfall in January, followed by a cool, lengthy ripening period resulting in fresh yet concentrated wines with lower alcohol and great acidity	Drink or hold
2020	90	A demanding vintage, hot and dry, with an early, condensed harvest and lower yields; reds show good concentration, albeit with slightly higher alcohol levels	Drink or hold
2019	93	Balanced and cool, yet good thermal amplitude throughout the season yielded aromatically expressive reds, with balanced acidity; drought conditions impacted whites	Drink or hold
2018	93	Slightly cooler-than-average temperatures produced structure and concentration, with precise Cabernet- and Carmenère-based reds offering good freshness, acidity and color	Drink or hold
2017	88	Hot summer temperatures delivered ripe wines and an early harvest, with low yields. Overall, reds offer silky tannins and full flavors; whites are fruit-forward	Drink or hold
2016	87	Untimely rains in key regions such as Colchagua, Maipo and Casablanca cut yields and led to less concentrated flavors, particularly for reds	Drink or hold

**Vintage ratings:** 95-100, classic; 90-94, outstanding; 85-89, very good; 80-84, good; 75-79, mediocre; 50-74, not recommended **Drinkability:** "NYR" means most of the wines of the vintage are yet to be released; "drink" means most of the wines of the vintage are ready to drink; "hold" means most of the ageworthy wines have yet to fully mature.



## Aaron Romano's Recommended Wines From Chile

Nearly 150 wines were reviewed for this report. A free alphabetical list is available at [WineSpectator.com/ChileAlpha053125](https://www.winespectator.com/ChileAlpha053125).  
WineSpectator.com members can access complete reviews for all wines tasted using the online Wine Ratings search.

### TOP-SCORING 2022s

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>VIÑEDO CHADWICK</b> <b>Puente Alto 2022</b> Complex, with violet and graphite aromas and a rich core of black cherry, plum and cassis. Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot.	95	\$390
<b>VIÑA DON MELCHOR</b> <b>Cabernet Sauvignon Puente Alto Don Melchor Vineyard 2022</b> Elegant, nuanced and concentrated, with a core of blackberry and cassis; wonderfully fresh as it moves toward the harmonious finish.	95	\$185
<b>VIÑA ALMAVIVA</b> <b>Puente Alto 2022</b> Ripe blackberry and cassis over tobacco leaf and graphite. Structured, with dense, integrated tannins. Cabernet Sauvignon blend.	94	\$180
<b>VIÑA SANTA RITA</b> <b>Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Casa Real Reserva Especial 2022</b> Poised for a long future, with mahogany, tobacco and dried sage details. Plum and raspberry flavors swell around its lively acidity.	94	\$120
<b>VIÑA CARMEN</b> <b>Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Gold Alto Jahuel 2022</b> Pepper and cassis notes fold over onto blackberry and plum flavors. A gentle push of acidity lifts everything and carries it onto the finish.	93	\$100
<b>CONCHA Y TORO</b> <b>Carmenère Peumo Terrunyo Peumo Vineyard 2022</b> Alluring aromas of lavender and cocoa join a rich core of black cherry and berry flavors lifted by plenty of fresh acidity.	93	\$55
<b>VIÑA SAN PEDRO</b> <b>Sideral Cachapoal Valley 2022</b> Red currant and raspberry flavors enlivened by fresh acidity and finishing with presence and length. Cabernet Sauvignon blend.	93	\$25
<b>VIÑA SANTA EMA</b> <b>Carmenère Peumo Amplus One 2022</b> Floral and thyme aromas leap from the glass. Herb-laced cherry, raspberry and plum pastry swell and linger around silky tannins.	93	\$30
<b>VIÑA SEÑA</b> <b>Aconcagua Valley 2022</b> Elegant and balanced, with generous plum and berry flavors. There's a late burst of energy, yet it keeps its focus. Cabernet Sauvignon blend.	93	\$145
<b>VIK</b> <b>La Piu Belle Millahue 2022</b> Swells with rich plum and cherry tart flavors; a twinge of acidity expands the finish around an echo of cocoa bean. Carmenère blend.	93	\$89
<b>GARAGE WINE CO.</b> <b>Sémillon Cauquenes Isidore Vineyard F5 2022</b> Lime and ginger aromas join a Mt. Olympus tea-accented core of peach and tangelo. Saffron and honey chime in on the clean finish.	92	\$55
<b>VIÑA QUEBRADA DE MACUL</b> <b>Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Domus Aurea 2022</b> Intensely savory, with singed bay leaf, Nyons olive and a concentrated core of cocoa-accented Santa Rosa plum and bitter cherry.	92	\$105
<b>VIÑA TABALI</b> <b>Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Talud Viñedo Dom 2022</b> Restrained and elegant, offering petrichor, dusty rose petal and graphite notes that give way to a well-structured core.	92	\$32
<b>VIÑA CASA SILVA</b> <b>Carmenère Los Lingues S7 Single Block 2022</b> Intriguing spice and herb notes with cassis and bay leaf on a silky-framed core, revealing juicy raspberry and Rainier cherry flavors.	91	\$35
<b>VIÑA MONTES</b> <b>Syrah Colchagua Valley Alpha 2022</b> A nice mix of elegance and muscle, with grilled rosemary and singed orange peel notes, plus graphite-laced blackberry at the center.	91	\$25

### OTHER TOP-SCORING

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>CLOS APALTA</b> <b>Apalta 2021</b> A stunner. Aromatically complex and intriguing, with a rich palate of concentrated black cherry, plum and cassis. Carmenère blend.	96	\$170
<b>VIÑA MONTES</b> <b>Alpha M Apalta 2021</b> This medium-bodied red deftly balances finesse and flare, offering layers of tobacco, cedar and spices. Cabernet Sauvignon blend.	95	\$130
<b>VIK</b> <b>Millahue 2021</b> Refined and elegant. Graphite, wild thyme and raspberry are buoyed by fresh, mineral acidity. Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon.	95	\$149
<b>VIÑA ERRÁZURIZ</b> <b>Don Maximiano Founder's Reserve Aconcagua Valley 2021</b> Savory and sage notes pave the way, with white pepper accenting the vibrant raspberry and cherry core. Cabernet Sauvignon blend.	94	\$200
<b>LAPOSTOLLE</b> <b>La Parcelle 8 Vieilles Vignes Apalta 2021</b> Elegant, with blackberry and plum flavors and subtle cedar, graphite and cassis notes and a spice-filled finish. Cabernet Sauvignon.	94	\$180
<b>VIÑA MONTES</b> <b>Purple Angel Colchagua Valley 2021</b> Rather muscular, with a concentrated core of mineral-accented berry and damson plum flavors. Carmenère and Petit Verdot.	94	\$120
<b>LOS VASCOS</b> <b>Le Dix Colchagua Valley 2021</b> Intriguing and complex, with generous concentrated blackberry and cassis flavors picking up graphite notes. Cabernet Sauvignon blend.	94	\$75
<b>CASAS DEL BOSQUE</b> <b>Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Gran Bosque Private Reserve 2021</b> Floral, spice and cassis accents reveal this red's plush, concentrated core of creamed plum and berry. Finishes with earthy chocolate notes.	93	\$60
<b>CLOS APALTA</b> <b>Le Petit Clos Apalta 2021</b> Refined and structured, with a dark chocolate-coated blackberry and spiced plum center that lingers nicely. Carmenère blend.	93	\$65
<b>CONCHA Y TORO</b> <b>Chardonnay Limarí Valley Amelia Quebrada Seca 2023</b> Complex and layered, with spiced pastry, toasted almond and verbena notes that join a core of clove-laced baked apple and grilled lemon.	93	\$55
<b>LAPOSTOLLE</b> <b>Clos du Lican Apalta 2021</b> Blends muscle and elegance, offering lilac, sage, peppercorn and Mexican chocolate notes with concentrated dark berry flavors. Syrah.	93	\$100
<b>VIÑA CARMEN</b> <b>Carignan Maule Gran Reserva 2023</b> Deeply aromatic, with orange peel, clove and singed bay leaf accents melding with a taut core of sage-accented dried cherry and currant.	92	\$18
<b>DAKÉL</b> <b>Pinot Noir Itata Valley Viñedo Maricerro 2021</b> Rich yet elegant, with toasted fennel and rosemary notes. Fresh coffee bean, plum and berry flavors linger nicely around the silky finish.	92	\$75
<b>VIÑA NEYEN DE APALTA</b> <b>Espíritu de Apalta Apalta 2021</b> Complex bay leaf and petrichor aromas with cassis-accented cherry and plum flavors. Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenère.	92	\$65
<b>ODFJELL</b> <b>Carignan Maule Valley Orzada 2021</b> Energetic and poised, with dried hibiscus up front and a loamy, licorice cast to the bright beam of floral huckleberry and raspberry core.	92	\$150
<b>BARON PHILIPPE DE ROTHSCHILD</b> <b>Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Escudo Rojo Origine 2021</b> Savory and floral up front, showing sage, dried rose petal and lavender notes; rich plum and cherry flavors on the smooth finish.	92	\$28



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# Wine Spectator Buying Guide



Tedeschi's Monte Olmi vineyard, in the heart of Valpolicella, lies on steep, terraced slopes with southwest exposure.

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## BY THE NUMBERS

The May 31 Buying Guide features **51 classic wines** and more than **385 outstanding wines** from among reviews of nearly **500 new releases**. Members can access tasting notes and scores for those wines, along with **hundreds of additional wines** reviewed since our last issue, using the Wine Ratings search at WineSpectator.com.



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# SPECTATOR SELECTIONS

## Highly Recommended

The issue's most impressive wines. Includes top-scorers and wines that represent optimal purchases based on their combination of score, price and availability.



**97** **Château Léoville Barton St.-Julien 2022 \$90** FRANCE Violet and iris notes hint at its purity, while the cold cast iron- and charcoal-accented structure warns that patience is required. In between is a core that offers sleek refinement, with shimmering cassis, plum and black cherry puree. Tightly drawn through the pinpoint finish, but everything is in proportion. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2030 through 2050. 10,800 cases made.—J.M.



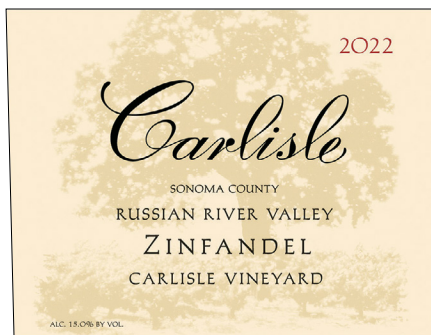
**97** **Château Pichon Baron Pauillac 2022 \$188** FRANCE This towering red offers a remarkable combination of freshness and weight. The well-endowed core of cassis, plum and black cherry puree shows polish and brightness, and a sleek iron note keeps this grounded. That background is laced with rose petal, iris and apple wood, while a subtle savory twinge percolates throughout in a way that only a classic Bordeaux can accomplish. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2026 through 2050. 12,797 cases made.—J.M.



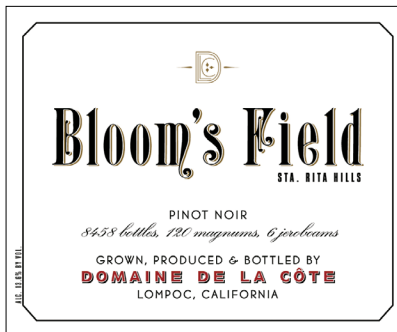
**96** **Brewer-Clifton Chardonnay Sta. Rita Hills Perilune 2022 \$75** CALIFORNIA Complex, dense and wonderfully concentrated, with notes of jasmine, shiso leaf, freshly grated ginger and lemon basil. Sleek flavors of lemon, yuzu and pomelo are vibrant, juicy and intense. Crushed stone, vetiver and celery salt hints linger on the long, expressive finish. Drink now through 2036. 282 cases made.—M.W.



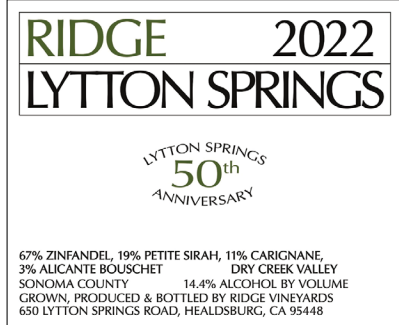
**96** **Clos Apalta Apalta 2021 \$170** CHILE Aromatically complex and intriguing, this offers a spiced plum pastry note that melds with petrichor, pine, dried violet and cocoa powder elements. The palate is round and richly textured, with Szechuan peppercorn accents to the concentrated black cherry, plum and cassis center. Everything comes together harmoniously on the finish and lingers, with present but integrated tannins. A stunner that should develop nicely in the cellar. Carmenère, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2040. 11,169 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—A.R.



**95** **Carlisle Zinfandel Russian River Valley Carlisle Vineyard 2022 \$56** CALIFORNIA Deeply structured and distinctive, this is Russian River Zin at its best. Offers blackberry flavors laced with pepper, orange peel and roasted anise as this builds tension and richness toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2035. 629 cases made.—T.F.



**95** **Domaine de la Côte Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Bloom's Field 2023 \$105** CALIFORNIA Mulberry and raspberry fruit leads the way in this red, with flashes of iris and hibiscus peeking in. There's a rapier of fresh acidity for spine while bay leaf, savory and wet slate notes add underlying tension throughout. The lovely pinpoint finish shows steady persistence. Best from 2026 through 2038. 727 cases made.—J.M.



**95** **Ridge Lytton Springs Dry Creek Valley 2022 \$56** CALIFORNIA Like a beast that's been tamed, this red is genteel and polished on the outside but dark and fervent deep down, with expressive flavors of blackberry, briar patch, savory anise and pepper. Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Carignane and Alicante Bouschet. Drink now through 2035. 7,000 cases made.—T.F.

## Collectibles

Wines that will improve most from additional bottle age and that show the greatest potential to gain in value.



**98** **Château Pichon Longueville Lalande Pauillac 2022 \$234** FRANCE This brims with notes of dark currant, blackberry and black cherry preserves that sparkle subtly with reserved energy, while sweet tobacco, licorice snap, chestnut, violet and ink notes work harmoniously through the long, crumpled velvet finish. A late humus echo provides a beautiful counterpoint, which just makes you want to go right back and start the experience all over with another sip. A total stunner. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2028 through 2050.—J.M.



**97** **Château Cos-d'Estournel St.-Estèphe 2022 \$260** FRANCE This is deep, dark and a bit brooding in feel, with layers of warm and well-steeped dark currant, blackberry and fig fruit. Married to a structure that's plush and nicely inlaid, while sweet tobacco, bay leaf, tar and chestnut notes add impressive range. The long finish pulls in a warm paving stone detail to seal the deal. Impressive indeed. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2028 through 2045. 12,000 cases made, 3,500 cases imported.—J.M.



# About the Buying Guide

This Buying Guide contains ratings of new releases from around the world. Complete tasting notes are provided for new releases scoring 85 or more points (on the *Wine Spectator* 100-point scale, explained below). Hundreds of additional reviews appear each month on our website, [www.winespectator.com](http://www.winespectator.com).

Each review carries the initials of the *Wine Spectator* editor who blind-tasted and scored the wine and wrote the review, based on the regional specializations indicated below.

<b>Bruce Sanderson</b>	<i>Burgundy, Piedmont, Tuscany</i>
<b>James Molesworth</b>	<i>California Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir, Bordeaux, Port</i>
<b>MaryAnn Worobiec</b>	<i>California Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, Australia, New Zealand</i>
<b>Alison Napjus</b>	<i>Spain, Italy, Champagne, South Africa</i>
<b>Tim Fish</b>	<i>California Zinfandel and Merlot, Oregon, Washington, U.S. sparkling wines</i>
<b>Aaron Romano</b>	<i>Argentina, Chile, California Rhônes</i>
<b>Kristen Bieler</b>	<i>Rhône Valley and other France, Germany, Austria</i>

## How We Do the Tastings

*Wine Spectator* editors taste more than 11,000 wines each year. Wines are tasted in our offices in New York and Napa, Calif. Tastings are also conducted on location in various European winegrowing regions.

All tastings are conducted in private, under controlled conditions. Wines are always tasted blind, in flights organized by varietal, appellation or region. Bottles are bagged and coded. Tasters are told only the general type of wine (varietal or region) and the vintage. Price is not taken into account. Each tasting begins with a wine previously rated, which is tasted non-blind as a reference point. Other already-rated wines are inserted into the blind tasting to ensure consistency. A typical tasting session consists of 20 to 30 wines, with a maximum of two sessions per day. We retaste many wines to confirm impressions, always in subsequent blind tastings.

Notes and ratings are entered directly into our database prior to the removal of the bags. Additional comments may be added to a note after the identity of the wine is revealed, but the score is never changed.

## Featured Wines: Spectator Selections, Labels and Photographs

Each issue, our editors choose wines with special qualities; called Spectator Selections, they are highlighted in the first pages of this Buying Guide, along with their labels. The categories are described below. In addition, selected reviews throughout the Buying Guide include a photograph of a winery principal, presenting these producers in a more personal way. All labels and images are chosen by *Wine Spectator* for editorial purposes only and do not represent any commercial transaction between *Wine Spectator* and the producers whose wines are featured.

**Highly Recommended:** The issue's most impressive wines. Includes top-scorers and wines that represent optimal purchases based on their combination of score, price and availability.

**Collectibles:** Wines that will improve most from additional bottle age and that show the greatest potential to gain in value.

**Smart Buys:** Wines that deliver fine character at affordable prices and that are broadly available.

**Best Values:** Wines with solid scores, modest prices and wide distribution.

## About Prices and Wines Tasted

Prices shown reflect the suggested retail price. When the suggested retail price is not available, we publish the prevailing wholesale price with a standard markup added. Actual retail prices may vary. Wines are chosen for tasting from among those sent to our offices for review and those purchased at retail. Because we for the most part serve a U.S. audience, we prefer to review wines that are widely available there.

## About the 100-Point Scale

Ratings reflect how highly our editors regard each wine relative to other wines in its category and are based on potential quality—how good the wine will be when at its peak. The score summarizes a wine's overall quality; the tasting note describes the wine's style and character.

<b>95-100</b>	<i>Classic: a great wine</i>
<b>90-94</b>	<i>Outstanding: a wine of superior character and style</i>
<b>85-89</b>	<i>Very good: a wine with special qualities</i>
<b>80-84</b>	<i>Good: a solid, well-made wine</i>
<b>75-79</b>	<i>Mediocre: a drinkable wine that may have minor flaws</i>
<b>50-74</b>	<i>Not recommended</i>



**97** **Château d'Yquem Sauternes 2022 \$350** **FRANCE** Starts slowly, with a creamy and seductive feel to its mix of warmed peach, fresh mango, glazed Anjou pear and mirabelle plum flavors. As this moves along, flashes of singed almond and coconut appear before the finish kicks into another gear, offering green fig, white tea and sweetened butter notes. The entire thing just sails through without a single bob of its hull in an impressive marriage of power and precision. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Best from 2028 through 2050. 5,833 cases made.—J.M.



**97** **Château Léoville Las Cases St.-Julien 2022 \$350** **FRANCE** Dark, winy and alluring, this offers a deep well of steeped black currant, blackberry and black cherry paste flavors that are sappy in their intensity. Sweet bay, violet, tobacco and apple wood accents fill in along the way, giving this superb range, while the long, cast iron-edged finish pulls everything to its vanishing point. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Best from 2027 through 2045.—J.M.



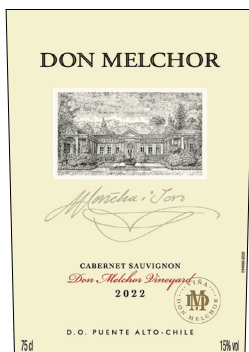
**95** **San Giusto a Rentennano Sangiovese Toscana Percarlo 2020 \$179** **ITALY** The aromas of vanilla and toasty new oak are more prominent than the flavors, where the black cherry, blackberry and plum fruit shines. Elements of iron, tobacco and wild herbs add complexity. Nonetheless, there are beefy tannins to be resolved, while the lingering finish promises fine evolution. Best from 2027 through 2043. 1,400 cases made, 312 cases imported.—B.S.



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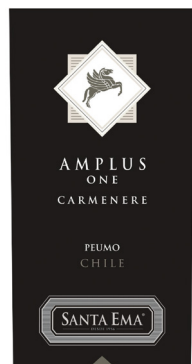
**95 Viña Don Melchor Cabernet Sauvignon Puente Alto Don Melchor Vineyard 2022 \$185 CHILE** Elegant, nuanced and concentrated, with a loamy-clay cast to the fresh thyme and subtle tuberose aromas, which give way to a rich yet balanced core of blackberry and cassis notes lifted by saline-edged acidity. Wonderfully fresh while moving toward the finish, where the flavors come together and linger harmoniously around well-formed tannins. Drink now through 2040. 17,800 cases made, 3,500 cases imported.—A.R.

## Smart Buys

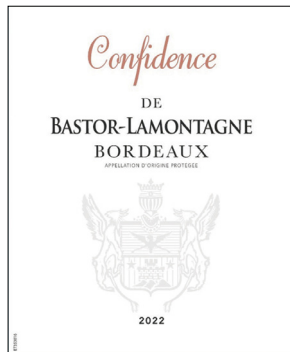
Wines that deliver fine character at affordable prices and that are broadly available.



**95 Clos Marsalette Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$30 FRANCE** Flamboyant and showy, this throws off waves of white nectarine, apricot, white peach and lemon gelée, with secondary hints of anise, pineapple and bitter orange. Rich and viscous, but with tensile strength as a quinine spine pierces the mouthwatering finish. Distinctive. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2030. 616 cases made.—J.M.



**93 Viña Santa Ema Carmenère Peumo Amplus One 2022 \$30 CHILE** Alluring aromas of phlox, heliotrope, wild thyme and floral cherry leap from the glass and pave the way for the elegant yet richly textured core of herb-laced cherry, raspberry and spiced plum pastry. Swells and lingers around silky tannins, with twinges of vanilla and cocoa nib. Drink now through 2035. 22,500 cases made, 12,000 cases imported.—A.R.



**92 Château Bastor-Lamontagne Bordeaux White Confidence 2022 \$20 FRANCE** A plump, energetic style, with Meyer lemon, apricot and white ginger notes flexing atop fresh acidity. A subtle savory twinge adds contrast on the finish. Sauvignon Blanc, Sauvignon Gris and Sémillon. Drink now through 2028. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 2,750 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—J.M.



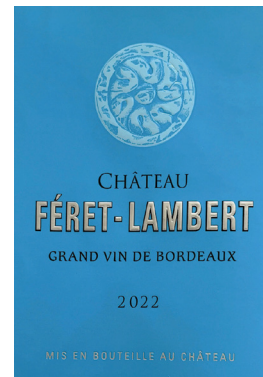
**92 Turley Zinfandel California Old Vines 2022 \$28 CALIFORNIA** A gutsy little red, with intense yet zesty flavors of raspberry, cranberry, savory anise and black pepper that finish with briary tannins. Drink now through 2032. 9,979 cases made.—T.F.



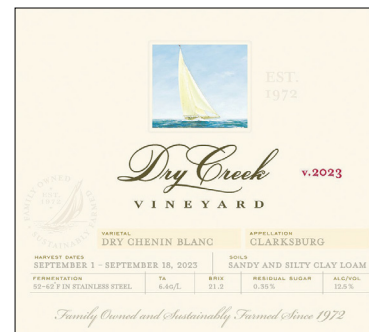
**91 Bodegas LAN Rioja Reserva 2019 \$22 SPAIN** Ripe black cherry and black plum fruit flavors are laced with lavish hints of vanilla, tar and cedar in this dark, deep red, animated by mandarin orange peel acidity. The lingering finish, trimmed by fine, taut tannins, offers medicinal herb and mineral details. Tempranillo, Mazuelo and Graciano. Drink now through 2035. 65,000 cases made, 10,000 cases imported.—A.N.



**91 Castello La Leccia Chianti Classico 2021 \$22 ITALY** This red is opulent, offering plum and black cherry flavors shaded by earth, iron, tobacco and leather notes. Shows density and overall balance, if not the freshness and precision of the vintage. Drink now through 2035. 4,200 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—B.S.



**91 Château Féret-Lambert Bordeaux Supérieur 2022 \$19 FRANCE** Fresh and sleek, with the vintage's vivid plum and dark cherry paste flavors mixed in with violet and anise and carried by a sleek graphite edge. Overdelivers for its AOC. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2027. 9,000 cases made, 5,000 cases imported.—J.M.



**91 Dry Creek Chenin Blanc Clarksburg Dry 2023 \$18 CALIFORNIA** Offers a firm, intense, juicy and refreshing mix of vibrant apricot, peach and Honeycrisp apple flavors, with a hint of jasmine and a long, refreshing finish. The succulent texture, purity of flavor and long finish are particularly impressive. Drink now. 9,500 cases made.—M.W.



**91 La Rioja Alta Rioja Viña Alberdi Reserva 2020 \$25 SPAIN** Hints of tobacco, smoke and vanilla are a fragrant thread winding through the baked cherry and raspberry fruit, cocoa powder and red licorice notes on display in this lively, harmonious, focused red. Fine, crisp tannins firm the finish. Drink now through 2030. 650,000 cases made, 15,000 cases imported.—A.N.





**91 Tommasi Sangiovese-Cabernet Sauvignon Toscana Poggio al Tufo Rompicollo 2021 \$21** ITALY Black currant, blackberry, iron, tapenade and mint aromas and flavors highlight this thickly textured red. Firm and elegant, showing plenty of Cabernet character. Ends long. Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2026 through 2035. 33,000 cases made, 7,000 cases imported.—B.S.

## Best Values

Wines with solid scores, modest prices and wide distribution.



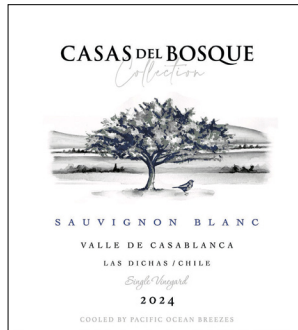
**92 Viña Carmen Carignan Maule Gran Reserva 2023 \$18** CHILE A deeply aromatic red, offering orange peel, clove and singed bay leaf accents that meld with a taut core of sage-accented dried cherry and currant, adding loam, licorice and mineral traces near the finish. Lingers around firming tannins. Drink now through 2033. 15,000 cases made, 5,000 cases imported.—A.R.



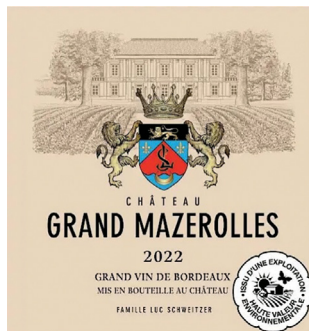
**90 Bodegas Beronia Rioja Crianza 2021 \$15** SPAIN This well-balanced red is animated by plum skin acidity, with a dark, mineral base underscoring crushed mulberry and blackberry fruit and herbed black olive notes, plus hints of vanilla and graphite. Light tannins define the finish. Tempranillo, Garnacha and Mazuelo. Drink now through 2030. 300,000 cases made, 3,500 cases imported.—A.N.



**90 Cline Zinfandel Contra Costa County Ancient Vines 2022 \$16** CALIFORNIA Fruit-forward and jammy, with supple raspberry and blueberry flavors accented by licorice and pepper. Drink now through 2030. 18,000 cases made.—T.F.



**89 Casas del Bosque Sauvignon Blanc Casablanca Valley Collection Las Dichas Single Vineyard 2024 \$14** CHILE Inviting for its tropical entry of mango and papaya, with peppery, floral notes underneath. Mouthwatering finish. Drink now. 36,500 cases made, 4,000 cases imported.—A.R.



**89 Château Grand Mazerolles Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux 2022 \$15** FRANCE This offers a solid core of kirsch and currant paste flavors laced with singed vanilla and tobacco. Shows a violet echo on the finish. Drink now through 2028. 9,800 cases made, 6,100 cases imported.—J.M.



**88 Villa Pillo Toscana Borgoforte 2021 \$14** ITALY A subtle smoke aroma seeps into the plum, black cherry, menthol and earth flavors in this red. Firms up on the finish, where savory and oak spice notes reside. Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Drink now. 12,000 cases made, 6,000 cases imported.—B.S.

## New Wines From Around the World

### CHILE

#### Cabernet Sauvignon & Blends

**95 Viñedo Chadwick Puente Alto 2022 \$390** A complex and multilayered version, with aromas of violet, crushed fennel seed, damp earth and graphite that give way to a rich, commanding and well-defined core of black cherry, plum and cassis elements. A subtle saline edge checks in, lending a mouthwatering quality as this moves to the lengthy finish around dense, structured tannins, plus late echoes of dried mint and bay leaf. Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2040. 803 cases made, 300 cases imported.—A.R.

**95 Viña Don Melchor Cabernet Sauvignon Puente Alto Don Melchor Vineyard 2022 \$185** See Collectibles, page 89.

**94 Viña Almaguilla Puente Alto 2022 \$180** This complex red slowly reveals itself as opening notes of dried violet, cedar wood and turmeric give way to a dense core of ripe blackberry and cassis, with hints of tobacco leaf and graphite underneath. There's plenty of structure, plus a gentle nudge of acidity to let the flavors play out on the chocolatey finish, with dense yet integrated tannins. Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenère, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2038. 15,000 cases made, 1,200 cases imported.—A.R.

**94 Viña Errázuriz Don Maximiano Founder's Reserve Aconcagua Valley 2021 \$100** Savory and sage notes pave the way in this refined version, with white pepper accents to the vibrant raspberry and cherry core, enlivened by fresh acidity. Details of cassis and truffle weave in and linger as this moves to the finish line around well-integrated tannins. Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Petit Verdot and Carmenère. Drink now through 2035. 1,278 cases made.—A.R.

**94 Lapostolle La Parcelle 8 Vieilles Vignes Apalta 2021 \$180** Elegant and fresh in feel, this medium-bodied red delivers layers of heliotrope, olive and herb details. Blackberry and plum flavors swell with intensity, adding subtle cedar, graphite and cassis notes. The spice-filled finish offers refined tannins. Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2036. 800 cases made, 500 cases imported.—A.R.

**94 Viña Santa Rita Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Casa Real Reserva Especial 2022 \$120** Restrained but poised for a long future. With time, this version reveals mahogany, tobacco and dried sage details, yet there's a tremendous presence on the palate. Offers concentrated plum and raspberry flavors that swell around its lively acidity, adding layers of dark chocolate as this finishes around fine tannins. Best from 2026 through 2036. 2,000 cases made, 500 cases imported.—A.R.

**93 Viña Carmen Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Gold Alto Jahuel 2022 \$100** This style offers a wealth of pepper, mace and cassis notes up front that fold over onto the palate, which swells with intensity around blackberry, plum and Mission fig flavors. A gentle push of acidity lifts and carries everything onto the finish around structured tannins, with hints of cocoa and Christmas spices. Drink now through 2035. 500 cases made, 60 cases imported.—A.R.

**93 Casas del Bosque Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Gran Bosque Private Reserve 2021 \$60** Floral, spice and cassis accents reveal this red's plush and concentrated core of creamed plum and black raspberry, offset by piquant red chili and lively details of pomegranate and molasses. Finishes with earthy, smoky chocolate notes and integrated tannins. Drink now through 2035. 520 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.R.



**93 Viña Seña Aconcagua Valley 2022 \$145**

Elegant and balanced, this offers floral blueberry and cocoa nib details inflected with lemon thyme and anise notes. The palate is smooth in texture, with generous plum and berry flavors. There's a late burst of energy, yet this keeps its focus around polished tannins and a late twinge of coffee bean. Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Carmenère and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2035. 11,197 cases made, 3,000 cases imported.—A.R.

**92 Viña Almaviva Epu Puento Alto 2022 \$60**

A rich and opulent style that drips with ripe berries, plum and cassis, with twinges of leather, fresh herbs and graphite dancing in and out. The plush finish lingers, offering spiced chocolate notes. Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenère, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2032. 5,000 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.R.

**92 Viñedos Calcu Cabernet Sauvignon Colchagua Valley Futa 2020 \$70**

A refined and elegant late release. This leads with loam, fresh herb and floral details before giving way to a spice-inflected core of brambly raspberry and cherry. Subtle cedar and graphite nuances check in on the firming finish. Drink now through 2032. 225 cases imported.—A.R.

**92 Concha y Toro Cabernet Sauvignon Pirque Terrunyo Pirque Viejo Vineyard 2022 \$40**

This concentrated and slightly muscular version offers hoisin, loam and spiced chocolate notes up front, followed by plum and cassis flavors. Yet there's a measure of elegance underneath, with floral berry and baking spice details emerging amid a push of acidity that lingers around structured tannins. Drink now through 2032. 1,500 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.R.

**92 Viña Neyen de Apalta Espíritu de Apalta Apalta 2021 \$65**

An engaging red, with complex aromas of bay leaf, petrichor, baking spices and cocoa bean that fold over onto the silky palate. Filled with cassis-accented cherry and plum flavors that swell with intensity and linger effortlessly around well-integrated tannins, plus traces of chicory. Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmenère. Drink now through 2035. 800 cases made, 140 cases imported.—A.R.

**92 Viña Quebrada de Macul Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Domus Aurea 2022 \$105**

An intensely savory style, with its singed bay leaf and Nyons olive aromas and flavors melding with a concentrated core of cocoa-accented Santa Rosa plum and bitter cherry. A base note of chicory swirls in, and the finish is firm, with gravelly tannins. Distinctive and could use time to unwind. Best after 2026. 2,400 cases made, 150 cases imported.—A.R.

**92 Viña Tabali Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Talud Viñedo Dom 2022 \$32**

A restrained and elegant version, offering petrichor, dusty rose petal and graphite notes that give way to a well-structured core, where precise tannins linger around layers of cherry, red currant and Santa Rosa plum flavors. Drink now through 2035. 4,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—A.R.

**91 Viña Santa Ema Catalina Maipo Valley 2021 \$60**

Elegant aromas of pine, hibiscus and Mission fig gather around a lively core of raspberry and cherry tart, flanked by roasted herb and mineral nuances tucked underneath. A trace of vanilla bean folds in on the finish around svelte tannins. Cabernet Sauvignon, Carmenère and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2032. 5,000 cases made, 3,000 cases imported.—A.R.

**91 Viña Santa Rita Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Floresta Alto Jahuel 2023 \$35**

Redolent of warm concrete after rain, with aromas of pine, cedar and mushroom against vibrant cherry and red currant flavors. Finishes with refined, mineral-tinged tannins. Drink now through 2033. 4,400 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Viñedos Calcu Cabernet Sauvignon Colchagua Valley Fotem 2020 \$32**

A suave rendition, with spicy, floral and licorice aromas paving the way for a smooth-textured core of Santa Rosa plum and cherry. Lengthens nicely around a push of acidity before finishing with pepper and mineral details around fine tannins. Drink now. 350 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Trasiego Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Mystic Andes Gran Reserva 2022 \$25**

Lures you in with rich aromas of coffee bean and sweet tobacco that give way to a lingering core of black raspberry and cherry fruit. Subtle accents of loam and cedar swirl in, and there's a slight mocha cast to finish. Drink now through 2032. 6,000 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—A.R.

**89 Viña Santa Carolina Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Reserva de Familia 2021 \$25**

This is a touch tight, with a subtle base of floral dried herbs to the mineral-accented roasted cherry and red currant core. Comes up a tad shy on the finish but is otherwise well done. Drink now. 5,500 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.R.

**88 Clos de Luz Cabernet Sauvignon Rapel Valley Jaya Single Vineyard Las Cenizas 2023 \$23**

An elegant version, with petrichor and dried floral notes mingling with a vibrant core of red currant and cherry. Finishes with subtle herb details and fine tannins. Drink now. 4,000 cases made, 3,000 cases imported.—A.R.

**88 Viña Tabali Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Pedregoso Dom Vineyard 2023 \$17**

Prominent notes of pepper and herbs lead, mixing with a plush core of plum and chocolate-covered cherry in this youthful and direct version, which finishes with polished tannins. Drink now. 16,500 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—A.R.

**CHILE**  
**Carignan****92 Viña Carmen Carignan Maule Gran Reserva 2023 \$18** See Best Values, page 92.


**AN ICONIC  
SIGNATURE  
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WINE**

Mirto is born from a deep desire to discover and challenge the status quo. A pioneering red wine among the village wines of Rioja. It represents the vanguard of a new stylistic approach in the region. An icon with a contemporary profile that has marked the beginning of a new era in wine focused on complexity, rich fruit expression, and a profound connection to terroir and origin.

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**91 Garage Wine Co. Carignan Empedrado Vigno Truquilemu Vineyard 2021 \$95** Earthy and savory, this shows loam, molasses and mushroom notes amid a dried cherry and fig center, with briny olive acidity yet a relatively smooth-textured frame. Ends with fine tannins and cocoa powder details. Drink now. 350 cases made, 150 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Balduzzi Carignan Maule Viejo Encachao Grand Reserve 2022 \$18** An aromatically engaging style, offering layers of white pepper, plumeria and red currant, while the palate displays deeper, richer flavors of clove-accented black raspberry that linger around well-integrated tannins and subtle hints of chicory and dark chocolate. Drink now through 2030. 12,000 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Undurraga Carignan Maule Valley Vigno 2022 \$35** A coating of spiced chocolate mixes with intense flavors of raspberry and cherry pastry, adding baking spice and chalky details on the finish around ripe, spicy tannins. Drink now through 2030. 3,500 cases made, 350 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Viña La Ronciere Carignan Licantén Piedras Magicas Idahue Estate 2020 \$27** There's still a good amount of density to this late release, with floral, leather and spice nuances leading to a dried cherry and raspberry center. A gentle push of fresh acidity picks things up and carries the finish around a cassis note. Drink now. 1,875 cases made, 500 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Viña Longaví Carignan Maule Valley iGlup! 2023 \$18** A slightly energetic version, with loamy nuances mixing with licorice notes before giving way to a brambly raspberry and Santa Rosa plum core. Offers hints of dried herbs and hibiscus on the finish around well-integrated tannins. Drink now through 2030. 500 cases made, 100 cases imported.—A.R.

**88 Viñedos Terranoble Carignan Maule Valley Azara 2021 \$19** Pronounced aromas of chicory and roasted herbs give way to taut and lively flavors of dried cranberry and cherry, with mineral and spice details on the finish. Best after 2026. 2,000 cases made, 500 cases imported.—A.R.

## CHILE Carmenère & Blends

**96 Clos Apalta Apalta 2021 \$170** See Highly Recommended, page 89.

**93 Clos Apalta Le Petit Clos Apalta 2021 \$65** Refined and structured, offering graphite and herbal notes up front that give way to a dark chocolate-coated blackberry and spiced plum center, with a twinge of cassis underneath. The tannins show some grip, but the finish also gives a sense of freshness as the core flavors linger nicely. Carmenère, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2036. 9,510 cases made, 1,800 cases imported.—A.R.



CHARLES DE BOURNET  
Owner

**93 Viña Santa Ema Carmenère Peumo Amplus One 2022 \$30** See Smart Buys, page 91.

**92 Viña Santa Carolina Carmenère Rapel Valley Reserva de Familia 2021 \$25** This medium-bodied version offers a savory base, with a saline edge to the tobacco and loam details that swirl around cassis and black raspberry flavors. Offers good density, but there's also a measure of freshness to the finish, bringing floral and red currant nuances around well-integrated tannins. Drink now through 2032. 3,500 cases made, 120 cases imported.—A.R.

**91 Viu Manent Carmenère Colchagua Valley El Incidente Gran 2022 \$80** Delivers a mix of floral and warm spice details, with a subtle herbaceous undertone to the pure plum and black cherry center. A gentle push of acidity allows the flavors to play out on the finish around polished tannins, plus a trace of cocoa powder. Drink now through 2032. 1,325 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Concha y Toro Carmenère Peumo Terrunyo Peumo Vineyard 2023 \$40** Offers a fresh and savory entry of dried rose petal and California laurel that folds over onto the palate, joining brambly raspberry and Santa Rosa plum flavors. A slight dose of oak chimes in on the finish, lending bass to the otherwise elegant details, but it works in the end. Drink now through 2030. 9,500 cases made, 358 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Viñedos Terranoble Carmenère Maule Valley Azara 2022 \$19** A refined and polished version, with a mineral and herb tinge to the creamed plum and cherry core, lingering nicely around suave tannins. Drink now through 2032. 8,000 cases made, 2,500 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Los Vascos Carmenère Colchagua Valley Cromas Gran Reserva 2022 \$25** Abundant gravelly and peppery notes yield to concentrated black plum and cassis flavors that receive a nice vibrant lift, pushing the flavors onto the well-spiced finish around fine tannins. Drink now. 10,000 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—A.R.

**89 Lapostolle Carmenère Apalta Cuvée Alexandre 2023 \$28** Lively and fruit-driven in style, with paprika accents to the ripe black cherry and plum core, plus mineral twinges that fold in on the finish. Drink now. 4,500 cases made, 1,200 cases imported.—A.R.

## CHILE Sauvignon Blanc

**90 Viña Tabali Sauvignon Blanc Limarí Valley Talinay Viñedo Talinay 2024 \$30** There are plenty of pepper, fresh herb and sea spray elements against a vibrant core of grapefruit and peach flavors that linger on the clean finish, with hints of pickled ginger chiming in. Drink now. 1,200 cases made, 600 cases imported.—A.R.

**89 Viñedos Calcu Sauvignon Blanc-Sémillon Colchagua Valley Marchigüe Estate Gran Reserva 2023 \$15** A trace of fresh chamomile leads off, lingering around a core of grilled Meyer lemon and pear, with subtle spiced pastry notes folding in on the finish around a lingering anise note. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now. 1,500 cases imported.—A.R.

**89 Casas del Bosque Sauvignon Blanc Casablanca Valley Collection Las Dichas Single Vineyard 2024 \$14** See Best Values, page 92.

**89 Lapostolle Sauvignon Blanc Rapel Valley Grand Selection 2023 \$15** Lively and fresh, with jasmine and lime zest aromas. This is built around finger lime and peach flavors, with a hint of ginger on the refreshing finish. Drink now. 8,000 cases made, 2,800 cases imported.—A.R.

**88 Viña Haras de Pirque Sauvignon Blanc Leyda Valley Albaclara 2024 \$15** There are subtle notes of jalapeño and fresh thyme to the vibrant citrus and pineapple core. Ends with cleansing, mineral acidity. Drink now. 3,000 cases imported.—A.R.

**88 Viña Mayu Sauvignon Blanc Elquí Valley 2024 \$16** Slightly grassy in style, with a core of melon and citrus flavors. Offers moderate acidity and a smooth-textured finish. Drink now. 3,700 cases made, 1,200 cases imported.—A.R.

## CHILE Other Red

**93 Lapostolle Clos du Lican Apalta 2021 \$100** Blends muscle and elegance, with lilac, sage, peppercorn and Mexican chocolate notes mixed with concentrated, clove-accented flavors of blueberry and blackberry. A twinge of lively acidity lifts everything before settling into the polished finish alongside an additional layer of chocolate. Syrah. Drink now through 2030. 576 cases made, 150 cases imported.—A.R.

**91 Garage Wine Co. Garnacha-Cariñena-Monastrell Empedrado Sauzal Vineyard Lot 105 2019 \$45** This late-release red is already beginning to reveal its tertiary side, offering leather, dried tobacco and fig aromas and flavors, with subtle notes of cured meat, loam and sappy cherry swirling in. There's still ample acidity, however, which helps enliven and lengthen everything. Finishes with chalky tannins. Garnacha, Cariñena and Monastrell. Drink now through 2030. 450 cases made, 225 cases imported.—A.R.

**91 Los Maquis Cabernet Franc Colchagua Valley Franco 2020 \$125** Mature in feel, with leathery details meeting dried rose petal, herb and tobacco notes up front, yet a good measure of acidity drives the cedar- and spice-accented flavors of black raspberry and Mission fig that linger around structured tannins. Drink now through 2032. 125 cases imported.—A.R.

**91 Viña Santa Rita Cabernet Franc Maipo Valley Floresta Alto Jahuel 2023 \$35** A harmonious version, with a balanced mix of spicy, floral and pepper notes against its pure and vibrant core of strawberry and raspberry, which lingers, with subtle gravelly tones underneath and fine tannins. Drink now through 2035. 1,100 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Viña Montes Pinot Noir Aconcagua Coast Limited Selection 2023 \$26** Orange peel and dried lavender lead in this elegant and savory style, with an essence of sage running through the raspberry coulis center. Picks up a loamy mineral detail as this finishes around perky tannins, with notes of cedar and spices. Drink now through 2032. 300 cases imported.—A.R.

**89 Viña Mayu Syrah Elquí Valley Gran Reserva Don Mauro Vineyard 2022 \$24** A savory red, with tobacco, grilled rosemary and bacon fat joining a dense and concentrated core of smoky blueberry and damson plum. The smoky essence lingers well onto the finish. Drink now. 1,800 cases made, 150 cases imported.—A.R.

**89 Viña Tabali Pinot Noir Limarí Valley Vetas 2023 \$22** A well-spiced version, with dried rose petal nuances to the vibrant cherry and raspberry flavors. Finishes with fine tannins, plus a twinge of cedar and baking spices. Drink now. 1,200 cases made, 600 cases imported.—A.R.

## CHILE Other White

**93 Concha y Toro Chardonnay Limarí Valley Amelia Quebrada Seca 2023 \$55** A complex and layered white, with spiced pastry, toasted almond and verbena notes that join an energetic, lingering core of clove-laced baked apple and grilled lemon. Finishes with nice length and a salty, mineral freshness centered on the core flavors. Drink now through 2028. 3,300 cases made, 682 cases imported.—A.R.

**92 Garage Wine Co. Sémillon Cauquenes Isidore Vineyard F5 2022 \$55** Aromatically engaging for its mix of finger lime, ground ginger and hyacinth, which joins a Mount Olympus tea-accented core of peach and tangelo. Saffron and honey notes chimes in as the core flavors play out on the long, clean finish. Drink now through 2028. 550 cases made, 165 cases imported.—A.R.



**90 Viña Santa Rita Chardonnay Limarí Valley Floresta 2023 \$35** Offers plenty of acidity and tension, with subtle tropical notes mixing with apple and citrus flavors, plus just a trace of wood on the finish, which reveals spiced pastry accents that linger. Drink now. 2,200 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.R.

**90 Viña Tabali Chardonnay Limarí Valley Talinay Viñedo Talinay 2023 \$35** Subtle notes of herbs and crème fraîche are a contrast to the incredibly vibrant pineapple and melon flavors, with sea spray and chalky undertones to the clean finish. Drink now. 800 cases made, 400 cases imported.—A.R.

**87 Casas del Bosque Chardonnay Casablanca Valley Collection Las Dichas Single Vineyard 2024 \$14** Fresh and youthful, yet this feels more Sauvignon Blanc in style than Chardonnay, with floral and herb details amid a core of tropical fruit flavors. Mouth-watering finish. Drink now. 13,000 cases made, 1,200 cases imported.—A.R.

## FRANCE

### Bordeaux / Barsac

**95 Château Coutet Barsac 2022 \$50** Ripe, unctuous and deliciously rendered, this pumps out orange blossom, peach, apricot and pineapple upside-down cake notes that are seamlessly stitched with bitter almond and orange threads. Offers a long, seductively glazed finish. Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle. Drink now through 2045. 5,400 cases made.—J.M.

**95 Château Doisy Daëne Barsac L'Extravagant 2022 \$220/375ml** Bright, slightly high-toned and pure, delivering a beam of white peach, Meyer lemon and green almond that is lengthy, poised and sleek in feel. Honeysuckle and salted butter gild the finish liberally. Drink now through 2050. 80 cases made.—J.M.

**94 Château Climens Barsac 2022 \$135** An enticing white, with lively notes of graham cracker, pie crust and ginger tossed in with glazed pear, clove-studded orange and apricot flavors. The deliciously unctuous finish offers lingering hints of bitter almond and green tea. Drink now through 2045. 1,000 cases made, 50 cases imported.—J.M.

**94 Château Doisy Daëne Barsac 2022 \$70** A bright white, with freshly sliced pineapple, candied lemon peel, orange blossom and elderflower honey notes seamlessly entwined. There's a pretty accent of salted butter on the generous finish. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2045. 2,000 cases made, 80 cases imported.—J.M.

**94 Château de Myrat Barsac 2022 \$48** A flattering style, with toasted almond and coconut infusing a core of candied pineapple, dried apricot and just-baked peach. Brioche and ginger fill in liberally on the finish. Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle. Drink now through 2045. 1,666 cases made.—J.M.

**92 Château Cantegril Barsac 2022 \$30** Bright and fresh, displaying elderflower honey, ginger and white peach notes that glide through, with a friendly, lightly glazed feel on the finish. Drink now through 2036. 1,100 cases made.—J.M.

**91 Château Nairac Barsac 2022 \$50** Plump and slightly exotic in feel, with pineapple, lemon chutney, ginger and buttered brioche notes that roll through the orange blossom-tinged and corpulent finish. Drink now through 2038. 370 cases made.—J.M.

## FRANCE

### Bordeaux / Pauillac

**98 Château Pichon Longueville Lalande Pauillac 2022 \$234** See Collectibles, page 89.

**97 Château Pichon Baron Pauillac 2022 \$188** See Highly Recommended, page 89.

**96 Château Grand-Puy-Lacoste Pauillac 2022 \$80**

This version shows the floral side of the vintage, with a vibrant mix of iris, violet and rose petal notes leading the way, backed by a core of pure and racy red and black currant preserves. There's a well-integrated singed cedar note running along its flanks and a long beam of iron driving the finish. Textbook. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2026 through 2042. 10,000 cases made.—J.M.



MARIE-HELENE AND FRANÇOIS-XAVIER BORIE  
Owners

**96 Château Lynch Bages Pauillac 2022 \$147**

There's an iron spine buried in this red, providing a sleek grounding wire for the core of succulent blackberry and black currant preserves. Singed alder, chestnut leaf and ink notes fill in along the way. Ends with authority thanks to the precise, fine-grained finish, which sports a regal mouthfeel. Offers exactly what this vintage is all about—ripeness and freshness. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2050.—J.M.

**94 Château Grand-Puy Ducasse Pauillac 2022 \$40**

Dark and winery, with game and sweet bay flashes peeking out from behind a dense core of mulled black currant, blackberry and black cherry fruit flavors. Dark licorice and warm earth notes wrap up the finish, while a smoldering cast iron edge lingers. Muscular and burly, but with energy and depth for the requisite cellaring needed. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2028 through 2042. 9,000 cases made.—J.M.

**94 Château Haut-Batailley Pauillac 2022 \$64**

Juicy and fresh, with red and black currant and cherry notes infused with an iris accent. Shows purity through the iron-tinged finish. An elegantly styled Pauillac that should age gracefully in the cellar. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2025 through 2040.—J.M.

**94 Château Pontet-Canet Pauillac 2022 \$125**

This is alluring and smoldering, with dark violet, iris and anise notes infusing the core of plum sauce and dark currant preserves. A bolt of cast iron runs underneath, and there's a late tug of freshly tilled humus on the finish, all while the fruit keeps the upper hand. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2028 through 2042.—J.M.

**93 Château Bellegrave Pauillac 2022 \$80**

A dark, sleek version, with gently mulled black currant and blackberry fruit dusted with cocoa and gilded with accents of violet and dried anise. A light kiss of singed cedar underscores the fresh finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2037. 2,500 cases made, 800 cases imported.—J.M.

**93 Château Fonbadet Pauillac Par Pascale Peyronie 2022 \$100**

Aims for a richer, more fruit-driven expression of Pauillac, with dark plum and blackberry compote flavors laced with notes of bay leaf, sweet tobacco, alder and warm earth. The plush, toasty finish is languid in feel, but well-stuffed. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2026 through 2036. 200 cases made.—J.M.

**93 Château Pibran Pauillac 2022 \$39**

Lovely from start to finish, this offers a caressing core of warmed cassis and plum sauce, while notes of ink, violet and anise filter through. A perfumed cedar and sandalwood frame gently guides the finish, where an echo of warm earth lingers amid the fruit. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2026 through 2036. 766 cases made.—J.M.

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**93 Château Pichon Baron Pauillac Les Tourelles de Longueville 2022 \$45** This throws off a lovely stream of violet and iris that settles gently over the top of a beam of pure cassis and bright plum flavors. A pure iron note supports the fresh finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2025 through 2035. 9,049 cases made.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Pichon Longueville Lalande Pauillac Réserve de la Comtesse 2022 \$57** Laden with warmed cassis and dark plum notes, this moves slowly as bittersweet cocoa, espresso crema and dark tobacco accents fill in along the way. Cedar and savory hints add range and cut to the finish, and there's ample latent depth. A touch old school and can handle some cellaring. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2038.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Fonbadet Pauillac 2022 \$50** This slow but steady-moving style offers a warm, caressing profile, with cassis and plum reduction notes supported by cedar and tobacco nuances. A sleek iron element gives the chestnut- and cedar-tinged finish a streamlined feel. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2026 through 2037. 2,400 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Pichon Baron Pauillac Les Griffons de Pichon Baron 2022 \$46** A solid version, with a packed core of blackberry, black currant and black cherry reduction notes wrapped in licorice root, bay leaf and violet. A growl of cast iron emerges through the finish, giving this a burly, earth-driven feel. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Best from 2025 through 2036. 5,568 cases made.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Lynch Bages Pauillac Echo de Lynch Bages 2022 \$51** Delivers a sappy (if perhaps slightly extracted stylistically) beam of dark cherry and cassis notes girded by graphite and sweet tobacco. Clear and precise in its message through the violet-accented finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2035.—*J.M.*

## FRANCE

### Bordeaux / Pessac-Léognan / Red

**96 Domaine de Chevalier Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$75** Sports a wonderfully polished core of cassis and cherry reduction, while the vintage's telltale notes of warm cast iron, bay and tobacco fill in throughout. Violet and singed chestnut accents check in for added range and length. A pure, deep, lengthy and authoritative expression of Pessac. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2028 through 2042. 9,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

**95 Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$135** Delivering a warm gush of cassis, plum puree and cherry preserves, this style manages to capture a polished feel, with sweet tobacco, black licorice and violet notes filling in liberally, all backed by an echo of espresso crema on the lengthy and opulent finish. Almost approachable for its mouthfeel, but cellaring will be rewarded. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2026 through 2042. 8,000 cases made, 2,400 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**94 Château Latour-Martillac Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$40** A youthfully compact style, with its core of red and black currant preserves sitting behind a mix of warm tar, alder and chestnut. Dark tobacco and leather notes stretch out on the finish and add a textural element, while the fruit keeps pace. Solid. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2040. 12,000 cases made, 2,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**94 Château Pape Clément Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$94** Well-packed with dark currant, raspberry, plum and cherry compote notes, all carried by gently

singed apple wood and cedar. Sweet tobacco and a flash of incense fill in on the finish, which offers woody hints but stays polished and fine-grained overall. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2028 through 2040. 23,800 cases made.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Carbonnieux Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$50** Gently steeped dark currant and cherry fruit mixes well with singed tobacco, alder and black tea accents. There's a warm earth echo through the finish, which is fine-grained and focused. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2036. 13,000 cases made, 2,300 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**93 Château La Louvière Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$55** A juicy and focused version, with a nice beam of violet, iris, cassis and bitter plum puree that drives through, laced with alder, savory and leather hints on the finish. Nicely done. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2026 through 2036. 10,800 cases made, 700 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Malartic-Lagravière Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$52** Warm plum, black currant and black cherry compote notes cruise through slowly, inlaid with singed alder and black tea. Warm earth, bay and burnished leather hints keep the finish nicely grounded. Very solid. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2038. 8,330 cases made.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Olivier Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$45** Sanguine and iron show themselves early on, while the core of warmed cassis and steeped cherry fruit moves along steadily. Polished in feel, with fine-grained alder and cedar notes asserting themselves on the suave finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2039. 9,000 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Branon Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$90** Mulled currant and black cherry fruit melds with notes of leather, chestnut and warm earth through the cedar- and alder-streaked finish, which is also frankly toasted and direct. A muscular style. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2038. 410 cases made, 50 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Brown Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$49** Ripe and fleshy in feel, with enticing black currant and blackberry notes liberally laced with tar, dark tobacco and dried violet details. Sappy finish. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2026 through 2037. 4,000 cases made, 800 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Cantelys Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$23** Notes of gently mulled plum, black cherry and red currant fruit meld with licorice, bay leaf and tobacco leaf elements, while worn cedar and alder provide a warm and burnished feel through the earth-tinged finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2035. 5,300 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Domaine de Chevalier Pessac-Léognan L'Esprit de Chevalier 2022 \$40** Shows an enticing sense of freshness in the form of savory and violet details that gently infuse the core of warmed cassis and dark cherry paste. There's a subtle, leathery tug through the finish, which offers polish and a late iron twang. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2036. 8,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Château de France Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$37** Ripe and focused, with sleek sanguine and iron threads harnessing the core of gently steeped damson plum, cherry and red currant fruit. There's a subtle, leathery tug through the finish. Textbook for the vintage. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2036. 6,500 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Larrivet Haut-Brion Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$40** Mulled red and black currant fruit is laced with savory, cedar and tobacco leaf notes.

Offers a textbook vintage profile; this is just slightly more understated than most of its peers. Earth-tinged finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2037. 10,000 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Lespault-Martillac Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$30** A lively version, offering a mix of red currant, bitter cherry, singed cedar, savory and tar notes that streak through in unison. Shows cut and focus on the grippy finish. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2026 through 2036. 2,200 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Picque Caillou Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$70** A dark red, with a mulled edge to its black currant and black cherry fruit, this shows streaks of tar, alder and bay leaf. The long, fine-grained finish is focused, with an iron note lingering at the very end. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2037. 5,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte Pessac-Léognan Le Petit Haut Lafitte 2022 \$35** This forward red displays ripe, succulent flavors of black cherry and black currant fruit paste laced with licorice root, alder and black tea. Offers a toasty finish but shows good energy and is accessible now. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Drink now through 2034. 6,000 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*



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**92 Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte Pessac-Léognan Les Hauts de Smith 2022 \$32** Notes of steeped red currant and dark plum form the core of this red, along with sleek, singed accents of alder, bay, tobacco and black tea, while a tug of warm earth hangs on the finish. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2035. 6,000 cases made, 800 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Bouscaut Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$45** Ripe and focused, with a steady beam of cassis and bitter plum sauce notes that stretch out nicely, laced with rose hip, iris and anise accents through the focused finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec. Best from 2026 through 2036. 5,800 cases made, 200 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Le Thil Pessac-Léognan Comte Clary 2022 \$28** Notes of red currant and bitter plum paste cruise through in this version, with a brushstroke of tar and a frame of singed apple wood. Offers a flash of olive on the finish. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2034. 1,000 cases made, 100 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**90 Château Carbonnieux Pessac-Léognan La Croix de Carbonnieux 2022 \$25** This red is brimming with succulent flavors of warmed cassis, plum reduction and cherry paste that stay fresh, along with details of savory, cedar, red tea and iron. Delicious and ready to go. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Drink now through 2032. 2,000 cases made, 200 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**90 Château Couhins-Lurton Pessac-Léognan 2022 \$40** This is a slightly high-pitched version, with bright mulberry and cherry fruit laced with red licorice and iris notes. The sleek finish shows a sanguine twinge amid its fruit. Pretty. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2033. 1,900 cases made, 100 cases imported.—*J.M.*



## FRANCE

## Bordeaux / Pessac-Léognan / White

**97 Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$169** This shimmers with a salted butter note that adds a flattering edge to its panoply of shortbread, singed almond, honeysuckle, lemon curd and creamed white peach flavors. Feels regal, with a long finish that deftly toes the balance between the toasted and fresh, unadorned sides of the spectrum. A rare dry white that can handle all four seasons as anything from a solo aperitif to a main course partner. Beautiful. Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon and Sauvignon Gris. Drink now through 2035. 2,000 cases made, 250 cases imported.—J.M.

**96 Château Pape Clément Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$140** Drapes an alluring cape of bitter almond and warmed brioche over a core of lemon curd, white peach and shortbread. Subtle jasmine oil, elderflower and honeysuckle add range through the finish, where there's a long, subtle twinge of quinine buried deeply. The hedonist's white Bordeaux. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Best from 2026 through 2032.—J.M.

**95 Domaine de Chevalier Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$114** This is lovely from the get-go, delivering a sensation of shimmering, wet pebbles, plus fresh thyme, oyster shell, quinine and Key lime zest notes that streak and glide at the same time. The long, unadorned finish hums like a tuning fork. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2035. 2,000 cases made.—J.M.

**95 Clos Marsalette Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$30** See Smart Buys, page 91.

**93 Château Bouscalt Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$50** Juicy and focused, with lemon peel, nectarine and star fruit flavors that are energetic in feel, while sel gris, thyme and quinine notes ripple underneath. The lengthy, fresh finish is very alive. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2029. 2,000 cases made, 200 cases imported.—J.M.

**93 Château Carbonnieux Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$50** Bright and engaging, with chive oil, thyme and oyster shell blitzing to the fore, followed quickly by a second wave of enticing lemon pith, white peach and star fruit flavors through the long, fresh, pure finish. Someone bring the langoustines and saffron aioli. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2027. 10,800 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—J.M.

**93 Château Latour-Martillac Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$45** A lively white, with a mix of tarragon, verbena and thyme backed by lemon curd, star fruit and white peach flavors. A quinine thread adds length and cut on the finish. Delicious. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2029. 2,300 cases made, 500 cases imported.—J.M.

**93 Château Lespault-Martillac Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$40** Tangerine, white peach and quinine form a lively, fresh-feeling mix. A light gilding of honeysuckle is draped over the bouncy finish, which shows a wet stone echo. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2028. 700 cases made.—J.M.

**93 Château Malartic-Lagravière Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$68** Lemon oil, white nectarine and macadamia nut give this a weighty, waxy feel, while verbena and salted butter add length and cut to the finish. Nicely done. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2029. 420 cases made.—J.M.

**92 Château Brown Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$49** Bright and punchy, with a burst of lemon peel, honeysuckle and verbena that streaks through, backed by hints of clementine and elderflower honey. Delicious and distinctive. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon.

Drink now through 2028. 1,000 cases made, 450 cases imported.—J.M.

**92 Domaine de Chevalier Pessac-Léognan White L'Esprit de Chevalier 2022 \$41** Jasmine, green almond and thyme lead the way, backed by a solid core of white peach and quinine. Everything drives nicely through the finish. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2028. 1,200 cases made.—J.M.

**92 Château Larrivet Haut-Brion Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$42** A flattering style, with a kiss of warm brioche added onto a core of lemon curd, white peach and straw. Tarragon and verbena notes add range in the background. Nicely done. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2029. 1,000 cases made, 200 cases imported.—J.M.

**92 Château Olivier Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$45** Fresh thyme and chive notes lead the way, followed by a plump core of citrus oil and white nectarine. The pure, unadorned finish lingers, offering a hint of oyster shell. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2027. 1,500 cases made, 300 cases imported.—J.M.

**92 Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte Pessac-Léognan White Le Petit Haut Lafitte 2022 \$42** Lemon curd and salted butter notes give this pretty white a curvy, flattering feel, while verbena and honeysuckle keep everything on the fresh and floral side. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon. Drink now through 2028. 1,000 cases made, 150 cases imported.—J.M.

**91 Château de Rochemorin Pessac-Léognan White 2022 \$30** This comes across as plump, with friendly notes of white peach and white nectarine that are gilded with verbena, while a subtle twinge of salted butter adds underlying tension through the finish. Drink now through 2027. 3,800 cases made, 250 cases imported.—J.M.

**90 Château Larrivet Haut-Brion Pessac-Léognan White Les Demoiselles de Larrivet Haut-Brion 2022 \$35** Plump and breezy, with white peach and lemon shortbread notes rippling through the tarragon-tinged finish. Drink now through 2027. 1,600 cases made, 300 cases imported.—J.M.

**90 Château Smith-Haut-Lafitte Pessac-Léognan White Les Hauts de Smith 2022 \$40** Salted butter, shortbread and white peach notes are fresh, focused and pure. Sleek finish. Drink now through 2027. 1,500 cases made, 300 cases imported.—J.M.

## FRANCE

## Bordeaux / Pomerol

**94 Château Certan de May Pomerol 2022 \$123** This is a touch exotic in style, with dark and winy blackberry, boysenberry and mulberry compote flavors forming the core, while anise, cocoa, alder and Christmas pudding notes add an exotic backdrop. Carressing and seductive through the gently toasted finish. A smoky eye Pomerol. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2026 through 2040. 1,250 cases made, 50 cases imported.—J.M.

**93 Château Beauregard Pomerol 2022 \$85** Dark, ripe and succulent, with crushed plum, steeped blackberry and warmed black cherry reduction notes woven together by black tea and singed sandalwood threads. Savory flecks and a subtle minerality pervade gently on the finish as the fruit lingers. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2038.—J.M.

**93 Clos de la Vieille Église Pomerol 2022 \$90** Ripe, fresh and well-built, with a dark ganache coating that melds nicely into the core of steeped black cherry and blackberry fruit flavors, while singed alder, sandalwood and bay notes flow through in tandem. Perfumy finish. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2038. 282 cases made.—J.M.

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**93 Château Le Gay Pomerol 2022 \$125** Not shy with the toast, this offers a layer of mocha and açai paste draped over fresher flavors of raspberry and red currant coulis. The fruit shows persistence through the finish, but this seems more about power than range or freshness. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2038.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Montviel Pomerol 2022 \$46** A seductive style, with a caressing frame of warm cocoa and black tea guiding the core of mulled black cherry and black currant fruit. Subtle notes of bay leaf and sandalwood underscore the finish. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2038.—*J.M.*

**92 Château La Pointe Pomerol 2022 \$46** Friendly notes of cherry and raspberry flesh out nicely as they air in the glass, picking up rooibos tea, sandalwood, iris and savory accents through the fresh, polished finish. Nicely done. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2035. 4,208 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Lagrange Pomerol 2022 \$45** Silky and enticing, with gently mulled raspberry and boysenberry fruit that glides through, flecked with anise, red tea and sandalwood notes. Ready to go. Drink now through 2035. 2,300 cases made, 200 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**91 Château de Sales Pomerol 2022 \$40** Gently steeped raspberry and black cherry fruit shows density and grip, with light anise, black tea and savory notes adding energy through the lightly toasted, slightly dusty finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2036. 9,000 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

## FRANCE

### Bordeaux / Sauternes

**97 Château d'Yquem Sauternes 2022 \$350** See Collectibles, page 90.

**95 Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey Sauternes Crème de Tête 2022 \$165** Creamed Anjou pear, warm tarte Tatin and apricot chutney notes result in a broad and muscular feel, while singed brioche, bitter almond and papaya fill in through the finish. Dense and youthfully backward. Best from 2028 through 2045. 200 cases made.—*J.M.*

**95 Château Suduiraut Sauternes 2022 \$72** A plump, broad style, with marzipan, toasted almond and bitter orange notes leading the way for mango, creamed peach and papaya flavors. Rich and honeyed, but with an alluring, shimmering energy through its long finish. Drink now through 2045. 3,324 cases made.—*J.M.*

**94 Château Guiraud Sauternes 2022 \$60** Juicy and fresh, with a mix of delightfully ripe peach and yellow apple fruit that plays nicely with honeysuckle, ginger and jasmine through the finish. Exotic in bent, with lovely energy. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2040. 4,166 cases made.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey Sauternes Coeur de Terroir 2022 \$85** Singed almond, toasted coconut and warm apricot notes give this a rich and exotic feel, while mango, green fig and honey accents add further fuel through the finish. In the not-shy style. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Best from 2027 through 2045. 1,250 cases made.—*J.M.*

**93 Château de Rayne Vigneau Sauternes 2022 \$50** Juicy and frankly ripe, with mouthfilling apricot, peach and guava flavors laced with a hint of green fig. Ginger and pie crust notes add range on the flattering finish. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2040. 3,000 cases made, 450 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Sigalas Rabaud Sauternes 2022 \$58** This is lively, with juicy apricot, nectarine, Anjou pear and honey flavors that have good energy and inner brightness. Green fig and candied lemon peel notes add range on the finish, which shows a toasted coconut echo as well. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2042. 804 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Bastor-Lamontagne Sauternes 2022 \$35** Plump and lively, with green almond, apricot and papaya flavors that show good energy as they cruise through the orange blossom-tinted finish. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2038. 2,500 cases made, 250 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Clos Haut-Peyraguey Sauternes 2022 \$55** A breezy style, with a beam of peach, Jonagold apple and elderflower honey notes laced with white ginger and jasmine. Stays fresh and lively through the finish. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2040. 500 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Château La Tour Blanche Sauternes 2022 \$50** Offers a sedate, broad, flattering approach, with warmed brioche, creamed peach and glazed Anjou pear flavors. A subtle note of pie crust weaves through the finish, giving this white a warm tint. Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle. Drink now through 2038. 1,250 cases made.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Suduiraut Sauternes Castelnau 2022 \$48** Unctuous apricot, mango and papaya flavors roll through to the juicy, muscular, marzipan-accented finish. A throwback-styled Sauternes. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2034. 2,262 cases made.—*J.M.*

**90 Château La Tour Blanche Sauternes Emotions de La Tour Blanche 2022 \$45** Plump and fresh, with apple and pineapple chutney notes laced with jasmine and honeysuckle that add lift through the finish, where a hint of green fig kicks in. Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle. Drink now through 2035. 650 cases made, 196 cases imported.—*J.M.*

## FRANCE

### Bordeaux / St.-Emilion

**96 Château Pavie St.-Emilion 2022 \$400** This takes the showy fruit of the vintage and amplifies it, adding warm cocoa, melted licorice and roasted apple wood accents that fuel the core of boysenberry, plum and blackberry reduction flavors. Broad-shouldered in feel, with a deep well of fruit in reserve, this rumbles through the amply toasty finish. For the hedonist crowd. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2029 through 2045.—*J.M.*

**95 Château Bélair-Monange St.-Emilion 2022 \$225** Ripe and caressing in feel, with delicious boysenberry and black cherry compote flavors that roll through, with notes of black licorice, bay and chestnut. Alder and warm humus accents frame the finish as chalky minerality lingers amid the fruit. Large in scale but reserved in style. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2028 through 2042. 3,050 cases made, 627 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**94 Château Beauséjour St.-Emilion 2022 \$168** This poised version captures the showy mulberry, linzer torte and cassis fruit of the vintage but keeps it restrained in feel while gilding it with rose petal, hibiscus and rooibos tea notes. The long, filigreed finish lets a pretty chalk detail echo amid the fruit. Lovely. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2028 through 2042. 1,250 cases made, 500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**94 Château Monbousquet St.-Emilion 2022 \$57** Drips with notes of boysenberry, mulberry and blackberry confiture that just won't quit, spilling out in all directions as details of singed apple wood, violet and licorice snap attempt to keep everything reined in.

The seductive, velvety mouthfeel and rather luxurious display of toast play their part as well. This version is for those who enjoy the power style. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2027 through 2042.—*J.M.*

### 94 Château Troplong Mondot St.-Emilion 2022 \$140

A sappy red, with kirsch and cassis notes tossed in with red licorice and apple wood. A flash of sweet tobacco pierces the juicy, slightly compact finish. Should unwind nicely in the cellar, as there's a bold mix of buried minerality and latent energy. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2027 through 2042. 10,000 cases made, 900 cases imported.—*J.M.*



AYMERIC DE GIRONDE  
CEO

**93 Château Côte de Baleau St.-Emilion 2022 \$29** This is stylish, with a core of mulled black cherry and black currant fruit that glides through, laced with chestnut, violet and alder hints, all backed by a tug of warm earth on the lengthy finish. Solid. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2027 through 2038. 4,500 cases made.—*J.M.*

**93 Château La Marzelle St.-Emilion 2022 \$55** Warmed black currant and boysenberry compote notes are inviting, if a touch heady, while extra fig and licorice root details add a chewy, grippy edge. Singed cedar and chestnut leaf accents ripple through on the finish, along with a swath of warm earth. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2028 through 2042. 3,750 cases made.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Rocheyron St.-Emilion 2022 \$110** Warmed cassis and linzer torte notes are pushed by melted red licorice and fruitcake details as this moves along steadily. A roasted apple wood accent lends energy and focus to the grippy finish, where floral and savory hints echo in the background, adding latent energy. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2027 through 2042. 1,700 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Clos St.-Martin St.-Emilion 2022 \$97** A ripe red, with açai, blackberry and black cherry compote flavors wrapped in warm cocoa and melted licorice notes. Worn cedar and chestnut hints lurk underneath on the dark, smoldering finish. Offers a little more heft than purity but is solid. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2026 through 2038. 913 cases made, 100 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château La Commanderie St.-Emilion 2022 \$37** There's a nice polish to the mulled cherry and warmed cassis notes as they glide through, laced with singed alder, sweet tobacco and warm earth details. Offers a flash of licorice root on the finish, with a late twang of iron. Nicely rendered. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2027 through 2038. 2,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Laniote St.-Emilion 2022 \$50** Warm linzer torte and kirsch notes give this an exotic edge, while singed alder, mocha and licorice root accents bring a slightly burly, extracted feel to the finish. The fruit pushes through; this is for fans of the style, though. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2027 through 2039. 21,000 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Laplagnotte-Bellevue St.-Emilion 2022 \$40** This red is sleek, fresh and refined in style, offering tantalizing notes of mulberry, linzer torte and cherry puree that stream through, with ink, iris and rose hip accents. Shows a lightly singed apple wood frame. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2027 through 2038. 2,500 cases made, 600 cases imported.—*J.M.*



**92 Château Peby Faugères St.-Emilion 2022 \$162** A frankly toasty version, with a rich core of crushed plum and black cherry fruit coated with mocha and melted licorice. Tilts toward extracted in profile, though violet and ink notes add range and length. For fans of the style. Best from 2027 through 2038. 1,800 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Yon-Figeac St.-Emilion 2022 \$39** Gently steeped black currant and blackberry fruit is mixed with anise, iris and singed tobacco, keeping a silky feel through the toasted finish. Steady. Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2036. 10,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Capet-Guillier St.-Emilion 2022 \$60** Fresh and direct, with kirsch and damson plum compote notes that stay relatively light on their feet as red licorice and iris accents fill in on the sleek and slight-of-frame yet charming finish. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2037. 1,111 cases made.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Jean Faure St.-Emilion 2022 \$49** Gently mulled black cherry and raspberry fruit is couched in a light-bodied mélange of warm earth, cocoa and tobacco. A subtle, chalky thread adds a grounding wire on the finish. Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Merlot. Drink now through 2033. 3,750 cases made, 400 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**90 Château Montlisse St.-Emilion 2022 \$17** A fleshy version, with gently steeped plum and blackberry fruit rolling slowly over roasted apple wood and cedar notes. There's a saturated, slightly hefty feel through the finish. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2027 through 2037. 1,997 cases made.—*J.M.*

## FRANCE

### Bordeaux / St.-Estèphe

**97 Château Cos-d'Estournel St.-Estèphe 2022 \$260** See Collectibles, page 89.

**96 Château Calon-Ségur St.-Estèphe 2022 \$140** A steady stream of cassis, dark plum and black cherry preserves seamlessly melds with lilac, licorice, alder and chestnut notes. Keeps a sleek, polished edge through the lengthy finish, while a subtle tug of earth provides a nice counterpoint. Captures the essence of the vintage. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2045. 7,083 cases made.—*J.M.*

**96 Château Montrose St.-Estèphe 2022 \$195** This is laden with gently steeped black currant, black cherry and blackberry fruit inlaid with flashes of licorice snap, singed alder, chestnut and gunpowder tea. A flash of lilac skirts the edges, adding subtle energy and lift. The long finish offers an alluring feel, with an echo of warm earth lingering amid the fruit. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2026 through 2045.—*J.M.*

**95 Château Phélan Ségur St.-Estèphe 2022 \$60** Plush and warm in feel, this offers plum and blackberry compote notes flecked with chestnut and bay leaf and underscored by warm stone and leather through the finish. Broad and slow-moving, but with clear definition, plus a nice muscular edge that hints at its buried power. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2027 through 2040. 12,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

**94 Château Ormes de Pez St.-Estèphe 2022 \$38** This version is stylish in the way it captures the warm cassis and mulled plum fruit of the vintage, along with the AOC's telltale accents of warm stone, lilac and iron. The long, smoldering finish pulls everything together thanks to a subtle chalky thread. Understated and nicely done. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon,

Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2026 through 2038.—*J.M.*

**94 Château de Pez St.-Estèphe 2022 \$48** Black cherry and dark currant fruit is lightly mulled in feel, while sweet tobacco, chestnut leaf and singed alder notes wrap around it. The earth-tinged finish shows focus and poise. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2026 through 2038.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Le Crock St.-Estèphe 2022 \$36** Dark plum and loganberry fruit is warm and broad in feel, while dark tobacco, warm earth and chestnut leaf accents add range and grip on the finish. Shows solid structure, too—tuck this away for a bit. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2038.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Le Boscq St.-Estèphe 2022 \$44** Red and black currant compote notes move through steadily, flanked by a bay leaf detail and laced with lightly singed cedar, warm earth and burnished leather accents that add a nice tug on the finish. Solid. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2037. 5,333 cases made, 125 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Calon-Ségur St.-Estèphe Château Capbern 2022 \$35** Notes of red and black currant preserves form the core, while dried lilac and rose hip add a floral hint. Sleek through the finish, with just a kiss of toast that lets an iron detail chime prettily underneath the fruit. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2037. 6,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Cos Labory St.-Estèphe 2022 \$45** Sleek and well-built in feel, with a beam of violet, iris, red currant and dark cherry notes that have melded together nicely. Shows a singed apple wood frame on the finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2036. 6,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Cos-d'Estournel St.-Estèphe Les Pagodes de Cos 2022 \$65** Juicy and sporting a fresh edge, this drives steeped red currant and cherry paste notes, injecting dried rose petal, singed alder and warm earth along the way. A late echo of game adds a final flirtation. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2036. 10,000 cases made, 3,000 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Meyney St.-Estèphe 2022 \$38** Gently singed bay and dried lilac notes infuse a core of bitter plum and dark cherry compote, with a wet stone accent. The lightly chalky structure underscores the focused finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2037. 8,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Tronquoy-Lalande St.-Estèphe 2022 \$40** Gently steeped black cherry and currant fruit shows a subtle juicy edge, while tobacco, licorice root and chestnut leaf accents fill in liberally. Offers a late cast iron echo on the toasty finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Best from 2026 through 2037.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Calon-Ségur St.-Estèphe Le Marquis de Calon-Ségur 2022 \$41** Mulled black currant and cherry fruit is inlaid with singed alder and bay leaf hints, along with a dried lilac accent. Light tugs of leather and warm earth through the finish give this an old-school edge. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2035. 5,083 cases made.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Laffitte-Carcasset St.-Estèphe 2022 \$32** Shows violet and ink notes backed by dark currant and steeped red cherry fruit. A warm paving stone detail girds the nicely structured finish, where a late sparkle of savory adds energy. Cabernet Sauvignon,

Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2035. 8,500 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Montrose St.-Estèphe La Dame de Montrose 2022 \$40** An enticing red, with loganberry and black cherry fruit shows a slightly mulled/smoldering edge, while black tea, warm earth and singed bay leaf notes skirt underneath. Approachable now. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2034.—*J.M.*



MELISSA BOUYGUES  
Chairwoman

**91 Château Tour des Termes St.-Estèphe 2022 \$37** Energy ripples through a core of fresh bitter plum and black cherry fruit. Iris and rose petal notes drape gently over the top, while singed earth and chalk hints skirt underneath. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2031. 5,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

## FRANCE

### Bordeaux / St.-Julien

**97 Château Léoville Barton St.-Julien 2022 \$90** See Highly Recommended, page 89.

**97 Château Léoville Las Cases St.-Julien 2022 \$350** See Collectibles, page 90.

**96 Château Talbot St.-Julien 2022 \$68** This delivers an energetic tumble of blackberry, boysenberry and black currant paste flavors injected with bramble and apple wood and supported by a licorice snap accent. The strapping finish is laced with violet and iris notes, while a cast iron edge lends bass. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2045. 24,000 cases made, 2,400 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**95 Château Branaire-Ducru St.-Julien 2022 \$55** A mix of mulled boysenberry and blackberry fruit, dried violet, iris and lively licorice snap notes gives this a textbook and very aromatic St.-Julien profile. A sleek iron detail courses underneath, allowing the fruit to sail unhindered through the finish, flanked judiciously by singed apple wood. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2042. 12,500 cases made, 2,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**95 Château Langoa Barton St.-Julien 2022 \$50** This is a suave rendering of the vintage, offering a vivid beam of boysenberry and blackberry puree that's gently succulent and generous in feel but stays racy and defined by an underlying iron note. Violet, ink and anise accents are infused throughout, lending brightness and range through the pure finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2027 through 2042. 5,500 cases made.—*J.M.*

**95 Château Léoville Poyferré St.-Julien 2022 \$125** Solid, dark and winey, with a well-structured core that holds blackberry and plum reduction notes in a tightly knit mix of apple wood, licorice root and warm cast iron. The long and direct finish throws off hints of violet and ink. For the cellar. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2042.—*J.M.*

**95 Château St.-Pierre St.-Julien 2022 \$67** A ripe and vivid style, with plum, cassis and boysenberry notes spilling out. There's just enough singed apple wood and cast iron to keep this focused. Violet and anise accents chime in the background. A decidedly not-shy St.-Julien that captures this vintage profile nicely. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2040. 6,500 cases made.—*J.M.*



**94 Château Beychevelle St.-Julien 2022 \$99** Generous in feel, with a delicious wave of warmed plum sauce and crushed blackberry fruit backed by a well-embedded graphite spine, this moves through steadily, letting licorice snap, ink and sweet tobacco notes emerge slowly on the lengthy finish. Rock solid. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2026 through 2040. 18,333 cases made.—*J.M.*

**94 Château Léoville Las Cases St.-Julien Le Petit Lion 2022 \$75** Ripe and well-defined, this ripples with energy in the form of iron streaks that help carry the core of blackberry, black currant and boysenberry reduction flavors. Mouthwatering anise and iris notes bloom through the finish, along with a flash of ink. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2038.—*J.M.*

**93 Clos du Marquis St.-Julien 2022 \$82** This sports a strapping feel, with blackberry and boysenberry compote notes that show solid, brambly energy, backed by licorice snap and roasted apple wood, while a streak of warm earth runs underneath. Shows the warmth of the vintage, but with good latent energy. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2040.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Gloria St.-Julien 2022 \$50** A pretty violet note leads off before the core of kirsch, linzer torte and plum sauce starts to yawn awake. Licorice snap and bramble are injected into the finish, along with an apple wood accent. Shows grip and focus. For fans of the gutsy style. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2038. 17,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Léoville Poyferré St.-Julien Château Moulin Riche 2022 \$34** A well-fruited red, with a lushness to its display of plum, boysenberry and blackberry compote flavors thanks to the fairly velvety structure. Freshly plowed humus and cast iron notes give the finish a grounded feel as the fruit cruises through. Nicely done. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2038.—*J.M.*

**93 Château Léoville Poyferré St.-Julien Pavillon de Léoville Poyferré 2022 \$35** A grippy, strapping style, with bramble-laced black currant, plum and boysenberry reduction flavors carried by a fine-grained structure through the finish, accented by anise, violet and warm cast iron. Very much in the vintage profile. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2027 through 2038.—*J.M.*

**92 Château Talbot St.-Julien Connétable Talbot 2022 \$31** Notes of warmed cassis and plum compote give this a forward and generous feel, while details of singed apple wood, dried anise and violet, plus a perfumed hint on the finish, display a St.-Julien profile that's textbook. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2026 through 2036. 15,000 cases made, 600 cases imported.—*J.M.*

## FRANCE Bordeaux / Other Red

**92 Château Les Trois Croix Fronsac 2022 \$39** A bright and engaging red, with a vivid stream of violet and iris notes racing over the top of mulberry and boysenberry puree flavors. Its sleek, chalky minerality is encased in the fruit, and the finish lingers, with breezy energy. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2036. 5,800 cases made, 1,900 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Claud-Bellevue Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022 \$25** Juicy flavors of blackberry and boysenberry paste pump along in this red, with notes of roasted apple wood and black licorice. Shows a flash of violet on the finish, which is carried by a steady spine of graphite. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best

from 2026 through 2034. 1,290 cases made, 100 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Féret-Lambert Bordeaux Supérieur 2022 \$19** See Smart Buys, page 91.

**91 Château Lascombes Margaux 2022 \$80** Warm and caressing up front, with a velvety edge to its cassis and black cherry compote flavors, backed by singed black tea, wood spice and walnut husk notes that then leave a subtle, burly edge as they finish. A bit ambitious in style for this warm vintage. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2038. 15,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Moncets Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022 \$25** Bright raspberry and cherry coulis notes stream through prettily, laced with rose hip and iris accents. A subtle, chalky thread underlines the gentle finish. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec. Drink now through 2030. 2,000 cases made, 400 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**91 Château La Prade Francs Côtes de Bordeaux 2022 \$20** The core of steeped cherry and warmed cassis gets a subtle lift from a tobacco leaf note. A perfumed hint of chalk adds focus to the finish. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2027. 3,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

**91 Château Prieuré-Lichine Margaux 2022 \$55** Dark cherry and blackberry fruit shows a steeped edge, while bramble, warm earth and roasted cedar notes fill in through the ever-so-slightly grainy finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2026 through 2032. 15,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

**90 Château La Chandellière Médoc 2022 \$16** Shows the generous ripeness of the vintage, with gently mulled currant and blackberry fruit laced with singed alder and dried anise. There's a sanguine flash through the finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2032. 2,500 cases made, 500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**90 Clos Lunelles Castillon Côtes de Bordeaux 2022 \$30** Toasty and winery, with a large core of blackberry and boysenberry compote that's well-coated with ganache and dark licorice. Roasted cocoa and apple wood details frame the finish. For fans of the power style. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2026 through 2032.—*J.M.*

**90 La Fleur de Boüard Lalande-de-Pomerol 2022 \$55** Plump and direct, with a core of cherry and plum compote backed by light red licorice and rose hip notes. The finish is toasty but just light-handed enough to keep a fresh feel. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2030. 10,000 cases made, 2,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**90 Château Haura Graves 2022 \$25** A soft-edged and friendly version, with notes of plum and black cherry compote dusted with savory and dried violet details. There's a light sanguine echo through the perfumed finish. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Drink now through 2029. 2,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**89 Château Cap St.-Martin Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux 2022 \$18** Dried violet and tea notes gently infuse a modest core of bitter cherry and red currant fruit. Light sanguine and cedar details fill in on the finish. Drink now through 2028. 4,000 cases made, 500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**89 Château Grand Mazerolles Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux 2022 \$15** See Best Values, page 92.

**89 Château La Tour de Mons Margaux 2022 \$25** An expressive version, with a mix of violet, iris, chestnut and cedar notes leading the way for a core of lightly mulled red and black currant fruit. Offers a hint of cedary grain on the finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon,

Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2026 through 2035. 12,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

**88 Château de la Cour d'Argent Bordeaux Supérieur 2022 \$18** Friendly flavors of bitter cherry and red currant lead the way in this style, with singed sandalwood and a savory note filtering through on the back end. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Drink now. 14,000 cases made, 4,000 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**88 Château Luc de Beaumont Blaye Côtes de Bordeaux 2022 \$12** An open-knit red, with a brambly hint to its core of cherry and red currant preserves. The finish is coated with a frankly singed vanilla note. Drink now through 2028. 10,000 cases made, 2,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**88 Château Malescas Haut-Médoc 2022 \$20** A warm gravel accent runs throughout a core of gently steeped blackberry and black cherry fruit flavors, with light brushstrokes of tobacco and cast iron on the finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2027. 4,800 cases made, 1,040 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**88 Château Pey La Tour Bordeaux 2022 \$18** Fresh and tasty, with a succulent beam of plum and cherry puree flecked with anise, savory and violet through the lightly singed finish. Ready to go. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2027. 44,500 cases made, 2,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*

## FRANCE Bordeaux / Other White

**92 Château Bastor-Lamontagne Bordeaux White Confidence 2022 \$20** See Smart Buys, page 91.

**91 Château Sigalas Rabaud Bordeaux White 2022 \$50** Lively sel gris and quinine threads add an underlying hum to this white's viscous mix of apricot, white nectarine and clementine flavors. There's a waxy edge on the finish, but this intriguing version maintains tension. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2029. 300 cases made.—*J.M.*

**90 Château Climens Bordeaux White Asphodèle 2022 \$60** A lacy, high-pitched version, with filigreed Key lime zest, Thai basil and green almond notes that flutter through on a light-bodied but tensile matrix. Drink now through 2027. 2,808 cases made, 200 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**90 Château Haut Selve Graves White 2022 \$35** A flattering version, with star fruit, white peach and verbena notes backed by a rounded, shortbread-accented finish. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2026. 1,850 cases made, 365 cases imported.—*J.M.*

**89 Domaine de Chevalier Bordeaux White Clos des Lunes Lune Blanche 2022 \$20** An open, breezy style, with thyme, sel gris and Key lime notes that zip through. Shows a dusting of oyster shell and chalk on the unadorned finish. Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2026. 1,250 cases made.—*J.M.*

## FRANCE Burgundy

**96 Domaine des Perdrix Nuits-St.-Georges Aux Perdrix 2022 \$190** The core of blackberry and black cherry is wrapped in an embrace of smoked meat and toasty oak. Mint, iron and bacon fat accents emerge as this red builds to the long, complex aftertaste. Shows fine balance despite its youthful exuberance. Best from 2028 through 2045. 1,200 cases made, 90 cases imported.—*B.S.*



**94 Domaine du Cellier Aux Moines Volnay En Chevret 2022 \$180** A fragrant red, this exudes sandalwood, tomato leaf, rose, strawberry and cherry aromas and flavors. Silky and elegant, with harmony, charm and a long, spice-tinged aftertaste. Best from 2027 through 2045.—*B.S.*

**93 Domaine du Cellier Aux Moines Chassagne-Montrachet Les Chaumées 2022 \$180** This is luscious and charming, its peach, pear, lemon and baking spice aromas and flavors augmented by an oyster shell note. Offers ample drive and mineral underpinnings, with fine balance and length. Drink now through 2032. 125 cases made, 25 cases imported.—*B.S.*

**93 Domaine du Cellier Aux Moines Givry Les Dessus 2022 \$180** Though a bit shy in aroma, this version delivers ample cherry, blackberry and boysenberry fruit shaded by flavors of sandalwood, incense and sweet spices. Balanced and fresh, with a dense line of tannins that offers support. The finish echoes the oak spice notes. Still needs a year or two to integrate. Best from 2028 through 2042. 225 cases made, 25 cases imported.—*B.S.*

**92 Domaine Jessiaume Santenay Les Gravières 2022 \$55** Pure black cherry, blackberry and pomegranate flavors are singed by smoky oak in this suave red. Firms up on the finish, where notes of sweet spices come to the fore. Balanced and long. Best from 2026 through 2040. 1,500 cases made, 60 cases imported.—*B.S.*

**91 Domaine du Cellier Aux Moines Mercurey White Les Margotons 2022 \$80** Peach and apple flavors mark this rich, broad version alongside a hint of lanolin. There are baking spice details and a lightly tactile feel as this white winds down on the salty finish. Drink now through 2028. 350 cases made, 50 cases imported.—*B.S.*



CATHERINE & PHILIPPE PASCAL  
Owners

**91 Domaine du Cellier Aux Moines Santenay White Beauregard 2022 \$85** This white is creamy in texture, offering plush flavors of peach, lemon, butter pastry and vanilla. The acidity washes in as this builds to the lingering, toasty finish. Drink now through 2028. 150 cases made, 30 cases imported.—*B.S.*

## FRANCE

### Languedoc-Roussillon

**90 Domaine de Baron'arques Limoux Red 2022 \$40** Sappy cherry shows purity and freshness in this refreshingly unadorned red. Clove and allspice notes add detail, along with a waft of apple wood smoke. Density builds, with fine-grained tannins providing a gentle frame through the focused, harmonious finish. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now. 6,000 cases made, 400 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**90 Domaine de Fabrègues Languedoc Le Plan de L'Âme 2022 \$40** Supple in feel, with a tug of tar behind black plum and lavender notes layered with wet soil, smoked bacon fat and grilled apple wood smoke. Savory, with an intriguing spice dimension and a streak of saline toward the salty finish. Syrah and Carignan. Drink now through 2028. 2,000 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**89 Château d'Aussières Corbières Blason d'Aussières 2019 \$20** Bright, earthy and expressive, with cherry and licorice held erect by tangy acidity in this late-release red. Singed bacon, warm spices and charred mesquite hover in backdrop through the

energetic finish. Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre and Carignan. Drink now. 600 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**88 Aussières Pays d'Oc A d'Aussières 2022 \$19** A sultry, smoky red, with spice and earth tones infusing a core of red fruit and licorice root. Medium-weight, with savory freshness and cool mineral notes. Syrah, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now. 5,000 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**87 Château Haut-Blanville Pinot Noir Pays d'Oc 2023 \$16** Bright, juicy cherry and sweet rhubarb are fresh and unadorned in this light, friendly red. Glossy in feel, with tangy acidity alongside hints of smoke and dried thyme. Drink now. 4,800 cases made, 1,800 cases imported.—*K.B.*

## FRANCE

### Loire

**93 Domaine Laureau Savennières Le Bel Ouvrage 2020 \$75** There's a waxy, honeyed quality to this late-release white that's alluring. On the palate, this is racy, with electrifying acidity buoying the orchard fruit, lacquered with white mocha, smoked acacia and toasted hazelnut. A fresh mint note cruises alongside the earthiness. Salty and yeasty, offering power and pleasure. Drink now through 2030. 750 cases made, 180 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**91 Foucher-Lebrun Sancerre Les Monts Damnés 2019 \$45** This late-release white shows a concentrated mix of tangerine, apple and lime oil, all cut with bitter, pithy acidity. Oily in texture, with richness from its toasted hazelnut and almond notes. Details of dried herbs line the concentrated, herbaceous finish. Drink now.—*K.B.*

**90 Michel Brégeon Muscadet de Sèvre et Maine Sur Lie 2023 \$23** Enticing notes of ripe pear, apple and spices are plush in this delicious white, with a savory beam of fine-grained mineral details driving energy. Shows depth and a hint of grilled macadamia nut on the long, streamlined and smoky-saline finish. Drink now through 2030. 1,008 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**90 Domaine Laureau Savennières l'Alliance 2022 \$35** There's an austere quality to this savory version, with a razor-sharp backbone of acidity driving pretty notes of apple, star fruit and light melon. Details of blanched almond and toasted brioche bring another dimension to the salty, firmly cut finish. Drink now through 2030. 1,200 cases made, 200 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**90 Vincent Barbier & Cécile Perraud Muscadet de Sèvre et Maine Le Haye Fouassière 2020 \$32** There's range to this white's aromatic expression, with notes of white flowers, wild herbs, apple, honey and warm hay showing a bit of lushness. This is creamy in feel, underscored by wet rock, with a good sense of fullness to the fresh finish, which shows hints of grilled nuts and brioche. Drink now through 2027.—*K.B.*

**89 Domaines Minchin Menetou-Salon Morogues 2023 \$25** The pretty nose of white blossoms, clementine and nectarine is anchored by chalk-fine mineral notes in this fine-boned white. Offers wafts of smoke and green almond on the distinctive finish, which shows impressive textural purity and intrigue. Drink now through 2027. 5,000 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**88 Les Frères Couillaud Muscadet de Sèvre et Maine Sur Lie Château de la Ragotière Les Vieilles Vignes 2023 \$18** Verbena and aloe notes are up front in this green, fresh white. Details of zesty green herbs, fennel frond and racy flintiness make for a chiseled, steely feel. Offers a hint of chamomile on the firmly structured finish, with succulent, salty acidity. Drink now through 2030. 2,700 cases made, 1,600 cases imported.—*K.B.*



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**88 Foucher-Lebrun Sauvignon Vin de France Petit Le Mont 2023 \$15** Light and racy, with apple and star fruit, plus warm spice details. The silky palate is coated with bitter mineral details and white grapefruit pith acidity that course through. Drink now.—*K.B.*

## FRANCE

### Rhône / Côtes du Rhône

**90 Alain Jaume Côtes du Rhône White Domaine Grand Veneur Les Champavins 2023 \$30** A nicely expressive version, with fragrant notes of honeyed lemon, peach and juicy melon supported by tangy acidity and crushed stone elements. Mouthwatering on the finish thanks to a saline streak. Bouncy and fleshy, with good definition. Drink now. 200 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**89 Clos du Mont-Olivet Côtes du Rhône Vieilles Vignes 2022 \$25** Notes of fleshy cherry and boysenberry are refreshingly held in check by a firming spine of graphite and juicy acidity in this delicious red. Lavender and incense smoke details play out, with a nice lift to the chalky-textured finish. Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Cinsaut and Carignan. Drink now through 2027. 4,150 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**89 Domaine Corne-Loup Côtes du Rhône 2023 \$18** A bouncy, ripe version, with a juicy mix of cherry, violet and graphite-edged plum. A tug of mineral energy keeps this balanced, with chalky tannins bringing the framework. A crowd-pleaser, offering real character. Drink now. 50 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**89 Paul Jaboulet Aîné Côtes du Rhône White Parallèle 45 2023 \$16** This offers an open-knit palate that features peach, starfruit and orange flavors, with just a touch of salted buttercream. Silky in feel, with a note of chamomile on the clean, pithy finish. Viognier, Grenache Blanc, Marsanne, Roussanne and Clairette. Drink now. 1,000 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**88 Henri de Lanza Côtes du Rhône Château de Ségriès 2022 \$22** Cassis, sweet red plum and high-toned spice notes introduce this creamy style, which offers a hint of chewiness. There's a firming mineral layer on the dry, smoke-tinged finish. Grenache, Syrah, Cinsaut and Carignan. Drink now. 800 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**88 Stéphane Vedeau Côtes du Rhône La Ferme du Mont Première Côte 2022 \$20** Juicy red plum and boysenberry are detailed with singed spice and lavender. There's a chalky feel to the texture, with tar and earth hints on the finish, marked by a waft of apple wood smoke. Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. Drink now. 10,000 cases made, 700 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**88 Stéphane Vedeau Côtes du Rhône Mademoiselle du Mont 2022 \$17** Cherry coulis and strawberry leather show a pronounced herbaceous vein and orange peel acidity in this fresh, zesty red. Shaved graphite and pink peppercorn run from start to finish. Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre and Carignan. Drink now. 15,000 cases made, 600 cases imported.—*K.B.*

## FRANCE

### Rhône / Côtes du Rhône-Villages

**92 Domaine de Piaugier Grenache Blanc Côtes du Rhône-Villages 2022 \$50** A stylish and richly styled white, with a delicious mix of lemon pulp, tangerine and pear notes judiciously brushed with toasty oak and smoke details. Balanced, offering density and texture; the finish shows real cut thanks to its elements of crushed flint and green almond, plus zesty acidity. A lot of wine. Drink now through 2030. 300 cases made, 50 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**90 Domaine de Piaugier Côtes du Rhône-Villages Sablet Les Brigières 2020 \$22** This is a perfumed, elegant style that shows inner density and

textural complexity, with a slight chewiness to the notes of incense, tobacco leaf and red currant, all amply supported by a crushed iron accent and fine, silky tannins. A few years of bottle age have resulted in a beautifully drinking red. Grenache and Mourvèdre. Drink now. 750 cases made, 100 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**89 André Brunel Côtes du Rhône-Villages Cuvée Sabine 2022 \$20** There's a smoldering edge to this supple, solid red, with black tea, mocha and iron bolts backing up a core of plum. Smoky incense wafts through as the tannins pick up steam, holding real grip at the end. Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. Drink now. 3,000 cases made, 194 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**89 Domaine de Piaugier Côtes du Rhône-Villages Sablet 2022 \$16** There's a creamy note of bacon fat atop the mulling spice and plum elements in this mouthfilling red. Well-packed and energetic, with firming details of iron and smoky, charred herbs. Delicious. Grenache and Syrah. Drink now. 2,500 cases made, 1,700 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**88 Rhonéa Côtes du Rhône-Villages Visan Cuvée du Marot 2022 \$25** A restrained, savory style, with notes of red licorice and dry spices layered with dusty earth, warm soil and graphite. Sandalwood smoke curls through the slightly chewy finish. Grenache, Syrah and Carignan. Drink now. 800 cases made, 200 cases imported.—*K.B.*

## FRANCE

### Rhône / Other

**94 Domaine Courbis Cornas La Sabarotte 2022 \$95** Dark, brooding and powerful, with a wealth of boysenberry, spice and dried lavender notes on its generous frame, lacquered with toasty oak. Iron and salt smolder in the backdrop. Impressively finessed and energetic despite its large frame and ripeness; a delicious, expertly crafted Cornas. Give this some cellar time for the oak to fully integrate. Best from 2026 through 2038. 320 cases made.—*K.B.*

**94 Les Vins de Vienne Cornas Lieu-Dit St.-Pierre 2022 \$110** A concentrated, ripe version, with a foundation of cast iron supporting cherry paste and plum sauce notes. The tannins are nicely sculpted, though they still offer a firm grip. Shows a pretty, high-toned floral character, with dried lavender smoke wafting through the persistent finish. Still tightly wound, this will truly shine with time in bottle. Best from 2026 through 2038. 100 cases made, 50 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**93 Les Vins de Vienne Cornas Les Barcillants 2022 \$77** A salty, savory red, with a briny mineral well bolstering round, juicy cherry and warm earth notes. Glossy in feel, with details of cocoa powder, singed graphite shavings and sweet apple wood smoke wafting through the finish. The succulent acidity makes for a fresh, mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2034. 440 cases made, 120 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**92 Domaine Le Clos des Cazaux Gigondas La Tour Sarrasine 2022 \$39** Sultry and smoky, with mulling spices and ripe plum wrapped around a spine of iron and salty mineral elements. Tobacco leaf and warm earth accents merge in alongside sanguine notes of smoked meat and singed sandalwood. Smooth but persistent tannins make for a focused, dry finish. Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2032. 25 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**92 Domaine Courbis Cornas Champelrose 2022 \$37** Notes of warm cherry, black licorice and candied violet make an alluring impression in this stylish Cornas. A firming spine anchors the lush palate, and tangy acidity keeps pace, with warm baking spices, sandalwood smoke and bitter green herbs. Drink now through 2034. 1,780 cases made, 50 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**91 Domaine Corne-Loup Tavel 2023 \$25** Strawberry compote and cherry leather notes are nicely plump and round, with bitter blood orange acidity and tobacco leaf accents adding a savory counterpoint. Medium-bodied, with vibrancy and substance. A good example of a balanced and characterful Tavel. Drink now. 145 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**91 Rhonéa Gigondas Les Pas de Montmirail 2022 \$35** Ripe and seductive, with a gush of cherry and dried herbs held in check by a wall of crushed graphite. Shows energy and mineral drive through the persistent finish, which stays light on its feet. Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2032. 2,500 cases made, 600 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**90 Clos du Mont-Olivet Lirac 2022 \$25** An intriguing, fresh red, with a sultry mix of raspberry, bergamot and warm spices woven with singed lavender and mesquite smoke. Rooibos tea tannins keep everything knitted together through the finish, which features cool stone minerality. Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre and Cinsaut. Drink now. 2,500 cases made, 600 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**90 Henri de Lanza Lirac Château de Ségriès Cuvée Réserve 2022 \$24** There's concentration to the smoky red fruit, dusty earth and licorice root notes. Supple and round on the palate, with an herbal lift. A savory beam of acidity cuts through, bringing focus and energy to the finish, held together with slightly chewy tannins. Drink now through 2027. 300 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**90 Domaine de la Mordorée Lirac White La Reine des Bois 2023 \$34** Shows great freshness, with notes of white meadow blossoms and plush nectarine invigorated by zesty, bitter crushed mineral accents. Fresh-cut chive, wet stone and lime peel elements make for a lively, precise finish. Grenache, Clairette, Viognier, Roussanne, Marsanne, Picpoul and Bourboulen. Drink now. 100 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**90 Domaine de la Mordorée Tavel La Dame Rousse 2023 \$40** A perfumed, inviting style, with rose and white raspberry on a broad frame, cut with a swath of bitter, chalky mineral notes and fine acidity. Smoky and succulent at the close, with hidden power and finesse. Drink now. 150 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**90 Rhonéa Gigondas Les Pierres du Vallat 2022 \$40** A gentle-edged version, with lavender accents atop chewy plum and red licorice notes. Warm earth, grilled herbs and incense cruise along, while the finish is smooth and etched in graphite. Grenache and Syrah. Drink now through 2030. 1,250 cases made, 300 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**88 Rhonéa Beaumes-de-Venise Confidence 2022 \$25** Lightly steeped cherry and singed dry spice notes are round and full. There's a tug of tar and smoke toward the dry finish, held together with red tea tannins. Syrah and Grenache. Drink now. 1,600 cases made, 400 cases imported.—*K.B.*

**88 Les Vins de Vienne Vin de France White Reméage 2023 \$21** Charming notes of melon and citrus are set against chalky minerality on a zesty, zippy frame. Offers pleasing refreshment and juiciness. Viognier, Chardonnay, Marsanne and Sauvignon. Drink now. 2,800 cases made, 400 cases imported.—*K.B.*

## ITALY

### Friuli/Venezia-Giulia

**92 Livio Felluga Rosazzo Terre Alte 2021 \$130** A graceful white, bright and focused, with vibrant acidity enmeshed with a silky weave of baked pear, apricot, almond butter, lemon thyme and pastry flavors. This is long and fluid, with a fresh, mineral-driven finish. Pinot Bianco, Friulano and Sauvignon. Drink now through 2035. 25 cases imported.—*A.N.*



**91 Livio Felluga Friuli Colli Orientali Illyvio 2022 \$58** A pure note of ripe and juicy pear is enriched by a skein of salted butter, vanilla and creamed almond accents, while tangerine peel acidity provides lively lift and focus. Long and creamy on the palate, with minerally smoke. Hints of dried thyme and chamomile emerge to linger on the finish. Pinot Bianco, Chardonnay and Picolit. Drink now through 2032. 700 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Marco Felluga Ribolla Gialla Collio Maralba 2023 \$23** A fresh, well-knit white, with creamy pear and star fruit flavors laced with pickled ginger, verbena, chalk and pink grapefruit sorbet notes. Supple and lightly mouthwatering throughout, offering a lingering finish. Drink now through 2030. 4,100 cases made, 100 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Castelvechio Malvasia Carso 2023 \$26** There's a plush feel to the flavors of pineapple, lychee, anise and tea rose in this stylish white, framed nicely by well-cut acidity, with a chalky underpinning, plus accents of tangerine zest, herbs and white pepper. Drink now through 2028. 2,500 cases made, 800 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Marco Felluga Pinot Grigio Collio Mongris 2023 \$21** Bright acidity buoys ripe nectarine, pineapple and guava fruit, plus grated ginger, blood orange zest and honeysuckle accents. Lithe and lively on the palate. Mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2028. 12,500 cases made, 3,600 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Marco Felluga Sauvignon Collio 2023 \$23** A minerally white, with a stony underpinning to the flavors of green pear, crunchy white peach, lemon pith and fresh tarragon. Well-knit and vibrant, with a zestiness to the lightly spiced finish. Drink now through 2028. 5,000 cases made, 100 cases imported.—A.N.

**89 Antonutti Pinot Grigio Friuli 2023 \$23** A vibrant white, with a juicy mix of passion fruit, nectarine and white cherry fruit flavors. Tarragon, chives and lemon peel accent this expressive mix, and a streak of light, chalky minerality emerges on the finish. Drink now. 6,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—A.N.

## ITALY Tuscany / Chianti Classico

**94 Fontodi Chianti Classico Filetta di Lamole 2021 \$49** This is intense, with its velvety texture embracing flavors of black cherry, blackberry, violet and earth, plus a hint of chocolate. Offers density but also an effortless feel, with a long, fruit-stained finish. Harmonious. Decant now or give this a few more years of aging. Best from 2027 through 2042. 1,400 cases made, 350 cases imported.—B.S.

**94 Mazzei Chianti Classico Castelnuovo Berardenga Castello di Fonterutoli Vicoregio 36 Gran Selezione 2021 \$89** A modern style, this Chianti Classico reveals ample black cherry, blackberry, mint and iron flavors wrapped in an embrace of toasty oak. Effortless and balanced yet shows density through the long, spicy aftertaste. Best from 2027 through 2042. 1,100 cases made, 110 cases imported.—B.S.

**93 Mazzei Chianti Classico Castellina Castello Fonterutoli Gran Selezione 2021 \$72** Flavors of dusty cherry, black currant, violet and cedar mark this inviting, open-knit red. Vibrant and endowed with refined tannins, lending harmony and driving the extended aftertaste. Drink now through 2038. 3,900 cases made, 390 cases imported.—B.S.

**93 Mazzei Chianti Classico Radda Castello di Fonterutoli Badiola Gran Selezione 2021 \$89** Well-defined and bolstered by a hint of toasty oak, this red displays black cherry, blackberry, earth and spice flavors. Firms up while playing out on the oak-tinged finish. There's fine balance and length, with added

focus courtesy of its lively acidity. Drink now through 2040. 840 cases made, 84 cases imported.—B.S.

**93 Castello di Monterinaldi Chianti Classico 2021 \$32** Iron and wild Tuscan scrub accent the core of juicy cherry and pomegranate in this supple red. There's adequate structure and fine balance to support the persistent finish. Fruit, savory and mineral elements grace the aftertaste. Best from 2026 through 2040. 3,500 cases made, 1,100 cases imported.—B.S.

**92 Mazzei Chianti Classico Ser Lapo Riserva 2021 \$33** Lush in texture, this opulent Chianti Classico reveals black cherry, blackberry, plum and iron aromas and flavors. Shows power but also driving acidity, keeping this focused on the lingering finish. Sangiovese and Merlot. Best from 2027 through 2043. 24,100 cases made, 2,400 cases imported.—B.S.

**91 Castello La Leccia Chianti Classico 2021 \$22** See Smart Buys, page 91.

**91 Villa a Sesta Chianti Classico Riserva 2021 \$35** A supple red, featuring black cherry, blackberry, earth and violet flavors, with a hint of cocoa. Fresh and with enough tannins for aging in the short term, this lingers on the fruit- and spice-filled finish. Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2026 through 2037. 3,300 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—B.S.

## ITALY Tuscany / Toscana

**95 Argiano Toscana Solengo 2021 \$95** This is very Cabernet, with its black currant, blackberry, violet, cedar and sandalwood notes uplifted by vibrant acidity and energetic tannins. Youthful and even a bit awkward now, yet the mineral-infused aftertaste goes on and on. Shows excellent overall balance and detail. Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Merlot and Sangiovese. Best from 2028 through 2042. 2,500 cases made, 847 cases imported.—B.S.

**95 San Giusto a Rentennano Sangiovese Toscana Percarlo 2020 \$179** See Collectibles, page 90.

**94 Carpineta Fontalpino Toscana Do ut des 2019 \$39** Aromas and flavors of black currant, black cherry, blackberry, cedar, iron and tobacco are intense and wrapped in a cloak of vanilla and smoky oak. There are still assertive tannins, with the fruit portion echoing on the finish. Mellowing. Petit Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2027 through 2040. 3,000 cases made, 300 cases imported.—B.S.



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**91 Tommasi Sangiovese-Cabernet Sauvignon Toscana Poggio al Tufo Rompicollo 2021 \$21** See Smart Buys, page 92.

**90 Castello Banfi Toscana Belnero 2022 \$30** Laced with black currant, blackberry, violet and Mediterranean herb flavors, this red is dense yet remains expressive. Firms up on the finish. Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Drink now through 2030. 7,500 cases made, 2,400 cases imported.—B.S.

**90 Villa Pillo Sangiovese Toscana Cypresses 2021 \$25** This is potent, with a dense matrix of tannins and vivid acidity providing support for flavors of cherry, blackberry, blueberry, earth and spicy oak. Long, firm and a bit tight now. Drink now through 2029. 700 cases made, 500 cases imported.—B.S.

**88 Villa Pillo Toscana Borgoforte 2021 \$14** See Best Values, page 92.

## ITALY Veneto

**94 Tedeschi Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Capitel Monte Olmi Riserva 2017 \$99** Sangine hints of game and iron on the nose are a savory underpinning for the palate's flavors of dried raspberry, black cherry coulis, tobacco and cocoa powder. This is firm, sculpted and tightly meshed today but should open nicely in the glass or with cellaring, expanding with just a little air to reveal a spiced thread of black pepper, paprika and mineral that gives a zesty edge to the finish. Corvina, Corvinone, Rondinella and Oseleta. Best from 2027 through 2037. 700 cases made, 100 cases imported.—A.N.

**93 Brigaldara Amarone della Valpolicella Riserva 2015 \$249** Sleek and sinewy, integrating fine-grained, structured tannins with flavors of crushed cherry and cranberry fruit, blood orange peel, and minerally iron and smoke notes. This fresh, focused red opens nicely in the glass, revealing a fragrant thread of Mediterranean *macchia*, anise, smoked paprika and milled pepper that lingers on the finish. Best from 2027 through 2037. 300 cases made, 100 cases imported.—A.N.

**93 Michele Castellani Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Cinque Stelle 2020 \$90** A fluid and harmonious red, with creamy-edged tannins supporting a lush range of blackberry preserves, plumped black cherry and blood orange peel, plus accents of black licorice and medicinal herbs. Plum skin acidity animates the rich profile, and a zesty thread of spices spins out on the finish. Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara. Drink now through 2035. 750 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Monte Faustino Amarone della Valpolicella Classico del Maestro Fornaser Riserva 2015 \$175** High-toned and fragrant on the nose, this is rich and creamy on the palate, with hints of coffee liqueur, baking spices and glazed orange peel accenting the baked black cherry and black raspberry fruit flavors. Balanced and still fresh on the palate, with a frame of chalky tannins and a savory range of medicinal herbs, iron, smoke and graphite pushing through on the finish. Drink now through 2032. 300 cases made, 150 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Tedeschi Amarone della Valpolicella Marne 180 2020 \$60** This structured, medium- to full-bodied red shows length and tension, offering expressive notes of sun-dried cherry, dark chocolate, spiced orange peel and smoke. Lively on the palate, with chewy tannins firming the herb-laced finish. Corvina, Corvinone, Rondinella and Rossignola. Drink now through 2035. 12,500 cases made, 600 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Michele Castellani Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Colle Cristi 2020 \$65** A rich, ripe red, with baked cherry, blood orange, milk chocolate, dried mint and licorice notes enmeshed with a core of dense, fine-grained tannins. The tang of *balsamico* acidity keeps this lively and focused, while loamy earth, smoke and spice accents play on the finish. Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara. Drink now through 2030. 2,000 cases made, 1,200 cases imported.—A.N.

## ITALY Other

**91 Garofoli Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore Podium 2022 \$30** A minerally white, with a subtle thread of stone and salt underscoring flavors of baked pear and apricot fruit and blanched almond, plus accents of mountain herbs and Meyer lemon peel. Long and fluid, with a zesty touch of white pepper on the fresh finish. Drink now through 2032. 2,500 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.N.



**91 Fattoria della Talosa** **Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Alboreto 2021 \$35** Aromas and flavors of cherry, plum, leather, earth and woody spices infuse this broad, lightly chewy red. There's good acidity underneath, and a mineral element emerges on the lingering finish. Drink now through 2040. 3,333 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—*B.S.*

**90 Masciarelli** **Trebbiano d'Abruzzo Marina Cvetic Riserva 2022 \$60** A supple white, lightly honeyed and silky on the palate, with refreshing, lemon pith-infused acidity. Offers flavors of Anjou pear, crushed almond, chamomile and beeswax, with a subtle tang of salinity that drives the lingering, lightly spiced finish. Drink now through 2030. 1,800 cases made, 100 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**90 Ottella** **Lugana White Le Creete 2023 \$34** A bright white, focused yet lithe, with a streak of salinity and a zesty touch of milled white pepper weaving through flavors of grapefruit sorbet, lemon curd and mountain herbs. Drink now through 2028. 6,600 cases made, 300 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**90 Villa Sandi** **Brut Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze La Rivetta 2023 \$58** There's a lively juiciness to the flavors of white and yellow peach, melon, grated ginger and tea rose on display in this lithe yet layered sparkler. Backed by racy acidity, this shows a stony underpinning, with a skein of spices on the mouthwatering finish. Drink now. 1,375 cases made, 200 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**88 Umani Ronchi** **Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Superiore Casal di Serra 2023 \$21** This light-bodied white shows balance, with crisp acidity animating a lightly fleshy mix of pear, star fruit, fleur de sel and lemon thyme, plus a touch of chalk. Drink now. 13,000 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**88 Umani Ronchi** **Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico Villa Bianchi 2023 \$14** Juicy, tangerine-infused acidity is layered with a subtle mesh of creamed almond, poached pear and white blossoms in this lithe version. Drink now. 25,000 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**87 Brigaldara** **Soave 2023 \$19** A crisp, light-bodied white, with a salty tang and notes of tarragon and chives lacing apple and white peach flavors. Drink now. 5,000 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—*A.N.*

## SOUTH AFRICA

**93 Damascene** **Syrah Swartland 2022 \$60** Wild herb and floral notes are an enticing overtone to this well-knit red. Medium-bodied and fresh, with focus to its flavors of crushed black raspberry, blood orange peel, fresh earth, iron and pink peppercorn. Lightly chalky tannins provide a fine frame and good tension through the fragrant finish. Drink now through 2037. 363 cases made, 50 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**92 Damascene** **Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch 2021 \$60** Toasty hints of ground coffee and smoke are enmeshed with ripe red and black currant, plum skin, sassafras root, bay leaf and milled pepper flavors. Lively, focused and well-balanced, with fine tannins firming the finish. Drink now through 2035. 288 cases made, 25 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**91 Momento** **Chenin Blanc-Verdelho Western Cape 2021 \$29** Well-cut acidity creates a mouthwatering frame that balances a pleasingly plush range of yellow melon, tangerine sorbet, lemon curd and crushed almond. Hints of ginger, thyme and white pepper add detail on the finish. Chenin Blanc and Verdelho. Drink now through 2028. 77 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**90 David & Nadia** **Grenache Noir Swartland 2021 \$39** Ruby-hued, light on its feet and graceful, with appealing wild strawberry, raspberry, tea rose, marjoram and mineral notes framed by light, supple tannins. Drink now through 2030. 150 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**90 Mullineux** **Kloof Street Swartland 2021 \$23** Warm plum and raspberry fruit flavors are laced with wild sage, dried fig, smoke and juniper accents in this lightly chewy, appealing, medium-bodied red. Syrah, Grenache, Cinsaut and Tinta Barocca. Drink now. 416 cases imported.—*A.N.*

## SPAIN Rioja / Red

**96 Bodegas Muga** **Rioja Aro 2021 \$450** A rich red, offering depth and focus, with an enticing core of blackberry coulis and plum sauce, plus accents of star anise, wild thyme and ground coffee brightened by mouthwatering acidity and well-meshed, muscular tannins. Long, expressive and harmonious, with pretty floral, spice and mineral aromatics echoing on the finish. Tempranillo and Graciano. Drink now through 2045. 430 cases made, 50 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**96 Álvaro Palacios** **Rioja Oriental Quiñón de Valmira Viñedo Singular 2022 \$550** An enticing, elegant version, with purity to the pureed raspberry and strawberry flavors, plus a pronounced mineral presence. Focused and fragrant, with detailed notes of wild thyme, dried violet, blood orange peel and stone. Seamlessly knit, with its lightly chalky texture and fresh juiciness carrying the profile on the long, spiced finish. Hard to stop sipping. Drink now through 2040. 460 cases made.—*A.N.*

**96 Bodegas Sierra Cantabria** **Rioja Amancio 2021 \$180** This classy red shows a broad-shouldered, statuesque form, fleshed out nicely by a rich mesh of blackberry coulis and ripe, crushed mulberry fruit, with dark chocolate, mountain herb, smoke, toasted paprika and cumin accents. Finely knit and fluid, with fresh focus on the lasting finish. Drink now through 2041. 416 cases made, 100 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**95 Bodega Lanzaga** **Rioja Las Beatas 2021 \$375** Poised and perfumed, with lovely aromas of finely chopped rosemary, blood orange peel and saffron that accent the concentrated flavors of pureed blackberry, black plum skin, tar and black olive. There's a pleasing textural plushness on the palate, plus a limber feel to the well-meshed, sculpted tannins. The fragrant overtone echoes on the finish. Drink now through 2040. 130 cases made.—*A.N.*

**95 Viñedos de Párganos** **Rioja El Puntido 2021 \$70** A poised red, with a lovely sense of equilibrium. Offers a rich profile of blackberry paste, plum sauce and black licorice, with nutmeg, graphite and dried thyme notes, but they're backed by bright acidity and set in a seamless, mid-weight frame that doesn't overpower the palate. Fine-grained tannins firm the lengthy finish. Drink now through 2040. 3,000 cases made, 350 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**95 Bodegas Sierra Cantabria** **Rioja Mágico 2021 \$1,000** This rich style shows an elegant sense of restraint, with refined tannins forming a taut, focusing frame for flavors of red and black currant, mandarin orange peel, rooibos tea, loam and dark chocolate. Long and fresh, with floral and spice notes playing on the creamy finish. Tempranillo, Garnacha, Graciano and Petit Bouschet. Drink now through 2036. 1,000 cases made, 100 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**94 Bodegas y Viñedos Artuke** **Rioja Paraje El Meadero El Escolladero 2022 \$80** This fresh red offers fine precision and focus, seamlessly knitting supple tannins and blood orange peel acidity with an enticing range of ripe blackberry and black cherry fruit,

plus an underpinning of mineral tar and graphite notes. Long and fragrant, with floral, wild thyme, milled pepper and anise details echoing on the lasting finish. Drink now through 2040.—*A.N.*

**94 Viñedos de Párganos** **Rioja El Puntido Gran Reserva 2013 \$120** There's an elegance to this richly detailed red, with its fine-grained tannins and creamy texture well-meshed with baked blackberry, plum sauce, ground coffee and graphite notes. Firms up on the fresh finish but shows fine length and expression, with lingering, fragrant hints of sassafras root, white pepper and sweet tobacco. Drink now through 2038. 2,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**94 Viñedos de Párganos** **Rioja La Nieta 2022 \$300** Finely knit and seamless, there's a fluid grace to this nonetheless powerful red. The muscular tannins show a creamy edge, allowing for fine integration with the concentrated flavor profile of boysenberry coulis, plum cake and herbed black olive. A skein of floral, anise and graphite notes winds through the lingering finish. Drink now through 2040. 400 cases made, 60 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**94 La Granja Nuestra Señora de Remelluri** **Rioja Gran Reserva 2015 \$140** This is a graceful style that sneaks up on you while expanding on the palate. Leads with an elegant mix of baked cherry and currant fruit, sassafras root and singed orange peel notes, all trimmed by finely sculpted tannins, but there's firm focus and stuffing. Reveals sweet tobacco, mocha, loamy earth and mineral details as this opens in the glass and lingers. Tempranillo, Garnacha and Graciano. Drink now through 2040. 800 cases made, 100 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**94 Marqués de Riscal** **Rioja Frank Gehry Selection 2019 \$668** Notes of freshly brewed coffee, eucalyptus, black licorice and dried violet offer an enticing mesh of aromas on the nose of this rich, layered red. Shows concentration and subtle power in a sleek, well-knit form structured by finely sculpted tannins. There's a pure beam of black currant alongside flavors of fresh, loamy earth, dried mint, olive and dark chocolate. Drink now through 2040. 95 cases made, 50 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**94 Señorío de San Vicente** **Rioja 2021 \$85** A muscular red, offering an initially compact feel that then opens nicely in the glass and on the palate, revealing a concentrated range of ripe black currant and black cherry fruit, with a fleshy hint of green olive, plus fragrant thyme, rosemary, licorice and mineral accents. Framed by limber tannins that firm the fresh, focused finish. Best from 2026 through 2041. 4,000 cases made, 750 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**94 Bodegas Sierra Cantabria** **Rioja Finca El Bosque 2022 \$200** Fragrant with mountain herb and mineral accents, this broad-shouldered version is thick and layered, offering a range of blackberry paste, fig cake, mocha and licorice notes. Shows fresh focus animated by *balsamico* acidity, and the muscular tannins are fine-grained as they firm the floral finish. Drink now through 2040. 415 cases made, 150 cases imported.—*A.N.*

**93 Bodegas y Viñedos Artuke** **Rioja La Condenada Paraje Camino del Ciego 2022 \$80** Showing sleek integration and a sense of poise, this fluid red layers creamy tannins and mandarin orange peel-infused acidity with a lovely range of coulis blueberry and boysenberry fruit, warm spice, rose hip and mineral notes. Hints of white pepper and paprika play on the lightly chewy finish. Drink now through 2037. 150 cases made, 15 cases imported.—*A.N.*



**93 Bodegas Faustino Rioja Gran Faustino I Gran Reserva 2004 \$100**

Aging gracefully, this harmonious red shows remarkable vibrancy and focus, with orange peel acidity and fine, taut tannins structuring a creamy mesh of baked cherry and sweet tobacco. Accents of vanilla, milled white pepper and tar expand through the finish. Tempranillo, Graciano and Mazuelo. Drink now through 2035. 2,600 cases made, 300 cases imported.—A.N.



JUAN JOSÉ DIEZ GONZÁLEZ  
Head Winemaker

**93 Bodegas LAN Rioja Edición Limitada 2022 \$60**

Fresh and focused, with a core of ripe red and black cherry and currant fruit flavors meshed with dense, fine-grained tannins. Enticing details of violet, wild thyme, rosemary, vanilla and anise accent the fruit profile and linger on the finish. Tempranillo, Graciano, Garnacha and Mazuelo. Drink now through 2040. 3,260 cases made, 400 cases imported.—A.N.

**93 Bodega Lanzaga Rioja La Estrada 2021 \$140**

This is a creamy, fluid version, layering fine, sculpted tannins with well-spiced flavors of black currant, dried fig, tarragon and white pepper, plus a tarry underpinning. Focused and integrated, with good length through the lively finish. Drink now through 2036. 161 cases made.—A.N.

**93 Diego Magaña Tejero Rioja Anza Carramonte 2022 \$75**

There's a compact feel to this stylish red, with chalky underlying tannins tightly meshed to the flavors of black raspberry paste, pomegranate puree and black olive that open nicely in the glass. Expands on the palate, showing fragrant violet, sage, white pepper and paprika notes, plus a streak of minerality that echoes on the finish. Best from 2027 through 2040. 311 cases made, 75 cases imported.—A.N.

**93 Bodega Abel Mendoza Graciano-Garnacha Rioja Grano a Grano 2020 \$100**

Bright, plum skin acidity enlivens a dark core of blackberry paste, mountain herbs and black olive in this finely integrated red, firmed by sculpted tannins. Vanilla, licorice and graphite are lavish details that play on the lasting finish. Graciano and Garnacha. Drink now through 2040. 100 cases made, 14 cases imported.—A.N.

**93 Bodegas Miguel Merino Rioja Alta Gran Reserva 2018 \$60**

An elegant red, showing depth. Expands slowly on the palate, with fragrant hints of dried thyme and cocoa powder accenting warm cherry, dried fig, tar and licorice notes. Silky in texture, this is long and fluid, with supple tannins firming the lightly spiced finish. Tempranillo and Graciano. Drink now through 2038. 371 cases made, 100 cases imported.—A.N.

**93 La Granja Nuestra Señora de Remelluri Rioja Reserva 2016 \$56**

There's a bright, buoyant feel to this fluid red. Its frame of mandarin orange peel acidity and chalky tannins is well-meshed with a dark and expressive core of macerated blackberry and black plum skin. Fragrant notes of leather, dried flowers, mountain herbs, licorice and paprika add depth to the fruit profile and linger on the finish. Tempranillo, Garnacha and Graciano. Drink now through 2040. 25,000 cases made, 2,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**93 Bodegas Remírez de Ganuza Rioja Gran Reserva 2012 \$150**

Fragrant milled spices, graphite and cedar accent the baked and dried black cherry fruit, vanilla and tar notes on display in this creamy, integrated red. The dense tannins are fine-grained and enmeshed with the flavor profile but trim the lingering finish nicely. Tempranillo, Graciano, Viura and Malvasia. Drink now through 2037. 6,460 cases made, 12 cases imported.—A.N.

**93 Bodegas Roda Rioja Roda I Reserva 2019 \$78**

Long and supple, this harmonious version features flavors of ripe black cherry and currant laced with cocoa powder, dried thyme, violet, mineral and smoked paprika notes. Its refined structure is framed by fine-grained, muscular tannins and balsamico-infused acidity. Tempranillo and a dollop of Graciano. Drink now through 2040. 10,000 cases made, 500 cases imported.—A.N.

**93 Bodegas Roda Rioja Roda Reserva 2020 \$55**

A poised red, showing a sense of style and seamless integration. Offers ripe cassis and boysenberry fruit alongside delicate anise, paprika and cinnamon spice notes, with stone, dried mint and floral accents. Framed by sleek, sculpted tannins, this shows good tension and focus through the long-lasting, lively finish. Drink now through 2040. 10,000 cases made, 500 cases imported.—A.N.

**93 Vignerons de la Sonsierra Rioja Jose Gil Paraje La Canoca 2022 \$74**

A brambly overtone of fragrant herbs and spices is layered with baked mulberry and cherry fruit in this concentrated red, with muscular, fine-grained tannins, plus a minerally underpinning. Long and supple on the elegant finish. Drink now through 2037. 275 cases made.—A.N.

**92 Aiurri Rioja Alavesa Vino de Leza Aiurri 2021 \$70**

Taut tannins structure this fresh, minerally red, offering a fine, lightly chalky frame for flavors of ripe, crushed blackberry and mulberry, mountain herbs, warm spices and stone. Shows length and focus, with the generous fruit profile echoing on the plush finish. Tempranillo, Grenache and Graciano. Best from 2026 through 2036. 10 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas y Viñedos Artuke Rioja Finca de los Locos Paraje Peñaescalera 2021 \$60**

An elegant, fluid version, seamlessly knitting supple, sculpted tannins and juicy acidity with a lovely range of coulis boysenberry and black raspberry fruit, wild thyme and sage aromatics, plus hints of loamy earth, cocoa powder and licorice. Shows good length on the spiced finish. Drink now through 2036. 1,000 cases made, 100 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas y Viñedos Artuke Rioja Paso Las Mañas Paraje El Chorro 2022 \$41**

This expressive style offers creamed black cherry and boysenberry fruit, with a minerally underpinning, plus fragrant accents of wild thyme, tea rose and mandarin orange peel. The firm, chalky tannins are well-meshed, creating a plush quality on the palate and through the spiced finish. Drink now through 2037. 700 cases made, 80 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Beronia Rioja III a.C. 2020 \$76**

An aromatic red, with layers of crushed rosemary, graphite, white pepper, espresso and sweet smoke accenting the notes of chopped blackberry and mulberry fruit, vanilla and loamy earth. Well-knit and polished, with sculpted tannins firming the fragrant finish. Drink now through 2035. 400 cases made, 100 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Bhilar Rioja Phincas 2020 \$33**

Chalky in texture and firmed by fine-grained tannins, this fragrant version layers a zesty underpinning of cracked pink peppercorn and crushed stone with blackberry coulis, medicinal herb, cinnamon and floral notes. Well-meshed, with a lingering, aromatic finish. Drink now through 2035. 850 cases made, 92 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Marqués de Cáceres Rioja Gran Reserva 2016 \$40**

Warm spice and licorice notes lace the chopped cherry, green olive, sweet tobacco and vanilla flavors in this well-balanced red. Lightly chewy, with refined tannins and a minerally, tar-tinged finish. Tempranillo, Garnacha Tinta and Graciano. Drink now through 2036. 16,666 cases made, 5,000 cases imported.—A.N.

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**92 El Coto de Rioja Rioja Coto de Imaz Gran Reserva 2019 \$38** An enticing and harmonious red, with fine, taut tannins well-meshed with an expressive range of bright, ripe cherry flavors, plus cedar, vanilla and licorice accents that linger on the spiced finish. Drink now through 2039. 25,000 cases made, 4,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Cuentaviñas Garnacha Rioja CDVIN 2021 \$90** There's a crisp feel to the fine tannins structuring this appealing red, layered with a light fleshiness on the palate that carries flavors of black raspberry paste, spiced orange, mountain herbs and white pepper. A streak of stone-tinged minerality lingers on the finish. Drink now through 2036. 665 cases made, 120 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Faustino Rioja I Gran Reserva 2016 \$37** A harmonious style that leans toward traditional in style without forsaking its concentration or fruit expression. An overtone of tobacco, vanilla and milled white pepper is a fragrant thread winding through ripe and juicy black cherry and plum fruit, framed by refined, supple tannins. Hints of leather, red licorice and wild thyme play on the fresh, focused finish. Tempranillo, Graciano and Mazuelo. Drink now through 2036. 5,044 cases made, 3,600 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodega Lanzaga Rioja Tabuerniga 2021 \$125** A subtle, supple red, with creamy tannins enmeshed with its fine, taffeta-like texture, which carries flavors of sun-dried black cherry, dried fig and olive tapenade. Rosemary, lavender and thyme notes are fragrant on the persistent finish. Drink now through 2035. 317 cases made.—A.N.

**92 Viñas Leizaola Rioja Alavesa El Sacramento 2020 \$95** Bright and brambly on the nose, with good depth to the palate's crushed blackberry, black raspberry, chopped thyme, red licorice and pink peppercorn notes. Fine, chalky tannins firm the well-spiced, lingering finish, providing light muscle and definition. Drink now through 2035. 700 cases made, 240 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Viña del Lentisco Rioja Alavesa Villota Viña Gena Viñedo Singular 2022 \$60** A sleek and sculpted style, showing a compact mesh of ripe boysenberry and mulberry fruit, plus plum skin acidity. Offers fine, chalky tannins, with a bouquet of violet, mint, thyme, white pepper and saffron. This elegant red expands nicely on the palate, revealing an underlying streak of minerality that drives the long finish. Drink now through 2035. 580 cases made, 150 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Diego Magaña Tejero Rioja Anza San Ginés 2022 \$52** Shows tension and drive, with a zesty skein of milled pepper, cumin and graphite animating chopped blackberry, plum skin and mountain herb notes, plus minerally stone and smoke accents. Chalky tannins offer a firm frame that's aligned with the flavor profile as this expands through the lingering finish. Best from 2027 through 2037. 114 cases made, 25 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodega Abel Mendoza Graciano Rioja Grano a Grano 2020 \$100** This subtle red slowly expands on the palate, revealing flavors of plum sauce and crushed mulberry, with a fragrant thread of milled white pepper and rose hip alongside underpinnings of fresh, loamy earth and iron. Fine-grained tannins are seamlessly knit to the lightly fleshy texture, and the finish is long and mineral-driven. Drink now through 2035. 100 cases made, 14 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodega Abel Mendoza Rioja Selección Personal 2019 \$65** A supple, harmonious red, offering lush boysenberry and warm fig fruit flavors accented by dried lavender and thyme, mandarin orange peel, mineral and anise notes. Shows lively focus and balance, with refined tannins emerging to firm the finish.

Drink now through 2040. 440 cases made, 14 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodega Abel Mendoza Tempranillo Rioja Grano a Grano 2020 \$100** A harmonious version, with its creamy texture carrying a subtle mesh of baked cherry, red licorice and loamy earth notes, plus touches of white pepper and paprika. Long and fluid, with supple tannins firming the finish. Drink now through 2035. 176 cases made, 14 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Muga Rioja Reserva 2021 \$39** This is fresh and minerally up front, opening to reveal a fine mesh of chopped cherry and plum skin flavors, with fragrant hints of ground coffee, smoked paprika and dried marjoram. Sculpted tannins define the long, slightly chewy finish. Tempranillo, Garnacha, Mazuelo and Graciano. Drink now through 2035. 80,000 cases made, 15,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Viñedos de Párganos Tempranillo Rioja Calados del Puntido 2020 \$55** Round and appealing, with a buoyant feel on the palate to the flavors of sun-dried black cherry, violet, black olive and espresso, plus accents of licorice strip and dried thyme. Fine, sculpted tannins provide good tension through to the fresh finish. Drink now through 2035. 2,000 cases made, 300 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Hermanos Peciña Rioja Señorío de P. Peciña Reserva 2016 \$35** Fresh and harmonious, with enticing, savory underpinnings of leather, sweet smoke and eucalyptus enmeshed with notes of macerated cherry and raspberry fruit, singed orange peel, vanilla and smoked paprika. Supple, fine-grained tannins firm the finish. Tempranillo, Graciano and Garnacha. Drink now through 2036. 2,500 cases made, 600 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Remírez de Ganuza Rioja Reserva 2017 \$75** The tang of plum skin-infused acidity enlivens a dark and creamy range of crème de cassis, medicinal herb, milled white pepper and tarry smoke notes. This version shows good concentration and length, with chewy tannins emerging on the finish. Drink now through 2035. 7,500 cases made, 202 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Remírez de Ganuza Rioja Viña Coqueta Reserva 2015 \$70** A concentrated range of dried cherry and cranberry fruit, eucalyptus and tar notes is enmeshed with sinewy tannins and mandarin orange peel acidity in this focused red. Well-balanced and shows good length through the floral, spiced finish. Drink now through 2035. 775 cases made, 55 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Marqués de Riscal Rioja XR Reserva 2020 \$74** An enticing red, offering an aromatic range of warm cherry and plum fruit, plus herbed black olive, cinnamon, dark chocolate and fresh, loamy earth notes. Shows muscle, with its sculpted tannins well-integrated with the flavor profile as they firm the fresh, persistent finish. Drink now through 2035. 4,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Sierra Cantabria Rioja Reserva 2017 \$39** Fragrant hints of anise, iron and mountain herbs add depth to the focused core of ripe black cherry and black raspberry fruit. Sculpted tannins form a fine frame for this fluid, well-knit red, firming the lingering finish. Drink now through 2032. 5,000 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Sierra Cantabria Rioja Única Reserva 2020 \$42** A fresh, sleek red, offering a profile of creamed cherry and crushed raspberry fruit, floral, graphite and vanilla notes, all trimmed nicely by fine, taut tannins. Well-balanced and elegant, with ripe fruit and spice details lingering on the finish. Tempranillo and Graciano. Drink now through 2035. 1,714 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Valdelacierva Garnacha Rioja 2022 \$60** A lively, harmonious red, with tangy acidity and sculpted tannins. Its brambly raspberry and mulberry fruit flavors are ripe and juicy, enriched by notes of vanilla, toast, tobacco and red licorice. Drink now through 2037. 250 cases made, 50 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Vignerons de la Sonsierra Rioja Jose Gil Paraje El Bardallo 2022 \$74** A delicate skein of paprika, pepper, violet and sage laces the blackberry coulis and plum sauce flavors on display in this fresh, focused red. Well-integrated and lively, sculpted by lightly chalky tannins, with a creamy sensation on the lasting, minerally finish. Drink now through 2035. 262 cases made.—A.N.

**92 Señorío de Villarrica Rioja Delicia de Baco Crianza 2021 \$75** Dark and dense, offering muscular tannins wrapped in a creamy texture, with saturated notes of blackberry and boysenberry fruit, vanilla and mocha. A savory thread of tobacco, smoke and black olive gains momentum and lingers on the lively finish. Tempranillo, Garnacha and Graciano. Best from 2026 through 2036. 2,000 cases made, 600 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Señorío de Villarrica Rioja Reserva 2019 \$46** A smooth, rich red, with ripe, glossy black cherry and boysenberry fruit flavors layered with an aromatic range of tar, vanilla, black licorice and eucalyptus notes. This is an opulent style that shows good balance and length, with firm tannins emerging on the well-spiced, lingering finish. Drink now through 2035. 5,000 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Aiurri Rioja Landua 2021 \$50** There's an understated elegance to this harmonious red, with a subtle weave of supple tannins and lightly mouthwatering acidity alongside baked black cherry, macerated raspberry, olive, white pepper and dried mint flavors. Expands nicely through the creamy finish. Tempranillo and Grenache. Drink now through 2031. 20 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas y Viñedos Artuke Rioja Pies Rotos 2022 \$23** An enticing red, showing appealing aromas and flavors of black raspberry coulis, warm fig, violet and mountain herbs, plus a stony mineral character. Animated by bright acidity, this shows good length, with a pleasing touch of tension focusing the light, chewy finish. Tempranillo and Graciano. Drink now through 2030. 5,000 cases made, 800 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Beronia Rioja Vareia Viñedo Singular 2020 \$80** Bright mulberry and plum sauce notes are underscored by a layer of fresh, loamy earth in this lively red, focused by sculpted tannins and lightly chalky in texture. Expands nicely on the palate, with hints of balsamico, dark chocolate and spices playing on the finish. Drink now through 2035. 391 cases made, 37 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Casa Primicia Rioja Reserva 2019 \$38** A well-balanced red, fresh and focused, offering a pure beam of ripe black cherry and cassis fruit layered with supple tannins and appealing accents of licorice, vanilla, dried sage and cocoa powder that linger on the finish. Drink now through 2035. 3,920 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Izadi Rioja El Regalo Viñedo Singular 2022 \$65** A well-oaked version, with black licorice, smoke, dried mint and vanilla accents to the fig cake and crème de cassis flavors, plus balsamico-infused acidity. The underlying tannins are muscular and well-meshed as they emerge to firm the chewy, spiced finish. Best from 2027 through 2037. 1,250 cases made, 625 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas LAN Rioja Reserva 2019 \$22** See Smart Buys, page 91.



**91 Bodegas LAN Rioja Viña Lanciano Reserva 2020 \$30** A lively, well-oaked red, with lavish notes of graphite, licorice and vanilla accenting the saturated blackberry and boysenberry fruit flavors. Sculpted by sinewy tannins, this is chewy on the palate but shows good overall integration. Herb and mineral hints play on the finish. Tempranillo and Graciano. Best from 2027 through 2035. 10,000 cases made, 600 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodega Lanzaga Rioja Lanzaga 2020 \$50** Fragrant with tea rose, iron and wild thyme notes, this vibrant red shows fine integration and fluid length. There's a limber feel to the tannins as they support flavors of black raspberry puree, plus sweet hints of red licorice, white pepper and paprika that play on the plushly textured finish. Drink now through 2035. 5,750 cases made.—A.N.

**91 Viñas Leizaola Rioja Alavesa Caminos de Sacramento 2021 \$45** Well-meshed tobacco and mineral notes lead the way ahead of black cherry and black plum fruit, with sculpted tannins, plus fragrant hints of vanilla and paprika. Offers a fresh, chewy finish. Tempranillo and Graciano. Drink now through 2031. 3,000 cases made, 996 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Viña del Lentisco Rioja Alavesa Villota 2022 \$37** Warm spice and floral notes are enticing on the nose of this elegant red. Supple and shows good length, with limber, sculpted tannins enmeshed with creamy flavors of black cherry and plum sauce, plus accents of rooibos tea, vanilla and smoke. Tempranillo, Graciano and Garnacha. Drink now through 2032. 5,000 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Miguel Merino Rioja Alta Reserva 2018 \$45** Lively and focused, with a savory beam of loamy earth and tobacco notes integrated nicely with sun-dried cherry, red licorice and plum skin flavors. The underlying tannins are well-integrated, giving this harmonious red a plush texture and added weight. Tempranillo and Graciano. Drink now through 2035. 716 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Miguel Merino Rioja Alta Vitola Reserva 2019 \$32** Round and creamy, displaying a ripe push of blackberry coulis and warm fig delicately laced with dried mint, anise, vanilla and paprika aromatics, with orange peel acidity, plus a subtle underpinning of smoke and loamy earth. Dense, plushly textured tannins emerge on the finish. Tempranillo and Graciano. Drink now through 2035. 702 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Olarra Rioja Clásico Gran Reserva 2019 \$70** Hints of mocha and black licorice enrich the baked black cherry, dried cranberry, fig cake and tobacco flavors on display in this balanced red. Offers depth and focus, with a loamy underpinning that supports creamy tannins, plus a refreshing, savory tang of balsamico-laced acidity. Tempranillo, Mazuelo and Graciano. Drink now through 2034. 10,000 cases made, 7,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Olarra Rioja Clásico Reserva 2020 \$55** Appealing for its fragrant floral, warm spice and ripe cherry and boysenberry fruit notes and for its overall harmony and integration, with fine, defining tannins. The creamy finish echoes the ripe fruit, with savory hints of tar, tobacco and graphite. Drink now through 2035. 18,000 cases made, 8,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Oндarre Rioja Rivallana Gran Reserva 2019 \$60** Fragrant with hints of mountain herbs, anise, graphite and milled pepper, this focused red layers firm, underlying tannins with ripe red and black currant, green olive, leather and vanilla flavors that expand through the balanced finish. Tempranillo, Mazuelo and Garnacha. Drink now through 2035. 6,000 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Hermanos Peciña Rioja Finca Is-corta de Peciña Gran Reserva 2015 \$55** Aromatic with loamy earth, dark chocolate, dried sage and smoke notes, this rich, thickly textured red layers a core of baked black cherry fruit, vanilla and espresso with sinewy tannins. Firm and focused on the iron- and spice-accented finish. Tempranillo, Graciano and Garnacha. Drink now through 2035. 1,250 cases made, 200 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 La Rioja Alta Rioja Viña Alberdi Reserva 2020 \$25** See Smart Buys, page 91.

**91 Marqués de Riscal Rioja 150 Aniversario Gran Reserva 2017 \$130** A skein of sweet tobacco, vanilla and red licorice winds through the baked cherry and black plum fruit, leather, dark chocolate and spice notes offered in this elegant red. The underlying tannins are supple and well-integrated, and the rich, lasting profile is brightened by a subtle tang of mandarin orange peel acidity. Drink now through 2030. 200 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Sierra Cantabria Rioja Colección Privada 2022 \$65** A dense, creamy and structured red that shows good integration, offering warm cherry and fig fruit, plus cocoa powder, tobacco, vanilla and mineral hints. Drink now through 2032. 2,000 cases made, 300 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Sierra Cantabria Rioja Reserva 2018 \$40** Lively and well-knit, this version offers a pleasing range of black cherry, mountain herb, smoke and toast notes framed by light, sculpted tannins. Shows good length on the mineral-laced finish. Drink now through 2035. 4,000 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodega Sierra de Toloño Garnacha Rioja La Dula de Altura 2022 \$30** A bright style, with good focus. This is a bit firm today, showing taut, chalky tannins. Yet there's pleasing expression, too, with ripe, crushed raspberry, thyme and floral notes, plus white pepper and blood orange peel-infused acidity. With some short-term cellaring, this will shine. Best after 2027. 540 cases made, 150 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodega Sierra de Toloño Rioja Camino de Santa Cruz 2021 \$45** This fluid red shows a pleasing sense of tension and energy, with a lightly chalky sensation from the integrated tannins. Crushed black raspberry, pomegranate puree, wild thyme and mineral flavors expand through the chewy, spiced finish. Drink now through 2035. 98 cases made, 30 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodega Sierra de Toloño Rioja Raposo 2021 \$28** This expressive red crackles with energy, offering a lively overtone of milled pink peppercorn, crushed thyme and rosemary, plus wild raspberry, pomegranate puree and mineral flavors. Plush on the palate, with a fresh, lingering finish. Tempranillo and Graciano. Drink now through 2031. 500 cases made, 120 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Valdemar Rioja Conde Valdemar Edición Limitada 2020 \$64** Glossy blackberry and mulberry fruit is ripe and appealing in this stylish red, enlivened by mandarin orange peel-infused acidity and accented by black licorice, sage, pomegranate seed and mocha. Muscular tannins are enmeshed with the silky flavor profile, giving this a compact feel at first that opens nicely in the glass. Tempranillo, Maturana Tinta and Graciano. Drink now through 2030. 667 cases made, 300 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Valdemar Rioja Conde Valdemar Reserva 2018 \$30** A plush red, with saturated cherry and boysenberry fruit flavors accented by vanilla, licorice, iron and cured tobacco notes. Mandarin orange peel-infused acidity provides fresh focus and lively balance, while fine-grained tannins firm the spiced finish. Tempranillo, Graciano, Garnacha and

Maturana Tinta. Drink now through 2035. 9,850 cases made, 2,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Vignerons de la Sonsierra Rioja Jose Gil Viñedos en Labastida 2022 \$52** Mountain herb and mineral notes on the nose are layered with sculpted tannins and flavors of chopped mulberry and black plum fruit, rose hip and ground cumin in this creamy red, backed by blood orange peel acidity. Drink now through 2030. 300 cases made.—A.N.

**91 Vignerons de la Sonsierra Rioja Jose Gil Viñedos en San Vicente de la Sonsierra 2022 \$52** Perfumed by sweet floral and spice notes, this harmonious red is lightly mouthwatering, with plumped black cherry, wild strawberry, dried mint and mineral flavors. Supple tannins impart some weight and definition to this otherwise elegant version. Offers a lingering, spiced finish. Drink now through 2031. 1,250 cases made.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Beronia Rioja Crianza 2021 \$15** See Best Values, page 92.

**90 Bodegas Beronia Rioja Gran Reserva 2017 \$30** A round, well-balanced red, integrating light, creamy-edged tannins with flavors of ripe black cherry, anise, sweet tobacco and vanilla. Smoke and mineral hints play on the lightly chewy finish. Tempranillo, Graciano and Mazuelo. Drink now through 2030. 10,000 cases made, 2,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Beronia Rioja Reserva 2020 \$25** A harmonious version, with a deep underpinning of smoke and warm spices buoying concentrated flavors of cassis and baked cherry fruit, tea rose, thyme and licorice. The sculpted tannins are finely integrated, providing a limber yet structured feel to the lingering, spiced finish. Tempranillo, Mazuelo and Graciano. Drink now through 2030. 50,000 cases made, 3,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Izadi Rioja Reserva 2021 \$20** A sleek, savory style, with firm tannins and sanguine underpinning of iron and loamy earth layered with a concentrated core of black currant and herbed olive, plus a touch of black licorice. Best after 2027. 29,100 cases made, 7,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Izadi Rioja Selección Reserva 2020 \$30** This well-balanced red is fresh and accessible, layering light, creamy-edged tannins with flavors of ripe black cherry, graphite and mandarin orange peel, plus a savory touch of herbed olive through the zesty, spiced finish. Tempranillo, Graciano, Garnacha, Maturana Tinta and Mazuelo. Drink now through 2030. 10,300 cases made, 1,200 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodega Lanzaga Rioja LZ 2022 \$35** This is an elegant red, showing good focus. The silky texture carries a lovely range of pureed black cherry, strawberry pâte de fruit and dried violet notes, with a savory underpinning of milled white pepper, mint and mineral elements. Drink now through 2030. 5,400 cases made.—A.N.

**90 Bodega Abel Mendoza Rioja Jarrarte 2017 \$40** Supple tannins are well-meshed with flavors of creamed cherry, dried sage and dark chocolate, with loamy earth and mineral underpinnings. Lightly chewy on the spiced finish. Drink now through 2030. 890 cases made, 224 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Olarra Rioja Cerro Añon Gran Reserva 2019 \$45** Dusty tannins create a well-knit, sculpted frame for flavors of black cherry, dried thyme and dill, dark chocolate and espresso in this creamy red. Shows good length, with smoke and spice notes on the chewy finish. Tempranillo, Garnacha, Graciano and Mazuelo. Drink now through 2030. 12,000 cases made, 8,000 cases imported.—A.N.



**90 Bodegas Hermanos Peciña Rioja Señorío de P. Peciña Crianza 2018 \$25** Fresh and focused, with delicate violet and white pepper accents to the ripe raspberry and cherry fruit flavors. A savory push of fresh earth, iron and wild sage comes through on the lightly chewy finish. Drink now through 2030. 8,000 cases made, 2,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Hermanos Peciña Rioja Señorío de P. Peciña Gran Reserva 2014 \$52** Earthy on the nose, this silky version shows more minerally iron and tar elements on the fresh palate, underscoring the dried cherry, plum sauce, dried thyme and vanilla flavors. Light, creamy tannins firm the moderate finish. Drink now through 2029. 1,250 cases made, 300 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Sierra Cantabria Rioja Crianza 2021 \$25** Fresh and fruit-driven, this balanced red offers flavors of wild strawberry, ripe cherry, peach skin, sage and milled white pepper framed by light, crisp tannins. Drink now through 2030. 20,000 cases made, 7,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodega Sierra de Toloño Tempranillo Rioja 2022 \$21** A balanced red, offering supple tannins enmeshed with a lively range of brambly blackberry and mulberry fruit flavors, plus accents of mountain herbs, mineral and espresso. Spiced finish. Drink now. 3,500 cases made, 720 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Valdelacierva Rioja Crianza 2021 \$29** A supple style, with a dark core of pureed mulberry and baked black cherry fruit framed by limber, sculpted tannins. Hints of dried herbs, cocoa powder and tarry smoke linger on the lightly chewy finish. Drink now through 2031. 3,800 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Valdemar Rioja Inspiración 2021 \$25** A generous range of pureed black cherry and black raspberry notes is layered with sculpted tannins and appealing accents of mocha, toasted cumin, vanilla and loam in this creamy, balanced red. Tempranillo, Maturana Tinta and Graciano. Drink now through 2031. 10,300 cases made, 1,800 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Señorío de Villarrica Rioja Crianza 2020 \$24** This lightly toasty, lively red offers accents of licorice, smoke and vanilla layered with baked cherry, warm fig and tobacco notes. Shows good focus, with light tannins on the spiced finish. Drink now through 2030. 25,000 cases made, 8,100 cases imported.—A.N.

**89 Bodegas y Viñedos Artuke Rioja Artuke 2023 \$16** A lively, juicy red, with focus to the crushed boysenberry, blackberry paste, violet, wild thyme and mineral flavors. Lightly chewy on the spiced finish. Tempranillo and Viura. Drink now. 6,500 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**89 Bodegas Bhilar Rioja Bhilar Viñedos en Elvillar 2022 \$21** An herbaceous red, loaded with marjoram, tea rose, wild thyme and violet notes, plus a pretty display of ripe cherry and raspberry fruit. Light tannins trim the fresh, well-spiced finish. Drink now. 1,500 cases made, 250 cases imported.—A.N.

**89 Bodegas Burgo Viejo Rioja Reserva 2019 \$21** A balanced version, with plum skin acidity animating an accessible range of black cherry and herbed olive notes, plus hints of tar and tobacco. Dusty tannins are lightly chewy on the spiced finish. Tempranillo, Graciano and Mazuelo. Drink now through 2028. 200 cases imported.—A.N.

**89 Bodegas LAN Rioja Xtrème Crianza 2021 \$20** This lively version offers ripe red currant and cherry fruit flavors, plus a brambly overtone of wild herbs and zesty spices. A balanced sipper, with a lightly chewy finish. Drink now. 3,000 cases made, 650 cases imported.—A.N.

**89 Bodega Abel Mendoza Rioja Jarrarte Carbonic Maceration 2020 \$20** Creamy, medium-bodied and lively, with pretty floral, herb and peach skin accents to the baked raspberry and mulberry fruit flavors. Offers a lightly chewy, mineral finish. Drink now. 2,500 cases made, 224 cases imported.—A.N.

**89 Bodegas Muga Rioja El Andén de la Estación Crianza 2022 \$25** Hints of espresso, smoke and tobacco are a savory underpinning that adds dark detail to flavors of baked black cherry and blackberry fruit in this well-meshed, thickly textured red, with chewy tannins. Tempranillo and Garnacha. Drink now. 7,000 cases made, 4,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**89 Bodegas Valdemar Rioja Conde Valdemar Crianza 2021 \$20** A balanced, accessible red, with creamed black cherry layered with light tannins and hints of herbed black olive, cocoa powder and singed orange peel. Tempranillo, Mazuelo, Garnacha and Maturana Tinta. Drink now. 31,900 cases made, 7,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**88 Baron de Ley Garnacha Rioja Varietales 2023 \$15** This well-spiced red is creamy and accessible, with juicy black raspberry and boysenberry fruit, wild rosemary and smoke. Drink now. 5,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**88 Bodegas Olarra Rioja Cerro Añon Reserva 2020 \$26** Aromas and flavors of black cherry coulis, dark chocolate, loamy earth and dried mint up front are initially appealing in this thickly textured red, but they lose momentum through the creamy finish. Tempranillo, Graciano, Garnacha and Mazuelo. Drink now. 27,500 cases made, 18,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**88 Bodegas Hermanos Peciña Rioja Señorío de P. Peciña 2022 \$18** Supple and balanced, this accessible version offers chopped black cherry, cured tobacco, violet and mineral notes framed by lightly chewy tannins. Moderate finish. Tempranillo, Graciano and Garnacha. Drink now. 6,000 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—A.N.

**88 Bodegas Carlos Serres Rioja Gran Reserva 2017 \$27** There's a sinewy feel to this lively red, with crisp tannins structuring the wild cherry, dried cranberry, medicinal herb, leather and earth notes through the chewy, spiced finish. Tempranillo, Graciano and Mazuelo. Drink now. 10,000 cases made, 7,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**87 Bodegas Carlos Serres Rioja Crianza 2022 \$14** A zesty overtone of cracked pink peppercorn and chopped rosemary is layered with raspberry and cherry fruit flavors in this lively red, with chewy tannins. Modest finish. Tempranillo and Graciano. Drink now. 8,000 cases made, 6,000 cases imported.—A.N.

**86 Bodegas Riojanas Rioja Viña Albina Crianza 2022 \$16** A round, easy-drinking red, with light tannins and baked black cherry, dried dill, black pepper and mocha notes that lose some momentum toward the finish. Tempranillo, Mazuelo and Graciano. Drink now. 22,000 cases made, 1,650 cases imported.—A.N.

## SPAIN Rioja / White

**93 La Granja Nuestra Señora de Remelluri Rioja White Alavesa 2021 \$140** A lovely, layered white that offers verve and drive. A rapierlike spine of acidity is enmeshed with a creamy range of patisserie pear, green fig and persimmon fruit flavors, showing notes of lime blossoms, grilled macadamia nut and vanilla. Rich and harmonious, with a sweep of salinity cleaning the spiced finish. Drink now through 2031. 2,155 cases made, 88 cases imported.—A.N.

## 92 Bodegas Bhilar Rioja White Bhilar 2022 \$21

Lightly gauzy and golden in hue, this silky white is fragrant with hints of honeysuckle and mint, offering flavors of raw almond, mandarin orange peel and dried white cherry. At first there's a pleasing succulence to the acidity, which is then firm and refreshing, a clean-cut swathe on the salty finish. Long and distinctive. Viura and Grenache Blanc. Drink now through 2032. 1,000 cases made, 256 cases imported.—A.N.



DAVID SAMPEDRO & MELANIE HICKMAN  
Owners

**92 Bodegas Faustino Rioja White I Gran Reserva 2020 \$37** A richly expressive white in a traditional style, with a dry, medium-bodied frame. Fragrant honeycomb, vanilla and tobacco notes accent the dried white cherry, Marcona almond and blood orange peel flavors. Creamy in texture and backed by well-cut acidity, with an underpinning of salinity emerging to clean the finish. Viura and Chardonnay. Drink now through 2030. 450 cases made, 40 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodega Abel Mendoza Rioja White 5V 2021 \$65** Refreshing acidity creates a bright frame for tightly meshed dried pear, almond skin and mountain herb flavors, plus a racy streak of salinity. Shows focus and length through the spiced finish. Expands nicely on the palate, so give this time to open in the glass. Best after 2026. 343 cases made, 112 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodega Abel Mendoza Rioja White Fermented on Skins 2022 \$55** This is a horse of a different color for the eyes, nose and palate. Gauzy and deeply colored in a pale chestnut hue, this white is pungent in aroma; but on the palate, pleasing accents of Mediterranean *macchia*, leather and iron are layered with baked persimmon, glazed tangerine, vanilla and dried mint details. Lightly chalky in texture, framed by vibrant acidity that cleans the spiced finish. Not an example for the masses, this will appeal to fans of the idiosyncratic style of skin-contact wines. Drink now through 2030. 100 cases made, 14 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodegas Miguel Merino Rioja White 2022 \$45** Vibrant with lip-smacking acidity, this fleshes out its firm frame nicely with a plush texture and layered flavors of poached apricot, tangerine peel, steeped white cherry, Marcona almond and vanilla. Mountain herb and milled white pepper hints play on the salty finish. Viura and Garnacha Blanca. Drink now through 2030. 308 cases made, 80 cases imported.—A.N.

**92 Bodega Sierra de Toloño Rioja White Nahikun 2023 \$38** Firm and focused, this well-cut white offers flavors of chopped white raspberry, tangerine and wild rosemary, with a pronounced vein of minerally petrol and salt that emerges to drive the racy finish. Viura, Calagraño and Garnacha Blanca. Drink now through 2033. 176 cases made, 30 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas y Viñedos Artuke Rioja White Trascuevas 2021 \$45** A mouthwatering white, with an expressive range of mandarin orange peel, raw almond and persimmon notes, with accents of honeycomb and vanilla. Shows energetic drive and focus through the salty finish. Drink now through 2030. 330 cases made, 30 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Viña del Lentisco Rioja White Alavesa Vilota 2022 \$37** Rich notes of Marcona almond, white cherry, vanilla and crushed pine ride this white's plush texture, which is well-defined by a firm, focusing spine of sleek acidity. Medium-bodied and refreshing, echoing on the finish with the minerally undertow of saline, petrol and sea shell details. Drink now through 2030. 1,000 cases made, 500 cases imported.—A.N.



**91 Bodega Abel Mendoza Tempranillo Blanco Rioja 2022 \$55** Though nicely balanced and buoyant on the palate, this crackles with acidity, displaying a fragrant overtone of crushed pine and petrol that accents the mouthwatering mix of tangerine, yellow peach, blanched almond and anise flavors. Drink now through 2030. 95 cases made, 14 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodega Abel Mendoza Torrontés Rioja 2022 \$55** A vivid, layered white, with a fine, raw silk-like texture and medium body. Offers flavors of Marcona almond, dried apricot, vanilla and chopped rosemary, with a racy underpinning of salinity. Drink now through 2032. 143 cases made, 14 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Tentenublo Rioja White VLA 2022 \$28** Leesy on the nose, but not so on the palate, which offers a creamy mesh of baked apricot, vanilla wafer and chopped almond, plus savory touches of Parmesan cheese and wild herbs. A distinctive version, framed by well-cut, integrated acidity. A streak of salinity lingers on the finish. Viura, Malvasia and Garnacha Blanca. Drink now through 2030. 330 cases made, 60 cases imported.—A.N.

**91 Bodegas Valdemar Rioja White Conde Valdemar Finca Alto Cantabria Viñedo Singular Old Vines 2023 \$44** Round and lightly spiced, with hints of vanilla, hazelnut and toast accenting the creamed apple and pear fruit flavors. Brightened by lively acidity, this is well-balanced, showing good length through the finish. Drink now through 2030. 1,875 cases made, 450 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Remírez de Ganuza Rioja White Reserva 2022 \$42** A refreshing white, offering poached pear and tangerine fruit flavors, with notes of salted almond, Meyer lemon peel, vanilla and wild thyme. Well-spiced and minerally on the clean-cut finish. Viura and Malvasia. Drink now. 2,272 cases made, 103 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodegas Sierra Cantabria Rioja White 2024 \$27** This is light- to medium-bodied and fresh, with appealing floral and spice accents to the ripe apricot and clementine fruit flavors. Supple and well-knit, with a clean sweep of grapefruit peel and saline notes on the finish. Sauvignon Blanc, Viura and Malvasia. Drink now. 3,000 cases made, 500 cases imported.—A.N.

**90 Bodega Sierra de Toloño Rioja White 2023 \$27** Vivid and appealing, this balanced version crackles with lively acidity and underlying salinity, offering an aromatic thread of honeysuckle, ground ginger and wild rosemary that winds through flavors of yellow peach, passion fruit and smoked almond. Drink now. 1,000 cases made, 400 cases imported.—A.N.

## United States

### CALIFORNIA Cabernet Sauvignon

**94 Freemark Abbey Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford Sycamore Vineyard 2021 \$200** This is Rutherford from the get-go, with a large, broad-shouldered core of cassis and black cherry notes liberally laced with singed cedar and tobacco. A well-buried iron detail provides a steady underpinning on the fine-grained and lengthy finish. Solid. Best from 2027 through 2040. 1,641 cases made.—J.M.

**94 Charles Krug Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain Family Reserve 2021 \$175** This sports dark and winy cassis and plum reduction notes, with a brushstroke of tar in the mix as well. Echoes of sweet bay and violet fill in on the finish, along with a curl of alder smoke. Offers grip and nice cut, with a well of fruit in reserve. Best from 2027 through 2040. 400 cases made.—J.M.

**94 Mount Eden Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Santa Cruz Mountains 2020 \$110** This is solidly grippy from the start, with a mix of brambly grip and zesty acidity driving its dark, juicy core of mulberry, boysenberry and blackberry preserves. Shows violet, sweet bay and iris accents, plus a lively flash of apple wood through the finish. A delicious mountain Cab. Best from 2026 through 2040. 922 cases made.—J.M.

**94 Salvestrin Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Dr. Crane Vineyard Three D 2021 \$225** Ripe and with the vivid edge of the vintage, this bursts with energy as its core of red and black currant and boysenberry fruit pumps along, fueled by bramble, anise and violet accents. Turns sleek and polished, with a subtle alder infusion through the finish. Best from 2026 through 2040. 499 cases made.—J.M.

**92 Domaine Eden Cabernet Sauvignon Santa Cruz Mountains 2020 \$50** Dark and winy, with mulberry, boysenberry and black currant fruit that shows a zesty edge. This offers brambly grip, with sweet bay, violet and anise notes darting around to add range and energy. Best from 2026 through 2038. 2,982 cases made.—J.M.

**90 Miner Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Emily's 2021 \$65** Sleek and fresh, with a core of gently warmed cassis mixed in with mulled plum, sage, roasted vanilla and alder hints. An understated style. Drink now through 2035. 6,178 cases made.—J.M.

### CALIFORNIA Chardonnay

**96 Brewer-Clifton Chardonnay Sta. Rita Hills Perilune 2022 \$75** See Highly Recommended, page 89.

**95 Brewer-Clifton Chardonnay Sta. Rita Hills Machado 2022 \$65** A stunning white, sleek and precise, with Key lime, makrut lime leaf and Meyer lemon flavors at the core. Details of white pepper, sea salt, jasmine and lemon verbena add complexity, and a touch of matcha lingers on the fresh finish. Drink now. 214 cases made.—M.W.



GREG BREWER  
Winemaker

**94 DuMOL Chardonnay Sonoma Coast DuMol Estate Vineyard 2022 \$90** This style is succulent, juicy and mouthwatering at the core, with generosity to the peach, lemon curd, lemon oil and sweetgrass aromatics. Offers wild fennel and orange blossom accents, plus a touch of dried mango, along with vibrant acidity that leaves a lasting impression. Drink now through 2034. 720 cases made.—M.W.

**94 Hartford Court Chardonnay Russian River Valley Four Hearts Vineyards 2022 \$55** Fresh and vibrant notes of satsuma tangerine, Meyer lemon, pear pastry and ginger mingle with Honeycrisp apple and lemon sherbet, with accents of brioche, sweet cream and spices on a supple, elegant frame. Drink now through 2034. 1,139 cases made.—M.W.

**94 Shafer Chardonnay Napa Valley Carneros Red Shoulder Ranch 2023 \$80** A bold, juicy expression, with pear drop, apple and apricot flavors that are juicy and intense. Details of wild fennel, grilled bread, crunchy sea salt, Meyer lemon zest, lemon thyme and ginger emerge on the fresh, juicy finish alongside a touch of yuzu. Drink now. 5,400 cases made.—M.W.

**94 Stonestreet Chardonnay Alexander Valley Upper Barn Vineyard 2022 \$155** Powerful and distinctive, with a touch of salted, buttery goodness to the flavors of pear pastry, marzipan, grilled peach and tangerine. Notes of lemon verbena, ginger and spices linger on a supple, juicy frame. Drink now through 2029. 423 cases made.—M.W.

**93 Brewer-Clifton Chardonnay Sta. Rita Hills 3D 2022 \$75** Apricot, peach, marmalade and candied ginger flavors are plump and juicy on an appealingly fleshy texture. Grace notes of Meyer lemon, satsuma tangerine and lemon oil add wonderful layers of complexity. Drink now. 666 cases made.—M.W.

**93 Kosta Browne Chardonnay Russian River Valley One Sixteen 2022 \$90** This is a bold expression of Chardonnay, offering succulent notes of butterscotch, grilled peach, lemon curd and mango puree. Smooth and creamy, with sleek acidity, plus accents of orange blossoms, lemon zest, tangerine and ginger. Mouthwatering finish. Drink now. 3,700 cases made.—M.W.

## ATTENTION EXECUTIVES:

Marketing | Sales | Finance | Product Development



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**92 Dragonette Chardonnay Sta. Rita Hills Black Label 2022 \$105** An intense and generous style, offering toasted brioche and grilled pineapple flavors up front. Shows fresh notes of lemon, pear and green apple, with fragrant details of honeysuckle and lemon balm, plus a hint of lemon mint. Seamless, with a long, expressive finish. Drink now. 150 cases made.—*M.W.*

**92 Nickel & Nickel Chardonnay Napa Valley Carneros Grand Sky Vineyard 2023 \$75** Distinctly floral and fragrant, with orange blossom, jasmine and wildflower honey notes. The core of pear pastry, apricot, citrus and apple is vibrant and juicy, while details of wild fennel, ginger and shortbread linger on the finish. Drink now. 1,200 cases made.—*M.W.*

**92 Nickel & Nickel Chardonnay Napa Valley Carneros Truchard Vineyard 2023 \$65** Fragrant and expressive, with honeysuckle and lemon blossom notes leading the way to a polished and fresh core of pear, pineapple, tangerine, lemon sorbet and ginger, highlighted by lemon thyme and lemon balm accents on a plush and juicy frame. Drink now through 2035. 4,500 cases made.—*M.W.*

**91 Nickel & Nickel Chardonnay Coombsville Berlenbach Vineyard 2023 \$85** This distinctive version opens with bright Meyer lemon flavors that are sleek and pure, with Honeycrisp apple and lime zest accents. A firm, mineral note of crushed rock and a lemon thyme detail linger on the finish. Drink now. 700 cases made.—*M.W.*

**90 Sandhi Chardonnay Sta. Rita Hills William Hines Vineyard 2022 \$65** Sleek and mouthwatering in its intensity, with spice accents. Shows touches of cardamom and candied ginger that complement the white peach, apricot, apple and citrus notes. A lovely harmony emerges on the finish, with details of green tea and lemon basil that linger. Drink now. 246 cases made.—*M.W.*

## CALIFORNIA Pinot Noir

**96 Domaine de la Côte Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills La Côte 2023 \$155** Thyme, sage and savory notes spike a core of intense *griotte* fruit, while flashes of pomegranate, damson plum and blood orange work their way in as well. The long, mouthwatering finish shows a terrific, chiseled feel, with a wet flint note as its energy source. Best from 2026 through 2040. 653 cases made.—*J.M.*

**96 Domaine de la Côte Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Sous Le Chêne 2023 \$165** Sage brush, thyme and pepper notes give this a bristling feel up front, while the core of pomegranate, blood orange and bitter cherry waits in reserve. There's a lovely racy feel through the finish, with a sanguine note twanging brightly, adding length that lets the fruit slowly flesh out. For the cellar. Best from 2026 through 2040. 98 cases made.—*J.M.*

**95 Domaine de la Côte Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Bloom's Field 2023 \$105** See Highly Recommended, page 89.

**95 Paul Hobbs Pinot Noir Russian River Valley George Menini Estate 2023 \$95** This is vivid, bristling with crunchy acidity that helps drive a mix of mulberry, black cherry and raspberry fruit along, while letting in rose hip, hibiscus and pomegranate accents along the edges. Expressive and well-defined, this is brimming with energy. Best from 2026 through 2035. 870 cases made.—*J.M.*

**94 Domaine de la Côte Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Memorious 2023 \$100** This offers a distinct density—showing intensity without heaviness—as its core of red and black cherry fruit bristles with grilled savory and flint notes. A very racy underpinning through

the finish leaves echos of kirsch and wet slate. Very distinctive. Best from 2026 through 2036. 452 cases made.—*J.M.*

**94 Paul Hobbs Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Fraenkle Cheshier Vineyard 2023 \$95** Lively energy carries a vibrant mix of mulberry, red and black cherry and boysenberry flavors along in this version, while vivacious accents of violet and hibiscus gild the edges prettily. The mouthwatering finish brings you back quickly for more. Best from 2026 through 2033. 280 cases made.—*J.M.*

**93 Paul Hobbs Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2023 \$80** This shows solid, punchy drive, with pomegranate, cherry and blood orange *pâte de fruit* flavors in the mix, along with hibiscus and lilac notes. Stays fresh and engaging through the finish. Best from 2026 through 2031. 10,170 cases made.—*J.M.*

**93 Paul Hobbs Pinot Noir West Sonoma Coast 2023 \$80** This displays lovely, juicy energy, with hibiscus-laced black cherry and mulberry fruit that drives along nicely, infused through the finish with black tea and a sparkle of anise. Well-defined, pure and almost breezy in feel. Drink now through 2028. 2,400 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Crossbarn Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023 \$45** Shows freshness and energy, with black cherry and blackberry coulis notes laced with bright acidity, while hibiscus, iris and anise fill in the background. Should fill out nicely with modest cellaring. Drink now through 2027. 16,750 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Domaine Carneros Pinot Noir Carneros Le Ciel Serein 2022 \$62** Nicely done for the vintage, with lightly brambly energy to its black cherry and raspberry fruit core, which is woven nicely with black tea, rose hip and wood spice notes. Drink now through 2027. 1,580 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Domaine Della Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 4 Amours 2022 \$150** Offers mulberry and cherry compote flavors lined with a hint of bramble, while hibiscus and iris details filter through on the finish. Shows solid energy overall, especially for a '22. Drink now through 2028. 100 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Paul Hobbs Pinot Noir Napa Valley Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2023 \$95** This shows depth for the vintage, with a sappy kirsch and mulberry core that brings nice definition. Pulls in hibiscus and iris accents on the juicy, anise-tinged finish. Well-done. Drink now through 2027. 290 cases made.—*J.M.*

**92 Senses Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Kanzler Vineyard 2022 \$90** Delivers an up-front burst of plum and mulberry notes, while its lightly brambly structure gives the fruit enough fuel to linger on the apple wood— and hibiscus-accented finish. Drink now through 2028. 390 cases made.—*J.M.*

**91 Domaine de la Côte Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills DDLC 2023 \$80** This version crackles with savory and struck flint notes that pull along a core of gently mulled cherry and blood orange flavors. There's a piercing edge to the finish, which leaves a hint of oyster shell behind. Best from 2026 through 2032. 588 cases made.—*J.M.*

**90 Dutton-Goldfield Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Dutton Ranch 2022 \$50** A plump red, offering punchy pomegranate and cherry fruit laced with a subtle mineral edge that harnesses the finish nicely. Drink now through 2027. 3,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

## CALIFORNIA Zinfandel & Blends

**95 Carlisle Zinfandel Russian River Valley Carlisle Vineyard 2022 \$56** See Highly Recommended, page 89.

**95 Hartford Family Zinfandel Russian River Valley Highwire Vineyard Old Vine 2022 \$65** Fragrant and plump yet retains a sense of refinement and polish, with jammy raspberry, cherry, orange peel and licorice accents that build richness toward briary tannins. Drink now through 2035. 183 cases made.—*T.F.*

**95 Ridge Lytton Springs Dry Creek Valley 2022 \$56** See Highly Recommended, page 89.

**95 Turley Zinfandel Paso Robles Dusi Vineyard 2022 \$45**

A seductive Zin that's rich and polished yet handsomely structured, with detailed flavors of raspberry, cranberry, roasted sage and loamy white pepper that end with big but refined tannins. Drink now through 2035. 1,732 cases made.—*T.F.*



TEGAN PASSALACQUA  
Director of Winemaking

**95 Turley Zinfandel Paso Robles Ueberroth Vineyard 2022 \$52** Broad-shouldered and powerfully structured yet detailed and stylish, with deep flavors of blackberry and cherry accented by bittersweet chocolate, orange peel and fruitcake spices that gather tension and richness on the slightly firm finish. Drink now through 2037. 1,958 cases made.—*T.F.*

**94 Robert Biale Zinfandel Sonoma County Pagan Ranch 2022 \$60** A deeply structured and rich style, with detailed blackberry and cherry flavors accented by briar, licorice, bittersweet mocha and black pepper notes that gather structure and tension toward broad-shouldered tannins. Drink now through 2034. 314 cases made.—*T.F.*

**94 Carlisle Zinfandel Russian River Valley Piner-Olivet Ranches 2022 \$42** Captures the essence of the distinctive Zins from this Russian River Valley region. Full of flavor but polished and not heavy, with wild berry, orange zest and spiced cinnamon accents that gather richness toward the briary finish. Drink now through 2034. 368 cases made.—*T.F.*

**94 Carlisle Zinfandel Russian River Valley Saitone Vineyard 2022 \$56** Full-bodied and rich in structure but not weighty, with multilayered blackberry and raspberry flavors highlighted by roasted sage, licorice and orange peel notes that gather power and detail toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2035. 266 cases made.—*T.F.*

**94 Hartford Family Zinfandel Russian River Valley Dina's Vineyard Old Vine 2022 \$65** Dark and potent yet richly detailed, with blackberry cobbler, roasted sage and licorice flavors that build tension and structure toward broad-shouldered tannins. Drink now through 2035. 137 cases made.—*T.F.*

**94 Hartford Family Zinfandel Russian River Valley Fanucchi-Wood Road Vineyard Old Vine 2022 \$65** A briar patch in a glass, this is a zesty, old-school Zin, with wild berry and black cherry flavors framed by chunky chocolate, espresso and green peppercorn accents. Ends with appealingly rustic tannins. Drink now through 2035. 244 cases made.—*T.F.*

**94 Hartford Family Zinfandel Russian River Valley Hartford Vineyard Old Vine 2022 \$65** Deeply structured yet agile on its feet, with rich raspberry, roasted anise and cracked pepper flavors that fan out on the detailed finish. Drink now through 2032. 267 cases made.—*T.F.*

**94 Hartford Family Zinfandel Russian River Valley Jolene's Vineyard Old Vine 2022 \$65** A polished yet dynamic Zin, with well-structured raspberry and cherry flavors that offer mint and cracked pepper details as this builds tension toward medium-grained tannins. Drink now through 2034. 275 cases made.—*T.F.*



**94 San Lorenzo Rock Garden Hillside Red Alexander Valley 2022 \$48** Rich and briary, with deep blackberry and cherry flavors that take on lico-rice, mocha espresso and savory pepper flavors as this builds richness and zesty tannins on the finish. Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2035. 380 cases made.—T.F.

**94 San Lorenzo The Pearl Alexander Valley 2022 \$80** Formidably structured yet supple and refined, with deep blackberry and raspberry flavors that carry accents of roasted sage, dark Asian spices and cinnamon as this gathers richness toward medium-grained tannins. Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Alicante, Carignane, Peloursin and Grand Noir. Best from 2026 through 2035. 200 cases made.—T.F.

**93 Carlisle Zinfandel Russian River Valley Montafi Ranch 2022 \$56** Deeply structured yet polished and generous, with expressive flavors of blackberry and cherry laced with brown baking spices and licorice as this builds tension toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2033. 221 cases made.—T.F.

**93 Hartford Family Zinfandel Russian River Valley Old Vine 2022 \$50** Though sleek and briary, this is refined, offering handsome flavors of raspberry and huckleberry accented by green peppercorn and roasted sage. Finishes with zesty tannins. Drink now through 2033. 1,282 cases made.—T.F.

**93 Ridge Pagani Ranch Norma's Block Sonoma Valley 2022 \$42** A potentially structured version, with deep, brooding flavors of blackberry and currant accented by dark chocolate, dark Asian spices and savory herbs that build toward broad-shouldered tannins. Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, Grand Noir and Lenoir. Best from 2026 through 2033. 1,350 cases made.—T.F.

**93 Ridge Rockpile 2022 \$42** This is vibrant and zesty, with multilayered cherry and raspberry flavors laced with river rock, white pepper and dried sage notes that build toward fine-grained tannins. Zinfandel and Petite Sirah. Drink now through 2032. 1,300 cases made.—T.F.

**93 Ridge Zinfandel Sonoma Valley Pagani Ranch 2022 \$51** Elegance meets a deep core of concentrated fruit, with blackberry and blueberry notes, plus details of green olive, licorice and Asian dark spices that build richness toward fine-grained tannins. Drink now through 2033. 3,000 cases made.—T.F.

**93 St. Francis Zinfandel Russian River Valley Old Vines Anacleto Vineyard Artisan Collection 2021 \$54** Full-bodied and generous, with appealing flavors of briary black raspberry and cherry accented by toasted anise and white pepper tones that build richness toward zesty tannins. Drink now through 2031. 310 cases made.—T.F.

**92 Carlisle Zinfandel Sonoma County 2022 \$33** Loaded with briary blackberry and cherry flavors accented by underbrush and licorice that build structure toward medium-grained tannins. Drink now through 2032. 294 cases made.—T.F.

**92 Denner Zinfandel Paso Robles Willow Creek District 2022 \$75** Precise and tightly focused, with briary raspberry, cherry, licorice and black pepper flavors that build tension toward zesty tannins. Drink now through 2032. 642 cases made.—T.F.

**92 Turley Zinfandel California Old Vines 2022 \$28** See Smart Buys, page 91.

**91 Miraflores Zinfandel El Dorado Yellow Block From The Ashes 2021 \$38** A dark and brooding style, with deep notes of blackberry, bitter chocolate and pepper, plus hints of raisin that build tannins toward the broad-shouldered finish. Best from 2026 through 2032. 120 cases made.—T.F.

**91 Rombauer Zinfandel El Dorado Twin Rivers Single Vineyard 2022 \$48** Plump and toasty, with jammy raspberry and blackberry flavors accented by spiced cinnamon, licorice and bittersweet chocolate. Finishes with briary tannins. Drink now through 2031. 4,965 cases made.—T.F.

**90 Cline Zinfandel Contra Costa County Ancient Vines 2022 \$16** See Best Values, page 92.

## CALIFORNIA Other Red

**93 Argot Syrah Sonoma Mountain Indigo 2021 \$85** Full-bodied and ripe yet gracefully structured, with expressive flavors of huckleberry and raspberry that take on coffee bean, licorice and pepper accents as this builds richness toward polished tannins. Drink now through 2032. 135 cases made.—T.F.

**92 Argot Syrah Sonoma Mountain 2022 \$60** Supple and richly textured, with layered raspberry and cherry flavors laced with mocha espresso and spices. Finishes with refined tannins. Drink now through 2032. 100 cases made.—T.F.

**91 Carlisle Petite Sirah Napa Valley Palisades Vineyard 2022 \$58** This is well-concentrated yet offers elegant details of dried violet, orange peel and clove that circle its layers of huckleberry and blueberry, which linger on the finish around toothsome tannins and a trace of tobacco. Drink now. 284 cases made.—A.R.

**90 Marimar Estate Syrah Russian River Valley Don Miguel Vineyard 2019 \$58** Straightforward and appealing, with savory cherry, raspberry and tarragon flavors that glide on the polished finish. Drink now through 2030. 348 cases made.—T.F.

**89 Frei Brothers Merlot Dry Creek Valley Sonoma Reserve 2022 \$20** A user-friendly Merlot that's medium-bodied and generous, with sleek red currant, sweet tobacco and spice flavors. Drink now through 2030. 11,000 cases made.—T.F.

## CALIFORNIA Other White

**91 Ballentine Chenin Blanc St. Helena Betty's Vineyard 2023 \$35** Succulent and mouthwatering, with white peach, apricot and pineapple flavors that are pure and bright on a fleshy, juicy frame. Notes of lemon zest, lemon balm and orange blossoms, plus a touch of Himalayan sea salt, all add to its appeal. Drink now. 487 cases made.—M.W.

**91 Bouchaine Alsatian Blend Los Carneros 2023 \$50** Fragrant, juicy and full of personality. Opens with notes of ripe Bartlett pear, Fuji apple, yuzu and fresh lime zest. Floral accents of orange blossoms, candied ginger and jasmine meet a drizzle of wildflower honey, leaving a lasting impression, as does the mouthwatering finish. Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Riesling and Gewürztraminer. Drink now. 495 cases made.—M.W.

**91 Dry Creek Chenin Blanc Clarksburg Dry 2023 \$18** See Smart Buys, page 91.

**91 Marimar Estate Albariño Russian River Valley Don Miguel Vineyard 2023 \$36** Succulent, intense and vibrant, with notes of tangerine, ruby grapefruit, lemon oregano and lemon sherbet, plus hints of salted Marcona almond and lemon blossoms, all on a sleek, mouthwatering frame. Drink now. 699 cases made.—M.W.



MARIMAR TORRES & CRISTINA TORRES  
Founder; General Manager

**90 Fort Ross Chenin Blanc Fort Ross-Seaview Fort Ross Vineyard 2023 \$44** There's wonderful purity and intensity to the lemon, Honeycrisp apple, yuzu and white grapefruit flavors, with notes of white flowers, freshly grated ginger and lemon balm. Whiffs of wildflower honey and biscuit linger. Drink now. 100 cases made.—M.W.

**90 Marimar Estate Godello Russian River Valley Don Miguel Vineyard 2023 \$46** Fresh Honeycrisp apple, Meyer lemon and pear flavors are crisp, sleek and precise. Shows details of crushed rock minerality, with lemon thyme and saline on the long, expressive finish. Drink now. 398 cases made.—M.W.

## OREGON

**93 Lingua Franca Chardonnay Eola-Amity Hills Lingua Franca Estate 2022 \$60** Handsomely structured and detailed, showing precise flavors of apple and pear laced with lemon zest and crushed stone tones as this glides on the sleek finish. Drink now. 1,910 cases made.—T.F.

**93 Lingua Franca Chardonnay Willamette Valley Sisters 2022 \$95** A dynamic, precise style, with apple, lemon blossom, quince and steely mineral accents that finish on a refreshing note. Drink now. 695 cases made.—T.F.

**91 Argyle Chardonnay Eola-Amity Hills Nut-house 2022 \$45** Supple and refined, with generous flavors of apple and pear accented by orange peel and mineral hints. Drink now. 200 cases made.—T.F.

**91 Brick House Gamay Noir Ribbon Ridge Due East 2023 \$46** Light-footed yet shows a core of lively tannins and acidity framed by cherry, tarragon and spice notes. Ends on a snappy accent. Drink now through 2030. 100 cases made.—T.F.

**90 Lingua Franca Chardonnay Willamette Valley Avni 2022 \$40** A steely and refreshing version, with chiseled acidity framed by lemon, lime and vanilla accents that zip along the finish. Drink now. 12,000 cases made.—T.F.

**88 Silvan Ridge Pinot Gris Willamette Valley 2023 \$18** This is steely yet succulent, with appealing lime blossom, kiwi and grapefruit flavors. Drink now. 850 cases made.—T.F.

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## Solar Panels as Vineyard Aid

Could mobile solar panels produce both energy and better wines? A French company researching solar panels and agriculture conducted studies at pilot vineyards in southern France for several growing seasons. They say their mobile solar panels can be positioned to create microclimates for vines, producing grapes with lower potential alcohol, higher acidity levels and better aromatic profiles, plus healthier vines, higher yields and a reduced need for irrigation.

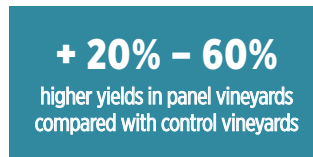
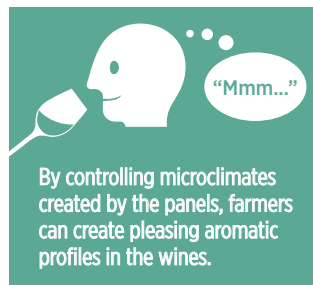
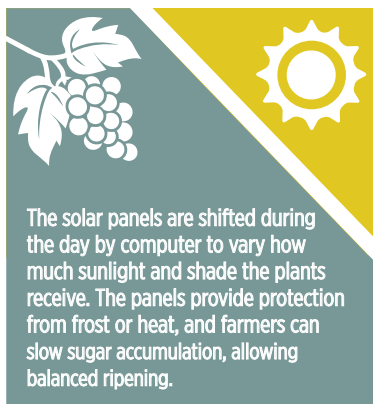
“The shading provided by the panels slows sugar accumulation in the grapes, resulting in lower potential alcohol levels,” explained Nathanaël Kasriel, deputy director of Sun’Agri, a private company that focuses on adapting agriculture to climate change. “Simultaneously, the cooler temperatures under the panels help preserve acidity, a key factor in wine balance. The shift in ripening time also allows for harvesting at optimal maturity under milder temperature conditions.”

“In a nutshell, we develop dynamic agrivoltaics solutions for agriculture,” said Kasriel. They install mobile solar panels in fields above the crops; computers shift the panels to vary how much sunlight the plants receive. “Through our algorithms, our day-to-day job is to place panels in an optimized position to either provide shade to the crop to protect it from climatic hazards (drought, excessive sunlight, frost, heavy rain) or let it do photosynthesis.” The goal is to produce energy for the region and help farmers.

Kasriel said the microclimates created by the panels show the potential for pleasing aromatic profiles in wines. “Our preliminary results, especially from Tresserre [a part of the Roussillon appellation] in 2023, suggest that dynamic agrivoltaics can enhance desirable aromas in wine.” Their findings have spurred more studies. “More research is planned with white Viognier grapes at the Rodilhan site [a commune in the Languedoc] starting in 2025 to understand the impact on white wine aroma profiles.”



The team's mobile solar panels cool the vines and offer optimal sun exposure.



The 2024 round of the study took place at experimental vineyards in the Southern Rhône, where the team tested Grenache Blanc, Chardonnay and Marselan. Those yields were 20% to 60% higher than the control vineyards', depending on the grape. Chardonnay enjoyed the highest increase in yields at 60%, followed by Marselan (30%) and Grenache Blanc (20%).

“The panels provide protection from frost, heat waves and excessive radiation while also reducing water stress. While shade would normally reduce photosynthesis, our intelligent software enables us to choose the

best moments for the crop to receive sunlight,” said Kasriel.

The economics of the projects depend on energy prices, the location of solar power facilities and the sunlight needs of the crops. Sun’Agri does private research but also works with public institutions, receiving support from the government as it looks for new ways to transition to farming practices that consume fewer resources and produce reliable crops. The group is not only studying wine grapes; it also has projects with a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and grains.

—Suzanne Mustacich



Martin Short (left) with Craig and Kathryn Hall

## Martin Short Joins Kathryn Hall for a Palm Springs Wine Tasting

Tony-winning actor Martin Short reaches for wine to celebrate, and he knows where to get a great glass. He recently joined vintner Kathryn Hall at her newest tasting room and lounge, in Palm Springs, California.

The *Only Murders in the Building* star is well-acquainted with Hall's lineup of wines (and its sister labels, Walt and Baca), having joined Hall for her *Virtual Happy Hour*. More than 300 episodes of *Virtual Happy Hour* were recorded; in addition to Short, guests included Jimmy Kimmel, Tina Fey, John Leguizamo, Tori Spelling and Julia Louis-Dreyfus.

In January, Hall and Short reunited for a tasting and to film the premiere of her interview series *Kathryn & Friends*. Short got more than just a glass of his favorite 2019 Kathryn Hall Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley when he visited the newest of Hall's six tasting rooms: Palm Springs Mayor Ron deHarte was on hand to proclaim January 4th Palm Springs' official Martin Short Day. Our spies report that Short was ready to celebrate.

—Robert Taylor



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