

10 Wines That Taste Pricier Than They Are

by [Anthony Hall](#) on 18 April 2014

1 comment



Value, when it comes to wine, is in the palate of the beholder. But it also depends on the wallet of the beholder, as well. Frankly, what is considered to be a great deal on a wine for dinner is worlds apart depending on whether you have that conversation with Bill Gates or Warren Buffett or with little ol' me. (See also: [10 Cheap and Tasty Wines](#))

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You can start with a \$5 gallon jug and work up from there until you hit the pinnacle of bad wine purchases, which was the bottle of 1787 Chateau Lafite that sold for \$156,000 plus or about \$26,000 per glass in 1985. Given that Bordeaux lasts about 50 years, what is known as the most expensive bottle of wine ever sold was really the most expensive bottle of vinegar ever sold.

Luckily for everyone else, there's a lot of ground in the middle. The Wine Enthusiast, for example, reviewed 16,000 bottles of wine in 2013, coming up with a list of [100 Must Have Wines](#) for the year. And "must have" essentially means that all 100 on the list were considered worth the price.

Their list includes a \$98 bottle of Cavallotto 2007 Vignolo Riserva Barolo, a good deal for some, if you have that kind of coin. Unfortunately, I don't.

Here are some bottles with pedestrian price tags you might enjoy. They certainly taste better than their price tag would indicate, so you can impress your guests without spending too much.

I've leaned on reviewers I trust and my own excursions into the field (or into a bottle) to come up with these.

5 Red Wines

Red wines are for romance, beef or lamb dinners, and windy porches. Picnics, too. And outings on the boat. And for impressing your boss. (See also: [10 Reasons to Drink Wine](#))

Zestos Old Vine Garnacha 2011

This is a quaffable [\\$8 steal](#) from Spain that gets high marks from reviewers, who declare it is delightful for informal outings — a good backyard wine, rather than a dinner table wine. It will wash down a hamburger quite well, one reviewer said. With this price, I had to put it on the list.

Dr. Konstantin Frank Cabernet Franc 2011

Speaking from experience now, this is a surprising New York wine that sells for \$16 and is both mature and lively. It has a gutsy punch that is sometimes defined as bright, peppery, and elegant. For a dark red, it also has a soft underbelly. You might say it has exotic overtones. What I like is the tang that accompanies New York reds, which some find a distraction, but I have grown fond of over the years. It makes the wine more versatile when choosing something for dinner, because this wine will go with anything and it will please your snooty wine friends and please your less-experienced drinkers, as well.

Borsao Berola 2008

Another bottle from Spain. this is a blend with a bright bouquet that retails for under



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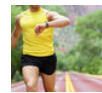
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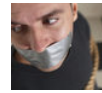
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Borsao Berola 2008

Another bottle from Spain, this is a blend with a bright bouquet that retails for under \$20 and has dark red color and a complex taste. This wine tastes older than it is; it has matured well and has a bold, fruity flavor blended into a soft presentation. It's full-bodied, in other words, but with a tickle, rather than a punch. Whereas I would have said "seductive," it is also described as "silky." (I figured that was a polite way of saying seductive, anyway.) The blend in this bottle is 70% Grenache, 20% Syrah, and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, which reads to me like an excellent potion. It is matured in French and American oak barrels and consistently gets rated with 90 points from reviewers — a great rating for an inexpensive wine.

Ex Libris Cabernet Sauvignon 2009

This is a fashionable wine from Washington State about which Chelsea Wine Vault owner David Hunter said "over-delivers" for the price. He is not alone in that assessment. The Reverse Wine Snob says this bottle "[drinks like a \\$45 Cabernet](#)," and yet it retails for \$14. I haven't tasted this one myself, but those are two reviewers I consider very reliable.

Mt. Beautiful North Canterbury Pinot Noir 2011

This is a spicy, complex wine from New Zealand that averages a rating of 89.4, which brings up expectations of a \$30 price tag. Not so. This wine has a hint of cranberry, black cherry, and a hint of oak, says reviewer Jon Thorsen at The Reverse Wine Snob. Further, it's a "[medium bodied... \[with\] absolutely fabulous balance](#)" wine that retails for \$18.

5 Whites

White wines are good for pasta dishes, fish, the salad course, wine beginners, and family gatherings (or other gatherings where some might shun the punchier red wines).

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Herman Wiemer's Finger Lakes Dry Riesling 2012

Now that we're here on the whites, let's start with my favorite. This is a warm wine with more than a hint of apricot and an aftertaste that hints of lemon-tinged butterscotch. It is often used as a dessert wine, but who likes to wait for dessert, anyway? This makes a great starter wine or something you can serve with soup, salad, and poultry, and it will have your guests talking and expecting surprises all night. Of course, that would only work if you are following up with white wines, because you don't follow this with reds. That would be like following a ballet with a boxing match. [For \\$16](#), it's a serious crowd pleaser.

Laurenz V. Singing Gruner Veltliner 2011

This is a feel-good wine from Austria that is fruity and crisp and sophisticated — only wine can present all those contradictions in one glass. This is a wine you want around if you have lots of guests, because it is [under \\$20](#), so you can pour liberally. If anyone complains (and that is not likely) tell them the money you saved went into the meal. (See also: [Feed a Dinner Party of 6 for Under \\$20](#))

Donnafugata Lighea Zibibbo Sicilia 2011

How is it that an imported Italian Moscato wine [selling for \\$12](#) tastes so exceptional? I almost believe that the cheaper the wine the more ethnicity it can claim. This is a dry, regional, perfumy wine that has bursts of fruity and flowery flavors. There are subtle hints of pear and peach that are quite exhilarating. Anyway, if it's good enough for the man on the street in Rome, it's good enough for me — and my budget.

Indaba Chenin Blanc 2011

My budget friendly pick from South Africa costs \$7 per bottle and tastes like... well, if I had a \$50 bottle to compare it to, I would. But this is certainly a surprise for most wine buyers. After all, it's not from France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, California, New York, or any of the standard wine regions. Nevertheless, a \$7 bottle of wine (how can

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