

WINE BUYERS GUIDE

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Cousino-Macul 2013 Antiguas Reservas Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley \$18 (298075) Expect rich black raspberries and blackcurrant aromas accented by pencil shavings, cocoa nibs and smoked spice notes. The palate doles out generous sweet fruit, chocolate, fine spice and espresso flavours. It's muscular and elegant in turns, with potent character and a long finish. Truly a bold and unapologetic red that offers great bang for your buck. (DVM)

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Viña Errazuriz 2014 Aconcagua Alto Cabernet Sauvignon Aconcagua Valley \$19.95 (203364) Errazuriz's Aconcagua Alto label is helping to define the new style of Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon, which embraces elegance over power and refinement over ripeness. It's a giant leap in the right direction for diligent producers working in the higher elevation sites in the foothills of the Andes. A blend of 90 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, seven percent Cabernet Franc and three percent Petit Verdot, the 2014 vintage conveys fresh red fruit, bright acidity, ripe tannins and long, persistent finish. A telling stat on the data sheet suggests this was aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 35 percent of which were new – less time and less new wood compared to what was fashionable five years ago. The result is a poised red wine that's drinking beautifully right now and for the next two to four years. (CW)

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Viña Santa Carolina 2014 Reserva de Familia Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley \$19.95 (408658) This is a robust Cabernet that manages to achieve some finesse at the same time. The flavours are rich and concentrated, with impressive layering and depth, and the texture is generous, mouth-filling, and smooth. The acid is well measured – it cuts through the fruit and freshens the texture – and the tannins are fine and integrated. It's drinking well, and I suggest drinking in the next two or three years to enjoy the primary fruit flavours. (RP)

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Viña Concha y Toro 2015 Casillero del Diablo Reserva Privada Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley \$17.95 Winemaker Marcelo Papa is moving to earlier picking within the harvest window as Concha y Toro moves away from the very ripe flavours that have dominated until recently, and towards wines that show "more precise" fruit character, are less sweet and have lower alcohol.

This Cabernet, from Chile's best region for the variety, is juicy and lively, but retains the depth and complexity of fruit you expect of the grape variety. It has much less of the mint/eucalyptus character often found in Maipo Cabernet – something Papa also attributes to earlier harvesting. This is a young cabernet that needs a little longer to integrate. Drink it from 2018-21. (RP)

FRANCE

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Clarence Dillon Wines 2012 Clarendelle Rouge Bordeaux \$23.95 (028837) This is an attractive blend of Merlot (57 percent), Cabernet Sauvignon (30 percent), and Cabernet Franc (13 percent). Aged in used and new French oak, it delivers lovely layered flavours and some intensity in the fruit, all supported by the clean, fresh acidity that helped me deal with a dish of cassoulet. The tannins have just a little nip – you couldn't call it grip, but there was something – and the texture is smooth and mouthfilling. It's a really lovely Bordeaux red that shows its Merlot dominance, and it's ready to drink now through to 2020, while the fruit is fresh. (RP)

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Cave de Rasteau 2015 La Domellere Rasteau, Rhône Valley \$22 (645655) This Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre blend comes from the new Rasteau appellation, which is located just north of Chateauneuf-du-Pape in the southern Rhône Valley. It's a wonderfully succulent wine, doling out roasted cherries and blueberries, sarsaparilla, mocha and toffee, then wrapped up with a bouquet of lilac and freesia blossoms. Equally supple and substantive on the palate, it offers plump purple fruits, mocha, spice, floral and bacon fat flavours that lead to a lengthy espresso finish. (DVM)

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Bouchard Pere & Fils 2014 Bourgogne Pinot Noir Burgundy \$27 (493544) A classic style of red Burgundy, the Bouchard relinquishes tangy red currants and cherry aromas layered with cocoa, smoked spices and leather. The palate follows suit; fine-boned and exceedingly fresh flavours of red fruit, forest floor, spice and tea leaf flavours. Overall, expect a solid regional style, and a perfect partner to creamy cheeses, salmon, duck or mushroom ravioli. (DVM)

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Brotte Pere Anselme 2015 La Fiole Cotes du Rhône Rhône Valley \$17.50 (194498) This contorted bottle is unique to Brotte's

Pere Anselme line of wines. It's an approachable red Rhône blend delivering an ambrosial cocktail of succulent purple berries, warm chocolate, leather and wild herbs. It has a dusty fruited palate with distinct earthy notes followed by spice. Overall, this is a simple yet effective wine, perfect for dinners involving rustic braised meat, stews, bean casseroles or ratatouille. (DVM)

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Gérard Bertrand 2013 Grand Terroir Les Aspres Côtes du Roussillon Roussillon, South of France \$18.95 (413245) A blend of Syrah, Mourvèdre, and Grenache, this delivers solid fruit right through the palate. It's characterized by complexity and structure, and is supported by a seam of well-calibrated acidity. The tannins are drying and well integrated, and you can drink it now through to 2020. (RP)

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Gérard Bertrand 2013 Grand Terroir Tautavel Grenache - Syrah - Carignan Roussillon \$18.95 (272575) Located between the foothills of the Pyrenees mountains and the Mediterranean, Tautavel is an ancient village in Roussillon where some of the oldest human remains have been unearthed. It's a special place, not least for the style of wine coming from the region's weathered Grenache, Syrah and Carignan vines. The hot climate coaxes intensely fruity and fragrant aromas and flavours from the grapes, suggesting ripe fruit and complex spice and floral notes. Approachable and engaging, this is a great winter red to enjoy with roast lamb or beef dishes. (CW)

ITALY

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Boia 2014 Valpolicella Classico Superiore Ripasso 2014 Veneto \$19.95 (475574) This is a drinkable wine that's juicy-textured, full of fresh fruit, and animated by lively acidity. A blend of Corvina, Corvinone, and Rondinella grapes, it shows the fruit concentration that comes from the ripasso process and here the fruit is not only concentrated but complex, well structured and well balanced by the acidity. The tannins are fine and drying, and well enough integrated that you can drink this now. Or hold it to the end of the decade, before it starts to lose its freshness. (RP)

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Donnafugata 2014 Sedara Sicily \$20 (560300) From an iconic Sicilian producer, this Nero d'Avola is blended with small

amounts of Cabernet, Merlot and Syrah to offers velvety aromas of black cherry and red plums, spicecake and an intense mineral/earthy core. Pronounced mineral tones appear on the palate as well; where cocoa, black fruits, tobacco and spice flavours are encapsulated in fine yet textural tannins. Overall, expect good balance and structure in a wine that's an excellent pairing for eggplant caponata, braised meats, roasted mushrooms and hearty pastas. (DVM)

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Marchesi de' Frescobaldi 2012 Nipozzano Vecchie Viti Chianti Rufina Riserva Tuscany \$29.95 (395186) Vecchie Viti translates to "old vines." The second release of Nipozzano Vecchie Viti Chianti Rufina Riserva is produced from the oldest vines on the Nipozzano estate, Sangiovese and complementary indigenous varieties (namely Malvasia Nera, Colorino and Canaiolo). Robust and age-worthy, this medium-bodied red delivers appealing dark fruit and spice notes with bright acidity that keeps things fresh and balanced from start to finish. The rich structure suggests it would be best enjoyed with hearty dishes such as baked pasta with a meat sauce or roasts. (CW)

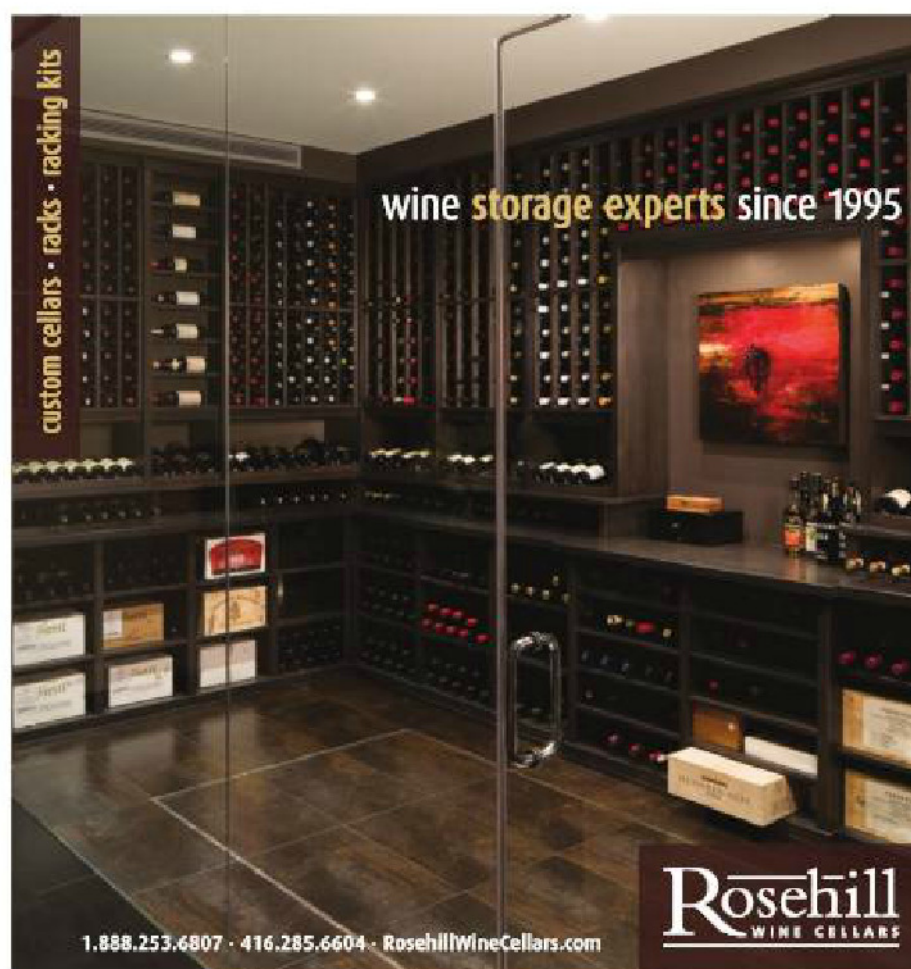
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Monte del Fra 2013 Ca Del Magro Custoza Superiore Veneto \$21 (216077) Here is another stunning vintage of the exciting white, Monte del Fra, which hails from Custoza, only 15 km from Lake Garda, near Verona. It is a unique blend of Garganega, Trebbiano Toscano, Tocai Friulano, Cortese, Chardonnay, Riesling Italico-Malvasia and Incrocio Manzoni, from a established, 40+ year-old vineyard. Expect a fragrant potpourri of honey, candle wax, lemon meringue, golden apples and marzipan. The palate is rich and slick with lemon oil, pine resin and a sweet kiss of peach flavor that rolls gently across the tongue. It has a delightful generosity and is even better than its 2012 predecessor. (DVM)

NEW ZEALAND

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Kim Crawford 2016 Spitfire Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough \$24.95 (038240) Spitfire is named for the Second World War aircraft; because the winery is located near the location of a wartime air force training base. This is an eminently drinkable style of Sauvignon Blanc, unlike many Marlborough Sauvignons that are too heavy in fruit sweetness. In contrast, the pungent aromatics of Spitfire take flight and the rich, defined flavours are complemented by fresh,



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