

A wine shopper's miscellany for winter drinking



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There are times of the year when we are looking for specific wines - a **rosé** for **Valentine's Day**, say; a robust **zinfandel** for **summer grilling**; a **sparkling wine** for the winter holidays - but sometimes it's fun to consider wine shopping like going to a farmers market. What is there that's new to try? What can you find that's a steal? What can I find here that I probably can't find elsewhere?

Here is a selection of wines for winter enjoyment from around the world, priced from \$9 to \$89, that can fulfill that variety of shopping pleasures.

Mont Gravet Côtes de Gascogne Blanc 2016 (\$9). Although **colombard** is a variety often used in American jug wine, it thrives in **Gascony, in southwestern France**, where the grape is used both for table wines and for Armagnac. This one has tart, green fruitiness and is tight in the finish, with notes of green apple skin.

Sea Pearl Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2017 (\$11). Crisp green flavors with a lime finish and a little spritz - very young, even for a wine from the Southern Hemisphere, where grapes are harvested in the spring.

M. Chapoutier Bila-Haut Côtes du Roussillon Blanc 2016 (\$13). Somewhat assertive, with lots of spicy fruit and a beeswax finish.

E. Guigal Côtes du Rhône Blanc 2015 (\$15). Crisp, with flavors of apples and aromas of baking spices.

Abbazia di Novacella Alto Adige Müller-Thurgau 2016 (\$20). Full-bodied, with pear, apple, and mineral flavors. This **riesling** cross makes good wine in this Northern Italian region.

Château Paul Mas "Belluguette" Languedoc Blanc 2016 (\$20). Lovely floral and tropical fruit notes, but with a lean structure and a firm finish.

Quivira Fig Tree Vineyard Dry Creek Valley Sauvignon Blanc 2016 (\$21). Lifting flavors of spicy green apples and tropical fruits with a hint of citrus. This is a complex wine, one that warrants a little contemplation as you sip.

Le Roi des Pierres Sancerre 2016 (\$30). Wet-fruit **sauvignon blanc** fragrance with mellow green fruitiness, notes of chalk, and a tight finish.

Terlan "Vorberg" Alto Adige Pinot Bianco 2014 (\$39). Nice complexity - a balance of stone fruits and minerality with a spicy, slightly tart finish.

Stony Hill Napa Valley Chardonnay 2015 (\$49). Just a lovely, flavorful wine with a crisp finish suggesting ripe pear, tropical fruits, and a hint of honey.

Gary Farrell Durell Vineyard Sonoma Valley Chardonnay 2015 (\$65). Beautiful and complex - well-balanced and lean, yet with a toasty, buttery finish,

Wayfarer Fort Ross-Seaview Chardonnay 2015 (\$77). A substantial, well-groomed white with mature apple flavors, lots of barrel notes, and some dusty tannins.

Paul Mas "Vignes de Nicole" Pays d'Oc Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot 2016 (\$10). Lively, with bright raspberry fruit.

E. Guigal Côtes du Rhône Rouge 2015 (\$15). Lovely, especially for the price, with lots of vibrant fresh cherry flavors brought to earth with spicy notes and a crisp finish.

Zuccardi "Serie A" Valle de Uco Malbec 2016 (\$15). Lots of intense red fruit - cherry and cranberry - with dark, savory undertones and a mildly tannic finish.

Quivira Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel 2015 (\$23). A mixture of bright and dark-fruit flavors with lots of puckery tannins.

Carlos Serres Rioja Gran Reserva 2011 (\$25). Gamey flavors with old-oak notes - an older style of wine that goes well with hardy foods.

Donnafugata "Tancredi" Terre Siciliane Red 2012 (\$40). A warm and generous blend of **cabernet sauvignon** and **nero d'avola** with a good balance of fruit and savory flavors.

The Prisoner Napa Valley Red Wine 2015 (\$45). A big, jammy wine with 15.2 percent alcohol that is quite lovely if you enjoy drinking at that dizzying altitude. Rather than spread it on your toast, dip your biscotti into it.

Fort Ross Vineyard Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir 2012 (\$53). A big, fruity, spicy wine with lots of vanilla in the finish.

Fort Ross Vineyard Fort Ross-Seaview Pinotage 2012 (\$58). An unusual varietal (a cross between **pinot noir** and **cinsault** bred in **South Africa**) from a new, fairly unknown appellation (established 2012) on the cold Sonoma coastline yields a wine that is dark, rich, spicy, and tannic, yet light in the finish. If you've acquired the taste, this is one of the better wines from the variety.

Franz Haas "Schweizer" Alto Adige Pinot Nero 2014 (\$70). A brooding yet not heavy pinot with rooty, savory flavors that linger on the palate - an ideal accompaniment for a wild boar ragout.

Gary Farrell Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir 2015 (\$70). Very fragrant and flavorful, with cola and rooty flavors and an underlying savory note. Still tight, so wait a few years if you can.

Frescobaldi Mormoreto 2012 (\$73). A very good Bordeaux-style blend of ripe, dark berries, with a raspy finish.

Wayfarer Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir 2015 (\$89). Moderate body with lots of fresh raspberries and considerable tannins - quite nice.

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