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# 25 Fascinating Mid-Winter Wines — Pricey Whites, Affordable Reds

Jan 26, 2018 | 1:22 pm By Roger Morris (https://www.thedailymeal.com/users/roger-morris), Contributor

A treasure trove for Alsace fanatics, and a stunning To Kalon cab from Robert Mondavi

We’ve passed the end-of-the-year holidays and are now firmly into the winter doldrums, with short days, cold nights, and only **Valentine’s Day** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/valentines-day>) to look forward to, in a few weeks, before spring. To help keep our spirits high, here is a collection of fascinating wines from all over — France, Italy, Spain, California, and New Zealand.

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**Blanck Alsace Pinot Blanc 2015 (\$14).** A big wine with lots of flavorful apple character. Fruity/sweet, but with good balancing acidity.

**Tasca d’Almerita Buonora Etna Bianco 2016 (\$20).** Crisp herbal flavors with a nice touch of bitters in the finish.

**Meyer-Fonné Pinot Gris Reserve 2016 (\$23).** Delicious, with a little spritz from somewhere that goes along well with the stone fruit and slightly woody flavors.

**Trefethen Oak Knoll Chardonnay 2016 (\$30).** From one of the pioneering families in the **Napa Valley** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/free-tagging-cuisine/napa-valley>) renaissance, this **chardonnay** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/variatal/chardonnay>), lean without being thin, has good mineral and spiced apple flavors with some lime thrown in.

**Domaine Weinbach Clos des Capucins Cuvée Théo Riesling 2015 (\$35).** Lovely, with a complex, concentrated light cherry flavor with a hint of apricot. In spite of its cost and pedigree, this is a very quaffable wine.

**Albert Boxler Pinot Blanc Reserve 2014 (\$36).** Very nice; crisp and spicy with a hint of cream in the finish.

**Robert Mondavi Carneros Chardonnay Reserve 2015 (\$46).** Some toast and spiciness with lots of barrel flavors integrated into the fruit.

**Michael Mondavi “Animo” Heritage Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc 2016 (\$59).** Assertive in a good way, with lots of gooseberries and lime — a very drinkable wine away from the table as well as with food.

**Zind-Humbrecht Hengst Grand Cru Gewürztraminer 2013 (\$69).** Hengst is one of **Alsace** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/drink/wines-alsace-are-excellent-fairly-priced-and-distinctive-why-are-they-so-little-known>)’s best vineyards, and it shows here with lovely stone-fruit aromas and flavors, zesty yet lightly sweet with an underlayer of dried honeycomb.

**Valpantena “Torre del Falasco” Valpolicella Ripasso Classico Superiore 2014 (\$12).** Nice for the price, with bright but ripe red fruit followed by rich, earthy, chocolate flavors.

**Santi “Solane” Valpolicella Ripasso Classico Superiore 2015 (\$13).** A creamier version of ripasso than the Valpantena, with more old-barrel flavors.

**López de Haro Rioja Crianza 2014 (\$15).** Basic **Rioja** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/wine-search/rioja>), with some raspberry fruit, but don’t expect too much at this price.

**Tasca d’Almerita Tascante “Ghiaia Nera” Sicilia Nerello Mascalese 2014 (\$20).** **Nerello mascalese** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/wine-search/nerello>) is a grape that loves the volcanic soil of Mt. Etna in **Sicily** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/free-tagging-cuisine/sicily>)’s eastern region. Here, it produces a dark, murky wine with muted berry fruits and a hint of nuttiness.

**Michel Chapoutier Bila-Haut “Occultum Lapidem” Côtes du Roussillon Villages 2015 (\$23).** Gamey and puckery (perhaps it needs more bottle time), with flavors of blackberries and mulberries.

**Sartori “I Saltari” Valpolicella Superiore 2009 (\$28).** It’s nice to be able to have a mature, almost-9-year-old wine — with firm, integrated fruit flavors and pleasant barrel notes — available at this price.

**Matsu El Recio Toro 2015 (\$30).** A medium-bodied **tempranillo** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/varietal/tempranillo>) with good cherry fruit and a dark, savory finish.

**Craggy Range Te Muna Road Martinborough Pinot Noir 2014 (\$41).** I’ve long thought that the best **New Zealand** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/free-tagging-cuisine/new-zealand>) **pinot noir** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/varietal/pinot-noir>) comes from **Martinborough** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/wine->

**search/martinborough)** on the North Island rather than **Marlborough** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/wine-search/marlborough>) or **Central Otago** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/wine-search/otago>) on the cooler South Island. **Craggy Range** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/wine-search/craggy-range>)’s Te Muna is a classic example, with very ripe fruit, rooty and cola flavors, firm tannins, and a great mouth feel.

**Star Lane Happy Canyon Cabernet Sauvignon 2011 (\$47).** A very ripe, spicy **cabernet** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/variatal/cabernet-sauvignon>) from **Santa Barbara County** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/free-tagging-cuisine/santa-barbara>) that has jammy flavors without a jammy texture.

**Donelan “Cuvée Moriah” Sonoma County Red Wine 2014 (\$49).** A “GSM” with more **grenache** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/variatal/grenache>) than **syrah** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/variatal/syrah>), or **mourvèdre** (<https://www.thedailymeal.com/variatal/mourvedre>), this wine has lovely dark raspberry fruit, a dried-herb undertaste, and good tannins in the finish.

**Trefethen Oak Knoll Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 (\$51).** Very concentrated, but not overly extracted, with dark berry and savory flavors; still tight, so decant first to give it some breathing room.

**Tasca d’Almerita Il Tascante Nerello Mascalese 2014 (\$54).** The nerello flavor is more typical in this wine than in its less-expensive counterpart; a very vibrant wine, with tart red fruits and a dark, satisfying finish.

**Albert Mann “Grand H” Pinot Noir 2014 (\$55).** Although we tend to rightfully think of Alsace as white wine country, there are some nice pinot noirs made as well. This one is different from most French pinots, but it's entrancing, with earthy, gamey flavors and a sour cherry finish, like the last sip of a Manhattan after you’ve eaten the fruit.

**Donnafugata “Mille e Una Notte” Terre de Siciliane 2012 (\$57).** A flavor of mulberry along with tropical red fruits and with good structure.

**Robert Mondavi “The Reserve” To Kalon Vineyard Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 (\$173).** Just a stunning red, a big wine with beautiful, complex, dark blackberry fruit, lots of balancing savory notes, and good, firm tannins; drinking well now, but will improve in the bottle.

**Donnafugata “Ben Ryé” Passito di Pantelleria 2015 (\$59).** Even though its terroir is administratively part of Sicily, this intriguing sweet wine comes from the small, windswept island of Pantelleria just off the coast of Africa. It has a luscious body with flavors of honey, baking spices, and sorghum, with strong acidity for balance.