

ANDREA IMMER'S
WINE BUYING GUIDE
FOR EVERYONE

*Featuring more than 400 Top Wines
available in Stores and Restaurants*

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Andrea Immer

Edited by Anthony Giglio

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Introduction

Although enjoying a good glass of wine is easy, all the types, costs, and confusing labels can make *shopping* for a bottle pretty hard. For the typical wine consumer, buying guidance—in the form of critics’ 100-point scores and elaborate tasting reports of rare and exclusive bottlings— isn’t much help. That is why I wrote *Andrea Immer’s Wine Buying Guide for Everyone*. It is your road map to the *real* world of wine buying—from restaurants and hotels to supermarkets, price clubs, wine shops, and websites. Here is what you’ll find inside:

Real-World Wines

This guide showcases more than 400 of the most popular and available wines on the market. The book includes everything from supermarket stalwarts to trade-up labels to superpremium “restaurant brands (with plenty of boutique pedigree but without the you-can’t-get-it frustration). Putting it plainly, if the wine is in your favorite neighborhood shops and eateries, at your supermarket or Costco, Olive Garden or Walt Disney World, Marriott or Carnival Cruises, Delta Airlines or wine.com, it’s probably in this book.

Wine Reviews from the Trenches

I am indebted to the many consumers and wine pros who helped assess, for each of the wines in the book, what really matters to buyers at the point of purchase—taste and value for the money. For each wine, you’ll also see their real-world reactions, as well as my impressions of how the wine stacks up in its grape or style category and in the marketplace overall. My tasters also contributed write-up candidates to the list of wines, and I’ve included those that received the highest number of positive mentions and have decent availability. There’s also space in each listing for your notes, so you can keep track of the wines you try. (I hope you’ll share your impressions with me for the next edition—read on to see how.)

Other Helpful Buying Tools in the Guide

Throughout the *Immer Guide*, I’ve included simple tools to address just about every major wine buying question I’ve ever been asked. They are:

Best-Of Lists—A quick reference to the top-performing wines in each grape or style category.

Andrea’s Kitchen Fridge Survivor™ and Kitchen Countertop Survivor™ grades—“How long will a wine keep after it’s opened?” Having heard this question more than any other from my restaurant customers and wine students, I decided several years ago that it was time to find out, so I started putting every wine I taste professionally to the “fridge/countertop test.” The resulting report card should help both home wine drinkers and restaurateurs who pour wine by the glass make the most of the leftovers, by simply recorking and storing red wine on the kitchen countertop and storing recorked sparkling, white, and pink wines in the fridge.

Immer Best Bets—This is the book’s “search engine” of instant recommendations for every common wine occasion and buying dilemma, from Thanksgiving wines to restaurant wine list best bets, part

crowd pleasers, blue chip bottles to impress the client, and more.

Wine List Decoder—This handy cross-reference chart will help you crack the code of different wine list terms, so you can quickly and easily find the styles you like.

Great Wine Made Simple Mini-Course—Mini-lessons covering wine styles, label terms, glassware, buying wine in stores and restaurants, and other housekeeping details to simplify buying and serving wine, so you can focus on enjoying it.

I had been in the restaurant wine business for more than a decade before I wrote my first book, *Great Wine Made Simple*. Having studied like crazy to pass the Master Sommelier exam (the hardest wine test you can imagine), I knew there were lots of great books out there. So why another? Because as I worked training waiters and budding sommeliers, I began to see that in practice those books weren't much help. Wine, like food, golf, the saxophone, and so many other sensory pursuits, is something you learn not by studying but by doing. So *Great Wine Made Simple* teaches wine not through memorization but the way I learned it—through tasting. It works, and it's fun, whether you are just a dabbler or a committed wine geek.

Similarly, I intend this guide to fill a gap. Most people around the country buy wine based on price and convenience. And whether it's restaurant guests, live callers on my Food Network and radio appearances, or e-mail from readers of my *Esquire* column, they all have the same questions: What are the good, cheap wines? And which wines are really worth the splurge? This buying guide is the first to answer those questions realistically, featuring wines and tastes in the broad marketplace, along with plenty of shrewd pro advice to help you make the most of every wine purchase. Food is one major way to do that, so as a professionally trained cook I've also included lots of pairing pointers.

How to Use This Buying Guide

Here is everything you need to know to get instant buying power from the *Immer Guide*.

Looking Up Wine Recommendations—by Wine Category or Winery Name

Wine Category—Grape, Region, or Type

The wine reviews are grouped by major grape variety, region, or type. For example: Reviews section headings look like this

WHITE WINES

Sparkling/Champagne

You'll probably recognize some of the main grape and style categories, because they lead the wine market in both quality and sales. These include what I call the Big Six grapes (the white grapes Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, and Chardonnay; and the reds Pinot Noir, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon), plus Pinot Grigio, Italian reds, Syrah/Shiraz, and some other popular categories. This is also the way most wine lists and many shops are set up. The “Other Whites” and “Other Red” sections are used for less common grapes and proprietary blends.

Helpful to know: I've arranged all the wine categories from lightest to fullest in body, as a quick reference for when you are shopping or perusing a wine list. More and more, restaurant wine lists are being arranged by body style, too, because it helps both the guest and the server quickly determine which wines are lightest or heaviest, so they can match their personal preference or food choice if they wish.

Winery Name—Alphabetical Wine Listings

The wines in each category are in alphabetical order by winery name, so you can easily find the specific wine you're looking for. For example:

Chardonnay [[Wine category heading]]

Almaden Chardonnay, California [[Alphabetical wine listings]] Beaulieu Vineyard (BV) Coastal Chardonnay, California [[Alphabetical wine listings]]

Helpful to know: If you are looking for a specific winery name rather than a grape or style category, the Winery Index at the back of the book will show you which producers' wines were reviewed for the guide and the page number for each wine review.

Key to the Ratings and Symbols in Each Wine Entry

This sample entry identifies the components of each wine listing.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | [[2]] | [[3]] | [[3]] |
| [[1]] Chateau Andrea Rosé | PC | T | V |
| New York | \$\$ | 26 | 28 |

[[4]] ♥ [[5]] Tasters marvel at its “amazing quality for a bag-in-the-box.” Pro buyers (including me) find it “every bit as good as the finest Cold Duck... and sometimes better!”

[[6]] *Kitchen Fridge Survivor™ Grade: A*

[[7]] Your notes:

[[1]] Wine name and provenance (country or state)

[[2]] Price category

[[3]] Taste and value ratings

[[4]] Symbols: These identify wines rated as

✓ best-of (rated most popular in their category)

👤 pro picks, or

✗ worthy write-ins in their respective categories.

♥ indicates an Immer “Top 50 Wines You’re Not Drinking” selection.

[[5]] Reviewers’ commentary, in quotation marks, along with my notes on the wine

[[6]] My Kitchen Fridge/Countertop Survivor™ Grade

[[7]] Space for your wine notes.

Price Category

Prices for the same wine can vary widely across the country. Here’s why: individual states regulate the sale and taxation of wine within their borders, and sometimes local municipalities have further regulations and taxes. That means the price for any particular wine depends very much on where you live and shop. In general, wines are cheapest in large urban areas, where there’s lots of retail competition. They are usually most expensive in so-called “control states,” where there is zero competition because the state acts as the sole retailer (Pennsylvania is one example). In addition, some of the wines in the survey are available in a different size or in more than one size (e.g., half bottles, standard 750 ml bottles, magnums, jugs, and larger). The price categories here, based on a standard 750 ml bottle, are intended as a guideline to help you compare relative prices of the different wines in the survey:

\$ = up to \$12

\$\$ = \$12.01 to \$20

\$\$\$ = 20.01 to \$35

NA indicates a wine not available in 750 ml bottles (sold only in jugs or bag-in-box format; prices for these are quite low).

Note: These are retail store prices, not restaurant wine list prices.

Taste and Value Ratings

Tasters (no pro credentials necessary, just an opinion) were asked to assess any of the listed wines that they'd tried in the past year on the following criteria:

- *Taste*—What did you think of the wine's taste?
- *Value for the Money*—Were you happy with what you got for the price you paid?

I kept the rating criteria simple, with scores listed on a scale of 0 to 30:

0–9 = Poor

10–15 = Fair

16–19 = Good

20–25 = Very good

26–30 = Outstanding

X = No data available

Certainly everyone has an opinion based on his or her own preferences and experience, and that's precisely what I sought to capture with this simple scale. I have also come to believe, from my years in the restaurant business and teaching wine classes, that most consumers can recognize inherent wine quality, regardless of their level of wine sophistication. I am pleased to say that the responses bore that out. Specifically, the wines that are consistently recognized by experts as quality and value leaders in their category were standouts among my tasters, too. Similarly, wines that have slipped, or whose price has risen unduly, were for the most part assessed accordingly. Other provocative attributes that influenced commentary and ratings included extreme prices (either high or low), an extreme reputation (either good or bad), and substantial inconsistency in the taste from one year to the next.

Symbols

Worthy Write-In ✖—Denotes that a wine was added to the book listings by popular demand (as noted earlier, only those write-ins with decent availability were included). Because most tasters gave the write-ins verbal endorsements rather than scores, I haven't included scores here but will do so in future editions of the guide.

Pro Pick 🏆—Indicates that a wine received consistently high praise from trade tasters.

Best-Of ✓—Identifies the top-rated wines in each category. (Rated "most popular" in the category— an average of the taste and value scores.)

Top 50 WYND ♥—Denotes an Immer “Top 50 Wines You’re Not Drinking” selection. Since they are not my write-ins and thus not assessed by my tasters, no scores are included.

Reviewers’ Commentary and My Notes

Along with their taste and value assessments, reviewers were asked to include comments on the wine—not tasting descriptions per se but “buyers’ notes” reflecting their gut reactions to the wine. If they felt a wine was overrated, underappreciated, delicious, awful, in a beautiful (or ugly) bottle, whatever, I asked them to say so and have passed along those impressions, as well as my own based on working every day with myriad wines, wine servers, and wine drinkers.

Andrea’s Kitchen Fridge Survivor™ and Kitchen Countertop Survivor™ Grades

I think a great many people hesitate to open wine for everyday meals because they won’t know what to do with leftovers. No wonder! It’s wildly expensive to pour out unfinished wine. And the frustration of wondering and worrying whether your wine’s over the hill, *after* the intimidation of shopping for the wine, is more than most of us can be bothered with.

Since I couldn’t stand the idea of people pretty much giving up on wine with dinner, and “How long will it keep after I open it?” is one of the most common wine questions I’m asked, I decided it was time to give some real answers.

I’m a bit embarrassed to admit that I began to test how long wines hold up in the everyday kitchen not because I was on a quest to answer these big-picture questions but because I kept tasting some impressive leftovers. In my sommelier and writing duties, I taste multiple wines often, and rarely with enough company to finish them the day they’re opened, or even the next. In going back to the leftovers—to see if they were as good (or as disappointing) as I’d remembered—I got some amazing surprises. Far more often than you’d think, the good wines stayed that way for days. Even more astonishing, some of the wines that were initially underwhelming actually came around and started tasting better after being open for a while (in the same way that some cheeses need to sit out at room temperature to show their best flavor or a bowl of chili can taste better after a day or two in the fridge).

And thus were born the Kitchen Fridge Survivor™ and Kitchen Countertop Survivor™ experiments. I hope the grades will give you confidence to enjoy wine with dinner more often, or even multiple wines with one meal (I frequently do), knowing that you can have tastes or just a glass of many wines, over several days, without the wines going “bad.”

To test the wines’ open-bottle longevity, I handled them as follows:

Whites—Recorked with the original cork (whether natural or synthetic). Placed in the fridge.

Reds—Recorked with the original cork. Placed on the kitchen counter.

Sparkling wines—Opened carefully without popping (popping depletes carbonation faster). Closed with a “clamshell” stopper designed for sparkling wines—sold in housewares departments and sometimes wine stores. Placed in the fridge.

Bag-in-box wines—These were not tested, because the airtight bag inside keeps the wine from oxidizing as it’s consumed—one of the major virtues of this type of packaging.

The same process was repeated after each daily retaste, until the wine’s taste declined noticeably. As I said, some wines actually taste better after a day or two. They were handled the same way.

There's no science to this. My kitchen is just a regular kitchen, probably much like yours. Hopefully these grades, which showed the wines' staying power in an everyday setting, will give you the confidence to enjoy wine more often with your everyday meals:

Avg a "one-day wine," which tastes noticeably less fresh the next day. This doesn't mean the wine is less worthy, just less sturdy—so plan accordingly by inviting someone to share it with you.

B = holds its freshness for 2–3 days after opening

B+ holds *and gets better* over 2–3 days after opening

=

A = has a 3- to 4-day "freshness window"

A+ holds *and gets better* over 3–4 days

=

To learn how to lengthen the survival rate of your wine leftovers, see "Handling Wine Leftovers" in the *Great Wine Made Simple* Mini-Course chapter of this book.

Your Notes

Would you join my tasting panel? Of course, I would love for you to record your wine impressions and share them with me for the next edition of the *Immer Guide* (please see the form at the back of the book to request a survey, or you may do so at www.greatwinemadesimple.com). But even if you are not the survey type, do it for yourself. Whether you're at home or in a restaurant, the guide is a handy place to keep notes on what you drank, what you paid, what food you had with it, and what you thought. Don't you hate it when you've enjoyed a wine, then can't remember the name when you want to buy it again?

A Few Questions About the Wine Entries

How Were Wines Chosen for Inclusion in the Book?

The wines represented are the top sellers in stores and restaurants nationally, in each style category. I featured mostly the top-selling premium, cork-finished wines because they outsell generics overall. However, I did include the dominant screw-top and bag-in-box wines, and my tasters did not ignore them. Don't see one of your favorite wines? Keep in mind that both popularity and availability of specific wines can vary a lot regionally, so a big brand in your area may not have the same sales and presence in other markets. This is especially true with local wines—for example, the Texas Chenin Blanc or New York Riesling that's on every table in your neck of the woods may not even be distributed in the next state. I also included worthy write-ins—those with decent availability that got the highest number of positive mentions from my tasters, although in some cases that availability may be skewed heavily to restaurants. Why? you ask. Many buyers have told me of their frustration seeing the wines they'd like to purchase available only in restaurants. It's a phenomenon that has become increasingly common in the wine boom of the last few years. Simply put, wineries with limited supply often concentrate on restaurant lists because of the image enhancement they can offer—good food, nice setting, and (usually) fewer competing selections than in a shop. Finally, I also

constantly asked for specific wine recommendations, especially for the so-called “sleepers,” the new and-different, outstanding values, and up-and-coming regions. So I added my own list of “write-ins” which I’ve called the Top Fifty Wines You’re *Not* Drinking. These nifty selections have good availability but aren’t so well-known. I think they should be!

Why No Vintage Years?

This guide deals with the top-selling wines in the market, and so, for the most part, the year available in stores and restaurants is the winery’s current release. But I am also making a philosophical statement about vintages for the wines in the guide, and it is this: I believe that the leading wines in the market *should* be fairly consistent from one year to the next so that consumers, and the retail and restaurant wine buyers who serve them, need not sweat the vintage, as long as it’s current and fresh. There are certain wine categories where vintage is a bigger consideration—among them expensive California reds, French Bordeaux and Burgundy, and upscale Italian reds. But even with these, if you do not intend to cellar the wines (very few buyers do), vintage isn’t so critical. A few of the tasters mentioned the vintage issue, but most were comfortable with my approach.

Immer Insight: Ninety-five percent of the quality wines on the market are meant to be consumed within one to three years of the harvest (the vintage date on the label), while they are young, fresh, and in good condition. Most wines do not get better with age, so why wait?

Can You Really Define “Outstanding” Wine?

Indeed I can. We all can. Broadly, it is a wine that captures your attention. It could be the scent, the taste, the texture, or all three that make you say first, “Mmm...,” and then, “Wow” as your impression registers in the moment, in the context of all your prior experience and the price you paid. If it sounds very personal and subjective, you’re exactly right—it is. That is why I felt a guide like this showcasing the impressions of real-world buyers, was so important. The fact that the wines herein are big sellers is already an endorsement. The details put each wine in context—of price, similar-style wines, occasion, and whatever else buyers feel is important. No other wine buying guide does that.

Who Were the Tasters?

Over a six-month period in 2001 I surveyed thousands of American wine buyers—trade colleagues (retail and restaurant buyers, sommeliers, hoteliers, chefs, waiters, importers, and distributors). The trade buyers included most major chain restaurants and stores, chefs, and my master sommelier colleagues, among others. I also surveyed consumers, recruited through my restaurant guests, the events and classes I conduct around the country, my website, and of course the friends and family network, including family members I didn’t even know I had until I found them on the e-mail trail. I originally thought consumers would be less keen than trade to share their wine opinions, but I was wrong. Consumers account for more than half of the responses. Although I didn’t purposely exclude anyone, I did review every survey returned for signs of ballot stuffing from winery companies and

eliminated all suspicious responses (there were literally just a couple).

Why Do These Tasters' Opinions Matter?

Clearly, this guide for everyone takes an utterly populist perspective that's different from every other wine publication on the market—and that is exactly what I intended. I think the honest assessment and perspective of consumers who have to pay their own money for wine (while wine journalists rarely do), and the restaurateurs and retailers who serve them, are extremely important and helpful—because they're the real world. (With so little of that perspective in the marketplace, can it be any wonder that wine is barely a blip on Americans' cultural radar screen?) I am not dismissing the value of, and expertise behind, the leading critics' scoring reports. But I do think they often further the notion that there are haves and have-nots in the wine world: the 90+-rated “good stuff” that none of us can afford; and the rest—the wines we see every day whose lower scores seem bad by comparison. That perspective is perhaps valuable to a tiny, elite group of luxury wine buyers. But for what I call the OTC (other than collectors) market, which comprises the bulk of the nation's buyers (including just about everyone I know), this dichotomy leaves us feeling utterly insecure about our own taste and budget, skeptical about the quality of the selection at the stores and restaurants we frequent, and self-conscious about our (legitimate) desire for value for the money—in the vernacular, good, cheap wine. If I've achieved my goal, this guide's real-world information will give you a renewed sense of confidence in your own taste and some great word-of-mouth guidance on new wines to try that are actually available where you shop and dine. Enjoy!

My Guest Insiders' View of Wine Market Trends

By Brian Yost

Vice President, Beverage
Marriott International

An interesting phenomenon is taking shape across the country. Guests in the restaurants, bars, and ballrooms of our hotels are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about and interested in food and beverage, wine in particular. The impact of the Food Network, the multitude of wine-related consumer magazines, and the many well-written books on wine has been to enlighten and encourage wine fanciers to further explore the world of wine and all that it has to offer.

This newfound passion has been fueled by the fact that, in general, our guests are more travelers than ever before, expanding their wine horizons as they collect stamps in their passports. The combination of this passion and education is driving our guests to seek out new experiences, to taste varietals that they have not tasted before, and to look for appellations that may represent new finds. While many travelers are still enjoying luxury wines like first-growth French Bordeaux and California Cabernets, just as many are seeking out the values (and quality) offered by a Syrah-based Crozes-Hermitage from France, a superripe Chilean Chardonnay, or an aromatic Argentine Malbec. And speaking of quality and value, the Australian portion of our portfolio continues to enjoy great success, with Shiraz and Merlot leading the wave of the wines from down under.

Having said all of this, American wines continue to dominate the sales landscape in our hotels. However, as already pointed out, here too guests are searching for a quality/value balance—not a low-cost alternative but a high-quality, perhaps lesser-known, better-value bottle. As might be expected, the core varietals (Chardonnay, Cabernet) still account for the majority of our American wine sales, but it is interesting to note a bit of a surge in Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, and Zinfandel as more adventurous consumers continue to experiment. Before leaving a discussion of American wines, I would be remiss not to mention what seems to be an increased thirst for wines from growing areas other than California, most notably Washington state, where again the quality is very high and there is still value to be found.

Finally, a quick look at the other categories on our wine list reveals the following. First, it seems that we've begun to drink more Champagne and other sparklers. This is particularly evidenced by a trend toward more sparkling wines by the glass and toward traditional bubbly-based cocktails and aperitifs. Second, Italy continues to play a growing role in our wine sales, led by the increase in the Pinot Grigio and Chianti categories. Finally, although still a relatively small proportion, we have begun to see some acceptance of Spanish Rioja and German Riesling—again, purchased primarily by the more adventurous guests.

I fully expect wine sales to continue to grow as an integral part of the dining/entertainment experience in our hotels. This will be aided by aggressive wine-by-the-glass programs, allowing guests to experiment at relatively low risk, continued focus on the selection of the products in our portfolio, and most important, by the ever-increasing interest and passion of you, our guests. Enjoy your adventure!

By Annette Alvarez

**Buyer, Southern California, Costco Wholesale
and**

David Andrew

Director of Wine, Costco Wholesale

One advantage of buying for a national retailer is that we can sit at our desks and see at a glance what wine trends are taking place all over the country.

Perhaps the most striking trend is that consumers are “trading up;” they’re buying better-quality and more expensive wines. Over the past several years price hasn’t seemed to be an issue for our customers, but this may be changing. We’re noticing that when wineries take a substantial price increase, say \$2 or \$3 per bottle, otherwise loyal customers will look elsewhere. Our members rely on us for value at every price point, but when they perceive that the value is no longer there, they move on.

Wine drinkers are definitely drinking more red wine than white. What’s interesting is that it’s not all Cabernet and Merlot as you might expect. We’re seeing the strongest growth in Shiraz, Pinot Noir, and Zinfandel. Particular countries and regions are trending very strongly, too. Australia, Bordeaux, Burgundy, and the Rhône are doing very well for us. We really think that this is a clear indication of American wine drinkers becoming more adventurous and looking for something new.

This applies equally to whites. While Chardonnay is still a huge category, we’re seeing much stronger growth in Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Grigio. New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc is particularly popular, and it’s not difficult to understand why.

The good news for wine consumers is that there has never been so much high-quality wine available in this country as there is now. Improvements in grape growing and winery technology around the world have helped wine regions maximize their potential, bringing better and better wine to market. This brings with it an increasingly wide range of choices for the consumer, too.

With today’s wine drinker’s thirst for adventure, there’s never been a better time to go out and experiment with great value wines from around the world.

Most Popular Wines—Reflecting Both Taste and Value for the Money

25 Most Popular Whites Based on Taste and Value

| Name | Wtd. | Ave. Price |
|---|------------|------------|
| Style Category | T/V Score* | Category |
| Lucien Crochet Sancerre, France | 24 | \$\$ |
| Sauvignon Blanc/Fumé Blanc | | |
| Brancott Rsv. Sauv. Blanc., New Zealand | 24 | \$\$ |
| Sauvignon Blanc/Fumé Blanc | | |
| Trimbach Riesling, Alsace, France | 24 | \$\$ |
| Riesling | | |
| Jolivet Sancerre, France | 24 | \$\$ |
| Sauvignon Blanc/Fumé Blanc | | |
| Trimbach Pinot Gris, Alsace, France | 24 | \$\$ |
| Pinot Gris/Pinot Grigio | | |
| Leflaive (Domaine) Puligny-Montrachet, France | 23 | \$\$\$\$ |
| Chardonnay | | |
| Martin Codax Albariño, Spain | 23 | \$\$ |
| Other White Wines | | |
| Cloudy Bay Sauv. Blanc., New Zealand | 23 | \$\$\$ |
| Sauvignon Blanc/Fumé Blanc | | |
| Hugel Pinot Blanc, Alsace, France | 23 | \$ |
| Other White Wines | | |
| Chalone Central Coast Chard., Calif. | 23 | \$\$\$ |
| Chardonnay | | |
| Honig Sauv. Blanc, Calif. | 23 | \$\$ |
| Sauvignon Blanc/Fumé Blanc | | |
| Bernardus Chard., Calif. | 23 | \$\$\$ |
| Chardonnay | | |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Alois Lageder Pinot Grigio, Italy | 23 \$\$ |
| <hr/> | |
| Pinot Gris/Pinot Grigio | |
| Hugel Gewürztraminer, Alsace, France | 23 \$\$ |
| Other White Wines | |
| Talbott (Robert) Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Chardonnay | |
| Leflaive (Olivier) Puligny-Montrachet, France | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Chardonnay | |
| Château Montelena Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Chardonnay | |
| Penfolds Semillon/Chardonnay, Australia | 22 \$ |
| Other White Wines | |
| Didier Dagueneau Silex Pouilly-Fumé, France | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Sauvignon Blanc/Fumé Blanc | |
| Dry Creek Fumé Blanc, Calif. | 22 \$ |
| Sauvignon Blanc/Fumé Blanc | |
| La Crema Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| Chardonnay | |
| Frog's Leap Sauv. Blanc, Calif. | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Sauvignon Blanc/Fumé Blanc | |
| Cakebread Napa Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Chardonnay | |
| Kenwood Sauv. Blanc, Calif. | 22 \$ |
| Sauvignon Blanc/Fumé Blanc | |
| Rosemount Diamond Label Chard., Australia | 22 \$ |
| Chardonnay | |

25 Most Popular Reds Based on Taste and Value

| Name | Wtd. | Ave. Price | T/V | Cate- |
|----------------|--------|------------|-----|-------|
| Style Category | Score* | gory | | |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Muga Rioja Reserva, Spain | 25 \$\$\$ |
| Rioja, Ribera del Duero, and Other Spanish Reds | |
| Willakenzie Willamette Valley Pinot Noir, Oregon | 24 \$\$\$ |
| Pinot Noir | |
| Ridge Geyserville (Zin.), Calif. | 24 \$\$\$ |
| Red Zinfandel | |
| Alvaro Palacios Les Terrasses Priorat, Spain | 24 \$\$\$ |
| Rioja, Ribera del Duero, and Other Spanish Reds | |
| Etude Pinot Noir, Calif. | 24 \$\$\$\$ |
| Pinot Noir | |
| Chât. de Beaucastel Chât.-du-Pape, France | 24 \$\$\$\$ |
| Syrah/Shiraz and Other Rhône-Style Reds | |
| Joseph Phelps Napa Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 24 \$\$\$\$ |
| Cabernet Sauv. and Blends | |
| Rosemount Diamond Label Shiraz, Australia | 24 \$ |
| Syrah/Shiraz and Other Rhône-Style Reds | |
| Shafer Merlot, Calif. | 24 \$\$\$\$ |
| Merlot | |
| Duckhorn Napa Merlot, Calif. | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| Merlot | |
| Pesquera Ribera del Duero, Spain | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Rioja, Ribera del Duero, and Other Spanish Reds | |
| Rosemount Diamond Label Shiraz/Cab. Sauv., Australia | 23 \$ |
| Syrah/Shiraz and Other Rhône-Style Reds | |
| Chateau Gruaud-Larose Bordeaux, France | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| Cabernet Sauv. and Blends | |
| Antinori, Marchese Chianti Classico Riserva, Italy | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Chianti and Sangiovese | |
| St. Francis Sonoma Merlot, Calif. | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Merlot | |
| Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Napa Merlot, Calif. | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| Merlot | |
| Morgan Pinot Noir, Calif. | 23 \$\$ |
| Pinot Noir | |
| St. Francis Sonoma Zin, Calif. | 23 \$\$ |
| Red Zinfandel | |
| Querciabella Chianti Classico Riserva, Italy | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Chianti and Sangiovese | |
| Beringer Knights Valley Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 23 \$\$\$ |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Cabernet Sauv. and Blends | |
| Penfolds Bin 389 Cabernet/Shiraz, Australia | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Cabernet Sauv. and Blends | |
| Château La Nerthe Chât.-du-Pape, France | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Syrah/Shiraz and Other Rhône-Style Reds | |
| Selvapiana Chianti Rufina, Italy | 23 \$\$ |
| Chianti and Sangiovese | |
| Jaboulet Côtes-du-Rhône, France | 23 \$ |
| Syrah/Shiraz and Other Rhône-Style Reds | |
| Groth Napa Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| Cabernet Sauv. and Blends | |

Best of the Big 6 Grapes

| Name | Wtd. | Ave. Price | T/V | Cate- |
|----------------|--------|------------|-----|-------|
| Style Category | Score* | gory | | |

5 Most Popular Rieslings

| | |
|--|---------|
| Trimbach Riesling, Alsace, France | 24 \$\$ |
| Hogue Fruit Forward Johannisberg Riesling, Wash. | 22 \$ |
| Château Ste. Michelle Riesling, Wash. | 21 \$ |
| Bonny Doon Pacific Rim Riesling, USA/Germany | 21 \$ |
| J. Lohr Bay Mist Riesling, Calif. | 20 \$ |

10 Most Popular Sauvignon/Fumé Blancs

| | |
|---|---------|
| Lucien Crochet Sancerre, France | 24 \$\$ |
| Brancott Rsv. Sauv. Blanc., New Zealand | 24 \$\$ |
| Jolivet Sancerre, France | 24 \$\$ |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Cloudy Bay Sauv. Blanc, New Zealand | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Honig Sauv. Blanc, Calif. | 23 \$\$ |
| Didier Dagueneau Silex Pouilly-Fumé, France | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Dry Creek Fumé Blanc, Calif. | 22 \$ |
| Frog's Leap Sauv. Blanc, Calif. | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Kenwood Sauv. Blanc, Calif. | 22 \$ |
| Ferrari-Carano Fumé Blanc, Calif. | 22 \$\$ |

30 Most Popular Chardonnays

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Leflaive (Domaine) Puligny-Montrachet, France | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| Chalone Central Coast Chard., Calif. | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Bernardus Chard., Calif. | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Talbott (Robert) Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Leflaive (Olivier) Puligny-Montrachet, France | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Château Montelena Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| La Crema Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| Cakebread Napa Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Rosemount Diamond Label Chard., Australia | 22 \$ |
| Ferrari-Carano Sonoma Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Cambria Katherine's Vineyard Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| Lindemans Bin 65 Chard., Australia | 22 \$ |
| Château St. Jean Sonoma Chard., Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| Chalk Hill Chard., Calif. | 21 \$\$\$\$ |
| Sonoma-Cutrer Russian River Ranches Chard., Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| Gallo of Sonoma Chard., Calif. | 21 \$ |
| Edna Valley Vineyard Chard., Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| Grgich Hills Chard., Calif. | 21 \$\$\$ |
| Chât. Ste. Michelle Columbia Valley Chard., Wash. | 21 \$\$ |
| Benziger Chard., Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| J. Lohr Riverstone Chard., Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| Beringer Napa Chard., Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| Jacob's Creek Chard., Australia | 21 \$ |
| St. Francis Sonoma Chard., Calif. | 21 \$ |
| Beringer Founders' Estate Chard., Calif. | 21 \$ |
| Columbia Crest Chard., Wash. | 21 \$ |
| Sterling Vineyards North Coast Chard., Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| Hess Select Chard., Calif. | 21 \$\$ |

| | |
|--|---------|
| Penfolds Koonunga Hill Chard., Australia | 21 \$ |
| Raymond Estates Napa Chard., Calif. | 21 \$\$ |

10 Most Popular Pinot Noirs

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Willakenzie Willamette Valley Pinot Noir, Oregon | 24 \$\$\$ |
| Etude Pinot Noir, Calif. | 24 \$\$\$\$ |
| Morgan Pinot Noir, Calif. | 23 \$\$ |
| Cristom Willamette Pinot Noir, Oregon | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Robert Sinskey Napa Pinot Noir, Calif. | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Archery Summit Arcus Estate Pinot Noir, Oregon | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| Byron Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir, Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| Dom. Drouhin Willamette Valley Pinot Noir, Oregon | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| La Crema Pinot Noir, Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| Elk Cove Pinot Noir, Oregon | 22 \$\$ |

20 Most Popular Merlots

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Shafer Merlot, Calif. | 24 \$\$\$\$ |
| Duckhorn Napa Merlot, Calif. | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| St. Francis Sonoma Merlot, Calif. | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Napa Merlot, Calif. | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| Frog's Leap Merlot, Calif. | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Sterling Vineyards Napa Merlot, Calif. | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Casa Lapostolle Classic Merlot, Chile | 22 \$ |
| Chât. Ste. Michelle Columbia Valley Merlot, Wash. | 22 \$\$ |
| Columbia Crest Merlot, Wash. | 21 \$ |
| Carmenet Dynamite Merlot, Calif. | 21 \$\$\$ |
| Rodney Strong Merlot, Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| Franciscan Oakville Estate Merlot, Calif. | 21 \$\$\$ |
| Montes Merlot, Chile | 21 \$ |
| Ravenswood Vintners Blend Merlot, Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| Clos du Bois Sonoma Merlot, Calif. | 21 \$\$\$ |
| Pine Ridge Crimson Creek Merlot, Calif. | 21 \$\$\$\$ |
| Blackstone Merlot, Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| Gallo of Sonoma Merlot, Calif. | 21 \$ |
| Lindemans Bin 40 Merlot, Australia | 21 \$ |

30 Most Popular Cabernet Sauvignons and Blends

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Joseph Phelps Napa, Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 24 \$\$\$\$ |
| Château Gruaud-Larose Bordeaux, France | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| Beringer Knights Valley Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Penfolds Bin 389 Cabernet/Shiraz, Australia | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Groth Napa Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| Carmenet Dynamite Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Napa Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 23 \$\$\$\$ |
| Cain Cuvée Bordeaux Style Red, Calif. | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Château Larose-Trintaudon Bordeaux, France | 22 \$\$ |
| Cakebread Napa Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Hess Select Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| Château Greysac Bordeaux, France | 22 \$\$ |
| Franciscan Napa Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| Château Gloria Bordeaux, France | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Raymond Napa Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| Mt. Veeder Napa Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Beaulieu Vineyard (BV) Rutherford Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Jordan Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Heitz Napa Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Rosemount Diamond Label Cab. Sauv./Merlot Australia | 22 \$ |
| Guenoc Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| J. Lohr 7 Oaks Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$ |
| Silver Oak Alexander Valley Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Chât. Ste. Michelle Columbia Valley Cab. Sauv., Wash. | 22 \$\$ |
| Sterling Vineyards Napa Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$\$ |
| Gallo of Sonoma Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 22 \$ |
| Clos du Bois Sonoma Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| Rosemount Diamond Label Cab. Sauv., Australia | 21 \$ |
| Simi Sonoma Cab. Sauv., Calif. | 21 \$\$ |
| Jacob's Creek Cab. Sauv., Australia | 21 \$ |

Best of the Rest

| Name | Wtd. | Ave. | Price |
|----------------|------|-------|-------------|
| Style Category | T/V | Cate- | Score* gory |

5 Most Popular Champagnes and Sparkling Wines

| | | |
|---|----|----------|
| Roederer Estate Sparkling, Calif. | 23 | \$\$\$ |
| Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label NV Champ., France | 23 | \$\$\$\$ |
| Taittinger Brut La Francaise NV Champ., France | 23 | \$\$\$\$ |
| Perrier-Jouët Grand Brut NV Champagne, France | 21 | \$\$\$\$ |
| Mumm Cuvée Napa Brut Prestige Sparkling, Calif. | 21 | \$\$ |

5 Most Popular Pinot Grigio/Gris

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|------|
| Trimbach Pinot Gris, Alsace, France | 24 | \$\$ |
| Alois Lageder Pinot Grigio, Italy | 23 | \$\$ |
| Livio Felluga Pinot Grigio, Italy | 21 | \$\$ |
| King Estate Pinot Gris, Oregon | 21 | \$\$ |
| Cavit Pinot Grigio, Italy | 18 | \$ |

5 Most Popular Other Whites

| | | |
|---|----|------|
| Martin Codax Albariño, Spain | 23 | \$\$ |
| Hugel Pinot Blanc, Alsace, France | 23 | \$ |
| Hugel Gewürztraminer, Alsace, France | 23 | \$\$ |
| Penfolds Semillon/Chardonnay, Australia | 22 | \$ |
| Miguel Torres Viña Sol, Spain | 21 | \$ |

10 Most Popular Italian and Spanish Reds

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Muga Rioja Reserva, Spain | 25 \$\$\$ |
| Alvaro Palacios Les Terrasses Priorat, Spain | 24 \$\$\$ |
| Pesquera Ribera del Duero, Spain | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Antinori, Marchese Chianti Classico Riserva, Italy | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Querciabella Chianti Classico Riserva, Italy | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Selvapiana Chianti Rufina, Italy | 23 \$\$ |
| Santa Cristina Sangiovese, Antinori, Italy | 23 \$ |
| Vega Sindoa Tempranillo/Merlot Navarra Tinto, Spain | 23 \$ |
| Arzuaga Crianza Ribera del Duero, Spain | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Marqués de Cáceres Rioja Crianza, Spain | 22 \$\$ |

5 Most Popular Shiraz/Syrahs and Rhône-Style Reds

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Chât. de Beaucastel Chât.-du-Pape, France | 24 \$\$\$\$ |
| Rosemount Diamond Label Shiraz, Australia | 24 \$ |
| Rosemount Diamond Label Shiraz/Cab. Sauv., Aust. | 23 \$ |
| Château La Nerthe Chât.-du-Pape, France | 23 \$\$\$ |
| Jaboulet Côtes-du-Rhône, France | 23 \$ |

5 Most Popular Red Zinfandels

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Ridge Geyserville (Zin.), Calif. | 24 \$\$\$ |
| St. Francis Sonoma Zin., Calif. | 23 \$\$ |
| Cline Zin., Calif. | 23 \$ |
| Grgich Hills Sonoma Zin., Calif. | 22 \$\$\$ |
| Seghesio Sonoma Zin., Calif. | 22 \$\$ |

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