

Our Best Holiday Picks in 2018

Most of these wines are old standbys, but a few are new kids on the block. All represent great buys in the adult beverage world.

Launois "Cuvée Reserve" Brut
Blanc de Blancs Champagne
(\$34.99) Launois remains the
only Champagne I have ever sold
to someone from Champagne to
bring back to Champagne with
them! This Grand Cru Mesnilsur-Oger is composed entirely of
Chardonnay from estate vineyards
planted to the best, low-yielding massal selections. The result
is a creamy but vibrant, deep yet
quaffable wonder of a wine.

2015 Tongue in Groove "Cabal Vineyard" Pinot Noir Waipara Valley (\$29.99) This is a brooding and savory Pinot with luscious dark fruit and earthy clay notes. Already developing beautifully, this wine has fine-boned but firm tannin, good acidity, and medium weight on the palate. It shows an intriguing, savory olive quality that marries seamlessly with the black plum and cherry notes.

2010 Bodegas Casa Juan "Señor de Lesmos" Reserva Rioja (\$19.99) Our favorite old-school Rioja producer (and to this day, still one of Spain's best-kept wine secrets) knocked it out of the park with the fantastic 2010 Reserva. Delicious, pitch-perfect fruit and savoriness for now, some years later, and beyond.

2015 La Massa "La Massa" Toscana (\$19.99) Pure flavors of blueberry and blackberry ride integrated tannins with just a touch of earthy savoriness. The finish keeps that dark-fruited sensation. This property always makes fine value reds, and this 2015 continues that tradition.

2015 Tour St-Christophe, St-Emilion (\$34.99) The biggestselling 2015 (in bottles) for us. Vibrant wine with blackberry aromas and flavors. Typical greattasting, elegant, forward, Right Bank 2015. James Suckling is a **96** on this beauty!

CA Dreaming

2016 Moulin de la Gardette "Cuvée Ventabren" Gigondas (750ml \$39.99; 1.5L \$79.99)

One of the most engaging and balanced Rhônes I tasted this year, it is a hallmark of Gigondas with explosive black currant fruit, garrigue and spice. Sumptuous and silky, it has the stuffing to age but immediate appeal. Even better, we have some large format bottles for gift season! 98 DC, 95 RP

Golden Devil "K&L Exclusive"
Dark Navy Strength Rum
(\$19.99) Rum is hot and nothing is hotter than one dressed in uniform. This Navy Strength is the best deal in town and guaranteed to keep your gunpowder flammable! This insane blend of pot still rums from the Caribbean's best distilleries is the K&L Exclusive that every tiki nerd and

cane-craving cocktail captain wants in their well. There is no better way to spend \$20 than this magnificent specimen. (Previously sold as "Overproof.")

Rhône Holiday

Old & Rare

2015 Raymond "Reserve Selection" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$31.95) Cab is still king, especially when it can hit a reasonable price point—and at under \$40, you would be hard-pressed to find one that delivers more

that delivers more
"bang for the buck."
Like its owner, JeanCharles Boisset,
this wine is filled
with life. Tons
of rich, layered
fruit with hints
of vanilla spice,
mocha, red
currant and black
cherry fruit coat
the palate. 95 DC



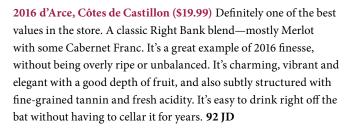
Bordeaux: Great Values and Classic 2015s in Stock

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

Just a few super values for the holidays—and do not miss the fabulous, forward, food-friendly fifteens. First, a couple of 2016s that have just come in, and they are stunning buys:

2016 Bellegrave, Haut-Médoc (\$13.99) Just in and not to be confused with the many other Bellegraves in Bordeaux. This wine is quite substantial for such a low price. Vibrant and lively on the palate with some toasty nuances and rounded tannins on the palate.

2016 Roque de By, Médoc (\$14.99) What a super value here. This property is not to be confused with La Tour de By, nearby. It is a separate property. **89-91** *WE*: "This is a firmly structured wine, dominated by solid tannins. Ample acidity and fruit concentration suggests it should age well, and be ready to drink from 2022."



2015 Petit Soutard, St-Emilion (\$19.99) What a delicious wine—the second wine of Soutard. Tons of blackberry jam on the nose with a touch of oak evident. So sweet and forward now, it is hard to resist.

2015 Capbern, St-Estephe (750ml \$22.99; 1.5L \$49.99) The first wine we tasted on the 2016 Bordeaux trip and we loved it. In fact, we preferred it to the Marquis de Calon. It has just arrived and wow is it good. These '15s are easy to drink, but they are young, so decant one hour on this one. It is sweet and silky. The finish screams St-Estephe. Great balance and tremendous depth of flavor for just over \$20. Buy a case and taste it in three years. **93 WE**

2015 Cantelys Rouge, Pessac-Leognan (\$29.99) Owned by the Cathiards of Smith Haut Lafitte fame and situated just next door, these wines are always values. The 2015 is mineral on the nose and packed with black fruit flavors. **92** *WS*

2015 Poujeaux, Moulis (\$34.99) One of my old time favorites—I just drank a heavenly bottle of their 1997. **94 JS:** "Suave, brambly mixed summer berry fruits take center stage on the nose with a very nicely layered palate carrying fresh bright berry flavors into an upbeat finish. Smart wine." You can never go wrong with Poujeaux.

2015 Branaire-Ducru, St-Julien (\$64.99) 95 WE: "This family-owned estate has produced a structured and dark wine with great concentration balanced by acidity and pure, creamy fruit. It is a wine with a good future. The aftertaste leaves juicy acidity and firm tannins."

2015 Duhart-Milon, **Pauillac** (\$69.99) **93 JS**: "The smoke, almond, dark-berry and plum character is impressive in this young Duhart. Full body, round and silky tannins and beautiful fruit and spice

undertones. Plenty of coffee and cedar flavors at the end. A pretty Duhart. Needs four or five years bottle age."

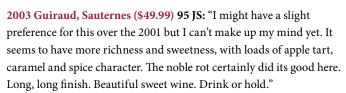
2015 Clinet, Pomerol (\$159.99) One of the top 2015s for sure. **99 JS** and **96** Neal Martin: "The 2015 Clinet is just a brilliant wine from Ronan Laborde and his team. It has a refined bouquet that is extremely well defined, blackberry, briary, crushed stone and hints of black truffle developing with time...This is a classy, mineral-driven Pomerol that has enormous potential."

2015 Pichon-Lalande, Pauillac (\$179.99) **96** points Neal Martin: "The 2015 Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande has a beautiful bouquet that soars from the glass: blackberry, bilberry, potent graphite scents that lend it an air of Pauillac. I love the precision here and the manner in which it builds and gains momentum with aeration...This is a serious Pichon-Lalande for long-term aging."

Sauternes: Sweets for Your Sweetie

2015 Haut Charmes, Sauternes (375ml \$11.99) This 2015 has the richness of the 2012 with the focus and acidity of the 2013. Haut Charmes is a very special Sauternes bottling, made from the younger vines of one of the region's most legendary châteaux (the property starts with an S). Charming, elegant and an exceptional value for what's in the bottle.

2015 Petit Guiraud, Sauternes (\$24.99) Superb value right now. **91 JS:** "This has an interesting oolong-tea note plus a lot of citrusy freshness and enough caramel and honey to make for a satisfying experience. Well balanced and easy to enjoy now."



2014 Coutet, Barsac (\$49.99) Fabulous wine and great price.

97 *WE*: "Powered by intense botrytis, this wine is opulent and ripe, with spice, yellow fruit and honey flavors. It has just the right balance of acidity to maintain its shape and proportions. It's likely to age well over many years. Drink from 2024."

One Fabulous Dry White Wine:

2016 Y de d'Yquem, Bordeaux Blanc (\$169.99)

96 *WS*: "Rather rich, with coconut, green fig, creamed pear, yellow apple and jasmine notes all melded together, picking up light acacia and elderflower accents on the finish. Very, very showy, with the underlying cut to pull it off. Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon."





Frosty Holiday Champagne for Everyone!

By Gary Westby

The best part of the holidays is celebrating friends and family and taking time to enjoy each other's company. This year we have lots of very good Champagne to celebrate with that will fit every occasion and budget.

Our best deal in Champagne is the Baron-Fuenté "Grande Réserve" Brut Champagne (\$24.99) which is aged for three years on the lees and composed of 60% Meunier, 30% Chardonnay and 10% Pinot Noir from the western part of the region. This has the right amount of toast, a classy, fine bead and a dry, refreshing finish.

The Ariston Aspasie "Carte Blanche" Brut Champagne (\$29.99) is a perfect choice for people who love depth in their Champagne, but have a large, thirsty crowd. This all-estate-grown brut has been aged an amazing five years on the lees, and has the finesse and complexity that you would expect from something kept this long. At 40% Chardonnay, it has plenty of vibrant verve while the 30% Pinot Noir and 30% Meunier give the Champagne the power and richness of a much more expensive wine.

If you love blanc de blancs, the long delayed Franck Bonville Grand Cru Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne (\$34.99) has finally arrived. This Avize masterpiece is 100% Grand Cru Chardonnay from the immaculate estate of Olivier Bonville. It has limey, zesty brightness as well as fine, subtle creamy character from the 50% reserve wines used in the blend. This is classy juice.

No big house has made such a leap forward recently as Laurent-Perrier with their "La Cuvée" Brut Champagne (\$39.99). They recently purchased an old Champagne house and procured some incredible Chardonnay as a result. They renamed their non-vintage wine La Cuvée because of the change. It now it sees four years on the lees instead of three. This Champagne has a lot in common with Puligny-Montrachet, and delivers a wine that is elegant, delicate and far too easy to drink a lot of.

One of our most awaited releases just arrived, the 2010 Launois "Spécial Club" Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne (\$59.99). This comes from Bernard Launois' two oldest plots of Mesnil Chardonnay,

both planted in the early fifties. This concentrated, chalky, dry, driven, super long Champagne is perfect for your Dungeness crab feed this year, and for many years to come if you should decide to cellar some.

Another incredible value in top-class Champagne is the 2012 Louis Roederer Brut Champagne (\$64.99). They farm the 70% Pinot Noir from Verzenay and the 30% Chardonnay from Avize that makes up this Champagne as a separate estate. The results are stunning, and far





more interesting than some of the famous names at double the cost. The 2012 vintage is famous for a reason: the tiny crop of high-quality wines it yielded have a rare concentration that reminds me of 2002. This wine has an elusive hazelnut toast married to a dry, chalky finish and is perfect for a racy toast today, and a profoundly complex drink in a few years if you store some away. 96 JS, 94 RP

My favorite pick for an important gift this year is the 2006 Billecart-Salmon Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne (\$129.99). We were happy to sell this for \$180 before, but managed to buy up all that was allocated for this holiday season, securing a great deal for our Champagne-loving customers. This tiny production Champagne comes from the Grand Crus of Mesnil, Avize, Oger, Cramant and Chouilly. Drinking this at dinner with Geoffrey from the property, I wrote in my notebook, "Lafon Meursault richness up front, Salon belemnite chalk on the back." This is a Champagne that truly has it all, including the famous name of Billecart on the front label. It is sure to delight the most sophisticated of friends and colleagues! 96 WE

A toast to you!



Go for the Golden State: 10 California Picks for the Holidays

By Trey Beffa

2017 Kalinda Sonoma County Chardonnay

(\$14.99) A great Sonoma Chardonnay for under \$15? What a value. Melon aromas and some vanilla oak nuances on the nose. This one goes down easily with some oaky notes and fine acidity at the back palate. Clean and refreshing, but if you love the Rombauer buttery style, don't buy this one. We can't tell you who made it for us, but they are famous.

2017 Kalinda Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (\$26.99)

This wine comes from one of the most famous Kalinda Pinot Noir producers in Northern California really. This beauty is at a price much lower than what you'd pay at the winery, making it an amazing value. The nose is delicate with red fruit and floral notes and a hint of spice. On the palate this wine has good acidity and tannin, and has great aging potential. You can drink it now with the usual holiday fare, but it will really start to blossom with another year in the bottle. I suggest decanting it for an hour.

2016 Seghesio Sonoma County Zinfandel (\$19.95)

Zinfandel is the one varietal wine of which Californians can say for sure, "we grow it better here!" Over the past 100 years, the Seghesio family of Sonoma County has had a hand in the wine industry in some form or another. The 2016 is another in a long line of consistent, bold, ripe Zinfandels from this property. This wine will pair surprisingly well with food, so don't be afraid to serve it for your holiday meals! 93 WS

2015 Dierberg "Dierberg Vineyard" Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay (\$Inquire)

The Dierberg Vineyard sits 13 miles from the Pacific Ocean. The cool influence of the ocean helps this wine maintain its acidity on the finish. Up front, its toasty aromas are followed by a mouth-coating texture and a spicy, lingering finish. The fruit is very ripe and bright. A favorite of many publications, this received four 91-plus-point scores—pretty impressive! 93 RP

2016 Scattered Peaks Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$34.95) The 2015 release of Scattered Peaks received a 97-point score from Decanter and quickly became one of the best-selling wines of the year here at K&L. While not professionally reviewed yet, the 2016 is another stunner and promises to be just as highly touted. The 2016 is a well balanced, fresh Napa Cabernet that doesn't exhaust the palate.







2016 Flowers Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (\$39.99)

One of our best-selling Pinot Noirs at any price, the Flowers has been a crowd favorite for several years here at K&L. A prototype Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, this wine shows high-toned red fruits, along with hints of anise, minerals, toast and cedar. On the finish the wine is long and smooth. 91 RP

2016 Leviathan California Red Blend (\$44.99)

Winemaker Andy Erickson sticks to the script with the 2016 vintage, blending Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. The resulting wine is a very full bodied, intensely fruited, toasty blend that still shows balance and structure. If you are looking for something a bit different and exciting, this wine is the perfect choice.

2015 Inglenook "1882" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$44.95)

A blend of 89% Cabernet Sauvignon and 11% Cabernet Franc, the 1882 pays tribute to Gustave Niebaum's first vintage. This wonderful Cabernet is loaded with red and black cherry fruit, hints of vanilla and spice, all set on a firm, dense structure. This is an excellent pick for the cellar but despite being so young, it shows pretty well now.



2015 Opus One Napa Valley Bordeaux Blend (\$349.99)

One of the best Opus One vintages in several years, the 2015 is a monumental wine! Checking off all the boxes, the 2015 is a blend of 81% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Cabernet Franc, 6% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot and 2% Malbec. This is a wine for the cellar and would be appreciated by any connoisseur. 98 JS, 97 RP





Fantastic Red Burgundy for Under \$100

By Alex Pross

Far too often, I think we get caught up in chasing "the very best," whether it is drinking Grand Cru red Burgundy or only wanting to eat at Michelin-starred restaurants. But by living according to the highest standards, we miss out on many of life's more affordable pleasures, like great-tasting red Burgundy for \$100 or a great hole-in-the-wall restaurant.

Luckily, with two strong vintages in a row in 2015 and 2016, there are numerous great Burgundy buys just waiting to be snatched up. 2015 and 2016 really are a tale of two vintages, with the 2015s being more powerful, having darker fruit and more pronounced spice, while the 2016s are fresher, brighter, and more precise and pretty. Both offer a wonderful experience—just in a different package.

Two fine bargains currently gracing our shelves are the 2015 Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy Gevrey-Chambertin (\$49.99) and the 2015 Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy Gevrey-Chambertin Vieilles Vignes (\$64.99). Domaine Harmand-Geoffroy is located in the heart of Gevrey-Chambertin and is known for fashioning Old World-styled reds that truly speak to their terroir. These wines have dark fruit that unfurls layer after layer on a complex palate, with the Vieilles Vignes being a tad bit more structured and requiring a bit more time to coax out all of its nuances. If you're searching for a great, affordable Gevrey-Chambertin, then look no further.



Two prime examples of the differences between the 2015 and 2016 vintages are the 2015 Domaine Gérard Mugneret Vosne-Romanée (\$79.99) and the 2016 (\$79.99). We have both vintages in stock and the wines are strikingly different. The 2015



for a future bottling.

displays dark fruits of plum and black cherry with a more succulent feel, while the 2016 has notes of violet, red cherry and spice with a more lifted palate. A great example of how a Vosne-Romanée should feel, smell and taste, this is a holiday treat at only \$79.99.

You can never go wrong with the three houses of Faiveley, Jadot and Drouhin. These large houses produce myriad wines through

their numerous holdings and long-term contracts that allow them, in stronger vintages like 2015 and 2016, to offer excellent wines at killer pricing. With a winery located in the heart of Nuits-St-Georges as





Vieil homme d'hiver visits Drouhin's Clos de Mouches in Côte de Beaune.

well as Mercurey, Faiveley has been tirelessly working on improving quality. A prime example of this is the 2016 Faiveley Mercurey 1er Cru "Clos des Myglands" (\$39.99), a stellar monopole offering from Mercurey. Loaded with plump red fruit, spice and supple tannins, this is a great Burgundian introduction for your friends and family. Packed with fruit but undoubtedly Burgundian, this is a prime example of the high-quality wines Faiveley is producing.

Not to be outdone, Louis Jadot has a wonderful everyday red that has become one of our annual staples here at K&L. The 2016 Domaine Louis Jadot Côte de Nuits-Villages "Le Vaucrain" (\$37.99) allows you to drink as if you have a Premier Cru red Burgundy while paying like it is a village red. Beautiful red cherry fruit is seamlessly surrounded by spice and crunchy red fruit and tannin notes while the finish lingers ever so sweetly.

Last but certainly not least is the venerable Domaine Drouhin. I was lucky enough to have a wonderful sit-down tasting with Véronique Drouhin, who graciously poured an array of amazing offerings while providing facts and stories that gave a great backstory to why many of the wines outperformed their neighbors. While they make stunning Grand Crus and Premier Crus, the two wines that always stand out as bargains to me are the 2016 Joseph Drouhin Côte

de Nuits-Villages (\$29.99) and 2016 Joseph Drouhin Côte de Beaune-Villages (\$27.99). The 2016 Côte de Nuits-Villages has good structure, with elegant red fruit and subtle spice notes all wrapped around a sleek, feminine body. This is a pretty wine that showcases everything there is to love about the Côte de Nuits without emptying your wallet. The 2016 Côte de Beaune-Villages, on the other hand, is a bit larger-scaled, a more rustic wine with darker fruits more apparent, spice notes, and an earthier bent. These two offerings are a great showcase of what Domaine Drouhin can do and of the subtle differences between the Côte de Nuits and Côte de Beaune.



Tenuta di Sesta's Italian Sunshine Warms the Winter Chill

By Greg St. Clair

When thinking about wines for the holidays, I always think of cold weather scenes, fireplaces, and the foods that are best enjoyed with the feasts of these wintry times. And there isn't a wine we have that works better for that than the wines of Tenuta di Sesta. Why, you might ask? Well, for me it is their supple, savory nature that gives one a feeling of a more mature wine, and a recollection of warm sunshine on your face. Sangiovese can sometimes show high acid levels but in these wines the smooth, languid flow of the wine across your palate gives you a feel of textural richness that seems to warm your bones. Get out your Yorkshire pudding, prime rib, roast goose or stuffed turkey and feel the richness.

Whenever I visit this winery I always feel more serene. There's just something about how it sits nestled into the hillside on Montalcino's south slope. It seems to have had the same effect upon the owners, Giovanni Ciacci and his son and daughter Andrea and Francesca the calm they exude is contagious. Their vineyards stretch down the slope from about 1,200 to 700 feet, being protected from the cold north wind by the hills at their back. They overlook the Orcia river valley and benefit from the warm airflow from the Tuscan coast. Here the soil here is rich in marl and limestone, the perfect foil to harness Sangiovese's vigor and allow the vine to produce complexity rather than bulk. Their estate covers almost 500 acres, of which 32 acres are in Brunello (all acreage in Montalcino is controlled and limited, and there isn't any "open" land to just plant Rosso or Brunello) and 26 acres of Rosso di Montalcino. The biggest portion of the estate is close to 250 acres that are planted to olives and grain. I love these wines. They reflect the placid serenity I spoke of previously, are far more savory than fruity and are far more elegant than bold, but incredibly expressive and very age-worthy as well.



Postcard from another not-to-be-missed vintage at Tenuta di Sesta.

2016 Tenuta di Sesta Rosso di Montalcino (\$16.99) Tenuta di Sesta is our most elegant Rosso. It is subtle and has a more feminine grace, but underneath that obvious restraint lies a wine full of complexity and savory intrigue...it just takes a bit of time to open up (I'd decant



K&L's Team Italy braves the sunshine of another spring day in Montalcino, only for the hope of bringing you some bone-warming Brunello for winter.

for an hour if you have the chance—also, they will age easily and wonderfully for another 4–5 years). In this vintage (if you haven't heard, 2016 is an *outstanding* vintage in Montalcino), of the more than 100 Rosso I tasted, this wine was my number-one choice. The depth of this wine's flavor is unreal—even its color is more pronounced than usual. It is a sensational wine.

2013 Tenuta di Sesta Brunello di Montalcino (\$32.99) I find that Tenuta di Sesta's wines are always overlooked upon release. They are never the loudest, tallest or heaviest; they just seem to be pleasant.

Yet after years of tasting their wines I find they are just slower to develop and end up morphing into silky, elegant masterpieces. In the 2013 vintage their Brunello shows the pure Sangiovese aromatics of wild cherry and plum cut in behind hints of smoke and earthy elements along with hints of dried roses and freshly cut leather. On the palate the wine is graceful, seemingly plump, while the tannins are a bit more present in the finish than is usual for them.

2012 Tenuta di Sesta "Duelecci Ovest" Brunello di Montalcino Riserva (\$59.99) This is the first vintage for this wine labeled with a vineyard designate, which translates to "Two Oaks West," and it was planted in 2001. This year Gambero Rosso's Vini d'Italia, Italy's No. 1 wine reviewer, gave this wine their red wine of the year in their upcoming 2019 edition. The nose of this Riserva is layered with subtle bits of leather, iron-rich earth, rosemary and wild strawberry. On the palate the wine shows an understated power, a smooth, regal flow full of spice, earth and wild fruits but it is presented with a particular verve and a lifted finish. Aged for almost three years in 20-hectoliter Slavonian oak, this wine is beautiful now but will age incredibly well for another 15 to 20 years. Only 3,000 bottles made.

The Spirit of the Holidays: Exclusive Single-Cask Scotch Whisky

MALTC

By David Othenin-Girard

We've had an incredible year here at the K&L Spirits Department. We said goodbye to an old friend and welcomed a new buyer in K&L's Northern California headquarters.

Mr. Andrew Whiteley, who himself recently welcomed a new baby, and I met for the first time in the conference room of the Hunter Laing Company. There we sat, two new colleagues, examining a new batch of single barrels with our old friends, the younger Laing brothers, looking on. The brothers and their father, Stewart, had broken ground on a new distillery the year before and Andrew's first trip to Islay would include a tour of this incredible new facility. But with all that is going on with the distillery the Laings have not ignored their core business. They've had great contacts with some excellent distilleries and made extremely advantageous cask purchases after the last downturn, which has allowed them to offer an unprecedented array of casks through trades and bulk purchases alike. We've spent the last eight years building our relationship with both Douglas and Hunter Laing Companies, and the result is a level of service and collaboration that no other retailer in the US has been afforded.

We work closely with both teams to identify the most exciting casks in that year's rotation. This unprecedented working relationship coupled with the continued strength of the dollar has resulted in one of our largest and most valuable purchases of casks in K&L history. We've selected more than 40 casks from the 2018 campaign which will be offered over the course of the next two to three months. Over the years we've made it clear to all our suppliers that our main goal is offering extreme value to our customers. It's not just about finding rare or unusual casks, it's about bringing them back at a price that makes them impossible to refuse. And just like our incred-

ible, diverse customer base, we've amassed a complex selection of incredible styles and price points that will interest every type of single malt drinker. There is no question that this year's Whisky Season will be the biggest, boldest and most exciting to date. Here is a selection—albeit just a snapshot—of the most exciting casks. Anyone who thinks the golden age of whisky is gone is dead wrong. We're bringing it back like never before—in all its cask-strength, natural color, non-chill-filtered glory. For an up-to-date tally of the exclusive single casks in stock, please head over to the Spirits Journal.

Blair Athol 23 Year Old "Old Malt Cask" K&L Exclusive Single Sherry Butt Cask Strength Single Malt Scotch Whisky (\$109.99) There's really no

reason this cask should be this price. My bosses probably shouldn't know that we could sell this for \$150 and have not a single soul not feel like they're getting an insane deal. But I just love the idea of selling this magical cask for \$110. Deep, rich Oloroso sherry in its most elegant and overt form. Not quite like the bitter dark chocolate style we got out of the '80s Signatory bottlings, but an absolute slam dunk filled with complex, savory and nutty rancio flavors.

Tamdhu 20 Year Old "Old Malt Cask" K&L Exclusive Single
First Fill Hogshead Cask Strength Single Malt Scotch Whisky
(\$89.99) The Tamdhu distillery is one of the most underappreciated
in Scotland. They're one of Speyside's highest-quality operations and
while the distillery is now releasing some good product, it has yet to

while the distillery is now releasing some good product, it has yet to catch on with mainstream drinkers. Their small-batch, cask-strength offering fetches \$90 even without an age statement—this awesome hogshead spent 20 years in the warehouse before being bottled for us and offers exceptional value for lovers of the classic Speyside style. No peat here, just pure malty magic.

Croftengea 12 Year Old "Hepburn's Choice" Single Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Scotch Whisky (\$59.99) This oddball little malt is the first Croftengea we've ever seen. The heavily peated malt from the reclusive Loch Lomand distillery is easily the best thing they make. A stupendous Highland peater that definitely has some of the more woodsy earthy smoke as opposed to the briny kippers and sea spray. A gorgeous citrus quality and warming fresh bread note round out one of the most affordable and interesting rare peaters we've ever sold.

Ardmore 21 Year Old "Old Malt Cask" K&L Exclusive Single Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Scotch Whisky (\$89.99) I can't believe we can do it, but we did. Ardmore is the smoky heart of the Teacher's Blend, but it produces some wonderful, smoky Highland stuff. It's especially good when it's old, but since we never ever see it above 20 years, it's all the more shocking when you actually find it. Many people will overlook this one and be very sorry they did, indeed.

Carsebridge 52 Year Old "Sovereign" K&L Exclusive Single Barrel Cask Strength Single Grain Scotch Whisky (\$349.99) An old glory, and one of the most exceptional old grains we've ever stumbled on, representing a complexity not available anywhere else in the world for this price point.

Bowmore 22 Year Old "Old Malt Cask" K&L Exclusive Single Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Scotch Whisky (\$149.99) The old Islay stocks are off-limits thanks to a ridiculous explosion in price—but the Bowmore keeps getting older and better and the price stays the same. We can't get enough of these mid-'90s stocks and this one is more classically Bowmore than the last two we had. Tasting better for the same price. No-brainer for any real Islay-head.

Springbank 22 Year Old "Hunter Laing Old & Rare" K&L Exclusive Single Barrel Cask Strength Single Malt Whisky (\$399.99) Sometimes we just can't help ourselves. Yes it's expensive, but it's no more expensive than the distillery's 21-year, and that one isn't cask-strength or single-barrel. This outrageous whisky is the pinnacle for lovers of the Campbeltown style. Perfect integration and filled with that gorgeous Kintyre character. Not everyone will be able to afford this one, but there are only 78 bottles, so it's probably for the best.





A Rhône Wine for Every Holiday Need...

By Keith Mabry

In the Rhône it is all about the 2016 vintage right now. There is no shortage of great wines to be had from north to south, but the focus of our attention right now is on those beautiful Grenache-based wines from the Southern Rhône. So here are some of my favorite Rhônes to help you cover your holiday needs.

Let's start with the perfect party wine for under \$15 by grabbing some bottles of the 2016 Domaine de Verquière Rasteau (\$14.99). You'll love it for its deeply saturated red raspberry and cherry fruit. This is Rasteau, which is lush and inviting and an immediate crowd pleaser, making it the perfect work gift or to get you through all those weekend holiday parties. You'll make a lot of new friends, too. Plus it's organic for those particular acquaintances that need things to be a certain way. 91 RP, 90 JD

Want to further impress your friends at a more intimate dinner party? Show up with the 2016 La Ferme du Mont "Le Rif" Vacqueyras (\$19.99).

Stylish and elegant, Vacqueyras is a gravelly soiled region just to the east of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, you'll tell them. It's the up-and-coming area that is just being discovered and the winemaker, Stéphane Vedeau, makes some of the most artful and pristine wines in the whole South of France. His wines tend to be lower in alcohol, expressive of their terroir and he uses the minimum amount of intervention in all his winemaking. Plus it is out-of-the-glass explosive! The nose on the wine is filled with potpourri and incense plus a delicious, lively palate of red fruits. It will have all your dinner party attendees talking about your good taste in regional French wine.



93 RP, 92 DC, 91 JD

For bigger gifts, you might be in need of something a bit more recognizable, but slightly off the beaten path? You can't go wrong with Châteauneuf-du-Pape. As far as gifts go, you're right up there with Bordeaux, Napa Cabernet and Brunello for quality and versatility. The wines are familiar but maybe not as heavily traded and that's what makes it a great gift! I'm giving most of my friends a bottle of 2016 Domaine Giraud "Tradition" Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$44.99). It is a blockbuster wine full of kirsch, garrigue and savory spices. They can drink it now or sing my praises in a few years when they open it. It is stunning! 95 WS, 95 JD, 93 RP

There's always that one gift for the person who has everything but a special bottle is always a great gesture to add to their collection. Look no further than the 2016 Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe "La Crau" Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$79.99) to cross that final name off your list. Vieux Télégraphe is one of the region's most regarded wineries and this is one of their best wines ever. 98 JS, 97 JD, 96 RP



ANCERRE

But All I Really Want for Christmas Is... Sancerre!

It's true, people find it hard to buy wine for me but I do love to receive it. So here's a tip about me (and may apply to some other savvy wine consumers as well)...if you're not sure, go for some wines from the Loire Valley! They are eminently appealing and I love many of their enigmatic expressions. Here's a couple at the top of my list:

Give me a bottle of gulpable but nervy white—so a good Sancerre (the heart of Sauvignon Blanc production) is a perfect choice. I love the 2017 Franck Millet Sancerre (\$17.99) for its crystal-clear grapefruit zestiness and mineral-driven balance. It fits all my parameters and would make a wonderful aperitif at my house.

I tend to cook a fair amount of braised dishes this time of year as well as a standing rib roast or two, but Bordeaux seems too obvious a choice. But, I'm a huge Cabernet Franc fan. Something like the 2015 Joël Taluau Saint-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil Vieilles Vignes (\$17.99) fits me like a loud Christmas sweater. It's an off-the-radar region and it has spot-on varietal character. It's also from a great vintage so the wine has ripe black cherry fruit but also notes of crushed herbs like sage and rosemary. It's an outstanding complement to my style of cooking.

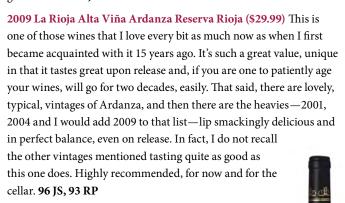
So there you have it, a couple of choices that would fill my stocking nicely or that of any other nerdy wine drinker out there. Done! Now that we have a game plan, it's time to start popping these bottles and celebrating the holidays!

The Warmth of Rioja for the Celebratory Winter Table

By Joe Manekin

Whether your holiday celebrations steer you toward a beautifully braised brisket, a perfectly roasted standing rib roast, leg of lamb or garlicky roasted wild mushrooms in pastry dough, Rioja is the region to pair with these rich, celebratory winter dishes. Here are some delicious options:

2015 Bodegas Abanico Hazaña Viñas Viejas Rioja (\$10.99) A crisp, brightly fruited, well delineated and surprisingly lively Rioja for this warm and dry vintage, the Hazaña surprises me with its structure, tastiness and overall balance, particularly for a Rioja at this price. The nose brings together spicy notes with plummy fruit, leading to a palate with tasty dark fruits and plum skins, and an underlying, subtly earthy, savory quality, perhaps owing to the 15% portion of Graciano blended in. It seems as though the fruit was picked for acidity first and foremost, with good flavor development and no overripe qualities. This is easy to drink and priced to drink in quantity. Me gusta, me gusta mucho! 91 JD



2005 Bodegas Casa Juan Señor de Lesmos Gran Reserva Rioja (\$29.99) Finally, the great 2005 Gran Reserva from our favorite old school Rioja winery has arrived! As with their other wines, this is a blend of Alavesa Tempranillo with older vine Mazuelo from what used be called Rioja Baja (now "Rioja Oriente"), on a high elevation, isolated vineyard where the Carignane grapes can properly ripen and deliver its trademark earthy, tangy character in just the perfect amount to complement the Tempranillo. A phenomenal bottle of wine.



2015 Mas Martinet "Clos Martinet" Priorat (\$69.99) OK —I know we're focusing on Rioja here, but I could not resist throwing in one of the original founding Priorat wineries for those who prefer a little more fruit and meat on the bones. If that is the case for you, then this is your bottle: rich, purely fruited, a bit earthy and rustic but elegant as well.

1981 Viña Salceda Gran Reserva Rioja (\$79.99) Viña Salceda produced some fine wines back in the day, and this bottling from the classic, higher acidity 1981 vintage has been drinking well for a little while, enjoying the famously long Rioja drinking plateau. A great combination of earthy savor and fruit, this would make a fine celebratory bottle.

1970 Bodegas Bilbainas Pomal Reserva Rioja (\$129.99) A terrific, classic Rioja, from a winery whose top older bottlings can rival some much more famous (and more expensive) names.

Port for the Holidays

Finally...2016 was a declared vintage port year, and a very fine one at that. We have the following available, some of them in 375s and large format (please inquire).

2016 Graham's Vintage Port (\$89.99) 99 JS, 98 DC, 96 VN, 95 RP

2016 Dow's Vintage Port (\$99.99) 98 DC, 96 JS

2016 Fonseca Vintage Port (\$89.99)

98 JS, 96-98 RP, 97 WS, 97 WE, 97 DC, 96 VN

2016 Warre's Vintage Port (\$89.99)

98 DC, 96 JS, 96 WE

2016 Cockburn Vintage Port (\$79.99)

99 JS, 96 WE, 96 DC, 95 VN







The sun shines on another verdant holiday season day at Waterkloof Wine Estate.

From a Little Closer to the South Pole: Wine Gifts for Everyone on Your List

By Stefanie Juelsgaard

When considering gifts for the holidays, it can be tedious racking your brain to find something to please everyone on your list. And though there are no one-fits-all gifts, a bottle of wine can be a fantastic choice for everyone ranging from your best friend to your distant third cousin once removed. All of the wines presented can be drunk now or held if you want to enjoy in holidays to come. Don't worry if you don't know the wine preferences of every person in your life—we are here to help you find the perfect bottle.

For friends, you can be a little more adventurous and give them something out of the ordinary, yet still incredibly delicious. This year give your friends the 2014 Tongue In Groove Riesling Waipara Valley (\$19.99). Super fresh and fun, this dry-style Riesling pairs so well with holiday dinners and with a few years on it now, offers a more textural, deep style. Riesling exhibits such a wide range of styles and characters to explore, and this exquisite offering from New Zealand definitely won't break the bank if you want to pass it around to more than a few people. 95 SK, 91 RP

For the in-laws, you want something that shows sophistication and thought, without being too showy or pretentious. This year give them the 2016 Felton Road "Calvert" Pinot Noir Central Otago (\$39.99). One of the pioneering leaders of the biodynamic movement in New Zealand, Felton Road consistently produces high-scoring, collectible wines. These





wines can be enjoyed at the holiday dinner table this year as a great accompaniment to lamb or sage-infused stuffing, or they can be cellared and enjoyed on a future holiday get-together. Complex, yet easy to drink, this Pinot is sure to impress the family. 96 BC, 96 RC, 93 WS

For co-workers, a wine with poise and refinement, yet incredibly affordable is the way to go, as you want to show thought without going broke. This year, give them the 2017 Kloof Street (Mullineux Family Wines) Chenin Blanc Swartland South Africa (\$19.99). Chris and Andrea Mullineux are fast gaining recognition as one of the top winemaking duos in South Africa and this crisp, silky Chenin is a great example of why. Made from old, unirrigated bush vines in the up-and-coming Swartland, this wine shows thought and character and is a great way to introduce your co-workers to a new place. 90 Tim Atkin.

For your parents, you want to give something special, maybe a little over the top to show how grateful you are for everything they have given to you. Give it back with the 2016 Penfolds "Bin 389" Cabernet-Shiraz South Australia (\$64.99). Also referred to as the "Baby Grange," this wine is the perfect choice to spoil your parents without having to shell out the \$500-plus for the actual Penfolds Grange. This Cabernet-Shiraz blend is aged in the same barrels as age the actual Grange and helped to launch Penfolds as one of the top Australian wineries. This wine would feature exquisitely with prime rib and rich scalloped potatoes. 91 RP, 94 DC

Don't forget about yourself this holiday season! The perfect end to any holiday meal is undoubtedly the **2017 Framingham F-Series Riesling Beerenauslese Marlborough** (375ml \$39.99). This is a rare wine that Framingham was only able to make because of the buckets of rain they got during the vintage of 2017. Made from 100% botrytised fruit, this has incredible weight and lushness with a fresh line of acidity to keep the lift. The perfect cheese or dessert pairing and a great way to treat yourself after the inevitable holiday madness. **95 RP, 96 JS, 99 BC, 98-99 RC**

If, in the end, you are running ragged and just want a catch-all bottle for everyone on your list, bubbles is the way to go. The Jansz "Premium Cuvée" Brut Sparkling Wine Tasmania (\$19.99) is a fresh, slightly toasty sparkling, made in the traditional Champenoise method. The perfect pairing for crab, turkey, ham, or meat, this is a great go-to for all. 91 JH

Oz and NZ Key: **BC** Bob Campbell **JH** James Halliday **RC** Raymond Chan **SK** Sam Kim (Wine Orbit)





The sun sets on another holiday season afternoon near K&L Hollywood.

From the Southland: Top Picks from K&L's Hollywood Store

By Kaj Stromer

Few things give us more pleasure than enjoying the company of those we love over a home-cooked meal and a glass of wine. Studies have proven that there are real health benefits to this. However, with additional company comes added expense. So don't get stressed out about the cost of entertaining. I've assembled a collection of wines that will maximize your pleasure while minimizing the hurt on your wallet. Each of these wines, all under \$30, most under \$20, represent the finest wines made by artisanal winemakers in California and Oregon. Each of these will pair smashingly with your food, delight your friends, and keep you pulling corks.

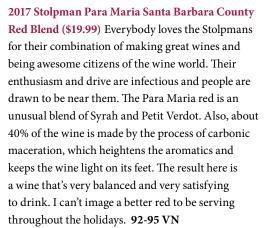
2015 Martin Ray Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$25.99) If your holiday celebration calls for a standing rib roast or a hearty winter stew then you should be serving a classy Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. The 2015 Napa Valley release from Martin Ray is the most Cabernet you're going to get for your money. Dollar for dollar, this wine offers more classic Cabernet character that many wines twice the price. Layers of ripe mulberry, wild violets and woodspice are framed by well-structured tannins and just a dusting of French oak. 91 JS

2017 Averaen Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$19.99)

This small, independent Oregon Pinot Noir specialist is a spinoff from the wildly popular Banshee wines. They are producing high-quality, value-driven Pinot that's just a pleasure to drink. Oregon Pinot Noir has come a long way over the last two decades and the proof is in the bottle. Over time the vines have gained age, which results in wines of greater complexity and richness. This is the kind of Pinot Noir you want to be serving with your holiday bird, salmon, and even some red meat dishes. The wine shows exceptional structure, focus, and juicy red fruit.

2015 Luli Santa Lucia Highlands Syrah (\$19.99)

The Luli wines come from none other than one of my absolute favorite Master Sommeliers, Sarah Floyd. Along with the esteemed Jeff Pisoni, they are producing some of my favorite wines from the Santa Lucia Highlands. This small-production Syrah possesses all the telltale signs of true, juicy, delicious Syrah. Loaded with soft black fruit, silky texture and subtle spice. It's a perfect match for duck, cassoulet, and mushroom-infused dishes. 91 JD



2017 Field Recordings "Skins" Central Coast White Blend (\$19.99) The hippest trend in the wine business today is the emergence of the orange wine movement; which is of course built on historical precedent. The orange wine process refers to white wines made with skin contact (like red wines). Led by heavyweights such as Gravner and Radikon, we are now seeing more and more local producers trying their hand at it. I'd consider this effort from Andrew Jones to be a bona fide success. The result of the skin contact process is to create wines of a more savory character along with a more textural mouthfeel. The flavor profile aligns well with fall and winter flavors. I can see this being a

pretty amazing match with most game bird (as well as turkey) and a

variety of pork dishes. The components here are 60% Chenin Blanc,



30% Pinot Blanc and 10% Verdelho.

This has been one of my favorite white wine values of the year. It's a blend of Viognier, Roussanne, Grenache Blanc and Chardonnay. One of the amazing aspects of this wine is how each variety is able to stand on its own, yet together they've created something that is greater than the sum of its parts. For fall and winter flavors, few wines will pair better than the Tenshen. The wine is raised in both stainless steel tanks and neutral oak. On display are fully formed aromas and flavors of buttered peach, tangerine, honeysuckle and flowers. The wine has plenty of texture to match the wildly exotic aromatics and flavor. It finishes clean and dry and savory encouraging the next sip. 92 JD







Bordeaux: Old and Rare, Great Values, Classics and Those Perfect Gifts

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

A great array of holiday gifts for any person or pocketbook, from \$20

1998 Haut-Franquet, Moulis (\$19.99) We discovered this wine on our 2017 Bordeaux trip and it has finally arrived. It is a neighbor of Poujeaux, and while I must admit I have never seen the property, what they did in 1998 is commendable. Some 1998 Left Bank wines are a bit coarse and tough—this, like the Poujeaux, is elegant and fruit driven. Great for twentieth anniversary celebrants.

2004 Moulin-Haut-Laroque, Fronsac (\$24.99) We sold a bunch of this

wine last year—it is back. 90 RP: "A big time sleeper of the vintage from Fronsac, this beauty from proprietor Jean-Noel Herve has hit the bull's eye. A dark ruby/purple color is accompanied by notes of black currants, sweet cherries, crushed rocks, and a distinctive minerality."

2003 Clarke, Listrac (\$36.99) and 1999 Clarke, Listrac, (\$37.99) The 2003 shows a very dense, inky purple color and charming aromas of intense, ripe fruit with pure black currant, cherry and plum jam. The nose wraps up with subtle wood and mocha notes, espresso roast, toasted white bread, licorice and hints of chocolate and spices. The 1999 is absolutely elegant and delicious now-almost twenty years old. This property used to make very rustic, tannic wines, but the quality has improved vastly since the early '90s.



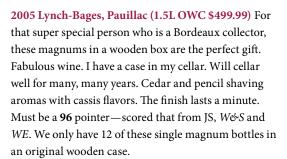
since 1945 and I love these two wines. The Langoa with its black cherry cola aromas and the Lascombes with its red rose and violet aromas and flavors. The Langoa is 92 JS: "Blueberry and currant aromas follow through to a full body, with dark chocolate and bright acidity. Long and delicious." The Lascombes is 94 JS: "Aromas of black tea, blackberries, blueberries and coffee bean, follow through to a full body, with velvety tannins and a juicy finish. Lovely mouth feel."

2000 Clos du Marquis, St-Julien (\$89.99) 94 WS: "The nose shows loads of plum, spice and meat aromas, as well as hints of licorice. It's full-bodied, with firm, yet velvety textured tannins. It's big and rounded. If you can't afford Las Cases, try this. Some might call this a second

wine, but it comes from a plot of vineyards not deemed worthy of Léoville Las Cases."

2010 Pichon-Baron, Pauillac (\$209.99; 6-pack OWC \$1,239.00) RP 97: "This sensational Pichon Longueville Baron needs 5-6 years of cellaring, and should keep 30+ years."

2012 Les Forts de Latour, Pauillac (\$229.99) A 2018 release direct from the property with proof tag. 92 JS: "Perfumed and bright with mineral, currant, raspberry and citrus character. Full body, fine tannins and a crisp finish. Orange peel." Very limited availability.



And finally let's end with the perfect gifts and their perfect scores:

2009 or 2010 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$289.99); the 2009 6-pack OWC (\$1,650.00) and 2009 12-pack OWC (\$3,299.00); and the 2010 6-pack OWC (\$1,650.00) and 2010 12-pack OWC (\$3,299.00). Mr. Robert Parker scored them both **100** points and we agree completely. These beauties will age gracefully for twenty more years—easily. The 2009 is a bit more voluptuous and the 2010 is powerful—it is also quite limited in availability right now.

2015 Margaux, Margaux (\$1,499.99) The best wine of the 2015 vintage. Very limited availability.

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