

WINE News

Wine and spirits for holiday entertaining and gifts.



NOVEMBER 25, 2019 FEATURES

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Our Best Holiday Picks for 2019

Most of these wines and spirits are old standbys, but a few are new kids on the block. All represent great buys.

Billecart-Salmon Brut Rosé Champagne (\$74.99)

There is a reason that this is the rosé by which all others are judged. Elegant, delicate, dry, and refreshing, this is the ultimate rosé Champagne.



2010 La Rioja Alta “904” Gran Reserva Rioja (\$59.99) This wine does everything that a “great” should do: Great aromas, check; great flavors, check; great finish, check; complex and interesting, check! Cost an arm and a leg—nope. It’s a little splurge, but so worth it. **98 JS, 96 RP**

2016 La Massa “La Massa” Toscana (\$19.99) 2016 is a sensational vintage in Tuscany, and this

bargain Super Tuscan (Sangiovese, Merlot, and Cabernet) is supple enough to drink now and gift for your holiday parties.

2009 Sociando-Mallet “Cuvée Jean Gautreau” Haut-Médoc (\$69.99) This top cuvée is only made in certain years. A fabulous wine that still needs another 20 years in the cellar. Sadly, we just learned that Jean Gautreau passed away after over 30 years at Sociando.



2016 Domaine Durieu Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$29.99) Châteauneuf-du-Pape is the icon wine of the Rhône Valley. Our newest direct import from Durieu brings fleshy red fruit, a gorgeous palate, and it has depth for days. **92 RP**

2017 Franck Millet “Insolite” Sancerre (\$26.99) This is simply fabulous, but only a few cases left. We have been buying from Franck and Betty Millet for 25 years—we were their first customer. This wine has superb minerality.

2016 Lewis Cellars “Reserve” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$156.99) Randy Lewis always makes great wines. This Reserve is spectacular. **93 VN:** “Alluring boysenberry, plum and blueberry flavors are seamlessly layered, picking up hints of mulled spice, melted licorice and ganache along the way.” A must-buy.

2017 Château de Chemilly Chablis (\$19.99) Refreshing and bright, with orchard fruits, saline notes, and lip-smacking acidity that allows it to be versatile and pair well with the various dishes served for holiday celebrations—especially crab! **96 DC**

2016 Mount Edward Pinot Noir Central Otago (\$29.99) Mount Edward is one of the leading forces in NZ Pinot Noir, crafting profound wines from some of the best vineyards in the region. The 2016 is full of brilliant, black cherry fruit complemented by firm tannin and spice. **94 JS**

Clynelish 23 Year Old “Signatory Vintage Black Label” K&L Exclusive Single Malt Scotch Whisky (\$249.99)

We’ve been afforded unprecedented access to some of Scotland’s rarest malts by our friends in Pitlochry. We loved this cask so much, we thought it deserved a special label. The striking package fits this delectable whisky perfectly.



Bordeaux: Great Values and Classics from 2010 through 2017

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

From under \$15 to \$4,000—a wine for each pocketbook.

Perfect for holiday drinking or giving.

2016 Bellegrave, Médoc (\$13.99) Back in for the holidays.

This property is not to be confused with the many other Bellegraves in Bordeaux. This wine is quite substantial for such a low price. Vibrant and lively, with some toasty nuances and rounded tannins on the palate.



2016 La Roque de By, Médoc (750ml \$14.99; 1.5L \$29.99) 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.”

2016 Kalinda Médoc Bordeaux Red (\$16.99) A great value here—just in time for the holidays and the holiday parties.

Spicy, lively, vibrant wine. Decant it for an hour and enjoy.

2017 Capbern, St-Estèphe (750ml \$24.99; 1.5L \$49.99)

The first wine we tasted on the 2017 Bordeaux trip, and we loved it. These 2017s are easy to drink—like the 1997s and 2007s, this wine is sweet and silky. The finish screams St-Estèphe. Great balance and tremendous depth of flavor for just over \$20. Made by the Calon-Séгур team.

2016 d’Aiguille, Côtes de Castillon (\$27.99) 92 JD:

“The 2016 has brilliant limestone character as well as vibrant strawberry and black raspberry fruits, hints of violets and flowers, background oak, and medium to full-bodied richness.”

2016 Poujeaux, Moulis (\$34.99) One of my all-time favorites. **93 DC:** “A standout during the en primeur tastings that lives up to its initial promise now it’s in bottle. Strong, confident flavours show clear Médoc character, with dark berry fruits, silky tannins, great balance and freshness. Lots of life ahead of it.”

2016 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (\$35.99) 94 JS:

“Plenty of menthol, blackberry and blackcurrant aromas in this elegant, medium-weight Haut-Médoc that’s got as much freshness as ripeness and a long, clean, mineral and herbal finish. An incredibly food-flexible wine!”

2015 Baron de Brane, Margaux (\$38.99)

A fabulous second wine that is perfect Margaux. Soft, sweet, elegant, violet aromas and flavors. Long, sweet finish. Perfect now with a rack of lamb.



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.”

2016 Climens, Sauternes (375ml \$36.99; 750ml \$69.99) 96 RP:

“Pale lemon-gold colored, the 2016 Climens is a little youthfully mute, revealing notions of ripe peaches, mango and musk melon with touches of cedar chest, orange blossoms, candied ginger and baking bread. Bursting in the mouth with vibrant, energetic stone fruit and tropical layers, it is framed by fantastic freshness, finishing long and creamy.”

2015 Brane-Cantenac, Margaux (\$89.99; OWC

6-Pack \$489.00) Wow! How great is this wine! 2015 vintage wines from the Margaux region are the best from Bordeaux—and this is one of the best in Margaux. So elegant and refined. So Margaux!

2015 Canon, St-Emilion (\$329.99; OWC 6-Pack

\$1,950.00) A perfect wine? 100 points from a few raters—and we agree on that score. **100 points** Neal Martin: “The 2015 Canon was a benchmark wine that seemed to revitalize this historic estate. I was crossing my fingers that it would not disappoint in bottle and I am glad to say that it delivers the goods.”

2015 d’Yquem, Sauternes (375ml \$199.99;

750ml \$399.99) This is a perfect 100 points for Clyde and many wine lovers. Their best wine since 2001, and maybe even back to 1967! **100 RP:** “Truly, this is a legendary vintage for d’Yquem. I’ve been conservative with my drinking window here, and I would not be at all surprised if our descendants are drinking this vintage well into the next century.” For your best friends here.

2015 Angelus, St-Emilion (1.5L

\$799.99) 99 JS: “A great wine with superb concentration and richness. Yet it’s ever so agile and polished. Spices, blueberries, cinnamon and dried flowers. Full body and polished and full tannins. Great length. The refinement to the tannins is amazing. Compacted. Essence-like.”

2014 Petrus, Pomerol (\$2,499.99) and 2015 Petrus,

Pomerol (\$3,999.99) For those who have everything. Very limited availability here.



Champagne for Every Holiday Budget in 2019

By Gary Westby

The holiday season is a busy time for everyone, and I think that the best moments are those spent with friends and family with food and wine. Starting with a little bit of Champagne is a tradition for many of us, and having something that fits into the budget is very important to me. Our Direct Import program here at K&L has always searched for the best value—great quality at a fair price. This year, we have a number of old favorites and new ones to share with you.

Whenever I open a bottle of **Baron-Fuenté “Grande Réserve” Brut Champagne (\$24.99)** even our experienced wine staff is surprised by the quality. This Champagne, which hails from the western valley of the Marne, is aged for three years on the lees and benefits from one-third older reserves in the blend. While most Champagne under \$30 in the US market has been aged the legal minimum of 15 months, the longer aging of the Baron gives it the small bubbles, fine texture, and authentically toasty flavors that people love in real Champagne. It is composed of 60% Meunier, 30% Chardonnay, and 10% Pinot Noir, and has just the right combination of richness and refreshment. An even better deal for your parties is the same wine in magnum (**1.5L \$49.99**). The aging goes up to four years on the lees, and you will have to taste it to believe it—this is serious Champagne.



Louis Brochet surveys his snowy vineyards in Écueil.

Louis Brochet makes an exciting line of Champagne from their Premier Cru vineyards in Écueil, just between Reims and Épernay. I find their **Louis Brochet 1er Cru Brut Champagne (\$29.99)** to be outstanding, estate-grown stuff for a super fair price. This is composed of 75% Pinot Noir, 20% Chardonnay, and 5% Meunier, and is 50% reserves, giving this wine great structure and power, especially at the price. If you like Champagne from Michel Arnould or Bollinger, this is a must to try. It has refined, almost Burgundian black cherry Pinot Noir character tied to a focused, mineral-driven finish. It is dosed at just eight grams per liter and is very dry.



The **Franck Bonville Grand Cru Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne (\$34.99)** is one of our best-selling Champagnes for a reason. It is entirely estate-grown, Grand Cru Chardonnay from Avize and Oger, and has not only the energetic, racy chalkiness that one would expect from the best terroir in Champagne, but also some great underlying complexity and texture from 50% reserve wines. It is amazing to me that these grapes now sell for so much money, that producers like Bonville would make more money selling their harvest than making wine. Luckily, Olivier Bonville has pride in his wine, and it is well placed—this is expertly crafted Champagne at the top level. This is one that our customers try by the bottle and then buy by the case. This Champagne is too easy to drink. You have been warned.

Often, holiday gifts and parties for colleagues call for a well-known name, and none of the Grande Marque producers are doing better work than the next two.

The **Laurent-Perrier “La Cuvée” Brut Champagne (\$39.99)** enjoys four years of aging on the lees and is composed of 55% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir, and 15% Meunier. The Champagne is better than ever and has nearly Puligny-Montrachet-like lime zest character, as well as a creamy mid-palate.

Since before my time, K&L customers have loved the elegant, balanced style of the **Billecart-Salmon “Brut Réserve” Champagne (\$44.99)** which is composed of 40% Meunier, 30% Chardonnay, and 30% Pinot Noir, and benefits from the longest, coldest fermentation in all of Champagne. The exceptional freshness and purity of this non-vintage wine are unmatched, and it is an ideal aperitif.



All I Want for Christmas... Is a Great Bottle of Cab!

By Ryan Woodhouse

I'm keeping it simple this year. As the old saying goes, "Cab is King," and that certainly seems true during the holiday season here at K&L. So whether buying gifts for friends and family or treating yourself to a nice bottle, here are some of my favorite Cabs starting at \$20 and going up to \$100 and beyond:

2016 Buehler Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.95)

A perennial favorite here at K&L and hands-down one of the very best values in Napa Valley. Classically styled, medium-bodied Cab that punches well above its weight. If this is a gift for someone, they're sure to think you paid more than \$20! **91 JS**

2016 Marietta "Game Trail" Estate Yorkville Highlands Cabernet Sauvignon (\$29.95)

One of my personal favorite wines of the year. To reiterate what I said in my staff review, this could easily pass for Howell Mountain Cab of a much higher price point. Big, powerful wine but with refinement and polish. **94 VN**

2016 Amici Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$39.95)

Amici continues to put out fantastic wines across the range. This "entry level" Napa Valley Cab easily mixes it up with plenty of \$75–\$100 bottles. Take note of this holiday special price, down from the regular \$50 retail price. **94 WE, 93 JS, 93 JD**

2013 Sbragia "Godspeed Vineyard" Mt. Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon (\$49.95)

One of the biggest steals of the season. We secured every last case we could of this 2013 beauty from Sbragia.

Spectacular Mount Veeder-grown

Cabernet that is absolutely singing. Robert Parker's tasting note says: "This demonstrates why, as good as 2013 is, this is an exceptional, singular, and possibly once-in-a-lifetime vintage for Bordeaux varieties in Napa." Elsewhere \$80. **93-95 RP**

2014 Heitz Cellar Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$59.95)

Still an all-time classic. Poured recently among 30 other Napa Cabernets, Heitz's 2014 release showed its timeless pedigree, elegance, and balance. It's not about muscle and brawn; it's about line, length, and purity. **93 JS, 92 WE**

2015 Farella "Estate" Coombsville Napa Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon (\$64.95) This wine truly wowed me earlier this year and we just managed to get another drop. From old vines in Coombsville, this is quintessential Napa Cab with tons of black and

blue fruit, loamy earth, power and concentration. Tastes like high-end cult Napa Cab for a fraction of the price. **95 VN, 94 WS, 93 JS**

2016 Hayfork "Lewelling Ranch" St. Helena Cabernet Sauvignon (\$74.95)

Given the quality of this hallowed vineyard site and the immaculate winemaking, this bottle is still very well priced in the context of modern-day Napa Cab. From a multi-generational farming family well-rooted in the old adage, "Great wines are made in the vineyard." Awarding 95 points, Jeb Dunnuck writes that it "tastes like it cost 2-3 times the price." **95 JD, 94 RP**

2016 Shafer "One Point Five" Stags Leap District Cabernet Sauvignon (\$89.95)

A blockbuster wine from one of the valley's most high-profile producers that still comes in under \$90. Triple 95 points. Big, powerful Cabernet that is sure to please the hedonistic folks. Lush, dark fruit, and exotic oak tones. **95 RP, 95 WE, 95 JS**

2016 Corison Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$99.95)

So, if Cab is King, then Cathy Corison must be the "Queen of Cabernet." It seems not one moment of her 45 years of experience crafting Napa Cabernet has gone to waste, as her wines continue to amaze year after year, and her style is practically inimitable. Lovers of a more restrained, elegant and age-worthy bottle of Cabernet need look no further. **95 WE, 93 JS**

2015 Keenan "Reserve" Spring Mountain District Cabernet Sauvignon (\$109.95)

Immensely powerful, structured, mountain-grown Cabernet from one of my favorite producers in all of Napa Valley. Keenan's wines are the real deal. If you like a slightly more traditional style with authentic structure and real varietal character, you can't go wrong with this exceptional reserve bottling. **95 RP, 95 JD**

2016 Larkmead Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$119.95)

A lesson in power and refinement. This wine has a big, structural core and density, and yet it has very moderate extraction and beautifully fine tannin. Long and linear; no excessive weight or overripeness. Very classy stuff. **98 WE, 92-95 JD, 94 JS**

If you are looking for some more cult Cabernets, we have plenty, including multiple vintages of:

Opus One; Dominus; Joseph Phelps Insignia; Mayacamas; Chateau Montelena; Caymus; Silver Oak; Lewis; Pahlmeyer; Eisele; Kapcsandy; Peter Michael; Accendo; Shafer; La Jota; Staglin; Chappellet; Spottswoode; Pulido-Walker.



Burg in the USA! West Coast Chardonnay and Pinot Noir

By Kaj Stromer

Few wines prove themselves so adept at pairing on the dinner table as **Chardonnay** and **Pinot Noir**. These tandem varietal wines, most famously associated with Burgundy, offer the greatest flexibility when pairing with cuisine. So, whether you're hosting a dinner, attending as a guest, or just in need of a gift, these selections will make you shine in your execution.

Chardonnay

The range in style of Chardonnay made in the US has never been more diverse or more interesting. As buyers at K&L, our goal is to source the best quality wines from smaller, boutique properties that produce compelling wines of distinction.

Probably one of the most exciting things happening on the US wine scene is the emergence of world-class Chardonnay from Oregon. It's been a work in progress for a long time and I'd say they're really hitting their stride. The **2018 Chehalem "INOX" Willamette Valley Chardonnay (\$17.99)** is a brisk and refreshing tank-fermented wine. The result is aromatics redolent of fall farmers' market: stone fruit, citrus, melon, green apple, and pear notes grounded with earthy vanilla and spicy ginger. On the palate the tart, vibrant fruit is balanced by a shock of mineral.

Few winemakers are more important than Greg Brewer when it comes to the creation and evolution of the Sta. Rita Hills appellation. His **2017 Brewer-Clifton Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay (\$29.95)** is arguably one of his best and is one of the finest wines of the region.

One of my favorite winery visits this year was our afternoon spent at the legendary Hanzell above the Sonoma Valley. Their **2018 Hanzell "Sebella" Sonoma Valley Chardonnay (\$29.95)** is composed of young estate vine parcels, and is made with the same exacting quality as their flagship wine. As a second wine, Sebella is far from simple and its virtue shows most clearly on the persistence of finish, which out-classes the more fleshy and obvious Chardonnay bottlings on the market.

Pinot Noir

Fans of Pinot Noir will tell you that it is the most regal of all reds and can produce the most sublime varietal wines. I would not argue against that sentiment. And domestically produced Pinot Noir has never been better. Here are a few highlight-reel selections that should catch your attention.

The K&L Kalinda wines are consistently among the best values in our store. We work closely with top producers to bring you first-rate wine at reasonable prices. We can't reveal our sources, but we can say that



Willamette wonderland: the barn at Chehalem in winter.



this is a steal. The **2018 Kalinda Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (\$15.99)** is a perfect combination of concentration, elegance, and balance. This is dangerously delicious.

Talk about a new winery to watch. The **2017 Bold Wine Co. Monterey County Pinot Noir (\$19.95)** is possibly the most versatile wine out of winemaker Chris Miller's portfolio. Along with the bright red cherry aroma there's also a touch of smoke on the nose. On the palate you get bright, crunchy red apple, and just a hint of cranberry and wood spice. This may be the perfect Thanksgiving dinner red.

Founder Adam Lee remains firmly on board as winemaker and continues to push the envelope, exploring the great terroirs of California and Oregon. After tasting his most recent releases, I think it's safe to say that Adam is making some of the best wines of his career. The **2017 Siduri Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$29.95)** is picture-postcard-perfect Russian River Valley Pinot, with all that succulent, juicy red cherry fruit the area is known for.

No discussion of home-grown Pinot Noir is complete without a selection from Oregon. Oregon has staked its reputation on Pinot Noir, and the results have been outstanding. The most exciting Oregon Pinot Noir project is the new winery from the Drouhin family of Burgundy. This is French soul, meets Oregon soil. The **2015 Roserock (Drouhin) Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir (\$27.95)** really caught my attention. You can sense the classic Oregon terroir driven by ancient volcanic soils. Dark berry preserves, dried flowers, and a touch of wood spice combine to make this one of the more compelling Pinot Noirs in an attractive price range.



The Gift of Adventure from the Rhône and Burgundy

By Alex Pross

Feeling a little adventurous this holiday season? Instead of a tie, or even a California wine, give the gift of a robust Rhône Valley wine or an elegantly complex Burgundy to friends and family this year. We have an abundance of wines in every price range, guaranteed to be a great gift, and most have great scores from the critics.

Rhône Valley

Looking for a killer bottle of wine that won't break the bank? Then go with the **2018 Bonpas "Croix de Bonpas" Côtes du Rhône-Villages (\$13.99)**.

This wine is a spectacular red just bursting with red fruits and spice along with a 96-point score, all for just \$13.99. We suggest you gift yourself a case as well. **96 DC**

Going up just a bit, we have a perennial great deal. The **2017 Coudoulet de Beaucastel Côtes du Rhône Rouge (\$24.99)** is a fabulously drinking red from the makers of famed Château de Beaucastel. This wine is basically "baby" Beaucastel and is approachable and immensely enjoyable in its youth. Red raspberries, red licorice, spice and fine tannins make this a wine that drinks way above its price. A wonderful selection for the discerning connoisseur. **92 JS, 91 JD, 90-92 RP**

If you're feeling very giving this year, then we suggest going with the **2017 Château de Beaucastel Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$74.99)**, a stunning red wine that exudes class and refinement. Loaded with pure red fruit, subtle spice, garrigue, and licorice notes, this masterpiece is the perfect gift for the person who has and wants it all! **95 JD, 95 WS, 95 DC, 93-95 RP**

Burgundy

The 2017 vintage in Burgundy is packed with wines that are not only approachable and drinking great in their youth, but can age gracefully, as well. The whites rival the best wines made this decade, and the reds are generous and easy drinking, with gorgeous red fruits and zesty acidity—a win-win duo for gifting this season.

The **2017 Domaine Faiveley Mercurey 1er Cru "Myglands" (\$42.99)** is absolutely packed with red and black berry fruit that tastes like it was just picked off the vine. Fresh and bright and so drinkable now, this is a lovely entry-level Premier Cru Burgundy. **93 WS, 92 JS, 91 RP**

Going up the ladder a bit, we have the **2017 Joseph Drouhin Gevrey-Chambertin (\$59.99)**, a fantastic wine offering up dark berry fruit, cola notes, and exotic spice. Succulent and juicy, this is a beautiful Gevrey-Chambertin that won't break the bank. **92 JS**

If complexity and elegance are your game, then the **2017 Hudelot-Noëllat Chambolle-Musigny (\$69.99)** is a good bet. Showing incredible purity, complexity, and elegance, the Hudelot-Noëllat is the right choice for the palate that prefers traditional Burgundy. **92 DC**



Clyde and the gang confer in Corton, 2017.

The gold watch of red Burgundy gifts this year is the **2017 Domaine Faiveley Corton-Clos des Cortons Faiveley Grand Cru (\$199.99)**.

A wine destined for the cellar, with its formidable structure and tightly wound core of fruit, this is the reference-point offering of the Faiveley lineup and is their most consistent wine year in and year out. **96 JS, 96 DC, 92-94 RP, 91-93 VN**





Italian Holiday: Have One of Everything from the Boot!

By Greg St. Clair

I am always perplexed at this time of the year. There are so many opportunities to share intriguing wines with friends and family—but which wines to pick? I've spent years trying to figure out which path is for me. Do I go with what the family likes; do I venture outside of Italy; introduce friends to new flavors and categories, but without looking like I'm trying to show off; or dig up old vintages? It's not always easy, but I've finally come to peace with a solution: I just go with what I like—and I try to have one of everything!

Most holiday gatherings start around some kind of bubbly. In Italy, Prosecco comes to the forefront—however, not just any Prosecco will do. There's one that stands way above the rest: **2018 Silvano Follador Prosecco Superiore Brut Nature (\$19.95)** is, from my experience, a Prosecco like no other. They are a tiny, biodynamic producer and make only 3,500 cases of super dry wine each year. Most Prosecco has a fair amount of dosage to sweeten the taste, but the quality of Silvano Follador's vineyards are so good, it allows them to use just two grams per liter. With superb balance and aromatics, this wine is a must for anyone who likes sparkling wine.



I love medium-bodied red wines. They're such good food wines, so easy to drink, and they open up a new category for most. I know I am leaning a bit in the other direction from current drinking trends, but I love the elegance—and Italy has so many options that have really interesting flavor profiles. From Italy's Alpine north, these two Schiava wines show a vibrant, spicy, black pepper nose with a supple, smooth and easy to drink body. Perfect for lighter meats and fowl. **2017 Abbazia di Novacella Schiava Alto Adige (\$14.99)** and **2018 Peter Zemmer Schiava Alto Adige (\$15.99)**.

Two medium-bodied Nebbiolo from Piedmont, the **2016 Treves Nebbiolo Canavese (\$17.99)** and **2018 Fratelli Barale Langhe Nebbiolo (\$19.99)** are so fun to drink, and so full of flavor, but without the harsh tannins some Nebbiolo wines have when they are young.

The Valle d'Aosta, one of Italy's least-known regions, is a tiny valley that connects Italy to France in the Western Alps. **Rosset "Trasor" 750 Valle d'Aosta (\$19.99)** is a non-vintage blend of 50% Syrah and 50% Petite Rouge. This is just so delicious, super easy to drink, and has vibrant flavors.

Don't get me wrong—I love full-bodied wines as well. When the temperatures cool down, I start to think of the wines of Langhe, Barolo, and Barbaresco, paired with hearty casseroles and plates of risotto or polenta. These are wines with a bit more grit and depth, but with the advent global warming, the Langhe has produced wines that have more rich fruit and are much more drinkable at an early age than their forbearers.

My favorite of this category, the **2015 Fratelli Barale Barolo (\$34.99)** is supple, has classic styling, and is wonderful to drink now.

Here are a few others to try from another stellar vintage: The **2016 Ca' del Baio "Autinbej" Barbaresco (\$34.99)** shows a slightly more fruit-forward character; the **2016 Cascina Alberta "Giacone" Barbaresco (\$36.99)** gives a more savory character, but backed up with a mocha-like richness. In Barolo, the **2015 Einaudi "Ludo" Barolo (\$39.99)** shows the benefit of a shorter maceration, with lots of strawberry and violets in the nose.



If you know me, you know I love Brunello di Montalcino. One of our Direct Import favorites has just arrived—Albatreti. Gaetano

Salvioni produces a tiny amount of Brunello of outstanding quality.

The just-released **2013 Albatreti Brunello di Montalcino (\$39.99)** is exceptional.

The nose on this wine is full of wild cherry, Tuscan brush, leather, rosemary, and Middle Eastern spices, with hints of smoke.



No, not Babbo Natale—this merry gentleman of Montalcino is Gaetano Salvioni Albatreti.

Balance and elegance are words that come to mind once it hits your palate, and it shows a long finish. I'd decant for an hour ahead of time, but if you don't have time it's good to go, all the same!



Get In the Holiday *Spirits* with K&L's Spirits Department

By David Othenin-Girard and Andrew Whiteley

We're committed to finding the world's finest products and offering them, often exclusively, to our customers at excellent prices. We've built a diverse portfolio of world-class spirits that no other retailer stateside can compete with. Here are some of this year's most exciting exclusive offers:

Golden Devil K&L Exclusive Dark Navy Strength Rum

(\$19.99) This is an incredible blend of heavy and light rums from traditional sources for the British naval rations: Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica. Dark, dense and funky. There's few better choices as the base for holiday punch or a midwinter Mai Tai.



Laphroaig 13 Year Old "Chieftain's" K&L Exclusive Single Sherry Butt Cask Strength Islay Single Malt Scotch Whisky

(\$159.99) The world's most richly flavored malt has become a true rarity on the independent bottling market. The heady, peaty intensity of Laphroaig marries perfectly with the complex nuances of a second-fill sherry butt.

Cameronbridge 27 Year Old "Old Particular" Single Refill Sherry Butt Cask Strength Single Grain Scotch Whisky

(\$79.99) While we've purchased countless barrels of single grain over the years, this is the first from an ex-sherry butt. Not a sherry bomb by any means, but a complex mixture of creamy flambéed bananas, pungent Seville orange peel, spicy fresh ginger, ripe sultanas, and sweet cereal grains.

Springbank 22 Year Old "Sovereign Wax Top" K&L Exclusive Single Barrel Cask Strength Campbeltown Single Malt Scotch Whisky

(\$399.99) There's little argument among the Scotch cognoscenti that Springbank is one of the best distilleries in Scotland. One taste of this single cask and you'll understand what all the fuss is about.

Corner Creek 10 Year Old Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey

(\$59.99) Don't know exactly how they're sourcing this excellent 10-year stock, but we do know it tastes delicious. It's easygoing enough to be appreciated by nearly anyone, but with enough depth to gift to the pickiest bourbon lover.

Rock Rose Premium Scottish Gin

(\$44.99) The wonderfully tiny Dunnet Bay Distillery is the 2019 winner of the Scottish Gin Awards. Using local plants along with exotic ingredients, and packaged in a gorgeous ceramic bottle, it's available exclusively at K&L this holiday season.



Del Professore Vermouth Rosso (\$22.99) and **Classico (\$22.99)** This wonderful line of products is created from bar legend Jerry Thomas' own recipe. The red is one of the few vermouths with a base of red wine, in this case high-quality Nebbiolo from the Langhe. The white is distinctive and not as simple or sweet as many bianco vermouths. From a base of Moscato, it remains refreshing and works nicely in place of a traditional dry vermouth, or in a white Negroni. While we don't have an exclusive for this special product, no one can beat our incredible price.



Often the best booze-related gifts are the unique single casks and exclusive releases we have tracked down. Sometimes these are just exceptional versions of the standard expressions, and other times they're singular, one-of-a-kind opportunities to expand someone's drinking horizon.

Maker's Mark Private Select Casks

(\$69.99) We currently have two of these incredible casks in stock. Cask No. 5 plays up the inherent sweetness of Maker's Mark. Cask No. 6 goes heavy on the French oak, particularly the "mocha stave." We're often asked how big a difference the staves make. These casks came from the same original vatting, so they started as the exact same whiskey before the addition of the staves. Grab one of each and see for yourself!



Old Potrero K&L Exclusive Single Cask Straight Rye Whiskeys

(\$99.99) This San Francisco-based distiller has been at it since 1993. Both Cask No. 12 and Cask No. 13 are enormously spicy, as you might expect for pot-distilled 100% rye. The surprise comes in how they are different.

Privateer "Distiller's Drawer" K&L Exclusive Bottled-In-Bond American Rum

(\$69.99) It's easy to focus on whiskey at this time of year, but some of the finest finds come from unexpected places. Like Massachusetts. Maggie Campbell founded the Privateer Rum Distillery in Ipswich, Mass. to buck the trend of sweetened, spiced, and colored rum. This single cask is aged four years, made wholly in Ipswich, and bottled at 100 proof. The palate is rich, supple, and round, yet absolutely bone dry.

Código 1530 K&L Exclusive Single Barrel Añejo Tequila (\$109.99) Código is our most popular tequila—for good reason. For starters, they only use *extra maduro* agave for their tequila. These extremely ripe agaves make a rich and flavorful tequila with a luscious texture and intensity of fruit that is rarely found from larger producers. The second major difference is that they only age in Napa Cabernet barrels. For any tequila lover, this is a must-have bottle.





K&L Rhône buyer Keith Mabry will climb any stack of barrels, anywhere, to bring you the best in Rhône and French Regional value.

I'm Going Rhône for the Holidays!

By Keith Mabry

From north to south, a bevy of great vintages have delivered some of the most sumptuous and amazing offers from the Rhône Valley to date. You would be hard-pressed to make a misstep from daily drinker, to holiday meal wine, to top gift pick from this region. There is a style to fit every budget and every palate. Here are a few of my favorite selections:

The wines of the southern Rhône lean on the Grenache grape and have a briary, spicy quality. One of the best versions of this is the classically styled **2017 Ferraton Père et Fils Côtes du Rhône-Villages Plan de Dieu (\$14.99)**. It has all the spice and fruit that one associates with peppery Rhône flavors, plus a little extra heft from the warmer growing region that is Plan de Dieu. This is 70% Grenache and 30% Syrah with warm fruit flavors, allspice, nutmeg, and crushed herbs. It has a beautiful, slightly more elegant mouthfeel that make it great for pairing with poultry and pork dishes. **90 JD**

Don't know what your friends are serving at their holiday party? The **2017 Domaine de Verquière Rasteau (\$14.99)** is the perfect choice for fans of richer, full-bodied styles. The commune of Rasteau sits on a plateau of rolled pebbles and broken rocks, not entirely dissimilar to Châteauneuf-du-Pape. But you can get that flavor profile from Rasteau, usually at better than half the price. This drinks deeply with bold spices, chocolate undertones, and a saturated, cherry-fruited palate. It stays just shy of hedonism and makes the perfect party wine for its ease of pairing with a multitude of foods, or just sipping on its own. **91 DC, 91 RP**

A perennial favorite in our stores, and here just in time for the holiday season, is the **2017 Moulin de la Gardette "Tradition" Gigondas (\$34.99)**. Winemaker JB Meunier always over-delivers the quality on this cuvée, and the 2017 may be one of his most magnificent to date. It is pure Gigondas, sitting on the eastern slopes of the Rhône Valley. Surrounded by forests, his vines produce deeply flavored wines. The Tradition shows all the hallmarks of roasted strawberry, fennel, bay leaf, and potpourri. It has the finest of textures



that makes it a superb drink now, but with this kind of structure and balance, it is a great gift idea for that collector friend of yours.

It is always a good time to give Châteauneuf-du-Pape as a gift—especially during the holidays.

The **2016 Xavier Vignon "Cuvée Anonyme" Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$49.99)** is nicely suited for that more label-conscious friend of yours. Vignon is an up-and-coming star of the region who has been working in the shadows for years as a top consultant for more recognized producers. His Anonyme from the extraordinary 2016 vintage is a truly stunning wine. This is deep, rich, and complex, and delivers all you could ask for from this category. **95 RP, 95 JD, 92 JS**

Let's not forget the Syrahs from the northern Rhône. I can think of no better wine for my own holiday feast than the **2017 Guy Farge "Passion de Terrasse" Saint-Joseph (\$34.99)**. Farge has been upping his game, and each year Guy and his son, Tomas, have surpassed the overall quality of the previous vintage. The Passion is the oldest vines from his best parcel selections, and it shows. With gorgeous black cherry fruit interlaced with spices, and that smoky bacon quality, this is a St-Joseph that lingers on the palate. This is my prime rib dinner wine, all the way. This is also on my gift short list—gifts for me, that is!

Finally, if you're looking for that something special, for a collector, a friend, or maybe that Christmas gift to yourself, grab a bottle of the **2009 Pierre Usseglio "Cuvée de Mon Aïeul" Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$69.99)** from our collection of library wines. This has it all—classic Châteauneuf character evolving into its next phase of development as it reaches the decade mark. This wine comes together with an abundance of fruit, dusty leather, and spice. This is drinking perfectly right now and will put a big red bow on that more intimate holiday gathering.



Salud! Saúde! Spice It up with Iberian, South American Wines

By Kirk Walker

The wines from the Iberian Peninsula and South America always present opportunities to bring different flavors to the party. Whether it is spice, earthiness, fruit, oak, or unique tones of minerality, these wines do things that wines from other European or American countries can't, while also being accessible and charming.

2010 La Antigua Classico Reserva Rioja (\$23.99) This is an old vine Grenache-dominated Rioja from the foothills of Rioja Alta. This is 100% Rioja with a twist. The nose is Rioja-savory, with the warmth and inviting spice of the region. The palate is rounder, and here is where you feel the Grenache. It is rich and has plenty of stuffing and a long, complex, and very satisfying finish.

2017 Susana Balbo "Signature" Malbec Mendoza (\$19.99) Malbec in Susana's hands is magic. This is a wine for any full-bodied red wine drinker. This wine has great aromatics, is mouth-filling, rich, and polished. There are no edges to this wine's aroma, flavor, or texture. This is a wine that tries to please but never loses its identity. A lovely Malbec.

2010 Pinna Fidelis "Roble Español" Ribera del Duero (\$39.99) This wine was a revelation to me. I am a big fan of the Pinna Fidelis wines. There all express Ribera

del Duero, no matter what the style of the wine. This wine is aged in Spanish oak. I didn't know that was a thing—shame on me. But, thankfully, they brought it to my attention with this wine. This delivers Tempranillo's dark fruit and earthiness with soft, round, but substantial tannins, and spice. There is also a delicious, fun note here that I can't quite put my thumb on—I love it when wine does this!

Honorío Rubio "Añadas Saca 2018" Blanco Rioja (\$44.99) Named Añades because it is a non vintage blend, while "Saca" will be familiar to sherry lovers. This is the most recent "withdrawal" from the solera this is aged in. It gets better—this is made from grapes grown in a valley renowned for white wine. This is oaky, slightly oxidized traditional white Rioja that is made in a non-traditional way.

2016 Koyle "Cerro Basalto Cuartel G2" Colchagua Valley (\$34.99) Carménère is a misunderstood wine. It has a rightfully earned "reputation," but things are changing, both in the vineyard and in the winery. This is an incredible example of how things are going

right. Blended with Cabernet Franc, Carménère does not exhibit herbal notes, and there's no rusticity in this wine. Full-bodied and polished, this is a perfect hybrid of New World and Old World.

2018 Verdeal "Ayre" Verdejo Rueda (\$10.99) A longtime favorite here at K&L, but you might not recognize it with its great new label. I think the wine has taken as big a qualitative jump as the label has. It has always been crisp and easy, but there is a purity to the fruit and a mineral element on the finish. I think this is the best Sauvignon Blanc for value we have in the store.

2017 Trans Douro Express Cima Courgo Douro (\$20.99) The 2017 vintage was great in the Douro Valley. This wine is the dry exemplification of the great fortified wines that are now becoming available. This a brash red with a fun mix of dark and red fruits. This is also a wild, floral wine with spice and minerality. What a great wine region.

Back-to-Back Excellence: 2017 Port

It is almost unbelievable that there are two back-to-back vintage ports from the big houses. This is the very first time it has happened for any port in the Symington family portfolio. The 2016s were about elegance and finesse, while the 2017s are a little more brash, intense and exuberant. Like returning champs, they know what it takes to win again.

2017 Fonseca Vintage Port (375ml \$49.99; 750ml \$99.99)
96-98 RP, 95 JS, 95 VN

2017 Taylor Fladgate Vintage Port (375ml \$49.99; 750ml \$99.99)
98-100 RP, 99 JS, 98 VN, 97 WS

2017 Croft Vintage Port (375ml \$41.99; 750ml \$79.99)
97 WS, 94 RP





Holiday traffic jam: South Island vineyard lane in late spring—holiday time in New Zealand!

New Zealand Pinot Noir Shines on the Holiday Table

By Thomas Smith

I always find myself returning to Pinot Noir during the holidays.

Bright and fresh, Pinot Noir is a perfect pairing with everything from turkey to roast ham. Whether having guests for dinner or sipping wine at a holiday party, Pinot Noir is what you'll find in my glass.

Further, there is no place on the planet that has better value in Pinot Noir than New Zealand's cool climate. This holiday season, we have plenty of new arrivals from New Zealand's stunning 2017 vintage that range from easy-drinking party wines to seriously profound representations of terroir. The quality from this far-flung region of the earth has never been better. It should be on every Pinot Noir lover's radar.

We're so pleased to be introducing the wines of Matt Connell to the US for the first time—well, technically. Matt spent three years crafting wines at Oregon's Elk Cove Winery in addition to other notable wineries around the world, before returning to New Zealand and starting his eponymous winery in 2015.

2018 Matt Connell "Rendition" Pinot Noir Central Otago (\$29.99) This is beautifully aromatic with complex notes of wild strawberry, cherry, and dried flowers. The palate is supple and incredibly approachable, but still has all the focus and drive you'd expect from Central Otago Pinot Noir. It walks that fine balance between satisfying those who take wine seriously, and still impressing those who don't. At a family gathering this will "wow" both you and your family. For me, this is the most exciting bottle of wine in the store right now. **95 SK, 95 BC**

Bright, fruity and fun, the **2017 Thistle Ridge Pinot Noir Waipara Valley North Canterbury (\$14.99)** definitely over-delivers at \$15. Made by Greystone—arguably the best producer in North Canterbury—the Thistle Ridge is sourced from top vineyards throughout the region, and shows bright cherry notes along with more subtle savory tones. A standout Pinot at its price. **93 SK**



Our other offering from Greystone, the **2017 Nor'Wester by Greystone Pinot Noir North Canterbury (\$19.99)** might be the best value Pinot Noir in the entire store. Much more black-fruited than the Thistle Ridge, it has zippy acidity, silky tannins, and electric acidity. Weighted and substantial, this is incredibly serious Pinot Noir that can go toe-to-toe with wines twice the price. For anyone who is a fan of Oregon Pinot Noir, you've got to check out this wine. It is a perfect example of the serious value that New Zealand Pinot Noir offers. **93 SK, 91 JS**

Mount Edwards is a leader in biodynamic and organic winegrowing in Central Otago. From a great vintage, the **2017 TED by Mount Edward Pinot Noir (\$19.99)** is a delicious exposition of wild berries, tart acidity, and fruit-forwardness in a glass. Delightful, fun, it keeps you coming back to your glass again and again. **93 JS**

Andrew Donaldson has been crafting the wines at Akitu since his vineyard was planted in northern Central Otago in 2002. Just down the road from Rippon Winery, Akitu strives to make their best expressions of Pinot Noir, and nothing else. He has two wines, each with its own distinctive character.

2017 Akitu "A2" Pinot Noir Central Otago White Label (\$24.99) This is crafted to be bright and delicious for dinner tonight. It has soft, warm fruit, and ethereal aromatics of raspberries and violets. Red-fruited and bold, with a crack of acidity, it concludes with a beautiful, smooth finish. **91 RP**

2017 Akitu "A1" Pinot Noir Central Otago Black Label (\$34.99) This is of a darker, more focused breed of Pinot. Black cherry and spice are built on a richer, tannic structure with intricate layers of aromatic complexity. With a good decant, it shows wonderfully now, but a few more years down the line this will morph into something off-the-charts gorgeous. **95 DC, 93 RP**



Key NZ: **90** Critic Score on 100-Point Scale **RP** Robert Parker's Wine Advocate **BC** Bob Campbell **SK** Sam Kim (Wine Orbit) **JS** James Suckling **DC** Decanter

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

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

Here's a great array of holiday gifts from our Bordeaux department—for any person or pocketbook, and from \$20 on up.

1998 Haut-Franquet, Moulis (\$19.99) Some 1998 Left Bank wines are a bit coarse and tough. This, like the Poujeaux, is elegant and fruit-driven. We just got a final shipment in time for the holidays.

2006 Arnauld, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99) Château Arnauld is located between Margaux and Moulis, on a large gravel outcropping on the edge of the Gironde, neighboring Chasse-Spleen and Poujeaux. This 2006 is so delicious and lively. Buy it before these 100 cases go away—before Christmas.

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, etc.”

1999 Gaudin, Pauillac (\$29.99) An old-school Bordeaux 20 years old and less than \$30? A steal. Property is close to Château Latour, but much less expensive. Sold out twice already.

1991 Pibran, Pauillac (\$49.99) Almost 30 years old and still going strong. Another old-school Cabernet-based red. Party time.

1999 Boyd-Cantenac, Margaux (\$59.99) A 20-year-old classified growth that shows the elegance of Margaux. Perfect to drink right now with a pork roast or even with a holiday bird.

2009 Guiraud, Sauternes (\$59.99) Super concentrated dessert wine with fine acidity to balance the intense fruit and botrytis.

2007 Rieussec, Sauternes (\$69.99) Balanced and very spicy, with almond paste and apricot. Full-bodied, medium sweet, with a long, fruity, tangy finish. Layered and stylish.

1989 Lynch-Moussas, Pauillac (\$69.99) Here is your basic superbly valued, thirty-year old Pauillac—neighbor of Lynch-Bages. The Lynch-Bages sells for \$399.

1997 Haut-Bailly, Pessac-Léognan (\$99.99) What a great wine from an underrated vintage. Silky smooth and quite mineral on the nose and palate. The year before Véronique Sanders took over the production at Haut-Bailly.

2000 Clos du Marquis, St-Julien (\$99.99) 94 WS: “The nose shows lots 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.”

2006 Cantemerle, Haut-Médoc (1.5L \$109.99) One of our favorite Cantemerles. This wine will age well in magnum for 25 more years. Full, rich, and round.

2000 Montrose, St-Estèphe (\$229.99) Just starting to open, it shows beautiful spices and dark fruit on the nose and palate. It’s full-bodied, with ultra-fine, integrated tannins and an extremely complex, refined finish. Drink or hold. Top of the line here.

2009 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$289.99) and 2010 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$289.99) 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.

2009 l’Evangile, Pomerol (\$489.99) 100 points from Robert Parker: “An astonishing effort from the Rothschild family, the 2009 l’Evangile may be the reference point offering from this estate for decades to come.”

2005 La Mission Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (\$599.99) Another **100** points from Robert Parker: “The 2005 La Mission Haut-Brion is pure perfection.”

2001 d’Yquem (375ml \$379.99) and 2009 d’Yquem, Sauternes (375ml \$289.99; 750ml \$549.99) Perfect wines that will age forever. The crème of the crop for two different years.

2008–2013 Pontet-Canet Vertical Sets (\$829.99) The perfect gift for that someone special—like yourself. One bottle each of 2008, '09, '10, '11, '12, and '13. The 2009 and 2010 are worth almost \$600 themselves. Very limited availability.

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We host regular evening and Saturday tastings at each K&L store as well as many special events throughout the year. For the complete calendar go to KLWines.com/Local-Events.

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