

January Wine Bargains

White Wines:

Famiglia Castellani Vermentino, 2016, Tuscany, Italy

I'm not sure why we don't drink more Vermentino. It has lovely flavors of white peaches, pears, mint and flowers and a crisp, energetic finish. It's unoaked and is such a great wine for pairing with lots of foods. It's rich enough to work with chicken, pork and grilled fish, but delicate and bright enough to pair beautifully with fresh seafood and salads. \$15

Bodega Colome Torrontes, 2016, Salta, Argentina

We continue our love affair with Torrontes. This darling of Argentina is just so much fun. How can we not invite her to every party? The nose is intoxicating and exotic; apricot, honeysuckle, jasmine and elderflower. You anticipate sweetness but the palate is bone dry and finishes with a lovely crisp minerality. Definitely rockstar paired with oysters, but works with any seafood. \$14

Farmhouse White, 2017, California

From the folks at Cline Cellars, the winemaker says, "When selecting grapes for this wine, we were particularly conscious of the intensity of the fruit, the acid balance, and the characteristics each varietal offered to the blend as a whole. The final product delivers bright, crisp flavors of Mandarin orange, pear, and lime, with a fresh, clean finish. Pairs well with appetizers such as ripe tomatoes and mozzarella, salads with extra-virgin olive oil, and lightly-spiced chicken or fish dishes. This is a great everyday wine that suits a wide variety of cuisines. Adventurous, affordable and delicious. "\$12

Hugel Gentil, 2016, Alsace, France

Gentil refers to a wine that is a blend of at least 50% of the noble Alsace varieties and in this case, Hugel blends Gewurztraminer, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Muscat and Sylvaner. Always garnering tons of accolades, this vintage was named as "50 Affordable Wines You Can Always Trust" by Food and Wine Magazine and was on Wine Spectator's list of "Top 100 Values of 2017". The wine shows gentle fruit of yellow apples, pear, spice and nutmeg. Clear, straight and fresh on the palate, it's fabulous with rotisserie chicken and paella. \$15

Louis Latour "Ardeche" Chardonnay, 2016, Rhone Valley, France

This famous Burgundy producer now makes Chardonnay in the Ardeche, a region in the northern Rhone Valley near St Joseph and Cornas. The climate is more Mediterranean and the wine is crisp, elegant, tasty, light to medium-bodied, has apple and flowery flavors, as well as fine purity and ripeness. \$12

Red Wines:

Lucky Star Pinot Noir, 2017, California

These Pinot Noir grapes are sourced from several cool climate growing regions including the Santa Lucia Highlands. Lush berry aromas with hints of baking spice lead to a jammy red fruit palate. Medium in body, Lucky Star Pinot Noir has a round mouthfeel, smooth tannins and a lovely, lingering finish. \$12

La Maialina Gertrude Rosso, 2014, Tuscany, Italy

This Super Tuscan is a blend of Sangiovese (the Chianti grape), Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. It is a plush wine loaded with jammy cherry, ripe plum fruit, violets and sweet baking spices. Fabulous with lasagna, Osso Bucco or braised meats, and grilled pork. \$15

Chateau d'Oupia "Heretiques", 2017, Languedoc, France

Everyone talks about the new quality of wines from the Languedoc. For us, this doesn't mean the ubiquitous varietal bottlings from irrigated flat vineyards but the wonderful wines coming from the best hillside vineyard sites in AOCs like Minervois, Corbières and Coteaux-du-Languedoc. Les Heretiques from Château d'Oupia is one of the best. The wine is 100% Carignan, 40+ years old. Half of the wine is fermented in barrel and the other half is made in a process similar to Beaujolais. It's truly the ideal bistro wine. Dark, ruby-colored, the wine is wonderfully clean & pure, with an exuberant personality, and gobs of rich, peppery, red and black fruit. \$12

Barossa Valley Shiraz, 2015, Barossa Valley, Australia

An excellent Shiraz, the dark garnet/plum-colored wine reveals a big, oaky, spicy nose filled with jammy black fruits. In the mouth, the wine offers jammy sweet fruit, in a mouthfilling, hedonistic style filled with fruit and toasty oak. Drink it over the next 5-6 years with burgers and barbecue. \$14

Cline Zinfandel, 2017, Lodi, California

This wine displays a deep ruby color with a slightly purple edge, a penetrating, fragrant, smoky, peppery, earthy nose, excellent richness and fruit, fine underlying acidity and tannin for support, and a long, lusty finish. It will drink well for 3+ years with ribs, sausages and grilled lamb. \$12

Spellbound Merlot, 2016, California

This wine is made by Michael Mondavi, Robert's son. It reveals aromas of roasted coffee, deep forest, dusty cocoa, black cherries and black currants. Medium-bodied, ripe and well-made, it will provide plenty of pleasure over the next 2-3 years. \$13

Barricas Cabernet Sauvignon, 2017, Mendoza, Argentina

The nose is ripe, with red and black fruit aromas intermixed with some herbal tones and notes of black pepper and baking spices, a textbook Cabernet, with ripe tannins and good suppleness. Lovely on its own or with steak. \$13

