

# Bloomberg

## The Year's 50 Best Wines Under \$50, From an Expert Who Tasted 3,243



Source: Vendors; Background: Getty Images

By [Elin McCoy](#)

28 de diciembre de 2023 at 11:51 CET

I love drinking rare, expensive wine as much as anyone, but I'm a bargain hunter at heart. I'm always on the lookout for the reds, whites, rosés and sparklers that deliver top quality at a reasonable cost. So, as I reviewed my 2023 tasting notes, I was delighted to discover this was a banner year for good values, despite inflation.

I culled my following 50 good buys from 3,243 wines from 21 countries that I sipped this year. I've tried to highlight what's new, at least to me, but some are familiar labels that consistently deliver deliciousness—and they haven't raised their prices, either. Sadly it gets harder and harder to find Champagnes that sell for \$50 and under, but I did.

So, where to look for bargains?

For the past two years, my top country for value in almost every category is Italy.

France is a close second. Look to the Languedoc in the south, as well as the Touraine region of the Loire Valley, and in Macon. Be sure to add in Bordeaux from smaller chateaux. According to the French Ministry of Agriculture, prices of reds in this world-famous region dropped 21% in the second half of 2022 compared with the five-year average.

More sauvignon blancs than ever, from New Zealand, Chile and elsewhere, are hitting the market at good prices, warranting a bigger look early next year. And rieslings from everywhere are underappreciated and undervalued.

Finally, shop around and compare prices. Sparkling wines frequently go on sale during the holidays, and you'll find discounts on all wines in the slow sales month of January.

## **The Fun Fizz**

*Top sparkling wines, including pét-nats, come from every continent but Antarctica.*



### **2022 Meinklang Prosa Frizzante Rosé**

This lightly sparkling pinot noir-based fizz with a hint of fruity sweetness comes from a biodynamic family estate in Austria. It's perfect to serve with brunch, as an aperitif, with a dish of fresh berries, you name it. \$16

### **NV Adami Prosecco di Treviso Garbèl**

More than 638 million(!) bottles of prosecco were sold worldwide in 2022, according to the Prosecco Consortium. Many are boring, but this entry-level example from an excellent producer has a lot of personality for the price, with juicy acidity, mineral and melon-y aromas with soft, soothing bubbles. \$19

### **NV Piper Sonoma Blanc de Blancs**

Nonvintage basic cuvées from a handful of California wineries are consistent best buys. This one, under the umbrella ownership that includes Piper-Heidsieck Champagne, is a bright, crisp blend of chardonnay and pinot blanc that has both elegance and charm. A top aperitif. \$22

### **2021 Raventos I Blanc Conca del Riu Anoia Rosé de Nit**

The Raventos family, who made this biodynamic pale pink rosé fizz in Spain's cava region, created their own more strictly defined appellation: Conca del Riu Anoia. It's my go-to pink bubbly because of its complexity, purity and mineral freshness. \$25

### **NV Laurent Barth Extra Brut Pétillant Naturel**

Pét-nats are getting pricier, but this one from an organic Alsace producer is still a deal. Made from pinot auxerrois and pinot noir grapes, it's subtle and citrusy, and will also please people who say they don't like pét-nats. \$26

### **When Only Champagne Will Do**

*Nonvintage blends from little-known grower-producers still offer the best value. Entry-level cuvées from larger brands are better than ever, but most are now above \$50.*





### **NV Lanson Le Black Brut**

Rich, spicy, balanced, classic, Lanson's basic cuvée hasn't gone up much in price, and it's still satisfying and delicious. \$43

### **NV J.M. Labruyère Grand Cru Extra Brut Prologue**

A rich, full-bodied blend of 69% pinot and 31% chardonnay with notes of apple and plenty of zingy acidity, this very dry, pure fizz is new to me. \$45

### **NV Sotheby's Champagne Blanc de Blancs**

The auction house's own-label bubbly is a bestseller for good reason. Made by the Legras family from 100% grands crus vineyards, it's a versatile Champagne with light citrus-and-toasted-brioche aromas and flavors that go with smoked salmon or salty cheese sticks. \$45

### **NV Diebolt-Vallois Blanc de Blancs Brut**

You can try this bubbly by the glass at Daniel Boulud's Le Pavillon in New York. Tangy and vivid, it brims with saline and almond notes, and makes a super aperitif. \$46

### **NV Laherte Frères Extra Brut Rosé de Meunier**

More Champagne producers than ever are making single-varietal bubbly from the less well-known meunier grape. This fizz is fruity, round and full-bodied with aromas of crushed strawberries. It also has a gorgeous floral label. \$49

### **NV Deutz Classic Brut**

My first reaction: delicate and sleek. The aromas remind me of a *tarte au citron*, and I reveled in the superfine bubbles and subtle spice and almond flavors. \$50

### **Whites Fit for a Grand Dinner**

*From light, bright aperitifs to elegant, rich notes.*



**2022 Susana Balbo Crios Torrontés**

Balbo is a master of this Argentine white grape, and her refreshing, gulpable lower-priced bottling is all about lychee and white flower aromas and mellow yet lively flavors. Pair it with crab dishes. \$15

**2022 Domaine de la Pepière Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie Clos des Briords**

Mineral-driven Muscadet from the Loire Valley, the ideal white with oysters, is still a huge bargain. This one from certified organic old vines is a top value, with complexity, bitter lemon aromas and lingering ripe apple-and-earth flavors. \$20

**2021 Eisacktal Cantina Valle Isarco Kerner**

The grape is a cross between riesling and red grape schiava and thrives at high altitudes in Italy's Alto Adige. This one has scents of peaches and herbs and a round, full-bodied beeswaxy texture that reminds me of sémillon. \$21

**2022 Douloufakis Dafnios Vidiano**

Talk about an unusual grape variety! Ancient Cretan vidiano was almost extinct 25 years ago before a few young winemakers revived it. Crisp, yet concentrated, this producer's example shows intense aromas of quince, chamomile and green herbs. Great with smoked fish. \$22

**2022 Shaw + Smith Sauvignon Blanc Adelaide Hills**

Australia, especially the cool Adelaide Hills region, has become yet another source of good, reasonably priced sauvignon blanc. Shaw + Smith's is a ripely textured, fresh, herb-and-mineral-toned white. \$22





Source: Vendors; Background: Getty Images

### **2022 Jean-Marc Brocard Chablis Sainte Claire**

What's not to like? Chablis is still a deal compared with Burgundy, and this creamy textured chardonnay with bright citrus and wet stone notes can compete against many premier cru bottles that cost way more. The grapes come from certified organic vines. \$26

### **2022 Tablas Creek Patelin de Tablas Blanc**

This pioneer of Rhône-style classics and regenerative farming in California's Paso Robles region is a consistent source of good values. This blend of seven white varieties is perfectly balanced, floral and luscious with honeydew aromas and vivid acidity. \$28

### **2021 Château Grand Village Blanc**

The Guinaudeau family of Pomerol's famed Château Lafleur is behind this bright, energetic, pure and fragrant sauvignon blanc-sémillon blend that punches way above its price. \$29

### **2020 Trefethen Estate Chardonnay**

This textbook lovely chardonnay from the Oak Knoll district in Napa is deep, pure and elegant and ages surprisingly well. \$30

## 2021 Greywacke Wild Sauvignon

New Zealand's Marlborough region is sauvignon blanc land, but many are simple party whites. This one is just about perfect: sophisticated, layered, succulent and citrusy. It's one of 12 wines chosen for this year's Appellation Marlborough Annual Collection, all top values. \$31



Source: Vendors; Background: Getty Images

## 2022 Graci Etna Bianco

Wine lovers are just getting to know the fantastic complex whites from Mount Etna, and they should. From a noted producer, this golden-colored blend of 85% carricante and 15% catarratto has tangy, salty-mineral notes. \$36

## 2018 Smith-Madrone Estate Riesling

Every year I ask the same rhetorical question: Why don't people drink more riesling? Napa pioneer Stu Smith has been making stylish German-style examples with racy acidity and deep minerality for decades on Napa's Spring Mountain. This is an excellent vintage. \$36



### **2020 Paul Jaboulet Aîné Mule Blanche Crozes Hermitage**

This polished, biodynamic blend of marsanne and roussanne from the Rhône Valley is a generous, winter-weight white. Think ripe pear and stone fruit aromas and a lush texture. \$39

### **2021 Fort Ross Vineyard Chenin Blanc**

The first chenin blanc from this winery on the Sonoma Coast, owned by a couple from South Africa, is golden and rich with lots of depth and a peachy richness. \$44

### **2020 Grgich Hills Napa Valley Chardonnay**

Toast Miljenko Grgich, known as “Mike,” who died this month at age 100. After winning fame by creating the Chateau Montelena chardonnay, winner of the famous 1976 Paris Tasting, he founded his eponymous estate. This creamy, vibrant wine has notes of flint, citrus, green cardamom and hazelnuts. \$50

### **Rosé for All Seasons**

*Dry pink wines as an aperitif, party sipper or with food.*



Source: Vendors; Background: Getty Images

### **2022 E. Guigal Tavel Rosé**

Time for pink wine lovers to discover France's rosé-only appellation, Tavel, across the river from Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Guigal's version is deep salmon pink and food-friendly with spicy red fruit. \$23

### **2022 Domaine Guiberteau Rosé**

The domaine is a wish-list label from the Loire Valley's Saumur region. Given their other wines, I wasn't surprised the cabernet franc-based rosé is layered and complex, as well as refreshing, with cool mineral and red berry tones. \$25

### **2022 Tiberio Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo**

A deep pink color is traditional for *rosato*, called *cerasuolo* in Abruzzo. The award-winning Tiberio family estate makes a rich, perfumy example with crushed cherry and mineral tones. \$25

### **2022 Minus Tide Feliz Creek Vineyards Carignan Rosé**

The mouthwatering, almost salty acidity in this Mendocino rosé makes it a super food wine. From a single vineyard of old carignan vines, it has aromas of apricots and intense concentrated flavor. \$27

### **2021 Girolamo Russo Etna Rosato**

Giuseppe Russo is one of the best winemakers on Mount Etna, and his rosé is one of the best, too. Made from nerello mascalese grapes, it's complex, mouth-filling and food-friendly, with bright berry and cherry notes. \$30

## **Reds to Pair With Pizza and Steak**

*From light and lively to big and bold.*



*Source: Vendors; Background: Getty Images*

### **2022 Viña Zorzal Garnacha Navarra**

You don't expect much for \$12, but this juicy, medium-bodied everyday red from a Spanish family estate in Navarra will surprise you. It has dark fruit and minerality and comes from 100-year-old vines. \$12

### **2021 Argiolas Costera Cannonau di Sardegna**

This red easily passed the drinkability test at my table—I had a second glass. It's a rich, intense but balanced wine with dried herb and smoke flavors and a slightly bitter edge, perfect with roasted meat. \$17

### **2019 Morandé Carménère Gran Reserva**

Chile is a terrific source of great values, both red and white. This one, made from the carménère grape, stands out for its lush, smooth texture and black currant-bitter cherry flavors. (The 2021, not yet in shops, is even better, labeled Vitis Unica instead of Gran Reserva.) \$22.50



### **2021 Cantina Kurtatsch Sonntaler Schiava Alte Reben**

Northern Italy's Alto Adige region is loaded with red and white values. This light, tart, savory red from old vines has cranberry and dried-flower aromas and comes in a tall, elegant bottle. \$25



### **2021 Penfolds Bin 28 Shiraz**

A velvety texture and sweet, spicy fruit stand out in this intense, robust, powerful, big-tannin Australian shiraz. It's a blend of grapes from several regions—as is typical for this renowned producer. \$28

### **2018 Quinta da Fonte Souto Tinto**

A luscious food wine from the Symington family of port fame, this savory, seductive red is from Portugal's Alentejo, a region replete with bargains. \$30

### **2021 Tenuta delle Terre Nere Etna Rosso**

The entry-level reds from Mount Etna's slopes have surprising complexity for the price. This one is seductive, with floral aroma notes, a savory taste of dark red fruit and smoke, and smooth texture. \$30

### **2018 Mazzei Ser Lapo Chianti Classico Riserva**

Chianti Classico is still underpriced for quality, especially the wines from this noble Tuscan family. Midweight, it has the cherry-ish core fruit essence of Tuscany's sangiovese grape. \$32



Source: Vendors; Background: Getty Images

### **2020 Domaine Mee Godard Morgon Corcelette**

Cru Beaujolais isn't as good a deal as it used to be, but this one made by fast-rising star Godard overdelivers. Bright and succulent, it's bold and yet elegant, from a special gamay plot in Morgon. \$35

### **2021 Cristom Pinot Noir Mt. Jefferson Cuvée**

Oregon's pinots keep getting more expensive, which makes this non-estate, value-priced bottling from a noted winery even more enticing. What stand out are the notes of damp earth, pepper and cranberry fruit, which will show off any mushroom dish. \$40



### **2019 Château Siran**

This vintage, from a château in Margaux whose reputation has been rising over the past eight years, has gorgeous layers of intense cassis fruit, notes of graphite and a long, lush finish. \$40

### **2021 Phelan Farm Autrement Red Blend**

Winemaker/sommelier Raj Parr has a new project on the San Luis Obispo coast, and this is the first vintage of its juicy Savoie-inspired combo of gamay noir, mondeuse and pinot noir. It's pure pleasure, yummy and complex. \$48

### **2018 Terroir al Limit Terra de Cuques Priorat**

Cult biodynamic Spanish winemaker Dominik Huber showed the world what the Priorat region is all about. Firm and silky, this energetic, powerful garnacha and cariñena village blend is full-bodied, with hints of berries, herbs and licorice. It's a good introduction to his style. \$49

### **For Wine Geeks**

*And those who love the unusual.*





### **2021 Krasno Goriska Brda White Wine with Maceration**

Think ripe apricots, dried herbs, citrus peel and a slight tannic bitterness that's ideal with food. Made in Slovenia, this organic orange blend of local grapes is a fresh, fruit-forward style. \$20

### **2020 Herdade do Rocim Amphora Branco**

This white blend of antao vaz and other white grapes from Portugal's Alentejo was fermented and aged in traditional *talha*, or clay amphora. It's a bit like a savory orange wine, with an earthy character from the amphora. \$22

### **2019 Van Ardi Estate Red Blend**

If you've never tasted an Armenian wine, you're in for a treat with this organic estate red made by an American who arrived in 2008 to pursue a winemaking dream. It's a dark, smooth blend of areni, haghtanak and milagh grapes (got that?) with notes of spice, red fruit and cocoa. \$26

### **And for Dessert**

*Sweet wines for sipping.*



Source: Vendors; Background: Getty Images

### **NV Yalumba Antique Tawny**

In Australia, this amber-colored, very sweet wine is known as a “stickie.” It’s an amazing buy, with a compote of aromas, from ginger to toffee, and intense spicy fruitcake, caramel and hazelnut flavors. A sip is all you need after dinner. \$22 for a half-bottle

### **Graham’s Six Grapes Reserve Ruby Port**

Robust and smooth, with incredibly pure rich blackberry fruit flavors, this deservedly popular wine is not too sweet and fantastic with dark chocolate. \$26

### **Taylor’s Historical Collection III Reserve Tawny**

This rich, mellow, silky-textured limited-edition blend from wines destined for Taylor’s 10-, 20-, 30- and 40-year-old tawny bottlings has plummy, dried fruit and nutty aromas and flavors of toffee and brown sugar. The bottle shape is historically inspired. Perfect with pecan pie. \$47