

WINE News

Your Next Favorite Bottle
Awaits: A Remarkable
Selection of Domestic Wines



West Coast Wonders

By Ryan Woodhouse



This edition of Wine News must be one of the broadest and most comprehensive editions we've written to date! I give you my thoughts on the highly anticipated 2019 vintage in the Napa Valley. I'm calling it a "modern classic" with rich, ripe, forward, exotic wines that are going to give folks a lot of early drinking pleasure. These are exuberant,

powerful wines that scream "Napa Valley!" My next article focuses on the exceptional, world-class wines coming out of Oregon's Willamette Valley. I've long been a huge fan of these wines, but recently winemakers in the region have taken it to a whole new level and gotten the HUGE critical acclaim they deserve.

2019 Walter Scott "Cuvée Anne" Eola-Amity Hills Chardonnay \$39.95 97RP 94DC 94W&S A

A perfect example of the world-class Chardonnay coming out of Oregon right now. This wine will have white Burgundy fans lining up for more. Stunning.



2019 AXR Napa Valley Bordeaux Blend \$39.95 95JS Crafted by 100-point cult winemaker Jean Hoefliger (Alpha Omega), this 90% Cabernet blend highlights the quality of the 2019 vintage and its pure, exotic fruit profile. Polished and delicious.



2016 Hanzell "Estate" Sonoma Valley Chardonnay \$39.95 (Elsewhere \$65) 95WE 94VN

We have a stunning price on this California classic. One of the finest and most pedigreed Chardonnays in the state, from some of the oldest Chardonnay vines in the state. Staff members are all-in on this one.



2019 Bedrock "Old Vine" California Zinfandel \$23.95

92VN 92WS 92JD With talented winemaker Morgan Twain Peterson at the helm, Bedrock Wine Co. makes some of the finest Zinfandel in the world. The



2019 Old Vine bottling is the best ever under this label. Selected from legendary vineyards including: Evangelho, Teldeschi, Bedrock, Pagani, and Old Hill.

2019 Eyrie Dundee Hills Pinot Gris \$19.99

93 WE **#4 in Wine Enthusiast Top 100 Wines of 2021** This wine has our staff swooning. It's a stunning Pinot Gris from Oregon stalwart Eyrie Vineyards at an incredibly sharp price. The Eyrie estate has some of the oldest vines in the Willamette Valley. They farm with organic and regenerative practices and make wonderfully authentic and complex wines.



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Next, my SoCal counterpart, Kaj Stromer, gives us a look back at some of the brightest things to come out of the otherwise gloomy 2021 by recapping the best Domestic deals we offered. Unprecedented times produced unprecedented deals. Continuing on the theme of wines that overdeliver, Kaj highlights his favorite bottles for under \$25. Your dollars will go farther than you expect with these stunning values. His picks include a sub-\$20, 95-point old-vine Riesling; a 94-point Châteauneuf-du-Pape look-alike from Santa Barbara at \$22.95; a stunning Zin from some of the most famed ancient vines in the world at \$23.95; and legit Napa Valley Cabernet for under \$20! Finally, Kaj looks at what K&L staffers are drinking during these long winter months. Read on and enjoy!



The Decadent and Deeply Fruited Cabs from Napa's 2019 Vintage

By Ryan Woodhouse



The 2019 vintage in Napa is a modern classic. I say “modern” classic, because, from what I have tasted, the wines show the richness and exotic exuberance that Napa Cabernet-based wines have come to be in the past few decades. As I wrote last year, the 2018 vintage was really a blast from the distant past: a cool, long, very even vintage with more elegant wines, higher acidities, and more savory aspects. One could even say it shows

greater varietal typicity. The 2019 vintage, however, seems to be a return to more recent trends with delicious fruit-forward wines, riper flavor profiles, lush textures, and early accessibility.

The growing season was warm, but not exceptionally so. It was not plagued by the dramatic heat spikes of 2017, but did see some late warmth and difficult windy conditions causing power outages during harvest. There are some big extracted wines out there, but largely they have the depth of fruit to pull it off. I don't think the 2019s will age as gracefully as the 2018s, but I do think they will provide the average consumer with as much, if not more, drinking pleasure in the short term.

Another positive about the 2019 vintage is that the yields were large. Folks in the Valley at times had more fruit than they had anticipated and juggling tank space became paramount to getting fruit picked and in the barn at the right time. Of course, in hindsight the devastating fires of 2020 mean that the extra yields from 2019 will be critical in bridging the gap between the almost nonexistent 2020 red wines.

Here are a few 2019s that we have in stock that I hope will provide you with a good reference point for the vintage. There are great wines to be found from the \$20–30 range all the way up to \$500+.

2019 AXR Napa Valley Bordeaux Blend \$39.95 95JS A simply stunning value for the money, the '19 AXR is a great bottle of Cab for \$40. Winemaker Jean Hoefliger, of Alpha Omega fame, worked

his magic here. It's packed with crushed blackberries, cassis, espresso crema, wonderful cedary oak tones, dusty-stony mineral accents. Every element is perfectly integrated; beautiful elegant tannins caress the palate, while the whole wine remains so vibrant and fresh. Great concentration and power here, but also tons of vitality and lift. This is a Napa Cab you can drink right from release.

2019 Priest Ranch Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$44.95 Priest Ranch comes from the renowned Somerston Estate in the Vaca Mountains east of Rutherford. These steep, rugged, hillside vineyards between 1000 and 2,400ft produce Cabernet with pronounced aromas of lavender, crushed blackcurrant, stewed mulberry, and briary notes that mingle with graphite, hot stone, and charred oak. Serious Cab with a great core of noble tannin. For ribeye.



2019 Teeter-Totter (Fait-Main) Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$64.95 94JD Made by Benoit Touquette of Realm and Fait-Main. Teeter-Totter gives you a chance to taste the achievements of one of Napa's top superstar winemakers for a very reasonable price. A perfect example of the rich, exotic fruit profile that characterizes the 2019 vintage. Polished like a flawless diamond.

The next two wines were both made by the exceptionally talented Tony Biagi. Biagi makes wines for several top producers in the Valley and he has truly been on a hot streak in recent years. In 2020 Antonio Galloni named him Winemaker of the Year due to the strength of his wines across the board.

2019 Hourglass “Blueline Estate” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$149.95 97JD 95–97RP 96VN Tragically, Hourglass was largely destroyed in the 2020 Glass Fire, and the vines at their Blueline Estate were scorched. However, the crop that came off those vines the year before is up there with the very best wines of the vintage. Pure, exotic, wonderfully perfumed



and alluring. Floral tones, creme de cassis, blackcurrant, vanilla, unsmoked cigar, pencil shavings, and subtle mint.

2019 Patria “Oakville Ranch” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$99.95 95–98VN 94–96RP Patria is the personal project of Tony Biagi in collaboration with fine wine broker Kimberly Jones. Oakville Ranch is the central fruit source for the winery. This property sits high (1,400ft) in the hills east of the Valley floor. Organically farmed by legendary viticulturist, Phil Coturri. The vineyard seems to combine some of the exotic lushness and perfume of Oakville Cab with more structure and volcanic minerality. Jeb Dunnuck suggests this is the best bottle of Napa Cab under \$100...I wouldn't argue.



2019 Familiar Air Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$89.95 95RP Another project that involves broker Kimberly Jones, this time with Benoit Touquette (Realm, Fait-Main) as the winemaker. This wine has Benoit's signature polished style: a wonderfully aromatic, powerful, refined Cabernet with ripe black fruit, cocoa powder, woody spices, and loamy earth. A suave, sophisticated wine with wonderful balance and poise. A relative bargain in top-flight Napa Cab.

2019 Sinegal “Estate” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$79.95 98VN 94–96 JD Sinegal's run of spectacular wines continues with the 2019 Estate release. Winemaker Ryan Knoth learned his trade from Napa legends David Abreu, Fredrik Johansson (Staglin), and Michel Rolland. Celebrated grower Jim

Barbour oversees the farming. The results are nothing short of spectacular. Ultra-pure, rich, polished, modern Napa Cab. Cassis, blackberry preserve, mocha, exotic oak spice, cedar and wood smoke. Full-bodied and intense but silky and refined.

Not to be outdone by big brother Napa... **Alexander Valley** also produced some phenomenal wines in 2019. Two I just have to mention are the new releases from Jessie Katz at Aperture. These wines have the quality and class to stand shoulder to shoulder with much more expensive Napa bottlings.

2019 Aperture “Soil Specific” Alexander Valley Bordeaux Blend \$59.95 95–97RP Mostly Malbec, (a speciality of Katz), this wine has a highly floral nose of violets and lavender, mint, sage, crushed blackberries and Maraschino cherries. Classy cedar oak tones and gravelly minerals shine through. The tannins are really tactile and give great texture and measured grip to the finish. Awesome wine, I think this will age beautifully, too.



2019 Aperture “Soil Specific” Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$74.95 95–97RP Wow. Powerful wine. A huge nose of purple fruits and dried flowers. Crème de cassis, huckleberry, bramble, cedary oak, leather and cigar box. Quite linear and focused, beautiful varietal expression. With a powerful core of tannins that are refined, but have good grip and give the wine real form and pedigree. A benchmark wine for the region. 15+ years of ageing potential.

Oregon: Reaching New Heights or Overdue Recognition?

By Ryan Woodhouse

A recent report from Robert Parker's Wine Advocate suddenly shone a very bright light on the current state of play in Oregon wine country. Sure, it's been pretty common knowledge among wine savvy people for a while now



that the Willamette Valley produces excellent Pinot Noir and that Oregon is home to many very talented growers and winemakers. However, this article boasted no fewer than 83 wines earning over 95 points from a total of just 111 wines in the “sneak peek” report.

For those of us who are already in love with these wines, it was thrilling to see critic Erin Brooks so whole-heartedly embrace the wines and not be hesitant to throw out the huge scores that they deserve. Thankfully for us, we've been working with and carrying a great many of these wines for years and thus already had relationships with the wineries before the monumental scores were in print. What follows are some of the wines from that watershed report. I've also included a selection of some of my current favorites that I firmly believe are of world-class quality and deserve to be recognized as such.

Arterberry Maresh

A long-time favorite here at K&L and a central player in the recent *Wine Advocate* report, this multi-generational estate is producing some of the finest wines in the country both from their own old-vine, dry-farmed vineyard and from other top-notch sites around the northern Willamette. Winemaker Jim Maresh is the unassuming talent behind these wines, but the real magic appears to be recognizing the potential of these terroirs and shepherding it into bottles with the least amount of distraction and interference. The winemaking is simple yet precise, the purity of the wines and expression of place has uncommon clarity and a genuine authenticity.

From the entry level wines with the Dundee Hills AVA designation to the top single-vineyard wines, the pedigree is unwavering and a thread of quality runs throughout. While Jim's personality can seem almost nonchalant about the wines he produces at times, the consistent quality here shows a level of dedication and talent rarely found.



2019 Arterberry Maresh Dundee Hills

Pinot Noir \$29.95 94RP A perfect intro into Arterberry's wines, sourced from the home block called Maresh Vineyard plus some neighbors, this wine is shockingly flavorful and textured despite its very light, translucent appearance in the glass. So lifted, pure, aromatic and layered. Lots of soft red fruits, baking spice, potting soil, bramble leaf. Exceptional value.

2018 Arterberry Maresh "Old Vines" Dundee

Hills Pinot Noir \$39.95 94RP 93WS The "Old Vines" selection is taken from 1970s plantings at the neighboring Maresh and Webber Vineyards. The vines are farmed organically and without any irrigation. This is a jump up in weight and concentration here from the Dundee Hills bottling, with more structure, too. Darker-hued color and fruit profile. Black raspberry, dark cherry, sandalwood, toasted spices, truffle, and soil tones with a ferrous note perhaps from the famed red volcanic Jory soils.

2018 Arterberry Maresh "Maresh Vineyard"

Dundee Hills Pinot Noir \$49.95 95RP The home block bottling from Arterberry comes from vines planted in the 1970s. Again a wonderful combination of lifted floral aromas, rose water, Asian spices, then deep, brooding brambly fruits, black raspberry, earthy tones, tan bark, truffle. Effortless weight on the palate, fine, groomed tannins. Quintessential Pinot Noir.



Pics from a recent visit to Arterberry Maresh by Domestic Buyer Kaj Stromer.

Walter Scott

Walter Scott wines seem to have jumped into the upper echelons of the Oregon wine scene of late, but when you look at winemaker Ken Pahlow's background you'll see they're anything but an upstart! Ken worked for one of the most singular characters in Oregon wine, Mark Vlossak at St. Innocent Winery for 14 years. Following that, he worked in the cellars at Patricia Green and notably at Evening Land/Seven Springs under the tutelage of Burgundian legend, Dominique Lafon. Not surprising then that Chardonnay is a key focus here, though the Pinot Noir is also excellent to say the least.

2020 Walter Scott "Bois-Moi" Willamette Valley Chardonnay

\$29.95 94RP The "entry-level" Chardonnay from Walter Scott that is likely the envy of many other producers' premier label. This doesn't come across as a lower-tier wine in any way. In fact it's really quite serious with bracing acidity, chalk dust, golden apple, baked pastry notes, preserved lemon, stony mineral tones, and a long, intensely flavorful finish. Wow. An absolute bargain.

2019 Walter Scott "Cuvée Anne" Eola-Amity Hills Chardonnay

\$39.95 97RP 94DC 94WS This cuvée offers exceptional value and great insight into the upper-tier Walter Scott wines. Sourced from A+ vineyards (Justice, X Novo, Seven Springs), this wine shows the Burgundian style of the range. Low crop yields, picked early. Very fresh acidity, struck flint, matchstick, reductive edge

with mouth-watering citrus fruit, salted lime, grapefruit, tart quince, toasted grains, raw almond. A vibrant, focused, linear Chardonnay early on its ascent, but destined to be great.

2019 Walter Scott "Freedom Hill Vineyard" Willamette Valley

Chardonnay \$69.99 98RP 95DC Freedom Hill is a vineyard that Ken has decades of experience with from his time at St. Innocent. This bottling has a little more richness and roundness on the palate than most in the range, yet the piercing acid line and unwavering focus returns on the finish. Baked pear, firm apricot, honeysuckle, nutty oak tones, riverstone. Incredible, multi-dimensional Chardonnay.

Not to be out done by the transcendental Chardonnays, Walter Scott's Pinots are also standouts in the region.

2019 Walter Scott "Sojeau Vineyard"

Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir \$64.95 97DC 96RP A much revered site in the Eola-Amity Hills, referred to as the "Musigny" of the area by Ken. Sojeau Vineyard is a steep, ridge-top block with extremely rocky volcanic soils. The Pinot Noir from here is highly perfumed with floral wafts, piquant red berries, mulling spices, pine forest, sassafras. Vibrant and elegant on the palate, bursting with cool-climate freshness.

Audeant

I had seen the name Audeant show up a few times but I had no real knowledge of the project until the *Decanter* World Wine Awards made me sit up and take notice, dropping huge scores on the wines. A quick bit of online research, and it quickly became clear that I needed to taste these wines. Audeant's winemaker Andrew Riechers' resume showed a wealth of experience both at home and abroad with 19 vintages under his belt, including stints in Burgundy, California, New Zealand, and Oregon. Notably he worked with Ted Lemon of Littorai and Burn Cottage and spent the last five years as Assistant Winemaker to Maggie Harrison at Antica Terra! I literally picked up the phone there and then called the number on their website. To my surprise, after just a couple rings, Teal Walker, the proprietor and founder of Audeant, picked up. We chatted, I told her a little about what we do here at K&L and thankfully she expressed an interest in working with us. A box of samples to taste was all but a formality; the wines were exceptional across the board, of course, and the next thing I knew, K&L was the new home for Audeant in California! There are very limited quantities of these wines available, so if you're interested grab them quickly!

2017 Audeant Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$49.95 97DC A multi-vineyard blend combining Nysa, Luminous Hills, and

Carlisle's Crest vineyards. In terms of character, I can only describe fruits of the forest compote: deep, red to black, intense berry flavors mingling with forest floor, bramble, earthy tones, smoldering spices, and leather. A complex wine with so much going on. A satiny mouthfeel, with tactile tannins and great length. This is one to savor and let it evolve in the glass.



2017 Audeant "Luminous Hills Vineyard" Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir \$59.95 95DC 93RP 93VN From a unique, higher-elevation site in Yamhill-Carlton, this property spans both marine sedimentary soils and volcanic Jory soils. The wine is quite boisterous with forward red fruits and heightened aromatics. Some loamy, earthy tones add base notes and weight to the midpalate before more exotic spice notes return in the finish. Super expressive Pinot Noir. Less than 200 cases were made of this beauty so don't miss it!



2017 Audeant "Nysa Vineyard" Dundee Hills Pinot Noir \$74.95 94VN 93WA Hailing from the highly regarded Nysa Vineyard in the heart of the Dundee Hills, this is the most generous and powerful of the Audeant Pinots. The fruit comes off 30-year old, own-rooted vines growing deep into the areas famed iron rich, red volcanic soils. Amplified red fruits, cherry, ripe raspberry, cranberry jelly. Baking spices, leather and warm earth. Wonderfully rich and satisfying but still agile and light on its feet.



2019 Audeant "Seven Springs Vineyard" Eola-Amity Hills Chardonnay \$74.95 96WA Perhaps the most surprising wine in the portfolio for me was the Seven Springs Chardonnay. Made from seven specific rows in this legendary vineyard, this wine has SO much flavor encapsulated within it's almost unfathomable. Just a tiny sip on the tongue expands across the whole palate with baked, golden orchard fruit, caramelized pear, crunchy yellow quince, mouthwatering acidity, salinity in spades, a subtle framing of oak. Wines like this are exactly why folks are getting so excited about the possibilities for Oregon Chardonnay. We were able to acquire three of the 144 cases produced.

Cristom

In my mind, Cristom is one of the benchmark producers of the region. Winemaker Steve Doerner has done just about as much as anybody to elevate the quality and reputation of Oregon Pinot Noir. After 14 years at California Pinot Noir powerhouse Calera with Josh Jensen, Doerner took the job as winemaker at Cristom. Thirty years later he's still the driving force behind the wines.

In 2019, Cristom took on another winemaker to work alongside Doerner and to help continue the estate's journey into biodynamic and regenerative farming. That winemaker was Daniel Estrin. Estrin came to Cristom after seven years as Assistant Winemaker at Littorai with the inimitable Ted Lemon. Estrin has also made wine at Domaine de la Côte and Bodega Chacra. So whether you credit

Doerner's 30 years on the estate, Estrin's fresh input on the wines, or just the excellent vintage overall... Cristom's 2019s are not to be missed!

2019 Cristom "Mt. Jefferson Cuvée" Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$39.95 97JS 95RP

The Mt. Jefferson bottling has long been a staff favorite at K&L and in the past few years has gone up a few notches in both price point and quality. It now contains more estate fruit plus fruit from a pretty dazzling array of partner vineyards.

Those include: Seven Springs, Arcus, Durant, Canary Hill, Eola-Springs, and Ridgecrest—all vineyards typically reserved for single-vineyard designates of \$50–\$100 bottles.

2019 Cristom "Jessie Vineyard" Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir \$79.95 96RP 96JS

Jessie is typically my favorite of the single vineyards from Cristom. This steep southeast-facing slope with volcanic/basalt soils produces highly perfumed, elegant Pinot Noir, and the tiny clusters seem to work perfectly with Doerner's whole-bunch philosophy in the cellar. This is a bright, lifted, spicy, wine with wonderful focus and poise.

2019 Cristom "Paul Gerrie Vineyard" Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir \$79.95 97RP 95JS

The fruit for this bottling is grown on a newer planting on the estate that is now up to speed and making top-notch Pinot Noir—as evidenced by the huge scores! Named for the founder of Cristom, the Paul Gerrie Vineyard Pinot Noir is pure and lifted. Piquant red fruits, hard ground spices, dried herbs, leaf litter, spiced citrus peel, and crushed rock mineral. Considering the vines are only three to six years old, they are already producing very characterful Pinot that fits perfectly within the fold alongside the other single vineyards.

Goodfellow

A year ago, I knew nothing about these wines. Now they are some of my favorites in the region. The key thing to understand about Goodfellow is that their "home" vineyard, Whistling Ridge, is immediately adjacent to Beaux Frères. Established in 1990 and dry-farmed from the start, this vineyard produces world-class Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

Beyond this perfectly situated planting, they also pull fruit from some of the finest vineyards in the region and craft tiny quantities of wines that are very terroir driven and elegantly styled. Winemaker Marcus Goodfellow, who learned his craft at Evesham Wood and Westrey, also credits Cristom's Steve Doerner as a key mentor. The wines are low alcohol, elegant, savory, ageworthy, and precise. If you haven't tasted them yet... I strongly suggest you do!



Endorsement by the mayor of Portland/cheeky signage at K&L Hollywood.

2018 Goodfellow Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$24.95 92RP 91VN

A sleeper wine for sure. This Willamette Valley designated entry level wine is actually primarily Whistling Ridge with a few other barrels of the various single-vineyard Pinots blended in. As I noted above, Whistling Ridge is separated from Beaux Freres Vineyard by a single fence line. Bottles go for \$80 on one side of the fence, \$25 on the other! Floral notes meet savory spices, amaro-like alpine herbs, subdued red fruits, earthy tones and forest floor. More soft red fruits with air, very layered and serious for an “entry-level” wine.

2019 Goodfellow “Durant Vineyard” Dundee Hills Pinot Noir \$39.95 Another value in the Goodfellow’s line up is the Durant Vineyard Pinot. Sourced from this well-respected vineyard in the heart of the Dundee Hills. Planted in the 1970s with Pommard clone vines that are entirely dry farmed. Marcus chooses to age this wine in 500L neutral puncheons, which serves to help keep the wine linear

and focused when many Dundee Hills wines tend to be more broad and plush in character. The lack of oak influence really lets the vitality of the fruit shine.

2018 Goodfellow “Block 8 - Fir Crest Vineyard”**Yamhill-Carlton Pinot****Noir \$54.95 95+RP A**

tiny production that yields 55 cases, Block 8 is a small planting of old Wadenswil clone. Quite a powerful, dark-fruited wine: bramble, cherry, warming spices of clove and nutmeg. Savory turned earth and dried porcini are also present. Fine but notable tannins. A lovely expression of this heritage clone.



The Hit Parade 2021

By Kaj Stromer

One of the best reasons to shop at K&L is to have access to our daily email offers. We spent 2021 putting together some of our strongest offers in years. In case you missed any, here’s our “best of” recap.



There are real advantages to being part of our Insider’s Advantage program!

2019 Denman Ranch “Fallenleaf Vineyard” Sonoma Coast Chardonnay \$24.95 (Elsewhere

\$55) As one of our most successful white wine offers, the single-vineyard Denman Ranch

Chardonnay checks a lot of boxes. Combine an elite winemaking team (Ex-Cellarmaster of Littorai plus the Assistant Winemaker from Flowers) with a prestigious vineyard, and you’re bound to create some vinous magic. Which is exactly what happened; except for the fact that this fledgling winery ran directly into the economic headwinds of the pandemic. We snagged a killer “take-all” price. This is one very classy Chardonnay.

2018 Peake Ranch Santa Barbara County Chardonnay \$39.99 94JD

You better have Peake Ranch on your winery watch list. Everything owner John Wagner is doing here is a testament to his rich history in agriculture and his drive to make the very best wines in Santa Barbara county. The SBC bottling is a blend of fruit from the estate and the Sierra Madre vineyard. This cooler site allows the Chardonnay to ripen evenly and develop even greater complexity. Winemakers Paul Lato and Wynn Solomon have created one of the most noteworthy Chardonnays we sell for under \$40.



Wynn Solomon, Winemaker at Peake Ranch

2016 Hanzell “Estate” Sonoma Valley

Chardonnay \$39.95 (Elsewhere \$65) 95WE This is an historic estate with a proven track record of producing some of the greatest expressions of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. These are meticulously farmed old vines perfectly situated on hillside vineyards, and they

yield magnificent wines. Our offering on the ‘15 was strong but I would argue that the 2016 is an even better wine. This one is well worth loading up on.

2018 Wayfarer “Wayfarer Vineyard” Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot

Noir \$89.95 98RP Since the inaugural vintage in 2012, the Wayfarer Vineyard, in a pristine location just down the road from Marcassin, has become a perennial high scorer and critical darling. The 2018 vintage hits a benchmark high of 98+ points as a “stunning effort” and “exquisite beauty” that belongs in any lineup of the world’s greatest expressions of this beloved varietal. It’s every bit a worthy rival to California’s top cult-collectible Pinots, including names like Aubert, Marcassin, Occidental, and Morlet—for a fraction of what you’d pay for those icons.

2016 Saxon Brown “Stonewall Block” Sonoma Valley Zinfandel \$29.99 (Elsewhere \$40)

A big, rich, powerful Zin from Jeff Gaffner at Saxon Brown. This comes from a block of vines planted in extremely rocky soils on the edge of the Sonoma Coast AVA. Saturated and powerful on the palate, with layer upon layer of ripe red and black fruits. The tannins are silky and fine after the tidal wave of generous fruit. Wow. This is big, mouth-filling, impressive, old-school Zin.

2018 Brave & Maiden “Estate” Santa Ynez Valley Cabernet

Sauvignon \$24.99 (Elsewhere \$45) This wine was originally intended for restaurants, but we were given the option to secure a significant cache if we loved it—and we did! Stylistically, it reminds me of some of the better Sonoma County Cabs, which tend to be a bit more elegant and sleeker than their Napa Valley cousins. There’s plenty of dark berries, plum, and cocoa on the palate. We’ve got a special one-time price, so do not miss this!

2020 Tensley “Colson Canyon Vineyard” Santa Barbara County

Syrah \$39.95 95–97VN This is a monstrous wine—inky black, a hedonistic nose of sweet, dark fruit, charcoal, Crème de Violette, grilled meat, and charred spice. Mouth-coating, rich, and densely fruited with a framework of sturdy, grippy tannins corseting the voluptuous fruit. The folks at Tensley know how to get every last ounce of deliciousness from this site. The wine just keeps getting better each year. With enormous scores, this is quite an impactful wine that is perfectly judged and loaded with character.

2018 Recoltant Coombsville Cabernet Sauvignon \$39.95

(Previously \$65) 93RP The Recoltant is made by cult winemaker Julian Fayard. His career started in Provence but eventually led him to Château Lafite Rothschild and Smith Haut Lafite in Bordeaux before coming to California. He worked at Quintessa where he met the legendary Phillippe Melka leading to consulting gigs at Lail, Gemstone, and Dalle Valle. His Recoltant Cab is midweight in fruit profile, with some good structure and varietal typicity. It's a classy bottle of Cabernet that won't break the bank.

2007 Balcom Family "Mascaret" Napa Valley \$59.95 (Previously \$125.00) Here's a very rare opportunity to get your hands on a perfectly aged Napa Cab blend at a deeply discounted price! Balcom Family was a small winery that stopped releasing wines after the 2009 vintage. The winemaker for the project was Craig Becker, formerly of Robert Mondavi and Opus One. The wine is drinking superbly right now; there's still plenty of that boisterous, rich, ripe

fruit the 2007 vintage is famed for. Also, you can find some delicious secondary development tones of sweet leather, cedar, and unsmoked cigar. Do not miss this if you like bigger, richer styles with structure. This is a one-time opportunity of limited quantities.

2018 Mt. Brave Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon \$99.95 97JD

97VN The Mt. Brave Cabernet carries more shining praise and higher scores than many iconic wines at two to three times its price point. The nose explodes from the glass with notes of lavender, blackcurrant, mulberry, pipe tobacco, cedar, crushed rock, toasted spices, and leather. There's plenty of lush, rich fruit, supported by big, muscular tannins and beautiful fine grained oak. A true showcase for the exceptional 2018 vintage. A definite candidate for top wine of the vintage regardless of price point.



White Hot and Wallet Friendly

By Kaj Stromer

It's a great time to stock up on white wines as we trudge through the post-holiday winter months. We've built a list of first-class values with your budget in mind. There's a wide mix: Santa Barbara County Aligoté, top-rated dry Riesling from Oregon, a stunning white Bordeaux blend from Washington, and a few luxurious Chardonnays.

2018 Hanzell "Sebella" Sonoma Valley

Chardonnay \$24.95 Sebella's virtue shows most clearly on the persistence of its finish, which out classes many Chardonnay bottlings on the market. This gorgeous wine displays plenty of fresh apple and mineral notes accented by a floral lift. The fact that it's made by the team at Hanzell is a guarantee that it's a class act. Light on its feet with plenty of richness.



2020 Clendenen "Le Bon Climat Vineyard" Santa Maria Valley Aligoté \$19.95 Though not a classic California variety, Burgundy fans will be familiar with Aligoté, the second white of the Côte d'Or. When planted in better sites it can absolutely hold its own. This Aligoté is grown at the esteemed Le Bon Climat Vineyard and given equal care and love as the Chardonnay. It's a brilliant change of pace.

2017 Varner "El Camino Vineyard" Santa Barbara County Chardonnay \$14.95 91W&S The legendary Varner brothers are headquartered in the Santa Cruz Mountains, but they have focused their attention on Santa Barbara County. This bottling is made up of fruit sourced from the cool Los Alamos district. A superb January Chardonnay that tastes of fresh apples and pears, with a long zesty finish that will complement your roasted chicken. It's delicious and very popular with our clients and staff.

2020 Ridgecrest Ribbon Ridge Dry Riesling \$19.95 95WE From 40-year-old vines deeply rooted in marine-sedimentary soils, this is a wonderfully mineral-driven wine with great intensity and concentration. Brought up entirely in stainless steel, it is focused and pure with

citrus zest, preserved lemon, white flowers, freshly crushed quince, beeswax, and wet stone. Beautiful and a steal at this special price.

2019 Fundamental (Tensley) Central Coast Chardonnay \$18.95

93JD Here's a Chardonnay that delivers the highest quality at an amazingly everyday price. Over the past two decades the winemaker has garnered every accolade and critical review one can get. With Fundamental he wants you to pull a cork, pour a glass, sit back, relax, and enjoy. It's a most unpretentious Chardonnay that reminds me of better wines from France's Mâcon region. It's aromatically as pleasing as a field of white flowers. This is well-suited for cold weather dining.

2018 Buty Columbia Valley White Bordeaux \$19.99 (Previously \$25) 93WE

A lovely bottle of white wine with so much character and depth. It displays tension between the racy, citrus Sémillon and Sauv Blanc components and the more tropical tones brought by the Muscadelle. An astounding value made all the more attractive when you consider this wine's proven ability to age beautifully. A truly engaging and delightful bottle now and for many years to come.

2018 Avennia "Oliane" Yakima Valley Sauvignon Blanc \$14.99

(Previously \$20) 91-93JD The intensity of varietal character is stunning, bursting with freshly chopped herbs, orchard blossom, jasmine, citrus peel, wet chalk, and lime leaf. The palate is broad and textured but keeps a razor-sharp edge and stony mineral tinges. Our pricing is from a winery-direct deal and makes this one of the must-have values in this category.

2016 Eric Kent "Luke's Grove" Russian River Valley Chardonnay

\$24.99 (Previously \$45) This is a pure RRV beauty. It possesses all that fleshy green apple and pear fruit you'd expect with just a dash of zesty citrus, which gives the wine lift and freshness on the palate. All of that is topped off nicely with a dollop of wood spice. Thanks to our long-running partnership with Kent, he generously offered us a parcel at a particularly sweet tariff, so we can offer it to you for nearly half the winery price. With a few years of bottle age under its belt, this is drinking perfectly today and will no doubt become a go-to Chardonnay.



Winter Reds Under \$25

By Kaj Stromer

The winter months do cry out for hearty red wine. Braises, stews, and roasts are on the menu and we've got just the wines for the table. From Pinot Noir to Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon to Syrah and Rhône blends, here's a list of some very good drinking from our Domestic shelves for under \$25.

2018 Calera Central Coast Pinot Noir \$19.95 (Elsewhere \$25+)

92WE The fruit for this bottling didn't come from Calera's properties, but rather from some of the best sources in the area, including Eden Rift, Bien Nacido, and Chalone. This was aged in French oak with only 10% new barrels, so the fruit is on full display. The palate is a mixture of tart red fruits—with fresh raspberry shining the brightest—the delicate florals floating on top, and dusty earth rounding it out. In terms of finesse and complexity, this may be the best value in Domestic Pinot.



Calera is a roast bird's BFF.

2019 Margerum "M5" Santa Barbara County Rhône Blend \$22.95

94VN Doug Margerum may not be a household name but he's played a critical role in the promotion of Santa Barbara County as a world-class wine region. After many years running Santa Barbara's



Doug Margerum pouring his Rhône-inspired wines for staffers at the Hollywood store.

premier restaurant, the Wine Cask, Doug turned his sights to making wine. His M5 has been a perennial best seller for us. He sources fruit from 13 different sites, and the wine is a blend of 42% Grenache, 34% Syrah, 13% Mourvèdre, 6% Counoise, and 5% Cinsaut.

2019 Marietta "Román" North Coast Zinfandel \$19.95 95RP This is one of the best values you're likely to find anywhere. How often do you see \$20 wines get 95 points from the *Wine Advocate*!? Marietta's "Román" bottling is a selection of some of their finest barrels of estate-grown Zinfandel (with a splash of Petite Sirah and Barbera). Medium- to full-bodied, richly fruited, but with plenty of energy and vibrancy, too. The perfect burger/BBQ wine. It's an unrivaled bargain given the quality in the bottle and its huge critical acclaim.

2017 Silenus "Tyros" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$19.99 (Elsewhere \$35) The Tyros bottling from Silenus has become our "go-to" under \$20 Napa Valley Cabernet (yes, you read that price right!). It's a rare creature for sure, but we can't get enough of this plush, robust Cabernet, filled with bold fruit. Plum, blackberries, and a hint of Tahitian vanilla rise from the glass. Much like you'd find in more expensive Napa Valley Cabernets, the enticing fruit components are complemented by bay leaf, rose petals, and toasty oak. I am extremely excited about this wine. It's been one of our best-selling reds over the last year.

2020 McKinlay Willamette Valley

Pinot Noir \$18.99 This is easily the best Oregon Pinot Noir for under \$20—ever. I visited winemaker Matt Kinne back in January of 2020 and spent a memorable evening with him and his family. What started out as a wine tasting and dinner turned into a late night jam session. Truly one of my more special visits. Most importantly, these wines are for real. Matt broke out a bottle of his very first release, the 1987 vintage, and it was glorious. Matt's wines are not widely distributed as he spends no time promoting them. As such, he leads with the price: "Keep it cheap," he says. Most of his wine sells out locally but dribs and drabs make it to California. It's elegant, sublime, and creeps up on you with its subtle charm.



Matt Kinne makes the best deal in Oregon Pinot in all the land.

2020 Evening Land "de Múres - Seven Springs Vineyard"

Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir \$19.95 This is a super fun wine that came to be thanks to the great skill of the team at Evening Land. The 2020 vintage was a challenging, fire and smoke-threatened one, but they were able to make something delicious with a bit of ingenuity and quick maneuvering. By pressing the juice off the skins quickly, they were able to avoid the potential smoke taint issues. While the resulting wine is light in color and body, it's packed with flavor and personality. You'll find flavors of juicy, tart red berries, dried herbs, soil, and mulling spice on an elegant frame.

2019 Bedrock "Old Vine" California Zinfandel \$23.95 92JD

Thanks to the vision of Mark Twain Peterson and his passion for historic vineyards, Bedrock Wine Co. is one of the best sources for outstanding California Zinfandel. The Old Vine bottling is a blend of the more expensive single-vineyard casks, but in an affordable package. We're talking: Bedrock, Teldeschi, Evangelho, Pagani, Old Hill—ancient "grand cru" vineyards in a sub-\$25 wine. It's packed with bold, spicy fruit all wrapped up in a luxurious yet silky wine. It's no wonder this has become one of our best-selling Zins.

2018 Field Recordings "Wonderwall" Central Coast Syrah \$13.99 (Previously \$20)

Winemaker/proprietor Andrew Jones began his wine journey as a nursery vinegrower and has stepped foot in nearly every vineyard on California's Central Coast. This affords him a step up on his competition, as he knows where all the best off-the-beaten-path vineyards are located—and he has relationships with their owners. This Wonderwall coastal Syrah is juicy and full-bodied, with savory notes such as olive paste and roasted meat, rounded out by fresh, fruity plums and a hint of white pepper. It's a great introduction to Central Coast Syrah at a great price.



Andrew Jones has a sixth sense for finding the best vineyards on the Central Coast.

Treasure Hunt with K&L Staff

By Kaj Stromer

Nearly every day I hear our customers say, “I’m so glad you’re open again! Help me find something new. Show me what the staff members are drinking.” While some say we have the best website in the biz, it’s hard to beat the human touch, especially when you’re looking to explore something outside of the wines in your regular rotation. I can speak for the rest of the K&L staff when I say that we truly love unearthing new vinous treasures, and nothing is better than sharing our newest discoveries with our customers. So here I present some of our current favorites—wines that you might not find if it weren’t for an enthusiastic sales person putting them into your hands.



2019 Tatomer “Hinter de Mauer” Central Coast White Blend \$14.99

Sourced from some of the finest vineyards in the region and crafted by a master of his trade, Graham Tatomer. The Hinter de Mauer is a value-priced wine from Tatomer to help him glide through the perilous times COVID has brought upon many small wineries. Blended from the exact same juice that typically graces his benchmark \$25-\$35 bottlings, this wine is a steal.

2019 Cruse “Monkey Jacket” North Coast Red Blend

\$24.95 Michael Cruse is one of the most vocal proponents of North Coast Valdiguié—a relatively obscure red grape that also goes by Napa Gamay or Gros Auxerrois (in France’s Languedoc-Roussillon region). It produces gluggable, fruity, low-alcohol wines (thus the Gamay comparison), and Cruse’s “Monkey Jacket” is a superb example. It shows the darker, meatier side of this under-the-radar grape, underscored by crunchy, brambly fruits and floral notes. The *New York Times* wine section featured this wine as one of the Top 10 wines for Thanksgiving turkey this year, and we agree. That’s exactly what this wine is intended to be—a high-quality engaging, dinner wine. It’s 51% Valdiguié, with the balance of Carignan, Syrah, and other red grapes.



2019 Maidenstoen Edna Valley Gruner Veltliner \$19.99

Mike Callahan has embarked on a mission to create a world-class Grüner Veltliner in California. The charm of this wine is its intensity and palate-cleansing verve. The nose hints at grapefruit and blood orange, as well as fresh herbs and sweet pea with a dust of white pepper. The wine completely outperforms its price tag. From fresh fish to Dungeness crab to a classic schnitzel, I’d strongly recommend this wine to pair. This is one of the finest domestically produced Grüners I’ve ever tasted.



2019 Eyrie Dundee Hills Pinot Gris \$19.99 93WE History was made when David Lett decided he’d plant Pinot Gris in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. While many have followed his example, few have crafted such spectacular versions. Pinot Gris is arguably one of the most food-friendly wines I know, and the Eyrie’s rendition remains my favorite. The *Wine Enthusiast* ranked it #4 of their Top 100 Wines of 2021. I certainly agree with their enthusiasm. FYI: this is a wine with long aging potential.

2019 Stolpman “Para Maria” Santa Barbara County Red Blend

\$19.95 94WE Stolpman is a stalwart Santa Barbara winery, and they are pretty much untouchable when it comes to fantastic quality wines that consistently overdeliver on price. The Para Maria is a somewhat unusual blend—80% Syrah and 20% Petit Verdot—but in Stolpman’s hands, it works like a charm. The rich, sensual, smoky Syrah gives lots of generous, unctuous, ripe red fruits; while the dollop of inky-black, structured Petit Verdot brings some darker purple fruits, graphite, leather, and a lovely tannic grip that gives definition to the wine. You can treat this as an everyday bottle, but it has the stuffing and quality to stand shoulder to shoulder with much more expensive wines.



Ruben Solorzano is the talented Vineyard Manager at Stolpman, who farms everything organically. The Para Maria is named for his wife.

K&L REDWOOD CITY

3005 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061

P (650) 364-8544 **F** (650) 364-4687

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KLWINES.COM

Toll Free (877) KLWINES (877) 559-4637

Email: customerservice@klwines.com

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1400 Vine Street, Hollywood, CA 90028

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