



# Grapevine

December 2021

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## Give the Gift of Wine ~ Wine Spectator's 2021 Top 100

**W**ine Spectator released their 2021 Top 100 wines, and we are eager to share some of them with you. Just in time for holiday hosting and gifting, you can't miss with these gorgeous wines.

Sourced from northern California's cool climate appellations in early August to preserve the wine's acidity, the **NV Domaine Chandon Brut Rosé** is a classic Champagne-style blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir with just a touch of Pinot Meunier. After the secondary fermentation in bottle for at least 12 months, it sees three more months of bottle aging. The result is vibrant red fruit flavors, creamy roundness and a crisp finish. **90 #70** \$17.99

From the Sonoma Coast, **Chalk Hill's 2019 Chardonnay** is fermented and aged in new and seasoned French oak and undergoes malolactic fermentation to develop the creamy body, bringing complexity. Apple and pear aromas are accented by honeysuckle, orange zest and a kiss of toasted marshmallow. The long, clean finish makes it food friendly and elegant. **91 #84** \$14.99

The **2018 Clos de los Siete** by Bordeaux winemaker Michel Rolland comes from Mendoza's Uco Valley. Malbec-driven, it is bolstered



and balanced by Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc — a true Bordeaux-style blend. Aged 11 months in new and seasoned French oak, it's a dense wine with plentiful dark cherry and plum flavors, finishing with rich, dark chocolate. **90 #53** \$16.99

Bodegas Beronia in northern Spain's Rioja region was started in 1973 by a group of foodie friends who wanted to create great wines to pair with their culinary creations. The **2012 Beronia Rioja Gran Reserva**, made mostly from Tempranillo with just a skosh of Graciano, is aged more than two years in French oak barrels and another three years in bottle before release. Aromas of ripe

plums and baking spices open to a palate of black fruits, cocoa and cedar. It is full-bodied and silken with a long finish. **92 #36** \$29.99

On the western edge of Alexander Valley in Sonoma sits Geyserville, home to Ridge Vineyards' oldest vines. Organic and sustainably farmed, the **2019 Ridge Geyserville** is predominantly Zinfandel blended with Carignan, Petite Sirah and Alicante Bouschet. Fermented with native yeasts, undergoing malolactic fermentation and aging for 12 months in new and seasoned American oak barrels, it is rich with ripe black cherries, well integrated oak and polished tannins. **93 #24** \$40.99

We'll conclude this tour in Italy's Tuscany region.

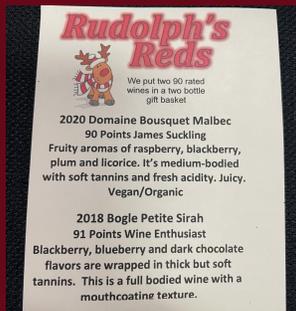
Located in the province of Siena, south of Florence, sits hilly Montalcino, the land of Brunello. **Poggio Landi's 2016 Brunello di Montalcino** is made from select Sangiovese grapes that undergo two weeks' natural fermentation, followed by 38 weeks of aging in French oak barrels and six more months in bottle. Complex and refined, this wine has distinct notes of red fruits, black peppercorn and licorice, balanced by bright acidity and culminating in a lengthy finish. **97 #12** \$49.99

Whether you're gathering around your fireplace or dinner table, attending someone else's soirée or giving the gift of wine, let us take the work out of it for you with a stunning selection of vinous gems that will brighten your festivities. We wish you the happiest of holidays. ♦

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*Did you know...Each year, Wine Spectator editors select the most exciting wines they reviewed throughout the year for their Top 100 Wines—based on quality, value, availability and excitement, aka X-factor.*

Whether you're bringing wine to your host or putting gifts under the tree, Rudolph's Reds (\$28.99) and custom gift baskets are a festive solution.



### Gougères With Pancetta and Sage

- 6 oz pancetta, cut into cubes
- A dozen whole sage leaves
- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter
- ½ tsp fine sea salt or kosher salt
- ¼ tsp cayenne
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- 5 oz shredded Gruyère
- ⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese



In a large skillet over medium heat, cook pancetta slowly, stirring, until fat is rendered and meat is browned and crisp, 15 minutes or so. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Drop sage leaves into the hot fat in the skillet and cook until crisp, about 1 minute. Transfer to plate with pancetta. When cool, finely chop pancetta and sage together.

Heat oven to 425 degrees and line two rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Have ready an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment.

In a saucepan, bring 1 cup water, butter, salt and cayenne to a boil. Stir in flour all at once and cook, stirring continuously with a wooden spoon until dough forms a mass and pulls away from the sides of the pot, 2 to 3

minutes. The dough will be quite stiff. Scrape into the mixer and beat until cooled slightly, about 30 seconds. Add one egg at a time, beating to let it fully incorporate before adding the next. When eggs are incorporated, add Gruyère and continue to beat until it is melted into batter, then add pancetta and sage and mix until combined.

Transfer batter to a large resealable plastic bag, and snip off 3/4-inch from one corner, or use a pastry bag. Pipe into balls, about 2 teaspoons each, leaving 1 inch of space between them. Sprinkle Parmesan on top, and bake 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees, and continue to bake until golden and cooked through, 10 to 15 minutes more. Serve immediately, while still warm.

### Poinsettia

- 1 oz Cointreau or Grand Marnier
- 6 oz cranberry juice
- 6 oz dry sparkling wine, like Mumm Napa
- 2 fresh rosemary sprigs, for garnish
- 6 fresh cranberries, for garnish



Into a chilled cocktail shaker, add first two ingredients and stir, then divide between two chilled Champagne flutes. Top each with sparkling wine, a sprig of rosemary and three cranberries. Toast to those you love.

## December 2021 Staff Wine Picks

**Sheila: NV Pol Roger Brut Réserve** (Champagne) **\$45.99** (reg \$53.99) Incorporating 25% réserve wines, this classic Champagne is equal parts Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Post malolactic fermentation, the second fermentation takes place in the bottle, followed by three months' aging. Apricots, tangerine and spice. *\*Broiled oysters with butter and breadcrumbs*

**Ian: 2017 Crooked Path Zinfandel** (Paso Robles) **\$18.99** (reg \$21.99) Blended with 10/5 Syrah and Petite Sirah, the wine undergoes malolactic fermentation followed by two years' aging in French and American oak. Redolent of raspberries and blackberries, there's a shadow of white pepper and vanilla bean. *\*Braised lamb meatballs with cumin and couscous*

**Brian: 2019 Katherine Goldschmidt 'Stonemason Hill' Cabernet Sauvignon** (Alexander Valley) **\$18.99** (reg \$21.99) Purely Cabernet, the grapes are from 30+-year-old vines. Aged in French, American and Hungarian oak for 12 months, the tango between blackberries and licorice segues to velvety tannins and a long finish. *\*Grilled New York strip steak*

**Bill: 2019 Turley Old Vines Zinfandel** (California) **\$30.99** (reg \$35.99) **93 RP** Grapes from select vineyard sites 50-130 years old that have been reinvigorated through organic farming practices make up this wine. Medium-bodied, juicy and silky, notes of black cherries, leather and spice sing in this exceptional wine. *\*Braised pork shoulder with red wine and olives*

**Ben: 2020 Paolo Scavino Vino Rosso** (Piedmont) **\$11.99** (reg \$13.99) **92 WS** Blended from Dolcetto, Nebbiolo, Barbera and Merlot, the wine is aged in stainless steel. Food friendly and delicious, it echoes a choir of black currants, violets and rosemary with a clean, lean finish. *\*Mushroom and ricotta ravioli with tomato sauce*

**Carol: 2018 Cherry Pie Tri-County Pinot Noir** (California) **\$16.49** (reg \$18.99) Grapes sourced from Monterey, Napa and Santa Barbara Counties are fermented in separate lots and aged in new and seasoned French oak. Flavors of mulberries and Bing cherries linger through the long, silken finish. *\*Seared duck breast with Marsala-steeped cherries*