

Attractive and tasteful red wines for \$25 or less

JOHN VANKAT
Pine Wine

Here are my favorite red wines for \$25 or less, as selected from recent, extensive tastings. Each is a bargain, with impressive quality and character for the price, and can be ordered from local wine stores.

\$10 and Under

Borsao 2017 Grenache "Campo de Borja, Spain" (\$9): Attractive in the glass, this fine value features strength on the palate with pleasingly balanced fruit, medium-soft tannins and enjoyable complexity.

Citra 2017 "Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Italy" (\$10): This superb bargain surprises for the price with appealing color, forward fruit, core acidity, modest yet persistent tannins and a lengthy finish.

Sand Point (by Lange Twins) 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon "Lodi" (\$10): Enjoyable all-around with purplish color, good strength and complexity on the nose and well-balanced fruit. Plus there's surprising complexity, fine integration and an extended finish.

\$11-15

Ivory & Burt (by Lange Twins) 2015 Zinfandel "Lodi" (\$12): This good bargain impresses all-around, but especially on the palate with strong, rich fruit attractively melded with enjoyable tannins and complexity over long length.

Altano 2015 red blend "Douro, Portugal" (\$13): This expressive blend is beautiful in the glass and appealing on nose and palate with full body, highly pleasing balance, medium-soft tannins and a prolonged finish.

Firesteed 2015 Pinot Noir "Willamette Valley" (\$13): My top-ranked Pinot Noir for under \$15 has attractive fruit with strength, balance, complexity, length and more. A very good buy, especially for Pinot Noir.

Santa Cristina 2015 red blend

"Toscana, Italy" (\$13): This blend of four grapes is enticing in the glass, on the nose and especially on the palate. Rich fruit on the attack is joined by core acidity producing fine balance. Plus it has impressive complexity and a lingering finish.

Ironstone 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon "Lodi" (\$14): Another bargain from California's Lodi region is strong on the attack with expressive fruit, core tannins, very good balance and surprising complexity. Plus its forward personality persists through a lengthy finish.

Please see WINE, Page A9

Pinot Noir "California" (\$16): Impressive Pinot for the price. Very appealing all-around, especially on the palate with full body, rich fruit, balance, complexity and an engaging, long-persisting finish.

Coppo 2017 "L'Avvocata, Barbera d'Asti, Italy" (\$17): Tied for the top-rated wine in my tastings for this column, this Barbera has luminescent color and a complex nose, but is best on the palate with full body, fruit, excellent balance, complexity and great length.

La Vendimia (by Palacios Remondo) 2016 red blend "Rioja, Spain" (\$17): My favorite among Spanish wines tasted for this column. This Grenache-Tempranillo blend has a strong personality with strength and complexity on nose and palate in which pleasing fruit is paired with medium tannins.

Erath 2016 Pinot Noir "Oregon" (\$19): Features impressive strength on nose and palate with the latter having fruit balanced with attractive acidity. Nicely rounded, well-integrated tannins express character throughout an extended finish.

Qupé 2016 Syrah "Central Coast" (\$20): This notable buy is strong on the palate with full body, expressive fruit, well-integrated oak and very good balance. Despite its strength, there's greater refinement than usual, especially for Syrah at this price.

\$21-25

Kunde 2015 Merlot "Sonoma Valley" (\$22): The best Merlot tasted for this column has strength on the attack with forward fruit quickly followed by medium-soft tannins leading to highly pleasing complexity. It is well-integrated and has a strong personality with an extended finish.

Kunde 2015 Zinfandel "Sonoma Valley" (\$22): The top Zinfandel is impressive all-around. Its appealing personality appears on the fruit-dominated attack. Pleasant tannins soon join, and engaging complexity persists through a prolonged finish.

Predator 2015 red blend "Six Spot, Lodi" (\$24): Tops among numerous red blends tasted, this uncommon blend of Petite Sirah, Zinfandel and Malbec is excellent for its price on both nose and palate. Well-integrated from attack to finish, it features fruit and a full body, as well as attractive tannins, integration, refinement and personality.

Very Dark Red 2015 red blend "VDR, Hames Valley" (\$24): Another top blend (Petit Verdot and Petite Sirah) is beautiful in color, as the name suggests, while on the palate it has strength, wonderful fruit, fine balance, medium to medium-soft tannins, appealing complexity and more.

Landmark 2016 Pinot Noir "Overlook, Monterey, Santa Barbara and Sonoma Counties" (\$25): Co-highest rated of the numerous wines tasted for this column, this fine



Pinot Noir is attractive in the glass, but even more so on nose and palate. Fruit on the attack is soon joined by tannins and complexity that linger through a lengthy finish.

John Vankat's Pine Wine appears

Win Pick of the week for October 3

Miner 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon "Emily's, Napa Valley" (\$50)

This well-crafted wine commands attention in the glass and on nose and palate with style, strength and complexity. I was especially impressed by its finely honed balance of beautiful fruit and enjoyable crisp acidity.

Ask your favorite store to order this wine for you. Prices may vary.

every month and his Wine Pick of the Week is published every Wednesday. Wines can be ordered from local wine stores, unless indicated otherwise. Prices may vary. John can be reached at azpinewine@yahoo.com.