

January 7, 2019

# WINE News

Exceptional values  
for the average  
weekday.



## JANUARY 7, 2019 FEATURES

- 2 Best Under \$20 Wines by Varietal
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## Tuesday Night Wines

By Ryan Woodhouse

I'm not sure why we always pick on Tuesday as the night that doesn't deserve expensive wine, but it has become a common expression here at K&L and throughout the broader wine business: "A perfect Tuesday night wine!" It's nothing to do with Tuesday, really—it simply means a wine you can quaff without any special occasion, without elaborate gourmet food or your finest crystal stemware. A wine that goes with fast food burgers, a carton of your favorite take-out cuisine, or leftovers reheated in the microwave.

Life is busy (and getting busier, it seems) but as I'm sure you've heard before, life is also too short to drink bad wine. So in the following pages are some bottles that I hope you will enjoy next Tuesday night (or any night of the week) when the situation calls for something tasty and glugable, at \$20 or less. That's right—everything in this newsletter is under \$20. So if you blew your booze budget over the holidays, fear not. We have you covered.

**2016 The Burn "Borne of Fire" Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.99)** Pure Cabernet flavors of blackcurrant, cassis, loganberry, freshly picked mint and dusty earth tones. Medium-bodied with fantastic purity and grace. An easy-drinking Cab that doesn't lack any varietal character.

**96 JS:** "The first year made of this wine with wonderful blackberries, rose leaves and blueberries. Full body and round and fine tannins. Juicy and intense."



**2016 Angels & Cowboys Sonoma County Red Blend (\$19.95)**

This wine was a major standout at an industry tasting of hundreds of wines. I quickly bought some to stack in the stores, confident it would be a crowd-pleaser with its bold fruit, mouthcoating texture and silky tannins. A few weeks later it picks up big points from *Decanter*! (That sound you hear is me patting myself on the back!)

**96 DC:** "A fantastic explosion of ripe damson and juicy cherries supported by delicious rich chocolate, coffee, black pepper and sweet spice. Smooth, elegant and voluptuous with a rich fruit finish."





## The Best of Under \$20 Domestic Wines By Varietal

### Chardonnay

#### 2017 Bishop's Peak San Luis Obispo County Chardonnay (\$14.99)

Talley might just be my favorite Chardonnay producer in the state right now. Their top single-vineyard bottlings (Rosemary's, Oliver's and Rincon) give Premier Cru (if not Grand Cru) white Burgundy a serious run for its money. Bishop's Peak is their "second label" and the wines consistently rank as some of the best value-for-money bottles at K&L. No new oak—a fresh, zesty, floral style with nice lees elements giving texture and depth.

**2016 MacRostie Sonoma Coast Chardonnay (\$17.99)** A perennial top value capturing the essence of Sonoma Coast Chardonnay in dependable, crowd-pleasing style time and time again. Fruit sources for this stalwart read as a who's who of growers, including Sangiacomo, Dutton and Martinelli. **92 RP**

**92 RP:** "Great intensity of fresh, pure apple and white peach aromas with hints of baker's yeast and allspice plus a waft of honeysuckle. Medium to full-bodied and delivering mouth-filling stone fruit and spice flavors, it has a satiny texture and great length. Totally over-delivers at this price point!"

#### 2015 Talbott "Logan-Sleepy Hollow Vineyard"

**Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay (\$19.95)** Consistently over-delivering, this wine made by SLH stalwart Talbot from one of their prize vineyards—Sleepy Hollow—has serious pedigree for a \$19.95 wine. Many other wineries that make Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Chardonnay charge two or three times this price! **91 RP, 91 VN**

**2017 Averaen Willamette Valley Chardonnay (\$19.99)** A new release from Averaen, whom we have long adored for their Pinot Noirs (see the Pinot also included in this article). This Chardonnay really over-delivers on price point with a lovely combination of fruit from three different sites (Stoller, Eola Springs and Chehelem Mountain vineyards) including some old



Wente clone and Calera heritage clone, growing in complex volcanic soils. A midweight wine with subtle oak, pure orchard fruit and stony minerals.

### Pinot Noir

**2016 The Crusher California Pinot Noir (\$9.99)** One of the more outrageous values of the year. \$10 Pinot Noir simply doesn't ever taste this good. I was shocked by the quality of this wine. It became one of our best sellers in 2018. **91 WE**

**2017 The Pinot Project California Pinot Noir (\$11.95)** Another outlandishly good, inexpensive Pinot Noir, this time from importer and distributor Michael Skurnik, who is pursuing a passion for Pinot Noir and turning out very promising wines for miniscule price points. Hard to beat this one. **90 WE**

**2016 Fossil Point Edna Valley Pinot Noir (\$15.99)** Very cool climate grown Pinot Noir from the coastal hills of San Luis Obispo County. A huge staff favorite here at K&L, Fossil Point is always in the conversation for best value Pinot in the store. Bright berry fruits, some savory forest floor, woody notes, clove. Delicious and surprisingly layered and complex for the price.

**2017 Averaen Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$19.99)** Sourced from some top vineyards around the various AVAs of the Willamette Valley including Nysa, Eola Springs, Croft, Meredith Mitchell and Momtazi Vineyards. Averaen is crafted by genius winemaker Adam Smith and is ludicrously good for sub-\$20 Pinot Noir.



### Cabernet Sauvignon

**2017 Wines Of Substance Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$14.99)** The 2016 Substance Cab was one of our biggest selling wines of 2018. The past few vintages of this wine have scored highly from multiple top critics. This new release is tasting great and is another sure-fire winner.

**2017 The Fableist Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.99)** Tasting this blind, you could be forgiven for thinking it is a much more expensive wine. It has a lovely silky texture, beautiful purity of fruit and balance. All the wines in the Fableist lineup represent stunning value for the money. Check them out.

**2016 Bacchus California Cabernet Sauvignon (\$14.95)** This wine is produced by a top sommelier with lots of connections in the wine world. And while they won't tell you exactly where the components of this wine come from... rest assured it's some declassified juice from some top producers, expertly blended into one deliciously easy-drinking Cab.

**2015 Napa Cellars Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.99)** Classically bold, full-bodied Napa Cabernet that won't break the bank. Winemaker Joe Shirley selects fruit from great sites all around Napa including Spring Mountain and Atlas Peak to give backbone to the lush fruit. Killer value Cab with our best-in-the-country pricing. **90 WE**

## Zinfandel

**2016 Shenandoah Vineyards "Special Reserve" Amador County Zinfandel (\$10.99)** Chances are if you've ever asked for an inexpensive red at K&L someone has recommended this gem. Year in year out one of the best values on our shelves. Delicious Zin from the Sierra foothills.

**2016 Ancient Peaks Paso Robles Zinfandel (\$15.95)** A longtime favorite producer in Paso, Ancient Peaks continues to grow from strength to strength with their wines. Big dark fruit, mulling spices, lifted aromatics from the calcareous soils. **90 JD, 90 RP**

## Points Versus Price

**2016 Margerum "M5" Santa Barbara County Rhône Blend (\$19.95)** A simply stunning Rhône-inspired red...for sure one of the best \$20 wines I have ever tasted. Period.

**93 VN:** "Lifted and gracious, with generous Grenache red-toned fruit leading the way. Medium in body and understated, the 2016 finishes with terrific energy and verve."

**92 JD:** "This deep ruby/purple-tinged effort is a medium to full-bodied, ripe, beautifully textured effort that has rock star notes of black cherries, black raspberries, scorched earth, and peppery herbs. Incredibly charming, with notable purity and a great texture."



**91 WS:** "Sleek and precise, with raspberry and garrigue aromas and refined cherry, licorice and savory pepper flavors. Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Counoise and Cinsault. Drink now through 2026."

**2016 Seghesio Sonoma County Zinfandel (\$19.95)** From one of the true masters of Zin in California, Seghesio's Sonoma County bottling is a beautiful example of the varietal. Lush, ripe fruit, exotic spice, bold and bright.

**93 WS:** "Plump and loaded with rich, jammy fruit, this Zinfandel is a pleasure to drink."

**2016 Bishop's Peak Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignon (\$14.99)** **91 WE:** "Snappy blackberry and boysenberry aromas combine with lilac, herbs and olive on a very inviting nose in this second-label bottling by the Talley family. It's a fully flavored experience on the sip, with black plum, savory charred meat and dried herbs, showing great complexity for under \$25."

**90 VN:** "Deep bright-rimmed ruby. Pungent aromas of cassis, cherry liqueur, licorice, cedary oak and tobacco. Juicy and lively on the palate, offering bitter cherry and dark berry flavors that deepen slowly with aeration. Finishes silky and quite long, with sweet, harmonious tannins and a touch of smokiness."

**2016 Foxglove Central Coast Chardonnay (\$14.95)** **90-91 VN:** "The 2016 Chardonnay is fabulous. In this vintage, the Chardonnay is especially broad, with plenty of tropically leaning fruit, peach and apricot flavors...Quite simply, this is one of the best values in California Chardonnay readers will come across."

**90 RP:** "Always a terrific value, the 2016 Chardonnay from Foxglove is excellent, offering up lovely aromas of citrus, melon and apricot, followed by an elegantly satiny, succulent palate with excellent balance and a flavorful finish. It's hard to think of a better Chardonnay for the money than this offering from the dynamic Varner brothers."

**2016 Gainey Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay (\$14.95)** A California Chard for white Burgundy lovers! This is a beautifully focused, bright, mineral-driven Chardonnay with tons of verve and brisk ocean air qualities.

**91 VN:** "Gainey's 2016 Chardonnay is a gorgeous entry-level wine. Lemon confit, white flowers and light tropical notes run through this delicious, hugely appealing Chardonnay."



# We've Got Just the Thing: K&L Staff Picks in Domestic Values

In putting together this newsletter, I put some of my colleagues on the spot by asking them for a instant recommendation on a great value, sub-\$20 domestic wine. These are the responses I got:

**Marietta "Old Vine Red Lot #67" California Red Blend (\$11.99)** *Thomas Smith, Redwood City (RWC) Sales:* Pound for pound the best value red in the store.

And Robert Parker agrees with him, writing: "For many years I have been touting the old-vine red put together by Marietta cellars as one of the great values in all of winedom."

**2016 Gundlach Bundschu "Mountain Cuvée" Sonoma County Bordeaux Blend (\$16.99)** *Ryan Kewin, RWC Sales:* I once worked on the blending of this wine and know how much work and dedication goes into it every year. **90 WE**



**2015 Mount Eden "Old Vine" Edna Valley Chardonnay (\$19.95)** *Cameron Hoppas, RWC Sales:* Old vine Chardonnay from one of California's greatest winemakers... for under \$20!? **90 WE**

**2017 Neyers "304" Sonoma County Chardonnay (\$19.99)** *Stephanie Vidales, RWC Sales:* A great example of unoaked Chardonnay. California meets Chablis!

**91 WE:** "Intensely floral, this youthful white is citrus-driven in nature, with a grainy texture and moderate acidity. Toasted oak rides in the background, offering a complementary element to racy lemon."

**2016 Idlewild "The Bee-Flora & Fauna" California White Blend (\$19.99)** *Sarah Covey, RWC Store Manager:* In my eyes clearly the best Italian varietal producer in California! A wonderfully refreshing, aromatic, white blend of Muscat Canelli, Arneis and Cortese. **90 VN**



**2017 Margerum "M5" Santa Barbara County White Rhône Blend (\$19.95)** *Rob Cash, SF Sales:* A complex Rhône white blend that totally over-delivers for the price. Rich but balanced with layers of fruit and minerals.

**92 VN:** "The 2017 White M5, Margerum's white Rhône blend, is bright, nuanced and wonderfully focused, with the energy of Grenache driving the wine's personality. Citrus, orchard fruit and floral notes are nicely delineated in this attractive, inviting white."

**Sapere Aude Brut Rosé North Coast Sparkling Wine (\$19.95)** *Ryan Woodhouse, Domestic*

*Wine Buyer:* A dynamite little sparkling rosé sourced from organic and sustainable vineyards in Mendocino and the Sonoma Coast. Sapere Aude is made using the Charmat, or tank fermented, method and spends six months sur lie before being bottled. Tart alpine strawberry, Honeycrisp apple, toast, wet stones.



## K&L REDWOOD CITY

3005 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061  
**P** (650) 364-8544 **F** (650) 364-4687  
**HOURS** Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 9-7, Sun 10-6  
**LOCKERS** Mon-Sat 10-6, Sun 11-5

## KLWINES.COM

Toll Free (877) KLWINES (877) 559-4637  
Email: [Wines@KLWines.com](mailto:Wines@KLWines.com)

## K&L HOLLYWOOD

1400 Vine Street, Hollywood, CA 90028  
**P** (323) 464-WINE (9463) **F** (323) 836-0853  
**HOURS** Mon-Thurs 11-8, Fri-Sat 10-8, Sun 11-6

## K&L EVENTS & TASTINGS

We host regular evening and Saturday tastings at each K&L store as well as many special events throughout the year. For the complete calendar go to [KLWines.com/Local-Events](http://KLWines.com/Local-Events).

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855 Harrison Street, San Francisco, CA 94107  
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