



Vineyards for wines such as El Enemigo are grown located near the Andes Mountains in Argentina.

White and Red Value Wines Update

HISTORICALLY, I HAVE DEVOTED one or two issues about every five years or so to my favorite wines under \$25. Although these articles have been well received, in the two months' interval between my writing and the publishing of the issue, many or most of the wines have disappeared. To rectify the situation going forward, I intend to write one article annually on my value choices of both red and white wines under \$25 and make reference to the previous article to hopefully increase the chances of finding some of these gems, even if the vintages are different.

WHITE VALUE WINES

The last issue of Quintessential Barrington for September/October 2022 focused on my best value white wine of 2022 which is Château Guiraud “G”. You can read about it online (qbarrington.com) or in the magazine. Although all of this wine was sold before the issue was published, I have discovered two other Sauvignon Blancs from Bordeaux which are fantastic values.

Château Lugud 2019 from the Graves appellation retails for \$9, but drinks at a level of many multiples of this price. It is a blend of 50% Semillon, 40% Sauvignon Blanc, and 10% Muscadelle. The Semillon provides structure and a rich full

body, the Sauvignon Blanc adds fruity and floral aromas, and the Muscadelle adds spiciness. This wine is elegant, beautifully balanced, and fresh with a rich mouthfeel. It pairs well with white fish, crustaceans, and soft, white cheeses, e.g., Brie and Camembert.

Another great Bordeaux Blanc is the Clos Des Lune D'Argent 2020 from Domaine de Chevalier—one of the most consistent great white wine producers in Bordeaux. It is a blend of 70% Semillon and 30% Sauvignon Blanc picked from plots of old vines in the Sauternes appellation. In its youth, the wine is fresh, fruity, and very smooth on the palate. It becomes more complex after three



A vineyard in Bordeaux, France at sunrise.

to six years of age but retains its freshness. This wine pairs very well with grilled fish, crustaceans, oysters, shellfish, and mild soft cheeses. This wine is an unbelievable P.Q.R. (Price Quality Ratio).

RED VALUE WINES

Switching to the great red wine values, I discovered a new wine which is without a doubt one of my best finds. The wine is Marinus Piceno Superiore 2017 from Il Conte Villa Prandone. It is a blend of 70% Montepulciano and 30% Sangiovese and retails for \$18. Both grapes have an affinity for each other. By the way, in general, I prefer to experience Sangiovese (the dominant grape in Chianti) by itself, but especially if the wine is to be drank without food, Montepulciano is a wonderful, blended partner. This wine has an intense ruby color with a distinct nose of red peel fruits, black current, and raspberry. Although slightly tannic, the full mouthfeel results in a somewhat velvety body with a rich medium-to-full-bodied wine redolent of crushed boysenberry, pomegranate, black licorice, spice, and graphite undertones. This

wine pairs well with roasts, grilled meats, game, and aged cheeses.

Another great find is the El Enemigo Cabernet Franc 2018 from Mendoza, Argentina. Although the Cabernet Franc grape originated in France and reaches great heights in both Bordeaux and the Loire Valley, it also produces great wines in Argentina. I am particularly impressed by the quality and value of this wine. It is a product of the wine-maker of Bodega y Viñedos Catena, Alejandro Vigil, and Adrianna Catena, daughter of Nicolas Catena, the owner of Bodega y Viñedos Catena. (Note that they also produce one of my top value whites—the El Enemigo Chardonnay, \$20.)

This red wine, El Enemigo Cabernet Franc 2018, also retails for \$20 and is worth multiples of this amount. This wine has intense aromas of cassis, ripe currants, and sweet spices including black pepper and cloves. There are also hints of ripe red fruit and eucalyptus detected, veiled behind integrated notes of cedar and vanilla. The finished product is a well-balanced elegant wine with a persistent finish. This will pair perfectly

with grilled meats (roasts and steaks) and is my runaway favorite with corned beef for that one day (St. Patrick's) when we all honor our Irish heritage (real or imagined).

Happy hunting for these gems.

A Vôte Santé! 🍷



PHOTO: THOMAS BALSAMO

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