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Vineyards in the Bordeaux wine region of France.

Best Value Wines of 2026

Jim Bryant offers his 2026 value wines list that follow those of 2024 and 2025 found at qbarrington.com



KIRKLAND SIGNATURE BORDEAUX BLANC

Kirkland Signature Bordeaux Blanc by Château Petit Freylon sells for $7, although I would pay multiples for this wine. This white Bordeaux is without a doubt the best value wine I've ever discovered. It is a blend of 80% Sauvignon Blanc and 40% Sémillon. For those reading this who do not like most Sauvignon Blancs from New Zealand, this is very different.

New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs are generally described as tropical and citrus fruit based, where as Sauvignon Blanc from Bordeaux or the Loire Valley are more redolent of white fruits such as peaches, apple, and pear. When combined as in this case with my favorite white wine grape, Sémillon, which can be vinified either sweet or dry (as with this wine) and it makes for very excellent wines. In fact, one of the sweet versions, Château d'Yquem, is one of the greatest wines in the world (my Nov/Dec 2008 article, "French Fantasies," can be searched for online.)

This wine is great by itself and as an accompanying wine for shellfish and white fish as well as soft cheeses. The palate is velvety smooth, and it combines notes of toasted brioche, honey, lemon, and hazelnut. As an interesting sidenote, three local couples decided to dine upscale with



expensive wines ($100+ nominally). In addition to my two wines, I inserted this wine as a 'ringer' and several of us chose this as one of the best of the night and by far the least expensive.

ARGANZA LEGADO DE FARRO 2024

A close second in value is the Arganza Legado

De Farro 2024 from Castilla y León (Spain). It is a blend of 80% Verdejo and 20% Godello (my favorite white Spanish wine grape) and retails for $8 at Costco and up to 50% higher at other retailers. The wine is pale straw in color with a green cast and offers aromas of apple blossoms, pear, nectarine, and citrus. It has great acidity which makes it easy to pair with food. Suggested pairings include grilled fish, crustaceans, light salads and cheese, and tapas-style dishes, but it is also excellent by itself.



GUILLAUME GONNET BELLE AMIE CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE BLANC 2024

My final white wine is the Guillaume Gonnet Belle Amie Châteauneuf du Pape Blanc 2024 for $25. Many people assume all Châteauneuf du Pape is red, but 8% is white. This wine is made from Clairette, Roussanne, and Grenache Blanc. It has notes of lychee, pear, apple, citrus, and white floral on the nose. The grapes were harvested early to ensure bright acidity. The palate has a fresh and crispy feel with a slight saltiness lingering aftertaste. There is a long-lasting finish with just a touch of sweetness in the great rounded full mouthfeel. While enjoyable now, this will improve over the next few years. Although it is great to drink by itself, it will go well with rich fish such as salmon, cheese fondue, and rich white cheeses.



GUILLAUME GONNET BEL AMI CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE ROUGE 2023

Regarding red wine values, I have chosen another wine by Guillaume Gonnet, specifically his Châteauneuf du Pape Rouge 2023. Many of my readers know that he has produced one of Costco's greatest Kirkland Signature wines from purchased fruit, but this is the first time we have his personal vineyard offering in the standard 750 ml format. He is known as one of the great young producers, and he also makes great Gigondes and Vacqueyras Rhône wines under the Kirkland label. Several years ago, Guillaume produced one of two 100-point Chateauneuf du Pape wines at a small fraction of the other producer, Rayas.

This wine is 70% Grenache, 10% Syrah, 10% Mourvèdre, and 10% Cinsaut. It has a silky mouthfeel with a warm cascade of cherry, kirsch, and black raspberry ganache. This wine is quite complex and sultry with charred incense, violet perfume, and dark graphite overtones. The light oak treatment is well integrated in the overall mouthfeel. While approachable now with a one-hour decant, it will age well over the next decade and perhaps longer. My favorite food pairings with this wine are steak au poivre and rack of lamb, as well as ratatouille.



KIRKLAND SIGNATURE CHIANTI RISERVA 2022

My final red wine choice is the Kirkland Signature Chianti Riserva 2022 for $10. After being produced for Costco by Villa Cafaggio for seven years, it is now being made at Barone Ricasoli. According to a recent YouTube video by an Italian sommelier, it is the identical wine to the producer's $50 Chianti Riserva, but available for one-fifth the price. The wine has deep morello cherry flavors supported by black currant undertones. It has an intense dark color with aromas of ripe fruit and wild herbs.

My insider tip—which involves a much smaller amount of this wine coming to Costco this year due to smaller production—is to buy now as it is a once-a-year wine. It is an unbeatable value for pasta and pizza meals and goes well with lightly spiced beef and pork, as well as with Italian soups, sausage, and anti-pasta. À Votre Santé!

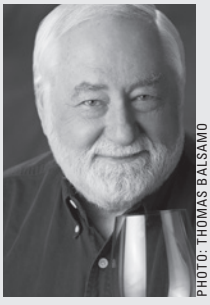

PHOTO: THOMAS BALSAMO

Barrington resident Jim Bryant is pursuing his passion and love of wine as an international wine consultant. This follows a 30-year career in senior financial and general management positions at two Fortune 100 companies. He is the owner of James R. Bryant L.L.C.; contact him at profwino@comcast.net.