

**850+** WINES  
REVIEWED PAGE 105

**TOP 100**  
CELLAR SELECTIONS PAGE 58

**AUSTRALIAN  
PINOT NOIR** PAGE 91

# WINE ENTHUSIAST

DECEMBER 2015

EASY & ELEGANT  
**HOLIDAY  
PARTIES** PAGE 44

ITALY'S MOST  
COLLECTIBLE  
WINES PAGE 76

**90+**  
GREAT  
GIFT  
IDEAS  
FOR WINE  
LOVERS

PAGE 15

\$5.99 US & CANADA

\$5.99

123



Winemag.com



# WINE ENTHUSIAST BUYING GUIDE



MARC LOBOY/ALAMY

Riddling racks in a  
Champagne cellar

## IN THIS MONTH'S GUIDE

**2** CHAMPAGNE  
**30** ALSACE  
**33** BURGUNDY  
**33** BEAUJOLAIS  
**42** PORTUGAL  
**48** SPAIN

**55** ITALIAN SPARKLING WINES  
**65** AUSTRIA  
**66** SOUTH AFRICA  
**67** AUSTRALIA  
**68** ARGENTINA  
**71** CALIFORNIA

**95** OREGON  
**99** CANADA  
**102** SPIRITS  
**104** BEER

FOR ADDITIONAL RATINGS AND REVIEWS, VISIT [BUYINGGUIDE.WINEMAG.COM](http://BUYINGGUIDE.WINEMAG.COM)

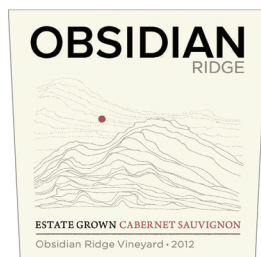




**93** **Mattina Fiore 2012 Murmur Vineyard Grenache (Santa Maria Valley).** Black cherry juice, slate and sandalwood consume the nose with rich and ripe aromas on this powerful bottling from a vineyard south of Santa Maria. This shows lots of elegance and complexity on the palate, with turned earth, wild berries and an intriguing sense of pine needles and juniper. Expect great things from this relatively new producer. —M.K.  
**abv:** 14.8% **Price:** \$60



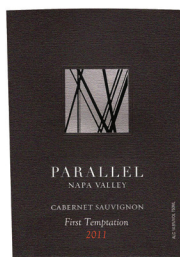
**93** **Mattina Fiore 2011 Murmur Vineyard Syrah (Santa Maria Valley).** Cola, beef jerky, roasted meats and dried purple berries hit initially the nose, follow by aromatic woods and black pepper. The flavors are distinctly interesting, with sandalwood, stewed plums, peppered chocolate, soy-braised beef and a tiny bit of reductive tar. —M.K.  
**abv:** 14.6% **Price:** \$50



**93** **Obsidian Ridge 2012 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Hills Lake County).** Bold aromas, thick layers of fruit flavor, and a supple but steely texture of fine tannins and acidity add up to a powerful and complex wine that should improve with age. Pure, dark-fruit flavors are accented by smoke and cardamom while the structure is mouth-puckering with astringency but softened by the richness of body and fruit. Best after 2019. *Cellar Selection.* —J.G.  
**abv:** 14.3% **Price:** \$30



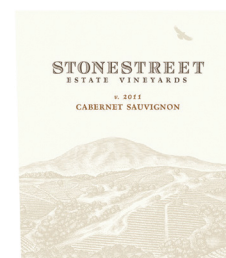
**93** **Panthea 2012 Estate Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley).** Rich, satisfying and full bodied, this wine is packed with delicious fruit and spice flavors while structured by good acidity and fine tannins that keep the texture lively. Layers of cherry, currant, cedar and cinnamon fill the flavor profile, and a long finish completes the package. *Editors' Choice.* —J.G.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$55



**93** **Parallel 2011 First Temptation Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** Jammy, rich and leathery, this full-bodied, robust wine has a touch of smoke lingering in the back, beneath soft, well-integrated oak. Juicy, it's enjoyable now, while being structured enough to go another decade or so. Cellar through 2021. *Cellar Selection.* —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.9% **Price:** \$138



**93** **Pellet Estate 2012 Pellet Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** From a heritage site planted originally in 1859, this wine was made by Nils Venge and contains mostly Cabernet, with a small handful of Merlot and an even smaller pinch of Petit Verdot. Soft yet structured, it's layered in leathery dark-chocolate and black-fig tones, with juicy components of blackberry and cassis. It should age through 2022. *Cellar Selection.* —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.7% **Price:** \$95



**93** **Stonestreet 2011 Estate Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley).** This wine is quite an accomplishment in flavor and complexity given the vintage and the price. From high-altitude vineyards atop the Mayacamas, it delivers peppercorn, herb and fine, well-integrated tannins, with mellow oak. Graphite and cedar also figure into the mix, with a shock of black cherry and cassis weaved within. Drink now through 2019. *Cellar Selection.* —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$45



**93** **Thienot 2002 Cuvée Alain Thienot (Champagne).** Only produced in the best years, such as 2002, this is a 60-40 blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from grand cru vineyards. This intense wine is well-balanced and packed with fruit tones, yet seems to be just approaching maturity. It is full, generous and tightly textured. Drink now and until 2025. Thienot USA. —R.V.  
**abv:** 12.5% **Price:** \$100



**93** **Trione 2010 Block Twenty One Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley).** While the producer holds back its heartier reds in bottle before release, this complex, rich wine will keep going with more cellaring, giving it a chance to further hone its already-developed layers of leather, earth and backbone of black fruit. Smooth and velvety, it retains sizable tannin weight on the finish. Cellar through 2020. *Cellar Selection.* —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.4% **Price:** \$67