

BONUS:  
100 TOP  
VALUES

WineSpectator.com

# THE **TOP 100**

## THE MOST EXCITING WINES OF 2018

**U.S. BUBBLY  
BEST BUYS**  
**ARGENTINA  
MALBEC &  
MORE**  
**NEW YORK  
WINE  
EXPERIENCE**



DEC. 21, 2018 - JAN. 15, 2019  
\$7.99 U.S.

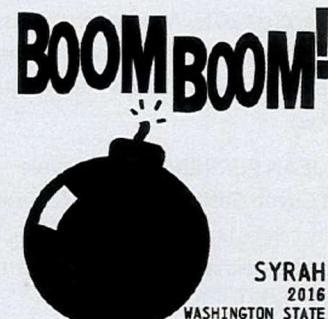
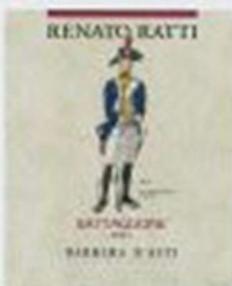


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# 100 TOP VALUES

GREAT WINES FOR \$20 OR LESS

BY KEITH NEWTON



This year's top values hail from every major region around the world and span every style, from light whites to elegant reds to sparklers.

Light Whites

Rich Whites

Elegant Reds

Big Reds

Rosé

Sparkling

Wine is rooted in tradition, yet many factors can force wine regions to evolve. Changing climate conditions, shifting tastes and rising land prices all challenge producers to refine their grape sources and winemaking practices. Those who best identify the right grapes for their *terroir* are ideally positioned to deliver exciting yet affordable wines year after year. Some thrive in established areas where grapegrowing has existed for centuries. Others are more recent upstarts on the global wine scene. Yet all have committed themselves to production methods that yield the highest quality in the most cost-effective way. This is how great values are born.

The diverse group of wines in this year's annual roundup of 100 top values shows just how widespread this commitment is. All of them are rated 88 points or higher, priced at \$20 or less and made in large enough quantities to be widely available. Another 24 wines in this year's Top 100 also represent exceptional value, offering further proof that producers across the globe have made it their goal to deliver high quality wine at budget-friendly prices. (See page 70 for a complete list of values in the Top 100.)

The selection that follows spans every corner of the wine world. Recent great vintages in France and Italy mean a number of choices from the Rhône Valley and Tuscany, while California regions such as Santa Barbara, Monterey, Lodi and Clarksburg field excellent wines at a fraction of the cost of those from Napa. There are values everywhere you look—it's time to get out there and explore.

# BIG REDS

**G**o big or go home. That's the ethos of these powerhouse reds, which vintners make by extracting the most they can get out of their grapes. Ripeness is crucial to delivering the necessary depth and concentration, so warmer regions or hotter vintages tend to yield the best versions. Argentine Malbec and Australian Shiraz are forces of nature, while California hits all its marks this year with a Zinfandel, a Syrah and a Merlot.

**93 \$20 ARGENTIERA Bolgheri Poggio al Ginepri 2015 Italy** A deep well of black currant, blackberry, licorice, cedar and graphite flavors draws you in for the ripe fruit. Cabernet blend. (NM)

**92 \$18 THOMAS GOSS Shiraz McLaren Vale 2016 Australia** Bittersweet chocolate, hazelnut and blackberry pie flavors show good density, with sink-your-teeth-into-them tannins adding richness. (NM)

**91 \$18 VIÑOS DE ARGANZA Mencía Bierzo Finca Selección 2015 Spain** This plush red shows black cherry and current flavors, with licorice and cocoa notes that give way to a floral finish. (NM)

**91 \$20 CLOS DE LOS SIETE Uco Valley 2015 Argentina** Offers a little mix of cherry, dried berry, currant and spice box flavors that mesh easily, with a richly textured finish. Malbec blend. (NM)

**90 \$15 BAROSSA VALLEY ESTATE GSM** Barossa Valley 2016 Australia Blackberry, cassis and blueberry notes are dark and brooding, with lingering accents of dark chocolate, smoke, tomato leaf and licorice. (NM)

**90 \$15 COLUMBIA CREST Cabernet Sauvignon Horse Heaven Hills H5 2016 Washington** This red is supple and approachable, delivering lively black cherry and spiced herb flavors that linger on the finish. (NM)

**90 \$13 D'ARENBERG Shiraz McLaren Vale The Stamp Jump 2016 Australia** A fresh note of spearmint complements the juicy core of plum and blackberry flavors in this distinctive red, with a long, expressive finish. (NM)

**90 \$19 DUNHAM Three Legged Red Washington 2016 Washington** Zesty and lively, showing expressive black cherry and smoky beef aromas, with licorice and sage flavors. Cabernet, Sauvignon, Syrah and Merlot. (NM)

**90 \$16 CAVEDE RASTEAU Reserva Orts Les Peyrières 2016 France** Well-focused, with ripe raspberry and boysenberry coulis flavors underscored by a solid graphite edge. Ripe and delicious without being heavy. (NM)

**90 \$14 RAVENSWOOD Zinfandel Lodi Old Vine 2015 California** This Zin is appealingly old-school, with briery cherry and white pepper flavors that lead to a zesty, lively finish. (NM)

**90 \$16 VIÑA SAN PEDRO Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley 1865 Selected Vineyards 2016 Chile** A burnished red, featuring cherry tart, dried red currant and raspberry flavors flanked by plenty of savory notes, with accents of green spices and olive on the finish. (NM)

**90 \$18 CHARLES SMITH Syrah Washington Boom Boom! 2016 Washington** This perky red delivers lively blackberry, smoky pepper and licorice flavors that linger on the finish. (TF)

**2016 California** Loaded with personality, this red offers zesty blackberry, orange peel, espresso and smoked sage flavors. Syrah blend. (TF)

**90 \$12 VERAMONTE Pinot Noir Casablanca Valley 2016 Chile** A suave red, with plenty of savory spice notes to the cherry, dried currant and red berry flavors, and a luscious finish. (NM)

**89 \$9 BODEGAS BRECA Garnacha Aragón de Fuego 2016 Spain** Thick and rich, this heady red features flavors of plum and blackberry, with menthol, cola and espresso notes and a dense, plush texture. (NM)

**89 \$20 FREI BROTHERS Merlot Dry Creek Valley Sonoma Reserve 2015 California** A straightforward red, offering dark plumb and boysenberry flavors flanked by forest-floor notes, with rich spicy accents on the juicy finish. (NM)

**89 \$13 RAMOS-PINTO Devro Duas Quintas 2016 Portugal** This juicy, full-bodied red features a licorice-tinted core of cherry tart and red currant flavors, with hints of violet and mineral. (NM)

**89 \$13 VIÑA SANTA EMA Merlot Maipo Valley Reserva 2016 Chile** A supple, juicy style, with notes of allspice to the plum, boysenberry and dried cherry flavors, ending with hints of chocolate mousse. (NM)

**88 \$10 ASIRIMOTA Douro Lago Cerqueira 2014 Portugal** This polished, full-bodied red features glazed cherry and plum pudding flavors that are detailed with accents of herb, pepper and fresh earth. (NM)

**88 \$11 TRIVENTO Malbec Mendoza Reserve 2017 Argentina** Blackberry and dark currant flavors are concentrated and very juicy in this ripe, spicy style, with hints of licorice and dark chocolate on the finish. (NM)

## A GUIDE TO WINE-AND-FOOD PAIRING

### LIGHT WHITES

Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Albariño, dry Riesling



### RICH WHITES

Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Viognier, white Rioja



### ELEGANT REDS

Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Sangiovese, Tempranillo



### BIG REDS

Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Syrah, Grenache, Zinfandel, Deco reds



CLASSIC  
OFFBEAT



—Keith Newton and Hilary Sims