

FORTUNE

These 5 Can't Miss Wines Are All Under \$50

By Chris Morris

Apr 24, 2017

Wine may be one of the hardest spirits to choose, in that price is really no barometer of quality. That \$100 Syrah may taste worse than a bottle of “3 Buck Chuck” from Trader Joe’s, while there can be a world of difference in the quality of a \$20 bottle and a \$50 one.

Certainly, the best way to find the most ideal wine for you (or a friend/coworker) is to sample what you can and take risks. But if you’ve yet to find the perfect choice and you’ve got a dinner party looming or an important date on the way, it never hurts to have a little help. Whether you like reds, whites or sparkling wines, we’ve got some suggestions to help you out.

K Vintners The Deal Sundance Vineyard Syrah 2013

K Vintners is part of the Charles Smith family of vintners and its Syrahs may be some of the best in the country. It’s not as well known outside of the Northwest, but the winery has consistently made smooth, tasty examples of the style (Its ‘The Beautiful’ Syrah just misses our price point for this piece, but is worth the extra \$10 if you find it.) The Deal, priced at \$40, lives up to its name. It’s a savory, full-bodied fruity offering with blackberry, tobacco and cherry notes that won’t overpower anyone’s palate, but will leave them fully satisfied.

Domaine Drouhin Oregon Pinot Noir 2014

It’s hard to go wrong with most Oregon Pinot Noirs, but this \$45 offering from Domaine Drouhin is wonderfully balanced and pairs nicely with beef, lamb, or pork. It’s a medium-bodied, earthy blend of blackberry and pepper that’s already juicy. But cellar this away for a few years and it could be a real showstopper.

Ravenswood Belloni Ranch Zinfandel 2012

Full-bodied and savory, this \$38 offering from the well-known Russian River winery is one worth looking for, even if you’re not generally a fan of the style. It’s loaded with raspberry flavors and oak and has a wonderfully dry finish. Nicely spicy, it pairs perfectly with good beef BBQ - especially if you’re cooking up a Texas-style brisket.

Perrier-Jouet Grand Brut Champagne

If you’ve got reason to celebrate, discount champagne or sparkling wines just won’t do. At \$45, Perrier-Jouet’s Brut—imported from Champagne, France—is crisp and refreshing with a hint of lemon amidst the bubbles. It’s splendid on its own, but works equally well with light appetizers, fruit, or seafood.

Dr. Konstantin Frank Gruner Veltliner 2015

New York’s Finger Lakes often gets overlooked by oenophiles, but the region puts out some amazing Rieslings. Dr Frank’s is the winery that put the Finger Lake on the map for many wine drinkers and is still one of the top vintners in the area. The Riesling is good, but the \$22 Veltliner, an Austrian grape that flourishes in upstate New York, is better. It’s akin to a Sauvignon Blanc with a dry citrus mouthfeel. And it’s wonderful with chicken or seafood.