

Canada

White

89 Château des Charmes St. David's Bench Vineyard Chardonnay 2014, St. David's Bench (\$19.95)

Offers up a lot of flavour for the price, notably from the oak spectrum. Cream, vanilla, apple, pear, spice and roasted nuts are built on a medium body. Lovely acidity and length. Pair with seabass topped with a beurre blanc sauce. (ES)

Red

89 Henry of Pelham Pinot Noir Estate 2012, Short Hills Bench (\$24.95)

Supple, maturing and ready to drink, this Pinot exhibits cherry fruit, graphite, beetroot, truffle, spice and dried earth. Beautiful length and a perfect fit with a duck terrine. (ES)

89 Southbrook Organic Triomphe Pinot Noir 2015, Niagara (\$29.95)

Starts off with a burst of ripe cherry fruit which is followed by red flowers and earth. Suave tannins and fresh acidity make for a magical pairing with braised short ribs with root vegetables. (ES)

88 Southbrook Organic Triomphe Cabernet Franc 2015, Niagara (\$21.95)

A mid-weight Franc with a bouquet of cassis, black raspberry, herbs, violets and spice. The palate is linear with elevated acidity and fine tannins. Drink over the next five years. Contains 15% Merlot. □ (ES)

France

White

92 Le Mesnil Brut Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Champagne NV, Champagne (\$49.95)

A stellar value from the famed Chardonnay vineyard of Mesnil-sur-Oger which is rated Grand Cru per the Échelle des Crus classification. This bubbly is very toasty and autolytic with added nuance in the form of lemon, apple, nuts and hints of caramel. Lively on the palate with creamy bubbles and delightful length. (ES)

89 Domaine Laroche Chablis Saint-Martin 2015, Chablis (\$23.20)

A soft and approachable Chablis with a personality of citrus, honey, green apple, anise and mineral. There is great length and just the right amount of acidity which allows it to pair perfectly with double cream brie or asiago cheeses. (ES)

Red

88 Chateau Tour Carmail 2011, Haut-Médoc (\$19.80)

This well priced Left Bank Bordeaux features classic aromas of cassis, raspberry, herbs,

tobacco, graphite, anise and vanilla. It possesses a medium body and very good length. Drink or hold for a couple of years. Serve with charcuterie or steak. (ES)

88 Gérard Bertrand Grand Terroir Les Aspres 2013, Côte de Roussillon (\$18.95)

Les Aspres is a blend of Syrah, Mourvèdre and Grenache from Southern France. Dark plum, cassis, raspberry, Provencal herb, black pepper, smoke, vanilla cream and tar are all in play. Full-bodied with very good length and a healthy amount of tannins and fresh acidity. (ES)

88 Ferraton Père et Fils Samorëns Côtes du Rhône 2014, (\$14.95)

A great value petit Rhône blend which serves up black pepper, lilac, cassis, plum, black olive. Medium body with very good length, soft tannins and ready to open with pasta or pizza. (ES)

Italy

93 I Castei Campo Casalin Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 2012, Veneto (\$51.95)

From a top vintage and producer comes this Amarone which doles out the plum, cherry, raspberry, vanilla cinnamon, raisin and garam masala. Full-bodied, with 15.5% alcohol, it is balanced, concentrated and long-lasting. It will age well for a decade. (ES)

92 Sartori Corte Bra Amarone Della Valpolicella Classico 2009, Veneto (\$49.95)

Starting to hit a sweet spot, this maturing Amarone reveals plum/prune, sweet cherry, leather, spice and cocoa. Brawny with a great finale. Will age gracefully for many more

years. (ES)

92 Giacosa Vigna Mandorlo Barolo 2010, Piedmont (\$53.95)

Just starting to hit its stride. Shows an evolved colour and classic aromas of cherry, prune, rose, liquorice and spice. Full bodied with tannins that will ensure another 15 years of life ahead, at least. (ES)

89 La Vite Lucente 2014, Toscana IGT (\$34.95)

A Merlot dominant blend with Sangiovese and Cab acting as the backstop. Medium body, with blackberry, cherry, spice, earth and tobacco notes. Fine length and ready to drink. (ES)

Spain

91 Faustino I Gran Reserva 2004, Rioja (\$34.95)

2004 was a superb vintage, and this has translated to a medium to full-bodied wine with dried fruit, leather, tomato concentrate, cedar, mint and game qualities. Excellent length with sound tannins, still. Pair with lamb chops. □ (ES)

91 Senorio de P. Pecina Reserva 2009, Rioja (\$29.95)

An obvious old-school Rioja with strawberry, stewed plums, coconut, red flowers, stewed tomatoes and cedar. Excellent length and ready to go. (ES)

Portugal

92 Quinta do Portal LBV Port 2012, Douro (\$24.95)

This LBV easily matches and bests Vintage Ports, which are double or triple the price. From the fabulous 2011 vintage, this wine possesses an opaque black/purple colour and a profile of damson plum, kirsch, chocolate, mint and spice. Approachable now but has the stuffing to improve over the next decade. If you are a port lover, do not miss this opportunity! (ES)

USA

White

92 Paul Hobbs Chardonnay 2014, Russian River Valley (\$64.95)

Full-bodied and rich, this superb Chardonnay is concentrated with peach, honey, quince jam, fig paste, apple, citrus, spice, cream and vanilla. Long-lasting with a pop of bright acidity, which is the hallmark of the vintage. Lobster and butter please! (ES)

90 La Crema Chardonnay 2014, Sonoma Coast (\$29.95)

This stalwart of most Canadian wine stores is a creamy Chardonnay with a personality of citrus, green apple, peach, white flowers, honey, vanilla and spice. Excellent length with just the right amount of acidity. (ES)

90 Robert Mondavi Fumé Blanc 2014, Napa Valley (\$22.95)

Mostly Sauvignon Blanc with a dash of Sémillon. Citrus, lime, gooseberry, apricot and herbs come together in this crisp and elegant wine. Seared scallops all the way. (ES)

Red

93 Cliff Lede Cabernet Sauvignon 2013, Stags Leap District (\$114.95)

This is a powerful and dense Napa Cab with boatloads of crème de cassis, dark cherry, violets, mint, graphite. The palate boasts sweet fruit and enough tannins to age 20 years. Top notch juice! (ES)

92 Austin Hope Syrah 2013, Paso Robles (\$40.95)

A big and brash Syrah which clocks in with 15.5% alcohol, a thick texture and intense flavours of dark plum, blackberry, black cherry, balsamic, spice and cocoa. Long finish. (ES)

89 Big Smooth Old Vines Zinfandel 2014, Lodi/Sonoma/Napa (\$24.95)

The name says it all- this is a big, fruit-driven Zin with a soft and succulent texture, and of course, 15.5% alcohol. Dark and red fruit jam, raisins, black tea and spice gush from the glass. A hedonistic wine in the truest sense. (ES)

88 Joel Gott 815 Cabernet Sauvignon 2013, California (\$24.95)

A multi-appellation blend which delivers plum, dark cherry, spice, vanilla and cocoa. It

provides immediate gratification with its upfront personality but can go another five years in the cellar, if you so chose. (ES)