

Argentina

89 Luigi Bosca Cabernet Sauvignon 2015, Mendoza (\$19.95) Here you will find a structured Cabernet with lots of black fruit qualities -blackberries and cassis- accompanied by spice, smoke, mint/herbs and vanilla. Medium plus body with good cellaring potential. Prime rib all the way! (ES)

Canada

White

91 Tawse Chardonnay South Bay Vineyard 2015, Prince Edward County (\$34.95)

Tawse trucked in Chardonnay grapes from PEC to make this fine and delicious Chardonnay. White fruit (pear, apple) and citrus find are underpinned by oak in the form of vanilla and spice. Freshness is not lacking and there is excellent length. Lobster or halibut would be divine with this wine! (ES)

87 Kacaba Vineyards Unoaked Chardonnay 2017, Niagara Peninsula (\$15.95) A pure expression of Chardonnay with pear, yellow apple, peach, white flowers and mineral. Dry, the fresh acidity and very good length. A great wine for those weeknight chicken or finish dinners. (ES)

Red

93 Thirty Bench Winemakers Small Lot Cabernet Sauvignon 2016, Beamsville Bench (\$50) Of all of Thirty Bench's Small Lot series in 2016, this is my favorite. It is a concentrated, complex and powerful Cab full of smoke, coffee, cassis, plum, raspberry, sweet herbs, graphite, vanilla and spice. Excellent length. Still very much youthful, it requires three years of cellaring and will age at least 15 years. Impressive juice!

92 Thirty Bench Winemakers Small Lot Merlot 2016, Beamsville Bench (\$50) A fabulous follow up the stunning 2012. Full-bodied and rich, there is plum, dark cherry, chocolate, vanilla, herbs, and spice both on the nose and palate. The finale is long, with the chocolate qualities carrying into the sunset. It will cellar for a decade. (ES)

92 Thirty Bench Winemakers Benchmark Red 2016, Beamsville Bench (\$60) This wine is only released in the best years, the previous two being the 2010 and 2012. It is also the wine which is the hardest to gage in its youth and usually requires 3 to 5 years of cellaring before being broached. That said, my gut feeling is that this wine will eventually be the best of the Small Lots when the time arrives. Vanilla, cassis, plum, cherry, tobacco, mint and spice are what are in play right now. Concentrated and long with masses of tannins. (ES)

91 Thirty Bench Winemakers Small Lot Cabernet Franc 2016, Beamsville Bench (\$75)

Plum, cassis, raspberry, sweet tobacco, spice, graphite and vanilla are all found in this Cabernet Franc. The acid is surprisingly elevated for such a warm vintage. Combined with the tannins, it will cellar nicely for 12 years. Rack of lamb with this beauty please! (ES)

91 Reif Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2015, Niagara Peninsula (\$34.95) A lovely Cabernet Sauvignon with a bouquet of cassis, raspberry, plum, violets, tobacco and smoke. On the palate, much of the same is found, with a minty/herbal streak running through. Great finish and can be drunk now or aged for 5 to 7 years. (ES)

90 Reif Estate Meritage 2015, Niagara Peninsula (\$39.95) A medium plus body Meritage with a bouquet of smoke, cherry, plum, cassis, spice, leather and tobacco. Lovely depth on the palate with cocoa and herbs adding an extra layer. Excellent length. (ES)

90 Tawse Cabernet Sauvignon Icewine 2017, Niagara (\$35.95) A delightful red Icewine with a luscious personality of guava, cassis, raspberry, cocoa and herbs. Sweet with high acidity providing definition and lift. (ES)

89 Reif Estate Merlot Reserve 2016, Niagara River (\$29.95) Merlot all the way what with the chocolate, plum, cherry, spice, coffee and earth. Nice depth and persistence. Ready to drink or can cellar for up to 5 years. (ES)

89 Henry of Pelham Pinot Noir Speck Family Reserve 2017, Short Hills Bench (\$34.95)

There is a really lovely balance here with the cherry, cranberry and mushroom qualities of the grape melding with spice, vanilla and cocoa from the oak. Excellent length with correct acidity and tannins. Confit de Canard please. (ES)

89 Tawse David's Block Merlot 2013, Twenty Mile Bench (\$49.95) This is the last vintage ever for this wine as the vines gave up the ghost after the brutally cold 2014 winter. Medium body and elegant, maturity has set in with some savoury/leather notes weaving between the plum, cherry, chocolate, herbs and spice. Ready to drink. (ES)

89 Henry of Pelham Cabernet-Merlot Estate 2015, Short Hills Bench (\$24.95) Medium plus body, this is always a quality representation of what Niagara can do vis a vis the Bordeaux varietals. Cassis, raspberry, cherry, chocolate, smoke, herbs and graphite are all in play. Lovely balance and aftertaste. (ES)

89 Tawse Growers Blend Pinot Noir 2016, Niagara (\$25.95) Aromatic on the nose with cherry, raspberry, red flowers and earth. Spice, cassis and plum add nuance on the palate. Tannins and acidity are on the plus side of medium. Lengthy and ideal with a mushroom risotto topped with roasted quail. (ES)

88 Thirty Bench Winemakers Red 2016, Beamsville Bench (\$24.95) A solid Bordeaux-styled red featuring cassis, cherry, vanilla, cocoa, coffee, herbs and violets. Weighty, there is very good length and lots of tannins in the background. Drink over the next 5 to 7 years. (ES)

88 Redstone Meritage 2012, Niagara (\$45.95) Punchy, this blend of 60% Merlot and

equal parts of both Cabs serves up plum, dark cherry, cassis, blackberry, olive, smoke, graphite, anise and mint. It is concentrated with grippy tannins, so grill up a rib eye medium rare and go to town. (ES)

86 Kacaba Vineyards Winery Cabernet 2016, Ontario (\$14.95) A smooth drinking blend of 90% Cab Franc and 10% Cab Sauv. Cherry, cassis, raspberry, green herbs, toast and spice. Medium body and length. Ready to drink. (ES)

France

White

90 Taittinger Nocturne NV, Champagne (\$69.95) The funky purple disco ball packaging will attract many, but it is the wine inside which is the real attraction. Done in the Sec style (off-dry, 17 g/l), this Champers reveals, apple, peach, cherry and a floral personality. There is a creamy texture with high acidity which helps to temper the sweetness. It is made for spicy dishes or at the end of the meal, alongside cheeses. (ES)

88 Gerard Bertrand Réserve Spéciale Viognier 2016, Pays D'Oc (\$14.95) A textbook version Viognier with peach, apricot, honeysuckle, orange blossom, spice and fresh yogurt. Rather dense on the palate and dry with a soft end. Solid value! (ES)

87 Baron de Hoen Pinot Gris Réserve 2016, Alsace (\$14.95)

Off-dry, this is an easy drinking Gris with peach, apricot, orange blossom, spice and honey. A smooth palate and fine length make for a solid pairing with butternut squash soup or Oka cheese.

Red

91 Chateau Mont-Redon Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Rhone Valley (\$45.95) Cherry, strawberry, plum, licorice, and some garrigue are present in this well-made and approachable CNP. There are tannins for sure, but the entry is plush and there is some sound acidity to provide symmetry. Excellent length. Drink or hold. (ES)

90 Gérard Bertrand Grand Les Aspres Syrah-Mourvèdre-Grenache 2016, Côtes du Rousillon (\$18.95) There is lots of finesse to be found in this medium plus body red from Southern France. Crème de cassis, Chambord liqueur, black pepper, baking spice, toast and vanilla are in the mix. Refined, balanced and just the right amount of underlying grip. Drink until 2024. (ES)

Spain

89 Goru El Blanco Moscatel - Chardonnay 2017, Jumilla (\$13.95) Goru continues to produce wines which deliver above their pay grade. Rich and aromatic, it features peach, orange blossom, pineapple, honey and spice. Acidity is soft and the finale carries long. Try with mahi-mahi topped with a fruit salsa of Tacos Al Pastor.