

2021 BRUNELLO • GLOBAL SPARKLING WINE

# Wine Spectator

WineSpectator.com

## The Ultimate Travel Guide to **NAPA VALLEY**

Our editors' favorite destinations  
to taste, dine, stay, shop and more



Sttupa Estate  
Napa Valley

# STELLAR SANGIOVESE

The 2021 vintage of Brunello di Montalcino rivals 2016 in both quality and style | BY BRUCE SANDERSON



Crafting Baricci's top-scoring 2021 Brunello required Federico (left) and Francesco Buffi, grandsons of the estate's founder, to adjust their approach in the vineyard and cellar.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
LORENZO COTROZZI

A decade or more from now, we may be debating the merits of the 2021 vintage in Montalcino versus the 2016. By that time, perhaps one will have established itself as superior. For now, it's a win-win for Sangiovese lovers, because the current releases of Brunello di Montalcino from the 2021 harvest rival their predecessors at the pinnacle of quality.

The 2021 Brunellos from Montalcino are the last wines from this great harvest in Tuscany to be released. Compared with 2016, the newer vintage fields a slightly higher percentage of Brunellos earning classic scores of 95 to 100 points on *Wine Spectator's* 100-point scale. Although a greater number of 2016s scored 95 to 98 points overall, that includes that year's *riservas*, whereas the 2021 *riservas* will be released next year, when they may prove even more exceptional. Needless to say, 2021 is a truly exciting vintage.

Nevertheless, the growing season presented obstacles, most notably the hard frost during the nights of April 7 and 8. Summer was dry, with a timely rainfall at the end of July; by the end of August, weather conditions cooperated with the warm days and cool nights to foster full ripeness of the Sangiovese grapes.

One of the best wines of the vintage is Argiano's Brunello di Montalcino Vigna del Suolo (98 points, \$300), an expressive,



Elisabetta Gnudi Angelini works with her daughter Alessandra Angelini at their Altesino and Caparzo estates, which together produced four of this report's classic-rated wines.



**"If I look back at the best vintages I have made at Argiano, I would say that 2021 shows great precision, a very vertical profile and balance."**

**—Bernardino Sani**

polished red exuding cherry, raspberry, graphite, earth and underbrush flavors. It's powerful, with a thick swath of tannins flexing their grip on the finish, plus vibrant acidity.

"I think the key point of the vintage has been harvesting at the right time as the lower yields and warm September month could easily overripen the fruit," explains Argiano CEO Bernardino Sani, referring to the 30% reduction in volume due to the frost. "If I look back at the best vintages I have made at Argiano, I would say that 2021 shows great precision, a very vertical profile and a balance that reminds me a little of the 2016 wines."

Joining Argiano's Vigna del Suolo among the top-scoring wines is Baricci's Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli (98, \$110), with its racy and complex character and dark fruit flavors of black cherry, black currant and blackberry, accented by violet, mineral and wild herbs. The Casanova di Neri Brunello di Montalcino Tenuta Nuova (98, \$135) reveals a buried core of strawberry, cherry, iron and wild herbs, with a linear, tightly wound profile, while Castello Romitorio's fresh, invigorating Brunello di Montalcino Filo di Seta (98, \$149) features flavors of macerated plum, cherry, blackberry, iron and eucalyptus.

Francesco Buffi, whose family owns Baricci, outlines its approach to the season. "Compared to other years, we maintained a denser canopy to better protect the bunches and prevent sunburn," he says. "Furthermore, starting from veraison, we carried out an initial selection of the best bunches (those from buds not affected by the spring frost) in order to ensure a uniform ripening process of the grapes, which occurred slowly and gradually, with bunches in perfect phytosanitary condition."

Baricci also adjusted its cellar protocols. "In the winery, we favored the practice of *délestage*, which has a much gentler extraction effect than pumping over, which has been reduced in quantity and daily frequency," Buffi adds. "This also helps avoid

COURTESY OF ALTESINO

the risk of extracting vegetal aromas and less pleasant tannins.”

These are the top-rated labels from among the more than 100 2021 Brunellos I have blind-tasted at our New York office since my previous report (“Attention to Detail,” June 30, 2025). Dozens of additional 2021s earned scores between 95 and 97 points, while another 34 *riservas* from 2020 and a few older vintages round out this year’s report. Based on the success of the Brunello *annate* and pending the 2027 release of the *riservas*, I give the 2021 vintage an overall rating of 99 points.

**A**lessandra Angelini, whose family owns both Altesino and Caparzo, made four classic-rated Brunellos from the 2021 harvest. She also noted yields 10% to 15% lower, citing minimal frost damage due to vineyard holdings higher than 1,000 feet and late pruning, a practice that was successful after a softer frost in the 2020 vintage. She recalls that the dry summer required little work in the vineyards. “It was really only detailed hand work on the foliage and on the undersoil. The vines were very healthy, and the bunches of grapes had a natural selection in most cases due to the frost,” she says. “It reminds me a lot of 2016, one of my overall favorite vintages ever.”

At Poggio di Sotto, where yields were 15% less due to the frost, winemaker Leonardo Berti fashioned a classic-scoring, solidly built Brunello di Montalcino (96, \$320) that shows an essence of cherry, plum, blackberry, earth, mineral and eucalyptus flavors. Berti reports that he lost some vineyard parcels entirely due to the frost but that “the remaining part of the season was fantastic.”

Though Montalcino is small, with less than 11,000 acres of vineyards, it is a complex region with a variety of soil types



After losing whole parcels of vines to frost during the 2021 growing season, Poggio di Sotto winemaker Leonardo Berti transformed his remaining harvest into a classic-scoring wine.

and climates throughout the zone. The town of Montalcino is roughly in the center, at the highest elevation, with slopes descending in all directions. These factors influence not only the harvest dates but also the style of the wines, with the southernmost vineyards more Mediterranean in character and generally harvested earlier.

The wines from the southwest and southeast typically have more weight and tannic structure; however, in 2021, there is beautiful fruit, and many of these Brunellos reveal elegance and vibrant structures—for example, the Camigliano Brunello di Montalcino Paesaggio Inatteso (97, \$90), Poggio San Polo Brunello di Montalcino Vignavecchia (97, \$375), Pieve Santa Restituta Brunello di Montalcino Rennina (96, \$255) and Podere Salicutti Brunello di Montalcino Sorgente (96, \$170).

The Brunellos from the north side of Montalcino tend to be more reserved, with firm structures yet excellent freshness and precision. Altesino’s Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Montosoli (97, \$135), Canalicchio di Sopra’s Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Montosoli (97, \$250), Le Ragnaie’s Brunello di Montalcino Passo del Lume Spento (97, \$200) and Valdicava’s Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Montosoli (97, \$379) are all representative.

## Rating Brunello di Montalcino Vintages

<b>2021</b>	<b>99</b>	Spring frost reduced yields 10% to 30%, followed by a hot, dry summer with enough rain to refresh the vines. Warm days and cool nights in September facilitated ideal ripening	<i>Drink or hold</i>
<b>2020</b>	<b>93</b>	Marked by a hot, dry summer, with sufficient rain to ripen and a beautiful September, yet the wines are heterogeneous; the best deliver purity, balance and energy	<i>Drink or hold</i>
<b>2019</b>	<b>98</b>	Consistent weather, warm days, cool nights and well-timed rain resulted in pure, fruit-filled Brunellos that combine elegance and power; the top wines rival the best 2016s	<i>Drink or hold</i>
<b>2018</b>	<b>93</b>	A rainy spring and July storms led to swollen berries by harvest, yet cool weather in September resulted in fine ripening; the top examples are aromatic, elegant and fresh	<i>Drink or hold</i>
<b>2017</b>	<b>92</b>	Spring and summer were warm, but especially dry, with slightly more rain in the north; the best wines are balanced and fresh for enjoying over the near term	<i>Drink or hold</i>
<b>2016</b>	<b>99</b>	Textbook growing season resulted in wines of finesse and elegance, balance and harmony, with mostly red fruit flavors. Ideal weather in September preserved acidity	<i>Drink or hold</i>

**Vintage ratings:** 95-100, classic; 90-94, outstanding; 85-89, very good; 80-84, good; 75-79, mediocre; 50-74, not recommended. **Drinkability:** NYR means most of the wines of the vintage are yet to be released; “drink” means most of the wines of the vintage are ready to drink; “hold” means most of the ageworthy wines have yet to fully mature.



**FREE ALPHABETICAL LIST**  
Get scores and prices for nearly 150 wines reviewed for this report  
[WineSpectator.com/BrunelloAlpha063026](https://www.winespectator.com/BrunelloAlpha063026)

Despite several pricier Brunellos, the majority of producers held prices steady, and in some cases, the 2021s cost less than their 2020 counterparts. There are still values for \$65 or less among the 2021s, some of them even boasting 1,000 or more cases imported. At 95 points, look for Caparzo's Brunello di Montalcino (\$54), which shows flavors of cherry, strawberry and raspberry accented by wood smoke, tobacco and iron; Caprili's savory Brunello di Montalcino (\$55), offering ripe plum, black cherry, black currant, iron, earth and eucalyptus notes; Capanna's Brunello di Montalcino (\$65), evoking cherry, pomegranate, blackberry and violet; and La Fiorita's Brunello di Montalcino (\$65), a dense, muscular red whose beefy tannins and vibrant acidity uphold black cherry, blackberry, iron, tomato leaf and Tuscan scrub notes.

Weighing in at 94 points are Camigliano's Brunello di Montalcino (\$65), Col d'Orcia's Brunello di Montalcino (\$65) and San Felice's Brunello di Montalcino Campogiovanni (\$65). These are a terrific starting point for any Tuscan wine lover looking to explore Brunello di Montalcino.

Joining the newly released 2021 vintage are nearly three dozen *riservas* from 2020. Based on the Brunello di Montalcino *annate* from 2020 reviewed last year, the best bottlings are forward, fruity, expressive, balanced and vibrant—wines that are immediately enjoyable. While a few producers did not make a *riserva* in 2020, those that did crafted wines of intensity and potentially long aging, with the extra level of



Biondi-Santi CEO Giampiero Bertolini (left) and director of winemaking Federico Radi released one of the finest *riservas* of the year with its expressive 2019 bottling.



**"The vines were very healthy, and the bunches of grapes had a natural selection. It reminds me of 2016, one of my overall favorite vintages ever."**

**—Alessandra Angelini**

structure to withstand the additional year of aging.

Leading the pack is the Podere Salicutti Brunello di Montalcino Teatro Riserva 2020 (98, \$320), an expressive, complex red packed with succulent cherry, raspberry and floral flavors. Just a notch below, Caprili's fresh, linear and elegant Brunello di Montalcino AdAlberto Riserva 2020 (97, \$100) offers cherry, blackberry, licorice, violet and iron notes framed by bracing acidity and a layer of dense, dusty tannins; Fattoria dei Barbi's expressive Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2020 (97, \$188) features flavors of strawberry, cherry, earth, underbrush and flinty mineral; and Poggio Antico's Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2020 (97, \$170) is juicy and structured, exhibiting notes of cherry, blackberry and violet. An additional six Brunello *riservas* earned 96 points, while all tasted for this report scored 93 points or higher.

The 2020 growing season presented challenges. Abundant spring rains recharged the moisture in the soils, allowing the vines to withstand the hot, dry summer months. In parts of the region, a few rains in early summer and, more importantly, at the end of August, followed by cooler weather in September, ushered the vines to full ripeness.

Other notable releases are Biondi-Santi's Brunello di Montalcino Tenuta Greppo Riserva 2019 (98, \$1,069), an intense, expressive and elegant red evoking plum, raspberry and cherry flavors accented by iron and tobacco. It's the first *riserva* made entirely under the new ownership. Technical director Federico Radi employed concrete, stainless steel and oak casks for the fermentation and reduced the aging in wood from 36 months to 28, providing more time in bottle before release. "We're looking for more depth, intensity, structure and aging potential," says Radi.

The Col d'Orcia Brunello di Montalcino Poggio al Vento Riserva 2019 (96, \$160) is round and supple, with excellent harmony and a sustained, fruit- and mineral-infused aftertaste, and Le Chiuse's Brunello di Montalcino Diecianni Riserva 2016 (98, \$280) exhibits maturing aromas and flavors of licorice, sautéed porcini and woody underbrush, along with fading cherry and berry fruit.

The bottom line? It's a very good time to stock up on Brunello di Montalcino. There are several excellent vintages available, starting with the superb 2021s, which are not to be missed. Many of the outstanding 2020s can be enjoyed now, yet the *riservas* need a few years to find their equilibrium. It may be some time before there's another windfall like this in the market.

Senior editor Bruce Sanderson is Wine Spectator's lead taster on the wines of Tuscany.

## Bruce Sanderson's Recommended Brunellos di Montalcino

Nearly 150 wines were reviewed for this report. An online version is available at [WineSpectator.com/BrunelloAlpha063026](https://www.winespectator.com/BrunelloAlpha063026).  
WineSpectator.com members can access complete reviews for all wines tasted using the online Wine Ratings search.

### TOP 2021 BRUNELLOS

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>ARGIANO Brunello di Montalcino Vigna del Suolo 2021</b> Exudes cherry and raspberry fruit, graphite and earth. Powerful and polished, ending with a swath of tannins and vibrant acidity.	98	\$300
<b>BARICCI Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli 2021</b> Black cherry, black currant and blackberry flavors are accented by violet, mineral and wild herbs. Racy and complex, with terrific energy.	98	\$110
<b>CASANOVA DI NERI Brunello di Montalcino Tenuta Nuova 2021</b> Tightly wound but reveals a core of strawberry, cherry, iron and wild herbs, with a linear profile wrapped in firm acidity and tannins.	98	\$135
<b>CASTELLO ROMITORIO Brunello di Montalcino Filo di Seta 2021</b> Plum, cherry, blackberry, iron and eucalyptus flavors hallmark this invigorating red. Balanced and long, ending with malleable tannins.	98	\$149
<b>ALTESINO Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Montosoli 2021</b> Balsamic notes of eucalyptus, tomato leaf and mint mingle with cherry, strawberry and rose. Taut and elegant, with chalky tannins.	97	\$135
<b>CASTELLO BANFI Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Marrucheto 2021</b> Packed with fruit, showing berry, violet and mineral flavors supported by a solid structure, but iron and tomato leaf notes make this complex.	97	\$140
<b>FATTORIA DEI BARBI Brunello di Montalcino Vigna del Fiore 2021</b> Defined by cherry, strawberry, peony, earth, iron and tobacco notes, this is fresh and invigorating, with a firm structure.	97	\$160
<b>CAMIGLIANO Brunello di Montalcino Paesaggio Inatteso 2021</b> Silky and vibrant, with notes of flint, cherry, strawberry, rose hip and orange peel. Approachable now yet will be better in a few years.	97	\$90
<b>CANALICCHIO DI SOPRA Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Montosoli 2021</b> Balsamic notes of tomato leaf, juniper and eucalyptus join cherry, plum and iron. The fruit core matches the structure, giving balance.	97	\$250
<b>CAPARZO Brunello di Montalcino Vigna La Casa 2021</b> Dark fruit flavors mark this fluid yet dense red. Dusty tannins leave a solid grip on the menthol- and mineral-infused finish.	97	\$93
<b>CASANOVA DI NERI Brunello di Montalcino Giovanni Neri 2021</b> Blackberry, cassis and black cherry flavors are the main themes in this muscular red, framed by rosemary, juniper and Mediterranean scrub.	97	\$250
<b>LISINI Brunello di Montalcino 2021</b> Cherry, raspberry, pomegranate and rose notes are offset by dusty tannins in this fresh, layered and vibrant red, ending long.	97	\$90
<b>PIEVE SANTA RESTITUTA Brunello di Montalcino Sugarille 2021</b> Offers ripe cherry and blackberry notes, while earth, iron, tobacco and Mediterranean scrub add depth. Dense tannins line the finish.	97	\$280
<b>POGGIO SAN POLO Brunello di Montalcino Vignavecchia 2021</b> Macerated cherry, plum, spice, mineral and floral flavors highlight this elegant yet intense red, which shows superb balance and structure.	97	\$375
<b>LE RAGNAIE Brunello di Montalcino Passo del Lume Spento 2021</b> This starts with finesse, its silky texture enveloping cherry, strawberry, rose hip, mineral and wild herb flavors, along with vibrant acidity.	97	\$200

<b>PODERE LE RIPI Brunello di Montalcino Amore &amp; Magia 2021</b> Black cherry, blackberry and cassis notes are shaded by flinty mineral, eucalyptus and herbs, with ample tannins for structure.	97	\$120
<b>PODERE SALICUTTI Brunello di Montalcino Piaggione 2021</b> Bursts with cherry, raspberry, pomegranate and rose notes backed by dense, dusty tannins and a lasting impression of ripe fruit.	97	\$170
<b>SAN FILIPPO Brunello di Montalcino Le Lucère 2021</b> Packed with ripe black cherry, blackberry and pomegranate flavors, this red adds grace notes of iron, sweet spices and eucalyptus.	97	\$130
<b>TALENTI Brunello di Montalcino Piero 2021</b> Lush with cherry, blackberry and plum fruit, this is seductive and harmonious, with serious, gripping tannins and an expansive aftertaste.	97	\$150
<b>VAL DI SUGA Brunello di Montalcino Poggio al Granchio 2021</b> Saturated with cherry, blackberry, rose hip and wild herb notes, this is still a bit monolithic but well-balanced, with a mineral undercurrent.	97	\$114
<b>VALDICAVA Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Montosoli 2021</b> Mint, mineral, kirsch, blackberry, violet and underbrush highlight this fresh, racy red. Bracing acidity focuses the tightly wound flavors.	97	\$379

### TOP 2020 BRUNELLO RISERVAS

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
<b>PODERE SALICUTTI Brunello di Montalcino Teatro Riserva 2020</b> Expressive, with cherry, raspberry and floral notes through the finish. Offers immediate gratification as well as the structure to age.	98	\$320
<b>FATTORIA DEI BARBI Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2020</b> Showing strawberry, cherry, earth and mineral notes, this tightens up while building to the long, energetic, spice-tinged aftertaste.	97	\$188
<b>CAPRILI Brunello di Montalcino AdAlberto Riserva 2020</b> Fresh and linear yet elegant, with cherry, blackberry, licorice, violet and iron notes framed by bracing acidity and dense, dusty tannins.	97	\$100
<b>POGGIO ANTICO Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2020</b> Bright and persistent, evoking cherry, blackberry and violet. Shows vivid acidity, refined tannins and a mineral-tinged ending.	97	\$170
<b>PODERE BRIZIO Brunello di Montalcino Bosco Alto Riserva 2020</b> Shaded with rose and mineral notes, this bright red is intense and graceful, ending with pure red fruit. Beautifully wrought.	96	\$185
<b>FANTI Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Le Macchiarelle Riserva 2020</b> Saturated with cherry, raspberry, black currant and floral notes, this stylish, fresh red is taut yet balanced. Long, complex and compelling.	96	\$140
<b>LISINI Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2020</b> Packed with black cherry, blackberry, cassis, iron, tobacco and blood orange flavors, this is built for the long haul. Alive and crackling.	96	\$140
<b>POGGIO DI SOTTO Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2020</b> Mint and menthol highlight the core of cherry, plum, dill and celery seed flavors in this lean, intense red, with iron and tobacco notes.	96	\$650
<b>LIVIO SASSETTI Brunello di Montalcino Pertimali Riserva 2020</b> An enticing style, showing luscious blackberry and black currant fruit accented by green olive, cedar, sandalwood, graphite and eucalyptus.	96	\$150
<b>VALDICAVA Brunello di Montalcino Madonna del Piano Riserva 2020</b> Dark and supple, with black currant, blackberry, black cherry, licorice, iron and leather flavors that reveal a black pepper accent.	96	\$339

# SPECTATOR SELECTIONS

## HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

The issue's most impressive wines. Includes top-scorers and wines that represent optimal purchases based on their combination of score, price and availability.



**97** Caparzo Brunello di Montalcino Vigna La Casa 2021 | **\$93** | ITALY | Dark fruit flavors of black cherry, blackberry and plum mark this fluid yet dense red, whose dusty tannins leave a solid grip on the menthol- and mineral-infused finish, which shows fine length. The lasting impression is ripe fruit, so give this time to knit together. Best from 2029 through 2048. 1,666 cases made, 416 cases imported.—B.S.



**95** Brancaia Toscana Ilatraia 2022 | **\$80** | ITALY | Although dark in color and backed by dense, almost chewy tannins, this red leans more toward elegance. Saturated with blackberry, plum, pomegranate and mineral flavors that persist through the long aftertaste, this offers refined tannins in the end and finds its equilibrium. Needs time. Petit Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2029 through 2047. 3,750 cases made, 540 cases imported.—B.S.



**94** Gary Farrell Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Sebastopol Hills Cuvée 2023 | **\$60** | CALIFORNIA | This vibrant red offers rose hip, iris and hibiscus notes that leap up from a core of cherry, pomegranate pâte de fruit and damson plum coulis flavors, with an enticing flash of anise on the finish. Punchy and graceful at the same time. Drink now through 2033. 418 cases made.—J.M.



**97** Lisini Brunello di Montalcino 2021 | **\$90** | ITALY | Expressive flavors of ripe cherry, raspberry, pomegranate and rose are offset by thick, dusty tannins and accents of wild herbs and menthol in this fresh, layered red, which stays vibrant throughout, with a long aftertaste of red fruit and savory notes. Shows excellent aging potential. Best from 2029 through 2048. 3,333 cases made, 500 cases imported.—B.S.



**95** Denner Dirt Worshipper Central Coast 2023 | **\$85** | CALIFORNIA | This unconventional red delivers a compelling contrast of elegant lilac and floral pink peppercorn, with deeper tones of meat and leather that give way to a dense and commanding core of black plum and blackberry. Yet for all its muscular foreshadowing, this ends on a graceful note, with refined, integrated tannins, while lingering on core flavors accented by hints of herbes de Provence and chicory. Syrah, Petit Verdot and Graciano. Drink now through 2040. 1,001 cases made.—A.R.



**93** A.A. Badenhorst Family Kalmoesfontein Swartland 2021 | **\$60** | SOUTH AFRICA | A zesty red, leading with a lovely overtone of Mediterranean scrub, crushed stone and cracked peppercorn notes, this tightly meshed red marries fine, sculpted tannins with layers of crushed raspberry, pomegranate puree, herbed black olive, mocha and smoked paprika that echo on the long, chalky finish. Shiraz, Cinsault, Tinta Barocca, Mourvèdre and Grenache Noir. Drink now through 2036. 100 cases imported.—A.N.



**96** Paul Hobbs Cabernet Franc Coombsville Nathan Coombs Estate 2023 | **\$195** | CALIFORNIA | This is a beauty, with a lovely flow to its warmed cassis, plum puree and black cherry reduction flavors, all covered with a pure blanket of violet and ink. The long finish shimmers with fruit, while a subtle tug of warm earth lingers. Best from 2027 through 2040. 290 cases made.—J.M.



**94** Tenuta Bibbiano Chianti Classico Castellina Vigne di Montornello Gran Selezione 2021 | **\$45** | ITALY | This broad red displays plum, black cherry, earth, iron, sanguine and tomato leaf flavors, with dense, burly tannins underlining everything as this plays out on the compact finish. The flavors indicate this is ready, but the tannins still need time. Best from 2029 through 2050. 1,100 cases made, 400 cases imported.—B.S.



**93** Schramsberg Brut Rosé North Coast 2022 | **\$50** | CALIFORNIA | A floral and seductive rosé, with a rich, creamy texture framed by strawberry, cherry and rose petal tones that build toward the festive finish. Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Drink now. 18,334 cases made.—T.F.

## COLLECTIBLES

Wines that will improve most from additional bottle age and that show the greatest potential to gain in value.



**98 Baricci Brunello di Montalcino Montosoli 2021 | \$110 | ITALY** | Dark fruit flavors of black cherry, black currant and blackberry are accented by notes of violet, mineral and wild herbs in this racy and complex red, with terrific energy from start to finish. While this is focused on the fruit, there's a lot going on. Best from 2029 through 2050. 1,375 cases made, 350 cases imported.—*B.S.*



**98 Casanova di Neri Brunello di Montalcino Tenuta Nuova 2021 | \$135 | ITALY** | Though tightly wound, this red reveals a buried core of strawberry, cherry, iron and wild herbs. A harmonious version, with a linear profile wrapped in firm acidity and tannins. Best from 2029 through 2049. 4,900 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—*B.S.*



**97 Altesino Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Montosoli 2021 | \$135 | ITALY** | Balsamic flavors of eucalyptus, tomato leaf and mint mingle with cherry, strawberry and rose in this taut, detailed red. On the elegant side, with mid-palate presence and vivid acidity. A layer of chalky tannins lines the finish. Best from 2029 through 2048. 1,000 cases made, 350 cases imported.—*B.S.*

## SMART BUYS

Wines that deliver fine character at affordable prices and that are broadly available.



**92 Anthonij Rupert Optima Coastal Region 2021 | \$35 | SOUTH AFRICA** | There's lovely purity to the beam of black cherry flavors in this fresh red, layered with a subtle range of black licorice, bay leaf, espresso crema, iron and smoke, showing fine balance and good length. Fine, taut tannins firm the well-spiced finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2036. 48,000 cases made, 1,500 cases imported.—*A.N.*



**91 Kanonkop Pinotage Stellenbosch Kadette 2023 | \$25 | SOUTH AFRICA** | There's a tarry underpinning to the creamy mix of pureed black raspberry, plum and mulberry fruit in this balanced red, layered with chewy tannins. Hints of rooibos tea, sweet paprika and roasted vanilla show on the lasting finish. Drink now through 2031. 40,000 cases made, 1,000 cases imported.—*A.N.*



**91 Lamadrid Cabernet Franc Agrelo Single Vineyard Reserva 2024 | \$20 | ARGENTINA** | Youthful, vibrant and well-structured, this red shows notes of graphite, fresh herbs and cocoa bean that integrate seamlessly into the tight beam of raspberry and plum flavors, culminating in structured, mineral-tinged tannins. Drink now through 2038. 20,000 cases made, 10,000 cases imported.—*A.R.*



**90 Boutinot Côtes du Rhône-Villages Les Coteaux 2023 | \$23 | FRANCE** | Strappy licorice and plum paste notes are ripe and round, with earthy dimensions of salt, tapenade, dried herbs and lavender. Robust in feel, with a graphite spine and rooibos tea tannins to keep hold through the substantial, smoky finish. Grenache and Syrah. Drink now through 2029. 8,500 cases made, 4,500 cases imported.—*K.B.*



**90 Scharffenberger Brut Mendocino County Excellence NV | \$24 | CALIFORNIA** | Crisp and a bit showy but appealing for its rich Asian pear, lemon, yeast roll and toasted spice flavors. Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Drink now. 20,000 cases made.—*T.F.*



**89 Tohu Sauvignon Blanc Awatere Valley 2025 | \$17 | NEW ZEALAND** | Basil, lemongrass and oregano notes are aromatic and generous, with a juicy core of Key lime, tangerine and lemon curd flavors. Shows plenty of intensity on the long, expressive finish. Drink now. 58,000 cases made, 15,000 cases imported.—*M.W.*