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14 Red Wines That Taste Better Chilled

Chilled red wine isn't just for summer anymore.

By [Ray Isle](#) | Published on September 9, 2026



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There are bizarre wine trends (putting frozen pickles in your [Sauvignon Blanc](#) springs to mind), and then there are brilliant wine trends, like chilling down red wines. Not that this idea is all that new. For years, red wine was typically served at cellar temperature, or somewhere around 55°F to 59°F. By today's standards, that's chilly already. But that tradition has largely fallen away, since most of us do not have cold, stony, northern European cellars (ideally under one's castle or château) in which to store our wines.

The trend started taking off a few years back. Femi Oyediran at [Graft Wine Shop & Wine Bar](#) in Charleston says, "We've had chilled reds on the list since we opened in 2018, and at the beginning, I felt like we were pioneers. Now it's ubiquitous – so many people sit down at the bar and say, 'I'll have a glass of the Chenin, and she'll have whatever chilled red you've got right now.'" [Chilled reds](#) are so popular that they now make up 18% of Graft's wine sales.

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Think *cool*, not *cold*, for your target temperature: Slightly lower than cellar temp, say 50°F or so, is ideal. About 30 to 45 minutes in the fridge should do it, depending on how cool the wine is to start. As for what red wines to chill, the best results come with lighter-bodied, lower-tannin varieties. Cold tends to accentuate tannins, making bigger wines like [Cabernets](#) or Barolos unpleasantly astringent.

But there's no hard-and-fast rule for what makes a red chillable or not, which is why Gabriella Borg Costanzi, wine and service director at Le Crocodile and [Bar Blondeau](#) in New York City, doesn't pour a chilled red specifically labeled as such. "A lot of places do, but I prefer having that conversation with the guest. When you ask me if I have a chilled red – and people do all the time – it's not that you want *cold* red wine. If I brought you an ice-cold red wine, you'd hate it! What you want is something fruit-forward, really juicy, and low-tannin that, when chilled down, is even more pluggable. And I'll say, we have a *ton* of wines like that that we can chill down for you."

So if you don't see a chilled red option on the wine list, ask the server. If there's not a section in the wine store, look for the bottles recommended here, or ask the staff what could work. And don't think a 50°F sip of red is solely a summertime move. This trend is a year-round one, and why not? I mean, who doesn't want to be cool?

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Europe

2024 Gulp Hablo Fresco (\$17 for a 1-liter bottle)

Spain's Castile-La Mancha region supplies the organically grown grapes (Grenache, Syrah, Verdejo, Airén, and Macabeo) for this direct, appealing, scarlet-hued wine. It's juicy, simple, and comes in a 1-liter bottle or, now, in cans. Need a quaff at the end of a long hike? Here you go. They don't call it "gulp" for nothing.

2024 Tenuta Sant'Antonio Nanfrè Valpolicella (\$15)

The hue of fading rose petals, this red from Amarone producer Tenuta Sant'Antonio evokes violets, cloves, and red currants. It's spicy and silky, and the unanimous response in our tasting room was, "Who wouldn't love this?" No one, I'd say.

2025 Azimut Penedès Vermell (\$17)

Vermell means “red” in Catalan, and in a wine context, it means a light-drinking red, which this weightless blend of Grenache, Sumoll, and Monastrell certainly is. Organic fruit, minimal-intervention winemaking, and lots of cherry-berry joy are what you get here.

2025 Christina Kuhlbar (\$20)

This transparent natural wine from Austrian winemaker Christina Netzl came about when she decided to mix some red and rosé Zweigelt together as an experiment. The result is a happy medium between the two, full of juicy, bright, strawberry-inflected flavor.

2024 Thibault Ducroux Beaujolais En Roue Libre (\$23)

Thibault Ducroux grew up in a winemaking family, and when he planned to sell off most of their wine to other Beaujolais producers, importer Jenny Lefcourt assured him she would buy it if he continued to bottle it. So he did, capturing sweet raspberry and dry herb aromas, similar flavors, and light leafy tannins.

2024 Valle dell’Acate Il Frappato (\$23)

Sicily’s Frappato variety is often blended with the more powerful Nero d’Avola, but on its own it reveals its subtle charms, as in this lovely wine from Valle dell’Acate. The nose is particularly distinctive, full of balsamic herbs and kirsch notes; very exotic, very alluring, very Sicilian.

2021 Familie Friedrich Becker Pinot Noir (\$25)

This German Pinot lives on the savory side of the variety, leafy and lightly bitter (but in a good way), with fruit that recalls red currant jelly. It’s more of a main course than an aperitif red; chill it down and serve it with a cold poached salmon for brunch.



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The Americas

2025 Colonia Las Liebres Bonarda Mendoza (\$13)

Historically, Bonarda was a workhorse grape for blending in Argentinean reds – it grows easily, produces a lot of fruit, and in a rough year can add pigment and flavor to, say, Malbec. But done well on its own, as here, it makes an energetic, juicy red with a lot of oomph, low tannins, and a gentle texture.

2024 Birichino Buraribi Old Vine Carignane & Grenache

(\$26)

Birichino, founded in 2008, was an early adopter of creating lighter-style, less-extracted reds from California grapes. Many of their wines taste great when lightly chilled down (their Scylla red blend is a perennial fave), but of the '24s I tasted, this Grenache/Carignane blend particularly stood out. Violets, red cherries, light-bodied, with a hint of earthiness on the end: It's lively and entirely refreshing.

2024 Vinos Finos de California Sabroso (\$29)

Winemaker, former sommelier, and occasional DJ Ted Glennon crafts this unusual blend of Grenache, Cabernet Pfeffer, and Zinfandel specifically to be served with a chill. It's lightly earthy, peppery, and full of lively strawberry fruit.

2024 Frog's Leap Flycatcher California Red Wine (\$30)

Zinfandel and six other varieties, sourced from five different California regions, somehow all go together seamlessly in this buoyant red from one of Napa Valley's most eco-conscious wineries. It recalls ripe boysenberries and blackberries, pricked by some peppery spice.

2023 Kings Carey To Market Grenache (\$32)

Winemaker James Sparks has a gift for making the kind of wines that seem to disappear from your glass almost before you know it, and this incredibly drinkable Grenache certainly falls into that category. The floral nose suggests peonies, and the sweet red fruit fades into a whisper of tannins and a lasting minty note.

2024 Donnachadh Estate Gamay (\$52)

Donnachadh has quickly made a name for itself in California's Sta. Rita Hills appellation for impressive single-vineyard Pinots and Chardonnays. They also make this lightly herbal, black cherry-ish Gamay (the grape of Beaujolais). Its silky flavors wrap up with suggestions of earthy pu-erh tea and dried citrus.

2024 Hirsch Vineyards The Bohan-Dillon Pinot Noir (\$52)

Hirsch Vineyards has long been known as one of California's top Pinot Noir terroirs, and for good reason. Its top single-parcel wines are complex and nuanced, and even this entry-level offering (named for the road that leads to the property) offers a lot of depth. Its lightly spicy, raspberry-currant flavors are supple and fresh, and fade into a lingering tea-leaf savoriness.