

Easy-on-the-Wallet Wines for the New Year

Written by Jacqueline Coleman, BT Contributor
January 2019

Red, white, and you: Agreeable wine for \$15 or less

A



hundred years ago, on January 16, 1919, the 18th Amendment, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, and transportation of “intoxicating liquors,” was ratified as part of the U.S. Constitution. Although the country didn’t go completely dry until a year later, on January 17, 1920, it was well on its way to banning all production and sales of alcohol -- until the ban was repealed with passage of the 21st Amendment in 1933.

The temperance movement, based upon the idea that alcohol was the root of all evil, led the drive for a nationwide ban, was actually accepted as a progressive movement at the time. Those who supported temperance wanted the complete removal of alcohol from public life as a way of strengthening family life. But what happened after 1920 was surely the opposite of what they had in mind.

Technically, the *consumption* of alcohol wasn’t illegal, and Americans all over the country found ways to enjoy their libations. This often involved organized crime, bootlegging, and illicit speakeasies, which were all on the rise during what came to be known as Prohibition while the

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country descended into the Roaring Twenties.

At Vino, we're happy that the year is 2019 and we don't have to start hoarding our wines. In fact, we can enjoy all the wine that we want -- or at least all the wine within our budget. We know that wallets can be bare after the holidays, when the allure of shopping fades into a sea of bills and payment plans, so we've created a list of extra-economical wines to get you started in the New Year. Here are a few bottles that aren't cost prohibitive at under \$10.

Usually, when we think of Argentina, we think of Malbec. But I'll tempt you with the **2015 Benjamin Nieto Senetiner Estate Pinot Noir**

, out of Mendoza. This wine is lighter than a Malbec and has strong cherry and plum flavors. Very fruit-forward, light and smooth, it's an easy-drinking Pinot Noir.

Ready for something a little heavier? Try the **2017 Jacob's Creek Classic Cabernet Sauvignon**

. This Australian Cab has a bit more weight to it, but I'd still classify it on the lighter side of Cabs. Bold dark fruits dominate the palate, and there are virtually no tannins. Another smooth drinker, and not bad at its price point.

If you can't quit rosé, look for the **2017 Mont Gravet Rosé** from the South of France. This "Provence-style" rosé is light in color and true to what you expect out of the region. Crisp strawberries and raspberries float through both the nose and palate, and this 100 percent Cinsault wine goes down with no trouble. It's refreshing now and throughout the year.

Travel a little further south to Italy, and you'll discover one of the oldest grapes: Primitivo. You may know that Primitivo is the same as the Zinfandel grape. The **2017 Caleo Primitivo Salento** from Puglia is a nice representation of the juicy black-skinned grape. Medium-bodied and bursting with ripe red fruit, this luscious wine goes well with a meatier pasta dish.

For a wine full of fruit flavors, check out the **2015 Bubo Pinot Grigio** from California. Wow! From pear to pineapple, lemon to green apple, there's a lot of juicy fruit floating through on the nose and in the mouth. This medium-bodied Pinot Grigio is not shy and has California characteristics all over it, complete with a bold zest and complementary acidity.

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Speaking of California, at under \$10, the **2016 Firebrand Chardonnay** is a nice pick for anyone who likes a little oak with their Chardonnay. Big apple and stone fruit aromas give way to a bouquet of spicy vanilla before coating the palate with the full-flavored creamy richness of an oaked Chardonnay. Citrus flavors linger throughout the finish for a nice poultry accompaniment.

I love Spanish Garnacha, and the **2014 San Gregorio Single Vineyards Las Martas Garnacha** did not disappoint. A beautiful aroma of freshly ripened red fruit, welcoming wet earth, and sweet vanilla greet you in the glass. This medium-bodied wine has noticeable tannins, significant alcohol at 15 percent, and a smooth dark fruit dance in the palate. One taste, and it's no mystery why James Suckling gave it 93 points.

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