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Fall Wine: 20 Under \$20

The Pour By ERIC ASIMOV

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A good value is not the same as cheap. You can find decent wines for \$5, \$10 or even \$15, but rarely will you find wines that snap you to attention, fill you with wonder or simply move you by their sheer deliciousness.

For those qualities, which some may regard as luxuries but I believe are necessities, you need to spend a little more, say \$15 to \$25. Today, this range is the bull's-eye for great values in wine.

Focusing on the less expensive end of this range, I've picked 20 excellent bottles, all under \$20. Each was chosen with an eye to the fall season. That doesn't mean they are all red. Even in the depths of winter, our cuisine is varied, and so are the wines that go with those foods. But I've picked fewer whites than I would have in a summer selection, and most of the wines tend to be a little heftier in texture and warmer in character.

This list comprises mostly Old World wines. Some will question this, as so many inexpensive wines are available from regions in the Southern Hemisphere, for example, and North America. Others may wonder why I've included only two American wines. Unless I intend to

focus only on one country, I put together each "20 Under \$20" list with no set idea how it should all break down. I look around at retail shops, and include the best wines I try. I don't keep track of origins and I have no quotas.

While I believe I have an open mind, I know this from experience and common sense: Countries that have been making wine for centuries have clear advantages in offering distinctive values. They have far more local traditions in winemaking, which means that the variety of grapes and styles of wine in France, Italy or Spain far surpass what are available from the United States.

In addition — for reasons of real estate, the cost of doing business and tradition — small estates, which tend to make more interesting inexpensive wines than corporate producers, have an easier time

aging. (Louis/Dressner Selections, New York)

Broadside Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignon 2013 \$15.99

Broadside is a perennial 20 Under \$20 favorite. This one is a departure, made by a slightly different winemaking team, and not all the grapes are sourced from the Margarita Vineyard. Yet it still possesses the hallmark character of a classically shaped California cabernet, with freshness, fruit, herbal accents and just enough tannins to give it a little grip. Bravo.

Domaine de la Grande Colline Vin de Table de France Le Canon 2013 \$19.99

If you are curious about "natural wine," here is an excellent example of a wine made with nothing added, nothing taken out. This pale red, a blend of



BROADSIDE

Paso Robles Cabernet Sauvignon 2013 \$15.99

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Any list of great wine values could conceivably begin and end with Muscadet. La Pèpière is among Muscadet's best producers, and Clos de Briords, a single-vineyard plot of old vines, is among the region's best cuvées. This is a concentrated, richly textured, resonant wine, with great minerality and flavors of herbs and citrus. It's great now but will reward

indifferent and overly am I and this one gets it just right sense of place. Give it some open it, and serve with steaks and meats. (Kermit Lynch Wine Merchants, Berkeley, Calif.)

Shinn Estate North Fork Island Mojo Cabernet 2013 \$17.99



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