

WINE ENTHUSIAST

DECEMBER 2023

OLDER
WINES, RICHER
FOODS AND
HOW TO PAIR
THEM.

TOP
100
CELLAR
SELECTIONS
2023

\$7.99 US & CANADA

\$7.99 US / CAN

12>



WINE ENTHUSIAST BUYING GUIDE

DECEMBER 2023

THIS MONTH

- 131 CHAMPAGNE
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The Chapelle de Chevennes in the middle of Beaujolais vineyards

FOR ADDITIONAL RATINGS AND REVIEWS, VISIT WINEENTHUSIAST.COM/RATINGS

CELLAR SELECTIONS

Accessible, ageworthy wines inspire us to explore.

Anna-Christina Cabrales is Wine Enthusiast's tasting director and reviews the wines of Burgundy and the Rhône Valley.

Within the wine world, there exists a category known as collectible wines. These bottles typically hail from esteemed producers who craft limited quantities of these masterpieces. Among these storied treasures, you'll find Bordeaux First Growths, Super Tuscans, pedigreed Burgundy and cult Napa wines. Once relatively accessible, these bottlings have long been cherished companions on my wine journey. Now they are growing increasingly elusive and are often stratospherically priced, placing them out of reach for many enthusiasts.

The pandemic played a role in this development. During the past three years, prices surged due to economic flux, along with rising production and transportation costs. However, winemakers were gifted with time to refine their craft. Vineyards benefited from meticulous hands-on attention worthy of the most exacting neurosurgeon. Globally, wine quality soared, continuing a trend that has built momentum over the past two decades.

That included quality at every price point. Since we understand that price isn't always the arbiter of quality, and since our reviewers evaluate wines without knowing their brands or prices, we've methodically turned up some bang-for-your-buck discoveries in the past year alone.

Enter the Cellar Selections. These are the wines that make us raise our eyebrows and say, "You've got potential." They possess a balanced structure and complexity that are



Anna-Christina Cabrales

These wines...make us raise our eyebrows and say, "You've got potential."

crafted for the long haul. Some of their qualities might not be immediately evident and will require time in the cellar.

Our discerning reviewers commonly describe sensing a reservoir of untapped energy—one that no amount of quick decanting can release. Think of it as akin to antique shopping. Your intuition tells you that you have found something special, but it's covered in dust. Yet after several rounds of detailed cleaning and polishing, a treasure is revealed. In the same vein, a wine can present with youthful and perhaps overwhelming tannins or acidity that blanket a tantalizing core of aromas and flavors. Greatness awaits, but only time can unveil its full splendor.

When you come across the Cellar Selection designation in our Buying Guides, particularly in this issue, it sparks your curiosity, regardless of price points. Yes, cellarable wines can be found at \$40 a bottle, even \$30. Often you'll find an under-the-radar Cellar Selection standing shoulder to shoulder with a more familiar and more expensive brand, a testament to the diversity and quality that the wine world offers.

We hope that our Cellar Selections help answer the question, "What do I pay attention to next?" We're here to inspire you to explore new wine frontiers and embrace different styles, no matter the price. Cheers to new and endless wine adventures!

—Anna-Christina Cabrales

The Wine Enthusiast Buying Guide

The Buying Guide includes ratings and reviews of new-release and selected older beverage alcohol products evaluated by Wine Enthusiast magazine's editors and other qualified tasters.

STAFF EDITORS

Anna-Christina Cabrales: Burgundy, Rhône Valley
Jim Gordon: Napa, Sonoma
Craig Chamberlain: Virginia
Stacy Briscoe: Northern California & California AVA
Jacy Topps: Languedoc-Roussillon, Provence, Vin de France

WRITERS AT LARGE

Michael Albert: Oregon, Washington, Canada
Danielle Callegari: Tuscany & Southern Italy
Mike DeSimone: Spain, Croatia, Israel, Turkey, Lebanon, Armenia, Hungary
John Holl: Beer, Hard Seltzer
Matt Kettmann: Central & South Coast California
Kara Newman: Spirits, RTD
Christina Pickard: Australia, New Zealand, England, New York
Jeff Porter: Piedmont & Northern Italy
Emily Saladino: Greece, Georgia
Reggie Solomon: Beaujolais, Loire Valley
Jesica Vargas: South America & South Africa
Roger Voss: Portugal, France: Bordeaux, Champagne, Southwest & Other France
Aleks Zecevic: Alsace, Austria, Germany

TASTING METHODOLOGY AND GOALS

All tastings reported in the Buying Guide are performed blind. Typically, products are tasted in peer-group flights of from 5–8 samples. Reviewers may know general information about a flight to provide context—vintage, variety or appellation—but never the producer or retail price of any given selection.

ABOUT THE SCORES

Ratings reflect what our editors felt about a particular product. Beyond the rating, we encourage you to read the accompanying tasting note to learn about a product's special characteristics.

Classic 90–100: The pinnacle of quality.
Superb 94–97: A great achievement.
Excellent 90–93: Highly recommended.
Very Good 87–89: Often good value; well recommended.
Good 83–86: Suitable for everyday consumption; often good value.
Acceptable 80–82: Can be employed in casual, less-critical circumstances.

Products deemed Unacceptable (receiving a rating below 80 points) are not reviewed.

SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

Editors' Choice products are those that offer excellent quality at a price above our Best Buy range, or a product at any price with unique qualities that merit special attention.

Cellar Selections are products deemed highly collectible and/or requiring time in a temperature-controlled wine cellar to reach their maximum potential. A Cellar Selection designation does not mean that a product must be stored to be enjoyed, but that cellaring will probably result in a more enjoyable bottle. In general, an optimum time for cellaring will be indicated.

Hidden Gems are products which are not your typical regional finds, but should not be missed. These fun, esoteric wines are priced above \$20 and score above 87 points.

Best Buys are products that offer a high level of quality in relation to price. Wines meriting this award are generally priced at \$20 or less, and are designated Best Buys after surpassing a specific quality-to-price ratio benchmark.

SUBMITTING PRODUCTS FOR REVIEW

Products should be submitted as detailed in our FAQ, available online via WineEnthusiast.com/submit-for-rating. Inquiries should be addressed to tastings@wineenthusiast.net. **There is no charge for submitting products.**

LABELS

Labels are paid promotions. Producers and importers are given the opportunity to submit labels only after the reviews have been finalized and assigned to a specific issue. Labels are reproduced and printed along with tasting notes and scores. For information on label purchases, contact Denise Valenzia at 813.571.1122; or email dvalenzia@wineenthusiast.net.

Find all reviews on our fully searchable database at wineenthusiast.com/ratings

AS SEEN IN DECEMBER 2023 BUYING GUIDE

WINE ENTHUSIAST®

94 Points

BOROLI

LANGHE

DI NOMINAZIONE DI ORIGINE CONTROLLATA

NEBBIOLO

1661
2021

IN BOTTIGLIA ALL'ORIGINE DA - ESTATE BOTTLED BY

ACHILLE BOROLI

CASTIGLIONE FALLETTO - ITALIA

Boroli 2021 1661 Nebbiolo (Langhe). This evocative wine opens with aromas of fresh cherries, rosebud, thyme and mixed spices. Polished and almost pristine on the palate, the purity of red berried fruit is sublime. Fine tannins give grip but never detract from the openness of fruit, herbs, earth and minerality. Drink now–2035. Winebow Imports. *Editors' Choice.* —J.P.

abv: 14%

Price: \$30