



December 2018

Grand Cru

2012 Chateau Nenin Pomerol – 64.98

2015 Argiano Solengo Toscana IGT – 69.98

Sparkle

Le Brun Servenay Extra Brut Champagne Odalie – 44.98

Taittinger Brut Champagne La Francaise – 39.98

Ultimate Reds

2016 Turley Wine Cellars Juvenile Zinfandel – 27.98

2015 Tenuta di Arceno Il Fauno di Arcanum Toscana IGT – 29.98

Vintage Values

2015 Tenuta di Arceno Il Fauno di Arcanum Toscana IGT – 29.98

2017 Frenzy Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough – 12.98



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2012 Chateau Nenin Pomerol
Bordeaux, France

On the eve of the 1997 harvest, Jean-Hubert Delon purchased Château Nénin, which had belonged to his cousins, the Despujol family, since 1847. A major restructuring was immediately undertaken. The pruning and trellising methods were reviewed, the land was drained, the vines were replanted or uprooted, and the equipment modernized. The aging and storage cellars were extended and completely re-fitted, and air conditioning was added. A new vat room, furnished with state-of-the-art equipment, was built thereby completing the total transformation of the property.

Château Nénin's vineyards grow on a single block of land with the exception of one plot. In Pomerol, where it is rare for an estate to exceed 10 hectares, Château Nénin's vineyard is considered very large, with 32 hectares of vines in production. As a consequence, its terroir includes the many, diverse soils that characterize Pomerol. It is mainly made up of Oligocene deposits covered by Dordogne alluvial gravelly formations; siliceous clay and gravel, quartz, granite, iron-deposits and basalt pebbles. Château Nénin's vineyards grow on the great clay-gravel terroirs of the Pomerol Plateau.

Château Nénin is the epitome of a great Pomerol "vin de garde" (wine for laying down). It combines power and elegance, complexity and balance, purity and refinement. The gradual increase of Cabernet Franc within the vineyards gives the wine tautness, distinction and freshness. To really appreciate the Grand Vin's aging ability, you may need to be patient. Like all great Pomerol vins de garde, Château Nénin blossoms over time.

(91-93) Points – “Composed of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Franc, the deep ruby/plum/purple-colored 2012 Nenin exhibits notes of spring flowers, blueberries, black raspberries and kirsch, a full-bodied, beautifully textured mouthfeel, terrific purity and a long finish. It should drink well for 15+ years. These may turn out to be the finest Pomerols Jean-Hubert Delon and his team have made to date as the 2012s are better than either the 2009s or 2010s.” – Robert Parker, Jr. for Wine Advocate

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2015 Argiano Solengo Toscana IGT
Tuscany, Italy

Argiano is one of the oldest winemaking estates in Montalcino with a rich 500-year history dating back to the Renaissance. The estate served as a bastion of winemaking through the centuries and in modern times Argiano produced one of the first Brunello di Montalcinos.

The history of the Argiano lands extends to Roman times but it was at the end of the 14th century, when the region around Argiano was taken over by the Republic of Siena, that the foundation of Argiano winemaking was laid. The cornerstone came in 1851, when the noble Pecci family of Siena began to build the Villa di Argiano in the village of Sant'Angelo in Colle. The Villa included a large cellar for wine barrels and allowed the noble family to begin a winemaking vocation there.

Through the centuries, the graceful Villa on a Montalcino hilltop has been home to noble families and popes as Argiano built its winemaking legacy. Today, the Villa remains the center of the Argiano estate and stands as a testament to the architectural and cultural roots that continue on as an inspiration for Argiano. Both the elegant Villa and the historic cellar are currently undergoing a careful restoration.

In 1967, Argiano was one of the two founders of the Consorzio di Brunello di Montalcino, and the winery has continued its leadership in Italian wine, working with Giacomo Tachis, a man credited with changing the course of wine in Italy as the founding father of the Super Tuscan movement. Tachis helped craft Argiano's Solengo, the first Super Tuscan to originate from Montalcino.

'Solengo', which is Tuscan for "lone wild boar", is the product of the combination between Tuscan soil and French grape-varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Merlot and Syrah. It is a modern, well-balanced and full-bodied wine. It is deep, dark purple in color with a bouquet of ripe fruit, such as blackcurrants and blackberries, with a hint of toasted oak. It is smooth on the palate, with a great concentration of excellent fruit, nicely balanced with delicate, soft tannins. The structure and complexity in the mouth are outstanding, tempered by excellent tannic extracts. This high-profile blend has evident Mediterranean characteristics and a sunny nature. Its grace and delicacy mean that it can be drunk while young, yet it also has a remarkable aging capacity.

95 Points - Argiano has been doing terrific work lately with this historic blend of Cabernet Sauvignon with Petit Verdot, Syrah and Merlot. The 2015 Solengo is especially exuberant, concentrated and dark in this warm and sunny vintage. The previous vintage (2014) is perhaps more veiled and subtle, whereas this wine plays its cards in an immediate and upfront manner. It shows confidence and determination. This is a softly enriched red wine with black fruit, dried blackberry aromas, exotic spice, savory smoke and cured tobacco.
– Monica Larner for Wine Advocate

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2015 Tenuta di Arceno Il Fauno di Arcanum Toscana IGT
Tuscany, Italy

The Tenuta di Arceno estate was established in 1994 by Kendall Jackson. Although the estate is a sprawling 2,500 acres, only 223 are planted to vine and Cabernet Franc has proven to be the variety best suited to the estate's diverse soils and topography. Franc is the true signature of the estate, as it thrives in both warm and cool vintages.

The estate is found within the commune of Castelnuovo Berardenga, located in the province of Siena, Tuscany. It lies in the southeast corner of the Chianti Classico region and is bordered by the ancient, walled town of San Gusmé.

A Bordeaux-style blend, il fauno di Arcanum embodies the diversity of the estate, and is sourced primarily from the Di Sotto, La Curva, Colombaio and San Giovanni blocks. Located in the lower southwest section of the estate, in a warmer, exposed subsection that ripens early, the soils possess a significant amount of clay, with good water retention, and produce wines that tend to be more voluptuous and lush.

Traditionally, cooler climate years in Tuscany create elegant and ethereal high tones of fruit. The nose explodes with bright raspberries and wild berries, with some floral tones of lavender. Though a Bordeaux-style blend, the palate is more Burgundian with soft elegant tannins and textures. The slightly higher than usual acids firmly frame a potpourri of blueberry and sour cherry. The fruit slowly subsides giving way to exotic spice, reminiscent of cardamom and finishing with sweet black licorice.

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2016 Turley Wine Cellars Zinfandel Juvenile
California

After founding the Frog's Leap winery with business partner John Williams in 1981, then ER physician Larry Turley had taken a shining to the wines made from Zinfandel & Petite Syrah, growing particularly fond of those made from old vine vineyards. Eventually, he sold his half of Frog's Leap to John and started Turley Wine Cellars in 1993.

Primarily focused on single vineyard designate Zinfandel and Petite Syrah and working with old vine vineyards, Larry aimed to both create and preserve California's unique winemaking culture. Today, all of Turley's vineyards are either Certified Organic by California Certified Organic Farmers or in the process of certification, and they use all natural yeasts during fermentation. Tegan Passalacqua was hired as Head Winemaker and Vineyard Manager in 2013 and now manages over two dozen vineyards throughout California.

Because Larry has never met an old vine vineyard he didn't like, Turley now makes 28 separate wines from 35 different vineyards, some with vines that date back to the late 1800's. Often weak and decaying, these old vine vineyards require extra care and attention in order to restore them to their former glory. After twenty-five years in the emergency room, Larry can now focus his resuscitative skills on the various old vineyards that comprise the wines he loves.

The Turley Juveniles is sourced from vineyard fruit from a selection of young vines planted among old vine Zinfandel in a few of their best vineyards across California including: Hayne, Pesenti, Salvador, Vineyard 101, Fredricks and Kirschenmann. Vines range in age from about 6-25 years.

90 Points – "This is loaded with pepper and smoky sweet anise flavors. The raspberry flavors take on tannins toward the finish." – Wine Spectator

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2017 Frenzy Sauvignon Blanc
Marlborough, New Zealand

New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc is the white wine grape variety that put Marlborough on the international wine map. The Marlborough wine region, at the northern tip of the South Island, has the reputation as one of the great Sauvignon Blanc regions of the world. Originating from western France, Sauvignon Blanc is now New Zealand's most planted variety and is successfully grown throughout all its wine regions.

The Sauvignon Blanc's produced in the North Island tend to be softer and less herbaceous than those grown in the South Island. Most of Marlborough's Sauvignon Blanc's display the pungent, grassy green flavors that the international wine community associate with the New Zealand style.

New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc's are normally produced un-oaked and comes with a variety of flavors and aromas from blackcurrant leaf, capsicum and asparagus to green apples, gooseberries, nectarine and passion fruit.

Sauvignon is a relatively robust, vigorous vine adapting readily to all kinds of growing environments. Its early ripening period allows it to grow in relatively cool climates while its naturally high acidity allows it to retain a level of freshness even in warmer regions. However, a cooler terroir with persistent bright sunshine and a dry harvest period achieves the true, forward zing that best characterizes Sauvignon Blanc wine.

The Frenzy is made in Blenheim, the wine capital of New Zealand. Frenzy Sauvignon Blanc is produced by Paua Bay wines and is a carefully made blend of the best wines from selected vineyards. Capturing the spirit of New Zealand, Frenzy is crisp, refreshing, vibrant, aromatic and energetic with hints of peach, grapefruit, lime, melon and fresh cut grass. New Zealand produces what many wine critics consider the world's best Sauvignon Blanc, so drink up the Frenzy.

90 Points – "Succulent mango, melon and tangerine flavors are fleshy and lush, with dried floral hints and a touch of matcha green tea on the finish. Drink now." – Wine Spectator

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Le Brun Servenay Extra Brut Champagne Odalie
Champagne, France

Le Brun Servenay is a small, family-run domaine located in Avize, but with vineyards throughout the Cote des Blancs, namely Cramant and Oger, as well as in and around Mancy. At their best, the wines offer an attractive combination of breadth and volume, but with the telltale minerality of the Cote des Blancs.

The bedrock of northern Champagne is chalk, a form of limestone. It is at its most ungrateful, with the least clay topsoil, in the Côte des Blancs. With little to no clay, this is where champagne tastes the most consistently chalky, cutting, racy, and suspenseful. To a certain kind of wine lover, Champagne is not champagne, the Côte des Blancs is champagne.

There is a new wave of ultra-talented growers in Champagne today. They favor riper harvests, wood, and oxidative techniques. Their wines can be stunning, but they are different. In some respects, the new winemaking is more minimal, but in others it adds elements that soften chalk's ungrateful edge. A certain kind of wine lover sometimes feels nostalgic.

This is why Patrick Le Brun's champagnes are precious. His holdings are superb, especially his extremely old vines in Avize and Cramant, two of the most assertively chalky terroirs in the Côte des Blancs. That is all that matters to him. He is a thoughtful man; he is aware of the current fashion. But he has chosen, as if were his duty, to be the guardian of a classic, non-malo, non-wooded, non-oxidative, Côte des Blancs esthetic. At this, he is one of the best.

This is a blend of all three varieties: 50% Grand Cru Chardonnay (Avize, Oger, Cramant) from four different vintages with 25% Pinot Noir and 25% Pinot Meunier from Mancy and Grauves, each from the same vintage. The name of this wine was changed late spring 2017 in time for the domaine's new labels. This is the cuvée formerly known as Réserve Brut and Extra Brut. The bouquet is nuanced by floral and tropical notes with a hint of fresh dough. This is charming and satisfying bubbly that should be enjoyed with the best caviar and raw bar you can get your hands, or lobster cracker, around!

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Taittinger Brut Champagne La Francaise
Champagne, France

Champagne Taittinger is one of the few remaining family owned and operated Champagne houses. The firm was started by Pierre Taittinger and is distinguished for its extensive vineyard holdings of 752 acres, including prestigious Grand Cru vineyards in the Côte des Blancs and Montagne de Reims regions. Unlike most large houses, Champagne Taittinger relies primarily on estate grapes for its portfolio of Champagnes. Also unique are the higher proportion of Chardonnay in its wines that gives Taittinger its signature style, and the time devoted to aging the wines before release—most often greatly exceeding the legal requirement, in a practice that also has become a Taittinger hallmark. Taittinger Champagnes are unique in their higher proportion of Chardonnay and the time devoted to aging the wines before release—most often greatly exceeding the legal requirement.

Pierre Taittinger's philosophy proved him to be a visionary well ahead of his time. An accomplished and respected gastronome, he was among those who, during the interwar years, foresaw changing public preferences in cuisine away from the complex and often heavy traditional preparations that had long dominated the classic culinary arts. The evolution he set in motion centered on two concepts: lightness and naturalness.

Economic conditions acted as a catalyst to this change. Vast areas of the champenois vineyards destroyed during the war had to be replanted. Former primary export markets had been temporarily interrupted. Pierre Taittinger saw the opportunity to reshape the tastes of the traditional Champagne clientele who had subscribed to the old, Belle-Epoque-style Champagnes. He wagered the market would turn away from heavily dosed, sweet Champagnes in favor of natural, elegant wines expressive of their origin, just as it would reject the affront of dense, cloying sauces for pristine foods.

Pierre's son, François Taittinger, set the standard for lightness and delicacy that was to become the hallmark of the Taittinger style. He was responsible for building and shaping the vineyard, allowing Taittinger to be self-supplying and to distinguish itself with the Chardonnay grape. Indeed, Taittinger has 37% Chardonnay planted in its vineyards, compared to an average in Champagne of only 27%. He ultimately attained the epitome of delicacy and elegance he desired in his cuvées through the proportionately higher use of Chardonnay, the most costly of the champenois grapes.

Taittinger Brut La Française is a blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier wines from at least 35 villages. The high proportion of Chardonnay (40%) is unique among fine nonvintage Champagnes. This wine has a subtle, pale gold color with fine, persistent bubbles. It is delicate, with aromas of peach, white flowers, vanilla pod, and brioche on the nose and flavors of fresh fruit and honey on the palate.

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