



February 2019

Grand Cru

2015 Justin Vineyards Red Wine Isosceles – 69.98

2015 Rodney Strong Rowen Red Blend, Sonoma County – 54.98

Sparkle

Bollinger Brut Champagne Special Cuvee – 62.98

Pierre Sparr Cremant d'Alsace Brut Rose – 15.98

Ultimate Reds

2013 Tonti Family Wines Zinfandel Old Vine Artisan Reserve – 49.98

2015 Arnaldo Caprai Montefalco Rosso – 18.98

Vintage Values

2015 Querciabella Mongrana Maremma Toscana – 19.98

2016 Castello di Volpaia Citto Rosso Toscana IGT – 13.98



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2015 Justin Vineyards Red Wine Isosceles
Paso Robles, California

In 1981, Justin Baldwin purchased 160 acres in Paso Robles, with the aim of crafting wines that belong in the company of the finest in the world. Rich in limestone, the soil of Paso Robles produces grapes with intense flavor and great structure, making it a perfect location for Justin Vineyards & Winery. Baldwin has long since moved on, but the legacy remains and the wine is consistently among Paso Robles' best.

Paso Robles' distinctive microclimate offers the widest day-night temperature swings of any grape-growing region in California. The hot days allow the grapes to develop intense flavor, while the cool nights create great structure and balance. Rich in fossilized limestone from eons of marine deposits, the soil is ideally suited to creating big, Bordeaux-style reds. The limestone "stresses" the vines, producing grapes that fully express their varietal character.

76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Cabernet Franc, 11% Merlot. Dark ruby purple core with a black hue, lighter at the rim and more ruby in color. Moderate plus viscosity with moderate tearing and light staining on the glass. Very aromatic, complex and layered with vibrant red cherry, ripe black cherry and black currant fruit, vanilla and cinnamon spice, with camphor and licorice, savory cigar box notes and an attractive, youthful toasted oak underpinning. Dry and full bodied, layered with red and black cherry, cassis and complex baking spice on the entry. Sweet tobacco and classic savory pencil-like notes of cedar and graphite with a little cocoa emerge on the crisp mid-palate with firm chewy tannins lasting into a long, complex finish that shows a parade of fruit and spice balanced with constantly evolving textures and savory notes.

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2015 Rodney Strong Rowen Red Blend, Sonoma County
Sonoma County, California

Rodney Strong was one of the pioneers of Sonoma County's modern wine industry, an acknowledged visionary who understood the potential that Sonoma County's soil and climate held for producing world-class wines. A successful dancer before retiring and turning to his second love, winemaking, Rodney Strong established Sonoma County's 13th bonded winery in 1959.

In 1959, Rod officially retired from dance, married his dancing partner Charlotte Ann Winson, and made plans to begin a new career in winemaking. When asked why, Rod explained, "I knew I couldn't be an old dancer, but I could be an old winemaker."

The couple moved to Northern California, where they purchased a century-old boarding house and began making their first wines. In the beginning, Rod purchased bulk wine and blended and bottled it to his taste in the cellar of the house, while Charlotte operated the tasting room on the ground floor.

Flash forward to current day after four decades of up and down growth, retirement, numerous accolades including 2014 Wine Enthusiast winery of the year, the winery continues to produce quality wine with the help of modern equipment and updated facilities.

Rowen Wines is Rodney Strong's additional label that focuses on small lot production from high elevation mountain vineyards that explores the generous nuances of Sonoma terroir.

56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Malbec, 17% Syrah, 2% Viognier. Lush and elegant wine consisting of wonderful high elevation, mountain fruit. Aromas of black raspberries, cocoa and black pepper with notes of blackberries, cassis, nutmeg and vanilla on the palate. Exotic floral element on the finish as well as a rounder mouthfeel.

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Bollinger Brut Champagne Special Cuvee
Champagne, France

I drink it when I'm happy and when I'm sad. Sometimes I drink it when I'm alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I'm not hungry and drink it when I am. Otherwise, I never touch it— unless I'm thirsty. – Lily Bollinger

Bollinger is an icon in Champagne, all the more remarkable because its reputation rests entirely on the quality of its extraordinarily distinct Champagnes. Very simply, Bollinger is the outlier. The rigorous, obsessive attention to detail and preservation of artisanal, almost absurdly labor-intensive practices, makes Bollinger both a guardian of the past and, as we see with each passing year, the beacon of the future.

Each and every detail at Bollinger represents a quest for a certain form of perfection. Known around the world for powerful, polished Champagnes that are among the greatest of both Non-Vintage and Vintage Champagnes produced, any of the fundamentals to their approach and production would be special, but when taken altogether are utterly unique.

First, the Bollinger vineyards cover 405 acres, most of which are classified as Grand or Premier cru, and provide roughly two-thirds of the house's needs. Decades ago, Bollinger wrote a quality charter that stated their own vineyard must account for at a minimum 60% of their production. This reflects their approach to always focus on quality, and not quantity.

Secondly, no producer is as associated with a single grape in Champagne as Bollinger with Pinot Noir. The most demanding grape variety to grow in the region, it forms the backbone of Bollinger's luscious style, making up around 60% of plantings and always 60% or more of each Champagne.

Thirdly, Bollinger is the only remaining producer in the region with its own cooperage, and keeps a stock of 3,000 oak barrels for fermenting the base wines for its Non Vintage and Vintage wines. Their single cooper, an important link to historical knowledge, does not make any new barrels, rather spends his time fixing barrels, many of which are over 60 years of age. All Vintage wines are 100% barrel fermented, both alcoholic and malolactic fermentation, something no other major producer does.

Fourthly, Bollinger stores its reserve wines to blend into their Non Vintage cuvées in magnum bottles, an incredibly labor-intensive process that no one today undertakes. It requires opening by hand all the magnums to blend into the Non Vintage wines, crazy work that takes a team of 7 a full month to complete every year.

Lastly, all Vintage wines are aged under cork, and not under a crown capsule (like a soda capsule). This requires that every Bollinger vintage bottle is hand-riddled, and then hand disgorged. Again, an unthinkable amount of work.

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Very lastly, it would be impossible not to note that Bollinger is also known for its long-time on-screen relationship with British secret agent James Bond. They have been featured as Bond's Champagne of choice in almost every Bond movie going back to 1973. Most importantly though, VWM's own secret agent Fong, Harrison Fong regards Bollinger as one of his perennial favorite champagnes.

The harmony of Pinot Noir's richness and elegance plays a large part in Special Cuvée's distinct profile, the ripe red berries and powerful impact a clear signature. Then there is the other association that Bollinger is so well known for: winemaking in barrel. As virtually every Champagne producer in the latter half of the 20th century moved to fermenting in large lots in stainless steel tanks, Bollinger persisted to oversee fermentation barrel by barrel for all vintage Champagnes and a remarkable 30% of Special Cuvée. Why? Because the development of flavors becomes so much more complex, and the texture rounder and silkier. A third Bollinger specialty is the aging of Champagnes. Most Champagnes on the market are primarily made up of the most recently harvested vintage before requirements to age in bottle. Bollinger is primarily made up of Champagnes that are not from the most recent vintage, and in the end a newly released bottle of Bollinger is around 7-8 years old. A fourth – and utterly distinct – practice at Bollinger is the use of Reserve Magnums. The best vineyards will be aged under cork in magnum for up to 15 years, and hand disgorged into the final blend to bring the aromas and flavors only a great aged Champagne can display, notes such as truffles, ginger and walnut.

Lovely aromas and flavors of ripe black cherry and currant fruit, graphite, toast and candied Meyer lemon zest are set in this racy Champagne, with a refined, finely detailed mousse. The mouthwatering finish is long and spicy.

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Pierre Sparr Cremant d'Alsace Brut Rose
Alsace, France

The Alsace region of France is known throughout the world for its lovely, dry white wines. Vineyards were first planted in this narrow valley during the height of the Roman Empire. In the heart of Alsace's finest district, the Haut-Rhin, Maison Pierre Sparr Successeurs follows a tradition of winemaking that began during the reign of King Louis XIV. Since the winery's founding in 1680, the Sparr family passed along its passion for Alsatian vineyards and winemaking from one generation to the next. Today that drive for perfection continues in the winery's attention to each vine-growing and winemaking detail, and its uncompromising quest for excellence in every bottle bearing the Pierre Sparr name.

Jean Sparr, who founded the Sparr winery in 1680, was born in the Alsace village of Sigolsheim. Over the next 300 years, nine successive generations of the Sparr family worked the land, maintaining and expanding their estate. When Pierre Sparr took over the winery in the early 1900s at the age of 20, his innate business sense made him one of the pioneers in estate bottling in Alsace. His motto was "invest, progress and maintain" — a motto that continues to describe the domaine that is named in his honor, "Maison Pierre Sparr Successeurs."

Pierre Sparr lived through World War II in Alsace and witnessed the destruction of his village of Sigolsheim and its surrounding vineyards. With undaunted determination, he rebuilt the family's domaine, which had always been one of the region's most beautiful. His sons, René and Charles, enlarged and replanted the estate's vineyards and expanded trade with European markets and abroad. Today Maison Pierre Sparr owns 15 hectares (37 acres) of vineyards in the heart of Alsace; and it sources fruit from another 150 hectares (370 acres) of vineyards owned by growers who share their philosophy and with whom they have long-term contracts.

100% Pinot Noir. Salmon pink color; fresh aromas of soft red berries, predominantly strawberry and raspberry. On the palate, round and fruity with hints of peach; the flavors are intense, with lively acidity framed by a well-made structure and delicate bubbles. The finish is smooth, clean and dry.

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2013 Tonti Family Wines Zinfandel Old Vine Artisan Reserve
Russian River Valley, California

Born out of love of fine wines and delicious food, Tonti Family Wines offers fine vintage Zinfandels. After traveling the world and sampling different wines, Peter Tonti decided to craft amazing Zinfandel for California wine lovers.

Through numerous vineyard partnerships, Tonti has gained access to an extraordinary patches of land and vineyards. The vineyard where their grapes are grown rest on the Eastern edge of the beautiful Russian River Valley Appellation, on gently rolling bench land above the valley floor.

The Russian River Appellation location not only provides the ideal soil composed of stoney ancient volcanic ash, but also an excellent overall climate for wine grapes. Warm days and cool nights, and light breezes from the Pacific, all have positive affects on the growing season. The day heating and night time cooling cycle plays an important part of why Northern California is a world class wine producing region.

Planted to Zinfandel in the early 1900's, the Vineyard consists primarily of Old Vine Zinfandel, as well as small separate blocks of Cabernet Sauvignon. The vineyards enjoy views North into the Russian River Valley. To the Northeast, stands the majestic Mount St. Helena. To the West, lie rolling vineyards to the foothills that are the home of the great Redwoods, with the Pacific Ocean beyond. On cloud free days, the top of Mount Tamalpais near the San Francisco Bay can be seen reaching skyward in the distant Marin County to the South.

Violet color. Aromas of flavors of chocolate, berry pie, peppery spice, medium long raspberry preserves, cedar finish with chewy, tannins and moderate oak. Organically Farmed Only 112 cases made

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2015 Arnaldo Caprai Montefalco Rosso
Umbria, Italy

The family operation began in 1971 when textiles entrepreneur Arnaldo Caprai purchased 12.5 acres in Montefalco. In 1988, ownership passed on to Arnaldo's son, Marco, who began the project to cultivate the promotion of the grape that has been growing in the Montefalco region for more than 400 years: Sagrantino. Today, the winery is the leading producer of top quality Sagrantino di Montefalco, a wine produced exclusively from this native variety. In addition to its commitment to quality, Arnaldo Caprai is recognized for its dedication to environmental, economic and social sustainability, as well as being champions for the wines of Umbria.

Umbria's two DOCGs are for red wines. The native grape Sagrantino has gained prominence in the Montefalco area, creating wines of great depth and power, so it was no surprise when Montefalco Sagrantino received DOCG classification in 1992. The second of the region's DOCG wines is Torgiano Rosso Riserva.

Sagrantino is a deeply colored grape variety that produces one of central Italy's most tannic red wines. Though Sagrantino's origins are disputed, the region of Umbria – and in particular the area around the town of Montefalco – has been the variety's home for centuries.

The grape's nature is most famously displayed in the Sagrantino di Montefalco region, where wines must be produced from at least 95 percent Sagrantino. The clay soils of Montefalco are dusted with sand and limestone pockets, which Sagrantino responds well to. Blends are permitted in the greater Montefalco DOC region.

Montefalco Rosso embodies a great bond between the wine and the area of Montefalco. It is produced from Sangiovese, Sagrantino and Merlot, which epitomizes the character and identity championed by the Arnaldo Caprai winery.

70% Sangiovese, 15% Sagrantino, 15% Merlot. Sensationally intense, with notes of wild flowers, violet and red berry jam. Full bodied, rich, dry with a long finish and delicate hint of spice.

Ripe plums, dried lavender, basil, tar, licorice and hot stones show here on the nose. Medium to full body, fresh acidity, round yet tight tannins and a fruity finish.

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2015 Querciabella Mongrana Maremma Toscana
Tuscany, Italy

Founded in 1974, Querciabella enjoys the acclaim of the world's most discriminating critics and consumers for wines such as Camartina, Batàr, Palafreno and Querciabella Chianti Classico. In its uncompromising pursuit of quality, sustainability and authenticity, Querciabella has continually honed its approach to biodynamic viticulture for over a decade. With vineyards located throughout Tuscany's Chianti Classico and Maremma areas, Querciabella exemplifies the mindful preservation of tradition through forward-thinking, albeit completely natural, winemaking.

With 183 acres of prime Chianti Classico vineyards – located in the municipalities of Greve, Panzano, Radda and Gaiole – in addition to 79 acres in Maremma on Tuscany's unspoiled Etruscan coast, Querciabella's holdings represent the largest extensions of biodynamically farmed (certified organic) vineyards in Italy, contributing extraordinary biodiversity to local and surrounding ecosystems and serving as a sanctuary for thriving numbers of honeybee colonies.

Mongrana comes from the Banditella, Podere Harras and Sugherettaia vineyards and has been biodynamically grown since inception. The first vintage was 2005. The soil is a mixture of silt and alluvial sand, with areas of gravel and surface pebbles that can be traced back to the Pleistocene.

50% Sangiovese, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot. A juicy and delicious 2015 red with plenty of berry and chocolate character. Medium to full body, round tannins and a flavorful finish. A blend of sangiovese, merlot and cabernet sauvignon.

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2016 Castello di Volpaia Citto Rosso Toscana IGT
Tuscany, Italy

It all started hundreds of years ago in a tiny Italian village named Volpaia, once known for its quaint streets and fairytale like castle walls within the area of Chianti, this town thrived on farming and innovation. Home to a certain mathematician named Lorenzo Della Volpaia; he grew the tiny location into a Florentine dynasty of clockmakers and scientific-instrument makers. Lorenzo put this town on the map, but after a series of wars and political battles, the town reverted back to its farming heritage and was nearly forgotten. That is, until Italy's premier printer and bookbinder, Rafaello Stianti decided to buy his daughter an 18th century ring with two foxes engraved into the ring (Volpaia means two foxes). It was only natural that when Giovannella decided to get married, her father took it a step up and bought nearly the entire village and the entire wine estate for her as a wedding gift. Since then it's been Giovannella's mission to update the winery to using modern winemaking practices all while preserving the look and feel of a medieval town.

In the Tuscan dialect, "Citto" means "young boy." We're reminded of the French Chateau history of releasing an early drinker while the Grand Cru's patiently sleep until they're ready. Mouton Rothchild has Mouton Cadet, Cheval Blanc has Petit Cheval, and Castello di Volpaia has Citto. All the fruit and vines are certified organic and hail from estate vineyards in the Chianti Classico and Maremma regions of Tuscany. The grapes are de-stemmed and crushed, and then fermented in stainless steel vat for 10 days. 8 days later, the juice is drained from the skins and bottled, when it ages again prior to release.

Mostly Sangiovese, with a little Cabernet Sauvignon thrown in for good measure, the 2015 Citto is a vivid ruby color. This generous, silky wine displays ripe fruit aromas with intense cherry and red berry flavors on the palate.

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