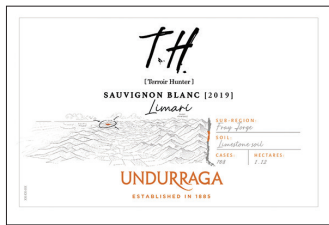


90 | Kingston Family Vineyards \$22

2019 Casablanca Valley Cariblanco Sauvignon Blanc Grown on the sandy granite hills of the Kingston Ranch in southwestern Casablanca, this is a clean, rich and satisfying sauvignon, lasting on a mineral finish. Its tart gooseberry flavors make it a partner for clams or, if you happen to be in Chile, the pungent flesh of steamed *picoroco*, the giant barnacles native to the rocky coastline. *Kingston Family Vineyards, Portola Valley, CA*



90 | Undurraga \$22

2019 Limari T.H. Sauvignon Blanc This wine's quince-like richness is cut by the mineral drive of its acidity, layering pungent orange pith and a sharp limestone-inflected edge. Pour it with oyster ceviche. *Freedom Wine Co., Greensboro, NC*

88 | Albamar \$12

2019 Casablanca Valley Estate Series Sauvignon Blanc (Best Buy) A brand from Tapihue Wines, this is a fruit-driven sauvignon, all bright pink grapefruit and juicy apricot. Chill it for grilled fish with a tropical-fruit salsa. *Global Vineyard Importers, Berkeley, CA*



88 | Cono Sur \$13

2019 San Antonio Valley Sauvignon Blanc (Best Buy) This wine's gooseberry and green apple flavors have high-toned aromatics, touching on cider and flamed orange zest. The sulfur is a little aggressive for now, suggesting you wait six months for it to settle down, then enjoy the wine's richness with baked brie. *Fetzer Vineyards, Hopland, CA* ■

FOCUS: CALIFORNIA VALDIGUIÉ

There are now enough California valdiguiés in bottle to pull off a comparative tasting. We found that, taken together, these were wines that live within a narrow bandwidth, characterized more by nerve and energy than by depth or complexity. There was modest stylistic variation, mostly with respect to percentages of whole-cluster fermentation, but most modern bottlings owe their success to dialing back their ripeness levels: If valdiguié's fruit gets too ripe, and the alcohol too high, the wines become noticeably lackluster. The best are tart and mouthwatering, with edgy, crunchy red fruit and youthful grip. —P.J.C.

Our blind panels tasted **8** California valdiguié and blends for this issue. Our critic, **Patrick J. Comiskey**, rated **5** as exceptional (90+) and **1** as a Best Buy. Subscribers can find a complete list of wines tasted, and all reviews, at wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

92 | Broc Cellars \$32

2018 Solano County Green Valley Valdiguié With ethereal scents of violet and clove, this is the spiciest of the valdiguié wines reviewed here. The edge of whole-cluster spice gives the wine a briary brightness, with sour apple and crunchy berry flavors bringing up the rear. Though it doesn't resemble gamay noir, the wine feels very Beaujolais-like in spirit, ready to drink with whatever's coming off the grill. (193 cases)

91 | Cruse Wine Co. \$25

2018 North Coast Monkey Jacket Michael Cruse blends Monkey Jacket from an array of appellations and varieties, but he always bases it on valdiguié because, as he puts it, it drives the "California-ness" of the wine—the sunniness, the fruit. In 2018 the blend is about half valdiguié, with the rest carignane, syrah and other mixed blacks. At 12.5 percent alcohol, it's translucent, bright and floral, with scents of violets and cherry blossoms. The crunchy fruit is firmed up by 20 percent whole-cluster additions, making this a snappy wine for summer barbecue. (3,000 cases)

90 | Cruse Wine Co. \$35

2017 Napa Valley Rancho Chimiles Valdiguié If you want to know what crunch is in a wine, lean in here. This wine, from Terry Wilson's old-vine valdiguié vineyard in the Wooden Valley, is leafy and bright, with an herbaceous edge to the brisk fruit. There's a

tense, mouthwatering leanness to its blackberry flavors, and a high-acid salinity that would be ideal to cut through something on the rich side, like braised lamb. (225 cases)

90 | Folk Machine \$23

2018 Redwood Valley Film & Camera Lolonis Vineyard Valdiguié Kenny Likitprakong employs a modest amount of whole clusters to bolster this bracing red from Lolonis Vineyard. It's darker than the Lioco valdiguié from the same vineyard (also recommended here), with notes of black loamy soil and iron filings. Firm and a touch resinous, it's a seamless wine with high tone and dark ferrous tannins.

90 | Lioco \$30

2018 Redwood Valley Lolonis Vineyard Valdiguié Matt Licklinder makes this wine from a part of the Lolonis family vineyard planted in 1945. It's toothy and dark-fruited, the sweet berry notes scented with pipe tobacco and violets, held in a firm grip of tannins. (233 cases)

88 | J. Lohr \$10

2018 Monterey Wildflower Valdiguié (Best Buy) You'd be hard-pressed to find a California wine with this much moxie for ten bucks. Steve Peck makes it from valdiguié vines planted in Monterey in 1974. It's full of nerve and rustic character, the fruit a cross of briary blackberry and black plum, with peppercorn spice and lean, edgy tannins. ■