

Best wine values of 2012

The year 2012 had its fair share of great wine values due in large part to the influx of new and original domestic blends. And, as always, Europe continued to export extraordinary values geared towards food lovers. Sit back and enjoy, for these are the best your dollar could buy this year.

Best French Value: The Grand Veneur Reserve Cote du Rhone by Alain Jaume is a rich wine with inky, crimson hues. Its bouquet shows off a dichotomy of rustic aromas and dried cherries, backed up by pomegranate tastes and a decadent finish.

Best Spanish Value: The 2010 El Chaparral by Vega Sindoa is Garnacha at its best, diverse and complex in aromas, easily enjoyable and inspiring in flavor. This wine is all about the fruit forward style. Runner up: 2009 Evohe Garnacha

Best Red Blend Value: Although Washington State led the charge years ago with early introductions of red blends, the release of California's 2010 Bogle Essential Red proves that getting into the game a little late can make for a better game plan. Runner up: Concannon Crimson & Clover

Best Rosé Value: The Hecht & Bannier Languedoc-Roussillon Rosé had a lot of stiff competition this year, including Oregon's latest venture with the Acrobat Rosé. But its amaz-



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ing blood orange color and raspberry/ strawberry fruit punched a whole lot of would-be contenders down the rankings. Runner up: 2011 Michel Chapoutier Les Vigne Bila Haut Rosé

Best Zinfandel Value: In August, I blogged that the 2010 DeLoach Russian River Valley Zinfandel was the new "it" wine. There may not have been a ton to go around but this spicy enticer was a summertime BBQ's best friend. Runner-up: 2009 Brazin Lodi Zinfandel

Best Chilean/Best Sauvignon Blanc Value: With more grapefruit, lime and tropical expressions than a banana republic, it's no wonder the 2011 Leyda Sauvignon Blanc took home two "Best Of" awards.

Best Italian Value: The 2009 Colosi Rosso is easy drinking Nero d'Avola from Sicily. Runner-up: 2009 Masi Chianti Riserva

Best Cabernet Value: 2009 Milbrant Traditions Cabernet. Runner-up: 2009 Columbia Crest H3 Cabernet

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