

GREAT WINE VALUES

MARNIE OLD

'The Count' Red Blend

If liquor store wine displays are any indication, it's safe to say that we have entered a post-grape society. Red blends from California are everywhere, and few give shoppers any indication of what grapes they contain. Blending red grapes together is nothing new; most of the classics are blends, from French

Bordeaux to Italian Chianti. But in California, since the '70s, naming prestige grapes has been the key to premium status. What has changed is that vintners are catching on to the fact that most American wine drinkers care more about how a wine tastes than how, or from what, it's made. In



decades past, a blended red that didn't give a hint of its pedigreed grapes on the front or back label would be dismissed as inferior plonk. Nowadays, high-quality wines from reputable producers, like this robust blended red from

Buena Vista in Sonoma, can be as coy as they like about their recipe as long as they wow us in the glass. California's red blends tend to taste sweeter and less tart than European blends. Ice cream aromas abound, as with the cherry-vanilla and chocolate-mocha aromatics found in this pleasingly plump and plummy red wine. Try it with teriyaki or backyard barbecue.

"The Count" Red Blend by Buena Vista, Sonoma County, Calif. \$15.99 (regularly \$19.99, sale price through 7/30/17) PLCB Item #8569. Also available at Kreston Wine & Spirits, in Wilmington, Del., \$18.99.

