

LIKEWINE

by VIRGINIE BOONE

After all the excesses of the holidays, it may be tempting to lay off the wine for a while. But there are still plenty of occasions where the fruit of the vine is welcome, especially with food. A good time for experimentation and restrained spending, this is a season marked by holidays intimate (Valentine's Day) and grand (Super Bowl). Enjoy.

IF YOU LIKE THIS WINE

THEN TRY THIS WINE

ZINFANDEL
for the Super Bowl

DeLoach Vineyards 2012 Saitone Vineyard Olivet Bench Russian River Valley Zinfandel (\$45)

From one of the most storied sites in the Russian River Valley comes this stubbornly persistent Zin, brambly and dusty and with an intense old-vine character. Cinnamon spice accents the hearty fruit in this balanced, complex wine. It's a good candidate for cellaring (five to 10 years).



River Road Family Vineyards and Winery 2012 Boschetti Vineyard Russian River Valley Old Vine Zinfandel (\$20)

From a vineyard dating to 1925, this lovely Zinfandel is aromatic in sandalwood and blackberry, with peppery spice interspersed with generous fruit and creamy vanilla. There aren't a lot of old Zinfandel vines in Russian River Valley, so this is not only a great find, it comes at an irresistible price.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON
for Groundhog Day

Markham Vineyards 2010 The Altruist Calistoga Estate Vineyard Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$65)

Given more than two years of aging in French oak barrels, most of them new, this is a sizably lush and intense Napa Valley Cabernet, made from grapes grown at the winery's estate vineyard. Bay leaf imprints itself on the wine's entry, followed by juicy blackberry and vanilla notes. The firm tannins suggest this wine will improve with time in the cellar.



Dealy Lane 2011 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$25)

From Michael Mondavi's portfolio of family estate wines, Dealy Lane over-delivers on flavor given its price. This Cab has bold aromas of rose and lavender and a palate of zingy black fruit, oak and bacon.

DESSERT WINE
for Valentine's Day

Joseph Phelps 2013 Eisrèbe Napa Valley White Wine (\$50)

This subtle dessert wine is made from Scheurebe grapes (native to Austria) and has a lightness and floral quality to it. It's lovely and fresh, expressing apricot and honey sweetness that lingers on the palate. It also can be enjoyed as an aperitif or digestif.



Benessere 2012 Estate St. Helena Vineyard Scintillare Moscato di Canelli (\$25)

Perfumed and aromatic, it's reminiscent of Gewürztraminer in its ripe lychee aromas and flavors. This balanced wine, made from Muscat di Canelli grapes, has a pretty lightness to go with its moderate sweetness.

CHARDONNAY
for Chinese New Year

Keller Estate 2012 La Cruz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay (\$38)

From the family's estate vineyard high above Lakeville Highway, in the heart of what may one day be officially known as the Petaluma Gap appellation, this barrel-fermented Chardonnay is creamy and full-flavored. This style would pair well with Peking duck, dumplings and spicy noodles.



MacMurray Ranch 2013 Russian River Valley Chardonnay (\$20)

This is a straightforward Chardonnay with layers of ripe tropical fruit and caramel, a generous creamy texture and whispers of vanillin oak. Stock up for festive feasts in celebration of the Year of the Sheep.