

ABOUT THE LIST

I created this list after a year of visiting wineries all around the world, but with a special focus on Europe and my home region of Italy.

On average per year, I will taste between 7,000-10,000 wines in order to evaluate them for the following: typicity of the region and the variety, balance in flavor, complexity, expression of terroir and drinkability/versatility with food.

I conduct all of my wine tastings blind, without knowing the price, as I like to judge a wine fairly to determine if it's worth the price tag.

It is important to note that my assessment swings heavily towards wines that are extremely well balanced and do not fatigue your palate. I believe that wine should be pleasurable to drink. You should be able to finish a bottle with your partner without the wine making your tongue feel "tired". It is important for a wine to demonstrate complexity and elegance and not just brute force so you will not see a heavy presence of Cabernet on my list.

Loger Bissell

#W2W2022

PART ONE



The 40 wines featured are all hyperlinked and not listed in any particular order. **There is no first or last.**They are all incredible and should be on your list to buy and drink this year!

THE WINES

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CANTINA NINNI POGGIO DEL VESCOVO TREBBIANO SPOLETINO 2020

A white wine hailing from the picture-perfect town of Spoleto (in the region of Umbria) and surrounding areas. This wine is not to be confused with any of the other many examples of Trebbiano as it stands on its own.

The owner Gianluca Piernera has crafted the perfect mineral-driven wine complete with white flowers, almond and zippy, refreshing acidity that keeps you coming back for more. It drinks well when it's young, but it can also age roughly for 12 years too.



ANDREA FELICI VERDICCHIO DI CASTELLI DI JESI 2020

This is my favorite example of the often overlooked, greatest white wine variety in Italy - Verdicchio. If you enjoy seafood, oysters, and other lighter fare, this wine can pair with it all.

Leopardo Felici has crafted Italy's answer to Chablis which stands in a group all its own. The calling card for this white wine is the white flowers and the citrus and almond notes which take on such complexity with aging.



CANTINA TABARRINI BOCCATONE MONTEFALCO ROSSO 2016

Another wine hailing from Umbria, but this time an impressive red blend of the local indigenous variety of Sagrantino with Sangiovese and a touch of Barbera for acidity and fruit. This wine expresses such elegance and complexity in its bouquet as well as on the palate.

Once it is open for about 30 minutes, this wine will leave you in awe of its flavors and aroma. It can go with steak, pasta, and game. The price point of the wine is laughable as it tastes like many wines that cost \$50-\$60. <u>Giampaolo Tabarrini</u> is a true master of creating perfectly balanced wines that keep you entertained.



FAMIGLIA OLIVINI LUGANA BRUT

Did somebody mention sparkling wine? This is a classic method wine made from the local variety around Lake Garda known as Turbiana or Trebbiano di Lugana. There is a huge difference in quality between a prosecco and a classic method sparkling wine, yet the price point here is only a few more dollars than a prosecco and much cheaper than a Franciacorta.

The flavor profile is agreeable with anything that you serve. It's creamy with a long, persistent finish that cleanses your palate. Take a peek at some of Giovanni Olivini's other Lugana from his winery located in southern Lago di Garda in Desenzano. This is an absolute must for under \$20.



ROYAL SEYSSEL EXTRA BRUT SAVOIE 2016

Speaking of bubbles, let's talk about the best-kept secret of the champagne method wine found in eastern France (Savoie). This oldest producer is making a blend of local varieties, Altesse and Molette, and aging it for over three years!

The perlage and complexity found in this wine will have your jaw dropping on the floor. White flowers, citrus, this is a very refreshing Alpine wine with such complexity. Without the hefty price tag, this is a wine that will have all of your guests talking, in a good way. A true hidden gem that was one of the original AOC in France. Bravo Gérard Lambert!!



MONCHIERO BAROLO MONTANELLO 2016

A well-balanced Barolo that doesn't display an interruption of fruit with the presence of oak or unripe tannins yet instead, shows its absolute finesse, elegance and power!

This wine is from a family producer that has been around for about 50 years in Castiglione Falletto and it is one of the crus of their commune. A truly under-the-radar producer who deserves to be more well known for the absolute balance found in this wine. A wine that can impress the most finicky crowd.



BALGERA VALTELLINA SUPERIORE VALGELLA RISERVA 2005

Mamma Mia! If you're looking for a wine to knock your socks off from a historic, reputable producer in Valtellina (an hour north of Lake Como) THIS IS IT! 95 percent Nebbiolo, this wine shows an explosive display of aromas and a tremendously long, persistent finish with the classic expressions of terroir.

Think schist, granite, roses, cardamom and fresh Alpine character. An absolute must-try!



LA PERLA MARCO TRIACCA LA MOSSA 2015 VALTELLINA SUPERIORE

This is another Nebbiolo-based wine from Marco Triacca, one of the most inventive producers in Valtellina who completely changed the way his vines are planted; they're exposed so that he can work better in the vines and reach optimum ripeness.

In the glass, this wine is vibrant with racy acidity, camphor, spices, and a great cranberry, cherry flavor. It is easy to drink and pairs with a great deal of food. It demonstrates complexity for such a warm vintage.





GUILLAUME GILLES CORNAS 2017

A classic true expression of Cornas which is 100 percent Syrah and reveals itself to you with its plum, cherries, roasted meat and scorched earth. This wine is mineral and granite soil-driven with a laser focus yet rustic charm.

It is a serious wine that can age forever, but is also approachable in its youth. The price point is surprising considering the fact that most of the grapes are found in the famed "Chaillott" vineyard which can sell for hundreds of dollars.

Bravo Guillaume as usual!



DOMAINE TEMPIER BANDOL ROSE 2020

I am such a fan of this juicy, crunchy, fruity Bandol rose. Think of hills overlooking the south of France in Côte d'Azur which is where you will find this winery.

The perfect wine to drink with an appetizer and your main course or cool you down during those hot summer months. It's important to note, however, that rose isn't only meant for summertime! It should be drank all year long, especially this expression.



DOMAINE SAINT GAYAN SABLET L' ORATORY 2020

One of my favorite producers in Gigondas crafts this white blend from the southern Rhone which consists of Viognier, Clairette, Bourboulenc Grenache Blanc, and Roussane. What that blend creates is the perfect white for aging or just drinking.

Sandy limestone soil sets the perfect foundation for this mineral-driven wine with so much complexity, character, and persistence that has never seen oak. Christian (the son-in-law) has taken over the reins at this family estate and is doing an impeccable job.



FILLABOA ALBARIÑO 2019

If you have never had the pleasure of tasting an Albariño from the northern region of Galicia in Spain, this would be a good place to start. This wine is addictive and triggers the salivary glands in your mouth, forcing you to want to eat and sip more of it.

Juicy acidity, bursting with fresh-cut peach, melon, lemon and lime, there is no doubt that you will finish the bottle.





PIETROSO ROSSO DI MONTALCINO 2019

This small, family-operated winery, clinging to the hill of Montosoli in Montalcino, consistently crafts some of the best Brunello and Rosso, especially when considering the price. This Sangiovese is opulent, lush with clear, persistent acidity which gives it the ability to perhaps be Italy's best food partner.

Lush cherries, cranberry, menthol, and tar lead the way here. The proprietor Gianni also happens to be one of the kindest individuals you will ever meet.





TASCA D ALMERITA LEONE 2020

In Sicily at many of the restaurants I visit, it can be difficult to find some of the smaller producers that I really enjoy. This pick, however, is a larger producer which is readily available, affordable, and high on the drinkability list. Nearly every wine bar and restaurant in Palermo will have this wine.

Everything is well balanced and perfectly matched with food.

Alberto Tascante has led his family's firm into the record books for being the winery of the year for just reason. Pastas and every sort of fresh seafood imaginable pair well with this refreshing, citrus, floral wine with great salinity. This white blend of Catarratto, Pinot Bianco, Traminer, and Sauvignon Blanc changes every year.



Visiting Italy without going to Sicily leaves no image in the spirit. It is Sicily that is the key to everything!

GOETHE





LUIGI VALORI MONTEPULCIANO D' ABRUZZO 2017 BIO

This is one of the most underpriced wines in relation to quality. Luigi works all of his vineyards with his own hands in accordance to bio philosophies. The fruit of this wine is juicy, rich with plenty of plum, dark fruits and dark cherries, but with just enough acidity to cleanse your palate. This is a wine to pair with BBQ, roasted and grilled meats, chicken and/or braised items. Be on the lookout for this pick as well as his Riserva.



STEFANO AMERIGHI NOÈ BIANCO 2015

A Pecorino wine made in such small production that it is nearly impossible to get your hands on it. True poetry in the glass, it is a rustic wine that is so unique. Aged in glass demijohns in a cave in Marche with no running water or electricity, this is a true expression of the genius mind of <u>Stefano Amerighi</u>.

He is one of the leading bio wine producers in all of Italy, crafting amazing Syrah as well at his property in Cortona.



DOMAINE SEROL MILLERANDS COTE ROANNAISE 2020

Robert Serol has long been the flag bearer for this often overlooked part of the Loire Valley in France. When you think of a red wine bursting with energy and freshness, this 100 percent Gamay St. Romain is often times the culprit.

Vineyards situated on granite soil at 500 meters above sea level with fresh berries, cleansing, refreshing acidity and a juicy finish make this wine a surefire winner! Oh, and did I mention that it creates stunning complexity and nuances after about 5-7 years of age?

This is also imported by the late <u>Becky Wasserman</u> who had an eye for great French wines.



HUGUET DE CAN FEIXES BLANC SELECCIO PENEDES 2020

Hills in southern Spain with gravelly soil coax the most out of this blend of local varieties like Macabeo, Xarel-lo, Malvasia and Parellada along with some Chardonnay. This classic white wine from Penedes is always a classic, but relatively obscure in America which is a pity.

Fresh lime, apple, melon, and apricot along with wonderful tertiary aromas, give way to a wine that is rich, persistent and full of fruit on the palate. Capable of aging a few years and gaining a bit more complexity as well.





DIGBY LEANDER PINK NV BRUT

A wonderfully refreshing and fun English sparkling wine made for enjoying life on Sundays at brunch or just to open up your palate for dinner. This is roughly a ten-year-old negociant purchasing Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier from different growers in England.



ANGWIN CABERNET HOWELL MOUNTAIN NAPA 2017

Dr. Larsen and his wife have been crafting a passion project of high altitude Cabernet that speaks of low alcohol, terroir, complexity and elegance that could be mistaken for a French Bordeaux.

This is a must-try for Cabernet lovers that want something more well-balanced and off the radar.





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FAMIGLIA ANSELMA LAZZARITO 2016

In one word...WOW! Hailing from the Barolo estate of Maurizio Anselma, I could very easily name any of his nine Baroli to be included on this list. Maurizio only makes Nebbiolo and fun fact - he's reconstructed a castle that is dug nearly 25 meters underground, high above Barolo with vintages dating back 23 years!

His wines speak of energy, precision, and elegance. They can be tight and difficult to understand without opening them at least a day beforehand. This pick is one of my favorite wines of the year to drink. Collect this now because when he opens his cellar to the public, I guarantee the prices will skyrocket! Plus, he hasn't imported any of his wines into the USA in nearly 20 years, but that's about to change in 2022.



DOMAINE PIERRE GUILLEMOT BOURGOGNE ROUGE 2019

This is quite frankly one of the most delicious and best value Pinot Noirs from Burgundy. You should ALWAYS have a bottle of it on hand in your cellar and ready to drink. It's ethereal in its balance and flavor with just the right amount of lift, red berries, spices and orange peel. Impossible to imbibe too much of this wine and VERY dangerous for its food pairing ability.

The only negative is that they don't make too much of it so it tends to sell quickly thanks to the stellar work in America by Kermit Lynch. To think that this pick can be purchased for a mere \$30 dollars per bottle in comparison to other burgundy wines is insane. Bravo Vincent Guillemot!



Give me books, French wine, fruit, fine weather and a little music played out of doors by somebody I do not know.

JOHN KEATS



VIN DE BOURGOGNE

2019

Bourgogne

APPELLATION BOURGOGNE CONTRÔLÉE

Mis en bouteille à la propriété par Domaine Productor de la propriété par Dierre Guilleme de la sabigny-lès-Beaune (compresse de la propriété par Dierre Guilleme de la propri

DOMAINE NICO PINOT NOIR GRAND PERE 2019

Another high-altitude pick that creates amazing finesse, acidity and balance, but this time hailing from Argentina. A wine from the venerable Dr. Laura Catena, this wine was named after her daughter Nicola.

The soil here is limestone and of alluvial origin. The project yields about 9,000 bottles per year. The wine is high in quality yet low in price comparatively speaking. It will be interesting to see how it ages as the first vintage was only in 2017.



ANTONIO & ERICA PERRINO "TESTALONGA" ROSSESE DI DOLCEACQUA 2019

Dolceacqua, a northwestern town in the region of Liguria (just a stone's throw from Nice, France), may not be known by the masses, but I am absolutely certain that the true gem of the area is this indigenous variety which is elegant, spicy, full of cherries, rustic and alluring.

The entire process for making the wine is carried out by the producer as they did 60 years ago; completely by hand in a cellar the size of a large American bedroom with a vertical press and a few barrels.

Erica represents the new generation and approaches her work with a feverish zeal and passion which is unrivaled in the region.

The wines are a testament to the winemaking process which is completely natural and should be cherished. Warning - these wines are hard to come by as Erica only makes around 3,000 bottles per year due to climate and vineyard size.



IL MONTICELLO VERMENTINO DI COLLI DI LUNI 2020

A true Vermentino hailing from one of the most pragmatic, intelligent and oldest families in the Colli di Luni appellation. The two Neri brothers have taken over this family-run winery and are poised to lead them into the next several decades.

This pick is one of the most well-balanced and drinkable Vermentinos you will find in the world. Bright sage, rosemary, almond, citrus, peach and saltiness, as if kissed by the ocean itself!

A perfect pairing with calamari, fritto misto or fresh seafood.



FEUDO DI SAN MAURIZIO DI MICHEL VALLET MAYOLET 2019

A truly eccentric winemaker, Michel bottles about 18 different wines from over 55 vineyards perched on the sides of mountains. He is in the region of Aosta, along the Swiss border of Italy. I secretly think he forgets the locations of some, but his genius and ability to craft amazing wines is undeniable!

Mayolet is a medium-bodied, extremely savory wine that gives off aromas and flavors of mulberries. A perfect wine that makes you want to eat and then drink... and repeat. It's incredible to think what he does with so little as most of these vineyards are the size of a school bus. His wines are impeccable and affordable at the same time.



SIMONE CAPECCI PECORINO 2020

The most affordable wine on my list that should be quaffed daily! This wine is one of those whites that you can easily drink two bottles of it as it matches with nearly everything. Simone is a quiet genius of a man whose cantina is nestled among the hills of Marche, overlooking the ocean.

He gives this naturally salty wine a nice creamy texture by leaving it on the lees for several months after fermentation. Interestingly enough, many American sommeliers have mistakenly confused this pick with a white burgundy. I don't understand why, but that's certainly a compliment to Simone.

Imported by Eros Spinozzi Selections.



VALFACCENDA ROERO RISERVA VIGNA VALMAGGIORE 2018

One of Roero, Piemonte's brightest, young winemakers, <u>Luca Faccenda</u> leads *Solo Roero*, an effort that is dedicated to promoting Roero with several other young producers.

With the help of Carolina, his wife and business partner, Luca has transformed his family's property into a viable winery. They believe in crafting wines that speak of their land and balance.

The Nebbiolo in his Valmaggiore comes from the most valuable vineyards in Roero, just across the Tanaro River from the Langhe. They have bright cherry, orange peel and savory, crunchy notes that also have a highly perfumed character due to the sandy soil found there.

I am looking forward to seeing these wines improve every year as the vines age, but that also unfortunately means that the price will eventually go up too.

Buy it now!





FIAMBERTI "SACCA DEL PRETE" BUTTAFUOCO 2016 DOC

Oltrepo Pavese is an often overlooked appellation but one that is rich in history and potential for the future. Nestled in the hills of Lombardy, you will find fantastic Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and many lesser-known varieties like the ones found in this blend for the ages. Croatina, Barbera, Uva Rara and Ughetta make up this rich wine built for the long haul.

Only a select group of individuals can create the wine made from this historical area. It is a wine that is dark, rich and brooding, but with tremendous balance and lush acidity. Bravo Giulio!



PETRUSSA SCHIOPPETTINO DI PREPOTTO 2019

One of the top seven red wine varietals in the world, this pick is relatively unknown as it is only planted in Friuli, located in the northeastern part of Italy across the border from Slovenia.

The Petrussa brothers, along with their wives, have been making world-class wines for over 40 years. They are highly competitive brothers who want to win in all that they do. On my last visit to their winery, they forced me to run with them and the local Udine high school track team which culminated in a race with them winning!

Their Schioppettino demonstrates the classic flavors of white pepper, raspberries, violets, cherries and plums. This wine is so lush yet at the same time, so restrained and highly addictive. When it ages it takes on a meaty, Northern Syrah type of quality that is undeniable.



My only regret in life is that I did not drink more wine.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY





SCALA CIRO ROSSO 2019

A predominately Gaglioppo-based red wine hailing from the southern point of mainland Italia. This is a classic, old school producer that makes clean, red wines that have notes of tea, cherry, camphor and slight mint. This wine's bouquet is alluring and unmistakably Gaglioppo.

The estate has been producing it since the 1960s and its modest taste makes you always feel like you're tasting something that should cost \$50 or more. This is the undercover stunner that nobody at your dinner party will know, but it can make even the most discriminating wine drinker happy.



CHATEAU YVONNE SAUMUR BLANC 2019

A rockstar biodynamic wine from the Loire Valley of France that produces my favorite white wine variety in the world - Chenin Blanc. A wine that is fruity and possesses a soaring high acidity, laser focus and tension that could cut cheese. This wine could literally pair with anything!

This pick is impossible to put down and can age forever or it drinks great young too. The green apple, pear and peach notes are like cutting open a fresh fruit that has been pressed across fresh, mineral rocks. This producer is currently crushing it and I am super excited to see the next projects they are working on (they make several different bottlings).



DOMAINE DE LA TAILLE AUX LOUPS "TRIPLE ZERO" NV

A sparkling wine from Montlouis, Loire Valley from 100% Chenin Blanc and made in the ancient way of making sparkling wines which is in stark contrast to Champagne. The grapes are harvested from old vines when slightly riper and fermented spontaneously in barriques.

The wine has amazing salinity, lemon citrus aromas, and is steely, mineral and dry in the mouth. It is the ultimate wine for seafood and an opportunity to surprise your guests with a funky, eclectic wine that they have never heard of, but will surely want to drink the entire bottle. The price point is favorable as well. Bravo Jacky Blot!



Taille aux Loups
Triple Ziro.

VERA DE ESTENAS EL BOBAL 2020

An Indigenous red variety to the Utiel-Requena appellation about 50 miles inland from Valencia, Spain. These vineyards are about 800 meters above sea level in chalky, clay soil which gives this wine its distinctive flavor. This winery has been the flagbearer for this former bulk wine variety for nearly 50 years.

However, in recent times, they have formed together with a few other producers to revive this red wine which has notes of plums, spices and earthy, mineral characteristics. It's almost criminal how affordable this is as it can taste like wines that are nearly quadruple the price!



WEINGUT FRANZ HERTZBERGER (ROTES TOR) GRUNER VELTLINER 2019

This might be the most well-known wine on the list and one of the oldest producers of the Austrian variety Gruner Veltliner. I consider this wine to be the benchmark for Gruner and a classic example of old school Gruner. This is the go-to wine to please all white wine drinkers at your party. It has it all!

Elegance, citrus, stone fruits, and a zippy minerality that is simply addictive; this wine can pair with virtually everything. It is actually one of few wines that can match with asparagus.

This pick is from their single vineyard and is worth every penny and can be aged for 15 years without a problem. Discover why nearly every sommelier and wine director is in love with this wine.



DOMAINE LE COUROULU VACQUEYRAS VIELLES VIGNES 2017

A juicy, rich red wine that satisfies all of the big boys at the dining table without fatiguing your palate. A blend of 90-year-old vine Grenache (75%) and 60-year-old vine Syrah (25%).

You don't have to pay the price for CDP or Gigondas, but you get great complexity of flavor from old vines here. Southern Rhone reds always amaze me for their ability to blend acid-driven grapes like Grenache with riper Syrah to keep its freshness. This is a wine that you will not want to let go of! Trust me as this is just so juicy, lush and easy to gulp with food.



<u>PIETRADOLCE BARBAGALLI ETNA ROSSO</u> 2018

This is one of the more expensive wines on the list, but it will give you so many of those characteristics you love in Burgundy, but completely different country and terroir with its crunchy, volcanic soil texture. This wine from Michele Faro on the slopes of Mt. Etna, is full of energy and vibrance with marasca cherry, star of anise, raspberries and racy acidity.

It is one of the most memorable wines I drank this past year. I feel the need to advise you to wait at least 4-5 years to truly enjoy it though. It is just a matter of time until the Etna Rosso wines are all super expensive. You would be wise to collect them now! They are imported by Empson Wines.





OENOPS XYNOMAVRAW 2019

If you haven't heard of this amazing red wine variety hailing from the northern region of Greece in the Naoussa valley you need to get tasting! This is a newer producer (7 years old) that sources from various vineyards ranging between 15-70 years old. It has many characteristics similar to Nebbiolo, but completely different.

This pick has crunchy red fruits like cherry, raspberry great roses and slight mint, but with a long, crunchy persistent finish. I cannot wait to see how these wines age. They are nearly impossible to stop drinking due to the whole cluster fermentation which enhances the fruit and aromas. I am thinking of a Greece trip soon! Anyone?

LE CLOS DE LA BUTTE ERIC CHEVALIER MUSCADET 2020

Muscadet is one of my guilty pleasures and should be yours as well for its quaffability, salinity, apple notes and just plain yumminess! These vineyards are from one of the Loire Valley's brightest, young stars, Eric Chevalier. He is in the Nantais appellation where there is a strong maritime climate which expresses that salty, ocean air so well in the Melon de Bourgogne grape.

The saltiness in this wine is that perfect tension between bites of food. This pick is under \$20 and can be aged for 10 years with no problem. It is the type of wine that you want to buy multiple cases of at a time as it's lower alcohol and just perfect with food or even as an aperitif. Give some more love to Muscadet!



PAITIN "BONINA" LANGHE FREISA 2019

An ancient variety related to Nebbiolo that has been making a bit of a comeback in recent years thanks to the efforts of many. There are talks of a new Consortia being formed, but time will tell.

In the interim, let's talk about a delicious wine made by one of the historical families of the Langhe who lost nearly everything, including their bloodline, years ago due to the Nazis during World War 2.

This Freisa possesses notes of crushed cherries, wild strawberries, strong acidity and firm tannins. A Piemontese classic through and through from the next generation of winemakers, <u>Luca Pasquero</u>.



QUESTIONS?

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WINE NOTES

Wine should be fun and is meant to be paired with food and shared with friends and family.

Explore wines from regions that don't often get publicity for a greater appreciation of quality and diversity.

When opening wines, don't decant them as you miss out on the evolution in the glass that takes place. Wine, as it begins to breathe, will give off different aromas and flavors in stages.

Great wine does not have to be super expensive!



ABOUT ROGER

For the last 20 years, <u>Roger Bissell</u> has been on an inspiring mission to help others explore authentically.

A self-made entrepreneur, former restaurateur and hospitality pro, Roger has traveled the world dining and designing innovative, epicurean experiences for Michelin restaurants, hotels, private country clubs, resorts and wineries.

As a Certified Sommelier and Italian Wine Expert with a Master of Olive Oil and a Master of Terroir, Roger shares his extensive knowledge and passion of Italian wine and culture through exclusive, one-of-a-kind, travel excursions and <u>tours</u> throughout Italy.





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