

Food

These five under-\$20 wines can take the chill off winter



By [Dave McIntyre](#) Columnist, Food January 5

Exceptional Excellent Very Good



(Goran Kosanovic/For The Washington Post)

Here are five wines, all under \$20, to help you through the winter chill. They include a rich Cotes-du-Rhone that tastes above its pedigree, a fun and juicy Sicilian red, and a philanthropic South African red that funnels extra profits back to the farmers who grow the grapes.

Clos du Mont-Olivet Vieille Vignes 2015

Cotes-du-Rhone, France, \$18

This savory, rich red evokes southern France with its scents and flavors of dark fruit, lavender and wild thyme. The winemaker deftly captured the warmth of a ripe vintage without letting the sugar levels in the grapes — and the resulting alcohol in the wine — get out of whack. Alcohol by volume: 14.5 percent.

[*\[The 12 best wine bargains of 2017 are cheap without tasting like it\]*](#)

Distributed by Dionysus: Available in the District at Arrowine and Spirits, MacArthur Beverages, Rodman's, Whole Foods Market (P Street); on the list at Mirabelle. Available in Maryland at Balducci's and Bradley Food & Beverage in Bethesda, Wine Source in Baltimore. Available in Virginia at Arrowine and Cheese in Arlington, Balducci's (Alexandria, McLean), Whole Foods Market (Alexandria, Arlington).

Donnafugata Sedàra 2015

Sicily, Italy, \$18

Sometimes a good wine just needs to get the job done, but with a little added flair. This juicy red blend based on Sicily's own nero d'avola is ideal for casual weeknight meals such as pizza, pasta, even grilled fish or meat. ABV: 13.5 percent.

Distributed by M. Touton: Available in the District at A. Litteri, Best in Liquors, Capital City Wine & Spirits, Connecticut Avenue Wine & Liquor, Eye Street Cellars, Rodman's. Available in Maryland at Cork 57 Beer and Wine in Bethesda, Franklins Restaurant, Brewery and General Store in Hyattsville, Old Farm Liquors and Riverside Liquors in Frederick, the Wine Harvest in Potomac.

Stillman St. Chardonnay 2016

Sonoma County, Calif., \$18

This is good, straightforward chardonnay, rich with stone fruit flavors, just a little bit of influence from older oak barrels, and a nicely balanced finish. ABV: 14.1 percent.

Distributed by DMV: Available in the District at Paul's of Chevy Chase. Available in Maryland at 5 O'clock Wines & Spirits in Owings Mills, Aloha Liquor and Bristol Liquors in Baltimore, Breezy Point Market in Chesapeake Beach, Eastport Liquors and the Italian Market in Annapolis, Fenwick Beer & Wine in Silver Spring, Frederick Wine House, Lakefront Fine Wine & Spirits, Old Farm Liquors and Trout Liquors in Frederick,

Hair o’ the Dog in Easton, McHenry Beverage Shoppe in McHenry, Old Line Fine Wine, Spirits & Bistro in Beltsville, Pine Liquors in Fort Washington, Richburn Discount Liquors in Columbia.

GREAT VALUE

Cape Venture Wine Co. Lubanzi 2015

South Africa, \$15

Lubanzi is the creation of District-based Charles Brain and Walker Brown, who trekked across part of South Africa a few years ago with a stray dog named Lubanzi. They describe their company as a sustainable enterprise; half of the profits go back to the farmers who grew the grapes. They launched last year with two wines: a 2016 chenin blanc and this deliciously zesty 2015 Rhone-style red, a blend of shiraz, cinsault, mourvedre and Grenache. The wines are sealed with an innovative twist-off cork. ABV: 13.5 percent.

Distributed by Constantine in the District and Maryland, Global Wines in Virginia: Available in the District at Ace Beverage, A. Litteri, Batch 13, Connecticut Avenue Wine & Liquor, Cordial Fine Wine & Spirits (Union Market, the Wharf), Eye Street Cellars, Gallagher & Graham Fine Spirits, Metro Wine & Spirits, Modern Liquors, Universal Liquor, Wine Specialist; on the list at All Souls Bar, the Bird, Blue Duck Tavern, Bombay Club, Joe’s Stone Crab, Proper 21. Available in Virginia at the Brew Shop in Arlington, Department of Beer and Wine in Alexandria.

GREAT VALUE

Legado del Moncayo Dry Muscat 2016

Campo de Borja, Spain, \$14

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Muscat generally tends to be sweet. Dry versions like this one retain the grape's flowery and citrus character. Think of standing in a lemon grove near the ocean on a breezy day. This is delicious by itself but would be a great partner for seafood salad or paella. ABV: 13 percent.

Distributed by Elite/Grapes of Spain: Distributed in the District at Batch 13, Dupont Market, Grand Cata, Paul's of Chevy Chase, Rodman's; on the list at Joselito, Mi Cuba, Taberna del Alabardero. Available in Maryland at Beers & Cheers Too, Downtown Crown Wine and Beer and Finewine.com in Gaithersburg, the Bottle Shop in Potomac, Cheers & Spirits in Arnold, Georgetown Square Wine and Beer in Bethesda, Mt. Washington Wine Co. and Wine Source in Baltimore, Takoma Park-Silver Spring Co-op in Takoma Park, Village Beer & Fine Wine in Rockville, Wine Cellars of Annapolis; on the list at Corner Charcuterie Bar and Minnow in Baltimore. Available in Virginia at Arrowwine and Cheese in Arlington, Balducci's in Alexandria, the Bottle Stop in Occoquan, Cheesetique in Alexandria, Planet Wine & Gourmet in Alexandria; on the list at Bistro 1521 and SER in Arlington.

Availability information is based on distributor records. Wines might not be in stock at every listed store and might be sold at additional stores. Prices are approximate. Check [Winesearcher.com](https://www.wine-searcher.com/) to verify availability, or ask a favorite wine store to order through a distributor.

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