



FEBRUARY 2021 THE WINEKNITTER WINE

RED IS FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

BY PENNY WEISS
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COMMENT 1

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Valentine's Day is rapidly approaching! It is the one day of the year that we make a point of celebrating romance, love, and friendship by expressing our affection with cards, gifts, and special dinners.



Deciding how to celebrate in this most challenging of times is the big question. Our options are limited for dining out, in-person gift shopping, and for some of us, it is online-only contact, but love always seems to prevail! Not to be deterred, my fellow editors and I are here to help you celebrate!

Whether you're enjoying Valentine's Day with loved ones, friends, family, or just want to celebrate "you", we have some great suggestions for food, wine, and spirits.

Sparkling wines and roses may tend to be the "go-to" drink on Valentine's Day, but there are many noteworthy red wines to explore as well. So, join me on a virtual trip around the world to taste them, one glass at a time!



Photo courtesy of Max Tutak at Unsplash

Australia

McGuigan Wines, 'The Plan' Cabernet Sauvignon 2017

McGuigan Wines is a major wine producer in Australia. Their family roots date back to 1880 in Hunter Valley with Perc McGuigan, who set the standard for generations to come. Grapes for this 100% Cabernet are sourced from top-quality vineyards in South Eastern Australia that includes McLaren Vale, Langhorne Creek, and Barossa Valley. The fruit is harvested at night, and after fermentation, it is matured in stainless steel tanks and oak before final blending.



Photo credit: Penny Weiss

Aromas of blackberry, cherry, chocolate, and hints of baking spice segue onto the palate with a hint of cranberry and herbs. This fruit-driven wine has refreshing acidity and firm tannins with hints of warm toasted oak. It is a steal at this price! Serve with roasts, grilled tuna, and dark chocolate desserts.

Alcohol: 13.5%

SRP: \$10.99

Italy

Bertani Valpolicella DOC 2018

Bertani has been producing wine for over 150 years and has an impressive 200 hectares of vineyards in the most ideal areas of Verona province in the Veneto region, which is famous worldwide for wines such as Valpolicella, Soave, and Amarone. This wine is a blend of 80% Corvina Veronese and 20% Rondinella. Grapes are harvested from the heart of the Valpolicella Classico area and the Valpantena vineyards, near the municipality of Grezzana. The wine is aged for eight months in concrete vats covered with glass bricks to allow slow and gradual aging. It is then further aged for a minimum of three months in the bottle.



Photo credit: Penny Weiss

Aromas of plum, sour cherry, red berries, pepper, and baking spice continue onto the palate. This wine has nice acidity and a good balance between juicy fruity and savory. Sour cherry and raspberry linger on the finish. Pair with hearty stews, braised meat, pasta, and semi-aged cheese.

Alcohol: 12%

SRP: \$16.49

Spain

Bela, Ribera del Duero DO 2017

One of Rioja's most iconic wine producers, CVNE (pronounced coo-nay), is an acronym for Compañia Vinicola del Norte de España. CVNE has expanded their territory to include a 182-acre estate in Ribera del Duero in northern Spain with the focus of bringing their Rioja elegance to the rugged Ribera del Duero region. Grapes for this 100% Tempranillo are sourced from Ribera del Duero region. The climate here leans toward continental with a complexity of soils throughout the region. This wine is aged for six months in American and French, new and one-year-old oak barrels.



Photo credit: Penny Weiss

Intense aromas of dark fruit, floral, baking spice, and a touch of earth, set the stage for this terroir-driven wine. The palate is layered with dark berries, dark cherry, plum, spice, anise, and a hint of minerality. Vanilla and pepper linger on a long finish. This is a graceful wine with soft tannins and brimming with character. It is an easy wine to pair with a wide range of cuisine.

Alcohol: 14%

SRP: \$19

Portugal

Esporão Reserva Red 2016

Alentejo wine region is situated in the southern half of Portugal and covers one-third of the country. It is one of Portugal's largest wine production areas. Herdade Do Esporão, whose history dates back over 750 years ago, first introduced this wine in 1985. It is a blend of Aragonez, Trincadeira, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Alicante Bouschet. Grapes are sourced from vineyards with soil of granite/schist origin and clay/loam structure. This wine is aged for 12 months in American oak (60%) and French oak (40%) barrels, and then an additional six months in the bottle.



Photo credit: Penny Weiss

It begins with a rich bouquet of cherry, raspberry, blackberry, plum, and baking spice. The palate is entertained with lush dark fruit jam, spice, and a hint of plum. Smooth tannins and a long berry finish add to the richness of this wine. Pair with grilled or braised meat and game, stews, tapas, and codfish.

Alcohol: 14.5%

SRP: \$24

Sicily

Donnafugata Sherazade Sicilia DOC 2018

The Rallo family owns the iconic Donnafugata, and their family history of winemaking dates back to 1851. They have several wineries and over 405 hectares of vineyards located throughout Sicily, including historic aging cellars at their Marsala winery. Nero d'Avola is an indigenous grape that is considered Sicily's most important red wine grape. Sherazade is 100% Nero d'Avola and the grapes are sourced from Donnafugata's Contessa Entellina Estate and nearby vineyards, which are located in the southwestern part of Sicily. The wine is aged for about four months in tanks and then a minimum of three months in the bottle.



Photo credit: Penny Weiss

Delectable aromas of violets, red fruit, and spice open to a lovely palate of cherry, plum, berries, and spice. Well-balanced tannins and acid add to the character of this fresh and lively wine, along with a touch of pepper and tartness on a long finish. Serve with mature cheese, pasta and red sauce, seared tuna, and calamari.

Alcohol: 13%

SRP: \$25

California

Au Contraire Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast 2019

Sonoma County's Au Contraire winery was inspired by Taub Family vineyards company founder, David S. Taub. The grapes for this Pinot Noir are sourced from top Sonoma Coast vineyards, from Sebastopol to the Fort Ross Seaview AVA. Although these are warmer vineyard sites, they sit above the fog line generating a cool-climate style Pinot Noir with highly concentrated fruit flavors. The wine is aged for 12 months in French oak barrels, 35% new.



Photo credit: Penny Weiss

Juicy aromas of cherry, red berries, plum, and a hint of floral segue onto the palate with strawberry and cherry leading the parade of flavors. This is a silky wine with lots of ripe fruit and bright acidity. Serve with roasted meat, fowl, spicy Asian cuisine, and soft cheese.

Alcohol: 14.2%

SRP: \$26.99

Argentina

Bodegas Salentein Numina Gran Corte 2016

Bodegas Salentein is located in the Uco Valley of Mendoza, Argentina. Many of their vineyards are situated at some of the highest elevations in the world. This privately-owned estate was established in the late 1990s and boasts almost 5000 acres of which 1,124 acres are planted to vine. The Numina Gran Corte is a blend of 61% Malbec, 21% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 7% Petit Verdot, and 3% Cabernet Franc. Grapes are hand-harvested from small selected plots. Fermentation takes place in 7000-liter oak casks and then aged for 16 months in French oak barrels.



Photo credit: Penny Weiss

This wine opens with subtle violet aromas, plum, dark berries, spice, and a trace of vanilla. The palate offers a fresh and elegant layering of blackberry, raspberry, plum, baking spice, and a touch of earth. This is a beautifully integrated blend with a silky mouthfeel and a long finish. Pair with grilled meat, seared tuna, hearty stews, and casseroles.

Alcohol: 13.5%

SRP: \$40.99

France

Jean-Luc Colombo Cornas "Terres Brûlées" 2018

Jean-Luc Colombo winery is located in the northern appellation of Cornas in the Rhône Valley, France. Cornas is the smallest appellation in the Rhône Valley consisting of approximately 325 acres and is dedicated to producing only red wine from the Syrah grape. The Mediterranean climate and decomposed granite soils contribute to the richness and character of these wines. Terres Brûlées means, "burnt earth" which refers to the long hot days here that are balanced by the cool nights. Grapes are hand-harvested from 30+ -year-old vines. This wine is aged for 21 months in oak barrels (10% new, 90% one-to-five-year old barrels).



Photo credit: Penny Weiss

This 100% Syrah wine has enticing aromas of dark cherry, dark berries, dark plum, spice, and hints of baking spice. The palate is rich with blackberry, plum, and black cherry, reminiscent of exotic jam. Notes of vanilla, cocoa, spice, and a trace of minerality linger on a long finish. A truly noteworthy wine! Pair with white meat, game, seared tuna, and hearty stews.

Alcohol: 14.5%

SRP: \$63.99

These are expressive wines that are perfect for special occasions or “just because” moments! And, if you are flying solo on Valentine’s Day, indulge yourself and your palate with one of these beauties!

For delectable chocolate and spirit suggestions to add to your Valentine’s Day festivities, or for any occasion, please click on the links below.

Happy Valentine’s Day!

Enjoy our other Valentine’s Day Special:

Until next time...

Cheers!

Penny

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