

# BUYINGGUIDE

wine that's ready to go, enjoyable now, with a finishing touch of chocolate-covered cherry. —V.B.  
**abv:** 15% **Price:** \$90

**90 Le Vigne 2017 Ame de la Vigne (Paso Robles).** Blackberry and cedar aromas kick off the nose on this blend of 44% Grenache, 41% Petite Sirah and 15% Syrah. The palate is more compelling, proving thicker in texture in a ripe boysenberry-paste flavor alongside fresh acidity. —M.K.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$48

**90 Le Vigne 2017 Nikiara (Paso Robles).** Dark cherry and dried loamy soil aromas come through most prominently on the nose of this blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Cabernet Franc, 5% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot and 1% Petite Sirah. The palate is lighter bodied than expected, offering plum, blackberry and roasted herb flavors. —M.K.  
**abv:** 14.6% **Price:** \$51

**90 Markus Wine Co 2017 Blue (Lodi).** Nicely balanced and dry, this full-bodied, complex blend based on Petit Verdot will pair nicely with rich indulgent entrées as moderate tannins add grip to the deep dark fruit flavors. Best through 2025. —J.G.  
**abv:** 14.8% **Price:** \$39

**90 Patel 2016 Red Wine (Napa Valley).** This red blends 51% Malbec with 39% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cabernet Franc. Aged in 100% new French oak for 19 months, it offers earthy, spicy density, thick in cola and brown sugar, with a grip on the palate. The fruit is a mix of blackberry and plum. —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.9% **Price:** \$75

**90 Prospect 772 2017 The Truant G-S-M (Sierra Foothills).** This appealing and smooth-textured wine based on two-thirds Grenache offers alluring floral aromas and rich chocolaty flavors. The wine has good depth, full body and rather soft tannins that keep it feeling plush on the palate. —J.G.  
**abv:** 15% **Price:** \$36

**90 Raymond 2016 Reserve Selection (Napa Valley).** Blending a majority of Merlot with Syrah, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petite Sirah and Malbec, this red is tight and fresh in bright red fruit, big tannins and generous power. It dances around components of cocoa powder and baking spice, with pronounced toasted oak. —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$40

**90 Round Pond 2016 Proprietary Red (Rutherford).** Made from 50% Cabernet Sauvignon with 36% Petit Verdot and 14% Malbec, this red wine packs a powerful punch, showing thick tight-grained tannin and juicy supple red fruit. Toasted oak is integrated and in plain sight—the whole likably drinkable. —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.8% **Price:** \$88

**90 Rowen Wine Co. 2016 Rowen Red Wine (Sonoma County).** For full review see page 16.  
**abv:** 14.2% **Price:** \$55

**90 William Hill Estate 2015 Benchmark (Napa Valley).** For full review see page 16.  
**abv:** 15.4% **Price:** \$100

**89 Akash 2017 Three's Company (Temecula Valley).** Aromas of black currant and turned earth transition to sagebrush and licorice on the nose of this red blend. Dried mint and more wild sage play on the palate against a baked black-plum core. —M.K.  
**abv:** 14.4% **Price:** \$62

**89 Bliss 2016 Red (Mendocino).** This estate-grown wine tops good fruit concentration with baking spices, pouring lush oak notes over plum, black cherry and strawberry for an almost irresistible, easy-to-drink combination. —J.G.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$16

**89 Brutocao 2016 Quadriga Hopland Ranches (Mendocino).** Handsome baking-spice aromas and moderate fruit and oak flavors come together nicely in this full-bodied, muscular, square-jawed wine. Toasted oak, cedar, sage and tea accent the red- and black-cherry flavors. Best through 2024. —J.G.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$28

**89 Darcie Kent Vineyards 2015 Choreography (San Francisco Bay).** This well-structured wine shows fresh cherry and blackberry flavors and a good firm texture, with moderate tannins. The fruit notes are ripe, concentrated and a bit tangy, nicely framed by the effect of new French oak. —J.G.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$60

**89 Jax 2017 Y3 Taureau (Napa Valley).** This blends 50% Merlot with 30% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Syrah, combining them into a forceful, full-bodied and approachable wine of viscous richness and dried plum fruit. —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$20

**89 Le Casque 2017 Calotte (Sierra Foothills).** This is a rich full-bodied wine that is hearty in flavor, offering good black-plum and black-pepper notes and high-octane content that can be felt in the texture and finish. —J.G.  
**abv:** 15.3% **Price:** \$27

**89 Markus Wine Co 2017 Domo (Lodi).** Smooth and rich, this full-bodied wine coats the palate with ripe plum and milk-chocolate flavors, while a soft texture keeps it broad in mouthfeel. Blended from Carignan, Malbec and Zinfandel. —J.G.  
**abv:** 14.8% **Price:** \$39

**89 McClain Cellars 2017 Chapter & Verse (Santa Ynez Valley).** Roasted coffee and black-cherry aromas meet with smoke and wet stone on the nose of this proprietary blend. It's a rich and flavorful wine on the palate, where roasted berry

and baking-spice flavors linger into a vanilla-laced finish. —M.K.  
**abv:** 14.6% **Price:** \$62

**89 Montemar 2014 G-S-M (Santa Barbara County).** lavender, sandalwood and black-plum-paste aromas arise on the nose of this county-wide blend. The wood-spice influence also shows on the cedar-laced palate, where purple-acai flavors play with lavender. —M.K.  
**abv:** 13.9% **Price:** \$38

**89 Newsome-Harlow 2016 The Deviant (Calaveras County).** This is a dry, well-structured wine blended from classic California grape varieties of Carignan, Zinfandel, and Petite Sirah. It's packed with tasty ripe blackberry, cranberry and black-cherry flavors. A tangy, slightly tannic texture frames all that fruit very nicely and leaves a lip-smacking finish. —J.G.  
**abv:** 14.9% **Price:** \$45

**89 Work Vineyard 2015 Adrien's Blend (Napa Valley).** A Cabernet Sauvignon-driven blend aged in new French barrels, half of it new, this wine is heavily oak-influenced as well, tasting of cinnamon sticks and vanilla. Soft red fruit and supple tannin combine nicely across the palate, with grippy tannins on the finish. —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$75

**88 Clockwise 2016 Red (Napa Valley).** This blend of a majority Cabernet Sauvignon with sizable additions of Petit Verdot, Merlot and Malbec delivers simple fruitiness and dark layers of spice. Supple and approachable, it broods in blackberry, clove and earth. —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.3% **Price:** \$68

**88 Highwayman 2017 Trailblazer Reserve (Sonoma County).** Robust and juicy in soft appealing layers of black cherry, cassis and baking spice, this wine combines 75% Zinfandel with 15% Petite Sirah. The full-bodied ripeness is held in check against the lushness of spicy fruit. —V.B.  
**abv:** 15.3% **Price:** \$25

**88 Hovey 2017 C2 (Sierra Foothills).** Barnyard and turned earth aromas lead to earthy iron-like flavors in this funky, off-beat but compelling wine. A deep plummy richness underlies the earthy tones and helps the wine evolve across the palate and through the finish. —J.G.  
**abv:** 14.1% **Price:** \$28

**88 Jamie Slone Wines 2016 P1 (Santa Ynez Valley).** Baked cherry and berry aromas meet with nutmeg spice and a touch of grape seed on the nose of this blend of 66% Cabernet Sauvignon and 34% Syrah. Tangy and somewhat primary aromas of black-plum skins and more grape seed show on the palate. —M.K.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$49

**88 Lapis Luna 2017 Red Wine Blend (North Coast).** This full-bodied wine balances the full fruitiness of strawberries and red cherries