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Wine Guy: Hearty reds for the winter season

BY RICH MAURO Special to The Gazette Jan 16, 2025 Updated Jan 16, 2025

Rich Mauro.

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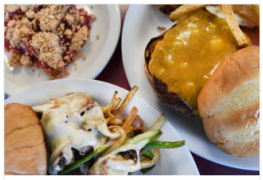

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Sheldon's Luncheonette boasts a relationship with Colorado Springs that surpasses many marriages: 56 years, and it's still going strong.

While I drink all kinds of wine all year around, I do tend to drink much more red wine during the cold months. And I bet most of you do also. Below are several suggestions to start the year in style.

• 2021 Sullivan Rutherford Estate "Coeur de Vigne" Cabernet Sauvignon ($100). Sullivan Rutherford was founded in 1972 during Napa's boutique winery boom. This balances the best aspects of New World winemaking (finesse, ripeness, approachability) with those of Old World (elegance, tradition, acidity, sense of place). French for "Heart of the Vine" (cabernet sauvignon, with merlot, petit verdot), it presents mouthwatering blue and black fruits, a firm structure and fine tannins.

• 2022 PlumpJack Syrah Napa Valley ($86). PlumpJack was founded 30 years ago on a property known for producing fine wines since 1881. This wine is sourced from estate vineyards in Carneros and Atlas Peak. The wine offers concentrated dark fruits, bright acidity, olive and meaty notes, white pepper and supple tannins.

• 2016 Ramón Bilbao "Mirto" ($80). From a pioneering Spanish winery founded in 1924 in Rioja, this wine's fresh, fruit-forward style is the result of a century of exploration. Made only in exceptional years from the best old vine grapes sourced from estate vineyards, it is 100% tempranillo. Expect a complex mix of dark fruits, licorice, brown spices, chocolate and coffee.

• 2020 Darioush Signature Merlot Napa Valley ($74). Founded in 1997, Darioush has built a reputation for elite quality wines from Bordeaux varieties. A fine example of mountain-grown fruit (vineyards atop Mount Veeder) providing energy and focus blended with valley floor fruit contributing lush, supple fruit and texture, resulting in complexity and concentration.

• 2021 JONATA "Todos" Red Blend ($50). Todos, meaning "everyone" in Spanish, is a mosaic of grapes grown on the JONATA Estate in the Santa Ynez Valley of California's Santa Barbara County. It features 2/3 syrah, with cabernet sauvignon, petite sirah, merlot for freshness, bold fruit, black pepper, minerality.

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Online Poll

Is it time to retire the penny?

- Yes, it costs more to make than it's worth
- No, we still need it for transactions
- Only if prices are rounded fairly
- I don't care, I never use pennies
- Not sure

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• 2022 Inman Family Wines G&T ($42). From a producer of superior Russian River Valley pinot noir, this is an intriguing blend of grenache and tempranillo sourced from Two Brothers Vineyard in the Clear Lake appellation of Lake County. It showcases bright red fruits with earth and spices, solid structure and hints of oak.

• What's better than a fine port to warm one's soul in the cold of winter? For me it's 200-year-old Graham's Trio Port pack ($55) with a 200 ml bottle of each of three delicious ports: Six Grapes Reserve, a young, fresh ruby port but showing more intensity and richness than typical; 10-Year-Old Tawny offering hints of nut, honey, fig with mature fruit flavors and a luscious finish; and 20-Year-Old Tawny, benefiting from long aging, is complex and enticing with almond, orange, pure berry fruits, and elegant finish.

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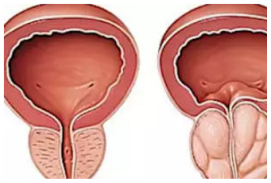

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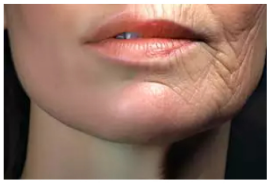

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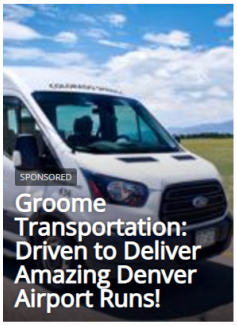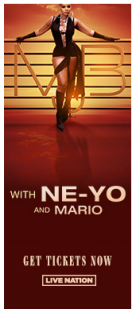
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