Robb Report

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DINING · ART · WINE · TRAVEL · REAL ESTATE · SPIRITS · DESIGN · MARINE

37TH ANNUAL

BEST OF THE BEST

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

WINE

By Mike DeSimone and Jeff Jenssen

THE BIG IDEA

SIP HAPPENS

MORE THAN 90 years after Congress repealed the 18th amendment, also known as Prohibition, and made consuming alcohol legal again, there's a new temperance movement in town. The concept of "mindful drinking" has spread in popularity, especially among younger people. A 2023 Gallup Poll found that the number of adults under age 35 who drink has fallen by 10 points over the past two decades, from 72 percent to 62 percent. (By contrast, drinkers over the age of 55 have increased in the same period, from 49 percent to 59 percent.)

"It is becoming clear that, for whatever reasons, today's younger generations are just less interested in alcohol and are more likely than older generations to see it as risky for their health and to participate in periods of abstinence like Dry January," said George Koob, Ph.D., director of the National Institute of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse, in a statement.

And while medical professionals largely agree that drinking less has big benefits, it's not the healthiest situation for winemakers. Throw in the tariffs on goods from the European Union, and the result is a wine industry fighting for its life.

In an attempt to reverse the trend, an organization called Come Together—A Community for Wine has begun campaigns to focus on favorable messaging, framing vino as a communal beverage with historical and cultural associations. Unlike unlicensed wellness influencers, the people who produce, sell, and write about the stuff cannot make any claims linking wine and health, so the group's efforts center on positive, consumer-focused concepts. Think the social benefits of getting together with friends to enjoy a glass of wine. (To wit, instead of Sober October, the group has coined Come Over October.)

Meanwhile, members of industry groups such as the U.S. Wine Trade Alliance are meeting with congresspeople to make them aware of the deleterious effects of wine tariffs on every sector of the industry. The 1,200 wine importers, 1,000 distributors, 47,500 wine and spirits retailers, and 350,000 independently owned restaurants in the United States who rely on the consumption of wine to keep their doors open need far more than a "this too shall pass" attitude to beat back the current headwinds. It's important to remember that through wars, famines, droughts, and plagues, wine has brought flavor and joy to humans for more than 8,000 years. There's no reason to believe it is going to disappear from our lives anytime soon.

ILLUSTRATED BY **Nash Weerasekera**

WHITE BURGUNDY
AND WINE OF THE YEAR

DOMAINE PARENT CORTON

2022 Grand Cru Blanc

REPRESENTING THE 12TH generation of their family, winemaker Anne Parent and her sister Catherine Fages-Parent are the first women at the helm of Domaine Parent. After picking the grapes from a privileged site on the Corton hill, the duo fermented the juice with indigenous yeast and barrel aged it on the lees for 16 months. Aromas of Bartlett pear, nectarine, and toasted almond open for flavors of Granny Smith apple, lemon zest, and a touch of oyster shell. Despite the hot summer of 2022, this wine's lively acidity is the first thing that you'll notice—and the last impression this truly stunning wine will leave on the palate. *$399*

Dress, **Max Mara**; all jewelry, **Pamela Zamore.**

PHOTOGRAPHED BY **Scott Semler**

ROSÉ

CHÂTEAU D'ESCLANS 2022 GARRUS ROSÉ

(Côtes de Provence, France)

IF YOU CLOSED your eyes before sipping, you might think you were drinking an elegant white Chardonnay from Burgundy, but this amazing Provencal rosé wine is made using deep-garnet Grenache grapes grown on 100-year-old vines. Fermented in 600-liter temperature-controlled oak barrels, it undergoes twice weekly *bâtonnage*—in which settled lees are stirred back into the wine—for 11 months, which imparts structure and creaminess. Reminiscent of a Saint-Tropez sunset, it is pale pink in the glass and has aromas of vanilla, strawberry, and red raspberry. A backbone of minerality supports flavors of red plum, white citrus blossoms, and honeydew. *$125*

AROMATIC WHITE

TRIMBACH

2018 Clos Ste. Hune Riesling (Alsace, France)

THE 2018 BOTTLING represents the 99th anniversary of Trimbach's Clos Sainte Hune Riesling's first release. Located in the unique terroir of Rosacker Grand Cru in Hunawihr, the *monopole* vineyard has been owned by one family for over 200 years and is a little larger than four acres in size. Its limestone soils are studded with broken-down seashell remnants, which impart a unique minerality to this stunning wine. It has aromas of verbena, Bartlett pear, and mango, with balanced acidity and flavors of freshly sliced apricot, yellow peach, and yellow plum. *$499*

DESSERT WINE

KOPKE

2022 Quinta São Luiz Vintage Port (Douro, Portugal)

THIS DELICIOUS PORT, made from fruit grown on old vines, is composed of a field blend of 35 different varieties of grapes, with Touriga Nacional accounting for 30 percent of the finished wine. It is deep red-purple in color with aromas of red plum, black pepper, and blackberry pie. Silky-smooth with just the right levels of sweetness and acidity, it offers flavors of raspberry jam, vanilla, and red currant on the palate. Enjoy this perfectly balanced sweet wine with strong cheeses—like Stilton—or with fruit-based desserts. *$87*

This page: Clothing, **Slowear;** watch, **Blancpain.**
Opposite: Dress, **Max Mara;** bracelet, **Emily P. Wheeler;** rings, **Pamela Zamore.**

ROSÉ CHAMPAGNE

NICOLAS FEUILLATTE

2008 Palmes d'Or Rosé Intense

FROM THE HOUSE that produces the No. 1 Champagne in France comes a limited-edition rosé made with 100 percent Pinot Noir from two cru vineyards. According to chief winemaker Guillaume Roffiaen, Palmes d'Or Rosé Intense "is only made when the vintage is remarkable and promises a high aging potential." The coldest year of its decade, 2008 provided freshness and vitality that are evident in its vivid aromas of peach and pomegranate. Pale apricot in the glass with a persistent column of fine bubbles, this elegant sparkler offers flavors of lemon, red plum, and lavender with a delicate structure and brilliant acidity. *$230*

WHITE CHAMPAGNE

DOM PÉRIGNON

2015

THE SINGULAR HOUSE to produce only vintage Champagne, Dom Pérignon has bottled its 46th declared vintage since its inaugural release in 1936. Cellar master Vincent Chaperon attributes the 2015's "bright, focused character and the signature texture" to a season of extreme weather, including a prolonged summer drought. With aromas of peach, brioche, and espresso bean, this luscious dram washes over the mouth with flavors of apricot, vanilla, lemon zest, and rose petal. Well structured and offering gorgeous acidity, this blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay energizes the palate with a sense of precision and focus. *$295*

Scarf blouse, **Another Tomorrow;** trousers, model's own; Scarf ring, **Pamela Zamore;** diamond ring, **Wempe.**

AMERICAN PINOT NOIR

ARISTA

2021 Ulises Valdez Lucky Well Vineyard (Sonoma, California)

"THE U. V. LUCKY Well Vineyard, and frankly the entire lineup of Pinot Noirs from 2021, are without a doubt the most deeply and vibrantly colored wines we have produced," says Arista's winemaker, Matt Courtney. That intensity carries through to the aroma and palate thanks to a season noted for ideal growing conditions and Courtney's incorporation of whole-cluster fermentation into the winemaking regimen. Deep ruby to the eye, this wine has aromas of pomegranate, vanilla bean, and black tea. Flavors of cranberry, pomegranate, milk chocolate, and juniper berry are wrapped in a sheath of polished tannins and brilliant acidity. *$104*

AMERICAN CABERNET SAUVIGNON

SULLIVAN RUTHERFORD ESTATE

2021 J. O. Sullivan Founder's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley, California)

DROUGHT-LIKE CONDITIONS in 2021 created a vintage marked by 30 percent less fruit and petite, intensely flavored grapes that were vinified to make this exceptionally concentrated wine. A blend of 89 percent Cabernet Sauvignon and 11 percent Petit Verdot, it was aged for 22 months in 85 percent new French oak. Densely colored in the glass, it smells like black raspberry and brown baking spices and has a silky tannic backbone that supports flavors of elderberry, black plum, cassis, and powdered dark cocoa. Only 500 cases were produced. *$350*

Watch.
Parmigiani.

AMERICAN WHITE WINE

CHALK HILL

2021 Founder's Block Chardonnay (Sonoma, California)

SITUATED IN THE Russian River Valley's Chalk Hill region, this 1,500-acre estate of the same name is planted with a one-of-a-kind proprietary Chardonnay clone developed in partnership with U.C. Davis's esteemed viticulture and enology department. Courtney Foley, executive vice president and owner of Foley Family Wines & Spirits, says this was the favorite wine of her father, Bill, who founded the company. Winemaker Darrell Holbrook fermented the juice with native yeast and matured it in 92 percent new French oak for 15 months. With flavors of Gala apple, Bartlett pear, and nutmeg, it is full textured and bursting with acidity. *$125*

Watch.
Blancpain.

BORDEAUX

CHÂTEAU ANGELUS

2022 Le Majestueux Saint Émilion

MADE WITH 60 percent Merlot and 40 percent Cabernet Franc, the 2022 edition of Angelus is called Le Majestueux (the Majestic) thanks to the unprecedented resistance the vines showed during the season's severe drought. Château Angelus C.E.O. and owner Stéphanie de Boüard-Rivoal points to the years of work her team has done in the vineyard to "reliably produce magnificent, ripe berries," resulting in a wine with a "a remarkable sense of freshness, energy, and tension." Its black-fruit and violet aromas, flavors of purple plum, cassis, and candied violet, and gorgeous polished tannins make for a beautiful pour. *$530*

RED BURGUNDY

DOMAINE FAIVELEY

2020 Corton Clos des Cortons Faiveley Grand Cru Monopole

ONE OF ONLY two grand cru *monopoles* in Burgundy that also bear the name of their owner—and the only grand cru site for red wines in the Côte de Beaune—Domaine Faiveley is a special locale. Its seventh-generation proprietor, Erwan Faiveley, praises this vintage for its "astonishing ripeness." A bouquet of black cherry, clove, rose petal, and river rock gives way to raspberry, dried-cranberry, and nutmeg flavors with hints of white chocolate and orange zest. Velvety tannins and well-integrated acidity mean you can drink it now or hold it for the next 20 years. *$492*

WINES OF THE WORLD

France and California might have stolen this year's show, but there are still plenty of excellent bottles to be found around the globe.

ARGENTINA

BODEGA COLOMÉ

2019 Altura Máxima (Salta)

Grapes for this fantastic wine are grown at altitudes of 9,500 to 10,200 feet—some of the world's highest vineyards. That's important, because "as elevation increases, we see darker color and greater aromatic complexity with more structure and freshness in the mouth," according to winemaker Thibaut Delmotte. Deep garnet to ruby red in the glass, this wine has aromas and flavors of plum, dark chocolate, and black cherry. *$152*

SPAIN

BODEGAS PORTIA

2020 Summa Finca Fuentellamas (Ribera del Duero)

Made from grapes grown on 105-year-old vines, this stunning wine has increased acidity, lower tannins, and a more elegant structure than previous vintages. Aged for 18 months in large and small barrels, it has aromas of blueberry, black raspberry, and cassis and flavors of juicy ripe black fruits with a touch of spice in the finish. Only 3,733 bottles were made. *$134*

AUSTRALIA

PENFOLDS

2020 Grange (South Australia)

Grange is often referred to as the best and most coveted Australian wine, and the 2020 vintage certainly lives up to that reputation. "The philosophy for Grange is the best of the best that the vintage can offer, regardless of region," says chief winemaker Peter Gago. This stunner offers aromas and flavors of Luxardo cherry, macerated black raspberry, and vanilla with elegant, rounded, and velvety tannins. *$850*

ITALY

RENATO RATTI

2020 Rocche dell'Annunziata Barolo (Piedmont)

Proprietor and winemaker Pietro Ratti explains that the cliffside Rocche dell'Annunziata vineyard "represents the quintessential elegance of Barolo." Only 3,600 bottles and 200 magnums were made of this garnet-colored wine, which has aromas of crushed violets, rose petals, and red raspberry and flavors of black and red fruits wrapped in silky tannins. *$190*

NEW ZEALAND

VILLA MARIA

2019 Ngakirikiri Gimblett Gravels Cabernet Sauvignon (Hawkes Bay)

Ngakirikiri is produced only in exceptional vintages—the 2019 represents just the fourth bottling since the inaugural 2013 release. The apex of Villa Maria's offerings, this New Zealand Cab offers aromas of mocha, pencil lead, and black currant with silky-soft tannins and flavors of plum, cigar box, and black raspberry. *$100*

CHILE

VIÑEDO

2021 Chadwick (D.O. Puente Alto)

The 2014 bottling was the first Chilean wine to receive a 100-point score from a major publication. The 2021 vintage recently garnered multiple perfect scores. Technical director Emily Faulconer attributes this to the wine's "perfect balance between texture and tension." We found voluptuous mouthfeel and precise acidity with aromas and flavors of black currant, red plum, and crushed violet petals. *$380*