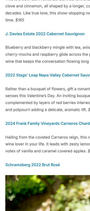

Love at First Sip: California Wines that Promise Romance

Written by Alison Bailin Batz · Published on February 4, 2026 · in Food & Drink, Wine

Whether the evening involves a white tablecloth, takeout eaten straight from the box, or a couch with a scintillating playlist and zero plans beyond pouring another glass, the right wine will surely set the mood this Valentine's Day. These sensational locally grown wines are sure to make your paramour swoon long after the first sip.

Dry Creek Vineyard Sparkling Chenin Blanc

Bright, lively, and instantly celebratory, this sparkler opens with Asian pear and green apple before a whisper of raspberry joins the party. Crisp and mineral-driven, it feels like popping a cork just to say, "Why not?" Perfect for first pours and last toasts alike. *$50*

ONEHOPE 2021 Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

The Oakville AVA is a viticultural treasure where soil, topography, and climate join in harmony, giving life to rich and expressive wines. Aged for 22 months in French oak, this wine explodes with bold, beguiling flavors of red currant and blackberry. *$200*

Clos du Val 2022 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

From a multigenerational, family-owned estate in Stags Leap District, this California Cabernet wraps black fruit and savory spice into a silky, mouth-filling embrace. It's confident, composed, and quietly seductive. It is ideal for a candlelit dinner that stretches into the night. *$60*

Ram's Gate 2021 Pinot Noir, Gap's Crown Vineyard

Silky, seductive, and full of allure, this Pinot Noir is made for candlelit evenings. The 2021 vintage opens with classic blue fruit notes and ripe plum, unfolding into layers of richness that feel wonderfully indulgent. Elegant tannins and beautifully balanced concentration give the wine a graceful structure, while a touch of whole-cluster fermentation adds subtle depth. *$80*

Gary Farrell 2023 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

Silky and refined, this inaugural release from the acclaimed winery's winemaker captures the magic of the Sonoma Coast with red and blue berry notes framed by lively acidity. Elegant without trying too hard, it's the wine equivalent of an effortlessly charming date. *$50*

Siduri 2024 Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir

Raspberry, turned earth, and violets lead into black plum, blueberry, and subtle anise. Expressive yet balanced, it's an easy yes for Valentine's night. *$25*

Cambria 2024 Julia's Vineyard Rosé of Pinot Noir

White peach, strawberry, citrus, watermelon, and grapefruit make this rosé bright, refreshing, and irresistibly pretty. Think love notes, not love letters. *$25*

Hartford Court 2023 Four Hearts Vineyard Chardonnay

Textured and luxurious, this Chardonnay layers yellow apple, orange blossom, honeysuckle, tangerine skin, spice, and crystallized ginger with a long, mineral-driven finish. A rich, lingering goodbye in a glass. *$50*

Palmaz Vineyards 2021 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

This is a slow-burn romance. Dark currant and orange peel lead into warming spices like clove and cinnamon, all shaped by a longer, cooler growing season. Drink now or save it for decades. Like true love, this show-stopping romantic California wine will stand the test of time. *$185*

J. Davies Estate 2022 Cabernet Sauvignon

Blueberry and blackberry mingle with tea, anise, and dark mint chocolate on the nose, while cherry-mocha and raspberry glide across the palate. Structured yet juicy, this is the kind of wine that keeps the conversation flowing long after dessert. *$150*

2022 Stags' Leap Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

Rather than a bouquet of flowers, gift a romantic California wine that evokes the same senses this Valentine's Day. An inviting bouquet of warm spices and sweet oak is complemented by layers of red berries interwoven with floral undertones of red rose, violet, and potpourri adding a delicate, aromatic lift. *$65*

2024 Frank Family Vineyards Carneros Chardonnay

Hailing from the coveted Carneros reign, this romantic California wine is perfect for the white wine lover in your life. It leads with zesty lemon and guava aromas that are tempered by notes of vanilla and caramel covered apples. *$40*

Schramsberg 2022 Brut Rosé

Pink, playful, and polished, this Brut Rosé delivers strawberry, citrus, hibiscus, and shortbread cookie notes with a long, cranberry-kissed finish. It's flirty without being frivolous—perfect for love notes, literal or otherwise. *$50*

Annulus 2022 Cabernet Sauvignon, Vine Hill Ranch Vineyard

A single-vineyard stunner rated 100 points by *Decanter Magazine*, this Cabernet layers cranberries, chocolate, cedar, tobacco, violet, and loamy earth into a dramatic, unforgettable pour. This is the grand gesture wine. *$250*

Williams Selyem 2024 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley

A panoramic expression of the AVA, this iconic Pinot Noir brims with red cherry, dried cranberry, rose, and lavender. Graceful and expressive, it feels tailor-made for a Valentine's dinner that ends with shared smiles and empty glasses. *$70*

The Prisoner 2023 Red Blend

Lush, expressive, and smooth, this Zinfandel-based blend delivers red and black fruit with sweet spice and a velvety finish. Bonus points for giving back, with three percent of sales donated to The Center for Art & Advocacy. *$50*

J Vineyards & Winery Brut Rosé NV

Ripe raspberries, rose petals, and slivered almonds set the stage, followed by mandarin orange, roasted strawberry, and crème fraîche. Lively, mineral-driven, and endlessly charming, it's romance with impeccable balance. *$50*

Mount Veeder Winery 2022 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

Mountain intensity meets elegance in this Cabernet layered with black cherry, fig, bramble, cedar, baking spices, and black tea. Bold yet refined, it's a power couple of a wine. *$70*

Bouchaine Vineyards 2022 Brut Rosé

Crafted méthode Champenoise from Carneros fruit, this delicate sparkler shows white peach, apricot, and a touch of brioche. Soft, romantic, and quietly luxurious, it's a whisper rather than a shout. *$60*

Coeur de Vigne 2022 by Sullivan Rutherford Estate

French for "Heart of the Vine," this Cabernet Sauvignon lives up to its name with energy, grace, silky tannins, and structure. It's heartfelt, expressive, and undeniably Napa. *$80*

Kendall-Jackson Vintner's Reserve Brut Cuvée

Fresh, fruity, and refreshingly approachable, this Charmat Method sparkler pairs beautifully with oysters, sushi, fried foods, and soft cheeses. Love does not have to be complicated. *$20*

Clif Family x Reyna Noriega 2024 Rosé of Cabernet Franc

This stunner made from Cabernet Franc grapes is truly something special for the someone special in your life. From its delicate soft hue and utterly enchanting perfume of jasmine, crisp Asian pear, and tart cherry to its refreshing, bright acidity, it is a perfectly pink dream from start to finish. *$36*

Matanzas Creek 2024 Sauvignon Blanc, Sonoma County

Zesty lime, lemon, white nectarine, and honeysuckle create a bright, refreshing profile with balanced acidity. This is the crisp, clean slate wine—perfect for a fresh start or a flirty appetizer course. *$25*

Maggy Hawk 2023 Anderson Valley White Pinot Noir

Pear, key lime, lemon blossom, gardenia, and Rainier cherry shine in this vibrant, layered white Pinot Noir. Unexpected and intriguing, it's love at first sip for adventurous palates. *$55*

TAGS

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Alison Bailin Batz

Alison Bailin Batz, better known as @ABSeesItAll online, is a veteran public relations executive at the award-winning HMA Public Relations who began freelance writing as a hobby in 2007. One story turned to two, and two to about 2,000. Today, she is a contributor on all things luxury travel, wine, food and spirits for Fabulous Media Group as well as Wander with Wonder, WHERE Magazine, City Lifestyle Richman Media Group, AZ Big Media Times Media Group and many more in addition to serving as director of client service at her firm (and volunteering in the kitten ICU at the Humane Society). Alison's aim in life is best summed up by her social handle as "AB" truly does want to "see it all." Then she wants to share it all with you.

‹ Fabulous People: Sandor "Sandy" Shapery

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- Fabulous People: Sandor "Sandy" Shapery
- Black History Month Events in Los Angeles 2026
- Cherryfish Debuts in Pacific Beach With Modern American Izakaya Dining
- Beverly Hills Hotel's Private Architectural Landmarks Tour

Upcoming Events

FEB 4 · February 4 - February 14 · **Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF)**
FEB 6 · 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm · **La Jolla Art Walk**
FEB 12 · February 12 - February 22 · **Modernism Week 2026**
FEB 14 · 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm · **Carmel Art Walk**
FEB 17 · 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm · **Surf City Nights**

View Calendar

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