

## Find good wine for a reasonable price

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By **BILL AND KAREN GARLOUGH For GO**

When thinking of this April, two things come to mind: paying our income taxes and hoping the economy has finally bottomed out and will start recovering. Given these two financial matters, looking for wines that offer the best bang for your buck is timely.

The economic recession is on a global scale, so good value wines are to be found throughout the world. Exploring wines you may have heard of but never tried would be a fun diversion from money matters. My goal is to share some exciting and quality wines at unbeatable prices.

### Wine Facts

There are several regions in the world that have the reputation for quality wines at affordable prices. Value wines include Sauvignon Blancs from Chile, New Zealand and South Africa, Rieslings from our Pacific Northwest and Austria, Malbec from Argentina, Carmener and Cabernet reds from Chile, Shiraz and Shiraz-Cab blends from Australia, Barbera red wines from Northern Italy, Tempranillo, Grenache and Monastrell (Mourvedre) reds from Spain, and red wines from the Douro and the Dao regions of Portugal.



As a generality, these regions have transformed from an emphasis of quantity to quality production. These winemakers have dramatically reduced their yields per acre and have focused on their wine making techniques to allow the varietals natural flavor profiles and their terroir (combination of soil and climate) to become more pronounced.

While their quality is greatly improved, these wines still offer great values to the knowledgeable shopper.

Armed with this information, I explored several local retailers to find exceptional bargains from some of these internationally famous wine regions. I found the folks at Binny's to be in step with this theme, as their current tastings feature 70 percent value wines to meet customer demand.

### Bill's Picks

(With suggested retails -- some of these are currently on sale for even lower retail prices) Also, these value wines offer wonderful food pairing opportunities.

Avalon Cabernet Sauvignon, California: \$7.99. Robert Parker gives this red 85 points and describes it as an elegant medium-weight red. It is a blend of 86 percent cab and 14 percent Syrah. Food Pairings: Pairs well with lamb and beef dishes.

Luzon-Jumilla, Spain: \$7.99. Robert Parker rates this beauty 88 points. It is a blend of 65 percent Monastrell and 35 percent Syrah. He describes this red wine as smooth with savory fruit, good balance and a pure finish. The tasting notes include spice, violets and blueberry. Food Pairings: Pairs well with Mexican and other spicy dishes.

Antinori Toscana Santa Cristina, Italy: \$8.99. This red received 85 points from Parker, and it is described as an easy drinking red with cherry, citrus and a fresh herb character. "This never lets you down for the buck." Food Pairings: Pairs well with pizza and pasta dishes (particularly pasta bolognese).

Casa Lapostolle Sauvignon Blanc, Chile: \$9.99. The Casa Lapostolle winery routinely offers great value wines with critical acclaim. Parker rated this expressive and pleasing white 86 points and describes this as a light to medium bodied wine. Food Pairings: Pairs well with light salads and fish.

Domaine d'Andezon Cotes du Rhone, France: \$11.99. One of the great value wines south of Chateauneuf du Pape, this red wine is a blend of 90 percent Syrah and 10 percent Grenache. Parker gives the 2007 vintage 89 points and describes this wine as possessing a lovely texture, crisp acidity, medium to full-bodied with a long, smooth finish. This Rhone wine offers sweet blackberry and cassis fruit with hints of spring flowers. Yum! Food Pairings: Pairs well with roasts and beef stews.

NV Jonesy Old Tawny Port, Australia: \$9.99. This incredibly valued port wine received 93 points from Parker and is a blend that averages 46 years. Parker says this tawny delivers plenty of pleasure with a bouquet of sweet candied fruit and hazelnuts. Tawny Ports offer a light, nutty style. Food Pairings: Pairs well with rich chocolate desserts and cheeses (blue cheese is always a favorite).

Whatever the occasion, it's always a joy to share a quality bottle of wine at an affordable price.

### **Wine of the Month**

2006 Falesco Vitiano \$9.99

Keeping with the value wine theme, this Italian red from Umbria consistently receives scores from the Wine Spectator and Robert Parker from 88 to 92 points. The 2006 rated 88 points by both reviewers. While it is a blend of equal parts Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, it maintains its Italian character and benefits from some time to "breathe." Parker describes this as "possessing layers of plump, ripe fruit intermingled with sweet scents of French oak with a sleek, stylish personality." This aromatic fruit bomb is best consumed young and pairs well with pasta dishes and pizza.

Winemaker Riccardo Cotarella is best known for consulting at high-end wineries and also consistently produces great value wines at his Falesco estate.



*Courtesy of Bill and Karen Garlough*

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