

# WINE ENTHUSIAST BUYING GUIDE



KEVIN JUDD/CEPHAS

In the Southern Hemisphere, autumnal colors fall over the vineyards in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand.

# MARCH 2016

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# NEW ZEALAND

Current releases include diverse selections

Approximately 70 percent of New Zealand's grape harvest is Sauvignon Blanc. And it accounts for 86.5 percent by volume of the country's exports, according to the 2015 annual report by New Zealand Winegrowers. In terms of shelf space in American wine retailers, the proportion might be even higher.

I get it—Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc has become an international standard. In this issue, the Sauvignon Blanc reviews are a microcosm of the current state of the market: A handful of late-release 2013s (a fine vintage); a preponderance of the less-exciting 2014s; and a preview of the low yielding but potentially excellent 2015s.

New Zealand Chardonnay also has world-class potential, with the pace set by the consistent excellence of Kumeu River's offerings. Other stars include Cypress in Hawke's Bay and Dog Point and Greywacke in Marlborough.

In much of the New World, Chenin Blanc is a maligned and abused grape variety, but this month's New Zealand reviews includes two stel-

lar examples: Millton and Pyramid Valley.

New Zealand's Pinot Noirs are the country's best-known red wines, but for heartier stuff, look to the Gimblett Gravels subregion of Hawke's Bay. In top vintages, the area's Bordeaux-inspired blends and varietal Syrahs combine bold fruit and supple tannins with balanced acids. The 2013s may be one of the best years ever for these wines, so although the quantities of these wines that make it to the U.S. are limited, they're worth seeking out.

Elsewhere in this month's Buying Guide, be sure to check out the wide variety of bold red wines from Sicily, as well as other selections of classic

Old World wines from Bordeaux and Austria. From the New World, there are hundreds of reviews from the Americas, including California, Washington, New York and Chile. And, as always, be sure to visit out our newly redesigned database, with thousands more reviews, at [winemag.com/ratings](http://winemag.com/ratings).

Cheers!

—Joe Czerwinski

In this issue, the Sauvignon Blanc reviews are a microcosm of the current state of the market.

## CHARDONNAY

**92 Cypress 2013 Terraces Chardonnay (Hawke's Bay).** This is a smashing American debut for this wine, which comes from a small vineyard atop Roy's Hill, overlooking the Gimblett Gravels. Welcoming peach and pineapple fruit is framed by toasted-grain elements in this whole-cluster-pressed and barrel-fermented wine. It's mouthfilling, but maintains a sense of balance while finishing long, with hints of honey and citrus. Drink now–2018. Wine Dogs Imports LLC. —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$35

**92 Greywacke 2013 Chardonnay (Marlborough).** For full review see page 6.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$40

**92 Kumeu River 2013 Maté's Vineyard Chardonnay (Kumeu).** For full review see page 6. *Cellar Selection.*  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$52

**91 Kumeu River 2013 Coddington Chardonnay (Kumeu).** This shows a touch less oak than the Maté's Vineyard, with more emphasis on pineapple and citrus. It's medium-bodied, with a slightly custardy texture, and turns tangy and crisp on the finish. Drink now–2020. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$45

**91 Kumeu River 2013 Hunting Hill Chardonnay (Kumeu).** Like the other 2013 Chardonnays from Kumeu River, this boasts crisp acids. Melon and lime notes dominate at first, slowly being overtaken by zesty pineapple fruit on the finish. Quaffable now, but sure to deepen and round out with a

few years of aging. Drink now–2020. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

**abv:** 14%

**Price:** \$49

**90 Dog Point 2013 Chardonnay (Marlborough).** This starts off a bit funky, with struck match aromas partially obscuring apple and citrus fruit. Yet it's full and custardy in feel, with hints of fruit showing through and a long, harmonious finish, so there's optimism for its future development. Drink now–2020. Vintus LLC. —J.C.

**abv:** 14%

**Price:** \$38

**87 Craggy Range 2013 Single Vineyard Kidnappers Vineyard Chardonnay (Hawke's Bay).** Craggy Range has put their marketing energy in the U.S. behind this largely unoaked Chardonnay. It's clean and bright, with refreshing melon and pear notes, but not a ton of weight or complexity. Drink this medium-bodied dry white now through 2018. Kobrand. —J.C.

**abv:** 13%

**Price:** \$22

## SAUVIGNON BLANC

**92 Clos Henri 2013 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** It's interesting to compare this to the 2014, which I also tasted recently. The 2013 is balanced and silky by comparison, with a fine tapestry of interwoven aromas ranging from pineapple and mixed citrus to charming herbaceousness and fresh-cut grass. Pink grapefruit flavors linger on the finish. Chambers & Chambers. —J.C.

**abv:** 14.1%

**Price:** \$25

**92 Greywacke 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Former Cloudy Bay boss Kevin Judd scores big in this challenging vintage. The wine is round, ripe and amply concentrated, with grassy, herbal shadings and pineapple and stone fruit notes that linger on the lush finish. Old Bridge Cellars. —J.C.

**abv:** 13%

**Price:** \$23

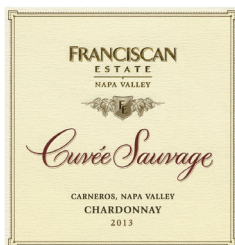
**92 Jules Taylor 2013 OTQ Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** This is a wild-yeast, barrel-fermented wine that makes one wonder why other producers' versions are so pricey. Silky textured and moderately weighty on the palate, it offers up complex aromas of smoky struck flint, subtle herbaceousness and ripe melon and fig. Drink it now–2017. Maritime Wine Trading Collective. *Editors' Choice.* —J.C.

**abv:** 14%

**Price:** \$22

**91 Dog Point 2013 Section 94 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** From a couple of pioneers of the style, this barrel-fermented Sauvignon Blanc shows aggressive fumé-style aromas of smoky struck flint. Grilled melon and fig flavors take hold of the silky midpalate, followed by lingering grape-

Continued on page 16



**92 Franciscan 2013 Cuvée Sauvage Chardonnay (Carneros).** This wine is medium to full bodied, with integrated, toasty oak and a healthy dose of baked apple and pear. Made in a luxurious style, it delivers in flavor and subtle elegance, with the structure to age further. Drink through 2020. *Cellar Selection.* —V.B.

abv: 14.5%

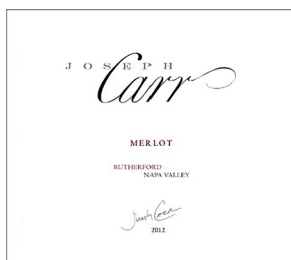
Price: \$40



**92 Greywacke 2013 Chardonnay (Marlborough).** This is a fairly big, weighty Chardonnay, but one whose alcohol levels are balanced by crisp acids. Aromas of smoke and toasted grains lead the way, followed by hints of whole wheat toast and lemon curd. The long, mouth-watering finish brings the citrus elements back to the fore. Drink now–2018. Old Bridge Cellars. —J.C.

abv: 14.5%

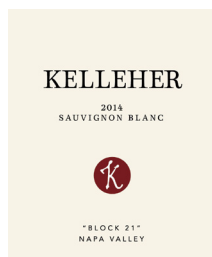
Price: \$40



**92 Joseph Carr 2012 Merlot (Rutherford).** This wine is a standout, with seasoned, full-bodied layers of peppercorn, clove, cinnamon and jammy plum, balanced in weight and length, with just a hint of sanguine character. While it plays the savory card successfully, it dabbles judiciously in dark chocolate, too, finishing like a chocolate kiss. *Editors' Choice.* —V.B.

abv: 14.7%

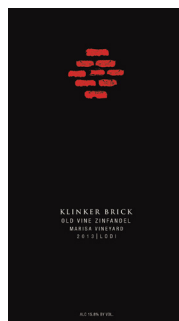
Price: \$40



**92 Kelleher 2014 Block 21 Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley).** This is a sophisticated, stylish and ultimately tasty wine, given time in mostly stainless steel, with 10% in neutral oak. Fleshy, floral and full bodied without ever becoming obtrusive, it offers a nice mix of Meyer lemon and vanilla. The elements are integrated and the punchy texture offers both depth and breadth. —V.B.

abv: 14.3%

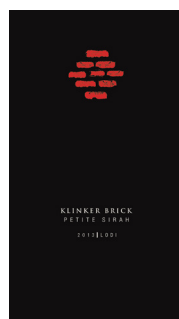
Price: \$30



**92 Klinker Brick 2013 Marisa Vineyard Zinfandel (Lodi).** Just plain delicious, this full-bodied wine starts with ripe blueberry and dark chocolate aromas. Next, generous, ripe, saturated fruit flavors flood the mouth, seeming to deepen with each sip. The mouthfeel stays smooth but is enhanced by moderate tannins and ample acidity for good balance. —J.G.

abv: 15.8%

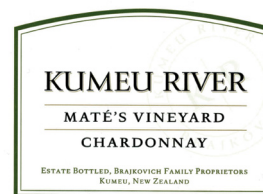
Price: \$30



**92 Klinker Brick 2013 Petite Sirah (Lodi).** Big, robust and powerful, this inky wine has wonderfully complex and assertive flavors, along with a thick, velvety and tannic texture. Flavors of espresso, dark chocolate and blueberries rush across the palate, linger in the chewy texture and last on the long finish. A bit bold to fully enjoy now, this will be best after 2019. *Cellar Selection.* —J.G.

abv: 15%

Price: \$25



**92 Kumeu River 2013 Maté's Vineyard Chardonnay (Kumeu).** Choosing favorites among Kumeu River's Chardonnays is always difficult. The 2013 Maté's is potentially the longest lived of this year's releases, showcasing tight, crisp citrus fruit garnished with hints of butter, tropical fruit and mocha-like oak. Drink 2018–2025. Wilson Daniels Ltd. *Cellar Selection.* —J.C.

abv: 13.5%

Price: \$52



**92 Lombardi 2013 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).** This lovely, luxurious wine hails from the Terra de Promissio Vineyard. It stands out for its thickness of earthy forest floor and exuberant fruit, a mix of candied raspberry, blueberry and cherry. Building structure and power as it opens in the glass, it finishes strongly tannic, suggesting more time in the cellar may be of benefit; hold through 2023. *Cellar Selection.* —V.B.

abv: 14.5%

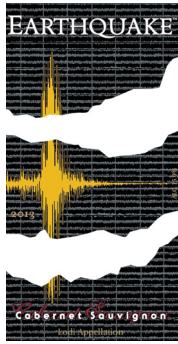
Price: \$38



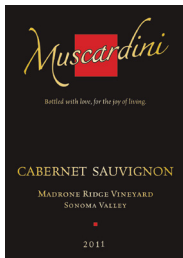
**92 MacPhail 2013 Toulouse Vineyard Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley).** A full-bodied, complex and supple-textured wine, this offers plump, ripe black-cherry aromas shaded by hints of forest floor and sautéed mushrooms, along with mild plum and cherry flavors. While soft and soothing on the palate, a fine layer of tannins wraps it up and keeps it appetizing. —J.G.

abv: 14.7%

Price: \$49



**90 Michael David 2013 Earthquake Cabernet Sauvignon (Lodi).** Flavors are deep and rich in this bold, full-bodied and mouthfilling wine. It smells like molasses, Bing cherries and black plums, tastes as if saturated with blackcurrants and cherries and has a layer of fine-grained tannin to add texture. *Editors' Choice.* —J.G.  
**abv:** 15% **Price:** \$26



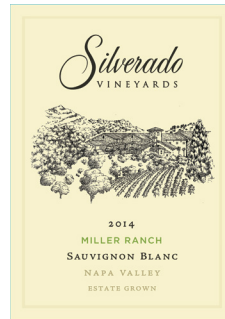
**90 Muscardini 2011 Madrone Ridge Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Valley).** This is a big, burly wine, hedonistically ripe in blackberry jam, black currant and espresso. A leathery texture gives it body and weight that never gives up, finishing in a shaker's worth of black pepper. —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.9% **Price:** \$48



**90 Oveja Negra 2011 The Lost Barrel (Maule Valley).** Cherry, plum and oak aromas are more subtle than forced. This is mostly Syrah and Carignan, with some Cab Franc and Petit Verdot. Dark, peppery, toasty black-fruit flavors finish full and grabby, with notes of cassis, herbs and spice. Drink through 2018. Old Bridge Cellars. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$27



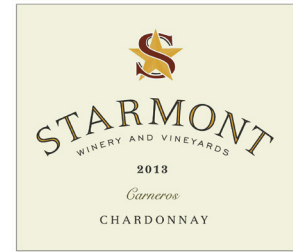
**90 Planeta 2013 Dorilli (Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico).** Silky and elegant, this offers delicate, enticing scents of wild red berry, rose, blue flower and baking spice. The linear, vibrant palate delivers Marasca cherry, crushed strawberry, anise and white pepper, accompanied by bright acidity and polished tannins. Palm Bay International. —K.O.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$33



**90 Silverado 2014 Miller Ranch Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley).** Medium-crisp, this wine delights in stone fruit and lime zest, with a taste of fuzzy apricot dominant on the palate. Showing a balance of body and weight, it wraps things up with a layer of acidity. —V.B.  
**abv:** 13.8% **Price:** \$22



**90 Spy Valley 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** For only clocking in at 13% abv, this is remarkably full in body and rich in texture, with hints of smoke highlighting citrus and stone fruit. The finish is particularly notable for its fine chalk dust and silk feel. Broadbent Selections, Inc. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$20



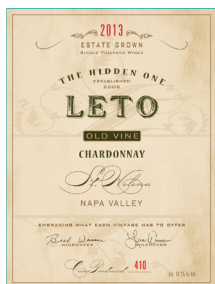
**90 Starmont 2013 Chardonnay (Carneros).** Light-bodied and modestly priced, this is a wine for a wide circle of friends, great for midweek meals and larger weekend gatherings. Hazelnut and caramel-honey confront the senses, while the palate offers balance and zesty acidity. The finish is soft and subtle. —V.B.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$22



**90 Starmont 2013 Pinot Noir (Carneros).** Earthy cranberry and orange compote surround this soft, seductive wine, made in relatively easy-to-find quantities and available at an attractive price. Forest floor and black tea tinge the still-tannic finish. —V.B.  
**abv:** 13.7% **Price:** \$27

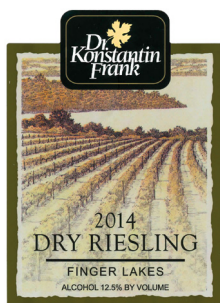


**90 Villa Maria 2014 Cellar Selection Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** A step up in weight, texture and concentration from VM's Private Bin bottling, Cellar Selection is the middle tier of the company's Sauvignon Blancs. Delicate leafy characters mark the nose, but the emphasis is on the engaging gooseberry and pink grapefruit notes. Textures of silk and cream add richness to the palate, lingering on the mouthwatering finish. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$17



**86** **Leto 2013 The Hidden One Old Vine Estate Grown Chardonnay (St. Helena).** From vines planted in the 1960s, and given time in 100% French oak, this dry, unctuous wine is tropical in character. A mix of pineapple and nutmeg teases its way into notes of canned corn. —V.B.  
**abv:** 14.2% **Price:** \$35

## BEST BUYS

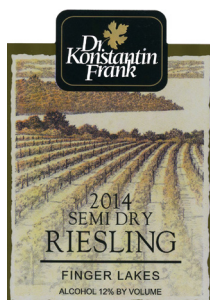


**91** **Dr. Konstantin Frank 2014 Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes).** With a palate-drenching fountain of peach nectar, grapefruit and orange blossom notes, this inexpensive Finger Lakes standard packs a surprising punch in the 2014 vintage. Dry, yet intensely ripe, it boasts long, lingering streaks of honey and fruit offset by zigzagging daggers of lime zest and lemon. It's penetrating and deliciously persistent. **Best Buy.** —A.I.  
**abv:** 12.5% **Price:** \$15



**91** **Dr. Konstantin Frank 2014 Gewürztraminer (Finger Lakes).** Sun-kissed tangerine, yellow peach and mango flavors drench the palate of this deeply concentrated Gewürztraminer. It's unabashedly forward and fruity yet briskly composed, finishing long on a deliciously astringent grapefruit note. Drink now through 2016. **Best Buy.** —A.I.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$15

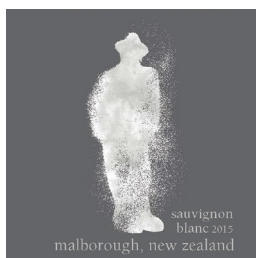
## BEST BUYS



**90** **Dr. Konstantin Frank 2014 Semi Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes).** Lemon-lime acidity cuts a laser-sharp edge through honey in this lush, concentrated Riesling full of pink grapefruit, mango and peach flavors. It's a lip smacking, juicy wine, yet stands up to even the most elegant occasions. Drink now. **Best Buy.** —A.I.  
**abv:** 12% **Price:** \$15

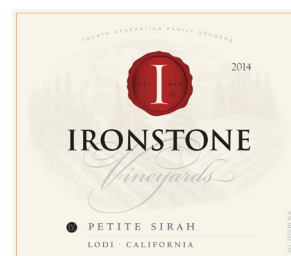


**90** **Francis Ford Coppola 2013 Votre Santé Chardonnay (California).** This delicious wine holds back a little on the aromas, but gives up a palate of enticing fruit and baking spice flavors dressed in accents of butter and toasted almonds. It offers a little more textural interest and a little less obvious ripeness than its competitors. **Best Buy.** —J.G.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$14



**90** **Innocent Bystander 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** This Australian (Yarra Valley-based) brand has bottled an excellent Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc. It's plump and ample in the mouth, while the aromas are laced with hints of struck flint, snow pea, celery leaf and gooseberry, all woven into fine balance and possessing a long, mouthwatering finish. Old Bridge Cellars. **Best Buy.** —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$15

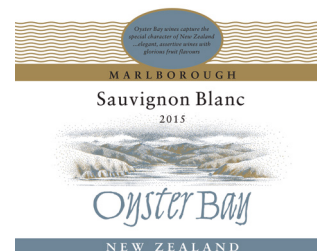
## BEST BUYS



**90** **Ironstone 2014 Petite Sirah (Lodi).** Intense and concentrated blackberry flavors rise above thick tannins in this full-bodied wine. Aromas suggest boysenberry, smoke and clove, while the flavors taste more like blackberry jam. Although the texture is dense and tannic, it stays velvety rather than drying. This will be great now with ribs or roast venison, but will easily age through 2020. **Best Buy.** —J.G.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$12



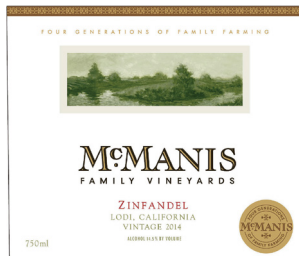
**90** **North by Northwest 2013 The Explorer Series Red Blend (Columbia Valley).** Aromas of coffee, toast, vanilla spice and dark fruit offer immediate appeal. The black-fruit flavors are ripe and generous, sticking around on the tart finish. **Best Buy.** —S.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$15



**90** **Oyster Bay 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Even big brands like Oyster Bay benefitted from the excellent vintage conditions in 2015, so consumers shouldn't be shy about trying some of them. This medium-bodied wine has a pleasant, silky texture, understated graphite and citrus aromas and flavors, and a long, mouthwatering finish. Oyster Bay Wines. **Best Buy.** —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$15



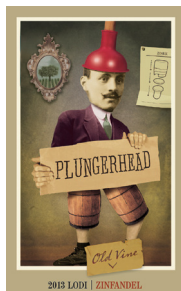
## BEST BUYS



**87 McMannis 2014 Zinfandel (Lodi).** Spicy, smoky oak aromas dominate this dark-colored and full-bodied wine. Cherry and raspberry emerge as the flavors. The texture is plush but not quite soft, as firm tannins and moderate acidity give it good structure. **Best Buy.** —J.G.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$11



**87 Oak Grove 2013 Family Reserve Zinfandel (California).** This lively, medium-bodied and well-balanced wine smells of raspberries and dried herbs. It tastes invitingly fresh, combining bright fruit with earthy and savory accents. The color is relatively light, matching the overall tangy personality. **Best Buy.** —J.G.  
**abv:** 13.8% **Price:** \$8



**87 Plungerhead 2013 Old Vine Zinfandel (Lodi).** Fresh and lively like a cherry soda, this medium-bodied wine has light, spicy, oaky aromas, lots of cherry and strawberry flavors and an easy-drinking texture. **Best Buy.** —J.G.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$12

## BEST BUYS



**86 Montevina 2014 Summit Ridge White Zinfandel (Amador County).** A bright pinkish-orange color makes this light-bodied wine stand out from the beginning. Fresh watermelon and cherry flavors carry on the rounded palate, with a slight sweetness giving softness. **Best Buy.** —J.G.  
**abv:** 11.5% **Price:** \$8



**86 Prodigio 2014 Nero d'Avola (Terre Siciliane).** Aromas of ripe dark-skinned fruit and a whiff of exotic spice lead the nose on this straightforward red. The medium-bodied palate offers prune, mature black cherry and a hint of star anise alongside dusty, but rather fleeting tannins that leave a tongue-drying finish. Winesellers, Ltd. **Best Buy.** —K.O.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$11

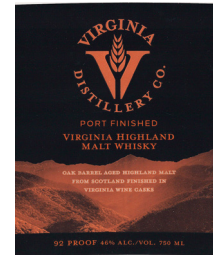


**85 Chilensis 2013 Reserva Carmenère (Maule Valley).** Herbal aromas of olive and eucalyptus are stronger than the wine's briary berry scents. Herbal berry flavors are savory and feature a lot of olive, while a roasted meat note is the closing act. Old Bridge Cellars. **Best Buy.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$10

## SPIRITS



**92 Collier and McKeel Tennessee Whiskey (USA; Tennessee Distilling Company, Nashville, TN).** Made from a mash of corn, rye and malted barley and aged four years, look for very sweet, bold aromas: lots of vanilla and caramel. The first sip is dry, showing cocoa, espresso and leather, but then the flavors seem to grow sweeter, more in line with the aromas, and coat the mouth with crême brûlée and a hint of butterscotch. It finishes spiced, with a flicker of alcohol heat.  
**abv:** 43% **Price:** \$60



**92 Virginia Distillery Co. Highland Malt Whisky (USA; Virginia Distillery Company, Lovings-ton, VA).** Highland malt whisky from Scotland is finished in former Port casks at the distillery in Virginia. The end result is a deep amber hue and a rich caramel and campfire-smoke profile, finishing dry and slightly hot, with sarsaparilla and lots of spice.  
**abv:** 46% **Price:** \$58

fruit on the finish. True to its usual impressive standard. Vintus LLC. —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$35

**91 Staete Landt 2014 Annabel Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** The blending of estate-grown lots given different vinification and maturation regimes has yielded uncommon elegance and complexity in a wine of this price. Stone fruit, citrus and modest herbal notes merge seamlessly on the medium-bodied palate, while the mouthfeel has a silky-creamy texture that's undeniably appealing. The Henry Wine Group. *Editors' Choice.* —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$19

**91 Vavasour 2013 Sauvignon Blanc (Awatere Valley).** For full review see page 9. *Editors' Choice.*  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$20

**91 Villa Maria 2014 Taylor's Pass Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** At first glance, this appears to be a well-made but fairly innocuous Marlborough Sauvignon. But give it a little more time in bottle, or air in the glass, and it fills out, gaining length and complexity. Pineapple and stone fruit aromas and flavors are appealing from the start, but the quality shines through on the long, vibrant finish that's filled with suggestions of nectarine and wet stone. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$25

**90 Cairnbrae 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Cairnbrae's 2014 is a pleasant surprise, boasting fine aromatics of celery leaf and struck flint, bold passion-fruit flavors and a long, mouthwatering finish. Subtle herb shadings and a rich texture add extra interest, but drink up by the end of 2016. Station Imports Inc. —J.C.  
**abv:** 12.5% **Price:** \$16

**90 Eradus 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Awatere Valley).** The Awatere Valley is a cooler subsection of Marlborough, where the wines can sometimes be a bit more leafy or herbal. This wine holds true to that pattern, but balances the celery leaf and tomato stalk character with melon and fig notes. It's verging on full-bodied, even a touch oily in texture, with a long, vibrant finish. Station Imports Inc. *Editors' Choice.* —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$18

**90 Greywacke 2013 Wild Sauvignon Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Struck flint and tomato leaf notes add welcome complexity to this wine's grapefruit aromas and flavors. For a wild-ferment Sauvignon Blanc, it's reasonably clean, with moderate body and a long, dry finish. Old Bridge Cellars. —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$29

**90 Innocent Bystander 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** For full review see page 13. *Best Buy.*  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$15

**90 Lake Chalice 2014 The Nest Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** This combines bold fruit flavors reminiscent of peach or nectarine with leafy, herbal notes. The tomato and celery leaf tones provide a cool contrast to the ripe fruit, and a burst of crisp acids on the finish keeps the wine refreshing. Pacific Prime Wines. *Best Buy.* —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$15

**90 Loveblock 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Owner-winemaker Kim Crawford knows a thing or two about Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, and despite a challenging vintage, this wine shines. Dry stony precision underscores passion fruit and herb notes, while crisp, citrusy flavors linger on the finish. Terlato Wines International. —J.C.  
**abv:** 12.5% **Price:** \$26

**90 Mud House 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** After some struck flint on the nose, this shows classic Marlborough Sauvignon characters, ranging from snow pea and cut grass to grapefruit and pineapple. It's medium bodied, with a clean, crisp finish, but should be consumed by the end of 2016. Accolade Wines NA. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$17

**90 Oyster Bay 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** For full review see page 13. *Best Buy.*  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$15

**90 Spy Valley 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** For full review see page 11.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$20

**90 Staete Landt 2014 Map Maker Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** A lovely Sauvignon Blanc at a lovely price, this shows characteristic notes of snow pea, cut grass and tropical fruit upfront, followed by hints of pink grapefruit and nectarine. It's medium in weight, with a long, stony finish. The Henry Wine Group. *Editors' Choice.* —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$16

**90 Villa Maria 2014 Cellar Selection Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** For full review see page 11.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$17

**90 Whitehaven 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** For full review see page 12.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$20

**89 Brancott 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Given the great potential of the 2015 vintage, it's reassuring to see that some big brands have scored successes like this. Explosive aromas of lime, tangerine and pink grapefruit burst from the glass, followed by ample citrus flavors. There's a hint of herbaceousness that grounds it in Marlborough, along with a long, passion fruit finish. Pernod Ricard. *Best Buy.* —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$14

**89 Drylands 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Despite some honeyed notes on the nose, this is a bit austere and stony overall. Herbal shadings accent pineapple and underripe stone fruit flavors, while a dry finish reinforces the impression of restraint. Constellation Brands, Inc. —J.C.  
**abv:** 12.5% **Price:** \$17

**89 Kim Crawford 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** The namesake is long gone from the company, but the wine is still a very good drop. Hints of snow pea and cut grass offset stone fruit flavors and a touch of honey. Drink this medium-bodied, mouthwatering wine up by the end of 2016. Constellation Brands, Inc. —J.C.  
**abv:** 12.5% **Price:** \$18

**89 Mount Nelson 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Snow pea is a descriptor often attached to Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, but I don't think I've ever tasted a wine that captures it as precisely as this one does. Zesty citrus notes fill out the wine's medium body and linger on the finish. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$18

**89 Sileni 2014 The Straits Reserve Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Subtle leafiness accents pineapple and grapefruit aromas in this solid effort from an inconsistent vintage. Despite its age, it's still tight, offering coiled notes of tropical fruit and citrus and finishing with crisp acids. Prestige Wine & Spirits Group. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$17

**89 Waipara Hills 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** This is a bold, assertive Sauvignon Blanc, boasting bright citrus aromas and flavors, lifted by just a sprinkling of cut grass. A bit of creaminess adds dimension on the palate, which then finishes on a burst of lime and grapefruit. Accolade Wines NA. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$19

**89 Yealands 2014 Single Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc (Awatere Valley).** For an Awatere wine, this isn't overly herbal. Instead, it delivers passion fruit and citrus aromas and flavors. It's plump, with a slightly creamy midpalate and medium body, making it an easy drink. Palm Bay International. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$25

**88 Astrolabe 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Green notes reminiscent of tomato leaves accent fig and melon flavors. It's only medium in body, but comes across as otherwise ripe in style, with a medium-length finish. Cannonball Wine Company. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$23

**88 Barker's Marquee 2014 Ranga Ranga Estate Grown Certified Sustainable Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** This is a good value, offering plenty of the plump, ripe fruit flavors and leafy,

**83 Clos Henri 2014 Petit Clos Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** This is lean and green, so if you like your wines redolent of green tomato, celery leaf and lime this is one to try. It's flavor profile and tart finish would make it pair well with ceviche. Chambers & Chambers. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$16

**82 Kate Radburnd 2014 Bud Burst Sauvignon Blanc (Hawke's Bay).** Disappointing, but perhaps this is just past its best? Scallion and green veggies nearly swamp nectarine fruit in this medium-bodied wine. Seaview Imports. —J.C.  
**abv:** 12.5% **Price:** \$19

## CHENIN BLANC

**92 Pyramid Valley 2013 Growers Collection Moteo Ridge Vineyard Chenin Blanc (Hawke's Bay).** This wine's wet-wool aromas are more characteristic of the grape's Loire Valley origins than any New World example I can remember tasting. Add notes of pineapple, truffle and honey, and this is a surefire winner. It's rich and slightly oily in texture, and even a bit off dry (13 g/L of residual sugar), but with a long, acid-lined finish. I'd even consider adding a bottle or two to the cellar to see how it develops. Pyramid Valley Vineyards LLC. *Editors' Choice.* —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$30

**90 Millton 2013 Te Arai Vineyard Chenin Blanc (Gisborne).** One of New Zealand's pioneering biodynamic estates, Millton's Chenin Blanc is perennially among the country's best. The 2013 is a bit oily in texture and quite rich, with just a bit of residual sugar (7 g/L). Apricot and honey aromas and flavors linger extravagantly on the finish. Verity Wine Partners. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$30

## PINOT NOIR

**93 Craggy Range 2013 Aroha Te Muna Pinot Noir (Martinborough).** A barrel selection off Craggy Range's estate vineyard in the Te Muna Road area of Martinborough, this isn't a huge blockbuster style, but one that favors elegance. The aromas and flavors are ripe, oozing with hints of plum, black cherry, cola and licorice, but what makes the wine special are its subtle spice shadings and silky texture. Drink now–2025. Kobrand. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$105

**92 Mt. Difficulty 2013 Bannockburn Long Gully Single Vineyard Pinot Noir (Central Otago).** This is a sturdy, tannic wine, but one that should come around in a few years. Vanilla, cedar and dark fruit notes have the spotlight for now, with hints of mocha coming on strong on the long finish. Drink 2018–2025. Broadbent Selections, Inc. *Cellar Selection.* —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$120

**91 Dog Point 2013 Pinot Noir (Marlborough).** A fine effort from the Sutherland-Healy partnership behind the label, this is silky and crisp, with bright hints of cherry highlighting darker notes of cola and plum. Vanilla and cedar notes frame the medium-bodied fruit without being overbearing in the least. Drink now–2025. Vintus LLC. —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$40

**91 Greywacke 2013 Pinot Noir (Marlborough).** The 2013 vintage was a solid one for Pinot Noir in just about every corner of New Zealand. This is medium-bodied and slightly creamy-textured, with dark notes of cola, mocha and plum, spiced up by hints of cinnamon and clove. The lengthy finish is supple and velvety. Drink now–2025. Old Bridge Cellars. —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$40

**91 Murdoch James 2013 High Block Pinot Noir (Martinborough).** For full review see page 8.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$40

## SYRAH

**93 Craggy Range 2013 Le Sol Gimblett Gravels Syrah (Hawke's Bay).** The style of this wine has evolved away from the massive ripeness and pure power in its early days to more finesse and elegance. It's still a rich wine, but silkier, with fresher fruit and more nuanced spice. Toasty oak seductively frames blueberry and plum fruit on the long finish. Drink now–2023. Kobrand. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$105

**93 Esk Valley 2013 Winemaker Reserve Gimblett Gravels Syrah (Hawke's Bay).** Rich, velvety and intense, this is packed with gorgeous mulberry and spice aromas and flavors, with intriguing hints of tar and espresso. Senior Winemaker Gordon Russell deserves much credit for crafting such a voluptuous expression of Hawke's Bay Syrah. Drink now–2025. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$39

**93 Trinity Hill 2013 Gimblett Gravels Syrah (Hawke's Bay).** Blind, you could be forgiven for thinking this is the winery's flagship, *Homage Syrah*. What an intoxicating nose of baking spices, blueberries and boysenberries, followed by ample weight and plush tannins. It's complex, earthy and spicy, but with a beam of lively, just-ripe fruit from start to long-lived finish. Drink this stunning value through 2023. Terroir Selections. *Editors' Choice.* —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$30

**92 Mission Estate 2013 Jewelstone Syrah (Hawke's Bay).** This is less luxuriantly ripe than some of the other 2013 Hawke's Bay Syrahs, showing some firm, dusty tannins on the finish, but it's still a terrific offering. Cracked black pepper, fresh blueberries and cedar notes come together beautifully on the palate, promising much for the

future. Drink 2018–2025. Station Imports Inc. —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$29

**92 Te Awa 2013 Single Estate Gimblett Gravels Syrah (Hawke's Bay).** A terrific value, this is one of the more forward Syrahs from Hawke's Bay's glorious 2013 vintage. It's on the full side of medium-bodied, with a slightly creamy texture and a crisp, softly dusty finish that underscores a mélange of pepper, clove, cinnamon, blueberries, raspberries and yellow-fleshed plums. Drink now–2023. RO Imports LLC. *Editors' Choice.* —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$23

**92 Te Mata 2013 Bullnose Syrah (Hawke's Bay).** Te Mata's Bullnose doesn't receive nearly the media attention of its flagship Coleraine, but it's a benchmark for Hawke's Bay Syrah—the violets and pepper on the nose couldn't be mistaken for any other variety. This is a bit creamy in texture on the midpalate but not weighty at all, more agile or spry, with a fine, silky feel on the finish. Drink now–2023. Wine Dogs Imports LLC. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$40

**91 Cypress 2013 Syrah (Hawke's Bay).** Blueberries and spice—think baking spices and cracked pepper—mingle easily in this medium-bodied, velvety-textured Syrah. Vanilla oak makes an appearance as well, but overall the wine is savory, with ample spice and structure. Drink now–2020. Wine Dogs Imports LLC. *Editors' Choice.* —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$25

**89 Stonecroft 2014 Crofters Gimblett Gravels Syrah (Hawke's Bay).** Alan Limmer of Stonecroft was the first modern grower of Syrah in New Zealand, planting his first vines in 1984. While the winery has changed hands, it's still a good source for Syrah. This bottling is appropriately smoky and peppery, with hints of bacon fat and blueberries, and a lingering, softly dusty finish. Sagan Imports LLC. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$23

**88 Maimai 2013 Syrah (Hawke's Bay).** This is a medium-bodied, oak-inflected wine. Initial aromas of sun-warmed lumber and vanilla give way with air to scents of cola, earth and mocha. The overall impression is savory, especially on the long finish, which picks up some asphalt notes. Probably best with herb-crusted beef or lamb. Pacific Prime Wines. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$22

**87 Mission Estate 2013 Syrah (Hawke's Bay).** Mission Estate is New Zealand's oldest winery, established in 1851 by French missionaries. The Syrah vines are young by comparison, but this wine is matured in tank, so what you smell and taste is unmarked by wood. The result is just a bit greenish—the cracked pepper and plum notes pick up



while a nectarine flavor drives the finish. Ararat Import/Export Co. LLC. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$NA

**87 Montes 2014 Alpha Chardonnay (Casablanca Valley).** Nutty, honeyed apple and melon aromas come with plenty of raw wood grain. This is an oaky, resinous Chardonnay with just enough core acidity to maintain balance. Creamy apple and melon flavors finish on barrel-driven resin and cinnamon accents. Guarachi Wine Partners. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$23

**86 Cono Sur 2014 Single Vineyard Block no.5 Quebrada Alta Chardonnay (Casablanca Valley).** Pithy aromas of melon and apple are low in oak and emphasize minerality. This feels full and chunky, but also acidic. Briny flavors of stone fruits lean toward sour, while an oily, briny tasting finish is short on elegance. Vineyard Brands. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$20

**86 Luis Felipe Edwards 2014 Marea Chardonnay (Leyda Valley).** Oily, harsh aromas of almond skins and stone-fruit pits lead to a weighty, slick, citric palate with apple and nectarine flavors. This ends pulpy and big, with white-fruit flavors bolstered by fresh acidity. Prestige Wine & Spirits Group. —M.S.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$25

**85 Alto Los Romeros 2015 Reserva Chardonnay (Maule Valley).** Apple and citrus aromas are accented by a floral hint of bath soap. This is a mid-level Chardonnay that's unexciting but not bad. Melon and pear flavors are low on oak and devoid of complexity. Domaine Select Wine Estates. —M.S.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$13

**85 Chilensis 2014 Reserva Estate Bottled Chardonnay (Maule Valley).** Straightforward apple and peach aromas announce your basic everyday quaffing Chardonnay: this is low on minerality and acidity, and thus it tastes of banana, melon and vanilla. A flat, melony finish lacks acidic framework. Old Bridge Cellars. *Best Buy.* —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$10

**85 Rubus 2014 Chardonnay (Colchagua Valley).** Peach pit, matchstick and almond skin aromas come across a bit harsh. This is chunky on the palate, with pulpy, pithy melon and lees flavors that take on a briny characteristic on the finish. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$15

**85 Santa Carolina 2013 Reserva de Familia Chardonnay (Limarí Valley).** Aromas of vanilla and pear are mild on the nose. This feels heavy and chunky, with low acidity. Vanilla, melon and papaya flavors taste as though they're on the way out, while this soft Chardonnay feels oily on the finish. Carolina Wine Brands USA. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$20

**84 Alto Los Romeros 2015 Chardonnay (Central Valley).** Generic from head to toe, this opens with a hint of wood and aromas that suggest cinnamon-spiced applesauce. The palate is plump but flat, while flavors of wood grain and mixed white fruits finish with a vanilla note and then lasting bitterness. Domaine Select Wine Estates. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$10

**84 Concha y Toro 2015 Reserva Casillero del Diablo Chardonnay (Chile).** A neutral nose offers mild notes of minerally rich vitamin but almost no discernible fruit. Lightly oaked pear flavors are distant and turn bitter in front of a finish that stands still. Excelsior Wines. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$11

**84 Grýphus 2015 Viña Macatero Estate Chardonnay (Maule Valley).** This smells both dry and oily, with apple and melon notes. The palate is round and healthy in feel, while flavors of honeyed apple and white peach turn more briny and pyrazinic as this breathes and finishes. Hammeken Cellars USA. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$11

**84 Ritual 2014 Supertuga Chardonnay (Casablanca Valley).** Stalky aromas of creamed corn hide notions of fruit on the nose. Flavors of peach and melon are leesy and oaky, while the finish tastes yeasty. Huneus Vintners. —M.S.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$20

**84 Santa Rita 2014 Medalla Real Gran Reserva Chardonnay (Leyda Valley).** Aromas of corn and melon are waxy and oily. This feels pinched and juicy, but not crisp or minerally. Stalky flavors of corn, citrus and apple lean towards bitter, as does the finish. Palm Bay International. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$18

**80 Aguirre 2014 Gaucho Andino Chardonnay (Maule Valley).** This has overripe tropical-fruit aromas on the nose. Wheaty, oxidized flavors finish with a note of mushy fruit. G&G Trading Company. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$7

## CABERNET SAUVIGNON

**93 Santa Rita 2011 Casa Real Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley).** For full review see page 5. *Editors' Choice.*  
**abv:** 14.1% **Price:** \$85

**92 Cono Sur 2011 Silencio Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley).** Earthy, spicy berry aromas come with accents of tomato, oregano and other herbs. This winner of a Cabernet is edgy, lively and tannic. Spicy oak, herbal notes of tobacco and thyme, raw oak and berry fruit flavors finish toasty, oaky, tannic and drawing. Drink through 2022. Vineyard Brands. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$175

**91 Aresti 2001 Family Selection Cabernet Sauvignon (Curicó Valley).** Lightly herbal aromas of black currant, tobacco, minerals and latent char provide for a fine opening. Given that this is now 14+ years old, its core structure and acidity level are excellent. Rooty flavors of licorice and black currant show toast and chocolate accents, while the finish is dry, spicy and whole. This is living proof that top Chilean Cabernets from exceptional vintages can age for up to two decades; drink through 2020. Italy Wines & Food Distributor, Inc. *Editors' Choice.* —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$45

**90 MontGras 2012 Intriga Maxima Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley).** Currant aromas blend with notes of tomato, herbs and brick dust on this tight, grabbing Cabernet. Currant and red plum flavors meet herbal notes of mint and carob, with an oak character rising up on a gritty finish. Drink through 2020. Palm Bay International. —M.S.  
**abv:** 15% **Price:** \$90

**88 Lapostolle 2013 Casa Grand Selection Cabernet Sauvignon (Rapel Valley).** Earthy aromas of rubber and herbs meet black cherry on the nose. The palate is lively, with bold acidity and grabby tannins carrying flavors of black plum, cassis and loamy earth. Drink this functional, everyday red through 2017. Terlato Wines International. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$14

**88 Ochagavia 2013 Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley).** Stalky, lightly green aromas of tobacco and mountain herbs blend with leathery plum and berry scents in front of a round, full-bodied palate. Loamy, earthy plum flavors come with an herbal covering, while this tastes oaky, herbal and like cocoa on the finish. Drink through 2018. Carolina Wine Brands USA. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$15

**87 Odfjell 2013 Armador Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley).** Herbal and savory smelling up front, this cool-vintage Cabernet also shows plum, berry and mild green aromas. A tight, tannic palate offers flavors of herbal plum and cherry, while the finish is choppy, drawing and tannic, with herbal leftovers. Epic Wines. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$13

**86 Chilcas 2013 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley).** Plum, cherry and cassis aromas are lightly charred but not really dark or dense. This shows high-toned, edgy acidity and hard tannins. Punchy, borderline sharp flavors of raspberry and herbal plum finish rough. Old Bridge Cellars. —M.S.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$12

**86 Chilcas 2013 Single Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley).** Concentrated aromas of licorice, mocha and generic black fruits are low on elegance. This is grabby and strong, with herbal plum and cassis flavors that finish chunkily

and deep, with good texture. Expect a saucy, herbal aftertaste. Old Bridge Cellars. —M.S.  
abv: 14.5% Price: \$19

**86 Santa Alicia 2013 Gran Reserva de Los Andes Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley).** Gritty, leathery aromas register as less than fully ripe. In the mouth, this Cabernet is a touch biting. Limited cherry and plum flavors come with burnt, herbal notes, while an earthy finish tastes of salt and chocolate. Halby Marketing. —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$15

**86 Siegel 2013 Single Vineyard Los Lingues Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley).** Blatant green aromas of bell pepper and thyme are the dominant aromas. A raw, tannic, edgy mouthfeel and herbal, green flavors are patently Chilean and compounded by this cool vintage. Mint and leftover green flavors take up space on a bullish, tannic finish. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$30

**86 Viña Casablanca 2014 Cefiro Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Casablanca Valley).** Aromas of olive, green herbs, mixed spices and black plum set up a full, grabby palate. Flavors of generic black fruits, bitter herbs and eucalyptus finish minty and leafy, with weight and cushion. Carolina Wine Brands USA. —M.S.  
abv: 13.8% Price: \$12

**85 Albamar 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Central Valley).** Earthy, scratchy, herbal aromas of cassis and raspberry lead to a punchy, wiry palate. Generic cherry and berry flavors are herbal and lightly green, while this is grabby and tannic on the finish. Global Vineyard Importers. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$12

**85 Luis Felipe Edwards 2013 Riscos de Puquillay Alto Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley).** With a mix of graham cracker, coffee, herb and jammy, unfocused berry aromas, this lacks cohesion on the nose. A fat, wide palate offers no point of focus, while herbal flavors of cassis and olive finish with green notes of tobacco and oregano. Prestige Wine & Spirits Group. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$17

**85 Siegel 2013 Special Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley).** Chunky, meaty, saucy plum and berry aromas are green and gritty. This is solid feeling on first blush, but then it collapses and turns clumpy and tannic. Minimal berry and cassis flavors battle with herbal, green notes in front of a chunky, imprecise finish. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$16

**84 Kon Tiki 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Central Valley).** Herbal cherry and cassis aromas feature a note of tobacco. This comes across short on stuffing and structure, while generic berry fla-

vors are bolstered by high acidity that creates tartness. A wiry finish is raw in feel. Wine Trees. —M.S.  
abv: 13.2% Price: \$13

**84 Santa Ema 2014 Select Terroir Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley).** Cherry and cassis aromas are generic. This feels raw and choppy, with sharp tartaric acidity. Limited, herbal flavors of mint and red fruits end in abrasive style. Guarachi Wine Partners. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$10

**83 Cucao 2013 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley).** Aromas of sandalwood and Middle Eastern spices feed into a creamy palate with little to no acidic cut. Flavors of caramel and milk chocolate rest on one side of a flavor void, while herbal, green notes reside on the other side, while the finish is resinous and lactic. Grassroots Wine Wholesalers, LLC. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$12

**83 Viña Bisquert 2014 Petirrojo Reserva Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley).** Jammy aromas are accented by hints of mint, animal hide and cinnamon. This feels wide, grabby and low in acidity. Rubbery flavors of baked plum, chocolate and baking spices finish flat. Prestige Wine & Spirits Group. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$8

## CARMENÈRE

**92 Montes 2013 Purple Angel Carmenère (Colchagua Valley).** Like the name suggests, this Carmenère is opaque purple in color, with earthy, complex aromas of graphite, char and herbal black currant. The palate is, not surprisingly, saturated and dense. Flavors of toasty, minty black fruits are charred, while the finish tastes roasted, heavily oaked and blackened. Drink through 2021. Guarachi Wine Partners. *Editors' Choice.* —M.S.  
abv: 14.5% Price: \$85

**90 Apaltagua 2011 Grial Carmenère (Colchagua Valley).** On the nose, this Carmenère is integrated and earthy, with cedar, black cherry, baked plum and spice aromas. The palate is a touch abrasive and edgy, while core blackberry flavors are surrounded by oak, chocolate and earth notes. A long, woody, persistent finish is mildly complex. Drink through 2019. Global Vineyard Importers. —M.S.  
abv: 14.5% Price: \$75

**90 Santa Rita 2011 Pehuén Carmenère (Colchagua Valley).** This is a heavily oaked Carmenère, so aromas of caramel, vanilla and licorice share space on the bouquet with stewed, foresty notes. Plump and saturated in feel, this is more mellow and soft than tough or tannic. Roasted blackberry, toast and spicy oak flavors end big and heavily, with leftover oak and herbal notes. Drink through 2018. Palm Bay International. —M.S.  
abv: 14.5% Price: \$70

**89 Concha y Toro 2013 Terrunyo Entre Cordilleras Peumo Vineyard Block 27 Carmenère (Cachapoal Valley).** Usually Terrunyo exudes blatant ripeness, but this cool-vintage rendition smells stalky, rubbery and herbal more than ripe and lusty. The palate is chunky and extracted, but shallow. Herbal blackberry flavors are toasty and oak, with licorice, pepper and spice flavors carrying a short finish. Excelsior Wines. —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$40

**88 Autoritas 2013 Gran Reserva Carmenère (Colchagua Valley).** Plum and berry aromas are leathery and solid. This feels a bit wiry, but full of energy and pointy acidity. Loamy plum and blackberry flavors are boosted by tartaric acidity, while chunky berry flavors are ripe and moderately herbal as this fades away. Prestige Wine & Spirits Group. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$17

**88 Ochagavía 2014 Gran Reserva Carmenère (Rapel Valley).** Warm earth, leather, black fruit and herbal aromas set up a palate that's bolstered by tartaric acidity that doesn't last long. Flavors of olive, lactic oak, herbal plum and blackberry finish creamy and chewy. Carolina Wine Brands USA. —M.S.  
abv: 14.5% Price: \$15

**87 Leyendas de Familia 2013 Gran Reserva Carmenère (Maule Valley).** Spicy, leafy aromas of tobacco, dried cherry and plum lead to a round palate that's hollow in the middle. Earthy flavors of mixed berry fruits and spice end chunky and herbal, which is par for the course for Carmenère. Aiko Inc. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$14

**87 Odfjell 2013 Armador Carmenère (Central Valley).** Rooty, minty aromas of blackberry and boysenberry are heavy on the nose. This feels blocky and full-bodied, with loamy, jammy black-fruit flavors that show a typical varietal greenness. A finish with herbal, tomatoey flavors includes a dusting of chocolate. Epic Wines. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$13

**87 Santa Rita 2011 Medalla Real Gran Reserva Carmenère (Colchagua Valley).** A flat bouquet smells mostly of root beer, grass and herbal black fruits. This is chunky and lacking a central point of reference. Rooty, creamy, oak flavors taste a lot like vanilla or a root beer float, while oak and caramel flavors control a finish that lacks drive. Palm Bay International. —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$20

**87 Viña Casablanca 2014 Cefiro Reserva Carmenère (Rapel Valley).** Solid blackberry and black cherry aromas show typical varietal notes of spice, chocolate and herbs. This is concentrated and healthy on the palate, with good grip. Flavors of olive, baked plum, herbal berry and chocolate end

bell pepper and grass that finish with nothing but pyrazines. Skurnik Wines, Inc. —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$11

## SYRAH

**89 Echeverria 2013 Gran Reserva Syrah (Colchagua Costa).** Bright cherry and berry aromas get support from grainy, lightly lactic oak. This Syrah is balanced and fresh, with a mild sensation of tartaric acid on the palate. Flavors of loamy berry fruits are mildly spicy but lack serious complexity. Ararat Import/Export Co. LLC. *Best Buy.* —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$14

**88 Ritual 2013 Alcaparral Syrah (Casablanca Valley).** Aromas of citrus peel, rubber, spice, and iodine lead to a tight, drawing but full-feeling palate. This tastes herbal, spicy and oaky, with carob accenting black fruit and berry flavors. A minty, oaky, resinous finish closes this out. Huneus Vintners. —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$20

**86 Quasar 2013 Limited Edition Syrah (Colchagua Valley).** Compact aromas of berry fruits are more basic than complex. This has a choppy, edgy, grating mouthfeel to go with prune and stewed-berry flavors. A loamy, overripe tasting finish struggles to display a sense of freshness. Ararat Import/Export Co. LLC. —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$16

## PINOT NOIR

**88 Ventisquero 2012 Herú Pinot Noir (Casablanca Valley).** Rough, tarry aromas of tire rubber and asphalt are low on fruit. This turns for the better on the palate, which feels creamy despite showing rubbery tannins. Peppery flavors of cherry, plum and raspberry become salty on a mostly smooth, solid finish. San Francisco Wine Exchange. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$45

**87 Echeverria 2013 Gran Reserva Pinot Noir (Leyda Valley).** This is a light, airy Pinot with a see-through rusty color and aromas of hard spices, tomato and dried red fruits. A fresh, lean, almost diluted palate is featherweight, while flavors of spicy red fruits, oak-based caramel and tea finish dry and simple. Ararat Import/Export Co. LLC. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$14

**86 Chilcas 2013 Reserva Pinot Noir (Maule Valley).** Aromas of herbs, spice, tomato and red plum are good but lean. This features a fresh, dry, tomatoey palate and equally dry, peppery flavors of plum and cherry. A lasting finish is bright but light on residual flavors. Old Bridge Cellars. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$12

**86 Luis Felipe Edwards 2013 Marea Pinot Noir (Leyda Valley).** Leafy, scratchy aromas of dried plum and raspberry give way to lemony, grainy oak scents. This is medium bodied, tightly wound and tastes of dried red fruits mixed with cocoa powder. A spicy, dry, crisp finish reinforces the wine's limitations. Prestige Wine & Spirits Group. —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$25

**86 Santa Alba 2013 Reserve Pinot Noir (Maule Valley).** Herbal raspberry and leather aromas create an obtuse nose. This is round, not overly exact in feel, and mild in acidity. Peppery flavors of raspberry and cherry end in dry, standard fashion. Aidil Wines/Old World Import. *Best Buy.* —M.S.  
abv: 13% Price: \$10

**85 Amayna 2013 Pinot Noir (Leyda Valley).** Rough, nutty, stalky aromas are not particularly inviting. This has a grabby, creamy, chocolatey texture to go with baked, stewy flavors of cherry cough drop. A lightly green, oaky, chocolatey finish is low on acid given that this is a coastal wine from a cool year. Vine Connections. —M.S.  
abv: 14.5% Price: \$35

**85 Chilensis 2013 Reserva Estate Bottled Pinot Noir (Maule Valley).** Dry, lightly herbal aromas of spicy raspberry and currant precede a tomatoey palate with bright acidity and modest weight. Short, spicy flavors of tomato and plum finish simply, without much flavor or force. Old Bridge Cellars. *Best Buy.* —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$10

**85 Concha y Toro 2013 Casillero del Diablo Reserva Pinot Noir (Chile).** Horsey aromas infringe upon basic cherry and tomato scents. This is lean on the palate, with scouring acidity. Tart, spicy plum and cherry flavors end on a crisp, dilute finish with that reverberates with sour plum and cherry notes. Excelsior Wines. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5% Price: \$11

**83 Beach Kite 2013 Pinot Noir (Central Valley).** Aromas of clamshell, tree bark and berry fruits are scattershot. This has a noticeably sticky, syrupy feel along with candied, sweet flavors of black plum and baking spices. A chunky, sticky, sweet-tasting finish lacks cut and finesse. Puerto Viejo Wines. —M.S.  
abv: 13% Price: \$8

**82 Amayna 2012 Pinot Noir (Leyda Valley).** Heavy, raisiny aromas of cherry and chocolate are ominous. This feels thick, out of shape and awkward, with zero elegance. Weedy, raisiny, syrupy berry flavors finish fat, with a palpable note of cooked fruit. Vine Connections. —M.S.  
abv: 14.5% Price: \$35

## RED BLENDS

**94 Lapostolle 2012 Clos Apalta (Colchagua Valley).** Lusty notes of coconut, charcoal, vanilla and herbs grace core blackberry and cassis aromas. This is massive and widespread on the palate, but the key to its success is impeccable balance. Toasty, minty flavors of blackberry and cassis are chocolatey and lightly herbal, while the finish blends lushness, power, heft and smoky, herbal flavors that go on and on. Drink this Carmenère-led blend through 2024. Terlato Wines International. *Cellar Selection.* —M.S.  
abv: 14.2% Price: \$135

**93 Montes 2012 Alpha M (Colchagua Valley).** Subtle, alluring aromas of earth, cola, eucalyptus, fallen leaves, black cherry and cassis properly announce this saturated, well-balanced Cabernet Sauvignon-led blend. Dark, toasty, baked flavors of blackberry come with vanilla, herb and tobacco accents. The finish feels great while tasting integrated and complex. Drink through 2024. Guarachi Wine Partners. *Cellar Selection.* —M.S.  
abv: 14.5% Price: \$90

**93 Montes 2009 Taita (Colchagua Valley).** Aromas of spice, vanilla and wood are stronger than this wine's fruit scents. Pure and lush on the palate, this is showing fine balance. Flavors of baking spices, caramel, vanilla and black fruits finish mildly and subtly, with mocha notes and good length. Drink this ripe Cabernet blend through 2019. Guarachi Wine Partners. —M.S.  
abv: 15% Price: \$300

**92 Caliterra 2012 Cenit (Colchagua Valley).** Tight, mineral aromas of charred oak, vanilla, toast, black cherry and cassis carry an herbal note. A fresh, juicy, layered palate shows controlled rawness, with classic Chilean flavors of spice, green herbs, mint and mixed black fruits. A peppery, blackened finish with toasty, herbal blackberry flavors suggests this is built to last. Drink through 2023. Seaview Imports. *Cellar Selection.* —M.S.  
abv: 14.5% Price: \$80

**92 Neyen 2012 Red (Colchagua Valley).** Despite 2012 being a hot year with many overripe wines, this Cabernet-Carmenère blend opens with highly Chilean aromas of tobacco, bell pepper and eucalyptus. The palate is plush and saturated, with minty plum, olive and herbal berry flavors. A final wave of mint and herbs is in charge of an otherwise chocolatey finish. Drink through 2024. Huneus Vintners. —M.S.  
abv: 14% Price: \$50

**91 Luis Felipe Edwards 2011 Doña Bernarda (Colchagua Valley).** Overt oak, tobacco and earthy cherry and plum aromas create a nice bouquet on this Cabernet Sauvignon-led blend. A loamy, plump palate is just firm enough, while herbal plum and cassis flavors finish with carob, coffee