

Red

Vineyard/Name: Blue Tongue

Grape Varietal: Shiraz

Location: South Eastern
Australia

Year: 2002

Cost: \$8.99

Notes: I find myself liking most Shiraz, but this one rises above the rest. It is a medium-bodied, dry red with lots of fruity flavor. The color is a deep purplish-red. It tends to be a bit sharp if you don't decant it for at least 10 minutes before serving. It's a bit peppery at first, but the fruit flavors really come out afterward. Compared to some other Shiraz I've had, it is rather light weighted in the mouth, which I like. The price is unbeatable and I truly think this will eventually take off.

Red

Vineyard/Name: Excelsior

Grape Varietal: Cabernet
Sauvignon

Location: South Africa

Year: 2003

Cost: \$9.99

Notes: This is another great red that I just can't get enough of. Everyone tells me it will be better in about 3 or 4 years, but I can't keep them on my wine rack long enough. The color of this wine is a beautiful deep ruby red with hints of purple. It's a full-bodied red that has a somewhat heavier weight. I find it best when decanted for a few minutes before serving. It has a peppery bite, but with lots of fruit flavor. It's got just enough acidity to cut through a thick meal. I usually drink with meats of almost any kind.

Dessert

Vineyard/Name: Rotllan Torra
"Moscatell"

Grape Varietal: Muscat and
10% Pedro Ximenez

Location: Priorat region of
Catalonia, Spain

Year: n/a

Cost: \$15.99 on sale (usually
\$19.99)

Notes: I'm breaking with my other two wines with this one, but I just loved it so much. I bought it on sale to stay within my \$20 limit and boy am I glad. This is a fortified, sweet desert wine. It's got a nutty, spicy flavor that melts in your mouth. Unlike Port, I could have two glasses of this and still enjoy the last sip. A great buy if you can find it on sale.

Red

Vineyard/Name: The
Gouguenheim Winery/ Valle
Escondido

Grape Varietal: Muscat and
10% Pedro Ximenez

Location: Mendoza region of
Argentina

Year: 2004

Cost: \$14.99

Notes: The first thing that struck me about this wine was its aroma. It had a very strong cherry and earthy nose. Its color was very dark, but it did not "stick" much to the glass. To me this meant it was a lighter wine. Upon tasting it proved to be a rather soft wine with light tannins. It wasn't as "exciting" a wine as I usually drink, but I would recommend it for lightly flavored meat, chicken, or even fish.

Dessert

Vineyard/Name: Miles Finest
Madeira – Rainwater Medium
Dry

Grape Varietal: A mixture, most
likely part Verdelho or Sercial

Location: Island of Madeira,
Portugal (off the coast of
Morocco)

Year: n/a

Cost: \$14.00

Notes: An older friend turned me onto this wine. Apparently, he was introduced to it by a professor he had in college, so it's got a long history. This is an economical variety of Madeira, which means it is relatively younger than other Madeiras produced by Miles and also not made with a single varietal. It is more substantial than a sherry, but I swear I could feel the purity of the "rainwater." The brandy can certainly be felt on the way down. It has an initial sharp sweetness that mellows as you finish your sip. The color is a dark caramel. The bottle recommends serving it as a chilled aperitif, but I found it to be excellent after dinner and at just slightly below room temp.

Rosé

Vineyard/Name: Domaine de
Fenouillet

Grape Varietal: Cotes du
Ventoux

Location: France

Year: 2005

Cost: \$12.99

Notes: Before even opening the bottle, you could tell that this was an exceptionally fine rosé. It was much drier than I expected, but it had a muted sweetness with hints of melon.

Apparently, the grapes are harvested manually and the entire process is done using traditional artisan methods. It comes from a relatively small estate in France that yields only about 5,000 cases of wine a year.