

Calling Cards

BY KEITH NEWTON

These signature wines from the Southern Hemisphere offer great value in a range of styles

It's no secret that the Southern Hemisphere has become one of the world's go-to sources for delicious yet affordable wines. But the story of how it achieved its success in the global marketplace is not as widely known. One of the ways in which the countries of Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Chile and



Photograph by
Jeff Harris

South Africa have grown into the players they are today is by closely identifying themselves with specific varieties and then working tirelessly to refine their expressions of those grapes. Once each of these nations aligned itself with its signature wine, vintners spent years honing their production process through a persistent focus on grape sources and winemaking techniques.

The results are in the bottle: Australian Shiraz, New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, Argentine Malbec, Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon, South African Chenin Blanc. These are wines enjoyed around the world even by those unfamiliar with other offerings from these countries. Not only are they known as reliable options for value, but they offer distinctive flavors unique to their regions—there is no mistaking them for versions of the same grapes found elsewhere. This is one of the keys to their popularity: They deliver excellent quality for the price while still offering expressive character and a style all their own.

By building their wine industries around grapes so well-suited to their regions' climates, these countries have been able to increase production capacity to impressive levels without sacrificing quality. For each of the five categories covered in this roundup, we offer a selection of 10 bottlings rated 88 points or higher and priced at \$25 or less, all of them made in large-enough quantities to be widely available. Whether you know these wines already or are just trying them for the first time, this selection offers the perfect jumping-off point to explore the wine world's vast southern frontier.

Australia

SHIRAZ

“Shiraz is Australia’s signature wine—and for good reason. The Syrah grape flourishes in many parts of the continent, often showcasing bold, full-bodied flavors of dark berries and cherries, with spice, black tea, pepper and sarsaparilla details offering complexity. Even the wines built to age drink well on release.”

MaryAnn Worobiec

92 | \$18 | THOMAS GOSS | Shiraz McLaren Vale 2016 | There’s good density to the bittersweet chocolate, hazelnut and blackberry pie notes, with sink-your-teeth-into-them tannins that add richness to the complex blend of flavors. Clove, nutmeg and cumin aromas linger on the long finish. (M.W.)



Jim Barry’s Lodge Hill vineyard in Clare Valley, South Australia

91 | \$20 | D’ARENBERG | Shiraz McLaren Vale The Footbolt 2015 | Dense and concentrated, with cassis, blackberry and dried cherry flavors that have an appealing chewy, rustic profile, with plenty of charm to the tobacco, spice and black tea notes, lingering harmoniously. (M.W.)

90 | \$20 | FIRST DROP | Shiraz Barossa Mother’s Milk 2016 | This version is appealing and aromatic up front, with rosemary, thyme and sage details to the restrained flavors of cranberry and raspberry at the core. Elegant, fresh and smooth, finishing juicy. (M.W.)

90 | \$24 | TORBRECK | Shiraz Barossa Valley Woodcutter’s 2016 | Apricot, plum and black cherry flavors are ripe and fleshy, with appealing accents of violet, black tea and white pepper. Juicy and vibrant, showing plenty of harmony on the finish. (M.W.)

89 | \$18 | HOPE ESTATE | Shiraz Western Australia The Ripper 2014 | Dense, espresso-laced blackberry flavors are rich and thick, with plenty of traction from the tannins. Ends with a spicy finish. (M.W.)

89 | \$20 | SCHILD | Shiraz Barossa Valley 2016 | Juicy cherry, cranberry and wild strawberry flavors are elegant and juicy, with touches of green tea, dried flowers and savory, earthy notes. Finds plenty of harmony on the finish, where the tannins firm up. (M.W.)

89 | \$22 | ST. JOHN’S ROAD | Shiraz Barossa Valley Blood & Courage 2016 | There’s an appealing sense of restraint to the wild berry, cherry and red currant flavors in this version, with herb shadings, a touch of matcha and fine-grained tannins on the finish. (M.W.)

88 | \$15 | SMALL GULLY | Shiraz South Australia Mr. Black’s Little Book 2015 | This is precise, offering vibrant raspberry, cherry and plum notes at the core, with details of sarsaparilla, clove and cola on the finish, rounding out the juicy profile. (M.W.)

88 | \$19 | JIM BARRY | Shiraz Clare Valley The Lodge Hill 2015 | Minty fresh, with a distinct green tea note to announce the crisp red fruit flavors at the core of this sleek wine. Finds balance and charm on the finish. (M.W.)

88 | \$19 | JIP JIP ROCKS | Shiraz Padthaway 2016 | Distinctive, with dried herb notes of sage and thyme leading the way toward focused, precise flavors of plum and blueberry at the core. The herb and forest floor accents come into play again on the firm finish. (M.W.)

Argentina

MALBEC

“Malbec is the red grape that put Argentina on the map, with intense dark fruit flavors that are powerful and spicy. Malbec can be crafted in a variety of styles, from rich and ripe to elegant and creamy, as winemakers explore a variety of high-altitude *terroirs* at the base of the Andes.”

Kim Marcus

91 | \$20 | ANDELUNA | Malbec Tupungato Altitud 2015 | Concentrated dark plum and dark cherry flavors are loaded with Asian spice notes that take on a creamy texture. Dark chocolate details fill the rich finish. (K.M.)

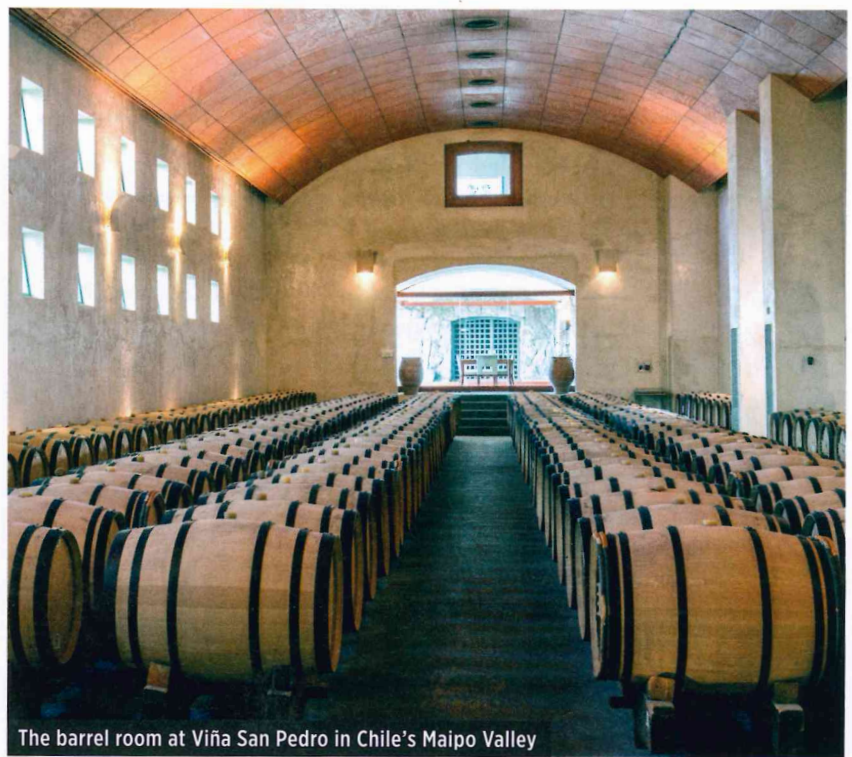
91 | \$22 | PIATTELLI | Malbec Luján de Cuyo Grand Reserve 2015 | This luscious red offers concentrated red and dark fruit flavors that are filled with Asian spice notes. Creamy midpalate, with a finish that lingers with German chocolate cake accents. (K.M.)

90 | \$17 | BODEGA EL ESTECO | Malbec Calchaquí Valley Don David Reserve 2016 | This elegant red offers a lively and well-structured mix of juicy red fruit and savory spice flavors framed by silky tannins. Finishes with notes of chocolate and hints of cream. (K.M.)

90 | \$22 | FINCA DECERO | Malbec Agrelo Remolinos Vineyard 2016 | A sanguine red, with notes of hot stone to the raspberry, dried cherry and floral flavors. The savory finish has some mineral accents. (K.M.)

89 | \$13 | ARGENTO | Malbec Mendoza 2015 | Rich and robust, with sink-your-teeth-into-them flavors of red currant, roasted plum and cherry tart, followed by accents of white berry on the fresh finish. (K.M.)

89 | \$16 | BODEGA CLOP Y CLOP | Malbec Mendoza Los Clop Reserva 2015 | This offers aromas of kirsch, with flavors to match, along with notes of blackberry tart, dark plum and currant. Black olive accents show midpalate, and the finish is loaded with dark chocolate, cream and spice details. (K.M.)



The barrel room at Viña San Pedro in Chile's Maipo Valley

89 | \$18 | ANTIGAL WINERY & ESTATES | Malbec Mendoza Uno 2015 | This richly spiced version is filled with concentrated raspberry, red plum and currant flavors that are backed by fresh acidity, ending with mineral notes on the finish. (K.M.)

89 | \$20 | FAMILIA ZUCCARDI | Malbec Uco Valley Q 2015 | A brooding red, with dark fruit flavors that feature plenty of inky accents, followed by espresso and mocha notes on the brawny finish. (K.M.)

88 | \$11 | TRIVENTO | Malbec Mendoza Reserve 2017 | Blackberry and dark currant flavors are concentrated and very juicy in this ripe, spicy style, showing hints of licorice and dark chocolate on the finish. (K.M.)

88 | \$12 | BODEGA LUIGI BOSCA | Malbec Luján de Cuyo La Linda 2016 | Intense notes of hot stone and underbrush emerge in this sinewy red. Dried cherry and currant flavors linger on the finish, with hints of coffee. (K.M.)

Chile

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

“Chile’s Cabernet Sauvignons are well-structured and full of flavors, and can give versions from France and California a run for their money. Ranging from medium- to full-bodied in style, Chilean Cabernets offer pure-tasting red fruit and spice components that are finely balanced.”

Kim Marcus

90 | \$15 | VIÑA HARAS DE PIRQUE | Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Hussonet Gran Reserva 2013 | This offers a crisp, fresh-tasting mix of dried green herb and crushed red fruit flavors that are supported by firm acidity. The mineral finish features slate and white pepper notes. (K.M.)

90 | \$16 | VIÑA SAN PEDRO | Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley 1865 Selected Vineyards 2016 | A burnished red, showing cherry tart, dried red currant and raspberry flavors flanked by plenty of savory notes. Accents of green spices and olive show on the finish. (K.M.)

TOP: SARA MATTHEWS



Andeluna's high-altitude winery in Mendoza, Argentina