

CR Quick Recommendations

The highest-rated wines were generally more complex, with a variety of flavors and aromas, none overwhelming the others. All wines in our tests are ready for drinking now.

We test for adherence to the classic qualities of the varietal, as detailed in the accompanying [Overview](#). The Ratings indicate the style or notable aromas that distinguish each wine.

Some wines to consider first are listed in the **Quick Picks**; all are very good overall and are relatively inexpensive. Below we list the tasting notes on the other wines, which all scored good overall. Wines are listed within the groups in order of overall quality.

We also list recommendations of foods the wines might complement especially well.

Quick Picks

Doña Paula (2006) \$16

A little more complex than others. Big wine with rich spiced fruit balanced with acid and tannin, a fair amount of oak, and hints of leather. Also, trace alcohol and trace bitterness.

Food pairing: Roasted or braised meats, spare ribs, spicy beet salad, lamb kabob, grilled lamb chops, pasta with sweet sausage.

Navarro Correas (2005) \$13

A little more complex than the others, with rich extracted flavors of fruit and oak, chocolate notes and a crisp acidity. Also, black pepper, trace alcohol, and trace bitterness.

Food pairing: Root vegetables, kabobs, braised short ribs, Kobe burger, meat lasagna, spicy appetizers and starters, grilled rare steak, highly herbed and seasoned roast meats.

Bodega Septima (2005) \$12

Tasty rich black fruit, spice and lots of vanilla and oak flavors. Also, black pepper and trace bitterness.

Food pairing: Duck confit or cassoulet, mushroom risotto, Kobe burger, grilled lamb chops, grilled rib eye steak with garlic mashed potatoes, meat lasagna.

Pascual Toso (2005) \$12

A little more complex than others with a nice mix of red and black fruit, oak, and chocolate notes. It all opens on the palette.

Food pairing: Rare filet mignon, steak with mashed potato and gravy, meat lasagna, venison medallions, BBQ, cheese platter.

Montes (2006) \$12

Rich, ripe black fruit shines through heavy oak flavors; notes of chocolate. Also, trace alcohol.

Food pairing: Roasted or braised short ribs or lamb shanks, open-faced roast beef sandwich with gravy, meat lasagna, Kobe burger, grilled meats, roasted root vegetables, grilled steak with mushroom gravy, beef goulash, roast beef with demi glaze.

Trivento (2005) \$12

Bold, attractive non-specific black fruit notes with herbal notes. A little closed now but should open up as it matures and the tannin softens. Also, trace alcohol and trace bitterness.

Food pairing: Burgers, lamb stew, pot roast, braised short ribs, winter stews, mushrooms, lamb kabob.

Other Wines Tested

Trapiche (2005) \$10

Mix of red and black young ripe fruit and a pronounced acidity (tartness).

Food pairing: Asian beef salad, savory appetizers, Serrano ham and fine cheeses, simple starter course with some fat, BBQ, mushroom risotto,

Catena (2005) \$22

Good fruit base with firm acid support (on the tart side).

Food pairing: Ribs, bleu cheese burger, pasta with sweet sausage, chicken, mushrooms, appetizers and finger foods, game, duck confit.

venison medallion, mixed grill.

Bodega Norton (2005) \$18

Red and black fruit balanced with a good tannic backbone, alcohol and oak but needs time for these assets to settle down and harmonize. Also, chocolate notes, trace alcohol and trace bitterness.

Food pairing: Duck breast with fruit compote, braised short ribs, sweet glazed BBQ ribs, meat lasagna, roasted game.

Alamos (2006) \$10

Full flavored, rich, ripe but non-descript fruit flavors, Also, trace alcohol and trace bitterness.

Food pairing: Mixed cheese platter, party fare, deli sandwich, venison medallions with berry sauce, beef stew, heavy meat entrees.

Francis Coppola (2005) \$18

Mix of ripe, mostly black fruit with notable acidity (tartness).

Food pairing: Rabbit, game, spicy beef salad, rotisserie chicken or turkey, grilled rare steak, skewered lamb, lamb chop with rice/mushroom pilaf.

Terrazas de los Andes (2005) \$16

Ripe fruit, chocolate, and other flavors, but tannin and oak a little too pronounced. Also, trace alcohol and trace bitterness.

Food pairing: Korean ribs or Teriyaki beef, BBQ (including spare ribs), beef stew, rich braised meats with mushroom risotto or casserole, bleu cheese burger.

Don Miguel Gascón (2005) \$12

Tasty mix of nondescript red and black fruit against a tart and tannic backdrop. Also, herbaceous notes.

Food pairing: BBQ ribs with lots of sauce, meat ravioli, rotisserie chicken or turkey, London broil, open-face roast beef sandwich with gravy, bleu cheese burger, Kobe burger.

Nieto Senetiner (2005) \$9

Concentrated fruit flavors, aggressive acid and tannin, chocolate and other flavor notes, but not quite all in harmony (could use more balance). Also, trace alcohol and trace bitterness.

Food pairing: Lamb kabob, grilled lamb chops, braised lamb shanks, salty, savory snack foods, ribeye steak with iceberg wedge and bleu cheese, meat lasagna, medium-rare burger.

Las Moras (2005) \$8

Less intense fruit with a crisp acidity that makes it a good food wine. Also, trace alcohol.

Food pairing: Pasta with meat sauce, BBQ, meat lasagna, party snacks, pizza, spicy beef salad (Asian style), tapas, appetizers.

Concha Y Toro (2005) \$7

Adequate black and red fruit with crisp acidity. Needs more details and intensity to be higher quality.

Food pairing: Venison medallions with fruit sauce, grilled steak and grilled mushrooms, veal Parmesan, BBQ, ribs, chicken, veggies, spicy seafood, beef goulash.

Origine (2004) \$10

A modicum of fruit and wood, lots of spiciness and tannin (astringency), but needs more fruit flavor and details. Also, trace alcohol and trace bitterness.

Food pairing: Ribeye steak, appetizers and savory main courses, beef goulash, Korean BBQ ribs, mutton chops.

Don David (2005) \$16

"Mainstream" wine with adequate fruit and supporting wood. Also, trace alcohol.

Food pairing: Pasta with cream sauce and Serrano ham or prosciutto, pate, lunchmeat, pizza and party snacks, tandoori chicken with mango chutney, roast beef, or open-faced roast-beef sandwich with mushroom gravy, savory foods.

Trumpeter (2006) \$11

An array of fruit notes with noticeable acidity (tartness). Overall, it was simpler and less well balanced than others. Also, herbal notes.

Food pairing: Party snacks, deli foods, pizza, beef stew, pasta with cream sauce and prosciutto, pasta puttanesca, fried calamari, spicy beef salad, savory foods.

Domaine Jean Bousquet (2006) \$13

A mix of red and black fruit in an otherwise mostly nondescript wine. Also, trace alcohol and bitterness. Off notes in two of four bottles.

Food pairing: Grilled ribeye with mashed potatoes, meat lasagna, bleu cheese burger, deli sandwich, party snacks, beef stew.