

BUSINESS INSIDER

A Sommelier Chooses His 10 Favorite Wines For \$16 Or Less



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JUN. 4, 2014, 10:43 AM

Recently, we wrote about an experiment showing that most people [can't taste the difference between cheap and expensive wine](#), and it got us thinking: What are the best inexpensive wines?

So we asked an expert: Sommelier Jörn Kleinhans, the owner of the [Wine Elite Sommelier Company](#).

"We've found that appreciation of wine usually comes with deeper knowledge, which you can gain when a specific wine is a good representation of its grape varietal," Kleinhans says. He explains that such a wine must marry varietal (that's categories like Cabernets, Pinot Noirs, and Rieslings) with a region in which it grows best.



Flickr / Alessandro Giannini

The sommelier pictured is not Jörn Kleinhans.

"The wines here are typical examples of their kind," he says. "If you buy one, that's great, and if you buy all of them, you basically have a box of all the important wine styles in the world."

Here, Kleinhans presents his top 10 wine picks for \$16 and under, broken down by varietal and region. While they may be available in your local wine store, we've also provided links to where you can purchase them online.

1. Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand

Such as: [2013 Giesen Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough](#), \$10.99

"This is perhaps the most drastic example of Sauvignon Blanc because it shows strong grapefruit, lemon, and grass notes, which is the clearest taste profile of this wine," says Kleinhans.



Kiwines.com

2. Riesling from Germany

Such as: 2009 S. A. Prum "Urziger Wurzgarten" Riesling Kabinett, \$12.99

"Germany is where Riesling should belong," explains Kleinhans. "This wine has a sweetness, high aroma, and high acidity that you look for in every Riesling."



Kiwines.com

3. Chardonnay from Burgundy, France

Such as: 2011 Château de la Charrière
Bourgogne Chardonnay Domaine Yves
Girardin, \$14.99

"This is the ultimate expression of a
Burgundy," says Kleinhans. "It's clean,
mineralic, and made to be consumed
with food."



Kiwines.com

4. Pinot Noir from Oregon

Such as: [2012 King Estate "Acrobat" Pinot Noir](#), \$15.99

"The Pinot Noir belongs to Burgundy, France, and great Pinots can be exceptionally expensive," explains Kleinhans. "But there's a place in the world they're made in that style, and that's Oregon. It's not as warm as California, so it makes for a somewhat more authentic presentation."



KingEstate.com

5. Syrah from Australia

Such as: 2011 Jim Barry "Lodge Hill"
Shiraz Clare Valley South Australia,
\$15.99

"The Syrah belongs to the Rhone Valley," says Kleinhans. "It's also called Shiraz — it's the same grape with a different name. In this case, the Australian wine shows the beautiful aspects of lavender, pepper, and meatiness, but adds oak and pepper."



Wine.com

6. Sangiovese from Tuscany, Italy

Such as: 2010 Borgo Scopeto Chianti Classico, \$13.99

"This is perhaps the most known grape varietal from Italy," Kleinhans explains, "because the underlying wine is Chianti. It happens to be the European wine that was first made available in the new world at an affordable rate. It's a classic that pairs beautifully with rustic foods like spaghetti and meatballs, and tomato sauces, and has flavors of dark or sour cherry and soft vanilla."

Editor's note: A previous version of this article incorrectly listed Kleinhans' pick as 2010 Cameron Hughes "Lot 354" Crozes-Hermitage.



Kiwines.com

7. Cabernet Sauvignon from South Africa

Such as: 2010 Glen Carlou "Grand Classique" Bordeaux Blend Paarl, \$14.99

"France and the U.S. have more important versions of this wine, but you can't get them at this price point," says Kleinhans. "It combines the lush fruits of Cabernet Sauvignon, along with blackberries, blueberries, nice vegetable notes often described as chopped green pepper, and noticeable aspects of menthol and eucalyptus."



Kiwines.com

8. Malbec from Argentina

Such as: 2011 Renacer "Punto Final"
Reserva Malbec, \$14.99

"Malbec is the national grape of Argentina," explains Kleinhans. "It can be a dark purple wine that has alcoholic strength and is really well enjoyed with heavier meat."



Kiwines.com

9. Tempranillo from Spain

Such as: 2010 Finca El Encinal Crianza
Ribera del Duero, \$14.99

"This is the most important grape of Spain that will give you a good sense for the Spanish style of wines," says Kleinhans. "It should show you silky notes of American oak and dark cherry, which are some of the signature signs of Spanish winemaking."



Kiwines.com

10. Zinfandel from California

Such as: [2012 Cline "Ancient Vines" Zinfandel](#), \$14.99

"Nowadays wines under this name are only grown in California and are somewhat of an indigenous representation that doesn't have an equal," says Kleinhans. "One should not underestimate the rich beauty of the Californian wines we have in the U.S. They should be a clear example of American wine-making."



winemarketanddeli.com

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