

Spec'ssm

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TWELVE-UNDER-\$12

You love great wine ... but just now you're looking for a cheap bottle - "an everyday value wine" - that tastes really good. I'm right there with you. I love great wine, but \$12 is about my limit for everyday drinking wines. And to me, value means a wine tastes like it costs more than it does. Here are twelve of my everyday value picks, all priced under \$12.

MARQUES de CACERES Rioja Rose, 2003

12x750ml \$5.99 \$66.72

A blend of 80% Tempranillo and 20% Garnacha (Grenache) from Rioja Alta, this is a medium-weight, earthy dry rose featuring fine ripe strawberry fruit that hints at red cherries, red raspberries, black pepper, and minerals. It is very refreshing with enough acidity to keep it lively but also has enough richness to give it a nice feel. Don't serve it too cold or you'll mask the flavor; 45° is ideal. Very Good. **Bear's Score: 86+ points.**

LOUIS MARTINI Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma County, 2001

12x750ml \$11.99 \$134.29

The winery's tech sheet says 88% Cabernet Sauvignon with 9% Merlot and 1% Cabernet Franc - which is 2% shy of 100. Nevertheless, this is a medium-weight, fruit-forward, spicy Cabernet Sauvignon featuring plenty of red cherry and red berry fruit with notes of tobacco and cedar and a sweet spiciness. The wine is well balanced and elegant - everything I expect from a Martini Cabernet. Really Fine. **Bear's Score: 90+ points.**

La VIELLE FERME "VF" Lasira Costieres de Nimes, 2002

12x750ml \$6.74 \$75.11

Try this Stelvin-sealed (screw cap) value-price blend of 75% Syrah and 25% Grenache from the up-and-coming appellation of Costieres de Nimes. It is fat and juicy with dark cherry-berry fruit and real depth. Has a perfumed note of dark fruit liqueur. The finish brings notes of pepper and dust. Really Very Good. **Bear's Score: 87 points.**

PERRIN Reserve Cotes du Rhone Rouge, 2001

12x750ml \$6.99 \$83.88

A blend 60% Grenache, 20% Syrah, and 20% Mourvedre, this is a juicy, grapey, classic Grenache-dominated Cotes du Rhone full of supple dark fruit with warm earth notes and a hint of garrigue. It is lively and rich with good power. A solid, flavorful wine. Fine. **Bear's Score: 88 points.**

SELBACH "Fish Label" Zeltinger Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett

(Mosel Saar Ruwer), 2003 12x750ml \$11.95 \$134.54

This super refreshing Riesling weighs in at only 10% alcohol but packs lots of green apple and peach nectar fruit layered over notes of slate and mineral with hints of mountain meadow wildflowers and lime blossom. The texture is juicy but the wine is in thrilling tension with the sweetness perfectly balanced by its bracingly fresh acidity. Finishes long and clean with no remaining sweetness. Really Fine. **Bear's Score: 90 Points.**

WISHING TREE Shiraz, Western Australia, 2003

12x750ml \$9.92 \$110.49

Here's a spicy rich, new-wave style Aussie Shiraz offering lots of juicy blackberry and black raspberry fruit with hints of earth and mixed white and black pepper. The texture is dusty dry but with a rich feel and plenty of ripeness. Lively in the mouth; quite tasty. Fine. **Bear's Score: 89 points.**

Special for SPEC's KEY holders:

Buy a mixed case consisting of one 750ml bottle of each of our JUNE 12-UNDER-\$12 selections for only \$102.59, a savings of \$7.52 over SPEC's already low cash bottle price. Special price good 06/02/04 thru 07/01/04. (UPC: 00000227421)

COPERTINO Riserva, Puglia, 1999

12x750ml \$10.08 \$110.40

A blend of 95% Negro Amato and 5% Malvasia Nero, this is a sun-baked, rich, dark red featuring dense plummy-grapey fruit with a rich texture and fine juicy feel. The is a perfect pizza red or try it with your favorite lasagne or pasta-and-red-sauce combinations. Fine. **Bear's Score: 88 points.**

BOMMARITO Viognier, Napa Valley, 2002

12x750ml \$9.93 \$110.72

This rare value-priced Napa Viognier from the owners of Whitehall Lane offers refreshing peach nectar and honeysuckle notes with hints of hops and minerals in a very fresh lively style perfect for summertime sipping. Lively in the mouth with a long, clean finish, this is a classy and delicious but fun wine. Fine. **Bear's Score: 89 points.**

ROBERT PEPI Sauvignon Blanc, California, 2003

12x750ml \$9.09 \$100.66

In a new package with a Stelvin (screwcap) closure, this "New Zealand meets the Entre Deux Mers" 100% Sauvignon Blanc represents a new style for Pepi. It is bright and very fresh tasting with nice grapefruit, melon, and kiwi fruit in the mouth. The melon takes over and the minerals kick in on the finish. Very refreshing. Yum. Fine. **Bear's Score: 88+ points.**

PASCUAL TOSO Chardonnay, Maipu Valley (Mendoza), 2003

12x750ml \$7.61 \$83.78

This Argentine winner offers fresh, lively, light weight Chardonnay fruit in the green pear, lime, lime peel, and subtle almost ripe banana range with a nice clean mineral note and fine balance. It finishes long, clean and fresh with none of the oaky-milky heaviness that plagues so many South American Chardonnays. Really Very Good. **Bear's Score: 87 points.**

RENWOOD Barbera, Sierra Foothills, 2002

12x750ml \$8.25 \$91.85

For a pure summer-weight, nothing-but-pleasure red, try this succulent, juicy, ripe, dusty dry Barbera featuring lots of grape Nehi fruit. It is not complex but it is delicious. Alive in the mouth, this is what Barbera really ought to taste like. Yummy. Fine. **Bear's Score: 88 Points.**

OTTELLA Lugana DOC, 2002

12x750ml \$11.87 \$132.26

Try this delightful white offering plenty of clean lemon and pear fruit with surprising juicy texture, and good richness and weight; quite flavorful. Has an unusual amount of character for a wine made from 100% Trebbiano. The finish lasts and lasts before resolving clean. If you like Roussette de Savoie, you'll like this. Fine. **Bear's Score: 89 points.**

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SPEC's JUNE 2004 12-UNDER-\$12