



MARK OLDMAN

BILLIONAIRE WINES

AND THEIR
LESS EXPENSIVE
SUBSTITUTES

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BUBBLY: LIGHTER STYLE

BILLIONAIRE (\$400 to \$1,000+)

- Krug “Clos du Mesnil” Blanc de Blancs Brut Champagne
- Salon Cuvée 'S' Le Mesnil Blanc de Blancs Champagne

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (\$100 to \$300):

- Charles Heidsieck “Blanc des Millénaires” Brut Champagne
- Taittinger “Comtes de Champagne” Blanc de Blancs Brut Champagne
- Ruinart “Dom Ruinart” Blanc de Blancs Champagne

MILLIONAIRE (\$30 to \$80)

- Argyle Farms Knudsen Vineyard “Julia Lee’s Block” Blancs de Blancs (Oregon)
- Delamotte Blancs de Blancs Champagne
- Pierre Moncuit Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru Champagne

THOUSANDAIRE (\$30 or less):

- Gruet Blancs de Blancs (New Mexico)
- Gloria Ferrer Blanc de Blancs (California)
- Piper Sonoma Blanc de Blancs (California)
- Mumm Napa Blanc de Blancs (California)
- Domaine Chandon Blancs de Blancs (California)
- Michelle Blanc de Blancs (Washington State)

“Blanc de Blancs” indicates that the Champagne or sparkling wine is solely from white (i.e., typically Chardonnay) grapes, as opposed to the normal blend of richer pinot noir and/or pinot Meunier grapes. Blanc de Blancs bubbly is often lighter bodied, with a crisp, sometimes minerally taste. Krug and Salon represent the pièce de résistance of this style, but Salon’s sister house, Delamotte, is exponentially more affordable and gets Salon’s precious grapes on years the legendary Salon Cuvée 'S' is not made. American sparkling wine, which is generally more fruit-forward and less bread-scented than its French counterpart, imposes even less financial strain.

BUBBLY: GROWER CHAMPAGNE

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (over \$100)

- Jacques Selosse “Substance” Blanc de Blancs Champagne

MILLIONAIRE (\$40 to \$60)

- Agrapart 7 Crus Brut NV, Bérêche & Fils Réserve Champagne
- Charles Ellner “Cuvée de Réserve”
- Chartogne-Taillet Sainte Anne Champagne
- Savart Premier Cru L'Accomplie Brut
- Vilmart Grande Réserve Brut

Insiders look to small, artisanal producers who grow their own grapes—so-called “Grower Champagne”—to pay less for top-flight quality. Anselme Selosse of Domaine Jacques Selosse continues the house’s sublime performance (and prices often reflect it), but his obsession with quality and terroir has influenced a bevy of rising stars, including Alexandre Chartogne of Chartogne-Taillet and Frédéric Savart of Champagne Savart.

BUBBLY: RICHER STYLE

MULTIBILLIONAIRE (\$2500+):

- Krug Clos d’Ambonnay Blanc de Noirs Champagne (France)

BILLIONAIRE (\$150 to \$400):

- Bollinger “La Grande Année” Brut Champagne
- Krug “Grande Cuvée” Brut Champagne
- Pol Roger “Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill” Champagne

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (\$80 to \$150):

- Alfred Gratien Brut Champagne
- Tarlant “Cuvée Louis”
- Vilmart & Cie “Coeur de Cuvée”

MILLIONAIRE (\$30 to \$50):

- Louis Roederer Brut Premier Champagne
- Nicolas Feuillatte Brut Réserve Champagne
- Juvé y Camps Pinot Noir Blanc de Noirs Brut Reserva Cava (Spain)

THOUSANDAIRE (under \$30):

- Gruet Blanc de Noirs (New Mexico)
- Roederer Estate Anderson Valley Brut (California)
- Segura Viudas Aria Estate Brut Cava (Spain)

As with the rare and astonishingly expensive Krug Clos d’Ambonnay, the Tarlant, Vilmart, and Gratien bottlings use oak casks during production, which create a rich, intense style of Champagne. It may not be as complex as that of its more expensive counterparts, but for about a 20-spot, Gruet “Blanc de Noirs” ably caresses the palate with cream and spice.

BUBBLY: PINK

BILLIONAIRE (\$350+)

- Dom Pérignon Brut Rosé Champagne
- Krug Brut Rosé Champagne
- Perrier-Jouët “Belle Epoque” Brut Rosé Champagne

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (\$80 to \$150)

- Drappier “Grande Sendrée” Brut Champagne
- Egly-Ouriet Brut Rosé Champagne
- Billecart-Salmon Brut Rosé Champagne

MILLIONAIRE (\$30 to \$60)

- Jacquart Brut Rosé Champagne
- Schramsberg Brut Rosé (California)
- Domaine Carneros Cuvée de la Pampadour Brut Rosé (California)

THOUSANDAIRE (\$30 or less)

- Segura Viudas Brut Rosé Cava (Spain)
- Domaine Chandon Brut Rosé (California)
- Scharffenberger Mendocino County Brut Rosé (California)
- Jansz Brut Rosé NV (Australia)
- De Chanceny Cremant de Loire Rosé (France)

OTHER KEY CRU BOURGEOIS

CHÂTEAU CHASSE-SPLEEN

CHÂTEAU D'AGASSAC

CHÂTEAU DE PEZ

CHÂTEAU GLORIA

CHÂTEAU GREYSAC

CHÂTEAU MEYNEY

CHÂTEAU ORMES DE PEZ

CHÂTEAU PHÉLAN SÉGUR

RING THE “BELLE” FOR FIVE BORDEAUX VALUES

I have found these five lesser-known Bordeaux châteaux to consistently drink above their price. Appropriately enough, each has some variation of “belle,” the French word for beautiful, in its name, so remember to ring the “belle” when you’re in the Bordeaux aisle of your local wine shop.

CHÂTEAU BEL-AIR (HAUT-MÉDOC)

CHÂTEAU BELLE-VUE (HAUT-MÉDOC)

CHÂTEAU BELLEGRAVE (PAUILLAC)

CHÂTEAU BELLEVUE (ST. ÉMILION)

CHÂTEAU BELLES-GRAVES (LANDE-DE-POMEROL)

BORDEAUX: LEFT BANK (CABERNET SAUVIGNON-DOMINATED)

BILLIONAIRE: (\$1,000+)

-Château Margaux

MULTIMILLIONAIRE: (\$300-\$500)

-Château Cos d'Estournel

-Château Lynch-Bages

-Château Palmer

MILLIONAIRE (\$150+)

-Pavillon Rouge du Château Margaux

THOUSANDAIRE (\$30 to 80)

-Blason d'Issan

-Château Malescot St. Exupéry

-Château Rauzan-Ségla

-Château Siran

To avoid paying top dollar for first-rate Bordeaux, aficionados look to “second labels” of icon châteaux, such as Pavillon Rouge du Château Margaux instead of Château Margaux, which use grapes that didn’t make the cut for the first label wine. Relative bargains can be also found in a category known as “Cru Bourgeois,” which includes the excellent Château Siran and scores of other châteaux that didn’t make the cut in the outdated Classification of 1855. Both offer the advantage of significantly gentler prices and wine that is often made with lower tannins and is thus ready to drink far sooner than the billionaire-priced wine.

BORDEAUX: RIGHT BANK (MERLOT-DOMINATED)

MULTIBILLIONAIRE (\$3,000+)

-Château Pétrus

BILLIONAIRE (\$1,000+)

-Château Le Pin

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (\$200-\$400)

-Château L'Église Clinet

-Château Trotanoy

-Vieux Château Certan

THOUSANDAIRE (\$30-\$80)

-Château Beau Soleil

-Château de Sales

-Château Le Bon Pasteur

-Château L'Ecuyer (leh-qwee-aye)

Merlot-focused Château Pétrus has long symbolized one of the world’s priciest pours, but you’ll pay a magnitude less for Château Trotanoy, which is also in the “Right Bank” Bordeaux appellation of Pomerol and has the same owner, the renowned Christian Moueix (pronounced “Moo-icks”). Near Pétrus is another Pomerol great, Vieux Château Certan (shortened to “VCC”); its reliance on the Cabernet Franc grape (often even more than Trotanoy) bestows on it a flavor profile somewhat different from Pétrus. In the same area are the reliable Château Le Bon Pasteur and Château de Sales, which are far less expensive, if somewhat simpler, sources of smooth, supple Right Bank magic.

OTHER KEY “SECOND LABEL” BORDEAUX

WINE	SECOND LABEL
CHÂTEAU COS D'ESTOURNEL	LES PAGODES DE COS
CHÂTEAU DUCRU-BEAUCAILLOU	LA CROIX DE BEAUCAILLOU
CHÂTEAU GRUAUD-LAROSE	SARGET DE GRUAUD-LAROSE
CHÂTEAU LAGRANGE	LES FIEFS DE LAGRANGE
CHÂTEAU LASCOMBES	CHEVALIER DE LASCOMBES
CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE-BARTON	LA RÉSERVE DE LÉOVILLE-BARTON
CHÂTEAU LYNCH-BAGES	ECHO DE LYNCH-BAGES
CHÂTEAU PALMER	ALTER EGO DE PALMER

WHITE BURGUNDY

MULTIBILLIONAIRE (\$5,000+)

-Domaine Leflaive Montrachet

BILLIONAIRE (\$500 to \$1500)

-Ramonet Montrachet

-Domaine Leflaive Bâtard-Montrachet

-Joseph Drouhin "Marquis

de Laguiche" Montrachet

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (\$200 to \$500)

-Domaine Leflaive Bâtard-Montrachet

-Etienne Sauzet Chevalier-Montrachet

-Louis Jadot Bâtard-Montrachet

-Ramonet Bâtard-Montrachet

MILLIONAIRE (\$60 to \$120)

-Chavy-Martin Puligny-Montrachet

-Faiveley Puligny-Montrachet

-Olivier Leflaive Puligny-Montrachet

-Vincent Girardin Puligny-Montrachet

"Villages Vieilles Vignes"

-Ramonet Chassagne-Montrachet

THOUSANDAIRE (Under \$60)

-Dominique Lafon Bourgogne Blanc

-Faiveley Bourgogne Blanc

-Hubert Lamy St. Aubin (various)

-Olivier Leflaive Bourgogne Blanc

"Les Sétilles"

-Philippe Colin St. Aubin "Le

Charmois"

-Pierre-Yves Colin-Morey St. Aubin

"La Chatenière"

If you'd rather avoid the prestige premium for the villages famous for Montrachet—Chassagne-Montrachet and Puligny-Montrachet—the respected appellation of St. Aubin is wedged right next to them and overdelivers for its price. Producer Pierre-Yves Colin-Morey (shortened by insiders to the ink-toner-evoking PYCM) is a blue chip for St. Aubin, as are the various vineyards of Hubert Lamy. A step down in price and, sometimes, complexity is Bourgogne blanc, which is made from grapes that can come from any part of the Burgundy region.



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RED BURGUNDY

MULTIBILLIONAIRE (\$5,000+)

-Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Romanée-Conti

BILLIONAIRE (\$700 to \$1,500+)

-Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier "Les

Amoureuses" Chambolle-Musigny Premier Cru

-Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Romanée St.

Vivant

-Domaine Comte Georges de Vogüé Musigny

MULTIMILLIONAIRE: (\$200 to \$700)

-Claude Dugat Gevrey-Chambertin Premier Cru

-Dujac Vosne-Romanée "Aux Malconsorts"

Premier Cru

-G. Roumier "Les Cras" Chambolle-Musigny

Premier Cru

MILLIONAIRE (\$70 to 120)

-Domaine Fourrier Gevrey-Chambertin

-Dominique Mugneret Vosne-Romanée

-Jean Grivot Vosne-Romanée

-Méo-Camuzet Vosne-Romanée

THOUSANDAIRE (Under \$50)

-Anne Gros Bourgogne Rouge

-Bouchard Père et Fils Bourgogne Rouge

-Champy Bourgogne Rouge

-Domaine de Montille Bourgogne Rouge

-Faiveley Bourgogne Rouge

-Henri Boillot Bourgogne Rouge

-Mugneret-Gibourg Bourgogne Rouge

-Nicolas Rossignol Bourgogne Rouge

-Sylvie Esmonin Bourgogne Rouge

It's a frustrating fact that even relatively modest Village-level Burgundy—i.e., wine made from grapes in or around a particular village—is priced beyond everyday use. If you choose carefully, however, certain village wines can drink like those of the dramatically more expensive grand cru and premier cru vineyards. Domaine Fourrier's Jean-Marie Fourrier, for example, a protégé of one of France's greatest winemakers, the late Henri Jayer, regularly makes a stunning village-level Gevrey-Chambertin. With its abundance of excellent producers, the village Chambolle-Musigny, an insider favorite, probably offers the highest quality of village-level wine, but also relatively high prices. Entry level for Burgundy is "Bourgogne," which is wine sourced not from one particular village or vineyard therein, but from grapes anywhere in the entire region of Burgundy. Bourgogne rouge is often light and simple but can be memorable in the hands of a talented winery or négociant, the latter being a producer who buys grapes from growers. Négociants such as Champy and Domaine Faiveley offer rewarding quality at surprisingly palatable prices.

HOW TO PLAY DRC, THE WORLD'S MOST COVETED PRODUCER

A way to spend hundreds instead of thousands for the wine of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti is to find a bottle of its Vosne-Romanée "Cuvée Duvault-Blochot," which is made from leftover grapes from the young vines of some of DRC's legendary *cru* vineyards. If you do long to try of DRC's fabled *grand crus* but can't quite stomach the vertiginously priced Romanée-Conti La Tâche, you would do well to consider the *Grand Cru* Romanée-Saint-Vivant, which is located a stone's throw from those famous vineyards. The RSV is still priced for billionaires, but because it is less known and more recently under the domaine's control, it isn't quite as depleting. In some years, I prefer this delicate, fragrant charmer to the more expensive and renowned Romanée-Conti La Tâche.

AFFORDABLE RED BURGUNDY IS NOT OXYMORONIC

Being a tiny region coveted by connoisseurs for what many consider the world's best Pinot Noir, it is no surprise that red Burgundy is punishingly expensive. There is hope, however. In addition to better bottles at the Bourgogne rouge level, I lean on the three less-heralded areas of Burgundy listed below for light-bodied, earthy, and sometimes compellingly good red Burgundy. With wines from Burgundy varying widely by producer, vintage, and particular vineyards, always try to consult a trusted merchant or sommelier to confirm that a specific bottle will be to your taste.

MARSANNAY: Bart, Chanson, Louis Latour, Domaine Joseph et Philippe Roty, Trapet

SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE: Maurice Ecard, Simon Bize, Jean-Marc Pavelot, Nicolas Rossignol, Tollot-Beaut

PERNAND-VERGELESSES: Chandon de Briailles, Chanson, Mongeard-Mugneret, Rapet, Rollin

MULTIBILLIONAIRE (\$3,000+)

-Jean-Louis Chave Ermitage “Cuvée Cathelin”

BILLIONAIRE (\$250+)

-Jean-Louis Chave Hermitage Rouge

MILLIONAIRE (\$80 to \$120)

-Delas Frères Hermitage “Domaine des Tourettes”
 -J. L. Chave Sélections St.-Joseph Offerus
 -M. Chapoutier Hermitage “Monier de la Sizeranne”

THOUSANDAIRE (under \$40)

-Alain Graillot Crozes-Hermitage
 -Emmanuel Darnaud Crozes-Hermitage “Les Trois Chênes”
 -Jean-Luc Colombo Crozes-Hermitage “Les Fées Brunes”

You’ll pay a premium for the legendary and powerful Syrah known as Hermitage, but in the right hands of fellow Northern Rhône appellation St.-Joseph can spirit you pretty close to Hermitage’s brooding blackberry-and-herb majesty. A step down in price and concentration is Crozes-Hermitage, considered a “baby Hermitage,” able to dial up some of the Northern Rhône’s dark, smoky charm.

CÔTE-RÔTIE

BILLIONAIRE (\$600+)

-E. Guigal Côte-Rôtie “La Mouline”

MILLIONAIRE (\$80 to \$100)

-E. Guigal Côte-Rôtie “Brune et Blonde”
 -Saint Cosme Côte-Rôtie
 -R. Rostaing Côte-Rôtie “Ampodium”

THOUSANDAIRE (under \$40)

-Domaine des Hauts Châssis Syrah “La Champine”
 -Domaine Lombard Syrah “La Côte”
 -R. Rostaing Syrah “Les Lézardes”

Côte-Rôtie, the famously floral, peppery, Syrah-focused red from the Rhône Valley meets its apotheosis in E. Guigal’s single vineyard “La La” bottlings, but venerable producer René Rostaing can deliver similar quality with significant savings. Not only is his “Ampodium” Côte-Rôtie blended from several top parcels, but his “Les Lézardes” bottling comes from Syrah grapes grown in the Côte-Rôtie zone, which are declassified to the more general “Vin de Pays” because he deems them too young for the name Côte-Rôtie. Domaine’s Lombard’s excellent Vin de Pays “La Côte” is even easier on the wallet.

CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

BILLIONAIRE (\$600 to \$800)

-Château de Beaucastel Châteauneuf-du-Pape
 “Hommage à Jacques Perrin”

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (\$120+)

-Château Rayas Châteauneuf-du-Pape
 -Henri Bonneau & Fils Châteauneuf-du-Pape
 “Réserve des Célestins”
 -Domaine du Pégau Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Réserve

MILLIONAIRE (\$60 to \$120)

-Château de Beaucastel
 -Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe “La Crau”
 -Château La Nerthe

THOUSANDAIRE (Under \$50)

-Château de Beaucastel Côtes du Rhône “Coudoulet Rouge”
 -E. Guigal Gigodnas
 -Tardieu-Laurent Vacqueyras “Vieilles Vignes”

Economical alternatives to the earthy, roasted berry deliciousness that is Southern Rhône’s Châteauneuf-du-Pape are plentiful in the neighboring regions of Vacqueyras (Vab-kay-rahss) and Gigondas (Jbee-gohn-das). Even more affordable is Côtes du Rhône, which is often uncomplicated and straightforward but from a talented producer and can get you the flavor, if not some of the complexity and depth, of a CdP. Château de Beaucastel Côtes du Rhône “Coudoulet Rouge,” for example, is known to insiders as a “baby Beaucastel Châteauneuf-du-Pape,” sourced as it is from grapes next to the producer’s renowned Châteauneuf-du-Pape vineyard.

NAPA VALLEY CABERNET

BILLIONAIRE (\$1,000+)

-Screaming Eagle Cabernet Sauvignon

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (\$200 to \$500)

-Dalle Valle Maya, Scarecrow Cabernet Sauvignon
 -Schrader Cellars “Old Sparky” Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

MILLIONAIRE: (\$80 to \$200)

-Hewitt Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford
 -Robert Mondavi To Kalon Vineyard Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon
 -TOR Oakville Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard Clone No.6 Cabernet Sauvignon

THOUSANDAIRE (under \$50)

-Buehler Napa Valley Estate Cabernet Sauvignon
 -Newton Napa County Cabernet Sauvignon
 -Villa Mt. Eden Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Reserve

Those lacking the paper to invest in the To Kalon vineyard sourced “Old Sparky” from cult cabernet house Schrader Cellars can more affordably access Napa opulence through Robert Mondavi’s cuvée, which was the wine that established To Kalon as one of the world’s great vineyards. In general, value in Napa cabernet is found from such low-buzz pioneers, a category so important I expand upon it in the sidebar. Stalwarts like Buehler, Newton, and Villa Mt. Eden are gloriously untrendy, and you’ll pay less for that fact.

SUPER TUSCAN

BILLIONAIRE (\$600+)

-Masseto

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (\$200 to \$400)

- Monteverdine "Le Pergole Torte"
- Tenuta dell'Ornellaia "Ornellaia"
- Tenuta San Guido "Sassicaia"

MILLIONAIRE: (\$75 to \$120)

- Antinori "Tignanello"
- Felsina "Fontalloro"
- Tenuta dell'Ornellaia Le Serre Nuove

THOUSANDAIRE (under \$35)

- Banfi Brancaia "Tre"
- Ceralti "Scirè" Bolgheri
- Tenuta dell'Ornellaia "Le Volte"

No need to operate a Ponzi scheme to lay your lips on a super Tuscan, which is the category of Italian reds that come from non-traditional grape blends and/or are grown outside the official Chianti zone of Tuscany. Le Serre Nuove is the dependably delicious second label of the famed Ornellaia, while Le Volte is its excellent third label. Brancaia "Tre," a blend of three grapes—sangiovese, merlot, and cabernet sauvignon—is perennially a steal, as is the similarly built Castello Banfi "Centine."

BAROLO AND BARBARESCO

BILLIONAIRE (\$700+)

- Giacomo Conterno Barolo "Monfortino" Riserva

MULTIMILLIONAIRE: (\$200 to \$500)

- Angelo Gaja (GAH-yah) Barbaresco
- Bruno Giacosa "Falletto" Barolo Riserva
- Prunotto Barolo Riserva Bussia Vigna Colonnello
- Vietti (VYEHT-tee) Villero Barolo Riserva

MILLIONAIRE (\$80 to \$150)

- Elio Altare Barolo Cerretta.
- Giacomo Borgogno & Figli Barolo Riserva
- Paitin Barbaresco Sorì Paitin
- Paolo Scavino Cannubi Barolo
- Pio Cesare Barolo Ornato

THOUSANDAIRE (Under \$40)

- Cavallotto Langhe Nebbiolo
- Elio Grasso Barbera d'Alba Vigna Martina
- Paolo Scavino Barbera d'Alba
- Produttori del Barbaresco Langhe Nebbiolo

Piedmont's celebrated Barolo and its Nebbiolo-powered sister Barbaresco are wallet draining but not as punishingly pricey as their counterparts from Bordeaux and Burgundy. A solid understudy is Langhe Nebbiolo, which is a Nebbiolo-based wine from Piedmont that did not make the cut (typically because it came from younger grapes and/or less exalted vineyards) for the more expensive Barolo and Barbaresco. Another strategy is to look for the grape Barbera from a talented Piedmontese producer such as Elio Grasso or Paolo Scavino. Both cases get you "Piedmont Lite," a typically softer and less complex red that requires no bottling aging.



LOW-BUZZ PIONEERS: THE SECRET TO VALUE FOR NAPA CAB

Let others pursue the mailing list wineries that play hard to get. Billionaire flavor and complexity can be found for far less with cabernet and related blends from old school producers whose buzz has long subsided. I call these venerable wineries the Low-Buzz Pioneers (LBP). Many of them got first dibs on the best land and produce wine in relatively large quantities, both of them factors that can lead to relief at the cash register. Here are 10 compelling LBPs and their dependably excellent under Cabernet (all about \$50 or less).

LBP	FOUNDED	VALUE BOTTING
BEAULIEU	1900	Beaulieu Vineyard Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon
BERINGER	1897	Beringer Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
CHAPPELLET	1967	Chappellet Signature Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
FREEMARK ABBEY	1939	Freemark Abbey Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
FLORA SPRINGS	1978	Flora Springs Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
HONIG	1964	Honig Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
LOUIS M. MARTINI	1933	Louis M. Martini Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
RAYMOND	1970	Raymond Napa Valley Reserve Selection Cabernet Sauvignon
ROBERT MONDAVI	1966	Robert Mondavi Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
TREFETHEN	1978	Trefethen Oak Knoll District Cabernet Sauvignon

AUSTRALIAN SHIRAZ/RED BLEND

BILLIONAIRE (\$700+)

-Penfolds Grange Shiraz

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (\$100 to \$300)

-Two Hands "Ares" Barossa Valley
-McLaren Vale Shiraz
-Jim Barry "The Armagh" Shiraz
-Mollydooker "Velvet Glove" Shiraz

MILLIONAIRE (\$50 to \$100)

-Hentley Farm "The Beast" Single Block Shiraz
-Mitolo "G.A.M." Shiraz
-Penfolds "Bin 389" Cabernet-Shiraz
-Sons of Eden "Remus" Shiraz

THOUSANDAIRE (Under \$40)

-Kalleske "Moppa" Shiraz
-Mollydooker "The Boxer" Shiraz
-Penfolds "Bin 8" Cabernet-Shiraz
-Shingleback "The Davey Estate" Shiraz
-Wirra Wirra "Church Block" Red Blend

Penfolds Grange is Australia's most iconic wine, but the producer's markedly less expensive "Bin 389" is considered a fine stunt double, being that some of it matures in the same oak barrels that held the previous vintage of Grange. Plush, expressive Australian shiraz is plentiful at fair and even bargain prices, including Penfolds' wallet-loving "Bin 8" cab-shiraz.

SPANISH TEMPRANILLO/ RIBERA DEL DUERO

BILLIONAIRE (\$800+)

-Dominio de Pingus Ribera del Duero

MULTIMILLIONAIRE (\$200 to \$600)

-Bodegas Hermanos Sastre Ribera del Duero
"Vina Sastre" Pesus
-Bodegas Vega Sicilia "Unico"

MILLIONAIRE (\$50 to \$120)

-Bodegas y Viñedos Alion Ribera del Duero
"Hacienda Monasterio"
-Dominio de Pingus "Flor de Pingus"
-Tinto Pesquera Crianza
-Vega Sicilia "Valbuena 5º"

THOUSANDAIRE (Under \$40)

-Bodegas Cepa 21 Ribera del Duero
-Bodegas Ordoñez "Avante"
-Dominio de Pingus "Psi"
-Prado Rey Elite
-Valdrinal Ribera del Duero "Crianza"

Those lacking the funds for "Pingus," Spain's iconic and powerful Tempranillo from the Ribera del Duero region, can find a more affordable understudy in its second label, "Flor de Pingus," as well as the producer's more basic and available "Psi". The same winemaker, the famed Peter Sisseck, is also the force behind the splendid Hacienda Monasterio. Another titan of Ribera del Duero, Vega Sicilia's "Unico," has a second label in Valbuena 5º, which is aged for less time than its wine and is thus ready to drink sooner. The same winemaker also does a more affordable Tempranillo from Ribera del Duero under Bodegas y Viñedos Alion, which many consider a "baby Unico."

PORT

BILLIONAIRE (\$700+)

-Quinta do Noval Nacional Vintage Port

MILLIONAIRE (\$60 to \$120)

-Cockburn Vintage Port
-Graham Vintage Port
-Quinta do Noval Vintage Port

THOUSANDAIRE (\$30)

-Dow's Late Bottled Vintage Port
-Taylor Fladgate Late Bottled Vintage Port
-Niepoort Late Bottled Vintage Port

Vintage port is the longtime connoisseur's choice for rich, plummy, complex dessert wine, but the category called Late Bottled Vintage (or "LBV") has the dual advantage of being less expensive and also ready for immediate consumption (Vintage Port, on the other hand, requires years of aging in the bottle to mellow out). Some LBV's approach vintage port's trademark depth and concentration, while others have a lighter, more fruity character.

SAUTERNES/LATE-HARVEST DESSERT WINE

BILLIONAIRE (\$400 to \$800+)

-Château d'Yquem Sauternes

MILLIONAIRE (\$40 to \$120)

-Château Climens (Klee-mahs) Sauternes
-Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey (La-foh-ee Pay-ra-goo-aye) Sauternes
-Château Suduiraut (Soo-dwee-roe) Sauternes
-Château Rieussec (Ree-oh-sec) Sauternes

THOUSANDAIRE (\$15 to \$40)

-Cru d'Arche Pugnau Sauternes
-Domaine des Deux Vallées Coteaux du Layon "Le Clos de la Motte" (France)
-Hogue Columbia Valley Late Harvest (Washington State)
-The Royal Tokaji Wine Co. Tokaji Late Harvest "Mad Cuvée" (Hungary)
-Disznókő Tokaji Late Harvest (Hungary)

Nothing quite matches the nectarous transcendence of Sauternes (Saw-tairn) from the Bordeaux region, but you can come pretty close with other styles of late harvest dessert wine, especially Coteaux du Layon from the Loire Valley and Tokaji (Tob-kay) from Hungary. If you're looking for the genuine article, Cru d'Arche Pugnau, a fantastic, lesser-known Sauternes, is situated near some of Sauternes's most famous names yet rings up for much less.