

# California

California vineyards name their wines not after the region or vineyard where they're grown (as is the custom in France), but after the predominant grape used in making the wine. These are the most popular varieties.

## White Wines

Variety	Characteristics	Serve with	Price	Favorite Labels
<b>Chardonnay</b>	Fruity; full-bodied; smooth	Roast chicken; grilled fish; salmon; veal	\$4–7 \$18–20	Glen Ellen; Sonoma-Cutrer
<b>Sauvignon Blanc</b>	Light; crisp	Light fish or chicken dishes; cream sauces	\$4–7 \$10–12	Robert Mondavi; Silverado; Sterling

## Red Wines

Variety	Characteristics	Serve with	Price	Favorite Labels
<b>Cabernet Sauvignon</b>	Fragrant; smooth	Roast meats or chicken; hearty pasta	\$7–9 \$18–22	B.V. Coastal; Napa Ridge; Hawk Crest; White Oak Vineyards
<b>Merlot</b>	Spicy; full-bodied; slightly tannic; slightly smoky	Lamb; grilled meats or fatty fish	\$9–12 \$13–16	Clos du Bois; Sebastiani
<b>Pinot Noir</b>	Spicy; slightly tannic; dry	Roast meats; steak; grilled tuna; lamb chops	\$9–12	Napa Ridge; Robert Mondavi "Private Selection"
<b>Zinfandel</b>	Fruity; complex; slightly spicy	Grilled meats and fish; roast chicken; hearty pastas; lamb chops	\$7–9 \$10–15	Ravenswood; Segesio; Ridge

## Rosé Wines

Variety	Characteristics	Serve with	Price	Favorite Labels
<b>White Zinfandel</b>	Fruity; slightly sweet; smooth	Chicken; fish; burgers; casual meals	\$5–7	Beringer; Sutter Home

## TWO FANCY DINNERS

# France

Understanding the nuances of French wine is very complicated. There are many different vineyards in Bordeaux and Burgundy and each produces wines of varied tastes and finishes. However, you can count on certain wines to deliver distinctive tastes; full-bodied and light/crisp are the differentiating characteristics used here.

## White Wines

Variety	Region Grown	Characteristics	Serve with	Price	Favorite Labels
<b>Chablis</b>	Burgundy	Dry; crisp; elegant	Chicken breasts; light fish dishes; cream sauces	\$12–15 \$40	Vocoret; Vocoret "Grand Cru"
<b>Muscadet</b>	Loire Valley	Full-bodied; fruity	Roast chicken; grilled fish; salmon	\$8–12	Chereau "Carré"; Sauvion et Fils
<b>Pouilly-Fuissé</b>	Burgundy	Dry; subtle; crisp	Light fish dishes; cream sauces; light pasta sauces	\$12–14	Georges Duboeuf
<b>Vouvray</b>	Loire Valley	Dry; soft; slightly sweet	Chicken; grilled fish; veal	\$8–10 \$18–20	B & G; Huet

## Red Wines

Variety	Region Grown	Characteristics	Serve with	Price	Favorite Labels
<b>Beaujolais</b>	Burgundy	Fruity; soft; smooth	Chicken; fish; stews; burgers; pasta	\$7–9	Georges Duboeuf; Louis Jadot
<b>Bordeaux</b>	Bordeaux	Rich; hearty; full-bodied	Roast beef; chicken; lamb	\$7–9 \$14–30	Mouton Cadet; Château Greysac; Château Meyney
<b>Burgundy</b>	Burgundy	Rich; hearty; full-bodied; strong	Roast meats; lamb	\$8–10 \$32–35	Louis Latour; Marquis d'Angerville

### Wine Tip

Much is made of the rule, "Red wine with meat, white with fish or chicken." And you certainly would not serve a *grand cru* red Bordeaux with fillet of sole, nor a light Frascati with roast lamb. But some of the lighter and fruitier reds, such as Beaujolais, Barbera, or Valpolicella, are fine for roast chicken or grilled fish. And some of the heartier whites, such as a white Burgundy, will stand up to a veal chop.

# Italy

Italy is known for its dry, crisp white wines and large, powerful reds. Of course there's also a lot of wine in between, like Barberas and Dolcettos, which are both light and fruity Italian reds. While the giant Italian wine labels that are distributed in grocery stores and less distinguished liquor stores may be unsatisfying, in a better wine shop you are bound to discover some wonderful Italian wines that rival the best of France and California.

## White Wines

Variety	Region Grown	Characteristics	Serve with	Price	Favorite Labels
<b>Frascati</b>	Rome	Light; dry	Fish; hors d'oeuvres	\$5–8	Fontana Candida
<b>Orvieto</b>	Tuscany	Light; crisp	Fish; chicken; veal	\$7–9 \$10–13	Antinori; Teruzzi & Puthod Vernaccia
<b>Pinot Grigio</b>	Friuli or Veneto	Fruity; crisp	Fish; seafood; chicken	\$9–12	La Columbaia; Antica Corte; Bartenura

## Red Wines

Variety	Region Grown	Characteristics	Serve with	Price	Favorite Labels
<b>Barbera</b>	Piedmont	Fruity; smooth	Pasta; veal; grilled fish	\$9–12	Marchesi di Barolo; Bartenura
<b>Barolo</b>	Piedmont	Hearty; complex; full-bodied	Roast meats; hearty pasta	\$20 \$32–38	S. Orsola; Ceretto "Zonchera"
<b>Dolcetto</b>	Piedmont	Dry; elegant	Lamb; roast fowl; meat; pasta	\$10–14	Marchesi di Barolo; Prunotto
<b>Chianti</b>	Tuscany	Full-bodied; fruity; slightly tannic	Meat; pasta	\$7–10	Ruffino; Badia a Coltibuono

## Wine Bargains

There are lots of very decent whites and reds in the \$5 to \$6 price range. Some are simply called "table wines" and can vary greatly in quality. Others are from some of the newer wine-producing countries such as Chile, Australia, and New Zealand. Ask your local wine merchant for his recommendations. Then take home four or five different wines and try them out. You really will taste the differences. The one you like most may even be the cheapest. Once you've found your favorite, pick up a case.