

Here is a listing of some of the most spectacular vineyards in the area. Nearly all are domestic.

LESS THAN \$10

Sterling Vineyard: 79 Chenin Blanc complex and refined.

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Chenin Blanc — Usually this is a fruity, picnic wine designed to be drunk young and well-chilled. It rarely develops complexity, though the Sterling in the list here has some. It is straight forward and clean in taste, pale in color and should have a rich aroma.

LESS THAN \$15

Claire du Val: 79 Chenin Blanc complex and refined.

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CABERNET SAUVIGNON and ZINFANDEL ROSE — These excellent red wine grapes, when made into rose wines (an increasing occurrence in California), tend to have an excellent balance between fruit and acidity. Well-balanced, they have rich varietal character combined with backbone. These are not the simple roses we meet in jug wines. Rather, they have layers of fruit and interesting aromas.

PINOT NOIR — Lush, creamy, genteel and full of texture, the Pinot Noir at its

best is a luxurious wine, as the great French Bugundies attest. Lesser Pinot Noirs tend to be almost medicinal and/or thin of character.

ZINFANDEL — The hardest grape of all to describe as its character depends on growing and fermentation conditions. It can be fresh and berry-like, it can be complex and elegant, it can be huge and rich and overpowering. Those in this list tend toward the elegant side, comparable in depth to any of California's best red wines.

PETITE SIRAH — This tends to be bold, straight forward wine with overtones of peppercorns and other spicy fruits or berries. Much tannin is usually present, meaning the wine should be allowed to mature five to eight years beyond its vintage.

Continued on page 62

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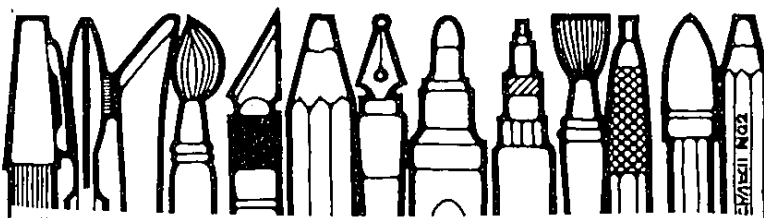


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