

2022 Malcaracter Verdejo Rueda, Spain



Malcaracter is a vineyard project in the Ribera del Duero, with no other aim than to endeavor to return to the origins of Castilian vinegrowing. The name is a tribute to the Castilian temperament. It is said that the inhabitants of Ribera del Duero are rude and opinionated. They are known as 'Malcaracter.' Now that's running with an unfavorable moniker! Rueda is Spain's most famous white wine zone. It's located in the northern central part of the country's largest state: Castilla y León, which is also home to Ribera del Duero. Coming from a certified organic vineyard with an average age of 25 years, this Verdejo is aged on its lees for 6 months for fabulous texture. It has highly intense aroma and very fruity. Fresh tropical fruits like pineapple and passion fruit as well as light boxwood and fennel, typical of the Verdejo variety. Very round, balance and fresh in mouth, with good body and structure. A great pairing with cod, squid and grilled octopus. Also pairs with seafood paella, and a goat cheese salad.

Thieves' price: \$11.99

2019 Bell Syrah Canterbury Vineyard, Sierra Foothills



Bell Wine Cellars was co-founded in 1991 by Anthony Bell and a local Napa Valley grower. Frequent discussions about grape growing practices and wine quality reinforced their belief that great wines are not only a product of the vineyard – the terroir – but that elegance, fruit, and balance are hallmarks of a fine wine. In 2002, Ron Berberian, former California wine wholesaler, along with Alex Spanos and his family, real estate developers and owners of the San Diego Chargers, acquired the assets of the former wine company and formed a new partnership with Anthony. With their support and vision, Bell has grown from the original 500

cases to 15,000 cases. Deep ruby in color with spicy, peppery fruit aromas, the wine has good acidity, with a rich, luscious mouthfeel and soft, elegant tannins. The oak flavors are in balance with the fruit acidity and fruit flavor to yield an appealing wine, bright on the palate, with great depth and concentration. Pair with cassoulet, or lamb curry.

Thieves' price: \$11.99

2023 Donnafugata 'Anthilia' Lucido blend Sicilia, Italy



Lucido (synonym for Catarratto), the predominant variety, with typical Italian caginess on what else makes up this blend! Sicily is the crossroads of the Mediterranean with a winemaking history going back 3000 years. With over 65 native wine varieties, Sicily makes flavors that can only be found on this island. In 1983, the experienced winegrowing couple Giacomo and Gabriella Rallo decided to invest in a new Sicilian project that they called "Donnafugata." Their vision was to create a contemporary winegrowing operation based around three sites in western Sicily and to produce a range of international and indigenous variety wines to showcase the potential of Sicily. The nose offers a fresh and fragrant bouquet with notes of white pulp fruit combined with hints of wildflowers. In the mouth, we find the evident fruity note, refreshed by a pleasant savoriness. The finish has good persistence. Perfect with various appetizers, with crudities and fried fish, and vegetable casseroles; also try it with fresh cheese and white meats.

Thieves' price: \$17.99

2022 Domaine Jocelyn Raoux Lirac, France



A blend of 50% Grenache and 50% Syrah. Lirac is one of the crus of the Rhône valley, and it's just northwest of Avignon, next to Tavel and over the river from Châteauneuf-du-Pape. It became a cru back in 1947. This is a warm, sunny place for growing grape vines with 2700 sun-hours per year, and a strong influence from the Mistral wind from the northeast. The history of this estate dates back to the 19th century, when Aimé Raoux, a man of the land with many talents, planted the first plants of this wine adventure. Aimé practiced mixed farming by cultivating olive trees, cereals but also by devoting himself to market gardening, and even sericulture (breeding silkworms). But among all his activities, it was the vine that slowly took root

to become the very essence of the farm. From galets roulés, large river stones, over clay/limestone, and then some calcareous soils. Ripe and concentrated with lush, sweet cherry and berry fruit with a stony, mineral twist. Has a core of sweet fruit but also some savoury, grainy characters. A rich style but with some complexity. Pair with grilled tuna or wild boar stew.

Thieves' price: \$17.99

2017 Paola Sordo Nebbiolo Barolo, Italy



Barolo is one of Italy's greatest wine appellations. In fact many cognoscenti of Italian wines consider Barolo to be the apex of Italian winemaking. Barolo is sometimes referred to as "the king of wines, and the wine of kings" partly because until the mid-19th century Piedmont was owned by the noble House of Savoy, the historic rulers of northwestern Italy. And the Savoys had a taste for Nebbiolo. The Sordo estate is to be found in the heart of one of the most successful winegrowing areas in Piedmont – the Langhe – in between the municipalities of Castiglione Falletto and Barolo. The winery is modern and uses the latest technology a combination of tradition and innovation, its aim is to achieve the highest quality in each step of the production: from the harvest to the aging of the wine. Aromas of ripe red berries and hints of grainy earth, rose petals and citrus rind. Full-bodied and densely packed with fine, lightly chewy tannins and very good fruit drive from start to finish. Pair with Osso Buco, prime rib, Peking duck, Grana Padana or Toma cheese.

Thieves' price: \$38.99

2018 Green & Red Zinfandel Napa Valley, Chiles Mill Vineyard



In 1968, founder Jay Heminway was living in Berkeley, teaching sculpture at U.C. Berkeley, and right in the eye of the 1960s storm — dead center in the summer of love, of the free speech movement, of anti war protests, psychedelia, and a reawakening of so many to the beautiful and complex world around them. There was a Berkeley movement among a tight knit group of friends, for local, authentic food and wine. Bob Wax, Patricia Curtan, John Lilly, Alice Waters, and Jay Heminway were a part of this merry group of friends. The first planted by Heminway was The Chiles Mill Vineyard, in the 1960's, situated at 800-1000 feet above sea level and named after the historic *Chiles Grist Mill* — the first flour mill in Northern California, which had been built by Joseph B. Chiles in 1845. This claret style zin is smoky, with scents of red berries, amaro and pine that carries through to a mentholated savor to the palate. The purple fruit is lean and juicy with fine tannins and a lacy acidity that steers the wine with a quiet energy. Pair with brisket, grilled chicken, Italian sausage, or grilled eggplant with caramelized onions.

Thieves' price: \$35.99