





Wine & Spirits TASTINGS DECEMBER 2016

KEY			
			
TASTED	RECOMMENDED	TOP WINES	BEST BUYS

YEAR'S BEST

				
CHAMPAGNE, P. 48	294	143	90	27
ALSACE, P. 59	260	89	46	15
GERMAN RIESLING, P. 64	370	160	85	44
US CABERNET & BORDEAUX STYLE RED BLEND, P. 72	774	213	121	14
BAROLO & BARBARESCO, P. 85	226	106	69	8
RIOJA, P. 91	301	90	32	33
PORT, P. 95	86	27	22	10

NEW RELEASES

US, P. 97	464	67	20	15
IMPORTED, P. 100	496	160	34	37

**TOTAL WINES
TASTED
FOR THIS ISSUE**

3,271



1,055



519



203

The Top Wine and Best Buy numbers are a subset of the total number of recommended wines.

SOME MEMBERS OF OUR TASTING PANELS FOR THIS ISSUE:

SF: David Castleberry, *RN74* • Spencer Chaffey, *Mason Pacific* • Tara Patrick, *Mourad* • Charlotte Randolph, *Californios* • Rob Renteria, *La Folie*
NY: Rebecca Banks, *Balthazar* • Luke Boland, *La Sirena* • Michael Engelmann MS & Kyungmoon Kim MS, *The Modern* • Andrea Morris, *Nix* • Grant Reynolds, *Charlie Bird* • Sarah Thomas, *Le Bernardin* • Hristo Zisovski, *Alta Mare Group*



YEAR'S BEST **ALSACE**

Our blind panels tasted **260** new-release Alsace wines over the past 12 months.

Joshua Greene, our critic for Alsace wines, rated **46** as exceptional (90+) and **15** as Best Buys.

Find a complete list of wines tasted and all reviews at wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

SPARKLING

90 | Cave de Turckheim \$32
Crémant d'Alsace Mayerling Brut Rosé
From fruit grown on gravel and granite soils, this has clean, fresh flavors that last. It's firm and juicy, with a touch of mushroom earthiness adding structure to the length and depth of pinot noir flavor. Pour it with sautéed cèpes. *Magnum Wines Int'l, East Greenwich, RI*

WHITE

GEWURZTRAMINER



93 | Trimbach \$47
2008 Alsace Cuvée des Seigneurs de Ribeauvillé Gewurztraminer This historic vineyard in Ribeauvillé grows on marl-limestone soils, where the Trimbachs farm gewurztraminer on 50-year-old vines. The limestone soils seem to direct the structure of this wine, keeping it tight and formal. The fruit itself is markedly fresh, with a cool pink-grapefruit buzz of flavor and fine tannins that lengthen the zesty spice. Juicy and brisk, this has years of development ahead. *Esprit du Vin, Syosset, NY*

92 | Charles Baur \$31
2013 Alsace Grand Cru Pfersigberg Gewurztraminer From clay-limestone soils on the hill above Eguisheim, Pfersigberg is one of Baur's three grand cru sites. This gewurztraminer starts off with floral notes that are detailed and pretty, not aggressively perfumed. The rose scents fill out a texture that's smoky with grape-skin tannins and fat with alcohol, yet all held in check so it finishes clean, with finesse. It would work well with something crisp and meaty, like

bacon-wrapped water chestnuts. *V.O.S. Selections, NY*

92 | Domaine Sipp Mack \$32
2012 Alsace Vieilles Vignes Gewurztraminer This comes from organically farmed estate vines with more than 40 years of age, growing on clay-limestone soils. More about peach and stone fruits than floral scents, this has gewurz's pungent orange and lemongrass notes. Rich and round, it has staying power, a tense young wine to pour with choucroute, or to age. *Franck's Signature Wines, Annapolis, MD*

91 | Dom. Zind-Humbrecht \$26
2014 Alsace Gewurztraminer This grows at Zind-Humbrecht's gravelly valley-floor vineyards in Turckheim, where the vines average 45 years old, with some dating to the 1940s and '50s. It starts off brisk and tight, with bitter melon and grapefruit pith flavors, building intensity with air so it almost grabs you by the lapels and shakes. *Boudin blanc* will tame some of that intensity, as will a few years of age. *Kobrand, Purchase, NY*

90 | Léon Beyer \$63
2008 Alsace Comtes d'Eguisheim Gewurztraminer A muscular white, this takes gewurztraminer's propensity toward tannins and builds it into a full metal jacket. It's a little soapy in its scent, and stony in its acidity, with a porky flavor essence that takes it to choucroute. *Vin Divino, Chicago, IL*

90 | Schoffit \$54
2012 Alsace Grand Cru Clos St-Théobald Rangen Gewurztraminer Deep gold and superripe, this is a fruit-driven gewurztraminer with clean flavors of nectarine and loquat. Some bitter and savory notes offset the sweetness of the fruit, finishing warm and potent. For sausages and onions braised in white wine. *Weygandt-Metzler Importing, Coatesville, PA*

88 | Wolfberger \$17
2014 Alsace Gewurztraminer (Best Buy)
Tight and chalky, this wine's bright lemon scent carries some pungent gewurztraminer

stinkiness—bitter notes of rose petals and litchi. Match its tart fruit to a Thai green papaya salad with salted crab. *Kysela Père et Fils, Winchester, VA*

PINOT GRIS

93 | Kuentz-Bas \$59
2014 Alsace Grand Cru Florimont Trois Châteaux Pinot Gris This grows at a vineyard in Ingersheim, where winemaker Samuel Tottoli has been farming the vines under biodynamics since 2004 (certified in 2008). The soils are limestone marls, the fruit fermented and aged in stainless steel, producing a powerful and compressed wine with direction and drive to its flavors. It's superrich, with the tart density of grapefruit marmalade, yet it feels completely fresh, lasting with the spicy grip of pale grape-skin tannins. Built to age, this will match a rabbit and herb terrine. *Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA*

93 | Dom. Zind-Humbrecht \$55
2014 Alsace Roche Calcaire Pinot Gris In 2014, Olivier Humbrecht decided to blend three of his lieux-dits for this wine: all of Clos Jébsal, along with fruit from Clos Windsbuhl and Heimbouurg. Harvested early and fermented dry, this is a formidable, meaty wine that feels saturated with golden apple flavor. Its satisfying richness would match an equally rich roasted turbot with cream and herbs or *blanquette de veau*. *Kobrand, Purchase, NY*

92 | Jean-Baptiste Adam \$50
2014 Alsace Letzenberg Pinot Gris Adam farms this vineyard in Ingersheim under biodynamics; it's a warm slope of mostly Jurassic limestone with red marls. This is ripe and bluntly fruity at first, taking time for the smoky earthiness of the lees to show. Its pale peach flavors are heady, brought into focus by an intriguing mineral component. For the cellar. *The Sorting Table, Napa, CA*

YEAR'S BEST ALSACE

91 | Wolfberger \$90

2012 Alsace Grand Cru Rangen de Thann Pinot Gris Wolfberger farms close to 10 acres in Rangen de Thann, where the warm, volcanic soils helped ripen this pinot gris to its deep golden color and tropical fruit flavors of pineapple and mango. Its botrytis complexity provides richness, while a firm line of minerality keeps the wine cool and focused, with the stamina to age. *Kysela Père et Fils, Winchester, VA*

91 | Dom. Zind-Humbrecht \$26

2014 Alsace Pinot Gris (Best Buy) With its golden honey and yellow flower scents, this starts off bright and sweet, then ends completely dry. It's a floral pinot gris with pungent richness, delicious with veal schnitzel. *Kobrand, Purchase, NY*

90 | Joseph Cattin \$17

2015 Alsace Pinot Gris (Best Buy) This wine's fresh, pear-like flavors are rounded by a touch of sweetness. Notes of pastry crust and hazelnut underlie the fruit, making this a lovely white to pour with a savory onion tart. *Grapevine Distributors, Concord, NC*

90 | Kientzheim-Kaysersberg \$24

2014 Alsace Lieu-Dit Altenbourg Anne de K Pinot Gris (Best Buy) This wine's sweet nectarine flavors are clean and transparent, allowing an undertone of earthiness to lend it savor. That savory element comes across as a brioche-like leanness holding up against all the generous fruit. It's a pale, rich white to serve with fruit and cheese. *Saranty Imports, Harrison, NY*

90 | Kuentz-Bas \$59

2014 Alsace Grand Cru Eichberg Trois Châteaux Pinot Gris This wine's floral leanness has a heady, buttered-brioche flavor, its ripe density focused by spicy fruit-skin tannins. Kuentz-Bas's pinot gris parcel at Eichberg is just over an acre, planted on a mix of clay, limestone, sandstone and quartz. *Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA*

90 | Gustave Lorentz \$35

2013 Alsace Lieu-Dit Schofweg Pinot Gris Schofweg is an east-facing limestone parcel neighboring the grand cru Altenberg de Bergheim. In 2013, it grew a pinot gris with the cool feel of fresh orchard fruits, the bitter pithiness of lemon zest and the pale spice of the grape. Clean and lasting, this wine's flavors will enrich a Berkshire pork chop roasted with herbs. *Quintessential, Napa, CA*

90 | Domaine Moltes \$32

2015 Alsace Grand Cru Steinert Pinot Gris From the limestone soils of Steinert, this is a grand wine with juicy flavors of pear skin and honeycomb. Toasty lees add to the wine's intensity and picks up on its alcohol, finishing with some edges of floral warmth, even as the fruit remains cool and stony. For pan-roasted sea bass with chanterelle cream. *Orr Selections, Miami, FL*

90 | Schoffit \$53

2012 Alsace Grand Cru Rangen Clos St-Théobald Pinot Gris This is a big pinot gris, concentrated and complicated in its flavor depths. It's sunny and golden, with gingery spice and ripe peach intensity. The toasty, caramelized flavors will match a wintry roast pork shoulder. *Weygandt-Metzler Importing, Coatesville, PA*

89 | Domaine Saint-Remy \$24

2014 Alsace IM Berg Pinot Gris (Best Buy) Honeyed and rich, with tangy white berry flavors, this wine's pale herbal spice and talc-like acidity would match most any roasted white meats. *Domaine Select Wine and Spirits, NY*

RIESLING

95 | Dom. Schlumberger \$29

2013 Alsace Grand Cru Saering Riesling With 55 acres in Saering, Schlumberger owns two-thirds of this grand cru, a hillside that extends down onto the plain, where it forms the shape of a ring. Schlumberger harvested this vineyard on October 4th, before a major storm, and then again on the 7th, after the well-drained soils, a former seabed of marl, limestone and sandstone, had helped the vines to recover from the rain. The combination of ripeness and acidity in this wine makes the structure compelling, while the evocative scents and flavors mirror that dynamic: a burst of ripe, mid-summer peach with a luscious drop of honey to contrast the fresh line of limestone acidity. That acidity is evocative of crisp apples and crushed seashells, a mineral line to draw the flavors forward and upward. Fresh and beautiful. *Maisons Marques & Domaines USA, Oakland, CA*

94 | Kuentz-Bas \$50

2014 Alsace Grand Cru Pfersigberg Trois Châteaux Riesling Pfersigberg is a hillside facing southeast, composed of marl and limestone soils over *muschelkalk*. This riesling, farmed under biodynamics, fermented slowly through the winter on ambient yeasts. Marked by those yeasts in its rich brioche

scent, and by its soils in the formidable drive of its flavor, this is a grand wine with just enough creamy richness to prevent it from feeling austere. The scent alone is worth the price of admission: Green in the best limey sense, it has the mineral essence of a grand cru Burgundy without any of the weight. *Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA*

94 | Domaine Zind-Humbrecht \$120

2014 Alsace Grand Cru Clos St-Urbain Rangen de Thann Riesling A muscular riesling from the volcanic soils of Rangen, this is golden in color and in its super-concentrated flavors of peach. There's salty warmth to the wine's distinctive minerality, captured here in a youthfully powerful wine that feels graceful and elegant. It finishes with cool, clean purity of fruit. The relatively high elevation (1,150 to 1,475 feet above sea level) and proximity to the Vosges Mountains makes this a late-ripening site, while the steep, south-facing slope facilitates that slow ripening. It's a pretty glorious 2014. *Kobrand, Purchase, NY*

93 | Kuentz-Bas \$30

2014 Alsace Trois Châteaux Riesling This has an old-fashioned earthy complexity that gives more of the taste impression of a field blend than a single-variety riesling. It's mineral from beginning to end, broadening in the middle to ripe nectarine flavors, then firming up and tingling with acidity in the finish. The sensation of chewing on fuzzy peach skin adds to the wine's intensity and flavor length. Accessible now if you decant it for roast pork, this is structured for age. *Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA*

93 | Meyer-Fonné \$46

2013 Alsace Grand Cru Wineck-Schlossberg Riesling Félix Meyer farms 2.5 acres of this grand cru, a south-facing hillside of crumbly mica granite where the vines date to 1958 (he replanted a portion in 2010). He ferments the wine in stainless steel, then ages it on the fine lees in foudres, both rounding the texture and deepening the flavors without losing any of the buoyant freshness of this 2013. In a blind tasting, the impression is that the skin of the fruit is still present, holding the flavors within at peak ripeness, shaping a memory of a cool morning in a summer orchard, when there's condensation on the ground and the golden skin of the peaches is crisp. The wine is broad and luscious, with remarkable staying power, its beauty lasting over the course of several days after the bottle is first opened. This has a long life ahead. *Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA*

93 | Wolfberger \$90

2012 Alsace Grand Cru Rangen de Thann Riesling There's refreshing, cool earthiness to this tight young riesling, a deep mineral tone and root-cellar savor that balances its floral, lemon-curd flavors. As potent and earthy as the flavors may be, they finish clean, with enough cut to stand next to braised rabbit or other white-meat game. *Kysela Père et Fils, Winchester, VA*

93 | Dom. Zind-Humbrecht \$80

2014 Alsace Clos Windsbuhl Riesling Olivier Humbrecht farms riesling at the top of the slope in Clos Windsbuhl, where the topsoil has eroded so the vines are close to the *muschelkalk*; it's a type of limestone rich in magnesium, which he finds to produce riesling with both elegance and volume. This wine took 15 months to finish fermentation, producing a kaleidoscope of fruit in colors of lemongrass, yellow flowers, pink grapefruit and red berries. The tense, mineral-tinged structure is powerful, yet withheld, keeping a tight focus on the lasting fruit complexity. Fascinating to drink now, this will benefit from mellowing for a few years in the cellar. *Kobrand, Purchase, NY*

92 | Domaine Bott-Geyl \$21

2014 Alsace Les Elements Riesling (Best Buy) Jean-Christophe Bott converted the 80 parcels of his family's estate to biodynamics in 2002. His careful farming shows in this simple domaine wine that performs far beyond its price. It takes riesling in an unexpected direction, with intense lemon-yellow fruit and bright acidity well padded by savory green tea and lobster broth flavors. Then the finish opens toward a note that's almost strawberry in its red hue. Pour it with gingery Cantonese lobster. *David Bowler Wines, NY*

92 | Domaine Sipp Mack \$43

2011 Alsace Grand Cru Rosacker Riesling Jacques Sipp was working as a cellar hand at Langguth Winery in Mattawa, Washington, when he met his future wife, Laura, a UC-Davis oenology grad. They have run this family estate since 1985, converting it to organic farming in 2010. Their 5.2 acres at Rosacker includes riesling vines on gray limestone and calcareous clay, the hillside facing east-southeast. This 2011, aged in oak on the fine lees, has a green-tea note of tannins along with an intriguing red fruit character, like brandied cherries and the bittersweet flavors of a peach pit. It's a powerful wine, broad and rich, needing further bottle age to fully open. *Franck's Signature Wines, Annapolis, MD*

91 | Gustave Lorentz \$50

2010 Alsace Grand Cru Altenberg de Bergheim Vieilles Vignes Riesling The Lorentz family's vineyard holdings are focused in Bergheim, where it farms 82 acres, including 33 in the Altenberg grand cru (they gained organic certification in 2012). In the hot summer and cool fall of 2010, this relatively warm site produced a powerful riesling, its broad yellow peach and Rainier cherry flavors focused and directed toward a stony, green-pear finish. It's warm at the edge, ready to take on *choucroute au poisson* with a creamy riesling sauce. *Quintessential, Napa, CA*

91 | Domaine Ostertag \$63

2014 Alsace Grand Cru Muenchberg Riesling Originally planted by Cistercian monks in the 11th and 12th centuries, Muenchberg is a south-facing hillside of volcanic and pink sandstone soils. André Ostertag has been farming it under biodynamics since 1998 and considers it his top site. His 2014 takes the acidity of the vintage to searing austerity, relieved by the roundness of the texture, ending on herbal complexity and strapping richness. That richness is infused by bright floral notes of daisies and roses. A little reduced for now, this needs cellar time to fully open. *Kernit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA*

90 | Domaine Pfister \$49

2012 Alsace Grand Cru Engelberg Riesling Pfister grows riesling to the east of the old limestone quarry at Engelberg. This 2012 is vertically structured, following a tight line of lime. It feels almost tannic in its tale-like constriction, but then there's some fruit relief in the end. Built to age. *Vintage '59 Imports, Washington, DC*

90 | Cave de Ribeauvillé \$40

2010 Alsace Grand Cru Osterberg Riesling Just reaching the bridge between youth and maturity, this wine opens to classical Alsace richness, a searingly acidic riesling with citrus notes touched by the sweetness of age. It's quiet up front, expanding into an oyster broth savor then tightening around caraway, tart lemon and softer notes of honey. Pour it with a lobster salad for a decadently elegant Sunday brunch. *Serge Doré Selections, Chappaqua, NY*

90 | Schoenheit \$25

2014 Alsace Linsenberg Riesling Located in Wihr-au-Val, in the hills west of Colmar, the Schoenheit family farms several lieux-dits, including Linsenberg, on granite and mica soils. This riesling has a tough structure, almost like a red wine in its tannic feel. The




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YEAR'S BEST ALSACE

fruit smells and tastes of white cherries, the dense texture cut by sharply abrasive acidity. It's a substantial wine demanding some cellar time and something as rich as rilletes, whether salmon or pork. *Crystalline Selections, Jersey City, NJ*

90 | Schoffit \$53
2012 Alsace Grand Cru Rangen Clos St-Théobald Riesling Rich with green fig and layers of dried fruit, this is an ornate and powerful riesling from the volcanic soils of Rangen. It's floral and rich, an unctuous white for a crown roast of pork. *Weygandt-Metzler Importing, Coatesville, PA*



90 | Trimbach \$70
2009 Alsace Cuvée Frédéric Emile Riesling The Trimbach family's vineyards are centered around Ribeauvillé, where this cuvée comes from a selection of vines averaging 45 years old in Geisberg and Osterberg. The south- and southeast-facing hills are a mix of limestone and sandstone marls with some *muschelkalk* (fossil-rich deposits from an ancient, land-locked sea). The deep-rooted old vines handled the summer drought of 2009 and turned out a classical, complex riesling with rotund flavors of apples, peaches and honeycomb. It buzzes with alcohol and acidity in the middle, then finishes relatively cool. Serve it with a savory onion tart. *Esprit du Vin, Syosset, NY*

90 | Willm \$22
2014 Alsace Grand Cru Kirchberg de Barr Riesling Willm farms this mid-slope site above the village of Barr, fermenting the riesling in large oak vats, presenting a wine with tight lime green fruit and spine-tingling acidity. A little short in the finish, it quiets to a ghost of lime zest, a refreshing counterpoint to bouillabaisse laden with clams. *Monsieur Touton Selection, NY*

89 | Cave de Turckheim \$21
2015 Alsace Tradition Riesling (Best Buy) Scents of jasmine brighten this wine's juicy honey-lemon flavors, finishing fresh and clean. Simple, good juice. *Magnum Wines International, East Greenwich, RI*

88 | Lucien Albrecht \$20
2015 Alsace Réserve Riesling (Best Buy) Saturated with grapefruit and lemon flavor, this riesling has a pretty heather note and enough firmness of texture to provide resistance. For Cantonese salt-and-pepper squid. *Pasternak Wine Imports, Harrison, NY*

87 | Albert Seltz \$17
2014 Alsace Réserve Riesling (Best Buy) This warm, sturdy riesling has the sugar-and-salt balance to match fish and chips. *Domaine Select Wine & Spirits, NY*

WHITE BLENDS

96 | Domaine Marcel Deiss \$97
2011 Alsace Grand Cru Altenberg de Bergheim Jean-Michel Deiss believes the synthesis of a community of vines provides the clearest voice of his grand cru vineyards. So he farms 12 varieties in a mixed planting at Altenberg de Bergheim, a south-facing hillside in Ribeauvillé where two geological faults meet, crumbling limestone together with Jurassic marls. What he achieves through the care of his farming is a wine that's layered with more flavors than it's worth attempting to list: If you begin with the scents of grapefruit, crunchy peach and the high-toned buzz of meadow flowers, they all become subsumed into a buzz of honeyed richness that feels lighter than air. A day later, the wine is pure deliciousness, with a physical attraction in the scent and a flavor that lasts for minutes. *Verity Wine Partners, NY*

94 | Dom. Marcel Deiss \$52
2012 Alsace Rotenberg Rotenberg is an east-facing hillside of Jurassic limestone covered in iron-rich red soil where Deiss farms riesling and pinot gris for this silken, satin richness, creating a wine that could not come from anywhere else. It starts off with elegance, that textural richness emanating out of soft peach and tart green apple flavors. Wait a day and the wine is Alsace gone wild, with scents of floral pear and meadow flowers, the texture sexier than before, inviting you in to cuddle up with its graceful curves. *Verity Wine Partners, NY*

94 | Dom. Marcel Deiss \$95
2011 Alsace Grand Cru Schoenenbourg Deiss describes the soils at this south-facing hillside in Riquewihr as a mix of "iridescent marls and Keuper gypsum covered in sandstone," all of it layered over clay. The rocks and clay provide fertility and water-holding capacity for the vines

(a co-plantation of 12 varieties) giving a powerful wine, spherical in its shape on the palate, warm and buzzing with a near-explosive energy. The wine's earthiness has a lower tone, like celery root, that continues to ground it as scents of white flowers pull in the opposite direction. It's held together by a supple, silken texture, needing years to provide open access to its full expression. *Verity Wine Partners, NY*

92 | Schoffit \$21
2013 Alsace Vieilles Vignes Pinot Blanc-Auxerrois (Best Buy) This seems round and simple at first, with the milk-and-honey pallor of two very white grapes. Schoffit's pinot blanc and auxerrois grow on loess over gravel, the vines averaging 50 years old. The wine requires some patience to blossom from a nondescript sweetness to a beautiful scent of fresh pear and white flowers. Its leesy pallor takes on an earthiness even as the texture grows luscious and bold. Decant this if you open it now, to serve with *boudin blanc*. *Weygandt-Metzler Importing, Coatesville, PA*

91 | Dom. Marcel Deiss \$23
2014 Alsace (Best Buy) Deiss farms 13 local varieties as a field blend, harvesting and fermenting them together for this tribute to the genetic diversity of Alsace's vines. It has the floral scent of a peach just coming into ripeness, along with hints of roses and red spice. Completely dry, the flavors have a high-toned buzz, with notes of floral spice and lanolin. Anything but sleek and modern, this is a tightly focused view back in time and a forward look at what Alsace wine could be. *Verity Wine Partners, NY*

91 | Dom. Marcel Deiss \$44
2013 Alsace Langenberg This is a field blend of riesling, pinot gris, pinot beurot, muscat and pinot noir, a mixed planting on granite. Deiss farms the vines under biodynamics, harvesting and fermenting them together. When it's first opened, the muscat is dominant, with lively acidity and some tannins in the finish. Give it time to open and the riesling's grandeur becomes apparent, the structure still tight and fresh. This has the stamina to evolve over a decade in the bottle, and the firmness to take on pan-roasted mackerel if you open and decant it sooner. *Verity Wine Partners, NY*

90 | Dom. Marcel Deiss \$52
2012 Alsace Schoffweg A "sheep path" runs through this high plateau, where a thin crust of limestone defines the soil. Deiss farms it as a mixed planting of riesling, muscat, chasselas and all the pinots, producing something weird and wonderful, a red-fruited white wine with scents of hyssop and peppery strawberries. It's plump with alcohol, balanced by a light, sandy resistance in the structure. Chill it for a picnic with a summer salad, or serve it cellar temperature by the fireplace in winter with a cheese course. *Verity Wine Partners, NY*

88 | Domaine Bott-Geyl \$15
2014 Alsace Points Cardinaux Métis (Best Buy) This is a blend of pinots—blanc, auxerrois, gris and noir—and as dry and savory as it may be, it has a wide range of fruit flavors, from peach and nectarine to banana. Toasty lees enrich the texture, placing this with a lemony paillard of chicken with mushrooms and cream. *David Bowler Wines, NY*

88 | Pierre Sparr \$17
2015 Alsace One (Best Buy) Equal parts muscat and riesling, with the balance made up of 20 percent pinot gris, this is all about perfume at first. It comes into balance with air, bringing flavors of kumquat to flesh out the muscat aroma. If you like dry muscat, this is a fresh and friendly blend. *Wilson Daniels, St. Helena, CA*

85 | Willm \$12
2015 Alsace Réserve Gentil (Best Buy) Half of this blend is riesling, the balance made up of pinot blanc, pinot gris and muscat. And it's the muscat that comes across most strongly, perfumed and clean. It's a very green wine, and it could be refreshing if served well chilled. *Monsieur Touton Selection, NY*

RED

PINOT NOIR

90 | Dom. Schlumberger \$20
2014 Alsace Les Princes Abbés Pinot Noir (Best Buy) Light in color and in its tart raspberry flavor, this wine's acidity gives it a radish-like heat. Give it an hour in a decanter and the fruit deepens to cherry, the flavor enveloping for such a light wine. It's fresh and edgy with spice, a pinot that's easy to drink with charcuterie or on its own. *Maisons Marques & Domaines USA, Oakland, CA*

DESSERT

94 | Dom. Schlumberger \$72
2013 Alsace Kessler Cuvée Christine Gewurztraminer Vendanges Tardives The Schlumbergers own most of the Kessler grand cru, an east-facing sandstone hillside where they grow this fragrant, rosy, late-harvest gewurztraminer. While you can feel the richness from the residual sugar in this wine, it doesn't taste sweet. Instead it tastes like perfectly ripe fruit, the flavors evolving from peach to apricot nectar as they last. There's some nerve and tension to the wine, expressed in herbal notes of rosemary and the mineral feel of the acidity, wrapping the flavors into a sphere. Pretty delicious. *Maisons Marques & Domaines USA, Oakland, CA*

92 | Schoffit \$66
2007 Alsace Grand Cru Rangen Clos St-Théobald Pinot Gris Vendanges Tardives For several decades, Schoffit has been collecting land around the Clos St-Théobald, much of which had been abandoned due to the steep slopes; he now farms 17 acres there. His late-harvest pinot gris is a powerful wine, with a spiciness that brings to mind turmeric and ginger. The volcanic soils seem to give intensity to the wine's structure, which feels cool and astringent under the mellow, honeyed fruit. Great with a crispy pork belly dish. *Weygandt-Metzler Importing, Coatesville, PA*

92 | Dom. Zind-Humbrecht \$75
2011 Alsace Herrenweg de Turckheim Vieilles Vignes Gewurztraminer Vendange Tardive This wine's elegant floral notes have none of the aggressive perfume gewurztraminer can take on in more rustic sites. It smells of fresh rose petals and orange pith, while the wine's tight acidity gives it direction and a surprisingly dry feel, balancing the substantial sugar (98 grams per liter) and smooth, spicy bitterness of the grape tannins. Serve it with a pistachio-studded foie gras terrine. *Kobrand, Purchase, NY* ■

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