

The Best Wines Of March 2017

Katie Kelly Bell, CONTRIBUTOR

I scout the globe for the best experiences in wine, food and travel.

This month didn't have as many wine-by-the-fireside moments as I might have liked given the 70 degree days but I did uncork some tasty surprises including a white from Bordeaux (with a very cool American connection) and a heck of a deal in sparkling (crémant) from Burgundy. This month's wines have very civilized prices too, with the highest price point at around \$35 a bottle. Consider these wines good candidates to have on hand for casual suppers and last-minute celebrating.

Le Blanc de Cazenove, Grand Vin de Bordeaux, 2015: This mouth-watering and rich white blend from Bordeaux has a fascinating American connection. In the 1700's Theophile de Cazenove (of the Cazenove winery family) emigrated from France to the US and founded several settlements in Upstate New York (called Cazenovia). He became a US citizen in 1794 and a portrait of him hangs in the Corcoran Gallery in D.C. Back in France his family continued to perfect their winemaking and this white is a fine example of that history. White flowers, pears and creamy lemon notes dominate the palate—but the mineral and acidity keep it fresh and alive. Great for sipping or with seafood. \$14.99

Tenuta Di Arceno Strada al Sasso Chianti Classico Riserva, 2010: Tall, dark and handsome, the fruit for this wine comes from vines that sit adjacent to an ancient Etruscan village. Tucked into the center of Chianti, this winery produces wines of deep and brooding complexity. This one delivers loads of black cherry, cedar, smoke, and leather aromas. Dusty tannins and incredible structure make this a nice

candidate for aging, but taste won't suffer if you open it tonight and serve it with a roasted pork loin. \$35.

Fattoria Selvapiana Pomino “Villa Petrognano” DOC, 2011: This red blend of 60% sangiovese, 20% cabernet sauvignon and 20% merlot is a straight up tasty Italian wine. The aromas call to mind a sun-soaked Tuscan farmhouse and the vanilla scents of old wood. It is savory on the palate with black cherry and cassis notes. Fattoria Selvapiana is a small family-owned Tuscan estate (located in the Chianti Rufina zone) with over 181 years and five generations of experience in winemaking. Grapes are grown at modest elevation in soils of schist, limestone and clay. This wine has classic Italian sensibilities: rustic, rich and charming, and it delivers for \$20.

Moingeon La Maison du Crémant, Prestige Brut NV: Considered to be one of the premiere producers of crémant (sparkling wine) in Burgundy, Moingeon was established by brothers François and Albert Moingeon in 1895. This crémant is utterly delightful and could easily be mistaken for Champagne with its racy vibrance and mousse-like texture. White flowers, apple and lemon notes on the nose and palate make it just non-stop drinkable. Online prices vary, but I found it for \$19.