



Wine

BY DAVE MCINTYRE

Prices on European wines are going up, but area importers are finding interesting wines for well under \$20.

As wine, avid wine drinkers are "search the regions." He suggests foraging, Côtes du Rhône, whose popularity has resulted in higher prices and inferior wine, in favor of smaller, overlooked regions, such as Coteaux du Jura, Côtes du Ventoux, and regions farther south in the Languedoc such as Minervois or Corbières—places that produce Rhône-style wines at moderate prices with consistent quality.

Joe Genesee, co-owner of the wine store Schneider's of Capital Hill, agrees, singling out Spain as a source of interesting, affordable wines.

There are some suggestions to help ease the wallet on your wallet. All are under \$20, a range that still allows for some excitement, complexity, and (and valuable despite the poor exchange rate) You aren't likely to find a liter of at a single store, but some should be available at the area's better wine stores.

FRANCE
The big-ticket wines of Bordeaux and Burgundy are very expensive, but Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon blanc from the Loire Valley, Chardonnay from Médoc and Rhône-style blends from the south can run a better deal.

Domaine Pascal Barthier Mâcon-Chablis 2006, \$14 (imported by Wine Traditions). Excellent Chardonnay with full apple and peach flavors. The fruitiness comes from oak, not from new oak.

Plaisir des Lys 2005 Minervois, \$13 (Thomas Calder, Thomas Selection). A blend of Gamay, Syrah, Carignan, and Grenache featuring striking aromas of violets and lavender tinged by rosemary. A surprisingly complex wine for the price.

Domaine Ste-Eugénie "La Réserve" 2004 Carbières, \$16 (Robert Weber Selections). A Syrah, Carignan, and Grenache blend, brooding and taut with mineral notes from old vines. A great primer for southern cheeses.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JERAMEN SMOUSE

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Europe on \$15 a Bottle

The dollar's slide means soaring prices for European wines, but there still are bargains from across the pond.

Economists aren't the only ones watching the dollar's slide against the euro. Wine lovers are, too, for prices on European wines are rising, and some of the most desirable ones, such as the Rhône's Côte du Rhône, are up by 25 percent or more in the coming months. Wine retailers are already reporting price hikes on imported wines, but buyers haven't seen the worst yet. Are there any bargains left to be had across the pond? Not if

you compare prices with yesterday's. But here are deals out there. To means reading labels are hints for the names of producers—Robert Kalin, Terry Thelme, and Thomas Calder are among those to become acquainted with—who have done the hard work of finding high quality, small production winemakers. Doug Rosen, co-owner of Arlington's

Austria: Look to Grüner Veltliner, similar to Riesling but more consistently dry, with the same vibrant acidity and affinity for food

Anton Bauer 2007 Gmörk Grüner Veltliner (KW Selection / Select Wines) Straightforward flavors of apple and lime zest – bracing acidity that's refreshing alone or with simpler foods.