

WINE

9 for \$15 or less: Bargain bottles pack lush flavor



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Wineries get it. They understand that readers send me angry e-mails when I write about \$40 wines and tell me I'm a fine fella when I describe the joys of more frugal libations. So those wineries are putting out a great variety of good value wines at \$15 and under.

Here are nine I've tasted recently:

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

● **2008 Finca La Linda Torrontés**, Bodega Luigi Bosca, Cafayate, Argentina: This grape, which may be related to gewürztraminer, is grown at nearly 6,000 feet above sea level in the foothills of the Andes. The wine is crisp and lightly sweet, with ripe peach flavors — a great match for spicy Asian food like Thai green curry chicken; \$11.

● **2006 Viña Zaco Tempranillo**, by Bodegas Bilbainas, Rioja, Spain: Bodegas Bilbainas says it's seeking the fruitiest

• **TURN TO WINE, 2E**
expression of the tempranillo grape of Spain's famous Rioja region. It succeeds here, with crisp, intense tart cherry flavors in a medium-bodied wine that would be great as an aperitif or with tapas; \$15.

RECOMMENDED

● **2007 Lander-Jenkins Cabernet Sauvignon**, California: This wine, made for the Rutherford Wine Co., of grapes from the Central Coast area of Paso Robles, is an interesting not-quite-Bordeaux blend of 94 percent cabernet sauvignon, 3 percent malbec, 2 percent petite verdot and 1 percent merlot. It's full of black cherry and black pepper flavors, with firm tannin. A good steak wine; \$12.

● **2008 Lander-Jenkins Chardonnay**, California: Another wine from the Rutherford portfolio, it's made of grapes from California's Lodi and Monterey areas. It's rich and lush, with ripe pear flavors; \$12.

● **2008 Castello di Gabbiano Pinot Grigio delle Venezie**, Italy: This is from the cool northern region of Italy — Trentino, Veneto and Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, up against the Alps and Dolomite mountains. It's light and crisp, with apricot and mango flavors — given some extra fruitiness by the addition of 8 percent garganega grape and 7 percent chardonnay; \$10.

● **2008 Tapeña Rosé**, Tierra de Castilla, Spain: You gotta have a rosé for any picnic, and this one is crisp and tart, with strawberry flavors and a hint of minerality. It's made in Castilla, just south of Madrid, of monastrell, garnacha and shiraz grapes; \$10.

● **2008 Saracco Moscato d'Asti**, Dalla Terra Winery, Piedmonte, Italy: You're sitting bare-

ched under your mango tree on a warm night in South Florida. You pop open a bottle of this. Nice. It's crisp, sweet and bubbly, only 6 percent alcohol, with flavors of oranges and peaches; \$15.

● **2007 Lockwood Vineyard Malbec**, Monterey: This grape, which is putting Argentina on the world wine map, is now being grown in a few places in California. It works pretty well here, producing a smooth, mellow, medium-bodied wine with violet aromas and rich blueberry flavors; \$15.

● **2007 Lockwood Vineyard Chardonnay**, Monterey: The same vineyard is producing a quintessential California chardonnay — rich and lush, with pineapple and vanilla flavors. One-third of the wine is aged in French oak barrels, the rest in stainless steel tanks, so you get the richness of oak and the crispness of steel; \$12.

