Green’s Top 10
Wine Values for 2016

The Top 10 wines of 2016 are presented here—the 27th Anniversary of the Top 10, by the way—and I must say the year has gone by in a hurry. The selections range from Customer favorites—the Bread & Butter Chardonnay, Chateau Ste. Michelle Indian Wells Merlot and Crapila Gold 5, just to name a few, which have been best-sellers at Green’s for the better part of 2016—to a number of under-the-radar part of 2016 gems that the Green’s wine staff all agree deserve the Top stage.

Nonetheless, the wine styles represented here can all be described as classic and true-to-form, and of course all with an impressive level of pedigree; the difference comes down to familiarity. Finally, an eye towards versatile pairing with the spectrum of holiday foods was also a major consideration as we were narrowing down our selections. Please have a safe and happy holiday season this year and thank you for being a Green’s customer.

As always with the holiday program, the discount for Top 10 wines is 15% off on six bottles mix or match.

~Doug Werner, Green’s South Carolina Wine Buyer
Charles Smith Substance Cabernet Sauvignon - 2014

Green's Cash Sale Price:

$14.95

The original thought for The Wines of Substance was to be a one wine brand, with a single minded vision to produce the best value-priced Cabernet Sauvignon in America. How do you go about this? Traditional winemaking, natural fermentations, barrel-aging, plus bottling unfiltered and un-fined; in essence, making the wines with small batch winemaking integrity, but doing so on a larger scale. The wine is black. The label definitively says, “This is Cabernet Sauvignon”. And also, with the CS on the label, you know who made this wine: Charles Smith. This is a single vineyard, single expression Bordeaux varietal produced in very limited quantities. This is the newest chapter in the history books of Charles Smith and his wines.

“…the 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon should be just as good as the 2013. Seeing all native yeast, 42 days on skins, 12 months in French oak and bottled un-fined and unfiltered, it offers classic plum and blackberry fruit intermixed with ample licorice, toasted bread and violet aromas and flavors. Concentrated, balanced, and the real deal, buy it by the case and drink it over the coming 4-5 years.”

Rated 90-92 Points-Wine Advocate
A noted customer favorite of 2016, this is a rich California Chardonnay that delights not only lovers of the style, but surprisingly also those wine drinkers who prefer a level of thoughtful restraint to the wines.

The color is a day-bright, golden yellow with bright flashes of brilliance. The wine develops like a story in the glass as you let it breathe. It begins with a combination of bright butterscotch and lemongrass, then the notes of cream and lemon meringue pie begin to rise to the surface and are joined with toast, smoke and vanilla flavors from the oak. Floral and canned peach aromas develop last. When it all comes together, it's magic. Let the wine open up to wonderful flavors of peach, lemon zest, papaya, banana, and honeysuckle, then buttered popcorn and vanilla oak characters emerge from the background to soften the fruit. There is a great balance of acidity and richness that makes Bread & Butter both refreshing and decadent.

The critics agree on its high quality. Read below:

“A balanced and refined red with blueberry, blackberry and hints of cloves. Medium to full body, fine tannins and a fresh finish.”

*Rated 92 Points-James Suckling

“Bright ruby-red. Complex aromas of black fruits, coffee bean and smoky, nutty oak. Round, broad and ripe, conveying an impression of soft extraction to the flavors of blackberry and violet...An excellent value.”

*Rated 90 Points-Vinous / Antonio Galloni
In a similar fashion to the 2014 vintage, the Willamette Valley experienced another extraordinary, nearly ideal growing season. 2015 was a dry season, though never critically hot. This led to perfect ripeness and beautifully balanced fruit. High yields with exceptional quality allowed for another harmonious vintage, albeit almost a month earlier than the previous year... The harvest began in the last week of August, almost a full month earlier than normal. Grape clusters were larger than usual as a result of a very giving vintage, allowing for larger yields at high levels of quality. A twin to 2014, although a year apart, the 2015 vintage provided pristinely clean fruit with the wines showing extraordinary balance between fruit, sugar, and acidity, the harmony of the 2015 vintage sets the stage for some stellar Oregon wines.

This superlative example – a Green’s exclusive cuvee, no less – The Spillwater Willamette Valley Pinot Noir is vibrant and offers bright acidity leading with red cherries, plums, black tea and raspberries. It finishes with bright red fruit, clove, and vanilla, and easily merits the $25+ price points of its French counterparts. Consider the actual price as a pleasant holiday surprise.

If you remember last year, we promoted Spillwater Pinot Gris, as one of our Top 10. I purchased 56 cases and it sold very well, but I also purchased 28 cases of Spillwater Pinot Noir and it didn’t last a month and I was out of stock, sorry about that, not going to make that mistake this time!

This year we selected a few of their wines and featured them in our “Value Wines” and also a few years ago we selected the Chateau Ste. Michelle Indian Wells Chardonnay as one of our “Top Ten Wines Values”. Well, here we go again:

This Merlot is a blend of blend of 85% Merlot and 15% Syrah sourced predominately from vineyards throughout the Wahluke Slope in Eastern Washington, aged in 51% new American and French oak barrels, winemaker Bob Bertheau carefully selects his favorite lots in making his Indian Wells Merlot.

Wine Maven review below:
“Focused, with firm tannins on a pliable frame, supporting dark berry, licorice and chocolate flavors. Lingers deftly on the finish.”
Rated 90 Points Wine Spectator
Josip Babich arrived in New Zealand in 1910, an emigrant from Croatia. Only 14 years old at the time, he came out to join his three brothers who were making a living digging and selling gum from the kauri tree in the north end of the North Island. Two years later Josip planted his first vineyard and in 1916 made and sold his first wine. Still a family-owned enterprise, the winery is today run by Josip’s two sons, Peter and Joseph, with their sister Maureen, now joined by the next generation; David, Peter’s middle son. The winery remains headquartered in Henderson Valley on the North Island but they now have vineyards throughout both the North and the South. Winemaker notes: “This is a classic Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc which is consistently produced in a fuller, riper, softer style that develops well. Clean, fresh and tropical, with fruit from several vineyards situated throughout Marlborough. Typically pungent with grapefruit, lantana and blackcurrant. The entry is sweet-fruited and juice with tropical fruits and blackcurrant. Balance is fresh and lingering.”

The wine critics, as usual, are impressed with the latest version of the 2015 Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc. See below:

“The 2015 Sauvignon Blanc gives note of fresh apples and grapefruit with a grass and pea pod undercurrent. Light to medium-bodied, dry, crisp, the palate is straightforward and linear in its delivery of clean, thirst-quenching flavors”

Lisa Perrotti-Brown, www.erobertparker.com

“You don’t have to pay a lot to get a well-made New Zealand Sauvignon, and this bottling from the reliable Babich brand is proof that solid sub-$15 values can readily be found. A zingy white with notes of citrus and tropical fruit.”

Lettie Teague, The Wall Street Journal
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Rasteau Cote Du Rhône Dame Victoria - 2015
*National Average Retail Price: $15.00

Green’s Cash Sale Price:

$12.95

One of the more successful Cotes-du-Rhone Villages, the commune of Rasteau was granted its own AOC in 2010 (and thus allowing its wines to be labelled as such, as opposed to only being allowed to add it as a Cotes-du-Rhone Villages suffix). Grenache is the majority partner here, complemented by Mourvedre and Syrah, and which at its best is every bit the analogue to Chateauneuf-du-Pape. The producer is one of the most outstanding (and one of the most elegantly-situated) cooperatives in the Southern Rhone. A wine for the season.

“Solidly ripe, with dark plum, currant and blackberry preserve notes inlaid with a well-buried spine of charcoal and graphite. The fleshy finish has a pleasant juniper accent.”

Wine Spectator

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Cap Royal Bordeaux Supérieur Rouge - 2012

Green’s Cash Sale Price:

$11.95

Cap Royal takes its name from the royal Cordouan lighthouse, the oldest lighthouse in Europe. Situated at the entrance of the Gironde Estuary, this 14th century beacon once signaled safe passage to Bordeaux for wine merchants returning home after sharing the great wines of Bordeaux with the world. Today, Cap Royal benefits from the expertise of Jean René Matignon, winemaker of Château Pichon Baron. A master in the art of blending and an expert in monitoring barrel ageing, Matignon and a team of partner winemakers supervise the production of Cap Royal from the plot selection through the careful oak ageing.

A blend of 70% Merlot and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, Cap Royal is a very aromatic wine with a saturated crimson color. The nose is open and complex, with notes of black fruits, strawberries, and violets mixed with a touch of toasted bread. The mouth is ample and silky, with a long finish. This is a balanced wine that is ready to drink now or in a few years.
What a lucky find this was! Earlier in the year we promoted this wine and it was such a huge success. Thinking ahead to our Top 10 promotion over the holiday, I asked the distributor if there was any more available, and they located 85 cases of the 2013 vintage for Green’s. Talk about being lucky!

Winemaker Gabriel Martínez Valero sourced the Cr Gold 5 Meses from vines grown in limestone soils with low levels of organic matter. The vineyard is located at an altitude of 2,600 feet. The climate is typically Mediterranean, with some continental influences. This red wine from Jumilla was vinified in stainless steel tanks at a temperature below 82º F. True to its name, it has been aged for 5 months in French oak barrels.

*Wine Enthusiast rated this wine 92 points:*
“Powerful blackberry aromas are matched by creamy oak. This Monastrell-Syrah blend is a driller, with strong tannins and more than enough body weight. Oaky flavors of dark-bery fruits and black plums finish with vanilla and lactic notes. This is rock solid from head to toe.”

G.D. Vajra Langhe Rosso 2013 - Italy

Vajra’s Langhe Rosso, has become one of our wine consultant’s favorites over the past year… A classic Piedmont field blend of Nebbiolo, Barbera and Dolcetto with small amounts of Albarossa and Pinot Noir, this fruit-driven red is vinified in tank without oak. The result is a fresh, friendly and playful red wine bursting with bright red cherries and strawberries, and clean, refreshing acidity that makes it oh-so-fun to drink. Serve it slightly chilled and enjoy it all season long with your favorite pizza and pasta dishes, grilled seafood, sausages and just about any other light fare.

Looking for something other than Beaujolais Nouveau to serve with Thanksgiving dinner this year…Give this a try.