

# 8 Exciting California Values Up to 91 Points

---

**WS** [winespectator.com/articles/tasting-highlights-8-exciting-california-value-wines-up-to-91-points](https://www.winespectator.com/articles/tasting-highlights-8-exciting-california-value-wines-up-to-91-points)

Aaron Romano

## Tasting Highlights

Discover Golden State Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Zinfandel and more in these new reviews of delicious red, white and rosé wines priced \$30 or less

Jun 12, 2023

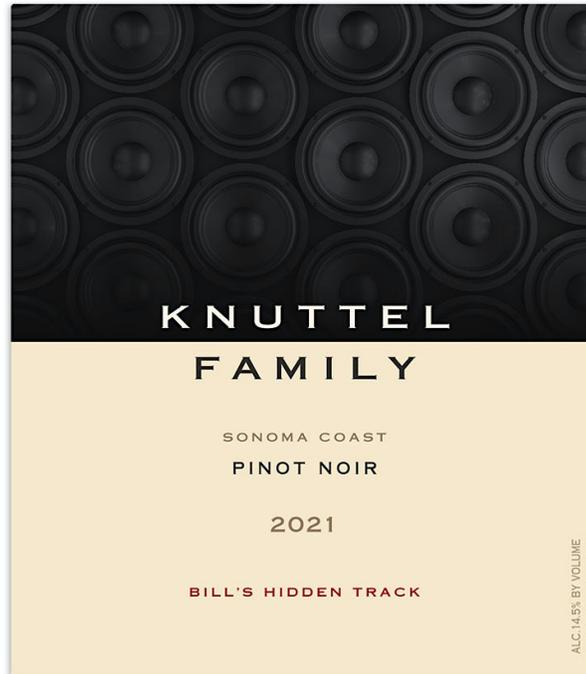
*Tasting Highlights' wine reviews are fresh out of the tasting room, offering a sneak peek of our editors' most recent scores and notes to WineSpectator.com members.*

Summer is just around the corner; for many, that means warm-weather entertaining. Whether you're hosting a backyard barbecue or a pool party, or even if you're just having some friends over, buying wine doesn't have to eat into your budget. Below, we've rounded up a wide mix of California wines from recent tastings that are suitable for any occasion and budget at \$30 or less.

Pinot Noir is always a crowd pleaser, and this selection features two Sonoma Coast bottlings that overdeliver at their price points. Winemaker William Knuttel had a long career in wine, including posts at [Saintsbury](#), [Chalk Hill](#) and [Dry Creek Vineyard](#). He established [his namesake winery](#) with daughter Kate and son Sebastian in 2001, and in 2014 added the Knuttel Family label. The Knuttel Family Pinot Noir blends grapes from a couple of vineyards, resulting in a lively mix of boysenberry and spice notes. The team at [Decoy](#) also knows how to deliver great value. This winery began as a second label from the acclaimed [Duckhorn](#) before becoming its own brand, and its Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Limited bottling is brisk and fresh with cherry pit and blood orange notes carried by fresh acidity.

If you do a lot of grilling, there's perhaps no more friendly wine companion than California Zinfandel, and at just \$16, [Terra d'Oro's](#) Amador bottling is worth stocking up on. Aged 15 months in a mix of [French](#) and [American oak](#), of which 24 percent was new, it's a plump and briary Zin with raspberry, sage and green peppercorn flavors.

Of course, the warm weather welcomes chilled wines, and a glass of rosé always pairs well with the summer sun. Lodi-based [Klinker Brick](#) blends Rhône grapes (Grenache, Mourvèdre, Carignane and Syrah) for its refreshing and vibrant blush with orange blossom and strawberry flavors. If you need a white wine, one producer to look out for is Rabble, which offers affordable bottlings with eye-catching labels based on historical woodblock prints from the 15th-century Nuremberg Chronicle encyclopedia. The label for Rabble's 2022 Central Coast Sauvignon Blanc depicts a sailing ship caught in a whirlpool; the wine, itself, is crisp and fresh with mango, melon and peach flavors.



## WILLIAM KNUTTEL

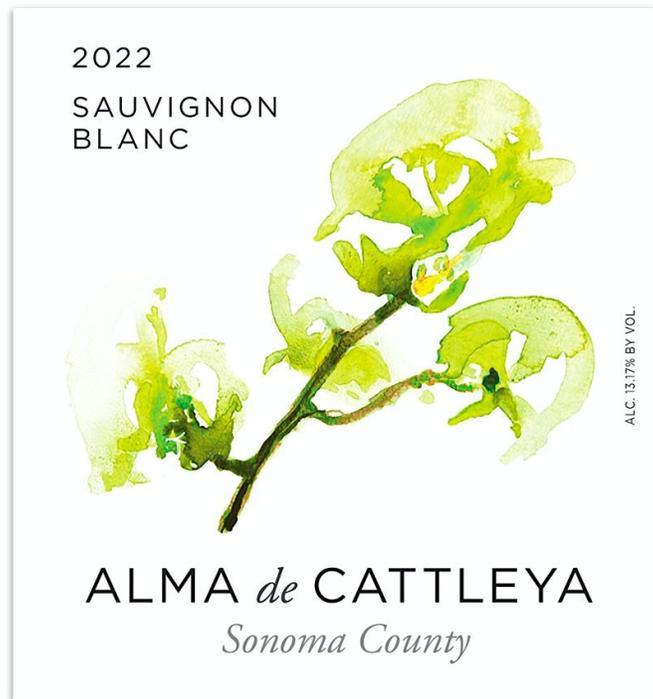
---

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Knuttel Family Bill's Hidden Track 2021

Score: 91 | \$28

**WS review:** Lively and open in feel, with a mix of boysenberry fruit, mulling spice and potpourri notes backed by a flash of singed tea on the stylish finish. Drink now through 2027. 890 cases made.—*James Molesworth*

---



## ALMA DE CATTLEYA

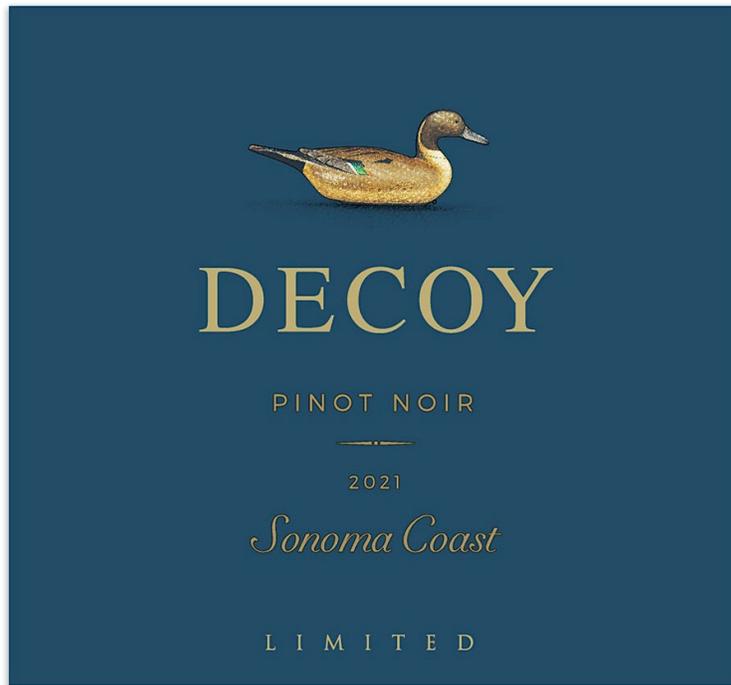
---

Sauvignon Blanc Sonoma County 2022

Score: 90 | \$25

**WS review:** An aromatic white, with yuzu and ginger notes leaping out of the glass, showing passion fruit, green apple, lemon zest and makrut lime leaf and a touch of toasted green tea. Features sleek acidity that keeps the flavors fresh and focused. Drink now. 3,400 cases made.—*MaryAnn Worobiec*

---



## DECOY

---

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Limited 2021

Score: 90 | \$30

**WS review:** A brisk, fresh style, with cherry pit and blood orange notes carried by fresh acidity. Reveals a savory note that ripples nicely through the finish, along with an encore of fruit. Drink now through 2026. 25,720 cases made.—*J.M.*

---



## FERRARI-CARANO

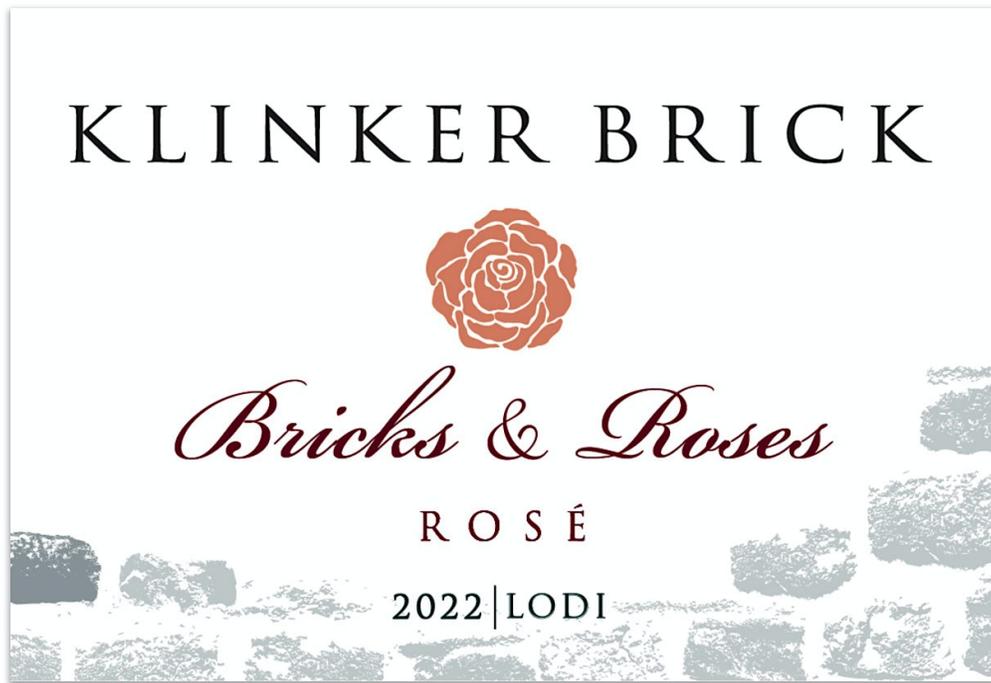
---

Pinot Grigio Sonoma County 2022

Score: 88 | \$24

**WS review:** Shows juicy, mouthwatering pear and peach flavors on a round, smooth frame, with mango details on the finish. Drink now. 10,127 cases made.—*M.W.*

---



**KLINKER BRICK**

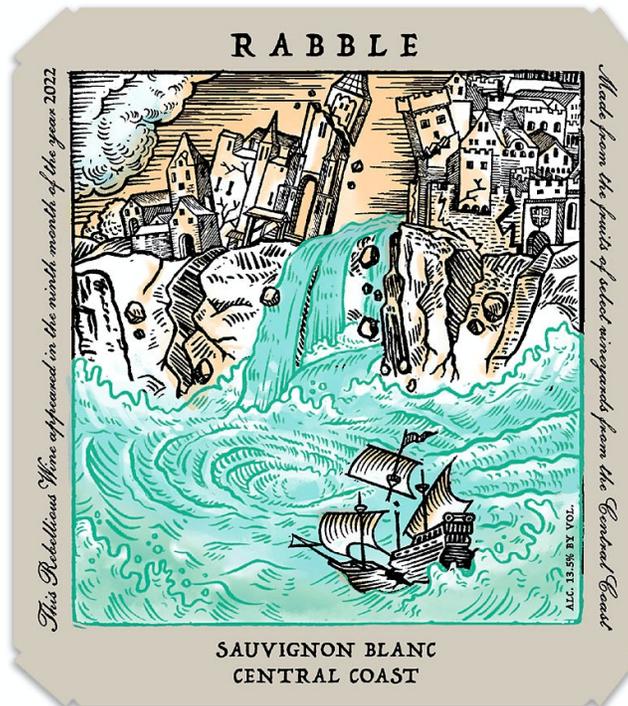
---

Rosé Bricks & Roses Lodi 2022

Score: 88 | \$17

**WS review:** Refreshing and vibrant, with orange blossom and strawberry flavors that finish on a spicy accent. Grenache, Mourvèdre, Carignane and Syrah. Drink now. 4,000 cases made.—*Tim Fish*

---



## RABBLE

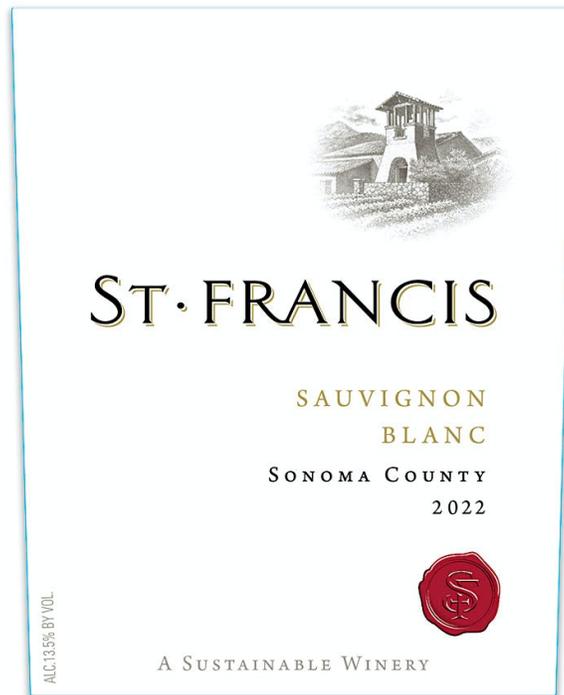
---

Sauvignon Blanc Central Coast 2022

Score: 88 | \$18

**WS review:** Crisp and fresh, with an appealing fleshy note on a medium body, revealing mango, melon and peach flavors, plus touches of apple skin and dried ginger on the juicy finish. Drink now. 3,000 cases made.—*M.W.*

---



## ST. FRANCIS

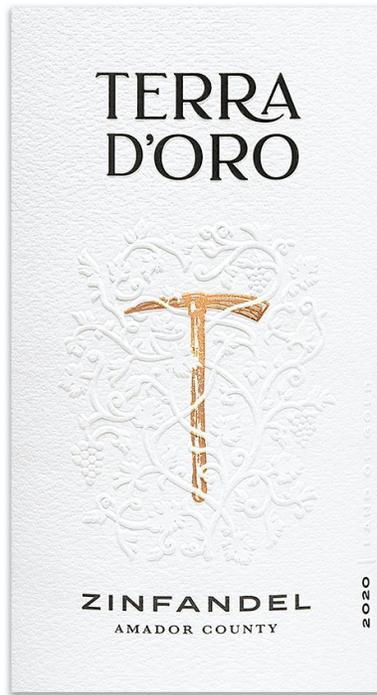
---

Sauvignon Blanc Sonoma County 2022

Score: 88 | \$17

**WS review:** Vibrant, with generous flavors of juicy citrus at the core, along with pineapple, apple and orange and lime zest on the finish. Drink now. 15,060 cases made.—*M.W.*

---



## TERRA D'ORO

---

Zinfandel Amador County 2020

Score: 88 | \$18

**WS review:** Plump with fruit and notes of briar, this medium-weight red offers raspberry, sage and green peppercorn flavors. Drink now through 2029. 16,000 cases made.—*T.F.*