



## **Wine Press: Wines worth splurging on, holiday gift ideas**

By [Ken Ross](#) | [Special to The Republican](#)

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For many years, my parents have given my wife and me a one-of-a-kind Christmas gift — a case of wine.

But not just any case.

All 12 wines are carefully selected, one by one, by my father.

As I've written here before, my dad's crazy about wine. He's the one who really got his father and the rest of the family into wine years ago.

So when he's shopping for wine throughout the year, he's always keeping an eye out for great wines to add to our Christmas case, which is also the exact same 12 wines he gives to my sister and brother-in-law.

Some of these wines cost \$10 to \$20 a bottle. Others cost significantly more. But they're all great wines that cover a wide range – from cellar-worth French red wines to ready-to-drink New Zealand white wines. There's also often a fair number of wines from Italy, Spain, Australia, South Africa, California and Oregon.

My dad also includes a piece of paper with copies of reviews about the wines from various well-known wine publications. (He reads a lot of them.)

The Christmas case changes from year to year. And it's one of my favorite Christmas gifts since it's the gift that keeps on giving all year, as Cousin Eddie would say in "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."

The same goes for this annual wine column about wines worth splurging on. (And by splurging, I mean any wine that costs more than \$20 a bottle.)

Don't feel as though you have to buy all the wines on the list. And if you do decide to do so, don't feel pressured to drink all the wines over the holidays. Save a bunch of them for something special next year – perhaps a birthday party or wedding anniversary or just a nice meal with family and friends. Frankly, any great wine makes any occasion a special occasion.

Let me add that there are no sparkling wines or Champagnes on this week's list. That's because next week's wine column is devoted exclusively to sparkling wines and Champagne.

This week, I have also included a few holiday gift suggestions for wine lovers other than wine. I've written about some of these gift ideas in the past but most of them are brand new.

Hope you enjoy.

### OVER \$100 A BOTTLE

**2017 Chateau de Nalys Chateauneuf-du-Pape Grand Vin (\$105 SRP)** – One of my favorite wine regions in the world is Chateauneuf-du-Pape, which is located in the southern part of France's Rhone region. For about \$50 to \$100, you can find some of the best, intense red wines in the world. They're consistently full-bodied yet elegant, rugged yet refined. Best of all, they often taste great 3 to 5 years after they're bottled. Sure enough, this 2017 from the famous Guigal family winery hit the bullseye. The 2016 vintage might grab all the hype (it is amazing) but the 2017's just as delightful in its own charming way. Flavors range from dark chocolate, roasted cherries and blackberries to leather, coffee and almonds.



**2019 Gary Farrell Russian River Valley Chardonnay (\$32 SRP) –**

I've written here before about this winery in California's Russian River Valley in Sonoma County, which makes many outstanding Chardonnay and Pinot Noir wines. So if you can't find this particular wine (which you can find easily online, like all the wines recommended this week) you can't go wrong with any of their other wines. This intense, dense, earthy white wine bursts with robust yet elegant flavors, including sea salt, green apples, toasted butter and the wonderful fog-like mist notes often found in great Russian River Chardonnays.