

25 Splurge-Worthy California Reds

These wines represent what I consider to be some of the best high-end bottles in the state—and, for many of them, the world.

By [Brian Freedman](#) | November 06, 2019

When I set out to compile this list of 25 splurge-worthy [red wines from California](#), I knew I'd have a difficult task ahead. As a lifelong drinker and collector of wines from the state, I knew the quality would be high. What I *didn't* expect was just how fraught the process of narrowing down my selections would be. This list could have run to 40 bottles, easily.

Tasting dozens upon dozens of wines, all with a minimum suggested retail price of \$100, was fascinating, educational, delicious, and occasionally exhausting. But it wasn't monolithic. Because while it's still frustratingly common to hear otherwise well-versed wine lovers say that they just don't like [California reds](#)—as if the state is a single terroir with one style shared among all producers—the truth is that the state's wine culture is a lot more varied, interesting, and rewarding than that vinous stereotype implies.

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2015 Newton Spring Mountain District Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley (\$190)

Part of Newton's appellation-specific lineup of estate-grown wines, this is aromatically generous with figs and currants that are cut through with dried Mediterranean herbs, green peppercorns, and floral blue fruits. On the palate, it shows excellent energy and concentration, with mineral-flecked flavors of currants, cedar, and brambly berries, with a finish that suggests sandalwood and Indian spices.

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