

Best Bites

By Todd Kliman, Ann Limpert, and Anna Spiegel

American Beauties

If Thanksgiving is an American holiday, why do so many people break out the French and Italian wines? Good wine is produced all over the US, with many varietals natural fits for game meats and holiday sweets. Here are our favorites—all less than \$25.



Sawtooth Winery 2010 Riesling

NAMPA, IDAHO, \$10
A decent bottle of sparkling wine can set you back \$40 or more, a good Champagne three times that, but for the price of a movie you can relax with this wonderful wine from that noted wine region—Idaho. Inhale the ripe peach and nectarine aromas, then savor the clarity and brightness. A touch of residual sugar gives this Riesling an appealing sweetness, and the subtle fizz adds an unexpected note of elegance.

Available at Total Wine & More in Alexandria, McLean, Chantilly, Springfield, Sterling, and Manassas.

Dr. Konstantin Frank 2010 Dry Riesling

FINGER LAKES, NEW YORK, \$14.99
You can look to Austria and Germany for Rieslings, or you can stay stateside with this upstate New York winery, which year in and year out produces very good values. This bottle's lush fruitiness is balanced by a bracing acidity. We like it as a pre-meal sip to wash down all those nuts and spreads, but it also pairs beautifully with most staples of the holiday table.

Available at Wegmans in Fairfax, Leesburg, and Sterling as well as drfrankwines.com.

Chrysalis Vineyards 2008 Estate Bottled Norton

MIDDLEBURG, VIRGINIA, \$17
Jenni McCloud's winery is evangelical about the Norton grape, and it's easy to see why, especially at the Thanksgiving table. This wine's bold earthiness is a perfect match for game and other meats, while its acidity helps mitigate the starchy richness of the feast. (We're also partial to McCloud's Albariño, a lively, fruity white.)

Available at chrysaliswine.com.

Breaux Vineyards 2008 Lafayette Cabernet Franc

PURCELLVILLE, VIRGINIA, \$19
This Cabernet is a good introduction not only to one of Virginia's best reds but also to one of its best wineries, situated on a 400-acre estate in nearby Purcellville. A fruity, medium-bodied wine with good spice, it's a nice complement to stuffed meats and nut-based dishes. It also has a suppleness that will tempt you to pour another glass to drink later by the fire.

Available at breauxvineyards.com and by special order from Total Wine & More.

Elk Cove 2008 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

GASTON, OREGON, \$24.99
The Willamette Valley has found tremendous success with Pinot Noir—some requiring a serious investment. This one is a good-value choice. It has both clarity and juiciness, and its aromas of black currant and cherry reveal themselves once it has breathed a little. Its subtle earthiness is a fine match for the meal, but this is also a wine to sip later, when everyone has left and you don't want to start cleaning up just yet.

Available in DC at MacArthur Beverages and Calvert Woodley Wines & Spirits.