



Mount Etna is an active stratovolcano on the east coast of Sicily, Italy, and is one of the most monitored volcanoes in the world.

PHOTO: ISTOCK.COM/JEROME LABOYRI

## Best White and Rosé Wine Discoveries

JIM BRYANT SHARES EXPERT KNOWLEDGE OF VALUE WINES  
FROM FRANCE, ITALY, AUSTRALIA, AND BEYOND

**W**ITHOUT A DOUBT my favorite recent wine discovery is the Alta Mora Etna Bianco. This wine is produced from the Carricante grape by the Alta Mora winery owned by Cusumano family. This grape is indigenous to Sicily where it was once widely planted, but today is now nearly entirely found on the volcanic slopes of Mount Etna where it has grown for at least 1,000 years.

### ALTA MORA'S ETNA BIANCO

Although often blended with Catarratto and Minella Bianca, the Alta Mora is 100% Carricante. The wine has flavors of yellow apple, bergamot, orange, saline, white peach, and crushed rocks. Grown at 900 meters, the volcanic soil evidences great minerality. This light body wine is dry and flinty on the palate with high acidity and low tannins and obvious salinity. With age, the wine softens, and the yellow apple and white peach overtones increase. The wine is similar to Dry Rieslings from Eden Valley

(Australia and Alsace-Lorraine, France), Sauvignon Blanc from the Loire Valley, and Chablis—all favorites of mine, but with a refreshing twist of salinity and for \$20 or so.

### LA SEGRETA BY PLANETA

Staying in Sicily, another great discovery is the Grillo grape. This grape grows here and along the Amalfi Coast near Mount Vesuvius. It produces a bone-dry, medium-to-full bodied wine with grapefruit, citrus blossom, thyme, and mineral and saline flavors. It has good acidity, low tannins, high alcohol, and balanced softness with the ability to age up to five years. My experience with this grape covers only three years and I have consistently been impressed by both producers. I found La Segreta by Planeta three years ago and it was my favorite summer wine of 2022. It is clean and crisp with a tinge of straw, slightly bitter with medium acidity and evidence of lemon and salinity. This wine excels without food and marries very well with seafood, particularly crustaceans.





### FEUDO PRINCIPIA DI BUTERA'S GRILLO SICILIA

Most recently, I found another producer of the Grillo grape and it is also excellent. The Feudo Principia di Butera Grillo Sicilia is a fantastic value for \$15. Attributes of this wine are similar to those of La Segreta, but with herbs and flavors of lanolin balm and garrigue. This is a fabulous food wine as well as an aperitif.

### COTE DES ROSES ROSÉ BY GÉRARD BERTRAND

Another great find this year was the Rosé Cote des Roses by Gérard Bertrand. An imposing character at 6'7" tall, Bertrand was a member of the French national rugby team, an Olympiad, and he's found a second passion—wine. He learned from his father but has now grown his holdings to be the largest producer in the Languedoc Province. He makes many wines from his extensive vineyards and wineries, and all are very good-to-outstanding. Many of his wines are relatively low-priced and almost always have a great quality-to-price ratio (QPR). Perhaps one of the greatest QPR Rosés is the Cote des Roses, a blend of Grenache, Syrah, and Cinsault, which retails in the Barrington area from \$13-\$22. This wine is almost unbelievable at this price point. My wife, Pat, calls it the Rosé with a 'hole in the bottle' because it's gone as soon as we



open a bottle. It comes in a tall, clear ribbed bottle with a glass stopper and made Lettie Teague's (wine writer for the Wall Street Journal) list of her most frequently purchased wines this summer. The wine is great served without food or with deviled eggs, niçoise salad, or lighter seafood, especially crustaceans or Bouillabaisse. It is a bright pale pink showing strawberry, peach, raspberry, and melon with some minerality and acidity.

### GÉRARD BERTRAND'S GENORA VIN ORANGE

Another interesting wine on my list is also made by Gérard Bertrand. Genora is a blend of mainly Chardonnay and Grenache with some Roussanne and Muscat. It is an organic wine honoring the first Georgian orange wines created 4,500 years ago. The grapes are fermented in whole bunches containing the stalks and skins, giving the wine its color. The wine is complex with aromas of white flowers, candied fruits, and white pepper. It has a luscious mouthfeel showing freshness and subtle aromas. The long finish ends in a fine bitter touch, making a perfect match for aperitifs, cheese platters, and Indian and Asian food. The cost is \$15.

### FAMILLE PERRIN'S CÔTES DU RHÔNE RESERVE BLANC

My last find is the most consistently high quality,

low-priced wine I have ever known. It is the Famille Perrin Cotes Du Rhone Reserve Blanc, made from Grenache Blanc with a supporting cast of other Rhone varietals. It is pale yellow with delicate green reflections. The nose reveals beautiful aromas combining floral and mineral notes while the palate reveals superb aromas of lemon, bergamot, and hawthorn, ending with a long finish. It is a superb food and sipping wine. With a cost of \$12, it is an unbelievable find. À Votre Santé! 🍷



PHOTO: THOMAS BALSAMO

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