

SAY HAPPY HOLIDAYS WITH WINE

Fred Naddeo

THERE'S A WINE FROM BURGUNDY FOR EVERYONE ON YOUR LIST.

With the holidays back again, we're all looking for appealing gift ideas for family, friends, coworkers, as well as hostess gifts. For those of us yearning for one-size-fits-many, buying wine has great appeal.

There are plenty of convenient wine shops around—no need to head for the mall or drive to a distant specialty store with limited shopping hours. Wrapping doesn't require yards of holiday paper, and it's likely not the wrong color or size—though some may want the larger size. Plus it's easy to have a spare present or two tucked away for gift emergencies.

Simply put, it's easy to choose wine when working through your gift list. Just stop at your local wine store for recommendations from your favorite wine specialist. They likely even sell festive gift bags.

But what to do when you're on your own to select the wine? Or if you don't know what the recipient likes, or what's being served at the dinner party? The best solution is to choose a wine that's smooth and not overpowering on the palate. And with an impeccable reputation.

Pinot noir and chardonnay fit the bill. Both are from the prestigious Burgundy region in central France, a small area with a huge influence on the wine world. Known for its terroir, the region produces some of the most expensive and sought-after wines in the world, characterized by their elegance, aromatics and complexity.

Even wildlife likes these grapes better than other varieties! This past year, owners of Navarro Vineyards & Winery in California captured video of a bear that's been

"stealing" grapes for a few years—the bear ignores other varieties and eats only the pinot noir grapes.

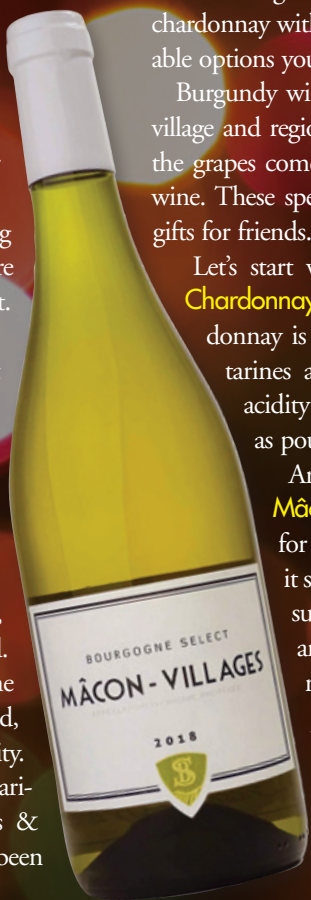
As even a California bear knows, these wines are so important that the most expensive wines at collector wine auctions tend to be from Burgundy. So, how do you select the perfect pinot noir or chardonnay without busting your budget? Here are some affordable options you will like, and more importantly, like to give.

Burgundy wine quality—from grand cru and premier cru to village and regional—is defined by the location of the vineyard the grapes come from, as well as the producer that makes the wine. These special wines make great hostess gifts as well as gifts for friends.

Let's start with **Bourgogne Select Mâcon-Villages Chardonnay 2018**, just \$12.99. This golden chardonnay is rich with flavors of peaches and nectarines and slight lemon notes. The bright acidity makes it perfect for seafood as well as poultry dishes.

Another option is **Nicolas Potel Mâcon-Villages Chardonnay 2017** for \$16.99. Yellow with a green tint, it showcases floral aromas of honey-suckle as well as almonds. This is an easy drinking white wine with rich flavors of green apple and pear. Try it with poultry and other white meats.

For a red wine option, try **Louis Jadot Pinot Noir Bourgogne 2016** for \$19.99.



Blended from a collection of pinot noir grapes grown in a variety of places in Burgundy, it has aromas of plums, cherries and red fruits. With traditional flavors reminiscent of earth and mushroom, it pairs well with chicken and pork dishes.

For a step up in quality but not necessarily price, choose **Frédéric Esmonin Les Genévrières Pinot Noir Bourgogne 2017** at \$19.99. Hailing from around the village of Genévrières, this red has notes of ripe dark fruits, like black cherry, along with hints of earth. Also excellent with poultry and pork dishes.

Every holiday has celebrations that call for some bubbly, and Burgundy can help with that as well. Since sparkling wines are typically made from pinot noir and chardonnay, Burgundy has the grapes to make top-notch sparklers.

First up, is **Vignobles Bulliat Crémant de Bourgogne Brut Nature Non-Vintage** for \$17.99 from the Beaujolais region of southern Burgundy. Made from chardonnay, it has aromas of citrus and flavors of white fruits. The perfect wine to toast with friends.

These wines are a great introduction to the Burgundy region and prove that you don't have to break the bank to drink and give good wine from the region.

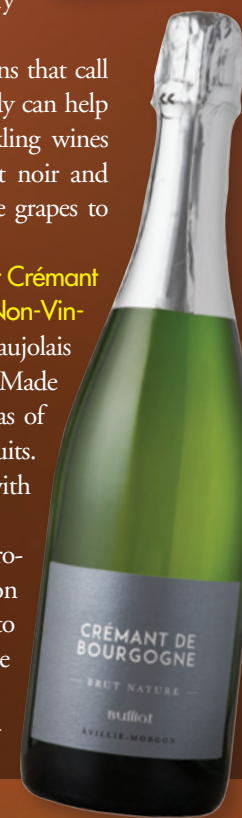
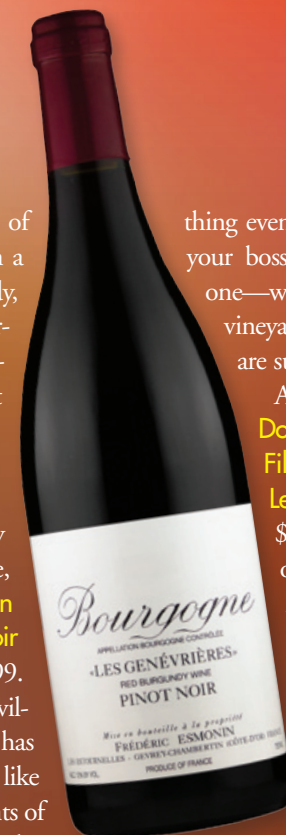
If you're looking for some-

thing even more special—whether for your boss, a wine lover or a loved one—wines like these, from better vineyards and better producers, are sure to please.

A great red wine choice is **Domaine Bouchard Père & Fils Savigny-Lès-Beaune Les Lavières 2017** at \$54.99 from the town of Savigny-Lès-Beaune, in the middle of Côte d'Or in eastern France.

Côte d'Or, meaning "Hills of Gold," connotes the high quality and expensive wines produced there. Notes of ripe red and dark fruits, with a touch of spice, complement its earthy notes. It's a perfect match for richer seafood dishes such as salmon.

Our white wine choice is **Domaine William Fevre Chablis Premier Cru Montmains 2017** for \$54.99. Chablis produces some of the most expressive and elegant white wines in the world. The premier cru designation means this wine is near the top of the Burgundy quality pyramid. This wine received high ratings from several wine magazines, with the highest by *James Suckling* at 94 points, which noted the fresh lemon nose with hints of spiced almond biscuit and flavors of lemons, peaches and grapefruit.



Finally, for a quality sparkling choice, choose **Louis Picamelot Crémant de Bourgogne Blanc Extra Brut 2014** for \$24.99. This 100% chardonnay-based wine brings green apple notes in a fuller bodied, Champagne-style wine, that's perfect for sharing a special holiday moment.

These wines are sure to impress and not because of the price—but for their outstanding quality. And if you can't find these selections, talk to your local wine specialist for other recommendations.

You don't have to spend a bundle to give a gift of Burgundy wine this season ... unless you want to. Cheers! ♦

What started as a hobby is now a career. Fred Naddeo began his wine journey more than 20 years ago when his wife bought a bottle of Black Tower Riesling to try something different. It marked the beginning of an exploration of the amazing world of wine that continues to this day. Fred is a wine specialist at the Springfield Fine Wine & Good Spirits store on Baltimore Pike in Springfield. Learn more at FineWineAndGoodSpirits.com.

