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The BrightWines Beacon for Easter Weekend, 2024

Easter Sunday is arriving relatively late in the season this year, in fact it hasn't been this late in over 10 years, but having it in mid-to-later April seems to match when my inner child thinks it should be. It does sound like perhaps Easter weekend have some "April Showers" involved. That's okay though, here at BrightWines April showers bring Angels Ink... and Immortal Zin... and even a White Rabbit too! And much MORE of course, so let's see what all sort of easter eggs are in store for us!

BRIGHT LIGHTS: Top Picks and Smart Buys for Easter weekend, including "personal shopper Easter Baskets"

** Smart Buys @ \$12.99 per bottle for Ham, or Lamb, or just for April Showers **

Angels Ink 2021 central coast Pinot Noir @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case, sale price)

Suggested Retail of \$15 - \$18

"Sourced from premier vineyards across the Central Coast, Angels Ink Pinot Noir is rich, round, and supple in texture. It leads with a concentrated nose of **well-ripened red cherries and succulent strawberry jam that is accented with a touch of vanilla**. The juicy notes of red fruit carry through to the palate making a **well-balanced Pinot Noir**." (winemaker notes) And DAVE says: this is the **same vintage we loved last year, and it's drinking great**. Was served at Como this winter, but a higher price. The **winery has come through with a great price for BrightWines** to feature, while the vintage holds! 10 cases in-stock now, this is a perfect fit for Easter ham with a great name to suit.

Collier Creek 2023 "Front Coach" Lodi Chardonnay (un-oaked) @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case)

This Chardonnay has all the richness you expect of Lodi wines, but does not use any oak to accomplish that richness, nor is it overly fruity either. It drinks more like a lush Lodi version of a white Burgundy Bourgogne Blanc style of Chardonnay. Stainless tank fermented with *batonnage* (lees stirring) and careful winemaking from certified green "Lodi rules" vineyards. It should appeal to fans of all sorts of California Chardonnay styles. DAVE says: this wine has been my favorite "unoaked" Chardonnay under \$15 ever since Field Recordings took a price jump last spring, and frankly it's as good a wine and Lodi (per usual) costs less!

"The Retreat" 2023 Marlborough, New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case)

Rated 90 points Wine Enthusiast magazine (at \$20 retail) noting the "passion fruit, pineapple, lime leaf and bell pepper... the palate is dry, crisp... classic Marlborough. 90 points." DAVE says: this might be our new favorite at \$12.99 although it has a bit less mineral than Babich it's a little more casual (has a northwoods sort of feel to the label) but comes from the same supplier. It's good to change things up, something new and fun (and high quality) for spring!

Peirano Estate 2021 old vine Lodi THE IMMORTAL ZIN @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case)

Suggested Retail: \$15 (see Wine Enthusiast magazine)

Peirano Estate has some of the oldest vines in all of Lodi, California. This wine is a perennial favorite!

KALPELA 2023 Mendocino Sauvignon Blanc @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case)

It's fresh and expressive with melon flavors and light citrus. This Sauvignon Blanc is made by Mendocino specialist winemaker Greg Graziano (who I've always felt was a great white wine winemaker) and has a focus more on making a classic light fresh California style of Sauvignon Blanc (**melons with citrus, subtle grassy hints**) not duplicating New Zealand style.

KALPELA 2020 Redwood Valley Cabernet Sauvignon @ \$12.99 per bottle *LOW STOCK as of 4/25*

This Greg Graziano Cabernet has been our favorite here under \$15 for several months now. Drinks like a 1990's era Sonoma Cab. That's high praise!

ARAGOSTA (Cantina Santa Maria la Palma) 2023 Alghero dry ROSE @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case)

The white wine Vermentino with this same "lobster label" is always one of my top-selling whites each summer. This new dry Rose from Sardinia/Italy took us by surprise last summer, and what a lovely surprise it was. It turned out to be one of the best roses of the season, but supply was sporadic so some of you may have missed it. Don't get too caught up in the varietals, it's a blend of Cannonau (classic) and Carignano (less-known) and the secret sauce is a hefty dose of Monica (yes, Monica - famed in Alghero region, northwest Sardinia). The bottom line is it is one darn tasty dry Rose!

Chateau de Campuget (vdb Gard, Nimes) 2024 "Traditon" Rose @ \$12.99 per bottle *LOW STOCK as of 4/25*

Tradition indeed! This Syrah/Grenache Rose by one of the best wineries in the Costieres de Nimes is always one of the first new vintage to arrive (note the 2024 vintage) and is usually our favorite French dry Rose of the springtime, sometimes it takes months before something replaces it in the realm of popular French roses. Once again, it's very impressive (Provence styled) and the same price as last year, arrived pre-tariffs.

LONE BIRCH (Airfield Estate, Washington) SYRAH @ \$12.99 per bottle (\$155.88/case) *SOLD OUT as of 4/25*

A very **smooth and tasty value-priced Syrah with rich raspberry and spice flavors that are both complex and friendly**. The best red wine value here from Washington since the "red blend" by Lone Birch (also with Syrah in the blend) we had here last fall. Washington does Syrah very well, and I might prefer this pure version a little better than the blend we had.

** a new Easter tradition... a new vintage of "White Rabbit" Riesling, it's dry companion, plus a sweeter red too **

WHITE RABBIT (Ress Family) 2024 Rhein RIESLING @ \$12.99 per bottle

Refreshing and "off dry" (but not sticky sweet either) with balance and good zing. A modern package by a VDP producer (Ress Family, Eltville am Rhein) that is not afraid of traditional Riesling. This drinks like a Kabinett with the lower abv of just 8.5% that is often seen on Spatlese Riesling. 2024 vintage is new and fresh, and just in time to toast the easter bunny's arrival.

(also available) **RESS (Eltville am Rhein) 2023 Rheinhessen RIESLING Trocken @ \$17.99 per bottle** (limited stock)

DRY Riesling in a very modern German wine package by a VDP producer. screwcapped and simply labeled, nicely dry, plenty of Riesling character, and 12% abv.

(sweet red) **Quady "Electra" Red moscato @ \$14.99 per bottle** (very limited stock left from the Como orders)

This is a table wine style (not fizzy) sweet red Moscato wine from the most famous Moscato winery in California, Quady. This "Electra" red with its angelic label would make an ideal sweeter wine option alongside Angels Ink or White Rabbit.

** dry and classy for \$15 and quite suitable for ham, lamb, or any meal (hint: what's Dave serving this Sunday?) **

(one Red, one Rose, and one White wine - very highly rated smart-buys)

Chateau Courac 2022 Cotes du Rhone @ \$14.99 per bottle mix/match (\$159.99 per case = \$13.33 ea, solid case)

Joséphine and Frédéric Arnaud took over this property in the hills above the village of Tresques (to the north-west of Châteauneuf-du-Pape) with 90 hectares of syrah and grenache vines within the Cotes du Rhone Villages designation of Laudun. This **drinkable now Syrah/Grenache blend, classic Cotes du Rhone** rouge, *mis en bouteille au chateau*, was awarded 95 points by Decanter at their World Wine Awards, noting: "Vibrant dark berries and fragrant florals parade over the **succulent palate. Full of energy and engagement** with soft grainy tannins and an impressively long length." And DAVE says: this would be great for lamb, but it will have to do for lamb at my family dinner this Sunday. Dry and classy to grace the table!

Elk Cove Vineyards 2023 Willamette Valley dry Rose of Pinot Noir @ \$14.99 per bottle *SOLD OUT as of 4/25*

DAVE says: As tempted as I am to serve the new French Rose, and the **Aragosta** (see above in the \$12.99 section) **will be my backup plan in case I'm sold out of Elk Cove**, but this Rose is as classy as it comes and was very popular at Como and is still available at that great price. Rose of Pinot Noir from all-estate Willamette Valley for just \$15 is hard to beat.

Serrra da Estrela 2023 Rias Baixas Albarino @ \$15.99 per bottle (*LOW STOCK as of 4/25*)

Rated 92 points by James Suckling "briny, textured, and pure... brings you right to the coast (with) "nose of **limes, green apples, nectarines, and tangy minerals, followed by a subtle and textured palate** with plenty of white-fruit and mineral allure." And DAVE says: this is NEW to our market, from one of my favorite importers (a pre-tariff shipment) and is truly a smart-buy for classic Rias Baixas Albarino which have trended toward \$20 for anything this perennially highly rated.

I hope everyone has a lovely holiday weekend, and finds a good opportunity to have a glass or two, and share a bottle or two, of fine wine! — Dave

The Right Wines are BrightWines!

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