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2019 TOP VALUES

RICH WHITES

Chardonnay maintains its pride of place as one of the world's most popular wines, delivering intense, juicy and expressive whites. From California and Washington to Italy, Chile and Australia to the grape's home in France's Burgundy region, distinctive versions are being produced at affordable prices. For other rounder, fuller wines, Spain offers multiple examples from native grapes, while Chenin Blanc—from France's Loire Valley as well as South Africa—is winning over more and more wine lovers.



92 \$25 ARNAUD LAMBERT Saumur White Bréze Clos de Midi 2017 | *France* | This offers a juicy mouthful of yellow apple, white peach and honeysuckle notes. Vibrant and detailed, with a lively finish laced with quinine and lemon peel accents.—*J.M.*

91 \$16 FRANKLIN TATE Chardonnay Margaret River 2018 | *Australia* | Features a mouthwatering, intense and distinctive mix of pineapple juice, dried mango and citrus flavors, set on a sleek body, with orange blossom and nutmeg details on the finish.—*M.W.*

91 \$20 LAVAU Côtes du Rhône-Villages White Valréas Domaine La Décelle Reserve 2018 | *France* | A shortbread frame around the flavors of lemon curd, grapefruit peel, star fruit and peach provides nice contrast, with the finish showing good cut. Viognier and Marsanne.—*J.M.*

91 \$22 BODEGAS AS LAXAS Albariño Rias Baixas 2018 | *Spain* | Smooth and dense, offering peach, honeydew, tarragon and blanched almond flavors, with juicy tangerine acidity backed by briny and mineral notes. Harmonious and intense.—*T.M.*

90 \$13 YALUMBA Viognier South Australia The Y Series 2018 | *Australia* | Floral and fragrant, with orange blossom, peach and marmalade flavors set on a smooth and juicy frame. Shows precision and balance, with nutmeg details.—*M.W.*

90 \$17 CASAL DE ARMÁN Ribeiro Eira dos Mouros 2017 | *Spain* | Expressive, generous and lively, offering flinty and briny notes, with pear and quince flavors, followed by floral and spice details.—*T.M.*

90 \$17 LAGAR DE FORNELOS Rias Baixas Pazo de Seoane Rosal 2018 | *Spain* | This white has a fleshy texture, showing peach, tangerine and floral flavors, braced by firm, citrusy acidity. Energetic and focused, with good depth. Albariño blend.—*T.M.*

90 \$20 ALBERT BICHOT Viré-Clessé 2017 | *France* | A lush, creamy texture sets the stage for the peach, apple and honeysuckle flavors in this expressive white, underlined by bright structure and leaving a light hint of bitterness on the finish.—*B.S.*

90 \$20 DE MARTINO Chardonnay Limarí Valley Legado Reserva 2018 | *Chile* | Vibrant, with honeysuckle and lemon cream notes to the richly textured and tightly wound flavors of apple pastry and apricot tart. Finishes with glistening acidity and spiciness.—*K.M.*

90 \$22 SEAN MINOR Chardonnay Sonoma Coast 2018 | *California* | Airy and well-spiced flavors of cream, apple and ripe pear are plush and engaging, with buttery notes on the finish.—*K.M.*

90 \$22 RODNEY STRONG Chardonnay Chalk Hill 2016 | *California* | This is juicy and lusciously fruity, featuring roasted tropical fruit, apple pastry and pear tart flavors, with buttery and spicy accents on the vibrant finish.—*K.M.*

90 \$22 J. WILKES Chardonnay Santa Maria Valley 2017 | *California* | This spicy and fruity version offers a luscious mix of peach cobbler and apple pastry flavors supported by fresh acidity. The minerally finish lingers with savory hints.—*K.M.*

89 \$11 CHATEAU STE. MICHELLE Chardonnay Columbia Valley 2017 | *Washington* | This sleek and supple version features appealingly forward flavors of tropical fruit and pear, which finish with zesty spice notes.—*T.F.*

89 \$12 MICHEL GASSIER Costières de Nîmes White Buti Nages 2018 | *France* | Bright star fruit, melon and pear notes are lined with details of honeysuckle and chamomile. The fresh finish shows minimal toast, allowing the fruit to shine. Roussanne and Grenache Blanc.—*J.M.*

89 \$15 EDETÀRIA Garnatxa Blanca Terra Alta Via Terra 2018 | *Spain* | This fleshy white features enough zippy acidity to freshen the rich texture, supporting pear, honeydew and heather flavors. Saline and briny notes add interest.—*T.M.*

89 \$15 REYNEKE Vinehugger White Western Cape 2018 | *South Africa* | Distinct apple wood and smoke notes introduce this version, while pear and white peach flavors extend on the palate, ending with accents of spice and mineral. Silky and charming. Chenin Blanc.—*J.M.*