

FOOD & WINE

Drink These 25 Bottles and Become a Wine Master

Want to take your wine smarts to the next level? Easy peasy. Just follow this simple, can't-miss tasting tutorial —*Ray Isle*

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Ask any wine expert what's the best way to learn about wine, and they'll tell you to taste as much as you can. But where to start? And for that matter, where to finish? There are almost 20,000 different wines for sale in the U.S. at any given moment. So **even if you're a zillionaire** with a ton of spare time, tasting more than a tiny fraction of what's available clearly is not an option.

To save you from getting completely overwhelmed, here's a 25-bottle starter guide to wine wisdom. You'll need a budget of roughly \$1,000, which sounds like a lot, but you don't have to buy all of the bottles up front—one a week will suffice. Also, the point here isn't to drown you in technical wine geekery. If you are keen to know the geological origins of Portugal's **Douro Valley**, Google's your friend. The purpose of this exercise is to leave you with a mental library of tastes that you can refer to anytime you try a new wine.

In fact, maybe the thing to do is to think of this as a game rather than a rigorous course of study—like The Game of Life for wine. Follow the path in order. Each bottle leads to the next. You accumulate experience. But instead of retiring at the end, you wind up with a bunch of wine smarts and the rest of your days ahead of you. Not bad, right?



9 of 22 Courtesy of Frederick Wildman and Sons, LTD.

9. Barolo

Step up your Italian game with a bottle of Barolo, which is made from the Nebbiolo grape in northern Italy's Piedmont region (and sometimes referred to as “the wine of kings, the king of wines”). The **2012 Marchesi di Barolo Barolo Tradizione (\$53)** captures the wine's signature floral delicacy as well as its underlying tannic power.

Alternate bottles:

2013 Vietti Castiglione Barolo (\$51)

2013 Pio Cesare Barolo (\$63)

2013 Azelia Barolo (\$39)