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Wine & Spirits

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THE RESTAURANT TOP 50

THE MOST POPULAR WINES IN AMERICA'S TOP RESTAURANTS

are willing to pay for them," says Brian Mitchell at Max Restaurant Group in Connecticut, calling out two of the top wines on the Restaurant Top 50. Wines from the US still hold diners in thrall, making up 38.4 percent of the Most Popular bottlings.

There are some wines on the Top 50, however, that we would have never imagined making the list 30 years ago. Lopéz de Heredia's ultra-traditional Rioja, for example, which shot to the #1 position last year, and remains at the top of the list. Or Lucien Crochet, rising into the top ten, thanks to diner's thirst for Sancerre.

There's no doubt that the wine world is far bigger than it was 30 years ago. Respondents' lists of Most Popular wines include ever more obscure regions, as well as more exotic varieties—143 in all this year, compared to 76 in 2005. As Catherine Morel reports from TAJAW in LA, people used to ask her to "suggest a red. Now they'll say, 'Oh, I know I like this and this. Can you recommend something like that?' People are definitely willing to try off-the-beaten path wines, especially the younger crowd, which is fun because some of the weirder wines are the inexpensive wines on the list."

Some of them, like Ametztoi Txacoli and Alpha Estate Xinomavro, are making it into the Top 50.

Some wines create buzz. Some simply sell without any effort: Guests don't bother to name-check those wines on their Instagram feed, or to confer with a sommelier before calling for a bottle. Those are the wines that top the Restaurant Top 50, the most popular wines in America's favorite restaurants.

For 30 years, we've asked wine directors to mine their sales data for the last quarter of the year and report on their top-selling bottles; we then count the number of mentions for each wine reported on their top-ten lists, as well as the rank; these 50 wines accrued the greatest number of mentions overall. The accompanying price is the average wine-list price for all the bottlings our respondents mentioned.

Many of these names have been perennial favorites over the 30 years we've been tracking wine trends: Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, Jordan, Cakebread, Kistler, Sonoma-Cutrer, Duckhorn, Silver Oak, Antinori and Trefethen have been regulars since 1991. "Stag's Leap Wine Cellars and Jordan are comfortable, consistent steakhouse-style wines that are recognizable, and people

1	STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS, \$120	27	PIERRE-YVES COLIN-MOREY, \$82
2	JORDAN VINEYARD & WINERY, \$112	28	DOMAINE VACHERON, \$93
3	R. LOPEZ DE HEREDIA, \$82	29	MARCHESI ANTINORI, \$104
4	ROMEAUER VINEYARDS, \$86	30	JEAN-LOUIS CHAVE SELECTION, \$74
5	CAKEBREAD CELLARS, \$96	31	FERRARI-CARANO WINERY, \$64
6	KISTLER VINEYARDS, \$150	32	BAILLY-REVERDY, \$83
7	FAUST WINES, \$120	33	CHATEAU MONTELENA, \$105
8	SONOMA-CUTREER VINEYARDS, \$51	34	PRODUTTORI DEL BARBARESCO, \$78
9	LUCIEN CROCHET, \$84	35	ALPHA ESTATE, \$62
10	DUCKHOEN VINEYARDS, \$106	36	J. LOUIS, \$44
11	SILVER OAK WINE CELLARS, \$141	37	TURLEY, \$76
12	CATHMUS VINEYARDS, \$150	38	BOW & ARROW, \$58
13	FRANK FAMILY VINEYARDS, \$99	39	THE PRISONER WINE COMPANY, \$91
14	G.D. VAJRA, \$65	40	RIDGE VINEYARDS, \$83
15	YALLA, \$84	41	BILLECART-SALMON, \$168
16	HIRSCH VINEYARDS, \$125	42	LITTORAI, \$121
17	YUVE CLICQUOT, \$128	43	AMEZTOI, \$50
18	HEITZ CELLAR, \$118	44	CLOUDY BAY, \$68
19	MOUNT VEEDER WINERY, \$91	45	MASSICAN, \$69
20	DECOY, \$83	46	PATRICIA GREEN CELLARS, \$76
21	ROBERT SINSEY VINEYARDS, \$93	47	MERRY EDWARDS WINERY, \$117
22	VIETTI, \$59	48	CHAPPELLET, \$81
23	LA RIOJA ALTA, S.A., \$71	49	DIVISION WINE CO., \$63
24	JUSTIN VINEYARDS & WINERY, \$74	50	CASANOVA DELLE CERREIE, \$117
25	CRISTOM VINEYARDS, \$73	51	HALL, \$98
26	FLOWERS VINEYARDS & WINERY, \$103	52	TREFETHEN FAMILY VINEYARDS, \$74

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ITALIAN WINES

Although Italy still trails France in this year's poll results, the gap closed by a few percentage points. Tuscany and Piedmont are almost evenly split in representation on the Most Popular wines list. In Piedmont, Barolo and Barbaresco dominate, even as sommeliers continue to reach for more affordable expressions of nebbiolo from Langhe and Gattinara. And it's a barbera from G.D. Vajra that tops both the most popular bottles and glass pours. Tuscany's strength this year lies not in Super Tuscan blends, which have slipped down the list, but in wines based on sangiovese, with Brunello leading the way, followed by Chianti Classico. A notable trend is the prominent position of wines from previously obscure native varieties, like timorasso from Vigneti Massa (number 8), and pelaverga from Burlotto (number 9) and Castello di Verduno (number 26).



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Believe it or not, we sometimes have people who say, 'I want to drink timorasso tonight.'

MOST POPULAR ITALIAN WINES

Rank	Brand	Bottling	Avg. Price
1	G.D. Vajra	Barbera d'Alba Superiore Langhe Nebbiolo	\$84 \$63
2	Marchesi Antinori	Toscana Villa Antinori Rosso Brunello di Montalcino Pian della Vigne	\$55 \$130
3	Vietti	Roero Arneis	\$54
4	Produttori del Barbaresco	Barbaresco	\$87
5	Casanuova delle Cerbaie	Brunello di Montalcino	\$117
6	Felsina	Chianti Classico Riserva Chianti Classico Berardenga	\$55 \$48
7	Fratelli Alessandria	Barolo	\$107
8	Vigneti Massa	Colli Tortonesi Derthona Colli Tortonesi Monleale	\$48 \$64
9	Burlotto	Verduno Pelaverga Langhe Nebbiolo	\$45 \$62
	Paolo Scavino	Vino da Tavola Vino Rosso Barolo	\$50 \$74
11	Oddero	Barolo	\$104
12	Uccelliera	Brunello di Montalcino Voliero Brunello di Montalcino	\$110 \$117
13	Pieropan	Soave Classico Calvarino Soave Classico	\$75 \$42
14	Bastianich	Friuli Orsone Friuli Vespa Rosso	\$50 \$69
15	Fattoria la Valentina	Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Spelt	\$48
16	Tenuta Sette Cieli	Toscana Indaco Toscana Yantra	\$150 \$90
17	Zaccagnini	Montepulciano d'Abruzzo	\$35
	Elisabetta Foradori	Trentino Teroldego Rotaliano	\$56
18	La Gerla	Brunello di Montalcino Toscana Poggio gli Angeli	\$70 \$56
	Tenuta Sette Ponti	Toscana Crognolo Toscana Oreno	\$68 \$138
	Antonio	Gattinara Osso San Grato Gattinara	\$130 \$59
21	Roagna	Langhe Nebbiolo	\$90
	San Felice	Chianti Classico	\$50
	Frescobaldi	Toscana Luce Lucente Rosso Toscana Castello di Pomino Benefizio	\$65 \$44
24	Montepeloso	Toscana A Quo	\$52
	Angelo Gaja	Brunello di Montalcino Pieve Santa Restituta Langhe Gaia & Rey Chardonnay	\$140 \$750
26	Castello di Verduno	Verduno Basadone Pelaverga Langhe Nebbiolo	\$52 \$55
	Sartori	Veneto Pinot Noir Valpolicella	\$40 \$36
29	Ruffino	Chianti Classico Riserva Ducale Tan Toscana Modus	\$66 \$60