

# A Helpful Wine Buying Guide

## Wine COOLER D I R E C T

### Introduction

If you are new to buying wines, or you have only made purchases on occasion before, then the whole idea of buying the right wines can be very daunting. In fact, there are thousands of options available, and they aren't all good. A simple mistake and you could end up with a bottle no one really wants to drink. So, in order to make the right decisions, you need to know more about wines.

That's the purpose of this guide. Here, you will find everything you need to know so that you can start buying wines with a keen eye. Before long, you will become the envy of your friends and acquaintances

since every single bottle you purchase, offer as a gift, or open at a dinner party, will be the most delicious possible.

Throughout this guide, you will get practical advice that will help you understand what you should purchase and when. Additionally, you will find advice on wines in every price point. You don't have to spend an arm and a leg to get good wines, but you do have to know what to look for.

Are you ready to become a wine connoisseur? Let's get started on the right path.

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## Chapter 1 Wine Types and Regions - Reds

To begin with, you can think of this chapter and the next as sort of a cheat sheet so that you don't have to understand everything right away. Instead, you can use the information you will find here so that you could go out and buy a bottle right now and purchase something delicious and proper for your event or occasion. Below, you will find a plethora of information, including wines based on type, region, and cost. This will give you an immediate guide to purchasing a good wine whether you want something affordable or you want to spend a little more. You will find the category itself first and then a list of wines that fit into that category. Then, you will see information for wines found in cool and warm climates broken down by price. In this first chapter, we will discuss the reds.

**Bold Reds:** Bold red wines include **Malbec, Syrah, Shiraz, Mourvedre, Pinotage, Petite Sirah, Touriga Nacional, Cabernet Sauvignon, Bordeaux Blend, and Meritage.** A bold red will have a strong, dry taste, and is best used for very specific events and occasions.

**Warm Climates:** There is only a handful of medium red wines available from warm climates. Again, you will want

to choose those based on your price point. If you want to keep the price lower, then look into the undervalued regions, which include Puglia in Italy, Rhone in France, Umbria in Sardinia, Ribera del Duero in Spain, and Lodi in California.

However, if you wish to spend more money, then you can choose from wines that cost more than \$25 a bottle. These include those from the following regions:

### Wine Regions

United States	Sonoma Valley and Napa Valley
Australia	Barossa Valley and McClaren Vale
Spain	Cabernet as well as Priorat Syrah specifically
France	Chateaufneuf du Pape and Bandol specifically
Italy	Cabernet blends from Tuscany and Amarone della Valpolicella from Italy specifically

These wines or the ones from these regions will cost upward of \$25 and they are considered top shelf varieties, so they would be best if you want to choose something touted for its taste.

**Cool Climates:** If you are looking for bold reds that were produced in cooler climates, then there are plenty to choose from as well. As far as lower cost wines that will keep you from spending more than \$20 a bottle, consider those found in such undervalued regions as Chile and France (Bordeaux Superiore).

If you want to spend more money, then you can choose from wines available in more popular regions. They include:

## Chapter 1 Wine Types and Regions - Reds

### Wine Regions

Italy	Alto Adige Lagrein specifically
Australia	Blaufrankisch varieties
South Africa	Stellenbosch Cabernet options specifically
France	Bordeaux blends from the left bank

These wines will cost more money, but again, they will offer the best quality if you want a bold red.

**Medium Reds:** Medium red wines include Merlot, Sangiovese, GSM Blend, Barbera, Nebbiolo, Cabernet Franc, Zinfandel, and Tempranillo. These wines are also available in a variety of flavors and choices whether you wish to buy those produced in warm or cool climates.

**Warm Climates:** There is only a handful of medium red wines available from warm climates. Again, you will want to choose those based on your price point. If you want

to keep the price lower, then look into the undervalued regions, which include Puglia in Italy, Rhone in France, Umbria in Sardinia, Ribera del Duero in Spain, and Lodi in California.

However, if you wish to spend more money, then you can choose from wines that cost more than \$25 a bottle. These include those from the following regions:

### Wine Regions

United States	Sonoma Valley and Napa Valley
Australia	Barossa Valley and McClaren Vale

These wines will be your best option if you want top notch medium reds to serve with your next party or dinner.

**Cool Climates:** When you look to cooler climates, you will have more options for medium reds. For example, if you want to spend less on a bottle, then you could look toward Hungary, Valencia in Spain, Columbia Valley in Washington, and Loire in France. The more popular regions offer more expensive wines, including:

### Wine Regions

Italy	Piedmont region and Tuscany
France	Bordeaux from the right bank
Spain	Rioja

These three regions will provide you with high-quality medium red wines that you could add to your cellar.

## Chapter 1 Wine Types and Regions - Reds

**Light Reds:** Light reds will not have as much body and strength to them as the dark reds and medium varieties. While still dry, these reds do have sweeter qualities. You can choose from a wide variety of different light reds based on how much you want to spend and climate.

**Warm Climates:** In warmer climates, you have a variety

of different choices for your light reds. For lower priced, but still quality wine options, you will need to look to such regions as California, Sardinia, New Zealand, Argentina, and Chile.

If you would like to spend a little more money, then you have plenty of options as well. They include wines from regions, such as:

### Wine Regions

United States

Rita Hills, Santa Lucia Highlands, Santa Barbara, and Sonoma

Australia

Yarra Valley and Morington Peninsula

As you can see, the actual locations for light reds in the more expensive varieties is a little more limited, but that doesn't mean you will not have plenty of choices.

**Cool Climates:** When you turn to cooler climates for light reds, your choices are a little limited, but you do have options. For lower priced wines, you could choose those from Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Maconnais in France.

If you wish to spend a little more on the wines, then you could choose those from the following regions.

### Wine Regions

United States

Willamette Valley in Oregon

Italy

Oltrepo Pavese

France

Cotes d'Or

As you can see, the options are somewhat limited, but that doesn't mean you cannot get a high-quality light red wine that you and your friends or family will enjoy.

**Rosé:** This is a select variety of wine that seems to cross the line between a red and a white. It still has a dry quality to it, but it is much sweeter than other red varieties. If you choose a rosé, then you should look for Provencal, White Zinfandel, Loire Valley, and Garnacha Rosado. That is just

a select samples of the ones available. Instead of breaking these wines down into climates and cost, here is a simple list of the sweet and dry versions.

**Dry:** Your dry options will come from regions like:

## Chapter 1 Wine Types and Regions - Reds

### Wine Regions

France	Provence, Bordeaux, Loire, and Rhone
Italy	Lombardy
Spain	Navarra
United States	California, Washington, and Oregon

A dry rosé will be less sweet and leaning more toward a red wine.

**Sweet:** If you prefer something on the sweeter side, then you could choose options like the following:

### Wine Types



White Zinfandel
Pink Moscato
Rose Prosecco
Pink Port
Lambrusco
Brachetto d'Acqui
Fresia

All of these are your choices for red wines. They will be drier, and as you will learn later in this guide, they pair well with certain foods. However, before we get to actual pairings, we need to look at white wines as well.



## Chapter 2 Wine Types and Regions –Whites

White wines have their own special place in meals, and many people prefer them specifically because they are sweeter than reds. Generally, white wine appears as yellow-gold in color, not white obviously. They have a higher volume of residual sugar during the winemaking process, and this is the reason for the sweeter flavor. As with the reds, there are different categories of white wines, so let's go over each of them.

**Bold White:** Bold white wines will have the strongest flavors, and they include such options as Chardonnay, Semillon, Roussanne, Marsanne, and Viognier. When you choose these wines, keep in mind that the combination of flavor and sweetness is the most important thing to look for.

**Warm Climates:** If you are looking for bold white wines that were produced in warmer climates, then you have plenty of options. The wine bottles that will cost less than \$20 include those from such regions as Australia, Central California, Washington State, Sicily, and Argentina.

If you would like to spend a little more money on a bottle of wine, then you can look for those in the following regions:

### Wine Regions

Australia	Hunter Valley
France	Chateauneuf du Pape
South Africa	Stellenbosch
United States	Sonoma, Napa Valley, and Paso Robles

These warm climate white wines will have the bold flavor if that is what you prefer.

## Chapter 2 Wine Types and Regions – Whites

**Cool Climates:** If you are interested in white wines from a cooler climate, then your bolder flavor options include those from Loire and Languedoc-Roussillon in France as well as in Chile when you prefer lower cost wines. When you want to spend more money on your bold white wine options, then look for regions including:

### Wine Regions

Australia	Australia
France	Pessac-Leognan
Austria	Gruner Vetliner for Smaragd and Reserve Styles
United States	Willamette Valley in Oregon

These bold white wines will offer the best flavor and will cost more than \$25 a bottle.

**Light White:** If you prefer a lighter wine, the flavor will be smoother and the sweet taste will go along with it well. Versions of light white wines include Sauvignon Blanc, Colombard, Pinot Grigio, Trebbiano, Garganega, Melon de Bourgogne, Vermentino, and Pinot Blanc. If you are looking for this smooth option, then consider the following choices.

**Warm Climates:** In a warmer climate, you can get a bottle of light white wine for less than \$20 if you choose options from Rias Baixas and Rueda, Spain, Veneto in Italy, Cotes de Gascogne in France, and Tuscany in Italy. If you would prefer to spend more money on a high-quality bottle of white wine, then look in regions like:

New Zealand	Sauvignon Blanc
United States	Napa Valley and Sonoma Valley

In both of those cases, look for Sauvignon Blanc wines specifically.

**Cool Climates:** You have more options if you choose a light white wine in a cooler climate. These choices will allow you again to choose between lower and higher cost bottles. If you are interested in wine that costs less than \$20, then consider those from Vinho Verde in Portugal as well as Loire Valley and Entre-Deux-Mers in France.

If you would prefer to choose a higher-cost bottle of light white wine, then you could pick from the following options and regions:

### Wine Regions

United States	Columbia Valley Washington, Willamette Valley Oregon
France	Loire Valley and Bordeaux
Italy	Alto Adige and Garganega in Soave, Italy.

These wine options are sweet and smooth, and as you can see, you have choices in every price level.

## Chapter 2 Wine Types and Regions – Whites

**Sweet Whites:** These wines are considered extremely sweet, only being outdone by dessert wines as we will discuss momentarily. Sweet white wines include Moscato, Riesling, Alsatian Pinot Gris, Late Harvest White, Chenin Blanc, and Gewurztraminer. You don't have to worry about different climates for these wines. Instead, you can choose the following regions.

If you wish to spend a little less, then your choices include sweet white wines from California, Washington, Portugal, Brazil, Italy, and South Africa. When you wish to spend a little more, your wine options include those from:

### Wine Regions

United States	Napa Valley and Icewine from Canada
France	Loire Valley
Italy	Moscato d'Asti
Germany	Mosel
Hungary	Tokaji
South Africa	Constantia
Austria	Eiswein

These wine options are sweet and smooth, and as you can see, you have choices in every price level.

**Dessert:** If you want the perfect wine for serving with sweets after a meal, then dessert wines are your best options. They include Port, Madeira, Sherry, Vin Santo, Muscat, and Pedro Ximenez.

You can get a lower cost version of these dessert wines by looking in Spain and Portugal. You can get higher cost versions by looking into the following regions:

### Wine Regions

Portugal	Vintage and Tawny Port
France	Rhone
Italy	Vin Santo
Spain	Sherry
Australia	Rutherglen

These wines will offer the perfect sweet taste to go along with your dessert options so be sure to save them for the end of the meal.

**Sparkling:** A final category would be sparkling wine. This includes any wine that has bubbles in it, such as Champagne, Prosecco, Cremant, Metado Classico, Brut, Cava, and Sparkling Rose. Sparkling wines can vary from extra dry to extra sweet. They include the following ratings:



## Chapter 2 Wine Types and Regions – Whites

### Sparkling Wines



Doux
Demi Sec -sweet
Dry - slightly sweet
Extra Dry - fruity in flavor
Brut - Dry
Extra Brute - extra dry
Brut-Nature - extremely dry or bone dry

You can choose from sparkling wines that will suit your budget as well. If you want to save money, you could pick Cava in Spain, Prosecco and Metodo in Italy, and Cremant in Alsace. French and American sparkling wines would fit in this category too.

If you are looking to spend more money, then you have wine choices that cost more than \$25 a bottle, including:

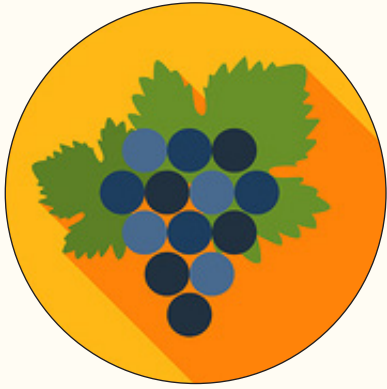
### Wine Regions

United States	Sonoma Valley
France	Champagne
South Africa	Cape Classique
Italy	Franciacorta and Oltrepo Pavese

Not all sparkling wines are champagne, but that is what most people are used to. However, you can choose from a variety of sparkling options whenever you want something special.

Now you know all of the information about how to choose the right reds and whites. Of course, you still can't make a purchase if you don't have more details. In the next chapter, we will contrast reds and whites based on how they should be stored and other important details.

notes



## Chapter 3 Comparing Reds and Whites

If you are going to purchase red and white wines, then there are certain things you need to know in order to ensure you store them and serve them properly. These wines are very different, so it is vital that you make the right decisions.

**Red Wines:** If you purchase a red wine, then you need to follow these rules:

- You should serve the wine slightly cool, which translates to between 63 and 69 degrees.
- You will need to purchase a decanter to serve this wine in. This allows the wine to breathe before you serve it.
- The aging process of red wines is between four and ten years.

Red wines should not be served cold, but contrary to what some people may believe, they don't need to be hot. Slightly cool would fall into the category of a little below room temperature.

**White Wines:** If you purchase a white wine, then you need to follow these rules:

- The wine should be served refrigerator cold, which translates to between 44 and 57 degrees. Many people like these wines extremely cold.
- Serve whites straight from the bottle, not from a decanter.
- White wines should be aged between one and three years.

White wines should always be served cold, so you will need to chill them before you serve them.

**Reading a Wine Label:** It's important that you know how to read a wine label too. This way, you will know exactly what you are purchasing, because the type of wine isn't always obvious when you don't know what you are looking for. There are essentially two different types of wine labels: New World and Old World. The New World labels are very easy to read because they are very straightforward. Old World labels can be more confusing.

The New World labels will be very direct, providing you with basic information including the name of the wine, the year it was bottled, and where it was bottled. It will look something like this:

### **Riesling, 2009, Napa Valley**

Now, if you are looking at Old World wines, then the label is going to assume that you know where it was made based on regions, which can be somewhat confusing. For example, a French wine may look like this:

### **Chateau Moulin de Grenet, 2009, Lussac St. Emilion**

Based on this label, would you know right away what type of wine you are buying? If you are familiar with regions, you would know that it is a Merlot. However, as someone new to the purchases, you will have no way of understanding the regions.

That's not the only information you will see on the wine label either. Each label can be different, but the information will be the same. The following details should be listed on any label that you look like:

## Chapter 3 Comparing Reds and Whites

### Wine Labels



Region where the wine is made

Producer of the wine

Alcohol percentage in the wine

Vintage (year)

Varietal

Those are the things that absolutely should be included on a wine label. There are also optional details that some companies prefer to include. These details can be: the vineyard, the estate, the reserve, the tasting notes, the history of the wine, and the quality level.

There are more details to a wine label as well, but for the beginner, this information is a good place to start.

It's a good idea just to go and peruse wine labels. This will help you better understand what you are looking at, and the more comfortable you become looking at the details, the better you will be able to read the labels.

Now that we have talked about a few details that help you break wines down even more, let's step back a bit and discuss the fact that there are really only six basic types of wines.

notes



## Chapter 4 Are There Really Only Six Wines?

When you go to a wine store, the first thing you will see is thousands of different types of wines from places all over the globe. It is a lot to take in and it may make you wonder how anyone could settle on anything. Of course, we have broken down the wines very specifically in the earlier parts of this guide. However, you may still feel overwhelmed. In this chapter, we are going to go back to the basics and categorize wine into six different types. Yes, it is true that all wines can fit into one of these six. Putting everything into basic categories like this will help you understand things a little better.

**Apertif:** The first category would be aperitif wines. These are the ones designed to cleanse the palate and to prepare it for something you are about to eat. Think of this type of wine as a way to get ready for the rest of the meal. Many people refer to them simply as appetizer wines. You have many different options, including Sherry, sparkling wines, and dry vermouths. Generally, no matter what your choice might be, aperitif wines tend to be dry and not sweet (you will save those sweet wines for dessert!)

**Rosé Wines:** For a very long time, people have lumped all of these in a category they simply define as pink. Some people haven't considered everything this category has to offer. These wines aren't just pretty. They also have very complex tastes that will appeal to many different people. Some of the most well-known of these include Grenache and Cinsault from France in the Rhone region. The most popular of all the wines in this category, though, would be White Zinfandel.

**Dessert Wines:** If you have a sweet tooth, then this is the wine category for you. These dessert wines are designed to allow you to enjoy the sweetness of your dessert after dinner. If the reds and whites are considered the serious wines, then these would fall into the fun category. That's because they allow you to truly have fun with your taste buds. There are numerous different ways to pair them, like Sherry with cookies and Port with slices of cheese. There are even dessert wines that stand all on their own, leaving your taste buds not even interested in having anything else.

**White Wines:** The next category would be white wines. The wine itself is made from only the juice of the grape, and that's how it gets the color. White wines can vary in sweetness from close to dry to extremely sweet. Some of the most popular categories of white wines include Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay, which are considered the heavy hitters in the wine world. Some of the lesser known white wines that are still worth your attention include Chenin Blanc, Pinot Blanc, and Pinot Grigio.

**Red Wines:** The third category of wines would be reds. Often considered the best of the wines to go with meals, reds pair very well with meat and we do love meats don't we? Generally aged in oak barrels, these wines have a very distinct taste that elicit such words as toasted, roasted, woody, smoky, etc. Red wines are made by crushing the whole grape and using all of it, not just the juice. The more color that can be extracted, the more intense and bold the wine will be.

Of course, the most well-known of the red wines is Pinot Noir. Other reds that are well known include Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

**Sparkling Wines:** Finally, the last category of wines would be the most unique. Sparkling wines are those that have CO<sub>2</sub> added for a little bubbly. They range extensively from very dry to very sweet and everything in between. Of course, Champagne is the most famous of the sparkling wines, but it is not the only one as we have discussed. And, any of them can be used for any occasion. They should not be limited to just using them for wedding toasts and other celebrations.

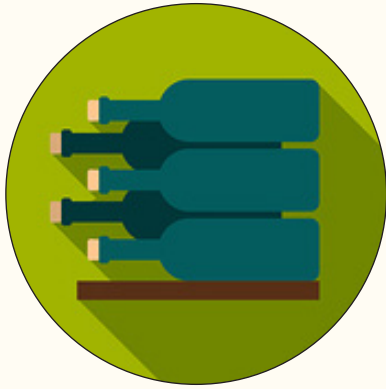
So, despite there being thousands of different options,

## Chapter 4 Sparkling Wines ( Continued..)

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there are only six real categories of wines. Before you get overwhelmed with all of your choices, just start breaking things down. Which of these categories are you looking for? Once you have chosen one of the six, then you can narrow down your wine options to just those that fit within that category. It will save you a lot of time as well as a big headache.

Now, we have discussed the different types of wines you could choose and even how to narrow down your options so that you don't get overwhelmed. Let's talk about something else in the next chapter: how to buy for and stock your wine cellar. After all, if you plan on having wines readily available for any occasion, then you will need a well-stocked cellar that has a little of everything.



## Chapter 5 Storing Your Wine

Wine storage can vary from a small wine rack that only holds around six bottles all the way to an underground cellar that holds six thousand bottles. You don't have to feel intimidated where you fall in that variation. Even if you only have room for half a dozen bottles, you will want to make sure you store it properly.

One of the most popular options for wine storage is a wine cooler also known as a wine refrigerator. There are many options when it comes to selecting the right wine cooler. The three most important questions to ask yourself are:

- **What bottle capacity do I need?**
- **Am I going to build in my wine cooler or do I need a freestanding model?**
- **Do I need a dual zone or single zone?**

Wine coolers range in bottle capacity from 4 bottles to upward of 300 bottles. So first you'll need to determine how many bottles you will typically be storing in order to narrow your selection. Next, you'll need to decide where you'll be putting your wine cooler. Will you be putting this under a counter replacing either a cabinet or an outdated appliance such as a trash compactor? If so, you'll need a built in model and if not, you'll want a freestanding model. Finally, if you plan on storing both red and white wines you'll need a dual zone wine cooler, which has two temperature zones. If you'll only be storing one or the other then a single zone will work for you.

Of course, if you would like, you can actually build a very

nice wine cellar in your home. There are plans and steps available that will help you renovate a room or a part of your basement into your very own wine cellar and you can make it as detailed and attractive as you would like. If you get very involved in wines, then you may wish to create a cellar that will look good enough to show off to people when they come by.

Now, let's say you really want to collect numerous different types of wines, but you don't want to purchase a **wine cooler** or **build a wine cellar**. Don't worry. You can easily create a cellar like environment where you can keep your wines without spending money to renovate your house. You simply want:

- **A place that doesn't get sunlight.**
- **A place that doesn't have much vibration.**
- **A place that stays cooler than the rest of your home.**

Once you find a place like this, then you can start storing wines. Additionally, make sure you find shelving or racks of some sort to actually keep your wine sorted. If you just have bottles piled up, then you are risking something getting broken and you certainly won't know what you have and where it is.

## Chapter 5 Storing Your Wine

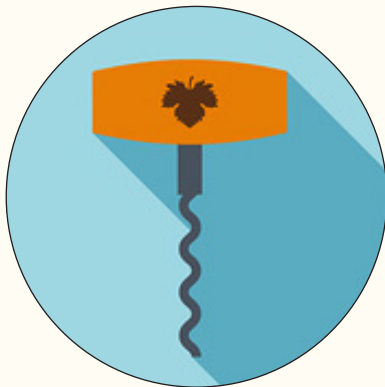
**Stocking Your Wine:** So, how do you buy so that you will have the right stock? Once you know more about your wine options as we have discussed throughout this book, then you can move on to taking the steps to buy the right things. Here's what you need to do.

- **What wines would you want in the next week?**
- **What wines would you want in the next month?**
- **What wines would you want in the next six months?**

Try to come up with your own drinking list. This will be the basis for your wine stock. Don't worry in this step about other people. This part is just for you.

**What Events Are Coming Up?** Next, you will want to ask yourself if you have any events coming up in the next week, month, or year. You probably already have a good idea of who you will be entertaining, when and how. This will also have a big impact on how much wine you need to buy. When you have figured out what events you will have coming up, then consider what types of wines you would want for those occasions. You may want a variety to suit every taste or you may wish to lay out your wine menu in the same way you would lay out the menu for the foods you will serve.

### Wine Events



**What Wines Do You Like?** To start with, write down the wines you already know you like. You don't have to worry about stocking things you don't like unless you are extremely picky and you know you will be entertaining people that like something else. There are a couple of ways you could create your favorites list based on how much you drink:

**Start Cultivating:** If you have plenty of room to store wine, then you will want to start cultivating your favorite options from local and worldwide vineyards. Cultivation will be how you end up with a well-stocked wine cellar. Of course, if you only have a little storage space, you will be limited on how much you can buy. However, always try to leave room for a few unique options that you purchased just because you wanted to try something different.

Here's a good rule of thumb as well. If you have the space, buy wines you like and will be using by the case. Then, only buy single bottles of those you would like to cultivate.

The best way to actually learn about wine is to also collect it. That's because you will have to learn something each time you purchase a new bottle. Don't worry if you feel overwhelmed. Just take things one step at a time and begin creating your very own collection.

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## Conclusion Storing Your Wine

Wine is perfect for so many occasions and it has a lot to offer. Some people enjoy collecting wines, going to tastings, and finding new options. Others just want to know how to pick the right bottle of wine for an occasion like a house-warming gift or a Christmas party. No matter which of these you are, this guide is designed to help you.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion (Continued..)

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The good thing to remember is that even if you cannot afford to spend hundreds of dollars on a wine bottle, there are very good choices, as we discussed in the first portion of this book.

If you have felt overwhelmed when choosing wine before, then this guide can help you as well. The best thing to do is break the wines down into the six main categories and then choose from a narrowed selection of these. That will make your life much easier, and when you learn how to read wine labels, you will find it very easy to make the right purchases.

So, what better time is there to start **building your own wine collection**? With the information you have learned here, you can go out and buy your very first bottle without reservation.

### resources

<http://www.winemag.com/wine-for-beginners/>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=AyQ4KR9rj5wC&lpg=PP1&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

<http://winefolly.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2014-wine-buying-cheat-sheet-final.pdf>

<http://learn.winecoolerdirect.com/>