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Variety and Value from France

New reviews of inexpensive reds, whites, rosés and dessert wines from Provence and southwest France

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The south of France offers a treasure trove of wine styles based on a wide variety of grapes.

In its eastern reaches, in Provence, an epicenter for quality is the small Bandol appellation. Here the Mourvèdre grape thrives under the strong Provençal sun, producing rich and full-flavored reds. A smattering of whites is also made in Bandol as well, based on blends of Clairette, Bourboulenc and Ugni Blanc.

In southwest France and Gascony, Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh offers luscious off-dry whites, while Madiran provides hearty reds based on the Tannat grape. Because of its off-the-beaten path status, the southwest puts forward many fine values as well.

DOMAINE DU GROS NORÉ Bandol 2007 Score: 91 / \$39

Very plush, with rich dark plum, cherry and kirsch flavors. Elegant violet and black licorice notes come to the fore, and this finishes with plenty of dark chocolate and spice notes. Drink now through 2017. 2,250 cases made. *Red.* —K.M.

DOMAINE SERGENT Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh 2008 Score: 90 / \$24

A lush, off-dry white, offering a vibrant array of ripe tropical fruit flavors and plenty of baked cream and honey notes, with hints of lemon meringue. The rich finish is long and well-spiced. Drink now through 2017. 1,080 cases made. *Dessert.* —K.M.

DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON Bandol St.-Ferréol 2007

Score: 90 / \$49

Ripe, rich and beefy-tasting, showing muscular dark fruit flavors of plum and blackberry, with plenty of sanguine notes. Dark chocolate, smoke and spice fill the finish. Drink now through 2016. *Red.* —K.M.

DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON Bandol White 2009 Score: 89 / \$29

A rich style, with robust ripe apple, quince and baked peach flavors that are accented by zesty clove and tropical fruit notes. The long finish is minerally and lush. Drink now through 2014. *White.* —K.M.

CHÂTEAU DU GALOUPET Côtes de Provence 2007 Score: 88 / \$20

A dense red, with concentrated aromas and flavors of dark plum, baked cherry and berry. Shows plenty of licorice notes, with a finish of French roast and dark chocolate. Drink now through 2014. 150 cases imported. *Red.* —K.M.

DOMAINE DE TERREBRUNE Bandol White 2009 Score: 88 / \$28

A rich and supple white, with plenty of lush white fruit flavors, including quince, apricot and white peach. Finishes with notes of tropical fruit and mineral. Drink now through 2014. *White.* —K.M.



J. Guillard/Scope

The Bandol appellation is a center of quality in southern France.

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DOMAINE BRU-BACHÉ Jurançon Sec 2009 Score: 87 | \$17

A firm white, with honeyed notes to the ripe apple, almond and mineral flavors. Features interesting pineapple and mango notes on the crisp finish. Drink now through 2014. *White*. —K.M.

DOMAINE DU GROS NORÉ Bandol White 2009 Score: 87 | \$32

A crisp white, showing good concentration to the white fruit and spice flavors, which include overtones of sea salt and white pepper. The finish is minerally. Drink now through 2013. 50 cases imported. *White*. —K.M.

CHANTAL & PHILIPPE MUR Madiran L'Esprit del Basté 2007 Score: 87 | \$14

Very lively, with red cherry, berry and plum flavors that extend with peppery notes on the finish. Drink now. 500 cases made. *Red*. —K.M.

DOMAINE DU TARIQUET Chardonnay-Sauvignon Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne Côté 2009 Score: 86 | \$14

There's good cut to the ripe apple and piecrust flavors, which feature notes of baked peach. Clove and ruby grapefruit notes linger on the finish. Drink now. 2,000 cases imported. *White*. —K.M.

DOMAINE DU TARIQUET Chenin-Chardonnay Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne 2009 Score: 86 | \$12

This has good mix of crunchy fresh fruit flavors, including peach, apple and lemon zest. Delicate and spicy on the finish. Drink now. 5,000 cases imported. *White*. —K.M.

DOMAINE SERGENT Madiran Cuvée Élevée en Fûts de Chêne 2007 Score: 85 | \$25

Red licorice and sweet cherry flavors dominate this medium- to full-bodied red. The finish is chewy, with bittersweet chocolate. Drink now. 600 cases made. *Red*. —K.M.

DOMAINE DU TARIQUET Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne Rosé de Pressée 2009 Score: 85 | \$12

A very dry and firm rosé, with berry and cherry flavors and hints of herb running through. The finish is crisp. Drink now. 6,500 cases imported. *Rosé*. —K.M.