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# Budget-conscious wine collectors will love the affordable and age-worthy reds on the shelves now, and love them even more later

By **CAROLYN EVANS HAMMOND** Special to the Star  
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The other day, I tasted a 1970 Chateau le Puy Emilien from Bordeaux with the visiting winemaker alongside the 2014 vintage of the same wine. The 48-year-old bottle tasted blissful. It was still in perfect balance and had the same cherry-chocolate-and-toasted-sesame nose as the 4-year-old wine, but the palate had gained elegance and complexity with age. This longevity is seldom found in wines that sell for around \$30. The 2014 Chateau le Puy Emilien (\$29.95) hits shelves Sept. 15 in Vintages for the first time in Ontario and is almost certainly a must-buy for collectors. It's stunning and will age for decades. My tasting note for this blissful wine follows, along with recommendations for four other affordable and age-worthy bottles on shelves now.

For short-term cellaring

Tasting 2014 and 1970 Chateau le Puy Emilien with the winemaker, Harold Langlais

**2012 Marques de Caceres Reserva, DOCa Rioja, Spain (Vintages 702761 \$24.95 in stores only)**

Reserva wines from Rioja must be aged for at least three years before they're released to market — by law. So they need to be made from fine fruit to begin with; and in some cases, these wines can be cellared for several years more. Such is the case with this bottle. Its warm, sultry aromas of earthy black cherry immediately draw you in, and then a cashmere crush of cascading plum and toasted tobacco flavour saturate the palate and linger. Just so hedonistic. The wine will no doubt tempt you to drink up now but will reward patience.

Drinking window: now to 2027

Score: 93

For short-term cellaring

**2012 Masi Costasera Amarone Classico, Veneto, Italy (LCBO 317057 \$39.05 till Sept. 16, reg. 43.05 in stores and online)**

This evocative Amarone is already quite complex and inviting with its bold expression of dark fruit cordial, cigars, autumn leaves and melted bitter chocolate and lingering note of dark molasses. It's a bold and beautiful bottle that I've recommended before. But like most Amarones from good years, this muscular Italian will improve for several years, becoming more suave with time. And it's four dollars off right now in Ontario.

Drinking window: now to 2026.



2012 Masi Costasera Amarone Classico, Veneto, Italy (LCBO 317057 \$39.05 till Sept. stores and online) (MASI AGRICOLA SPA)

Score: 92+

**2014 Louis M. Martini Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California (Vintages Essential 232371 \$37.95 in stores and online)**

Not to be confused with the similarly labelled wine from Sonoma, this bottle has all the hallmarks of a serious Napa Cabernet Sauvignon – concentration, complexity, and aging potential. The perfume immediately draws you in with sexy scents of cedar and blackcurrant liqueur before swathing the palate with sumptuous flavours of cassis, cherry-vanilla, warm wood and a fine sprinkling of finely textured cocoa powder. While this Californian charmer is drinking well now, it will improve.

Drinking window: now to 2024.

Score: 92

For mid-term cellaring

### **2014 Wynns Coonawarra Estate Black Label Cabernet Sauvignon, South Australia (Vintages 84996 \$28.95 in stores only)**

This wine hails from a tiny, isolated area of South Australia called Coonawarra with a mere 29 residents. Here, the region's red clay soil and cool coastal climate produces succulent and age-worthy Cabernet Sauvignon such as this now-iconic label that's a favourite in auction circles. The newly released 2014 exudes deep aromas of ripe blackcurrant and toasted hazelnuts before erupting with driving purity— a whoosh of dense red and black berry fruit laced with toasted wood. This deep, resonant wine is approachable now but will develop for some time.

Drinking window: now to 2038.

score: 94

For long-term cellaring

### **2014 Chateau le Puy Emilien, AC Francs Cotes de Bordeaux, France (Vintages 557660 \$29.95 in stores only)**

First and foremost, this is a natural wine, meaning one made with minimal intervention — something seldom found in Bordeaux. And it is one of the most undervalued bottles from that fine French region. Produced near Pomerol and St. Emilion, this Merlot seasoned with touches of Cabernet Franc, Carmenere and Malbec red has been made the same way for 400 years and drinks (and indeed ages) like a wine worth twice the price. The toasted sesame seeds, dark chocolate and black cherry expression tastes lifted and graceful — much like a fine Burgundy — but delivers the depth and structure of Bordeaux blend.

Drinking window: now to 2058.

Score: 97

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