

# 10 Bottles Worth Chasing

*Great wine doesn't have to be famous — or expensive. Ten lesser-known grapes, all under ~\$25.*

These are the wines I keep coming back to — indigenous grapes from Portugal, the Caucasus, the Italian Alps, Greece, and Spain that the mainstream keeps overlooking. A few I've scored myself (noted); the rest are the entry bottles I'd hand a curious friend. Prices and availability vary by market, so treat them as a band, not a promise. Pull a cork and go off the beaten path.

## PORTUGAL

- 1 Aluado — Alicante Bouschet**  
*Alicante Bouschet · Lisboa · ~\$14 · My pick: 91/100*  
The brand's signature grape — red-fleshed and 'bleeding,' fruity with a touch of sweetness and a warm finish. Absurd value.
- 2 Luís Pato — Baga**  
*Baga · Bairrada · ~\$20–25*  
The 'Nebbiolo of Portugal': structured, high-acid, age-worthy, from the grower who revived the grape.
- 3 Quinta dos Roques — Dao Tinto**  
*Touriga Nacional blend · Dão · ~\$20*  
Touriga Nacional beyond Port: violets, dark fruit, elegant structure for a fraction of the famous-name price.

## THE CAUCASUS — GEORGIA & ARMENIA

- 4 Marani — Khvanchkara**  
*Aleksandrouli & Mujuretuli · Racha, Georgia · ~\$18 · My pick: 95/100*  
Naturally semi-sweet, velvety, raspberry and a citrus lift. A 1907 Grand Prix winner, still under twenty bucks.
- 5 Marani — Saperavi**  
*Saperavi · Kakheti, Georgia · ~\$15*  
Georgia's flagship and another grape that bleeds (red flesh): inky, bold, from the oldest wine culture on earth.
- 6 Armenia Wine — Semisweet Red**  
*Indigenous blend · Aragatsotn, Armenia · ~\$15 · My pick: 93/100*  
Crisp, holds up for days, overflowing with cherry, pomegranate and raspberry. Joyful and a steal.

## THE ITALIAN ALPS

- 7 Mezzacorona — Teroldego Rotaliano**  
*Teroldego · Trentino · ~\$15*  
Inky, dark-fruited Alpine native with a savory edge — one of Italy's best-value reds.

**8 Elena Walch — Schiava / St. Magdalener**

*Schiava · Alto Adige · ~\$20*

Pale, light, low-tannin and chillable — a red built for pure, unpretentious pleasure.

**GREECE & SPAIN**

**9 Boutari — Naoussa**

*Xinomavro · Naoussa, Greece · ~\$15*

The 'Greek Barolo': tannic, savory, thrilling — the best ageworthy-red value almost nobody's buying.

**10 Luna Beberide — Mencía**

*Mencía · Bierzo, Spain · ~\$15*

Fragrant and mineral, with bright red fruit — the obvious next bottle for anyone who loves Pinot Noir.

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