

The Seattle Times' 50 best wines of 2015

By Andy Perdue, November 11, 2015

Wine columnist Andy Perdue chose 50 wines he loved this year — from 50 wineries. They're all winners, of course, but No. 1 was a 2012 cabernet sauvignon from Woodward Canyon Winery.

For example, the No. 1 wine this year rings it at nearly \$100. The fact is, many great wines come from meticulously farmed grapes and are, quite simply, expensive to make. I try to temper the higher-priced wines with those that are affordable and readily available. On this year's list, 14 of the wines retail for \$20 or less — not a bad price for a great bottle of wine.

Accessibility is an even harder issue. I begin tasting for this list in January, so some wines inevitably are going to be sold out by the time this comes out nearly 11 months later. Additionally, while some wines might be sold out at the winery, they could be available in some retail outlets or on wine lists for a year or more.

This is my third year compiling The Seattle Times' top 50 wines and, as has become tradition, I choose the wines from 50 different wineries.

You might notice some prominent wineries missing from this list. All wines I include are tasted blind, meaning I know neither the producer nor the price until I've finished evaluating them. Not all wineries submit their wines, so it isn't fair to include them here. We already know they produce terrific wines, so that leaves room to explore other producers.

30. Coiled Wines 2014 Rizza, Snake River Valley, \$28: Former Napa Valley winemaker Leslie Preston is helping to lead the Idaho wine industry into new directions. This is a remarkable, spine-tingling sparkling riesling.

40. Cinder Wines 2013 syrah, Snake River Valley, \$28: Ste. Michelle alum Melanie Krause returned to her native Idaho to raise the profile of the Snake River Valley wine industry. This luscious syrah is a great example of what is possible.

45. HAT Ranch Winery 2014 estate dry moscato, Snake River Valley, \$18: Tim and Helen Harless moved to Idaho's Sunnyslope Wine District from Texas to make wine. Four years in, they've released one of the nation's most remarkable dry muscats.

46. Clearwater Canyon Cellars 2013 carménère, Washington, \$28: Lewiston, Idaho, winemaker Coco Umiker has crafted a head-turning carménère from Phinny Hill Vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills. It is a spicy red loaded with ripe plum and blackberry flavors.

