

My Top Memorable Wines From Last Year Are The Wines You Should Find In 2023

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I cover drinks, travel and food, and the intersection of all three.

As a wine writer and student of the Master of Wine, I taste a lot of wine. Good for me, occasionally bad for my health. As a professional, I do spit, of course. Nevertheless, this fraught privilege allows me the opportunity to discover exquisite or fascinating bottles I might not otherwise have access to; wines that remind me why I left the business of law years ago.

Writing a list of ten challenges the imagination and memory, but I found the bottles I pondered most frequently shared a common trait: they **stimulated the mind and touched that soft intangible part of my singular emotional response some might call the soul.**

Climate change, craftsmanship, family, old and new friends, thrills in far-flung places, the steady hand of home, the past, the future, the now. Will these wines be around in future decades? Will something new take their place? How long will I be around to see what unfolds? What does it matter when today is the day I'm here and tomorrow doesn't yet exist? These fragments of thought span some of the musings inspired by a journey through these bottles.

How did I encounter them? Though I don't drink or buy based on scores, some of these wines earned 100-point accolades, thus earning spots at the 1000-point tasting thrown each year by Charlotte Wine & Food Week. I co-hosted the event in March 2022 alongside Argentine wine icon Laura Catena. The role provided access to an embarrassment of riches donated by private collectors. Other wines I stumbled upon while traveling, many delicious bargains far away from auction houses and investors.

As you review my memorable wines of 2022 list, remember I tasted plenty but not all of the wines in the world. Thus, I'd love to hear from readers about their favorite wines, whether rare or readily available. Please drop me a line!

NUMBER ONE



Morlet Family Vineyards, 'Coup de Cœur' Chardonnay, Sonoma, California, 2018



Morlet Family Winery & Estate Vineyard Panoramic
TIM CARL PHOTOGRAPHY

The first of 3 Chardonnays to land on my top ten list this year, I tasted 'Coup de Cœur' at the Charlotte Wine & Food Week 1000-point tasting.

Winemaker Luc Morlet and his wife Jodie have a reputation for making some of the finest Burgundian-style Chardonnays on the Sonoma Coast. **Coup de Cœur, which means "heart's astonishment" comes close to describing the experience of tasting this wine.**

The wine is a cuvée of the best barrels blended from Fort Ross-Seaview & Russian River Valley vineyards and a combination of Gold Ridge and volcanic soils.

A gorgeous nose of white blossoms, pear, and ripe summer peach sprinkled with baking spice leads to a broad **silken palate that carries on for minutes of ethereal weightlessness. Tasting complexity and power with the delicacy of air is that rarest of experiences that comes from winemaking craftsmanship paired to exceptional Chardonnay fruit.**