



# PURSUITIST

## Top 10 Wines To Give (And To Keep)

Move over, vodka, rum, and beer. Wine is now the world's number-one most popular alcoholic beverage. But things get complicated when it comes to choosing what type of wine to drink, gift, or store in cellars to enjoy in a few years. So we turned to wine guru Ian Blackburn of LearnAboutWine – the leading source for wine education and events in Southern California — to school us on the selection process, and to make his essential wines recommendations.

“As a wine professional, I rarely receive wine as a gift except from the very few in my inner circle that feel confident to purchase something special,” says Blackburn, a Master of Wine student and teacher whose classes and tastings have served to demystify wine for nearly 20 years since the launch of LearnAboutWine.

“I’m famous, however, for purchasing gifts for others and for finding the treasures that I hold dear — and purchasing a few gifts for myself.”

Since Blackburn has taught more than 50,000 students in just his core class, “Wine Camp: An Introduction to Wine,” we asked to copy his notes for a cheat-sheet shopping list of his Top 10 finds. “Being a student of wine and a teacher, I enjoy wines at all price points and quality levels,” he says. “Here are the wines that I tend to get excited about.”

### 10. **Lail Vineyards “Georgia” Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley, 2011 or 2012 (\$120)**

*Ian Blackwood: “Phillip Melka on winemaking and Robin Lail Vineyard Owner, what a team of personality and perfection. This is the newest edition, the latest trend to emerge out of Napa Valley – ultra-premium Sauvignon Blanc. Melka, who cut his teeth on the category in Bordeaux, is bringing his daft touch to this variety that now sees new life in the \$100+ club. “Georgia” benefits from high tier selection from low yield vineyards, hand stirring in expensive wood, time, age and careful ‘Melka’ craftsmanship.”*