

To Market, To Market

We realize that it's probably too early to start popping magnums of champagne, but several economic indicators suggest we might sidestep complete financial ruin yet.

And with the holidays upon us, now could be a good time to reward yourselves—or perhaps a loved one/colleague/cherished wine journo—with a bottle of something special.

Lucky for you, we tasked our Wine Pros with ferreting out terrific values and splurges worthy of the season.

Walter Martley fears not sticker shock, even when trolling through France, for he is well versed in the secrets of the Cotes du Rhone region. He singles out the **2005 Philippe**

Plantevin Cotes Du Rhone Villages “La Daurelle” (\$18) for its “myriad of black-fruit flavors” and “echoes of herbs and flowers,” praising the standout grenache-syrah-mourvedre-carignan blend.

Kelly Magyaris looks west for her value pick, heralding the “soft and silky” tannins of the **2007 Mark West California Pinot Noir (\$12)** (no pun intended) a utility buy that “makes a thoughtful host gift, even if you’re not exactly sure what kind of wine the host prefers.”

Loosened purse strings don't release the Pacific Northwest's hold on Magyaris, who taps the **2006 Arcus Estate Pinot Noir (\$100)** as her big-ticket purchase. She thinks a bouquet of “violets, currants and black cherries” and splashes of “raspberries, black cherries and baking spices” across the palate are cause for celebration enough, but only gains appreciation for the complex red as it continues to breathe. “The wine continues to evolve in the glass after you pour it,” Magyaris notes.



Martley suggests opening up the wallet for the **2006 Vietti Barbera D'Alba Scarrone Vigna Vecchia (\$90)**, a pulse-racing red—he dubs it the “Lamborghini of Barbera”—bolstered by “herb, spice and oak” and brought to bear through malolactic fermentation.

Our Wine Pros



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By Warren Rojas

and buried beneath fried onions. **L,D,LN** daily
\$ 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍴

★ **LA BERGERIE** 218 N. Lee St.; 703-683-1007. Duck confit heads to the highlands via a shepherd's pie layering shredded duck (fatty in spots, but mostly flavorful) with wild mushrooms (great building block) and whipped potatoes (clever twist on the rustic meal). **L Mon-Sat, D** daily \$\$\$\$ 🍷 🍴

LAS TAPAS 710 King St.; 703-836-4000. Specializing in over 70 types of tapas for vegetarians and carnivores alike. **L Mon-Fri, D** daily, **Br Sat-Sun** \$\$ 🍷 🍴 🎵 🍷

LE REFUGE 127 N. Washington St.; 703-548-4661. Daily chalkboard specials supplement a static menu stocked with French standards like salmon en croûte, baked escargot and beef Wellington. **L,D Mon-Sat** \$\$ 🍷

MURPHY'S GRAND IRISH PUB 713 King St.; 703-548-1717. Celtic favorite offering up traditional pub grub, nightly entertainment and over a dozen beers on tap. **L,D,LN** daily, **Br Sun** \$ 🍷 🍴 🎵 🍷

★ **RESTAURANT EVE** 110 S. Pitt St.; 703-706-0450. Poached fluke (clean, uncomplicated fish) provides the perfect foil for a cushion of buttery corn veloute and crunchy green beans. **L Mon-Fri, D,LN Mon-Sat** \$\$\$ 🍷

UNION STREET PUBLIC HOUSE 121 S. Union St.; 703-548-1785. Potent East Coast chowda is brimming with so many oysters, bay scallops, chunks of select fish (typically cod), potatoes, red onions, celery and corn, staff members insist, “it's a meal.” **L,D,LN** daily, **Br Sun** \$\$ 🍷 🍴

★ **VERMILION** 1120 King St.; 703-684-9669. Savory sweetbreads flanked by savory cabbage and pomegranate seeds are the stuff of legend. **L Mon-Fri, D** daily, **Br Sat-Sun** \$\$ 🍷 🎵 🍷

VILLAGE WHARF RESTAURANT 7966 Fort Hunt Road; 703-765-0661. Local institution since the 1970s; specializing in seafood, lobster, steak. **L,D** daily \$\$ 🍷 🎵 🍷 🍴

THE WAREHOUSE BAR & GRILL 214 King St.; 703-683-6868. Cajun favorites like crawfish-crab imperial and oyster loaf in an amiable environment. **L,D** daily, **Br Sun** \$\$\$ 🍷 🍴 🍷

THE WHARF 119 King St.; 703-836-2836. Broiled haddock sports a delectable cornbread crust with some definite body (surprisingly spicy) while the succotash (lima beans, corn, peppers and crab in a dreamy cream sauce) proves divine. **L,D** daily, **Br Sun** \$\$ 🍷 🍴 🍷

DEL RAY
CABOOSE CAFE & BAKERY 2419 Mount Vernon Ave.; 703-566-1283. The real draw is a surprise Ethiopian dinner menu, a feature unlikely to be duplicated by any chain eatery. **B,L** daily, **D Mon-Sat** \$ 🍷 🍴