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These 12 Unforgettable Wines Are About Way More Than Quality

What turns a great wine into an unforgettable one? Our critic rounds up the dozen best, most memorable bottles out of the more than 4,000 she tasted this year.



Hi Top Shelf, and happy holidays from [Elin McCoy](#), Bloomberg's wine critic, with my most memorable wines, 2024 edition.

Every December, I spend hours combing through my stack of red tasting notebooks to home in on the standout bottles and think about why they wowed me. In 2024, I found dozens of serious contenders for my annual top 10 among the great reds, whites, rosés and sparkling wines I sampled in visits to everywhere from Chile to Italy, France to California, and my home terroir of New York City. This year, I included a bonus two more. (Here are my lists from [2023](#), [2022](#) and [2021](#).)

But before we get to it, here's a recap of the year's most important wine stories. Look for my trends for 2025 the first week in January.

- **Wine & Health:** Statements from the World Health Organization that no amount of alcohol consumption is safe have helped generate dozens of articles highlighting the risks, pointing out what the headlines get wrong, warning of growing neo-prohibitionism, and citing studies that show moderate drinking can be good for you. A more nuanced view is needed say two Harvard professors who have researched the issue for a combined 60 years.
- **Climate Change:** Forever the story, and one I discussed in my annual harvest report. The issue is driving serious scientific research as well as solutions such as regenerative farming, even highlighted as the future of all agriculture by the World Economic Forum.

- **Tariffs:** Import duties proposed by President-elect Donald Trump are causing worry in all sectors of the spirits industry. They'd mean not just higher prices for us wine lovers, but also hurt restaurants and retailers.

The Best Wines of 2024

Superlative quality in the glass is not my only criteria here. A great wine memory is also about the setting, the occasion, the people, the food, how the wines reflect today's wine world and where it's headed in the years to come.

My top wines this year range from historic to brand new, traditional to experimental, and rich collectible reds to bright zingy bubbly. They include a surprising red from China, a World War I Bordeaux, one of the best cabernets ever from Chile, and a fabulous Italian red that spoke to both my love of wine and art.

2015 Bollinger La Grande Année Rosé (\$310)



Tasting this deeply pink fizz with fresh berry aromas and red fruit in March at the woodland-themed launch in Paris, it seemed like the embodiment of spring. The lunch was held at Le Philanthro-Lab, the perfect place match, with a canopy of 9,500 paper leaves suspended above a long flower-strewn table and a menu from a Michelin-starred chef with nods to fir trees and forest mushrooms. Yes, we tasted the 2015 and 1989 La Grande Année, but this complex, joyous pink version made the event feel like the most sophisticated, glamorous indoor picnic ever.