



Big, Balanced Reds

Although there's now a backlash against wines containing more than 15 percent alcohol, the category includes some of the best wines in the world. That's because they are balanced: All that alcohol is supported by rich, intense flavor and substantial structure (i.e., tannins). The wines below are great examples of rich, balanced reds. Any one would make an ideal partner for juicy grilled steaks or sausages.

2007 Bodegas Borsao Tres Picos Garnacha (\$18) Robust and spicy, this old-vine Grenache comes from one of the leading wineries in Spain's up-and-coming Campo de Borja region.

2006 St. Francis Sonoma County Old Vines Zinfandel (\$22) This bottling is the epitome of supercharged California Zinfandel, full of brambly, dark-berry fruit and lush tannins.

2005 Masi Costasera Amarone (\$65) Amarone, a wine from Italy's Veneto region that's made from partially dried grapes (with concentrated sugars), often recalls dried cherries and dark chocolate. Masi's Costasera bottling is a perfect example of the style.

