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## 20 American Chardonnays to Buy Now

<http://www.winemag.com/Web-2015/20-American-Chardonnays-to-Buy-Now/index.php/cparticle/2>

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### CALIFORNIA

Au Contraire 2013 Chardonnay (Russian River Valley); \$20, 93 points. This is a delightfully floral and lemony-crisp wine, with a touch of crème brûlée balanced between layers of citrus. Despite the rich accent, it's light-bodied and easy to like, offering subtle complexity and a sultry, spicy finish. —Virginie Boone

Crossbarn by Paul Hobbs 2013 Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast); \$25, 90 points. A tremendously well-made Chardonnay at the price and production levels, this is lean in high-toned acidity but offers tropical goodness, a swath of lime throughout. Balanced and tense, the twist of lime comes back on the finish. This is a great wine to stock up on for larger gatherings. —V.B.

Domaine Anderson 2012 Chardonnay (Anderson Valley); \$43, 92 points. This attention-grabbing debut Chardonnay comes from a new sister winery to Roederer Estate in Mendocino County. It shows a vivid yellow-gold color, butterscotch and hazelnut aromas, butter and bosc pear flavors and tasty bread dough accents. Rich and full in flavor, it's sleek in texture, but not too full-bodied. —Jim Gordon

Dry Creek Vineyard 2012 DCV Estate Block 10 Chardonnay (Russian River Valley); \$30, 90 points. The winery once made 30,000 cases of Chardonnay. With this release, it micro-sized that number down to 1,250, focusing on 30 vine rows to make a better wine. Mission accomplished—this medium-bodied wine offers a creamy texture, with concentrated fig and pear flavors around a mineral-laden finish. —V.B.

Duckhorn 2012 Chardonnay (Napa Valley); \$35, 90 points. For the debut of the winery's Chardonnay, fruit is sourced largely from Oak Knoll, Carneros and Rutherford to craft an aromatically lemony wine that gives way to fuller tidings of caramel and vanilla on the palate. The finish offers balanced and refreshing acidity. —V.B.

Dunning Vineyards 2013 Estate Wines Westside Chardonnay (Paso Robles); \$26, 92 points. One of the many vintners proud of their forthcoming Willow Creek District appellation, Bob and Jo-Ann Dunning's Chardonnay presents delicate aromas of yellow flowers, vanilla bean, peach skin and limestone. The white rocks extend to the palate, picking up nectarine elements, too, creating a lean but flavorful wine that's refreshing enough to sip all night. —M.K.

FEL 2012 Savoy Vineyard Chardonnay (Anderson Valley); \$48, 91 points. Like a bouquet made of different types of flowers, this polished wine brings diverse elements into a pleasing whole. There are ripe tropical fruit, vanilla and butter aromas, rich apple and pear flavors, a soothing smooth texture and lingering finish. —J.G.



Gary Farrell 2012 Rochioli Vineyard Old River Block Single Oak Puncheon Chardonnay (Russian River Valley); \$60, 93 points. Bright, beautiful and balanced, this tiny production wine is aflutter in high-toned citrus notes, melon and peach. A well-crafted marriage of power and sophistication, the aromatics of wild jasmine shine, while texturally the wine is round and softly layered. —V.B.

Kendall-Jackson 2013 Vintner's Reserve Chardonnay (California); \$17, 91 points. This is a tasty and accessibly priced Chardonnay. It packs in lots of fruit flavor, vibrant acidity, rich texture and layers of oaky spice while showing a rare sense of seamlessness. Very Californian and compelling. Editors' Choice. —J.G.

Lafond 2011 Lafond Vineyard Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills); \$40, 93 points. Scents of chamomile tea with generous honey and lemon get down with white flowers and baking pie crust on this offering from Pierre Lafond, who's been making wine since the 1960s. The wine dances across the tongue, with bright papaya, pear and a dill-powered, nearly bitter finish. It's showing almost no age, so it will hold well, but it's also brilliant right now. —Matt Kettmann

Noble Vines 2013 446 San Bernabe Chardonnay (Monterey County); \$13, 90 points. Aromas of lightly roasted and salted peanuts, Golden Delicious apples and toasted bread introduce this wine. It's soft on the palate, but with refreshing grapefruit-powered bitterness and cement-like mineral underpinnings. Best Buy. —M.K.

Ram's Gate 2012 Chardonnay (Carneros); \$36, 92 points. Crisp, clean, light and bright, this is an easy-to-love Chardonnay, with a soft texture and ample concentration. Notes of citrus and fresh pear dominate, with lovely streaks of subtle spice adding depth and interest to the finish. —V.B.

Zaca Mesa 2011 Zaca Mesa Vineyards Chardonnay (Santa Ynez Valley); \$16, 90 points. One of Santa Barbara County's pioneer properties delivers an aromatically luscious wine, with aromas of white flowers, French toast, quince and lime sorbet on the nose. It's a bit like sipping perfume of tuberose and honeysuckle, yet there is bouncy acidity and chalky minerality, ensuring an emerging shelf life through 2018. Editors' Choice. —M.K.