

Holiday Gift Guide 2016: The Top Wines and Spirits



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I travel to learn, eat, golf and ski, but mostly for travel's sake [FULL BIO](#) ✓

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20 of California's biggest and best reds from Napa's acclaimed Stags Leap District in a spectacular one of a kind gift box.

As my annual series of Holiday Gift Guides concludes, I saved the best for last - booze. My picks run the gamut from affordable and accessible to esoteric and collectible, but there is something here for everyone at every price point, and unlike many magazine and online gift round-ups, I have personally tried and approved each of these. If a spirited gift isn't right for your recipient, please check out my other themed 2016 gift guides for [Golfers](#), for [Cyclists](#), for [Skiing](#)

& Snowboarding, for [Fitness & Travel](#), and for [Food & Cooking](#). I also recently posted an in-depth guide to the [Best Toys and Gear for Dogs](#), so if Man's Best Friend is on your gift list, take a look. Also, check out last year's booze gift guide as you'll find many things are still worth considering.

Stag's Leap Stunners: With indulgent dinners and hearty celebratory roasts of beef and lamb, to me the holiday season screams "Big Reds," and you will find a few such options in this gift guide. But none are as indulgent as this coveted aficionado's set, which I wrote about last year and called the "Ultimate Wine Lover's Gift Set." You can [check out that piece for far more detail](#), but basically, winemaking in the New World was changed forever by the Judgment of Paris, when wines from Napa's Stags Leap District bested the finest First Growth French Bordeaux (they even made a movie about it, *Bottle Shock*), and this area has ever since represented the best of American cabernet. The Stags Leap District is a designated American Viticultural Area (AVA) that includes renowned wineries Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, Clos du Val, Baldacci Family Vineyards, Chimney Rock Winery, Cliff Lede Vineyards, Hartwell Vineyards, Ilsley Vineyards, Lindstrom Wines, Malk Family Vineyards, Odette Estate Winery, Pine Ridge Vineyards, Regusci Winery, Robinson Family Vineyards, Shafer Vineyards, Silverado Vineyards, Stags Leap Winery, Steltzner Vineyards, Taylor Family Vineyards, Quixote, and Terlato Family Vineyards. To celebrate more than a half century of excellence, the Stags Leap District Winegrowers Association annually releases its Appellation Collection, a unique and amazing set of very limited release Cabernet Sauvignon, all made by these top producers in the Stags Leap District. This year's set is better than ever, expanded to include 20 wines, all from different wineries from the acclaimed 2013 vintage. Stag's Leap Wine Cellars was the red that won the Judgement of Paris, and the annual highlight of this set is a bottle from its Fay vineyard label, a 100% cabernet from the region's oldest vineyard that like many of the wines in this set, are nearly impossible to find elsewhere, with some made in tiny quantities - several never see commercial allocation at all. Only 200 of these very special sets are [available for purchase](#), and only through December 15 (\$2,199 which includes shipping for 20 and detailed winemaker tasting notes).

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