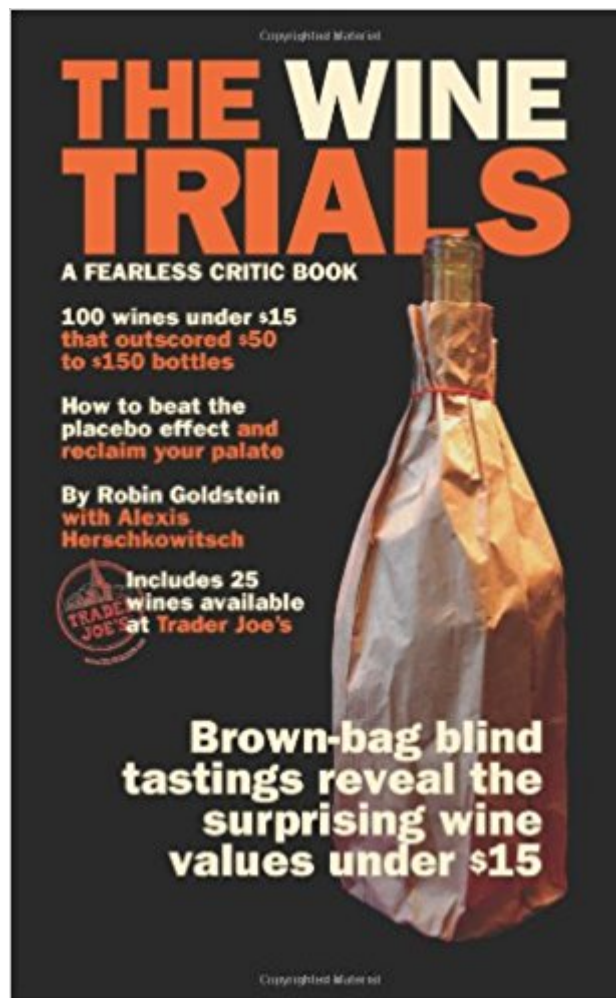




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The Wine Trials: 100 Everyday Wines Under \$15 That Beat \$50 To \$150 Wines In Brown-Bag Blind Tastings



Synopsis

6,000 glasses of evidence that will change the way you buy wine: Hide the label...and the truth comes out. Acclaimed Fearless Critic Robin Goldstein has gone around the country serving 6,000 glasses of wine from brown paper bags to experts and everyday wine drinkers around America. Here, in print for the first time, are the shocking results, including full-page reviews of the 100 wines that beat \$50 to \$150 bottles in the blind tastings.

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Customer Reviews

Might rattle a few wine snobs, but the average oenophile can rejoice. --Newsweek Magazine

ROBIN GOLDSTEIN is the founder and editor-in-chief of the Fearless Critic series. He has authored four books of restaurant reviews and has written for more than 30 Fodor's travel guides around the world, from Italy to Thailand, Argentina to Hong Kong. Robin is a graduate of Harvard University and Yale Law School, and has a certificate in cooking from the French Culinary Institute and a WSET advanced wine and spirits certificate.

The strongest aspect of this book is its wry, irreverent destruction of the myths propagated by the self-appointed oenologists of the world. I was personally gratified to discover on their list as under five dollars a favorite in our household, Crane Lake Sauvignon Blanc, for which I was once charged eighteen dollars in a restaurant - an extravagant markup typical in the States and made issue of in

the text. Like many in this world, I am sure, I am also grateful to be able now to ask for a bottle of Freixenet with absolute certainty as to its pronunciation, as well as with knowledge of the difference brut and extra dry. All in all The Wine Trials makes buying wine, especially when it is to be served to guests, both reassuring and more fun.

This is a great book to try out new wines under \$15. I found many of these wines at my local grocery store or World Market. I wish they would update this book to include some of the newer wines.

I like to have good table wines & respectable wines to serve at larger gatherings at reasonable prices - not just high dollar ones for special occasions. This book was perfect for me to find everyday wines that are easily available at my supermarket that taste like they cost far more than the \$6-10 I'm willing to pay for a bottle for Tuesday night's dinner (most lists of good, low-priced wines are just a mirage since you can never find them in the real world - so far I've found all of the wines I've wanted to try from the book). All of the wines are under \$15, again perfect for someone who wants to enjoy wine a couple times a week without breaking the bank. It has detailed descriptions of the taste of the wine, which is wonderful because it removes all of the trial and error with wines I'm not familiar with. I'm certain this has saved me enough money to pay for the book a couple times over, since I'm no longer pouring whole bottles of reject wine down the drain. One feature I loved is that the book has pictures of the bottle with the label, which makes it a lot easier to spot them in the store. I also love that it's in alphabetical order, which again is easier to use when shopping. Another cool feature is that on the corners it has a code to let you know if the wine is white/rose/red/sparkling, approximate cost and a "ribbon" to show if it was a finalist or winner in their blind taste tests. Great design - easy to use! ! Their critique of the label is rather annoying, but since it's such a big help in finding relatively good wines for a great price, I overlook that arrogance. The other thing I could've done without is the l-o-n-g description of the procedures (nearly 1/2 the length of the book) of their blind taste tests they used to choose the wines that made it into the book - that just makes the book heavier to carry around the grocery store. I wish they had an app of this book for my blackberry so I didn't have to carry the book around in the grocery store! I know a good bit about wine and have even worked in a wine store, but these days when I buy wine I love not having to guess whether it will be good or not! ! !

If you have been at a liquor store to pick up wine and have no idea what you are looking for, this is the book for you. Their scientific method of testing people's preferences is covered and shows some

surprising results with labels you probably already heard of. As a former liquor store employee, my recommendations on wine were either based on my personal experience, my observation on what people were buying, or the promotion I got from the wine distributor. This book will introduce you to perhaps a hundred or so affordable (under \$15) wines that many people like. I have purchased this book 5 times to give as a gift to people I have met that enjoy wines. Do not forget to take the book to the liquor store when shopping in order to insure that you are buying the item covered by the blind taste testing method.

In a series of well done experiments on wine tasting, the author Goldstein shows that the price of a wine has little, if any, effect on its rated quality when the taster does not know the price of the wine, or other facts that would influence the ratings of the wine. This sort of double blind testing, where neither the one serving the wine, nor the one tasting it, has any knowledge of how good the wine is "supposed" to be, is the gold standard of scientific evaluation. Of course, if one knows that a glass of wine comes from a bottle costing \$1000, it would be very difficult not to rate it more highly than a glass from a \$15 bottle. By "blinding" the raters, the author gives us a much more valid idea of the quality of different wines. Wine snobs will hate this book. I do have one problem with the author's interpretation of his data. He argues that knowing that a wine has a very high price actually makes it taste better. That's an interesting hypothesis, but his data do not address it. The data merely show that knowing that a wine has a high price results in higher ratings. There is a fairly easy experimental technique called signal detection analysis that the author and his team of experts could have used to answer this question. Signal detection analysis, which is taught to every undergraduate psychology major, allows one to separate changes in bias from changes in the actual sensory experience when some variable like price is being studied. Goldstein is basically arguing that knowledge of the price of a wine actually changes the sensory experience of the taster, as opposed to just making the taster rate the more expensive wine higher with no sensory change. This latter effect is called a change in bias. Both results are possible, as is a combination, where there is both a change in the sensory experience and a change in the rater's bias. It's really too bad that Goldstein didn't do a signal detection study of his wine tasters. This would have been very easy to do and would have resulted in a much fuller understanding of the effects of price on the sensory experience of wines. By the way, another reviewer states that the tastings in this book were not done fully blinded. This is simply wrong. The description in the book is of a well conducted double blind experiment. It was also fascinating to know that the major wine raters are "in bed" with the wine sellers. The major wine magazines that rate wines get huge amounts of advertising

revenue from the sellers of the very wines they rate in their pages. Gee - what could be wrong with that?

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