

# ONE BOTTLE: The 2003 Château de Fargues Sauternes

by JOSHUA BAER

In order for this to work, we will have to forgive each other. We are in trouble. We can blame each other until we are blue in the face, but we know the truth. We got ourselves into this mess and we are all responsible. If we want to get out, we will have to stop blaming and start forgiving.

Forgiving your enemies is hard work. It requires patience, restraint, and concentration. Fortunately, these qualities can be found in a bottle of good wine. Good wine is not a magic elixir. If you have no patience, drinking wine will not give it to you. But if you drink a wine that was made with patience, you will taste that patience in the wine. The taste of patience is powerful. It sets an example. This makes wine the ideal holiday gift.

Each of the following wines is the product of a partnership between men, women, and nature. That partnership is difficult. Nature is not the most forgiving partner on earth. People, on the other hand, are capable of forgiving each other. We are also capable of forgiving nature. When we use our ability to forgive nature, each other, and ourselves, our difficulties have a way of turning into opportunities.

**#1. The Piper-Heidsieck NV Champagne Cuvée Brut.** If you wear a flag pin, run a company, refer to your female employees as “the girls,” and still believe in supply-side economics, this would be a good Champagne to give to a godless liberal who believes that middle class incomes should rise, middle class taxes should fall, and working people should be able to pay their bills without using the equity in their homes as revolving lines of credit. \$44 at Susan’s Fine Wines and Spirits; \$48 at Whole Foods; \$38 at World Market.

**#2. The Lucien Albrecht Crémant d’Alsace Brut Rosé.** If you think Ronald Reagan was a closet demagogue, give this superb crémant to an unrepentant tycoon near you. \$23 at Liquor Barn; \$23 at Susan’s Fine Wines and Spirits; \$24 at Whole Foods.

**#3. The 1996 Pierre Moncuit Champagne “Brut.”** Moncuit’s 1996 rings every bell in the cathedral. This would be a fine gift for the Bush-Cheney diehard who insists that flatbed trucks loaded with Saddam Hussein’s nuclear-tipped Scuds are parked in a limestone cave west of Fallujah. With their engines running. \$64 at Susan’s Fine Wines and Spirits.

**#4. The 2007 Commanderie de la Bargemone Rosé.** 2007 was a banner year for French rosés. Commanderie’s rosés are not light wines. They are refreshing but their substance stays with you. Give a bottle to the last person who insulted your intelligence. \$16 at Casa Sena Wine Shop; \$15 at Susan’s Fine Wines and Spirits; \$15 at Whole Foods.

**#5. The 2007 Château St. Martin de la Garrigue Rosé.** This wine manages to be charming, delightful, and fresh without losing its sincerity. Give it to the pathological liar in your life, stand back, and watch the fireworks. \$12 at Susan’s Fine Wines and Spirits; \$13 at Whole Foods.

**#6. The 2007 Domaine de Fontaine “Gris de Gris” Rosé.** I liked the 2006 Fontaine “Gris de Gris” for its restraint. I like the 2007 for its aggression. If you have an enemy who thinks history will be kind to President Bush, give him or her a bottle of this wine. \$19 at Casa Sena Wine Shop; \$17 at Susan’s Fine Wines and Spirits; \$17 at Whole Foods.



**#7. The 2006 Clos Ste. Magdeleine Cassis.** Men love women. Women love this wine. If you have ever gotten into an argument about love with a lovely woman and refused to forgive her for being right, take her a bottle of this wine, knock on her door, and get down on your knees. \$36 at Susan’s Fine Wines and Spirits.

**#8. The 2004 Allegrini “Palazzo della Torre.”** Rich, deep, dark—steeped in animism, really—this is the ideal red wine for the post-feminist, middle-aged woman who still believes that all men are wolves. \$25 at Liquor Barn; \$24 at Susan’s Fine Wines and Spirits; \$26 at Whole Foods; \$20 at World Market.

**#9. The 2005 Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe Châteauneuf-du-Pape.** I have noticed that Republican men over the age of sixty—especially the ones who like to shoot animals—have a thing about California Cabernets. Common decency prohibits me from recommending a California Cabernet to anyone, including my worst enemies, but the 2005 Vieux Télégraphe Châteauneuf-du-Pape tastes better than the best California Cabernet ever made so I can recommend it without hesitation. Give it to the right-wing rifleman of your choice. \$63 at Liquor Barn; \$65 at Susan’s Fine Wines and Spirits.

**#10. The 2004 Zenato Amarone.** It may not be the 1997 Zenato Amarone (the best wine I tasted this year), but give it eleven years and you may decide that there were more angels dancing on the head of this pin than you originally thought. And that’s the thing about angels and heads of pins, isn’t it? It’s what you can’t count that counts. This is the wine to give to the old boyfriend with whom you are no longer on speaking terms. \$73 at Susan’s Fine Wines and Spirits.

**#11. The 2006 Domaine Tempier Bandol Rouge “Cuvée Classique.”** Do yourself a favor. Buy a case plus one. Seriously. I say this because, after you give the thirteenth bottle to some bohemian redneck who can’t stop talking about “how hot Sarah looked in black,” you will wish you had bought a case for yourself. So do it now. There are worse things in life than making your own wishes come true before you have them. \$49 at Whole Foods.

Which brings us to the 2003 Château de Fargues Sauternes.

**#12. The 2003 Château de Fargues Sauternes** is the best dessert wine I tasted during 2008. If you want to stun one of your enemies, wrap this little jewel in black tissue paper, tie a white ribbon around its neck, take it to the enemy in question, hand it to him or to her, and say, “See? I can see things in black and white, too.” If you are lucky—and yes, in cases like these, it is better to be lucky than good—he or she will open the bottle and drink it with you. \$81 at Casa Sena Wine Shop.

A word of caution: If you buy any of these wines and give them to your enemies, make sure to forgive the enemies in question before you make the gifts. *Forgive before you give*—that’s the holiday mantra. Otherwise, your enemies will taste your bitterness in the wine and assume that your generosity was nothing more than revenge disguised as a gift. ♡

*One Bottle* is dedicated to the appreciation of good wine and good times, one bottle at a time. The name *One Bottle*, and the contents of this column, are © 2008 by onebottle.com. Write to Joshua Baer at [jb@onebottle.com](mailto:jb@onebottle.com)

