

New York, NY

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## FOOD & WINE



## Tasting Room

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### Value Wine Friday: Two Under \$20

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I've been feeling vaguely French all day. Maybe it's those frogs they were going to be using for a Jean-Georges recipe in the test kitchen, little green guys hopping everywhere, test kitchen staff charging after them with cleavers...ok, sorry, just kidding. They did have a jar of Nutella open in there, though, which always reminds me of visiting Rennes some (yikes) twenty years ago, getting up early in the morning and eating croissants fresh from the bakery downstairs. They were absurdly good, smeared with Nutella or not.

The following two French bargains are good, too, though I'd suggest having them with an intense [beef stew like this one from Jacques Pépin](#) instead of a croissant (no matter where you are).

**2003 Château d'Or et de Gueules Select (\$13)** This blend of Syrah, Carignan, Grenache and Mourvèdre from the Costières de Nimes has an evocative roasted currant-cherry scent, plummy notes, a silky texture, and a real sense of place—the wine tastes deeply southern-French, if you're willing to accept that somewhat romantic description.

**2003 Zette Malbec (\$10)** As Alain Perrin, the voluble owner of [Château Lagrezette](#), said when I was tasting this, "This is a *real* Malbec, from France—where it was *born*!" I'll let him duke it out with the Argentines over who makes the best Malbec, but questions of national pride aside, this is a terrific red for the money: dense blackberry fruit, with toasty oak and dark chocolate notes in abundance.

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