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A California Red Worth Drinking All Week

Big House Red California 2008

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On my first trip to France, years ago, when I was young and poor, I had to count every franc. I fondly recall ordering carafes of red wine during bistro lunches; they were tasty and affordable. They weren't wines you dwelled upon; you just drank them. More Americans would be avid wine drinkers if they had access to similarly good everyday wines.

We've all been hearing that the quality of box wines is improving in the United States, and I've tasted a few decent examples in recent years. But few can rival Big House Red 2008 in the 3-liter bag-in-box. It reminds me of those French bistro wines—juicy but pleasantly structured, with fresh and supple flavors of cherry, raspberry and spice. The 2008 is a kitchen-sink blend of everything from Syrah and Malbec to Tannat and Sangiovese. I rated it 84 points, non-blind. It's \$24 for the box, or the equivalent of \$6 per bottle for four 750ml bottles. I consider that good value. Maybe I don't have to move to France after all.

WineSpectator.com members: Get scores and tasting notes for other recently rated California reds priced \$10 or less.



Associate Editor Tim Fish joined the Wine Spectator staff in 2001. His tasting beat includes California sparkling wine, Zinfandel and Merlot.

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