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Six wines get stamp of approval from club tasters

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'Tis the season for picking out a special wine for the connoisseur on your list.

The Mill City Oenophile Club, comprised of Sun reporters and editors, met recently at Ricardo's Trattoria in Lowell for a splendid evening of food and wine tasting. The panel, which included Richard "Ricardo" Rourke himself, blind-tasted six wines in three varietal categories.

The goal was to evaluate the wines individually and assign each a score (5-point system, with "5" being the best) in five categories -- appearance, aroma, body, taste and finish.

The beauty of the exercise proved there is a wine to fit every palate preference and price point.

In the end, club members gave all six wines a unanimous stamp of approval.

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Acumen Mountainside Cabernet Sauvignon 2013, Napa Valley, \$60 -- The panel's top-scoring wine, narrowly edging the aforementioned Mondavi, it received 14 perfect scores across the five categories, with the majority coming for taste and finish. In my view, Acumen is powerful and classically balanced in every way. Two judges ranked it their favorite wine. The comments were dead on: "Very classy, richly layered in blackberries, plummy, so smooth and velvety, refined, toasty vanilla finish." Also detected were figs and chocolate. Sadly, the original winemaker, Denis Malbec, died in a tragic auto accident earlier this year, but his beautiful craftsmanship lives on in this premium Cabernet Sauvignon that is well worth the asking price. However, for more value, try Acumen's Red Blend, discounted from \$55.99 to \$24.99 at several New Hampshire wine outlet locations.