

The 20-Point Provenance Scorecard

Score the bottle before discussing price. The score tells you how much of the price is evidence — and how much is story.

BOTTLE IDENTITY

0–5 pts

Label, capsule, cork and glass fully consistent with the producer's release (5). Minor unverifiable detail (3–4). Any element inconsistent or unverifiable (0–2).

STORAGE

0–5 pts

Professional bonded storage since release, warehouse(s) named (5). Professional for most of its life, gaps explained (3–4). Domestic or unknown storage for meaningful periods (0–2).

CUSTODY

0–5 pts

Every transfer since release documented; one or two owners (5). Chain reconstructable with small gaps (3–4). Story-based custody, undocumented owners (0–2).

CONDITION

0–3 pts

Fill level, capsule and label all appropriate for the wine's age (3). One cosmetic doubt (2). Condition issues that need an explanation (0–1).

RELEASE CHANNEL

0–2 pts

In-bond, warehouse-to-warehouse, physically verified stock (2). Duty-paid but professionally shipped and insured (1). Bottle leaves professional custody unverified (0).

Total

/ 20

17–20 · EVIDENCE

The bottle's history is a record. Price the wine, not the risk.

12–16 · DILIGENCE

Buyable, with questions asked and answers in writing. The gaps should be reflected in the price.

BELOW 12 · STORY

Whatever the label says, you are buying a narrative. Walk away, or price it as the gamble it is.

The Field Checklist

The questions whose answers should exist on paper — not in the seller's confidence.

BOTTLE IDENTITY

- Label, capsule, cork branding and glass agree on producer, cuvée, vintage, format
- Packaging matches the producer's known release for that vintage (label stock, lot codes)
- Large formats: the producer actually bottled this format in this vintage

STORAGE HISTORY

- Professional, temperature-controlled storage — named warehouses, dated from release
- No period of domestic storage, transit gap or climate the seller cannot account for

CHAIN OF CUSTODY

- Every transfer since release evidenced: invoices, warehouse records, auction lots
- Origin is ex-cellar, en primeur into bond, or a documented secondary purchase
- The seller's story stays identical when you ask twice

CONDITION

- Fill level appropriate for the wine's age
- Capsule original and intact — no seepage, spinning or re-seating
- Label condition consistent with the claimed storage history

RELEASE CHANNEL

- Transaction in-bond, warehouse-to-warehouse where possible
- Platform or intermediary physically verifies stock — not a listing board

Two honest limits: a perfect score cannot rule out cork taint, which no custody prevents; and no checklist replaces physical inspection by someone who knows the producer's packaging. The score measures evidence, not certainty.