

# Substance

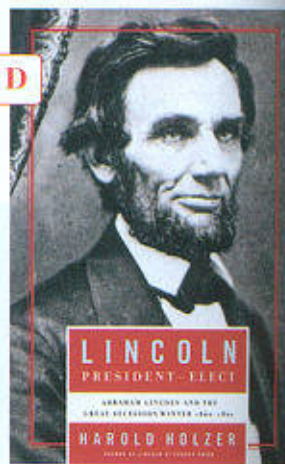
**A** One of the trickiest elements of making certain types of wine is the blend: how do you mix varietals to create a seamless, elegant whole? Let a friend try it, but with training wheels. The acclaimed **Blackbird Vineyards helps an oenophile craft a personal blend of its Illustration Napa Valley Proprietary Red Wine** (\$20,000) from its exquisite red grapes, but the wizardry is supervised by wine-grower Aaron Pott. The result is a half-barrel's worth (about twelve cases), presented in hand-etched bottles, and dinner for six at the Napa Valley private events space Ma(i)sonry. [blackbirdvineyards.com](http://blackbirdvineyards.com). T.L.

**B** You'll want to go, too, when you give a loved one the **Princely Domains cruise, which explores the Elbe River**, with stops that include Baroque Dresden and medieval Meissen (twelve days, from \$6,995 per person, departing May 1). Along the way, passengers

explore central Europe's castles, cathedrals and countryside with scholars from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. [arrangementsabroad.com](http://arrangementsabroad.com). J.H.D.

**C** Le Corbusier was one of the colossi of the 20th century. So what better way to commemorate the scale of his feats as an architect, designer, urbanist, theorist, painter and sculptor than with a massive visual biography, **Le Corbusier le Grand** (Phaidon Press; \$200)? This twenty-pound tome is crammed full of his observations, drawings, letters and personal photos, as well as images of his extraordinary creations. M.B.

**D** Newly elected presidents often begin their terms with major decisions to make. One of Abraham Lincoln's first was how to deal with secessionism. **Lincoln: President-Elect** (Simon & Schuster; \$30), by Harold Holzer, is a compelling account of the president's principled strategy for preserving the



union while abolishing slavery—and a timely gift for a history lover, with the bicentennial of Abe's birth little more than a month away. D.M.

**E** Is there a cinephile in your life? He or she will swoon upon opening **Essential Art House Volume 1** (Janus Films; \$100), a boxed set of six movie classics: Renoir's *Grand Illusion*, Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*, Bergman's *Wild Strawberries*, Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, Polanski's *Knife in the Water* and Brook's *Lord of the Flies*. In short, a treasure trove. S.M.

**F** Whether you're enjoying an audiobook or Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, **Sony's MDR-NC500D digital noise-canceling headphones** (\$400) can block out background buzz, dramatically improving sound quality (and your listening experience). Thick foam padding on the earpieces ensures ultimate comfort on long flights. [sony.com](http://sony.com). ERIN MCCARTHY

