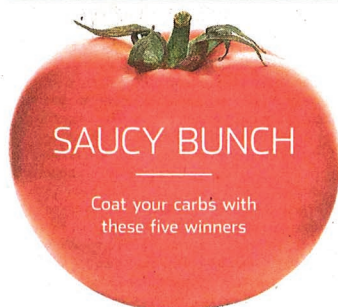


# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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CONSIDER THIS: JARRED TOMATO SAUCE



**LET'S FACE IT:** We don't all have boundless patience and time. And while we might occasionally enjoy spending an entire day making dinner, it's usually more appealing—and realistic—to pop open a jar of tomato sauce and heat up its contents. But the variety of jarred sauces can be dizzying. We picked 16 brands of basic tomato sauce, from the common commercial to specialty selections, and subjected them to the palates of red-sauce aficionados Michael Chernow and Daniel Holzman, chefs and proprietors of New York's casual Italian restaurant the Meatball Shop. In three rounds of blind tastings, the duo picked five jars that even a slow-cooking Italian mamma could love. —Kathleen Squires



**Hoboken Farms Big Red Marinara Sauce**  
New Jerseyans know their tomatoes—after all, it is the state vegetable. And this small-batch brand from Hoboken produced the tasting's top pick for its brightness and balance of acidity and sweetness. Mr. Chernow praised it as the “most classic” of the bunch, while Mr. Holzman liked that it is “lightly cooked with a really fresh tomato flavor.” This crowd pleaser is sold exclusively at Whole Foods. **\$8 for 25 ounces,** [hobokenfarms.com](http://hobokenfarms.com)



**Marky Ramone's Brooklyn's Own Marinara Pasta Sauce**  
Ramones drummer Marky Ramone serves up a mean marinara with a powerful peppery seasoning. The recipe was passed down by his grandfather, once a chef at Manhattan's '21' Club. “There's a lot of olive oil in this one, but that is not a bad thing,” Mr. Holzman pointed out. Mr. Chernow appreciated its “great texture thanks to plum tomato seeds that give it a little crunch.” **\$7 for 24 ounces,** [markyramone.com](http://markyramone.com)



**Mom's All Natural Spaghetti Sauce**  
Whole garlic cloves and basil leaves mark this distinctive batch, with a chunky style inspired by a short-simmered, garden-fresh recipe from the founder of the brand's mother (she's featured in the portrait on the label). Mr. Chernow admired the hearty texture while Mr. Holzman appreciated how the basil countered the sauce's acidity. Sweet California tomatoes and lemon juice lend the flavor a signature tang. **\$8.50 for 24 ounces,** [jelly.com/moms.php](http://jelly.com/moms.php)



**Rao's Marinara**  
Scoring a jar of this red sauce is much easier than snagging a reservation at the namesake restaurant in Manhattan's East Harlem. The recipe dates back 115 years to the restaurant's origin, with a smoothness captured from a generous blending of extra virgin olive oil. Mr. Chernow found this selection similar to Marky Ramone's, with slow-simmered San Marzano tomatoes liberally laced with olive oil and oregano. Mr. Holzman recommends clams as a pairing. **\$10 for 24 ounces,** [raos.com](http://raos.com)



**Classico Marinara With Plum Tomatoes**  
And to prove that taste doesn't have to get lost in a big-batch sauce, the flavor of long-stewed plum tomatoes stands out in this popular supermarket brand. Both Mr. Holzman and Mr. Chernow enjoyed its roasted tomato flavor and dense texture, while Mr. Holzman pointed out its “herbaceousness,” thanks to a sprinkling of oregano and basil that tastes fresh, not dried. The low price point makes this the best value of the bunch. **\$4 for 24 ounces,** [netgrocer.com](http://netgrocer.com)