



OVER 970 WINES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

WINE ENTHUSIAST

MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2011

SENSATIONAL SICILIAN CUISINE

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TUSCANY

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BEST PLACES TO DRINK AND EAT

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Oakville

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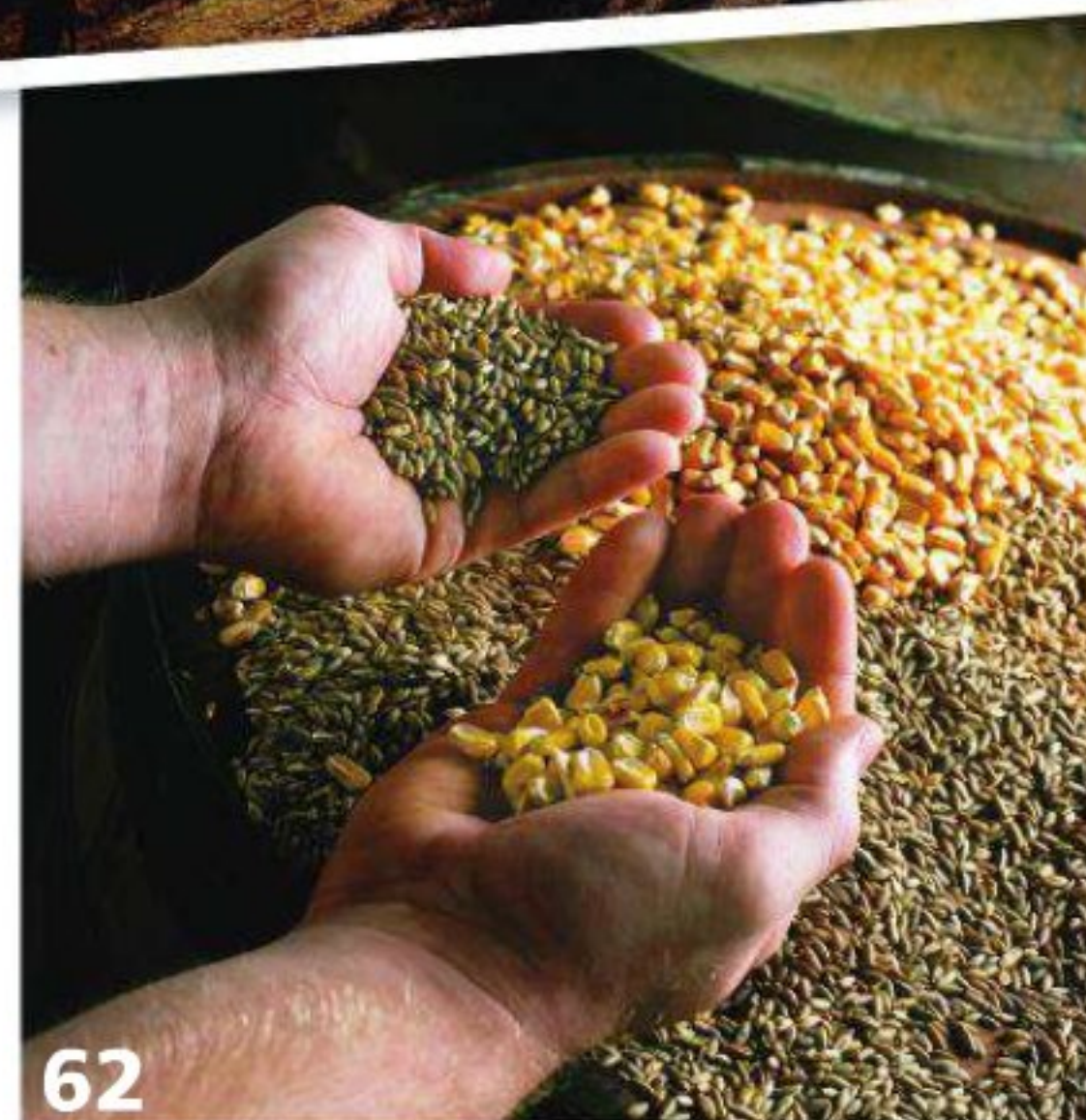
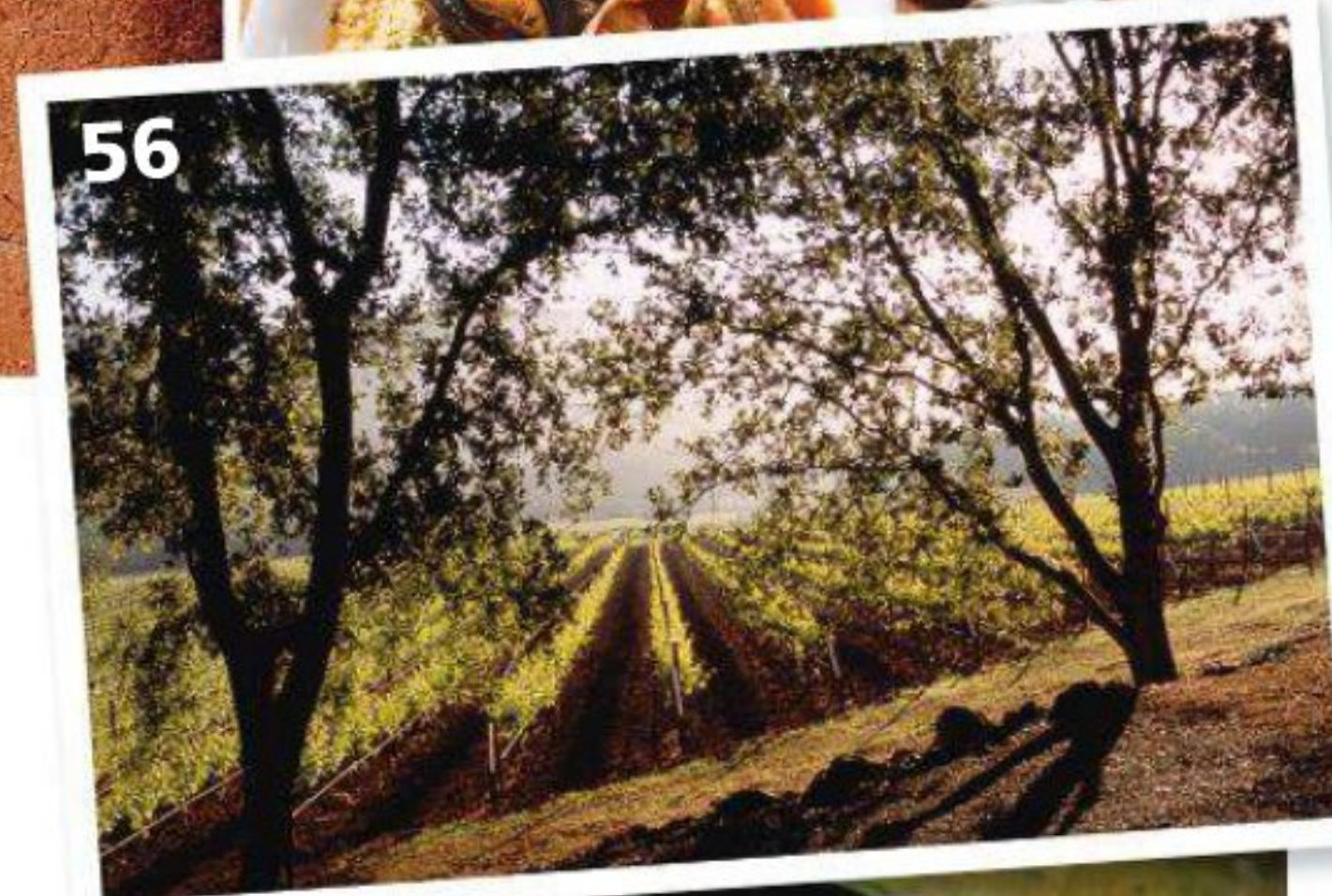
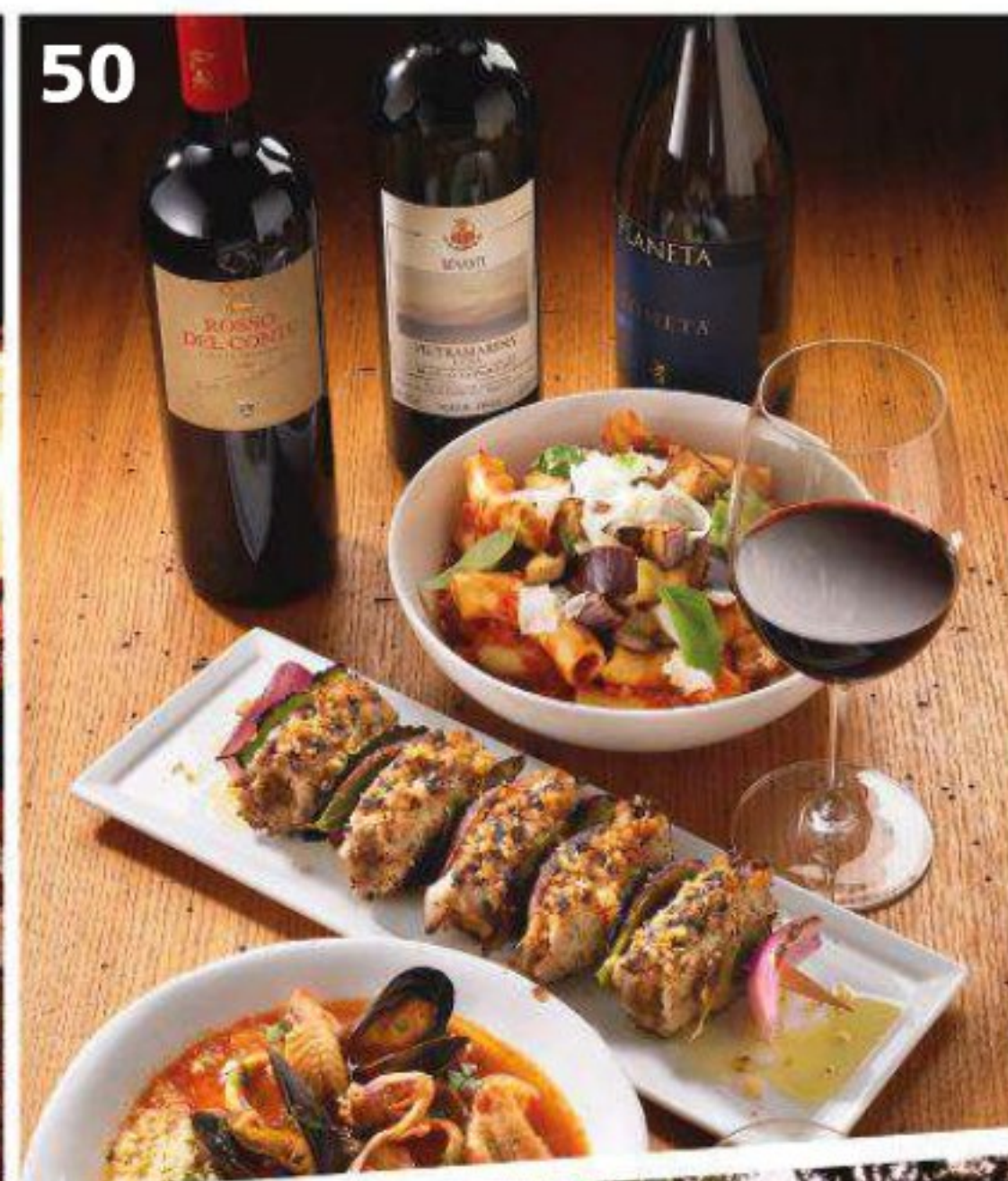
Discover THE TASTE OF Tuscany




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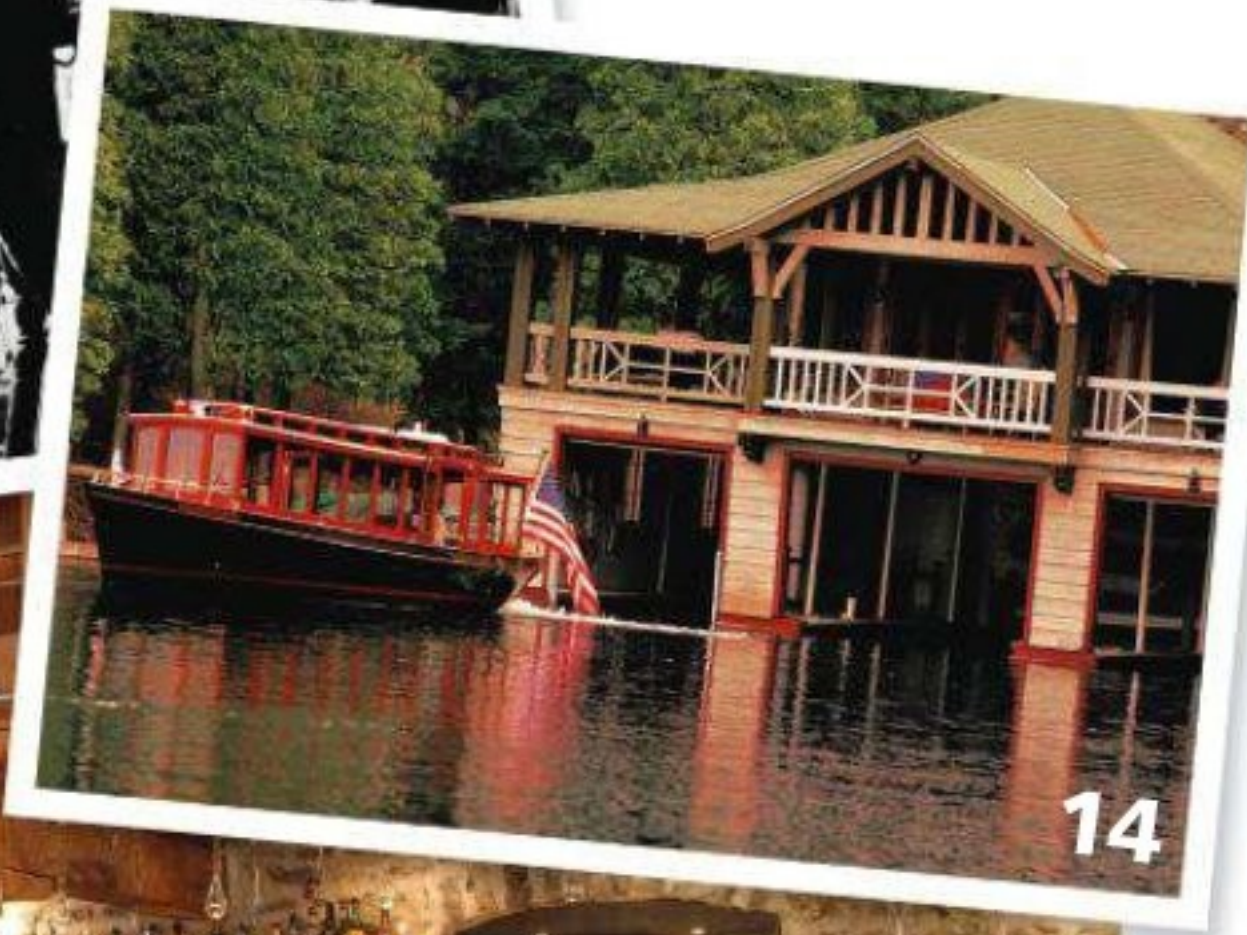
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We are conditioned by our birthplace, whether we're now just two blocks away or 2,000 miles. The same is true of wine.
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OUR WINERY IS KNOWN FOR SETTING THE BENCHMARK.
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September 2011 Wine Enthusiast

Robert Mondavi taught me that great wine can only come from great vineyards. Our To Kalon Vineyard is located in the heart of Oakville, the cradle of great Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon for more than 130 years. The majority of the fruit for our 2008 Robert Mondavi Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon is sourced from this vineyard. Robert Mondavi chose the To Kalon Vineyard in 1966 with the goal of creating wines that could stand in the company of the world's finest. I am proud to carry on that tradition.

—Genevieve Janssens, Winemaker

Janssens



ROBERT MONDAVI
WINERY

Oakville

2008

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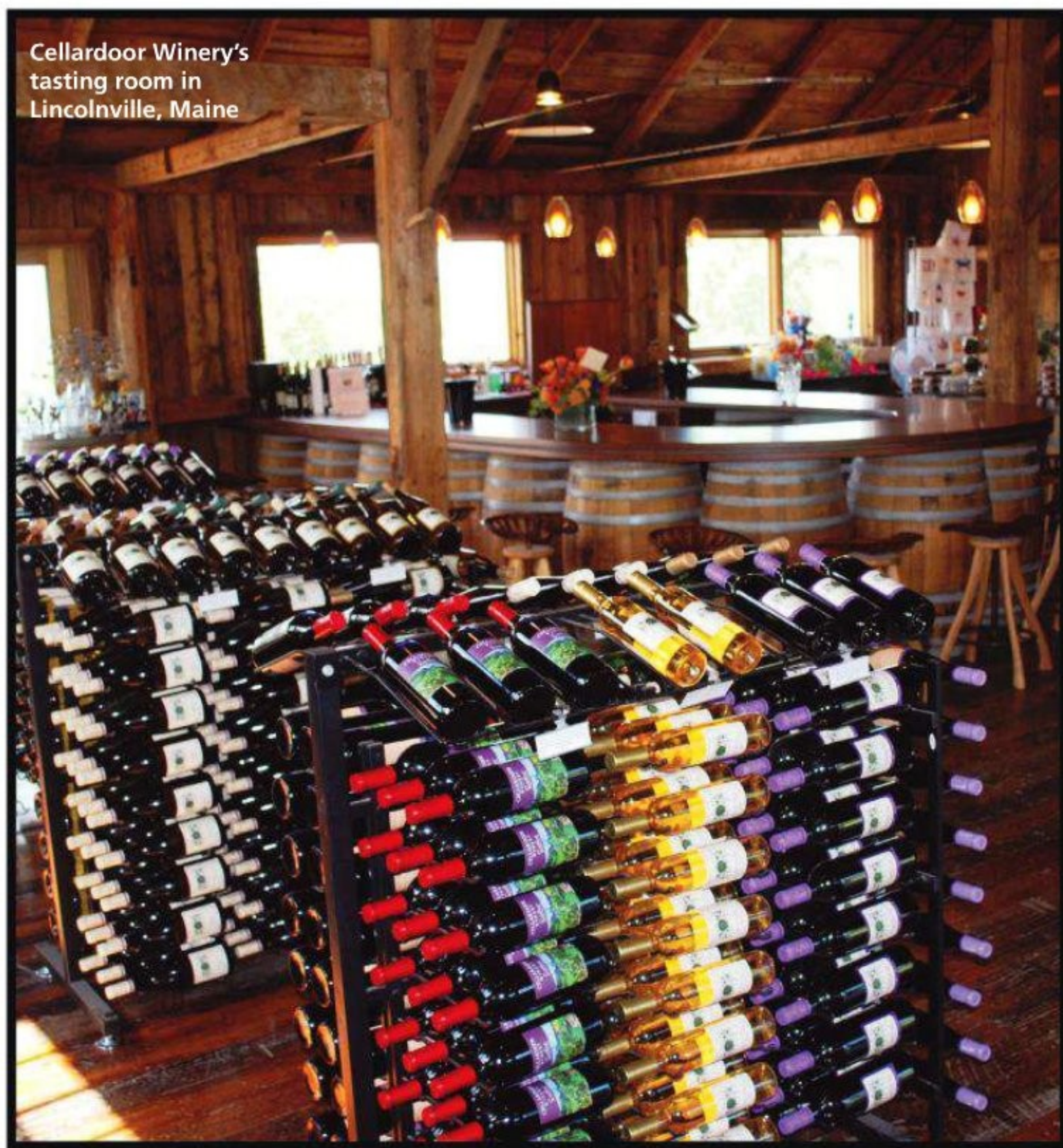
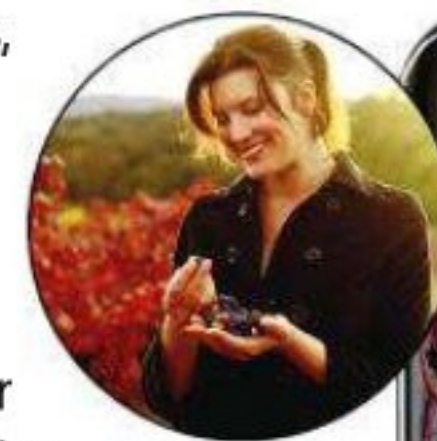
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Maine's Wine Trail

Innovative winemakers in Maine are playing up the rustic charm to attract visitors. At Blacksmiths Winery, sample a smoky Cabernet Sauvignon in the refurbished barn, while at Bar Harbor Cellars, taste ice wine in a restored Civil War-era barn. For full trail details, visit winemag.com/mainetrail

Unique Greek Wines

The Greeks have millennia of winemaking history under their belts, but never has there been a better time to experience the diversity of their wines. *Wine Enthusiast Magazine's* Executive Editor **Susan Kostrzewa** selects five Greek whites reflective of the past-meets-present combination that makes these wines so appealing. Visit winemag.com/greek



Cellardoor Winery's tasting room in Lincolnville, Maine

WINE & CHEESE PAIRING

Simple Strategies



Pairing wine and cheese presents endless possibilities, but Tim Lake, owner of Screwtop Wine Bar and Cheese Shop in Arlington, Virginia, gives you five strategies to make the tough decisions easy. This expert in the art of pairing cheese and wine gives you the low down on the best artisan cheeses to accompany an array of wines. Visit winemag.com/wcpairings

DINING TRENDS

Improv Cooking

Wondering about the hot trends in the dining world? Chefs are spontaneously creating menus by sourcing ingredients daily and letting inspiration strike. But the challenge of impromptu cooking is selecting wine for these dishes—a task Jeff Bareilles, beverage director of Manresa in Los Gatos, California, has perfected; in one great pairing, he matches Chef David Kinch's sea urchin entrée with a citrusy COS 2009 Rami from Sicily. Visit winemag.com/improvcooking



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POINTS

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR Adam M. Strum
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER Jay Spaleta

EDITORIAL

EXECUTIVE EDITOR Susan Kostrzewa
MANAGING EDITOR Tim Moriarty
SENIOR EDITOR Joe Czerwinski
SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITOR Alexis Korman
CALIFORNIA EDITOR Steve Heimoff
EUROPEAN EDITOR Roger Voss
ITALIAN EDITOR Monica Larner
WEB EDITOR Marina Vataj

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Michael Schachner, Paul Gregutt, Virginie Boone
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS, LIFESTYLE & ENTERTAINING Mike DeSimone, Jeff Jensen

CREATIVE

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Marco Turelli
ART DIRECTOR Dana Buonincontri
DIRECTOR OF PRINT PRODUCTION Laura Reedy

TASTING

TASTING DIRECTOR Joe Czerwinski
ASSISTANT TASTING DIRECTOR Lauren Buzzeo
TASTING COORDINATOR Anna Lee Iijima
SPIRITS TASTER Kara Newman
CONTRIBUTING TASTER Virginie Boone

EDITORIAL OFFICES

333 North Bedford Road, Mt. Kisco, NY 10549
TEL: 914.345.9463 FAX: 914.218.9186 EMAIL: editor@wineenthusiast.net

CALIFORNIA: Steve Heimoff 199 Montecito Avenue, Oakland, CA
TEL: 510.893.7479 EMAIL: sheimoff@wineenthusiast.net
Virginie Boone 122 Calistoga Road, Santa Rosa, CA
TEL: 707.310.4289 EMAIL: vboone@wineenthusiast.net

EUROPE: Roger Voss Laclaverie, 32160 Beaumarches, France
TEL/FAX: Bordeaux +11 33 562 09 50 76 EMAIL: rvoss@wineenthusiast.net

ITALY: Monica Larner via della Madonna dei Monti 96, 00184 Rome, Italy
TEL: +39 06 6780627 TEL: +39 333 4634043 EMAIL: mlarner@wineenthusiast.net

SOUTH AMERICA & SPAIN: Michael Schachner 333 North Bedford Road, Mt. Kisco, NY
EMAIL: mschachner@wineenthusiast.net

PACIFIC NORTHWEST: Paul Gregutt, c/o Seattle Wine Storage 122 Terry Avenue North, Seattle, WA
EMAIL: pgregutt@wineenthusiast.net

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

NORTHEAST U.S. & EUROPE: Jay Spaleta 333 North Bedford Road, Mt. Kisco, NY
TEL: 914.345.9463 ext. 4611 FAX: 866.887.0943 EMAIL: jspaleta@wineenthusiast.net

SOUTHEAST U.S.: Denise Valenza 17846 Mission Oak Drive, Lithia, FL
TEL: 800.315.4397 FAX: 866.896.8786 EMAIL: dvalenza@wineenthusiast.net

WESTERN U.S.: Allison Langhoff 401 Ashbury Street, San Francisco, CA
TEL: 800.319.6920 FAX: 866.896.7961 EMAIL: alanghof@wineenthusiast.net

MANAGER OF COMMUNICATIONS Jacqueline Strum EMAIL: jstrum@wineenthusiast.net

ACCOUNT MANAGER Amanda Young EMAIL: ayoun@wineenthusiast.net

MEDIA COORDINATOR Greg Jones EMAIL: gjones@wineenthusiast.net

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING Denise Valenza EMAIL: dvalenza@wineenthusiast.net

MANAGER OF EVENTS & TRADE SHOWS Joyce White EMAIL: jwhite@wineenthusiast.net

ART DIRECTOR OF EVENTS Eileen Curran EMAIL: ecurran@wineenthusiast.net

CIRCULATION

PROCIRC: 3191 Coral Way, Suite 510, Miami, FL

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Jim Motrinec EMAIL: jim.motrinec@procirc.com

CIRCULATION ASSISTANT Susi Chapman EMAIL: susi.chapman@procirc.com

RETAILERS: To carry *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*, Call 800.381.1288 ext. 6048

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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(International: 386.447.2397) wineentsub@palmcoastd.com

BACK ISSUES AND ADDITIONAL COPIES Greg Jones EMAIL: gjones@wineenthusiast.net

REPRINTS Jill Kaletha EMAIL: jillk@fosterprinting.com

WINE ENTHUSIAST COMPANIES

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Sybil Strum

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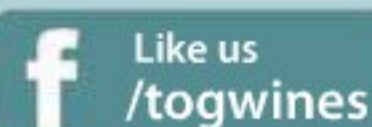
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stand-out (stand'out') adj.

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2. virtue of excellence
3. high-quality or superiority



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—  MEDB0414

Facebook Comment: "Honored to be recognized alongside some of the top restaurants in the U.S. Thanks *Wine Enthusiast*."

—  Charleston Grill

Facebook Comment: "Never thought of D.C. as the 'South,' but I can't wait to try Art & Soul."

—  Joe Locke

OCTOBER / 2011

SOUND OFF via Twitter

In connection with the *winemag.com* article, "Man Spends \$117,000 on Wine, Setting New World Record," *Wine Enthusiast* asked the twitterverse, "What's the most you would spend on a bottle?" Our followers tweeted:

"@WineEnthusiast \$1,600-\$4,000 Petrus."

—  1educatedpalate

"He's opening it in 6 yrs. How do we get on that list?"

—  LAWineGal

"\$117,000.01! Am I too late?"

—  GrapeConviction

CONTRIBUTOR / SPOTLIGHT



MONICA LARNER (PICTURED NEAR LEFT: "THE HILL TOWNS OF TUSCANY," PG. 42) "My friend joined me on my tour of Tuscan towns and our favorite destination was Volterra with its mysterious Etruscan roots. This town delivered a series of unexpected surprises. One night, we headed to a local bar for drinks. A car with darkened windows pulled up and a motley crew of pierced and tattooed individuals emerged. It turns out they were janitors getting off the late shift at a high-security prison. An uneasy conversation pattered forward, but as soon as I revealed my wine background, it quickly blossomed into one of the most intense wine debates I have ever had. Our new friends rattled off tasting notes for their favorite vintages of Sassicaia and Ornellaia and challenged me on obscure Italian producers. True wine lovers, it turns out, can't be judged by appearances."

500 Wines
30 Top Restaurants
1 Amazing Night

 **WINE ENTHUSIAST**
TOAST OF THE TOWN

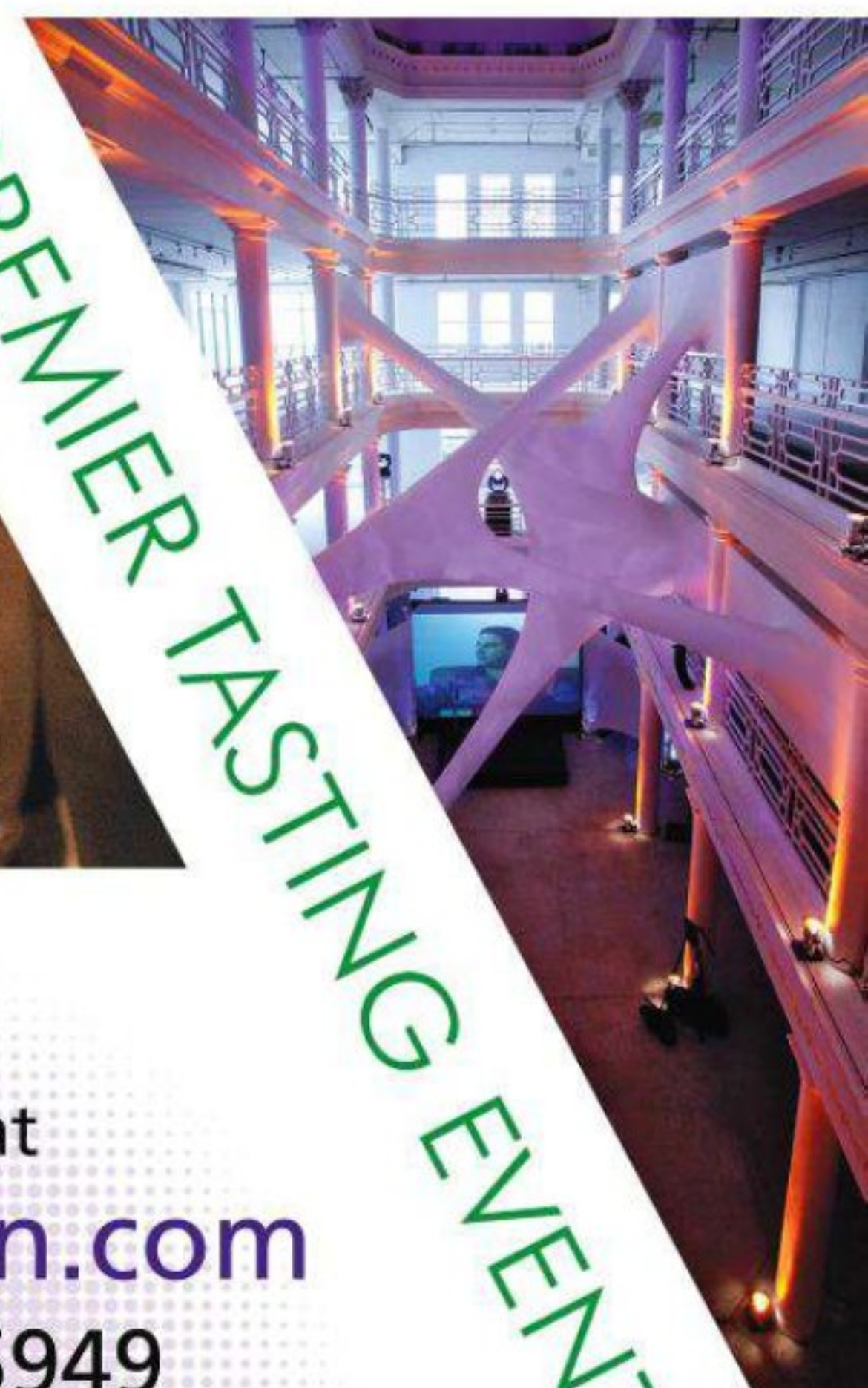


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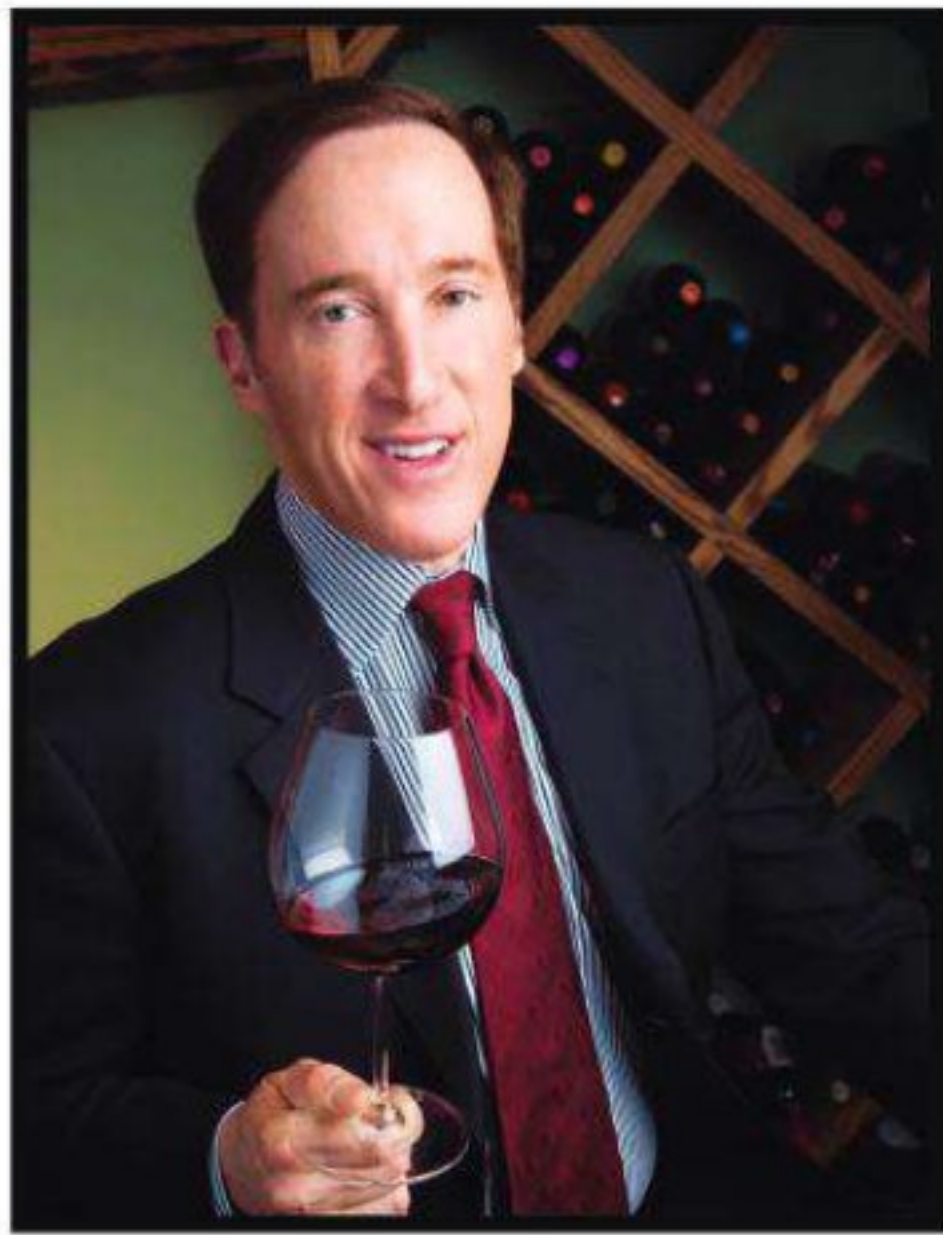
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The medieval hilltop towns and hamlets in this iconic region are unlike any other place on earth, fulfilling the locavore dream of truly great wine and food enjoyed at their source.

It may not qualify as adventure travel, but visiting the hill towns of Tuscany may be an eye-opener for Americans accustomed to the comforting closeness of amenities and signposts of modernity.

In this issue, our Rome-based editor, Monica Larner, presents profiles of her favorite hill towns: San Gimignano, the home of Vernaccia di San Gimignano, a great white wine; Panzano, one of several towns surrounded by the vineyards that produce Chianti Classico; Montalcino, where Brunello di Montalcino is sourced; and many others. If you want to enjoy some of the finest food and wine in the world and do so right at the source—the *raison d'être* for locavores—this is hallowed ground.

But you won't find much in the way of Starbucks or Pinkberry. Sure, Montalcino in particular has plenty of shops, restaurants, wine bars, boutique hotels and tasting rooms, and some of the other villages have town squares with tourist-friendly bustle. But go to lesser-known hilltop hamlets or stray far from the piazzas of the prominent towns, and you will be startled by the stillness and emptiness—tight medieval streets, virtual alleyways, that show no signs of life at all. You feel like the stranger in one of those old western movies who rides into town and the fearful townfolk run inside and shut the doors and windows. Of course, life is going

on inside those immaculately maintained buildings—it's Italy, after all. And should you happen upon a small, unmarked restaurant, you are likely to have one of the greatest meals of your life. Most any traveler to Tuscany has a story like that to tell; Larner's begins on page 42.

Also in this issue, Steve Heimoff investigates Napa Valley's Oakville, where many of this country's most iconic, rare, expensive and frankly great Cabernet Sauvignons are made. Why is there such consistency of excellence when there are always differences in approach to vineyard management, oak treatment and all the other methods employed by winemakers? The answer on page 60 is, excuse the expression, beneath you.

On page 50, Roger Voss extols the virtues of cru Beaujolais, a category of wines with far more body, complexity and ageability than is generally recognized by even savvy wine devotees. On page 66, our spirits taster, Kara Newman, presents a tour of Kentucky's Bourbon Trail.

There's much more to be found in these pages. In the spirit of Tuscany, I invite you to explore.

ADAM STRUM,
EDITOR & PUBLISHER

AROUND the CORNER

Here's what's coming up in the November issue of *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*:

TOP 100 BEST BUYS OF 2011

Wines that earn a high score for quality relative to retail price earn a "Best Buy" designation from our editors. We reveal the 100 wines—reds, whites, rosés, sparklers and stickies, many priced at \$15 and under—that offer the most value in fine wine today.

BEST BOTTLEINGS FROM CO-OP WINERIES

Many powerful and quality-minded wine companies are based on the co-op model as small producers come together to produce blends and estate bottleings. We review the top wines from co-ops throughout Europe and beyond, all of which represent great value.

AN INTIMATE CONVERSATION WITH CHRISTINA HENDRICKS

The star of AMC's *Mad Men* riffs on her spirit of choice, Scotch; discusses her favorite spirits and food pairings and reveals a guilty pleasure or two.





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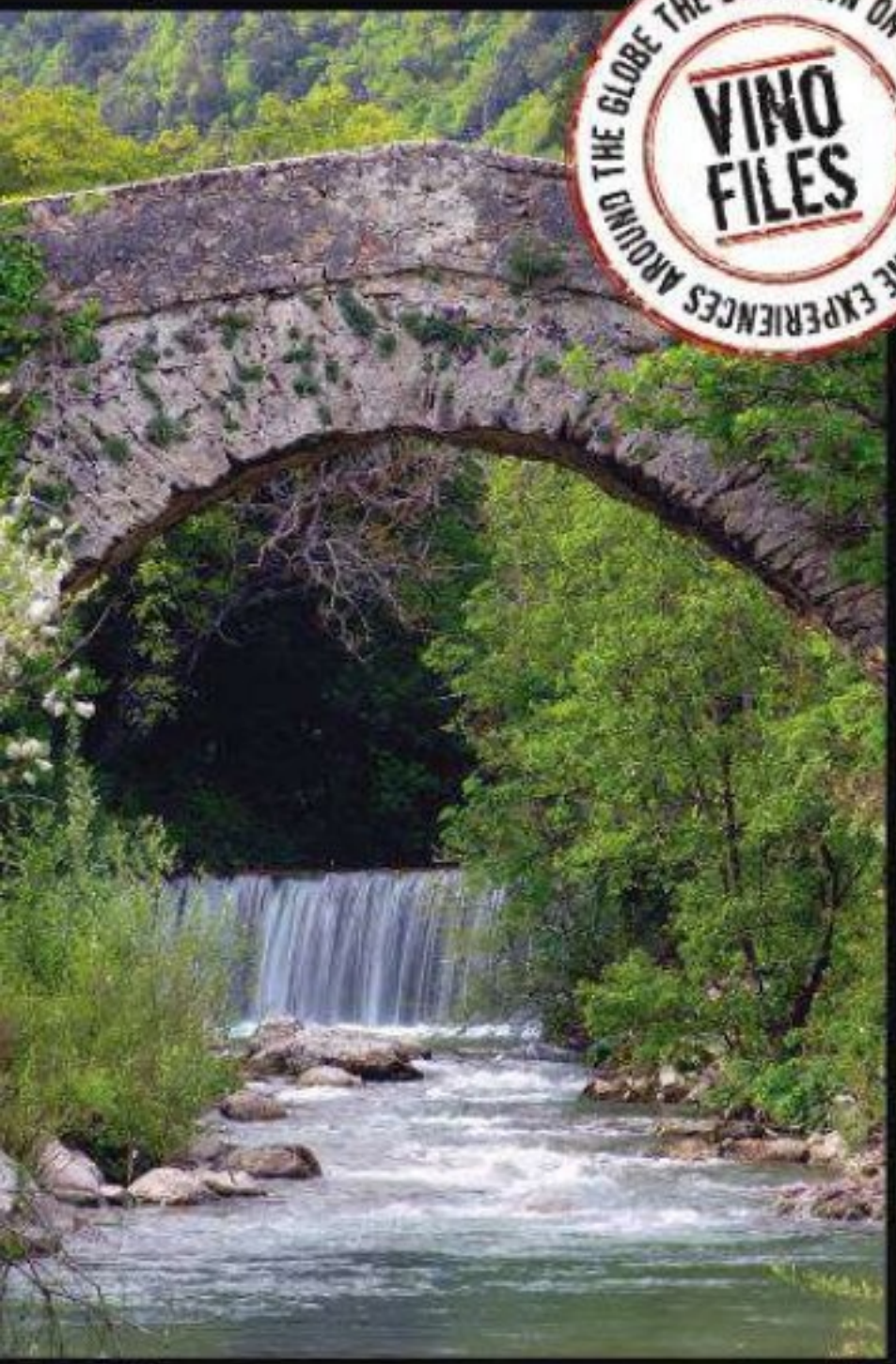
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Where To Go This Month: Irpinia, Italy

In October, the beach crowd of the Amalfi Coast may have thinned, but Italy's spa season has just begun. Pliny the Elder (who died during the eruption of nearby Mount Vesuvius in A.D.

79) once said, "In

wine, there is health." It's only fitting, then, that travelers can combine the healthful pursuits of wine and water in Irpinia, a natural wonderland packed with forests, lakes and waterfalls in Italy's Campania region. The same volcanic fault line that decimated Pompeii is responsible for a string of thermal pools and spas, and October is a great time to enjoy them in warm weather without the summer crowds.

The region's volcanic soil, ideal for grape growing, also produces black truffles, which are just coming into season this month: Taste them in local dishes like the homemade pasta with black truffles from neighboring Monti Picentini at Feudi di San Gregorio's Michelin-starred restaurant Marennà (feudi.it/marennà). Pair it with Feudi's mineral-rich Pietracalda, or "Hot Stone" Fiano, for a full-circle wine and food experience.

The grape harvest is over, but the heady bouquet of fermenting Greco di Tufo and Aglianico perfumes the cool evening air. Go to the source by touring local wineries, including Feudi and Cantine di Marzo (cantinedimarzo.it), with its bedrock cellars, or grab a glass at Winebar, dramatically located in a volcanic crater.

—MIKE DESIMONE AND JEFF JENSSEN

SNAPSHOT

PHOTO COURTESY OF BELATHEE.COM



Glam in a Glass, New York

Abigail Gullo, brand ambassador for E**X**R, posed behind the bar at the swanky Manhattan Cocktail Classic Gala, held at the New York Public Library on May 13, 2011. Nearly 40,000 cocktails were poured at the trend-focused event for 3,000 cocktail aficionados. manhattancocktailclassic.com. —ALEXIS KORMAN

LUXE life

The Point. In a region better known for black bears than bottles of Bordeaux, The Point in New York's Adirondack Park is a surprising draw for inquisitive imbibers. Once a Rockefeller family estate, the exclusive resort on the pine-fringed banks of Upper Saranac Lake recently spruced up its 11 expansive guest suites with fireplaces and amenities like Kiehl's toiletries. It also buffed up its

kitchen, where Executive Chef Mark Levy hosts impromptu cooking classes when he's not turning out thoughtful, French-inflected fare. The all-inclusive nightly rate covers all meals and beverages—in addition to a laundry list of other perks—encouraging exploration of The Point's adventurous cellar, overseen by Assistant General Manager Cameron Karger. During black-tie Saturday dinners, Karger, who cut his teeth at cult Napa wineries Futo and Aubert, might pour Kiralyudvar's refreshing Tokaji Furmint Sec, a richly aged López de Heredia Rioja, or Pahlmeyer Proprietary Red. Glasses of Port, Armagnac and Champagne seem to materialize magically. Says Karger with a smile, "We believe you should never have to walk far for a bottle of Champagne." Stays from \$1,345. thepointresort.com. —CHRIS SCHMICKER



To read about more luxurious experiences, visit winemag.com/luxelife

motown goes for the grape

Finding fine wine in Detroit is easier than you think.

The Motor City once had a bad reputation for high crime rates and a declining population, but today, Detroit has a hidden wine scene that is drawing visitors in for a closer look. Here are a few of our top picks:

Tallulah Wine Bar & Bistro (tallulahwine.com)

Owner Mindy VanHelle-mont stocks her Birmingham bar with everything from lesser-known wines from Michigan to St.-Émil-ion, all perfect for sipping with funghi of the day or fresh pasta dishes. For their Sunday Somm SLAM series, diners judge Tallulah's Director of Liquid Operations, Antoine Przekop, against a guest sommelier in a multi-course wine pairing challenge.

Motor City Wine (motorcitywine.com) is part wine bar, part bargain wine shop (all bottles cost \$20 or less). Located in downtown Detroit, the casual, red-walled space features wine tastings, Wednesday night jam sessions, live jazz and affordable, by-the-glass pours.

Southfield's **Bacco Ristorante** (baccoristorante.com) specializes in wines from Italy. Chef-Owner Luciano Del Signore imports not only the Italian wines offered from his parents' home country (the list includes 700 selections by the bottle and 30 by the glass), but cheeses, too. Lunch and dinner dishes incorporate fresh ingredients from Michigan farms, although the sardines are flown in from Italy.

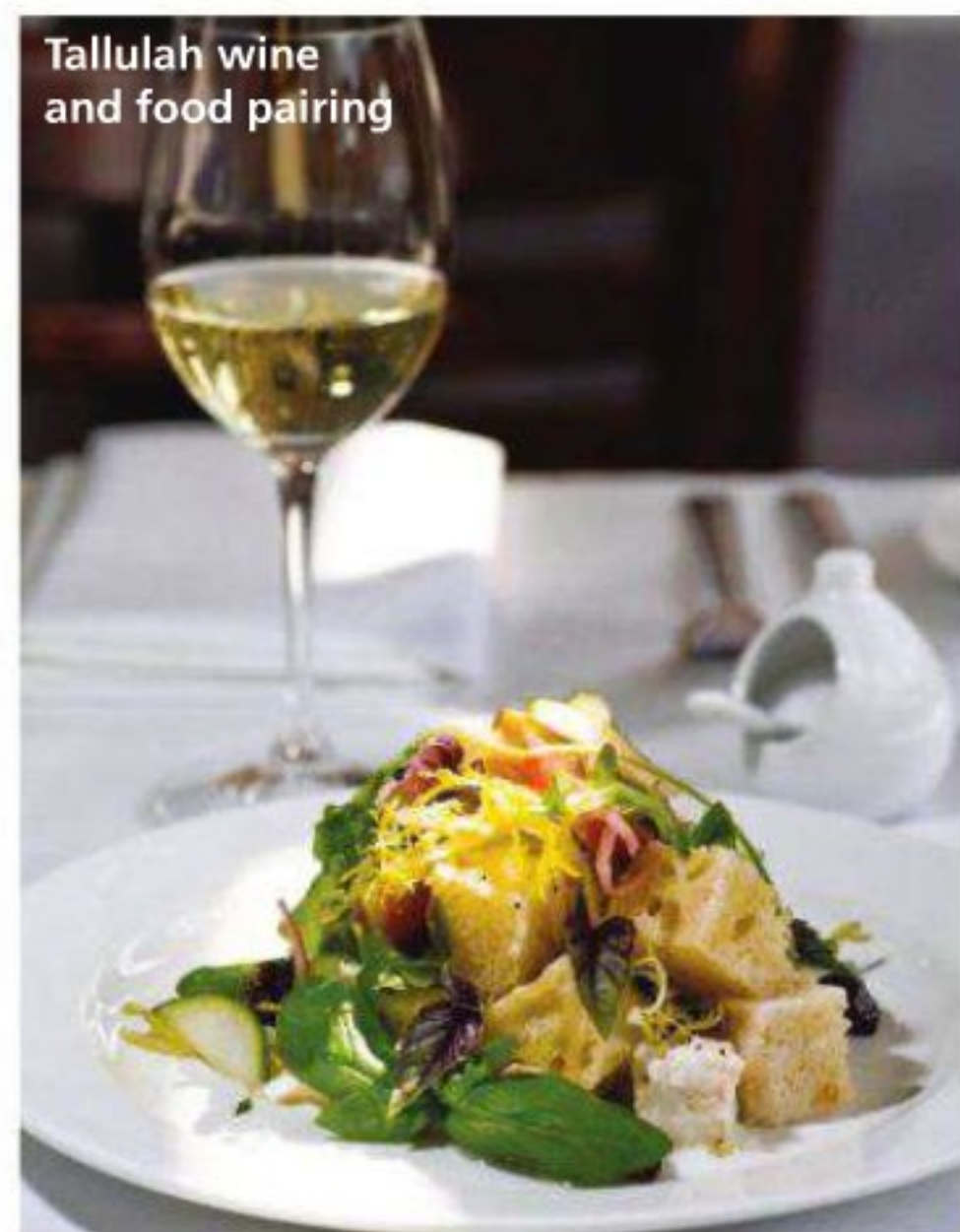
—KRISTINE HANSEN



Bacco Ristorante



Motor City Wine



Tallulah wine and food pairing

For more on dining in Detroit, visit winemag.com/dinedetroit

TOPshelf

Here's a look at this month's top-scoring **Cellar Selection**, **Editors' Choice** and **Best Buy**. For full tasting notes on these and hundreds of other wines, turn to our Buying Guide, which begins on page 71.

EDITORS' CHOICE

96 Shafer 2009 Red Shoulder Ranch Chardonnay (Carneros); \$48. Shafer

consistently produces one of the biggest, fruitiest Chardonnays in California, and yet the wine remains balanced and interesting. The 2009 Red Shoulder Ranch is gigantic in pineapples, pears, mangoes, tangerines and honey, and yet so minerally and crisp that somehow it finishes dry. —S.H.



CELLAR SELECTION

97 Franz Hirtzberger 2010 Singerriedel Riesling Smaragd (Wachau);

\$144. A supreme wine, the embodiment of Wachau Riesling. The steely character with its parallel acidity is beautifully integrated into grapefruit and perfumed white fruits. A taut, nervy texture adds tension to a wine that will age 10 years or more. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.



BEST BUY

90 90 Oak Knoll 2008 Semi-Sweet Riesling (Oregon); \$10. This

full-bodied Riesling checks in at 12% alcohol and roughly 2% residual sugar. All in balance, the sweetness and acidity wrap around deliciously luscious fruit flavors of peach and nectarine, melon and sweet apple. —P.G.



TOP 10 *under \$10*

These wines represent some of the best inexpensive offerings we've tasted for this issue, selected for price and quality, and balanced to give a selection of wine styles. Remember, you can always visit our Ratings on winemag.com to search more than 5,000 wines we've named Best Buys.

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Oak Knoll 2010 Semi-Sweet Riesling (Oregon); \$10. —P.G.
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Marqués de Cáceres 2010 Rosé (Rioja); \$9. Imported by Vineyard Brands. —M.S.
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Novy 2009 Red Wine (North Coast); \$9. —V.B.
- 87

Borsao 2010 Rosé (Campo de Borja); \$8. Imported by Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.
- 87

Château de l'Estagnol 2009 White (Côtes du Rhône); \$10. Imported by Frank-Lin International. —J.C.
- 87

Fox Run NV Drink New York Riesling (Finger Lakes); \$10. —A.I.
- 87

Portillo 2009 Estate Bottled Cabernet Sauvignon (Uco Valley); \$10. Imported by Palm Bay International. —M.S.
- 87

Veraz 2008 Garnacha (Campo de Borja); \$8. Imported by Aviva Vino. —M.S.
- 86

Bodegas Navarro López 2009 Para Celsus Tempranillo (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla); \$10. Imported by Quintessential Wines. —M.S.
- 86

Trapiche 2009 Oak Cask Syrah (Mendoza); \$10. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —M.S.

from the boardroom to the barrel room

Trump relaunches Virginia's Kluge Estate Winery and Vineyard.

Real estate magnate and TV personality Donald Trump has added wine-making to his résumé with his October 4 relaunch of the Kluge Estate Winery and Vineyard in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Kluge Estate was founded in 1999 by Patricia Kluge, a British socialite, out of a windfall divorce from her ex-husband, the communications mogul John W. Kluge. Through Kluge's hands-on approach, the winery's idyllic location and the use of notable consultants like Bordeaux's Michel Rolland, Kluge Estate established a following for its Bordeaux-style reds and sparkling wines—including the SP Blanc de Blancs and SP Rosé, which were served at Chelsea Clinton's wedding festivities in 2010.

The winery was roiled by years of financial trouble, and by 2010, banks had foreclosed on the estate and vineyards. Early in 2011, Trump, a longtime friend of Kluge, began to cobble together parcels of property. First, he purchased 200 acres surrounding the former Kluge mansion for less than \$500,000 from a Kluge family trust. Then, in April, Trump obtained the estate's 776 acres of vineyard along with the winery's inventory and equipment for \$7.9 million at auction, just a fraction of the \$60-million appraised value.

Donald Trump's son, Eric, who has been charged with operating the newly acquired estate, admits the initial attraction to Kluge Estate was the value of its real estate. "We got into the wine business almost by default," he says, "but recognizing how good the wines were, we realized how sexy it could be for the brand as a whole."

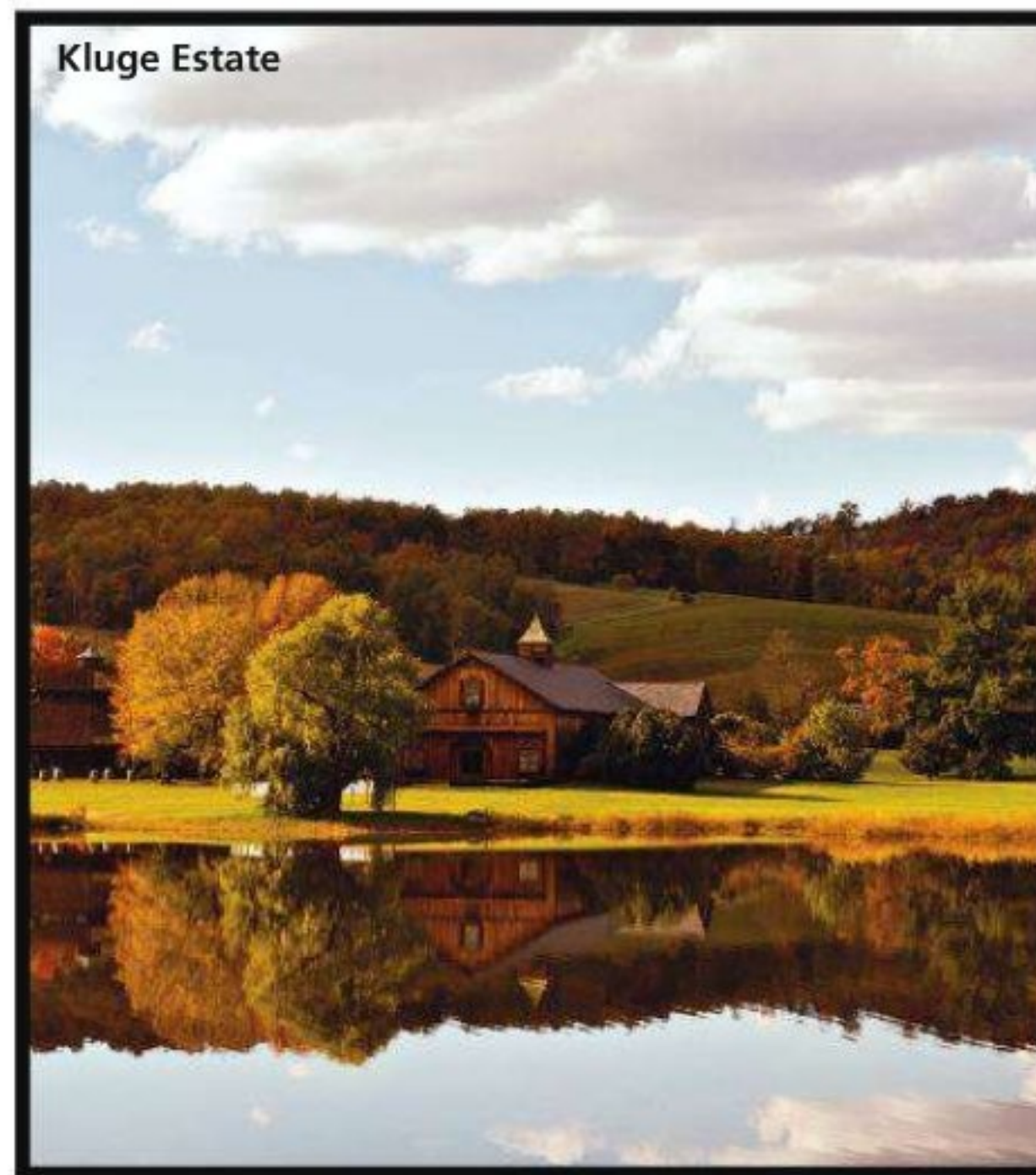
The winery's tasting room was remodeled for the relaunch and plans for a golf resort and event venues are in the works. Rolland will remain a consultant and Kluge and her family will continue as employees. Kluge Estate's most popular wines will be kept largely intact, but rebranding under the Trump name and an expansion of products and capacity are expected.

"We are believers in brands, and clearly we have an incredible one," Eric Trump said. "Our top product will certainly be some sort of Trump label."

"Whether it be real estate ventures, or anything else," he adds, "we only have five-star assets and are mindful about keeping everything absolutely first class."

—ANNA LEE C. IJIMA

Kluge Estate





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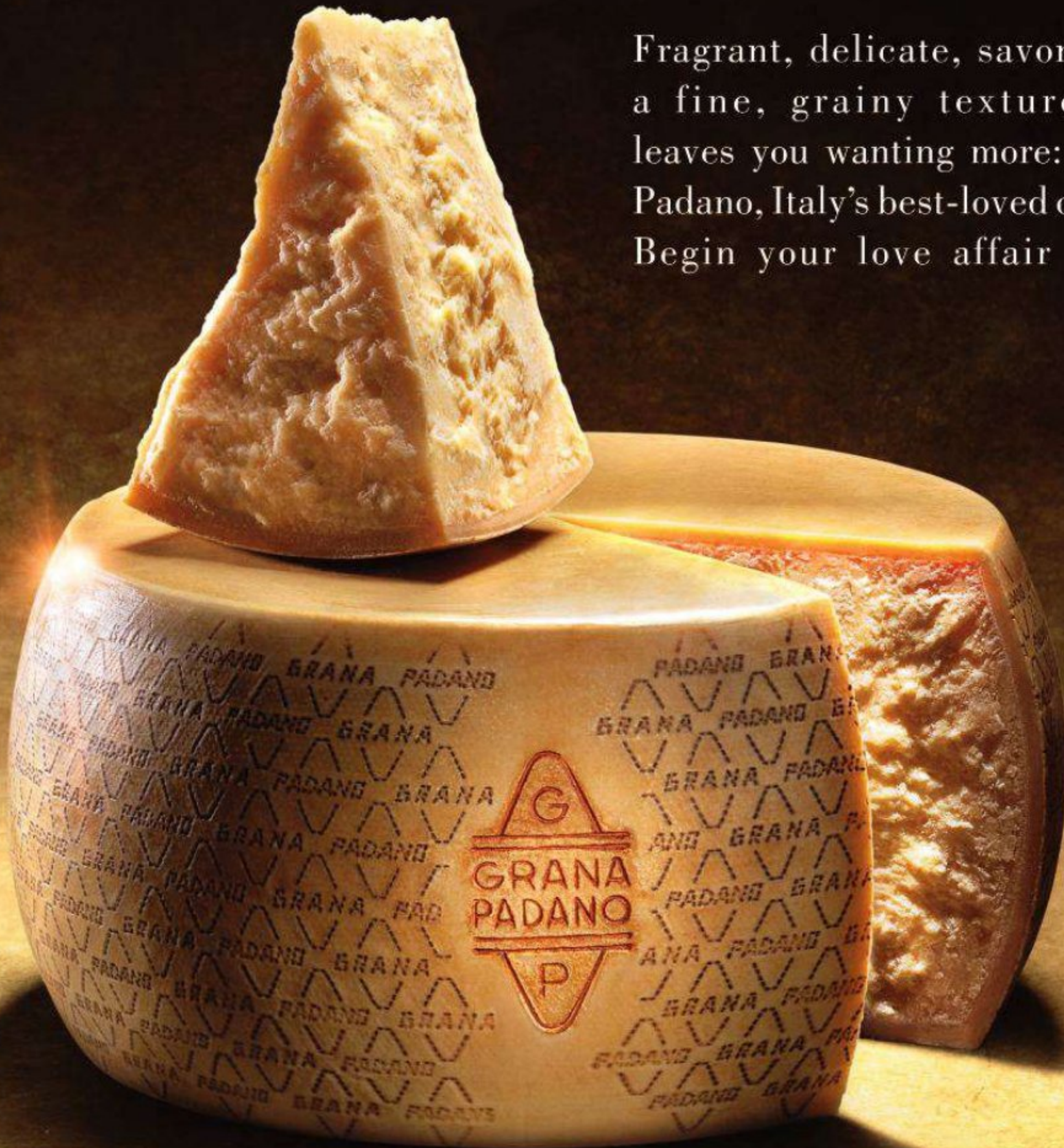


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port pointers

from *Adrian and Natasha Robertson Bridge*

Natasha Robertson Bridge, seventh generation of the Taylor Fladgate & Yeatman line, is the head blender for the Taylor Fladgate Partnership, and her husband, Adrian Bridge, is the group's

CEO. Wine Enthusiast caught up with the first couple of Port, who recently opened the Yeatman Hotel in Porto. Here are highlights from the interview:

For the full interview with Port's most prestigious couple, visit winemag.com/bridge

Vintage Port vs. LBV Port: "Vintage Port is the very best that we make. It comes from a single year, is bottled after two years and is rare—we make it only three or four times per decade. We came up with the idea of late bottled vintage in 1970. This is a Port from a single year, but by aging it in wood for five or six years, it is ready to drink immediately." —A.B.

Three brands, three styles: "Taylor Fladgate is lean, firm, racy, muscular, but in a sinewy, elegant way. Fonseca's style is noted for its expressive, luscious fruitiness, opulence and voluptuousness, and velvety, mouth-filling tannins. Croft is defined by an abundance of rich, plump fruit with a delicious exotic quality and a distinctive herbaceous, spicy character." —N.R.B.

2009 Vintage Ports: "The 2009 vintage Ports are wines of massive scale and density, with tannin levels and an intensity of color that has not been seen for at least two decades. However, in spite of their inky color and thick, muscular tannins, the 2009s also display a magnificent quality of fruit, crisp acidity and extraordinary complexity. In many ways, these wines represent a return to the vigor and stamina of the iconic vintage Ports of the early 20th century." —A.B.

—M.D. & J.J.



wine flavored chocolates

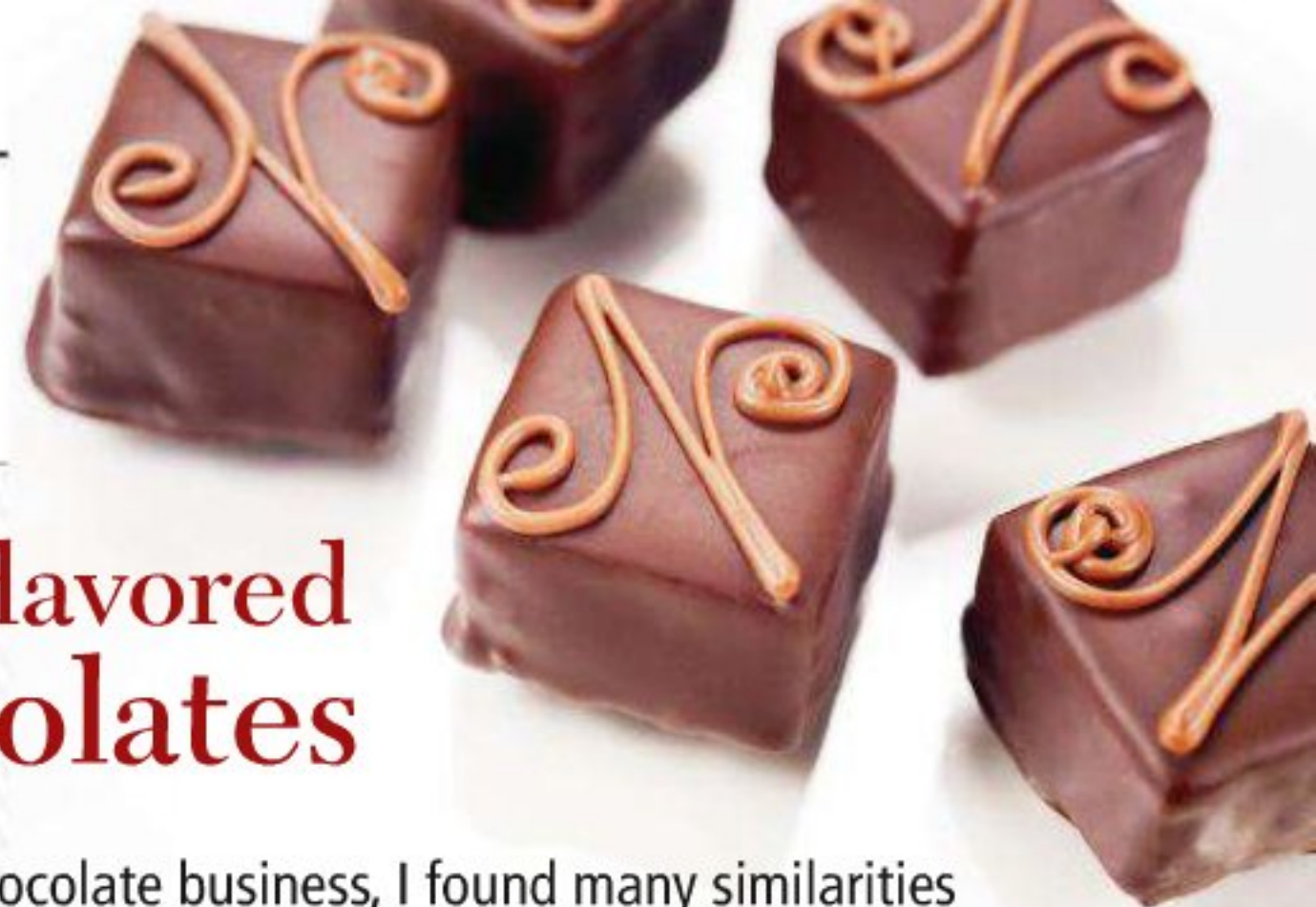
"Being brought up in the chocolate business, I found many similarities between dark chocolate and red wine," says Tad Van Leer, a third-generation chocolatier and owner of J. Emanuel Chocolatier in New Jersey. Van Leer first conceived the idea for his line of wine truffles in 2001, when he visited Napa Valley as a guest of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars.

Van Leer and vintner Warren Winiarski were discussing the similarities between chocolate and wine: They agreed that both are affected by terroir, can be blended, have complex flavor profiles and possess a number of healthful attributes. Van Leer was inspired to infuse red wine into chocolate. "After experimenting I found that the wine and dark chocolates created a great tasting confection that enhanced both the wine and chocolate flavors," he says.

Van Leer uses 74% dark chocolate from Ghana and infuses the truffles with Cabernet, Chardonnay, Malbec, Syrah, Zinfandel, Champagne, Port and Merlot; he has worked in collaboration with Joseph Phelps, Palmaz, Ridge, Dolium, Château Fougères and Schramsberg.

J. Emanuel Wine Truffle Collections: 36-piece, \$45; 15-piece, \$22.

jemanuel.com. —TIM MORIARTY



SNAPSHOT



Freixenet Goes Food Truck, Boston

Freixenet's "Black Bottle Bubbly" went on a road trip this summer. Its Tastings and Tapas Truck poured samples of Cordon Negro Brut for Cava fans in five cities on the East Coast, pairing the sparkling Spanish wine with small bites, like saffron-battered shrimp and vegetable *buñuelos* (fritters). Catch up with the Freixenet truck at freixenetusa.com.

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CAN'T-MISS WINE AND COCKTAIL FESTIVALS



1 SAN DIEGO BAY WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL (SAN DIEGO) This week-long festival features hundreds of wine and spirit purveyors, classic culinary all-stars, continuous food and wine tastings, cooking and wine classes, auctions and competitions. worldofwineevents.com

2 AUCTION NAPA VALLEY (NAPA) Four days of Napa's best wines and food are accompanied by glitzy parties and 250-plus auctions (proceeds benefit nonprofit organizations). napavintners.com

3 HOSPICE DU RHÔNE (PASO ROBLES) This weekend wine festival held annually celebrates the 22 Rhône grape varieties and French cuisine with a California twist. hospicedurhone.org



4 TOTT (CHICAGO, MIAMI, NEW YORK, SAN FRANCISCO, WASHINGTON, D.C.) *Wine Enthusiast's* signature consumer event features 500 wines and delicious bites from 35 local restaurants in five historic locations throughout the U.S. toastofthetown.com

Wine Enthusiast editors selected these 10 extraordinary festivals for their high quality, great regional drinks and scenic venues. Each one is sure to leave you in high spirits.

5 GREAT AMERICAN BEER FESTIVAL (DENVER) Beer lovers can sample suds up for gold, silver and bronze medals in categories like American-Style Wheat Beer, Fruit Beer and Coffee Beer. Breweries compete for prizes, and of course, glory. greatamericanbeerfestival.com



6 THE HUKILAU (FORT LAUDERDALE) This annual tiki event celebrates Polynesian cocktail culture, music and food in a festive, retro 1950s fashion. Live entertainment and plenty of tropical shirts round out the experience. thehukilau.com

7 SAVOR SONOMA (SONOMA) On the periphery of San Francisco, Savor Sonoma Valley features the vintage best of more than 20 wineries but also other Sonoma Valley bests including culinary delicacies from local chefs, art from local artists and live music. sonomavalley.com



8 TALES OF THE COCKTAIL (NEW ORLEANS) This fun five-day festival in New Orleans celebrates the history and craft of cocktails. Events include themed dinners, cocktail and spirits tastings and mixology competitions. talesofthecocktail.com

9 TASTE WASHINGTON (SEATTLE) More than 200 wineries participate in this classic event held in Seattle. Wines are accompanied by an assortment of gourmet foods from local restaurants and attendees can attend seminars hosted by renowned wine experts. tastewashington.org

10 PASSPORT TO DRY CREEK VALLEY Showcasing more than 45 Dry Creek Valley wineries, this festival offers tasty dishes from gourmet chefs, live music and entertainment that in past years has included circus troupes and belly dancers. <http://wdcv.com/passport>

For additional wine festivals selected by our editors, visit winemag.com/wcfestivals

—COMPILED BY LISA STAHL

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SENEGALESE STEW (FONIO Á LA SAUCE MAFÉ)

Bineta Diallo Dioh is a chef with a mission. Her restaurant, Le Point d'Interrogation in Dakar, Senegal, is lauded for its authentic local dishes. But she's also aligned with Mangeons Local, a group that seeks to preserve traditional Senegalese dishes using regional ingredients. "Too many of the ingredients we use in Senegal are imported from Europe," Dioh says. Mafé is one of Senegal's most famous (and delicious) dishes—it's a meat and vegetable stew that showcases the country's best-known ingredient, peanuts. —ELIZABETH HELMAN MINCHILLI

STEW

- 1 pound fonio (or substitute couscous)
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons oil
- 1 pound beef, ground
- 2 medium-sized onions, chopped
- 1/3 cup tomato paste
- 3 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 cup broth
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 medium-sized eggplant, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- Salt
- Pepper
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- 1 cup peanut butter
- Dried red pepper (optional)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

TO PREPARE THE FONIO

Wash the fonio and soak in tepid water for 20 minutes. Drain and steam until tender (about 20 minutes) and add butter.

TO MAKE THE SAUCE MAFÉ

Heat the oil in a large pot, and brown beef. Add

onion, tomato paste and chopped tomatoes. Cook until mixture is well incorporated and the onion softens, about 8 minutes. Add the broth and cook for another 15 minutes.

Stir in the garlic, carrot, potato, eggplant, salt, pepper, fish sauce and peanut butter. Cook on low heat for 40–50 minutes, until the meat is tender and the vegetables are cooked through. If necessary, thin sauce with water. Turn off heat and add lemon juice before serving over fonio or couscous. *Serves 6.*



Wine Recommendation:

The spicy, nutty nature of this dish's sauce (we like it with plenty of the optional red pepper) goes well with a medium-bodied off-dry white wine, like a recent vintage of Domaine Huët's Demi-Sec Vouvray. A less-expensive option would be Barton & Guestier's Vouvray (look for the 2009). If you insist on red wine with beef, try an inexpensive Spanish Garnacha or fruit-forward California Zinfandel.

For additional recipes, visit winemag.com/foodrecipes



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Please Drink Responsibly

KEN BURNS, DOCUMENTARIAN

The historical film icon talks about Prohibition, his evocative new three-part series on spirits and the 18th amendment.

In October, PBS will air a three-part documentary by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick entitled *Prohibition*. The film is a detailed and fascinating exploration of the complex social and political events that led up to the passage of the 18th Amendment in 1920 and set off an era of violent crime and widespread hypocrisy. Burns talked with *Wine Enthusiast* about the impact of Prohibition on our politics, our justice system and our most intimate relationships.

WINE ENTHUSIAST: What sparked your interest in doing this project?

KEN BURNS: It's not rocket science; it's always just being drawn to a good story. This is not just one, it's thousands of good stories. We take a topic and try to cover it as much as possible. I live in New Hampshire, where we make maple syrup. It takes 40 gallons of sap to make a gallon of syrup. That's about the same ratio with filming a documentary.

WE: You title the three parts "A Nation of Drunkards," "A Nation of Scofflaws" and "A Nation of Hypocrites." And you begin the first episode with a quote from Mark Twain: "Nothing so needs reforming as other people's habits. Fanatics will never learn that, though it be written in letters of gold across the sky. It is the prohibition that makes anything precious." Is it

fair to assume this to be your take-away message?

KB: All of those titles are things people actually say in the film. It's not our title; we're selecting quotes. From the first to the last moments of the film we show the human cost of alcohol. You don't have to point arrows at it—these are phenomenal stories. Too often we tend to have a superficial view of any era. **Prohibition brings up mobsters, machine guns, flappers, but we've got a lot more in the film that's extraordinarily interesting.** It was important to find so-called ordinary people with their own memories and recollections, and we have that from all around the country.

WE: It's fascinating to learn the origin of such common terms as teetotaler (from "total abstinence"), bootleggers (whiskey sellers) and scofflaws (literally those who scoffed at the law).

KB: I was particularly interested to learn about capital T-totaler, which began as a temperance movement and got metastasized into what was known as the "absolute shall." Total temperance.

WE: You show how the advent of Prohibition quickly led to crime, bribery and widespread hypoc-



Filmmakers
Lynn Novick
and Ken Burns

KEN BURNS PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHANIE BERGER

ris, even among lawmakers.

KB: I think this is inevitable when you have a situation where 10% of the population has a problem with alcohol, and impose a solution on the entire population. You leave yourself open to unintended consequences. Prohibition promoted a great deal of violation of the law, and the corruption that followed because everybody looked the other way.

WE: You profile some bootleggers who it seems were simply businessmen, not gangsters. They were addressing a need in the marketplace. Capitalism pure and simple?

KB: In the urban cities, bootlegging was the province of organized crime, which we would not have without Prohibition. But for many people it was

simply a business opportunity. Most of the law violations were on a local level. It was a whole country saying "this is an absurd law," which breeds contempt for the law. It's important to note that this is the only Constitutional amendment that actually limited freedom; and the only one that was repealed.

WE: Do you enjoy a drink now and again?

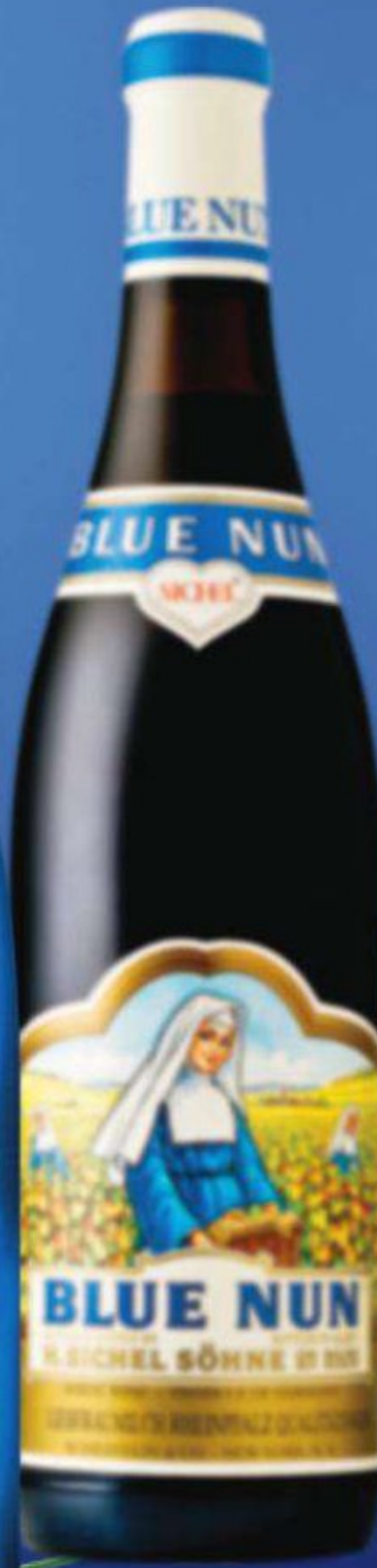
KB: My father was a cultural anthropologist whose area of expertise was France; he had a phenomenal wine cellar. I used to be a great drinker. When I was working on the Civil War series I needed more time in my day and quit drinking, to add a few hours of work. I still will have a little wine, a little Champagne now and again.

—PAUL GREGUTT



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“ Find vegetarian dishes that are satisfying and filling enough for meat-eaters. Your carnivore friends won't even miss the meat. ”

ANNIE SOMERVILLE

The executive chef and flexitarian offers 10 essential tasting tips for a vegetarian-friendly fête.

For more than 30 years, my life has revolved around the vegetarian fare at Greens Restaurant in San Francisco. When we first opened, vegetarian food was far from the mainstream. I'm confident that Greens forever changed the image of vegetarian cooking in America: With a mix of casual elegance and a subtle message of health and harmony, a distinctive cuisine was born.

That said, I don't proselytize on behalf of vegetarianism at Greens; we solely celebrate the bounty of extraordinary produce that's bursting with flavor, color and texture. In the same vein, the emphasis of our wine program remains on small, high-quality producers from Europe and the West Coast of the U.S. who practice sustainable viticulture. I live a predominantly vegetarian lifestyle, but I'm actually a flexitarian, meaning I eat the occasional chicken or fish at get-togethers with friends. I understand, it can be especially difficult during the holidays to stick to a vegetarian lifestyle if your family and friends are carnivores.

For example, my husband—a true omnivore—respects and encourages my eating choices, but he eats anything and everything. I've figured out how to adjust

during the holiday festivities and am happy to provide some tips for vegetarians (and nonvegetarians, too) during the busy season.

1 Food brings people together no matter what type it is, so first and foremost, enjoy the time you have with family and friends.

2 If your loved ones want to help, invite them into the kitchen. Perhaps if they see how vegetarian food is prepared—the care it takes and the beauty of it—they will appreciate it more.

3 Shopping for food can be fun. Find downtime at your grocery store and wander the aisles, finding the best ingredients for your recipes.

4 Take a trip to the farmers' market and talk to the farmers and purveyors to learn more about your local produce.

5 Make a vegetarian dish ahead of time, such as little veggie *empanadas*, a simple goat cheese platter with chopped chives, olive tapenade or white bean puree.

6 Don't try to outdo yourself. Know what you're good at and shine. The best dishes are those that celebrate the true flavors of the ingredients; the lighter, leaner, simpler cuisine.

7 Mike Hale, our wine director, lives by the theory that a rich dish needs a rich wine, or the opposite, that a light dish works with a light wine, red or white—this is particularly true of vegetable-focused dishes. With our curried cauliflower soup, for example, we like the Bella Valle 2008 Gewürztraminer from California; the main aroma is fresh lychee, and the grape exhibits other spices.

8 Everyone knows that preparing for the holidays can be stressful—don't take it out on anyone, but instead pace yourself and breathe.

9 If you're not vegetarian, eat your animal protein before or after the party—or be adventurous and find out what it's like to be vegetarian for an evening.

10 Find vegetarian dishes that are satisfying and filling enough for meat-eaters (mushrooms are a great example). Your carnivore friends won't even miss the meat.

Annie Somerville is executive chef of Greens Restaurant and author of two cookbooks, Fields of Greens: New Vegetarian Recipes from the Celebrated Greens Restaurant (Bantam, 1993) and Everyday Greens (Scribner, 2003).

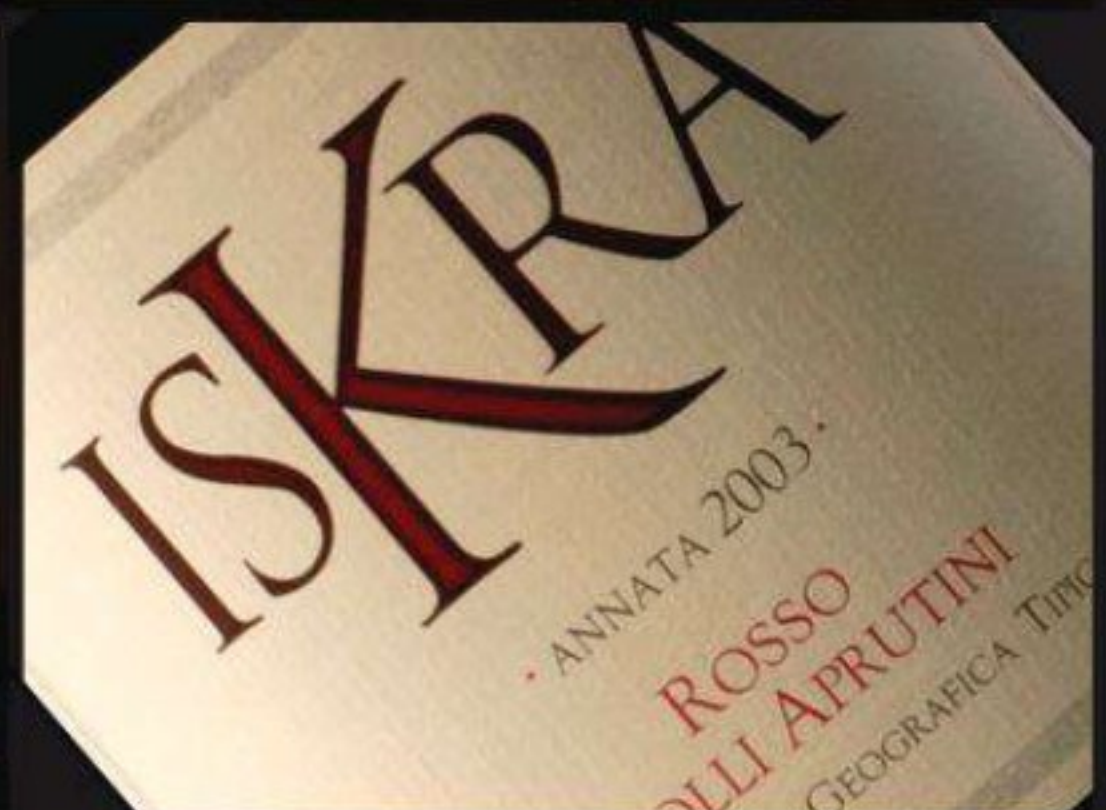
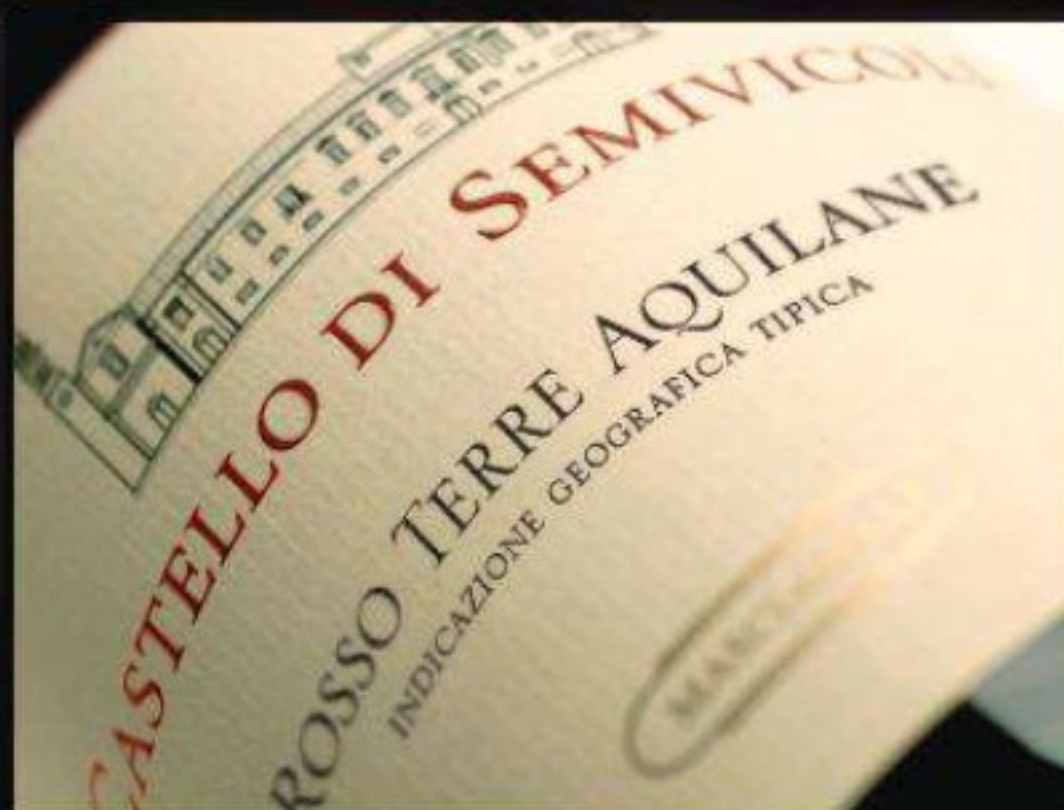
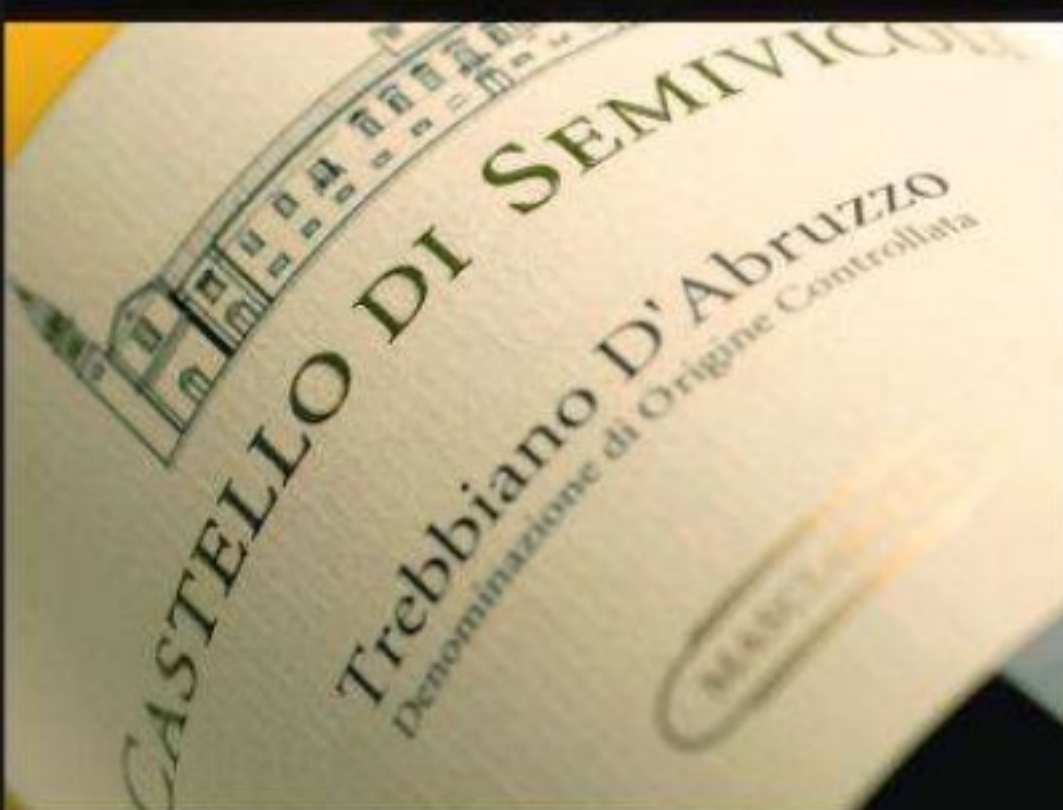
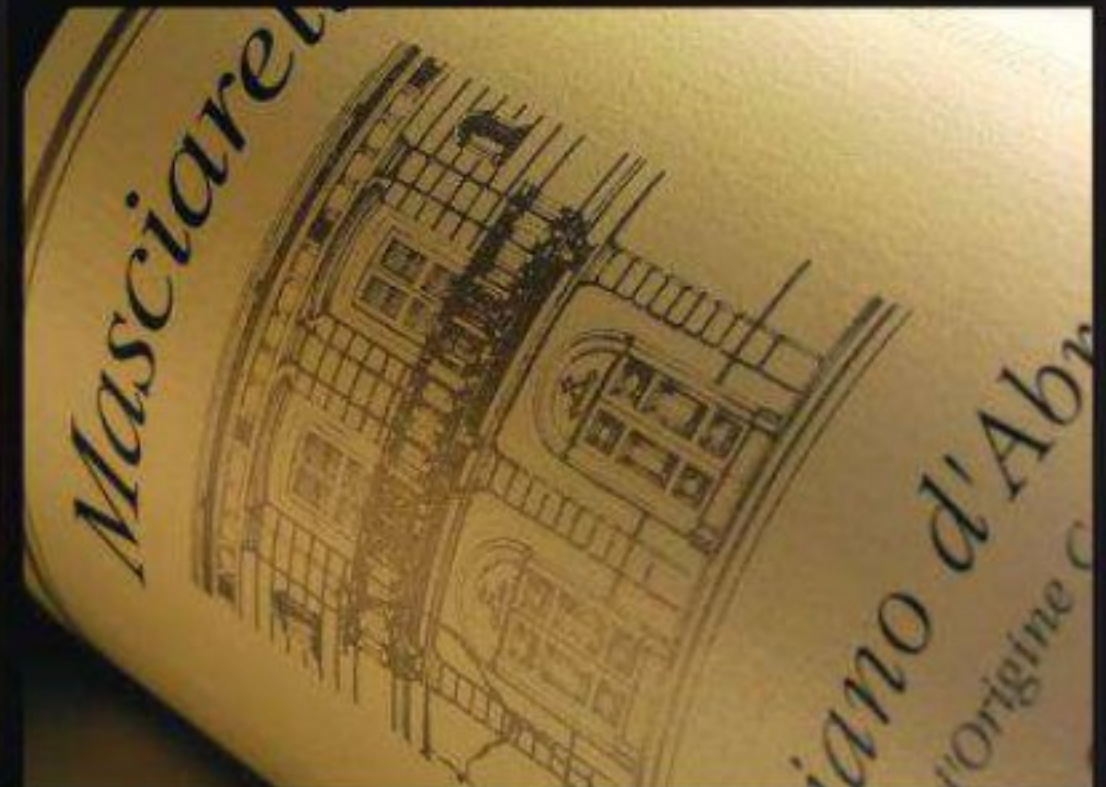


PAIRING WINE WITH VEGETARIAN FOOD

“In the spring, our Artichoke and Sunchoke Gratin with leeks, green garlic, tomatoes, Manchego and fromage blanc custard works so well with Preston's 2009 Roussanne from Dry Creek Valley; it has a touch of yeast, pear and apple and a very nice mouthfeel.

A wilted spinach salad (our version features Olympia pears, pomegranates, pecans, goat cheese and pear vinegar) could be paired with Lioco 2007 Indica, a red blend of Carignan and Petite Sirah from Mendocino with punchy, ripe berry fruit flavors and a hint of smoke.”

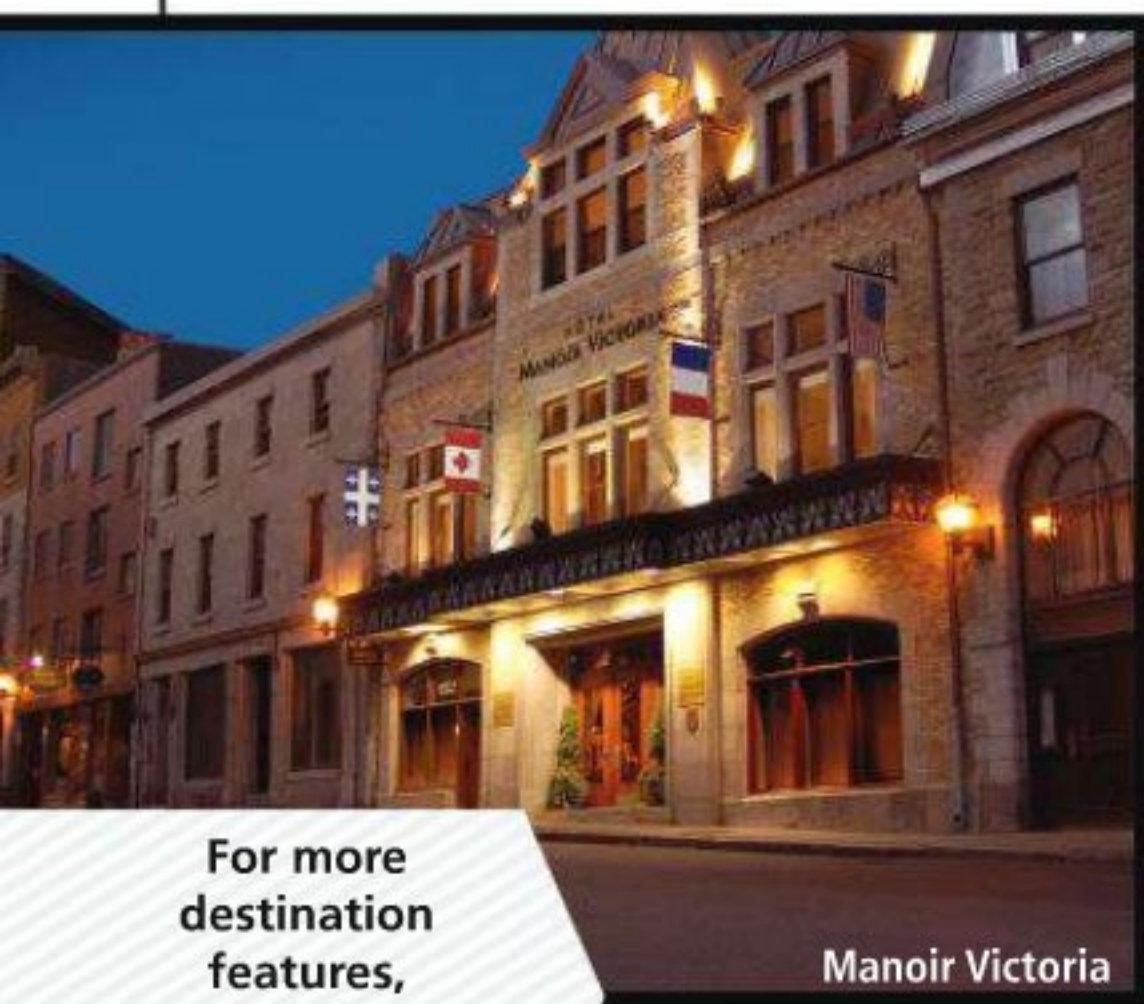
For a Butternut Squash Empanadas recipe, visit winemag.com/somerville



QUEBEC CITY

Take a trip back in time in this former fur-trading post, known for its historic charm and culinary offerings.

Founded along the banks of the St. Lawrence River by French fur traders more than 400 years ago and later run by the British, Quebec City was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985, and aptly. A stroll along the cobblestone streets is like a Charles Dickens novel come to life. But culinary travelers will find there's more than sites to be savored here: "Food, glorious food"—and wine—is found in every corner of this Canadian gem.

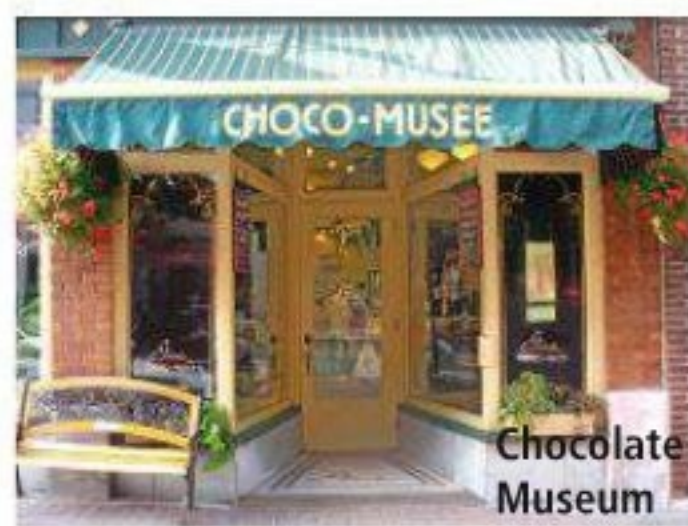


Manoir Victoria

For more destination features, visit

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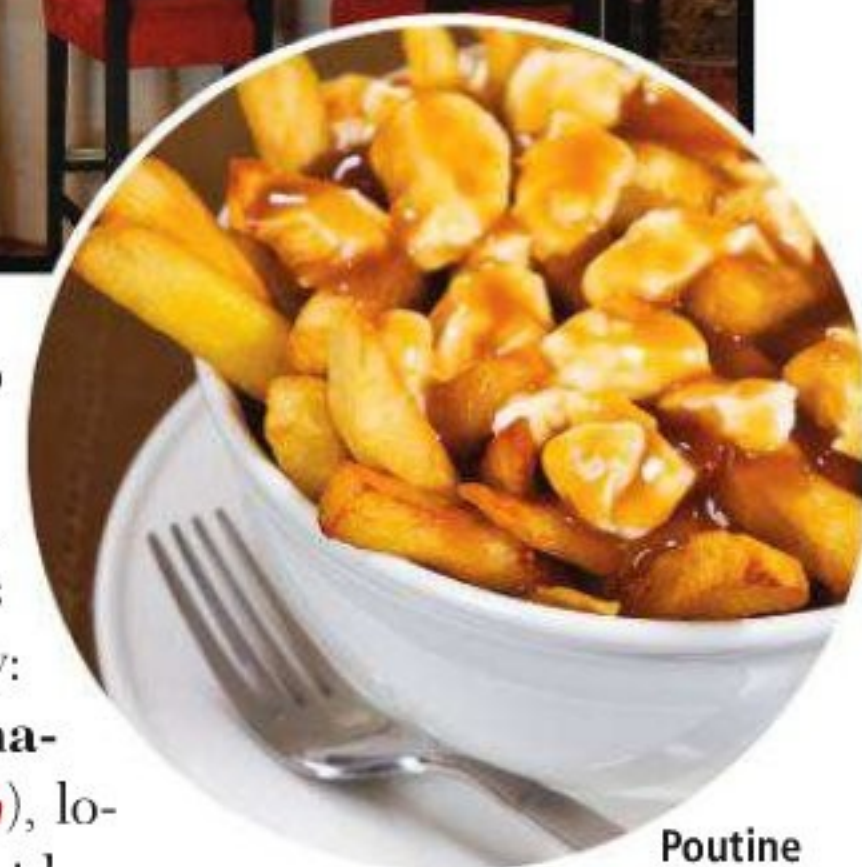
Around Town: Rue Saint-Jean in Old Quebec is a good starting point for a foodie tour, and costumed street entertainers strumming banjos, juggling balls or playing crystal glasses for tips add to the ambiance. Once a working-class neighborhood, the area is now filled with fun shops, stops and cafés. The street is home to **J.A. Moisan** (jamoisan.com), said to be the oldest continuously operated *épicerie*, or market, in North America. A Frenchman opened the import-and antique-filled shop 140 years ago. Purchase fresh bread, regional cheeses and pâtés here for a picnic. **Old Port Market** (marchevieuxport.com) is another viable option. Just a few doors down, step inside the cottage with the green- and white-striped awning to visit the **Chocolate Museum** (chocomusee.com) where spicy hot chocolate, artfully crafted handmade truffles and historic artifacts help document the treat everybody loves. On occasion, Chocolatier Eric Normand offers wine pairings.



Chocolate Museum



Panache



Poutine

Wine & Food: Be sure to sample a Canadian staple—*poutine* (French fries and cheese curd covered in gravy)—at restaurants that serve regional fare. One to try: the popular **Aux Anciens Canadiens** (auxancienscanadiens.qc.ca), located in one of upper town's oldest homes, circa 1675. Follow the street called Grande Allée for upscale regional dishes (duck confit, venison and smoked salmon) at **Le Parlementaire** (assnat.qc.ca), a fine-dining establishment located in the Beaux Arts Parliament Building.

For sunset views and an extensive wine list, take the elevator up to the 29th floor of Loews Hôtel Le Concorde to dine at **L'Astral** (lastral.ca). The revolving restaurant's menu changes seasonally, offers American classics for picky eaters and the wine list boasts more than 100 choices. Try the Minervois red called L'Opéra de Château Villerambert Julien.

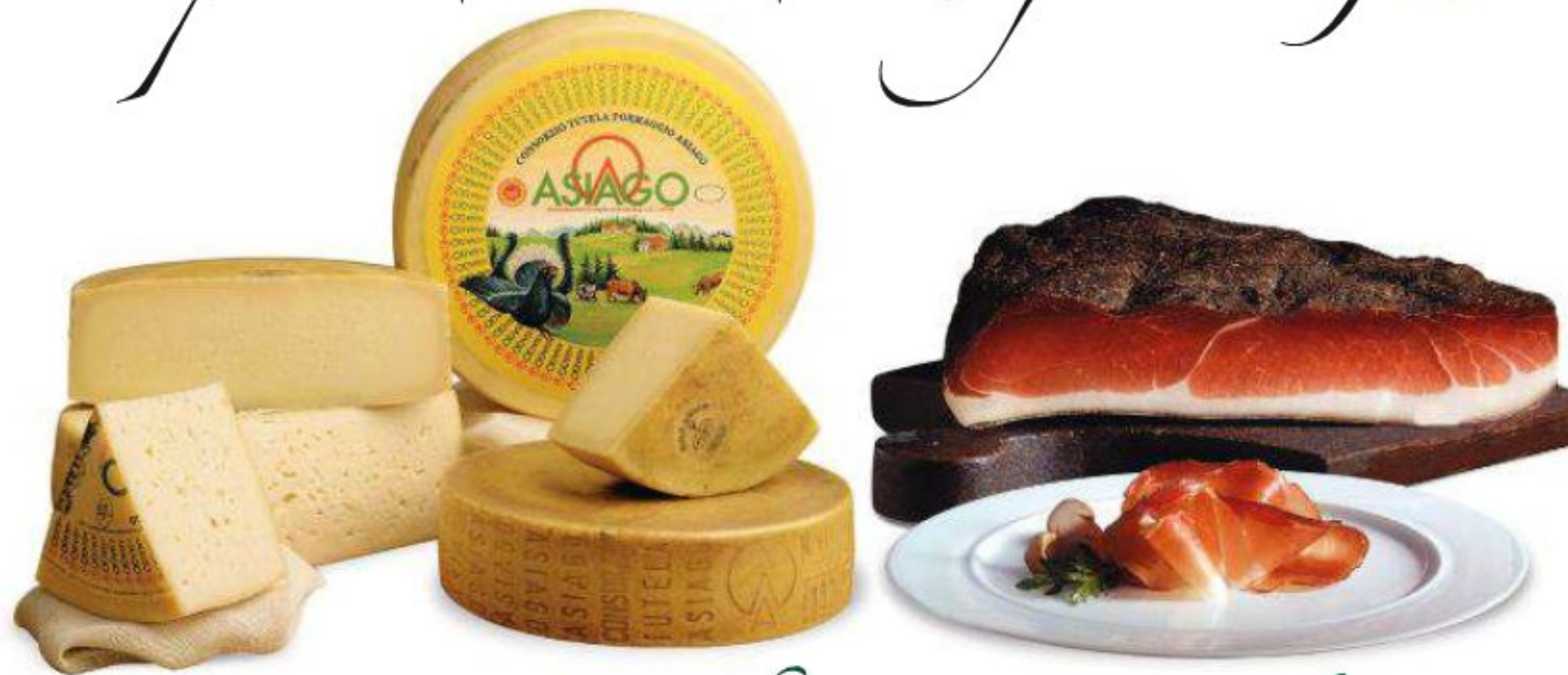
While **Le Café Saint Malo** (75, rue Saint-Paul) in the Lower Town serves an authentic but affordable French lunch or dinner, a short walk lands you at the popular **Panache** in Auberge Saint-Antoine (saint-antoine.com). Modern regional tastes such as caviar, rabbit and ice wine made from apples are on the menu, as are Quebecois cheeses and a signature seven-course dinner (with wine pairings) that may include foie gras, maple-glazed halibut and house-made sorbet.

Head back over to the Grande Allée for nightlife options. Always a busy place, this is where you'll find a string of outdoor cafés and wine bars, including the trendy **Savini Resto-Bar** (savini.ca). For something more casual, but with an adventurous wine list (choices from Canada, France, Australia, South Africa, California and beyond), try **Le Moine Échanson** (lemoineechanson.com), just outside the gate to the Old City. Make reservations for a chance to wine and dine around oak barrels.

Before you leave, visit Le Château Frontenac, the most visible landmark in the historic district near Dufferin Terrace, for pan-fried scallops. Executive Chef Jean Soulard's recipe, which he gladly shares, uses honey from the hotel's rooftop garden. The result is a soft yet crisp morsel you'll remember long after you return home. —**JACKIE DISHNER**



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The PDO and PGI symbols were designed under European Law to designate regional foods using geographical indicators. The legislation for these seals was formed in 1992 to ensure that only products that originate within the specified European Union regions are allowed to establish themselves as such.

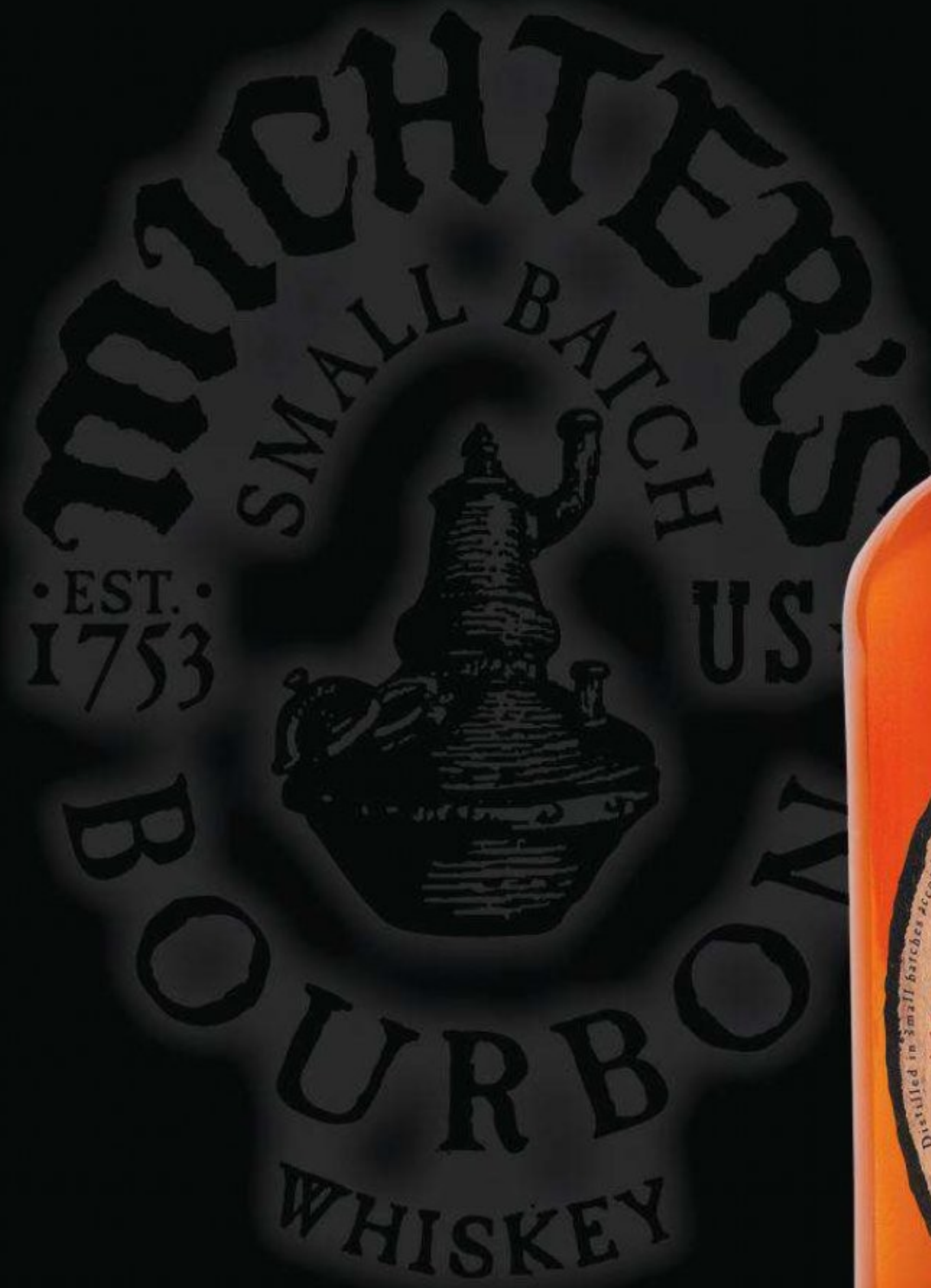
The laws apply to a wide range of products produced in Italy, including authentic Speck Alto Adige and Asiago. These two products from Northern Italy embody European agricultural production that is characterized by the PGI and PDO quality seals.

To qualify for a PGI or PDO seal, a product must comply with the European Union's standards with regard to the name and description of the product, the definition of the geographical area, the methods of preparation, factors relating to the geographic environment, the inspection bodies, details of how the product is labeled and any legislative requirements that must be met. For more information, recipes and events, please visit www.genuinetaste.org



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Limited Production



Real Bourbon

KARA'S *picks*

I'm a coffee geek as well as a cocktail geek, which made reviewing this month's crop of coffee and tea liqueurs a particular treat. Here's the spirit I'd most like to see in my cup:



94 **Firelit Coffee Liqueur Batch 02 (USA; St. George Spirits, Alameda, CA); 30% abv, \$50.** This brandy-based liqueur is infused with coffee hand-roasted by Blue Bottle Coffee in Oakland. Oddly, I'm not thinking cocktails for this baby. Instead, I want to pour it over gelato for spiked *affogato*. —K.N.

Visit the Ratings page on winemag.com or turn to **page 133** of this issue for more spirit reviews.

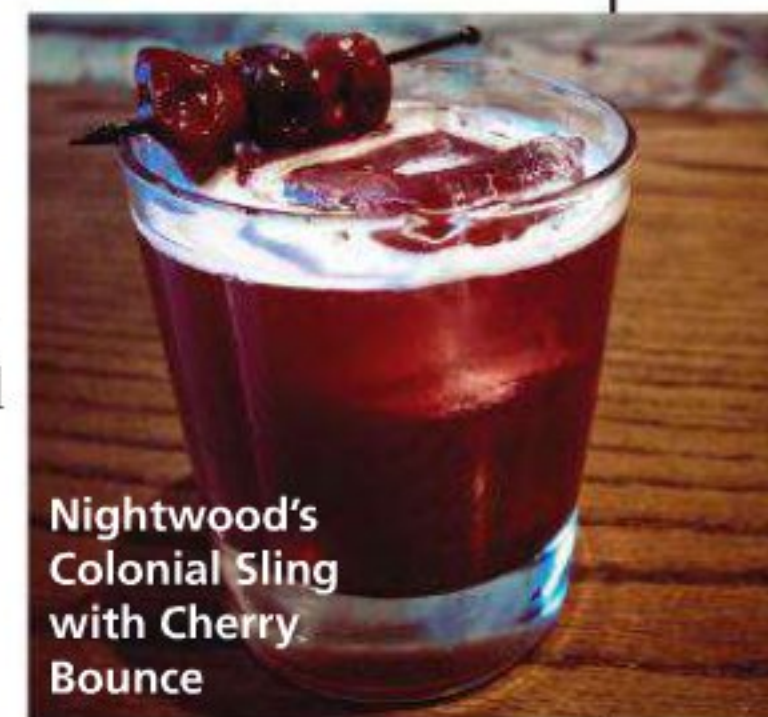
Cherry Bounces Back

Martha Washington may be the only First Lady with a tippler's bona fides.

Her specialty? Cherry Bounce. Made with nothing more than cherries and sugar steeped in brandy, it's cherry liqueur, and Colonial America loved it. In recent years, it's been revived by mixologists whose lips smack loudly when an intoxicant has a historical pedigree.

Eric Davis, beverage director at Chicago's **Nightwood**, spikes his Colonial Sling with house-made Bounce using California brandy and Michigan cherries. "I think how old it is interests people," Davis says, "and there's something about the name."

Opening in 2012, **Restaurant R'evolution** in New Orleans plans to offer several Bounce cocktails and, on occasion, Folsie Sr.'s 1976 vintage Bounce, the recipe came from Chef John Folsie's father who has been making cherry liqueur for years. As for the origins of that charming name, Beverage Director Molly Wismeier has her theories: "It makes your brain bounce a little bit." —ROBERT SIMONSON



Nightwood's Colonial Sling with Cherry Bounce



Trick or Treat

Surprises await with these Halloween-friendly drinks.

Halloween is a night for mayhem, mysticism and magic. What better reason to try these sleight-of-hand cocktail tricks this October?

Make cotton candy vanish by mixing up a **Magic Mojito**, a signature cocktail at The Bazaar by José Andrés in Los Angeles. Place cotton candy in a glass, then pour in the contents of a mojito shaker, sans simple syrup. The trick: The liquid dissolves the cotton candy, which is a substitute for simple syrup. Lucas Paya of The Bazaar says this technique works with any cocktail that uses simple syrup.

Mystify with a margarita made with invisible salt. The glass rim of The Bazaar's **Salt Air Margarita** appears to be salt-free, yet each sip says the opposite. For this trick, use a magic wand—or a hand emulsifier—to make "salt air" with salt, water, lime and soy lecithin. Then place the mixture on the surface of the margarita.

Give a good-natured scare with the **Explosive Caipirinha**, created by Chef Marcel Vigneron of Modern Global Tasting in Los Angeles. The drink wows with unexpected fireworks on the palate. Vigneron's trick: dip glasses in honey, then pop rocks. This lively rim will complement any citrus cocktail. —LILLY KUWASHIMA

For spooky sip recipes such as "Magic Mojito," visit winemag.com/spooky



we'd be proud too

Glenmorangie reveals Pride 1981 single malt Scotch.

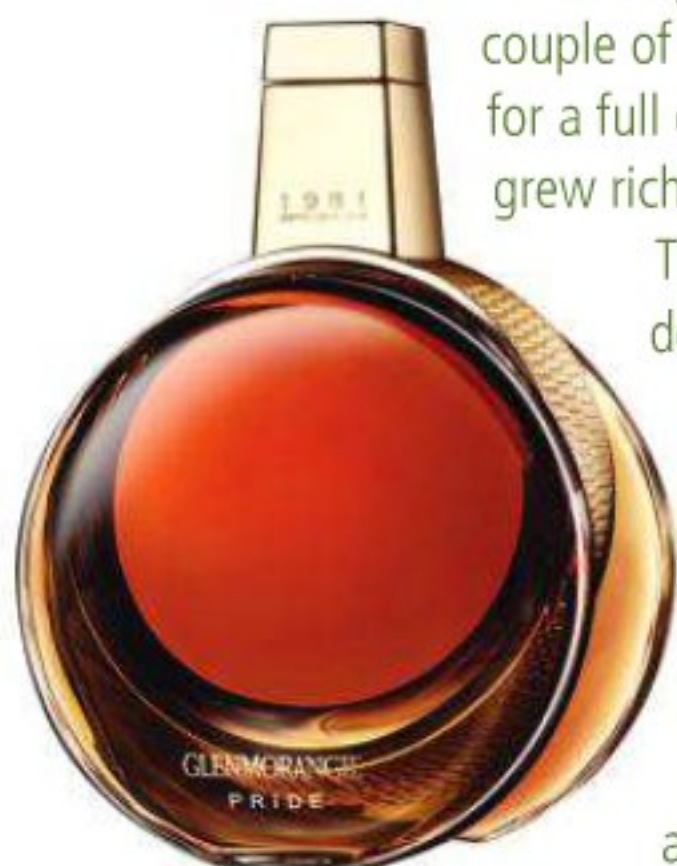
Here's what I can tell you about 1981: It was a good year for music, an embarrassing year for fashion and an excellent year for Scotch.

In April, Glenmorangie unveiled its Pride 1981 single malt Scotch, its longest "extra-matured" product, a full 28 years old. Created by Bill Lumsden, a pioneer in creating extra-mature whiskies, Pride 1981 is finished in Château d'Yquem Sauternes casks.

Although most spirits are cask-finished for anywhere from a few weeks to a couple of years, Lumsden let an 18-year-old Scotch rest in the d'Yquem casks for a full decade. "Some magical alchemy happened," he says. "Each year, it just grew richer and more intense." Ten years in, it had reached its peak.

The end result is a bold and highly aromatic Scotch, with lots of lush, dessert-like vanilla, crème brûlée and marshmallow flavors. It also sports dried fruit notes and spicy clove and nutmeg accents. The long aging process amps up the alcohol levels to 56.7% abv, but the spirit retains a full-bodied, silky texture.

In addition, the limited-edition run of 1,000 bottles is packaged in a Baccarat crystal decanter shaped like a barrel, the work of French designer Laurence Brabant. About 100 of the 1-liter bottles will be available in the U.S., retailing at \$3,600 a piece. —KARA NEWMAN





Baumétini from Baumé Restaurant

shaking up saké

The sakétini gets a makeover.

With its remarkably diverse flavor profiles and styles, the rice-based beverage known as saké is as varied and complex as any sourced from the vine. Many purists take umbrage at the idea of mixing saké with other ingredients to create cocktails, but the mixologists who use it champion its flexibility and multifaceted character. Whether infused, sparkling or unfiltered, saké is a surprisingly fresh way to create modern cocktails.

Biwa Restaurant (Portland, Oregon) The Chrysanthemum, made with dry vermouth, Benedictine and Pernod, is the inspiration for Biwa's Kiku cocktail, which easily substitutes Kasumi Tsuru Kimoto Extra Dry saké for the vermouth.

Mana Food Bar (Chicago) The saké-based Pineapple Ginger, Watermelon Mint and Almond Horchata cocktails at Mana feature "fresh, house-made ingredients," notes owner Susan Thompson, and complement the vegetarian cuisine.

SEI Restaurant (Washington, D.C.) The Liquid Wasabi spices up the nation's capital with a potent combination of Sho Chiku Bai Nigori Unfiltered saké, vodka, lime and habañero-ginger-infused simple syrup.

Baumé Restaurant (Palo Alto, California) The restaurant's signature "Baumétinis" change seasonally and feature flourishes of molecular mixology like liquid nitrogen. The sweet, sparkling saké they use—Ozeki Hana Awaka—has "an effervescent tickle and a brightness that fits for an apéritif-style drink," according to Wine Director Tim Augello.

Bao Noodles (New York) Momokawa Organic Ginjo saké infused with cucumber, strawberry and kiwi adds extra depth and freshness to drinks like the Cucumber Rosemary Sakétini and the Summertime, created by saké specialist Chris Johnson, at this cozy Vietnamese eatery.

—LESLEY JACOBS SOLMONSON

Straw Kiki Sakétini from Bao Noodles, New York



infuse your own spirit



one

Wash and dry ingredient of choice (such as fruit, vegetables or chilies). Pour the spirit into a wide-mouth jar (save the bottle). Halve or quarter the ingredient and add to the jar.

Seal it tightly, allowing it to steep for as little as a couple of hours (for strong items like chilies or spices) or as long as several days (for mild items, like fruits), tasting occasionally to check for strength and flavor.



two

When you've hit the right flavor and heat, remove the peppers or fruits, and use a funnel (and a strainer if needed) to return

the now-infused liquor back to the original bottle. The infused spirit will keep almost indefinitely.

three

Close the bottle tightly and keep it in a cool, dark area as you would any other bottle of prized liquor. Be sure to label it to avoid surprises later on! —K.N.

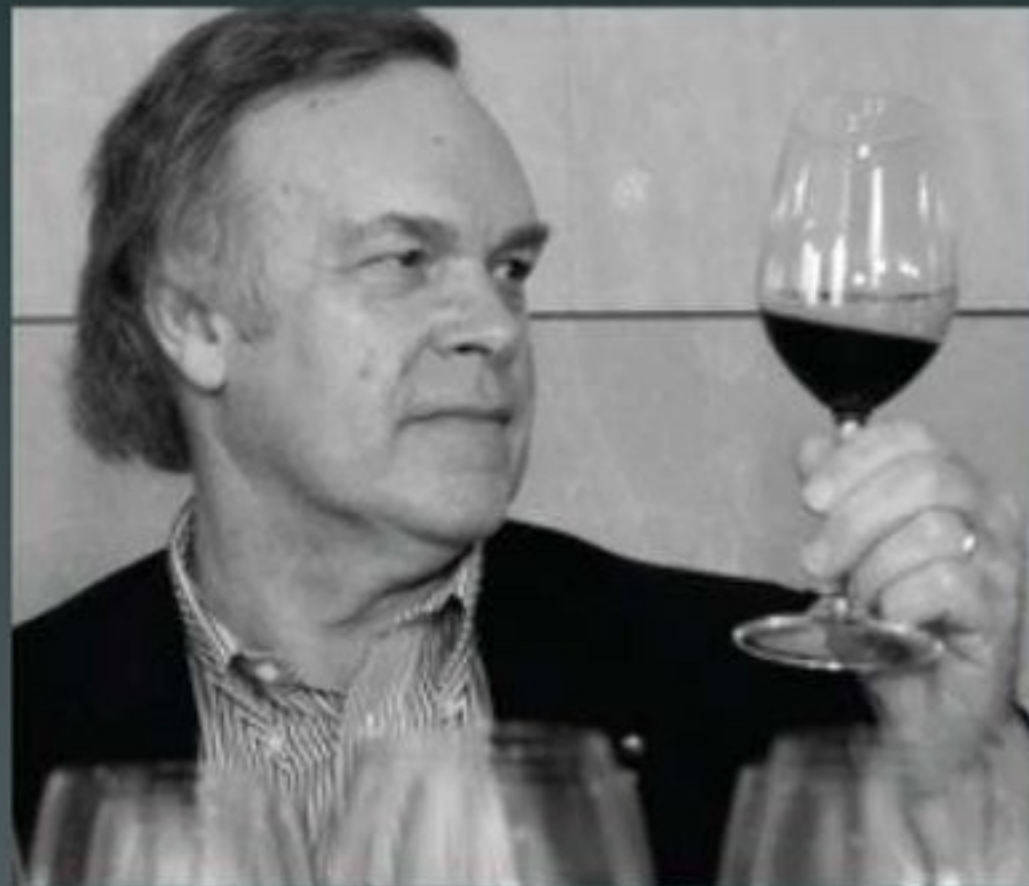


tip: Resist the temptation to leave the ingredient floating in the liquor. Ingredients left floating in the alcohol can pickle, disintegrate or simply go rancid, ruining your results.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIAN CLARK

For saké cocktail recipes, plus Johnson's tips, visit winemag.com/susake

Speakers



Robert Parker



Jancis Robinson MW



Adam Strum



Randall Grahm



Pancho Campo MW



Steven Spurrier



Michel Rolland



James Suckling



Michel Bettane

Adam Strum - Adrian Bridge - Bernard de Laage - Carol Duval Leroy

Christian Seely - Cyril Penn - David Furer - Debra Melburg MW

Demel Li - Don St. Pierre, Jr. - Eduardo Chadwick - Essi Avellan - Felicity Carter

Florence Cathiard - Gianluca Bisol - Ian Ford - Ian Harris - Jaime Araujo

Jean-Charles Cazes - Jeannie Cho Lee MW - Kevin Zraly - Lisa Perrotti-Brown MW

Mauricio González-Gordón - Michel Bettane - Miguel Torres

Nigel Greening - Pedro Ferrer Noguera - Robert Joseph - Simon Tam

Stephen Mack - Su Birch - Tim Atkin MW - Tony Jordan - Yang Lu



Presents:

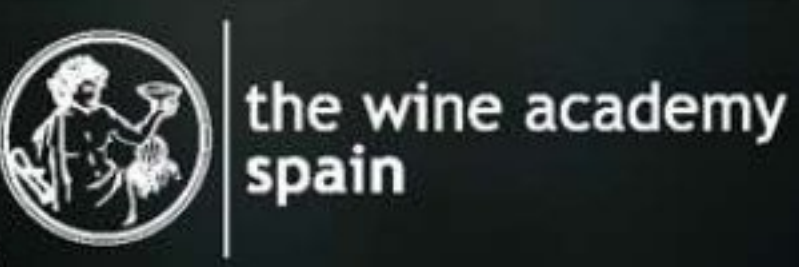
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West meets East



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PROOF *positive* / COCKTAIL OF THE MONTH

HOT BOT

This is Sterling Field's riff on the Southside, one of the only classic cocktails attributed to Chicago. The basic version is a gin gimlet shaken with mint, but the Hot Bot has an extra herbal edge thanks to the addition of Green Chartreuse.

2 ounces SVEDKA 80-proof vodka
¼ ounce Green Chartreuse
¾ ounce fresh lime juice
½ ounce simple syrup (equal parts
sugar and water by volume
not weight)
5–6 fresh mint leaves, plus
additional sprig for garnish
Angostura bitters, 2–3 dashes

Combine spirits, juice, simple syrup and mint in a shaker with ice, and shake lightly. Double strain (though a fine-mesh strainer from the shaker) over fresh crushed or cracked ice. Float Angostura bitters on top and garnish with a fresh sprig of mint.



For more
cocktail
recipes, visit
[winemag.com/
cocktailrecipes](http://winemag.com/cocktailrecipes)

MIXOLOGIST *of the month*



STERLING FIELD

*Bartender,
Sable Kitchen
& Bar,
Chicago*

At Sable Kitchen and Bar (sablechicago.com), located in Chicago's Hotel Palomar, the cocktail list is complicated. It's divided into chapters, sprinkled with clever quotations ("Be wary of strong drink. It can make you shoot at tax collectors and miss." Lazarus Long) and full of complex, flavorful drinks made with ambitious ingredients such as cardamom-spiced Guinness, cranberry-infused maple syrup and house-made bacon bitters. However, Sable's Bartender Sterling Field wishes everyone would simplify.

"People come in and they want the wildest drink on the menu, the one with nine ingredients," he says. "But I love to introduce them to a classic, like the daiquiri or a martini, and blow them away. Then we can move on."

In fact, Field says his favorite drink is the clear-cut daiquiri: just rum, sugar and lime juice. And although Sable's drink menu appears quite elaborate, Field claims that "straightforward" is the word that best describes the restaurant's cocktail philosophy. "We're trying not to take ourselves too seriously," he says.

However, Field's shortlist of must-have bar tools is straightforward, indeed: *Imbibe!* (Perigee Trade, 2007) by cocktail historian David Wondrich serves as a reference for "old-timey cocktails," long-handled bar spoons from Cocktail Kingdom (cocktailkingdom.com) and, most importantly, Angostura bitters. "We'd have to close Sable without them," he says jokingly. —K.N.

How did a nation
founded on rights
ever go so wrong?

PROHIBITION

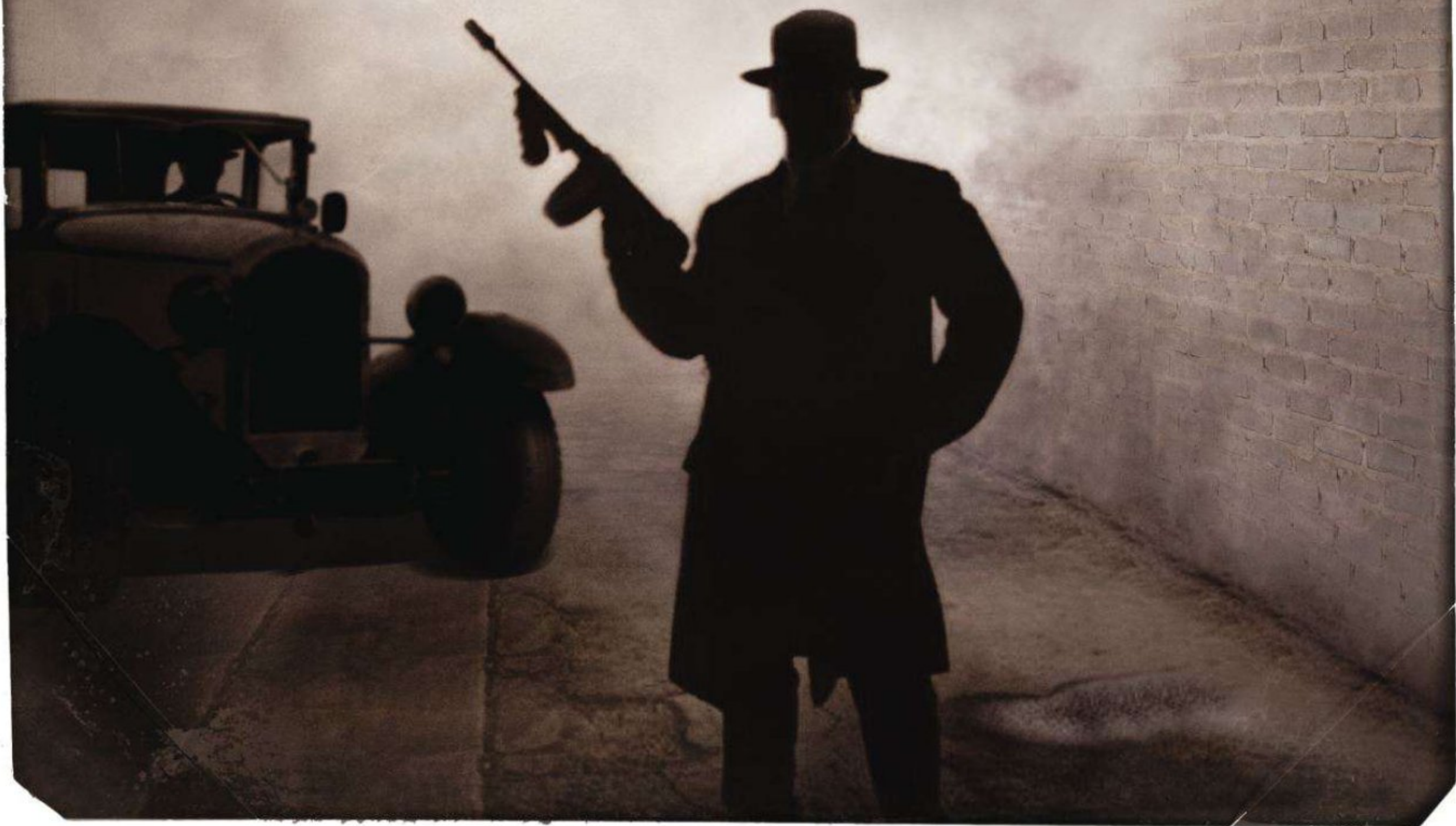
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Be more.



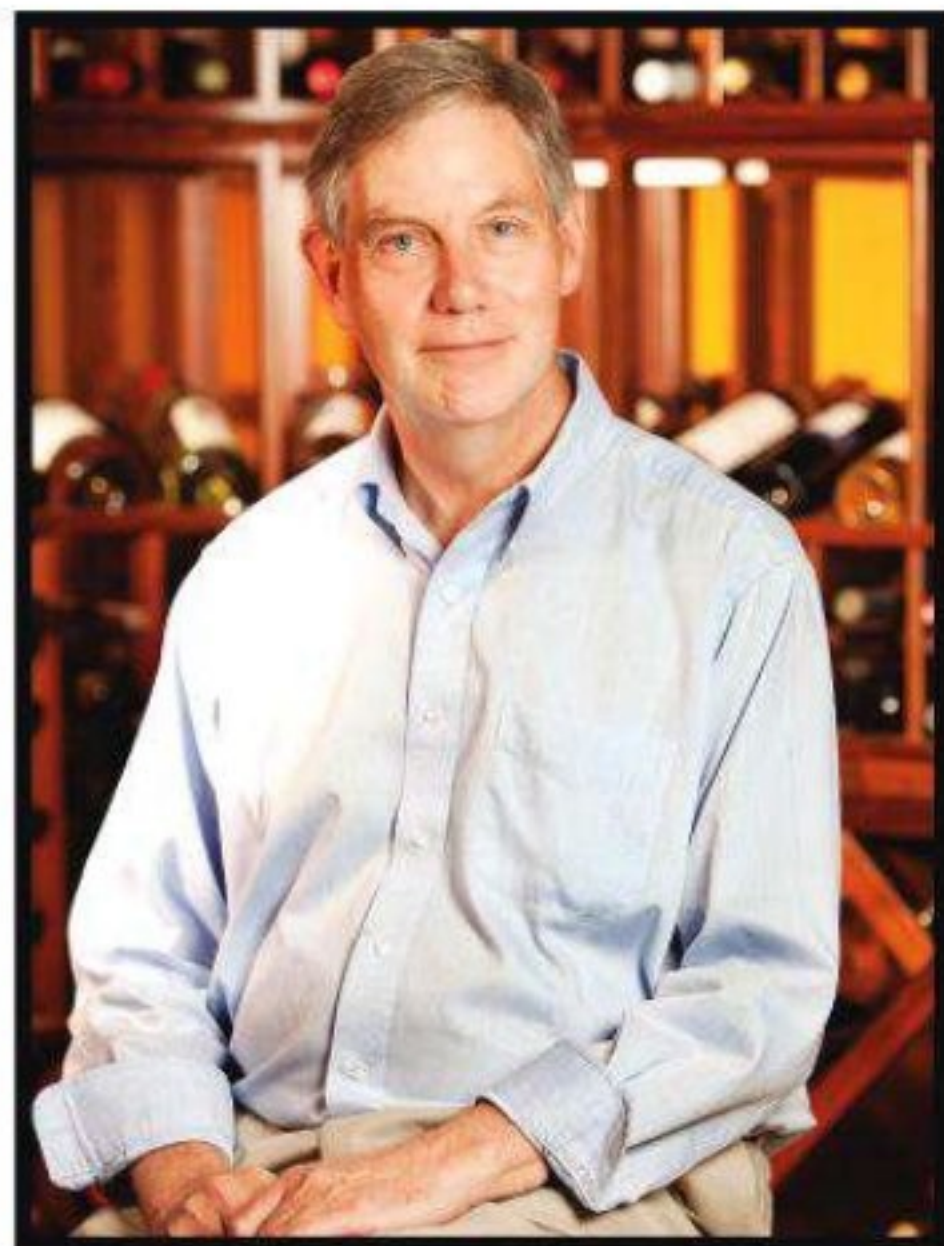
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Place Matters

We are conditioned by our birthplace, whether we're now just two blocks away or 2,000 miles. The same is true with wine.

stones. All this is in an area not much larger than a Walmart parking lot.

A grape grower in Bordeaux was recently telling me about a portion of his vineyard where five rows of Merlot never managed to produce the same quality, or quantity, of grapes as the rest of the parcel. The vines did not have the same vigor, and the soil, when analyzed, was deficient in minerals.

Move the magnifying glass back a little, and you find the situation in Burgundy where two vineyards, almost side by side, produce

A wine's birthplace is part of its make-up, its character. The wrinkles of the landscape, the soil, the trees that provide shade, are all there in the bottle. This is particularly true of fine wine, with its tight appellations or single vineyards, but a branded wine is also conditioned by the people who create it, who put the blend together and who devise the marketing campaign. Their pride, prejudices and experiences all factor into what the wine becomes. We cannot escape our roots, however they present themselves.

In a wine review I wrote earlier this month, I used the phrase: "It shows the granite character of Dão." For those of you unfamiliar with Portugal's Dão region, it's dominated by granite mountains, outcroppings of granite rocks and a soil that's hard and unyielding.

The Dão is a region with immense character and a distinct sense of place, and the wines produced there reflect its nature. When young, they have a firm, almost austere quality. Over time, however, they develop into wines of beauty.

It's easy, from the comfort of a city restaurant, to gloss over the place that a wine comes from and the difficulties involved in growing and harvesting the fruit. "Ah yes," we say, "it must be tough out there for those grape growers. But the wine tastes so good—have another glass." So many city dwellers have lost touch with the origin of that wine. It's like kids who have no idea that milk comes from cows.

I am fortunate to live in the country. Our neighbors are cows on one side and a field of cereal crops on the other. Across the road is a vineyard, the soil a mix of clay and small

“It's easy, from the comfort of a city restaurant, to gloss over the place that a wine comes from, or the difficulties involved in growing and harvesting the fruit. So many city dwellers have lost touch with the origins of wine. It's like kids who have no idea that milk comes from cows.”

very different wines. Soil, exposition and history all play a part. Why is To Kalon Vineyard in Napa so esteemed? Because it's the right soil, in the right place, just waiting to have Cabernet Sauvignon planted in it.

All of us are conditioned by the place where we were born, whether we are now just two blocks away or 2,000 miles. It becomes a part of who we are, even as we may fight against it. It's the undercurrent to everything we think and, even as we grow older, it conditions how we behave. And yet, two people who grow up in the same place at the same time are not exactly alike.

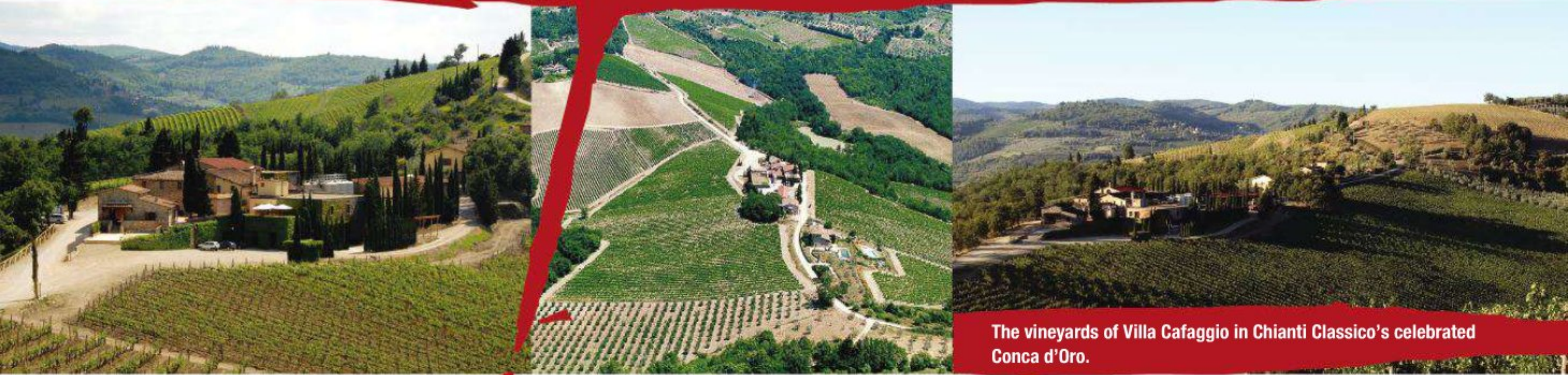
Just so with wine.

Why escape it? Place brings with it diversity, quirks and idiosyncrasies. That's why wine regions as diverse as Port, Jerez, Napa and Champagne protect what they regard as their uniqueness. Prosciutto di Parma ham comes from Parma and not from Pennsylvania. Stilton cheese comes from Leicestershire in England, not from South Carolina.

Consider the place where you will be celebrating the holiday season. Wine may not be produced there, nor cheese nor ham. But something makes it special. Whatever it is, or who, I hope you find enjoyment, and drink wine that will make the experience of that place just a bit more special.

TUSCAN STARS

VILLA CAFAGGIO AND POGGIO MORINO



The vineyards of Villa Cafaggio in Chianti Classico's celebrated Conca d'Oro.

Renaissance all-rounder Leonardo da Vinci reportedly mused, "The discovery of a good wine is better than the discovery of a new star." For some of the best wines in the world, the preeminent polymath needed to look no further than his native home, Tuscany.

Villa Cafaggio in the Chianti Classico area and **Poggio Morino** in the Maremma zone of southern Tuscany are two shining stars in Italian wine. Both represent distinct territories and variety-driven flavors expressed through indigenous grapes, starting with Sangiovese, and international varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. They offer a full range of styles, from sophisticated, age-worthy wines to easy, value wines to pair with home cooked pasta shared between family and friends.

Among Tuscany's most prestigious names, Villa Cafaggio villacafaggio.it boasts a rich winemaking history that spans back many centuries. In fact, the word *cafaggio* comes from an archaic term for "farming plot" because the noblemen, monks and growers who owned the land at various points all recognized its superior soils, elevation, exposures and microclimates for quality grape growing. The estate includes 175 acres of land in the Panzano subzone of Chianti Classico and occupies vineyards in the celebrated Conca d'Oro, or "Golden Basin," considered to be one of the best cru sites in the world.

Some 100 acres are planted to vine, with 85 percent to Sangiovese and the rest to Cabernet Sauvignon. High density planting ensures quality and 400-meter altitudes are con-

sidered ideal for the vines.

Villa Cafaggio offers a range of red wines including **Chianti Classico** (pictured here, \$20) and **Chianti Classico Riserva** (\$27). Both are 100 percent Sangiovese Toscano and the Chianti Classico sees 12 months of oak aging, while the Riserva rests in traditional oak casks for 18 months. In 1988, the estate embarked on a massive zoning project to identify the best growing sites for indigenous grapes such as Sangiovese. To this day, that study remains one of the most important in Italy.

Two non-denomination "super Tuscan" wines are also produced by Villa Cafaggio. The first is the 100 percent Sangiovese **San Martino**. Newer Sangiovese clones

planted over 15 years ago are the base of this hearty, concentrated wine. It also sees 18 months of barrique-aging for soft spice and toasted nuances. San Martino represents a dynamic and modern side to Tuscan wine. Another great red in the estate's lineup is the 100 percent Cabernet Sauvignon

Cortaccio. Grapes are harvested at peak maturity for smooth richness and deep intensity. These wines promise to age soundly in your cellar for many years to come.

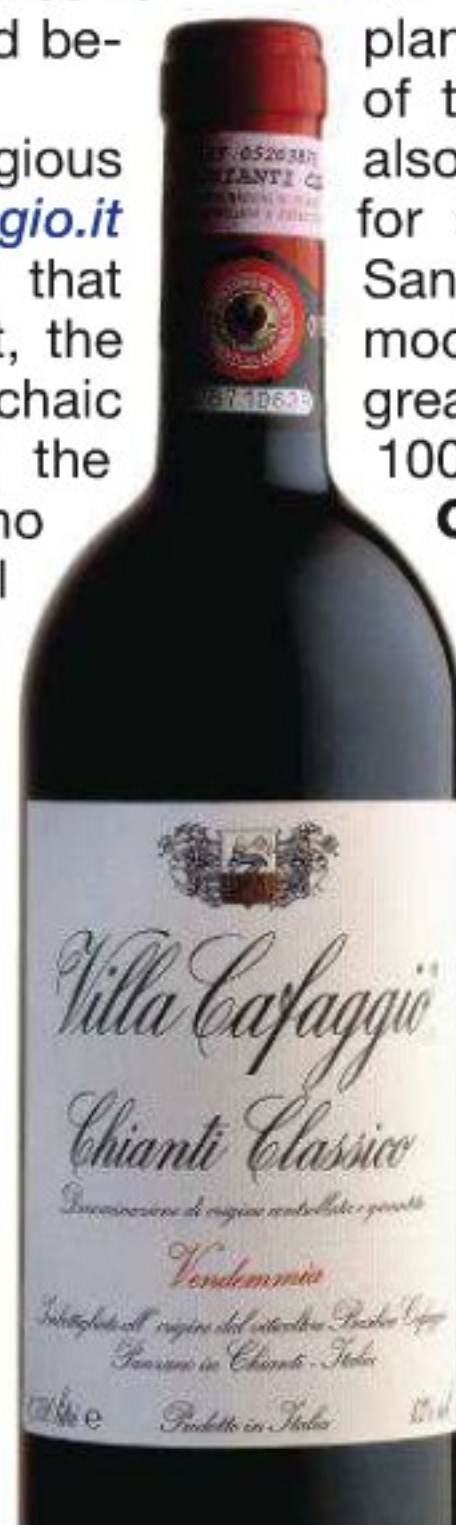
Miles away from the storied traditions of Chianti Classico is the southern Tuscan region of Maremma where new innovation, technology and energy abound. This is the "wild west" of Italian wine and Poggio Morino is an estate

that personifies the region's dynamic spontaneity.

With 225 acres of rolling hills near the ancient hamlet of Scansano, Poggio Morino presents a bright, fruit-forward **Morellino di Scansano** (an 85-15 blend of Sangiovese and Syrah, pictured here, \$15) that ages in wood for four months. The cuvee **Rosso Maremma Toscana** (\$13) is a blend of Syrah (40 percent), Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Alicante and makes a perfect pairing to barbecued meat or grilled sausage. The portfolio is completed by a white wine, Poggio Morino's **Vermentino**, which boasts crisp, drying flavors that match seafood or vegetables. The estate wines boast competitive price points.

Both Tuscan estates are owned by **Cantina La-Vis** la-vis.com based in Trentino, northern Italy. This important wine group unifies 1,350 grape growers that farm beautiful high altitude vineyards in Lavis, near Trento, Alto Adige and the Cembra Valley.

Wines from Villa Cafaggio and Poggio Morino are imported to the United States by **Ethica Wines** ethicawines.com. As the group's US sales division, Ethica Wines represents all wines of Gruppo La-Vis. 



ETHICA
ESSENZA DEL VINO

Visit www.gruppo-la-vis.com for more information or contact Ethica (www.ethica.biz), the group's commercial division that operates in 45 countries around the world.

The Hill Towns of Tuscany

With Florence or Siena as your base camp, explore an Italian nexus of authentic wine and food.

BY MONICA LARNER

You've heard of island hopping, bar hopping and table hopping. Only in Tuscany, however, can you practice the truest form of town hopping.

Located in the heart of Italy, this large (8,800 square miles), somewhat circular region is covered with postcard-perfect hilltop hamlets, most dating back to the Middle Ages. Perfectly preserved or restored, each town is never more than an hour apart by car. All thrive in their gorgeous natural settings, consisting of rolling hillside vineyards, cypress-lined drives, farmhouses and other exhilarating flashes of iconic imagery.

Town hopping, known as pilgrimage in ancient times, is a force in Tuscan history and is responsible for the region's rise in wealth, power and influence. In the Middle Ages, the *Via Francigena*, which connected England's Canterbury to Rome, cut straight through Tuscany. It carved a corridor of commerce and communication, thanks to the thousands of travelers, merchants and clergymen who walked its path. Towns along the route, such as Lucca, San Gimignano, Monteriggioni and Siena, experienced economic booms that fueled the artistic and institutional momentum of the Renaissance. Italian cuisine benefited as well: Spices and exotic ingredients like chocolate were carried here from faraway lands.

Many of today's travelers who make their own pilgrimages to Tuscany are already familiar with attractions such as Florence and Siena. Both of these cities make an excellent base from which to explore Tuscany's massive collection of hill towns. Here are our favorite picks, selected for the quality of exciting new restaurants, wine venues, quirky things to see and overall charm.



The San Gimignano skyline.





SAN GIMIGNANO *La Città delle Torri*, or “the city of towers,” is by far the most ostentatious example of *Via Francigena* abundance. This medieval Manhattan once boasted 72 soaring towers visible for miles around.

Just as New York City’s skyline added the Chrysler Building and Rockefeller Plaza during times of prosperity, the inhabitants of San Gimignano erected stone towers as symbols of their collective aspiration. Petty jealousies and one-upmanship resulted in a tower-building frenzy that even dwarfed the main church steeple. Such exploits put the vulnerable town in the crosshairs of outside enemies and warring neighbors. Today, only 14 towers survive.

The appeal of San Gimignano, however, is much more than architectural hubris. It’s home to the Gelateria di Piazza (gelateriadipiazza.com), considered by many to make the best artisan ice cream in Italy. It certainly wins top prize for creativity: Rosemary essence, lavender, Gorgonzola, saffron and chili peppers are popular ingredients. There’s even a vin santo-flavored offering that pays homage to Tuscany’s celebrated dessert wine.

If you crave savory foods, the Osteria del Carcere is a popular choice for hearty Tuscan classics such as *ribollita* (white bean and vegetable soup), *pappa al pomodoro* (a bread and tomato soup) and *l’arista di maiale* (roast pork loin). Finer cuisine can be had at La Collegiata (lacollegiata.it).

Housed in a former convent, this restaurant and Relais & Château property borrows ingredients from afar such as truffles, prawns and squid ink.

A 45-minute drive southeast from San Gimignano is the tiny town of Monteriggioni, with its circular walls and 14 preserved military towers. Outside of town is the excellent La Leggenda dei Frati restaurant (laleggendadeifrati.it). A great selection of local wines and artisanal beers accompany tortelloni stuffed with pigeon, or lasagna made with chestnut flour and wild boar sauce with leeks and Pecorino.



Above: The heart of Italy’s medieval Manhattan, San Gimignano; colors and flavors abound at the Gelateria di Piazza in San Gimignano; handpainted ceramics for sale.



VOLTERRA Far off the beaten wine trails, Volterra offers a perspective on Tuscany that’s uniquely Etruscan—reflecting the region’s indigenous population (*Etruschi*) for whom the Romans named the region. With commanding mountaintop views, alabaster mines and an important collection of Etruscan and Roman artifacts—Volterra was the last Etruscan stronghold to fall to the conquering Romans—the town really has an authentic Tuscan feel.

Equally compelling are the food offerings, starting with Del Duca Ristorante-Enoteca (enoteca-delduca-ristorante.it). Traditional dishes are served with modern flair, featuring locally sourced mushrooms, meats and garden greens. Slightly less formal is the awesome Ristorante Ombra della Sera, which offers a surf and turf menu based on the freshest ingredients. Try the beef carpaccio with black truffle or the delicate linguine pasta with calamari and *bottarga* (dried fish roe). The



MAP COURTESY OF DESIGN MAPS



The main square of Volterra, a Tuscan town with strong Etruscan roots, is a perfect spot for drinks or a quick lunch.

service is excellent and you'll love the outdoor seating area. Because Volterra is located on the crest of the mountains that eventually lead to the Mediterranean Sea, fish dishes from *baccalà* to raw seafood appetizers can be found here.



PANZANO At the bucolic heart of Tuscany and one of the most important vineyard sites for Chianti Classico, Panzano is a natural intersection where great food and wine meet. It also makes a great resting stop for those intent on exploring the main towns of Chianti Classico, such as Greve in Chianti (home to the historic butcher Antica Macelleria Falorni, (www.falorni.it), Castellina in Chianti and Radda in Chianti.

The superstar of Panzano is Dario Cecchini (dariocecchini.com). This eccentric butcher's celebration of *ciccia* (the local word for succulent red meat) finds its voice in encyclopedia-sized cuts of T-bone steak that come in three versions: *la Bistecca alla Fiorentina*, *la Costata* and *la Panzanese*. Just a few years ago, Cecchini opened the Officina della Bistecca, a restaurant serving dinner several nights a week, with tables set around an open grill. Wine is included in the price of a meal—you do have the option of bringing your own bottle without a corkage fee, but you absolutely must bring a hearty appetite.



Celebrity butcher Dario Cecchini in Panzano in Chianti.

Towns with Character

Scenic Tuscan hill towns have made cameos in—or provided luscious backdrops for—a handful of Hollywood hits, including 1999's star-studded *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Montepulciano); the 1968 production of *Romeo and Juliet* (Pienza); *The English Patient* (Pienza); *Twilight: New Moon* (Montepulciano); *Under the Tuscan Sun* (Cortona); and *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (San Gimignano).

3 OPTIONS FOR GETTING AROUND THE HILLS OF TUSCANY

Air Balloons: Volare in Mongolfiera

Tuscany's Leonardo da Vinci was among the first to design a human flying machine, and his native land is today a hub for hot-air ballooning. Experienced companies such as balloonflightsitaly.com, www.balloonintuscany.com and chiantibalooning.com average 250 euros (\$350) per person. Some serve Champagne breakfasts in the sky.



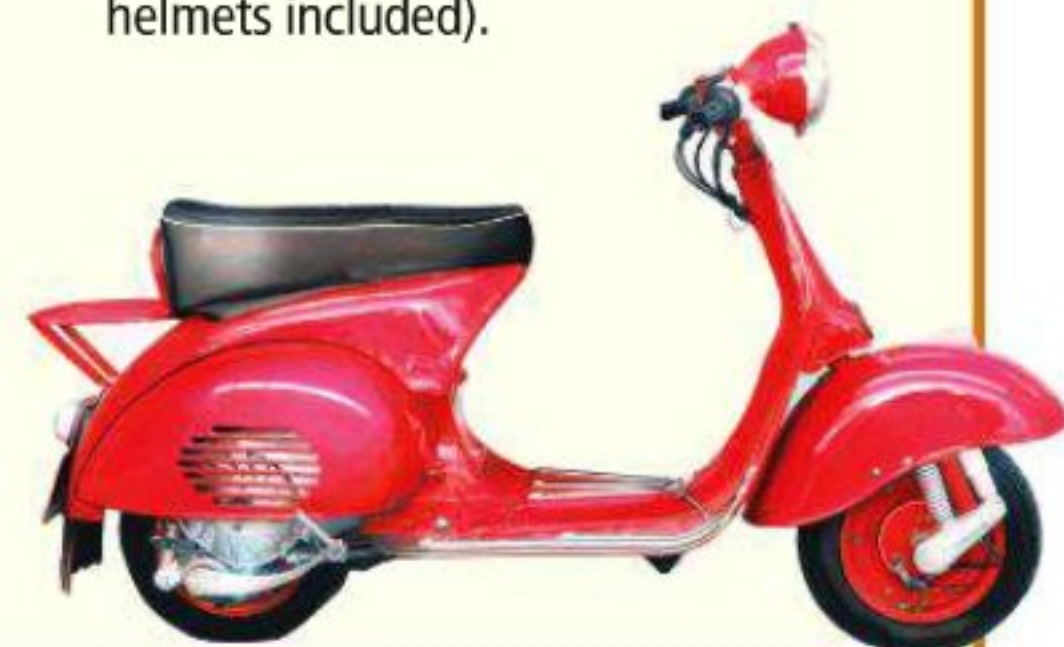
Classic Cars: Noleggio Auto d'Epoca

Tuscany epitomizes the slow lane philosophy. One of the best ways to take in the surroundings is with a leisurely drive in a classic car. Rent a Fiat 500 or an Alfa Romeo Duetto from chianticlassiccar.com or driveinstyle.it. For more horsepower in the sensual shape of a Ferrari, Maserati or Lamborghini, go to noleggioautotoscana.it. Racing enthusiasts should not miss the Mille Miglia classic car rally, 1000miglia.eu, or tuscanrewind.com, both held in May.



Scooters: Vacanza in Vespa

The excellent panorama vs. pavement ratio that Tuscany offers makes it ideal for scooting around on two wheels. Agencies such as tuscanybyvespa.com, scooterbella.com and stradanova.com offer scooter tours (insurance and helmets included).





BOLGHERI

Birthplace of Sassicaia, Ornellaia and Solaia, Bolgheri's influence on modern Italian wine is significant. Located on Tuscany's unspoiled coast between natural reserves of native scrub oak and the shimmering sea, Bolgheri is gaining popularity with wine tourists, foodies and cyclists (thanks to the hundreds of kilometers of scenic roads).

At the base of the cypress-lined road that leads to the town and Castello di Bolgheri is the informal Osteria San Guido (www.enotecasanguido.it), owned by legendary Sassicaia proprietor Niccolò Incisa della Rocchetta. With outside seating in a grassy field, the restaurant serves authentic country foods paired with the iconic wines of the area. Another fun spot in Bolgheri is the Enoteca Tognoni (enotecatognoni.it). Besides its offering of excellent food, this wine shop is a great place to fill in gaps in your Italian wine collection (the prices are very reasonable, too).

Coastal Tuscany offers a fish-based cuisine all its own, and Marina di Bibbona (a 20-minute drive from Bolgheri) is home to one of Italy's best seafood restaurants, La Pineta. Chef Luciano Zazzeri offers the freshest catch of the day and local dishes such as *cacciucco alla Livornese* (a hearty fish soup from Livorno). Don't be surprised to see famous vintners such as Angelo Gaja, Piero Antinori or Cinzia Merli of Le Macchiole sitting at the next table.



The hefty and powerful Chianina race of cattle is native to Central Italy and provides Tuscany with its beloved beefsteaks.



MONTALCINO

The town of Montalcino is synonymous with Brunello, one of Italy's most cherished red wines. But Montalcino is also on its way to becoming Tuscany's most popular small-town destination.

Up until a few decades ago, Montalcino was the poor and desolate backwater of rural Italy. Today, it pulls in millions of tourism dollars, thanks to its wine shops, restaurants, boutique hotels and tasting rooms. Montalcino offers a 360-degree vista of one of the greatest cru areas in the wide world of wine.

Here, some the best eating opportunities are found on wine estates. The Ristorante di Poggio Antico (poggioantico.com) has been attracting attention with its gorgeous outdoor patio and excellent food. Poggio Antico's wines are some of the best in town and are excellent when paired with dishes like ravioli stuffed with foie gras, baby shrimp served in an asparagus cream sauce or beef filet marinated with porcini mushrooms.

Castello Banfi's Taverna (castellobanfi.com) serves up wine and food pairing menus featuring fusilli with porcini and sausage and *Chianina tagliata* (beef cut into strips). Le Potazzine's Ristorante La Vineria (lepotazzine.it) boasts an amazing selection of Brunello and Rosso di Montalcino, as well as beautiful outdoor seating.

Where do Montalcino's winemakers eat? Many book dinner at Ristorante Il Leccio (illeccio.net) in the nearby hamlet of Sant'Angelo in Colle. If you're lucky, you'll find a handwritten sign that reads *tartufi freschi* ("fresh truffles") on the door. In that case, expect heaping shavings of Tuscany's best tubers over your pasta, meat and more.

Ravioli with fava bean purée at the Castello Banfi Taverna in Montalcino; Montalcino's Abbazia Sant'Antimo.



A cyclist pauses for a picture outside the Castello di Brolio in the Chianti Classico area. Biking paths are well marked and traveled across Tuscany.



FROM TUSCANY,
THE WORLD'S ITALIAN WINE.

AMERICA HAS DISCOVERED AN ITALIAN.



ARMANDO TESTA



PIENZA The philosophical opposite of San Gimignano, Pienza was built during the Renaissance as an experiment in humanist ideals. It was envisioned as a utopian city in which palaces and public squares were calculated to be the perfect fit for its inhabitants. The so-called *città a misura d'uomo* (the human-sized city) is not too big to be daunting, nor is it too small to be ignored.

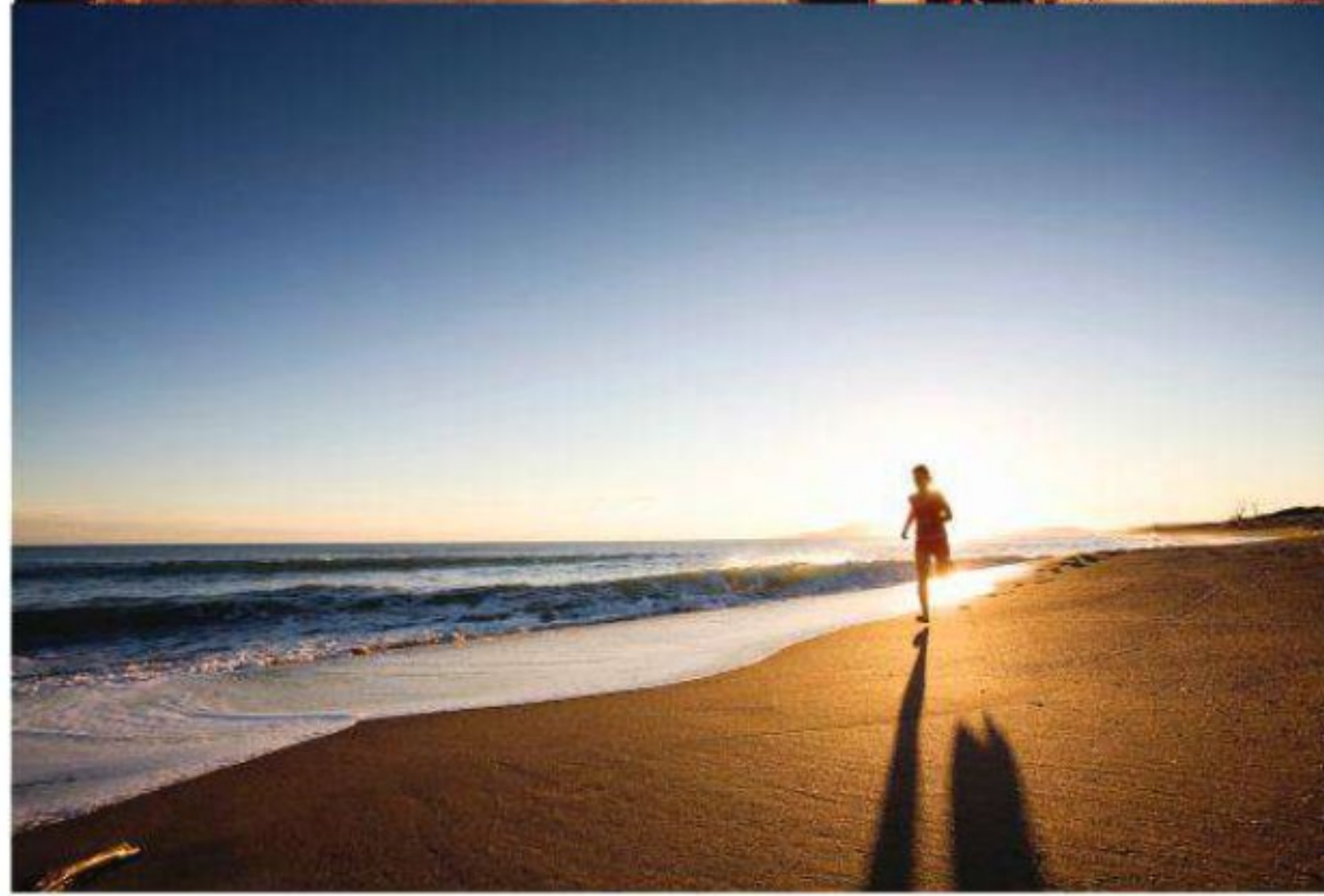
In keeping with those ideals, this beautifully designed and proportioned town offers restaurants that straddle that happy space between rustic, country kitchens and elegant culinary experiences. Latte di Luna, in the city center, is a friendly trattoria that serves *zuppa di pane* (soup with bread and vegetables), *pici con ragù di cinghiale* (thick pasta with wild boar) and *agnello scottadito* (lamb chops served so hot they “burn your fingertips”). The modest wine list offers options from nearby Montepulciano and Montalcino.

A second informal eatery, located slightly outside Pienza in the village of Monticchiello, is Osteria La Porta (www.osterialaporta.it). Typical Tuscan dishes, ranging from appetizers like *salumi di cinta senese* (salami made with the local species of pig) to desserts such as panna cotta, can be enjoyed on an outdoor terrace.

The same owners also run the more upscale Ristorante La Cantina for evening dining.

The main square of Pienza and its 11th-century cathedral.

For pairing tips from Tuscan butchers, visit winemag.com/tbutchers



CAPALBIO On the Tuscany-Lazio border, 93 miles south of Florence, Capalbio is the quintessential Tuscan town. It occupies the crest of a perfect hill the way a crown rests on a prince's head. This is definitely the most rustic of the towns featured here because of its location in the Maremma, known for rugged horse wranglers (*i butteri*), lonely prairies and tufa-stone villages.

But in summer months, Capalbio attracts an artsy-intellectual crowd to its pristine beaches and wild landscapes. The trendiest spot in town is part bookstore, part art gallery and part restaurant. Il Frantioio puts on a fantastic outdoor *aperitivo* as the sun begins to set, and serves local delicacies late into the evening.

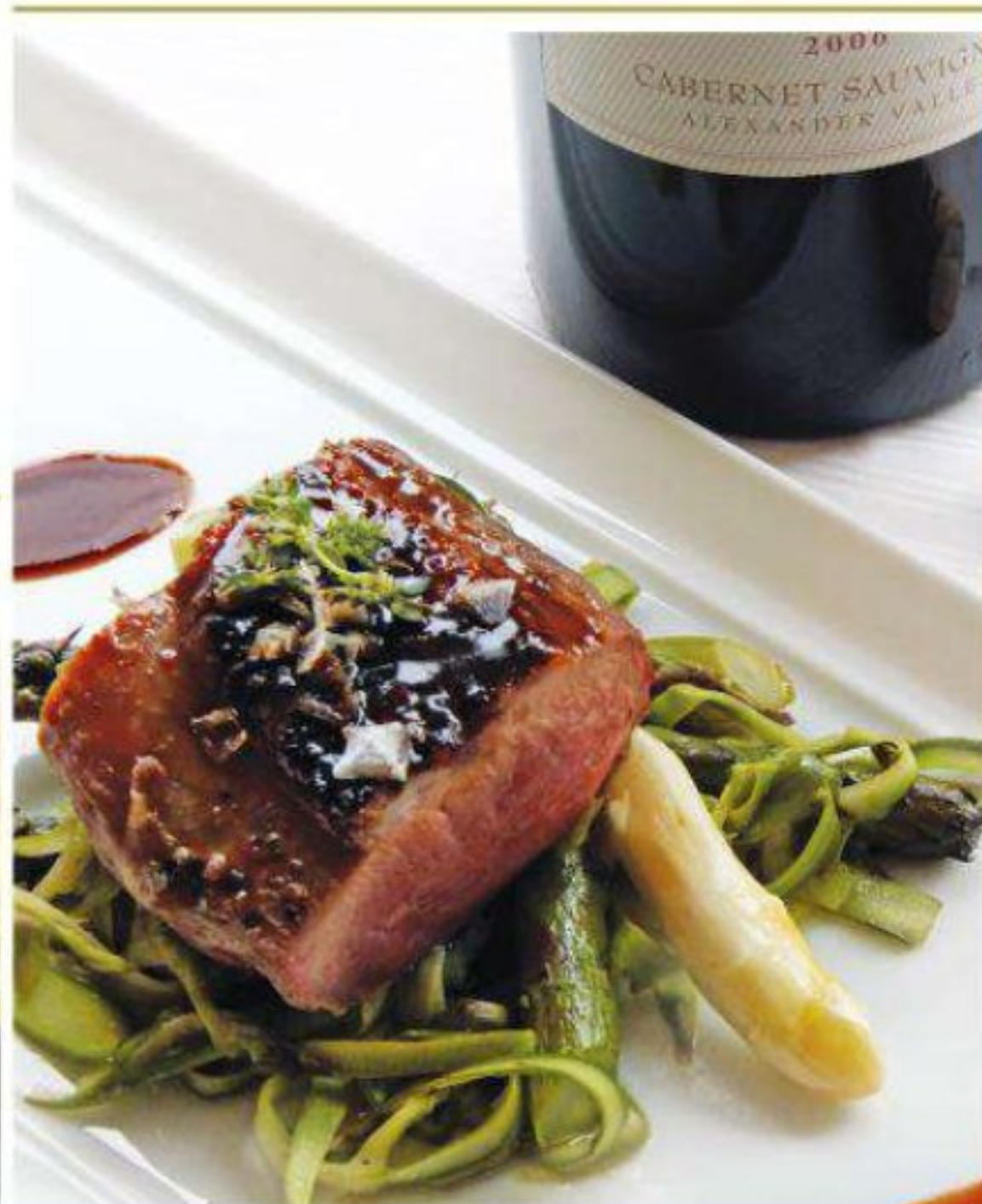


From top: Capalbio entrance gate; a young woman running at sunset on Chiarone Beach; beautiful afternoon sunlight warms the Capalbio countryside.

PHOTOS GATES, © MASSIMO BORCHI/CORBIS; BEACH, © DAMIANO LEVATI/AURORA OPEN/CORBIS

Jordan Rooted in tradition and technology

When Jordan Vineyard & Winery released its first Cabernet Sauvignon, from the 1976 vintage, critics called it a feminine wine. Gentle and smooth, it established the Jordan style, a wine so food-friendly that, to this day, Jordan's remains the most popular Cabernet Sauvignon served in American restaurants.



From left: Bacchus courtyard statue at Jordan chateau entrance; Executive Chef Todd Knoll; Chef Knoll's Hoisin Glazed Duck; CEO John Jordan.

No coincidence, that. Food had long been central to founder Tom Jordan's vision. As a young businessman, he'd spent time in France. "That led me to discover the high-quality food, wines and impeccable service of French restaurants. And the hospitality of French hotels was amazing," he recalls. These themes—food, wine, hospitality, service—were to become central to Jordan Winery. When construction on the chateau began in the mid-1970s, Tom dedicated an entire wing to dining and cooking.

Today, it's not unusual for a winery to have a resident chef, but Jordan was one of the first. The winery's executive chef is Todd Knoll, who trained at San Francisco's Ritz-Carlton Hotel, where he developed his signature style: fresh and seasonal fare, with Asian influences stemming from his boyhood in Hawaii. And always, Chef Knoll says, he crafts his foods to pair with Jordan's balanced, elegant wines.

For example, when Chef Knoll devised a plate to go with Jordan's Russian River Valley Chardonnay, he dressed Dungeness crab in a miso vinaigrette and served it on micro shiso (a leafy green), in a savory nod to Asia. For Jordan's celebrated Cabernet Sauvignon, Chef gives a Polynesian twist to traditional duck confit by spicing it with Sarawak black peppercorns and coriander.

You can watch Chef Knoll at work through online videos created at the winery, and that's no

“People know that Jordan is a family winery. But with video, we're able to share aspects of our life, not just through our own website but through Facebook and Twitter.”

coincidence either. Tom Jordan's son, John, who now runs the winery, is a Gen X'er confident in the use of Internet-based media, especially YouTube; he was impressed by how the popular Internet video site was utilized during the 2008 elections. The winery's online presence grows all the time, and every employee was given an iPad. "I want to change the way we employ technology at the winery," John says. "People know that Jordan is a family winery. But with video, we're able to share aspects of our life, not just through our own website but through Facebook and Twitter.

"It ties back to these disciplines we practice everyday here, in a way that's relevant to the average consumer who may not be able to visit us," he explains. John takes a personal interest in the winery's online presence. "As the owner of Jordan Winery, I check

out our Facebook page everyday, and I take the time to respond to posts." On the Facebook site, you can find links to dozens of short, interesting videos, on everything from pruning a grapevine to the making of a quality wine barrel.

Of course, lots of wineries are making videos these days, but most of them are of little practical benefit to viewers. Jordan's videos are true educational tools. There's not only Chef Knoll's cooking videos, there are his videos on kitchen utensils, cutlery and other useful tips. And Jordan's Director of Hospitality, Nitsa Knoll, who went to floral design school (and is Chef Knoll's wife), has created videos on how to order flowers and make the perfect floral arrangements.

Chef Knoll created a special dish for *Wine Enthusiast* readers, Hawaiian Tiradito, which can be found by visiting www.winemag.com/hawaiiantiradito. This dish is "a cross between a traditional Latin ceviche with a Japanese sashimi preparation," says the Chef. He recommends pairing it with Jordan Chardonnay for the perfect beginning to a summer dinner.

Take a few moments to meet the Jordan family online, and don't forget to check out the videos. It's the next best thing to actually being at the winery in beautiful Sonoma County!

COLLECTIBLE BEAUJOLAIS

France's value red offers surprisingly high quality at the cru level.

BY ROGER VOSS

Beaujolais, the light-bodied red wine made in the central-eastern French region of the same name, is the epitome of a “likeable” wine—it has character, fresh berry-fruit flavors and an affordable price tag. In a sea of wine choices, it's a solid pick for a pure, pleasurable experience.

But at its top tier, or *cru* level, Beaujolais (not to be confused with Beaujolais Nouveau, which is fermented just a few weeks before being released for sale on the third Thursday of November), offers all of the approachability, but with additional texture and complexity.

Often selling for under \$20, these wines are made exclusively from the Gamay grape. They are packed with vibrant cherry and red berry flavors, are richly textured and offer a line of acidity that makes them excellent for pairing with food.

These better wines are the result of a recent trend: Producers are becoming more serious about their *cru* bottlings. A younger generation is putting quality above quantity. Many are turning to more natural ways of vineyard management, particularly organic and biodynamic.

A growing number of these producers are eschewing the classic early-drinking Beaujolais vinification techniques of whole-bunch, semi-carbonic maceration and employ the Burgundian red winemaking technique of destemming the grapes. The result is an increasingly impressive range of *cru* wines that have concentration, silky tannins and the ripe cherry fruit of Beaujolais.

The blossoming quality of Beaujolais *cru* wines remain a secret, especially to wine drinkers who are not fans of the more commercial

A CRU FOR EVERY MOMENT

The 10 Beaujolais *crus* are surprisingly different. Each has its own style. Some wines are for aging, others are for drinking now. Here's a quick guide to the 10, moving from the lightest to the most powerful. The light wines on the list are fruity, the dark ones tannic and ageworthy. Intriguingly, Gamay wines—particularly Morgon and Moulin-à-Vent—often become closer in taste to Pinot Noir as they age.



Régnié. The newest and softest of the *crus*, Régnié wines are rounded, perfumed and packed with cherry, cassis and strawberry flavors. The tannins are light, so wines are attractive young.

Age for: 1–3 years.



Brouilly. The largest and most southerly of the *crus*, Brouilly wines are ripe, soft and accessible. The style is fruity rather than perfumed, sometimes with a mineral character from the granite subsoil.

Age for: 1–4 years



Chiroubles. At an elevation of 1,200 feet, it's the highest of the *cru* villages and, as a consequence, the coolest in character. The wines have a delicious freshness and perfumed red fruits, often with distinct acidity when young.

Age for: 2–5 years



Côte de Brouilly. The Côte de Brouilly is a small appellation in the heart of the Brouilly appellation, on the slopes of Mont Brouilly. Côte de Brouilly often shows mineral character, with red cherry fruits and a strong tannic presence when young.

Age for: 1–5 years.

Beaujolais Nouveau. But these are superb early autumn wines for enjoying after the whites and rosés of the summer. Price-wise, they leave any Pinot Noir from further north in Burgundy at the starting blocks. Exciting producers and a variety of terroirs result in a range of flavors from the Gamay grape.

Two great though contrasting vintages (2009 and 2010) are on the market now, making it the perfect time to explore the 10 crus of Beaujolais.

“Very Beaujolais, a classic,” says Yves Dominique Ferraud of négociant Ferraud et Fils, speaking of the 2010 vintage. He says that 2009 “was fabulous, concentrated, but unique for us. [The 2010 vintage] is less complex, but more friendly—very easy to drink. Perhaps 2010 is less for aging, but that is often the pleasure of Beaujolais.”

Ferraud is on target: The 2009 vintage, beautiful throughout France, was exceptional in Beaujolais. The wines have firm tannins—lots of them—but they are barely noticeable amid the ripe, velvety fruit that surrounds them. Producers in Beaujolais expect these wines to age for many years.

The wines of 2010, the more typical Beaujolais of the two vintages, present the natural fruitiness of the Gamay grape with acidity and softer tannins. Even with these wines, though, there is some aging potential.

THE GROWERS

Domaine Dominique Piron. Using Burgundian winemaking techniques, Piron’s wines are powerful and concentrated, while retaining their essential fruitiness. Crus: Morgon, Chénas, Brouilly. Importer: Sherbrooke Cellars.

Domaine Louis-Claude Desvignes. Fine Beaujolais has been made here for generations, and these wines, made from some of the best vineyards in Morgon, are extremely ageworthy. Cru: Morgon. Importer: Louis Dressner Selections.

Marcel Lapiere. Following innovator Marcel Lapiere’s death last year at 60, his son, Mathieu, continues to fashion serious wines, often unfiltered and with no sulfur dioxide. Crus: Morgon. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant.

Domaine des Terres Dorées. Fruity, delicate wines with an approach that’s as natural as possible. Crus: Morgon, Moulin-à-Vent, Fleurie, Côte de Brouilly. Importer: Louis Dressner Selections

Robert Perroud. A winemaker whose product reflects the seriously sloping terroir. Crus: Brouilly, Côte de Brouilly. Importer: Wine Traditions.

Domaine du Vissoux. Although based in the south, Pierre-Marie Chermette’s wines cover the

gamut of Beaujolais. Many are deep, complex wines. Crus: Fleurie, Moulin-à-Vent, Brouilly. Importer: Weygandt-Metzler.

THE MERCHANTS

Château des Jacques. An estate owned by the Beaune-based négociant Louis Jadot. Manager Guillaume de Castelnau follows organic principles to fashion richly colored and flavored wines. Crus: Moulin-à-Vent, Morgon. Importer: Kobrand.

Georges Duboeuf. With a range of nearly 50 wines—including every cru—Georges Duboeuf covers Beaujolais. The great protagonist of Nouveau has now created a range of much more serious single-estate wines. Importer: W.J. Deutsch & Sons.

Mommessin. Owned by the Boisset family, Mommessin has adopted many Burgundian vinification methods to make richly satisfying wines from all the crus. Importer: OWS.

Henry Fessy. Since its purchase by Louis Latour, the wines of Henry Fessy (with their signature handlebar mustache label) have improved every year. Each of the major crus are represented in the portfolio. Importer: Louis Latour Inc. >>>



Chénas. The least known of all the crus (due to small production), these wines start out soft, yet age well. Red fruits dominate the generous tannins. These can be remarkable bargains.

Age for: 1–6 years



Fleurie. Fleurie wines are among the most expensive of Beaujolais crus, which is not always justified. The wines have floral aromas, a rounded and rich character and tannins that sit comfortably in the dense fruits.

Age for: 2–6 years



Saint-Amour. Wine of choice for Saint Valentine’s Day and, of course, for lovers. In fact, the village at the far north of Beaujolais is said to be named after a Roman soldier, St. Amateur, who converted to Christianity. This wine is very fruity, floral and rich with well-integrated tannins.

Age for: 1–5 years.



Juliéna. Powerful wines come from this northern cru village. Raspberries, violets and spice give the wines an exotic, fruity character. Their dense texture is what sets these wines apart from other crus.

Age for: 2–5 years



Moulin-à-Vent. Named after the windmill on the highest point of the appellation, Moulin-à-Vent produces powerful wines that are intense and tannic when young. They have all the Gamay fruitiness, in addition to excellent structure.

Age for: 2–8 years



Morgon. The big Beaujolais, Morgon hails from some of the finest vineyard sites of all the crus. Taking their power from the schist and volcanic soils around the Mont de Py, these solid, structured and richly fruited wines can easily age.

Age for: 10 years

For Beaujolais reviews, visit winemag.com/buyingguide



Making wine in Beaujolais

If you've dreamed of harvesting grapes in France, head for Beaujolais. It's one of only two wine regions in France where the grapes must, by law, be picked by hand (the other is Champagne). The reason: to ensure the thin-skinned Gamay grapes reach the winery intact.

Winemakers use a variation on carbonic maceration for many wines (especially the less expensive wines, such as Beaujolais Nouveau). Fermenting whole berries in closed tanks filled with carbon dioxide brings out color quickly and gets the light, fruity, soft-tannin wine ready for market in a few weeks. A telltale sign that the wine has been fermented in this fashion is the suggestion of banana that can creep in, particularly in late harvest years like 2010, when there is a short time between harvest and Nouveau release.

Many of the more serious wines, such as crus Beaujolais, are fermented traditionally. In Beaujolais, they call it Burgundy-style vinification. There is a division between some home-grown Beaujolais producers who like their carbonic maceration and want their wine younger and fruitier, and the producers (such as the Burgundy merchants from Beaune who produce and bottle Beaujolais) who make wine for aging. Sometimes it's noted on the bottle. Otherwise, ask the seller.

THE GAMAY FICTION

Gamay is another European grape that appeared to have an "illicit suitcase" arrival in California when a winemaker brought clones thought to be Gamay to the U.S. in the 1970s. First, the plants were fictitiously named "Gamay Beaujolais" and then "Napa Gamay." The clones weren't Gamay. Both names are now banned on U.S. labels.

Beaujolais and food

With its integrated tannins, great fruit and fresh acidity, Beaujolais is just right for so many foods. In Beaujolais, the wines are sipped with stews, cold cuts, salami, chicken and hard cheeses, such as Cantal from the mountains to the west. The wine is also commonly paired with fish and scallops.

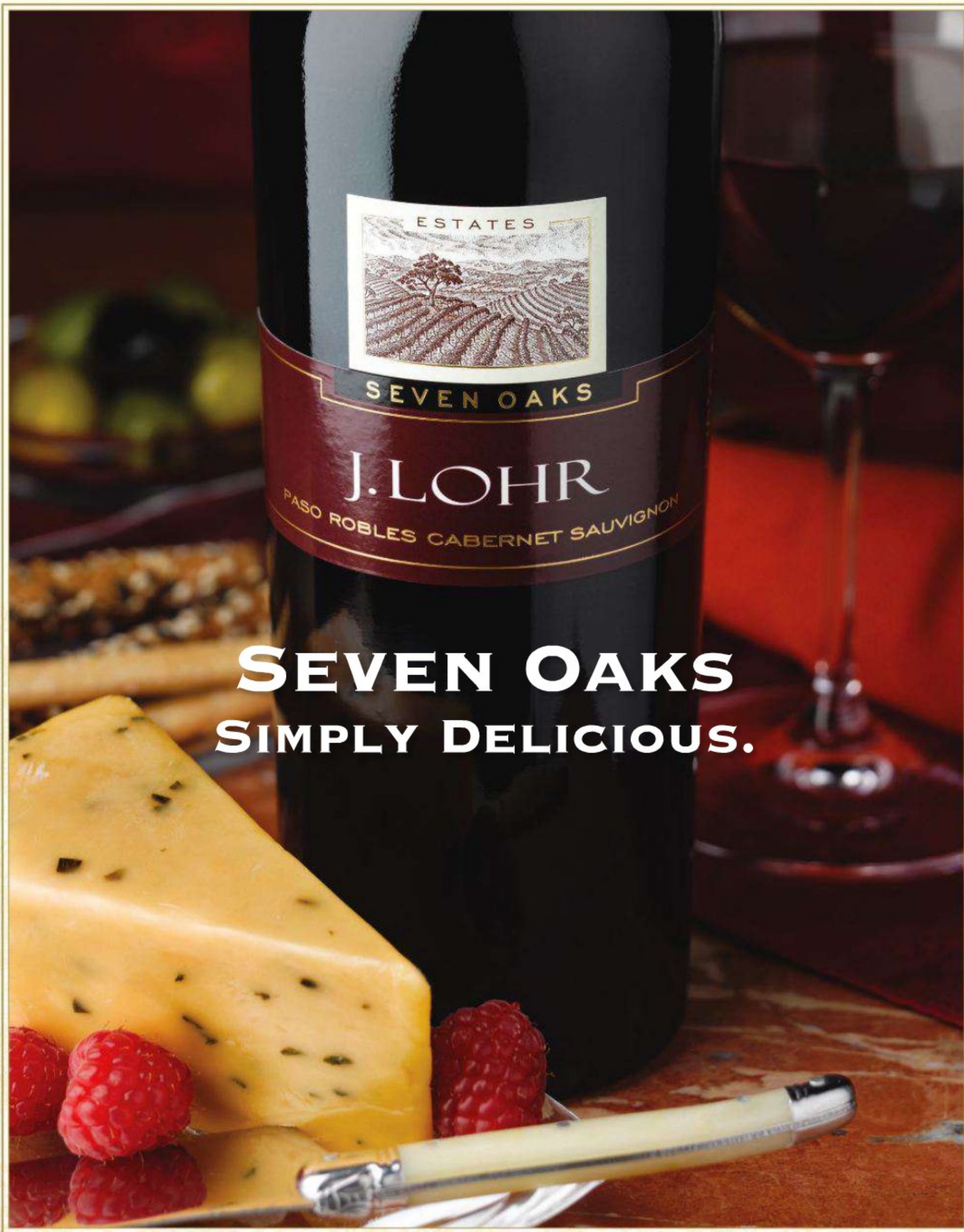
Beaujolais is always the wine touted for Thanksgiving—and let's be frank, the meal is a mélange of all kinds of flavors. The light tannins in Beaujolais bring those traditional tastes together, or at least keep creamed cauliflower and cranberry salad from colliding with the wine. Remember, the Beaujolais often slightly chill their red table wines. (Try an hour in the fridge, not three hours in the freezer.)

But it's even more versatile than that—a light cru, such as Régnié or Brouilly, will complement a fruit crumble, red fruits or an almond tart.

Visiting Beaujolais

The landscape of Beaujolais is as attractive as its wines. The wine road crosses bucolic landscapes, deep valleys and rolling hills, always with views out to the Saône Valley and the Alps to the east. Red-roof-tiled villages with evocative names offer great eating, B&Bs and some exceptional hotels. And it's within an hour of Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport (LYS) and a TGV railroad station that deposits you direct from Paris. The northern cru vineyards are less than 30 minutes south of Burgundy's Mâcon. 🍷

For travel tips on visiting Beaujolais, visit winemag.com/beaujolaistravel



**SEVEN OAKS
SIMPLY DELICIOUS.**

J. LOHR
VINEYARDS & WINES

sun-drenched SICILIAN classics

The melting pot of the ancient world, Sicily now offers cuisine and wines that reflect its disparate roots—and volcanic soil.

by **monica lerner**

photos by jon van gorder

If you were to condense the Italian experience into a single, keepsake moment, that memory could be of a visit to Palermo's vibrant Il Capo street market. The sounds, smells and colors there create one of the most authentic snapshots of Italy. Housewives spread laundry from overhead windows. Three-wheeled Piaggio Apes honk through the pulsing crowd of determined shoppers and feisty vendors. And everywhere: abundance.

This is what sets Il Capo apart. It is a showcase for the country's bounty, in the overproportioned size of the vegetables, the bright saturation of the fruit colors and the sheer variety of seafood and shellfish on display.

It comes as no surprise that Sicily, at the heart of the Mediterranean, played a role in the lives of all the goddesses dedicated to fertility, from Ceres to Demeter, and Venus to Aphrodite. From the time of the ancients who spun those myths, Sicily has evolved a highly sophisticated and complex culinary tradition that matches the impressive caliber of other

hot-climate cuisines, like those found in India, Mexico and Morocco.

"The sun provides us with the key to understanding Sicilian food," says Anna Tasca Lanza, who has written several books on her native island's cuisine and founded its most important cooking school. "The sun is a powerful natural force that blesses everything that grows in Sicily with intense flavor and shapes the daily life of its people."

Besides its favorable climate and fertile growing conditions, Sicily is heavily shaped by the outside forces that skirted its perimeters

throughout civilization. Its strategic positioning made it a natural resting spot for the Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans. The Greeks are said to have introduced olive trees and grapevines for oil and wine, while the Romans accumulated vast stockpiles of durum wheat and other grains.

The most significant growth in Sicilian cuisine came with the Arab domination of the island that started in A.D. 827 and continued for hundreds of years. While the rest of Europe was experiencing the Dark Ages, Sicily experienced its own gastronomic renaissance.

The Arabs brought the technology for irrigation aqueducts and smaller, more diversified farming plots. They also imported key ingredients such as noodles, citrus, rice and, most importantly, sugar. These opened new horizons for Sicilian food. Sweet and sour contrasts, found in such dishes as eggplant caponata with vinegar and capers, originated during this time. The Arabs were also responsible for the island's famous desserts, which feature honey, almonds and pistachios.



Couscous alla
Trapanese



a culinary point of pride in the area around Trapani in southwestern Sicily. It represents one of the most obvious examples of Arab influence found in Sicilian cuisine, with North Africa only 200 miles away. Variations of the dish, which are plentiful, rely on whatever the local fishermen have caught that morning.

Born in the port city of Catania on the east side of the island, Pasta alla Norma was named after Vincenzo Bellini's lyrical opera *Norma*, featuring a tormented high priestess—the role has challenged soprano singers since the work was first produced in 1831. Legend says the dish was invented at a tavern located near Catania's Teatro Massimo Bellini opera house. After seeing the opera, a tavern client praised the dish's abundant flavors and declared it “just like *Norma*.”

Involtini (meat rolls barbecued on skewers, also called *spiedini*) is said to have originated in the town of Bagheria, near Palermo. On the other side of the island near Catania, they are known as *sasizzeddi*, and spicy salami is added to the filling.

Think of the abundant offerings of fresh ingredients found at Il Capo market as you stroll the farmers' market closest to you.

Couscous alla Trapanese

With the soft texture of the semolina flour enhanced by the delicate nature of the seafood, this dish makes an excellent companion to a structured Sicilian white wine or light red. Unlike the meat couscous made in Tunisia and Algeria, the Sicilian expression is not heavy or overtly spicy.

For the fish broth and COUSCOUS:

4 cups water

1 large white onion, chopped

1 carrot, peeled and roughly chopped

1 celery stalk, roughly chopped

2 bay leaves

10 black peppercorns, whole

10 ounces white-fleshed fish

Salt to taste

14 ounces couscous

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

3 tablespoons broad leaf Italian parsley,
finely chopped

“Sicilian cuisine is a blend of different cultures and races,” says Chef Ciccio Sultano, who infuses many classic recipes with a modern touch at Ristorante Duomo in Ragusa Ibla. “It really is the most complex and complete in Europe.”

After the Arabs came the Spaniards, who introduced the flavors of the New World: peppers, tomatoes, potatoes, corn, beans, zucchini and eggplant. In the mid-19th century, the British established a benign military

presence in Sicily's port city of Marsala. As they did with Port and Madeira, the British experimented with fortifying the local wines; the seeds of Sicily's powerhouse wine industry were sown at this time.

The three recipes presented here not only represent Sicily's classic dishes, but they also reflect the international influences that continue to shape local cuisine.

One of the most elaborate but rewarding classics from Sicily is seafood couscous,

For the fish sauce:

- 4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pound peeled tomatoes (fresh or canned)
- 5 to 10 saffron threads
- ½ large chili pepper
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 cups water
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 pounds fresh seafood, cleaned;
any combination of red mullet or bream
prawns, calamari, mussels or shrimp
- 3 tablespoons broad leaf Italian
parsley, chopped

To make fish broth:

In a large pot, add water, onion, carrot, celery, bay leaves, black peppercorns and fish and simmer for 25 minutes. Strain the broth through a cheesecloth, reserving the liquid and discarding the solids. Season with salt to taste.

To cook couscous:

Pour the couscous grains into a large sauté pan set over low heat. Add the hot fish broth and olive oil, stirring continuously with a wooden spoon until the grains absorb all the moisture and are soft, but not clumpy. Mix in the chopped parsley at the end.

To make the fish sauce:

In a large pot, sauté the garlic and onion in olive oil until transparent. Add the tomatoes, saffron, chili pepper and salt, and cook for 35 minutes, making sure the tomatoes are fully stewed.

Add water and tomato paste to keep the sauce from becoming too reduced. Add the fish, starting with the seafood that takes the longest to cook—beginning with the calamari and ending with the red mullet or bream. Simmer until the sauce has the consistency of a creamy soup. Finish with parsley.

To serve:

Place a small portion of couscous in a serving bowl and top with fish soup. *Serves 4.*

Wine Recommendations:

This elegant dish would pair well with Planeta's Cometa, a concentrated Fiano-based white wine with a long finish.



If you prefer red wine, another interesting match would be a Cerasuolo di Vittoria from COS, a bio-dynamic producer that ages its wines in clay amphorae.

Pasta alla Norma

Topped with fried eggplant and salted ricotta cheese, this Sicilian classic ranks high on any list of Italy's best pasta dishes. The freshness and simplicity of the ingredients, as well as the brilliant juxtaposition of sweet tomato and eggplant with savory cheese, are what set it apart.

- 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon extra virgin
olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 pound peeled tomatoes, fresh or canned

Salt and pepper to taste

- 10 to 15 large basil leaves, cleaned, divided
- 2 medium eggplants, unpeeled, cut into
inch-long cubes
- 14 ounces maccheroni pasta
(or large tubes)
- 7 ounces ricotta salata

In a large skillet, fry the garlic in a tablespoon of the olive oil until soft and light gold in color. Add the tomatoes, salt, pepper and half the basil leaves and simmer for 25 minutes. In a second skillet, add the full cup of olive oil, until it fills up ½ inch of the skillet; fry the cubed eggplant until crispy and golden.

Boil the pasta in a large pot of salted water. Drain and place in a large bowl. Mix in the tomato sauce until the pasta is evenly coated. Remove the fried





For a classic and delicious Formaggio All' Argentiera recipe, visit [winemag.com / sicilianclassics](http://winemag.com/sicilianclassics)

eggplant from the oil and pat dry with a paper towel until the excess oil is removed. Add the eggplant over the pasta and sauce so that the cubes remain crunchy and piping hot. Using the side of the cheese grater that produces thick shreds, grate the fresh ricotta salata over the pasta and fried eggplant. Garnish with the remaining basil leaves. *Serves 4.*

Wine Recommendations:

This easy dish could pair with a white, rosé or a light red wine, but the excellent wines of Mount Etna are ideal. For a white, Benanti's Pietramarina, made with Carricante, fits the bill. But for an



Etna red that delivers both the bouquet and power to pair with a dish like this, try Tenuta delle Terre Nere's Guardiola.

Involtini alla Siciliana

Despite Sicily's irresistible abundance of fresh fish and vegetables, meat dishes also feature regularly in Sicilian cuisine. There are any number of variations of involtini. Veal or even swordfish can be substituted for the pork, and the rolls can be grilled or fried in olive oil.

For the filling:

- 1 onion, chopped
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 10 ounces breadcrumbs

- 10 ounces grated cheese (either aged caciocavallo, pecorino or Parmigiano-Reggiano)
- 2 ounces white raisins
- 2 ounces pine nuts
- Salt and pepper to taste

For the meat rolls:

- 2 pounds pork chops, boned and flattened with a meat pounder
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 2 large whole onions, cut into 1½-inch segments
- 20 fresh bay leaves

Make the filling:

Place the chopped onion in a large skillet with a tablespoon of olive oil and fry until soft and transparent. Set aside to cool. In a large bowl, combine breadcrumbs, cheese, raisins, pine nuts, salt and pepper. Add the onion. Mix well with your hands, adding a tablespoon or more of olive oil to keep the mixture moist. The filling should be soft and compact without crumbling.

Prepare the pork:

Section the pork so that you have 20 pieces. Rub the pieces with olive oil on both sides and sprinkle with salt. Add about a tablespoon of the filling onto the pork chop and roll tightly. Using bamboo* or metal skewers, first impale one onion segment, one bay leaf and one pork roll, repeating until 5 pork rolls are placed; onion should enclose the skewer on both sides. When finished, drizzle over more olive oil and roll over any remaining breadcrumbs to lock in softness and moisture. Grill until pork registers 140°F on an instant-read thermometer, or is slightly pink in the center. Makes 4 skewers with 5 meat rolls each.

**Note: Soak bamboo skewers briefly in water beforehand to prevent them from catching fire.*

Wine Recommendations:

Sicilian reds can match the smoky flavor of this dish. Try the Nero d'Avola-based Rosso del Conte by Tasca d'Almerita, which offers bold flavors of red fruit, firm structure and great evolution in the glass, or the streamlined elegance of Firiato's Ribeca, made from the native Pericone variety.



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Côte-Rôtie
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Always Right

>>> ***What's So Special About***

East Oakville?

SOIL.

In Napa Valley's most distinctive wine subregion, dirt makes the difference.

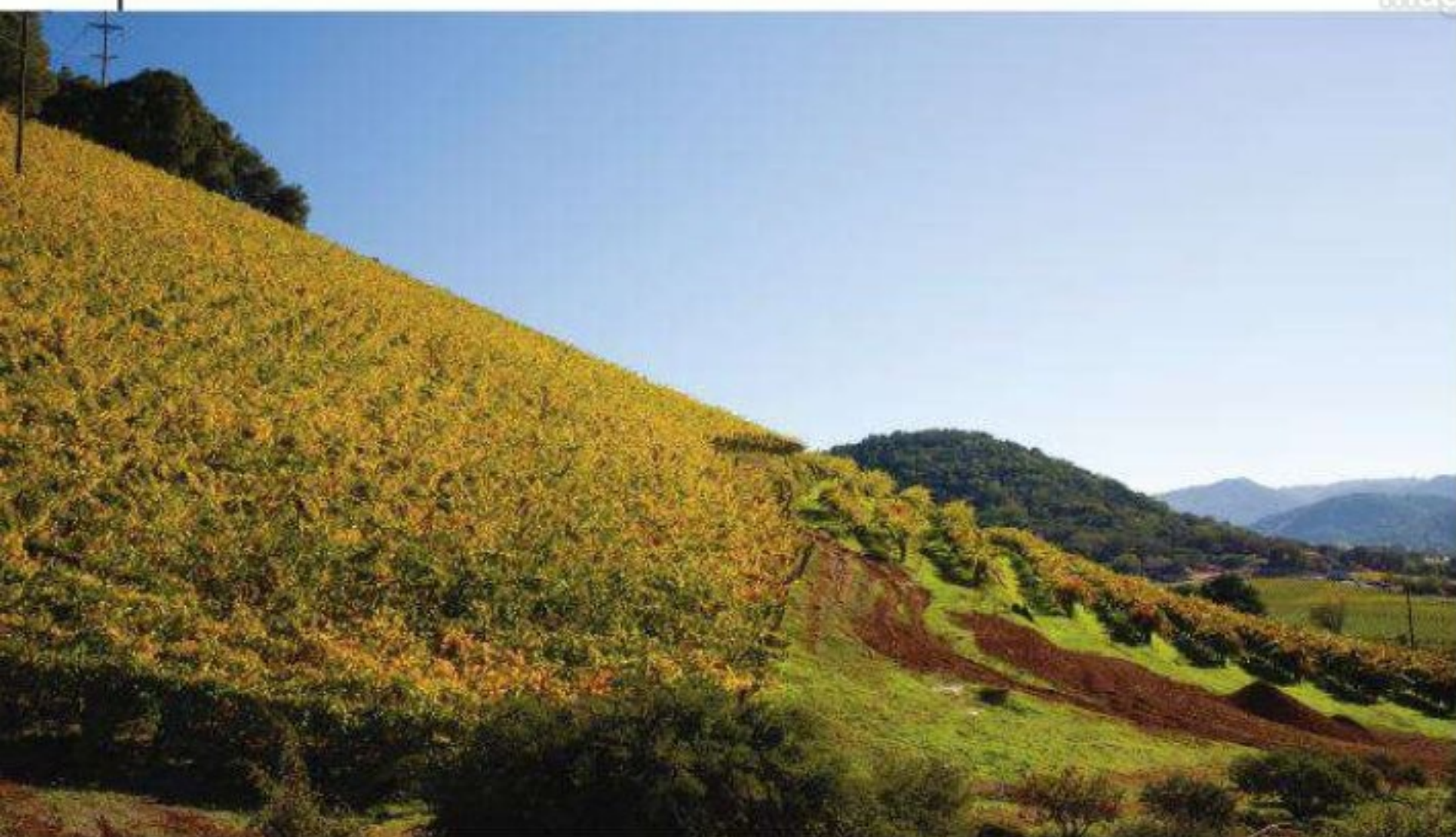
BY STEVE HEIMOFF

The taste of blood. That's how Kristof Anderson describes the saline, minerally tang that the red, volcanic soils of East Oakville give to Cabernet Sauvignon. He's winemaker at Gargiulo Vineyards, whose vineyard is just west of the Silverado Trail.

You can see this dramatic landscape 500 feet up in the mountains at Dalla Valle, where the dirt is red, as are the rocks and boulders. You can see it next door, at Joseph Phelps's Backus Vineyard, and much higher up the mountain, at Oakville Ranch's estate.

Lower down the hill, it colors Tierra Roja's little vineyard, just east of the Silverado Trail. Across the Trail, red earth and stones grace the vineyards of Harbison, Screaming Eagle, Rudd, Bond St. Eden and Gargiulo before coming to an end at PlumpJack, where an ancient avalanche of dirt ceased. There, you can see the soil change to the more alluvial browns of the Napa Valley floor.

The dozen or so wineries whose estate vineyards boast these red soils feel they have a special story to tell, but it's not a story of unsought cult stereotyping, allocations and closed mailing lists. It's dirt, beginning with how the red dirt came to be.



Jonathan Swinchatt and David G. Howell, in their book *The Winemaker's Dance* (University of California Press, 2004), propose this theory: Millions of years ago, a catastrophic geologic event approximately 1,500 feet up in the Vaca Mountains caused a massive earthen collapse, which sent hundreds of feet of iron-rich debris cascading down the slopes.

As the hill leveled off at the valley floor, they suggest, the debris flow lost momentum and eventually halted, but not before littering a few square miles with coarse material that eroded into red clay loam. The color is the result of oxidized, or rusted, iron, a prime constituent of volcanic basalt.

The soil fascinates those who deal with it. "An interesting dirt! I never dealt with soil of that color," says Armand de Maigret, Screaming Eagle's estate manager. On a sunny day, the red glows with incandescence.

"When we cut the terraces for our vineyard and the fresh dirt was turned over, you could see this blazing, volcanic red [soil] from across the valley," says Linda Neal, Tierra Roja's proprietor. The Mexican field hands who helped develop her property gave Spanish names to the local vineyards they called ranchos. "They called ours Rancho de la Tierra Roja," she says, which translates to red dirt ranch. Neal says that they decided to adopt the name in homage to the people who worked the ground.

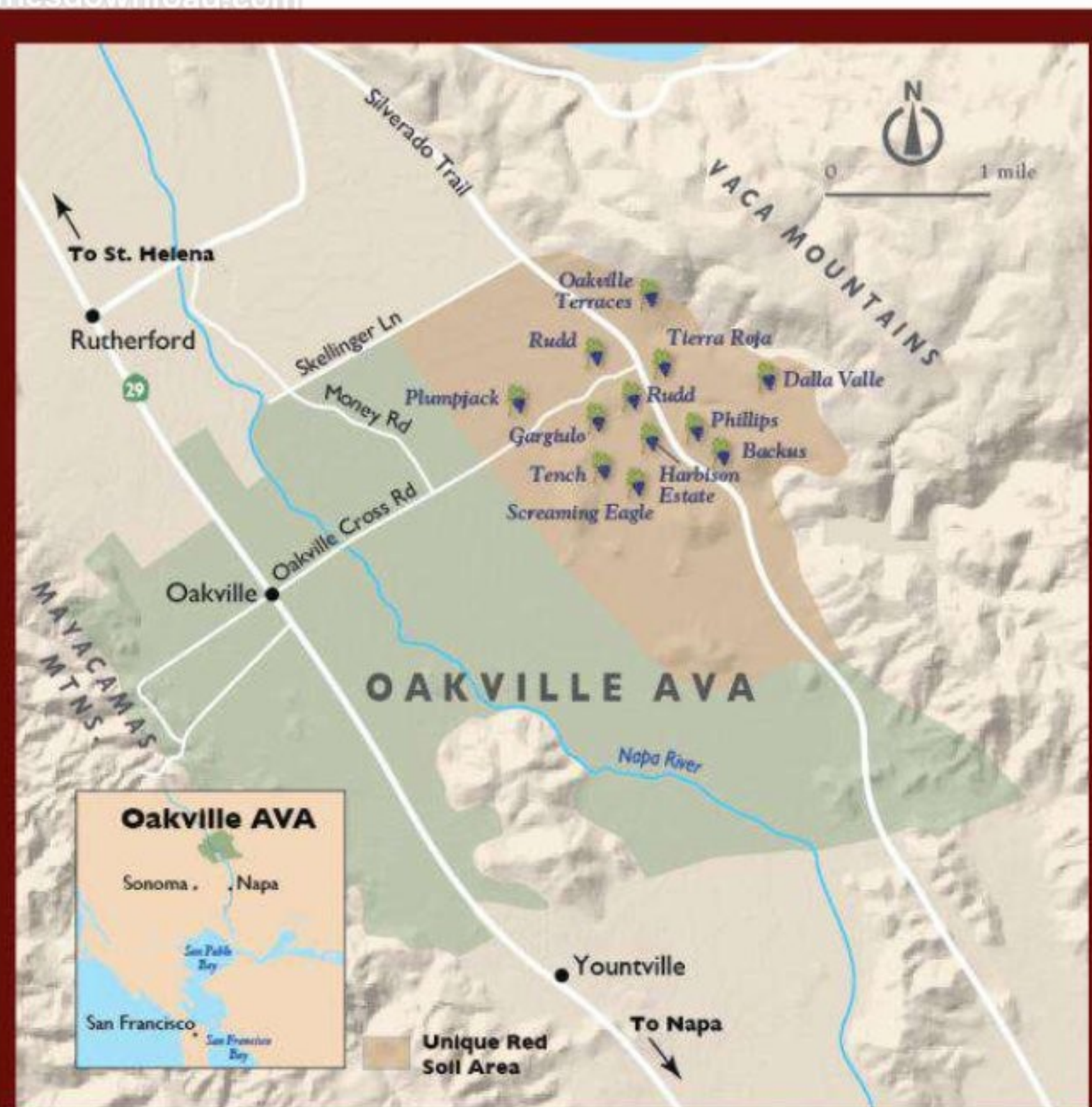
Since at least Roman times, red dirt has been considered beneficial for wines, although exactly why is a bit of a mystery. "I don't know if there's a tie-in between red soils and vine quality," says John Piña, a vineyard manager who has worked on many of the area's vineyards, "but when you look at all the places with red soils, they're my favorites for drinking red wine."

A word on the wines

To see how East Oakville's red dirt influences the wines' character, it is instructive to look at Dalla Valle's 20-acre vineyard, which resembles the inside of a glowing crater, surrounded on three sides by the collapsed Vaca ramparts. Dalla Valle's winemaker, Andy Erickson (who resigned as winemaker for Screaming Eagle back in December 2010), believes the soil's high iron content lends the wines "great minerality and good natural acidity."

You can taste the minerality in Dalla Valle's 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon, from barrel. It provides a firmness, a groundwork for the fruit. And while the winery's 2009 Maya Bordeaux-style blend,

Backus Vineyard's steep slope provides intensity to fruit for Joseph Phelps.



The shaded area shows the extent of the landslide's red soil, extending hundreds of yards from the foot of the mountains westward onto the valley floor before halting near today's PlumpJack. The valley floor itself consists of flood plain deposits of silt, clay and pebbles.

also tasted from barrel, is lush, sexier and sweeter, that same firmness remains detectable.

In general, you'll find East Oakville Cabernets and blends marked by luscious early drinkability, ripe fruit and tannins, savory minerality and alcohol on the high side, but not too high. Specific fruit flavors are, of course, dependent on the blend. More Cabernet will bring more blackberries and cassis. Cabernet Franc is very popular on the east side due to the extra heat, which the red rocks and soil accentuate. When it's grown in overly cool locations, Franc can have a leafy green note that's undesirable. The east side's warmth keeps a touch of that herb, but fattens it up with cherries. Combined with caramelized new oak, the flavors can include chocolate.

That mineral taste and texture, what Anderson calls "blood," is hard to put into words. De Maigret shies away from specific associations with iron, much less blood. However, he says the red dirt brings "a specific grain in the tannins," grain being a good thing because it implies textural finesse.

Some wines, such as Bond St. Eden, are more overtly tannic than their neighbors. That's partly attributed to house style, and also because the St. Eden vineyard faces north, "so it's cooler than the surrounding area," says estate manager Paul Roberts. Still, the typical East Oakville Cabernet will exhibit enough of that graininess to make it smooth and round, right out of the bottle.

Heat

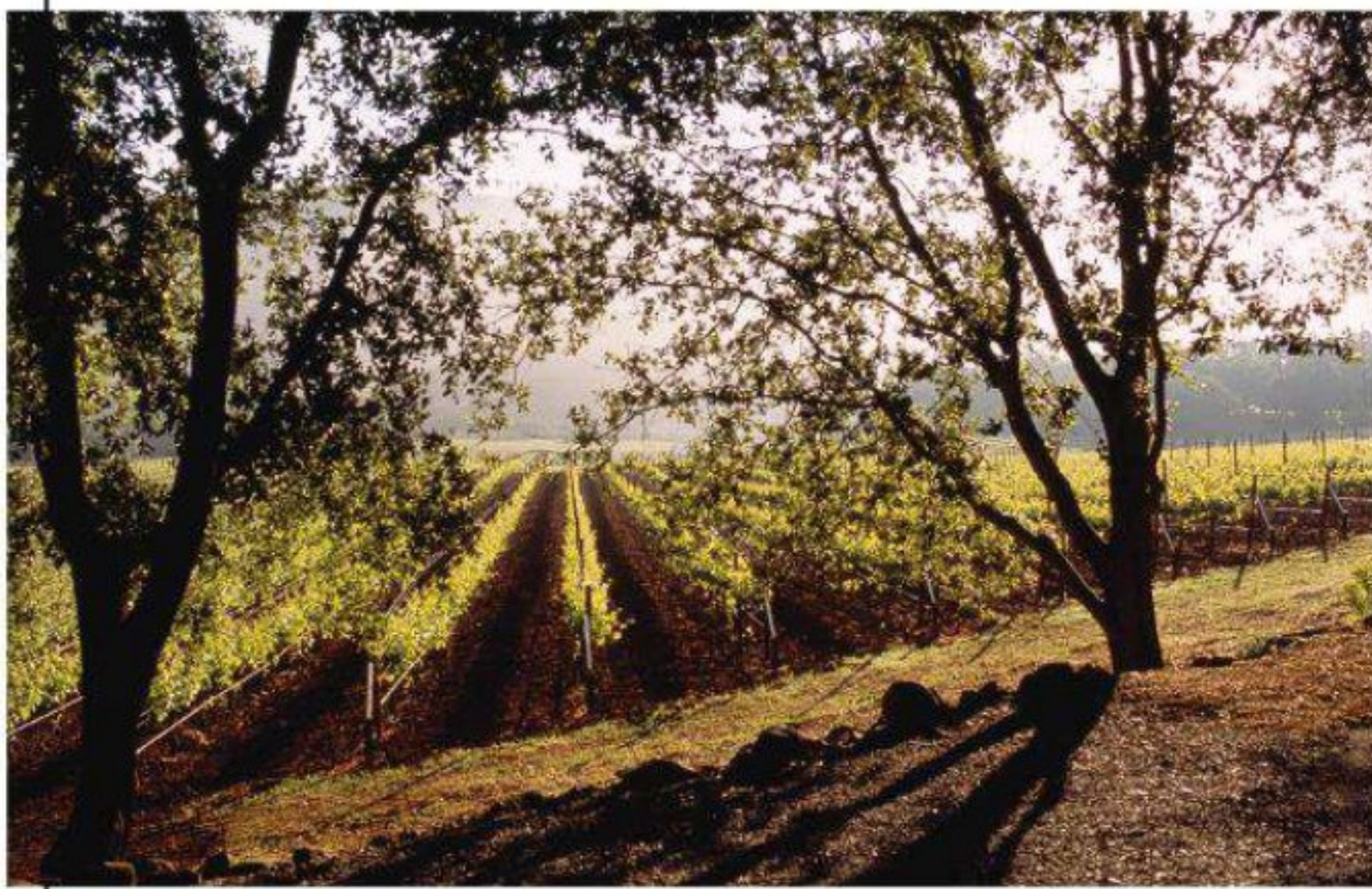
In the early afternoon on a warm June day, Erickson and I are walking through Dalla Valle's vineyard when, abruptly, a cooling breeze kicks in

IT MUST BE JOB REVIEW TIME AGAIN!



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tion. If you ever wondered why East Oakville's wines are so expensive—good luck finding anything below \$100—a big reason is that vintners ruthlessly cut off shriveled grapes, further reducing crop yields that are miserly to begin with. What doesn't get dropped in the vineyard is hand-sorted at the winery by professional teams that add to the cost of labor.

Top: St. Eden Vineyard, north of the Oakville Cross Road, provides fruit for Bond; bottom: Harbison Vineyard.

The heat, however, may bring an advantage. Since east-side vineyards ripen earlier than those on the west (Joseph Phelps Winemaker Ashley Hepworth says Backus is always the first of the winery's vineyards to ripen), the grapes will be in before early rains can strike, as they did in 2008. The heat also is a good thing in cool vintages, which California notably has experienced since 2005, and especially in 2009 and 2010. "We do great in cold years," Rudd's winery director, Kenny Koda, says. "The sugar slows down, so we can get great flavor development at very acceptable alcohol levels."

Still, the occasional East Oakville Cabernet can be excessively ripe and hot, as Oakville Ranch's 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, with 15.6% alcohol by volume, shows.

Still, the occasional East Oakville Cabernet can be excessively ripe and hot, as Oakville Ranch's 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, with 15.6% alcohol by volume, shows.

The question of blends

Joe Harbison planted his vineyard solely to Cabernet Sauvignon "because in this dirt, it has to be Cabernet," he says. Yet, most of the wines of East Oakville are blends.

The decision of whether to craft a blend or a 100% Cabernet, as always, is based on house styles and individual preferences. Linda Neal's Tierra Roja 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon is somewhat more austere and masculine than, say, Dalla Valle's Maya (62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 38% Cabernet Franc), or Gargiulo's flamboyant 2007 OVX G Major Seven, a blend of the two Cabernets with Petit Verdot, but it's still a mighty good wine.

Hepworth, at Phelps, adds Petit Verdot to the Backus blend "for color and backbone," but adds, "We don't really need it," because the Cabernet by itself has good color and plenty of structure.

The quintessential East Oakville wines on the market now include Oakville East's 2008 Core Stone, a blend that's ripe and showy. It's not dissimilar to the Joseph Phelps 2007 Backus Cabernet Sauvignon, the Maybach 2008 Weitz Vineyard Materium Cabernet Sauvignon or, for that matter, the Gargiulo 2008 OVX Cabernet Sauvignon. All are awesome in fruit, with a mouthfeel of pure velvet and the tangy minerality that gives the richness a kick. Many, if not most, were aged in 100% new French oak, or something close to 100%. But they have such intense fruit that the wood doesn't feel overpowering.

And all are ageable. Dalla Valle's 1994 Cabernet Sauvignon, for example, is still firm and tannic, while the 1994 Maya has years ahead. Tierra Roja's 2003 and 2004 Cabernet Sauvignons are just at the beginning of their journeys. Of course, alcohol levels were lower in the past than now: The 1994 Maya had 13.5% alcohol by volume, while the 2009 clocks in at 14.8%. One can legitimately question whether the new Dalla Valles will last as long as the old ones. Still, 10 years at a minimum seems a lock.

It's hard to go wrong when you start with such blessed fruit. Linda Neal says it best, when asked why she planted the Tierra Roja vineyard entirely to Cabernet Sauvignon: "Because this is magical ground for Cabernet." 🍷

from the south. It comes up from Carneros via the Stags Leap District fairly consistently around this time every day. "If it was perfectly clear, you could see the [San Pablo] Bay from here," Erickson says.

That cooling breeze is vital to counterbalance the second most significant terroir factor that marks East Oakville: heat. "It gets real hot over here, with the direct afternoon sunlight," says Anderson. East Oakville catches the full brunt of the late-day sun, even as the cooler slopes of West Oakville (Harlan Estate, Futo, Far Niente, Bond Vecina) begin to be shaded by the wall of the Mayacamas.

"The difference east to west is dramatic," says Heidi Peterson Barrett, who's been the winemaker for five Oakville wineries, including Dalla Valle, Screaming Eagle and Showket, which was bought by Peter Michael in 2009. Its first new wines will be released in 2013.

In a heat spike, the results in the east can be catastrophic. "We lost 50% of our crop during last year's [2010] August heat wave, when the temperature hit 115 degrees," says Tierra Roja's Neal. The extreme heat was one reason (the infertility of the soil was another) why Napa Valley vintners historically settled the west side and avoided the unwelcoming east. "To farm over here would have been considered crazy 50 years ago," says Anderson.

East-siders try various things to mitigate the heat, such as misting (Rudd) and changing row direction from north-south to east-west to shelter grape bunches from the afternoon sun (Dalla Valle).

Another strategy is draconian grape selec-



SPECIAL MARKET OPPORTUNITY



Your Expert Guide to the World's Finest Coins

Nicholas J. Bruyer, Chairman & Founder, First Federal Coin Corp.
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It wasn't more than ten years ago that we met with former U.S. Mint Director Donna Pope. She spoke with pride about what she considered to be her greatest achievement as Director under President Reagan: Creation of the American Eagle silver and gold bullion coin programs, the first of their kind in our nation's history.

The purpose of these coins was to give people the opportunity to own physical silver and gold in a form certified for weight and purity by the U.S. Mint. While the bullion coin program was a signal success, nobody took into account the profound effect it would have on the collector market.

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In the 1800s and early 1900s, the U.S. Morgan Silver Dollar was struck year upon year at various mints and circulated at face value. Their core value was in their precious metal content. However, in top grades, Morgan Silver Dollars can sell today for tens and even hundreds of thousands of dollars each!

For the same reason, many collectors today see the Silver Eagle series as a literal "ground floor" opportunity to acquire the top-grade coins as they are released. They started submitting Silver Eagles to the leading independent coin grading services, Professional Coin Grading Service (PCGS) and Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC), praying that the coins would come back with the highest possible grade: MS70 (all Uncirculated coins are graded on a point system from a low of 60 to a high of 70, with 70 representing flawless perfection). Of all the Silver Eagles produced by the U.S. Mint in 2010, less than one out of every 681 earned the NGC MS70 grade!

MS70 = \$\$\$\$\$!

In the rarified atmosphere of MS70, Silver Eagles have soared to market prices that I can only characterize as surreal. Consider this: MS70 Silver Eagles have been selling for truly stratospheric prices. Here are just a few eye-popping examples:

1996 MS70 Silver Eagle	\$5,690
1988 MS70 Silver Eagle	\$3,190
1991 MS70 Silver Eagle	\$2,810
1994 MS70 Silver Eagle	\$1,470

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This Early Release certification can turbo charge the value of an already valuable MS70 coin. For example, a MS70 2006 20th Anniversary Silver Eagle from the West Point Mint is valued at \$2,000—but add the NGC "Early Release" pedigree and the value skyrockets to \$2,995—that's 50% more!



Actual size is 40.6 mm

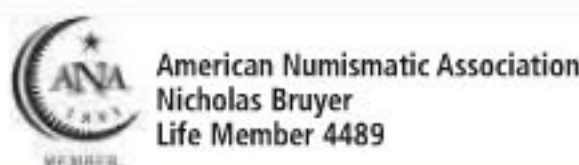
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barreling down the

Kentucky Bourbon Trail

Savor Bourbon's flavor along this 70-mile tasting trail in the heart of Bluegrass Country.

BY KARA NEWMAN

No doubt about it—central Kentucky is Bourbon Country. Steeped in over 200 years of history, the essence of Bourbon flows from the area's limestone-rich water, which is essential to its production. It springs from the ground, in the corn required to constitute at least 51% of the spirit.

The spirit of Bourbon, however, is most deeply rooted in people—the distillers who make the stuff, the bartenders who mix it and, of course, the visitors who drink it.

For travelers to Bourbon Country, finding the best place to taste is the real adventure.

Perhaps choose a quaff straight up while winding down a distillery tour, the caramel fragrance of the rickhouse still lingering in the air. Maybe Bourbon is best enjoyed on the rocks at one of the historic hotel bars. Or perhaps it's shaken into a cocktail, flanked by a plate of locally made duck prosciutto.

Here's a potential itinerary for a Kentucky Bourbon Trail journey, with a singular goal: capturing the history, character and diversity of what makes Bourbon and the place in which it's made so special.

Day 1:

Bardstown and Loretto

Starting from downtown Louisville (recommended as the home base for this outing), head to Bardstown and make your first distillery stop **Heaven Hill** (heavenhill.com). It offers a large Bourbon Heritage Center, a comprehensive ex-



Barrel room at Heaven Hill Distillery.

PHOTO: © FRED MINNICK; BOTTLES: JON VAN GORDER



NOB CREEK
aged nine years
SINGLE BARREL RESERVE
KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY
DISTILLED AT
BY KNOB CREEK DISTILLERY, CLERMONT, OHIO
60% ALC./VOL. (120 PROOF)

Michter's
Small Batch
Bourbon
EST. 1753
USA

Blanton's
THE ORIGINAL
SINGLE BARREL
BOURBON WHISKEY
This whiskey dumped on
street in Warehouse
from Barrel No. 29
on Rick No. 19
selected, filtered and bottled by hand at 93 Proof
46% ALC./VOL. (93 PROOF)

Maker's 46
KENTUCKY BOURBON WHISKEY
BARREL FINISHED WITH OAK STAVES
94 PROOF (47% ALC/VOL.)
750ml

ELIJAH CRAIG
KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY
Years **12** Old
47% ALC/VOL (94 PROOF)
750ml

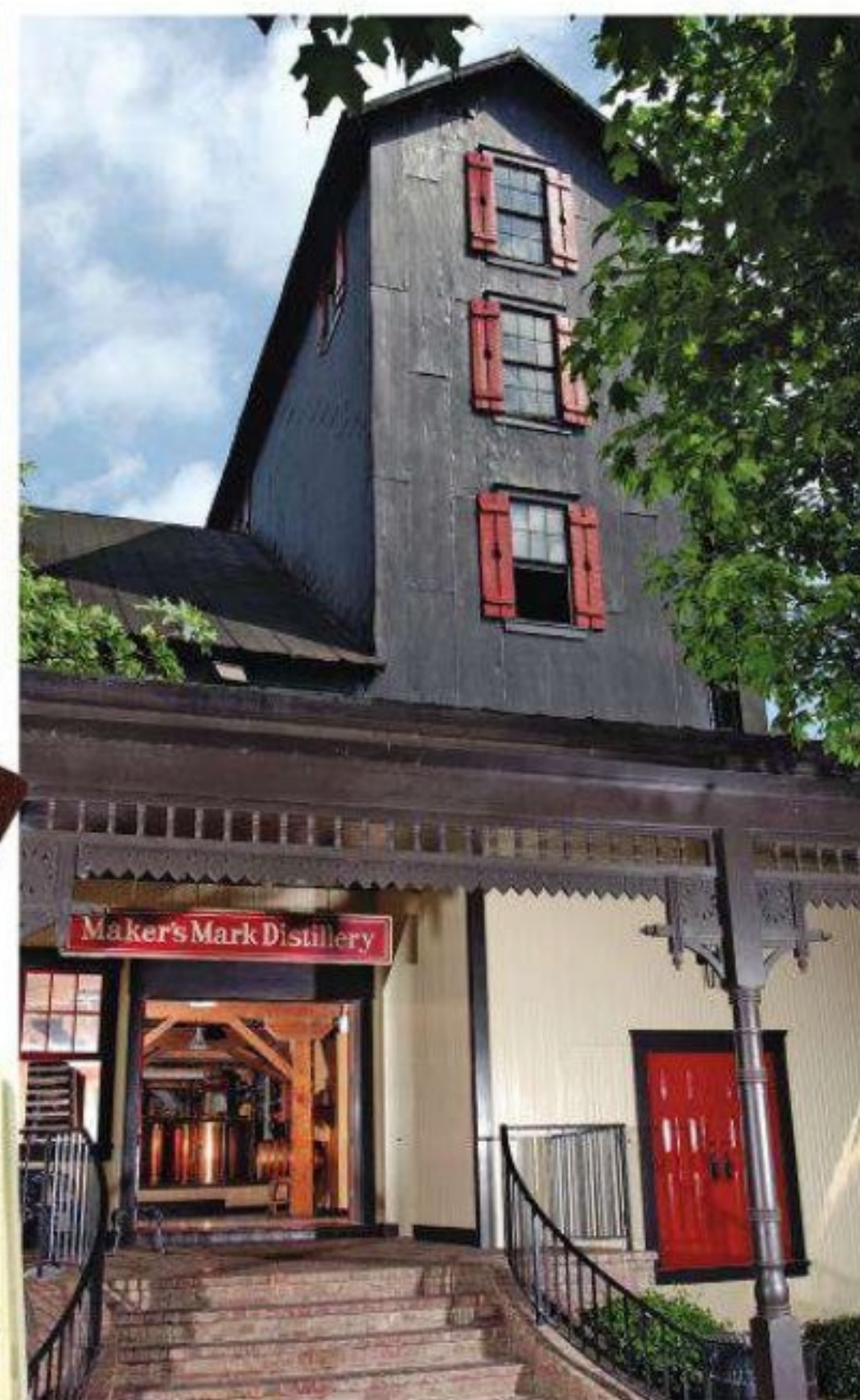
BASIL HAYDEN'S
Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey
WHEN BASIL HAYDEN, SR. began distilling his smooth BOURBON here in 1796, KENTUCKY was but four years old and GEORGE WASHINGTON was PRESIDENT.

WILD TURKEY 81
KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY
EST. 1855

BUFFALO TRACE
KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY

Poppy Van Winkle's
Reserve
straight Bourbon Whiskey
10 years old
45.2% ALC/VOL (90.4 PROOF)
Van Winkle Distillery • Frankfort, Kentucky

hibition on the history of the spirit and a tasting room that's shaped like a Bourbon barrel. This is a great place for an orientation, either with a complimentary 30-minute Mini Tour, or if you can spare the time, the (also complimentary) 90-minute Deluxe Tour of the indoor and outdoor facilities. Both conclude with a tasting session, as most of the distillery tours do. Even if you skip the tour, the gift shop is one of the best you'll find, with a wide



A Note on Distillery Tours

Information on the Kentucky Bourbon Trail can be found at kybourbontrail.com. If visiting the official Bourbon Trail of six distilleries, pick up a "Passport" card and get it stamped along the way. Collect all six stamps and get a free T-shirt. >>>

Be sure to call ahead so you don't miss the guided (and usually free) tours, which are often the only way to see the distillery. The last tours usually are around 3 or 4 pm.

If you miss a tour, you still can wander the distillery's grounds and browse its gift shop, which is always worth a look. Bypass the coasters and aprons, and head straight for the hooch. Look for bottlings that may not be on offer at your local liquor store.

Getting Around: If you're starting from downtown Louisville, it's about a one hour drive to the distilleries.

By Van: Distillery tours are available from Mint Julep Tours (mintjulep-tours.com), recommended for those who plan to imbibe along the way.

By Car: Two essentials for drivers: a GPS system (you *will* get lost) and tunes for the highway-driving portion of the trip. Once off the highway, drive with care—this is horse country and sometimes the roads are narrow and winding. Be aware that the Bourbon Trail is a fair sprawl (don't expect to do it all in one day), and is marked with hard-to-see brown signs.

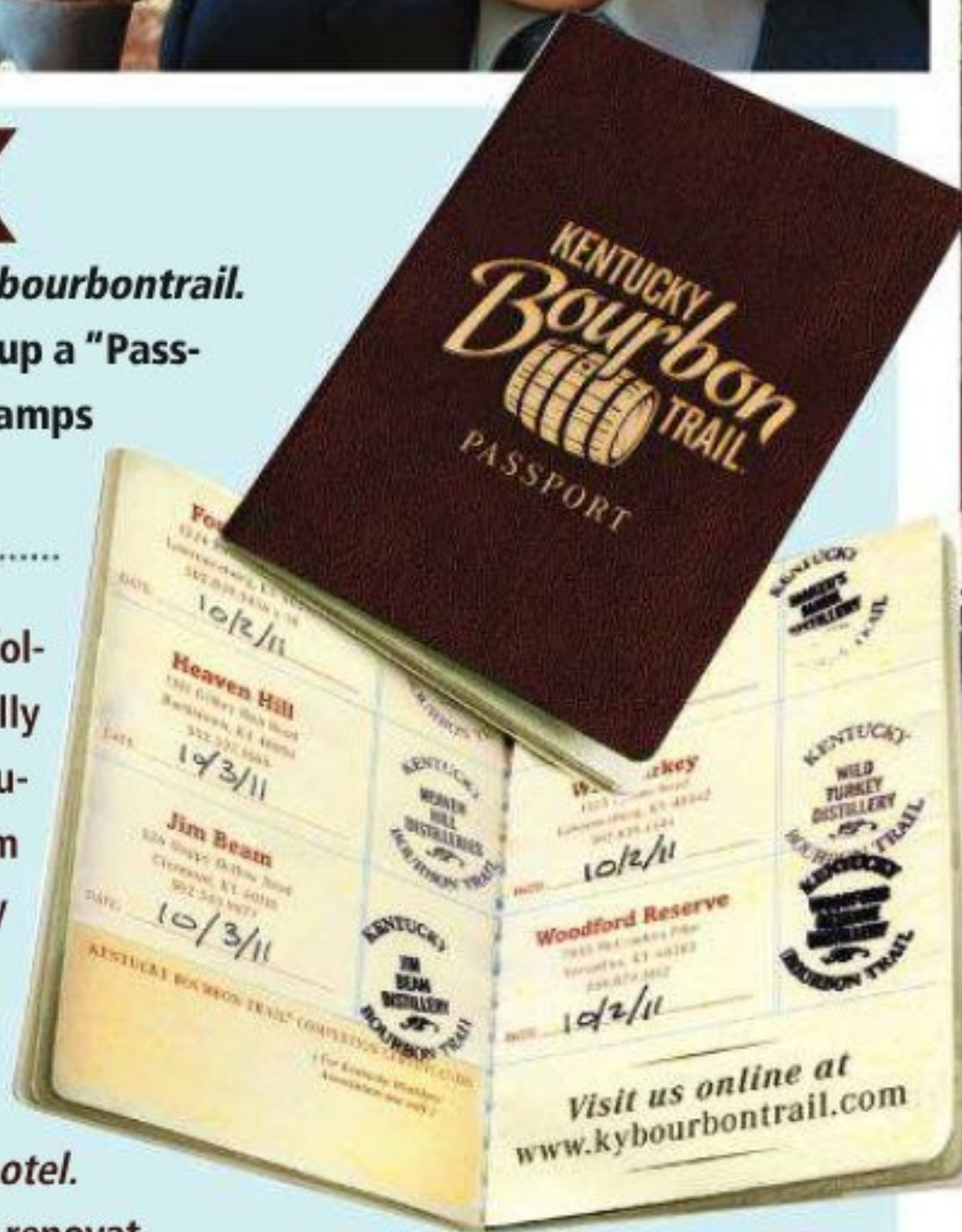
Where to Stay: All of the following hotels are centrally located in downtown Louisville, making any of them a solid choice for your stay while exploring the Bourbon Trail.

The Brown Hotel (brownhotel.com). Opened in 1923, and renovated and reopened in the 1980s. Lavish and very Old South.

The Seelbach Hotel (seelbachhilton.com) A grande dame hotel built in 1905, but thoroughly refurbished. Enjoy the signature Seelbach Cocktail at the bar (Bourbon, Cointreau and bitters, topped with Champagne), and check out the elaborate Bavarian-style Rathskeller in the basement.

21C Museum Hotel (21chotel.com) A boutique hotel in the style of the W chain, with artwork in the hotel lobby, and within easy walking distance of attractions like the Louisville Slugger Museum.

Bars & Restaurants: Consider downloading the free iPhone app from justadbbourbon.com to guide you through the "Urban Bourbon" trail of nine bars and restaurants.



Left: Willie Pratt, Michter's master distiller; Above: Maker's Mark Distillery.

732 Social (732social.com) More than 70 Bourbons and ryes, plus classic and craft cocktails galore. The menu includes cheeses and charcuterie, as well as larger Southern heritage-inspired plates like the "Big Ass Ribeye."

Proof on Main (proofonmain.com). Look for outstanding wine and Bourbon lists to pair with seasonal dishes. The crowd includes lots of suits, including some from the Brown-Forman headquarters across the street.

Bourbons Bistro (bourbonsbistro.com). Part of the Urban Bourbon trail. More than 130 Bourbons are available at this bistro, and flights are encouraged. Hosts monthly Bourbon dinners. Call for a taxi—it's three miles from downtown Louisville.

array of rare and unusual bottlings.

Next stop: Head to nearby Loretto to visit **Maker's Mark** (makersmark.com). The distillery is certainly scenic on its own, with shiny copper stills and an opportunity to dip your own souvenir bottle in Maker's signature red wax. But, if you're lucky, you may also share a tippie with Chairman Emeritus Bill Samuels Jr., who reversed his retirement in June expressly to hang out at the distillery, drink Bourbon and share tales with visitors. At the bar, keep an eye out for Maker's Mark Mint Julep, a liqueur sealed with vibrant green wax. It's rolled out annually for the Kentucky Derby, and it has limited distribution in just a handful of states.

In the evening, return to Louisville and indulge in drinks and dinner at one of *Wine Enthusiast's* Best 100 Wine Restaurants of 2011, **Proof on Main** (proofonmain.com), for locavore-friendly fare and well-made cocktails like The Gold Rush, made with Woodford Reserve Bourbon, honey syrup and lemon juice.

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Best Value, Wine Spectator Dec. 2010,
Jaume Serra Cristalino Rose
Valued Brand of the Year
for 3 consecutive years
WINE & SPIRITS
Gold Medal Brussels
Top 100 Values of the Year, June 2010
Year's Best Values,
August 2009 WINE & SPIRITS
Best Value, Robert Parker 2009
Best Buy, Wine Spectator 2008

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If you plan to hit the Bourbon Trail in 2013, don't miss **Michter's** (michters.com) forthcoming production distillery in the historic Fort Nelson Building. Located in downtown Louisville, directly across the street from the Louisville Slugger Museum, this facility will produce single-barrel rye whiskey and small-batch Bourbon and is slated to open in the spring of 2013.

Day 2:

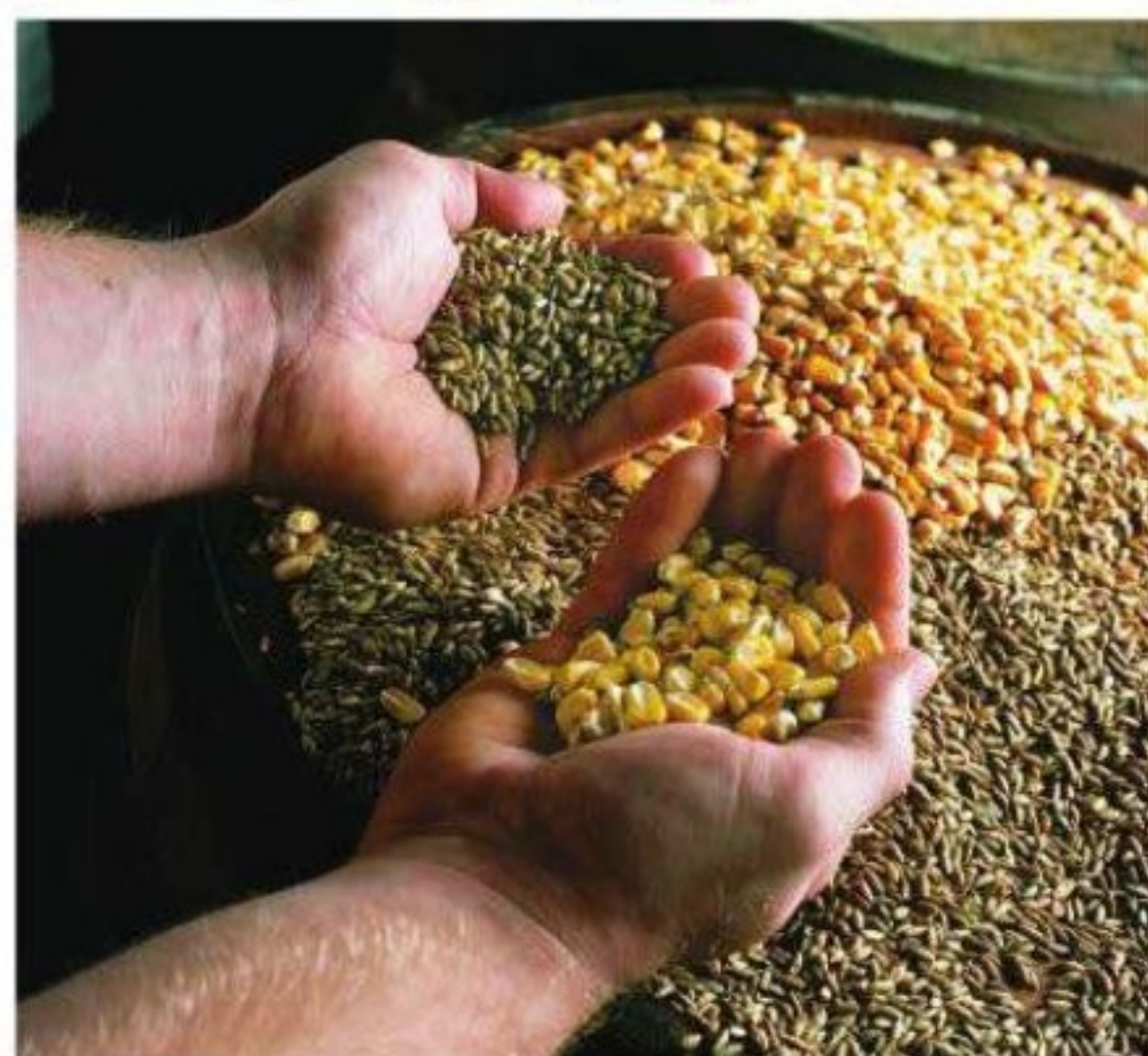
Lawrenceburg, Versailles

Just when you start to think that all distilleries look alike, the Spanish Mission-style architecture at **Four Roses** (fourroses.us) in Lawrenceburg is a welcome change. Autumn is too late to see the red roses that wind along the grounds, but the legend of the label's name still charms visitors. Shortly after the Civil War, founder Paul Jones Jr. became smitten with a Southern belle and proposed. To signal her acceptance, the belle adorned her ball gown with a corsage of four roses.

About 20 minutes up the bluegrass byway, you'll arrive at **Wild Turkey** (wildturkey.com). From the visitor's center, a bus will drive the half-mile up to the new distillery that opened this year, as well as provide the trip back for an optional tasting session.

After a quick lunch in town, continue on to **Woodford Reserve** (woodfordreserve.com) for one of the most intimate and interesting distillery tours available to the general public. Although Woodford is one of the only distilleries charging admission, it's worth the \$5 for a one-hour tour. Expect to wind past the impressive 7,500-gallon cypress wood vats, bubbling madly like hot tubs full of oatmeal, through the cool and quiet barrel-aging building. You'll also see how a barrel is opened and dumped for filtering through screens to remove any char that has loosened from the staves. The barrel dump is not part of many tours, and you may have a chance to sample whiskey fresh from the barrel.

Reflect on the day over a drink at the vast



Hands in grain and corn mash at Four Roses; Woodford Reserve whiskey barrels.



mahogany expanse of the **Seelbach Hilton Hotel** (seelbachhilton.com), which boasts a wide array of top-shelf Bourbons. Ask nice-



<<<
What is Bourbon? Bourbon is the only major liquor category that is required to be 100% made in the United States. Strict regulations govern every aspect of production, including the grain recipe, known as the mash bill (at least 51% corn), how it's aged (in charred, new American oak barrels), how long it's aged (at least two years), its strength (no more than 160 proof off the still, and no more than 125 proof in the barrel) and additives (water only, no colorings or flavorings, unlike Scotch). Yet, even with all those rules, distillers find ways to get creative by crafting single-barrel and small-batch Bourbons.



PHOTO: COURTESY WOODFORD RESERVE; COURTESY FOUR ROSES



SAME LATITUDE. DIFFERENT ATTITUDE.



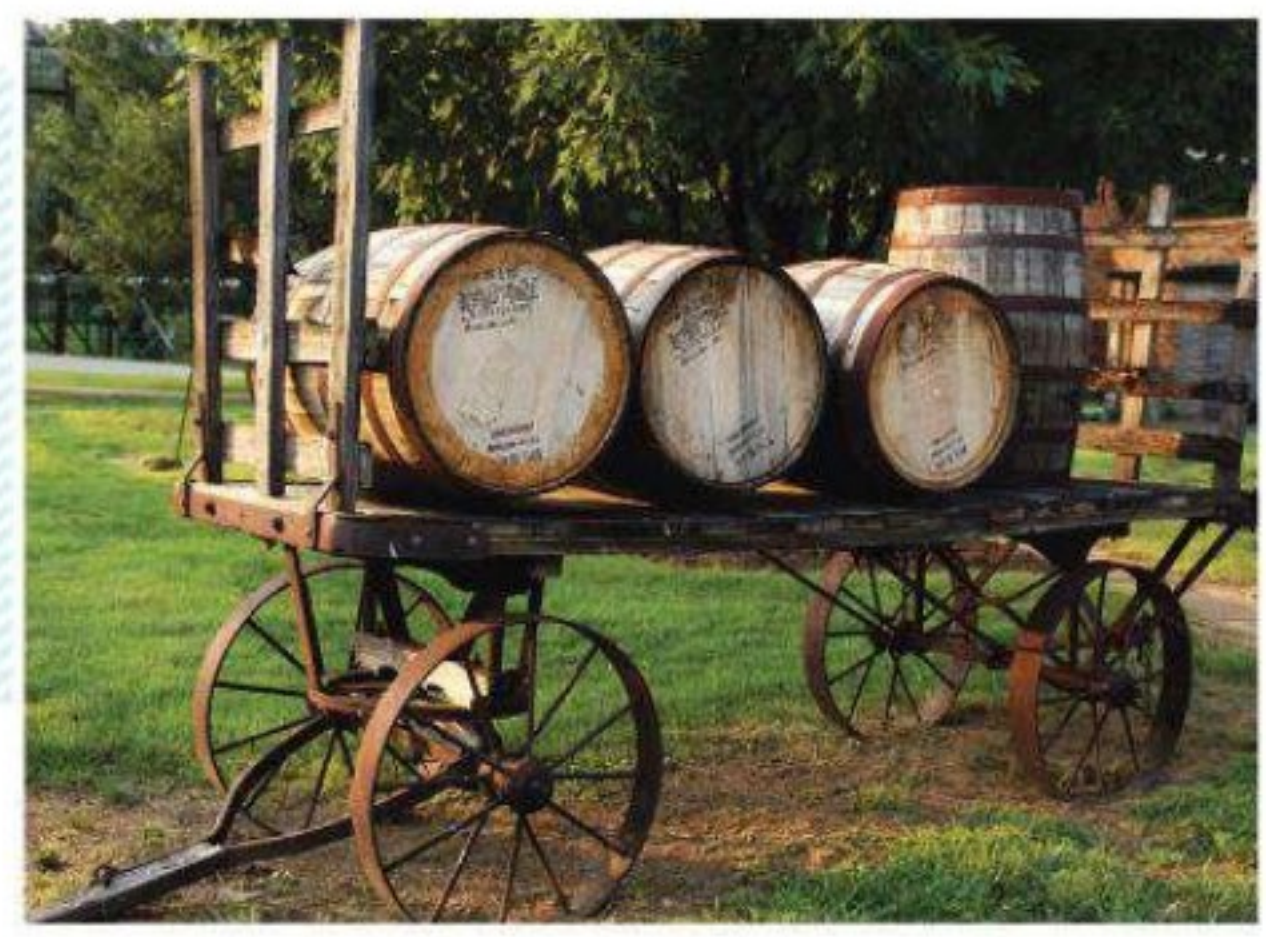
Campaign financed with aid from
the European Union and Romania.

Although Romania lies along the same latitude as Bordeaux, Piemonte and other great winemaking regions, our wines differ in character. Indigenous grapes and international varieties flourish here from Transylvania to the Danube Delta. Our appellations, such as Banat (Recas), Oprisor and Segarcea (Oltenia), Dealu Mare (Muntenia), Murfatlar (Dobrogea) and Panciu, Cotesti, Odobesti (Vrancea), are famous in Europe and now available in the U.S. If you're interested in tasting or importing our outstanding wines, call 212-725-0707 or visit us at SelectWinesOfEurope.com.

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Notable Bourbon Bottlings

Can't make it down to Bourbon Country? Here are some delicious Kentucky finds to try at home.



Bourbon barrels on a wagon at Buffalo Trace Distillery.

Basil Hayden's. This double-rye, 80-proof spirit is light and drinkable with a spicy bite. Try it as 7th generation Jim Beam Distiller Fred Noe recommends: with ginger ale and a squeeze of lime

Blanton's Original Single Barrel. Aromatic, rich and flavorful, with deep orange and caramel flavors. The gold thoroughbred bottle topper is a playful reminder that Kentucky is also horse country.

Buffalo Trace. Pleasantly sweet sticky-toffee flavor. It's mellow and smooth, reasonably priced and a top choice for mixing into cocktails.

ly, and the bartender will tell tall tales about the days when F. Scott Fitzgerald drank here.

Day 3:

Clermont, Frankfort

Today, it's on to the big daddy of the Bourbon scene—the **Jim Beam** (jimbeam.com) distillery. Although their official distillery tour won't debut until 2012, visitors today can visit T. Jeremiah Beam's home, the distillery grounds, and its oldest barrel warehouse, where the whiskey is aged.

It's eye-opening to compare the volume here in comparison to smaller operations. For example, hundreds of barrels are emptied here each day, compared to about a dozen at Woodford Reserve; the bottling room presents an incredible assembly-line din, as 300 bottles a minute roll off the line. Despite the factory-like presentation, Jim Beam has a number of small-batch Bourbons under its umbrella, including Knob Creek and the rye-spiced Basil Hayden's.

Wind it all up at the **Buffalo Trace** (buffalo-trace.com) distillery in Frankfort. Since it's not on the official Bourbon Trail, the crowds tend to be smaller and the tours generally get high marks, as do the wide array of Bourbons in the gift shop.

Still thirsty? Finish the day with a drink at edgy **732 Social** (732social.com) in the East Market District. Perch at the bar and let one of the inked bartenders select a drink like the Bourbon-based Old Maple Sour (Old Grand Dad, maple syrup, orange, lemon, Demerara syrup, egg white, vanilla and maple bitters).

PHOTO: © FRED MINNICK; BOTTLES: JON VAN GORDER



Elijah Craig 12-Year-Old Butterscotch candy flavors so strong you can almost hear cellophane unwrapping, tempered by wood and spice tones.

Knob Creek Single Barrel Reserve. Aged nine years, 100 proof, with a long caramel finish. An excellent choice for a Manhattan since it will stand up to vermouth.

Maker's Mark 46. At the distillery, they refer to this as "Maker's Mark on steroids." Despite the candy-like almond fragrance, it's dry and biting, with oak, strong tea and cigar tobacco flavors.

To read about barrel techniques, visit winemag.com/oakbourbon



Michter's US*1 Small Batch. Lovely deep honey color; mellow with balanced caramel sweetness.

Pappy Van Winkle's Family Reserve. A little more expensive, but worth it. Dark, spicy-sweet, deep vanilla aroma and it tastes just like it smells.

Wild Turkey 81 Proof. New to the market and touted for its mixability. Pleasantly spicy bite, lively woody and orange peel notes and a toffee-like finish.



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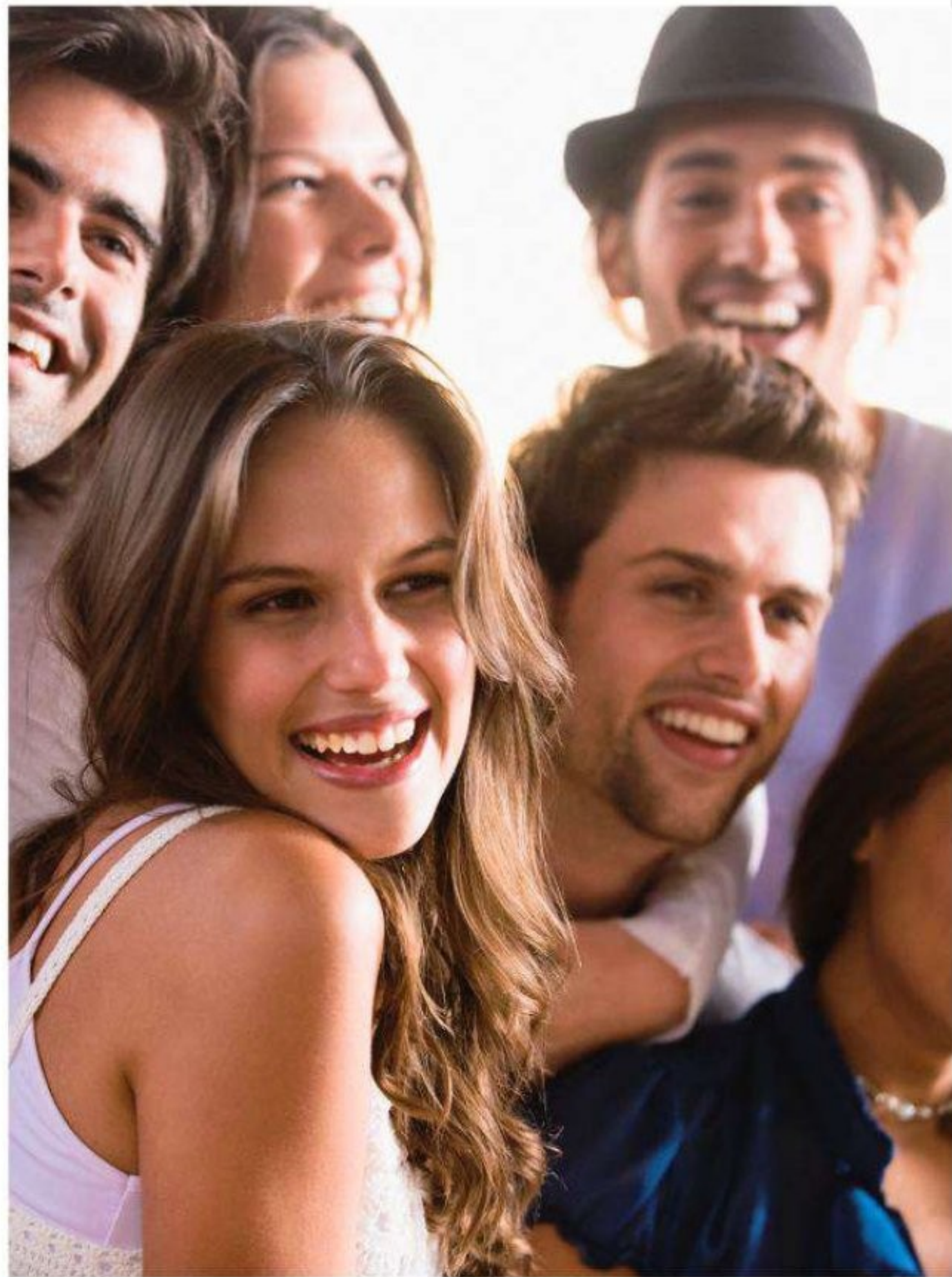
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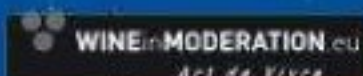
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Grenache vines change with the seasons on the stony slopes of Priorat, Spain.

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SPAIN

MODERN WINES FROM ANCIENT VINEYARDS

In centuries past, villagers in the Catalan region of Priorat practiced subsistence farming in the river bottoms of the area's twisting valleys. On the heights above, vines were the only cultivated plants capable of surviving, digging their roots deep into the steep slopes of eroded black slate (*llicorella*). Over the years, villagers created terraces on these hillsides, making it easier to work among the vines.

Historically, the varieties planted were the same as those found further up the Mediterranean coast in Roussillon—Garnacha (Grenache Noir) and Carriñena (Carignan) for the red wines, and Garnacha Blanca (Grenache Blanc) for the whites. Both whites and reds were frequently picked overripe and often fortified, resulting in heavy, thick wines that packed a wallop, even if they were sometimes oxidized in character.

Fast forward to 2011, and the types of wines being produced have undergone a tremendous metamorphosis. Originally led by the inspirational René Barbier and Álvaro Palacios, who pioneered modern Priorat in the 1980s, old vineyards have been resuscitated and new vineyards planted. While the new wines of Priorat use the historic grape varieties as their base, they also use Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Winemaking has been modernized, and new French oak plays an important role in maturation of the wines.

In this month's Buying Guide, Contributing Editor Michael Schachner reviews 20 recent releases from Priorat, including top scorers from Val Llach, Can Blau, Costers del Siurana, Clos Figueras, Pasanau Germans and more. In just a couple of decades, the number of noteworthy producers has expanded rapidly, a testament to the quality potential of the famous *llicorella* terroir. These Priorat wines still display the minerality and ripeness of the region's stony, sun-drenched hillsides, but cushion those strengths in supple tannins and polished oak. They are wines that can be consumed while young, but can also age up to a decade.

Elsewhere in this issue, you can find Tuscan wines that almost match the beauty of their origins, Beaujolais recommendations to pair with just about anything and enough Austrian wines to create your own little Neusiedlersee. Plus California wines from Albariño to Zinfandel, exciting Oregon Pinot Noirs and new releases from New York. As always, our reviewers have tasted many more wines than could fit in the print version of the Buying Guide, so be sure to check our online Buying Guide at buyingguide.winemag.com.

Finally, you'll notice that we've started to include the alcohol content as reported to us by the producer or indicated on the label. We hope that you find this extra information helpful. Cheers!
—JOE CZERWINSKI

SPANISH REDS

PRIORAT/MONTSANT

94 Vall Llach 2006 (Priorat). Earthy and deep as midnight, with spice, floral notes, herbal aromas, tobacco and mocha. The palate is super rich, almost to the point of syrupy, with blackberry, brown sugar and coffee flavors. Finishes chewy, ripe and deep, with no harshness or tannic grind. Drink now through 2013. Folio Fine Wine Partners. *Editors' Choice.* —M.S.

Price: \$95 **abv:** 15.5%

93 Can Blau 2007 Mas de Can Blau (Montsant). A big, balanced, bombastic Montsant made from one-third each of Mazuelo, Garnacha and Syrah. On the bouquet it's the fruit that endears but mocha and vanilla stick out. The flavor profile sees lemony oak, blackberry, blueberry and minerality. Spicy and long late with size and grip. Drink now through 2015. *Editors' Choice.* —M.S.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 15%

93 Costers del Siurana 2007 Clos de l'Obac (Priorat). Licorice, schist, wild herbs and spicy berry fruit form an alluring bouquet. The palate is jammy but firm, with mouthfilling tannins and schisty flavors of blackberry that come with a fine herbal streak. Meaty and tannic but balanced and deep; a classy taste of Priorat to drink now through 2018. Fine Estates From Spain. *Editors' Choice.* —M.S.

Price: \$95 **abv:** 16%

93 Vall Llach 2006 Idus (Priorat). Another excellent Idus. The nose is jammed full of big berry, leather and earth aromas. In the mouth, it's pure to the hilt, with jammy depth and delicious flavors of blackberry, chocolate and licorice. Finishes toasty and

creamy, with soft tannins and ease. Drink now through 2015. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.S.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 15.5%

92 Clos Figueras 2006 Clos Figueres (Priorat). Baked, earthy, mineral berry fruit aromas suggest lead pencil, roasted plum, cassis and raspberry. The palate is lush, pure and balanced, with classic Priorat flavors of mineral-tinged blackberry and plum. Chunky and smooth on the finish, with broad, soft tannins. There's no bite or harshness at all; drink now through 2014. Europvin. —M.S.

Price: \$90 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Joan Simó 2006 Les Eres Especial dels Carners (Priorat). Deep, sweet and lusty on the nose, with a hint of animal and whole lot of black fruit. The palate is saturated and jammy, with roasted, ripe berry flavors and a ripe, silky finish. Not hard or tannic in the least, with a spot of Priorat's patented schisty minerality. Drink now through 2015. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$122 **abv:** 15.5%

92 Pasanau Germans 2006 Finca La Planeta (Priorat). A potent brew of raisin, blackberry, minerality and leather comes together to form a bold, very ripe bouquet. The palate is chunky and forward, with beefy tannins and full-force flavors of blackberry, black peppercorn and toast. A huge and massive wine with a sweet, toasty, ripe and candied finish. Drink now through 2014. Classical Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$54 **abv:** 14%

91 Capafons-Ossó 2006 Sirsell (Priorat). Reedy, attractive, classy aromas of red fruits, tobacco and fine herbs are like a red carpet entering the gala. The mouth is structured and tannic but not hard or biting; flavors of red berry, plum and cherry lean towards sweet, while the finish is long, medicinal and on

the money. Drink now through 2014. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.S.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Ferrer Bobet 2007 (Priorat). Hard spice, blackberry and leather form a firm opening salvo, then oak, mocha and chocolate notes take over on the bouquet. The palate is firm and healthy, with mineral berry, spice, leather and chocolaty flavors. Long, alert, pure and driving on the finish. Drink now through 2016. Vintus LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 15%

91 Francesc Sanchez Bas 2005 Montgarnatx (Priorat). Classic Priorato aromatics of raspberry, cherry, schisty mineral and smoke are welcoming. Elegant and firm in the mouth, with drying tannins and staunch red fruit flavors of cherry and tomato blended with wild herbs and reeds. Earthy and dry on the finish, and not overpowering or overripe. Drink now. Winebow. —M.S.

Price: \$43 **abv:** 14%

91 Vall Llach 2006 Embruix (Priorat). Rubbery and gaseous on first sniff, and then upon airing it shows pretty black fruit scents and richness. Forget about minerality and *llicorella* here; this wine is modern, lusty, big and dark, with licorice, blackberry and chocolaty flavors. Finishes thick, long and tasty. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.S.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 15.5%

90 Casa Gran del Siurana 2006 Cruor (Priorat). Soft, sweet and jammy aromas are easy to like and precede a chunky, soft and creamy palate with robust flavors of sweet black fruits and plum. The finish is creamy and thick, with jammy richness. A simple,

Continued on Page 82

The Wine Enthusiast Buying Guide

The Buying Guide includes ratings and reviews of new-release and selected older beverage alcohol products evaluated by *Wine Enthusiast Magazine's* editors and other qualified tasters. Regular contributors to our Buying Guide include Senior Editor/Tasting Director Joe Czerwinski, Assistant Tasting Director Lauren Buzzeo, Tasting Coordinator Anna Lee C. Iijima, Executive Editor Susan Kostrzewa, Contributing Editor Michael Schachner and Spirits Reviewer Kara Newman in New York, European Editor Roger Voss in Bordeaux, Italian Editor Monica Larner in Rome, California Editor Steve Heimoff in Oakland, Contributing Editor Paul Gregutt in Seattle and Contributing Reviewer Virginie Boone in Santa Rosa.

If a wine was evaluated by a single reviewer, that taster's initials appear following the note. When no initials appear following a wine review, the wine was evaluated by two or more reviewers and the score and tasting note reflect the input of all tasters. Unless otherwise stated, all Spirits Reviews are by Kara Newman and all beer reviews are by Lauren Buzzeo.

Each review contains a score, the full name of the product, its suggested national retail price, its abv as reported to us by the submitter and a tasting note. If price or alcohol content cannot be confirmed, NA (not available) will be printed. Prices are for 750-ml bottles unless otherwise indicated.

TASTING METHODOLOGY AND GOALS

All tastings reported in the Buying Guide are performed blind unless otherwise noted. Typically, products are tasted in peer-group flights of from 5–8 samples. Price is not a factor in assigning scores. When possible, products considered flawed or uncustomary are retasted.

ABOUT THE SCORES

Ratings reflect what our editors felt about a particular product. Beyond the rating, we encourage you to read the accompanying tasting note to learn about a product's special characteristics.

Classic 98–100: The pinnacle of quality.

Superb 94–97: A great achievement.

Excellent 90–93: Highly recommended.

Very Good 87–89: Often good value; well recommended.

Good 83–86: Suitable for everyday consumption; often good value.

Acceptable 80–82: Can be employed in casual, less-critical circumstances.

Products deemed Unacceptable (receiving a rating below 80 points) are not reviewed.

SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

Editors' Choice products are those that offer excellent quality at a price above our Best Buy range, or a product at any price with unique qualities that merit special attention.

Cellar Selections are products deemed highly collectible and/or requiring time in a temperature-controlled wine cellar to reach their maximum potential. A Cellar Selection designation does not mean that a product must be stored to be enjoyed, but that cellaring will probably result in a more enjoyable bottle. In general, an optimum time for cellaring will be indicated.

Best Buys are products that offer a high level of quality in relation to price. There are no specific guidelines or formulae for determining Best Buys, but wines meriting this award are generally priced at \$15 or less.

SUBMITTING PRODUCTS FOR REVIEW

Products should be submitted to the appropriate reviewing location as detailed in our FAQ, available online via winemag.com/contactus. Inquiries should be addressed to the Tasting & Review Department at 914.345.9463 or email tastings@wineenthusiast.net. **There is no charge for submitting products.** We make every effort to taste all products submitted for review, but there is no guarantee that all products submitted will be tasted, or that reviews will appear in the magazine. All samples must be accompanied by the appropriate submission forms, which may be downloaded from our Web site.

LABELS

Labels are paid promotions. Producers and importers are given the opportunity to submit labels, which are reproduced and printed along with tasting notes and scores. For information on label purchases, contact Denise Valenza at 813.571.1122; fax 866.896.8786; or email dvalenza@wineenthusiast.net.

Find all reviews on our fully searchable database at buyingguide.winemag.com



96 Babcock 2009 Microcosm Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). From the southernmost part of the appellation comes this very deeply flavored Pinot Noir. It bursts in the mouth with mushu plum sauce and cherry fruit and the most marvelous feral notes of mushrooms, minerals, hung meat, forest spices and herbs. It's quite a tannic wine, giving it a brooding quality. Huge, massive, stunning. Should glidepath through the next 6–8 years. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

Price: \$50

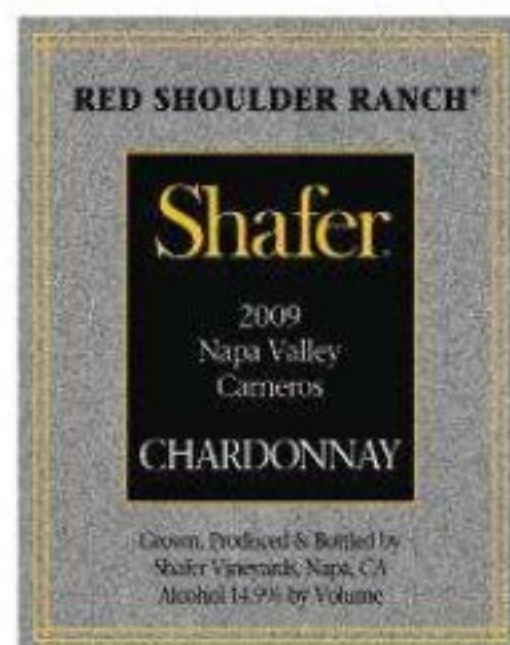
abv: 13.7%



96 Bien Nacido 2007 Bien Nacido Vineyard Syrah (Santa Maria Valley). From the vineyard's choicest blocks. There's so much going on here, it's hard to know where to begin. Explosive in grilled meats, blackberries, plum jam, licorice, coffee, chocolate, caramel, black pepper and Chinese 5 spice, yet bone dry, with smooth, rich tannins. Extraordinarily good now, and should develop in interesting ways. Certainly one of the best California Syrahs of the last few vintages. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

Price: \$52

abv: 14.5%



96 Shafer 2009 Red Shoulder Ranch Chardonnay (Carneros). Shafer consistently produces one of the biggest, fruitiest Chardonnays in California, and yet the wine remains balanced and interesting. The 2009 Red Shoulder Ranch is gigantic in pineapples, pears, mangoes, tangerines and honey, yet so minerally and crisp that somehow it finishes dry. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

Price: \$48

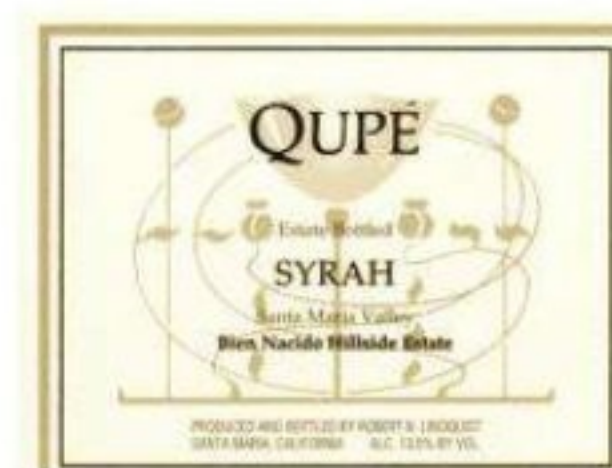
abv: 14.9%



95 Dutton-Goldfield 2009 Dutton Ranch Freestone Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Mouthwatering acidity and berry freshness mark this muscular young Pinot Noir. It's gritty in tannins and brilliant in acids, with subtle flavors of sour red cherries, persimmons and cola, as well as a mushroomy earthiness to which oak adds exotic sandalwood notes. Very dry and fine, complex and provocative, a wine to let warm in the glass as it changes by the minute. Drink now–2015. —S.H.

Price: \$58

abv: 13.5%



95 Qupé 2007 Bien Nacido Hillside Estate Syrah (Santa Maria Valley). A massively rich, ripe, flamboyant wine. Huge in blackberries, cassis, smoked meat, leather, cocoa, pepper and sandalwood flavors that go on and on. Full-bodied, powerful, a hedonist's Syrah. Near perfect balance of tannins and acids, with integrated oak. Dramatic and ageable, it should develop over the next six years. —S.H.

Price: \$40

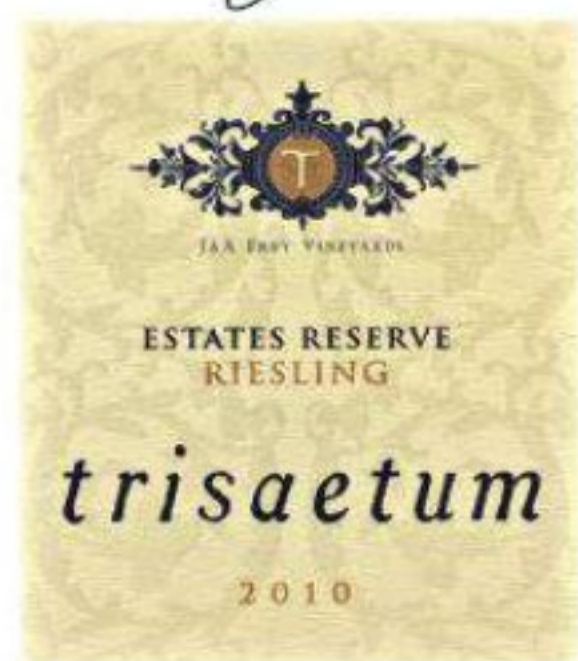
abv: 13.5%



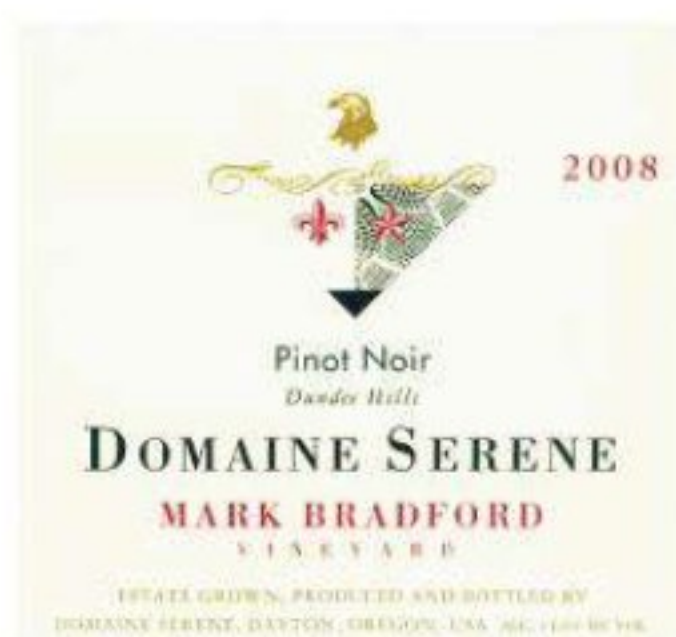
95 Rocca di Frassinello 2008 Baffonero (Maremma). Baffonero ("black mustache") is a pure expression of Merlot and represents a new generation of exciting super Tuscans from the southern part of Tuscany. Rocca di Frassinello is betting on this wine to match the greatest Italian Merlots and this first vintage is very impressive indeed. Soft cherry is followed by chocolate, exotic spice, tobacco and clove. Vias Imports. **Cellar Selection.** —M.L.

Price: \$120

abv: 13.5%



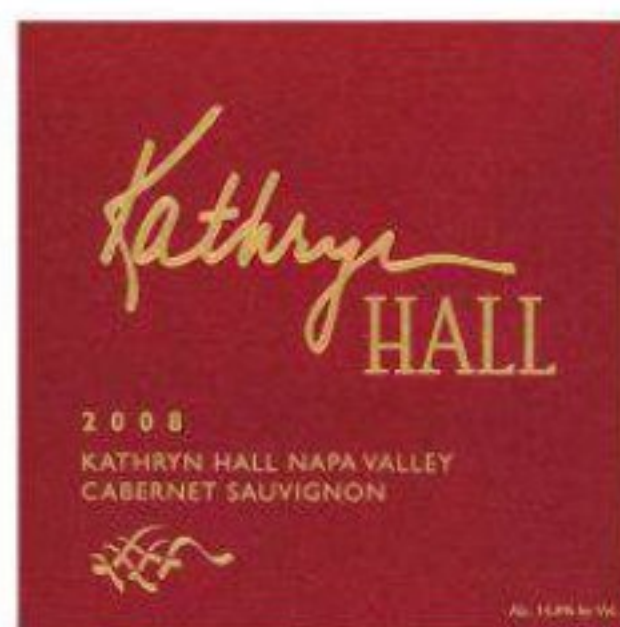
95 Trisaetum 2010 Estates Reserve Riesling (Ribbon Ridge). A two-barrel selection consisting of the favorite sweeter barrel from each of the two estate vineyards. Intense, bright and focused, with candied lemon/lime fruit flavors. The power and concentration of the wine is remarkable. **Cellar Selection.** —P.G.
Price: \$32 **abv:** 11%



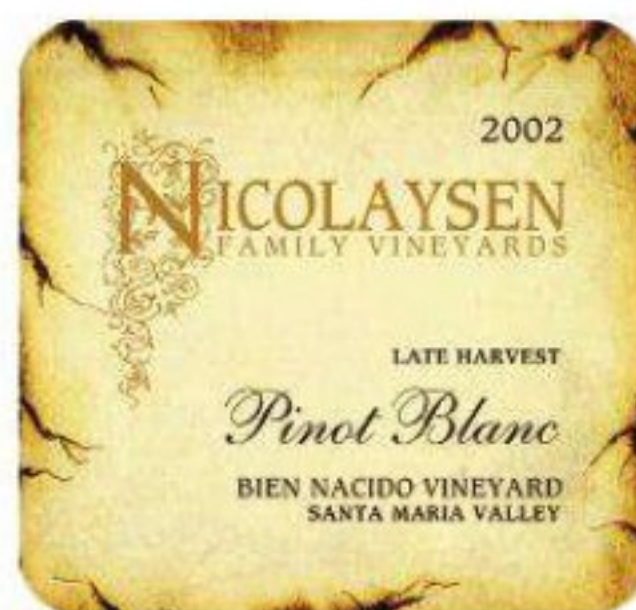
94 Domaine Serene 2008 Mark Bradford Vineyard Pinot Noir (Dundee Hills). Domaine Serene has been dialing down the new oak (at least as far as its impact on the wines) and making more and more nuanced wines, that truly capture the terroir of their spectacular Dundee Hills vineyards. Here is a beautiful mix of supple fruits—cherries and berries, with appealing sweetness—along with delicate highlights of spice and herb. It's finished with a creamy streak of buttery chocolate. Pure pleasure. **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.
Price: \$90 **abv:** 14.7%



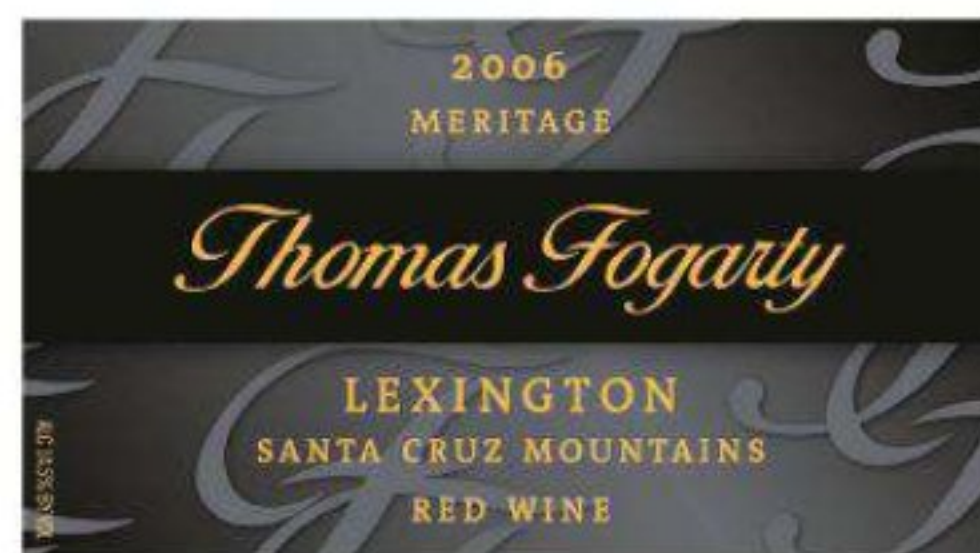
94 Dutton-Goldfield 2009 McDougall Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Somewhere between the acidity and dryness, this Pinot has a terrifically interesting core. It's a subtle wine, now suggesting cherry fruit, now retreating in favor of earthier mushrooms, minerals and pine needles, framed in firm tannins. Strikes out new territory for cool-climate Pinot Noir, less ripe, lower in alcohol and more exciting. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.
Price: \$58 **abv:** 13.8%



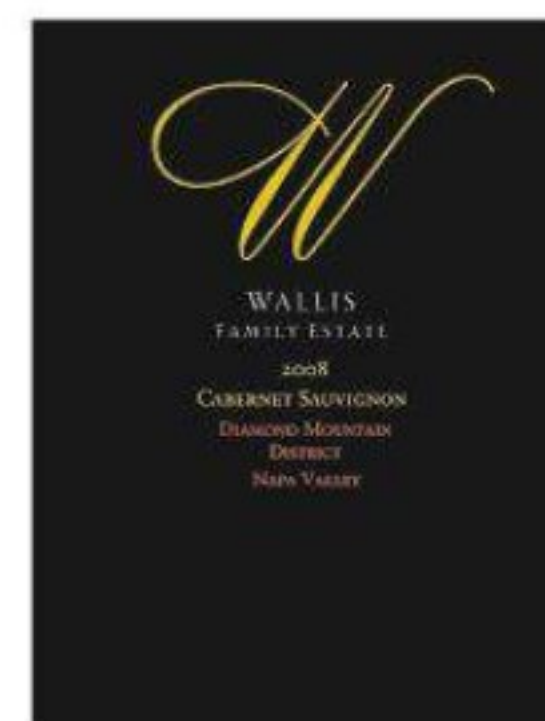
94 Hall 2008 Kathryn Hall Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This is a best of barrels blend from Hall's various vineyards, including the famous Sacrashe. The wine itself is lovely. It has a firm structure thanks to dusty tannins and a dry minerality, while bright acidity makes the cherry, blackberry, blueberry, cassis and dark chocolate fruit sing. Drink now and through 2014. —S.H.
Price: \$90 **abv:** 14.8%



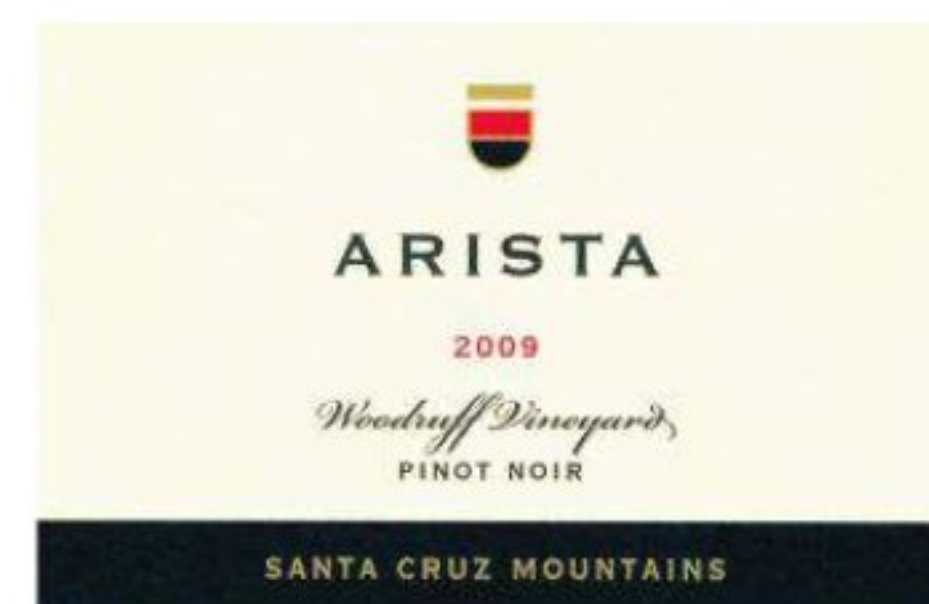
94 Nicolaysen Family Vineyards 2002 Late Harvest Bien Nacido Vineyard Pinot Blanc (Santa Maria Valley). Pours dark for a dessert wine, an old gold-orange color that suggests bottle age. And indeed, it's nearly nine years old. But it's still rich and vibrant in orange liqueur, honey and crème brûlée flavors, finished with clean acidity. The residual sugar is an amazingly sweet 22.6%. —S.H.
Price: \$50/375 ml **abv:** 12.5%



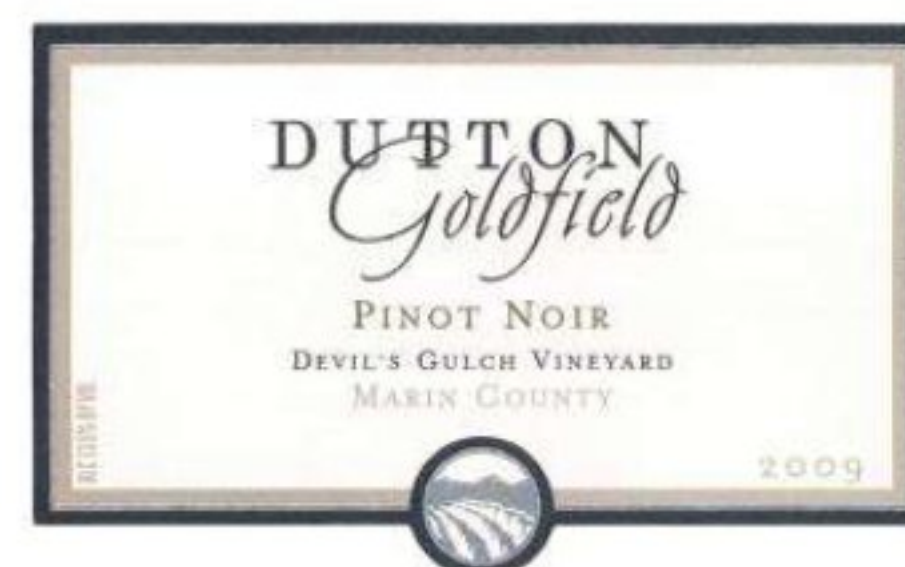
94 Thomas Fogarty 2006 Lexington Meritage (Santa Cruz Mountains). An extraordinary wine, Fogarty's best Bordeaux-style wine ever. A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc, it shows the classic profile of a young wine capable of extended aging. The tannins still are serious at the age of nearly five years. There's good acidity, and the core of blackberries, cherries and cassis is potent. Give it at least another six years. —S.H.
Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.5%



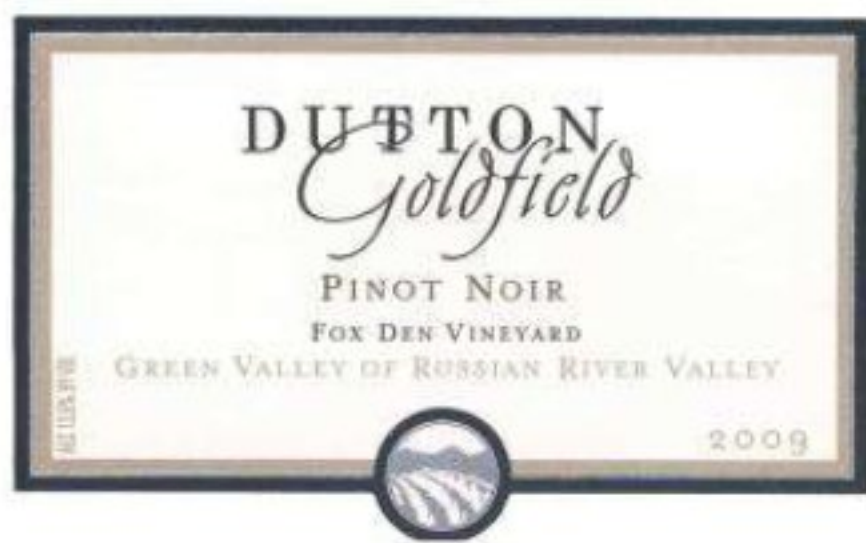
94 Wallis Family Estate 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Diamond Mountain). Rich, elaborate and layered. If this Cab were a fabric, it would be suede. Shows the tannins and minerals of Diamond Mountain, with potent flavors of blackberries, cherries, currants, cola, anise and sweet smoky oak. The finish is wonderfully dry, firm and long. Should develop for at least eight years. **Cellar Selection.** —S.H.
Price: \$65 **abv:** 14.9%



93 Arista 2009 Woodruff Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Cruz Mountains). The oak sticks out now in the form of toast and sweet wood sap, but that's because it hasn't been integrated into this fine young wine. Give it 3–4 years to come around, by which time the barrel influence will equalize with the ripe raspberries, cherries, Dr. Pepper cola and red currants. Could be quite special around 2015. **Cellar Selection.** —S.H.
Price: \$55 **abv:** 14.1%



93 Dutton-Goldfield 2009 Devil's Gulch Vineyard Pinot Noir (Marin County). You can taste Marin's cool climate in the exotic, forest-scented pine needle, wild thyme and bitter cherry flavors of this elegant, complex young Pinot. It's completely dry and savory in acidity. An elusive, subtle, captivating wine that should do interesting things over the next six years. **Cellar Selection.** —S.H.
Price: \$58 **abv:** 13.5%

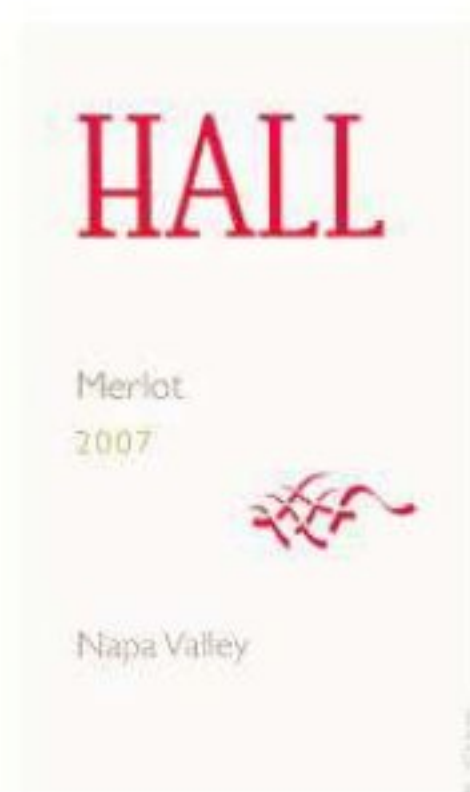


93 Dutton-Goldfield 2009 Fox Den Vineyard Pinot Noir (Green Valley).

Shows the elegantly crisp, almost austere structure of the winery's 2009s, courtesy of the cool vintage. Tight at first in acids and tannins, as it warms it gives off deep layers of sour cherries, cola, pomegranates and rhubarbs, all of them dry, earthy fruits that sing of the soil. Should develop bottle complexity through 2015. —S.H.

Price: \$58

abv: 13.5%

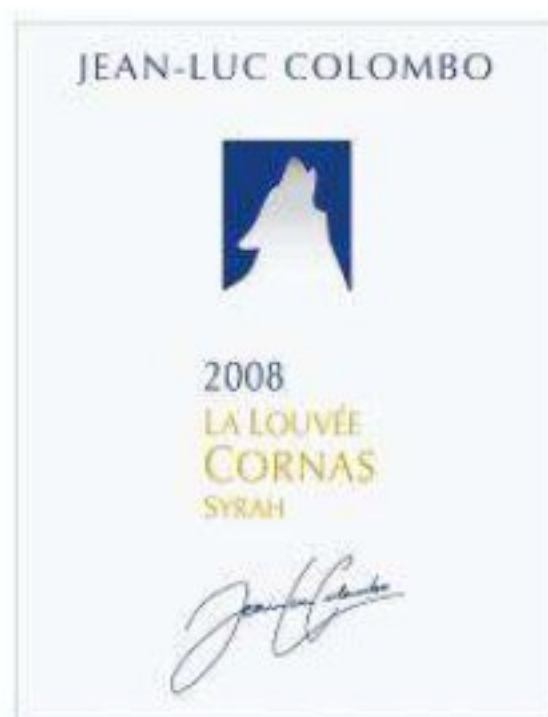


93 Hall 2007 Merlot (Napa Valley).

A rich, dense, vital Merlot, one of the best of the vintage. Offers loads of cherry, green olive, roasted meat and pepper flavors, wrapped into firm tannins leading to a distinguished finish. Dry and elegant, it's a beautiful wine to decant and drink soon with steak, chops, lamb. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$30

abv: 14.5%



93 Jean-Luc Colombo 2008 La Louvée Syrah (Cornas).

The 2008 Cornas from Colombo have turned out very nicely, led by this effort. Scents of cracked pepper, bold blackberries and a hint of coffee presage a big-fruited wine, but one with ample complexity of savory notes. It's full bodied and richly textured, with a long, chewy finish. Drink 2015–2025. Palm Bay International. *Cellar Selection.* —J.C.

Price: \$84

abv: 13.5%

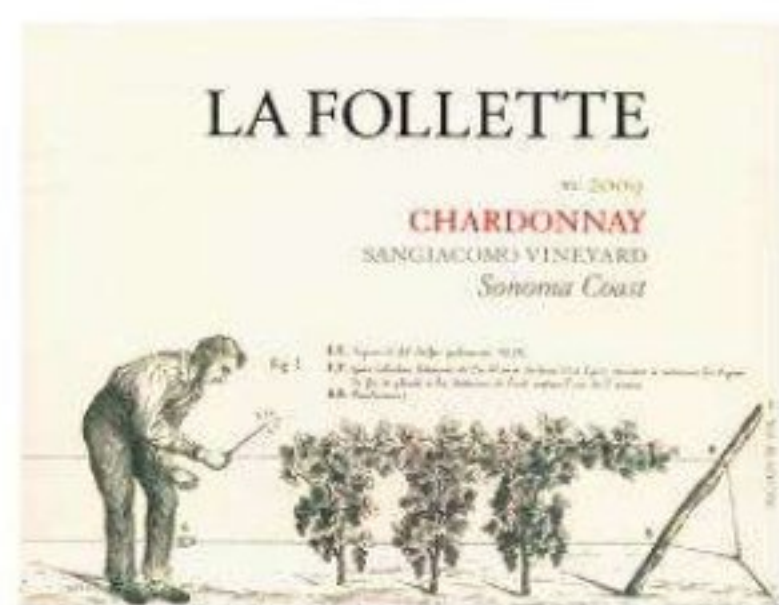


93 K. Furtado 2009 Bien Nacido Vineyards Chardonnay (Santa Maria Valley).

Kevin Furtado is a sommelier in Vail who owns this brand. The grapes come from some of Bien Nacido's best blocks. The wine is exceptionally lush and complex, showing flashes of tropical fruits, honey and minerals, tightly wound together in a firm structure. A really fine Chardonnay that should hold for up to six years. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$29

abv: 14.6%



93 La Follette 2009 Sangiacomo Vineyard Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast).

A very rich, flamboyant Chardonnay, designed to dazzle. With tropical fruit and spice flavors, it has all the buttered toast, crème brûlée and butterscotch notes you could ask for from oak barrels. Brisk acidity provides much needed balance in this superb white wine. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$30

abv: 14.2%



93 Laetitia 2009 Reserve du Domaine Pinot Noir (Arroyo Grande Valley).

A dark, big, potent Pinot, as Laetitia tends to produce. It shows the tannin structure of its cool climate vineyard, and is completely dry, with a refreshing squirt of acidity. Deep down inside is a rich core of cherries and cola. A dramatic wine that needs serious decanting, and should develop in the bottle over the next six years. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.

Price: \$40

abv: 14.5%

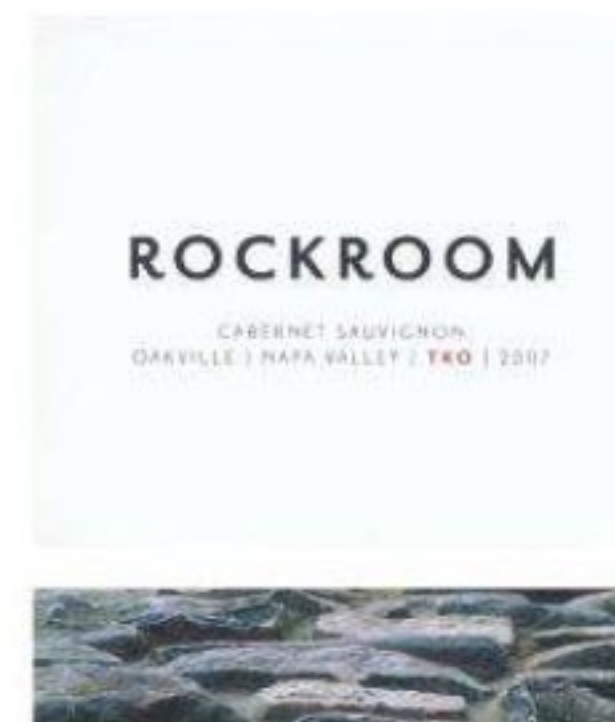


93 R&A Pfaffl 2010 Hundsleitener Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel).

Rich, smooth and opulent wine from the top Hundsleitener vineyard. It is driven by a taut line of acidity that is surrounded by ripe pear and melon flavors and a rounded, concentrated texture. Fruit is right to the fore in a refined way, and pepper on the finish. Palm Bay International. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

Price: \$31

abv: 13%



93 Rockroom 2007 TKO Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville).

An impressive young Cabernet that shows plenty of classic Oakville character. It's dry and balanced, with firm, complex tannins and a solid core of ripe blackberry and currant fruit, as well as a fine overlay of sweet, smoky oak. Feels fine and important in the mouth, and should benefit from aging through at least 2017. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.

Price: \$80

abv: 14.7%



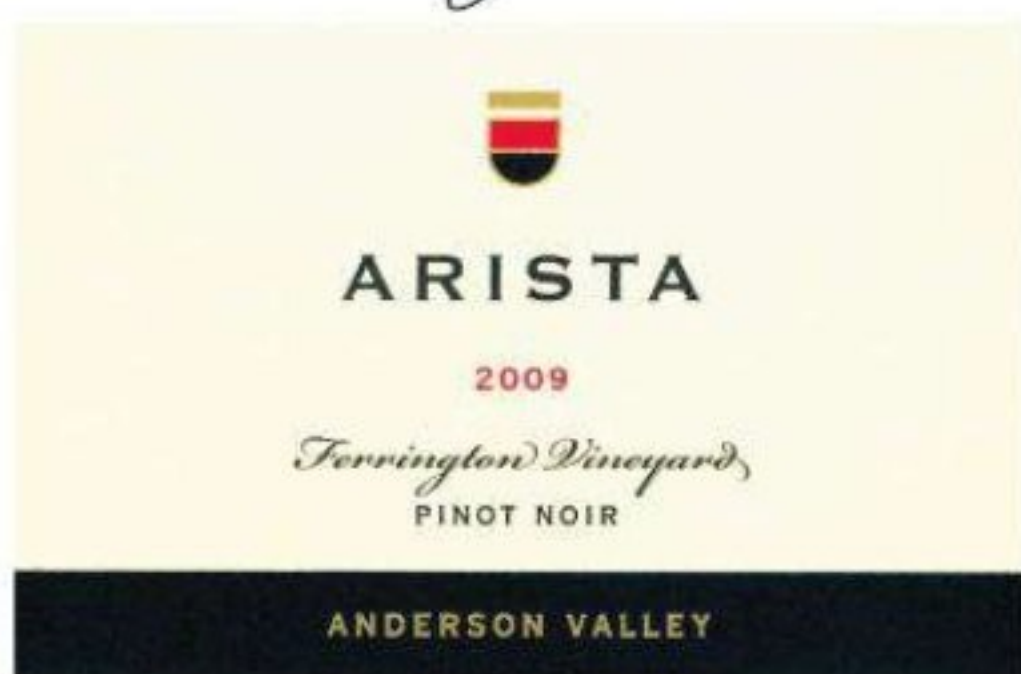
93 Summers 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).

A lush, opulent Cabernet for drinking now. Shows classic Napa structure, with firm, fine tannins housing ripe flavors of blackberries, currants, cassis and herbs, touched by smoky oak. —S.H.

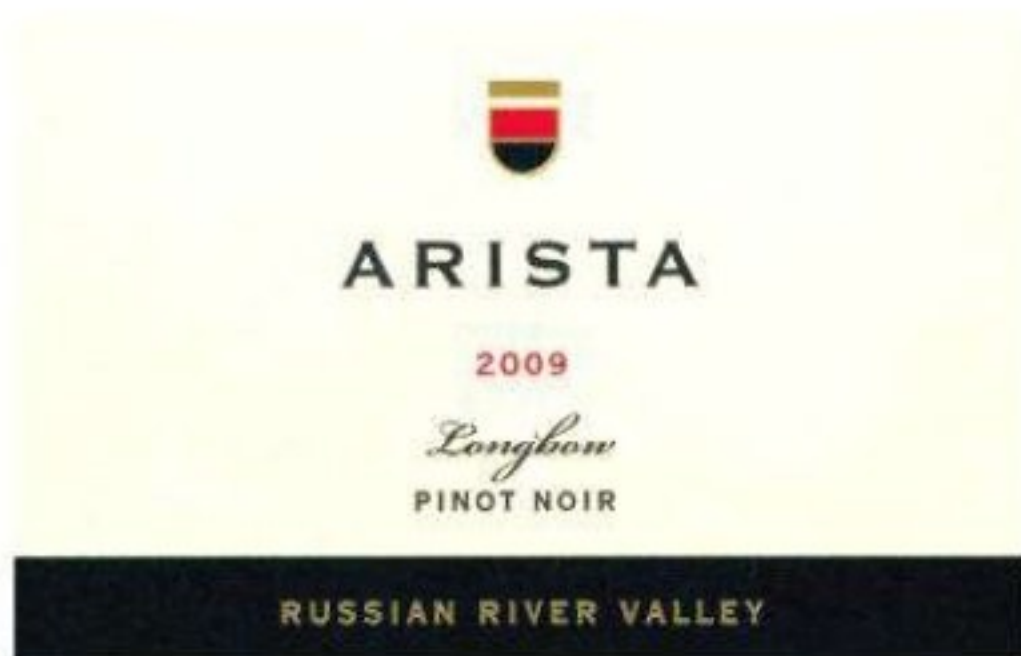
Price: \$45

abv: 14.1%

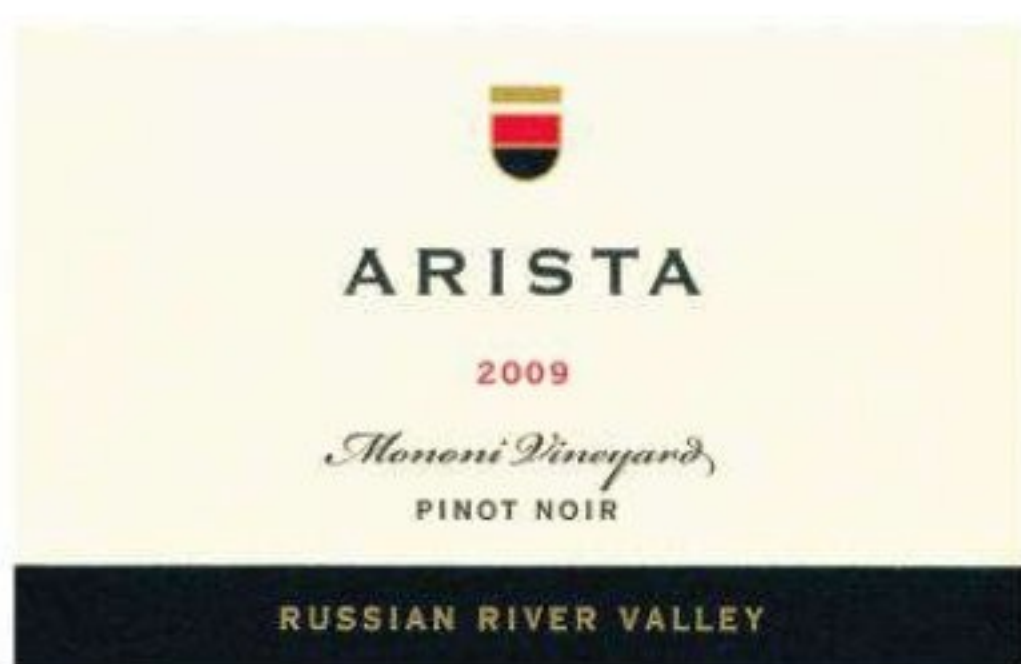
BUYING *guide*



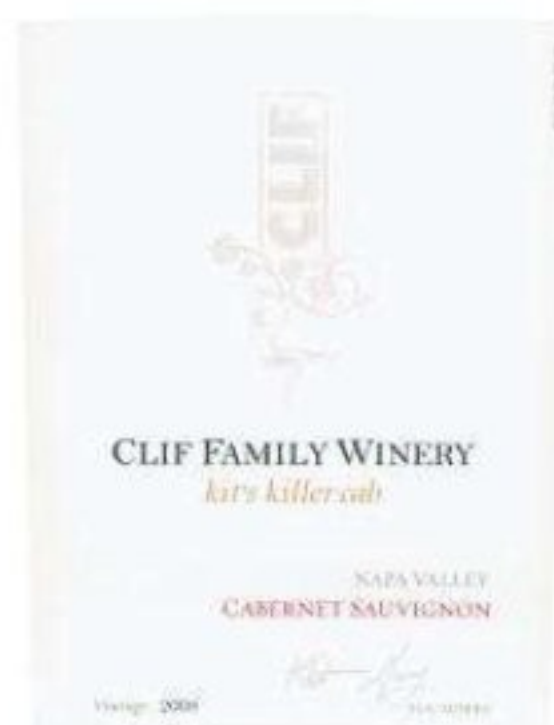
92 Arista 2009 Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley). An elegant Pinot Noir, dry, silky and crisp in acidity, making it a natural for lamb chops or a grilled steak. The flavors are strong, of sour cherry candy and raspberries, with a sweet, smoky coating of oak. Likely to develop over the next six years. —S.H.
Price: \$56 **abv:** 14.2%



92 Arista 2009 Longbow Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). A lovely, silky Pinot Noir, so fresh and vibrant in cherry, cola, pomegranate and spice flavors. Feels light and delicate in the mouth, with lots of charm, yet shows a depth that makes it complex and interesting. Now–2014. —S.H.
Price: \$48 **abv:** 14.3%



92 Arista 2009 Mononi Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). So fresh and jammy in raspberry and cherry fruit, so tannic and acidic, so overtly oaky, it seems like a wine to stick in the cellar for 3–5 years to let it mellow out. It's good and rich and impressive, but too much of everything at this point. **Cellar Selection.** —S.H.
Price: \$60 **abv:** 14.3%



92 Clif Family 2008 Kit's Killer Cab Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Feels vital and refined, from the classic aroma through the gorgeous tannins to the long finish. Seriously good Napa Cabernet, brimming with blackberry, black currant and cedar flavors that get more complex as they breathe. Nice now, and should develop over the next 6–8 years. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.
Price: \$38 **abv:** 14.1%



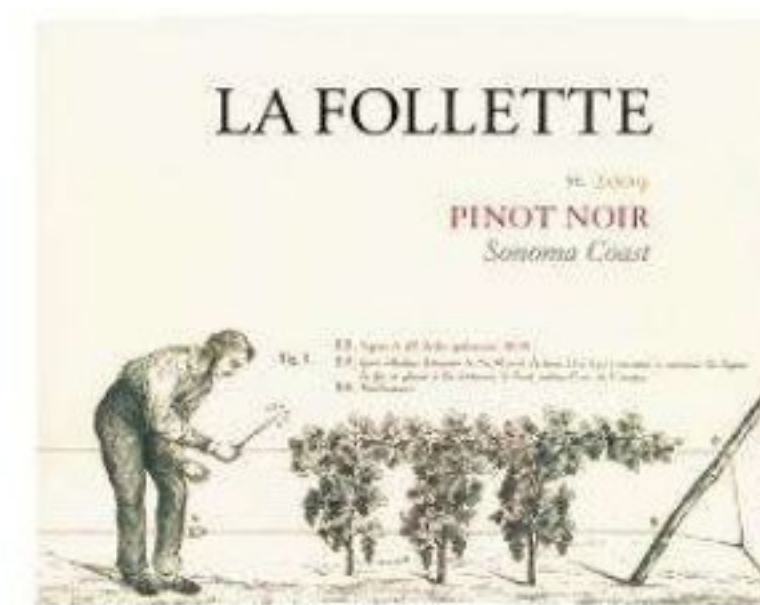
92 Henry Fessy 2009 (Fleurie). A richly aromatic wine, with swathes of sweet fruit, ripe tannins and a juicy, jammy feel. This is so generous, open, welcoming. There is structure as well, cushioned by the sweet fruits. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.
Price: \$20 **abv:** NA



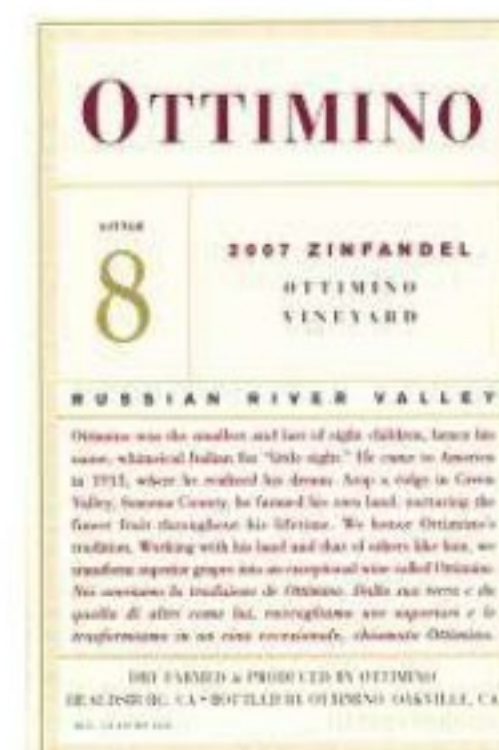
92 Henry Fessy 2009 (Saint-Amour). Ripe, rounded and generous, a warm plum juice-flavored wine. There is power and concentration. It is a very complete, ageworthy wine, although accessible now. Louis Latour Inc. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.
Price: \$20 **abv:** NA



92 Keenan 2007 Merlot (Napa Valley). A delicious Merlot, drily tannic and rich in blackberries, cherries and chocolate. Nearly as good as the winery's much more expensive Reserve. Great with grilled steak with sautéed mushrooms. —S.H.
Price: \$36 **abv:** 14.3%



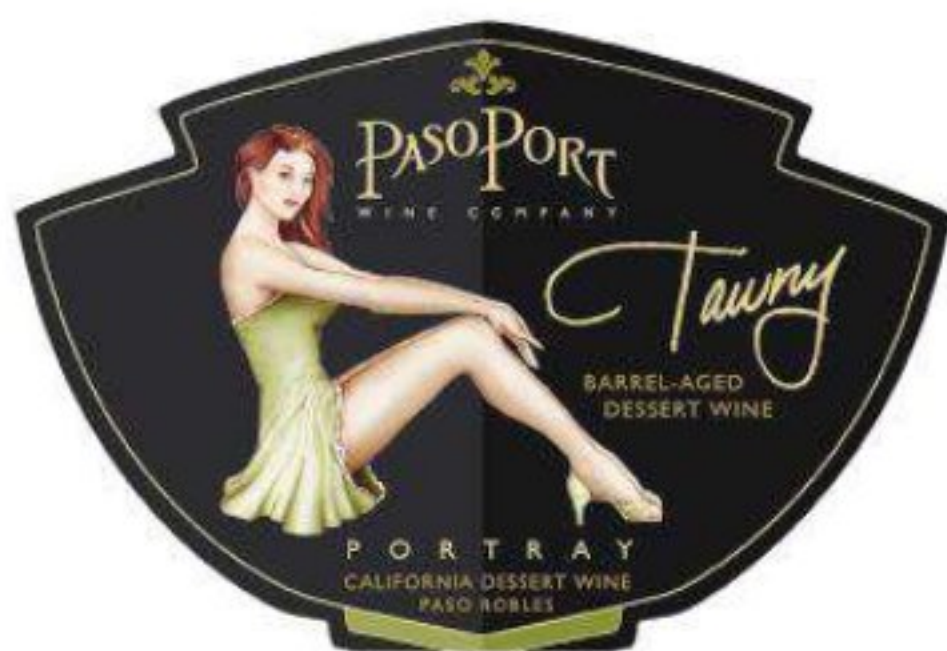
92 La Follette 2009 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Just gorgeous, a wine to linger over with the finest food. Bone dry and crisp in acidity, it shows subtle flavors of sour cherry candy, persimmons and spices. Sweet, smoky oak is perfectly integrated. One of the best Pinot Noirs of the vintage in this price range and a comparative bargain. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.
Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.1%



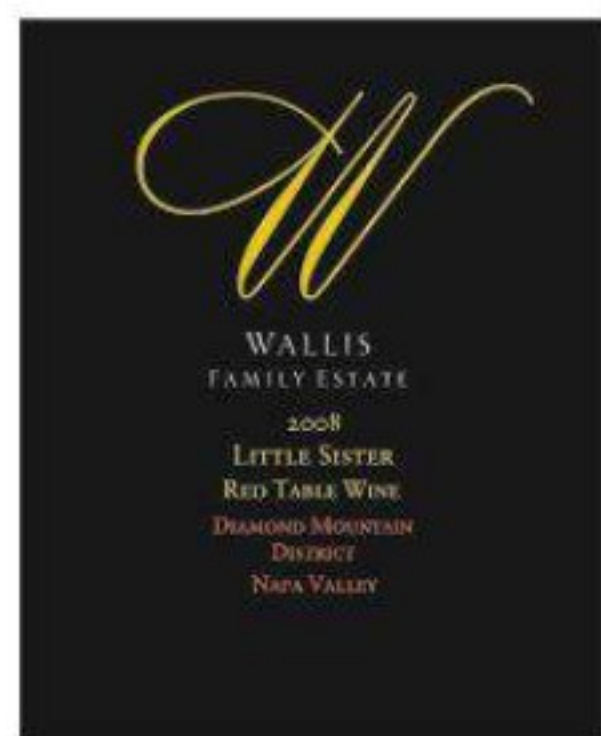
92 Ottimino 2007 Ottimino Vineyard Little 8 Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). Classic Russian River Zinfandel. The vineyard is in the Green Valley, and the wine has the wonderful attributes of ripeness, dryness and acidity, without high alcohol. It's enormously flavorful, delivering waves of blackberries, cherries, cola, red licorice, bacon, black pepper and sweet oak. A gorgeous Zin showing class and elegance. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.
Price: \$28 **abv:** 14.4%



92 PasoPort NV Portray Angelica Aged White Dessert Wine (Paso Robles). An extraordinarily sweet wine, just massive in honey, orange and butterscotch flavors. A brisk streak of acidity provides much-needed balance. Beautiful and decadent, and deliriously good with cheesecake. —S.H.
Price: \$40/500 ml **abv:** 17%



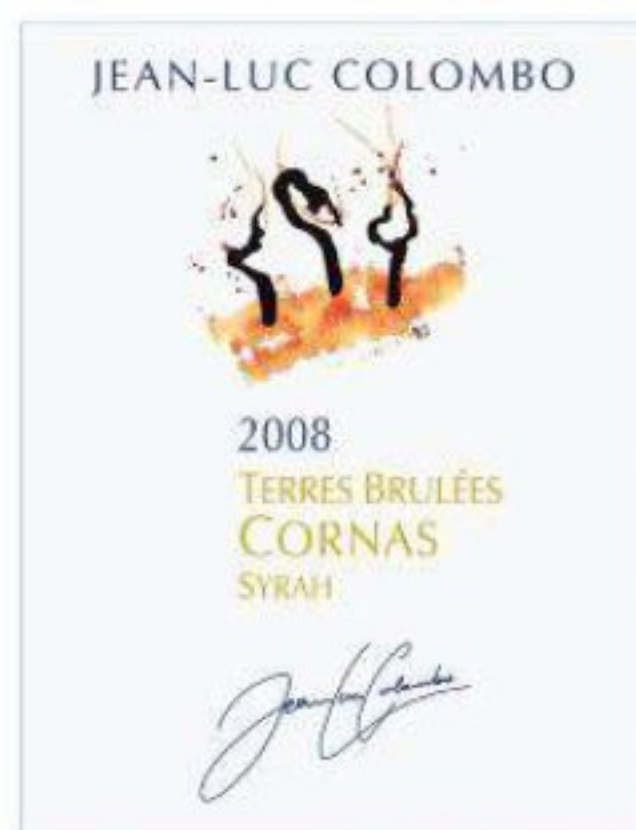
92 PasoPort NV Portray Tawny Barrel-Aged Dessert Wine (Paso Robles). A Port-style blend, this full-bodied red dessert wine is enormously sweet and quite delicious, with rich, decadent blackberry, chocolate, nougat, macaroon and vanilla flavors, brightened with fine acidity. Save it for this winter, and drink on a cold night in front of the fireplace, with something chocolaty and romantic. —S.H.
Price: \$35/500 ml **abv:** 18%



92 Wallis Family Estate 2008 Little Sister Red Table Wine (Diamond Mountain). Dry and smooth as a fine old Scotch, with intricately woven blackberry, black currant, green olive and herb flavors leading to a long, spicy finish. The tannins are significant, but very finely ground. Classy and powerful, this Cabernet should develop over the next eight years. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.
Price: \$45 **abv:** 14.5%



91 Henry Fessy 2009 (Morgon). A really ripe wine, rich and with a generous feel to it. The sweet cherry fruit is powered with plum juice, dense tannins and structure. A wine for aging. Louis Latour Inc. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
Price: \$19 **abv:** NA



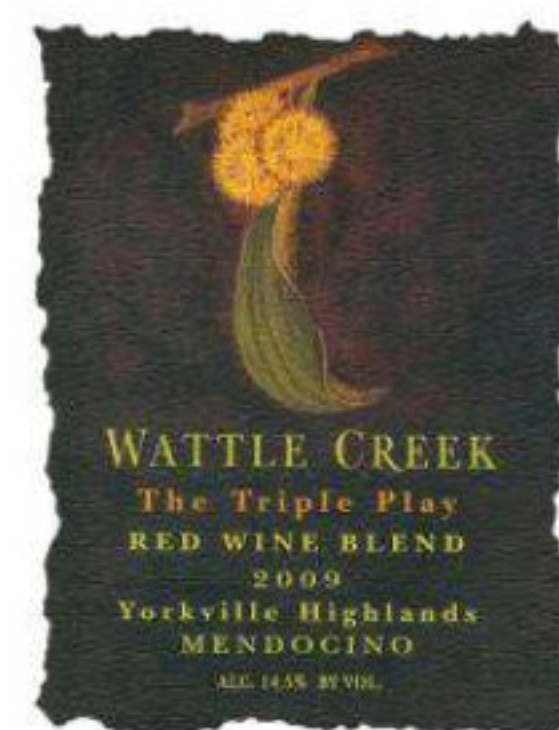
91 Jean-Luc Colombo 2008 Terres Brulées Syrah (Cornas). This is Colombo's entry-level Cornas in the U.S., and is a more-than-solid effort from a challenging vintage. Beefy aromas lead the way, with hints of espresso and black olive, adding some cassis and blueberry fruit. This is amply concentrated and firm, with a dusty, lingering finish. Drink 2013–2020. Palm Bay International. —J.C.
Price: \$48 **abv:** 13.5%



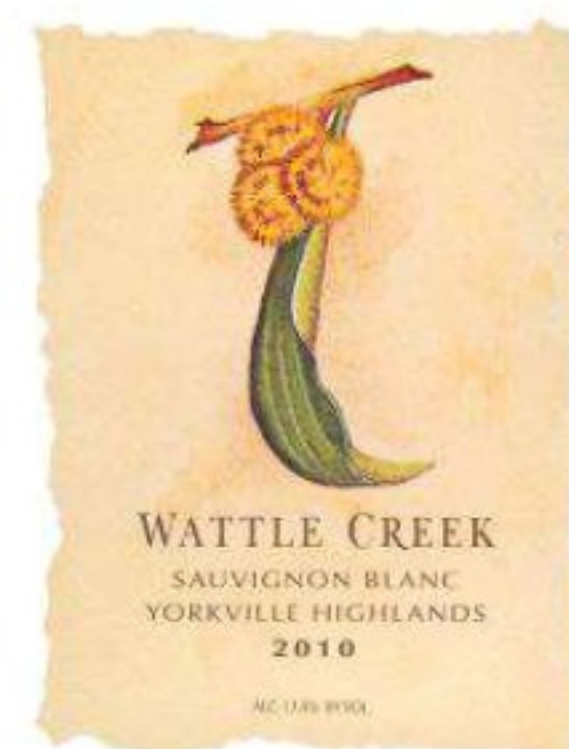
91 La Rochelle 2009 Four Sisters Vineyard Pinot Meunier (Sonoma Coast). Light in body, silky and acidic, made in a more elegant and sophisticated style than some of those bigger, extracted Pinots. Almost like a white wine, but with intense raspberry and cherry fruit, cola, rosehip tea, spice and oak flavors. Decant for a few hours, or drink over the next three years. —S.H.
Price: \$38 **abv:** 14%



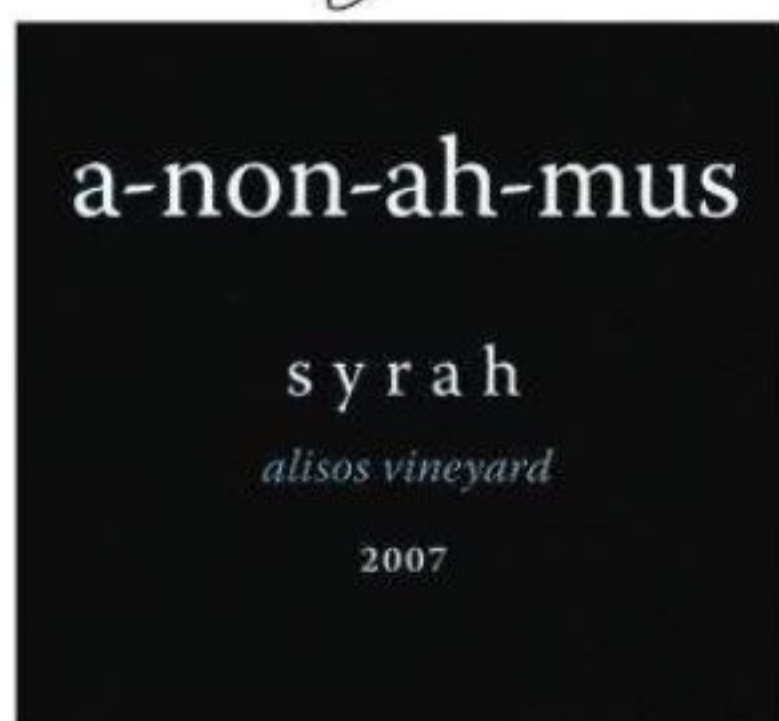
91 Mommessin 2010 Les Griottes (Morgon). Griottes are a type of bitter cherry used in cooking, and this wine shares some of that character. It is firmly structured with acidity and an edge of attractive lightness. Age for 2–3 years. OWS. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
Price: \$16 **abv:** NA



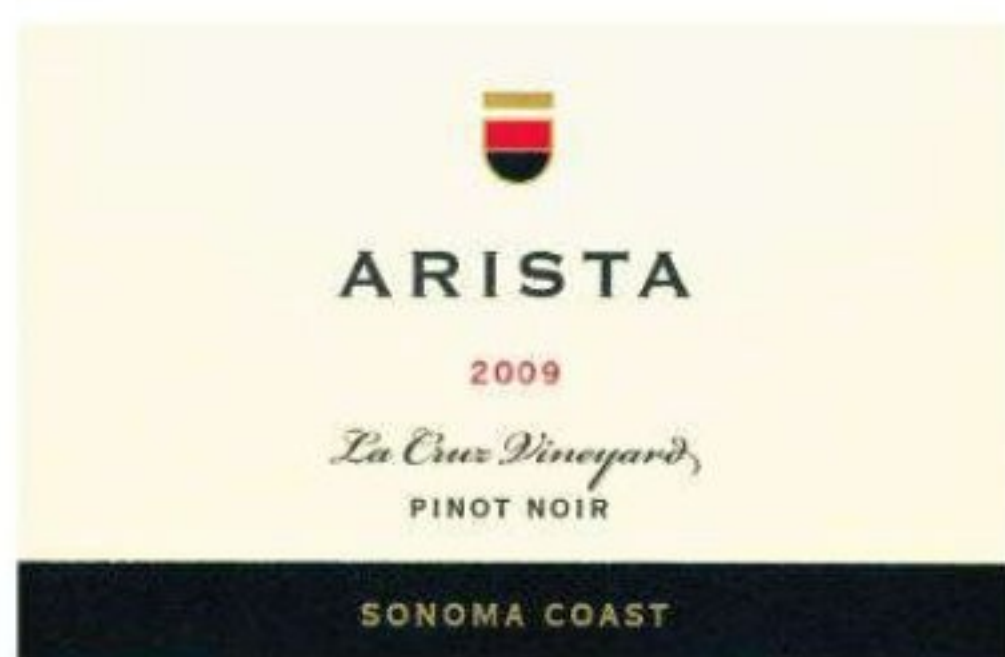
91 Wattle Creek 2009 The Triple Play Red Wine Blend (Yorkville Highlands). Wattle Creek's best Triple Play ever. A blend of Syrah, Viognier and Petite Sirah from this cool appellation in Mendocino County, the wine is dry, medium- to full-bodied, tannic and complex, with flavors of blackberries, currants, tobacco, smoked meat, cedar and scads of black pepper. Drink now for its sheer power and joy. —S.H.
Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.5%



91 Wattle Creek 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Yorkville Highlands). So bone dry and acidic, the tastebuds start whistling at the first sip. Defines the racy personality of Sauvignon Blanc, with a palate-stimulating tang and lime, lemongrass and mineral flavors. The best Wattle Creek Sauvignon Blanc ever. —S.H.
Price: \$19 **abv:** 13.8%



90 a-non-ah-mus 2007 Alisos Vineyard Syrah (Santa Barbara County). The northern Rhône is inspiration for this Syrah. It's a dark, tannic wine, richly acidic, with complex, fascinating flavors of blackberries, smoked meat, cassis, cedar wood and black pepper. You get plenty of bang for your buck with this dry, elegant wine. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.
Price: \$23 **abv:** 13.5%



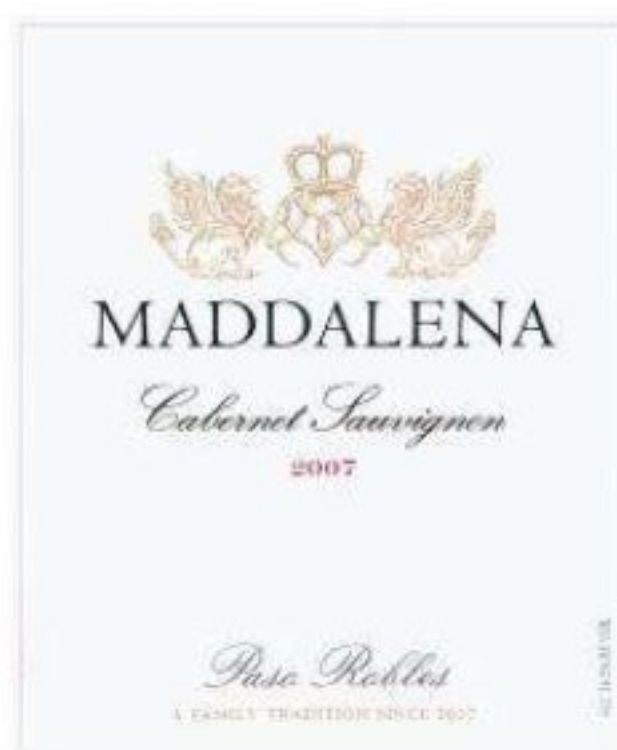
90 Arista 2009 La Cruz Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). A good, rich, fruity Pinot Noir, nice and dry, with flamboyant raspberry, cherry, cola and sandalwood flavors. It's fresh and vibrant in coastal acidity that gives it a tang. Drink now–2014. —S.H.
Price: \$52 **abv:** 14.2%



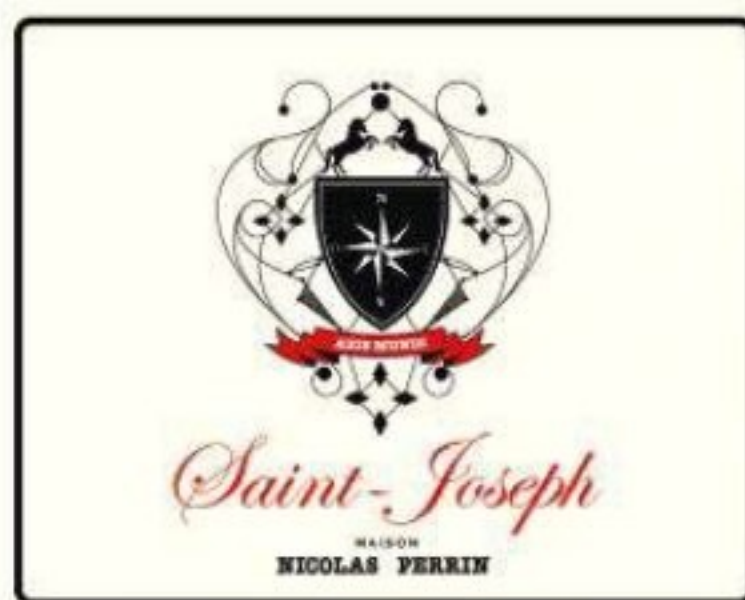
90 Henry Fessy 2010 (Moulin-à-Vent). A very structured wine, as befits this normally powerful cru. It is packed with dark tannins and minerality. The wine is angular, and you can taste the granite and schist soil. This edge of austerity is balanced by delicious fruit. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.
Price: \$20 **abv:** NA



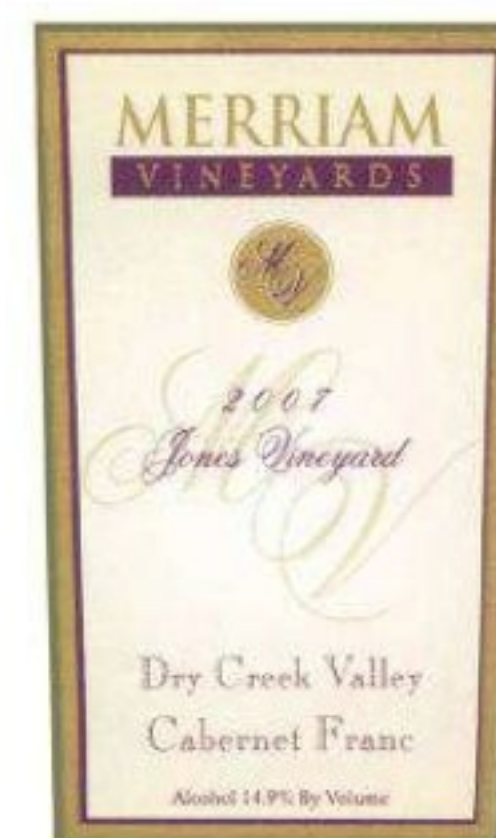
90 La Rochelle 2010 Pinot Noir Rosé (Santa Lucia Highlands). Tasted in June following the vintage, this blush wine had a slight effervescence, like a sparkling wine, with a tingly mouthfeel that was by no means unpleasant. In fact, it was very good, giving a clean, lively tang to the strawberry, yeast, vanilla, citrus and spice flavors. Unconventional, but a beautiful rosé that gets better as it warms in the glass. —S.H.
Price: \$22 **abv:** 13.2%



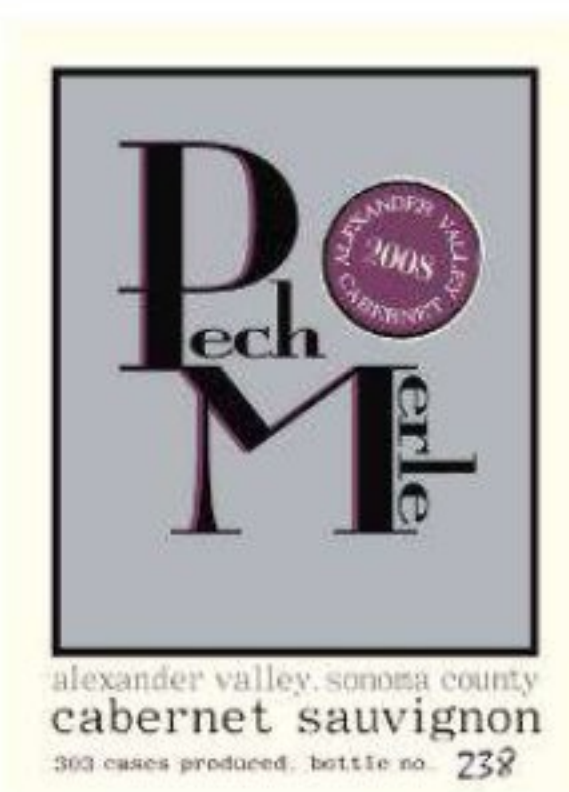
90 Maddalena 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). Firmly tannic, crisply acidic and dry, this is easily Maddalena's best Cabernet Sauvignon ever. It has classic flavors of blackberries and black currants, with a nice earthiness, and is notable for its elegant structure. A real achievement and a great value. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.
Price: \$16 **abv:** 14.5%



90 Maison Nicolas Perrin 2007 (Saint-Joseph). A supremely pretty and elegant version of Saint-Joseph, with perfumed cherries, crushed stone and floral notes, this is a medium-bodied wine that seems almost weightless in the mouth, inviting another sip. Drink now and over the next few years. Vineyard Brands. *Editors' Choice.* —J.C.
Price: \$33 **abv:** 13%



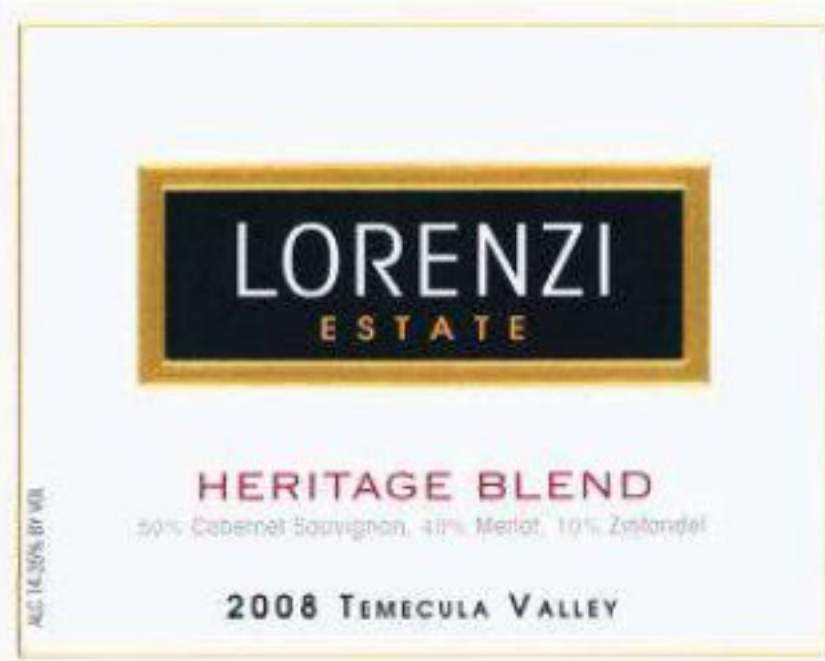
90 Merriam Vineyards 2007 Jones Vineyard Cabernet Franc (Dry Creek Valley). A dry, tannicly rich, interesting wine to drink with a nice steak. It's smoky in oak, with complex black cherry, cassis and spice flavors. Feels supple and good in the mouth, showing Dry Creek's natural affinity for Cab Franc. —S.H.
Price: \$45 **abv:** 14.9%



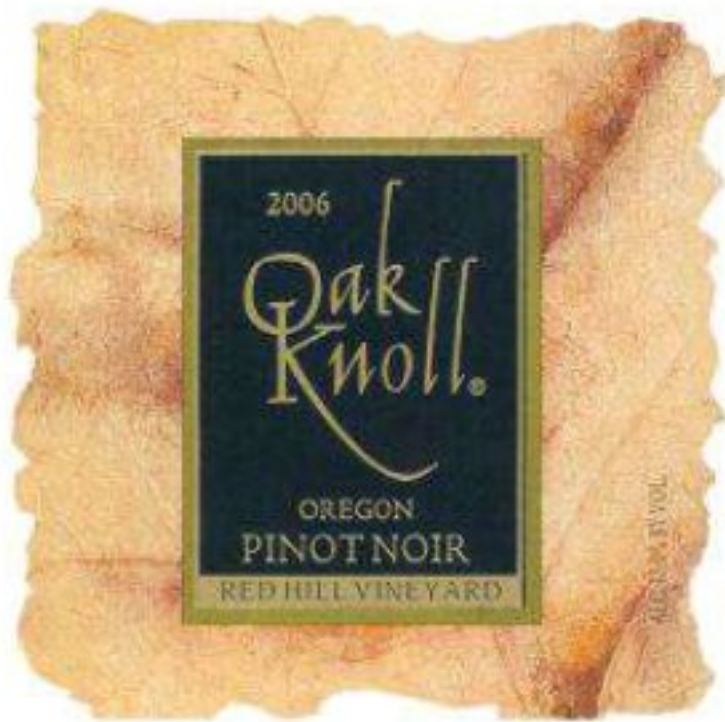
90 Pech Merle 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). Shows the earthy, herbal tinge that characterize Alexander Valley Cabernet, but it's not shy in fruit. You'll find plenty of cherries, blackberries, red licorice and smoky cedar. This Cab isn't flashy, but it's very good, a lovely wine to pair with grilled steak. —S.H.
Price: \$37 **abv:** 14.4%



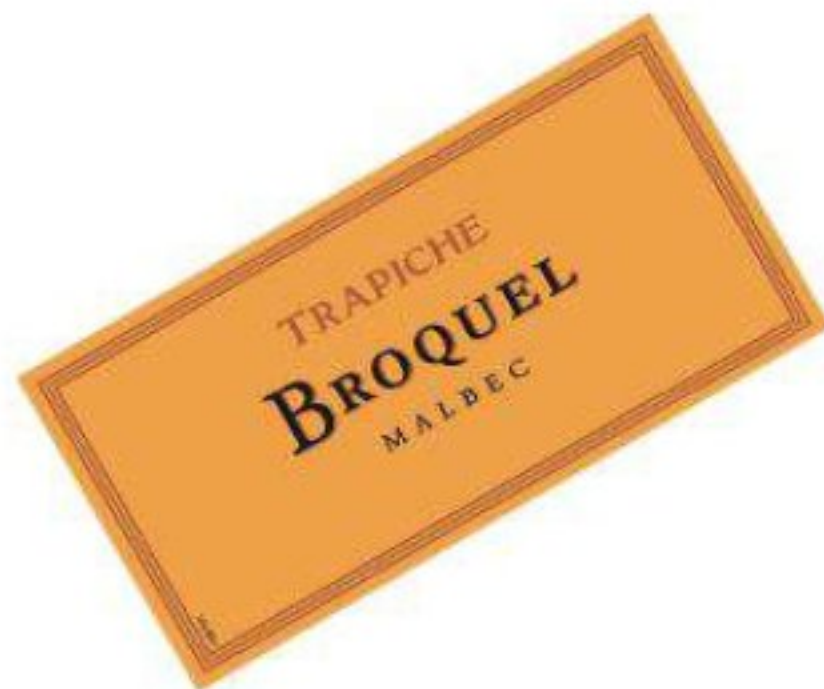
89 Angeline 2009 Reserve Merlot (Sonoma County). One of the best Merlots for the price on the market today. So gentle and easy to like for the fresh berry, mocha and spice flavors, and the gentle scour of tannins. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.
Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.9%



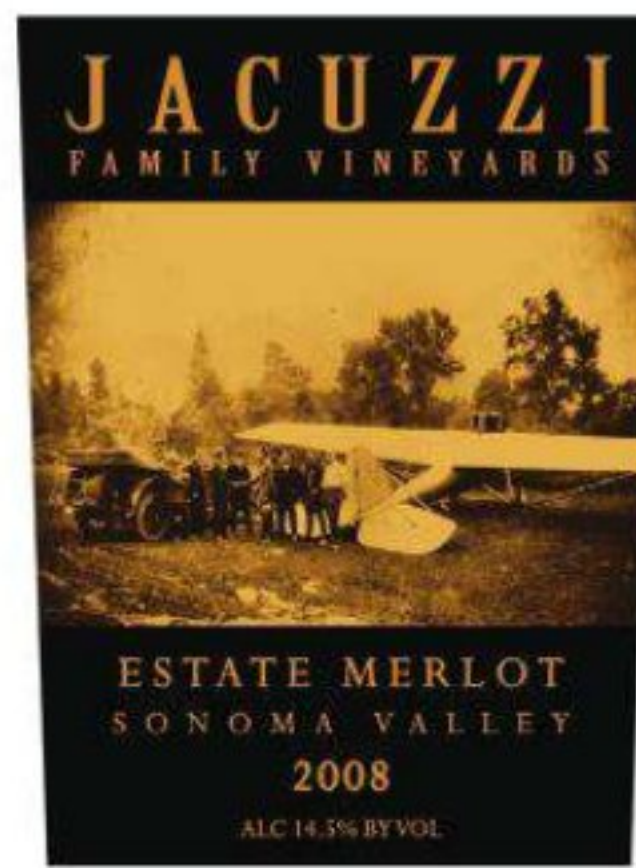
89 Lorenzi Estate 2008 Heritage Blend (Temecula Valley). A big-boy Cabernet Sauvignon-dominant blend (50% Cab Sauv, 40% Merlot, 10% Zinfandel) from the South Coast of California, offering up tones of cranberry, cassis and even a hint of eucalyptus, that's stemmy and tannic with room to mellow with age. —V.B.
Price: \$26 **abv:** 14.35%



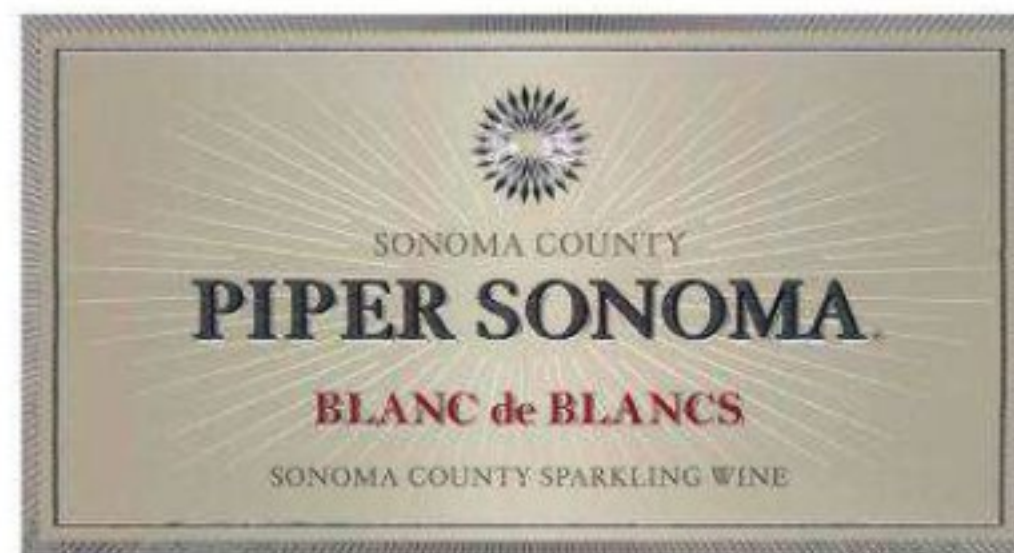
89 Oak Knoll 2006 Red Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Oregon). From a vineyard in southern Oregon that is actually its own, self-contained AVA (Red Hill Douglas County), this is a well-structured Pinot Noir with grip and authority. There is a noticeable smokiness to both nose and palate, not unpleasant, and the fruit is tight and supple. Black cherry and blackberry flavors are set in charred wood tannins, but everything is in proportion and nicely developed. —P.G.
Price: \$24 **abv:** 13%



89 Trapiche 2009 Broquel Malbec (Mendoza). Very purple and saturated, with mushroom, shoe polish, black licorice and smoky, hard berry aromas and flavors. There's big time weight to this dark, roasted Malbec; that and a soft, smooth, coconutty finish. Loaded with flavor but a bit clumsy. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —M.S.
Price: \$15 **abv:** 14%



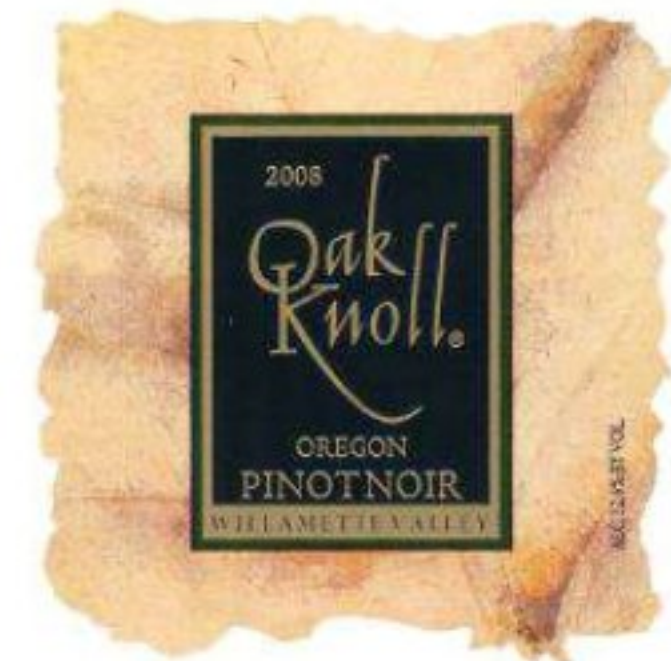
88 Jacuzzi 2008 Estate Merlot (Sonoma Valley). Lots to like in this dry, smooth Merlot. It's an earthy wine, with dried herb, black cherry and cedar flavors wrapped into firm tannins. Good price for the quality. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.
Price: \$16 **abv:** 14.5%



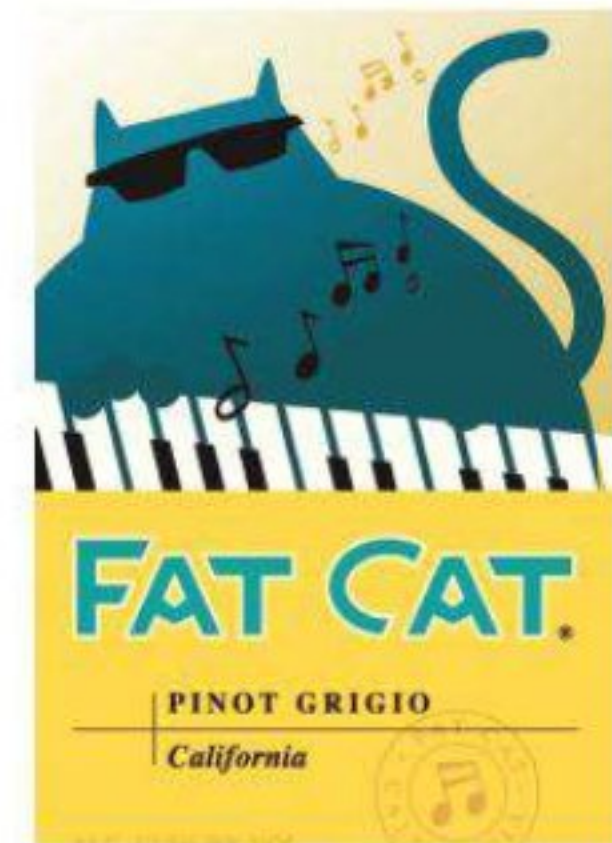
88 Piper Sonoma NV Blanc de Blancs (Sonoma County). Mainly Chardonnay, with a drop of Pinot Noir, this dry bubbly has intricate flavors of lemons, limes, tangerines and honey, with a rich yeastiness. It's a little scoury in texture, but pretty good for the price. —S.H.
Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%



88 Piper Sonoma NV Brut (Sonoma County). A little scoury around the edges and sweet, but otherwise a fine bubbly. Dry and tart, it shows rich Meyer lemon, lime, strawberry, vanilla and yeast flavors. —S.H.
Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%



87 Oak Knoll 2008 Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). This opens with a clean evocation of Pinot Noir aromas—delicate, almost ethereal, like a wisp of cherry and caramel and moist earth. It turns a bit hard and acidic in the mouth, suggestion that further cellaring is in order. The pieces are here to make a wine with genuine ageability. —P.G.
Price: \$15 **abv:** 12.6%



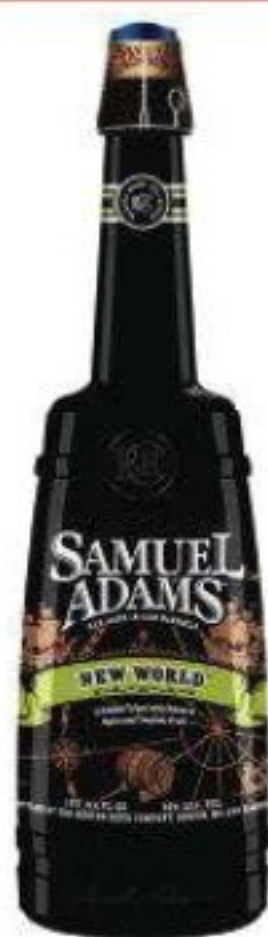
85 Fat Cat 2009 Pinot Grigio (California). Here's a useful white wine for drinking as a cocktail, or with Asian fare or a nice roast chicken. It's crisp in acidity, with clean citrus, honey and vanilla flavors that finish just a little off-dry. —S.H.
Price: \$11 **abv:** 12.5%

SPIRITS



88 Molinari Sambuca Caffé Liqueur (Italy; Van Gogh Imports, Orlando, FL). A blend of Sambuca and coffee yields a rich, full-flavored anisette spirit with just a faint whiff of coffee on the finish. Billing this as a coffee liqueur does it a disservice, although it would be awfully nice mixed with coffee as an after-dinner quaff.
Price: \$25 **abv:** 40%

BEER



93 Samuel Adams Barrel Room Collection New World Tripel (Belgian-style Tripel; The Boston Beer Company, MA).

An intense tripel that definitely puts a Sam Adams stamp on the classically Belgian brew. Right off the bat, you can tell that it's going to be a big and powerful sip as intense aromas of rich malt, apricot, orange peel and banana are accented with spicy notes of coriander, sweet spice and crusty bread. The palate offers additional depth and complexity through a toasty oak core, making the mouthfeel even more round

and full than the style traditionally provides. Medium carbonation and a clean finish close the swallow nicely.

Price: \$10/750 ml

abv: 10.0%

 **BEST BUYS**

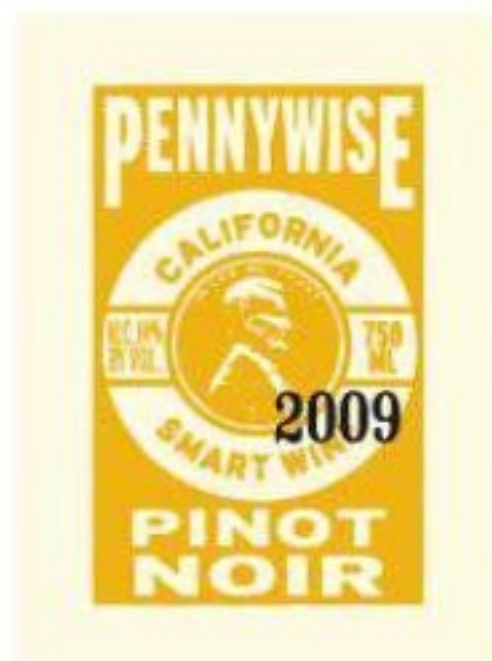


90 Oak Knoll 2008 Semi-Sweet Riesling (Oregon).

This full-bodied Riesling checks in at 12% alcohol and roughly 2% residual sugar. All in balance, the sweetness and acidity wrap around deliciously luscious fruit flavors of peach and nectarine, melon and sweet apple. **Best Buy.** —P.G.

Price: \$10

abv: 12%



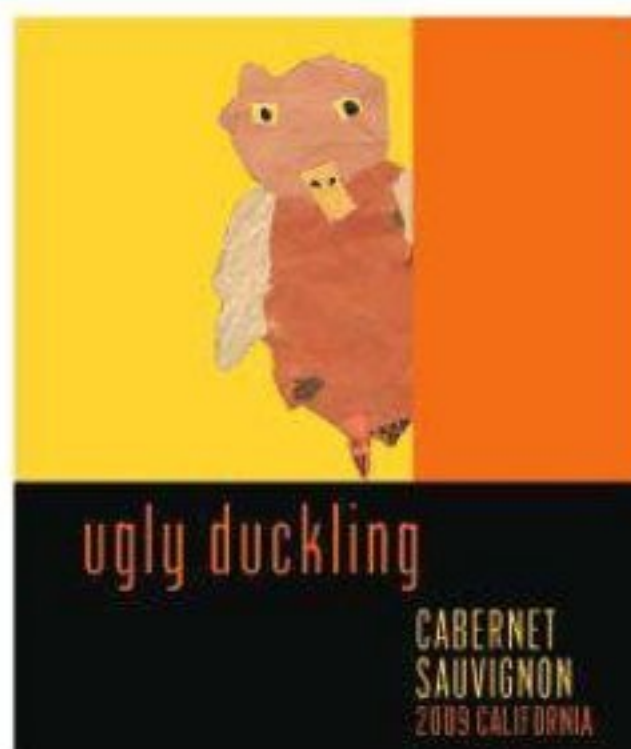
90 Pennywise 2009 Pinot Noir (California).

Surprisingly sophisticated for a Pinot Noir at this price. It's dry, light in the mouth and elegantly structured, with a nice bite of acids and tannins. The flavors are delicate in sour cherries, sweet tomato jam and dusty spices. **Best Buy.** —S.H.

Price: \$12

abv: 14%

 **BEST BUYS**



90 Ugly Duckling 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (California).

In a word, wow. What a wonderful Cabernet Sauvignon. It has got to be one of the best buys out there, so rich and smooth in berry, cherry, currant and spice flavors. Only 640 cases were produced, but worth a search. Drink now. **Best Buy.** —S.H.

Price: \$12

abv: 13.9%



89 Cachette 2009 (Côtes du Rhône).

Rich, ripe and chocolaty in style, this is a full-bodied yet soft and velvety-textured wine. It's a rich, satisfying mouthful of lusty red from the right bank of the Rhône, made by Laudun Chusclan Vignerons for the importer, Quintessential Wines. **Best Buy.** —J.C.

Price: \$14

abv: 14%



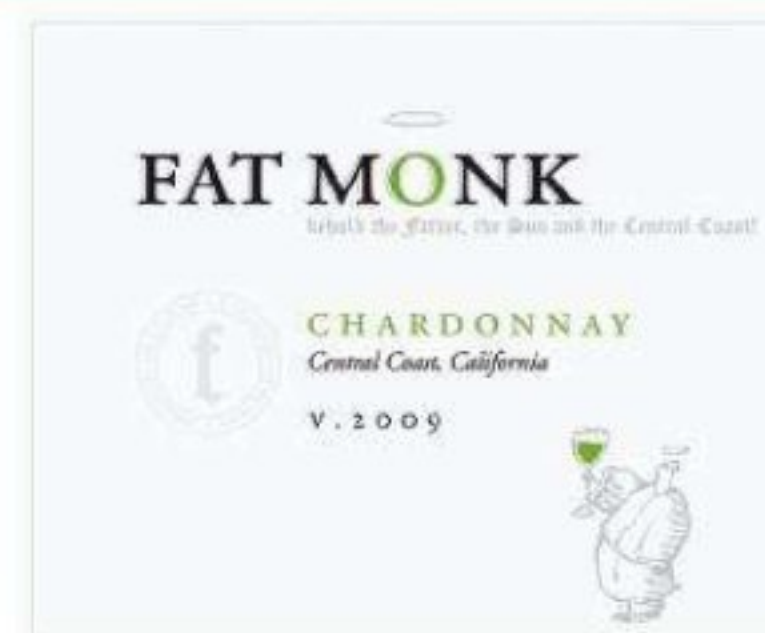
89 Marqués de Cáceres 2010 Rosé (Rioja).

Ideal Spanish rosé in every way, from color to aromas to flavors to the price tag. The nose is inviting, with delicate, crisp fruit aromas. The feel is just right, propelled by bright acids. Tastes of raspberry and watermelon, while the finish is long and lightly spicy. What a quaffing rosado should be. Vineyard Brands. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$9

abv: 13.5%

 **BEST BUYS**



88 Fat Monk 2009 Chardonnay (Central Coast).

Tastes like a white Rhône blend, with tangerine, white peach, nectarine and mineral flavors, but surprise, it's Chardonnay. Crisp acidity provides balance, and the finish is clean and elegant. Great price for a full-bodied white wine this rich. **Best Buy.** —S.H.

Price: \$12

abv: 14.5%

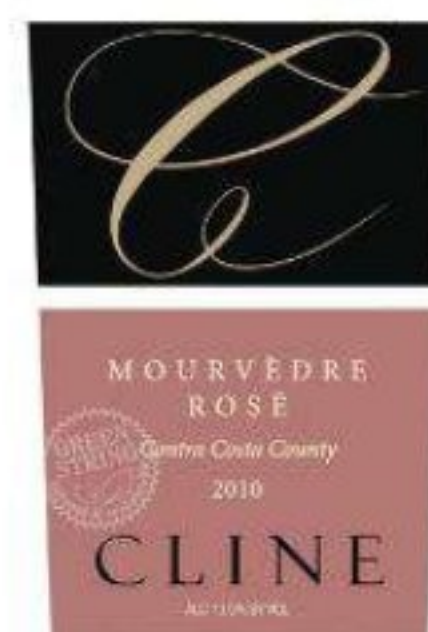


88 Mommessin 2010 Château de Pierreux (Brouilly).

The showpiece château and estate owned by Mommessin has produced a rich, characterful wine, the fruits balanced by acidity. The structure of the year does show through, but always there is the juicy fruit. OWS. **Best Buy.** —R.V.

Price: \$13

abv: NA



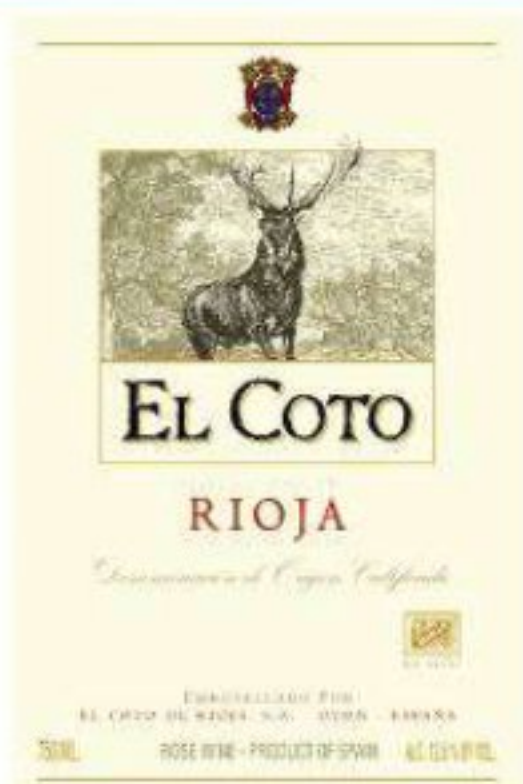
87 Cline 2010 Mourvèdre Rosé (Contra Costa County).

Cline always does a nice job with its old-vine Mourvèdre, particularly with its rosé, which is surprisingly light on its feet given how big varietal Mourvèdre bottlings can be. This wine is perfect for summer or even around Thanksgiving, with ample acidity and pleasing flavors of pomegranate and plum, a good pairing with seafood or anything spicy. **Best Buy.** —V.B.

Price: \$12

abv: 13.5%

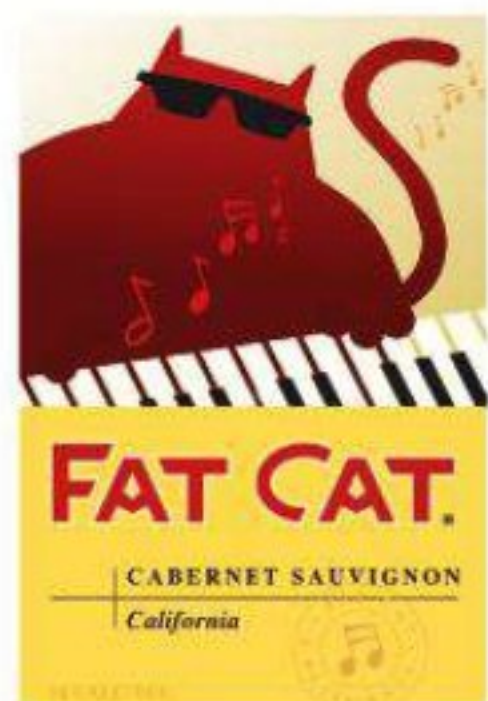
 **BEST BUYS**



87 El Coto 2010 Rosado (Rioja). Always a consistent rosé from Rioja. The nose is candied but fresh and nice, while the palate is full but standard, with plump melon, citrus and raspberry flavors. Finishes short but sturdy, with balance and good acidity. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. **Best Buy.** —M.S.
Price: \$10 **abv:** 12.5%

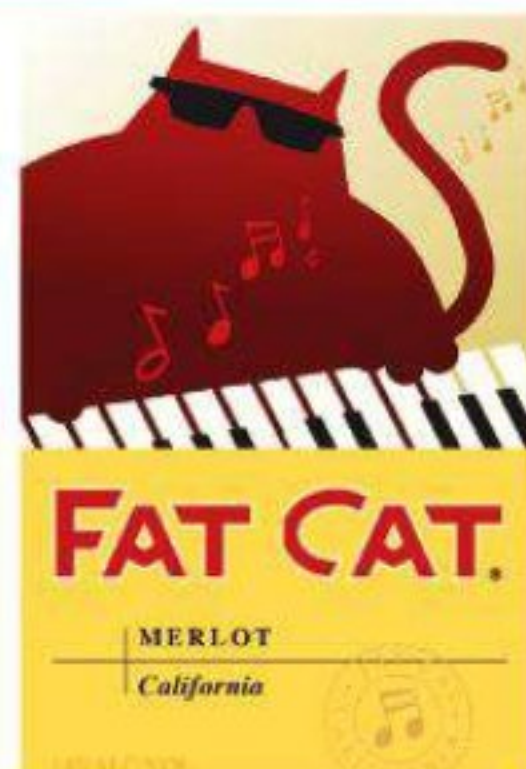


87 Oak Knoll 2008 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley). Oak Knoll's Pinot Gris is a sturdy, steady expression of the grape's main strengths. Vintage in and vintage out, the wine has plenty of ripe apple and pear fruit flavors, with citrusy highlights and a splash of refreshing acidity. **Best Buy.** —P.G.
Price: \$12 **abv:** 13.5%

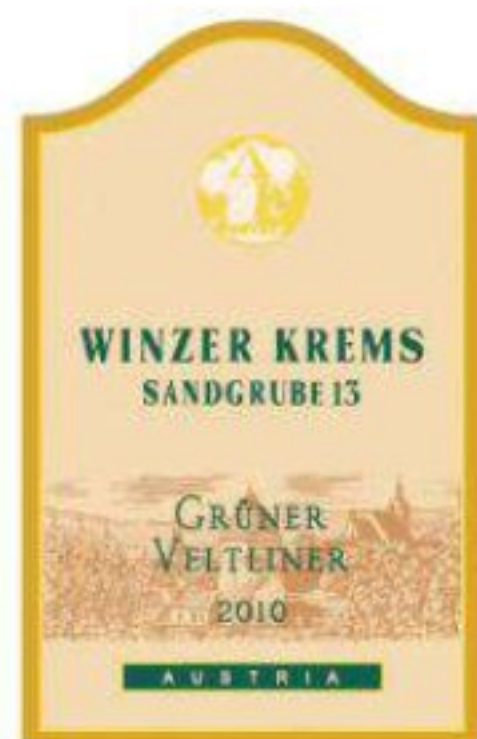


86 Fat Cat 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). Lots of blackberry, cherry and spicy cola flavors in this dry, clean wine. It has the classic tannins and balance of a fine Cabernet. Drink now with a good steak. **Best Buy.** —S.H.
Price: \$11 **abv:** 14%

 **BEST BUYS**



86 Fat Cat 2009 Merlot (California). A versatile Merlot. Lends itself to drinking with a range of steaks, poultry, lamb, even vegetarian lentil and tofu dishes. Dry and balanced, with pleasant berry, currant and herb flavors, at a fair price. **Best Buy.** —S.H.
Price: \$11 **abv:** 14%



85 Winzer Krems 2010 Sandgrube 13 Pulverturm Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Soft, just off dry wine that packs in ripe apples, green plums and pineapple. It has a really tangy, crisp texture, a slight prickle on the tongue. Total Wine & More. **Best Buy.** —R.V.
Price: \$9 **abv:** 12.5%

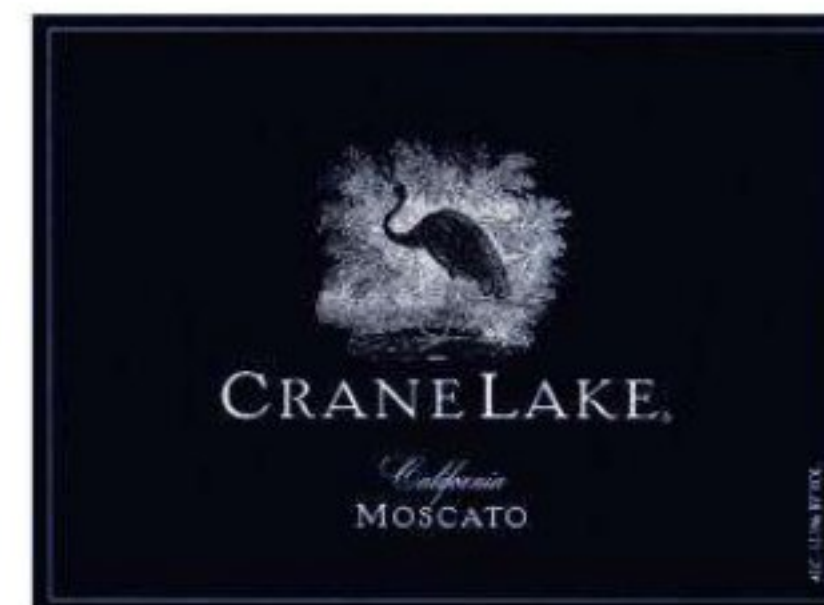


84 Barefoot NV Cabernet Sauvignon (California). Dependable year in and year out for prominent flavors of raspberry and blackberry jam and spices, wrapped into smooth tannins. A good price for a solid house red. **Best Buy.** —S.H.
Price: \$7 **abv:** 13%

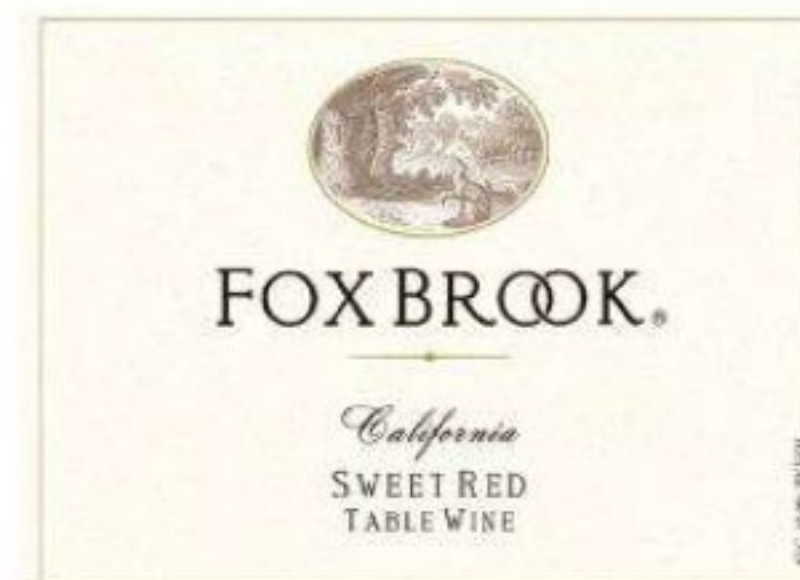
 **BEST BUYS**



84 Cottonwood Creek 2010 Red Table Wine Made With Organic Grapes (California). Sweetish and simple, but ripe and lusty in berry and spice flavors, this is a bistro-style wine for everyday drinking. Production was high and the alcohol level is low. **Best Buy.** —S.H.
Price: \$7 **abv:** 12.5%



84 Crane Lake 2010 Moscato (California). Sweet in honey, lemon and lime and vanilla flavors, with a good zest of acidity that makes it finish clean and vibrant. Good price for an everyday sweetie. **Best Buy.** —S.H.
Price: \$6 **abv:** 10%



84 Fox Brook NV Sweet Red Table Wine (California). Like the label says, this red wine is sweet. It has raspberry and cherry flavors, with a pretty dusting of cinnamon spice. If sweet is your thing, drink up. The price is right. **Best Buy.** —S.H.
Price: \$6 **abv:** 10%

BUYINGguide

friendly and very likable style of Priorat to drink now through 2013. MHW, Ltd. —M.S.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.5%

90 Torres 2006 Grans Muralles (Conca de Barberà). Roasted and leathery upon first impression, with a juicy, mildly astringent palate that's full up with tannins. Tastes baked and leathery, with herbal accents running alongside roasted berry flavors. Tannic grip rises up on the finish, which is clumpy and hard but offers sturdy support to what is ultimately a pedigreed Catalan blend. Dreyfus, Ashby & Co. —M.S.

Price: \$105 **abv:** 14%

90 Vall Llach 2007 Embruix (Priorat). Chunky, fruity and softer than many Priorat wines. There's raisin, blackberry and prune on the nose, which is followed by a grippy, round palate with sweet blackberry, raisin and chocolate flavors. Fleshy and easy on the finish, with coconut and warmth. Drink now through 2014. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.S.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 15%

90 Vinyes Doménech 2007 Fervus (Montsant). Deep, ripe, pure black fruit aromas feature leather and oak accents. The palate has a nice feel and good balance; it's tight, minerally and deals toasty berry, snappy pomegranate and chocolaty spice. Tight as a drum and long on the finish. Drinkable now but better down the road. 65% Garnacha with Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Ole Imports. —M.S.

Price: \$34 **abv:** 14.5%

89 Besllum 2008 (Montsant). Robust on the bouquet, with ample red berry fruit and vanilla. The palate has a deep, layered feel and flavors of plum, berry and peppery spice. A tight blend of Carignan, Garnacha and Syrah that's forward and wiry, with power in reserve. Drink now through 2015. Frontier Wine Imports. —M.S.

Price: \$32 **abv:** 14%

88 Fra Guerau 2006 (Montsant). A big, warm, baked wine made from Merlot, Garnacha, Syrah and Cab Sauvignon. It has baked aromas in front of a full, balanced palate that hits with dark fruit, molasses and warmth. Does a good job of blending ripe black fruit and chocolate with proper tannins and acidity. Drink now. Freixenet USA. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 14%

87 Costers del Siurana 2007 Miserere (Priorat). Hard and harsh on the nose, with an odd clam-or-oyster shell aroma that comes back time and time again. The palate is narrow and tannic, with minerally berry and baked flavors. Grippy, hard and tannic on the finish, with red berry and cherry notes. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$84 **abv:** 15.5%

87 Gran Vinaio 2007 (Montsant). A bit hard and leathery smelling, but there's enough cedar and smoky darkness to the nose that it invites you in. The palate is tight and drying, with earthy, slightly herbal flavors of spiced red berry. Short on fruit come finish-

ing time but showing length, juicy acidity and structure. Vinaio Imports. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Can Blau 2008 Can Blau (Montsant). Cherry and leather aromas show a stemmy, brambly element. The mouthfeel is sharp and scratchy, while the flavors are a mix of reedy tobacco, raspberry and cherry. Choppy but juicy and lively on the finish. A blend of Mazuelo, Syrah and Garnacha. —M.S.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 14%

CAMPO DE BORJA

88 Borsao 2008 Berola (Campo de Borja). Opens with rich aromas of brandied cherry, kirsch and smoked meats. The palate is big but fresh, with slightly grating tannins and tightness. Flavors of roasted plum and berry maintain freshness, while the finish is deep and satisfying. A blend of 70% Garnacha, 20% Syrah and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 14.5%

87 Veraz 2008 Garnacha (Campo de Borja). Among \$8 reds this is really good. The nose is roasted and jammy, and it deepens and cleans up with airing. The palate is full, chunky and offers proper balance, while the flavors are plummy and deep, with a touch of raisin and rubber. Solid on the finish, with grapy lasting flavors. Aviva Vino. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$8 **abv:** 14%

86 Coto de Hayas 2007 Crianza Tempranillo-Garnacha (Campo de Borja). Not complex but if you're looking for size, red fruit flavors and balance, it has that. The nose shows compost and horse hide but for the most part it's fruity and welcoming. The mouth is fresh and a bit sheer, with direct berry, plum and creamy flavors. Finishes smooth for a \$10 Tempranillo-Garnacha blend. Scoperta Importing Co. Inc. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Granate 2008 Garnacha (Campo de Borja). Aromas of sweet black cherry and dark plum form a good bouquet. The palate has smack and acidic bite, but the flavors are forward and clean, with a focus on plum and black cherry. Finishes full and long, with licorice as well as leftover acidity. Aviva Vino. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 14%

83 Coto de Hayas 2008 Fagus Selección Especial Garnacha (Campo de Borja). Tire rubber, heat and funky, oak-based spice aromas are ominous and foretelling. The palate on this Garnacha is creamy and feels sticky, while the flavors are sugary and emphasize vanilla and marshmallow over clean fruit. Flaccid on the finish, with candied flavors. Scoperta Importing Co. Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%

BIERZO

92 Dominio de Tares 2007 Exaltos Cepas Viejas (Bierzo). Deep, dark and oaky smell-

ing, with tons of mocha on top of ripe black fruit aromas. There's both heft and elegance to this wine, that and coffee, spice and exotic black fruit flavors. Finishes toasty and spicy, with a rich, chunky, structured feel. Impressive; drink now through 2013. Opici Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14%

92 Pittacum 2007 Aurea (Bierzo). Poised and focused Mencía with lush, bold aromas that are powerful and alluring. The palate is healthy and stout, with tannic grip that props up black fruit, toast and charcoal flavors. Black pepper, spice and licorice are the finishing notes. Drink now through 2014. Aveniù Brands, Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$52 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Pittacum 2007 (Bierzo). A bit rubbery and earthy at first but with time it develops, yielding syrupy berry aromas, woody oak notes and dried cheese. The palate feel is deep, lush and silky smooth, while it tastes of ripe berry, coconut and vanilla. Softer than some, with a lush texture that will allow for near-term drinking. Aveniù Brands, Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.5%

89 Casar de Burbia 2007 Tebaida Mencía (Bierzo). Meaty and leathery opening aromas bring spice, herbs and bit of everything. It's clacky and tannic on the palate, which shows good acidity and lightly herbal flavors of tomato, red berry and spice. Turns more herbal and oaky on the dry finish. Very nice and solid, but a bit herbal tasting. Classical Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 13.5%

RIBERA DEL DUERO

92 Bodegas Peñafiel 2004 Miro de Ribera Reserva Selección Barricas Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). A bit thick and raisiny on first take, but with airing and swirling it becomes fresher. The palate is rich and rooty, with cocoa, prune, earth notes and tea-like flavors. Ripe and smooth on the finish, with no tannic backlash or lazy oak. Ripe as can be but still lively; drink now through 2018. Vino Cava. —M.S.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Protos 2004 Gran Reserva Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Smooth, deep and fairly complex on the bouquet, with concentrated dark fruit aromas blending with coconut. The palate shows structure, tightness and full but integrated tannins, while the flavors of black fruits, herbs, tea and spice set up a full, toasted finish that satisfies. Drink now through 2020. Winebow. —M.S.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 14.5%

91 De Bardos 2006 Ars Mítica (Ribera del Duero). Smooth, deep aromas of bacon and dark berry form a proper and likable greeting. The palate is tight, with piercing but balanced acidity creating lift and structure. Tastes of bacon, vanilla, raspberry and



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plum, with cured meat, vanilla and coconut on the finish. Drink now through 2016. Rodinia LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Recoletas 2004 Vendimia Seleccionada Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Comes on solid and strong with smoky aromas of black fruit, coconut and shoe polish. Stout and layered in the mouth, with full tannins and a nice mix of bold berry flavors, tobacco, herbs, spice and lemony oak. Tastes similar on the finish, with tobacco and spice lasting the longest. Complex and healthy; drink now through 2018. Classic Wines, Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 15%

90 Convento San Francisco 2004 Special Selection (Ribera del Duero). Starts out crusty and dark, with earth, leather and other savory aromas. The palate is clacky and tannic, with roasted berry, leather and slightly burnt and bitter oak accents. Finishes peppery, with drying hardness and a pinch of leafy herbalness. Winebow. —M.S.

Price: \$90 **abv:** 15%

90 Finca El Quiñón 2008 Chafandin Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Coconut, smoke and sweet aromas of cola, berry jam and fine tobacco make the bouquet inviting. In the mouth, it maintains freshness due to good acidity, while the flavors of earthy blackberry and plum come across dense and right. Firm and tannic on the finish; drink from 2012–2016. Ole Imports. —M.S.

Price: \$65 **abv:** 14%

89 Conde de Siruela 2006 Reserva Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). The show starts with a blast of bacon, vanilla and ultimately sweet, syrupy berry aromas. In the mouth, it's tough and clamps down with grip due to strong tannins. The flavors are roasted and oaky, with vanilla and mocha shadings working the background. Tannic and willing on the finish; drink now through 2016. United Cellars, Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.5%

89 Emina 2009 Tinto Fino Roble (Ribera del Duero). Purple and big, with black fruit aromas along with plenty of young oak, licorice, cola and bacon. The palate has a saturated, lush feel and bold flavors of blackberry and oak. On the finish it's all coconut, butter and dill. Ribald and offering a lot. Imported by USA Wine West. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Matarromera 2008 Crianza (Ribera del Duero). Rich and lusty smelling, with a tight, saturated, grabby palate full of big berry, bacon and oaky flavors. The tannins are big and grabby, while the finish of espresso and toast ends with bitterness. Forceful and oaky RDD. Imported by USA Wine West. —M.S.

Price: \$27 **abv:** 14.5%

89 Marques de la Concordia 2008 Hacienda Abascal Producción Limitada Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Dark and loaded with big black fruit aromas, tobacco, spice and a lot of vanilla from copious oaking. The palate is good and juicy, with a healthy blend of blackberry, fig and chocolate flavors.

Toasty, round and chocolaty on an oaky, creamy finish. MHW, Ltd. —M.S.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 14%

89 Prado Rey 2006 Elite (Ribera del Duero). Nice on the nose, with layers of blackberry, earth, lemon peel and herbs. The palate is grabby and clacky but healthy, with forward black cherry and blackberry fruit flavors. Finishes full and long, with coffee and toast notes. A generous wine to drink now through 2015. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —M.S.

Price: \$29 **abv:** 14%

89 Viña Mayor 2003 Gran Reserva Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). A rich and soft-textured wine with dark fruit, raisin, coconut and chocolaty aromas. The palate offers maturity and structure along with black fruit flavors, chocolate, spice and pepper. Turns sweeter and more raisiny on the finish, with brown sugar and toast. Drink now through 2015. HAB North America. —M.S.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Ébano 2006 Crianza Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Starts out oaky and cheesy, with baked berry, leather and clove-like aromas. The palate has lots of size, clacky tannins and acidity, while flavors of berry, mocha and tobacco are nice and lead to a toasty, grabby finish. Typical for RDD in that it's tough and tannic but full of brash flavor; drink now–2015. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.

Price: \$33 **abv:** 14%

88 Garcia Figuero 2009 Tinto Figuero 4 Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Opens with medicinal aromas of latex, mint and red berry and cherry. The palate is full, balanced and shows serious but not too fierce tannins. Tastes medicinal, like the bouquet, with toasty midlevel berry fruit flavors. Peppery and solid on the finish. Quintessential Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14%

88 Martín Berdugo 2009 Joven Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Sweet and young on the bouquet, with fresh and easy plum and blueberry aromas. The palate is chunky but clean, with bright, candied berry flavors and a touch of dark molasses on the sweet finish. Not bashful; juicy, bright and flavorful. Puerto Viejo Wines. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 14%

87 Barco de Piedra 2009 Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Berry and rubbery aromas suggest young but spunky fruit. And the palate is indeed lively, albeity big and grabby. The flavor profile offers a mix of plum, berry and herbs, while the finish has a good feel to it and *sauvage* notes. Solid and likable. Ole Imports. —M.S.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Prado Rey 2006 Reserva Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Rubbery and earthy on first take, with bacon and stewed berry aromas. The palate is fleshy but also astringent due to fierce tannins, while the flavor profile suggests baked berry, molasses and black

pepper. Turns sweeter and more creamy and candied on the finish. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —M.S.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 15%

86 Conde de Siruela 2007 Crianza Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Dry and peppery aromas feature oak, mint and standard berry fruit. The palate is clacky and high in acidity, yielding raspberry, red plum and pie cherry flavors that are fresh but sheer-ing. Oaky vanilla notes show up on the tight, juicy finish. United Cellars, Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$21 **abv:** 14.5%

86 De Bardos 2007 Ars Romántica Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Sort of raisiny but also prickly on the nose, with a granular, gritty quality that subsides with airing. The palate is chunky and offers herbal red berry flavors that give way to a scratchy, herbal-tasting finish. Good in a regular way, but herbal. Rodinia LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 14%

86 Finca Torremilanos 2008 Los Cantos Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Berry aromas are jammy and show a pinch of green. The palate matches the nose; it's jammy and soft, with blackberry and spiced plum flavors. Tastes good and rich but feels heavy and a little flabby. Grapes of Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$23 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Monteabellón 2009 Avaniel Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Opens with latex and mint scents that yield to cherry and plum aromas. Grabby and acidic in the mouth, with quick, racy plum and raspberry flavors. Juicy but not all that tasty or interesting. A generic style of RDD. Europvin. —M.S.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 14%

84 Ébano 2007 6 Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Leather, earth and a vinegar-like volatility are the aromatics. The palate is, not surprisingly, choppy and crisp, with narrow berry fruit flavors and a lactic element courtesy of barrel aging. Linear and tight on the finish, with acidic snap. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.

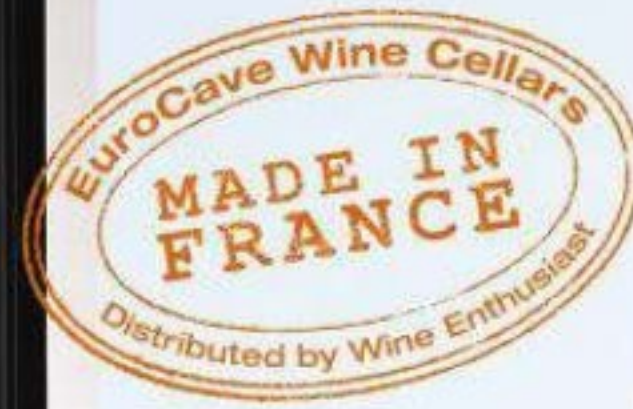
Price: \$18 **abv:** 14%

83 Bodegas Epifanio Rivera 2008 Erial Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Heavily roasted on the nose, with rustic aromas of leather, olive and baked berries. The palate is fiercely tannic and low on sweetness; it runs sharp, lean and salty, with a hollow finish and tang. Two samples tasted. Elite Wines Import. —M.S.

Price: \$23 **abv:** 13.5%

83 Catania 2007 Crianza Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Earthy, leafy and also damp smelling, with a raisiny quotient. The palate is heavy, with muddled, murky, damp-tasting berry fruit. Pep-

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pery and fairly dull on the finish, with a thick, meaty feel. Beacon Wine Company. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 14%

RIOJA

92 Bodegas Roda 2006 Roda I Reserva Tempranillo (Rioja). Lush and dark, with balance throughout. The nose oozes blackberry and fine oak, while the palate is thick and meaty, with dark berry and vanilla as the prime flavors. Solid, textured and rich, with a long, lasting, complex finish of tobacco, vanilla, mixed spices and chocolate. Drink now through 2017. Kobrand. —M.S.

Price: \$70 **abv:** 14%

91 Marqués de Murrieta 2004 Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva Especial (Rioja). Starts out a bit flat, with milk chocolate and raisiny aromas. With airing it evolves and expands, showing snappy flavors of berry, raisin and brown sugar. Very solid on the finish and elegant as an aged Rioja gran reserva should be. Drink now through 2015. Maisons Marques & Domaines USA. —M.S.

Price: \$58 **abv:** 14%

90 Baron De Ley 2004 Grand Reserva (Rioja). Initially it smells rooty and roasted, with coffee, tobacco, dried berry and foresty aromas. It's classic in the mouth, with fine aged tannins and zesty acids pushing tomato, dill, tobacco and light plum flavors. Finishes with elegance and length. Drink now through 2016. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —M.S.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 13.5%

89 CVNE 2004 Viña Real Oro Reserva Tempranillo (Rioja). Earth, leather, baked fruits and spice notes make for a classic aged Rioja bouquet. The palate is juicy, crisp and pure, with light cherry, cranberry, tobacco and dill flavors. Racy and ready to drink now, but with such a tight spine it'll age another decade. Europvin. —M.S.

Price: \$32 **abv:** 13.5%

89 El Molino de Puelles 2004 Viticultura Ecológica Tempranillo (Rioja). Earthy and a touch leafy, with brick, dried fruits, raisin and lightly roasted berry aromas. The palate is lean, tight and agile, with perky cherry, raspberry and light vanilla flavors. Finishes elegant, with herb and oak notes. Ready to drink. Las Arribes LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$33 **abv:** 13.3%

88 Rioja Vega 2005 Reserva (Rioja). Molasses, intriguing spice, cola and berry aromas are good and honest. The mouthfeel on this wine is zesty due to 25% Graciano in the blend, and overall it's a snappy number with sweet and sour flavors, toasty nuances and a long finish. Drink now through 2014. —M.S.

Price: \$21 **abv:** 14%

87 Ondarre 2005 Reserva (Rioja). Rooty and baked on the nose, with sweet plum, raisin and grit. The palate is full and solid, with snappy plum and raspberry flavors. Turns richer and more raisiny on the

finish, with a bold, roasted lasting flavor. Drink now through 2013. Spanish Vines, Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Bodegas Franco-Españolas 2005 Rioja Bordón Reserva Tempranillo (Rioja). Rooty, spicy and baked on the nose, with aromas that lean towards raisin. The palate is more gritty and acidic, with raisin, cola and spice flavors. Darkens up on the finish, which is long and peppery, with adequate juiciness and a final note of tomato. Vision Wine & Spirits. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Bodegas Muriel 2005 Vendimia Seleccionada Crianza Tempranillo (Rioja). Opens with a warm, baked nose of raisin, roasted plum and tobacco. The palate is scouring and crisp due to sharp acids, and thus the flavors follow suit in that they're lean and tart and focus on pie cherry and red plum. Lean, zesty and lively Rioja to drink now. Quintessential Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13%

86 Valdelana 2004 Reserva (Rioja). Every wine from this house has exotic aromas and flavors that aren't matched elsewhere, which isn't to say that Valdelana's wines offer fool-proof likability. This wine smells funky and tastes of tobacco, butter and cumin. Lean on the finish, but interesting for its unique character, aromas and flavors. Ready to drink. Global Wines and Foods, Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$23 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Agrícola Labastida 2009 El Primavera (Rioja). Berry and leather aromas are good and bring in some minerality. The palate is lean and high in acid, which should play well with food, especially salty ham or nuts. By itself it could come across tart, with red fruit dominating. Elite Wines Import. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Viña Ijalba 2005 Crianza (Rioja). Unusually exotic and strange on the bouquet, with blueberry, lemon peel and warm mulch aromas. The palate has size and pretty good feel, with tangy blue-fruit flavors, exotic spice notes and zip. Finishes with floral notes and lightness. Baron Francois Ltd. —M.S.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13%

84 Darien 2009 Tempranillo (Rioja). Opens with red berry aromas and scuttling earthy scents. The palate is fresh and zesty but short on depth and darkness. The flavors are of crisp berry with a light buttery finish. Signature Imports. —M.S.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 13%

TORO

91 Muruve 2006 Reserva (Toro). Meaty and full-bodied, with molasses, roasted blackberry and cola aromas. This is a fine example of affordable Toro; it's rich and balanced, not overripe or raisiny, with tannic grip, a chewy texture and lasting flavors of prune,

blackberry and chocolate. Drink now through 2013. United Cellars, Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Numanthia-Termes, S.L. 2008 Termes (Toro). An excellent wine for an off vintage, with licorice, balsam, black fruit galore and coconut aromas. The feel is plush, layered and smooth for Toro, with blackberry, mocha, lemon peel and coconutty flavors. Toasty on the finish, with a final wave of vanilla and chocolate. Drink now through 2014. Moët Hennessy USA. —M.S.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

90 Elias Mora 2007 Crianza (Toro). Full, ripe and dark like a good Toro wine should be. The nose is rock solid and appealing, while the palate is lush but with a streak of bracing acidity. Tastes bold and bright, with blackberry, black cherry and chocolate flavors. Modern and lusty, with cola, toast and depth. Grapes of Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$38 **abv:** 14.5%

89 Marqués de Olivara 2006 M.O. de Olivara Vendimia Seleccionada (Toro). You won't find many Best Buy Toro wines, so this is a good rare bird. Blackberry, raisin and crusty molasses aromas come with a floral note, while the palate is dark, toasty and loaded up with black fruit and fudge flavors. Finishes healthy and with good feel and wild berry flavors. USA Wine West. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 14.9%

88 Finca Sobreño 2008 (Toro). Earth, tree bark, dry spice and finally some plum and berry aromas appear on the nose. The palate is astringent but also bright and structured, with plum, raspberry and herbal flavors. Warming and tannic all the way to the very end. A very nice and forceful Toro. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.

Price: \$19 **abv:** 14%

85 Bodegas Abanico 2008 Eternum Viti (Toro). Rubbery and meaty smelling, with a certain chunkiness conveyed. The palate is tight as nails, with grabby tannins pushing savory plum flavors that come with a good dose of dill and herbal accents. Drying and a bit scratchy on the finish, with smack-down grip. Grapes of Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 14%

85 Caño 2006 Crianza Tempranillo (Toro). A bit damp and mulchy on the nose, with rubber and meaty aromas. The palate feels sort of clacky and tough, while the flavors revolve around generic cherry and plum. Finishes full but hard, with chocolate and oaky, resinous notes. Luneau USA Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Viña Mayor 2007 Vendimia Seleccionada (Toro). Savory and herbal smelling with thyme and oregano along with smoke. The palate spreads itself thin, with acidity running the show. Tastes like a blend of generic berry and herbs before turning a little green

on the finish, with a grassy aftertaste. HAB North America. —M.S.

Price: \$20

abv: 14%

85 **Volvoreta 2008 El Vino del Buen Amor Tempranillo (Toro)**. Smells damp and murky, with raisin and other sweet berry aromas along with some mulch. The palate brings more freshness, but it's grabby and tannic as it delivers prune, raisin and berry flavors in front of coffee and herbs on the finish. Good but smells and tastes a little overripe. Classic Wines, Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$22

abv: 14%

NAVARRA

88 **Viña Magaña 2005 Barón de Magaña (Navarra)**. Opens with ripe berry, mineral and plum aromas. The palate is firm, shows good structure and is anything but short with the acids. Thus it's bright and crackles on the palate, with raspberry, plum, spice and chocolate flavors. Long on the finish. 70% Merlot with 20% Cab Sauvignon and 10% Tempranillo. Ole Imports. —M.S.

Price: \$20

abv: 14%

84 **Ochoa 2006 Crianza Tempranillo (Navarra)**. Chunky smelling, with herb, tomato and roasted plum aromas. Acidity is the first impression in the mouth, followed by roasted flavors and herbal/tomato accents. A standard Navarra Tempranillo that's acidic and veers towards red and herbal. Frontier Wine Imports. —M.S.

Price: \$20

abv: 13.5%

83 **Bodegas Julián Chivite 2005 Gran Feudo Reserva (Navarra)**. Band-Aid and latex notes vie with sweet aromas and pine/juniper accents. Clacky and tight in the mouth, with cherry, raspberry and light, oaky toast. Zesty, crisp and lean for a reserva. 80% Tempranillo with 10% each of Cabernet and Merlot. Spain Wine Collection. —M.S.

Price: \$15

abv: 13%

PENEDÈS

88 **Pinord 2006 Clos de Torribas Crianza Tempranillo (Penedès)**. Warm, earthy and integrated on the nose, with lightly baked berry fruit aromas and a touch of tree bark. The palate is medium in weight and intensity, and thus it reads as elegant, with good acidity and rooty flavors of earthy fruit and oak. A fresh wine that shows the lighter side of Tempranillo. Vinaio Imports. **Best Buy**. —M.S.

Price: \$12

abv: 12.5%

87 **Huguet de Can Feixes 2006 Negre Selecció (Penedès)**. Starts out rough, with latex, rubber and leathery aromas. After those smells subside, the palate is lively and solid, with tangy red berry and red plum flavors. Finishes firm and tight, with juicy acidity. A blend of Merlot, Cabernet, Tempranillo and Petit Verdot. Classical Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$23

abv: 13.5%

87 **Segura Viudas 2004 Mas d'Aranyó Reserva Tempranillo (Penedès)**. Aromas

of balsam wood, leather, earth and mature berry come with a pinch of lemon. The palate is crisp and tight, with baked berry flavors followed by a wave of buttery oak and vanilla. That oak persists onto the finish, which is drying and hints at elegance. Drink now. Freixenet USA. —M.S.

Price: \$15

abv: 13.5%

CASTILLA Y LEÓN

88 **Bodegas Leda 2007 Más de Leda Tempranillo (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla y León)**. Big, extracted and clumsy on first blush, with raisin and prune preceding chocolate on the nose. The palate is big and tannic, with chocolate and baked berry flavors. Finishes full, toasty and grabby, with mocha and vanilla. Drink now through 2012. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.S.

Price: \$20

abv: 14.5%

88 **Dehesa de Luna 2008 Tempranillo (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla)**. Charred and rubbery smelling, but with earth, mocha, coffee and black fruit on the full and lusty nose. The palate is round and offers mocha-infused flavors of berry and black plum. The finish follows suit; it's creamy and oaky, but sweet and ripe. 300 cases made; drink now through 2013. Las Arribes LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$25

abv: 14%

88 **Mano A Mano 2008 Venta la Ossa Tempranillo (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla)**. Meaty and full Tempranillo with olive, lemon peel and smoky aromas that accent robust berry fruit scents. The palate is saturated and jammy, with a baked softness that balances firm tannic grip. Flavors of blackberry come with a roasted bitterness before dark chocolate rises up on the finish. Aviva Vino. —M.S.

Price: \$20

abv: 14%

87 **Vega Ibor 2007 Tempranillo (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla)**. Generic and quiet on the nose except for a touch of spearmint and dried spice. The palate is crisp and focused, with size and grip to go with solid raspberry and plum fruit. Textured and good on the finish, which folds in herb and spice flavors. Kensington Distributors Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$13

abv: 14%

86 **Bodegas Navarro López 2009 Para Celsius Tempranillo (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla)**. Basic berry and cherry aromas are good but muted. The wine offers proper mouthfeel and creaminess to go with raspberry, black plum and spice flavors. Finishes clean, peppery and dry, with mild acidic kick and snap. Quintessential Wines. **Best Buy**. —M.S.

Price: \$10

abv: 13%

85 **Bodegas Farina 2008 Spanish Sons Tempranillo (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla y León)**. Earthy blackberry aromas come with an herbal/leafy edge. The palate is clacky and tannic, but low on volume and stuffing. Tastes of hollow but dark berry

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fruits, with a hint of buttery oak. A good but average type of Tempranillo. Winebow. —M.S.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Tikalo 2009 Rubens Tempranillo (Tierra de Castilla). Nery on the bouquet, with forceful, fiery red berry scents. The mouthfeel is fresh and clacky, while flavors of red plum and dry blackberry are solid and clean. Offers a dusting of light oak and spice on the finish. Bourgeois Family Selections. —M.S.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13%

84 Altozano 2009 Tempranillo-Cabernet Sauvignon (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla). Starts out with roasted, rubbery aromas that blow off fairly quickly. The palate is average and as expected, with herbal berry flavors and a savory, soupy accent. Finishes minty and earthy, but solid in feel. San Francisco Wine Exchange. —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 14%

84 Altozano 2009 Tempranillo-Shiraz (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla). Blocky raspberry and plum aromas lead to a stocky palate with plum, berry and mild oak flavors. Shows good spine and acidity, which leads to a fresh, upright and alert finish. San Francisco Wine Exchange. —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 13.5%

83 Altozano 2009 Tempranillo (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla). A tad bit sharp on the nose, with a suggestion of vinegar. Crisp and high in acidity in the mouth, with snappy flavors of herbs, raspberry and tart red plum. Shows heat and burn on the finish. Decent but highly regular. San Francisco Wine Exchange. —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 13.5%

LA MANCHA

88 Gladium 2008 Crianza Tempranillo (La Mancha). Big, dark and bold, with smoky aromas of bacon and blackberry. The palate is firm and tannic, with wild berry flavors and weight that transitions into herbs, spice and licorice on the finish. A big wine that rounds together well. American Estates Wines, Inc. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Paso a Paso 2009 Tempranillo (La Mancha). Dark in color, with full, ripe blackberry aromas. This is a fresh but generous everyday Tempranillo with generic black fruit flavors and a dose of licorice. Finishes ripe and creamy, with medicinal and sweetness. Good value. Fine Estates From Spain. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Paso a Paso 2009 Made With Organic Grapes Tempranillo (La Mancha). Full on the nose, with heavy black plum and tea aromas that fall off towards herbal. The palate is big, clumpy and tannic, with herbal berry and black plum flavors along with a hint of grass. Finishes with size and power. Made

with certified organic grapes. Fine Estates From Spain. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 13.5%

84 Venta Morales 2009 Made With Organic Grapes Tempranillo (La Mancha). Tart and angular on the nose, with sharp red berry and plum aromas. Crisp and acidic, with sweet-and-sour flavors in front of a tight, clean, short finish. Fresh but high in acidity and veering towards tart. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 13.5%

VALDEPEÑAS

85 Bodegas Navarro López 2008 Old Vines Crianza Tempranillo (Valdepeñas). Opens with raisiny, gritty aromas along with vanilla and dill. The palate is forward and edgy, with some heat. Tastes of dry plum fruit, oak and vanilla, while the finish is dry and woody, with juicy acidity taking over. Quintessential Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 13%

85 Bonal 2009 Tempranillo (Valdepeñas). A little fiery and rubbery on the nose, but mostly you get driving red fruit notes. The palate is tight and minimal, with dry spice and strawberry/raspberry flavors. Fresh and acidic at the end, with crispness on the way out. Kensington Distributors Inc. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 13.5%

OTHER REDS

90 Finca Millara 2007 (Ribeira Sacra). Floral and classy, with field herbs and pretty berry aromas. Fresh, juicy and forward in the mouth, with black fruit flavors led by dark plum. Finishes with complexity, tobacco and vanilla flavors. A stout, competent Mencía from a region worth paying attention to. Classical Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$43 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Peza do Rei 2007 Barrica (Ribeira Sacra). Starts out a bit soupy and thick, with earthy mulch and heavy berry aromas. Medium in body but with smacking tannins and snappy flavors of plum and raspberry. Quite "red" in terms of flavors, with fresh tomato notes. Finishes oaky, with a hint of chocolate. Classical Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$37 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Bodegas Luis Gurpegui Muga 2009 Pinotresco Tempranillo (Extremadura). Heavy and dense up front, with dark, forceful aromas. The palate is crisp and tight, with firm plum and berry fruit in front of a short, basic finish. A good, standard wine with good depth and character; 100% Tempranillo. Table 31 Imports. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$9 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Mad Dogs & Englishmen 2009 (Extremadura). This wine used to come from Jumilla and contain Monastrell in addition to Shiraz and Tempranillo; now it's from Extremadura, with Carignan instead of Monastrell. It's rudimentary on the nose and scouring in

the mouth, with firm tannins and sharp acids. The palate pulses with raspberry and plum fruit, then finishes with resinous grip and oaky flavors. Winebow. —M.S.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 14%

ROSÉS

89 Marqués de Cáceres 2010 Rosé (Rioja). For full review see page 10. **Best Buy.**

87 Borsao 2010 Rosé (Campo de Borja). Light, fruity and clean smelling, with a touch of candy to the nose. The palate, especially for an \$8 Garnacha rosé, is zesty and spunky, with cherry, plum and citrus flavors. Crisp and crackling through the finish. Fine Estates From Spain. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$8 **abv:** 14%

87 El Coto 2010 Rosado (Rioja). For full review see page 11. **Best Buy.**

86 Ilurce 2010 Rosado (Rioja). Reddish in color and big on the bouquet, with sweet berry and cherry aromas. The palate is full and fun, with acidity and heavier, sweeter flavors of strawberry, raspberry and sweet plum. Handles its size well. Made from 80% Garnacha and 20% Graciano (for acidity). Fine Estates From Spain. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 14%

86 Muga 2010 Rosado (Rioja). Smells like raspberry bubble gum and piercing citrus fruits. The palate, like it has been for several vintages running, is sharp and angular, making this much more of a food wine than a patio quaffer. Flavors of orange, nectarine and lemon border on sour. 60% Garnacha, 30% white Viura and 10% Tempranillo. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 13.5%

84 Val de Los Frailes 2010 Rosado (Cigales). Smells grassy and sweaty, kind of like Sauvignon Blanc. The palate is chunky and awkward feeling, with pink grapefruit and passion fruit flavors. Fades fast and easy on the finish. Contains 20% Verdejo in addition to Tempranillo, which explains the citrusy aromas and flavors. Imported by USA Wine West. —M.S.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14.5%

83 Finca Torremilanos 2010 Monte Castrillo Rosado (Ribera del Duero). Punchy and grassy on the nose, with pink grapefruit aromas. The palate is astringent and green in character, with pithy, almost bitter citrus flavors. Finishes tart and grapefruity. Grapes of Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 13.5%

SPANISH WHITES

RÍAS BAIXAS

89 Don Olegario 2010 Albariño (Rías Baixas). Crisp apple and pineapple aromas come on strong on this healthy, straw-colored Galician quaffer. The palate is full and chalky, with fine acidity and

tropical flavors of pineapple and mango. Finishes round, with just enough cutting acidity. Kobrand. —M.S.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 12.8%

89 Nessa 2010 Albariño (Rías Baixas). Green apple, melon and light vanilla aromas make this clean and approachable. The wine has body and cut, with plump, focused flavors of melon and dry green fruits. Persistent on the finish and very nice overall. Grapes of Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13%

87 La Cana 2010 Albariño (Rías Baixas). Light and lemony on the nose. The palate has some baby fat and flab, but it's acidic enough to have kick. Flavors of sweet, tropical fruits are candied and a touch chunky, referencing pineapple and mango. Drink right away. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$17 **abv:** NA

85 Adegas Gran Vinum 2010 Mar de Viñas Albariño (Rías Baixas). Crisp and mineral on the nose, then salinic and zesty in the mouth, with higher than normal acidity. Tastes regular in that it shows green melon, tart apple and pithy citrus. Turns more pithy on the finish. Grapes of Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13%

RIOJA

88 Finca Nueva 2009 Fermentado en Barrica Blanco (Rioja). Waxy white fruit aromas of peach and apple are a touch baked, with vanilla peeking through. The palate is smooth and offers good mouthfeel, while the flavors of lemon, apple and hay are good and finish buttery and creamy. Made by Finca Allende; 70% Viura and 30% Malvasia. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13%

88 Muga 2010 Blanco (Rioja). Shows stinky hay on the nose along with apple and lemon drop. The palate is crisp, focused and elegant, with driving acidity and bright flavors of apple, lemon and nectarine. As a barrel fermented wine, it's lightly woody as it finishes long and strong. 90% Viura with Malvasia. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 13%

87 Remírez de Ganuza 2009 Erre Punto Barrel Fermented Blanco (Rioja). Apple, toast and a hint of mineral on the nose precede a chunky, almost chubby palate with candied flavors of melon and apple. Turns creamier the longer it sits, with baked notes and a slight stickiness. 70% Viura and 30% Malvasia. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Sierra Cantabria 2009 Organza (Rioja). A bit resinous and hard at first, with apple and a lot of oak on a compact, somewhat neutral nose. It's a heavy wine in the mouth, with oak on top of lemon, apple and green banana flavors. Finishes resinous, with odd spice

notes. Viura, Malvasia and Garnacha Blanca is the mix. Fine Estates From Spain. —M.S.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 13%

85 Bodegas Franco-Españolas 2010 Diamante Semi Sweet Malvasia-Viura (Rioja). A different breed in that it's semisweet and kind of sticky. The nose breathes odd spice and resinous aromas along with banana and cream. The palate is solid but soft, with mango, melon and sugary peach flavors. Has just enough spice to remain fresh. Vision Wine & Spirits. —M.S.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 12%

84 Bodegas Julián Chivite 2010 Gran Feudo Chardonnay (Navarra). Soft on the nose, with pineapple and fruit cocktail aromas. The palate is lemony, monotone and hollow, with lemon, green apple and green banana flavors. Finishes tangy, but with modest flavors and little to no complexity. Spain Wine Collection. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 13%

83 Castillo de Monjardin 2010 El Cerezo Chardonnay (Navarra). Generic peach aromas are about all you can pull from the nose. The palate is wet and chunky, with heavy but bland peachy flavors. Mealy on the finish and just not showing anything beyond the basics. Winebow. —M.S.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13%

RUEDA

85 Nos Riqueza 2010 Verdejo (Rueda). Lemon blossom, apple and mineral aromas meet in a regular place. The palate is chunky and shows just enough acidity, and the flavors run towards generic citrus, apple and green melon. Falls off on the finish, so drink as soon as possible. Scoperta Importing Co. Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Pentio 2010 Verdejo (Rueda). Aromas of hay and straw are a bit sweet and waxy, and then some melony fruit comes in. The palate is plump and melony, with light citrus, melon and green herb flavors. Ditto on the simple finish. Drink this year. Luxe Vintages. —M.S.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 13%

84 Esperanza 2010 Verdejo-Viura (Rueda). Starts out with pineapple, dusty mineral and stemmy aromas. Melony and soft in the mouth, with honeydew and nectarine flavors. Finishes soft, standard and a little mealy. 70% Verdejo with 30% Viura. Axial Wines USA. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 12%

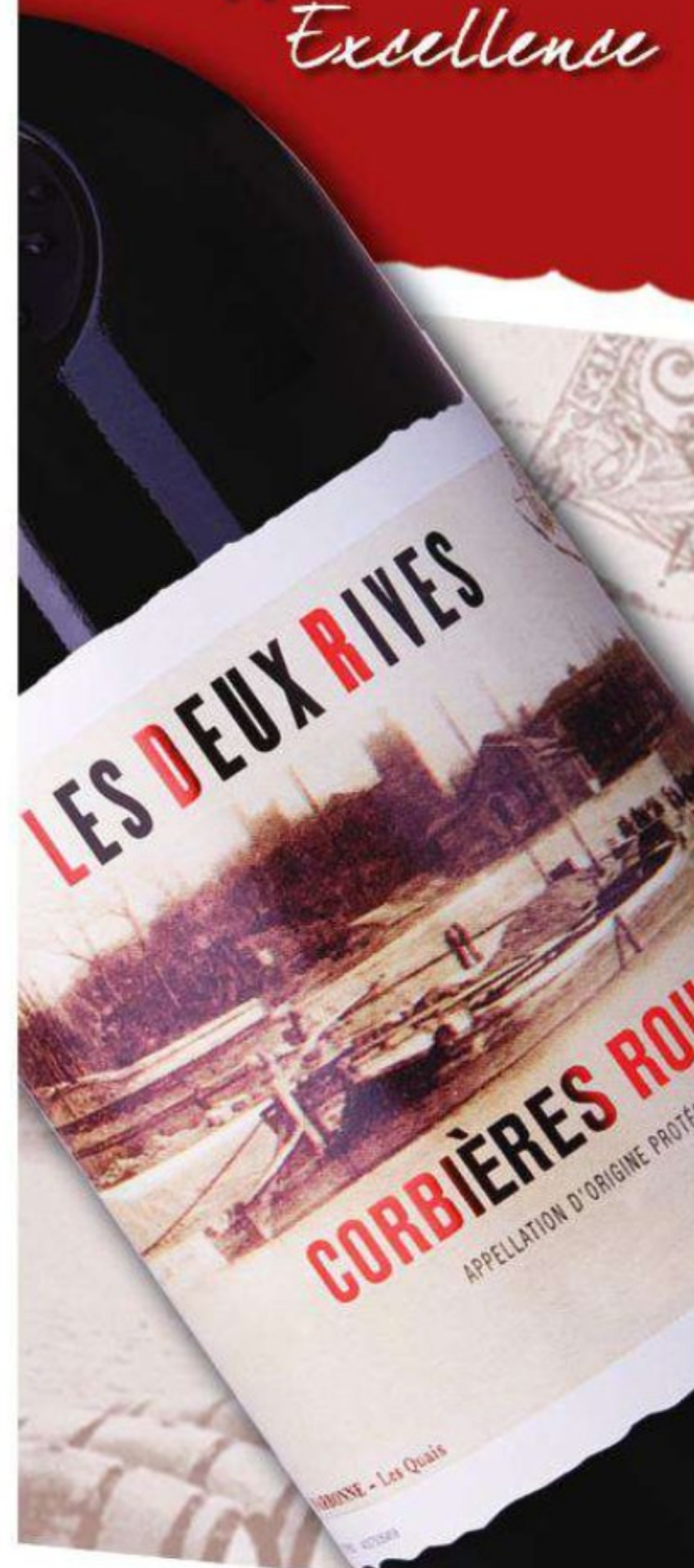
OTHER DRY WHITES

86 Enrique Mendoza 2009 Moscatel de la Marina (Alicante). Opens with air freshener, chemical notes, lime and pastis aromas. Overall it doesn't smell light and ethereal like some Moscatels, but it's honest and varietally correct throughout. Tastes of honey, candied mango and anise, with bitterness on

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the finish. Stirrs some interest but has its weaknesses. Winebow. —M.S.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 15%

85 Paso a Paso 2010 Verdejo (La Mancha). Light and simple on the nose, with peach and flower blossom notes. The palate has some zip to it but not a whole lot, while the flavors are your basic mix of peach and nectarine. Zesty on the finish and then it evaporates. Drink now. Fine Estates From Spain. *Best Buy.* —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 13.5%

AUSTRIA

GRÜNER VELTLINER

95 Franz Hirtzberger 2010 Axpoint Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau). The essence of Grüner Veltliner is present in this magnificent wine. It is rich, the spice of the fruit translated into lychee exoticism. The acidity is always present, giving shape to this luscious (but dry) wine. Vin Divino. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

Price: \$78 **abv:** 14%

94 Franz Hirtzberger 2010 Honivogl Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau). Gorgeously ripe fruit, full of pear, green plum and exotic spices. The wine is rich, with its smooth, rounded texture that is pierced with mouthwatering acidity and laced with steeliness. This is a wine with considerable aging potential. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$134 **abv:** 14.5%

94 Franz Hirtzberger 2010 Rotes Tor Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau). Intensely mineral wine, with an austere edge of acidity and texture. It has a pure quality, its apple flavors shining through the outer shell. With its firm character, it will age many years. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$78 **abv:** 13.5%

93 Markus Huber 2010 Berg Reserve Grüner Veltliner (Traisental). A powerful wine, a serious conversation between ripe fruits, spice, a smooth creamy texture and underlying minerality. With its edge of toast, pepper and final acidity, it is a wine for aging. Screwcap. Circo Vino. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 13.5%

93 R&A Pfaffl 2010 Hundstleiten Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). For full review see page 75.

92 Dürnberg 2008 Rabenstein Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). This wine benefits from some time in bottle. Wood and fruit are integrated, bringing out the spice in the fruit, while leaving delicious apple and white currant fruits to blossom. Screwcap. Private Reserve. —R.V.

Price: \$29 **abv:** 13%

92 Leth 2010 Scheiben Grüner Veltliner (Wagram-Donauland). A rich style of wine, very generous, ripely fruity. The classic pepper character of the grape is rounded out by pear, green apple and

lime flavors, as well as a concentrated, textured center. Screwcap. Domaine Select Wine Estates. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13.5%

92 Markus Huber 2010 Alte Setzen Reserve Grüner Veltliner (Traisental). Very spicy and mineral in character, this is a distinct terroir wine, speaking of the gravel and loam soils of the Traisental region. It has richness, complex lychee and mango fruits and a tight texture of acidity and pepper. Screwcap. Circo Vino. —R.V.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 13%

92 Setzer 2010 8000 Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). The densely planted vineyard that gives this wine its name yields fine concentration, dense pear and melon flavors. The apple skin texture also shows a distinct bite of acidity. Wafts of fruitiness combine with pepper right to the end. An impressive, ageworthy wine. Michael Skurnik Wines. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

Price: \$49 **abv:** 13.5%

92 Soellner 2010 Fumberg Grüner Veltliner (Wagram-Donauland). The rich, exposed soils of the Wagram ridge give richness to this wine. From old vines, it is impressive with spice, red pepper, cinnamon as well as green plum and mango fruits. Six months wood aging rounds it out. Screwcap. Weygandt-Metzler. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 13%

92 Türk 2009 Kremser Sandgrube Grüner Veltliner (Kremstal). From one of the top vineyard sites in Kremstal, this is powerful, concentrated, very spicy wine. It shows considerable pepper, tropical fruits, mango and lychee, along with a taut mineral structure. Screwcap. Niche Import Company. —R.V.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 13.5%

92 Zull 2010 Aussere Bergen Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). There is impressive balance here—rich apple and pear flavors with a tang of minerality. It is smooth and concentrated on the one hand and edgy and nervy on the other. Screwcap. Magellan Wine Imports. —R.V.

Price: \$23 **abv:** 13%

91 Domäne Wachau 2010 Achleiten Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau). A wine with a core of steel. It is taut, nervy, full of acidity, creamed apples and a mineral character. It's powered by richness, although totally restrained by its tightness. It is an impressive wine with a good aging potential. Screwcap. Vin Divino. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

Price: \$46 **abv:** 13.5%

91 Dürnberg 2009 Rabenstein Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). A single-vineyard wine that displays creamed pear and apple flavors, softly touched with wood. It's an elegant wine, although whether wood aging and Grüner go together is a debatable point. Let the wood soften and it will show more of the ripe fruit. Screwcap. Private Reserve. —R.V.

Price: \$29 **abv:** 13%

91 Ebner-Ebenauer 2009 Black Edition Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Light

wood aging gives this wine a very smooth character. It's acidity and varietal character are subsumed into an almost Chardonnay richness and weight. The balance and the ripe flavors are impressive, while the final taste does bring out the pepper character of the grape. Wine Monger. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13.5%

91 Laurenz V. 2009 Charming Grüner Veltliner (Kamptal). Full and rich wine, its acidity brightening peach, melon and spice flavors. It is an expressive wine characterized by its ripe fruits, intense pepper and ginger. Screwcap. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —R.V.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 13%

91 Leth 2010 Steinagrund Lagenreserve Grüner Veltliner (Wagram-Donauland). Intense, crisp acidity shines on this young wine. It's concentrated citrus is like sucking a lemon. This character shows its potential for aging. It will develop richer, secondary flavors over the next 2–3 years. Screwcap. Domaine Select Wine Estates. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 12.5%

91 Markus Huber 2010 Obere Steigen Grüner Veltliner (Traisental). Still closed up when tasted in June 2011, but showing great promise. It has weight, with vanilla and spice flavors to complement the rich apricot, pear and lime notes. They will give an impressive, full wine in a year. Screwcap. Circo Vino. —R.V.

Price: \$19 **abv:** 12.5%

91 Maurer 2010 Stoitzenberg Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). This smooth and rich wine has spiced apple, white peach and pink grapefruit flavors, all mixed into a serious package. It's a wine worth aging to bring the beautiful fruit right to the fore. Screwcap. JK Imports. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

Price: \$32 **abv:** 12.5%

91 Setzer 2010 Die Lage Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). The rich style of a Setzer wine is here, married to tight acidity, a mineral edge and ripeness. Pepper and white currant flavors come together in a mellifluous whole. Age for a year. Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

Price: \$33 **abv:** 13%

91 Türk 2009 Frechau Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). From a vineyard selection, this is a powerful wine, very rich and opulent. With a year's age, it shows concentrated spice and ginger mixed in with orange peel, red apple and lime flavors. Niche Import Company. —R.V.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14%

90 Bauer 2009 Hinternberg Grüner Veltliner (Wagram-Donauland). Melon and pear flavors give this rich and spicy wine just the necessary freshness. It is equally honey and dried fruits, very rich, with an unctuous, ripe character. Screwcap. Laird & Company. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13.5%

90 Ebner-Ebenauer 2010 Alte Reben Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Old vines—in

this case with an average age of 50 years—give an extra concentration to this impressively rich wine. It is full of beautifully ripe apple and apricot fruit flavor, with a great zing of acidity. Age for a year. Screwcap. Wine Monger. —R.V.

Price: \$NA

abv: 13%

90 Graf Hardegg 2010 Vom Schloss Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). The castle of the Hardegg family is a magnificent edifice near the Czech border with Austria. The wine from the castle vineyards is concentrated and rich, hinting at vanilla with intense ripe mango and peach flavors. There is pepper, acidity and ripe fruit. Screwcap. World Wine Headquarters. —R.V.

Price: \$26

abv: 13%

90 H. & M. Hofer 2010 Kirchlisten Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Smooth and rounded, with a ripe pear and cream texture lightened by attractive acidity. This is rich, full of fruit and just touched by spice. Worth aging for a year, this concentrated wine can also be drunk now. Screwcap. Michael Skurnik Wines. *Cellar Selection*. —R.V.

Price: \$NA

abv: 13%

90 Markus Huber 2010 Grüner Veltliner (Traisental). Complex, mineral wine, crisp but also very, very textured. Flavors of peach and red apples work with pink grapefruit to give the fruit character, while there is also a more serious complexity of green herbs. The finish is soft, still mineral. Screwcap. Circo Vino. —R.V.

Price: \$16

abv: 12%

90 Maurer 2010 Urkristal Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). A wine that needs some aging. It is restrained at the moment, holding back its rich, very textured fruit flavors, along with acidity and a core of citrus. Keep for 2–3 years. Screwcap. JK Imports. —R.V.

Price: \$28

abv: 12.5%

90 Schwarzböck 2010 Sätzen-Furstenberg Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Coming from two vineyards, here is a full-bodied and rich wine that employs spice as well as fresh green fruit flavors. Touched by herbs, asparagus and textured with apple skins, this is a complex wine for aging for a year. Screwcap. Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

Price: \$NA

abv: 13%

90 Winzer Krems 2010 Kremser Wachtberg Reserve Grüner Veltliner (Kremstal). A single-vineyard wine that shows elegance and a fine pedigree. It is rich, while also restrained by its mineral and apple edge. Full of fruit with added complexity from a tannic structure. Age over two years. Total Wine & More. —R.V.

Price: \$25

abv: 13.5%

89 Bauer 2010 Goldberg Grüner Veltliner (Wagram-Donauland). The freshest apples that are also rich and textured mark this wine, which is also packed with totally tangy citrus while also hav-

ing some weight. It's a delicious style of wine for food. Screwcap. Laird & Company. —R.V.

Price: \$NA

abv: 12.5%

89 Domäne Wachau 2010 Terrassen Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau). Properly rich wine, full of spice, almost sweetness, with hints of honey as well as pepper, mango and fine tannins. A wine like this is meant to be aged, at least over the next 3–4 years. Screwcap. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$30

abv: 13%

89 Dürnberg 2010 Ried Neuberg Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). Full and ripe, classic Grüner. It has spice, with red apple and pear fruits and a rounded, just oily texture, giving zest with the taut acidity. Drink now, especially with food. Screwcap. Private Reserve. —R.V.

Price: \$17

abv: 12.5%

89 H. & M. Hofer 2010 Freiberg Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). The wine walks a fine balance between taut acidity and riper red apple and green plum flavors. It has a distinct mineral edge, while offering a very concentrated pepper and spice finish. Screwcap. Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

Price: \$NA

abv: 12.5%

89 Maurer 2010 Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). Delicious apple aromas give a wine that is as fresh as possible, with a pear skin texture. It's bright with almost a prickle on the tongue. Apples, grapefruit and other citrus fruits dominate this mouth-watering wine. Screwcap. JK Imports. —R.V.

Price: \$24

abv: 12.5%

89 Setzer 2010 Ausstich Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). If you want to experience the pepper in Grüner Veltliner, this is the wine to drink. It has plenty of fruit as well—pear and white fruits, elderflower and light acidity. A great food wine. Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

Price: \$24

abv: 12.5%

89 Winzer Krems 2010 Kellermeister Privat Kremser Goldberg Grüner Veltliner (Kremstal). Crisp apples give the wine its tautness and apricot adds a richer touch. This is a balanced, full wine, the fruit tempered by a more herbal, spicy character. Total Wine & More. —R.V.

Price: \$16

abv: 12.5%

89 Zull 2010 Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). Intensely fruity, combining a spicy edge with ripe apples and grapefruit. It is deliciously crisp, with some richness. The fruitiness goes through and through the wine. Screwcap. Magellan Wine Imports. —R.V.

Price: \$17

abv: 12.5%

88 Ebner-Ebenauer 2010 Hermanscharten Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). An apple-oriented wine, with a concentrated extra core. There is an earthy edge here, packed with acidity, offer-

TRUMPETER

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ing some classic Grüner spice, while keeping the wine rich. Screwcap. Wine Monger. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 12.5%

88 Graf Hardegg 2010 Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). There is weight here, and some extraction. The wine feels fleshy, full of juicy ripe green and white fruits. There is pepper, spice and the ripest of green plums. A definite food wine. Screwcap. World Wine Headquarters. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 12.5%

88 H. & M. Hofer 2010 Von den Rieden Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Tight citrus and apple fruits give a distinct texture to this single-vineyard wine. It has young acidity that will soften in a few months, layered with grapefruit and green apples. Screwcap. Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

Price: \$23 **abv:** 12.5%

88 Pleil 2010 Pfaffenhözel Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). Full-bodied wine, with rich, succulent green fruits, laced with pepper and a balance of acidity. It's pure apples and lemons, with a texture of fruit skins. It could even age for a few months. Screwcap. Carolina Wine Co. —R.V.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 12.5%

88 Stift Klosterneuburg 2010 Hengsberg Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). The 12th century Klosterneuburg monastery is home to the main Austrian wine school. No wonder that its own wines have exemplary grades. This vineyard-designated wine has some richness, a ripe and full character with pear and sweet currant flavors. Glass stopper. Leopold Imports LLC. —R.V.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 12.5%

88 Türk 2010 Kremser Weinberge Grüner Veltliner (Kremstal). On the pepper side of Grüner Veltliner, this rich, smooth wine combines a lightness of touch with intense lemon zest, orange and lychee flavors. It's young at the moment and needs another 1–2 years. Screwcap. Niche Import Company. —R.V.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 12%

87 Ebner-Ebenauer 2010 Bürsting Reserve Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). Tight, mineral wine, with apple and spice flavors. There is some weight as well as clean green fruits. There is an attractive fresh feel here, very drinkable now, best with food. Screwcap. Wine Monger. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13%

87 Glatzer 2009 Grüner Veltliner (Carnuntum). A full wine, with ripe pear as well as acidity, touched with pepper. A round wine, and very fruity. Screwcap. Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 12.5%

87 Graf Hardegg 2010 Veltlinsky Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). For its light alcohol, the wine feels full, with caramel as well as green apple fruit flavors. There is a tang here, almost a prickle

on the tongue. Screwcap. World Wine Headquarters. —R.V.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 12%

87 H. & M. Hofer 2010 Vom Vogelsang Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Smooth, creamy wine, very clean green fruits layering acidity with a taut nervy texture and citrus flavors. The wine has a purity of lime that offers a great drink-now experience. Screwcap. Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 12.5%

87 Martinshof 2010 Hausberg Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). There is a full-bodied feel to this wine, an extra richness, with flavors of apples, pink grapefruit, a strong citrus element. The finish glows with acidity. Screwcap. Carlo Huber Selections. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 12%

87 Soellner 2010 Wogenrain Grüner Veltliner (Wagram-Donauland). A light and fruity wine, with attractive baked apple and lime flavors. It has dance in its step, fresh and packed with forward, lip-smacking fruitiness. Drink now. Screwcap. Weygandt-Metzler. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 11.5%

87 Zull 2010 Lust & Laune Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Phillip Zull's offering in the light, fresh Grüner Veltliner stakes is as light and fresh as they come. It's a burst of fruitiness across the palate, starring bright citrus and green fruits, with bone-dry acidity. Screwcap. Magellan Wine Imports. **Best Buy.** —R.V.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 11.5%

86 Dürnberg 2010 L&T Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Crisp green apples, very fresh, with a positive zing. This is a light Grüner, packed with attractive forward fruit flavors and a bright finishing acidity. Screwcap. Private Reserve. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 11.5%

86 Ebner-Ebenauer 2010 Birtal Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). A very citrusy wine, all lemon juice and pink grapefruit. It is totally refreshing, crisp, as light as a feather, but with a tight tangy complexity to give extra interest. Screwcap. Wine Monger. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 12%

86 Markus Huber 2010 Hugo Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Fresh, totally dry, very fruity, this is a great quaffing white wine. Enjoy the flavors of white peach, citrus, bright and vivid acidity. Drink now. Screwcap. Circo Vino. —R.V.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 12%

86 Martinshof 2010 Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). With just the right weight, this is a warm, rich and ultimately deliciously refreshing wine. Creamed apples, a tangy texture of clean

acidity. Good as an aperitif, also with food. Screwcap. Carlo Huber Selections. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 12.5%

86 Stift Klosterneuburg 2010 Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Attractive, zingy wine, full of lemon zest acidity, crisp green apples and clean, pure fruitiness. It has just a hint of pepper, layering the creamy final taste. Screwcap. Leopold Imports LLC. —R.V.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 12%

86 Winzer Krems 2010 Sandgrube 13 Edition Chremisa Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Chremisa is the Roman name for Krems. This wine is more modern in its clean, bright fruits. There are also minerality, orange peel and lemon and white peach flavors. Total Wine & More. —R.V.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 13%

85 Berger 2009 Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). As always, this is a fresh, fruity, light-bodied wine, with apples and the crispest acidity, just touched by pepper. A great value from Austria. Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

Price: \$17/1 L **abv:** 12.5%

85 Martinshof 2010 Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Some of the best value in Austria comes in liter bottles of Grüner Veltliner like this. It is packed with fruity apple and grapefruit flavors crisp and bright, with only a hint of pepper. Carlo Huber Selections. —R.V.

Price: \$NA/1 L **abv:** NA

85 Winzer Krems 2010 Sandgrube 13 Pulverturm Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). For full review see page 11. **Best Buy.**

RIESLING

97 Franz Hirtzberger 2010 Singerriedel Riesling Smaragd (Wachau). A supreme wine, the embodiment of Wachau Riesling. The steely character with its parallel acidity is beautifully integrated into grapefruit and perfumed white fruits. A taut, nervy texture adds tension to a wine that will age 10 years or more. Vin Divino. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.

Price: \$144 **abv:** 13.5%

96 Franz Hirtzberger 2010 Hochrain Riesling Smaragd (Wachau). A beautifully perfumed wine is give shape by its great swathe of minerality, its intense acidity. The fruits range from citrus to white peach, a gallery of delicious flavor. Like any great Riesling, it needs years to mature. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$103 **abv:** 13%

90 Domäne Wachau 2010 Terrassen Smaragd Riesling (Wachau). Aromas of apricots, pears, go with this smooth wine. It has weight, complex acidity and fruits as well as a taut, mineral core. It feels

Price: \$30

abv: 13%

90 Winzer Krems 2010 Kremser Pfaffenberg Reserve Riesling (Kremstal).

Price: \$25

abv: 13%

88 Domäne Wachau 2010 Terrassen Riesling Federspiel (Wachau).

Price: \$20

abv: 12%

OTHER WHITE WINES

90 Dürnberg 2010 Cool Climate (Niederösterreich).

Best Buy

Price: \$15

abv: 11.5%

87 Dürnberg 2010 Blanc de Noir Select Zweigelt (Niederösterreich).

Price: \$NA

abv: 12%

87 Münzenrieder 2008 Traminer Classic (Burgenland).

Price: \$19

abv: 13%

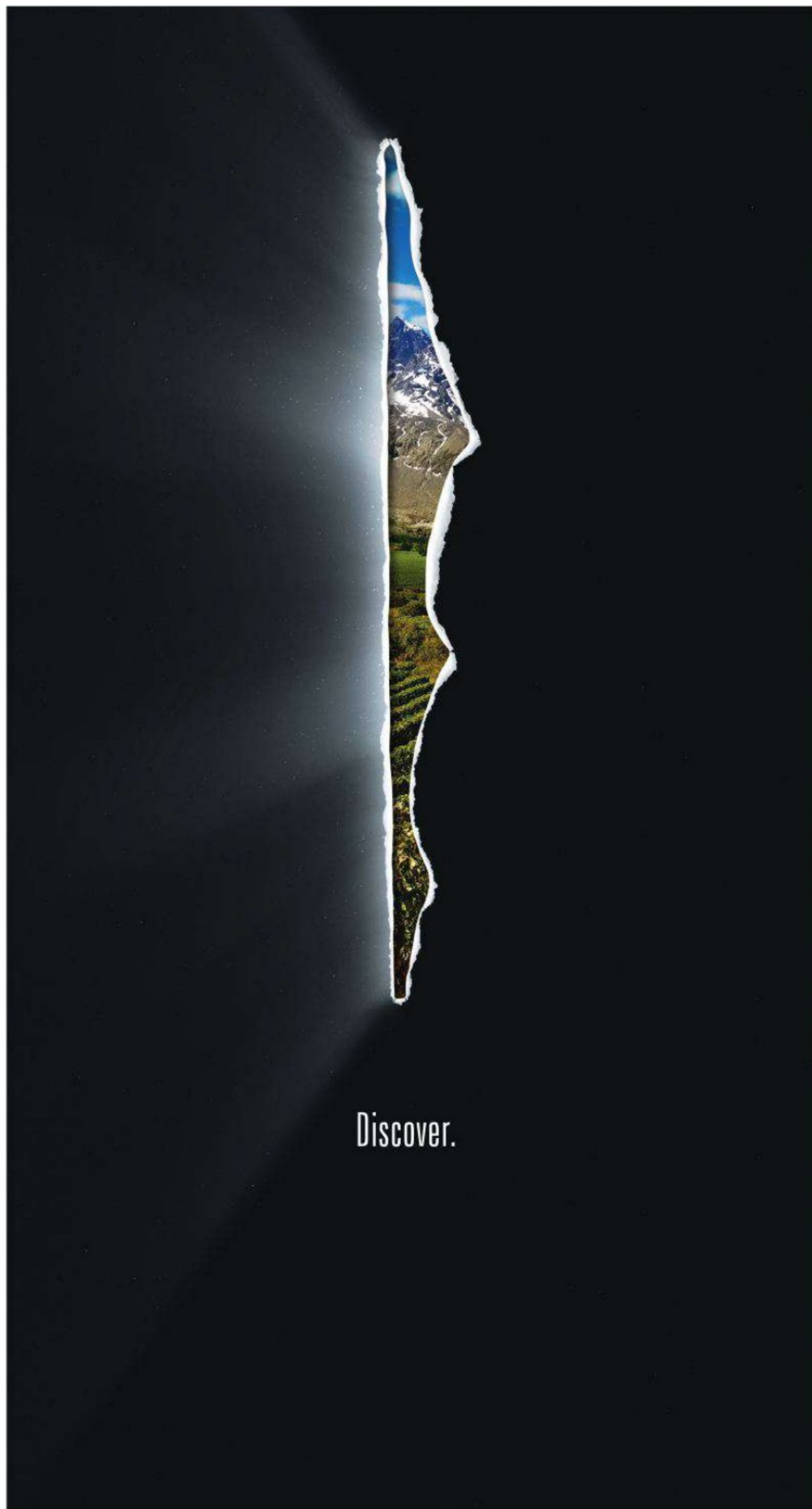
SWEET WINES

98 Kracher 2008 Zwischen den Seen Nummer 9 Welschriesling Trockenbeerenauslese (Burgenland).

Price: \$NA/375 ml

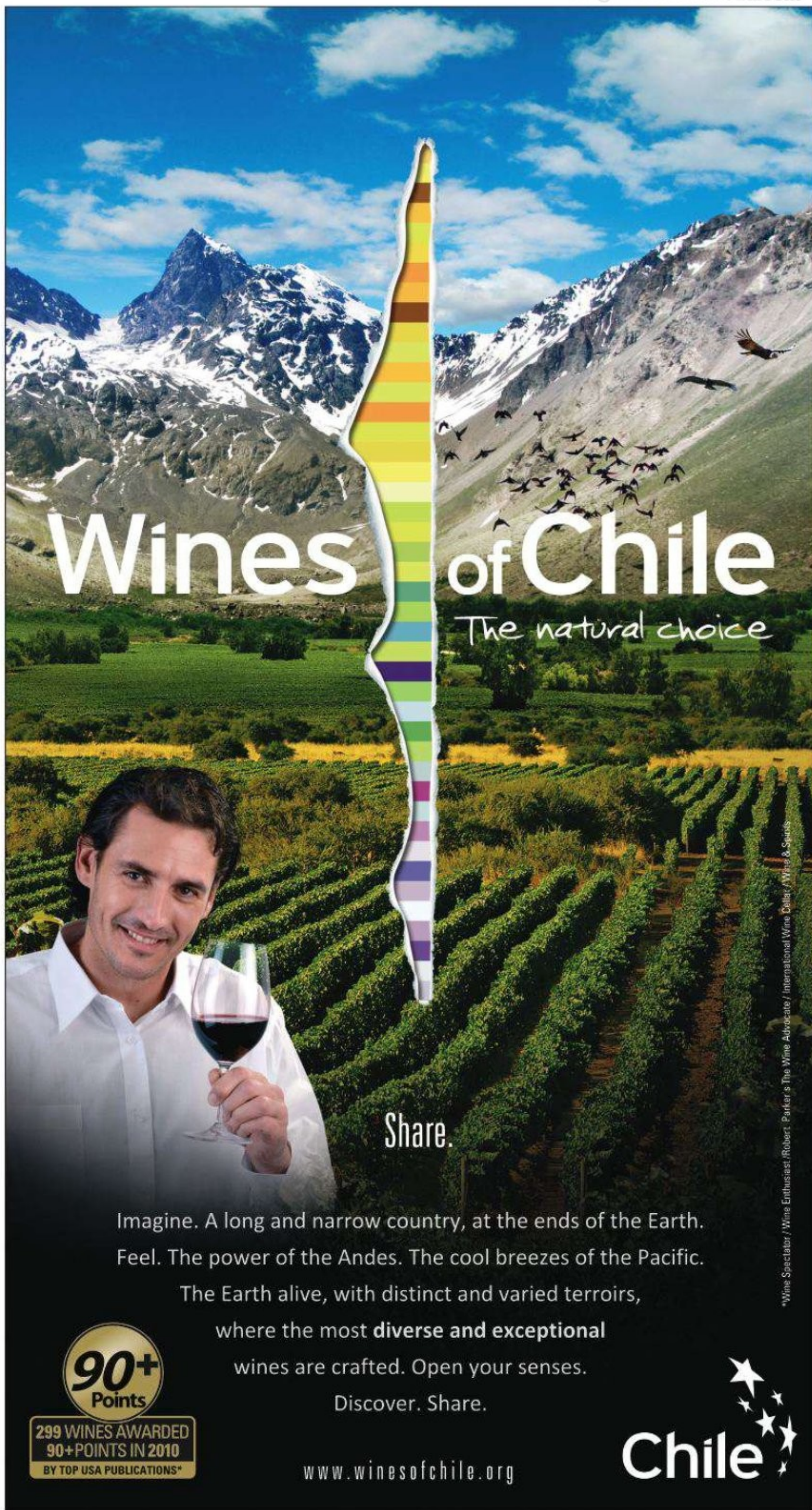
abv: 8%

97 Kracher 2008 Zwischen den Seen Nummer 11 Scheurebe Trockenbeerenauslese (Burgenland).



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and a smooth texture while there is a great citrus edge.
Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$103/375 ml

abv: 5%

96 Kracher 2008 Nouvelle Vague Nummer 12 Chardonnay Trockenbeerenauslese (Burgenland). The smoothest, ripest wine, its opulent character brought out by the touch of wood. It is so rich, the honey edge surrounded by ripe mango and pineapple with a light touch of acidity. Age this wine for several years. Vin Divino. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.

Price: \$NA/375 ml

abv: 6%

95 Kracher 2008 Nouvelle Vague Nummer 8 Chardonnay Trockenbeerenauslese (Burgenland). When it becomes a sweet wine, Chardonnay's natural richness shows immensely. This wine has orange and crystallized orange flavors along with intense concentration. A smooth texture is given just the right lift by acidity. Vin Divino. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.

Price: \$103/375 ml

abv: 11%

95 Kracher 2008 Nouvelle Vague Nummer 10 Traminer Trockenbeerenauslese (Burgenland). Devotees of Kracher wine argue whether the classic Zwischen den Seen or the modern Nouvelle Vague style is more impressive. In this case, the perfumed Traminer lends itself perfectly to a touch of wood. It gives the wine a rounded texture without losing sight of the extraordinary richness. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$NA/375 ml

abv: 9%

94 Kracher 2008 Nouvelle Vague Grande Cuvée Nummer 6 Trockenbeerenauslese (Burgenland). A blended wine, so rich with flavors of toffee, apples and honey, given a lift with intense acidity. The wine has enormous concentration, a smooth and beautiful texture. Age for many years. Vin Divino. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.

Price: \$89/375 ml

abv: 10.5%

93 Kracher 2008 Zwischen den Seen Nummer 5 Muskat Ottonel Trockenbeerenauslese (Burgenland). Muskat Ottonel adds its typical perfume to this smoothly rich wine. It has great density in its rich fruit flavors of apricots, sweet oranges and an exotic edge of rosewater. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$NA/375 ml

abv: 11%

93 Kracher NV Nouvelle Vague Nummer 4 Kollektion L08B Rosenmuskateller (Austria). The pair to this wine is Nummer 3 in the Kracher 2008 series. This smoother version has touches of toast to go with the intense ginger cake and spice as well as considerable acidity. A rounded, pure nectar of a wine. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$NA/375 ml

abv: 9.5%

92 Kracher NV Zwischen den Seen Nummer 3 Kollektion L08A Rosenmuskateller (Austria). Made from Rosenmuskateller (a pink-tinted grape), this wonderfully perfumed wine is such a curiosity that it can only legally be table wine, a super Austri-

an. There are flavors of rosehip, ginger and a wondrous freshness. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$150/375 ml

abv: 10%

91 Kracher 2008 Zwischen den Seen Nummer 2 Welschriesling Trockenbeerenauslese (Burgenland). Smooth and unctuous wine, rich with an oily texture that coats the mouth with its honey, mango and treacle character. It is so concentrated, just the essence of sweetness. Acidity is there in the final tang of lemon zest. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$75/375 ml

abv: 10.5%

91 Kracher 2008 Nouvelle Vague Nummer 7 Zweigelt Trockenbeerenauslese (Burgenland). Something of a curiosity in the Kracher range, this red grape-based, super-rich wine has preserved its tannins while having flavors of dried figs, spice and concentrated red berries. An intriguing wine, best with food. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$NA/375 ml

abv: 7.5%

90 Kracher 2008 Zwischen den Seen Nummer 1 Scheurebe Trockenbeerenauslese (Burgenland). This, the first of 12 grades of richness in the Kracher range in 2008, is already an intense wine, with concentrated orange marmalade and honey flavors. What gives it just the right fresh lift is the lemon acidity on the refreshing finish. Vin Divino. —R.V.

Price: \$84/375 ml

abv: 12%

90 Türk 2008 Grüner Veltliner Eiswein (Niederösterreich). With fruit picked on January 7, 2009, this superrich wine shines with acidity that picks out the fuller honey flavors. It has an almost unctuous texture, very smooth, with orange zest and peach giving a fresh side to the wine. Niche Import Company. —R.V.

Price: \$44/375 ml

abv: 11.5%

BEAUJOLAIS

BEAUJOLAIS

85 Paul Beudet 2009 Domaine Romy (Beaujolais). Sweet cherry and raspberry flavors, with soft tannins. The acidity melds into the ripe fruits, in a wine that is rounded and ready to drink. Gifted Grape. —R.V.

Price: \$15

abv: 12.5%

84 Domaine Dupré 2009 La Trend Attitude (Beaujolais). Fresh, soft cherry fruit wine, with light tannins and bright acidity. Simple, soft and fruity. Wine Traditions. —R.V.

Price: \$15

abv: NA

84 Henry Fessy 2010 (Beaujolais). Fruity wine, with sweet cherry flavors and warmth. Just a touch of structure and acidity. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$10

abv: NA

83 Paul Beudet 2010 Domaine Romy (Beaujolais). Showing up-front fruit, with tense acidity, this is all about freshness. There's a cool,

textured feel to the wine, more plum skin than juice. Gifted Grape. —R.V.

Price: \$15

abv: NA

BEAUJOLAIS-VILLAGES

86 Château de la Terrière 2009 Vieilles Vignes (Beaujolais-Villages). Earthy, fruity wine with bitter cherry and plum flavors. The wine has some weight, along with its acidity. Serve slightly chilled. Worldwide Cellars. —R.V.

Price: \$NA

abv: 13%

85 Ferraud et Fils 2010 (Beaujolais-Villages). Very fresh and crisp, packed with ripe juicy cherries. There are tannins, but they are an afterthought compared to the bright fruit and acidity. Vinum Wine Importing and Distributing LLC. —R.V.

Price: \$16

abv: NA

85 Henry Fessy 2010 (Beaujolais-Villages). A series of firm tannins goes with acidity, raspberry fruits and attractive juicy sweetness. A wine for drinking on cold winter evenings. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$12

abv: NA

85 Lucien Lardy 2010 (Beaujolais-Villages). There are tannins here, with tight acidity and clean cherry fruits. The structure is balanced by this red fruit character. For drinking now. Zancanella Importing Co. —R.V.

Price: \$13

abv: NA

84 Mommessin 2010 (Beaujolais-Villages). With bright red fruits and acidity, this shows structure, piles of red cherry flavors, followed by firm tannins. OWS. —R.V.

Price: \$10

abv: NA

BROUILLY

90 Georges Duboeuf 2009 Prestige (Brouilly). With some tannins, even a touch of wood, this is a weighty wine, giving juicy plum flavors along with acidity. It is rich and concentrated, although ready to drink now. —R.V.

Price: \$NA

abv: NA

90 Robert Perroud 2009 Pollen (Brouilly). Firm tannins push this wine into the concentrated direction. It is rich, ripe, although with plenty of juicy red fruit flavors. The wine, with its pure line in acidity, has an attractive chewy structure. Wine Traditions. —R.V.

Price: \$24

abv: 12.5%

88 Château de la Terrière 2009 (Brouilly). Rounded and ripe, this is delicious, soft Gamay. It has the concentration of the vintage, giving red cherry spice and juicy fruit to go with the acidity. An enjoyable wine already, although still with some potential. Galaxy Wine Company. —R.V.

Price: \$20

abv: NA

88 Henry Fessy 2010 Cuvée Confidentielle (Brouilly). From a selection of parcels, this cu-

vée is, for the vintage, concentrated and rich. Firm and tough tannins do show, although the dominant character is sweet fruit. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$25

abv: NA

88 Mommessin 2010 Château de Pierreux (Brouilly). For full review see page 80. *Best Buy.*

87 Henry Fessy 2010 (Brouilly). A wine with considerable structure, balanced by a good dollop of sweet fruits. The wine has weight, a tight final acidity and a finish that hints at some aging potential. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$19

abv: NA

87 Mommessin 2010 Château de Briante (Brouilly). For the year, this is ripe and soft, the core of dry tannins providing the counterbalance to the juicy red cherry flavors. The finish has lively acidity. OWS. —R.V.

Price: \$14

abv: NA

87 Robert Perroud 2010 L'Enfer des Balloquets (Brouilly). Some richness and smoky flavors, although the acidity is also very present. Flavors of red cherry and pepper are balanced by a core of tannins. Wine Traditions. —R.V.

Price: \$20

abv: NA

86 Ferraud et Fils 2010 Domaine Rolland (Brouilly). This is a soft, ample wine, with an attractive tang of black cherry and ripe acidity. The wine has just the right juicy fruitiness. Vinum Wine Importing and Distributing LLC. —R.V.

Price: \$20

abv: NA

85 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Sélection (Brouilly). With intense acidity, this is a firm and tannic wine, unusual for a Brouilly. The tannins give the wine weight, an almost severe feel, the acidity cutting right through the juicy berry fruits. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.

Price: \$15

abv: 13%

84 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Château de la Perrière (Brouilly). On the banana side of Beaujolais, there are also acidity, red fruits and a dry, tannic core. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.

Price: \$16

abv: NA

CHÉNAS

89 Henry Fessy 2009 (Chénas). Sweet plum juice and strawberry flavors, a typical wine of the vintage. Acidity and tannins are well integrated into the ripe character of this delicious wine. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$19

abv: NA

CHIROUBLES

90 Georges Duboeuf 2009 Domaine Desmures (Chiroubles). Rich and perfumed, the wine is packed with black cherry and damson fruit flavors. It is concentrated with its tannins firmly integrat-

ed, giving great final fruit and ripeness. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. **Best Buy.** —R.V.

Price: \$14 **abv:** NA

89 Henry Fessy 2009 (Chiroubles). There is an austere character to this wine, tannins edged with minerality. It has weight as well as concentration and, as compensation, sweet cherry juice to go with all this structure. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$19 **abv:** NA

88 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Domaine Desmures (Chiroubles). Laced with tannins, this has intense, very pure red cherry fruits and a cool feel to it. The wine's juiciness has a smoky edge, while remaining fresh. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.

Price: \$15 **abv:** NA

87 Mommessin 2010 Les Muriers (Chiroubles). The wine has a lively, bright feel even though the structure is very present. The fruit is as crisp as possible, giving a tight as well as refreshing final taste. OWS. —R.V.

Price: \$15 **abv:** NA

86 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Sélection (Chiroubles). In 2010, this cool-climate cru of Beaujolais has produced a fruity wine, very structured while retaining all the right red berry flavors. It would be possible to age this for a year or two. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 12.5%

CÔTE DE BROUILLY

89 Paul Beudet 2009 Domaine de Chardignon (Côte de Brouilly). Powerfully rich wine, with jammy fruit flavors to go with its strawberry fruits. The wine is driven by its ripe fruit, the acidity coming through the sweetness to finish freshly and with some tannic, ageworthy structure. Gabriella Importers Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Ferraud et Fils 2010 Domaine Rolland (Côte de Brouilly). There are certainly plenty of tannins here, but they are balanced by rich fruit, strawberry juice flavors and freshness. Structured ripeness is the hallmark here. Vinum Wine Importing and Distributing LLC. —R.V.

Price: \$20 **abv:** NA

87 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Domaine de Riaz (Côte de Brouilly). There is plenty of acidity here, but that is balanced by the edge of dryness and the enticing raspberry juice flavor. A wine with freshness a-plenty as well as some dry weight. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.

Price: \$13 **abv:** NA

87 Henry Fessy 2009 (Côte de Brouilly). Warm, rounded and open style of wine with attractive fruits, hints of raisins and a smoky character. Not for aging. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$19 **abv:** NA

85 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Sélection (Côte de Brouilly). With a very mineral texture, this

is a wine with as much tannin as fruit. It does have a bitter cherry character that gives some freshness, while the aftertaste combines both the dryness and the acidity. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.

Price: \$13 **abv:** NA

FLEURIE

92 Henry Fessy 2009 (Fleurie). For full review see page 76.

91 Ferraud et Fils 2009 Le Reposoir (Fleurie). A powerful style, very much OF the year. There are initial austere tannins as well as acidity. The juiciness of the wine takes a while to come through, the jammy character in the background of what is still a structured wine. Vinum Wine Importing and Distributing LLC. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.

Price: \$21 **abv:** NA

91 Lucien Lardy 2009 Les Moriers Vieilles Vignes (Fleurie). A firmly structured wine, with dark, ripe tannins. The black plum and berry fruits add juiciness, while the wine also has touches of spice and a full rich texture. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13%

90 Lucien Lardy 2009 (Fleurie). An opulent, ripe, full-bodied wine, with sweet cherry and spice flavors, very rich. The juicy sweetness of the fruit is given shape by the firm, dusty tannins. Likely to age, this is already drinking well. Cru Wines. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.

Price: \$21 **abv:** NA

89 Mommessin 2010 La Cerisaie (Fleurie). A very complete wine, firm but flattering on the palate. A mix of cherry skins, red plums and lovely juiciness all come together in an harmonious whole. OWS. —R.V.

Price: \$15 **abv:** NA

87 Domaine de Leyre-Loup 2010 (Fleurie). Fine, aromatic wine, very cherry, its structure and bright fruits already integrating well. Acidity is a dominant element, with the underlying tannins pushing through the intense juiciness. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 12.5%

JULIÉNAS

91 Georges Duboeuf 2009 Prestige (Julié-nas). With the embossed bottle and the extra years aging, Duboeuf's Prestige range does have an extra quality. This Julié-nas is ripe, concentrated, a powerful expression of Gamay with a more serious intent. Worth aging for another year. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** NA

91 Pascal Aufranc 2009 Les Crots Vieilles Vignes (Julié-nas). Despite its underlying richness, this is a very structured wine, solidly based on dry tannins and firm acidity. This texture, which is also given extra liveliness by its red cherry fruits, suggests a

wine for aging over 2–3 years. Wine Traditions. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.

Price: \$22 **abv:** NA

90 Ferraud et Fils 2009 Les Ravinets (Julié-nas). Firm wine that is packed with tannins as well as solid fruit. The wine is concentrated with a dense plum skin texture, chunky, perfumed and solid. Vinum Wine Importing and Distributing LLC. —R.V.

Price: \$19 **abv:** NA

90 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Château de Julié-nas (Julié-nas). Very firmly tannic, still young and needing another year to age. The red berry fruits are present, layered with the tannins and acidity. The wine has structure, plenty of freshness, finishing with cherry acidity. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** NA

89 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Château des Capitans (Julié-nas). Warm and ripe wine, very open with its red fruit acidity well integrated. There are tannins and a more dry character of course—this is a 2010 wine, but the main effect is of weight and some power. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.

Price: \$19 **abv:** NA

89 Henry Fessy 2010 (Julié-nas). Ripe fruit with soft acidity characterize this wine that has great concentration, jammy flavors, strawberry jelly and a generous plum skin texture. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$19 **abv:** NA

88 Pierre Dupond 2009 Domaine de Bois-champ (Julié-nas). A rich and spicy wine, its red fruits given a jammy feel by sweetness and ripeness. The acidity lies underneath this attractive surface, while tannins give the final structure. Vignobles LVDH USA Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** NA

87 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Domaine de la Seigneurie (Julié-nas). Soft and fruity, this is a warm-feeling wine. The hints of banana do not detract from the black cherry and juicy flavors. There is some weight as well, with dense tannins. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.

Price: \$15 **abv:** NA

87 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Sélection (Julié-nas). In Beaujolais, 2010 was a firm and structured year, and this is very evident in this darkly tannic wine. It is packed with juicy acidity and red berry fruits, while it is also in need of several months' aging. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 12.5%

86 Pierre Dupond 2010 Domaine de Bois-champ (Julié-nas). Generous ripe fruit is found on a wine packed with cherry and raspberry flavors. Hints of banana appear along with the vintage's signature tannic structure. Keep for 6–9 months. Exclusive Imports. —R.V.

Price: \$NA **abv:** NA

84 Georges Duboeuf 2010 La Trinquée (Julié-nas). A lean wine, all tannins and missing

Price: \$15 abv: NA

MORGON

92 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Domaine de la Chaponne (Morgon).

Best Buy

Price: \$15 abv: NA

92 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Domaine Montchavy (Morgon).

Best Buy

Price: \$14 abv: NA

92 Paul Beudet 2009 Côte du Py (Morgon).

Cellar Selection

Price: \$26 abv: NA

91 Georges Duboeuf 2009 Prestige (Morgon).

Price: \$NA abv: NA

91 Henry Fessy 2009 (Morgon).
Cellar Selection

91 Jacques Charlet 2009 Les Charmes (Morgon).

Price: \$NA abv: NA

91 Mommessin 2010 Les Griottes (Morgon).
Cellar Selection

91 Paul Beudet 2008 Côte du Py (Morgon).

Cel-

lar Selection

Price: \$25 abv: 13%

90 Domaine de Leyre-Loup 2009 (Morgon).

Price: \$23 abv: 13.5%

90 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Côte du Py (Morgon).

Best Buy

Price: \$14 abv: NA

90 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Domaine Jean Descombes (Morgon).

Price: \$16 abv: NA

90 Laurent Gauthier 2010 Côte du Py Vieilles Vignes (Morgon).

Price: \$18 abv: NA

89 Domaine de Leyre-Loup 2008 Réserve (Morgon).

Price: \$35 abv: 13%

89 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Belles Grives (Morgon).

Price: \$15 abv: NA

89 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Domaine Javernières (Morgon).

Price: \$15 abv: NA

89 Laurent Gauthier 2010 Grand Cras Vieilles Vignes (Morgon).

Price: \$18 abv: 12.5%

86 Georges Duboeuf 2010 Sélection (Morgon).

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front. Fine acidity gives just the right lift. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.

Price: \$14 **abv:** NA

MOULIN-À-VENT

92 **Château de la Terrière 2009 (Moulin-à-Vent).** A wine that combines richness with a great structure. It is ripe, smoky, the red fruits rich and concentrated. A wine that is packed with juicy fruit and also with a good aging potential. Lauber Imports. —R.V.
Price: \$NA **abv:** NA

92 **Château des Jacques 2010 Clos du Grand Carquelin (Moulin-à-Vent).** A finely perfumed wine, touched with wood, Beaujolais in a Burgundy style, structured and with intense acidity. It is packed with firm tannins, surrounded by a lively cherry and rich fruit character. Kobrand. —R.V.
Price: \$34 **abv:** NA

92 **Jacques Charlet 2009 Champ de Cour (Moulin-à-Vent).** Such a concentrated wine, with the intensity of red Burgundy but with the juiciness of Beaujolais. Swathes of smooth fruit wash around the palate, coupled with a touch of minerality and a dense texture. Age for 2–3 years and more. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
Price: \$NA **abv:** NA

91 **Georges Duboeuf 2010 Domaine des Roisiers (Moulin-à-Vent).** Intense and rich wine, with touches of smoky wood, the tannins ripe, the acidity a refreshing balancing factor. With its cherry character, there is fruit already, but wait a year and this will be impressive. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.
Price: \$18 **abv:** NA

91 **Lucien Lardy 2009 (Moulin-à-Vent).** Sweet strawberry and cherry fruits are the soft cover to this intensely tannic wine. That structure shows its power, concentration and ageworthiness. Keep for three years and the richness will be fully revealed. Zancanella Importing Co. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.
Price: \$19 **abv:** NA

91 **Mommessin 2010 Domaine de Champ de Cours (Moulin-à-Vent).** Structured, with layers of dark tannins and black cherry flavors. It's packed with plum juice, hinting almost at Pinot Noir, while also retaining the lovely open Gamay fruit. OWS. —R.V.
Price: \$16 **abv:** NA

91 **Richard Rottiers 2010 (Moulin-à-Vent).** Smoky wine, rich as well as structured. The acidity of the year is integrated into the structure, the firm tannins and juicy red berry fruits a balanced pleasure to taste. Paul M. Young Fine Wines. —R.V.
Price: \$25 **abv:** NA

90 **Henry Fessy 2010 (Moulin-à-Vent).** For full review see page 78.

89 **Château de la Terrière 2008 Cuvée de la Lure (Moulin-à-Vent).** Hints of smoky bacon and wood are now giving this wine some maturity. It has

firm tannins still, but also a rich texture, with some red berries still present. Ruby Wines Inc. —R.V.

Price: \$20 **abv:** NA

89 **Georges Duboeuf 2010 Domaine de la Vigne Romaine (Moulin-à-Vent).** A wine that still has young and fresh fruit. It has attractive acidity, a core of tannins. The weight and ripe fruit flavors are hiding in the background, offering the potential for a wine that is solid and concentrated. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.
Price: \$17 **abv:** NA

88 **Georges Duboeuf 2010 Sélection (Moulin-à-Vent).** Rounded and rich wine, its acidity pushing through firm tannins and lively red fruits. There are both freshness and structure here, with final juiciness. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.
Price: \$16 **abv:** NA

RÉGNIÉ

88 **Mommessin 2010 Hospices de Beaujeu Cuvée des Sires de Beaujeu (Régnié).** The Hospices de Beaujeu is a charitable foundation. Mommessin makes the wine from the foundation's vineyards. This vintage is packed with black cherry fruit and lively acidity. It is also structured, creating an excellent balance. OWS. —R.V.
Price: \$15 **abv:** NA

86 **Domaine Dupré 2010 Haute Ronze (Régnié).** Tight and tannic with as much structure as fruit. The freshness comes from the acidity, although at the end strawberry juiciness shows through. Wine Traditions. —R.V.
Price: \$18 **abv:** NA

86 **Henry Fessy 2010 Château des Reysiers (Régnié).** This property, belonging to Henry Fessy, has produced a light-hearted wine, with hints of minerality, some dry tannins, juiciness and lively acidity. Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.
Price: \$16 **abv:** NA

84 **Georges Duboeuf 2010 Sélection (Régnié).** Well structured wine, the red cherry fruits laced with some banana hints. The wine is deliciously fruity, the tannin edge just a light coating. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.
Price: \$12 **abv:** 13%

SAINT-AMOUR

92 **Henry Fessy 2009 (Saint-Amour).** For full review see page 76.

92 **Paul Beudet 2009 Clos de la Brosse (Saint-Amour).** The rare ripeness of the 2009 vintage is shown in the high alcohol, for Beaujolais at least, of this wine. Not that it shows, except in weight. The acidity is right there along with ripe plums. An age-

worthy, finely concentrated wine. Vintage Wine Marketing. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

Price: \$23 **abv:** 14%

90 **Mommessin 2010 Les Pêcheurs (Saint-Amour).** A wine with an important structure, tasting very young at this stage. There is great acidity through a lovely, fragrant, forward wine. The acidity gives everything a lift of fruitiness. OWS. *Best Buy.* —R.V.
Price: \$15 **abv:** NA

89 **Ferraud et Fils 2009 Cuvée Ensorceleuse (Saint-Amour).** Producers love to play on Saint-Amour (in fact a Roman legionary), and this Sorcerer Cuvée is in a good tradition. The wine is soft, ripe, open and generous, with spice and juicy cherry and raspberry flavors. The tannins are in the background. Vinum Wine Importing and Distributing LLC. —R.V.
Price: \$21 **abv:** NA

89 **Pascal Berthier 2010 Esprit de Séduction Vieilles Vignes (Saint-Amour).** So, why not take advantage of the appellation name to declare a wine spirit of seduction? You'll find soft, ripe and warm fruits, delicious juiciness and well integrated tannins. Wine Traditions. —R.V.
Price: \$24 **abv:** NA

87 **Georges Duboeuf 2010 Sélection (Saint-Amour).** Boasting weight and some richness, the wine shows that the northern Beaujolais crus are the most successful in 2010. The cherry and sweet plum flavors are laced with ripe acidity as well as a mineral edge. W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —R.V.
Price: \$15 **abv:** NA

RHÔNE REDS

CORNAS

93 **Jean-Luc Colombo 2008 La Louvée Syrah (Cornas).** For full review see page 75.

91 **Jean-Luc Colombo 2008 Les Ruchets Syrah (Cornas).** Full bodied and lush, with hints of sweet, smoky oak layered over espresso, black olive and sour plum. With faint suggestions of dried fruit and chocolate yet ample freshness on the finish, this seems a bit disjointed at the moment; drink 2016–2024. Palm Bay International. —J.C.
Price: \$84 **abv:** 13.5%

91 **Jean-Luc Colombo 2008 Terres Brulées Syrah (Cornas).** For full review see page 77.

90 **Tardieu-Laurent 2008 Coteaux (Cornas).** Pungent and potent, with notes of dark-roast coffee and roasted meat accenting plum fruit. This is full bodied yet surprisingly crisp, with firm but not over-

whelming tannins. Drink 2013–2020. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$59

abv: 13%

CÔTE RÔTIE

91 Tardieu-Laurent 2007 (Côte Rôtie). This is a full-bodied, muscular example of Côte Rôtie, with pronounced savory, meaty character tinged with smoke and ash. Yet despite that, it manages to be approachable at the same time, finishing long and velvety. Drink it over the next 5–8 years. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$105

abv: 13%

90 Ferraton Pere et Fils 2007 L'Eglantine (Côte Rôtie). A textbook example of the flavors one expects to find in Côte Rôtie, laden with hints of smoke, bacon, herbs and green olives, all framed by silky tannins and a delicate structure. The finish is long and mouthwatering. It's drinking well now, but shows the balance to age through at least 2017. Baron Francois Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$85

abv: 13%

90 Les Vins de Vienne 2008 Les Essartailles (Côte Rôtie). This offering from Les Vins de Vienne offers a chunky mouthful of cassis and plum fruit, accented by notes of smoke and cedar. The finish is soft and plush, so there's no need for extended

cellaring. Drink now–2017. Domaine Select Wine Estates. —J.C.

Price: \$75

abv: 12.5%

89 Maison Nicolas Perrin 2007 (Côte Rôtie). This joint venture between Nicolas Jaboulet and the Perrin family is turning out some good examples from the Northern Rhône, like this Côte Rôtie, which is plummy, yet at the same time loaded with savory notes of cured meat and smoke, even a hint of bacon fat. Silky tannins frame the finish. Drink now–2017. Vineyard Brands. —J.C.

Price: \$72

abv: 13.5%

89 Paul Jaboulet Aîné 2007 Les Jumelles (Côte Rôtie). This venerable firm is going through substantial changes as the Frey family continues to update the viticulture and winemaking. This is a rather full-bodied Côte Rôtie, with plenty of dark, earthy and meaty notes edged with just a bit of peppery spice. Drink 2014–2020. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$110

abv: 13%

88 Tardieu-Laurent 2008 (Côte Rôtie). Not as impressive as the 2007, Tardieu-Laurent's 2008 Côte Rôtie is still a very good wine, boasting notes of espresso and black olive tinged with oak notes of cedar

and cinnamon. Finishes with tart fruit and soft tannins; drink now–2015. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$92

abv: 13%

CROZES-HERMITAGE

91 Tardieu-Laurent 2008 Vieilles Vignes (Crozes-Hermitage). When T-L gets the mix of fruit and oak right, the wines can be deliciously hedonistic. This is a beautiful mix of cedar, vanilla and chocolate with bright boysenberry fruit, wrapped in a richly velvety texture and lingering elegantly on the finish. Drink 2012–2020. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$35

abv: 13%

90 Delas Frères 2009 Les Launes (Crozes-Hermitage). This is not a blockbuster, just a nicely balanced Syrah for drinking over the next several years. Ample black cherry fruit is enhanced by layers of floral and herbal complexity, while the tannins are supple, allowing the flavors to linger elegantly on the finish. Maisons Marques & Domaines USA. *Editors' Choice.* —J.C.

Price: \$21

abv: 13%

89 Cave de Tain 2009 (Crozes-Hermitage). A fine value in Northern Rhône Syrah, the Tain cooperative's 2009 Crozes-Hermitage is fairly extracted for a Crozes, with plummy, dark fruit alongside hints of

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2006 - 91 pts, *Wine Spectator*
2005 - 90 pts, *Wine Enthusiast*
2004 - 91 pts, *Wine Spectator*
2003 - 91 pts, *Wine & Spirits*
2001 - 91 pts, *The Wine Advocate*
2000 - 90 pts, *Wine Spectator*
1999 - 91 pts, *Wine Spectator*

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clove, leather and coffee. Turns a bit astringent on the finish; try 2013–2018. Cognac One, LLC. —J.C.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 12.5%

88 Ferraton Pere et Fils 2009 Les Pichères (Crozes-Hermitage). A bit on the simple side, combining black cherries and a hint of cracked pepper, but a solid steak house option. There's enough tannin and acidity to stand up to rare beef, yet it's supple enough to drink now. Baron Francois Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 12.5%

84 M. Chapoutier 2008 Les Meysonniers (Crozes-Hermitage). A decent effort, but one that shows the lean side of the vintage, with cranberry-tart fruit and peppery notes. Spicy and crisp on the finish. Drink now–2016. Terlato Wines International. —J.C.

Price: \$32 **abv:** 13%

HERMITAGE

91 Domaine Philippe & Vincent Jaboulet 2007 (Hermitage). This wine starts off a bit smoky and cedary, but with time it develops more typical Hermitage notes of cassis, hickory smoke and meat. It's medium to full in body, with a rich texture and long finish. Approachable now, but should age easily through 2018. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$85 **abv:** 13.5%

90 Ferraton Pere et Fils 2007 Les Miaux (Hermitage). Under the same ownership as Chapoutier, Ferraton has turned out an elegant 2007 Hermitage, one that is red fruited, but with dark overtones of chocolate, espresso and black olive. It's medium to full in body, with ample tannins, but they're silky in texture, making this Hermitage one that is approachable young. Drink now–2020. Baron Francois Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$80 **abv:** 14%

90 M. Chapoutier 2007 Monier de la Sizeranne (Hermitage). Chapoutier's largest Hermitage cuvée is rich and almost fudge-like in 2007, yet at the same time isn't at all sweet or confectioned. Notes of sweaty leather, dried cherries and chocolate are framed by silky tannins. Drink now–2020. Terlato Wines International. —J.C.

Price: \$120 **abv:** 13.5%

90 Tardieu-Laurent 2007 (Hermitage). Like many of the '07 Hermitages, this isn't a huge wine, but instead shows a nice sense of proportion, marrying hickory smoke with touches of cracked peppercorns, cedar and roasted beef. Drink now–2020. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$126 **abv:** 13%

89 Maison Nicolas Perrin 2007 (Ermitage). Leathery, earthy and spicy, with dried fruit flavors framed by soft tannins. This full-bodied offering from the new négociant venture between Nicolas Jaboulet and the Perrin family is reasonably complex

and mouthwatering on the finish. Drink now–2020. Vineyard Brands. —J.C.

Price: \$88 **abv:** 14%

SAINT-JOSEPH

93 E. Guigal 2007 Lieu-Dit Saint-Joseph (Saint-Joseph). Crafted from the vines of the old Jean-Louis Grippat estate, this is a wonderfully complex yet elegant rendition of Saint-Joseph. Smoky notes of cured meat and cracked pepper entwine perfumed, plummy fruit in this full-bodied, creamy-textured wine that should drink well for at least the next 10 years. Ex-Cellars Wine Agencies, Inc. —J.C.

Price: \$108 **abv:** 13%

91 E. Guigal 2007 Vignes de l'Hospice (Saint-Joseph). Guigal's long-term aging in new barrels has left a sheen of oak on this wine, but the underlying material is excellent, with mocha and plum notes supporting cedar and vanilla. The finish is long and savory, with a distinct granitic edge to the flavors. Drink now–2020. Ex-Cellars Wine Agencies, Inc. —J.C.

Price: \$108 **abv:** 13%

91 Tardieu-Laurent 2007 Vieilles Vignes (Saint-Joseph). T-L's 2007s from the Northern Rhône came out well, including this example from Saint-Joseph. Intense espresso, cracked pepper and black olive notes scream of cool-climate Syrah, while the feel in the mouth is supple, ending on a silky note. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$46 **abv:** 13%

90 Cave de Tain 2009 Esprit de Granit (Saint-Joseph). This is richly oaked, which may turn off some northern Rhône purists, but the underlying fruit is superb, with the toast, cedar and vanilla notes amply supported by black cherry fruit. The texture is velvety, leaving the flavors to linger softly on the finish. Cognac One, LLC. —J.C.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 13.5%

90 Maison Nicolas Perrin 2007 (Saint-Joseph). For full review see page 78. *Editors' Choice.*

89 Ferraton Pere et Fils 2009 La Source (Saint-Joseph). Ripe black cherries with a hint of garrigue mark the nose of this attractively plump red from Ferraton. The fruit dominates, but there's just enough savory complexity to make it interesting, with a firm yet silky finish. Drink now–2017. Baron Francois Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$21 **abv:** 13%

87 Cave de Tain 2009 (Saint-Joseph). Cave de Tain has three levels of Saint-Joseph. This may be the entry-level one, but it's still a nice Syrah, combining hints of smoke with black cherry and pepper aromas and flavors. It could use more richness on the palate, but pair it with a juicy steak and it will do

just fine now and for the next couple of years. Cognac One, LLC. —J.C.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 13%

87 Cave de Tain 2009 Terre de Granit (Saint-Joseph). Not as impressive as the Esprit de Granit bottling, this is nonetheless a solid Northern Rhône Syrah, with herbal notes accenting dark fruit. The moderately concentrated plum flavors show touches of coffee and chocolate, turning crisp on the finish. Drink now and over the next few years. Cognac One, LLC. —J.C.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Vignobles La Coterie 2009 (Saint-Joseph). This is a medium-bodied, fruit-driven Syrah that seems built for immediate consumption. Black cherry fruit is in the lead, with hints of chocolate and lavender to spice things up. Eminently quaffable, with bright fruit and a lingering finish. Cordon Selections. —J.C.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 13%

CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

93 Château de Beaucastel 2007 (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). At first glance, this is not particularly impressive; it's slightly herbal and rustic, with a raisiny edge to the fruit. But this really improves with air, fleshing out on the midpalate and losing the raisiny notes in favor of plum and savory notes. Give it four or five years in the cellar and drink it over the next 15 or so. Vineyard Brands. *Cellar Selection.* —J.C.

Price: \$120 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Tardieu-Laurent 2007 Cuvée Spéciale (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). Full bodied and concentrated, with a long, chewy finish, this wine gets points for being complex as well. It's plummy yet savory, with touches of braised beef, coffee and black olive. Drink 2013–2023. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$85 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Tardieu-Laurent 2008 Vieilles Vignes (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). The only question with this wine is whether it might be too much of a good thing. It's full bodied and densely concentrated, with oaky notes of toasted almond and vanilla layered over plummy fruit, finishing warm and lush. Hedonistic to the max. Drink now. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$77 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Château La Nerthe 2007 (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). La Nerthe is usually quite structured, so while the 2007 is riper and creamier than most vintages, it still retains decent acidity to balance things out. Leather, spice and cherry flavors pick up hints of coffee and chocolate on the finish. Drink it over the next 10–12 years. Pasternak Wine Imports. —J.C.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Domaine du Vieux Lazaret 2007 Cuvée Exceptionnelle (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). Hugely toasty and oaky, and yet the wine never seems too extreme given the intensity of the cherry fruit. It's full bodied, lush and supple, with a long, mouthwater-

ing finish. Drink now–2019. David Milligan Selections. —J.C.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 14.5%

89 Vignobles La Coterie 2007 (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). Full bodied without being heavy and fruit driven without being confectioned, this is a well-made Châteauneuf-du-Pape imported in sufficient quantities to make it reasonably available (2,000 cases). Plum and licorice flavors finish dusty and long. Drink now–2015. Cordon Selections. —J.C.

Price: \$33 **abv:** 14%

88 Perrin & Fils 2007 Les Sinards (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). The antithesis of many 2007 Châteauneufs, the 2007 Les Sinards surprises for its fruity immediacy. Its cherry and raspberry fruit is fresh and bouncy, making it a cheerful, fruit-forward wine for drinking over the next few years. Vineyard Brands. —J.C.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 14%

88 Réserve des Oliviers 2007 Vieilles Vignes (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). Not a super-charged heavyweight even at 15% abv, instead this is an elegant, complex rendition of Châteauneuf-du-Pape that's ready to drink now–2015. From its aromas of leather and dried flowers to the meaty, complex flavors and coffee and black olives on the finish, it delivers easy-drinking charm. Massanois Imports. —J.C.

Price: \$62 **abv:** 15%

86 Michel Picard 2007 (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). Even the big négociant Michel Picard has managed to turn out a decent 2007 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, which speaks to the quality and consistency of the vintage. It combines leather and meat with cherry fruit and some firm tannins, but falls off a bit rapidly on the finish. Drink now. Prestige Wine Group. —J.C.

Price: \$39 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Réserve des Oliviers 2007 (Châteauneuf-du-Pape). Rustic and feral, with hints of dirty Band Aid alongside notes of coffee and molasses. Still, it holds some appeal for not conforming to expectations and boasts a redeemingly ripe, creamy texture that's almost suede-like on the finish. Drink now. Massanois Imports. —J.C.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 14%

LIRAC

91 Domaine de la Mordorée 2009 La Reine des Bois (Lirac). O.K., so it's a New World-ish blend of fruit and oak, but leaving stylistic prejudices aside, it's also a darn fine wine. Black cherry fruit balances the cedar and vanilla nicely, while the texture is rich yet supple and the finish lingers a good long time. Drink now–2018. Kysela Père et Fils. —J.C.

Price: \$43 **abv:** 14.5%

90 Château de Ségrèrie 2009 Cuvée Réserve (Lirac). Full bodied and heavily extracted, this is a dark, plummy wine with almost chewy tannins on the finish. Yet the aromas remain fresh and

floral, nicely accented by coffee and spice. Drink now–2017. Kysela Père et Fils. —J.C.

Price: \$23 **abv:** 13.5%

89 Domaine de la Mordorée 2009 La Dame Rousse (Lirac). This muscular blend of 50% Grenache and 50% Syrah features bold dark fruit notes of black cherries and plums and some chunky tannins on the finish. Drink it now with some rare red meat, or over the next several years as it gradually softens. Kysela Père et Fils. —J.C.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Domaine Lafond 2008 Roc-Epine (Lirac). Solidly built and slightly chewy, this pleasant blend of cherries, chocolate and peppery spice can be consumed anytime between now and 2018. The actual blend is 65% Grenache, 30% Syrah and 5% Mourvèdre. Wines of France. —J.C.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Domaine Coudouli 2007 (Lirac). A silky, elegant, pretty rendition of Lirac, Coudouli's 2007 displays hints of cherries, Mexican chocolate and coffee in a medium- to full-bodied format. Charming to drink now and over the next several years. Frank-Lin International. —J.C.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14.5%

CÔTES DU RHÔNE VILLAGES

89 Sélection Laurence Féraud 2008 Séguret (Côtes-du-Rhône Villages). Explosively peppery upfront, with hints of allspice and pomegranate on the nose and expressive garrigue and tart fruit flavors on the palate. This wine is a little lean, but the beautiful aromas are well worth the price of admission, and this wine should prove brilliant paired with food. Hand Picked Selections. —J.C.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%

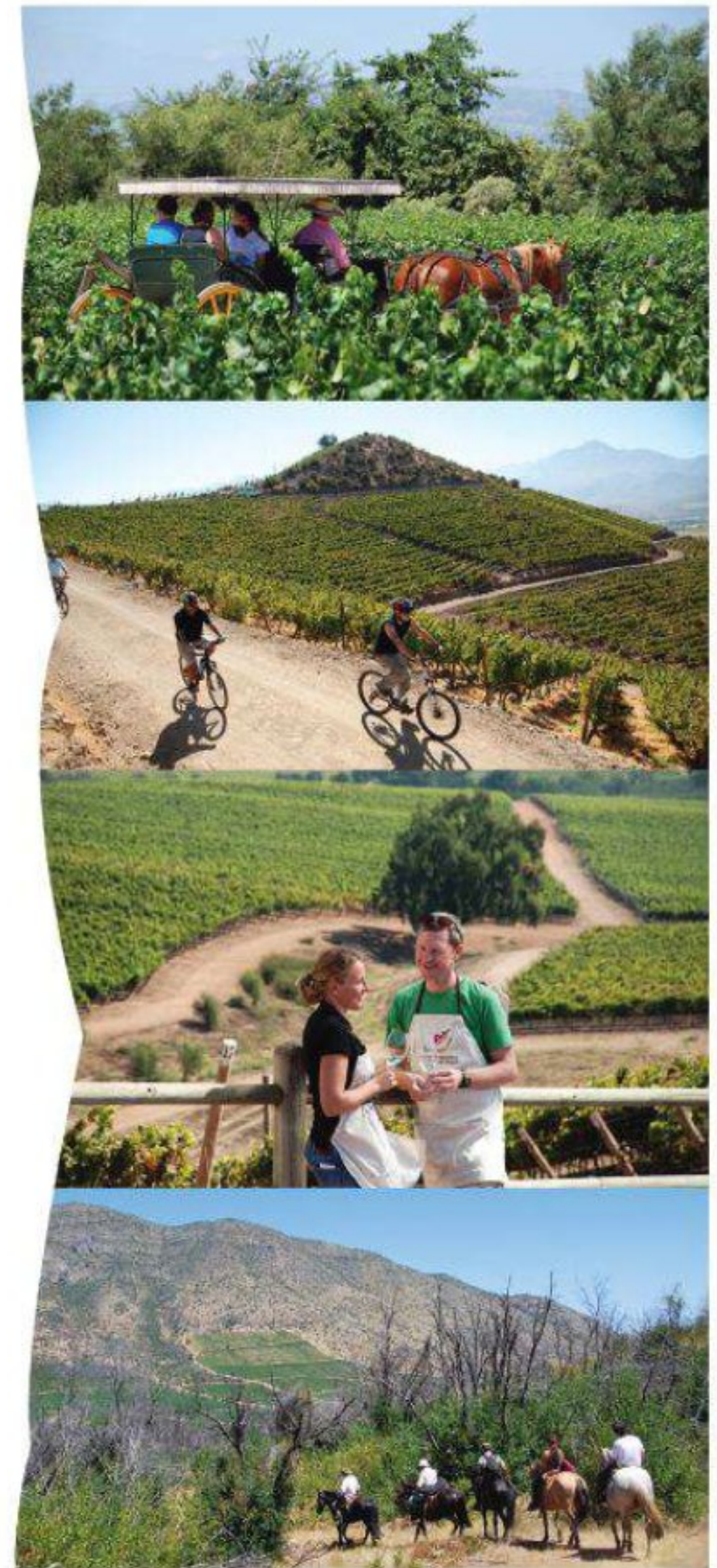
89 Tardieu-Laurent 2008 Rasteau Vieilles Vignes (Côtes-du-Rhône Villages). The oak is prominent on this wine, giving a high-glass sheen of toasted coconut and vanilla to the otherwise modest fruit. There's enough weight and richness to stand up to the wood, but just barely, while the texture is creamy and lush throughout. Drink now. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —J.C.

Price: \$33 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Domaine de la Bastide 2009 Visan (Côtes du Rhône Villages). Visan is a village that typically provides structured reds, and this is a solid example. It's a bit stern and tannic, but those elements are backed by warm, ripe fruit: black cherry, plum and chocolate notes. Drink now–2019. Casa Viñedo. —J.C.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 14%

87 Les Vignerons D'Estezargues 2008 Domaine Grès St. Vincent Signargues (Côtes-du-Rhône Villages). Fans of natural wines should be beating a path to the doors of this fine cooperative, which has produced cuvées for numerous importers. The blend of this one is 60% Grenache, 25% Syrah, 10% Mourvèdre and 5% Carignan, giving a wine



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with scents of raspberries and fine, well-worn leather and a long, silky finish. Drink now. Jenny and François Selections. —J.C.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 14%

85 Les Vignerons D'Estezargues 2008 Domaine des Genestas Signargues (Côtes-du-Rhône Villages). On the earthy, leathery side of things, this wine comes across as a bit tough and rustic but not completely without charm; brown sugar and dried fruit notes give it a subtle sweetness on the palate. Drink up. Jenny and François Selections. —J.C.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 14.5%

CÔTES DU RHÔNE

89 M. Chapoutier 2009 Belleruche Grenache-Syrah (Côtes du Rhône). Chapoutier's Belleruche red succeeds admirably in 2009, marrying superripe black cherries with hints of chocolate and cedar in this mouthfilling, richly textured wine. Drink it over the next few years. Terlato Wines International.

Best Buy. —J.C.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 14%

89 Cachette 2009 (Côtes du Rhône). For full review see page 80. *Best Buy.*

87 Domaine de la Bastide 2009 Cuvée Les Fignes (Côtes du Rhône). The 2009s from Domaine de la Bastide are sturdy, ripe southern reds. This blend of 60% Syrah, 20% Grenache and 20% Carignan displays hints of raspberry and plum layered with coffee and chocolate and backed by plenty of tannin. Long and chewy on the finish right now, it should drink well through 2016. Casa Viñedo. —J.C.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 14%

86 Domaine de la Bastide 2009 Cuvée Tradition (Côtes du Rhône). Warm, plummy and inviting, with plum and black cherry fruit framed by crisp acidity. The combination makes for a juicy, mouth-watering finish in this fine everyday red. Casa Viñedo. —J.C.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 14%

TUSCAN REDS

TOSCANA

97 Castello Banfi 2007 Excelsus (Toscana). The 2007 Excelsus is a gorgeous super Tuscan expression (with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot) that shows quality and superior fruit on all levels. Castello Banfi has really hit a home run with this vintage. You'll encounter persuasive aromas of cassis, blackberry, chocolate, tobacco, curry leaf and deep renderings of exotic spice. The wine's texture is exceedingly smooth, rich and long lasting. Banfi Vintners. —M.L.

Price: \$81 **abv:** 14.5%

97 Fattoria Petrola 2008 Galatrona Merlot (Toscana). Each new vintage of Galatrona proves, year after year, the enormous potential of Italian Merlot. This is a soft and beautifully decadent wine with plush and perfectly ripe aromas of black cherry, light spice, chocolate and tobacco. The smoothness,

richness and persistency is simply unbeatable. Vintus LLC. —M.L.

Price: \$134 **abv:** 14%

96 Tua Rita 2008 Redigaffi (Toscana). Tua Rita's Redigaffi is one of the best reds to emerge from Italy and the 2008 vintage delivers all the promise and hope of previous editions. The wine is set apart by its enormous richness and deeply concentrated layers of sweet cherry fruit, chocolate, tobacco and cinnamon spice. Put this bottle in your cellar for ten years or more. Winebow. *Cellar Selection.* —M.L.

Price: \$330 **abv:** 14.5%

95 Poggio al Tesoro 2006 Dedicato a Walter Cabernet Franc (Toscana). Poggio al Tesoro, located in coastal Tuscany, is showing amazing results with Cabernet Franc. This plush and decadent expression boasts rich extraction and a long list of ripe, dark fruit aromas. It's a thick and meaty wine, with a smooth but rock-solid quality of tannin. Drink after 2015. Winebow. —M.L.

Price: \$90 **abv:** 14.5%

94 Agricola Querciabella 2006 Camartina (Toscana). This luscious blend of mostly Cabernet Sauvignon and Sangiovese shows bright cherry and blueberry characteristics backed by smooth richness and velvety texture. The wine is soft, dense and delicious overall. It presents a beautiful portrait of Tuscan wine. Maisons Marques & Domaines USA. —M.L.

Price: \$150 **abv:** 14%

94 Castello Banfi 2007 Summus (Toscana). Summus is a beautiful Tuscan blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah that opens with a drying, dusty mineral feel followed by loads of plump, ripe fruit. Great care was executed in the clonal selection of Sangiovese and that variety delivers the wine's distinctive territoriality. Banfi Vintners. —M.L.

Price: \$69 **abv:** 14.5%

94 I Giusti e Zanza 2007 Dulcamara (Toscana). This gorgeous blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot offers beautiful intensity and impressive complexity. Aromas here include black cherry, exotic spice, leather, fine tobacco and loads of plush, ripe fruit. It's a smooth velvety wine but the tannic backbone gives it lift and staying power. Vindagra USA. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

93 Canneto 2007 Filippone (Toscana). This impressive blend of Sangiovese and Merlot offers rich softness and a smooth texture backed by ripe aromas of red fruit, cinnamon spice, chocolate and mocha. The tannins also show softness and the wine would pair with choice cuts of succulent meat. Selected Estates of Europe Ltd. —M.L.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

93 Castello di Bossi 2007 Corbaia (Toscana). Corbaia is a super Tuscan blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon that opens with intensity and bright fruit flavors. It boasts a soft, silky feel

with a firm tannic bite followed by cassis, earth and wild mushroom. Very nice. Winebow. —M.L.

Price: \$65 **abv:** 14%

93 Cavalli Tenuta degli Dei 2007 (Toscana). From fashion designer Roberto Cavalli's wine estate (run by his son Tommaso), this elegant super Tuscan blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Alicante Bouschet opens with compelling intensity and pristine aromas of ripe blackberry, spice, leather and dark chocolate. Sherbrooke Cellars. —M.L.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 13.5%

93 Sant Agnese dei F.lli Gigli 2004 Spirito (Toscana). This super Tuscan blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon shows richness and softness followed by aromas of red cherry, chocolate and toasted hazelnut. The tannins are firm but smooth, and the wine would pair with game meats or spicy pork ribs. Classic Wine Imports, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14.5%

93 Tua Rita 2008 Perlato del Bosco (Toscana). The price is right and the blend is excellent. Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon are mixed in equal parts resulting in excellent integration and aromas that express the characteristics of both varieties. Blackberry and cassis is followed by spicy tones and bright freshness. Winebow. —M.L.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.5%

93 Tua Rita 2008 Syrah (Toscana). Tua Rita's blockbuster Syrah oozes thick, inky concentration with luscious layers of ripe fruit, blueberry, leather and bitter dark chocolate. You'll sense cedar wood and licorice as well and the mouthfeel is super soft and smooth. Drink after 2015. Winebow. —M.L.

Price: \$230 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Boscarelli 2006 (Toscana). Here's a beautiful wine fit for serving at elegant dinner parties or special occasions. There's a slightly aged quality of dry cassis or candied fruit that is followed by warming tones of toasted nut and dark leather. The overall effect is that of elegance and persistency. Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

Price: \$100 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Castello Banfi 2007 Cum Laude (Toscana). A food-friendly blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sangiovese and Syrah, Cum Laude offers attractive notes of milk chocolate and creamy cherry over a rich, plump mouthfeel. Meat dishes or pasta al forno with a crunchy cheese topping would fit the bill. Banfi Vintners. —M.L.

Price: \$37 **abv:** 14%

92 Castello Banfi 2006 Cum Laude (Toscana). Castello Banfi's delicious Cum Laude is a super Tuscan blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sangiovese and Syrah that opens with rich aromas of black fruit and chocolate fudge. The 30% Cabernet Sauvignon component adds background notes of exotic

spice, moist tobacco and firm tannins. Banfi Vintners. —M.L.

Price: \$37

abv: 14.5%

92 Castello Banfi 2006 Summus (Toscana).

The 2006 vintage presents elegant, refined tones and this blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah does just that. There's a nice fullness to the wine that is reflected in the integration of its aromatic elements. Chocolate, red cherry and exotic spice linger long on the palate. Banfi Vintners. —M.L.

Price: \$69

abv: NA

92 Castello del Terriccio 2006 Tassinai (Toscana).

Tassinai is a perennial super Tuscan expression with lush layers of cherry and blackberry backed by soft spice nuances and toasty oak aromas such as baked vanilla bean and roasted almond. Dense, firm tannins lend a sturdy but velvety texture. Kobrand. —M.L.

Price: \$NA

abv: 14%

92 Castellare di Castellina 2006 Coniale Cabernet (Toscana).

Coniale is one of those beautifully balanced Italian Cabs that is plush and dense, but elegant and fine at the same time. The wine boast ripened blackberry and cassis and there is not a green note in sight. Indeed, soft spice and firm tannins promise a bright aging future. Winebow. —M.L.

Price: \$55

abv: 13.5%

92 Castello di Bossi 2007 Girolamo Merlot (Toscana).

Girolamo is a wine you can't get enough of. It's soft and luscious with ripe cherry, chocolate and tobacco overtones. It feels smooth and finely textured on the finish with a long, fruit-driven endnote. Pair this beautiful expression from Tuscany with pulled beef or marinated pork. Winebow. —M.L.

Price: \$50

abv: 14%

92 Duemani 2007 Suisassi (Toscana).

Suisassi is one of Italy's most interesting and unique expressions of Syrah. Made according to organic and biodynamic principles, the wine shows a hearty masculine side of ripe fruit and rich oak that is enhanced by subtle elegance and lingering power. It is definitely worth your attention. Acid Inc Selections. —M.L.

Price: \$110

abv: 14.5%

92 I Giusti e Zanza 2008 Perbruno (Toscana).

Perbruno is a beautiful Syrah from central Tuscany that showcases loads of elegant spice and cinnamon backed by blueberry, cherry and sophisticated oak renderings. Pair this wine with succulent steak and green pepper cream sauce. Vindagra USA. —M.L.

Price: \$NA

abv: 14%

92 Jacopo Biondi-Santi 2007 Sassoalloro (Toscana).

In terms of value, Sassoalloro is one of the most interesting wines in Italy. Here you have a major, cult-level super Tuscan available at a surprisingly reasonable price. Elegance and complexity come through in spades and so do fine aromas of red cherry,

licorice and toasted almond. Remy Cointreau USA. **Editors' Choice.** —M.L.

Price: \$29

abv: 14%

92 Piccini 2006 Sasso al Poggio (Toscana).

This flagship super Tuscan from Piccini shows us the serious winemaking potential of one of Tuscany's most charismatic and playful wineries. The softness and richness of the wine is impressive and its long finish is driven forward by chocolate, red cherry and spice. Aveniù Brands, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$25

abv: 14%

92 Rocca delle Macie 2007 Roccato (Toscana).

From one of Tuscany's most charismatic producers, Roccato has shown a steady evolution in quality and intensity that culminates with this beauti-

ful vintage. A blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon, the wine delivers Rocca's signature juicy softness with background notes of spice and almond. Palm Bay International. —M.L.

Price: \$57

abv: 14.5%

92 Ruffino 2005 Romitorio di Santedame (Toscana).

Romitorio di Santedame delivers the elegance and storied tradition of Tuscany in a refined, sophisticated package. Bright notes of cherry, cassis and white almond give a fresh edge to the wine's rich concentration. Icon Estates. —M.L.

Price: \$80

abv: 13.5%

92 Volpaia 2006 Balifico (Toscana).

Gorgeous, soft and rich with velvety firm tannins, Balifico would pair with spicy marinated pork or slow

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cooked-beef. The plushness is what sets this wine apart as do its fine aromas of blackberry, leather and black cherry. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —M.L.

Price: \$57 **abv:** 13.5%

91 Fattoria di Valiano 2004 Vino in Musica (Toscana). Keeping in line with its musical theme, *Vino in Musica* shows harmony and balance with cherry and blackberry aromas set against spice and lightly grated clove. The mouthfeel is softly textured and rich. Aveniù Brands, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13.5%

91 Poggio al Tesoro 2007 Mediterra (Toscana). Plush and rich, but not too meaty or thick, *Mediterra* (as its Mediterranean-sounding name suggests) delivers aromas of small fruit, wild sage, leather and moist earth. The bouquet paints a pretty picture of the territory in coastal Tuscany that inspired this blended red wine. Winebow. —M.L.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14%

91 Renieri 2007 Re di Renieri (Toscana). *Re di Renieri* represents a blend of four international grape varieties (including 60% Merlot) that is characterized by layers of soft chocolate and cherry. It shows a rich, plush texture on the finish. Michelangelo Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Sant Agnese dei F.lli Gigli 2006 Spirto (Toscana). There's a touch of green herb here that comes forward as curry leaf or wild sage. Beyond that, however, is a rich reserve of black fruit and sweet spice. Classic Wine Imports, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14.5%

90 Altesino 2007 Alte d'Altesi (Toscana). From one of the best producers of Brunello di Montalcino, this super Tuscan blend of Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon delivers impressive intensity and a rich, sweet, cherry-driven feel in the mouth. Winebow. —M.L.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 14.5%

90 Castello di Poppiano 2007 Tricorno (Toscana). Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are deftly blended to produce a soft, thick wine with inky concentration and deep layers of blackberry and sweet spice. The wine could definitely age five years or more. Classic Wine Imports, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14.5%

90 Marchesi de' Frescobaldi 2008 Tenuta di Castiglioni (Toscana). This super Tuscan blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Sangiovese delivers rich softness and a plush, approachable style. You can't help but love those decadent layers of chocolate, spice and cherry liqueur. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.L.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 13.5%

90 Máté 2007 Banditone (Toscana). *Banditone* is a chewy and ripe Syrah from Tuscany with plump aromas of blueberry and black fruit fol-

lowed by dark chocolate and spice. The tannins are smooth and extra soft as well. Vinilandia USA. —M.L.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 14.5%

90 Sant Agnese dei F.lli Gigli 2006 Libatio (Toscana). *Libatio* shows nice integration with smooth tones of cassis, blueberry, white almond and dried spice. The results deliver balance and elegance and make this a food-friendly option for meat or hearty pasta dishes. Classic Wine Imports, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

90 Tenuta di Trecciano 2007 Daniello (Toscana). Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon conspire to produce a rich, plump wine with plenty of spice and fruit to keep it interesting. That positive momentum is upheld by the wine's soft, yielding texture. Vignaioli. —M.L.

Price: \$37 **abv:** 14%

90 Tenuta San Guido 2007 Guidalberto (Toscana). A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, *Guidalberto* is a thick, food-friendly blend that opens with bright ripe fruit and cherry as well as green herb and spice. It's soft and plush on the close with lasting ripe fruit flavors. Kobrand. —M.L.

Price: \$55 **abv:** 14%

89 Sant Agnese dei F.lli Gigli 2004 Libatio (Toscana). From an older vintage, this edition of *Libatio* shows some tertiary aromas of licorice and mineral backed by chocolate fudge and dusty hazelnut. Drink now. Classic Wine Imports, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

89 Tenuta di Biserno 2008 Inseglio del Cinghiale (Toscana). From the Campo di Sasso vineyards in coastal Tuscany, this red blend shows a mixed bag of mature fruit, spice and nut aroma. Soft chocolate and cherry do come through clearly on the finish. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —M.L.

Price: \$32 **abv:** 14%

89 Villa Poggio Salvi 2006 Tosco (Toscana). *Tosco* is an earthy, generous and thick red wine that would stand up to game meat or Irish boiled beef and mint sauce. Black fruit, peppercorn and tobacco characterize the finish. Shaw-Ross International Importers. —M.L.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Campomaggio 2006 Vigneti di Campomaggio (Toscana). Lightly toasted oak renderings give *Vigneti di Campomaggio* a smoky, sophisticated feel with cherry and berry fruit in the background. Lasting renderings of blueberry and dried cassis keep the wine genuine and straightforward. Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC. —M.L.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13%

88 Casali di Bibbiano 2006 Argante (Toscana). The Cabernet Sauvignon component (70%) really comes through here as spicy, green notes of

rosemary and curry leaf. But the 30% Merlot adds soft lushness and sweet cherry. Terranova Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Collazzi 2009 Libertà (Toscana). *Libertà*, or "freedom," is a velvety blend of Merlot, Syrah and Sangiovese with soft cherry and nutmeg followed by smooth, enduring tannins. This straight-shooting super Tuscan is great for grilled meat or sausage. The Sorting Table. —M.L.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 13.5%

88 I Giusti e Zanza 2008 Belcore (Toscana). Sangiovese and Merlot make a great team and offer ripe berry tones with chewy spice and leather on the close. This is a clean, easy and generous super Tuscan expression. Vindagra USA. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

88 Mazzei 2008 Badiola (Toscana). Well-priced and approachable, *Badiola* (a blend of Sangiovese and Merlot) is an easy, no-fuss red blend that would pair beautifully with pasta or easy beef dishes. Red fruit and a touch of sassy spice appear on the close. Palm Bay International. —M.L.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Monte Antico 2007 (Toscana). From the excellent 2007 vintage, *Monte Antico* (a blend of 85% Sangiovese with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot) offers easy spice aromas of clove and cinnamon followed by a fresh dose of cherry fruit. Empson (USA) Ltd. **Best Buy.** —M.L.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 12.5%

88 Pietro Beconcini 2006 Maurleo (Toscana). A 50-50 blend of Sangiovese and Malvasia Nera, *Maurleo* shows a fresh, crisp quality with red cherry and wild berries in the foreground. Dig deeper and you'll find spice, toast and nutty tones as well. SullaTavola LLC. —M.L.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Pietro Beconcini 2005 Vigna alle Nicchie (Toscana). Here's the first expression of *Tempranillo* we've seen from Tuscany. This groundbreaking wine offers a linear, elegant approach with polished mineral notes followed by forest berry and cassis. SullaTavola LLC. —M.L.

Price: \$66 **abv:** 15.5%

88 Tenuta di Ceppaiano 2007 Alle Viole (Toscana). *Alle Viole* has a large Sangiovese element that lends aromas of wild berry, violets, almond skin, wet earth and tobacco. The wine is compact and smooth, making it a perfect companion to risotto with wild porcini mushrooms. Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC. —M.L.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 12.5%

87 Altesino 2008 Rosso (Toscana). Three popular grape varieties, Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, are blended to produce an easy,

food-friendly wine with pretty berry tones and background renderings of exotic spice. Winebow. —M.L.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 14%

87 Banfi 2009 Centine (Toscana). Chewy, ripe fruit and jammy cherry aromas are backed by subtle hints of dried herb and rosemary. Pair this easy wine with grilled hamburgers or spicy barbecued pork ribs. Banfi Vintners. **Best Buy.** —M.L.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Banfi 2008 Centine (Toscana). Easy, chewy, slightly bitter and plush, Centine is an everyday red wine that offers nostalgic hints of sunny Tuscany. Bold cherry flavors make it a good match to pizza and pasta. Banfi Vintners. **Best Buy.** —M.L.

Price: \$11 **abv:** NA

87 Bellavista Toscana 2006 Botterò (Toscana). Sangiovese and Cilieggiolo (two native grapes of Tuscany) offers earthy aromas of leather and spice backed by crisp flavors of cherry and wild berry. A toasted oak note appears at the very end. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13%

87 Castello di Poppiano 2007 Syrah (Toscana). True to the Syrah variety, this plush red wine offers bright fruit tones of blackberry and cherry backed by light spice and clove. It's an easy, soft ensemble that would pair with meat, chicken or pasta. Classic Wine Imports, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

87 Renieri 2008 Invetro (Toscana). Closed with a pretty glass cork, Invetro (translated as "in glass" in Italian) offers fresh tones of wild berry and raspberry. This easy, lively red blend would match succulent meat or spicy pork. Michelangelo Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 14%

87 Selvapiana 2006 Fornace (Toscana). A lean, crisp mouthfeel is followed by sour cherry and brambly notes of forest floor and wild herbs. These are the exact qualities that make this wine appropriate to pair with cheesy or creamy pasta dishes. Dalla Terra Winery Direct. —M.L.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Torrenera 2006 (Toscana). Nicely balanced and not too thick, this easy red blend from central Tuscany opens with aroma of mature blackberry and cherry followed by black pepper, leather and wet earth. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13%

86 Fattoria di San Quintino 2009 Pilerno (Toscana). Simple, crisp, bright cherry aromas would make a good companion to lasagna or cheesy pasta. There's a touch of acidity on the close to keep the palate refreshed. Vindagra USA. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 12.5%

86 Fattoria di Travalda 2007 (Toscana). This is a simple, straightforward wine that is characterized by easy fruit aromas and a finely textured, but slightly gritty, mouthfeel. Pair it with bruschetta or

mini cheese pizzas. Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC. —M.L.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Badia a Coltibuono 2009 Cancelli (Toscana). A straight-shooting blend of Sangiovese and Syrah for picnics or weekends away with friends. The wine goes down easy, and offers fresh cherry and blueberry flavors along the way. Dalla Terra Winery Direct. **Best Buy.** —M.L.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 12.5%

85 Bellavista Toscana 2006 Balenzi (Toscana). Earthy tones of clay soil and wild mushroom are rounded off by raspberry and forest berry. There's a wild, raw quality to this wine that makes it perfect for grilled or toasted finger foods. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13%

85 Poggio al Casone 2009 La Cattura (Toscana). Designed as a paring match to game foods and wild turkey, La Cattura is 85% Teroldego (a native variety of northern Italy) and 15% Syrah. This specific blend results in raw, milky tones of creamy blueberry and mocha. Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC. —M.L.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 12.5%

BOLGHERI

92 Poggio al Tesoro 2006 Sondraia (Bolgheri). Huge intensity, inky concentration and rich texture characterize this blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot from coastal Tuscany. Aromas of cherry, toast and exotic spice are carefully woven within. Winebow. —M.L.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 14%

88 Tenuta Moraia 2008 Pietracupa (Bolgheri). There are hint of dried herbs or garden greens at the back but the primary aromas to emerge from this Tuscan blend are wild berries and exotic spices. The tannins are smooth and firm. Aveniù Brands, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Tenuta Moraia 2007 Pietracupa (Bolgheri). From the excellent 2007 vintage, this edition of Pietracupa shows dried fruit, cassia, apple skin and loads of leather and tobacco. The long intensity on the finish is also very nice. Aveniù Brands, Inc. —M.L.

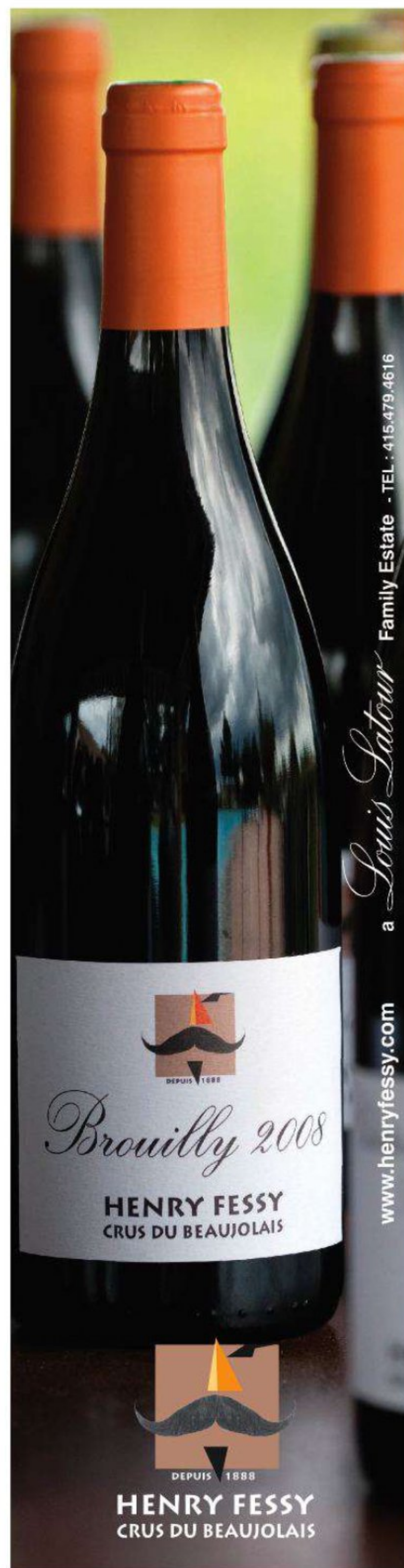
Price: \$25 **abv:** 13.5%

CHIANTI RUFINA

89 Podere il Pozzo 2009 (Chianti Rufina). This young Chianti Rufina opens with a generous, dark color and offers pretty aromas of mature berry, spice and soft chocolate or tobacco tones. There's a drying mineral note at the back that gives it backbone and dimension beyond what is a fresh, compact mouthfeel. Saranty Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13.5%

88 I Veroni 2009 (Chianti Rufina). Notes of tobacco or dried herbs give this Chianti Rufina a



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masculine, austere first nose. Ripe fruit notes of cherry and blackberry emerge slowly with time and translate into pulpy, slightly sweet sensations on the close. Bazzini Wine Merchants. —M.L.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Villa Travignoli 2009 (Chianti Rufina). Here's a pretty Chianti Rufina with loads of ripe fruit, such as blackberry and cassis, woven together by subtle mineral shadings and a delicate herbal touch. This wine shows a nice level of complexity with tobacco and espresso overtones on the close. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13.5%

87 Dreolino 2009 (Chianti Rufina). There's a succulent, ripe quality to this wine that is followed by masculine tones of dried tobacco and carob seed. The wine is soft and smooth on the close with pulpy fruit tones and medium intensity. IMA Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 13%

87 Fattoria di Basciano 2009 (Chianti Rufina). This Chianti Rufina opens with overripe aromas of blackberry pie or fruit preserves and also offers a touch of smoked bacon or dried beef jerky. It presents a mature, sun-kissed style with a thin, compact sensation in the mouth. Lauber Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13.5%

87 Fattoria Il Lago 2009 (Chianti Rufina). Here's an elegant, mineral-driven Sangiovese-based wine from the Rufina zone of Chianti that opens with floral notes of lavender and blue flower. The wine presents a thin, tight sensation in the mouth. There isn't much pulp or concentration, but it does deliver crisp acidity. Terravino Wine Partners. —M.L.

Price: \$13 **abv:** NA

86 Selvapiana 2009 (Chianti Rufina). This tight Sangiovese from one of Chianti Rufina's most historic estates offers a medley of fruit-based aromas wrapped around a solid core of red cherry and raspberry. It's a simple, polished wine that recalls some winery, foxy aromas. Dalla Terra Winery Direct. —M.L.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13%

MAREMMA

95 Rocca di Frassinello 2008 Baffonero Merlot (Maremma). For full review see page 73.

93 Poggio Verrano 2005 Chance (Maremma). Francesco Bolla's Poggio Verrano is an interesting estate worth keeping an eye on. The wines show consistent quality and the red blend Chance is the latest in a varied portfolio of products that show the best of southern Tuscany. The wine opens with ripe fruit aromas, cured meat and leather. Tutto Vino. —M.L.

Price: \$39 **abv:** 14%

91 Fattoria Nittardi 2006 Nectar Dei (Maremma). Aesthetics and elegance are important values to the owners of Fattoria Nittardi (who also happen to be important art dealers in Europe) and are reflected in this wine. Bold concentration and rich texture is soft-

ened by aromas of smoke, clove and mature blackberry. Louis Glunz Wines. —M.L.

Price: \$65 **abv:** 13.5%

90 Massi di Mandorlaia 2007 Colpetroso (Maremma). Rosemary-marinated steak, roast pork roll stuffed with prunes or dark chicken or turkey meat would make perfect paring partners to this red blend from southern Tuscany. Aromas of spice, mature cherry and leather are soft and penetrating. Classic Wine Imports, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14.5%

90 Pieve Vecchia 2007 Pieve dei Monaci (Maremma). Sweet pipe tobacco and red cherry open the nose of this plush Syrah from Maremma, Tuscany. Soft, chewy tannins make this inky red wine appropriate to pair with grilled porcini mushrooms or veal in cream sauce. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

89 Fortediga 2008 (Maremma). Cabernet and Syrah from southern Tuscany produce aromas of ripe fruit, cola, soft cherry and prune. There's a spicy, earthy, leathery note as well with smooth tannins on the close. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

88 Agricola Querciabella 2008 Mongrana (Maremma). Sangiovese (50%) is enhanced by equal parts Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon to deliver a richly concentrated and plump wine with good structure, fresh acidity and loads of black cherry. Maisons Marques & Domaines USA. —M.L.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Fortediga 2007 Sodamagri (Maremma). Syrah Sodamagri opens with a dark garnet color and easy aromas of red cherry, natural rubber and spice. The mouthfeel is soft and yielding and the wine is informal and food friendly overall. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

87 Poggio Morino 2008 (Maremma). This blend of Syrah (40%), Sangiovese, Alicante, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot offers creamy aromas of milk chocolate and blueberry followed by a chewy, slightly raw mouthfeel. Ethica Wines. —M.L.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 13%

87 Rocca di Frassinello 2008 Poggio alla Guardia (Maremma). Poggio alla Guardia opens with tart, bright aromas of white cherry and forest berry. There's a touch of white almond at the end that lends a bitter touch. Vias Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14%

VINO NOBILE

89 Boscarelli 2008 (Vino Nobile di Montepulciano). This hearty Vino Nobile opens with a dense garnet color and offers a full bouquet of dark fruit and oak-driven aromas of spice, leather and dried tobacco. There's a touch of sour cherry in the

mouth and that characteristic Sangiovese acidity comes through nicely. Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

Price: \$34 **abv:** NA

89 Tenuta di Poggio Oliveto 2008 (Vino Nobile di Montepulciano). Here's a bigger, concentrated expression of Vino Nobile that delivers ripe fruit aromas of blackberry jam and spicy fruit. There's a touch of ripe strawberry at the back and although the fruit does taste mature here, you'll enjoy the softness and richness of the mouthfeel. Vias Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** NA

88 Icaro 2008 (Vino Nobile di Montepulciano). Here's a ripe, chewy expression of Vino Nobile that opens with aromas of black cherry, dark fruit and even a touch of strawberry. The jammy fruit element is supported by wood tones that add structure and depth without taking away from the overall picture. Vinifera Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$30 **abv:** NA

88 Lunadoro 2008 (Vino Nobile di Montepulciano). Vino Nobile can sometimes take on a delicate, feminine expression, and this ruby-colored wine does just that. The nose is redolent of bright cherry and forest fruit and the wine shows good structure and persistency with ripe fruit flavors on the close. USA Wine Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** NA

87 Terra Antica 2008 (Vino Nobile di Montepulciano). Bright aromas of sour cherry, black fruit and spice make for a nose that has elements of both sweet and sour. The wine shows medium heft in the mouth, which is very much in line with Sangiovese and offers a lively, berry-driven finish. Royalty Importers. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** NA

OTHER TUSCAN REDS

92 Castello Romitorio 2006 Romito di Romitorio (Sant'Antimo). This lovely blend of Sangiovese (60%), Cabernet Sauvignon and Canaiolo shows the super Tuscan side of a storied wine region like Montalcino. Indeed, Castello Romitorio is one of the best Brunello producers and this wine shows their expertise with other grape varieties. Blackberry, soft spice and fruity fullness characterize the mouthfeel. Vinifera Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$54 **abv:** 14%

92 Podere Forte 2006 Guardiavigna (Orcia). Guardiavigna is one of those soft, pleasurable wines with lavish, intense aromas of chocolate mocha, sweet cinnamon and loads of mature fruit. That plush, soft feel continues over the long finish. North Berkeley Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14.5%

91 Collemassari 2007 Riserva (Montecucco). Some lovely red wines are coming from the Montecucco wine region (located in coastal Tuscany) and Collemassari leads the pack of this new and exciting group of vintners. Soft cherry, leather,

spice, and earthy mineral tones create harmony and momentum. Bedford International. —M.L.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 14%

91 Collemassari 2005 Lombrone Riserva (Montecucco). This Riserva Sangiovese opens with warming notes of black cherry, blackberry pie, exotic spice, leather and moist pipe tobacco. The wine shows fine tannins and a rich feel overall. Bedford International. —M.L.

Price: \$75 **abv:** 14%

91 Podere Forte 2006 Petrucci (Orcia). Petrucci offers intensity and sophistication with aromas of warm spice, leather and mature fruit. But the freshness of the acidity kicks in at the end and delivers a cooling surprise to the palate. North Berkeley Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14.5%

90 Il Veltro 2005 (Brunello di Montalcino). Il Veltro is a newish brand of Brunello from Montalcino that opens with bright berry nuances and background notes of spice, cola, tobacco and leather. The mouthfeel is rich and firm, enduring but not too heavy or overdone. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13.5%

90 Máté 2007 Mantus Merlot (Sant'Antimo). Mantus, a 100% Merlot from the Montalcino area of Tuscany, shows territory-driven aromas of mineral and white stone backed by plush fruit and loads of cherry. It's a fine, elegant wine without that extra ripeness or jamminess you sometimes see with warm climate Merlot. Vinilandia USA. —M.L.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 15%

88 Fattoria di Petrognano 2007 (Pomino). Sangiovese (60%) and equal parts Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot deliver soft tones of cherry and blackberry with white almond and toasted hazelnut on the close. Sun Wine Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

88 Morisfarms 2007 (Monteregio di Massa Maritima). Bright, raw aromas of blueberry and fresh raspberry are followed by cola, leather and a touch of polished river stone. This is a youthful, food-friendly alternative from Tuscany. Polaner Selections. —M.L.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Ormanni 2004 Julius (Colli della Toscana Centrale). A bit rustic and loaded with tertiary aromas of dried fruit and spice, Julius is a wine that should be consumed sooner rather than later. It does exhibit careful balance and impressive intensity. Classic Wine Imports, Inc. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

88 Pietrafitta 2005 La Sughera (San Gimignano). Sangiovese is enhanced by 20% Merlot to produce a thick, berry-driven wine with lush softness at the back. Dried earth, cassis, leather and oak

spice are some of the aromas you will pick up. Alberico Wines. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

87 Pieve Vecchia 2007 Albatrello (Montecucco). Tiny hints of wet earth or wild mushroom are rounded out by mature cherry and cinnamon. This red blend from Tuscany ends with a sweet, chewy feel. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 13.5%

87 Terre di Fiori 2008 (Monteregio di Massa Maritima). From the Tenuta Costa group (that makes wine across Italy including Barolo in Piedmont), this easy red blend from southern Tuscany offers

ripe cherry and strawberry with easy spice and tobacco. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

86 Fattoria di Basciano 2008 I Pini (Colli della Toscana Centrale). This hearty blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah offers meaty aromas of smoked bacon and barbecue sauce backed by black fruit and loads of exotic spice. It's a soft, polished wine with a rubbery note on the close. Lauber Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$NA **abv:** 14%

85 Volpaiole 2007 (Val di Cornia Suvereto). This vintage of Volpaiole's (Sangiovese, Cab-



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RISING STAR CHEF
NOAH'S OWNER
PERFECTIONIST
RIOJA LOVER
PURE GENIUS**

Photographed at Pipe's Cove Oyster Farm, Greenport, NY. Oysters, with Rioja Blanco, shown at right.

Noah Schwartz, rising star chef owner of Noah's on Long Island's East End, is a stickler for details, serving only organic, locally grown and harvested food paired with the best wine. His choice for many of his creations are wines from Rioja, the best food pairing wines on earth. Visit vibrantrioja.com to learn why *Rioja is pure genius*.

RIOJA

**VIBRANT
RIOJA**

ernet Sauvignon and Merlot) shows a fresh or unripe note of green pepper and rosemary. Ultimately, there is more dimension here compared to 2006. Lyaeus Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Volpaille 2006 (Val di Cornia Suvereto). There's a muddled or confused quality to this blend of Sangiovese (50%), Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Although the nose needs deciphering, the mouthfeel is clean, fruit-driven and tight. Lyaeus Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 13.5%

84 Volpaille 2007 Merlot (Val di Cornia Suvereto). Here's a Tuscan Merlot that is distinguished by a slightly green or underripe note of pepper or dried herb. Fruity aromas of cherry and blackberry do exist but have a difficult time coming to the surface. The wine is smooth and soft on the close. Lyaeus Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$65 **abv:** 13.5%

84 Volpaille 2006 Merlot (Val di Cornia Suvereto). Here's a Merlot that presents simple but slightly muddled aromas of spice and fruit. The distinction between its various aromatic elements is not that clear, and the wine delivers a one-dimensional feel on the close. Lyaeus Imports. —M.L.

Price: \$65 **abv:** 13.5%

ARGENTINE REDS

MALBEC & BLENDS

94 Monteviejo 2007 Lindaflor La Violeta Malbec (Mendoza). Dark and incredibly concentrated, with earth, black fruits, mint and exotic side notes. It's stout and tannic, but also rich and pure, with monster black fruit flavor and powerful coffee, toast and length on the finish. A smashing wine that's huge but delicious. Drink now through 2017. Bob Bofman Selections. *Editors' Choice.* —M.S.

Price: \$100 **abv:** 15%

93 Kaiken 2007 Mai Malbec (Mendoza). Blackberry, raisin, cola, moss and spice aromas form a potpourri of Malbec excellence. This is super deep and dense stuff; it's tight and ripped with tannins and acids. Flavors of licorice, blackberry, dark plum and oak are layered and serious. The first Mai made by Kaiken, and it's ready now through 2016. T.G.I.C. Importers. *Editors' Choice.* —M.S.

Price: \$85 **abv:** 15%

92 Lagarde 2007 Henry Gran Guarda No. 1 (Mendoza). A deep, developed wine with cola, licorice and prune aromas. The palate is poised and balanced even if it's rich and very ripe. Layered in the mouth, with plum, prune, chocolate, coffee and fine spice, which is about as complete a package as you'll find with Malbec. Cabernet and Syrah; drink now through 2015. Well-Oiled Wine Company. —M.S.

Price: \$65 **abv:** 15%

91 Viña Las Perdices 2008 Reserva Don Juan (Luján de Cuyo). Leather and earth

aromas are just part of the meaty, roasted, lightly charred bouquet. The palate is thick and jammy, with savory, roasted flavors of berry fruit, pepper and leather. Finishes with chocolate and a fine texture. Impressive despite having a light herbal streak. 500 cases made. Matadorvino LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$23 **abv:** 14.5%

90 Doña Silvina 2006 Malbec (Mendoza). Opens with rooty, baked aromas before finding its legs and plenty of ripe, attractive berry fruit. The palate is juicy and solid, with good acidity and nice flavors of wild berry, chocolate and toast. Stylish and very solid. Definitely a food-friendly Malbec. Mistica Wines LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14%

90 Finca Vides 2009 Torcidas Malbec (Mendoza). Solid and smooth from the beginning, with cola, pastry and blackberry aromas. The palate is fresh, full and healthy, with cola, black pepper and a ton of berry push. Toasty and roasted on the finish, where coffee comes into play. Right on the spot for value-priced Malbec. Sherbrooke Cellars. *Best Buy.* —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.9%

89 Notro 2009 Malbec (Mendoza). Savory and meaty on first take, with ample berry on the nose as warmth and leather seep through. The palate is round and healthy, with a mix of succulent berry and savory spice and leather pumping up the flavor profile. Spicy and chocolaty on the finish. Hand Picked Selections. *Best Buy.* —M.S.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 13.5%

89 Trapiche 2009 Broquel Malbec (Mendoza). For full review see page 79.

88 Ricominciare 2009 Malbec-Tannat (Uco Valley). Sweet and candied at first, with carob and vanilla aromas. The palate toughens up, and while the feel is creamy and warm, the flavors of berry fruit, chocolate and leather are clean and deep. Finishes well, with firm but manageable tannins and lasting fruity sweetness. 60% Malbec and 40% Tannat. The Artisan Collection. —M.S.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 14%

88 Trivento 2009 Amado Sur (Mendoza). Toasty and smooth on the bouquet, with full berry aromas and plenty of oaky, hefty weight. The palate on this Malbec-Bonarda-Syrah trio is bright and healthy, with juicy acidity, good tannins and generous red berry and plum flavors. Finishes flavorful and long. Banfi Vintners. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13%

87 Valentin Bianchi 2008 Famiglia Bianchi Malbec (Mendoza). Roasted, robust aromas feature typical berry scents along with herbal notes and leather. The palate is centered on tight-grained tannins and bold, dark berry flavors touched up by herbs and

spice. Toast and bitter chocolate are most noticeable on the finish. Quintessential Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$19 **abv:** 14.1%

86 Alma del Sur 2008 Seleccionada Malbec (Mendoza). Forward berry aromas are regular but solid. The palate has a ripe but choppy mouthfeel and juicy, firm flavors of blackberry and dark toast. Burns a bit on the finish, with extended toasty flavors and peppery accents. Martin Scott Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 13.8%

86 La Posta 2009 Cocina Tinto (Mendoza). Standard-issue berry and plum aromas turn warm and leathery with airing. The palate on this Malbec-Bonarda-Syrah blend is juicy, but it comes with a choppy feel. Tastes brambly and wild, with red berry fruit and a briary, leathery finish. Vine Connections. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.7%

85 Vistalba 2009 Corte C Malbec-Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). Opens with scratchy, dusty aromas of red fruits and herbs. The palate is round but clunky, with sweet, grapy flavors of blackberry and blueberry. Finishes rather oaky and mild, with a grainy feel. San Francisco Wine Exchange. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 14.5%

84 Altos Nevados 2008 Malbec (Mendoza). Both red and green on the nose, with raspberry and alfalfa aromas coming in front of a scratchy-feeling palate with red plum, herb and thyme flavors. Shows coarse tannins as it finishes light on fruit but with length and juiciness. HeyDay Corporation. —M.S.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 14%

84 Coiron 2007 Oak Malbec (Mendoza). Sweet red berry aromas come across reedy and scratchy, with a pinch of green. The palate has heat and edge to it; the flavors are oaky, spicy and herbal, with salinic red fruit. Finishes with smacking tannins, oak flavor and baked notes. Mistica Wines LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13.5%

84 Luigi Bosca 2008 Reserva Malbec (Luján de Cuyo). Opens with funky, earthy aromas of juniper, herbs, green pepper and baked berry fruits. It's thick and grabby in the mouth, with roasted, herbal plum and berry flavors. Leathery and slightly burnt tasting on the finish. Testa Wines Of The World. —M.S.

Price: \$21 **abv:** 14.3%

84 Ñandú 2009 Malbec (Mendoza). Smells baked and stinky, with more earth than fresh fruit aromas. The palate is big and grabby, with plodding tannins and lightly herbal berry flavors that yield to carob and spice on the finish. Low acidity. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.9%

84 Petizos 2007 Malbec (Argentina). Pretty good aromas of plum, berry and brown sugar give way to a hard, tannic palate that has no give to it as it offers up generic but hard, flat cherry and berry

flavors. Tastes slightly burnt on the finish. HeyDay Corporation. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 13.9%

83 Los Vencejos 2008 Malbec (Uco Valley). Starts off with volatile, sharp aromas that suggest vinegar. The palate is stark and sheer, with roasted plum and hickory flavors. Hot, leathery and tight on the finish, with a grabby, chopping run out. 250 cases made. Two Pines LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 13.5%

83 Sol de Uco 2007 Old Vines Malbec (Uco Valley). Heavy, stewy and jammy on the nose, but astringent and heavy in the mouth, such that it collapses on itself. Flavors of red berries are roasted and rubbery, while the finish is rubbery as well. Garcia Wine Imports. —M.S.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 14%

83 Xavier Flouret 2007 La Pilar Reserva Malbec (Mendoza). Smells jumpy and musky, like a wet dog in from the rain. The palate is brutally tannic and hard as rocks, with sweet, pasty berry flavors infused with vanilla. Finishes like the bouquet: foxy and funky. Cognac One, LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.5%

CABERNET & BLENDS

87 Portillo 2009 Estate Bottled Cabernet Sauvignon (Uco Valley). This wine has been on the upswing in recent vintages. Here it's clean and delivering full berry and cherry aromas. The palate is juicy, driving and whole, with berry, cherry and light chocolate flavors. Finishes racy, fresh and with slight astringency from tannic bite. Palm Bay International.

Best Buy. —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 14%

87 Valentin Bianchi 2009 Familia Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon (San Rafael). Shows density and concentration on the nose, with red berry and lemony oak aromas and just a spot of leafiness. Forward in the mouth, with lively acids giving lift to cherry, cassis and peppery flavors. A true, crisp and honest Cab that isn't too big or complicated. Quintessential Wines. —M.S.

Price: \$19 **abv:** 14.1%

86 Septima 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). Spicy and dry on the nose, with subdued, earthy aromas that suggest some hotness. The palate is a bit fiery and aggressive, with red berry and cassis flavors. Warm and spicy on the finish; edgy but good overall. Aveniù Brands, Inc. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 14%

84 Menduco 2009 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Uco Valley). Berry and plum aromas are normal and don't stir too much interest. The palate is grabby and a bit tannic, with slightly medicinal and rubbery cassis and raspberry flavors. Pepper and mo-

cha notes show up on the finish. Carolina Wine Brands USA. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 14.5%

83 Cruz Alta 2009 Grand Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). Quite charred and heavy on the nose, with a briny, herbal side to it. Full, rugged and tannic in the mouth, with burnt, crusty dark fruit flavors. Finishes stout, herbal and peppery. Clock Tower Imports. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.5%

83 Gardel 2009 Colección Cabernet Sauvignon-Malbec (Mendoza). Tomato leaf and mild green notes infiltrate the nose. The palate has a clacky, fresh, high-acid feel and then come basic cherry and raspberry flavors. Finishes light and racy. Frontier Wine Imports. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.5%

MERLOT

86 Rutini 2010 Trumpeter Merlot (Mendoza). Balsam wood, earthy notes and lightly leafy berry aromas lead to a juicy palate with plum, herb and tea flavors. Fresh on the finish, with size, nice flow and clean berry flavors. Nothing unusual here. Pasternak Wine Imports. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Argana 2010 Merlot (Mendoza). Young and fruity smelling up front, with a dusting of hard, dry spice. The palate is firm and juicy, with lightly medicinal red fruit flavors. Finishes with dryness, lots of spice and pepper. Atlanta Improvement Co. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 13.4%

84 Bodega Norton 2010 Merlot (Mendoza). Fairly full and dark smelling, with generic berry aromas and some damp earth. It's lively and grabby in the mouth, with heat and scour along with sweet, medicinal berry flavors. Bright but also a touch raw and green at the end. T.G.I.C. Importers. —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 14%

84 Palo Alto 2010 Coiron Merlot (Maipú). Rusty in color for a young wine, with mulchy, faded berry fruit aromas. It has life on the palate, which tastes earthy, peppery and a little bit burnt. A dry, spicy wine with cherry flavors interspersed. Casa Corbello, LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13.5%

83 Funky Llama 2010 Merlot (Mendoza). Regular raspberry and plum aromas show a pinch of heat and rubber. The palate is snappy and comes with modest red berry and light spice flavors. Simple, generally clean and a bit sharp at the edges. Tastings Import Company. —M.S.

Price: \$7 **abv:** 13%

SYRAH/SHIRAZ

90 Luca 2010 Laborde Double Select Syrah (Uco Valley). Pretty aromatics include balsam wood, blackberry and blueberry. The palate is lush but well structured, with bullish berry, chocolate and



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creamy oak flavors. Minty and super spicy and long on the finish, with a lasting dark toastiness. Vine Connections. —M.S.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 13.9%

87 Bodega Norton 2008 Reserva Syrah (Mendoza). Damp and dark at first, with campfire and black fruit aromas. The palate is big and widespread, with ripe flavors of maduro tobacco, blackberry and licorice. Warm, spicy and peppery on the finish, with tannins and power to spare. T.G.I.C. Importers. —M.S.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14.5%

86 Michel Torino 2009 Don David Reserve Syrah (Calchaqui Valley). Quite minty and herbal on first take, with a hardness to the bouquet. The palate is racy, herbal, roasted and very much tastes different than most Argentine wines because it's from Cafayate in the north; look for spice, tomato, herbal waves and meaty notes. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —M.S.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 13.9%

86 Trapiche 2009 Oak Cask Syrah (Mendoza). Tight and intense for a \$10 varietal, with crusty, charred oak aromas on top of ripe berry fruit. The palate is thick and full, with clamping tannins and flavors of lemony oak, plum and blackberry. Vanilla and mocha work the woody finish. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 14%

85 Gotan 2009 Shiraz (Mendoza). A surprisingly good little Syrah. The nose is full and dark, albeit a bit damp. The mouthfeel is big and rubbery but sound, with blackberry and chocolate flavors. Lightly toasted and jammy as well. Good stuff for the money. Eagle Eye Imports. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$7 **abv:** 13.5%

ARGENTINE WHITES

TORRONTÉS

88 Terrazas de Los Andes 2010 Reserva Torrontés (Salta). Oily and tropical on the nose, with pungency and clarity. The palate is full, layered, plump and loaded with lychee, honeydew and green herb flavors. Provides good feel and just enough acidity to make for a long ending. Moët Hennessy USA. —M.S.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Michel Torino 2010 Don David Finca La Primavera #3 Torrontés (Cafayate). More minerally and tight than most, with a bit of brine and lettuce to go with tropical fruit aromas. The palate is citrusy and features a beam of bright acidity that props up melon and citrus flavors. Full and forceful late, with some burn to the finish. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —M.S.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Don Rodolfo 2010 High Altitude Vineyards Torrontés (Cafayate). Nice white fruit aromas form a good greeting, which is backed by a fresh, melony palate with solid honeydew and lychee

flavors. This one keeps things simple and clean, and for the most part that's what you want from the variety. Cabernet Corporation. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Finca El Origen 2010 Reserva Torrontés (Cafayate). A bit heavy and oily on first blush, with tropical fruit aromas resting underneath the surface. The palate is round and full, almost syrupy, with honeyed citrus and pithy flavors. Turns more pithy and a little hot on the finish. Carolina Wine Brands USA. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 14%

86 Menduco 2010 Reserve Torrontés (Cafayate). Chunky and oily on the nose, with basic white fruit aromas of peach and apple. The palate is full and balanced, with nectarine, pineapple and lychee flavors. Pithy and citrusy on the finish. Ripe and good in a regular way. Carolina Wine Brands USA. —M.S.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 14%

85 Alamos 2010 Torrontés (Mendoza). Smells a bit oily and heavy, with sweet tropical fruit aromas leading the charge. The palate is creamy and oily feeling, with honey, nutmeg, banana and melon flavors. Fleshy on the finish; best if taken well chilled. E & J Gallo. —M.S.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 13.5%

84 Coiron 2010 Torrontés (Mendoza). Smells melony as well as stalky and oily. The palate falls on the chunky, soft side of the fence, with sweet melon, candied apricot and tropical flavors. Plump and showing banana-driven sweetness on the finish. Mistica Wines LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13.5%

84 Nieto Senetiner 2010 Reserva Torrontés (Mendoza). Neutral on the nose except for some oily rusticity. The palate is full with okay acidity and sweet flavors suggestive of mango, pineapple and melon. Turns a little mealy and towards lychee on the finish. Winebow. —M.S.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13.2%

84 Noble Aconcagua 2009 Torrontés (Mendoza). Basic tropical aromas feature a touch of citrus. The palate is melony and chunky, with tropical fruit flavors and sweet melon. Turns pithy and bitter on the finish. Soft and rapidly losing steam. Bob Bofman Selections. —M.S.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 13.5%

CHARDONNAY

86 Bodega del Fin del Mundo 2010 Reserva Chardonnay (Patagonia). Opens with light tropical aromas, toasty oak and vanilla. It's honest on the palate, where the body is good and structured and the flavors of peach and apple are accented by toasty oak. Nice and balanced, but maybe a touch woody for what it is. Gaucho Imports, LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$19 **abv:** 13%

84 Lagarde 2010 Chardonnay (Mendoza). Not very fragrant, in fact it's barely a step above

water in its neutrality. The palate is clean and solid, with sweet flavors of candied mango and melon. Plump and on the mild and bland side overall. Well-Oiled Wine Company. —M.S.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 13.9%

83 Medanos 2010 Made with organic grapes Chardonnay (Mendoza). Smells stemmy and stalky, with a green note and a whiff of corn. It's lemony and not bad in terms of feel, with stalky peach and orange flavors. Basic and citrusy on the finish. Mistica Wines LLC. —M.S.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13%

83 Michel Torino 2010 Don David Reserve Chardonnay (Calchaqui Valley). Neutral smelling except for some pith and green melon. The palate is angular and high in acidity, which yields a citrusy, sharp-tasting flavor profile. Finishes zesty with even more acidic scour. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —M.S.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 13.9%

CALIFORNIA REDS

PINOT NOIR

96 Au Bon Climat 2008 20 Years in the Shed with Bob at Bien Nacido Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). A stunning Pinot Noir. Feels soft as silk, yet crisp, tastes flamboyant yet controlled, a wine that contains many opposites. Made from a barrel selection of the best of winemaker Clendenen's Bien Nacido Pinots, it's superb to drink now. Hard to exaggerate its charms, with waves of spicy raspberries, cherries, cola and sandalwood. Really seductive and impressive. —S.H.

Price: \$75 **abv:** 13.5%

96 Babcock 2009 Microcosm Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). For full review see page 73.

95 Bonaccorsi 2008 Fiddlestix Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Amazingly Burgundian in style, showing intense black cherry, mushroom, truffle, tea and earthy notes. Dry, rich and complex in tannins, with a strong but balanced integration of new wood. Feels authoritative and firm in the mouth, with great weight yet an airy lightness. Drink now—2014. —S.H.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.7%

95 Dutton-Goldfield 2009 Dutton Ranch - Freestone Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 73.

94 Dutton-Goldfield 2009 McDougall Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Somewhere between the acidity and dryness, this Pinot has a terrifically interesting core. It's a subtle wine, now suggesting cherry fruit, now retreating in favor of earthier mushrooms, minerals and pine needles, framed in firm tannins. Strikes out new territory for cool-climate Pinot

Noir, less ripe, lower in alcohol and more exciting. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

Price: \$58 **abv:** 13.8%

94 Fort Ross 2007 Fort Ross Vineyard Reserve Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). A very beautiful wine that shows the exotic, feral quality of the greatest Pinot Noirs from the Fort Ross area. It's explosive in wild raspberry and cherry flavors, with hints of pine, cola, wintergreen, anise, bacon and smoky, sweet vanillins from oak barrels. A wine of great pedigree, it's showing well now, and should hold for the next six years. —S.H.

Price: \$49 **abv:** 14.2%

93 Arista 2009 Woodruff Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Cruz Mountains). For full review see page 74.

93 Babcock 2009 Ocean's Ghost Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Vibrant, fresh, lively, with uplifted aromas and flavors of cherries, minerals, coffee, mushrooms, grilled meats and spices. A very rich wine, elaborately layered and multidimensional. Pretty tannic, which gives it a chewy quality. Drink this great wine with a steak, or age it for up to six years. —S.H.

Price: \$55 **abv:** 14%

93 Bonaccorsi 2008 Cargasacchi Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Rich in cherries and spices, this dramatic wine has a linear, structural quality to it, the result of dryness and acidity and minerals. Shows the finesse and femininity often associated with this vineyard. Pretty and polished now, but should develop over the next six years. —S.H.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.7%

93 Bonaccorsi 2008 Melville Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). A burst of black cherry fruit and spice announces this rich, complex young Pinot. Shows great structure in the fine tannins, brisk acids and firm minerality. Brims with power and assertiveness, and should develop over the next six years. —S.H.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.7%

93 Bonaccorsi 2008 Nielsen Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). Tons of dusty Indian spices on this wine, along with sweet oak, ripe pie-filling cherries and raspberries and cola. In a word, generous. Yet it's bright in acidity and dry on the finish. A lovely wine to drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.7%

93 Clendenen Family 2007 Le Bon Climat Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). Ultrarich and spicy, with exotic flavors of bacon, cherry pie, cola and sandalwood. Notable for its structure, so dry and sturdy in tannins, yet so silky. A big, full-bodied wine, it should develop bottle complexity over the next four years. —S.H.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 13.5%

93 Demetria 2009 Le Belier Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). A huge wine, brimming with ripe cherry, blackberry and cola flavors, housed in a firm structure of acidity and minerality. Feels tight and el-

egant in the mouth, a complex wine to lay down if you like a little bottle age on your Pinots. —S.H.

Price: \$55 **abv:** 14.4%

93 Dutton-Goldfield 2009 Devil's Gulch Vineyard Pinot Noir (Marin County). For full review see page 74.

93 Dutton-Goldfield 2009 Dutton Ranch - Fox Den Vineyard Pinot Noir (Green Valley). For full review see page 75.

93 Fort Ross 2007 Symposium Fort Ross Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Held back for nearly four years, this Pinot still brims with acidity. Tartness is the shock that precedes columns of raspberries, cherries, pomegranates, persimmons and cola, bearing banners of exotic spices. A precise, intellectually pure wine, it should be decanted now, and will develop interestingly over the years. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

93 Foxen 2009 Julia's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). A beautiful Pinot, authoritative and masculine, with firm tannins, hard acidity and a bone-dry finish. The core of black cherries, cola, spices and sweet oak is irresistibly good. Compelling now right out of the bottle, and should develop over the next six years. —S.H.

Price: \$56 **abv:** 14.7%

93 Laetitia 2009 Reserve du Domaine Pinot Noir (Arroyo Grande Valley). For full review see page 75.

92 Arista 2009 Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley). For full review see page 76.

92 Arista 2009 Longbow Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 76.

92 Arista 2009 Mononi Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 6.

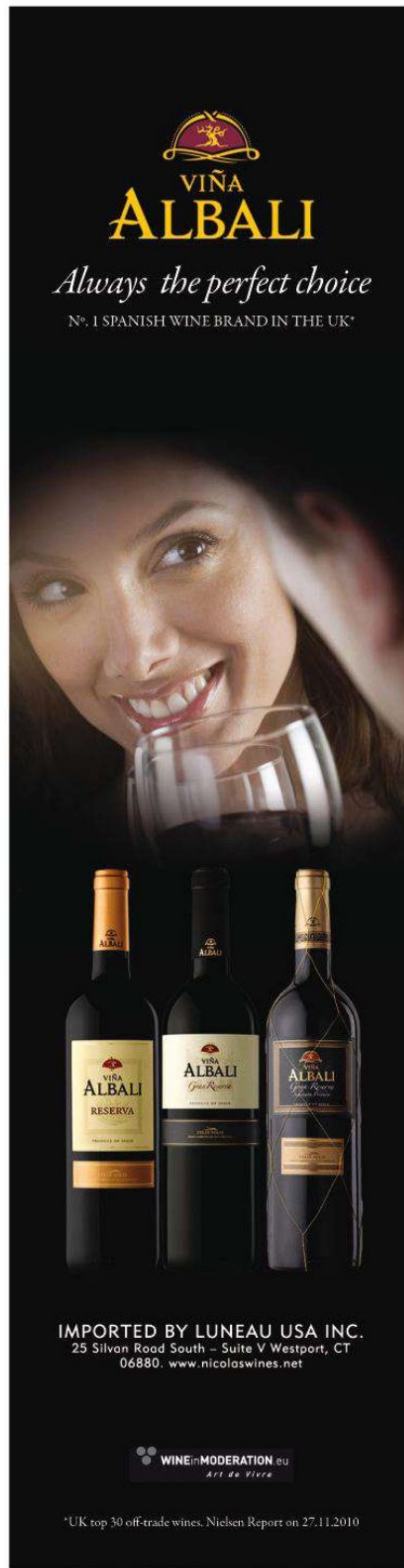
92 Babcock 2009 Precocious Pinot Noir (Santa Barbara County). From the Los Alamos Valley, an oaky, mushroomy Pinot Noir, with blackberry, raspberry and cherry pie filling flavors as well as earthy notes of mushrooms and cola. Voluptuous and silky, it's lovely for drinking now. —S.H.

Price: \$55 **abv:** 13.6%

92 Barham Mendelsohn 2007 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Here's a dry, rich, elegant Pinot Noir, brimming with cool-climate flavors of cherries, cola, cranberries, rhubarb and mushrooms. It's an elaborate wine, with a fine burst of acidity and a good grip of tannins. Now-2013. —S.H.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 13.5%

92 Bjornstad 2008 Hellenthal Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Lots of zesty acidity in this wonderfully complex, exotic Pinot Noir, which



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comes from the true Sonoma Coast, in the Fort Ross area. It's explosive in wild summer raspberries and cherries, briary nettles, vanilla bean and spices, with a perfect coating of sweetly caramelized oak. Very pure and refined, and best enjoyed young. —S.H.
Price: \$40 **abv:** 14.6%

92 Bonaccorsi 2008 Sanford & Benedict Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). From older vines comes this very dry, tannic young wine. It has a distinguished minerality anchoring the black cherry, cola and spice flavors. Almost old fashioned in style, with some ruggedness to the texture. Give it until after 2014. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.
Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.7%

92 Demetria 2009 Halcyon Days Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). A dry but very rich Pinot Noir, made from the well-known Sierra Madre Vineyard. It's elaborately layered, offering tiers of dusty spice, cherry pie, red currant, licorice, cola, grilled mushroom and sandalwood flavors. Vigorous enough in tannins to cellar for 5–6 years. —S.H.
Price: \$55 **abv:** 13.5%

92 Domaine Carneros 2008 La Terre Promise Pinot Noir (Carneros). Few Pinot Noirs are as delicious right out of the bottle. Dazzles with tiers of raspberry and cherry tart, smoky pie crust, cinnamon and nutmeg spices and a sweet squirt of vanilla. For all the richness, it's dry and crisp. Drink now with seared tuna, lamb chops, beef tenderloin. —S.H.
Price: \$48 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Fort Ross 2008 Fort Ross Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Elaborately ripe, this polished Pinot explodes with fresh flavors of raspberries and cherries that taste pie-baked, with the smoky, sweet, toasty crust. It's just delicious, and also obviously fruity-sweet, with a jammy attractiveness. What it lacks in subtlety it more than makes up for in richness. Drink now. —S.H.
Price: \$37 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Foxen 2009 Bien Nacido Vineyard Block 8 Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). Exceptionally rich, a Pinot Noir that tastes dramatic from the get go. It's full-bodied, dry and velvety, with complex flavors of berries, pomegranates, cherries, cola, currants, mushrooms and spices. The firm tannins and crisp acids suggest ageability over the next six years. —S.H.
Price: \$56 **abv:** 14.9%

92 Foxen 2009 La Encantada Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). With 50% new oak aging, the wood stands out now, showing caramelized and buttered toast flavors. Under that is a dry, tannic wine, filled with raspberries, cherries and spicy pomegranates. Complex and pedigreed, it wants some time in the cellar. Better after 2014. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.
Price: \$56 **abv:** 14.7%

92 Graton Ridge 2009 Estate Paul Family Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Dryness, tannins and acidity mark this elegantly structured Pinot Noir. It's an earthy wine, with mushroom and herb notes to the cherries and cola. Maintains

a sense of restraint, while tantalizing with complexity. Drink now–2015. —S.H.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.5%

92 La Follette 2009 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). For full review see page 76.

91 32 Winds 2007 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Dry and elegant, with a scour of tannins, this Pinot Noir wants a rich steak or chop to balance out its astringency and acids. At nearly four years of age, it's still fresh, with a central core of cherries, raspberries and orange zest. Purists will like the lightish color and modest alcohol. —S.H.
Price: \$48 **abv:** 14.1%

91 Au Bon Climat 2008 Isabel Pinot Noir (California). Here's an easy, soft Pinot, a real crowd pleaser. It's rich and forward in raspberries, cherries, spices, cola and sandalwood. So easy to like now for its fresh, fruity appeal. —S.H.
Price: \$50 **abv:** 13.5%

91 Bonaccorsi 2008 Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). A beautiful Pinot Noir, dry and firm, with an authoritative structure. A little modest in fruit, with earthy, dried sour cherry candy and spice flavors, uplifted by brisk acidity. What a nice restaurant wine. —S.H.
Price: \$40 **abv:** 14.7%

91 Carr 2009 Kessler-Haak Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). A big, tough, resilient Pinot Noir, hefty in tannins and bone dry. Not showing much delicacy now, but it sure is complex, offering waves of wild cherries, tobacco, cola, smoked meat, herbs and spices. Purists will criticize it for being too Rhône-like. Give it a decant and drink over the next few years. —S.H.
Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Domaine Carneros 2008 The Famous Gate Pinot Noir (Carneros). A fruity, spicy, vibrant Pinot Noir, easy to like for its richness, yet balanced and elegant, if a little direct in its appeal. It shows jammy flavors of raspberries, cherries and blackberries, with hints of cola and anisette liqueur and a sweet coating of sandalwood. Drink it now. —S.H.
Price: \$68 **abv:** 14.2%

91 Foxen 2009 Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). Just beautiful, a dry, silky Pinot Noir, filled with complex flavors of cherries and black raspberries. Oak adds lovely notes of sweet char, and the natural acidity of the Santa Maria Valley shines through. Now–2014. —S.H.
Price: \$34 **abv:** 14.4%

91 Ghostwriter 2009 Woodruff Family Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Cruz Mountains). Despite the light color and delicate silky mouthfeel, this mountain Pinot Noir is potent in fruit. It explodes in raspberry and cherry pie, red licorice and beef jerky flavors, enhanced with noticeable oak. But then it retreats into a dry, spicy, mineral finish. Firm in tannins and

distinguished, it should develop in the bottle over the next six years. —S.H.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 13.5%

91 Tyler 2009 Bien Nacido Vineyard N Block Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). Maybe a tad off the pace from the excellent 2008, but still a wonderfully rich, complex wine. Pale in color, it tastes fresh and lively, with raspberry and cherry sour candy flavors accompanied by a burst of zesty acidity. Enjoyable now, and should gain bottle complexities over the next six years. —S.H.
Price: \$65 **abv:** 13.9%

90 Arista 2009 La Cruz Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). For full review see page 78.

90 Bjornstad 2008 Van der Kamp Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Mountain). Lots of vibrantly ripe fruit in this wine, with mouthfilling flavors of raspberries, cherries and cola. It's delicious in an up-front way, with a supporting structure of acids and tannins and a sweet coat of oak. Drink over the next year or two before it fades. —S.H.
Price: \$40 **abv:** 14.8%

90 Bonaccorsi 2008 Julia's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). Flamboyantly rich in cherries, raspberries and cranberries that are a bit tart, yet enriched with sweet oak. Firm acidity brings everything to a clean, bright finish. A pretty wine, showing elegance and finesse. —S.H.
Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.7%

90 Chanin 2008 Bien Nacido Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). A spicy wine, silky and light-bodied, with sour raspberry candy, mushroom and sandalwood flavors leading to a long, complex finish. It's an elegant, polished wine, with modest alcohol. Seems best for drinking over the next few years. —S.H.
Price: \$45 **abv:** 12.9%

90 Fort Ross 2009 Sea Slopes Fort Ross Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Fruit is the star of this wine. It's gigantic and forward in sweet raspberry and cherry flavors that taste wild, picked under a hot summer sun. Fortunately, there's a lot of acidity, and firm tannins provide additional structure. The finish is thoroughly dry. A bit in your face now, but could do interesting things over the years. —S.H.
Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.1%

90 Foxen 2009 Sea Smoke Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Heavy and rich, as Pinots from this vineyard tend to be. Also exceptionally ripe, with massive cherry marmalade and smoky, sweet oak flavors. Feels young and direct and easy to drink, with a fruity sweetness. Glamorous, but the price seems out of line. —S.H.
Price: \$80 **abv:** 14.6%

90 Ghostwriter 2009 Pinot Noir (Santa Cruz County). With a pale color, modest alcohol and plenty of acidity, this Pinot Noir is made in a more food-friendly style than some of the richer ones around. It's bone dry and sleek, with a minerality undergirding tart sour cherry candy and spice flavors. A lovely, ele-

gant wine that should hang in there for a good six years. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 13.6%

90 Pennywise 2009 Pinot Noir (California). For full review see page 80. *Best Buy.*

89 a-non-ah-mus 2008 Babcock Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Richly textured and full-bodied, a wine to drink now with fine steaks and chops. Almost sweet, it's opulent in cherry and raspberry jam flavors, with a decadent hint of chocolate. But it's fully dry. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.3%

89 Aiken 2009 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Mountain). Not showing much generosity now, pinched by tough tannins that give it a scoury astringency. Deep inside is a molten core of cherries and cola, with complex earth, mushroom and mineral notes. Pretty soft, but dry and focused, and could age well. Try after 2014. —S.H.

Price: \$55 **abv:** 14.9%

89 Babcock 2009 Grand Cuvée Estate Grown Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). This is a best of barrels selection, basically a Reserve, although with the 2009 vintage, the Grand Cuvée designation will disappear. The wine shows lots of rich, spicy cherry, licorice, cola and pomegranate flavors, wrapped into firm tannins. Should develop over the next 3–4 years. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 13.9%

89 La Rochelle 2008 La Cruz Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Tons of sweet, ripe forest cherries, blackberries, raspberries, grilled mushrooms, smoked meat, mushu plum sauce, anise and pepper in this silky wine. Certainly delivers on flavor, although it could be more complex and better structured. Ready now. —S.H.

Price: \$48 **abv:** 15.3%

89 Sequana 2009 Dutton Ranch Pinot Noir (Green Valley). A shade off from the past few vintages, but still a nice Pinot Noir. Showing crisp acidity and some firm tannins, it's sweet and forward in black raspberry, cherry, cola and spice flavors. Drink over the next 2–3 years. —S.H.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 13.9%

88 Arista 2009 Pinot Noir (Mendocino Ridge). This is a big Pinot Noir, full-bodied and dry, and a little heavy. But it's rich, offering delicious waves of cherries, raspberries, red currants, licorice, cola and savory spices. Unclear if it will age, but nice now with steaks, chops, grilled salmon. —S.H.

Price: \$38 **abv:** 14.3%

88 Arista 2009 Bacigalupi Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Tastes young and acidic but weirdly ripe now, with jammy raspberry, cherry and cola flavors and a tart finish. The ques-

tion is whether it will age. Unlikely, but you never know. —S.H.

Price: \$58 **abv:** 14.3%

88 Armida 2009 Castelli-Knight Ranch Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Lots of rich, ripe, candied flavors of raspberries, cherries, gingersnap cookies and spice flavors in this soft, feminine wine. Drink soon before it loses its fresh, sweet fruit. —S.H.

Price: \$39 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Armida 2009 Durell Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Valley). Lot of sweet, savory fruit flavors in this wine, which comes from the cooler southern part of Sonoma Valley, on the road to Carneros. It floods the mouth with tart flavors of raspberries, cherries, spices and smoky sandalwood. Drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 14.7%

88 Carr 2009 Three Vineyards Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Lots of acidity in this wine. It cuts right through the middle, giving the cherry fruit a sour candy tartness. Not one for the cellar, so drink it now with a rich steak, which will balance out the acids and tannins. —S.H.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Chanin 2009 Le Bon Climat Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). Extraordinarily ripe and fruity, like an explosion in a jam factory. Masses of raspberries and cherries, spiced like a punch, and brightened with crisp acidity. Drink now for freshness. —S.H.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 13.6%

88 Demetria 2009 Cuvée Sandra Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). Scads of sweet, fresh raspberries and cherries on this forward, fruity young wine. It's crisp in acidity and dry, with a lush coating of smoky oak. Would benefit from a little more earthiness, as the fruit is so powerful. —S.H.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 14.1%

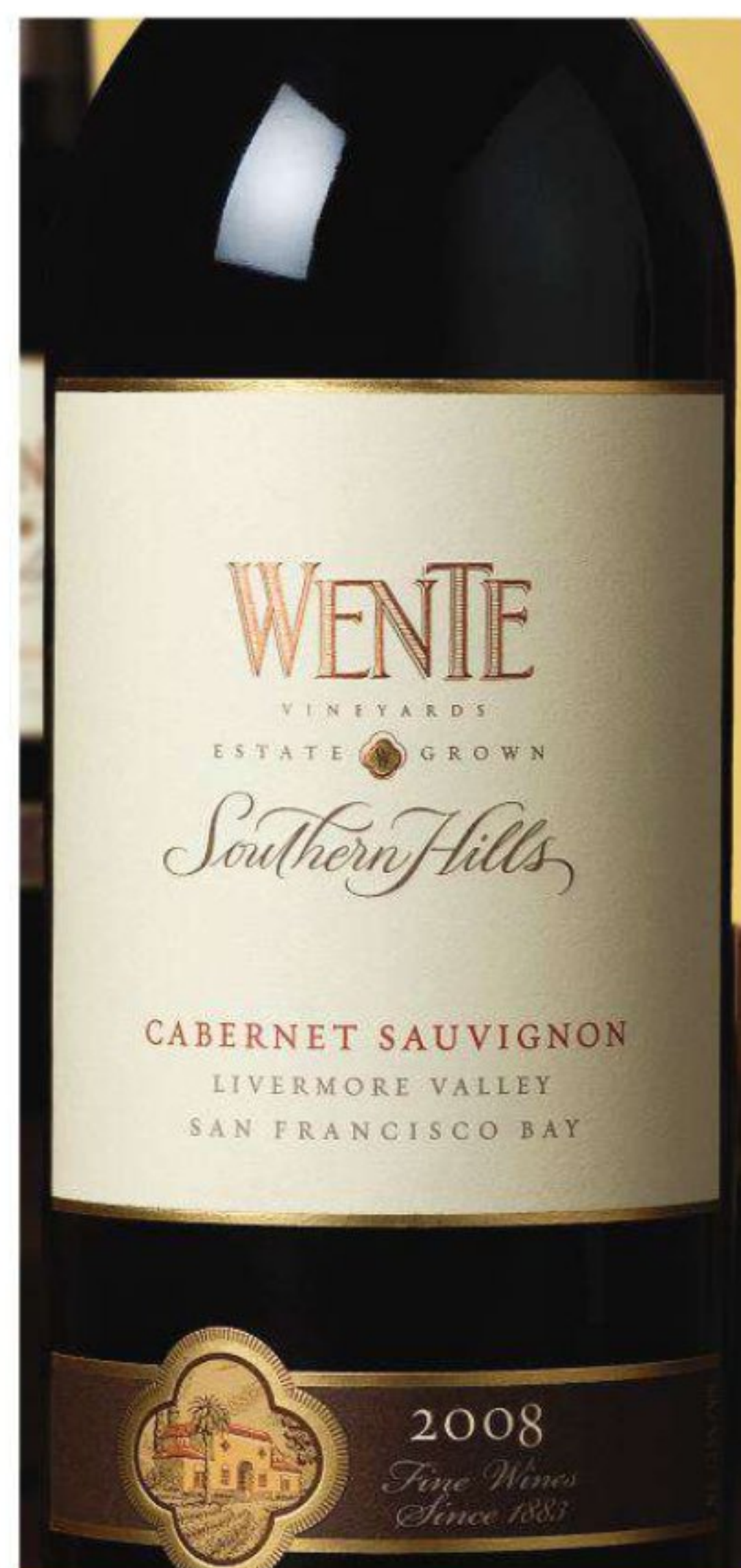
88 Domaine Carneros 2009 Clonal Series Pommard Pinot Noir (Carneros). Ripe and elaborate, offering rich, savory flavors of cherries and black raspberries, with an earthy note of mushrooms and barnyard funk. A pleasantly complex young wine to drink now for its vibrant freshness. —S.H.

Price: \$48 **abv:** 13.8%

88 Heron 2010 Pinot Noir (Sonoma County). Heron's best Pinot ever, and look at that price. The wine is bone dry, crisply acidic and elegant, with silky layers of bitter cherryskin, tobacco and cola. A lovely Pinot at a great price. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 13%

88 Sonoma Coast Vineyards 2008 Petersen Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). A marriage of zippy acidity and ripe raspberry and cherry fruit, this Pinot is a bit simple, sweet and candied. Yet there are considerable tannins lurking in the back-



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Price: \$50 abv: 14.1%

87 Arista 2009 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).

Price: \$34 abv: 14.3%

87 Babcock 2009 Deja Vu Pinot Noir (Paso Robles).

Price: \$55 abv: 14%

87 Babcock 2009 Rita's Earth Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills).

Price: \$22 abv: 13.6%

87 Bargetto 2009 Mount Eden Clone Pinot Noir (Santa Cruz Mountains).

Price: \$60 abv: 14.3%

87 Carr 2009 Turner Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills).

Price: \$45 abv: 14.5%

87 Chalone 2007 Estate Pinot Noir (Chalone).

Price: \$39 abv: 14.4%

87 Damian Rae 2009 Doctor's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands).

Price: \$38 abv: 14.3%

87 Domaine Carneros 2009 Estate Grown Pinot Noir (Carneros).

Price: \$35 abv: 14.2%

87 Fat Monk 2009 Pinot Noir (Central Coast).

Price: \$15 abv: 14.5%

87 Fulcrum 2009 Gap's Crown Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).

Price: \$54 abv: 14.2%

87 Manzoni 2009 Family Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands).

Price: \$26 abv: 14.7%

87 Rockroom Winemaking Cooperative 2008 Hein Vineyard Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley).

Price: \$28 abv: 14.2%

87 Sanford 2009 Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills).

Price: \$43 abv: 14.5%

87 Schug 2009 Pinot Noir (Carneros).

Price: \$28 abv: 14%

87 Schug 2009 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).

Price: \$24 abv: 13.5%

87 Sequana 2009 Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands).

Price: \$32 abv: 13.9%

86 Arista 2009 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley).

Price: \$44 abv: 14.3%

86 Bianchi 2007 Signature Selection Pinot Noir (Edna Valley).

Price: \$24 abv: 13.9%

86 Cinnabar 2008 Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands).

Price: \$42 abv: 14.5%

86 Cuvaison 2009 Pinot Noir (Carneros).

Price: \$33 abv: 13.5%

86 Graton Ridge 2009 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley).

Price: \$38 abv: 14.5%

86 Patz & Hall 2009 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).

Price: \$42 abv: 14.5%

86 Waxwing 2009 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).

Price: \$30 abv: 14.5%

85 Gatos Locos 2007 Pinot Noir (Santa Cruz Mountains).

Price: \$20 abv: 14.3%

85 Gatos Locos 2007 Scintilla Vineyard Pinot Noir (Carneros).

Price: \$28 abv: 14.4%

85 Heron 2010 Pinot Noir (California).

Price: \$14 abv: 13%

85 J. Lohr 2009 Fog's Reach Pinot Noir (Arroyo Seco).

the mouth watering. The oak adds sweet, caramelized notes. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.9%

CABERNET & BLENDS

94 Hall 2008 Kathryn Hall Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 74.

94 Thomas Fogarty 2006 Lexington Meritage (Santa Cruz Mountains). For full review see page 74.

94 Wallis Family Estate 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Diamond Mountain). For full review see page 74.

93 Janzen 2008 Missouri Hopper Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A wine to cellar. With powerful tannins and near perfect balance, it's extraordinarily ripe and rich in blackberries and currants, with hints of minerals and spices. Very dry, it feels vital from the first taste to the long finish. The vineyard is north of Yountville, which puts it in a cooler area. Should develop bottle complexity over the next decade. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.

Price: \$100 **abv:** 15.2%

93 Rockroom 2007 TKO Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). For full review see page 75.

93 Summers 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 75.

93 Thomas Fogarty 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Cruz Mountains). Just terrific, a classic Santa Cruz Mountain Cabernet from this consistent producer. It's bone dry, fine in balancing acidity and very tannic, with a sandpapery, lockdown mouthfeel. Yet it's wonderfully rich in blackberries, currants, cassis and chocolate. This outstanding young Cabernet should easily develop beyond 2015. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Babcock 2007 Nucleus Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Ynez Valley). Made from the same vineyard as Babcock's "Loin" Cabernet, only the addition of Merlot makes the wine richer, fatter and more complex. More feminine, too, despite firm tannins. It's sweet in cherries, blackberries, vanilla, mocha and cinnamon spice. Very fine, one of the best Santa Ynez Valley Bordeaux blends, and a wine to drink over the next several years. —S.H.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.1%

92 Clif Family 2008 Kit's Killer Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 76. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

92 Laurel Glen 2007 Counterpoint Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Mountain). A sort of second wine to Laurel Glen's estate Cabernet, this is quite simply a wonderful wine. It's dry, tannic and crisply balanced, with rich flavors of blackberries, currants, cola, herbs and sweet, smoky sandalwood. Really com-

elling, and at this price, a steal in a great coastal California Cabernet. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Laurel Glen 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Mountain). Hard tannins, dryness and oakiness are the three horsemen that mark this young, vital Cabernet. Is it ageworthy? Absolutely. Once the fruit kicks in, which is pretty much instantly, it's devastatingly rich and spicy in blackberries, blueberries and cassis. Clearly a cellar candidate for at least the next decade. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Meyer Family 2008 Fluffy Billows Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). There's a fleshy

quality to this Cabernet that makes the term fluffy appropriate. It's rich and dry, with voluptuous flavors of blackberries, black currants and cedar, as well as a touch of umami, dark chocolate and smoked meat. The tannins are fairly potent, suggesting 5–7 years in the cellar.

Cellar Selection. —S.H.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 13.9%

92 Piña 2008 Firehouse Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford). Shows the voluptuous texture and opulence that announce a fine Napa Cabernet. Rich in blackberry, black cherry, chocolate and smoky oak flavors, it's wrapped into fleshy tannins. Made from 100% Cabernet, it should develop bottle

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complexities over the next 6–8 years. —S.H.

Price: \$85 **abv:** 15.1%

92 V. Sattui 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Mount Veeder). A big, thick Cabernet, dry and tannic and very rich in concentrated mountain fruit. The flavors of blackberry and cherry jam are almost sweet in ripeness, and finish with a heady liqueur intensity. There's a fleshy quality, meaty and umami, like lightly salted beef tartare. Give this young wine six years in the cellar. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.

Price: \$42 **abv:** 14.8%

92 V. Sattui 2008 Morisoli Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Lots of rich, heady flavors in this delicious young Cabernet Sauvignon. It appeals now for the intense blackberry, cherry, cassis, dark chocolate and anise flavors, but such is the tannic intensity that it should easily age. Hold until 2015 and try again. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 14.4%

92 V. Sattui 2008 Preston Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Give this vital young Cab a good five years to come around. Right now it's hard in tannins. But it's exceptionally ripe in blackberry and cherry fruit, with a liqueur richness of crème de cassis, and it should have no trouble in the cellar. —S.H.

Price: \$47 **abv:** 14.7%

92 Wallis Family Estate 2008 Little Sister Red Table Wine (Diamond Mountain). For full review see page 7. *Cellar Selection.*

91 Janzen 2008 Cloudy's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A shade off the great 2007, but still a very good Cabernet that's capable of aging. It's super sweet in blackberries, cherries and chocolate, but dry and balanced with herbs and minerals and firm tannins that provide a skeletal backbone. Will be interesting to watch over the next 6–8 years. —S.H.

Price: \$100 **abv:** 14.9%

91 Judd's Hill 2007 Kairos Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Tastes pretty dry and tannic, with lots of astringency, and finishes hard and gritty. Not a wine you want to drink now. But there's a huge core of blackberries hidden below, accompanied by a burst of juicy acidity. Seems to have the balance for cellaring. The score reflects what this Cab will likely be in 6–8 years. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.

Price: \$55 **abv:** 14.5%

91 V. Sattui 2008 Vittorio's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A very tannic wine, with an astringent, dry mouthfeel, but it's so rich in fruit, it's enjoyable now. Floods the mouth with blackberry, cherry, plum, currant and dark chocolate flavors, edged with dusty spices. Should develop over the next six years, but if you can't wait, give it a good long decant. —S.H.

Price: \$44 **abv:** 14.9%

90 Babcock 2007 The Loin Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Ynez Valley). Made from 100%

Cabernet, an interesting, complex wine, showing cool climate notes of mint, cassis, cloves and blackberries. Lots of sweet ripeness underneath the tannins, and a coating of sweet, smoky oak. Decant and drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 15%

90 Maddalena 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). For full review see page 78. *Editors' Choice.*

90 Meyer Family 2008 Spitfire Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). Tough tannins give this wine a kick. It's like rubbing sandpaper on the tongue, but there's a brilliantly ripe core of blackberries, cherries and blackberry liqueur. Oak adds richer levels of caramel and vanilla. Not clear if it will age well, so drink soon after a few hours decanting. —S.H.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 13.9%

90 Mueller Family Vineyards 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Diamond Mountain). Big-time tannins and flashily ripe fruit mark this fresh young Cabernet, from the western Mayacamas Mountains. It's dry, but rich in blackberries, blueberries, cherries and chocolate, with an elaborate coating of oak. Should develop over the next six years. —S.H.

Price: \$54 **abv:** 14.4%

90 Pech Merle 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). For full review see page 78.

90 Piña 2007 Mimbres Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). As soft and smooth as velvet, with superripe flavors of chocolate, blackberry and cherry pie filling, currants, cassis and sweetly toasted oak. A best blend of vineyards available to the winery, this Cab was aged in 100% new French oak. The alcohol level is high, leading to questions of ageability. —S.H.

Price: \$115 **abv:** 15.5%

90 Rock Hollow 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). This is a Cab to bring joy to a wine critic's heart. It's just lovely, being dry and elegantly structured, offering a complex balance between blackberry fruit and earthier notes of tobacco and sage. What a great house pour, and look at that price. Production was only 1,200 cases. *Best Buy.* —S.H.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 14.1%

90 The Treat 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Made in the softly generous, voluptuous modern style, with considerable alcohol, this Cabernet is vast in blackberry jam, cassis, chocolate and sweetly caramelized flavors, wrapped into smooth, intricate tannins. Doesn't seem likely to age, but a dazzler in its flashy youth. —S.H.

Price: \$75 **abv:** 15.4%

90 Ugly Duckling 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). For full review see page 80. *Best Buy.*

89 Janzen 2008 Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Lots of flamboyant blackberry, cherry, raspberry, blueberry and plum fruit flavors in this wine. Almost too much of a good thing. So ripe and opulent, its other

qualities, including wonderful tannin structure, seem overshadowed. Difficult to predict where it's going, but right now, it's an orchard in a bottle. —S.H.

Price: \$135 **abv:** 15.1%

88 Chappellet 2008 Pritchard Hill Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Not showing much pleasure now, it's so tannically astringent and shut down. Almost rustic, with a heart of blackberries and currants, and bone dry. The tannins are augmented by oak. It takes imagination to conceive of this Cabernet aging, but it probably will. —S.H.

Price: \$135 **abv:** 14.9%

88 Hall 2007 Bergfeld Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A lovely Cabernet, dry and classy, with rich flavors of blackberries, cherries, currants, herbs and oak, housed into firm tannins. Good as it is, it disappoints at this price. Hall is making at least seven different Cabernet Sauvignons. Are they spreading themselves too thin? —S.H.

Price: \$100 **abv:** 15%

88 Sebastiani 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). A lovely Cabernet, soft and round and polished, and ready to drink now. Shows ripe flavors of sweet cherry pie filling, mocha, anise and smoky oak, wrapped into creamy, gentle tannins. —S.H.

Price: \$34 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Summers 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Knights Valley). Lots of spices and upfront fruit here, offering waves of blackberries, black cherries, blueberries and cassis. Lots of tannin, too, giving the wine an astringent mouthfeel. Try cellaring for 3–4 years. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.2%

87 32 Winds 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Still tough in tannins at nearly four years, with palate-numbing astringency. Under all that are blackberry, cherry, currant and cedar flavors that finish long, dry and spicy. Lots of class, but those tannins may never age out. —S.H.

Price: \$75 **abv:** 14.5%

87 Alpha Omega 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Sweet fruit and chocolate mark this soft Cabernet. It's like the wine version of a dessert, with blackberry and cherry jam, mocha, sweet crème de cassis and smoky vanilla flavors. Opulent, but needs greater dryness and structural integrity. —S.H.

Price: \$84 **abv:** 14.9%

87 Chalk Hill 2008 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon-Carmenère (Chalk Hill). Extremely ripe, oaky and decadent, but all that richness comes at the cost of a certain absence of subtlety. Few wines are this rich in blackberries, cherries, raspberries and milk chocolate, but it's all front loaded. Turns somewhat tired and hot in alcohol after a sip or two. —S.H.

Price: \$85 **abv:** 15.6%

87 Frei Brothers 2008 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). Lots going on in this softly appealing Cabernet. It's full-bodied and ripe, showing classic Alexander Valley flavors of blackberry jam, chocolate, anise, dried herbs and spices. Will

develop bottle complexity over the years while gradually losing fruit. —S.H.

Price: \$27 **abv:** 14.2%

87 Hearst Ranch 2009 Bunkhouse Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles). Give this pretty Cabernet a brief decant to let it breathe so the tannins can soften a little. It's too soft to age, but offers nice flavors now of blackberries, cherries, mocha, sage, cedar and spices. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

87 Martin Ray 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa-Mendocino-Sonoma). Here's a good, rich Cabernet for drinking now. It satisfies for the elaborate layers of blackberries, cherries and plums, enhanced with spicy, smoky oak. Full-bodied and tannic, it shows lots of elegant complexity for the price. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14.4%

87 Piña 2008 D'Adamo Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Ripe, jammy fruit marks this Cabernet. Floods the mouth with raspberry, cherry and blackberry jam flavors, accented with smoky oak. A bit one-dimensional, with a candied sweetness, but delicious. Drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$75 **abv:** 15.2%

86 Amici 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A heavy, fleshy wine that sits in the mouth and lacks vivacity despite some magnificently ripe flavors. Tons of blackberries, cherries, currants and oak, with solid tannins, but a little inert. Its best bet is a few years in the cellar. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.7%

86 Chalk Hill 2008 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon-Malbec (Chalk Hill). A heavy, ripe, oaky wine. Offers a blast of ripe, pie-filling flavors of raspberries, cherries, blackberries, mocha, licorice and new oak, but all that richness tires the palate. High alcohol gives a scoury heat. Ready now. —S.H.

Price: \$85 **abv:** 15.5%

86 Fat Cat 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). For full review see page 11. *Best Buy.*

86 Merriam Vineyards 2006 Block 8 Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). Super-extracted in fruit, with jammy cherry and blackberry flavors, this Cab's texture is a little aggressive. It's tannic and acidic, giving the wine a tough bite that even at the age of nearly five years is unlikely to age out. —S.H.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 14.7%

86 Newton 2008 Red Label Claret (Napa County). A little sharp and brusque, with a pinched finish. But it's dry and fruity enough, offering ripe layers of blackberries, cherries and plums. Drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.5%

86 Olema 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma County). A nice Cabernet to drink now.

It has very ripe, upfront cherry and blackberry pie flavors, with firm tannins and a sweet vanilla note. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14.5%

86 RN Estate 2008 Cuvée des Trois Cepages (Paso Robles). A Bordeaux blend based on Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine is soft and drinkable now. It's jammy, with raspberry, cherry, mint and spice flavors that finish a little sweet. —S.H.

Price: \$55 **abv:** 14.3%

86 Rockroom 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Howell Mountain). Eccentric for a Howell Mountain Cabernet. A funky wine, with excessively ripe blackberry fruit that's sweet and jammy, and the tannins are soft and creamy. A good but imperfect Cab for drinking now. —S.H.

Price: \$48 **abv:** 15%

86 Roney 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District). Pretty rough and tough for a Stags Leap Cab. Shows hard tannins and some overripe flavors, with a funky, sweaty note. Lots of ripe, crushed blackberries and cassis, but it doesn't seem like an ager, so drink up. —S.H.

Price: \$34 **abv:** 14.4%

85 Newton 2008 Red Label Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa County). Very dry, tannic and a little coarse. Shows flavors of blackberries, currants, herbs and oak. An easy wine with good varietal character to drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 14.5%

85 Nord Estate 2008 Red Wine Cuvée (Napa Valley). Thick, heavy and soft, with ripe to overripe flavors of blackberry jam, raisins, spices and dark chocolate. Hot in high alcohol, too. Drink up. —S.H.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 15.3%

CABERNET FRANC

90 Cuda Ridge Wines 2008 Cabernet Franc (Livermore Valley). Another Livermore Valley producer to watch, Cuda Ridge has fashioned a varietally textbook Cab Franc here, with an intensely woody, herbal nose. Medium-bodied, with tannins that are integrated and ready to soften, this Cab Franc, barrel-aged for 18 months, is really, really good, and ready to age another 3–5 years. —V.B.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 14.2%

90 Merriam Vineyards 2007 Jones Vineyard Cabernet Franc (Dry Creek Valley). For full review see page 78.

87 Hearst Ranch 2007 Lone Tree Cabernet Franc (Paso Robles). Dry, smooth and tannic, this is a polished wine for drinking now with a salted and peppered steak. Its cherry, tobacco and sandalwood flavors will complement the meat's grilled sweetness. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.5%

85 Cinnabar 2007 Lewis Vineyard Cabernet Franc (Lodi). This 2007 Cab Franc had trouble opening up, without much of the variety's trademark

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aromas, which caused the wine to seem bland, rich and soft from there. —V.B.

Price: \$38 **abv:** 14.3%

MERLOT

94 Keenan 2007 Reserve Mailbox Vineyard Merlot (Spring Mountain). Just delicious, an important, elegant Merlot to drink with the finest steaks and chops. Even better than the fine 2006, with vast, deep flavors of blackberries, black cherries, cocoa, grilled meat and herbs, wrapped into rich, smooth tannins. Gets better and better as it warms in the glass. Drink over the next six years. —S.H.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 14.3%

93 Hall 2007 Merlot (Napa Valley). For full review see page 75.

92 Keenan 2007 Merlot (Napa Valley). For full review see page 76.

91 Thomas Fogarty 2006 Merlot (Santa Cruz Mountains). Feels classy and vital from the very start and all the way through. Lots of ripe, complex, bone-dry blackberry, cherry, cola, cassis, herb, chocolate and cedar flavors that finish long and spicy. Even nearing five years of age, the tannins are significant, giving the wine a tough astringency. Hard to tell if the fruit will outlast the tannins. If you drink now, give it a good, long decant. —S.H.

Price: \$34 **abv:** 14.4%

89 Angeline 2009 Reserve Merlot (Sonoma County). For full review see page 78. *Editors' Choice.*

88 Jacuzzi 2008 Estate Merlot (Carneros). For full review see page 79. *Editors' Choice.*

87 Frei Brothers 2008 Merlot (Dry Creek Valley). An easy wine whose ripe fruit and oak flavors are immediately likeable. The cherries, raspberries and plums have a jammy sweetness, yet the tannins are firm. Easy to find, with 27,300 cases produced. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14%

87 Martin Ray 2009 Merlot (Napa Valley). A smooth, rich, ripe Merlot for drinking now with a nice steak. It's sturdy in tannins, with delicious cherry and oak flavors that have layers of complexity. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14.4%

87 Summers 2008 Summers Ranch Reserve Merlot (Knights Valley). Oak dominates this wine, with vanilla, chocolate, buttered toast and caramel aromas and flavors. Under all that you'll find some good, ripe black cherry fruit. With soft tannins, it's ready to drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.2%

86 Fat Cat 2009 Merlot (California). For full review see page 11. *Best Buy.*

85 Hearst Ranch 2007 Pico Creek Merlot (Paso Robles). Deficient in acidity and tannins, this soft wine lacks needed structure. It feels melt-

ed and collapsed in the mouth, and a little hot. But it's very tasty in raspberries, cherries, milk chocolate and spices. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

PETIT VERDOT

92 Occasio 2008 Ghielmetti Vineyard Petit Verdot (Livermore Valley). A sensational varietal Petit Verdot that's rich and velvety, lush and intense, with a hint of Bordeaux's typical herbiness, that evolves into some of the best blackberry, mocha and spicy chocolate you can imagine. Winemaker John Kinney had originally planned to blend the two barrels that eventually became this wine. Be glad he didn't. The grapes were sourced from Ghielmetti Vineyard, the primo vineyard to look for in Livermore wines. —V.B.

Price: \$34 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Grands Amis Winery 2008 Private Reserve, Elk Vineyard, Borden Ranch Petit Verdot (Lodi). Minty at first, and herbal, the way a Cabernet can be, this Petit Verdot from Lodi is juicy and well made with licorice and spice and plenty of tannin structure. Its limp finish could signal the need for a bit more time in the cellar, perhaps 2–5 years. —V.B.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 13.6%

87 Ancient Peaks 2008 Petit Verdot (Paso Robles). This is an elaborately soft, richly decadent wine. It tastes like milk chocolate, with a squirt of blackberry and cherry liqueur. Delicious and slightly off-dry, if a little direct. Drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 15.2%

87 Nova Vita 2008 Petit Verdot (Paso Robles). Brims with briary blackberry fruit, spicy and ripe, enhanced with a layer of oak. It's a little jammy and hot, and also is quite tannic, but there's a firm nobility in there. Give it a good decant and enjoy. —S.H.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 14.6%

85 Opaque 2007 Petit Verdot (Paso Robles). Lots of everything in this wine. Tannins, fruit, oak, acids, minerals, you name it. The result is very rich, but the astringent tannins overwhelm, and will never age out. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

SYRAH/SHIRAZ

97 Qupé 2006 Bien Nacido Vineyard 25th Anniversary X-Block The Good Nacido Syrah (Santa Maria Valley). A gigantic wine, one of the most powerful Syrahs in memory. Shows fabulously rich tannins from stem fermentation, sweet, spicy and earthy. The aromas and flavors are of mushrooms, grilled meat, blackberries, cherries, cola, black pepper and smoky cedar. Extraordinary depth and complexity,

a very great California Syrah. Could soar off the charts in the next 2–3 years. —S.H.

Price: \$100 **abv:** 14.5%

96 Bien Nacido 2007 Bien Nacido Vineyard Syrah (Santa Maria Valley). For full review see page 73.

95 Qupé 2007 Bien Nacido Hillside Estate Syrah (Santa Maria Valley). For full review see page 73.

94 Babcock 2009 Upper Crust Syrah (Santa Maria Valley). The real deal in a cool-climate Syrah. Dark and broodingly dry, it smells like grilled lamb, roasted rosemary, white pepper and other Provençal herbs, blackberries, cassis and smoky oak. High in alcohol but balanced, this 100% varietal wine is huge, powerful, dramatic and tannic. Drink it soon with the best grilled meats. —S.H.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 15.6%

92 Qupé 2009 Sawyer Lindquist Vineyard Syrah (Edna Valley). Very ripe, showing rich, pure varietal flavors of blackberries, cherries, ground pepper, grilled meat, sweet sandalwood and spices. One hundred percent Syrah, it's balanced with great acidity. Really smooth and delicious, and a crowd pleaser. Could develop over the next 4–5 years. —S.H.

Price: \$55 **abv:** 13.5%

92 Schulz 2008 Fortunati Vineyard Syrah (Oak Knoll). This is one of those wines that tastes dramatic and important. It's marked by rich, thick tannins, but they're ripe and smooth, and frame complex flavors of blackberries, black cherries, grilled teriyaki beef and black pepper, enriched with smoky cedar. Texturally, it's medium-bodied and velvety, like a Merlot. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Curtis 2007 Crossroads Vineyard Syrah (Santa Ynez Valley). Elegant and sophisticated, a Syrah to drink now for its rich array of fruits and spices. It's soft in tannins and acidity, giving a silky, velvety mouthfeel to the cherry, blackberry, bacon, sandalwood and, above all, savory black pepper flavors. —S.H.

Price: \$32 **abv:** 14.2%

91 Nova Vita 2009 Syrah (Paso Robles). A very nice Syrah, with lots of ripe fruit but also a good structure. It's rich in blackberry, cherry and cola flavors, with an earthiness suggesting mushrooms sautéed in brown butter and sprinkled with black pepper and Chinese 5 spice. Firm tannins ground it. —S.H.

Price: \$45 **abv:** 15.4%

90 a-non-ah-mus 2007 Alisos Vineyard Syrah (Santa Barbara County). For full review see page 78. *Editors' Choice.*

90 Chalk Hill 2008 Estate Bottled Syrah (Chalk Hill). Chalk Hill ripened the grapes almost to the point of super-maturity, and picked at just the right moment, giving the blackberry fruit just a hint of shriveled raisins. Oak complexities add dark chocolate and firm, spicy wood tannins. It's a dry, astringent

young Syrah that should develop bottle complexities over the next 3–4 years. —S.H.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 16.9%

90 Curtis 2007 Vogelzang Vineyard Syrah (Santa Ynez Valley). Grill a nice steak and wash it down with this richly textured, gentle Syrah. Dry and smoky, it has black pepper-infused flavors of blackberries, currants and singed bacon. Gives lots of elegant pleasure for the price. —S.H.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.5%

90 Laetitia 2009 Estate Syrah (Arroyo Grande Valley). The finish is dry and toughly tannic on this elegant Syrah. With smoked meat, black cherry, blueberry, pepper and salt flavors, it's a chewy wine, full-bodied and complex, brightened with fine acidity. Seems best in its youth for freshness. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.7%

89 Bernat 2008 Latitude Colson Canyon Syrah (Santa Barbara County). Rich and unctuous, this Syrah flatters for sheer decadence. It's soft and fruity, offering waves of blackberry and cherry jam, mocha, bacon, black pepper and smoky cedar flavors, wrapped into firm but finely ground tannins. Finishes a bit hot in alcohol. Drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 15.4%

89 Waxwing 2009 Flocchini Vineyard Syrah (Sonoma Coast). A controversial wine. Some will love it; some not. It's soft and creamy, with a rich backbone of tannins, and very peppery. As for the flavors, they suggest berry fruit jam, but with deeper notes of mushrooms and grilled meats. The pepper reprises all the way through. Grows more interesting the longer you sip it. —S.H.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Babcock 2009 Under the Radar Syrah (Santa Barbara County). A nice Syrah for drinking now, at a good price. It's a bistro-style wine, crisp and lusty, with lots of spicy, berry-cherry flavors. Good as a house pour. *Best Buy.* —S.H.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 13.7%

88 Longoria 2008 Alisos Vineyard Syrah (Santa Barbara County). This Syrah is bone dry and somewhat austere, but complex and elegant. It's a spicy, peppery wine, with firm, thick tannins and hints of blackberries, smoked meat and dark chocolate. Drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$34 **abv:** 15.2%

88 Qupé 2009 Syrah (Central Coast). A bistro style wine to drink with grilled meats and game birds. It's juicy and crisp, with flavors of cherries, licorice and spices, wrapped into a creamy texture. Really rocks. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Wattle Creek 2009 Shiraz (Alexander Valley). Interesting that they call it Shiraz instead of Syrah. Either way, it's a very dry, tannic and fairly complex wine, rich in blackberry, currant, tobacco and

pepper flavors. Drink this robust, astringent young wine now with roasted meats and stews. —S.H.

Price: \$38 **abv:** 14.6%

87 Bernat 2008 Focus Syrah (Santa Ynez Valley). Lots to like in this dry, velvety Syrah. It's very rich, offering waves of black cherry pie filling, bacon, black pepper and sandalwood flavors wrapped into firm tannins. Loses a few points due to a vegetal note in the aroma. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 15.4%

87 Bonny Doon 2008 Le Pousseur Syrah (Central Coast). Sweet in cherry-berry fruit, this Syrah has more complex layers of smoked meats,

earth, grilled mushrooms, tamari and sandalwood, brightened with crisp acidity. It's a fine, full-bodied wine for drinking now. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Curtis 2007 Ambassador's Vineyard Syrah (Santa Ynez Valley). A simple but satisfying Syrah, sweet and jammy in raspberry, cherry and blackberry fruit flavors, with lots of black pepper. Earns extra points for good tannins and balancing acidity. —S.H.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 15%

85 Carr 2007 Syrah (Santa Barbara County). Too sweet and oaky to earn a higher score. It's

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rich and jammy in sugary raspberries and cherries, with lots of caramel and buttered toast. Ready now. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 15%

85 Four Cairn 2009 Syrah (Napa Valley). No-where near as good as the 2008, with an over-ripe, pruny taste, and heat in the finish. On the plus side, it's dry and rich in tannins. Hard to see it developing, so drink up. —S.H.

Price: \$38 **abv:** 14.7%

PETITE SIRAH

91 Chiarito 2007 Estate Bottled Petite Sirah (Mendocino). Juicy as a dark plum with a raspberry chaser, this 80-case Petite Sirah gets better and better as it opens, revealing itself to be mellow and rustic, yet big and broad-shouldered. It would make the perfect pairing with a plate of cheesy pasta, meat sauce and crusty garlic bread, or anything with pancetta. —V.B.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.7%

91 Saracina 2007 Petite Sirah (Mendocino County). Big and chewy and inky black, this clearly well-crafted Petite Sirah is full of black fruit—mostly blackberry—and peppery tones. The tannins stand out and yet mellow as the wine opens. A few more years in bottle should get them to the appropriate place. Enjoy this wine with a pepper steak or ravioli. —V.B.

Price: \$38 **abv:** 14.9%

89 Horse & Plow 2009 Testa Vineyard, Old Vines Petite Sirah (Mendocino). This old vine Petite Sirah gets the royal French oak treatment, the grapes organically grown at Testa Vineyard. This has very nuanced raspberry throughout its big, concentrated and sensuous body, the mid-palate showing its oak but the wine is still very young. Give it air and a few more years to age. —V.B.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.5%

88 C.G. di Arie 2008 Estate Petite Sirah (Shenandoah Valley (CA)). This 77% Petite Sirah has 23% Syrah blended into it, the result entirely satisfying with a rich full nose of dark berries and chocolate and spicy plum, the tannins a touch dusty in taste. This wine would be delicious with a meaty pizza or lasagna layered with meat and cheese. —V.B.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.1%

88 Concannon 2008 Conservancy Petite Sirah (Livermore Valley). The Livermore Valley master of Petite Sirah outpaces much of its competition with Conservancy, a wine that honors land conservancy and is priced fairly. Well-made and very balanced for a larger production endeavor, this Petite opens with a nose of pepper and mocha, stewed berry and plum and develops into a full body that's lush and oaky but also shows plenty of minerality. —V.B.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Fenestra 2007 Ghielmetti Vineyard Petite Sirah (Livermore Valley). A rich, full Petite Sirah with a taste of cola and spice followed by ripe raspberry and blackberry. A very yummy version

of the variety from one of Livermore's most promising vineyards. —V.B.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.4%

88 V. Sattui 2008 Petite Sirah (North Coast). This wine—sold direct only through the winery—gets better with time, with stony, cherry and cardamom brightening up through the tannins as the wine has a chance to breathe. Big and full, V. Sattui gets its grapes from mostly Lake County, rounding it out with a smaller percentage of Napa Valley fruit, as well as a handful from Dry Creek. Very solid. —V.B.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 14.8%

87 Guenoc 2008 Petite Sirah (Lake County). This is an easy-drinking Petite Sirah from an always solid producer of the variety. The wine is a little less in your face than many of its competitors with noticeable acidity and flavors of dark plum, mocha and spicy blackberry, though its finish could have been a little bit longer. —V.B.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Page Mill Winery 2007 Estate Vineyard Petite Sirah (Livermore Valley). This Livermore Valley Petite Sirah, from a producer that's done well with Syrah, is soft and round, docile even for a Petite Sirah, especially one at 14.8% alcohol. Opening with a hit of menthol and cocoa, the wine is fruit forward but tame and oaky throughout. Give it time to open and age. —V.B.

Price: \$36 **abv:** 14.8%

86 Ancient Peaks 2008 Petite Sirah (Paso Robles). Shows Petite Sirah's firm tannins, giving the wine a robust mouthfeel. Also you'll find Paso softness and high alcohol ripeness, with sweet, jammy blackberry, cherry and cola flavors. Ready now with barbecue. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 15.7%

86 Cinnabar 2007 Jake's Vineyard Petite Sirah (Paso Robles). Shows the thick tannins of Petite Sirah, and deeply ripe blackberry, currant and spice flavors, with the softness that comes from a warm-climate vineyard. A bit rustic, with some sharp angles, and best now. —S.H.

Price: \$38 **abv:** 15%

86 Lava Cap 2008 Granite Hill Petite Sirah (El Dorado). Fragrant with a full body and discernible depth, this Sierra Foothills Petite is anything but—with giant tannins and a high alcohol level (15.2%) that makes its presence felt on the way down. —V.B.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 15.2%

86 True Vine 2007 Estate Petite Sirah (El Dorado County). Big and tight and intense, a bottle for serious Petite Sirah lovers only. True Vine's wines are estate grown and aged for two years in American oak. Big and ageworthy. Marco Cappelli is the winemaker. —V.B.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 14.8%

85 Diamond Ridge Vineyards 2008 Petite Sirah (Lake County). Muted and simple, a

Petite Sirah that's oaky and has some sage and blackberry going on but a bit of a bitter finish. —V.B.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 14.5%

85 Grands Amis Winery 2006 Elk Vineyard, Borden Ranch Petite Sirah (Lodi). Austere at first, even flowery, this Grands Amis Petite Sirah soon becomes more tannic and rough, its time spent in American oak evident, though the finish reveals some pleasing blueberry. Open this one up and let it breathe and pair with meaty meat. —V.B.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.4%

85 Grizzly Republic 2007 Petite Sirah (Paso Robles). Rich and overtly sweet in raspberry and cherry pie filling, with a chocolate-butterscotch taste like candy. A big, lusty, opulent style of wine to drink now with barbecue. —S.H.

Price: \$31 **abv:** 14.2%

85 Main & Geary 2009 Petite Sirah (California). A little tough and gritty, showing Petite Sirah's big-boned tannins, and also a burst of acidity. The blackberry fruit has earthy notes of tobacco and spices. Drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 14%

85 Ursa 2006 Naggiar Vineyards Petite Sirah (Sierra Foothills). Stewy yet intriguing with a taste of clove that finishes bitter, this Petite Sirah needs a rich risotto to stand next to. —V.B.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 14.9%

BARBERA

89 Noceto 2008 Linsteadt Barbera (Shenandoah Valley). Noceto is a Sierra Foothills' Sangiovese specialist but does a nice job with Barbera as well, this wine being well-integrated, not heavy-handed (13.8%) with a deft balance between acidity and fruit, mostly sweet cherry and blueberry. Very good. —V.B.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 13.8%

88 Muscardini 2009 Pauli Ranch Barbera (Redwood Valley). Opening with strong aromas of baked bread, this lush Barbera has a ton of cherry and cranberry flavors at first, is full bodied and oaky. Once it opens a bit it turns into a glass of blueberry crumble, deliciously rich and a crowd pleaser for sure. —V.B.

Price: \$38 **abv:** 14.4%

85 Lava Cap 2008 Reserve Barbera (El Dorado). Lava Cap has made a decent version of Barbera here, simple and blueberry-toned but the wine is a tad heavy and overly oaked and bitter on the finish. —V.B.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14.9%

GRENAICHE

90 Qupé 2009 Sawyer Lindquist Vineyard Grenache (Edna Valley). Lots of tannins and acidity on this dry Grenache, but it's so rich and sweet in cherries, you can drink it now. Somehow manages to be

fun and serious at the same time. A real success for this finicky variety in California. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Quivira 2009 Wine Creek Ranch Grenache (Dry Creek Valley). A delightful bistro wine from a producer who's specialized in Rhône-style wines for decades. It's dry, with pleasant raspberry, strawberry, orange zest, vanilla and spice flavors, wrapped into the silky texture of a fine Pinot Noir. —S.H.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 14.4%

87 Bodega de Edgar 2009 Garnacha (Central Coast). This is the kind of light-bodied, fruity wine you can drink with just about anything, from ham and broiled chicken to Mexican beef dishes and barbecue. It's silky and smooth, with flavors of cherries, raspberries and spices. —S.H.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 15.5%

86 a-non-ah-mus 2007 Alisos Vineyard Grenache (Santa Barbara County). This is a feminine wine, soft, generous and fruity. The raspberry and cherry flavors are jammy. There's some heat on the finish from high alcohol. Drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 15.3%

TEMPRANILLO

87 Verdad 2008 Sawyer Lindquist Vineyard Tempranillo (Edna Valley). Lots of racy acidity in this light-bodied wine. It has the flavor of tart sour cherry candy, but is bone dry. Shows that pure, transparent Edna Valley minerality that makes its wines so easy to like. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Bodega de Edgar 2009 Tempranillo (Paso Robles). A nicely soft, gentle red wine starring upfront flavors of cherries, red licorice, bacon, cola and peppery spices, folded into a silky texture. It's an easy wine to drink with spicy little appetizers. —S.H.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 14.7%

86 J.R. Storey 2008 Cielo Grande Vineyard Tempranillo (Paso Robles). This spicy Temp has a funky, bacony note to the berries and cherries. It's a little green and minty around the edges, with a burst of acidity. Drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 14.5%

85 Hearst Ranch 2009 Chileano Tempranillo (Paso Robles). Feels light and silky in the mouth, like a Pinot Noir, with brisk acidity and red cherry and tobacco flavors. A bit brusque and rustic in

texture, though. Drink now with spicy-tapas style dishes. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.4%

ZINFANDEL

92 Ottimino 2007 Ottimino Vineyard Little 8 Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 76. *Editors' Choice.*

92 Ottimino 2007 Von Weidlich Vineyard Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). Shows a delicate texture, almost Pinot Noir-like in lightness, yet offers a blast of berry, spice, tobacco, cola and bacon flavors that are lusty and ripe. The grapes come from the Green Valley, and the alcohol is low while acidity is high. Beautiful and classy, a Zin to drink with everything from salmon and steak to tuna and short ribs. —S.H.

Price: \$36 **abv:** 13.9%

92 V. Sattui 2008 Crow Ridge Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). A big, lusty, rich Zinfandel, packing wildly complex flavors of summer-ripe raspberries and cherries, anise, crushed pepper, dusty spices, sweet vanilla and smoky sandalwood. One of V. Sattui's best Zins of the vintage. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.7%

92 V. Sattui 2008 Ramazzotti Vineyard Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). A really good Zinfandel, and despite hefty alcohol, it's dry and balanced. Really delivers those Zin flavors of wild berries, leather, anise, cocoa and cola, and the spices are a wild ride through Asia. With thick, velvety tannins and acidity, it's a lovely, classy Zin to drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$36 **abv:** 15%

90 Schulz 2008 Lampryidae Vineyard Zinfandel (Mount Veeder). Marked by substantial fruit, this Zin offers a burst of ripe blackberries, blueberries and black cherries, spiced with cinnamon and cloves, and clothed in smoky, sweetly toasted oak. Mountain tannins give it a thick, astringent mouthfeel. A very fine Zinfandel that's a little high in alcohol, but it doesn't feel hot. —S.H.

Price: \$36 **abv:** 15.2%

89 Armida 2009 Poizin Reserve Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). A hefty Zinfandel, full-bodied and front-loaded in raspberry, cherry and blackberry fruit, with delicious chocolate, anise liqueur and spice layers. It's very tannic, a wine to make your tongue stick to the gums. Tough now, but already throwing sediment crystals in the glass, and could develop in the bottle. —S.H.

Price: \$80 **abv:** 14.8%

89 Dashe Cellars 2008 Florence Vineyard Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). This 100% Zin shows classic spices and ripe berry fruit that veers into currants. It's bone dry, and the alcohol is relatively high but not hot. It's a lusty wine, subtly oaked, and a great partner to barbecue. —S.H.

Price: \$32 **abv:** 14.8%

89 Easton 2009 Zinfandel (Amador County). This is a tremendously inviting price for a wine

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of this caliber, super structured and tight at first with chewy tannins and savory plum and chocolate on the palate. Concentrated, this Zin could stand a little time in the cellar, 3–5 years, or let it breathe awhile if you just have to drink it now. —V.B.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Bonterra 2009 Zinfandel (Mendocino County). Bonterra continues to make great wines at affordable prices, all from organically grown grapes. With blueberry pie and clove predominating, the wine is tannic, super-structured, with a spicy finish. A good deal for sure. —V.B.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Ottimino 2007 Rancho Bella Vineyard Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). High in alcohol, in the manner of a ripe Zin, but the wine wears it well. It's full-bodied and softly tannic, showing elaborate wild berry, cherry, licorice, currant, salty bacon and pepper spice flavors. —S.H.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 15.1%

88 Saracina 2009 Pick and Shovel Zinfandel (Mendocino County). Plenty of dark plum and blackberry going on here, from a Zin sourced from two organically farmed vineyards. Low berry weights from the dry vintage have contributed to a concentrated wine here, with soft tannins and some spiciness, an overall balanced wine. —V.B.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 14.9%

88 Sobon Estate 2009 Old Vines Zinfandel (Amador County). Impressive for a \$12 Old Vine Zin, this wine is spicy and full of pepper, much more savory than sweet with plenty of texture midpalate and decent length. Definitely full-bodied, it'll stand up to a plethora of rich foods and even age another couple of years. *Best Buy.* —V.B.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 14.9%

88 Summers 2008 Four Acre Zin Zinfandel (Calistoga). A very nice Zin with plenty of varietal flavor, though it finishes thin and quick. But it's lovely at first in wild raspberries and cherries, with lots of brown sugar and dusty baking spices. —S.H.

Price: \$34 **abv:** 14.2%

87 Armida 2009 Poizin Zinfandel (Sonoma County). Fairly simple in appeal, with candied, sweet and sour cherry flavors, like a cough drop. Tannic, too, hitting the palate with sandpapery astringency. But earns extra credit for dryness and a rich smoked meat note that makes it a partner for barbecue. —S.H.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.5%

87 Armida 2009 Tina's Block Maple Vineyards Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). Lusty, rich and tannic, this rustic-chic Zin trades elegance and subtlety for sheer dynamic power. Its wild blackberry, cola and mulberry flavors tread the fine line between dry and off-dry, exploding in the mouth, then finishing in a scour of astringency. —S.H.

Price: \$48 **abv:** 14.5%

87 Artezin 2009 Zinfandel (Mendocino County). Classic in style with raspberry and

spice dominating, the wine overall is supple and lush. —V.B.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 14.5%

87 Dashe Cellars 2009 Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). With a little Petite Sirah and Carignane blended in for depth and complexity, this is a nice Zinfandel for everyday drinking. It's dry and full-bodied, and while the tannins are strong, they're perfect for busting up rich barbecue. Shows all the fruity spiciness you expect from a lusty Zin. —S.H.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.5%

86 Armida 2009 Maple Vineyards Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). Ripe to the point of over-ripe, with dried blackberry, cherry and raisin flavors, this Zin also is hot in alcohol. Drink now with rich, fatty barbecue to soften its tough tannins. —S.H.

Price: \$39 **abv:** 14.9%

86 Gracianna 2009 Bacigalupi Vneyard Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). This is a strongly flavored Zinfandel, not particularly graceful or subtle. It kicks you in the head with ripe, jammy raspberry, cherry and blackberry fruit, with sweet overtones of chocolate and anise. The alcohol is very high and makes the wine feel hot. —S.H.

Price: \$42 **abv:** 15.9%

86 Pech Merle 2009 Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). Barbecue and lusty stews are what this wine wants. It's dryish to sweet in raisin, blackberry jam, chocolate, beef jerky and spice flavors, and the tannins are big and tough. —S.H.

Price: \$27 **abv:** 14.9%

OTHER DRY REDS

94 Clendenen 2003 Brico Buon Natale Nebbiolo (Santa Maria Valley). One of the best Nebbiolos to ever come from California. The aroma dazzles with notes of tar, licorice, roasted meat, cherries, pepper and cedar. The wine is absolutely dry, with brilliant acidity, and seems to change with each moment in the glass. Just starting to dry out, but still fresh and lively. A remarkable wine at an amazingly affordable price for what you get. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.1%

94 Sheldon 2009 Ripken Vineyard Graciano (Lodi). This might be one of the most interesting wines being made in California right now, a tiny production, 12%-alcohol Graciano, a grape native to Rioja and barely found in California. The wine is bright and very European, full of white pepper, cranberry and leather notes, high in acid and very clean, though it's unfiltered and unfiltered. It lasts and lasts, getting better with every drop. —V.B.

Price: \$48 **abv:** 12%

93 Sanguis 2008 Endangered Species (California). Mostly Syrah, co-fermented with Viognier and Roussanne. The whites give an acidic, lemony tang to the rich, flamboyant blackberries, cherries and

bacon of Syrah. The wine is young and vibrant, with a velvety texture. Should hold through 2014. —S.H.

Price: \$70 **abv:** 15.2%

92 Sanguis 2008 Polly Ann (California). Mainly Grenache and Syrah, co-fermented with Viognier. It's a massively rich, dense wine, erupting in raspberry and cherry pie filling, cassis, blackberry liqueur, sandalwood and spice flavors. A real crowd pleaser, forward and dramatic, if a bit high in alcohol. A great steak wine. —S.H.

Price: \$75 **abv:** 15.7%

92 Schulz 2008 Samuel's Cuvée (Napa Valley). A beautiful wine that tastes much richer than you usually get for this price. Shows gorgeously ripe blackberry, cherry, currant, mocha, licorice, bacon and sandalwood flavors, wrapped into refined tannins and finishing long and spicy. A blend of Syrah, Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 14.5%

92 Sean Thackrey 2009 Rossi Vineyard Orion (St. Helena). Elaborate and impressive, in the manner of Sean Thackrey, a big, rich, alcoholic wine with massive flavors. The blackberries and currants are swamped with black pepper and various exotic spices, and the finish is thoroughly dry. There's nothing shy or subtle about this wine, but it does express what California's sun does so well. —S.H.

Price: \$90 **abv:** 15.2%

91 La Rochelle 2009 Four Sisters Vineyard Pinot Meunier (Sonoma Coast). For full review see page 77.

91 Wattle Creek 2009 The Triple Play (Yorkville Highlands). For full review see page 77.

90 Sanguis 2007 Las Mujeres (California). An unusual blend of Grenache and Syrah, with a splash of Roussanne and Viognier, this wine is massively rich in cherry and blackberry pie, caramelized oak, vanilla and cinnamon spice flavors. The addition of those few drops of white varieties brings brisk acidity and a tang of citrus and flowers. Very fine now, and should hold through 2014. —S.H.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 15.9%

90 Tessa Marie 2007 Coquette Sangiovese-Syrah (Santa Barbara County). An offbeat blend of Sangiovese and Syrah, and quite a good wine, at that. It's dry, medium- to full-bodied and tannic, with complex flavors of cherries, leather, tobacco, Dr. Pepper cola and peppery spices. It is high in alcohol, but wears the heat well. —S.H.

Price: \$36 **abv:** 15.8%

89 Chandon 2009 Pinot Meunier (Carneros). Sommeliers will call this a restaurant wine because it supports food rather than dominating it. It's bone dry, crisp in acidity and silky, with subtle cherry,

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tobacco, cola and sandalwood flavors. Drink now as an interesting switch on Pinot Noir. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14%

89 Demetria 2008 North Slope (Santa Ynez Valley). Mostly Syrah, with a splash of Viognier for lifted aromatics and acidity. The two varieties were co-fermented. The aroma grabs you right away, offering masses of blackberries, chocolate, crème de cassis and sandalwood notes. In the mouth, it's a little hot in alcohol, with a glycerine sweetness. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.9%

88 Demetria 2008 Cuvée Constantine (Santa Ynez Valley). A Côtes-du-Rhône style wine. Bring on the lamb, roasted potatoes and rosemary. It's dryish and soft, with rich flavors of raspberries, cherries, spices and Provençal herbs. The blend is Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah. —S.H.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 14.8%

89 Lorenzi Estate Wines 2008 Heritage Blend (Temecula Valley). For full review see page 79.

88 Ancient Peaks 2008 Margarita Vineyard Malbec (Paso Robles). Rich, thick and oaky, with massive blackberry, cassis, blueberry, chocolate and oak flavors, this Malbec is obviously built along Argentine models. It's soft and somewhat direct, but a flattering wine that will pair well with a smoky, spicy grilled steak. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.1%

88 Novy 2009 (North Coast). This red blend of Syrah, Zinfandel, Grenache and Nebbiolo is such a screaming good deal anyone wanting to make the point that California wine can be affordable and incredibly well made should buy a case just to proselytize to friends. It's got bright raspberry, cherry and cranberry highlights as well as the meatiness one can appreciate in a fine Syrah. Well-integrated, smooth, clean and balanced, it's the whole package in an under \$10 price.

Best Buy. —V.B.

Price: \$9 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Triune 2008 Synthesis (Santa Ynez Valley). Soft, rich and spicy, with loads of cherries and cranberries, sweetened with a touch of oak. It's a nicely balanced blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, Syrah and Carignane. —S.H.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 15.4%

87 Murrieta's Well 2008 The Spur (Livermore Valley). Murrieta's Well is a partnership between Phil Wente and Sergio Traverso devoted mostly to Bordeaux varieties. This red blend, along with a sister white, called The Whip, are new this vintage. The result is sound and structured with notes of both blue and blackberry, a little licorice, a little chocolate and some oaky tannins. —V.B.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.5%

87 X 2009 Red X (North Coast). Lots of rich delights in this fruity blend of Syrah, Mourvèdre, Zinfandel and Grenache. It's a bit rustic, with zingy acidity, but beautifully layered, with flavors of wild ber-

ries, cherries, tobacco, crisp smoky bacon and sweet oak. —S.H.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 14.5%

86 Armida 2009 Il Campo (Dry Creek Valley). Marked by excessive heat from high alcohol, with a jalapeño pepper burn all the way through. If you can get past that, it's dry and smoothly tannic, with rich berry, currant, cocoa and spice flavors. —S.H.

Price: \$39 **abv:** 15.4%

86 Chalk Hill 2008 Furth (Chalk Hill). A heavy wine, meant to impress with sheer weight, but actually lacking some life. It's certainly ripe and dense in black currants and oak, but palls after a few sips, and finishes hot in alcohol. Might do something interesting down the road. —S.H.

Price: \$150 **abv:** 15.7%

86 Hearst Ranch 2007 The Point (Paso Robles). This offbeat blend of Bordeaux varieties with Petite Sirah and Syrah is made in a rustic Paso style. It's soft in the mouth, with dusty tannins and high alcohol that gives the cherries and blackberries a Porty, liqueur-type heat. —S.H.

Price: \$70 **abv:** 15.5%

86 RN Estate 2008 Symphonie de Cepages (Paso Robles). Hot and jammy, this wine is forward in raspberries, cherries and milk chocolate. It's delicious in an upfront way, but a little too sweet and soft. —S.H.

Price: \$48 **abv:** 14.4%

86 Valley of the Moon 2008 Sangiovese (Sonoma County). A pretty Sangiovese, gentle and easy to drink now. With crisp acidity, it has flavors of sour cherry candy, tobacco, red licorice and peppery spices. —S.H.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Hearst Ranch 2009 Babicora Malbec (Paso Robles). Tastes both underripe and overripe at the same time, with some polished cherry flavors in the middle. Lots of acidity makes it sour. A dry, somewhat rustic wine that rich meats and cheeses will help fatten. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.1%

85 Hearst Ranch 2008 Three Sisters Cuvée (Paso Robles). A Syrah-based Rhône blend, this wine is soft, sweet and simple. It has powerfully ripe raspberry, cherry, Dr. Pepper cola and spice flavors, and is hot in high alcohol. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 15.5%

85 Tessa Marie 2007 Sangiovese (Santa Barbara County). Harsh and hot in the mouth, with high alcohol and tough tannins. There's lots

of rich cherry, berry and tobacco flavor, but the wine is too unbalanced to earn a higher score. —S.H.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 15.8%

SWEET RED WINES

92 PasoPort NV Portray Tawny Barrel-Aged Dessert Wine (Paso Robles). For full review see page 77.

87 PasoPort 2007 Portray Ruby California-Style Dessert Wine (Paso Robles). Very sweet in honey and bubbling brown sugar, with a nice fruity core of blackberries and mocha. Could be a little more concentrated and focused, with a simple finish, but it gets the job done with admirable dessert wine hedonism. —S.H.

Price: \$30/500 ml **abv:** 19%

87 PasoPort 2008 Portray Violeta Portuguese-Style Dessert Wine (Paso Robles). Made from authentic Port grape varieties, this dessert wine is saved by the sugar. It's very sweet and honeyed, and even if it's a little one-dimensional, that raspberry and chocolate dimension is pretty good. —S.H.

Price: \$32/500 ml **abv:** 19%

CALIFORNIA ROSÉS

90 La Rochelle 2010 Pinot Noir Rosé (Santa Lucia Highlands). For full review see page 78.

90 Verdad 2010 Sawyer Lindquist Vineyard Grenache Rosé (Edna Valley). Oodles of fresh raspberries, cherries and spices in this zesty young blush wine. It's elaborately rich but oh, so dry and crisp. Just a delight, one of the best rosés of the vintage. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 13%

89 Fort Ross 2010 Fort Ross Vineyard Rosé of Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This is one of the darker, fuller-bodied, richer rosés on the market. It almost has the weight of a red wine. Dry and zesty in acidity, it features powerful flavors of cherries, strawberries, cola and spices. A great wine for beef, pork and tuna. Don't drink it too cold. —S.H.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 14%

87 Cinnabar 2010 Rosé (Paso Robles). Kind of dark in color for a rosé, but dryish, crisply acidic and fine. A blend of Syrah, Petite Sirah and other varieties, it's as full-bodied as a red wine, with tangerine, strawberry, vanilla and cinnamon spice flavors. —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 14.1%

87 Cline 2010 Mourvèdre Rosé (Contra Costa County). For full review see page 80. **Best Buy.**

87 Demetria 2010 Rosé (Santa Ynez Valley). Bubblegummy and fresh in acidity, this rosé tastes like a young Beaujolais, with strawberry and rasp-

berry fruit. It's an enjoyable wine to wash down little tapas plates of olives, ham, salted nuts. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13%

86 Bonny Doon 2010 Vin Gris de Cigare (Central Coast). A fine blush wine for warm weather drinking. Bring on the watermelon, fried chicken, sausages, ham sandwiches. It's slightly sweet and clean in raspberries and vanilla. —S.H.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 12.8%

86 Tolosa 2010 Rosé of Grenache (Edna Valley). With additions of Syrah and Pinot Noir, this blush wine is full-bodied and a little heavy. It has flavors of raspberries, cherries and tangerines, with a needed bite of acidity, and the finish is sweet. —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 13.2%

86 Valley of the Moon 2010 Rosato di Sangiovese (Sonoma County). A dark, medium-bodied rosé, with crisp acidity and firm tannins that could easily double as a Grenache with grilled steak. It's slightly sweet and rich in cherry jam flavor. —S.H.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 13.5%

84 Barefoot NV White Zinfandel (California). A good example of white Zin for its millions of fans. It's off-dry to sweet, with honeyed flavors of raspberries and vanilla. *Best Buy.* —S.H.

Price: \$7 **abv:** NA

84 Merriam Vineyards 2010 Rosé (Sonoma County). With a dark, weird red-orange color, this rosé feels heavy and candied in raspberry and orange fruit. It's a little sweet. —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 14.3%

CALIFORNIA WHITES

PINOT GRIS/GRIGIO

90 Babcock 2010 Naughty Little Hillside Estate Grown Pinot Gris (Sta. Rita Hills). Creamy, lush, a gorgeous Pinot Gris with cotton candy, strawberry and toast flavors and a honeyed finish, balanced by crisp acidity. A lovely white wine at a good price. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.9%

89 Morgan 2010 R&D Franscioni Vineyard Pinot Gris (Santa Lucia Highlands). A rich, savory Pinot Gris that's just a little sweet, and has a slight fizziness that makes it lively. Rich in citrus, tropical fruit, honeysuckle and vanilla flavors, brightened with brilliant acidity, it shows a buttery smokiness from neutral oak. Drink this refreshing wine now. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 14.1%

86 Kenwood 2010 Pinot Gris (Russian River Valley). Clean and vibrant in the mouth, with zesty acidity and brisk flavors of tangerines, Meyer lem-

ons, honey and vanilla. Nice as a cocktail sipper to get the evening started. —S.H.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Armida 2010 Antidote Pinot Gris (Russian River Valley). High, zesty acidity and orange citrus fruit flavors are the hallmarks of this dryish wine. It's a little rustic, but give it the right Vietnamese or Thai food, and it will rise to the occasion. —S.H.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.5%

85 Fat Cat 2009 Pinot Grigio (California). For full review see page 79.

84 J Vineyards & Winery 2010 Pinot Gris (California). What you need to know about this wine is that it's pretty sweet. Straddles the border of off-dry, with sugary pineapple, tangerine and vanilla flavors. —S.H.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 14%

84 Murphy-Goode 2009 Pinot Grigio (California). Simple and sweet, with candied lemon, lime, orange and vanilla flavors. But it's crisp in balancing acidity. At this price, a good cocktail sipper. —S.H.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 13.5%

84 Woodbridge by Robert Mondavi 2010 Pinot Grigio (California). A little sweet and simple in pineapple and peach jam flavors, but adequately balanced with acidity. A good white wine for parties. *Best Buy.* —S.H.

Price: \$8 **abv:** 12%

SAUVIGNON BLANC

92 Alpha Omega 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley). A superb Sauvignon Blanc. The cool vintage gives it brilliant acidity, modest alcohol and dryness, yet it's wonderfully rich in long hangtime citrus, wet stone, green apple, apricot and mineral flavors. Better than the excellent 2008, a white Bordeaux-style wine to drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$36 **abv:** 14.1%

92 Chalk Hill 2009 Estate Sauvignon Blanc (Chalk Hill). When it comes to rich, barrel-influenced Sauvignon Blanc, Chalk Hill is a consistent producer. The last few vintages have been brilliant. So is this 2009. The oak is obviously there in the smoky, buttered toast, but the underlying fruit is ripe in pineapples, limes, peaches and citron fruit, while acidity provides the perfect scour of clean balance. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.9%

91 Wattle Creek 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Yorkville Highlands). For full review see page 77.

89 Sonoma Coast Vineyards 2010 Laguna Vista Vineyards Sur Lees Selection Sauvignon Blanc (Sonoma Coast). This Sauvignon Blanc was made in the Burgundian style, with partial barrel fermentation and aging on the lees. Creaminess marks the texture, yet the underlying wine is rich and racy in pineapples, limes, kiwis and golden mangoes. A

fine example of an oak-aged Sauvignon Blanc, at a great price. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 13.7%

88 Angeline 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Russian River Valley). A beautiful wine, sharp and clean in acidity and savory, with ripe lemon, lime, pineapple and grapefruit citrus flavors. Finishes dry and honeyed, a paradox. —S.H.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.9%

88 Dominican Oaks 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley). A bone-dry, acidic Sauvignon Blanc, just what the doctor ordered in a wine to get the evening started. The flavors of cold steel, lemons, limes and minerals are tart, almost sour, suggesting rich, savory tapas, like sausages, salted nuts, grilled veggies. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13.5%

88 Martin Ray 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Carneros). What a nice Sauvignon Blanc. It's refreshingly dry and crisp in acidity, with a mouthwatering tartness. Yet it's abundant in lemon, lime, green apple and pear flavors. A perfect wine to start the evening as a cocktail, with tapas appetizers. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14.2%

87 Groth 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley). A good, useful Sauvignon Blanc whose high acidity and dryness make it fine for a cocktail sipper, or with Asian fare. The lime, papaya, lemongrass, mineral and spice flavors are rich and stimulating. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14.5%

86 Armida 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Russian River Valley). A nice, brisk Sauvignon Blanc, with refreshing acidity. The citrus, mineral and peach flavors have a touch of gooseberry. A good, dry wine as a cocktail to stimulate the appetite. —S.H.

Price: \$19 **abv:** 14.2%

86 Dry Creek Vineyard 2010 Fumé Blanc (Sonoma County). Nice and dry, with a mouthwatering hit of acidity, and savory lime, green apple, lemon and Asian pear flavors. A crisp, vibrantly clean wine to get the evening started, at a great price. —S.H.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Geyser Peak 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (California). A fine, crisp and clean Sauvignon Blanc at a good price. It's basically dry, with a honeyed edge to the tropical fruit, lime and peach flavors, and shows a good bite of acidity. —S.H.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 13%

86 Matanzas Creek 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Sonoma County). Not quite up there with previous vintages, although they've held the price and that's a good thing. The cold vintage took its toll, making this wine tart and somewhat green and herbal. Shows enough citrus and peach fruit to get by. —S.H.

Price: \$19 **abv:** 14.1%

86 Schug 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Sonoma Coast). There's lots of acidity and green, tangy

gooseberry fruit in this bone-dry Sauvignon Blanc. It's a severe wine, brittle and citrusy, but honeyed in the finish. —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Tolosa 2010 Edna Ranch Sauvignon Blanc (Edna Valley). A little feral in feline notes, almost like a whiff of ammonia, but saved by richer green grass, grapefruit, vanilla and spice flavors. It's still a very dry, acidic, lean wine, but has its place in the repertoire. —S.H.

Price: \$19 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Woodbridge by Robert Mondavi 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (California). A nice Sauvignon Blanc for the price. It's basically dry, with honeysuckle, pineapple, lime, gooseberry and green apple flavors brightened by crisp acidity. Easy to drink at a good price. *Best Buy.* —S.H.

Price: \$8 **abv:** 12.5%

84 Bernardus 2010 Griva Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc (Arroyo Seco). With a hint of oak, this racy Sauvignon Blanc has a strong hint of ammonia riding on top of the citrus, gooseberry, mineral and flower aromas and flavors. Could be a little riper, but it's bone dry and crisp in acidity. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%

84 Hess Select 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (North Coast). An easy-to-drink wine, with a tart tang of gooseberries to the orange, lemon and lime flavors. A good value for a dry, crisply clean sipper. —S.H.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 13.5%

VIOGNIER

92 Chalk Hill 2009 Estate Bottled Viognier (Chalk Hill). A beautiful 100% Viognier, showing the variety's exotic tropical fruit, wildflower and pear flavors wrapped into a texture of firm tannins and adequate acidity. Finishes with tiers of honey, apricot jam, tangerine-infused crème brûlée. Very nice, if high in alcohol. —S.H.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 15.5%

89 a-non-ah-mus 2009 Curtis Vineyard Viognier (Santa Barbara County). Shows the exotic side of Viognier, with tangerine preserve, apricot, tobacco, white flower, golden currant and white pepper flavors that finish absolutely dry and crisp in acidity. Elegant and clean, an interesting wine to pair with a wide variety of ethnic foods. —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 12.2%

88 Tolosa 2010 Edna Ranch Viognier (Edna Valley). Brightened with crisp acidity, this Viognier shows pure, vibrant flavors of tropical fruits, green apples, peaches, honeysuckle flowers and white

pepper. It's a clean, strong wine, lovely for an apéritif. —S.H.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.5%

SPARKLING WINES

92 Sonoma Coast Vineyards 2007 Sparkling (Sonoma Coast). Excellent price for a coastal sparkling wine made from the superior grape varieties of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Rich and ripe in strawberries, limes and vanilla, it has a doughy yeastiness, with crisp acidity and a dry finish. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 12.8%

88 Piper Sonoma NV Blanc de Blancs (Sonoma County). For full review see page 79.

88 Piper Sonoma NV Brut (Sonoma County). For full review see page 79.

OTHER DRY WHITES

93 Sanguis 2009 Lotus of Siam (California). A Rhône-style wine, mostly Roussanne, co-fermented with Viognier. Defining richness, it's elaborate and heady in orange, honey, apricot, sandalwood, anise, vanilla and buttered toast flavors. This full-bodied beauty is a white wine for red wine fans. Don't chill it too much. —S.H.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.2%

92 Qupé 2008 Bien Nacido Vineyard Hillside Estate Roussanne (Santa Maria Valley). Racy acidity gives this wine a brisk, uplifted mouthfeel. It's rich in honeysuckle, citrus and vanilla flavors. This is Qupé's most expensive white wine and a fine example of a California Roussanne. —S.H.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Demetria 2009 Cuvée Papou (Santa Ynez Valley). A refreshing blend of Marsanne and Grenache Blanc, this white wine is rich and elaborate in vanilla, custard, citrus fruits, pears, butterscotch and crème brûlée. For all that, it finishes dry and crisp. A beautiful, California-style wine to try as an alternative to a barrel-aged Chardonnay. —S.H.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 14.1%

91 Sanguis 2009 Uncloudy Day (California). Rich, ripe and flamboyant in tropical fruit, pear, peach, Meyer lemon, orange jam and vanilla spice flavors. Layered, opulent, lush and honeyed, but actually quite dry on the finish, with a burst of acidity. The blend is Chardonnay, Roussanne and Viognier. —S.H.

Price: \$60 **abv:** 14.4%

90 Chalone 2009 Estate Pinot Blanc (Chalone). A lovely wine to try as an interesting alternative to Chardonnay. It's dry and crisp, with a creamy texture housing complex flavors of oranges, limes and pears, with an earthiness suggesting sweet cashews. Chalone's Pinot Blanc has a history of aging beyond all

expectations, so if you're a gambler, hold this one for up to 20 years. —S.H.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 14.5%

90 Domaine Carneros 2009 Pinot Clair White Pinot Noir (Carneros). A rare white Pinot Noir. It's heavy and full-bodied for a white wine, with pronounced strawberry and lime flavors, brightened by crisp acidity and a bracing minerality. It's a very good wine, if a little pricey. —S.H.

Price: \$48 **abv:** 14.1%

90 Dutton-Goldfield 2010 Dutton Ranch Shop Block Pinot Blanc (Russian River Valley). Similar to Chardonnay, but lighter in the mouth, and the flavors veer to tangerines and Meyer lemons. Still, it has the familiar buttered toast, vanilla and caramel richness of a barrel-aged Chard. A dry, acidic finish makes it versatile at the table. —S.H.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 13.5%

90 Hearst Ranch 2009 Three Sisters Cuvée (Paso Robles). A wine for those who want something drier and crisper than the typically over-oaked white Rhône blend. It's smooth, silky and earthy, with just a touch of orange and sandalwood. A very nice, elegant and versatile wine. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 14.3%

90 Qupé 2010 Bien Nacido Cuvée (Santa Maria Valley). An unusual blend of Viognier and Chardonnay, the wine is brilliantly dry and crisp. It's rich and spicy in citrus, tropical fruit and spice flavors, brightened with bracing acidity. Opulent, yet crisp and refreshing. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%

90 Qupé 2010 Marsanne (Santa Ynez Valley). A huge, ripe, opulent wine, rich in orange, butter, peach, honey and spice flavors. Shows great depth and power, yet finishes thoroughly dry and crisp. Should develop bottle complexities over the next six years. Blended with 15% Roussanne. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13%

90 Qupé 2010 Sawyer Lindquist Vineyard Albariño (Edna Valley). A gorgeous white wine, rich and savory. Unoaked, and put through 100% malolactic fermentation, it's honeyed and round, with citrus, spice, green apple, floral and mineral notes. —S.H.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 13%

90 Tessa Marie 2009 Grenache Blanc (Santa Barbara County). Rich and opulent, showing masses of honeydew melon, orange crème, vanilla and spicy flavors. Really seductive, so easy to like. A touch of oak adds just the right note of smoke. Great with roast pork. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 14.1%

89 Thomas Fogarty 2009 Gewürztraminer (Monterey County). A wonderfully interesting Gewürz. Just when it makes you think it's sweet, it withdraws into utter dryness. Teases with tangerine, Asian pear and grapefruit flavors, but then the acids

kick in, as well as a scour of tannins. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 13.1%

88 Chalk Hill 2009 Estate Bottled Sauvignon Gris (Chalk Hill). Sauvignon Gris is not a grape variety officially listed by state authorities, but it is basically a tropically exotic Sauvignon Blanc. This wine is dryish, with flavors of oranges, limes and honey. Crisp acidity balances it. —S.H.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 15.5%

88 Cinnabar 2010 Terrace Vineyard Picpoul (Paso Robles). High in acidity, this wine gets the mouth watering. It's completely dry, with citrus flavors and an astringent hit of tannins. There's no oak influence at all, making it a sophisticated partner to sushi. —S.H.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 13%

88 Tessa Marie 2009 Vermentino (Santa Barbara County). Nicely dry and acidic, giving a clean, scoury mouthfeel to this food-friendly wine. The flavors combine tart citrus fruits with vanilla, yeast, minerals and peppery spices. A crisp cocktail wine to start the meal. —S.H.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Bodega de Edgar 2010 Albariño (Paso Robles). If there's any oak at all on this wine, it takes a very shy role in the background. The stars are ripe citrus and pear fruit, crisp acidity and a limestoney minerality. The finish is honey sweet. —S.H.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 12.5%

86 Chalone 2009 Estate Chenin Blanc (Chalone). With good acidity, this Chenin Blanc has easy, forward flavors of ripe citrus fruits, sweet peas and oaky vanilla. Drink now as an interesting alternative to Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio. —S.H.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 14.1%

86 Dutton-Goldfield 2010 Dutton Ranch Green Valley Vineyard Gewürztraminer (Green Valley). Nice and dry, with spicy citrus and tropical fruit flavors, enhanced with crisp acidity. A bit thin, though, with a watery finish. Ultimately, a disappointment from this fine winery. —S.H.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 13.5%

85 Bernat 2009 Clarity Grenache Blanc (Santa Barbara County). Lots of clean acidity and exotic tropical fruit flavors in this wine, which also shows buttery, toasty, vanilla influences from oak. It's a rich Grenache Blanc, with some less than ripe vegetal notes that detract. —S.H.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.9%

85 Clayhouse 2010 Adobe (Central Coast). A useful white wine, comprised of Viognier, Sauvignon Blanc and several other varieties. It's crisp in acidity, and treads the line between dry and off-dry, with lots of peach, nectarine and honeysuckle flavors. —S.H.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 13%

84 Jacuzzi 2010 Arneis (California). Bone dry and high in acidity, this wine has mineral-dominated flavors of citrus fruits and herbs. It's a good

cocktail wine, and will pair well with spicy Asian-style foods. —S.H.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 14%

SWEET WINES

95 Nicolaysen Family Vineyards 2001 Late Harvest Alisos Vineyard Gewürztraminer (Santa Barbara County). At nearly 10 years of age, this beautiful Gewürz shows how well a good California dessert wine can age. It's still brisk in clean acidity, but is honeyed and sweet, with nearly 19% residual sugar. Shows rich, exotic pineapple, tangerine marmalade, gingerbread, apricot jam, buttered toast, crème brûlée, vanilla cream and spice flavors, leading to a long, deliriously delicious finish. A heady, flamboyantly sweet wine to drink now. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

Price: \$50/375 ml **abv:** 9.5%

94 Nicolaysen Family Vineyards 2002 Late Harvest Bien Nacido Vineyard Pinot Blanc (Santa Maria Valley). For full review see page 74.

92 PasoPort NV Angelica White Port (Paso Robles). For full review see page 77.

85 Woodbridge by Robert Mondavi 2010 Moscato (California). With notable sweetness, this Moscato should be considered a dessert wine. It has sugary flavors of apricots, tangerines and peaches. Crisp acidity provides clean balance. **Best Buy.** —S.H.

Price: \$8 **abv:** 10%

84 Crane Lake 2010 Moscato (California). For full review see page 11. **Best Buy.**

OREGON REDS

PINOT NOIR

94 Domaine Serene 2008 Mark Bradford Vineyard Pinot Noir (Dundee Hills). For full review see page 74.

92 Lemelson 2008 Jerome Reserve Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). The Jerome reserve is exactly what you want and expect in a reserve. Not just bigger, not just more of everything—it has that—but without sacrificing terroir or balance. Supple, veined with red fruits, purple fruits, smoke, earth and barrel toast, the wine moves sinuously across the palate into a full-bore finish. Lots of life ahead. —P.G.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14%

92 Lemelson 2008 Stermer Vineyard Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). A single-vineyard selection Pinot with nerves of steel. Big fruit—blackberry and black cherry—finds itself wrapped in a skin of metal and rock. It's all still primary, but has every indication of developing more subtle and complex flavors as it ages. **Cellar Selection.** —P.G.

Price: \$42 **abv:** 14.2%

92 Vidon Vineyard 2009 Mirabelle Clone 115 Pinot Noir (Chehalem Mountains). Mirabelle is the darkest, chewiest, most tannic of the three clonal selection Pinots offered by Vidon. It's a Pinot in

Cab clothing. Chewy, dense, ripe fruit keeps it all in proportion, a thick black cherry core with rings of chocolate. Think Saturn in a glass. —P.G.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.8%

91 Domaine Serene 2008 Winery Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Dundee Hills). A tight, spicy Pinot with a chocolate heart, this has a lot of aging potential. The fruit and tannins are tightly wound at the moment, with a lavish coating of milk chocolate from the barrel aging. Cellar it another 5–6 years and let it knit together. **Cellar Selection.** —P.G.

Price: \$75 **abv:** 14.5%

91 Lemelson 2008 Meyer Vineyard Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). Lemelson makes a consistent lineup of single vineyard Pinots, and with a track record extending back a decade or more, the results are predictably satisfying. The Meyer has a solid core of blackberry and black cherry, highlighted with a lining of licorice, scents of dried herb and citrusy acids. Beautifully styled and riding on perfectly ripened fruit, it will be hard to keep your hands off it, but it can cellar for 5–6 more years. —P.G.

Price: \$42 **abv:** 14%

91 Vidon Vineyard 2009 Brigita Clone 777 Pinot Noir (Chehalem Mountains). Firm and spicy, this well-crafted wine has the supple fruit and steely tannic spine to evolve nicely over a decade or more. Purple berries, whiffs of moist earth, a suggestion of brioche and unexpected chocolate truffle highlights keep it interesting all through the finish. —P.G.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.8%

90 Expression 44° 2009 Roserock Vineyard Pinot Noir (Eola-Amity Hills). This single-vineyard bottling is like a reserve-level companion to the other 2009 Oregon Pinot from Expression Vineyards. The fruit is tart and sappy, a concentration of raspberry and cranberry juice, with a lick of chocolate threading through the finish. Young and tannic, this will improve with a few more years in bottle. —P.G.

Price: \$65 **abv:** 14.1%

90 Lemelson 2009 Mt. Richmond Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). Forward and accessible, this wine has broadly displayed flavors of berry and milk chocolate, along with more subtle details of cayenne and herb. The nuances sneak up on you, but make for a fascinating ride. Drink now or give it another 3–4 years. —P.G.

Price: \$42 **abv:** 14.5%

90 Lemelson 2008 Thea's Selection Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). Thea's, the blended offering in Lemelson's stable of single vineyard Pinots, advances the idea that blends are often the most complete wines in a lineup. Though each of Lemelson's single vineyard wines has its own unique particularity, this wine takes the best of them and gracefully pulls them all together. A gentle mix of spice, floral, mocha, forest and

chocolate streaks, it is buttressed with firm purple fruits and polished tannins. —P.G.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 13.5%

90 Terrapin Cellars 2009 Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). What a treat to find a Pinot Noir this expressive, dense and polished at this price point. The density, black fruits, herbal threads, thick tannins and the overall mass of the wine belie the rather modest alcohol. But however this was done, it was well done, and the wine has muscle, verve, cherry and coffee liqueur, earthy power and impact. *Editors' Choice.* —P.G.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 13.4%

90 Vidon Vineyard 2009 3-Clones Pinot Noir (Chehalem Mountains). Spicy and bright, this young wine nicely displays the Chehalem Mountains mix of earth, pine needle, mountain fruit and crisp tannins. It has the grip and authority to take on a big, oily, fresh-caught salmon steak. —P.G.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 14.8%

89 Oak Knoll 2006 Red Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Oregon). For full review see page 79.

89 Vidon Vineyard 2009 Hans Clone Pomard Pinot Noir (Chehalem Mountains). Hans is not really a clone; it's a block in the vineyard. The clone is Pomard; the wine is deep, earthy, tannic and not afraid to show its wild, herbal, forest flavors. It's a classic Oregon style, a little bitter, but nicely sculpted and crisply defined. —P.G.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 14.8%

89 Vidon Vineyard 2008 3-Clones Pinot Noir (Chehalem Mountains). There's an intriguing, earthy, dusty roughness underscoring the fruit in this blend of three different clones. Vidon is a tiny mom and pop operation, with a good feel for the dirt in their Chehalem Mountains AVA. Fragrant and well-evolved, with notes of barnyard, pie cherry, milk chocolate and coffee truffle. —P.G.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 14.8%

88 Expression 44° 2009 Pinot Noir (Eola-Amity Hills). A spicy, bold, fruit-powered take on Pinot Noir. William Hill is the proprietor. The wine comes across as sort of a California-Oregon hybrid, mixing the slightly herbal, moderately tannic Oregon grapes with a fruit-forward, cranberry core. —P.G.

Price: \$36 **abv:** 14.1%

88 J. Scott Cellars 2009 Susan's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Southern Oregon). A rustic but flavorful Pinot Noir from Southern Oregon. Plenty of stem and earth flavors, along with pie cherry fruit, and a wide wash of chocolate from the barrels. It's all rendered in broad, flavorful strokes. —P.G.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.8%

88 Longplay 2009 Lia's Vineyard Jory Bench Reserve Pinot Noir (Chehalem Mountains). Though color is no indication of ultimate quality, or even ageability, with Pinot Noir, this may set a world record for lightness in a reserve. The flavors mix strawberry, raspberry and chocolate in roughly equal

proportions. Color aside, it has medium concentration and grip, and should drink well over the next five or six years. —P.G.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Sno Road 2008 Reserve Pinot Noir (Eola-Amity Hills). With just a bit more concentration than the regular 2008 bottling from Sno Road, this carries the same cranberry/raspberry/cherry flavors, with a touch of sweetness behind sharp acidity. There is no trace of new oak barrels, which might add a welcome flash to the finish. —P.G.

Price: \$53 **abv:** 14%

88 Spindrift 2009 Lewisburg Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). Young and forward, with a core of pretty sour cherry fruit, wrapped in a shell of earth and tannin. Not yet knit together, but proportionate, with good components. —P.G.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 14.7%

87 Oak Knoll 2008 Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). For full review see page 79.

87 Primarius 2009 Pinot Noir (Oregon). Stiff and fairly tannic, this includes some fruit from Oregon's tiny Red Hill AVA. Brambly wild berry highlights, bright and firm, lead into a finish annotated with baking chocolate. —P.G.

Price: \$17 **abv:** NA

87 Red Door 2009 Pinot Noir (Oregon). A pleasant, broadly fruity wine, already soft and on the road to maturity. Light flavors of strawberry dominate, with just enough acidity and tannin to give it some oomph in the finish. —P.G.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Sno Road 2008 Pinot Noir (Eola-Amity Hills). Approachable with pretty cherry and rose petal flavors, this wine finds its spine via a streak of herb and tannin. Dried leaves, a hint of granite, and persistent berry flavors suggest that it can be cellared for at least 6–8 years. —P.G.

Price: \$43 **abv:** 13.3%

86 Montinore 2008 Graham's Block 7 Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). Light in color and weight, this has forward, cranberry-flavored fruit, backed with some herbal tannins. Pine needle bitters rim the finish. —P.G.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 13.6%

86 Sno Road 2007 Pinot Noir (Eola-Amity Hills). Moderately herbal and tannic, with tight cranberry and pomegranate fruit tucked inside the leaf and stem flavors. That said, this perfectly captures the terroir of the Eola-Amity Hills AVA. If there is a classic Oregon style of Pinot, this would be it. —P.G.

Price: \$43 **abv:** 14%

86 Spindrift 2009 Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). Light and balanced, this recalls a village Pinot from, say, the Côte Chalonnaise. Simple, tart red

fruits, some threads of earth and fungus and a modest, balanced, proportionate finish. —P.G.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 13.5%

86 Spindrift 2009 Croft Vineyards Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). Modest but firm fruit flavors mix cranberry, salmonberry and even a bit of rhubarb, with very light tannins and a finish more herbal than fruity. —P.G.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 14.1%

85 Longplay 2009 Lia's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Chehalem Mountains). There is already a hint of tawiness to this wine (second bottle— first was TCA-infected) that suggests a short life ahead. It's charming at the moment, surprisingly far along the aging curve, but with pretty cherry fruit and some sandalwood in the tannins. Drink up. —P.G.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.5%

85 Montinore 2009 Estate Reserve Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). Cool-climate flavors, just barely ripe, create a light wine overloaded with herb and stem flavors. The fruit is thin and pale, rhubarb and cranberry. —P.G.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 13.8%

85 Spindrift 2008 Reserve Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley). For a reserve from what is generally acclaimed as a stellar vintage in the Willamette Valley, this wine seems thin and watery. Watermelon and raspberry fruit leads into an acidic, one-dimensional finish. —P.G.

Price: \$38 **abv:** 14%

OTHER DRY REDS

90 Quady North 2007 Flagship Syrah (Applegate Valley). Quady North's Flagship is what the owners consider the best lot of wine of the year. Generously slathered in toasty new oak, this very limited (two barrel) reserve from the estate's Frank's Vineyard is not the blockbuster of the previous vintage, but shows exceptional winemaking skills. Black cherry fruit is wrapped in woody tannins, a yin-yang combination that works by dissonance rather than harmony. —P.G.

Price: \$65 **abv:** 14%

89 Del Rio 2009 Claret (Rogue Valley). A very nicely composed blend of 52% Merlot, 32% Malbec and 16% Cabernet Sauvignon. It works well, and there is complexity also—a textural weaving of spice, herb, berry, rock and tannins. Good concentration and a hint of clove in the aftertaste. —P.G.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 13.7%

89 J. Scott Cellars 2008 Syrah (Rogue Valley). Aromas of spice cake, licorice, moist earth, pie cherries and kirsch, with flavors that follow suit. A luxurious wine, bursting with flavor, tannic and just a bit pruned. This is a love it or hate it style; you pick. —P.G.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 14.3%

87 Abacela NV Vintner's Blend #11 (Southern Oregon). Juicy, sappy, with forward berry and spice flavors, this 14-grape, nonvintage red is a

Price: \$16 abv: 13.5%

87 Del Rio 2008 Merlot (Rogue Valley).

Price: \$28 abv: 13.6%

87 J. Scott Cellars 2009 Grenache (Rogue Valley).

Price: \$25 abv: 14.8%

87 J. Scott Cellars 2009 Petite Sirah (Rogue Valley).

Price: \$26 abv: 14.5%

87 Quady North 2008 4-2,A Syrah (Rogue Valley).

Price: \$25 abv: 13.5%

86 Del Rio 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Rogue Valley).

Price: \$28 abv: 13.2%

85 Abacela 2008 Malbec (Southern Oregon).

Price: \$25 abv: 13.5%

OREGON WHITES

CHARDONNAY

92 Domaine Serene 2008 Etoile Vineyard Dijon Clones Chardonnay (Dundee Hills).

Price: \$45 abv: 14.4%

92 Lemelson 2008 Reserve Chardonnay (Willamette Valley).

Choice

Price: \$25

Editors'

abv: 13.5%

91 Longplay 2008 Lia's Vineyard Jory Slope Chardonnay (Chehalem Mountains).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$20

abv: 13.6%

90 Adelsheim 2009 Caitlin's Reserve Chardonnay (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$40

abv: 13.9%

90 Mythology 2009 Chardonnay (Eola-Amity Hills).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$20

abv: 13.5%

88 Del Rio 2009 Chardonnay (Rogue Valley).

Price: \$20

abv: 13.7%

88 Melrose Vineyards 2010 Chardonnay (Umpqua Valley).

Price: \$18

abv: 14.1%

PINOT GRIS

93 David Hill 2010 Estate Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$16

abv: NA

91 Lange 2010 Reserve Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Ed-

itors' Choice

Price: \$22

abv: 12.9%

91 Pudding River 2010 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley). *frizzante*

Editors' Choice

Price: \$16

abv: 12.5%

91 Wy'East Vineyards 2010 Pinot Gris (Columbia Gorge).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$18

abv: 11.8%

90 Lange 2010 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$16

abv: 12.9%

90 Terrapin Cellars 2010 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Best Buy

Price: \$13

abv: 12.8%

89 Left Coast 2009 The Orchards Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$16

abv: 13.5%

88 Provincial Vineyards 2010 Single Vineyard Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$15

abv: 13.1%

87 Dion 2010 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$13

abv: 12.9%

87 Lumos 2010 Rudolfo Vineyard Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$17 abv: 13.7%

87 Lumos 2010 Temperance Hill Vineyard Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$20 abv: 13.4%

87 Oak Knoll 2008 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley). *Best Buy*

86 Spindrift 2010 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$15 abv: 13%

86 Van Duzer 2010 Estate Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$16 abv: 13.1%

PINOT BLANC

87 Château Bianca 2009 Estate Pinot Blanc (Willamette Valley).

Best Buy

Price: \$12 abv: 12.5%

87 J. Scott Cellars 2010 Pinot Blanc (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$15 abv: 13%

87 Spindrift 2010 Pinot Blanc (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$15 abv: 12.2%

OTHER DRY WHITES

92 Quady North 2010 Pistoleta (Rogue Valley).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$19 abv: 13%

91 Quady North 2009 Ox Block Viognier (Applegate Valley).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$25 abv: 14%

90 Abacela 2010 Albariño (Umpqua Valley).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$18 abv: 13.1%

90 Melrose Vineyards 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Umpqua Valley).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$18 abv: 13.4%

89 Melrose Vineyards 2010 Viognier (Umpqua Valley).

Price: \$18 abv: 13.1%

88 Montinore 2010 Gewürztraminer (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$15 abv: 12.9%

85 Lumos 2010 Temperance Hill Vineyard Gewürztraminer (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$19 abv: 12.3%

85 Sno Road 2009 Echo West Vineyard Dry Style Muscat Canelli (Columbia Valley).

Price: \$24 abv: 14%

RIESLING

95 Trisaetum 2010 Estates Reserve Riesling (Ribbon Ridge).

Price: \$32 abv: 11%

93 Trisaetum 2010 Coast Range Dry Riesling (Yamhill-Carlton District).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$24 abv: NA

92 Chehalem 2009 Corral Creek Riesling (Chehalem Mountains).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$24 abv: 12.4%

92 Penner-Ash 2009 Riesling (Willamette Valley).

Editors' Choice

Price: \$18 abv: NA

91 Chehalem 2009 Reserve Dry Riesling (Ribbon Ridge).

Price: \$21 abv: 12.7%

91 Elk Cove 2009 Estate Riesling (Willamette Valley).

Price: \$19 abv: 12%

91 Lemelson 2009 Dry Riesling (Willamette Valley).

Selection

Price: \$20 abv: 12.5%

91 love & squalor 2009 Riesling (Willamette Valley).

Cellar

the same tart and tasty mix of acid and sugar, with lemony fruit and floral highlights. Really tasty. —P.G.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 11.4%

90 Alexana 2010 Revana Vineyard Riesling (Dundee Hills). Fragrant with orange blossom and tart, tangerine-based fruit. The barely-perceptible residual sugar is listed at 0.53%. Solid winemaking by Lynn Penner-Ash, as usual. —P.G.

Price: \$28 **abv:** NA

90 Oak Knoll 2008 Semi-Sweet Riesling (Oregon). For full review see page 80. *Best Buy.*

90 Ponzi 2010 Riesling (Willamette Valley). Full, round, tart and spicy, this is easily approachable and ready to drink immediately. Quite flavorful, with ginger and lime highlights. *Best Buy.* —P.G.

Price: \$15 **abv:** NA

90 Trisaetum 2010 Coast Range Riesling (Yamhill-Carlton District). A juicy blend of fruits, the acidity nicely cut by the residual sugar (2.12%). Stone fruits, white peach, tangerine, nectarine, and more, all cut with enough acidity to give it precision. —P.G.

Price: \$24 **abv:** NA

90 Trisaetum 2010 Ribbon Ridge Vineyard Dry Riesling (Ribbon Ridge). Beautifully balanced, with a creamy texture that pushes the wine into deeper and deeper layers. A mix of stone fruits, ripe citrus, brightness and purity of young vines, with .95 residual sugar that nicely rounds out the finish. —P.G.

Price: \$24 **abv:** NA

89 Brooks 2009 Ara Riesling (Eola-Amity Hills). A lot selection; achingly dry but not just simple lemon juice. There's good concentration and a mix of mineral, rind, light citrus flesh, with excellent length and a finishing hint of honeysuckle. —P.G.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 12%

89 Daedalus 2009 Maresh Vineyard Riesling (Dundee Hills). The Maresh Vineyard is one of the oldest sites in the region, and this wine is sourced from 40-year-old vines. One third was fermented in neutral oak; the rest in stainless. It is high-toned, with hints of paste in the nose, and an elevated palate. The fruit emphasizes orange, nectarine, tangerine and polished acidity. —P.G.

Price: \$21 **abv:** NA

89 Trisaetum 2010 Ribbon Ridge Vineyard Riesling (Ribbon Ridge). This is off-dry, with residual sugar at 2.4%. A barrel selection, with ripe flavors of lush tree fruits and moderately sweet, candied citrus. It's well balanced against the acidity. —P.G.

Price: \$24 **abv:** NA

88 Argyle 2009 Riesling (Eola-Amity Hills). Full-bodied, juicy, off-dry and forward. Immediately approachable and plenty flavorful, with streaks of tea, lemon and tangerine. —P.G.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 12.8%

88 Brooks 2010 Sweet P Riesling (Eola-Amity Hills). Lots of acidity behind the the

5.4% residual sugar—a highwire balancing act. There is a fascinating tension between the acid and the sugar, filling the mouth with sweet/sour fruity and slightly grainy sugars. —P.G.

Price: \$22 **abv:** NA

87 Montinore 2009 Almost Dry Riesling (Willamette Valley). This lives up to its labeling; most folks would call this one dry. The almost part suggests just enough residual sugar to cut through the piercing acidity. It's got a crunchy apple flavor, with plenty of lip-smacking tartness still in play. Made with organic grapes. —P.G.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 11.7%

SWEET WHITES

90 Daedalus 2009 Maresh Vineyard Dessert Riesling (Dundee Hills). For those with a serious sweet tooth, this checks in with residual sugar at 23%! Decadent, sugary, intense, and expansive, with a mix of honey, butterscotch and caramel. —P.G.

Price: \$25/375 ml **abv:** NA

88 Chehalem 2010 Sext Riesling (Ribbon Ridge). A delightful wine, done in a sparkling Moscato style, but with Riesling grapes. It's delicious, low alcohol and moderately sweet—perfect for today's consumer. Just the right amount of fizz, and a pleasing orange character. —P.G.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 7%

88 Elk Cove 2009 Late Harvest Riesling (Willamette Valley). Low alcohol and medium-sweet sugar levels belie what is a more sophisticated wine than the usual tasting room Riesling. Here is real depth and complexity, that walks the line with sweet citrus, sugary peach and finishing notes of black tea. —P.G.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 8.8%

85 Argyle 2009 Nuss haus Riesling (Eola-Amity Hills). This has the acidity to complement the 7.2% residual sugar, but it flattens out in the mouth. As a result, it loses the freshness, and feels a little dull, leaving a sugary aftertaste. —P.G.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 8.9%

OTHER U.S. WINES

RED WINES

88 Bloomer Creek 2007 Vintner's Selection Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Layered on both the nose and palate, this standout Finger Lakes Pinot is tart and fresh, yet full with concentrated sour cherry and red plum flavors. Firmly structured with bright acidity and a delightful spray of violet perfume on the finish. —A.I.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 13%

88 Comtesse Thérèse 2007 Aquebogue Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (North Fork of Long Island). Accents of vanilla, fresh mint and graham cracker crumbs add a touch of complexity to the ripe black plum and cherry flavors on Comtesse

Thérèse's Aquebogue Estate. Elegantly structured with a brisk, lean acidity and soft, powdery tannins. —A.I.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 12.5%

88 Damiani 2008 Meritage (Finger Lakes). Shades of graphite and forest floor add subtle nuance to the layers of blackberry fruit on this concentrated, elegant Meritage. Rich in flavor yet lean in profile with a bright, clean acidity, it finishes on a graham cracker and chocolate note. —A.I.

Price: \$27 **abv:** 13%

88 Wölffer 2007 Cassango Cabernet Sauvignon (Long Island). Rich with fleshy black plum and cherry flavors, Wölffer's Cassango meshes deeply concentrated fruit with swathes of smoke, violets and darkly toasted oak. Bright, brisk acidity carries a long finish marked by a coating of soft, powdery tannins. —A.I.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 13.7%

87 Comtesse Thérèse 2007 Canadian Oak Cabernet Sauvignon (North Fork of Long Island). Darkly toasted Canadian oak reveals itself through layers of vanilla, smoke and burnt sugar on the nose of this lovely North Fork Cab. On the palate, bright acidity shines through a concentrated black cherry palate flecked with hints of dark caramel and freshly cut mint. —A.I.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 12.5%

87 Comtesse Thérèse 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (North Fork of Long Island). Hints of caramelized soy sauce that linger amidst layers of smoke and char on this black cherry Cab pack an irresistible punch of umami. On the palate, rich fruit is accented by ripe bramble notes and a spray of fresh herbs that lead to a soft, powdery finish. —A.I.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 13.5%

87 Shaw 2007 Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Alluring on the nose with a bouquet of brandy and sweet maraschino cherries, this Pinot bursts with ripe red cherry flavors accented by hints of violet, cocoa and spice. Bright acidity and a coating of soft, powdery tannins lead to a persistent sour cherry finish. —A.I.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 13%

86 Canyon Wind 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Grand Valley). Tones of black cherry and cassis are pure and pristine on this fresh, herb-infused Cabernet. Vibrant acidity and soft, furry tannins on the midpalate give way to a finish that's flecked with spice and menthol. —A.I.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 13.9%

86 Canyon Wind 2006 IV (Grand Valley). While ripe with black fruit and hints of caramel, forest bramble and black pepper, this Bordeaux-style blend (with a hefty dose of Petit Verdot) boasts an elegant structure and clean acidity with just a hint of green on the finish. —A.I.

Price: \$100 **abv:** 13.1%

86 Heron Hill 2007 Ingle Vineyard Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Scented with ripe black fruit, darkly toasted oak and a hint of gingersnap, there's an irresistible complexity to this medium-bodied Pinot.

BUYINGguide

On the palate, smoky oak notes and strident, yet finely grained tannins envelop flavors of fleshy red plum. —A.I.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 12.5%

86 Silver Thread 2008 Blackbird Cabernet Franc-Cabernet Sauvignon (Finger Lakes). Smoke and bramble fringe vibrant cassis and cranberry flavors on this rich, round wine. Made predominantly from Cabernet Franc, it's a touch plush and soft, but boasts supple tannins and an elegant violet and vanilla finish. —A.I.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 12.8%

86 Standing Stone 2006 Pinnacle (Finger Lakes). Hints of fresh herb and pencil lead add dimension to the pristine black plum flavors on this pleasant Bordeaux-style Blend. Bright cranberry juice acidity and soft, talc-like tannins in the midpalate lead to a rich, cassis finish. —A.I.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 12.2%

85 Canyon Wind 2009 47-Ten (Grand Valley). Sweet and savory are juxtaposed on this bold, full-bodied Red Blend. Plush, sweet black fruit and violet petals contrast the briney, soy sauce notes and big, chunky tannins that drive to a finish that ends just a tad hot. —A.I.

Price: \$13 **abv:** 13.8%

85 Standing Stone 2007 Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Sweet on the nose with aromas of sour cherry syrup and darkly toasted wood, this Pinot is soft and pleasant with an unabashedly fruity palate. Rich and concentrated, it balances ripe cherry and cranberry flavors with a backbone of acidity and oak. —A.I.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 12.3%

85 Two Rivers 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Grand Valley). This is a big, bold Cab, ripe with pulpy black fruit flavors marked with a rustic spray of dried herbs and bramble. The fruit verges a bit on the overripe, but it would be an excellent companion to steak or lamb. —A.I.

Price: \$20 **abv:** 14.3%

84 Atwater 2008 Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Seductively sweet on the nose with aromas of sweet cherry preserves and vanilla, this fruity, forward Pinot is rich on the palate with concentrated flavors of plum compote and dried sour cherries. Bright acidity and a coating of soft, smooth tannins help keep the structure intact. —A.I.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 12.5%

84 Castello di Borghese 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (North Fork of Long Island). Juicy, ripe, black fruit infused with vanilla and toasted oak are promising on this intensely concentrated North Fork Cabernet, but are hindered by green stem and leaf notes that trail from start to finish. The puckery, tart finish ends with a mouthful of big, chunky tannins. —A.I.

Price: \$42 **abv:** 12.5%

84 Glenora 2009 Meritage (Finger Lakes). Sweetly scented with rich blackberry pie and vanilla, Glenora's Meritage is surprisingly dry on the

palate with lean, bright raspberry and bramble tones. Fine-grained tannins add structure, but overall, the finish falls a bit short. —A.I.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 12.5%

RIESLING

88 Chateau Lafayette Reneau 2009 Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes). Tangerine skins, fresh pears and a hint of petrol combine into an invigorating perfume on this fascinating Riesling. While initially soft with white peach and floral notes, the palate turns zippy and fresh with a slate- and chalk- laced minerality and a clean, lemony finish. —A.I.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 12%

88 Sheldrake Point 2009 Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes). Dainty aromas of fresh apple and freesia are juxtaposed gorgeously against a striking tinge of petrol. While initially soft and honeyed, Sheldrake's Dry Riesling is remarkably lean with a steely minerality and focused, lime-inflected acidity. —A.I.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 11.8%

87 Fox Run NV Drink New York Riesling (Finger Lakes). First impressions of fresh apple and lemon take a dark and mysterious turn amidst layers of smoke and petrol in this multifaceted wine. A hint of white pepper brightens concentrated apple flavors in the midpalate, leading to a pleasantly astringent black tea finish. **Best Buy.** —A.I.

Price: \$10 **abv:** 12%

87 Hosmer Winery 2009 Riesling (Cayuga Lake). Savory on the nose with pressed apple notes brightened by a dash of coriander spice, this semi-sweet Riesling is brisk with a lemony acidity and concentrated, honey-kissed apple flavors. Unusually spiced, it's a tempting companion for lighter South Indian fare. **Best Buy.** —A.I.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 11.4%

87 Red Newt Cellars 2009 Riesling (Finger Lakes). Zesty lime skins meld with sweet honey and yellow florals on the nose of this semisweet Riesling. It's gorgeously concentrated yet elegant with a sheer, mineral midpalate and a hint of spice on the finish. **Best Buy.** —A.I.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 11.7%

86 Lucas Vineyards 2009 Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes). Freshly scented of apple and yellow peaches, this fairly dry Riesling gains softness from a sweet white grapefruit juice note. Brisk with a lemon pith astringency and notes of slate and chalk that linger through a clean, mineral finish. —A.I.

Price: \$14 **abv:** 11.5%

85 Hosmer Winery 2009 Dry Riesling (Cayuga Lake). Just a shade off-dry, Hosmer's Dry Riesling boasts pleasant fresh apple and pear flavors embellished with a pronounced layer of smoke and

spice on the nose and palate. Fresh and clean with a bright, lemony acidity. —A.I.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 11.7%

85 Lucas Vineyards 2009 Reserve Riesling (Finger Lakes). Fragrant of lemons and lime with a spray of fresh apple blossoms, this single-vineyard Riesling made from 30-year-old vines is dry on the palate with pleasant apple and pear flavors. Brisk and clean with lingering citrus acidity. —A.I.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 11%

GEWÜRZTRAMINER

87 Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards 2009 Gewürztraminer (Finger Lakes). Heady with characteristic scents of lychee, roses and savory spice, this dry Gewürztraminer is luscious on the palate with soft ripe melon and peach nectar notes. A hint of black tea leaf astringency helps to tame all the fruit and floral ebullience. —A.I.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 12%

86 Keuka Spring 2009 Gewürztraminer (Finger Lakes). Sweet yuzu, tangerine and black tea leaves perfume this intriguing off-dry Gewürztraminer. Melon, lychee and citrus flavors are voluptuous and ripe, but bright acidity and spice notes on the midpalate keep it in balance. —A.I.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 13%

86 Prejean 2009 Semi-Dry Gewürztraminer (Finger Lakes). A veritable bouquet of jasmine and orange blossoms, this off-dry Gewürztraminer hits the tongue with a delightful prickle of effervescence. Soft and rich with juicy melon and peach flavors, it finishes on a sweet, spicy iced tea note. —A.I.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 13%

85 Rooster Hill 2009 Estate Gewürztraminer (Finger Lakes). Savory in style with an earthy, nut-skin aroma that wafts amidst sweet apple and tangerine notes, this off-dry wine doesn't boast a lot of typical Gewürztraminer characteristics, but it's a pleasant, easygoing treat for everyday. —A.I.

Price: \$17 **abv:** 12.7%

84 Belhurst 2009 Gewürztraminer (Finger Lakes). While smoky on the nose with a slightly dusty, white floral perfume, this off-dry Gewürztraminer is quite pretty on the palate with sweet white peach and lemon flavors accented with orange blossoms and an elegant tangerine pith finish. —A.I.

Price: \$19 **abv:** 12.7%

84 Knapp 2009 Sunrise Hill Vineyard Dry Gewürztraminer (Cayuga Lake). Fragrant of spiced apples and yellow florals, this dry, medium-bodied Gewürztraminer is sunny and bright on the palate with high-toned apple and honey flavors. —A.I.

Price: \$15 **abv:** 11.5%

CHARDONNAY

85 Rooster Hill 2009 Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Layers of smoke, toast and savory apples on the nose strike a contrast with the sweet melon

and apple flavors on the palate of this dry, full-bodied Chardonnay. Reverberates to a rich, salted butter and toast note on the finish. —A.I.

Price: \$15

abv: 13.9%

84 Hunt Country Vineyards 2009 Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Clean and fresh with hints of underripe mango, fresh apples and lemon, this dry, medium-bodied Chardonnay is pleasantly brisk but hindered by a slightly soapy floral note in the midpalate and bitterness on the finish. —A.I.

Price: \$13

abv: 12.5%

84 Lucas Vineyards 2009 Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Hints of rich, sweet butter mesh with fresh apple and pear on the nose and palate of this dry, medium bodied Chardonnay. Lemon-lime acidity adds freshness and verve to an otherwise creamy, buttery finish. —A.I.

Price: \$14

abv: 12%

SPARKLING WINES

86 Dr. Konstantin Frank 2005 Chateau Frank Brut (Finger Lakes). Sweet brioche and berry aromas meld with fresh apples, violets and mushroom on the nose and palate of this *méthode champenoise* sparkling. Profusely creamy with an intensely mouthfilling mousse, it's on the sweeter side of brut, but balanced by acidity and pleasant astringency on the finish. —A.I.

Price: \$25

abv: 12.5%

85 Dr. Konstantin Frank 2006 Chateau Frank Blanc de Blancs (Finger Lakes). Bright apple and lemon with a touch of freshly baked bread and biscuit make for a lovely bouquet on this *méthode champenoise* Blanc de Blancs. Full bodied with a thick, ebullient foam, it's balanced by a fresh acidity and touch of sweetness on the finish. —A.I.

Price: \$30

abv: 12.5%

OTHER WHITES

86 Dr. Konstantin Frank 2009 Rkatsiteli (Finger Lakes). Beautiful on the nose with sweet notes of honey tangerine and marmalade, Dr. Frank's 2009 Rkatsiteli is leaner than in previous vintages, but bright with fresh navel orange peels and a crisp, clean acidity. Finishes quite long with a delightful orange pith astringency. —A.I.

Price: \$15

abv: 11%

85 Dr. Konstantin Frank 2010 Grüner Veltliner (Finger Lakes). Refreshing on the nose and palate with vibrant notes of freshly cut grass, tart gooseberries and underripe melon, this unusual Finger Lakes Grüner has a squeaky clean, lemon-lime vitality that makes it an excellent seafood pairing. —A.I.

Price: \$20

abv: 12%

BEER

TRIPEL THE PLEASURE

While it's generally beneficial to present a clearly defined style on beer labels, there are exceptions—styles that might just cause a bit more confusion. IPAs and Stouts are pretty standard these days, and so are the “imperial” or “double” iterations of these offerings. Consumers understand what to expect—that “double” pretty much means two times the overall experience in terms of flavor, strength and intensity of profile. So what happens when people come across a Tripel? Will it make you combust on the spot upon first swallow from sensory overload?

Obviously that won't happen, but I wonder how many people shy away from the style, thinking that it's just going to be far too overwhelming. It's a shame, because although these beers aren't short on strength they represent some of the most complex and well-crafted beers available today.

Tripel is a classic Belgian Trappist style that has since found respect and interpretation from brewers across the world. It stems from part of the brewing process in which brewers use up to three times the amount of malt than the standard Trappist beer to produce the strongest beer in their lineup. These brews are big and powerful with thick heads, intense aromas and flavors: Belgian yeast accents and a bit of sweetness are coupled with balancing bitterness and alcoholic bite. Though the typical alcohol range is between 8 and 12% abv, the best achieve a balance so that it is not as noticeable as one would imagine.

I've also included a handful of other wheat beer reviews for those who might be looking for a tamer, more approachable experience. Both are great for different occasions, so don't be afraid to take the plunge for tripel the fun when the mood strikes.

Prost!

—LAUREN BUZZEO

TRIPELS

98 Westmalle Tripel (Belgian Tripel; Brouwerij Westmalle, Belgium). A classic Belgian tripel that is truly the benchmark of the style. It pours a hazy golden color with a thick off-white head that shows serious staying power in the glass. The aromas are fairly intense with fruity notes of banana and stone fruit at the forefront and supporting aromas of sweet spice, yeast and a touch of candi sugar. The full and creamy mouth offers more of the same rich flavors as the nose suggests, with a great spice and lemony hop characteristic remaining on the long finish.

Price: \$6/330 ml

abv: 9.5%

93 Samuel Adams Barrel Room Collection New World Tripel (Belgian-style Tripel; The Boston Beer Company, MA). For full review see page 80.

93 The Bruery Trade Winds Tripel (Belgian-Style Tripel; The Bruery, CA). A pale orange color in the glass, it starts off with a thick white head that exhibits good retention. Attractive scents of fresh lemon supremes, sweet grass, clean wheat, yeast and basil all welcome you into the glass, promising a refreshing experience despite the higher alcohol. Cleansing carbonation and a great earthy spice character lift the medium-weight mouthfeel and keeps things light and brisk on the dry finish. Well balanced and extremely drinkable.

Price: \$12/750 ml

abv: 8.1%

WHEAT BEERS

86 Shiner 102 Double Wheat (American Pale Wheat Ale; Spoetzl Brewery, TX). This clear, medium-gold-colored brew exhibits a clean malt core with supporting notes of raw dough and sugar cane. The carbonation is high and cleanses the sweet palate, with a lingering soft hop character on the end.

Price: \$7/12 oz 6 pack

abv: 6.2%

86 Tap Room No. 21 Brewing Co Moe's Backroom Wheat Beer (American Pale Wheat Ale; Tap Room Brewing Company, NY). Its clear golden appearance and quickly dissipating frothy white head introduce this beer as an easy-drinking option. Faint aromas of wheat and sweet citrus appear on the nose. The mouth is lighter in weight with brisk carbonation and a clean, short finish.

Price: \$9/12 oz 6 pack

abv: 4.5%

85 Roscoe's Hop House Original Summer Wheat (American Pale Wheat Ale; Brewmaster's Choice, NY). Light and easy drinking with aromas and flavors of husky wheat, green banana rind and soft tart citrus. Cleansing carbonation keeps the mouth bright and brisk, the flavors not really showing much staying power through the close.

Price: \$9/12 oz 6 pack

abv: 4.5%

SPIRITS

STRANGE BREW: COFFEE AND TEA LIQUEURS

Odds are, you know (or are!) someone who obsesses over their morning beverage, whether that be coffee or tea. It's almost become a sport to hunt down the best frothy triple-iced-mocha-latte concoction or Yerba Maté leaf blend.

So perhaps it was only a matter of time before that level of obsession started to percolate around the growing ranks of coffee and tea liqueurs.

One distiller of note in this category is St. George Spirits, perhaps best known for the Hangar One vodka line. Apparently, they have some sort of mad-scientist lab going on over in Alameda, California, where they are brewing up innovative spirits, including both coffee and tea liqueurs.

Consider, for example, the Firelit Coffee line, made with top-quality coffee beans from local

Bay Area micro-roasters. According to the brand's founder, Jeff Kessinger, the process for making the liqueur is as intense as a shot of double espresso: Coffee is cold-brewed for 24 hours, then blended with unaged Chardonnay brandy. Meanwhile, a second lot of Chardonnay brandy is infused with coffee grounds, and distilled into a clear, high-proof coffee brandy. Then both batches of brandy are blended together and aged for a month, "to let it come together, oxidize and open up." The final step is to lightly sweeten the liqueur.

The end result is an intense coffee spirit that cries out to be served in the Italian *shakerato* style: Add the liqueur, ice and perhaps a splash of simple syrup to a cocktail shaker. Shake and strain into a small glass—or perhaps, an espresso demitasse.

—KARA NEWMAN

94 Firelit Coffee Liqueur Yirg (USA; St. George Spirits, Alameda, CA). Coffee geeks will go bananas for this liqueur made with single-origin cold-brewed beans roasted by cult favorite Blue Bottle Coffee. Looks and smells like brewed espresso in the glass. It's not too sweet, has a bracingly bitter edge and a lingering true-coffee finish that clings tenaciously to the palate. Oddly, it's better without milk—it just doesn't need it.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 30%

93 Qi White Exotic Oranges & White Tea Liqueur (USA; St. George Spirits, Alameda, CA). Look out, triple sec, you may have competition. Bold, sweet and complex, this spirit has a golden orange glow and a bright, juicy citrus and honeysuckle aroma. Front-loaded honey, orange blossom and lemon zest flavors ease into a subtle, pleasantly lingering, floral finish. This liqueur would lend itself to a fizzy, spritz-like drink with ease, and blends dreamily with gin. Lovely.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 40%

92 Kahlua (Mexico; Pernod Ricard USA, Purchase, NY). This rum-based liqueur is a classic for mixing with coffee. The dominant flavors are a familiar dark chocolate-vanilla hybrid, bold and sweet, only nodding at roasted coffee on the lingering finish. Sippable straight up, perhaps because of its relatively low alcohol content.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 20%

91 Firelit Coffee Liqueur Mocha Java (USA; St. George Spirits, Alameda, CA). Here's another single-origin coffee liqueur, this one made with aged mocha Java beans roasted by Weaver's Coffee. This light-textured brew has a nutty, roasted coffee bean scent and a light sweetness, with most of the espresso on the finish. Ice brightens the flavor and draws out more pungent coffee notes. With a splash of milk, it mimics

iced coffee with a hint of alcohol buzz. Would make a very fine White Russian.

Price: \$50 **abv:** 30%

90 Qi Black Smoked Black Tea Liqueur (St. George Spirits, Alameda, CA). Smoky and sultry. The scent is intriguing, a blend of black tea, vanilla, leather, cigar smoke and a deep, musky dried fig note. This nut-brown spirit is very dry, finishing with licorice, spicy nutmeg and black pepper. Mixologists will love this one for unusual cocktails, but for most, it might be perceived as too challenging a flavor for everyday use. It would benefit from a little more sweetness. A natural match for whiskey—try this blended with Bourbon and a hit of simple syrup.

Price: \$39 **abv:** 40%

90 Galliano Ristretto (Italy; Lucas Bols USA, New York, NY). From the makers of golden Galliano liqueur, this dark-brown spirit arrives in the same striking pyramid-shaped bottle. This thick, velvety liqueur has a sweet, dark-roast coffee flavor and aroma, and winds into a rich finish with a light anise note. Claims to be the only espresso liqueur made from both Arabica and Robusta coffee beans. This may not be a selling point; most coffee experts frown on Robusta's strong, bitter notes. Still, this should shine in an espresso martini.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 30%

90 Dolce Nero Espresso Liqueur (Italy; Admiral Imports, Cedar Grove, NJ). This medium-brown, light-bodied spirit has a pungent, bright espresso aroma and a sweet, intense coffee flavor. Although it's a little much straight up, a splash of milk helps mellow the flavor. Recommended for a blended coffee cocktail.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 20%

88 Molinari Sambuca Caffé Liquore (Italy; Van Gogh Imports, Orlando, FL). For full review see page 79.

88 Patron XO Café (Mexico; The Patron Spirits Company, Las Vegas, NV). Deep brown and syrupy with sweet, subtle coffee aroma. This Tequila-based liqueur should meld especially nicely with Tequila-based cocktails, or with hot coffee as a digestif. Best with ice and a hit of milk or cream.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 35%

86 Heering Coffee Liqueur (Denmark; Kindred Spirits of North America, Miami, FL). From the makers of Cherry Heering. This rich, dark brown spirit was the most chocolaty of all the coffee liqueurs sampled, more mocha than flat-out coffee. Although it's a little cloying straight up, ice mellows out the alcohol a bit, and milk softens the flavor.

Price: \$26 **abv:** 35%

CORRECTIONS

In the August issue's feature on *Wine Enthusiast's* Best 100 Wine Restaurants, we incorrectly spelled the name of Spiaggia's owner. The correct spelling is Tony Mantuano.

In the gatefold map introducing that same article, the name of Auberge du Soleil was misspelled.

On the cover and in the interior of the September 2011 issue, a bottle of the Joseph Swan Vineyards 2008 Trenton Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir appears, attached to a score of 97 points. The wine that received 97 points is from the 2007 vintage; the 2008 vintage of that wine has not yet been reviewed. We apologize for any confusion.

In the Fare Play article in our September issue, we cited the name of Tanya Holland's restaurant as B-Sides BBQ. After we went to press, the name was changed to B-Side BBQ.

In the September issue article on Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, there was an error in the caption under the map of the area. Though the author's main text makes it clear that Green Valley has been an AVA since 1983, the map caption, introduced by the editors, distorted that fact.

On page 92 of the September issue's Buying Guide, we incorrectly identified the appellation for the Louis Latour 2009 Morgeot Premier Cru; the correct appellation is Chassagne-Montrachet.

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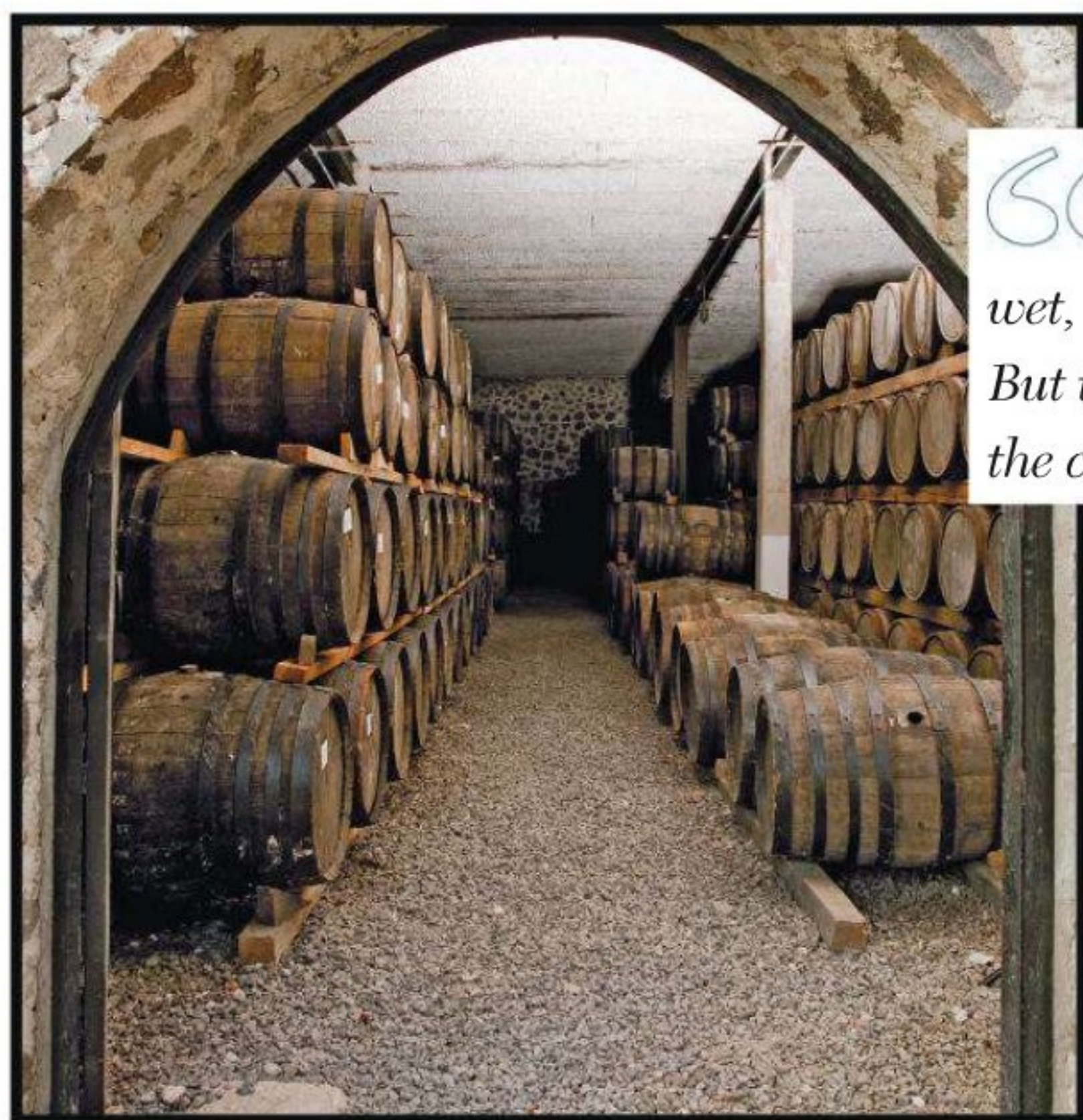
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“ At first, I resented being stuck with the grungy, wet, cold cleanup while everyone else was off partying. But then I began to notice the beauty of the night beyond the crushpad. ”

crushed: confessions of a cellar rat

Freezing cold, stultifying heat, insects, rodents, muck and mire: the romance of winemaking over a barrel.

I looked forward to my first crush—not the love-struck adolescent kind, but rather the over-eager wine geek kind—with the same feverish anticipation of naïve youth. At Wild Horse Winery and Vineyards in Templeton, California, I would soon sink my hands into a bin of warm, fermenting must and breathe deeply the perfume of terroir. I would work in a privileged library of oak barrels and fine wine, surrounded by the

bucolic scents of mown hay and ocean breezes.

Actually, as it turned out, I would be stuck with every job that was dirty, disgusting, inconvenient or embarrassing.

Picking grapes is a hot, messy business. In addition to tending fruit and vine, it involves plucking black widows out of one's dusty hair and finding dead mammals and birds tangled in netting.

Winemaking is a cold, nasty business. My hands would get so

cold and sticky during late-night punchdowns that I looked like a Lego man after going inside—it took 10 minutes for my hands to uncurl.

I slithered into wet presses and scrubbed the seeds out with a Brillo pad. I stood in the sun all day painting barrels with mold deterrent. I pulled inquisitive kittens out of crushers and presses.

A cellar rat, I learned, is mostly in charge of muck management. Equipment is spray-washed from every possible angle; I spent much of my cleaning time upside down peering into crevices. Picking bins are scrubbed free of sun-baked juice stains and accumulated vineyard dust.

The ultimate muck moment occurred when I was asked to help the vineyard manager open a barrel of fish emulsion that had been left in the sun for a year and had fermented. He tipped the barrel while I held a bucket to catch the contents. A crusty cap held the thick goo back for a moment, but suddenly the cap burst, vomiting decayed fish goo over me—an uneven emulsion of watery discharge and thick strings of brown, putrid fish slime. I was completely covered, head to toe, in fermented fish guck.

And that's what it means to be

a true cellar rat. I was the last person on the crushpad, hosing all the muck out of the crusher on a cold, frosty October evening after the winemaker and his entourage had retired to a warm and cozy restaurant.

At first, I resented being stuck with the grungy, wet, cold cleanup while everyone else was off partying. But then I began to notice the beauty of the night beyond the crushpad—singing frogs, courting owls, yipping coyotes, dancing bats, a sky so laden with stars that it droops toward earth. Fermenting bins of Zinfandel and Syrah lifted warm, pepper-laden aromas as I punched and stirred the fruit.

When I finally stopped to go inside for a glass of wine, in a chilly cellar that actually felt like a spa after working in the biting cold of an October night, I stood there in my stained pants, wet shirt, soaked shoes and socks and gave thanks for the experience... and tasted the wine with an entirely new palate.

—MARY BAKER

Mary Baker is the author of *50 Tips for Cellar Rats: How to Get (and Keep) a Great Job as a Winery Cellar Rat or Harvest Intern* (Lulu, 2010).

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