

TOP
100
BEST
BUYS
2010



The finest value-priced wines of the year.

BY THE EDITORS OF WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE

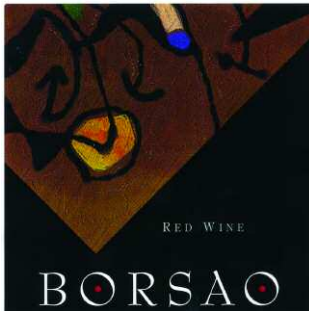
At the end of the year we tend to count our blessings and take a minute to appreciate the good things in our lives. Family, friends and health deservedly come first, but somewhere near the top of any wine devotee's list has to be the increasing quality of wine, available at prices that make regular enjoyment affordable. We can cite any number of reasons for this, from increased competition to greater attention to detail in the vineyards and winery, but why ask why? Let's just whisper thanks and review the 100 wines that *Wine Enthusiast's* tasting panelists felt offered the highest quality for the price in 2010.

If a wine's score on the *Wine Enthusiast* 100-point scale is high in relation to its price (a very precise formula we keep to ourselves, but 88-points and \$10 are approximate yardsticks), it merits a Best Buy designation. Only about 5% of the wines we review annually merit this designation, and what you're seeing on these next pages is a very elite grouping drawn from that already limited group. Enjoy, shop wisely, drink well, give thanks.



TOP 100 BEST BUYS 2010

1



89 Borsao 2008 Red Wine (Campo de Borja); \$8. Almost impossible to distinguish this nice and easy Garnacha from the winery's Monte Oton label (also rated 89). Open berry and jam aromas keep it together, while the saturated, sweet blackberry palate is living proof of Campo de Borja's sun and terroir. Ripe, deep and easy to enjoy. Imported by Fine Estates From Spain.

2

92 Pacific Rim 2009 Riesling (Columbia Valley); \$11. A classic Washington tasting-room Riesling—only better. Opulent and fruity, with apricots, star anise, mint, a very nice spicy streak that lifts it up, and adds a lot of complexity. Smooth and supple, it coats the palate, captures some floral highlights, even a bit of marshmallow.

3

91 Casa Lapostolle 2008 Casa Carmenère (Rapel Valley); \$13. One of the best value-priced, big and rich wines you're likely to find. The nose impresses with potent blackberry, cedar and marzipan aromas, and the palate bridges the gap between power and elegance. Tastes great, with herbal black cherry and cola leading the way. Very ripe but really well made. Imported by Moët Hennessy USA.

4

90 Bogle 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (California); \$11. Here's a stellar example of how a really good Cabernet can be made without gouging the consumer. This is a dry, elegant and rich

wine, with firm tannins housing flavors of blackberries, currants, herbs, spices and smoky cedar wood. It's a terrific value. 100,000 cases made.

5

87 Bandit NV Pinot Grigio (California); \$4/500 ml. Packaged in a little green Tetrapak, this is a very nice white wine. It's totally dry, and the lime and grapefruit flavors are balanced with ultra-crisp acidity. Great with grilled veggies, sole with a squeeze of lemon, and Asian fare.

6

90 Companhia das Quintas 2006 Fronteira (Douro); \$10. You can taste the dry, wild upper Douro in this powerful wine. It has exotic chocolate, black fig and nutmeg flavors, along with a rich, dark texture and plenty of accompanying tannins. The acidity cuts through, but this is about dense power. Imported by Admiral Imports.

7

90 Tenuta di Ceppaiano 2005 Alle Viole (Toscana); \$12. Alle Viole is a penetrating blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet and Merlot with an extra oak element that comes off as spice, campfire and smoked bacon. At the center of this wine, however, is a solid base of red fruit that recalls cherry and blackberry. The wine is fresh and tonic but full and generous at the same time. Imported by Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC.

8

92 Aveleda 2009 Alvarinho (Minho); \$13. Alvarinho is the grape of northern Vinho Verde, giving a style that is rich and complex. The fruit here fits that character, packed with pear, apple and citrus flavors and a light texture of lime zest. Note: this wine is commercialized as Follies Alvarinho outside the U.S. Imported by FJN Fine Wines LLC.

9

89 Altos del Cuco 2008 Yecla; \$10. A smooth wine for the price where all the dots connect. The nose has black cherry and raisin, while the palate is lush, deep and concentrated, with rewarding flavors of cherry, cassis and roasted plum. Lasting on the finish, with a licorice flavor. Very good wine for the money; Monastrell/Syrah/Tempranillo is the blend. Imported by Opici Import Company.

10

89 Carlos Basso 2008 Dos Fincas Cabernet Sauvignon-Malbec (Uco Valley); \$10. Meaty and earthy, with leather and early sulfur to the nose. The palate is big, round and grabby, with warm, lush berry fruit and scattershot accents of herbs and leather. Delivers a ton of oomph for the price, and also good berry and herbal finishing flavors. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Malbec. Imported by Southern Wine Group.

11

90 Kirkland Signature 2008 Merlot (Columbia Valley); \$10. Another fine value from Kirkland, the Costco house brand. Vineyard sources are first rate, mostly Wahluke Slope, and the wine has exceptional grip, depth and structure for Merlot at this price point. Cassis, dark plum, black cherry, licorice, espresso and smoke are woven together nicely. Tannins are lush, substantial and quite ripe; they wrap up the wine with a blanket of smoke and tar. A great steak wine.

READ THE WEAVE

Fiaschi, the traditional basket-encased packaging for Chianti Classico, not only look nice and protect the product, but their design—specifically, the basket-stitching pattern—once doubled as primitive labels. Those with a horizontal weave indicated export wines, while those woven vertically were destined for domestic markets.



TOP 100 BEST BUYS 2010

12

91 Arbor Crest 2009 Dionysus Vineyard Riesling (Columbia Valley); \$8. This is fruit sourced from a 1972 planting—single-vineyard, old-vine Riesling at an amazing price. Done in a big, round, fruity, off-dry style, it's loaded with sweet pineapple, Meyer lemon and honey peach flavors. The fruit concentration is spectacular, and yet the wine retains enough acidity to feel balanced against the 3.5% residual sugar. Serve with hot and spicy Asian fare, or with a peach cobbler for dessert.

13

89 Rotari NV Rosé Talento (Trento); \$14. Elegant and tight, this pale pink sparkling wine boasts a wide array of small fruit and floral aromas. This vibrant wine would pair well with fried calamari or shellfish thanks to its delicate nature and bright acidity. Imported by Prestige Wine Imports Corp.

14



89 DFJ Vinhos 2006 Alta Corte (Estremadura); \$9. A blend of Caradoc (a cross of Malbec and Grenache) and Tinto Roriz, this is a bold ripe wine that pushes its vivid berry fruits right up front along with some dark tannins. Black cherries and figs show well at the end, along with wood spice and acidity. Imported by Dionysos Imports Inc.

15

89 Hey Mambo 2008 Swanky White (California); \$10. What a nice wine for bistro-style drinking. Conjures up pairing with almost everything, from tempura to grilled chicken to pork enchiladas. Bone dry and crisp, it offers outstanding flavors of citrus fruits, petrol, wildflowers, grass, minerals, honey and spices. A blend of Viognier, Sauvignon Blanc, Muscat Canelli and Chenin Blanc.

16

91 Château Peyros 2005 Tannat-Cabernet (Madiran); \$13. There is a solid amount of wood here, but the fruit has weight enough for it. The tannins are dark, brooding in character, but they also support ripe and juicy fruits. With its dusty texture, this wine could certainly be aged for several years. Imported by Baron Francois Ltd.

17

88 Oxford Landing 2007 GSM Grenache-Shiraz-Mourvèdre (South Australia); \$8. A remarkable value, Oxford Landing's GSM is a convincing argument in favor of blending. It offers a complex mélange of leather, spice and cherry notes, medium body and a fresh, vivacious finish. Considering it can probably be found for around \$80 per case, this would make a great everyday wine for drinking over the next year or so. Imported by Negociants USA, Inc.

18

90 Hyatt Vineyards 2008 Pinot Gris (Rattlesnake Hills); \$9. Firm and full of fresh pear and apple and white peach fruit flavors. A clever blend that includes Muscat, Viognier and Riesling. Crisp and full-bodied, with a very clean and refreshing mouthfeel that extends into a bright, satisfying finish. P-ere

19



90 Lopez Noceti 2008 1919 Malbec (Mendoza); \$12. Great Malbec for the money, and one that gives the impression that it's three or four times more expensive than it is. From 40-year-old vines, this is concentrated and complex, with graphite, plum, prune and black-berry aromas. The palate is heavy but correct, and the primary flavors of berry and plum segue into fig and chocolate with ease.

20

89 Viña Casablanca 2008 Cefiro Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley); \$10. A totally correct but well-priced Cab that brings pretty much everything the textbook calls for. The nose features graphite, berry and smoky wood, while the mouthfeel is spot-on and made better by ripe, toasty berry, chocolate and spice flavors. A definite winner at its price point. Imported by Carolina Wine Brands USA.

21

89 Marrenon 2008 Chardonnay (Vin de Pays de Vaucluse); \$10. A recent discovery, this Chardonnay (yes, Chardonnay) has a striking bouquet of flowers, spices, honey and nuts, then adds a peachy fruit component on the palate. It's medium in weight, with a lush texture and a long finish. A super bargain to drink over the summer months. Imported by USA Wine Imports.

WHISTLER TREE

The "Whistler Tree" near Aguas de Moura, Portugal—named for its resident song-birds—is the world's largest and oldest cork tree. Planted in 1783, it's said to produce the world's finest wine corks and is cultivated every nine years, each harvest yielding enough bark to cap 100,000 bottles.



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22

90 Razor's Edge 2008 Shiraz-Grenache (McLaren Vale); \$12. Fully ripe and verging on jammy, this 75-25 blend is nonetheless charming, with raspberry fruit cosseted by lashings of vanilla. It's round in the mouth and exceedingly supple, picking up intriguing dusty spice, cocoa and coffee notes on the finish. A notable value for drinking over the next 6-12 months. Imported by American Wine Distributors.

23

89 Excelsior 2009 Chardonnay (Robertson); \$10. This lively Chardonnay starts with lemon, lime and pear on the nose, followed by a terrific combination of crisp citrus fruit and oaky, white fruit roundness. Elegant but fun, it's a perfect food wine. Think spicy ethnic cuisine, grilled seafood, salads. Imported by Cape Classics.

24



88 Turning Leaf 2009 Pinot Grigio (California); \$8. A wonderful appetizer wine, dry, clean and zesty in acidity, with appealing citrus, apple, lemongrass, vanilla and honeysuckle flavors. A great restaurant by-the-glass sipper. Production was 136,000 cases.

25

88 Columbia Crest 2007 Two Vines Cabernet Sauvignon (Washington); \$8. This is the best Cab from Two Vines to date. It's got real concentration and fruit flavor, enhanced with the addition of 11% Cab Franc and 7% Syrah in the blend. Berries, cherries, cassis, plums, coffee and smoke filter through the palate, with just a little bite to the tannins. Very impressive.

26

92 Bacalhõa Wines of Portugal 2007 Catarina (Terras do Sado); \$12. The flagship white from Bacalhõa is a full-bodied blend of Fernão Pires and Chardonnay. There is both freshness and richness here, with a tight texture of lime zest and apple skins giving lively acidity. The finish is more tropical, with smooth creamy flavors. Imported by Admiral Imports.

27

91 Kanonkop 2008 Kadette (Stellenbosch); \$15. This blend of Pinotage, Cabernet, Merlot and Cabernet Franc is full-bodied and complex, with layered aromas of cherry, banana and warming spices, and smooth, elegant flavors of cedar, cherry, tobacco smoke and red berries. Velvety, soft tannins and a clean finish give it a classy touch. The wine can age, but drink now and you won't be disappointed. Imported by Cape Classics.

28

90 Brassfield 2008 Serenity (High Valley); \$11. A beautiful white blend, one of the best values on the market. Made from Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Gewürztraminer and Sémillon, it shows a near-perfect balance of crisp acidity, clean minerality, dryness and complex citrus fruit, peach, lychee, mineral and honeysuckle flavors. A compelling restaurant by-the-glass wine.

29

89 Robert Papi 2008 Sauvignon Blanc (California); \$11. Fills an important niche in California whites, a bone-dry, tartly crisp, mineral wine that gets the mouth watering. With pleasant citrus, floral and peppery spice flavors, it's perfect as a cocktail sipper with appetizers, like puff pastries, grilled veggies, toast rounds with goat cheese.

30

89 MAN Vintners 2008 Shiraz (Coastal Region); \$11. Smoke and roobios tea dominate the bouquet, with accents of raspberry and cocoa. The mouth is more of the same with soft notes of black plum guts and berry preserves fleshing it out. The texture is like crushed velvet with assertive tannins and structured acidity. Drinkable now, though could age for another year or two. Imported by Vineyard Brands.

31

88 Kenwood 2008 Vintage Red Wine (California); \$9. A great success, as this bottling has been for decades. The wine, which is a blend of Petite Sirah, Merlot and Sangiovese, is dry and rich and balanced, showing lots of finesse in the cherry, currant, licorice, mocha and cedar flavors. Easy to find, with 24,000 cases produced.

32

87 Mezzacorona 2009 Pinot Grigio (Vigneti delle Dolomiti); \$9. The quality-price ratio here is simply unbeatable. Mezzacorona presents a fuller, rounder, more satisfying Pinot Grigio with ripe aromas of peach, pear and honey. There's a smooth, creamy feel in the mouth. Imported by Prestige Wine Imports Corp.

33

92 Whitman Cellars 2008 Riesling (Columbia Valley); \$14. This is the first Riesling from Whitman, and it's a beauty. Lovely, inviting aromas mix roses and rocks, leading into fresh, layered, complex fruit flavors of pear, apple, white peach and orange. It's got plenty of acid so the residual sugar is almost undetectable, but the alco-

SKIN CONTACT

During the growth stage known as veraison, anthocyanins (in red grapes) and carotenoids (in whites) replace chlorophyll, giving the grapes their color. You can't make red wine with white grapes, but you can make white wine with red grapes. Most grape juice itself has no pigment, and only acquires color after prolonged exposure to the skins.



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hol stays at a Germanic 12.5%. This is so good it makes you wish that winemaker Steve Lessard had been doing Riesling all along.

34



89 Laurent Miquel 2007 Père et Fils Cabernet Syrah (Vin de Pays d'Oc); \$10. With 60% Cabernet and 40% Syrah, this is an intense and well-structured wine that offers a ton of bang for your buck. The rich and powerful nose is loaded with aromas of blackberry, black raspberry sauce, wild strawberry and soft licorice spice. Full and lush in the mouth with the strong fruit character leading nicely to the cocoa and coffee flavors that dominate the lingering finish. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.

35

90 Quarles Harris 2005 Late Bottled Vintage Port; \$13. A deliciously rich, sweet and youthfully fruity wine that has an opulent feel to it. There is a juicy element, with fresh acidity, but most of the character comes from the ripe fruit, the jelly character and the sweet tannins. It needs more bottle age. Imported by Vineyard Brands.

36

89 Analivia 2009 Verdejo (Rueda); \$11. Nice and fresh, and definitely the best vintage of Analivia we've tasted to date. The nose bursts with floral aromas, apricot, apple and minerality, while the palate is clean as a whistle, with apple, tangerine and pineapple flavors. Slightly pithy on the finish, but that's normal for Verdejo from Rueda. Imported by Luneau USA Inc.

37

89 Dry Creek Vineyard 2009 Fumé Blanc (Sonoma County); \$12. This is a delicious, balanced Sauvignon Blanc that's the equal of many wines costing much more, which makes it a great value. It features lemon and lime flavors made richer by notes of pineapples and honeysuckle. Entirely unoaked, it's a great cocktail sipper.

38

89 Santa Julia 2008 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza); \$11. Chunky, stout and solid on the nose, with round, pure flavors of black cherry and raspberry. The mouthfeel is comfortable and complete, especially for an \$11 wine from Argentina. Finishes dry, smooth and slightly spicy; very pleasing in a no-nonsense way. Imported by Winesellers Ltd.

39

89 Acrobat 2009 Pinot Gris (Oregon); \$12. Even better than the excellent 2008 Acrobat, this ups the alcohol to about 13% and gives the impression of dryness, though there might be a trace of residual sugar. In any event, it's loaded with pretty pear fruit flavor, lightly dusted with cinnamon spice, and fills the mouth with its body and gentle hint of spritz. A fine summer sipper.

40

88 Château Lagrezette 2005 Zette Rouge Malbec (Cahors); \$9. In a modern, smooth style, with plush fruit and dusty tannins, this is a ripe, open wine, an easy expression of Malbec, New World in its fruitiness. Imported by USA Wine West.

41

91 Thistle 2008 Pinot Blanc (Dundee Hills); \$15. Tasty with terrific dry extract, this excellent Pinot Blanc stands out with a palate-pleasing mix of grapefruit, pineapple and citrus rind. Sharp and penetrating, it lingers into a graceful finish annotated with toasted hazelnuts.

42



89 Wines & Winemakers 2008 Azul Portugal (Douro); \$10. Ripe and smooth wine, with a rich Port-like aroma, the sweet fruit structured with some fresh stalky tannins. Great herbal and wild berry flavors to finish. Imported by Iberia Wine & Spirits LLC.

43

90 Plantagenet 2006 Hazard Hill Shiraz (Western Australia); \$13. A terrific value, Plantagenet's 2006 Hazard Hill Shiraz is a silky, feminine-styled Shiraz that starts with smoky, slightly floral notes, then adds in peppery spice, delicate red berries and just a hint of chocolate before leaving your mouth watering on the finish. Drink now. Imported by Old Bridge Cellars.

44

88 Feudo Arancio Stemmari 2008 Chardonnay (Sicilia); \$9. You've got to hand it to the folks at this estate: they make nice wines at low prices. This Sicilian Chardonnay is bright and creamy with aromas of orange blossom, almond, golden honey and mature apricot. The wine feels crisp and pristine in the mouth. Very nice. Imported by Prestige Wine Imports Corp.



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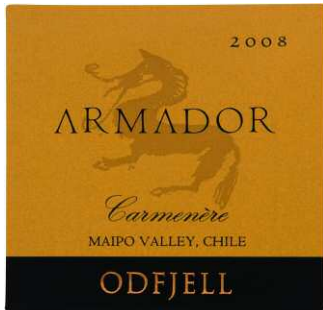
45

90 Don Miguel Gascón 2008 Malbec (Mendoza); \$14. A bright purple luster draws you in, and the nose is bright, clean, focused and full of wild blackberry. Balanced in the mouth, with size and tannin but plenty of acidity and fruit. Tastes of blackberry, vanilla cream, molasses and spice, and the finish brings it on home. Sincere and excellent for the price. Imported by E & J Gallo.

46

89 Leasingham 2008 Magnus Riesling (Clare Valley); \$12. This wine earns every penny of its modest price tag with a bright palate of petrol, talcum powder and wet stones propping up aromas of white flowers, cumin and lime. The finish could be longer but with this stunning nose and palate, we're not complaining. Drink now. Imported by Constellation Wines U.S.

47



89 Odfjell 2008 Armador Carmenère (Maipo Valley); \$12. A nice, clean, attractive version of affordable Carmenère? Yep, that's what Odfjell delivers pretty much every year with its Armador bottling. Aromas are floral, minerally and deep, and so is the palate, which is pure, spicy and loaded with blackberry fruit. Smooth on the finish, too. One of Chile's best value-priced Carmenères. Imported by Select Fine Wine.

48

91 Rulo 2007 Syrcá Red Wine (Columbia Valley); \$15. This wine hits the ground running, with a surging nose of ripe raspberries, cassis, coffee, tobacco and chocolate. Those flavors fall right into line in the mouth, the fruit so bright and fresh you can almost see it. Flavors are focused and penetrating; little details keep emerging throughout a lengthy finish. It's hard to believe this is a \$15 wine.

49

88 Santa Alicia 2009 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley); \$9. A good deal in value-priced Cabernet. Aromas of mocha, chocolate and ripe berry fruit are well molded, and the palate is warm, rich and full of clean, tasty raspberry and plum fruit accented by another dash of mocha. Fruity and thick, and with a natural oak flavor. Imported by Halby Marketing.

50

88 Château Cabezac 2004 Le Petit Arthur (Minervois); \$10. There's no shortage of spice in this value Minervois, with strong notes of pepper and garrigue herbs backed by notes of orange rind, red cherry and young raspberry. Medium-light in the mouth with moderate acidity and soft tannins; drink up now. Imported by Fruit of the Vines, Inc.

51

91 Caterina 2008 Willard Family Vineyard Viognier (Yakima Valley); \$15. Beautifully concentrated and textural, this Viognier mixes melon, white peach, nectarine and lemon fruit with pleasing minerality. There is none of the burn or bitterness that so often affects Washington Viogniers. This is a really refreshing, palate-cleansing wine.

52

88 Caves Velhas 2007 Serradayres Reserva (Ribatejo); \$8. With its spicy black cherry flavors lifted by cranberry juice, this is a wine that has both structure and fresh fruit. The tannins are part of that structure along with acidity, while the toast element adds spice. To drink now. Imported by Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd.

53

89 Barker's Marque 2009 ranga.ranga Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough); \$12. Rather flinty on opening, although that subsides somewhat to reveal green, leafy aromas. This is a lighter-bodied Sauvignon Blanc that's refreshingly brisk and dry, raspingly fresh and green, with a crisply acidic, lingering finish. Imported by International Vines, Inc.

54

90 Fantelli 2007 Serie Magno Malbec (Mendoza); \$15. Inky, dark, charred and serious, and it only gets better as it opens with air. The palate has a smooth, deep, comfortable feel and the flavors are sweet, fruity, creamy and proper for Malbec. Chocolatey and rich on the finish. A very nice wine made for near-term drinking. Imported by Kensington Distributors Inc.

55

88 Fleur Du Cap 2008 Wooded Chenin Blanc (Western Cape); \$10. This Chenin starts with aromas of vanilla, spice and honey, followed by upfront flavors of peaches, honey and spice. Fun but elegant, with a balanced freshness that keeps it clean on the tongue. Pair with creamy cheeses, fruit. Imported by Maisons Marques & Domaines USA.

CORKS TAKE FLIGHT

A Champagne cork leaves the bottle at 38–40 miles per hour on average, but is easily capable, some say, of 100. That may well have been the case during the world's longest recorded cork flight, achieved by Heinrich Medicus at Woodbury Vineyards in upstate New York: 177 feet and 9 inches, from a starting height of 4 feet.



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56

89 Vignobles Alain Jaume & Fils 2007 Les Gélinittes (Côtes-du-Ventoux); \$13. Full-bodied, creamy and lush in texture, this 50-50 blend of Grenache and Syrah is just right for drinking over the next few years. Black cherry fruit is touched with just enough pepper and anise to keep your interest sip after sip, gently framed by soft tannins on the finish. Great burger wine. Imported by Kysela Père et Fils.

57

90 Chateau Ste. Michelle 2008 Horse Heaven Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc (Horse Heaven Hills); \$15. The 2008 Horse Heaven Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc does not shy away from the grape's natural grassy pungency. Rather, it embraces it, supporting the herbaceous aromas with ripe tree fruit flavors and some sweet spiciness from the portion (about one fifth) that was barrel fermented. A very nice combination of barrel and stainless styles.

58

90 Leaping Lizard 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$15. A very nice Cabernet at a great price for the quality. It's dry and smooth, with rich Napa tannins framing classic Cab flavors of blackberries, black currants, minerals and cedar. Tastes like it costs three times as much.

59

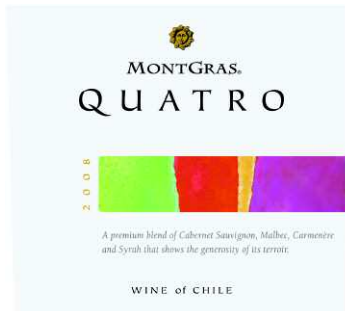
91 Valle da Fonte 2001 Reserva Touriga Nacional (Douro); \$15. From pure Touriga Nacional, this is already mature, with earthy overtones coming through to give leather aromas and flavors that are moving into spice, sweet wood and dark coffee. It has a great smooth texture with delicious final acidity. Imported by Tri-Vin Imports.

60

90 Boomtown 2008 Chardonnay (Columbia Valley); \$13. Stainless steel fermented, this pure varietal is bursting with a tasty fruit bowl mix of apple, pineapple and Meyer lemon. A hint

of mint sneaks in, and the acidity brings bracing minerality to the finish.

61



90 MontGras 2008 Quatro (Colchagua Valley); \$15. One of the best values in Chilean wine is Quatro, a lusty blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Carmenère and Syrah. The nose is deep and roasted, with aromas of bacon, vanilla, pastry and black fruit. Lush and full in the mouth, with intense blackberry and cassis flavors. A titan at a great price, and ageable over the short term. Drink now through 2013. Imported by Palm Bay International.

62

90 Château de Valcombe 2005 Prestige (Costières de Nîmes); \$15. There's a lot going on in this bargain-priced beauty black olive, earth, leather and coffee mingle on the nose, while the flavors add fruitier notes of black cherry and savory notes of dried spices. It's softly tannic, and long on the finish. Drink now-2015. Imported by Robert Kacher Imports.

63

88 Luigi Bosca 2009 Finca La Linda Viognier (Luján de Cuyo); \$11. A nice New World Viognier with peach and apricot aromas that come across as solid and true. The palate has size and balance, while the flavors of peach and apricot properly reflect the bouquet and bring spice into play. Fades with mild heat and bitterness on the finish, which won't be a factor if you're drinking the wine with a salad or grilled seafood. Imported by Testa Wines Of The World.

64

90 Te Kairanga 2008 Estate Pinot Noir (Martinborough); \$15. A super value in Pinot Noir, just so long as you don't expect a bright, berry-scented wine. This is a dark, mysteriously earthy and herbal Pinot, with savory, spicy elements backed by dark fruit and a long, dusty finish. Drink it now and over the next few years. Imported by Liquid Brands LLC.

65

89 Pedro Romero NV Dark, Sweet Moscatel (Jerez); \$13. Cinnamon, nutmeg, a pinch of iodine and more spice than fruit on the nose. Flavors of brown sugar and toffee are satisfying, while the feel is fresh with no excess weight. Finishes with caramel, butter, toffee, coffee and pepper. A fit wine that's priced well. Imported by Frontier Wine Imports.

66

89 Dow's 2007 Vale do Bomfim (Douro); \$12. There is definite weight behind this intense wine. But it also has ripe, rich, deliciously sweet and juicy black fruits. It has structure as well, a series of sweet tannins and fresh acidity. It's the best red wine from the Dow's Quinta do Bomfim so far. Imported by Premium Port Wines, Inc.

GREEN HARVESTING

In a process known as green harvesting, vintners prune a portion of immature grapes from the vine with the belief it will provide an additional energy boost to the remaining bunches, helping them to better ripen and acquire higher concentrations of flavor compounds.



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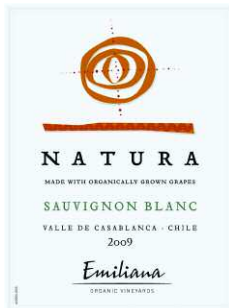
67

90 De Martino 2008 Legado Reserva Chardonnay (Limari Valley); \$15. Composed and showing no overwrought oak or tropical fruit aromas that so often plague Chilean Chardonnay. A smooth operator, with toasty apple and mineral aromas leading to a ripe but cleansing palate and finish. This is like winemaker Marcelo Retamal's favorite child; with proper guidance it is growing better every year. Best overall Chardonnay to date from Limari. Imported by Opici Import Company.

68

87 Rayun 2008 Syrah (Rapel Valley); \$8. If you don't mind a bit of herbal character, this is a nice, easy drinking Syrah with raspberry and cherry aromas and timidity as opposed to a forceful attack. Zesty berry fruit rules the palate, which finishes in round, roasted form. Nice but sort of generic. Imported by Montecastelli Selections.

69



88 Emiliania 2009 Natura Sauvignon Blanc (Casablanca Valley); \$11. Emiliania's Natura is a consistently fresh, clean SB. The nose is mildly green and citrusy, with hints of grass, fresh herbs, orange peel and grapefruit. Mineral, lemon, lime and green apple work the flavor profile, while the finish is chiseled and pure. Clean and crisp throughout. Imported by Banfi Vintners.

70

90 Casa do Valle 2008 Grande Escolha (Vinho Verde); \$15. Made to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Casa do Valle winery, this is an impressively rich Vinho Verde. It is smooth, creamy, with green plum and apricot flavors, the acidity a well-balanced counterpoint. Imported by Triage Wines.

71

90 Cameron Hughes 2007 Lot 129 Garnacha (Campo de Borja); \$15. This is nothing more than a few barrels of wine bottled by Hughes, a so-called "global vintner." And like its Lot 128 brother, it is really good juice. Inky and floral, with blueberry and wild raspberry flavors. It's smooth, fresh, bold and finishes with mint and chocolate. Shows the positives of Campo de Borja's Garnacha. Imported by Cameron Hughes Wine.

72

87 Snap Dragon 2007 Red (California); \$8. Shows lots of rich Zinfandel character in the spiciness, the full-bodied mouthfeel, the sturdy tannins and especially the flavors of wild forest berries, leather and cola. Delicious, and a great bargain.

73

89 Bernard Magrez 2005 Château Haut Mouleyre (Bordeaux); \$14. Based in the heart of the Entre-deux-Mers, this vineyard has ancient monastic origins. The 2005 is a well-balanced wine, structured with Cabernet and rounded with Merlot. The fruit is rich, not complex, but very food friendly. Imported by Bernard Magrez USA.

74

90 Concannon 2008 Conservancy Chardonnay (Livermore Valley); \$15. A very nice Chardonnay that's dry and crisp and elegant. Shows tart, leesy flavors of citrus fruits, apricots and pears, with a steely minerality that may come from those famous Livermore rocks. Great price for a Chardonnay of this quality.

75

89 Domaine Lafond 2007 Roc Epine (Côtes-du-Rhône); \$14. A super value, Lafond's 2007 Côtes-du-Rhône bursts with fruit. Bright, bold waves of black cherries laze across the palate, accented by hints of dried spices and herbs. Drink now-2012. Imported by Wines of France.

76

88 Nederburg 2009 The Winemaster's Reserve Sauvignon Blanc (Western Cape); \$10. This robust SB starts with a nose of cut grass and gooseberry, followed by a complex, spicy array of tropical fruit and spice. Weighty but balanced, the wine will pair well with more complex seafood dishes: think halibut or tuna. Imported by Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.

77



88 Douglas Green 2009 Vineyard Creations Sauvignon Blanc (Western Cape); \$10. Vibrant, tart aromas of green gooseberries and lime rind elevate the underlying hay and fresh thyme herbal accents. Lean, barely ripe white peach and hard pear add volume to the medium-weight mouth. Balanced and seamless with a clean, refreshing finish. Drink up! Imported by Cape Wine Ventures.

PRIORITIES

Of his \$25,000 presidential salary in 1801, Thomas Jefferson spent \$3,000 on wine.



TOP 100 BEST BUYS 2010

78



88 Cristobal 1492 2008 Bonarda (Mendoza); \$11. A pure, sweet, easygoing, full-bodied red wine with tons of boysenberry, currant and chocolate aromas and flavors. Dark and saturated in the mouth, with a bouncy palate, youthful but tolerable tannins, and a fudge-infused finish. Shines a positive light on varietal Bonarda. Imported by Eagle Eye Imports.

79

90 Adegas Cooperativa do Cartaxo 2006 Bridão Reserva (Ribatejo); \$13. Big and rich, this is a round and structured wine. It has great layers of ripe herbs, full black fruits and exotic spice to go over the dry tannins. The final flavors are rich, tarry, juicy as well as powerful. Imported by Wine Enterprises LLC.

80

88 Domaine Sorin 2009 Terra Amata Rosé (Côtes de Provence); \$11. Darker in color than many Provence rosés, this caramel-flavored wine has a fine line in ripe berry fruits to go with the smooth, velvet texture. Dry in style, its firm texture is right for food. Imported by Grape Expectations (CA).

81

90 Warwick 2007 The First Lady Cabernet Sauvignon (Western Cape); \$15. Aromas of black currant, violet and pepper start this stylish Cabernet and Petit Verdot red from Warwick. On the palate, smooth, round and full-bodied flavors of vanilla, black cherry and cassis are complex but easy drinking. A delicious, chewy spice finish ends the sip. Pair with hearty cuisine like steaks, stews and roasted lamb. Imported by Broadbent Selections, Inc.

82

88 Domaine Houchart 2009 Rosé (Côtes de Provence); \$12. The Domaine Houchart is everything a Provence rosé should be: effusively fresh, vibrantly fruity and dry, dry, dry. With a crisp, mouthwatering palate, it would make a great companion for flavorful fish dishes. Pick this one up to enjoy a bit of the South of France with dinner tonight. Imported by David Milligan Selections.

83

87 Rivarey 2006 Crianza Tempranillo (Rioja); \$8. Nice for a standard, no-frills type of Rioja. The cherry and raspberry aromas are sweet and clean, while the palate is juicy, fresh and tastes of ripe cherry, berry, vanilla and cream. Offers good clarity, power and depth given its price point. Imported by International Wine Imports.

84

90 Six Prong 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Horse Heaven Hills); \$15. Dark, tannic and full-bodied, this five grape Bordeaux blend from a classic Washington vintage is 100% Alder Ridge fruit. This is a fine effort, cellar-ready and substantial. Black fruits, fresh herbs, a hint of tomato leaf, a streak of caramel, all come together but need lots of breathing time (or cellaring) to show their best.

85

88 Hogue 2008 Gewürztraminer (Columbia Valley); \$11. This is an off-dry, fruity style, bringing luscious pear, orange, golden apple and citrus flavors to the front. There's a hint of orange marmalade, and it has good weight and concentration, along with lovely purity of flavor, right through the finish. You'll be reaching for that next glass before you know it.

86

90 Side Job 2008 Zinfandel (Sonoma County); \$15. One sip is all it takes to love this wine, if you're a Zinfandel fan. It's bone dry, silky in texture and spicy, with brambly, briary flavors of wild forest berries, red currants, tobacco and beef jerky. Feels really rich and savory, right through the long, peppery finish. And look at that price.

87

89 E. Guigal 2008 White (Côtes-du-Rhône); \$14. Almost as good as the '07, Guigal pared down the production of this wine by one-third to maintain its quality level. Pear and melon flavors are buttressed by weight and richness while still retaining freshness and a touch of spice on the finish. Imported by Ex-Cellars Wine Agencies, Inc.

88

90 Fitapreta Vinhos 2007 Fitapreta Tinto (Alentejano); \$15. A smooth, rounded wine, with depth of black berry, dark plum and licorice flavors. It is solid, chunky, powerfully ripe, full of pepper, spice as well as sweet acidity. Very enticing and rich. Imported by Davis Wine Company.

89

90 Babcock 2009 Identity Crisis Syrah (Santa Barbara County); \$15. Identity crisis indeed. The label says Syrah, but the wine is white. Actually, golden copper in color. It's perfectly dry and wonderfully crisp, with complex waves of sour citrus fruit candy, spice and mineral flavors. Fascinating and elusive, it's compelling.

LIVERMORE, FOREVERMORE

The first American wine to win a French competition hailed not from Napa Valley, but Cresta Blanca Winery in Livermore, some 60 miles southeast. It received the Grand Prix at the 1889 Paris Exposition with its first vintage.



TOP 100 BEST BUYS 2010

90

88 Snoqualmie 2008 Chardonnay (Columbia Valley); \$10. The blend includes 5% Viognier, a nice touch from winemaker Joy Anderson, as it adds both spice and lift to the Chardonnay. Lime, butter and caramel run through the veins of this supremely smooth and soft offering.

91

86 Leone de Castris 2006 Maiana (Salice Salentino); \$10. Lighter in concentration and easy-drinking overall, this Salice Salentino (mostly Negroamaro) from southern Italy offers aromas of ripe fruit, prunes, strawberry and black cherry. It has a slightly sweet taste in the mouth and is loaded with mature fruit flavors. Imported by Wine Wave.

92

87 Finca del Marquesado 2006 Crianza (Rioja); \$10. Composed, balanced and with all the dots connected; this is what we like about basic, affordable Rioja. It's fleshy yet fresh, with snappy cherry and raspberry flavors accented by a wave of vanilla that continues onto the finish. Blends good flavors, weight and acidic crispness. Imported by CIV/USA.

93

87 Henry's Drive Vignerons 2009 Morse Code Chardonnay (Padthaway); \$9. This has all the touchstones of good Chardonnay: just enough body and richness, apple, pineapple and melon fruit flavors and a crisp, citrusy finish. Solid Chardonnay for under \$10. Imported by Quintessential Wines.

94

88 Casteller NV Brut (Cava); \$10. Crisp and nice Cava with good balance, clean apple, dusty spices and pithy lemon. Fold it all together on the nose, palate and finish and you wind up with a well-made, attractive, easy-to-sip bubbly with some polish. Textbook everyday Cava. Imported by Ole Imports.

95



87 Winzer Kreams 2009 Pulverturm Gruner Veltliner (Niederosterreich); \$9. A delicious, fresh wine, just lightly peppery and featuring the crispest apple texture, so fresh and bright, with an aftertaste that is soft. For drinking now, to keep all that vivid flavor. Screwcap. Imported by Total Wine & More.

96

88 Brancott 2009 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough); \$13. This vintage of Brancott's Sauvignon Blanc knocks it right down the center of the fairway—clean and refreshing, marked by brisk acids. Stone fruit and melon notes abound, tinged with just the right proportion of green herbs. Drink now. Imported by Pernod Ricard.

97

87 Marqués de Cáceres 2009 Rosé (Rioja); \$9. Crisp, natural and lightly salinic on the nose, with medium weight, good freshness and solid peach and citrus flavors. This is a standard but nicely done Rioja rosé with a pithy finish and just the right edge to it. Drink liberally with appetizers and you shouldn't go wrong. Imported by Vineyard Brands.

98

89 Hedges Family Estate 2008 CMS White (Columbia Valley); \$14. About three quarters Sauvignon Blanc, with Chardonnay and a splash of Marsanne filling out the blend. A lush effort, with a vivacious mix of pineapple, pear, and green and yellow apples. All stainless fermented, clean and refreshing.

99

88 Weingut Burg Ravensburg 2008 Freiherr von Goeler Dry Riesling (Baden); \$13. A lovely and versatile Riesling, filled with lime, floral and apple and pear shadings. This medium-bodied, barely off-dry wine features pristine citrus and tree fruit flavors on the midpalate, then ends on a slightly spicy note. Imported by USA Wine Imports.

100

88 Château de Fontenille 2009 (Entre-Deux-Mers); \$12. This is white Bordeaux at its freshest, bursting with herbaceous flavors, very grassy. It does have some weight of green plum flesh and a creamy texture. Delicious. Imported by Stacole Fine Wines.

GRAND CRUDE
Prince Charles's prized Aston-Martin burns bioethanol produced from surplus British wine, the result of vintners surpassing European Union-mandated quotas. The "crude" is supplied by a Wiltshire winery and distilled into fuel in Gloucester.