BUYING GUIDE
BEST OF YEAR/2012

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### Chardonnay

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### Other Wines

- **Ram’s Gate 2010** Lee’s Secret Vineyard Chardonnay (Carneros). Extravagantly rich in tropical fruit, orange, honey and sweet oak flavors, this is balanced, with crisp acidity and a dry finish. It’s a good example of the popular style, at the upper tier. —S.H.
- **Ramey 2010** Single Vineyard Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast). This shows the impressive acidity and spice flavor that this cool part of Santa Barbara County coaxes out of its wines. With a touch of new oak, it provides balanced flavors of pineapple, lime, green apple, buttered toast, vanilla, crème brûlée and honeysuckle. —S.H.
- **Gainey 2010** Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills). For full review see page 9. **Editors’ Choice.**
- **Ram’s Gate 2010** Ulises Valdez Diablo Vineyards Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). This is clearly an elegant Chardonnay, well grown and made to impress. It’s rich, dry and creamy, with a good hit of acidity accompanying oak-influenced flavors of tropical fruit, pear and peach. —S.H.
- **Jordan 2010** Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). Easy to drink, this has enough sophistication to pair with rich scallop, tuna and lobster dishes. It’s dry, although there’s a lot of sweetly ripe orange, apricot and buttercreem flavors, as well as cara-
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 Tasting Director Lauren Buzzeo, Assistant Tasting Director Anna Lee C. Iijima, Executive Editor Susan Kostrzewa, Managing Editor Joe Czerwinski, Contributing Editor Michael Schachner and Spirits Editor Kara Newman in New York, European Editor Roger Voss in Bordeaux, Italian Editor Monica Larner in Rome, California Editor Steve Heinzoff in Oakland, Contributing Editor Paul Gregg in Seattle and Contributing Editor Virgnie 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 96–100: The pinnacle of quality. A great achievement.
- Superb 94–95: Highly recommended.
- Excellent 90–93: Very Good 87–89: Recommended.
- Good 83–86: Suitable for everyday consumption.
- 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 value 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 formulas 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 winecountry.com/contactus. Inquiries should be addressed to the Tasting & Review Department at 914.345.9463 or email tastings@winecountry.com. 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 813.371.1122; fax 866.806.8768; or email dolezza@winecountry.com. All reviews on our fully searchable database at buyingguide.winecountry.com.

98 Charles Smith 2009 Royal City Syrah (Washington). This beautifully reflects the vintage as well as the place. There is astonishing density, length and detail—as much as any Syrah in the country. The deep, compact and impossibly complex flavors mix notes of black fruit, cassis, licorice, coffee, baking spice, smoke and Bourbon barrel. **Cellar Selection.** —P.G. **abv:** 15% **Price:** $140

98 Schramsberg 2004 Reserve (Napa-Mendocino-Sonoma-Marin). The opulence of this sparkling wine has to be tasted to be believed. It’s far softer and silkier than the winery’s companion new release, the 2005 J. Schram, but then the blend is the complete opposite. This one’s mainly Pinot Noir, with the balance from Chardonnay. The Pinot Noir brings a warm, raspberry- and cherry-sauce richness to Chardonnay’s limes and pears, while an extraordinarily delicious toastiness pervades the whole, as if it had been gently smoked. So enticing now, it’s hard to keep from drinking the whole bottle, and you certainly can, but this is a wine that will age for 10–15 years. —S.H. **abv:** 12.5% **Price:** $110

96 Dunham 2009 XV Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley). This pure Cabernet from a lush vintage comes together in a wonderfully supple, dense and complex mix of red and black fruit, coffee, mocha and toast flavors. There is no part of this wine that is not thoroughly delicious. It’s very satisfying, long and luxurious, with plenty of life ahead—but why wait? **Editors’ Choice.** —P.G. **abv:** 13.8% **Price:** $45

96 Goldschmidt 2008 Single Vineyard Selection Game Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). This is rich and appealing, vast in flavor and luxurious in texture. It shows Oakville character in its smooth, velvety tannins and overall balance, with ripe blackberry, currant and dark chocolate flavors. If you can keep from drinking it now, it should hold in the cellar for 10–15 years. —S.H. **abv:** 14.9% **Price:** $75

96 Joseph Phelps 2009 Insignia Estate Grown Red Wine (Napa Valley). This wine continues a long-standing tradition, showing a mastery of the art of blending. It’s made using grapes that are sourced from at least six vineyards scattered from Yountville to St. Helena. Right out of the bottle, it’s a soft, smoothly tannic wine that’s rich in blackberry jam, black currant, blueberry, raspberry, dark chocolate and spice flavors. The wine, which contains small amounts of Petit Verdot and Malbec, is so powerful, it easily carries the 100% new French oak. Just gorgeous now, and it should develop bottle complexity for at least the next 10 years. —S.H. **abv:** 14.5% **Price:** $200

96 Krupp Brothers 2008 M5 Stagecoach Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A quintessential, cult-style Napa Cabernet, this has a soft creaminess that’s reminiscent of milk chocolate. The fruit is terrifically ripe in blackberry jam and cassis liqueur, with a strong but balanced application of sweet oak. Really complex, it’s a Cabernet that will stand against the best of Napa Valley. —S.H. **abv:** 15.4% **Price:** $125
96 The Vineyard House 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). You want soft, cult-style, wildly delicious Napa Cabernet? Here it is. The personal vision of Jeremy Nickel, of the Far Niente and Nickel & Nickel dynasty, this is rich and delicious in blackberry compote, black currant, chocolate, anise and sweet oak flavors. Blended with a few drops of Merlot, Petit Verdot and Malbec, this bottling now establishes itself at the forefront of Napa's most important Cabernets. —S.H. 
abv: 14.2%  
Price: $200

95 Moone-Tsai 2009 Cor Leonis Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This wine is entirely Cabernet, using grapes from the southerly Coombsville area and warmer St. Helena. As such, it's wonderfully balanced, with a sprightly burst of acidity brightening succulent flavors of black cherry and dark chocolate. The use of 100% new French oak sounds excessive on paper, but it's perfectly integrated, providing a jacket of sweet buttered toast that in no way overshadows the fruit. Enjoy it now and over the next 10 years as it ages. —S.H. 
abv: 15.3%  
Price: $175

95 Nefarious Cellars 2010 Rocky Mother Vineyard Estate Syrah (Columbia Valley). Once again, the Syrah from the Rocky Mother Vineyard proves its mettle, with a young, juicy, jammy, joyful expression of pure berry flavor. Compelling structure, amazing purity and a well-modulated hint of chocolate from aging in 20% new French oak complete the picture. Cellar Selection. —P.G. 
abv: 14.6%  
Price: $45

95 Pirouette 2009 Red (Columbia Valley). A four-grape, Bordeaux-style blend, this packs 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc and 3% Malbec. Refined and elegant, it is precisely structured, with a firm herbal attack and a perfect blend of berry and cassis flavors. It's dense, deep and compact, suggesting long aging ahead. Cellar Selection. —P.G. 
abv: 14.6%  
Price: $50

95 Prime 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Coombsville). A wonderful 100% Cabernet, this is Prime's first wine to bear the new Coombsville appellation. It's smooth, elegant and complex, with layers of blackberry and crème de cassis. It's beautiful now and over the next eight years. —S.H. 
abv: 14.3%  
Price: $59

95 Yates Family Vineyard 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Mount Veeder). This is an absolutely beautiful wine from a winery that's quietly been doing a great job with their Cabs. Made from grapes grown high up on Mount Veeder, which insiders know as one of Napa's premier mountain appellations, it's rich and softly refined in blackberry, blueberry, currant and chocolate flavors, with lovely minerality. It will age for a while, but there's no reason not to drink it now. Editors' Choice. —S.H. 
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $55

94 CREÖ 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Chalk Hill). There aren't very many Cabernets from the small Chalk Hill appellation in eastern Sonoma County. This one is excellent, a worthy follow-up to the winery's 2007, offering smooth and rich tannins, with elaborate blackberry, cherry, cassis and mocha flavors. New oak plays a dominant role, but it should recede as the wine integrates over time. Give it 6–8 years in the cellar. Cellar Selection. —S.H. 
abv: 14.2%  
Price: $75

94 Goldschmidt 2009 Single Vineyard Selection Yoeman Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). This is one of the best Alexander Valley Cabs of the vintage. It shows tightly controlled tannins framing luxurious black cherry, currant, dark chocolate and oak flavors that are dramatically rich and balanced. So delicious now, it's hard to keep from popping the cork, but it should develop in the bottle over the next eight years. —S.H. 
abv: 14.6%  
Price: $75

94 Goldschmidt 2007 Plus Single Vineyard Selection Vyborny Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). Goldschmidt has held this single-vineyard Cabernet back for more than five years, an expensive proposition. And it needs even more time. Although it's magnificent, the parts haven't yet come together. It's massive in blackberry and cassis liqueur flavors, and the tannins are pure Alexander Valley—soft and herbal—but the oak sticks out like a sore thumb. Put it in the cellar until at least 2018, and it could go far beyond that. Cellar Selection. —S.H. 
abv: 14.6%  
Price: $150
94 Krutz 2009 Stagecoach Vineyard Syrah (Napa Valley). A dramatic wine, rich and full bodied, this has flavors that change with every taste. The structure is complex in tannins and acid, framing kaleidoscopic notes of blackberry, black currant, spicy smoked bacon, violet, white pepper and sandalwood. Drink this outstanding Syrah over the next six years. *Editors’ Choice.* —S.H.

abv: 14.9%
Price: $38

94 Marimar Estate 2010 Don Miguel Vineyard La Masía Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). There’s a lot of lees influence on this wine, which gives it a sourdough taste and creamy mouthfeel. It’s dense in tropical fruit, citrus, green apple and honey notes, with a touch of sweet, smoky oak. A dry, complex, multilayered wine, this will gain traction with 2–4 years in the cellar. —S.H.

abv: 14.2%
Price: $35

94 Marimar Estate 2008 Doña Margarita Vineyard Mas Cavalls Unfiltered Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). The winery delayed the release of this block-designated Pinot later than its other 2008s, but even at four years old, it’s still tight and acidic, a wine you really shouldn’t open right now. Bone dry, it has a nice, balanced mouthfeel, with complex flavors of cherry, pomegranate, persimmon, tamarind-splashed mushroom and oak. Hold at least until 2014. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.

abv: 14%
Price: $95

94 Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars 2009 Cask 23 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A big, vital wine, mouth-filling and dense, with plenty of weight and volume, and deep flavors of earth, chocolate, blackberry and sweet currant. The cool ’09 vintage has resulted in this version of Cask 23 being lighter in alcohol and tighter than others like the 2008. It’s not quite as fat or immediately accessible as those vintages, but it is very fine, and should reward at least 10 years in the cellar, although you can certainly drink it now after a few hours in the decanter. *Cellar Selection.* —S.H.

abv: 13.5%
Price: $210

93 Darms Lane 2009 Bon Passe Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Darms Lane is one of those wineries that travels under the radar, but it really is worthy of your attention. With this superb 2009 Cab from their Oak Knoll vineyard, they’re continuing a string of successful bottlings with prices that have held steady for many years. The wine is rich, smooth and tannic, with a deep core of blackberry and currant. Dramatic now, it should continue to evolve in the bottle for many years. *Editors’ Choice.* —S.H.

abv: 14.5%
Price: $60

93 Forgeron 2009 Merlot (Columbia Valley). A hint of mint can be detected in the opening aromas of this Merlot, which includes a splash of Cabernet Franc in the blend. Licorice, smoke and deep cassis flavors all contribute to an intense, seductive wine, with velvety tannins enrobing a lingering finish. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

abv: 14.2%
Price: $30

93 Groth 2009 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). From the winery’s estate vineyard, on the eastern side of the Oakville appellation, this Cab is incredibly lush and delicious. It dazzles with rich blackberry, cherry pie, currant and cassis liqueur flavors, perfectly accented by sweet, smoky oak. It’s soft in tannins, yet age worthy. Drink now–2020. —S.H.

abv: 14.9%
Price: $125

94 Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars 2009 Fay Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This delicious 100% Cabernet is supple and generous. The tannins are gentle, the acidity soft yet supportive of the structure, and as for the flavors, they go beyond satisfaction into sheer delight. They include blackberry, cherry, blueberry, currant, mocha and red licorice, but the wine has an earthiness and minerality that give it true complexity. This is Stag’s Leap’s most accessible 2009 Cabernet, easily earning its high score for sheer delight. Drink now–2015. —S.H.

abv: 14%
Price: $95
Joseph Phelps 2010 Freestone Vineyards Estate Grown Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This shows the power and purity of the winery's coastal Pastorale and Quarter Moon vineyards, in this cool vintage that allowed for long hang time. Although some coastal Pinots were plagued by rot, this one was not, resulting in a wine with delicious raspberry and cherry notes, accented by new French oak. It's very fine, complex and enjoyable now. —S.H.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $55

Marimar Estate 2009 Don Miguel Vineyard La Masia Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Although this is tight, acidic and tannic, the core is so rich, it should easily negotiate the next 5–6 years in a good cellar. The texture is of pure silk, and the flavors are rich in cherry, pomegranate and spice. Cellar Selection. —S.H.  
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $39

Knights Bridge 2010 Alder Springs Vineyard Chardonnay (Mendocino County). A California Chardonnay for Montrachet fans, this is the color of Golden Delicious apple, and it fully shows its time spent in barrel. Rich and unctuous, this is a heady wine, with lingering tastes of butterscotch, crème brûlée and vanilla, that is still laced with minerality. It is extremely well made, fitting for special occasions. —V.B.  
abv: 14.2%  
Price: $65

Pedestal 2009 Merlot (Columbia Valley). Michel Rolland’s Long Shadows wine is 83% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. Bay leaf and pretty herb scents introduce a wine that remains tightly wound. Black cherry and cassis flavors are set in a frame of smoky espresso. The tannins are polished, and the finish is deliciously long. Cellar Selection. —P.G.  
abv: 14.9%  
Price: $55

Long Meadow Ranch 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). You’ll love the brightness and liveliness of this wonderfully drinkable Cabernet. Sometimes these rich wines can be heavy, but this one combines tautness with its elaborate blackberry jam, anise and cedar wood flavors, which makes it sing. Perfect now with a great steak, and should age well for up to eight years. Editors’ Choice. —S.H.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $47

Pepper Bridge 2009 Estate Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla Valley). A rich mix of red, blue and black fruit opens into a sappy, spicy midpalate. The lush fruits are highlighted by a wash of milk chocolate. At first tightly wound, the wine seems to show more oak flavors with air, hinting at licorice and Bourbon barrel. Cellar Selection. —P.G.  
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $55

Woodward Canyon 2009 Estate Reserve Merlot-Cabernet Franc-Petit Verdot-Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla Valley). Made only in optimal vintages, this is drawn from chosen lots of estate-grown Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon. As 2009 was a warm year, the wine is thick as a brick, dark and seemingly soaked in oak. It’s rich, with superconcentrated black-cherry and cassis flavors. The acidity and minerality offered by this sustainably farmed site prop up the wine, but even so, it’s not for the faint of palate. —P.G.  
abv: 16%  
Price: $79

Zuccardi 2008 Aluvional (La Consulta). A gorgeous 100% Malbec with freshness, depth and complexity, this smells like graphite, cola, bacon and blackberry, then feels strapping—like granite. Smooth, deep berry flavors are matched by spice and leather, while the finish is oak driven, with coffee, coconut and chocolate notes. Drink now–2018. Winesellers Ltd. —M.S.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $80

Swanson 2008 Alexis Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This great Napa Cabernet can stand beside far more expensive Cabs from the valley. Notable for its dry, tannic, rich structure and complex blackberry, black currant, blueberry and oak-inspired smokiness, it’s absolutely delicious now, and will develop in the bottle over many years. —S.H.  
abv: 14.8%  
Price: $75
**Bodegas Ateca 2009** Atteca Armas Old Vines Garnacha (Calatayud). The Gil family understands how to make fully loaded reds that are balanced and highly enjoyable. Look for a saturated, rich nose with brandied plum, blackberry pastry and toasty oak notes. The palate is both lush and racy, with dark berry and chocolate flavors. It finishes huge and masculine, almost like fudge. Drink now–2015. Gil Family Estates. —M.S.

*abv:* 15.5%  
*Price:* $45

**Can Blau 2009** Mas de Can Blau (Montsant). This is deep and attractive, with complex aromas of balsam wood, ripe black fruit and bacon. It feels really good and dense, with pastry, roasted berry, chocolate and molasses flavors. The finish is long, flavorful and rewarding. A modern wine to drink now–2016. Gil Family Estates. —M.S.

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

**Forefathers 2009** Lone Tree Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). This has been a very successful second label from Goldschmidt, and with this 2009, they again hit gold. The wine is smoothly tannic and dry in black cherry pie and red currant flavors, with all kinds of interesting herb, carob bean, spice and oak complications. It’s elegant and complex to drink now and over the next 5–6 years. —S.H.

*abv:* 14.3%  
*Price:* $50

**Forgeron 2011** Ambiance Roussanne-Grenache Blanc-Marsanne-Viognier (Columbia Valley). Thoroughly delicious, this clever blend of Grenache Blanc, Roussanne, Viognier and Marsanne is a joyride of green and yellow fruit, citrus and pear, honeysuckle, melon and sweet orange peel. It’s complex and distinctive. *Editors’ Choice.* —P.G.

*abv:* 14.1%  
*Price:* $25

**J. Davies 2009** Cabernet Sauvignon (Diamond Mountain). Give this dramatic young wine a little time in the decanter or the glass to gain its stride. Right out of the bottle, it’s tough as nails, but a bit of breathing softens it, bringing out a vast core of sweet black currant. Lots of new oak adds to the sweetness in the form of buttered toast. Should age well, if you’re in the mood to cellar it, through 2017 or so. —S.H.

*abv:* 14.5%  
*Price:* $80

**MacPhail 2010** Gap’s Crown Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Fans of ripe, sweet fruit will love this Pinot. It’s huge in juicy raspberry and cherry, with spicy hints of Dr. Pepper and red licorice. It will be fun to see how the wine evolves over the next 6–8 years. —S.H.

*abv:* 14%  
*Price:* $49

**Poet’s Leap 2011** Riesling (Columbia Valley). This shows lively acidity, with ripe but tart fruit and an alcohol level just slightly above 12%. The grapes used were sourced from the Benches (German clones) and old vine plantings at Dionysus. It’s a lush Poet’s Leap, lightly tasting of honey, and loaded with pretty flavors of Meyer lemon, ripe orange, and candied pineapple. *Editors’ Choice.* —P.G.

*abv:* 12.3%  
*Price:* $20

**Reata 2010** Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This shows real Sonoma Coast character in its silky texture, strong acidity and transparency of its raspberry and cherry notes, which allow for a mineral-driven taste of the soil to shine. The wine improves in the glass as it airs, picking up extra layers of complexity. *Editors’ Choice.* —S.H.

*abv:* 14.2%  
*Price:* $30

**Schramsberg 2008** Blanc de Noirs Brut (Napa-Mendocino-Sonoma-Marin). Golden pale in color—this is so light and delicate on the palate, you’d never guess it was made almost entirely from Pinot Noir, with just 9% Chardonnay added. It tastes of lime and yeast, with a suggestion of strawberry, and has a soft, creamy mousse. Drink now. —S.H.

*abv:* 12.7%  
*Price:* $39
92 Sequel 2009 Syrah (Columbia Valley). Rich, dark, dense and smoky, this is a fruit-driven Syrah that has a splendid bouquet of ripe black fruit. Some herbal accents and a streak of bark runs through the tannins. —PG.

92 Swanson 2008 Merlot (Oakville). This shows the sun-ripened black cherry, red currant, anise and herb flavors you'd expect in a great Oakville Merlot, coupled with hard, complex tannins. The wine lifts Merlot to true elegance, with flavors that finish dry and spicy. Drink over the next six years. Editors' Choice. —S.H.

92 Spring Valley Vineyard 2009 Derby Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla Valley). This introduces itself with sweet scents of plum and cherry, the sort found in young vines. It moves into a thick, well-structured midpalate, with big splashes of coffee, earth and roasted nut. —PG.

92 Twomey 2010 Bien Nacido Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). Twomey has turned to various coastal sources for Pinot Noir for years, with mixed results. Finally, with this Bien Nacido bottling, they’ve found something worth repeating. It shows that vineyard’s balanced structure, with fine acidity and tannins framing cherry, red currant and cola flavors laced with minerality. —S.H.

92 Whitehall Lane 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). What a beautiful wine this is for drinking now and over the next few years. It's lush and approachable, but it also has plenty of complexity, offering waves of blackberry, cherry, red currant, mocha and delicately toasted oak. Easy to find, with 8,950 cases produced. Editors' Choice. —S.H.

92 Winzer Krems 2011 Kremser Pfaffenberg Reserve Riesling (Kremstal). The steep Pfaffenberg vineyard, sloping straight down to the Danube River, is one of the top vineyards in Krems. This rich and complex wine has a fine perfumed character, laced with lemon and pear flavors. It has a touch of minerality in its texture, making a wine that should age over several years. Total Wine & More. Editors' Choice. —R.V.

91 Ancient Peaks 2010 Renegade Margarita Vineyard (Paso Robles). This is one of those wines that’s a little soft and heavy by itself, but when paired with the right food, it will explode. Made from Syrah, Malbec and Petite Sirah, it’s bone dry, with blackberry, red currant, bacon and white pepper flavors that are wrapped into firm tannins and finished with a touch of smoky oak. It begs for a simple, sweet, charcoal-grilled steak. Editors' Choice. —S.H.

91 Bodegas Ateca 2010 Atteca Old Vines Garnacha (Calatayud). Emphatically toasty and charred on the nose, this offers chocolate and hickory aromas. It feels smooth, plush, layered and not at all simple, with baked black-fruit flavors that are draped over savory barbecue and spice accents. The toast is present but not overpowering on the finish. Gil Family Estates. —M.S.
**Cambria 2010 Julia’s Vineyard Estate Grown Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley).**
This is a big, fleshy wine, with evident tannins and acidity that give it bite and structure. The flavors are ripe and pure, suggesting red and black cherry pie filling, with lots of dusty spice and a hint of sweet oak. It will be very nice now and over the next 4–5 years. And with more than 22,000 cases produced, it should be relatively easy to find. *Editors’ Choice.* —S.H.

*abv:* 14.6%  
*Price:* $25

**Gainey 2010 Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills).**
This shows an evident layer of oak in the form of buttered toast and vanilla notes, but the underlying wine is strong in pineapple and golden mango flavors. Fine coastal acidity and a hint of mineral provide structural balance. *Editors’ Choice.* —S.H.

*abv:* 13.9%  
*Price:* $23

**Dunham 2011 Shirley Mays Lewis Estate Vineyard Chardonnay (Columbia Valley).**
This is a juicy, buttery, nicely defined bottle with caramel and butterscotch flavors that run through its heart. Thoroughly delicious fruit notes of key lime and apple pie complete the picture. —P.G.

*abv:* 13.3%  
*Price:* $24

**Frog’s Leap 2010 Zinfandel (Napa Valley).**
This flashy, complex Zinfandel wants to be paired with a burger. It’s just luscious in blackberry jam and teriyaki beef flavors, with tart acidity that can’t wait to bite into greasy protein and fat. *Editors’ Choice.* —S.H.

*abv:* 13.8%  
*Price:* $27

**Katherine Goldschmidt 2010 Crazy Creek Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley).**
This is really one of the best values in Cabernet on the market. It’s so deliciously rich in blackberry, currant and chocolate, you’ll want to drink the whole bottle right now. Kudos to winemaker Nick Goldschmidt for producing a wine this good at such a good price. *Editors’ Choice.* —S.H.

*abv:* 14.3%  
*Price:* $21

**MacPhail 2010 Wildcat Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).**
Here’s a full-bodied Pinot Noir that’s a little high in alcohol, but that’s the cost of all the richness. The flavors of raspberry jam, cherry pie, sweet date and smoky, buttery vanilla are frankly addictive. Lovely pairings would be grilled salmon steaks with a fruity salsa or lamb chops in a wine reduction sauce. —S.H.

*abv:* 14.9%  
*Price:* $49

**Schramsberg 2009 Blanc de Blancs Brut (Napa-Sonoma-Marin).**
Made from 100% Chardonnay, this bubbly shows Schramsberg’s ease of producing rich, clean and elegant sparkling wines. It’s delicious now in vanilla, yeast, lime and Asian pear flavors, with some sweetness from the dosage, but try giving it 5–6 years in the cellar. —S.H.

*abv:* 12.7%  
*Price:* $37
10 Caraccioli 2007 Brut Cuvée (Santa Lucia Highlands). The winery says this is made from all Chardonnay, making it a blanc de blancs. It's dry, creamy and rich in flavors of citrus, yeast and vanilla. It feels refined and silky on the palate, with a honeyed finish. —S.H.

abv: 12%  
Price: $52

90 Groth 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). This is a lovely Cabernet to drink now and over the next few years. It shows its Oakville pedigree with smooth tannins and dry, complex flavors of blackberry, black currant and cherry, with a fine earthiness. —S.H.

abv: 14.5%  
Price: $55

90 Hendry 2010 Block 28 Zinfandel (Napa Valley). Easy and gentle in mouthfeel, this has soft, velvety tannins, but the flavors are big and complex. It offers waves of blackberry and blueberry jam, anisette liqueur, milk chocolate, bacon and white pepper as well as a smoky, creamy touch that melts into a long, spicy finish. It's high in alcohol, but wears it well. —S.H.

abv: 15.9%  
Price: $35

90 Joanne Weir 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This soft, lush Cabernet features lots of richness. At four years old, it's drinking well now, with mocha-infused black cherry, cassis and cedar flavors. —S.H.

abv: 14.5%  
Price: $42

91 Swanson 2009 Instant Napa Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A perfect illustration of why Napa Valley Cabernet is so popular. Blended with a little Merlot and Petit Verdot, it's dry, softly tannic and balanced in acidity, with ripe blackberry, cherry, currant, cocoa and cedar flavors. Just gorgeous for drinking now and over the next few years. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%  
Price: $60

91 Twomey 2008 Merlot (Napa Valley). Made with a drop of Cabernet Franc, this Merlot is rich, smooth and bone dry. With modest alcohol, it brims with flavors of black and red currant, licorice, anise and white pepper, as well as a subtle touch of sweet, smoky new oak. The grapes come from the cool Soda Canyon area of Napa Valley, at the base of Atlas Peak. —S.H.

abv: 13.7%  
Price: $50

91 Vina Robles 2011 White4 (Paso Robles). This is an interesting wine that pushes the boundaries beyond the usual offerings in California. Blended from Viognier, Vermentino, Verdelho and Sauvignon Blanc, it's dry, tart and complex, with a broad range of citrus, white peach, dried apricot and white pepper flavors. Don't serve it too cold. —S.H.

abv: 14.1%  
Price: $16
90 Kenwood 2010 Jack London Vineyard Zinfandel (Sonoma Mountain). Smooth and spicy, this has lots of raspberry, cherry and smoky wood flavors that taste sweet and savory, but turn nicely dry and complex on the finish. It shows real class. Best over the next few years. —S.H. 
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $22

90 Vignobles La Coterie 2006 Balma Venitia (Muscat de Beaumes de Venise). For a wine without a reputation for aging, this is surprisingly good. It’s very lush and honeyed, with a viscous texture and a long, sweet finish. Try it with desserts rather than as an apéritif. Kosher. Royal Wine Corporation. —J.C. 
abv: 15%  
Price: $19

90 Zuccardi 2010 Q Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). Opening with subtle berry aromas and hints of herb, rubber and leather, this is sturdy as a rock, with dry, spicy plum and cassis flavors. Powerful but restrained, it’s neither overextracted nor too grapy. Winesellers Ltd. —M.S. 
abv: 14%  
Price: $23

90 Merriam 2008 Jones Vineyard Cabernet Franc (Dry Creek Valley). This is nice and soft, with ripe red-cherry and spice flavors. There’s an herbal, earthy dustiness that’s appealing. The fruit has a delicious sweetness that makes it ideal for pairing with charred meats. —S.H. 
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $45

90 Vina Robles 2010 Red4 (Paso Robles). There’s a robust heartiness to this Rhône-style blend that makes it perfect for drinking on cold nights with spicy barbecue or stew. Mainly Syrah and Petite Sirah, it’s rich in blackberry, bacon and black pepper flavors. Bone dry and moderate in alcohol, it represents great quality for the price, and it should be relatively easy to find, with nearly 12,000 cases produced. Editors’ Choice. —S.H. 
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $17

90 Bodegas Bilbainas 2009 Viña Pomal Crianza (Rioja). A medicinal cherry aroma is solid despite its suggestion of plastic or latex. The mouthfeel is lively and edgy, offering raw tannins. Flavors of strawberry, plum and spice end in swirls of vanilla and cream. For a fresh, traditional Rioja, this is pretty good. Aveniu Brands, Inc. —M.S. 
abv: 14%  
Price: $15

90 Spring Valley Vineyard 2009 Frederick Estate Grown Red Wine (Walla Walla Valley). The Frederick bottling is 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 31% Merlot, with other Bordeaux grapes filling in the rest. Chewy and tannic, it seems to have a green edge to its fruit and tannins. Nonetheless, there are plenty of flavors of berry, spice and black pepper, with highlights of coffee and cacao. This has lots to chew on, plus good length. —P.G. 
abv: 15%  
Price: $50

90 Waterstone 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). The translucent color and light body warn against aging this wine, but why would you want to? It’s delicious right out of the bottle. Rich in black currant, cherry, violet and cedar, it’s a blend of all five of the classic Bordeaux varieties. Editors’ Choice. —S.H. 
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $24

88 Foppiano 2011 Estate Bottled Sauvignon Blanc (Russian River Valley). With hints of dried hay, white pepper, lemon, Asian pear and mineral that are brightened by searing acidity, this elegant, bone-dry wine will complement food—not dominate it. Editors’ Choice. —S.H. 
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $18
**Louis M. Martini 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma County).** Smooth and complex, this is dry and softly tannic, with pleasant blackberry, black currant, spice and cedar flavors. Ready to drink now.—S.H.  
*abv: 13.8%  
Price: $18*

**Freakshow 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Lodi).** Michael David’s Freakshow is predictably freaky, big in oak and concentrated fruit. But its juicy and robust nature is hard to dislike. The dark cherry and savory baking-spice flavors meld into the soft tannins, creating a crowd-pleasing example of California’s agricultural generosity.—V.B.  
*abv: 14.5%  
Price: $20*

**Kenwood 2008 Artist Series Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma County).** Ripe blackberry and black cherry flavors are prominent in this bottling, which is rich in sweet, smoky oak. But it’s a little soft and one dimensional. It’s unlikely to improve with age, so drink up.—S.H.  
*abv: 14.5%  
Price: $60*

**Rosemont 2010 Merlot (Virginia).** The smooth-smelling bouquet is an amalgam of dried dill, exotic spice and black fruit notes, with hints of sweet pipe tobacco and potpourri. The wine feels easy and relaxed on entrance, with flavors of blackberry and chocolate that seem to melt into the manicured tannins.—A.H.  
*abv: 14%  
Price: $18*

**Angeline 2011 Pinot Noir (California).** A solid Pinot Noir, this is surprisingly good for the price. It shows a delicate texture and plenty of dry elegance, along with flavors of tobacco, pomegranate and sour cherry candy. It should be relatively easy to find, with 40,000 cases produced. *Editors’ Choice.*—S.H.  
*abv: 13.5%  
Price: $15*

**Château du Tariquet VSOP (France; Robert Kacher, New York, NY).** Vibrant yellow-gold in color, this full-bodied blend of Ugni Blanc and Baco Blanc resounds with a rich butterscotch note and a long finish that would be dynamite paired with pecan pie. The cap to the rounded cylindrical bottle is frustratingly hard to open.  
*abv: 40%  
Price: $50*

**Château du Tariquet VS Classique (France; Robert Kacher Selections, New York, NY).** Light, nuanced and soft, this dark gold brandy breathes a bright, fresh aroma of fresh apple. The flavors are more rounded, showing notes of cola, vanilla, allspice and a delicate ribbon of milky caramel winding throughout. In addition to sipping, consider using this brandy for cocktails, too—sub it anywhere a lighter whiskey might go. Made from Ugni Blanc and Baco Blanc.  
*abv: 40%  
Price: $37*

**Chateau Ste. Michelle 2011 Riesling (Columbia Valley).** A marvelous effort in a difficult year, this textbook Washington Riesling is bursting with apricot and peach goodness. Round and polished, it’s long and textured, with an excellent wash of minerality. *Best Buy.*—P.G.  
*abv: 11%  
Price: $9*

**Trapiche 2010 Broquel Malbec (Mendoza).** Minty and toasty upfront, this is layered with blackberry, licorice, leather and roast aromas. It feels raring and ready to go, courtesy of firm acidity and good overall framing. Flavors of wild berry are bright, with herb and oak accents. Long, toasty and solid on the finish. The Wine Group. *Best Buy.*—M.S.  
*abv: 14.5%  
Price: $15*
90 Clos Mont-Blanc 2009 Xipela (Catalunya). This is extremely fruity, with an exotic bouquet of blueberry, cardamom, nutmeg and earth aromas. It feels smooth, collected and fairly rich, with savory, lightly baked flavors of black fruit. The finish remains savory, where graham cracker sweetness and roasted qualities dominate. Luxe Vintages. Best Buy. —M.S.

abv: 14%  Price: $15

90 HandCraft 2010 Artisan Collection Petite Sirah (California). A really nice evocation of this variety, this is made in a soft style, with a Merlot-like velvety texture. But there’s nothing shy about the flavors: It bursts with ripe, jammy cherry, grilled pancetta, crushed pepper and sandalwood, and has a long, spicy finish. Best Buy. —S.H.

abv: 14.5%  Price: $15

88 Korbel NV Sec California Champagne (California). This is a special bottling with a fancy new label that commemorates Korbel’s 130th anniversary. It’s slightly sweet and easy to drink, with rich, creamy flavors of honey, orange and vanilla. The blend is Chenin Blanc, French Colombard and Chardonnay. Best Buy. —S.H.

abv: 12%  Price: $13

87 Tortoise Creek 2011 Jam’s Blend Chardonnay (Lodi). Full of flavors and aromas of grapefruit and pear, this delightful Chardonnay is super-crisp, with restrained barrel influence. Like a freshly baked pie, it’s bright and satisfying. Best Buy. —V.B.

abv: 13.9%  Price: $11

86 Bota Box 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon (California). At the equivalent of $5 for a regular bottle of Cabernet, this three-liter box of wine is a real value. It’s rich and fruity in blackberry and spice flavors, with robust tannins and a clean, smooth finish. Best Buy. —S.H.

abv: 13%  Price: $20/3 L

86 Redtree 2011 Moscato (California). We’ll call this a table wine, but you could just as easily consider it a dessert sipper. It’s honey-sweet in orange and vanilla flavors, with a pleasant zippiness that’s almost sparkling. Best Buy. —S.H.

abv: 9%  Price: $8

86 Redtree 2011 Pinot Grigio (California). A little sweet and honeyed, but with crisp acidity and a clean mouthfeel, this would make for a pretty good cocktail sipper, or it would pair with slightly sweet Vietnamese or Chinese fare. It tastes of tangerine, white pepper and vanilla. Best Buy. —S.H.

abv: 12.5%  Price: $8

86 Viña Maipu 2011 Alta Max Malbec (Mendoza). The citrusy red-fruit aromas have a sharp note of brine. It feels broad and full, with sweet berry and plum flavors, while snappy raspberry flavors and scratchy tannins work the finish. USA Wine West. Best Buy. —M.S.

abv: 13.5%  Price: $11
**BEST BUYS**

85 Baron Herzog 2011 Chenin Blanc (Clarksburg). This offers pleasant notes of apricot, dark caramel, grapefruit, gooseberry and pineapple. It’s medium in weight and texture, with acidity on the finish. Swirl it early and often to get the aromas going. Kosher. *Best Buy.* —V.B.  

abv: 11%  
Price: $8

85 Idilicum NV Brut (Cava). Green melon and lettuce aromas are fresh and clean. The wine feels solid and good, and there’s a jumble of baked apple and melon flavors. Yeasty on the finish, it’s made entirely from Macabeo grapes. A.W. Direct. *Best Buy.* —M.S.  

abv: 12%  
Price: $9

85 Line 39 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Lake County). Line 39 is a consistently solid name in Lake County Sauvignon Blanc. The 2011 delivers an aromatically inviting, grassy, New Zealand-style wine, with layers of citrus and grapefruit. *Best Buy.* —M.B.  

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $10

85 Piccini NV Memóro (Italy). With no vintage or appellation other than Italy, this cheerful blend of Primitivo, Montepulciano, Nero d’Avola and Merlot represents a blend that’s sourced from sites across southern Italy. The nose shows jammy raspberry aromas while the close is soft and chewy. Avenin Brands, Inc. *Best Buy.* —M.L.  

abv: 14%  
Price: $10

85 San Huberto 2011 Torrontés (Argentina). This is fresh and open on the nose, which is what you’d want from a $9 quaffer like this. It tastes good and fruity, with lychee, green apple and spice flavors working together. Vanilla and papaya notes come up on the mild finish. Jomada Imports. *Best Buy.* —M.S.  

abv: 13%  
Price: $9

84 Les Bourgeois NV Riverboat Sweet White Wine (Missouri). Floral and exotic, this smells like a bowl of rose petals and orange blossoms marinating in lime juice. It feels loose, soft and medium bodied, with a discernible sweetness that offsets a hint of bitterness. *Best Buy.* —A.H.  

abv: 12.5%  
Price: $7

**CORRECTIONS**

On page 107 of the November issue, the appellation for the Sebastiani 2008 Merlot was misreported. The correct appellation is Sonoma County.

On page 15 of the November issue, the price for the Vine Cliff 2009 16 Rows Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville) was incorrect. The correct price is $150.

On page 18 of the December issue, we misstated the producer of an 88-point Romanian Cabernet. The correct wine attribution is:


abv: 14.5%  
Price: $8

On pages 102 and 110 of the December issue, the price for the Berlucchi NV Cuvée ’61 Brut (Franciacorta) was misreported. The correct price is $22.

**AROUND THE CORNER**

Here’s what’s coming up in the February issue of *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*:

**TOP 10 WINE TRAVEL DESTINATIONS**  
Imagine savoring Piedmont-inspired cuisine in the rolling hills of Brazil’s Val do Vinhedos, touring wineries housed within majestic castles along Austria’s Danube River or sipping Pinotage while overlooking the sea in Stellenbosch, South Africa. We’ve named 2013’s top wine tourism spots.

**TAMING PETITE SIRAH**  
Petite Sirah is coming into its own in California. Are consumers are ready to pay ultrapremium prices for wines made from this inky, bold grape variety, and how do the wines age?

**ARGENTINA BY PRICE TIER**  
Malbec’s surging popularity has resulted in a flood of new Argentine brands, many of them inexpensive. Whether you’re shopping for a casual midweek dinner or an extra-special occasion, there’s an Argentine wine out there for you.
90 Lost Canyon 2010 Ruxton Vineyard Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). The chilly vintage has produced a very dry, young wine whose flavors veer toward acid-inspired mineral, citrus peel and apricot, rather than the riper flavors of a warmer year, such as 2008. The result is a tight Chardonnay, one more geared for revealing complexities than for opulence. —S.H.
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $35

90 Moone-Tsai 2010 Chardonnay (Napa Valley). Made using grapes grown high in the Mayacamas Mountains, this is extremely concentrated in pineapple essence, peach custard and tropical fruit flavors. It's extravagant, with 50% new French oak playing a strong role in contributing notes of buttered toast, crème brûlée and butterscotch to the flavor profile. —S.H.
abv: 14.7%  
Price: $55

90 Talley 2010 Rincon Vineyard Chardonnay (Arroyo Grande Valley). While this is not Talley's best Rincon ever, it is rich and elegant. You'll find tropical fruit, orange and toasty oak flavors, with a burst of citrusy acidity. Drink now. —S.H.
abv: 14.4%  
Price: $42

89 Darcie Kent Vineyards 2011 West Pinnacles Vineyard Chardonnay (Monterey). Grown on the east side of the Salinas Valley, opposite the Santa Lucia Highlands, this Chardonnay shows excellent Monterey acidity and dryness. The pineapple, green apple and peach fruit flavors are nice and streamlined, making the wine elegant and food friendly. —S.H.
abv: 13.2%  
Price: $15

89 Occidental Road Cellars 2010 Horse-shoe Bend Vineyard Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). Showling sweet toasty oak, brisk acidity and pure flavors of citrus fruit and apricot, this is a very rich, dry Chardonnay, although all of its parts haven't quite come together. While it's not an ager, it will benefit from holding until mid-2013, but not any longer. —S.H.
abv: 13.9%  
Price: $25

88 Bargetto 2010 Chardonnay (Central Coast). This Chardonnay emphasizes structural elegance and mineral-driven acidity, rather than opulence, although you'll find good citrus and tropical fruit flavors. With a dry finish, it's a fine Chardonnay to drink with chicken, ham, salmon or pork, or a nice dish of buttery pasta with peas and Parmesan. Editors’ Choice. —S.H.
abv: 13.8%  
Price: $15

88 Ram's Gate 2010 Sangiacomo Vineyards Chardonnay (Carneros). This is a strongly flavored Chardonnay, with powerful notes of ripe mango, pineapple, papaya and oak. Its intensity of fruit is impressive. What it lacks in subtlety, it makes up for in sheer power. —S.H.
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $62

88 Simi 2010 Reserve Chardonnay (Russian River Valley). This is a very pretty, polished wine for drinking now. It has rich, creamy flavors of tropical fruit and sweet, smoky oak that are heightened by crisp acidity. —S.H.
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $26

87 Fleuron 2010 Chardonnay (California). This will appeal to lots of people. It's made in the popular style, bearing ripe citrus, tropical fruit and honey flavors that are set into a creamy texture. It finishes with a touch of smoky, buttery oak. —S.H.
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $24

87 Hendry 2010 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay (Napa Valley). Better known for red wines, Hendry often produces a very good Chardonnay. This 2010 shows fine acidity and sweet flavors of tropical fruit, vanilla and buttered toast. —S.H.
abv: 13.8%  
Price: $30

87 Hoopla 2011 Chardonnay (North Coast). A soft, food-friendly wine, this has layers of vanilla and caramel apple, featuring a pronounced, lemony finish. With deeper, darker tones than an unoaked or neutral barrel-aged Chardonnay, Hoopla also retains plenty of acidity and a lingering sweetness. —V.B.
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $16

87 R2 2010 Big Bend Chardonnay (Carneros). New oak and ripe fruit combine to produce a user-friendly Chardonnay that's made in the popular style. It's enormous in pineapple, orange, mango and vanilla flavors that are brightened by crisp acidity. Drink now. —S.H.
abv: 13.7%  
Price: $24

87 Talley 2010 Oliver's Vineyard Chardonnay (Edna Valley). This Chardonnay seems a bit overmanipulated; the oak sticks out in the form of vanilla and butterscotch flavors. But you'll also find plenty of tropical fruit and tangerine notes that are brightened by brisk acidity. Drink now. —S.H.
abv: 14.4%  
Price: $32

87 Tortoise Creek 2011 Jam's Blend Chardonnay (Lodi). For full review see page 13. Best Buy.  
abv: 13.9%  
Price: $11

86 Calcareous 2011 Chardonnay (Paso Robles). This is a tasty Chardonnay, showing lots of pear, orange, mango, vanilla-cream and butterscotch flavors. It tastes on the sweeter side. —S.H.
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $30

86 De Tierra 2009 Reserve Chardonnay (Monterey). This is an easy Chardonnay, seemingly sweet and ripe in apricot, orange and mango flavors, with vanilla and buttered toast notes from the oak aging. Mouthwatering acidity provides great balance. —S.H.
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $30

86 Don & Sons 2010 Sonoma Signature Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast). This is rich in pineapple, mango, honey and smoky vanilla flavors, with a creamy richness and bracing acidity. —S.H.
abv: 13.7%  
Price: $20

86 Kenwood 2011 Chardonnay (Sonoma County). This brisk, satisfying Chardonnay offers plenty of varietal flavors of tropical fruit and green apple, with a smoky jacket of oak. —S.H.
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $15

86 Reata 2010 Chardonnay (Carneros). A seemingly sweet, simple but likeable Chardonnay, this shows the buttered toast and buttered popcorn flavors so popular among consumers, with rich pineapple and mango notes and a nice burst of Carneros acidity. —S.H.
abv: 14.3%  
Price: $20

85 Bell 2011 Chardonnay (Yountville). This tastes sweet and creamy, with buttered toast, buttered popcorn and tropical fruit flavors. It's made in the modern style, and despite its shortcomings, it will appeal to many Chardonnay fans. —S.H.
abv: 13.8%  
Price: $33

85 Bluenoise 2010 Chardonnay (Sonoma County). Too oaky, this is dominated by buttered toast and crème brûlée flavors. Underneath all that are some nice notes of pineapple, orange and apricot. Drink up. —S.H.
abv: 14.4%  
Price: $18

85 Joanne Weir 2010 Chardonnay (Sonoma Valley). This shows flavors of honey, tropical fruit, vanilla and smoky oak that are wrapped into a creamy texture. It will satisfy your basic Chardonnay needs. —S.H.
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $30

85 Noble Vines 2011 446 Chardonnay (Monterey). This hits it right in the sweet spot for Chardonnay-loving consumers, with buttered toast, honey and grilled pineapple flavors. It's part of Delicato Family Vineyards' Noble Vines series. —S.H.
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $13

85 Rutherford Ranch 2011 Chardonnay (Napa Valley). This seems as sweet as a fruit tart, featuring pineapple and orange jam flavors, with an oaky hit of buttered toast. Brisk acidity provides needed balance, but it's still pretty simple. —S.H.
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $16

84 Rock View 2011 Reserve Chardonnay (Mendocino). As this tastes pineapple-sweet, with a rich, creamy mouthfeel, it is for Chardonnay drinkers who prefer the popular style. The wine is best served chilled with similarly rich, creamy food. —V.B.
abv: 14.8%  
Price: $20

84 Scott Family 2011 Dijon Clone Chardonnay (Arroyo Seco). This nice, everyday Chardonnay is made in the modern style, showcasing appealingly ripe fruit. With a coating of sweet vanilla and buttered toast from the oak, it also shows pineapple and orange flavors. —S.H.
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $25
84 Signorello 2010 Hope’s Cuvee Chardonnay (Napa Valley). This heavy, oily wine shows the pitfalls that Napa Valley Chardonnay can fall into. While it’s very rich and sweet in tropical fruit and honey, it’s soft and structureless, and tastes like it’s already going downhill. —S.H.  
abv: 14.6%  
Price: $70

84 Stave & Hoop 2009 Lot 55 Chardonnay (Santa Barbara County). Here’s a soft, seemingly sweet and simple wine, with jammy orange, mango and buttered toast flavors. —S.H.  
abv: 14.4%  
Price: $16

84 ZD 2011 Chardonnay (California). This features creamy flavors of orange, nectarine and tropical fruit. The finish is seems a little sweet. —S.H.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $36

83 Jenica Peak 2011 Coastal Series Chardonnay (California). This tastes like an alcoholic fruit drink with apricot, orange and mango flavors. Still, it’s clean and pleasant. —S.H.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $9

82 Angelina 2011 Reserve Chardonnay (Santa Barbara County). The oak sticks out, dominating with toast and excessively sweet flavors. If you can get past that, you’ll find a dry, crisp wine, with a note of pineapple. —S.H.  
abv: 13.9%  
Price: $15

82 Butterfield Station 2011 Chardonnay (California). This seems as sweet as fruit juice, with flavors of orange, pineapple and banana. It’s creamy and warm, in the way of the modern Chardonnay style. —S.H.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $8

82 Save Me San Francisco 2010 Calling All Angels Chardonnay (California). This passes basic inspection for Chardonnay, with vanilla- and buttered-toast-inspired tropical fruit and pear flavors, but it’s heavy and it tastes sweet. A portion of the proceeds goes to children’s charity. —S.H.  
abv: 13.9%  
Price: $12

82 Tercero 2010 White Hawk Vineyard Viognier (Santa Barbara County). There’s a lot to like about this Viognier. It’s dry and zesty in acidity, with complex flavors of citrus, peach, kumquat, white pepper, chamomile and honey. Editors’ Choice. —S.H.  
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $20

88 Bodega Rancho 2011 Viognier (Santa Lucia Highlands). This showcases Viognier’s rich, exotic side, with flavors of tropical fruit, orange, vanilla-cream, honeysuckle and spice. It’s a big, flambé-ant wine, but dry, and nicely balanced with crisp acidity and a touch of mineral. —S.H.  
abv: 13.6%  
Price: $25

87 The White Knight 2011 Viognier (Clarksburg). A clean and bright wine with focused acidity, this is a mouthful of lemon and lime flavors, with a hint of peach. With a handful of Chardonnay and Muscat in the mix, this is a great party or midweek white, but it’s also fit for any special occasion. —V.B.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $13

86 Peirano 2009 Heritage Collection Viognier (Lodi). Fragrantly viscous and deeply golden in color, this has coatings of honey and apricot amid its full body and texture. —V.B.  
abv: 14.8%  
Price: $12

82 Gainey 2010 Limited Selection Sauvignon Blanc (Santa Ynez Valley). Very rich and refined, this features sleek acidity and a racy tang of minerality. It really shows how well Sauvignon Blanc grows in a good Santa Ynez Valley vineyard. The tropical fruit, pear and green apple flavors have tantalizing hints of gooseberry and smoky oak. Editors’ Choice. —S.H.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $19

80 Husch 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Mendo- cino). As good as last year, this vintage has a subtle lemon taste that’s layered with dashes of lifting lychee and fresh cantaloupe. Well integrated and pleasant, it will pair with spicy and seafood-infused foods, or go down easy on its own. Best Buy. —V.B.  
abv: 13.7%  
Price: $14

80 Imagery 2011 Wow Oui Sauvignon Blanc (Sonoma County). The wine is refreshing and unoaked, allowing pure fruit flavors to star, and the brisk acidity is just about perfect. A splash of Muscat Canelli brings a rich orange-honey note to Sauvignon’s typical lemon and lime flavors. Editors’ Choice. —S.H.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $27

80 Round Pond 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Rutherford). Food friendly and delicious, this offers tiers of lemon, lime, pineapple, green apple and vanilla flavors, with a touch of smokiness, and a long, spicy, slightly sweet finish. Crisp acidity provides the perfect balance of zestiness. —S.H.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $24

89 Gainey 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Santa Ynez Valley). This is the winery’s stainless-steel-fermented Sauvignon Blanc. Dry and racy in acidity, it shows lemon and lime flavors, with a rich hint of tart kiwi. —S.H.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $20

88 Easton 2011 Monarch Mine Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc (Sierra Foothills). Easton blends the Musque clone with Clone One for a Sauvignon Blanc that’s not overly herbaceous nor overly rich and creamy. The wine has a crisp minerality and tastes of ripe golden apple and lemon, with just the right amount of richness and a silver of nuttiness in the background. —V.B.  
abv: 13.8%  
Price: $18

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $18

87 Amici 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley). Tart, clean and juicy, this has ripe flavors of apricot, citrus, tropical fruit and spice. With zesty acidity, it feels basically dry, despite the honeyed finish. A touch of oak lends vanilla and smoke notes. —S.H.  
abv: 14.2%  
Price: $20

87 Barefoot NV Sauvignon Blanc (Califor- nia). Year after year, Barefoot does a great job with Sauvignon Blanc. The wine is dry, mouthwateringly crisp in acidity, and appealing in citrus, tropical fruit and gooseberry flavors. Best Buy. —S.H.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $7

87 Jeriko 2011 Musqué Clone Sauvignon Blanc (Mendocino). Made from certified biodynamic grapes and the Musqué clone, this is crisp with a creamy texture and a long finish. Tasting of brioche, lemon chiffon and wood, it screams out for seafood. —V.B.  
abv: 13.4%  
Price: $29

87 Whitehall Lane 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley). This wine seems sweet and refreshing, with juicy flavors of orange, apricot and peach, leading to a spicy finish. It’s polishes and drinks well now; try it with Asian fare. —S.H.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $18

86 Greedy 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Alexander Valley). While this Sauvignon Blanc seems to have some sweetness, it also has crisp acidity and pleasing minerality that gives the citrus and tropical fruit flavors a tang. It would pair nice with Vietnamese noodle dishes or chicken tacos. —S.H.  
abv: 13.8%  
Price: $24

86 Murphy-Goode 2011 The Fumé Sauvi-gnon Blanc (North Coast). An easy-drinking Sauvignon Blanc that’s fermented in barrel and stainless steel, this has a depth of pear, tangerine and lime flavors. Creamy and rich, it will make a consistent companion to most fish dishes. —V.B.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $14

86 Paul Dolan 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Mendocino). This is an intensely creamy white that’s full, bright and delightfully clear in its...
grapefruit zest flavor. The finish features touches of lemon and lemongrass. —V.B.

**86** Vermeil 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley). Dryish and crisp, this shows citrus, lemongrass, herb and honey flavors, with a sweet bitterness that will play well with a wide range of food, especially modern Asian fare. —S.H.

**abv:** 13.5%  
**Price:** $18

**85** Line 39 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Lake County). For full review see page 14. _Best Buy._

**abv:** 13.5%  
**Price:** $24

**85** Steelhead Vineyards 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (North Coast). This grassy North Coast offering has plenty of lime, kiwi and jalapeño flavors. It’s able to stand up to spicy appetizers with its crisp, long finish. Proceeds are donated to the restoration of watersheds for steelhead trout and coho salmon. —V.B.

**abv:** 13.5%  
**Price:** $13

**84** Parker’s Estate 2011 Tolleson High Coriniche Sauvignon Blanc (Sonoma County). This wine tastes sweet, soft and simple, with apricot and tropical fruit flavors. A great burst of acidity provides balance. —S.H.

**abv:** 13%  
**Price:** $20

**83** Buttonwood Farm 2011 Estate Zinfandel Sauvignon Blanc (Santa Ynez Valley). The green gooseberry and apricot side of Sauvignon Blanc comes out in this crisp, clean wine. It tastes a little too sweet, though, giving it a cloying, candied taste. —S.H.

**abv:** NA  
**Price:** $20

**82** Rutherford Ranch 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley). Sweet and simple, this features fruit-juice-like flavors of orange, pineapple and apricot. A great big burst of lemony acidity saves it. —S.H.

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $15

**82** Butterfield Station 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (California). This wine tastes sweet, soft and simple, with orange and apricot flavors. —S.H.

**abv:** 12%  
**Price:** $8

**82** Felten Cellars 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Santa Barbara County). This tastes sweet and simple, with lemongrass and tropical fruit notes. It’s high in acidity, giving it a sweet and sour finish. —S.H.

**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $18

**89** Clif Family 2011 Gewürztraminer (Menocino). A gorgeously perfumed, dry and lean white, this is light, crisp and bright, with just the right level of viscosity to pair with cheese, charcuterie or spicy chicken. Like those foods, it has a jolt of spice between its layers of lychee and clove flavors. —V.B.

**abv:** 14.1%  
**Price:** $25

**85** Bargetto 2010 Viento Vineyard Gewürztraminer (Monterey County). This seems like one of the sweeter Gewürztraminers out there, with flavors of white sugar, Asian pear, lychee and spice. The sweetness is balanced with crisp acidity. —S.H.

**abv:** 13.7%  
**Price:** $15

**PINOT GRIGIO**

**86** Monte Volpe 2011 Pinot Grigio (Mendocino County). A medium-bodied, middle-of-the-road Pinot Grigio, this has lemon-tinged acidity and a bit of barrel weight in its texture. It’s floral, with almond and pear notes on the palate. This is a simple, worthy alternative to Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. —V.B.

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

**86** Redtree 2011 Pinot Grigio (California). For full review see page 13. _Best Buy._

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $8

**86** Bargetto 2011 Pinot Grigio (California). At the time of tasting, this wine was slightly sparkling, providing a pleasant tingle to the lemon, lime and yeast flavors. —S.H.

**abv:** 13.9%  
**Price:** $15

**WHITE BLENDS**

**93** Krupp Brothers 2008 Black Bart’s Bride Marsanne-Viognier (Napa Valley). Powerful and intense, this is rich in flavors of tropical fruit, orange, nectarine and sweet peach. Oak is evident in the vanilla and buttered toast notes, but they’re in keeping with the underlying wine’s volume. Exotic and appealing, it’s a wine that will present a pairing challenge; try something complex, like Asian fusion. —S.H.

**abv:** 14.9%  
**Price:** $40


**abv:** 14.1%  
**Price:** $16

**88** Steven Kent 2011 Lola Ghieletti Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc-Sémillon (Livermore Valley). This full-bodied blend of 65% Sauvignon Blanc and 35% Sémillon doesn’t try to hide its Sémillon’s boldness. Tasting of lemon, vanilla and ripe peach, this is a combinaton of feminine aromatics and masculine textures, making it exotically intriguing. —V.B.

**abv:** 13.9%  
**Price:** $24

**86** Signorello 2011 Seta Sémillon-Sauvignon Blanc (Napa Valley). This proprietary blend of 62% Sémillon and 38% Sauvignon Blanc seems on the sweet side. It tastes like a honeyed fruit drink, with orange and tropical fruit flavors, plus hints of white pepper and spicy tobacco. —S.H.

**abv:** 14.4%  
**Price:** $42

**86** Standing Sun 2011 Blanc (Santa Barbara County). This is a very fruity, honeyed wine that needs to be paired with equally powerful foods. It tastes of apricot, orange and pineapple jam, brightened by crisp acidity. The blend is Grenache Blanc, Viognier and Roussanne. —S.H.

**abv:** 14.3%  
**Price:** $24

**85** Palazzo Wine 2011 Cuvée Blanc (Napa Valley). Dry and a little unripe, this has a vegetal streak that compromises the nectarine and citrus flavors. A fine burst of acidity makes the mouth water. The blend is mainly Sémillon, with a little Sauvignon Blanc. —S.H.

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

**WHITE WINES**

**88** Enotria 2010 Arneis (Mendocino). This is a fun, creamy and rich wine made from a white grape native to Piedmont, Italy. This has intriguing tastes of sweet, tart fresh-squeezed lemonade, with a nutty, apple-driven acidity that lingers through the finish. Barrel-fermented, it would pair nicely with scallops. _Best Buy._—V.B.

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

**88** Tercero 2010 Camp 4 Vineyard Grenache Blanc (Santa Ynez Valley). This is an aromatic varietal Grenache Blanc, with distinctive diesel-fuel aroma often associated with Riesling; in fact, this is a dry tropical varietal. —T.C.

**abv:** 13.5%  
**Price:** $15
and mineral-driven, it shows a citrus flavor, in addition to that petrol note. —S.H.

**87** Saint Gregory 2011 Pinot Blanc (Mendocino County). Winemaker Greg Graziano’s Saint Gregory wines are intended to represent the cool regions of the spread-out Mendocino County, and this Pinot Blanc does it well. With aromatics of honeysuckle and honey, this is medium bodied and balanced, with lingering tastes of pear and mango. Pair it with something spicy. —V.B.

**abv:** 13.3%

**Price:** $15

**88** Sassy Bitch NV Moscato (California). This is distinctly sweet, almost a dessert wine, with orange, mango, honey and vanilla flavors. It’s easy to like, and would be nice if garnished with a slice of pineapple and a sprig of mint.

**Best Buy.**

**abv:** 12.3%

**Price:** $8

**89** Schramsberg 2008 Blanc de Noirs Brut (Napa-Mendocino-Sonoma-Marin). For full review see page 7.

**abv:** 12.7%

**Price:** $39

**90** Caraccioli 2007 Brut Cuvée (Santa Lucia Highlands). For full review see page 10.

**abv:** 12%

**Price:** $52

**91** Schramsberg 2009 Blanc de Blancs Brut (Napa-Sonoma-Marin). For full review see page 9.

**abv:** 12.7%

**Price:** $45

**92** Schramsberg 2008 Blanc de Noirs Brut (Napa-Mendocino-Sonoma-Marin). For full review see page 7.

**abv:** 12.7%

**Price:** $39

**93** Schramsberg 2009 Blanc de Blancs Brut (Napa-Sonoma-Marin). For full review see page 9.

**abv:** 12.7%

**Price:** $37

**94** Vermeil 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé (Calistoga). There are ample flavors of rich, ripe raspberry and tobacco in this blush wine. It’s properly balanced with crisp acidity and silky texture. The acidity and hint of sweetness suggest pairing it with grilled tuna. —S.H.

**abv:** 12.5%

**Price:** $15

**95** Chacewater 2011 Rosé (Sierra Foothills). Lake County producer Chacewater has made a pleasant, refreshing rosé from 100% Syrah. It’s dark in color, with tastes of watermelon, ripe peach and tropical fruit. Intensely textured and full bodied in mouthfeel, it emphasizes its flavors through to the finish. —V.B.

**abv:** 13.8%

**Price:** $18

**96** Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This is an astonishingly good Pinot Noir that immediately shows the Sonoma Coast virtues of dryness, acidity, firm minerality, complexity and age worthiness. Flavors abound, with dominating notes of sour cherry, persimmon, cinnamon spice and sweet oak. It’s rich and refined, pure, and a great expression of the cool 2010 vintage. Drink now–2020. —S.H.

**abv:** 13.9%

**Price:** $60

**97** Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). It’s hard to believe that this fabulous Pinot is Failla’s least expensive selection; what a great indication of his 2011s yet to come and of the vintage in general. It’s bone dry and rich in raspberry flavor, with brisk acidity, firm minerality and a perfectly applied jacket of smoky oak. Elegant, pure and savory, it’s just beautiful to drink now. Editors’ Choice. —S.H.

**abv:** 13.5%

**Price:** $34

**98** Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This is a very big Pinot Noir, proudly showing off its muscles. Few Pinots anywhere achieve this depth of fruit. It floods the palate with the essence of raspberry and cherry, while plenty of new French oak brings even richer notes of toast and butterscotch. Despite the richness, it has a keen, silky vibrance. Although it is fine and impressive, it needs 5–6 years to knit together, settle down and get a little earthy.

**Cellar Selection.** —S.H.

**abv:** 13.5%

**Price:** $75
94 Marimar Estate 2008 Doña Margarita Vineyard Mas Cavalls Unfiltered Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). For full review see page 5. **Cellar Selection.**

abv: 14.2%  Price: $44

93 Joseph Phelps 2010 Freestone Vineyards Estate Grown Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). For full review see page 6. abv: 13.5%  Price: $55

93 Joseph Phelps 2010 Quarter Moon Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). A huge wine, bright and bold in raspberry and cherry flavors, this has a jammy directness that makes it drinkable now, but such is the acid and tannin structure that it should develop bottle complexity over the next 6–8 years.

The alcohol is a refreshingly low 13.3% by volume, a testament to the coolness of the 2010 vintage. **Cellar Selection.**  —S.H.

abv: 13.5%  Price: $75

93 Marimar Estate 2009 Don Miguel Vineyard La Masia Unfiltered Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 6. **Cellar Selection.**

abv: 14.1%  Price: $39

92 Kynsi 2009 Precious Stone Stone Corral Vineyard Pinot Noir (Edna Valley). There’s a mushroom note to this Pinot that gives it an earthy richness, helping to ground the ripe, jammy raspberry and cherry flavors. This is Kynsi’s best ’09 Pinot, but you should give it 1–3 years in the bottle to let everything integrate. **Cellar Selection.**  —S.H.

abv: 14.2%  Price: $62

92 Laetitia 2009 La Colline Pinot Noir (Arroyo Grande Valley). Laetitia’s La Colline bottling is always a big, vital wine, unusually rich for Pinot Noir but nonetheless compelling. The 2009 vintage has been kind to it, resulting in fantastically concentrated flavors of cherry pie, pomegranate, persimmon, cola and mushroom, liberally enhanced by sweet new oak. It’s a potent wine, one that Pinot purists might say is too extracted. But there’s no denying its delicious beauty. Drink now–2015.  —S.H.

abv: 13.3%  Price: $60

92 MacPhail 2010 Gap’s Crown Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). For full review see page 7. **Editors’ Choice.**

abv: 14%  Price: $49

92 Ram’s Gate 2010 Sangiacomo Vineyards Roberts Road Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This low-production Pinot Noir is dry, silky and enormously complex, with cherry pie, Dr. Pepper, bacon, anise and white pepper flavors, plus a woody suggestion of pine needle. Oak aging adds the perfect touch of smoke. Good as it is, it should improve in the bottle over the next 4-5 years. **Cellar Selection.**  —S.H.

abv: 14.5%  Price: $68

92 Reata 2010 Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). For full review see page 7. **Editors’ Choice.**

abv: 14.2%  Price: $30

92 Twomey 2010 Bien Nacido Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). For full review see page 8. abv: 13.5%  Price: $54

91 Cambria 2010 Julia’s Vineyard Estate Grown Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). For full review see page 9. **Editors’ Choice.**

abv: 14.6%  Price: $25

91 Laetitia 2009 Les Galets Pinot Noir (Arroyo Grande Valley). This offers big bursts of ripe cherry and raspberry jam, but that richness is complicated by minerality, earthiness and firm tannins, giving it true complexity. It’s not very subtle, and you might think it’s a Grenache if you didn’t know what you were tasting, but it’s certainly delicious. Drink over the next few years.  —S.H.

abv: 14.2%  Price: $60

91 MacPhail 2010 Wildcat Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). For full review see page 9. abv: 14.9%  Price: $49

91 Ram’s Gate 2010 Bush Crispov Vineyards Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). This is initially tight and closed, needing to be decanted to reveal its generous black cherry and persimmon flavors, plus lots of peppery spice. The texture is silky, yet there are some hefty tannins, suggesting the wine might improve over the next 5–6 years, even though it’s drinkable now.  —S.H.

abv: 14.5%  Price: $70

90 Gainey 2010 Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills). A lovely Pinot Noir for drinking now, this shows Gainey’s deft hand, with soft, gentle tannins and fine acidity that frame delicious raspberry, cherry, red licorice and buttered toast flavors.  —S.H.

abv: 13.9%  Price: $30

90 Laetitia 2009 La Coupelle Pinot Noir (Arroyo Grande Valley). Laetitia for years has been separately bottling blocks of its own estate vineyard, looking for sections that can stand on their own. La Coupelle is its latest experiment. It’s certainly a huge, concentrated wine, vast in cherry pie, cola and new oak flavors, with the weight of Grenache. Good as it is, it’s a little heavy-handed; sometimes less is more.  —S.H.

abv: 14.7%  Price: $60

89 Patz & Hall 2010 Jenkins Ranch Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). Give this wine some time in a decanter, because right out of the bottle it smells a little dusty. After a while, that recedes into the background, and the flavors are very nice, suggesting ripe cherry and cola. Fine tannins and classic coastal acidity provide good balance.  —S.H.

abv: 15.4%  Price: $55

88 Don & Sons 2010 Sonoma Signature Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This is a new brand from veteran Don Sebastiano & Sons, and it’s a bottle of easy-drinking deliciousness. Mellow and smooth, it shows cherry pie, sandalwood and white pepper flavors.  —S.H.

abv: 13.9%  Price: $20

88 Laetitia 2010 Whole Cluster Pinot Noir (Arroyo Grande Valley). “Whole cluster” refers to the fermentation practice of using intact clusters of grapes, rather than grapes that have been destemmed and crushed. This often results in an earthier, more tannic, spicier wine. This is big, rich and ripe, vast in cherry flavor, yet a little heavy.  —S.H.

abv: 14.5%  Price: $40

88 Occidental Road Cellars 2009 Horseshoe Bend Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Right out of the bottle, this is tight and acidic. While it’s rich in raspberry, cherry and Dr. Pepper flavors, not to mention oak, it’s jammy, fresh and direct— in an immature way. Give it a few hours in a decanter and drink it with rich lamb and steak dishes.  —S.H.

abv: 14.5%  Price: $34

87 Bargetto 2010 Regan Vineyards Reserve Pinot Noir (Santa Cruz Mountains). This is very rich and forward in raspberry jam and red currant notes, and its fruit is brightened by crisp acidity—like a squirt of lime. It’s silky and smoky in oak, if a little direct. Drink now.  —S.H.

abv: 14.6%  Price: $40

87 Darcie Kent Vineyards 2010 Rava Black Jack Vineyard Pinot Noir (Monterey). Dry and sophisticated, this has flavors of Life Saver, black raspberry, cola and Tabasco that are a little slender. It shows an elegant structure, with plenty of mouthwatering Central Coast acidity. Drink now.  —S.H.

abv: 15%  Price: $15

87 De Tierra 2008 Silacci Vineyard Pinot Noir (Monterey). This Pinot is soft and mellow, with flavors of ripe cherry pie, cola and plum sauce. It finishes dry and spicy. Drink now with a sizzling steak.  —S.H.

abv: 14.2%  Price: $28

87 Graton Ridge 2010 Estate Paul Family Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Although this is very good, it’s something of a letdown after the superb 2009 vintage. The wine shows an earthiness that reflects the cool vintage, with cherry, cola and mushroom flavors.  —S.H.

abv: 14.5%  Price: $50

87 Sequana 2010 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Seemingly sweet and light bodied, this features raspberry, vanilla, brown sugar and cinnamon flavors. It’s a delicious wine in the way of a granola candy bar. Drink now.  —S.H.

abv: 14.1%  Price: $38

86 Angeline 2011 Pinot Noir (California). For full review see page 12. **Editors’ Choice.**

abv: 13.5%  Price: $15

86 Felten Cellars 2009 Pinot Noir (San Luis Obispo County). Pale in color and silky in body, this defines a lighter style of Pinot, although the
alcohol isn’t particularly low. It bears flavors of black raspberry, Dr. Pepper and cinnamon spice. —S.H.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $28  
86 Foppiano 2010 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). This is nice and dry, with a silky texture, firm acidity and classic cherry, cola and pomegranate flavors. But it finishes on the slender side. —S.H.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $30  
86 MacPhail 2010 Sangiacomo Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast). This is packed with delicious raspberry, cherry and vanilla flavors. But it seems a little soft and flat, like soda left out overnight. Drink now. —S.H.  
abv: 13.9%  
Price: $49  
86 R2 2010 Black Pine Pinot Noir (California). An everyday Pinot Noir, this is rich in cherry and oak flavors, with firm tannins and a bright edge of acidity. Try pairing it with lamb, tuna and steak. —S.H.  
abv: 14.4%  
Price: $26  
86 ZD 2011 Pinot Noir (Carneros). A good, briskly acidic Pinot, this is dry and silky in raspberry, cherry, cola and oak flavors. It’s neither simple nor complex—a nice wine to drink now. —S.H.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $48  
85 Angelina 2011 Reserve Pinot Noir (Sonoma-Santa Barbara-Mendocino). This feels tight and pinched, with lots of acidity. It’s pretty good for everyday drinking, with cherry candy, raspberry jam and white pepper flavors. —S.H.  
abv: 13.9%  
Price: $18  
85 Stave & Hoop 2009 Lot 55 Pinot Noir (Santa Barbara County). This simple Pinot Noir is dry and silky, with pleasant cherry pie, red currant and pepper flavors. It’s a good wine to explore Pinot’s allure. —S.H.  
abv: 14.4%  
Price: $18  
83 Bargetto 2010 Pinot Noir (Santa Cruz Mountains). Here’s another 2010 Pinot marred by vegetal aromas. The chilly vintage took its toll, robbing the raspberry and cherry flavors of their natural richness. Still, it’s pretty good once you give it some airing. —S.H.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $25  
83 Deep Sea 2010 Solomon Hills Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley). This is a little soft and heavy, with a sweet, jammy raspberry flavor and a green, unripe touch. It’s also hot on the finish, due to very high alcohol. —S.H.  
abv: 15.6%  
Price: $39  
83 R2 2010 Big Bend Reserve Pinot Noir (Carneros). Ripe and oaky, this has flavors of raspberry, cherry jam, mushroom and oak, leading to a dry finish. Drink now. —S.H.  
abv: 14.2%  
Price: $38  
82 Arrow Creek 2011 Coastal Series Pinot Noir (California). This simple Pinot smells and tastes like black raspberry jam spread onto buttered white toast, with a sprinkle of pepper. —S.H.  
abv: NA  
Price: $18  
82 Noble Vines 2011 667 Pinot Noir (Monterey). This is dry, with simple raspberry and cranberry flavors, brightened by plenty of acidity. Drink now. —S.H.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $15  
82 Redtree 2011 Pinot Noir (California). Dry and silky in texture, this doesn’t have much else going on, except for modest cherry, tobacco and herb flavors. —S.H.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $8  
88 TEMPRANILLO  
87 Fenestra 2009 Silvaspoons Vineyard Tempranillo (Lodi). Livermore-based Fenestra always does well by Silvaspoons Vineyard in Lodi, a site devoted to Iberian and other unusual varieties. This is bright and full bodied; it’s a glass of chewy dark cherry, coffee and caramel notes. The finish is toothy with a clove flavor. Pair it with hamburgers. —V.B.  
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $23  
85 Villa Toscano 2009 Tempranillo (Shenandoah Valley). This Tempranillo gives off intense aromatics of ripe berry pie and has a crisp, smoky finish. It is big and brawny, delicious and complex cherry, red currant, cocoa and spice flavors. It’s neither simple nor complex—a nice wine to drink now. —S.H.  
abv: 15.9%  
Price: $22  
83 Peirano 2008 Heritage Collection Tempranillo (Lodi). This features extensively pronounced aromas and flavors of smoke, oak and toasted bacon, blocking out most of the lush dark fruit, with tobacco dominating black cherry and plum. —V.B.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $12  
89 CABERNET SAUVIGNON  
96 Goldschmidt 2008 Single Vineyard Selection Game Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). For full review see page 3.  
abv: 14.9%  
Price: $75  
96 Krupp Brothers 2008 M5 Stagecoach Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 3.  
abv: 15.4%  
Price: $125  
96 The Vineyard House 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 4.  
abv: 14.2%  
Price: $200  
95 Amici 2009 Morisoli Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford). Another successful Cabernet from Amici, who turns to this esteemed vineyard for sourcing. It shows real pedigree and finesse, and it’s instantly appealing for its soft tannins and complex cherry, red currant, cocoa and spice flavors. Yes, it’s expensive, but it’s Amici’s best Cabernet of the vintage, and this is as upscale as Napa Cabernet gets. —S.H.  
abv: 14.7%  
Price: $125  
95 Moone-Tsai 2009 Cor Leonis Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 4.  
abv: 15.3%  
Price: $175  
95 Prime 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Coombsville). For full review see page 4.  
abv: 14.3%  
Price: $59  
95 Signorello 2009 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Massive in chocolate, blackberry, blueberry and cherry jam intensity, this is a brilliant wine. It’s so delicious that you’ll want to drink the whole bottle. The inclusion of Cabernet Franc in the blend may be partly responsible for its accessibility. It’s wonderful to drink now, despite having fine, firm tannins. Give it some decanting, and then watch as it changes in the glass with every sip. —S.H.  
abv: 14.7%  
Price: $75  
95 Yates Family Vineyard 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Mount Veeder). For full review see page 4.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $55  
94 Amici 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Spring Mountain). This 100% Cabernet is soft, rich, fruity and almost sweet in ripe, jammy blackberry and cherry flavors, and that impression of sweetness is heightened by caramelized oak. Without structure, this would be a candy bar, but structure it has, and plenty of it. The acidity is firm and mouthwatering, and the tannins are wonderful. You’d think they’d be tough as nails, given the Spring Mountain origin, but they’re easily negotiable. Drink now–2015. —S.H.  
abv: 14.7%  
Price: $95  
94 Beaulieu Vineyard 2009 Georges de Latour Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). A soft, voluptuous quality immediately identifies this wine as pedigreed and delicious. The tannins are evident in the astringency, but they’re so finely ground. It’s firmly set in the modern cult style and identifies this wine as pedigreed and delicious. The tan-
Goldschmidt 2009 Single Vineyard Selection Yoeman Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). For full review see page 4. abv: 14.6% Price: $75


Hewitt 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford). Quietly, Hewitt flies below the radar, often producing Cabernets that, while not cheap, rival their pricier competition. Consider their '09 a deal. It's dry, smoothly tannic and complex, offering waves of black cherry jam, mocha, licorice and smoky oak. You can drink this lovely wine now, but it should develop in the bottle over the next 10 years. Editors’ Choice. —S.H. abv: 14.8% Price: $85

Krupp Brothers 2008 Stagecoach Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). The vineyard straddles Atlas Peak and the Pritchard Hill region, and this beautiful Cabernet shows its terroir in the firm tannins and ripe, complex flavors. It's high in alcohol, which gives it some heat, and it is rich in flavors of blackberry and cherry jam and cassis liqueur. Give it an hour or two in the decanter and drink now. —S.H. abv: 14.7% Price: $145

Lamborn Family Vineyards 2008 Vintage VI Cabernet Sauvignon (Howell Mountain). Tannic and closed now, this wine has a tough-as-nails astringency that brings to mind an older style of Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon, one that required many years of aging. However, this wine is considerably riper and fruitier than anything the mountain used to yield, testimony to modern growing and extractive measures. It is, in a word, delicious, with deep, long blackberry, black currant, crème de cassis and smoke flavors. But, like the 2007, it needs serious time in the cellar. Try after 2018. Cellar Selection. —S.H. abv: 14.8% Price: $100

Laurel Glen 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Mountain). Very tannic, in the Laurel Glen way, this young wine's toughness is due to the estate vineyard’s mountain terroir. In years past, Laurel Glen was a cult Cabernet. They perhaps dropped the ball for a while, but this wine stages a big comeback. It’s rich and vital in black currant and mineral, with just the right touch of new oak, and it shows a sophistication not seen from the winery in years. And at this price, it’s a bargain. Drink now–2021, as it gradually softens and sweetens. Cellar Selection. —S.H. abv: 14.3% Price: $60

Provenance Vineyards 2009 Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard TK2 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Just gorgeous, this soft, plush, velvety wine is dry and smooth in tannins. Its dramatic tiers of flavors range from ripe summer blackberry to rich black currant, with a sweet, spicy jacket of smoky, buttery oak. Really beautiful for drinking now and over the next six years. —S.H. abv: 15.1% Price: $95

Shafer 2008 Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District). Another great Hillside Select from selected blocks in Shafer’s vineyard. It’s a perfect illustration of the “iron fist in a velvet glove” description of Stags Leap Cabernet, with perhaps more emphasis this year on the velvet than the iron. With smooth tannins and luxurious, oak-influenced blackberry and black cherry jam flavors, it’s delicious now and will provide plenty of pleasure over the next 8–10 years. —S.H. abv: 15.5% Price: $230

Signorello 2009 Padre Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This is a 100% Cabernet, and its tannins are so strong that it's virtually undrinkable now. It displays class in every way, with an intense concentration of cassis liqueur and blackberry that's especially deep in the middle palate, but it also persists into a long, spicy finish. It would be a pity to open it before 2018, and it has the structure to go the long haul. Cellar Selection. —S.H. abv: 14.7% Price: $145

Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars 2009 Cask 23 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 5. Cellar Selection. abv: 13.5% Price: $210

Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars 2009 Fay Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 5. abv: 14% Price: $95

Darms Lane 2009 Bon Passe Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 5. Editors’ Choice. abv: 14.5% Price: $60

Groth 2009 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). For full review see page 5. abv: 14.9% Price: $125

Laurel Glen 2009 Counterpoint Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Mountain). This is made from the winery’s estate vineyard, but from lots not included in the main blend, which costs twice as much. You’ll find plenty of tannins in this darkly colored, impressively concentrated 100% Cabernet. It’s fresh, soft and juicy in blackberry and cherry jam flavors, with a rich earthiness. Just delightful for drinking over the next four years, and a great value. Editors’ Choice. —S.H. abv: 13.7% Price: $30


Sterling 2009 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Just beautiful, this is the best Sterling Reserve Cabernet in years, and a huge improvement over the 2008. It shows ripe, lush flavors of blackberry and black cherry pie, anise, cola and smoky sandalwood, wrapped into sweetly gentle, complex tannins. Drink this beauty over the next six years. —S.H. abv: 15.1% Price: $95

Swanson 2008 Alexis Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 6. abv: 14.8% Price: $75

Beaulieu Vineyard 2009 Maestro Collection Ranch No. 2 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This pretty wine is rich, dry and softly tannic. Although it’s a little high in alcohol, it feels smooth and round, showing Cab’s riper side of blackberry jam, cassis liqueur and chocolate, generously oaked. Made from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, it’s great to drink now and over the next four years. —S.H. abv: 15% Price: $65

Brion 2009 Monte Rosso Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Valley). Cabernets from this famous vineyard have varied in quality over the years, across multiple brands, but this new release is a winner, continuing Brion’s streak of success. It’s soft, luscious and instantly drinkable now for its gentle tannins. The flavors are of milk chocolate, blackberry essence, black currant and smoky cedar. —S.H. abv: 14.5% Price: $75

Cliff Family 2009 Kit’s Killer Cab Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). The winery’s Kit’s Killer is a dependably good Cabernet, almost always showing lots of richness and complexity. They raised the price by $2 since last vintage, but it’s still a very fine wine, with delicious blackberry, currant and licorice flavors, wrapped into smooth tannins. Drink over the next few years. —S.H. abv: 14.5% Price: $40

Forefathers 2009 Lone Tree Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). For full review see page 7. abv: 14.3% Price: $50

Francis Ford Coppola 2009 Archimedes Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). This flashy Cabernet is one of Coppola’s best Sonoma County Cabernets ever, a fine followup to the great 2007. It immediately impresses with richness, smoothness of texture and complexity, offering waves of ripe summer blackberry, blueberry and smoke. The tannins are firm, dusty and soft, making the wine drinkable now and over the next six years with tea. —S.H. abv: NA Price: $52

J. Davies 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Diamond Mountain). For full review see page 7. abv: 14.5% Price: $80

Ridge 2009 Monte Bello Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Cruz Mountains). This is tough in tannins and somewhat rustic now, in the way of young Monte Bello. There’s not much to recommend opening it anytime soon, especially if you’re a fan of the modern style of accessible lusciousness. But it is rich and mineraly, with a fine core of black fruit. Monte
Bello Estate (not to be confused with Ridge's similarly-named Estate Monte Bello, which costs far less) is a wine that historically ages very well, and 2009 was a pretty good vintage, so you’re safe cellaring it for at least 10 years. **Cellar Selection.** —S.H.

**Falcone 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles).** This delicious wine shows Paso ripeness in the form of blackberry, cherry, anise and chocolate, with soft tannins and just enough acidity to balance the richness. The cool vintage played a part here, giving the wine long hangtime flavors while keeping the alcohol level low. **Editors’ Choice.** —S.H.

**Frog’s Leap 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford).** Blended with a little Cabernet Franc, this is an incredibly rich wine, drinkable now for its approachability. It pleases with blackberry and black cherry jam and spice flavors, wrapped into smooth, creamy tannins. —S.H.

**Groth 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville).** For full review see page 10. **abv:** 14.5% **Price:** $75

**Jean Edwards 2009 Seventy Four - Forty One Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** A big, firm 100% Cab, rich in blackberry jam and black currant flavors, enriched with lots of sweet, smoky oak. It’s made in the modern cult style of soft approachability. It might age, but seems best now for sheer luxury. —S.H. **abv:** 14.4% **Price:** $65

**Katherine Goldschmidt 2010 Crazy Creek Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley).** For full review see page 9. **Editors’ Choice.** **abv:** 14.3% **Price:** $21

**Swanson 2009 Instant Napa Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** For full review see page 10. **abv:** 14.8% **Price:** $60

**Bell 2009 Claret Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** A very nice wine that shows the smooth, complex tannin structure, ripe fruit and dry balance you’d want from a Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. You’ll like the blackberry, cherry and cedar flavors, enhanced by touches of dried herb and cocoa. Drink now–2015 for fruity freshness. —S.H. **abv:** 14.7% **Price:** $45

**90** **Bella Vetta 2008 Ami’s Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Howell Mountain).** This shows the intense mountain flavors of previous releases, with dense flavors of blackberry, cherry and currant, and plenty of smoky oak. The tannins are dense but negotiable. There’s a sharpness throughout that may its limit approachability. —S.H. **abv:** 14.5% **Price:** $45

**88** **Falcone 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles).** This delicious wine shows Paso ripeness in the form of blackberry, cherry, anise and chocolate, with soft tannins and just enough acidity to balance the richness. The cool vintage played a part here, giving the wine long hangtime flavors while keeping the alcohol level low. **Editors’ Choice.** —S.H. **abv:** 13.9% **Price:** $38

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The question is whether the fruit will outlive the tannins. Try holding it until 2017. —S.H.

87 Round Pond 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Sweet and smooth, this features flavors of milk chocolate, black cherry pie, anise and smoky oak that are rich and delicious. It's a pretty wine to drink now. —S.H.

87 Sterling 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). Structure, rather than richness, stars in this wine that is based on Cabernet but contains other classic Bordeaux varieties, plus a splash of Syrah. The tannins provide the architecture, and the acidity gives zest to the flavors, which could use more concentration. —S.H.

87 Fleuron 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). This is a rich, jammy wine, with ripe raspberry, cherry and spice flavors. Blended with a little Merlot and Petit Verdot, it's made in the popular savory style, featuring sweet fruit with a touch of oak. The tannins are pretty thick, and the wine might improve with a few years in the cellar. —S.H.

87 Hendry 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This is a brawny, bratty and a little high in alcohol, like some of Hendry's Zinfandels. While it lacks the elegance of a great Napa Valley Cabernet, it's certainly rich and creamy, with brambly spice, nettle and blackberry jam flavors. Drink now–2015. —S.H.

87 Kenwood 2008 Artist Series Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma County). For full review see page 12.

87 Proverbial 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). Acidity and tannins give this dry Cabernet a fine structure, providing the architecture for proper varietal flavors of blackberry and tobacco. It's a nice wine for drinking now. —V.B.

87 Proverbial 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley). With succulent cherry, red currant, herb and oak flavors, this is a tasty Cabernet. It's softly tannic and dry, with some real complexity. It might develop bottle complexity over the next six years. —S.H.

88 Veedercrest 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). There's lots to admire about this Cabernet. For one, it's dry and controlled, with blackberry, cassis and chocolate flavors that are balanced with earthiness. It's also very tannic, although the soft acidity makes it drinkable now. —S.H.

88 Veedercrest 2008 Villa Mille Rose Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville). Not very Oakville-like, this Cabernet is bone dry and strong in tannins, giving it an astringent mouthfeel. It's light in body for a Cabernet, with lots of acidity. However, it does have pretty flavors of blackberry and sour cherry candy. —S.H.

88 Freakshow 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Lodi). For full review see page 12.

88 Hendry 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). This is a brassy, bratty and a little high in alcohol, like some of Hendry's Zinfandels. While it lacks the elegance of a great Napa Valley Cabernet, it's certainly rich and creamy, with brambly spice, nettle and blackberry jam flavors. Drink now–2015. —S.H.

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this has modest cherry, black pepper and mint flavors. It's rich and complex enough to drink now with steak or lamb. Decant it for an hour or two. —S.H.

**Cabernet Franc**

86 **Fernwood 2009 Estate Cabernet Franc (Santa Cruz Mountains).** Sweet, ripe cherry pie and smoky oak flavors mark this wine, which also has some grippy mountain tannins. It's not an ager, but it's rich and complex enough to drink now with steak or lamb. Decant it for an hour or two. —S.H.

**Merlot**

82 **Cass 2009 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles).** This unctuous wine combines sour cherry candy flavors with herbal, vegetal notes. The oak adds a note of sweet toast. —S.H.

**Sauvignon**

82 **Hawkstone 2011 Barney's Heritage Cuvée Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** The texture is a bit sharp, and the flavor ranges from blackberry to prune on this everyday, dry Cabernet. —S.H.

**Barbera**

82 **Save Me San Francisco 2010 California 37 Cabernet Sauvignon (California).** Soft, sweet and a tad harsh, this has simple, sweet blackberry and oak flavors. —S.H.

**Cabernet Franc**

84 **Constant 2009 Cabernet Franc (Napa Valley).** One of the best Napa Cabernet Francs in memory, this shows lush, concentrated flavors of cherry pie, red currant, mocha, anise and smoky, spicy sandalwood that are wrapped into firm but exceptionally refined tannins. Drink now to experience the youthful beauty. —S.H.

86 **GenS 2010 Merlot (Clarksburg).** This is a slightly syrupy Merlot that has flavors of overripe plum, black pepper and vanilla, especially on the finish. The blend is mostly Merlot with small amounts of Petite Sirah, Malbec, Cabernet and Zinfandel, all from the cool subregion near Lodi. —V.B.

87 **Twomey 2008 Merlot (Napa Valley).** For full review see page 10.

88 **Bargetto 2009 Regan Vineyards Reserve Merlot (Santa Cruz Mountains).** This wine displays the aggressive acidity typical of Central Coast Merlots. While it's rich and dry in raspberry, cherry and red currant flavors, with a fine note of smoky oak, the tannins are soft, making it ideal for drinking now with steak. —S.H.

88 **Irony 2010 Merlot (Napa Valley).** Here's a soft, luscious Merlot, filled with juicy black cherry, red currant, licorice and sandalwood flavors. It shows the fine structure associated with the 2010 vintage. —S.H.

87 **Freemark Abbey 2010 Merlot (Napa Valley).** Lots of rich, sweet flavors of raspberry, cherry and mocha appear in this vigorous, young Merlot. Blended from vineyards around the valley, it emphasizes fruit. Drink now with beef-based Mexican food. —S.H.

87 **Martin Ranch - J.D. Hurley 2009 Merlot (Santa Clara Valley).** Martin Ranch makes a consistently good Merlot, one marked by sweet red fruit and licorice, with layers of cinnamon spice. Full-bodied and meaty, its layers are concentrated enough to stand up to steak or hamburgers. —V.B.

87 **Truchard 2009 Merlot (Carneros).** Sweet in raspberry and cherry jam flavors, with a touch of smoky oak, this ready to drink now, but it needs a good decanting or at least an hour in the glass to develop. —S.H.

87 **Veeedercrest 2008 Villa Mille Rose Vineyard Merlot (Oakville).** Very dry and tannic, this has interesting suggestions of cherry, rose petal, red currant and mineral, all kissed by oak. It's light in body, like a Pinot Noir, but with some real complexity. Drink now. —S.H.

86 **Bell 2009 Merlot (Yountville).** The cool vintage in this southerly part of Napa Valley has produced a wine that's dry; acidic and lacking in richness, especially for Merlot, a variety that's supposed to be voluptuous. There's a green-olive vegetativeness alongside the cherry note that even 100% new oak barrel aging can't mask. —S.H.

85 **Ancient Peaks 2010 Merlot (Paso Robles).** A fine, everyday Merlot, although a little rough, but nicely ripe and sweet in raspberry and cherry flavors. It's a country-style wine that will pair well with beef. —S.H.

85 **Rutherford Ranch 2010 Merlot (Napa Valley).** A little thin in flavor, this is nonetheless nice and dry, with gentle tannins framing cherry, herbal tea, spice and sandalwood flavors. Drink up. —S.H.

85 **Whitehall Lane 2009 Merlot (Napa Valley).** A touch of unripeness gives this wine some steamed broccoli and herb notes, although it also shows plenty of sweet blackberry, cherry and oak. Merlot's smooth softness is present. —S.H.

84 **Deep Sea 2009 Rancho Arroyo Grande Merlot (Arroyo Grande Valley).** Grown in the warmer inland section of the sprawling Arroyo Grande Valley, this Merlot is simple and appealing for its raspberry and cherry flavors, boosted by a squirt of citrus-driven acidity. —S.H.

84 **GenS 2010 Merlot (Clarksburg).** This is a slightly syrupy Merlot that has flavors of overripe plum, black pepper and vanilla, especially on the finish. The blend is mostly Merlot with small amounts of Petite Sirah, Malbec, Cabernet and Zinfandel, all from the cool subregion near Lodi. —V.B.
**Peirano 2010 Heritage Collection, Six Clones Merlot (Lodi).** This is an oaky Merlot that’s thick with black olive and blackberry flavors, encased in a wall of dark chocolate and roasted coffee. Somewhere in the midst of it all is also a taste of toasted bread. —V.B.

**Butterfield Station 2010 Merlot (California).** This Merlot is thin in body and flavor, with sour cherry and white pepper notes. Despite that, it’s clean and dry. —S.H.

**Arrow Creek 2011 Coastal Series Merlot (California).** Simple and sharp, this has bubblegum and raspberry candy flavors. —S.H.

**Doohickey 2010 Merlot (Carneros).** This tastes like an inexpensive Merlot you opened a few days ago and left on the kitchen counter. It’s soft and simple, and the cherry fruit turns dry and stale. —S.H.

**Platform 9 2011 Merlot (California).** This wine tastes common and sharp, with candied licorice and blackberry flavors. While it’s nicely dry, the texture is not pleasing. —S.H.

**Krutz 2009 Krupp Vineyard Malbec (Napa Valley).** This is right up there with previous vintages of Krutz’s Malbec, which have been among the best in California. It’s certainly not a shy wine, showing Malbec’s power to dazzle with its sheer volume. Offering endless waves of blackberry and black pepper, with thick tannins and vibrant acidity, this is the perfect wine to drink now with charbroiled beef. —S.H.

**Fenestra 2009 Silvaspoons Vineyards Malbec (Lodi).** Initially tight, this opens to reveal a lovely structure, with bombastic, dark flavors of blackberry and black cherry that are wrapped in leather. From a superb Lodi vineyard, this has a velvety finish. —S.H.

**Martin Ranch - Thérèse Vineyards 2010 Dos Ninas Vineyards Malbec (Santa Clara Valley).** This hearty, juicy and full-flavored Malbec is noteworthy for its soft tannins and blackberry and vanilla flavors. It’s a big wine, hearty and leathery, perfect for a fatty steak. —V.B.

**Buttonwood Farm 2010 Estate Malbec (Santa Ynez Valley).** This simple, soft wine has a ripe, chocolaty blackberry flavor. Not showing much structure, this is Malbec in name only. —S.H.

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**GRENACHE**

**Andrew Murray 2010 Terra Bella Vineyard Grenache (Paso Robles).** This Grenache from Rhône-specialist Murray is tremendous in cherry jam, licorice and chocolate flavors. It’s saved from being a mere fruit bomb by its good acid-tannin structure, which gives the sweetness some bite. Drink now. —S.H.

**Fenestra 2009 Grenache (Livermore Valley).** Rich in layers of raspberry and bright cherry, this full-bodied Grenache surprises in its depth of structure. The finish dives deep into caramel and oak, rounding it out pleasantly. —V.B.

**Buttonwood Farm 2010 Estate Grenache (Santa Barbara County).** This is an easy-to-drink Grenache, with the light, silky body of Pinot Noir, and deep flavors of red cherry pie, violet and crispy pancetta. Drink now. —S.H.

**Standing Sun 2010 Grenache (Santa Barbara County).** This is a soft, seemingly sweet, simple wine. Although it’s huscious in raspberry, cherry, orange zest and cinnamon spice notes, it’s pretty onedimensional. —S.H.

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**SYRAH**

**Failla 2010 Estate Syrah (Sonoma Coast).** Failla is so well known for Pinot Noir that we sometimes forget how good their estate Syrah can be. Given the vineyard’s terroir, its red wines show better in cooler vintages—like 2010—while its above-the-fogline elevation encourages ripeness. This is dry, tannic and peppery, with a succulent blackberry flavor. Among the best Syrahs of the year, it’s gorgeous now, and should develop over the next six years. —S.H.

**Krutz 2009 Stagecoach Vineyard Syrah (Napa Valley).** For full review see page 5. Editors’ Choice.

**Falcone 2010 Syrah (Paso Robles).** There are lots of lush flavors in this soft, mellow Syrah. It shows ripe blackberry jam, bacon, anise, cocoa and pepper notes, wrapped into smooth, complex tannins. Ready to drink now. —S.H.

**Krupp Brothers 2008 Black Bart Stagecoach Vineyard Syrah (Napa Valley).** This is one of the bigger Syrahs out there, generously proportioned and calling out for equally rich fare. Try beef short ribs or coq au vin, using the same wine for the dish. It’s tannic and enormous, with flavors of ripe black cherry and teryaki sauce. —S.H.

**Occidental Road Cellars 2009 Syrah (Russian River Valley).** This is a very rich Syrah, dramatically layered in blackberry, bitter cherry skin, dark chocolate, grilled prosciutto and pepper flavors. Despite the richness, it’s bone dry, with refined tannins and fine acidity. It’s somewhat light in body, like a Pinot Noir, which makes it especially drinkable. —S.H.

**Bodega Rancho 2009 Vivo Syrah (Bennett Valley).** Power marks this gigantic Syrah. What it lacks in subtlety, it makes up for with its sheer size. Syrah doesn’t get much riper in blackberry, cherry and chocolate flavors. With its thick, rich tannins, drink it soon with beef and game dishes. —S.H.

**Standing Sun 2010 Rodney’s Vineyard La Rouge Syrah (Santa Barbara County).** This is a lush Syrah, smooth and rich in blackberry jam, milk chocolate and sandalwood flavors, with sprinkles of pepper and anise. So fruity, it’s almost sweet, but the finish is clean and dry. Drink now. —S.H.

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**MALBEC**

**Canterbury Vineyard Syrah (Sierra Foothills).** There’s lots of seemingly sweet, jammy raspberry and cherry flavors in this Syrah. It has good Central Coast acidity that gives it a pleasant bite, but it never quite climbs above ordinary. —S.H.
85 Bodega Rancho 2009 Que Syrah Vineyard Syrah (Sonoma Coast). Sharp acidity accentuates the tannins in this aggressive, dry Syrah, giving the blackberry and cherry flavors a jamminess that suggests pie filling. The official alcohol is amazingly low at 12.4%. —S.H.  
abv: 12.4%  
Price: $35

85 Calcareous 2009 Syrah (Paso Robles). This Syrah is soft, simple and sweet, with jammy raspberry, cherry and milk chocolate flavors. High alcohol gives it some heat on the finish. Drink up. —S.H.  
abv: 15.7%  
Price: $34

82 Rock Wren 2008 Syrah (Solano County Green Valley). It exudes funky aromas, suggesting sweaty leather. In the mouth it turns softly sweet and hot in alcohol. —S.H.  
abv: 14.8%  
Price: $27

PETITE SIRAH

94 Turley 2010 Hayne Vineyard Petite Sirah (Napa Valley). There’s a smoky edge to the dark chocolate, licorice, blackberry and bacon flavors that make this especially savory. It tastes like jam, but finishes dry, with superb tannins and fine, mouthwatering acidity. It’s one of the best Petite Sirahs out there. This will age for decades, but enjoy it over the next several years for its fruity freshness. —S.H.  
abv: 14.6%  
Price: $75

92 Turley 2010 Library Vineyard Petite Sirah (Napa Valley). This is so chocolatey and rich, it’s impossible to resist a second or third glass. Although it’s heady in alcohol, there’s an excellent burst of acidity and the texture is pure velvet. The blackberry tart, orange zest, spice and sandalwood flavors change continuously as the wine warms in the glass. —S.H.  
abv: 14.9%  
Price: $38

92 Turley 2010 Pesenti Vineyard Petite Sirah (Paso Robles). This is classically proportioned in the warm-climate style. It provides a textbook example of the variety’s inky black and purple color, rich, thick tannins and elaborate flavors. These flavors include profoundly ripe summer blackberry and mulberry, smoky, umami-rich bacon and sweet sandalwood. Full-bodied and dry, this is a wine to warm the blood on cold winter nights. —S.H.  
abv: 14.9%  
Price: $35

abv: 14.5%  
Price: $15

90 Stags’ Leap Winery 2009 Ne Cede Malis Petite Sirah (Stags Leap District). This huge Petite Sirah shows such powerful blackberry, raspberry and Kahlua flavors. It’s delightfuly rich, but don’t look for subtlety. —S.H.  
abv: 14.2%  
Price: $80

89 Olabisi 2007 King Vineyard Petite Sirah (Suisun Valley). Black and thick, this Petite Sirah delivers on all the variety’s attributes in warm-climate California. It’s blisteringly gregarious yet rounded, with smoky dark-fruit flavors that are initially hard to capture and tannins that verge on puckering. But time rewards—this wine hits its stride after being allowed to open and swirled around a few times. Enjoy it with a rich rosotto or rack of ribs. —V.B.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $38

87 Stags’ Leap Winery 2009 Petite Sirah (Napa Valley). Soft and fruity, this offers wave after wave of ripe fruit, spice, mocha, leather and oak flavors. The tannins are big, as you’d expect from Petite Sirah, but you can drink it now. —S.H.  
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $39

85 Foppiano 2009 Petite Sirah (Russian River Valley). Oak dominates this wine, with strong notes of buttered toast, vanilla and sweet char. There’s nothing wrong with those pleasant aromas and flavors, but the underlying wine, with its cherry and currant fruit, is overpowered by the wood. —S.H.  
abv: 14.9%  
Price: $20

85 Parducci 2008 True Grit Petite Sirah (Mendocino). A 100% Petite Sirah, this is inky, dark and thick, exuding tobacco, blackberry and an old-school rusticity true to its Mendocino roots. —V.B.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $20

84 D-Cubed Cellars 2008 Petite Sirah (Napa Valley). There are sharp and seemingly sugary touches to the cherry jam and mint flavors that give this wine a tart, toothpaste-like sweetness. Drink now. —S.H.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $27

84 Line 39 2011 Petite Sirah (North Coast). With the variety’s signature dark black fruit, earthy tobacco and leathery accents going on, this is a good starter wine for those curious to try Petite Sirah. —V.B.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $10

ZINFANDEL

93 Turley 2010 Hayne Vineyard Zinfandel (Napa Valley). Few wineries can make Zinfandel with nearly 16% alcohol by volume and get away with it, but Turley can, as evidenced by this gorgeous wine. Even though there is an overripe raisin flavor, this becomes an integral part of the wine’s profile. It’s dry and balanced, softly complex and layered in textures and flavors. Pair this with almost anything off the grill. —S.H.  
abv: 15.8%  
Price: $75

93 Turley 2010 Tofanelli Vineyard Zinfandel (Napa Valley). This is rich and complex, with the balanced elegance of a big Napa Cabernet, but retaining Zin’s briary, brambly character. With its soft, tannic texture, the flavors shine, ranging from ripe summer blackberry and blueberry to plum sauce, licorice and mocha. Brightened by zesty acidity, this has a dry, spicy finish. It easily handles its high alcohol level. —S.H.  
abv: 15.8%  
Price: $34

92 Turley 2010 Heminway Vineyard Zinfandel (Napa Valley). This is made from grapes that are sourced from the hills overlooking the warm, inland Chiles Valley subsection of Napa Valley. It’s concentrated in black currant and dark chocolate flavors, with a pleasant warmth from the alcohol. But it’s dry, with fine acidity—a great representation of its style. —S.H.  
abv: 15.6%  
Price: $30

abv: 13.8%  
Price: $27

91 Ridge 2010 Ponzo Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). This will divide the Zinfandel community. Some will find its earthiness and herbaceousness an attractive complication to the briary berry and spice notes. Others will think it’s not quite ripe enough and lacking richness. The score reflects the wine’s complexity and adaptability to a wide range of foods. —S.H.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $28

91 Turley 2010 Fredericks Vineyard Zinfandel (Sonoma Valley). While this Zin is high in alcohol, which gives it some peppery heat, it’s dry and complex. The flavors range from ripe blackberry, blueberry and currant to dark chocolate, licorice and warm-climate Zin spice. The vineyard contains 80-year-old vines, grown in the mountains above the valley floor, which explains the wine’s unique concentration. —S.H.  
abv: 15.3%  
Price: $42

91 Turley 2010 Pesenti Vineyard Zinfandel (Paso Robles). This huge, rich Zinfandel is ripe—nearly overripe—with dry raisin, blackberry and currant flavors. There’s a curious bitterness to the finish that must come from the shriveled grape skins, which add to the wine’s complexity. The vineyard is on the cooler, hillier western side of Paso Robles. Not a Zin for everyone, it’s nevertheless a classic example of its genre. —S.H.  
abv: 16.1%  
Price: $35

90 Bella Vetta 2008 Jack’s Cabin Vineyard Zinfandel (Rockpile). This low-production Zin gets extra credit for sheer power. It’s explosive, with briary, brambly flavors of wild raspberry, cherry and blackberry, complete with spice notes of anise, cinnamon and pepper, all wrapped in soft tannins. This would be great now with spicy beef and poultry dishes or pizza. —S.H.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $34

90 Hendry 2010 Block 28 Zinfandel (Napa Valley). For full review see page 10.  
abv: 15.9%  
Price: $35

90 Hendry 2009 Block 28 Zinfandel (Napa Valley). There’s a fleshy mouthfeel and a taste of green olive that make this Zinfandel atypical, but which add to its appeal. The varietal flavors show up in the form of ripe, robust blackberry, cola, tobacco and spice, while Napa’s lovely tannins give it an elegant
framework. Drink it over the next few years for maximum freshness. —S.H.

90 Kenwood 2010 Jack London Vineyard Zinfandel (Sonoma Mountain). For full review see page 11.

abv: 15.5%  Price: $35

89 Bruliam 2010 Rocky Ridge Vineyard Zinfandel (Rockpile). This shows the Rockpile personality with its intensely jammery raspberry, cherry and chocolate flavors that are accentuated by a bit of Port-like heat and set off by good acidity. The pleasure is in the power. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%  Price: $35

89 Occidental Road Cellars 2009 Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). Although this Zin has a touch of overripeness in the form of raisins covered in chocolate, followed by a lot of blackberry and foxy mulberry. The wine is dry, smooth and balanced, with plenty of complexity. —S.H.

abv: 14.9%  Price: $34

88 Artezio 2010 Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). High on the deliciousness-factor, this shows soft, seemingly sweet flavors of raspberry, cinnamon, smoky butter, sugar cookie and vanilla. It's a little one-dimensional, but that dimension is a nice one. Drink now. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%  Price: $25

86 Bluenose 2008 Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). This wears its 16.5% alcohol well, like a heavy but graceful dancer. It's softly sweet in glycine, with flavors of milk chocolate and blackberry jam, sprinkled with black pepper and anise liqueur. —S.H.

abv: 16.5%  Price: $25

85 Acorn 2010 Alegria Vineyards Heritage Vines Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). Soft, sweet and candied, this has flavors of raspberry, cherry, roasted almond, honey and spice—almost like a granola bar. High alcohol adds to the impression of sweetness. —S.H.

abv: NA  Price: $42

85 D-Cubed Cellars 2009 Zinfandel (Napa Valley). Here's a soft, seemingly sweet Zin. Part of its apparent sweetness is from the glycerine of high alcohol; part is from the extracted flavors of raspberry, milk chocolate and caramelized oak. It's almost a dessert wine, but nonetheless a good example of its style, which will appeal to lots of people. —S.H.

abv: 14.6%  Price: $27

85 Renwood 2010 Old Vine Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). This tastes juicy, sweet and vibrant, with candied raspberry, pink bubblegum, vanilla, cinnamon and white pepper flavors. A nice Zin to drink now. —S.H.

abv: 14.5%  Price: $20

88 Sextant 2010 Wheelhouse Zinfandel (Paso Robles). Rich and chocolate, with blueberry and blackberry jam flavor, this is high in alcohol, but it is delicious nonetheless. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%  Price: $21

84 Martin Family Vineyards 2010 Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). Showing the briary, brambly side of Zinfandel, this features wild berry, tobacco and spice flavors. Its thinness and impression of sweetness give it a rustic mouthfeel. —S.H.

abv: 15%  Price: $19

84 Sextant 2010 Zinfandel (Central Coast). This seems candy-sweet with flavors of raspberry, red licorice and spice. Simple, it is fine for everyday drinking. —S.H.

abv: 14%  Price: $16

84 Turley 2010 Cedarman Zinfandel (Howell Mountain). Underripe and slender, this wine's vegetal flavors appear alongside its blackberry note. Although it's dry and balanced, with firm Howell Mountain tannins, it implies richness but doesn't really deliver. The thinness allows the high alcohol to become prominent, making the wine feel hot. —S.H.

abv: 15.6%  Price: $29

84 Turley 2010 Dogtown Vineyard Zinfandel (Lodi). This is a sound example of the warm-climate style of Zinfandel. It's high alcohol gives it a hot, chili-pepper-like sting, and the blackberry fruit has a Port-like, raisiny edge. —S.H.

abv: 16.2%  Price: $38

84 Turley 2010 Salvador Vineyard Zinfandel (Contra Costa County). There's something vegetal on this Zin that lowers its score. It's dry and smooth in tannins, and it shows some complexity, with pleasant blackberry flavor. —S.H.

abv: 15.9%  Price: $38

84 Turley 2010 Ueberroth Vineyard Zinfandel (Paso Robles). Touches of unripe vegetal aromas and flavors compromise this wine, despite some jammy blackberry and cherry flavors. Because of its thinness, its high alcohol content makes it feel hot. Drink now. —S.H.

abv: 15.8%  Price: $48

83 Bota Box 2011 Zinfandel (California). Jammy and tart in acidity, with green mint and white pepper flavors alongside riper ones of raspberries, this is a Zinfandel that's easy to drink with burgers, and it can even take a slight chill in the fridge. Best Buy. —S.H.

abv: 13.5%  Price: $20/3 L

81 Bluenose 2009 Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). This Zin isn't rich enough to stand up to its enormously high alcohol level, making it seem hot. Its fruit is overripe and raisiny. —S.H.

abv: 15.8%  Price: $25

OTHER RED WINES

88 Martin Ranch 2009 Therese Vineyards Carignane (Santa Clara Valley). A well-made, earthy Carignane, this tastes of cinnamon and plum cobbler, with subtle layers of bacon and smoke on the finish. Full-bodied, but also softly round, this is just right for hearty dishes like braised lamb or roasted pork. —V.B.

abv: 14%  Price: $29

86 Acorn 2009 Alegria Vineyards Alicante Bouschet (Russian River Valley). This variety has long been planted in California as a blending grape, often with Zinfandel. On its own, as it is here, it's soft and candied-tasting, with flavors of raspberry and red cherry; set off by brisk acidity and firm tannins in a light-bodied texture. A little rustic, it needs to be paired with rich fare, such as steaks or lamb chops, to become balanced. —S.H.

abv: NA  Price: $45

86 Fenestra 2009 Estate Mournvedre (Livermore Valley). This is a pleasantly plum-perfumed Mournvedre that's straightforward in approach and flavor. Just slightly chewy, the wine shows a burst of mocha on the finish. —V.B.

abv: 13.7%  Price: $26

85 Coquelicot 2009 Estate Sangiovese (Santa Ynez Valley). This is a dry wine, but very acidic, almost sour. It calls for rich beef, pork and cheese dishes to cut through the tartness. The flavors are of sour cherry candy and spice, with a light mouthfeel. —S.H.

abv: 14.3%  Price: $39

83 Tercero 2009 Camp 4 Vineyard Mourvedre (Santa Ynez Valley). This doesn't taste quite ripe, with vegetal flavors marring the raspberry and cherry notes. Otherwise, it shows a soft, tannic mouthfeel. —S.H.

abv: 14.9%  Price: $30

RED BLENDS


abv: 14.5%  Price: $200

93 Constant 2009 Claret (Napa-Sonoma). It's hard to imagine a Cabernet Sauvignon-based wine richer or more decadently appealing than this. It dazzles with blackberry jam, black cherry pie, milk chocolate and anise flavors that are framed in soft, smooth, dynamic tannins. It defines the modern cult style. —S.H.

abv: 14.4%  Price: $105

93 Justin 2010 Focus (Paso Robles). This is a new bottling from Justin, and it's one of its best wines in years. Blended mostly from Syrah, with a splash of Mourvedre and Grenache, it's rich, ripe and velvety smooth. The wine shows a warm-climate touch of overripeness in the chocolate-covered raisin flavor, which gives it a Port-like warmth. Otherwise, the flavors veer toward blackberry and cassis liqueur. —S.H.

abv: 15%  Price: $95

93 Krupp Brothers 2009 Stagecoach Vineyard Synchrony (Napa Valley). This is rich
and dense in blackberry and cherry jam, currant, mocha, anise and smoky cedar flavors. The mountain tannins are strong but refined, and the finish is long and spicy. It's a Bordeaux blend based on Cabernet Sauvignon, but be forewarned: It's high in alcohol. —S.H.

**90 Vina Robles 2010 Red4 (Paso Robles).** For full review see page 11. **Editors’ Choice.**

abv: 14.1%  
Price: $17

**89 Provenance Vineyards 2009 Winemaker’s Reserve Blend (Napa Valley).** Blended with the classic Bordeaux varieties, this is dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon's blackberry and cassis liquor flavors. Lots of sweet oak gives a buttery, toasty richness. Drink now. —S.H.

abv: 14.5%  
Price: $50

**88 Fenestra 2007 Conjugation (Livermore Valley).** Opening with a mouthful of dusty raspberry and cherry flavors, this Bordeaux blend of a little more than half Cabernet Sauvignon and smaller percentages of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot offers much in the way of inviting fruit and spice notes. Its pleasing acidity lasts through the finish. —V.B.

abv: 14.1%  
Price: $40

**88 Fenestra 2007 Tourvanillo Silvaspoons Vineyard Reserve (Lodi).** Another Fenestra-Silvaspoons collaboration, Tourvanillo is a proprietorial blend of Iberian grapes, predominantly Touriga, and is marked mostly by its aromatic highlights of spicy cinnamon and vibrant currant. Dense, it's interesting and intense with rounded edges and a leathery, long finish. —V.B.

abv: 13.9%  
Price: $28

**88 Palazzo Wine 2008 Red (Napa Valley).** This Merlot-based blend also contains Cabernet Franc and a drop of Cabernet Sauvignon. It's user friendly, with soft, easy tannins framing ripe flavors of blackberry, raspberry, red licorice, mocha and spice. Ready to drink now. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%  
Price: $65

**88 Tercero 2008 Larner Vineyard Cuvee Loco (Santa Ynez Valley).** This big, rich, thick wine, dripping with gooey cherry and chocolate flavors. Blended from equal parts Grenache and Syrah, it features some notable tannins, although it's voluptuous enough to drink now. Pair it with barbecue. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%  
Price: $30

**87 B Wise 2009 Wisdom (Sonoma Valley).** Sweet and gentle, with cherry and raspberry jam flavors that are enhanced by hints of vanilla, spice and sandalwood, this is essentially a Bordeaux-style blend with a touch of Syrah. Easy to drink with ham, bacon, sausage and other salty, umami-rich meats. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%  
Price: $24

**87 Beauilieu Vineyard 2009 Tapestry (Napa Valley).** This is a blend of the major Bordeaux varieties. It's dry, tannic and flavorful in blackberry, cherry and sweet oak, although it is a little rough around the edges. Drink now. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%  
Price: $60

**86 Di Arie 2008 Sierra Legend Estate (Shenandoah Valley).** A pungent blend of Sierra Foothills-grown Syrah, Primitivo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Sierra Legend starts off earthy—as well as like a liquid form of stewed plums—before taking on leather and coffee components. Smoothly textured, it's a straight shooter, ready for rich, earthy food. —V.B.

abv: 14.1%  
Price: $26

**85 Buttonwood Farm 2010 Grenache-Syrah (Santa Barbara County).** Dry and rough in texture, this has earthy flavors of coffee, cherry and spice. The tannins are a little meek and green. Drink up. —S.H.

abv: NA  
Price: $26

**85 Kendall-Jackson 2009 Summation (California).** A bit sharp and green in tannins, this nevertheless provides plenty of cherry, blackberry, black pepper and baking spice flavors to pair with barbecue. The blend is Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Zinfandel. —S.H.

abv: 14.2%  
Price: $40

**85 Magistrate 2010 Restitution (Sonoma County).** Smooth, mellow and dry, this features savory flavors of blackberry jam, cola, licorice and baking spice. It's a sound red wine for drinking with everyday fare. —S.H.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $20

**84 Pandemonium 2009 Red (California).** This blend of Zinfandel, Malbec, Petit Verdot and Merlot is an easy-drinking wine for everyday fare like burgers. It has juicy red fruit, licorice and caramel candy flavors. —S.H.

abv: 13.9%  
Price: $10
FORTIFIED WINE

84 Ridge 2010 Lyton Springs (Dry Creek Valley). This tastes hotter than the official alcohol of 14.4% abv, giving it a heat that combines with the pepper flavor that lends a prickliness. A flavor of overripe raisin also shows up in this dry blend, which is based on Zinfandel. It’s a rustic wine for drinking now. —S.H. abv: 14.4%  Price: $37

84 Standing Sun 2010 G-S-M (Santa Barbara County). Made from Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre, this is a simple, soft wine. It shows California-sweet raspberry and cherry flavors. You can even chill it a little bit. —S.H. abv: 14.9%  Price: $28

83 Bogle 2009 Essential (California). This simple blend of Zinfandel, Syrah and several other red varieties is rich in red berry jam and spice flavors. As the name implies, it’s a pantry-style red for everyday drinking. —S.H. abv: 13.5%  Price: $11

82 Andrew Murray 2010 Esperance (Central Coast). This blend of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre is dry, acidic and not quite ripe. There’s a green tobacco edge to the fruit. It’s also a bit Funky. —S.H. abv: 15%  Price: $25

82 Dune Buggy 2009 Red (California). Rustic in mouthfeel, with some green sharpness, this wine’s fruit flavors veer toward raspberry and cherry candy. —S.H. abv: NA  Price: $10

80 Hoyt Family Vineyards 2009 Dylema Red (Paso Robles). Soft and sweet, this manages to combine Port-like and vegetable flavors in the same glass. The alcohol is an unmanageable 16.4% by volume. —S.H. abv: 16.4%  Price: $22

NEW YORK

CHARDONNAY

90 Bloomer Creek 2010 Block 97 Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Irresistible on the nose and palate with loads of sweet cream butter, ripe honeydew and delicate white flower, this is a luxurious yet elegantly structured single-vineyard Chardonnay. Lemony, bright acidity and shades of crushed stone highlight the palate that bursts with pristine, ripe fruit. —A.I. abv: 12.8%  Price: $22

87 Bloomer Creek 2009 Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Pretty on the nose with whiffs of ripe honeydew and orange blossom, this is a dry, elegantly structured Chardonnay that balances sharp, angular acidity with a rich note of sweet vanilla cream. —A.I. abv: 12.1%  Price: $16

87 Damiani 2010 Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). For such a luscious, powerfully built wine, there’s a surprising delicacy to this Chardonnay, exhibiting dainty hints of tropical fruit and butter cream on the nose and palate. It is nicely balanced, with bright, lemony acidity and a hint of saline that lingers on the finish. —A.I. abv: 13.7%  Price: $18

87 Lamoureux Landing 2010 Estate Bottled Unoaked Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Squeaky clean and bright, with an abundance of fresh apple and citrus notes on the nose and palate, this unoaked wine is rich with fruit and a luscious body, but balanced with brisk tangerine acidity. It is pristine and easy drinking. —A.I. abv: 13.2%  Price: $13

87 Red Tail Ridge 2011 Barrel Fermented RTR Vineyard Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Aromatic of sweet cream, ripe apple and butted popcorn, this luxurious Chardonnay counters richness of flavor with brisk acidity and impeccably balanced alcohol. It’s irresistibly luscious but elegant. —A.I. abv: 12%  Price: $15

86 Bloomer Creek 2010 No Oak Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). There’s a lifted citrus aroma that’s accented by hints of orange blossom and orange rind on this unique, unoaked Chardonnay. The palate is richly concentrated with shades of tangerine and lemon, and a bristling acidity that keeps things fresh and vibrant. —A.I. abv: 12.8%  Price: $18

86 Glenora 2011 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay (Finger Lakes). Abundant flower notes meld with hints of toast and pear on this dry, easy-drinking Chardonnay. The palate is creamy in texture, with flavors of sweet cream and fresh apple that linger richly on the finish. —A.I. abv: 13.5%  Price: $16

86 Hosmer Winery 2011 Chardonnay (Cayuga Lake). Hints of smoke and toast add warmth to the fresh pear and blossom aromas. An easy-drinking blend of stainless-steel- and barrel-fermented wine, it’s bright with fresh fruit, but it’s luxuriously textured on the palate. —A.I. abv: 13.1%  Price: $12

86 Macari 2009 Chardonnay (North Fork of Long Island). Nervy and brisk with acidity, this is a refreshingly crisp, unoaked Chardonnay, with underripe tropical fruit and lemon notes on the nose and palate. Elegant minerality adds a tonic touch. —A.I. abv: 13.1%  Price: $19
PINOT NOIR

87 Swedish Hill 2011 Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes). Pretty floral aromas accent notes of fennel and savory apple on this dry, crisp Riesling. Bright and bold on the palate, this has lemony acidity and an abundance of fresh apple flavor. —A.I.  
abv: 11.5%  
Price: $16

86 Heart & Hands 2011 Reserve Riesling (Finger Lakes). Delicate floral notes brighten the savory apple and herb flavors on this dry, minerally Riesling. Vibrant acidity carries the medium-long finish that’s marked by a hint of white spice. —A.I.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $29

86 Heart & Hands 2009 Barrel Reserve Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Concentrated and ruddy, this has ripe red-fruit flavors that are accented by savory spice and earthy tones of mushroom and autumn leaf. Soft and gentle on the palate, this has just a murmur of tannins. —A.I.  
abv: 12.7%  
Price: $41

86 Heart & Hands 2010 Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Hints of caramel and toasted marshmallow add sweetness and spice to the nose and palate of this earthy, yet elegant, Pinot Noir. Restrained red-plum and cherry flavors are accented by tones of wet soil and leaf. A soft floral spray brightens the finish. —A.I.  
abv: 12.4%  
Price: $21

86 Heart & Hands 2010 Hobbit Hollow Vineyard Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Darkly toasted oak, dried herb and mushroom notes add warmth and earthiness to this delicately fruity Pinot Noir. The palate is ruddy and rustic with subtle sour-cherry sweetness, but bright acidity and a swathe of green herb drive the fresh, clean finish. —A.I.  
abv: 12.1%  
Price: $30

abv: 13%  
Price: $18

86 Millbrook 2010 Proprietor’s Special Reserve Pinot Noir (New York). While sultry and rich with ripe black-fruit flavors, this concentrated Pinot Noir is surprisingly multidimensional on the nose and palate. Green herb and brisk acidity add freshness. Hints of mushroom and wet soil, along with penetrating, chewy tannins, add depth and balance. —A.I.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $20

89 Bloomer Creek 2008 Unfined and Unfiltered Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Hints of cedar and spice accent ripe red-fruit and flower notes on this distinctly Old World-style Pinot Noir. A fresh green-herb flavor, brisk acidity and penetrating tannins drive through the long finish. —A.I.  
abv: 12.3%  
Price: $20

88 Ravines 2009 Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Whispers of charred wood, ripe bramble and earth add an elegant rusticity to this Pinot Noir’s subtle black-cherry flavor. This is delicately structured, with bright, brisk acidity and a hint of dried mushroom that lingers on the palate. —A.I.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $23

87 Heart & Hands 2010 Elaine’s Vineyard Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). Beautifully fragrant of sweet black cherry and violet, this intensely fruity yet earthy wine is a standout within the Heart & Hands collection. Richly textured, it finishes with hints of spice, dried leaf and lingering, gentle tannins. —A.I.  
abv: 13.4%  
Price: $30

87 Heart & Hands 2010 Patrician Verona Vineyard Pinot Noir (Finger Lakes). A spray of floral perfume lingers gorgeously on the nose and palate of this elegantly fruity, yet slightly rustic Pinot Noir. Soft sour-cherry and plum flavors are anchored by hints of toast, wet soil and a ripple of granite-like minerality. —A.I.  
abv: 12.7%  
Price: $30

86 Heart & Hands 2010 Selection Pinot Noir (New York). Unabashedly forward, with loads of concentrated sour-cherry flavor, this is a boldly structured Pinot Noir with accents of sweet spice, bramble and violet. It’s richly textured with firm, penetrating tannins on the finish. —A.I.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $15

86 Heart & Hands 2010 New York Premium Selection Pinot Noir (New York). An unabashedly Chardonnay with a light-to-medium body, this has tart acidity that drives the palate, but its flavor concentration falls on the low end of the intensity spectrum. Perky and zesty, it ends with a zing of light lemonade. —A.H.  
abv: 10.5%  
Price: $15

84 Stinson 2011 Chardonnay (Monticello). A seemingly oxidative hint lends aromas of nut and toast, with added notes of spiced, sautéed orchard fruit and white currant. The acids feel soft and malleable upon entrance, but they pick up some energy on the midpalate. The finish is short to medium in length. —A.H.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $20

84 Annapolis Vineyards 2011 Chardonnay (Virginia). Like a bag of trail mix, this has scents of dried apple, walnut and toasted grain. Medium to full bodied, the mouthfeel is easy and plush, with a broad orchard-fruit flavor. The acids pick up some vigor on the finish, giving the wine a lifted quality. —A.H.  
abv: 12.9%  
Price: $18

82 Gadino 2011 Chardonnay (Virginia). The nose smells hazy, with understated aromas of orchard fruit, toast and white soy sauce. On the palate, it feels one-dimensional and straightforward, with light flavor concentration. —A.H.  
abv: 12.9%  
Price: $20

88 Tarara 2010 Honah Lee White (Virginia). An enticing, heavy-duty blend of 40% Viognier, 40% Petit Manseng and 20% Roussanne, this is rich, round and unctuous, with bold notes of golden stone fruit, orange Creamsicle, lemon tartlet and caramelized nut. The acidity is soft across the midpalate, but it brightens on the warm, medium-length finish. To appreciate the full spectrum of aromas and flavors, don’t drink this too cold. —A.H.  
abv: 15.5%  
Price: $30

87 White Hall Vineyards 2010 Gewurztraminer (Virginia). Intoxicating aromas of lychee, rose petal, white cherry and caramelized sugar are offset by a modicum of fresh dill. It tastes full and slightly oily, typical of the varietal, with soft acids and a
touch of bitterness. The finish tapers off with notes of flower and citrus Creamsicle. —A.H.

**Barrel Oak 2010 Petit Manseng (Virginia).** Although the aromas seem slightly muted—squeezing out notes of toasted brioche, nut, nectarine and golden apple—the palate proves to be much more intense. It’s round, soft and slightly heavy in feel, finishing with mouth-watering flavors of lemon Creamsicle and nut. —A.H.

**Veramar 2011 Seyval Blanc (Virginia).** The bright bouquet of Meyer lemon zest, green apple and pear is filled out with heftier scents of toasted nut and bees wax. Medium bodied with precise flavors, the palate is marked by stimulating acidity, finishing with some warmth and a mineral tang. —A.H.

**Lovingston 2011 Petit Manseng (Monticello).** While Petit Manseng is famed for producing late-harvest dessert wines in southwestern France, this bottling is a table wine, featuring a slight edge of sweetness and a richly textured palate. It’s intense and exotic, with tropical notes of papaya, pineapple and apricot preserve, offset by a nutty edge. —A.H.

**CrossKeys 2010 Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** Deep and dark smelling, the nose is composed of cola, charred meat, blackberry and chocolate notes. The mouthfeel is plant and supple, with integrated tannins and malleable acids. A smokey mocha note lingers on the finish. —A.H.

**North Gate 2010 Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** A scent of stewed legumes weaves through the aromas of tobacco, cassis, leather and caramelized sugar. It’s medium bodied, with palate-clenching tannins, but the wild strawberry note on the finish outlasts the tannic structure. —A.H.

**Pearmund 2009 Pan d’Or Vineyard Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** A charred sugar note sits on top of the fruit tones of herb-influenced cherry and wild strawberry, with a dusting of white pepper adding interest. This has a more feminine physique, with flavors of Dr. Pepper and flower. The herb streak that’s apparent on the nose continues onto the palate, cutting through the fine layers of tannins and acids. —A.H.

**Attimo 2010 Deep Silence Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** This veers on the lower side of aromatic intensity, with notes of dark raspberry and plum, raw meat, melted chocolate and underbrush. Lively acids define the light- to medium-bodied palate, while powdery tannins lend tract. —A.H.

**Autumn Hill 2010 Cabernet Franc (Monticello).** Mild aromas of spiced raspberry compote, strawberry, herb and Earl Grey tea compose the nose. It’s light to medium bodied, with an elegant as-trangency. While the acids are soft upon entrance, they spike on the finish, turning lemony. —A.H.

**Doukénie 2010 Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** Blackberry liqueur, strawberry jam, cocoa and spiced toast aromas are offset by a subtle, bitter hint of grapefruit pith. The palate is quite succulent and agile, with its tannins slowly surfacing on the backend, lending traction to the finish. —A.H.

**Jefferson Vineyards 2010 Cabernet Franc (Monticello).** A green, leafy streak threads through the primary dried-strawberry aroma, showing solid Cabernet Franc typicity. This is a medium-bodied wine, with flexible tannins and balanced acids, Notes of black tea and earth give the flavor profile dimension. —A.H.

**Fox Meadow 2009 Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** A note of charred turmeric adds an exotic touch to the red plum and caramel aromas. The elevated acidity is the palate’s driving force, thrusting outward, overshadowing the tannins that have the quality of powdered sand. —A.H.

**Rosemont 2010 Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** Notes of dark cherry and berry, toast and Indian spice are a bit blunted, remaining relatively static as the wine is allowed to breathe. Light to medium bodied, it shows some elegance, and the plant tannins add a soft, dusty grip. —A.H.

**Shenandoah 2010 Cabernet Franc (Shenandoah Valley).** Smelling this wine is like sticking your nose into a jar of turmeric, with added aromas of ground coffee bean and broad black fruit that shade in the background. While the turmeric note remains dominant on the palate, the wine would pair well with spicy curry dishes—especially considering its modest 12% alcohol. —A.H.

**Gadino 2010 Antiche Viti Reserve Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** A healthy mix of boysenberries and strawberry preserves form the core aromas, with touches of spiced toast and purple flower. Delicate tannins lend the palate an open feel, and a green streak cuts through the center. The flavors would benefit from a boost of concentration. —A.H.

**Narmada 2009 Reserve Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** Raw oak is the dominant scent, which overlays a less intense cherry aroma. It feels medium bodied, with a certain flatness about its core. Acidity lends the finish some zip, but it lacks focus overall, ending on a hazy mocha note. —A.H.

**Cabernet Franc**

**Breaux 2007 Reserve Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** It’s striking that this bottling packs a whopping 16.4% alcohol and is capable of managing it as well as it does. The palate is rich and hefty, with plenty of burly tannins that are deeply set into the wine’s flesh. It tastes chocolatey and toasty, with an enticing madoeh note that sings across the midpalate and onto the finish. Editors’ Choice. —A.H.

**Cedar Creek 2009 Estate Bottled Cabernet Franc (Shenandoah Valley).** Fruit forward aromas of blueberry compote, blackberry and boysenberry blend notably well with a savory note of feral brown spice are almost as opaque in smell as the wine is in appearance. Full bodied and lush upon entrance, it has a velvety core that’s bolstered by firm, muscular tannins and illuminating acids. Notes of dark berry preserves and cedar shavings dot the finish. —A.H.

**Breaux 2009 Marquis de Lafayette Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** A smoky narcissus note is upfront and almost obtrusive, with brooding notes of spiced black fruit and char lurking in the background. The tannins are drying—with the consistency of finely ground sand—and they constrict the flavors a bit. A food wine for sure, it needs to be paired with a slab of rare meat. —A.H.

**Keswick Vineyards 2010 Estate Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Monticello).** Deep aromas of fruitcake, dark cherry, minty chocolate and brown spice are almost as opaque in smell as the wine is in appearance. Full bodied and lush upon entrance, it has a velvety core that’s bolstered by firm, muscular tannins and illuminating acids. Notes of dark berry preserves and cedar shavings dot the finish. —A.H.

**Bleustone 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Virginia).** Roasted-smelling, this has leading aromas of coffee bean, char and smoky wood, with background scents of boysenberries and blackberry preserves vying for attention. It’s medium to full bodied, with well-managed tannins that lend the palate some traction. The toasted-barrel influence weaves in and out during the entire tasting experience. —A.H.

**Pearmund 2010 Crown Orchard Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Virginia).** Decidedly savory on the nose, this is stippled with hints of pepper, smoke and leather, all accenting the core of boysenberry and blackberry. The firm tannins and balanced acids create a shell for the dark fruit flavors, and the structure stays strong throughout the finish. Let this one breathe in the glass; with air, the palate fills out. —A.H.

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**Cabernet Sauvignon**

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Shenandoah 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Shenandoah Valley). At the start, this smells like dark fruit and roast drizzled with molten beeswax. The flavors mirror the aromas, with a hefty hint of clove that stipples the textured finish. —A.H.  
**abv:** 12%  
**Price:** $19

Breaux 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Virginia). A broad black-fruited scent defines this Cabernet Sauvignon, with mulled hints of blueberry, toast and cheese rind. The palate is marked by stripping tannins that tug on the upperlip, bearing flavors of toast and coffee bean. —A.H.  
**abv:** 15.4%  
**Price:** $32

Doukénie 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Virginia). Like a deconstructed peanut butter and jelly sandwich, this has nutty, toasty aromas that are topped with a generous dollop of strawberry jam. It feels full and slack upon entrance, with slightly pickled acids and firm but integrated tannins that tug on the finish. —A.H.  
**abv:** 13.8%  
**Price:** $33

DOUGENIE 2010 MERLOT (VIRGINIA). A precise note of crème de cassis is met with dense aromas of herbal relish, spiced toast and raisin purée. It feels medium to full bodied, with an open texture and dark, sun-baked flavors. —A.H.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $16

Keswick Vineyards 2009 Estate Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Monticello). Charred bread, blueberry compote and rubber are the key aromas, which lead to a medium-to full-bodied palate that tastes slightly grapey. Acidity is the wine’s chief structural component, more salient than its tannins. —A.H.  
**abv:** 13.8%  
**Price:** $40

King Family 2010 Merlot (Monticello). Bold, dark and compelling, the nose offers scents of tar, resin herb, dark fruit and pastry spice. The chewy tannins are woven into this heavy hitter’s full body, while uplifting acids keep the palate feeling steady and toned. Structured plum and tobacco notes drive the long, balanced finish. *Editors’ Choice.* —A.H.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $23

Breaux 2007 Merlot (Virginia). Earthy and dark smouldering, the nose is thick with delineated aromas of dark cherry and plum, long-cut tobacco, underbrush and brown spice. It’s full bodied, with plenty of tannic muscle. Pair this brassy effort with a slab of grilled beef or venison. —A.H.  
**abv:** 15.2%  
**Price:** $32

Rosemont 2010 Merlot (Virginia). For full review see page 12.  
**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $18

Keswick Vineyards 2010 Merlot (Monticello). Aromas of sweat, plum, mocha and melted butter seem dialed back, but they offer plenty of intrigue. The midpalate feels open and accessible, while the finish tenses up a bit with lingering tannins. —A.H.  
**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $28

Breaux NV Equation Merlot (Virginia). Aged in French oak for 9–12 months, this has a base of 54% Merlot, with smaller portions of Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. It has a soft and nimble core, with a grippy tannic shell and a vein of compost that weaves through the palate. Blackberry and clove notes tag the finish. —A.H.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $19

DOUGENIE 2010 PETIT VERDOT (MONTICELLO). An aromatic core of dark cherry flesh and blackberry is strung together with threads of char, cocoa and spice. Chewy, meaty tannins build the palate, with vibrant acids that make the fruit quite succulent. This calls for pairing with hearty fare, like grilled skirt steak served with a porcini polenta cake. —A.H.  
**abv:** 13.5%  
**Price:** $23

CrossKeys 2010 Petit Verdot (Virginia). While this has a tight-lipped nose at first—offering reticent scents of grilled herb, game and leather polish—it does open up with air. Flavor wise, it is much more outgoing, with notes of dark stone fruit framed by chewy tannins and comfortable acids. —A.H.  
**abv:** 13%  
**Price:** $23

General’s Ridge 2010 Petit Verdot (Virginia). The blackberry aroma gets the palate watering in anticipation, with anticipatory notes of grilled herb and leather adding dimension. The acidity level is pegged at the higher end of the spectrum, creating a succulent midpalate, but the acid becomes a bit overwhelming on the finish. —A.H.  
**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $28

INGLESIDE 2007 PETIT VERDOT (MONTICELLO). A veneer of spicy oak overlays the nose, ac- 

**Red blends**

**King Family 2010 Meritage Unfiltered Merlot-Petit Verdot-Cabernet Franc-Malbec (Monticello).** This blend of 43% Merlot, 27% Petit Verdot, 22% Cabernet Franc and 8% Malbec continues King Family’s spate of solid releases. The aromas are rich but restrained, showing layers of curry powder and dried basil, with notes of spiced blueberry compote and blackberry. The full-bodied palate kicks into overdrive, with intense flavors of black fruit and dried rose that fill in the soft core, but the tannic framework keeps them from seeming effusive. —A.H.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $28

**Veritas 2010 Vintner’s Reserve (Monti- cello).** Decidedly savory on the nose, aromas of bacon, brûléed sugar, grilled herb and toast highlight the black fruit core. The palate is meaty and currently locked tight with superfine, grippy tannins. Bone dry on the finish, this should be enjoyed with a chunk of rare beef to help tame the tannic blow. —A.H.  
**abv:** 13.7%  
**Price:** $35

**Breaux 2007 Meritage Cabernet Sauvi- gnon-Merlot-Malbec-Petit Verdot-Cabernet Franc (Virginia).** This smells dark and bold, offering Port-like aromas of chocolate ganache, buttercream frosting, brown spice and sun-baked fruit. Hearty and toasty, the palate packs plenty of muscle in the form of strapping tannins and supporting acids. Pair this with seared flank steak with a coffee-soy rub to accent the wine’s decadence. —A.H.  
**abv:** 15.2%  
**Price:** $32
Delifosse 2007 Meritage (Monticello). A seemingly oxidative edge defines the bold nose, with aromas of spiced fruitcake, toasted walnut, leaf litter and chocolate. Full bodied and opulent, the palate features deeply integrated but firm tannins that lend a velvety-like texture. This is a blend of 30% Cabernet Franc, 30% Merlot, 20% Petit Verdot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now. —A.H.

King Family 2008 Meritage (Monticello). This has a savory nose of worn leather, herb and leaf litter that’s offset by decadent notes of wild berry doused with pastry batter. Medium to full bodied, it has a soft core that’s outlined by well-built tannins. It finishes with traction and touches of chili spice and licorice. —A.H.

Stinson 2010 Meritage Cabernet Franc-Merlot-Petit Verdot-Cabernet Sauvignon (Virginia). A Bordeaux-style blend of Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon, this has a nose that erupts with scents of ripe, macerated strawberries, red currant preserves and briny black olives. Medium to full bodied, it feels loose and agile upon entrance before the tannic structure gains footing on the midpalate. Hints of graphite and cedar shade in the finish. —A.H.

Glen Manor 2009 Hodder Hill (Virginia). The primary aroma of raw game creates an assertively meaty nose, with underlying tones of char, brown spice and black fruit. Medium to full bodied, it feels open upon entrance before firming up on the midpalate. A note of spiced blackberry jam lingers on the finish with some warmth. —A.H.

CrossKeys 2009 Meritage (Virginia). A barnyard-like quality underlines the leafy, herbal-smelling nose, with leather, blackberry and olive subtleties. A dominant thread of green pepper weaves through the medium-bodied palate, with proportionate tannins that tug on the finish with a slight bitterness. —A.H.

Lovingston 2010 El Late Harvest Char donnay (Monticello). Decadent and intense, this smells like breakfast toast that has been slathered with red currant jam, mango butter and apricot preserves, topped with a drizzle of honey. The mouthfeel is rich, round and unctuous, with a zing of acidity that keeps it from seeming cloying. Notes of bruised apple and spice decorate the finish. —A.H.

Riesling

Dunham 2010 Lewis Estate Vineyard Riesling (Columbia Valley). Truly stunning, the Lewis Estate Riesling from Dunham explodes with fragrant fruits—citrus, melon and tropical. A symphony of subtle accents, such as powdered sugar, candied citrus peel and breakfast tea, this gorgeous bottle belongs with the short list of the very best of Washington’s many Rieslings. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

Nefarious Cellars 2011 Stone’s Throw Vineyard Estate Grown Riesling (Columbia Valley). Nefarious just keeps going from strength to strength. This marvelous, off-dry Riesling, from an estate vineyard just outside the Lake Chelan AVA, is built upon delicately-woven threads of lemon, orange, apricot and cantaloupe, with a smattering of spun sug-

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WASHINGTON

SWEET WINES

Lovingston 2010 El Late Harvest Charmolonne (Monticello). Decadent and intense, this smells like breakfast toast that has been slathered with red currant jam, mango butter and apricot preserves, topped with a drizzle of honey. The mouthfeel is rich, round and unctuous, with a zing of acidity that keeps it from seeming cloying. Notes of bruised apple and spice decorate the finish. —A.H.

Wallula Benches Riesling (Horse Heaven Hills). Quite tart and bone dry, this is made from fruit sourced from the Wallula Benches Vineyard—a site also prominently featured in Pacific Rim’s Riesling lineup. Racy and gin-like in its flavor profile, it emphasizes botanical and citrus notes, with good penetration and length. Best Buy. —P.G.

Swiftwater Cellars 2011 No 9 Riesling (Yakima Valley). Just a hint of sweetness can be found in a bouquet of honey-dusted flavor. Pretty in on the palate, with citrus and apricot notes, this shows floral accents that are somewhat reminiscent of Gewürztraminer. —P.G.

Gárd Vintners 2011 Lawrence Vineyards Riesling (Columbia Valley). Rich and full bodied, despite the relatively low alcohol, this supertart and luscious Riesling is loaded with sour candy flavors of lemon and lime. Quite refreshing, pure and dry. —P.G.

Thomas O’Neil Cellars 2010 Fahrenheit 100 Riesling (Columbia Valley). This is Riesling done in a forward and fruity style, showing a mix of peach, apple and pear flavors. Broad and access-

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sible, it finishes with a sweet dusting of powdered sugar. —P.G.

86 Cave B 2010 Estate Riesling (Columbia Valley). With close to 2% residual sugar, this seems as if it would show some sweetness. But it has an edgy sharpness, matching primary tastes of peach and apricot to a fruit skin flavor and a hint of diesel. Give it another year or two to round out a bit. —P.G.

86 San Juan Vineyards 2011 Riesling (Yakima Valley). This is a pleasant, ripe and roundly fruity Riesling. Its medium sweet with a slightly sugary mouthfeel, bearing flavors that are upfront and well balanced acidity. —P.G.

85 Chateau Ste. Michelle 2011 Dry Riesling (Columbia Valley). This was a difficult vintage in Washington, and the style of this dry Riesling seems to have changed significantly, perhaps as a result. The grapefruit flavors have no body or texture; it’s light, certainly refreshing, but rather simple. —P.G.

85 Vin du Lac 2011 Les Amis Riesling (Columbia Valley). Though labeled Riesling, it’s blended with 16% Muscat and 9% Gewürztraminer. The residual sugar is listed as 2%, but rather than sweetness, the wine carries a sour lemon snap and a palate of tart citrus and orange soda flavors. —P.G.

85 Woodward Canyon 2011 Estate Sauvignon Blanc (Walla Walla Valley). The alcohol has dropped almost a full percentage point in 2011, but the wine has plenty of ripe, round fruit, with the emphasis on Meyer lemon, orange blossom, and pineapple. Forward and fruity, with mouth-filling sappiness, this is a wine to enjoy in the splendor of its youth. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

88 Columbia Crest Two Vines 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Washington). A fine bottle at a great price, this fresh and clean-tasting Sauvignon Blanc offers a bracing mix of tree fruit, with just a touch of sweet herb. It’s clearly varietal: no frills, just straightforward and very nicely made. Best Buy. —P.G.

88 Lullaby 2011 Blanc de Virginie Sauvignon Blanc (Columbia Valley). Named for winemaker Virginie Bourgue, this entirely stainless-steel-fermented Sauvignon Blanc has a grassy, spicy edge reminiscent of Loire Valley whites. It’s also tongue-twistingly tart, a reflection of the vintage, like a lemon explosion in the mouth. In other words, this is a perfect seafood wine. —P.G.

87 Cave B 2011 Estate Sauvignon Blanc (Columbia Valley). Assertively grassy, this pungent Sauvignon Blanc also carries a fairly strong diesel scent. Call it Pouilly-Fumé in style, though as a New World wine, it has more fruit, without the bracing minerality. The finish is clean and medium in length. —P.G.

87 Chateau Ste. Michelle 2011 Horse Heaven Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc (Horse Heaven Hills). The Horse Heaven Vineyard adds a welcome touch of minerality to the plain apple fruit flavor of the wine. It is this minerality that elevates it a notch, giving it a textural and refreshing mouthfeel. —P.G.

87 Snoqualmie 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Columbia Valley). Sharply defined with fruit flavors of melon and green berry, this has real cut and drives through the palate with confidence. It’s a great food wine, neither wimpy nor too assertive, and it’s made to be chilled and set out with any white-wine-friendly food. Best Buy. —P.G.

VINHO BRANCO

88 2011 Kit’s Corner Pinot Gris (Columbia Valley). Light, dead-on ripe red fruit, with a fresh finish. —P.G.

88 Pinot Gris (Columbia Valley). A fresh, vivid, crystal-clear Pinot Gris, this offers cool cucumber and melon flavors first and foremost. It’s a refreshing addition to any summertime meal. —P.G.

87 Vin du Lac 2011 Savvy! Blanc Sauvignon Blanc (Columbia Valley). Pure Sauvignon Blanc, this is a light and fresh wine, with notes of lime, melon and a hint of bell pepper. It’s nicely rounded off with a touch of residual sugar—a perfect thirst-quencher. —P.G.

86 Chateau Ste. Michelle 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Columbia Valley). This is a pleasant-drinking wine with no distinguishing features—a Sauvignon Blanc with training wheels. It’s perfectly enjoyable and can be paired with a wide variety of poultry and seafood. —P.G.

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88 Chateau Ste. Michelle 2011 Dry Riesling (Columbia Valley). The residual sugar is listed as 2%, but rather than sweetish, this is a wine to enjoy in the splendor of its youth. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

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87 2011 Snoqualmie Sauvignon Blanc (Columbia Valley). Sharply defined with fruit flavors of melon and green berry, this has real cut and drives through the palate with confidence. It’s a great food wine, neither wimpy nor too assertive, and it’s made to be chilled and set out with any white-wine-friendly food. Best Buy. —P.G.

87 2011 Martinez & Martinez Alder Ridge Vineyard Viognier (Horse Heaven Hills). A single-vineyard wine (though not labeled as such), this is barrel-fermented in neutral French oak and bottled after about four months. Honey and toast are delicate nuances; the minerality and pure expressions of lime and kiwi fruit are at the core. This has excellent grip and medium-term aging potential. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

89 2011 Nefarious Cellars Defiance Vineyard Viognier (Lake Chelan). This is a juicy, perfect melding of citrus and light tropical fruit flavors. With impeccable balance and poise, this thrilling, entirely stainless-steel-fermented Viognier persists well onto the graceful finish. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

89 2011 Lullaby Viognier (Walla Walla Valley). Fermented and aged in neutral oak, this mixes the richness of Chardonnay with the herbaceous tang of Sauvignon Blanc—but flavors notwithstanding, it’s in fact pure Viognier. Excellent mouthfeel and structure carry the light and pretty fruit onto the finish that shows just a hint of barrel toast. —P.G.

89 2011 Cave B Estate Viognier (Columbia Valley). Young and yeasty, this seemingly off-dry Viognier rounds out in the mouth with appealing scents and flavors of lemon, lime, jasmine and honey. —P.G.

88 2011 Palouse Golden Pearl Viognier (Washington). Light honey, lemon and grapefruit flavors blend harmoniously. The wine has good length and texture in the mouth, with a tart, pleasantly tangy finish. —P.G.

88 2011 Gård Vintners Lawrence Vineyards Pinot Gris (Columbia Valley). Clean and leesy, this estate-grown Pinot Gris has a crisp mineral underpinning. Light celery and green melon flavors are balanced, showing good length and some finishing complexity. —P.G.

88 2011 Wild Goose Vineyard Pinot Gris (Lake Chelan). Though listed at a rather potent 13.8% alcohol, this can only be called delicate, with flavors reminiscent of Pinot Blanc as much as Pinot Gris. Pleasing apple and pear flavors show excellent concentration and balance, with just a faint tinge of finishing heat. —P.G.

87 2011 Vin du Lac Grisant! Pinot Gris (Columbia Valley). A tasty mix of fresh fruit flavors—including melon, peach and nectarine—this is sourced in part from Snipes Mountain’s excellent Upper
Tart and tasty, this is a vibrant, clean and fresh Viognier, loaded with flavors of citrus fruit and rind. Some tangerine and candied orange-peel highlights add zest to the midpalate. —P.G.

87 Thomas O’Neil Cellars 2011 Viognier (Yakima Valley). This sharp-edged Viognier brings peach and pineapple flavors to the fore, then some hard, drying phenolic notes bring the wine into a firm, quick resolution. —P.G.

abv: 13.9% Price: $13

86 Vin du Lac 2011 Vie! Viognier (Columbia Valley). Stylish and tart, this is a high-acid Viognier, with sharp flavors and a zippy mouthfeel. The nose hints at powdered sugar, but there is no follow-up sweetness on the palate. —P.G.

abv: 13.4% Price: $18

CHARDONNAY

93 Woodward Canyon 2011 Chardonnay (Washington). Woodward Canyon makes one of Washington’s most interesting Chardonnays, blending fruit from the old vines at Celilo in the Columbia Gorge, with estate-grown grapes from the western end of the Walla Walla Valley. In this cooler vintage, the wine remains beautifully proportionate, round and fruity, with pretty apple, pear and peach highlights. There is a light dusting of spice, and a lick of caramel on the finish. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

abv: 13.3% Price: $44

91 Dunham 2011 Shirley Mays Lewis Estate Vineyard Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). For full review see page 9.

abv: 13.3% Price: $24

90 Blacksmith 2011 Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). Fresh and dry, this unusual blend includes 13% Roussanne and 7% Orange Muscat. The Muscat brings a gentle kiss of orange to a lightly toasty wine, plus pretty fruit flavors of tangy grapefruit and sweet melon. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

abv: 13.9% Price: $18

88 Dance 2010 Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). A new effort from Long Shadows, Dance spent 15 months in French oak and shows it. Broad and smoky, it’s a rich, generous, ready-to-drink wine, with just a tiny bit of unoaked 2011 wine in the blend for added lift and freshness. —P.G.

abv: NA Price: $NA

88 Goose Ridge 2010 Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). Deep gold and richly scented with buttered toasted-nut aromas, this 100% barrel-fermented Chardonnay is a bit old-fashioned, but deliciously delectable. Superripe fruit and decent acidity elevate it above mere oak-bomb status. —P.G.

abv: 13.6% Price: $24

87 Chateau Ste. Michelle 2009 Ethos Reserve Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). Not one of the better Ethos reserves, this is a mix of buttered nut and light green-apple flavors. It feels just a little flat in the mouth, with a suggestion of beer yeast. Drink soon. —P.G.

abv: NA Price: $25

87 Columbia Crest H3 2010 Chardonnay (Horse Heaven Hills). The latest release of the H3 Chardonnay shows plenty of fruit upfront (20% was fermented in stainless steel). Firm, crisp apple and a buttery finish set this clearly in the mainstream Columbia Crest style. —P.G.

abv: 13.5% Price: $15

87 Thomas O’Neil Cellars 2010 Fahrenheit 100 Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). Textural and leesy, this refreshing Chardonnay also has a pretty, toasty nose. The mouthfeel and barrel notes compensate for the rather light, generic fruit. —P.G.

abv: 13.9% Price: $20

86 Cave B 2011 Unoaked Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). All stainless-fermented, this clean and fruity wine has pleasant flavors of light peach and pear. It’s round and forward, with balancing acidity. —P.G.

abv: 13.3% Price: $19

86 Columbia Crest Grand Estates 2010 Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). An uneasy mix of steel and butter, this may just need a bit more time to settle. At the moment, the twin elements of metal and popcorn clash and compete. For those who love the buttery style, this should prove pleasing. —P.G.

abv: 13.5% Price: $12

85 Chateau Ste. Michelle 2010 Indian Wells Chardonnay (Columbia Valley). Always a wine that shows a powerful oak influence, this new Indian Wells seems soaked in buttered popcorn flavor. The finish comes out a little bitter, with little fruit flavor to round it out. —P.G.

abv: NA Price: $18

OTHER WHITE WINES

93 Doyenne 2011 Winemaker’s Select Roussanne (Red Mountain). For the Winemaker’s Select, a small block of Ciel du Cheval Vineyard Roussanne was cropped down to two tons per acre and fermented and aged entirely in stainless steel. The results are impressive—a sensationally lively, leesy, creamy wine, with flavors of lime, melon and a hint of honey. It offers superb minerality, length and compression. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

abv: 14.1% Price: $40

81 Amavi Cellars 2011 Sémillon (Walla Walla Valley). This Sémillon is made from all Walla Walla Valley fruit, with 11% Sauvignon Blanc in the blend. It was barrel-fermented and -aged, and the time in barrel and on the lees has given the wine an extra dimension of texture. The fruit flavors mix white peach and ripe apple, with a streak of chamomile tea. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

abv: 13.9% Price: $20

91 Doyenne 2011 Roussanne (Red Mountain). Sourced exclusively from the Ciel du Cheval Vineyard, this pure Roussanne is fragrant with bright scents of apple and citrus. The fruit is set in an elegant frame of mineral-infused acids, and it stretches out on the palate into a lengthy, polished, refreshing finish. —P.G.

abv: 14% Price: $34

90 L’Ecole No. 41 2011 Chenin Blanc (Columbia Valley). L’Ecole consistently makes the best Chenin Blanc in the Northwest, if not the entire country. Done in an almost-dry Vouvray style, this engages the full range of varietal flavors. This has a scent of white flower and flavors of stone and citrus fruit, with overriding freshness and vitality that are heightened by the snappy, juicy acidity. Best Buy. —P.G.

abv: 13.5% Price: $15

87 Columbia Crest Two Vines 2011 Gewurztraminer (Washington). With just 11% alcohol and an impressive production of 20,000 cases, this will have wide appeal. It’s a flurry of pleasant, quaffable flower and peach notes. There is just enough residual sugar to give the finish a pulled taffy quality. Best Buy. —P.G.

abv: 11% Price: $8

WHITE BLENDS

92 DeLille Cellars 2011 Chaleur Estate Blanc Sauvignon Blanc-Semillon (Columbia Valley).Styled after the great white wines of Bordeaux, this is fresh and clean, with luscious mixed fruit flavors that emphasize apple and melon. A cooler vintage has produced a wine of low alcohol and real finesse, with a light dusting of toasty oak. Given its impeccable balance, it could be cellared for another 6–8 years. —P.G.

abv: 13.1% Price: $37


abv: 14.1% Price: $25

87 Columbia Crest 2010 Reserve White Blend (Columbia Valley). A Rhône-style white blend, this offers mixed stone fruit notes, with cool flavors of celery and melon. It’s clean and pleasant, though pretty light relative to similar wines from Washington. —P.G.

abv: 13.5% Price: $20

87 Gård Vintners 2011 Lawrence Vineyards Freja White (Columbia Valley). A blend of half Viognier, plus Roussanne and Pinot Gris, this workman-like white wine is firm and tart. A mix of yellow fruit and plenty of fresh acidity make it a versatile pick for a variety of white meats and pastas. —P.G.

abv: 13.6% Price: $16

87 Goose Ridge 2011 g3 (Columbia Valley). A tasty, sweet and sour blend of Chardonnay, Riesling, Viognier and Pinot Gris, this has bountiful fruit flavors of peach and pear. It’s a big, forward, generous, though ultimately simple, white wine, with more than a touch of sweetness. —P.G.

abv: 12.8% Price: $16
87 Wapato Point Cellars 2011 Harmony White (Lake Chelan). Two-thirds Pinot Gris, the rest a mix of Riesling and Gewürztraminer, this pleasant and fruity white wine can serve many purposes. It’s full bodied and fresh, with ripe, round, tangy stone fruit flavor. —PG. abv: 13.6% Price: $22

86 Stottle 2011 S3 Sauvignon Blanc-Semillon (Yakima Valley). The blend is 60% Sauvignon Blanc, but the finished wine is fairly well balanced between the two grapes. Apple and lime rind flavors dominate. It’s tangy and sharp, with a quick finish. —PG. abv: 13.6% Price: $24

SPARKLING WINES

88 Domaine Ste. Michelle NV Brut (Columbia Valley). This is a bit sweeter than the blanc de blancs, with the addition of 12% Pinot Noir to the cuvée. Nice focus, density and length. Best Buy. —PG. abv: 11.3% Price: $12

88 Domaine Ste. Michelle 2006 Luxe (Columbia Valley). This sparkler is 100% Chardonnay and is clearly the star of the Domaine Ste. Michelle lineup. Generously toasty, with the sort of finesse found in Champagne. The fruit is not as oenological as in most California bubbles, which gives it a more European mouthfeel. —PG. abv: 11% Price: $23

87 Domaine Ste. Michelle NV Blanc de Blancs (Columbia Valley). Yeasty and lemony, this has the snap and tang of citrus—notably grapefruit. This dry and bracing bubbly shows a touch of minerality as well. A nice choice to accompany fresh oysters. Best Buy. —PG. abv: 11.3% Price: $12

86 Domaine Ste. Michelle NV Extra Dry (Columbia Valley). There is little sense in using the confusing French system in which wines labeled extra dry are actually sweet—yet here it is. Seemingly twice as sweet as Domaine Ste. Michelle’s brut, this hints at tropical and stone fruits, made more in a California style than the rest of the lineup. A good choice for drinking in cocktails and mimosas. —PG. abv: 11.5% Price: $12

84 Domaine Ste. Michelle NV Brut Rosé (Columbia Valley). Renamed Brut Rosé, what used to be the blanc de noirs has slipped a notch or two. Still 100% Pinot Noir, it is austere to the extreme, lemony and quite tart. —PG. abv: 10.5% Price: $12

84 Domaine Ste. Michelle NV Brut Rosé (Columbia Valley). Renamed Brut Rosé, what used to be the blanc de noirs has slipped a notch or two. Still 100% Pinot Noir, it is austere to the extreme, lemony and quite tart. —PG. abv: 10.5% Price: $12

ROSES

90 Doyenne 2011 Rosé (Yakima Valley). Vibrant, coppery salmon in color, this lively and delightful rosé is two-thirds Grenache and one-third Mourvèdre, all stainless steel-fermented. Pretty watermelon and strawberry flavors are accented by streaks of cracker and mineral. —PG. abv: 14.1% Price: $25

89 Gárd Vintners 2011 Lawrence Vineyards Grand Klasse Rosé (Columbia Valley). Packaged in a lovely, Champagne-like bottle (but without a cage), this is very pretty, with a hint of cherry candy. The palate is round, full and forward. This is a wine to set on the table for a special occasion—but don’t wait too long. —PG. abv: 13% Price: $28

88 L’Ecole No. 41 2011 Alder Ridge Vineyard Grenache Rosé (Horse Heaven Hills). Made with 100% Grenache, this is fermented in neutral oak before being transferred to tank. It has substantial weight and spiced cherry flavor. Full bodied for a rosé, it can stand up to a variety of cured meats, pasta dishes and even salmon. —PG. abv: 14.5% Price: $20

87 Gárd Vintners 2011 Lawrence Vineyards Rosé (Columbia Valley). Rhubarb and peach pie flavors are at work in this pleasant rosé. It’s clean and refreshing, with just the right profile for that leftover holiday turkey or ham. —PG. abv: 13.8% Price: $17

86 Lullaby 2011 Rosé (Columbia Valley). This new rosé from Lullaby is Grenache-based. It’s lightly spicy and so delicate it is on the verge of disappearing. It has somewhat dilute flavors of cranberry and strawberry. —PG. abv: 13.3% Price: $22/500 ml

84 Thomas O’Neill Cellars 2011 Grenache (Yakima Valley). A light rhubarb flavor with a dash of pepper can be found here, but the mouthfeel seems flat and the wine dries out quickly. Drink up. —PG. abv: 13.4% Price: $19

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

96 Dunham 2009 XV Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley). For full review see page 3. Editors’ Choice. abv: 13.8% Price: $45

94 Corliss Estates 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley). Concentrated and wonderfully aromatic, this ages for 32 months in 75% new French oak, plus another 28 months in bottle prior to its release. Smooth as silk, it mixes berry, cherry and plum notes, with whiffs of smoke, green tea, and chocolate. Just past the stage of primary fruit flavors, it drinks beautifully, but can certainly be cellared for another decade at least. Cellar Selection. —PG. abv: 15.3% Price: $75

94 K Vintners 2009 Stoneridge Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Washington). This is pure Cabernet—tight, tannic and terroir-driven. It has a dense mix of fruit, rock, earth and herb flavors that are nicely integrated, with a full palate and fine complexity and density. A little more barrel toast would put the icing on the cake. Editors’ Choice. —PG. abv: 14.5% Price: $45

93 DeLille Cellars 2008 Grand Ciel Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain). The Grand Ciel Vineyard seems to be coming into maturity, and this shows impressive depth and complexity. Infused with flavors of rock and light herb, with hints of stem, anise, coffee and cocoa, it nonetheless remains firmly anchored in ripe black cherry and cassis. This could easily be cellared for 10–15 years. Cellar Selection. —PG. abv: 14.9% Price: $140


92 Doubleback 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla Valley). Still tasting like a very young wine, this opens with pretty fruit flavors that range from raspberry candy to dark layers of black cherry and cassis. The concentration and depth are apparent, though quite compact. The blend includes 14% Merlot and 10% Petit Verdot. Cellar Selection. —PG. abv: 14.4% Price: $89

92 Forgeron 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley). Beautifully aromatic, this purple-hued wine offers generous plum and black cherry flavors that are cloaked in mocha, with muscular, earthy tannins. It spent over two years in barrel (half new oak), and will benefit from a bit more bottle age for all of its rich flavors to fully integrate. Cellar Selection. —PG. abv: 14.4% Price: $33

92 Gramercy Cellars 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley). This is a serious and substantial Cabernet, using grapes sourced primarily from the Phinney Hill Vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills. Muscular and loaded with purple fruits and cassis, it is thickly woven into a bed of earth and herb. The wine is graceful and balanced, with exceptional depth and detail; however, it leans heavily on the herbal side of the grape. —PG. abv: 13.9% Price: $50

92 Spring Valley Vineyard 2009 Derby Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla Valley). For full review see page 8. abv: 15.2% Price: $50

91 Elevation Cellars 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley). Earth and olive streaks wrap around tight, compact fruit flavors of berry and plum. The aging in French oak—60% new—adds a light touch of spice without dominating. The tannins are clean, crisp and gently powdery. —PG. abv: 14.9% Price: $25

91 Hightower 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley). The Cabernet includes 9% Petit Verdot in the blend—a happy addition that seems to add some tannic oomph as well as a light touch of herb to the mix. Cherry, cassis, tobacco and clean earth roll through the palate, with substantial mass and length. Cellar Selection. —PG. abv: 14.2% Price: $35
**NxNW 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla Valley).** NxNW makes much less of its Walla Walla Cabernet than of its Columbia Valley bottling, though both wear the same price tag. This is the one to find—a deep, dark wine ripe with smoke and espresso. Black cherry and cassis fruit—equally dark and quite thrilling—carries the center into a rich, ripe finish. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $37

**Adams Bench 2009 Artz and Shaw Red Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain).** This two-vineyard blend of two-thirds Merlot and one-third Cabernet Sauvignon is a well-balanced mix of brambly berry flavors, with details of leaf and clean earth. Both vineyards are well established and are located in prime Cabernet country on Red Mountain. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.9%  
**Price:** $39

**Feather 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** Smooth and almost buttery, this new Cabernet from Randy Dunn has plenty of blackberry and black cherry flavors, along with silky tannins. The midpalate fades a bit, though perhaps the wine is just in need of a bit more bottle age. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.2%  
**Price:** $39

**L’Ecole No. 41 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla Valley).** Dense and complex, the winery’s Walla Walla Cabernet offers a beguiling nose of toast, coffee and baking spice, combining to create a scent of a liquid coffee cake. Vineyard sources are scattered throughout the Walla Walla Valley and play together well, with a mineral base under the tart, focused black fruit. *Cellar Selection.* —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $37

**NxNW 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** Technically proficient and showing a certain amount of style, this is a focused Cabernet with tart, tangy cassis and berry flavors. The barrel regime adds bits of toast and mocha to the finish. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $25

**Palouse 2009 Red Satin Cabernet Sauvignon (Washington).** Sourced from the Dineen Vineyard in the Rattlesnake Hills, this pure Cabernet sports generous plum and berry flavors that are lushly coated in dark notes of espresso, cacao and licorice. There is an underpinning of rock, adding structure and suggesting that this wine could be cellared for another decade. —P .G.  
**abv:** 13.9%  
**Price:** $39

**Adams Bench 2009 Mays Discovery Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Horse Heaven Hills).** This ripe Cabernet has an expressive roasted aroma, and the sweet black-cherry and kirsch liqueur flavors are wrapped in thick, toasty tannins. Earthy and smoky through the finish, and tannins ultimately turn a bit rough and drying. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.8%  
**Price:** $52

**Adams Bench 2009 Red Willow Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Yakima Valley).** For many years, Red Willow Cabernet was exclusively produced at Columbia Winery in a style that emphasized rather green, stummy flavors. This is the polar opposite. It’s roasted, earthy and tannic, with a mix of prune, fig and compote, along with a highlight of cinnamon spice. The finish turns lighter, with a leafy component typical of fruit from this vineyard. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.6%  
**Price:** $80

**Adams Bench 2009 V Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** Ripe to the point of smelling like Port, this is a wine for those who relish sweet flavors of raisins, cooked fig, and ultraripe fruit in their Cabernets. This has so much fruit it almost seems to have some sweetness. Drink this soon, while some youthful freshness remains. —P .G.  
**abv:** 15%  
**Price:** $49

**Goose Ridge 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** This pure estate-grown Cabernet shines. It’s tight and somewhat earthy, with nuanced notes of bark and stem. The fruit is medium bodied, firm and clean, showing good balance. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.3%  
**Price:** $87

**Snoqualmie 2009 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** A similar but bigger version of the Whistle Stop Red, this is made of all Cabernet, bearing rather hard tannins and flavors of coffee and clean earth. It’s a good choice to pair with grilled cuts of beef. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $89

**Stottle 2009 Elerding Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Horse Heaven Hills).** Cassis and black-cherry flavors are at the core of this pure Cabernet. It’s tight and tannic, with accents of earth and ground coffee. It’s definitely a wine that should be decanted well ahead of consuming. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.6%  
**Price:** $30

**L’Ecole No. 41 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** This pure estate-grown Cabernet is blended from a variety of widely separated vineyards. The fruit is forward, pushing black cherry and cola notes to the front of the palate, layering in a streak of milk chocolate, and finishing with smooth, supple tannins. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $32

**Northstar 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** This starts with a startling but tangy lemon-tea flavor. Cinnamon and plum notes enter the palate, which are underscored by rather chalky acidity, and finished with a coffee highlight. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.9%  
**Price:** $40

**Columbia Crest 2009 Reserve Wautoma Springs Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** This pure Cabernet starts well, with ripe, tart blackberry and cassis flavors. It fills the mouth quickly, then turns a bit chalky when the finishing acids hit. Nonetheless, an easy-drinking red for near-term consumption. —P .G.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $30

**Corvus Cellars 2009 Corbeau Sauvage Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain).** This pure Cabernet from the estate vineyard has a sweetly fruity entry. Notes of brown sugar, bacon bits and candied cherries coalesce on the midpalate, which feels round and open. Full and fruity, it offers immediate enjoyment. —P.G.  
**abv:** 14.6%  
**Price:** $39

**Cave B 2009 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** A scent of wet leaf combined with somewhat pruney fruit leads into a wine that tastes better than it smells. There is a quick-latticing core of black cherry, with light barrel flavors of milk chocolate and ground coffee. —P.G.  
**abv:** 14.1%  
**Price:** $28

**Corvus Cellars 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain).** The fruit for this wine is sourced from the former Sandhill Vineyard on Red Mountain. The nose is pretty and enticing, but the palate shows a sour note. There seems to be a separation between the first berry flavors and the tight, quick finish. Perhaps more time in bottle will meld it together. —P.G.  
**abv:** 13.6%  
**Price:** $39

**Thomas O’Neil Cellars 2009 Fahrenheit 100 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** This is a stiff, herbal wine, whose fruit is largely subsumed by flavors of herb, earth, olive and bark. There’s a subtle layer of cassis, but the overall impression is that it never got quite fully ripe. —P.G.  
**abv:** 13.6%  
**Price:** $22

**Martinez & Martinez 2009 Dominio de Martinez Cabernet Sauvignon (Horse Heaven Hills).** A light, pale raspberry flavor seems to run a mile wide and an inch deep. Seeming slightly sugary, this just doesn’t have any weight. —P.G.  
**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $45

**Michael Florentino 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain).** This unusual Cabernet, which includes small percentages of four different Blanche red grapes, doesn’t show much of anything in the way of Cabernet flavor. Stenny and tannic, with green tea on the finish, it registers high in alcohol but is green on the palate. —P.G.  
**abv:** 14.6%  
**Price:** $33

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**MALBEC**

**Charles Smith 2009 Broncho Stoneridge Vineyard Malbec (Washington).** A fascinating nose that’s threaded with mint, earth, cassis and coffee, leads into a dense and saturated palate, with complex layers of herb and fruit. This wine dances across the tongue. It’s not too big, but complex and complicated, ending on a blood-orange-tinged finish. —P.G.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $70
**BUYING GUIDE**

**90 Nefarious Cellars 2010 Defiance Vineyard Malbec (Lake Chelan).** Tangy cranberry and wild strawberry fruit, and spice and grip, highlights this clean, pure and fruit-driven Malbec. The addition of 20% Merlot may account for a sense of near-raisin ripeness. The tannins carry a hint of dried leaf. —P.G.

**95 Cave B 2010 Estate Malbec (Columbia Valley).** This is a modest red wine, with very light berry-flavored fruit, and just a hint of cherry candy. The simple flavors are ready to drink. —P.G.

**95 Spring Valley Vineyard 2009 Mule Skinner Estate Grown Malbec (Walla Walla Valley).** Well balanced and 100% varietal, this is a mix of berry, plum and cassis flavors that are annotated with notes of licorice, tar and coffee. Moderate in length and clean, this has polished tannins to keep it all in balance. —P.G.

**MERLOT**

**92 Pedestal 2009 Merlot (Columbia Valley).** For full review see page 6. Cellar Selection. abv: 14.9%  
Price: $35

**92 Elevation Cellars 2009 Merlot (Columbia Valley).** This tastes far more expensive than the price would suggest. Sourced from both Red Mountain and Royal Slope vineyards, it’s a smoke-, coffee- and licorice-laden wine, with expressive cassis and black cherry flavors at its core. It finishes with lovely, fine-grained tannins. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

**91 Chateau Ste. Michelle 2009 Ethos Reserve Merlot (Columbia Valley).** A deep, dense blackberry flavor suggests that this is cellared worthy. Notes of ground coffee, cacao and clean earth abound. The finish is long and compact, with nicely polished tannins. Cellar Selection. —P.G.

**91 Goose Ridge 2008 Merlot (Columbia Valley).** This excellent estate-grown Merlot is a standout in the current Goose Ridge lineup. A scent of violet introduces a dark and potent wine. Plum and black cherry are enhanced by streaks of rock and tar. The tannins are supple and substantial. —P.G.

**90 K Vintners 2009 Stoneridge Vineyard Merlot (Washington).** This is a very firm, tight and focused effort, with a clean cherry flavor. It is not at all like most Washington Merlots, which are often heavily influenced by new oak aging. Here is a concise, pure expression that may come across as a little monochromatic, perhaps because it seems to be somewhat shut down at the moment. Made using grapes from 10-year-old vines, it shows great promise. —P.G.

**SYRAH**

**98 Charles Smith 2009 Royal City Syrah (Washington).** For full review see page 3. Cellar Selection. abv: 15%  
Price: $140

**97 K Vintners 2009 The Hidden Syrah (Wahluke Slope).** From Northridge Vineyard grapes, this mix of four clones spent more than two years in barrel. Tremendous depth and complexity are apparent on the nose, and there is no let-down on the palate. It’s a seriously powerful wine, with muscle and magic. It opens generously into beautifully integrated layers of ripe fruit, confection, candied rind, cacao and a finishing touch of minerality. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

**95 Nefarious Cellars 2010 Rocky Mother Vineyard Syrah (Columbia Valley).** For full review see page 4. Cellar Selection. abv: 14.6%  
Price: $45

**94 Betz Family 2010 La Côte Patriarche Syrah (Yakima Valley).** This is made from fruit sourced from the oldest block of Syrah in Washington, which was planted in 1986. The nose expresses complex varietal character, with a mix of blue and purple berry, a dusting of earth and accents of cinnamon and incense. Subtle and expressive, this is the best vintage to date for the Patriarche. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

**94 Gramercy Cellars 2010 Syrah (Walla Walla Valley).** This classy Syrah opens with a note of pretty funkiness, wrapped around stiff, tight, rather herbal flavors. The berry flavor is ripe but in no way jammy. Here the emphasis is on nuance, earthiness and herbal details. Cellar Selection. —P.G.

**94 K Vintners 2009 Morrison Lane Syrah (Walla Walla Valley).** Always a classic Walla Walla Syrah, this is made from fruit sourced from the oldest Syrah vineyard in the valley. It’s a supple, sexy, smoky, sappy wine, both rich and expressive in this very ripe vintage. It’s done in an open-vidal-enjoy-now style, but it can age as well, and it will develop more and more nuances as it does. Cellar Selection. —P.G.

**94 K Vintners 2009 The Beautiful Syrah (Walla Walla Valley).** Co-fermented with 3% Viognier, this has a nice peppery lift. The fruit flavors seem less forward, with the herbal components much more front and center. It’s made from a clone specific to the Cougar Hill Vineyard, showing cool climate flavors with subtle grace. Given a full 24 hours of breathing time, it opens further into a dazzling, rich mix of cherry and cassis that’s soaked in an herbal broth. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

**93 Betz Family 2010 La Côte Rousse Syrah (Red Mountain).** Once again, this cuvée blends grapes drawn equally from the Ciel du Cheval and Ranch at the End of the Road vineyards on Red
Mountain. Imposing minerality underscores a tight, raspberry-flavored wine that seems like it’s soaked in liquid rock. A teasing barrel note adds threads of coffee liqueur and dark chocolate to the finish. —P.G.

abv: 14.4%
Price: $55

K Vintners 2009 Cougar Hills Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). Broad and earthy, with a dash of funk and a peppery lift, this grips the tongue and power. It’s poised and tense, as if balanced on the edge of a precipice, with the fruit, herb, roasted earth and coffee notes all tumbling around in glorious profusion. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

abv: 14.5%
Price: $45

K Vintners 2009 Pheasant Vineyard Syrah (Wahluke Slope). This opens with beautiful dark fruit that’s thick and voluptuous, tasting of black cherry and cassis, with excellent depth and intensity. It’s sleek and supple, yet at the same time deep and polished, with impressive minerality and a note of granite-like rock. Cellar Selection. —P.G.

abv: 15%
Price: $35

Amavi Cellars 2010 Les Collines Vineyard Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). This is pure single-vineyard Syrah, dark and tasting of cassis and blackberry, with a slightly briny, oyster-shell undertow. As it breathes, it displays a cured meat flavor, with a lively, citrusy finish accentuated by espresso. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

abv: 14.3%
Price: $34

Doyenne 2009 Signature Syrah (Yakima Valley). This opens with deep, dense dark-fruit goodness. It’s a massive wine that bursts with blackberry, black cherry and cassis. After that opening explosion of ripe fruit, it seems to float through the mouth, like riding in a big-finned Cadillac from the 1950s. Consume this one within 2–5 years. —P.G.

abv: 15.2%
Price: $40

K Vintners 2009 Milbrandt Syrah (Wahluke Slope). This is wonderfully aromatic and forward, with lush fruit-pie flavors of blackberry and black cherry. There are graceful notes sprinkled generously throughout, hinting at peppery herb and anise. At once smooth and supple, long and generous, this is drinking exceptionally well. Editors’ Choice. —P.G.

abv: 15%
Price: $30

Sequel 2009 Syrah (Columbia Valley). For full review see page 8.

abv: 14.8%
Price: $50

K Vintners 2009 Sundance Vineyard The Deal Syrah (Wahluke Slope). Here the aromas carry not only sweet, ripe fruit, but also a suggestion of earth and a bit of meaty funk. The flavors are front-loaded, open and complex, holding through the lingering finish. It seems a little closed at first, but it just needs a bit of extra breathing time. —P.G.

abv: 15.5%
Price: $35

Nefarious Cellars 2010 Defiance Vineyard Syrah (Lake Chelan). Wonderful purity is on display in this mineral-driven, tart, racy and expressive Syrah from the estate vineyard. The bright and tangy berry flavors may strike some palates as a bit on the sour side, but there is more than enough ripeness here for most. This is succulent and classy. —P.G.

abv: 14.2%
Price: $30

Amavi Cellars 2010 Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). Though the wine saw less than 10% new oak, it carries a rich, smoky note of espresso from first whiff to last swallow. It’s dusty and dense, with fragrances of baking spice and incense. The flavors bring accents of citrus rind, orange peel and white pepper, showing lovely balance and varietal strength throughout. —P.G.

abv: 14.5%
Price: $29

Betz Family 2010 La Serene Syrah (Yakima Valley). This is a difficult wine to analyze: Even after some hours of breathing time, it seems resolutely shuttered, tart and actually a bit on the thin side. Given the track record of both the producer and the vineyard, it was unexpected. Another taste on the second day showed promise. With time, the score could improve. —P.G.

abv: 14.5%
Price: $55

NwNw 2009 Les Collines Block 12 Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). Sourced entirely from Walla Walla’s Les Collines Vineyard, this lovely Syrah features pretty strawberry and cherry flavors that are broadly displayed with a rich vein of chocolate. It’s forward and flavorful, drinking quite nicely already, but with the stuffing to cellar for a few more years. —P.G.

abv: 14.5%
Price: $40

Palouse 2009 Aah Syrah (Washington). Very dark in both color and flavor, this single-vineyard Syrah is loaded with smoke, earth, licorice, espresso and cocoa notes. There is enough tight, tangy black fruit to create balance in the focused midpalate. A lick of citrus adds lift to the finish. —P.G.

abv: 13.9%
Price: $36

NwNw 2009 Syrah (Columbia Valley). Sourced from Les Collines Vineyard in Walla Walla and Wahluca Benches Vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills, this engaging Syrah features firm, ripe fruit, brown spice and a strong streak of cola. It’s drinkable quite well and is fully integrated, so enjoy it soon rather than cellaring it for later. —P.G.

abv: 14.5%
Price: $30

Spring Valley Vineyard 2009 Nina Lee Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). A significant expansion in the case production this wine suggests that fruit from newly planted vineyards is now in the mix. This is a pure expression of pretty boysenberry with a red licorice highlight. A firm foundation of juicy acidity keeps it lively and fresh. —P.G.

abv: 15%
Price: $50

Forgeron 2009 Syrah (Columbia Valley). Lovely scents of violet and black fruit open this dark, sappy Syrah. The mouthfeel is sleek and citrusy, with sharp acidity and a finish amplified by barrel-influenced flavors of coffee and licorice. Give this some extra decanting time and it will open up further. —P.G.

abv: 14.5%
Price: $30

L’Ecole No. 41 2009 Syrah (Columbia Valley). Solid and varietally correct, this includes 19% Grenache in the blend. Berry and bright spiciness are further accentuated by streaks of coffee and mocha. The style is smooth, accessible and seamless. —P.G.

abv: 15%
Price: $25

Stottle 2009 Eldering Vineyard Syrah (Horse Heaven Hills). The 2009 Syrah, like its companion reds, needs plenty of breathing time to shed its hard shell of tannins and barrel flavors. Coffee and smoke are the aromas and flavors first noticed. Slowly the fruit emerges, offering pretty boysenberry that has a tangy snap. —P.G.

abv: 14.9%
Price: $28

Michael Florentino 2009 Syrah (Columbia Valley). The best of the 2009 reds from this producer, the Syrah has sappy red-fruit flavors, with underpinnings of licorice and espresso. The tannins remain hard and unyielding, so give it a good decanting. —P.G.

abv: 15.4%
Price: $36

Wapato Point Cellars 2008 Cougar Ridge Reserve Syrah (Lake Chelan). This is a strong wine, dark and oaky, with rich flavors of licorice, toffee and espresso. The fruit is washed in Bourbon barrel flavor. It’s impressively rich, but a bit overpowering. —P.G.

abv: 13.8%
Price: $28

Wapato Point Cellars 2008 Red Delicious Syrah (Lake Chelan). Labeled as “Red Table Wine,” this is almost pure Syrah, and tastes quite a bit like the winery’s reserve. Raisiny and tannic, it has strong flavors of chocolate and coffee syrup, with extra ripe, almost pruney fruit. —P.G.

abv: 13.8%
Price: $26

Murray 2010 Syrah (Red Mountain). The label—a grimacing winery dog—is irresistible. The wine is a bit sharp, with a green edge to the tannins and a strong streak of vanilla, perhaps from some sort of oak treatment. —P.G.

abv: 14.4%
Price: $20

Cove B 2010 Estate Syrah (Columbia Valley). This wine seems barely ripe, with thin, herbal, almost vegetal flavors and a sour streak. The barrel aging may have contributed some suggestions of vanilla and licorice. —P.G.

abv: 14.1%
Price: $25

ZINFANDEL/PRIMITIVO

Forgeron 2010 Zinfandel (Columbia Valley). Zinfandel has been a Forgeron specialty for the past decade. Done in a ripe, though not too Porty style, it’s more like a Dry Creek wine. Flavors of red and blue berries are annotated with a note of sweet grain, giving it a California twist, with Washington verve and acidity. —P.G.

abv: 14.8%
Price: $30

Forgeron 2009 Stonetree Vineyards Primitivo (Wahluke Slope). American and

Price: $25
Hungarian oak barrels were used, adding a rustic, powerful base to this pure Primitivo. Think Zinfandel crossed with Lemberger and you’re in the ballpark of its style. Its raw, big-boned flavors of fruit and barrel are ready for a juicy steak. —P.G.

**RED BLENDS**

**95** Charles Smith 2009 King Coal Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah (Washington). King Coal is 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Syrah from the Stoneridge Vineyard. Silky and seamless on entry, it pushes into a wine of power and punch. The fruit is complex and complicated, a mix of berry and cherry, with tart, tangy acid. While the wine is still primary, it has superb concentration and length, and it’s beautifully structured for aging. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

* abv: 15%  
* Price: $100

**95** K Vintners 2009 The Creator Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). This is co-fermented Old Stones Vineyard and Cailloux Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (60%) and Syrah (40%), showing the funk of the terroir and less of the varietal character of the fruit. It’s flavorful and textural, with earth, anise and smoke notes, plus a mineral-driven wet-stone base and exceptional length. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.5%  
* Price: $55

**95** DeLille Cellars 2009 Chaleur Estate Red Wine (Red Mountain). Perfect balance is evident in this tightly wound, refined and smooth-drinking Bordeaux-style blend. Made using two-thirds Cabernet Sauvignon, this is fragrant, stylish and polished, with dark fruit flavors that are dotted with notes of spring herb and black olive. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.9%  
* Price: $75

**92** DeLille Cellars 2009 Harrison Hill Red Wine (Snipes Mountain District). Marvelous scents of violet and crushed rock set this wine apart from the rest of the DeLille releases. Intensely fruity, with flavors of ripe cherry and cherry pit, it layers toasted coconut and barrel spice notes on the powerful finish. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.8%  
* Price: $75

**94** Gramercy Cellars 2010 The Third Man (Columbia Valley). Comprised of Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre, this is sharp upon entry, with snap and sizzle. It’s powered with tangy berry, pomegranate and sour cherry flavors, plus dashes of pepper and rock. It’s a complex, compelling and potentially age-worthy. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.7%  
* Price: $50

**94** K Vintners 2009 En Cerise Ovide Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). This will be the last Ovide from En Cerise grapes. It’s an explosion of cherry and milk chocolate flavors, remaining firm with expressive highlights of olive, earth and herb. It is a two-thirds Cabernet and one-third Syrah, a perfect melding of the two grapes. Arguably, one gets better aromatics than Charles Smith, and the wine flavors deliver on their initial promise. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.5%  
* Price: $65

**94** K Vintners 2009 En Chamberlin Roma Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah (Walla Walla Valley). A blend of 62% Cabernet Sauvignon and 38% Syrah, this has strong Cabernet character, with firm tannins and a precisely defined herbal note. Some good funk is present and proportionate, but ultimately it is the wild, brambly cherry flavor that shines through to a compelling finish. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.5%  
* Price: $55

**93** Pamplin 2009 Proprietary Red (Columbia Valley). Pamplin’s admirable focus on its pair of Bordeaux-style blends is rather rare. This is more expensive of the two, and a fine, fat, forward bottling in this warm vintage. It’s three-quarters Cabernet Sauvignon, with lovely fruit that’s compact upon opening, fleshing out with air time. Clean, dense and focused, it is bright with berry and cassis flavors, plus subtle barrel notes. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.9%  
* Price: $55


* abv: 16%  
* Price: $79

**92** Betz Family 2010 Bésoleil (Columbia Valley). Bésoliel gains complexity with each vintage. Grenache makes up the bulk of the blend, plus 18% Mourvèdre, 11% Cinsault and 6% Syrah. Deliciously spicy with cranberry, raspberry and other red fruit flavors, this tightly wound wine will reward decanting. The minerality and supple tannins suggest that it may cellared as well. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.6%  
* Price: $45

**92** Corliss Estates 2007 Red Blend (Columbia Valley). Smooth and textured, this is a supple, lightly earthy and aromatic Bordeaux-style blend. The principal components are Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot, with smaller amounts of Malbec and Petit Verdot. One gets the feeling that the winery was still finding its way during production; this was made by a winemaker no longer at Corliss. Berry, plum, fig, dried herb and cedar are all in the mix—it’s more gentle than generous. *Cellar Selection.* —P.G.

* abv: 15.3%  
* Price: $65

**92** Doyenne 2009 Aix (Red Mountain). A blend of 58% Syrah, 38% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Mourvèdre, this combines power with a big yumm factor. Potent and rich, with woody, spicy highlights, the juicy fruit flavors favor blackberry and black cherry. A whiff of smoke runs through the finish. *Editors’ Choice.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.9%  
* Price: $37

**92** Elevation Cellars 2008 Monolith (Columbia Valley). Monolith is a Bordeaux-style blend—mostly Cabernet Sauvignon—that’s dark, smooth and smoky. Citrus scents adorn the deep fruit, which resolves in earthy, substantial tannins. The wine spent 22 months in 100% new French oak, yet the barrel notes seem muted, and the intense fruit is certainly up to the challenge. *Editors’ Choice.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.9%  
* Price: $34

**92** Hightower 2008 Red (Red Mountain). This is a three-grape Bordeaux-style blend that is three-fifths Cabernet Sauvignon and one-fifth each Merlot and Petit Verdot. It has tremendous flavor appeal, featuring a lush mix of red and black fruit—both berry and plum—with generous barrel flavors of mocha and espresso. It gains mass and breadth as it breathes. *Editors’ Choice.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.2%  
* Price: $50

**92** Nefarious Cellars 2010 Rx-3 Red Wine (Columbia Valley). “Blonde times three” seems to be the code name for this classy blend of Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah. It takes the best from each grape, creating a rich, pure, high-acid wine with a zingy berry flavor, plus a mineral underpinning and earthy, coffee-soaked tannins. *Editors’ Choice.* —P.G.

* abv: 14.4%  
* Price: $30


* abv: 14.5%  
* Price: $50

**91** DeLille Cellars 2009 D2 (Columbia Valley). Highlighted by forward, pretty, cherry-candy flavor, this is an appealing vintage for D2—DeLille’s second-label Bordeaux-style blend. Accented with integrated notes of herb, nougat and milk chocolate, this finishes with a streak of minerality that provides a bit of gravitas. —P.G.

* abv: 14.7%  
* Price: $40

**91** Doyenne 2010 Métier (Yakima Valley). This blend consists of 40% Mourvèdre, 40% Grenache and 20% Syrah, creating a strong base that’s loaded with steely mineral and graphite notes, plus tart fruit flavors of cranberry and strawberry. A hint of strawberry leaf brings in an herbal accent. —P.G.

* abv: 14.8%  
* Price: $45

**91** Elevation Cellars 2009 Jammin’ Red (Columbia Valley). Consulting winemaker Matthew Laro joins his way around a blend, and this fine Cabernet-Merlot mix shines with focused, dark fruit flavors. It’s threaded with streaks of clove, black...
olive and anise, with real muscle and tannic heft. *Editors’ Choice.* —P.G.

**Spring Valley Vineyard 2009 Frederick Estate Grown Red Wine (Walla Walla Valley).** For full review see page 11.

**Corvus Cellars 2009 Syrah-Petite Sirah (Red Mountain).** The best wine in the current Corvus lineup, this opens with a fresh boysenberry scent and flavor, leading to a darker core of cassis and black cherry. Whiffs of smoke and a streak of graphite create added interest through the midpalate. —P.G.

**Shining Hill 2009 Red Wine (Columbia Valley).** This is the second label for Col Solare, the Ste. Michelle-Antinori collaboration on Red Mountain. Except for a splash of Syrah, it’s a Bordeaux-style blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and three other Bordeaux grapes, mostly sourced from the recently planted estate vineyard on Red Mountain. Mixed black-fruit flavors come dusted with baking spice, plus notes of olive, cedar and coffee. —P.G.

**K Vintners 2009 En Chamberlin El Jefe Tempranillo-Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla Valley).** In this vintage, the blend is 66% Tempranillo and 34% Cabernet Sauvignon. The earthy funk is well integrated with black cherry and hints of stem and bark. Still tight and herbal, this is a well-balanced, well-crafted wine, with medium body and length. —P.G.

**Nefarious Cellars 2010 The Spinner (Columbia Valley).** Made from three-quarters Merlot and one-eighth each Cabernet Sauvignon and Mourvèdre, this new version of The Spinner seems to be surfacing a wave of spicy berry that’s about to smash into a wall of chocolate. But it never crashes, instead it just sails on through a gorgeous midpalate into a lingering finish that features caramel and mocha highlights. —P.G.

**Golden Ridge 2009 Estate Red (Walla Walla Valley).** Roughly three-fifths Merlot and two-fifths Cabernet, this well-made red has thick, supple, generous fruit. It seems to have aged in a hefty amount of new oak, but it balances the fruit and spice well. Look for plum, black cherry, smoke and toast notes on the full, round palate. —P.G.

**Golden Ridge 2009 Canopy Vineyard (Horse Heaven Hills).** Fruity, spicy and brightly acidic, the Sol Duc represents the estate’s best barrels. It’s a generous wine, full-bodied and lush, with cherry and cassis flavors. Light touches of leaf and herb come through as well. —P.G.

**Goose Ridge 2009 Canopy Vineyard (Horse Heaven Hills).** The blend is all over the map, with portions of Merlot, Syrah, Cabernet, Petit Verdot and Malbec. There’s a whiff of leather and a core of sweet plum, with lean, slightly tannic tannins. —P.G.

**Martinez & Martinez 2008 César Red (Columbia Valley).** Three-quarters Cabernet Sauvignon, this blend also has Sangiovese, Syrah and Merlot. The result is a pleasant, unfocused red wine, with candied flavors of berry and cherry, plus some tannic bite. Drink up. —P.G.

**Michael Fiorentino 2009 Mélange Noir (Columbia Valley).** A Rhône-inspired mélange, this mixes Syrah, Counoise, Mourvèdre and Grenache. Nothing dominates or stands out; it’s a monolithic Bordeaux-style blend, featuring mostly Cabernet and Merlot. The rich entry features berry, chocolate and espresso, with a round midpalate and polished tannins. A hint of tar runs through the finish. —P.G.
of red fruit flavor, featuring a streak of dark chocolate and a hint of earth. —P.G.

**abv:** 14.9%  **Price:** $20

### OTHER RED WINES

#### Columbia Valley

88 **Capstone Cellars 2009 Boushey Vineyard Banere (Yakima Valley).** This Bordeaux-style blend enters with a sharp, tannic, rough-hewn mouthfeel. The fruit may be ripe enough, but the hot finish makes it difficult to taste. —P.G.

**abv:** 13.9%  **Price:** $27

#### MICHIGAN

86 **Chateau Chantal 2010 Proprietor’s Reserve Pinot Gris (Old Mission Peninsula).** Bright and lifted on the nose, this bears aromas of lemon peel, green apple and white peach, with accents of honeyed nut and wilted rose. The flavors mirror the aromas, showing very good concentration and lively acidity. The medium-long finish is zesty, warm and fresh. —A.H.

**abv:** 14.6%  **Price:** $20

#### MISSOURI

86 **Montelle 2010 Dry Vignoles (Missouri).** A note of freshly squeezed lime juice is quite effusive on the nose, with understated hints of white strawberry and sugar cane adding interest. Citrus acids keep the medium-bodied palate feeling racy and refreshing, with a note of passion fruit that surfaces on the midpalate. —A.H.

**abv:** 12%  **Price:** $17

#### NEW ENGLAND

85 **Running Brook 2010 Reserve Chardonnay (Southeastern New England).** Deep and intense on the nose, this has enticing aromas of toasted bread, honeysuckle and sautéed apples, drizzled with dark clover honey. A slight char-like bitterness mars the palate, and the wine’s unctuous body is more salient than its flavors are intense. —A.H.

**abv:** 12%  **Price:** $19

84 **Running Brook 2010 Reserve Pinot Gris (Southeastern New England).** Subtle notes of peanut shell, brioche, wet wool and apple juice form the nose, leading to a palate that veers toward the light side, tasting a bit washed out. —A.H.

**abv:** 12%  **Price:** $17

### OTHER U.S.

85 **Running Brook 2010 Vidal Blanc (Southeastern New England).** This smells like a toasted peanut butter sandwich that’s layered with oxidized apples and baked pineapple. The palate is full and unctuous, with mild acids adding slight lift. It finishes with bright, apple-like acidity and a warm, nutty flavor. —A.H.

**abv:** 12%  **Price:** $15

84 **Les Bourgeois 2010 Collector’s Series Vidal Blanc (Missouri).** A slinky scent appears on the nose at first, but it eventually blows off
to reveal woody aromas of white orchard fruit, Meyer lemon and nut. This is a mildly concentrated wine with bright acids, and despite its relatively low alcohol, it manages to have some flesh. —A.H.

**abv:** 11.7%  
**Price:** $25

84 Les Bourgeois NV Riverboat Sweet White Wine (Missouri). For full review see page 14. 
**Best Buy.**  
**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $7

83 Les Bourgeois 2010 Chardonnel (Missouri). Tropical scents of kiwi and Catawba are strung together with a touch of caramel syrup and a hint of sulfur. The palate has a pudgy feel upon entrance, with mild flavor concentration. As the wine sits in the glass, the acidity flattens out and a cheezy flavor surfaces. —A.H.

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $11

**TEXAS**

82 Messina Hof 2010 Tribute to Innocence Naturally Sweet Moscato (Texas). Foggy aromas of lychee, rose and grapefruit pith lead onto the palate, which tastes predominately of bitter ruby grapefruit—a bitterness that seems to cramp the tongue. Acidity kicks in on the finish, leaving the taste buds watering. —A.H.

**abv:** 12%  
**Price:** $11

**ARGENTINA**

**CHARDONNAY**

86 Doña Paula 2011 Estate Chardonnay (Uco Valley). Pineapple and dusty apple aromas set up a fruity, melony wine, with thick, round flavors of honeydew and sweet apple. Banana and walnut oil notes appear on the finish. Tasted twice; this note reflects the better wine of the two. Trinchero Family Estates. —M.S.

**abv:** 14.1%  
**Price:** $16

84 Zuccardi 2011 Serie A Chardonnay-Viognier (Mendoza). This scents of citrus peel and lime, with a plump, oily and round palate that features orange and banana flavors. A blend of 75% Chardonnay and 25% Viogner, it turns melony on the short finish. Winesellers Ltd. —M.S.

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

82 Cruz Alta 2011 Reserve Chardonnay (Mendoza). This wine’s finest quality is its white flower fragrance. It feels thick like fruit juice, with plucking lemon-lime, pineapple and banana flavors. Fruity but cloying on the finish. Clock Tower Imports. —M.S.

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

82 Domaine Jean Bousquet 2011 Made with Organic Grapes Reserve Chardonnay ( Tupungato). Oily and salinic in aroma, this wine smells like an oyster shell. It feels plump and soft, without much acidity. Honey, banana and mealy flavors rest on the finish of this organic Chardonnay. Domaine Jean Bousquet. —M.S.

**abv:** 13.5%  
**Price:** $18

80 Ruca Malen 2011 Reserva Chardonnay (Mendoza). This wine isn’t flawed, but it has a faded waxy banana quality. It tastes, smells and feels creamy and confectioned. Opici Wines. —M.S.

**abv:** 13.7%  
**Price:** $18

**TORRONTÉS**

85 San Huberto 2011 Torrontés (Argentina). For full review see page 14. 
**Best Buy.**  
**abv:** 13%  
**Price:** $9

83 Andeluna 2011 1300 Torrontés (Uco Valley). Tropical-smelling and typically melony for the variety, this features citrusy acidity that props up melon, pear and papaya flavors. Bitterness bursts through on the finish, as is often the case with Torrontés. San Francisco Wine Exchange. —M.S.

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

81 Tercos 2011 Torrontés (Salta). A mild lychee aroma vies with a scent of turpentine on the lean nose. It feels crisp but hollow, with papaya and bland banana flavors in front of a vanilla-tinged finish. Global Vineyard Importers. —M.S.

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

**CABERNET SAUVIGNON**

91 Casarena 2009 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). This is a rich, plush Cabernet, with a sense of elegance. It smells like prune, blackberry, coffee and toast. The concentrated palate boasts prune, olive, coffee and dark berry flavors. Drink or hold for a few years. Southern Starz, Inc. —M.S.

**abv:** 14.85%  
**Price:** $20

90 Bodega Catena Zapata 2009 Catena Alta Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). Thick and chewy, this Cabernet is all Argentine in its weight and character. It feels full, with candied, creamy dark-fruit flavors that are backed by caramal and spice notes. The wine is hugely flavorful and expansive on the finish, showing brown-sugar sweetness and toast with warmth. Drink now–2017. Winebow. —M.S.

**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $55

90 Siesta Wines 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). This firm and dark Cabernet features notes of charcoal, smoke and plenty of berry on the bouquet. Clammy tannins and stalky acidity make for a lively, structured palate, with a saturated berry flavor and a vanilla shading. It is ripe and modern, providing proof that Argentina can make excellent Cabernet in addition to Malbec. Vineyard Brands. —M.S.

**abv:** 13.8%  
**Price:** $25

90 Zuccardi 2010 Q Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). For full review see page 11. 
**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $23

89 Finca Los Maza 2004 FLM Gran Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). Pencil lead and rubbery, mature berry aromas open this wine. The palate is driven by energetic, pounding tannins and flavors of black cherry and tomato, which become more prominent as the tannins and acid rebound. This is an indication of how Argentine Cabernet Sauvignon ages. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —M.S.

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

89 Lamadriz 2010 Single Vineyard Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Agrelo). Fiery at first, this also has mint and toast notes to the otherwise black-fruit-scented nose. It feels tannic and drawing, but strong boned. Flavors of roasted black fruit are bolstered by olive, chocolate and spicy toast accents. Finishes savory and firm. Vino Del Sol. —M.S.

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

88 Tilia 2011 Sustainably Farmed Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). This brand has done well in the past few years with its value-priced Cabernet. This one performs in upstanding fashion, with clean plum, berry and cassis aromas, turning to blackberry and toast flavors on the firm palate. Dark, spicy and a touch warm on the finish. Winebow. Best Buy. —M.S.

**abv:** NA  
**Price:** $10

87 Bodega Catena Zapata 2010 High Mountain Vines Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). This is a little soft and fleshy at moments, while at other times the nose is intense and sturdy. Full and tannic, this has foresty, slightly stewed berry flavors that heat up and turn chunky and toasty on the finish. Winebow. —M.S.

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

87 Ruca Malen 2009 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). Mossy and inky in smell, this has a firm palate. Flavors of berry, herb and chocolate set up a dry finish, with structure and background complexities. Spicy and herbal, it has a Chilean sort of character. Opici Wines. —M.S.

**abv:** 13.9%  
**Price:** $18

87 Trivento 2011 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). This full and ripe Cabernet has berry and black cherry aromas. Tannic, narrow and tough on the tongue, it is blasting with flavors of blackberry, mint and black coffee. It’s fruit flavor is met with
plenty of kick and grab. Can age for a year. Banfi Vintners. **Best Buy.** —M.S.

87 Valencia Bianchi 2011 Elsa Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza). Pointed and narrow at first, this perks up with black fruit and cherry aromas that set the stage for a full-bodied palate with black cherry, cassis and pepper-like heat. A toasty wine with plenty of gas in the tank. Quintessential Wines. **Best Buy.** —M.S.  
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $10

85 Doña Paula 2010 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Luján de Cuyo). Grapey berry aromas come with sweet, reedy notes and a brandied cherry component. It feels condensed but lively, with a mix of sweet, almost tropical flavors that hint at pineapple, wild berry and herb. Tasted twice; this score and note reflects both tastings. Trinchero Family Estates. —M.S.  
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $16

**MALBEC**

93 Zuccardi 2008 Aluvional (La Consulta). For full review see page 6.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $80

92 Bodega Norton 2010 Reserva Malbec (Mendoza). Opaque purple and thick in the glass, this wine has inky, supercharged aromas of ripe blackberry and spice. It feels amped up but balanced, with more intensity and clarity than what most other $18 reds offer. The flavors of wild berry, mild herb and chocolate finish in a rich, toasty wrapping. T.G.I.C. Importers. **Editors’ Choice.** —M.S.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $18

92 Kaiken 2010 Ultra Malbec (Luján de Cuyo). This is opaque, offering a lush collection of black fruit aromas on what amounts to a deep, dense bouquet. Layered and displaying excellent size and texture, it has saturated, meaty black-fruit flavors along with toasty, integrated oak. A powerhouse Malbec and maybe the best Ultra to date. T.G.I.C. Importers. —M.S.  
abv: 15%  
Price: $20

91 Trapiche 2010 Broquel Malbec (Mendoza). For full review see page 12. **Best Buy.**  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $11

90 Bodega Catena Zapata 2010 High Mountain Vineyards Malbec (Mendoza). There’s plenty of size, sweetness and fruit on the nose. It feels rich and ripe, with an exemplary weight-to-acid ratio, and it tastes juicy, fruity and friendly, with notes of black licorice and dark chocolate on the finish. A wine that properly blends Malbec’s sweet and sultry sides. Winebow. —M.S.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $24

90 Lamadrid 2008 Matilde Single Vineyard Malbec (Agrelo). Like the winery’s Gran Reserva ’05, this is a saturated bomber that rides along the edge of overripeness. Aromas of baked berry, cassis, vanilla and coconut are rich and oaky. It feels tannic, with a beam of shrill acidity that propels up flavors that otherwise might seem raisiny or pruney. Chocolate and wood resin tones pile up on the finish. Vino Del Sol. —M.S.  
abv: 14.9%  
Price: $80

89 Pascual Toso 2010 Reserve Barrancas Vineyards Malbec (Mendoza). Intense on the nose, this has spice, leather and ripe berry aromas. It feels clean, plummy, juicy and bright, with lifted red and black fruit flavors. Showing chewy tannins and additional juiciness on the finish, it’s very nice and delivers the goods. T.G.I.C. Importers. —M.S.  
abv: 14%  
Price: $20

88 Domaine Jean Bousquet 2010 Grande Reserve Malbec ( Tupungato). Exotic aromas of wild berries, cumin and other Middle Eastern spices are interesting and inviting. This feels thick and chewy, bordering on syrupy, with stewed plum and brown sugar flavors. It hits with some burn and heat on the bullish finish. Domaine Jean Bousquet. —M.S.  
abv: 15.5%  
Price: $25

87 Pascual Toso 2011 Estate Bottled Malbec (Mendoza). This floral and candied upfront, with a red licorice note. It feels full and freshy; with hints of red berry and cassis, with not too much oak on the palate. Ripe, basic, clean and sweet as a whole. T.G.I.C. Importers. **Best Buy.** —M.S.  
abv: NA  
Price: $12

87 Valentino Bianchi 2011 Elsa Malbec (Mendoza). This has fresh berry and flower aromas that lead to a healthy-feeling palate, which is full of cherry, boysenberry and blackberry flavors. Mildly toasty and chocolaty on the finish. Quintessential Wines. **Best Buy.** —M.S.  
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $10

86 Cielo y Tierra 2008 Celador Malbec (Mendoza). Reedy and minty in smell, this has a green aroma that shares the stage with cassis and plum notes. It feels gritty and choppy, with rustic flavors of burnt leaf, roasted berry and herb. The finish is short on flavor and high on heat. The Sorting Table. —M.S.  
abv: 14%  
Price: $22

86 Siesta Wines 2010 Malbec (Mendoza). Earthy and chunky from the start, this features heavy, granular aromas of blueberry and blackberry. It is huge on the palate but shows little structure or framework to support the heavy berry flavors. Thus, the wine falls flat while tasting sweet and feeling fleshy. Vineyard Brands. —M.S.  
abv: 13.8%  
Price: $25

86 Viña Maipú 2011 Alta Max Malbec (Mendoza). For full review see page 13. **Best Buy.**  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $11

85 Doña Paula 2010 Estate Malbec (Uco Valley). Grapey and inky on the nose, this feels saturated and a bit hot on the palate, with a candied blueberry flavor leading to a grapey finish. Tasted twice, months apart, with similar findings; this score reflects both tastings. Trinchero Family Estates. —M.S.  
abv: 14.1%  
Price: $16

85 Portillo 2011 Estate Bottled Malbec (Valle de Uco). A touch foxy and reduced on the nose, with jumpy berry aromas, this feels edgy and shows a grating tannic bite. The wine’s plum, herb and candied berry flavors are solid, finishing with a dose of blueberry. Palm Bay International. —M.S.  
abv: 14%  
Price: $11

84 Enrique Foster 2011 Ique Malbec (Mendoza). A little murky and muddled on the nose, this has rubbery tannins and candied, foxtasting berry flavors. Nothing harsh or sour here, but it is tannic; at best, it’s sweet and simple stuff. Dreyfus, Ashly & Co. —M.S.  
abv: 14%  
Price: $11

83 Finca 8 2010 Malbec (Mendoza). This has a saturated purple color, with aromas that are green, inky and grassy. Supertannic and drawing in feel, it has black fruit and chocolate flavors that come across pushy, sweet and hot. It’s as bold as they come, but it lacks elegance and harmony. Paul Hobbs Wines. —M.S.  
abv: 14.4%  
Price: $29

82 Lagarde 2010 DOC Malbec (Luján de Cuyo). Fiery, hard and closed on the nose, this has a chemical hint. It feels acidic and sappy, with a weird mix of flavors that run from fish and fake butter to earthy, leathery raspberry. Stally on the finish. Dangerous Wine Group. —M.S.  
abv: 14.3%  
Price: $29

**MERLOT**

85 Zolo 2011 Merlot (Mendoza). Plump and cola aromas set up a spunky, rubbery Merlot that features a mix of roasted berry and chocolaty oak flavors. It is mild on the finish. Vino Del Sol. —M.S.  
abv: 13.8%  
Price: $11

83 Viña Cobos 2011 Felino Merlot (Mendoza). This has bready, herbal aromas and a sweet beet note. It is syrupy and sappy, with candied cassis and black cherry flavors. Paul Hobbs Wines. —M.S.  
abv: 14.5%  
Price: $19
82 Funky Llama 2011 Merlot (Mendoza). This opens with a familiar taste of artificial, roasted char, then it moves on to soupy berry aromas. It feels scratchy, with flavors of hickory, baked plum and berry. Vision Wine & Spirits. —M.S. 

81 Rutini 2011 Trumpeter Merlot (Mendoza). Burnt and angry in smell, this has earthy red berry aromas. It feels astringent, with jumbled, baked berry flavors that come with a woody note. Turns to leathery and baked fruit tones on the finish. Pasternak Wine Imports. —M.S. 

80 Tilia 2011 Merlot (Mendoza). This smells of generic red fruit and pasty oak, and it tastes burnt, slightly chemical and rubbery, with creamy berry fruit flavors taking over. Winebow. —M.S. 

**RED BLENDS**

92 Trapiche 2008 Iscay Malbec-Cabernet Franc (Mendoza). This high-class blend of Malbec and Cabernet Franc is both elegant and powerful. The bouquet deals classic Malbec aromas of cola, licorice and blackberry, while the palate features typical Cabernet Franc spice, along with a ripe, healthy blackberry flavor. Expansive and buttery smooth on the finish, this should be opened now–2016. The Wine Group. —M.S. 

81 Domingo Molina 2010 Hermanos Malbec-Tannat (Cafayate). Roasted in scent, this has black olive and crusty, herbal berry scents. It feels ultratannic and hard, with a graphite note and heat feel on the finish. Pasternak. —M.S. 

**SPAIN**

**RIAS BAIXAS**

90 Pazo de Señorans 2011 Albariño (Rías Baixas). Focused and saline, offering mild white-flower and peach aromas, this feels full, round, fleshy and balanced, with pithy citrus, peach and almond flavors that lead nicely to a smooth, melony finish. This is about as complex as Albariño gets. Eric Solomon Selections. *Editors’ Choice*. —M.S. 

89 Adegas Gran Vinum 2011 Esencia Divina Albariño (Rías Baixas). Apple and other white fruit aromas come with hints of sea foam and clam shell. The palate is tight, mineral-driven and citric, with some spritz. Flavors of apple and pithy citrus lead to a long, speedy finish, with generous acidity. Grapes of Spain. —M.S. 

88 Nora 2011 Peitán Albariño (Rías Baixas). Buttercup and fresh pear aromas are friendly and inviting. It feels full and correct, with good acids and minerality. Flavors of pears, melons and lees are very nice, while the finish is simultaneously flowery, crisp and salinic. Aviva Vino. —M.S. 

88 Finca de Arantei 2011 Single Vineyard Albariño (Rías Baixas). Clean and fresh, this features largely neutral, mineral-driven aromas that hint at white fruit and melon. Citrus, particularly white grapefruit, is the lead flavor, while background notes of pith, melon and green banana make appearances. Fresh, crisp and nice on the finish. Winebow. —M.S. 

87 Egeo 2011 Verdejo (Rueda). With dusty apple and mineral aromas, this feels healthy and plump, with apple, pear and lime flavors that sit in front of a citric and mildly green finish. Good and normal as Rueda wines go. Grapes of Spain. —M.S. 

87 Legaris 2011 Verdejo (Rueda). Varietally correct on the nose, this has green apple, grapefruit and floral aromas. It feels basic, tangy and linear, with notes of melon, citrus and a dry, crisp finish that’s mildly briny and a touch bitter. Aveniños Brands, Inc. —M.S. 

87 Margués de la Concordia 2011 Vega de la Reina Hacienda Zorita Verdejo (Rueda). Crackling aromas of grapefruit, scallion, mineral and green herb are initially pungent. It feels tangy and offers plenty of zap in front of the lime, green apple and nettle flavors. It’s solid on the finish, but nothing too serious or complex. MHW, Ltd. —M.S. 

87 Naia 2011 Verdejo (Rueda). Citrusy aromas suggest orange juice and grapefruit pith. This feels balanced, with apple, papaya, melon and banana flavors that feed into a sweet-tasting finish that’s slightly mealy in feel and flavor. Good and tasty, but drink immediately. Aviva Vino. —M.S. 

86 El Hada 2011 Verdejo-Viura (Rueda). Apple and mineral aromas are solid and fresh but don’t deliver much kick. This feels lively, with a mix of citrus flavors that are enhanced by grass and a pithy finish. It ends on a green note, with a hint of scallion and a cut of acidity. Steve Miles Selections. —M.S. 

86 Nidia 2011 Verdejo (Rueda). This is pretty neutral on the nose, except for the saline, citrus and pear aromas. It feels juicy, fresh and average, with slightly sweet flavors of kiwi, lime and white grapefruit.
GETARIAKO TXAKOLINA

87 Txomin Etxaniz 2011 Getaria (Getaria Txakolina). Dusty apple and mineral aromas are clean, but that’s about it. The palate is lifted by blazing acids and spritz, while the flavor profile is all tangy lemon, tangerine and freshly picked green beans. Cleansing on the finish. Jorge Ordoñez Selections. —M.S. 

abv: 10.5% 

Price: $25

88 Arregi 2011 Getariako Txakolina. Peachy, crisp aromas are mild but standard. It feels puckery and tight, with some spritz. Flavors of tangerine, orange and lemon are tangy but not sour, while the finish is long and chalky in feel. Drink immediately. Matarovino LLC. —M.S. 

abv: 11.5% 

Price: $26

89 Zudugarai 2011 Getariako Txakolina. This is flat and lemony on the nose, with a hint of asparagus. It feels zesty and tastes of tart lemon-lime and green bean. Tangy but not edgy or razor-like on the finish. This is a classic cool-climate white with citrus and green elements running the show. Frontier Wine Imports. —M.S. 

abv: 10.5% 

Price: $28

RIOJA

87 Marqués de Cáceres 2011 Satinela Medium-Sweet (Rioja). Satinela has been on the upswing in recent years as it has become more complex. This vintage smells of lime, mineral and dusty apple. It feels fresh and right for the style, with Bartlett pear, lime and dry spice flavors. Vineyard Brands. Best Buy. —M.S. 

abv: 12% 

Price: $9


abv: 12% 

Price: $11

89 Gramona 2006 Imperial Gran Reserva Brut (Cava). Among Cavas, this is one of the more yeasty, full-bodied and creamy wines you’ll find; it’s also cidy, dusty and heavy on the nose. Round, it offers plenty of depth to frame the flavors of candied peach, melon, pear, tarragon and thyme. Although it’s a bit foamy and coarse, overall this is a flavorful, complex, demanding Cava to drink now—2015. Eric Solomon Selections. —M.S. 

abv: 12% 

Price: $17

CAVA

82 Federico Paternina 2010 Banda Dorada White (Rioja). This smells of funk, yeast and cured meat. Tangy and acidic in the mouth, it has peach, citrus and hazelnut flavors, finishing a bit meaty. Aidil Wines & Liquor Inc. —M.S. 

abv: 12.5% 

Price: $10

83 Bodegas Franco-Espanolas 2011 Royal Viura (Rioja). Generic white-fruits feature apple and melon. It feels sharp as a razor, with citrus acidity pushing lemon and sour peach flavors, finishing tart. Vision Wine & Spirits. —M.S. 

abv: 12.5% 

Price: $10

OTHER WHITE WINES

83 Beldui 2011 Txakolina (Spain). An oily popcorn aroma is neither fresh nor lively. The palate is wide and mouthfilling, with notes of bitter almond and creamy citrus. It’s viscous on the finish, but there’s not much flavor or character. ENVV Distribu- 

tion Group, LLC. —M.S. 

abv: 12.25% 

Price: $19


abv: 11.5% 

Price: $14

87 Jaume Serra NV Cristalino Brut (Cava). For fresh, basic Cava with a juicy profile and clarity, you can’t go wrong with this. Apple and lime aromas are straightforward and clean, while the palate is tight and tastes of spiced apple, lime and orange. It’s crisp, focused and easy to enjoy. Colección Internac- 

ional del Vino. Best Buy. —M.S. 

abv: 11.5% 

Price: $10

87 Marques de Gelida 2007 Claror Gran Reserva Brut Nature (Cava). Pear and apple aromas provide a good opening to this flowery, slightly sweet-tasting wine. It maintains freshness and pop that doesn’t last long in the glass. Flavors of lime and melon end with a hint of papaya. Seems as if it’s beginning to fade. Jorge Ordoñez Selections. —M.S. 

abv: 12% 

Price: $25

87 Raventós i Blanc 2009 Reserva Brut (Cava). This is definitely a briny specimen, but under the pickled blanket there’s depth of fruit, texture and complexity. It feels tight and lively, with salinic flavors of citrus fruit and apple. The finish holds onto that briny character, but the feel, balance and overall quality are solid. Vallyrie Selections. —M.S. 

abv: 12% 

Price: $23

86 Marques de Gelida 2009 Pinot Noir Brut Reserva Rosé (Cava). Modest and generally clean on the nose, this features little more than a touch of berry. It feels tight and juicy, with citrus flavor and not much complexity. A note of pink grapefruit shows up on the finish. Jorge Ordoñez Selections. —M.S. 

abv: 11.5% 

Price: $17
86 Masia Puigmoltó NV Absidio Semi-Secco (Cava). The nose is grassy and stally, with fresh-cut hay and straw aromas. It tastes semisweet, just as the label promises. Look for candied apple and lime flavors with a peachy twist. ENYE Distribution Group, LLC. —M.S. 

abv: 11.5% 
Price: $16

85 Gran Sarao NV Brut Kosher (Cava). Narrow but perfectly acceptable on the nose, with white fruit aromas, this may not have much feel and style, but the flavors of soda cracker, lime and apple are dry, ending on a baking spice note. Steve Miles Selections. —M.S. 

abv: 11.5% 
Price: $13

85 Idilicium NV Brut (Cava). For full review see page 14. Best Buy. 

abv: 12% 
Price: $9

85 Llopart 2009 Rosé Brut Reserva (Cava). Light pink in color, this has chewing gum, watermelon and dust aromas. It is underwhelming on the palate, with a simple mouthfeel and flavors of cotton candy and cherry. Jorge Ordoñez Selections. —M.S. 

abv: 11.5% 
Price: $23

85 Dominio de la Vega NV Brut (Cava). This is wide and sweet on the bouquet, with pear and cider aromas. It feels thick and a bit grabby, with basic apple flavor and not much more. Long on the finish, it has a decent feel if you don’t mind some excess foam. A.W. Direct. —M.S. 

abv: 12% 
Price: $15

84 Jaume Serra NV Cristalino Rosé Brut (Cava). Citrus and yeast aromas form the nose on this wine, which feels forward and bubbly, with some sizzle to the palate. Cherry, plum and nectarine flavors are good, and it finishes with vitality. This is sweet and flavorful stuff. Colección Internacional del Vino. —M.S. 

abv: 11.5% 
Price: $10

83 Berberana NV Gran Tradición Rosé Brut (Cava). This smells gaseous, with tutti-frutti notes. It feels acidic and angular, with a narrow scope of red fruit flavors. It’s a touch bitter on the finish. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —M.S. 

abv: 11.5% 
Price: $12

83 Bodegas Ondarre NV Selección Millennium Brut Macabeo (Cava). This wine smells fermented, like Tequila. Linear, acidic and lemony on the palate, it has tart apple and pineapple flavors. A citrus note carries the finish to a modest end point. Although it’s good enough, it’s neither inspired nor inspiring. Tasted twice. Classic Wines, Inc. —M.S. 

abv: 11.5% 
Price: $15

TORO

95 Maurodos 2008 San Román (Toro). One of Spain’s great full-force, modern-style wines, this excels despite the marginal 2008 vintage. It’s open-knit and soft on the nose, with ladels of spice, graphite and black fruit aromas. It feels fresh, balanced and not overly tannic, with strapping blackberry, coffee, chocolate, spice and tobacco flavors all rolled into a fabulous whole. Licorice, espresso and anise notes grace the padded finish. Drink now–2018. Grapes of Spain. Editors’ Choice. —M.S. 

abv: 14.5% 
Price: $70

92 Pictor 2008 Toro. Deeply layered and pure on the nose, with tarry, cola and toasty oak aromas, this feels deep, full and chunky, with tough tannins and seriously dark flavors of blackened spice, berry and bitter chocolate. It’s very long on the finish, which has a tough feel but is generous and loaded with power. Drink: 2013–2018; 275 cases made. Hidalgo Imports, LLC. —M.S. 

abv: 14.5% 
Price: $90

91 Dos Victorias 2008 2V Premium (Toro). Roasted meat, animal and stout berry aromas make for an inviting bouquet. Like most serious Toro wines, this is hard but fresh and layered, with lively black-fruit flavors that darken under the control of oaky spice. Tobacco, menthol and mint ring loudly on the finish. Drink now–2018; 200 cases made. Grapes of Spain. —M.S. 

abv: 14.5% 
Price: $143

90 Pictor 2010 6 Meses (Toro). Minty and on the nose, this has notes of licorice, black fruit and a funky kick. It feels big, tannic, powerful and warm, with wild berry and boysenberry notes, plus a ton of dark spice, chocolate and mild heat. Toasty and extremely dark on the finish. Hidalgo Imports, LLC. —M.S. 

abv: 14.5% 
Price: $17

88 Toriles 2010 Roble Tinta de Toro (Toro). Bold berry aromas charge forth in a clean, pointed fashion. This feels firm and solid, with no obvious flaws and a dark flavor of blackberry that’s offset by notes of rooty licorice and sweet brown sugar. Lengthy and fresh on the finish. Axial Wines USA. —M.S. 

abv: NA 
Price: $14

87 Cyan 2010 8 Meses (Toro). This is heavy and rasing, with ripe earth and mineral aromas that are suggestive of Port. It feels loaded and scratchy, with licorice, prune and pepper flavors that finish short and with some heat. A bullish style to drink now. Matarromera USA, Inc. —M.S. 

abv: 15% 
Price: $15

85 Bodegas Fariña 2010 Third Generation Dama de Toro (Toro). This smells foxy and jumpy, with a candied cherry aroma. Fresh and forward, scratchy and rough, this has raspberry, plum and resinly oak flavors. It breaks down and turns somewhat metallic on the finish. Specialty Cellars. —M.S. 

abv: 13.5% 
Price: $13

85 Telmo Rodríguez 2010 Dehesa Gago (Toro). Mediterranean cherry and plum scents come with a gassy, minty persistence. This feels tannic and syrupy, with some heft, accompanying sweet black-fruit flavors that are green and herbal at the core. It finishes chunky, with a minty aftertaste. Vinitus LLC. —M.S. 

abv: 14.5% 
Price: $18

RIBERA DEL DUERO

93 García Figuero 2009 Figuero Tunas Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero). Toasty and black as midnight on the nose, this has mineral-driven, tight-grained oak, with a blackberry aroma that won’t quit. It feels deep, dense and saturated on multiple levels, with black fruit flavors leading the charge, followed by clove and hickory accents. Warm, long and driving on the finish. Drink 2014–2020. Just over 100 cases and magnums made. Quintessential Wines. Editors’ Choice. —M.S. 

abv: 14.5% 
Price: $599

92 Alidis 2009 VS (Ribera del Duero). Cola, coconut and ripe blackberry aromas are draped all over the wine’s bouquet. On the palate, it’s a bit chewy and acidic, with pounding flavors of black cherry, blackberry and leather. Juicy, zesty and jagged feeling at the moment, this should be consumed no earlier than 2014 and may be at its best around 2018. Hidalgo Imports, LLC. Cellar Selection. —M.S. 

abv: 15% 
Price: $100

92 Finca Torremilanos 2008 Cyclo (Ribera del Duero). Despite the less-than-stellar vintage, this is excellent, with dark berry aromas, earthy grit and complexities that rise to the occasion. It feels big, fresh and fruity, with racy black-cherry, chocolate and pepper flavors. Elegant, correct and complete; drink now–2016. Grapes of Spain. —M.S. 

abv: 14% 
Price: $58

92 García Figuero 2009 Figuero Noble (Ribera del Duero). Rich and voluptuous on the bouquet, this has coconut, ripe blackberry and leather aromas. It feels huge, grabby, tannic and supercharged, with ultradark and chocolaty berry flavors that last long on the finish, where pepper, spice and chocolate flavors sneak into the frame. Drink 2014–2021. Quintessential Wines. Cellar Selection. —M.S. 

abv: 14% 
Price: $132

92 Matarromera 2006 Reserva (Ribera del Duero). Tight, dark and oaky on the nose, this has woody power, cedarly complexity and lots of staunch berry character. It is full, grabby and tannic, showing a firm spine to support toasty, oaky, clove-influenced flavors. Dark, tight and toasty on the finish; drink now–2019. Matarromera USA, Inc. Cellar Selection. —M.S. 

abv: 14.5% 
Price: $52

92 Peña Roble 2004 Reserva (Ribera del Duero). This is a drink-or-hold wine, with grip, snap, barging tannins and all sorts of character. Licorice and black cherry aromas set up strong berry and chocolate flavors. There’s a mild, herbal twinge and a grilled element to the wine as well. Drink 2014–2021. T.G.I.C. Importers. —M.S. 

abv: 14.5% 
Price: $41

91 Alidis 2009 Expresión (Ribera del Duero). Roasted and rubbery, this features potent leather and compost aromas that settle with airing. Angular, aggressive and full of power and lemony oak; it also has raw wood and heavily toasted black-fruit flavors. Long,
peppery and choppy, it's powerful and stomping. Best to hold this for 3–5 years before drinking, when it should emerge as a better, more approachable wine. Hidalgo Imports, LLC. *Cellar Selection.* —M.S.  
**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $70

91 **Arrocal 2006 Ángel (Ribera del Duero).** This is supersmooth and attractive, with earth, cola, tobacco, balsam and solid berry aromas. The palate rings with vitality, while the flavor profile consists of an ideal mix of vanilla, herb, tomato and berry. Dry on the finish, with a leathery note. Drink now–2018. Grapes of Spain. —M.S.  
**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $55

91 **Loess 2009 Collection (Ribera del Duero).** Expansive and generous on the nose, this has all the bold berry aromas for which Ribera del Duero is known. It feels tight as a drum, with staunch acidity. Flavors of dark fruit and chocolate are typical for a small-production—150 cases—modern wine. It's tight, spicy and integrated on the finish, with a lasting note of lemony oak. Best 2014–2018. Enotrends LLC.  
**abv:** 14.5%  
**Price:** $55

91 **Vecordia 2008 Crianza (Ribera del Duero).** Only 400 cases of this top-level crianza were made, and it smells rich and good, with notes of ripe berry and plum and a mild syrup note. Although it feels big, it's also fresh and layered, with pure berry, herb, spice and oak flavors. Toasty, smooth and elegant as a whole. Drink now–2015. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —M.S.  
**abv:** 13.5%  
**Price:** $19

90 **Pago de Sangara 2008 Crianza Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero).** Jammy berry, licorice, herb and leather aromas set up a lively, fresh palate that boasts tomato, raspberry, plum and herb flavors. It shows good energy and balance throughout, with a forward attitude and a spicy, solid finish. Quintessential Wines. —M.S.  
**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $45

90 **Prado Rey 2009 Elite (Ribera del Duero).** Briary berry, leather and animal aromas comprise the bouquet on this full-forced effort. Astringent and jumpy in feel, it has piercing acidity, propelling the tangy flavors of berry, currant and plum. It's tasty, offering a pinch of tobacco on the finish. Drink 2013–2017. Monsieur Tonton Selection Ltd. —M.S.  
**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $40

90 **Torrodezors 2004 Reserva (Ribera del Duero).** This is cool on the nose, with tree bark and tobacco aromas that come together well. Tannic and stout, it's not punishing, with a roasted black-fruit flavor and a backing of espresso bitterness. This shows a syrupy side and also raw power. Drink now–2018. ENYE Distribution Group, LLC. —M.S.  
**abv:** 14%  
**Price:** $44

89 **de Restia 2006 Crianza Selected Harvest (Ribera del Duero).** Berry and dark plum aromas accompany tobacco, spice and baking spice notes. This feels mostly fresh and vital, with drying tan-
with light berry aromas. It feels a bit clacky, with lemon-driven acidity in front of oaky, savory, earthy berry flavors. This is taut and a little warm on the finish, with savory, salty flavors and a clipped feel. T.G.I.C. Importers. —M.S.

85 Resalte 2001 Gran Resalte (Ribera del Duero). With Ribera wines there’s an assumption of tannic presence; but this older vintage, while displaying a classic bouquet, is brutally tannic, with an acid-washed palate. Splashes of cranberry and plum flavors are cut by lemony acidity and drying sandpaper tannins. T.G.I.C. Importers. —M.S. 

84 Peña Roble 2009 Ribera del Duero. The nose is leathery and mulchy, with earthy berry aromas. It feels raw and choppy, with stalky, leathery, burnt flavors, plus pinches of green and mint. Ultimately, it doesn’t have much berry power or clarity. T.G.I.C. Importers. —M.S. 

84 Prado Rey 2010 Roble (Ribera del Duero). This smells rubbery and a bit gamy, with meaty berry aromas. Tannic, with gaps in the mouthfeel, it has flavors of prune and herb, which are not excessively sweet or raisiny. The finish is dry, tannic and steady. Monsieur Touson Selection Ltd. —M.S. 

84 Xavier Floret 2007 Pavo Real Crianza (Ribera del Duero). Asphalt, leather and paint aromas are present on the scratchy bouquet. It feels clacky, with pushy acidity and flavors of tomato, salo, herb plum and raspberry. It’s lively, with a bite to the finish. Cognac One, LLC. —M.S. 

89 Bodegas Palacio 2009 Cosme Palacio Vendimia Seleccionada (Rioja). Big, smoky and charred, with a rubbery blackberry note lurking in the background, it feels chewy, thick and dense, with a roasted black-fruit flavor, a baking spice note and a toasted, rooty aftertaste that suggests root beer. HAB North America. —M.S. 

89 Bodegas Valdemar 2004 Inspiración Valdemar Edición Limitada (Rioja). This opens with balsamic, briary aromas that include herb, olive and greenness. It wine feels big, full and generally well balanced, with roasted flavors of earth and herbal berry that reflect the bouquet. Tobacco, coffee and leather components drive the finish. Colección Internacional del Vino. —M.S. 

89 Burgo Viejo 2009 Crianza (Rioja). Ripe berry, mild raisin and overall clarity define the bouquet. This offers a full, complete mouthfeel, with structure and layers of roasted berry, spice and integrated herb. It's sturdy and long on the satisfying finish. Kysefa Pere et Fils. Best Buy. —M.S. 

89 Federico Paternina 2005 Conde de los Andes Gran Reserva (Rioja). Rusty and light in color, this has earth, compost and root notes, with dry leather aromas. It feels good, with an easy, mature flow and light flavors of dried fruit, spice, pepper and vanilla. Lengthy, it features tobacco and toast flavors on the finish. Drink now. Novo Imports. —M.S. 

89 Vallobera 2009 Finca Vallobera (Rioja). This opens with big aromas of black fruit compound, molasses and maple. It feels tannic and grappy, with notes of black cherry, dark plum and vanilla controlling the flavor profile. It finishes big tight and chalky, due to tannic residue. Powerful and composed, drink now–2016. Axial Wines USA. —M.S. 

88 Bodegas Bilbainas 2009 Viña Pomal Crianza (Rioja). For full review see page 11. 

88 Bodegas Palacio 2005 Glorioso Gran Reserva (Rioja). This is initially dark and earthy, with brindled cherry, leather and tobacco aromas. It feels complete and offers core acids to keep it feeling fresh. Flavors of black fruit and spice lead to a lasting finish with cola and cherry notes. HAB North America. —M.S. 

88 Obalo 2010 Rioja. This is modern in style and well stocked for an affordable Rioja. It opens with aromas of gritty, roasted berry, plum and grilled beef that lead to a firm palate, with dark fruit, toast, mineral and chocolate flavors. It feels tight, warm and long on the finish. Aviva Vino. Best Buy. —M.S. 

88 Palacios Remondo 2010 La Vendimia (Rioja). Active on the bouquet, this features mint, baking spice, clove and ripe berry aromas. It feels plump and round, with a mildly candied flavor profile that includes blackberry, herb, and nutmeg. It turns a little rooty on the finish, suggesting licorice nibs. A blend of 65% Garnacha and 35% Tempranillo. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.S. 

88 Soto de Torres 2009 Ibéricos Crianza Tempranillo (Rioja). Berry, plum and pastry aromas carry a bit of stalky sweetness. It feels juicy, textured and mildly tannic, with lightly herbal berry and resin flavors. Oaky on the finish, it has a good set of outgoing flavors and length. Dreyfus, Ashby & Co. —M.S. 

87 Altino 2009 Crianza (Rioja). This is dark, roasted and rubbery on the nose, with staunch aromas of dark chocolate, char and tire. It feels full, layered and tannic, with deep plum, berry and chocolate flavors, leading to a chewy finish full of vanilla and fudge. Aviva Vino. —M.S. 

87 Bodegas Palacio 2008 Glorioso Crianza (Rioja). Cedar cigar box and berry aromas become significantly more charred and toasted upon airing. It feels good, with plum, berry and plenty of burnt toast in the flavor package. It finishes dark and spicy, with a leftover burnt note. HAB North America. —M.S. 

87 Colina Verde 2010 Made with Organic Grapes Tempranillo (Rioja). This ripe-leaning wine has raisin and licorice aromas, with firm leather and saddle notes. It feels full and tannic, then tastes a bit woody and resin, with berry and cassis flavors. The wine finds a needed dose of freshness on the finish. The Artisan Collection. —M.S. 

87 Marqués de Terán 2010 Sustainably Produced (Rioja). Likable from the start, with black fruit, baking spice and exotic sandalwood notes, this is firm and drying in feel, with a blend of dark berry, toast and peppery spice flavors. It remains dry on the finish, with a pinch of heat that food should tame. M Imports, LLC. Best Buy. —M.S. 

87 Vallobera 2009 Javier San Pedro Crianza (Rioja). Brambly, leathery and roasted on the nose, this features raspberry and plum aromas in the backdrop. It feels fresh, clamy and forward, with a mix of leather, herb, plum, tomato and spice flavors. A solid wine with traditional Rioja character. Axial Wines USA. —M.S. 

87 Ysios 2006 Reserva (Rioja). Tame black-fruit aromas are leathery, darkened by asphalt and tar notes. This wine feels good and round, with
plum and berry flavors that accompany resinous oak. Fruity, nice and pleasant, it doesn’t announce itself as special or elevated. Fernod Ricard. —M.S.

86 Aticus 2009 Crianza (Rioja). This wine’s floral cherry and raspberry aromas aren’t fancy, but they set up a solid-feeling wine, with black cherry, maple and raisin flavors. It turns sweet-tasting on the finish, with brown sugar and chocolate notes. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.

abv: 14%  
Price: $30

85 Bodegas Franco-Españolas 2007 Bordón Reserva (Rioja). Fiery berry and cherry aromas emerge with a hint of milk chocolate. This wine feels high in acidity, with raspberry, tart red plum and spice flavors that finish with citrus snap and grittiness. Vision Wine & Spirits. —M.S.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $25

85 Casa de la Reina 2008 Tempranillo Crianza (Rioja). This smells mildly grassy and green at first, while balsamic vinegar and tobacco notes enter the frame later on. It’s solid and average in mouthfeel, with a slightly sweet and syrupy berry flavor that’s tempered by tomato-driven acidity. Vision Wine & Spirits. —M.S.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $15

85 Zinio 2008 Tempranillo-Garnacha (Rioja). Dry herbs and spice aromas precede a solid, drawn-down palate, with lively acidity and flavors of medium-dark berry, toast and herb. Modest in intensity, this is composed. Hidalgo Imports, LLC. —M.S.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $15

84 Bodegas Franco-Españolas 2008 Bordón Crianza (Rioja). Dry on the nose, this has light red-fruits that are offset by spice and vanilla notes. It feels snappy and raw, with tart citrus, plum and tomato flavors. Crisp, quiet and vapid on the finish. Vision Wine & Spirits. —M.S.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $12

84 Federico Paternina 2010 Monte Haro Red (Rioja). Dusty, spicy and a little scratchy on the nose, this has leather, vanilla and mild fruit aromas. It feels tangy, with a light herb flavor working in tandem with dry plum and berry notes. Bribry, spicy and drying on the finish. Aidil Wines & Liquor Inc. Best Buy. —M.S.

abv: 13%  
Price: $12

84 Bodegas Ontañón 2008 Crianza Tempranillo-Garnacha (Rioja). A dusty cherry aroma turns harsh with airing, setting up a tight, acidic palate that’s marked by tart raspberry and plum flavors. Scouring, spicy and peppery on the finish, this amounts to a tight, hard and basic Rioja. Cavatappi Distribuzione. —M.S.

abv: 13%  
Price: $13

83 Federico Paternina 2010 Clisos Tempranillo (Rioja). Generic red fruit and milk chocolate aromas precede a tangy palate with a fairly high acid-to-body ratio. This tastes of tart red plum, with a hint of chocolate; it’s short, crisp and quaffable. Novo Imports and Aidil Wines & Liquors. Novo Imports. —M.S.

abv: 13%  
Price: $10

83 Montebuena 2010 Cuvée KPF (Rioja). Scratchy berry and rubber aromas roll into a grabby, aggressive palate, with a burnt note and resinous oak overshadowing a berry flavor. The finish is rubbery and chunky. Kysela Père et Fils. —M.S.

abv: 14%  
Price: $13

83 Ramón Bilbao 2009 Rioja. This is mulchy on the nose, with a compost aroma muddling up the red-fruit component. It feels lean and souring, with cranberry, tart raspberry and vanilla flavors. The finish is fragmented and stinky. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —M.S.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $13

83 Sionsierra 2008 Reserva (Rioja). Dry berry, leather and spice aromas lead to a juicy, high-acid palate, with red cherry, tart plum and pepper accents. It remains zesty, clean, simple and sharp on the finish. Spain Wine Collection. —M.S.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $25

82 Bodegas Escudero 2008 Becquer (Rioja). This is fairly mulchy on the nose, with an earthy prime aroma. It feels grabby and lean, with cranberry fruit flavor, bitterness and an herb accents. The finish stays murky, tart and mildly green. Grapes of Spain. —M.S.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $22

82 Camboral 2010 Tempranillo (Rioja). Crisp plum and raspberry aromas set up a snappy, tight palate with green flavors of plum, raspberry and herb. It tastes vegetal on the finish, with cutting acidity. Vicente Gandia PLA. —M.S.

abv: 14%  
Price: $10

82 Campellares 2010 Rioja. Plastic and lemon aromas are neither exciting nor inviting. This feels flat and tastes bland and jammy, with mossy berry aromas. Grapes of Spain. —M.S.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $12

81 Bodegas y Viñedos Noe 2010 Coupé Tempranillo-Garnacha (Rioja). This smells raw and minty, with an artificial candy note. It feels lean, with a green, weedy flavor of red fruit. It shows heat and sour on the finish. This is a blend of equal parts Tempranillo and Garnacha. Massanois Imports. —M.S.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $17

81 Viña Cerrada 2008 Crianza (Rioja). Damp and mossy on the nose, this has a leafy berry aroma that lacks brightness. It feels narrow and sharp,
with limited flavors of red fruit. The finish is tart and empty. Mindeza Trading Inc. — M.S.

**CALATAYUD**

| 82 | Bodegas Ateca 2009 Atteca Armas Old Vines Garnacha (Calatayud). | For full review see page 7. | abv: 15.5% | Price: $45 |
| 83 | Bodegas Ateca 2010 Atteca Old Vines Garnacha (Calatayud). | For full review see page 8. | abv: 15% | Price: $16 |
| 88 | Picos Pardos 2010 Garnacha (Calatayud). | Dense and concentrated on the nose, this features blackberry and black cherry aromas, with hardly any perceptible oak. It feels fresh but chunky and tannic, with roasted plum, berry and savory spice flavors. It's baked in flavor and gritty in feel as it finishes. Hidalgo Imports, LLC. — M.S. | abv: 14% | Price: $17 |
| 89 | Punto y Coma 2009 Viñas Viejas Garnacha (Calatayud). | Earthy, inky, sweet and jammmy on the nose, this brings just the right hint of raisin. It feels narrow and finely tannic, with wide flavors of blackberry, prune, raisin and chocolate. It's loaded with flavor, but the mouthfeel is astringent and collapsed. A powerful country-style wine. Hidalgo Imports, LLC. — M.S. | abv: 14% | Price: $15 |
| 86 | Filón 2010 Garnacha (Calatayud). | Blueberry and raisin aromas announce ripeness. This wine feels jammmy but vital, with a prune flavor and a lightly roasted note. Although the wine becomes a little too soft at the end, it's flavorful and dense. A good match for a hamburger or steak sandwich. Aviva Vino. Best Buy. — M.S. | abv: 14.5% | Price: $9 |
| 87 | Humilitat 2009 Priorat. | A tight-grained oak aroma mixes with notes of red berry, herb, leather and aged cheese. It feels rubbery but solid, with roasted flavors of berry and sweet plum. A bit warm and rubbery on the finish. This is a blend of equal parts Carignan and Garnacha. Steve Miles Selections. — M.S. | abv: 14.5% | Price: $28 |

**CARIÑENA**

| 85 | Viña Alarba 2010 Viñas Viejas Garnacha (Calatayud). | Jammery berry, blueberry and spice aromas meet the nose, followed by a narrow palate that turns softer as the wine airs out. Flavors of jammery berry and raisin end on a mellow, chewy finish. A soft Garnacha for casual consumption. The Artisan Collection. Best Buy. — M.S. | abv: 14% | Price: $9 |
| 88 | Pago Aylés 2010 Aldeya Garnacha (Cariñena). | This is dense yet fresh, with dark berry and mild earth aromas. It feels lively, forceful and solidly built, with blackberry, creamy chocolate, toast and spice flavors that are all in equal, balanced portions. Long and warm on the finish. MatadorVino LLC. Best Buy. — M.S. | abv: 14% | Price: $10 |
| 89 | Castillo de Monseran 2010 Garnacha (Cariñena). | Floral berry aromas are fresh and carry only the slightest grassy, green element. The wine feels crisp and tight, with nice red plum and raspberry flavors. Mild, focused and not very hefty or thick on the finish. T.G.I.C. Importers. Best Buy. — M.S. | abv: 13.5% | Price: $11 |
| 90 | Acústic 2010 Vinyes Velles Nobles Garnatxa-Cariñena (Montserrat). | Mineral-driven and hard on the nose, this features toasty, smoky, chocolaty notes in addition to medicinal berry aromas. It feels juicy but also resin and creamy, with plum and wood flavors that finish long. This is a ripe, fruity wine with plenty of oak, size and body. Steve Miles Selections. — M.S. | abv: 14.5% | Price: $20 |

**PRIORAT**

| 88 | Pahi Poboleda 2009 Gaubançà (Priorat). | Earth, cola, berry, toast and leather aromas share the bouquet. The palate is narrow and pinched by firm tannins, while the flavor profile displays a mix of herb, toast and plum. Warm, earthy and oaky on the finish, the wine carries a lemony accent and satisfying length. Hand Picked Selections. — M.S. | abv: 13.5% | Price: $28 |

**TIERRA DE CASTILLA**

| 88 | Dehesas y Viñedos de Navamarín 2007 Aldonzana Navamarín (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla). | Roasted and fiery on the nose, this wine has red fruit aromas mixed with green, herbal notes. It feels racy and pumped up with acidity, which drives the wine's core flavors of red plum, herb and vanilla. It's fresh but slightly abrasive and herbal throughout. This is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and
Tempranillo, in descending order. Sommelier Imports.
—M.S.

abv: 14%

Price: $28

87 Dehesas y Viñedos de Navamarín 2008 Aldonza Selección Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot-Syrah-Tempranillo (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla). Red plum and cherry aromas accompany a hint of lemony oak. The palate feels fresh, suggesting tomato, with ample body. It tastes of red fruit, accented by nutmeg and candied berry, and it feels tough on the finish, with flavors of vanilla and plastic. A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and Tempranillo in descending order. SommelierImports.—M.S.

abv: 14%

Price: $22

87 Dehesas y Viñedos de Navamarín 2007 Aldonza Picases (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla). Bits of grass and green tobacco infiltrate the otherwise sturdy and solid nose on this Tempranillo-based blend that includes Merlot, Cabernet and Syrah. It feels medium bodied and fresh, with red plum, raspberry, herb and coffee flavors. The finish turns leafy, chocolaty and herbal. SommelierImports.—M.S.

abv: 13.5%

Price: $13

84 Finca La Estacada 2007 Varietales (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla). This smells charred and burnt, with a leaf aroma following. It ranges from fresh to granting, with roasted tomato, plum, compost and earthy flavors. Saucy and roasted on the finish, this is a blend of Tempranillo, Cabernet and Syrah. HidalgoImports, LLC.—M.S.

abv: 14%

Price: $24

83 Tapeña 2010 Garnacha (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla). Rubbery and fiery on the nose, this wine is then chunky, chewy and thick in the mouth. It tastes sweet, like berry syrup, but also a touch grassy and herbal. It feels full in weight and tastes slightly warm on the finish. Freixenet USA.—M.S.

abv: 13%

Price: $10

OTHER RED WINES


abv: 14%

Price: $15

90 Licinia 2008 Red (Vinos de Madrid). Graham cracker, raisin, earth and leather aromas announce a level of richness. It feels prune-like and saturated but not flat, with blackberry and exotic spice flavors. It qualifies as a lush, ripe specimen with a long finish that stays complete. Syrah, Cabernet and Tempranillo are the components. OleImports.—M.S.

abv: 14.5%

Price: $52

87 Ochoa 2010 Tempranillo-Garnacha (Navarra). This opens with a bouquet that’s packed with bold berry fruit aromas, plus a mineral accent. It feels zesty, solid and slightly clumpy, with plum and cherry flavors that lead to a tight, juicy finish, with modest length and power Frontier WineImports. BestBuy.—M.S.

abv: 13%

Price: $12

85 Torres 2010 Sangre de Toro (Catalunya). Moderately leafy and brambly smelling, this is supported by its berry aroma. It feels edgy and juicy, with tangy, herbal raspberry and plum flavors. The finish is quick and snippy, with a hint of tomato and lasting green flavor. Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.—M.S.

abv: 13.5%

Price: $12

84 Bodegas Aleta 2010 Veraz Garnacha (Campo de Borja). This smells candied and reedy. Its mouthfeel smacks hard with acidity, leaving a crisp expression of strawberry, raspberry and herb flavors. It turns warm, lactic and chocolatey on the finish. Aviva Vino. BestBuy.—M.S.

abv: 14%

Price: $8

84 Evohé 2011 Viñas Viejas Garnacha (Vino de la Tierra del Bajo Aragón). Reasonably clean, simple and steady on the bouquet, this is subsequently chunky and fairly full in the mouth, with grassy red-fruit flavors that end with tannic clamp. Perfectly drinkable for a large-production wine (38,000 cases). DomaineNapaWineCompany.—M.S.

abv: 14%

Price: $12

ALSACE

GEWÜRZTRAMINER

92 André Blanck et ses Fils 2010 Schlossberg Grand Cru Gewürztraminer (Alsace). Showing as much freshness and acidity as the hallmark spice of a Gewürztraminer, this is a white-fruit-dominant wine, poised and elegant, with a touch of minerality. Keep for 2–3 years. VineyardResearch. CellarSelection.—R.V.

abv: 13%

Price: $NA

92 René Muré 2010 Clos Saint-Landelin Turckheim Grand Cru Gewürztraminer (Alsace). A medium-sweet wine, this balances a ripe lychee flavor with touches of botrytis and spice. The acidity contributes the essential element to this concentrated and impressive wine. There is a crisp, refreshing finish. Age for 2–3 years. RobertKacherSelections. CellarSelection.—R.V.

abv: 13%

Price: $NA

91 Domaine Albert Mann 2010 Fürstentum Grand Cru Gewürztraminer (Alsace). An aroma of pure lychee announces a wine that is attractively balanced. It wears its richness easily; it’s ripe and fruity, with a good level of acidity. With a medium-sweet character, it is a great wine for Asian cuisine. Weygandt-Metzler.—R.V.

abv: 14%

Price: $NA

91 Domaine Weinbach 2010 Cuvée Théo Gewürztraminer (Alsace). A beautifully balanced wine, expressing a certain sweetness, this has a great line of acidity. It’s full bodied, ripe and packed with spice and fruit, while remaining elegant and impressive. VineyardBrands.—R.V.

abv: 14%

Price: $35

91 Jean-Baptiste Adam 2011 Réserve Gewürztraminer (Alsace). There is plenty of character in this attractive wine. It has a fine balance between the rich natural spice of the Gewürztraminer and a fresh, citrus-driven edge, giving it a fine, textured character, worth aging a year. Winebow.—R.V.

abv: 13%

Price: $NA

90 Domaine Bott-Geyl 2010 Les Élémets Gewürztraminer (Alsace). A rich concentration of honey and botrytis gives this wine balanced sweetness. Full bodied and ripe, this has a spice character that is well contained with serious flavors of mineral and almond. Winebow.—R.V.

abv: 13.5%

Price: $NA

90 Domaine Marcel Deiss 2008 Gewürztraminer (Alsace). There is a great balance between the natural floral and perfumed character of this Gewürztraminer and its lively acidity. These elements combine to form a wine that is complex and immediately attractive. It’s ready to drink, but it can also age for a year. Angels’ShareWineImports, LLC.—R.V.

abv: 13%

Price: $29

90 Domaine Rémy Grosser 2010 Kritt Gewürztraminer (Alsace). Full and ripe, this has a pure, fragrant fruitiness. Its structure and freshness add a delicious drinkability to this rich wine. Age for another year. Martine’sWines.—R.V.

abv: 15%

Price: $30

90 Joseph Cattin 2010 Hatschbourg Grand Cru Gewürztraminer (Alsace). Right in the middle of the sweetness scale, this is a smooth, ripe, and fruity wine. It shows both spice and tropical fruit character, balanced with an attractive, lemony acidity. It could age for another 2–3 years. T. EdwardWinesLtd.—R.V.

abv: 15%

Price: $NA

90 Mittnacht Frères 2010 Les Terres Blanches Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This dense and spicy wine is powerful, with a dry core that tends toward sweetness. It features pepper as well as lychee flavors, followed by a light touch of acidity and a firmly structured finish. DanielJohnesWines.—R.V.

abv: 14.5%

Price: $NA

89 Domaine Schoffit 2010 Cuvée Alexandre Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This is a richly sweet wine that’s honeyed and ripe. Featuring notes of apricot, spice and an opulent texture, this is full and round in the mouth. It’s a wine to pair with spicy foods or blue cheese. Weygandt-Metzler.—R.V.

abv: 13.5%

Price: $NA

89 Domaine Sipp-Mack 2009 Tradition Gewürztraminer (Alsace). Even though this is a dry wine, it has such richness that it almost tastes sweet. The balance comes from the hint of acidity and the intense spice and pepper flavors. It’s ready to drink,
yet could age for another year. Bacchus Imports, Inc. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

**89**  
Hugel 2007 Jubilée Hugel Gewürztraminer (Alsace). A mature Gewürztraminer like this shows the richness of the grape and how the spice mellows as it ages. This is intense and rounded, with a streak of acidity adding freshness. Ready to drink now. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

**89**  
Louis Sipp 2010 Nature’s Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This medium-dry wine layers attractive spice and lychee notes with a soft, warm texture. There’s a spring in the stride of this fragrant wine; its acidity adding just the right sharp edge. Baron Francois Ltd. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
André Kientzler 2010 Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This is a hugely rich wine, very concentrated, yet with a light touch of acidity that gives it some crispness. It is on the dry side, though with some sweetness that comes through on the soft, rounded finish. Vin de Garde Wines. —R.V.  
abv: 14%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
Château d’Ourschwirr 2010 Bollenberg Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This full-bodied wine, as its alcohol indicates, has intense flavors of white fruit, spice and pepper. DS Trading Co. —R.V.  
abv: 14.8%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
Frédéric Mallo 2008 Cuvée Saint-Jacques Gewürztraminer (Alsace). It’s intriguing to taste an aged Gewürztraminer like this. It has weight, richness and still plenty of spice. The fruit has been changed into a smooth, ripe texture that brings out sweetness, rather than freshness. USA Wine Imports. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
Frey-Sohler 2010 Vieilles Vignes Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This dry Gewürztraminer brings its spice character to the fore. It has ripe white fruit notes, with touches of almond and pepper. With its dense, firm texture, it is a strong candidate for Asian food. J et R Selections. —R.V.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
Helfrich 2008 Steinklotz Grand Cru Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This is a soft, rounded wine that has ripe tropical fruit, lychee and mango notes, accompanied by just enough acidity. While it is fruity, a more mature character is beginning to show. Underdog Wine & Spirits. —R.V.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
Henri Schoenheitz 2009 Holder Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This is a deliciously balanced, elegant wine. Its ample spice character is matched by the crisp white-fruit note and acidity. It is floral, perfumed and stylish. OZ Wine Company. —R.V.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
Meyer-Fonné 2011 Réserve Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This medium-sweet wine has an attractively honeyed character and fragrant, spicy fruit. There’s also a fine lift of acidity, giving some brightness to an otherwise rich wine. Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
Clement Klur 2009 Gewürztraminer (Alsace). Medium dry in style, this is rich in spice flavor. Lychee and peppered pear notes dominate the flavor profile, producing a wine that is hugely rich and very rounded. Ready to drink. A.I. Selections —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
Domaine Ehrhart 2010 Herrenweg Gewürztraminer (Alsace). Here’s a sweet Gewürztraminer, honeyed and spicy. That classic lychee flavor dominates this rounded, ripe wine that has a full mouthfeel. There is a mere hint of acidity at the end. Robert Kacher Selections. —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
Domaine Vincent Stoellfer 2011 Gewürztraminer (Alsace). The Barr Vineyards of Vincent Stoellfer produce a relatively soft, rounded Gewürztraminer. The result is an attractive, fruity, dry wine that has its spice in balance with lemony and honey-driven acidity. Massanois Imports. —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

**88**  
Domaine Zinck 2010 Gewürztraminer (Alsace). There’s classic lychee fruit on this rich, full-in-the-mouth Gewürztraminer. It’s ripe, opulent and generous, offering a great burst of spicy flavors that have just a touch of sweetness to them. Screwcap. HB Wine Merchants. —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $19

**88**  
Emile Beyer 2010 Tradition Gewürztraminer (Alsace). While the wine is on the sweet side of Gewürztraminer, it has an attractive level of acidity. The result is rich, but it has poise and elegance. Ready to drink. Michael Corso Selections. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

**87**  
Hugel 2011 Gewürztraminer (Alsace). Here is a master class in the flavors of Gewürztraminer. It is spicy, ripe and rich, with lychee and mango flavors. Perfumed, rounded and touched by notes of spice and ginger, this is lacking in acidity and will likely be drinkable soon. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —R.V.  
abv: 14%  
Price: $NA

**87**  
Jean Becker 2010 Sonnenglanz Grand Cru Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This overtly spicy wine is very intense, with a slight burn on the palate from the pepper flavor. Exotic white fruit and a hint of pomegranate are the flavors. It has a hard, final edge from its alcohol. Ideal Wine and Spirits Co. Inc. —R.V.  
abv: 14%  
Price: $NA

**87**  
Leon Beyer 2010 Gewürztraminer (Alsace). As with all Léon Beyer wines, this is dry, which means that it has a fine structure as well as a dense character. It’s very much a food wine, perfect for spicy fare. Avenin Brands, Inc. —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

**87**  
Pierre Sparr 2011 Gewürztraminer (Alsace). There’s pure lychee fragrance on this rich, smooth and oily-textured wine. It is ripe and off-dry, with honey and white fruit flavors that are offset by spice. Screwcap. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $17

**87**  
Ruhlmann 2011 Vieilles Vignes Gewürztraminer (Alsace). Towards the drier end of the Gewürztraminer spectrum, this has plenty of the spicy richness. A note of lychee dominates along with an herb character, a touch of pepper and fine acidity. Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

**87**  
Wolffberger 2011 Signature Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This is an attractive, ripe, spicy and fruity wine. Its acidity is just right, producing a clean balance in its rich, full Gewürztraminer character. This is delicious to drink now, even better in a year. Kysela Pére et Fils. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

**86**  
Cave de Beblenheim 2010 Baron de Hoen Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This medium-sweet wine is attractively perfumed, with a good balance between exotic spice and fragrant acidity. The wine is soft and immediately drinkable. Screwcap. The Other Wine & Spirits. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $14

**86**  
Domaine Barnes-Buecher 2008 Herrenweg Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This gold-colored, mature wine shows deliciously rich spice as well as a dense texture. It’s full-bodied and definitely ready to drink. Petit Pois. —R.V.  
abv: 14%  
Price: $NA

**86**  
Robert Klingenfus 2011 Signature Gewürztraminer (Alsace). Very much in the candy-shop mode, this smooth wine is dominated by its spice. It’s not sweet, but instead has a dry edge of peach skin, which offers a countertop to the spice flavor. Wait a year to drink. European Wine Imports. —R.V.  
abv: 12%  
Price: $NA

**86**  
Trimbach 2009 Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This is a spicy and ripe wine, rather fat in character, lacking acidity. It has a full mouthfeel, with notes of lychee, toasted bread and various fruits. Drink now. Esprit du Vin. —R.V.  
abv: 14%  
Price: $NA

**85**  
Domaine Fernand Engel 2011 Réserve Gewürztraminer (Alsace). With a slightly chemical smell, this is an intensely spicy, relatively dry wine. It’s not abundant in acidity and freshness, so drink soon. Grape Expectations (CA). —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $17

**85**  
Vignerons Réunis de Kientzheim 2010 The Forst Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This is a very spicy, candy-flavored wine. A simple Gewürz-
**BUYING guide**

**MUSCAT**

88 **Kuentz-Bas 2010 Sélection Muscat (Alsace).** This is a dry and elegant style of Muscat, maintaining the grape’s natural fragrance along with its acidity and refreshing green fruit flavor. That puts it in the food-friendly category, a wine to pair with difficult vegetables, such as asparagus or artichoke. Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. —R.V. 

abv: 12.5%  
Price: $NA

87 **Pierre Sparr 2011 Riesling (Alsace).** This is a softly floral wine, with citrus and fresh pear notes that accompany green apple. It is ripe and fruity, with a light tang of orange on the finish. Screwcap. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —R.V.  

abv: 12%  
Price: $15

**PINOT GRIS**

89 **André Kientzler 2010 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** Showing dryness in its pepper and spice characters, this is a full-bodied, weighty wine. Dried fruit and lychee combine with a toasty, almond-flavored edge. Worth aging a year. Vin de Garde Wines. —R.V.  

abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

88 **Jean-Baptiste Adam 2011 Réserve Pinot Gris (Alsace).** The Adam family has been producing wine since 1674, a legacy that is distilled into this delicate, ripe, and fruity wine. It has an elegant balance between its acidity and its dried apricot flavor. Give this attractive wine a few months more in bottle. Winebow. —R.V.  

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

87 **Reyne-Muré 2010 Clos Saint-Landelin Vorbourg Grand Cru Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This impressively rich wine, with impeccable balance, has acidity and ripe, spicy fruit in great accord. It’s dry, with its acidity cutting through the complex texture. It should certainly age over several years. Robert Kacher Selections. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.  

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $17

86 **Domaine Michel Fonné 2010 Muscat d’Alsace Muscat (Alsace).** This seductively fragrant Muscat features bergamot and white fruit flavors. The floral character of the wine is balanced by dry, crisp acidity, which provides freshness as well as ripeness. Bacchus Imports, Inc. —R.V.  

abv: 12.5%  
Price: $NA

85 **Dopff Au Moulin 2011 Gewurztraminer (Alsace).** From one of the old Alsace merchant houses, this is a simple, bland wine. It has a spice note and a heavy, soft feeling. Drink now. Heritage Wine Cellars. —R.V.  

abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

84 **Wunsch & Mann 2005 Steinruberler Grand Cru Gewürztraminer (Alsace).** This is a very sweet, perfumed wine, showing spice and lychee notes, touched by honey. Not for aging. BCI LLC. —R.V.  

abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

83 **Wunsch & Mann 2011 Gewürztraminer (Alsace).** This creamy, rounded wine shows soft spice, baked apple and nutmeg flavors. It is rich, medium-dry in character and softly textured. BCI LLC. —R.V.  

abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

82 **Domaine Bernhard & Reibel 2009 Hahnenberg Gewürztraminer (Alsace).** A white fruit note leads this wine on a rich, spice-strewn path. The acidity cuts into the richness, putting the slightly oxidative character into perspective. With its rich, yeasty character, it’s fit for drinking now. Tru Wines LLC. —R.V.  

abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

81 **Domaine Zinck 2009 Eichberg Grand Cru Riesling (Alsace).** This is a really fragrant wine, with white hedgerow flowers that introduce its rich, full body. It has just a touch of sweetness from the ripe pear and quince flavors, although the texture also has a fine edge of minerality. Age for another 1–2 years. HB Wine Merchants. —R.V.  

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $35

80 **Domaine Zinck 2011 Riesling (Alsace).** There is some steeliness here, with a great burst of white currant, fragrant apple and a twist of lemon. This is crisp and fruity. Screwcap. HB Wine Merchants. —R.V.  

abv: 13%  
Price: $16

89 **Emile Beyer 2010 L’Hostellerie Pinot Gris (Alsace).** Here’s a wine that is rich and full bodied, tending toward dryness while still retaining all the ripe, spicy Pinot Gris character. It has apple, lychee and mango flavors, nicely mingling together, leaving a fresh, crisp finish. Michael Corso Selections. —R.V.  

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

88 **Domaine Wurth 2010 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This dry, spicy wine has its white fruit flavor layered over attractive acidity. It feels firm, and its flavors of almond and lychee are balanced with an austere structure. Give this wine at least three years. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V.  

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

87 **Emile Beyer 2010 Lieu dit Hohrain Pinot Gris (Alsace).** In 2007, this was produced as a late-harvest wine. In 2010, by contrast, it is a crisp, apple- and pear-flavored wine. It has bright fruit, lightly acidic and just an edge of sweetness. Michael Corso Selections. —R.V.  

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

86 **Domaine Wurth 2010 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** A ripe melon aroma follows through to a wine that is rich, open and generous. While it misses some freshness and acidity, its ripe, rounded fruit flavors are an enjoyable compensation. For short-term aging. T. Edward Wines Ltd. —R.V.  

abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

85 **Jean-Baptiste Adam 2011 Réserve Pinot Gris (Alsace).** The Adam family has been producing wine since 1674, a legacy that is distilled into this delicate, ripe, and fruity wine. It has an elegant balance between its acidity and its dried apricot flavor. Give this attractive wine a few months more in bottle. Winebow. —R.V.  

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

84 **Joseph Cattin 2010 Hertschbourg Grand Cru Pinot Gris (Alsace).** A ripe melon aroma follows through to a wine that is rich, open and generous. While it misses some freshness and acidity, its ripe, rounded fruit flavors are an enjoyable compensation. For short-term aging. T. Edward Wines Ltd. —R.V.  

abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

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abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

80 **Domaine Wurth 2008 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This is a really fragrant wine, with white hedgerow flowers that introduce its rich, full body. It has just a touch of sweetness from the ripe pear and quince flavors, although the texture also has a fine edge of minerality. Age for another 1–2 years. HB Wine Merchants. —R.V.  

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

79 **Domaine Wurth 2009 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This medium-dry wine is rich and rounded. It has concentrated flavors of spice, mango,
crisp lime and ripe apple. Full-bodied and rounded, it has a good shot of acidity. Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. —R.V.

**Trimbach 2008 Réserve Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This smooth, rounded Pinot Gris has just the right spice, acidity and warm, rich texture. Drink now for both freshness and richness. Esprit du Vin. —R.V.

**Domaine Ernst Burn 2009 Le Dauphin Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This sweet wine, almost gold in color, is ripe and round. Honey and peach notes complement spice and white pepper flavors. It is soft, rich and ready to drink. Its label does not warn of its sweetness. Encore Wine Imports. —R.V.

**Domaine Michel Fonne 2010 Tradition Pinot Gris (Alsace).** While the back label suggests that this wine is dry, it seems to taste sweet. It has honey and ripe apricot flavors that are lifted by the fresh acidity. The wine is all fruitiness—ready to drink. Scott Levy Selection. —R.V.

**Domaine Hugel 2008 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This Pinot Gris is on the dry side, but it still retains a spicy finish. Hermitage Cellars. —R.V.

**Domaine Leon Beyer 2010 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This dry Pinot Gris is lightly smoky, with fine acidity and rich, spicy fruit. It has a dense texture and full mouthfeel, with a concentrated finish that’s marked by passion fruit and lychee notes. Weygandt-Metzler. —R.V.

**Domaine Wildman & Sons 2010 Tradition Pinot Gris (Alsace).** Rich, soft and spicy, here is a wine, now-mature style of Pinot Gris. Its riper melon and peach flavors complement the lychee note. There is a touch of pepper that gives an edge to this rounded wine. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —R.V.

**Domaine Rieflé 2010 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** Intense, complex and full-bodied, this is a powerful Pinot Gris. It has weight and richness, providing both fruitiness and a ripe texture. Ready to drink, with the acidity lifting the finish. Maritime Wine Trading Collective. —R.V.

**Domaine Rieflé 2010 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This wine has just the right touches of acidity and spice. Made by the cooperative of Eguisheim, this is crisp and fragrant. It’s ready to drink now, but could age for a year. Kysela Père et Fils. —R.V.

**Wunsch & Mann 2009 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** The spice and fruit of this wine fall subordinate to the ripe fruit. Its character is curiously both sweet and dry. Made from selected parcels around Ribeauvillé. Planet Wine. —R.V.

**Wunsch & Mann 2009 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This wine is full of tropical fruit, with attractive, accessible acidity adding a crisp touch. Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC. —R.V.

**Wunsch & Mann 2009 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This is an attractive, fruity wine, expressing the spice and ripe fruit character of Pinot Gris. It is rich and full-bodied, with its white fruit with notes of mango and ginger. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —R.V.

**Wunsch & Mann 2009 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This Pinot Gris is on the dry side, but it still retains a spice note and a rich, fruity texture. It has weight and concentrated white fruit, needing a few months to develop and round out further. Screwcaps. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —R.V.

**Cave de Hunawihr 2010 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** Rich, ripe and medium sweet, this is characterized by its pure fruit flavors, which are dominated by notes of orange zest, honey and crisp lime. It has a tight, bright texture, leading to a fine, fragrant and spicy finish. Bacchus Imports, Inc. —R.V.

**Domaine Andrés Blanck et ses Fils 2010 Clos Schwendi Pinot Gris (Alsace).** Finely balanced, this has attractively honeyed aromas that lead to apricot, honey, lemon and light spice flavors. The wine is warm, yet with just the right acidity to keep it fresh. Vineyard Research. —R.V.

**Domaine Lautner 2010 Tradition Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This wine is full of tropical fruit, with attractive, accessible acidity adding a crisp touch. Biagio Cru & Estate Wines, LLC. —R.V.

**Domaine Schwulmberger 2009 Les Princes Abbés Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This dry Pinot Gris relies on its richness for power and concentration. From the steep, hillside Schlumberger Vineyards, this is dense and spicy; its acidity and mineral character are essential to its character. Age for a year, or drink now. Maisons Marques & Domaines USA. —R.V.

**Domaine Vignoble Schiavo 2009 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This Pinot Gris is rich and medium sweet, this is characterized by its pure fruit flavors, which are dominated by notes of orange zest, honey and crisp lime. It has a tight, bright texture, leading to a fine, fragrant and spicy finish. Bacchus Imports, Inc. —R.V.

**Domaine Chevalier 2009 Tradition Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This Pinot Gris is on the dry side, but it still retains a spice note and a rich, fruity texture. It has weight and concentrated white fruit, needing a few months to develop and round out further. Screwcaps. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —R.V.

**Domaine Pinard-Chichon 2009 Tradition Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This Pinot Gris is on the dry side, but it still retains a spice note and a rich, fruity texture. It has weight and concentrated white fruit, needing a few months to develop and round out further. Screwcaps. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —R.V.

**Domaine Hugel 2008 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This Pinot Gris is on the dry side, but it still retains a spice note and a rich, fruity texture. It has weight and concentrated white fruit, needing a few months to develop and round out further. Screwcaps. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —R.V.

**Domaine Johannisberg 2009 Tradition Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This Pinot Gris is on the dry side, but it still retains a spice note and a rich, fruity texture. It has weight and concentrated white fruit, needing a few months to develop and round out further. Screwcaps. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —R.V.

**Domaine Lautner 2009 Tradition Pinot Gris (Alsace).** This Pinot Gris is on the dry side, but it still retains a spice note and a rich, fruity texture. It has weight and concentrated white fruit, needing a few months to develop and round out further. Screwcaps. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —R.V.

**Domaine Leon Beyer 2010 Pinot Gris (Alsace).** In the dry Léon Beyer style, this is a dense, spice and lychee-flavored wine. It has richness, elegance and a deliciously pure acidity that cuts the ripeness. Aveniu Brands, Inc. —R.V.

**Domaine Michel Fonne 2010 Tradition Pinot Gris (Alsace).** While the back label suggests that this wine is dry, it seems to taste sweet. It has honey and ripe apricot flavors that are lifted by the fresh acidity. The wine is all fruitiness—ready to drink. Scott Levy Selection. —R.V.

**Domaine Wildman & Sons 2010 Tradition Pinot Gris (Alsace).** Rich, soft and spicy, here is a wine, now-mature style of Pinot Gris. Its riper melon and peach flavors complement the lychee note. There is a touch of pepper that gives an edge to this rounded wine. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —R.V.

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to a stale almond flavor. The acidity is the saving grace.

BCI LLC. — R.V.

**abv:** 13%  
**Price:** $NA

### PINOT BLANC

**91** Marc Kreydenweiss 2010 Kritt Pinot Blanc (Alsace). This wine develops slowly in the mouth, providing a finely structured, rich and elegant character. There’s a round white-fruit flavor that’s shot through with tart acidity. With its tight finish, it could age a few more months. Grape Expectations (CA). — R.V.

**abv:** NA  
**Price:** $16

**90** Domaine Barmes-Buecher 2010 Rosenberg Pinot Blanc (Alsace). This is a ripe and spicy wine, with great touches of lemon and acidity that partner with the rich quince and mango flavors. The wine is ripe and full bodied, a fine expression of a more complex side of Pinot Blanc. Vineyard Research. — R.V.

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

**89** André Blanck et ses Fils 2011 Rosenberg Pinot Blanc (Alsace). This is a ripe and spicy wine, with great touches of lemon and acidity that partner with the rich quince and mango flavors. The wine is ripe and full bodied, a fine expression of a more complex side of Pinot Blanc. Vineyard Research. — R.V.

**abv:** 13.5%  
**Price:** $NA

**89** Domaine Ernest Burn 2010 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). There’s a touch of spice in this rounded, ripe wine. It’s dry, with flavors of baked apple and cinnamon. Full, rich and flavorsome. Encore Wine Imports. — R.V.

**abv:** 13%  
**Price:** $NA

**89** Domaine Ostertag 2010 Barriques Pinot Blanc (Alsace). As its name indicates, "barriques" (barrels), this is that rare Pinot Blanc that is aged in wood. There’s a mere hint of toast, the main thrust of this delicious wine being its pear and honeyed apple flavors, with acidity cutting through at the end. Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. — R.V.

**abv:** 12%  
**Price:** $NA

**89** Domaine Zind-Humbrecht 2011 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). This is rich and concentrated, spice as well as pear and melon flavors. It is complex, with almond and nutmeg notes, balanced by the tart acidity that completes a full, ripe wine. The Sorting Table. — R.V.

**abv:** 13%  
**Price:** $24

**89** Domaine Zind-Humbrecht 2010 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). Rounded and honeyed, this is a wine that shows a sweeter side of Pinot Blanc, buoyed by fresh, juicy white-peach flavor. Full, rich and dense, this is fruity, yet it has a complex structure. The Sorting Table. — R.V.

**abv:** 13.5%  
**Price:** $24

**89** Henri Schoenheitz 2010 Val Saint-Gregoire Pinot Blanc (Alsace). Coming from the valley that leads to the city of Munster, of cheese fame, this rich, mineral-driven Pinot Blanc has both weight and balanced fruitiness. Its concentrated is apple flavor is threaded with taut acidity. OZ Wine Company. — R.V.

**abv:** 12%  
**Price:** $NA

**89** Louis Sipp 2010 Nature 5 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). Lively and crisp, fruity and bright, this has green apple and lime flavors that offer a taut, textured and very dry character. Fruity and concentrated, it is worth keeping an extra year. Baron Francois Ltd. — R.V.

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $NA

**88** André Kientzler 2010 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). This intense, dry, and fruity wine is packed with citrus flavor and laced with a lime zest texture. The wine is crisp, tangy and flavorful. Vin de Garde Wines. — R.V.

**abv:** 13%  
**Price:** $NA

**88** Domaine Fernand Engel 2010 Réserve Pinot Blanc (Alsace). This smooth, vanilla-and apricot-flavored wine is round and fruity. It is generous and full bodied, with ripe fruit that’s balanced by rich acidity. Fine, warm and opulent. Grape Expectations (CA). — R.V.

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $12

**88** Martin Schaezel 2010 Vieilles Vignes Pinot Blanc (Alsace). Made in a rich yet dry style, this is densely packed with full, ripe yellow fruit and pear flavors. It is full bodied, generous and round. AP Wine Imports. — R.V.

**abv:** 13%  
**Price:** $NA

**88** René Muré 2010 Signature Pinot Blanc (Alsace). A delicious aroma of creamed apple wafts from this wine, which has notes of tropical fruit, mango and ripe pear. It is opulent and rounded, with just the right amount of balancing acidity. Screwcap. Robert Kacher Selections. — R.V.

**abv:** 12%  
**Price:** $NA

**88** Willim 2011 Réserve Pinot Blanc (Alsace). Here’s a spicy, dry style of Pinot Blanc that shows considerable intensity of fruit, with its pear and apple complementing its dense texture. It has a full, rich character that’s structured and needing to age for a year. Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. — R.V.

**abv:** 12%  
**Price:** $NA

**87** Jean-Baptiste Adam 2011 Réserve Pinot Blanc (Alsace). The light, elegant style of this Pinot Blanc brings out its apple character and fresh acidity. It has an attractive tang of fruitiness as well as some sweetness on the finish. Winebow. — R.V.

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $NA

**87** Josmeyer 2009 Les Grands Voyageurs Pinot Blanc (Alsace). This is a soft, lightly honeyed wine, with an attractive balance between its sweet apple flavor and green-fruit-driven acidity. Ripe and warm, it is a fine apéritif. Domaine Select Wine Estates. — R.V.

**abv:** 12%  
**Price:** $NA

**87** Kuentz-Bas 2010 Tradition Pinot Blanc (Alsace). Fine, soft and round, this is a simple Pinot Blanc that’s fruity and creamy. Apples and pears dominate the fruit flavors, with a texture that is open and ready to drink. Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. — R.V.

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $NA

**87** Meyer-Fonné 2011 Vieilles Vignes Pinot Blanc (Alsace). A bright, apple-flavored wine, this is smooth and fragrant. The palate is clear, clean and fresh, with its light blend of citrus and green fruit. Age for a year, but also drink now. Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. — R.V.

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $NA

**86** Cave de Beblenheim 2010 Baron de Hoen Pinot Blanc (Alsace). Towards the dry end of the Pinot Blanc spectrum, this is a crisp, citrus-driven wine. It has fine acidity and a simple, open, fruity character. The texture is rich and well balanced. Screwcap The Other Wine & Spirits. — R.V.

**abv:** 12%  
**Price:** $12

**86** Domaine Charles Baur 2010 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). This is a light wine, attractively fruity with peach and apricot flavors. Intense acidity gives a fine kick to the texture, while also showing a dry, citrus-dominated side. Ready to drink. Grape News Importing. — R.V.

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

**86** Domaine François Schmitt 2010 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). This ripe, honeyed wine is very rich and smooth. Apricot and mango flavors dominate. Balance comes with the final tang of lemon zest acidity. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. — R.V.

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $NA

**86** Domaine Sipp-Mack 2010 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). There is a touch of minerality from the textured apple-skin flavor. The wine has a bright, lively feel to it, with green plum and grapefruit notes providing a fruity finish. Bacchus Imports, Inc. — R.V.

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $NA

**86** Dopff Au Moulin 2011 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). Crisp, attractive fruit flavors produce a wine that is bright, light, open. There’s a good tang of lemon zest accompanying the acidity that comes from the green fruit flavor. Ready to drink. Heritage Wine Cellars. — R.V.

**abv:** 12.5%  
**Price:** $NA
Jean Becker 2010 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). Soft and rounded, this has stewed pear and red apple flavors that give it an attractive, fruity feel. The acidity brings out a bright, crisp finish. Ideal Wine and Spirits Co. Inc. —R.V. abv: 12.5% Price: $NA

Leon Beyer 2010 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). Soft and fragrant, this has flavors of green plum and peach that complement the acidity and the soft and creamy finish. Aveniù Brands, Inc. —R.V. abv: 12.5% Price: $NA


Robert Klingenfus 2011 Signature Pinot Blanc (Alsace). This light, fruity wine gets its warm, rounded feel from the spicy, creamy apple and cantaloupe flavors. The crisp acidity adds balance. European Wine Imports. —R.V. abv: 11.5% Price: $NA

Frédéric Mallo 2009 Pinot Blanc (Alsace). A yeast aroma leads to a wine that is soft, with sulfur and brioche flavors masking the attractive apple note. USA Wine Imports. —R.V. abv: 12% Price: $NA

Kuentz-Bas 2010 Trois Chateaux Sylvaner (Alsace). The name Trois Chateaux (three castles) refers to the three ruined towers that loom over the Kuentz-Bas village of Hussen. The wine, produced from biodynamic grapes, is deliciously fruity, with a spicy element here the Pinot Gris in the blend, giving a piquancy to the white fruit flavor. It is warm, rounded and fragrant. Screwcap. A.I. Selections. —R.V. abv: 13% Price: $NA

Clément Klur 2011 Gentil de Katz (Alsace). Soft and ripe, smooth and creamy, this has a spicy element here the Pinot Gris in the blend, giving a piquancy to the white fruit flavor. It is warm, rounded and fragrant. Screwcap. Daniel Johnnes Wines. —R.V. abv: 13% Price: $NA

Mittnacht Frères 2011 Cuvée Goyotaku (Alsace). This off-dry wine is aromatic and honeyed. It has enough richness to pair with sushi and soy sauce. Screwcap. Daniel Johnnes Wines. —R.V. abv: 13% Price: $NA

Domaine Schoffit 2010 Vieilles Vignes Auxerrois (Alsace). Just off-dry, this ripe, yellow-fruited wine is smooth and immediately drinkable. Pinot Auxerrois, a clone of Pinot Noir mainly found in Alsace and neighboring Lorraine, gives a soft, rich and creamy wine that’s laced with lightly herbal acidity. Robert Kacher Selections. —R.V. abv: 12.5% Price: $NA

Domaine Ehrhart 2010 Val St. Grégoire Auxerrois (Alsace). This creeps up slowly, gradually revealing its rich, spicy character that’s laced with creamed pear and vanilla. What it lacks in fresh acidity, it certainly makes up for in ripeness. A.I. Selections. —R.V. abv: 13% Price: $NA
a crisp, floral finish. Screwcap. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V.  
abv: 12%  
Price: $NA

85 Pierre Sparr 2011 One (Alsace). This has a soft texture and an attractive apple flavor, with light acidity. Bright and fruity, it’s ready to drink, just hinting at pepper and spice on the finish. Screwcap. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —R.V.  
abv: 12%  
Price: $14

86 Domaine François Schmitt 2011 Bollenberg Auxerrois (Alsace). This soft, gentle wine is defined by its notes of pepper and spice. The light acidity is just a hint in the full, rounded palate. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

SPARKLING WINES

88 Domaine Zinck NV Brut (Crémant d’Alsace). A blend of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc, this is a delicious, apple-flavored wine. It’s fruity, very crisp and fresh, with an orange zest edge and lively mousse. It’s a fine apéritif sparkling. HB Wine Merchants. —R.V.  
abv: 12%  
Price: $22

87 Pierre Sparr NV Brut Rosé (Crémant d’Alsace). This lively, raspberry- and redcurrant-flavored wine has just the right tang of acidity to create its crisp feel. Fruity and fragrant, it features a touch of minerality to add further texture. Wilson Daniels Ltd. —R.V.  
abv: 12%  
Price: $20

88 Domaine Zinck NV Brut Rosé (Crémant d’Alsace). A pale rosé in color, this light and fruity wine has a fresh raspberry flavor, with a zingy texture that gives attractive acidity. It’s light and creamy, hinting at yeastiness on the finish. HB Wine Merchants. —R.V.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $25

PINOT NOIR

89 Domaine Albert Mann 2009 Clos de la Faille Pinot Noir (Alsace). With some earthy aromas, this is a rich wine. It has weight, layers of wood and attractive strawberry flavor. The fruitiness is contained within a firm tannin shell that suggests the wine could age. Weygandt-Metzler. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

90 Cave de Ribeauvillé 2009 Grande Cuvée Pinot Noir (Alsace). A full-bodied, ripe Pinot Noir that has gained concentration from the vintage, this has red plum and raspberry flavors, with smooth tannins and a dense texture. There is a smoky note from the wood. Planet Wine. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

91 Château d’Orschwihr 2008 Zinnkoepflé Grand Cru Pinot Gris (Alsace). Though not indicated as such on its label, this is a sweet wine. It has spiced, ripe fruit flavors, notably pear, which are deliciously laced with honey and cinnamon notes. There is also a fine streak of lively acidity that keeps this very fresh. DS Trading Co. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $23

92 J. Dumangin Fils 2004 Vintage Premier Cru Brut (Champagne). Ripe yet crisp, this is a fine reflection of the excellent 2004 vintage in Champagne. It has a rich texture with concentrated apple, pineapple and toast notes, along with a tangy orange-zest character. Ready to drink now, but it will certainly age. Palateur Imports. Cellar Selection. —R.V.  
abv: 12%  
Price: $55

93 Louis Roederer 2007 Brut Rosé (Champagne). A structured, crisp and mineral-driven wine, this merely hints at raspberry flavors but is dedicated to a steely character. That suggests youth, and the wine, with its tense texture, could well age over several more years. For now, this is an impressive wine that demands pairing with food. Maisons Marques & Domaines USA. Cellar Selection. —R.V.  
abv: 12%  
Price: $72

94 Domaine Bott-Geyl 2008 Sonnenglanz Grand Cru Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This is sweet and rich, featuring ripe, spicy fruit, a hint of honey and an opulent texture. Now mature, this is rounded and delicious. Winebow. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

95 Louis Roederer 2006 Blanc de Blancs Brut (Champagne). Roederer takes the natural elegance of a blanc de blancs to an extra level. This is so stylish, its white fruit and lemon flavors are touched with the minerality, and the acidity is nearly absorbed into the texture of the wine. Like many Roederer vintages on release, this should be aged, so give it 4–5 years. Maisons Marques & Domaines USA. Cellar Selection. —R.V.  
abv: 12%  
Price: $78

DESSERT WINES

96 Rieflé 2010 Pinot Noir (Alsace). This is a wine with good depth of flavor. The toast and wood characters are already balancing well with the soft, juicy fruit and acidity. It will age for 2–3 years and round out. Serendipity Wine Imports. —R.V.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $NA

97 Charles Ellner 2002 Millésime Brut (Champagne). This retains so much freshness, with just a hint of toasting showing at the back of a wine that otherwise projects minerality, a tight structure and intense citrus acidity. It should be aged for several more years. Massanos Imports. Editors’ Choice. —R.V.  
abv: 12%  
Price: $79

98 Domaine Brown 2008 Tradition Pinot Noir (Alsace). This is a wood-aged wine that has some weight. There’s a strong toast character from the wood, contrasting with the ripe plum flavor. European Wine Imports. —R.V.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $26

99 Domaine Marcel Deiss 2009 Rouge Pinot Noir (Alsace). This earthy, light-weight wine has wild strawberry flavor along with citrus-driven acidity that gives the red fruits a taut quality. Tannins and a dry edge suggest it needs a few more months before drinking. Angels’ Share Wine Imports, LLC. —R.V.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $NA

100 Hugel 2009 Pinot Noir (Alsace). Hugel has always made a benchmark Pinot Noir. This has weight and richness. It does have a strong wood content that provides some bitterness, though it is rounded out by the note of ripe red plum, lifted by final acidity. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —R.V.  
abv: 11.5%  
Price: $NA

CHAMPAGNE VINTAGE

88 Hugel 2005 Pinot Noir (Alsace). This is a wood-aged wine that has some weight. There’s a strong toast character from the wood, contrasting with the ripe plum flavor. European Wine Imports. —R.V.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $NA

89 Domaine Bott-Geyl 2008 Sonnenglanz Grand Cru Gewürztraminer (Alsace). This is sweet and rich, featuring ripe, spicy fruit, a hint of honey and an opulent texture. Now mature, this is rounded and delicious. Winebow. —R.V.  
abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

90 Cave de Ribeauvillé 2007 Gloeckelberg Grand Cru Pinot Gris (Alsace). This rich, sweet wine is honeyed, with a crisp, balancing lemon character. It is full and rich, touched by spice as well as mango and yellow peach. A delicious dessert wine, this is now ready to drink. Planet Wine. —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

91 Domaine Ferrer 2009 Pinot Noir (Alsace). This is rich, but never too rich, allowing some acidity to shine. It is ready to drink now, though it will age for several more years. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. Cellar Selection. —R.V.  
abv: 12%  
Price: $78
92 Pannier 2002 Egérie Extra Brut (Champagne). This certainly has maturity, giving it toasty flavors and a touch of oxidation. But it balances that with ripe yellow fruit, ripe acidity and a firm texture. It’s rich and complex, balancing ripe fruit and more a rounded finish. Don’t age it, though—enjoy it with food now. Aviva Vino. —R.V. 
abv: 12% | Price: $NA

91 Chapuy 2004 Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Réserve Brut (Champagne). This is a mature, rich wine from an excellent vintage in Champagne. The wine has toast as well as lemon and grapefruit flavors, giving weight and complexity. Although this is ready to drink, it could probably age a few more years. The Wine List Inc. Cellar Selection. —R.V. 
abv: 12.5% | Price: $48

91 Charles Ellner 2002 Séduction Brut (Champagne). This has a touch of toast and a rich character. A creamed pear note mingle with lime-driven acidity and a delicious, warm tropical-fruit aftertaste. Massanos Imports. —R.V. 
abv: 12% | Price: $60

91 Pannier 2004 Blanc de Blancs Brut (Champagne). This balances crisp citrus and apple flavors with a touch of toast to make for a dry, full-bodied wine. Aviva Vino. —R.V. 
abv: 12% | Price: $NA

90 Pannier 2006 Cuvée Louis Eugène Vintage Blanc de Noirs Brut (Champagne). A blend of the two Pinots used in Champagne—Noir and Meunier—this rich yet soft wine from a lesser vintage is rounded, smooth and ripe. It is well balanced, crisp, rich and full of attractive red-currant and orange zest fruitiness. Aviva Vino. —R.V. 
abv: 12% | Price: $NA

90 Pannier 2005 Vintage Brut (Champagne). This is a mature and toasty vintage, showing notes of yeast, croissant and toast flavors. The fruit is still there, with notes of quince, pear and green plum partnered with acidity. It is balanced, ripe and ready to drink now. Aviva Vino. —R.V. 
abv: 12% | Price: $NA

92 J. Dumangin Fils NV Grande Réserve Premier Cru Brut (Champagne). From the family-owned J. Dumangin, this is a full, fruity, ripe wine that’s full of sweet apple and lime flavors, with a bright orange-zest texture. It’s also more serious than this fruitiness suggests, with dense flavor and concentration that promises to age. Palateur Imports. —R.V. 
abv: 12% | Price: $53

90 Chapuy NV Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Réserve Brut (Champagne). Chapuy is a négociant based in Mesnil-sur-Oger in the Chardonnay vineyards of the Côte des Blancs. This wine, made from grapes sourced exclusively from grand cru vineyards, is all citrus, mineral and apple skin flavors. It’s a tight, taut effort with a crisp texture and a note of grapefruit on

87 Chapuy NV Tradition Brut (Champagne). Chapuy’s nonvintage blend is soft and creamy. It is full in the mouth, with almond, pear and orange peel flavors. The acidity of this relatively sweet wine is late to arrive but balanced once it emerges. Ready to drink. The Wine List Inc. —R.V. 
abv: 12.5% | Price: $32

87 Pannier NV Rosé Brut (Champagne). This is a mousse-filled, lively, orange-pink wine. Its red fruit flavors are balanced nicely by fresh apple-driven acidity, while the structure of the wine is light and easy, emphasizing fruitiness. Aviva Vino. —R.V. 
abv: 12% | Price: $NA

84 Ernest Rapeneau NV Premier Cru Grande Réserve Brut (Champagne). This tastes soft and almost off-dry, despite its brut label. The flavors are of off-ripe apple, creamed pear and a light taste of acidity. It’s all fine and in balance, it just misses vivacity and freshness. G.K. Skaggs, Inc. —R.V. 
abv: 12% | Price: $40

BEAUJOLAIS

MORGON

91 Domaine de Leyre-Loup 2009 Réserve Louis Leyre-Loup Cuvée d’Exception (Morgon). This is a dense and rich wine, showing the power of a Morgon and the ripeness of the vintage. It is full bodied, dense and firmly tannic, with red plum and sweet cherry flavors. Keep this fine wine for another 2–3 years. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. Cellar Selection. —R.V. 
abv: NA | Price: $NA

91 Georges Duboeuf 2011 Domaine Mont Chavy (Morgon). This big, burly effort is structured and solidly textured. It has weight accompanying the blackberry flavor, with a firm character that demands aging over at least 18 months. The finish is still firm and concentrated. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. Editors’ Choice. —R.V. 
abv: NA | Price: $NA

91 Georges Duboeuf 2009 Cuvée Prestige (Morgon). A solid and chunky wine, this balances a rich structure with ripe, rounded fruit. Acidity cuts through the complex texture to give a juicy, fragrant feel. It’s worth aging another year. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. 
abv: NA | Price: $NA

90 Georges Duboeuf 2011 Côte de Py (Morgon). This is a solid, structured, mineral-driven wine from a famous vineyard. It is firm and dense, its big plum and berry flavors are supported by dry tannins and an herbal spice character. With its firm style, it needs to age for at least two years. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. 
abv: NA | Price: $NA

90 Georges Duboeuf 2011 Domaine Chaponne (Morgon). Firm tannins and its dark plum and blackberry fruits all point to a structured wine that has aging potential. It is ripe, with black cher-
ry and spice notes that are balanced with acidity. Keep for one year. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2011 Domaine Jean Descombes (Morgon). This big, ripe, fruity wine balances its fruit with a core of firm tannins. It's dense, with a dusty texture, a sweet blackberry-jam flavor and final acidity. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2011 Domaine Javernière (Morgon). This is a firmly structured wine, but its black cherry flavor is marred by banana sweetness. Otherwise the wine is solid and tannic, with light acidity on the finish. Age for a year. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2011 Sélection (Morgon). Black currant and red cherry flavors come together with a core of tannins, creating a wine that is ripe, floral and lightly structured. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2011 Domaine des Bois (Fleurie). This is a structured wine, showing the firm tannins of a 2010 Beaujolais. Under the dry surface, the rich, juicy fruit is there, balanced with acidity, red fruit and a dense texture. Age for at least another year. Serge Doré Selections. —R.V. abv: 13% Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2010 La Chapelle des Bois (Fleurie). This is a structured wine, showing the firm tannins of a 2010 Beaujolais. Under the dry surface, the rich, juicy fruit is there, balanced with acidity, red fruit and a dense texture. Age for at least another year. Serge Doré Selections. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2010 Réserve Louis Leyre-Loup (Fleurie). This is a perfumed wine with violet aromas and a fragrant character. It has soft plum and cherry flavors, its acidity shaped by ripe fruits. There is a touch of structure that provides a fine finish. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2010 Clos des Garands (Fleurie). This is a structured wine with firm tannins, showing a good balance of red berry and cherry juice flavors. It is rich and likely to soften over the next year into something warm and fruity. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2010 La Madone (Fleurie). This taut, structured wine achieves a balance between red berry flavors and dry, firm tannins. It has a herbal edge and a solid, dense texture. It powers through with intense acidity on the finish. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2010 Sélection (Fleurie). This tight, solid wine has more black currant than berry flavor, with a taut, dry character. It seems to lack some depth of fruit. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2011 L'Héronde (Côte de Brouilly). This rich, juicy wine is bursting with red fruits that are ready to drink. This is a ripe, full-bodied, friendly wine with just an edge of tannin and acidity to hold it all together. Serge Doré Selections. —R.V. abv: 13% Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2009 Cuvée Prestige (Côte de Brouilly). This is soft and ripe, with red cherry and strawberry notes. It has a light tannic texture, with acidity and a broad, rich finish. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2011 Sélection (Côte de Brouilly). This attractively fruity effort features bitter cherry and raspberry flavors along with a light, tannic structure and acidity. The wine has weight and the chance to age over the next few months. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2011 Château du Prieuré (Brouilly). A soft, fragrant red-cherries flavor dominates this fruity, open and easy wine. Very ready to drink, it has attractive acidity and a light spice to the finish. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2009 Cuvée Prestige (Juliénas). A rich and rounded wine from a top Beaujolais vintage, this is ripe and full, packed with black cherry flavor and tannins that have now fully integrated into this warm wine. Drink now, although it could age longer. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Georges Duboeuf 2011 Sélection (Juliénas). Structured and dense, this has a solid feel to it that still preserves its attractive, fragrant character. Black plum notes provide a twist of acidity as well as a perfumed finish. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

L. Tramier et Fils 2011 Beaujolais-Villages. This is fruity Beaujolais with a sense of structure. It has a red cherry flavor that’s laced with lively acidity, making this juicy and very drinkable. At the same time, the light tannins add a food-friendly element. Luxe Vintages. —R.V. abv: 13% Price: $14

Georges Duboeuf 2011 Domaine Paradis (Saint-Amour). Simple and fruity, this has berry flavors that mingle with floral acidity, soft tannins and a rounded texture. Ready to drink. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Jaffelin 2010 Beaujolais-Villages. There is some of the structure characteristic of 2010 Beaujolais in this wine, but it is mainly dominated by a red cherry flavor and fresh acidity. It’s ripe, fruity and ready to drink. Epic Wines. —R.V. abv: 12% Price: $14

Domaine Chasselay 2010 L’Héronde (Côte de Brouilly). This rich, juicy wine is bursting with red fruits that are ready to drink. This is a ripe, full-bodied, friendly wine with just an edge of tannin and acidity to hold it all together. Serge Doré Selections. —R.V. abv: 13% Price: $NA

Domaine Chasselay 2010 La Chapelle des Bois (Fleurie). This is a structured wine, showing the firm tannins of a 2010 Beaujolais. Under the dry surface, the rich, juicy fruit is there, balanced with acidity, red fruit and a dense texture. Age for at least another year. Serge Doré Selections. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Domaine de Leyre-Loup 2010 Fleurie. Just bottled, this wine is young, fruity and full of black cherry and red plum flavors. Combined with this is a firm character and a structure of tannins that demand aging over at least 2–3 years. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Domaine de Leyre-Loup 2011 Fleurie. This soft and ripe, with red cherry and strawberry notes. It has a light tannic texture, with acidity and a broad, rich finish. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Domaine de Leyre-Loup 2011 Clos des Garands (Fleurie). This is a structured wine with firm tannins, showing a good balance of red berry and cherry juice flavors. It is rich and likely to soften over the next year into something warm and fruity. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Domaine Girardin 2011 Cuvée Prestige (Fleurie). This is a lush and satisfying Rivesaltes Ambré, this is ripe and full, packed with black cherry flavor and tannins that have now fully integrated into this warm wine. Drink now, although it could age longer. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Domaine de Leyre-Loup 2010 Réserve Louis Leyre-Loup (Fleurie). This is a perfumed wine with violet aromas and a fragrant character. It has soft plum and cherry flavors, its acidity shaped by ripe fruits. There is a touch of structure that provides a fine finish. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Domaine de Leyre-Loup 2011 Sélection (Fleurie). This tight, solid wine has more black currant than berry flavor, with a taut, dry character. It seems to lack some depth of fruit. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Domaine Girardin 2011 Cuvée Prestige (Fleurie). This soft and ripe, with red cherry and strawberry notes. It has a light tannic texture, with acidity and a broad, rich finish. Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits. —R.V. abv: NA Price: $NA

Domaine Cazes 1996 Ambré (Rivesaltes). This is a lush and satisfying Rivesaltes Ambré, made from 100% White Grenache and aged in oak for seven years. There's a gorgeous ramno quality to the wine with notes of almond and orange rind throughout, framed by aromas and flavors of quince paste, wood-grilled peach, fruit cake and caramelized date. The long
91 Domaine Cazes 2008 Biodynamie (Muscat de Rivesaltes). This biodynamic Muscat is direct and focused, with a ripe core of stone fruit, melon rind and sweet citrus notes, framed by touches of waxy honeycomb, white flower and soft baking spice. A hint of toast lingers on the long finish, and the mouthfeel is full and lush without feeling viscous, thanks to the vibrant acidity. Robert Kacher Selections. Editors’ Choice. —L.B. 

abv: 15.6% 

Price: $36/375 ml

91 Mas Amiel NV Cuvée Spéciale 10 Ans d’Âge (Maury). Aged in glass demi-johns for one year and oak tuns for nine, this is a mature selection that’s ready to drink now, though it can certainly keep for many more years to come. A beautiful rancio characteristic leads, with aromas of walnut shell, orange oil and earthy spice fill the bouquet. Skin-driven fruit flavors of cherry and plum dominate the gripping palate, while the complex finish reveals accents of black tea, licorice root and baking spice. North Berkeley Imports. Editors’ Choice. —L.B. 

abv: 16.5% 

Price: $21

90 Domaine de la Coume du Roy 2008 Maury. This is a brooding selection, with layers of dark fruits (think blackberry, plum and cherry), chewing tobacco and bay leaf alongside a hint of vanilla bean. The palate is rich and dense, with a texture like crushed satin. Tight and flavorful now, this would benefit from a bit more time in the cellar; try after 2015. Bradley Alan Imports LLC. —L.B. 

abv: 16.5% 

Price: $24/500 ml

89 Laurent de Bescombles Singla 2003 Héritage du Temps (Rivesaltes). Notes of burnt caramel, dried date, mocha and fresh savory herb like thyme and bay leaf complement the umami and burnt caramel, dried date, mocha and fresh savory herb. A hint of toast lingers on the long finish, and the mouthfeel is full and lush without feeling viscous, thanks to the vibrant acidity. Robert Kacher Selections. Editors’ Choice. —L.B. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $21

89 Vignobles de Beaumes de Venise NV Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. A lush, decadent style of Muscat de Beaumes de Venise, this is ripe and viscous, filled with honeyed apricot and tangerine flavors. The merest hint of bitterness on the lengthy finish helps to balance the considerable sweetness. William Harrison Imports. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $24/500 ml

88 Vignobles de la Méditerranée NV Les Petits Grains (Muscat de Saint-Jean de Minervois). Although slightly unctuous, this decadent selection is hard to turn down thanks to its enticing aromas and flavors of honeyed apricot, preserved peach and quince paste. A soft accent of crushed rose petal adds depth to the nose, while a lingering gingery spice flavor freshens up the finish. Pasternak Wine Imports. —L.B. 

abv: 16% 

Price: $14/375 ml

88 Les Vignerons de la Méditerranée NV Resplandy (Muscat de Saint-Jean de Minervois). Lush, ripe and a touch heady, this is a rich selection that’s brimming with notes of white peach, quince, melon and red apple. Thankfully, hints of ginger, nectarine pit and citron rind add lift to the palate and remain through the medium-length finish. Clock Tower Imports. —L.B. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $12/375 ml

88 Domaine de Beaumalric 2010 Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. Honeyed and rich without being heavy, this is one of the sweeter versions of Muscat de Beaumes de Venise, yet it maintains a sense of poise throughout. Pineapple, nectarine and citrus linger on the finish. Robert Kacher Selections. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $17/375 ml

88 M. Chapoutier 2009 Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. Metaphorically speaking, Chapoutier has put this wine right down the center of the fairway. An orange blossom aroma marks the nose, while melon and tangerine flavors take over on the palate. It’s all remarkably balanced and pure, remaining long and refreshing on the palate. Try it as an aperitif. Terlato Wines International. —J.C. 

abv: 15.5% 

Price: $30/500 ml

87 Cave de Rasteau ND (Vin Doux Naturel Rasteau). A rare rosé style of VDN Rasteau, this nonvintage cuvée is pale copper in color, with aromas and flavors of peach and toasted almond.

abv: 15% 

Price: $30/500 ml

87 Croix Milhas 2011 Rivesaltes Rosé. Officially launched in 2011, this is a fresh and fruity style of the classic fortified wine. Lively notes of strawberry and cream, white cherry and fresh bay leaf dance on the nose, while the palate balances flavors of small red berry and vanilla spice. Sopexa USA. —L.B. 

abv: 16% 

Price: $27/500 ml

87 Les Clos de Paillules 2009 Rimage (Banyuls). Notes of dried dark berry, leathery spice, sweet tobacco and chocolate-covered cherry fill the nose of this wine. The satiny texture pairs well with the dusty tannins, and additional flavors of prune, sweet smoke and fresh caramel linger through the medium-length finish. Pasternak Wine Imports. —L.B. 

abv: 16% 

Price: $24/500 ml

87 Domaine des Bernardins 2010 Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. This is made using both white and red versions of Muscat, which accounts for its pale copper color. The bouquet is floral and rose-like, with a bit of nasturtium-like pepperiness as well. It’s weighty and slightly warm, decadently rich in peach, white chocolate and honey flavors that linger on the persistent finish. Kysela Père et Fils. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $31

87 Vignobles de Balma Venitia NV Tradition Rosé (Muscat de Beaumes de Venise). Pale copper in color, this wine boasts classic Muscat floral notes and citrus-driven aromas. On the palate, it’s plump and mouthfilling but not heavy, with melon, peach and tangerine flavors anticipating a long finish. William Harrison Imports. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $24/500 ml

87 Vignobles de Balma Venitia NV Rosé (Muscat de Beaumes de Venise). It’s deep garnet in color, made solely from Muscat à Petits Grains Noir, with unique aromas reminiscent of pomegranate and cherry, and a slightly peppery note. Medium-bodied and silky in texture, it has a long finish that hints at leather, earth and cocoa. William Harrison Imports. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $24/500 ml

87 M. Chapoutier 2010 Rimage (Banyuls). Dark fruits like blackberry, raspberry and black plum lead the bouquet, with supporting aromas of milk chocolate and purple flower. Balanced and approachable, it has a crushed velvet texture that’s complemented by the skin-driven fruit and dusty cocoa flavors on the palate. Terlato Wines International. —L.B. 

abv: 16% 

Price: $29/500 ml

87 Vignobles La Coterie 2006 Balma Venitia (Muscat de Beaumes de Venise). For full review see page 11. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $19

87 Cave de Rasteau 2009 Signature (Vin Doux Naturel Rasteau). The 2009 vintage was a warm, dry one in the southern Rhône, lending itself to the production of rich dessert wines like this one. Plum and chocolate notes dominate, but there’s also complexity in the form of cinnamon and clove. It’s full bodied and softly tannic, with lingering notes of cocoa powder and dried spice on the finish. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. —J.C. 

abv: 17% 

Price: $28

87 Domaine des Bernardins 2010 Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. This wine is made using both white and red versions of Muscat, which accounts for its pale copper color. The bouquet is floral and rose-like, with a bit of nasturtium-like pepperiness as well. It’s weighty and slightly warm, decadently rich in peach, white chocolate and honey flavors that linger on the persistent finish. Kysela Père et Fils. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $31

87 Vignobles de Balma Venitia NV Tradition Rosé (Muscat de Beaumes de Venise). Pale copper in color, this wine boasts classic Muscat floral notes and citrus-driven aromas. On the palate, it’s plump and mouthfilling but not heavy, with melon, peach and tangerine flavors anticipating a long finish. William Harrison Imports. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $24/500 ml

87 Vignobles de Beaumes de Venise NV Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. A lush, decadent style of Muscat de Beaumes de Venise, this is ripe and viscous, filled with honeyed apricot and tangerine flavors. The merest hint of bitterness on the lengthy finish helps to balance the considerable sweetness. William Harrison Imports. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $24/500 ml

87 Vignobles de Balma Venitia NV Rouge Venise (Muscat de Beaumes de Venise). It’s deep garnet in color, made solely from Muscat à Petits Grains Noir, with unique aromas reminiscent of pomegranate and cherry, and a slightly peppery note. Medium-bodied and silky in texture, it has a long finish that hints at leather, earth and cocoa. William Harrison Imports. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $30/500 ml

87 Vignobles de Balma Venitia 2009 Château Baroncelli (Muscat de Beaumes de Venise). This wine’s aromas are strongly citrusy, with a squeeze of lime zest that gives it a lively sensation, but the flavors are more sedate and ripe, veering gently into apricots and melons. The texture is lush and luxurious, while the finish is undeniably sweet and decadent. William Harrison Imports. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $29/500 ml

87 Domaine de Beaumalric 2010 Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. Honeyed and rich without being heavy, this is one of the sweeter versions of Muscat de Beaumes de Venise, yet it maintains a sense of poise throughout. Pineapple, nectarine and citrus linger on the finish. Robert Kacher Selections. —J.C. 

abv: 15% 

Price: $17/375 ml

87 M. Chapoutier 2009 Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. Metaphorically speaking, Chapoutier has put this wine right down the center of the fairway. An orange blossom aroma marks the nose, while melon and tangerine flavors take over on the palate. It’s all remarkably balanced and pure, remaining long and refreshing on the palate. Try it as an aperitif. Terlato Wines International. —J.C. 

abv: 15.5% 

Price: $30/500 ml

87 Cave de Rasteau ND (Vin Doux Naturel Rasteau). A rare rosé style of VDN Rasteau, this nonvintage cuvée is pale copper in color, with aromas and flavors of peach and toasted almond.
It’s nicely silky in texture, with a mouthwatering finish. Fruit of the Vines, Inc. —J.C.

**WHITE WINES**

### NORTHERN ITALY

#### Colterenzio 2010 Lafóa Sauvignon (Alto Adige). This is a gorgeous expression of Sauvignon that boasts enormous focus and precision in terms of its aromatic delivery. It has notes of citrus, almond, tomato leaf, dried basil and exotic fruit. The mouthfeel is solid in structure and refreshingly crisp on the finish. Empire Merchants. —M.L.

- **abv:** 14%
- **Price:** $42

#### Kellerei Kaltern Caldarro 2009 Giovanelli Sauvignon Blanc (Alto Adige). This is a beautiful Sauvignon Blanc that has the aromatic intensity and crispness expected from the best expressions of the variety. Background tones of citrus, herb and spicy ginger add personality and overall momentum. Omnivines Distribution. —M.L.

- **abv:** 14.5%
- **Price:** $44

#### Cantina Produttori San Michele Appiano 2010 Sant'Valentino Pinot Bianco (Alto Adige). This opens with stone fruit, citrus, honey and yellow rose notes. The mouthfeel is thick and rich, and the wine moves with silky grace across the palate. Martin Scott Wines. —M.L.

- **abv:** 14%
- **Price:** $38

#### Colterenzio 2010 Atisis Corneli Gewürztraminer (Alto Adige). This fragrant Gewürztraminer from one of the best producers in northern Italy offers aromas of jasmine and honeysuckle, with background tones of apricot and candied exotic fruit. It’s creamy and rich on the finish. Empire Merchants. —M.L.

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

#### Colte Rot 2011 L’Autico Pinot Grigio (Alto Adige). Elegant and sophisticated, this has soft aromas of apricot, honey, citrus and pear. Fresh acidity is followed by a touch of savory spice. Omnivines Distribution. —M.L.

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

#### Le Due Terre 2009 Sacrisassi Bianco (Colli Orientali del Friuli). A gorgeous blend of Friulano and Ribolla Gialla, this dense and rich white would pair with crab or lobster. It opens with creamy tones of stone fruit and citrus mousse, followed by slight touches of spice and vanilla. Indie Wineries. —M.L.

- **abv:** 14%
- **Price:** $44

#### Livio Felluga 2010 Sauvignon (Collio). Livio Felluga produces an excellent Sauvignon that shows beautiful characteristics of the variety. Creamy, rich and intensely aromatic, this opens with citrus, green fruit and tomato leaf notes. The density of the mouthfeel gives the wine momentum and persistence. MW Imports. —M.L.

- **abv:** 12.5%
- **Price:** $26

#### Livio Felluga 2011 Vertigo (Delle Venezie). This is a creamy and very well-executed blend of Chardonnay and Ribolla Gialla that opens with exciting aromas of stone fruit, citrus and honey, plus tiny touches of candy and butterscotch (a common aromatic characteristic of Ribolla Gialla). MW Imports. —M.L.

- **abv:** 12.5%
- **Price:** $21

#### Lechthaler 2011 Pinot Grigio (Trentino). Aged only in stainless steel in order to preserve the freshness of its citrus and peach aromas, this would wash down with spicy barbecued shrimp or vegetable dumplings. The finish is crisp and sharp. Vias Imports. —M.L.

- **abv:** 13%
- **Price:** $12

#### Pasyos 2009 Ponka (Venezia Giulia). This vino naturale (the wine is not filtered and has no added sulfites) opens with intense aromas of butterscotch, candied fruit, apricot and honey. The blend is Chardonnay, Sauvignon and Malvasia, and it tastes slightly oxidized overall. Free Run Partners, I.L.C. —M.L.

- **abv:** 13.5%
- **Price:** $22

#### Ricci Curbastro 2011 Pinot Bianco (Sebino). Packaged in an easy screwcap bottle, this fresh white wine pairs perfectly with seafood, white meat or grilled vegetables. Pinot Bianco offers the structure to stand up to those foods, plus fresh peach aromas that are not a distraction. Grappoli Imports. —M.L.

- **abv:** 11.5%
- **Price:** $15

#### Tommasi 2011 Le Rosse Pinot Grigio (Delle Venezie). This is a fresh and informal white that would pair with Thai shrimp salad with mango. It is Pinot Grigio in its easiest and most approachable form. Vintus LLC. —M.L.

- **abv:** 12%
- **Price:** $15

#### Torre di Luna 2011 Sauvignon (Delle Venezie). Torre di Luna is an Italian brand you can count on for value and good cheer. This offers crisp aromas of citrus and tomato leaf, followed by a fresh mouthfeel. Vias Imports. —M.L.

- **abv:** 13%
- **Price:** $12
SPARKLING WINE

La Montina 2007 Brut Millesimato (Franciacorta). Here is a smooth, supple sparkling wine, with bright aromas of citrus, stone fruit, apricot, baked bread and even a touch of piquant white peppercorn. The mouthfeel is full and generous, with fine, tonic perlage on the finish. Vino Direct. —M.L.  abv: 12.5%  Price: $NA

Cantina Prodottori San Michele Appiano 2009 Pinot Nero (Alto Adige). This is aged carefully in large oak casks to give the wine softness, without taking away from its red fruit intensity. Wild blueberry, raspberry, licorice and dried ginger notes appear on the bouquet. Martin Scott Wines. —M.L.  abv: 13.5%  Price: $17

Comelli 2008 Soffumbengo (Delle Venezie). A blend of Merlot, Cabernet and Refosco that’s aged in French oak, this opens with bold, black intensity, bearing notes of dark fruit, ripe blackberry and sweet spice. The mouthfeel is chewy and soft, with a touch of pulpyness on the close. Peter Warren Selections. —M.L.  abv: 14%  Price: $20

Ricci Curbastro 2008 Vigna Santella del Gròm (Curtefranca). A blend of Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Carminere, Merlot and Barbera, this simple, bright red blend offers simple layers of cherry and blackberry, with background tones of black olive and cheese rind. Imports Inc. —M.L.  abv: 13.5%  Price: $26


FONDAZIONE EDMUND MACH 2009 CASTEL SAN MICHELE (TRENTINO). This beautiful blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc opens with a dark color and velvety aromas of red fruit and spice, plus savory layers of leather and dried tobacco at the back. Those mountain vineyards also render a lasting sensation of freshness and elegance. Vias Imports. —M.L.  abv: 14%  Price: $NA

NIEDERMAYR JOSEF 2008 PRECIOS PIÑONERO (ALTO ADIGE). This Italian Pinot Nero from the far north of the country shows an Old World style with smooth elegance, a garnet-anumber color and rustic aromas of savory spice and cured meat. There’s a pretty blast of freshness, with forest berry and fresh currant notes on the finish. Opici Wines. —M.L.  abv: 13%  Price: $30

TOLLOW 2010 PINOT NERO (VINIGETTE DELLE DOLOMITI). Fresh, clean and bright, this is a simple but compelling expression of Pinot Nero that invites glass after delicious glass. Notes of red berries, wild herbs and violets characterize the cheerful bouquet. This would pair with white meat or pasta topped with veal ragi. Prestige Wine Imports Corp. Editors’ Choice. —M.L.  abv: 12.5%  Price: $13

PASSETI 2009 TENUTA ROSSA (COLLINE PESCARESI). A blend of Trebbiano and Pecorino, Tenutarossa offers impressive thickness and
89 Marcella Giuliani 2006 Dives (Cesanese del Piglio). Aged for one year in French oak, this is a proud member of a new generation of wines from the up-and-coming Cesanese del Piglio appellation. It offers notes of savory spice, dried herb, tobacco, rosemary and black fruit, with tight tannins on the close. Empire Wine Collection. —M.L.
abv: 13.5% Price: $35

88 Cantina Tundernum 2006 Rojano (Umbria). More savory and spicy than fruity, this Sangiovese-Merlot-Sagrantino blend shows cured meat, tobacco, leather and black currant aromas. The finish is polished and firm. Wine Sources. —M.L.
abv: 13.5% Price: $25

88 Casale della Ioria 2010 Campo Novo (Cesanese del Piglio). Here’s a simple and genuine expression of Cesanese d’Affile that offers floral aromas of red rose and violet, with background notes of dried herb and anise seed. Pair this with grilled sausage stuffed with fennel seed. DVM - Domenico Valentino Selections. —M.L.
abv: 14% Price: $16

87 Marcella Giuliani 2010 Alagna Superiore (Cesanese del Piglio). Made with organically farmed fruit, this opens with dark aromas of liquorice, plum, coffee and blackberry. It shows tight tannins and some astringency on the finish. Empire Wine Collection. —M.L.
abv: 13.5% Price: $18

86 Terre di Poggio 2010 Passo Cale (Montepulciano d’Abruzzo). This opens with dark aromas of leather, tobacco, cured meat, plum and prune. It shows soft tannins and loads of dark fruit on the finish. Bacco Wine & Spirit, LLC. —M.L.
abv: 13.5% Price: $16

84 Terre di Poggio 2010 Coste Mancini Pignoto Nero (Terre di Chieti). This shows tawny aromas of green olive, caper, wild berry, anise seed and a touch of licorice. There’s a touch of heat on the close, and the mouthfeel is lean. Bacco Wine & Spirit, LLC. —M.L.
abv: 13.5% Price: $17

TUSCANY

87 Pieve Vecchia 2010 Campo del Noce Vermentino (Montecucco). Fresh, easy and bright, this opens with layers of citrus, stone fruit, green melon and pear. The mouthfeel is sharp and informal with a touch of zesty acidity. Supreme Wines & Spirits. —M.L.
abv: 13.5% Price: $20

87 Terre di Talamo 2011 Vento Vermentino (Toscana). This offers breezy aromas of lemon, citrus mousse, cut grass and sweet basil. It is bright, lively and crisp, with the kind of fresh acidity that pairs with seafood and vegetable dishes. Michelangelo Imports. —M.L.
abv: 14% Price: $18
note of bruised apple or plum that gives the wine sharp brightness. Zonin USA. —M.L.

87 Banfi 2010 Chianti Classico. Bright berry fruit and a thin, crisp finish characterize this easy-drinking Chianti Classico. It delivers bright aromas of violet, raspberry and forest bramble. Banfi Vintners. —M.L.

abv: 13%  Price: $28

87 Castello di Querceto 2010 Chianti Classico. This follows very traditional lines, with bright berry nuances that are followed by earthy aromas of forest floor and pressed violet. It shows the character of Sangiovese in a light, food-friendly and informal manner. Prestige Wine Imports Corp. —M.L.

abv: 13%  Price: $13

87 Fattoria San Michele a Torri 2008 San Giovanni Novantasette Riserva (Chianti Colli Fiorentini). This opens with a meaty aroma of cured beef and shows a ripe, dark and almost gritty quality of fruit. Ripe berry notes continue on the palate, proving to be both extracted and a touch on the sweet side. Casa Torelli. —M.L.

abv: 14.5%  Price: $23

87 Grati 2009 Villa di Vetrice Riserva (Chianti Rufina). This opens with immediate aromas of red apple and raspberry, followed by bright acidity and wild berry endnotes. Pair this with cheese-filled ravioli. AHD Vintners. —M.L.

abv: 13%  Price: $21

87 Tamburini 2009 Italo Riserva (Chianti). Italo Riserva harkens back to those old-style Chiantis that once graced the checkered tablecloths of your childhood Italian restaurant. That’s the inspiration for this wine, perhaps, but the style is modern and bold, with loads of oak spice, cinnamon and dark berry. Best Value Wine Group. —M.L.

abv: 13%  Price: $19

87 Fattoria San Michele a Torri 2010 Chianti Colli Fiorentini. A light and informal expression of Sangiovese with a very attractive price tag, this easy-going effort would pair perfectly with sausage pizza or homemade pasta sauce. There are touches of bitter almond and bright berry on the finish. Casa Torelli. —M.L.

abv: 13%  Price: $11

84 Piazano 2011 Chianti. This is vinified in cement vats to retain the purity of fruit and easy crispness. You will also notice slight dusty tones of crushed mineral and vitamin on the finish. Vintner Select. —M.L.

abv: 13.5%  Price: $11

MONTEPULCIANO

90 Tenuta Valdiaperta 2005 Riserva (Vino Nobile di Montepulciano). This sees long months of oak aging that help to shape the dark, savory aromas of cured meat, spice and worn leather. The tannins are textured, exhibiting a dusty, polished feel. Winebow. —M.L.

abv: 13.5%  Price: $17

87 Vecchia Cantina di Montepulciano 2009 Terre di Rubinoro (Vino Nobile di Montepulciano). Aged two years in large oak casks, this opens with ripe, dark, almost jammy notes of cherry and blackberry preserves. There’s a touch of sweetness on the finish, and the wine offers an easygoing approach overall. Wines LLC. —M.L.

abv: 13.5%  Price: $NA

86 La Calonica 2011 Rosso di Montepulciano. This hearty effort shows ripe aromas of black cherry, prune, plum, leather and dried spice. Those savory tones are backed by touches of cured meat and bitter almond. Panebianco. —M.L.

abv: 13%  Price: $21

MORELLINO DI SCANSANO

91 Suberli 2009 Riserva (Morellino di Scansano). Compelling, rich and darkly extracted, this would pair with succulent red meat, roasted pork or lamb. The wine shows blackberry, plum and prune, with leather, tobacco and bitter chocolate. The mouthfeel is soft, plush and velvety. Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

abv: 14%  Price: $32

86 Caparzo 2010 Doga delle Clavule (Morellino di Scansano). This is made from 85% Sangiovese and smaller percentages of Merlot and Alicante. It delivers easy and compact aromas of cherry, leather and tobacco, and the mouthfeel is bright and light. Vineyard Brands. —M.L.

abv: 13%  Price: $19

MAREMMA

90 La Corsa 2010 Aghiloro (Maremma Toscana). A joint project by winemakers Vittorio Fiore and Barbara Tamburini, this is a rich and compelling blend of equal parts Sangiovese, Petit Verdot and Teroldego. The bouquet is bold and immediate, with tones of chocolate, red cherry, clove, prune and tobacco. Colline d’Italia. Editors’ Choice. —M.L.

abv: 13.5%  Price: $21

89 Paniele 2008 Emineo (Maremma Toscana). Part of the natural wine movement, this blend of Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon comes from organically farmed fruit. There’s a touch of heat on the palate, with aromas of cherry liqueur, jammy blackberry and exotic spice that drive the bold and masculine mouthfeel. Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

abv: 14%  Price: $18

MONTALCINO

93 Caparzo 2006 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino). This shows bright Sangiovese tones of crisp berry and forest floor, followed by subtle touches of spice, leather, black licorice, dried ginger and rosemary. The true character and freshness of the San-giovese fruit comes through loud and clear. Vineyard Brands. —M.L.

abv: 14%  Price: $85

93 Caparzo 2010 Rosso di Montalcino. Caparzo delivers a killer Rosso di Montalcino from one of the most anticipated vintages of the past 10 years. It is intense and clean, with polished berry aromas of black cherry and red currant that are backed by savory spice and leather. Vineyard Brands. —M.L.

abv: 14%  Price: $94

93 Caparzo 2010 Vigna La Casa (Brunello di Montalcino). This opens with elegant and finely tuned aromas of wild berry, dried ginger, smoked bacon and dried herb. It is still toasty and young at this point and will benefit from another 5–10 years of cellar aging. The tannins are smooth and polished. Vineyard Brands. —M.L.

abv: 14%  Price: $85

88 San Polo 2010 Rosso di Montalcino. From the excellent 2010 vintage, this really shines with the characteristics that make the Sangiovese grape so wonderful. The crisp finish shows nuances of red berry, blue flower and forest floor. Winebow. —M.L.

abv: 13.5%  Price: $25

88 Fanti 2010 Rosso di Montalcino. Here’s a bright, food-friendly bottling that offers raspberry, cherry and light spice aromas. The mouthfeel is lean and compact, and the wine shows a zesty vein of fresh acidity on the close. Sherbrooke Cellars. —M.L.

abv: 14.5%  Price: $20

88 Tamburini 2010 Italo Riserva (Chianti). Fiore and Barbara Tamburini, this is a rich and compelling blend of equal parts Sangiovese, Petit Verdot and Teroldego. The bouquet is bold and immediate, with tones of chocolate, red cherry, clove, prune and tobacco. Colline d’Italia. Editors’ Choice. —M.L.

abv: 13.5%  Price: $21

86 Caparzo 2010 Doga delle Clavule (Morellino di Scansano). This is made from 85% Sangiovese and smaller percentages of Merlot and Alicante. It delivers easy and compact aromas of cherry, leather and tobacco, and the mouthfeel is bright and light. Vineyard Brands. —M.L.

abv: 13%  Price: $19

88 Mocali 2009 Mirus (Maremma). A super Tuscan blend of Sangiovese, Merlot, Syrah and
Alicant, this shows some of the cheerful, funky and lively characteristics that identify this wine with Maremma, Tuscany. This velvety effort offers notes of chocolate, blackberry, cherry and tobacco. Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

**COLLI DELLA TOSCANA CENTRALE**

92 **Castello di Querceto 2008 Il Querciolaia (Colli della Toscana Centrale).** This blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon opens with impressive intensity, with notes of bold cherry, crushed black pepper, clove, dried currant and tobacco. The mouthfeel is velvety and rich, with a touch of bright acidity on the finish. Prestige Wine Imports Corp. —M.L.

92 **Castello di Querceto 2008 Il Sole di Alessandro Cabernet Sauvignon (Colli della Toscana Centrale).** This expression of Cabernet Sauvignon shows Tuscan characteristics of maraschino and dried Mediterranean herb. This is enhanced by tones of chocolate, espresso bean and cinnamon. The tannins are silky and long. Prestige Wine Imports Corp. —M.L.

89 **Fattoria San Michele a Torri 2008 Murtas (Colli della Toscana Centrale).** Made with organically farmed fruit, this blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Colorino opens with an inky, dark color and savory aromas of ripe fruit, prune, plum, leather, tobacco and exotic spice. It's firm and well structured, with a velvety feel to the tannins. Casa Torelli. —M.L.

88 **Piancole 2010 L’Artista (Maremma Toscana).** Hearty and masculine, this has dark fruit aromas of blackberry and prune that are backed by notes of cured meat, leather and Indian spice. Those dark flavors add sensations of sweetness and richness to the overall mouthfeel. Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

88 **San Polo 2010 Rubio Sangiovese (Toscana).** This Tuscan Sangiovese opens with flavors of cherry, blackberry and bold modern spice. It delivers bright acidity, balance and crispness, with a food-friendly personality. Winebow. —M.L.

88 **Tamburini 2008 Il Moraccio Sangiovese (Toscana).** Il Moraccio (Sangiovese with 10% Merlot) shows determined oak influences of spice and tobacco, followed by black fruit and plum cake notes. It’s a thick, well-made expression, with a bold, chewy finish. Best Value Wine Group. —M.L.

87 **Piazzano 2010 Syrah (Colli della Toscana Centrale).** This shows a soft, velvety personality, with loads of ripe fruit, blackberry and cherry liqueur. Leather, exotic spice and dark chocolate notes complete the picture, giving the wine a rich, generous personality. Vintner Select. —M.L.

87 **Piazzano 2008 Sangiovese (Colli della Toscana Centrale).** True to the Sangiovese grape, this opens with aromas of crisp berry, wet earth, leather, pressed violet and spice. There's a zesty touch of acidity on the close to keep the palate refreshed. Vintner Select. —M.L.

85 **Piazzano 2011 Ventoso (Colli della Toscana Centrale).** Ventoso (“windy”) shows easy fruit aromas of cherry and blackberry, with notes of cured meat and tobacco. Nothing on the bouquet is overdone by any stretch, but the wine does offer a nice, easygoing informality for pizza or pasta dinners. Vintner Select. Best Buy. —M.L.

88 **Tenuta di Biserno 2008 Il Pino di Biserno (Toscana).** This opens with inky, dark concentration and offers many of the beautiful aromas associated with the Cabernet family of grapes: Dark berry, prune, dried spice and chocolate. It delivers impressive intensity and persistence, with well-formed tannins and mocha softness on the finish. Wade & Clark Wine Imports. Cellar Selection. —M.L.

89 **Tenuta San Guido 2010 Guidalberto (Toscana).** Guidalberto is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, with soft tannins and a lingering spice flavor on the finish. The bouquet is marked by cherry, blackberry, leather and tobacco notes. The intensity is present but not overdone. Kobrand. —M.L.
ed nut. It also shows power and a touch of heat. Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $18

87 Tamburini 2008 Il Massiccio Sangiovese (Toscana). Il Massiccio is 85% Sangiovese with Merlot and Alicante, opening with bright cherry, raspberry aromas, with sour acidity and a touch of almond. Pair it with pepperoni or sausage pizza. Best Value Wine Group. —M.L.

abv: 13%  
Price: $16

87 Tenuta San Guido 2010 Le Difese (Toscana). This edition of Le Difese (a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Sangiovese) doesn’t show the same aromatic clarity as past vintages. It does however offer notes of spice and cherry fruit. It’s bright and easy-going on the finish. Kobrand. —M.L.

abv: 13%  
Price: $NA

86 Casa Sola 2009 Pergilamici (Toscana). Pergilamici (“for our friends”) is a blend of Sangiovese and other Tuscan grapes, opening with easy aromas of cherry, spice, crushed granite, cured meat and dried herb. The mouthfeel is lean and fresh. The House Of Burgundy. —M.L.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $12

86 Tamburini 2010 Il Castelluccio Sangiovese (Toscana). Sangiovese is enhanced by tiny percentages of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, producing a bright and simple wine that pairs with cheese-rich pasta dishes like lasagna or ravioli. The finish shows a note of simple berry fruit and a touch of crispness. Best Value Wine Group. —M.L.

abv: 13%  
Price: $13

86 Vignamaggio 2010 Il Morino Sangiovese (Toscana). Packaged in an easy screwcap bottle, this is a simple expression of Sangiovese that would pair with pasta or pizza. Cheerful and bright, it delivers cherry, raspberry and almond aromas. Bedford International. Best Buy. —M.L.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $11

85 Banfi 2010 Col di Sasso (Toscana). A blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon, this opens with cherry cola, sweet fruit, spice and dried rosemary aromas. It is easy-drinking and bright, with a touch of fruity sweetness on the finish. Banfi Vintners. Best Buy. —M.L.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $9

OTHER Tuscan REDS

96 Tenuta San Guido 2009 Sassicaia (Bolgheri Sassicaia). Sassicaia has been showing amazing results in recent years, and the 2009 vintage opens with all the intensity and beauty you should expect of Italy’s flagship super Tuscan. Notes of blackberry, soft spice, chocolate, espresso and a touch of rosmary oil make for a beautiful bouquet. The mouthfeel is long, supple and rich. Drink after 2020. Kobrand. Cellar Selection. —M.L.

abv: 14%  
Price: $NA

AUSTRIA


abv: 13.5%  
Price: $29

91 Domäne Wachau 2011 Achleiten Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau). Opulent and rich, this is a fine expression of the dense mineral side of the Achleiten Vineyard. It has weight, and is packed with ripe peach and spiced pineapple flavors. It is obviously capable of aging for at least three years. Screwcap. Vin Divino. —R.V.

abv: 14%  
Price: $46

91 Dürnberg 2011 Rabenstein Reserve Grüner Veltliner (Weißenkirchen). Made from fruit that’s sourced from over 50-year-old vines, this is a rich, concentrated single-vineyard wine. It shows notes of tropical fruit and pear, with just the right amount of crisp acidity. A dash of pepper gives spice to the wine. Showing its origins in the cool region of Weißenkirchen, the wine ends with a crisp bite of lemon. Private Reserve. Editors’ Choice. —R.V.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $27

89 Domäne Wachau 2011 Terrassen Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau). This is a ripe, spicy and pepper-flavored wine. It has pear and green plum notes that give a crisp edge to rich texture. There is a tangy orange zest character that gives some tightness, suggesting it can age. Total Wine & More. —R.V.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $23

ITALY

OTHER RED WINES

90 Primo Volo 2007 Red (Italy). Primo Volo is a blend produced by three winemakers (Andrea Faccio, Giordano Enzo Capodilista and Sergio Zingarel- 
l). of three grape varieties (Barbera, Merlot and Sangiovese) from three estates spread across Italy. It opens with a plush, dark color and delivers aromas of black fruit and sweet, oak-driven spice. The texture is rich and penetrating. Palm Bay International. —M.L.

abv: 14.5%  
Price: $NA

85 Piccini NV Memòro (Italy). For full review see page 14. Best Buy. —M.L.

abv: 14%  
Price: $10

93 Tenuta di Valgiango 2009 Colline Lucchesi. Sangiovese, Syrah and Merlot are blended to form a rich and supple red, with black cherry, chocolate, cinnamon and blackberry nuances. The mouth-feel is characterized by richness, softness and a touch of bright crispness. Morgan Import LLC. —M.L.

abv: 14.5%  
Price: $75

92 La Braccesca 2008 Bramasole Syrah (Cortona). This is opulent and rich, with a thick, velvety texture and pretty aromas of blackberry, chocolate, leather and freshly nulled white pepper. Cortona is the wine area of Italy that’s most closely associated with this grape. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —M.L.

abv: NA  
Price: $39

88 Domus Vitae 2009 Dragone Cabernet Franc (Sant’Antimo). This pure expression of Cabernet Franc is packed with black fruit, prune, sweet spice, leather and dark chocolate. There’s a subtle sweetness to the mouthfeel that is fueled by those ripe fruit flavors. Superior Wine Selections. —M.L.

abv: 14%  
Price: $25

88 Tenuta di Valgiango 2009 Palisstorti di Valgiango (Colline Lucchesi). A blend of Sangiovese, Syrah and Merlot, this shows black cherry, blackberry, ripe fruit, spice and tobacco. There’s a note of fruity sweetness that’s followed by a soft, chewy structure. Morgan Import LLC. —M.L.

abv: 14%  
Price: $33

87 Pieve Vecchia 2010 Albabetro (Monte- 
cucco). A blend of Sangiovese and Alicante, this plush wine shows simple tones of black fruit, worn leather and cherry. The nose is a bit muddied, and there’s a subtle touch of sweet soda on the close. Supreme Wines & Spirits. —M.L.

abv: 14%  
Price: $18

86 La Calonica 2011 Calcinaio Sangiovese (Cortona). This easy Sangiovese is enhanced by 15% Syrah, lending added intensity and richness to the palate. The bouquet is redolent of cherry, spice, tobacco, leather and bitter almond. Panebianco. —M.L.

abv: 13%  
Price: $20

OTHER RED WINES

98 Rabenstein 2009 Il Massiccio Sangiovese (Toscana). Il Massiccio is 85% Sangiovese with Merlot and Alicante, opening with bright cherry, raspberry aromas, with sour acidity and a touch of almond. Pair it with pepperoni or sausage pizza. Best Value Wine Group. —M.L.

abv: 13%  
Price: $16

Domäne Wachau 2011 Achleiten Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau). Opulent and rich, this is a fine expression of the dense mineral side of the Achleiten Vineyard. It has weight, and is packed with ripe peach and spiced pineapple flavors. It is obviously capable of aging for at least three years. Screwcap. Vin Divino. —R.V.

abv: 14%  
Price: $27

91 Domäne Wachau 2011 Rabenstein Reserve Grüner Veltliner (Weißenkirchen). Made from fruit that’s sourced from over 50-year-old vines, this is a rich, concentrated single-vineyard wine. It shows notes of tropical fruit and pear, with just the right amount of crisp acidity. A dash of pepper gives spice to the wine. Showing its origins in the cool region of Weißenkirchen, the wine ends with a crisp bite of lemon. Private Reserve. Editors’ Choice. —R.V.

abv: 13.5%  
Price: $23

93 Tenuta di Valgiango 2009 Colline Lucchesi. Sangiovese, Syrah and Merlot are blended to form a rich and supple red, with black cherry, chocolate, cinnamon and blackberry nuances. The mouth-feel is characterized by richness, softness and a touch of bright crispness. Morgan Import LLC. —M.L.

abv: 14.5%  
Price: $75

92 La Braccesca 2008 Bramasole Syrah (Cortona). This is opulent and rich, with a thick, velvety texture and pretty aromas of blackberry, chocolate, leather and freshly nulled white pepper. Cortona is the wine area of Italy that’s most closely associated with this grape. Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. —M.L.

abv: NA  
Price: $39

88 Domus Vitae 2009 Dragone Cabernet Franc (Sant’Antimo). This pure expression of Cabernet Franc is packed with black fruit, prune, sweet spice, leather and dark chocolate. There’s a subtle sweetness to the mouthfeel that is fueled by those ripe fruit flavors. Superior Wine Selections. —M.L.

abv: 14%  
Price: $25

88 Tenuta di Valgiango 2009 Palisstorti di Valgiango (Colline Lucchesi). A blend of Sangiovese, Syrah and Merlot, this shows black cherry, blackberry, ripe fruit, spice and tobacco. There’s a note of fruity sweetness that’s followed by a soft, chewy structure. Morgan Import LLC. —M.L.

abv: 14%  
Price: $33

87 Pieve Vecchia 2010 Albabetro (Monte- 
cucco). A blend of Sangiovese and Alicante, this plush wine shows simple tones of black fruit, worn leather and cherry. The nose is a bit muddied, and there’s a subtle touch of sweet soda on the close. Supreme Wines & Spirits. —M.L.

abv: 14%  
Price: $18

86 La Calonica 2011 Calcinaio Sangiovese (Cortona). This easy Sangiovese is enhanced by 15% Syrah, lending added intensity and richness to the palate. The bouquet is redolent of cherry, spice, tobacco, leather and bitter almond. Panebianco. —M.L.

abv: 13%  
Price: $20
88  Dürnberg 2011 Falkenstein Tradi-
tion Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich).
Warm and creamy, this fills the palate with apple and pink grapefruit flavors. A touch of spice adds interest to this ripe, fruity effort that is ready to drink. Screwcap. Private Reserve. —R.V.
abv: 13%  Price: $18

87  Dürnberg 2011 Alte Reben Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel). This is a spicy, pep-
pery wine initially, opening with a fragrant, fresh and citrus character. It’s bright and crisp, showing some inten-
sity from low-yield vines. Full, ripe and fresh on the finish. Screwcap. Private Reserve. —R.V.
abv: 12.5%  Price: $17

87  Laurenz V. 2011 Laurenz and Sophie Singing Grüner Veltliner (Kamptal). This fresh, crisp bottling features a green apple note with a touch of citrus. Made by Laurenz Moser V and his daughter Sophie, this is the epitome of light, fruity Grüner, a wine that dances easily across the palate. Screwcap. Folio Fine Wine Partners. —R.V.
abv: 11.5%  Price: $15

86  Dürnberg 2011 Falko Cool Climate Grüner Veltliner (Niederösterreich). Lively, vital and fresh, this is typical of the new generation of Grüners that are made for early drinking. It’s light and tangy, burstling with apple and lemon flavors. Screwcap. Private Reserve. —R.V.
abv: 13.5%  Price: $24

RIESLING

92  Domäne Wachau 2011 Aicheliten Riesling Smaragd (Wachau). This steely, mineral-driven wine is crisp with an austere edge. The fruit is ripe, while taut and tense at the same time. As it ages, the wine will show rich peach and apricot flavors to round it out. Age for four years and more. Screwcap. Vin Divino. Cellar Selection. —R.V.
abv: 13.5%  Price: $50

92  Winzer Krems 2011 Kremser Pfaffenberg Reserve Riesling (Kremstal). For full re-
view see page 8. Editors’ Choice. abv: 13.5%  Price: $25

91  Domäne Wachau 2011 Terrassen Riesling Smaragd (Wachau). The Riesling perfumes shine, and its light, almost dancing charac-
ter is blended with a more complex set of yellow fruits and mineral texture. The result is a serious wine that demands to be aged for at least four years. Screwcap. Vin Divino. —R.V.
abv: 13%  Price: $30

90  Dürnberg 2011 Rosenberg Select Riesling (Niederösterreich). This intensely
aromatic wine has perfumes of peach, apricot and ripe plum. These fruits dominate the warm, ripe palate, with just a hint of minerality. Private Reserve. —R.V.
abv: 12.5%  Price: $18

WEISSBURGUNDER

90  Dürnberg 2011 Burggarten Weissburg-
under (Niederösterreich). The Burggarten Vineyard is below the Falkenstein Castle, producing a Pinot Blanc that is rich and creamy, with a slight hint of wood aging. Fullbodied with pear and white peach flavors, it will mature for 3–4 years. Screwcap. Private Reserve. —R.V.
abv: 13.5%  Price: $25

BLAUFränkISCH

94  Judith Beck 2009 Altenberg Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). The Altenberg Vineyard is on the slopes to the north of Lake Neusiedlersee. With its great exposure, it can produce a rich, structured wine like this that offers aging potential. Even at this stage, it feels complete, offering a balanced mix of tannins, black plum and peppered blackberry notes. Age for 3–4 years. VOS Selections. Cellar Selection. —R.V.
abv: 13%  Price: $55

94  Weninger 2009 Alte Reben Blaufränkisch (Mittelburgenland). A wood-aged wine, this is fully ripe and has aging potential. From old vines, the wine has a dense texture, concentrated black fruits and tannins that combine in a dark, brooding structure. This is a wine for long-term aging; the new wood and for-
ward fruits both promise that. Keep for six years. Moni-
ka Caha Selections. Editors’ Choice. —R.V.
abv: 13.5%  Price: $40

93  Umathum 2008 Joiser Kirschgarten
Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). A brooding
wine, this shows all the aging potential of Blaufränkisch. Using grapes sourced from the Kirschgarten Vineyard, this has tar and violet aromas, plus firm, dry tannins and a dense yet juicy black-fruit character. It could still age over 4–5 years. Glass stopper. Winemonger. Cellar Se-
lection. —R.V.
abv: 13.5%  Price: $70

93  Weninger 2009 Dürreau Cuvée Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). The top wine from Weninger, this is a hugely rich, wood-aged wine that has smooth toast, licorice and herb flavors, which sustain the complex structure of tannins and the juicy, black currant-like acidity. This needs to age for 4–5 years and more. Monika Caha Selections. —R.V.
abv: 14%  Price: $60

92  Nittnaus Hans und Christine 2009 Blaufränkisch (Leithaberg). This is impres-
sive and firmly tannic, showing mint and herb flavors, new wood toast and bitter black-cherry fruit. It’s com-
plex, dense and age worthy. Wein-Bauer, Inc. Editors’ Choice. —R.V.
abv: 13%  Price: $32

91  Iby 2009 Chevalier Reserve Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). This is a tight, mineral-textured wine that shows the potential of its rich black fruit, while keeping a close rein on its exuberance. The result is a wood-aged wine that offers considerable aging po-
tential, so it keep for at least three years. Domaine Se-
lect Wine Estates. —R.V.
abv: 13.5%  Price: $45

91  Johann Heinrich 2010 Goldberg Blaufränkisch (Mittelburgenland). This wood-laden effort is polished and initially herbal. Be-
neath the wood, there is the weight of black fruit, spice and dark tannins. The result is a wine that’s full and dense, powered by structure as well as acidity, and needing to age for several years. Screwcap. Winebow. —R.V.
abv: 13.5%  Price: $NA

91  Johann Heinrich 2009 Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). This wine is produced from fruit that was sourced from Leithaberg vineyards in the northwestern corner of Lake Neusiedlersee. It’s power-
ful with dense tannins that accompany the bright red fruit flavors. Acidity cuts right through the solid struc-
ture, giving it a fresh finish. Glass stopper. Winebow. Editors’ Choice. —R.V.
abv: 12.5%  Price: $22

91  Kirnbauer 2009 Goldberg Reserve Blaufränkisch (Mittelburgenland). This is the top wine from Kirnbauer, produced from vines in the Mittelburgenland region—one of the best areas for Blaufränkisch. This serious, wood-aged and com-
pex wine has both intense bitter-cherry acidity and a firm, dense and tannic texture that shows aging poten-
tial. H.Mercer Wine & Spirit Imports. Cellar Se-
lection. —R.V.
abv: 14%  Price: $NA

90  Johann Heinrich 2011 Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). Serious spice, black currant and herb flavors combine with firm tannins to produce a wine that is both structured and age worthy. Made from grapes sourced from the Deutschkreutz region of central Burgenland, this should be kept for another year. Screwcap. Winebow. —R.V.
abv: 13%  Price: $20

90  Judith Beck 2011 Blaufränkisch (Burgen-
land). The partner to Beck’s Zweigelt, this is every bit as complex and structured. It has a solid, firm feel, with darkly tannic fruit, a broad texture and a hint of toast. This is for aging for at least a year. Screwcap. VOS Selections. Editors’ Choice. —R.V.
abv: 13%  Price: $NA

90  Scheibelhofer 2010 Jois Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). This wood-aged effort shows its wood flavors strongly. In the future, the rich black-
berry flavor will take over, yielding a complex, ripe wine that will always have tannins, but it will also have a con-
centrated structure. Age for at least four years. Monika Caha Selections. —R.V.
abv: 13.5%  Price: $39
87 Zantho 2011 Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). Zantho is a joint venture between winemakers Josef Umathum and Wolfgang Peck. This Blaufränkisch sums up the goal of the winery: to make wines that are accessible and fruity. There is a lightly herbal, medicinal quality accompanying the red fruit flavors. Not for aging. Glass stopper. Vin Divino. —R.V. 
abv: 13% 
Price: $13

86 Weninger 2011 Blaufränkisch (Mittelburgenland). The Mittelburgenland appellation is dedicated to the typicity of Blaufränkisch. This ripe, fruity effort shows just the right combination of plum and tannin, along with pure, bright acidity. Age for 3–4 years. Screwcap. Monika Caha Selections. —R.V. 
abv: 13% 
Price: $16

85 Hafner 2009 Queen Esther Reserve Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). Red berry flavors and a soft-but-spicy texture give this now-mature wine some ripeness. It has a raspberry jam character that's laced with acidity; its tannins are soft and mature. Apollo Fine Spirits. —R.V. 
abv: 13% 
Price: $30

89 Judith Beck 2011 Zweigelt (Burgenland). For a wine labeled merely Zweigelt, this is anything but simple. It has plenty of fruit, which is counterbalanced by complex tannins and dark texture. A spice note and acidity add to this wine, which should be aged for another year. Screwcap. VOS Selections. —R.V. 
abv: 13.5% 
Price: $20

89 Kracher 2009 Zweigelt (Burgenland). This wine is already in balance and can be consumed now. Screwcap. Domaine Select Wine Estates. —R.V.

88 Monika Caha Selections. —R.V.

88 Winzer Kremes 2009 Edition Chremisa Sandgrube 13 Barrique Zweigelt (Niederösterreich). This smooth, wood-aged wine demonstrates the acid of Zweigelt, plus complex toast, red cherry and dark chocolate flavors. The wine is rich, ripe and full-bodied, finishing with fresh juicy acidity. Total Wine & More. —R.V.

88 Muenzenrieder 2011 Classic Zweigelt (Neusiedlersee). As fruity as Zweigelt can get, this is packed with ripe blackberry and plum flavors, deliciously cut with acidity. It has a dense, juicy character, with soft tannins. Screwcap. Niche Import Company. —R.V.

88 Nittnaus Hans und Christine 2010 Heidemoden Zweigelt (Burgenland). A bitter cherry flavor is balanced by the firm, tannic structure. With its appropriate weight and juicy, spicy acidity, it's attractive now but also has aging potential. Screwcap. Wein-Bauer, Inc. —R.V.

88 Zantho 2011 Zweigelt (Burgenland). Red fruit dominant, this has fine tannins and a juicy berry flavor. It's ripe, soft and open, with a touch of dark chocolate and an herbal finish. Glass stopper. Vin Divino. Best Buy. —R.V.

87 Kirmbauer 2009 Girmer Zweigelt (Burgenland). This is a very soft wine, with a smooth wood-aged character that has burst some of its juicy fruit. It has a red berry flavor and acidity, rounded out by spice and toast notes. For short-term aging. H. Mercer Wine & Spirit Imports. —R.V.

abv: 13% 
Price: $22

87 Hölper 2008 Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). This is relatively light in color, as befits a grape supposedly related to Pinot Noir. It has a red fruit flavor and a juicy character, balanced by almond and bitter cherry-stone flavors. It's not a wine for aging. Screwcap. USA Wine Imports. —R.V.

abv: 13% 
Price: $22

88 Höpler 2008 Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). Firm and rich, this is structured and firm, it needs another few years of aging. Screwcap. Domaine Select Wine Estates. —R.V.

abv: 13% 
Price: $19

88 Nittnaus Hans und Christine 2010 Edelgedult Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). With its flavors of spice, dark fruit and a hint of herb, plus its touch of rusticity and tense acidity, this is classic Blaufränkisch. Its juicy berry flavors emerge through the tannic texture, revealing a final flavor that is elegant and full. Screwcap. Wein-Bauer, Inc. —R.V.

abv: 13% 
Price: $45

88 Höpler 2008 Blaufränkisch (Burgenland). This is a powerful, wood-aged wine. It's still showing its toast at the moment, but expect the wine to round out, yielding solid tannins and a concentrated black-plum flavor. With a rich yet firm finish, this should age well over several years. Monika Caha Selections. Best Buy. —R.V.

abv: 13.5% 
Price: $70

88 Höpler 2008 Zweigelt (Burgenland). This is a very soft wine, with a smooth wood-aged character that has burst some of its juicy fruit. It has a red berry flavor and acidity, rounded out by spice and toast notes. For short-term aging. H. Mercer Wine & Spirit Imports. —R.V.

abv: 13% 
Price: $22

88 Muenzenrieder 2011 Classic Zweigelt (Neusiedlersee). As fruity as Zweigelt can get, this is packed with ripe blackberry and plum flavors, deliciously cut with acidity. It has a dense, juicy character, with soft tannins. Screwcap. Niche Import Company. —R.V.

abv: 13% 
Price: $15
**RED WINES**

90 **Kabaj 2007 Merlot (Goriska Brda).** A noble tribute to his Bordeaux training, winemaker Jean Michel Morel’s namesake blend is beautifully concentrated with rich, black fruit, with hints of violet, savory mushroom, cured meat and clay. A textured and powerful wine with vibrant acidity, it finishes long, with a swathe of velvety tannins. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $40

89 **Sutor 2008 Pinot Noir (Vipavska Dolina).** Bramble, smoke and charred wood notes add rusticity to the subtle red-cherry and plum flavors. The full-bodied palate is earthy, with tones of dried mushroom and leaf that are marked by big, chunky tannins. It finishes surprisingly sweetly, with a bright red-raspberry note. Indie Wineries. —A.I.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

89 **Sutor 2008 Chardonnay (Vipavska Dolina).** Hints of smoke and roasted nut add a savory tone to the zesty lemon and pear flavors on this structured Chardonnay. Lusciously textured, with a touch of lemon curd and zingy tangerine acidity, it’s a powerful wine with a long finish. Indie Wineries. —A.I.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

89 **Sutor 2008 Burja Zelen (Vipavska Dolina).** Honey and orange rind notes meld with a hint of waxy lanolin on this richly textured white wine. Savory hints of smoke and black tea are balanced with a touch of bright citrus rind and a delicate salinity that lingers on the finish. Indie Wineries. —A.I.  
abv: 12.5%  
Price: $NA

88 **Burja 2011 Petite Burja Zelen (Vipavska Dolina).** This fascinating blend of biodynamically farmed Malvasia, Ribolla and Welschriesling balances savory smoke and toasted wood notes with sweet elements of apple, lemon and cream. Fermented with indigenous yeast, it’s a richly textured wine with deep complexity. Indie Wineries. —A.I.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

88 **Burja 2009 Burja Bela (Vipavska Dolina).** This fascinating blend of biodynamically farmed Malvasia, Ribolla and Welschriesling balances savory smoke and toasted wood notes with sweet elements of apple, lemon and cream. Fermented with indigenous yeast, it’s a richly textured wine with deep complexity. Indie Wineries. —A.I.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

88 **Kabaj 2006 Cuvée Morel (Goriska Brda).** A noble tribute to his Bordeaux training, winemaker Jean Michel Morel’s namesake blend is beautifully concentrated with rich, sweet black fruit, with hints of violet, savory mushroom, cured meat and clay. A textured and powerful wine with vibrant acidity, it finishes long, with a swathe of velvety tannins. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA

**SLOVENIA**

**WHITE WINES**

90 **Kabaj 2011 Classic Zweigelt (Burgenland).** This deliciously ripe and fruity wine has a sweet, soft flavor of red plum jelly. Smooth, elegant and certainly not too heavy, this is a fine barbecue wine. Screwcap. Domaine Select Wine Estates. —R.V.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $32

88 **Krug 2008 Riesling (Burgenland).** This offers a delicious, zesty, tangy flavor with a hint of citrus rind and a subtle, tangy saline note that lingers on the finish. Indie Wineries. —A.I.  
abv: 13.5%  
Price: $NA
88 Coronica 2009 Gran Malvasia (Istria). This is voluptuous and floral on the nose and palate, with loads of sweet, ripe peach and melon flavors. Bright lemon-lime acidity and a shimer of salinity help to keep this full-bodied wine from becoming overwhelming. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 14% Price: $32

88 Sipun 2011 Dry White Zlahtina (Krk). Abundant lavender and jasmine touches meld with lemon peel and waxy lanolin notes on this richly textured, slightly viscous white wine. Lemony and fresh on the palate, with brisk acidity, it finishes with a long, delicate touch of hazelnut oil. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 12.4% Price: $17

88 Bibich 2011 Debit (North Dalmatia). Aromas of nut and marzipan are enticing on this lemony-fresh white wine. Brisk tangerine and tropical fruit flavors bristle with acidity, and a white-tea astringency lingers on the finish. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% Price: $18

87 Bibich 2010 Riserva R5 (North Dalmatia). This is an unusual blend of Croatian and international white grapes that's floral and spiced with orange peel and clove note. It's also smoky and savory with tones of dried apple, toast and herb. This is medium bodied, with a slightly viscous richness on the palate. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 12.5% Price: $19

87 Terzolo 2011 Malvasia (Istria). Grassy and herbaceous on the nose and palate, this is a beautifully textured, full-bodied wine that shows an abundance of white flower and orange peel notes. It's structurally satisfying, with brisk acidity giving it a crisp, refreshing feel. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 13.5% Price: $19

86 Piquentum 2010 Blanc 10 Malvasia (Istria). Smoky and briny, with hints of roasted nut, citrus peel, spice and dried apple, this is a full-bodied, savory Malvasia. It finishes long, with a refreshing black-tea astringency. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 12.8% Price: $20

86 Piquentum 2009 Rouge 9 Teran (Istria). Rich, muddied black-fruit flavors are laced with hints of chocolate and dried herb on this full-bodied red wine. The palate is tart with penetrating acidity, but soft fruit and dusty tannins add warmth and roundness. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 12.9% Price: $23

86 Terzolo 2009 Teran (Istria). Striking acidity adds verve to the ripe blackberry and sour cherry flavors. The medium-bodied palate is tangy, but hints of rose petal and green herb give it softness. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 12.8% Price: $19

HUNGARY

90 Gere Attila 2007 Kopar Cuvée (Villány). Luscious, ripe black-fruit and sweet spice notes are gorgeous on the nose and palate of this penetrating, yet impeccably structured wine. Rippling minerality and bright acidity balance out the bold flavors, hefty alcohol and big, chunky tannins. This is intense from start to finish. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 15% Price: $60

90 Vylyan 2008 Pinot Noir (Villány). Shades of crushed stone and granite add a penetrating minerality to the ripe, rich raspberry and cherry flavors of this nervy wine. A hint of dried herb and velvety tannins round out the finish that's long and lingering. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 13% Price: $25

RED WINES

88 Bibich 2009 G6 Grenache (Croatia). Fermented with indigenous yeast and then aged in French oak, this has rose and raspberry perfumes, with deep black-plum and berry flavors. Striking acidity and bold, angular tannins soften on the palate, revealing a smooth, luscious finish. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 13.2% Price: $19

87 Bibich 2009 R6 Riserva (North Dalmatia). Tart sour-cherry and preserved plum flavors add freshness to this bold, spicy blend of three Croatian grape varieties. Ruddy hints of chocolate, hay and leather combine with bold tannins on the midpalate, driving the finish that's surprisingly delicate and chalky. Blue Danube Wine Co. —A.I.
abv: 13.3% Price: $19
THE OTHER FRENCH BRANDY: ARMAGNAC

You may already know Cognac, that great French import. Now, it’s time to familiarize yourself with Armagnac, France’s other fine grape brandy.

While Armagnac surely bears a passing resemblance to cousin Cognac, several notable differences distinguish the spirit.

For one, Armagnac is made in the Gascony region of southwest France—not the Cognac region—in the Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée (AOC) Armagnac.

For another, Armagnac and Cognac use several of the same grapes (Ugni Blanc with Colombard), but Armagnac is noted for using more Folle Blanche and a great deal of the grape Baco Blanc (also spelled “Bacco”). The end result is a bold and aromatic brandy, described by some as exhibiting rich notes of gingerbread, butterscotch and dried fruits (think prune or raisin), plus spicy or even smoky characteristics.

A note on aging designations: In addition to the brandy standards—VS, VSOP and XO—Armagnac’s mix ranges from the unaged blanche d’Armagnac up to hors d’âge, in which the spirit spends at least 10 years in barrel. In addition to these designations, which are often a blend of brandies of varying ages, a number of producers also release bottlings with specific vintage designations.

Cheers! —Kara Newman

97 Delord X.O. (France; Heavenly Spirits, Lakeville, MA). Enticing and complex, this velvety X.O. is one to savor. The countryside perfume of this 15-year-old brandy evokes notes of fresh flower, hay, fig and vanilla, with a crème brûlée flavor that fades away ever so gently. Hard wax cap.

abv: 40%  
Price: $55

96 Darroze Les Grand Assemblages 50 Years Old (France; Martin Scott Wines, Lake Success, NY). Five centuries of barrel aging yields a topaz hue and notes of dried orange peel, caramel and black tea, with an extraordinarily long finish that gently blankets the mouthwatering palate.

abv: 43%  
Price: $345

95 Delord 25 Ans D’Age (France; Heavenly Spirits, Lakeville, MA). Aged for a minimum of 25 years, this has patisserie aromas of caramel and orange peel, with a soft feel and perky ginger and citrus notes on the finish. This light and lovely Armagnac would pair particularly well with fruit desserts. Hard wax cap.

abv: 40%  
Price: $75

95 Artez VSOP 100% Folle Blanche (France; Heavenly Spirits, Lakeville, MA). This honey-colored brandy features a vanilla and toasted oak scent, with sweet, bold fresh peach and honey flavors, and a refreshing finish that bears flavors of citrus-cream.

abv: 40%  
Price: $55

94 Chateau du Tariquet VSOP (France; Martin Scott Wines, Lake Success, NY). Aged for a minimum of 8 years, this golden Armagnac is named for the Grassa family, which settled in the Château du Tariquet in 1912. This has a sweet scent of maple syrup, figs and hazelnuts, with round, mouth-filling flavors of sarsaparilla, marzipan, peach and a spicy cinnamon kicker. The alcohol feels fairly strong, so allow it plenty of time to aerate.

abv: 40%  
Price: $50

93 Dartigalongue XO (France; Heavenly Spirits, Lakeville, MA). From “the oldest House in Armagnac” comes a well-balanced sipper that’s reminiscent of Bourbon with its deep amber color; its rich, sweet caramel note; and bold finish that tastes of maple-butter sprinkled with clove and cinnamon.

abv: 40%  
Price: $57

93 Dartigalongue Hors D’Age (France; Heavenly Spirits, Lakeville, MA). Although Hors d’age translates as the subtle phrase “beyond age,” the contrary label trumpets that this brandy is aged 12 years. This seems apt as there’s little subtlety about what’s in the bottle either: rich, bulldozer-bold flavors ranging from buttermilk brioche to sweet caramel and toffee, braced up with notes of allspice and espresso on the surprisingly creamy and rich finish.

abv: 40%  
Price: $50

93 Armagnac de Montal XO (France: A. Hardy USA, Des Plaines IL). Within the curvy, regal-looking bottle with the royal crest—more Cognac style than modest Armagnac—is a silky, vanilla-forward brandy that resonates into a powerful finish with bold notes of clove, cocoa, espresso and cigar tobacco. Savor alongside dark chocolate.

abv: 40%  
Price: $100

93 Château de Laubade Intemporel No. 5 (France; Baron Francois, New York, NY). Look for a dark amber hue and a deep caramel aroma from this brandy. On the palate, fleeting sweetness gives way to a long finish, offering flavors of oak, cocoa, caramel, clove and cinnamon. Some might compare this Armagnac to good Bourbon.

abv: 40%  
Price: $189

93 Chateau du Tariquet Famille Grasse Le Legendaire XO (France; Robert Kacher Selections, New York, NY). For full review see page 12.

abv: 40%  
Price: $37

93 Chateau du Tariquet VS Classique (France; Robert Kacher Selections, New York, NY). This copper-penny-colored Armagnac is named for the Grassa family, which settled in the Château du Tariquet in 1912. This has a sweet scent of maple syrup, figs and hazelnuts, with round, mouth-filling flavors of sarsaparilla, marzipan, peach and a spicy cinnamon kicker. The alcohol feels fairly strong, so allow it plenty of time to aerate.

abv: 40%  
Price: $50

93 Darroze Les Grand Assemblages 8 Years Old (France; Martin Scott Wines, Lake Success, NY). This golden Armagnac is light and delicate, with aromatics of honey, fresh pears and peaches, and a light, creamy honey flavor that’s mixed with faintly perfumed white flower and pear notes. Although it almost seems a shame to mix, it would be lovely in an effervescent drink with ginger ale or sparkling wine.

abv: 43%  
Price: $45

93 Darroze Les Grand Assemblages 40 Years Old (France; Martin Scott Wines, Lake Success, New York). Four a glass of this complex, luxurious brandy and watch how the flavors evolve.
Laubade 1974 (France; Baron Francois, New York, NY). Bold and full bodied, this has flavors that tend toward sarsaparilla, caramel and allspice, with still more spice on the buttery finish. Hard wax cap.

abv: 40%  Price: $239

Laubade 1982 (France; Baron Francois, New York, NY). Give this vintage Armagnac time to aerate; the boozy nose dissipates, and the aromas and flavors deepen noticeably, turning from vanilla to toasty caramel and honey, with finessed tropical fruit and orange-pee notes.

abv: 40%  Price: $200

XO Chateau de Laubade (France; Baron Francois, New York, NY). The rich topaz color nods to the smooth fruit-and-honey character of this Armagnac. A blend of Baco, Folle Blanche, Ugni Blanc and Colombard grapes yields aromas of butterscotch and fresh apricots, with etheerally light, fruity notes on the palate that are reminiscent of some honeyed Speyside Scotches.

abv: 40%  Price: $90

Armagnac Laubade 1956 (France; Baron Francois, New York, NY). This complex gem offers toffee and peach aromas that are surrounded by a faint smoky wisp. Caramel-sweet and soft on the palate, this is no fading violet; it finishes with a spicy cinnamon and cayenne pepper prickle—memorable to the end.

abv: 40%  Price: $789

Artez VSOP 100% Baco (France; Heavenly Spirits, Lakeville, MA). This tawny brandy, with orange highlights, benefits from some time in the glass. Silky and elegant, this has mild apricot, vanilla and nut flavors that stretch into the long, long finish. Pair with a rich dessert like bread pudding.

abv: 40%  Price: $55

Chateau du Tariquet Famille Grassa XO (France; Robert Kacher, New York, NY). Named for the Grassa family, which settled in the Chateau du Tariquet in 1912, this is made from a blend of Ugni Blanc and Baco grapes. Here, a heady vanilla tone mixes with a fresh apple flavor, leading to a hint of rich butterscotch and a surprisingly delicate white-flower note on the finish. Pair with tarte Tatin.

abv: 40%  Price: $70

Darroze Les Grand Assemblages 30 Years Old (France; Martin Scott Wines, Lake Success, New York). Maple syrup in color, this has a toffee aroma and flavor, along with notes of dry cocoa, espresso, spice and dried orange peel on the finish. The tannins get a bit brusque after having spent three decades in the barrel, but overall it’s a well-balanced brandy.

abv: 43%  Price: $115

Chateau du Tariquet Famille Grassa 1995 (France; Robert Kacher, New York, NY). As one of the few Armagnacs bottled as cask strength, the “Millelitéme 1995,” as this is also known, has a sharp alcohol presence, but it’s balanced by rich, sweet cola, hazelnut and stone-fruit tones, with clove, cinnamon and ginger notes surfacing on the superlong finish.

abv: 45.8%  Price: $110

Domaine du Chateau a Laree, Baron de Lustrac 1995 (France; CVI Brands, San Carlos, CA). Bright, light and citrusy, this is made from 100% Ugni Blanc. The color is light amber, with bright golden highlights, and the flavor tends toward lemon cream, with notes of nutmeg and spicy cinnamon on the finish. Consider a savory pairing, such as blue cheese or nuts.

abv: 42%  Price: $97

Les Domaines Grassa Reserve Armagnac (France; CVI Brands, San Carlos, CA). From Chateau du Tariquet, this fruity-floral treat melds together apple, pear and hazelnut notes, ending with a long, soothing toffee-flavored finish.

abv: 40%  Price: $37

Darroze Les Grand Assemblages 12 Years Old (France; Martin Scott Wines, Lake Success, New York). Allow this bright amber brandy some air exposure, and the reward is a dried-fruit aroma and a vanilla flavor, with touches of cinnamon and clove. It feels a bit drying on the palate.

abv: 43%  Price: $58

Domaine de la Croix Pelanne, Baron de Lustrac – 1980 (France; CVI Brands, San Carlos, CA). Made with 100% Baco, this vintage Armagnac has a nut-brown color and maple-sugar aroma. Rundled sarsaparilla and vanilla flavors finish with an almost effervescent sensation on the tongue, along with a tannic oaky pucker.

abv: 42%  Price: $140

Armagnac VSOP Aged 10 years Castarède (France; Domaine Select Wine Estates, New York, NY). Given some time to aerate for full aromatic effect, the end result is a maple- and vanilla-scented nose, with a butterscotch-banana flavor and abundant baking spice notes that are heaped on the long finish. Brisk in alcohol but balanced, this feels like a great foundation, but would benefit from more aging time.

abv: 40%  Price: $60

Chateau de Laubade VSOP (France; Baron Francois, New York, NY). This burr-nished-gold-colored spirit is made from a blend of Baco, Folle Blanche, Ugni Blanc and Colombard. The scent is light, with a funky touch of resin. On the palate, vanilla and maple flavors mix with a hint of citrus peel and a faint smoky note on the finish. Brisk in feel, this is recommended for mixing into cocktails, such as a sidecar variation.

abv: 40%  Price: $50

Chateau de Tariquet Armagnac 8yr Color Collection (France; CVI Brands, San Carlos, CA). This Armagnac is cask strength and feels it. Beneath the alcohol lurks rich scents of apple and honey, with a sweet, nutty palate that’s nearly obscured by fierce alcohol heat. 100% Folle Blanche.

abv: 51.1%  Price: $52

Domaine de Courros a Salles Baron du Lustrac 1986 (France; CVI Brands, San Carlos, CA). A 1986 vintage made from only Folle Blanche—is it possible that it was allowed to age too long? The effect is one of fleeing sweetness, overwhelmed by an oaky, tannic feel, even lingering into the vanilla-scented finish.

abv: 42%  Price: $106

Blanche Armagnac Castarède (France; Domaine Select Wine Estates, New York, NY). This clear blanche has big, funky, fruity flavors, with a robust alcoholic twang and a long brute of a finish. Use for mixing into cocktails.

abv: 40%  Price: $45

Chateau du Tariquet Armagnac 8yr Color Collection (France; CVI Brands, San Carlos, CA). This Armagnac is cask strength and feels it. Beneath the alcohol lurks rich scents of apple and honey, with a sweet, nutty palate that’s nearly obscured by fierce alcohol heat. 100% Folle Blanche.

abv: 51.1%  Price: $52

Delord Napoléon (France; Heavenly Spirits, Lakeville, MA). Versatile and a good choice for mixing, this has a maple color, with dried-fruit aromas and a hint of fresh sugar-cane funk. On the palate, a long, soft vanilla flavor fades into clove and cinnamon sparks. Soft but brisk in alcohol, this is aged for a minimum of 10 years. Hard wax cap.

abv: 40%  Price: $40

Laubade 1968 (France; Baron Francois, New York, NY). Sweet vanilla and orange flavors are jarred by a resin note at the back of the palate, then rescued by a smooth, buttery finish. Hard wax cap.

abv: 40%  Price: $289

Chateau du Tariquet Blanche Armagnac (France; Robert Kacher, New York, NY). Clear, funny, grappa-esque and muscular, this is a bit much straight up, but could have cocktail applications similar to cachaca or pisco. Blanche Armagnac Caiquirinhas, anyone? Made using 100% Folle Blanche, this comes in a clean, modern-looking bottle. The producer suggests serving it well chilled alongside smoked salmon or caviar.

abv: 46%  Price: $50

Marie Duffau Napoléon (France; Heavenly Spirits, Lakeville, MA). This offers a mix of fresh and dried-fruit aromas and a slightly resinous nose. Its juicy apple cider, vanilla and toasty baking-spice notes suggest this would be a fine choice for mixing into a mulled brandy punch for winter parties. Hard wax cap.

abv: 40%  Price: $36

Domaine de Courros a Salles Baron du Lustrac 1986 (France; CVI Brands, San Carlos, CA). A 1986 vintage made from only Folle Blanche—is it possible that it was allowed to age too long? The effect is one of fleeing sweetness, overwhelmed by an oaky, tannic feel, even lingering into the vanilla-scented finish.

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abv: 51.1%  Price: $52

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THE BEAUTY OF BARREL-AGED BEERS

Many Wine Enthusiast readers understand the importance that oak plays in the world of wine. From different equipment choices (barrels vs. staves vs. chips) to decisions about from where to source the oak to toast-level options, there are so many ways that oak can affect the end result of a product. But how many people have begun to relay that information over to the world of beer?

French or American wood, Bourbon- or rum-soaked casks, spent Zinfandel or Cabernet Sauvignon barrels—these are just a few of the options to consider when sourcing barrels for aging beer, with each imparting an individual identity and range of nuances to a brewer’s final product. Aromas and flavors of vanilla and coconut are commonly associated with oak aging, but other notes like cocoa, whiskey, toast, baking spice and, of course, a flavor of wood itself can all be connected to the aging regimen a beer receives.

Aging in oak is nothing new in the brewing world, but it’s certainly a trend that has surged over the past couple of years. An increasing number of breweries are coming up with their own “barrel reserve” line or special releases, turning out sporadic, limited-production offerings that have undergone anywhere from 3–24 months of oak aging.

This month, we have a wide assortment of wood-aged beer styles reviewed for your consideration. Depending on your personal preference, not all of these beers will appeal to you. However, their overall complexity, depth of character and remarkable balance make these excellent examples of wood-aged brews.

Given their typically small production numbers, you have to be extremely diligent about picking them up upon release. And because of the expense of production, these selections do command a premium on retail shelves. But when you taste your Goldilocks—the one that’s just right for you—you’ll understand why you spent the extra time and money to be one of the lucky few to taste the good stuff.

Prost!

—Lauren Buzzo
Karl Strauss 23rd Anniversary Old Ale (Old Ale; Karl Strauss Brewing Co., CA). Aged for 12 months in Bourbon barrels, this is a robust beer that exhibits strength and balance. Fruity notes of dried fig, date and raisin are infused with accents of toffee, molasses and sweet spice. Rich, oak-driven flavors of vanilla, coconut and charred sugar—like coconut crème brûlée—flood the creamy palate, giving way to secondary flavors of caramel-drizzled plum and candied orange peel. Even though the alcohol is high, the beer never comes across as hot, but it closes with a lovely warming sensation.

abv: 12.2%  
Price: $12/22 oz

Uinta Crooked Line Oak Jacked Imperial Pumpkin (Pumpkin Ale; Uinta Brewing Co., UT). This oak-aged ale brewed with pumpkin and spices is warm and inviting, evoking a sense of season and begging to be consumed on a chilly fall evening. It doesn’t get overpowered by the oak or sweet spice characteristics that can sometimes dominate a pumpkin beer, but instead provides a balanced and enjoyable selection that offers soft cinnamon, clove, nutmeg and brown sugar accents to the core of caramel malt, gourd and baked yam. The palate is robust but open, with medium carbonation and a slightly astringent texture. Vanilla and toasted coconut accents unfold on the finish, but then transition into a lingering sweet, peppery spice flavor.

abv: 10.3%  
Price: $13/750 ml

DuClaw Retribution (American Double/Imperial Stout; DuClaw Brewing Company, MD). With a label proclaiming that “patience is more than a virtue,” this imperial stout has spent six months in Kentucky white-oak Bourbon barrels, and it could certainly stand to spend at least six more in your cellar. Currently, the beer is loaded with robust dark chocolate and roasted coffee aromas and flavors, alongside intensely sweet notes of toffee, molasses and caramel. Sticky and slightly viscous, the mouthfeel is full and coats the palate with a resiny texture. Hints of leather and sweet smoke grace the finish, ending with a soft, spicy kick.

abv: 11.5%  
Price: $11/22 oz

Avery Rumpkin Annual Barrel-series Batch No. 2 (Pumpkin Ale; Avery Brewing Company, CO). Rumpkin is not an ordinary pumpkin beer: Bearing 18.1% abv and having aged for six months in dark rum barrels, it’s a bruise of a beer that demands sipping. It pours a dark brown color with a murky orange accent and a viscous consistency that’s almost like motor oil. The boozy spice notes of the rum barrels take center stage on the nose, with forward aromas of nutmeg, cinnamon, clove, ginger and brown sugar to the pumpkin and caramel-malt backbone. Those notes continue onto the palate, which is reminiscent of pumpkin pie, rum-soaked raisins and vanilla. Only 418 cases produced.

abv: 18.1%  
Price: $10/12 oz