While American culture in general is preoccupied with the here and now, wine devotees are well accustomed to thinking long term. Laying down bottles in cellars or stand-alone storage units and monitoring their development over a period of years is a thing of beauty to true enthusiasts. It's one of the deep, true pleasures of wine: as tannins, acidity and flavors flower or subside, the disparate elements coalesce into a complex whole and after patiently observing you finally decide on the moment of optimal consumption. What could possibly be better than that reward of your efforts?

On these pages are the 100 wines reviewed this year that our editors feel are most cellar-worthy and achieve high quality. It is a refined list, and many of the wines are expensive—no surprise there. But all are collectible and/or might require time in a properly temperature-and humidity-controlled cellar to deliver maximum pleasure. In an ideal world, you could buy a half case or more of wines that intrigue, and open a bottle at intervals to watch and savor their evolution. Of course, many of these wines are limited in production, and just like wines on our other Top 100 lists, some may have sold out or increased in price since our initial reviews were published.

In most contexts, the phrase “you’re not getting older, you’re getting better” is wishful thinking. In these wines, it is the truth. Enjoy!
99 Trefethen 2005 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Oak Knoll); $100. This is nearly perfect, a massive, monumental wine whose sheer power is matched only by its grace and refinement. The flavors of blackberries, cassis, dark chocolate, buttered toast and cedar flood the mouth, tightly controlled by firm tannins and good acidity. Decant for several hours if you open it now, but better to give it 6-10 years in the bottle.

97 Marchesi Antinori 2006 Guado al Tasso (Bolgheri Superiore); $95. Guado al Tasso is finally back. After a string of past vintages that exhibited some rubber-like aromas, the 2006 expression is a study in purity, focus and excellence. This wine is impressive on all levels in terms of intensity, personality and persistency. It's rich and luscious with smooth tannins and lasting flavors of blackberry and spice. Drink after 2015. Imported by Ste. Michelle Wine Estates.

96 Poderi Luigi Einaudi 2006 Costa Grimaldi (Barolo); $70. Costa Grimaldi is a spectacular wine that surprises with every sip thanks to its intensity and the extraordinary quality of its mouthfeel. Initially, the wine is soft and yielding with tones of red cherry, chocolate, cola, licorice and mineral. It grows even more opulent and velvety in the mouth thanks to its fine texture and tannins. Keep this wine in your cellar ten years plus. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd.

97 Williams Selyem 2007 Hirsch Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); $72. A brilliant wine. Racy in acidity, silky in texture, yet powerful, it exudes the essence of Pinot Noir's greatness. Shows great fruity ripeness in the cherry, Dr. Pepper cola, licorice and bacon flavors, and also a wild, forest quality of grilled mushrooms, thyme and fennel. Absolutely dry, with a firm spine of tannins, the structure is near perfect. A divine expression of Hirsch, and a good candidate for six years in the cellar.

97 Henriot 1996 Cuvée des Enchanteleurs Brut (Champagne); $185. With all the extreme intensity of this vintage, this wine brings even more. The start of cookie yeast and toast character, a vibrant mineral texture, hints of spice, green herbs and a final white peach flavor. It is still young, just keep aging. Imported by Henriot Inc.

96 Aalto 2006 Ribera del Duero; $55. Mariano Garcia's deft winemaking touch and propensity for making monster RDDs is etched into this massive, extracted heavyweight, and wow is it good! After a touch of early heat, there's dusty black fruit aromas, spice galore, floral notes and then a huge palate of raw blackness and finally an explosion of creamy mocha, vanilla and woodspice. Needs a couple of more years but not 10 or 20. Imported by European Cellars.
97 Château Suduiraut 2007 Sauternes; $90. Powered by dry botrytis, this is a wine with immense potential. It has weight, complexity and richness, all under the cloak of botrytis. To leaven the power, there is acidity, but this is certainly for aging. Imported by Château Suduiraut.

10 Standish 2006 The Relic Shiraz (Barossa Valley); $135. This prodigious wine showcases Barossa's ability to deliver big, mouthfilling flavors without any suggestion of heat or heaviness. Scents of stone fruit, pepper and red currants mark the nose, while the flavors take on a darker cast, heading toward black cherries and black olives. The tannins are supremely silky, but this graceful, feminine beauty should drink well through at least 2020. Imported by Epicurean Wines.

11 Betz Family 2007 Père de Famille Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley); $60. This Père de Famille is 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, with the rest split between Merlot and Petit Verdot. Sweet, pure fruit—black currants and black cherry and blackberry—is packed tight, concentrated and polished, but needing hours to breathe open. Dense, dusty, complex, complicated, this wine is sophisticated beyond description.

12 Failla 2006 Vivien Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); $70. This small-production wine showcases the wild, feral and lonely personality of this winery's extreme coastal mountain location, offering the most exotic flavors that are hard to describe. Asian pears, pomegranates, Dr Pepper cola, red currants, licorice, bacon and rare berries like mulberries and loganberries come to mind. It's softly delicious and drinkable now, yet has a firm acidic structure that suggests aging into the future. It will be fascinating to watch this wine develop over the next decade.

13 Atalon 2006 Corestone Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); $60. Dramatic all around. Deeply aromatic, offering waves of grilled blackberries, currants, violets, sweet buttered cinnamon toast and sandalwood. The tannin structure is superb. Feels classically dense and full-bodied in the mouth, very dry, yet opulent and complex. Grows more concentrated as it airs in the glass. A tremendous wine that needs time. 2012–2020.

14 Bodega Catena Zapata 2006 Nicasia Vineyard Malbec (Mendoza); $120. If the color doesn't tell the full story, the nose will: it's impeccably perfumed, round and sweet, with amazing fruit aromas and a toasty background. The feel is as lush and rich as they come, and there's outstanding purity to the lusty black fruit flavors. A masher with elegance. Maybe the best Malbec Argentina has ever produced. Drink from 2011–15. Imported by Winebow.

15 Hestan 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); $100. Massive, dramatic, beautiful, intense, but young and firm in tannins, with a cut of fresh acidity. Shows concentrated blackberries, black currants, violets, minerals and cedar, leading to a long, penetrating finish. Very great Cabernet, vibrant and potent, just tremendous in structure. Potentially a near-perfect wine with 4–6 years in the bottle.
Tannat at its most
Easily the greatest Dominus in
The 76% Cabernet
This stunning wine
This very dense, tannic Pinot
The oak element is still strong at this

94% Cabernet Sauvignon, with a few drops of
Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

The window seems to be

Imported by Dalla Terra Winery Direct.

Dominius 2007 Red Wine (Napa Valley);
$129. Easily the greatest Dominus in
memory. Comes down on the drier, lower alcohol
and less ripe side than many Cabs in its league,
yet lacks for nothing in complexity and sheer deli-
ciousness. Tantalizes with blackberry tart, cherry,
carob bean and a Pinot Noir-esque cola-rhubarb
richness that retreats behind rich tannins and an
earthiness suggesting sweet blond tobacco and
dried sage. Clearly ageable, it will develop bottle
complexity over the next 12 years, at least. It's
dense, polished, tight wine. It's light years away
from the Leonetti's of the 1980s—compact and
dry. But the fruit is of such an
expressive, this wine boasts dense tannins that roll
deePLY around the wine. But the fruit is of such an
intensity that it keeps up a fine equilibrium. It is a
seamless, impressive wine, projecting its power
easily. Imported by Charles Neal Selections.

A great waft of ripe fruits,
impossible to dissect. It needs time—a lot of time.

Unbelievable, this wine
is a triumph for the winery, the vint-
age and the region it represents. A multi-clone
blend (hence the name) with high, cool-climate
acidity and aged in 100% new oak, it's still young,
fresh and tight. The astringency throws a cloak
over the raspberries, cherries, rosehip tea and
Indian spice flavors, which reveal themselves only
reluctantly. But they're there, in an imposing tex-
ture of velvet and silk. This enormous wine
demands time. The window seems to be

Imported by Charles Neal Selections.

A big, rich wine, showing its gorgeous fruit
easily. But with a core of dryness, the ripest apri-
cots touched by caramel, it should age well over
many years. There is intense power here, still
hidden by the youth of the wine, but with final
concentration. Imported by Château Climens.

A great waft of ripe fruits,
unusual for great Chablis, a taut wine, like a spring of
green fruits waiting to burst out. This impressive
wine needs aging, give it at least five years.
Imported by Henriot Inc.

The finest hops

There were more than 140 winer-
ies in Napa Valley in 1889. Yet, the
newspapers proclaimed one crop
in particular to be the best in the
world: hops.

A great waft of ripe fruits,
wood spice and tense acidity. A Valmur is a model
for great Chablis, a taut wine, like a spring of
green fruits waiting to burst out. This impressive
wine needs aging, give it at least five years.
Imported by Henriot Inc.
98 Evening Land 2007 Occidental Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); $150. A terrific Pinot, and one of the few that absolutely demands cellaring. The tannic structure is enormous, providing a sandpapery dryness to the palate. Yet the flavor explosion is so powerful, you can enjoy it now with utter satisfaction. Erupts in grilled blackberry and cherry, Dr. Pepper cola, bacon, anise, sautéed wild mushroom and smoky sandalwood flavors, leading to a spicy finish that continues for a full minute. Glorious and decadent. The winemaker was Sashi Moorman, from Stolpman, and the vineyard was planted in 1994 to the Calera clone. Only 115 cases were produced. Drink now–2017.

96 Baldacci 2006 Brenda’s Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District); $85. Easily earns its high score for the sheer power and mass, equal to anything out of Napa. Erupts in the most complex blackberries, black currants, licorice and 100% new smoky oak flavors, with a spicy finish that goes on and on. The tannins are strong and fine and impressive. Not for the faint-hearted, and not a wine to drink now, as it will swamp food. Should begin to emerge after 2012.

95 Von Strasser 2007 Reserve (Diamond Mountain); $125. Napa Bordeaux-style wines don’t get much richer than this. It is, in a word, extraordinary, in large part due to the perfect vintage. So rich, so ripe in fruit, and yet so brilliantly balanced in tannins and acidity. Really world-class. Made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Malbec, it offers dazzlingly complex waves of blackberry and black currant fruit, with suggestions of cocoa, spice and cedar. You can drink it now, but it should develop bottle nuances through the next ten years, at least. Only 172 cases were produced.

96 Sbragia 2006 Monte Rosso Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Valley); $50. One for the cellar. It’s vibrantly rich and forward in blackberries, black cherries, plums, dark chocolate and sweet smoky new oak, yet very tannic. Creates an astringency that lasts through the spicy finish. It would be a pity to open it before 2012, and will last for years after.

96 Rudi Pichler 2008 Wösendorfer Kollmutz Reserve Grüner Veltliner (Wachau); $97. This is the third vintage of Rudi Pichler’s Reserve from the Kollmutz Vineyard. It shows an extra richness over the already concentrated Smaragd, a powerhouse of intensity, spice, mango, oregano and lemon verbena crispness. The balance is already there, now the wine needs to mature. Imported by Winebow.

96 Eugenio Bocchino 2005 La Serra (Barolo); $99. This beautiful expression of Nebbiolo from the La Serra cru represents the best of Barolo winemaking tradition. Eugenio Bocchino heads a family-run estate that spans almost six hectares in La M orra, Verduno, Roddi and Alba. This is a focused and tightly tuned wine with bright berry nuances and exciting crispness, length and elegance. Imported by Small Vineyards LLC.

96 Stonestreet 2006 Christopher’s Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley); $100. Hard mountain tannins characterize this Cab, which was grown above 2,000 feet in the Mayacamas. It’s hugely deep in blackberries and black currants, with notes of dark chocolate and violets. Meanwhile, 100% new French oak adds an elaborate layer of smoky caramel and char that’s entirely in keeping with the wine’s volume. Impressive and flashy, but immature, this wine requires cellaring. Best 2012–2018.

95 Adelsheim 2007 Boulder Bluff Vineyard Pinot Noir (Chehalem Bluffs); $58. This is the first vineyard-designation for the vineyard, and it’s easy to see why it was done. The wine has pinpoint focus, bright fruit, natural layering of spice, fruit and herb, with a punchy, briny spine that seems to gather force and go on forever. If a wine can ever be salty, this is the wine.
95  Château du Cèdre 2006 Le Cèdre (Cahors); $60. Almost black in color, this is a wonderful wine with a long development ahead. At the moment, wood is still too dominant, but just taste the weight of the darkest plum and sweet fig fruit flavors, a line of licorice and bitter coffee and huge, dry tannins. Imported by Martine's Wines.

95  W.H. Smith 2007 Purple Label Piedra Hill Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Howell Mountain); $64. You don't want to open this wine anytime soon. It's tightly wound and immature, offering a blast of primary fruit flavors that haven't yet integrated with the oak. It tastes almost sweet now, although it's technically bone dry, with waves of black cherries, blackberries, mocha, anise liqueur and smoky oak vanillins, followed by a long, spicy finish. Hold until 2012, if you can, and should drink well beyond that.

97  Emilio Moro 2006 Malleolus de Valderamiro (Ribera del Duero); $180. Beautifully composed, with power and just as much precision and pizzazz. The nose offers lightly baked berry fruit notes, leather and spice, while the palate is loaded with tobacco, exotic spices and the finest natural berry flavors Spain has to offer. Smooth, elegant, finessed and potent, with integrated tannins and bold acidity that will keep it going for at least a decade. Drink from 2012 through 2018. Imported by Fine Estates From Spain.

95  Paul Lato 2007 Fiddlestix Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills); $70. A spectacular Pinot Noir, but you don't want to open it anytime soon. Shows the pedigree of this vineyard, a superbly balanced wine rich in acidity and minerals. The fruit? Black and red cherries, blackberries, cola, cocoa powder and red currants, enriched with smoky cedarwood. Beautiful, but needs time. The window is 2011–2013.

99  Moët & Chandon 1996 Dom Pérignon Oenothèque Brut (Champagne); $385. A magnificent Champagne, one that is light, delicate, yet packed with character. It is beautifully balanced, with a bone-dry character, just softened by the toastiness that is developing. Expect this to age for many years. Imported by Moët Hennessy USA.
95 Mark Ryan 2007 Lonely Heart Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain); $75. The first reserve from this winery, it’s a barrel selection of Ciel du Cheval and old block Klipsun Cabernet Sauvignon, blended with 15% Petit Verdot. This is the most structured, dense and tightly layered Mark Ryan wine to date. It has the density and compact structure of Quilceda Creek, with perhaps just a shade less concentration. Aromatically complex, you can pick out early details of seed, coffee, pepper, chocolate and tobacco around the dense cassis, plum and cherry fruit. But this wine is truly a baby, and should not be touched for a decade or more.

94 José Maria da Fonseca 2007 Domini Plus Red Wine (Douro); $40. A beautifully shaped and structured wine. Its polished wood shines through the black plums, figs and dark chocolate flavors. It’s a wine with a velvet texture, hiding sweet tannins and pushing the ripe fruit forward. For aging, 4–5 years, but already very drinkable. Imported by Palm Bay International.

94 Quinta do Crasto 2008 Reserva Old Vines (Douro); $40. From low-yielding 70-year old vines, this is a beautifully structured wine, its dark tannins balanced by complex dark coffee, plum skins, a rich texture. It’s obviously a wine for aging—give it at least four years. Imported by Broadbent Selections, Inc.

94 Ehret 2006 Bella’s Blend (Knights Valley); $39. A deeply impressive Bordeaux blend. It comes from this small, but prestigious, appellation, which is a bridge between Sonoma County and Napa Valley. Marked by dryness and a superb tannic structure, it has deep flavors of blackberries, black currants, violets, herbs and cedar. Needs time. Give it 4–6 years in the cellar.

96 Chappellet 2007 Pritchard Hill Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); $135. This is a monster Cabernet, in the best sense. Comprised of all five Bordeaux varieties, it’s bone dry, enormously complex and firmly masculine, with very big, hard tannins. Concentration on the flavors shows layers of blackberries, black currants, blueberries, mocha, violets, sweet charred oak and a firm grounding of minerals. An outstanding wine from the Pritchard Hill region east of the Silverado Trail, but one that needs cellar time to resolve the tannins. Better after 2013, and should develop for many years after that.

97 Bollinger 1997 RD Brut (Champagne); $260. Disgorged in 2009, this is a toasty wine, rich and concentrated. The idea of long aging before disgorging the yeast cells is to build up the unique complexity of the wine. In this Bollinger has succeeded magnificently. An opulent wine, with aging potential for 10 years or more. Imported by Terlato Wines International.

BLUSH

Grenache is ideal for producing rosé because of its thin skin and naturally occurring phenolic coloring compounds.
95 Semper 2007 Ellenbach Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); $85. Acidity makes the mouth water, tannins provide a firm framework, oak is perfectly integrated, and the depth of fruit is impressive. Shows flavors of cherry tart, raspberry Newton, cola, buttered cinnamon toast and vanilla that are magnificent and decadent. Elegant and classy. Should negotiate the years through 2014.

94 Gary Farrell 2007 Bradford Mountain Vineyards Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley); $40. A complex, sophisticated Zinfandel, although it’s very young, and all the parts haven’t come together. Shows luscious waves of ripe forest blackberries, raspberries, red plums and nectarines, with notes of dry chocolate, sweet tobacco, balsam and cedar, finished with massive peppery spices. Notable for the purity and elegance of its tannin-acid structure, this beautiful Zinfandel should age well through 2014.

95 San Polino 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); $90. Here’s an immediately seductive Riserva from Montalcino with sweet cherry aromas backed by vanilla, cinnamon and spice. The wine is terrific, from the intensity of its aromas to the smoothness of its mouthfeel. The finish is long, supple and very polished. Imported by Premier Wine Co.

100 Viña Sastre 2006 Pesus (Ribera del Duero); $750. If there’s any such thing as the perfect Spanish red, Pesus is it. A blend of 80% Tempranillo with other grapes including Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine sees 200% new oak, resulting in a thick, dark, tannic beauty that bubbles over with toast, cola, mint, chocolate and spice aromas. The mouth is sheer heaven; a mile deep in terms of berry flavor and more, but faultless and smooth. Shows outstanding structure and power, and should age well for 15–20 years. Hails from two 100-year-old vineyards and some baby vines with but 25 years of age. Crazy expensive but only 150 cases were made; drink 2013–2030. Imported by De Maison Selections, Inc.

94 Schloss Gobelsburg 2008 Heiligenstein Riesling (Kamptal); $54. Lovers of the purest mineral Riesling, very steely, will go crazy for this wine. It is tightly wound around a core of green and white fruits and the crispest, knife-edge sharp acidity. It is for aging, to produce a stunning wine in 4–5 years at a minimum. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines.

94 Ravenswood 2006 Pickberry Vineyards Merlot-Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Mountain); $50. Quite a noble, interesting wine that bears comparing with the best of Napa Valley. It’s bone dry, with softly dusty tannins backed with a firm hit of clean acidity. The flavors are somewhat herbal, with a sage and tobacco edge to the blackberries, dark chocolate and graphite. Feels classy and important, but young. Better after 2012

94 WesMar 2007 Hellenthal Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); $50. Here’s a young, dry, acidic Pinot Noir that clearly wants some time in the cellar. It has a beautifully silky texture, and is made in a light, elegant style, with very complex flavors. Waves of sour red cherry candy and cola flavors wash over the palate, accented with orange zest, cinnamon, Asian spices, anise and sandalwood. Better after 2011 and should develop for 3–5 years after that.

94 Quinta do Vallado 2007 Reserva Field Blend (Douro); $60. From old, mixed planting vineyards in the Quinta do Vallado, this is an impressively complex blend of flavors, from rich spice, smooth tannins, the richest plum juice and a gorgeous, opulent texture. It is ripe, drinkable now, but likely to benefit from several years aging. Imported by Quintessential Wines.
95 Flora Springs 2007 Hillside Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford); $100.
An amazingly rich, complex and ageworthy wine. Made from 100% Cabernet grapes, it shows firm, plush flavors of blackberries and black currants, with a sour cherry candy tartness that's clean and piquant in the mouth. But the wine is also very tannic, giving a dry astringency through the finish. Should reward time in the cellar. Best 2012–2018.

94 Ken Wright 2008 Canary Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Eola-Amity Hills); $50.
The top wine from Ken Wright in 2008, this beautifully elegant wine clocks in at just 13.3% alcohol, yet delivers a mouthful of delicious flavors. A lovely mix of cranberry, pomegranate and wild raspberry is annotated with dusty herb. Excellent midpalate concentration and length.

95 Chehalem 2006 Statement Pinot Noir (Ribbon Ridge); $99.
This one-of-a-kind offering from Chehalem celebrates what they are calling a “great” vintage. The wine is dark, supple and immensely rich and dense, yet retains a lightness that captures the elegance of the Pinot Noir grape while propelling it to rarified heights. The mix of red and purple fruits, herb, spice and earth all come together in a smooth and seductive wine that drinks like a dream.

95 Uccelliera 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); $112.
Uccelliera is among an elite group that represents the best of the best of Montalcino. This gorgeous wine is intense and generous with nice concentration and layered aromas of cherry, blackberry, spice, blackberry and plum. The mouthfeel is smooth and rich and the wine promises many happy years ahead. A Marc de Grazia selection; various American importers.

95 Ghost Block 2007 Single Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Yountville); $100.
A terrific Cabernet you want to cellar for a good 5–6 years, at the very least, and could go far longer. Shows what Yountville can do in a good year. The wine is very dry and more mineral than further north, yet is extraordinarily rich in blackberries, chocolate-covered cherries and cassis, with a perfumed scent of violets. The mouthfeel is all velvet and satin—so pretty and refined.

95 Knights Bridge 2007 Beckstoffer Dr. Crane Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); $110.
Beautiful from start to finish, but tannic, and not drinkable now, in the classic sense. The tannins are hard, and while they're very finely ground, they prevent the palate from full appreciation of the lush blackberries, black cherries, dark chocolate and herbs. Give this 100% Cabernet at least five years to begin to mellow.

94 Staglin 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford); $175.
A big wine, rather ponderous now in the size and forwardness of its fruit and the volume of mainly French oak. The fruit is massive, suggesting black and red sour cherry candy, with oak influences of smoky char and pencil shavings, and complex notes of minerals and sweet violet flowers. But it all needs time to come together. Tasted in a large flight of 2007 Rutherford Cabernets and Bordeaux blends, this was easily the star. Really hard to exaggerate the wine’s beauty and elegance. Best 2013–2019, at least.

95 Testarossa 2008 Doctor’s Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands); $54.
A very finely crafted Pinot Noir, although it’s also very young and wants some time in the cellar. Combines great Highlands fruit power and tannic structure with a silky, delicate mouthfeel. Beautiful now for the elaborate raspberry and cherry flavors, elaborated with beautiful oak, but better after 2013.

94 Schmelz 2008 Dürnsteiner Freiheit Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); $56.
Crisp, steely, deliciously perfumed wine. It shows a tight mineral character balanced by the fresh white currant and grapefruit flavors. The acidity and structure are important, promising good aging. Imported by Blue Danube Wine Co.
95 Le Chiuse 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); $120. Le Chiuse has produced one of Montalcino’s brightest stars with this Riserva 2004 (the base 2004 Brunello didn’t impress us nearly as much). This is a delicious wine that you will enjoy on every level. The intensity and purity of the fruit and spice aromas are impressive and the mouthfeel is extra-plush and supple. Yet, those firm tannins give it the balance and structure it needs. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.

95 Fattoria Petrolo 2006 Galatrona (Toscana); $120. With its extraordinary texture, bright personality and complex medley of aromas, this is a lovely Merlot. The aromatic layers here include red cherry, earthy tones, exotic spice and cinnamon. The mouthfeel is smooth and gorgeous with delicious softness and opulent richness. Drink after 2015. Imported by Vintus LLC.

93 Quaïta de São José 2008 Reserva (Douro); $40. Concentrated and dense, very structured, swathed in sweet ripe plums, dark chocolate, spice and balancing acidity. This is complex, dark, while remaining stylish. For aging over 5–6 years. Imported by Laurel Importers.

94 Argiano 2006 Solengo (Toscana); $70. Solengo is a masterfully crafted super Tuscan blend of Petit Verdot, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot with seamlessly integrated wood notes that form a modern and proud personality. Aromas include black cherry, exotic spice and chocolate and the wine’s flavors are enduring and smooth. Cellar it for five more years at least. Imported by Vias Imports.

94 Château Léoville-Barton 2007 Saint-Julien; $65. This is a great success for the year, a wine that is dense, characterized by balance between sweet fruit and solid tannins. Spice from the finely judged wood aging adds extra complexity, as do the plum and berry fruits. For aging. Imported by Château Léoville-Barton.

94 Simonnet-Febvre 2007 Les Clos Grand Cru (Chablis); $70. Still tasting young, with its lemon and lime flavors dominant, this is going to be a serious, mineral-driven wine. It has plenty of fruit, but it is caged in a firm, tight texture of green fruits. Obviously it needs aging. Imported by Louis Latour Inc.

89 Not for Prophets
All but one section of the Old Testament—the Book of Jonah—contain wine references.
95 Quintessa 2007 Red Wine (Rutherford); $140. A very fine Cab from the estate, which is in the north-central part of the Rutherford appellation. Judging from the tannins, it's too youthful to drink now, with a tight, astringent mouthfeel and fleshy, unintegrated oak. But the flavors are extraordinary. They flood the mouth with the essence of Cabernet, with ripe blackberries, black currants, raspberries and mocha, and the spicy finish lasts for a full minute. Give it until 2013, and it should provide great drinking through 2019, at least.

94 Niepoort 2008 Batuta Tinto (Douro); $100. Big, solidly tannic, impressive wine, packed with brooding fruits, very firm. Flavors of dried plums, black berry juice and warm herbs combine to produce a wine that is powerful, concentrated, while retaining great balance. It is obviously for aging—give it 5–6 years. Imported by Martine's Wines.

94 Castello Banfi 2004 Poggio all'Oro Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); $150. The last time this special Riserva was produced was in 1999. Only produced in excellent vintages, the 2004 expression shows amazing concentration, balance, complexity, depth and personality. Aromas include black cherry, cola, light smoke, graphite and moist tobacco. The mouthfeel is deep, penetrating and long lasting with tight but polished tannins. D rink after 2015. Imported by Banfi Vintners.

93 Domaine Michel Bouzereau 2007 Le Cailleret Premier Cru (Puligny-Montrachet); $75. The wine is currently closed up, not offering huge flavors. So it is a question of feeling the richness, the steely edge and the yellow fruits. It is certainly very dense, needing several years' aging, finishing with vanilla creaminess. Imported by Domaine et Saveurs Collection.

92 Joseph Drouhin 2007 Clos des Mouches Premier Cru (Beaune); $80. Still young, of course, but already the wine is showing great fruits, smoothed by wood, offering style and sophistication. As it opens up, the flavors of pears and sweet apples join the toast and the ripeness. This is on the path to greatness; give it 5–6 years and more. Imported by Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.

91 Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils 2007 Les Clos Grand Cru (Chablis); $81. A wine in two parts. It opens soft, with attractive green and white fruits. Then a tight, steely grip shows through, offering aging as well as a taut mineral character. Give the wine 4–5 years. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.

90 Sierra Cantabria 2006 Amancio (Rioja); $167. Brawny but lovely, with monster black fruit, balsam wood, tobacco and cola nut aromas. The palate is ultrarich and modern in style, with deep, brandied flavors of cola, black cherry and spice. Driven, modern and properly tannic, with a fair amount of mocha and creaminess on the finish. D rink from late 2010 thru 2014. Imported by Fine Estates From Spain.

98 Krug 1998 Clos du Mesnil (Champagne); $1,400. A wine that has created its own universe. It has a unique, special softness that allies with the total purity that comes from a small, enclosed single vineyard. The fruit is almost irrelevant here, because it comes as part of a much deeper complexity. This is a great wine, at the summit of Champagne, a sublime, unforgettable experience. Imported by Moët Hennessy USA.

97 Quinta Vale Dona Maria 2007 Tinto (Douro); $45. A beautifully smooth wine, with a rich Port-like texture. The dry, firm tannins give the wine impressive structure, although it remains an opulent wine, its dark fruit, cocoa and herbal flavors just breathing the concentration of the Douro. Imported by Adventures In Wine.

96 Alfred Tardieu-Laurent 2007 Blanc (Hermitage); $82. With its head-turning aromas of honey, truffles and ripe peaches, this is a knockout offering from Tardieu Laurent. In the mouth, it's broad yet focused, with layers of rich, nuanced flavors that coat the palate before ending in a long, mineral-inflected finish. D rink now–2020, and possibly beyond that. Imported by Wilson Daniels Ltd.

95 Clarendon Hills 2007 Astralis Syrah (Clarendon); $225. The 2007 Astralis impresses for its combination of power and nuance. It's dark and almost tarry in concentration, but floral and bright at the same time. Layers of dark coffee and earth are balanced by red fruit, and although it's full bodied and rich in texture, the finish introduces delicately herbal, tea-like notes. Best from 2014–2025. Imported by Wine Brokers Unlimited.

94 Tardieu-Laurent 2007 Blanc (Hermitage); $82. With its head-turning aromas of honey, truffles and ripe peaches, this is a knockout offering from Tardieu Laurent. In the mouth, it's broad yet focused, with layers of rich, nuanced flavors that coat the palate before ending in a long, mineral-inflected finish. D rink now–2020, and possibly beyond that. Imported by Wilson Daniels Ltd.

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90 Sierra Cantabria 2006 Amancio (Rioja); $167. Brawny but lovely, with monster black fruit, balsam wood, tobacco and cola nut aromas. The palate is ultrarich and modern in style, with deep, brandied flavors of cola, black cherry and spice. Driven, modern and properly tannic, with a fair amount of mocha and creaminess on the finish. D rink from late 2010 thru 2014. Imported by Fine Estates From Spain.