



Our editors name their top wines of 2009.

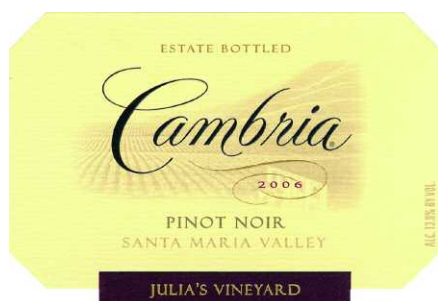
BY THE EDITORS OF WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE

Each year, the editors of *Wine Enthusiast* compile the list of their favorite wines of the year. While most featured have received high scores from our critics, many go far beyond the numbers assigned to them, either for their extraordinary quality-to-price value, their immediate drinkability, or their uniqueness. All are diverse and offer a window into the terroir from which they were made. And perhaps most importantly, all are available in the U.S. market.

We also strive to consider newsworthiness or excitement factor, and whether a wine represents notable trends in the wine market. This year's Number One wine is a prime example: Pinot Noir being the buzz wine of the past few years, Cambria combines high quality with a reasonable price and is made in sufficient quantities as to be generally available.

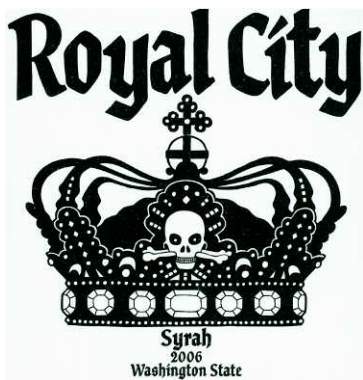
Within the limits of what we tasted over the past year, we've tried to include wines that not only represent many different regions and grape varieties, but also vary in style. You'll find wines from all the major wine-producing countries across the full spectrum of grape varieties in sparkling and still, table, dessert and fortified wines. One of the things we value most in the wine world is diversity, and this is one way of applauding it.

1



93 Cambria 2006 Julia's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Maria Valley); \$21. This is the best Pinot Noir at this price on the market. Easily. It's picture-perfect cool climate, absolutely dry and silky, with complex flavors of cherries, Mandarin orange, cola, pomegranates, licorice and cinnamon spice, made even richer by smoky oak. Just lovely, and gets even better as it breathes in the glass. *Editors' Choice.*

2



100 Charles Smith 2006 Royal City Syrah (Columbia Valley); \$80. In 2005 Charles Smith introduced three high-end Syrahs, all from the same vineyard, named Heart, Skull and Old Bones. In 2006 Smith has made a wine better than each of these, by combining them into a single wine—Royal City Syrah. Rich scents of purple fruit, smoked meat, cedar, lead pencil, moist earth and so on proclaim a wine with genuine gravitas. There is nothing missing, from the first sniff to the last sip, the wine delivers on all levels. Complex, beautifully balanced, powerful and detailed.

3

93 François Chidaine 2006 Le Bouchet (Vouvray); \$21. Chidaine, based across the Loire in Montlouis, has only recently begun making wine from Vouvray as well. Le Bouchet is an off-dry wine that balances a core of minerality and acidity against intense richness. Flavors of sweet plums, apricots and almonds ride beautifully into the soft finish. Imported by Louis Dressner Selections.

4

98 BOND 2005 The Matriarch (Napa Valley); \$90. This year's Matriarch is very similar to Harlan Estate in structure, and in some ways, a superior wine, or at least more delicious now. Shows the most beautiful black currant, cedar, blueberry pie and Asian spice flavors. What makes the structure so gorgeous are the firm tannins. Ultimately, it's a refined, exquisite red wine. Hard to imagine a better one for drinking over the next decade, and just shows that price sometimes has no relationship to quality.

5



94 Henriot NV Souverain Brut (Champagne); \$45. A beautifully fine mousse indicates the class of this finely molded wine. It has some weight, flavors of green apples, with hints of fresh apricots. There is extreme freshness here, the style dry but rich. This bottling tastes young and would be worth aging six months. Imported by Henriot Inc. *Editors' Choice.*

6

93 Michele Chiarlo 2006 Reyna (Barbaresco); \$40. Here's a wine that holds its own in a ranking of top Nebbiolos. There's depth and great promise of fruit here, which is wrapped within folds of vanilla, ginger, cinnamon and dusty mineral. The mouthfeel is plush and velvety and the wine ends with tart but succulent tannins. It will drink beautifully for five-plus years. Imported by Kobrand.

7

93 Concha y Toro 2006 Terrunyo Old Pirque Vineyard Block: Las Terrazas Cabernet Sauvignon (Pirque); \$41. Thick and rich, with hedonistic black fruit aromas and all the accents of leather, tobacco and olive that come with a great Chilean Cabernet. In the mouth, everything comes together in a commendable knit, and it doesn't sacrifice anything, be it berry fruit, herbal accents, tannic grip or acidity. Drink now through 2013. Imported by Banfi Vintners. *Editors' Choice.*

8

94 Poet's Leap 2007 Riesling (Columbia Valley); \$20. Loaded with honeysuckle, melon, pear, peach and hints of sweet grapefruit, this juicy wine perfectly captures the intensity of Washington Riesling and the complexity of German wines. Buoyant and precise, with notes of chalk and limestone in the finish, this is a stunning achievement in a challenging vintage. *Editors' Choice.*

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9

95 **Kaesler 2006 Old Vine Shiraz (Barossa Valley); \$60.** This wine's concentrated dark fruit shows in the color—a vibrant dark garnet—and in the aromas of blueberry, vanilla and dried spices. The 16% alcohol is well concealed, manifesting only as wonderfully full, creamy density on the palate, magnifying the intense cola, earth and spice complexity. A pronounced peppery, black licorice note adds extra length to the finely textured finish. Drink now–2020. Imported by Epicurean Wines. *Editors' Choice.*

10

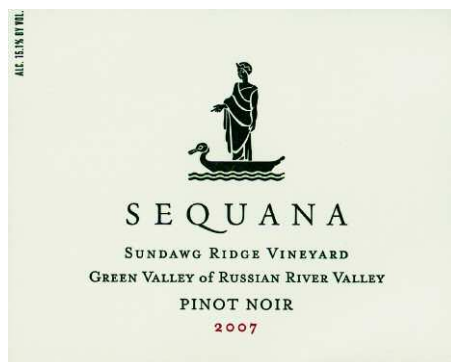
95 **Testarossa 2007 Brosseau Vineyard Chardonnay (Chalone); \$39.** How they manage to make dessert pastry flavors taste dry is a mystery. Whatever the answer is, this utterly delicious wine erupts with pineapple tart, date nut cookie, vanilla-covered orange and spicy mocha latté flavors, yet has no trace of residual sugar. Brilliant acidity makes it all clean and alive. *Editors' Choice.*

11

98 **Kracher 2005 Zwischen den Steen Nummer 8 Trockenbeerenauslese Welschriesling (Burgenland); \$103.** The intensity of the acidity, piercing through the sweetness, is what is astonishing about this wine. It gives the wine an ethereal quality, a lightness to go with the concentration of the dried fruits and orange zest flavors. The essence of TBA. Imported by Vin Divino.

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12



97 **Sequana 2007 Sundawg Ridge Vineyard Pinot Noir (Green Valley); \$50.** This distinctive Pinot Noir's source is a tiny vineyard in cool Green Valley; the winegrower is James MacPhail, whose own MacPhail Pinot Noirs are so good. The wine itself is totally dry and silky and firm in acidity, yet soft in fine tannins. You might call it noble. It's eruptive in cherries, sweet smoky bacon, raspberry granola and oaky sandalwood. Gorgeous, seductive and brilliant, a truly great Pinot Noir that's impeccable now.

13

96 **Au Bon Climat 2006 Santa Barbara Historic Vineyards Collection Bien Nacido Vineyard Chardonnay (Santa Maria Valley); \$35.** Chardonnay doesn't get much better than this. Bursts with grilled pineapple-infused crème brûlée, peach pie, butter-sautéed banana, passion fruit and butterscotch flavors, dusted with cinnamon and brown sugar. Yet all that opulence is balanced by perfect acidity. Totally gorgeous. *Editors' Choice.*

I fill the goblet again! For I never
before
Felt the glow which now gladdens
my heart to its core.
Let us drink!—who would not?
Since through life's varied
round,
In the goblet alone no deception
is found.

—GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

14

95 **Maurodos 2005 San Román (Toro); \$67.** We would not have expected anything to match the stellar 2004 San Román, but this newest vintage is up to the task. It's opaque as midnight without a moon, and the nose is a delectable blend of vanilla, spice, hickory, mocha and meaty blackberry. The palate is both magnetic and sly; it pumps black fruit galore, but augments things with controlled chocolate and spice. Finishes a mile long, with cream, intensity and guile. This wine does not mess around. Best from 2010–2016. Imported by Grapes of Spain. *Editors' Choice.*

15

93 **Laurent Miquel 2005 Saga Pegot Syrah (Faugères); \$28.** Moody, complex and brooding, this is a superb wine and an exceptional value. Purple violets, black forest cake, cocoa nibs and espresso granules all abound on the nose, backed by dark juicy black raspberries. Full and firmly structured in the mouth with notes of pepper, tea, smoked meat and black fruit on the palate. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. *Editors' Choice.*

16

96 **Betz Family 2006 Père de Famille Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley); \$58.** This is taut, muscular, toasty, young and tight; the fruit is concentrated, pure and evocative, with earthy flavors that add notes of soil, spice and mineral. The most complex of all the Betz blends, in this vintage it includes 84% Cabernet Sauvignon—far and away the dominant flavor. The fruits unfold in a rich panoply of reds and blues; the tannins are rich and chewy, polished and complex, showing exemplary back of the palate grip and concentration.

17

95 René Muré 2004 Clos St Landelin Vorbourg Grand Cru Pinot Gris (Alsace); \$61. Stunning aromas of orange, clove and gingerbread follow through to a dense palate with intriguing notes of white chocolate and honey. The high level of sweetness is effectively countered by bright acidity. Serve with a mousse of foie gras. Imported by Robert Kacher Imports.

18

97 Melville 2007 Carrie's Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills); \$52. Combines a delicate, floral lightness with a potent intricacy to produce a wine of vast intellectual interest. Dry and somewhat tannic, and crisp in tangy acidity, this small-production Pinot features tiers of tart red cherries, rosehip tea, cola, mint, lavender, anise and pepper, edged with the honeyed sweetness of smoky, glazed oak. A tremendous achievement, and the wine of the vintage. *Editors' Choice.*

...Mr. Tulkinghorn sits at one of the open windows, enjoying a bottle of old port. Though a hard-grained man, close, dry, and silent, he can enjoy old wine with the best. He has a priceless bin of port in some artful cellar under the Fields, which is one of his many secrets. When he dines alone in chambers, as he has dined to-day, and has his bit of fish and his steak or chicken brought in from the coffee-house, he descends with a candle to the echoing regions below the deserted mansion, and, heralded by the remote reverberation of thundering doors, comes gravely back, encircled by an earthy atmosphere and carrying a bottle from which he pours a radiant nectar, two score and ten years old, that blushes in the glass to find itself so famous, and fills the whole room with the fragrance of southern grapes.

—Bleak House, Charles Dickens

19

94 Tegernseerhof 2008 Steinertal Riesling (Wachau); \$35. An impressive wine that manages to bring out both richness and a wonderful shower of fresh flavors. So the ripe pineapple and pear fruits combine with an edge of spice. Then they are lifted to a great height by the acidity, the fruit skin texture and a final burst of floral intensity. Screwcap. Imported by Prescott Wines.

20

93 Companhia das Quintas 2005 Quinta de Pancas Grande Escolha (Estremadura); \$25. Despite its 4 years' aging, this is still young. The Cabernet Sauvignon in the blend (with Touriga Nacional and Petit Verdot) sees to that, producing the tightly textured tannins. The wine sits foursquare on structure, the fruit still behind. Wait 2–3 years. Imported by Admiral Imports.

21

97 Lynmar 2007 Hawk Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley); \$70. An extraordinarily lush, dramatic Pinot Noir. Dense and full-bodied, it shows flashy flavors of black and red berries, currants, cola, pomegranates and dusty spices, enhanced with the most perfect application of smoky oak, and wrapped into a rich, silky texture. The balance is exquisite, a tension of acidity and tannins. Beautiful now, and should develop bottle complexity for at least six years.

22

96 Mount Eden 2005 Estate Bottled Chardonnay (Santa Cruz Mountains); \$48. A massive Chardonnay, with tremendous grilled pineapple, peach pie, buttered cinnamon toast, butterscotch, caramel and vanilla flavors, with a firm, earthy minerality. Feels fat and glyceriney in the mouth, providing a decadent palate experience, but acidity contributes to the firm, elegant structure. It should age effortlessly for at least six years, changing and evolving over time. *Editors' Choice.*

23

94 Carmelo Rodero 2004 Reserva Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero); \$50. Potent and promising on the nose, with rich, deep black fruit, coffee and deftly applied oak. As it airs out it only gets better, with driving berry fruit flavors, thickness, structure and trimmings like clove, baking spice and exotic spices. Long and pure on the finish, and outstanding as a whole. The best Rodero wine we've rated to date; drink now or hold through 2015. Imported by Vinos and Gourmet Inc. *Editors' Choice.*

24

93 Montirius 2006 Le Clos (Vacqueyras); \$30. The essence of raspberries here is even more expressive than in the 2005, accented by hints of crushed herbs (garrigue). It's not as rich or concentrated as the 2005, but features greater elegance and finesse. Drink now–2015, possibly beyond. Imported by Vintage '59 Imports. *Editors' Choice.*

25

95 Buoncristiani 2005 O.P.C. Proprietary Red Wine (Napa Valley); \$40. Just gorgeous. Floods the mouth with decadent black currant, cherry, chocolate, anise, beef jerky and smoky oak flavors that stun for their addictive deliciousness. Yet it's perfectly dry, and the balance of rich, ripe tannins, acidity and smoky oak is near perfect. The wine is a blend of Bordeaux varieties and Syrah, from esteemed vineyards including Hyde, Stagecoach and Caldwell. *Editors' Choice.*

26

94 Schmelz 2007 Pichl Point Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau); \$38. Johann Schmelz has produced a voluptuous wine, full of ripe fruits and a velvet texture. Of course, the acidity is there, giving the wine a crisp edge, but it is the rich structure and flavors of apricots, red apples and spice that blend together in a harmonious, balanced whole. Imported by Blue Danube Wine Co. Imported by Blue Danube Wine Co. *Editors' Choice.*

27

94 Lustau NV Almacenista Palo Cortado de Jerez; \$42. A beautiful style of elevated Sherry that's worth every cent if fine Sherry is to your liking. The nose is pure toffee, roasted nuts, apricot and mellow quince, while the key flavor is dried orange and the nuances hinted at by the aromas all reappear. Muscular but in perfect shape, with a finish as smooth as glass. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. *Editors' Choice.*

28

96 Merry Edwards 2006 Klopp Ranch Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley); \$57. Made in the Merry Edwards style, which is powerfully ripe and extracted, yet always balanced. Dazzles with enormous cherry pie filling, cola, sassafras, beef jerky, raspberry tart, anise, pepper and smoky cedar flavors that finish with amazing length. Yet the tannin-acid structure is superb, and the wine is totally dry. Beautiful now, and should age through 2012.

29

94 Château Beau-Séjour Bécot 2006 Saint-Emilion; \$56. Although it begins with austerity, its acidity and tannins dominant, the palate opens beyond its youthfulness after a few moments. It becomes dark and powerful, certainly still dryly tannic, but the fruit is generous, and the final taste is of beautiful, ripe fruits.

30

96 Hartford 2007 Highwire Vineyard Zinfandel (Russian River Valley); \$55. The vineyard is in Fulton, a cool part of the south-eastern valley heavily influenced by fog, and the vines are about 100 years old. This is great, classic Zinfandel. It should be in a museum. Despite high alcohol, it has a silky, Pinot-esque suppleness, balanced with crisp acids, and is profoundly rich in Zinny flavor. Currants, mushu plum sauce, anise, crushed black pepper, dark chocolate and rich Asian spices last forever on the finish.

31

95 Alvaro Palacios 2006 Finca Dofi (Priorat); \$90. Alvaro Palacios is as meticulous as any vintner when it comes to vine maintenance and winemaking. His Finca Dofi blends Garnacha and Cabernet Sauvignon with some Syrah and sometimes Merlot, and the result is extremely impressive vintage after vintage. This wine is alluring, silky smooth and endowed with beautiful herb and mineral notes along with light oak, fine tannins and non-stop length on the finish. It's drinkable right now and should hold steady and/or improve over the next five years. Imported by Rare Wine Company. *Editors' Choice.*

32

93 Bonny Doon 2006 Le Pousseur Syrah (Central Coast); \$20. This bottling, which is Randall Grahm's homage to the Northern Rhône, has varied over the vintages, but with this 2006, hits the mark as never before. Made with a splash of Grenache, it's full-bodied, bone dry and compelling in the intricacy of flavors. The blackberries, black cherries, licorice, and raspberries have elements of roasted meats and wild mushrooms sautéed in butter, tamari and a few drops of balsamic, liberally dusted with black pepper. Unique and compelling, and should develop over the next six years. *Editors' Choice.*

33

95 Château Coutet 2006 Barsac; \$50. It is the poise, the elegance of Coutet that shows so well in this delicious wine. It is ripe, with layers of apricot and peach, lifted with spice and an over-arching sweet acidity that gives the wine a wonderful, heart-stopping lift.

34

95 Dutton Estate 2007 Dutton Ranch Karmen Isabella Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley); \$38. Easy to like a lot now for its terrifically rich flavors of cherries, raspberries, pomegranates, mocha and smoky sandalwood flavors that take over and dazzle the palate. Also shows a silky, airy mouthfeel. But it's way too young now, an obvious ager, and in fact demands

time in the bottle. Stash this beauty. Best 2011–2013, possibly longer. *Editors' Choice.*

35

94 Mas du Soleilla 2007 Clot de l'Amandier La Clape (Coteaux du Languedoc); \$63. If you need convincing of the true potential of the La Clape region of Languedoc, look no further. This is a delicate yet complex wine of true character and depth with a beautiful bouquet of rich dark fruit, tea leaves, leather and menthol. The mouth, smooth and lush, is loaded with intense plum, cherry, spice and pepper. The balance is fantastic, making this an easy wine to enjoy now or an excellent candidate to hold for 3–5 years. Imported by Luxe Vintages.

36

94 Sottimano 2005 Fausoni (Barbaresco); \$64. Fausoni is a rich and opulent Barbaresco that presents a veritable wall of flavors that surrounds you on all sides: Vanilla, sweet cherry and chocolate are the most obvious aromas, but Indian spice and black currants also make an appearance. Awesome intensity is followed by firm structure: Drink after 2015. A Marc de Grazia selection, various American importers.

Champagne, with its amber hue, its éclat, its sparkle and its perfume, arouses the senses and produces a cheerfulness which flashes through the company like a spark of electricity. At the magic word Champagne, the guests, dull and torpid with good feeling, awake at once. This lively, ethereal and charming beverage sets in motion the spirits of all; the phlegmatic, the grave and the philosophic are surprised to find themselves amiable; in the wink of an eye (or the pop of a cork) the whole banquet has changed its physiognomy.

— Charles Baudelaire

37

93 Fess Parker 2007 Viognier (Santa Barbara County); \$24. A very fine Viognier, one of the best of the vintage, that takes the variety's exotic, sometimes over-the-top richness and controls it with crisp coastal acidity and a deft touch of minerals. Elegant and interesting, it displays utterly dry flavors of Meyer lemon, lime, fig, date, honeysuckle, vanilla, spice and flint flavors. Drink now for freshness.

38

93 Grans-Fassian 2007 Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Spätlese Goldkapsel (Mosel-Saar-Ruwer); \$38. This striking spätlese comes across as lush and decadent, yet without losing any focus. Crushed stones impart a sense of minerality on the nose, palate and finish, while the roundness comes from notes of honey, apple blossom and orange marmalade. Long and pristinely pure on the finish. Drink now–2030. Imported by Valckenberg International, Inc. **Editors' Choice.**

39

95 Fielding Hills 2007 RiverBend Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Wahlake Slope); \$38. In the blend are small portions of 8% Syrah, 3% Merlot and 1% Cabernet Franc. This is a spicy take on Cabernet, with some of the pepper and smoked meat character of Syrah coming through, despite the fairly small amount in the blend. The concentration of cassis and black cherry fruit is astonishing; matched with ripe tannins that hint at black olive. Despite the somewhat heavier oak influence, it is the fruit that stands front and center.

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40

93 Château Haut-Bergey 2007 Pessac-Léognan; \$40. A truly grassy aroma leads to a fresh, herbaceous and crisp wine. To top its crispness, it also has some weight, wood flavors and a creamy core with a white pear texture. It could benefit from aging, at least three years, to bring out the inherent richness of the wine.

41

94 Sterling 2006 SVR Reserve (Napa Valley); \$50. Beautiful now, with decanting, due to the generous fruit flavors and the way the oak shows them off. Dry and smooth, it brims with blackberry, cherry, red and black currant, blueberry, cocoa, anise and sandalwood and smoky flavors that go on and on. Should age, too. Mainly Cabernet Sauvignon, with Merlot and Petit Verdot. Now–2014.

42

93 Royal Tokaji 2005 Red Label Aszú 5 Puttonyos (Tokaji); \$41/500 ml. A deep, lush nose of honey, marmalade and lemon leads into fresh, bright fruit and acid undertones melded with luscious honey, orange peel and quince. A lingering finish spun with spice adds to the complex, elegant nature. Pair with cheeses, foie gras. Imported by Wilson Daniels Ltd.

43

94 Domaine Grand Veneur 2006 Les Origines (Châteauneuf-du-Pape); \$74. A luxury cuvée at this price is becoming a rarity in Châteauneuf, but Les Origines delivers the goods. Subtle cinnamon and nutmeg shadings frame densely packed black cherry flavors. It's creamy in texture, with a long, velvety finish that lingers elegantly. Drink now–2020. Imported by Kysela Père et Fils.

44



95 Drew 2007 Fog-Eater Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley); \$42. A stunning Pinot Noir, and a worthy followup to Drew's 2006 bottling. Interestingly, the official alcohol is nearly 1% lower at no loss of ripeness, a testimony to the success of the vintage. Offers everything you want in a fine coastal Pinot: crisp acidity, a dry, silky mouthfeel, refined tannins, complexity and ageability. The flavors include red cherries and currants, cola, sassafras, red licorice and Asian spices. Great now and through 2013.

45

93 Dr. Loosen 2007 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Auslese (Mosel-Saar-Ruwer); \$42. This thrilling auslese starts off with intriguing spicy, musky aromas, then moves easily into flavors of pear, melon, pineapple and even red berries on the palate. It somehow comes across as plump, yet crystalline and pure, with a long, fruit-driven finish. Drink now–2030. Imported by Loosen Bros. USA. **Editors' Choice.**

46

95 Roar 2007 Rosella's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands); \$50. This Pinot is so good, it's hard to know where to begin. It's dry and full-bodied and bold, in the way a Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir, with some finely-ground tannins. Yet it's perfectly ripe, showing luminous flavors of raspberries, cherries, pomegranates and sweet red plums, enriched with sweet, smoky oak. Fabulous now, and should glide easily through the next six years.

47

93 J. & F. Lurton 2005 El Albar Excelencia (Toro); \$42. Excelencia is a great wine that offers a lot of character beyond just bold fruit and body. This is by far the best El Albar that the Lurtons have made; it features citrus peel, sexy berry fruit and baking spices on the nose, and then sweet berry, black plum, spice and warmth on the palate. It's powerful as a Toro wine should be, but not tannic or harsh. A monster with a smile; drink now and over the next 5–8 years. Imported by Winesellers Ltd.

48

93 Tolosa 2006 Estate Edna Ranch Chardonnay (Edna Valley); \$22. By itself, Tolosa's Edna Ranch Chardonnay is rich and crisp, always exhibiting exciting flavors of limes, kiwis and pineapples. Add oak barrels, and complex layers appear, of peaches and cream, vanilla fudge and buttered toast. All that, and the wine is entirely dry. *Editors' Choice.*

49

96 Adelsheim 2007 Winderlea Vineyard Pinot Noir (Dundee Hills); \$75. This vineyard has an interesting history that dates back to 1974. Formerly the Goldschmidt vineyard, it was replanted, repurchased, and renamed. It's a magical site, one of the greatest Oregon Pinot vineyards. The wine has the majestic plumpness of grand cru Burgundy, with potent cherry fruit, laced with sweet spices, that seems to expand through a generous midpalate and keep on keeping on as long as you are paying attention. *Editors' Choice.*

In Europe we thought of wine as something as healthy and normal as food and also a great giver of happiness and well being and delight. Drinking wine was not a snobbism nor a sign of sophistication nor a cult; it was as natural as eating and to me as necessary.

—ERNEST HEMINGWAY

50

92 Piattelli 2007 Grand Reserve Malbec (Luján de Cuyo); \$20. Piattelli is an under-the-radar label that makes very good to excellent Malbec from old vines in Luján del Cuyo, Mendoza. And the prices are more than fair. This wine is big and focused, with intense blackberry, chocolate and espresso qualities throughout. And the finish is midnight dark. Good through 2012. Imported by Vinocopia Imports. *Editors' Choice.*

51

92 Château Thivin 2007 Cuvée Zaccharie (Côte de Brouilly); \$20. Perfumed, earthy, spicy, this is a balanced wine that brings its tannins firmly together with black fig, black plum skins and sweet juicy black cherries. The core is dry, but the delicious fruit finally dominates. That said, it is sure to have some good aging. Imported by Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. *Editors' Choice.*

52

96 Iron Horse 2002 Brut LD (Green Valley); \$85. Deliriously good, one of the best Iron Horse sparkling wines ever, which says a lot. Made from equal amounts of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, it was aged on the lees for more than 4 years, which gives it a fabulous creamy, yeasty complexity. There are tantalizing flavors of limes, orange zest, roasted hazelnuts, minerals and smoke. Absolutely wonderful now, and should hold and develop in the bottle through 2014, at least. Only 563 cases were produced of this splendid wine. *Editors' Choice.*

53

95 Justin 2006 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles); \$45. Although this Cab is quite tannic, it's really good now. Shows impeccable balance in a New World style that oozes black and red currants, dark chocolate, licorice, cedar and plums, with a note of raw, bloody meat. Very high quality, an excellent rendition of western Paso Robles hillside Cabernet. Good through 2015, with proper cellaring.

54

95 Abacela 2005 South Face Block Reserve Syrah (Southern Oregon); \$45. Look out, Hermitage, this has the grip, the earthiness, the herbs and spice, and above all the massive, ripe, complex fruit to compete. The layers of this wine just keep unfolding; the longer it breathes, the more it gives you. Crushed rock, lead pencil, Asian spice, blackberry, coffee and caramel... it never stops. What a superb achievement. *Editors' Choice.*

55

92 Le Salette 2006 I Progni (Valpolicella Classico Superiore Ripasso); \$31. This is a drop-dead gorgeous wine with amazing intensity and concentration. It delivers rich aromas of cherry, smoke, spice and chocolate and is decadent to the very last drop. The feel in the mouth is soft, plush and round. Imported by Vias Imports. *Editors' Choice.*

56

94 Château Lynch-Bages 2006 (Pauillac); \$85. Year after year, Lynch-Bages is able to produce sumptuous wines, typically rich, powerful and structured. This is solid, the blackberry ripe fruit enveloping this structure with a velvet sheen. This is developing into one of the successes of the vintage.

57

92 Lagarde 2007 Henry Lagarde Guarda (Mendoza); \$20. Outstanding red wine for the price. Henry is a blend of Malbec, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, and it's clean, generous, lush, complex and highly satisfying for \$20. The nose is clean and deep, while the pure palate features cola, blackberry, cassis and toast. Modern in style but not overdone. Drink now through 2012. Imported by New World Wines. *Editors' Choice.*

58

91 Eradus 2008 Sauvignon Blanc (Awatere Valley); \$20. This is herbal and bell-peppery but not to an extreme, balanced by citrus and pineapple fruit. It's medium- to full-bodied, with an appealing, slightly oily texture and great length. Drink now; probably would be great with ceviche. Imported by R O Imports. *Editors' Choice.*

59

96 Pride Mountain 2006 Vintner Select Cuvée Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$85. What a fine, beautiful wine this is. Shows every graceful aspect of a modern Napa Cab, from the perfectly ripened fruit to the unbelievably fine tannins and application of oak. Thrills the mouth with decadently rich black currants, crème de cassis, milk chocolate, anise and cedar flavors, but never loses an impeccable sense of balance and control. Best now, even without decanting, and through 2014.

60

93 Two Hands 2006 Bad Impersonator Single Vineyard Shiraz (Barossa Valley); \$50. This intensely flavored Barossa Shiraz features notes of sweaty leather, stewed plums, black olive and coffee beans. It's full-bodied and creamy in texture, with ample but soft tannins that glide easily over the palate. The concentrated fruit and long, complex finish suggest that it can be consumed now and over the next 10 years. Imported by Terlato Wines International.

61

95 Talley 2006 Rosemary's Vineyard Chardonnay (Arroyo Grande Valley); \$50. Talley's Rosemary's typically is one of the greatest, most dependable Chardonnays in California. The 2006 upholds that distinguished tradition. It's dry and balanced, with a mineral undertone that grounds the flamboyant pineapple custard, lemondrop and lime pie flavors. Feels ultra-distinguished and elegant despite the richness. Now through 2010.

62

96 Leonetti Cellar 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla); \$85. This full-throttle Bordeaux blend is big, tight, and a bit hard but dense and concentrated. Here are blue and black fruits, layers of smoke and bitter chocolate, yet a lifted, floral scent is also there. In the finish it feels chewy and substantial, with threads of cedar, cinnamon and caramel woven among the darker, smoky notes. Give it plenty of breathing time.

63

95 Madrigal 2005 Barberis Family Vineyard Petite Sirah (Napa Valley); \$50. Fifty bucks for Petite Sirah? You bet. It's a huge wine, black as midnight, dry and tannic, with amazingly deep, long flavors of currants, Mexican chocolate mole sauce, crème de cassis, sweet old leather, anise, pepper, cinnamon and smoky oak. Has the balanced complexity of a great Napa Cabernet Sauvignon, with Petite Sirah's classic earthiness and depth. This quintessential wine should age for at least a decade. *Editors' Choice.*

64

92 Amisfield 2007 Pinot Noir (Central Otago); \$45. Amisfield has been on a hot streak, and the 2007 continues that roll. The aromas show wonderfully high-toned cherry fruit, with a slightly herbal element that adds welcome complexity. In the mouth, the wine is full-bodied and richly textured, with its black cherry fruit framed by a hint of vanilla. Long and lush on the finish, this looks to be at its best now and for the next several years. Imported by Pasternak Wine Imports. *Editors' Choice.*

65

93 Emilio Moro 2005 Malleolus (Ribera del Duero); \$70. Opens with touches of coconut, mineral, violet petals and sweet black fruits. The mouthfeel is textured and smooth, while the flavors of raspberry, blackberry and plum are deep, delectable and of very high quality. This is Ribera del Duero wine at the optimal intersection of power, flavor and human care and concern. Drink now and over the next four years. Imported by Fine Estates From Spain. *Editors' Choice.* Imported by Fine Estates From Spain. *Editors' Choice.*

66

93 Pittacum 2006 Aurea Mencia (Bierzo); \$52. Among richly structured Bierzo wines, this is a dandy. Thick, jammy aromas with a cookie quality kick it off, and then comes a tidal wave of blackberry, pastry and mocha flavors. By now you're saying "wow," and then comes a warm, subtle, chocolaty finish. More rich and hedonistic than varietal or terroir-driven. Drink now through 2012. Imported by A.V. Brands. *Editors' Choice.*

67

95 Hanna 2005 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley); \$52. Grown in the flatlands and benches of Alexander Valley, this Cab tastes more like a high mountain wine, with its firm tannins and flavor intensity. It's quite fine, showing intense blackberry, cherry, blackcurrant, plum, cocoa and violet flavors that are tinged with soft, dry herbs. Very beautiful now for sheer charm, it will develop bottle complexities over the next decade. The best Cabernet from Hanna in memory.

68

94 Albert Bichot 2006 Domaine Long-Depaquit Moutonne Grand Cru (Chablis); \$90. This monopole within the Chablis grand cru vineyards produces top Chablis. In 2006, the wine is powerful, but layered with intense minerality, a flinty character on top of the ripe white and yellow fruits. It has concentration, a depth of flavor that is impressive. It will age well. Imported by A French Paradox.

The joy that is in Wine is the joy of sunshine...Wine is not a drug. It is never a craving. It seldom becomes even a mere habit. It is an instinct, a man's time-honoured joy.

—ANDRÉ L. SIMON

69

96 David Arthur 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$95. Here's an important new Cabernet that instantly takes its place in the increasingly crowded Napa pantheon. It's extraordinarily rich in black currants, chocolate, anise, pepper and cedar flavors that are wrapped into perfectly ripened tannins. Feels lush, plush and smooth in the mouth, and should age effortlessly for a decade or more.

70

93 Torres 2006 Perpetual (Priorat); \$53. Very ripe, rich and rewarding. Perpetual is Torres' top wine from the Priorat, and it's a winner in 2006; it has polish, power and life. The nose is dark and alluring, while the palate hits comfortably with bold black cherry, cured meat, herb and tobacco flavors. Long and honest on the finish, with thrust. Good now thru 2013. Imported by Dreyfus, Ashby & Co. **Editors' Choice.**

71

94 Zina Hyde Cunningham 2005 Petite Sirah (Lake County); \$24. This is a tremendous wine, and a hugely enjoyable one from the point of view of power and authority combined with balance. It just detonates on the palate with the deepest flavors of currants and black pepper, yet the huge structure of the tannins, and extreme dryness, make it elegant. And there's no trace of heat. Should age gracefully for many years. **Editors' Choice.**

The phase in the growing of grapes when the berries turn from a hard green and begin to gain their final color is called veraison. The word first appeared in French in 1826 and in English in 1889, and derives from the Latin variare.

—HISTORY OF WINE WORDS
BY CHARLES HODGSON

72

92 Viu Manent 2006 Single Vineyard La Capilla Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Colchagua Valley); \$25. Is this the best Cabernet that Viu Manent has ever bottled? We think it very well might be; the wine is midnight madness, meaning it's dark as night and richly draped with blackberry, cassis, black plum and overall lushness. It's a hulk of a wine, with jammy fruit, fine tannic structure and handsome shadings. Drinkable now and probably better over the next two or three years. Imported by Millissime.

73

95 Andrew Will 2006 Ciel du Cheval Vineyard Red Wine (Red Mountain); \$55. This is darn near perfect, a matchless expression of berries, dotted with chocolate, vanilla and butterscotch. The berry flavors, highlighted with crisp acids, strike a pure note and ring true over a long, long finish. The blend is 40% Merlot, 37% Cab Franc, 19% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Petit Verdot. Great concentration, finesse and length. **Editors' Choice.**

74

94 Buty 2007 70% Sémillon/26% Sauvignon/4% Muscadelle (Columbia Valley); \$25. Spicy and detailed, layered with sweet grass and lemon meringue. Shows wonderful dry extract, dense and complex, with terrific midpalate concentration and exceptional length and viscosity. Focused and fragrant, it goes into the deep, bold flavors of the best Washington Sémillon.

75

93 Bodega Catena Zapata 2005 Catena Alta Malbec (Mendoza); \$57. Inky dark and an outstanding example of high-end Malbec. This is the finest Alta we've tried; it is ripe as can be but not raisiny. The palate is creamy and lush, but with good acidic balance. And the flavors of black fruits, chocolate and spice make it a league-leader. Drink now through 2012. Imported by Winebow.

76

92 Mönchhof 2007 Mosel Slate Riesling Spätlese (Mosel-Saar-Ruwer); \$25. With 3,000 cases imported into the U.S., consumers should still be able to track down some of this sweet, luscious spätlese. Citrus and custard notes mark the nose, followed by rich, tropical elements, even some hints of banana. Despite the sugary richness, the wine ends clean and refreshing, thanks to a burst of lime on the finish. Imported by Cellars International, Inc. **Editors' Choice.**

77

93 Livio Felluga 2007 Terre Alte (Colli Orientali del Friuli); \$70. One of Italy's best white wines, this gorgeous blend of Friulano, Pinot Bianco and Sauvignon delivers intensity, concentration, fragrance and elegance. The wine is luminous and brilliant with aromas of peach, apricot and delicately toasted almond. Imported by Moët Hennessy USA.

78

93 Altaïr 2005 Altaïr (Cachapoal Valley); \$65. One of Chile's best red blends is back with a vengeance. The nose is a wonderful mix of almond candy, fine leather, baked pastry, prune and licorice all bundled up in a comfortable blanket, while the palate is mouthfilling and loaded with cassis, coffee, herbs and pepper flavors. Excellent structure and depth, with power and balance. Drinkable now but ageable through 2014. Imported by Misa Imports. **Editors' Choice.**

79

94 Adelaida 2006 HMR Estate Pinot Noir (Paso Robles); \$30. This bottling is always quite good, but it excels in 2006. Shows lush, more exotic notes than ever before, just oozing in tiers of black and red cherry compote, currants, mocha, cinnamon, anise and pepper flavors. Finishes thoroughly dry, a beautifully crafted Pinot that will change your mind about Paso Robles.

80

91 Brancott 2008 B Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough); \$26. One of Brancott's best Sauvignons in recent memory, the 2008 B is intensely herbal on the nose, featuring green tomatoes and bell pepper, but only mildly vegetal on the palate—well within the bounds of acceptable varietal character. It's on the full-bodied side of the spectrum, with a long, mouth-tingling finish. Try with sole Basquaise. Imported by Pernod Ricard. **Editors' Choice.**

81

92 Laurel Glen 2006 Vale La Pena Malbec (Mendoza); \$30. California winemaker Patrick Campbell has been making wine in Argentina for years, and Vale La Pena, which more or less means "worth the headache," is top-notch. The nose exudes mossy plum, black currant and fruitcake aromas, while the palate is dark, manly and best of all not overoaked. A textured, full-fruit Malbec that's complex, lush and exciting. Drink now through 2011. Imported by Laurel Glen Vineyard.

82

93 Chateau Ste. Michelle & Dr. Loosen 2008 Eroica Riesling (Columbia Valley); \$24. The 10th vintage of Eroica may be the best ever. It's supremely fresh, spicy, and mineral-driven. The well-textured mouthfeel runs the gamut from celery, chervil, and other fresh herb into melon, citrus and stone. Though technically off-dry, this is a low pH, high acid wine with plenty of length and depth. **Editors' Choice.**

83

93 Pio Cesare 2004 Barolo; \$70. Here's a beautifully crafted, oak-driven wine that needs at least four or five more years of cellar aging before it reaches true harmony and balance. The wine's aromas are focused on Indian spice, vanilla, toasted nut and plush blackberry. It tastes bright and fresh but has the natural complexity to promise great things to come. Imported by Maisons Marques & Domaines USA.

84

91 Telmo Rodríguez 2005 Lanzaga (Rioja); \$34. Quite well-oaked, which is the house style for Lanzaga. There's darkness, vanilla, char, leather and a bed of black fruit. The palate has a tight but nice feel to it, with fine tannic structure propping up plum, blackberry and chocolate flavors. Some expected mocha and coffee work the finish, but mostly it closes long and natural. For modern Rioja, this is well built and satisfying. Imported by Vintus LLC.

85

94 Gary Farrell 2007 Russian River Selection Chardonnay (Russian River Valley); \$32. Brilliantly crisp and lushly creamy and honeyed, just a beautiful Chardonnay that offers decadence and sheer deliciousness. Massive in grilled pineapples, green apples, ripe nectarines and butterscotch, brightened with mouthwatering acidity. A joy to drink. **Editors' Choice.**

86

94 Stevens 2006 BlackTongue Syrah (Yakima Valley); \$32. An immense, black, moody wine with a spectacular mix of black fruits, cassis, earth, soy and forest floor, it remains thoroughly delicious and polished despite its size. This will clearly improve with more bottle age, but it's already impressive and drinking well. Long and textural, the finish lingers with ground coffee and baking chocolate highlights. **Editors' Choice.**

87

92 Oliverhill 2007 Clarendon Shiraz (McLaren Vale); \$33. Nicely balanced McLaren Vale Shiraz, featuring mixed berries, toast and spice carried by a firm structure and some rich, soft tannins on the finish. Aromas of coffee, plum and graham crackers complete the package. Drink now–2020. Imported by Southern Starz, Inc. **Editors' Choice.**

88



94 Trenza 2007 Tinto (San Luis Obispo County); \$33. Unusual, distinctive, and a wonderful first release from this new brand, a member of the Niven (Baileyana) family of wines. A blend of Tempranillo, Mourvedre and Grenache, it's utterly dry, richly tannic and well-structured, with earthy flavors of cherries, blueberries, herbs, unsweetened cocoa, black pepper and other dusty spices. A brilliant and provocative wine from winemaker Christian Roguenant. **Editors' Choice.**

89

94 Beringer 2007 Sbragia Limited Release Chardonnay (Napa Valley); \$40. Very strongly flavored, very big and powerful in both oak and fruit. Beringer aims for the fences with this massive Chard, which erupts with tropical fruit, ripe pear, baked pastry crust, buttered toast, mineral and cinnamon spice flavors. Not for the faint-hearted, but it's sheer decadence.

90

92 Gianfranco Alessandria 2006 Vittoria (Barbera d'Alba); \$34. Vittoria is one of the best Barbera d'Alba wines you will ever taste. Chocolate fudge, powdered mocha, blackberry and exotic spice waft gently off the nose of the luscious, but delicate Barbera d'Alba. The wine is dense and round (it's aged in oak, 50% of which is new barrique). Imported by T. Edward Wines Ltd.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRODUCER**

91

94 Chehalem 2006 Ian's Reserve Chardonnay (Dundee Hills); \$34. This is certainly the finest Ian's Reserve Chardonnay ever made. A softly appealing entry leads gracefully into a remarkably complex wine that puts the lush barrel flavors of butterscotch, toffee and toasted hazelnuts right up front. But it doesn't stop there, layering in candied apricots and a rich array of ripe tropical fruits. Remarkably concentrated, the wine lasts a full two minutes or more in the mouth. **Editors' Choice.**

92

92 Dao Sul 2005 Quinta das Tecedeiras Reserva (Douro); \$34. Ripe and spicy, this is an impressive, solid, new wood-dominated wine. The tannins come from high toast as well as the concentrated blackberry juice fruits. That makes it dry, a wine that needs to soften. But it has all the intensity that are the hallmarks of top Douro wines, so try it again in a year. Imported by Aidil Wines & Liquor Inc.

93

94 Simi 2005 Landslide Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley); \$35. This bottling has been a star for Simi since its inception, and the '05 is among their best ever. It shows Alexander Valley's softness and slight herbaceousness, along with decadently rich red currant, mocha and oak flavors. Classic and elegant now, it should develop bottle complexities for the next six years. This is a good price, especially compared to what's going on in Napa Valley. **Editors' Choice.**

94

92 Felsina 2005 Rancia Riserva (Chianti Classico); \$35. Riserva Rancia opens with elegant hues of garnet and dark ruby and offers sophisticated notes of old spice, cured leather and dried currant berries. It achieves elegance, harmony and delivers pristine and persistent flavors that would marry red meat, pork or lamb. Imported by Wine Warehouse Imports.

95

94 Rôtie Cellars 2007 Red Wine (Southern Blend) (Horse Heaven Hills); \$35. Rarely has a first effort from a new winery made such a strong impression as this Côtes-du-Rhône-ish effort from Rôtie Cellars. It's classy stuff, silky, smooth, layered and beautifully integrated throughout, with a full, fleshy middle and seamless entry into finishing tannins that are polished and ripe.

96

93 Louis M. Martini 2006 Monte Rosso Vineyard Gnarly Vine Zinfandel (Sonoma Valley); \$50. Classic Monte Rosso Zin, big, full-bodied and mouth-filling, showing all the spice you could want. Floods the palate with concentrated blackberry and black currant, leather, cola, bacon, sandalwood and black pepper flavors that are densely tiered and dramatically structured. Best now and over the next six years.

97

94 Woodward Canyon 2006 Merlot (Columbia Valley); \$39. There is a little Cabernet Sauvignon (15%) and Syrah (4%) in the blend also. This is a silky, yet muscular—let's say it, masculine—style of Merlot. Meaning that the fruit is concentrated with deep blue and black berry and cassis flavors, augmented with lead pencil. Beautiful polish and concentration characterize this wine, yet it's quite approachable.


98

92 Kilikanoon 2005 Covenant Shiraz (Clare Valley); \$40. Like all of winemaker Kevin Mitchell's Shirazes, this is full-bodied and lushly textured. The point of difference here is the fruit character, which leans toward black olives and espresso, with just enough stewed fruit to provide cushioning. Finishes long and velvety, hinting at vanilla. Drink now–2012. Imported by Old Bridge Cellars.

99

92 Planeta 2006 Burdese (Sicilia); \$40. Spice, chocolate, blackberry and dark fruit come across with determination and intensity. Burdese is a modern, Bordeaux-inspired blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc with bright fruit flavors, fresh acidity, natural succulence and warm spice flavors on the close. Imported by Palm Bay International.

100

92 Bilton 2004 Sir Percy Classic Blend (Stellenbosch); \$40. Rich, savory and smooth, this Bordeaux blend offers complex aromas of leather, cloves, tobacco and cedar, followed by integrated layers of tobacco, cinnamon, cloves and spice. Elegant and structured, with a big, lingering finish. A beautiful example of how to marry Old and New World styles. Imported by Southern Starz, Inc. **Editors' Choice.** 

Port is essentially the wine of philosophical contemplation.

—H. WARNER ALLEN

May you have many children
And may they grow mature in
taste
And healthy in color
And as sought after
as the contents of this glass.

—IRISH PROVERB

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