



# THE ENTHUSIAST 100

2012

## OUR FAVORITE WINES OF THE YEAR.

BY THE EDITORS OF WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE

In 2012, members of our tasting panel reviewed more than 15,500 wines from around the world. Tasting that many wines isn't easy, but keeping track of them all and remembering what to buy next time you're at your favorite retail shop is an even more difficult task.

Luckily, *Wine Enthusiast* has got you covered. Knowing there's nothing quite like an end-of-year list to sum up the best of the best, we offer three distinct guides for all of your wine needs: the Top 100 Best Buys (wines for \$15 or less, published in November), the Top 100 Cellar Selections (age-worthy, highly rated collectibles, published in early December), and now, The Enthusiast 100.

The Enthusiast 100 is our special year-end roundup. While all of the wines featured are highly rated by our critics, in creating this list, we consider many factors, including the wine's quality-to-price ratio, drinkability, availability and uniqueness. We also strive to provide as diverse a list as possible, reflecting the range of styles, varieties and regions we've reviewed over the past 12 months.

The result is a list of wines that should not be missed, and wineries to definitely keep on your radar in the years ahead.

### BREAKDOWN BY COUNTRY

Argentina	3
Australia	3
Austria	3
Chile	2
France	19
Germany	2
Italy	17
New Zealand	3
Portugal	5
South Africa	5
Spain	8
United States	30

Washington - 10

Oregon - 3

California - 17

55  
Dry red wines

1  
Rosé wine

6  
Sweet wines

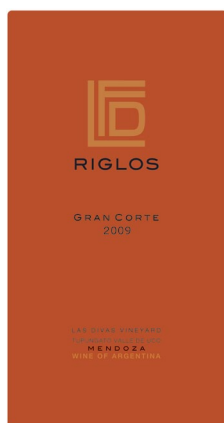
28  
Dry white wines

7  
Sparkling wines

3  
Fortified wines

\$49.10  
Average price

94.2  
Average rating

**1**


**96 Riglos 2009 Gran Corte Las Divas Vineyard (Tupungato).** This wine takes you on a trip to an outer wine world where deep, cushioned berry aromas come with exotic perfumes, bath oils and crushed flower petals. It's ultrasaturated and jammy, but not clunky or heavy. This tastes like a storm of blackberry, espresso and Swiss chocolate, while black spice and length bring up the rear. A blend of 50% Malbec, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon and 10% Cab Franc; drink now–2017. Paul Hobbs Wines. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 14.9% **Price:** \$50

**2**

**93 Domaine de Cause 2009 La Lande Cavagnac (Cahors).** A bold statement of dark Malbec, it's very rich and very concentrated. The wine has considerable tannins to go with the weight of its fruit. With excellent potential, this wine, made from old-vine grapes, should age for at least seven years. Bird Rock Imports. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$19

**3**

**99 Failla 2010 Estate Vineyard Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast).** Shows classic, full-throttle notes of tropical and citrus fruits, pears and sweet green apples, combined with strong minerality and complex layers of buttered toast, honey and creamy lees. The description alone hardly does justice to the wine's beauty. The acidity is perfect, the oak deftly applied, the finish long and completely satisfying. Winemaker Ehren Jordan suggests pairing it with simple fare like roast chicken and salted fingerling potatoes. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.  
**abv:** 14.2% **Price:** \$44

**4**

**97 Casanova di Neri 2007 Tenuta Nuova (Brunello di Montalcino).** Gorgeous, opulent and rich, Tenuta Nuova is an unforgettable wine. It has body, power, persistence and loads of plush personality. It is layered with chocolate, cherry, blackberry, spice, leather and savory notes. There's a deep mineral layer as well. Compelling and lovely. Dalla Terra Winery Direct. —M.L.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$79

**5**

**98 Merry Edwards 2009 Klopp Ranch Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley).** Amazingly rich, this offers deep, complex layers of cherry, black raspberry, cola, anise biscotti, pomegranate, persimmon, black tea, orange zest, mushroom, you name it—but don't forget the spice: everything from cloves and black pepper to cinnamon. It's utterly delicious, with a silky, briskly clean mouthfeel. But the tannins are pronounced; they're not so strong as to lock the wine down, but they do suggest time in the cellar. Give it four years, and it could be wonderful after 10 or more. —S.H.  
**abv:** 14.4% **Price:** \$57

**6**


**95 Rulo 2010 Chardonnay (Walla Walla Valley).** Simply astonishing for its price, this toasty, rich wine matches ripe flavors of peach, red apple and light tropical fruit. Thick, juicy, and seductive, it finishes with a lick of butterscotch. **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$20

**7**

**93 Dog Point 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** Complex on the nose and richly textured in the mouth, this wine delivers it all. Hints of struck flint and wild onion accent a grapefruit aroma, while the flavors range easily from pink grapefruit and red currant to delicate herb shadings. It's full without being too full, with a potent yet refreshing finish that seemingly lingers forever. Vintus LLC. **Editors' Choice.** —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$22

**8**

**96 Château Beau-Séjour Bécot 2009 Saint-Émilion.** Minty new-wood aromas waft on a wine that shows both great tannins and sweet wood. The fruit is still to show, but promises fresh plum flavor that will be delicious and juicy. This is a ripe, concentrated wine. —R.V.  
**abv:** NA **Price:** \$75

**9**

**96 Scott Paul 2009 Dix Pinot Noir (Dundee Hills).** Wow, this is a glorious bottle of Pinot Noir. It was designed to celebrate the winery's 10th vintage (hence the name, Dix) and is a barrel selection of Maresh Vineyard grapes. Textural, lush, smooth, supple and utterly delicious, its red and black fruits are dappled with dusty spices, dusted with coffee grounds, and they glide into a silky finish. Yummy beyond words. **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$40

**10**

**97 Bodegas Gutiérrez de la Vega 1999 Casta Diva Fondillón Sweet Monastrell (Alicante).** Fondillón represents the pinnacle of red Spanish dessert wines, and the 1999 vintage just might make your jaw drop. Subtle but expansive on the nose, with a blend of baked dark-fruit and cinnamon aromas, it is liquid heaven in the mouth, with excellent balance and flavors of roasted plum, black cherry, nutmeg and chocolate. This is pure, structured and outstanding from start to finish. Drink now or hold in a proper cellar for another 10 or 20 years. Only 100 cases made. Classical Wines. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 16% **Price:** \$88/500 ml



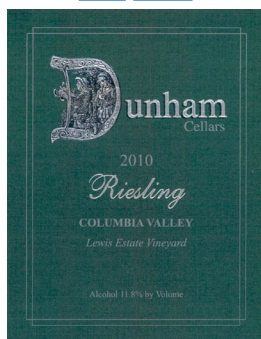
**11**

**98 Mt. Brave 2008 Merlot (Mount Veeder).**

This represents a tremendous achievement in Merlot. The vineyard, around 1,600 feet up on Mt. Veeder, is now owned by the Jackson family, and the winemaker is Chris Carpenter, who oversees Cardinale. In fact, this Merlot bears an uncanny resemblance to Cardinale in the dramatically ripe, sweet fruit and superb, tannin-based structure. It's 100% Merlot, with hefty yet balanced alcohol, and the wine easily handles the 85% new French oak in which it was aged for 22 months. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

**abv:** 15.2%

**Price:** \$60

**12**

**95 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.

**abv:** 11.8%

**Price:** \$20

**13**
**95 La Mannella 2007 Brunello di Montalcino.**

This is a gorgeous Brunello, with bountiful and intense aromas of red fruit, blackberry, spice, leather and cedar wood that go on and on. The wine is pristine, chiseled and sharp—but bold and generous at the same time. There's a touch of bitter almond followed by soft tones of red berry and spice. Casa Torelli. **Editors' Choice.** —M.L.

**abv:** 14.5%

**Price:** \$47

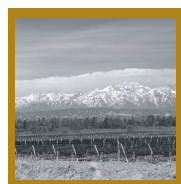
**14**

**94 Uvaggio 2010 Moscato Secco (Lodi).**

This dry Moscato Giallo from Lodi is delicious, with an intensely perfumed nose that follows through in the taste, alongside notes of Meyer lemon, jasmine and cantaloupe. Very unusual, incredibly well priced and modest in alcohol, this lush, ginger-tinged Moscato is this taster's desert-island white. **Editors' Choice.** —V.B.

**abv:** 13%

**Price:** \$16

**15**

**93 Finca Flichman 2009 Paisaje de Barrancas (Mendoza).**

This blend of Syrah, Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon is sultry and sexy—like a club dancer. Flashy, brash, deep in color and big in flavor, this has flavors of wild berry, chocolate and cola, with a toast note. An incredibly ripe wine. Evaton, Inc. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.

**abv:** 14.5%

**Price:** \$18

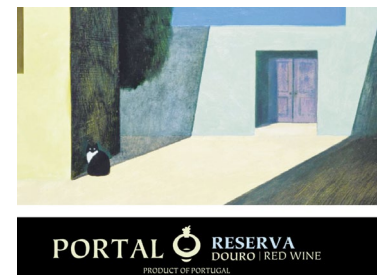
**16**
**98 Von Strasser 2009 Estate Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Diamond Mountain).**

This gorgeous Cabernet is so enormously delicious, it will be hard to keep from drinking it right

away, and that's just fine. It's composed of the most intensely concentrated flavors of blueberry and blackberry—dense, pure and slightly heady, with a liqueur-like alcohol. The tannins are classic Diamond Mountain, firm and minerally, while oak plays the perfect role of the buttered toast and sweetly charred supporting character. Despite its immediate attraction, it's best cellared for 6–8 years, at the very least. Fans of old Cabernets will still be loving it in 2029. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

**abv:** 14.1%

**Price:** \$70

**17**

**93 Quinta do Portal 2009 Reserva (Douro).**

Still very youthful, this concentrated wine has structure, deep black-fruit flavors and intense acidity. Its wood aging offers an extra spice note and a polished surface. Underneath, the wine is dense, needing aging. Give it 2–4 years. M Imports, LLC. —R.V.

**abv:** 13.5%

**Price:** \$28

**18**
**94 Pierre Gimonnet et Fils NV Sélection Belles Années Blanc de Blancs Brut (Champagne).**

This is an impressively rich nonvintage selection, with tropical fruit as well as a mineral-driven character. It's impressive and would certainly take more bottle aging. Michael Skurnik Wines. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.

**abv:** 12.5%

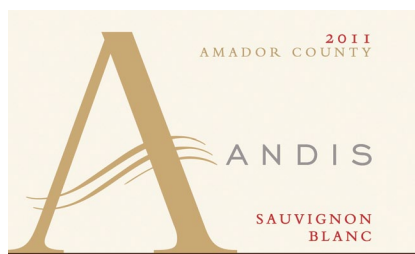
**Price:** \$44

**19**
**94 Barberani 2008 Calcaia (Orvieto Classico Superiore).**

One of the best dessert wines from central Italy, this is marked by *muffa nobile*, or "noble rot." It's opulent and dense, with golden apricot, honey and a delicate veil of muskiness. Vinifera Imports. **Editors' Choice.** —M.L.

**abv:** 13%

**Price:** \$35/500 ml

**20**


**93 Andis 2011 Sauvignon Blanc (Amador County).** At first, this shows faint aromas of lemon, pear and orange zest before gaining steam and finishing with a dollop of balanced white peach. Light in alcohol, this fresh, floral, mineral-laced wine should pair with goat cheese or seafood—especially in summer. —V.B.

**abv:** 12.9%

**Price:** \$19

**21**

**93 Bonacchi 2007 Casalino (Brunello di Montalcino).** A lovely, lush wine with bold, direct aromas of ripe cherry, cured meat, blackberry preserves and exotic spice. It presents a clean and fresh mouthfeel, with solid structure on the long finish. Baum Wine Imports Inc. —M.L.

**abv:** 13.5%

**Price:** \$25

**22**

**98 Flowers 2010 Sea View Ridge Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).** A cool climate has given this wine bracing acidity and gentle-yet-persistent tannins. Its flavors of wild raspberry and cherry, with spice and mineral overtones, are delicious. There's a feral quality that expresses umami perfectly, suggesting butter-sautéed, tamari-splashed mushrooms and crisped prosciutto. The oak is powerful and present in the form of toast and sweet vanilla, but perfectly balanced with the wine's volume. For all its richness, the wine finishes bone dry. Drink this impeccable Pinot Noir now–2020. —S.H.

**abv:** 14%

**Price:** \$70

**23**

**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-

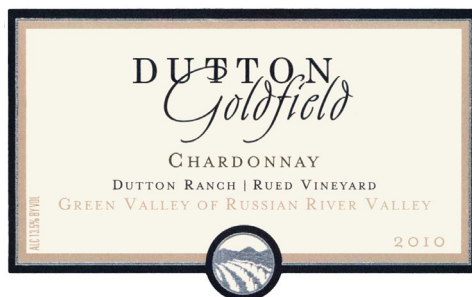
ward fruits both promise that. Keep for six years. Monika Caha Selections. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$40

**24**


**94 S.A. Prüm 2009 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese (Mosel).** This starts off a bit sweaty, then develops passion fruit and tangerine aromas. It's a medium-bodied auslese, sweet but balanced, with peach and apricot, ripe citrus and honey all coming together in lovely harmony. Delicious now, and should age well for 10–20 years. Palm Bay International. **Editors' Choice.** —J.C.

**abv:** 7%

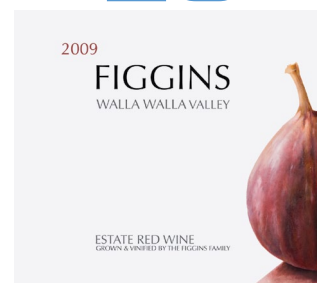
**Price:** \$40

**25**


**97 Dutton-Goldfield 2010 Dutton Ranch Rued Vineyard Chardonnay (Green Valley).** The cold and fog actually helped this Chardonnay, which achieves a remarkable delicacy and tartness despite the power of its fruit. It is really remarkable for the flood of golden mango, Asian pear and Key lime pie richness, which is grounded by a firm minerality. Oak influence and aging on the lees lend the perfect touches of smoky, buttered toast and zesty creaminess to this dry, polished wine. A mere 587 cases were produced. —S.H.

**abv:** 13.5%

**Price:** \$50

**26**


**98 Figgins 2009 Estate Red Wine (Walla Walla Valley).** The second release of Figgins—a single wine produced by Leonetti's Chris Figgins—is astonishing. Tasted in a lineup of exceptional Walla Walla reds, it outshined them all. It's a sophisticated blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Merlot, from the Figgins Vineyard, with gorgeous aromas of flowers, spices and black fruits. Seamless and long, complex and forceful without being overpowering, it can stand alongside top-tier Bordeaux costing four or five times as much. **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.

**abv:** 14.4%

**Price:** \$85

**27**

**94 Molino di Sant'Antimo 2007 Brunello di Montalcino.** This is well stitched together with a broad, wide assembly of dark fruit, spice and cola aromas. All the wine's elements sing loud as a single chorus, bold, plush and chewy. It ends with ripe fruit, rum cake, pipe tobacco and dark espresso bean. Firm, great length. Delectatio Wines. **Editors' Choice.** —M.L.

**abv:** 14%

**Price:** \$40

**28**


**95 Trapiche 2009 Finca Jorge Miralles Single Vineyard Malbec (La Consulta).** This is a real blaster of a Malbec, showing power, concentration and subtleties. The bouquet is full of Graham cracker, cola, monster berry and moss notes, while the pure, driving palate deals flavors of toasty blackberry, spice, mocha and more. The lengthy but mellow finish hums like a finely tuned machine. Drink now–2018. The Wine Group. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.

**abv:** 15%

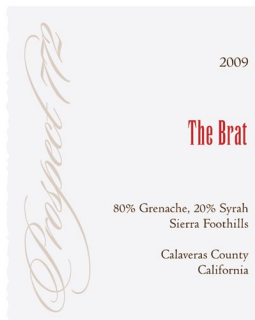
**Price:** \$50

**29**

**94** **Château Tronquoy-Lalande 2009 Saint-Estèphe.** The tannins are very fine, with rich fruitcake and smoke flavors. Red berry and black plum notes give a fruity character, along with delicious acidity. The wine is structured while still remaining very approachable. —R.V.

abv: NA

Price: \$45

**30**


**94** **Prospect 772 2009 The Brat Grenache-Syrah (Calaveras County).** This is an incredibly concentrated, silky blend of 80% Grenache and 20% Syrah. There's nothing shy about this wine, inspired as it is by the great Châteauneuf-du-Papes and yet undoubtedly Californian. Make that mountain Californian. With notes of baked cherry fruit and baking spice throughout, and serious grip and weight, this is one heady and delicious wine. —V.B.

abv: 14.8%

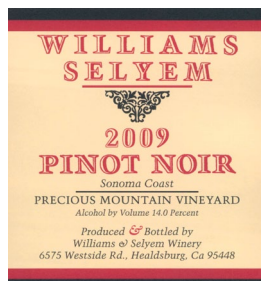
Price: \$36

**31**


**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 *amaro* notes grace the padded finish. Drink now–2018. Grapes of Spain. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$70

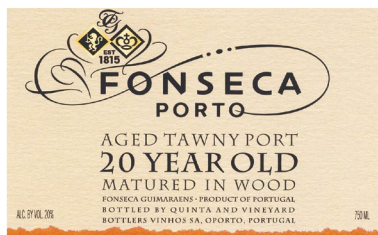
**32**


**99** **Williams Selyem 2009 Precious Mountain Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).**

A stupendous Pinot Noir, this shows how beautifully this vineyard performs in the remote Sonoma Coast above Fort Ross. Williams Selyem's last few vintages of Precious Mountain have been extraordinary, but this 2009 tops them all. The wine is as light as a feather in the mouth, modest in alcohol and delicately feminine, like pure satin. However, few Pinot Noirs in the world achieve this level of concentration. Notes of wild raspberries and cherries, cola, sleek minerals, dusty baking spices and smoky oak combine for flavors that are utterly delicious. After all that, it possesses an indefinable attribute of fascination. Will age well for a long time, if you can keep your hands off it. Now–2021. —S.H.

abv: 14%

Price: \$94

**33**


**94** **Fonseca NV 20 Year Old Aged Tawny Port.** This gorgeous Port is at that perfect stage where there are still freshness and hints of orange and dried fruit, while the wood aging is concentrating the wine into its essence. It is rich, full, yet at the same time has a great tang of spirit and acidity. Kobrand. —R.V.

abv: 20%

Price: \$50

**34**

**95** **PianCornello 2006 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino).** Here is a very plush, dark and decadent riserva with soft and luscious tones of ripe fruit, blackberry, moist earth and pipe tobacco. The wine is smooth, dense and enduring. It can be either aged or consumed in 3–5 years. The style reflects a soft, round approach to the crisp 2006 vintage. Superior Wines LLC. —M.L.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$70

**35**


**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.

abv: 15.5%

Price: \$70

**36**

**94** **Château Grand Mayne 2009 Saint-Émilion.**

This is a ripe wine, very open and smooth. The tannins are dark, but it is the fruit—blackberry- and red plum-dominated—that comes right through. Look beneath this charm, and there is also a wine with structure, perfumed and ageworthy. —R.V.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$50

**37**

**97** **Rochioli 2010 South River Vineyard Chardonnay (Russian River Valley).**

A spectacular Chardonnay, this is dazzlingly beautiful and mesmerizing in its appeal. The complexity of flavor stuns, offering tiers of pineapples, oranges, green apples and golden mangoes. Then the oaky influences appear in the form of buttered toast and caramel, with a suggestion of honey. The finish is dry and crisp in acidity. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.

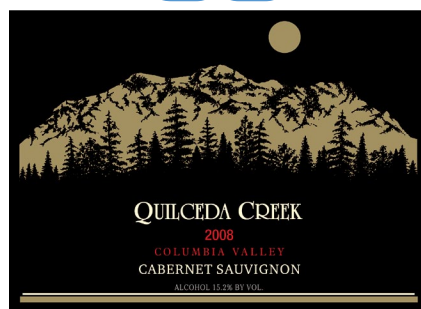
abv: 14.5%

Price: \$60

“Quickly, bring me a beaker of wine so that I may whet my mind and say something clever.”  
—Aristophanes, in *The Knights* (4th century B.C.)\*

\*from *The Curious World of Wine: Facts, Legends, and Lore About the Drink We Love So Much* by Richard Vine (Perigree, 2012).



**38**


**99 Quilceda Creek 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** The flagship wine from Quilceda Creek offers exotic scents of plum, cassis, loam, coffee and pine sap, a rich and evocative blend. The wine delivers all that is promised and more; it is deep and dense in flavor, polished, focused and persistent. It features notes of vanilla, espresso, fine tannins, luscious acids and cascading fruits. **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.  
abv: 15.2% **Price:** \$125

**39**

**94 Andriano 2009 Juvelo Gewürztraminer (Alto Adige).** Lovely, lively and super-intense, this is richly fragrant and opulent on all levels. This precious expression offers loads of honeysuckle, jasmine, citrus blossom and apricot. Banville & Jones Wine Merchants. —M.L.  
abv: 10.5% **Price:** \$50/375 ml

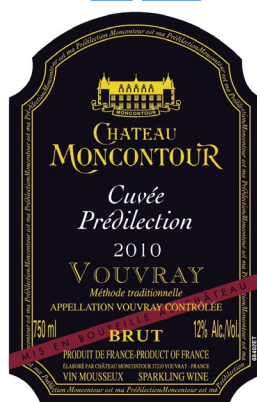
**40**

**96 Tamarack Cellars 2008 DuBrul Vineyard Reserve Red (Rattlesnake Hills).** DuBrul is perhaps the single most sought-after vineyard in the entire Yakima Valley, and at this price this Tamarack selection is an absolute steal. Pomegranate, blueberry, black cherry and cassis notes lead into a full-flavored wine that remains concise and perfectly defined. The blend is 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 31% Merlot and 7% Cabernet Franc. This is concentrated, with earthy depths suggesting Dr. Pepper, espresso and dark chocolate. **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.  
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$50

**41**

**92 Cartuxa 2007 Foral de Evora Colheita (Alentejo).** This powerful expression of rich red fruit is smoothed by wood aging and nearly four years in bottle. It has layers of acidity, spice, soft tannins

and flavors of maturing fruit. It is ready to drink now but worth aging as well. Tri-Vin Imports. —R.V.  
abv: 14% **Price:** \$19

**42**


**92 Chateau Moncontour 2010 Cuvée Prédilection Brut (Vouvray).** This sparkling Vouvray has weight and richness, balanced by intense acidity and a crisp green-salad texture. Lemon zest and quince flavors add the fruit element. It will benefit from another two years in bottle. USA Wine West. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.  
abv: 12% **Price:** \$20

**43**

**96 De Loach 2009 Pennacchio Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley).** With the 2009 vintage, De Loach is at the top of its Pinot Noir game, and this one, from a chilly vineyard south of Sebastopol, is among its best ever. The crisp acidity is bracing, like a squirt of lime, accompanying the raspberry, cherry and persimmon notes. Meanwhile, a mushroomy earthiness gives complex layers that don't stop. It should age through the next decade. **Editors' Choice.** —S.H.  
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$45

**44**

**92 Langmeil 2008 Hangin' Snakes Shiraz-Viognier (Barossa).** Full bodied yet surprisingly light on its feet, the 2008 Hangin' Snakes represents a terrific value. Peppered meat, fresh berry, coffee and black olive notes add up to a complex, savory wine, framed by soft tannins. Drink now–2017. Negociants USA, Inc. **Editors' Choice.** —J.C.  
abv: 14.5% **Price:** \$20

**45**

**92 Eichinger 2011 Wechselberg Grüner Veltliner (Kamptal).** Ripe and creamy, this is full of rich pear and green plum flavors. It has weight and is layered with acidity, with a spice note and a taut, mineral texture. This is complex and age worthy. Weygandt-Metzler. —R.V.  
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$20

**46**

**92 Castello Banfi 2010 Florus (Moscadello di Montalcino).** This is an epic wine, fit to present the little-known Moscadello di Montalcino desert wine to foreign markets. Its ambassadorial qualities include a lively, golden color and sweet tones of honey, rose and marzipan. Banfi Vintners. **Editors' Choice.** —M.L.  
abv: 14% **Price:** \$20/500 ml

**47**

**96 J. Bookwalter 2009 Conner Lee Vineyard Conflict Red (Columbia Valley).** The Conflict red is a mash-up of 38% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc, and it's a crowd-pleaser from the instant the cork is pulled. Dense scents of cherry, roasty-toasty barrel and cracker are inviting. The grapes were sourced entirely from the Conner Lee Vineyard. This effort showcases the winery's signature style, with notes of black fruits, exotic spices, coffee grounds and dark chocolates. Drink now or cellar for 6–8 years. —P.G.  
abv: 15.6% **Price:** \$55

**48**

**92 Château Coussin 2011 Rosé (Côtes de Provence Sainte-Victoire).** Crisp, bright and delicious, this has pure red fruit, with an herb note, intense acidity and a tangy texture. T. Edward Wines Ltd. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.  
abv: 13% **Price:** \$20

**49**

**95 Lapostolle 2008 Clos Apalta (Colchagua Valley).** Clos Apalta, depending on your point of view, is arguably Chile's best wine. And this vintage is outstanding! Earth, minty spice, ripe berry, mineral and smoke aromas cover the bases. It's superbly structured, with a fine texture and depth. Tastes lush and complex,

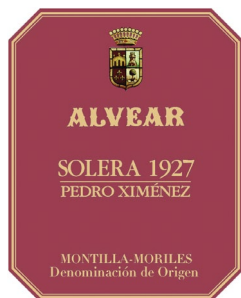
with blackberry, crème de cassis, fine herb and tobacco flavors. Finishes classy. Drink now–2016. Terlato Wines International. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 14.2% **Price:** \$90

**50**


**93 Twisted Oak 2009 Torcido (Calaveras County).** What a wine. It tries to intimidate at first, with its bottle size and alcohol level, but in the glass, this 100% Garnacha is like a purring kitten—or rather a purring, 20-pound Maine Coon cat, joyous in its pretty red fruit, and its earthy, meaty, vanilla and cinnamon-toast range of goodness. All lush, Twisted Oak's Torcido is like a retro soap opera, brave and beautiful. —V.B.  
**abv:** 15.3% **Price:** \$32

**51**

**93 Herdade do Esporão 2009 S Syrah (Alentejano).** This is a gorgeous wine that's driven by notes of spice and new wood. The wood is supported by ripe flavors of plum, damson and blackberry juice, with tight acidity. The Alentejo's dry climate is certainly suited to Syrah, producing fine structure. Age for 3–4 years. Esporão Wines & Olive Oils. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$35

**52**


**94 Alvear NV Solera 1927 Pedro Ximénez (Montilla-Moriles).** This is a rank well above most PX sweeties, with lush but fresh aromas of raisin and spice that are distinctly not syrupy or heavy. It

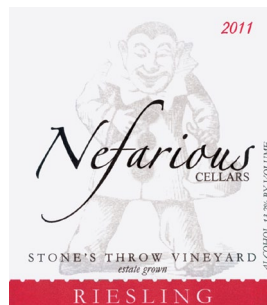
feels thick, but there's enough acidity to cut through the wine's weight. Flavors of caramel and chocolate are ideal, and the finish is smooth, not heavy, with bounce in its step. A beautiful PX any way you cut it. Fine Estates From Spain. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 16% **Price:** \$25/375 ml

**53**

**95 Donnafugata 2010 Ben Ryé (Passito di Pantelleria).** Ben Ryé is one of the 10 best dessert wines made in Italy. From the sun-drenched island of Pantelleria, this is made using Zibibbo grapes that are air-dried. It's thickly extracted and syrupy-sweet, with intense aromas of apricot, honey and marzipan. The kick of fresh acidity at the end is nothing short of brilliant. Folio Fine Wine Partners. **Editors' Choice.** —M.L.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$40/375 ml

**54**

**94 Château de Fieuzal 2009 Pessac-Léognan.** Full of tropical fruit flavor, this is rounded, ripe and very accessible. At the same time, its structure shows through in the tang of green apple skin, judicious wood aging and taut aftertaste. —R.V.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$60

**55**


**94 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 sugar. The flavors keep piling on, with caramel and honey coating the finish. **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.  
**abv:** 13.2% **Price:** \$18

**56**

**94 Domaine Jean-Paul et Benoît Droin 2010 Valmur Grand Cru (Chablis).** This is beautifully rich and powerful, with tropical fruit flavors and a hint of wood. It has enormous concentration of sweet, ripe white and yellow fruits, balanced by the sharp cut of acidity. European Cellars. —R.V.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$60

**57**

**94 CVNE 1999 Imperial Gran Reserva (Rioja).** This is textbook Rioja gran reserva in every way. It's light and smoky-smelling, with brown sugar, fine cologne and cedar aromas. Generous but well-cut in the mouth, it features fig, mushroom, raspberry and spiced plum flavors. Fresh on the finish, with a light herb note and good weight. Drink now–2018. Europvin. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$62

**58**

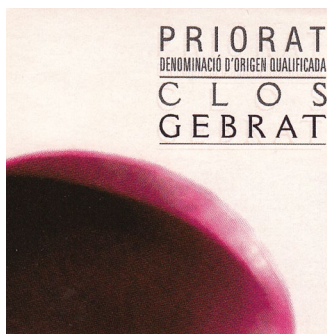
**95 Prinz 2009 Jungfer Riesling Auslese (Rheingau).** The scents of dried apricot and honey are made even more captivating by intriguing hints of musky spice. This is viscous, luscious and complex, with a bergamot note that lends another exotic element. Long and mouthwatering on the finish. Magellan Wine Imports. —J.C.  
**abv:** 8% **Price:** \$44/375 ml

**59**

**93 Château Olivier 2009 Pessac-Léognan.** This has smooth, rich fruit, with sweet berries, ripe tannins and strong layers of wood. The wine is powerful; the stally bitter-chocolate edge contrasts the sweet, ripe fruit. This is meant for long-term aging. —R.V.  
**abv:** NA **Price:** \$39

The Georgian grape Rkatsiteli is thought to be the oldest variety that is still planted today, first grown 5,000 years ago.\*

\*from *The Curious World of Wine: Facts, Legends, and Lore About the Drink We Love So Much* by Richard Vine (Perigee, 2012).

**60**


**92 Clos Gebrat 2010 Priorat.** Fresh, floral and not overbearing on the nose, this has red berry and cassis aromas, with no interference from oak or too much extraction. It feels pure and elegant, with wild berry and cherry flavors that end on a ripe, slightly sweet-tasting finish. Good for near-term drinking. The Artisan Collection. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$24

**61**

**99 David Arthur 2009 Elevation 1147 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** There are incredible aromatics on this Cabernet. It's powerful yet subtle (how can that be?), all about sweet, crushed summer blackberry and pure cassis liqueur. Elaborate oak, in the form of buttered toast, is perfectly in balance, never overshadowing the fruit. The tannins are dry, rich and smooth, defining Napa elegance, grace and beauty. World class, dramatic and just about perfect, this gets better and better as it breathes in the glass. Drink now–2030. —S.H.  
**abv:** 14.8% **Price:** \$150

**62**

**92 Companhia das Quintas 2009 Quinta da Fronteira Seleção do Enólogo (Douro).** Huge and rich, this offers ripe black fruits and a concentrated structure. It's packed with a seemingly sweet blackberry flavor that serves as a counterpoint to the firm texture. With both density and a dark edge, this will age over several years. Importo LLC. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$20

**63**


**92 Poggio al Tesoro 2009 Mediterra (Toscana).** Luscious, dark and penetrating, Mediterra delivers a long, velvety texture with sweet flavors of cinnamon, nutmeg and plump cherry fruit. It's a wonderful wine that would pair with pasta, meat or aged cheese. Winebow. —M.L.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$25

**64**

**92 Beaumont 2010 Hope Marguerite Chenin Blanc (Bot River).** This is a stunning and cellar-worthy Chenin that exhibits superb balance and layers of flavor. At first it's nutty and toasty on the nose, with notes of grilled red apple, orange rind and honeydew providing a solid fruit core. Threads of mineral and a soft fynbos character weave through the palate. Peach pit and sweet spice flavors grace the long, evolving finish. wine@34south. —L.B.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$28

**65**

**94 Garcia Figuero 2006 Vendimia Seleccionada (Ribera del Duero).** This is incredibly inviting on the bouquet due to aromas of leather, raisin, tea and mocha. It feels lifted, benefiting from the superb structure and tannins, while the flavors of leathery berry, coffee, toast and chocolate are outstanding. This is pure, deep, elegant and impeccably balanced Tempranillo. Drink now–2018. Quintessential Wines. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$69

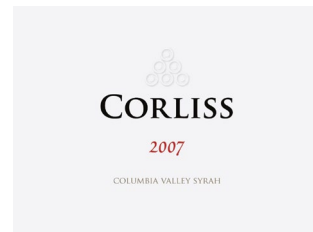
**66**

**92 Château Paloumey 2009 Haut-Médoc.** With a blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 50% Merlot, this is as rich as the year. The weight of fruit is borne by sweet tannins and layers of wood toast. There is a very dense dusty texture along with fine acid-

ity and final blackberry fruit. It is for aging over the next 4–5 years. —R.V.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$22

**67**


**93 Lagar de Bezana 2008 Single Vineyard Limited Edition Syrah (Alto Cachapoal).** Superpretty aromas of earth, balsam wood, coconut, graphite and blackberry comprise the excellent bouquet. It feels full and shows great definition, with smoky dark-berry flavors and notes of licorice and pepper. It's elegant on the finish for such a muscular, modern Syrah. Drink now–2016. One of Chile's best Syrahs. Vino Del Sol. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$40

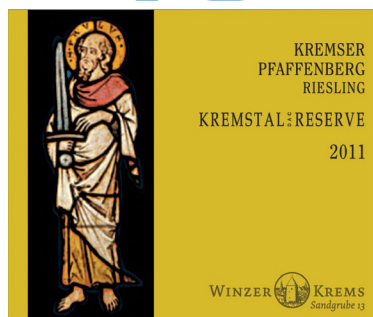
**68**


**96 Corliss Estates 2007 Syrah (Columbia Valley).** This winery gives its wines extra years in bottle prior to release, and it pays off with powerful, muscular, densely structured expressions that have been polished to a fine luster. This Syrah emphasizes fruit, not funk, with opulent flavors of black fruit, dried cherry, fig and plum. The 30 months it spent in two-thirds new French oak adds dark streaks of coffee and cocoa. It shows tremendous depth, and it could be cellared for another few years—but why wait? **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.  
**abv:** 15.4% **Price:** \$55

**69**

**93 Neudorf 2009 Moutere Chardonnay (Nelson).** A top-notch offering, this combines ample weight and richness with an impression of focus and purity. It's smoky and subtly toasty on the nose, seamlessly marrying those notes with apple, peach and citrus flavors. Long, lingering and very fine on the finish. Drink now–2017. The Vintner Group. —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$45



**70**


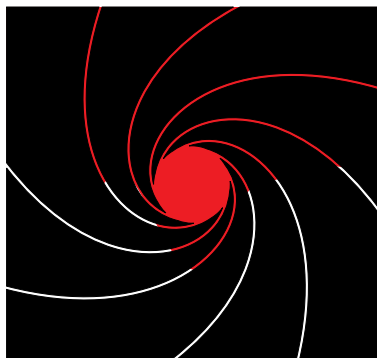
**92 Winzer Krems 2011 Kremser Pfaffenberg Reserve Riesling (Kremstal).** The steep Pfaffenberg vineyard, sloping straight down to the Danube River, is one of the top vineyards in Krems. This rich and complex wine has a fine perfumed character, laced with lemon and pear flavors. It has a touch of minerality in its texture, making a wine that should age over several years. Total Wine & More. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$25

**71**

**92 Domaine Fouassier 2010 Les Romains (Sancerre).** The Romans made it to Sancerre: hence the name of this wine. The flavors are rich, with a mineral edge to the notes of green fruits, plums and greengages and a serious citrus core. With its structure, the wine needs to age for 2–3 years. Bayfield Importing Ltd. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$25

“My dear girl, there are some things that just aren’t done, such as drinking Dom Pérignon ’53 above the temperature of thirty-eight degrees Fahrenheit”

—James Bond, in *Goldfinger* (1964)\*



\*from *The Curious World of Wine: Facts, Legends, and Lore About the Drink We Love So Much* by Richard Vine (Perigee, 2012).

**72**

**93 Giulia Negri 2007 La Tartufaia (Barolo).** This newcomer Barolo shows beautiful intensity and an inky-dark appearance. The aromas are soft and yielding, with sweet tones of wild berry and exotic spice woven between leather, tobacco and licorice. Barton Brescome. —M.L.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$45

**73**

**92 Raventós I Blanc 2009 de Nit (Cava).** This has a pretty light color, with dry raspberry and citrus scents. The palate is pure and elegant, with tangerine, grapefruit and nectarine flavors. This finishes longer than most, with poise and grace. Valkyrie Selections. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 12% **Price:** \$26

**74**

**92 Saint Clair 2011 Pioneer Block 3 43 Degrees Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough).** This bottling is a bit green and herbal while remaining plump and ripe in the mouth. The aromas are intense and vibrant, redolent of gooseberry and crushed tomato leaf, while the flavors are a beguiling mix of ripe tropical fruit, with an herbal edge that lingers on the finish. Winesellers Ltd. **Editors' Choice.** —J.C.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$26

**75**

**94 Olivier Leflaive 2009 Clos Saint Marc Premier Cru (Chassagne-Montrachet).** This is an intense, mineral-driven wine, tasting of the limestone soil as well as of very ripe fruit. Great acidity keeps the richness in line, toast offering sweetness. The wine is full bodied, the flavors going right through to the apple-skin-textured core. Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —R.V.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$75

**76**

**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

**77**

**92 Jean Daneel 2010 Signature Chenin Blanc (Western Cape).** This oaked Chenin shows great structure and power now, with the potential to cellar nicely for another three years or beyond. Toasted brioche, wood-grilled peach and quince aromas open up immediately on the bouquet and carry through to the palate alongside seductive accents of sweet spice, almond skin and orange oil. The texture is round and full, and the spice-driven finish is long and satisfying. Z Wines USA. —L.B.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$28

**78**

**92 Blanco Nieva 2011 Pie Franco Verdejo (Rueda).** This gets going with apple, peach and mineral aromas that are pure and alluring. It feels lifted but a little creamy, with green banana, lime, orange and kiwi flavors. Solid and long on the finish, this is exemplary uncooked Verdejo. Frontier Wine Imports. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.  
**abv:** 12.5% **Price:** \$28

**79**

**93 Les Vins de Vienne 2009 Les Barcillants (Cornas).** This seems awfully civilized for Cornas, with bold, clean blueberry fruit front and center, anchored by a framework of cedar and vanilla. This full-bodied, lush, creamy expression of Northern Rhône Syrah should drink well now–2025. Multiple U.S. importers. **Editors' Choice.** —J.C.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$50

**80**

**92 Nals Margreid 2011 Punggl Pinot Grigio (Alto Adige).** This is delightful, with amazing intensity and unique smoothness. Aromas of honey, peach and cantaloupe linger on the finish, with a fresh note of mountain flower. This is a simple wine, but a perfectly executed one. Masciarelli Wine Co. —M.L.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$30

**81**

**92 Bizio 2010 Henrietta Semillon-Sauvignon Blanc (Western Cape).** This beautiful Semillon-dominant blend shows great finesse, depth and power. Rich and opulent in every way, it has notes of baked red apple, lemon verbena, honey-drizzled peach and sweet orange oil flooding the nose and mouth, while additional flavors of hazelnut cream, fig bread and soft, sweet spice carry into the long finish. Round, but with enough acidic lift to keep it from being flabby. Drink now–2015. The Triton Collection. **Editors' Choice.** —L.B.  
**abv:** 12.8% **Price:** \$30

**82**


**97 Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin 1990 Cave Privée Brut (Champagne).** This toasty, superbly mature wine is part of a series of releases featuring the house's cellar-matured Champagnes. This emerges from the glass with complex flavors of almond, brioche, citrus and a hint of steeliness. The majestic richness of the wine has fully justified its decades of aging. Moët Hennessy USA. —R.V.  
**abv:** 12% **Price:** \$208

**83**

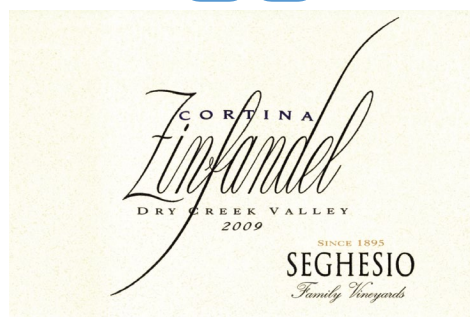
**93 Domaine Cazes 1996 Ambré (Rivesaltes).** This is a lush and satisfying Rivesaltes Ambré, made from 100% White Grenache and aged in oak for seven years. There's a gorgeous *rancio* quality to the wine with notes of almond and orange rind throughout, framed by aromas and flavors of quince paste, wood-grilled peach, fruit cake and caramelized date. The long finish shows good evolution, transitioning from notes of stone fruit to peach pit and finally ending on a sweet spice accent. Robert Kacher Selections. **Editors' Choice.** —L.B.  
**abv:** 15.6% **Price:** \$36/375 ml

**84**

**92 DeMorgenzon 2010 Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch).** A beautifully balanced and attractive wine, this is delicious now but should hold well for another five years. Herbal fynbos aromas infuse the peach, melon and ripe fig core, while accents of soft toast and nuttiness add depth. The medium-weight mouth, framed by sweet, tropical fruit-flavored acidity, leads seamlessly onto the long and evolving finish. Cape Classics. —L.B.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$30

**85**

**93 Girolamo Russo 2009 San Lorenzo (Etna).** Delicate and sophisticated, this has notes of wild berry, rosemary, crushed stone, tobacco and spice that are delivered with slow, beautiful intensity. The wine shows freshness, structure and staying power. Panebianco. —M.L.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$55

**86**


**95 Seghesio 2009 Cortina Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley).** A joy to drink, this is ripely exuberant in fruit, exploding with flavors of wild berry, dried red currant, licorice, cocoa and dusty spice that sink deep into the palate and last forever on the finish. Yet it's dry, and the structure is entirely elegant. The two vineyards that source this wine are old and dry-farmed. A very great Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel, a real classic. Drink now–2015. —S.H.  
**abv:** 15% **Price:** \$38

**87**

**93 Charles Heidsieck NV Brut Réserve (Champagne).** It's rare to find a nonvintage blend with such attractive bottle age; in most others, the fruitiness dominates. This has a toasty character, with an almond note and a ripe mouthfeel that balances its warm pear and yellow fruit flavors. This demonstrates a

full, rich style. Remy Cointreau USA. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.  
**abv:** 12% **Price:** \$60

**88**

**92 Cusumano 2008 Moscato dello Zucco (Sicilia).** Strong sunshine and fertile soils give this wine an extra boost in intensity and overall mouthfeel. Golden honey, candied fruit and sweet almond paste flavors drive the experience. Vin Divino. —M.L.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$31/500 ml

**89**

**95 Abeja 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley).** Good enough to be a reserve, this includes just 4% Merlot, with the balance Cabernet. Smooth and supple, full of lovely toasty aromatics, it layers rich cherry against the lush barrel spice. A companionable wine, already drinking beautifully, but perfectly fine to cellar for up to a decade. **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.  
**abv:** 14.8% **Price:** \$44

**90**

**92 Hamilton Russell 2010 Chardonnay (Hemel en Aarde).** Hamilton Russell just knows how to do Chard right, striking superb balance and finesse in a wine that's drinkable now but can age for another five years or more. Baked apple, barely-ripe honeydew, lemon custard and a touch of beeswax dance in the bouquet and transition seamlessly into the softly-toasted palate. A beautiful seam of acidity threads it all together and lifts the lengthy finish. Vineyard Brands. —L.B.  
**abv:** 13% **Price:** \$32

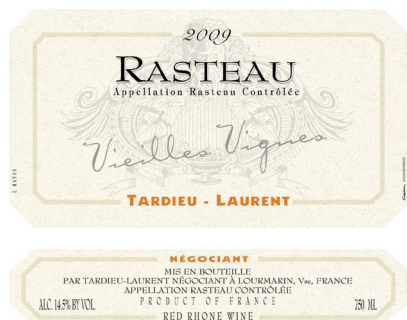
**91**

**93 Begali 2007 Monte Ca' Bianca (Amarone della Valpolicella Classico).** This shows enormous personality and distinctive aromas of rosemary, bay leaf, sweet cherry, prune, spice, cola and tobacco. Made in a large, bold style, it delivers plush layers of sweetness and softness, with a touch of heat on the finish. Siema LLC. —M.L.  
**abv:** 16% **Price:** \$58



**92**

**95 Evening Land 2010 Seven Springs Vineyard La Source Chardonnay (Eola-Amity Hills).** Gorgeously ripe fruit packs this wine with tropical flavors of cantaloupe, apricot and papaya. Lemony acid keeps it fresh and vibrant, and the overall texture and complexity are a revelation. Both of Evening Land's Chardonnays elevate the grape to new heights in this part of the Willamette Valley. **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.  
**abv:** 13.1% **Price:** \$60

**93**


**92 Tardieu-Laurent 2009 Vieilles Vignes (Rasteau).** The poster child for Tardieu's winemaking style is this 2009 Rasteau. It features masses of luscious oak—toasted coconut, cedar, vanilla—with just enough raspberry flavor to support it. It's full bodied and lushly textured, even a bit dessert-like, despite being totally dry. Probably best consumed on its own over the next few years. Wilson Daniels Ltd. **Editors' Choice.** —J.C.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$31

**94**

**92 Glaetzer 2009 Bishop Shiraz (Barossa Valley).** Glaetzer's wines have moved in a savory direction in recent vintages, and the 2009 Bishop displays plenty of tarry, treebark and black olive notes. It's mouthfilling and round, picking up hints of sweet fruit framed by mocha and cocoa. Finishes long and intense; drink now–2020. Epicurean Wines. **Editors' Choice.** —J.C.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$35

**95**


**92 Pertinace 2008 Barolo.** An impressive Barolo from a tricky vintage, this shows bold aromas of blackberry, prune, plum and cherry liqueur. There's a plush richness on the palate that softens those tight, young tannins. MW Imports. **Editors' Choice.** —M.L.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$35

**96**

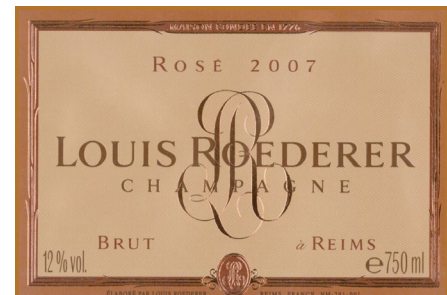
**96 Terra Valentine 2009 Marriage (Spring Mountain).** Few wines in the world can boast this concentration of ripe, flashy fruit. It's decadent and enormous in blackberry, cherry, currant, licorice, bacon and spice flavors, which are all melted into the perfect fusion of alcohol and warmth, and elaborated with smoky, toasty oak. With its level of elegance, this is wonderful now, and it should drink well over the next 15 years. —S.H.  
**abv:** 14.9% **Price:** \$80

**97**


**94 Archery Summit 2010 AB OVO Pinot Gris (Dundee Hills).** This very limited, concrete-egg-fermented, and thoroughly splendid Pinot Gris is a good indication of the potential for PG in Oregon if the price limitations are lifted. Stunningly rich with citrus, lemon curd, ripe apple and light tropical flavors, this concentrated, deeply driven wine is both roundly full and amazingly dense. Certainly the best Oregon Pinot Gris in memory. **Editors' Choice.** —P.G.  
**abv:** 13.5% **Price:** \$42

**98**

**92 Pietro Rinaldi 2009 San Cristoforo (Barbaresco).** This opens with a plush, dark appearance and generous aromas of ripe fruit, tobacco, hazelnut and bitter chocolate. It delivers balance, determination and polished tannins. Terravino Wine Partners. —M.L.  
**abv:** 14% **Price:** \$36

**99**


**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. —R.V.  
**abv:** 12% **Price:** \$72

**100**


**92 Peter Lehmann 2006 Mentor Cabernet Sauvignon (Barossa).** Full bodied and richly tannic, Lehmann's 2006 Mentor is dark, chocolaty and intense, with further nuances of cassis and cigar box. The finish is chewy and juicy, simultaneously drying and mouthwatering. Drink 2015–2023. Hess Collection. —J.C.  
**abv:** 14.5% **Price:** \$38