

The Classics Collection January 2008

Tasting notes

Note: This page does not indicate if a product is still available for ordering. For stock status information please check the main pages.

France - Classics Collection - January 2008

Bordeaux

Red Wine

CHÂTEAU ANGELUS 2004

St-Émilion 1^{er} Grand Cru (B)

664482 (XD) 750 mL \$189

TASTING NOTE: This 7,500-case blend of 62% Merlot and 38% Cabernet Franc is one of the strongest wines of the vintage. A deep blue/purple hue is accompanied by classic aromas of smoky blueberries and blackberries as well as incense and floral notes in the background. A beautiful texture, opulence, flamboyance, and purity characterize this stunningly deep, full-bodied effort, another great success from proprietor Hubert de Bouard. Anticipated maturity: 2009-2022. Score - **95**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, June 2007)

CHÂTEAU AUSONE 2004

Saint-Émilion 1^{er} Grand Cru (A)

672071 (XD) 750 mL \$790

TASTING NOTE: One of the vintage's most compelling wines (what's new about that?), Alain Vauthier's beloved 2004 Ausone has closed down considerably since I tasted it out of barrel, but it remains among the most concentrated wines of the vintage. Furthermore, along with Petrus, it will probably be the longest-lived. A dense purple color is accompanied by a celestial perfume of blue and black fruits, wet stones, flowers, and incense. On the palate, the wine exhibits exceptional power and concentration, but this historic terroir has also provided a surreal lightness to the wine's impression. Beautiful flavors, sensational depth, and abundant structure suggest this 2004 will not be close to full maturity for 8-10 years. It should last for four decades. Score - **94**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, June 2007)

CHÂTEAU CHEVAL BLANC 2004

St-Émilion 1^{er} Grand Cru (A)

670869 (XD) 750 mL \$450

TASTING NOTE: Eighty thousand bottles of 2004 Cheval Blanc were produced from a blend of 55% Cabernet Franc and 45% Merlot. Subtle herb, menthol, cranberry, black currant, and licorice aromas emerge from this dark ruby/plum-colored wine. It is medium-bodied and elegant with plenty of sweet fruit, but not a lot of weight or intensity. The complexity and nobility of Cheval Blanc's gravelly terroir is apparent in this delicate, subtle St.-Emilion. Give it a few years to develop additional aromatics, and drink it over the following 12-15. Score - **90**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, June 2007)

CHÂTEAU COS D'ESTOURNEL 2004
St-Estèphe, 2^e Cru

670927 (XD) 750 mL \$145

TASTING NOTE: A beautiful example of the vintage, proprietor Michel Reybier and his top-notch winemaker, Jean-Guillaume Prats, have fashioned an exceptional wine displaying a dense ruby/purple color as well as a sweet perfume of boysenberries, black currants, cherries, pain grille, roasted herbs, and licorice. Medium-bodied with impressive density for the vintage, sweet tannin, and outstanding richness and length, it should be at its finest between 2009 and 2020+. Score - **92**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, June 2007)

CHÂTEAU DUCRU BEAUCAILLOU 2004
St-Julien, 2^e Cru

664466 (XD) 750 mL \$125

TASTING NOTE: One can't say enough about the efforts Bruno Borie is pouring into this wonderful estate that I have often called the "Lafite Rothschild of St.-Julien." An undeniable success, the 2004 Ducru boasts sweet aromas of creme de cassis, spring flowers, pain grille, licorice, and road tar. This pure, medium-bodied wine possesses moderately high tannin, superb concentration, good sweetness, and low acidity. Give it 2-3 years of cellaring and drink it over the following 25 years. Score - **93**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, June 2007)

CHÂTEAU HAUT BRION 2004
Pessac-Léognan, 1^{er} Cru

671669 (XD) 750 mL \$329

TASTING NOTE: The dark plum/ruby-hued 2004 Haut-Brion exhibits a noble, discrete, smoky bouquet revealing notions of plum liqueur, black currants, sweet cherries, and subtle earth. In addition to its aromatic complexity, this medium-bodied effort reveals classic elegance and delicacy as well as sweet fruit in the mouth and a long finish. Give this streamlined, civilized wine 2-4 years of bottle age and drink it over the following 20-25 years. It is amazingly similar to Haut-Brion's 1999. Score - **92**. (Robert Parker Jr., *www.erobertparker.com*, June 2007)

CHÂTEAU LA MONDOTTE 2004
Saint-Émilion Grand Cru

669739 (XD) 750 mL \$219

TASTING NOTE: Another brilliant effort from a small, 45-year-old vineyard on the clay and limestone plateau above Pavie and Pavie Decesse, this blend of 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc was cropped at 30 hectoliters per hectare. A classically structured St.-Emilion, it boasts an opaque purple color as well as a gorgeous nose of black raspberries, creme de cassis, blueberries, espresso roast, and pen ink. Huge tannin, massive body, and tremendous richness as well as depth suggest it will benefit from 4-5 years of cellaring, and should drink well for 20-25. Score - **93**. (Robert Parker Jr., *www.erobertparker.com*, June 2007)

CHÂTEAU LATOUR 2004
Pauillac, 1^{er} Cru

671396 (XD) 750 mL \$899 ★

TASTING NOTE: A terrific effort from Administrator Frederic Engerer and owner Francois Pinault, the dark ruby/purple-tinged 2004 Latour exhibits a strong cassis character intermixed with notes of crushed rocks, earth, cedar, and forest floor. Racy, elegant, but powerful with medium to full body, and sweet tannin, it will benefit from 5-7 years of cellaring, and should keep for three decades. It is a very impressive offering. Score - **95**. (Robert Parker Jr., *www.erobertparker.com*, June 2007)

CHÂTEAU MOUTON ROTHSCHILD 2004
Pauillac, 1^{er} Cru

669820 (XD) 750 mL \$395

TASTING NOTE: Beautiful aromas of crushed berries and chocolate, with hints of Indian spices. Full-bodied, with silky, velvety tannins and a long, caressing finish. A lovely wine for the vintage. This is the first wine from the new winemaking team at Mouton and is showing really well. Best after 2011. Score - **93**. (James Suckling, *www.winespectator.com*, March 31, 2007)

CHÂTEAU PAVIE DECESSE 2004
Saint-Émilion Grand Cru

671545 (XD) 750 mL \$175

TASTING NOTE: This small estate owned by Chantal and Gerard Perse (9 plus acres planted with 43-year-old vines) is composed of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. In 2004, yields were a low 28-30 hectoliters per hectare, resulting in 400 cases being produced. The dense ruby/purple-colored 2004 offers smoky creme de cassis, kirsch liqueur, crushed rock, and spring flower aromas. Opulent, flamboyant, rich, dense, and lavishly endowed, it possesses enough fruit and glycerin to nearly conceal its elevated tannin. This wine should be at its finest between 2012-2025. Score - **94**. (Robert Parker Jr., *www.erobertparker.com*, June 2007)

CHÂTEAU PICHON-LONGUEVILLE COMTESSE DE LALANDE 2004
Pauillac, 2^e Cru

671677 (XD) 750 mL \$129

TASTING NOTE: The 2004 Pichon Lalande is a strong effort for the vintage (much better than their underwhelming and much more expensive 2005). A blend of 53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, it exhibits a deep ruby/purple color as well as scents of cocoa, espresso roast, black cherries, and cassis. Medium to full-bodied, opulent, and fleshy, this classic wine cuts a stylistic persona somewhere between the 1995 and 1996. It can be drunk now or cellared for two decades. Score - **92**. (Robert Parker Jr., *www.erobertparker.com*, June 2007)

LES FORTS DE LATOUR 2004
Pauillac, 2nd wine of Château Latour

664276 (XD) 750 mL \$199 *

TASTING NOTE: The estate's second wine continues to go from strength to strength. The 2004 Forts de Latour (includes 75% Cabernet Sauvignon) reveals a deep ruby/purple hue, classic evolved cedary, lead pencil, and cassis characteristics, medium body, beautiful sweetness of fruit, and a more forward, evolved character than its big sibling. Enjoy it over the next 15+ years. Score - **90**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, June 2007)

Burgundy

Côte de Nuits

Red Wines

HENRI GOUGES NUITS ST-GEORGES CLOS DES PORRETS 2005

1^{er} Cru

555631 (XD) 750 mL \$73

TASTING NOTE: A more elegant mix of red, black, violet, earth, spice and game notes blends into extremely rich and full-bodied flavors that are dense, serious, concentrated, palate drenching and complex on the beautifully long finish. I quite like this as it offers buckets of character and excellent aging potential. Drink: 2015+. Score - **89-92**. (Allen Meadows, www.burghound.com, Jan. 1, 2007)

HENRI GOUGES NUITS-SAINT-GEORGES 2005

555581 (XD) 750 mL \$47

TASTING NOTE: An unusually complex nose for a Nuits villages that displays a pretty mix of earthy red and black fruit plus spice and game hints that introduce rich, full and sweet flavors that culminate in a supple, forward and sappy finish. There is good balance with ample finishing drive. Excellent quality here. Drink: 2012+. Score - **87-90**. (Allen Meadows, www.burghound.com, Jan. 1, 2007)

HENRI GOUGES NUITS-ST-GEORGES LES PRULIERS 2005

1^{er} Cru

555623 (XD) 750 mL \$73

TASTING NOTE: This is a bit finer with more emphasis on spice and mineral-infused earth notes that can also be found on the complex and classic Nuits flavors that are at once robust but not really rustic, all wrapped in a sappy, dense and equally serious finish that offers outstanding length. This too possesses terrific aging potential and is recommended. Drink: 2015+. Score - **90-92**. (Allen Meadows, *www.burghound.com*, Jan. 1, 2007)

Côte de Beaune

Red Wine

DOMAINE CLERGET VOLNAY SANTENOTS 2002

AC, 1^{er} Cru

63271 (XD) 750 mL \$53

Perched on a picturesque hillside 275 meters high, this pretty village, nestled into the landscape, dominates the vineyards down below. Exclusively reds, Volnay premiers cru wines represent more than half of the total surface of 220 hectares of vines., of which almost 100 hectares are situated in AOC recognized vineyards. Volnay wines are soft, feminine and robust. Giving off aromas of violets and red fruit, these delicate and distinguished wines are tender, but also know how to show off their concentrated flavours. One should wait between five to 10 years before opening a bottle of this magic wine ... [Santenots is a] bit more masculine than the Carelle, these wines retain the fruity and rich characteristics of a classic Volnay. ... Veal parmesan with butter noodles, grilled sardines with garlic butter, parsley-stuffed trout, duck à l'orange [are good food choices]. (*www.domaine-clerget.com*)

Burgundy

Côte de Beaune

White Wine

BOUCHARD PÈRE ET FILS MONTRACHET 2005

Grand Cru

48074 (XD) 750 mL \$559

TASTING NOTE: As it should be, this is the best wine here with its compelling nose of acacia blossom, distinctly ripe orchard fruit and gorgeously exotic spice notes that seem to keep changing every few minutes followed by classy, pure and fine flavors that possess both seriously impressive power and wonderful elegance, which continues onto the multi-dimensional, dense, long and palate staining finish. This is very much of a baby and will need plenty of time to really open up so be prepared to wait. Note that there was a trace of reduction on the nose so it would be best to decant this for 30 minutes first if curiosity gets the best of you! Drink: 2017+. Score - **97**. (Allen Meadows, *www.burghound.com*, July 1, 2007)

Chablis

White Wine

CHRISTIAN MOREAU CHABLIS LES CLOS 2005

598623 (XD) 750 mL \$61

TASTING NOTE: Slightly reduced but complex nose hints at citrus peel, white fruits, minerals, iodine and lichee. Juicy and very intense, with terrific thrust to the white peach and mineral flavors. This is quite expansive despite the fact that it was bottled just a week prior to my visit. Finishes bracing and very long, with superb delicacy. An impressively mineral style of wine for the vintage. Score - **92**. (Stephen Tanzer, *International Wine Cellar*, Nov./Dec. 2006)

CHRISTIAN MOREAU CHABLIS VAUDÉSIR 2005

Grand Cru

29751 (XD) 750 mL \$61

TASTING NOTE: Steely minerality complicated by fresh hay and hazelnut on the nose. Sweet, broad and ripe, with strong fruit flavors of lemon and apple. Nicely aromatic in the mouth. Rich, very ripe and long on the aftertaste. About 40% of this juice was aged in barrel until February, then all of the cuvee spent the following three months in wood. Score - **90**. (Stephen Tanzer, *International Wine Cellar*, Nov./Dec. 2006)

Côte D'or

White Wine

DOMAINE PARENT CORTON BLANC 2005

Grand Cru

46607 (XD) 750 mL \$109

TASTING NOTE: Fruity and still a bit troubled on the nose, indeed this needed to be racked. The flavors however are classic Corton with a robust and even slightly sauvage quality to the big and powerful flavors that are delicious if somewhat particular as this really does drink like a Corton red, not withstanding the chardonnay base. To be sure, this is a good wine but not typical. Drink: 2012+. Score - **89-92**. (Allen Meadows, www.burghound.com, July 1, 2007)

HENRI GOUGES BOURGOGNE PINOT BLANC 2005

555649 (XD) 750 mL \$25

Pinot Blanc in Burgundy is allowed only for wines labelled AC Bourgogne. They are still as rare as hen's teeth. In fact, Henri Gouges is one of the few who is still making these very intriguing wines in any commercial quantities. Be the first on your block to try a Pinot Blanc from Burgundy!

LEFLAIVE PULIGNY MONTRACHET LES FOLATIÈRES 2005

1^{er} Cru

12393 (XD) 750 mL \$159

TASTING NOTE: Here there is a bit more wood toast but it stops well short of being intrusive with otherwise elegant and relatively airy white flower and pear aromas that continue onto the rich, full, intense and detailed flavors built on a base of fine minerality, all wrapped in a racy and refined finish that packs real punch and length. Lovely. Drink: 2012+. Outstanding! Score - **90-92**. (Allen Meadows, www.burghound.com, July 1, 2007)

LEFLAIVE PULIGNY-MONTRACHET CLAVOILLON 2005

1^{er} Cru

737700 (XD) 750 mL \$125

TASTING NOTE: A discreet touch of pain grillé frames fresh and exotic aromas of peach, melon and mango that continue onto the round, rich and concentrated flavors that possess real texture due to the solid dry extract on the mouth coating and solidly long finish. This is not particularly elegant in 2005 but there's plenty of wine here. Drink: 2010+. Score - **88-90**. (Allen Meadows, www.burghound.com, July 1, 2007)

BOUCHARD PÈRE ET FILS MEURSAULT GENEVRIÈRES 2004

1^{er} Cru

46532 (XD) 750 mL \$83

TASTING NOTE: This is a considerable step up in elegance with its sexy, spicy, pure and classy aromas that are layered and wonderfully complex that are followed by strikingly detailed and transparent flavors that possess a positively gorgeous texture and a driving, energetic and stunningly long finish. This is a terrific example of the vineyard and highly recommended. Drink: 2011+. Outstanding! Score - **92-94**. (Allen Meadows, www.burghound.com, July 1, 2006)

DOMAINE VINCENT SAUVESTRE CORTON-CHARLEMAGNE 2004

AC, Grand Cru

62133 (XD) 750 mL \$99

TASTING NOTE: Fresh and racy, with an underlying intensity, this tastes of green apple, lemon and mineral, with spice accents from oak. The emphasis is on fruit and terroir, building to a long finish. Best from 2008 through 2020. Score - **92**. (Bruce Sanderson, www.winespectator.com, Sept. 30, 2006)

Rhône

Northern Rhône

Red Wine

BERNARD BURGAUD CÔTE-RÔTIE 2004

662312 (XD) 750 mL \$72

TASTING NOTE: Juicy, with a racy mix of red and black fruit - cherry, plum and currant-followed by vibrant mineral, coffee and dark olive notes. Long, tangy finish. Fine typicity. Drink now through 2011. Score - **91**. (James Molesworth, www.winespectator.com, Dec. 15, 2006)

Rhône

Southern Rhône

Red Wine

DOMAINE DE LA VIEILLE JULIENNE CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE 2004

38182 (XD) 750 mL \$73

TASTING NOTE: The 2004 Chateauneuf du Pape is one of the finest wines of the vintage. Deep ruby/purple with good acidity, dense, sweet, floral, black cherry, raspberry, and black currant notes all resonate in the aromatics and flavors. Quite full-bodied, richly textured, but with good acidity, this is a brilliant wine that should age effortlessly for 10-15+ years. Moreover, it has the advantage of being approachable enough to be drunk now. By the way, their normal blend of Chateauneuf du Pape is 80% Grenache, 10% Syrah, and the rest Counoise and Cinsault. Score - **92**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, Feb. 2007)

CHÂTEAU DE BEUCASTEL CHÂTEAUNEUF DU PAPE HOMMAGE À JACQUES PERRIN 2004 AC

985622 (XD) 750 mL \$259

TASTING NOTE: ... The 2004 is potentially one of the legendary Jacques Perrin cuvees since the debut vintage of 1989. The potentially perfect 2004 Beaucastel Chateauneuf du Pape Hommage a Jacques Perrin has turned out to be just an amazing wine and one of the profound examples of this cuvee the Perrins have produced. It certainly has all the power, density, and richness of the great years, but there is almost a surreal elegance and lightness for a wine this powerful and dense. Almost difficult to describe, the gorgeous multi-layered texture, and the heavenly perfume of smoked meats, flowers, blueberries, blackberries, creosote, and truffles is a knock-out. In the mouth, it is medium to full-bodied with incredible intensity, purity, and overall symmetry. There's nothing out of place in this remarkable wine, and it seems somewhat approachable already, yet it will no doubt have the uncanny ability to age for 25-40+ years. Score - **96-98**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, Feb. 2007)

Champagne

TARLANT CHAMPAGNE CUVÉE LOUIS BRUT

918292 (D) 750 mL \$71

TASTING NOTE: Bright gold. Deep, honeyed, vaguely oxidative nose offers smoky apple, pear, orange and potpourri aromas, along with a toffee component. A rich style with broad pear and peach pit flavors deepened by brown butter and nutmeg. Toasty and dry on the long finish. Try this with a buttery lobster dish. Score - **90**. (Josh Reynolds, *International Wine Cellar*, Nov./Dec. 2006)

Loire

White Wine

NICOLAS JOLY CLOS DE LA BERGERIE 2005 **AC Savennières Roches aux Moines**

62620 (D) 750 mL \$59

If there is a biodynamic hotspot in the Loire, this is it. Other top producers - Domaine Huet for example - have practised biodynamics for years, but none follow it so fervently as Nicolas Joly at Coulée de Serrant. This close adherence to what some regard as an extreme method of viticulture (agriculture in fact - the application of biodynamics is not limited to the vine) seems at odds with Joly's previous employment as a high-flyer for the Morgan Guaranty Trust, having previously graduated with an MBA from Columbia University. Nicolas Joly returned to the family estate to help his mother, by that time a widow, in 1976. ... The catalyst for ... change [for Joly] was a book on biodynamic agriculture, by Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner, which Joly discovered in 1981. Nicolas Joly read the book on a skiing holiday and found it a life-changing experience. Within four years Coulée de Serrant was run on entirely biodynamic principles. (www.thewinedoctor.com, June 2004) The intensity of the flavour and perfection of the balance cannot be denied. Is it just biodynamism or exceedingly talented winemaking or both? This vintage is thoroughly impressive, but you be the judge.

NICOLAS JOLY CLOS DE LA COULÉE-DE-SERRANT 2005 **AC Savennières**

62604 (D) 750 mL \$105

Savennières was once among the most prized French wines. Louis XIV was apparently so smitten with a wine from the La Roche-aux-Moines vineyard that he decided to journey to Savennières to see for himself the source of this elixir; unfortunately, the royal coach got stuck in the mud en route and had to turn back. The same vineyard also produced what became a house wine in the court of the first Napoleon. However, the most celebrated Savennières comes from another vineyard, Clos de la Coulée-de-Serrant. Legendary 20th - century French food writer Curnonsky, dubbed the Prince of Gastronomes, famously declared Coulée-de-Serrant to be one of the five great white wines of France ... Coulée-de-Serrant makes headlines for a different reason these days: Its current owner is Nicolas Joly, the godfather of biodynamic winemaking, an ultra-organic, quasi-mystical approach to viticulture that has won the adherence of acclaimed wineries on both sides of the Atlantic. Thanks to Joly, Coulée-de-Serrant remains an iconic name in French viticulture ... (Mike Steinberger, *www.slate.com*, Oct. 10, 2007)

NICOLAS JOLY LES VIEUX CLOS 2005

62638 (D) 750 mL \$44

Cistercian monks planted this historic vineyard with vines in 1130, and there have been 875 consecutive grape harvests ever since. The entire vineyard has been biodynamic since 1984. Since then, all synthetic chemical products, weed killers and the like have been banished from the whole estate, not simply from the vineyard. Regarded as a pioneer of Biodynamic Viticulture [Nicolas Joly's] wines are a truly natural expression of their place. Coulee de Serrant, Savennieres-Roche aux Moines, and Savennieres should be decanted ahead of tasting and served at 14 to 15 degrees celcius ... 2005 Les Vieux Clos - 3 hectares of vineyard produce another gorgeous example of Chenin Blanc. (*www.thelivingvine.ca*)

CHÂTEAU DE LA ROULERIE CHAUME 2003

Côteaux du Layon, 1^{er} Cru

62190 (S) 500 mL \$47

TASTING NOTE: Rich and pure, with fig, glazed peach, pear tartine and ginger notes that run through a long, creamy finish. Lovely mouthfeel and balance. Drink now through 2014. Score - **92**. (James Molesworth, *www.winespectator.com*, Nov. 30, 2006)

Midi

Red Wine

GÉRARD BERTRAND L'HOSPITALITAS 2004
AC Côteaux de Languedoc, La Clape

683532 (D) 750 mL \$57

TASTING NOTE: A powerful, pure-tasting red, with concentrated flavors of cassis, blackberry, licorice and dark plum. Deft winemaking here, with a long, long finish of mineral, spice and hints of smoke. Impressive for its focus and structure. Syrah and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2014. Score - **93**. (Kim Marcus, *www.winespectator.com*, Feb. 28, 2007)

Other Europe - Classics Collection - January 2008

Austria

White Wines

ALOIS KRACHER CUVÉE TBA No. 1 NOUVELLE VAGUE 2003

Burgenland

62117 (S) 375 mL \$65

This represents our largest offering ever from what many consider Austria's dessert wine master. TASTING NOTE: 2003 #1 Trockenbeeren-auslese, Kracher's barrel-fermented 2003 essence of Welschriesling, Chardonnay (20%) and Pinot Gris (10%), smells of sultanas, truffles, musk, butterscotch and honey. The thick, satiny palate impression is not the least bit heavy due to the wine's high acidity and low alcohol. The desiccated fruit is clear and pure, with alluring accents of brown spices and resin. As for the novel-length finish, it practically snaps to attention with vivid citricity allied to apple jelly and white raisin. Only trouble is, you can't read this novel yet, all you know is it has a thousand pages. (And it took a lot of fining to get this into the bottle.) How about we revisit in 15 years, suggests Kracher. Score - **92**. (David Schildknecht, *www.erobertparker.com*, Aug. 2005)

ALOIS KRACHER TRAMINER TBA NO. 3 NOUVELLE VAGUE 2004

Burgenland

62091 (S) 375 mL \$65

TASTING NOTE: Deep golden yellow. Varietally expressive aromas of orange zest, rose oil and smoke. Powerful, full-bodied and brooding, and still in need of time to digest its oak spice. Tannins give this wine a velvety texture. Lingering flavors of minerals and rose. This calls for a good five years of patience. Drink 2011 to 2025. Score - **92**. (Peter Moser, *International Wine Cellar*, Nov./Dec. 2006)

ALOIS KRACHER SCHEUREBE TBA NO. 4 ZWISCHEN DEN SEEN 2004
Burgenland

62109 (S) 375 mL \$65

TASTING NOTE: Powerful golden yellow. Complex nose melds refreshing mandarin zest, gooseberry and discreet snow pea aromas, along with a pleasant grapey character. Juicy apricot and peach flavors are given lift and definition by racy acidity. Long and fruity on the aftertaste. This should offer considerable appeal to riesling fans. Drink now to 2020. Score - **93**. (Peter Moser, *International Wine Cellar*, Nov./Dec. 2006)

ALOIS KRACHER GRANDE CUVÉE TBA No. 6 NOUVELLE VAGUE 2004
Burgenland

62125 (S) 375 mL \$72

TASTING NOTE: (chardonnay and welschriesling) Medium yellow with brass highlights. Apple, pear, honey and vanilla aromas testify to the dominance of chardonnay. Wonderfully complex flavors of quince and creme brulee remain surprisingly elegant and refreshing due to vibrant acidity. A honeyed pear flavor lingers long on the aftertaste. Drink 2008 to 2020. Score - **94**. (Peter Moser, *International Wine Cellar*, Nov./Dec. 2006)

Germany

White Wines

Mosel-Saar-Ruwer

DR. PAULY-BERGWEILER RIESLING AUSLESE 2005
Wehlener Sonnenuhr

40600 (MS) 750 mL \$41

TASTING NOTE: This is a notch up in concentration, combining apricot, lime and vanilla flavors with honey and spice from botrytis. So rich, like apples simmered in brown sugar and cinnamon, yet there's a submerged structure that makes itself known on the finish. Best from 2009 through 2030. Highly Recommended. Score - **96**. (Bruce Sanderson, *www.winespectator.com*, April 30, 2007)

ST. URBANS-HOF RIESLING SPÄTLESE FEINHERB 2005

Leiwener Laurentiuslay

62166 (MS) 750 mL \$39

TASTING NOTE: Representing a blend of two fuders, one fermented spontaneously and one with cultured yeasts, the 2005 Leiwener Laurentiuslay Riesling Spatlese feinherb - at around 18 grams of residual sugar - still represents what the estate intends their customers to expect when they see "Laurentiuslay" on the label, namely a balanced, dry-tasting wine. (Without the yeasted lot to blend in, Weis points out, the sugar would have been much higher.) Grapefruit, white peach, kumquat, coriander, sage, and a site-typical hint of anise in the nose lead to a juicy, refreshing yet subtly creamy palate with supportive but barely noticeable sweetness. Delightful hints of citrus rind, mineral salts, and herb - plus a Gruner Veltliner-like note of white pepper - accent the generous pit fruit and citrus in the finish. Score - **92**. (David Schildknecht, *www.erobertparker.com*, Feb. 2007)

J.J. PRÜM RIESLING AUSLESE 2004

Wehlener Sonnenuhr, Estate Btld.

65508 (MS) 750 mL \$59

TASTING NOTE: This has a matchstick aroma from reduction, while the palate expresses peach, lime and mineral flavors. It has fine density and a keen-edged structure that keeps it detailed and crunchy. Long, mouthwatering finish. Best from 2009 through 2030. Score - **92**. (Bruce Sanderson, *www.winespectator.com*, April 30, 2006)

J.J. PRÜM RIESLING AUSLESE GOLD CAP 2005

Graacher Himmelreich, Estate Btld.

62042 (MS) 750 mL \$114

TASTING NOTE: Perfumed and creamy in texture, showing textbook lime, peach and slate flavors that mesh seamlessly with the delicate frame and the vibrant acidity. Has fine length, with a juicy, peach-infused aftertaste. This is terrific, with great harmony and intensity. Best from 2008 through 2022. Score - **97**. (Bruce Sanderson, *www.winespectator.com*, April 30, 2007)

J.J. PRÜM RIESLING SPÄTLESE 2004
Wehlener Sonnenuhr

22350 (MS) 750 mL \$49

TASTING NOTE: When tasted in August, the 2004 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spatlese A.P. #13 (or another, similar lot - because I was tasting them without benefit of identifying A.P. numbers) was richer in texture and more complex in flavors - if more restrained in their expression - than its Graach counterpart. Tasted in November, this A.P. #13 displayed significantly more sheer intensity. The aroma of cinnamon, honeysuckle, and vanilla-tinged watermelon and apple leads to a mouth-coating, rich yet delicate palate with nut oil, vanilla, and wet stones underlying the wine's exuberant, juicy fruit. Vividly fresh apple and melon along with salted lime, nut paste, honey, and wet stones inform a persistent finish and complete a picture balancing ripeness and considerable overt sweetness with delicacy and lift that is typical for the long-lived wines of this estate. There tend to be multiple Prum bottlings of a given combinations of site and Pradikat, but I am never privy to an overview of these. To sin on the side of safety, I have noted the A.P. # for wines I tasted from bottle, but Manfred Prum routinely seeks to assure me that any alternate bottlings will not differ substantially from those I have tasted, and consistent excellence - like ageworthiness - has long been a hallmark of Joh. Jos. Prum Rieslings ... Score - **92**. (David Schildknecht, www.erobertparker.com, Feb. 2006)

J.J. PRÜM RIESLING AUSLESE 2004
Graacher Himmelreich

62141 (MS) 750 mL \$52

35 in Wine Spectator's Top 100 Wines of 2006. TASTING NOTE: The aroma is marked by matchstick now, but this is positively crunchy on the palate. The vibrant structure and clarity set the tone for its peach, citrus and mineral notes. It's refreshing and alive, with a mouthwatering finish. This needs time. Best from 2009 through 2030. Highly Recommended. Score - **94**. (Bruce Sanderson, www.winespectator.com, April 30, 2006)

Hungary

White Wines

ROYAL TOKAJI TOKAJI ASZÚ 6 PUTTONYOS BETSEK 1999

588301 (S) 500 mL \$69

TASTING NOTE: Medium gold dried peel and marmalade on the nose, butter chunky marmalade on the palate, palate full and rich with lovely dried and raising peels and fruits. Score - **Gold Medal**. (Judges panel, *Decanter World Wine Awards*, 2006)

ROYAL TOKAJI TOKAJI ASZÚ 6 PUTTONYOS SZT. TAMÁS 1999

944744 (S) 500 mL \$79

TASTING NOTE: Positively electric. The racy style of the vintage shows in this laserlike Tokaji. The searing acidity is matched by intense flavors of apricot, orange peel, juniper, cedar and mineral. Has fine length. Drink now through 2030. Score - **95**. (Bruce Sanderson, *www.winespectator.com*, Web Only, 2007)

ROYAL TOKAJI ASZÚ ESSENCIA 1995

958587 (S) 500 mL \$189

TASTING NOTE: Thick and dense yet never heavy, with aromas that flit from floral and vegetal to caramel and smoke and back again. There's noticeable sweetness matched by a brisk acidity that need time to integrate. Fine, lingering finish. Seems monolithic today, so be patient. Best from 2003 through 2015. Score - **94**. (Bruce Sanderson, *www.winespectator.com*, Oct. 31, 2001)

Italy - Classics Collection - January 2008

Piedmont

Red Wines

CLERICO BAROLO CIABOT MENTIN GINESTRA 2003

DOCG

51268 (XD) 750 mL \$89

TASTING NOTE: The 2003 Barolo Ciabot Mentin Ginestra is even better than the Pajana, with a superbly well-delineated bouquet and deeply nuanced layers of violets, spices, menthol and sweet dark fruit. It fully captures the essence of Ginestra, one of Barolo's greatest sites, in the rich, ripe style of the vintage. This gorgeous Barolo is only in need of further bottle age after which it should drink beautifully to age 20, perhaps beyond. It is one of the highlights of the vintage ... Anticipated maturity: 2011-2023. Score - **93**. (Antonio Galloni, *www.erobertparker.com*, Oct. 2007)

**ALDO CONTERNO BAROLO BUSSIA SOPRANA 2001
DOCG**

51011 (XD) 750 mL \$89

TASTING NOTE: Lots of plum, cedar and light toasted oak that turns toward meaty aromas. Full-bodied, with soft, silky tannins and a long, rich, fruity aftertaste. Best after 2007. Score - **90**. (James Suckling, *www.winespectator.com*, Oct. 15, 2005)

**ALDO CONTERNO BAROLO GRANBUSSIA RISERVA 2001
DOCG**

50997 (XD) 750 mL \$235

TASTING NOTE: Displays wonderful aromas of strawberry and Indian spices, with a hint of flowers. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins, a beautiful texture and excellent balance. Drinking really well now. One of the most balanced Granbussias yet. Best from 2008 through 2012. Score - **92**. (James Suckling, *www.winespectator.com*, Oct. 15, 2007)

**ALDO CONTERNO BAROLO CICALA 1999
DOCG**

51003 (XD) 750 mL \$135

TASTING NOTE: Medium ruby. Owing to its poor soils, Cicala always gives the firmest wines, and this 1999 is no exception. It offers attractive mineral, menthol, and tobacco aromas, along with plenty of sweet fruit on a deceptively medium bodied frame of great length. It should drink well to at least age 25. Drink after 2009. Score - **92**. (Antonio Galloni, *www.erobertparker.com*, May 2006)

ALDO CONTERNO BAROLO GRANBUSSIA RISERVA 1999
DOCG

50971 (XD) 750 mL \$199

TASTING NOTE: The 1999 Barolo Riserva Granbussia, medium ruby in color, presents classic Barolo nuances of roses, tar, minerals and spices on the nose. It is expansive on the palate, with vibrant layers of ripe fruit, great length and fine, noble tannins. Although it is fairly accessible for the vintage it will be even better in a few years, after which it will provide rewarding drinking for at least another decade. Anticipated maturity: 2009-2021. Score - **94**. (Antonio Galloni, *www.erobertparker.com*, Oct. 2006)

AZELIA BAROLO SAN ROCCO 1999
DOCG

51318 (XD) 750 mL \$79

TASTING NOTE: Dark ruby. Exuding much richness and youthfulness, the San Rocco offers a heady, ethereal nose with suggestions of spices, sweet toasted oak and white truffles. As it sits in the glass, it opens to reveal gorgeous layers of vibrant sweet dark fruit, licorice, and menthol nuances that coat the palate with exceptional elegance and length. It should drink well to age 20 and perhaps beyond. One of the vintage's great wines. Drink after 2009 ... Score - **94**. (Antonio Galloni, *www.erobertparker.com*, May 2006)

ALDO CONTERNO BAROLO GRANBUSSIA RISERVA 1998
DOCG

50948 (XD) 750 mL \$199

TASTING NOTE: The 1998 Barolo Granbussia is a selection from the estate's highest, but very well exposed, vineyards. Always released late due to its austerity in its first years, it is an impressive success in 1998 with important floral and cherry aromas mingled with smoke and tar, firm and elegant on the palate with an excellent balance of force and elegance. Still extremely fresh, it will still be drinking well in 2015. Score - **92**. (Antonio Galloni, *www.erobertparker.com*, Aug. 2005)

Tuscany

Red Wines

CASTELLO DI AMA L'APPARITA MERLOT 2004

IGT Toscana

39776	(D)	750 mL	\$199
40030	(D)	1500 mL	\$485
39792	(D)	3000 mL	\$989

TASTING NOTE: The 2004 L'Apparita is a decidedly more structured, mineral-driven expression of Merlot. This superb wine is packed with the essence of blackberry liqueur, chocolate, minerals and sweet toasted oak. Made in a super-ripe style it nevertheless possesses much vibrancy as well as balance. Anticipated maturity: 2010- 2020. Score - **94**. June 2007)

FRESCOBALDI GIRAMONTE 2004

IGT Toscana

38612	(XD)	750 mL	\$85
-------	------	--------	------

TASTING NOTE: Lots of blackberry and mint character. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long aftertaste of ripe fruit and toasty oak. Layered and intense, with plenty going on. Best after 2008. Score - **94**. (James Suckling, *www.winespectator.com*, Oct. 31, 2006)

ORNELLAIA 2004

DOC Bolgheri Superiore

707547	(XD)	1500 mL	\$349
707414	(XD)	3000 mL	\$699
51516	(XD)	6000 mL	\$1399

TASTING NOTE: The gorgeous 2004 Ornellaia is a great way to start this tasting. A lively dark ruby, it is a vibrant effort bursting with expressive aromatics and layered, well-delineated fruit, showing much purity on the palate and closing with a long, finessed finish. Readers hoping to catch this wine's full array of nuances will have to wait at least another few years as the wine remains quite primary today. This exquisite effort is not to be missed. A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot. Anticipated maturity: 2011-2019 ... Score - **95**. (Antonio Galloni, *www.erobertparker.com*, April 2007)

SASSICAIA 2004
IGT Toscana

480541	(XD)	1500 mL	\$349
480558	(XD)	3000 mL	\$699

TASTING NOTE: Shows aromas of chocolate, currant and blackberry, with a hint of Spanish cedar. Full-bodied, with firm, velvety tannins and a long finish. Racy and very well-structured. Builds on the palate. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2012. Score - **94**. Oct. 31, 2007)


TENUTA DELI' ORNELLAIA MASSETO 2004
IGT Toscana

730655	(XD)	750 mL	\$319
732172	(XD)	1500 mL	\$659
732180	(XD)	3000 mL	\$1319

TASTING NOTE: The stunning 2004 Masseto (100% Merlot) presents layers of sweet jammy dark fruit and mineral notes that burst forth from the glass with notable length, purity and delineation. It is a decidedly elegant and super-refined Masseto that continues to integrate its 100% new oak well, showing extraordinary class and fine, silky-textured tannins that caress the palate on the long finish. The 2004 will be hard to resist in its youth as it is incredibly delicious even now, yet it promises to develop gracefully to at least age 20. It is a phenomenal effort that is not to be missed. Anticipated maturity: 2011-2024. Score - **97**. (Antonio Galloni, *www.erobertparker.com*, June 2007)

BIONDI SANTI TENUTA GREPPO BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO 2001
DOCG

981977 (XD) 750 mL \$149

TASTING NOTE: We can point to Brunello '01 as a benchmark and a top-of-the-class Three Glass wine that enthused all our tasters. Both eye and nose are classic Il Greppo, with ruby and just a touch of garnet at the rim followed by nuances of tobacco leaf and tanned leather emerging to immediately infuse generous yellow peach and subtle ripe cherry. The attack is magisterial, where a smooth alcohol and an acidity that is absolutely textbook drive an elegant development. Tannins are superlative, close-packed but already fairly supple, and the finale is generous and well nigh endless. Score -  (out of 3). *Gambero Rosso Italian Wines*, 2007)

FULIGNI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA 2001

952325 (XD) 750 mL \$115

TASTING NOTE: Wonderfully perfumed, with rose, blackberry and a hint of wet earth. Full-bodied, with layers of silky tannins and a long, long finish. Structured. Hard not to drink now, but will be even better with a little more bottle age. Best after 2009. Score - **97**. (James Suckling, *www.winespectator.com*, April 30, 2007)

Other Europe - Classics Collection - January 2008

Spain

Red Wines

BODEGAS RENACIMIENTO DE OLIVARES RENTO 2003 DO Ribera del Duero

62158 (D) 750 mL \$49

TASTING NOTE: This exuberant red shows blackberry and blueberry flavors accompanied by toasted almond and vanilla from oak. The tannins are well-integrated, the acidity lively. Sweet floral notes linger on the finish. Drink now through 2012. Score - **91**. (Thomas Matthews, *www.winespectator.com*, Oct. 15, 2006)

LUIS CAÑAS HIRU TRES RACIMOS 2003 DOCa Rioja

40519 (D) 750 mL \$122

Generally, Luis Cañas blends small amounts of Graciano, Mazuelo and Garnacha into his Tempranillo-dominated wines, but with this top-range Tres Racimos, he uses only Tempranillo from very low yielding, 60+ years old vines. He ages the wines for 18 months in new French oak. The result, made only in the best years, is frequently summed up by critics with one word: wow. The wines exhibit a rich and intense aroma and flavour profile, including plum, raspberry, cedar, mushroom and blueberry. Ripe and flavourful, this wine is ready-to-drink tonight with a braised beef dish. It may also be cellared successfully for 2-4 years.

MARQUES DE VARGAS RESERVA PRIVADA TINTO 2001
DOCa Rioja

62083 (XD) 750 mL \$49

TASTING NOTE: The 2001 Reserva Privada is a blend of three vineyard sites and is composed of 60% Tempranillo, 10% Mazuelo, 10% Garnacha, and 20% other varietals. The wine was aged for 23 months in new Russian oak. Purple-colored, it offers a full-throttle nose of scorched earth, espresso, blueberry, and blackberry jam. Mouth-filling, with great concentration and depth of flavor, this full-bodied wine is beautifully balanced and just beginning to strut its stuff. Give it another 4-6 years in bottle and drink it over the following decade. Score - **93**. (Jay Miller, *www.erobertparker.com*, Feb. 2007)

VIÑA SALCEDA CONDE DE LA SALCEDA RESERVA 2001
DOCa Rioja

46904 (XD) 750 mL \$52

TASTING NOTE: Chocolate, licorice, cardamom and mineral flavors accent a core of ripe plum fruit in this dense, balanced red. Not showy, but maintains perfect balance through the long, smoky finish. Should bloom with time. Drink now through 2015. Score - **92**. (Thomas Matthews, *www.winespectator.com*, April 30, 2007)

CONDADO DE HAZA ALENZA GRAN RESERVA 1999
DO Ribera del Duero

723791 (D) 750 mL \$79

TASTING NOTE: Deep red. Rich, smoky and wild on the nose, with scents of candied plum, cherry liqueur, charred meat, espresso, tobacco and cigar box. Powerful, densely packed dark fruit flavors are accented by exotic spice and earthy nuances, and supported by a firm, tannic frame. Although the tannins are nicely absorbed by the rich fruit with some aeration, I'd opt for cellaring this brooding wine for at least another few years, then serve it with grilled or braised lamb or game. Score - **92**. (Josh Reynolds, *International Wine Cellar*, Sept./Oct. 2006)

New World - Classics Collection - January 2008

Australia

Red Wine

GLAETZER SHIRAZ/CABERNET SAUVIGNON GODOLPHIN 2005

Barossa Valley, South Australia

54932 (XD) 750 mL \$59

TASTING NOTE: The 2005 Godolphin, a blend of 80% Shiraz (from 85-year-old vines) and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon (from 60-year-old vines), was aged in 100% new oak, primarily 300-liter French hogsheads. It represents a beautiful marriage of power and elegance, displaying an inky/blue/purple color as well as notions of black raspberries, blueberries, graphite, and sweet pain grille. Ripe, pure, and medium to full-bodied with sweet but noticeable tannin, it can be drunk now or cellared for 12-15 years. Score - **93**. (Robert Parker Jr., *www.erobertparker.com*, Oct. 2006)

GRANT BURGE ABEDNEGO MOURVÈDRE/GRENACHE/SHIRAZ 2003

Barossa, South Australia

5942 (XD) 750 mL \$55

TASTING NOTE: Only the second vintage of this wine, which sits above The Holy Trinity in the Grant Burge hierarchy. The 2003 is a blend of 36% Mourvedre, 33% Grenache and 31% Shiraz, showing hints of tea and cola on the nose to go with dark blackberry and coffee flavours. This is crisp and well-structured, with some drying tannins on the finish that suggest short-term cellaring. Drink 2010-2018. Score - **91**. (Joe Czerwinski, *Wine Enthusiast*, Jan. 11, 2007)

GRANT BURGE MESHACH SHIRAZ 2002

Barossa, South Australia

700310 (XD) 750 mL \$89

TASTING NOTE: A big Shiraz with a flair for elegance, offering a crisp texture against a fleshy veneer of fine tannins, with a lively core of blackberry, cherry and minty, creamy notes on the long finish. Best from 2010 through 2020. Score - **93**. (Harvey Steiman, *www.winespectator.com*, Sept. 30, 2007)

GRANT BURGE SHADRACH CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2001
South Australia

700781 (XD) 750 mL \$45

TASTING NOTE: The Grant Burge red lineup starts with the 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Shadrach. Sixty percent of the fruit was sourced from Coonawarra with the balance from Barossa and Adelaide Hills. Inky purple, it spent 20 months in seasoned French oak and 3 years in bottle prior to release. It gives up an alluring nose of cedar, spice box, red currants, and black currants along with a hint of mint. Layered, ripe, and sweet on the palate, it is drinkable now and will continue to provide pleasure through 2015. Score - **91**. (Jay Miller, *www.erobertparker.com*, Oct. 2007)

HENSCHKE ABBOTT'S PRAYER MERLOT 2003
Adelaide Hills, South Australia

720508 (XD) 750 mL \$89

TASTING NOTE: Fragrant, red berry fruits with some accompanying spices on the bouquet; a medium-bodied palate, with elegant, fresh cherry and cassis fruit; very fine tannins run through a great finish and aftertaste. Drink [until] 2025. Score - **95**. (James Halliday, *winecompanion.com.au*, April 2007)

KILIKANOON GREEN'S VINEYARD SHIRAZ RESERVE 2005
Barossa Valley, South Australia

6007 (D) 750 mL \$75

Sourced from very low-yielding vines in the Vine Vale district of Barossa Valley, Kilikanoon gives the wine 30 months in 100% new French oak barriques. The resulting wine is densely flavoured, aroma-filled (plum, coffee, mocha, spice) and very well-structured. The tannins are strong, but ably complemented by intense fruit flavours and good layers of acidity. This wine needs a good ten years in a cellar, but will also complement a braised beef dish tonight.

KILIKANOON M RESERVE SHIRAZ 2005

McLaren Vale, South Australia

54460 (D) 750 mL \$75

M Reserve is Kilikanoon's flagship McLaren Vale Shiraz. Sourced from 40-year-old vines, this is the embodiment of 'handmade' wine. Using what many would consider 'old fashioned techniques' of open fermenters and basket presses, Kilikanoon is able to craft a wine that shows the true nature of the McLaren Vale landscape. The hand of the winemaker lays lightly upon this product, which has been barrel fermented in French oak and bottled unfinned and unfiltered. Enjoy it tonight with a great steak or age it 4-6 years+.

KILIKANOON ORACLE SHIRAZ 2005

Clare Valley, South Australia

926816 (D) 750 mL \$75

Where the M Reserve (54460, \$75) represented Kilikanoon's finest Shiraz expression in McLaren Vale, this Oracle is the original flagship version from their home district, Clare Valley. Sourced from a low-yielding 40-year-old vineyard, Oracle is given open fermenter and basket press treatment in order to be as gentle on the fruit as possible. It is then aged for 24 months in a combination of new and seasoned French oak. The nose is powerfully suggestive of spicy plum, blackberry, just-roasted coffee beans and spice oak tones. It is perfectly balanced between fruit, tannin and acid. Age it 3-5 years or enjoy it tonight with roast beef au jus.

KILIKANOON R RESERVE SHIRAZ 2005

Barossa Valley, South Australia

6015 (XD) 750 mL \$99

TASTING NOTE: The 2005 Shiraz R Reserve spent 27 months in 100% new French oak hogsheads and was bottled unfined and unfiltered. Crimson/purple, it has enticing aromas of toast, smoke, vanilla, spice box, pepper, black cherry and blackberry. Layered, opulent, and long, with well-concealed tannins, it will begin to unwind with 5-7 years of cellaring and provide pleasure through 2030. Score - **94**. (Jay Miller, www.erobertparker.com, Oct. 2007)

RICHARD HAMILTON GRENACHE/SHIRAZ BURTON'S VINEYARD 2003
McLaren Vale, South Australia

722512 (XD) 750 mL \$32

TASTING NOTE: Serious and complete is the substantial, but impeccably well-balanced 2003 Grenache/Shiraz Reserve Burton's Vineyard (53% Grenache and 47% Shiraz). Its deep ruby hue is followed by a big, sweet nose of strawberry and cherry jam intermixed with notions of blackberries, licorice, smoke, and dried herbs. This full-bodied, opulent 2003 should last for at least a decade. Score - **92**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, Oct. 2005)

Australia

White Wine

PETALUMA CHARDONNAY PICCADILLY VALLEY TIERS 2002
Adelaide Hills, South Australia

54726 (XD) 750 mL \$109

TASTING NOTE: Gorgeous stuff. Elegant, refined, almost delicate at first, then the flavors kick in, sending in wave upon wave of melon, quince, citrus and a wee touch of hazelnut. The flavors persist against judicious acidity. Drink now through 2012. Score - **95**. (Harvey Steiman, www.winespectator.com, Nov. 15, 2006)

New Zealand

Red Wine

STONYRIDGE VINEYARD LAROSE 2006
Waiheke Island

942201 (XD) 750 mL \$99 *

Stonyridge Vineyard was conceived and operated with the sole intention of making the greatest Bordeaux style red wine in the world. This is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot and is named Larose as a tribute to the rose, the most aromatic, colourful, intense and beautiful of all flowers ... The wine is 100% oak aged in French and some American barriques. Larose is aged for over a year oak, racked regularly, rarely fined and never filtered. ... [In 2006, we] had one of the hottest early seasons on record ... In the barrel the 2006 Larose is dark and with a crimson purple hue, the wine shows sweet cassis, mint and plum. It is a powerful wine with surging fruit flowing through the whole palate, coating the mouth leaving a long finish that lasts for minutes. A ripe tannin structure supports the plush fruit complimented by classy French oak. Although still fairly tight it promises to be another excellent vintage with the potential to last 15 to 20 years. (Winemaker, www.stonyridge.co.nz)

South Africa

Red Wine

CULRAITHIN SYRAH 2002 **WO Paarl**

54320 (XD) 750 mL \$31

TASTING NOTE: The black-colored 2002 Syrah explodes from the glass with candied black raspberry aromas. A spicy, mouth-coating wine armed with sumptuous density of fruit, it displays loads of blackberries and black raspberries whose flavors linger in its ripe tannin-laden, lengthy finish. Drink this beauty over the next 5-6 years. Score - **90**. (Pierre Rovani, www.erobertparker.com, Oct. 2003)

KWV PEROLD SHIRAZ 2001 **WO Paarl**

993261 (XD) 750 mL \$89

TASTING NOTE: Another revelation, this time from the former state winery body. A blockbuster fantasy shiraz, necessarily at a whopping price. An intense wash ablaze with strawberry, white pepper and coffee, the evident tannic power and epic hallmarks of a left-field Icon wine. Early days yet, of course. Score - ******* (out of 5). (Tomas Clancy, *The Sunday Business Post (Ireland)*, June 29, 2003)

Argentina

Red Wine

O. FOURNIER MALBEC ALFA CRUX 2004

Uco Valley

54551 (XD) 750 mL \$42

TASTING NOTE: Description: The big brother of [their Urban Uco Malbec], from a Spanish-owned boutique winery, has power as well as grace. Drink it with: Try sirloin with this because the wine has the intensity to meet the flavour that drips through from the strip of fat on the steak's side Score - **** (out of 5). (Victoria Moore, *The Guardian (U.K.)*, Oct. 6, 2007)

POESIA CLOS DES ANDES 2005

Mendoza

2014 (XD) 750 mL \$25

To capture the essence of the Argentinean "terroir" and "tradition", Hélène [Garcin] and Patrice [Leveque] have also created Clos des Andes, made from 100% Malbec, a grape that has found its true home in the Argentinean climate. The wine is aged in French oak for between 10 and 12 months. Clos des Andes truly reflects the quality of this varietal and fine Argentinean wine. (www.bodegapoesia.com) Bodega Poesia is the inspiration and passion of Bordeaux winemakers Garcin and Leveque of Clos L'Eglise fame, among others. They moved to Argentina to pursue their dreams. Clos des Andes is their second wine.

Chile

Red Wine

SEÑA 2004

Aconcagua Valley

520551 (XD) 750 mL \$79

TASTING NOTE: The 2004 Sena is purple-colored with a super-expressive nose of toasty oak, earth, graphite, espresso, black currant, and blackberry liqueur with a hint of mint in the background. This is followed by a layered wine with gobs of spicy black fruits, great depth, and a long, 45+ second finish. Give it 6-8 years of additional aging and drink it through 2035 ... Score - **94**. (Jay Miller, www.erobertparker.com, June 2007)

California

Red Wine

STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS ARTEMIS CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2005

Napa Valley

708982 (XD) 750 mL \$49

Stag's Leap Wine Cellars makes their Napa Valley regional wines with the same care as their single vineyard creations. The majority of the blend is from their Arcadia vineyard, though they also use 'flavouring' elements from their two greatest vineyards, SLV and FAY. Artemis is flavourful with aromas of cassis, caramel, truffle, black pepper and black olive. It has classic claret qualities on the palate with a gentle cedar tone supporting all the fruit. Enjoy this on a cold winter's night with wild game meats. Why? Artemis was the Greek goddess of the hunt. It may also be cellared for 5+ years.

DUCKHORN CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2004

Napa Valley

24190 (XD) 750 mL \$69

TASTING NOTE: Rich and concentrated, with a tight, plush mix of currant, fresh earth, herb, anise and mocha, all tightly focused, deep and complex. Ends with a long, pure finish that keeps the fruit and oak at the center. Drink now through 2014. Score - **90**. (James Laube, *www.winespectator.com*, Web Only, 2007)

DUCKHORN MERLOT ESTATE GROWN 2004

Napa Valley

921346 (XD) 750 mL \$99

A very Napa Valley Merlot with aromas of currant, black cherry, dark chocolate, spices and oak. It is rich and round, fairly sweet with fine tannins and a lingering black cherry finish. Ageable 3-5 years, or match it tonight to a roast leg of lamb.

STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS CABERNET SAUVIGNON CASK 23 2004
Napa Valley

991919 (XD) 750 mL \$199

Stag's Leap's 'Cask 23' is produced only in the the very best vintages. The fruit is sourced from their prime vineyards in the Stags Leap District, SLV (Stag's Leap Vineyard) and FAY. They refine the sourcing even further selecting fruit from certain sub-blocks that consistently yield fruit of exceptional quality. Then they take it a step further. Depending on vintage, within that sub-block they pick vine by vine, ignoring certain ones that have not produced the level of quality they desire. They vinify in small lots to ensure the quality of the finished product. Once the best of the best lots are determined, they begin the arduous process of creating the 'perfect' blend. Then, and only then, are they satisfied. Year after year, even in their youth, these wines are incredibly approachable, yet they will also reward a decade or more in a cellar.

STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS CABERNET SAUVIGNON FAY 2004
Stags Leap District, Napa Valley

557686 (XD) 750 mL \$89

Not reviewed at press time, but this single vineyard Cabernet from Stag's Leap Wine Cellars' FAY Vineyard never disappoints. The 2004 vintage was a big success in Napa Valley. Look for the hallmark aromas and flavours of this wine, such as cassis, plum, chocolate, ginger, sandalwood and tobacco. It will be enjoyable upon purchase with a rosemary-crust leg of lamb or cinnamon-infused grilled quail, or cellar it 4-6 years.

STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS CABERNET SAUVIGNON SLV 2004
Napa Valley

14027 750 mL \$99

On May 24, 1976, a wine tasting took place in Paris that changed the world's view of California wines forever. The tasting was the brainchild of Steven Spurrier, an English wine merchant who owned an innovative wine shop and adjacent wine school in the center of Paris. ... Curious to see how these newcomers would fare against French wines made from the same kind of grapes, he arranged a blind wine tasting in celebration of the American Bicentennial activities in Paris. The French tasters chosen for the event had impeccable professional credentials. The French wines were First and other classified-growth red Bordeaux and white Burgundies. They were matched against California Cabernet Sauvignons and Chardonnays. The tasting was blind, with the identities of the wines concealed and the labels revealed only after the jury of nine tasters had voted its order of preference. The unthinkable happened. [Warren] Winiarski's 1973 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars S.L.V. Cabernet Sauvignon - his first vintage produced with grapes from vines a mere three years old - was judged the best. The Cabernet had bested four top-ranked Bordeaux, including first-growths Château Mouton-Rothschild and Château Haut-Brion ... (www.cask23.com) Try the new vintage of this now-legendary wine and discover what the fuss is all about.

SHAFER CABERNET SAUVIGNON HILLSIDE SELECT 2003
Stags Leap District, Napa Valley

735712 (XD) 750 mL \$229

TASTING NOTE: One of the world's most extraordinary Cabernet Sauvignons is the 1,800-2,400-case offering of Shafer's Hillside Select. The 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon Hillside Select is almost as good as the 2002. Its dense purple color is followed by aromas of camphor, black currants, licorice, crushed rocks, and white flowers. While full-bodied, powerful, and enormously endowed, it is not as seamless as the 2002. Impeccable balance, purity, and length suggest it will drink well for 20-25 years. Score - **95**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.robertparker.com, Dec. 2006)

SILVER OAK CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2002
Napa Valley

936039 (XD) 750 mL \$109

TASTING NOTE: Not surprisingly, my favorite Napa bottling is the 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon, a blend of 83% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and a dollop of Petit Verdot. Aromas of olive-tinged, creme de cassis intermixed with sweet vanillin and smoky oak lead to a sweet, chunky, ripe, cedary wine with an attractive texture, an expansive, fruit-forward style, and a spicy finish. It should drink well for 10-12 years. Score - **91**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, Dec. 2005)

VÉRITÉ LA JOIE 2002
Sonoma County

710285 (XD) 750 mL \$165

TASTING NOTE: The full-bodied, classically-styled, Bordeaux-like 2002 La Joie's (64.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28.5% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, and .3% Malbec) deep ruby/purple color is followed by gorgeous aromas of black truffles, scorched earth, tobacco leaves, blackberry and cassis liqueur, and notions of minerals as well as acacia flowers. This stunning red can be drunk in 2-3 years, or cellared for two decades. Score - **98**. (Robert Parker Jr., www.erobertparker.com, Feb. 2005)

California

White Wine

STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS CHARDONNAY KARIA 2005
Napa Valley

54585 (XD) 750 mL \$29

Karia (CAR-ee-a) is Greek for graceful, and this wine could not be better named. With its gentle tropical fruit notes and perfectly poised palate (acid, fruit and oak all work in harmony with each other), this wine has exceptional ageing potential (4-6 years), or enjoy it tonight with grilled salmon with a lemon/dill sauce.

RIDGE CHARDONNAY MONTE BELLO 2004
Santa Cruz Mountains

712554 (XD) 750 mL \$75

Ridge Vineyard's Paul Draper ... is arguably the greatest winemaker America has ever produced ... [and] makes some of the finest California chardonnays on the market ... It is hard to think of a winery anywhere in the world that has produced such consistently great wines over so long a period of time. With Draper, it's been almost all peaks, no troughs ... Although Ridge has production facilities in Sonoma County, the winery itself is set in the Santa Cruz mountains, far removed from the hype and glamour of Napa and (increasingly) Sonoma. Out of sight doesn't, in this instance, mean out of mind, but it perhaps explains why Draper doesn't get the attention he deserves. But that remote mountaintop location is also partly responsible for the quality of the Monte Bello cabernet and the chardonnay - the high-altitude vineyards produce wonderfully ripe fruit but also infuse the wines with a pronounced mineral component, a rare quality in most California cabernets and chardonnays but a hallmark of nearly all the great European wines. (Mike Steinberger, *www.slate.com*, Nov. 21, 2006)

Fortified Wines - Classics Collection - January 2008

Port

QUINTA DO ESTANHO 20 YEAR OLD PORT

62182 (S) 750 mL \$49

This 20-year-old Port has an attractive nose with layers of sour red fruits, dried fruits, sweet herbs and spices. Very rich, very complex and very well-balanced. Enjoy this around a crackling fire with mature cheeses and nuts.

QUINTA DO ESTANHO VINTAGE PORT 1998

62174 (S) 750 mL \$45

The fact that 1998 was not a universally 'declared year' for vintage port did not stop some superb wines from being made. Just because a year is not generally 'called' doesn't mean good wines are not made. Some producers, such as Quinta do Estanho, were blessed with ideal conditions. The fruit here is complex and the tannins are very precise, suggesting great ageability for about 8-10 years. Give it the time and then enjoy it with foie gras or your favourite mature cheeses.

Spirits - Classics Collection - January 2008

Scotch Whisky

BOWMORE 16 YEARS OLD SHERRY MATURED ISLAY SINGLE MALT 1990

11254 750 mL \$119

TASTING NOTE: The deep topaz color is lovely; flawless clarity. This aroma is off the charts in terms of assertive scents of lead pencil, iodine, sea salt, and inner tube; seven more minutes of exposure to air bring out salty sherry notes as well as hints of prunes, dates, black raisins, cigarette ash, and smoked trout. Aggressive in the palate entry, this taste profile is equal parts sherry and seaweed; the midpalate stage showcases more of the sherry influence than the maritime influence and the result is deliciously raucous, hearty, and far more unruly than most Bowmores, which are renowned for their island grace and power. No grace here; just flat out in-yer-puss Islay grit and electric strength. A tongue-tingling experience ... Highly Recommended. Score - **** (out of 5). (F. Paul Pacult, *www.spiritjournal.com*, 2007)

BOWMORE 37 YEARS OLD ISLAY BOURBON CASK SINGLE MALT 1968

37135 750 mL \$1599

TASTING NOTE: Nose: Scented, spicy with some Seville orange, cedar then sweetness into poached tropical fruit, and mint. A complex aroma with hints of rancio. Palate: Oak lends a firm edge, balancing concentrated raspberry fruit initially fragrant before deepening into dark vegetal areas. Finish: Long, fruity, silky. Comment: What a start! A truly magnificent dram and for me miles ahead of the competition. Score - **9** (out of 10). (Dave Broom, *www.whiskymag.com*)

GLENFIDDICH VINTAGE RESERVE SINGLE MALT 1973

606145 750 mL \$849

Each year, Glenfiddich selects a specific scotch for their annual Glenfiddich Vintage Reserve Scotch. For the first time, they selected a sherry butt-matured single malt for this rare honour. Most Glenfiddichs are matured in bourbon casks, so this was a unusual choice indeed. Malt Master, David Stewart, describes the scotch as follows: "The dark colour is the deepest of any Vintage Reserve release to date. The nose has rich oak notes, a subtle nuttiness and sherried sweetness that leads to a stunning sweet and spicy sensation upon taste and a warm and lingering finish". There were only 861 bottles of this unique product for the entire world.

Japanese Whisky

YAMAZAKI SINGLE MALT WHISKY AGED 18 YEARS

Japan

54494 750 mL \$109

TASTING NOTE: One of the most sophisticated Yamakazi noses of them all, somehow combining an ancient Kentucky bourbon, oaky depth with rich plum pudding, an element of old pot still Port Morant Demerara rum and the most distant smoke. There is no dominance and no beginning nor end: just perfect harmony. Taste: Succulent and chewy, the build-up and middle is one of ever-increasing sugared oak. Finish: Hints of liquorice and burnt raisin balance beautifully with the thick oak and powering malt. Balance: Indisputably brilliant whisky for all its obvious age. Score - **93**. (Jim Murray, *Whisky Bible*, 2007)

YAMAZAKI SINGLE MALT WHISKY AGED 12 YEARS

Japan

54767 750 mL \$59

TASTING NOTE: The Suntory Single Malt Whisky "Yamazaki" Aged 12 Years is 43% Alcohol by Volume and has a rich gold appearance. Although whisky can be drank straight, we added a bit of water to our tasting glasses to open up the whisky and bring out the full flavors, and we nosed dried fruit aromas, prune, nuts, wood, caramel and someone even smelled chocolate. The taste was creamy, buttery, sweet, dry, with prune and wood. This is a medium-body whisky with a pleasant lingering warm finish. (Debra C. Argen, *luxuryexperience.com*, May 2006)

Cognac

HARDY NOCES D'OR COGNAC

With Gift Box

622548 700 mL \$250

TASTING NOTE: Deep amber-bronze in color. Opening nosings pick up distant, delicately fruity and viny aromas; time in the glass allows for more expressive aromas such as pine, honeysuckle and oak to come alive. In the mouth, the sweet flavors of dark caramel, honey, oloroso Sherry, candied walnuts and spiced pears make for intriguing and beguiling tasting from palate entry through midpalate. Closes beautifully, as rich, warming tastes of tea, cedar, tobacco and honey excite the taste buds. Highly recommended. Score - **90-95**. (*Wine Enthusiast*, Feb. 2003)

Armagnac

LAUBADE ARMAGNAC 1958

AC

54650 700 mL \$375

In 1958, Elvis Presley joined the army, Sir Edmund Hillary reached the South Pole overland, Gigi was named Best Picture, and the Hula Hoop was introduced. This Armagnac is the perfect gift for friends or family celebrating their 50th anniversary or birthday this year. Rare, rich and spicy, this would go well with a dark chocolate cake. Felicitations!

**LAUBADE ARMAGNAC 1957
AC**

54668 700 mL \$425

In 1957, Dwight D. Eisenhower was President of the United States, Leave it to Beaver premiered on television, Bridge on the River Kwai won the Best Picture Oscar, Jack Kerouac's On the Road was released, Velcro was patented, and Jackie Robinson retired from baseball. A perfect meditative libation for those who are old enough to remember 1957 and even for those who are not.

**LAUBADE BAS ARMAGNAC 1977
AC**

54635 700 mL \$145

The year 1977 saw the release of the film Star Wars, Fleetwood Mac's record Rumours, and Alex Haley's book Roots. The Toronto Blue Jays played and won their first game and Pierre Trudeau did his famous pirouette behind the back of the Queen. And Laubade made this Bas Armagnac. Let it take you back 31 years.

Brandy

**GONZALEZ BYASS LEPANTO OLOROSO VIEJO SOLERA GRAN RESERVA
DO Jerez**

49056 700 mL \$75

Lepanto is named to commemorate the 16th century naval battle where Spain defeated the Ottoman empire. Most of the 15 years of ageing occurs in a regular sherry cask, but the last five is spent in a sweeter Oloroso sherry barrel. This rich and vibrant brandy has the taste and character to echo the exciting and colourful history of its namesake.

**GONZALEZ BYASS LEPANTO PEDRO XIMÉNEZ SOLERA GRAN RESERVA
DO Jerez**

49049 700 mL \$75

As in the case of their Oloroso Viejo Solera Gran Reserva (49056, \$75), Lepanto's Pedro Ximénez (PX) brandy is aged for 15 years in sherry casks and then spends five years in barrels that previously held Gonzalez Byass' great sweet sherry, Noe, made with the PX grape. The resulting brandy is smooth and incredibly elegant with a pretty hint of PX sweetness. A brandy to enjoy around the fireplace after a fine meal.

**** Note price update correcting typographical error in original printing***