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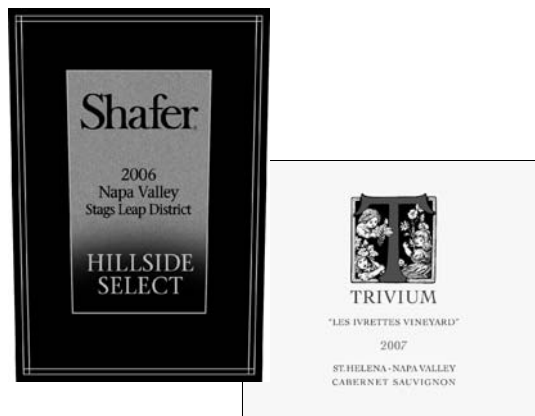
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CABERNET SAUVIGNON AND CABERNET BLENDS

New Releases

- 2007 Trivium**, "Les Ivrettes Vineyard," St. Helena, Napa Valley (\$65) – Medium-dark ruby color with purplish tinges; attractive, fragrant, intense, spicy, plummy, dark cherry and blackberry fruit aroma that developed some complexity as it aired in the glass; full body; rich, plummy, cassis and dark berry fruit flavors that show some elegance and a velvety mouthfeel; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very approach and enjoyable to taste now though also has the balance and structure for extended bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.6% alcohol; 368 cases; 100% Cabernet Sauvignon (CS); released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.7 of 20 points, 2 of 10 first-place votes/2 seconds/3 thirds; My Score: 17 [92 of 100 points], second place)
- 2006 Shafer**, "Hillside Select," Stags Leap District, Napa Valley (\$215) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, forward, intense, cassis and black cherry fruit aroma with a hint of milk chocolate; full body; big, rich, textured, concentrated, mouth-filling, black cherry fruit flavors; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Initially somewhat closed-in the wine developed with airing in the glass and shows great promise if given a good five more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 2,400 cases; 100% CS; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.6, 4/0/1; My Score: 17 [93/100], first place)
- 2007 Frank Family Vineyards**, "Reserve," Rutherford, Napa Valley (\$85) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, forward, spicy, plummy, cassis and dark berry fruit aroma with a hint of cocoa; full body; forward, rich, very ripe, plummy, cassis and cherry fruit flavors with earthy notes and a creamy mouthfeel; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Developed with airing in the glass and while approachable now it still deserves a good five more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 2,606 cases; blended with 10% Cabernet Franc (CF), 7% Petit Verdot (PV), and 1% Merlot; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4, 3/0/2; My Score: 17 [91/100], third place)



- 2007 Chateau Ste. Michelle**, "Ethos, Reserve," Columbia Valley, WA (\$38) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, earthy, cedary, dark cherry fruit aroma; medium-full to full body; rich, plummy, dark cherry fruit flavors with a creamy mouthfeel, hints of chocolate, and a spicy edge on the finish; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 2,500 cases; blended with 3% Malbec and 1% PV; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 0/3/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fourth place)
- 2006 Grgich Hills Estate**, "Yountville Selection," Napa Valley (\$135) – Medium to medium-dark brickish ruby; attractive, forward, plummy, herbal, cassis and red berry fruit aroma with hints of green olive, leather, and sassafras; medium-full to full body; rich, textured, herbal, cedary, dark cherry fruit flavors with a slightly chalky mouthfeel; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very approachable now. Highly recommended. *14.7% alcohol; 1,110 cases; 100% CS; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 1/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fifth place)
- 2007 Swanson Vineyards**, "Alexis," Oakville, Napa Valley (\$75) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, herbal, spicy, cedary, cassis and dark berry fruit aroma with hints of sage, anise, and graphite; medium-full to full body; forward, rich, intense, plummy, currant and dark berry fruit flavors with herbal notes and a silky mouthfeel; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very approachable now. Highly recommended. *14.8% alcohol; 500 cases; blended with 19% Merlot; to be released April 2011.* (Group Score: 16.2, 0/2/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)
- 2006 Couples & Co.**, Napa Valley (\$60) – Medium to medium-dark brickish ruby; initially restrained, herbal, spicy, dark currant and blackberry fruit aroma with notes of vanilla and hints of caramel and sassafras; full body; tight, spicy, cedary, dark berry fruit flavors that are a bit astringent and gripping on the finish; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Needs some more bottle aging. Highly recommended. *14.5%*

Continued on Next Page

alcohol; 525 cases; blended with 8% Merlot, 5% CF, and 2% Malbec; released September 2010. (Group Score: 16.1, 0/3/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], eighth place)

8. **2007 Stonestreet**, “Rockfall,” Alexander Valley (\$125) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; initially restrained, tight, red berry fruit aroma with cedary notes and a hint of green olive; full body; rich, textured, dark cherry and red berry fruit flavors with firm acidity and a note of graphite; full tannin; hard finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. 14% alcohol; 212 cases; 100% CS; released Fall 2010. (Group Score: 16.0, 0/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], ninth place)

9. **2006 Arrowood**, “Monte Rosso,” Sonoma Valley (\$70) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, spicy, herbal, cassis and dark cherry fruit aroma with hints of cola and graphite; full body; rich, intense, firmly structured, cedary, dark berry fruit flavors with hints of vanilla and bell pepper; full tannin; a bit drying and biting on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. 15.2% alcohol; 410 cases; 100% CS; released Fall 2010. (Group Score: 15.9, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], seventh place)

10. **2007 Volker Eisele**, Napa Valley (\$45) – Medium-dark ruby; fragrant, spicy, currant and blackberry fruit aroma; medium-full to full body; tight, spicy, current and berry fruit flavors; medium-full to full tannin; a bit lean and drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. 14.7% alcohol; 1,200 cases; blended with 15% Merlot and 2% CF; released Fall 2010. (Group Score: 15.8, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], tenth place)

11. **2007 Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars**, “Artemis,” Napa Valley (\$55) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; tight, black cherry and blackberry fruit aroma with cedary, leathery notes; medium-full to full body; tight, herbal, cedary, blackberry fruit flavors; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Recommended. 14.5% alcohol; 60,500 cases; blended with 7% Merlot, 2% Syrah, and 1% PV; released July 2010. (Group Score: 15.7, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [85/100], eleventh place)

12. **2006 Souverain**, “Winemaker’s Reserve,” Alexander Valley (\$40) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; intense, herbal, toasty, ripe, cassis and black cherry fruit aroma with hints of milk chocolate and hazelnut; full body; herbal, dark currant and blackberry fruit flavors with a slightly creamy mouthfeel and a drying, astringent finish; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Recommended. 14.5% alcohol; 496 cases; 100% CS; released July 2010. (Group Score: 15.6, 0/0/1; My Score: 16 [84/100], twelfth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3] [4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10] [11, 12]

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ABOUT OUR TASTING NOTES

OUR TASTING NOTES are the result of weekly double-blind tastings held in San Diego and sponsored by the *California Grapevine*. Our scoring system is based on a 20-point scale. I also include a score based on a 100-point scale using the following criteria:

“My Score” Based on <u>20 Points</u>	100-Point Equivalent <u>Score</u>	Quality <u>Description</u>
17-18	90-100	Outstanding
16-16.5	80-89	Good to Very Good
15-15.5	70-79	Average to Good
14-14.5	60-69	Below Average
13-13.5	50-59	Poor

While a score given on a 100-point scale may infer a high degree of precision in evaluating a wine, the threshold for repeatability generally falls within one or two points for even the best palate. One or two points difference between wines should not be considered significant.

The group score and the number of first, second, and third-place votes appear, along with my (editor Nick Ponomareff’s) own scores and relative ranking, in parentheses after the comments on each wine. (Note that the group score is an average of all tasters and its value doesn’t necessarily equate to the 20-point criteria presented above and should merely be interpreted as an indication of group preference.)

A “True Ranking” based on a statistical analysis of the results appears at the end of each set of tasting notes. Wines that do not differ significantly are grouped in brackets.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON AND CABERNET BLENDS More New Releases



1. **2007 Phifer Pavitt**, “Date Night,” Napa Valley (\$75) – Medium-dark ruby color; attractive, intense, cedary, cassis and blackberry fruit aroma with a note of mocha and hints of mint and graphite; full body; forward, rich, plush, plummy, cedary, dark cherry and blackberry fruit flavors with a note of graphite and a creamy mouthfeel; well balanced and firmly structured for near term drinking enjoyment; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very appealing to taste now and also has good bottle aging potential. Very highly recommended. 14.8% alcohol; 372 cases; blended with 3% Petit Verdot (PV); released December 2010. (Group Score: 16.6 of 20 points, 7 of 12 first-place votes/4 seconds/0 thirds; My Score: 17 [90 of 100 points], fourth place)

2. **2007 Sbragia Family Vineyards**, “Wall Vineyard,” Mt. Veeder, Napa Valley (\$75) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, plummy, cassis and blackberry fruit aroma with notes of black olive, cola, and cocoa powder; full body; forward, rich, plummy, cedary, toasty, blackberry fruit flavors with

firm acidity, and traces of vanilla and green olive, and a velvety mouthfeel; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Appealing to taste now as it developed with airing in the glass, though deserving of another five more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.8% alcohol; 754 cases; blended with 11% Cabernet Franc (CF); released January 2011.* (Group Score: 16.4, 0/1/5; My Score: 17 [91/100], third place)

3. **2007 Quintessa**, Rutherford, Napa Valley (\$145) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, fragrant, complex, cassis and black cherry fruit aroma with hints of bell pepper, coffee bean, mocha, and green olive; full body; rich, complex, toasty, dark berry fruit flavors that are nicely balanced and firmly structured; full tannin; a bit tight on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Needs a good several more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.6% alcohol; 9,500 cases; blended with 3% Merlot, 2% CF, and 1% Carmenere; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.3, 1/2/2; My Score: 17 [92/100], first place)

4. **2007 Altus**, Napa Valley (\$70) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, jammy, spicy, cassis and dark berry fruit aroma with notes of dark chocolate and tobacco; full body; forward, rich, plush, cedary, highly extracted, ripe dark cherry and blackberry fruit flavors with notes of vanilla, green olive, and graphite; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.8% alcohol; 973 cases; blended with 12% Merlot, 5% PV, and 4% Malbec; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 3/1/0; My Score: 17 [90/100], fifth place)

5. **2007 Sbragia Family Vineyards**, “Rancho Del Oro,” Howell Mountain, Napa Valley (\$75) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, spicy, herbal, sweet black cherry and dark berry fruit aroma with hints of green olive, cocoa, and licorice; full body; forward, plummy, cassis and dark cherry fruit flavors with a trace of vanilla and a rich mouthfeel; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Appealing to taste now and also has good aging potential. Very highly recommended. *14.8% alcohol; 1,064 cases; blended with 5% CF; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 16.1, 0/1/1; My Score: 17 [91/100], second place)

6. **2007 Stonestreet**, “Bear Point,” Alexander Valley (\$115) Medium-dark ruby; attractive, forward, herbal, spicy, raspberry and dark cherry fruit aroma with peppery, cedary notes; full body; currant and dark berry fruit flavors with herbal notes and hints of green olive and bell pepper; full tannin; a bit tight and drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 231 cases; 100% Cabernet Sauvignon (CS); released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 1/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], seventh place)

7. **2007 Chimney Rock**, “Ganymede Vineyard,” Stags Leap District, Napa Valley (\$100) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, intense, herbal, cassis and ripe blackberry fruit aroma with notes of vanilla, anise, and dill; full body; plush, plummy, toasty, ripe black cherry and dark berry fruit flavors that have good depth but are a bit drying on the finish; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.2% alcohol; 521 cases; 100% CS; released November 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 0/2/3; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

8. **2007 Chateau Ste. Michelle**, “Meritage,” Columbia Valley, WA (\$50) – Medium-dark ruby; relatively restrained, spicy, cedary, blackberry fruit aroma with hints of anise and cola; full body; cedary, dark berry fruit flavors with notes of tar and graphite; full tannin; a bit tight and harsh on the finish;

lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 2,200 cases; a blend of 56% CS, 37% Merlot, 6% Malbec, and 1% PV; released August 2010.* (Group Score: 15.8, 0/1/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], eighth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7] [8]

CABERNET SAUVIGNON AND CABERNET BLENDS

More New Releases

1. **2007 Rodney Strong**, “Brothers Ridge,” Alexander Valley (\$75) – Medium-dark purplish ruby color; attractive, forward, intense, spicy, plummy, cassis and dark berry fruit aroma with good depth and hints of cedar, graphite and tobacco; full body; big, rich, concentrated, ripe dark cherry and blackberry fruit flavors with herbal notes and a hint of leather; full tannin; a bit rough and angular on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Needs a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *15.1% alcohol; 1,987 cases; blended with 2% Cabernet Franc (CF); released February 2011.* (Group Score: 16.3 of 20 points, 3 of 13 first-place votes/2 seconds/4 thirds; My Score: 17 [90 of 100 points] third place)

2. **2007 Rodney Strong**, “Rockaway,” Alexander Valley (\$75) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, forward, intense, toasty, herbal, cedary, spicy, dark berry fruit aroma with notes of vanilla and graphite; full body; big, rich, concentrated, cedary, cassis and ripe blackberry fruit flavors that are a bit rough and chalky on the finish; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Needs a few years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *15.4% alcohol; 1,723 cases; 100% Cabernet Sauvignon (CS); released February 2011.* (Group Score: 16.2, 2/3/3; My Score: 17 [90/100], second place)

3. **2007 Turnbull**, “Black Label Reserve,” Napa Valley (\$100) – Medium-dark to dark purplish ruby; attractive, intense, peppery, cedary, spicy, plummy, very ripe, cassis and blackberry fruit aroma with notes of vanilla and graphite and overtones of creamy oak; full body; big, dense, concentrated, cedary, very ripe blackberry fruit flavors with hints of dark chocolate and roasted coffee; full tannin; a bit harsh and chalky on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Deserves a good five more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *15.5% alcohol; 500 cases; blended with 15% Petit Verdot (PV) and 7% Malbec; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 2/1/0; My Score: 17 [90/100], fourth place)

4. **2007 Sbragia Family Vineyards**, “Cimarossa Vineyard,” Howell Mountain, Napa Valley (\$75) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, herbal, cassis and dark berry fruit aroma with notes of graphite, bell pepper, and sweet oak; medium-full to full body; rich, textured, cedary, cranberry, dark currant, and black cherry fruit flavors with herbal notes and overtones of toasty oak; full tannin; tight and a bit drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Deserves a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.6% alcohol; 540 cases; blended with 4% PV; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 16.1, 2/0/0; My Score: 17 [90/100], first place)

5. **2007 Dry Creek Vineyard**, “Meritage,” Sonoma County (\$28) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, herbal, cedary, red currant and black cherry fruit aroma with light toasty notes and hints of dill, pepper, and green olive; full body; forward, rich, textured, cedary, dark cherry and blackberry fruit flavors with hints of dark chocolate and a silky mouthfeel; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very approachable now

though deserves a few more years of bottle aging. Highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 3,475 cases; a blend of 44% CS, 27% Merlot, 14% CF, 11% Malbec, and 4% PV; released November 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 1/1/2; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fifth place)

6. **2007 Sbragia Family Vineyards**, “Monte Rosso Vineyard,” Sonoma Valley (\$50) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, herbal, cedary, cassis, black cherry, and blackberry fruit aroma with hints of graphite, chocolate, and green olive; medium-full to full body; forward, rich, textured, cedary, bright cherry and berry fruit flavors; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows some maturity and is enjoyable to drink now. Highly recommended. *14.2% alcohol; 983 cases; blended with 4% CF; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 16.0, 1/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

7. **2007 Dry Creek Vineyard**, Dry Creek Valley (\$25) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, cedary, currant and red raspberry fruit aroma with herbal notes and a trace of vanilla; medium-full body; fairly rich, plush, cherry and currant flavors with a hint of dark chocolate; nicely balanced and has a velvety mouthfeel; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Enjoyable to drink now. Highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 15,000 cases; blended with 11% Merlot, 5% CF, 2% PV, and 2% Malbec; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 1/3/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], seventh place)

8. **2007 Hess Collection**, “19 Block Cuvée,” Mount Veeder, Napa Valley (\$36) – Medium to medium-dark ruby with purplish tinges; attractive, moderately intense, herbal, cedary, tarrish, cassis and black cherry fruit aroma with hints of green olive, tobacco and bell pepper; medium-full to full body; rich, textured, cedary, black cherry and dark berry fruit flavors; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very approachable now as it developed with airing in the glass. Highly recommended. *14.6% alcohol; 14,700 cases; a blend of 74% CS, 17% Malbec, 4% Merlot, 4% Syrah, and 1% PV; released June 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 0/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], eighth place)

9. **2007 Trefethen Family Vineyards**, Oak Knoll District, Napa Valley (\$55) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, herbal, cedary, slightly briary, toasty, black cherry fruit aroma with hints of roasted coffee; medium-full body; tight, herbal, cedary, black cherry and dark berry fruit flavors with prominent acidity and notes of cassis and green olive; medium-full to full tannin; a bit drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.3% alcohol; 7,000 cases; blended with 2% CF, 2% Malbec, 1% Merlot, and 1% PV; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 0/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], ninth place)

10. **2007 Louis M. Martini**, “Reserve,” Alexander Valley (\$35) – Medium to medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, herbal, spicy, toasty, plummy, cherry and red berry fruit aroma with hints of cola and graphite; medium-full body; rich, spicy, toasty, red berry fruit flavors that are elegantly styled, well balanced, and enjoyable to taste now; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.3% alcohol; case production number not available; blended with 9% Merlot and 1% CF; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 15.8, 1/1/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], tenth place)

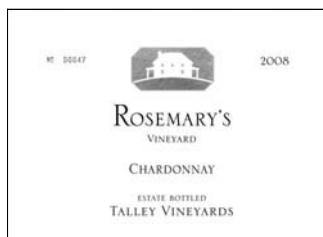
11. **2007 St. Clement**, “Oropas,” Napa Valley (\$55) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; spicy, dark cherry and red berry fruit aroma with herbal, green olive notes; medium-full to full body; moderately rich, textured, cedary, cherry and red

berry fruit flavors; medium-full to full tannin; drying and a bit hard on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Approachable now. Highly recommended. *14.8% alcohol; 12,879 cases; blended with 6% Merlot, 1% CF, and 1% PV; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 15.7, 0/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [87/100], eleventh place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10] [11]

CHARDONNAY

New Releases



1. **2008 Talley Vineyards**, “Rosemary’s Vineyard,” Arroyo Grande Valley (\$46) – Medium-light to medium golden yellow color; attractive, intense, spicy, toasty, lemony, stone fruit and green apple aroma with tropical and mineral notes; full body; rich, textured, firmly structured, pear and crisp apple flavors with firm acidity; lingering aftertaste. Developed with airing in the glass and deserves several more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 465 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% barrel fermented (BF); 100% malolactic fermentation (ML); released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4 of 20 points, 5 of 10 first-place votes/3 seconds/0 thirds; My Score: 17 [93 of 100 points], first place)

2. **2008 Talley Vineyards**, “Rincon Vineyard,” Arroyo Grande Valley (\$42) – Medium-light to medium golden yellow; attractive, toasty, spicy, white peach, Asian pear, and baked apple aroma with tropical, citrusy notes; full body; rich, firmly structured, citrusy, pear and apple flavors; a bit tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. A bit tighter than their Rosemary’s bottling and needing a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 460 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4, 1/1/2; My Score: 17 [92/100], second place)

3. **2008 Arrowood**, Russian River Valley (\$30) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive pear and green apple aroma with floral notes and hints of vanilla and sage; full body; spicy, firmly structured, pear and apple flavors with flinty, mineral notes and a slight bit of heat on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *15.4% alcohol; 3,584 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released April 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 1/2/1; My Score: 17 [90/100], third place)

4. **2008 Stonestreet**, “Lower Rim,” Alexander Valley (\$65) Medium-light yellow; attractive, forward, spicy, green apple aroma with notes of vanilla and toasty oak; medium-full to full body; forward, creamy, baked apple flavors with firm acidity and overtones of toasty oak; lingering aftertaste. Opened and developed with airing in the glass. Very highly recommended. *15% alcohol; 660 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 1/2/2; My Score: 17 [90/100], fourth place)

5. **2008 Stonestreet**, “Grandstone,” Alexander Valley (\$75) Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, earthy, toasty, baked

apple aroma with hints of butterscotch and pineapple; medium-full to full body; fleshy, supple, toasty, nutty, citrus and tropical fruit flavors; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *15% alcohol; 185 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 0/1/4; My Score: 17 [90/100], fifth place)

6. **2008 Forman**, Napa Valley (\$35) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, earthy, green apple aroma with a note of lemon; medium-full body; crisp, lemony, green apple flavors that are a bit lean and slightly tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *13.8% alcohol; 1,043 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 0% ML; released April 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 1/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

7. **2008 Patz & Hall**, “Dutton Ranch,” Russian River Valley (\$39) – Medium-light to medium golden yellow; attractive, intense, herbal, toasty, ripe peach and baked apple pie aroma with notes of butterscotch, vanilla, ginger, and roasted hazelnut; full body; buttery, toasty, baked apple flavors with a touch of citrus and a creamy mouthfeel, though turning a bit hard and oaky on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.2% alcohol; 2,257 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 1/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], seventh place)

8. **2008 Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars**, “Arcadia Vineyard,” Napa Valley (\$50) – Medium-light golden yellow; muted, tight, steely, spiced apple aroma; full body; rich, fleshy, lemony, pear and apple flavors; crisp and somewhat austere on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Recommended. *13.5% alcohol; 1,010 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 0% ML; released November 2010.* (Group Score: 15.4, 0/0/0; My Score: 16 [84/100], eighth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5] [6, 7] [8]

CHARDONNAY

More New Releases

1. **2008 Patz & Hall**, “Hyde Vineyard,” Carneros (\$55) – Medium-light golden yellow color; attractive, forward, toasty, pear and apple aroma with hints of baked bread and orange zest, and overtones of vanilla; medium-full to full body; rich, toasty, baked apple flavors with notes of citrus and butterscotch and a creamy mouthfeel; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.2% alcohol; 567 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% barrel fermented (BF); 100% malolactic fermentation (ML); released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2 of 20 points, 3 of 10 first-place votes/0 seconds/2 thirds; My Score: 17 [90 of 100 points], third place)

2. **2008 de Lorimier Winery**, Alexander Valley (\$28) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, earthy, pear and apple aroma with notes of citrus and vanilla; full body; rich, toasty, spiced apple and pear flavors with a hint of lemon zest and a creamy mouthfeel; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.4% alcohol; 370 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 20% ML; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 3/0/2; My Score: 17 [90/100], fourth place)

3. **2008 Trefethen Family Vineyards**, Oak Knoll District, Napa Valley (\$30) – Light to medium-light golden yellow; attractive, pear and apple aroma with floral notes of ginger and lemongrass; medium-full body; nicely balanced, crisp, pear and apple flavors with a nicely proportioned trace of toasty oak; lingering aftertaste. Shows some elegance and should continue to age gracefully for several more years. Very

highly recommended. *14.1% alcohol; 4,000 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 67% BF; 0% ML; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 1/2/1; My Score: 17 [91/100], first place)

4. **2008 Sbragia Family Vineyards**, “Gamble Ranch Vineyard,” Napa Valley (\$40) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, assertive, earthy, spicy, baked apple aroma with hints of lemon curd, roasted hazelnut, and butterscotch; full body; forward, rich, plush, spicy, toasty, citrus and baked apple flavors with overtones of sweet oak and a creamy mouthfeel; firmly structured and crisp on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 1,385 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 16.1, 1/2/1; My Score: 17 [90/100], fifth place)

5. **2008 Talley Vineyards**, “Oliver’s Vineyard,” Edna Valley (\$32) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, herbal, toasty, citrus and tropical fruit aroma with hints of roasted hazelnut and butterscotch; full body; rich, firmly structured, pear and pineapple flavors with a hint of lemon zest; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 238 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 0/2/2; My Score: 17 [90/100], second place)

6. **2008 Ortman Family Vineyards**, “Firepeak Vineyard,” Edna Valley (\$24) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, toasty, nutty, melon and stone fruit aroma with tropical notes; full body; big, rich, firmly structured, toasty, lemony, baked apple and tropical fruit flavors; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.4% alcohol; 1,065 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 40% ML; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 15.9, 2/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

7. **2008 Qupé**, “Bien Nacido Reserve, Block Eleven,” Santa Maria Valley (\$30) – Light to medium-light golden yellow; attractive, earthy, citrus and pear aroma with notes of charred oak; full body; forward, rich, cedary, citrus, pear, and baked apple flavors with overtones of toasty oak; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *13.5% alcohol; 955 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 0/2/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], seventh place)

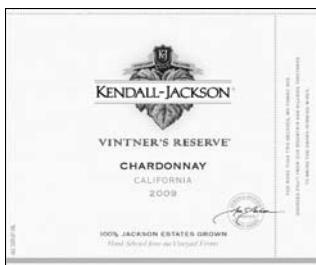
8. **2008 Smith-Madrone**, Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley (\$30) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, floral, green apple aroma with lemony notes and a hint of coconut; medium-full body; crisp, slightly toasty, spicy, apple and citrus flavors; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.4% alcohol; 790 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; % ML not available; released December 2010.* (Group Score: 15.8, 0/2/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], eighth place)

9. **2008 Chateau Ste. Michelle**, “Canoe Ridge Estate,” Horse Heaven Hills, WA (\$22) – Medium-light golden yellow; earthy, toasty, citrus and baked apple aroma; medium-full to full body; apple and citrus flavors with oaky overtones; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 8,700 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 15.6, 0/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [86/100], ninth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8] [9]



CHARDONNAY More New Releases



1. **2009 Kendall-Jackson**, “Vintner’s Reserve,” California (\$14) – Medium-light golden yellow color; attractive, initially restrained, baked apple aroma with hints of tangerine and butterscotch; medium-full body; forward, plush, toasty, citrus and baked apple flavors with a creamy mouthfeel and a trace of vanilla; lingering aftertaste. Shows distinct varietal character in an easy to drink style and very reasonably priced. Very highly recommended. *13.5% alcohol; over 50,000 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% barrel fermented (BF); 100% malolactic fermentation (ML); released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2 of 20 points, 3 of 10 first-place votes/1 second/0 thirds; My Score: 17 [90 of 100 points] fourth place)
2. **2009 Far Niente**, Napa Valley (\$56) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, toasty, nutty, melon and baked apple aroma with floral notes of citrus and honeysuckle; full body; crisp, green apple and tropical fruit flavors with good depth and a velvety mouthfeel; well balanced and firmly structured; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.3% alcohol; case production not available; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 0% ML; released December 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 1/2/1; My Score: 17 [90/100], second place)
3. **2009 Ortman**, “O² Series,” Central Coast (\$18) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, earthy, citrus, baked apple and stone fruit aroma; medium-full to full body; plush, earthy, fruit-driven, citrus and green apple flavors with mineral notes and crisp acidity; nicely balanced; lingering aftertaste. The O² designation refers to wines coming from the Ortman family second-generation winemaker, Matt Ortman. Very highly recommended. *14.2% alcohol; 959 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 10% BF; 30% ML; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 2/2/1; My Score: 17 [90/100], third place)
4. **2009 Lewis Cellars**, Russian River Valley (\$48) – Medium golden yellow; attractive, intense, stylistic, toasty, nutty, citrus and baked apple pie aroma with tropical notes and overtones of creamy sweet oak; full body; big, rich, relatively thick, toasty, nutty, baked apple and ripe tropical fruit flavors with crisp acidity, a layer of toasty oak, and a plush, creamy mouthfeel; lingering aftertaste. Displays oversized portions of sweet oak and rich, concentrated fruit. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 1,200 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 2/0/1; My Score: 17 [91/100], first place)
5. **2009 Cakebread Cellars**, Napa Valley (\$37) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, assertive, toasty, melon, white peach, and baked apple aroma with notes of vanilla and roasted hazelnut; full body; firmly structured, apple and stone fruit flavors with traces of citrus and butterscotch and a silky mouthfeel; well balanced and shows some elegance; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.1% alcohol; 35,000 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 86% BF; 0% ML; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 0/2/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fifth place)

6. **2009 Foxen**, “Block UU, Bien Nacido Vineyard,” Santa Maria Valley (\$32) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, floral, white peach, lemon, and baked apple aroma with mineral notes; medium-full to full body; crisp, citrusy, green apple and stone fruit flavors with a hint of residual sugar; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.0% alcohol; 930 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 1/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], eighth place)

7. **2009 ZD**, California (\$34) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, forward, herbal, earthy, green apple and pineapple aroma with notes of vanilla, honey, coconut, and spicy new oak; full body; forward, rich, fleshy, ripe tropical fruit flavors with crisp acidity and overtones of toasty oak; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *13.8% alcohol; 17,000 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 0% ML; released November 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 0/0/2; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

8. **2009 Sonoma-Cutrer**, “Russian River Ranches,” Sonoma Coast (\$40) – Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, initially subdued, earthy, toasty, baked apple aroma with notes of minerality, citrus, and butterscotch; full body; crisp, citrusy, melon and green apple flavors with a slightly tart edge on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.2% alcohol; 182,167 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 70% ML; released December 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 1/2/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], seventh place)

9. **2009 Floral Springs**, “Barrel Fermented,” Napa Valley (\$30) – Medium-light golden yellow; muted, earthy, citrus and pear aroma with tropical notes and overtones of toasty oak; medium-full body; toasty, citrus, apple, and stone fruit flavors; slightly tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.2% alcohol; 904 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 21% ML; released February 2011.* (Group Score: 15.6, 0/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [87/100], ninth place)

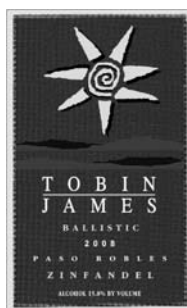
10. **2009 La Crema**, Sonoma Coast (\$20) – Medium-light golden yellow; spicy, toasty, apple aroma with a touch of butterscotch; medium-full body; slightly viscous, buttery, apple and citrus flavors of modest depth with a trace of vanilla and a creamy mouthfeel; lingering aftertaste. Recommended. *13.8% alcohol; over 50,000 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 97% BF; 73% ML; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 15.6, 0/0/1; My Score: 16 [84/100], eleventh place)

11. **2009 Artesa**, “Estate Reserve,” Napa Valley (\$30) – Medium-light golden yellow; forward, assertive, toasty, pear and baked apple aroma with hints of butterscotch and juniper; full body; plush, herbal, citrus and tropical fruit flavors with a hint of tapioca and overtones of toasty oak and some harshness on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 3,200 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 15.4, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [85/100], tenth place)

12. **2009 St. Supéry**, “Oak Free,” Napa Valley (\$20) – Medium-light yellow; assertive, herbal, surprisingly grassy citrus and apple aroma with a hint of passion fruit and an initial trace of sulfur; medium-full body; herbal, grassy, citrus and apple flavors; lingering aftertaste. More like a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc with a hint of cat pee. *13.5% alcohol; 4,663 cases; blended with 1% Sauvignon Blanc; 0% BF; 0% ML; released April 2010.* (Group Score: 15.1, 0/0/0; My Score: 16 [80/100], twelfth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8] [9, 10, 11] [12]

ZINFANDEL
New Releases



1. **2008 Tobin James, "Ballistic,"** Paso Robles (\$18) – Medium-dark ruby color; attractive, forward, relatively herbal, brambly, plummy, very ripe red berry fruit aroma with some tasters noting a hint of stewed tomatoes; full body; rich, plush, briary, very ripe berry fruit flavors with a touch of residual sugar; full tannin with some harshness on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Tending to an over-the-top, overripe style of Zinfandel. Very highly recommended. *15.8% alcohol; 11,000 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.3 of 20 points, 4 of 11 first-place votes/1 second/2 thirds; My Score: 17 [90 of 100 points], third place)

2. **2008 Wilson Winery,** Dry Creek Valley (\$26) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, fragrant, spicy, ripe plum and blackberry fruit aroma with overtones of vanilla; medium-full to full body; spicy, nicely balanced, bright cherry and raspberry fruit flavors with a silky mouthfeel; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very enjoyable to drink now. Very highly recommended. *15.0% alcohol; 600 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released June 2010.* (Group Score: 16.3, 2/3/3; My Score: 17 [90/100], second place)

3. **2009 Seghesio,** Sonoma County (\$24) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, spicy, briary, red berry fruit aroma that developed with airing in the glass; medium-full to full body; forward, rich, spicy, briary, peppery, red berry fruit flavors that are nicely balanced and have a velvety mouthfeel; firmly structured; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very appealing to drink now. Very highly recommended. *15.0% alcohol; 70,960 cases; blended with 8% Petite Sirah (PS) and 2% Syrah; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 1/1/4; My Score: 17 [91/100], first place)

4. **2008 Mettler Family Vineyards,** "Epicenter, Old Vine," Lodi (\$20) – Medium-dark to dark ruby; attractive, intense, ripe blackberry fruit aroma with notes of smoked meat, dark chocolate, dill, black pepper, and juniper; full body; big, rich, thick, lush, rustic, blackberry jam flavors with overtones of toasty oak; full tannin with a hard edge on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *15.8% alcohol; 3,330 cases; blended with 11% PS; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 2/3/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fourth place)

5. **2008 Fiddletown Cellars,** "Old Vine," Fiddletown (\$18) Medium brickish ruby; attractive, spicy, cedary, black raspberry aroma with notes of black pepper and brown sugar; full body; rich, briary, plummy, raspberry flavors with spicy notes and traces of cocoa and black pepper; medium-full to full tannin; a bit of heat on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *15.5% alcohol; 896 cases; blended with 3% Alicante Bouchet; released May 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 1/2/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fifth place)

6. **2009 The Prisoner,** "Red Wine," Napa Valley (\$35) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, forward, intense, earthy, black

currant and wild berry fruit aroma with hints of cassis, green olive, and black pepper; full body; big, rich, concentrated, textured, jammy, dark fruit flavors with a lush, velvety mouthfeel; full, supple tannin; a bit rough on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Not labeled as a Zinfandel, this is big, rustic style red wine that is very appealing to drink in its youth. Highly recommended. *15.2% alcohol; 65,000 cases; a blend of 51% Zinfandel, 19% Cabernet Sauvignon (CS), 18% Syrah, 7% PS, 3% Charbono, 1% Grenache, and 1% Malbec; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 0/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

7. **2008 Wilson Winery,** "Carl's Vineyard," Dry Creek Valley (\$32) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; spicy, briary, smoky, dark berry fruit aroma; full body; big, rich, thick, jammy, black fruit flavors with overtones of sweet oak; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended, though seemed to lack a bit in varietal personality. *15.5% alcohol; 540 cases; blended with 4% PS; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 15.8, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], seventh place)

8. **2008 Klinker Brick Winery,** "Old Vine," Lodi (\$18) – Medium-dark ruby; briary, black cherry and berry cobbler aroma with hints of smoked bacon, dill, and mocha; full body; big, rich, very ripe, concentrated, smoky, peppery, blackberry fruit flavors with overtones of sweet oak; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *15.8% alcohol; 20,000 cases; blended with 5% Cabernet Franc; released August 2010.* (Group Score: 15.7, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [87/100], eighth place)

9. **2009 McManis Family Vineyards,** California (\$12) – Medium ruby; attractive, intense, briary, toasty, cherry and raspberry fruit aroma; full body; forward, fleshy, plummy, red berry fruit flavors with firm acidity and a plush mouthfeel; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 12,000 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 15.5, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [87/100], ninth place)

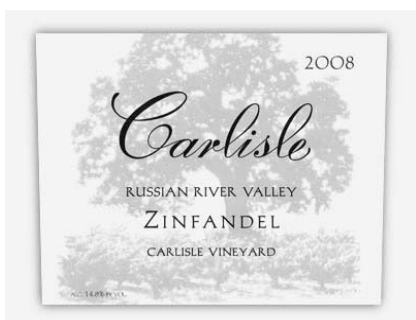
10. **2009 Ghost Pines,** "Winemaker's Blend," 85% Sonoma County and 15% San Joaquin County (\$20) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; herbal, berry fruit aroma with vegetal notes and traces of dill and vanilla; full body; very ripe, cedary, red berry fruit flavors that lack a bit in the mid-palate; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. *14.6% alcohol; 11,935 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released December 2010.* (Group Score: 15.5, 1/0/0; My Score: 16 [84/100], tenth place)

11. **2009 Wine Guerrilla,** Sonoma County (\$15) – Medium to medium-dark purplish ruby; fragrant, spicy, stemmy, blackberry fruit aroma; medium-full to full body; spicy, dark berry fruit flavors; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Recommended, though some tasters noted a hint of Brett. *14.5% alcohol; 1,100 cases; blended with 10% PS, 8% Carignane, and 1% CS; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 15.3, 0/0/0; My Score: 16 [84/100], eleventh place)

12. **2009 Wine Guerrilla,** "Clopton Vineyard," Russian River Valley (\$35) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; intense, spicy, toasty, very ripe, blackberry jam aroma with a trace of sulfur; full body; rich, concentrated, toasty, berry fruit flavors with moderate depth and some tartness on the rough finish; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Recommended. *14.7% alcohol; 120 cases; a field blend of Zinfandel and Alicante Bouchet; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 15.3, 0/0/0; My Score: 16 [82/100], twelfth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6] [7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]

ZINFANDEL
More New Releases



1. **2008 Carlisle**, “Carlisle Vineyard,” Russian River Valley (\$43) – Medium-dark purplish ruby color; attractive, intense, jammy, spicy, ripe raspberry fruit aroma with hints of white pepper, cinnamon, and vanilla; full body; big, rich, intense, concentrated, peppery, cherry and black raspberry fruit flavors with hints of dark chocolate and anise; nicely balanced with firm acidity; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Deserves a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.8% alcohol; 325 cases; blended with 13% other mixed black varieties; released November 2010.* (Group Score: 16.5 of 20 points, 3 of 10 first-place votes/2 seconds/0 thirds; My Score: 17 [92 of 100 points], first place)

2. **2008 Black Sears**, “Estate,” Howell Mountain, Napa Valley (\$42) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, forward, intense, earthy, brambly, peppery, red berry fruit aroma ; full body; forward, intense, spicy, briary, black raspberry jam flavors; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Nicely balanced for such a big wine and has an appealing mouthfeel. Very highly recommended. *15.5% alcohol; 300 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4, 3/0/1; My Score: 17 [90/100], third place)

3. **2008 Carlisle**, “Papera Ranch,” Russian River Valley (\$43) – Medium-dark to dark purplish ruby; attractive, intense, cedary, spicy, jammy, red berry fruit aroma; full body; forward, intense, textured, concentrated, cherry and raspberry flavors with firm acidity and a full, rich mouthfeel; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Deserves a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 349 cases; blended with 7% Carignane; released November 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4, 0/2/2; My Score: 17 [91/100], second place)

4. **2008 Grgich Hills Estate**, “Miljenko’s Old Vines,” Napa Valley (\$85) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, cedary, spicy, raspberry fruit aroma with notes of mocha; medium-full to full body; refined, briary, red berry fruit flavors; full tannin; tight and slightly tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Rather pricey, though well balanced and shows well defined varietal character. Highly recommended. *15.8% alcohol; 332 cases; 100% Zinfandel; released November 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 0/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fourth place)

5. **2008 Frank Family Vineyards**, “Reserve,” Napa Valley (\$49.50) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, Bing cherry and berry aroma with notes of dark chocolate, roasted coffee beans, and graphite; full body; rich, briary, toasted, mouth-filling, dark berry fruit flavors with overtones of creamy oak; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *15.0% alcohol; 835 cases; blended with 10% Petite Sirah (PS) and 4% Cabernet Sauvignon; released Spring 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 2/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fifth place)

6. **2008 Kenwood**, “Jack London Vineyard,” Sonoma Valley (\$20) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, cedary, toasty, jammy, ripe berry fruit aroma with notes of dill and vanilla; full body; toasty, dark berry fruit flavors with oaky overtones; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 4,000 cases; blended with 4% PS; released November 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 0/2/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], sixth place)

7. **2008 Christian Lazo Winery**, “Paso Zin,” Paso Robles (\$15) – Medium to medium-dark brickish ruby; attractive, plummy, very ripe blackberry fruit aroma that verges on being slightly raisiny; medium-full to full body; rich, intense, rustic, toasty, jammy, dark berry fruit flavors with hints of anise, peppercorn, and brown sugar; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.7% alcohol; case production not available; blended with 12% other varieties; released May 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 1/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], seventh place)

8. **2008 Sobon Estate**, “Cougar Hill,” Amador County (\$17) Medium-light to medium ruby; smoky, cedary, briary, dark cherry and very ripe berry fruit aroma with oaky overtones; full body; forward, toasty, blackberry fruit flavors tending to be a bit tight and sharp on the finish; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 1,594 cases; blended with 4% PS; released May 2010.* (Group Score: 15.8, 1/0/2; My Score: 16.5 [87/100], ninth place)

9. **2008 John Robert Eppler Wines**, “JRE,” St. Helena, Napa Valley (\$18) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, forward, boysenberry and blackberry fruit aroma with hints of lavender and graphite; medium-full to full body; forward, intense, blackberry fruit flavors with earthy notes and a hint of licorice; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *15.2% alcohol; 161 cases; blended with 7% PS; released March 2010.* (Group Score: 15.8, 0/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], eighth place)

10. **2008 Sobon Estate**, “Lubenko Vineyard,” Fiddletown (\$20) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, forward, intense, jammy, cherry and wild berry fruit aroma with hints of dill, tobacco, and graphite; medium-full to full body; intense, briary, tarrish, peppery, ripe cherry and red berry fruit flavors with notes of charred oak and jammy richness; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows lots of forward, very ripe fruit. Highly recommended. *15.4% alcohol; 1,563 cases; blended with 4% PS; released July 2010.* (Group Score: 15.8, 0/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [87/100], tenth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5] [6, 7, 8, 9, 10]

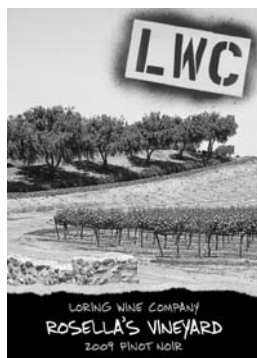


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PINOT NOIR
New Releases



1. **2009 Loring Wine Company**, “Rosella’s Vineyard,” Santa Lucia Highlands (\$45) – Medium-light to medium ruby color; attractive, relatively intense, spicy, slightly briary, raspberry and black cherry fruit aroma with notes of vanilla and cola; medium-full to full body; forward, rich, plush, concentrated, well focused, raspberry and cherry fruit flavors with a velvety mouthfeel; well balanced; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Enjoyable to drink now. Very highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 500 cases; 100% Pinot Noir (PN); released January 2011.* (Group Score: 16.6 of 20 points, 2 of 8 first-place votes/2 seconds/1 third; My Score: 17 [91of 100 points], second place)

2. **2009 Loring Wine Company**, “Garys’ Vineyard,” Santa Lucia Highlands (\$45) – Medium-light to medium brickish ruby; attractive, initially restrained, spicy, raspberry and red cherry fruit aroma with earthy notes and a hint of cola; medium-full to full body; forward, rich, plush, toasty, red cherry fruit flavors with undertones of sweet oak; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Developed with airing in the glass. Very highly recommended. *14.6% alcohol; 450 cases; 100% PN; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 16.6, 2/0/1; My Score: 17 [91/100], first place)

3. **2009 August West**, Santa Lucia Highlands (\$30) – Medium-light brickish ruby; attractive, fragrant, earthy, red cherry fruit aroma with hints of rhubarb and saffras; medium-full body; rich, plush, spicy, currant and sweet red berry fruit flavors; medium-full tannin; slightly tart and rough on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Already showing some elegance and complexity and deserving a few more years of bottle aging. Fruit is from the Rosella’s Vineyard, though not designated on the label. Very highly recommended. *14.7% alcohol; 260 cases; 100% PN; released August 2010.* (Group Score: 16.5, 3/0/0; My Score: 17 [90/100], fourth place)

4. **2009 Loring Wine Company**, “Durell Vineyard,” Sonoma Coast (\$45) – Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, plummy, black cherry and red berry fruit aroma with hints of cinnamon and orange zest; medium-full to full body; forward, textured, raspberry fruit flavors with hints of jammy richness and a bit of heat on the finish; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Deserving several more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.6% alcohol; 200 cases; 100% PN; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 16.5, 0/3/2; My Score: 17 [90/100] third place)

5. **2009 Loring Wine Company**, “Graham Family Vineyard,” Green Valley, Russian River Valley (\$45) – Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, fragrant, spicy, raspberry and cherry fruit aroma with some cedary notes and hints of forest floor; medium-full to full body; rich, textured, raspberry fruit flavors with good depth and some emerging complexity as it

aired in the glass; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.7% alcohol; 150 cases; 100% PN; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 16.3, 0/2/1; My Score: 17 [90/100], fifth place)

6. **2009 Loring Wine Company**, “Keefer Ranch Vineyard,” Green Valley, Russian River Valley (\$45) – Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, plummy, sweet red cherry fruit aroma with oaky overtones and a note of forest floor; medium-full body; rich, plush, red cherry fruit flavors with a spicy, briary edge and a trace of cola; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Developed with airing in the glass though needing another year or two of bottle aging to help further meld the fruit and oak. Very highly recommended. We’ll have reviews of more Loring spring releases in our next issue. *14.9% alcohol; 400 cases; 100% PN; released January 2011.* (Group Score: 16.3, 1/0/1; My Score: 17 [90/100], sixth place)

7. **2009 Melville**, “Estate - Verna’s,” Santa Barbara County (\$24) – Medium-light ruby; pleasant, earthy, spicy, red cherry and strawberry fruit aroma with slight hints of cola, menthol, and forest floor; medium-full body; cedary, cherry and red berry fruit flavors that are nicely balanced and have some plummy richness; medium to medium-full tannin; slightly tart and drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Easy to drink now. Highly recommended. *14.1% alcohol; 2,800 cases; 100% PN; released December 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 0/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [88/100] eighth place)

8. **2009 Laetitia**, “Estate,” Arroyo Grande Valley (\$25) – Medium-light to medium purplish ruby; attractive, fragrant, spicy, plummy, strawberry and raspberry fruit aroma with a note of charred oak; medium-full body; rich, plush, plummy, cherry and red berry fruit flavors with a velvety mouthfeel; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows precocious rich fruit and is enjoyable to drink now. Highly recommended. *14.1% alcohol; 20,000 cases; 100% PN; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 0/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], seventh place)

9. **2009 ZD**, Carneros (\$45) – Medium ruby; attractive, intense, fragrant, earthy, spicy, cherry fruit aroma with hints of saffras and spearmint; medium-full body; moderately rich, cedary, black cherry fruit flavors with oaky overtones; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *13.8% alcohol; 5,000 cases; 100% PN; released December 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], ninth place)

10. **2009 Pali**, “Bluffs,” Russian River Valley (\$19) – Medium-light ruby; earthy, spicy, red berry fruit aroma with hints of cola, plums, and forest floor; medium-full body; tight and a bit lean, cranberry and raspberry fruit flavors with firm acidity; medium to medium-full tannin; slightly tart finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.3% alcohol; 1,800 cases; 100% PN; released February 2011.* (Group Score: 15.8, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [86/100], tenth place)

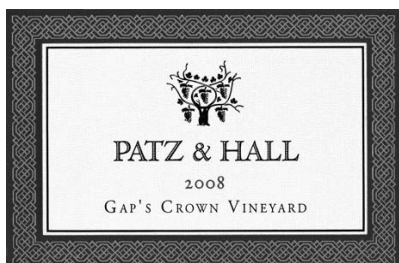
11. **2009 Foxen**, Santa Maria Valley (\$34) – Medium-light to medium ruby; forward, earthy, slightly stemmy, cherry fruit aroma with a lingering trace of sulfur; medium-full body; tight, slightly tart, herbal, cherry fruit flavors that are a bit drying and lean on the finish; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Recommended. *14.4% alcohol; 3,000 cases; 100% PN; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 15.7, 0/0/0; My Score: 16 [84/100], eleventh place)

12. **2009 Valley of the Moon**, Carneros (\$20) – Medium-light ruby; earthy, herbal, stemmy, red cherry fruit aroma with

a trace of sulfur; medium-full body; slightly tart, earthy, toasty, muted cherry fruit flavors that are rough and fall a bit flat on the finish; medium-full tannin; slightly lingering aftertaste. *13.5% alcohol; 5,000 cases; blended with 3% Syrah; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 15.4, 0/0/0; My Score: 16 [82/100], twelfth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6] [7, 8, 9, 10, 11] [12]

PINOT NOIR More New Releases



1. **2008 Patz & Hall**, “Gap’s Crown,” Sonoma Coast (\$70) Medium-light to medium ruby color; attractive, intense, complex, cranberry and red cherry aroma with notes of clove, cinnamon, and mocha; medium-full to full body; forward, rich plummy, elegant, spicy, cherry and berry fruit flavors with a touch of clove and hints of nutmeg and saffras; well balanced and structured; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows distinctive varietal character. Very highly recommended. *14.2% alcohol; 124 cases; 100% Pinot Noir (PN); released April 2010.* (Group Score: 16.5 of 20 points, 3 of 13 first-place votes/2 seconds/4 thirds; My Score: 17 [91 of 100 points], second place)

2. **2008 Patz & Hall**, “Pisoni Vineyard,” Santa Lucia Highlands (\$80) – Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, intense, plummy, cherry and red berry fruit aroma with spicy notes and a trace of charred oak; medium-full to full body; forward, plush, plummy, ripe cherry and strawberry fruit flavors with notable richness, and overtones of sweet oak; nicely balanced with firm acidity; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 589 cases; 100% PN; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4, 3/2/1; My Score: 17 [91/100], first place)

3. **2008 Ken Brown**, Sta. Rita Hills (\$38) – Light to medium-light ruby; attractive, earthy, slightly stemmy, cherry fruit aroma with toasty notes and a hint of cocoa; medium-full body; initially plush, forward, ripe black cherry and blackberry fruit flavors that are nicely balanced and have a hint of cola and a velvety mouthfeel; medium to medium-full tannin; a bit drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 363 cases; 100% PN; released March 2011.* (Group Score: 16.2, 3/2/2; My Score: 17 [90/100], third place)

4. **2008 Ortman Family Vineyards**, “Turner Vineyard,” Sta. Rita Hills (\$40) – Medium-light ruby; attractive, spicy, herbal, black cherry and raspberry fruit aroma with overtones of vanilla; medium-full body; sharp, spicy, red berry fruit flavors with hints of cinnamon and saffras; medium to medium-full tannin; tight, slightly tart finish; lingering aftertaste. Shows some complexity though could use a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; only 85 cases; 100% PN; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 2/2/1; My Score: 17 [90/100], fourth place)

5. **2008 Robert Mondavi Winery**, “Reserve,” Napa Valley (\$60) – Medium-light ruby; attractive, medium-light, spicy, toasty, candied cherry fruit aroma with touches of clove and sandalwood; medium to medium-full body; forward, well balanced, raspberry and cherry fruit flavors that are rather elegant though appearing a bit simple; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. 60% of grapes from Rancho Carneros Vineyard and 40% from Hyde Vineyard. Highly recommended. *15.2% alcohol; 1,300 cases; 100% PN; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 0/3/4; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], seventh place)

6. **2008 Inception**, Santa Barbara County (\$25) – Medium-light brickish ruby; pleasant, restrained, spicy, sweet cherry fruit aroma; medium-full body; plush, elegant, well balanced, raspberry and cherry fruit flavors; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Good value. Highly recommended. *14.8% alcohol; 1,000 cases; 100% PN; released April 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 0/2/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fifth place)

7. **2008 Patz & Hall**, “Hyde Vineyard,” Carneros (\$55) – Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, spicy, Bing cherry and red berry fruit aroma with a hint of cola; medium-full body; plush, plummy, ripe cherry fruit flavors with undertones of creamy oak; medium-full tannin; slightly tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *15.2% alcohol; 628 cases; 100% PN; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 2/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

8. **2008 Davis Bynum**, Russian River Valley (\$35) – Medium-light to medium ruby; oaky, stemmy, cherry fruit aroma; medium-full body; tight, rough, cranberry and cherry fruit flavors with an astringent, hard edge on the finish; lingering aftertaste. *14.9% alcohol; 3,785 cases; 100% PN; released August 2010.* (Group Score: 15.6, 0/0/0; My Score: 16 [82/100], eighth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7] [8]

PINOT NOIR More New Releases



1. **2008 Eric Kent Wine Cellars**, “Stiling Vineyard,” Russian River Valley (\$42) – Medium-light to medium ruby color; attractive, spicy, elegant, slightly stemmy, red berry fruit aroma with hints of clove, rhubarb, and vanilla; medium-full to full body; forward, rich, plush, plummy, strawberry and cherry fruit flavors; well balanced and structured with bright acidity; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very appealing to taste now though deserving a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.7% alcohol; 351 cases; 100% Pinot Noir (PN); released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4 of 20 points, 4 of 12 first-place votes/2 seconds/4 thirds; My Score: 17 [91 of 100 points], first place)

2. **2008 Williams Selyem**, “Vista Verde Vineyard,” San Benito County (\$54) – Medium-light ruby; attractive, floral, sweet Bing cherry and red berry fruit aroma with hints of rhubarb, cinnamon, and vanilla; medium-full body; initially plush, herbal, cherry and red berry fruit flavors with a silky

mouthfeel; medium tannin; slightly tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.1% alcohol; 591 cases; 100% PN; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 3/3/4; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], seventh place)

3. **2008 Ortman Family Vineyards**, “Salisbury Vineyard,” San Luis Obispo County (\$36) – Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, slightly floral, spicy, sweet cherry and red berry fruit aroma with hints of clove, cinnamon, and vanilla; medium-full body; plush, spicy, red berry fruit flavors with a silky mouthfeel; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Elegantly styled and very enjoyable to drink now. Very highly recommended. *14.3% alcohol; 133 cases; 100% PN; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 1/2/2; My Score: 17 [90/100], second place)

4. **2008 Patz & Hall**, “Jenkins Ranch,” Sonoma Coast (\$45) Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, herbal, stemmy, cranberry and red berry fruit aroma with notes of rhubarb and charred oak; medium-full to full body; big, rich, textured, ripe red berry fruit flavors with notes of sweet oak; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14% alcohol; 294 cases; 100% PN; released March 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 2/1/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

5. **2008 Williams Selyem**, “Hirsch Vineyard,” Sonoma Coast (\$72) – Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, forward, intense, plummy, sweet raspberry and black cherry fruit aroma with notes of clove, milk chocolate, black tea, and spearmint; medium-full to full body; rich, herbal, elegant, nicely balanced, red berry fruit flavors with a trace of mocha; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *13.8% alcohol; 487 cases; 100% PN; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 1/1/0; My Score: 17 [90/100], fourth place)

6. **2008 Williams Selyem**, “Ferrington Vineyard,” Anderson Valley (\$62) – Medium ruby; attractive, forward, rich, plummy, sweet raspberry and black cherry fruit aroma with overtones of vanilla; full body; rich, textured, black cherry fruit flavors with a silky mouthfeel; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Enjoyable to drink now. Very highly recommended. *14.3% alcohol; 686 cases; 100% PN; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 1/1/0; My Score: 17 [90/100], fifth place)

7. **2008 Merry Edwards**, “Coopersmith,” Russian River Valley (\$57) – Medium ruby; attractive, herbal, spicy, ripe cherry and strawberry fruit aroma; medium-full body; plush, herbal, red berry fruit flavors with firm acidity; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Deserves a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.4% alcohol; 545 cases; 100% PN; released April 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 0/1/1; My Score: 17 [90/100], third place)

8. **2008 Artesa**, “Estate Reserve,” Carneros (\$40) – Medium ruby; herbal, toasty, stemmy, cherry and strawberry fruit aroma with a hint of cardamon; medium-full body; tight, herbal, stemmy, black cherry fruit flavors with firm acidity; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.3% alcohol; 4,028 cases; 100% PN; released November 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 0/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [87/100], ninth place)

9. **2008 Merry Edwards**, “Olivet Lane,” Russian River Valley (\$60) – Medium-light to medium brickish ruby; attractive, spicy, bright red cherry fruit aroma with toasty notes and hints of mocha and licorice; medium-full body; moderately rich, herbal, toasty, black cherry flavor with spicy

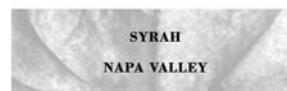
notes and hints of green tea and toasty oak; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *13.9% alcohol; 700 cases; 100% PN; released April 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], eighth place)

10. **2008 Longoria**, “Lovely Rita,” Sta. Rita Hills (\$32) – Medium-light to medium ruby; toasty, stemmy, red berry fruit aroma with an early trace of sulfur and a hint of rhubarb; medium-full body; herbal, stemmy red berry fruit flavors with oaky overtones; medium-full tannin; lean, rough finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.1% alcohol; 355 cases; 100% PN; released February 2010.* (Group Score: 15.4, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [85/100], tenth place)

11. **2008 Anthill Farms**, Anderson Valley (\$39?) – Medium-light brickish ruby; smoky, slightly stemmy, strawberry jam aroma; medium-full body; tight, herbal, stemmy, red berry fruit flavors with cedary, toasty notes and a slightly tart edge on the finish; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. *13.2% alcohol; other stats not available.* (Group Score: 15.0, 0/0/0; My Score: 16 [82/100], eleventh place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9] [10, 11]

SYRAH New Releases



1. **2008 Lewis Cellars**, Napa Valley (\$70) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, cedary, jammy, very ripe black fruit aroma with notes of black pepper, espresso, vanilla, and bacon fat; full body; big, very rich, plummy, peppery, very ripe, sweet blackberry fruit flavors with a thick, creamy mouthfeel; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Can aptly be described as a fruit bomb with lush, seductive, very ripe fruit making it precociously enjoyable to drink now and also with good aging potential and distinctive varietal character. Very highly recommended. *15.7% alcohol; 250 cases; 100% Syrah; released August 2010.* (Group Score: 16.5 of 20 points, 7 of 12 first-place votes/1 second/1 third; My Score: 17 [92 of 100 points], second place)

2. **2007 Shafer**, “Relentless,” Napa Valley (\$60) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, intense, spicy, jammy, peppery, blackberry fruit aroma with overtones of charred oak and hints of bacon fat and smoked meat; full body; forward, rich, plummy, spicy, toasty, peppery, dark cherry and blackberry fruit flavors; firmly structured; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Deserves a good five more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 3,800 cases; blended with 16% Petite Sirah (PS); released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4, 1/3/2; My Score: 17 [91/100], third place)

3. **2007 Domaine de la Terre Rouge**, “Ascent,” Sierra Foothills (\$80) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, fragrant, spicy, black raspberry aroma that developed some complexity with airing in the glass; full body; rich, textured, peppery, cedary, spicy, concentrated berry fruit flavors with

a silky mouthfeel; nicely balanced and firmly structured; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows some elegance and classic varietal character along with good aging potential. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 300 cases; 100% Syrah; to be released November 2011.* (Group Score: 16.3, 1/2/1; My Score: 17 [93/100], first place)

4. **2008 Stolpman**, "Hilltops," Santa Ynez Valley (\$48) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, spicy, cedary, earthy, blueberry and blackberry compote aroma with a hint of dill; full body; rich, plummy, ripe blackberry fruit flavors with notes of tar and graphite; full tannin; rough and slightly tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Shows appealing, very ripe fruit. Very highly recommended. *15.3% alcohol; 416 cases; 100% Syrah; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 0/3/3; My Score: 17 [91/100], fourth place)

5. **2008 Jelly Roll**, Santa Ynez Valley (\$32) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, intense, plummy, peppery, spicy, blackberry jam aroma with notes of vanilla and bacon fat; full body; rich, textured, jammy, tarrish, ripe blackberry fruit flavors with a plush mouthfeel; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *Stats not available in time for publication.* (Group Score: 16.1, 2/1/3; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fifth place)

6. **2008 Lucia**, "Susan's Hill," Santa Lucia Highlands (\$40) Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, spicy, sweet blackberry and blueberry fruit aroma with notes of black pepper and vanilla; full body; forward, rich, plummy, peppery, dark berry fruit flavors with hints of tar and black licorice; full tannin; slightly tart and hard on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.2% alcohol; 220 cases; 100% Syrah; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 0/2/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

7. **2007 Terre Rouge**, "Sentinel Oak Vineyard, Pyramid Block," Shenandoah Valley (\$40) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, earthy, cedary, peppery, dark berry fruit aroma with an initial trace of sulfur; full body; forward, earthy, toasty, dark cherry fruit flavors; medium-full to full tannin; rough and slightly harsh on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 450 cases; 100% Syrah; to be released October 2011.* (Group Score: 15.8, 1/0/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], seventh place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5] [6, 7]

SYRAH

More New Releases

1. **2008 Herman Story**, "Nuts & Bolts," California (\$35) – Medium-dark to dark purplish ruby color; attractive, forward, intense, concentrated, cedary, very ripe, blackberry jam aroma with notes of smoked meat and black pepper; full body; big, ripe, concentrated, highly extracted, mouth-filling, peppery, very rich, dark berry fruit flavors; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Appealing to drink now with it jammy richness as well as having good bottle aging potential. Very highly recommended. *16% alcohol; 590 cases; 100% Syrah; released Spring 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4 of 20 points, 5 of 11 first-place votes/0 seconds/1 third; My Score: 17 [92 of 100 points], first place)

2. **2007 Dehlinger**, Russian River Valley (\$45) – Medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, intense, fragrant, spicy, blackberry and blueberry fruit aroma with hints of vanilla,

graphite, and red licorice; full body; forward, rich, textured, peppery, cedary, mouth-filling, dark currant and blackberry fruit flavors with a note of sage; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Deserves several more years of bottle aging for the components to further meld. Very highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 450 cases; 100% Syrah; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4, 1/4/1; My Score: 17 [91/100], third place)

3. **2007 Ramey**, "Rodgers Creek Vineyard," Sonoma Coast (\$60) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, forward, intense, complex, black cherry and blackberry jam aroma with notes of graphite, dark chocolate, and bacon fat; full body; big, rich, textured, concentrated, very ripe blackberry fruit flavors with firm acidity and notes of sage, black pepper, and charred oak; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *15% alcohol; 350 cases; blended with 6% Viognier (co-fermented); released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.3, 2/2/1; My Score: 17 [92/100], second place)

4. **2007 Wilson Winery**, "Dorothy's Vineyard," Dry Creek Valley (\$30) – Medium-dark to dark ruby; attractive, fragrant, spicy, black cherry fruit aroma with hints of dill and overtones of sweet oak; full body; relatively soft, rich, plummy, sweet cherry and red currant flavors with hints of dark chocolate and a plush, rounded mouthfeel; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *15.5% alcohol; 350 cases; 100% Syrah; released July 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 2/0/2; My Score: 17 [90/100], fourth place)

5. **2007 Ramey**, Sonoma Coast (\$38) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, earthy, peppery, ripe blackberry fruit aroma with overtones of vanilla; full body; rich, plummy, peppery, ripe, dark berry fruit flavors; full tannin; a bit gritty on the finish; lingering aftertaste. More approachable than their Rodgers Creek bottling. Very highly recommended. *15% alcohol; 1,750 cases; blended with 7% Viognier (co-fermented); released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 0/1/2; My Score: 17 [90/100], fifth place)

6. **2008 Clayhouse Vineyard**, Paso Robles (\$15) – Medium ruby; pleasant, fragrant, spicy, cranberry and sweet blackberry fruit aroma with hints of cola and white pepper; medium-full body; plush, spicy, herbal, currant and dark berry fruit flavors with moderate depth; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Easy and enjoyable to drink now. Highly recommended. *14.1% alcohol; 1,509 cases; blended with 6% Tannat, 4% Petit Verdot, 4% Viognier, and 1% Grenache Noir; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 1/1/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

7. **2007 Lagier Meredith**, Mount Veeder, Napa Valley (\$48) Medium-dark to dark purplish ruby; attractive, intense, spicy, ripe blueberry and blackberry fruit aroma; full body; big, rich, textured, tightly focused, cranberry and blackberry fruit flavors; full tannin; slightly tart and drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.4% alcohol; 850 cases; 100% Syrah; released October 2009.* (Group Score: 15.9, 0/2/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], seventh place)

8. **2007 Stolpman**, "La Coppa," Santa Ynez Valley (\$19) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, jammy, boysenberry aroma with hints of mocha and orange rind; full body; big, rich, plummy, concentrated, ripe blackberry fruit flavors with firm acidity and a trace of vanilla; medium-full to full tannin; slightly tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.8% alcohol; 1,000 cases; 100% Syrah; released May 2009.* (Group Score: 15.8, 0/0/2; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], ninth place)

9. **2007 Villa Creek**, “Avenger,” Paso Robles (\$35) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, very ripe, jammy, blackberry fruit aroma with notes of espresso, tobacco, and bacon fat; full body; forward, rich, jammy, very ripe berry fruit flavors with overtones of sweet oak; full tannin; a bit drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Approachable now. Highly recommended. *14.7% alcohol; 400 cases; a blend of 75% Syrah, 15% Mourvèdre, and 10% Grenache; released September 2009.* (Group Score: 15.7, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], eighth place)

10. **2008 Eberle**, “Steinbeck Vineyard,” Paso Robles (\$21) – Medium to medium-dark ruby; spicy, cranberry and raspberry fruit aroma with hints of cardamon and saffras; full body; rich, textured, cedary, slightly leathery, toasty, dark currant and black cherry fruit flavors; medium-full to full tannin; tight and a bit drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14% alcohol; 705 cases; 100% Syrah; released April 2010.* (Group Score: 15.7, 0/1/1; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], tenth place)

11. **2008 Lucia**, “Garys’ Vineyard,” Santa Lucia Highlands (\$40) – Dark purplish ruby; attractive, intense, toasty, cedary, red berry fruit aroma with notes of black pepper, dill, sandalwood, green olive, and charred oak (tending to be a bit sulfury); full body; big, rich, plummy, blackberry fruit flavors with hints of graphite; full tannin; rough and drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.3% alcohol; 290 cases; 100% Syrah; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 15.6, 0/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], eleventh place)

12. **2007 Morgan**, “Double L Vineyard,” Santa Lucia Highlands (\$40) – Medium-dark ruby; intense, briary, peppery, black cherry and blackberry fruit aroma with notes of dill, saddle leather, and vanilla; medium-full to full body; earthy, spicy, toasty, plummy, slightly stemmy, dark berry fruit flavors; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Approachable now though tending to be a bit austere on the finish. Some tasters noted detracting hints of brett. *14.3% alcohol; only 75 cases; 100% Syrah; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 15.3, 0/0/1; My Score: 16 [84/100], twelfth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6] [7, 8, 9, 10, 11] [12]

PETITE SIRAH

New Releases

1. **2008 R**, “Salman Vineyard,” Clarksburg (\$28) – Medium-dark ruby color; attractive, intense, briary, peppery, sweet cherry and dark berry fruit aroma with overtones of vanilla and hints of cola, cassis, bacon fat, and dill; full body; forward, rich, plummy, sweet berry fruit flavors with hints of tobacco and black pepper, and a full, rich, creamy mouthfeel; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows seductive, forward, rich fruit with lots of sweet oak. Made by Jeff Runquist Wines. Very highly recommended. *14.7% alcohol; 2,318 cases; 100% Petite Sirah (PS); released July 2010.* (Group Score: 16.5 of 20 points, 4 of 12 first-place votes/2 seconds/1 third; My Score: 17 [91 of 100 points] second place)

2. **2007 Mazzocco Sonoma**, “Aguilera Reserve,” Dry Creek Valley (\$45) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, spicy, dark berry fruit aroma with notes of vanilla and mocha; full body; big, textured, concentrated, dark cherry and wild berry fruit flavors with firm acidity and oaky overtones; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.9%*

alcohol; 150 cases; blended with 5% Zinfandel; released September 2010. (Group Score: 16.3, 3/3/0; My Score: 17 [91/100], first place)

3. **2007 Wilson Winery**, “Ellie’s Vineyard,” Dry Creek Valley (\$35) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, spicy, peppery, blueberry and blackberry fruit aroma with hints of chocolate and bacon fat; full body; forward, very rich, relatively soft, supple, plummy, blueberry and blackberry fruit flavors with a hint of black licorice and a creamy mouthfeel; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *15.4% alcohol; 360 cases; 100% PS; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.3, 3/1/3; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fourth place)

4. **2007 Mazzocco Sonoma**, “Aguilera,” Dry Creek Valley (\$35) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, intense, spicy, earthy, dark berry fruit aroma with a hint of mocha; full body; big, textured, dark cherry and blackberry fruit flavors with a plummy mouthfeel, though tending to be a bit sharp and hard on the finish; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 340 cases; 100% PS; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 1/2/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], third place)

5. **2008 Bogle Vineyards**, California (\$11) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, cedary, cherry and blackberry fruit aroma with notes of graphite, black licorice, and toasty oak; full body; forward, rich, ripe blackberry and boysenberry flavors; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Fruit driven and nicely balanced. Highly recommended. *13.5% alcohol; 200,000 cases; 100% PS; released June 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 0/1/6; My Score: 16.5 [86/100], seventh place)

6. **2007 Grgich Hills Estate**, “Miljenko’s Vineyard,” Napa Valley (\$45) – Medium-dark ruby; attractive, fragrant, intense, blackberry compote aroma with notes of black pepper and espresso; full body; tight, peppery, blackberry fruit flavors with notes of tar and graphite; full tannin; rough, harsh, and slightly tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *14.8% alcohol; 512 cases; 100% PS; released December 2010.* (Group Score: 15.8, 0/2/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], fifth place)

7. **2008 Vina Robles**, “Jardine,” Paso Robles (\$26) – Medium-dark ruby; briary, toasty, blackberry aroma with notes of tar, graphite, dill, and an initial trace of sulfur; full body; big, plummy, sweet blackberry fruit flavors with a rich mouthfeel; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *15.0% alcohol; 2,259 cases; 100% PS; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 15.9, 1/1/0; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], sixth place)

8. **2007 Parducci**, Mendocino County (\$11) – Medium ruby; restrained, herbal, sweet blackberry fruit aroma with a note of graphite; medium-full to full body; tight, herbal, cedary, blackberry fruit flavors; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Appears a bit lacking in varietal character. *13.4% alcohol; 15,340 cases; blended with 11% Syrah and 1% Viognier; released March 2010.* (Group Score: 15.7, 0/0/1; My Score: 16 [80/100], eighth place)

9. **2007 Parducci**, “True Grit,” Mendocino (\$30) – Medium-dark ruby; earthy, cedary, black cherry and boysenberry aroma with oaky overtones; full body; tight, cedary, cherry and berry fruit flavors; full tannin; tight, lean, mouth-drying finish; lingering aftertaste. *14.5% alcohol; 1,900 cases; blended with 12% Syrah; released May 2010.* (Group Score: 15.3, 0/0/0; My Score: 15.5 [79/100], ninth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5] [6, 7, 8] [9]

COMMENTARY
Great Wine, Pricing, and Scarcity
By Dan Berger

There is a curious series of paradoxes about wine that few people will ever admit affects them. But it affects almost everyone, including me.

On one hand, most American wine buyers generally accept the fact that a wine that gets a score of 100 points is truly great. Moreover we instinctively accept the fact that a wine scoring 100 points is going to be expensive.

But what if we reverse the facts of any particular case? Let's assume there is a wine that sells for a lot of money. Can we then assume that the price indicates that the wine will be great? Or is it merely a result of scarcity and thus high demand that led to its price?

The following scenario applies to literally dozens of supposed luxury goods: Assume only 100 cars of a type are made. Further assume there are at least 500 potential buyers for this handcrafted automobile and that all of them are extremely wealthy. Demand for these 100 cars is thus a lot greater than for a mass-production car.

With the high demand that is based almost solely on scarcity, the dealers who are selling these cars have every right to charge a premium for them. So the car is extremely dear. Apply this to wine and the analogy works almost like an overlay.

Note that I did not say anything about the quality of the car. I'm sure that you assumed it was a great car, since only 100 of them were made, but there is no guarantee that the car is worth an exalted price since the primary reason for the demand for it is scarcity. Quality is assumed. But it well may be that the car is in demand because of its design, and that mechanically the car has many drawbacks.

What sort of quality would you assume the car has? What if this particular car has a driver's seat that's uncomfortable to some people? Then those who pay an exorbitant sum for one of them will be dissatisfied with at least one aspect of it. What if the view for shorter drivers is inappropriate? Then shorter drivers who buy one will be dissatisfied.

Apply this to wine and you can see that just based on scores (thus high demand) as well as high price are no guarantees that you will like the wine.

Indeed, let's keep in mind that the score may well have been generated more by its high price and the demand for it than any other factor, including structure, character, taste, etc.—and that the intrinsic nature of the wine may well be a lot less when other factors are brought into the picture. Let's look at a few of the key factors.

■ Is the wine really compatible with food?

Many wines that score 100 points or close to it are huge in flavors, but most often such wines were awarded their high score based on an evaluation that did not take food compatibility into account. It was instantly impressionable. But is this a good thing?

■ Was the wine, when evaluated for a score, tasted blind?

When a reviewer knows that a wine has an exalted reputation (based on a high price), that reputation often has a way of influencing positively the score it will get. No such baggage is carried to the table by those tasting blind.

■ Were the wine's regional characteristics taken into account when it was being evaluated, and if so was that regional character seen as a positive or a negative?

Pinot Noirs from Monterey County and other central coast areas often have a faint but noticeable leafy

characteristic that becomes Burgundian with a little bottle age. But when young, that character may well be a bit strong for some people. To disparage such a character is to fail to understand its *raison d'être*.

■ Did the wine's evaluator factor into the rating the wine's potential or was the rating done only on a simplistic hedonistic scale that doesn't in any way relate to the precise awarding of various points for various attributes?

As you can see, there are a lot of queries here that could be asked to determine the validity of the scores we see. Indeed, there has often been debate about the difference between a 92 and a 93. Can a reviewer who relies on scores replicate these numbers with any accuracy? Or is this merely a wild guess based on a single, rapid sniff, sip, and spit—enhanced, of course, by factoring in the price of the wine, the producer's reputation, and other gloss factors (gold on the label, etc.)?

The question of whether a wine's score on one day is 92 and on another is 93 begs the question: These were two different evaluations, so likely the wines came from different bottles. Are all wines with identical labels identical?

Wine makers often refer to bottle variation, and from my experience over 35 years tasting wine professionally, I can say that bottle variation is a lot more prevalent than has ever been discussed. And that's because it is a mystical notion that cannot be proved scientifically.

Very often I have heard wine makers say a particular wine is "not showing well today," or "that's a slightly off bottle." They know their wines a lot better than I do, and they can "see" issues with their wines that I cannot. Yet on those occasions when another bottle is opened side by side with the first, I can see just what the wine maker is talking about.

How much of this bottle variation affects wine reviewers? Not much, I would guess, for wines of exalted pedigree (high priced, glossy reputation, etc.). As long as the wine they try is close to what they anticipate, the score will be high, almost as if it were preordained. But chances are not many moderate-price, widely distributed wines get such a "benefit of doubt."

Those who have read my diatribes against the mindlessness of scores when they are generated by tasting wines with sight of the label know that I have lot more understanding of and interest in scores that were generated by those who are tasting blind, and in particular when the scores are generated not by one individual but by a group of experienced tasters.

As a result, the results of the *Grapevine's* tastings offer far more validity than do the opinions of single reviewers who are often swayed by factors that cannot help with any attempt at objectivity.

In particular, the results of tastings of 12 like wines are clear. It's possible, of course, to say that the first-place wine in a group of 12 is "rated" ahead of the first-place wine in another group of 12 done on a different day, but it's also possible to say that the third-place wine in one tasting is actually better than the first-place wine in another tasting. Different contexts, and a lot more.

Yet the scores that are generated at various *Grapevine* events, being an average of all tasters, also are not as comparable to one another since they occurred on different days with potentially a different mix of tasters.

But why compare one tasting to another? They are stand-alone results that are far more meaningful than are scores generated with fewer controls.

Clearly the price of a wine and its quality can be evaluated and turned into a kind of QPR (quality price ration),

but this is best done first with a blind tasting and then an adjustment for how it relates to like wines.

Since this is more arcane, we are left with raw scores, usually generated by a taster with sight of the label, that cannot explain why one wine differs from another.

IN THE WINE LIBRARY

by Bob Foster

The Finest Wines of Bordeaux; A Regional Guide to the Best Chateaux and Their Wines, James Lawther, MW, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2010, 320 pages, softback, \$34.95. This is really an insider's guide to Bordeaux. The author, a Master of Wine has lived in Bordeaux since 1995. He knows the region well and it shows in this book.

As the author insightfully notes, if you were looking for a region to produce magnificent red wines, Bordeaux would not be at the top of your list. The climate and soil are not ideal. Bordeaux owes its preeminent position to geography, history and human intervention. The author enlarges on this hypothesis in explaining why Bordeaux has become the center of the wine universe. It is a fascinating tale well told. Interwoven with the story is a detailed explanation of the emergence of new techniques (many of which are really a return to techniques of long ago) and methods used to make the wines from this region. There are small sections on the impact of climate change, the impact of nearby bodies of water, soil management, use of green methods, and when to harvest.

The newest methods in vinification are covered with subsections on sorting and handling, fermentation, barrel aging, and blending. There is even a small section on the major wine consultants who work in the region with a short description of the styles of wine each prefers.

The core of the book is chapters on each of the major growing regions in Bordeaux. There is an overview of the region, detailed maps and discussions of the appellations within the region. The author then has small sections on each of the major producers. For each chateau there are several paragraphs summarizing the winery's history, ownership, location, and role in the region. In a side bar the author gives his overall impression of the best wines from the producers as well as specific tasting notes for recent vintages.

At the back of the book are charts showing the various rankings of the chateaux that have been offered over the years, assessments of the vintages since 1982, a detailed glossary, a good index (but one that only includes the names of the chateaux) and a bibliography.

Special note must be made of the superb photography by Jon Wyand. The book is crammed with his photographs that reveal oft-pictured regions in a new light. He has a keen eye for interesting details and has the ability to photograph a person so you have the feeling you immediately know their personality. Great stuff.

There is a wealth of information here that is available nowhere else. An essential book for a lover of Bordeaux wines. Very highly recommended.

Wine Tasting Uncorked; Guided Tasting Courses and Tips, Michael Schuster, Potter Style (A division of Random House), New York, 2010, 40 cards, \$14.99. Odd, very odd. This is not a book; it is a set of 40 cards, each measuring four inches wide by five inches tall. They all come in a box that looks like an oversize Marlboro cigarette hard pack box

complete with flip top lid. Each card is chocked full of wine information. The first 31 cards cover the basics leading up to nine tasting lessons in which the author gives the specific format to allow a novice to taste, observe, describe, and evaluate wine. Lessons are set up to cover most major wine styles from dry whites to dessert wines.

There is lots of good information in this box, but the primary question that must be asked is whether the format assists or detracts from the curriculum. While these cards might seem clever at first blush, I think the real answer is they get in the way of the material. The cards are crammed with information so there is no room for maps, photos or charts. In the section listing the various grape varieties photographs could have been of great assistance to the reader instead of just the encyclopedic listing that is used. The cards have little space to spare so the type size is smaller than the one used in this newsletter. The cards are not numbered making any sort of index impossible.

So the format is a detriment, but putting this problem aside what about the content itself. Parts of it are fine, but parts of it are puzzling or superficial (perhaps because of the small format). The author at one point criticizes all wine competitions because they miss lighter more delicate wines and favor big, assertive wines. Oh? I have judged more than 10 wine competitions a year for many years and have found the judges well aware that light delicate wines can be lost amongst big extracted wines and seen them repeatedly look for and find these lighter gems. I have yet to see this author out on the judging circuit so I question the basis for his claim.

Oddly in the section on wine flaws he is so detailed as to cover ethyl acetate, sulfur dioxide, and hydrogen sulfide but makes no mention of *brettanomyces*. Given the controversy over the pungent component this wild yeast can add to a wine, its omission seems odd.

There is a card for each of the major varieties. At the bottom of the back side of the card the author gives suggested wines to try. But here I think the author loses sight of the fact that the cards are designed for the beginning wine buff. The recommendations are almost all for VERY expensive wines. For example on the Pinot Noir card the recommendation is for La Tache from Domaine Romanee Conti (currently selling for over \$1000 a bottle). No American Pinot Noir is even listed. On the Bordeaux cards he lists first and second growths and four California Cabernets all selling for more than \$100 a bottle. Perfect to scare off the novice wine drinker.

Interesting format but one that hampers rather than aids learning. Not recommended.

Wine Map of Italy, DeLong Company, Las Vegas, 24 inches by 36 inches on archival paper, \$29.95. There are so many wine producing areas in Italy that it is hard to keep track of their names and their specific locations. This tool is a great learning device. It shows all of the IGTs, the DOCs and the DOCGs for Italy. A separate booklet identifies the principal grapes grown in each of the regions. The colors are vibrant and the type face very readable. As an added plus the map also covers adjacent wine regions in France, Switzerland, Slovenia, Croatia, and Tunisia.

Because the map is printed on acid-free archival paper, it should be usable for decades, although given the ever-changing face of Italian wine and wine laws one can only guess how long it will be accurate.

The map is available directly from the manufacturer as well as the Wine Appreciation Guild in South San Francisco. Highly recommended.

WINES REVIEWED IN THIS FEBRUARY-MARCH 2011 ISSUE

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Score*</u>
CABERNET SAUVIGNON AND CABERNET BLENDS	
2007 Altus (\$70)	90
2006 Arrowood Monte Rosso (\$70)	89
2007 Ch. Ste. Michelle Ethos (\$38)	89
2007 Ch. Ste. Michelle Meritage (\$50)	88
2007 Chimney Rock Ganymede Vyrd (\$100)	89
2006 Couples & Co. (\$60)	88
2007 Dry Creek Vineyard (\$25)	89
2007 Dry Creek Vineyard Meritage (\$28)	89
2007 Frank Family Vineyards Reserve (\$85)	91
2006 Grgich Hills Yountville Selection (\$135)	89
2007 Hess Collection 19 Block Cuvée (\$36)	89
2007 Louis M. Martini Alexander Valley (\$35)	88
2007 Phifer Pavitt Date Night (\$75)	90
2007 Quintessa (\$145)	92
2007 Rodney Strong Brothers Ridge (\$75)	90
2007 Rodney Strong Rockaway (\$75)	90
2007 Sbragia Family Vyrds Cimarossa (\$75)	90
2007 Sbragia Family Vyrds Del Oro (\$75)	91
2007 Sbragia Family Vyrds Monte Rosso (\$50)	89
2007 Sbragia Family Vyrds Wall Vyrd (\$75)	91
2006 Shafer Hillside Select (\$215)	93
2006 Souverain Winemaker's Reserve (\$40)	84
2007 St. Clement Oroppas (\$55)	87
2007 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Artemis (\$55)	85
2007 Stonestreet Bear Point (\$115)	88
2007 Stonestreet Rockfall (\$125)	88
2007 Swanson Vineyards Alexis (\$75)	89
2007 Trefethen Family Vineyards (\$55)	88
2007 Trivium Les Ivrettes Vyrd (\$65)	92
2007 Turnbull Reserve (\$100)	90
2007 Volker Eisele (\$45)	88
CHARDONNAY	
2008 Arrowood (\$30)	90
2009 Artesa Estate Reserve (\$30)	85
2009 Cakebread Cellars (\$37)	89
2008 Ch. Ste. Michelle Canoe Ridge (\$22)	86
2008 de Lorimier Winery (\$28)	90
2009 Far Niente (\$56)	90
2009 Floral Springs Barrel Fermented (\$30)	87
2008 Forman (\$35)	89
2009 Foxen Block UU, Bien Nacido (\$32)	88
2009 Kendall-Jackson Vintner's Reserve (\$14)	90
2009 La Crema Sonoma Coast (\$20)	84
2009 Lewis Cellars Russian River Valley (\$48)	91
2009 Ortman O ² Series (\$18)	90
2008 Ortman Family Vyrds Firepeak (\$24)	89
2008 Patz & Hall Dutton Ranch (\$39)	89
2008 Patz & Hall Hyde Vineyard (\$55)	90

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Score*</u>
2008 Qupé Bien Nacido, Block Eleven (\$30)	89
2008 Sbragia Family Vyrds Gamble (\$40)	90
2008 Smith-Madrone (\$30)	88
2009 Sonoma-Cutrer Ranches (\$40)	89
2009 St. Supéry Oak Free (\$20)	80
2008 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Arcadia (\$50)	84
2008 Stonestreet Grandstone (\$75)	90
2008 Stonestreet Lower Rim (\$65)	90
2008 Talley Vineyards Oliver's Vyrd (\$32)	90
2008 Talley Vineyards Rincon Vyrd (\$42)	92
2008 Talley Vineyards Rosemary's Vyrd (\$46)	93
2008 Trefethen Family Vineyards (\$30)	91
2009 ZD (\$34)	89
PETITE SIRAH	
2008 Bogle Vineyards (\$11)	86
2007 Grgich Hills Estate Miljenko's Vyrd (\$45)	88
2007 Mazzocco Aguilera (\$35)	89
2007 Mazzocco Aguilera Reserve (\$45)	91
2007 Parducci (\$11)	80
2007 Parducci True Grit (\$30)	79
2008 R Salman Vineyard (\$28)	91
2008 Vina Robles Jardine (\$26)	88
2007 Wilson Winery Ellie's Vineyard (\$35)	89
PINOT NOIR	
2008 Anthill Farms Anderson Valley (\$39)	82
2008 Artesa Estate Reserve (\$40)	87
2009 August West Santa Lucia Highlands (\$30)	90
2008 Davis Bynum (\$35)	82
2008 Eric Kent Wine Cellars Stiling Vyrd (\$42)	91
2009 Foxen Santa Maria Valley (\$34)	84
2008 Inception Santa Barbara County (\$25)	89
2008 Ken Brown Sta. Rita Hills (\$38)	90
2009 Laetitia Estate (\$25)	89
2008 Longoria Lovely Rita (\$32)	85
2009 Loring Wine Co. Durell Vyrd (\$45)	90
2009 Loring Wine Co. Garys' Vyrd (\$45)	91
2009 Loring Wine Co. Graham Family (\$45)	90
2009 Loring Wine Co. Keefer Ranch (\$45)	90
2009 Loring Wine Co. Rosella's Vyrd (\$45)	91
2009 Melville Verna's (\$24)	88
2008 Merry Edwards Olivet Lane (\$60)	88
2008 Merry Edwards Coopersmith (\$57)	90
2008 Ortman Family Vyrds Salisbury (\$36)	90
2008 Ortman Family Vyrds Turner (\$40)	90
2009 Pali Bluffs (\$19)	86
2008 Patz & Hall Gap's Crown (\$70)	91
2008 Patz & Hall Hyde Vyrd (\$55)	89
2008 Patz & Hall Jenkins Ranch (\$45)	89
2008 Patz & Hall Pisoni Vyrd (\$80)	91
2008 Robert Mondavi Winery Reserve (\$60)	88

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Score*</u>
2009 Valley of the Moon (\$20)	82
2008 Williams Selyem Ferrington Vyrd (\$62)	90
2008 Williams Selyem Hirsch Vyrd (\$72)	90
2008 Williams Selyem Vista Verde Vyrd (\$54)	88
2009 ZD (\$45)	88
SYRAH	
2008 Clayhouse Vineyard (\$15)	89
2007 Dehlinger (\$45)	91
2007 Domaine de la Terre Rouge Ascent (\$80)	93
2008 Eberle Steinbeck Vineyard (\$21)	88
2008 Herman Story Nuts & Bolts (\$35)	92
2008 Jelly Roll (\$32)	89
2007 Lagier Meredith (\$48)	89
2008 Lewis Cellars (\$70)	92
2008 Lucia Garys' Vyrd (\$40)	88
2008 Lucia Susan's Hill (\$40)	89
2007 Morgan Double L Vyrd (\$40)	84
2007 Ramey Rodgers Creek Vyrd (\$60)	92
2007 Ramey Sonoma Coast (\$38)	90
2007 Shafer Relentless (\$60)	91
2008 Stolpman Hilltops (\$48)	91
2007 Stolpman La Coppa (\$19)	88
2007 Terre Rouge Pyramid Block (\$40)	89
2007 Villa Creek Avenger (\$35)	89
2007 Wilson Winery Dorothy's Vyrd (\$30)	90
ZINFANDEL	
2008 Black Sears Estate (\$42)	90
2008 Carlisle Carlisle Vyrd (\$43)	92
2008 Carlisle Papera Ranch (\$43)	91
2008 Christian Lazo Winery Paso Zin (\$15)	88
2008 Fiddletown Cellars Old Vine (\$18)	89
2008 Frank Family Vyrds Reserve (\$49.50)	89
2009 Ghost Pines Winemaker's Blend (\$20)	84
2008 Grgich Hills Estate Miljenko's (\$85)	89
2008 JRE St. Helena (\$18)	88
2008 Kenwood Jack London Vyrd (\$20)	88
2008 Klinker Brick Winery Old Vine (\$18)	87
2009 McManis Family Vineyards (\$12)	87
2008 Mettler Family Vineyards Epicenter (\$20)	89
2009 Seghesio Sonoma County (\$24)	91
2008 Sobon Estate Cougar Hill (\$17)	87
2008 Sobon Estate Fiddletown (\$20)	87
2009 The Prisoner Red Wine (\$35)	89
2008 Tobin James Ballistic (\$18)	90
2008 Wilson Winery Carl's Vyrd (\$32)	88
2008 Wilson Winery Dry Creek Valley (\$26)	90
2009 Wine Guerrilla Clopton Vyrd (\$35)	82
2009 Wine Guerrilla Sonoma County (\$15)	84

* Editor Nick Ponomareff's scores based on the 100-point scoring system