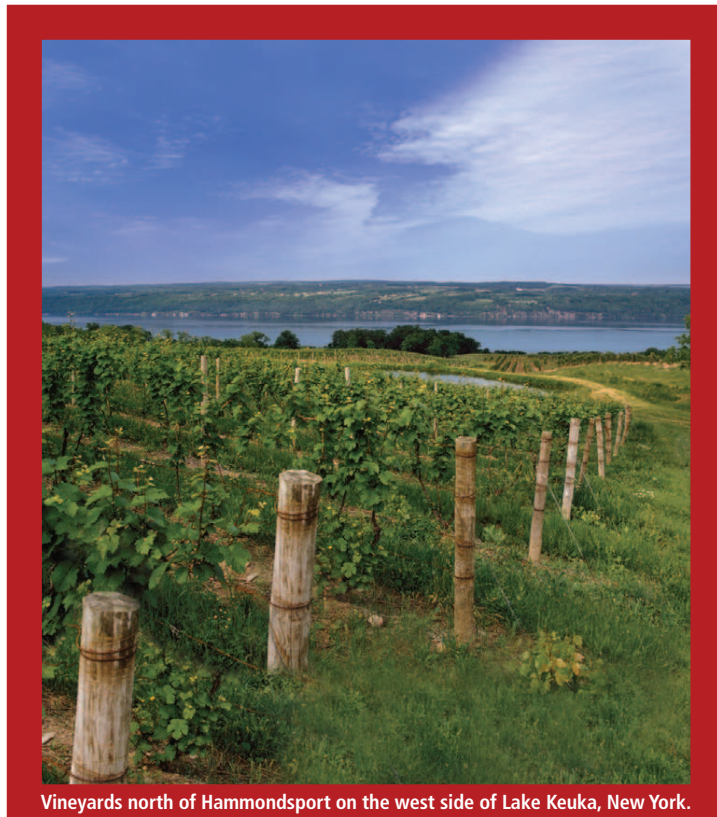




**WINE ENTHUSIAST**  
MAGAZINE

# Buying Guide



Vineyards north of Hammondsport on the west side of Lake Keuka, New York.

## Special Advance Release

Wines reviewed for the October 2010 issue,  
in home August 19

FOR ADDITIONAL RATINGS AND REVIEWS  
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New York

UPSTATE, WHERE RIESLING RULES

New York's Finger Lakes have long been one of the world's most promising growing regions for Riesling. "Most promising," because frankly many of the wines haven't lived up to global expectations for what seems such an obvious Riesling terroir. A cool, water-moderated climate and hillside vineyards made Riesling seem a given. But for many years, the focus was on anything but Riesling—Chardonnay had a run, as did Cabernet Franc; Pinot Noir has some proponents. Finally, our latest tastings suggest that the region as a whole is beginning to fulfill its vinous destiny as a producer of standout Riesling.

The Finger Lakes have always had their share of good Riesling producers—Wiemer, Frank, Heron Hill, to name a few—but now there are dozens of names to know, not just a handful. The original pioneers have been joined by a host of newer ventures, and the oldtimers have raised their games. In this issue, Tasting Coordinator Anna Lee Iijima spotlights some of the noteworthy Rieslings from

her first round of tastings for *Wine Enthusiast*. Expect more of her reviews, covering other parts of the United States and venturing into some European outposts, in upcoming issues.

For red wine lovers, this month's Buying Guide also features some great Cabernet reviews coming out of California. The 2007 vintage yielded some stunners, including noteworthy efforts from such stalwarts as Mondavi and Chappellet, but also from newer wineries, like Ghost Block. California-based Contributing Editor Steve Heimoff was also impressed by the quartet of single-vineyard Syrahs from Novy Cellars.

Imports in this month's collection include some great Grüner Veltliners from Austria, a bevy of Brunellos di Montalcino from the great 2004 and 2005 vintages and additional selections from France, Spain and Australia. Finally, remember that you can access our collection of almost 90,000 wine reviews (plus Spirits and Beers) via our Web site: [buyingguide.winemag.com](http://buyingguide.winemag.com). Cheers!

—JOE CZERWINSKI

RIESLING

**89 Belhurst 2009 Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes); \$19.** There's lots of zing in this lush, fresh wine with ripe pineapple, melon and peach aromas. Tart tangerine notes meld gorgeously with a bitter lime peel finish, giving added complexity to this intensely concentrated although not quite "dry" Riesling. —A.I.

**89 Chateau Lafayette Reneau 2008 Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes); \$15.** This beautiful Riesling from Chateau Lafayette Reneau opens with a delicate prickle of acidity that's wonderfully enticing on the tongue. Lush with aromas of ripe yellow peaches and nectarines, it's balanced artfully with a sharp, mineral edge and bright lemony acidity. Finishes quite dry. —A.I.

**89 Swedish Hill 2009 Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes); \$16.** Crisp and refreshing with notes of grated ginger, white flowers and cantaloupe. This dry Riesling balances peachy fruit flavors with a steely backbone

of slate and lime, tart acidity and a pleasantly long finish. Lovely all around. —A.I.

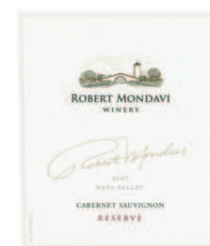
**88 Belhurst 2009 Semi-Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes); \$18.** This aromatic semisweet Riesling is a bouquet of jasmine blossoms and luscious pears laced with lime and musk. Sweet honeycrisp apples and powdered sugar on the palate meld with a tang of acidity and a long, mouthwatering finish. —A.I.

**88 Dr. Konstantin Frank 2008 Semi-Dry Riesling (Finger Lakes); \$15.** There's a whiff of summer—ripe yellow peaches caramelizing on the grill—trapped between the many layers of this honeyed, off-dry Riesling. The palate is polished with an undertone of wet stones and notes of freesia and grapefruit zest. Brisk acidity and a long, mineral finish round out this cheerful yet focused wine. —A.I.

**88 Lamoreaux Landing 2009 Round Rock Vineyard Riesling (Finger Lakes); \$20.** There's a hint of smoke throughout the nose and palate that adds a layer of complexity to this sweet, pretty Riesling. Aromas of



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



**95 Robert Mondavi 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$135.** Bone dry and utterly balanced, with deeply powerful, long-lasting flavors of blackberries and black currants and an intense, but integrated, coating of smoky oak. But it's also very tannic. Nothing soft about this wine. As fine a cellar candidate as any Mondavi Reserve in years. Should develop for 12, 15, even 20 years. **Cellar Selection.**



**95 Trinchero 2007 Cloud's Nest Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Mount Veeder); \$50.** A lovely Cabernet, brimming with complex blackberry, cherry, mineral, tobacco and cedar flavors that impress for their sheer power. Shows the firm, hard tannins this mountain always lends Cabs, but they're so finely ground, the wine is drinkable now with a good decanting. Should age well for a decade. **Editors' Choice.**

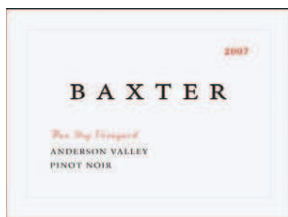
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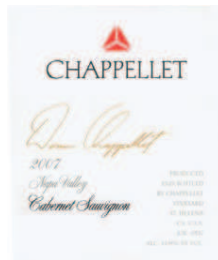
**95 Zaca Mesa 2007 Grenache (Santa Ynez Valley); \$32.** This spectacular 100% Grenache is a huge success. It's so delicious, you can hardly stop drinking it. Just oozes in raspberry and red cherry purée and caramelized, smoky oak richness, yet is thoroughly dry. An amazing, unforgettable wine that establishes a new benchmark for California Grenache from this winery that was an early pioneer in Rhône varieties. *Editors' Choice.*



**94 Astrales 2007 Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero); \$67.** Shows almost all that's great about the region: dark, smoky, floral berry and chocolate aromas followed by juicy, acid-driven boysenberry, spice, bitter chocolate and peppery flavors. An excellent effort for a tough vintage, with dynamite power and a poise. Drink 2012–2018. Imported by Grapes of Spain.



**94 Baxter 2007 Run Dog Vineyard Pinot Noir (Anderson Valley); \$45.** An exotic Pinot of a type usually limited to Anderson Valley. It's marked as much by gamy, mushroom and forest floor notes as by raspberries, cherries and red currants, with notes of licorice and pepper. Drily crisp and elegantly constructed, this complex young wine should develop for 4–6 years.



**94 Chappellet 2007 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$42.** This is the winery's basic Cabernet, but there's nothing common about it. It's dry and complex and moderately ageworthy, a hillside Cabernet that revels in its plush, firm tannins and ripe fruit. There's a minerality that seems to come from the soil, with expressive blackberry, currant, chocolate and anise flavors. Really fine now after a decant, and should develop through this decade.



**94 Pago de los Capellanes 2006 Reserva (Ribera del Duero); \$54.** Sensational RDD Reserva with dry, smoky, elegant aromas and then a super-juicy, fresh, finely etched palate with composed cola, cherry, raspberry and more. This wine exhibits merit after merit; it's complex yet easy to like. Really excellent for the money. Drink 2011–2018. Imported by Antalva Imports.



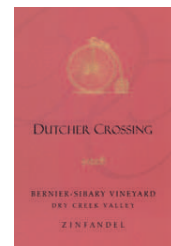
**94 Stonestreet 2008 Lower Rim Chardonnay (Alexander Valley); \$55.** Ultrarich, an oily, unctuous wine offering tiers of pineapples, pears, limes and mangoes, enriched with sweet, smoky oak. Made in the superripe California style, yet always retains a crisp, dry elegance.



**93 Baxter 2007 Oppenlander Vineyard Pinot Noir (Mendocino); \$60.** A fresh, vibrant but tight young Pinot Noir. It's rich in wild raspberry, cherry and cola flavors, enhanced with spicy oak, and firm in acidity and tannins. Should be cellared for a good 3–5 years. *Cellar Selection.*

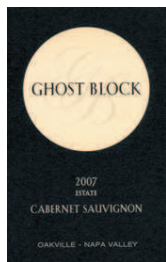


**93 Castello Banfi 2005 Poggio alle Mura (Brunello di Montalcino); \$85.** Castello Banfi's cru expression of Brunello, Poggio alle Mura, is a dark and delicious Brunello with a vertical aromatic delivery of blackberry, currants, plums, cola, mesquite and spice. Sweet oak flavors of vanilla spread over the palate and the wine has impressive consistency and persistency. Imported by Banfi Vintners.

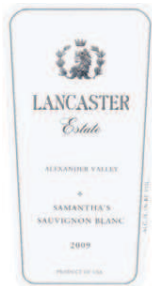


**93 Dutcher Crossing 2008 Bernier-Sibary Vineyard Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley); \$39.** Quite a beautiful Zinfandel. It takes Dry Creek's briary fruit and lifts it, although the wine retains a peppery, brambly character. Blended with Petite Sirah, Carignane and Mataro (Mourvèdre), it's rich in wild raspberry, cherry, sweet cured tobacco, anise and sandalwood flavors, with a squeeze of orange essence.

## BUYING GUIDE



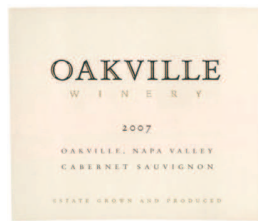
**93 Ghost Block 2007 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville); \$60.** A beautiful Cabernet. Dark, dry and elegantly structured, it has classic Napa tannins and is nicely trimmed in acidity. The flavors are complex and delicious, suggesting ripe blackberries, black currants and cedar. Drink now–2015.



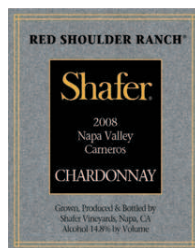
**93 Lancaster 2009 Samantha's Estate Sauvignon Blanc (Alexander Valley); \$24.** A worthy white wine to stand beside the winery's estate red. Made from a single vineyard, it's absolutely dry and brilliantly crisp in acidity, with subtle, complex flavors of white peach, citrus fruits, minerals and white flowers. A touch of oak adds the perfect note of toast. Very fancy and upscale. *Editors' Choice.*



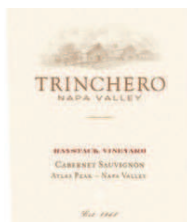
**93 Magistrate 2007 Limited Production Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley); \$25.** Great Zinfandel, showing Dry Creek Valley at its best. The wine is dry and super-spicy, with complex, succulent wild berry, currant, licorice, bacon and pepper flavors, and just a touch of superripe raisins on the finish. Really notable for the quality of its fine tannins. *Editors' Choice.*



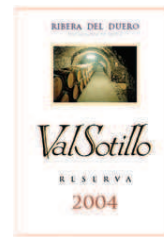
**93 Oakville Winery 2007 Estate Grown & Produced Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville); \$46.** Very ripe and extracted, almost jammy, with primary fruit flavors of blackberries, black cherries, red plums, currants, dark chocolate and spices. Delicious and noble, but kind of immature. Give it 4–6 years to soften and integrate, and it could develop even longer. *Cellar Selection.*



**93 Shafer 2008 Red Shoulder Ranch Chardonnay (Carneros); \$48.** After many years of cult stardom, Shafer's Red Shoulder Ranch still rules. It performs the difficult feat of combining powerful richness with dry elegance. The pineapple, Meyer lemon and kaffir lime flavors are undergirded with a steely minerality, while oak and lees add rich tiers of interest. The 2008 is tarter than usual, making it a good foil against lobster risotto or grilled salmon with a tropical fruit salsa topping.



**93 Trincherro 2007 Haystack Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Atlas Peak); \$50.** A wonderful Cabernet, rich and dry. The alcohol is fairly high, but in keeping with the wine's power. The fruity blackberry and currant flavors are balanced by refreshingly earthy notes of olives and sweet herbs. Should develop through 2013.



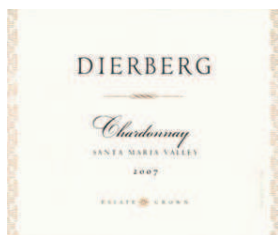
**93 Val Sotillo 2004 Reserva (Ribera del Duero); \$60.** Wonderful on the bouquet, where earthy notes blend perfectly with alert, bright fruit aromas. This is a sizable, full-bodied wine with leather, lively fruit character and a dose of rich chocolate. It's in excellent shape and shows impressive balance and depth. Delicious to the core, with leaft and noticeable oak that should lessen if given more time. Drink now–2019. Imported by Tradewinds Specialty Imports.



**92 Argiano 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$51.** From one of the most beautiful and historic estates in Montalcino, Argiano's Brunello is redolent of cherry, cassia, exotic spice, smoke and very tame, delicate oak notes of toasted vanilla. The wine is bright and polished with firm tannins and some sour cherry nuances on the close. Imported by Vias Imports.



**92 C. Beck 2007 Petite Sirah (Napa Valley); \$38.** A very good, even noble Petite Sirah whose classic structure expresses the variety's personality in an elegant way. Tannic and dry, it's a big, fruity wine, with notes of blackberries, coffee, dark chocolate and tar. Now–2013.



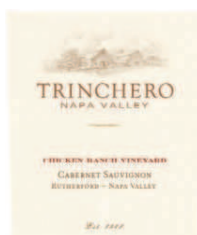
**92 Dierberg 2007 Chardonnay (Santa Maria Valley); \$32.** A lovely Chardonnay, bone dry and rich, that shows how well this cool Santa Barbara valley can develop the variety. With crisp acidity and a tang of minerals, the wine is citrusy and floral, with opulent notes from oak barrels and creamy lees.



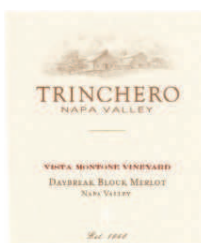
**92 Star Lane Vineyard 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Ynez Valley); \$42.** Quite a sophisticated Cab, and one that shows the promise of Happy Canyon, which became an appellation this year. The wine is much drier and leaner than anything in Napa, but quite elegant and intense in blackberries, black currants and dried herbs. It's a worthy successor to the very fine 2005. The alcohol is 15.1%.



**92 The Old Faithful 2005 Northern Exposure Grenache (McLaren Vale); \$38.** Starts off with intriguing aromas of coffee, clove and plum that segue into dark, warming flavors. It's full bodied, lush and almost creamy in texture, with supple tannins that only hint at their presence before fading into a long, licorice-tinged finish. Best now–2013. Imported by USA Wine West. *Editors' Choice.*



**92 Trinchero 2007 Chicken Ranch Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford); \$35.** A seriously good wine. Shows classic elegance in the dryness, fine tannins and restrained flavors of blackberries, black currants and cedar. Feels really refined in the mouth, with an herbaceousness that both grounds it and balances the fruit. Now–2013.



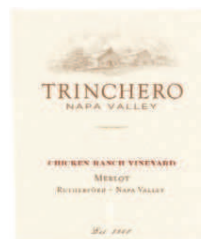
**92 Trinchero 2007 Vista Montone Vineyard Daybreak Block Merlot (Napa Valley); \$35.** A lovely Merlot, dry and oaky and earthy, with a rich vein of cherries, violets, red licorice and spicy bacon. Defines elegance, with a gentle scour of tannins. One of the drier, classier Merlots out there. Great with a juicy steak.



**91 Fuligni 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$75.** Here's an austere and sophisticated Brunello with a slightly brownish hue to its garnet color and aged aromas of dried currants and forest berries, spice, mesquite, soy sauce and licorice. The wine is exceedingly silky and drying in the mouth. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd.



**91 Side Job 2008 C5 Stefani Vineyard Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley); \$25.** This very dry wine shows the spicy, briary flavors of Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel. The flavors are of wild black and red berries, currants, brambly nettles, pepper, Chinese 5 spice, espresso and a hint of earthy dark chocolate. Quite a fine, complex drink that wants smoky, charred meats, like barbecued ribs, pork, or a rich grilled steak.

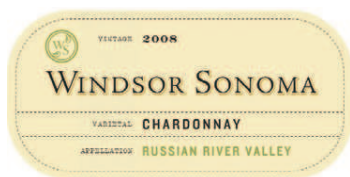


**91 Trinchero 2007 Chicken Ranch Vineyard Merlot (Rutherford); \$35.** Dry and tannic, a Merlot that's the opposite of softly luxurious. But it's extremely elegant with its cherry, red currant and bitter cherrieskin flavors, and shows true complexity throughout. Just cries out for a fine steak, in a brown butter, soft cheese and garlic sauce.



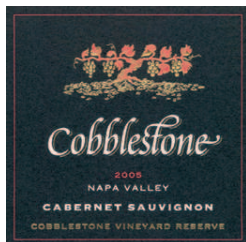
**91 Trinchero 2007 Meritage (Napa Valley); \$50.** Tough and gritty in tannins, with a mouthfeel like you're chewing on sandpaper. Yet this Bordeaux blend is very rich in fruit, with a solid core of blackberries, black currants, anise and violets, sweetened with toast oak. Decant this classy Bordeaux Blend for a few hours before serving.

## BUYING GUIDE



### 91 Windsor Sonoma 2008 Chardonnay (Russian River Valley); \$20.

This is a firm, dry, mineral Chardonnay. It's not blockbuster rich, but it is clean and vibrant and elegant. The flinty flavors are enriched with notes of pineapples and green apples, while oak and lees give hints of buttered toast and sour cream. A very fine, food-friendly wine that sommeliers should be aware of. **Editors' Choice.**



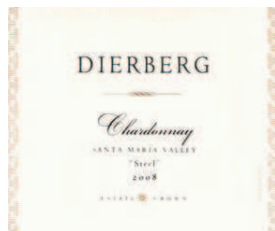
### 90 Cobblestone 2005 Cobblestone Vineyard Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$69.

Clearly well-originated, to judge from the fine structure and essential purity. But it's a very tannic, closed wine, with a mouth-numbing astringency that accentuates the acidity. Even so, it's so ripe in blackberries and currants it's almost drinkable now, with a good decant. But you're best off cellaring a good 4-6 years. **Cellar Selection.**



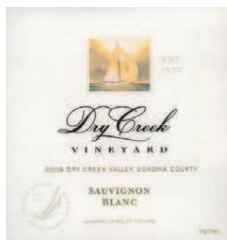
### 90 Col d'Orcia 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.

An improvement over past vintages, thanks to the elegance of its fruit and the richness of its consistency. The wine is bursting with cherry and casis flavors and it shows harmony and a firm, streamlined nature to its mouthfeel. Imported by Palm Bay International.



### 90 Dierberg 2008 Steel Chardonnay (Santa Maria Valley); \$32.

Made without any oak influences, this wine shows the splendors of great Santa Maria Chardonnay. It's marked by complex flavors of Meyer lemons, pineapples, orange zest and honeysuckle, and is beautifully bright in crisp acidity. Nice with fresh crab.



### 90 Dry Creek Vineyard 2009 Sauvignon Blanc (Dry Creek Valley); \$16.

Dry, dry, dry is the name of the game with this Sauvignon Blanc. It's rich in Meyer lemon, kaffir lime and pineapple flavors, with intense, zesty acidity for clean balance, and the finish is spicy and stimulating. A beautiful cocktail wine to get a fancy dinner started. **Editors' Choice.**



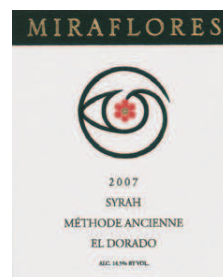
### 90 MacRostie 2008 Chardonnay (Sonoma Coast); \$25.

A very good, useful Chardonnay that's easy to drink, yet also quite complex. Brisk and crisp in acidity, it shows citrus mineral, green apple and floral notes, touched with smoky oak.



### 90 Mauritson 2009 Sauvignon Blanc (Dry Creek Valley); \$17.

Mauritson has been building up a pretty good track record with their unoaked Sauvignon Blanc. This '09 shows the balance of the vintage, with excellent acidity, modest alcohol and complex varietal flavors that range from citrus fruits and apples to spices and gooseberries. It's unusually good for the price. **Editors' Choice.**



### 90 Miraflores 2007 Methode Ancienne Syrah (El Dorado); \$25.

This is a wonderfully soft, complex Syrah. Completely dry, it offers waves of raspberries, red currants, mocha, licorice, sandalwood and dusty Indian spices that linger on through a long finish. A very fine, medium- to full-bodied red wine for drinking now.



### 90 Perry Creek 2007 Altitude 2401 Dark Forest Syrah (El Dorado); \$28.

A distinctive Syrah that shows great concentration in the focused blackberry, sweet leather, dark chocolate, mineral and black pepper flavors. Beyond the power, the wine is bone dry, soft in acidity and quite tannic. The end result is impressive, and ready to drink now.

## BUYING GUIDE

**\$14.** An intensely herbal wine, smelling of the garrigue where it is grown. It is lean, firmly tannic with high red fruit acids, and a dry structure. It's rustic, reminiscent of old-style winemaking. Imported by Hand Picked Selections. —J.C.

### WHITE WINES

**90** **Château Paradis 2008 Terre des Anges (Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence); \$28.** This striking Provence white opens with intense aromatics of mixed nuts and peach that set the stage for a powerful expression of crushed flowers and grass in the mouth. This is a refreshing wine, but weighty and warm; try with veal or light pork dishes. Drink now to 2011. Imported by Bob Bofman Selections. —J.R.

**88** **Domaine de la Sangliere 2008 Prestige (Côtes de Provence); \$27.** Complex and exotic, this blend of Rolle (Vermentino) and Ugni Blanc opens with papaya and almond notes that fold into a flavorful palate of cantaloupe and guava. Winds up on a bright mango tone. Drink now to 2011. Imported by European Wine Imports. —J.R.

**86** **Domaines Ott 2007 Clos Mireille Blanc de Blancs (Côtes de Provence); \$39.** This zesty Provence white is starting to show its age a bit, with faded flowers upfront and a slightly waxy texture. Nonetheless, there's enough to keep the senses entertained, with a pleasant floral edge to the pear-inflected palate and a final butter note. Drink up. Imported by Maisons Marques & Domaines USA. —J.R.

**86** **Domaines Ott 2008 Clos Mireille Blanc de Blancs (Côtes de Provence); \$39.** The nose is fresh and pretty and there's definitely a luxurious texture to the flower-accented palate. However, it lacks intensity in the mouth and a slight funkiness on the finish detracts. Drink soon. Imported by Maisons Marques & Domaines USA. —J.R.

**86** **Le Classique from the 3 Springs Vineyard 2007 Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence; \$17.** At three years old, this wine is showing some interesting developed aromas of almond paste and petrol while the lightweight palate displays some nice butter tones. Pick this one up soon, for it seems to be fading. Imported by OWS. —J.R.

## TUSCANY

### 2004 BRUNELLO

**96** **Altesino 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$80.** This stunning wine boasts loads of character that peels off as aromatic layers of cherry, cassis, soapy wild flowers, violets, earth, cola and church incense. There's a sweet spice element of cinnamon and nutmeg and all the flavors last long on the finish. It's tempered, elegant and smooth overall. Imported by Winebow. *Cellar Selection.* —M.L.

**95** **Casanova di Neri 2004 Cerretalto (Brunello di Montalcino); \$200.** The aromas are harmonious and penetrating; the mouthfeel smooth and velvety and the overall effect is one of complexity and intensity. Cerretalto is a cru selection riserva and represents one of the most modern, fruit-forward and boldest expressions from the Montalcino territory. Imported by Dalla Terra Winery Direct. *Cellar Selection.* —M.L.

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

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

**95** **Uccelliera 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$112.** Uccelliera is among an elite group that represents the best of the best of Montalcino. This gorgeous wine is intense and generous with nice concentration and layered aromas of cherry, blackberry, spice, blackberry and plum. The mouthfeel is smooth and

rich and the wine promises many happy years ahead. A Marc de Grazia selection; various American importers. *Cellar Selection.* —M.L.

**95** **Valdicava 2004 Madonna del Piano Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$186.** Here's a dark and well concentrated Brunello Riserva with meaty tones of smoked ham or bresaola backed by black cherry and prune. You'll get loads of leather and tobacco and the wine is bright and tart on the close with a fresh fruit finale. Excellent. Imported by Vinifera Imports. *Cellar Selection.* —M.L.

**94** **Caparzo 2004 Borgo Scopeto Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$97.** Soft, supple and persistent, this gorgeous Riserva Brunello offers intensity and genuine territorial characteristics. Aromas include cherry cola, spice and loads of balsam notes such as eucalyptus and menthol. It's tight and determined in the mouth and this impression is reinforced by fresh acidity and silky tannins. Imported by Vineyard Brands. —M.L.

**94** **Castello Romitorio 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$140.** Castello Romitorio's beautiful Riserva Brunello delivers ripe fruit notes with inky consistency and elegant mineral tones framed around a core of solid red fruit. The wine is supple and very polished with impressive persistency on the finish. Imported by Vinifera Imports. —M.L.

**94** **La Fiorita 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$84.** La Fiorita Riserva shows excellent intensity and generosity with full notes of blackberry, cherry, spice, cigar box and smoke. The wine is big, thick and succulent and the finish lasts many long, delicious minutes. Very nice. Imported by Chambers & Chambers. *Cellar Selection.* —M.L.

**94** **Poggio Antico 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$178.** This is a particularly elegant wine that emphasizes harmonious aromas of black fruit, spice and polished mineral. Poggio Antico is an excellent producer and this Riserva shows the best of Montalcino tradition. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. *Cellar Selection.* —M.L.

**94** **Poggio Nardone 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$NA.** Here's a beautiful Brunello Riserva that comes at you in full force thanks to its compelling aromas

of spice, cherry, currants, mesquite wood and cola. There's an immediate and direct manner to the aromatic approach, but it's layered and complex at the same time. Imported by Dancing Bear Cellars. **Cellar Selection.** —M.L.

### 93 Camigliano 2004 Riserva Gualto (Brunello di Montalcino); \$107.

This is a super modern and pleasurable Brunello Riserva with soft, sweet aromas of cherry, chocolate and vanilla bean. The texture is rich and smooth and the tannins are fine and extremely polished. Imported by Vias Imports. —M.L.

### 93 Casanova di Neri 2004 Tenuta Nuova (Brunello di Montalcino); \$82.

This vineyard-designate expression from Giacomo Neri shows gorgeous depth and intensity. Aromas here include red berries, currants, anise seed, new leather, pipe tobacco and Spanish cedar. Its texture is rich, firm and ripe with berry nuances. Drink after 2017. Imported by Dalla Terra Winery Direct. **Cellar Selection.** —M.L.

### 93 Citille di Sopra 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$52.

Here's an intense and immediate Brunello Riserva that needs a few more years of cellar aging to soften its young tannins. There's nice balance here between fruit notes and spice and the wine is generous, rich and silky on the close. Vanilla and vibrant cherry cap off the experience. Imported by Siena Imports. **Cellar Selection.** —M.L.

### 93 Conti Costanti 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$138.

This is a standout Brunello Riserva thanks to the smoothness and richness of its inviting aromas. The bouquet includes elements of cherry, chocolate fudge and soft plum and prune. Nothing is out of tune and the wine is equally harmonious and tasty on the finish. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

### 93 Fuligni 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$140.

Compared to past vintages, this Riserva embodies a lighter, more elegant style. Aromas are delivered in a direct and vertical manner and include cherry, red currant, chocolate and shadings of exotic spice. In the mouth, this wine shows enormous intensity, but also harmony and balance. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

### 93 Il Palazzone 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$140.

Il Palazzone's 2004 Riserva exhibits nicely aged aromas of dried currants, spice, leather, tar, Indian spice, pressed violets and cassis. There's excellent intensity and complexity here and the wine closes long with lingering layers of spice and smoke. Imported by Domaine Select Wine Estates. —M.L.

### 93 Marchesi de' Frescobaldi 2004 Castelgiocondo Riserva Ripe al Convento (Brunello di Montalcino); \$120.

Beautifully intense and generous, this Riserva Brunello from Frescobaldi's Castelgioconda estate boasts a modern, determined style. Aromas here include black cherry, chocolate, tobacco and spice. In the mouth, this wine is rich, smooth and very persistent. Imported by Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.L.

### 93 Mocali 2004 Vigna delle Raunate Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$75.

This is an excellent Riserva from Montalcino with rich notes of bright cherry, toast, coffee, tobacco and blackberry. Aged in big oak casks, the wine also shows elegance and harmony with a pristine, vibrant finish that lasts long on the palate. Imported by Michael Skurmik Wines. —M.L.

### 93 Solaria 2004 Riserva 123 (Brunello di Montalcino); \$84.

Produced by vintner Patrizia Cencioni, this Brunello Riserva is plump and succulent with loads of black fruit, new leather, moist tobacco, wet earth and wild mushroom. You'll love the intensity and the mouthfeel, which is tonic but firm at the same time. Imported by Sherbrooke Cellars. —M.L.

### 93 Talenti 2004 Pian di Conte Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$NA.

Talenti's Riserva Brunello is a beautiful wine on all levels. There's intensity and purity here with blackberry notes that blend with mineral and light shadings of smoke and spice. The wine ends with power and determination and a very long, spicy finish. Imported by Robert Chadderdon Selections. —M.L.

### 93 Tenuta di Sesta 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$NA.

The bouquet opens to sophisticated aromas of dried fruit, spice, smoke, tar and licorice. This is an austere and elegant wine that should be served with the highest quality red meat. In the mouth, it delivers complexity and elegance more than

brawn or power. Imported by Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —M.L.

### 93 Tenuta Vitanza 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$90.

Here's a dark and expertly extracted Brunello Riserva from a beautiful family-run estate located in its own microclimate within the Montalcino denomination. The wine shows intense aromas of blackberry, prune, leather, tobacco and spice. Imported by Vintners Estate Direct Importing. —M.L.

### 92 Fattoria La Lecciaia 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$60.

Smokey layers of tar and asphalt open the nose of this dark and brooding Brunello Riserva. There are some candied and dried fruit notes here but the overall bouquet is focused on complex tertiary aromas. What sets the wine apart however is its texture: firm, drying and long lasting. Drink now or up to three years from now. Imported by Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —M.L.

### 92 Fattoria La Lecciaia 2004 Vigna Manapetra Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$65.

This Brunello Riserva offers impressive tones of red cherry and blackberry backed by spice and toast. There's a richly succulent or vinous nature to the wine that will surely integrate with more time in the cellar. In the mouth, this wine is bright and fresh. Imported by Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —M.L.

### 92 Gianni Brunelli 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$105.

This elegant wine is distinguished by mineral notes of lead pencil and slate that give backbone to broader aromas of cherry, plum, currant and prune. Oak-related layers of spice and toast add a refined touch but do not distract from the overall fruit characteristics. Imported by Acid Inc Selections. —M.L.

### 92 La Poderina 2004 Poggio Banale (Brunello di Montalcino); \$133.

Poggio Banale offers a clean and polished nose with spice and black fruit highlights. The wine is chewy and deliciously succulent with tight tannins that make it an ideal candidate for long cellar aging. Imported by Vias Imports. —M.L.

### 92 Mocali 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$60.

Mocali's Brunello Riserva offers a bright and buoyant bouquet of cherry, blackberry, spice, tobacco and dark choco-

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late. The wine is elegant, generous and balanced with a full but not overdone style. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

**92 Padelletti 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$100.** Here is a very likeable Brunello Riserva with plush richness and intense aromas of chocolate, spice, cherry and blackberry. The wine is soft and rich and would pair perfectly with succulent steak. Imported by Uva Imports. —M.L.

**92 Pian dell'Orino 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$135.** Barbecue smoke and mesquite wood are the most immediate aromas you will notice here. You'll also recognize background tones of black peppercorn, lead pencil and licorice. The wine delivers loads of intensity in the mouth. This a big, thick and dense expression that is ready to drink now. Imported by Polaner Selections. —M.L.

**92 Sesti 2004 Phenomena Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$110.** Phenomena Riserva offers huge intensity and fullness with opulent notes of black fruit, spice and tobacco. The wine wins points in the mouth where it shows lovely density and persistency. Imported by Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. —M.L.

**92 Tenimenti Angelini 2004 Val di Suga Vigna Spuntali (Brunello di Montalcino); \$80.** Elegance, harmony and persistency characterize this Brunello Riserva from the Tenimenti Angelini group. Aromas include ripe berry fruit, spice, leather, tobacco and cola. Pair this wine with pheasant or game meat. The high alcohol will keep your palate clean. —M.L.

**92 Tenuta Oliveto 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$NA.** There's a smoky, meaty element to the bouquet here that recalls smoked bacon or beef jerky. Beyond those aromas, you'll get tons of black currant, plum and prune and the wine is satisfying and extremely smooth on the finish. Imported by Ima Imports. —M.L.

**91 Casanova di Neri 2004 (Brunello di Montalcino); \$55.** Lighter in style and consistency than this producer's past Brunellos, this wine represents a return to Montalcino tradition. Aromas include red cherry, wet earth, white mushroom and tobacco. In the mouth, the wine is

tight, firm and long lasting. Imported by Dalla Terra Winery Direct. —M.L.

**91 Domus Vitae 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$80.** Bursting red fruit stands opposite sophisticated oak-driven aromas of spice, coffee and tobacco to create a successful aromatic union. You can taste the wood rendering with more precision in the mouth, and the texture is consequently rich and smooth. Imported by Superior Wines LLC. —M.L.

**91 La Fornace 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$80.** Bright cherry and wild berry aromas are enhanced by spice and oak nuances of tobacco and leather. Count on a bright future for this Brunello Riserva as it integrates with more time in the cellar. The wine is compact, fresh and persistent in the mouth. Imported by Vignaioli. —M.L.

**91 La Fortuna 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$NA.** Cherry, red apple, spice and moist tobacco emerge from the nose of this Brunello Riserva. The wine offers impressive intensity and density in the mouth and the finish is long lasting and very enjoyable. Imported by MHW, Ltd.. —M.L.

**91 La Togata 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$134.** Made in limited quantities, this austere Riserva exhibits aged tones of dried blackberries and currants, exotic spice, tar, cola and powdered licorice. There's great freshness here that helps propel the wine over the palate. Imported by Panebianco. —M.L.

**91 Lazeretti 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$NA.** Buoyant and fresh with penetrating aromas of red berry, cola, licorice and natural rubber, the bouquet hits the nose in a vertical and direct manner. The wine is firm and textured in the mouth with a thick tannic coating that moves slowly over the palate. Imported by Joshua Tree Imports. —M.L.

**91 Lisini 2004 Ugolaia (Brunello di Montalcino); \$144.** This Riserva Brunello delivers instant aromas of spice, toast and leather that are wrapped seductively around a core of black fruit and plum. Those spice nuances last long in the mouth and would pair with braised meat or beef stew. The tannins are tight, so drink after 2014. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

**91 San Polo 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$NA.** Ripe fruit and oak nuances emerge from the nose of this modern Brunello Riserva. Aromas include black cherry, blackberry preserves, spice and smoke. Bright fruit flavors and smooth tannins characterize the mouthfeel. Imported by Winebow. —M.L.

**91 SassodiSole 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$90.** Austere and elegant with ethereal tones of Spanish cedar, cherry cola, eucalyptus and licorice, this Brunello represents some of vintage 2004's best qualities. The wine is elegant and tempered yet determined and enduring in the mouth. Pair it with pork rolled with prunes. Imported by Supreme Wines & Spirits. —M.L.

**90 Abbadia Ardenga 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$NA.** Here's a subdued Riserva with a clean bouquet of aromas that faithfully reflect Sangiovese's main characteristics. You'll recognize red currants, wet earth, pipe tobacco, cola and tar. The mouthfeel is simple and fresh although it does impart long-lasting flavors of cherry and spice. Imported by Market Wine. —M.L.

**90 Fattoi 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$95.** This is a rich and deeply oak-driven expression of Brunello with layers of spice and smoke that sit heavy over ripe fruit aromas of plum, prune and black currant. The texture is smooth and rich and the tannins are soft. Imported by Tricana Imports. —M.L.

**90 Fattoria Scopone 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$55.** Fattoria Scopone's 2004 Riserva opens with charred aromas of campfire, liquid smoke and barbecue sauce. The fresh fruit notes tend to be on the ripe side: think mature cherry and strawberry. In the mouth, however, this well-crafted wine is smooth, silky and long lasting. Imported by Siema LLC. —M.L.

**90 Fornacina 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$66.** Here's a smooth and bright Brunello Riserva with beautiful fruit tones followed by delicate notes of spice and black mineral. Pair this wine with pheasant with wild rice. Imported by Villa Italia. —M.L.

**90 Il Poggione 2004 Vigna Paganelli Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$96.** This Brunello Riserva offers very nice inten-

sity and smoothness in the mouth, although its aromatic bouquet is less determined. There are sweet polished tannins on the close and the wine would work with steak marinated with garlic and rosemary. Imported by Terlato Wines International. —M.L.

**90 La Colombina 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$75.** This Brunello Riserva delivers subdued aromas of cherry, blackberry, tar and spice. There's a sour cherry theme in the mouth and the finish is bright and crisp. It is, however, a very food-friendly wine thanks to the acidity. Pair it with grilled meats, wild mushroom risotto or cheesy pasta. Imported by Michael Skurmik Wines. —M.L.

**90 Pinino 2004 Pinone Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$62.** There's a raw, succulent element here that is reinforced by aromas of cherry and blackberry. This wine is distinguished by an intensely floral bouquet with notes of violets, lavender, incense and perfume. It's bright and tannic at this point, so give this wine a few more years of cellar aging. Imported by USA Wine Imports. —M.L.

**89 Collemattoni 2004 Vigna Fontelontano Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$85.** This Brunello Riserva offers wood-driven notes of spice and smoke backed by ripe fruit and blackberry preserves. It is sweet and rich in the mouth with loads of jammy fruit on the close. Imported by Vignaioli. —M.L.

**89 Le Potazzine 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$120.** Simple and straightforward aromas of red berry and mineral cap the aromatic nuances expressed in the Brunello Riserva. What the wine lacks is complexity, although it does feel rich, smooth and bright in the mouth. A Marc de Grazia selection; various American importers. —M.L.

**89 Piccini 2004 Villa al Cortile (Brunello di Montalcino); \$45.** Piccini offers a great opportunity to experience Brunello di Montalcino to those who may not already be familiar with this storied Tuscan wine. Available at a more attractive price, the wine is lean and compact with bright notes of cherry, blackberry and exotic spice. Imported by Aveniu Brands, Inc. —M.L.

**88 Canneta 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$NA.** This Riserva opens

with a lean, compact color and vinous aromas of forest berry and cherry. There's crisp acidity here that will pair perfectly with foods that have a fatty element such as ricotta-filled pasta or butter chicken. Imported by Orvino Imports & Distribution. —M.L.

**88 Poggio dell'Aquila 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$NA.** Bright and buoyant, this Riserva Brunello offers loads of easy, fresh fruit with a point of ripe apple or white cherry. The wine is smooth and bright on the finish with fresh acidity that follows polished tannins. —M.L.

**87 Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona 2004 Vigna di Pianrosso Santa Caterina d'Oro Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$65.** This Riserva Brunello shows sharp, brambly characteristics of forest berry and white cherry. Although the nose is prickly and awkward, the wine wins points in the mouth thanks to its softness and plushness. Imported by Indigenous Selections. —M.L.

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## 2005 BRUNELLO

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**94 Cupano 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$140.** Cupano has impressed with its entire line of Tuscan wines this year. Made with organically farmed fruit, this wine offers thick concentration, a velvety texture and bright aromas of cherry and spice. It's one of the most opulent Brunellos we've seen this vintage. Imported by Fairest Cape Beverage Co., Inc. —M.L.

**93 Altesino 2005 Montosoli (Brunello di Montalcino); \$100.** Altesino produces some of our favorite Brunello and although this vintage of Montosoli is less overt than others, the winemakers have worked hard to craft a top shelf expression from this sun-kissed territory. There's enormous depth and persistency here with aromas of black fruit, spice and cherry cola. It's smooth, rich and long lasting. Imported by Winebow. —M.L.

**93 Castello Banfi 2005 Poggio alle Mura (Brunello di Montalcino); \$85.** Castello Banfi's cru expression of Brunello, Poggio alle Mura, is a dark and delicious Brunello with a vertical aromatic delivery of blackberry, currants, plums, cola, mesquite and spice. Sweet oak flavors of vanilla spread over the palate and

the wine has impressive consistency and persistency. Imported by Banfi Vintners. —M.L.

**93 Luce della Vite 2005 Luce (Brunello di Montalcino); \$94.** After long anticipation, this Brunello finally hits the market. The wine is sure to gain enormous success: the packaging is the essence of Italian style and the wine itself shows the highest level of quality. Rich and opulent aromas of cherry, blackberry, spice and leather abound and the wine shows enormous length on the finish. Imported by Folio Fine Wine Partners. *Cellar Selection.* —M.L.

**93 Poggio Antico 2005 Altero (Brunello di Montalcino); \$110.** Aged and sophisticated, this hearty and concentrated Brunello offers ripe tones of blackberry, plum and prune along with subdued nuances of toast and exotic spice. There's great personality and dimension here with medium body and a fresh, berry-driven finish. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

**93 Tenute Silvio Nardi 2005 Vigneto Manachiara (Brunello di Montalcino); \$96.** This impressive vineyard designate Brunello delivers buoyant tones of cherry cola, mesquite and balsam notes. There's a direct and immediate nature to the aromas, followed by bright acidity and silky tannins that leave a lasting impression. This is a very beautiful wine that would pair with meats and oven-roasted pasta dishes. Imported by Kobrand. —M.L.

**93 Uccelliera 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$60.** Uccelliera makes some of the best Brunello you will find in the USA. This vintage does a great job of expressing the sun-drenched territory of Montalcino. Cherry and spice round off the bouquet and the mouthfeel is characterized by immense smoothness and richness. A Marc de Grazia selection; various American importers. —M.L.

**92 Argiano 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$51.** From one of the most beautiful and historic estates in Montalcino, Argiano's Brunello is redolent of cherry, cassis, exotic spice, smoke and very tame, delicate oak notes of toasted vanilla. The wine is bright and polished with firm tannins and some sour cherry nuances on the close. Imported by Vias Imports. —M.L.

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**92 Casanova di Neri 2005 Tenuta Nuova (Brunello di Montalcino); \$75.** Beyond the plump notes of cherry and blackberry there's an added touch of clove, cardamom and rosemary sprig that sets this wine apart. The mouthfeel is rich and textured and because the tannins still need to soften, we recommend you put this bottle down in your cellar for a few more years. Imported by Dalla Terra Winery Direct. —M.L.

**92 Col di Lano di Giovanna Neri 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.** Giovanna Neri's Brunello sports sweet and enticing notes of cherry liqueur, vanilla and soft shades of cinnamon spice. The wine is opulent and richly concentrated with sweet but firm tannins. Pair this wine with steak in green peppercorn sauce. Imported by Vignaioli. —M.L.

**92 Il Cocco 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$46.** The Bindi family of Montalcino has crafted a fine Brunello with excellent personality and dimension. You'll get aromas of black cherry, tart cassis, smoke, exotic spice and cola. It's marked by elegance, balance and a full, generous feel in the mouth. Imported by Fourcade & Hecht Wine Selections. —M.L.

**92 Le Chiuse 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$80.** This beautiful wine opens with impressive intensity and elegance. Aromas recall wild raspberry, cherry, cassis, cola and subtle spice shadings. Thanks to the silky nature of its tannins, you could pair this wine with lean meats like game hen or rabbit. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd. —M.L.

**92 Marchesi de' Frescobaldi 2005 Castelgiocondo (Brunello di Montalcino); \$70.** From the historic Frescobaldi family that has been making wine since the 1300s, this concentrated and rich Brunello delivers a modern touch to a territory steeped in tradition. Aromas here include plump cherry, blackberry and cassis and all that fruit is supported by spice and light toast. Drink after 2012. Imported by Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.L.

**92 Mastrojanni 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$50.** We are impressed with what the Illy brothers (of the Italian coffee dynasty) have done with this historic brand from Montalcino. The wine shows personality and dis-

tinction thanks to its aromas of wild cherries, cassis, light smoke and Spanish cedar. There's bright acidity and elegance here. Imported by Selected Estates of Europe Ltd. *Editors' Choice.* —M.L.

**92 Mocali 2005 Vigna delle Raunate (Brunello di Montalcino); \$55.** Mocali boasts a consistent record of top-notch Brunellos year after year. This expression delivers meaty tones of smoked bacon backed by mature cherry and raspberry. The concentration and density is excellent (especially for this weaker vintage) and the firm tannins need two or three more years of cellar aging to soften. Imported by Michael Skurmik Wines. —M.L.

**92 Padelletti 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$40.** Vintner Claudia Padelletti has crafted a lovely Brunello with bright fruit nuances and mineral tones that lend a polished, dry feel. In the mouth, the wine offers thickness and length. Drink after 2012. Imported by Uva Imports. *Editors' Choice.* —M.L.

**92 Poggio Antico 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$96.** This estate in Montalcino is a favorite, thanks to its consistent production of seductive and charming wines. Here's a Brunello that shows territorial characteristics and careful workmanship with pristine aromas of spice, cherry, blackberry and leather. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

**92 Siro Pacenti 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$70.** Attractive aromas of black fruit, plum, coffee and cola emerge elegantly from the nose of this solid Brunello di Montalcino. Siro Pacenti is one of the area's most historic estates and this expression offers endurance, persistency and silky tannins. Imported by Michael Skurmik Wines. —M.L.

**92 Tenute Silvio Nardi 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.** Tenute Silvio Nardi's Brunello delivers a plump, ripe quality that emphasizes the wine's naturally fruity and succulent personality. Aromas recall mature cherry, leather, pipe tobacco and blackberry. The mouthfeel is rich, polished and there's a touch of bright acidity on the close. Imported by Kobrand. —M.L.

**91 Altesino 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$50.** Altesino's base Brunello

presents a tonic, ruby color with pristine aromas of wild berry, blue flower, earth and ground clove. You'll like the brightness and determination the wine shows in the mouth as it spreads clean over your palate. Imported by Winebow. —M.L.

**91 Caparzo 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$45.** Clean and elegant with polished tannins and a silky texture. Caparzo makes some of the nicest Brunello you will find in the USA. This vintage is characterized by bright berry tones and a lean but elegant feel in the mouth. Imported by Vineyard Brands. —M.L.

**91 Casanova di Neri 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.** Giacomo Neri has seen his share of the media spotlight lately, but this honest base Brunello shows loads of fruit characteristics followed by power and persistency. You'll recognize cherry, blackberry and spice and the overall delivery emphasizes pleasure and drinkability. You could serve it now or wait three or four more years. Imported by Dalla Terra Winery Direct. —M.L.

**91 Da Vinci 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$70.** Da Vinci delivers a bright and vibrant Brunello with distinctive notes of church incense and Christmas spice. There are loads of cherry nuances as well as some sweet vanilla tones. It imparts a smooth, silky feel with a long, fruit-driven finish. Imported by E & J Gallo. —M.L.

**91 Fattoria La Lecciaia 2005 Vigna Manapetra (Brunello di Montalcino); \$55.** Here's an elegant and focused expression from Montalcino with tight aromas of blackberry, cola, anise seed and polished black stone. The mouthfeel is silky and smooth. Pair this wine with rabbit stew with carrots and potatoes. Imported by Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —M.L.

**91 Fornacina 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.** Vintner Simone Biliorsi has crafted an opulent expression of Brunello with sweet aromas of cherry, vanilla and spice. There's a pretty, smoothing quality to this wine that is underscored by the silky quality of the tannins and the long persistency of flavors. Imported by Villa Italia. —M.L.

**91 Fuligni 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$75.** Here's an austere and sophisticated Brunello with a slightly brownish hue to its garnet color and aged aromas of dried currants and forest berries, spice, mesquite, soy sauce and licorice. The wine is exceedingly silky and drying in the mouth. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

**91 Il Palazzone 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$85.** Il Palazzone opens with a lean, compact appearance and a bright ruby color. The bouquet delivers a steady aromatic lineup of cherries, wild berries, blue flowers and light shadings of spice. There's more power and persistency here than you'd expect and Il Palazzone has succeeded in making a beautiful wine in a difficult vintage. Imported by Domaine Select Wine Estates. —M.L.

**91 Il Poggione 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$80.** The folks at Il Poggione have produced a fine Brunello with the intensity and aromas you should expect from this four-star vintage. You'll get aromas of cherrywood, cola, wild berries and sour plum. There's a fresh, lean nature to the mouthfeel and a touch of bitter fruit on the close. Imported by Terlato Wines International. —M.L.

**91 La Fortuna 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$50.** Here's a fortunate Brunello that is redolent of all the best aromas the wine has to offer: blackberry, plump cherry, pressed violets and exotic spice. There's a slightly sweet and pulpy quality to the mouthfeel that helps drive this wine smoothly over the palate. Imported by MHW, Ltd. —M.L.

**91 La Poderina 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$75.** This ruby-colored Brunello offer a distinct mineral accent that is surrounded by fruity tones of wild berries, cassis and cherry cola. There's also a meaty or smoky quality here that gives the wine more heft and determination in the mouth. Drink it with grilled sausage. Imported by Vias Imports. —M.L.

**91 Lisini 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$81.** From the S. Angelo in Colle subzone of Montalcino, this seriously fruit-driven expression relies on a solid bouquet of cherry, blackberry and cassis. Oak-driven layers of spice and toast appear with more clarity in the mouth

and the finish is capped by long, silky tannins. Drink after 2013. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

**91 Mocali 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$40.** Mocali's base Brunello from the four-star 2005 vintage exhibits pretty spice layers of ground clove and black pepper backed by loads of fresh berry fruit. The smooth mouthfeel presents both crisp freshness and polished tannins. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

**91 Pietranera 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$60.** Soft and plush from the start, this bright Brunello spreads over the palate with ease and persistency. Along the way, it imparts flavors of ripe fruit, blackberry, cherry, leather and moist pipe tobacco. The mouthfeel is smooth and thick. Imported by Soilair Selection. —M.L.

**91 Pietroso 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$60.** This is a solid and attractive Brunello with bright cherry notes backed by softer tones of exotic spice, earth and white pepper. The wine boasts a compact and firm feel in the mouth that would pair with duck, pork or game hen. Imported by Enotria Wine Import. —M.L.

**91 Podere Brizio 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** Creamy and luscious with sweet fruit tones backed by layers of spice and tobacco, this wine does a nice job of showcasing the 2005 vintage of Brunello. The wine is less expressive in the mouth, where it shows a lean, compact feel with bright acidity. A Marc de Grazia selection; various American importers. —M.L.

**91 Poggio Nardone 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** Vintner Tiziano Ciacci delivers a beautifully extracted wine with rich ruby highlights backed by mature aromas of blackberry, dried currants, clove and cardamom. The wine is smooth and rich in the mouth with tight tannins and bright berry freshness. Imported by Dancing Bear Cellars. —M.L.

**91 Ricci 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** This 2005 Brunello opens with a soft and supple nose that is accented by tones of sweet cherry, blackberry and spice. All these elements integrate well and the acidity versus tannin equation is equally balanced. There's a slightly

sour note on the end that recalls almond skin or cassis. Imported by Italian Wine Growers. —M.L.

**91 San Felice 2005 Campogiovanni (Brunello di Montalcino); \$60.** Wild berry and forest aromas open the nose of this clean and direct Brunello. There's very nice purity and intensity here and the wine showcases layers of red fruit, plum, spice, leather and rose petal. The silky and smooth mouthfeel would work with meat dishes or hearty pasta. Imported by Premium Brands. —M.L.

**91 San Lorenzo 2005 Bramante (Brunello di Montalcino); \$50.** Spice, toast and black fruit drive the nose of this plush and ripe Brunello di Montalcino. There are loads of cherry, clove and eucalyptus-like aromas at the back that give the wine a more youthful and fresh impact and fresh acidity seals the deal. The wine is rich and velvety in the mouth. Imported by Votto Vines Importing. —M.L.

**91 Tenimenti Angelini 2005 Val di Suga (Brunello di Montalcino); \$50.** Toasty notes of spice, plum, cherry cola, mesquite and moist earth make this textbook Brunello. It has all the aromatic qualities you seek in a wine of this workmanship and sophistication. There's better density and thickness here too which helps propel the wine's persistency on the palate. —M.L.

**91 Tenuta Poggio il Castellare 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$60.** This pretty Brunello opens with a dark garnet color and segues to aromas of black cherry liqueur, blackberry, soy sauce, cola and dark spice. It's a brooding, austere expression from Tuscany with polished tannins and silky texture. Imported by Margate Wine & Spirit Company. —M.L.

**91 Tiezzi 2005 Vigna Soccorso (Brunello di Montalcino); \$45.** Here's a dark and concentrated Brunello with thick aromas of spice, smoke and tobacco lavished over a solid core of black fruit. The nose is definitely on the oak-driven side but the mouth is bursting with fresh fruit notes. It makes for an excellent ensemble. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

**91 Villa I Cipressi 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$51.** This is a smooth and

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enduring Brunello with beautiful tones of ripe cherry, vanilla bean, moist tobacco and loads of blackberry and plum. Drying mineral tones come into focus on the rear and the wine is plush and succulent in the mouth with polished tannins. Imported by Acid Inc Selections. —M.L.

**90 Belpoggio 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$50.** This vintage of Brunello from Belpoggio delivers thick and luscious tones of black fruit, plum, spice, blackberry and plump cherry. The wine is rich and smooth in the mouth with loads of black fruit nuances and an impressive, long finish. So far, this is our favorite vintage from this producer. Imported by Wine Worldwide. —M.L.

**90 Bonacchi 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** Ripe berry fruit and plump tones of cherry liqueur, blackberry and cassis open the nose of this dark and concentrated Brunello. There's also a hint of wet earth or wild mushroom and the wine is rich and smooth on the finish, with tart cherry flavors. —M.L.

**90 Castello Banfi 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.** Dark ruby red in appearance, this bright Brunello opens with vibrant fruit tones that fall harmoniously in step with spicy, oak-driven aromas. Although the wine drinks young now, it has the natural acidity and tannic structure for aging another five years or more. Imported by Banfi Vintners. —M.L.

**90 Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$33.** This is an elegant Brunello with pretty aromas of wild berries, cassis and white cherry enhanced by determined notes of spice and smoke. On the nose the wine is vertical and intense but like many expression from the 2005 vintage, the mouthfeel is toned down in dimension. Imported by Indigenous Selections. —M.L.

**90 Col d'Orcia 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.** An improvement over past vintages, thanks to the elegance of its fruit and the richness of its consistency. The wine is bursting with cherry and cassis flavors and it shows harmony and a firm, streamlined nature to its mouthfeel. Imported by Palm Bay International. —M.L.

**90 Coldisole 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$31.** Part of the Lionello Marchesi collection of Italian estates, Coldisole

consistently produces quality Brunello with a large enough case production to make the wines reasonably easy to locate in the USA. This expression offers a bright, ruby appearance followed by vibrant aromas of cherry and spice. Imported by W.J. Deutsch & Sons. —M.L.

**90 Fanti 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.** An important and historic player in Montalcino, Fanti comes forth this year with yet another beautiful Brunello. The wine is elegant and harmonious with bright layers of cherry fruit, spice and cola. The feeling it imparts in the mouth is one of richness and smoothness and there's a playful touch of sour cherry on the close. Imported by Tutto Vino. —M.L.

**90 Fattoria La Lecciaia 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$45.** Ripe and plump with pretty aromatic layers of blackberry, cherry and spice, this textbook Brunello speaks highly of the beautiful territory that shaped it. The wine is bright, crisp and a touch sour in the mouth with enduring flavors of white cherry and cassis. Imported by Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —M.L.

**90 Ferrero 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$50.** This hearty Brunello offers meaty tones of smoked bacon and ham that are wrapped over aromas of prune, mature cherry and blackberry. There's very good persistency here and silky tannins help shape the wine's velvety texture. Imported by Bacchanal Wines. —M.L.

**90 Fossacolle 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$70.** Bright and fresh with buoyant aromas of plum, blackberry and mature cherry, Fossacolle's 2005 Brunello (by vintner Sergio Marchetti) is a dark and concentrated wine with impressive aromatic depth. The mouthfeel is lean and compact with firm, polished tannins. Imported by Vias Imports. —M.L.

**90 La Fornace 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.** La Fornace delivers a gorgeous Brunello this year with pristine aromas of blackberry, wet earth, violets, blackberries, cherries and pipe tobacco. The wine is thick and enduring with tight tannins and a long, but slightly sour finish. Drink after 2012. Imported by Vignaioli. —M.L.

**90 La Gerla 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$40.** An extensive aging program has beautifully shaped this Brunello. The wine

shows balanced notes of fruit and spice with a smooth, silky texture. The density is not too thick or overdone and the wine would pair with pasta or risotto. Imported by Slocum & Sons, Inc. —M.L.

**90 Lambardi 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** Maurizio Lambardi presents a rich and enticing Brunello with a pretty aromatic lineup that spans from bright cherry to sophisticated spice notes. The wine is smooth and firm in the mouth and is ready to drink now. —M.L.

**90 Pian dell'Orino 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$65.** What an improvement over the overripe and jammy 2003 vintage. This is a nicely ripened, garnet-colored Brunello that boasts impressive aromatic intensity. You'll notice aromas of blackberry, spice, cherry cola and warmer tones of wet earth, leather and tobacco. The wine is thick and textured in the mouth. Imported by Polaner Selections. —M.L.

**90 Piccini 2005 Villa al Cortile (Brunello di Montalcino); \$45.** Here's a genuine and fruit-driven expression of Brunello with ripe notes of mature cherry and blackberry followed by a focused mineral tone of black stone or chalkboard. You'll also get interesting layers of eucalyptus, cola and dried herbs at the back. Imported by Aveniu Brands, Inc. —M.L.

**90 Rodolfo Cosimi 2005 Bramante (Brunello di Montalcino); \$40.** Here is a very attractive approach: equal parts fruit (cherry, blackberry and cassis) matched by equal parts spice. There's a thickness and an overall integrity here that gives the wine both staying power and endurance. Pair it with Cornish game hen or roast pork with fennel seed stuffing. Imported by Enotec Imports, Inc. —M.L.

**90 San Polo 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$70.** Here's a Brunello from the four-star 2005 vintage with a thick, almost creamy bouquet of ripe fruit, smooth cinnamon or clove, and warm tones of used leather and earth. There's a fresh acidic component as well with a bright berry finish. Imported by Winebow. —M.L.

**90 Solaria 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$48.** There's a pretty, buoyant or balsamic quality to this fresh Brunello that helps delivers its fruit and spice aromas in a direct and immediate manner. That clean approach gives the wine a determined and lasting impression in the

mouth. Drink it with game meats or steak. Imported by Sherbrooke Cellars. —M.L.

**90 Tenuta di Sesta 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$110.** Tenuta di Sesta consistently produces top-notch Brunello with an eye on tradition and territory. Textbook aromas of cherry, leather, earth and blue flowers emerge from the nose. The mouthfeel is silky, persistent and fresh. Imported by Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —M.L.

**90 Tenuta Friggiali 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.** Harmony and clean delivery of fruit on the nose and mouth mark this wine. You'll encounter layers of cherry, blackberry, plum, cola and spice. There's a dusting of mineral as well and the tannins are silky but firm. Imported by Vinifera Imports. —M.L.

**90 Villa Poggio Salvi 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$50.** Surrounded by forests teeming with wild animals and boars, Poggio Salvi has one of Montalcino's most isolated and unique vineyards. This wine offers cherry and spice aromas with an easy but extremely polished mouthfeel. Bright acidity at the end underlines those vibrant berries flavors. Imported by Shaw-Ross International Importers. —M.L.

**89 Abbadia Ardenga 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** This hearty but genuine Brunello delivers steady aromas of cherry, forest fruit, cola, leather and black licorice. It feels simple and easy in the mouth and would make a perfect companion to lasagna with meat sauce. Imported by Market Wine. —M.L.

**89 Casanuova delle Cerbaie 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$65.** This Brunello represents the 2005 vintage perfectly. The wine is not dense or over-concentrated and the aromas are bright and polished. Everything comes in moderation. Pair this wine with lean cuts of red meat on the grill. Imported by Castle Brands. —M.L.

**89 Casisano Colombaio 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** Compact and lean in texture, this bright Brunello offers brambly notes of wild berry, cassis, white cherry and licorice. The wine is a bit raw and thorny in places but the fresh acidity and berry flavors pull it forward. Imported by Laird & Company. —M.L.

**89 Domus Vitae 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$60.** Here's a smoky, earthy Brunello that shows sophisticated use of oak to render aromas of toast, spice and leather. There are fresh fruit nuances here as well—mainly cherry and blackberry—and the wine is bright, tonic, crisp and relatively lean on the close. Imported by Superior Wines LLC. —M.L.

**89 Fattoi 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$41.** Here's a plump and rich aromatic expression from the 2005 vintage with spicy oak tones that are woven within the wine's natural fabric of cherry and black fruit. However, in the mouth the wine is lightweight and lean with a tannic dusting at the end. Imported by Tricana Imports. —M.L.

**89 Innocenti 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** There's a sharp, brambly quality to this Brunello that recalls aromas of forest floor, chopped herb and wild berries. You'll also get mineral tones, slight graphite tones and the mouthfeel is both drying and polished. Pair this wine with Porcini risotto or pork medallions. Imported by Mission Wine Company. —M.L.

**89 La Colombina 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$40.** There's a meaty, smoked element to the nose of this Brunello that recalls beef jerky or sizzling bacon. Those hearty aromas are followed by delicate layers of blackberry, cherry and spice. The wine is bright and acidic in the mouth, which makes for an excellent balance. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

**89 Lazeretti 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** This rich expression from the 2005 vintage shows some signs of aging that are evident in its brownish-garnet color and in the wine's aromas of candied fruit, dried currants, mesquite, cola and licorice. It's powerful and pleasantly intense in the mouth with bright acidity and silky tannins. Drink now. Imported by Joshua Tree Imports. —M.L.

**89 Poggio dell'Aquila 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** Leaner in consistency and milder in temper, this is an elegant Brunello that puts more emphasis on aromatics than it does on build and heft. It's a feminine, delicate expression with enduring notes of spice, cola and cassis on the finish. —M.L.

**89 Renieri 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** Renieri's newest Brunello offers perfumed tones of church incense backed by Indian spice and red berries. The wine is bright and tonic with some sour fruit and a nice, silky feel to the tannins.—M.L.

**89 SassodiSole 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$49.** This well-aged Brunello shows a brownish hue in its ruby coloring and exhibits aromas of dried currants, licorice, cola, balsam and ground white pepper. This expression has more heft and determination in the mouth (compared to other Brunellos from the 2005 vintage) and lasts long on the palate. Imported by Supreme Wines & Spirits. —M.L.

**89 Talenti 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** Riccardo Talenti's 2005 Brunello offers slightly raw or sharp notes of white cherry, forest berry, spice and cola. There's definition and linearity here capped by fresh acidity and a specifically firm or polished quality to the tannins. Imported by Robert Chadderden Selections. —M.L.

**89 Tassi 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$60.** Elegant and refined with small aromatic pulses of cherry, violets and white mushroom, this wine is very true to the Sangiovese variety. The mouthfeel is light and thin and there's a truly feminine nature to this expression of Brunello. Imported by Wine Emporium. —M.L.

**89 Tenuta San Giorgio 2005 Ugolforte (Brunello di Montalcino); \$50.** This is a ripe and plump Brunello that could use two or three years of cellar aging to allow the oak notes to fully integrate. The quality of the fruit is excellent—cherry, blackberry and currants abound. Immediately behind those aromas, however, is loads of spice, smoke and tar. Drink after 2012. Imported by Blavod Extreme Spirits. —M.L.

**89 Tiezzi 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$40.** Toasty notes of almond and walnut are followed by black fruit, cherry and cassis. The wine is bright, sharp and cleansing in the mouth with tonic acidity and a compact feel overall. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

**88 Canalicchio di Sopra 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$65.** Here's a tight and compact expression from Montalcino with bright tones of cherry wood, wild berries and violets that are delivered in steady aromatic pulses. The fin-

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ish is not too long or persistent, but the flavors are fresh and very tasty while they last. Imported by Vinifera Imports. —M.L.

**88 Cantina di Montalcino 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** A deep garnet color and rich concentration characterize this austere Brunello di Montalcino. The nose is redolent of wild berries, cassis, currants, leather, dried tobacco and forest floor. In the mouth, the wine is smooth, silky and polished. —M.L.

**88 Conti Costanti 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$79.** Here's a simple but genuine expression from Montalcino with bright, easy fruit tones covered by a delicate layer of spice and dried tobacco. It's not too complicated or rich, but the wine offers a fresh, easy experience nonetheless. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

**88 Fattoria Scopone 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$40.** This is a thick and brawny Brunello that shows a lot more heft and personality than some of the weaker expression from the 2005 vintage. Fattoria Scopone presents a rich and textured wine with ripe notes of cherry liqueur and blackberry followed by firm, gritty tannins. Imported by Siema LLC. —M.L.

**88 Gianni Brunelli 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$75.** Gianni Brunelli's elegant Brunello opens with a bright ruby color and a lean, tonic appearance. Yet the aromas of cherry, anise seed and wild flowers are intense and beautiful. The mouthfeel is streamlined and compact. Imported by Acid Inc Selections. —M.L.

**88 Il Marroneto 2005 Selezione Madonna delle Grazie (Brunello di Montalcino); \$90.** This special selection Brunello shows ripe notes of strawberry and raspberry backed by spice and mature cherry. It's smooth and bright with a touch of sour fruit on the close. Imported by Domaine Select Wine Estates. —M.L.

**88 La Togata 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$72.** Here's a simple but genuine rendition of Brunello with measured aromas of cherry, wild berry and Indian spice. There's more personality in the mouth, however, where the wine shows a soft, supple and smooth texture. Imported by Panebianco. —M.L.

**88 Le Potazzine 2005 Gorelli (Brunello di Montalcino); \$65.** This Brunello opens with a bright ruby color and delivers aromas of cherry cola, Spanish cedar, cigar box, wild berries and spice. It's a streamlined wine that puts more emphasis on elegance than brawn or power. A Marc de Grazia selection; various American importers. —M.L.

**88 Rodolfo Cosimi 2005 Terra Rossa (Brunello di Montalcino); \$60.** Terra Rossa is a bright and polished Brunello with pretty aromas of spice, anise seed, blackberry, cherry and cola. There's a note of sour cherry on the close and the wine shows bright acidity that would pair well with succulent meat and cheesy pasta dishes. Imported by Enotec Imports, Inc. —M.L.

**88 Tenuta Oliveto 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** Among the most extracted and thick Brunellos of this vintage, Tenuta Oliveto offers a compelling wine with fresh tones of cherry, red apple and wild berries. There's a slightly thorny or sharp nature to the bouquet that reminds you of sour fruit, blue flowers and underbrush. Imported by Ima Imports. —M.L.

**87 Baccinetti 2005 Saporioia (Brunello di Montalcino); \$45.** Here's a dark and well concentrated Brunello with aromas that recall wild berries and appleskin. The fresh intensity of those aromas suggest slight volatility, but this doesn't seem to distract too much from the overall picture. In the mouth, the wine is very polished and squeaky clean. Imported by Premier Wine Co. —M.L.

**87 Canneta 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** There's a meaty, ripe aspect to the aromas here that recall black cherry and smoked ham. But there's also an edgy green tone that lends a slightly bitter impression in the mouth. Imported by Orvino Imports & Distribution. —M.L.

**87 Collemattoni 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$55.** Collemattoni delivers a ripe, fruit-driven Brunello that will appeal to those who enjoy plump, jammy notes in their red wine. Raspberry, strawberry and mature cherry stand out within a larger embroidery of spice and tobacco. The wine is soft and smooth with sweet berry notes on the close. Imported by Vignaioli. —M.L.

**87 Il Marroneto 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$60.** There's a brambly, slightly raw or sharp note here that comes off as white cherry, wild berry and spice. In the mouth, the wine shows bright acidity and polished tannins. Imported by Domaine Select Wine Estates. —M.L.

**87 Vasco Sasseti 2005 Brunello di Montalcino; \$NA.** Earthy aromas of white mushroom and dried roses that are characteristic of Tuscan Sangiovese are what you notice first here. The wine then segues to fruit and spice aromas, although those berry notes are on the mature and jammy side. Fresh acidity and firm tannins suggest a pairing with red meat. Imported by Franco Wine Imports. —M.L.

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## ROSSO DI MONTALCINO

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**91 Poggio Nardone 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$NA.** This is a truly outstanding Rosso di Montalcino that shows all the ripe and opulent characteristics of the promising 2008 vintage. The wine is rich, smooth and determined. The tannins are polished and silky. Imported by Dancing Bear Cellars. —M.L.

**90 Mocali 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$20.** Mocali's bright Rosso di Montalcino makes a great first impression thanks to its vibrant aromas of cherry, blackberry, spice and root beer. The wine is very rich and smooth in the mouth with impressive persistency. Imported by Michael Skurmik Wines. —M.L.

**90 Ricci 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$NA.** Tenimenti Ricci offers a dark and luscious wine with deep aromas of blackberry, cherry, exotic spice and old leather. It's not as thick or extracted as the estate's Brunello, but this wine is designed to offer an informal expression that can still stand up to grilled meats. This Rosso does exactly that. Imported by Italian Wine Growers. —M.L.

**89 La Poderina 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$40.** La Poderina's Rosso offers elegant notes of fine spice backed by small forest berries and currants. This wine excels at being intense and powerful but in a uniquely understated way. The finish is silky and smooth. Imported by Vias Imports. —M.L.

**89 Le Ragnaie 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$15.** Le Ragnaie offers an attractively well-balanced Rosso with equal parts spice, dark fruit and tobacco on the nose. In the mouth, this wine is full of dimension and power and its rich berry flavors last a long time. Imported by Vine Street Imports. *Editors' Choice.* —M.L.

**89 Tenuta Il Poggione 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$28.** This is the kind of Rosso di Montalcino you could pair with seasoned pork or chicken curry. It has the heft and substance to stand up to those spicy foods and offers loads of fresh fruit intensity on the close. Imported by Terlato Wines International. —M.L.

**88 Camigliano 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$25.** Elegant but austere, this bright Rosso delivers lively aromas of cherry cola, dried blueberries, spice and moist pipe tobacco. Floral and mineral tones appear in the mouth and the wine ends with a sweet but polished feel. Imported by Vias Imports. —M.L.

**88 Casisano Colombaio 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$NA.** This is a very successful Rosso di Montalcino with great intensity and loads of cherry and bright berry personality. There are austere notes of earth, cola and spice at the back and the wine feels smooth and silky on the palate. Imported by Laird & Company. —M.L.

**88 Fossacolle 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$33.** Here's a very balanced Rosso with contrasting aromas of cherry and red fruit that stand against spice, chocolate and tobacco. It's a bright, spicy wine with power, persistency and a much-needed touch of zesty acidity. Imported by Vias Imports. —M.L.

**88 Pietranera 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$NA.** An austere element of smoked meat, moist pipe tobacco and ripe blackberry opens the nose of this concentrated Rosso di Montalcino. This is a brawny, masculine wine with loads of spicy intensity to match marinated barbecue steak. Imported by Soilair Selection. —M.L.

**88 San Polo 2007 (Rosso di Montalcino); \$25.** San Polo's Rosso di Montalcino offers classic aromas of cherry, black fruit and spice. But it also adds an extra layer of vanilla and sweet spice that makes for a very nice ensemble. It's smooth, rich and spicy on the close. Imported by Winebow. —M.L.

**88 Tenute Silvio Nardi 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$25.** Here's a lush and modern Rosso di Montalcino with bright aromas of spice and vanilla that play background roles to fresh cherry and raspberry. The wine boasts a smooth, supple texture and sweet fruit on the finish. Imported by Kobrand. —M.L.

**87 Fanti 2007 Rosso di Montalcino; \$25.** Light and cheerful, this ruby-colored Rosso delivers a mixed bag of aromas. You'll detect red fruit, barbecue spice, smoked meat, leather and prune. It shows very nice intensity and persistency on the close with a playful touch of refreshing acidity. Imported by Tutto Vino. —M.L.

**87 Fattoria Scopone 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$20.** Apart from an obvious emphasis on oak-related aromas of vanilla, spice and carpentry shop, this is a satisfying Rosso that would pair with roast chicken, potatoes, garlic and rosemary. The garlic and rosemary would take the edge off those wood tones. Imported by Siema LLC. —M.L.

**87 Il Poggiolo 2007 Sassello (Rosso di Montalcino); \$25.** Here's a heavily oak-influenced Rosso that delivers aromas of vanilla, spice and woodshop over the wine's natural fruit. In fact, blueberry and cherry flavors come through with more clarity in the mouth, backed by soft, silky tannins. Imported by Enotec Imports, Inc. —M.L.

**87 La Colombina 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$20.** A brambly note of forest floor or exotic spice emerges first from the nose of this ruby-colored Rosso and is followed by floral notes of violets and dried lavender. The wine is fresh, thin and offers easy informality overall. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

**87 La Fornace 2007 Rosso di Montalcino; \$23.** Lean and compact with subdued aromas of cherry and wild berry, this is an informal Rosso to drink with roast chicken or home-cooked meatloaf. The wine is smooth and rich on the palate and it offers a cleaning touch of acidity on the finish. Imported by Vignaioli. —M.L.

**87 La Togata 2007 Rosso di Montalcino; \$30.** From the very nice 2007 vintage, this fresh Rosso di Montalcino offers measured aromas of black fruit, spice, plum, currant and moist earth. The wine's acidity is well

balanced against its spicy finish. Imported by Panebianco. —M.L.

**87 Marchesi de' Frescobaldi 2007 Castelgiocondo Campo ai Sassi (Rosso di Montalcino); \$25.** Campo ai Sassi is a lush and ripe Rosso with a point of cherry liqueur that appears alongside blueberry, spice, leather and tobacco. The wine is fresh, compact and would pair with succulent cuts of red meat. Imported by Folio Fine Wine Partners. —M.L.

**87 Pinino 2008 Clandestino (Rosso di Montalcino); \$27.** Clandestino is an oak-influenced Rosso di Montalcino with bright aromas of cinnamon, vanilla and chocolate that intermingle with cherry, blackberry and cassia syrup. Pair this wine with pork or poultry. Imported by USA Wine Imports. —M.L.

**87 Pinino 2008 Cupio (Rosso di Montalcino); \$19.** Cupio offers sharp aromas of bramble and spice backed by softer aromas of plum, prune and vanilla bean. The fresh acidity really keeps the palate polished and this wine would pair with cheesy pasta or buttery dishes. Imported by USA Wine Imports. —M.L.

**87 San Lorenzo 2007 (Rosso di Montalcino); \$24.** Well balanced and measured in terms of its aromatic intensity, this is a clean, straight-shooting Rosso di Montalcino that will pair with everything from lasagna to hamburgers. The wine shows more determination in the mouth thanks to its thick, supple texture. Imported by Votto Vines Importing. —M.L.

**87 SassodiSole 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$23.** Straightforward and honest, this bright Rosso delivers clean aromas of cherry, blueberry and subtle shadings of smoke and spice. You could pair this wine with lasagna, meat-filled ravioli or light pork or beef roasts. Imported by Supreme Wines & Spirits. —M.L.

**87 Tenimenti Angelini 2008 Val di Suga (Rosso di Montalcino); \$25.** True to its definition, this Rosso truly does act as "Brunello's little sister." It shows the same elegant aromas of spice and black fruit, but does so in a less intense and more informal manner. That same easy feeling translates to the mouth as well. —M.L.

**87 Uccelliera 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$28.** Uccelliera regularly pro-

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duces powerhouse Brunellos. This Rosso evidently represents a change of pace because instead of power and intensity, you get ethereal aromas of wild berry and green spice. There's also an unexpected touch of sour cherry on the close. A Marc de Grazia selection; various American importers. —M.L.

**87 Villa I Cipressi 2007 Rosso di Montalcino; \$25.** This luminous, ruby-colored Rosso delivers aromas of cherry, ripe berry fruit and sweet vanilla. There's a soft, modern touch here that has been shaped by oak aging and you'll taste background flavors of smoke and spice. Imported by Acid Inc Selections. —M.L.

**86 Baccinetti 2007 Saporioia (Rosso di Montalcino); \$25.** This is a powerful wine, both in terms of alcohol and aromatic intensity. You'll recognize tones of cherry liqueur, blackberry preserves and Indian spice. It's soft and sweeter than most other Rosso di Montalcino. Imported by Premier Wine Co. —M.L.

**86 Castello Tricerchi 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$NA.** Light and luminous in appearance, this bright Rosso di Montalcino delivers subdued aromas of raspberry, cherry, cola and wet earth. None of these aromas are particularly intense, but they are balanced. Imported by Monarchia Matt International. —M.L.

**86 Poggio Antico 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$48.** There's a brambly, slightly unripe or green aroma that characterizes this vintage of Poggio Antico's popular Rosso di Montalcino. That said, the wine does fill in smoothly over the palate with wild berry and spice flavors. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

**85 Fornacina 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$24.** This is a light and loosely fragrant Rosso with tones of raspberry, cherry and blueberry. It's easygoing and simple in style with fresh acidity on the close. Imported by Villa Italia. —M.L.

**85 La Fortuna 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$22.** La Fortuna's Rosso offers contrasting aromas of spice, red apple, wild berry, bramble and cherry liqueur. It boasts a deep ruby color and in the mouth, it feels pointed and edgy. Imported by MHW, Ltd. —M.L.

**85 Le Potazzine 2008 Gorelli (Rosso di Montalcino); \$28.** There's a sharp,

brambly note here of forest green and sour cherry that eventually transforms into spice and blackberry as the wine spends more time in the glass. The mouthfeel is smooth and silky. A Marc de Grazia selection; various American importers. —M.L.

**84 Canneta 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$NA.** Canneta presents a thin, ruby-colored Rosso with immediate aromas of raspberry, red apple, tobacco and spice. The wine is bright and streamlined on the finish with a prickly acidic endnote. Imported by Orvino Imports & Distribution. —M.L.

**83 Poggio dell'Aquila 2008 Rosso di Montalcino; \$NA.** This Rosso shows awkward aromas of almond paste and lemon zest on top of characteristic layers of wild berry and spice. It's light and lean on the palate with crisp fruit flavors on the close. —M.L.

**82 Tenuta Oliveto 2007 Il Roccolo (Rosso di Montalcino); \$NA.** There's an overripe or jammy element to this Rosso that resembles blackberry preserves, smoked ham and moist tobacco. The wine tastes sweet and sticky in the mouth and leaves the palate covered with strawberry-like flavors. Imported by Ima Imports. —M.L.

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### OTHER TUSCAN REDS

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**93 Casanova di Neri 2006 Pietradonice (Toscana); \$110.** This full, plump and generous Cabernet Sauvignon offers loads of ripe fruit, smoothness and intensity. If you love rich, sun-filled red wines from Tuscany, this is a perfect choice. In the mouth, you get firm tannins and bright cherry flavors on the close. Excellent. Imported by Dalla Terra Winery Direct. —M.L.

**90 Fattoria La Lecciaia 2005 Sant'Antimo; \$20.** This deeply colored blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Sangiovese offers a soft and layered bouquet of cherry, spice, leather and tobacco. The wine is smooth and luscious with a particularly spicy finish. Imported by Monsieur Touton Selection Ltd. —M.L.

**89 Máté 2006 Mantus (Sant'Antimo); \$45.** Here's a thick, powerful and sweet-smelling expression of Merlot from Montalcino with ripe aromas of cherry, blackberry and Indian

spice. The density is thick and opulent and the succulent tannins give the wine even more heft and dimension in the mouth. Imported by Vinilandia USA. —M.L.

**88 Fanti 2007 Sassomagno (Sant'Antimo); \$15.** From the Castelnuovo dell'Abate subzone of Montalcino, this bright super Tuscan blend delivers ripe notes of mature cherry, coffee grounds, dried tobacco leaf and cassis syrup. There's a sweet tone of cherry and vanilla in the mouth and the wine's texture is thick and chewy. Imported by Tutto Vino. —M.L.

**88 Mocali 2008 I Piaggioni (Toscana); \$15.** Mocali is a well-established estate in Montalcino and I Piaggioni is one of its super Tuscan wines. This youthful expression of Sangiovese offers hearty cherry aromas with loads of pretty spice and vanilla at the back. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

**87 Mocali 2008 Fossetti (Toscana); \$12.** This blend of Sangiovese and Canaiolo offers a nose of berry fruit and light almond shadings backed by an easy, informal mouthfeel. Pair this fruit-driven red with pasta or pizza. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

**84 Poggio Lungo 2007 Morellino di Scansano; \$22.** Good growing conditions in 2007 helped shape this bright, berry-driven wine from southern Tuscany. You'll recognize aromas of cherry, blueberry and mineral backed by a firm texture and sour cherry flavors. This is a simple, easy-drinking expression. Imported by R&R Wine Imports Inc. —M.L.

**83 Poggio Lungo 2008 Morellino di Scansano; \$20.** Jammy notes of strawberry and raspberry preserves open the nose of this overripe Morellino di Scansano. The wine is dark and concentrated but all that mature fruit leaves a raw, chewy sensation on the finish. Imported by R&R Wine Imports Inc. —M.L.

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### TUSCAN ROSÉ

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**85 Belguardo 2009 Belguardo Rosé (Toscana); \$17.** A 50-50 blend of Syrah and Sangiovese, this delicately pink Tuscan rosé offers bright aromas of raspberry, pink grapefruit, cranberry and almond skin. Pair this wine with

salmon canapé and other appetizers. Imported by Palm Bay International. —M.L.

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## TUSCAN WHITES

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**88 Mazzei 2009 Belguardo (Toscana); \$17.** Here's a gorgeous Vermentino (with small percentages of other white grapes blended in) that shows a luminous, golden color and bright aromas of white peach, apricot and dried hay. The wine makes an extremely clean, fresh and vibrant impact in the mouth. Imported by Palm Bay International. **Editors' Choice.** —M.L.

**87 Castello Montaúto 2008 Vernaccia di San Gimignano; \$20.** You'll really love this simple and clean white wine from sunny Tuscany. The aromas here are crisp and fragrant, recalling peach, apricot and pear. The wine is zippy in the mouth but it also awards enough natural structure for tuna or sushi. Imported by Banfi Vintners. —M.L.

**87 Cecchi 2008 Litorale (Maremma); \$18.** Cecchi, the historic estate in Chianti Classico, is doing beautiful work at their second property in Maremma, southern Tuscany. Litorale Vermentino really does conjure up images of sea, sand and heaping servings of seafood. The wine is light, fresh and very tasty. Imported by Banfi Vintners. —M.L.

**87 Mocali 2009 Fossetti (Toscana); \$15.** Mocali's Fossetti estate delivers a fantastically crisp and easy white blend of Chardonnay, Moscato and Trebbiano with the natural creaminess, floral aromatics and freshness you'd expect of those three grapes respectively. It's the perfect fish or pasta salad wine. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —M.L.

**86 Morisfarms 2009 Maremma; \$19.** This is a very attractive and straightforward Vermentino from southern Tuscany. This native variety is gaining in popularity and it's easy to see why: the wine is fresh, crisp and very bright on the close. Imported by Polaner Selections. —M.L.

# SPAIN RED WINES

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## RIBERA DEL DUERO

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

**98 Viña Sastre 2005 Regina Vides (Ribera del Duero); \$195.** From vines that are between 80 and 100 years, this is a marvelous example of top-notch Spanish red wine, regardless of region and grape variety. Hails from four vineyards, and the product is dark, concentrated, sultry, masculine and impressive. Giant black fruit flavors, texture, richness, coffee and cola make it truly special. Drinkable now; best in 3–5 more years. Imported by De Maison Selections, Inc. —M.S.

**97 Aalto 2006 PS (Ribera del Duero); \$115.** A beautiful but enormous style of red wine with char, leather and saturated black fruit aromas. There's also some lemony oak that will shed itself with time. Overall, it's rich, delicious and a real fruit bomb with chocolate, vanilla, caramel, coffee and mocha, all of which are reflections of the oak aging it sees. PS stands for *s seleccionados*, and it's really an example of the new school in full session. Best 2013–2017 due to its heft and extraction. Imported by European Cellars. **Cellar Selection.** —M.S.

**96 Aalto 2006 Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero); \$55.** Mariano Garcia's deft winemaking touch and propensity for making monster RDDs is etched into this massive, extracted heavyweight, and wow is it good! After a touch of early heat, there's dusty black fruit aromas, spice galore, floral notes and then a huge

palate of raw blackness and finally an explosion of creamy mocha, vanilla and woodspice. Needs a couple of more years but not 10 or 20. Imported by European Cellars. **Cellar Selection.** —M.S.

**96 Viña Sastre 1999 Pago de Santa Cruz Gran Reserva (Ribera del Duero); \$119.** A classic wine with maturity but still a lot to give. Aged 24 months in American oak then 12 more months in French barrels, this GR is leathery and powerful, with firm tannins supporting dry berry fruit flavors accented by copious amounts of tobacco, mint, vanilla and more. Will continue to age and soften; drink now through 2025. Imported by De Maison Selections, Inc. **Cellar Selection.** —M.S.

**95 Monteabellón 2006 Finca La Blanca Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero); \$NA.** Having only tasted this winery's basic RdDs, this single-vineyard whopper comes as a huge and pleasant surprise. The nose is pure as can be and driving, with richness, coffee and more. The palate is juicy and intense, with boysenberry, blackberry, toast and chocolate. Very concentrated and powerful; a wine that exudes and also inspires passion. Drink 2012–2021. Imported by JW Sieg Wines. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.

**95 Vega Sicilia 2000 Unico (Ribera del Duero); \$450.** Like liquid silk, it's so smooth and supple. Aromas of fresh mountain herbs pour forth from the glass along with the scents of cherry, cough drop and dried spices. Very light on its feet with pronounced elegance as opposed to raw power. The palate is sleek and feminine, with flavors of dried red fruits, raspberry and light medicinality. Spectacular as per usual, with 85% Tempranillo and 15% Cab Sauvignon. Drink now–2025. Imported by Europvin. **Editors' Choice.** —M.S.

**94 Astrales 2007 Tempranillo (Ribera del Duero); \$67.** Shows almost all that's great about the region: dark, smoky, floral berry and chocolate aromas followed by juicy, acid-driven boysenberry, spice, bitter chocolate and peppery flavors. An excellent effort for a tough vintage, with dynamite power and a poise. Drink 2012–2018. Imported by Grapes of Spain. —M.S.

**94 Pago de los Capellanes 2006 Reserva (Ribera del Duero); \$54.** Sensational RDD Reserva with dry, smoky, ele-