

GRAPEVINE WINE & SPIRITS'

drinks[®]

THE MAGAZINE OF FINE WINE, SPIRITS, AND LIVING

WINTER 2010

**ITALY'S
MAVERICK
RED WINES
REVEALED**

**6 WARMING
WINTER PUNCHES**

**COFFEE WITH
A KICK: 4 DELICIOUS
COFFEE COCKTAILS**

**5 LESSER-KNOWN
WHITE WINES WORTH
CONSIDERING**

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MANAGERS' SELECTIONS



John Fields

Black Slate Porrera Priorat 2007



Priorat, Spain produces some reds with amazing depth and flavor. This is 60% Graciano and 40% Carinena, and is the best affordable Priorat I've tried. Super arid conditions and a slate soil make yields low and the wines quite extracted, juicy, dark, and tannic. The

Black Slate needs a few minutes to open up, but explodes with dried-fruit flavors, licorice, leather, and healthy tannins. This is an absolute bargain for solid Priorat, and will show you why I think Priorat is poised to become the gem of Spanish wine. 91 points, *Wine Advocate* **\$24.99**

Villa Antinori Toscana 2006 Red



Consisting of 60% Sangiovese, 20% Cabernet, and the balance Merlot and Syrah, this Tuscan beauty is a great way to enjoy a ready-to-drink, Tuscan red at an everyday price. Great fruit initially, but mid-palate becomes much drier and dusty toward

the finish. Great balance and a nice velvety, tannic finish had me wondering why I need to spend \$40 (or more) for any other "baby Tuscan" with this stellar wine available! Try with traditional lasagna. 90 points, *Wine Spectator* **\$19.99**



Dan Dixon

Les Dolia Laudun Côtes du Rhône Villages 2007



This intense ruby-colored Côtes du Rhône is a great wine for the money. It starts with a ripe blackberry aroma with a bit of earthiness. On the palate it exhibits good fruit and reminded me of a forest in the autumn, reminiscent of

fallen leaves. It also had a spicy nuance that made it a perfect wine for the season. The finish was light with just the right amount of acidity. This would be great with grilled or roasted chicken, or better yet, duck. **\$19.99**

Château Saintongey Bordeaux 2006



This little Bordeaux really surprised me for its versatility. I expect inexpensive Bordeaux to be rustic and a little "barnyardy," for lack of a better term. This is what I love about them. However, the Saintongey had all of that and more. It had oak, leather, and

hints of smoke on the nose. From there, the smoke continued to exhibit itself with a bit of toast that still had dark fruit to temper it. It had medium tannins and finished easy and dry. I would pair this with a cut of steak that has a subtle flavor, such as filet mignon. *A votre santé!* **\$15.99**



Dawn Candelore

Castle Rock Petite Verdot 2007



Petite Verdot has always been principally used in classic Bordeaux blends but has seen its popularity rise in the U.S. as a single varietal over the last few years. This grape ripens later in the season and Monterey Bay cooling air creates a perfect

climate for a longer growing season. Great structure makes it a great accompaniment to red meats and aged cheeses. Look for cherry, herb, and tobacco aromas in this full-bodied red that is surprisingly soft on your palate. A great option for holiday parties! **\$9.99**

Corvidae Lenore Syrah 2007



Syrah is always a winter favorite of mine and getting a new option for this year is definitely a bonus. This is a great surprise in quality and price. Corvidae is a line from the Owen Roe Winery in Washington. The fruit is from Columbia Valley, consistently known for its rich

and juicy characteristics in its grapes. Great fruit and spices—sure to be a crowd pleaser. Big enough to hold its own against hearty stews but gentle enough to enjoy on its own. Great for cozy winter evenings. **\$15.99**



Josh Mulholland

Clos Pegase Mitzuko's Vineyard Chardonnay 2008



While Chardonnay is not normally my favorite wine varietal, this one stuck out as a special bottle. Aged 10 months in French oak, it tastes crisp and clean like a Burgundy, but has the weight and body of a California Chardonnay. The

nose is full of pear, vanilla, and a touch of light butter. The palate is dominated by Granny Smith apple, fresh hints of oak, and sweet pears. The well-balanced acidity is what made this wine stand out among its peers to me, though, and worked great with a full flavored chicken dish! Enjoy! **\$21.99**

Alma Negra Sparkling Malbec Rosé 2009



If you tried Alma Negra's red blend, then you know what kind of quality to expect in the bottle from these vintners. This sparkling wine is quite light and approachable, and smells of cassis, strawberry, and blackberry

liqueurs. The taste explodes with huge berry flavors, but finishes tame, crisp, and refreshing. Let this bubbly take the place of your French bottle this New Year's Eve! **\$19.99**

STAFF SELECTIONS



(L-R): Jordan Howard, Rich Stevens, Becky Baird, Jared Myers, and Jake Myers.

Becky Baird

Zeb Barron

Jared Myers



Caposaldo Moscato

This is perfect for sipping during the holiday season. With a bouquet of nectarines, peaches, and apples, this lightly sparkling wine is crisp and clean. The smooth taste with a touch of sweetness makes it perfect to enjoy as an apéritif, with dessert, or simply to toast in the New Year. **\$12.99**



Niner Merlot 2006

I love this uniquely crafted Merlot from Paso Robles. The nose is subtle, with hints of plums and cherries. I enjoy this because it is balanced. In my opinion, some Merlots can be overly tannic and rather bland. Not this one. It is sleek and smooth and tastes pop out on your tongue. Drink it with a soft cheese, like Port Salut. I liked it even better on day two. **\$17.99**



Cline Sonoma Pinot Noir 2007

Want to be the first to introduce your friends to something new? This is your man! Produced in the Sonoma Coast appellation this ruby red juice sings of subtle strawberry and raspberry. Keeping with the Burgundy tradition, Cline has created a wine that is full of character. Strawberry with a hint of mint on the nose and a lightly tannic finish make this wine a great holiday buy. Cline Pinot Noir is sure to please any palate. Give your friends and family something to talk about this season! **\$14.99**



Barista Coffee Pinotage 2009

I have to admit I have trouble not visiting Starbucks every day for my coffee fix. I've loved coffee since I was a kid, so it's no surprise that I fell in love with this one-of-a-kind coffee Pinotage. Pinotage alone is a great varietal, but this coffee Pinotage takes the grape to the next level. Pinotage was created in 1925 in South Africa by cross breeding Pinot Noir and Cinsault. The Barista Coffee Pinotage was created by Bertus Fourie of Val de Vie wines. When I poured my glass I was hit with a burst of rich coffee and chocolate aromas with ripe nuances of cranberry, raspberry, and cherry. The coffee flavor continues onto the palate with hints of vanilla and butterscotch. The wine has subtle tannins and a very long finish. Barista would pair well with smoky meats and BBQ. Don't take my word for it—grab a bottle today! **\$14.99**

Kevin Daugherty

Rich Stevens

Jake Myers



Schild Estate GMS 2008

Dark brick-red color. Mild nose. Marvelous round sweet-tart red and black fruit. Impressive with its underlying sweet citrus (orange and lime) notes. Finish lingers with oil tastes for better than five seconds. Medium-full body. **\$14.99**



Apothic Red

I am finding that often a blend can offer a more complete experience than any one varietal, especially among the budget class of wines. At only \$9.99, Apothic Red from Modesto, CA combines flavorful Syrah, rich Zinfandel, and smooth Merlot to achieve a very balanced and enjoyable juice. Give it a try! **\$9.99**



Grão Vasco Dão Red 2008

This Portuguese wine is an amazing bargain! On the nose I was struck with dark fruit notes such as plum and black cherry with a hint of pepper and light oak. On the palate I found good acidity and round tannins along with the fresh dark fruit. This would pair well with most any meal, maybe even some tortilla soup I plan to make soon. This proves bargains do exist. Enjoy! **\$6.99**

MERLOT'S MILEAGE

From France to California and points south, Merlot delivers.

It's been a good six years since Miles, the moody wine buff in the 2004 hit movie *Sideways*, professed his love for Pinot Noir and disdain for Merlot, causing some impressionable Merlot-drinking moviegoers to be left with a bad taste in their mouths. But while some may have questioned their preference for Merlot at the time, any Hollywood-induced effects seemed to have been minimal, if at all, and the wine is as popular as ever.

Merlot is the second leading red varietal after Cabernet Sauvignon purchased by Americans today, according to the Wine Institute, the public policy advocacy association of California wineries. California Merlot consumption was 19.1 million nine-liter cases in 2009 in the United States, having grown dramatically from the 2.8 million cases sold in 1994. Why? They speculate that those who are new to wine may be trying red wine because of news reports linking moderate drinking to a healthy lifestyle, and also white and blush drinkers may be expanding their preferences to red—especially Merlot's approachable character.

The Merlot grape has thinner skin than Cabernet Sauvignon, so it produces less tannic wine and has a slightly lower natural acidity. An early ripening grape, the soft, rich wines it produces are often described as "fleshy." Its name means "young blackbird" in French, perhaps in reference to the grape's dark blue color, and black often crops up in its flavor descriptors—blackberry, black plum, and black currant. When grown in cooler climates it can develop vegetal flavors, such as green beans or asparagus, while in sunnier climates

there may be hints of dried fruit flavors such as raisins. Some of the best can also have rich overtones of melted chocolate.

In the grape's homeland—the Bordeaux region of France—red wines are usually blended and Merlot takes a second position to Cabernet Sauvignon. But on the right (east) bank of the river Dordogne, Merlot plays a starring role in the wines from Saint-Émilion and Pomerol, which fetch top prices and are the benchmark of quality for Merlot.

Winemakers in California began growing Merlot in the late 1960s and early '70s, but it wasn't until the '80s that labels started to shine the spotlight on Merlot as a solo act. Dark, tannic Cabernets were the style of the time, and wine drinkers eagerly embraced the more easy-drinking Merlot, leading to a surge in plantings. The '90s drive to churn out as much Merlot as possible waned, and many good offerings are coming out of California and some are comparable to the prized French wines. Elsewhere in the United States, the climate in Washington state is also good for producing the concentrated but soft red wines that are especially enjoyed by those new to red-wine drinking. And in New York state, Long Island is also producing some good Merlot, though in relatively small quantities.

South of the equator, Merlot from Chile has shown particular promise. In Australia and New Zealand, Merlot is often used to blend with Cabernet, as in Bordeaux, but it also gets the occasional top billing. The grapes are grown in just about every region Down Under, but some of the best Merlot comes from vineyards in Australia's slightly cooler areas such as Adelaide Hills,



Eden Valley, Orange, and the Limestone Coast, including Coonawarra.

Merlot pairs well with a wide range of food. Try it with full-flavored cheese (such as blue, Camembert, cheddar, or Gouda), beef, lamb, pork, chicken, and turkey as well as salmon and tuna. It's also a good match with chili and pizza, as well as dark chocolate and berries to top off the meal. ▣

GRAPEVINE RECOMMENDS

Markham Napa Valley Merlot 2006
Over-delivers for the price. It's soft, yet full of flavor. Dark cherry, cola, mocha, and leather and a ripe juicy finish. A great gift if you're not sure what kind of red one typically drinks. **\$24.99**

Casa Lapostolle Rafel Valley Merlot 2008
Another fantastic value from the great Chilean producer! Tons of backbone for the price. Well-integrated tannins and oak and a spicy finish make this great with food—perfect with grilled pork chops! **\$15.99**

Snoqualmie "Naked" Merlot Columbia Valley 2006 "Naked" refers to the clean, organic growing process used for the grapes. What a bargain! A bit more fruit and not quite as acidic as many Merlots so should appeal to a wider audience. Check it out! **\$13.99**

PLEASING PAIRINGS

Chart your course for delicious holiday meals with these suggestions.

GRAPEVINE WINE RECOMMENDATIONS



BEEF

Red: Wines with a bit of body: Barbaresco, Barolo, Bordeaux, Brunello, Burgundy, Cabernet Sauvignon, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Malbec, Merlot, Nebbiolo, Pinot Noir, Rioja, Shiraz, and Zinfandel

ALEXANDER VALLEY VINEYARDS CABERNET 2007

This full-bodied Cab is perfect for steak. It's well-balanced and would be a good pairing with most any cut of meat! **\$19.99**



LAMB

Red: With lamb's stronger flavors try Amarone, Barbera, Barbaresco, Barolo, red Bordeaux and red Burgundy, Cabernet Sauvignon, rosé Champagne, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Chianti, Côtes du Rhône, Malbec, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Shiraz, and Zinfandel.
White: Gewürztraminer or Riesling if curry spiced.

DOMAINE JEROME GRADASSI CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE 2007 \$39.99

DOMAINE GRAND VENEUR CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE 2004 \$64.99

Classic with lamb. The fruit is tempered with a delicious earthiness that's just perfect!



HAM

Red: Beaujolais, Burgundy, Merlot, Pinot Noir (especially if served with mustard sauce), young Zinfandel. Off-dry rosé.
White: Chablis, Champagne, unoaked Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Grigio, and Riesling

ELK COVE WILLAMETTE VALLEY PINOT NOIR 2007

The Elk Cove is a pretty substantial Pinot Noir. It will certainly stand up to a well-seasoned ham and its fruit will complement the rest of the meal as well. **\$25.99**

PORK LOIN

Red: Young and fruity Burgundy, Pinot Noir **White:** Riesling



SEAFOOD

Red: Red wine's tannins taste a bit metallic with white fish, so it's best to avoid Cabernet, full-bodied Merlot, and Syrah. Light reds, such as Pinot Noir, will work with tuna, salmon, and some full-flavored fish.

White: Albariño, Chablis, Champagne, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris/Grigio, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon, and Viognier

MASO CANALI PINOT GRIGIO

Great with a wide variety of seafood. Slightly more creamy than most Pinot Grigio, it has great fruit and enough acidity to pair perfectly with the light harvests from the sea. **\$19.99**



TURKEY

Fruity and rich wines work well with the dinner.

Red: Beaujolais, Pinot Noir, fruity Zinfandel
White: Chablis, white Burgundy, and Chardonnay (especially California or other new world with little or no oak) Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris, Riesling, and Sauvignon Blanc
Sparkling: Especially brut, rosé, or a dry sparkling Shiraz

DELHEIM GEWÜRZTRAMINER 2008, SOUTH AFRICA

Pairs wonderfully with turkey and all the sides that typically accompany it. A good amount of fruit, a hint of sweetness, and a subtle spice. **\$19.99**

THE GRAPEVINE BEER COMMITTEE

Enjoy these handpicked selections that are perfect for the season.

(L-R): Jake Myers, Josh Mulholland, and Kevin Daugherty

(Not in photo: Zeb Barron)



ABITA JOCKAMO IPA

This beer is red amber and forms a moderate head, but the aroma helps make up for that. Hops, pine, and citrus greet the nose. Moderately bitter flavor, the hops take center stage, just in front of a caramel malt sensation that should be savored. The carbonation level isn't incredibly high, which is a bit peculiar for this style, but I'm not complaining. **\$8.99 / 6pk**

ABITA ANDYGATOR

The Grapevine now carries a high alcohol (8% by volume) beer from Abita! This is great for beginners to the high gravity beer sector. It's light and yeasty on the nose and drinks the same way, finishing up with some crisp pop. **\$5.99 / 750ml**



FLYING DOG RAGING BITCH

This new addition to the Flying Dog lineup smells of fruit and tons of hops. On the palate, it's quite full bodied with some apricot and a lot less grapefruit than a typical IPA. This gal finishes nicely and is a good, refreshing brew. **\$8.99 / 6pk**

PAULANER SALVATOR

This is certainly a personal favorite and a great winter beer. While it's sweet and malty on the nose and initially on the palate, this warming brew is huge with a long, excellent full finish. Give it a try if you like a bigger beer. **\$13.99 / 6pk**



AYINGER CELEBRATOR

This offering is quite similar to the Paulaner, but a bit more approachable. While it's still a good winter brew, the Celebrator is a good deal more hoppy, which lightens it up a bit on the palate. **\$14.99 / 4pk**

HOFSTETTEN SEIT 1229 GRANITBOCK

This Austrian beer is excellent! On the nose I got a heavy dose of raisins along with subtle hints of unfiltered honey and brown sugar. Also somewhat metallic. I tasted a variety of dried fruits such as dates and raisins. It is slightly sweet with a long finish. If you want to venture into a new world of brews, try this delicious Austrian treat. **\$5.99 / 16oz**



OSKAR BLUES DALE'S PALE ALE

This gold medal winner at the 2010 World Beer Championships is deserving. With its hoppy nose and well established flavors of pale malts and hops all the way to the end, it is sure to satisfy any pale ale lover. Dale says, "Don't judge this beer by its package!" and I concur! **\$9.99 / 12pk**

THE SPIRIT REVIEW

Spirit Manager, Josh Mulholland, and the staff's standout selections!



PRICHARD'S LINCOLN COUNTY LIGHTNING

This is the same spirit used to make the extremely tasty Prichard's Single Malt Whiskey. At 90 proof this is big enough to hold up to mixing yet not so aggressive that you can't sip it easily. The nose is full with pear aromas and vanilla with a touch of lemon zest. The palate shows more pear along with a subtle touch of honey in the lengthy finish. It's smooth going and shows little bite or burn. If you're a white whiskey fan then you'll want to pick up a bottle—it's a solid value. **\$19.99 750ml**



ISLA Ñ WHITE ARGENTINE RUM

While Argentina is not known for rum, this is a great buy on a well-made one. Isla Ñ only uses the distillate from the middle of the fermentation process, eliminating many impurities—much like the process of fine Cognacs. Try this straight or in a nice Daiquiri and dream of the beach this winter! **\$12.99 750ml**



GRAN DUQUE D' ALBA SOLERA GRAN RESERVA

This well-made spirit smells of sweet sherry (aged in old sherry casks) and hints of mint. I am amazed at how smooth it rolls across the palate with no real heat and a nice fruity, velvety texture. Roasted nuts and subtle fruits dominate the flavors. This is simply worth every penny! **\$59.99 750ml**



DRAMBUIE

Soft Speyside and Highland Scotch blended with honey and a secret mix of herbs and spices, make Drambuie the perfect fall/winter cordial. Drambuie and Ginger Ale is a big hit, as well as the classic Rusty Nail, which is one part Drambuie and one part Scotch, with a twist of lemon! We've also heard it's a mean replacement for bourbon in a Manhattan! Cheers! **\$39.99 750ml / \$21.99 375ml**



ELMER T. LEE SINGLE BARREL KENTUCKY BOURBON

If you're looking for top-shelf bourbon at a reasonable price, this whiskey delivers. It's very complex with hay, leather, dried spices, and oak leading into a mild, warming finish. At 90 proof, it's a smooth product that offers a great bargain for such exceptional quality. **\$29.99 750ml**



MAKER'S 46 KENTUCKY BOURBON

Maker's Mark has not released a new product since they began making their premium bourbon with the original red waxed top. The wait is finally over. This is produced using regular Maker's Mark bourbon, but during the barrel aging a new step is added to manipulate the flavors and make the 46. This is fuller-bodied, has more powerful flavors, and is "smokier" than the original. The word on the street is that supply is limited, so try it soon! **\$34.99 750ml**