

Our editors select the most ageable wines of the year.

BY THE EDITORS OF WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE

While American culture in general is preoccupied with the here and now, wine devotees are well accustomed to thinking long term. Laying down bottles in cellars or stand-alone storage units and monitoring their development over a period of years is a thing of beauty to true enthusiasts. It's one of the deep, true pleasures of wine: as tannins, acidity and flavors flower or subside, the disparate elements coalesce into a complex whole and after patiently observing you finally decide on the moment of optimal consumption. What could possibly be better than that reward of your efforts?

On these pages are the 100 wines reviewed this year that our editors feel are most cellar-worthy and achieve high quality. It is a refined list, and many of the wines are expensive—no surprise there. But all are collectible and/or might require time in a properly temperature- and humidity-controlled cellar to deliver maximum pleasure. In an ideal world, you could buy a half case or more of wines that intrigue, and open a bottle at intervals to watch and savor their evolution. Of course, many of these wines are limited in production, and just like wines on our other Top 100 lists, some may have sold out or increased in price since our initial reviews were published.

In most contexts, the phrase “you’re not getting older, you’re getting better” is wishful thinking. In these wines, it is the truth. Enjoy!

1



ESTATE GROWN 2005
CABERNET SAUVIGNON
OAK KNOLL DISTRICT OF NAPA VALLEY
A.C. 14.5% BY VOL.

99 Trefethen 2005 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Oak Knoll); \$100. This is nearly perfect, a massive, monumental wine whose sheer power is matched only by its grace and refinement. The flavors of blackberries, cassis, dark chocolate, buttered toast and cedar flood the mouth, tightly controlled by firm tannins and good acidity. Decant for several hours if you open it now, but better to give it 6–10 years in the bottle.

2

97 Marchesi Antinori 2006 Guado al Tasso (Bolgheri Superiore); \$95. Guado al Tasso is finally back. After a string of past vintages that exhibited some rubber-like aromas, the 2006 expression is a study in purity, focus and excellence. This wine is impressive on all levels in terms of intensity, personality and persistency. It's rich and luscious with smooth tannins and lasting flavors of blackberry and spice. Drink after 2015. Imported by Ste. Michelle Wine Estates.

3

97 Buty 2007 Champoux Vineyard Red (Horse Heaven Hills); \$55. Marvelously fragrant, with seductive scents of cherries, rocks and chocolate, which, along with the astonishing color saturation, suggest a wine of immense power. The 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc blend shows perfect ripeness with flavors of rock and acid preserved. This wine has it all—depth, blue and purple fruits, polished tannins—and probably a 25-year lifespan.

4

100 Cardinale 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$200. Tasted in a flight of great and famous Napa wines, this Cardinale stood at the head of the pack. Starts with a very fine nose of cedar, cassis, ripe blackberries and violets, then turns dramatic and refined in the mouth. Shows vast depth and length, with the finish a full minute of sweet fruits and spices. Marvelous tannins, so plush and elegant, so powerful yet refined. The grapes hail from Mt. Veeder, Howell Mountain, Stags Leap and Oakville, and the blend contains 14% Merlot. As good as it is now, it will improve for at least eight years.

6



97 Henriot 1996 Cuvée des Enchanteleurs Brut (Champagne); \$185. With all the extreme intensity of this vintage, this wine brings even more. The start of cookie yeast and toast character, a vibrant mineral texture, hints of spice, green herbs and a final white peach flavor. It is still young, just keep aging. Imported by Henriot Inc.

7

97 Williams Selyem 2007 Hirsch Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); \$72. A brilliant wine. Racy in acidity, silky in texture, yet powerful, it exudes the essence of Pinot Noir's greatness. Shows great fruity ripeness in the cherry, Dr. Pepper cola, licorice and bacon flavors, and also a wild, forest quality of grilled mushrooms, thyme and fennel. Absolutely dry, with a firm spine of tannins, the structure is near

perfect. A divine expression of Hirsch, and a good candidate for six years in the cellar.

8

96 Aalto 2006 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 wood-spice. Needs a couple of more years but not 10 or 20. Imported by European Cellars.

9

97 Château Suduiraut 2007 Sauternes; \$90. Powered by dry botrytis, this is a wine with immense potential. It has weight, complexity and richness, all under the cloak of botrytis. To leaven the power, there is acidity, but this is certainly for aging. Imported by Château Suduiraut.

10



98 Standish 2006 The Relic Shiraz (Barossa Valley); \$135. This prodigious wine showcases Barossa's ability to deliver big, mouthfilling flavors without any suggestion of heat or heaviness. Scents of stone fruit, pepper and red currants mark the nose, while the flavors take on a darker cast, heading toward black cherries and black olives. The tannins are supremely silky, but this graceful, feminine beauty should drink well through at least 2020. Imported by Epicurean Wines.

11

97 Betz Family 2007 Père de Famille Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley); \$60. This Père de Famille is 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, with the rest split between Merlot and Petit Verdot. Sweet, pure fruit—black currants and black cherry and blackberry—is packed tight, concentrated and polished, but needing hours to breathe open. Dense, dusty, complex, complicated, this wine is sophisticated beyond description.

12

97 Failla 2006 Vivien Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); \$70. This small-production wine showcases the wild, feral and lonely personality of this winery's extreme coastal mountain location, offering the most exotic flavors that are hard to describe. Asian pears, pomegranates, Dr. Pepper cola, red currants, licorice, bacon and rare berries like mulberries and loganberries come to mind. It's softly delicious and drinkable now, yet has a firm acidic structure that suggests aging into the future. It will be fascinating to watch this wine develop over the next decade.

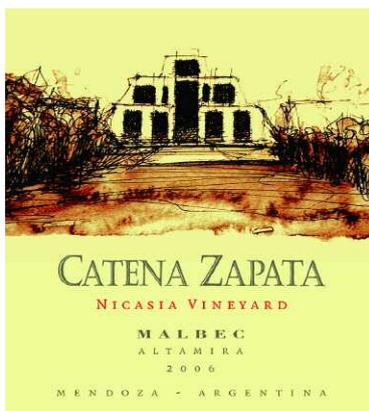
13

96 Atalon 2006 Corestone Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$60. Dramatic all around. Deeply aromatic, offering waves of grilled blackberries, currants, violets, sweet buttered cinnamon toast and sandalwood. The tannin structure is superb. Feels classically dense and full-bodied in the mouth, very dry, yet opulent and complex. Grows more concentrated as it airs in the glass. A tremendous wine that needs time. 2012–2020.

DEMOCRATIC IDEAL

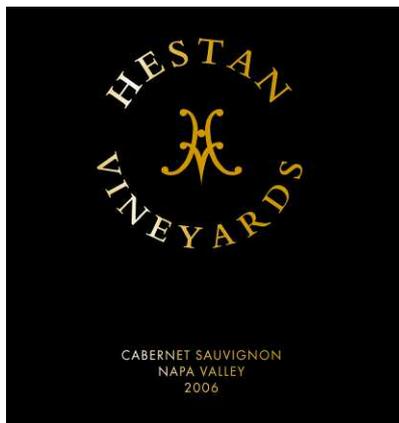
The framers of the U.S. Constitution celebrated its completion with 60 bottles of claret, 54 bottles of Madeira, 22 bottles of Port, 12 beers, eight bottles of hard cider and a punch bowl so large "ducks could swim in it."

14



97 Bodega Catena Zapata 2006 Nicasia Vineyard Malbec (Mendoza); \$120. If the color doesn't tell the full story, the nose will: it's impeccably perfumed, round and sweet, with amazing fruit aromas and a toasty background. The feel is as lush and rich as they come, and there's outstanding purity to the lusty black fruit flavors. A masher with elegance. Maybe the best Malbec Argentina has ever produced. Drink from 2011–15. Imported by Winebow.

15



97 Hestan 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$100. Massive, dramatic, beautiful, intense, but young and firm in tannins, with a cut of fresh acidity. Shows concentrated blackberries, black currants, violets, minerals and cedar, leading to a long, penetrating finish. Very great Cabernet, vibrant and potent, just tremendous in structure. Potentially a near-perfect wine with 4–6 years in the bottle.

16

97 Dominus 2007 Red Wine (Napa Valley); \$129. Easily the greatest Dominus in memory. Comes down on the drier, lower alcohol and less ripe side than many Cabs in its league, yet lacks for nothing in complexity and sheer deliciousness. Tantalizes with blackberry tart, cherry, carob bean and a Pinot Noir-esque cola-rhubarb richness that retreats behind rich tannins and an earthiness suggesting sweet blond tobacco and dried sage. Clearly ageable, it will develop bottle complexity over the next 12 years, at least. It's 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, with a few drops of Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

17

97 Vietti 2006 Brunate (Barolo); \$130. Bravo! The Brunate cru has awarded Vietti with a stellar product: a wine that is unusually dark and plush with impressive intensity and crafted aromas of black fruit, spice, earth, licorice, balsam and gianduia chocolate-hazelnut spread. The soft, velvety texture is seductively delicious and the wine will age many long, glorious years. Imported by Dalla Terra Winery Direct.

18

94 Tua Rita 2006 Giusto di Notri (Toscana); \$75. The oak element is still strong at this point so give this super Tuscan blend a few more years of cellar aging. Inky, black concentration foretells mature cherry, chocolate, vanilla bean and espresso. You can't help but love a wine like this because of its extraordinary succulence and intensity. Imported by Winebow.

19

97 Sea Smoke 2007 Ten Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills); \$80. This very dense, tannic Pinot Noir represents a triumph for the winery, the vintage and the region it represents. A multi-clone blend (hence the name) with high, cool-climate acidity and aged in 100% new oak, it's still young, fresh and tight. The astringency throws a cloak over the raspberries, cherries, rosehip tea and Indian spice flavors, which reveal themselves only reluctantly. But they're there, in an imposing texture of velvet and silk. This enormous wine demands time. The window seems to be 2012–2015.

20

96 Andrew Will 2007 Ciel du Cheval Vineyard Red Wine (Red Mountain); \$53. A completely different blend from the winery's 2006 Ciel, this reflects Chris Camarda's growing enchantment with Cabernet Franc, which is now 45% of the blend. Most of the rest is Merlot—a Right Bank style. The concept works. It captures the sleek minerality of the site, and puts the fruit into tight, laser-like focus. The wine seems almost crystalline—sharp-edged and reflective, with penetrating angles and offset flavors.

21

96 Prager 2009 Wachstum Bodenstein Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$70. A lovely wine. Ripe Riesling held under tension, its coiled white fruits creating the crispest citrus character. The wine is just settling out on a long development, its steely edge and intense acidity promising many years. Imported by Winebow.

THE FINEST HOPS

There were more than 140 wineries in Napa Valley in 1889. Yet, the newspapers proclaimed one crop in particular to be the best in the world: hops.

22

96 William Fèvre 2008 Valmur Grand Cru (Chablis); \$83. A great waft of ripe fruits, wood spice and tense acidity. A Valmur is a model for great Chablis, a taut wine, like a spring of green fruits waiting to burst out. This impressive wine needs aging, give it at least five years. Imported by Henriot Inc.

23

94 Domaine Berthoumieu 2007 Charles de Batz (Madiran); \$25. Tannat at its most expressive, this wine boasts dense tannins that roll deeply around the wine. But the fruit is of such an intensity that it keeps up a fine equilibrium. It is a seamless, impressive wine, projecting its power easily. Imported by Charles Neal Selections.

24

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.

25

98 Château Climens 2007 Barsac; \$200. A big, rich wine, showing its gorgeous fruit easily. But with a core of dryness, the ripest apricots touched by caramel, it should age well over many years. There is intense power here, still hidden by the youth of the wine, but with final concentration. Imported by Château Climens.

26

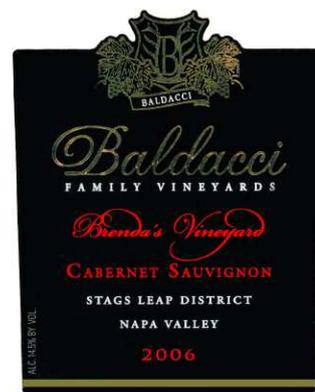
97 Leonetti Cellar 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla); \$85. The 76% Cabernet Sauvignon is melded with 17% Merlot, 4% Carmenère and 3% Malbec, creating a stunningly dense, polished, tight wine. It's light years away from the Leonetti's of the 1980s—compact and loaded with black fruits, pepper, fresh herbs, rock, earth, toast and smoke. It's so tight that it's almost impossible to dissect. It needs time—a lot of time.

27



98 Evening Land 2007 Occidental Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); \$150. A terrific Pinot, and one of the few that absolutely demands cellaring. The tannic structure is enormous, providing a sandpaper dryness to the palate. Yet the flavor explosion is so powerful, you can enjoy it now with utter satisfaction. Erupts in grilled blackberry and cherry, Dr. Pepper cola, bacon, anise, sautéed wild mushroom and smoky sandalwood flavors, leading to a spicy finish that continues for a full minute. Glorious and decadent. The winemaker was Sashi Moorman, from Stolpman, and the vineyard was planted in 1994 to the Calera clone. Only 115 cases were produced. Drink now–2017.

28



96 Baldacci 2006 Brenda's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District); \$85. Easily earns its high score for the sheer power and mass, equal to anything out of Napa. Erupts in the most complex blackberries, black currants, licorice and 100% new smoky oak flavors, with a spicy finish that goes on and on. The tannins are strong and fine and impressive. Not for the faint-

hearted, and not a wine to drink now, as it will swamp food. Should begin to emerge after 2012.

29

95 Dominio de Atauta 2006 Ribera del Duero; \$50. What a beauty! Masculine aromas of black fruits, cola and oak sit there begging to be sipped, while the lush, deep palate is home to dense blackberry, cassis and chocolate flavors. Lively but dense, with tannins, plenty of oak and a finish of black pepper, fudge and vanilla. Complex and exciting Spanish wine. Needs time; best from 2012 through 2018. Imported by European Cellars.

30

97 Von Strasser 2007 Reserve (Diamond Mountain); \$125. Napa Bordeaux-style wines don't get much richer than this. It is, in a word, extraordinary, in large part due to the perfect vintage. So rich, so ripe in fruit, and yet so brilliantly balanced in tannins and acidity. Really world-class. Made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Malbec, it offers dazzlingly complex waves of blackberry and black currant fruit, with suggestions of cocoa, spice and cedar. You can drink it now, but it should develop bottle nuances through the next ten years, at least. Only 172 cases were produced.

31

95 Sbragia 2006 Monte Rosso Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Valley); \$50. One for the cellar. It's vibrantly rich and forward in blackberries, black cherries, plums, dark chocolate and sweet smoky new oak, yet very tannic. Creates an astringency that lasts through the spicy finish. It would be a pity to open it before 2012, and will last for years after.

BLUSH

Grenache is ideal for producing rosé because of its thin skin and naturally occurring phenolic coloring compounds.

32

96 Rudi Pichler 2008 Wösendorfer Kollmutz Reserve Grüner Veltliner (Wachau); \$97. This is the third vintage of Rudi Pichler's Reserve from the Kollmutz Vineyard. It shows an extra richness over the already concentrated Smaragd, a powerhouse of intensity, spice, mango, oregano and lemon verbena crispness. The balance is already there, now the wine needs to mature. Imported by Winebow.

33

96 Eugenio Bocchino 2005 La Serra (Barolo); \$99. This beautiful expression of Nebbiolo from the La Serra cru represents the best of Barolo winemaking tradition. Eugenio Bocchino heads a family-run estate that spans almost six hectares in La Morra, Verduno, Roddi and Alba. This is a focused and tightly tuned wine with bright berry nuances and exciting crispness, length and elegance. Imported by Small Vineyards LLC.

34

96 Stonestreet 2006 Christopher's Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley); \$100. Hard mountain tannins characterize this Cab, which was grown above 2,000 feet in the Mayacamas. It's hugely deep in blackberries and black currants, with notes of dark chocolate and violets. Meanwhile, 100% new French oak adds an elaborate layer of smoky caramel and char that's entirely in keeping with the wine's volume. Impressive and flashy, but immature, this wine requires cellaring. Best 2012–2018.

35

95 Adelsheim 2007 Boulder Bluff Vineyard Pinot Noir (Chehalem Mountains); \$58. This is the first vineyard-designation for the vineyard, and it's easy to see why it was done. The wine has pinpoint focus, bright fruit, natural layering of spice, fruit and herb, with a punchy, briny spine that seems to gather force and go on forever. If a wine can ever be salty, this is the wine.

36

95 Château du Cèdre 2006 Le Cèdre (Cahors); \$60. Almost black in color, this is a wonderful wine with a long development ahead. At the moment, wood is still too dominant, but just taste the weight of the darkest plum and sweet fig fruit flavors, a line of licorice and bitter coffee and huge, dry tannins. Imported by Martine's Wines.

37

95 W.H. Smith 2007 Purple Label Piedra Hill Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Howell Mountain); \$64. You don't want to open this wine anytime soon. It's tightly wound and immature, offering a blast of primary fruit flavors that haven't yet integrated with the oak. It tastes almost sweet now, although it's technically bone dry, with waves of black cherries, blackberries, mocha, anise liqueur and smoky oak vanillins, followed by a long, spicy finish. Hold until 2012, if you can, and should drink well beyond that.

38

97 Emilio Moro 2006 Malleolus de Valderamiro (Ribera del Duero); \$180. Beautifully composed, with power and just as much precision and pizzazz. The nose offers lightly baked berry fruit notes, leather and spice, while the palate is loaded with tobacco, exotic spices and the finest natural berry flavors Spain has to offer. Smooth, elegant, finessed and potent, with integrated tannins and bold acidity that will keep it going for at least a decade. Drink from 2012 through 2018. Imported by Fine Estates From Spain.

39

99 Moët & Chandon 1996 Dom Pérignon Oenothèque Brut (Champagne); \$385. A magnificent Champagne, one that is light, delicate, yet packed with character. It is beautifully balanced, with a bone-dry character, just softened by the toastiness that is developing. Expect this to age for many years. Imported by Moët Hennessy USA.

40



94 Krutz 2007 Stagecoach Vineyard Syrah (Napa Valley); \$35. Very fine, very pure Syrah. Intense, well-structured, complex, a wine to lay down for a while, although it's delicious now. Shows spicy flavors of black currants, blueberries and plums, with great, big, softly lush tannins. Should glide smoothly through 2015.

41

95 Paul Lato 2007 Fiddlestix Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills); \$70. A spectacular Pinot Noir, but you don't want to open it anytime soon. Shows the pedigree of this vineyard, a superbly balanced wine rich in acidity and minerals. The fruit? Black and red cherries, blackberries, cola, cocoa powder and red currants, enriched with smoky cedarwood. Beautiful, but needs time. The window is 2011–2013.

42

94 Domaines Schlumberger 2007 Kessler Grand Cru Riesling (Alsace); \$36. With a few years' aging, this is beginning to show its almond and toast side. The fresh acidity is now melding beautifully into a soft, ripe texture with layers of spice and acidity. Certainly worth aging further. Imported by Maisons Marques & Domaines USA.

43

96 Gianni Voerzio 2005 La Serra (Barolo); \$125. We are enthusiastically impressed by this gorgeous wine. From the La Morra location in the Barolo region, Gianni Voerzio and his wife Franca have been making wine since 1986 and carry forth a philosophy that relies on both

innovation and tradition. This is a ripe, full and rich expression of Nebbiolo with long-lasting flavors of blackberry, tar and cola. Imported by Dancing Bear Cellars.

44

96 Quilceda Creek 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley); \$125. This feels slightly softer in the mouth than the massive 2006, but carries the density and gravitas that one associates with Quilceda Creek. Wonderful balance, with a deeply detailed set of flavors that gather strength as they move through the palate. Mixed berries, threaded with chocolate, lingering with black cherry, cassis, smoke, cedar, lead pencil and more.

45

97 Tenuta dell'Ornellaia 2006 Ornellaia (Bolgheri Superiore); \$200. Consistently among Italy's top-scoring wines, this vintage of the celebrated Ornellaia (a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot) is a gorgeous expression of the very best of European enology. It delivers extraordinary richness, succulence and intensity, but remains elegant to the end. Aromas include black cherry, spice and dark chocolate. Imported by Folio Fine Wine Partners.

46

95 Corte Pavone 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$75. Loacker/Corte Pavone is on a roll of late and is making some of the finest Brunello you will find. Organic farming practices have helped shape a truly tremendous wine with deep concentration and amazing intensity. The wine is rich and velvety and bursting with bright fruit nuances. Drink after 2015. Imported by Hey Day Corporation.

47

95 Mark Ryan 2007 Lonely Heart Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Mountain); \$75. The first reserve from this winery, it's a barrel selection of Ciel du Cheval and old block Klipsun Cabernet Sauvignon, blended with 15% Petit Verdot. This is the most structured, dense and tightly layered Mark Ryan wine to date. It has the density and

compact structure of Quilceda Creek, with perhaps just a shade less concentration. Aromatically complex, you can pick out early details of seed, coffee, pepper, chocolate and tobacco around the dense cassis, plum and cherry fruit. But this wine is truly a baby, and should not be touched for a decade or more.

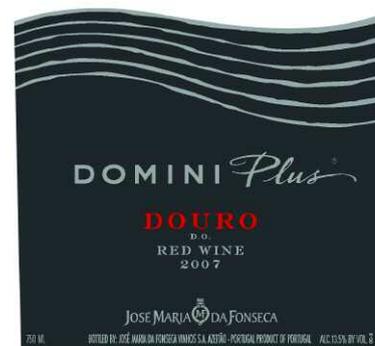
48

94 Ehret 2006 Bella's Blend (Knights Valley); \$39. A deeply impressive Bordeaux blend. It comes from this small, but prestigious, appellation, which is a bridge between Sonoma County and Napa Valley. Marked by dryness and a superb tannic structure, it has deep flavors of blackberries, black currants, violets, herbs and cedar. Needs time. Give it 4–6 years in the cellar.

49

94 Quinta do Crasto 2008 Reserva Old Vines (Douro); \$40. From low yielding 70-year old vines, this is a beautifully structured wine, its dark tannins balanced by complex dark coffee, plum skins, a rich texture. It's obviously a wine for aging—give it at least four years. Imported by Broadbent Selections, Inc.

50



94 José Maria da Fonseca 2007 Domini Plus Red Wine (Douro); \$40. A beautifully shaped and structured wine. Its polished wood shines through the black plums, figs and dark chocolate flavors. It's a wine with a velvet texture, hiding sweet tannins and pushing the ripe fruit forward. For aging, 4–5 years, but already very drinkable. Imported by Palm Bay International.

51

96 Chappellet 2007 Pritchard Hill Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$135. This is a monster Cabernet, in the best sense. Comprised of all five Bordeaux varieties, it's bone dry, enormously complex and firmly masculine, with very big, hard tannins. Concentration on the flavors shows layers of blackberries, black currants, blueberries, mocha, violets, sweet charred oak and a firm grounding of minerals. An outstanding wine from the Pritchard Hill region east of the Silverado Trail, but one that needs cellar time to resolve the tannins. Better after 2013, and should develop for many years after that.

52

96 Luciano Sandrone 2006 Cannubi Boschis (Barolo); \$150. It's hard to beat the quality achieved by this spectacular wine. Luciano Sandrone's Barolo from the Cannubi Boschis cru is creamy, rich, opulent and sophisticated. It oozes flavors of espresso, ripe cherry, cassis, cola and licorice. In the mouth, it is extraordinarily bright and generous and the seamless finish can be counted in long minutes. And, the best news is: this wine will only improve with time. Imported by Vintus LLC.

53

94 Sonoma Coast Vineyards 2008 Freestone Hills Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); \$40. The Freestone area is one of the coolest regions in the sprawling Sonoma Coast. Acidity marks this bone-dry, elegant wine. It tastes like somebody gave a squirt of lime to the cherry, raspberry, cola, persimmon, pomegranate and sandalwood flavors. Seems like a natural for the cellar. Drink 2012–2016.

54

95 Terre Rouge 2007 Ascent Syrah (Sierra Foothills); \$85. This is one of the few California Syrahs that demands time in the cellar. Its tough tannins form an aloof astringency that makes it virtually undrinkable now, but it has an incredible core of blackberry, black currant and dark chocolate fruit. Peppery, anise, leather and spice notes, in addition to slightly caramelized

vanillins from 100% new oak, impart great complexity. Best 2012 and beyond.

55

99 Avignonesi 1997 Occhio di Pernice (Vin Santo di Montepulciano); \$237/375ml. This sweet wine from Italy is guaranteed to blow your socks off. Its thickness and density resembles concentrated maple syrup or molasses. It is made with Prugnolo Gentile (Sangiovese) grapes that are air-dried and then aged in small wood containers for many careful years. The gorgeous aromas include roasted chestnuts, brown sugar, prunes and sweet figs and you can sense the power too. Imported by Dalla Terra Winery Direct.

56

97 Bollinger 1997 RD Brut (Champagne); \$260. Disgorged in 2009, this is a toasty wine, rich and concentrated. The idea of long aging before disgorging the yeast cells is to build up the unique complexity of the wine. In this Bollinger has succeeded magnificently. An opulent wine, with aging potential for 10 years or more. Imported by Terlato Wines International.

57

95 Semper 2007 Ellenbach Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); \$85. Acidity makes the mouth water, tannins provide a firm framework, oak is perfectly integrated, and the depth of fruit is impressive. Shows flavors of cherry tart, raspberry Newton, cola, buttered cinnamon toast and vanilla that are magnificent and decadent. Elegant and classy. Should negotiate the years through 2014.

58

94 Gary Farrell 2007 Bradford Mountain Vineyards Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley); \$40. A complex, sophisticated Zinfandel, although it's very young, and all the parts haven't come together. Shows luscious waves of ripe forest blackberries, raspberries, red plums and nec-

tarines, with notes of dry chocolate, sweet tobacco, balsam and cedar, finished with massive peppery spices. Notable for the purity and elegance of its tannin-acid structure, this beautiful Zinfandel should age well through 2014.

59

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.

60

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.

61

95 David Arthur 2007 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$95. Expensive, yes, but a very fine wine, showcasing what Napa Cab can do at a world-class level. But you want to cellar it, because it's all primary fruit, unintegrated oak and tannins now. Beyond the sweet cedar application you'll find deep, noble flavors of black currants and minerals, wrapped into the finest tannins imaginable. Hold until 2013, at least, and should provide good drinking for many years.

DIRT CHEAP

So esteemed is the soil of Burgundy's cloistered Clos de Vougeot vineyard that workers are told to scrape it from their shoes at day's end before leaving the property.

62

94 Rainer Wess 2009 Reserve Riesling (Wachau); \$49. Intense concentration, the wine powers across the palate, its texture packed with broad white and yellow fruit flavors as well as beautiful acidity. Age for 3–4 years. Imported by Russell Herman Selection.

63

94 Trapiche 2006 Viña Adriana Venturin Single Vineyard Malbec (La Consulta); \$50. From a 50+-year-old vineyard in La Consulta in the Uco Valley comes this bold, seriously built Malbec. Black cherry and coconut aromas settle in nicely, followed by forward raspberry, mocha and coffee notes. Great acidity, tannic foundation, structure and fillings; it's like a happy house. Drink from 2011 through 2015. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.

64

94 Schloss Gobelsburg 2008 Heiligenstein Riesling (Kamptal); \$54. Lovers of the purest mineral Riesling, very steely, will go crazy for this wine. It is tightly woven around a core of green and white fruits and the crispest, knife-edge sharp acidity. It is for aging, to produce a stunning wine in 4–5 years at a minimum. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines.

65

94 Ravenswood 2006 Pickberry Vineyards Merlot-Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma Mountain); \$50. Quite a noble, interesting wine that bears comparing with the best of Napa Valley. It's bone dry, with softly dusty tannins backed with a firm hit of clean acidity. The flavors are somewhat herbal, with a sage and tobacco edge to the blackberries, dark chocolate and graphite. Feels classy and important, but young. Better after 2012.

CODDLING CRIMINALS

Under the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, fraudulent wine sellers were ordered drowned in a river.

66

94 WesMar 2007 Hellenthal Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); \$50. Here's a young, dry, acidic Pinot Noir that clearly wants some time in the cellar. It has a beautifully silky texture, and is made in a light, elegant style, with very complex flavors. Waves of sour red cherry candy and cola flavors wash over the palate, accented with orange zest, cinnamon, Asian spices, anise and sandalwood. Better after 2011 and should develop for 3–5 years after that.

67

94 Quinta do Vallado 2007 Reserva Field Blend (Douro); \$60. From old, mixed planting vineyards in the Quinta do Vallado, this is an impressively complex blend of flavors, from rich spice, smooth tannins, the richest plum juice and a gorgeous, opulent texture. It is ripe, drinkable now, but likely to benefit from several years aging. Imported by Quintessential Wines.

68

95 Flora Springs 2007 Hillside Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford); \$100. An amazingly rich, complex and ageworthy wine. Made from 100% Cabernet grapes, it shows firm, plush flavors of blackberries and black currants, with a sour cherry candy tartness that's clean and piquant in the mouth. But the wine is also very tannic, giving a dry astringency through the finish. Should reward time in the cellar. Best 2012–2018.

69

94 Ken Wright 2008 Canary Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Eola-Amity Hills); \$50. The top wine from Ken Wright in 2008, this beautifully elegant wine clocks in at just 13.3% alcohol, yet delivers a mouthful of delicious flavors. A lovely mix of cranberry, pomegranate and wild raspberry is annotated with dusty herb. Excellent midpalate concentration and length.

70

95 Chehalem 2006 Statement Pinot Noir (Ribbon Ridge); \$99. This one-of-a-kind offering from Chehalem celebrates what they are calling a "great" vintage. The wine is dark, supple and immensely rich and dense, yet retains a lightness that captures the elegance of the Pinot Noir grape while propelling it to rarified heights. The mix of red and purple fruits, herb, spice and earth all come together in a smooth and seductive wine that drinks like a dream.

71

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.

72

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

73

96 Staglin 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford); \$175. A big wine, rather ponderous now in the size and forwardness of its fruit and the volume of mainly new French oak. The fruit is massive, suggesting black and red sour cherry candy, with oak influences of smoky char and pencil shavings, and complex notes of minerals and sweet violet flowers. But it all needs time to come together. Tasted in a large flight of

2007 Rutherford Cabernets and Bordeaux blends, this was easily the star. Really hard to exaggerate the wine's beauty and elegance. Best 2013–2019, at least.

74

94 Testarossa 2008 Doctor's Vineyard Pinot Noir (Santa Lucia Highlands); \$54. A very finely crafted Pinot Noir, although it's also very young and wants some time in the cellar. Combines great Highlands fruit power and tannic structure with a silky, delicate mouthfeel. Beautiful now for the elaborate raspberry and cherry flavors, elaborated with beautiful oak, but better after 2013.

75

94 Schmelz 2008 Dürnsteiner Freiheit Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$56. Crisp, steely, deliciously perfumed wine. It shows a tight mineral character balanced by the fresh white currant and grapefruit flavors. The acidity and structure are important, promising good aging. Imported by Blue Danube Wine Co.

76

95 Knights Bridge 2007 Beckstoffer Dr. Crane Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$110. Beautiful from start to finish, but tannic, and not drinkable now, in the classic sense. The tannins are hard, and while they're very finely ground, they prevent the palate from full appreciation of the lush blackberries, black cherries, dark chocolate and herbs. Give this 100% Cabernet at least five years to begin to mellow.

77

93 Sanctuary 2006 Mariah Vineyard Zinfandel (Mendocino Ridge); \$25. This is a Zin for the cellar. It's fine now in rich fruit, but fairly tannic, and there's some tension of parts that 3–4 years should resolve. Shows very pure, focused black currant and cedar flavors, liberally dusted with peppery spices. The challenge with these big Zins is balance, which Sanctuary's '06 achieves.

78



94 Prats & Symington LDA 2007 Chryseia (Douro); \$65. Chryseia is a benchmark wine in modern Douro table wine-making. With its layered tannins, black currant fruit, minerality and stylish yet powerful structure, this is a wine of great stature, needing aging for 2–3 years. Imported by Premium Port Wines, Inc.

79

95 Le Chiuse 2004 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$120. Le Chiuse has produced one of Montalcino's brightest stars with this Riserva 2004 (the base 2004 Brunello didn't impress us nearly as much). This is a delicious wine that you will enjoy on every level. The intensity and purity of the fruit and spice aromas are impressive and the mouthfeel is extra-plush and supple. Yet, those firm tannins give it the balance and structure it needs. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.

80

95 Fattoria Petrolo 2006 Galatrona (Toscana); \$120. With its extraordinary texture, bright personality and complex medley of aromas, this is a lovely Merlot. The aromatic layers here include red cherry, earthy tones, exotic spice and cinnamon. The mouthfeel is smooth and gorgeous with delicious softness and opulent richness. Drink after 2015. Imported by Vintus LLC.

81



93 Far Niente 2007 Estate Bottled Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville); \$115. This is one of the most tannic Cabs Far Niente has produced in quite a while. It's really not drinkable now, despite very complex flavors of blackberries, cherries, licorice, tobacco and plums, along with plenty of smoky new oak. Made with a few drops of Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc, which add perfume and flowers, it's a wine that won't come into its own for quite a while. Hold until 2013, at least, and it should provide interesting drinking for years after, in a proper cellar.

82

94 Umathum 2006 Unter den Terrassen zu Jois Pinot Noir (Burgenland); \$65. One of Austria's most successful Pinot Noirs, exhibiting both the wild cherry and jammy red berry fruits of the grape and also impressive Burgundian tannic structure. It is big, dense, powerful, a juicy streak of acidity giving a powerful element. Age for 3–4 years. Imported by Schindler Weissman Co LLC

CHATEAU NOAH

After beaching the ark atop Mt. Ararat, Noah and his sons, according to the Old Testament, became winemakers.

83

94 Château Léoville-Barton 2007 Saint-Julien; \$65. This is a great success for the year, a wine that is dense, characterized by balance between sweet fruit and solid tannins. Spice from the finely judged wood aging adds extra complexity, as do the plum and berry fruits. For aging. Imported by Château Léoville-Barton.

84

94 R Wines 2007 Chateau Pergola Blewitt Springs Grenache (McLaren Vale); \$67. Remarkably well balanced for a wine at nearly 16% alcohol, this is also quite fragrant and complex, boasting an array of scents ranging from slightly mushroomy, savory notes through dried flowers and baking spices. The texture is wonderfully lush and supple, while the flavors add fruit sweetness to the savory components. Long on the finish. Drink now–2015. Imported by The Grateful Palate.

85

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.

86

93 Quinta de São José 2008 Reserva (Douro); \$40. Concentrated and dense, very structured, swathed in sweet ripe plums, dark chocolate, spice and balancing acidity. This is complex, dark, while remaining stylish. For aging over 5–6 years. Imported by Laurel Importers.

87

94 Argiano 2006 Solengo (Toscana); \$70. Solengo is a masterfully crafted super Tuscan blend of Petit Verdot, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot with seamlessly integrated wood notes that form a modern and proud personality. Aromas include black cherry, exotic spice and chocolate and the wine's flavors are enduring and smooth. Cellar it for five more years at least. Imported by Vias Imports.

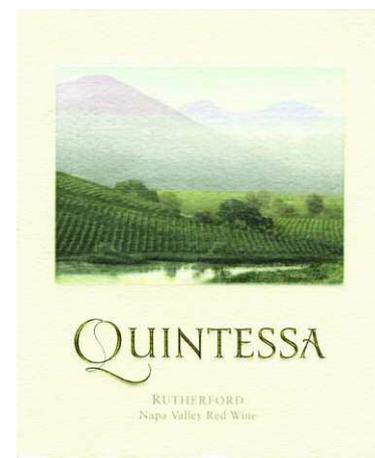
88

94 Château Malartic-Lagraviere 2007 Pessac-Léognan; \$70. It is easy to be seduced by the opulence of this wine. But underneath the ripe surface, there is a complex wine, full of tight, structured yellow fruits, spice from wood and acidity bursting to get out. It needs at least another four years for its real grandeur to be apparent. Imported by Château Malartic-Lagravière.

89

94 Simonnet-Febvre 2007 Les Clos Grand Cru (Chablis); \$70. Still tasting young, with its lemon and lime flavors dominant, this is going to be a serious, mineral-driven wine. It has plenty of fruit, but it is caged in a firm, tight texture of green fruits. Obviously it needs aging. Imported by Louis Latour Inc.

90



95 Quintessa 2007 Red Wine (Rutherford); \$140. A very fine Cab from the estate, which is in the north-central part of the Rutherford appellation. Judging from the tannins, it's too youthful to drink now, with a tight, astringent mouthfeel and fleshy, unintegrated oak. But the flavors are extraordinary. They flood the mouth with the essence of Cabernet, with ripe blackberries, black currants, raspberries and mocha, and the spicy finish lasts for a full minute. Give it until 2013, and it should provide great drinking through 2019, at least.

91

94 Domaine Michel Bouzereau 2007 Le Cailleret Premier Cru (Puligny-Montrachet); \$75. The wine is currently closed up, not offering huge flavors. So it is a question of feeling the richness, the steely edge and the yellow fruits. It is certainly very dense, needing several years' aging, finishing with vanilla creaminess. Imported by Domaine et Saveurs Collection.

OUT TO PASTEUR

After the 19th century wine blight, the French government hired Louis Pasteur to analyze and improve the winemaking industry. He was the first to observe the extent of oxidation's role in the aging process.

92

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.

93

94 Niepoort 2008 Batuta Tinto (Douro); \$100. Big, solidly tannic, impressive wine, packed with brooding fruits, very firm. Flavors of dried plums, black berry juice and warm herbs combine to produce a wine that is powerful, concentrated, while retaining great balance. It is obviously for aging—give it 5–6 years. Imported by Martine's Wines.

94

94 Joseph Drouhin 2007 Clos des Mouches Premier Cru (Beaune); \$80. Still young, of course, but already the wine is showing great fruits, smoothed by wood, offering style and sophistication. As it opens up, the flavors of pears and sweet apples join the toast and the ripeness. This is on the path to greatness; give it 5–6 years and more. Imported by Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.

95

94 Domaine Christian Moreau Père et Fils 2007 Les Clos Grand Cru (Chablis); \$81. A wine in two parts. It opens soft, with attractive green and white fruits. Then a tight, steely grip shows through, offering aging as well as a taut mineral character. Give the wine 4–5 years. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.

96

94 Tardieu-Laurent 2007 Blanc (Hermitage); \$82. With its head-turning aromas of honey, truffles and ripe peaches, this is a knockout offering from Tardieu Laurent. In the mouth, it's broad yet focused, with layers of rich, nuanced flavors that coat the palate before ending in a long, mineral-inflected finish. Drink now–2020, and possibly beyond that. Imported by Wilson Daniels Ltd.

97

95 Sierra Cantabria 2006 Amancio (Rioja); \$167. Brawny but lovely, with monster black fruit, balsam wood, tobacco and cola nut aromas. The palate is ultrarich and modern in style, with deep, brandied flavors of cola, black cherry and spice. Driven, modern and properly tannic, with a fair amount of mocha and creaminess on the finish. Drink from late 2010 thru 2014. Imported by Fine Estates From Spain.

98

100 Krug 1998 Clos du Mesnil (Champagne); \$1,400. A wine that has created its own universe. It has a unique, special softness that allies with the total purity that comes from a small, enclosed single vineyard. The fruit is almost irrelevant here, because it comes as part of a much deeper complexity. This is a great wine, at the summit of Champagne, a sublime, unforgettable experience. Imported by Moët Hennessy USA.

99

93 Quinta Vale Dona Maria 2007 Tinto (Douro); \$45. A beautifully smooth wine, with a rich Port-like texture. The dry, firm tannins give the wine impressive structure, although it remains an opulent wine, its dark fruit, cocoa and herbal flavors just breathing the concentration of the Douro. Imported by Adventures In Wine.

100

95 Clarendon Hills 2007 Astralis Syrah (Clarendon); \$225. The 2007 Astralis impresses for its combination of power and nuance. It's dark and almost tarry in concentration, but floral and bright at the same time. Layers of dark coffee and earth are balanced by red fruit, and although it's full bodied and rich in texture, the finish introduces delicately herbal, tea-like notes. Best from 2014–2025. Imported by Wine Brokers Unlimited. **WE**

NOT FOR PROPHETS

All but one section of the Old Testament—the Book of Jonah—contain wine references.