



WINE ENTHUSIAST
MAGAZINE

BUYING GUIDE

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An ancient press in Yad Hashmona, a *moshav* nestled in the Judean Hills near Jerusalem, speaks to the history of wine and oil making in the region.

BUYING GUIDE

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gooseberries, but don't fall into the trap of green under-ripeness. Sémillon constitutes 20% of the blend. —S.H.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$38

90 Daou 2010 Chemin de Fleurs (Paso Robles). A blend of Grenache Blanc, Roussanne and Viognier, this is a powerfully rich wine, with flavors of pears, peaches, mangos, oranges and almost any other fruit you can name. Thankfully, it's dryish, with a creamy texture and a spicy finish. Almost a food group in itself, it suggests pairing with strongly flavored, umami-rich dishes. —S.H.
abv: 14.2% **Price:** \$36

88 Montemaggiore 2010 3 Divas (Russian River Valley). This blend of Viognier, Marsanne and Roussanne, in roughly equal measures, is technically incorrect. It's a little dirty, a little fizzy and a little too sweet for a dry table wine. But you know what? It's fun to drink, and that's wine's ultimate obligation. Shows rich, satisfying flavors of apricots, oranges, peaches, honey and herbs, finished with a dry minerality. —S.H.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$25

87 Yorkville Cellars 2010 Eleanor of Aquitaine (Yorkville Highlands). Yorkville has been making this blend of Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc (for this vintage it's 60% the first and 40% the latter), for many of its 25 years, and it achieves a nice balance, the Sémillon there for richness, texture and color, the SB for acidity and the wine's citrus and herb finish. Made from organic grapes. —V.B.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$25

86 Carlotta 2010 Charlene (North Coast). The blend is Viognier, Roussanne and Marsanne, with a few other minor varieties. The orange and apricot flavors are strong and fruity-sweet. It's a country-style wine to drink with rustic poultry and pork dishes. —S.H.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$40

86 Murrieta's Well 2010 The Whip White Wine (Livermore Valley). Murrieta's blend of 31% Sauvignon Blanc, 27% Viognier, 15% Sémillon, 11% Pinot Blanc, 8% Orange Muscat and 8% Muscat Canellii is well-made and likable, medium-thick and somewhat sweet in style with citrus and almond accents. Delightfully quaffable. —V.B.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$19

82 Amberhill 2010 Secret Blend (California). Simple and sugary sweet with pineapple and mango fruit. —S.H.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$10

82 Cupcake 2010 Angel Food (California). Made with undisclosed grape varieties, this rustic, softly sweet wine has apricot, honey and herb flavors. —S.H.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$14

OTHER WHITE WINES

88 Gnarly Head 2010 Pinot Grigio (California). For full review see page 15. *Best Buy.*
abv: 13% **Price:** \$10

87 Graziano 2010 Chenin Blanc (Mendocino). Greg Graziano's Chenin, grown in a 30-plus-year-old vineyard, among the last of its kind in Mendocino County, is crisp and nutty, supported by dried apple, honey and melon-tinged minerality. Fermented in all French oak barrels, the wine has a calming roundness amid its acidity. —V.B.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$14

87 Jaffurs 2010 Thompson Vineyard Grenache Blanc (Santa Barbara County). Very rich and opulent, if a little soft, offering a flood of orange cream pie, meringue, butterscotch and cinnamon spice flavors. Delicious, if a bit one-dimensional. Try as an alternative to an oaky Chardonnay. —S.H.
abv: 13.2% **Price:** \$30

87 Storrs 2009 Viento Vineyard Gewürztraminer (Monterey). Gewürztraminer has lost some popularity lately, but this is really a lovely wine. It's spiciness and slight sweetness, not to mention the acidity, suggest pairing with today's Asian-inspired fare, especially based around chicken, lamb and pork. —S.H.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$16

87 Terlato 2010 Pinot Grigio (Russian River Valley). Rich and spicy, with oak-influenced green apple, pear, peach and citrus flavors, brightened with fine acidity. The finish seems pretty sweet, making the wine more off-dry than dry. —S.H.
abv: NA **Price:** \$24

87 Vermeil 2010 Luvisi Vineyard Dry Sémillon (Calistoga). Not really dry, like the label says, but with apricot and orange jam richness. Sauvignon Blanc adds citrus fruit notes and acidity. There's also a lot of new oak. Drink this tasty wine now. —S.H.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$24

85 Geyser Peak 2011 Pinot Grigio (California). Made without any oak, this wine shows ripe, long hangtime flavors of oranges, pineapples, limes and white flowers that straddle the border between dry and sweet. It's an easy-drinking wine for drinking now. —S.H.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$12

SPARKLING WINES

93 J Vineyards & Winery 2001 Late Disgorged Vintage Brut (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 5.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$90

87 J Vineyards & Winery 2005 Vintage Brut (Russian River Valley). You can taste the dosage on this Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier brut in the overt sweetness that accompanies the pear, citrus and raspberry fruit flavors. With notice-

able residual sugar, it's not really a dry sparkling wine, but it is delicious. —S.H.
abv: 12.5% **Price:** \$48

85 Allure NV Moscato (California). Sweet and fizzy, with orange soda and vanilla flavors. Made to appeal to serve the low-cost Moscato craze, and does a pretty good job. —S.H.
abv: 10% **Price:** \$13

ROSÉ

85 Lasseter 2010 Enjoué Rosé (Sonoma Valley). This Provençal-style blush is made from Syrah, Mourvèdre and Grenache. It's a good wine, dry and crisply acidic, but not without its faults. The main problem is a streak of green mint and vegetables. But there's enough sweet raspberry and cherry fruit to get by. —S.H.
abv: 13.5% **Price:** \$24

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

97 Shafer 2007 Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District). In keeping with the voluptuous approachability of the 2007 vintage, this 100% Cabernet Sauvignon is simply fabulous now for its flood of the ripest, sweetest blackberries, cherries, cassis and chocolate imaginable. Especially noble is the tannin structure, firm and soft, dry and sweet, a combination of opposites. The depth is vast, and the spicy finish goes on for a long time, suggesting the wine's concentration. Simply a joy to drink, it should develop over many years, but you might want to err on the side of youthfulness and open it by 2015. —S.H.
abv: 15.5% **Price:** \$225

97 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars 2008 Cask 23 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 3.
abv: NA **Price:** \$195

96 Jarvis 2006 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 3.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$95

95 Baldacci 2008 Brenda's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District). For full review see page 3.
abv: NA **Price:** \$105

95 Prime 2008 Midoriya Hills Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). An enormous Cabernet, but it's not simply the power of its fruit that's so impressive. Shows massive blackberry, blueberry, crème de cassis and oak flavors packed into profoundly beautiful tannins. The fruit is so sweet that it's surprising how dry the finish is. The winemaker, Ted Henry, also is at the helm of Jarvis. This young Cabernet should develop over the next dozen years, at least, in a good cellar. *Editors' Choice.* —S.H.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$55

95 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars 2008 S.L.V. Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley). For full review see page 4.
abv: NA **Price:** \$125

friendly wine. Drink it now with a nice steak, chop or stew. —S.H.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$35

88 Lasseter 2008 Amoureux (Sonoma Valley). This darkly colored wine tastes strong and sweet, like a blend of raisins, blackberries, milk chocolate and red licorice, with a little bacon thrown in for umami saltiness. Tasty and flashy, but not going anywhere, so enjoy now with a good steak. It's a Bordeaux blend based on Malbec. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%

Price: \$40

88 Lasseter 2009 Chemin de Fer (Sonoma Valley). It's easy to like this soft, smooth wine, with its cherry jam, blackberry liqueur, milk chocolate, sweet licorice, pepper and sandalwood flavors. It feels extravagant and seductive in the mouth, making you want another sip. The blend is Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. —S.H.

abv: 14.6%

Price: \$40

88 Lasseter 2008 Paysage (Sonoma Valley). Lots of rich, sweet cherry, blueberry and mocha flavors in this dry red wine, which is based on Merlot. But it goes beyond mere deliciousness in the refined structure. Feels elegant and dignified in the mouth, with a long, spicy finish. It's not an ager, though, so drink soon. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%

Price: \$40

88 Newton 2009 Red Label Claret (Napa County). Easy to like for its rich blackberry, cherry and cassis flavors, and the lovely coating of new oak, which brings sweet notes of toast and vanilla. The price isn't bad, considering you get real Napa elegance. —S.H.

abv: 13.5%

Price: \$25

87 Buena Vista 2008 The Count Founder's Red Wine (Sonoma County). All of the charms of this Merlot, Syrah and Zinfandel blend are on the surface, but what a pretty surface it is. Polished raspberry and cherry fruit, bacon, cream and a splendid array of flashy spices characterize the flavors. —S.H.

abv: NA

Price: \$20

87 JR Wine 2009 The Devious Woman (Napa Valley). Well-made and creatively blended from Zinfandel, Syrah and Petite Sirah, this is a big, tannic wine, formidable in sweet blackberry, cherry, licorice and spice flavors. It's not subtle, but it is authentic. Drink now. —S.H.

abv: 15%

Price: \$34

87 Tamber Bey 2009 Deux Chevaux Vineyard Rabicano (Yountville). Lots of blackberry, plum, currant and oak flavors in this classic Bordeaux blend. It's so ripe, it's almost sweet, except that the finish is thoroughly dry, with a stimulating scour of tannins and citrusy acids. Right now it's direct and not very complex, leading to the question of ageability. All indications are that it's not a wine you want to cellar, so drink up. —S.H.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$53

86 A.S. Kiken 2009 Estate Red (Diamond Mountain). A good but average red wine for

drinking now. Shows ripe berry, cherry, currant, licorice and spice flavors, with edgy tannins that are a little scoury. Drink up. —S.H.

abv: 13.9%

Price: \$49

86 Carlotta 2009 AD (North Coast). This is a spaghetti with tomato sauce wine, high in acidity, with very ripe, sweet cherry and cured tobacco flavors and firm tannins. It's kind of like an old fashioned Chianti. —S.H.

abv: 13.9%

Price: \$28

86 Kunde 2008 202 Meritage (Sonoma Valley). There's a tough, gritty feeling in the mouth with this dry, tannic wine. Although it has some rich flavors blackberries and blueberries, it's astringent and hard. Give it a good long decant and drink now. —S.H.

abv: 14.6%

Price: \$30

86 Longboard 2010 Point Break (North Coast). This is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Zinfandel, Merlot and Malbec. The grapes are entirely from Sonoma County. It's a tannic, lusty and ultimately satisfying wine, with jammy berry and spice flavors. —S.H.

abv: 14.4%

Price: \$24

85 Eagle Castle 2008 Royal Red (Paso Robles). This Syrah-Merlot blend is a country-style wine. Bone dry, it shows California fruity ripeness and lots of savory black pepper flavors, yet with rustic tannins and acids that scour the mouth. Drink it now with Mexican food or barbecue. —S.H.

abv: 14.9%

Price: \$25

84 Cupcake 2010 Red Velvet (California). So sweet in berry jam and mocha flavors, it's basically a dessert wine. If you like that style, it's pretty good. —S.H.

abv: 13.5%

Price: \$14

84 Dogwood 2008 Blendo (North Coast). The blendo on this North Coast country sipper is Petite Sirah, Mourvèdre, Zinfandel, Carignane and Syrah. It's rich and spicy in jammy berry flavors, and a little overripe, to judge from the raisins. Drink now. —S.H.

abv: 14%

Price: \$25

84 Tractor Shed Red 2009 Red Wine (California). For \$12 or less you get a fruity, clean wine, with berry, cherry and spice flavors. It's easy to drink with pizza, burgers and similar fare. —S.H.

abv: 14.3%

Price: \$12

84 Wild Coyote 2009 House of Reds (Paso Robles). Made from Syrah, Merlot and Zinfandel, this is a toughly tannic, rustic wine. It has berry, earth and spice flavors. —S.H.

abv: 14.4%

Price: \$20

83 Amberhill 2010 Secret Blend (California). Made from undisclosed grape varieties, this wine is simple and candied. It tastes like red cherry jam, spread on buttered white toast and sprinkled with brown sugar and cinnamon. —S.H.

abv: 13.5%

Price: \$10

83 Eagle Castle 2007 Trinity (Paso Robles). Harsh and rustic, with jellied berry and red pepper flavors. Feels soft, simple and sweet. The blend is Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. —S.H.

abv: 15.6%

Price: \$25

83 Midnight Cellars 2007 Zenith (Paso Robles). Overripe and raisiny, with sweet, shriveled blackberry and oak flavors, leading to a hot finish. Drink now. —S.H.

abv: 14.6%

Price: \$65

83 Midnight Cellars 2006 Mare Nectaris (Paso Robles). Made from all five classic Bordeaux varieties, this wine is overripe. Although it's dry and the tannins are fine, it's dominated by raisiny flavors. —S.H.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$44

82 Midnight Cellars 2007 Capriccio Italien (Paso Robles). Way too ripe, with raisined flavors, including raisin-skin bitterness and alcoholic heat on the finish. The dominant variety is Sangiovese. —S.H.

abv: 14.9%

Price: \$34

OTHER RED WINES

91 Reverie 2009 Estate Petite Verdot (Diamond Mountain). This wine is marked by exceptionally ripe, forward flavors of blackberry jam and black currants, with a sweet coating of smoky oak. In fact, flavor is what drives this wine, although it also shows fine, complex Diamond Mountain tannins that give it a dramatic structure. Seems best now and for the next three years. —S.H.

abv: 13.6%

Price: \$71

91 Thomas Fogarty 2007 Gist Ranch Malbec (Santa Cruz Mountains). One of the best Malbecs on the market. It's perfect for drinking now despite big tannins. Shows vast, deep blackberry, blueberry, dark chocolate, currant and anise flavors, with a long, spicy finish. Grill up a steak and pop the cork. —S.H.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$50

89 Summers 2009 Villa Andriana Vineyard Charbono (Calistoga). If you're unfamiliar with Charbono, it's kind of like Petite Sirah in its inky color, thick tannins and full-bodied mouthfeel. Summers' 2009 is a big wine, bone dry and modest in alcohol, with deep blackberry, grilled meat and black pepper flavors. It's a good barbecue wine that will probably live for 20 years. —S.H.

abv: 13.7%

Price: \$28

88 Cline 2010 Ancient Vines Mourvèdre (Contra Costa County). Full of dark plum and earth, a tremendous old-school California Mourvèdre from old Oakley vines that exude mushroomy soft tannins and a rounded spiciness, finished by a trace of chocolate. —V.B.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$20

87 Cline 2010 Ancient Vines Carignane (Contra Costa County). Intensely fruity—think boysenberry and blackberry jam—this old Cari-