

Wine Spectator's

advance

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A SNEAK PREVIEW OF THE BUYING GUIDE FOR THE DEC. 31st - JAN. 15th ISSUE

Wine Spectator's Top 100 wines are revealed in this exciting year-end issue. Also, tasting reports on Italy's Piedmont, Oregon and Greece. Plus, the best Champagnes and sparkling wines for the holidays.

98

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

MASSOLINO

*Barolo Vigna Rionda
Riserva 2000 • \$90*

Gorgeous nose of cut roses, raspberries, strawberries and Spanish cedar. Full-bodied, with powerful yet refined tannins. Incredible structure yet wonderful finesse. Goes on and on. A brick house. Best after 2010.—J.S.

95

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

CHARLES ELLNER

*Brut Champagne
Séduction 1996 • \$65*

A classy, complex Champagne that hints at its potential with graphite, biscuit, honey and citrus flavors all set against a refined mousse. Beautifully integrated, with a firm structure binding the flavors and texture. Great length and harmony on the finish. Best from 2008 through 2025.—B.S.

94

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

KEN WRIGHT

*Pinot Noir Willamette Valley
McCrone Vineyard 2004 • \$45*

Gorgeous stuff. Lithe and supple, with creamy dark berry and floral flavors. Blackberry and currant character lingers effortlessly on the finish, balanced with just enough refreshing acidity. Drink now through 2014.—H.S.

93

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

ST-URBANS-HOF

*Riesling Kabinett
Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Ockfener
Bockstein 2005 • \$16*

Fine cut and delineation to the lime, vanilla cream and slate flavors in this expressive Riesling. It's balanced and vibrant, with a midpalate succulence that cruises to a long, mineral-, salt- and floral-tinged finish. Best from 2008 through 2018.—B.S.

91

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

DOMAINE CARNEROS

Brut Carneros 2003 • \$25

Graceful and complex, with fresh cherry, spice and citrus aromas and impeccably balanced and well-structured flavors that emphasize creamy toastiness. The finish fans out and lingers, turning delicate and fleshy. Drink now through 2009.—J.L.

98

COLLECTIBLE

CHÂTEAU D'YQUEM

Sauternes 2003 • \$290

Subtle and racy, with lemon rind, vanilla cream and dried pineapple. Very spicy and intense. Full-bodied, with great length and flavor. Electrified yet refined, with medium sweetness and a wonderful finish. I love the class of this, and the length; has afterburners. Best after 2010.—J.S.

96

COLLECTIBLE

DOMAINE LEFLAIVE

Bâtard-Montrachet 2004 • \$270

Intense, revealing layer after layer of nuance. Citrus blossom, hazelnut, anise, lemon custard, apricot, smoke and mineral flavors mingle with the firm structure and creamy texture. It's harmonious and balanced, with lingering notes of vanilla and mineral salts. Best from 2009 through 2025.—B.S.

95

COLLECTIBLE

CHÂTEAU RIEUSSEC

Sauternes 2003 • \$65

Big, rich and juicy. Voluptuous, with aromas of caramel, apple and light tropical fruit. Full-bodied, round and very sweet, with loads of ripe fruit and a long butter-scotch and piecrust aftertaste. Viscous texture. Hard not to drink it now. A wonderful sticky. Best after 2010.—J.S.

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94

COLLECTIBLE

GAJA

Langhe Costa Russi
2003 • \$385

Plenty of fresh blackberry and cherry aromas follow through to a full-bodied palate, with fine tannins and a chewy finish. Well-structured for the vintage. Very fresh and lively. Best after 2008.—J.S.

93

COLLECTIBLE

SALON

Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne
Le Mesnil 1996 • \$300

Graphite, tobacco and coconut aromas and flavors wrap around the firm spine of this elegant, powerful Champagne. Lulls you midpalate, then comes back in a wave of vanilla on the finish. Drink now through 2020.—B.S.

90

SMART BUY

CASA LAPOSTOLLE

Syrah Requinoa Cuvée Alexandre
Las Kuras Vineyard 2004 • \$25

A solid, well-put-together Syrah, with dark loam, currant, tar and cocoa flavors backed by ample structure and flesh. Nice, rich finish. Needs short-term cellaring to stretch out fully. Best from 2007 through 2009.—J.M.

90

SMART BUY

COPPO

Barbera d'Asti
Camp du Rouss 2004 • \$19

Wonderful aromas of ripe, crushed wild berries. Full-bodied, with soft tannins and a long, luscious aftertaste. Glorious. Drink now.—J.S.

88

SMART BUY

DOMAINE CHANDON

Brut California Classic NV • \$18

Rich and intense, with complex pear, ginger and spicy apple scents. Turns rich and fruity on the palate, too. Drink now.—J.L.

88

SMART BUY

DOMAINE DE L'OLIVETTE

Bandol 2002 • \$16

A muscular red with an aroma of sandalwood and layers of red plum, savory spice, mineral and smoke. Dark chocolate notes enliven the finish. A good wine for grilled steak. Drink now through 2008.—K.M.

88

BEST VALUE

CHÂTEAU LA COLLINE

Bergerac Sec
Coté Sud 2004 • \$12

Well-structured, showing plenty of peach, green apple and pear flavors, with lots of smoke and spice. Fresh, rich and balanced. A full-bodied white from southwest France. Try with pork. Drink now through 2009.—K.M.

87

BEST VALUE

DOMAINE DU TARIQUET

Sauvignon Vin de Pays des
Côtes de Gascogne 2005 • \$10

Zesty, showing crunchy green apple, citrus and mineral flavors with appealing herbal touches that extend on the finish. Fresh and well-structured. Drink now.—K.M.

86

BEST VALUE

BODEGAS BLEDA

Monastrell Jumilla
Castillo de Jumilla 2005 • \$9

This red marries plush texture with firm backbone and delivers black cherry and light gamy flavors. A nice mix of fresh fruit and local character. Drink now through 2010.—T.M.

86

BEST VALUE

BON-BON

Shiraz South Australia
Rosé 2006 • \$10

Bright and crisp, very pink, with pretty strawberry and citrus flavors. Drink now.—H.S.

85

BEST VALUE

CONCHA Y TORO

Carmenère Central Valley
Casillero del Diablo 2005 • \$9

Nice supple texture, with a mix of plum, cocoa, tobacco and vanilla. The smoky finish gains flesh as it opens. Drink now.—J.M.

85

BEST VALUE

UNION DE PRODUCTEURS PLAIMONT

Vin de Pays des Côtes de
Gascogne White Colombelle
2005 • \$8

Fresh, with lemon-lime flavors, savory herbal notes and a spicy finish. Serve well-chilled. Drink now.—K.M.