



Our editors select the most ageable wines of the year.

BY THE EDITORS OF WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE

As wallets tighten and smart investment becomes ever more key for wine lovers, our collection of the Top 100 Cellar Selections from 2009 is, we hope, timed auspiciously. Without apologies, this is by and large a list for collectors with deep cellars and fat wallets, but price and availability are still factors, and we believe these wines will bring enjoyment—and truly good investment—for years to come.

This list of 100 great cellar-worthy wines is a relatively new category, which we first created for our Best of Year issue in 2007. Throughout the year, our tasting panelists can apply a “Cellar Selection” designation on a wine that he or she feels is collectible and/or might require time in a properly temperature- and humidity-controlled cellar to deliver maximum pleasure.

Keep in mind that 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.

The nature of this list intrinsically favors those parts of the world known for producing intense, cellar-worthy wines. In general, the New World wines, while still demanding time on the cellar, will require less aging than their European counterparts.

In years to come, these wines will begin to offer depth and complexity that other wines can only envy. They get older *and* better—a powerful combination.

1



**97 Hall 2006 Exzellenz Red Wine Sacrashe Vineyard (Rutherford); \$150.** This 100% Cabernet Sauvignon is like a neutron star, with massive power packed into a concentrated mass. Just huge in black currants, black cherries and chocolate, almost as thick as molasses, yet dry and firm and minerally. Vast weight and authority. Needs time. Will last 15–20 years.

2

**97 Domaine de Chevalier 2007 Pessac-Léognan; \$92.** Wonderfully aromatic, this sure-to-be legendary wine offers richness, ripeness, and pure yellow fruits, peaches and apricots, all alongside a structured strain of chalky minerality. It is a wine for long aging, the wood spice just becoming integrated, the fruit still in its first vibrancy. But even now, it fills the mouth with generous fruits, and a great finish of citrus.

3

**96 Siduri 2007 Hirsch Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast); \$50.** This is the tightest, most tannic and ageworthy of Siduri's 2007 Pinot Noirs. It's a huge wine, with a wealth of exotic berry, leather, teriyaki beef, Dr. Pepper, mocha and Asian spice flavors that finish entirely dry. Gorgeous now, and should slowly develop over the next eight years, if not longer.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT THE PRODUCER

4

**95 Betz Family 2006 La Serenne Syrah (Columbia Valley); \$55.** Toasty, dense, dark and complex, this is suffused with a complex mix of coffee, earth, butterscotch, cherry and mineral, with an underlayer of game, roasted almond, herb and earth. Still a baby, young and tight, it opens out with decanting, turning silky and supple. The balance is impeccable, and herbal nuances are preserved, despite the 14.7% alcohol.

5

**94 Brancaia 2006 Il Blu (Toscana); \$50.** Brancaia's flagship wine is a lovely expression from Tuscany that stands apart thanks to the precision and sharp focus of its aromas. The wine (Sangiovese, Merlot and some Cabernet) is intense, persistent and boasts careful harmony especially in the mouth where it delivers delicate fruit nuances carried over by firm tannins and an extra-long finish. Imported by Hess Collection.

6

**96 Dow's 2007 Vintage Port; \$76.** A solidly structured wine, packed with initially sweet fruit that then becomes drier as the ripe tannins show through. All the ingredients are there, supported by a tense texture to go with the first sweetness. It's an exciting wine, obviously very ageworthy. Imported by Premium Port Wines, Inc.

7

**96 Joseph Drouhin 2006 Marquis de Laguiche Premier Cru (Chassagne-Montrachet); \$114.** Drouhin has the exclusivity on the Marquis de Laguiche domaine, which is producing great white wine. Here, minerality and citrus acidity are layered over beautifully judged wood. The wine is rich but crisp, white berries mingling with pears and a delicious finishing spice. Age for 5–6 years. Imported by Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.

8

**96 Flora Springs 2005 Rennie Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (St. Helena); \$100.** An extraordinary wine, among the greatest Cabs in Flora Springs' long history. One hundred percent varietal, and made from a single clone, it shows fabulous density and serious weight, with dramatically rich blackberry, currant and cedar flavors anchored by a firm minerality. For all its power, the wine is balanced and elegant. An ager, it will drink well for at least a decade.

9

**95 Prager 2007 Achleiten Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$76.** A taut, terroir-driven wine that builds ripe fruits over the tight core of minerality. There is a youthful tang of orange zest over the sweet currants, while the acidity adds freshness. This wonderful wine just needs aging; give it 5–6 years. Imported by Vin Divino.

10

**95 Hartford Court 2007 Hailey's Block Pinot Noir (Green Valley); \$60.** This is from a block of younger vines made from Dijon clones within the larger Arrendell Vineyard. The wine is quite full-bodied and robust, almost rustic, which is mainly due to the powerful, young tannins. With explosive berry, currant and mocha flavors, this powerful wine should hit its stride in mid-2010.

11

**94 Domaine Louis-Claude Desvignes 2006 Javernières (Morgon); \$22.** A majestic wine, great Beaujolais by any standard. The fruit is tense, structured, dense, with black figs, strawberry jelly and ripe red plums fitting well into the texture. It manages to be both fruity and firmly structured. This is Beaujolais for aging, an impressive wine ready to mature over five years or more. Imported by Louis Dressner Selections.

12

**95 Woodward Canyon 2006 Estate Red Wine (Walla Walla); \$59.** This is Woodward Canyon's reserve—the best lots of Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot create this very limited wine. It is built to age, and reflects the tight and muscular style that Rick Small has developed over the years. There is a strong mineral-metal vein running through the black and blue fruits, and some very lively spicy highlights. Tannins are ripe but firm, and this is a wine that will benefit from further cellaring.

13

**95 Selene 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$70.** From Mia Klein, this is a seriously good Cabernet Sauvignon, even better than the winery's fine 2004. It shows a great balance of ripe tannins and fine acidity, with a judicious application of smoky oak. The flavors, of black currants and ripe mashed black cherries, have complex overtones of dark chocolate, olive tapenade and mushu plum sauce. Gorgeous now, and should age effortlessly for a decade.

14

**94 Schmelz 2007 Dürnsteiner Freiheit Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$42.** Gorgeous peach and apricot flavors give this round wine great richness, an almost tropical fruit character. But it never loses sight of its terroir, a steely edge coming through, with vibrant acidity and a final spice and berry fruit finish. Age for 4–5 years. Imported by Blue Danube Wine Co.

## QUAFFABLE QUOTES

"Wine has lit up for me the pages of literature, and revealed in life romance lurking in the commonplace. Wine has made me bold but not foolish; has induced me to say silly things but not do them."

—DUFF COOPER, *OLD MEN FORGET*

"In water one sees one's own face; but in wine one beholds the heart of another."

—FRENCH PROVERB

15

**95 Taylor Fladgate 2007 Vintage Port; \$95.** Enticing violet and black currant aromas followed by ripe plum and spice flavors. Maybe this isn't the most powerful Taylor Fladgate vintage ever, but it is balanced, opulent, beautifully made, the tannins fine, layered, with exquisite final acidity. Imported by Kobrand.

16

**94 Benanti 2005 Serra della Contessa (Etna); \$49.** Serra della Contessa (named after Benanti's most beautiful and historic vineyard) is an important wine in the history of Etna winemaking because it was among the first to show the massive potential of this dramatic terrain. This wine is executed in a richer, more opulent style with excellent complexity and endurance, capped by bright aromas of spice, forest berry and light smoke nuances. Imported by Stellar Cellars Imports.

17

**96 Rubicon Estate 2005 Rubicon (Rutherford); \$145.** Made from 98% Cabernet Sauvignon, with no Merlot or Cabernet Franc for the first time, the '05 Rubicon tastes bigger and more impenetrable than any previous vintage. It's thick and heavy at this time, with furry tannins and undeniably ripe flavors of blackberries, black currants, cherries, violets, chocolate and cedar, and a tang of melted minerals. Desperately needs time in the cellar. Nowhere near ready for at least four years, and that may be conservative. Tasted three times, and better each time, a seriously good sign, and potentially a perfect wine.

18

**94 Failla 2007 Phoenix Ranch Syrah (Napa Valley); \$42.** This is a tremendous Syrah, in every sense of the word. It's too young to drink now, although most of the 4,800 bottles produced will be opened too soon. A pity, because the tannins are bigtime, and the fabulous core of blackberries, blueberries, violets, dark chocolate and pepper will easily sustain this wine in the cellar. Best after mid-2010 and for an additional 4–6 years.

19

**95 Joan Simó 2005 Les Eres Vinyes Velles (Priorat); \$84.** A great Priorat, plain and simple. And while we have always liked Les Eres from Joan Simó, this vintage is the best we've tried. The nose is beautiful: coffee, cola, schist, black fruit and herbs rise up. In the mouth, there's strength but restraint; huge black fruit, pulsing tannins and subtleties. Power and precision as well. A brilliant wine that can be drunk now with decanting, or better: hold for another 4–12 years. Imported by Fine Estates From Spain.

20

**96 Château Climens 2006 Barsac; \$100.** Beautiful aromas of orange zest are followed by gingerbread, caramel and crème brûlée flavors. This is a beautiful, rich, smoothly dense wine with a core of botrytis, spice and vivid fresh citrus acidity.

21

**95 Alpha Omega 2006 Proprietary Red Wine (Napa Valley); \$82.** This is a big, powerful Bordeaux blend that clearly needs time. Tasted in early 2009, it's very tannic and dry, although you can detect the massive cassis and plum flavors. It would be a pity to open before 2012, if you can keep your hands off it. Could eventually stun. Alpha Omega is a winery to watch.

22

**94 Heintz 2007 Syrah (Sonoma Coast); \$48.** An interesting and different Syrah, and a promising release from a young brand to watch. The wine is very high in acidity, giving it a firm grip. The flavors are tremendously rich, offering a tsunami of blackberries, currants, plum sauce, baker's chocolate, leather, grilled meat, pine nut and black pepper. It's youthfully aggressive right now in tannins, and needs time for all the serious parts to marry. Leave it alone until sometime in 2010, and it should haul for years after.



23

**96 Niepoort 2007 Vintage Port; \$NA.** An impressive, balanced wine from master winemaker Dirk van Niepoort. Chocolate and licorice flavors dominate the fruit, giving a wine that has both weight, complexity and at the same time elegance. The tannins offer a dense, dry structure. It is tight, solid and certainly for aging. Imported by Eric Solomon Selections.

24

**94 Domaine des Baumard 2007 Trie Spéciale (Savennières); \$35.** A special selection of grapes has given a fascinatingly exotic and rich wine that remains resolutely dry. The fruit flavor dominates now, showing pear, white peach, a touch of lime with pepper, all rolled into an opulent wine with acidity and spice. Worth aging. Screwcap. Imported by Ex-Cellars Wine Agencies, Inc.

25

**94 Fess Parker 2007 Ashley's Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills); \$50.** Tasted in March, 2009, this Pinot was dark, rich and tannic. Clearly too young to really show its best now. But it's an ager. Give it three or four years to let all the parts come together, when the cherries, blackberries, spices and oak should begin to become silky and sweet. Will improve through 2015.

26

**94 Foxen 2007 Sanford & Benedict Vineyard Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills); \$50.** This is a big, gutsy, tannic and dry Pinot Noir, almost old-fashioned in its closed quality. It's built for aging. Locked down and tight now, but with a tremendous core of cherries, strawberries, blueberries and spice. Authoritative and distinctive. Hold until 2012 and beyond.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT THE PRODUCER

27

**96 Clos de la Coulée de Serrant 2007 Savennières-Coulée de Serrant; \$90.** It is not easy to describe one of the majestic wines of France. This 2007 is still a wine in the making. All the elements are there: the intensity of dry fruits, the richness of spice and white fruit jams, opulent and austere at the same time. It is an extraordinary wine, with freshness, sweetness, dryness and acidity all just about perfectly balanced. Give it at least seven years. Imported by Vintus LLC.

28

**95 Masciarelli 2004 Villa Gemma (Montepulciano d'Abruzzo); \$100.** The Abruzzo region of Central Italy boasts many unknown treasures; among the most beautiful of its riches is Villa Gemma. The late vintner Gianni Masciarelli has tamed the wild beast that is Montepulciano by creating a smooth, soft and extraordinarily rich wine that speaks volumes about the territory and the man who shaped it. Imported by Masciarelli Wine Co.

29

**94 Chappellet 2006 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$52.** Feels instantly special in the mouth, with beautiful tannins that are soft and ripe but complex at the same time. They frame deep flavors of blackberries, currants, tobacco, dark chocolate, violets, anise and cedar, firming with minerals. Best 2010–2014.

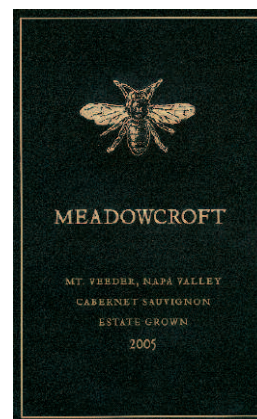
30

**96 Laurent-Perrier NV Grande Siècle (Champagne); \$200.** Laurent-Perrier's prestige cuvée is always nonvintage, a blend of top years. The latest bottling is so elegant, definitely maturing from bottle aging and older vintages in the blend, but still worthy of aging in itself. It is dry, in the L-P style, but has richness, an intense pink grapefruit character, hints of cilantro, the final acidity a great shaft of light. Imported by Laurent-Perrier U.S.

31

**94 Château Giscours 2006 Margaux; \$54.** After initial tastings suggested there was too much tannin, the wine has undergone a welcome transformation. It has become powerful and ripe, deliciously sumptuous, allying the tannins with densely ripe, sweet black fruits. It keeps its sense of balance, but all this density gives aging potential.

32



**94 Meadowcroft 2005 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Mount Veeder); \$56.** This is a big, powerfully constructed mountain Cab. Right now, it's noticeable for the impact of the tannins, which are hard and astringent. They complicate the massive black currant, cassis, mineral and cedar flavors. The richness won't go away while you age the wine and wait for some sediment to fall out. Best after 2011.

33

**94 Dutton-Goldfield 2006 Dutton Ranch Freestone Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley); \$58.** The Freestone Hill bottling is one of Dutton Goldfield's biggest and most powerful Pinot Noirs, and the '06 is nearly as stunning as the magnificent '05. It just explodes in the mouth with succulent cherry and raspberry pie, mocha and spicy anise and pepper flavors, with fabulous complexities from smoky oak. Terrific now, but the tannins will hold it for a decade.

34

**93 Leeuwin Estate 2005 Art Series Chardonnay (Margaret River); \$89.**

This looks to be a top vintage for one of Australia's most renowned Chardonnays. Like always, it's big, bold and intense, with melon and pineapple fruit accented by toasted grain and slightly coconutty oak. Right now, it's a little disjointed, showing a bit of unintegrated oak, but it should come together nicely in a year or two and last up to 10. Imported by Old Bridge Cellars.

35

**94 Joh. Jos. Prüm 2007 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese (Mosel-Saar-Ruwer); \$60.**

Prüm's 2007 Sonnenuhr auslese shows a typical youthful yeasty-leesy-sulfur funk, but also layers of ripe pear and citrus fruit lurking underneath. It's sweet but wonderfully balanced, plump and creamy in texture and long on the finish. Imported by Valckenberg International, Inc.

36

**94 Terra Valentine 2006 Wurtele Vineyard Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Spring Mountain); \$60.**

Stunning, dramatic, but nowhere near ready to drink. Dry and complex in mountain tannins, the wine displays massively deep flavors of blackberries and cassis, and the new oak is substantial and sweet. Try holding until after 2010, and should develop for an additional six years.

37

**95 Vietti 2005 Rocche (Barolo); \$125.**

Rocche is a standout wine that offers just about everything you look for in an excellent Barolo. There's power, complexity and personality here that is enhanced by lusciously intense aromas of chocolate, allspice, blackberry, licorice and cola. It's a beautifully healthy wine with a bright color, bold extraction, a soft finish and direct delivery. Drink in 5–10 years. Imported by Dalla Terra.

38

**95 Volker Eisele 2006 Alexander Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$125.**

A massive 100% Cab from this veteran producer/grower. Hard to exaggerate the lush, New World, cult-style power. High but balanced alcohol, massive new French oak, and a nuclear core of blackberries and currants. Somehow, it all works. A slam-dunk for aging. Drink now through 2018.

39

**94 La Chablisienne 2006 Les Preuses Grand Cru (Chablis); \$67.**

This is powerful, typical of Les Preuses. White and yellow fruits are important to the palate, but so are rich, honeyed toast, minerality and an opulent, intense concentration. This is impressive, elegance with power, and worth aging for several years. Imported by Gemini Spirits & Wine.

40

**95 Barnett 2006 Rattlesnake Hill Cabernet Sauvignon (Spring Mountain); \$125.**

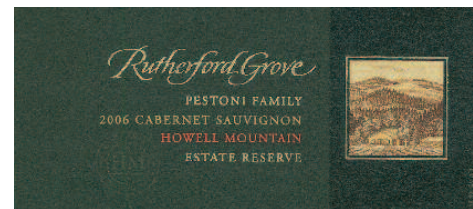
This is a tremendous Cabernet Sauvignon, but be warned, it's so tannic, it makes your tongue curl. That's what mountain grapes, grown at 2,000 feet with low yields and small berries, do. Such is the core of black currants, however, that aging is not a problem. With its dryness, intensity and overall balance, it should easily negotiate the next decade. Really displays Napa mountain Cab at its best.

41

**94 Cantina del Pino 2004 Ovello (Barbaresco); \$68.**

Extraordinary intensity and complexity make this a true standout. The Ovello cru excels in excellent vintages like 2004. This is a polished and pristine wine with a noticeable mineral layer that adds a delicate touch. Tannins and acidity are abundant and the wine culminates with a blast of cooling menthol. Drink after 2018. Imported by Artisan Wines, Inc.

42



**94 Rutherford Grove 2006 Pestoni Family Estate Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Howell Mountain); \$65.**

Here's a big, gutsy powerhouse of a Cab. It's thick in tannins, with concentrated blackberry, black currant, dark chocolate, cedar and spicebox flavors. Nowhere near ready. Classic Howell Mountain. Hold until after 2011, at least, and should develop for many years.

43

**94 Uccelliera 2004 Brunello di Montalcino; \$70.**

This is among our favorite 2004 Brunellos. Winemaker Andrea Cortonesi who once said, "the best irrigation is sweat," has worked hard to craft this plush, modern and penetrating wine. It boasts a deep, dark concentration and a very beautiful bouquet of luscious blackberries, spice, black mineral and cola. It's round and supple and shines simpatico. A Marc de Grazia selection; various American importers.

44

**94 Chateau Rollat 2006 Edouard de Rollat Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla); \$65.**

The label reads "The finest wine of Chateau Rollat Winery" and indeed it is, though in 2006 the immediate show-stopping appeal of the 2005 has been muted, or at least postponed. Here are nuanced, stacked flavors that subsume the berry and cassis fruit under herbs, earth and stone. The aromas are lively with lovely floral notes, primary grape smells, and juicy berries, but the wine is too young to see it completely. The kiss of chocolate in the finish tastes like a blessing.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRODUCER

45

**95 Château Trotanoy 2006 Pomerol; \$140.** This is a strongly structured and impressively textured wine. The tannins shoot through, giving a sense of dryness. But in the center, the wine shows power through both tannins and fruit, with blackberries and red plums. It has a precision and shape that promises long aging. Imported by Etablissements Jean-Pierre Moueix.

46

**95 David Arthur 2006 Elevation 1147 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$135.** This 100% Cabernet Sauvignon is a best barrels selection. It's the densest, most tannic of David Arthur's current releases, a massive wine stuffed with black currants, blackberries, anise, tobacco and smoky new oak. Best of all, it's dry, dry, dry. Fine now, if you're into young wines, but should age well in a good cellar for many years.

47

**94 Albert Morot 2006 Toussaints Premier Cru (Beaune); \$75.** Very mineral and structured, this is a wine that needs aging. The tannins at this stage are firm, dry, dense, forming a solid core. Around this floats the red cherry and red currant fruit flavors, just sweet and lifted by acidity. Give it at least five years. Imported by Robert Kacher Imports.

48

**94 Von Strasser 2006 Sori Bricco Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Diamond Mountain); \$70.** A very beautiful, intricate and complex Cabernet, but one that needs time in the cellar. The balance is beyond question. The heart of black currants subtly tinged with mushu plum sauce and tar, is delicious. The oak is smoky and fine. But the tannins are fierce. Don't touch it before 2012.

49

**94 Altesino 2004 Brunello di Montalcino; \$75.** Altesino delivers a wonderfully harmonious wine that invites one delicious sip after another thanks to its polished intensity. Subtle wood shadings appear in the background of bright cherry and blackberry. Overall, what distinguishes this wine is the sense of focus, sharpness and purity. Imported by Winebow.

50

**94 Beringer 2005 Bancroft Ranch Vineyard Merlot (Howell Mountain); \$75.** Gigantic, huge. Just erupts with the most intense cassis, chocolate and smoky new oak. Classic Howell Mountain structure, with dense, sweet young tannins and firm acidity. So immature, it's sappy and jammy now, and is sorely in need of cellaring. Don't touch before 2011, and should provide enjoyment for many years after.

51

**94 Whitehall Lane 2005 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$75.** Made from 100% Cab, this wine pours inky black, and feels softly ripe in the mouth, with pie-filling blackberries, cherries, mocha, plums, tobacco and sweet dusty spices. Shows a tannic astringency that strongly suggests cellaring, although it's flashy now. Best after 2011 and beyond.

52

**94 Château Léoville-Barton 2006 Saint-Julien; \$NA.** Right at the top of its form, this 2006 is one of the finest wines to come out of the vintage. The wine is structured and dense, but with such heartwarming ripe fruit that the tannins are almost submerged. There is just a hint of wood, but juicy black currant continues right through to the end. In a year, the fruit will lessen, and long aging begin.

53

**94 Honig 2005 Mitchell Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford); \$75.** From a vineyard on Rutherford's cooler, western bench comes this dry, spicy, firmly tannic young 100% Cabernet. It's aggressive and muscular now, with a hard, dusty astringency. But the rich core of red currants, black cherries, mocha, violets and cedar strongly suggests ageability. Better after 2011.

54

**94 Sbragia 2005 Rancho del Oso Cabernet Sauvignon (Howell Mountain); \$75.** Shows classic Howell Mountain tight, hard tannins that lock down the flavors and make the wine astringent. But what flavors they are. Just detonates on the palate with massive blackberries, currants, plums, chocolate and cedar, with incredible depth and length. Desperately needs time. Best after 2011.

55

**94 Cesari 2001 Bosan (Amarone della Valpolicella); \$85.** Bosan is a sweet-smelling Amarone with vibrant aromas of blueberry and cherry followed by delicate floral nuances. The wine is direct and immediate with background aromas of red apple, vanilla and oak. It's exceedingly smooth and ends with sweet fruit and soft tannins. An outstanding wine. Imported by Opici Import Company.

## QUAFFABLE QUOTES

"Great wine is a work of art. It produces a harmony of pleasing sensations, which appeal directly to the aesthetic sense, and at the same time sharpens the wit, gladdens the heart, and stimulates all this is most generous in human nature.

—H. WARNER ALLEN

"A woman is like a tea bag—only in hot water do you realize how strong she really is."

—NANCY REAGAN

56

**93 Pascual Toso 2007 Alta Reserva Las Barrancas Vineyards Malbec (Mendoza); \$36.** A big boy with black fruit, cedar, tobacco and chocolate cake aromas. All early signs say this one is here for the long haul; it is aggressive but serious, with fine acids and tannins hoisting deep black plum and berry flavors. Chocolate, mocha and pepper work the long finish. Best in 2010–13. Imported by T.G.I.C. Importers.

57

**94 Terre Rouge 2006 Ascent Syrah (Sierra Foothills); \$80.** This is Terre Rouge's priciest Syrah, a barrel selection of the best lots. It's a big wine. No, make that huge. Godzillalike. Just explodes in the mouth with massive flavors of blackberry and black cherry jam, milk chocolate, anise, cedar and pepper. Finishes bone dry, and the tannins are also gigantic, but very finely ground. You need to cellar this puppy. Best after 2010, for about six years.

58

**95 Marchesi Antinori 2006 Solaia (Toscana); \$170.** Mostly Cabernet Sauvignon and Sangiovese (with a small touch of Cabernet Franc), Solaia's winning card is texture. The wine is soft, velvety and penetrating in the mouth with succulent flavors of blackberry, creamy cassis berry, chocolate and tobacco. Thick extraction and quality fruit craft a memorable wine that will last many long and happy years in your cellar. Imported by Ste. Michelle Wine Estates.

59

**95 Henschke 2004 Hill of Grace Shiraz (Eden Valley); \$625.** This stellar wine takes a little time in the glass to show its true class, but once it's properly aerated, the aromas go from rather vague and lifted to plummy and spice laden. In the mouth, it's rich, creamy-textured and lush, offering the flavors of plum pudding without the excessive weight that the words suggest, plus hints of grilled meat. Again, with airing, it gets even better, piling on more red fruit notes and turning more elegant. A great example of Shiraz, but how many people will be able to justify the \$25/ounce expenditure? Imported by Negotiants USA, Inc.

60

**93 Castello di Bossi 2004 Berardo Riserva (Chianti Classico); \$41.** Sophisticated and intense, this is an extraordinary wine that performs beautifully both in terms of nose and mouth. The aromas are broad and all-encompassing, including blackberry, red currant, vanilla and pretty shadings of exotic spice. The mouthfeel is lively and generous and lasts a very long time. Imported by Winebow.

61

**94 Pascal Doquet 1996 Le Mesnil sur Oger Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Brut (Champagne); \$100.** Thirteen years on, this is still not remotely mature. It is a major wine, with its still-tight, vibrant acidity and wonderful piercing grapefruit flavors. The acidity of the vintage is all there, but the strength of this Champagne is that the acidity is finely balanced with minerality and fruit. Imported by Robert Kacher Imports.

62

**96 Tua Rita 2006 Redigaffi (Toscana); \$330.** A cult wine and an international superstar, Redigaffi (100% Merlot) will blow you away with its richness, opulence and smoothness. Aromatic layers of milk chocolate, nutmeg, vanilla and Christmas spice peel back one thick layer after the next. This is a loudspeaker wine with extraordinary intensity and softness from start to finish. Imported by Winebow.

63

**94 Bertani 2000 Amarone della Valpolicella Classico; \$136.** Bertani keeps a library of vintages that remain available. This 2000 is absolutely gorgeous, with exotic spice, clove, milled pepper, black fruit, dried apple skin, tobacco and cola. The complexity is extraordinary and so is the smoothness and quality of its fine tannins. Hold this wine another 10 years. Imported by Palm Bay International.

64

**94 Domaine Marc Morey 2007 Les Caillerets Premier Cru (Chassagne-Montrachet); \$102.** The nose powers with wood and high toast aromas, but the palate reveals sufficient ripe pineapple and yellow fruit flavors to act as a balance. There is a prominent acidity that cuts through this richness. The wine certainly needs 3–4 years for the wood to soften and integrate better with the fruit, but then this will be a superb wine. Imported by Robert Kacher Imports.

65

**94 Pio Cesare 2004 Il Bricco (Barbaresco); \$100.** Il Bricco is a blockbuster wine with extraordinary intensity and impressive concentration. It's a dark, spice-driven wine with oak aromas of vanilla, cinnamon and powdered spice backed by black currants, forest berry, pressed flowers, curry and turmeric. Austere and brooding, it's the kind of wine you'll want to pair with a heavy winter dish that can stand up to its thick, luscious mouthfeel. Imported by Maisons Marques & Domaines USA.

66

**94 Bruno Rocca 2006 Rabajà (Barbaresco); \$100.** Bruno Rocca's well-received Rabajà is extremely generous with soft tones of mature fruit, spice, vanilla, ginger and root beer. His are very well-made wines and the softness and suppleness of the texture is their most admirable quality. The finish is long and smooth and peppered with black fruit and vanilla. Drink after 2015. Imported by Indigenous Selections.

67

**95 Numanthia-Termes, S.L. 2006 Termanthia (Toro); \$200.** Termanthia is the pinnacle of Tinta de Toro. Aromas of wild blackberry, crude oil, forest floor and truffles are just now showing themselves, while the tight, tannic palate is full of black plum, blackberry and bitter chocolate flavors. Espresso and roast meat notes grace the dark, jam-packed finish, and as a whole this is one bold, boisterous wine. Best in 2011 thru 2013. Only 531 cases. Imported by Moët Hennessy USA.



68

**94 Renato Ratti 2004 Rocche (Barolo); \$100.** Renato Ratti's Rocche expression is a remarkable wine with extraordinary intensity and complexity. It's soft, yielding, rich and opulent with lingering aromas of spice, cherry and chocolate. Creamy oak tones of vanilla and crème caramel appear in the mouth and fuel the wine's long finish. Drink 2012 to 2020. Imported by Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.

69

**94 Château Montrose 2006 Saint-Estèphe; \$106.** Yes, this wine is tannic. To begin with it seems austere and mineral. But then the substrate of black berry juice asserts itself. The fruits are fresh rather than sweet, combining with leather, spice and a presence of new wood. Typical of Montrose, it is hard to appreciate this young, with those tannins needing to open out. But wait 10 years. Imported by Château Montrose.

70

**95 Deutz 1999 Amour de Deutz Brut (Champagne); \$208.** A Blanc de Blancs, from 100% Chardonnay, Deutz's top cuvée in its elegant long-necked bottle has been given enough bottle age from the vintage to bring out a whole raft of complex flavors that are structured finely but are also allowed to express their weight. There are almonds and quince, a texture that is rigorous, but also elegant. Imported by Maisons Marques & Domaines USA.

71



**94 Poggio Antico 2004 Altero (Brunello di Montalcino); \$115.** The wine's beauty and intensity are impossible to match. There's enormous complexity of aromas here with chocolate, black tar, spice, blackberry, forest currant and tobacco. You'll pick up toasted oak tones as well, but they are carefully balanced within the naturally supple and smooth essence of this standout Brunello. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd.

72

**93 Domaine Faiveley 2006 Clos des Myglands Premier Cru (Mercurey); \$46.** This single-vineyard monopoly produces impressive wine, some of the best in the Mercurey region. This 2006 is no exception, a finely structured wine that shows dry tannins, only the faintest hint of wood, and plenty of rich ruby fruit flavors: red plums and berries. Worth aging for 5–10 years. Imported by Wilson Daniels Ltd.

73

**95 Ceretto 2004 Bricco Rocche Bricco Rocche (Barolo); \$230.** This excellent Barolo from Ceretto's Bricco Rocche estate represents a perfect marriage between grape and wine-making. The integrity of the fruit is there—plush, round, intense—and is supported by oak-driven notes of vanilla, cinnamon, cigar box and ground ginger. In the mouth, it tastes smooth and supple and offers long-lasting intensity. Drink after 2020. Imported by Wilson Daniels Ltd.

74

**93 Château Sociando-Mallet 2006 Haut-Médoc; \$50.** With a high proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine has both structured and superbly rich fruit. The tannins are firm, but show a sweet, enticing edge to them, giving a full body and classic, fresh black currant acidity. An impressive wine, which definitely needs to age—five years or more.

75

**94 Bodega Chacra 2007 No. 32 Pinot Noir (Rio Negro Valley); \$120.** Bodega Chacra is Piero Incisa's personal project in Rio Negro, Argentina. It is only Pinot Noir, made by esteemed winemaker Hans Vinding Diers. This wine from vines planted in 1932 is linear and intense to the core. It's an ageworthy specimen with fine acidity and a tight structure. Now, it's juicy and a little sharp, with piercing black cherry fruit and spice galore. Best to wait another year or two to begin drinking, and beyond that it may last for another 5–10 years if well cellared. Imported by Kobrand.

76

**94 Château Troplong Mondot 2006 Saint-Émilion; \$130.** A wine that succeeds in combining great depth of flavor and structure with an impressive array of flavors. On top of the tannins is juicy black fruit, cocoa, a welter of spice and ripeness. The acidity and new wood put the wine into a more modern style. Wait for at least 5–7 years.

## RESTAURANTS WITH UNUSUAL SERVERS

Some restaurants have odd locations such as ice caves and treetops, or offer uncommon dishes like ant eggs. At these dining spots the most unusual ingredient may be the servers.

**1. Monkeys. Japan.** At Kayabuki Tavern sake house in the town of Utsunomiya, about an hour north of Tokyo by train, two macaque monkeys certified as restaurant workers deliver drinks and hot towels to customers. Their shifts are limited to two hours by animal rights regulations and customers tip with boiled soybeans.

**2. Criminals. England.** After surrendering cell phones and passing through six reinforced steel doors, diners at The Clink in Her Majesty's High Down Prison, Surrey, enter a swank room with mood lighting and polished granite. No knives are required for the chef's specials, which may include slow-cooked pork belly, a cheese souffle omelet and organic salad grown in the prison garden. Service is highly attentive as these waiters won't be rushing off any time soon. Book at least seven days in advance (to allow for security check) through [kate.ruby@btinternet.com](mailto:kate.ruby@btinternet.com) or [theclinkonline.com](http://theclinkonline.com)

—JANET FORMAN



77

**93 Domus Aurea 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (Maipo Valley); \$55.**

Arguably the best Domus to date. This wine is super-complete and remarkably individual. It has that classic Macul-area aromas of black olive and tobacco, but the fruit from this great vintage is elevated and pure. Look for graphite, tar, cassis, cherry and chocolate all rolled into one fine, ageable package. It's Cabernet from Chile in all its glory. Drink now through 2014. Imported by Global Vineyard Importers.

78

**96 Gaja 2005 Sori San Lorenzo Nebbiolo (Langhe); \$445.**

You cannot not love this wine: layered and intense with extraordinary integrity of fruit, it offers supple flavors of dark fruit, spice, tobacco and chocolate. It's dense, succulent and penetrating with polished tannins and long persistency. The palate becomes coated with opulence and richness: 5% Barbera is added. Drink 2015–2030. Imported by Terlato Wines International.

79

**96 Dal Forno Romano 2003 Vigneto di Monte Lodoletta (Amarone della Valpolicella); \$470.**

Monte Lodoletta Amarone is an exercise in extraction. The wine is absolutely black. Aromas are concentrated and intense and the wine is equally enormous in the mouth thanks to the extraction, oak, fruit and the hot climatic conditions associated with this vintage. Drink after 2020. Imported by Vias Imports.

80

**94 Alfred Gratien NV Cuvée Paradis Brut (Champagne); \$143.**

A ripe, dry wine with delicious mature fruit, touched by wood from barrel fermentation. Grapefruit, almonds, some yeastiness all give complexity, as does the acidity that follows this intense wine right through to the finish. Imported by Domaine Select Wine Estates.

81

**92 D'Arenberg 2006 The Ironstone Pressings G-S-M (McLaren Vale); \$65.**

For a Grenache-dominated (70%) blend, this shows outstanding structure. The firm tannins are slightly drying right now, but should smooth out nicely by 2012 and the wine should continue to drink well through at least 2020. Ripe cherry and cassis notes are framed by subtle cedary oak, imparting a sophisticated elegance to the long finish. Imported by Old Bridge Cellars.

82

**97 Château Mouton Rothschild 2006 Pauillac; \$800.**

At the time it was shown as a barrel sample in early 2007, this was the best wine of 2006. That accolade remains. It has all the power of the Cabernet Sauvignon in Pauillac, which was the greatest success of the vintage. That power comes from the dense tannins as well as the black plum and spice flavors and minerality. The texture becomes velvet, giving a final richness, but never losing its long aging potential. In a year that is good, but not at the top, Mouton has made a great wine.

83

**94 Domaine de la Vougeraie 2006 Les Mazoyères (Charmes-Chambertin); \$149.**

The density of a great grand cru from Gevrey-Chambertin is all here, magnified by the concentration of dark fruits and the firmest tannins. A powerful wine, it doesn't lose sight of ripe fruits, layered acidity and an edgy tannic structure on the finish. Imported by Boisset Family Estates.

84

**93 Marcarini 2004 Brunate (Barolo); \$66.**

The Brunate "grand cru" (because it really is considered among the top three best vineyards) has fatter soils with a higher clay content that shapes intense, well-structured wines. This expression delivers a beautiful bouquet of spice, berry fruit and vanilla shadings. The wine stands out thanks to its power and dimension. Drink after 2018. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd.

85

**95 Olivier Leflaive 2006 Bâtard-Montrachet; \$310.**

This is a bright star in Olivier Leflaive's firmament, a wondrous big, rich wine that is just so finely poised. The structure is dense, rich, fat and full-bodied, a hymn to ripe fruit. Flavors are fruit-driven at this stage, but this is a wine that will develop over many years, if you can resist the urge to indulge its luxuriant tastes now. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.

86

**96 Château Haut-Brion 2006 Pessac-Léognan; \$589.**

A severe, austere wine that doesn't show its richness easily. The tannins are tight and firm and they dominate. Underneath is ripe fruit, the balance with tannins giving a foursquare, solid character. The wine is complex, spice playing with the fruit, some medicinal flavors and a definite stinky, tight structure. It obviously needs long-term aging.

87

**93 Xavier Monnot 2007 Clos des Chênes Premier Cru (Volnay); \$64.**

A finely made ripe wine benefiting from low yields. The fruit is sweet raspberry juice, with a wonderful burst of fresh acidity. While there are tannins to show restraint, they are way behind the precise, delicious mouthfilling fruit. Worth aging for 3–4 years. Imported by Robert Kacher Imports.

88

**92 Quinta dos Roques 2003 Reserva (Dão); \$26.**

A closed, dark, tight wine, with an austere, mineral character, that obviously needs considerable aging. Smoky, meaty, dark tannins are dominant here, the black berry fruit showing through the powerful structure. Keep for 3–4 years. Imported by Wineworth LLC.

89

**95 Bründlmayer 2008 Ried Lamm Grüner Veltliner (Kamptal); \$82.** The Lamm vineyard, next door to the Riesling vineyard of Heiligenstein, produces powerful Grüners, and this 2008 is a fine example. It is opulent without being overpowering, the white currants and pears layered with acidity to give balance and texture. As with other great Bründlmayers, this needs aging. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines.

90

**93 Ökonomierat Rebholz 2007 Kastanienbusch Riesling Grosses Gewächs (Pfalz); \$90.** Like the Im Sonnenschein, this wine shows a touch of green on the nose, but there are also some riper notes that bring to mind tangerines. This is almost too intense and minerally; fans of fruity Rieslings will likely be underwhelmed, but if you like the flavors of wet salty stones that extend almost indefinitely on the finish, this wine is a winner. Imported by Cellars International, Inc.

91

**93 Giulio Ferrari 1999 Riserva del Fondatore (Trento); \$90.** Opulence and intensity set this wine apart and place it high on a list of the world's best sparkling wines. Made with creamy Chardonnay grapes, the brilliant bubbly delivers complexity and harmony thanks to its deep shadings of mature fruit, mineral and yeast. Fabulous. Imported by Palm Bay International.

92

**95 Geh. Rat Dr. von Bassermann-Jordan 2007 Ruppertsberger Reiterpfad Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese (Pfalz); \$333/375 ml.** The numbers on this wine are amazing (380 g/l residual sugar, 17 g/l TA), but even more impressive is how such an extremely sweet wine can remain reasonably drinkable, complex and harmonious. It's musky and spice-laden, filled with dried apricot and honey flavors that linger on the incredibly long, citrusy finish. Should age indefinitely. Imported by Valckenberg International, Inc.

93



**93 Fortress 2007 Petite Sirah (Red Hills Lake County); \$35.** A beautiful Petite Sirah, and a serious player. Shows the classic balance and elegance of a fine red wine, with smooth tannins framing the variety's wildly exotic flavors of blackberries, blueberries, bacon, tobacco, grilled mushrooms, tamari, anise and lots of black pepper. Great now with BBQ, and should evolve in interesting ways for many years.

94

**93 Gravner 2003 Anfora Ribolla Gialla (Venezia Giulia); \$120.** There's no other wine like this in the world, and it won't appeal to everyone. Anfora is matured in ceramic amphorae for seven months in a throwback to ancient wine-making techniques to achieve a deep golden color and penetrating aromas of resin, caramel, chestnut honey and cola. The firm structure could match that of a mature red and the wine imparts resinous, almost syrupy density. Imported by Vias Imports.

95

**92 McCrea Cellars 2005 Cuvée Orleans Syrah (Yakima Valley); \$40.** With the extra bottle age, this newest release of McCrea's Boushey/Ciel blend is powerful, but approachable. The black and blue fruit flavors are pure and spiced with something almost minty; the body of the wine is textural and veined with rock, lead pencil and coffee. This wine has the muscle and concentration to go another decade in the cellar.

96

**93 Biondi-Santi 2004 Brunello di Montalcino; \$180.** Earthy tones of moist clay, tobacco, leather and light shadings of spice open the nose of this delicate and elegant wine. In the mouth, the wine's natural acidity kicks in and washes clean over the palate with fresh flavors of wild berry and red currants. The finish is long and persuasive and shows the best of Sangiovese Grosso. Imported by Shaw-Ross International Importers.

97

**92 Wolf Blass 2004 Black Label 32nd Vintage (South Australia); \$75.** This traditional blend of Cabernet and Shiraz has been enlivened in recent years with a touch of Malbec (9% this vintage). It's a full-bodied, richly extracted wine, featuring ample spice notes of cinnamon and clove to go with flavors of cola, coffee and dark-skinned fruit. Muscular and tannic; try after 2010. Imported by Foster's Wine Estates Americas.

98

**92 Erath 2006 Bishop Creek Pinot Noir (Yamhill-Carlton District); \$50.** The first Bishop Creek designation from Erath, this dark-toned, deep and concentrated Pinot Noir is one to cellar. The fruit is seamless, sappy and dense, suggesting a mix of ripe berries. Fourteen months in French oak, about 40% new, seems just right, as the barrel notes of toast and coffee dance around the juicy berry flavors without smothering them.

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99

**94** **Château la Louvière 2007 Pessac-Léognan; \$49.** Rich and creamy, this wine has weight as well as the hallmark freshness of 2007. The yellow fruits and spicy pear flavors are smoothed out with spice, with some herbaceous elements and a fine waft of apple skin structure. Worth aging for 3–4 years. Screwcap.

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100

**92** **Parker 2005 Terra Rossa First Growth (Coonawarra); \$75.** Parker's First Growth has developed into something of a Coonawarra classic, and this vintage is as strong as ever. Densely packed with cedar, cassis and vanilla, this is a youthful pup that packs considerable tannic clout on the finish. Drink 2013–2020. Imported by Rathbone Wine Group. 