



TOP  
**100**  
 CELLAR SELECTIONS  
 2008



## Our Editors Name the Top Collectibles of the Year.

**W**ithout apologies, this is by and large a list for collectors with deep cellars and fat wallets. Although the interpretation of what constitutes a Cellar Selection varies somewhat from reviewer to reviewer, these are wines that require time in a temperature- and humidity-controlled cellar to reach their maximum potential. These are often among the highest-rated wines of the year, and price is less important in compiling this Top 100 list than for any of our others.

That said, price and availability are still factors, which is why you won't find the 100-point 2005 Château Petrus (\$6,000-plus, limited production) on the list. Instead, numerous other 2005 Bordeaux made the cut, including this year's Number One Cellar Selection. 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, with a heavy emphasis on France (30 wines) and Italy (16 wines), highlighting the excellence of 2005 in Bordeaux and 2004 in Tuscany. In general, the New World wines on the list—while still demanding time in the cellar—will require less aging than their European counterparts.

1

**97 Château Léoville-Barton 2005 Saint-Julien; \$150.** Power and elegance merge effortlessly in this superb wine. Its pure black currant fruit is tightly coiled, supported by just the right amount of firm tannins. Great aging potential. A triumph. Imported by Château Léoville-Barton.

2

**97 Betz Family Winery 2005 Père de Famille Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley); \$55.** The fragrance is almost otherworldly; sweet, dense and lightly lifted. This is a sinewy wine, that begins with compact power and focused, tart red fruits—predominantly raspberry and currant. At first juicy and tart, with hours of breathing time the wine broadens out into a wider spectrum of Cabernet fruits: cassis, blackberry and black cherry.

3

**97 Fattoria Petrola 2004 Galatrona (Toscana); \$100.** Galatrona is one of Italy's top Merlots and 2004 is its best vintage yet. The mouthfeel is extraordinary, distinguished by spectacular smoothness and elegance. The wine drinks like a chiaroscuro painting where all elements are harmonious by design. And there's excellent dimension with vibrant tones of red fruit and sweet spice woven within its fruity fabric. Imported by Vintus LLC.

4

**96 Etude 2005 Deer Camp Pinot Noir (Carneros); \$60.** This is one for the cellar. Dry and savory, it shows powerfully ripe blackberry, cherry, cassis and coffee flavors that have been well oaked, and the silky, elegant texture of Pinot Noir. But there's a youthful tightness that withholds the wine's tender heart. Best after 2008, and will develop for an additional 6 to 10 years.

5

**97 William Fèvre 2005 Les Clos Grand Cru (Chablis); \$95.** Big and powerful, this is the grandest of the grand crus. It has both a dense structure and overwhelming fruits. With minerality, spice and balance, this is a very complete wine. There is only a hint of the richness to come. Hold for 10 years at least. Imported by Henriot Inc.

6

**98 Louis Jadot 2005 Clos de la Roche; \$138.** This is a powerhouse of a wine. It is driven forward by immense tannins as well as by superrich fruit that still keeps itself in check by a velvet texture. There is spice, acidity, some toast and vanilla, and finally a sunburst of warmth. Imported by Kobrand.

7

**100 Avignonesi 1995 Occhio di Pernice (Vin Santo di Montepulciano); \$210.** Thick as molasses and dark as caramelized brown sugar, the wine oozes out of the bottle releasing concentrated aromas of butter-scotch, toffee, honey, licorice, coffee, resin and maple syrup. Grapes from the Montepulciano area are dried in a ventilated room and the wine ages over 10 years in tiny oak barrels resulting in thick, dark concentration. Don't pair it with food: Vin Santo as good as this deserves to be enjoyed alone, as a so-called "meditation wine." Imported by Dalla Terra.

8

**96 Goldschmidt 2005 Game Ranch Single Vineyard Selection Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville); \$65.** This is a densely structured young Cab. Although the tannins are ripe and sweet, they still possess enough astringency to suggest cellaring. This wine is terrifically rich in black currants and exotic, smoky oak—a big, rich Cab whose impeccable structure defines Oakville. Unfined and unfiltered, it will be best after 2008 and through 2017.

9

**95 Mouchão 2002 Alentejano; \$46.** The legendary Mouchão, one of Portugal's most revered wines, has finally made it to this country. Made in traditional open stone fermenters, this is not a modern wine. It's a wine, whose dark tannins and dense fruits demand attention and time. At this stage—six years in—it remains a baby, but in another five years, it will start to be a great wine, one that will show a hedonistic mix of power and beauty. Imported by Vinum Wine Importing and Distributing LLC.

10

**96 Williams Selyem 2005 Allen Vineyard Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley); \$78.** Dry and focused in acids, the wine shows the balance and complexity of the vineyard, as well as its ageworthiness. It's very young now, with immature raspberry, cola, rum punch, balsamic, mushroom and Asian spice flavors, but decanting and slow warming in the glass help elevate it. Nonetheless, your best bet is the cellar. Best after 2008, and for many years after, depending on how old you like your wines.

11

**97 Stonestreet 2004 Christopher's Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley); \$100.** This mountain Cab, blended with a little Petit Verdot and Syrah, is grown at 2,400 feet in the Mayacamas Mountains, which provide the east wall of Alexander Valley. The wine is known to be an ager, and the '04 should develop for many years. It's a tremendous wine, the equal of almost anything from Napa, which, after all, is just a geographic boundary away. Fabulously concentrated in cassis, currant, smoky cherry, licorice and chocolate flavors, its tannic structure is nearly perfect.

12

**95 Château Doisy-Daëne 2005 Barsac; \$50.** Under the control of white wine wizard Denis Dubourdieu, this is one of the great wines of Barsac. It has intensity of sweetness, but just the right lightness, which gives it freshness as well as richness. This is a great wine in its early stages, and is certainly likely to age over many years. Imported by Château Doisy-Daëne

13

**96 Leonetti Cellar 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (Walla Walla); \$80.** The Cabernet is sharply defined, with interesting citrus flavors defining the borders of the fruit. Lemon peel, candied pineapple and even grapefruit add lovely grace notes indicative of rich, clean, natural acids and a wine with plenty of glycerin. The stunning red fruits are polished and backed with details such as dried herb, and a tiny hint of mint. This may well be the most ageworthy Leonetti Cabernet ever made.

14

**96 Hanzell 2005 Chardonnay (Sonoma Valley); \$65.** Few wineries in California can craft a Chard as rich, balanced and ageworthy as this. In its youth this '05 is flashy in lemondrop, pear and spicy anise, with a honeyed finish and crisp acidity. It's quite addictively brilliant, a wine whose lush harmony mesmerizes the palate. But Hanzell Chards invariably age well, and this is a wine you can dependably put into your cellar for 5, 10, 15 years, even longer, as it continues to evolve and become more limpid and minerally.

15

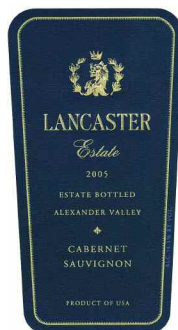
**99 Tenuta dell'Ornellaia 2004 Masseto (Toscana); \$250.** Even better than the highly acclaimed 2001 vintage, this Merlot from a tiny, clay soil vineyard in Bolgheri is just about everything you've ever dreamed of tasting. Gorgeous, generous, voluptuous, cheerful, succulent and intense: Masseto is all those things. The

aromas are seamless and capture the essence of chocolate fudge, sweet cherry, blackberry, spice and vanilla. It boasts thick, dense extraction, excellent structure and amazing persistence. Imported by Folio Fine Wine Partners.

16

**95 Louis Roederer 2002 Blanc de Blancs Brut (Champagne); \$70.** The purity of this wine is impressive. It has a straight line of mineral, flint and grapefruit running through it. Around this, there are layers of fresh apples, lime zest and a tight, taut structure. The one downside to what is a fine wine is that it, like many Roederer vintages, is too young. Give it 4–5 years. Imported by Maisons Marques & Domaines USA.

17



Please click label for more information

**95 Lancaster 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley); \$70.** A massive wine that absolutely demands time in the cellar, Lancaster's '05 is nearly all Cabernet, with tiny amounts of the other four Bordeaux varieties. It stuns with the power and authenticity of its hilly Cabernet origins, offering vast black currant, orange rind, anise and smoky oak flavors that implode on the palate. But the tannins are hard. It should blossom and fully come into its own after 2010.

18

**94 Bouchard Père & Fils 2005 Beaune du Château Premier Cru (Beaune); \$42.** From Bouchard's home vineyard, this is one of their signature wines. In 2005, it has produced a luscious, fruity wine whose richness is only a part of its wonderful floating character. The ripeness of the wine is matched by its structure, which promises considerable aging. Imported by Henriot Inc.

19

**96 Quilceda Creek 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (Columbia Valley); \$115.** Still young, chewy and textural, this stands as a classic Washington 2005 red—lusciously laden with mixed red and black berries, generous and deep; dense and jammy. The mixed berries, red licorice, cherries, layers of butterscotch, toffee and caramel are beautifully integrated and linger seductively into the finish. It has some initial alcoholic heat, but the flavors compensate and go on and on. This is a wine that must be cellared another five or more years before it even begins to pull itself together. If you must pop the cork before then, decant it for at least six hours and more if possible before drinking.

20

**95 Château Giscours 2005 Margaux; \$75.** This chateau gets better and better. The wine has power, but it is harnessed by the intense fruits, the blackberry flavors, the density and the wood. With the power, though, comes elegance, resulting in a wine that is ready to develop over many years. Imported by Château Giscours

21

**96 Bibi Graetz 2004 Testamatta (Toscana); \$98.** A prominent mineral component moves aside after a few minutes to reveal the true treasures of this Sangiovese-Canaiole blend. Those include the wine's gorgeous renderings of small forest fruit, Spanish cedar, cigar box and rum cake. Breathtaking in evolution and intensity. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines.

22



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**96 Far Niente 2005 Estate Bottled Cabernet Sauvignon (Oakville); \$125.** A fantastic Cabernet that stuns now for authenticity and power, and should develop for many years. Despite the large production, lower than that of many first growth Bordeaux, the wine, which has tiny amounts of Cab Franc and Petit Verdot, shows classic Oakville elegance and precision. Rich in black currants, blackberries, cherries and dark chocolate, it should hit its stride from 2011 through 2017.

23

**95 Domaine Vincent Dauvissat 2005 Les Preuses Grand Cru (Chablis); \$76.** There is much concentration and freshness here, along with power and intense minerality. The wine is very rich with butter, ripe fruit and layers of considerable acidity. Wait six years at least. Imported by Vineyard Brands.

24

**95 Girard 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (Diamond Mountain); \$75.** Where Girard's estate Cab is beautiful now, their Diamond Mountain bottling is one for the cellar. Veteran winemaker Marco DiGiulio has applied his considerable experience, with classic results. The wine is marked by firm tannins that make it astringent and sticky. But underneath all that is an explosion of currant, plum, licorice, chocolate and spicy curry flavor that dazzles. Should easily age for a long time in a proper cellar. Production was a paltry 325 cases, and worth the search.

25

**95 Franz Hirtzberger 2006 Singerriedel Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$88.** Tight, taut and mineral, tense and concentrated. There is intense acidity and a touch of spice, but this is all about structure and suppressed fruit. Keep this wine at least until 2010. Imported by Vin Divino.

26

**97 Iron Horse NV Joy! (Green Valley); \$147/1.5 L.** Available in magnum only, this is an occasional bottling from the winery. A winery spokesperson told me my bottle was entirely 1993 vintage, but not all other bottles are. The wine is extraordinarily fine, but compared to other California bubbly, it's sandpapery and almost harsh at this point. As it warms up in the glass it shows an immense toasted nut and grilled fruit richness with an impossibly long finish. This one to stash for the long haul.

27

**96 Le Macchiole 2004 Paleo (Toscana); \$105.** This Cabernet Franc is beautiful, with incredible succulence, persistence, heat, power and a full plate of enticing fragrances. Coffee, root beer, chocolate, Nutella, graham cracker and cherry liqueur are only a few elements of the wine's complexity. Imported by Domaine Select Wine Estates.

28

**94 Sineann 2006 Resonance Vineyard Pinot Noir (Willamette Valley); \$48.** Ah, the Resonance Vineyard. This is a magic spot that consistently makes the best wines from this top winery. In 2006 elegance is the keynote, with everything in perfect proportion and the fruit, acid, tannin and barrel notes in perfect harmony. The wine is young, almost austere, and the flavors are compact and wedged together, but they are there to be found if you sniff and search. The fruit is concentrated in the back of the palate and this wine perfectly captures an Oregon aesthetic without any of the rough edges or rawness. Will it age? The bet from here is it will go another 20 years.

29

**97 Joseph Phelps 2004 Insignia (Napa Valley); \$200.** Tasted in October, 2007, the wine was mute, offering little aromatically except for teasing notes of blackberries and oak. That shyness extended to the taste, where strong, hard tannins provide an almost impenetrable coat of armor to what's inside. But right down the middle of the palate is a deep, intensely powerful stream of perfectly ripened cassis that's all the proof you need of ageability. This is a magnificently structured young wine, reminiscent of a fine young Pauillac. Best after 2012, and should have another decade after that, at least.

30

**94 Casa Ferreirinha 2005 Quinta da Leda (Douro); \$50.** A great wine from a top red wine producer. Black tarry fruits, sweet ripe flavor and big, dense berry fruits are the stars of this intense, concentrated wine. It will develop over many years, but already shows its class and richness. Imported by Broadbent Selections, Inc.

31

**94 Talbott 2004 Cuvée Carlotta Chardonnay (Monterey County); \$60.** This is a barrel selection from the winery's Sleepy Hollow Vineyard and is one of the most concentrated Chardonnays in California. Has the honeyed richness of a botrytized wine, but is absolutely dry. Tastes like an apricot and pineapple tart, with seasonings of nutmeg, cinnamon, and the smoky, nutty pie crust. Very few California Chardonnays need time, but this one does. Stash until late 2008, but this powerhouse should gradually peak over a decade.

32

**97 Tenuta San Guido 2004 Sassicaia (Bolgheri Sassicaia); \$190.** The best Sassicaia of the last 10 years, the 2004 vintage is an outstanding achievement. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc highlight the beauty of Tuscany and portray the region in terms of thick chocolate fudge, succulent cherry and currant, exotic spice and vanilla seed. Beyond those big aromas are little teasers: blue flowers, Mediterranean herbs, cola and light mineral shadings. It's lush and full in the mouth and will hold 20 or 30 years. Imported by Kobrand.

33

**98 Clos de Tart 2005 Clos de Tart; \$319.** A beautiful wine, smooth, polished, with rounded corners. Its intense fruit is balanced and harmonizes well with the sweet tannins, the layers of wood and the red berry flavors. Certainly powerful, it impresses equally with the pleasure it will give in 7–10 years. Imported by Boisset America.

34

**94 Feiler-Artinger 2005 Ruster Ausbruch Essenz (Burgenland); \$58.** This is the pinnacle of achievement from an outstanding dessert wine producer. A blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc, it is an explosion of hugely rich, hugely sweet fruit, with brown sugar, raisins and tight acidity. This is an astonishingly rich wine, likely to age for at least 10 years. Imported by Schindler Weissman Co LLC.

35

**94 Robert Young 2004 Scion Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley); \$58.** The 2004 Scion is built for aging. It's stuffed with tannins that coat the mouth with grapeskin astringency, but that firm structure will support time in the cellar. Give it three or four years, when the black cherry, cassis, black and red currant, cocoa, herb and cedar flavors will emerge on their own.

36

**95 Tenuta Poggio al Tesoro 2005 W Dedicato a Walter (Toscana); \$80.** This 100% Cabernet Franc is dedicated to the late brother of Marilisa Allegrini (co-owner of the 110-acre estate). This is a top-notch wine, with succulence, intensity and outstanding wood integration. The spice, chocolate, campfire and leather notes blend seamlessly. In the mouth, the wine is vibrant and long-lasting, with chocolate notes on the finish. Imported by Winebow.

37

**94 Antonio Caggiano 2004 Vigna Macchia dei Goti (Taurasi); \$60.** This is one of the best Taurasis of all times. Antonio Caggiano has crafted an elegant wine that is rich in charm and personality. Cherry, freshly milled espresso, natural rubber, white truffle, pecorino cheese and black mineral all play a part in this complex ensemble. It has thick, tight tannins with beautifully etched mineral nuances and should age well for many years in the cellar. A Marc de Grazia selection, various American importers.

38

**94 Gary Farrell 2005 Allen Vineyard Hillside Blocks Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley); \$65.** Dryness and acidity mark this terrific wine. It's one for connoisseurs, a Pinot that requires some understanding to fully appreciate, as it's not a hedonistic seducer. The cherry and blackberry flavors have a fruit-skin bitterness, and there are additional nuances of violets, cola, leather, balsam and smoky oak. This is certainly one for the cellar. Drink now, with decanting, and over the next eight years.

39

**97 Colgin 2005 IX Estate Red Wine (Napa Valley); \$275.** This Bordeaux blend is similar to Colgin's Cariad bottling, but the grapes are from the winery's estate vineyard, high up on Pritchard Hill, ranging in elevation from 1,100–1,300 feet. A distinct note of violets and Provençal herbs erupts from the glass, supported by fruiter ones of cherries, red and black currants, dark chocolate, oak and cedar. What is so masterful about the wine is its complex structure. The tannins are fine as can be, offering just the right quality of briskness, and balanced with vital acidity. Tasted alongside Colgin's other 2005 wines, the IX Estate surpasses them all in sheer power and depth. Drink now, with decanting, or cellar through 2020.

40

**96 Marchesi Antinori 2004 Solaia (Toscana); \$170.** The 2004 Solaia is dense and concentrated with loads of character and defining aromatics: plump blackberry, chocolate fudge, exotic spice, peppercorn and smooth balsam notes. The real pleasure comes in the mouth where it delivers smooth elegance and an extra long finish. Imported by Ste. Michelle Wine Estates.

41

**96 Shafer 2003 Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District); \$200.** Solidly in the Hillside Select model, this vigorous young Cab is dramatically ripe and powerful. The flavors of red and black currants, milk chocolate, figs and smoky vanilla erupt in the mouth, making the tastebuds jump with joy. However, there is also the structure, among the greatest in California Cabs. The acidity is fine, but the tannins are stupendously rich, sweet and complex, practically a food group in themselves. Stunning and gorgeous now in its youth, this collectible wine will reward at least through 2015.

42

**94 Nikolaihof 2005 Vom Stein Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$74.** Structured with green plums and currants, this delicious, limpid wine envelops the palate with citrus and pure, crisp fruit flavors. A great expression of terroir-driven Riesling, with a mineral and steely structure to support the fruit. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines.

43

**94 Casa Lapostolle 2005 Clos Apalta Limited Release (Colchagua Valley); \$75.** Clos Apalta continues to push the envelope for Chilean icon wines. It's always been a blend of four or five Bordeaux grapes, and the 2005 is every bit as structured, tight and ripe as any predecessor. There is an intense blanket of new oak that tastes of mint, cinnamon, sawdust

and black licorice. When that subsides (maybe in another 12 months), expect racy and complex berry flavors, pinpoint tannins and preserving acidity. Hold for another two years; then drink through 2014. Imported by Moët Hennessy USA.

44



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**94 Dunham Cellars 2005 Lewis Vineyard Syrah (Columbia Valley); \$75.** Eric Dunham's Lewis vineyard Syrah belongs near the top of anyone's list of the best in the country. The brilliant nose opens with bright, inviting raspberry, blueberry and boysenberry scents and flavors. The wine is forward, intense and nuanced. Immediately, brilliantly appealing, it has the power and balance to age for up to a decade.

45

**95 Pride Mountain 2004 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma-Napa); \$120.** Youthful tannins star in this young wine. The wine is dry and balanced, with a fabulous core of blackberry, cassis and smoky oak. With a drop of Petite Verdot, which adds a touch of violets, this is one of the best high mountain Cabs of the vintage. Too dry and toughly astringent to drink before 2010; should develop well through 2016, at least.

46

**95 Joh. Jos. Prüm 2006 Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Beerenauslese Goldkap (Mosel-Saar-Ruwer); \$130/375 ml.** Filled with minerality, spice and everything nice, this incredibly intense wine is also filled with honey, gently caramelized peaches and citrus. It's got huge presence on the palate and a virtually endless, sweet finish. It should evolve gracefully for 50 or more years. Imported by Valckenberg International, Inc.

47

**95 Fattoria Le Pupille 2004 Saffredi (Maremma); \$140.** Saffredi is one of the most exciting super Tuscans of the year. The blend is Cabernet, Merlot and Alicante and the results underscore the immense potential of Maremma. The wine is vibrant, intense and sprightly with an outstandingly complex offering of pristine aromas: ripe cherry, floral essences, red apple and subdued almond. Imported by Henriot Inc.

48

**95 Barnett 2005 Rattlesnake Hill Cabernet Sauvignon (Spring Mountain); \$120.** Rattlesnake Hill is on the estate, more than 2,000 feet up in the Mayacamas above St. Helena. Typically tannic, in the way of Spring Mountain Cabs, the '05 is a dramatically structured wine that dazzles with power. Made entirely from Cabernet Sauvignon, it shows classic varietal flavors of black currants, cherries, licorice and spices, while mostly new French oak adds the perfect facade of smoky wood. Fabulous now with decanting and over rich fare such as steak, the wine should age gracefully for at least a decade.

49

**94 Sbragia 2004 Rancho Del Oso Cabernet Sauvignon (Howell Mountain); \$75.** Those mountain tannins are here in spades, and even though they're ripe and sweet, they give the wine a powerful astringency that demands cellaring. But age will certainly reward, for the wine is huge in currant, black cherry and unsweetened chocolate flavors. Open after 2010 and the fruit will shine through in all its ripe, succulent glory.

50

**96 Château Pichon-Longueville 2005 Pauillac; \$225.** A great, classic Pauillac, with its dark, dense, almost black currant flavors stirred together with immense tannins. The layers of dryness, fresh fruits, acidity and ripeness are all coming together into a magnificent structure. Age for at least 20 years. Imported by Château Pichon-Longueville.

51

**93 Dry Creek Vineyard 2004 The Mariner Meritage (Dry Creek Valley); \$40.** One of the best Bordeaux-style reds in memory from this warm Sonoma County appellation, this blend of all five Bordeaux varieties shows wild berry, plum, olive tapenade, spice and dried herb flavors, with tough, slightly rustic tannins that need time to melt. Give it until 2009, and should provide pleasure for another five or six years.

52

**95 Castello del Terriccio 2004 Castello del Terriccio (Toscana); \$140.** The aromas are clean, intense and penetrating and exhibit ripe black fruit with measured background shadings of spice, vanilla, toast and distant herbal tones. The blend of Syrah and Petit Verdot (with 25% other varieties) showcases the full beauty of its vintage in a feminine and understated way. But at the same time, this wine is determined and powerful. Imported by Kobrand.

53

**94 Benziger 2005 Tribute (Sonoma Mountain); \$80.** Softly lush, complex in flavor, this Cabernet-based Bordeaux blend impresses with power and authority. Thoroughly dry and firm in tannins, it shows classic flavors of black currants and cedar, with intricate notes of cherries, violets, tobacco, mocha and beef jerky. Beautiful now, and should develop for a decade.

54

**96 Chanson Père et Fils 2005 Charmes-Chambertin; \$225.** Dark in color, this is a rich, opulent, almost showy wine. The fruit is ripe, a combination of the sweetest strawberries with black cherries, laced with rich acidity. Then the tannins power in, a dry core of structure and density. Impressive and long-lasting, don't touch this wine for another six years at least. Imported by Terlato Wines International.

55

**94 Quinta do Vale Meão 2005 Douro; \$84.** The quinta of Vale Meão, Dona Antonia Ferreira's last creation in the 19th century, is one of the Douro's great vineyards. This is a wine that needs many years of aging, its tannins dominating what is also intense black, dense fruit. It is certainly powerful, but not out of balance, with an herbal element and precise acidity acting as a check, while the fruits gain in opulence in the mouth. Age for 10 years. Imported by W.J. Deutsch & Sons.

56

**94 Frog's Leap 2004 Rutherford; \$75.** A beautiful young Rutherford Cabernet, showing the dusty elegance and complexity of a top estate. There's a rich herbal character to the cherry, cassis and blackberry fruit, suggesting fresh green chervil, sage and thyme. Oak adds harmonious notes of vanilla, cedar and char. The tannins are thick and juvenile, but very finely ground. With 8% Cabernet Franc, this lush wine needs time. Hold until after 2008, and it should improve for another six years, conservatively.

57

**93 Wynns Coonawarra Estate 2004 John Riddoch Limited Release Cabernet Sauvignon (Coonawarra); \$45.** There's a noticeable background herbal element to this intensely concentrated wine. Dense layers of cassis and chocolate are front and center, filling the mouth with velvety richness and finishing long. Despite the power and richness, there's a structure to match, suggesting this will improve through at least 2012 and drink well until 2020. Imported by Foster's Wine Estates Americas.

58

**93 Pessagno 2005 Intrinity Chardonnay (Santa Lucia Highlands); \$45.** This is a very low-production, best-of-barrels selection by the winemaker. It's an extremely tight young wine, austere and almost searing in acidity, with a yeasty taste from sur lies aging. If you're looking for opulent, immediately accessible Chardonnay, this isn't for you. But the wine has tantalizing hints of grilled pineapples and nectarines, and the powerful structure suggests cellaring. Stash this away for a couple of years.

59

**94 Duckhorn 2005 Three Palms Vineyard Merlot (Napa Valley); \$85.** Duckhorn's Three Palms bottling is one of the oldest and most consistent Merlot vineyard designations in California and this is a classic example. The wine always is very tannic. But the '05 is dry and rich and complex in mineral-laden cherries and currants, with just the right application of new oak. You can decant it now for several hours and enjoy with a dramatically charred steak, but it will develop beautifully through 2011, at least.

60

**94 Joseph Drouhin 2005 Clos des Mouches (Beaune); \$89.** The oldest property owned by the Drouhin family has produced a wine that is initially withdrawn, showing its herbal, earthy character, before releasing an explosion of sweet berries, spice and irresistible freshness and acidity. The aftertaste is firm, and the fruit is very much in place. Imported by Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.

61

**96 Château Trotanoy 2005 Pomerol; \$250.** Certainly it is firm, with impressive power. But the smoothness of the ripe black fruits as they combine with the beautifully judged wood show a contrast of tension with the dense, chewy core. At its heart, this wine is dark and solid and concentrated, promising long aging. Imported by Etablissements Jean-Pierre Moueix.

62

**92 Domaine de l'Écu 2006 Expression de Gneiss (Muscadet Sèvre Et Maine); \$20.** A rich, creamy, sumptuous wine, with an impressive, decisive shaft of minerality and a stony, dense character. The name of the wine, referring to the granite and schist soil, is one of an extraordinary series reflecting different soil types made by Muscadet's top producer, Guy Bossard. Imported by Kysela Père et Fils.

63

**93 Amador Garcia 2004 Vendimia Seleccionada (Rioja); \$48.** Potent and raring to go, with lots of young oak and intense fruit that causes the wine to change in the glass in the blink of an eye. What we can tell at this early point of development is that it is saturated, healthy, balanced and clean. There's vibrancy and full tannins, with lip-smacking acidity. Already a good one to ponder, but should be even better from 2009–2011. Just 750 cases made. Imported by The Ravensvale Group.

64

**95 Jacquesson et Fils 1997 Brut (Champagne); \$165.** With a majority of Chardonnay in the blend, this has turned into a wonderfully expressive wine. It is more open than the great 1996, more generous, giving some mature toast and nut flavors, but still retaining ripe apricots and mulberry. In the Jacquesson style, this is very dry, but its richness keeps it well in balance. Imported by Vintage '59 Imports.

65

**94 Albert Bichot 2005 Domaine Long-Depaquit Moutonne Grand Cru (Chablis); \$97.** Initially this is closed up, then the wood and the superbly rich fruit assert themselves, unfolding into toast, lime, tropical fruits, plums and a dense, fresh acidity. It is still coming together, working up to being a superb wine. Give it 10 years. Imported by Bayfield Importing Ltd.

66

**93 Quinta de la Rosa 2004 Vintage Port; \$50.** A finely structured, impressively elegant wine, packed with dark fruit skin flavors, heavy with tannins and delicious perfumed fruit. While it is rich, it is also dry, suggesting excellent aging potential. Imported by Henry Wine Group.

67

**93 Thomas Fogarty 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon (Santa Cruz Mountains); \$50.** To begin with, it's a very fine, well-structured Cab, rich and vibrant in cassis and smoky oak flavors. It shows the deep integrity that the best Santa Cruz Mountains Cabernets possess. However, it's quite tannic, which gives it a palate astringency. So, will it age? Odds are strongly in favor of it. Best 2009–2015.

68

**93 Högl 2007 Ried Schön Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau); \$53.** A full-bodied, mouth-filling wine that bursts with melon, peach, peppery pear skin and nutmeg flavors. It is ripe, rich, a fruit salad whose final freshness and acidity suggest aging for 3–5 years. Imported by Winemonger.

69

**97 Louis Latour 2006 Montrachet; \$400.** It's the complexity that dominates this wine from what is arguably the greatest Chardonnay vineyard in Burgundy. All the fruit elements are wrapped up in a tense, tightly strung structure, and then surrounded by superrichness. Acidity adds to the mix, a pure, green plum fruit character. All in all, a great wine. Imported by Louis Latour Inc.

70

**95 Faiveley 2005 Corton Clos des Cortons; \$195.** One of Faiveley's monopoles (wholly owned vineyards), Clos des Cortons makes powerful wines. That's the case in 2005. This wine towers up, a strong edifice of tannins and big, black fruits. It has all the right elements coming into place, along with weight and some elegance. Imported by Wilson Daniels Ltd.

71

**93 Château Potelle 2005 VGS Cabernet Sauvignon (Mount Veeder); \$60.** Those famous Veeder mountain tannins are there in full force, providing a steel jacket to the wine and making it nearly undrinkable in its youth. But it has a fabulous, powerful core of fruit, making it a cellar guarantee. The cassis flavors punch through the astringency, finishing long and deep. Stash this one away for the long haul. Best after 2011. Decant before then.



72

**94 Le Salette 2004 Pergole Vecce (Amarone della Valpolicella Classico); \$118.** You'll notice a unique and terroir-driven note of freshly milled white peppercorn that distinguishes this Amarone. In the background are generous tones of berry, black mineral and toasted almond. Pair this extraordinary wine with roasted meat or aged cheese. Imported by Vias Imports.

73

**94 J. Schram 2000 Rosé (North Coast); \$130.** Has a pretty copper-partridge color and is very dry, with crisp, mouthwatering acidity and a yeasty, leesy tartness. Flavorwise, this bubbly is about subtle raspberries, cherry skin, tangerine, brioche and vanilla. Feels a bit full-bodied and juvenile now. The suggestion is ageability. Try after 2012, if you can properly cellar.

74

**93 Feudi di San Gregorio 2001 Piano di Montevergine Riserva (Taurasi); \$67.** Lead pencil, graphite, campfire, black mineral, blackberry, prunes and plums shape a first-class vintage of this famous Taurasi Riserva. The wine is dense and thick in concentration and offers excellent length and quality of tannins. Keep this wine in your cellar until 2010. Imported by Palm Bay International.

75

**94 Robert Mondavi 2005 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley); \$135.** This is a very fine, high level Cabernet that shows the impeccable nature of Mondavi Reserve. Yet it's also very tannic and far from being drinkable. Shows a vast repository of black currant, blackberry, black cherry and new oak flavors wrapped into a smooth, velvety mouthfeel whose finish goes on forever. Masculine and authoritative, it should continue to improve for many years. Drink now, with decanting, and through 2017, at least.

76

**96 Salon Le Mesnil 1997 Blanc de Blancs (Champagne); \$400.** The fabled Salon's latest release is much riper and softer than the great steely 1996 vintage. This suggests it is likely to be ready to drink soon. In the meantime, the acidity is supremely fresh, with grapefruit edges and green apple flavors. And then there is minerality and a tight, structured aftertaste as a reminder that this great Champagne is always going to be more than its fruit. Imported by Wilson Daniels Ltd.

77

**96 Biondi-Santi 2001 Riserva (Brunello di Montalcino); \$400.** Immediately, you know you are before a great Brunello with bright fruit aromas backed by forest floor, balsam notes, bramble, blue flowers, red apple and mint. The presence of wood is all but invisible and the wine sings true to its territory and tradition. The wine's natural acidity and intensity promise a long and glorious aging future before it. Imported by Shaw-Ross International Importers.

78

**93 Moss Wood 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon (Margaret River); \$75.** Operative words to describe this wine might include seamless and harmonious. There's such wonderful integration of fruit and oak that it's difficult to pick this wine's flavor components apart—it's a whirl of cassis and cedar, yet restrained; full-bodied, rich and dense without being heavy. Long and velvety on the finish, with enough soft tannins to last it 10–15 years. Imported by USA Wine Imports.

79

**93 Domaine Laroche 2005 Les Clos Grand Cru (Chablis); \$75.** Very firm, this is a structured, relatively austere wine, with lots of minerality and tightness. The green fruits are pierced with acidity, but also very fresh. A wine that needs time, give this at least 5–6 years. Screw-cap. Imported by Remy Cointreau USA.

80

**93 Domaine Philippe Delesvaux 2004 Sélection de Grains Nobles (Coteaux du Layon); \$75.** Supersweet, but never cloying, with acidity, pear skin tannins and delicate sweet brown sugar and honey flavors. It is a great example of how Loire Chenin manages to keep its balance and freshness while still offering long-aging botrytis character. Keep for at least 10 years. Imported by T.G.I.C. Importers.

81

**93 Château Lagrezette 2003 Cuvée Dame d'Honneur (Cahors); \$76.** Just a small proportion of Merlot smoothes out the hard Malbec edges in this impressive cuvée from Château Lagrezette. It is certainly powerful, the wood prominent but not too dominant. With advice from Michel Rolland, this shows great polish without losing entirely that mineral, dark edge. Age for 5–6 years. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.

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82

**93 Dr. H. Thanisch (Erben Thanisch) 2006 Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Spätlese (Mosel-Saar-Ruwer); \$76.** Prospective purchasers should bear in mind that this wine was harvested at sugar levels far beyond the minimum spätlese requirements. This is more of a big auslese or small beerenauslese in terms of sugar and style, marrying dried apricot aromas with notes of candied pineapple and spice. It's very sweet and honeyed, and would be cloying were it not for its firm acid backbone. This can be cellared for 20 years. Imported by Chapin Cellars, LLC.

83

**99 Château Lafite Rothschild 2005 Pauillac; \$1200.** Initially dense, almost black enough to be attacked with a knife. But then it becomes apparent that this is a beautifully integrated, balanced wine, bringing together power, with the hallmark Lafite style and poise. In the end, you have a wine that promises an impressive aging potential along with delicious black currant fruits, acidity and a layer of striking tannins. Imported by Domaines Barons de Rothschild and multiple U.S. importers.

84

**94 Masi 2001 Mazzano (Amarone della Valpolicella Classico); \$150.** Here's a beautifully aged Amarone from an excellent vintage. Masi's Mazzano is a benchmark wine for Valpolicella thanks to its intriguing complexity of aromas: black cherry, dried fruit, porcini mushroom, dark chocolate, vanilla bean and dark resin like the kind you'd smell in an antique furniture shop. The wine has a slightly brownish hue and remarkable penetration. Imported by Remy Coin-treau USA.

85

**94 Clos Triguedina 2005 The Black Wine (Cahors); \$156.** In the Middle Ages, the wines of Cahors used to be called "black wines" and the tradition comes from cooking the grapes for a night after harvest. Jean-Luc Baldès has revived the tradition in this limited production wine, with its glass-staining deep crimson color. The palate is dominated by prunes, dried raisins and a series of impressive perfumes that go through the dense, definitely black tannins. Age for 10 years before even touching. Imported by Eagle Eye Imports.

86

**93 Altaïr 2004 Altaïr (Cachapoval Valley); \$80.** Altaïr is a fortified high-end Cabernet blend with mineral and charred aromas announcing a palate coated with dense berry flavors, tobacco, vanilla and balsamic notes. It's a complex wine that is fairly tough out of the bottle. Ideally it should be cellared for another three to five years. Imported by Bacchus International.

87

**95 Tua Rita 2005 Redigaffi (Toscana); \$275.** This wine is at the top of its class in a new generation of super Tuscan producers. Plush and velvety, it opens with rich aromas of chocolate, cherry, peppercorn, black fruit and cola. Thick extraction sets the tone for a lush wine that requires a few more years in the bottle. Drink after 2012. Imported by Winebow.

88

**93 Ferrari-Carano 2004 Prevail Back Forty Cabernet Sauvignon (Alexander Valley); \$85.** Mountain fruit is the key to understanding this 100% Cab. By that is meant a unique combination of firm, astringent tannins and fabulously concentrated blackberry and currant fruit that absolutely demands aging. It's obvious that the terroir these grapes come from needs an appellation other than Alexander Valley, for there's nothing soft or herbal going on here. Hold until 2010, then should develop through 2014, at least.

89

**95 Domaine Jayer-Gilles 2006 Echézeaux du Dessus; \$300.** Here is an ageworthy wine, a proper grand cru. The spice from the wood is the dominant factor to begin with, and this needs more time to integrate. But already, the fruit is impressively ripe and jammy, a fruit salad of black and red berry fruits. The tannins are dark, brooding away in the background. Keep this wine at least five years, probably 10. Imported by Robert Kacher Imports.

90

**100 Château Latour 2005 Pauillac; \$2000.** A great wine, the summation of a great vintage in Bordeaux. The core of richness, the dense, bone-dry tannins, the black currants, red berries and black plum skins are the elements, but it's the way they have been integrated that makes this such an impressive wine. There is great elegance as well, a fabulous counterpoint to such power. Cellar for at least 15 years, but this will keep forever. Imported by Diageo Chateau & Estates and multiple U.S. importers.

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91

**94 Les Astéries 2005 Saint-Emilion; \$189.** Dark-hued and concentrated, this wine also has a considerable mineral character, along with intense bitter chocolate and dark plum skin flavors. It's juicy, but also broody, massive and dominated by its solid tannins. Keep for 5–10 years. Imported by JCP Maltus.

92

**95 Clarendon Hills 2005 Astralis Syrah (Clarendon); \$350.** Astralis has become one of Australia's top collectibles, and Roman Bratasiuk's 2005 version is once again top-shelf stuff. It's full-bodied and rich without being over the top, balancing dark-chocolate-covered blackberries and blueberries with more complex savory notes (spice, grilled meat). While it's a big, hulking wine at first, the finish shows great elegance and finesse, ending with silky tannins. Best from 2014. Imported by Wine Brokers Unlimited.

93

**92 Trapiche 2005 Viña Fausto Orellana Single Vineyard Malbec (Mendoza); \$47.** Our favorite of the Trapiche 2005 single-vineyard Malbecs is this one from Fausto Orellana. Winemaker Daniel Pi has made a brawny but savory wine with structure, core acidity and bold flavors. The palate is chunky and expansive, but also smooth and well directed. Some unabsorbed oak, tannins and more indicate that this bruiser is here to stay. Best from 2009 through 2014. Imported by Frederick Wildman & Sons, Ltd.

94

**93 Roux Père et Fils 2005 Corton-Charlemagne; \$120.** Appropriately big and burly, full of ripe fruit, rather soft as well as rich. With its yellow fruits, layers of white currants and a powerful wood element, this is a wine that is still knitting together. There is potential here, especially from the underlying acidity. Give it 4–5 years. Imported by Metrowine Distribution.

95

**93 Maison Champy 2006 Mazis-Chambertin; \$125.** A dense, almost heavy wine, with smoky, licorice flavors that dominate the fruit. It is firm, big, solid, the sort of wine that demands attention with its concentration and powered structure. It may need time for aging, but already the power and weight are there. Imported by K&L Wine Merchants.

96

**98 Château Haut-Brion 2005 Pessac-Léognan; \$1500.** A big, virile wine, dominated by dark and firm tannins. The structure comes from powerful black fruits, the wood only showing as a dry edge to the tannins. It's firm, obviously destined for long aging, with initial blackberry fruits powering through the density. A stupendous wine that will last many decades. Imported by Domaine Clarence Dillon.

97

**92 Torres 2004 Mas La Plana Black Label Cabernet Sauvignon (Penedès); \$58.** The color and weight on this Spanish Cabernet are just right. After that, it becomes an insider's wine. Why do we say that? Because it's not like a Napa, Washington or Chilean Cabernet that oozes cassis, plum and sweet French oak. Instead, it shows the terroir of the Mas La Plana vineyard in northeast Spain, and with airing (decanting even better) it becomes a sexy, interesting, Old World Cabernet that delivers provoking, earthier flavors. And it should age well for another decade. Imported by Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.

98

**92 Torii Mor 2006 Olson Vineyard Pinot Noir (Dundee Hills); \$65.** The flavors are sappy and spicy and full, and the wine has a pleasing depth and richness. The fruits run through red and purple berries and lead into hints of chocolate and leaf. The winemaking is polished and confident, and yet Jacques Tardy has left just enough roughness in the flavors to give the wine personality and character. May be cellared for up to a decade.

99

**92 Hélène Garcin 2005 Poesia (Mendoza); \$80.** The youngest of the Poesia line shows some new oak in the form of sawdust aromas and espresso and mocha on the finish. In between those oak-based characteristics are mineral and black-fruit aromas as well as lush, very potent plum and berry flavors. With midnight darkness, firm tannins and straggling wood notes, we suggest sitting this bruiser down for another two to five years. Imported by Bordeaux, Etc Wine Trade.

100

**92 Casa de Santar 2004 Conde de Santar (Dão); \$80.** In tribute to the first count of Santar, who created the present estate in the 19th century, this is a vineyard selection wine that shows a mineral elegance, powered by wood and firmly based on structured tannins and fresh berry fruits. It is always going to be an austere wine, but it also suggests good aging potential. Imported by Signature Imports. **WE**

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