

# WINES

We believe that wine is about exploration, discovery and, most importantly, fun. To create this list, we tasted hundreds of wines over several weeks, asking our suppliers to bring us wine made from unique varieties in up-and-coming or underappreciated regions. Here are our favorites – the wines that really stood out in the crowd. We have listed them roughly in order of overall character: lighter, livelier wines can be found nearer the top of each section, with the deeper, richer wines further down. Salud!

## BY THE GLASS

### • SPARKLING •

#### **NV VOUVRAY PETILLANT “LA DILETTANTE,” CATHERINE BRETON, LOIRE VALLEY, FRANCE**

Catherine and Pierre Breton are some of the most well-known producers of Cabernet Franc in France's Loire Valley. Lucky for us, Catherine's family had a small parcel of Chenin Blanc in Vouvray. In 2008, she finally decided to use it...and the result is this delightful sparkling wine. Made from 100% Chenin Blanc, it is gorgeously crisp and bright...full of Barlett pears and backed by a chalky minerality and vibrant acidity.

10 GLASS / 38 BOTTLE

#### **NV GAILLAC BRUT “METHODE GAILLACOISE,” DOMAINE DE MOULIN, GAILLAC, FRANCE**

This beautiful domaine lies on the banks of the Tarn river in rural southwestern France, and has been in continuous operation since 1827. Of all their wines, this unusual bubbly, made from the Maussac grape, is a favorite of ours for the cooler months – like a rich, spiced baked apple in a glass.

10 GLASS / 38 BOTTLE

#### **NV JEAN MILAN, BRUT GRAND CRU BLANC DE BLANCS “CUVÉE MILLÉNAIRE,” OGER, FRANCE**

Oger is one of the premiere sites in Champagne for the Chardonnay grape, in the heart of the mythical Côte des Blancs. Of all the non-vintage bottlings we tasted last year, this stunning wine from small producer Jean Milan was our favorite. Elegant and refined yet creamy and ripe, this Champagne practically cries out for oysters, good company and celebration!

18 GLASS / 90 BOTTLE

### • WHITE •

#### **2008 VERMENTINO, UVAGGIO, LODI, CALIFORNIA**

Vermentino? Lodi? Who knew? Jim Moore—who once headed up the Italian Varietal Program for Mondavi—apparently did. This 2008 is undoubtedly his best wine yet, and it's a dead-ringer for the authentic stuff from Sardinia... crisp, floral and bursting with tart-fruit aromas. A perfect aperitif.

10 GLASS / 38 BOTTLE

### • RED •

#### **2007 CESANESE DI OLEVANO ROMANO “CORTE ALLA LUNA,” PROIETTI, LAZIO**

Lazio, the area around Rome, is the home of Cesanese—a spicy, fragrant grape capable of producing excellent modern-styled Italian reds. This one, from top-tier producer Proietti, is a keeper. Juicy blue and red berries, plenty of earthy Italian charm, and a zippy finish make it a superb food wine.

10 GLASS / 38 BOTTLE

### • SWEET •

#### **2004 TANNAT “RESERVE - ALCYONE,” VIÑEDO DE LOS VIENTOS, ATLÀNTIDA, URUGUAY**

From his small winery outside Montevideo, Pablo Fallabrino is pushing Uruguayan wine in entirely new directions. This *passito*-styled dessert wine (made with dried, raisinated grapes) is fortified with grappa, and tastes like an otherworldly combination of asian spices and gourmet tootsie rolls. If this is the new direction we can expect from Uruguayan wines, we are most definitely on-board.

16 GLASS / 76 BOTTLE (375ML)

## BY THE BOTTLE

ALL SELECTIONS — 38 DOLLARS PER BOTTLE

• WHITE •

(100) **2007 COSTA DEL MOLINO “COCOCCIOLA,” CANTINA FRENTANA, ABRUZZO, ITALY**

Cantina Frentana, a large cooperative based in the Abruzzo region of eastern Italy, can hardly be called a ‘small’ producer – which normally isn’t our style. We couldn’t get this fantastic white out of our heads, though: grassy minerality and brilliant freshness make it an absolutely phenomenal match for oysters.

(102) **2006 ROUSSETTE DE SAVOIE “ALTESSE,” FRÉDÉRIC GIACHINO, SAVOIE, FRANCE**

White wines from the Savoie, in the lower reaches of the Alps of eastern France, are often compared to crystal-clear mountain streams—and often paired with the fish that come from them. This beauty from micro-producer Frédéric Giachino, who owns 7 hectares of organically-farmed vineyards, is a little richer than most...but only a little. Beautiful nutty and citrus tones on the nose and a pleasing richness in the mouth make this a winner with trout.

(103) **2008 ROBOLA, GENTILINI, CEPHALONIA, GREECE**

The Cosmetatos family has been producing small amounts of wine from their island perch in the Ionian Sea, in western Greece, since the mid-1980s. Attentive winemaking, a focus on indigenous grapes—what’s not to love? Full of citrus and minerals, this Robola-based wine practically screams shellfish.

(104) **2008 BEAUJOLAIS BLANC, JEAN-PAUL BRUN, BEAUJOLAIS, FRANCE**

Jean-Paul Brun runs Terres Dorées, a small 40-acre estate in Beaujolais, the land of light and fruity reds just south of Burgundy-proper. He believes firmly in manipulating the wine as little as possible, using indigenous yeasts and letting the grapes speak for themselves. We love the sound of their voices.

(105) **2008 ROERO ARNEIS, FRATELLI BROVIA, PIEDMONT, ITALY**

As far as we’re concerned, northern Italian wines just don’t get much better than those made by the Brovia family, fixtures in eastern Piedmont since the mid-1800s. Aside from their wonderful Barolo wines, this Arneis is one of our favorite whites. Clean, fresh, full of lemons and peaches...absolutely classic.

(106) **2008 VINHO REGIONAL MINHO “AURATUS,” QUINTA DO FEITAL, SEIXAS, PORTUGAL**

Marcial Dorado makes this zingy, fantastically refreshing white from Alvarinho and old-vine Trajadura grown on the banks of the Minho River in northern Portugal. Full of classic apricot and citrus, we think the added heft lent by the Trajadura lends the wine an exceptional balance.

(107) **2007 ERBALUCE DI CALUSO “CARIOLA,” FERRANDO, PIEDMONT, ITALY**

Luigi Ferrando is a cult figure in Carema, his corner of northwestern Piedmont. While primarily known for his cool-climate Nebbiolo reds, his Erbaluce wines, based on the nutty and floral white grape of the same name, are heavenly. One sip of this stunning single-vineyard “Cariola” bottling says it all.

(108) **2008 GODELLO, ADEGAS BENAZA, MONTERREI, SPAIN**

Godello is one of Spain’s great white grapes, thriving in the cool, windswept landscape of northwestern Spain. We loved this particular bottling (which blends in a bit of two other native grapes, Treixadura and Doña Blanca) for its slate and citrus tones and perfectly-balanced weight. Quaff away!

(109) **2008 SAINT-VÉРАН “TERROIR D’AVAYE,” DOMAINE CHEVEAU, MÂCONNAIS, FRANCE**

In the looming shadow of Pouilly-Fuissé lies the commune of Saint-Véran, where winemakers have quietly been making stunning Chardonnay-based whites for years. Domaine Cheveau is one of the best, making wines with restraint—no oak allowed—and an admirable attention to detail. This is a stunner.

(110) **2004 PINELA, IVAN BATIĆ, VIPAVA VALLEY, SLOVENIA**

Ivan Batić is the madman of one of the most interesting up-and-coming wine regions in the world: the Vipava Valley in Slovenia. He plows his fields with horses, practices strict organic viticulture, and is one of 4 producers making wine from the indigenous Pinelo grape. If you like White Burgundy, try this!

(111) **2005 TOKAJI FURMINT “MANDOLAS,” OREMUS, ZEMPLÉN, HUNGARY**

Oremus has been making wine for five centuries, and was for a period in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries one of the premiere producers of sweet wine in the world. Resurrected after the fall of the Iron Curtain by a consortium that includes famed Spanish producer Vega Sicilia, Oremus is now increasingly known as a top-tier producer of dry wines. This 2005 Furmint is as rich and unctuous as they come—completely dry, but beguiling all the same.

• RED •

(300) **2007 ST. MAGDALENER “RONDELL,” GLÖGGLHOFF, SÜDTIROL, ITALY**

For years now, Franz Gojer has been making some of the best wines in northern Italy on the gentle and sun-drenched slopes surrounding Bolzano. This delicate red, made from 100% Schiava, has a touch of the rustic in its smoky berry tones, but its light body and delicate finish are pure grace and class.

(302) **2008 “CONO 4 DE PURA CEPA,” PRIMITIVO QUILES, ALICANTE, SPAIN**

Primitivo Quiles is an acknowledged master of Fondillón, an extraordinarily complex, maderized wine from Alicante in northern Spain. This “joven” bottling is like a junior version, light and vibrant on the palate but overflowing with deep aromas of black cherries, figs and fresh herbs.

(304) **2005 “LES VIOLETTES,” PELERIN WINES, SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS, CALIFORNIA**

Chris Weidemann is one of our favorite domestic winemakers. He is a sensitive and attentive producer who makes *his* wines year after year, without regard to scores or fancy press. This gorgeous red is a dead-on homage to the Côte-Rôtie in Southern France: it still surprises us that it's made in California.

(305) **2006 TEROLDEGO ROTALIANO, ROBERTO ZENI, TRENTINO, ITALY**

The Zeni family isn't a small producer, but it is one of the most consistent in the Trentino zone of northeastern Italy. This Teroldego is one of the best wines they make, full of intense plummy character and a rich palate weight that makes us crave burgers. Or Steak Diane...

(306) **2007 RED BLEND “INDICA,” LIOCO, MENDOCINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

Kevin O'Connor was once the Wine Director at Spago, and Matt Licklider was a wine importer. A few years back, they started making wine—and one taste was all it took to convince us that they never should have been doing anything else. This red blend, inspired by the table wines of Southern France, is one of those wines that straddles the Old and New Worlds...fruity but pleasingly tart, dense yet light on its feet. Or, in other words, just plain delightful.

(307) **2007 PRIMITIVO SALENTO “ARKÉ,” MASTRI VINAI, PUGLIA, ITALY**

Puglia is hot both literally and figuratively—it forms the “heel of the boot” of Southern Italy, and 100-degree days are not unusual. But it's also one of the big up-and-comers of the Italian wine scene. Plenty of delicious, juicy reds are produced here these days, and the Papadopoli family behind Matri Vinai has been at it longer than most (four generations and counting). This Primitivo-based wine is a great example of their skill: ripe and ready, but still balanced.

(308) **2005 “CLAUS,” PAUL LEHRNER, BURGENLAND, AUSTRIA**

Paul Lehrner is a smaller grower based in Mittelburgenland, one of the oldest viticultural areas in all of Europe. He consistently makes excellent wines at reasonable prices, and we particularly like the importance he places on food-friendliness. This blend of Zweigelt and Blaufrankisch is a case-in-point: great acidity, sappy wild fruit aromas and a barely-perceptible smokiness that we absolutely love. A great stand-in for Cabernet.

(309) **2007 ST. LAURENT, SATTLER, BURGENLAND, AUSTRIA**

The young Erich Sattler says it best: “We make wine as my grandfather did, only with better machines.” It's a formula that seems to be working for him. From his 10 hectares in Burgenland, he produces one of our favorite Austrian reds from the St. Laurent grape: fruity, soft and lush, with just the slightest echo of Pinot Noir (St. Laurent is thought to be a genetic relative). A fantastic match for fall flavors.

(310) **2008 VDP DE L'HERAULT,” LES HÉRÉTIQUES,” CHÂTEAU D'OUPIA, LANGUEDOC, FRANCE**

Château d'Oupia, the estate of the late, great André Iché, is undoubtedly one of the greatest producers of Minervois. They also make a sumptuous Vin de Pays based on old-vine Carignan. Approachable and rich, we think this wine is an unpretentious, natural beauty. Braised meats, anyone?

(311) **2007 DOURO TINTO, POMBAL DO VESUVIO, DOURO, PORTUGAL**

Quinta do Vesuvio makes some of the finest vintage Ports in all of Portugal. Now, it seems that their non-fortified wines are catching up. Pombal do Vesuvio, their second label, produces this rich and eminently enjoyable red, mostly from Touriga Nacional grown in the extreme climate of Portugal's Douro River. It's a big wine with big flavors...naturally, it calls for bigger foods.

(312) **2006 TANNAT, CAMBIATA, MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

It takes guts to make a Tannat, period. It takes *extra* guts to make one in Monterey County. This onyx-dark wine from Cambiata is, in a word, huge...full of blackberries and Mediterranean herbs, and bursting with rich tannins and deep flavors. Definitely more California in style (read: softer) than the Tannat produced in Southwestern France and South America, and arguably more enjoyable out of the gate.

(313) **2005 BOBAL “MESTIZAJE,” BODEGAS MUSTIGUILLO, VALENCIA, SPAIN**

Bodegas Mustiguillo is an up-and-coming winery from southeastern Spain, just west of Valencia. One of the local grapes of the region is Bobal: it's a big, rich red grape that (unsurprisingly) makes big, rich red wines. Here it's blended with a small portion of Tempranillo, Garnacha, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot...more internationally-styled than we normally go for, but when a wine is this pleasurable, we have to throw our preconceptions out the window.