

# Wine & Spirits

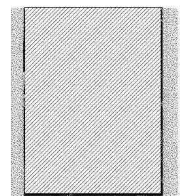


## A Sommelier Scavenger Hunt Tracking Down American Terroir

Year's Best Cabernet Sauvignon  
Champagne Buying Guide  
Germany's Riesling Trockenwelle  
2011 Napa Valley Vintage



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# BUBBLES, BAROLO & CAB

With well over 600 recommendations in the pages that follow, this issue packs in more choices than most wine books. The Champagne section alone is a crash course in France's most famous sparkling wine, with background on each house to help inform your own selections.

There are plenty of great sparkling wines from California, too, starting on page 108, as well as cool, restrained styles of cabernet, delicious results from California's challenging 2011 vintage (see report, p. 10). When it comes to bottles to end the meal, don't miss the Port section: Josh Greene found some ancient Tawnies, compelling Colheitas and new-release Vintages that will extend your holiday celebrations long into the night. Or look to Tokaji, (p. 118) for golden dessert wines that double as terrific gifts for the collectors on your list.

For this issue, J.D. Nasaw at *TBD*, Tonya Pitts of *One Market* and Amy Racine of *Sons & Daughters* were among the panelists who tasted with us in our San Francisco office; in New York, tasters included Daniel Beedle of *Juni*, Michael Engelmann of *The Modern*, Victoria James of *Ristorante Morini* and John Rankin of *Chambers St. Wines*. For details on our blind tasting process, turn to page 99, and for access to our online database of all wines tasted and all reviews, go to [wineandspiritsmagazine.com](http://wineandspiritsmagazine.com).

## YEAR'S BEST

62	Champagne	tasted 275	top wines 85	best buys 34
73	US Cabernet Sauvignon	tasted 779	top wines 95	best buys 29
84	German Riesling	tasted 385	top wines 102	best buys 46
94	Alsace	tasted 191	top wines 16	best buys 7
96	Barolo & Barbaresco	tasted 161	top wines 60	best buys 31
102	Rioja	tasted 263	top wines 27	best buys 19
105	Porto	tasted 82	top wines 28	best buys 6

## NEW RELEASES

108	US	tasted 553	top wines 56	best buys 43
115	Imported	tasted 451	top wines 45	best buys 26
	<b>Total</b>	tasted 3,140	top wines 514	best buys 241



# US NEW RELEASES

Our blind panels tasted **553** new-release US wines for this issue. Our critics rated **56** as exceptional (90+) and **43** as Best Buys.

**Joshua Greene** covers Napa Valley, **Luke Sykora** covers the rest of California. **Patrick J. Comiskey** covers Idaho, New York, Oregon and Washington. Find a complete list of wines tasted and all reviews at [wineandspiritsmagazine.com](http://wineandspiritsmagazine.com).

## CALIFORNIA SPARKLING



### 94 | Gloria Ferrer \$37 2006 Carneros Royal Cuvée (Best Buy)

The Ferrer family created Royal Cuvée to serve King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia of Spain when they visited California in 1987. Blended from many of the best lots at the family's Carneros estate, it's quite impressive thanks, in part, to a long season that delivered ideal ripeness. Two-thirds pinot noir and one-third chardonnay, it feels ripe in the best sense, bold in its fruit, with an impression of a juicy Bartlett pear, its fragrant nectar dripping down your chin. Yet it's fully dry and completely harmonious, the mousse fine, the delicate acidity giving it a bright, weightless length. It's not trying to emulate Champagne; rather, it's compelling in another way: delicious and true to place, it captures Californian sunshine in a bottle. (4,400 cases) *Gloria Ferrer Vineyards, Sonoma, CA*

### 93 | Roederer Estate \$65 2006 Anderson Valley L'Ermitage Brut Rosé

Roederer Estate winemaker Arnaud Weyrich recalls the lead-up to the 2006 vintage well: Torrential winter rains caused mudslides and floods, and, for a few days, Anderson Valley was virtually cut off from the rest of civilization. That abundant soil moisture led to a bumper crop of plump, healthy berries. L'Ermitage Rosé draws on many of the vintage's choice lots of pinot noir and chardonnay, supported by barrel-aged reserve chardonnay from the 2003 vintage. This leads with a leafy scent of barely ripe pinot noir, autumnal and quiet, supported by a delicate toasty impression from seven years on its lees in bottle. With air, it blooms from cherry tomato skin and herbs into more lifted territory, suggesting red raspberries and rose petals, the fruit gaining plumpness and depth without losing its firm, vinous structure. It's a savory sparkling wine

to decant or age, and it would provide a perfect partner for gently smoked salmon. (595 cases) *Roederer Estate, Philo, CA*

### 92 | Mumm Napa \$60 2007 Napa Valley DVX

Half chardonnay and half pinot noir, Mumm's DVX is a barrel selection coming mostly from vineyards in Carneros and Oak Knoll. The 2007 is bright and impeccably balanced, a resinous sage fragrance coursing through rich, ripe fruit—think white peach—rounded by subtle yeasty flavors and supported by acidity that feels crisp and refreshing. Serve it as a decadent aperitif or with pumpkin ravioli in browned butter. (3,375 cases) *Mumm Napa Valley, Rutherford, CA*

### 91 | Iron Horse \$50 2009 Green Valley of the Russian River

**Valley Brut X** is the driest of Iron Horse's sparkling wines, and this 2009 is quite austere, with bracing, salty flavors that hint at green apple and lemon skin. Its firm and mouthwatering presence will shine with salty foods, like shoestring fries and a platter of oysters. (500 cases) *Iron Horse Vineyards, Sebastopol, CA*

### 91 | Roederer Estate \$48 2006 Anderson Valley L'Ermitage Brut

Composed of a near-even balance of chardonnay and pinot noir, this gains richness from barrel-aged wines from the 2003 and 2006 vintages. It lasts on a creamy, fruit-driven impression of spicy pear skin and juicy pear flesh, its texture generous yet airy—a sophisticated sparkling wine to bring to a sushi bar for an *omakase* dinner. (1,629 cases) *Roederer Estate, Philo, CA*



### 90 | Domaine Carneros \$36 Carneros Cuvée de la Pompadour Brut

**Rosé** Organically grown pinot noir from the Domaine Carneros estate forms the base of

this pretty rosé. It spent several days on the skins before pressing, offering up clean red fruit flavors that suggest fresh strawberries at peak ripeness. The result is a clean, juicy, crowd-pleasing sparkling wine to keep on hand for the holidays. (3,800 cases) *Domaine Carneros, Napa, CA*

### 90 | Mumm Napa \$70 2008 Napa Valley DVX Rosé

Equal parts chardonnay and pinot noir, with 20 percent of the cuvée aged in oak, this is a lush, ripe rosé, holding white cherry and candied orange peel flavors in a round texture. A plump sparkler for salmon *nigiri*. (1,045 cases) *Mumm Napa Valley, Rutherford, CA*

### 90 | Roederer Estate \$24 Anderson Valley Brut (Best Buy)

Roederer Estate's Brut is reliably open and delicious, this year's cuvée bursting with concentrated apple flavor. It's clean and dry with a long, delicate finish enhanced by the barrel-aged reserve wines that winemaker Arnaud Weyrich blends in. Its bold flavors and vinous texture would be great with cracked crab. *Roederer Estate, Philo, CA*

### 88 | Gloria Ferrer \$22 Carneros Blanc de Noirs (Best Buy)

A posh sparkling wine made from pinot noir, this carries fresh scents of red raspberry and rose petals in a round, creamy texture that's supported by ample acidity. Perfect for a salmon fillet. *Gloria Ferrer Vineyards, Sonoma, CA*

### 88 | Iron Horse \$42 2010 Green Valley of the Russian River

**Valley Wedding Cuvée (Best Buy)** Mostly pinot noir, this starts off creamy and gentle, then turns spicy and assertive, with grapefruit-rind bitterness giving it a bracing close. Its austere finish would clean up after crab cakes. (4,150 cases) *Iron Horse Vineyards, Sebastopol, CA*

## CALIFORNIA WHITE

### CHARDONNAY

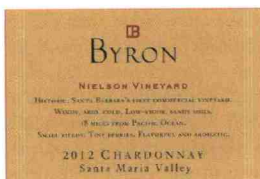
### 94 | Evening Land \$35 2012 Sonoma Coast Chardonnay (Best Buy)

Made by Isabelle Meunier and Erin

Miller, this wine was finished by Jamey Whetstone, who has since taken over the winemaking for Evening Land's Sonoma wines. It comes mostly from the Gap's Crown Vineyard at the base of Sonoma Mountain, which faces west into the coastal wind and fog of the Petaluma Gap. (A few barrels from Evening Land's own Occidental Vineyard also contributed to the blend.) The wine's beauty is immediately apparent in the purity of its orchard fruit aromas, as fragrant as a basket of heirloom apples. It's a chardonnay full of air and sunlight, gentle lees-stirring contributing a supple texture that seems to polish the delicate, gem-like fruit rather than dull it. If you've ever tasted a perfectly ripe loquat, you'll have a spot-on metaphor for this wine's effortless balancing act. (1,481 cases) *The Evening Land Vineyards, Salem, OR*

**94 | Evening Land** \$40

**2012 Sonoma Coast Sun Chase Vineyard Chardonnay** The Sun Chase Vineyard is located just uphill from Gap's Crown, on rocky clay loam at elevations of 900 to 1,400 feet. The blocks sourced by Evening Land were planted in 2007, and grew a quintessential coastal chardonnay in 2012. Its rich, bold ripeness—a near-tropical impression that suggests the musky succulence of papaya flesh—speaks to the vineyard's sunny afternoons. The wine's freshness and clarity capture the cooling marine air that rolls in before sunset. And the firm tension of this chardonnay's dry extract feels rooted in the thin hillside soils. It needs a few years of bottle age to fully settle into itself; then match its taut, meaty intensity with grilled octopus. (250 cases) *The Evening Land Vineyards, Salem, OR*



**93 | Byron** \$32

**2012 Santa Maria Valley Nielson Vineyard Chardonnay** Uriel Nielson developed Santa Barbara's first modern commercial vineyard in 1964, sourcing chardonnay cuttings from Wente and planting them on their own roots in the loose, sandy soil of this benchland site. The block that grew this wine was propagated from that original vine material in 1999. This 2012 practically bursts at the seams with a juicy purity of fruit, the flavors ripe and round as a nectarine yet completely

dry, the fruit dusted by a bold, earthy complexity, supported by the toastiness of lees and oak but not dominated by them. Deep and refreshing, it's a compelling chardonnay for lobster. (797 cases) *Byron Winery, Santa Maria, CA*

**93 | Sandhi** \$55

**2012 Santa Rita Hills Sanford & Benedict Chardonnay** Sashi Moorman sources this wine from the oldest chardonnay vines in the Santa Rita Hills, vines that Rick Sanford planted on their own roots in 1972. The vineyard's shale-laced benchland soil grew a resolutely earthy chardonnay in 2012, a wine that feels fully ripe yet almost austere at first, savory and floral rather than directly fruity. It gains clarity with air, the intensity of its old-vine dry extract supported by lively acidity, developing an appetizing aroma that suggests chanterelle mushrooms and *huitlacoche*. Give it a few more years of age to bring out its incipient richness, then pour it with a white truffle risotto. (830 cases) *Sandhi Wines, Lompoc, CA*

**92 | Medlock Ames** \$27

**2013 Russian River Valley Bell Mountain Estate Chardonnay (Best Buy)** From a hilly estate at the border of Alexander Valley, this is a pretty, unadorned chardonnay, expanding from a sunny chamomile scent into a tangy, balanced richness that's simple and as pleasurable as lemon curd, the wine's acidity cleaning up in the finish. (1,240 cases) *Medlock Ames, Healdsburg, CA*

**92 | Sandhi** \$38

**2012 Santa Rita Hills Chardonnay** Sashi Moorman draws on vineyards in the southwestern corner of the Santa Rita Hills, including Rita's Crown, Bentreck and Wenzlau, to compose this wine, aging it in barrel for a year and in stainless steel for a further six months. It's a taut expression of Santa Rita Hills chardonnay, a coastal white driven by electric acidity and a salty minerality. The fruit is pale and reticent, with subtle aromas of honeysuckle and peach skin. Its linear energy feels poised to gain complexity with age. (760 cases) *Sandhi Wines, Lompoc, CA*

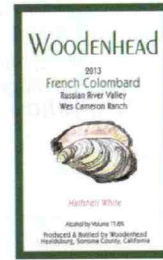
**89 | Keller Estate** \$33

**2012 Sonoma Coast Oro de Plata Chardonnay (Best Buy)** A warm, gripping chardonnay from an estate in the Petaluma wind gap, this has plenty of acidity to complement the golden, burnished tone of its fruit. It's a powerful white to serve with rich fish roasted in a wood-burning oven. *Keller Estate, Petaluma, CA*

**88 | Truett Hurst** \$27

**2012 Russian River Valley Swallowtail Chardonnay (Best Buy)** A ripe chardonnay with the warm succulence of apricot flesh, this is gentle and approachable without feeling heavy, its generous texture ready to take on butter-poached sturgeon. (700 cases) *Truett Hurst Winery, Sebastopol, CA*

COLOMBARD



**90 | Woodenhead** \$22

**2013 Russian River Valley Wes Cameron Ranch Halfshell White Colombard** This brisk, compact colombard comes from a 40-year-old planting in the heart of the Russian River Valley along River Road. It was fermented and aged in stainless steel with extended time on lees providing a texture that's round enough to hold its acidity in balance. The wine lasts on a lively streak of chlorophyll-green acidity and a spicy wildflower honey scent. Try it with salt cod brandade. (245 cases) *Woodenhead, Healdsburg, CA*

GEWURZTRAMINER

**90 | Dutton-Goldfield** \$30

**2013 Green Valley of the Russian River Valley Dutton Ranch Green Valley Vineyard Gewurztraminer** Rich yet refreshing, this lasts on bold flavors of apricot and earthy apricot skin, finishing quite dry despite its ebullient fruit. The aroma hints at rose petals without becoming overly florid. It's a satisfying white for fried chicken or pork schnitzel. (387 cases) *Dutton-Goldfield, Santa Rosa, CA*

SAUVIGNON BLANC

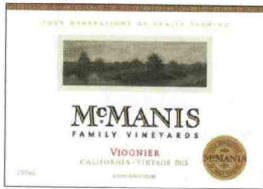
**90 | Flora Springs** \$25

**2013 Oakville Napa Valley Soliloquy Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc** A bright, citrusy sauvignon, this starts off brashly oaked but mellows with air to orange blossom tones, the fruit shining through the wood. Chill it for a shellfish stew. (4,899 cases) *Flora Springs, St. Helena, CA*

**90 | Joseph Phelps** \$35  
**2013 St. Helena Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc** Laden with oak, this wine takes time to reveal its bright pineapple flavors. It's both tart and sweetly ripe, finishing clean. For planked salmon. (3,025 cases) *Joseph Phelps Vineyards, St. Helena, CA*

**87 | Villa San-Juliette** \$14  
**2013 Paso Robles Sauvignon Blanc (Best Buy)** Grown in the hot, sunny hills of northern Paso Robles, this ripe sauvignon is succulent and as juicy as a nectarine, balanced by lively acidity and a chalky grip. Try it with pan-roasted grouper. (750 cases) *Villa San-Juliette Winery, San Miguel, CA*

## VIIGNIER



**88 | McMannis** \$10  
**2013 California Viognier (Best Buy)** Grown mostly at McMannis's Central Valley estate at the confluence of the Stanislaus and San Joaquin Rivers, this viognier is a steal: ripe and warming but rich enough to hold the heat in check, fragrant with jasmine and apricot scents, lasting on an apricot-skin grip that turns earthy at the end. Pour it with grilled fish or roasted king trumpet mushrooms. *McMannis Family Winery, Ripon, CA*

## CALIFORNIA ROSE

**88 | Y Rousseau** \$24  
**2013 Russian River Valley Rosé of Tannat (Best Buy)** Gascony native Yannick Rousseau worked with Saralee's Vineyard to plant a block of tannat; it mostly goes into a red wine, but he draws off some juice to make this saignée rosé. Once a whiff of sulfur dies down, this offers evocative scents of roses, ginger and Japanese plum. It's refreshing and effusive in its fruit, a crisp, taut rosé for oysters. (105 cases) *Y Rousseau Wines, Napa, CA*

## CALIFORNIA RED

### BLEND

**90 | Sextant** \$40  
**2011 Paso Robles Caverio** Based on grenache, with some syrah and mourvedre, this

is a plump and polished Paso red. The warm curves of its fruit are supported by a bright foundation of acidity—a natural expression of hot days, cool nights and limestone soils. It feels hearty and delicious, with enough structure to hold its generosity in balance, perfect for braised lamb shanks. (213 cases) *Sextant Wines, Paso Robles, CA*

## MALBEC



**92 | Mt. Brave** \$75  
**2011 Mt. Veeder Napa Valley Malbec** This vineyard rises above the fog line in the northern reaches of Mt. Veeder. Originally planted by Chateau Potelle and purchased by Jackson Family Farms in 2007, it has since been the province of winemaker Chris Carpenter, who handles several mountain sites for the firm. This wine draws on the initial three acres of malbec planted in 2003. Impressed by the character of the wine, the team has since doubled the amount of malbec on the property. It's a noble experiment, as this wine captures both Mt. Veeder and malbec in its red forest berry flavors, its tight, zesty fruit length and its bright rose petal scents. Simple, luscious and delicious. (27 cases) *Mt. Brave, Oakville, CA*

## MERLOT

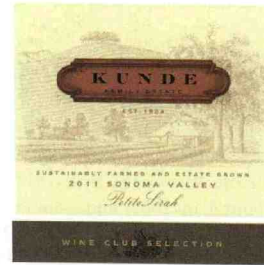
**91 | La Jota** \$75  
**2011 Howell Mountain Napa Valley Merlot** Juicy red fruit meets black olive tannins in a crush of stony, mineral warmth, ending this powerful wine with some freshness and tension. Youthfully hard in its structure, this should age well over the next several years. (256 cases) *La Jota Vineyard Co., Oakville, CA*

**85 | Peirano** \$12  
**2012 Lodi The Heritage Collection Six Clones Merlot (Best Buy)** This mingles bright acidity and dark, blackberry-toned fruit with the vanilla sweetness of oak. Its velvety, crowd-pleasing texture and low price tag make it an attractive banquet red. *Peirano Estate Vineyards, Lodi, CA*

## MOURVEDRE

**90 | Sol Rouge** \$29  
**2011 Red Hills Lake County Mourvedre (Best Buy)** Red volcanic soils and a steep, high-elevation vineyard give this a similar feel to the mourvedres coming out of the Sierra Foothills. It channels Lake County's hot afternoons into a surprisingly bright, lithe wine considering its potent ripeness, its fruit strawberry-red, bristling with exotic aromas of pine, peat and wild fennel. It feels like a wine of place; decant it at cellar temperature for salumi. (75 cases) *Sol Rouge, San Francisco, CA*

## PETITE SIRAH

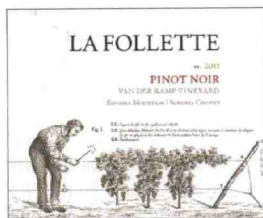


**93 | Kunde** \$35  
**2011 Sonoma Valley Wine Club Selection Petite Sirah** "It's super old-school," said *One Market* sommelier Tonya Pitts on tasting this stern, imposing petite sirah. The 2011 vintage was winemaker Zach Long's first at Kunde, and the cool year led him to bottle a block of young, terraced petite separately. This west-facing hill above Sonoma Valley is usually a warm site, but the cool 2011 vintage built a musculature in the wine that's about mineral structure rather than extreme ripeness, its obsidian-black tannins nearly sucking the air out of the room. This is strikingly aromatic, infusing the mouth with scents of pine frond, lilac and anise. The tannins relax a bit as the wine opens, while the structure remains firm and cool, the fruit as thick-skinned and gripping as a wild blueberry, deep and shadowed with glints of brightness. Keep this in the cellar for a decade, then serve with game, like venison braised in red wine. (289 cases) *Kunde Family Estate, Kenwood, CA*

**85 | McMannis** \$11  
**2013 California Petite Sirah (Best Buy)** Beyond the dark chocolate and wood smoke notes of this wine's oak, there's plenty of bright, firm petite sirah fruit. With grilled meat, the oak will recede and the fruit will shine. *McMannis Family Winery, Ripon, CA*

## PINOT NOIR

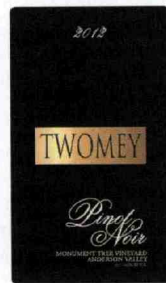
**95 | Emeritus** \$68  
**2011 Sonoma Coast William Wesley Pinot Noir** Brice Jones, who founded Sonoma-Cutrer in the 1970s and sold it to Brown-Forman in 1999, purchased 88 acres of land near Annapolis in 1996, developing the far coast property into a vineyard in partnership with Aubert de Villaine of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti. Jones later bought out de Villaine and now uses the vineyard for his Emeritus label. The soil here is Goldridge sandy loam over sandstone, just above the fog line on a steep slope at around 1,000 feet of elevation. De Villaine convinced Jones to pursue dry farming, and 2011 is the first vintage that's been completely dry farmed, after vineyard manager Kirk Lokka weaned the young vines off irrigation. The result is a commanding coastal pinot noir, powerful but not fat, its aroma cool and spicy, like green cardamom pods and rhubarb. Firm sandstone-grown tannins dominate the structure, yet the wine feels perfectly integrated, that stony character moving with the flavors rather than locking them down, carrying the wine's fresh, meaty red fruit into a savory finish that lasts. This is the far Sonoma coast in Technicolor, full of brightness and tension, an example of just how good coastal pinot noir can be in the cool 2011 vintage. *Emeritus Vineyards, Sebastopol, CA*



**94 | La Follette** \$42  
**2011 Sonoma Mountain Van Der Kamp Vineyard Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** The Van der Kamp family farms their orchard and garden organically, as they do this north-facing vineyard 1,400 feet up Sonoma Mountain. The family first planted vines on the flank of this extinct volcano in the early 1960s. Some of those original vines are still in the ground, and contributed to this wine, though most of it comes from plantings that are 10 to 15 years old. As fragrant as an herbal tea with rose petals, this feels spare at first, taking time to emerge into a pinot noir with pointed flavors of rhubarb and pink grapefruit. It's wild and energetic, as brisk as the winds that whip across the crest of the mountain. If you

want to drink it now, decant it for a whole roast fish. *La Follette Wines, Sebastopol, CA*

**94 | JCB** \$65  
**2011 Sonoma Coast No. 11 Pinot Noir** This comes from Durell Vineyard on the border of Carneros and Sonoma Valley, harvested at a sleek 21.6 degrees Brix, fermented without added yeasts and aged in new and once-used French oak. It's pretty irresistible, a savory pinot noir that feels energetic yet relaxed from its time spent in barrel, centered around wild mushroom and light wood smoke aromas, glowing with the subtle brightness of its acidity. Harmonious and complex without any rough edges, this wine's texture is supple and meaty, satisfying with grilled quail. (75 cases) *J.C. Boisset, Santa Rosa, CA*



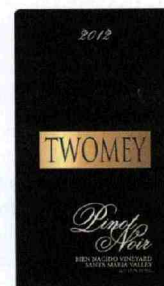
**94 | Twomey** \$68  
**2012 Anderson Valley Monument Tree Vineyard Pinot Noir** The Duncan family of Silver Oak fame bought the Monument Tree Vineyard for their pinot noir-focused Twomey label in 2009. Located in Anderson Valley's cool Deep End near Navarro, the site was initially planted for sparkling wine, but the team at Twomey was impressed by the hillside vineyard's ability to ripen grapes at low potential alcohols. This is their first single-vineyard wine from Monument Tree, and it's gorgeous, a pitch-perfect Anderson Valley pinot noir: a silky wine with snappy acidity. The fruit is bold and propulsive with red plum flavor, its delicate aromas floral yet earthy in their rose petal and redwood overtones. It becomes more beautiful and complete with air, suggesting that it will be even better in three or four years. *Twomey Cellars, Healdsburg, CA*

**93 | Emeritus** \$42  
**2011 Russian River Valley Hallberg Ranch Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Brice Jones spent five years courting Don and Marcia Hallberg for their apple orchard in the cool, rolling hills of Green Valley. He closed on the property just weeks after completing the sale of Sonoma-Cutrer, which he'd founded in 1972. As of the

2011 vintage the vineyard is completely dry farmed, forcing the now-mature pinot noir vines to dig deep into the vineyard's sandy Goldridge soil. This feels like a site-driven wine, a tense, gamey pinot noir with savory aromas of pinesap and forest mushrooms surrounding a sanguine fruit intensity. It's firm and bright, youthful and wound-up right now—give it a few more years in bottle to unfold. *Emeritus Vineyards, Sebastopol, CA*

**93 | Sandhi** \$38  
**2012 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Sashi Moorman and Rajat Parr sourced more than half of this bottling from the 40-year-old vines at Sanford & Benedict, the balance from two newer plantings more exposed to the coast: Rita's Crown and Bent Rock. The fruit is picked fairly early and mostly destemmed, giving a floral, high-toned take on the Santa Rita Hills, crisp and refreshing with the spiciness of black plum skin. Don't let the wine's dark color fool you: it's a lifted pinot noir, a complete joy to drink. (2,369 cases) *Sandhi Wines, Lompoc, CA*

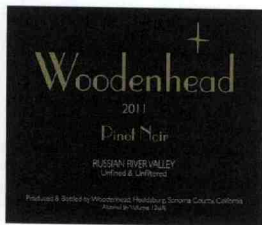
**92 | Emeritus** \$68  
**2012 Sonoma Coast William Wesley Pinot Noir** While not quite as electric as the 2011 (above), this is a strong performance in its own right. It feels ensconced in oak at first, but the cool richness of the fruit powers past the wood, the wine's energy shaped by the firm tannins and bright acidity of fruit from this coastal ridge-top vineyard. The flavors are deep and satisfying, a dark cherry richness infused with foresty bay leaf aromas. (450 cases) *Emeritus Vyd., Sebastopol, CA*



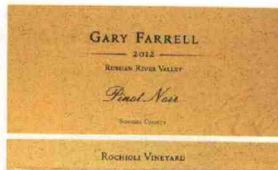
**92 | Twomey** \$58  
**2012 Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard Pinot Noir** Sourced from a number of blocks planted in the 1990s, along with a block planted to an own-rooted Martini selection in 1972, this leads with classic Bien Nacido aromas of ripe strawberry and savory herbs. The imprint of its oak feels earthy, the fruit rich yet driven by lively acidity. Decant this to unpack the density of its fruit and

you'll have a delicious wine for seared duck breast. *Twomey Cellars, Healdsburg, CA*

**92 | Ron Rubin** \$40  
**2012 Green Valley of the Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Around half of this wine came from the River Road estate, which Ron Rubin, who owns The Republic of Tea, purchased in 2011. The remainder of the fruit came from a nearby vineyard also planted on Goldridge soil. It's a pretty pinot noir with a cool, delicate, rosy scent, the fruit tangy with red currant brightness. Match its brisk energy to anything with pesto. *Rubin Vineyards and Winery, Graton, CA*



**92 | Woodenhead** \$42  
**2011 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** This presents the rich, sweet red fruit that defines the Russian River with impressive agility. It's concentrated but not heavy, a refreshing herbal tone lifting the sunny fruit at the edges. A delicious Russian River pinot noir to drink now with salmon. (450 cases) *Woodenhead, Healdsburg, CA*



**91 | Gary Farrell** \$70  
**2012 Russian River Valley Rochioli Vineyard Pinot Noir** This comes from several blocks at Rochioli, the oldest planted in 1974. It's a strapping Russian River pinot noir, ripe, warming and powerful; the lush core is held in place by bristly fruit-skin tannins that provide an earthen tension and spicy length. Bring it on a camping trip to pour with forged mushrooms roasted in a cast-iron skillet. (323 cases) *Gary Farrell, Healdsburg, CA*

**90 | Red Car** \$68  
**2012 Sonoma Coast Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir** The Platt Vineyard is a promising young site near Freestone, where the hills face into the cool winds channeled through the Peta-

luma Gap. Red Car's take on the vineyard is quiet and herbal in 2012, aromas of tarragon and mint draping the wine's light red-fruited sweetness. It's a gentle red for salmon. (443 cases) *Red Car Wine Co., Sebastopol, CA*

**88 | Emeritus** \$42  
**2012 Russian River Valley Hallberg Ranch Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** In 2012 the dry-farmed vines at Hallberg gave a simple, welcoming pinot noir with dark fruit that suggests black plum and blueberry. The plump texture finds its balance against juicy acidity, ready for a pork chop roasted with a sprig of rosemary. *Emeritus Vineyards, Sebastopol, CA*

**88 | Foxen** \$48  
**2012 Santa Rita Hills John Sebastiano Vineyard Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Generous and meaty, this has a gentian root scent that carries into the structure, the tannins as tough as iron, feeling subterranean against the wine's plump fruit. It needs protein, like smoked pork, to make use of its broad intensity. (1,500 cases) *Foxen, Santa Maria, CA*

**88 | Talley** \$20  
**2012 San Luis Obispo County Bishop's Peak Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Made from Talley's estate vineyards in the coastal Arroyo Grande and Edna valleys as well as some purchased fruit, this is aged for eight months in mostly used oak. It's a silky and very drinkable pinot noir, gentle in its wash of red fruit, well priced for a weeknight roast chicken. *Talley Vineyards, Arroyo Grande, CA*

**85 | McManis** \$11  
**2013 California Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** This marries black cherry flavors with barrel spice in a chewy structure that's bold rather than delicate. Chill it slightly for grilled bratwurst. *McManis Family Winery, Ripon, CA*

## SANGIOVESE

**88 | Noceto** \$18  
**2011 Amador County Sangiovese (Best Buy)** Light in color and centered on tangy red fruit, this is frank, acid-driven sangiovese with aromas of rose and mint, some warmth showing its Foothills climate. It's a mouthwatering, frisky red for red-sauced pasta. (3,709 cases) *Vino Noceto, Plymouth, CA*

## SYRAH

**92 | Foxen** \$48  
**2012 Santa Maria Valley Tinaquaic Vineyard Syrah** It's rare to find a dry-farmed vineyard in the cool but dry Santa Maria Val-

ley. Bill Wathen and Dick Doré decided to forego irrigation at Tinaquaic mostly because there wasn't much water available on the property. The vineyard succeeds in this rich and mouth-filling wine, which sustains its energy with complex aromas that touch on cocoa, pink peppercorn, cured meat and cardamom. With air the oak sweetness gives way to tangy savor, forming a syrah that would be doubly compelling decanted for grilled lamb. (770 cases) *Foxen, Santa Maria, CA*

**92 | Red Car** \$35  
**2010 Sonoma Coast Syrah (Best Buy)** This bottling draws on syrah grown at Red Car's Fort Ross-Seaview Estate, at Zio Tony Ranch in the Russian River Valley and at Vivio Vineyard in Bennett Valley. Black, peppery and tough at first, it entices with a bright current of acidity running underneath its armor. With air it opens into cool scents of moss and roses, growing rounder and more approachable while holding to a firm structure that would make it equally delicious with a platter of salumi or game served with wild mushrooms. (1,212 cases) *Red Car Wine Co., Sebastopol, CA*

## ZINFANDEL

**93 | DeLoach** \$20  
**2012 Russian River Valley Zinfandel (Best Buy)** Brian Mahoney drew on four vineyards to make this delicious zin, the oldest, Saitone, planted in the 1890s and the youngest, BCD, planted in the 1990s; he raised the wine almost exclusively in older barrels. It's cool and fragrant, firm yet silky, the flavors quiet but convincing, suggesting rose, dried strawberry and pink peppercorn. Its slow-building intensity calls for a plate of prosciutto. (4,500 cases) *DeLoach Vineyards, Santa Rosa, CA*

**92 | Dutton-Goldfield** \$45  
**2012 Russian River Valley Dutton Ranch Morelli Lane Vineyard Zinfandel** From a warm, sunny knoll above the cool Green Valley, this dry-farmed, 19th-century planting gave a silky, polished zin in 2012, with a gentle mulberry tone to its fruit, warming and plump at the outset, then turning toward delicate with mouthwatering acidity. (485 cases) *Dutton-Goldfield, Santa Rosa, CA*

**91 | River Road** \$20  
**2012 Russian River Valley Old Vine Boschetti Vineyard Zinfandel (Best Buy)** The oldest vines at Boschetti date to 1925. In 2012, the vineyard grew energetic zinfandel, rich and succulent enough to harmonize the cranberry brightness of its acidity with

its spicy, frictive tannin. It's a brambly zin to decant for pork chops. *River Road Family Vineyards & Winery, Graton, CA*

## CALIFORNIA DESSERT

**90** | **Castello di Amorosa** \$89  
**2010 North Coast II Passito** This combines sauvignon blanc from the Rolling Hills Vineyard in Lake County with semillon from the winery's Carsi Vineyard in Yountville, all the fruit affected by naturally occurring botrytis. Aged on its lees in all-new French oak for 19 months, this is a decadent but balanced dessert wine for a cheese course. Its pungent saffron scent and earthy grip provide a counterpoint to its luscious stone fruit flavors. (1,215 cases) *Castello di Amorosa, Calistoga, CA*

## IDAHO RED

**87** | **Sawtooth** \$16  
**2012 Snake River Valley Idaho Merlot (Best Buy)** Dark and a bit ashy in aroma, this wine's core of blackberry fruit dusted with minerals needs something rustic to pair with it, like a brisket sandwich with horseradish. (487 cases) *Sawtooth Winery, Nampa, ID*

## NEW YORK WHITE

## CHARDONNAY

**88** | **Knapp** \$14  
**2013 Finger Lakes Barrel Reserve Chardonnay (Best Buy)** Tense and high-toned, with a lemony lift and a citrusy sharpness of tone and texture, this wine gathers some breadth and complexity from a satisfying leanness in its flavors. The finish is bright, precise, mouthwatering. Chill it for the cocktail hour, or a plate of shrimp on ice. (94 cases) *Knapp Wine Cellars, Dundee, NY*

## OREGON WHITE

## CHARDONNAY

**93** | **Evening Land** \$40  
**2012 Eola-Amity Hills Seven Springs Vineyard Chardonnay** 2012 is a very good vintage in Oregon for chardonnay, and so it is at Seven Springs, where Dominique Lafon has been consulting since 2005. This wine leads with a toasted lees scent, crosshatched with bright apple accents. The fruit is precisely ripe, its succulence and plumpness reined in by a fine, lacy minerality and just enough acidity to keep the wine on point. This is ageworthy, but it's also delicious now, especially if you double decant the bottle and

serve it with grilled prawns. (219 cases) *The Evening Land Vineyards, Salem, OR*

**92** | **Evening Land** \$65  
**2012 Eola-Amity Hills La Source Seven Springs Vineyard Chardonnay** La Source draws from older parcels on Seven Springs, and is often backward on release. This starts out tart and lemony with an herbal scent over pithy citrus flavors. After a day the tension in the wine develops into complexity, the herbal notes going the route of pea tendrils and green peppercorn, with a lemony finish marked by a satisfying breadth of lees. Still tight and youthful, this needs a year in the cellar before opening for seared halibut. (350 cases) *The Evening Land Vyd., Salem, OR*

**88** | **Adelsheim** \$22  
**2013 Willamette Valley Chardonnay (Best Buy)** High-toned and pointed in aroma, this youthful wine has a crisp bite of crab-apple tartness. Give it time in the cellar to relax before pouring as an aperitif. (1,660 cases) *Adelsheim Vineyard, Newberg, OR*

## PINOT BLANC

**92** | **Adelsheim** \$25  
**2013 Chehalem Mountains Bryan Creek Vineyard Pinot Blanc** Almost searing in its briskness, this pinot blanc has fine savory accents of toasted lees and kid leather over its white-mineral sheen. After a day, it turns sunny, with a zinc-like edge to the texture that's both grounding and mouthwatering. Sip with oysters from the Oregon coast. (440 cases) *Adelsheim Vineyard, Newberg, OR*

## PINOT GRIS

**90** | **Erath** \$14  
**2013 Oregon Pinot Gris (Best Buy)** This brisk gris is zippy and bright, with scents of green apple and orange blossoms. Its flavors shift to lime, the structure angular, with a mild salty tang that suggests pairing it with roasted clams. *Erath Vineyards, Dundee, OR*

**88** | **Silvan Ridge** \$17  
**2013 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris (Best Buy)** Scents of apple and bread crust adorn this mildly herbal white. The texture is compact—a clean, foursquare white for lemon sole. (1,020 cases) *Silvan Ridge, Eugene, OR*

## OREGON RED

## PINOT NOIR

**94** | **Evening Land** \$70  
**2012 Eola-Amity Hills La Source Seven Springs Vineyard Pinot Noir** In a flight of Oregon pinots, my notes on this wine read, "most mineral of all." It's no surprise that it grows in the shallow soils of Seven Springs. With its sour cherry and tanbark scents it is also the most transparent of wines in a generous vintage, laden with fruit but not overlaid, and with just the suggestion of stem tannins from the whole-cluster fermentation, a character that opens up the wine's panoply of scents. The flavors are firmly expressed, focused, a touch restrained and all the more alluring for it. Open and decant for duck. (1,176 cases) *The Evening Land Vineyards, Salem, OR*

**94** | **Winter's Hill** \$44  
**2012 Dundee Hills Block 10 Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Grown at a Pommard-clone block in the estate's highest-elevation vineyards, this wine feels autumnal and warm, slightly rustic, and above all, cozy, like a cabin in the woods. Its scent brings to mind dark cherries, tanbark and sweet notes of wood. The texture is generous and fine at once, bearing a vintage exuberance while held in check by a red, dusty minerality that practically defines the Dundee Hills. Gulpable and complex, it will reward the patient, if you can keep your hands off it. (72 cases) *Winter's Hill Vineyard, Dayton, OR*

**93** | **Winter's Hill** \$44  
**2012 Dundee Hills Block 9-115 Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Winter's Hill Block 9 is planted to clone 115, one of the few Dijon clones thought to make a complete wine on its own. That's true here for sure—it's the source of this wine's pretty brightness and fine dusty red minerality. The strawberry and kirsch-wasser flavors are precise and nimble, saturating the palate even as they remain tense and lifted in a finish that feels invigorating. (72 cases) *Winter's Hill Vyd., Dayton, OR*



**92** | **Elk Cove** \$60  
**2012 Willamette Valley La Bohème Pinot Noir** Suave when first poured, this wine's

scent of dark cherries and an earthy bottom note keep it grounded and seductive. The palate is a quiet marvel of succulence, ripe and high toned at once. Its cherry fruit gives way to pomegranate before shifting back again, with mildly savory, mildly bitter tannins. For a duck breast, simply seared. (794 cases) *Elk Cove Vineyards, Gaston, OR*

**92 | Evening Land** \$50

**2012 Eola-Amity Hills Seven Springs Vineyard Pinot Noir** A feel of the wind leads this aromatic red from Evening Land, with an initial scent of wind-chapped cherry skin and a fine lashing of oak. The flavors are more generous and plush, then the finish comes to a fine and elegant point, a lasting tannin impression that will pair well with venison loin. (3,149 cases) *The Evening Land Vineyards, Salem, OR*

**91 | Evening Land** \$40

**2012 Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Tense and finely wrought, both in aromatics and texture, this is a blend of estate fruit with grapes from Eola Springs Vineyard. The scent of juicy red berries has a peppery top note; the flavors are darker and slightly more tannic than Evening Land's estate bottlings, but the textural weave is compelling and promising. Cellar, then decant for wild mushroom pasta. (770 cases) *The Evening Land Vineyards, Salem, OR*

**91 | Roco** \$50

**2012 Yamhill-Carlton District Marsh Estate Pinot Noir** Dark and burled, this wine's initial intensity may lead you to expect something brooding. But with air and a little time the wine opens up, as if a breeze has passed through it, lightening it to raspberry flavors and a kiss of oak that guide the wine to the finish. (424 cases) *Roco Winery, Newberg, OR*

**91 | Van Duzer** \$60

**2012 Eola-Amity Hills Bieze Vineyard Pinot Noir** This wine feels tense and unyielding at first, held in check by mocha-scented oak and hints of brown sugar adorning black cherry flavors. After a day it becomes suave, looser, grounded by a dusting of bitter chocolate and held together with dark, mineral tannins. For a blackened chicken breast. (119 cases) *Van Duzer Vineyards, Dallas, OR*

**90 | Adelsheim** \$32

**2012 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** A compact and high-toned red, this leads with scents of maraschino cherry and forest floor. A day goes by and a compelling

balsamic note emerges, the wine's texture as much about energy as it is about fruit. Give this time to let the flavors integrate, then serve with roast squab. (15,221 cases) *Adelsheim Vineyard, Newberg, OR*

**88 | Jolete** \$28

**2012 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Spicy from start to finish, with scents of cola, tar, mace and plenty of caramelly oak, this wood-driven red has an inviting breadth of flavor that holds the oak at bay, and a brightness to the finish that will pair with herb-rubbed pork loin. (329 cases) *Jolete Wines, Newberg, OR*

**88 | Windy Bay** \$15

**2012 Oregon Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Soft and lilting in its scents of cedar and turf, this wine has a chewy density, lending depth to the dark cherry flavors. Its abundant grippy tannins will cut into beef stroganoff. (5,000 cases) *Windy Bay Cellars, Seattle, WA*

WASHINGTON WHITE

CHARDONNAY

**86 | Mercer Estates** \$13

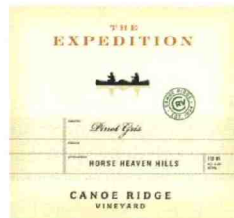
**2013 Columbia Valley Chardonnay (Best Buy)** This leads with broad vanillin and tree-fruit scents, and flavors of toffee and quince, a foursquare white for fish and chips. (3,601 cases) *Mercer Wine Estates, Prosser, WA*

MOSCATO

**87 | 14 Hands** \$10

**2013 Columbia Valley Moscato (Best Buy)** Varietally spot-on with a scent of pine fronds and rose petals, this medium-sweet white has a hefty pineapple ripeness, and a brisk balanced finish. *14 Hands Winery, Paterson, WA*

PINOT GRIS



**88 | Canoe Ridge** \$15

**2013 Horse Heaven Hills The Expedition Pinot Gris (Best Buy)** Bready and bright, with a pineapple sweetness to its flavors, this

is a juicy and mouthwatering aperitif. *Canoe Ridge Vineyard, Walla Walla, WA*

RIESLING

**88 | Mercer Canyons** \$10

**2013 Yakima Valley Riesling (Best Buy)** Scents of lime and passion fruit give way to rippling, high-toned peach flavors, delivered in an angular texture. It offers some complexity in an inexpensive package, providing a nice foil for pad thai. (4,800 cases) *Mercer Wine Estates, Prosser, WA*

**87 | Chateau Ste. Michelle** \$10

**2013 Columbia Valley Harvest Select Sweet Riesling (Best Buy)** Bright and appley in its initial scents, this isn't as sweet as the name might imply. It's buoyed by a brisk, dusty acidity that provides the spine to pair with seafood curry. *Chateau Ste. Michelle, Woodinville, WA*

WASHINGTON RED

CABERNET FRANC

**92 | Sparkman Cellars** \$38

**2012 Red Mountain Yonder Cabernet Franc** Despite being a showcase for Red Mountain's warmth and exuberance, this cabernet franc from Kiona Vineyard manages to retain a seductive, leafy varietal character. Scents of dark plum hint at its intensity, then a flash of herb—wintergreen, rosemary—cuts into the mass. The flavors are rich and heady, but the finish recalls that herbal contour. Pour alongside a steak drizzled with chimichurri sauce. (119 cases) *Sparkman Cellars, Woodinville, WA*

RED BLEND

**92 | Sparkman Cellars** \$28

**2011 Columbia Valley Wilderness** An unlikely blend of cabernet, malbec and syrah, this dark purple wine manages to express the best of all three varieties while melding into an intriguing whole. Scents of evergreen, pepper and violet are delivered in a cool, fine-boned frame, with invigorating acidity and impressive depth to the dark fruit. The blend is odd, contradictory, complex and compelling all at once, and will doubtless improve with age. (650 cases) *Sparkman Cellars, Woodinville, WA* ■