

The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner

~ Wine education for us all – understanding Italian labels ~
Saturday, December 8th, 2012

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Part II: the ABCs of IGTs:

When the Italian DOC/DOCG system was first established in 1963, it didn't take long for its many flaws to come to the fore. Above else, it failed to anticipate the radical changes Italian winemaking would take in terms of overall quality in the impending decades.

Let's put it another way: though it may come as a surprise to some, with very few exceptions the wines of Italy in the 1960s weren't all that impressive. Chianti was a weak, albeit passable concoction made of red *and* white grapes; Barolo was excessively tannic and unapproachable for the first two decades of its existence; and few people had ever even heard of Brunello di Montalcino or Amarone della Valpolicella. In short, the wines that Italy is most famous for today were not long ago either poorly made or barely known outside of the regions they came from.

Worst of all, the rigid regulations governing the production of such wines as Chianti Classico prevented producers from experimenting with better methods of winegrowing. By law, wines like Chianti Classico were obliged in the 1960s to contain at least 10-30% Trebbiano and Malvasia Bianca; permitted yields were a ridiculously high 80 hl/ha; and no percentage of French varietals such as Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot were allowed.



Cue the Antinori family and the debut of Tignanello of 1970. Though crafted from grapes grown within the Chianti Classico *denominazione*, the wine could not be labeled as such because it did not follow the traditional varietal formula. The wine was 100% Sangiovese and matured in French oak barrels (Piero Antinori began adding a little Cabernet Sauvignon in 1975). As such, the wine could only be labelled as *Vino di Tavola*, the lowest possible ranking for Italian wines. But a bottle of Tignanello sold for more than most Italian wines. Overnight, the imperfections of the DOC/DOCG system were clear.



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Even worse, it took over twenty years for a partial solution to be reached. In 1992, a new classification was put in place alongside the DOC/DOCG system: the *Indicazione Geografica*



Tipica (IGT) system. Though not without its limitations, ‘Super Tuscans’ such as Tignanello were finally no longer obliged to be labeled as *Vino di Tavola*, but as IGT Toscana.

Fast forward to 2012 and the IGT system has become almost as ubiquitous as its DOC/DOCG counterpart. For wine lovers nowadays, the most important thing to understand about the IGT system is that it is only used for wines that do not adhere to the traditional grape/winegrowing requirements as prescribed under the DOC/DOCG system. But it is *not* an extra guarantee of quality! Though there are plenty of premium Super Tuscans made by winemakers throughout Tuscany and other parts of Italy, the vast majority of IGT wines are fairly simple and straightforward, relatively inexpensive, and should not be confused with wines like Tignanello and Solaia (Antinori), Oreno (Sette Ponti), or Saffredi (Pupille)—a few personal favourites.

Just as important, the IGT system should not be confused with wines formerly labelled as *Vino di Tavola* but now have their own specific DOC/DOCGs. The most significant example of this is Bolgheri DOC, where renowned estates such as Sassicaia, Ornellaia, and Le Macchiole are located. Though Sangiovese is permitted, most of these wines are made entirely from Bordeaux varietals, ranked among the best in Italy.



These points notwithstanding, the IGT system is not very difficult to grasp. Like everything else about winegrowing Italy, all it takes is a little patience, a little studiousness, and a little tasting. The latter is the most rewarding...

A few gems for collectors:

White Wines:

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Bouchard Père & Fils 2009, Puligny-Montrachet Grand Cru Chevalier-Montrachet AOC, Burgundy, France: With 2.33ha of vines, Bouchard Père & Fils is the largest custodian of Chevalier-Montrachet; and if the monumental '09 is anything to go by, this substantial ownership is well-earned. Pale lime in colour, this near-masterpiece starts off with stunning, almost 'icy' scents of pears and quince; shortly giving way to delicate hazelnuts, lemon/lime citrus, white flowers, minerals, and traces of orange zest—all immaculately multilayered and elegant. Superbly complex, delivering fantastic fruit, balanced acidity, and a magnificent, poignant hint of pears, hazelnuts, and quince on the finish. Sensational pedigree, focus, and design. One of the best white Burgundies I have yet to taste in my still-fledgling career. Now-2032++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2011)

96 \$299.00 (#14969) Vintages May 2012 Classics Collection

Bouchard Père & Fils 2009, Corton-Charlemagne Grand Cru AOC, Burgundy, France: When in youth, Corton-Charlemagne is one of the toughest white Burgundies to examine; though this does not mean a good estimation of its worth isn't possible. Take the 2009 Bouchard Père & Fils: pale lime in colour, this beauty offers exemplary scents of minerally pears and quince, green apples, sherbet, and a heavenly hint of smoke and nuts. Very complex, retaining superlative, personified fruit, balanced acidity, and an extremely elegant, 'compact' hint of pears and nutted quince on the finish. Tight as a drum, a thorough decanting ought to make this gem immensely enjoyable even at such a young age. Now-2025+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2011)

93+ \$175.00 (Private Order) Woodman Wines & Spirits

Philippe Colin 2008, Chassagne-Montrachet Premier Cru Les Chaumées AOC, Burgundy, France: For technocrats, the Les Chaumées vineyard is located north of the famed Clos St-Jean site, bordering the St-Aubin commune. Light greenish-lime in colour, the gleaming 2008 Philippe Colin is finely toasted, exhibiting impeccable, confident scents of pears and alternate green fruits; switching to lemon, caramel, hazelnuts, white flowers, and a hint of orange peel and vanilla. Very complex, wielding invigorating fruit, balanced acidity, and an elegant, persuasive hint of pears, green fruits, and lemony overtures on the finish. Wonderful lively white Burgundy. Now-2022+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

92++ \$69.95 (#299933) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Penfolds 2009 Yattarna Chardonnay, Southeast Australia, Australia: One of the most pristine vintages I've tasted to date, the 2009 Yattarna reflects a growing confidence in Tasmanian-sourced grapes. Pale-light lime in colour, the wine reveals substantially elegant, tempting scents of pears, quince, lemon-lime, minerals, hazelnuts, and a lovely trace of vanilla pods and white flowers. Complex, boasting excellent fruit, balanced acidity, and a crisp, soothing hint of pears and nutted lemony quince on the finish. Immensely refined, fulsome, and expressive—wonderful 'icy' attitude. Screwcap closure. Now-2020. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2012)

92+ \$125.00 (#558643) Vintages Special Offer

M. Chapoutier 2006 Chante-Alouette, Hermitage Blanc AOC, Rhône, France: Sourced from three different vineyards (including one actually named 'Chante-Alouette'), the 2006 Chapoutier is one exceptional white Hermitage. Light golden-straw in colour, the wine displays enticing, individualistic scents of golden straw-infused pears (slightly

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nutted), nectarines, orange zest, almonds/marzipan, and the teensiest trace of iodine and spice. Complex, wielding compelling, invigorating fruit, balanced acidity, and a superbly elegant hint of nutted pears, nectarines, and golden straw on the finish. Excellent regional character, purity, and harmony. 100% Marsanne. Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, November 2010)

92+ \$74.00 (#140541) Vintages October 2010 Classics Collection

Domaine des Sénéchaux 2009, Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc AOC, Rhône, France: Purchased in 2006 by Jean-Michel Cazes of Château Lynch Bages, I hope to have many more notes from this fast-improving domaine in the coming years. Pale straw-lime in colour, the 2009 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc boasts immensely engaging scents of lemon citrus and green fruits; switching to mild herbs, orange peel, chalky minerals, and a hint of anise and spice. Complex, retaining terrific fruit, vibrant acidity, and a wonderful hint of citrus oils and green fruits on the finish. Marvellous vitality, balance, and harmony. Grenache Blanc, Roussanne, Clairette, and Bourboulenc. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, April 2012)

92+ \$69.95 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Cakebread 2007 Reserve Chardonnay, Carneros (Napa Valley), California: Just about the best Chardonnay I've ever tasted from Cakebread, the 2007 Reserve is a class act. Pale-light straw-line in colour, the wine is decisively/deceptively delicate, presenting marvellous scents of pears, lemon citrus, green apples, caramel, minerals, and a hint of apricots and nuts. Complex, with really beautiful fruit, balanced acidity, surprisingly well-integrated alcohol (even at a whopping 14.8%), and an elegant, lasting hint of caramel, pears, and nutted toasted oak on the finish. Semi-Burgundian in style, with excellent refinement, balance, and breadth. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, November 2010)

92 \$67.70 (Private Order) America's Wine Shop (USA)

Reichsrat von Buhl 2009 Riesling Spätlese, Forster Jesuitengarten QmP, Pfalz, Germany: From one of the greatest producers in Germany, the 2009 Forster Jesuitengarten-sourced Riesling Spätlese delivers everything it should—and more. Pale-light lime in colour, it reveals elegant, upbeat scents of floral white peaches, green grapes, white flowers (gently honeyed), lemon/lime, kerosene, minerals, and a hint of spice. Very complex, carrying extraordinary sweeter-styled fruit, balanced acidity, and a terrific hint of floral white peaches, green grapes, and kerosene on the finish. Immensely beautiful, balanced, and harmonious. Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, October 2012)

92 \$24.95 (#946673) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Shafer 2010 Red Shoulder Ranch Chardonnay, Carneros (Napa Valley), California: Despite logging in at a prodigious 14.9% alcohol, the appeal of the 2010 Red Shoulder Chardonnay is deliberately transparent. Light greenish-lime in colour, the wine reveals stellar scents of tropical pears, quince, apricots, lemon blossom, butterscotch, tangerines, and well-moderated vanillin. Complex, retaining exquisite full-bodied fruit, slightly milder acidity, and a lingering hint of pears, caramel, and toasted oak (a positive element in this case) on the finish. Delicious, balanced, and bold—great job. Now-2020. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, October 2012)

92 \$62.95 (#45583) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

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Castello della Sala 2010 Cervaro della Sala, IGT Umbria, Umbria, Italy: From Marchesi di Antinori's highly regarded Umbrian outpost, the 2010 Cervaro della Sala, this time round crafted clearly in the cool-climate Californian mold (though only boasting 13% alcohol), nonetheless retains its own sense of flavour, elegance, and self. Light greenish-lime in colour, the wine sports intense, inviting scents of toasted oak, pears, green fruits, apricots, butterscotch, and a hint of orange zest and vanillin. Complex, with superb fruit, balanced acidity, and a soothing, almost 'limpid' hint of caramel and pears on the finish. Delicious, fulsome, and well-moderated. 90% Chardonnay and 10% Grechetto. Now-2020. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91+ \$55.95 (#512376) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Ramey 2008 Hyde Vineyard Chardonnay, Carneros (Napa Valley), California: With the 2008 Hyde Vineyard Chardonnay, I'm clearly in error for not to have examined, to the best of my knowledge, any of David Ramey's white wines before. Light straw-lime in colour, it displays superb scents of pears, lemon, citrus oils, dried quince/apricots, orange zest, and a hint of cream and nuts. Complex, featuring delicious, finely polished fruit, balanced acidity, and a really great hint of pears, citrus oils, and nuts on the finish. Terrific personality, balance, and style. Now-2018. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

91 \$85.65 (Private Order) Barrel Select

Cakebread 2010 Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley, California: One of the best ever Sauvignons I've ever tasted from this winery, the 2010 Cakebread is assuredly worth a peek. Very pale lime in colour, it features remarkably understated, even elegant scents of pears, lemon citrus, white flowers, chalk, and a subtle hint of green apples, herbs, and nuts. Complex, sporting superbly polished fruit, balanced acidity, and a delicate yet well-proportioned hint of pears on the finish. Great balance, restraint (despite carrying 14.1% alcohol), and gentle flavourings. Now-2016. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90++ \$39.95 (#707224) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Bouchard Père & Fils 2009, Meursault Les Clous AOC, Burgundy, France: Substantial vineyard located high up near the Montagne du Chatelet de Montmellian, Bouchard Père & Fils owns 8.64ha of this capable plot, almost half the total area. Pale lime in colour, the '09 displays unquestionably beautiful scents of dried quince, pears, green apples, minerals, and nuts. Complex, wielding very fine, elegant fruit, balanced acidity, and a lovely hint of fresh lime-infused quince and green apples on the finish. Truly well done; superb single-vineyard character and balance. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2011)

90 \$49.00 (Private Order) Woodman Wines & Spirits

La Crema 2009 Chardonnay, Los Carneros, California: Tempting and forward, the 2009 Los Carneros Chardonnay represents another hit from this more-or-less consistent operation. Light greenish-lime in colour, the wine features abundant scents of melon-infused ripe pears, buttered toast, orange peel, apricots, and a hint of honeysuckle and nuts. Complex, carrying beautiful, expressive fruit, milder acidity, and a flavourful, well-defined hint of pears and buttered toast on the finish. Engaging, full-bodied, and delicious. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

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90 \$39.95 (#184929) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Pewsey Vale 2011 Riesling, Eden Valley, South Australia, Australia: Pale-light lime in colour, winemaker Louisa Rose's 2011 Riesling displays beautiful, delicate scents of lemon and lime; giving way to pineapple, dried white peaches, and just a hint of minerals. Complex, featuring fine, flavourful 'Riesling' fruit flavours, balanced acidity, and a splendid hint of lemon/lime and kerosene elements on the finish. Rounder in approach than anticipated, with delightful balance and grace. Screwcap closure. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

89+ \$19.95 (#686600) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Goldwater 2011 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, South Island, New Zealand: Very pale lime in colour, the 2011 Sauvignon Blanc offers distinct, potent scents of grassy gooseberries, white grapefruit and peaches, lemon, cat's pee, and minerals. On the palate: vibrant zesty fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a very lovely hint of pure gooseberries on the finish. Nervy, balanced, and unquestionably impressive. Screwcap closure. Now-2013. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

89 \$19.95 (#295261) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Domaine Franck Millet 2011, Sancerre AOC, Loire, France: Elegant and easygoing, the 2011 Sancerre is a swell choice for short-term enjoyment. Pale lime in colour, the wine displays delightful, delicately flinty scents of pears and green apples; switching to teensy traces of herbs, minerals, and lemon. Reasonably complex, with fine fruit, balanced acidity, and a lovely hint of green fruits and gentle minerals on the finish. Very finely done. Now-2014+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

89 \$23.95 (#297879) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Charles Wantz 2010 Excellence Gewurztraminer, Alsace AOC, France: Pale-light lime in colour with yellow traces, the 2010 Excellence Gewurztraminer exhibits delightful scents of intense lychee-based gingerroot, ripe yellow plums, and copious Asian spices. On the palate: fine fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a mellow, lingering hint of lychees and yellow pears on the finish. Balanced, round, and lasting. Now-2016+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

88+ \$17.95 (#298539) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Mount Riley 2012 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, South Island, New Zealand: Extremely pale lime in colour, the 2012 Sauvignon Blanc displays lovely, entirely non-threatening notes of gooseberries, white grapefruit, capsicum, and minerals. On the palate: splendidly zesty, light-weight fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a zippy hint of gooseberries on the finish. Now-2013. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

88 \$16.95 (#981670) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Mulderbosch 2011 Sauvignon Blanc, Western Cape WO, South Africa: Very pale lime in colour, the 2011 Sauvignon Blanc offers pleasant scents of herb-encrusted green apples, gooseberries, and a hint of lemon and minerals. On the palate: good fruit showing, with fairly zesty acidity, and a lovely hint of mineral green apples and herbal traces on the finish. Very refreshing and balanced—always dependable. Screwcap closure. Now-2013. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

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88 \$18.95 (#933424) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Sartori di Verona 2009 Marani, IGT Bianco Veronese, Veneto, Italy: Light golden-straw in colour, the 2009 Marani reveals very pretty notes of strawy Golden Delicious apples, pears, dried honeysuckle, and a hint of white peaches and lemon. On the palate: nice dry fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a hint of dried strawy Golden Delicious apples and honeysuckle (very mild) on the finish. Very refreshing and balanced. 100% Garganega. Now-2012. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2011)

88 \$14.30 (#265405) Vintages 3 March 2012 Release

Wither Hills 2011 Pinot Gris, Marlborough, South Island, New Zealand: Pale straw in colour, the 2011 Pinot Gris reveals lovely notes of sweet strawy peaches, minerals, and a hint of tropical fruits. On the palate: good round fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a delightful hint of peaches on the finish. Balanced, fresh, and easy to enjoy. New Zealand winegrowers have certainly made great strides with this marvellous grape. Screwcap closure. Now-2014+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

88 \$19.95 (#214999) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Red Wines:

Penfolds 1998 Grange, South Australia, Australia: The top wine at a special event organized by WineAlign, the 1998 Grange is, to be perfectly blunt, the best Australian wine I have ever tasted. Opaque ruby in colour (slightly faded), this perfect specimen offers monumental, multistoried aromas of black mocha, fragrant black currants, dark/blue fruits (slightly briary), blackberry compote, licorice, spring flowers, forest floor, vanilla, and a trace of eucalyptus, vanilla, and exotic spices. Supremely complex, delivering immortal fruit flavours, still-very firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lavish, unparalleled hint of black mocha, blackberry compote, black/blue fruits, and spring flowers on the finish. Flawless, elaborate, and resolutely stunning—from this day on, I shall make it my business to secure a few bottles for safekeeping and future enjoyment. 97% Shiraz and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2045+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2012)

100 \$439.60 (Private Order) Berry Bros. & Rudd (UK)

Penfolds 1982 Grange Hermitage, South Australia, Australia: Examined at a special function alongside the '62 and the '98, the 1982 Penfolds Grange is a masterpiece of acute sensuality and refinement. Dark-opaque red-garnet in colour, the wine reveals a particularly glorious bouquet of cigarbox-driven red and black fruits, pipe tobacco, forest floor, underbrush, scorched earth, minerals, vanilla, and exotic spices. Truly complex, possessing crisp, intoxicating fruit, firm yet fully integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a refined, pure hint of cigarbox and black fruits on the finish. Unbelievably vibrant, finesse-driven, and uncompromised by the passage of time; sheer brilliance. 94% Shiraz and 6% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2012)

98 \$452.16 (Private Order) Fine & Rare Wines (UK)

Penfolds 2007 Grange, South Australia, Australia: Provocative and profound, the 2007 Grange is a spitting image of the '04—only more 'miniature' and slightly less dense. Opaque ruby in colour, this legend in the making offers spellbinding aromas of

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spring flower-infused milk chocolate, mocha, plummy currants, black and blue fruits, dark cherries, licorice, crushed rocks, vanilla pods, incense traces, forest floor, and spice. Extremely complex, delivering astounding, all-embracing fruit, firm tannins, mild acidity, and a magnificent, immortal hint of milk chocolate, black and blue fruits, and spring flowers on the finish. Multileveled, immense, and toying with perfection, this should keep for well beyond three decades. 97% Shiraz and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2042++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2012)

98 \$500.10 (Private Order) Marquis Wine Cellars (British Columbia)

Antinori 2001 Solaia, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: Now over ten years of age, the 2001 Solaia has truly come into its own. Dark-opaque (slightly faded) ruby in colour, this gem features astounding aromas of dark briary cherries and black fruits; giving way to chocolate, licorice, kirsch, forest floor, asphalt/minerals, vanilla, and spice. Truly complex, wielding sensational velvety fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity and a fantastic, lingering hint of briary black fruits, forest floor, and chocolate on the finish. Harmonious, in-depth, and balanced, this is about as flawless a Solaia as has ever been produced, one that shall continue to develop over this decade and the next one with ease. 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Sangiovese, and 5% Cabernet Franc. Now-2028+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

97+ \$192.00 (Private Order) Fine & Rare Wines (UK)

Pieve Santa Restituta 2007 Sugarille, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: One of the greatest Brunellos I've ever tasted, the seductive 2007 Sugarille symbolizes artisanal winegrowing at its near-flawless. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine presents astonishing, intoxicating aromas of fragrant cherries, red and black fruits, licorice/liqueur, briary fruits, new leather, undergrowth, cedarwood, vanilla, and spice. Extremely complex, possessing fantastical silky fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a heavenly, finely textured hint of briary red/black fruits on the finish. Wondrous dimension, harmony, and grace; this will easily keep beyond a few decades. Now-2034++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

97+ \$169.00 (#990705) Vintages Special Offer

Bruno Giacosa 2003 Faletto, Barolo DOCG, Piedmont, Italy: Sourced solely from Bruno Giacosa's own vineyards, the breathtaking 2003 Faletto is one of the top wines of what was a very challenging vintage. Medium-dark dark garnet in colour, this gem offers spectacular aromas of fragrant dried red fruits and cherries; giving way to Chinese black tea (alternating with bergamot), cedarwood, tar, pipe tobacco, and the slightest, most delicate hint of mint, cigarbox, and exotic spices. Brilliantly complex, wielding incredible fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an exquisite, finesse-driven hint of fragrant dried red fruits, cedarwood, and tealeaves on the finish. Wondrous personality, classicism, and purity. This is what great Barolo is all about. Now-2021++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, December 2010)

97 \$177.10 (#74385) Vintages October 2008 Classics Collection

Penfolds 1996 Grange, South Australia, Australia: Tasted at a luncheon with Peter Gago alongside the '07, the 1996 Grange has entered midlife in exceptional, luminous form. Dark-opaque red currant in colour, it starts out leathery; eventually revealing a fantastic, multipronged bouquet of dried black and red fruits, dark cherries, wild plums, cigarbox, underbrush, cedarwood, minerals, mocha, vanilla, and spice. Immensely

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complex, featuring mature, uplifting fruit, fine-firm tannins, milder acidity, and an astonishing, fully integrated hint of cedar-oriented black fruits, leather, and exotic spices on the finish. Irrepressible personality, conciseness, and intensity; this is one unconditionally fabulous wine. 94% Shiraz and 6% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2025++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2012)

97 \$390.93 (Private Order) Fine & Rare Wines (UK)

Valdicava 2006 Madonna del Piano, Brunello di Montalcino Riserva DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: The greatest Madonna del Piano ever? Dark-opaque ruby-red currant in colour, this incredible gem reveals fabulous, multilayered aromas of dark red and black fruits (intermixed with dark cherries and briary plums); switching to undergrowth, leather, scorched earth, licorice, mild truffles, cedarwood, vanilla, and spice. Incredibly complex, wielding wonderful fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an amazing hint of dark briary fruits, cedarwood, and undergrowth on the finish. Compact and silky in tandem, with awesome dimension, structure, and balance; this will keep for at least two decades. Now-2035++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

96+ \$169.99 (Private Order) Stem Wine Group

Dunn 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, Howell Mountain (Napa Valley), California: The greatest wine I've ever tasted from this remarkable outpost, Randy Dunn's 2008 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon reminds me of a Second Growth St-Julien. Opaque ruby in colour, this stunning offering presents profound, alluring aromas of mocha, currants, crème de cassis, blackberry compote, spring flowers, minerals, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Truly complex, delivering well-structured, sensational fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, moderate alcohol (13.9%), and a lasting, elegant hint of currants, mocha, and graphite on the finish. Magnificent refinement, sturdiness, and depth. Now-2038+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

95+ \$99.95 (#193763) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Heitz 2006 Martha's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: One of the finest vintages I have yet to examine (rather surprising), the dazzling 2006 Martha's Vineyard almost flawlessly illustrates the unique, superior terroir to be found in this part of Oakville. Opaque ruby in colour, the wine is beautifully toasted, showcasing seductive aromas of milk chocolate and eucalyptus-infused currants, blackberries, cherries, kirsch, licorice, pain grille, forest floor, vanilla wafers, and spice. Truly complex, featuring gorgeously chewy fruit, firm tannins, slightly milder acidity, and a fabulous, decadent hint of milk chocolate, currants, and subtle eucalyptus on the finish. Grandiose, fulsome, and elegantly powerful—the full package. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2036++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

95+ \$225.00 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Tenuta dell' Ornellaia 2009 Ornellaia, Bolgheri Superiore DOC, Tuscany, Italy: Stunning as ever, the 2009 Ornellaia could very well be considered a legend in the making. Very dense ruby in colour, this stunning wine is beautifully toasted, detailing enveloping aromas of milk chocolate, crème de cassis, plums, cherries, strawberries, coffee ice cream, forest floor, mineral elements, vanilla, and spice. Truly complex, delivering gorgeous silky-smooth yet well-structured fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a spectacular hint of milk chocolate, crème de cassis, and strawberries on the finish. Heavenly texture, layering, and harmony; this will keep for well over twenty years. 55%

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Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 21% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot. Now-2034+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

95+ \$189.95 (#722470) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Gaja 2005 Sperss, Langhe DOC, Piedmont, Italy: From Angelo Gaja's prized Serralunga vineyard, the 2005 Sperss, despite hailing from a limited vintage, defies expectations. Dark ruby-red currant in colour, this beauty showcases extravagant, multistoried aromas of cherries, red plums and alternate 'Nebbiolo' fruits, tar, tealeaves, nougat, truffles, underbrush, cedarwood, vanilla, and spice. Exceedingly complex, delivering glorious fruit, firm yet surprisingly accessible tannins, balanced acidity, and a brilliant hint of cherries, truffles, and tealeaves on the finish. Stupendous, lively blend—a mid-weight classic in the making. 94% Nebbiolo and 6% Barbera. Now-2030+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

95 \$149.73 (Private Order) Fine & Rare Wines (UK)

Château Beaucastel 2010, Châteauneuf-du-Pape AOC, Rhône, France: The greatest Beaucastel I've tasted in years, the 2010 Châteauneuf-du-Pape is a classic example of one of the greatest reds of France. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, this beauty provides exceptional, multilayered aromas of leathery black raspberries, dried blueberries, blackberry compote, spring flowers, lavender, forest floor, white pepper traces, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, delivering wonderful fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant, in-depth hint of black fruits, spring flowers, and lavender on the finish. Fantastic layering, harmony, and precision, this will keep for at least two decades. 30% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre, 10% Syrah, 10% Cunoise, the rest other permitted varietals. Now-2032++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

94++ \$89.95 (#711317) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Louis Latour 2002 Cuvée Heritiers, Gevrey-Chambertin Grand Cru Chambertin AOC, Burgundy, France: Sourced from a 0.81-ha parcel adjacent to Latricières, the 2002 Cuvée Heritiers is every bit as brilliant a Chambertin as would be expected from this omnipotent vineyard. Medium red currant in colour with a touch of garnet, the wine reveals exquisite, slowly maturing aromas of red cherries and raspberries; switching to alternate red fruits, dried licorice, loamy earth, and an extremely subtle hint of cedarwood and spicebox. Very complex, showcasing immensely interwoven, contradictorily 'exact' fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a wholly genteel, fairly youthful hint of dark cherries and raspberries on the finish. Wondrous purity, style, and character; this should easily keep for up to two decades. Now-2025++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

94++ \$169.00 (#78204) Vintages Special Offer

Joseph Phelps 2006 Insignia, Napa Valley, California: Sourced from estate-grown fruit in differing AVAs throughout the valley floor, the 2006 Insignia is about as indulgent as it gets. Opaque ruby in colour, the wine is beautifully toasted, presenting spectacular aromas of chocolate, 'dusty' currants, dried raspberries and cherries, blackberry treacle, red plums, pain grille, asphalt, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, fielding sumptuous, monumental fruit, very firm tannins, milder acidity, and a long-lasting, abundant hint of chocolate, 'dusty' currants, and strawberry shortcake on the finish. Sensationally full-bodied, finely textured, and without a shred of humility. 95% Cabernet

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Sauvignon and 5% Petit Verdot. Now-2032++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

94++ \$229.95 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Antinori 2001 Guado Al Tasso, Bolgheri Superiore DOC, Tuscany, Italy: From Piero Antinori's perennially undervalued Bolgheri estate, the 2001 Guado Al Tasso was the last wine tasted during a terrific Super Tuscan-themed evening. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it features incredibly youthful, resplendent aromas of red and black fruits, cherries, blackberry compote, dark raspberries, licorice, charcoal, cedarwood elements, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, delivering fantastic velvety fruit, firm yet well-integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a superlative hint of dark briary black fruits (so pure) on the finish. Exquisite, fulsome, and elegant. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 10% Syrah and 'other red grape varieties.' Now-2025. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

94+ \$82.20 (Private Order) WineTip.com (Italy)

Penfolds 1962 Grange Hermitage, South Australia, Australia: The oldest Grange I have yet to taste, the '62 has performed remarkably well over the past fifty years, acquitting itself on this particular occasion with particular desirability and confidence. Dark (faded) garnet in colour, it delivers a lively bouquet of 'rugged' cigarbox and red fruits, saddle leather, savoury nuances, and varied hints of tobacco, scorched earth, and exotic spices. Very complex, retaining whimsical, fully integrated fruit and tannins, balanced acidity, and a fully mature, enduring hint of cigarbox on the finish. Incredible finesse, balance, and vitality, logging in at a nowadays-unthinkable 12.2% alcohol. 87% Shiraz and 13% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2015 (depending on providence). (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2012)

94+ \$2,499.00 (Private Order) Cellarlit (Australia)

Penfolds 2009 RWT Shiraz, Barossa Valley, South Australia, Australia: Since its launch in 2000, the RWT label, crafted solely from Barossa Valley fruit, has emerged as one of the finest bottlings in Penfolds lineup. Opaque ruby in colour, the sensational, exciting '09 presents 'compact,' multilayered aromas of black mocha/espresso, blackberries, black fruits, dried blueberries, licorice, asphalt, cookie dough, vanilla wafers, and spice. Very complex and youthful, boasting gorgeous, indulgent fruit, supple-firm tannins, mild acidity, and a heavenly, everlasting hint of mocha, plummy blackberries, and black fruits on the finish. Exceedingly delicious, full-throttle, and enticing. Screwcap closure. Now-2032. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2012)

94+ \$100.48 (Private Order) Berry Bros. & Rudd (UK)

Joseph Phelps 2008 Insignia, Napa Valley, California: A striking combination of sumptuousness and workability, the sensational 2008 Insignia will appeal to both carefree hedonists and conscientious collectors. Opaque ruby-red currant in colour, the wine is richly toasted, displaying concentrated aromas of baked chocolate, currants, blackberry treacle, new leather, forest floor, dried licorice, tar, vanilla, and spice. Complex, wielding extravagant forward fruit, very firm tannins, milder acidity, and an insanely long hint of chocolate and currants on the finish. Mightily decadent, at the same time not without a remarkable sense of balance, structure, and harmony. 89% Cabernet

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Sauvignon, 7% Petit Verdot, and 5% Malbec. Now-2030++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

94+ **\$224.95 (#710400)** **Vintages 24 November 2012 Release**

Pieve Santa Restituta 2007, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: ‘Entry range’ label from Angelo Gaja’s superlative Tavernelle-based outpost, the 2007 Pieve Santa Restituta is one great, legitimately price-tagged Brunello. Dark ruby-red in colour, it offers substantial aromas of fragrant cherries and wild red fruits; switching to red currants, undergrowth, wild game/roasted meats, balsam, leather, cedarwood, vanilla, and spice. Extremely complex, retaining magnanimous, elegantly layered fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an incredibly refined hint of red fruits and mild cedarwood on the finish. Remarkably sophisticated, stylish, and textured—truly great Sangiovese Grosso. Now-2028++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2012)

94 **\$62.95 (Private Order)** **Stem Wine Group**

Sassicaia 2004, Bolgheri Sassicaia DOC, Tuscany, Italy: Resolutely appealing, at-ease Sassicaia, the ‘04 is on the verge of reaching mid-life in complete serenity. Dark-opaque ruby in colour with a touch of red currant, the wine reveals wonderfully fresh aromas of fragrant dark cherries, plums, and sinewy black fruits; giving way to forest floor, chestnuts, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, featuring wondrous Bordelaise-styled fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an excellent, agile hint of cherries, plums, and mocha traces on the finish. Brilliant character, balance, and finesse—now at its peak though with plenty of steam for at least another dozen years. 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Cabernet Franc. Now-2024. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

94 **\$204.80 (Private Order)** **Fine & Rare Wines (UK)**

Beringer 2009 Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: Once again the standout bottling from this humungous liquid conglomerate, the 2009 Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon is one tempting collectible. Opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, exuding inviting, multilayered aromas of mocha, currants, blackberries, spring flowers, licorice, charcoal, cookie crumble, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, with exquisite forward, almost silky fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lingering, incredibly satisfying hint of mocha, currants, and licorice/flowers on the finish. Wonderful layering, length, and balance. For the long term. Also contains 2% Petit Verdot. Now-2032. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

93+ **\$119.95 (#149955)** **Vintages 24 November 2012 Release**

Arnaldo Caprai 2007 Collepiano, Sagrantino di Montefalco DOCG, Umbria, Italy: For those who have yet to discover the wondrous attributes of great Sagrantino, the stunning, reasonably priced 2007 Collepiano ought to serve as an eye-opener. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine displays exceptional aromas of moderate mocha, dark cherries/currants, black fruits, dried herbs, asphalt, roasted game, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, showcasing extremely firm, outgoing fruit, very firm tannins, and an impeccable, completely confident hint of dark cherried plums, mocha, and spicewood on the finish. Terrifically structured, layered, and balanced. Now-2028. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

93+ **\$51.99 (Private Order)** **Stem Wine Group**

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Luce della Vite 1997 Luce, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: The oldest vintage I have yet to taste from this then-venture between Robert Mondavi and the Frescobaldi family, the intrepid 1997 Luce has now reached its peak. Dark-opaque garnet-cherry red brick in colour, it exudes an exceptional bouquet of cedar-infused dried red/black fruits and dark chocolate; switching to forest floor, undergrowth, sandalwood, smoke, mahogany, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, boasting wonderful, still-youthful yet mature-flavoured fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a stellar hint of black fruits, dried chocolate, and cedar on the finish. Incredible structure, harmony, and durability. 50% Sangiovese and 50% Merlot. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

93+ \$10.40 (Private Order) WineTip.com (Italy)

Valdicava 2007, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: Slightly superior to previous vintages, the stunning 2007 Brunello di Montalcino is not to be missed. Dark-opaque ruby-red currant in colour, the wine features astonishing aromas of tealeaf-infused cherries, red plums, undergrowth, balsam, leather, sandalwood, cedarwood, and spice. Very complex, delivering impeccably pure, elegantly situated fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a prodigiously refined hint of cherries, cedarwood, and tealeaves on the finish. Wonderful traditional pedigree, balance, and energy; this will easily keep over fifteen years. Now-2026++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

93+ \$139.99 (Private Order) Stem Wine Group

Château Branaire-Ducru 2005, St-Julien AOC, Bordeaux, France: Easily the greatest wine this estate has ever produced, Patrick Maroteaux's intrepid 2005 Branaire-Ducru possesses all the hallmarks of an outstanding claret. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is beautifully (though not overly) toasted, delivering amazing aromas of mocha, currants, blackberries, black cherries, blueberries, ground chocolate, violets, graphite, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, showcasing delicious, opulent fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a multilayered, elegant hint of pure 'bluish' currants and mocha elements on the finish. Truly exquisite, balance, and refined. According to one source: 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, and 3% Petit Verdot. Now-2030+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

93 \$160.00 (#503706) Vintages 2005 Bordeaux Futures

Cakebread 2006 Benchland Select Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: Winemaker Julianne Laks' terrific 2006 Benchland Select is crafted from 63% Oakville and 37% Rutherford grapes. Opaque ruby in colour, the wine is beautifully toasted, offering extremely inviting aromas of mocha, currants, blackberry compote, dried black cherries, pain grille, graphite, saddle leather, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with superbly focused, sumptuous yet elegant fruit, firm tannins, slightly milder acidity, and a lengthy, mysteriously refined hint of 'dusty' currants and mocha on the finish. Very pure, poised, and downright scrumptious. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2025+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

93 \$98.12 (Private Order) America's Wine Shop (USA)

Heitz 2006 Trailside Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: After Martha's Vineyard, Heitz's Trailside plot is routinely ranked the runner-up—and deservedly so. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the '06 is finely toasted, offering amazingly pure, textbook 'Heitz' aromas of mocha, currants, blackberries, scorched (reddish) earth,

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pain grille, eucalyptus, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, delivering stunning, well-structured fruit, firm tannins, slightly milder acidity, and an elegant, forthright hint of mocha, currants, and 'red' eucalyptus on the finish. Profound, lengthy, and honestly excellent. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

93 \$135.00 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Poggio Mandorlo 2005, IGT Maremma, Tuscany, Italy: Top label of the operation, the 2005 Poggio Mandorlo is a robust, powerful wine with a big, delectable attitude. Opaque ruby in colour, it reveals abundant aromas of blackberry treacle, kirsch liqueur, dried blue berries, saddle leather (very potent), licorice, truffle traces, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, sporting polished, decadent fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a long, abundant hint of blackberry treacle, new saddle leather, and truffle elements on the finish. Alluring, Parkerized offering. 60% Merlot, 30% Cabernet Franc, and 10% Sangiovese. Now-2023++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

93 \$89.00 (#206433) Vintages February 2011 Classics Collection

Penfolds 2009 Magill Estate Shiraz, Magill Estate Vineyard, South Australia, Australia: Sourced entirely from Penfolds' 5.2-ha Magill Estate Vineyard in Adelaide Hills, the '09 is assuredly top-notch. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, this beauty showcases marvellous, sophisticated aromas of subtle mocha, currants, blackberries, dried black cherries, plums, licorice, asphalt, forest floor, underbrush, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, retaining incredibly opulent fruit, firm tannins, mild acidity, and a long-lasting, silky-smooth hint of mocha, plummy currants, and forest floor on the finish. Extraordinarily textured, balanced, and focused. Bravo! Screwcap closure. Now-2030. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2012)

93 \$78.50 (Private Order) Berry Bros. & Rudd (UK)

Petrolo 2004 Galatrona, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: Crafted from 100% Merlot, the 2004 Galatrona represents a bold, decadent effort from the Sanjust family. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, exhibiting youthful, alluring aromas of dark mocha, cherry liqueur, blackberries, plums, new leather, forest floor, asphalt, fresh vanilla pods, and spice. Very complex, possessing sumptuous fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a long, velvety hint of dark mocha and black cherried currants on the finish. Well structured, balanced, and enamouring, this should still-youthful specimen should easily keep for the foreseeable future. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

93 \$119.00 (#21998) Vintages September 2008 Classics Collection

Inglénook 2008 Rubicon, Rutherford (Napa Valley), California: With Stéphane Deroncourt as consultant, the 2008 Rubicon supposedly reflects a switch to a more elegant style—only this isn't so. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, this tempting, Parkerized offering is beautifully toasted, displaying indulgent aromas of baked black mocha and licorice; quickly switching to currants, blackberry compote, dark dried cherries, kirsch liqueur, pain grille, tar, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, boasting prodigious fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lasting, opulent hint of kirsch, licorice, and black mocha on the finish. Decadent, powerful, and alluring; though not exactly refined. 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc, 4% Petit Verdot, and 3% Merlot. Now-2028+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

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93 \$244.95 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Zýmē 2005 Kairos, IGT Veneto, Veneto, Italy: One of the wackier wines out of Celestino Gaspari's incredible lineup, the delectable, uniquely interwoven 2005 Kairos is crafted from a minimum of 15 different varietals. Opaque ruby-red currant in colour, it delivers amazingly inviting aromas of savoury red fruits and chocolaty nuances; quickly switching to gingerbread cookies, wild game, leather, grilled herbs, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, wielding excellent fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an extraordinary hint of savoury red/black fruits and chocolaty elements on the finish. Remarkable personality, style, and breed. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

93 \$69.99 (Private Order) Stem Wine Group

Bouchard Père & Fils 2009, Nuits-St-Georges Premier Cru Les Porrets St-Georges AOC, Burgundy, France: Separated from the famed St-Georges vineyard by Les Cailles, the fact that Les Porrets is permitted to append 'St-Georges' to its name makes for something of a crock. Whatever: medium ruby in colour, the fantastic '09 Bouchard Père & Fils displays truly beautiful, uplifting aromas of dark cherries, blackberries, crème de cassis, licorice, rhubarb, and spice. Complex, possessing extraordinary, delicious fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an absolutely impeccable hint of dark raspberries and cherries on the finish. Excellent purity, depth, and polish—wow! Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2011)

92++ \$92.00 (Private Order) Woodman Wines & Spirits

Catena Zapata 2008 Nicolás Catena Zapata, Mendoza, Argentina: Exceptional offering from one of Argentina's greatest producers, the terrific 2008 Nicolás Catena Zapata suggests an increasing focus on freshness and finer textural elements than has been apparent in the past. Opaque black-purple in colour, the wine is finely toasted, revealing alluring, emphatic aromas of currants, blackberries, dried blueberries, violets, pipe tobacco, forest floor, grilled herbs, white pepper, mocha traces, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, featuring impeccably concentrated fruit, very firm tannins, milder acidity, and a long, plentiful hint of currants, pipe tobacco, and mild white pepper on the finish. Pristine, robust, and excellently structured. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon and 35% Malbec. Now-2024. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

92++ \$109.95 (#662072) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Kilikanoon 2009 Green's Vineyard Shiraz, Barossa Valley, South Australia, Australia: Exuding amazing depth, shapeliness, and design, the tremendous 2009 Green's Vineyard Shiraz is sourced entirely from estate-owned grapes located in the heart of the Barossa Valley. Extremely dense black-ruby in colour, the wine is beautifully toasted, sporting alluring aromas of black fruits, dark mocha, blackberry compote, licorice, mint, leather, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with exquisitely sumptuous fruit, firm yet slightly velvety tannins, mild acidity, and a long, well-structured hint of black fruits and tobacco nuances on the finish. Terrifically executed, this will age at least a dozen more years. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

92++ \$74.95 (#6007) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

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Château La Tour Carnet 2009, Haut-Médoc AOC, Bordeaux, France: Under the same ownership as Pape Clément, Château La Tour Carnet has been quietly upping its game over the past several vintages. Opaque ruby in colour, the fabulous '09 is finely toasted, showcasing exquisite aromas of crème de cassis, blackberries, spring flowers, graphite, licorice, mocha, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, carrying outstanding full-bodied fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a harmonious, polished hint of currants, black mocha, and spring flowers on the finish. Pitch-perfect balance, style, and breed. 62% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petit Verdot, and 2% Cabernet Franc. Now-2032+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

92++ \$51.85 (#194555) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Bouchard Père & Fils 2007, Clos Vougeot Grand Cru AOC, Burgundy, France: Standout Vougeot from a very challenging vintage, the 2007 Bouchard Père & Fils acquits itself marvellously. Medium ruby in colour, the wine offers exceptional aromas of brambling cherries, raspberries, licorice, and the slightest hint of loamy earth, rhubarb, vanilla, and exotic spices. Very complex, delivering remarkable fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a superbly polished hint of dark raspberries (great grip) on the finish. Excellent bottling of real prowess, vigour, and balance. Now-2019++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2011)

92+ \$165.00 (Private Order) Woodman Wines & Spirits

Château Canon 2007, St-Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé AOC, Bordeaux, France: Owned by Chanel since 1996, recent vintages of Château Canon have, according to more 'seasoned' commentators than I, been among the finest in recent memory. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the '07 is finely toasted, offering subtle yet highly inviting aromas of black currants, blackberries, kirsch, crème de cassis, crushed rocks, lavender (very subtle), and a hint of vanilla and spice. Very complex, retaining really great, well-characterized fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an extremely refined, full-bodied hint of dark currants, kirsch, and graphite on the finish. Immensely beautiful, taut, and pure. 75% Merlot and 25% Cabernet Franc. Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

92+ \$88.00 (#16245) Vintages Shop Online

Cliff Lede 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap District (Napa Valley), California: Quite the treat, the 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon is a wine collectors will want to eagerly seek out. Opaque ruby in colour and finely toasted, it offers devilishly decadent aromas of chocolaty mocha, currants, blackberries, dark cherries, strawberries, licorice, forest floor, minerals, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, wielding beautifully structured, excellent fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and an extraordinary, lingering hint of chocolaty mocha, currants, and licorice on the finish. Exquisite texture, flavour, and length. Also contains 6% Petit Verdot, 2% Malbec, 1% Merlot, and 1% Cabernet Franc. Now-2030++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

92+ \$74.00 (Private Order) Halpern Enterprises

Tenuta dell' Ornellaia 2003 Ornellaia, Bolgheri Superiore DOC, Tuscany, Italy: With temperatures reaching as high as 39°C in early-August, the 2003 Ornellaia is one of the most forward, open-faced wines I have ever tasted from this venerable estate. Dark (slightly faded) ruby in colour, it offers exquisite, slightly singed aromas of cherries and red fruits (a tad cedary), toasted oak, leather, forest floor, underbrush, minerals, vanilla,

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and spice. Very complex, sporting generous, atypically accessible fruit, fine tannins, balanced acidity, and a remarkable hint of cherries and red fruits on the finish. Quite sumptuous, balanced, and undeniably appetizing. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc, 15% Merlot, and 5% Petit Verdot. Now-2019+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

92+ \$254.40 (Private Order) Fine & Rare Wines (UK)

Château Rauzan-Ségla 2007, Margaux AOC, Bordeaux, France: Upfront and surprisingly well-structured, the delectable 2007 Rauzan-Ségla indicates an estate on a roll. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine showcases refined, textbook aromas of dark raspberried currants, plums, blackberries, crushed rocks, and a pinch of licorice, incense, wild game, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, featuring deliciously approachable, suitably sturdy fruit, fine-firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a very elegant, emphatic hint of pure raspberried currants on the finish. Seriously tempting, balanced, and refined—outstanding Margaux. According to one source: 59% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35.5% Merlot, and 5.5% Petit Verdot. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

92+ \$90.00 (#98491) Vintages 29 October 2011 In-Store Discovery

Stonestreet 2007 Monument Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley (Sonoma County), California: One of the star wines at Stonestreet, winemaker Graham Weerts' 2007 Monument Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon merits extensive applause. Opaque black-ruby in colour, the wine presents engaging, alluring aromas of currants, plums, blackberries, dried cherries, asphalt/graphite, smoke, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering sumptuous, brilliantly textured fruit, very firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lasting hint of 'dusty' currants, black cocoa powder, and asphalt on the finish. Wonderful structure, style, and cautious elegance. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

92+ \$49.95 (#285098) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Vidal-Fleury 2004 La Chatillonne, Côte-Rôtie AOC, Rhône, France: Owned by the Guigal family since 1985 (though run independently), the top wines of Vidal-Fleury are undoubtedly their Côte-Rôtie(s). Dark ruby in colour with a touch of red currant, the 2004 La Chatillonne is delicately toasted, presenting wonderfully 'rugged' aromas of brambling red currants and plums, dried leathery cherries, strawberries, figs, and a hint of white pepper, sandalwood, and spice. Complex, carrying terrific regional fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a refined, lasting hint of brambling red currants and walnut traces on the finish. Impeccable expression, focus, and character. Now-2021++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

92+ Price Unavailable The Small Winemakers Collection (Private Order)

Château Branaire-Ducru 2004, St-Julien AOC, Bordeaux, France: One of the more 'imperial' examples of the vintage, the 2004 Château Branaire-Ducru is both indulgent and upright. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, with impeccably polished aromas of roasted mocha/coffee, currants, plums, blueberries, dark cherries, crème brûlée, asphalt, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, boasting classic, elegantly styled fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a delicious hint of currants, crushed rocks, and coffee traces on the finish. Still youthful, with exceptional structure, balance, and finesse. According to one source: 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot,

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5% Cabernet Franc, and 3% Petit Verdot. Now-2023++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

92 \$105.00 (#88336) Vintages Special Offer

Château Canon 2002, St-Emilion Premier Grand Cru Classé AOC, Bordeaux, France: From one of the weakest vintages of the decade, the 2002 Château Canon defies expectations, dispensing a supremely underrated performance. Dark-opaque red currant in colour and perhaps a tad closed when examined, it provides still-youthful aromas of mocha-infused blackberries, crème brûlée, pain grille, forest floor, savoury nuances, and spice. Complex, harnessing extremely fine fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a superb, polished hint of blackberries and plums (slightly sinewy/savoury) on the finish. Standout claret—clearly an overachiever. According to one source: 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Now-2017++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

92 \$99.00 (#920462) Vintages 2002 Bordeaux Futures

Fattoria di Casalbosco 2006 Orchidea, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: One of several Super Tuscans produced at Casalbosco, the 2006 Orchidea is a delicious and powerful blend. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, presenting enticing, well-developed aromas of 'forested' black mocha, currants, undergrowth, balsam, leather, and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, possessing robust, forward-style fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an assertive, lingering hint of plummy currants, dark mocha, and leather on the finish. Quite profound, balanced, and sumptuous. Typically 50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 50% Merlot. Now-2019+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

92 \$30.58 (Private Order) Behrens Weine (Germany)

Poggio il Castellare 2006, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: My only note from this estate, the 2006 Poggio il Castellare possesses wonderful depth, structure, and focus. Dark-opaque garnet-black cherry in colour, it displays potent, darkly savoury aromas of wild dried plummy cherries, black fruits, undergrowth, cedarwood, scorched earth, leather, mahogany wood, and spice. Complex, delivering exceptional robust fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an exciting, deliciously structured hint of black fruits, cedarwood, and nutted truffles on the finish. Terrific execution and balance. Now-2026+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

92 \$47.95 (#293555) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Far Niente 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon, Oakville (Napa Valley), California: Abundant and lengthy, the 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon accurately (and deliciously) reflects the style 'North American' style of palate. Opaque purple-ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, presenting inviting, slightly floral aromas of 'dusty' blackberry compote, dark chocolate, purple plums, licorice, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with sumptuous, fairly compact fruit, very firm tannins, milder acidity, and a long-lasting, scrumptious hint of dark chocolate, currants, and floral elements on the finish. Robust, lively, and decadent. Also contains 2% Petit Verdot and 1% Cabernet Franc. Now-2026. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2010)

92 \$139.95 (#539098) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

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Gaja 2007 Dagromis, Barolo DOCG, Piedmont, Italy: Crafted from two vineyards based out of La Morra and Serralunga, the 2007 Dagromis boasts a wonderful personality and superlative clarity. Dark red currant in colour, it offers remarkably fragrant aromas of cherries and ‘Nebbiolo’ fruits, tealeaves, gentle cedarwood, tar, undergrowth, forest floor, and spice. Complex, delivering great, sophisticated fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an excellent, compelling hint of dark dried cherries and tealeaf elements on the finish. Marvellous structure, refinement, and balance. Now-2024. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

92 \$79.95 (Private Order) Stem Wine Group

Château Rauzan-Ségla 2003, Margaux AOC, Bordeaux, France: One of my first-ever notes from this estate, the 2003 Château Rauzan-Ségla, like many other wines from the vintage, is maturing quickly; yet it remains excellently assembled and styled. Dark red currant in colour, it displays adorable, savoury-themed aromas of red currants, blackberries, dried raspberries, cedarwood, scorched loamy earth, leather, and a hint of wild game and spice. Very complex, possessing great fruit, fully integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a beautiful, slightly savoury hint of ‘mature’ currants on the finish. Superb finesse, agility, and balance. 53.5% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot, and 1.5% Cabernet Franc. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

92 \$99.00 (#580712) Vintages 2003 Bordeaux Futures

Seña 2008, Aconcagua Valley, Chile: Slightly leaner and more elegant than previous vintages, the 2008 Seña remains one of the finest Bordeaux-blends in Chile. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it reveals cassis-driven aromas of currants, blackberries, plums, black cherries, licorice, dried mocha, mint, asphalt, vanilla, and spice. Complex, retaining delicious, powerful fruit, very firm tannins, milder acidity, and a polished, lingering hint of cassis, dark mocha, and blueberries on the finish. Sophisticated, full-bodied, and wholeheartedly endearing; excellent aging potential. 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Carmenère, 10% Merlot, 8% Petit Verdot, and 5% Cabernet Franc. Now-2022+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

92 \$119.95 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Domaine des Sénéchaux 2009, Châteauneuf-du-Pape AOC, Rhône, France: Not as powerful as the supercharged ‘07, the 2009 Châteauneuf-du-Pape conveys excellent focus, lift, and harmony. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine delivers superb aromas of berried Provençal fruits, kirsch, licorice, spring flowers, leather, and a very mild hint of bacon bits, minerals, and spice. Complex, featuring exquisite fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a long, vibrant hint of plums, licorice, and lavender on the finish. Adorable freshness, structure, and balance. 63% Grenache, 20% Syrah, and 17% Mourvèdre/Cinsault/Vaccarèse. Now-2024++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

92 \$69.95 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Citille di Sopra 2007, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: Relatively young operation by Tuscan standards, Citille di Sopra was founded by Fabio Innocenti in 1997. Dark red-garnet in colour, the terrific 2007 Brunello displays beautifully restrained, ‘compact’ aromas of wild dried cherries and plums; quickly giving way to sandalwood, fruitcake, roasted meats, and spice. Complex, carrying exemplary fruit, very firm tannins,

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balanced acidity, and an excellently structured, elegant hint of dried dark fruits and cedarwood on the finish. Remarkable character, firmness, and traditional style. Now-2025. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, October 2012)

92 \$39.95 (#303503) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

La Torre 2005, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: Showcasing a more modern style than most, the 2005 La Torre Brunello is both undeniably delicious and fresh. Dark red currant in colour, the wine offers enticing aromas of elegant ‘rugged’ red cherries, plums, dark red fruits, leather, undergrowth, balsam, pain grille, and a hint of mocha, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering really superb fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lasting, polished yet delicate hint of dark red cherries, pain grille, and vanilla wafers on the finish. Wonderful pure expression, balance, and breed. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, November 2010)

92 \$53.97 (Private Order) Sussex Wines & Spirits (USA)

Star Lane 2007 Estate Red Blend, Santa Barbara County, California: Purchased in 1996, Jim Dierberg’s Star Lane Vineyard has shown remarkable potential over the past couple of years. Opaque ruby in colour, the 2007 Estate Red Blend is intensely toasted, delivering ‘drenched’ aromas of black chocolate, slightly baked currants, blackberries, crème de cassis, licorice, leather, tar, tobacco, vanillin, and spice. Complex, sporting concentrated, powerful yet well-structured fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and an extremely long, superlative hint of currants, black mocha, and a little pipe tobacco on the finish. Chewy, powerful, and decisively hedonistic—gorgeous. According to their website: roughly 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, the rest ‘other varietals.’ (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, April 2012)

91++ \$44.95 (Private Order) Kylix Wines

Cascina Cucco 2007 Cerrati, Barolo DOCG, Piedmont, Italy: Single-vineyard Barolo sourced well north of Serralunga d’Alba, the 2007 Cerrati (an alternate spelling of Cerretta?) is both enticing and compelling. Dark red currant in colour with a touch of garnet, it features more modernistic aromas of slightly savoury black fruits, dark dried cherries (intermixed with chocolate), tar, undergrowth, tealeaves, mahogany, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, with great fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a marvellous hint of black fruits and cedarwood traces on the finish. Great harmony and character. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, October 2012)

90 \$31.95 (#106294) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Chateau St Jean 2008 Cinq Cépages, Sonoma County, California: Flagship wine of the establishment, the 2008 Cinq Cépages is one fully-flavoured, ambitious Bordeaux-blend. Opaque ruby in colour, it is finely toasted, offering alluring, well-managed aromas of currants, blackberries, plums, incense, dried licorice, mild herbal elements, vanilla, and spice. Complex, boasting incredible, well-structured fruit, very firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lengthy hint of ‘dusty’ plummy currants, incense, and mocha on the finish. Great structure, flavour, and character. 78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc, 5% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot, and 3% Malbec. Now-2023+. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, October 2012)

91+ \$75.95 (#710913) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

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Joseph Phelps 2009 Freestone Vineyards, Sonoma Coast (Sonoma County), California: Crafted entirely from estate-grown fruit, the 2009 Pinot Noir (stated as 13.5% alcohol in tiny lettering on the front label) exudes considerable finesse and depth. Medium ruby in colour, it offers very attractive aromas of cherried raspberries, plums, violets, dried blueberries, currants, vanilla, and spice. Complex, featuring seductive fruit, fine tannins, balanced acidity, and an extremely silky hint of violets, raspberries, and 'Pinot' fruits on the finish. Delicious, marvellously crafted bottling. Now-2018. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

91+ \$77.70 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Silver Oak 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: For lovers of unbridled new American oak, the 2007 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is your best bet. Opaque ruby in colour, the wine is heavily toasted, offering pure American oak-driven aromas of 'dilly' currants, mocha, licorice, forest floor, vanilla, and spicebox. Complex, boasting smooth, velvety forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a long, concentrated hint of American oak, baked mocha, and 'dilly' plums on the finish. Characterful, intense, and lengthy—not my cup of tea, but plenty will adore this. Also contains 6% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot, and 1% Cabernet Franc. Now-2022+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91+ \$122.95 (#936039) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Château d'Armailhac 2003, Pauillac AOC, Bordeaux, France: Along with its pseudo-stablemate Clerc Milon, the 2003 d'Armailhac, while undeniable appetizing, is aging remarkably quickly. Dark red currant in colour with a touch of garnet, it presents lots of cedary tobacco at the outset; giving way to slightly fragrant red currants and plums, scorched earth, cigarbox, and spice. Complex, with great sturdy fruit, fairly firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant hint of cedarwood and plums on the finish. Superb character and balance; meant for early drinking. According to one source: 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc, and 3% Petit Verdot. Now-2015. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

91 \$48.98 (Private Order) Fine & Rare Wines (UK)

Bouchard Père & Fils 2008 Ancienne Cuvée Carnot, Volnay Premier Cru Caillerets AOC, Burgundy, France: Bouchard Père & Fils' most prized Volnay, the 2008 Ancienne Cuvée Carnot is undeniably superior to most of the wines hailing from the Les Caillerets plot. Medium ruby in colour, it starts off with marvellous aromas of fragrant, licorice-infused dried cherries; switching to potpourri, spicebox, and a hint of scorched loamy earth and violets. Complex, possessing beautiful fruit, fairly firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a truly lovely, delicate hint of dried cherries and licorice on the finish. Superb wine of real refinement and delicacy. Now-2017+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2011)

91 \$74.00 (#77016) Vintages October 2011 Classics Collection

Burrowing Owl 2009 Syrah, VQA Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, Canada: Slowly but surely, proprietor Jim Wyse's Syrah has become one of the star offerings at Burrowing Owl. Opaque ruby in colour, the '09 offers outstanding aromas of baked blackberries and brambleberries; switching to plum sauce, tobacco, leather, and a hint of dried mocha, smoked meats, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with delicious, well-structured fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lingering, poignant hint of dark mocha,

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blackberries, and tobacco on the finish. Powerful, tightly wound, and balanced. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91 \$40.95 (#73072) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Château Clerc Milon 2003, Pauillac AOC, Bordeaux, France: As anticipated, the 2003 Clerc Milon, while developing smoothly, is definitely evolving with greater speed on account of the conditions of the vintage. Dark red currant in colour with a touch of garnet, it exhibits absolutely lovely, slightly fragrant aromas of cedarwood-infused currants, plums, red fruits, scorched earth, and a pinch of leather and spicebox. Complex, retaining graceful fruit, still-firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a refined hint of dried plums and cigar box on the finish. Intrepid, adequately mature, and not without splendour. According to one source: 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 39% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot. Now-2015+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

91 \$176.21 (#5970) Newfoundland Labrador Liquor Corporation

Dierberg 2008 Pinot Noir, Santa Maria Valley, California: Under the same ownership as Star Lane Vineyard, the 2008 Dierberg Pinot Noir, though logging in at a well-managed 14.1% alcohol, is clearly crafted along Burgundian lines. Medium ruby in colour, it offers finely nuanced yet outgoing aromas of mineral-infused raspberries, dried strawberries, licorice, violets, subtle rhubarb, and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, retaining superb, elegant fruit, fine tannins, balanced acidity (crucial), and a lifting, inspired hint of raspberries and strawberries on the finish. Brilliant adeptness, vitality, and balance. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

91 \$44.95 (Private Order) Kylix Wines

Domaine Durieu 2009 Lucile Avril, Châteauneuf-du-Pape AOC, Rhône, France: Top bottling of the domaine, the 2009 Lucile Avril is dressed for success. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it features exceptional, individualistic aromas of 'rugged' blackberry/raspberry preserves, leather, Provençal herbs, wild game, herbs, minerals, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering superlative, finely structured fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a refined, potent hint of 'dusty' raspberries and leathery nuances on the finish. Unique, powerful, and delectable. Typically 85% Grenache, 10% Mourvèdre, and 5% Syrah. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91 \$42.95 (#295147) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Gaja 2010 Sito Moresco, Langhe DOC, Piedmont, Italy: Best described as Angelo Gaja's 'Super Piedmontese' label, the 2010 Sito Moresco is both delicious and modern. Dark ruby in colour, the wine is lightly toasted, detailing attractive aromas of dried wild cherries, 'dusty' mocha, currants, licorice, tar, underbrush, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with superb fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a polished, accurate hint of dried wild cherries, mocha, and bergamot on the finish. Focused, upright, and acutely appetizing. 35% Nebbiolo, 35% Merlot, and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91 \$54.95 (#976043) Vintages 29 September 2012 In-Store Discovery

Glaetzer Wines 2010 The Bishop Shiraz, Barossa Valley, South Australia, Australia: Superb successor to the '09, the 2010 Bishop Shiraz is another bull's-eye from one of Australia's most reputable winemakers. Extremely dense black-ruby in

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colour, it exhibits remarkable aromas of black/purple fruits, 'dusty' dark mocha, mint, asphalt, forest floor, moderate eucalyptus, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with excellent, well-structured forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lingering, copious hint of pure black fruits on the finish. Powerful, impeccably crafted and focused. Screwcap closure. Now-2024++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91 \$39.95 (#627869) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Justin Vineyards 2009 Isosceles, Paso Robles, California: Consistently one of the top Bordeaux-blends in Paso Robles, Justin Baldwin's Isosceles remains one of the standard-bearers in this part of California. Opaque ruby in colour, the '09 is finely toasted, presenting alluring, slightly fragrant aromas of mocha, currants, black cherries, plums, asphalt, and a hint of toasted graham crackers, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with superbly delicious fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lingering, characterful hint of mocha, currants, and cherries on the finish. Marvellous intensity, fulsomeness, and elegance of temperament; though past vintages have shown more acute structure. 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Merlot, and 3% Cabernet Franc. Now-2023+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

91 \$78.95 (Private Order) The Vine: Robert Groh Agency

Château Labégorce 2000, Margaux AOC, Bordeaux, France: Under the same ownership as Château Marquis d'Alesme, the Labégorce property has been swiftly improved over the past dozen years. Dark red currant in colour with a trace of garnet, the '00 offers beautiful aromas of gentle cedar-themed currants, blackberries, plums, tobacco, savoury nuances, leather, and spice. Complex, wielding immensely refined fruit, firm yet well-integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a slowly maturing, elegant hint of currants and mild cedarwood on the finish. Superb mellowness and evolving maturity. According to one source: 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot. Now-2015+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

91 \$39.24 (Private Order) K&L Wines (USA)

La Fattoria di Magliano 2009 Perenzo Syrah, IGT Rosso della Maremma, Tuscany, Italy: Compared to the '08 or the '06, the 2009 Perenzo Syrah seem to possess less oak influence and more varietal emphasis. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine reveals elegant, almost understated aromas of blackberries, plums, dried blueberries, white pepper, tobacco, forest floor, underbrush, and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, sporting excellent, well-styled fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a stellar hint of dried blueberries, plums, and tobacco on the finish. Marvellous freshness, structure, and crispness. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91 \$51.99 (Private Order) Stem Wine Group

Miner Family Winery 2007 The Oracle, Napa Valley, California: For the most part, the Oracle style and flavour profile seldom changes from year to year. Not that this is a bad thing, for the quality has been both consistent and high. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the '07 is finely toasted, revealing exemplary aromas of black cherried mocha, currants, blackberries, strawberries, licorice, kirsch, minerals, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering delicious fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lengthy, well-structured hint of mocha and black cherried currants on the finish. Poignant, balanced, and long. 55%

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Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc, 15% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot, and 5% Malbec. Now-2023+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

91 \$89.95 (Private Order) Profile Wine Group

Famille Perrin 2010 Les Christins, Vacqueyras AOC, Rhône, France: From the Perrin family's négociant lineup, the 2010 Les Christins is the most ambitious, finely executed vintage to date. Opaque black-ruby in colour with a touch of purple, it features superb aromas of brambleberries, blackberries, white pepper elements, charcoal, incense, forest floor, and spice. Complex, boasting deliciously concentrated fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a mouth-puckering, paradoxically silky hint of plummy brambleberries and white pepper traces on the finish. Great impact, balance, and length. Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91 \$23.95 (#973453) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Pietranera 2006, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: One of few notes I have from here, the 2006 Brunello di Montalcino exudes great finesse, balance, and style. Dark red-garnet in colour, it reveals alluring, traditional aromas of savoury dried cherries and plums; switching to cedarwood, mild chestnuts, undergrowth, and a hint of white truffles and spice. Complex, with excellent fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a finesse-driven hint of dried cherries, cedarwood, and faint white truffles on the finish. Extremely sturdy and elegant, this will keep for well over a decade. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91 \$35.95 (#189761) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Boroli 2004 Cerequio, Barolo DOCG, Piedmont, Italy: Though I'm a greater fan of the '03 (examined four years ago), the 2004 Cerequio is nonetheless of modest, serious charm. Medium (faded) ruby-red currant in colour, it offers innately delicate, endearing scents of fragrant dried cherries and strawberries; giving way to tar, rose petals, and a hint of red fruits, cedarwood, and spice. Complex, possessing very fine fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a superb hint of fragrant dried cherries on the finish. Great delicateness, balance, and breed—positively mid-weight. Now-2021. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90+ \$87.99 (Private Order) Stem Wine Group

Domaine Clavel 2010 Bonne Pioche, Languedoc Pic Saint Loup AOC, Midi, France: Incredible value for money, the 2010 Bonne Pioche represents some serious winegrowing. Extremely dense black-ruby in colour, the wine reveals inviting aromas of 'dusty' blackberry compote, dark mocha, charcoal embers, kirsch, tobacco, vanilla, and spice. Complex, featuring delicious full-bodied fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a superb, lingering hint of blackberry compote and dark mocha extract on the finish. Assertive, balanced, and ageworthy. Syrah (predominant), Grenache, and Mourvèdre. Now-2019+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90+ \$19.95 (#297986) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Domaine Grand Veneur 2010 Clos de Sixte, Lirac AOC, Rhône, France: Easily the greatest Lirac I've ever examined, 2010 Clos de Sixte, opaque ruby in colour, displays tempting, impactful aromas of blackberries, plums, black raspberries, espresso, crushed rocks, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with excellent, finely structured fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lingering, slightly chewy hint of blackberries and floral elements

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on the finish. Bold, robust, and delicious. 50% Grenache, 35% Syrah, and 10% Mourvèdre. Now-2019. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90+ \$22.95 (#76349) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Signorello 2008 Padrone Proprietary Red, Napa Valley, California: Coming off the stellar '07, the 2008 Padrone, while assuredly suited to the North American palate, is not in the same league as many of its recent predecessors. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, displaying rich, slightly jammy aromas of mocha, black cherried currants, plums, raspberry treacle, licorice, vanilla, and spice. Complex, boasting beautiful, well-structured fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a long, powerful (and alcoholic) hint of mocha and black cherried currants on the finish. Powerful and Parkerized, with plenty of positives for lovers of the style. Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

90+ \$159.95 (Private Order) Profile Wine Group

Vidal-Fleury 2005 Brune & Blonde, Côte-Rôtie AOC, Rhône, France: Made from Côte Brune and Côte Blonde grapes, the 2005 Vidal-Fleury is both beautifully crafted and personified. Dark ruby-red currant in colour, the wine reveals very fragrant, slightly 'roasted' aromas of plums, red licorice, leather, pain grille, grilled herbs, and spice. Complex, retaining highly polished, slightly 'dusty' fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a marvellous hint of red currants, leather, and forest floor on the finish. Great character, structure, and breed. Now-2019+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

90+ Price Unavailable The Small Winemakers Collection (Private Order)

Tim Adams 2006 Cabernet/Malbec, Clare Valley, South Australia, Australia: Rare type of Bordeaux-blend by Aussie standards, the well-crafted 2006 Cabernet/Malbec is now showing a little maturity. Opaque faded ruby in colour with a touch of red currant, it features superb aromas of mild cigarbox-infused currants, subtle dark mocha, graphite, and a hint of pipe tobacco, eucalyptus, and spice. Complex, retaining great fruit, firm tannins, mild acidity, and a well-structured hint of dried black fruits on the finish. Beautiful style, balance, and confidence. 80% Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% Malbec. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90 \$26.95 (#295535) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Bertani 2006 Villa Arvedi, Amarone della Valpolicella DOC, Veneto, Italy: With roots dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, Bertani has long been recognized as a source of reliable, sometimes superlative Amarone. Dark-opaque red currant in colour, the 2006 Villa Arvedi reveals appetizing aromas of baked cedary plums and savoury Baker's Chocolate®; switching to wild cherries, leather, undergrowth, smoke, and exotic spices. Complex, with delicious, slightly smoky/peppery fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a satisfying hint of cedary plums and roasted meats on the finish. Superior character, balance, and flavour. According to their website: typically Corvina and Rondinella. Now-2017++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

90 \$37.95 (#13417) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

Darioush 2007 Duel, Napa County, California: Darioush's answer to the blend made famous throughout Australia, the 2007 Duel is immensely saturated and satisfying. Dense black-ruby in colour with a shade of blue, the wine is heavily toasted, offering

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substantial aromas of 'dusty' chocolate, blackberry/blueberry treacle, currants, forest floor, asphalt, bonbons, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with sumptuous, alcoholic fruit (16.4%), firm tannins, milder acidity, and a long-lasting hint of blackberry treacle and chocolate on the finish. Port-like, powerful, and Parkerized—well-suited to the North American palate. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Shiraz. Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, October 2012)

90 \$48.95 (#291013) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Flowers 2009 Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast (Sonoma County), California: Routinely one of the most Burgundian of Pinots in California, the 2009 'straight up' Flowers has it where it counts. Medium ruby in colour, the wine exhibits wonderfully 'silky' aromas of raspberries, strawberries, subtle cherries and licorice, plus a hint of violets and spice. Complex, retaining very pleasurable, pure 'Pinot' fruit, fine tannins, ever-so slightly milder acidity, and a refined hint of raspberries on the finish. Beautiful clarity, character, and style; though perhaps a tad more 'streamlined' than previous vintages. Now-2016+. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, April 2012)

90 \$67.95 (Private Order) Rogers & Company

Fontodi 2009, Chianti Classico DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: Like the '08 tasted earlier this year, the 2009 Fontodi is a model Chianti Classico. Dark ruby in colour, the wine delivers beautiful aromas of dark wild cherries, plums, gentle leather and herbs, underbrush, cedary nuances, and a hint of tree bark and spice. Complex, retaining very fine, elegant fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a refined, utterly splendid hint of wild cherries on the finish. Understated approach, still completely balanced and harmonious. The website intimates 100% Sangiovese. Now-2017++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, October 2012)

90 \$29.95 (#933317) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Domaine Michelas St-Jemms 2009 Sainte Epine, St-Joseph AOC, Rhône, France: My only note from this domaine, the 2009 Sainte Epine remains in keeping with the heightened direction of quality continually taking place throughout St-Joseph. Opaque purple-ruby in colour, the wine offers first-rate, almost saturated aromas of white pepper-infused blackberries, brambleberries, dried blueberries, tobacco, leather, asphalt, and spice. Complex, possessing superb fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a refined, finely structured hint of blackberries and asphalt on the finish. Great mouthfeel, balance, and control. Now-2018. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, October 2012)

90 \$31.95 (#296772) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Mitolo 2009 Serpico Cabernet Sauvignon, McLaren Vale, South Australia, Australia: Made in the same manner as Amarone della Valpolicella, compared to the '08 the 2009 Serpico Cabernet Sauvignon is more fruit-oriented and sinewy. Opaque ruby-red currant in colour, the wine is beautifully toasted, showcasing attractive aromas of baked currants, stewed plummy raspberries/red fruits, apple butter, figs, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with sumptuous forward fruit, firm yet strictly supple tannins, mild acidity, and a lasting, characterful hint of sinewy/stewed black fruits on the finish. Powerful, personalized, and lengthy. Screwcap closure. Now-2019++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, October 2012)

90 \$57.95 (#659599) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

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The Prisoner 2011 Proprietary Red, Napa Valley, California: A first-degree smorgasbord of a blend, winemaker Dave Phinney's 2011 Proprietary Red is a qualitative surprise. Opaque black-ruby in colour with purple highlights, it reveals an attractive admixture of sweet blackberries, plums, mocha, candied black fruits, licorice, incense, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with delicious forward fruit, firm yet approachable tannins, milder acidity, and a lengthy, flavourful hint of ripe plummy blackberries and sweet mocha extract on the finish. Powerful, lengthy, and very interesting. 51% Zinfandel, 19% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Syrah, 12% Petite Sirah, 2% Charbono, and 1% Grenache. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90 \$49.95 (#104299) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Ramey 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: Checking my database, the 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon is one of few notes I have from David Ramey's operation. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, revealing poignant, if not slightly baked aromas of maraschino cherry-driven currants, plums, scorched earth, and plentiful vanilla and spice. Reasonably complex, carrying fulsome forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lingering hint of mocha and cherried currants on the finish. Better on the palate, boasting great grip, flavour, and length. Also contains 4% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot. Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

90 \$58.89 (Private Order) Barrel Select

Domaine la Roquette 2009, Châteauneuf-du-Pape AOC, Rhône, France: Crafted in more of an open, rounder style, the 2009 Châteauneuf-du-Pape embodies a clear sense of balance, harmony, and marvellous cheerfulness. Dark ruby in colour, it features resolutely elegant aromas of plums, cherries, raspberries, licorice, leather, spicebox, and herbs. Complex, possessing very fine fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a stylish, accessible hint of plums, licorice, and herbs on the finish. Great freshness and upbeat drinkability. 70% Grenache, 20% Syrah, and 10% Mourvèdre. Now-2022+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90 \$46.95 (#70862) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Sartori di Verona 2007 Reius, Amarone della Valpolicella Classico DOC, Veneto, Italy: In its present state, the 2007 Reius delivers an eminent performance. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine details youthful aromas of lightly toasted oak; quickly giving way to fresh black cherries, red currants and plums, licorice, spring flowers, and a hint of baker's chocolate, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with very fresh, upbeat fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a very lovely, elegant hint of cherries on the finish. Beautiful, adolescent Amarone, sporting excellent roundness, balance, and freshness. Typically 50% Corvina, 30% Corvinone, 15% Rondinella, and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2011)

90 \$40.06 (Private Order) Weinunion (Germany)

Domaine du Vieux Lazaret 2009, Châteauneuf-du-Pape AOC, Rhône, France: Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the beautiful 2009 Domaine du Vieux Lazaret calls to mind polished aromas of black raspberries, plums, licorice, mild lavender, underbrush, and a lovely hint of garrigue and spice. Complex, possessing open, deliciously round fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a gentle, accessible hint of raspberries (a little 'dusty') and lavender on the finish. Excellent flavouring, balance, and approachability. Grenache,

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Syrah, Mourvèdre, and Cinsault. Now-2022+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90 \$34.95 (#983650) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Kenneth Volk 2008 Santa Maria Cuvée Pinot Noir, Santa Maria Valley (Santa Barbara County), California: My only note from this winery, the 2008 Santa Maria Cuvée Pinot Noir is of first-rate appeal. Medium-dark ruby in colour, the wine is very lightly toasted, presenting beautiful aromas of plummy cherries, raspberries, wild strawberries, rhubarb, and spice. Complex, retaining very fine, well-styled fruit, fine yet entirely accessible tannins, milder acidity, and a highly satisfying, polished hint of plummy cherries and rhubarb on the finish. Generous without excess, with marvellous balance and flavour. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90 \$36.95 (#291039) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Château Fortia 2007 Cuvée du Baron, Châteauneuf-du-Pape AOC, Rhône, France: From one of the most underwhelming estates in the appellation, the 2007 Cuvée du Baron may very well indicate a much-needed turnaround in quality. Dark ruby in colour, the wine is lightly toasted, offering engaging aromas of dark raspberries and cherries; giving way to plums, leather, herbs, licorice, pain grille, and spice. Complex, with beautiful, approachable fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant hint of dark raspberries and cherries on the finish. Truly admirable, fresh, and characterful. 55% Grenache, 35% Syrah, and 10% Mourvèdre. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2011)

89++ \$34.95 (#959999) Vintages 19 February 2011 Release

Kaesler 2008 Stonehorse SGM, Barossa Valley, South Australia, Australia: Examined as part of a portfolio tasting, the 2008 Stonehorse SGM acquits itself well. Dark ruby in colour, the wine displays lovely aromas of fresh red fruits; switching to dark cherries, leather, eucalyptus, lavender, wild flowers, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with beautiful forward fruit, supple tannins, high alcohol (16%), and a lengthy hint of dark leather plums, cherries, and eucalyptus on the finish. Delicious, fruitier style; quite powerful. 62% Shiraz, 28% Grenache, and 10% Mourvèdre. Screwcap closure. Now-2017+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2010)

89+ \$20.95 (#6551) Vintages 23 June 2012 Release

Guigal 2009, Crozes-Hermitage AOC, Rhône, France: Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the 2009 Crozes-Hermitage displays personable aromas of blackberries, brambleberries, leather, roasted meats, and a hint of herbs, vanilla, and spice. Complex, retaining very fine fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a polished, well-structured hint of brambleberries and plums on the finish. Lovely character and balance. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

89 \$24.95 (#704908) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Nicolas Potel 2007, Beaune Premier Cru Les Grèves AOC, Burgundy, France: Owned since 2003 by négociant Labouré-Roi, the wines of Nicolas Potel are often hit-and-miss. Somewhere in the middle, the 2007 Les Grèves, medium ruby-red currant in colour, reveals lovely aromas of fresh cherries, raspberries, loamy earth, and a hint of toasted oak and spice. Complex, retaining charming, slightly lean fruit, fine tannins, balanced acidity, and a splendid hint of delicate cherries on the finish. Quite pretty,

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balanced, and fresh; true to the commune. Now-2014++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

89 \$29.95 (#196899) Vintages 19 February 2011 Release

Peter Lehmann 2008 The Futures Shiraz, Barossa, South Australia, Australia: Opaque ruby in colour, the 2008 Futures Shiraz is finely toasted, offering lovely, slightly 'singed' notes of mocha, plummy currants, licorice, kirsch liqueur, eucalyptus, vanilla, and spice. Complex, boasting fine supple fruit and tannins, mild acidity, and a lingering hint of baked mocha and plums on the finish. Round, accessible, and very tasty. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

88+ \$24.95 (#606780) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Castello di Farnetella 2007 Lucilla, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: Dark ruby in colour, the 2007 Lucilla displays fresh notes of 'rustic' blackberries and cherries; switching to wild plums, currants, undergrowth, and a hint of leather, vanilla, and spice. On the palate: fine fruit showing, with firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a solid hint of leather-laced black plums on the finish. Lovely firmness and balance. Now-2014+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

88 \$18.95 (#190033) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

Sandalford 2009 Shiraz, Margaret River, Western Australia, Australia: Opaque purple-ruby in colour, the 2009 Shiraz displays lovely notes of damson and plums; switching to currants, gentle leather, and a hint of vanilla and spice. On the palate: very good forward fruit showing, with near-firm tannins, milder acidity, and a hint of wild flowers and plums on the finish. High-octane at 15% alcohol, still properly structured and satisfying. Screwcap closure. Now-2015++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

88 \$19.95 (#80671) Vintages 16 October 2010 Release

Alkoomi 2007 White Label Shiraz, Frankland River, Western Australia, Australia: Dark ruby in colour, the 2007 White Label Shiraz reveals fragrant, slightly candied notes of cherried plums, currants, and a hint of scorched earth, vanilla, and spice. Palate: good fruit showing, with approachable tannins, milder acidity, and a hint of smooth raspberried plums on the finish. Tasty, forward style, albeit slightly jammy. Screwcap closure. Now-2013. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2009)

87+ \$14.95 (#138560) Vintages 9 January 2011 Release

Fincas Patagonicas 2007 Zolo Reserva Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina: Very dense purple-ruby in colour, the 2007 Zolo Reserve Malbec displays crimson-violet currants, plums, blueberries, coconut, toasted oak, vanilla, and spice. On the palate: good fruit showing, with firm tannins, milder acidity, and a hint of violet currants on the finish. Dense, tasty, basic bottling. Now-2013+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

87 \$16.95 (#81091) Vintages 16 October 2010 Release

Sparkling Wines:

Louis Roederer 2002 Vintage Cristal Brut, Champagne, France: My favourite vintage of the third millennium thus far, the 2002 Cristal is about a monumental a bottling as it

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gets. Pale-light straw in colour with a touch of lime, this beauty elicits stupendous scents of yeasty biscuits/French toast, citrus oils and white grapefruit, sugar power, pistachios, ginger, and abundant exotic spices. Truly complex, wielding fabulous moussy fruit, balanced acidity, and a wondrous, multistoried hint of lemon citrus-oriented French toasted, pears, and spicy white flowers on the finish. Gorgeous, decadent bubbly of amazing stylization, balance, and harmony. Now-2034++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

96+ \$286.95 (#268755) Vintages Essentials

Moët & Chandon 2000 Vintage Dom Pérignon Brut Rosé, Champagne, France: Grandiose in every sense of the word, the 2000 Vintage Dom Pérignon Rosé will leave collectors speechless. Light-medium pink-salmon in colour, this dazzling champagne is subdued at first, opening up to reveal a fantastic array of aromas consisting of fragrant cherries and yeasty biscuits; switching to red fruits, pink raspberries, rose petals, tropical citrus elements, a few nuts, and a host of exotic spices. Extremely complex, wielding profound, almost Burgundian-inspired fruit, frothy acidity, and a substantial, from-the-heart hint of red 'Pinot' fruits, yeasty biscuits, and exotic spices on the finish. Elegant, eloquent, and resolutely harmonious. Now-2028+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

95+ \$299.95 (#91777) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Moët & Chandon 2003 Vintage Dom Pérignon Brut, Champagne, France: Strikingly opulent and seductive, at this point the recently released 2003 Dom Pérignon is far more outgoing than its more tightly wound predecessor. Pale lime in colour, this glorious bottling showcases magnificent, absorbing scents of fragrant lime-infused biscuits and French toast; gently giving way to white flowers, lemon citrus, ginger, orange zest, sugar powder, and exotic spices. Incredibly complex, delivering extraordinary, crisp yet multilayered frothy fruit, balanced acidity, and an astonishing hint of lemon/lime citrus, biscuits, and white flowers on the finish. Generous by Moët standards, along with the '00 this should serve as a stunning stopgap while the more classic vintages of late come into their own. Now-2030++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

95 \$219.95 (#280461) Vintages Essentials

Bonnaire 2004 Vintage Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru Brut, Champagne, France: My first recorded note from here, the 2004 Vintage Blanc de Blancs, sourced entirely from Grand Cru vineyards, exceeds expectations. Pale lime in colour with a touch of straw, it opts for stylish, enticing scents of biscuits, pears, white flower petals, fresh lemon citrus, gingerroot, and spice. Complex, featuring excellent, finesse-oriented fruit, balanced acidity, and a superlative hint of pure brioche and pears on the finish. Exquisite mid-weight disposition, structure, and harmony. Now-2019++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

92+ \$62.95 (#721035) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Perrier-Jouët 1979 Vintage Spécial Reserve Brut, Champagne, France: Beguiling, over-the-top vintage champagne, the 1979 Spécial Reserve was probably at its best in the mid-1990s. Medium golden-caramel in colour with orange highlights, it reveals an intense bouquet of toasted honeysuckle, marmalade, dried fruits, coffee beans, and exotic spices. Very complex, retaining only a pinprick of fizz-oriented fruit, balanced

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acidity, and an enduring, almost defiant hint of orange fruits and Fino elements on the finish. Wonderfully oxidative, mature quality and personality—for lovers of ‘geriatric’ bubbly. Drink now. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

92 \$300.00 (Approximate) Auction Only

Beaumont des Crayères NV Grand Prestige Brut, Champagne, France: Based out of the village of Mardeuil northeast of Épernay, Beaumont de Crayères has been making champagne since the late-1950s. Pale-light straw in colour with a trace of lime, the Grand Prestige is gently honeyed, featuring open, elegant scents of brioche, toasted biscuits, white flowers, ginger, lemon, and spice. Complex, with rounder, deliciously frothy fruit, balanced acidity, and a great hint of toasted biscuits and lemony white flowers on the finish. First-rate vibrancy, balance, and style. 40% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir, and 20% Pinot Meunier. Now-2016+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91 \$46.95 (#903443) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Michel Gonet NV Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Brut, Champagne, France: From a long-established grower house based out of Avize in the heart of the Côte des Blancs, the NV Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs is a sheer delight. Pale straw in colour, the wine is finely toasted, with adorable scents of lemon citrus, ginger, wild white flowers, pistachios, and a hint of Asian spice. Complex, retaining excellent crisp fruit, balanced acidity, and a superb, elegant hint of lemon citrus and wild white flowers on the finish. Not a flashy offering, this is all grace, crispness, and character. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

91 \$69.95 (#238477) Vintages 28 May 2011 In-Store Discovery

Tarlant NV Brut Rosé, Champagne, France: Having grown familiar with overall style of the house, the quality and approach of the NV Rosé comes as little surprise. Light pink in colour, it offers truly charming, tempting scents of pink cherries and ruby-red grapefruit; switching to yeasty biscuits, dried nectarines, citrus fruits, and spice. Complex, possessing crisp citrus-driven fruit, balanced acidity, and a marvellous hint of ruby-red grapefruit and subtle toasted biscuits on the finish. Extremely pretty, balanced, and refined. 85% Chardonnay and 15% Pinot Noir. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91 \$49.95 (#664680) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Barnaut NV Blanc de Noirs Grand Cru Brut, Champagne, France: Crafted entirely from red grapes, the finesse-driven NV Blanc de Noirs is sourced entirely from Grand Cru vineyards. Pale straw in colour, the wine reveals very beautiful scents of floral yeasty biscuits, pears, ginger, white flowers, lemon, vanilla wafers, and spice. Complex, retaining very fine, elegant fruit, balanced acidity, and a crisp, invigorating hint of delicate yeasty biscuits and lemon citrus on the finish. Harmonious, balanced, and effortlessly refined. Now-2017+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90++ \$44.95 (#301887) Vintages 8 December 2012 Release

Charles de Cazanove NV Premier Cru Brut, Champagne, France: Founded in 1811, Charles de Cazanove is a small-scale house based out of Avize in the Côte des Blancs. Pale straw in colour, the NV Premier Cru offers refined, crisp scents of yeasty biscuits,

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lemon, ginger, white flowers, and a hint of grapefruit and spice. Complex, retaining beautiful frothy fruit, balanced acidity, and a superb, upstanding hint of yeasty biscuits and lemon on the finish. Balanced, stylish, and very dry—first rate in my estimation. 50% Chardonnay and 50% Pinot Noir. Now-2018. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

90+ \$43.95 (#299750) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Vazart-Coquart NV Réserve Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs Brut, Champagne, France:

Based out of Chouilly (located just southeast of Épernay), the Vazart-Coquart family have been producing champagne since the mid-1800s. Very pale straw in colour, the NV Réserve Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs features beautifully understated scents of herbed green fruits and lemon; switching to mild biscuits, ginger, minerals, and spice. Complex, possessing splendidly crisp fruit, balanced acidity, and an advantageously light-weight, delicate hint of lemony biscuits on the finish. Great delicacy, character, and lightness of touch. Now-2016+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2012)

90 \$55.00 (Private Order) Marquis Wine Cellars

Louis Bouillot 2006 Perle Rare Brut, Crémant de Bourgogne AOC, Burgundy, France:

Pale straw-lime in colour, the 2006 Perle Rare offers lovely notes of toasted biscuits, lemon citrus, baked green apples, pears, grapefruit, white flowers, and spice. On the palate: light, crisp fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a hint of dried pears and lemon on the finish. Good freshness, balance, and character; though perhaps a tad light in my estimation. Typically 60% Chardonnay, 35% Pinot Noir, and 5% Gamay. Now-2012+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

87++ \$19.95 (#178137) Vintages 16 October 2010 Release

Fortified Wine:

Smith Woodhouse 2000 Vintage Port, Douro DOC, Portugal: Regrettably one of few notes I have from this glorious vintage, the 2000 Smith Woodhouse is an awesome port to behold. Extremely dense ruby in colour, it is evolving at a snail's pace, presenting stunning aromas of black fruits, blackberry treacle, brambleberry liqueur, dates, licorice, eau de vie, walnuts, vanilla, and exotic spices. Very complex, boasting opulent fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lasting, heavenly hint of black fruits and dark chocolate on the finish. Immensely characterful, with exceptional depth, balance, and capability. This will easily go on another thirty years and beyond. Now-2042++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

95 \$79.95 (#140277) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Spirits:

Camus XO Élegance, Cognac, France: One of the tops blends in the Élegance range, the Camus XO is an assuredly smooth, graceful offering—a collector's Cognac in virtually every sense. Medium orange in colour, it reveals decadent yet delicate aromas of caramel, red fruits, ample butterscotch, and a whole array of exotic spices. On the palate: wonderfully mellow, with seamless depth, balance, and refinement. Round in approach yet overtly generous, this will offer abundant contentment to those with the good sense to seek it out. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

93 \$207.95 (#303099) Vintages 27 October 2012 In-Store Discovery

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Bowen XO, Cognac, France: Likely the only Cognac I have yet to taste from this house, the terrific Bowen XO seems designed with the North American palate in mind—less fiery and with heightened textural smoothness. Medium-dark orange in colour, it presents indulgent aromas of caramel, *petits fruits rouges*, orange peel, brown sugar nuances, and plenty of spice. On the palate: excellent dimension, style, and harmony, with plenty of caramel on the finish. Decadent and delicious. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

92+ \$184.95 (#298414) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release

Torres 20 Hors d'Âge, Spain: Crafted from Parellada and Ugni Blanc, the 20 Hors d'Âge is one of the only Spanish brandies I have ever tasted with any seriousness. Medium orange-caramel in colour, it displays excellent aromas of caramel (gently spicy), walnuts, dried *petits fruits rouges*, fruitcake, and orange zest. On the palate: beautiful, expressive mouthfeel, with exceptional balance and appropriate weight. Lingering, stylish, and bold. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2012)

91 \$81.95 (#286740) Vintages 24 November 2012 Release