

The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner

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~ Wine education for us all – Valpolicella ~

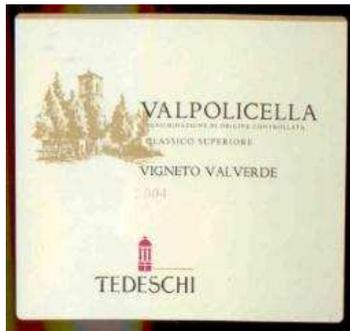
Saturday, July 7th, 2012

Quintessentially Italian:

The most important DOC (or subregion) in the Veneto, Valpolicella is one of the most famous light-bodied reds in Italy. Located right above starry-eyed Verona, in many ways Valpolicella might remind drinkers of Chianti: easygoing, fresh, and carrying that extra degree of acidity that's so important with food pairings.

And like Chianti, there are regrettably more bad versions than good.

At the top end, Valpolicella is just as complex and meaningful as any great Italian wine. At bottom, however, the commercial versions often taste artificially sweet, underripe, and excessively acidic. Fortunately, there are nowadays many bottlings, relatively inexpensive, which provide much satisfaction. Most of these hail from the Classico (or heartland) part of the region, with vines located on the best parts of the hillsides.



According to regulations, Valpolicella must be made from 40-70% Corvina Veronese, 20-40% Rondinella, and 5-25% Molinara, with the option of up to 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Negrara, Barbera, and Sangiovese (as well as a few others). Excepting the very best bottlings, the oak influence in Valpolicella is minimal. Basic versions are usually aged for up to a year in Slavonian oak casks, while those labelled 'Superiore' require longer maturations. Here, the primary aim is freshness and a reasonable upgrade in complexity, not tannic extraction or more powerful flavours.



Indeed, the key to appreciating good Valpolicella is discovering its gentleness and easygoing attitude. When young, aromas should include fresh cherries, red plums, light savoury nuances, cedar, underbrush, and the slightest hint of almond bitterness. On the palate, the ideal Valpolicella should emphasize these flavours while maintaining as fresh and rejuvenating a disposition as possible. Most Valpolicella should be served between 10-12°C. Though the best

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examples can be cellared for up to ten years or more, basic versions should be drunk young.

Food pairing options are diverse, though pasta dishes (especially lasagna) and light game birds (especially Cornish hen) are a few personal favourites. When in doubt, just follow your own taste buds.

Shared At: <http://www.winealign.com/user-list/julianhitner/7-july-2012-release---other-gems>

A few gems for collectors:

White Wines:

Tement 2007 Zieregg Sauvignon Blanc, Südsteiermark, Steiermark, Austria: A revelation like no other, the 2007 Zieregg is not only one of the greatest Sauvignon Blancs I have ever tasted, it also ranks among the most profound, mind-altering whites (of its type) I have ever examined. Pale green in colour, it showcases incredibly intense, mineral-driven scents of lemongrass, dried pears, white grapefruit, quince, white flowers, gooseberries, and schist. Very complex, delivering astonishingly crisp, mineraly fruit, brilliant acidity, and a very lengthy, elegant hint of lemongrass, gooseberries, and minerals on the finish. Fantastically crafted, this truly is an incomparable wine. Glass closure. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

93 \$62.00 (Private Order) Woodman Wines & Spirits

Nikolaihof 2005 Steiner Hund Reserve Riesling, Wachau, Niederösterreich, Austria: One of the Saahs' best Rieslings, the 2005 Steiner Hund Reserve is one of the finest wines I have yet to taste from this particular neck of the Austrian woods. Light straw in colour, it offers superbly intense, elegant scents of lemon citrus, dried orange blossom, pears, lime, minerals, and a hint of spice. Very complex, featuring remarkable mineraly fruit (fabulously textured), balanced acidity, and an incredible hint of dried lemon, pears, and minerals on the finish. Fairly backward when examined, the potential longevity of this wine is clear. Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

92 \$65.95 (Private Order) The Living Vine

Flowers 2010 Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast (Sonoma County), California: Since 1991, Walt and Joan Flowers have been producing some of the most elegant Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in Northern Sonoma. Pale-light lime in colour, the 2010 Sonoma Coast Chardonnay is finely toasted, featuring slightly Burgundian-themed scents of pears, delicate butterscotch, dried apricots, stone fruit, orange zest, and nuts. Complex, possessing superlative mineraly fruit, balanced acidity, and a texturally brilliant hint of pears, mild butterscotch, and orange zest on the finish. Excellently balanced and stylish, with just the appropriate weight. Now-2019+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

91++ \$59.95 (#215210) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Nikolaihof 2007 Im Weingebirge Grüner Veltliner Smaragd, Wachau, Niederösterreich, Austria: One of the top Grüners in the Nikolaihof arsenal, the 2007 Im Weingebirge Smaragd is one of the best wines of its type I've ever tasted. Light

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straw-lime in colour, it presents marvellous scents of fresh white lentils and lemon that shortly give way to white peppercorns, minerals, herbs (more Provençal style than anything), and a hint of dried honeycomb and nuts. Complex, boasting beautiful, elegant fruit, balanced acidity, and a superlative hint of lemon, minerals, and white lentils on the finish. My final comment: just beautiful. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

91 \$59.95 (Private Order) **The Living Vine**

Ponzi 2009 Reserve Chardonnay, Willamette Valley, Oregon: My first note from this winery, the 2009 Reserve Chardonnay is marvellously styled, balanced, and refined. Pale-light lime in colour, the wine reveals abundant Meursault-inspired scents of pears, quince, delicate yet poignant hazelnuts, white flowers, lemon, and minerals. Complex, delivering beautiful, judiciously restrained fruit, balanced acidity, and an elegant, expressive hint of delicate hazelnuts and pears on the finish. Excellently crafted, this is one of the best Chardonnays I have yet to taste out of the Willamette Valley. Now-2020. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

91 \$38.95 (#236208) **Vintages 7 July 2012 Release**

Churton 2010 Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, South Island, New Zealand: Compared to most Marlborough Sauvignons which are fermented entirely in vat, 10% of the 2010 Churton has been barrel-fermented in cask—with amazing results. Very pale lime in colour, the wine reveals truly characterful scents of tropical citrus pears, kiwi, subtle pineapple, nectarines, and a trace of toasted oak. Complex, boasting beautifully polished fruit, balanced acidity, and an elegant, lingering hint of citrus pears (semi-tropical) on the finish. Intense, balanced, and forward, one is able to detect the wine's slight white Pessac-Léognan leanings. Now-2016++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

90++ \$23.95 (#159244) **Vintages 7 July 2012 Release**

Kurt Angerer 2006 Unfiltriert Grüner Veltliner, Kamptal DAC, Niederösterreich, Austria: Likely the most original Grüner Veltliner I've ever tasted, the 2006 Unfiltriert is crafted along the lines of a premium Californian Chardonnay. Light yellow in colour, this perplexingly extracted wine is finely toasted, revealing inviting scents of dried natted honeysuckle, baked yellow plums, creamed corn, and a hint of quince, white lentils, and spice. Complex, boasting considerable fruit, balanced acidity, high alcohol (15%), and a beautiful, lengthy hint of dried honeysuckle, lentils, and caramel on the finish. Idiosyncratic and stylistically outdated, nonetheless delicious. Now-2015. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

90 \$45.00 (Private Order) **B & W Wines**

Bründlmayer 2007 Alte Reben Grüner Veltliner, Wachau, Niederösterreich, Austria: Excepting single-vineyard wines, Alte Reben bottlings (meaning 'Old Vines' in German) are usually much fuller and far more characterful than the vast majority of Austrian whites. Light straw in colour, the 2007 Grüner Veltliner of this sort displays extremely lovely scents of pure white lentils and pepper; switching to baked lemon, dried green apples, and a hint of cream, minerals, and spice. Complex, carrying truly fine fruit, balanced acidity, and a beautiful, slightly creamy hint of green apples, white lemon, and minerals on the finish. Superb, classy substance. Now-2016. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

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90 \$44.00 (Private Order) B & W Wines

Merry Edwards 2010 Sauvignon Blanc, Russian River Valley (Sonoma County), California: Entirely fermented in French oak (18% new), the gracefulness and charm of the 2010 Sauvignon Blanc is unmistakable. Pale lime in colour, it is extremely delicate, offering marvellous suggestions of lemon citrus/lemongrass, peach skins, white grapefruit, lemon, and a trace of herbs. Complex, with fine, almost silky fruit, milder acidity, and a truly elegant hint of lemon citrus and pears on the finish. A Sauvignon of excellent subtlety, focus, and style. Horribly overpriced in this market. Now-2015. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, July 2012)

90 \$47.95 (#283705) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Nigl 2009 Privat Grüner Veltliner, Kremstal DAC, Niederösterreich, Austria: Flagship Grüner Veltliner from Martin Nigl's remarkable lineup, the 2009 Privat is about as intense and elegant as the varietal can get at such a young age. Pale greenish-straw in colour, it offers expressive scents of white lentils and pepper; switching to lemon, minerals, dried green apples and pears, plus a hint of spice. Complex, carrying superlative fruit, mineral acidity, and a lovely, elegant hint of lemon, white pepper, and minerals on the finish. Terrifically textured and balanced. Screwcap closure. Now-2016+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

90 \$46.50 (Private Order) Le Sommelier

Sbragia 2009 Home Ranch Chardonnay, Dry Creek Valley (Sonoma County), California: Best known for its old-vine Zinfandel, the 2009 Home Ranch is one of few quality Chardonnays I have ever tasted from Dry Creek Valley. Light greenish-lime in colour, the wine is finely toasted, sporting intense, pristine scents of pears, lemon citrus, apricots, delicate honeysuckle, orange zest, and a hint of mango, nuts, and lime. Complex, with powerful yet Burgundian-inspired fruit, balanced acidity, high alcohol (14.8%), and a lingering, elegant hint of pears, quince, and nuts on the finish. Rich, delicious, and entirely workable. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, July 2012)

90 \$34.95 (#52720) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Tement 2008 Grassnitzberg Sauvignon Blanc, Südsteiermark, Steiermark, Austria: Runner-up to the Zieregg (the top dry white of the winery), the Grassnitzberg Sauvignon Blanc, while not nearly as potent as its counterpart, remains extremely attractive. Very pale green in colour, the '08 exhibits beautiful scents of grass-laden lemon, white grapefruit, and minerals. Complex, revealing intensely mineral fruit, balanced acidity, and a refined, lingering hint of lemongrass, minerals, and herbs on the finish. Considerably intense and elegant, this reminds me most of a single-vineyard Sancerre. Glass closure. Now-2014++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

90 \$90.00 (Private Order) Woodman Wines & Spirits

Château de Beaucastel 2009 Coudoulet de Beaucastel Blanc, Côtes du Rhône AOC, Rhône, France: Over the past few years, the white version of the Coudoulet de Beaucastel seems to have risen in both quality and seriousness. Pale straw in colour, the '09 displays lovely scents of dried lemon, green apples, autumnal leaves, and pears. Reasonably complex, carrying fine fruit, balanced acidity, and a really splendid hint of herbed pears and dried lemon on the finish. Getting better with each passing vintage,

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collectors would still be well-advised to hold off purchasing this label by the case for the present time. Now-2015. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

89+ \$33.95 (#48892) Vintages 30 October 2010 Release

Cave Spring 2008 CSV Cave Spring Vineyard Riesling, Beamsville Bench VQA, Niagara Peninsula, Ontario, Canada: Top Riesling from Cave Spring Cellars, the 2008 CSV, while not as concentrated and intense as the '07, remains an impressive example of the prevailing regional style beginning to emerge in this part of Niagara. Pale straw-lime in colour, it displays lovely scents of sweet 'icy' lemon, lime, tropical pears, green apples, and a trace of kerosene and spice. Complex, with very fine, crisp fruit, splendid acidity, and a lingering hint of lemon and kerosene (off-dry) on the finish. Admirable wine, and at 11.5% alcohol we can all enjoy a little more of the stuff. Now-2015+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

89+ \$29.95 (#566026) Vintages 18 September 2010 Release

Domaine de La Tour 2008, Chablis Premier Cru Montmains AOC, Burgundy, France: Over the past several years, it seems like I've tasted dozens of Chablis from Montmains, some of which have been better than others. The 2008 Domaine de La Tour is the former: pale-light straw lime in colour, the wine reveals delicate scents of slightly creamy green apples, dried pears, lemon, chalk, and the slightest trace of nuts. Complex, possessing very fine steely fruit, balanced acidity, and a lovely hint of fresh, slightly 'chalky' green apples on the finish. Charming and delicate, this serves as an ideal example of finely crafted Chablis. Now-2014++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

89+ \$29.95 (#159731) Vintages 5 March 2011 Release

Domaine de Saint-Pierre 2008, Sancerre AOC, Loire, France: As far as I'm aware, this is my only note from this winery. Pale lime in colour, the completely elegant '08 Sancerre reveals delicate scents of grassy gooseberry-infused lemon, lime, white grapefruit, nectarines, asparagus, and 'chalky' minerals. Complex, with beautiful minerally fruit, steely acidity, and a refined hint of grassy gooseberries (very pure yet different from Marlborough) and minerals on the finish. Worthy both of purchase and enthusiasts' genuine admiration. Now-2013. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

89+ \$24.95 (#170258) Vintages 18 September 2010 Release

Nikolaihof 2008 Hefeabzug Grüner Veltliner, Wachau, Niederösterreich, Austria: Since embracing biodynamic principles, Nikolaihof has fast become one of the greatest producers in the Wachau. Pale straw-lime in colour, the 2007 Hefeabzug Grüner Veltliner reveals very lovely scents of baked white lentils, lemon, dried pears, and a hint of lime and schist. Complex, retaining very fine fruit, balanced acidity, and a crisp, elegant hint of white lentils and spicy lemon on the finish. Superior wine, reflected—excessively—in the price. Screwcap closure. Now-2015+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

89+ \$28.95 (Private Order) The Living Vine

Domaine Jean-Marc Brocard 2008, Chablis Premier Cru Côte de Lechet AOC, Burgundy, France: One of the most favoured Premier Cru sites in Chablis, the 2008 Côte de Lechet represents a refined, characterful effort from Domaine Jean-Marc

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Brocard. Light lime in colour, it is delicately toasted, revealing lovely scents of pears, lemon, 'dry' marzipan, caramel, green apples, and a hint of white flowers and flint. Complex, with fine fruit, balanced acidity, and an intriguing, elegant hint of orange blossom and pears on the finish. Splendidly polished and well crafted. Now-2012+.
(Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

89 \$26.95 (#181305) Vintages 18 September 2010 Release

Frog's Leap 2009 Sauvignon Blanc, Rutherford (Napa Valley), California: While I have never been an avid enthusiast of Napa-based Sauvignon Blanc, the 2009 Frog's Leap stands out as one of the better efforts I've tasted in a long while. Very pale lime in colour, it seems inspired by its counterparts far away in Marlborough, delivering attractive scents of grassy gooseberries, lemon, lime, white grapefruit, and just the slightest hint of orange zest. Complex, with fine zesty/steely fruit, balanced acidity, moderate alcohol (12.6%), and a lingering hint of mineral green apples, gooseberries, and lemon-lime elements on the finish. Impressive, indeed. Now-2013. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

89 \$27.95 (#966036) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

The Royal Tokaji Wine Company 2009 Furmint, Tokaji, Hungary: Great value for money, the 2009 Furmint provides wine lovers with a chance to taste the star white grape of Hungary in dry format. Pale lime in colour, this overachiever shows lovely, vibrant scents of pears, buttercups, lemon citrus, white peach skins, and minerals. Reasonably complex, with beautiful fruit, balanced acidity, and a refined hint of pears and buttercups on the finish. Finely crafted and amply rewarding for the curious. Now-2015+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

89 \$13.95 (#653220) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Bründlmayer 2008 Steinmassel Riesling, Kamptal DAC, Niederösterreich, Austria: Well-priced single-vineyard Riesling, the 2008 Steinmassel effects a pleasing response. Light straw in colour, the wine displays lovely notes of crisp lemon citrus, green apples, and an intriguing hint of minerals and straw. Palate: fine fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a hint of lemon citrus and minerals on the finish. Classy and balanced. Screwcap closure. Now-2014+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

88 \$22.95 (Private Order) B & W Wines

Bründlmayer 2009 Kamptaler Terrassen Grüner Veltliner, Kamptal DAC, Niederösterreich, Austria: Just a friendly reminder: the Kamptaler Terrassen gets its name from the terraced vines along the Kamp river, though this is not a single-vineyard wine. Light straw in colour, the 2009 Grüner Veltliner displays decent notes of white pepper and lentils, baked lemon, Golden Delicious apples, and minerals. Palate: good fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a hint of lemon and white lentils on the finish. Very pleasant and crisp. Screwcap closure. Now-2013+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

88 \$19.95 (Private Order) B & W Wines

Bründlmayer 2009 Kamptaler Terrassen Riesling, Kamptal DAC, Niederösterreich, Austria: The Kamptaler Terrassen gets its name from the terraced vines along the Kamp river, though this is not a single-vineyard wine. Pale straw in colour, the 2009 Riesling offers lovely notes of mineral lemon, peaches, white grapes, minerals, and

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schist. On the palate: good minerally fruit showing, possessing balanced acidity, and a hint of schisty lemon (very pretty) on the finish. Finely executed and balanced. Screwcap closure. Now-2014. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

88 \$19.95 (Private Order) B & W Wines

Alain Geoffroy 2007, Chablis Premier Cru Beauroy AOC, Burgundy, France: Fairly precise, the 2007 Beauroy should provide wine lovers with a reasonable 'liquid introduction' to the world of Premier Cru Chablis. Pale straw-lime in colour, it presently displays 'slumbering' nuances of baked green apples, nutted pears, and a hint of wet stones and lemon wedges. Palate: refreshingly dry, nervy fruit on display, with balanced acidity, and a hint of nutted, steely green apples on the finish. Worth laying out a few extra bucks for. Now-2013. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

88 \$24.95 (#733501) Vintages 30 October 2010 Release

Alain Geoffroy 2010 Domaine Le Verger, Chablis AOC, Burgundy, France: Like most of the Geoffroys' bottlings, the 2010 Domaine Le Verger is a Chablis of good vitality and balance. Pale straw-lime in colour, it reveals subtle notes of steely green apples, dried pears, lemon, flint, and a hint of anise. Palate: good nervy fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a hint of lemon and dried green apples (agreeably tart) on the finish. Nice and easy. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

88 \$18.95 (#181289) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Spy Valley 2008 Chardonnay, Marlborough, South Island, New Zealand: Ideal everyday Chardonnay from one of Marlborough's most reliable producers. Pale lime in colour, the '08 is moderately toasted, with lovely scents of poached pears, apricots, caramel, baked lemon, and a hint of orange peel and minerals. Palate: fine, refined fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a splendid hint of poached pears on the finish. Most gratifying and fresh. Screwcap closure. Now-2012+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

88 \$19.95 (#57737) Vintages 18 September 2010 Release

Wynns Coonawarra Estate 2010 Riesling, Coonawarra, South Australia, Australia: For a winery best known for its reds, Wynns is one of the best Riesling producers in Coonawarra. Pale lime in colour, the '10 reveals intense notes of lime cordial and kerosene; accompanied by lemon, white peaches, melon, and a hint of spice. On the palate: crisp, characterful fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a lingering hint of lemon, lime, and kerosene on the finish. Refreshing, balanced, and expressive. Screwcap closure. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, July 2012)

88 \$17.95 (#528216) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Weingut Zahel 2009 Grüner Veltliner, Riedencuvée (Vienna), Austria: Identifiable and fresh, the 2009 Weingut Zahel is a decent Grüner Veltliner of which I have no qualms recommending. Pale straw-lime in colour, it reveals textbook white lentils, white pepper, green apples, lemon, and a hint of cream crackers. Palate: refreshing leafy fruit on display, with balanced acidity, and a hint of green apples and white lentils on the finish. Nicely balanced, dry, and easy to drink. Screwcap closure. Now-2012. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

87 \$15.95 (#181594) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

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Mulderbosch 2009 Chenin Blanc, Western Cape WO, South Africa: For what it is, the 2009 Chenin Blanc is a decent, well-priced wine. Starbright, very pale lime in colour, it starts off with lots of sulphur, so decanting the wine is probably a good idea; yet this seems to give way to pleasant green apples, lemon, and a surprising hint of bergamot. Palate: nice light fruit, with balanced acidity, and a hint of dewy green apples on the finish. Satisfactory everyday drinking—and I'm a very choosy drinker. Screwcap closure. Now-2012+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

86 \$14.95 (#675421) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

Red Wines:

Château Lafite Rothschild 2007, Pauillac AOC, Bordeaux, France: Quite possibly the best claret of the vintage, the 2007 Lafite Rothschild is best characterized as a classic specimen of pure finesse, style, layering, and breed. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine displays almost mystical aromas of black currants, blackberries, plums, espresso, graphite, licorice, cigar boxes full of top-grade stogies, flowers, leather, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Exceptionally complex, possessing chewy, exquisitely layered fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a doubly profound hint of currants, 'dusty' black mocha, and cigars on the finish. Absolutely heavenly, delicious, and precise where expected/required. Astounding for an '07! 84% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, and 1% Petit Verdot. Now-2045. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

96 \$575.00 (#100966) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Château Margaux 2007, Margaux AOC, Bordeaux, France: With few winemakers as dedicated as Paul Pontallier, is it any wonder the 2007 Château Margaux is this excellent? Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is utterly fragrant and flattering, featuring exuberant aromas of currants, raspberries, blackberries (slightly perfumed), violets, licorice, graphite, mocha, a trace of pain grille, vanilla, and spice. Extremely complex, with brilliantly textured, illustrious fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a profoundly elegant hint of perfumed, silky currants and dark raspberries on the finish. Wholly enticing, elegant, and classically assembled. Like other Firth Growths, this will likely reach its peak sooner than is the norm; which, for some, might be considered a bonus. 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Merlot, and 2% Cabernet Franc. Now-2040. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

95+ \$575.00 (#102418) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Château Mouton Rothschild 2007, Pauillac AOC, Bordeaux, France: Of all the First Growths, the 2007 Mouton Rothschild is likely the most powerful, most multi-dimensional of the vintage. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, this brilliant Pauillac offers astonishing aromas of violet-infused (odd) aromas currants and crème de cassis; switching to blackberries, pencil shavings, espresso, forest floor, leather, pain grille, black coffee, vanilla, and spice. Extremely complex, sporting magnificent fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a stunning hint of pure currants, blackberries, and charcoal embers on the finish. Incredibly layered, structured, and powered—so atypical of the vintage. 81% Cabernet Sauvignon and 19% Merlot. Now-2040. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

95+ \$575.00 (#102335) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

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Château Haut Brion 2007, Pessac-Léognan AOC, Bordeaux, France: Outstanding for the vintage, the 2007 Haut Brion is the top wine of the appellation, narrowly surpassing La Mission in terms of texture and elegance. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine exhibits amazingly multilayered, elegant aromas of fragrant forest floor-driven currants and blackberries, crème de cassis, licorice, graphite, minerals, rosemary (wonderful), vanilla, and spice. Truly complex, with caressing fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a stunning hint of gravely currants, blackberries, and subtle espresso on the finish. Outstandingly textured, layered, and focused, this is probably the most ‘backward’ of the ‘07 First Growths. A sincerely extraordinary wine. 44% Cabernet Sauvignon, 43% Merlot, and 13% Cabernet Franc. Now-2040. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

95 \$575.00 (#102178) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Heitz 2004 Martha’s Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: Based out of Oakville and one of the top vineyards in the Napa Valley, Heitz’s Martha’s Vineyard (100% Cabernet Sauvignon) is a true collector’s wine in every sense. Opaque ruby in colour, the classic, riveting ‘04 is beautifully toasted, delivering incredible aromas of mocha and espresso at the very beginning; which shortly gives way to currants, plums, blueberries (marked by a trace of eucalyptus), scorched earth, black cherries, minerals, leather, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Truly complex, possessing impeccable fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lasting, poignant hint of black cherried currants, mocha/espresso, and plums (plus a wisp of cedarwood) on the finish. Simply astonishing. Now-2038+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

95 \$219.95 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Château Léoville-Las Cases 2007, St-Julien AOC, Bordeaux, France: Another monumental outing from the Medoc’s greatest First Growth pretender, the fact that Léoville-Las Cases can produce such an astounding wine from a vintage like 2007 merits considerable kudos. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it offers wonderfully immense aromas of currants, blackberries, dried blueberries, crushed rocks, pain grille, licorice, smoke, forest floor, minerals, vanilla, and spice. Amazingly complex, carrying extraordinary, properly textured fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a slightly backward yet exacting, brilliant hint of dark ‘dusty’ currants, blackberries, espresso, and minerals on the finish. Spectacularly focused, harmonious, and brimming with pedigree. Easily the greatest wine of the appellation, and well as one of the best of the vintage. 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc, and 8% Merlot. Now-2038++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

95 \$215.00 (#102095) Vintages February 2012 Classics Collection

Château Palmer 2007, Pessac-Léognan AOC, Bordeaux, France: One of the top wines of the vintage, the 2007 Château Palmer, with just one exception (guess which one it is), surpasses all other wines of the appellation by an incredible margin. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it features fantastical aromas of dark fragrant currants, crushed flowers, blackberries, graphite, subtle dark mocha, forest floor, delicate pain grille, vanilla, and spice. Exquisitely complex, possessing unbelievable finesse-driven fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an almost silky hint of ‘crunchy’ currants, crushed flowers, and graphite on the finish. A Palmer of extraordinary depth, elegance, and posture. 49% Merlot, 44% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 7% Petit Verdot. Now-2035+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

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95 \$279.00 (#100362) Vintages February 2012 Classics Collection

Château La Mission Haut-Brion 2007, Pessac-Léognan AOC, Bordeaux, France: Classic wine from an otherwise limited vintage, the 2007 La Mission Haut-Brion surpasses all expectations. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine features wonderful, if not slightly reserved, aromas of red gravely currants and plums, blackberries, licorice, graphite, potpourri, forest floor, vanilla wafers, pain grille, and spice. Truly complex, wielding exquisitely elegant fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an opulent, magnificent hint of slightly flowery currants and graphite on the finish. Gorgeously polished, characterful, and focused, the sheer calibre of the '07 speaks volumes of the perfectionist approach consistently applied by the estate. Almost the equal of its neighbour. 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 43% Merlot, and 9% Cabernet Franc. Now-2038. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

94++ \$475.00 (#99911) Vintages February 2012 Classics Collection

Château Pape Clément 2007, Pessac-Léognan AOC, Bordeaux, France: Shockingly terrific when considering the struggles vigneronns faced in 2007, Bernard Magrez's intricate Pape Clément manages to combine richness and style like few other clarets. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it offers youthful, decadent aromas of finely toasted oak and mocha, quickly switching to blackberries, licorice, charcoal briquettes, fresh tobacco leaves, minerals, espresso, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, delivering delicious velvety fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lingering, elegant hint of currants, subtle mocha, and minerals on the finish. Quite the achievement. 55% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, the rest Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Now-2034+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

94 \$169.00 (#100370) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Château Trotanoy 2007, Pomerol AOC, Bordeaux, France: Aptly put by Hugh Johnson, Château Trotanoy is made "to the same Rolls-Royce standards" as Château Pétrus; of which the '07 serves as the perfect illustration. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine displays amazingly generous yet refined aromas of blackberry compote, plums, black raspberries, graphite, minerals, licorice, pain grille, undergrowth, vanilla, and spice. Truly complex, delivering extraordinarily elegant, delicious fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an unusually opulent hint of currants, blackberries, and spring flower traces on the finish. Astounding for the vintage, possessing wondrous depth, balance, and pedigree. The vineyard is planted to 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc. Now-2036++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

94 \$135.00 (#102681) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Château Cos d'Estournel 2007, St-Estèphe AOC, Bordeaux, France: Sensationally crafted, the 2007 Cos d'Estournel is only a shade off the mark compared to what the estate routinely achieves in the best vintages—not that this matters in the least, as my score would indicate. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine swiftly opens up to reveal an outstanding array of aromas, consisting of 'dusty' currants and blackberries, mint, and pain grille; switching to underbrush, charcoal, tobacco, crushed rocks (and flowers), vanilla, and spice. Exceedingly complex, delivering incredibly elegant fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a remarkably deep hint of currants and pain grille on the finish. Excellently structured, textured, and unusually deep for the year. 85% Cabernet

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Sauvignon, 12% Merlot, and 3% Cabernet Franc. Now-2035++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

93++ \$159.00 (#99986) Vintages February 2012 Classics Collection

Les Forts de Latour 2006, Pauillac AOC, Bordeaux, France: The ‘second wine’ of Château Latour, nowadays oftentimes equal to the best Second Growths, the 2006 Les Forts de Latour is an enthralling Pauillac, replete with glorious style, flavour, structure, and grip. Dark ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, showcasing exceptional aromas of almost ‘crunchy’ black currants, blackberries, dark black cherries, plums, graphite/pencil lead, loamy earth, pain grille, espresso, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, featuring remarkably pure, superbly structured fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a truly elegant, stylish hint of currants, graphite, and subtle espresso on the finish. Excellent as always. 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Merlot. Now-2025++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

93++ \$145.00 (#565705) Vintages Special Offer

Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars 2007 SLV Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: One of two magnificent single-vineyard wines produced by Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars from the district of the same name, the 2007 SLV (100% Cabernet Sauvignon) is arguably the greatest vintage I have personally tasted. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is beautifully toasted, exhibiting wonderfully refined aromas of currants, blackberries, black cherries, pain grille, graphite, forest floor, minerals, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, showcasing excellent, elegant fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a multilayered, refined hint of currants and mocha (somewhat minerally) on the finish. Slightly Bordelaise in style but with obvious Napa origins, the strength and character of this wine is incredible. Now-2032++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2011)

93++ \$140.00 (Private Order) Profile Wine Group

Château Canon-la-Gaffelière 2007, St-Emilion Grand Cru Classé AOC, Bordeaux, France: A testament to Stéphan von Neipperg’s commitment to excellence, the 2007 Canon-la-Gaffelière is amazingly generous for the vintage. Opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, providing decidedly opulent aromas of mocha and ripe plummy currants; switching to blackberries, licorice, forest floor (slightly cedary), asphalt, incense, ‘brambling’ pain grille, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, possessing rich, profound fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an amazingly velvety hint of mocha and plummy currants on the finish. Incredibly plentiful and forthright for the year. Bravo! 55% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Franc, and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2035+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

93+ \$90.00 (#102327) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Château Figeac 2007, St-Emilion AOC Premier Grand Cru Classé AOC, Bordeaux, France: Undeterred by difficult growing conditions, Eric d’Aramon’s staff pulled out all the stops in ‘07 to craft one of the best wines in the appellation. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, this strapping Figeac is finely toasted, offering excellent aromas of mocha, plummy currants, black cherries, blackberries, charcoal, forest floor, asphalt, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, with well-developed, atypically supple fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an exemplary, lingering hint of subtle mocha, currants, and blackberries on the finish. Exciting, velvety style—wickedly attractive. Its supple core should enable

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earlier drinking. 40% Merlot, 35% Cabernet Franc, and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2034+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

93+ \$115.00 (#99606) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Château Gazin 2008, Pomerol AOC, Bordeaux, France: With the stealth of a slithering snake, Château Gazin has ever-so quietly raised its standards to a point beyond recognition. Dark ruby in colour, the scrumptious '08 is finely toasted, presenting beautiful, exciting aromas of mocha, currants, blackberries, dried raspberries, charcoal, licorice, 'dark' pain grille, cookie dough, coffee ice cream, vanilla, and spice. Truly complex, possessing gorgeously fulfilling fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an extraordinary hint of currants, mocha, and crushed rocks on the finish. A Pomerol of exacting finesse, structure, and breed. The best wine I have ever tasted from here. 92% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 2% Cabernet Franc. Now-2028++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

93+ \$85.00 (#580464) Vintages Shop Online

Château Lynch Bages 2007, Pauillac AOC, Bordeaux, France: Renowned for great wine even in lesser vintages, the 2007 Lynch Bages ranks among the top Pauillacs of the year. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, offering superb aromas of pain grille-infused currants, plums, black cherries, dried licorice, mint, forest floor, graphite, tobacco, and a hint of vanilla and spice. Very complex, featuring excellent fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a generous yet refined hint of currants and plums on the finish. Of considerable style, the real attraction of the '07 comes from that extra layer of 'fat' it possesses—gorgeously useful when the vintage calls for it. 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot. Now-2030++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

93+ \$95.00 (#98640) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Château Pichon-Longueville Baron 2007, Pauillac AOC, Bordeaux, France: Reflecting both the temperament of the vintage and the reputation of the estate, the 2007 Pichon Baron, while admittedly not the most concentrated of wines, atones for its mid-weight disposition and greater roundness by means of exceptional structure, elegance, and class. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it is beautifully toasted, presenting archetypal 'Pauillac' aromas of black currants and plums, dried black cherries, asphalt, tobacco leaves, leather, spring flower traces, mocha extract, graphite, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, revealing exquisite, finely honed fruit, firm tannins (quite significant), balanced acidity, and a slightly reserved hint of currants, tobacco, and graphite on the finish. An excellent success. According to one source: 76% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Merlot. Now-2034. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

93+ \$119.00 (#102491) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Castello di Ama 2004 L'Apparita, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: Flagship wine of Castello di Ama and one of the great Super Tuscans of Toscana, albeit less famous than the likes of Solaia and Sassicaia. Dark-opaque ruby-red currant in colour, the '04 L'Apparita is finely toasted, featuring incredible, reserved aromas of mocha, plums, black cherries, mild cedarwood, light undergrowth, leather, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, delivering exceptional fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a wonderful, lingering hint of dried mocha and high-end cedar-infused black cherried plums on the finish. Very elegant and fulsome, with something of the Bordelaise about it—a truly great wine in

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either respect. 100% Merlot. Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

93 \$199.00 (#39776) Vintages January 2008 Classics Collection

Heitz 2004 Trailside Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: The best Trailside I have yet to taste, the 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon is an exemplary, decadent wine of clear-cut collector's status. Opaque ruby in colour, it is beautifully toasted, offering awesome aromas of mocha, curranted blackberries, plums, blueberries, asphalt, vanilla, and spice. Complex and just starting to open up, possessing delectable, concentrated fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and an extremely long, expressive hint of mocha, curranted plums, and dried blueberries on the finish. Excellently structured, its exciting concentration is brilliantly handled. Kudos to winemaker David Heitz for this supreme effort. Now-2025++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

93 \$104.95 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Inglenook 2006 Rubicon, Napa Valley, California: Flagship wine of the recently rechristened Inglenook winery, owned by famed director Francis Ford Coppola since 1975, the stunning 2006 Rubicon is sourced entirely from Rutherford grapes. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is beautifully toasted, offering amazing aromas of minty mocha and currants, plums, blackberry compote, espresso, asphalt, scorched earth, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, delivering gloriously forward, well-structured fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and an outstanding, lengthy hint of minty mocha and dark plummy currants on the finish. Superlative in terms of purity, balance, structure, and length. 95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot, and 1% Cabernet Franc. Now-2030++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

93 \$204.95 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Château Larcis Ducasse 2008, St-Emilion AOC Grand Cru Classé AOC, Bordeaux, France: Surprisingly, the 2008 Larcis Ducasse represents my inaugural tasting of this estate. And what an inauguration! Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is definitely on the hedonistic side of things, offering gorgeous aromas of mocha, crème de cassis, blackberry compote, kirsch, forest floor, licorice, 'warm' loamy earth, asphalt, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, delivering fantastically concentrated fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a long, abundant hint of mocha, plums, espresso, and 'loosened' black earth on the finish. Powerful at 14% alcohol, though not without a serious sense of elegance, structure, and style. 84% Merlot and 16% Cabernet Franc. Now-2026++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

93 \$99.00 (#137505) Vintages Shop Online

Mas Martinet 2005 Clos Martinet, Priorat DOCa, Spain: Flagship wine from one of the most respected operations in Priorato, the 2005 Clos Martinet is a mightily delicious, superbly executed bottling of considerable—yet enduring—heft, power, balance, and length. Opaque ruby in colour, it is intensely toasted, with beautiful, inviting aromas of baked (slightly earthy) currants, plums, blackberry treacle, fruitcake, dates, leather, and an expressive hint of stewed black raspberries, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, featuring deliciously powerful fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lengthy hint of stewed currants, black raspberries, and leather on the finish. Highly concentrated, persistent Priorato. Bravo! Approximately 40% Garnacha, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon,

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20% Merlot, and 10% Cariñena. Now-2025+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2011)

93 **\$99.00 (#109405)** **Vintages Shop Online**

Stag's Leap Wine Cellars 2007 Fay Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: While it does not say it on the (front) label, the 2007 Fay, crafted from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, is sourced from the Stags Leap District. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, this masterful wine, decisively elegant, offers terrific aromas of well-integrated toasted oak that switches to currants, black cherries, pain grille, charcoal embers, subtle espresso, forest floor, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, as a matter of fact, delivering stellar fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and an exemplary hint of currants, dark cherries, and minerals on the finish. From a magnificent vintage, this typifies the style and level of perfectionism Warren Winiarski has pursued for many decades. Now-2026+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2011)

93 **\$99.95 (Private Order)** **Profile Wine Group**

Marius 2005, Vin de Pays des Côtes Catalanes, France: Under the same ownership as Château Latour, Marius is a premium wine crafted in Languedoc-Roussillon. Opaque ruby in colour, this fascinating, excellent wine is beautifully toasted, revealing enticing aromas of currants, delicate mocha, plums, light Provençal herbs, pain grille, and a lovely hint of cookies, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, possessing rather robust, delicious fruit, elegant yet assertively firm tannins (strange combo), balanced acidity, and a lingering, surprisingly refined hint of currants on the finish. A wine of excellent complexity, flavour, focus, and depth. I hope to try more vintages from here in the future. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon (I think). Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2011)

92++ **\$79.00 (#100586)** **Vintages Shop Online**

Quintarelli 2001 Rosso Ca' del Merlo, IGT Veneto, Veneto, Italy: Another stellar offering from the most prestigious Veneto producer, the 2001 Rosso Ca' del Merlo, were it to have a flag, would be firmly affixed in the collector's camp. Dark garnet in colour, the wine displays an intensely elegant, mature bouquet of cedary-savoury plums, undergrowth, smoke, light herbs, and a very refined, subtle hint of leather and spice. Truly complex, possessing exemplary 'seasoned' fruit, beautifully integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a finesse-focused hint of cedary dried cherries and plums (both rather savoury) on the finish. Deliciously round, mature, and lending superb pedigree. Bravo! According to one website: Corvina, Rondinella, Molinara, Negrara, Cabernet Sauvignon, Croatina, Sangiovese, Nebbiolo, and Pelara. Now-2019+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

92++ **\$83.95 (#958595)** **Vintages 27 November 2010 Release**

Luce della Vite 2007 Luce, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: Flagship wine of Luce della Vite, now under sole ownership of the iconic Frescobaldi family, the 2007 Luce is an insatiably delicious, opulent, and extracted bottling. Opaque ruby in colour, it is beautifully toasted, presenting inviting aromas of mocha and baked currants, laced with blackberries, leather, smoke, undergrowth, mild cedarwood, and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, featuring sumptuous fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a long-lasting hint of smooth mocha, currants, and plums on the finish. Powerful, Parkerized, and packed to the brim, for many North American collectors, this is a must-have. 55%

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Merlot and 45% Sangiovese. Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

92+ \$99.95 (#685263) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

Poggio Antico 2006 Madre, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: One of two Super Tuscans now produced at Poggio Antico (the other being Lemartine), the 2006 Madre is an incredibly rewarding, lively wine. Dark-opaque ruby in colour with a touch of red currant, it is finely toasted, presenting inviting aromas of black fruits and roasted meats that give way to plums, dark wild cherries, underbrush, tobacco, and a hint of black tea and spice. Very complex, boasting amazing fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a superb hint of currants and roasted meats (lined with a trace of mocha) on the finish. In-depth, well-structured, and distinctly stylish, this should keep for at least a decade. 50% Sangiovese and 50% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

92+ \$55.00 (#25577) Vintages Shop Online

Benjamin Romeo 2002 La Cueva del Contador, Rioja DOCa, Spain: Produced in extremely small quantities, the 2002 La Cueva del Contador is an excellent Rioja of exquisite character, focus, and collectors' appeal. Dark red currant in colour, it seems to be ageing seamlessly, offering a wonderful bouquet of delicately cedary cherries and red plums, sandalwood, grilled herbs, and a lovely hint of roasted meats, garrigue, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, with surprisingly restraint yet beautiful fruit, firm yet well-integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a truly superlative hint of maturing cedary cherries on the finish. Coming along wonderfully; from a very difficult vintage. 100% Tempranillo. Now-2017+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2011)

92+ \$99.00 (#118430) Vintages Shop Online

Podere Il Carnasciale 2006 Carnasciale, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: Exceedingly delicious Super Tuscan of indulgent character, structure, and style, the 2006 Carnasciale is a must-have. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, presenting intense aromas of currants, brambleberries, blueberries, mocha, violets, gingerroot, white pepper, herbs, vanillin, and a hint of spruce wood and spice. Very complex, delivering powerful, wonderful fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a surprisingly delicate, albeit long-lasting hint of brambleberries and subtle white pepper on the finish. Patently tempting. Now-2020. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

92 \$79.00 (#167288) Vintages May 2010 Classics Collection

Darioush 2007 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: One of few times I have tasted from here, the 2007 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon is a powerful, brooding, and opulent wine. Opaque ruby in colour, it is beautifully toasted, featuring alluring, invigorating aromas of 'dusty' milk chocolate and black cherried currants, switching to blackberries, plums, crushed rocks, tar, pain grille, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering delicious, generous fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lasting, profound hint of mocha and currants on the finish. Sumptuous as always, yet not without a critical sense of balance. Built to last. Also contains 7% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, and 3% Malbec. Now-2024++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2010)

92 \$110.95 (Private Order) B & W Wines

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Château Duhart-Milon 2007, Pauillac AOC, Bordeaux, France: Buoyed by the cult status of Lafite Rothschild in the Asian market, prices for Duhart-Milon have soared; but at least the estate, much improved over the last decade, has advanced even further over the past several years. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the '07 offers tight yet gentle aromas (quite beautiful) of currants, plums, spring flowers, pain grille, crushed rocks, forest floor, licorice, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, delivering excellent fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a wonderful, elegant hint of currants, flowers, and tobacco on the finish. Outstanding effort for the year, with a personality all its own. 73.5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 26.5% Merlot. Now-2026+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

92 \$62.00 (#99424) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Heitz 2005 Trailside Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: Based entirely out of the Rutherford AVA, the superb 2005 Trailside Vineyard, crafted from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, is both delicious and powerful. Opaque ruby in colour, the wine is impeccably toasted, displaying truly invigorating aromas of currants intermixed with fragrant mocha, cedarwood, tar, leather, scorched earth, vanilla, and spice. Complex, retaining superlative forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lingering, extremely satisfying hint of 'gentle' black cedary currants and subtle mocha on the finish. Starting to show some age, this should have little trouble keeping for at least another decade. Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2011)

92 \$104.95 (Private Order) Lifford Wine Agency

Merryvale 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: A stark improvement compared to recent previous vintages—which I'd mostly found overly straightforward and uninteresting—the 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon represents a return to form. Opaque ruby in colour, this perception-changer is beautifully toasted, containing inviting aromas of fresh mocha, currants, plums, blackberries, graham crackers, scorched earth, leather, subtle dark cherries (slightly baked), vanilla, and spice. Complex, carrying delicious, concentrated velvety fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and an extremely long, gratifying hint of 'reddening' currants, mocha, and plums on the finish. Excellently done. Also contains 17% Merlot, 3% Petit Verdot, and 1% Cabernet Franc. Now-2021++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

92 \$76.95 (Private Order) Profile Wine Group

Silverado Vineyards 2006 SOLO Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap District (Napa Valley), California: Flagship wine of Silverado Vineyards, the 2006 SOLO is crafted from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, sourced from the Stags Leap District. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, this great wine is finely toasted, revealing superb, inviting aromas of mocha, red currants, plums, blackberry compote, graham crackers, vanilla, and spice. Complex and multilayered, boasting beautiful, concentrated forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and really endearing, lengthy hint of mocha and dark red currants on the finish. Powerful at 14.7% alcohol, it holds its head high with great structure, balance, and length. Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

92 \$99.95 (Private Order) Kylix Wines

Costers del Siurana 2004 Miserere, Priorat DOCa, Spain: One of many new start-ups in Priorato over the past twenty years, this is my only note from Costers del Siurana, in the form of the ultra-precise, hedonistic '04 Miserere. Opaque ruby in colour, the wine is

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beautifully toasted, boasting enticing aromas of 'scorched' loamy/earthy currants, blackberry compote, stewed plums, dates, leather, mocha, and a lovely hint of dried fruitcake, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, featuring delicious, generous fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an upstanding, lingering hint of dried baked currants on the finish. Marvellously crafted, with superb character, balance, and breadth. Cabernet Sauvignon, Garnacha, Tempranillo, Merlot, and Cariñena. Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, January 2011)

92 \$75.00 (#737080) [Vintages Shop Online](#)

Poggio Bonelli 2007, Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: Markedly superior to the '06, the 2007 is exquisitely styled, in-depth, and balanced. Opaque ruby, it offers terrific aromas of blackberry treacle and plums; switching to dried cherries, undergrowth, leather, black tea, tobacco, vanilla, and spice. Complex, sporting superb fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a delicious, well-structured hint of blackberry treacle and pipe tobacco on the finish. Wholly enticing, the oak influence is definitely less apparent compared to its most immediate predecessor—with seriously enhanced results. 100% Sangiovese. Now-2022+. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, May 2010)

91+ \$27.95 (#180067) [Vintages 7 July 2012 Release](#)

Domaine Courbis 2004 Les Eygats, Cornas AOC, Rhône, France: From one of the most respected producers of Cornas, the 2004 Les Eygats has reached a stage of marvellous integration and elegance. Dark red currant in colour, the wine has become remarkably savoury, revealing truly lovely aromas of semi-leathery/plummy-cedary cherries, brambleberries, pain grille, cedarwood, and spice. Complex, possessing extremely refined, deliciously savoury fruit, finely integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a decisively elegant hint of 'mature' plums and cedarwood on the finish. Now at its peak, with plenty of life left. Now-2016. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, November 2010)

91+ \$65.95 (#719385) [Vintages 28 September 2007 Release](#)

Fuligni 2005, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: From one of the most respected smaller-scale Brunello producers, the '05 Fuligni, crafted in a difficult vintage, shows just how adept the best winemakers in this forever untameable part of Tuscany can be. Dark garnet in colour, the wine displays elegant aromas of traditional cedary dried cherries and plums, tobacco, undergrowth, and a hint of leather, Chinese black tea, and spice. Complex, boasting extremely refined fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a sensationally pretty, endearing hint of cedarwood and dried cherries (lots of depth) on the finish. Traditional as always, owner Roberto Guerrini has every reason to be proud of this wine. This may even age longer than my prediction. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, November 2010)

91+ \$53.95 (#988808) [Vintages 27 November 2010 Release](#)

Oliver's Taranga 2007 Expatriate Shiraz, McLaren Vale, South Australia, Australia: One of the winery's top labels, the 2007 Expatriate packs an extraordinary punch. Very dense, slightly faded ruby in colour, the wine is massively oaked, delivering enticing aromas of baked blackberry compote, crème de cassis, chocolate, dried licorice, leather, scorched earth, vanilla, and spice. Complex, possessing sumptuous, well-structured forward fruit, firm tannins, mild acidity, and a very long, exemplary hint of

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chocolate and blackberry compote on the finish. Super-abundant, Parkerized Shiraz. Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

91+ \$49.00 (#221093) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Thomas George 2009 Russian River Valley Estate Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley (Sonoma County), California: For some time now, I've been growing increasingly convinced the Russian River Valley has come out on top as California's finest region for Burgundian grapes. Medium-dark ruby in colour, the 2009 Russian River Valley Estate Pinot Noir offers remarkably fragrant aromas of raspberries, cherries, licorice, incense, spring flowers, and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, carrying exquisitely silky fruit, soft yet finely integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a terrific hint of flowery raspberries and cherries on the finish. Great fragrance and finesse. Now-2016+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

91+ \$44.95 (#284018) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Brigaldara 2007, Recioto della Valpolicella Classico DOC, Veneto, Italy (375 mL): It's the strangest thing: I could swear I've tasted dozens of wines from Brigaldara, yet this is the first recorded note I have from here. No matter. Opaque ruby in colour with a touch of purple, the 2007 Recioto sports highly alluring aromas of blackberry compote, baker's chocolate, plums, marshmallows, tar, subtle savoury undergrowth, suede leather, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, with great sweet fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a long, smooth hint of baker's chocolate (slightly confectioned) and blackberry compote on the finish. Rich, quite sweet, and extremely well balanced. Typically 40% Corvina, 40% Molinara and Sangiovese, and 20% Corvinone. Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2012)

91 \$25.00 (#251207) Vintages Shop Online

Caparzo 2004, Brunello di Montalcino DCG, Tuscany, Italy: Never a heavy-hitter, Caparzo has consistently been lauded for superb, mid-weight Brunello, with the 2004 standing out as slightly better than previous years. Dark red currant in colour, the wine is (surprisingly) finely toasted, delivering beautiful aromas of cookie crumble (seriously), cherries, plums, white mocha, a leather, vanilla, and spicebox. Complex and more modernistic, featuring great, fresher fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lovely hint of cherries on the finish. More traceable French oak compared to the '05, which is just as good, by the way, if not noticeable lighter; the former remarkably structured yet fruity—love these paradoxical wines. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

91 \$43.95 (#579094) Vintages 27 November 2010 Release

Domaine Durand 2009 Les Coteaux, St-Joseph AOC, Rhône, France: My one and only note from this winery, the 2009 Les Coteaux is a full-bodied, delicious St-Joseph of superb quality and elegance. Opaque purple-ruby in colour, the wine reveals enticing, strictly 'Northern Rhône' aromas of intense brambleberries, currants, blackberry compote, dried blueberries, flowers, leather, tobacco traces, and spice. Complex, wielding exceptional fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant, abundant hint of pure blackberries on the finish. Outstanding wine, pegged at a reasonable 13.5% alcohol. Now-2022. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

91 \$28.95 (#272492) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

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Guigal 2009, Gigondas AOC, Rhône, France: For an operation so large, the level of quality at Guigal is remarkable. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the 2009 Gigondas delivers first-rate aromas of blackberried raspberries, dried currants, leather, mild lavender, licorice, asphalt, and spice. Complex, expressing wonderful, fairly powerful fruit, very firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a polished, lengthy hint of blackberries, dark raspberries, and delicate lavender on the finish. Impeccably assembled, boasting great power, breadth, and focus. Such beautiful fruit clarity! 60% Grenache, 25% Mourvèdre, and 15% Syrah. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

91 \$29.95 (#331900) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Le Ragnaie 2005, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: My only note from this winery, it would seem owner Riccardo Campinoti takes the crafting of first-rate Brunello with the utmost seriousness and sincerity. Dark red-garnet in colour, the '05 reveals beautiful aromas of 'round' cedary cherries, red plums, leather, smoke, tar, undergrowth, and spice. Complex, delivering superb drier-styled fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant hint of dried cedarwood and wild cherries on the finish. Crafted in more of a restrained style, this should easily appeal to the more 'purist' sort of collector, who would be well advised to make purchase. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

91 \$49.95 (#205930) Vintages 27 November 2010 Release

Ridge 2006 Santa Cruz Mountains Estate, Santa Cruz Mountains, California: If there was a 'second wine' to the Monte Bello, the Santa Cruz Mountains Estate would best fit the bill. Opaque ruby in colour, the first-rate '06 is finely toasted, offering superb, slightly understated aromas of dark currants and mocha, plums, blackberries, black cherries, charcoal, and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, delivering delicious forward fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lingering, stylishly flavourful hint of currants and mild cocoa shavings on the finish. Truly superb: balanced, well structured, and remarkably focused. 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Merlot, and 2% Petit Verdot. Now-2024. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

91 \$44.95 (#89284) Vintages 5 March 2011 Release

Castello di Nipozzano 2007 Mormoreto, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: From the excellent Frescobaldi stable, the Mormoreto is the Super Tuscan label of this exemplary family institution. Opaque ruby in colour, the '07 reveals slightly more traditional aromas, compared to past vintages, of 'black' cedar, leather, dried wild currants and blackberries, herbs, and spice. Complex, possessing extremely fine, almost dignified yet generous fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a truly lovely hint of dried mocha and baked plums on the finish. As a whole, a very extracted wine, though so nuanced, delicious, and stylish that it hardly seems to matter. Bravo! 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc, and 5% Petit Verdot. Now-2019++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

90++ \$59.95 (#951210) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

Robert Biale Vineyards 2009 The Southern Trail Zinfandel, Napa Valley, California: Unquestionably the most powerful Napa Zinfandel I have ever examined, the 2009 Southern Trail is both sumptuous and fulsome, not to mention immensely flavourful. Dark-opaque in colour, it boasts rich aromas of incense-infused blackberry compote, dark cherries, plums, currants, subtle brambleberries, forest floor, toasted oak,

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and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, featuring indulgent, well-textured fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, abundant alcohol (15.2%), and a long, sumptuous hint of darkened incense and blackberries on the finish. Extremely decadent and fresh, lovers of this style shall not be disappointed. Now-2021. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, July 2012)

90++ \$57.95 (#279679) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Antica 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: Owned by Piero Antinori of Tuscan renown, the flavourful 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon is the only wine I have ever examined from Antica. Opaque ruby in colour, it is finely toasted, presenting enticing, more fruit-oriented aromas of currants, plums, blackberries, blueberries, charcoal traces, mocha, vanilla, and spice. Complex, possessing delicious, neatly structured forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lingering hint of currants, blackberries, and blueberries on the finish. Great flavour profile, balance, freshness, and suitability of structure. Now-2022+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, July 2012)

90+ \$49.95 (#266551) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Hazyblur 2006 Shiraz, Barossa Valley, South Australia, Australia: A winery with an emphasis on concentration and power, the wines of Hazyblur are not for everyone; but for the 'North American' palate, a bottling like the '06 Shiraz is just what the doctor ordered. Opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, providing intensely minty aromas of eucalyptus, currants, baked dark chocolate, mulberries, leather, vanilla, and spice. Complex, retaining very smooth, powerful velvety fruit, firm tannins, mild acidity, and a long hint of baked minty eucalyptus, coffee, and plums on the finish. Archetypal, weighty Barossa bottling. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

90+ \$34.95 (#76141) Vintages 5 March 2011 Release

Argiano 2009 Non Confunditur, IGT Rosso Toscano, Tuscany, Italy: Possessing great character, balance, and lift, the 2009 Non Confunditur has much to recommend itself. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it features intriguing aromas of leathery currants and plums, dried cherries, undergrowth, asphalt, and a hint of herbs, tobacco, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering elegant yet fairly indulgent fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lingering, highly satisfying hint of currants, leather, and 'herbed' blueberry traces on the finish. Superbly layered, its unusual grape blend plays no small part in its uniqueness. 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 20% Syrah, and 20% Sangiovese. Screwcap closure. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, July 2012)

90 \$24.95 (#72397) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Castello di Fonterutoli 2009, Chianti Classico DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: Nowadays one of the finest producers in the Classico zone, the Mazzei family has roots here dating back to 1435. Dark ruby in colour, the 2009 Chianti Classico exhibits fresh, textbook aromas of cherries, plums, underbrush, forest floor, mild licorice, and a hint of 'dusty' currants, cedarwood, and spice. Complex, expressing very fine, elegant fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a marvellous hint of cherries on the finish. Great mouthfeel, balance, and elegance. 90% Sangiovese and 10% Malvasia Nera, Colorino, and Merlot. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

90 \$25.95 (#977629) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

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Château Haut-Chaigneau 2006, Lalande-de-Pomerol AOC, Bordeaux, France: Exposing its classical ruggedness in plain sight, the appeal of the 2006 Château Haut-Chaigneau lies in the comfort of its own self-identity. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, this fine claret is downright earthy, opening up to provide aromas of black currants, plums, dried cherries, leather, cedarwood, and a hint of roasted coffee beans and spice. Complex, featuring very elegant, reserved fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a truly lovely hint of refined earthy red currants on the finish. Aging apace, this should be both decanted and consumed well before the new decade is out. Now-2016+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

90 \$27.95 (#87650) Vintages 5 March 2011 Release

Château Haut-Vigneau 2009, Pessac-Léognan AOC, Bordeaux, France: Hands down the greatest Haut-Vigneau ever crafted, the '09 is well-structured, complete, and delicious for the style. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, presenting beautiful, slightly 'rustic' aromas of mocha, currants, plums, underbrush, tobacco, earth, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering robust claret fruit, firm-smooth tannins, balanced acidity, and a polished 'pliable' hint of elegant currants and forest floor on the finish. Overpriced in this market, still highly worth seeking out. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot. Now-2020. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

90 \$25.95 (#29678) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Casanova di Neri 2008 Rosso, Sant' Antimo DOC, Tuscany, Italy: Just a friendly reminder: the DOC of Sant' Antimo retains the same boundaries as Brunello di Montalcino, but is used for wines not containing 100% Sangiovese Grosso. Dark ruby in colour, the high-value '08 Rosso di Casanova di Neri offers very friendly, albeit more 'rugged' aromas of wild cherries, plums, undergrowth, and a hint of cedarwood, tar, and spice. Complex, with beautifully firm fruit and tannins, balanced acidity, and a lovely, elegantly 'regional' hint of cherries and undergrowth on the finish. Truly impressive and stylish. Excellent value for money. Now-2017+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

90 \$23.95 (#204578) Vintages 27 November 2010 Release

Domaine Pavelot 2007, Pernand-Vergelesses Premier Cru Les Vergelesses AOC, Burgundy, France: To make matters confusing, Burgundy lovers may want to take note that wines labelled 'Les Vergelesses' may alternatively be named 'Les Basses Vergelesses,' just to make life more complicated. Thus: medium-dark ruby in colour, the 2007 Domaine Pavelot, extremely well crafted, offers truly lovely aromas of 'white' raspberries (ever-so slightly peppery), cherries, plums, loamy earth, and spice. Complex, possessing very fine fruit and tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant hint of dried black cherries and violets on the finish. Seriously charming, polished, and characterful. Now-2015+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

90 \$42.95 (#155226) Vintages 18 September 2010 Release

Cantina del Pino 2006, Barbaresco DOCG, Piedmont, Italy: From the much-lauded 2006 vintage, the Cantina del Pino is a beautifully polished Barbaresco of great expression and balance. Medium red-garnet in colour, the wine reveals beautiful, delicate aromas of fresh cedary cherries, rose pedals, bergamot, sandalwood, and spice. Complex, possessing refined, downright classy fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant, endearing hint of dried cedary cherries (Nebbiolo-style) on the

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finish. From an operation with an envious track record, this is definitely a wine worth seeking out. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

90 \$38.95 (#922880) Vintages March 5 2011 Release

Poliziano 2007, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: From one of the finest Vino Noble producers, the 2007 Poliziano possesses great character, structure, and elegance. Dark-opaque red currant in colour with a touch of garnet, it reveals endearingly traditional aromas of cedar-tinged plums, dried cherries and blackberries, undergrowth, tobacco, tealeaves, earth, wild game, and spice. Very complex, with beautiful fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a refined, 'spritely' hint of cedary plums and forest floor on the finish. First-rate as always. 85% Prugnolo Gentile (Sangiovese) and 15% Colorino, Canaiolo, and Merlot. Now-2018. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

90 \$25.95 (#988055) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Rabl 2006 Titan V.O. Zweigelt, Kamptal DAC, Niederösterreich, Austria: From Rudolf Rabl's 'Vinum Optimum' series, the 2006 Zweigelt is determinedly substantial—and all the better for it. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, displaying beautiful, slightly peppery aromas of mocha, blackberries, plums, dark wild cherries, light leather, and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, with great fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a surprisingly smooth hint of moderate mocha and white peppery plums on the finish. Characterful, balanced, and crafted to full ripeness. First-rate Zweigelt. Now-2015++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

90 \$45.00 (Private Order) David Thompson Vintage Trade

Seghesio 2008 Home Ranch Zinfandel, Alexander Valley (Sonoma County), California: One of the top wines from this Zinfandel specialist, the 2008 Home Ranch is a delicious, finely integrated, and full-throttle wine—one that will provide much pleasure for enthusiasts of the style. Finely toasted, it delivers attractive aromas of fresh blackberries and plums, raspberried cherries, leather, incense, baked white pepper, vanilla, and spice. Complex, offering sumptuous, powerful fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lengthy hint of leathery plums and incense on the finish. Tipping the scales at 15.5% alcohol, this is one big Zinfandel, but with just enough 'stuffing' to pull it off. My compliments. Now-2016++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

90 \$44.95 (#70391) Vintages 18 September 2010 Release

Tenuta Sette Ponti 2007 Crognolo, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: Considered the second-tier Super Tuscan of Sette Ponti (the top being Oreno), the 2007 Crognolo is really finely done, boasting great integration and flavour. Dark-opaque ruby, the wine displays inviting aromas of cherries, delicate mocha, currants, light pencil lead, tar, and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, with great fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a beautiful hint of cherried plums on the finish. Delicious, more supple in style, and extremely easy to admire. Sangiovese (predominant), Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2016++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

90 \$31.95 (#727636) Vintages 27 November 2010 Release

Kaesler Wines 2007 Nashwauk Shiraz, McLaren Vale, South Australia, Australia: Big and brawny, the 2007 Nashwauk Shiraz is immediately appealing for those who favour the style. Opaque ruby in colour with a touch of red currant, it is finely

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toasted, with characterful aromas of 'mature' mocha, plums, blackberry treacle, eucalyptus, leather, vanilla, and spice. Complex, carrying well-structured, sumptuous forward fruit, firm tannins, mild acidity, and a very long hint of blackberry treacle and mocha traces on the finish. Seriously tasty, though at 15% alcohol small portions are well-advised. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

89+ \$19.95 (#221788) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Ruffino 2006 Modus, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: Super Tuscan label of Ruffino, the Modus offering has lately performed very impressively, representing only one of several bottlings that I tend to take seriously from this oftentimes 'bloated' producer. Opaque ruby in colour, the '06 is finely toasted, boasting intense aromas of smoky cedar, blackberries, currants, leather, and spice. Complex, possessing appealing, semi-extracted fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lovely hint of plums and smoke on the finish. Modelled after a Riserva, it seems; great sturdiness, fullness, and harmony, here. 50% Sangiovese, 25% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 25% Merlot. Now-2017++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

89+ \$28.95 (#912956) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

Kurt Angerer 2008 Granit Zweigelt, Kamptal DAC, Niederösterreich, Austria: One of a handful Zweigelt I came across at a recent Austrian tasting, the 2008 Granit, ambitiously crafted, was probably the most reasonably priced. Dark-opaque purple-ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, presenting impressive aromas of black peppery plums, blackberries, leather, and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, with good concentrated fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lengthy hint of peppery plums on the finish. Very well executed, balanced, and flavourful—also fairly extracted. Now-2015. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

89 \$24.95 (Private Order) B & W Wines

Juan Gil 2007 Silver Label, Jumilla DO, Spain: More and more, the DOs of Murcia, such as Jumilla, are proving well-suited to the crafting of quality, flavourful, and robust red table wines. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the 2007 Silver label displays attractive, near-fragrant aromas of plums, blueberries, slightly cedary currants, leather, violets, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with keenly satisfying fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, high alcohol (15%), and a lengthy hint of perfumed leathery plums on the finish. Substantial, alluring wine; though heavy 'heat' limits its score. 100% Monastrell (Mourvèdre). Now-2017+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

89 \$21.95 (#1677) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

Château Ollieux Romanis 2009 Cuvée Classique, Corbières AOC, Midi, France: Representing incredible value for money, the 2009 Cuvée Classique is a wine lover's treat. Opaque ruby in colour, it offers fairly substantial, if not 'brooding,' aromas of plums, blackberries, leather, mild Provençal herbs, incense, tobacco, and spice. Complex, with fine full-bodied fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lasting hint of blackberries and incense on the finish. Finely extracted, balanced, and characterful. 40% Carignan, 30% Grenache, and 30% Syrah. Now-2018. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

89 \$15.95 (#281162) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

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Château Sénéjac 2008, Haut-Médoc AOC, Bordeaux, France: Reliable, well-made Haut-Médoc, the 2008 Château Sénéjac displays impressive finesse and freshness. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it offers lovely, clear-cut aromas of currants, blackberries, licorice, underbrush, vanilla, spice, and the slightest hint of earth. Complex, with fine fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an appropriately dry, elegant hint of currants and tobacco on the finish. Reflects the vintage extremely well. 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc, and 4% Petit Verdot. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

89 \$23.95 (#265496) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Quinta do Côa 2007 Vinho Tinto, Douro DOC, Portugal: A difficult vintage to screw up a bottling, the 2007 Quinta do Côa is a delightful, rounder, and slighter fruitier-styled wine. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it offers lovely, intense notes of dark brambling violet currants, plums, blueberries, 'black' earth, vanilla, and spice. Reasonably complex, with great fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a pure, lengthy hint of plummy violet currants on the finish. Impressive example of the marvellous direction Douro red table wines are taking. Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz, and Touriga Franca. Now-2017+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

88++ \$19.95 (#182295) Vintages 27 November 2010 Release

Castillo de Sajazarra 2004 Solar de Líbano Reserva, Rioja DOCa, Spain: As far as I know, I have no other notes from this winery, at least none that have impressed me as much as the Solar de Líbano 2004 Reserva. Dark red currant in colour, it is finely toasted, with lovely traditional 'Rioja' aromas of slightly cedary baked cherries, plums, 'wild' leather, a little smoke, and spice; minus the excessive American oak. Complex, with fine fruit and tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant hint of dried cedary cherries on the finish. Splendid style, integration, and polish. From one of my favourite, relatively recent vintages. Now-2015++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

88++ \$22.95 (#190587) Vintages 27 November 2010 Release

Campillo 2004 Reserva, Rioja DOCa, Spain: From one of the best vintages of the new millennium, the 2004 Reserva is a very satisfying, properly made wine. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it is finely toasted, with lovely notes of leathery-laced currants, plums, reddish blackberries, coconut, cedar, and spice. Complex, with very good fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a 'tight' hint of plums and leather on the finish. Nicely assembled, despite the obvious intrusion, in this case, of American oak. The website suggests this is crafted from 100% Tempranillo. Now-2014++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

88+ \$21.95 (#94870) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

Château St-Didier Parnac 2006 Malbec/Merlot, Cahors AOC, Southwest, France: Finely crafted Cahors, the 2006 St-Didier Parnac is a very good, 'grippy' blend of splendid substance and structure. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine offers very pretty notes of dark, slightly scorched earth-driven currants, blackberries, pencil lead shavings, dried flowers, and spice. Palate: lovely, unassuming fruit showing, with firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a hint of violet currants on the finish. Well priced, this is the type of Cahors that gives the appellation a good name. Now-2014++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

88 \$16.95 (#194977) Vintages 5 March 2011 Release

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Bodega Monteviejo 2007 Lindaflor Petite Fleur, Uco Valley (Mendoza), Argentina: Interesting blend from the Uco Valley, one of the most up-and-coming winegrowing regions of Argentina. Very dense purple-ruby in colour, the 2007 Petite Fleur, under the Lindaflor banner, is finely toasted, with attractive notes of violet mocha, baked plums, currants, fruitcake, tar, vanilla, and spice. Reasonably complex, with fine forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lasting hint of 'purple' currants on the finish. Powerful and appealing. 50% Malbec, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Syrah, and 10% Merlot. Now-2015. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

88 \$19.95 (#167254) Vintages 18 September 2010 Release

Concha y Toro 2007 Marques de Casa Concha Carmenère, Peumo (Cachapoal Valley), Chile: One of few Carmenères that have satisfied me as of late, the 2007 Marques de Casa Concha can be easily considered a splendidly robust, collectors' everyday wine. Very dense ruby in colour, it is finely toasted, with appealing notes of fresh cassis (slightly peppery), blackberries, plums, leather, violet-infused asphalt (strange), vanilla, and spice. Palate: very good forward, well-structured fruit showing, with firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lingering hint of black 'purple' currants on the finish. Powerful, extracted, and phenolically ripe. Now-2014. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

88 \$19.95 (#169862) Vintages 18 September 2010 Release

Benziger 2006 Syrah, North Coast, California: The only Syrah I have ever tasted from Benziger, the 2006 North Coast version is surprisingly very good. Opaque ruby in colour, it is finely toasted, offering admirable notes of baked leathery currants and plums, black mocha, coffee beans, and a hint of white pepper, vanilla, and spice. Palate: fine forward fruit on display, with firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lingering hint of black plums and leather on the finish. A wine of impressive backbone, structure, and flavour. Why can't other North Coast wines taste like this? Now-2015. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

88 \$19.95 (#67215) Vintages 18 September 2010 Release

Lornano 2006, Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: Solid, pleasantly fruitier approach, the 2006 Lornano is an appealingly accessible Riserva for wine lovers to enjoy. Dark red currant in colour, it offers subtle notes of cedary cherries and red plums, undergrowth, light roasted meats, and a sprinkle of herbs and spice. Palate: good polished fruit on display, with firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a delightful hint of cedary cherries on the finish. Though of fleshier design, the quality is assuredly there. Now-2015. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

88 \$18.95 (#208447) Vintages 5 March 2011 Release

Torres 2009 Celeste Crianza, Ribera del Duero DO, Spain: The last vintage I tasted of this was the '05 almost three years ago, so it's good to see the label has remained on form. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the 2009 Celeste is finely toasted, displaying fine notes of blackberries, plums, dried strawberries, licorice, mild coconut, vanilla, spice, and seaweed traces. Complex, with robust fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a polished, juicy hint of blackberries and dried strawberries on the finish. Balanced, tasty, and reasonably fulsome. 100% Tempranillo. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

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88 \$21.95 (#210872) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Quinta da Rigodeira 2005 Baga, Bairrada DOC, Portugal: Neatly integrated and balanced, the 2005 Baga offers wine lovers a chance to sample one of the most tannic grapes in the world. Dark garnet in colour, it is intensely savoury, with lots of cedar, red fruits, sandalwood, mild leather, and spice. Palate: good mature fruit showing, with well-integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a hint of cedary and savoury nuances on the finish. Reasonably priced by our market standards. Now-2014. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, May 2012)

87+ \$13.95 (#219121) Vintages 7 July 2012 Release

Fortified Wine:

Gould Campbell 1983 Vintage Port, Douro DOC, Portugal: While I have tasted very few vintage ports from Gould Campbell, part of the Symington conglomerate, up until now, there is little mistaking the quality of their top bottlings. Dark red garnet in colour, the '83 Vintage Port displays a beautiful, mature bouquet of wonderful fruitcake, dark nuttled plums, figs, raisins, dried flowers, and spice. Complex and very delicate at this stage, featuring exceptional, gorgeous fruit, firm yet approachable tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant, lingering hint of sweet fruitcake on the finish. Excellent, stalwart, and unquestionably delicious. This should easily endure, albeit rather delicately, for the foreseeable future. Bravo! Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

92 \$79.00 (#731752) Vintages 13 November 2010 Release

Dessert Wines:

Château d'Yquem 2007, Sauternes AOC, Bordeaux, France: Easily the greatest d'Yquem since the '01, the 2007 Château d'Yquem is one of winemaker Sandrine Garbay's most magnificent accomplishments. Light golden-yellow in colour, this infantile beauty delivers heavenly, out-of-sight scents of delicately nuttled honeycomb and lemon blossom; switching to honeysuckle, orange zest, marzipan, dolce cream, 'icy' sherbet, amber, Asian spice, and nuts. Incredibly complex, possessing astonishing sweet fruit, perfect acidity, and an everlasting, exuberant hint of honeycomb, lemon blossom, dolce cream, and nuts on the finish. Omnipotent Sauternes, with unparalleled depth, finesse, and brilliance. This should easily keep for over half a century, likely much more if properly cellared. The vineyard is planted to 80% Sémillon and 20% Sauvignon Blanc. Now-2065++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2010)

98 \$895.00 (#99382) Vintages 2007 Bordeaux Futures

Kracher 2007 TBA No. 2 Traminer, Burgenland, Austria (375 mL): From the greatest sweet wine producer in Burgenland (if not all of Austria), the 2007 TBA No.2 Traminer is a remarkable collectable. Light gold in colour, it displays incredible scents of spicy apricots, caramel, maple-amber, melon, and just a hint of lychees—to name but a few of the most profound aromatics. Very complex, possessing amazingly smooth sweet fruit, balanced acidity, and an excellent, refined hint of spicy apricots and maple on the finish. Outstandingly personable, wielding great character, balance, and longevity. Just imagine how this will taste in a few decades. Now-2035++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner

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~ Wine education for us all – Valpolicella ~

Saturday, July 7th, 2012

92++ \$49.00 (Private Order) HHD Imports

Kracher 2007 TBA No. 3 Scheurebe, Burgenland, Austria (375 mL): When Alois Kracher passed away in 2007, Austria lost one of its greatest producers. Light gold in colour, the 2007 TBA No. 3 Scheurebe exhibits brilliant scents of spice-driven lemon citrus, orange blossom, maple (very light), marmalade, and spice. Very complex, guaranteeing superlatively smooth sweet fruit, remarkable acidity, and an elegant, long-lasting hint of orange blossom and lemon (both just a little bit spicy) on the finish. Extremely seductive, like all of Kracher's wines it embodies a uniqueness all its own. Now-2034++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

92 \$53.00 (Private Order) HHD Imports

Schloss Gobelsburg 2008 Grüner Veltliner Eiswein, Kamptal DAC, Niederösterreich, Austria (375 mL): Likely the only Grüner Veltliner I've ever tasted in icewine format, the 2008 Schloss Gobelsburg, albeit excellently crafted, is difficult to compare with other types of stickies. Whatever. Light straw in colour, it displays enticing scents of fresh sweet melon, lemon, pineapples, honeycomb, brioche, white flowers, and spice. Very complex, delivering superb sweet fruit, balanced acidity, and a decisively elegant hint of pure sweet melon and honeyed pineapple on the finish. Truly distinct, I would imagine such a wine to be sparsely produced. Now-2020++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, April 2010)

91 \$55.00 (Private Order) Andrews Group

Sparkling Wine:

Henri Abelé NV Traditionnel Brut, Champagne, France: My only note from this house, the NV Henri Abelé represents a terrific, tempting effort from what appears to be a modest yet proud operation. Pale straw-lime in colour, the wine reveals beautiful, intense scents of 'meaty' brioche and toasted biscuits, giving way to pears, white flowers, nuts, and a lovely hint of gingerroot and spice. Complex, possessing beautifully crisp, frothy fruit, balanced acidity, and a really poignant hint of pears and a few yeasty biscuits on the finish. Superlative bubbly, this performs beyond expectations. Now-2015++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2010)

91+ \$54.99 (Private Order) Stem Wine Group