

The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner

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~ Priorato – the best Garnacha in Spain ~

Saturday, February 4th, 2012

Home to some of the best wineries in Spain:

Listing Spanish winegrowing regions by fame, few would deny that Rioja, continuing to reinvent itself, retains top spot. Next on the list? Probably Ribera del Duero, home to two of the most prestigious wineries in the country, Vega Sicilia and Pingus. In both cases, the star grape is Tempranillo, the most famous, noblest red grape of Spain.



And then, there's Priorat. Granted DOCa status in 2003, Priorat, or 'Priorato' as it is correctly spelled, arguably ranks third, some would even say second, on any list of Spanish winegrowing regions by fame. Located around 150 kilometres from Barcelona in the sun-scorched Mediterranean region of Catalonia (correctly spelled 'Catalunya'), the speciality of Priorato is powerful, no-holds-barred Garnacha.



Like most other up-and-coming, or rediscovered, winegrowing regions, though vines have been planted in Priorato for well over eight hundred years, it is only relatively recently that great wine began to be made here. This occurred about twenty years ago, when René Barbier convinced a group of fellow winemakers in 1989 to produce five different 'Clos,' sourcing their grapes from only the finest, in some cases abandoned, sites surrounding the village of Gratallops, making their wine on the same premises in the village. The results were wines of unbelievable concentration, personality, and quality; and it was not before long that each winemaker set off on his own to start up his own individual bodega. The rest, as we say, is history.

Now for the specifics. Virtually surrounded by the Montsant DO, there are nowadays almost 1,800 hectares under vine (a far cry from its pre-phylloxera hectarage of 5,000), with

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approximately 70 bodegas in operation. The finest vines are planted on terraces between altitudes of roughly 100 to 800 metres—a key feature in producing the finest grapes possible. By sheer numbers, Cariñena (Carignan) still outnumbers Garnacha by far, though the best bottlings almost always feature the latter. These are usually planted on cooler, later ripening sites.

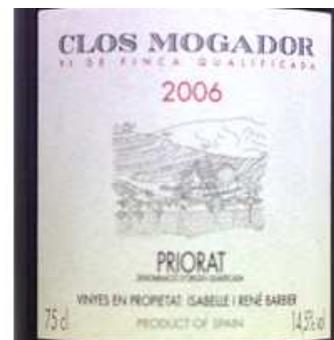
Of soil deposits, one of the most distinctive features of Priorat soils is the inclusion of dark stripes of brown slate intermixed with quartzite, which glitters black and gold in the sun; in Catalan, this is called *llicorella*. As one would expect in such a hot, sunny climate, rainfall is minimal, but because Priorat's soils are unusually cool and damp, vine roots usually dig deeper to absorb water and nutrients—another key component in the crafting of more complex, high quality wine.



For collectors, then, Priorato is nowadays home to some of the greatest wineries in Spain. The most costly is Alvaro Palacios' L'Ermita, a single-vineyard wine of the same name, made predominantly from Garnacha (usually 80%) with a dollop of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cariñena, crafted from vines ranging from

60 to 100 years of age; it was first released in 1993. Other gems? Think Mas Doix, Mas Martinent, Clos Mogador, Clos Erasmus, Cal Grau, and Cims de Porrera. Just so you know, not all of these are crafted primarily from Garnacha; many will be made from (very) old-vine Cariñena, and are not to be missed on any account.

So how should such wines taste? While I have encountered a few wines here and there that have tasted like richer versions of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the best examples from Priorato



ought to have this intense figgy, ripe black fruit aromas and flavours about them, boasting slightly 'roasted' or 'tarry' Provençal notes, which continue on the palate and finish. Accompanying scents

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and flavours will invariably include leather, ‘thick’ black raspberries, kirsch, and spice—among other things. Moreover, the best wines, robust and textured to a point beyond flattery, will almost always possess extremely high levels of alcohol, reaching as high as 16.5% on occasion. Such blockbusters have the potential of keeping for several decades, sometimes more. Such are the hallmarks of great Priorato.

[Click here for a few gems from the 4 February 2012 Vintages Release along with several others](#)

A few gems for collectors:

White Wines:

Domaine Bouchard Père & Fils 2008, Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru AOC, Burgundy, France: From one of the most stupendous white wine vineyards on Earth, the 2008 Chevalier-Montrachet stands tall as a magnificent, finesse-obsessed, and ridiculously harmonious Burgundy. Starbright, pale lime in colour with a touch of straw, it is insanely complex, featuring sensational scents of schisty hazelnuts and quince, giving way to pears, lemon, brioche, smoke, green apples, minerals, and spice—all unbelievably elegant and pure. On the palate: amazingly integrated, intense ‘white Burgundy’ fruit on display, coupled with perfect acidity, and a lasting, layered hint of hazelnutted quince on the finish. Only slightly eclipsing the ‘07, this should have little trouble keeping for at least a couple of decades. Bravo to Bouchard Père & Fils! Now-2032++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, June 2010)

95 \$259.00 (#88708) Vintages October 2011 Classics Catalogue

Domaine Bouchard Père & Fils 2008, Meursault Premier Cru Genevrières AOC, Burgundy, France: Stunning Genevrières from the ground up, the ‘08 is an exemplary white Burgundy of remarkable style, elegance, and breed—a true collector’s wine at an easily acceptable price. Light lime in colour, it is finely toasted, offering utterly beautiful scents of hazelnuts and quince, switching to pears, mild caramel, dried apricots, and a hint of vanilla, orange peel, and lime. Very complex, presenting great, refined fruit, balanced acidity, and a lingering, seamlessly elegant hint of hazelnutted pears on the finish. Exemplary, intensely ‘intellectual,’ invitational Premier Cru wine; from a site that makes a good case for promotion to Grand Cru. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, June 2010)

92++ \$69.00 (#46532) Vintages February 2011 Classics Catalogue

Domdechant Werner 2003 Riesling Auslese, Hochheimer Kirchenstück QmP, Rheingau, Germany: Owned by the same family since 1780, quality has considerably improved over the past decade or so. Light lime in colour, the fabulous ‘03 Auslese, hailing from the first-rate Hochheimer Kirchenstück vineyard, seems content to bask in its youthful tendencies, exhibiting beautiful scents of sweet pears and ‘temperate’ peaches, green grapes, kerosene, lemon blossom, lime cordial, orange zest, and spice. Very complex, with excellent sweet fruit (heightened from such a hot vintage), balanced acidity, and a wonderfully elegant, lingering hint of sweet pears and kerosene on the

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finish. Superb integration, desirable fatness, and vitality, barely affecting the scales at 7.5% alcohol. Now-2021++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

91+ \$27.95 (#931386) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Château Carbonnieux Blanc 2003, Pessac-Léognan AOC, Bordeaux, France: From one of the oddest, hottest years ever to grace the whole of Bordeaux, whites from '03 seem to have held up remarkably well, with Château Carbonnieux Blanc performing in accordance with its usual standard of both reliability and excellence. Starbright, light greenish-golden in colour, it offers exquisitely personable scents of citrus lemon, pears, tangerines, starfruit, almonds, and a hint of chalk and spice. Complex, possessing beautiful fruit, very fine, balanced acidity, and a lingering, elegant hint of lemon citrus and almonds on the finish. Superb elegance and integration—a real winner. Now-2016++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, February 2011)

91 \$69.00 (#120527) Vintages Online Exclusives

Landmark 2008 Damaris Reserve Chardonnay, Flocchini Vineyard/Sangiaco Vineyards (Sonoma County), California: One of several 'higher-up' labels from this otherwise—I'm sorry to say—routinely uninteresting winery, the 2008 outstanding Damaris Reserve Chardonnay caught me by surprise. Starbright, light greenish-lime in colour, it is finely toasted, boasting rich, lifted scents of apricots, honeysuckle, pears, butterscotch, lemon blossom, white chalk, orange zest, and a hint of vanillin. Very complex, delivering forward, deliciously 'constructed' fruit, balanced acidity, and a lingering, undeniably pleasure-oriented hint of butterscotch, apricots, and nuts on the finish. Full-throttle, immense style (not to my taste, though it will surely thrill others), nonetheless extremely alluring and certainly crafted from superior ingredients. Now-2017+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

91 \$45.95 (#356519) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Maison Roche de Bellene 2009 Vieilles Vignes, Meursault AOC, Burgundy, France: Crafted from vines planted in 1947, it is safe to say that the 2009 Meursault is a proper, legitimate, and alluring Vieilles Vignes. Pale-light lime in colour, it features quintessentially 'Meursault' scents of delicately toasted oak that rapidly makes way for hazelnutted pears, caramel, dried apricots, and a hint of acacia flowers and lemon. Very complex, carrying great fruit (rounder yet intense and elegant), balanced acidity, and a refined, poignant hint of pears, caramel, and hazelnuts on the finish. Verbose, fulsome, and inviting, this is exceedingly better than most village wines from this commune. Now-2019+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

91 \$48.95 (#241091) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Stratus 2008 Chardonnay, VQA Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Canada: When sticking with single-varietal wines, Stratus' offerings become some of the best in Ontario. Starbright, light lime in colour with a touch of straw, the 2008 Chardonnay happily aims for a more Burgundian style, presenting attractive scents of mild toasted oak that quickly switches to caramel, pears, lemon citrus, dried nuts, and a hint of orange zest and quince. Complex, possessing superbly elegant fruit, balanced acidity, and a refined, poised hint of caramel and pears on the finish. Excellent effort, quality, and balance; though some may not appreciate the obvious botrytis influence. In the end: kudos to winemaker J-L Groux for his hard work. Now-2016++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

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90+ \$42.20 (#267856) **Vintages 4 February 2012 Release**

Domaine Jean Collet & Fils 2008, Chablis Premier Cru Vaillons AOC, Burgundy, France: Located southeast of the village of Chablis, the Premier Cru site of Vaillons, while not considered top-tier in status, is nonetheless capable of producing superior, sometimes superlative wine. Starbright, pale lime in lime colour, the 2008 Jean Collet & Fils reveals amazingly elegant, delicate scents of mineral-laden green apples, lemon, seasalt, white grapefruit, dried nuts, and the smallest trace of cream and quince. Complex, offering beautiful nervy fruit, balanced acidity, and a refined, almost ethereal hint of minerals and lemon on the finish. Delicate and much focused; a top-notch effort, indeed. Now-2016. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

90 \$28.25 (#650804) **Vintages 4 February 2012 Release**

Kim Crawford 2011 SP Spitfire Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, South Island, New Zealand: For some reason, it's been ages since I last recommended a Kim Crawford wine—probably because of the erratic quality that began several years ago. No matter, the 2011 SP Spitfire is well worth a gander, possessing impressive intensity and precision. Starbright, pale lime in colour, it's almost 'sexy' for its type, featuring intense, pure scents of gooseberries, white grapefruit, tropical peach skins, lemon, minerals, and a hint of herbs. Reasonably complex, with zesty fruit, balanced acidity, and a lingering hint of gooseberries and peach skins on the finish. 'Marlborough-ly' to the last. Screwcap closure. Now-2014+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

89 \$24.25 (#38240) **Vintages 4 February 2012 Release**

Domaine Fouassier 2009 Les Grands Groux, Sancerre AOC, Loire, France: From a vineyard 5.5 hectares in size, the 2009 Les Grands Groux has a lot going for it: refined, impressive, and admirably singular. Pale lime in colour with the slightest touch of straw, the wine is slightly more tropical than the norm, revealing lovely scents of fresh cut grass, lemon, peach skins, capsicum, minerals, and a hint of smoke and orange peel. Complex, with fine, nervy fruit, balanced acidity, and an elegant hint of lemongrass and capsicum on the finish. With that extra lift of personality, the Fouassier family should take great pride in this wine. Now-2016+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

89 \$24.95 (#267948) **Vintages 4 February 2012 Release**

Vieil Armand 2009 Médaille Gewurztraminer, Alsace AOC, France: Ever since I stumbled upon the wines of Vieil Armand a few years ago, rarely have I tasted a bottling not worth recommending. Starbright, pale-light straw-lime in colour, the '09 Médaille Gewurztraminer displays lovely, 'varietally enthusiastic' scents of white peaches intermixed with Asian spice, lemon citrus, lychees, rosewater, and jasmine. Palate: delightful fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a satisfying hint of sweet lychees and peaches on the finish. Balanced, fresh, polished, and round. Now-2016++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

88 \$16.95 (#260158) **Vintages 4 February 2012 Release**

Rodney Strong 2008 Chalk Hill Chardonnay, Sonoma County, California: One of the better Chardonnays from the typically humdrum selection of Rodney Strong bottlings. Starbright, pale-light lime in colour, the 2008 Chalk Hill displays delightful notes of intense oatmeal at the outset, with lovely dried pears, lemon, kiwi, toasted oak, and a

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hint of dried apricots. Mouthfeel: very good fruit showing, with balanced acidity, and a hint of ripe pears on the finish. Quite satisfying, admirably made wine. Now-2013+.
(Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

88 \$22.95 (#275552) Vintages 30 April 2011 Release

Red Wines:

Robert Mondavi 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: A candidate for wine of the vintage, the 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon is one of the greatest creations this establishment has ever produced. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, the wine is magnificently designed, possessing abundant, decadent aromas of flower-infused 'silky' mocha and currants, giving way to toasted oak, kirsch liqueur, blackberry compote, blueberries, graphite, mild incense, vanilla, and spice. Extremely complex, for the aromas are extremely multilayered, possessing dazzling fruit, firm tannins, slightly milder acidity, and a phenomenal, lasting hint of mocha, flowers, and plummy currants on the finish. A wine of magnificent personality, structure, depth, and style. Tipping the scales at 16% alcohol, it's amazing how balanced the wine seems to taste. Also contains 7% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot. Also of interest: 71% sourced from the famed To Kalon Vineyard, the rest from other Oakville sites. Now-2035+.
(Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

95 \$139.95 (#670463) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Beaulieu Vineyard 2007 Georges de Latour Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: While I have little doubt that even finer vintages of Georges de Latour have been produced, the 2007 unmistakably stands out as the greatest bottling of the twenty-first century. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, this is so much superior to the other Beaulieu labelings it's almost sad; beautifully toasted, with wondrous aromas of currants, blackberry compote, flowery blackberries and blueberries, kirsch, crème de cassis, charcoal, asphalt, vanilla, and spice. Abundantly complex, featuring fantastic forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a long-lasting, astonishing hint of mocha, crème de cassis, and spring flowers on the finish. A wine of extraordinary depth, structure, boldness, and length. Built for the very long haul. Also contains 4% Petit Verdot and 3% Malbec. Now-2034+.
(Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

94+ \$89.95 (#80218) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Cliff Lede 2006 Poetry Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap District (Napa Valley), California: Under Canadian-born owner Cliff Lede, this stunning operation has become famous for its rich, sumptuous wines for which collectors should continually be on the lookout. Take the monumental '06 Poetry Cabernet Sauvignon: brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, it exhibits enveloping aromas of milk chocolate, currants, and toasted oak, switching to blackberries, coffee, roasted meats, kirsch, seaweed, tar, vanilla, and spice. Extremely complex, offering gorgeous forward fruit, supple yet firm tannins, milder acidity, and a long-lasting hint of milk chocolate and currants on the finish. Unabashedly opulent, decadent wine—simply fantastic. Also contains 2% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot. Now-2032+.
(Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

94 \$124.95 (#14209) Vintages 11 December 2010 Release

Dunn Vineyards 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon, Howell Mountain (Napa Valley), California: As usual, winemaker/owner Randy Dunn manages to outdo himself to craft

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one of the most wonderfully Bordelaise, elegantly stylish wines in California, with the 2006 Howell Mountain hitting all strides with near-effortless ease. Brilliant, dark-opaque ruby in colour, it is beautifully toasted, featuring exceptional aromas of currants, blackberries, plums, raspberries, black cherries, mocha, crushed rocks, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, possessing deliciously elegant fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a robust, lingering hint of black currants and mocha on the finish. Old World as always, logging in at a seemingly minor 13.8% alcohol. Excellently done! Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

93 \$92.95 (#709204) Vintages 11 December 2010 Release

Dunn Vineyards 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: Almost as good as the '07 Howell Mountain (the only other wine Randy Dunn produces), the 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon, as usual, is amazingly 'un-Napa' in its level of refinement, finesse, and obvious Bordelaise aspirations. Brilliant, dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine features elegant aromas (which appear to be shutting down) of extremely subtle toasted oak, currants, blackberries, black raspberries, graphite, leather, forest floor, sushi wrapper, tar, and a trace of black mocha and spice. Very complex, displaying excellent fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a harmonious, utterly refined hint of slightly silky currants and graphite on the finish. Bravo! Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

93 \$87.95 (#193854) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Hall 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: A must-have, unbelievable bargain for collectors, the 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon outdoes itself as a wildly concentrated, delicious, and plainly stunning wine—that is, for those who are fans of the style. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, it is uniquely characterful and decadent, offering truly inviting aromas of 'reddish' mocha and currants, blueberries, charcoal, licorice, spring flowers, incense, mild kirsch, vanillin, and spice. Very complex, carrying extremely sumptuous, velvety fruit, milder acidity, and a very long, extraordinary hint of creamy mocha and plums on the finish. Powerful and Parkerized, the instant appeal and grandeur of this wine should ensure its demand 'til there's no more to buy. Now-2024++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

93 \$59.95 (#273391) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Rapet Père & Fils 2006, Le Corton Grand Cru AOC, Burgundy, France: Believe me: whenever a terrific bottling of Corton comes your way, you buy it! All too often, I've had wines from this illustrious hillside(s) that simply do not measure up. Not so the '06 Rapet: brilliant, dark ruby in colour, the wine is finely (but not overly) toasted, with exceptional aromas of cherried plums, strawberries, rhubarb, cinnamon, a few herbs, some gamey underbrush, and spice. Complex, with superbly integrated, proper fruit, fine tannins, balanced acidity, and a truly appreciable hint of cherries and rhubarb on the finish. Great integration, structure, balance, and class. Now-2018. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, February 2011)

92+ \$99.00 (#103127) Vintages Online Exclusives

Antonino Izquierdo 2006, Ribera del Duero DO, Spain: One of countless new-wave offerings hailing from the burgeoning Ribera del Duero, the 2006 Antonino Izquierdo is a powerful, individualistic wine that will eagerly appeal to collectors of all types. Brilliant, dark-opaque ruby in colour, it reveals beautiful incense at the outset, with enticing,

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atypical aromas of sweet currants, damson, camphor, forest floor, spicebox, and dates. Complex, offering delicious, robust fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lasting, incense-infused hint of currants on the finish. A wine of outstanding character, structure, and harmony. 95% Tempranillo and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2020++ (probably much longer). (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, February 2011)

92 \$87.00 (#105809) Vintages Online Exclusives

Corté Riva 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa/Sonoma Counties, California: Ordinarily, I am not a fan of these multi-county California creations, as they're often rather mediocre, too fruit-driven, and largely uninspired. Not so the 2005 Corté Riva: dark-opaque red currant in colour, it reveals superlative aromas of 'mature' wild flowers that quickly give way cedary mocha and currants, leather, toasted oak, tobacco, tar, vanilla, and spice. Quite complex, actually, boasting exceptional, deliciously forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a powerful, lingering hint of 'maturing' mocha, dark currants, and toasted oak on the finish. Mightily rich, concentrated wine; maturing beautifully with beautiful structure and length. Now-2019++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

92 \$77.95 (#89318) Vintages 11 December 2010 Release

Château Certan-Marzelle 2005, Pomerol AOC, Bordeaux, France: The 'second wine' of Château Hosanna, now one of the most sought-after wines in Pomerol, the 2005 Certan-Marzelle is a delicious, appetizing wine that collectors should want to purchase simply for how delectable it is. Brilliant, dark-opaque ruby-red currant in colour, it is finely toasted, offering refined, 'softer' aromas of milk chocolate intermixed with plums, currants, dried cherries, tar, cedarwood, and a hint of earth, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with delicious, undeniably approachable fruit, firm yet supple tannins, balanced acidity, and a lingering, attractive hint of soft cocoa shavings and plums on the finish. Definitely alluring, softer-styled, and balanced. 100% Merlot (and it shows). Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, February 2011)

91+ \$79.00 (#501239) Vintages Online Exclusives

Tenementi Angelini 2005 Val di Suga, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: Another success story from the challenging 2005 vintage, the Val di Suga is a truly pleasing Brunello of great structure, balance, and poise. Brilliant, dark garnet in colour, the wine displays beautiful aromas of gentle, elegant cedarwood, dried cherries, undergrowth, cigar box, light tobacco, and the slightest hint of black tea and spice. Complex, with great traditional-styled fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a terrific, slightly rugged hint of cedarwood and leather on the finish. Definitely more understated by design, still possessing all the necessary components of a first-rate wine. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2011)

91 \$52.00 (#713719) Vintages Online Exclusives

Bacio Divino 2007 Janzen Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: Excellent, powerful Cabernet Sauvignon, to say the least, the 2007 Janzen is definitely a wine that should satiate collectors. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, it is finely toasted, with attractive aromas of black mocha and currants, forest floor, leather, tar, charcoal, vanilla, and spice. Complex, boasting delicious forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lingering, rather poised hint of reserved cocoa shavings and currants on the finish. Truly

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enticing, robust bottling, handling its 14.7% alcoholic content with seemingly irreverent ease. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

91 \$47.95 (#232355) Vintages 30 April 2011 Release

Tenuta de Ghizzano 2007 Veneroso, IGT Toscana, Tuscany, Italy: For collectors, the 2007 Ghizzano represents remarkable value for money when considering the inescapable quality of the wine. Brilliant, dark ruby in colour, it is finely toasted, delivering enticing aromas of dried mocha shavings and black cherries that shortly give way to plums, leathery undergrowth, pain grille, and a hint of graphite and spice. Complex, with really attractive, well-styled fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a delicious hint of mocha, cherried plums, and pencil lead on the finish. Definitely inviting, well structured, and harmonious. On the website, the wine is listed as a blend of 70% Sangiovese and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2019++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, June 2011)

91 \$29.95 (#103218) Vintages 9 July 2011 Release

La Gravette de Certan 2009, Pomerol AOC, Bordeaux, France: The 'second wine' of Vieux Château Certan, one of the top properties in Pomerol, having very recently tasted the '08 I was surprised to find the '09, from a much superior vintage, not as substantial as its predecessor. Nonetheless, the overall pedigree and sophistication of the wine remains very much apparent. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, it is only starting to come out of its shell: finely toasted, with exciting aromas of elegant red currants and grilled herbs, switching to cherries, woodsmoke, graphite, licorice, underbrush, vanillin, and a hint of graham crackers and spice. Very complex, delivering delicious, refined fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a superb hint of red currants and graphite on the finish. For collectors, this is not to be missed. Now-2021+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

91 \$69.95 (#256792) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Château Haut-Marbuzet 2005, St-Estèphe AOC, Bordeaux, France: From arguably the greatest estate in St-Estèphe not included in the 1855 Classification, the 2005 Haut-Marbuzet is has reached a unique phase of its existence that ought to please 'traditional' claret lovers to no end. Brilliant, dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine is innately savoury at the moment, with compelling aromas of dark dried mocha, currants, plums, earth, (atypically) fragrant pain grille, spicebox, and tar. Complex, with extremely refined fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a decisively elegant hint of dried earthy currants on the finish. Exceptionally well crafted, boasting great structure, pedigree, and balance. The vineyard is planted to 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, and 10% Cabernet Franc. Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, February 2011)

91 \$84.00 (#502773) Vintages Online Exclusives

Lail Vineyards 2008 Blueprint Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: For collectors of powerful, highly extracted California Cabernets, the 2008 Blueprint should foot the bill neatly. Brilliant, very dense ruby in colour, it is almost Provençal in style, offering enticing aromas of incense-infused blackberries, blueberries, currants, lavender, mocha, cream, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering sumptuous, powerful forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a very lengthy hint of blackberried currants and blueberries on the finish. Deliciously concentrated, enticing, and bold—a style some

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love, others not so much. Also contains 12% Merlot. Now-2019+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

91 \$59.95 (#60251) Vintages 15 October 2011 Release

Robert Mondavi 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon, Oakville (Napa Valley), California (Magnum): This was the first time I have tasted the Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon from magnum, and quite the treat it was—much more multilayered than the standard bottling, especially with regard to texture. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, the '05 is beautifully toasted, offering inviting yet 'brooding' aromas of sweet black mocha, 'dusty' currants and plums, baked black cherries, pain grille, licorice, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, possessing first-rate forward, well-structured fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lasting, polished hint of plummy currants on the finish. Truly delicious, straight-laced, and tempting. Also contains 6% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot, 1% Merlot, and 1% Malbec. Now-2022++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2011)

91 \$109.00 (#238659) Vintages Online Exclusives

Corte Pavone 2005, Brunello di Montalcino DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: As far as I'm aware, I have no other notes from this winery, which makes the 2005 Corte Pavone all the more effectively impressive as a delicious, original, and stylish Brunello. Dark red-garnet in colour, the wine features tempting, traditional aromas of dark cedarwood-driven cherries and red plums, underbrush, leather, mild chestnuts, earth, and spice. Complex, delivering superb fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an exciting, elegant hint of cherries and cedarwood on the finish. Considering the limitations of the vintage, the Loacker family, owners of the estate, should feel extremely proud of this wine. Now-2019. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

91 \$49.95 (#237263) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Souverain 2005 Winemaker's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley (Sonoma County), California: At this stage of its life, the 2005 Winemaker's Reserve has begun to evolve into an excitingly unique, beautifully engaging Cabernet Sauvignon. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, it displays beautiful, intense aromas of currants, dried black cherries, tobacco, forest floor, charcoal, and spice. Complex, with delicious, more elegantly inspired fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and an almost refined, generous hint of tobacco-laden currants and black forest cake (seriously) on the finish. In the end: superbly focused, balanced, and harmonious—never an easy feat at 14.3% alcohol. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, June 2011)

91 \$39.95 (#718197) Vintages 9 July 2011 Release

Château La Haye 2005, St-Estèphe AOC, Bordeaux, France: Though shutting down somewhat (particularly on the nose), the 2005 Château La Haye is nonetheless a great St-Estèphe with all the hallmarks of elegance, structure, and origin. Brilliant, dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine suggests truly refined aromas of slightly cedarwood-infused currants and plums, subtle mocha, forest floor, and a hint of wild game and spice. Complex, possessing beautiful, very elegant fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a superb hint of currants on the finish. Delicious and extremely well put together; a wine of real harmony. 68% Merlot, 23% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petit Verdot, and 4% Cabernet Franc. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, June 2011)

90++ \$29.95 (#230334) Vintages 9 July 2011 Release

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Domaine Bouchard Père & Fils 2008, Pommard Premier Cru Rugiens AOC, Burgundy, France: Considered one of the best Premier Cru sites in Pommard, the 2008 Rugiens hits most of the high notes with near-remarkable ease, revealing great structural depth, elegance, and balance. Medium ruby in colour, the wine is finely yet moderately toasted, revealing beautifully ‘rugged’ aromas of earthy cherries and plums, violets, mild rhubarb, rose petals, and a hint of vanillin and spice. Complex, presenting beautiful fruit, fine tannins, balanced acidity, and a wholly splendid hint of earthy plums and ‘Pinot’ cherries on the finish. Indeed, the Pommard-begotten terroir shows itself from many angles, and the wine is all the better for it. Now-2016++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, June 2010)

90+ \$74.00 (#206177) Vintages February 2011 Classics Catalogue

Bodegas Corral 1995 Don Jacobo Gran Reserva, Rioja DOCa, Spain: In all certainty, this is not a wine for everyone, conducting itself like an old warhorse on the verge of being put out to pasture, were it not for the considerable quality of its constituent features. Brilliant, dark garnet-red brick in colour, the 1995 Don Jacobo Gran Reserva is, indeed, extremely well aged, carrying a beautiful bouquet of elegant cedary plums, marjoram, cigar box, wild game, and a hint of smoke and spice. Complex, with truly lovely, mature fruit, finely integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a poised, refined hint of cedary cigar box on the finish. Properly aged, with just a few years of life left; still alive and kicking. Now-2014. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

90+ \$27.95 (#923748) Vintages 30 April 2011 Release

Château Grand Corbin-Despaigne 2007, St-Emilion Grand Cru Classé AOC, Bordeaux, France: One of a handful of St-Emilion-based estates with the name ‘Corbin’ in the title, Château Grand Corbin-Despaigne has taken a giant leap forward in quality under owner Francois Despaigne. Brilliant, dark ruby in colour, the ‘07 displays beautiful aromas of delicate mocha and dark, slightly raspberried plums, blackberries, finely toasted oak, and a hint of licorice and spice. Complex, with very elegant, lovely inlaid fruit, fairly firm tannins (considering the vintage), balanced acidity, and a refined, polished hint of mild raspberried plums on the finish. Extremely impressive for the year; definitely appealing. 75% Merlot, 24% Cabernet Franc, and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2017++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, June 2011)

90+ \$34.00 (#98798) Vintages 9 July 2011 Release

Les Hauts de Smith 2008, Pessac-Léognan AOC, Bordeaux, France: The ‘second wine’ of famed Château Smith Haut Lafitte, the 2008 Les Hauts de Smith retains much the same character as the ‘grand vin,’ though much rounder, fruitier, and less dense in structure. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, it is finely toasted, with inviting aromas of delicate mocha, currants, licorice, graphite, Oreo Cookies®, and a hint of blueberries, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with great, approachable fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a refined hint of currants and graphite on the finish. Deliciously textured, balanced, and elegant; though assuredly meant for a more limited existence. Now-2019. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

90+ \$36.95 (#241240) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Henschke 2008 Keyneton Euphonium, Barossa, South Australia, Australia: One of the more idiosyncratic bottlings from Henschke, the Keyneton Euphonium is the type of wine that seldom fails to turn heads. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, the ‘08 displays

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notably, and appealingly, intense aromas of eucalyptus, giving way to currants, blueberries, kirsch, violets, leather, baked cherries, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering delicious forward fruit, supple tannins, mild acidity, and a lingering, polished hint of smooth eucalyptus and currants on the finish. Powerful, invitational, and truly well done. 75% Shiraz, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, and 6% Cabernet Franc. Screwcap closure. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

90+ \$49.95 (#720433) Vintages 30 April 2011 Release

Château Malmaison 2006, Moulis-en-Médoc AOC, Bordeaux, France: In 1973, Château Malmaison, along with Château Clarke in neighbouring Listrac, was purchased by Baron Edmond de Rothschild; so it is only natural that a high level of quality would be expected from this estate. Brilliant, dark-opaque ruby in colour, the '06 displays beautiful aromas of 'rugged' currants and blackberries, dark raspberries, plums, charcoal, minerals, and a hint of black mocha, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with very fine, elegant fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a truly refined hint of currants and loamy earth on the finish. Great claret of notable substance, structure, and pedigree. 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon—who knew? Now-2017++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, June 2011)

90+ \$28.95 (#172676) Vintages 9 July 2011 Release

Xavier 2009, Châteauneuf-du-Pape AOC, Rhône, France: My only note from this operation, the 2009 Châteauneuf-du-Pape is beautifully oriented, balanced, and personable. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine has a slightly more 'rugged' feel to it, displaying engaging aromas of Provençal-infused black raspberries and lavender, red licorice, red currants, leather, and a trace of violets and spice. Complex, carrying delicious, well-structured fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lingering hint of 'reddish' black raspberries and lavender on the finish. Wholly unique in character, this should please collectors in search of something off the beaten track—a relative term for one of the greatest appellations in France. 55% Grenache, 35% Mourvèdre, and 10% Syrah. Now-2019. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

90+ \$39.95 (#244814) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Caymus 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California: Compared to previous vintages, the 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon seems a wine dependent on past laurels: full-bodied, delicious, and lengthy, yet not all the substantive. All the same, collectors will probably be satisfied with its overall attributes. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, the wine is definitely sweeter-styled, featuring attractive aromas of cherry-infused currants, blackberry treacle, cola, mocha, forest floor, seaweed, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with deliciously velvety, powerful forward fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lasting hint of slightly confectioned, sweet plummy currants on the finish. Not my style, but admirers will probably see the wine otherwise—hence, its score. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

90 \$69.95 (#222877) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Elderton 2008 Ode to Lorraine Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz/Merlot, Barossa Valley, South Australia, Australia: Part of the 'Elite Range' of the ever-growing Elderton lineup, the Ode to Lorraine has always been a big, round, and delicious wine. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, the '08 is finely toasted, offering extremely intense aromas of eucalyptus, currants, plums, tar, mint, 'sweet' minerals (hard to come up with the best

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term), vanilla, and spice. Complex, possessing deliciously supple forward fruit and tannins, mild acidity, and a lengthy hint of assertive eucalyptus and plums on the finish. Powerful and polished, the 'North American' collector's palate will be engrossed by this wine, which, if firmer, would have merited an even higher score. Screwcap closure. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, November 2010)

90 \$42.95 (#976423) Vintages 11 December 2010 Release

Fontodi 2008, Chianti Classico DOCG, Tuscany, Italy: As one of the greatest producers of Chianti Classico, the Manetti family, proprietors of Fontodi, seldom put a foot wrong. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the '08 features innately traditional yet fresh aromas of 'Tuscan' cherries, red plums, roasted meats, underbrush, tobacco leaves, leather, gentle cedarwood, and spice. Complex, possessing exceptionally elegant fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a refined, poised hint of cherries and cedarwood on the finish. Pure in style, well defined, and characterful. The website seems to indicate this is crafted from 100% Sangiovese. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, January 2012)

90 \$29.95 (#933317) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Howard Park 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, Margaret River, Western Australia, Australia: While perhaps not one of the most prestigious wineries in Margaret River, top offerings from Howard Park have always ranked highly in my books. Brilliant, dark-opaque ruby in colour, the 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon is very finely toasted, displaying elegant, inviting aromas of 'forested' currants, plums, graphite, subtle green pepper (rather appealing), and a hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, with really lovely, refined fruit, properly firm 'Margaret River' tannins, balanced acidity, and a delicious hint of currants and licorice on the finish. Truly well crafted, approachable, and classy. Screwcap closure. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, March 2011)

90 \$29.95 (#923565) Vintages 30 April 2011 Release

La Rioja Alta 2003 Viña Alberdi Reserva, Rioja DOC, Spain: For the style, the 2003 Viña Alberdi Reserva is a first-rate wine. Brilliant, medium-dark garnet in colour, it displays a truly lovely bouquet of savoury cigar box and earth, herbs, anise, lots of cedar, and spice; some American oak also still permeates. Complex, with beautiful fruit, well-integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and a mature, satisfying hint of cedary, savoury plums on the finish. A class act of maturity and grace; though the wine has aged extremely quickly, so it is well recommended to drink now or very soon—no doubt a feature of the vintage. 100% Tempranillo. Now-2013 (maximum). (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, June 2011)

90 \$29.95 (#161893) Vintages 9 July 2011 Release

Saltram 2008 Mamre Brook Shiraz, Barossa, South Australia, Australia: Fitting the profile of a big, burly Barossa bottling (always alliterative), the 2006 Mamre Brook is an undeniably delicious, hefty Shiraz. Brilliant, extremely dense ruby in colour with a touch of purple, the wine displays intense, vigorous aromas of 'purple' eucalyptus and currants, blackberries, mint, black forest cake, leather, kirsch, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with sumptuous forward fruit, supple yet firm tannins, mild acidity, and a very long, polished hint of eucalyptus and plums on the finish. Unmistakably powerful at 15% alcohol, nonetheless so appetizing and hearty that it really doesn't matter. Screwcap closure. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, *The Successful Collector*, June 2011)

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90 \$24.95 (#32227) Vintages 9 July 2011 Release

Amantis 2006 Sangiovese, Montecucco DOC, Tuscany, Italy: In case anyone's wondering, the DOC of Montecucco is located just to the west of the DOCG of Brunello di Montalcino; the speciality is Sangiovese. Thus: opaque ruby-red currant in colour, the 2006 Amantis displays lovely, rustic aromas of dark cedar, dried cherries and plums, abundant undergrowth and leather, plus a hint of black tea and spice. Complex, offering really satisfying, polished fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant hint of dried cherries, cedar (round and smooth) on the finish. Bigger and bolder than expected, logging in at 14.5% alcohol, yet extremely well integrated and balanced. Also contains small amounts of Colorino and Canaiolo. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

90 \$29.95 (#234930) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Enclos de Viaud 2008, Lalande-de-Pomerol AOC, Bordeaux, France: Some consider Lalande-de-Pomerol to be the next big thing in Bordeaux; personally, I say a lot of work still needs to be done, yet there are some wines, like the 2008 Enclos de Viaud, that hint of the progress already achieved. Brilliant, dark ruby in colour, it displays very earth-driven aromas of dried currants and plums, leather, and a hint of dried licorice and spice. On the palate: very fine, elegant fruit on display, with firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a refined hint of dried earthy currants on the finish. Quite lean, more traditional, still very appealing. 80% Merlot and 20% Cabernet Franc. Now-2016+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

89 \$26.95 (#205831) Vintages 30 April 2011 Release

Epsilon 2009 Shiraz, Barossa Valley, South Australia, Australia: As far as I know, I have no other notes from this winery, so I it was most gratifying to find the 2009 Shiraz so impressive. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, the wine reveals intense, 'original' aromas of eucalyptus and barbeque sauce, switching to baked currants, black raspberries, blackberries, cassis, leather, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering superbly forward, supple fruit and tannins, mild acidity, and a lingering, lifted hint of baked plums, eucalyptus, and barbeque smoke on the finish. Tempting, balanced, and very finely done. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

89 \$24.95 (#39552) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Yalumba 2008 Patchwork Shiraz, Barossa, South Australia, Australia: With the 2008 Patchwork Shiraz, Yalumba continues its marvelous streak of top-value wines that, while not fetching collectors' prices, nonetheless remain worth serious ganders. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely toasted, with aromas of 'black' eucalyptus, currants, tobacco, dried black chocolate, mint, leather, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with sturdy forward fruit, firm tannins, mild acidity, and a lingering hint of 'dark' eucalyptus and currants on the finish. Pleasing stuff, with very good structure and balance. Now-2017+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, March 2011)

89 \$21.95 (#98392) Vintages 30 April 2011 Release

M. Chapoutier 2009 Petite Ruche, Crozes-Hermitage AOC, Rhône, France: Superior Crozes-Hermitage, the 2009 Petite Ruche goes a long way to reaffirm my faith in this appellation. Dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine exhibits a lovely, finely honed 'core' of aromas: delicate white peppery brambleberries and blackberries, mulberries, plums,

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violets, leather, and spice. Complex, offering fine fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a splendid hint of brambleberries and plums on the finish. With a delightfully round texture, this is a well-balanced, polished, appealing wine, logging in at a moderate 13% alcohol. Now-2017+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

88++ \$22.95 (#264655) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Plunkett Fowles 2008 Stone Dwellers Shiraz, Strathbogie Ranges, Victoria, Australia: For those who are curious, the Strathbogie Ranges are located northeast of Melbourne, and is slowly becoming known for wines with better natural acidity. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour with a touch of red currant, there's lots of toasted oak on the 2008 Stone Dwellers Shiraz, with appealing notes of baked blackberries and blueberries, eucalyptus, dried cherries, spicebox, vanillin, and leather. Palate: forward, slightly peppery, supple fruit and tannins showing, with milder acidity, and a pleasant hint of eucalyptus and plums on the finish. Very tasty, full-flavoured, and fairly lengthy. Screwcap closure. Now-2018. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

88 \$19.95 (#265967) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Concilio 2008 Braide, Teroldego Rotaliano, Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy: Unique to Trentino, Teroldego is a pleasant red grape with lovely raspy acidity and dark plummy/berry flavours. Dark ruby in colour, the solid 2008 Braide features nice fresh plums, with a sprinkle of blackberries and herbs, plus a hint of spice. Palate: good approachable fruit, balanced acidity, and a hint of wild plums on the finish. Fresh, balanced, and easy to enjoy. Now-2011. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2010)

86++ \$13.95 (#989392) Vintages 2 October 2010 Release

Sparkling Wines:

Gosset 2000 Vintage Grand Millésime Brut, Champagne, France: From the oldest house in Champagne, the 2000 Grand Millésime is richly inlaid, opulent, and hugely inviting. Light straw in colour with a touch of gold, it reveals extremely enticing, indulgent scents of brioche and French toast, spiced yellow pears, jasmine, pistachios, cinnamon sticks, cream, white flowers, and spice. Very complex, featuring luxurious, frothy fruit, vibrant acidity, and a rich, decadent hint of brioche, jasmine, and mineral lemon on the finish. Properly the most hedonistic Gosset I have ever laid eyes on—collectors will want to stock up on this one. 57% Chardonnay and 43% Pinot Noir. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

93 \$89.95 (#596973) Vintages 4 February 2012 In-Store Discovery

Lallier NV Grand Cru Grande Réserve Brut, Champagne, France: Since I began tasting wines from Lallier about a year ago, I have been extremely impressed, with the Grand Cru Grande Réserve adding yet another feather to their cap. Starbright, light straw-lime in colour, it exhibits beautifully rich, intense notes of brioche and French toast, switching to biscuits, lemon, ripe pears, shortbread, and vanilla. Complex, with unusually sumptuous, frothy fruit, polished acidity, and a lingering, elegant hint of French toast and pears on the finish. Delicious, rather profound, and undeniably excellent. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, June 2011)

91++ \$47.95 (#225284) Vintages 9 July 2011 Release

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Moët & Chandon 2003 Grand Vintage Rosé Brut, Champagne, France: For enthusiasts of vintage rosé champagne, the '03 Moët & Chandon stands tall as a delicious, characterful, and patently original bubbly. Starbright, medium salmon in colour, it displays very delicate scents of fresh biscuits, ruby-red grapefruit, orange peel, nuts, and a darling hint of gingerroot and spice. Complex and very crisp, featuring beautiful, precise fruit, balanced acidity, and a complete, elegant hint of biscuits and trace amounts of 'nuttied' ruby-red grapefruit on the finish. While personally not my favourite type of sparkling rosé—as I prefer the more berried, less nutty approach—this is still a wonderful, fully developed model that can't help but inspire. Now-2016++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2010)

91 \$87.95 (#69831) Vintages 11 December 2010 Release

Ayala 1999 Vintage The King Pinot Noir Brut, Champagne, France: Drawing upon lots of character and much-appreciative propriety, the 1999 King Pinot Noir (which, by the way, not only contains Chardonnay but also doesn't appear on their website) suitably rewards sparkling lovers with all its positive attributes. Pale straw in colour, it seems more ethereal and delicate in style, suggesting 'proper,' lifted scents of yeasty biscuits, lemon, gingerroot, white flowers, cream crackers, and a hint of dried pears and spice. Complex, presenting extremely fine fruit, crisp acidity, and an elegant hint of yeasty biscuits, lemon, and ginger on the finish. Holding together with ease, one would be hard-pressed to tell this was from the '99 vintage. Now-2018+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

90++ \$72.95 (#265108) Vintages 4 February 2012 In-Store Discovery

Jackson-Triggs 2006 Entourage Silver Series Brut Méthode Classique, VQA Niagara Peninsula, Ontario, Canada: Likely the first sparkling wine I have yet to recommend from Jackson-Triggs, the 2006 Entourage Silver Series is an impressive, balanced, and well-assembled bubbly. Pale-light straw in colour, it reveals lovely, serious scents of yeasty biscuits, lemon, pistachios, cream, and a hint of ginger and spice. Complex, boasting fine crisp fruit, balanced acidity, and a slightly 'bulky' yet paradoxically stylish hint (possibly from good ingredients) of yeasty biscuits on the finish. Looks like good sparkling wine is here to stay in the Niagara Peninsula. Now-2016. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

89 \$22.95 (#234161) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

Fortified Wines:

Warre's 1983 Vintage Port, Douro DOC, Portugal: Now entering its third decade, the '83 Warre's has evolved into an exceedingly elegant, happily mature, excellent vintage port. Brilliant, medium-dark red brick in colour with a touch of tawny, the wine is coming along in a remarkably understated fashion, revealing a marvelous, subtle bouquet of mahogany-laced dried black fruits, fruitcake, undergrowth, mint, mild savoury overtones, cedarwood, nuts, tobacco leaves, gingerbread, and exotic spices. Truly complex, boasting wonderful spicy-mahogany fruit, well-integrated tannins, balanced acidity, and an amazing hint of the same fruit elements on the finish. Superlative now, though likely to reach more of a brittle existence in just a few years. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, January 2012)

93 \$89.95 (#161877) Vintages 4 February 2012 Release

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Graham's Twenty Year Old Tawny Port, Douro DOC, Portugal (500 mL): Compared to Graham's many other bottlings, I have never been as historically familiar with its tawnies—until now. Brilliant, medium tawny in colour, the Twenty Year Old displays beautiful, intensely 'tawny' aromas of nutted fruitcake, red plums, figs, toffee, autumnal amber, vanilla, nutmeg, and plenty of spice. Very complex, delivering marvellous sweet fruit, well-integrated tannins (quite flawless), balanced acidity, and as lingering, elegant hint of nutted fruitcake and toffee on the finish. In the end: a tawny port of excellent vitality, balance, and polish. Now-2035+-. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, November 2011)

92 **\$36.95 (#620641)** **LCBO General Listings**