

The Wine Enthusiast Buying Guide

The Buying Guide includes ratings and reviews of new-release and selected older beverage alcohol products evaluated by *Wine Enthusiast Magazine's* editors and other qualified tasters. Regular contributors to our Buying Guide include Senior Editor/Tasting Director Joe Czervinski, Assistant Tasting Director Lauren Buzzeo, Tasting Coordinator Anna Lee C. Iijima, Executive Editor Susan Kostrzewa, Contributing Editor Michael Schachner and Spirits Reviewer Kara Newman in New York, European Editor Roger Voss in Bordeaux, Italian Editor Monica Larmer in Rome, California Editor Steve Heimoff in Oakland, Contributing Editor Paul Gregutt in Seattle and Contributing Reviewer Virginie Boone in Santa Rosa.

If a wine was evaluated by a single reviewer, that taster's initials appear following the note. When no initials appear following a wine review, the wine was evaluated by two or more reviewers and the score and tasting note reflect the input of all tasters. Unless otherwise stated, all Spirits Reviews are by Kara Newman and all beer reviews are by Lauren Buzzeo.

Each review contains a score, the full name of the product, its suggested national retail price, its abv as reported to us by the submitter and a tasting note. If price or alcohol content cannot be confirmed, NA (not available) will be printed. Prices are for 750-ml bottles unless otherwise indicated.

TASTING METHODOLOGY AND GOALS

All tastings reported in the Buying Guide are performed blind unless otherwise noted. Typically, products are tasted in peer-group flights of from 5–8 samples. Price is not a factor in assigning scores. When possible, products considered flawed or uncustomary are retasted.

ABOUT THE SCORES

Ratings reflect what our editors felt about a particular product. Beyond the rating, we encourage you to read the accompanying tasting note to learn about a product's special characteristics.

- Classic 98–100:** The pinnacle of quality.
- Superb 94–97:** A great achievement.
- Excellent 90–93:** Highly recommended.
- Very Good 87–89:** Often good value; well recommended.
- Good 83–86:** Suitable for everyday consumption; often good value.
- Acceptable 80–82:** Can be employed in casual, less-critical circumstances.

Products deemed Unacceptable (receiving a rating below 80 points) are not reviewed.

SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

Editors' Choice products are those that offer excellent quality at a price above our Best Buy range, or a product at any price with unique qualities that merit special attention.

Cellar Selections are products deemed highly collectible and/or requiring time in a temperature-controlled wine cellar to reach their maximum potential. A Cellar Selection designation does not mean that a product must be stored to be enjoyed, but that cellaring will probably result in a more enjoyable bottle. In general, an optimum time for cellaring will be indicated.

Best Buys are products that offer a high level of quality in relation to price. There are no specific guidelines or formulae for determining Best Buys, but wines meriting this award are generally priced at \$15 or less.

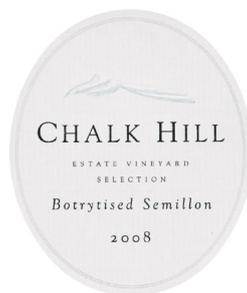
SUBMITTING PRODUCTS FOR REVIEW

Products should be submitted to the appropriate reviewing location as detailed in our FAQ, available online via winemag.com/contactus. Inquiries should be addressed to the Tasting & Review Department at 914.345.9463 or email tastings@wineenthusiast.net. **There is no charge for submitting products.** We make every effort to taste all products submitted for review, but there is no guarantee that all products submitted will be tasted, or that reviews will appear in the magazine. All samples must be accompanied by the appropriate submission forms, which may be downloaded from our Web site.

LABELS

Labels are paid promotions. Producers and importers are given the opportunity to submit labels, which are reproduced and printed along with tasting notes and scores. For information on label purchases, contact Denise Valenza at 813.571.1122; fax 866.896.8786; or email dvalenza@wineenthusiast.net.

Find all reviews on our fully searchable database at buyingguide.winemag.com



95 Chalk Hill 2008 Botrytised Sémillon (Chalk Hill).

Very, very sweet and decadent, like pure honey. Nectar of the gods-type wine, oozing spicy apricot, orange, roasted almond and vanilla honey flavors. To describe the mouthfeel as creamy hardly does it justice, it's so viscous and glyceriney. A magnificent dessert wine to savor. —S.H.

abv: 13.5%

Price: \$45/375 ml



95 Monticello 2008 Corley Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).

A terrific Napa Cabernet, dry and smooth and tremendously layered in flavors. Blackberries, blueberries, currants, crème de cassis, anise, dark chocolate and cedar flood the palate and are just delicious. Best of all is the structure, so rich in firm tannins and acidity. Wonderful now, and should develop for at least a decade. —S.H.

abv: 14.2%

Price: \$72

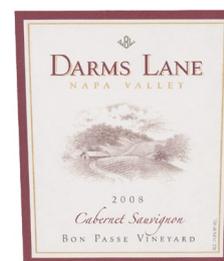


95 W.H. Smith 2009 Bill and Joan's Special Selection Maritime Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast).

A gorgeous evocation of Pinot Noir. Pours pale in color and translucent, suggesting it's not a heavy fruit bomb, and indeed it is not. Feels as light as a cloud, yet with intense flavors of red stone fruits, bacon and spices, and that feral, wild forest quality you get from the best Sonoma Coast Pinot Noirs. Bone dry, but so sweet in fruit and cedar, with wonderful acidity. Superb now, after decanting, and should develop over the next 6–8 years. **Cellar Selection.** —S.H.

abv: NA

Price: \$60



94 Darms Lane 2008 Bon Passe Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).

Darms Lane scores big with this rich, complex young Cabernet, which comes from a vineyard in the cool Oak Knoll region. The blackberry and cherry flavors, accented with red currants, licorice, cocoa, mushu plum sauce and sweet buttered cinnamon toast, are absolutely delicious. More impressive is the tannin-acid structure, which hits no wrong notes. A real beauty, capable of aging through the decade. —S.H.

abv: 14.8%

Price: \$60



94 Francis Ford Coppola 2007 Archimedes Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma County).

As fine a Cabernet as Coppola has ever produced (exclusive, of course, of Rubicon), this one's as deep and fancy as almost anything from Napa Valley. Strikes you immediately with a wealth of sweet, oak-infused blackberry, cherry and red currant flavors. The tannins are immaculate. This dramatic Cab will develop for the remainder of the decade. —S.H.

abv: 14.5%

Price: \$52



94 Simonnet-Febvre 2009 Les Clos Grand Cru (Chablis).

A tight and steely wine, very much in its infancy. It is taut, the texture dominated by green apple skins, herbs, some light toast. This is a complex, impressive wine, its rich fruit still to show. Keep for 4–5 years and more. Louis Latour Inc. **Cellar Selection.** —R.V.

abv: 13%

Price: \$70