

Wine

Sparkling Wine

Mumm de Cramant, Champagne Grand Cru, Brut Chardonnay, Reims, NV..... 128

The wine is bright, soft yellow in color. Bubbles that are light and delicate yield a gentle, creamy sparkle. The nose is of white flowers, fresh fruit and lemon. Young, fresh aromas predominate with an inherent elegance. The taste opens on fresh fruit and lemon, followed by grapefruit and kumquat notes. The gentle sparkle, at first expansive, gives way to the Chardonnay grape's natural grandeur.

Mumm Napa, "Brut Prestige," Napa Valley, NV 9 / 54

A pale golden yellow color with lively bubbles revealing a crystal clear wine. Some spicy yeast complexity and age on nose but still has a lime/citrus freshness. Freshness also evident on palate which is lively, long, elegant and flavorsome. Great acid backbone.

Perrier Jouët, "Grand Brut," Epernay, NV 12 / 72

An interesting blend of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier and Pinot Gris, this bubbly shows complex flavors of bread dough, yellow citrus fruits and wildflowers, but is subtle and dry. One of the nicer things is the mouthfeel, which is light and refined. Finishes with real elegance.

Vueve Cliquot, "Yellow Label," Reims, NV 88

Named for the Widow Cliquot, this golden-yellow colored champagne with a foaming necklace of tiny bubbles, it is so pleasing to the nose: initially reminiscent of white fruits and raisins, then of vanilla and later of brioche. Here is a true member of the powerful Brut family, well structured, admirably vinous.

Krug, "Grande Cuvee," Brut, Reims, NV 238

Pale gold color, with all the walk and the talk (the big mousse, the fine, active bead); yeast and flint on the nose, with more of the same on the palate over semi-ripe yellow apple shaded with nutty overtones. Big, rich and intense, with excellent acids and a long lingering finish.

Perrier Jouët, "Fleur de Champagne," Epernay, 2000, 375 ml 98

An attractive presence of perfumed, smoky fruit. Really nice style, with lots of fruit, and a creamy-foamy mousse. It is still showing its youth but has settled down somewhat since, and clearly has good potential with its bright, creamy style. Nice bite on the finish.

White Wine

Sauvignon Blanc, Niner, Paso Robles, 2007 9 / 36

The finished wine is both fresh and rich. Flavors of pear, grapefruit, and pineapple are juxtaposed by persimmon, lemon meringue and buttery nuances. It is refreshing, with a good mouthfeel, full body and a nice acid balance. The soft citrus candy finish lingers on the palate.

White Meritage, "Virtú," St. Supéry, Napa Valley, 2006..... 12 / 48

Wonderful aromas of honeysuckle, citrus blossoms and melon show up quickly in the aroma. They are soon married with barrel scents of toast and vanilla to create an intoxicating fragrance. On the palate are flavors of pear and peach from the Sauvignon Blanc while crème and lemon meringue come from the Semillon. With the blend of these two classic varietals this wine will age beautifully for years to come becoming even more complex.

Vermentino/Grenache Blanc, La Baronne, Languedoc, France, 2006 9 / 36

The color is very light and silver yellow. The aroma is of slight, light orange rind scented with some minerality. The taste is all about focused citrus structure and tartness; it's bright and crisp with a forward character. A definite candidate to be paired with food.

Alsatian Blend, Robert Sinskey Vineyards, Scintilla Sonoma Vineyard, "Abraxas," Sonoma, 2006 60

Abraxas proves that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. If you hunt for the individual contributions from each grape, they are there: the Riesling presents hints of white nectarine and flowers and Gewurztraminer lends the perfume of its unmistakable exotic spice. Pinot Blanc adds delicate aromas of apples and almonds, while the Pinot Gris provides backbone in the form of texture and refreshing citrus.

Pinot D'Alsace, Domaine Zind Humbrecht, Alsace, France, 2006 53

A pleasant golden hue in the glass, although it is not an intense color. The nose is rich, dripping with pineapple and other tropical fruits, with a sprinkling of spice. The residual sugar is immediately apparent on entry, giving a soft, luscious, sweet, slightly oily feel to the wine, but this is set off by deliciously fresh acidity. There is a mealy character to the tropical fruit flavors, and the spicy edge suggest by the nose is present.

Pinot Grigio, Robert Pepi, Oakville, 2007 8 / 32

Light on the palate with a smooth creaminess. Aromas abound of honeydew melon, red apple and a hint of orange blossoms. A full body of pear, apple and stonefruit leads to a bracing mineral finish.

Chardonnay, French Maid, Languedoc-Roussillon, France, 2007 9 / 36

This fresh, delectable Chardonnay boasts fragrant citrus, stone fruit and honey aromas with complimentary floral and bread toast notes. On the palate, the wine displays an excellent balance of bright and sweet oak tones, with vibrant lemon crème, honeydew melon, white peach, and toasty oak flavors culminating in a soft lingering finish.

- Chardonnay, Silverado Vineyards, "Vineburg," Santa Maria Valley, 2005 52**
 Ripe apple and orange blossom aromas with vanilla and oak in the background. Stone and mineral aromas echo on the palate. Balanced acidity with a silky mid-palate lead to a zesty finish.
- Chardonnay, Ambullneo Vineyards, "Big Paw," Santa Maria Valley, 2005..... 64**
 Expect intense flavors of orange blossoms, mango and peach, buoyed by flint and wet stone with a soft, haunting finish. With slightly lower pH's than previous vintages the 2006's boast a litheness that is utterly appealing.

White Wine continued

- Rousanne, Zaca Mesa, Santa Ynez Valley, 2005 40**
 Roussanne is a richly complex, white grape variety indigenous to the Rhône valley of France. The rich gold color implies how full this wine will feel, yet for all its richness, it's not weighty. The flavors are clean and cool, impressively dry for a wine with the ripe flavors of golden raisins and wheat.
- Viognier/Marsanne/Rousanne, Rosenblum "Chateau La Paws," Sonoma, 2006..... 11 / 44**

 A nice light bodied version of white Rhone blend. Wonderful floral notes on the nose of jasmine, honeysuckle and melon. A nice rounded mouthfeel on the palate gives way to flavors of pear, peach and vanilla fading out over a lingering finish.
- Chenin Blanc, Chateau de Montfort, Vouvray, 2005..... 10 / 40**
 Vouvray is made from Chenin Blanc. While there are a variety of styles, many of them deliver a nice mix of crisp acidity and slightly sweet fruit. This wine is no exception, with melon and peach on the nose and a crisp, semi-dry palate, this has an overall nice balance to it.
- Torrantes, Bodega Cicchitti, Mendoza, Argentina, 2007..... 10 / 40**
 Very pale in color, which is typical for this grape variety. This torrantes is very refined with aromas of white flowers and a bit of citrus. Refreshing and long it is an ideal summer wine to be drunk young.
- Riesling, Boeckel, Grand Cru Wiebelsberg, Alsace/Mittelbergheim, 2005..... 48**
 Organic, Classic style beginning with a very aromatic nose and then Fine, distinctive, very floral bouquet, delicate fruit, and noble, elegant body, a brilliant food wine
- Riesling, Ventana Vineyards, Monterey County, 2007 10 / 40**
 This riesling has a tart/sweet composition on the palate. The nose is explosive with apricot, orange peel and flowers. Green apple, honey, fig and apricot mingle on the palate. This is not a typically sweet California style Riesling. This riesling presents an off-dry style that allows the fresh stone fruit components to be forefront but with acidity for a lively mouth-feel.
- Riesling, Josef Leitz, Rudeisheimer Magdalenenkreuz, Spatlese, Rheingau, 2006.... 42**
 Organic, biodynamic. Offers a nose of caramelized pears with a touch of honey. The palate holds bright pear flavors, creamy hints of melon, a bit of fresh ginger and a suggestion of creamy peaches. Moderate, integrated acidity and plenty of supple fruit. Off-dry and a tad, tad, tad sweet
- Riesling, Chateau St. Michele, "Eroica," Washington, 2006 48**
 The 2006 Eroica delivers fresh mandarin orange and lime aromas and flavors with subtle mineral and slate notes. This Eroica shows the warm vintage through its slightly richer, bolder style than the previous vintage. Although slightly more fruit forward, the 2006 Eroica still achieves complexity from the diverse mix of vineyards it is sourced from.
- White Table Wine, Conundrum, Rutherford, 2005 14 / 56**
 This vintage shows an exceptional integration of layers based off of ¼ of the wine aged in stainless steel and the remaining ¾ aged in oak. Aromas of peach/apricot and honeysuckle; flavors of apricot, green melon and pear backed by notes of tropical fruit and spicy vanilla; a lush, creamy texture; and a crisp, balancing finish with lingering notes of citrus.
- Gewürztraminer, Thomas Fogarty, Monterey County, 2006 36**
 The 2006 bottling is one of their strongest ever. It has tell-tale Gewürztraminer aromas of rose and ginger, without being too cloying or 'over-lycheed.' There is pronounced minerality and acidity to help balance and complete the experience.
- Gewürztraminer, Storrs, "Viento Vineyards," Monterey County, 2006 10 / 40**
 Organic, With a wonderfully graceful impression, but delightful fruitiness, the nose of this racy Gewurztraminer presents scents of lychee, gardenia, apples and hints of fresh pear. That elegance is reprised on the palate, which lifts the same floral/fruity prettiness through the wines softly-dry finish.

Red Wine

- Pinot Noir, Castle Rock, Monterey, 2006 9 / 36**
 This Pinot Noir is elegant and medium-bodied, offering aromas of cherry, tea and herbal spice. On the palate, the wine gives flavors of black cherry, plum and spice. It is smooth with a silky texture and mild tannins.
- Pinot Noir, Davis Bynum, Russian River Valley, 2005 12 / 48**
 This Pinot Noir is elegant and medium-bodied, offering aromas of cherry, tea and herbal spice. On the palate, the wine gives flavors of black cherry, plum and spice. It is smooth with a silky texture and mild tannins.

- Pinot Noir, ZD, Carñeros, 2006** 56
 Dark ruby in color, with aromas of ripe cherries, plum and rhubarb, this wine is classic Carñeros Pinot Noir. Hints of cedar, vanilla and toasted nuts lead into a full, rich palate of flavors and silky tannins.
- Pinot Noir, Sleeping Dogs, Otago, New Zealand, 2006** 68
 Grapes for this vintage were hand-picked from the family vineyard, located on the Old Gibbston Road in Central Otago. The wine reveals itself in layers of wild blackberry, bramble, dried herbs and aromatic spices. It has a warm rich mouth feel, showing lots of texture and an elegant persistent finish
- Pinot Noir, Brancott, "Terraces," Marlborough, New Zealand, 2006** 74
 Deep garnet red in color with aromas of fragrant ripe cherry, spicy toast and violet highlights overlying rich plum and savory notes. The palate is characterized by a sweet ripe plum and cherry fruit with spicy complexity and a generous mid palate. Firm yet fine tannin structure balanced with concentration of flavor yielding to a silky chocolate finish.
- Pinot Noir, Mark West, Sonoma County, 2005** 88
 Enticing aromas of Cherry/Raspberry pie and cola berry intertwine with barrel notes of candied vanilla and spice. Oak aging rounds out the palate and gives the wine its body. Rich berry compote flavors. Pinot from start to silky finish.

Red Wine continued

- Grenache, Martella, Oleta Vineyard, Fiddletown, California, 2005** 45
 This wine is made from 100% Grenache grapes that stay on the vine until late October. This late hang time ensures fully ripe, rich Grenache berries alive with the sweet flavors of raspberry, blackberry and black currant. These grapes express Grenache varietal character at its finest, with no need to blend in anything else. Barrel aging alone, in French and American oak, adds complexity and structure to this California-grown old world favorite.
- Châteauneuf du Pape, Clos de l'Oratoires, "des Papes," Rhone Valley, France, 2005** 104
 It is deep, round, generously endowed with silky tannins. This estate has turned away from making rather run-of-the-mill, overly commercial wines and seems to be intent on turning out far more complex examples of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Dark and juicy, with fig paste, currant, mocha, tar and graphite notes that stay fresh and racy through the finish, the structure is nicely embedded.
- Mourvedre/Grenache/Syrah, Jade Mountain, "Provençale," California, 2004** 39
 A southern Rhone blend of century-old Mourvedre, floral perfumed Grenache and deeply colored Syrah that gives structure and complexity. Spicy yet smooth with blackberry jam aromas.
- Shiraz, Chateau Reynella, McLaren Vale, Australia 2002** 52
 Deep ruby red with purple hues the wine has a lovely forward fruit nose with hints of ripe plums, blueberry and chocolate. On the palate, the wine is layered with flavors of blood plums, ripe raspberry and dark chocolate characters. The tannins are elegant and supple creating a silky mouth feel, while the oak integration is seamless.
- Syrah, Havens, Napa Valley 2002**..... 10 / 40
 The relative warmth of 2002 is evident in this Syrah's rich, meaty character. Mocha-coffee hints and the bright, peppery spring to its finish on the palate balanced between its fleshy elements (round fruit and creaminess) and its structure (tannins and acids).
- Petite Sirah, Kent Rasmussen Winery, "Esoterica," Leed/Chavez Vineyard, Rutherford, 2004** 52
 Organic, This wine holds a wonderful dusty-black pepper character that good Petite Sirah is famous for. Under this is a good supporting structure of dark berry fruit and some lovely toasty-oaky notes. Once again, black pepper is in abundance, but also tons of rich fruit—ripe blueberries and raspberries.
- Sangiovese, Miner Vineyards, Gibson Ranch, Mendocino 2005** 48
 Sourced from a pristine vineyard in Mendocino, these Sangiovese grapes are harvested by hand only once the fruit has achieved optimal ripeness. This wine displays plenty of wild berry flavors with hints of cedar and currant that linger on the palate.
- Zinfandel/Syrah/Petite Syrah, Green & Red Vineyards, "Sobrante," Napa, 2005** 44
 From volcanic rubble shelves high above Chiles Valley springs forth this radiant red wine. This wine has the vigorous pepper bite that a true Napa Zinfandel has, but with a lush, dense structure that is brought forth only in Syrah. The wine finishes with a strong tannin mouth feel.
- Zinfandel, Edmeades, Mendocino, 2006** 10 / 40
 Aromas of black cherries, spice, violets and cola berry are the most prominent; but raspberries, salted apples, coffee and cedar chest are also layered into the profile. Flavors are full, soft and supple, with good intensity of fruit flavors. The berry and cherry flavors linger on the palate until you taste it again; the tartness of the finish goes from cherries, to stone fruit, to minerality.
- Zinfandel, Ridge, York Creek, California, 2003**..... 56
 Flavors of raspberry and cranberry merge with black pepper and clove spices. Mellow aromas of coconut are intertwined with firm tannins and a hearty finish.
- Zinfandel, Ridge, Lytton Springs, California, 2006**..... 64
 From a Dry Creek Valley vineyard containing vines a century old, the 2005 is lush and sensuous, with a fragrance of briar and forest brush. It has a gorgeous, creamy, black cherry flavor accented by a touch of cassis and sweet oak, with a finish marked by cedar and grainy tannins.
- Zinfandel, Bucklin, "Bambino", California, 2005**..... 68

The Bambino is deep purple in color with intense blackberry aromas and lots of "Old Hill" spice, including nutmeg, cinnamon and vanilla. The flavors are intense too, with blackberries, cherries, and vanilla spice. The tannins are big but ripe and mouth watering on the finish.

Malbec/Cabernet Sauvignon, Bodega Cicchitti, Argentina, 2007 48

Tastes robustly and balanced, with appreciated sweet tannins. Great structure and concentration.

Merlot, L'Abbyae de St Ferme, "Le Signes du Soir," Bordeaux, France, 2004 9 / 36

Very nice plummy nose with some mineral tones. These pull through on the palate which also has some coffee and a nice sour cherry in the mid-palate. Just enough oak, velvet glove tannins. Long finish that starts with the sour cherry, then progresses through the plum and then to the mineral and finally to cocoa.

Merlot, Robert Sinskey, Napa, 2004 58

The wine spent eighteen months in one-third new French oak barrels before bottling in the spring of 2006. A dollop (ten percent) of Cabernet Sauvignon plays a supporting role, adding structure.

Cabernet Sauvignon, 337, Lodi, 2005 9 / 36

The 2006 337 Cabernet Sauvignon exhibits enticing aromas of mocha, dark cherry, and spice, with a floral top note of rose and violet. Silky tannins wrap themselves around a core of blackberry fruit, interlaced with cola and cedar.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Ferrari Carano, Alexander Valley, 2005 48

A powerful wine with great finesse, this wine boasts aromas of blackberry, dark chocolate and black tea complemented by elements of earth and licorice. Ripe black fruit, currants, toffee and caramel flavors give this wine a sweet mid-palate, excellent depth, showy tannins, and a pure, classic Cabernet finish.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Jacobs Creek, St Hugo, Coonwarra, Australia, 2003 63

Complex aromas of ripe blackberry and cassis, flawlessly integrated with charry, spiced oak. The richness and intensity of fruit flavor is perfectly balanced with fresh acidity, and the complexity of the French oak used enhances the dense varietal fruit characters.

Red Wine continued

Cabernet Sauvignon, Judds Hill, Napa Valley, 2003 52

This Cabernet has a wonderful up-front fruit and a great extraction of color and flavor, not to mention a grand and attractive aroma of plums and cocoa. The mid-palate flavors comprise sensual, round yet elegantly balanced tannins combined with hints of bittersweet chocolate, orange and tea.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Caymus Vineyards, Napa Valley, 2005 128

Aromas of sweet bing cherry and ripe, lush plum. The opulent sweetness of peak-season, fully-ripe fruit brings about abundant yet soft tannins. The core of this wine is a silky and amiably rich, textured base, with a pure Napa Valley cabernet focus. Flavors of cocoa, currant and sweet tobacco. This rich and chalky wine, devoid of assertive astringencies, drinks well now and should endure for a decade or more.

Red Table Wine, Merryvale Vineyards, "Profile," Napa Valley, 2004 168

Profile is a blend of many of Merryvale's finest lots of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc, chosen for their concentration, depth of flavor and fine tannin structure. This wine was aged in mostly new French oak chateau ferre barrels and bottled unfiltered. It is opulently structured and very dark.

Red Table Wine, Joseph Phelps, "Insignia," Napa Valley, 2005 328

Amazing depth, texture and vibrant fruit qualities. Deeply colored, concentrated and layered, with floral, anise, black cherry and graphite aromas, this wine is classically structured with excellent acidity, well-balanced tannins and a mouth-staining, persistent finish.

Sake (Rice Wine)

Junmai

Akitabare "Koshiki Junzukuri" (Northern Skies) 1.8L 10 / 152

A pleasingly dry, well-crafted sake much appreciated by connoisseurs. It has just enough body to support the spare lines of its structure, making it the kind of sake one can drink enjoyably for hours at a stretch. Its subdued, understated refinement evokes a sense of the Northern Province where it is meticulously brewed.

Masumi "Okuden Kantsukuri" (Mirror of Truth) 1.8L 10 / 152

"Okuden Kantsukuri" is brewed from November through January, then aged in the tank until autumn to allow its rich, soothing flavor to mature. Longtime sake drinkers find this sake comfortingly familiar, with unshakable down-to-earth reliability. It is smooth and well-balanced at first sip, and with repeated tastings displays a range of subtle, organic flavors as well as a pleasant natural sweetness.

Koshi No Kanbai "Muku" (Pure Realm) 1.8L 16 / 243

This elite junmai sake is made from Yamadanishiki, the most sought-after brewing rice, with a polishing ratio of 55 percent. It possesses a powerful profile, with full-bodied flavor, perfect balance and a deep, lasting finish.

J unmai G injo

Dewazakura "Oka" (Cherry Bouquet) 1.8L..... 12 / 183

Light, fragrant and delicious, Oka was a tremendous hit when first introduced in 1981 and opened the way for breweries all over Japan to introduce premium labels. It is floral rather than fruity, though there is a touch of pear, and perhaps melon. A favorite among lady sake enthusiasts due to its delicacy and finesse.

Dewazakura "Dewasansan" (Green Ridge) 1.8L 12 / 183

With its floral nose and mellow fruity flavor, "Dewasansan" is a rewarding choice for wine drinkers new to the world of sake. It has a wholesome freshness, a green apple tartness and a refreshing finish.

J unmai D aiginjo

Kamoizumi "Junmai Daiginjo" (Autumnal Elixir) 500ml..... 14 / 59

This smooth, full-flavored sake possesses a rich range of flavors, from persimmon to caramel to earthy notes of mushroom and loam. Tartness, sweetness and *shibumi* (astringency) all converge in full-bodied balance.

Hoyo "Kura No Hana" (Fair Maiden) 500ml..... 16 / 68

Transparently light and touched with a sweet kiss of anise, Hoyo's winsome grace and charm are irresistible. Its floral aroma and luscious flavor extend a demure invitation to the world of sake enjoyment.

N igori

Tozai "Hanako" (Snow Maiden) 720ml..... 9 / 55

This is a fairly thick and chewy "nigorizake" (cloudy sake), but it is still surprisingly dry. The aromas are bright and fresh and they show a lovely ricey and fruity combination. In the mouth, this sake has solid weight and gives the same flavors of fresh fruit and creamy fresh rice that your nose told you about. The finish has a pleasant astringency and is nicely mellow, beckoning you for another mouthful.

Kamoizumi "Nigori Ginjo" (Summer Snow) 500ml 14 / 59

This premium unfiltered sake is rich, creamy and brimming with fresh-from-the-vat flavor. Mildly sweet, and surprisingly robust, it is an excellent introduction to the world of sake enjoyment. Kamoizumi's elegant nigori is a far cry from the heavy, sweet, unfiltered sakes of California. The percentage of *moromi* added to the pressed sake is about 20 percent, and you don't have to be a nigori fan to enjoy the delicious taste of this specialty, custom-blended ginjo sake.