



## **Clos Peagase 2003 Graveyard Hill Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Carneros)**

The '03 is rich and balanced in black currant, cherry, milk chocolate and sweet herb flavors, and is soft enough for immediate drinking.

**92 Points**

## **Clos Pegase 2003 Palisades Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley)**

The wine shows gorgeously ripe flavors but never loses its basic Napa elegance and balance. Filled with flamboyant blackberry jam, cherry, cassis, licorice, chocolate and smoky vanilla-oak flavors, it appeals immediately to the taste-buds, but has the tannin acid balanced to age for a decade.

**90 Points**

## **Mossback 2006 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley)**

This is a good Pinot Noir. While it's not an ager because it's made for immediate consumption, it does show an elegant structure. Crisp acidity provides balance to the cola, cherry, pomegranate, spice and smoky vanilla flavors.

**88 Points**

## **Clos Pegase 2004 Mitsuko's Vineyard Merlot Carneros**

The winery's Merlot has disappointed over the years, and the 2004 does little to change one's mind. It's overripe, with cooked or stewed raisin-currant flavors that make the tannins taste harsh and rasping. Okay, but not what this winery seems capable of.

**84 Points**

## **Saxum 2005 James Berry Vineyard Bone Rock (Paso Robles)**

The gold standard among Viura-based wines from Rioja has to be Placet from Palacios Remondo. Oak plays a big role here, and the nose wows with spice and cinnamon apple. There's more ripe apple and spice in the mouth, along with excellent acidity and textural creaminess.

**90 Points**

## **Grayson 2006 Chardonnay (Central Coast)**

A little rough around the edges, with a sweet, sugar-cured tobacco note to the tropical fruit, peach and pear flavors. But this is a good price for an everyday Chard with true varietal character.

**84 Points**

**Matchbook 2006 Chardonnay (Dunnigan Hills)**

Rich and soft, this Chard has strong flavors of stewed apricots, peaches, pineapples and vanilla. It would benefit from more crispness.

**84 Points**

**Andrew Will 2005 Champoux Vineyard Red Wine (Horse Heaven Hills)**

Dark and meaty, it's packed with cassis and black cherry fruit. The tannins are substantial, the acids sharp and refined, the mouthfeel dense, almost thick, and layered with herb, leaf, smoke and spice.

**94 Points**

**Andrew Will 2005 Sorella Red Wine (Horse Heaven Hills)**

Deep and dense with thick textures and tannins. The typical black currant and black cherry fruit character is here in spades, and yet at 14.4% alcohol the wine avoids any fatiguing jamminess or heat in the finish. It leaves a slightly chalky, chocolatey impression as it exits the throat, and promises a long life ahead.

**94 Points**

**Andrew Will 2005 Ciel du Cheval Vineyard Red Wine (Red Mountain)**

A classic Bordeaux blend. Tight and chewy, this fragrant wine adds whiffs of tobacco to its red currant and cherry fruit. It is a beautifully shaped wine, precise and balanced, compact and intriguing.

**92 Points**

**Andrew Will 2005 Two Blondes Vineyard Red Wine (Yakima Valley)**

Supple and layered. Black cherry and licorice flavors, backed with firm acids, are enlivened with the natural herbal qualities that the grape shows when not over ripened. The tannins are polished and unintrusive, and what new oak there is adds some pleasing toast to the finish. In short, this is an elegant style of Bordeaux that capitalizes on Yakima Valley strengths.

**91 Points**

**Andrew Will 2005 Sheridan Vineyard Red Wine (Yakima Vineyard)**

Aromatic, chocolaty and deliciously smooth, the Sheridan vineyard bottling sends up sweet scents of ground coffee and chocolate. Compact fruit flavors of fig and black cherry run right into a bourbon barrel finish, with granular tannins that add welcome texture and a streak of graphite.

**89 Points**

**Pannotia Vineyards 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (Mendoza)**

With a hint of prune to the nose and some cheesy oak, the red flags go up. But in the mouth, the wine shows good berry and cassis flavors and admirable depth and length. Finishing notes of cassis and blackberry give it a good send-off. (Best Buy)

**86 Points**

**Cono Sur 2006 20 Barrels Merlot (Colchagua Valley)**

Smoky, smooth and deep, with a notch or two of complexity on its belt. The wine has an easy, rich feel to it, and its blueberry and black plum flavors tip the scale toward ripe and ready. Adequate length and chewy, manageable tannins make the finish a solid final chapter.

**88 Points**

**Pierre Morey 2005 Meursault**

Full and ripe, certainly as befits Meursault from a great year, but this wine is also has deliciously crisp acidity which adds an element of minerality, of poise, to the smooth toast and cream texture. An enticing, structured wine.

**90 Points**

**Morey-Blanc 2005 Auxey-Duresses**

Deliciously fresh, this is almost delicate, certainly elegant. There is great balance here, the wood just lightly toasty over the smooth, creamy white fruit flavors. For a wine from a lesser Burgundy appellation, this is very impressive.

**90 Points**

**Faiveley 2005 Clos Rochette (Mercury)**

A toasty, oaky wine, with smoky aromas and flavors that mask the white fruit flavors acidity. Hopefully all this high toast will burn off.

**88 Points**

**Faiveley 2005 Domaine de la Croix Jacquet (Montagny)**

Initially, this appears gentle and creamy; on later does acidity and green pear skin structure come in. Full and plump, with soft white fruits, the wood is prominent at this stage.

**89 Points**

**Pierre Morey 2005 Bourgogne**

Light, fresh, soft and already very drinkable. The initial taste is dominated by citrus, and then rounds out, adding toast, green fruits and definite sophistication for a simple white Burgundy.

**88 Points**

**Faiveley 2005 Cuvee Georges Faiveley (Bourgogne)**

Green plums, cinnamon and freshness all come together in this attractive, ready-to-drink white. Toast and white fruits bring extra pleasure to the mix.

**86 Points**

**Volpaia 2004 Coltassala Riserva (Chianti Classico)**

This Chianti Classico Riserva is very territory-driven and opens with earth and cherry aromas that are typical of Sangiovese. Move forward, and you'll find a bit of cheese rind, herbs and firm structure.

**89 Points**

**Oliverhill 2006 Jimmy Selection Shiraz (McLaren Vale)**

The 2006 Jimmy Section is made in a rich, syrupy style, but does it have enough structure to improve with age? The dense blackberry and blueberry fruit carries its 15.5% alcohol well and there are some attractive peppery, herbal complexities that make for interesting drinking right now, so why wait?

**91 Points**

**Longwood 2006 The Shearer Shiraz (McLaren Vale)**

Espresso, blackberry and black olive flavors all come together on the palate of this medium- to full-bodied Shiraz. Hints of leather, plum, menthol and spice add complexity to the aromas, while only a touch of warmth on the finish from its 15% alcohol keeps this from an excellent rating.

**89 Points**

**Oliverhill 2006 Clarendon Shiraz (McLaren Vale)**

Features some superb elements that come off as a bit disjointed—perhaps it just needs some time? High-toned cherry fruit picks up some herbal notes and peppery cinnamon flavors, then finishes crisp, with hints of orange pekoe tea.

**88 Points**

**Sherwood Estate 2007 Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough)**

There's a slightly smoky, fume character to this wine's otherwise ripe aromas of stone fruit, melon and fig, giving an extra layer of complexity. And despite the ripe aromas, this wine is crisp and grassy on the palate, delivering a long finish with finely delineated flavors. (Best Buy)

**89 Points**

**Cold River Vodka (USA; Mine Distilleries, Freeport, ME)**

The lovely, austere and enticing bouquet offers scents of black pepper, charcoal and limestone. Entry is sweet and lightly spiced; at midpalate luscious tastes of caramel corn, charcoal, quartz and cocoa bean make for wonderful North American unflavored vodka drinking. Concludes smooth, complex and layered. A coming superstar. (Highest Recommended)

**96-100 Points**