



2006 Pewsey Vale Eden Valley Riesling

Big and brash up front, showing peppery alcohol in the aroma, this settles down to a gentler delivery, with lime and honey flavors in a warm finish.

89 Points

Jansz Tasmania Brut Premium Cuvee Sparkling

Predominantly chardonnay and pinot noir, with a touch of pinot meunier, this sparkler has firm, mineral flavors of aged less in a dry style. The fresh apple fruit makes it a crisp partner to oysters.

89 Points

2002 Yalumba Barossa The Signature

Ripe cabernet sauvignon lends tobacco high notes to blend, while the bright spice of shiraz brings it to a close. It's floral and brisk with miner-infected tannin that keeps it clearly delineated. Serve with thick cut lamb chops.

92 Points

2003 Jim Barry Clare Valley McRae Wood Shiraz

A thick, rich style of shiraz, with candied chocolate mint flavors and fresh acidity to clean up the finish, this is built for a bloody rare steak and fries.

87 Points

2004 Two Hands Barossa The Bull and the Bear Shiraz

In the contemporary Barossa style of honeyed concentration, this is balanced within its cherry-and-raspberry-syrup mode. Oak enriches it further, suited to either bull or bear.

88 Points

2005 Kumeu River Kumeu Village Chardonnay

A clean and refreshing style of chardonnay from just north of Auckland, this has good fruit intensity without a lot of volume. The orange pith scent and the light but lasting finish provide an edge for any fresh catch, particularly scallops.

91 Points

2005 Voss Estate Martinborough Riesling

A blast soil character introduces the wine, then quiets to scents of sour cherries and Asian pear. The fruit is as fresh as rain, lasting on a cool, bright spice that's evocative of Martinborough. This is a lovely Riesling, delicious with Thai squid salad or other spicy seafood dishes.

91 Points

2005 Villa Maria Marlborough Cellar Selection Riesling

A broad, fusel-scented Riesling, this is held together by its acidity, built for a rich fish like roast sturgeon or sable.

86 Points

2005 Main Divide Canterbury Riesling

Smoky with scents of chestnuts and burnt orange zest, this is a sweet, funky Riesling for rabbit stew.

85 Points

2006 Villa Maria Marlborough Private Bin Riesling

Clean, simple grape flavors end on lemony acidity; for veal schnitzel.

85 Points

2005 Seven Terraces Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc

Citrusy from beginning to end, this has flavors of baked lemon tart and orange sour candies. For grilled whole snapper.

88 Points

2004 Escarpment Martinborough Pinot Noir

Martinborough complexity drives this wine, as does tannic extract. The two combine in scents of dark cherry skin and autumnal forest floor. The tannins are both chocolate rich and a touch vegetal; for beef bourguignon.

88 Points

2005 Villa Maria Marlborough Private Bin Pinot Noir

A clean, fruit-oriented pinot noir, this leads with bright raspberry scents and ends with rose fragrance. The fresh acidity is not quite enough to lift the wine out of its tannins, but rare roast beef or cellar time will.

88 Points

2005 Seven Terraces Marlborough Pinot Noir

The gentle, honeyed fruit of this wine has a cool menthol spice. Then tannins rough up the finish, needing a grilled flank steak to assuage them

85 Points

2004 Alain Graillot Crozes-Hermitage

This slowly reveals savory aromas of black olive, pepper and game alongside brambly raspberry and wild cherry ripeness. Its feral complexity is supported by a firm, stony minerality. Decant it if you open it now, but wait if you can, as it will be much more approachable in a few years.

93 Points

2003 J.L. Chave St-Joseph Offerus

This is big, bold and ripe, the darkly charred notes of plum and cherry skins making it seem almost Amarone-like in flavor. Drink it now, with barbecued short ribs.

87 Points

2004 Domaine Lucien Barrot et Fils Chateauneuf-du-Pape

The Barrot family has been growing vines in Chateauneuf since 1690. The 2004 shows the rich ripeness of the vintage, yet underneath lies a complex array of flavors ranging from coriander and peppercorn to air-dried beef and wet tobacco. Through the long, fragrant finish, it feels elegantly and subtly composed.

94 Points

2003 Perrin et Fils Chateauneuf-du-Pape Les Sinards

Les Sinards comes from younger vines of Beaucastel, blended with the fruit from leased vineyards. The deep black cherry and strawberry aromas are inviting, feeling saturated and dense while maintaining a fresh clarity. It's very rich, almost liqueurlike, although the components are balanced so well that it never seems heavy.

92 Points

2004 Domaine de la Vieille Julienne Chateauneuf-du-Pape

The dark flavors of black plum and blackberry jam are very ripe, held in check by notes of damp earth and exotic spice. A streak of prominent acidity helps prevent the fruit from becoming top-heavy, and the finish is fresh and clean.

89 Points

2004 Domaine de la Vieille Julienne Cotes du Rhone

Although Grenache dominates the blend, syrah is most assertive right now, showing richly spicy, baconlike aromas. Its velvety texture and heady concentration give this a meaty, muscular feel, maintaining a bold aromatic presence from start to finish.

90 Points

2004 J.L Chave Cotes du Rhone Mon Coeur

Mon Coeur is blended from the wines of four small domaines, selected by Chave for their expression of terroir. The deep, brooding 2004 is very rich, almost syrupy in texture, with earthy, leathery notes under the black fruit flavors. Pair it with venison or lamb to balance its raw power.

87 Points

2004 Perrin et Fils Cotes du Rhone Villages Rasteau L'Andeol

This is rustic with blackberry and fig flavors backed by firm tannins and acidity.

86 Points

2004 Perrin et Fils Gigondas La Gille

Plush in texture and rich in flavor, this shows *garrigue* and spice notes backing broad, ample flavors of plum skins and cherry pie. It's exotic, with notes of cinnamon, Sichuan peppercorn and tomato leaf.

89 Points

2003 Shafer Napa Valley Relentless Syrah

Napa Valley in its sleek black richness, this grows on a southfacing ridge Shafer planted in 1995, mostly to syrah. Located at the southern border of the Stags Leap District, the 18-acre vineyard includes 3 acres of petite sirah, which adds to the peppery scent of this field blend. It's juicy and luscious right in the middle, a great steakhouse pour.

90 Points

2004 HDV Los Carneros Chardonnay

Warm notes of baked red apples handle bulk of this chardonnay's alcohol, a peppery white for crabcakes.

87 Points

2003 HDV Carneros Napa Valley

The cold, wet spring of 2003 generated a lighter than normal fruit set, and allowed most of the fruit for this wine to be farmed with no irrigation. The blend is predominantly merlot, grown on Hyde Vineyard's shallow loam over clay; ten percent is cabernet sauvignon. Oak enhances the lean texture of Carneros merlot, without obscuring the scents of red cherry contrast an elegant, chanterelle-like savor, a compelling balance with cool, earthy tones that last. Its complexity will develop further in the years to come, the wine enjoyable anywhere along the way with a dry-aged steak.

94 Points

2003 Cain Napa Valley Concept The Benchland

Ripe, dark fruit flavors of cherry and black currant jam come first, then tannin binds the finish with ferrous blackness. The tannins make it extremely dry, though the fruit would be relieved of those tannins in the company of a char-grilled steak.

90 Points

2004 Pride Napa County

Though percentages from the two countries imply a blend, this is, in fact, a wine from one contiguous estate, straddling the border of Napa and Sonoma at the top of Spring Mountain. Most of the cabernet is planted at the higher elevations of Pride's property, where the soils are particularly thin: gravel patchworks with volcanic rock, sandstone, clay and loam. They grow a structured cabernet with distinctively pure black currant flavor, this '04 potent with the mineral tannin of those mountain soils.

91 Points

2005 Cono Sur Casablanca Valley Vision Sauvignon Blanc

As bracing as fresh, cold lemonade with mint, this offers a bright, pure expression of sauvignon grown in the hills of Casablanca. It's ready to match a plate of Pacific oysters.

91 Points

2004 Cono Sur Maipo Valley 20 Barrels Limited Edition Cabernet Sauvignon

A big, impressive cabernet with strong black fruit character, this wine's ripe currant and pepper aromas evolve into sweet cherry flavors. Young and tight, save it a year and then pair with roasted lamb.

90 Points

2005 Cono Sur Casablanca Valley 20 Barrels Limited Edition Pinot Noir

From a hot year in Casablanca, this delivers black cherry and sweet raspberry flavors. Chill it for a seared tuna.

87 Points

2006 Neil Ellis Groenekloof Sauvignon Blanc

Scents of lime leaf and grapefruit introduce this delicate sauvignon, from a vineyard on the coast north of Capetown. The flavors combine bright tangerine and beeswax, lasting on fresh lime and persistent mineral character. It becomes more luscious with air, delicious with anything from the raw bar.

92 Points

2006 Sauvignon Republic Stellenbosch Sauvignon Blanc

A mild sauvignon with lime and grapefruit pith flavors, this has a creamy texture cut in the end by steely acidity. It gets smokier with air, built for wood-roasted oysters.

89 Points

2006 Fairview Coastal Region Gats do Roam

The sweet, ripe peach and gingersnap flavors end with a light touch; for grilled fish.

86 Points

2002 Capafons-Osso Priorat Mas de Masos

This expansive blend of garnacha, cabernet sauvignon, carinena and syrah has the muscles of an action hero. Its young, imposing tannins create an energetic feel; its acidity hides behind the heat of alcohol. Wild and exuberant, five to six years in a bottle should tame it well.

90 Points

2004 Clos Figueras Priorat Fond de la Figuera

The second wine from Clos Figueras, this is approachable and full of charm, generously ripe and dense, with soft, round tannins. In an international style, this will match grilled rib eye.

89 Points