

## TOP 100 BEST BUYS 2009



Our editors select the best value-priced wines of the year.

BY THE EDITORS OF WINE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE

At *Wine Enthusiast*, our tasting panel's job is relatively straightforward: judge and rate wines blind based purely on quality, with no inkling of producer or price. But at the end of the day when choosing what we'll pour at the dinner table, we're like any other wine lover in these tough economic times: price matters, and we're as thrilled for ourselves as for our readers when we find an outstanding Cabernet for \$15, or a knockout Sauvignon Blanc that won't break the bank.

That's why we're pleased to share with our readers the discoveries we find as reviewers: when the bags that disguise reviewed wines' identities come off and the scores are in, we then determine whether the wine can be given the Best Buy status, i.e. if a wine's score on the *Wine Enthusiast* 100-point scale is high in relation to its price (a very precise formula we keep to ourselves, but 87-points-and-above and \$15-and-below are approximate yardsticks). The higher the rating and lower the price, the more of a quintessential Best Buy a wine becomes—no mystery about that.

Only about 10% of the 10,000 wines we review annually merit this designation. So enjoy this elite grouping of Best Buy wines. In selecting, opening and sharing with friends and family, you won't be disappointed.

Reviews and accompanying text are by Lauren Buzzeo, Joe Czerwinski, Paul Gregutt, Steve Heimoff, Susan Kostrzewa, Monica Lerner, Michael Schachner and Roger Voss.

# *Heritage* WINE CELLARS LTD.

presents:

## **92 Pacific Rim 2008 Organic Riesling** (Columbia Valley, WA)

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"Made with organic grapes, this hits just 10.5% alcohol and 3.5% residual sugar. Honey, jasmine and tea notes take the off-dry style to a refined level, with the sweetness perfectly proportionate to the acid."

## **91 Colomé 2008 Torrentés** (Calchaqui Valley)

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"Much better and way more complex than your average Torrentes. The bouquet is flower power, lychee and tangerine, and overall this is an exotic, driving wine like no other from Argentina. Expect roundness and similarities to Viognier, it's amplified and impressive. Imported for Hess Collection."

## **90 Tangent 2007 Paragon Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc** (Edna Valley)

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"Tangent is on the cutting edge of bone dry, crisply elegant and superbly fine white wines at everyday prices, and this bottling is among their best. It's wonderfully tart, with mouth watering flavors of lemons and limes, Asian pears and minerals. A super value, and a sommelier alert."

## **90 Nine Stones 2007 Shiraz** (McLaren Vale)

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"Starts off slightly gamy and meaty, then adds bright blueberry fruit and hints of peppery spice. It's creamy-smooth in texture, medium bodied and nicely balanced on the juicy, mouth watering finish. A good value red to lay in for summer grilling."

## **90 Milbrandt Vineyards 2006 Traditions Cabernet Sauvignon** (Columbia Valley)

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"Here is another great value from the Milbrandt brothers, based upon their impeccable vineyard sources (they own 1600 acres, mostly in the Wahluke Slope AVA). Dense and dark, ripe and compact, this Cab/Merlot/Petit Verdot blend brings plenty of macho and muscle, layers of black fruits, black smoke, black tea and black olives. Get the idea? It's a beautiful effort, and really shines at this price point."

## **89 Segura Viudas NV Brut Reserva** (Cava)

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"The nose blends citrus and wild green-herb aromas, while the palate has perfectly composed orange and peach flavors. The finish is solid and around every turn it holds the road. Great for the price."

## **89 The Wolftrap 2008 Syrah – Mourvedré – Viognier** (South Africa)

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"A nose of red fruit, spice and violet is followed by fresh but lush aromas of cherries, blackberries and a touch of black smoke and dark chocolate. Smooth and integrated, with a pretty, aromatic character."

## **89 A to Z Wineworks 2008 Pinot Gris** (Oregon)

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"A to Z puts out a lot of Pinot Gris – more than 32,000 cases of this 2008- but the quality is consistently fine. Lovely spices wrap around fresh citrus and pear, then move into a smooth midpalate that lingers gracefully through a clean and very refreshing finish."

## **89 Santa Rita 2006 Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon** (Maipo Valley)

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"Lots of big fruit is what defines this easy-to-like wine. The nose throws off equal parts cassis, raspberry and plum, while the palate is saturated and dense, with pleasing cassis, plum and chocolate flavors. Given that the price is under \$15 it's hard to register any complaints. This is your classic Best Buy Cabernet all the way around."

## **88 Santa Julia 2008 Organica Malbec** (Mendoza)

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"The nose is full of mellow raspberry and cherry, while the palate is fleshy and round, with blackberry and a touch of raisin. Plump, not edgy, and ready to drink, with coffee and mocha notes on the finish."

## **88 Goats do Roam 2008 White** (Western Cape)

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"Fresh spicy and floral, this Rhone style blend of Viognier, Crouchen Blanc, Chenin blanc, Pinot Gris and Muscat offers a zing on the palate with complex waves of melon and tropical fruit. Fresh and expressive"