

Publisher's PICKS

In each issue THE TASTING PANEL's Publisher and Executive Editor, Meridith May, selects her favorite wines and spirits of the month. Check here for the latest arrivals in our offices, the hottest new brands on the market and an occasional revisited classic.



Meridith May

WINES



Chateau Julien 2007 La Convivance, Monterey County (\$90) Round and silky, an opaque and ripe blackberry and lavender thriller. The tongue-washing fruit seems limitless. Elegant and brightly lit. **95**



extraction here! Peach and cherry delicacy on the nose lifts with a rose petal softness. Ripe with rhubarb and red licorice. A graceful dusting of white pepper and a nod to earth and sun. **94**

MILLENNIUM WINE GROUP



Buccio 2009 Chardonnay, Monterey County (\$15) So much fruit and so little time to enjoy.



This is a wine to polish off with an array of food - chicken and shrimp worked for me. Freshness with personality plus pineapple, pear and banana. A sweet spice on the tongue is a well-planned finish. **91**



Albino Rocca 2007 Barbaresco Ronchi, Italy (\$60) This single-vineyard Barbaresco from the Ronchi cru is

earthy and meaty, with rustic tones of sun and soil. Vanilla cream-textured with nuances of lavender and orange-peel opulence, the grapes are grown on vines as old as 70 years. The soils are clay, fossil and limestone soils contribute to its distinct minerality. **95**

MARC DE GRAZIA SELECTIONS



Benessere 2008 Zinfandel, Estate Black Glass Vineyard, Napa Valley (\$28) An Old World style, with a brightness of cherries that progresses into undertones of leather and bittersweet fudge. Firmly held together tannins. **90**



Chateau Ste. Michelle 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, Druthers Limited Release, Columbia Valley (\$80)

A twist of anise and a string of lean inky fruit and sweet tobacco carries this incredibly small production gem on a focused path. Takes a sharp turn at the corner of brooding and disarming. **93**

STE. MICHELLE WINE ESTATES



Zaca Mesa Winery 2007 Syrah, Black Bear Block, Santa Ynez Valley (\$60) Intense and masterfully balanced. Blackberry, cassis and mocha-cedar conspire with bran-dried cherries. Campfire roasted marshmallows and grilled meat play on the culinary side of this refined, dusty-tanned and peppered burly red. **96**



Quinta da Aveleda 2010 Vinho Verde, Portugal (\$10) The guava and kiwi are stunning, but the searing acidity is startling and bright, meshed against a hint of creamy pleasures. **89**

HGC IMPORTS



Riverbench Vineyard & Winery 2009 Pinot Noir, Mesa, Santa Maria Valley (\$48) Scarlet-hued: no over

SPIRITS



Berentzen Pear Schnapps Liqueur, Germany (\$20) The sensation of sipping fresh, juicy pear nectar is as satisfying as a late harvest muscat: a brilliant crisp entry, just enough body without being syrupy and a hint of minerality. **92**



Worthy of a smooch.

French-style double bizou.

Wildly infatuated.

Seriously smitten.

Head over heels in love.