

SPECIAL ISSUE: Wine Country Travel

Wine Spectator

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NAPA A CITY REBORN

PLUS: EXPLORE THE VALLEY
WITH FIVE EXCITING DAY TRIPS



SUMMER WHITES FROM CALIFORNIA
ELEGANT REDS: 2008 BURGUNDY
WINE AUCTIONS BOOM
VALUES FROM THE LOIRE VALLEY

JUNE 15, 2011
\$5.95 US

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87 Villa Rubini Pinot Grigio Colli Orientali del Friuli 2009 \$15 There's a light fleshiness to the texture as this displays hints of Roma apple, cantaloupe and mineral. The subtle acidity is fresh and juicy, and the moderate finish echoes the smoky mineral note. Drink now. 1,500 cases made.—A.N.

ITALY

Lombardy

89 Nino Negri Terrazze Retiche di Sondrio White Ca' Brione 2008 \$28 This bright white finds a fine balance between its creamy palate and tangy acidity, supporting flavors of pear, honeydew melon, smoke and mineral. There's good concentration through to the lingering finish. Drink now through 2014. 125 cases imported.—A.N.

88 Antica Fratta Brut Franciacorta NV \$30 A smoky note underscores the toasty flavors of brioche, green apple and pear in this firm sparkler, which balances crisp acidity with lightly honeyed flavors and hints of vanilla. Drink now through 2015. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 10,000 cases made.—A.N.

88 Olivini Benaco Bresciano Notte a San Martino 2006 \$32 A medium-bodied red, with pretty boysenberry, ripe black cherry and damson plum flavors. This is lightly fleshy, offering hints of aromatic dried herbs, flowers and black olive. Well-cut, with a juicy finish. Drink now through 2014. 1,500 cases made.—A.N.

87 Antica Fratta Rosé Franciacorta Essence 2006 \$39 This tangy sparkler offers pretty strawberry, raspberry and apple flavors, set in a well-focused wine. Shows bright acidity, with a spicy undertone and a moderate finish. Drink now. 1,000 cases made.—A.N.

87 Nino Negri Valtellina Superiore Sassella Le Tense 2006 \$34 Hints of kirsch and crème de cassis mix with smoke and spice box notes in this red, which shows subtle acidity and lightly chewy tannins, resulting in a well-meshed wine that's more about finesse than power. Drink now through 2013. 125 cases imported.—A.N.

86 Nino Negri Valtellina Superiore Inferno 2007 \$25 Aromatic black licorice, rose petal and cedar notes accent dried cherry and currant flavors in this light- to medium-bodied red, which is supported by light tannins and juicy acidity. Drink now through 2013. 200 cases imported.—A.N.

ITALY

Puglia / Salento Red

89 Tormaresca Primitivo Salento Torcicoda 2007 \$22 Dense and compact, featuring jammy layers of plum pudding, blackberry liqueur and cassis, accented by wild herb, vanilla and spice notes that sail on through the juicy finish. Drink now. 15,700 cases made.—B.S.

87 Masseria Li Veli Negroamaro Salento Passamante 2009 \$12 Rustic yet refined, offering ripe cherry and plum fruit supported by a bright frame, with a touch of licorice lingering on the finish. Drink now. 16,000 cases made.—N.W.

87 Masseria Li Veli Salento Primonero 2008 \$10 Ripe aromas and flavors of damson plum skin and black cherry mingle with hints of grilled herb, tobacco and olive paste, with a rustic, iron-tinged finish. Primitivo and Negroamaro. Drink now. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 6,000 cases made.—N.W.

85 Masseria Li Veli Primitivo Salento Orion 2009 \$11 Forward and juicy, with gamy notes of macerated blackberry and black cherry, as a streak of licorice lifts the finish. Drink now. 5,000 cases made.—N.W.

85 Masserie Pisari Negroamaro Salento 2008 \$15 Spice and game aromas lead to an elegant palate of wild berry and herb notes in this medium-bodied red, with a lively finish. Drink now. 1,458 cases made.—N.W.

ITALY

Puglia / White & Rosé

87 Leone de Castris Salento Rosato Five Roses 2010 \$14 Bright, floral and quite tasty, this offers freshly cut strawberry and crushed cherry notes, which carry hints of wildflowers through the chalky finish. Negroamaro and Malvasia Nera. Drink now. 14,000 cases made.—N.W.

86 Vigne & Vini Chardonnay Puglia Primadonna 2009 \$18 A rich, nutty white that remains fresh through its baked apple, butterscotch and wildflower notes, as a hint of candied lemon zest fills the finish. Drink now. 6,667 cases made.—N.W.

85 Leone de Castris Verdeca Salento Messapia 2010 \$15 Crisp and fresh, showing enough melon and citrus fruit to carry the herb-tinged finish. Drink now. 5,500 cases made.—N.W.

85 Rivera Chardonnay Castel del Monte Preludio No. 1 2009 \$14 Offers solid varietal character, with elegant notes of melon, pineapple and citrus, supported by a firm minerality that lingers through the finish. Drink now. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 4,500 cases made.—N.W.

83 Tormaresca Chardonnay Puglia 2009 \$12 Juicy lemon pulp notes pick up a hint of fresh-cut herbs on the modest finish. Drink now. 12,000 cases made.—N.W.

ITALY

Sardinia

90 Argiolas Isola dei Nuraghi Turriga 2005 \$80 Dense, rich and focused, featuring ample blackberry liqueur, cassis and plum sauce notes that slowly fade to reveal layers of leather, dark tobacco and grilled game, leading to a long, grippy finish. Mostly Cannonau, with Carignano, Bovale Sardo and Malvasia Nera. Drink now.—B.S.

89 Argiolas Isola dei Nuraghi Korem 2007 \$45 This full-bodied red balances spicy game and sanguine notes to its ripe cassis, black cherry and plum fruit. Fine tannins add support, as a hint of olive paste fills out the finish. Bovale Sardo, Carignano and Cannonau. Drink now.—B.S.

88 Pala Isola dei Nuraghi S'arai 2006 \$46 Dark and brooding, yet lively and fresh, this displays a lovely mix of wild blackberry, damson plum and cassis fruit, with floral undertones accenting the solid finish. Cannonau, Carignano and Bovale. Drink now. 70 cases imported.—B.S.

88 Pedres Vermentino di Gallura Thilibas 2009 \$17 Elegant and subtle, yet with a latent intensity to its ripe green melon, blanched almond and fleur del sel notes, as wildflower hints linger on the citrusy finish. Drink now. 2,500 cases made.—B.S.

87 Argiolas Nuragus di Cagliari S'elegas 2009 \$13 Aromas of underbrush accent the tropical citrus and melon notes, which stretch out on the creamy yet mineral finish. Drink now.—N.W.

87 Argiolas Vermentino di Sardegna Is Argiolas 2009 \$20 Quite ripe, with floral pineapple, yellow melon and vanilla notes featuring a creamy texture, which expands on the tangy finish. Drink now.—N.W.

86 Sardus Pater Vermentino di Sardegna Terre Fenicie 2009 \$18 An earthy white, featuring tropical grapefruit pulp and creamy melon notes, backed by hints of underbrush on the juicy finish. Drink now. 4,000 cases made.—N.W.

85 Pala Vermentino di Sardegna I Fiori 2009 \$15 Light yet spicy, with white grapefruit zest and grilled herb notes accenting the citrus and melon fruit that carries through the tangy finish. Drink now. 1,200 cases imported.—N.W.

ITALY

Tuscany / Brunello di Montalcino

95 Máté Brunello di Montalcino 2006 \$65 See Highly Recommended, page 101.

95 Podere Salicutti Brunello di Montalcino Piaggione 2006 \$85 See Collectibles, page 101.

94 Canneta Brunello di Montalcino Il Pino 2004 \$42 Ripe and supple, with sweet cherry, raspberry and mineral flavors. Pure and vibrant, with finesse and a beautiful expression of Sangiovese. Very harmonious, this is coming into its own. Best from 2012 through 2022. 100 cases imported.—B.S.

94 Casisano-Colombaio Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2004 \$110 A powerful Brunello, this is packed with plum, black cherry, sweet spice and mineral aromas and flavors. Combines purity and a deft use of oak, with a great texture and lovely integration. Best from 2013 through 2024.—B.S.

94 La Pieve Brunello di Montalcino 2006 \$65 A touch of new oak gives this a sweet spice element and softens the impact of Sangiovese's dense tannins and bright acidity, working with the black cherry and plum flavors. Everything is in the right proportion, just needs time to integrate. Best from 2014 through 2025. 125 cases made.—B.S.

93 Mocali Brunello di Montalcino 2006 \$40 Lovely tobacco, tar, leather and dried cherry aromas and flavors mark this Brunello, which is sweet and tannic, the two components playing off each other through the finish. This has excellent harmony and a long aftertaste. Best from 2013 through 2026. 4,000 cases made.—B.S.

93 Il Poggione Brunello di Montalcino 2006 \$80 A fresh, elegant style, featuring cherry, blackberry and spice aromas and flavors, with a vibrant structure and well-integrated tannins. Hangs together beautifully through the long finish, which echoes fruit and tobacco. Best from 2013 through 2025. 4,000 cases imported.—B.S.

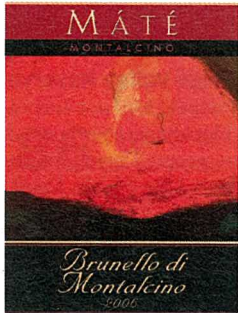
93 Le Ragnae Brunello di Montalcino 2004 \$70 The bilberry, boysenberry and spice aromas and flavors border on exotic in this effusive red. Though packed with sweet fruit, it's firmly structured and plays an initial smoothness off the refined tannins. Best from 2013 through 2024. 1,100 cases made.—B.S.

92 Castello Banfi Brunello di Montalcino Poggio Alle Mura 2006 \$82 A bruising, powerful red, packed with plum and blackberry, but also stiff tannins. This will require some time to come together, but there's adequate sweetness up front. Best from 2014 through 2027. 4,583 cases made.—B.S.

92 Fanti Brunello di Montalcino 2006 \$60 A dose of new oak lends vanilla and clove aromas and flavors, along with cherry and blackberry. There's a brightness to this red, and the tannins are well-integrated, despite being firm and dense. Fine length. Best from 2013 through 2025. 70,000 cases made.—B.S.

91 Piccini Brunello di Montalcino Villa al Cortile 2006 \$50 Round and generous, with a hint of menthol gracing its cherry, plum and leather aromas and flavors. Turns sleeker and more nimble on the finish, where the fine tannins mingle with licorice and spice. Best from 2013 through 2024. 500 cases imported.—B.S.

91 Piccini Brunello di Montalcino Villa al Cortile Riserva 2005 \$60 There's richness to this, showcasing its cherry, leather and spice flavors until the firm tannins sweep in. Sinewy and tight at this point, but



95 Máté Brunello di Montalcino 2006 \$65 An opulent, fruit-driven style, yet fresh, with cherry, raspberry and blackberry up front and tar and licorice lurking behind. The richness is mouthcoating, and there are dense tannins hanging out on the finish. This has immediate appeal, yet should age well too. Best from 2014 through 2027. 1,200 cases made.—B.S.