



A SNEAK PREVIEW OF THE BUYING GUIDE FOR THE MARCH 31st ISSUE

Wine Spectator's March 31 issue features 50 great Bordeaux values. Plus, tasting reports on the 2004 Bordeaux vintage and the Syrah-based, Rhône-style wines of California.

94

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

FAILLA

Syrah Sonoma Coast
2004 • \$54

Exotic smoke, ripe plum and blackberry aromas are enticing, spreading out and gaining richness and depth on the finish, where spice, mineral, herb and pebble notes add texture and flavor complexity. Deeply concentrated, impeccably balanced. Drink now through 2013.—J.L.

94

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

FOREAU

Vouvray Moelleux Domaine du
Clos Naudin 2005 • \$62

Shows a burnished hint, with a waxy note leading the way for lemon cream, papaya, glazed pear, piecrust and buckwheat honey flavors. Long, rich finish lets a humus hint peek out. Drink now through 2025.—J.M.

93

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

FOUR VINES

Petite Sirah Paso Robles
The Heretic 2004 • \$30

Delightfully rich and deep, ripe and fleshy, with a complex mix of currant, wild berry and blackberry fruit that's sharply focused. For all its size and range of flavors, it's lively and vibrant. Drink now through 2011.—J.L.

93

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

**CHÂTEAU
PONTET-CANET**

Pauillac 2004 • \$48

Shows beautiful aromas of crushed berries and currants, with hints of mineral. Full-bodied, with lovely currant, licorice and mint. Long and caressing. Very refined and balanced red. Another winner from Pontet-Canet. Best after 2011.—J.S.

92

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

MEERLUST

Chardonnay Stellenbosch
2005 • \$20

Glazed pear, apple and hazelnut combine with lemon zest, mineral and matchstick notes in this rich, chiseled white, with a long, vibrant, mouthwatering finish that brings you back for more. Drink now through 2008.—J.M.

95

COLLECTIBLE

CHÂTEAU AUSONE

St.-Emilion 2004 • \$350

Pretty aromas of crushed blackberry, with hints of ash and light earth. Full-bodied, with ultrafine tannins and a long, caressing finish. Goes on and on. Such class. Sleek and racy red. Best after 2012.—J.S.

95

COLLECTIBLE

CHÂTEAU HAUT-BRION

Pessac-Léognan 2004 • \$180

Wonderful aromas of dried flowers, currants, berries and mineral. Full-bodied, yet reserved and refined. Lovely texture, with a pure silk feel. Seamless and beautiful red. Great length. A joy to taste. Even better than from barrel. Best after 2012.—J.S.

95

COLLECTIBLE

CHÂTEAU LATOUR

Pauillac 2004 • \$330

Captivating aromas of currants, black licorice and spices, with just a hint of sweet tobacco. Full-bodied, with chewy tannins and a long, long finish. Structured and racy red. Best after 2011.—J.S.

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95

COLLECTIBLE

**CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE
LAS CASES**

St-Julien 2004 • \$90

Intense currant, blackberry and light vanilla aromas. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, caressing finish. Layered, with everything in the right proportion for the vintage. Excellent red. Reminds me of the 1996. Best after 2012.—*J.S.*

94

COLLECTIBLE

**CHÂTEAU
COS-D'ESTOURNEL**

St-Estèphe 2004 • \$80

Loads of currant and blackberry, with hints of Indian spices. Full-bodied red, with velvety tannins and a long, caressing finish. Round and generous for the vintage. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

90

SMART BUY

HOLBROOK

Syrah Santa Barbara County
2003 • \$16

A forward, ripe and fleshy style, compelling for its supple mix of wild berry, boysenberry and blackberry fruit and pretty toasty oak shadings. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

90

SMART BUY

MULDERBOSCH

Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch
2005 • \$14

Bold and spicy, with ginger and graham cracker on the nose followed by notes of brioche, mineral, lemon zest and chamomile. The long finish shows great cut. Drink now through 2008.—*J.M.*

89

SMART BUY

PLANTAGENET

Shiraz Western Australia
Omrah 2004 • \$15

Distinctly peppery, with jazzy blackberry and currant fruit to balance the spice. Round, open finish sails on and on. Drink now through 2010.—*H.S.*

89

SMART BUY

**LES VIGNERONS DES
TERROIRS DE LA
NOËLLE**

Muscadet de Sèvre et Maine
Sur Lie 2005 • \$10

Racy, with nice depth. Offers lots of lemon, lime, floral and mineral notes, with a long, crunchy finish. Drink now.—*J.M.*

88

SMART BUY

BALLAST STONE

Shiraz Currency Creek-
McLaren Vale 2004 • \$15

Dense in flavor and firm in texture, with raspberry, tobacco and plum flavors that mingle against fine-grained tannins. Finish swells. Best from 2008 through 2012.—*H.S.*

87

BEST VALUE

BIELER PÈRE & FILS

Vin de Pays des Maures
Rosé Sabine 2005 • \$10

Full-bodied, with plenty of wild berry and melon flavors. Ripe, spicy finish, with notes of mocha and cream. Syrah, Grenache and Cinsault. Drink now.—*K.M.*

86

BEST VALUE

CLINE

Viognier Sonoma Coast
2005 • \$10

Bursts with fragrant aromas of honeysuckle and apricot, leading to succulent peach, spice and cream flavors that finish with a lively blend of crisp acidity and toasty oak. Drink now.

86

BEST VALUE

COLUMBIA CREST

Shiraz Columbia Valley
Two Vines 2004 • \$8

Soft, open-textured and appealing for its pure blackberry and cherry fruit, finishing with a meaty note. Drink now through 2009.—*H.S.*

86

BEST VALUE

SAUVION & FILS

Vouvray 2005 • \$10

Lean, with lime and peach notes that stay fresh and bright through the mineral finish. Drink now through 2008.—*J.M.*

85

BEST VALUE

DE BORTOLI

Petite Sirah South Eastern
Australia dB Selection 2006 • \$9

Fresh and zingy. A lively mouthful of blueberry and blackberry fruit that's surprisingly refined in texture and style. Drink now.—*H.S.*

Initials at the end of each tasting note indicate the Wine Spectator editor who blind-tasted and scored the wine and wrote the review. The tasters are as follows: James Laube (*J.L.*); Kim Marcus (*K.M.*); Thomas Matthews (*T.M.*); James Molesworth (*J.M.*); Bruce Sanderson (*B.S.*); Harvey Steiman (*H.S.*); James Suckling (*J.S.*); Jo Cooke (*J.C.*); Daniel Sogg (*D.S.*). A lack of initials indicates the wine was reviewed by a *Wine Spectator* panel.