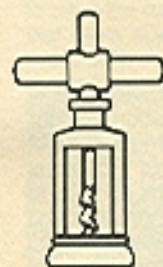


Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s



The WINE ADVOCATE®

The Independent Consumer's Bimonthly Guide to Fine Wine
RATING SYSTEM

Robert Parker's rating system employs a 50-100 point quality scale. It is my belief that the various twenty (20) point rating systems do not provide enough flexibility and often result in compressed and inflated wine ratings. THE WINE ADVOCATE takes a hard, very critical look at wine, since I would prefer to underestimate the wine's quality than to overestimate it. The numerical ratings are utilized only to enhance and complement the thorough tasting notes, which are my primary means of communicating my judgments to you.

96-100

An extraordinary wine of profound and complex character displaying all the attributes expected of a classic wine of its variety. Wines of this caliber are worth a special effort to find, purchase, and consume.

90-95

An outstanding wine of exceptional complexity and character. In short, these are terrific wines.

80-89

A barely above average to very good wine displaying various degrees of finesse and flavor as well as character with no noticeable flaws.

70-79

An average wine with little distinction except that it is soundly made. In essence, a straightforward, innocuous wine.

60-69

A below average wine containing noticeable deficiencies, such as excessive acidity and/or tannin, an absence of flavor, or possibly dirty aromas or flavors.

50-59

A wine deemed to be unacceptable.

TASTING NOTES AND RATINGS

When possible all of my tastings are done in peer-group, single-blind conditions, (meaning that the same types of wines are tasted against each other and the producers' names are not known). The ratings reflect an independent, critical look at the wines. Neither price nor the reputation of the producer/grower affect the rating in any manner. I spend three months of every year tasting in vineyards. During the other nine months of the year, six and sometimes seven-day workweeks are devoted solely to testing and writing. I do not participate in wine judging or trade tastings for many reasons, but principal among these are the following: (1) I prefer to taste from an entire bottle of wine, (2) I find it essential to have properly sized and cleaned professional tasting glasses, (3) the temperature of the wine must be correct, and (4) I prefer to determine the time allocated to the number of wines to be critiqued.

The numerical rating given is a guide to what I think of the wine vis-à-vis its peer group. Certainly, wines rated above 80 are very good to excellent, and any wine rated 80 or above will be outstanding for its particular type. While some have suggested that scoring is not well suited to a beverage that has been essentially created for outbursts, wine is no different from any consumer product. There are specific standards of quality that full-time wine professionals recognize, and there are benchmark wines against which others can be judged. I know of no one with three or four different glasses of wine in front of him or her, regardless of how good or bad the wines might be, who cannot say, "I prefer this one to that one." Scoring wine is simply taking a professional's opinion and applying some sort of numerical system to it on a consistent basis. Scoring permits rapid communication of information to expert and novice alike.

The score given for a specific wine reflects the quality of the wine at its best. I often tell people that evaluating a wine and assigning a score to a beverage that will change and evolve in many cases for up to 10 or more years is analogous to taking a photograph of a marathon runner. Much can be ascertained but, like a picture of a moving object, the wine will also evolve and change. Wines from obviously badly corked or defective bottles are retested, since a wine from a single bad bottle does not indicate an entirely spoiled batch. Many of the wines reviewed have been tasted many times, and the score represents a cumulative average of the wine's performance in tastings to date. Scores, however, do not reveal the important facts about a wine. The written commentary that accompanies the ratings is a better source of information regarding the wine's style and personality, its relative quality vis-à-vis its peers, and its value and aging potential than any score could ever indicate.

Here then is a general guide to interpreting the numerical ratings:

90-100 is equivalent to an A and is given only for an outstanding or special effort. Wines in this category are the very best produced of their type. There is a big difference between a 90 and 95, but both are top marks. As you will note through the text, there are few wines that actually make it into this top category because there are not many great wines.

80-89 is equivalent to a B in school and such a wine, particularly in the 80-89 range, is very, very good; many of the wines that fall into this range often are great values as well. I have many of these wines in my personal collection.

70-79 represents a C, or average mark, but obviously 70 is a much more desirable score than 70. Wines that receive scores between 75 and 79 are generally pleasant, straightforward wines that lack complexity, character, or depth. If inexpensive, they may be ideal for unorthodox quaffing.

Below 70 is a D or F, depending on where you want to school. For wine, it is a sign of an imbalanced, flawed, or tumbly out or diluted product that will be of little interest to the discerning consumer.

In terms of awarding points, my scoring system gives every wine a base of 60 points. The wine's general color and appearance merit up to 5 points. Since most wines today are well made, thanks to modern technology and the increased use of professional oenologists, they tend to receive at least 4, often 5 points. The aroma and bouquet merit up to 15 points, depending on the intensity level and dimension of the aroma and bouquet as well as the cleanliness of the wine. The flavor and finish merit up to 20 points, and again, intensity of flavor, balance, cleanliness, and depth and length on the palate are all important considerations when giving out points. Finally, the overall quality level or potential for further evolution and improvement/aging merits up to 10 points.

Scores are important for the reader to gauge a professional critic's overall qualitative placement of a wine vis-à-vis its peer group. However, it is also vital to consider the description of the wine's style, personality, and potential. No scoring system is perfect, but a system that provides for flexibility in scores, if applied by the same taster without prejudice, can quantify different levels of wine quality and provide the reader with one professional's judgment. However, there can never be any substitute for your own palate nor any better education than tasting the wine yourself.

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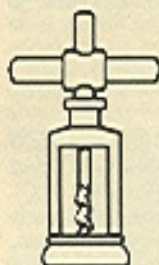
Recommended New Releases: Central Italy (43-64)

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

This journal, (ISSN 0890-8465), is published by THE WINE ADVOCATE, INC., with periodic postage paid at Monrovia, Maryland and additional mailing offices. The street address of the office is 1022 Hillside View, Parkton, Maryland 21120. THE WINE ADVOCATE is available only by subscription. The rates for one year are \$60 (Domestic), \$75 (Canada), and \$100 (Overseas). The rates for two years are \$110 (Domestic), \$135 (Canada), and \$180 (Overseas). All requests for subscriptions should be sent to THE WINE ADVOCATE, INC., P.O. Box 311, Monrovia, MD 21111. Subscription orders must be accompanied by check, money order, or Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit card information. For further information, call (410) 329-6477 or fax (410) 357-4504. THE WINE ADVOCATE is published in six bimonthly issues. Reproduction of the material contained herein, including office copying, without written permission is prohibited by law. The news media, wine distributors, and retailers may use brief portions of the material provided it is not distorted and THE WINE ADVOCATE is given credit for the material utilized. The tasting notes and content are solely the responsibility of author. Robert M. Parker, Jr., THE WINE ADVOCATE'S principal taster and writer. The only exception are those articles written by Pietro Rosati or Daniel Thompson. All work by Mr. Rosati and Mr. Thompson in this journal will be clearly indicated so there can be no confusion regarding the origin and person responsible for those tasting notes. Mr. Rosati can be reached at (202) 333-7165, fax (202) 333-7051. The copy editor of THE WINE ADVOCATE is Patricia E. Parker. Robert M. Parker, Jr., Pierre Rosati, and Daniel Thompson have no interest, direct or indirect, financial or otherwise in the importation or sale of the wine produced from the vineyard or the retail sale of wine except for Mr. Parker's one-third interest in an Oregon vineyard that was commercially planted in 1992 and began selling wine in 1993. Because of an obvious conflict of interest, the wine produced from this vineyard will never be mentioned or reviewed in anything written by Robert M. Parker, Jr. Copyright © 2004 by Robert M. Parker, Jr. Postmaster: Send address correction to THE WINE ADVOCATE, INC., P.O. Box 311, Monrovia, MD 21111. On the world wide web, visit RobertParker.com, Forward and Return Postage Guaranteed. THE WINE ADVOCATE, first published in August, 1978, relentlessly pursues the goal of providing valuable, uncorrupted, totally independent and reliable information on wine and issues affecting wine quality to those consumers in search of the finest wines and best wine values. All Rights Reserved.

TERRAGENS	2001	ROMIO	(\$30.00)	RED	90
Terragens is new line of wines from a giant cooperative organization in Romagna, known in the past strictly for volume wine but now searching for a new credibility in the market. Consulting winemaker Attilio Pagli has shaped the wines and, in terms of numbers and price, they do represent something new in the region. The 2001 Romio, the					
TERRE CORTESI MONCARO	2000	ROSSO CONERO RISERVA CIMELO	(\$17.00)	RED	89
TERRE CORTESI MONCARO	2000	ROSSO CONERO RISERVA VIGNETI DEL PARCO	(\$23.00)	RED	91
TERRE CORTESI MONCARO	2000	ROSSO PICENO ROCCAIVA	(\$34.00)	RED	88
A very large cooperative winery in the Marche (4300 acres of vineyards among its members), Terre Cortesi Moncaro has now moved into higher gear with the decision to engage Riccardo Cotarella to supervise the winemaking for the selections. I imagine, nonetheless, that we are just at the beginning here, and that the red wines, particularly those made in the province of Ascoli Piceno in the warm southern part of the region, have plenty of margin for improvement in coming years.					
The Conero promontory behind the city of Ancona is an enormous slab of limestone rock which has drifted down to the sea from the Apennine mountains. This is excellent soil for the Montepulciano grape, as the 2000 Rosso Conero Riserva Cimerio demonstrates. Bright ruby in color, ripe,					
MARCHESI TORRIGIANI	2001	GUIDACCIO	(\$55.00)	RED	92
The property of an historically important Florentine family, the vineyards of Raffaele Torrighiani are located in a sort of no-man's land between the Vernaccia vineyards of San Gimignano and Chianti Classico. The wine has been impressive since the 1993 vintage, however, and the able hand of Luca D'Atoma is quite perceptible. The 2001 Guidaccio hits the bull's-					
TRINORO	2001	TRINORO	(\$195.00)	RED	95
Andrea Franchetti is in the process of developing a new estate on the slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily, but he is certainly not neglecting his Tuscan property, at least to judge by the 2001 Trinoro, the best he has yet made. Unlikely the 2000 version of the wine, which was entirely Cabernet due to problems with the Merlot, the 2001 blend includes the latter grape, and its presence is felt in the supple tannins. The character of the wine, however,					
TUA RITA	2001	GIUSTO DI NOTRI	(\$80.00)	RED	97
TUA RITA	2001	PERLATO DEL BOSCO	(\$35.00)	RED	92
TUA RITA	2001	REDIGAFFI	(\$180.00)	RED	96
Rita and Virgilio Tua brought the seminolet Val di Cornia appellation back to life with a series of outstanding wines in the first half of the 1990's, first the 1993 Giusto di Notri, then the 1994 Redigaffi. This is as strong a series as they have ever made, wines with a phenomenal freshness which suggests they will also be the longest-lasting of the estate's distinguished short history. The 2001 Perlato del Bosco, 100% Sangiovese, is a brilliant ruby with some light garnet notes at the rim, a toasty, tarry, wild cherry and kirsch nose, and a long, ample, mineral-rich palate, rich, tangy, and with lovely caressing tannins on the close. Drink: 2005-2016. Virgilio Tua refuses to add Merlot to the blend, as he wishes to make an outstanding Sangiovese on its own, an admirable choice, but I would like to see how this grape would perform with the same yields as the others. All yields are low in these vineyards, but the Sangiovese produces half a ton more than the Cabernet or Merlot per acre, and I					
UCCELLIERA	2000	CASTELLACCIO	(\$30.00)	RED	90
A pioneering producer in the province of Pisa, Uccellierra is now making distinguished wines from the high-density vineyards planted by Stefano Chioccioli, who also takes care of the winemaking. The 2000 Castellaccio is sweet, expansive, and resinous on the nose					
VALGIANO	2001	SCASSO DEI CESARI	(unknown)	RED	89
VALGIANO	2001	TENUTA DI VALGIANO	(\$58.00)	RED	91
A very professionally run estate near the city of Lucca, Valgiano is normally classified as part of a cool-climate area of Tuscany, but the vineyards are quite well exposed. There is much fragrance and finesse in the wines, but good underlying strength as well, features which have persuaded Tan Dinh, a restaurant in the seventh arrondissement of Paris with one of the best cellars in France, to list these wines on the card. The 2001 Scasso dei Cesari is a limited edition wine, 100% old vine Sangiovese, very fragrant with elegant notes of red currants and violets, shapely and stylish					
VALLE REALE	2001	MONTEPULCIANO D'ABRUZZO	(\$16.00)	RED	89
VALLE REALE	2001	MONTEPULCIANO D'ABRUZZO SAN CALISTO	(\$29.00)	RED	92
A relatively new producer in Abruzzo, Valle Reale's vineyards are being developed by Leonardo Valentini, professor of agronomy at the University of Milan and one of the sharpest minds in his field in Italy. This is the second vintage I have tasted, and the wines, like the 2000s, are impressive. The 2001 Montepulciano d'Abruzzo is much more than a regular bottling in its depth, sizeable extract, length, and ripeness of fruit. Solid and					
VALORI	2001	MONTEPULCIANO DI ABRUZZO RISERVA	(\$23.00)	RED	91
An up and coming producer in the northern part of the Abruzzo, the most significant part of the region in terms of vineyards, Luigi Valori has followed his very good 2000 Riserva, the first important wine he made, with a 2001 which is even better. The 2001 Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Riserva, almost black in color, with the classic plummy and jammy nose of the variety when fully ripe, is equally full, sensual,					
best Sangiovese available from the growers, shows much tar, chocolate, and cinnamon on its nose of red fruit and violets, and the volume, length, intensity, and concentration are quite unexpected for a wine from a cooperative of this size. Drink: 2005-2012. Importer: Montecastelli Selections, New York, NY; tel. (212) 414-4898					
chocolatey, and tarry on the nose, it is full, soft, and sensual in texture, but with plenty of length and solidity on the finish. Drink: 2005-2012. Even more important is the 2000 Rosso Conero Riserva Vigneti del Parco, a darker ruby with intense, plummy, and jammy aromas, superior concentration and density, much straight ahead power, tannic authority, and mineral complexity from start to finish. Drink: 2006-2016. The 2000 Rosso Piceno Roccaiva, from the province of Ascoli Piceno, is the most approachable of these three offerings with its sweet, ripe, red fruit nose, melting tannins, and silky texture. But it should have no problem in providing pleasurable drinking until 2010. Importer: Matt Bros., New York, NY; tel. (212) 587-8147					
eye in this vintage. Explosively sweet and smoky on the nose, with focused and penetrating berry fruit, this burly, muscular wine features important depth and concentration but an equally impressive roundness and shapeliness of tannins and a freshness which promises long life. Drink: 2005-2016. Importer: Viansa, Sonoma, CA; tel. (707) 935-4700					
a brilliant blackish ruby, comes from the high percentage of Cabernet Franc and its patrimony of black berry fruit, sweet sage and rosemary aromas, polished, silky tannins, and ample, deep flavors, which nonetheless show off the superior elegance, grace, and class of Cabernet Franc which has ripened to the maximum degree. Drink: 2005-2022. Importer: William Grant & Sons, Edison, NJ; tel. (732) 225-9000					
would be curious to see what changes, if any, would result from an equal-opportunity viticulture. The 2001 Redigaffi, an exceptionally deep ruby with an exotic nose of chocolate covered cherries and plum jam along with additional notes of coconut and roasted coffee, has the tell-tale super richness and density of perfectly ripe Merlot, lush, enveloping, plush, and concentrated. Drink: 2005-2020. For the first time I preferred the Cabernet/Merlot blend to the all-Merlot wine, and there can be few doubts that the 2001 Giusto di Notri is a stunning wine. A blackish ruby/purple with a fabulous nose of textbook Cabernet aromas, black currants and blackberries, graphite, river gravel, and sweet herbs, its potent, dense, and packed palate displays flavors of perfect poise, grace and power intertwined and intermingled, shape and grip at the highest level from the initial explosive notes to the resonant, sweet finish. Drink: 2005-2025. Importer: Winebow, Hohokus, NJ; tel. (201) 445-0620					
with peppery Cabernet herbs and smoke. Full, firm, dense, and fresh on the palate, it is mineral and elegant but with plenty of meat on its bones and definition on the finish. Drink: 2005-2015. Importer: Supreme Wines & Spirits, New York, NY; tel. (212) 404-7904					
on the palate, lithe rather than muscular but with a superior persistence and grace. A wine for Sangiovese lovers, to drink between 2005 and 2014. The number one wine in the line, the 2001 Tenuta di Valgiano, blends Syrah into the Sangiovese, and it is the former grape and its meaty, mineral aromas which characterize the nose. The palate is well concentrated and sustained, with quite perceptible flavors of blackberries along with the fresh and smoked meat. Drink: 2005-2016. Importer: Vinifera Imports, Ronkonkoma, NY; tel. (831) 467-5907					
persistent, it will drink well from 2005 to 2012. The 2001 Montepulciano d'Abruzzo San Calisto is already one of the best examples of the wine on the market, almost purple in color, very ripe and jammy on the nose with notes of leather and game, concentrated, dense, and very long on the palate, and with another ten years of important drinking life ahead of it. Importer: Winebow, Hohokus, NJ; tel. (201) 445-0620					
deep, and sustained on the palate, with a firm finish which belies the sensual pleasurable of the initial impact. Drink: 2005-2015. A Marc de Grazia Selection, various American importers, including Michael Skumik, Syosset, NY; tel. (516) 677-9300, Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700, and Estate Wines, Ltd., San Rafael, CA; tel. (415) 492-9411					

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TASTING NOTES AND RATINGS

When possible all of my tastings are done in peer-group, single-blind conditions, (meaning that the same types of wines are tasted against each other and the producer's names are not known). The ratings reflect an independent, critical look at the wines. Neither price nor the reputation of the producer(s) affect the rating in any manner. I spend three-quarters of every year tasting in vineyards. During the other nine months of the year, six and sometimes seven-day workweeks are devoted solely to tasting and writing. I do not participate in wine judgments or trade tastings for many reasons, but principal among these are the following: (1) I prefer to taste from an entire bottle of wine, (2) I find it essential to have properly sized and cleaned professional tasting glasses, (3) the temperature of the wine must be correct, and (4) I prefer to determine the time allocated to the number of wines to be critiqued.

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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FATTORIA LE TERRAZZE	2000	CHAOS IGT	MARCHE	(\$43.00)	RED	89
FATTORIA LE TERRAZZE	2000	SASSI NERI	MARCHE	(\$34.50)	RED	88

These serious, ambitious Italian reds are expensive, but they represent breakthrough efforts for the Marche region. The 2000 **Sassi Neri** is 100% Montepulciano aged 12 months in barriques. Densely colored, with notes of blueberries, black fruits, earth, licorice, and vanilla, it possesses excellent texture, lush, ripe, fruit flavors, and a moderately long, medium-bodied finish. Drink it over the next 5-6 years. The opaque purple-colored 2000 **Chaos**, a blend of 50% Montepulciano, 25% Merlot, and 25% Syrah aged in 100% new

French oak, exhibits a big, impressive nose of licorice, new wood, black currants, and espresso. Although internationally-styled, it is impressively deep, concentrated, and intense. If a more singular character emerges, it will merit an even higher score. Anticipated maturity: 2004-2012. A Marc de Grazia Selection, various American importers, including Michael Skumik, Syosset, NY; tel. (516) 677-9300; Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700; and Estate Wines, Ltd., San Rafael, CA; tel. (415) 492-9411

TERRE TRINCI	2000	CAJO	UMBRIA	(\$17.00)	RED	88
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A blend of equal parts Sagrantino, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot, this opaque ruby/purple-colored 2000 reveals abundant power, a certain rusticity, and layers of flavor in its robust, exuberant

personality. Nearly uncivilized, tasters who admire intensity and power over finesse and elegance will enjoy it over the next 5-6 years. Importer: John Givon Wines, Staatsburg, NY; tel. (845) 268-3554

TERREDORA DI PAOLO	2001	FIANO DI AVELLINO	CAMPANIA	(\$20.00)	WHITE	89
TERREDORA DI PAOLO	2001	GRECO DI TUFO	CAMPANIA	(\$20.00)	WHITE	86

A 1998 Terrazi from this producer was decidedly unimpressive as well as over-priced. However, that was not the case with these two whites. The 2001 **Greco di Tufo** reveals earthy/volcanic/burning ember-like characteristics along with good fruit, medium body, and a ripe, flowery, nicely-textured style. Consume it over the next year. The

2001 **Fiano di Avellino** is a medium-bodied, crisp white displaying a fruit cocktail-scented nose (primarily peaches). Pure and elegant, with an underlying note of minerals, and a dry, zesty finish, it, too, should be drunk over the next year. Importer: Vias Imports, New York, NY; tel. (212) 629-0200

TOMMASI	1997	AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA	VENETO	(\$50.00)	RED	91
TOMMASI	1997	AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA VIGNETO MONTE MASUA	VENETO	(\$50.00)	RED	87
TOMMASI	1998	VALPOLICELLA RIPASSO	VENETO	(\$16.00)	RED	86

Readers looking for robustly-styled Valpolicella should check out Tommasi's 1998 **Valpolicella Ripasso**. Its dark ruby color is followed by a sweet nose of plums, prunes, black cherries, earth, and a hint of truffles. With good acidity, medium body, and a spicy finish, it will provide pleasure over the next 1-2 years. A superb Amarone, the dark plum/purple-colored 1997 **Amarone della Valpolicella** reveals notes of cocoa, chocolate, raisins, and ripe plum as well as black cherry

fruit. Full-bodied, soft, and luscious, it will drink well for 10-12 years. Surprisingly, the single vineyard 1997 **Amarone della Valpolicella Vigneto Monte Masua** is not as impressive as the regular bottling. The dense ruby-colored Monte Masua possesses full-bodied flavors, but fewer nuances and less complexity than its sibling. Nevertheless, it is a robust, copulent Amarone to drink over the next decade. Importer: Rolar Imports, Great Neck, NY; tel. (516) 466-9222

TENUTA DI TRINORO	2000	CUPOLE DI TRINORO IGT	TUSCANY	(\$55.00)	RED	92
TENUTA DI TRINORO	2001	TENUTA DI TRINORO IGT	TUSCANY	(not yet released)	RED	(91-94)
TENUTA DI TRINORO	2000	TENUTA DI TRINORO IGT	TUSCANY	(\$125.00)	RED	95+

One of the new superstar estates in Tuscany, the first vintage of proprietor Andrea Franchetti was 1997. He is obviously a perfectionist, and is doing some things that have never been done with the likes of Cabernet Franc outside Bordeaux and a handful of California wineries. All of Franchetti's wines are made from low yields, given indigenous yeast fermentations, micro-oxygenations, and no racking, fining, or filtration prior to bottling. I have been a fan since the first releases. The wines go from strength to strength, although Franchetti keeps changing some of the names as well as blends. The newest offerings include the 2000 **Cupole di Trinoro**, a blend of 78% Cabernet Franc, 11% Merlot, 8% Cesanese, and 5% Trola. Get this ... yields were 15 hectoliters per hectare, and the wine spent 14 months in 100% new French oak. There are 2,300 cases of this gorgeous opaque ruby/purple-colored effort. It offers up a sweet perfume of menthol, red as well as black currants, licorice, smoke, graphite, and vanilla. Rich, intense, and medium to full-bodied, but remarkably light and delicate on its feet, this stunning Italian red should drink well young, yet last for 12-15+ years. The prodigious 2000 **Tenuta di**

Trinoro is a blend of 55% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 10% Petit Verdot, also from yields of 15 hectoliters per hectare. Sadly, there are only 800 cases of this profound offering that wants to be the Cheval Blanc of Tuscany. Its opaque purple color is accompanied by an extraordinary nose of freshly ground truffles, damp earth, licorice, black currants, blackberries, and white flowers. There is extraordinary intensity, great richness, a profound, multilayered texture, and a finish that lasts for nearly a minute. This is compelling wine from a brilliant proprietor. Anticipated maturity: 2006-2018.

A barrel sample of the 2001 **Tenuta di Trinoro** revealed a similarly-styled effort, with perhaps not quite the power and muscle of its older sibling, but potentially greater elegance and perfume. While it's a bit too early to know for sure, it will certainly be at least a low to mid-ninety point effort when released next year. These are not easy wines to find in the marketplace, but this is a remarkable estate. Bravo! Importer: Rare Wine Co., Sonoma, CA; tel. (707) 996-4484

TUA RITA	2000	GIUSTO DEI NOTRI IGT	TUSCANY	(\$75.00)	RED	95
TUA RITA	2000	PERLATO DEL BOSCO IGT	TUSCANY	(\$36.00)	RED	90
TUA RITA	2000	REDIGAFFI IGT	TUSCANY	(\$175.00)	RED	100

Since the debut 1992 vintage, brilliant wines have consistently emerged from Tua Rita thanks to its gifted winemaker, Stefano Chioccioli. The estate is composed of a mere 36 acres (about the size of Pétrus), but what elixirs emerge! The newest releases include the first perfect score I have given to a wine from Tua Rita. The least expensive offering, the 2000 **Perlato del Bosco**, exhibits a deep ruby/purple color as well as a sweet nose of incense, saddle leather, blackberries, mocha, and spice. Fleshy and rich, with a sweet attack (from ripe fruit, not sugar) and a long, opulent finish, it should drink well for 5-8 years. Even more impressive is the opaque purple-colored 2000 **Giusto dei Notri**, a blend of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 5% Cabernet Franc aged 20 months in 100% new French oak before being bottled without filtration. It requires decanting to strut its stuff, but it is phenomenally rich with notes of blackberries, creosote, truffles, vanilla, and licorice presented in a full-bodied, powerful, concentrated style with

remarkable precision and harmony for a wine of such massive intensity and richness. The finish lasts for 40-45 seconds. Anticipated maturity: 2007-2020.

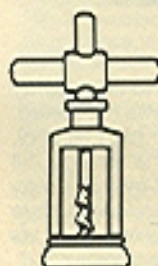
The prodigious, unfined/unfiltered, inky/purple-colored 2000 **Redigaffi** (a 400-case 100% Merlot cuvée) is a wine of extraordinary distinction and intensity. It boasts a fabulous perfume of melted licorice mixed with high quality espresso roast, black cherry and currant liqueur, white flowers, and toast. Boasting great intensity, glorious ripeness, formidable purity, and a finish that lasts nearly a minute, this is the stuff of dreams! Its dry extract number is about as high as one will find in a dry red wine. Additionally, its 14.8% alcohol is incredibly well-concealed beneath the wealth of glycerin and fruit. A brilliant achievement! Kudos to winemaker Stefano Chioccioli and proprietors Rita Tua and Vegilio Bisti. Anticipated maturity: 2007-2018. A Leonardo Locascio Selection, Winebow, Hohokus, NJ; tel. (201) 445-0620

LA TUNELLA	2001	PINOT BIANCO	COLLIO	(\$13.50)	WHITE	88
LA TUNELLA	2001	PINOT GRIGIO	COLLIO	(\$13.50)	WHITE	87

La Tunella's red wine offerings were competently made, but uninspiring. However, the two whites were delicious, offering loads of fruit, clean, pure styles, good underlying acidity, and no hint of wood ... always a blessing with these fruit-driven, aromatic, dry whites from northeastern Italy. The crisp, medium-bodied 2001 **Pinot Grigio** is a

big fruit bomb that needs to be consumed over the next year. Even better is the lemony, crisp, honeysuckle-flavored 2001 **Pinot Bianco**. It, too, should be enjoyed over the next year. Both are excellent values. Importer: William Grant & Sons, Edison, NJ; tel. (732) 225-9000

Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s



The WINE ADVOCATE®

The Independent Consumer's Bimonthly Guide to Fine Wine

RATING SYSTEM

Robert Parker's rating system employs a 50-100 point quality scale. It is my belief that the various twenty (20) point rating systems do not provide enough flexibility and often result in compressed and inflated wine ratings. THE WINE ADVOCATE takes a hard, very critical look at wine, since I would prefer to underestimate the wine's quality than to overestimate it. The numerical ratings are utilized only to enhance and complement the thorough tasting notes, which are my primary means of communicating my judgments to you.

96-100

An **extraordinary** wine of profound and complex character displaying all the attributes expected of a classic wine of its variety. Wines of this caliber are worth a special effort to find, purchase, and consume.

90-95

An **outstanding** wine of exceptional complexity and character. In short, these are terrific wines.

80-89

A **barely above average to very good** wine displaying various degrees of finesse and flavor as well as character with no noticeable flaws.

70-79

An **average** wine with little distinction except that it is soundly made. In essence, a straightforward, innocuous wine.

60-69

A **below average** wine containing noticeable deficiencies, such as excessive acidity and/or tannin, an absence of flavor, or possibly dirty aromas or flavors.

50-59

A wine deemed to be unacceptable.

TASTING NOTES AND RATINGS

When possible all of my tastings are done in peer-group, single-blind conditions, (meaning that the same types of wines are tasted against each other and the producer's names are not known). The ratings reflect an independent, critical look at the wines. Neither price nor the reputation of the producer/grower affect the rating in any manner. I spend three months of every year tasting in vineyards. During the other nine months of the year, six and sometimes seven-day workweeks are devoted solely to tasting and writing. I do not participate in wine judgments or trade tastings for many reasons, but principal among these are the following: (1) I prefer to taste from an entire bottle of wine, (2) I find it essential to have properly stored and cleaned professional tasting glasses, (3) the temperature of the wine must be correct, and (4) I prefer to consume the time allocated to the number of wines to be critiqued.

The numerical rating given is a guide to what I think of the wine vis-à-vis its peer group. Certainly, wines rated above 75 are very good to excellent, and any wine rated 90 or above will be outstanding for its particular type. While some have suggested that scoring is not well suited to a beverage that has been romantically quicked for centuries, wine is no different from any consumer product. There are specific standards of quality that full-time wine professionals recognize, and there are benchmark wines against which others can be judged. I know of no one with three or four different glasses of wine in front of him or her, regardless of how good or bad the wines might be, who cannot say, "I prefer this one to that one." Scoring wines is simply taking a professional's opinion and applying some sort of numerical system to it on a consistent basis. Scoring permits rapid communication of information to expert and novice alike.

The score given for a specific wine reflects the quality of the wine at its best. I often tell people that evaluating a wine and assigning a score to a beverage that will change and evolve in many cases for up to 10 or more years is analogous to taking a photograph of a man in a tuxedo. Much can be ascertained but, like a picture of a moving object, the view will also evolve and change. Wines from obviously poorly corked or defective bottles are retasted, since a wine from a single bad bottle does not indicate an entirely spoiled batch. Many of the wines reviewed have been tasted many times, and the score represents a cumulative average of the wine's performance in tastings to date. Scores, however, do not reveal the important facts about a wine. The written commentary that accompanies the ratings is a better source of information regarding the wine's style and personality. Its relative quality vis-à-vis its peers, and its value and aging potential than any score could ever indicate.

Here then is a general guide to interpreting the numerical ratings:

90-100 is equivalent to an A and is given only for an outstanding or special effort. Wines in this category are the very best produced of their type. There is a big difference between a 90 and 95, but both are top marks. As you will note through the text, there are few wines that actually make it into this top category because there are not many great wines.

80-89 is equivalent to a B in school and such a wine, particularly in the 85-89 range, is very, very good; many of the wines that fall into this range often are great values as well. I have many of these wines in my personal collection.

70-79 represents a C, or average mark, but obviously 79 is a much more desirable score than 70. Wines that receive scores between 75 and 79 are generally pleasant, straightforward wines that lack complexity, character, or depth. If inexpensive, they may be ideal for uncritical sipping.

Below 70 is a D or F, depending on where you want to school. For wine, it is a sign of an imbalanced, flawed, or terribly dull or diluted product that will be of little interest to the discriminating consumer.

In terms of awarding points, my scoring system gives every wine a base of 50 points. The wine's general color and appearance merit up to 5 points. Since most wines today are well made, thanks to modern technology and the increased use of professional oenologists, they tend to receive at least 4, often 5 points. The aroma and bouquet merit up to 15 points, depending on the intensity level and dimension of the aroma and bouquet as well as the cleanliness of the wine. The flavor and finish merit up to 20 points, and again, intensity of flavor, balance, cleanliness, and depth and length on the palate are all important considerations when giving out points. Finally, the overall quality level or potential for further evolution and improvement-aging merits up to 10 points.

Scores are important for the reader to gauge a professional critic's overall qualitative placement of a wine vis-à-vis its peer group. However, it is also vital to consider the description of the wine's style, personality, and potential. No scoring system is perfect, but a system that provides for flexibility in scores, if applied by the same taster without prejudice, can quantify different levels of wine quality and provide the reader with one professional's judgment. However, there can never be any substitute for your own palate nor any better education than tasting the wine yourself.

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

This journal, (ISSN 0890-4465), is published by THE WINE ADVOCATE, INC., with second class postage paid at Mondavi, Maryland and additional mailing offices. The street address of the office is 1000 Hillside View, Parkers, Maryland 21122. THE WINE ADVOCATE is available only by subscription. The rates for one year are \$60 (Domestic), \$60 (Canada), and \$95 (Overseas). The rates for two years are \$95 (Domestic), \$115 (Canada), and \$195 (Overseas). All requests for subscriptions should be sent to THE WINE ADVOCATE, INC., P.O. Box 311, Mondavi, MD 21111. Subscription orders must be accompanied by check, money order, or Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit card information. For further information, call (410) 329-6477 or fax (410) 337-4594. THE WINE ADVOCATE is published in six bimonthly issues. Reproduction of the material contained herein, including office copying, without written permission is prohibited by law. The news media, wine distributors, and retailers may use brief portions of this material provided it is not distorted and THE WINE ADVOCATE is given credit for the material utilized. The tasting notes and scores are solely the responsibility of author, Robert M. Parker, Jr., THE WINE ADVOCATE'S principal taster and writer. The only exception are those articles written by Pierre Royon, All of Mr. Royon's work in this journal will be clearly indicated so there can be no confusion regarding the origin and person responsible for those tasting notes. Mr. Royon can be reached at (202) 833-7165. Fax (202) 833-7091. The copy editor of THE WINE ADVOCATE is Patricia E. Parker. In Europe, Henri Apostol assists in gathering and confirming technical information. Neither Robert M. Parker, Jr., nor Pierre Royon has an interest, direct or indirect, financial or otherwise in the importation of wine, the wholesale distribution of wine, or the retail sale of wine except for Mr. Parker's unrelated interest in an Oregon vineyard that was commercially bonded in 1932 and began selling wine in 1965. Because of an obvious conflict of interest, the wine produced from this vineyard will never be mentioned or reviewed in anything written by Robert M. Parker, Jr. Copyright © 2001 by Robert M. Parker, Jr., Proprietor. Send address correction to THE WINE ADVOCATE, INC., P.O. Box 311, Mondavi, MD 21111. On the world wide web: <http://www.wine-advocate.com/news/index.html>. Forward and Return Postage Guaranteed. THE WINE ADVOCATE, first published in August, 1978, relentlessly pursues the goal of providing valuable, uncensored, totally independent and reliable information on wine and issues affecting wine quality to those consumers in search of the finest wines and best wine values. All Rights Reserved.

laser-like, syrupy personality. Its candied, jellied apricot flavors are rendered lively by its stupendous acidity. This incredibly long wine is powerful, highly expressive, and intense. It has the potential to last 25 or more years. The 1998 Tokay-Pinot Gris Rangen de Thann Clos St-Urbain Sélection de Grains Nobles has 13.5% alcohol and 160 grams of residual sugar. Even though no new oak was employed, its aromatics reveal vanilla, powerful smoke, and spice scents. This is a raspberry, apricot, peach, spice, and toast-flavored wine with magnificent breadth and an unbelievably long finish. Even though its flavor profile is unctuous,

almost jellied in character, it possesses brilliant focus. This is an extraordinary wine with an enormous upside. Drink it over the course of the next 25-30+ years. The exotic fruit-scented 1998 Tokay-Pinot Gris Clos Jebesal Sélection de Grains Nobles conquers the taster's palate with wave upon wave of thick apricots and peaches. This super-dense, fat, almost compote-like wine has exemplary balance due to its vivacious acidity. It is full-bodied, intensely sweet, hugely concentrated, and immensely powerful. Drink it over the next 30+ years. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA; tel. (510) 524-1524

WINE PERSONALITIES OF THE YEAR (An Homage to Quality)

John Alban (Alban Vineyards, Edna Valley, CA) – The quintessential Rhône Ranger, Alban sells small quantities of his fruit to some of California's top winemakers (Elaine and Manfred Krankl of Sine Qua Non, and Matthew Garretson to name a few). However, his finest achievements are the extraordinary wines he makes from Grenache, Syrah, and Roussanne at his hillside winery situated on the steep slopes overlooking Edna Valley. California is awash in interesting wines made from Rhône Valley varietals, but John Alban is the spiritual and qualitative leader of the movement, turning out sumptuous, majestic, potentially long-lived offerings. Highly recommended wines: 1999 and 2000 Roussanne, 1998, 1999, and 2000 Syrah Reva, 1998, 1999, and 2000 Syrah Lorraine, 1998, 1999, and 2000 Syrah Seymour's Vineyard, 1998, 1999, and 2000 Pandora (Syrah/Grenache), 1998, 1999, and 2000 Grenache. The reviews will be forthcoming in the February Wine Advocate. Tel. (805) 546-0305

Luca d'Attoma (wine consultant, Tuscany) – I have never met this brilliant consultant, but he seems to be fashioning some of my favorite Tuscan wines, particularly those from the fashionable coastal region known as Bolgheri. His finest work is being done at the estates of Montepeloso, Le Macchiole, and Gagliole. See issue #137, pages 14, 17, and 19.

Greg Brewer and Steve Clifton (Brewer-Clifton Winery, Lompoc, CA) – The reviews of these wines will not be published for a few months, but the Brewer-Clifton offerings were the single greatest revelation of my 2001 tastings. Their single vineyard Burgundian-styled Chardonnays and extraordinary Pinot Noirs from the cool micro-climates of Santa Barbara, particularly those from the new appellation called Santa Rita Hills, are astonishing. These two gifted winemakers have an incredible future. Quantities are extremely limited, so it is incumbent upon readers to get on their mailing list. Extensive notes are scheduled for an upcoming issue, but check out the following wines: 1999 and 2000 Chardonnay Katherine's, 1999 and 2000 Chardonnay Sweeney Canyon, 1999 and 2000 Chardonnay Marcella's, 2000 Pinot Noir Santa Maria Hills, 2000 Pinot Noir Clos Pèpè, 2000 Pinot Noir Rozack Ranch, 2000 Pinot Noir Julia's, and 2000 Pinot Noir Melville. Tel. (805) 452-5609

Roman Bratsluk (Clarendon Hills Winery, McLaren Vale, Australia) – This winery has emerged as a superstar of world class Shiraz and old vine Grenache. The Merlots and Cabernet Sauvignons aren't bad either, and I have consistently underrated the surprisingly ageworthy Chardonnays. Bratsluk chose Europe as his frame of reference, and thus uses French oak as opposed to the Australian predilection to use more blatantly scented and flavored American wood barrels. A minimal interventionist, his wines are produced from low yields, ripe fruit, and incredibly old vines, most of them from the adjacent hillside vineyards surrounding his state of the art winery in McLaren Vale. These profound wines taste larger than life, much like the boisterous proprietor. Highly recommended wines: see issue #135, pages 7 and 8. Importer: The Australian Premium Wine Collection, imported by USA Wine West, Berkeley, CA; tel. (510) 548-6380

André Brunel (Les Cailloux, Châteauneuf du Pape) – A brilliant winemaker and visionary, André Brunel has both inspired and encouraged a young generation of Châteauneuf du Pape winemakers to raise the level of quality in this appellation. He has always looked to the future without abandoning the best aspects of the past. His Châteauneuf du Papes have been models of consistency as well as brilliant combinations of both the modern and old schools of winemaking. His Châteauneuf du Pape Centenaire, a special cuvée of 100-year old vines (primarily

Grenache), is one of the world's most profound dry red wines. His new partnership with Laurence Féraud to start a *négociant* line of modestly priced Côtes du Rhône appellations, should also be applauded. Highly recommended wines: see page 6 of this issue. Importer: Robert Kacher Selections, Washington, DC; tel. (202) 832-9083

Jean-Paul Daumen (Domaine de la Vieille Julienne, Châteauneuf du Pape) – This young man took over his family's estate and has propelled it into the stratosphere of superb estates in Châteauneuf du Pape. These are quintessential, traditionally made Châteauneuf du Papes. Highly recommended wines: see page 31 of this issue. Importer: A Christopher Cannan Selection, Bordeaux fax: 33 5 57 87 43 22; various American importers, including Michael Skumik, Syosset, NY; tel. (516) 677-9300, and Diamond Wine Merchants, Oakland, CA; tel. (510) 567-9897

Christophe Delorme (Domaine de la Mordorée, Châteauneuf du Pape) – Delorme has completely transformed a once lackluster estate into one of the most meticulously run properties of not only the Rhône Valley, but of France. The quality of his wines, from the humble Côtes du Rhône, to his gloriously fruity, complex rosés, to his world-class, sumptuous Liracs and Châteauneuf du Papes, is to die for. He is a brilliant winemaker. Highly recommended wines: see pages 19 and 20 of this issue. Importer: Kysela Père et Fils, Winchester, VA; tel. (540) 722-9228

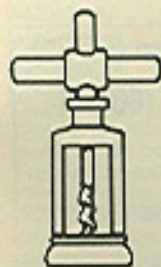
Laurence Féraud (Domaine de Pégaü, Châteauneuf du Pape) – It is rare in Châteauneuf du Pape to see a woman in charge of a famous estate. While Laurence's father, Paul, is still involved, it is clear he has given Laurence more and more liberty to pursue her goals. Along with the Armerier sisters of Domaine Marcoux, she is the most prominent female winemaker of the appellation. Firmly committed to the traditional style of Châteauneuf du Pape, Laurence has not changed anything in the production of these blockbuster wines except for the addition of a new cuvée, Da Capo, one of the most extraordinary expressions of old vine Grenache (actually a blend of 90-95% Grenache and the rest the twelve other Châteauneuf du Pape authorized varietals) I have ever tasted. Highly recommended wines: see page 21 of this issue. Importers: Hand Picked Selections, Warrenton, VA; tel. (540) 347-9400, and Martine's Wines, Novato, CA; tel. (415) 883-0400

Andrea Franchetti (Tenuta di Trinoro, Tuscany) – A wealthy aristocrat and self-trained winemaker as well as good friends with some of Europe's cutting edge producers (Jean-Luc Thunevin of Château Valandraud and Peter Sisseck of Pingus), Franchetti is fashioning remarkable wines that offer complexity and compelling richness. His 1999s are superb, and barrel samples of the 2000s were even more remarkable. If Bordeaux's famous Cheval Blanc were produced in Tuscany, it might be here. Highly recommended wines: see issue #137, page 20. Importer: Rare Wine Co., Sonoma, CA; tel. (707) 996-4484

Jorge Ordoñez (Fine Estates From Spain, Dedham, MA) – The undisputed master of Spain, Jorge Ordoñez has brilliantly succeeded in an unprecedented manner. Spending more time in Spain than any other importer, Ordoñez has unearthed not only extraordinary treasures for value hunters (a bevy of terrific wines priced under \$10), but he has also encouraged cutting edge estates to push the level of wine quality higher and higher. His own project in Toro, called Numanthia, is a watershed wine for this viticultural region. He is in a class by himself for his selections from Spain. Rather than resting on his impressive track record, Ordoñez works harder than anyone else in his field. Highly recommended wines: see issue #136, pages 2-10. Tel. (781) 461-5767

Closing Date: 10-30-01
Issue 137

Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s



The **WINE** ADVOCATE®

The Independent Consumer's Bimonthly Guide to Fine Wine

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

As feeble and inadequate as words may be, we give homage to the thousands of Americans and foreign nationals who were killed or wounded because of the unprecedented acts of barbarism that occurred on September 11, 2001. Additionally, heartfelt thanks are extended to the tens of thousands of people who exhibited enormous courage and financial support to assist those families affected by these senseless and inhuman acts of terror. Lastly, many thanks to the hundreds of wine producers throughout the world who have sent us touching messages of sympathy.

scents of saddle leather, dried Provençal herbs, and subtle toasty oak. It is medium to full-bodied, with excellent depth, superb purity, and an open-knit, complex, structured personality. Delicious now, it promises to evolve for 7-8 years. The **1997 Campaccio Riserva** (a 1,000-case blend of 65% Sangiovese and 35% Cabernet Sauvignon aged two years in primarily French oak) ratchets up the concentration level a notch or two, revealing a more expansive, layered palate, a deep ruby/purple color, more noticeable new oak, thicker, juicier flavors, plenty of power yet admirable elegance, purity, and overall harmony. The tannin is well integrated in this large-scaled, concentrated, complex Italian red. Anticipated maturity: now-2015.

FATTORIA LE TERRAZZE	1999	CHAOS	LE MARCHE	(\$44.00)	RED	89
FATTORIA LE TERRAZZE	1999	SASSI NERI	LE MARCHE	(\$32.00)	RED	88

Both of these barrique-aged efforts hold back from becoming too international in their orientation. The **1999 Sassi Neri** reveals an elegant, sweet perfume of cherry jam, currants, toasty oak, and licorice. Rich, medium to full-bodied, with sweet tannin as well as a long finish, it will drink well for 5-6 years. A blend of numerous varietals, the deep ruby/purple-colored **1999 Chaos** is a polished, medium to full-bodied, supple-textured offering with good focus,

CASTELLO DEL TERRICCIO	1998	LUPICIAIA	TUSCANY	(\$125.00)	RED	90
CASTELLO DEL TERRICCIO	1998	TASSINAIA	TUSCANY	(\$65.00)	RED	88

The dark ruby-colored **1998 Tassinai** is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese, and Merlot aged in French oak for 12 months prior to bottling. Copious quantities of black currant and cherry fruit are followed by medium body, sweet tannin, and plenty of spicy oak. Drink it over the next decade. A blend of Cabernet

TIEFENBRUNNER	2000	SAUVIGNON KIRCHENLEITEN	ALTO ADIGE	(\$18.00)	WHITE	88
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Made from 100% Sauvignon Blanc, Tiefenbrunner's 2000 Kirchenleiten offers aromas and flavors of melons, licorice, figs, and Provençal herbs. This flinty, light-bodied, refreshing white reveals surprising flavor

TIGNANELLO	1998	IGT	TUSCANY	(\$70.00)	RED	91
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There are 30,000 cases of this well-known Tuscan proprietary red made from a blend of 80% Sangiovese, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 5% Cabernet Franc. The 1998 offers a classic bouquet of berry fruit, new saddle leather, underbrush, earth, and toast from its new

TORMARESCA	2000	BOCCA DI LUPO	CASTEL DEL MONTE	(\$25.00)	RED	89+
TORMARESCA	1999	BOCCA DI LUPO	CASTEL DEL MONTE	(\$25.00)	RED	87
TORMARESCA	2000	NEGROAMARO	PUGLIA	(\$25.00)	RED	90

The Antinori firm has set up shop in this area of southern Italy, and with their talented oenologist, Renzo Cotarella, has begun to make waves with the quality of these wines. They have been transformed from rustic, earthy examples, to ones with loads of fruit and character. The **Bocca di Lupo** is produced from a blend of 80% Aglianico and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, and spends 12 months in French oak barrels, of which 50% are new. Because of heavy rains during the harvest, 1999 was a challenging vintage. 2000 was a superb year for this region. Both wines exhibit peppery, earthy, chocolately, fruit notes along with restrained toasty oak.

GIUSEPPE TRAVERSA	1999	BARBERA D'ALBA BURDINOTA DEL CIABOT	PIEDMONT	(\$23.00)	RED	88
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This medium-bodied Barbera offers tangy, sweet, strawberry and cherry fruit infused with toasty French oak. Plump and fleshy as well

TENUTA DI TRINORO	1999	CINCINNATO IGT	TUSCANY	(\$69.00)	RED	87
TENUTA DI TRINORO	1999	PALAZZI IGT	TUSCANY	(\$100.00)	RED	93
TENUTA DI TRINORO	1999	TRINORO IGT	TUSCANY	(\$100.00)	RED	92+

I continue to be amazed by the high quality wines produced by proprietor Andrea Franchetti. Self-trained, but a good friend of Jean-Luc Thunevin (of Château Valandraud and others) and Peter Sissick (of Pingus), Franchetti has been producing Cabernet Franc-based, Cheval Blanc-like efforts. Prices are steep, but the quality is in the bottle. In 2000, there will be a number of changes as 1999 is the last vintage for his cuvée of Palazzi. As a side note, barrel samples of the 2000 Trinoro IGT and his less expensive 2000 Trinoro Cupole di Trinoro were astonishing, and clearly the finest wines he has yet produced. If they continue to evolve, they will be mid-ninety point efforts when released in July, 2002. Readers should keep in mind that these are prodigious offerings that will quickly sell out.

The intriguing **1999 Cincinnato** (85 cases) was fashioned from the indigenous Cesanese d'Affile grape. Burgundian-like, it offers medium body, and luscious, sweet strawberry and cherry fruit notes. While it reveals good ripeness and charm, it is essentially superficial. Consume it over the next 3-4 years. The **1999 Palazzi** (800 cases of

TUA RITA	1999	GIUSTO DEI NOTRI	TUSCANY	(\$70.00)	RED	96
TUA RITA	1999	PERLATO DEL BOSCO	TUSCANY	(\$35.00)	RED	91
TUA RITA	1999	REDIGAFFI	TUSCANY	(\$120.00)	RED	99

Many of the greatest wines made in central Italy emerge from one of three winemaking consultants, Riccardo Cotarella, Luca d'Atoma, or Stefano Chiccoli, the winemaker for Tua Rita, a superstar of the coastal Tuscan region known as Bolgheri. As longtime readers know, these wines have received lavish praise in past issues, and that

Lastly, the **1998 Ceppate** (a blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon from the Chianti Classico region, and equal parts Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot from the coastal Maremma region) is terrific, no doubt because the Tuscan coastline enjoyed a far better vintage in 1998 than the inland viticultural regions. The color is a healthy dark ruby/purple, and the bouquet exhibits super fruit (primarily crème de cassis and new oak). Aged 12 months in 100% new oak, of which 70% was French, this youthful wine (1,800 six-packs produced) is full-bodied, ripe, textured, rich, and promising. It should drink well for 12-15 years. Importer: Neil Empson, Empson, USA, Alexandria, VA; tel. (703) 684-0900

LE MARCHE	(\$44.00)	RED	89
LE MARCHE	(\$32.00)	RED	88

abundant black currant/barrique characteristics, and a distinctive personality. It has the weight of a Bordeaux, and falls just short of being too internationally-styled. Consume it over the next 7-10 years. A Marc de Grazia Selection, various American importers, including Michael Skurnik, Syosset, NY; tel. (516) 677-9300, Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700, and Estate Wines, Ltd., San Rafael, CA; tel. (415) 492-9411

TUSCANY	(\$125.00)	RED	90
TUSCANY	(\$65.00)	RED	88

Sauvignon and Merlot, the **1998 Lupicai** reveals a darker, more saturated ruby/purple color along with a sweet nose of black currants, espresso, and chocolate. Dense, rich, and muscular, it needs an additional 1-3 years of cellaring, and should drink well for 12-15 years. Importer: Kobrand Corp., New York, NY; tel. (212) 490-9300

ALTO ADIGE	(\$18.00)	WHITE	88
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penetration. It will drink well for 12-18 months. A Leonardo Locasco Selection, Winebow, Hohokus, NJ; tel. (201) 445-0620

TUSCANY	(\$70.00)	RED	91
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barrique aging. Medium to full-bodied, with more tannin than the plusher, more opulent 1997, good delineation, and a firm, classic style, it requires 2-3 years of cellaring, and should drink well for 15-16. Importer: Remy America, New York, NY; tel. (212) 399-0200

CASTEL DEL MONTE	(\$25.00)	RED	89+
CASTEL DEL MONTE	(\$25.00)	RED	87
PUGLIA	(\$25.00)	RED	90

Full-bodied, chewy, and rich, they are appealing for their up-front fruit, glycerin, and personalities. The 2000 is slightly deeper and longer, with more velvety tannin. Both wines should drink well for 5-7 years or longer.

Produced from an indigenous varietal, the **2000 Negroamaro** (14% alcohol) was aged for 12 months in new and one-year old French Tronçais and Alliers barrels. It possesses an opaque black/purple color as well as a full-bodied bouquet of cassis, earth, licorice, and vanilla. Powerful, ripe, dense, and pure, it should drink well for 7-10 years. Importer: Remy America, New York, NY; tel. (212) 399-0200

PIEDMONT	(\$23.00)	RED	88
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as elegant and pure, it will drink well for 2-3 years. Importer: Steven Berardi, Elizabeth Imports, Denver, CO; tel. (303) 394-0691

TUSCANY	(\$69.00)	RED	87
TUSCANY	(\$100.00)	RED	93
TUSCANY	(\$100.00)	RED	92+

a blend of 50% Cabernet Franc and 50% Merlot) boasts a dense ruby/purple color in addition to a complex nose of currants, cigar box, plums, and cherry liqueur with a hint of toasty oak in the background. Full-bodied, elegant, and complex, with a savory mid-palate and sweet tannin, it will drink beautifully for 12-14 years. Even better are the 1,300 cases of the **1999 Trinoro**, a blend of 70% Cabernet Franc, 20% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 4% Petit Verdot. Cropped at yields of 26 hectoliters per hectare, this profound, dark purple-colored offering reveals noteworthy aromas of mocha, black fruits, spice box, and toast. It possesses multiple layers, astounding richness, gorgeous purity, definition, and elegance, medium to full body, and a beautiful texture. Anticipated maturity: now-2015. These wines, in the style of Franchetti's friends, Peter Sissick and Jean-Luc Thunevin, were not fined, filtered, or stabilized, and essentially represent the most honest/authentic essence of their vineyard. They are the wines of a genius. Importer: Rare Wine Co., Sonoma, CA; tel. (707) 996-4484

TUSCANY	(\$70.00)	RED	96
TUSCANY	(\$35.00)	RED	91
TUSCANY	(\$120.00)	RED	99

continues with the 1999 releases. A new star in Tua Rita's galaxy is the **1999 Perlato del Bosco** (1000+ cases produced), a 100% Sangiovese aged in barrique and bottled with neither fining nor filtration. A friend of mine described it best ... a "sex machine." Super-charged, complex notes of espresso, chocolate, and black fruits emerge from the

Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s



The WINE ADVOCATE®

The Independent Consumer's Bimonthly Guide to Fine Wine

TENUTA DI TRINORO	1999	CININNATO IGT	TUSCANY	(\$69.00)	RED	87
TENUTA DI TRINORO	1999	PALAZZI IGT	TUSCANY	(\$100.00)	RED	93
TENUTA DI TRINORO	1999	TRINORO IGT	TUSCANY	(\$100.00)	RED	92+

I continue to be amazed by the high quality wines produced by proprietor Andrea Franchetti. Self-trained, but a good friend of Jean-Luc Thunevin (of Château Valandraud and others) and Peter Sissick (of Pingus), Franchetti has been producing Cabernet Franc-based, Cheval Blanc-like efforts. Prices are steep, but the quality is in the bottle. In 2000, there will be a number of changes as 1999 is the last vintage for his cuvée of Palazzi. As a side note, barrel samples of the 2000 Trinoro IGT and his less expensive 2000 Trinoro Cupole di Trinoro were astonishing, and clearly the finest wines he has yet produced. If they continue to evolve, they will be mid-ninety point efforts when released in July, 2002. Readers should keep in mind that these are prodigious offerings that will quickly sell out.

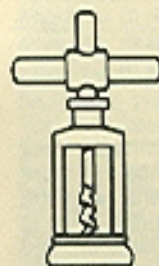
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SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

As feeble and inadequate as words may be, we give homage to the thousands of Americans and foreign nationals who were killed or wounded because of the unprecedented acts of barbarism that occurred on September 11, 2001. Additionally, heartfelt thanks are extended to the tens of thousands of people who exhibited enormous courage and financial support to assist those families affected by these senseless and inhuman acts of terror. Lastly, many thanks to the hundreds of wine producers throughout the world who have sent us touching messages of sympathy.

Robert M. Parker, Jr.'s



The WINE ADVOCATE®

The Independent Consumer's Bimonthly Guide to Fine Wine RATING SYSTEM

Robert Parker's rating system employs a 50-100 point quality scale. It is my belief that the various twenty (20) point rating systems do not provide enough flexibility and often result in compressed and inflated wine ratings. THE WINE ADVOCATE takes a hard, very critical look at wine, since I would prefer to underestimate the wine's quality than to overestimate it. The numerical ratings are utilized only to enhance and complement the thorough tasting notes, which are my primary means of communicating my judgments to you.

96-100

An extraordinary wine of profound and complex character displaying all the attributes expected of a classic wine of its variety. Wines of this caliber are worth a special effort to find, purchase, and consume.

90-95

An outstanding wine of exceptional complexity and character. In short, these are terrific wines.

80-89

A barely above average to very good wine displaying various degrees of finesse and flavor as well as character with no noticeable flaws.

70-79

An average wine with little distinction except that it is soundly made. In essence, a straightforward, innocuous wine.

60-69

A below average wine containing noticeable deficiencies, such as excessive acidity and/or tannin, an absence of flavor, or possibly dirty aromas or flavors.

50-59

A wine deemed to be unacceptable.

TASTING NOTES AND RATINGS

When possible all of my tastings are done in peer-group, single-blind conditions, (meaning that the same types of wines are tasted against each other and the producers' names are not known). The ratings reflect an independent, critical look at the wines. Neither price nor the reputation of the producer/grower affect the rating in any manner. I spend three months of every year tasting in vineyards. During the other nine months of the year, six and sometimes seven-day workweeks are devoted solely to tasting and writing. I do not participate in wine judgments or trade tastings for many reasons, but principal among these are the following: (1) I prefer to taste from an entire bottle of wine, (2) I find it essential to have properly sized and cleaned professional tasting glasses, (3) the temperature of the wine must be correct, and (4) I prefer to determine the time allocated to the number of wines to be critiqued.

The numerical rating given is a guide to what I think of the wine vis-à-vis its peer group. Certainly, wines rated above 85 are very good to excellent, and any wine rated 90 or above will be outstanding for its particular type. While some have suggested that scoring is not well suited to a beverage that has been intentionally colored for centuries, wine is no different from any consumer product. There are specific standards of quality that full-time wine professionals recognize, and there are benchmark wines against which others can be judged. I know of no one with three or four different glasses of wine in front of him or her, regardless of how good or bad the wines might be, who cannot say, "I prefer this one to that one." Scoring wines is simply taking a professional's opinion and applying some sort of numerical system to it on a consistent basis. Scoring permits rapid communication of information to expert and novice alike.

The score given for a specific wine reflects the quality of the wine at its best. I often tell people that evaluating a wine and assigning a score to a beverage that will change and evolve in many cases for up to 10 or more years is analogous to taking a photograph of a man in a room. Much can be ascertained, but, like a picture of a moving object, the wine will evolve and change. Wines from obviously faulty or defective bottles are rejected, since a wine from a single bad bottle does not indicate an entirely spoiled batch. Many of the wines reviewed have been tasted many times, and the score represents a cumulative average of the wine's performance in tastings to date. Scores, however, do not reveal the important facts about a wine. The written commentary that accompanies the ratings is a better source of information regarding the wine's style and personality, its relative quality vis-à-vis its peers, and its value and aging potential than any score could ever indicate.

Here then is a general guide to interpreting the numerical ratings:

90-100 is equivalent to an A and is given only for an outstanding or special effort. Wines in this category are the very best produced of their type. There is a big difference between a 90 and 98, but both are top marks. As you will note through the text, there are few wines that actually make it into this top category because there are not many great wines.

80-89 is equivalent to a B in school and such a wine, particularly in the 85-89 range, is very, very good; many of the wines that fall into this range often are great values as well. I have many of these wines in my personal collection.

70-79 represents a C, or average mark, but obviously 79 is a much more desirable score than 70. Wines that receive scores between 75 and 79 are generally pleasant, straightforward wines that lack complexity, character, or depth. If inexpensive, they may be ideal for unforced gifting.

Below 70 is a D or F, depending on where you want to school. For wine, it is a sign of an imbalanced, flawed, or terribly dull or diluted product that will be of little interest to the discriminating consumer.

In terms of awarding points, my scoring system gives every wine a base of 50 points. The wine's general color and appearance merit up to 5 points. Since most wines today are well made, thanks to modern technology and the increased use of professional oenologists, they tend to receive at least 4, often 5 points. The aroma and bouquet merit up to 15 points, depending on the intensity level and dimension of the aroma and bouquet as well as the cleanliness of the wine. The flavor and finish merit up to 20 points, and again, intensity of flavor, balance, cleanliness, and depth and length on the palate are all important considerations when giving out points. Finally, the overall quality level or potential for further evolution and improvement merits up to 10 points.

Scores are important for the reader to gauge a professional critic's overall qualitative placement of a wine vis-à-vis its peer group. However, it is also vital to consider the description of the wine's style, personality, and potential. No scoring system is perfect, but a system that provides for flexibility in scores. If applied by the same taster without prejudice, can quantify different levels of wine quality and provide the reader with one professional's judgment. However, there can never be any substitute for your own palate nor any better education than testing the wine yourself.

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Italy's Golden Age (624 recommended wines of which 209 are delicious bargains) (2-40)

Recommended New Releases: France, Spain & Portugal (41-54)
(including 114 great values)

A Buying Strategy (55-56)

CONTACT INFORMATION

This journal, ISSN 0891-6933, is published by THE WINE ADVOCATE, INC., with second class postage paid at Monkton, Maryland and additional mailing offices. The street address of the office is 1002 Hilsda View, Parkton, Maryland 21120. THE WINE ADVOCATE is available only by subscription. The rates for one year: \$45 (Domestic), \$60 (Canada), and \$65 (Overseas). The rates for two years are \$80 (Domestic), \$110 (Canada), and \$155 (Overseas). All requests for subscriptions should be sent to THE WINE ADVOCATE, INC., P.O. Box 211, Monkton, MD 21111. Subscription orders must be accompanied by check, money order, or Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit card information. For further information, call (410) 328-6177 or fax (410) 357-4904. THE WINE ADVOCATE is published in 30/34 bimonthly issues. Reproduction of the material contained herein, including either written or printed permission is prohibited by law. The news media, wine distributors, and retailers may use brief portions of this material provided it is not distorted and THE WINE ADVOCATE is given credit for the material utilized. The tasting notes and content are solely the responsibility of author, Robert M. Parker, Jr., THE WINE ADVOCATE'S principal taster and writer. The only exception are those articles written by Piero Rovati. All of Mr. Rovati's work in this journal will be clearly indicated so there can be no confusion regarding the origin and person responsible for those tasting notes. Mr. Rovati can be reached at 2003 333-7195, Fax (202) 333-7381. The copy editor of THE WINE ADVOCATE is Patricia E. Parker. In Europe, Pierre Apolline assists in gathering and confirming technical information. Neither Robert M. Parker, Jr. nor Piero Rovati has an interest, direct or indirect, financial or otherwise in the importation of wine, the wholesale distribution of wine, or the retail sale of wine except for Mr. Parker's one-third interest in an Oregon vineyard that was commercially located in 1992 and began selling wine in 1993. Because of an obvious conflict of interest, the wine produced from this vineyard will never be mentioned or reviewed in anything written by Robert M. Parker, Jr. Copyright © 2000 by Robert M. Parker, Jr. Postmaster: Send address correction to THE WINE ADVOCATE, INC., P.O. Box 211, Monkton, MD 21111. On the web visit <http://www.wine-advocate.com/uk/index.html>. Forward and Return Postage Guaranteed. THE WINE ADVOCATE, first published in August, 1978, relentlessly pursues the goal of providing valuable, unencumbered, totally independent and reliable information on wine and issues affecting wine quality to those consumers in search of the finest wines and best wine values. All Rights Reserved.

GIUSEPPE TRAVERSA	1999	DOLCETTO VIGNA DI CACCIA	PIEDMONT	(\$15.00)	RED	86	
GIUSEPPE TRAVERSA	1999	MOSCATO D'ASTI SORI STARDERI	PIEDMONT	(\$17.00)	SPARKLING WHITE	90	
The medium ruby-colored 1999 Dolcetto Vigna di Caccia exhibits lush cherry fruit, an attractive sweetness, more elegance than power, and a medium-bodied, soft finish. Drink it over the next year. The two Barberas tasted included the tank-fermented and aged 1999 Barbera d'Alba La Burdinota. Its dark ruby color is followed by a medium-bodied wine with tangy acidity, ripe strawberry and black cherry fruit, and notes of tomato skin. Spicy, with good concentration, and a tart finish, it should be consumed over the next 2-3 years. The wood-aged, more interesting 1998 Barbera d'Alba La Burdinota del Clabot is fatter, with sweeter tannin, and deeper, more concentrated fruit. This effort, which sees about 10% new oak, reveals a dense ruby color, excellent black cherry, cranberry, and plum-like fruit, as well as moderate acidity, and a plump, fleshy, medium-bodied personality. This round Barbera is ideal for drinking over the next 2-4 years.			glass, tobacco, new saddle leather, fennel, and sweet and sour cherry aromas emerged. Medium to full-bodied, complex, and already drinkable, it should keep for a decade or more. The medium ruby-colored 1997 Barbaresco Sori Clabot already reveals amber at the edge. Notes of rose petals, tar, cedar, spice box, and copious quantities of red and black fruits are classic characteristics of ripe Nebbiolo. Medium to full-bodied, with enough acidity for delineation and freshness, good spice and richness, and a long finish, it should be drunk over the next 10-12 years.				
As the spicy, complex 1997 Barbaresco Sori Stardereri sat in the			Lastly, the 1999 Moscato d'Asti Sori Stardereri (made from 45-year old vines) is a gorgeously low alcohol (4.5%), slightly frothy, apricot/peach-scented fruit bomb made from the delicate Moscato grape. A treat to drink, it is lively, fresh, pure, and best consumed over the next 6-9 months. Importer: Steven Berardi Selections, Elizabeth Imports, Denver, CO; tel. (303) 394-0691				
TRE MONTI	1999	SALCERELLA	COLLI D'IMOLE	(\$15.00)	WHITE	86	
TRE MONTI	1999	SANGIOVESE DI ROMAGNA	COLLI D'IMOLE	(\$10.00)	RED	85	
Tre Monti's 1999 Salcerella is a fruit-driven, medium-bodied effort exhibiting notes of peach, pear, pineapple, and other assorted tropical fruits. This low acid, fleshy effort is ideal for drinking over the next 6-12 months. The 1999 Sangiovese di Romagna exhibits a medium ruby			color as well as a straightforward, berry-scented bouquet, and flavors of strawberries and sweet cherries. This light to medium-bodied red can be served chilled over the next year. Both wines are good values. Importer: Langdon Shiverick, Cleveland, OH; tel. (216) 881-6600				
TENUTA DI TRINORO	1998	IGT	TUSCANY	(\$100.00)	RED	92	
TENUTA DI TRINORO	1998	PALAZZI IGT	TUSCANY	(\$100.00)	RED	93	
This exciting new operation is run by Andrea Franchetti, who has friendships with winemaking mavens Jean-Luc Thunevin of St.-Emilion and Peter Sisseck of Spain's Pingus. No expense has been spared in the replanting of this ancient vineyard (dating from 1892) or on the lavish attention given to the wine. Made from extremely low yields of 20 hectoliters per hectare, aged 14 months in 100% new French oak, and bottled without fining or filtration, these wines benefit from a process known as <i>micro-butlage</i> , which aerates the lees without having to rack the wines, thus minimizing damage to the wine's freshness. To date, these have been spectacular efforts with fabulous potential. The Tenuta di Trinoro is a blend of 80% Cabernet Franc, 10% Merlot, and 10% Petit Verdot. The Palazzi is a blend of 50% Cabernet Franc and 50% Merlot (reminiscent of St.-Emilion's famed Cheval Blanc). The 1998 Palazzi (1,000 cases) exhibits an			exotic, sweet nose of blackberries and spices, an opulently-textured, jammy, ripe style with wonderful sweetness on the attack, copious quantities of glycerin, supple tannin, and a blockbuster, rich finish with tremendous complexity. It should age effortlessly for 10-15 years. Also remarkably complex, the 1998 Tenuta di Trinoro reveals notes of coconut, Asian spices, and generous quantities of black cherry, blackberry, and smoke-infused fruit flavors. The wine is jammy, full-bodied, viscous, and voluptuously-textured with extraordinary purity and overall balance. In both wines, the tannin is obscured by the luxurious fruit and high glycerin. The 1998 Tenuta di Trinoro will also drink well for 10-15 years.				
I have been extolling the virtues of this estate's wines for several years. Although produced in limited quantities, they are among the most flamboyant and intense offerings from Tuscany's Livorno province. The spectacular 1998 Giusto dei Nofri is a 60% Cabernet Sauvignon/40% Merlot blend aged in French oak, of which 50% was new, and bottled unfined and unfiltered. A dense, murky ruby/purple color is followed by aromas of melted Valrhona chocolate, blackberries, smoke, and toast. Rich and full-bodied, with superb concentration, a seamless texture, low acidity, and a 40+ second finish, this huge, full-bodied wine should drink well for a decade. The 1998 Redigaffi (2,000+ bottles produced) is profound. I do not normally quote dry extract numbers, because taste is more important			By the way, the 1999 Tenuta di Trinoro appears to be the finest wine I have yet tasted from this up and coming superstar. Importer: The Rare Wine Co., Sonoma, CA; tel. (707) 936-4484				
TUA RITA	1998	GIUSTO DEI NOTRI	TUSCANY	(\$78.00)	RED	93	
TUA RITA	1998	REDIGAFFI	TUSCANY	(\$115.00)	RED	96	
I have been extolling the virtues of this estate's wines for several years. Although produced in limited quantities, they are among the most flamboyant and intense offerings from Tuscany's Livorno province. The spectacular 1998 Giusto dei Nofri is a 60% Cabernet Sauvignon/40% Merlot blend aged in French oak, of which 50% was new, and bottled unfined and unfiltered. A dense, murky ruby/purple color is followed by aromas of melted Valrhona chocolate, blackberries, smoke, and toast. Rich and full-bodied, with superb concentration, a seamless texture, low acidity, and a 40+ second finish, this huge, full-bodied wine should drink well for a decade. The 1998 Redigaffi (2,000+ bottles produced) is profound. I do not normally quote dry extract numbers, because taste is more important			than the numbers. However, I could not help but notice one of the highest measured dry extract numbers I have ever seen in a wine with the 1998 Redigaffi — 39 grams per liter. Made from 100% Merlot, aged in 100% new Allier and Tronçais French barrels, it is bottled without fining or filtration. An opaque purple-colored, powerful, enormously-endowed effort, it offers gorgeous black currant, plum, and blackberry fruit characteristics infused with spice box, chocolate, and vanilla. This harmonious wine oozes with extract and glycerin. Extraordinarily pure and impressive, with copious tannin nearly hidden beneath the wine's superb richness, this beauty should be at its apogee between 2004-2020. Importer: A Leonardo Locascio Selection, Winebow, Hohokus, NJ; tel. (201) 445-0620				
UCCELLERIA	1995	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO	TUSCANY	(\$49.00)	RED	89+	
UCCELLERIA	1998	ROSSO DI MONTALCINO	TUSCANY	(\$23.00)	RED	88	
Readers seeking a fruity Rosso di Montalcino should check out Uccelleria's 1998. Although not complex, it is velvety-textured, fleshy, and loaded with ripe, herb-tinged, berry fruit. It should be consumed over the next 2-4 years. The 1995 Brunello di Montalcino is a dense, moderately tannic, peppery, spicy, meaty, cherry and plum-scented and flavored effort with good density, medium body, and			attractive underlying acidity. It needs several more years of bottle age, but should drink well for 10-15 years. A Marc de Grazia Selection, various American importers, including Michael Skumik, Syosset, NY; tel. (516) 677-9300. Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700, and Estate Wines, Ltd., San Rafael, CA; tel. (415) 492-9411				
AZ. AGR. VAL CERASA	1998	ETNA ROSSO	SICILY	(\$15.00)	RED	86	
An attractive, bargain-priced red wine from Sicily, this Italian Côtes du Rhône look-alike exhibits a medium dark ruby color, abundant quantities of sweet, spicy, peppery, cherry fruit, and good ripe, round, dense, spicy flavors. While not complex, it will provide lovely drinking			over the next several years. A Marc de Grazia Selection, various American importers, including Michael Skumik, Syosset, NY; tel. (516) 677-9300. Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700, and Estate Wines, Ltd., San Rafael, CA; tel. (415) 492-9411				
VALDICAVA	1993	BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA	MADONNA DEL PIANO	TUSCANY	(\$110.00)	RED	93
VALDICAVA	1998	ROSSO DI MONTALCINO	TUSCANY	(\$26.00)	RED	87	
The 1998 Rosso di Montalcino is an open-knit, soft, fruity wine with abundant quantities of strawberry and cherry fruit, medium body, and a fleshy, low acid, mainstream appeal. Drink it over the next 3-4 years. The dazzling, dark garnet-colored 1993 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva Madonna del Piano (400 cases) boasts a breathtaking nose of foresty, damp earth, dried herbs, plums, incense, soy, smoke, and			jammy black and red fruits. Huge in the mouth, with no hard edges, it offers a lush, multidimensional texture, medium to full body, and plenty of glycerin in the lengthy finish. It is a complex Brunello to drink over the next 10+ years. Importer: Dominic Nocerino, Vinifera Imports, Ronkonkoma, NY; tel. (516) 467-5907				
FATTORIA VALTELLINA	1997	CHIANTI CLASSICO	TUSCANY	(\$22.00)	RED	89	
FATTORIA VALTELLINA	1996	CONVIVIO IGT	TUSCANY	(\$50.00)	RED	90	
FATTORIA VALTELLINA	1995	IL DUCA (MERLOT) IGT	TUSCANY	(\$80.00)	RED	94	
These are impressive offerings from proprietor Christoph Schneider, an outsider who believes in extremely low yields. The 100%			Sangiovese 1997 Chianti Classico offers a dense ruby/purple color as well as a sweet nose of black fruits, licorice, dried herbs, and damp				