

Spec's sm TWELVE

for December
of 2009

YOU LOVE GREAT WINE ... but you also want some "everyday value wines" that taste really good. So do I. I love great wine, but \$15 is about my limit for my *everyday drinking wines*. To me, *value* mean a wine tastes like it costs more than it does and *everyday drinking* means wine that goes well with my life and the sorts of food I eat on a daily basis. Here are my twelve everyday value picks for December 2009, all priced under \$15.

- Bear Dalton, Spec's Fine Wine Buyer

MURPHY GOODE Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, 2007
12x750ml \$14.30 \$161.04
Tech: 13.9% Alcohol. A blend of 97% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Petit Verdot, and 1% Malbec all sourced predominantly from Val Peline's Terra Rosa vineyard. Sensory: Deep purple in color, and with well formed legs; dry, medium full-bodied with balanced acidity; moderately chewy phenolics. Dark juicy blackberry- black cherry-and-blueberry fruit with dusty earth, spicy dusty oak, and accents of tobacco, cocoa, and cedar. Long finish. Complete, delicious, satisfying; quite tasty with a supple rich feel. Really Fine. BS: 90+.

FRANCIS COPPOLA Diamond Label Pinot Grigio, California, 2008
12x750ml \$10.97 \$123.56
Tech: 12.79% Alcohol. 100% Pinot Grigio fermented in Stainless Steel tanks using no malo-lactic. Sensory: Pale straw in color with good legs; dry, light-to-medium-bodied with fresh acidity. Fresh, juicy, lively with spicy lime, lemon peel, and pear fruit with mineral notes and floral accents. Very long finish. Delicious, complete, alive-in-the-mouth. Quite refreshing. Fine. BS: 88+VHR.

KENDALL JACKSON Grand Reserve Sauvignon Blanc, California, 2008
12x750ml \$14.95 \$168.36
Tech: 13.5% Alcohol. 100% Sauvignon Blanc fermented 84% in stainless steel tanks and 16% in oak barrels. Sensory: Straw in color, bright and clear with well formed legs; dry, medium-to-full-bodied with balanced acidity; moderately chewy phenolics. Elegant, ripe peach, pear, and citrus fruit with dusty mineral terroir, subtle oak, and subtle cut grass. Very long finish. Complete, focused, lovely-in-the-mouth - rich and ripe but still lively. Really Fine. BS: 90.

ERIC BANTI Carato, IGT Toscana, 2006
12x750ml \$11.99 \$135.86
Tech: 13% Alcohol. A blend of 70% Sangiovese, 25% Merlot, and 5% Syrah fermented using pump-overs and aged 12 months in a mix of Slovenian and American oak barrels. Sensory: red-black in color (a bit hazy) with well formed legs; dry, medium full-bodied with balanced acidity and chewy phenolics. Dusty, dry, and focused with red fruit including fresh and dried cherries accented with cedar and black pepper. Classic Pizza red. Very Good. BS: 86+HR.

VIGILANCE Cabernet Sauvignon, Lake County, 2007
12x750ml \$12.44 \$140.10
Tech: 14.5% Alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon aged 18 months in French and American oak barrels. Sensory: Purple-red-black in color, and with well formed legs; dry, medium full-bodied with balanced acidity and medium plus phenolics. Offers juicy cherry berry fruit with dusty earthy, subtle oak, and accents of cedar, tobacco, black pepper, and a hint of cocoa; very long finish; Lively, fresh, and focused. Quite tasty; alive-in-the-mouth. Fine. BS: 89+.

KENDALL JACKSON Vintner's Reserve Meritage, California, 2005
12x750ml \$12.47 \$138.63
Tech: 13.5% Alcohol. A blend of 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 46% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, and 1% Petite Verdot (41% Napa, 36% Sonoma Co, 17% Mendocino, 2% Solano, and 1% Lake counties and 3% Central Coast). Sensory: black-red in color with well formed legs; dry, medium full-bodied with balanced acidity and medium plus phenolics. Dark black cherry, blackberry black, and raspberry fruit. Dense with gravelly earth and accents of subtle tobacco, black pepper, and chocolate; long finish; complete integrated and quite satisfying. Fine. BS: 88HR.

Special for SPEC's KEY holders:

Buy a mixed case consisting of one 750ml bottle of each of the TWELVE for December 2009 selections for only \$142.46, a savings of \$9.93 over SPEC's already low cash bottle price. This special price is good through 01/02/10. UPC: 00000656306

THOMAS HENRY Pinot Noir, Napa County, 2008
12x750ml \$14.21 \$160.02
Tech: 13% Alcohol. 100% Pinot Noir fermented in open tops with punch-downs. Sensory: Violet-purple in color with good legs; dry, medium-bodied with balanced acidity and medium phenolics. Fresh juicy lively red & black fruit with subtle earth; and accents of cola, cocoa powder, and black pepper. Long finish. Fresh, focused, and lively. Fine. BS: 90.

TUDAL Napa Valley Cuvee, Napa Valley, 2006
12x750ml \$13.78 \$155.18
Tech: 14.5% Alcohol. A blend of 60% Zinfandel, 20% Merlot, and 20% Sangiovese aged in all French oak barrels. Sensory: Medium-red-purple in color with good legs; dry, medium full-bodied with fresh acidity and lightly chewy phenolics. It is lively and dusty in the mouth offering more red than black fruit (red cherry, raspberry, a hint of strawberry) with dusty gravelly earth and accents of cedar, black pepper, and subtle briar. Long finish. Lively, focused, almost elegant. Fine. BS: 89+.

CA de CALLE Reserva, Luján de Cuyo - Mendoza, 2008
12x750ml \$14.56 \$163.97
Tech: 13.9% Alcohol. A blend of 75% Malbec, 20% Tempranillo, and 5% Syrah fermented using pump-over and aged 12 months in all oak barrels (all French; 33% new) (Production: 500 cases). Sensory: Purple-red-black in color with well formed legs - stains the glass. Dry, full-bodied with balanced acidity and chewy phenolics. Dusty, dark, dense, black & red fruit with mineral earth; dusty with hint of coffee grounds along with dusty spicy oak and accents of cocoa, coffee, black pepper, dark, spice; a bit meaty. Very long finish. Focused and ripe; alive-in-the-mouth. Still very tight and young but opens nicely with lots of swirling. Fresher level of acidity than you'd expect from a Malbec blend. Would benefit from a rough decanting. Excellent. BS: 91+.

NAPA LANDING Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California, 2006
12x750ml \$10.99 \$123.71
Tech: 13.3% Alcohol. A blend of 86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Ruby Cabernet, 2% Segalin, and 6% other varietals aged 6 months American Oak. Sensory: Red-black in color with well formed legs; dry, medium full-bodied with balanced acidity and lightly chewy phenolics. Offers lively juicy red & black fruit with a lot of Cabernet character along with mineral-dusty earth and accents of tobacco, cigar box, and black pepper. Long Finish. Really Very Good. BS: 87. (Winner of the "Top Value Wine" award in the 2010 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo International Wine Competition.)

SELBACH Riesling QbA, Mosel, 2008
12x1Liter \$13.59 \$152.99
Tech: 10% Alc. 100% Middle Mosel Riesling fermented in stainless steel tanks with no malolactic. Sensory: Pale straw in color, day-bright and clear with green highlights and good legs; semi-sweet, light-bodied with crisp acidity. It tastes and smells like fresh, crisp, refreshing, adult apple juice. There is a touch of mineral and floral underlying the juicy apple fruit followed by a hint of peach and citrus. Long & delicious, alive with sweet fruit and flavor but finishes clean. This is how basic Mosel Riesling should taste. Fine. BS: 88VHR.

Finca ANTIGUA Crianza, La Mancha, 2006
12x750ml \$11.75 \$133.21
Tech: 14% Alcohol. 50% Tempranillo, 20% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Syrah, and 5% Petite Verdot fermented using pump-overs and aged 12 months in all new French and American oak barrels. Sensory: Inky purple in color with well formed legs; dry, medium full-bodied with balanced acidity and moderately chewy phenolics. Offers more black than red spicy-juicy-almost sweet fruit with notes of Bourbon-like oak, cedar, spice, black pepper, leather, and dusty earth. Quite lively in the mouth. Fine. BS: 88HR.

