

# SPEC'S UNDER \$12

## JULY 2006

*You love great wine ... but just now you're looking for "an everyday value wine" that tastes really good. I'm right there with you. I love great wine, but \$12 is about my limit for everyday drinking wines. To me, "value" means a wine tastes like it costs more than it does and "everyday drinking" means wines that go well with my life and the sorts of food I eat on a daily basis. Here are twelve of my everyday value picks, all priced under \$12. - CMBD*

### SPECIAL FOR SPEC'S KEY HOLDERS:

Buy a mixed case consisting of one 750ml bottle of each of our JULY 12-Under-\$12 selections for only \$112.77, a savings of \$8.15 over SPEC's already low cash bottle price. Special price good through 08/02/06. (UPC: 000002129254)

#### TEN MILE Broken Road Red, California, 2004 12x750ml \$10.37 \$115.63

A sort of North Coast, kitchen-sink blend of Petite Sirah, Zinfandel, Barbera, Malbec, and Carignan, this old-style red offers ripe dark fruit with notes of earth, chocolate, black pepper, and cherry perfume. It shows the same sort of old-style, field-blend character as the old Elyse Nero Misto or original Marietta Old Vine Reds. Long and alive. **Really Fine. Bear's Score: 90 points.**

#### Ch. JULIEN Merlot, Monterey County, 2002 12x750ml \$8.56 \$95.27

If Blackstone and Bogle Merlots float your boat, try this commercial (in the best way) fruit-forward, grapy Monterey Merlot offering black cherry fruit with hints of chocolate, earth, and spice. Rich, lively, and flavorful. **Fine. Bear's Score: 88 points.**

#### IRONSTONE Riesling QbA, Pfalz (Germany), 2005 12x750ml \$8.85 \$98.42

Normally I'm not too accepting of European wines sold under California labels but this one is a bit different; the Kautz family (who own Ironstone) have German roots and they don't pretend this is anything other than what it is: a dry Riesling from the Pfalz. The wine is crisp, bright and alive with apple, peach, and lime fruit, accented with minerals and a hint of spice. It is clean, fresh, focused, and refreshing. Try this super summer sipper as a refreshing aperitif or with moderately spicy foods. **Really Fine. Bear's Score: 90 points.**

#### LOOSE END Grenache Rosé, Barossa, 2006 12x750ml \$11.92 \$131.20

This is bright, juicy, fresh Rosé offering red raspberry and strawberry fruit with hints of dust and mixed white and black pepper. Vibrant and alive, it combines the refreshing fruitiness of a White Zin with the dry elegance of a Provence Rosé. **Delicious. Bear's Score: 91 points.**

#### PINE RIDGE Chenin Blanc Viognier, California, 2004 12x750ml \$11.16 \$124.17

Try this perfumed, ripe, delicious blend of 80% Chenin Blanc and 20% Viognier offering lemon and peach fruit with floral nuances and a particular note of honeysuckle. Lovely texture and feel. **Yum. Bear's Score: 89+ points.**

#### SNEAKERS Merlot, Napa, 2002 12x750ml \$11.99 \$135.13

This "Sneakers" Merlot is actually a sneaky relabeling of excess production from a much fancier Napa Merlot producer—and no, we can't tell you who. What we can tell you is that this cherry-plum-and-oak flavored Merlot with notes of Napa Valley floor dust, tobacco, and cedar would normally cost almost twice this much. **Fine. Bear's Score: 89 points.**

#### CHATEAU Ste. MICHELLE Indian Wells Riesling, Columbia Valley, 2005 12x750ml \$11.99 \$135.13

If Eroica (the joint venture Riesling from Ch. Ste. Michelle and the Mosel's Dr. Ernst Loosen can be likened to a new world Wehlener Sonnenuhr, then make this is a new world Urziger Wurtzgarten. However you couch it, this is an extraordinary Riesling offering spicy apple, peach, and lime fruit accented with minerals, earth, and exotic spice. It is richer and a bit sweeter than the Eroica (aka Erotica), but maintains the same sort of purity and focus. **Excellent. Bear's Score: 91+ points.**

#### LAS ROCAS Garnacha, Calatayud, 2003 12x750ml \$6.99 \$78.71

This juicy, succulent, ripe Garnacha (Grenache) offers sweet, grapy, rich dark fruit with notes of earth and coffee grounds and hints of raisin and black pepper. Quite supple with a fine rich feel. **Really Very Good. Bear's Score: 87 points.**

#### ROCK RABBIT Sauvignon Blanc, Central Coast, 2005 12x750ml \$8.18 \$92.09

A blend of 91% Sauvignon Blanc and 9% Gewurztraminer (and why not?), this lean, fresh, crisp, unwooded white offers spicy, grassy tropical fruit with notes of lime peel, lemon, and minerals. Long and refreshing. **Very Good. Bear's Score: 86+ points.**

#### RED GUITAR Old Vine Tempranillo-Garnacha, Navarra, 2005 12x750ml \$8.99 \$99.77

A blend of 55% Tempranillo and 45% Garnacha made in a new world style, this wine features sweet red fruit accented with dusty terroir and hints of black pepper, leather, and cedar. Fresh and lively. **Really Very Good. Bear's Score: 87+ points.**

#### MICHEL DUTOUR Pouilly Fuisse "La Roche", 2004 12x750ml \$11.99 \$136.48

You knew there had to be a Chardonnay on the 12-Under-\$12 list and this is it. This Pouilly-Fuisse is a barrel-fermented-and-aged 100% Chardonnay offering smooth pear and tropical fruit with a hint of banana, along with notes of vanilla, buttery oak, and a creamy richness. Although rich, it has plenty of acidity to keep it balanced and fresh. It is a classic Pouilly Fuisse at a value price. **Fine. Bear's Score: 89+ points.**

#### ZONIN Prosecco, NV6x750ml \$9.93 \$55.61

This crisp, focused, refreshing Charmat-process Italian sparkler made from 100% Prosecco offers fine bubbles along with lively lemony, toasty fruit in a clean refreshing format. It is perfect on its own as a fine summer aperitif and cheap enough to use as a base for a kir royal, bellini, or other sparkling wine cocktail. **Fine. Bear's Score: 89 points.**

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