



WINE ENTHUSIAST[®]

MAGAZINE

Are Women Better Tasters Than Men?

AND OTHER HOT-BUTTON, STEREOTYPE-SMASHING QUESTIONS ANSWERED

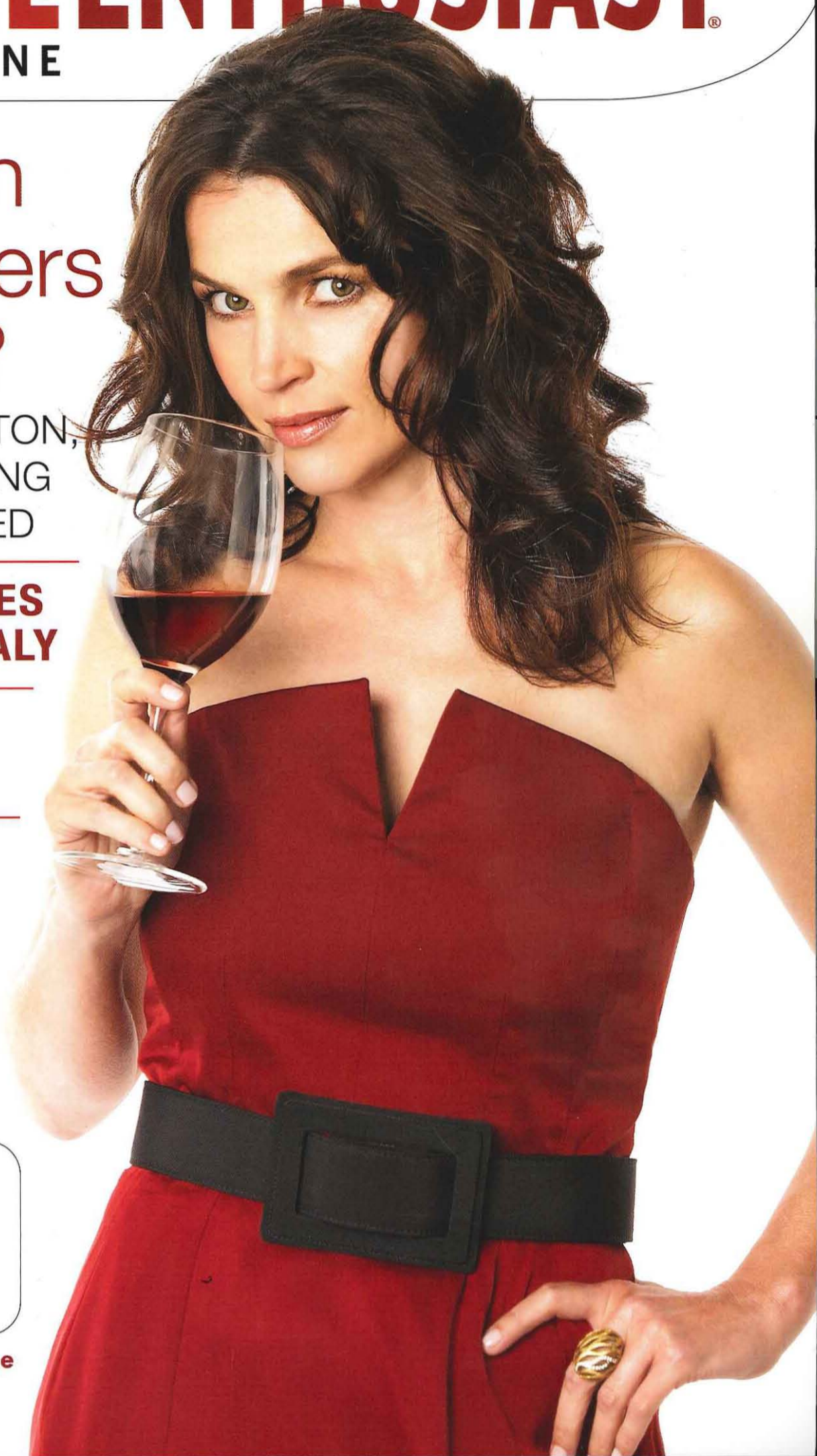
UNDISCOVERED WINES FROM SOUTHERN ITALY

AUSTRIA'S CRISP WHITE WINES

ACTRESS JULIA ORMOND'S WINE & FOOD STAND-OUTS



wineenthusiast.com/magazine



THE GRANDEUR OF AUSTRIA'S WACHAU

THE WARMTH OF THE DANUBE ENDOWS THE WINES OF THIS
FABLED REGION WITH POWER, PURITY AND AGEABILITY.

BY ROGER VOSS

I am admiring the new reception hall at the Prager winery in the Austrian Wachau region when owner Toni Bodenstern walks in to meet me. "The Danube flooded the building a couple of years ago," he says, almost casually, "so we had to renovate. The river can be both a friend and an enemy."

So true. The famous Danube, flowing placidly past the winery at harvest time, is the friend of the Wachau. Without its warming influence, Wachau producers could not grow grapes, let alone make some of Austria's greatest white wines.

But, as regular floods attest, it is also a danger. On occasional years, summer or winter, the river rises into vineyards and cellars; stone terraces are washed out and roads are under water. No wonder the founders of the villages put them back from the river, just high enough to avoid all but the worst the river can throw at them.

I am visiting this region on the Danube, an hour and a half west of Vienna, as the Grüner Veltliner and Riesling grapes arrive from the

vineyards. This is a good season to be here: you can get an idea of how tough it is to work the vineyards that climb in an almost sheer ascent, in staggered terraces, up to 1,000 feet above the river.

Facing due south, in the narrow, steep valley, the heat hits the river, bounces back up the mountainsides and ripens the grapes. At the far western end of the Wachau, the Danube twists, cold air from the Alps and the Atlantic Ocean starts to influence the climate, and vines stop. It's a short season. Harvest is in October, and the first frosts could come as early as November.

The Wachau, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site as much for its wine as for its scenery, is small—only 3,400 acres along a 17-mile stretch of the river. Ninety percent of the vineyards are planted with two grapes, Grüner Veltliner and Riesling. And it is a tale of two terroirs: west and east.

The cool western section, somewhat more than half the length, starts at Spitz and goes to the edge of the touristy Dürnstein, with its castle ruins towering high on a cliff. Magical villages, adorned with medieval churches—Spitz itself, Wösendorf, Joching, Weissenkirchen, Rührsdorf—are set among steep vineyards never more than half a mile from the river. Here the wines are strict, crisp, shot through with a steel backbone.

In the eastern portion of the Wachau beyond the stark cliff of Dürnstein and as far as the Baroque city of Krems, the valley opens out wide, facing the heat from the Pannonian Plain, which extends for several hundred miles across Austria and Hungary to Ukraine. The wines are softer, more opulent, equally impressive, but with less of that steely character. The villages—Loiben, Unterloiben, and, just across the river, Mautern—are more spacious, less restricted by the cliffs, and the vineyards are able to spread luxuriously on the wider, less precipitous slopes.



Machherndl vineyard

PHOTO HEINTZ WASSON PHOTOGRAPHY





While the cooler wines of western Wachau are crisp and ageworthy, the eastern wines are more powerful, often with higher alcohol levels, and more approachable when young. Quality-wise, both styles stand tall.

Some of Austria's most remarkable growers work in the Wachau. And the local cooperative is one of the best in Europe: the Frei Weingärtner Wachau, with wines sold under the Domäne Wachau label.

Together, they make some of Austria's greatest wines. With rare exceptions, the Wachau wines are not cheap—expect to pay upwards of \$25 and into the \$70 range. But for that money, you get an ineffable combination of power, elegance and a steely character rounded by the purest fruit flavors. These are world-class wines.

THE TORCH BEARERS

These three well-established producers are towering figures in the Wachau world. They represent and exemplify the current greatness of so many of the region's wines.

FRANZ HIRTZBERGER, WEINGUT HIRTZBERGER; SPITZ, WESTERN WACHAU

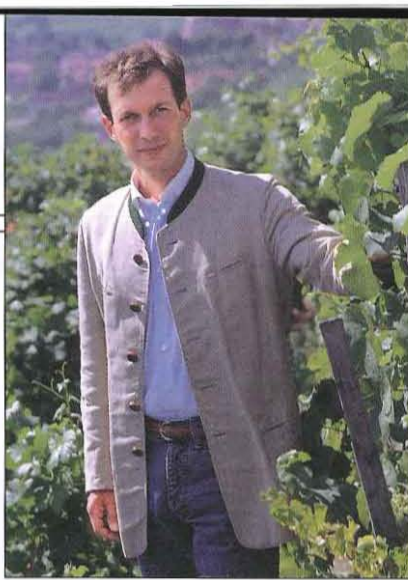
Minerality and elegance are the hallmarks of Hirtzberger wines, rightly judged some of the best in Austria. They are expressions of the western terroir; Rieslings and Grüners from single-vineyard Singerriedl, Hochrain, Honivogl and Rotes Tor. You can taste the difference.

Franz (all the first sons of the family are called Franz) Hirtzberger has 61 acres of vines around Spitz, at the cool western end of the Wachau. It is a sizeable chunk of land by Austrian standards. But then his family has been collecting vineyards since 1898. Even today, says his wife, Irmgard, "Franz can't see a piece of land without seeing vines on it."

Irmgard is my host as Franz stops to shake my hand, busy in the cellar as the grapes come in. The selection is berry by berry. We go on to the Riesling grapes in their pride-and-joy vineyard, the Singerriedl, which rises right behind their 650-year old house. Even the fallen berries are collected quickly before they rot—"It's a sign that they are ripe enough for our top Smaragd quality," says Mrs. H.

"Each year, we have to decide whether to leave grapes for Smaragd or whether to pick earlier for Federspiel. Experience tells us whether a bunch is going to get more sugar or not."

As we stand on the high point of the Singerriedl, you can see how the Spitz vineyards have pushed themselves into a bowl in the hills, a tight semicircle facing the Danube, which conserves the heat. This is extreme viticulture, and, in the hands of Franz Hirtzberger, vines at the edge of their ripening ability can make the greatest wines.



TONI BODENSTEIN, WEINGUT PRAGER; WEISSENKIRCHEN, WESTERN WACHAU

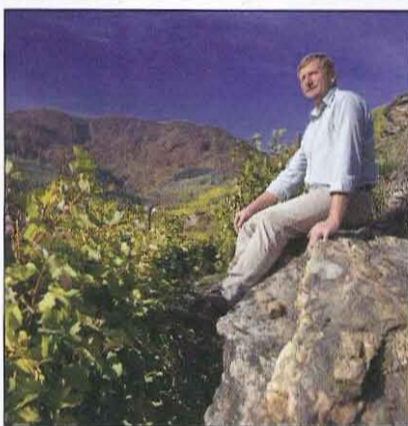
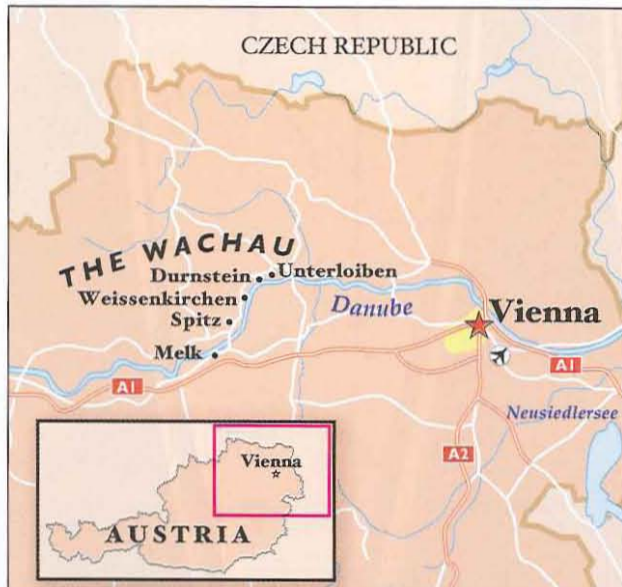
For Toni Bodenstein, the land is everything. So the Prager wines (his wife, Ilse, is the daughter of Franz Prager, one of the pioneers of the region's modern viticulture) are marked by a strong sense of terroir from both the western and eastern Wachau.

Bodenstein, both enthusiast and expert, shows me a geologic map of the Wachau. He emphasizes the hugely complex geology of the region, which lies between two cracks in the earth's crust. Rocks were shifted during the preglacial period, leaving granite on the north bank and granulite, which is even harder, on the south bank. It's a tough environment for vines, but, he says, "We plant according to how the vines will cope. Grüner Veltliner likes luxury; Riesling likes pain."

Prager's great vineyard sites are located around the village of Weissenkirchen, the heart of the Wachau. Lovers of great Austrian wines bow their heads at the names of Steinriegl, Klaus, Achleiten. These are the equivalent of Burgundy's greatest *grands crus*.

From these great vineyards, and from Kaiserberg and Hollerin in neighboring Dürnstein, Toni Bodenstein coaxes great dry wines that offer initial fruitiness then plunge into a tight, complex fusion of fruit and structure.

I taste a Riesling from his own vineyard, Wachstum Bodenstein. High up, at 1,200 feet, at the real limit of viticulture, this spot produces the purest green fruit flavors, limpid and floating. If you could drink atmosphere, this would be it.



Top: Toni Bodenstein, Weingut Prager. Above: Franz Hirtzberger, Weingut Hirtzberger.

CHRISTINE SAAHS, NIKOLAIHOF; MAUTERN, EASTERN WACHAU

As I step through the huge wooden doors of the Nikolaihof, I am enveloped by history: wine was first made on this site 1,700 years ago by the Celts. The remains of a 10th century chapel still form part of the medieval courtyard.

Nikolaihof, the home of the Saahs family, encompasses the history of the region. The Nikolaihof bridges past and future, through the family's fervent espousal of biodynamic agriculture.

The Nikolaihof, once a monastery, now a restaurant, guest house and home, is where some of the most impressive, most ageworthy Wachau wines are produced. Saahs takes me on a rapid tour of the vineyards. She is eager for me to see the exuberance of her vines in contrast to the mechanical regimentation of her neighbors.

The Saahs have vines on both sides of the river, around the winery in Mautern on the southern bank and in the Vom Stein and Steiner Hund vineyards on the north bank. Close by is the Weingebirge vine-

yard, a steep slope on in the mountain. From vines on the south bank

At Nikolaihof, ten inscription the m takes me to a field of the best place for safe too cold. Now with o stamens, the color ab

Initially, the Nikola very citrus character.

But with this initial back a portion of ea Grüner Veltliner from vats for 15 years, is to

The Heirs App

Three members of the ents, changing metho

A Baker's D

95 F X Pichler 2006 ling Smaragd (Wachau) eastern vineyard of the ley, giving an extreme and poised fruit even Yes, there are pear but the wine goes mo to fit with its austere 10 years. Imported by

95 Franz Hirtzberger Smaragd Riesling (Wachau) and mineral, tense an intense acidity and a t all about structure an this wine at least unt Divino. —R.V.

95 Josef Jamek 2006 ling Federspiel (Wachau) ship wine is as fine botrytis here, but thi rather one that shows ality and structure. It w superripeness and fre ture, it should age Imported by Michael S

95 Prager 2006 K (Wachau); \$61. Pure r tured with intensely pe vors. The fruit is ripe flavors of pears, a shc ity. Could age for years —R.V.

94 Franz Hirtzberger

yard, a steep slope on the north bank, with vines tucked into a tight slit in the mountain. From here the contrast with the gentle slope of the vines on the south bank of the Danube is enormous.

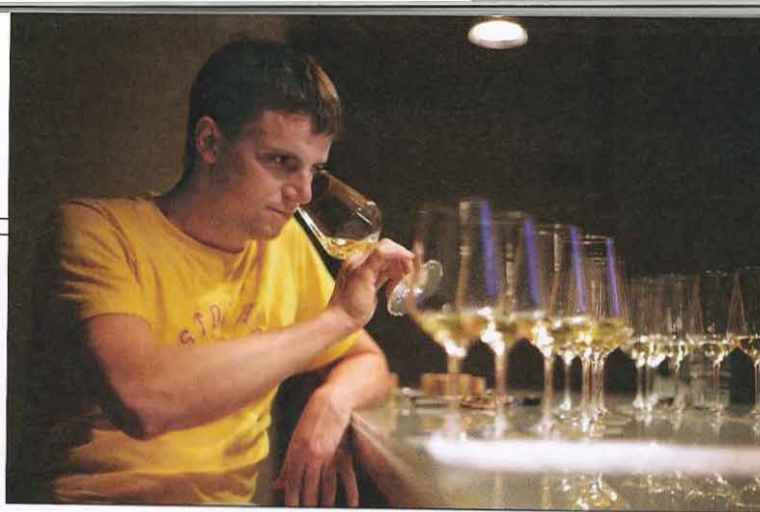
At Nikolaihof, terroir means every inch of land and every handwritten inscription the monks recorded. Amazingly, Saahs's son, Nikolaus, takes me to a field of saffron. "We know the monks thought this was the best place for saffron in the Middle Ages. Then, after 1850, it was too cold. Now with climate change, we can try again." We pick a few stamens, the color already staining the small bowl.

Initially, the Nikolaihof wines are dominated by tight structure and a very citrus character. They don't have high alcohol. "You don't need it to get balance," says Christine Saahs.

But with this initial austerity, the wines do need aging. Saahs keeps back a portion of each vintage for later release. So, to taste a 1991 Grüner Veltliner from the Nikolaihof Vinothek, kept in large wooden vats for 15 years, is to get a glimpse of the purest winemaking.

The Heirs Apparent

Three members of the younger generation, taking over from their parents, changing methods yet retaining traditions.



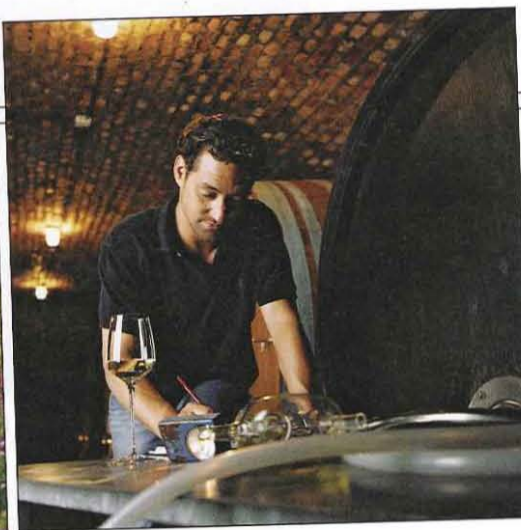
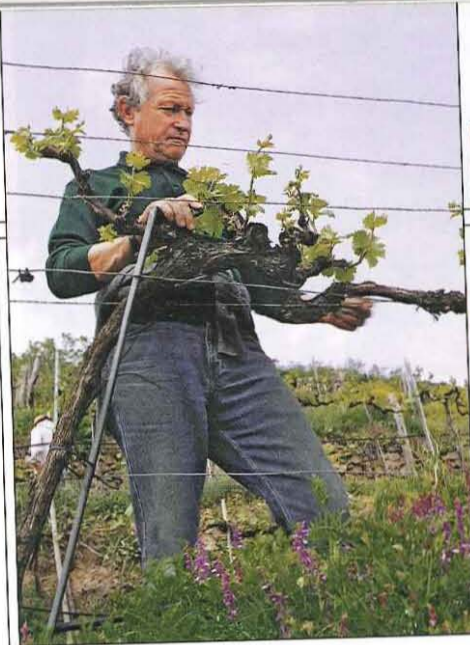
Erich Machherndl finds the little things to change that will make great wine greater.

ERICH MACHHERNDL, WEINGUT MACHHERNDL; WÖSENDORF, WESTERN WACHAU

Erich Machherndl looks younger than his 36 years. His family, though, has been in Wösendorf since 1786, making him the eighth generation in charge. He first started crafting his family's wines in 1998, taking over from his dad, whom he describes as "the greatest man I have ever met. It would be easy to say that when I took over I needed to change many things, but he only made great wine, so all I could do was change little things." Like, for example, letting the grapes hang longer to get riper, more concentrated fruit.

A Baker's Dozen of Wachau Wines

- 95 F X Pichler 2006 Loibner Steinertal Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$65.** The extreme eastern vineyard of the Wachau is a stony valley, giving an extreme wine, all mineral and cool and poised fruit even in a warm year like 2006. Yes, there are pear and currant fruit flavors, but the wine goes more toward lime and salt, to fit with its austere structure. Age for at least 10 years. Imported by Weygandt-Metzler. —R.V.
- 95 Franz Hirtzberger 2006 Singerriedel Smaragd Riesling (Wachau); \$88.** Tight, taut and mineral, tense and concentrated. There is intense acidity and a touch of spice, but this is all about structure and suppressed fruit. Keep this wine at least until 2010. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.
- 95 Josef Jamek 2006 Jochinger Berg Riesling Federspiel (Wachau); \$34.** Jamek's flagship wine is as fine as ever. There is some botrytis here, but this is not a sweet wine, rather one that shows vibrant fruit, great minerality and structure. It walks a tightrope between superripeness and freshness. With its structure, it should age for 10 years or more. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.
- 95 Prager 2006 Klaus Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$61.** Pure mineral, beautifully structured with intensely perfumed white currant flavors. The fruit is ripe and elegant, featuring flavors of pears, a shot of lime and crisp acidity. Could age for years. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.
- 94 Franz Hirtzberger 2006 Hochrein Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$72.** Structured and mineral, this is great Wachau Riesling. There is a core of steel that powers through, giving concentration and intensity to the perfumed fruit. On the finish there is some softness and roundness, but the wine needs time. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.
- 94 Emmerich Knoll 2006 Ried Schütt Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau); \$50.** Pepper and power mark this impressively rich wine. Tropical fruits, mangoes and lychees are layered with minerality and acidity. A wine that needs some aging in order to release the full potential of its structure and fruit weight. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.
- 94 F X Pichler 2006 Unendlich Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$145.** The label depicts the Queen of the Night in Mozart's opera, *The Magic Flute*. It is a huge and dry wine, despite its 20% botrytis. A wine to admire for its concentration, it demands attention as well as aging. Imported by Weygandt-Metzler. —R.V.
- 93 Tegernseerhof 2006 Höhereck Grüner Veltliner (Wachau); \$35.** Closed, mineral and salty, this is potentially a rich and powerful wine, full-bodied but still retaining great varietal character. The aftertaste has great acidity, which cuts through the wine, leaving considerable aging ability. Imported by Prescott Wines. —R.V.
- 92 Nikolaihof 2006 Weingebirge Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau); \$70.** With lively spice flavors and delicious red apple and white currant flavors, this is a spicy wine that just keeps cool and lively. There is some pepper and tropical fruit here, but this wine is more about great, fresh, green fruits. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.
- 90 Domaine Wachau 2005 Achleiten Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau); \$27.** Smoky, peppery flavors, minerality and a firm structure all show the poor slate soil of the Achleiten vineyard. Yes, quince and grapefruit flavors are there, but they come through only slowly on this still-young wine. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.
- 90 Machherndl 2006 Steinwand Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau); \$NA.** A powerful, rich and complex wine, with intense pear flavors and an impressively firm structure. There is spice as well, with a mineral character underneath the richness. Imported by Broadbent Selections. —R.V.
- 89 Franz Hirtzberger 2006 Steinterrassen Riesling Federspiel (Wachau); \$30.** A light, beautifully crisp wine that offers pure, perfumed white fruit, with hints of green apples and plum skins. It is a lively, fresh apéritif wine. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.
- 88 Rudi Pichler 2006 Grüner Veltliner Federspiel (Wachau); \$25.** Minimalist wine from the modern Pichler winery, this has freshness and crispness, providing structure over lithe green fruit flavors. The finish is lively and vibrant. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.



Now preferring to work in the vineyards, F.X. Pichler (far left) leaves the winemaking tradition to his son, Lukas (left).

But in fact, Machherndl is being modest. For fine as the father's wines were, the new vintages from his son are moving into a different class. They have intensity and urgency, especially those from the 2006 vintage. He was prepared to wait until the grapes were ready, and he was prepared to go through the vineyards more than once. "It was the finest vintage for white wines in Austria," he says.

"The ideal for me is that the wines should age. It is fun to taste older vintages; they have so many more flavors. If you wait two to three years, you have twice the wine." To prove it, he disappears into the old house and comes back with some superlative wines from 2000: Kollmitz Grüner Veltliner Smaragd, showing power and pepper, and Riesling Kollmütz Smaragd, showing the petrol character while retaining white fruits.

LUKAS PICHLER, WEINGUT F.X. PICHLER; OBERLOIBEN, EASTERN WACHAU

For the most famous winery in the Wachau, the scene is reassuringly modest. A pram is parked next to the big dining table in the house, where the tasting takes place. At one end, lace curtains mask the view on to the courtyard where grapes are arriving. At the other end, large picture windows give on to a very English, lush garden.

Lukas Pichler pours the wines. His first vintage was 1999. His dad,

The Wachau Classification

It may seem to add an extra layer of complication, but most Wachau wines are classified by three levels of richness, depending on the sugar content of the grapes and the resulting alcohol.

Steinfeder is the lightest, freshest style. The wines are light and racy, with a maximum alcohol of 11.5 percent. Steinfeder is the name of the delicate grass that grows on the hillsides.

Federspiel is next up the ripeness grade. The alcohol levels are between 11.5 percent and 12.5 percent. These wines are fuller, but have classy elegance and freshness. Federspiel is the call a falconer makes to his bird.

Smaragd is the most intense and rarest of all. These wines are powerful, with alcohol levels over 12.5 percent, though rarely more than 14 percent. The smaragd is the small emerald green lizard that basks in the sun in the vineyards.

There's more than a love of bureaucracy behind this rating by Vinea Wachau Nobilis Districtus, the local wine association. Producers can make all three styles of wine from the same vineyard by picking grapes at different times during harvest. It means that just by remembering the grass (Steinfeder), the falcon (Federspiel) and the emerald lizard (Smaragd), we can get some idea of the taste of the wine in the bottle.

and Monumental is the name of the top Grüner Veltliner each year, a huge wine that can top out at 15 percent alcohol. This richness is something of a family tradition, since Lukas Pichler's grandfather, Franz, used clonal selection in the 1920s to get smaller berries, enhancing the sweetness of his Grüner Veltliner. And now Pichler says, "I want to wait as long as possible to get the ripest grapes, but healthy."

The family's vineyards are in Dürnstein and in Loiben, some of the warmest sites in the Wachau. The Dürnsteiner Kellerberg and Loibener Loibenberg are great vineyards, the vines planted virtually on the primary rock, the heat ricocheting on to the grapes.

In 1998, F.X. introduced a wine he called Unendlich, "Eternal," inspired by the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Always the best Riesling he could make in a given year, the 2006 shows some botrytis, but is a superbly concentrated dry wine.

EMMERICH KNOLL JR., WEINGUT KNOLL; UNTERLOIBEN, EASTERN WACHAU

In what seems to be the true Wachau tradition, there have been Emmerichs running the Knoll family winery since as long as anyone can remember. The current Emmerich Jr., a world traveler fluent in English, still believes his German-speaking-only dad is right to emphasize the traditions, the freshness of the wines from the Wachau.

Sitting at a table in the narrow courtyard of the Knoll family house, I am just across the road from the Knoll family restaurant, run by cousin Josef, a traditional Austrian open-air *heuriger* restaurant (which, by definition, is located at a winery and serves only the winery's own bottlings). And tradition continues in the Knolls' products, with their extravagantly baroque labels portraying the patron saint of wine, Saint Urban. The labels have become a cult in themselves.

"A Federspiel wine should taste fresh, crisp, not at the limit of Smaragd," says Knoll as he pours the first wine, Ried Kreuzer Grüner Veltliner Federspiel, with its citrus bite.

The wines come from some of the great vineyards of the eastern Wachau: Schütt, Loibenberg, Kellerberg, Kreutles. Each time, the Grüner Veltliner seems more distinct, more terroir-driven than the Riesling. "That's easy," says Knoll, when I question. "Grüner Veltliner has less varietal character; it seems to take its character from the soil. Riesling on the other hand has definite varietal character that doesn't change regardless of the terroir."

A few wines from each vintage are selected to be aged, in a range called *Vinothekfüllung*. Why? "We don't want just primary fruit, but wines with the ability to age," says Knoll. "We don't want to be one-dimensional; we prefer to be classical." So: wines that can be drunk young, but can also be cellared. The best of both Old Worlds. **WB**

**2004 Whalebone Vine-
Wrattobully); \$70.** This
boration has turned out a
t with notable complexity.
uit is backed by shadings of
ed along by a creamy tex-
Without any track record,
rink this over the next few
Bay International. —J.C.

**2005 Merlot (Yarra
Pretty robust in style for
ck-cherry fruit framed by
s a minty or resinous note to
which imparts a slightly
rolonged finish. Drink
d. Imported by Southern**

A WINE BLENDS

**Louis Sémillon (Eden
schke is best known for
Louis Sémillon shows
about whites as well. It
y characters with herbal
velops flavors of wax,
elegantly on the finish.
p even more interesting
nal age. Imported by**

**Sémillon-Sauvignon
ver); \$18.** This Sémil-
le in an easy-to-drink,
g white peach, melon
round texture in the
t River Wines. —J.C.

**nd Bucket Sémillon-
(Adelaide Hills);
low-alcohol (11.5%)
0% Sauvignon Blanc
éritif or fish comple-
ng, with hints of toast
cum of complexity.
tner. —J.C.**

**2005 Siblings Sauvi-
n (Margaret River);
y shows off the vari-
eties in its combi-
s. It's like a collision
ine's modest inten-
er-bender than an**

ambulance call, and the finish fades a little too quickly. Imported by Old Bridge Cellars. —J.C.

OTHER WHITE WINES

**91 Yangarra Estate Vineyard 2007 Single
Vineyard Roussanne (McLaren Vale);
\$24.** Made in a rich, opulent style for near-term consumption, Yangarra's Roussanne features exotic notes of toasted hazelnuts, bananas Foster and ripe pineapple. It's full-bodied without being overly heavy, with a long finish redolent of tropical fruit and citrus. Imported by Yangarra Estate Vineyard. **Editors' Choice.** —J.C.

**90 Giaconda 2005 Aeolia Roussanne
(Victoria); \$100.** A full-bodied, mouth-
filling wine, Giaconda's 2005 Aeolia Roussanne showcases aromas of toasted cashews, then balances them against bold peach and citrus fruit. The oak lends a slightly charred quality to the wine, which comes through on the finish as a hint of espresso. Drink now and over the next few years. Imported by Negotiants USA, Inc. —J.C.

**87 D'Arenberg 2006 The Hermit Crab
Viognier-Marsanne (McLaren Vale);
\$15.** This medium- to full-bodied white features a richly textured mouthfeel to go with its toasty aromas and melon fruit. There's a touch of creamed-corn character, and the finish could be longer, but it's still a plump, satisfying wine to pair with chicken or fish. Imported by Old Bridge Cellars. —J.C.

AUSTRIA

GRÜNER VELTLINER

**93 Schloss Gobelsburg 2006 Kammerner
Renner Grüner Veltliner (Kamptal);
\$28.** Crisp in style, hinting at minerality, with great green fruit flavors and intense acidity. There is freshness, as well as rich spice and pepper. The wine shows delicious fish-friendly acidity and tautness. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. **Editors' Choice.** —R.V.

**92 Domäne Wachau 2007 Achleiten
Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau);
\$39.** The tough rocks of the Achleiten vineyard come through in this intense wine. It has grapefruit, citrus and vivid acidity, while the Grüner's pepper character just shows through as a touch on the tongue. Fine wine, very structured. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.

**92 Schloss Gobelsburg 2006 Kammerner
Lamm Grüner Veltliner (Kamptal);
\$46.** An oak-aged Grüner, which seems to turn the

grape, chameleon-like, into a peppery Chardonnay. That gives it a power and richness, with tropical fruits offset by nutmeg and coconut milk. It is big and intense, shot through with spice. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

**92 Schloss Gobelsburg 2006 Kammerner
Grub Grüner Veltliner (Kamptal); \$38.**
A big-hearted wine, packed with intense fruits and sweet green plum flavors. There is acidity, but the wine shows a sunny character, with richness and some spice. The wine comes from the deep loess soil of the Grub vineyard, just north of the wine capital Langenlois. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

**91 Domäne Wachau 2007 Kellerberg
Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau);
\$39.** From the Kellerberg vineyard, this is a powerfully rich wine, with its cream and nutmeg flavors complemented by creamed baked apples. There is strong pepper and spice character here. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.

**91 Schloss Gobelsburg 2005 Tradition
Grüner Veltliner (Kamptal); \$35.** Bright and fresh wine, but with delicious depth of apricot and green plum flavors. It's full with outstanding richness, while the fruit flavors have a great lift. Part of Schloss Gobelsburg's Tradition series, in which wines are aged longer before release. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

**90 Domäne Wachau 2007 Terrassen
Grüner Veltliner Smaragd (Wachau);
\$26.** Here's a wine that just fills the mouth with good things. This wine revels in its richness, which is balanced by fresh acidity, keeping the wine crisp. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.

**90 Schloss Gobelsburg 2006 Grüner Velt-
liner Eiswein (Kamptal); \$52.** Though
Grüner doesn't have a reputation in Austria for ice wine as do other varieties, based on the strength of this wine, maybe it should. It has a great balance between toffee sweetness and high acidity, the intensity softened and broadened by spice and toffee. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

**89 Schloss Gobelsburg 2006 Gobels-
burger Steinsetz Grüner Veltliner
(Kamptal); \$20.** In a lighter style than other
Grüners in the single-vineyard range, this comes from a gravel and loess vineyard close to the Schloss. The wine is fresh, erring on crisp, emphasizing the green and spice Grüner flavors. The aftertaste brings out the acidity. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

**89 Zull 2007 Aussere Bergen Grüner
Veltliner (Niederösterreich); \$25.** There

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is good depth of flavor in this delicious wine. The creamy apple flavors are crisp alongside pear skin tannins, while the touch of pepper gives some intrigue to the aftertaste. Screwcap. Imported by Magellan Wine Imports. —R.V.

88 Gritsch Mauritiushof 2007 Singerriedl Grüner Veltliner Federspiel (Wachau); \$14. The Singerriedl is the most renowned vineyard in Spitz, and this ripe but cool example shows its great minerality and taut apple skin tannin structure. Rounding the wine out is an attractive, creamy finish. Imported by Winemonger.com. —R.V.

87 Domäne Wachau 2007 Terrassen Grüner Veltliner Federspiel (Wachau); \$16. Very Grüner, with its spice, pear skin and pepper and rounded, creamy character. A delicious wine, quite light, with flavors of crushed grapefruit coming through in the form of fresh acidity. Screwcap. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.

87 Schloss Gobelsburg 2007 Domäne Gobelsburg Grüner Veltliner Grüner Veltliner (Kamptal); \$12. This is one of the everyday drinking range from Schloss Gobelsburg. It has freshness, light green and white fruits and an exuberant burst of acidity. It is cool, green and a great apéritif style. Screwcap. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. *Best Buy.* —R.V.

86 Gritsch Mauritiushof 2007 Kalmuck Grüner Veltliner (Wachau); \$12. Named after a traditional costume of the Wachau, the Kalmuck range of wines offers bright, crisp fruit and green berry flavors. There is an attractive touch of pepper, but this is more about primary, refreshing fruit flavors. Imported by Winemonger.com. —R.V.

86 Zull 2007 Grüner Veltliner (Weinviertel); \$19. Bright, fresh, green fruits and creamy acidity set this wine happily on its course as a delicious apéritif drink. The crisp fruit is great, while the finish is certainly green. Screwcap. Imported by Magellan Wine Imports. —R.V.

85 Domäne Wachau 2007 Wachau Collection Grüner Veltliner (Wachau); \$13. A fresh, green apple-and-cream style of wine, made to be drunk young. It's crisp, lively and light with a touch of pepper and spice. Screwcap. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.

RIESLING

94 Schloss Gobelsburg 2006 Heiligenstein Riesling (Kamptal); \$34. The volcanic soils of the Heiligenstein vineyard give intense ripe fruits, rich minerality and supreme elegance. The acidity steals in, a wisp of delicious fresh fruits

and spring perfumes. This is a classic wine from a top Riesling year. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. *Editors' Choice.* —R.V.

93 Domäne Wachau 2007 Achleiten Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$47. This is a fine expression of truly mineral Riesling. The wine's acidity is powerful, but so is its rich peach, green plum fruit laced with pink grapefruit. It needs time, at least 4–5 years. Imported by Vin Divino. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

92 Domäne Wachau 2007 Singerriedl Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$47. The cool climate Singerriedl gives this wine its intense mineral structure, crisp grapefruit and tight apple acidity, and its wonderful green freshness. The year was cool, the wine is cool, but the combination works. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.

90 Domäne Wachau 2007 Terrassen Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$28. Very crisp and fresh, this is a product of the relatively cool conditions of 2007. It is a lively, green and white fruit-flavored wine, all tense structure and perfumed acidity with a layer of concentration. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.

90 Zull 2007 Innere Bergen Riesling (Niederösterreich); \$25. Even in cooler 2007, Zull scores with this wine. It has all the right pear and apple perfumes, along with vibrant acidity and minerality. It's going to develop well over the next 4 years into a fine, elegant wine. Screwcap. Imported by Magellan Wine Imports. *Editors' Choice.* —R.V.

89 Schloss Gobelsburg 2006 Kammerner Gaisberg Riesling (Kamptal); \$26. Terraced vineyards with poor soil allow the Riesling to struggle as it ripens. This gives terroir-driven mineral tension to this tight, coiled wine, full of acidity and grapefruit flavors. The aftertaste is so fresh that the wine seems to just float away. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

88 Gritsch Mauritiushof 2007 1000-Eimerberg Riesling Smaragd (Wachau); \$29. The crispness is paramount here, maybe too much, meaning that the wine is very green. Of course, this is Riesling and is way too young now. For the moment, the fruit is taut and strung out, and it certainly needs 2–3 years. Imported by Winemonger.com. —R.V.

87 Domäne Wachau 2007 Terrassen Riesling Federspiel (Wachau); \$19. Soft and lightly fresh with some crisp acidity. This has a rounded green fruit character and is finished with white fruit flavors. Give it 6 months. Screwcap. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.

87 Schloss Gobelsburg 2007 Domäne Gobelsburg Riesling (Kamptal); \$14. This wine has great, crisp fruit, perfumed and dominated by its white fruit flavors. The aromas are enticing, full of spring hedgerow flowers, and edged with minerality. Part of the everyday drinking range from Schloss Gobelsburg. Screwcap. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

85 Domäne Wachau 2007 Wachau Collection Riesling (Wachau); \$17. Fresh flavors of white peach, nectarine and apricot flow through this perfumed, light and delicate wine. Its fruity, uncomplicated, freshened with crisp acidity. Screwcap. Imported by Vin Divino. —R.V.

RED WINES

90 Hans Moser 2004 V.T.S. (Burgenland); \$NA. V.T.S. stands for Vintage Top Select, the prestige cuvee from Hans Moser. It's an eclectic blend of every grape imaginable, from Cabernet Sauvignon to Syrah, by way of Zweigelt and Blaufränkisch. What you get is a superrich wine that's beginning to mature, with dark plum jelly and sweet black fruit flavors. It is ripe and concentrated, just finishing with some firmness. Imported by Hop and Wine Beverage. —R.V.

89 Feiler-Artinger 2003 Umriss Blaufränkisch (Burgenland); \$NA. A big, ripe wine, full of berry and red plum flavors. This is almost sweet in its richness, the big, bold flavors balanced by some light acidity. Good, intense spice and wood flavors and a juicy aftertaste add extra interest. Imported by Schindler Weissman Co LLC. —R.V.

88 Feiler-Artinger 2006 Umriss Blaufränkisch (Burgenland); \$24. There is ripe, soft fruit on this gently rounded wine. It has good depth of blackberry flavors, given an edge of minerality and concentrated fruit juice acidity. This could benefit from another 2 years' bottle aging. Screwcap. Imported by Schindler Weissman Co LLC. —R.V.

88 Hans Moser 2005 Exclusiv Blaufränkisch (Burgenland); \$NA. Perfumed black fruits make this wine immediately attractive. On the palate, there is some richness, black plums and spice, along with sultanas. The acidity is kept in good check, but certainly adds piquancy and freshness to the aftertaste. Imported by Hop and Wine Beverage. —R.V.

87 Feiler-Artinger 2007 Zweigelt (Burgenland); \$17. Freshly fruity, full of red fruit flavors, with acidity layered with spicy wood. This is all there, all up front, hiding nothing.

No need to age. Screwcap. Weissman Co LLC. —R.V.

87 Hans Moser (Burgenland); classic Bordeaux, the du fruit very obvious. This is dry tannins, but there is freshness, the wine shows. Imported by Hop and Wine Beverage. —R.V.

87 Zull 2007 Zweigelt; \$19. A very juicy shows spice and fresh blend. It is a major element. Imported by Magellan Wine Imports. —R.V.

86 Schloss Gobelsburg 2007 Domäne is the everyday drinking range from Schloss Gobelsburg. It's fresh, fruity style, emphasis on light tannins. The acid wine, which balances the Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

85 Hans Moser (Burgenland); spice, nutmeg and blackberry. Tight, slightly green, but very fresh, very fruity. Imported by Hop and Wine Beverage. —R.V.

FRANCE WHITE BOURGOGNE LES GRANDES CUVÉES

97 Louis Latour It's the combination of wine from what is arguably the best vineyard in Burgundy, wrapped up in a terroir and then surrounded by oak to the mix, a pure, great wine. Imported by Schindler Weissman Co LLC. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

96 Bouchard & Charlemagne Producers and négociants, the action in this family is generous, going from the terroir. This is definitely opulent, with the very ripe fruit to find a delicious edge. Imported by Henriot Inc. —R.V.

No need to age. Screwcap. Imported by Schindler Weissman Co LLC. —R.V.

87 Hans Moser 2005 Cabernet-Merlot (Burgenland); \$NA. On the nose this is classic Bordeaux, the dusty black currant and tight fruit very obvious. This is a lean wine, with a core of dry tannins, but there is definite black currant juice freshness, the wine showing high finishing acidity. Imported by Hop and Wine Beverage. —R.V.

87 Zull 2007 Zweigelt (Niederösterreich); \$19. A very juicy, fruity, light wine that shows spice and fresh black currant fruits. The acidity is a major element in this cool year wine. Imported by Magellan Wine Imports. —R.V.

86 Schloss Gobelsburg 2006 Domäne Gobelsburg Zweigelt (Kamptal); \$13. Domäne is the everyday range of wines from Schloss Gobelsburg. This 100% Zweigelt is in a fresh, fruity style, emphasizing red berry fruits and light tannins. The acidity gives a crispness to the wine, which balances the intensity of fruit flavors. Imported by Michael Skurnik Wines. —R.V.

85 Hans Moser 2006 Zweigelt Klassik (Burgenland); \$NA. A peppery wine, all spice, nutmeg and black pepper. The tannins are tight, slightly green, but the juiciness is all there. Very fresh, very fruity. Imported by Hop and Wine Beverage. —R.V.

FRANCE WHITE BURGUNDY LES GRAND CRUS

97 Louis Latour 2006 Montrachet; \$NA. It's the complexity that dominates this wine from what is arguably the greatest Chardonnay vineyard in Burgundy. All the fruit elements are wrapped up in a tense, tightly strung structure, and then surrounded by superrichness. Acidity adds to the mix, a pure, green plum fruit character. All in all, a great wine. Imported by Louis Latour Inc. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

96 Bouchard Pere & Fils 2006 Corton Charlemagne; \$NA. Like so many producers and négociants, Bouchard Père has a slice of the action in this famed Grand Cru. Its interpretation is generous, going for the inherent richness from the terroir. This is a magnificently ripe wine, definitely opulent, with the generous wood enhancing the very ripe fruit. In all this splendor, it is good to find a delicious edge of acidity. Imported by Henriot Inc. —R.V.

96 Louis Jadot 2006 Le Montrachet; \$NA. From the grandest of Burgundy's white vineyards, this Le Montrachet sums up the 2006 white vintage. Its structure, freshness and richness rolls the wine around the mouth, offering citrus, bitter orange and yellow fruit flavors. Toast flavors round the wine, leaving a hugely satisfying aftertaste. Imported by Kobrand. —R.V.

96 Louis Latour 2006 Chevalier-Montrachet; \$NA. Rich and mineral at the same time, this deliciously powerful wine is open and generous. The structure is equally impressive, a steely core of minerality and tense stone fruits. The wood shows through with spice, but remains discreet. Age for many years. Imported by Louis Latour Inc. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

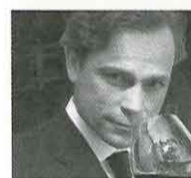
95 Bouchard Pere & Fils 2006 Chevalier Montrachet; \$NA. Power and elegance combine in this beautifully structured wine. The vineyard, of course, does the work, but the intensity of the rich fruits is given a fine twist of minerality, of tension, and of firm acidity. This wine will age 5–10 years and beyond. The acidity of 2006 will see to that. Imported by Henriot Inc. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

95 Bouchard Pere & Fils 2006 Chevalier-Montrachet La Cabotte; \$NA. There's an initial intense citrus character to this wine, a product of its youth. But then the freshness is enriched by the pear and green apple flavors, lifted by lively acidity. There are some almond and peach flavors to give an exotic touch to this superb wine that could age for a decade or more. Imported by Henriot Inc. *Cellar Selection.* —R.V.

95 Louis Latour 2006 Bâtard-Montrachet; \$NA. As soon as this wine reaches the palate, there is an explosion of green fruit, densely ripe and rich, followed by spice from wood, supporting a structure of white currants and green apple skins. The wine rolls around the mouth, powerful but kept within its limits by acidity. Imported by Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.

95 Louis Latour 2006 Corton-Charlemagne; \$NA. Power, density, huge richness—all the attributes you would expect from a Corton-Charlemagne. But, this being 2006, the ripe tropical fruits are crisped with acidity which cuts through the impressive opulence and ripeness. Imported by Louis Latour Inc. —R.V.

94 Louis Jadot 2006 Corton Charlemagne; \$NA. A big, fat and rich wine, with tropical fruit flavors. There is spice from the prominent wood with an edge of vanilla. It's a powerhouse of a Chardonnay, ripe and full, the acidity

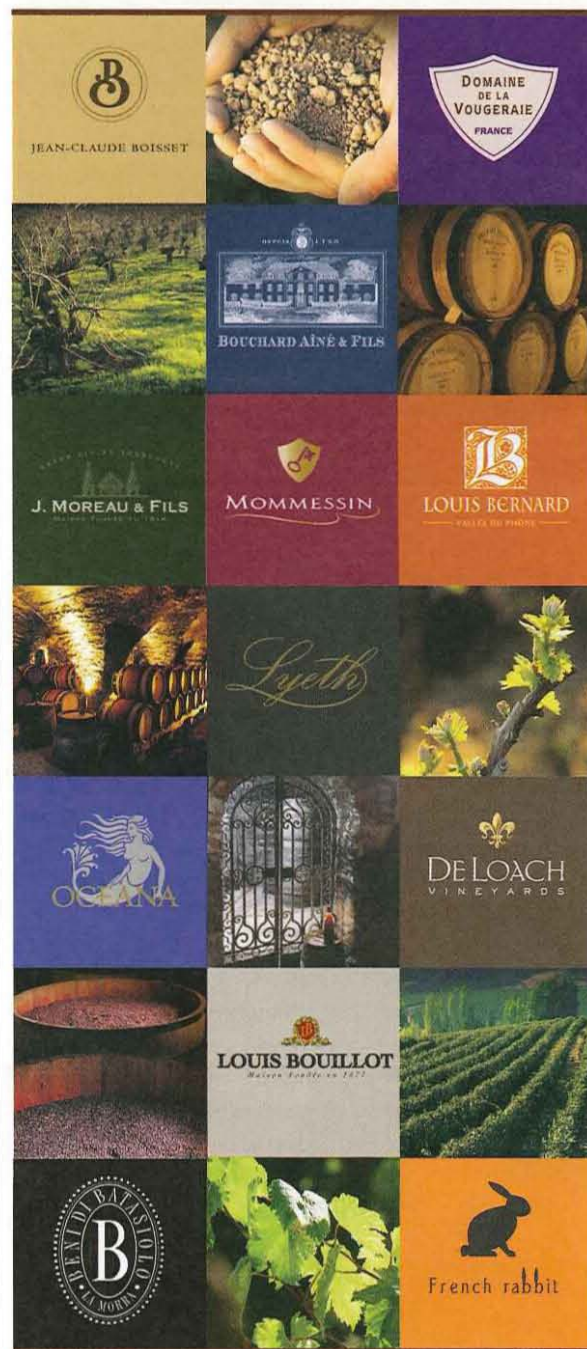


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