

The Cork Report

Wine of the Month

Sebastiani Barbera 2004

The 2001 version of this wine was our "Wine-of-the-Month" exactly two years ago. What a tribute to consistency that it again earns that honor! The rich cherry aromas raise expectations immediately, and the succulent, intense, full-bodied flavors meet those expectations. A memorable tannic finish caps a great wine experience. **94**



La Vite Lucente Toscana 2004

This wine has tons of finesse and texture. A soft yet flavorful Italian masterpiece. We could probably ramble on with seemingly interesting and descriptive verbiage, but this wine really speaks quite loudly for itself. **90**



J. Lohr Carol's Vineyard Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc 2004

When you think of J. Lohr Winery, you don't often think of Napa Valley. This delicious Sauvignon Blanc should give you reason to put J. Lohr and Napa in the same sentence. Pronounced floral aromas make way for a truly complex white. Can easily stand alone but is excellent with food as well. **89**



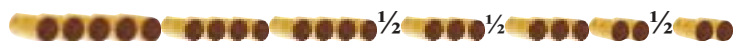
Angove's McLaren Vale Vineyard Select Shiraz 2004

This is new to the market and well worth seeking. A rich, full-bodied Australian Shiraz. Replete with a heady nose and electrifying strawberry and blackberry flavors, this is proof that Australia has some great wines priced just over \$15. **89**



Guide to the Cork Report

90-100	<i>Outstanding</i>
80-89	<i>Very Good</i>
70-79	<i>Good</i>
Below 70	<i>Really bad and probably won't even be mentioned</i>



John Breitlow's Picks



Louis M. Martini Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2001

Intense, deep and dense, firm and solid age-worthy super-premium red dinner wine with appealing berry and black cherry fruit under hefty tannins, long solid finish. **93**

Other Recommended Recent Releases (As usual, the wines have a 'California' appellation unless another is listed):

Kendall-Jackson 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Reserve – select premium blend of Sonoma, Napa, and Mendocino mountain ridge and hillside vineyards that yield a rich, concentrated wine with intense berry and mocha fruit, deep color, smooth texture, and a long lightly spicy finish, perfect for red meat dishes. **93**

Michele Charlo 2001 Barbera di Asti "Nizza La Count" – distinguished super-premium red dinner wine with superb balance and impressive depth, nicely modulated fruit, well-mannered tannins, long smooth finish: a classy quaff from northern Italy. **93**

Kendall-Jackson 2003 "Grand Reserve" Merlot – impressive estate-grown premium blend of Sonoma and Napa fruit, supple texture, splendid balance, excellent craftsmanship, and long finish: great with Beef Stroganoff. **92**

Dry Creek Vyd. 2002 Sonoma "Old Vine" Zinfandel – intense flavored, full-bodied, premium red dinner wine with definitive varietal character, good balance, firm tannins, long finish. **91**

Greg Norman 2004 Santa Barbara Chardonnay – crisp, clean, well-crafted and refreshing Chablis-styled, oak-free all-purpose dry white wine with a long lively finish, superb with Quiche. **90**

St. Francis 2002 Sonoma "Old Vines" Zinfandel – lush medium-bodied premium dinner and preprandial red with intense but well-mannered fruit, a long and tangy finish and a slight nip in the backtaste, hot backtaste. **90**

Jekel 2004 Monterey Riesling – tasty, off-dry well-crafted good-value aperitif wine with an enticing apple blossom nose, lively complex apricot and tropical fruit, ideal with spicy Asian-styled dishes, salmon and pork. **90**

Rutherford Vintners 2003 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon – smooth, tasty gold-medal red dinner wine with rich varietal blackberry and plum fruit, well-mannered oak, long finish, good premium value. **90**

Meridian 2004 Central Coast Pinot Noir – lighter color and styling, gentle tannins, mild acidity, smooth texture, delicate berry fruit, long tangy finish: a fine value in a mellow aperitif and dinner wine from Beringer-Blass. **89**

Bollini 2004 Trentino "Barricato 40" Chardonnay – lively, elegant, complex good value Italian cocktail and dinner wine with tasty varietal fruit, zingy acidity, lively spiced, tangy texture. **89**

William Hill Winery 2002 Napa Cabernet Sauvignon – brilliant ruby color, delicate varietal nose, rich smooth texture, mellow berry fruit: a nice all-purpose premium red with a slightly tart finish that some swirling dissipates. **89**

Camelot 2002 Shiraz – lush ripe black cherry and raspberry fruit, spicy herbal and chocolate notes, good depth, smooth mellow texture, fine value in a food-friendly barbecue wine from Kendall-Jackson. **88**

Hayman & Hill 2004 Santa Lucia "Reserve" Pinot Noir – round, mellow medium-bodied good-value red dinner wine offering pure, luscious varietal fruit, keen well-mannered acidity, excellent balance, silky texture, tasty. **88**

Red Bicycleette 2004 Vin-du-Pays d'Oc Rosé – a pleasant, off-dry, light and supple aperitif and table wine with glorious pink color, fragrant floral bouquet, delicate red raspberry fruit, a tasty value from southern France. **88**

Napa Ridge 2003 Lodi Shiraz – very smooth, ripe and round, medium-bodied all-purpose red wine with solid varietal berry fruit, slightly harsh finish, good value from Bronco Wines. **88**

Pepi 2004 Pinot Grigio – delightfully bright and fruity all-purpose light white wine with refreshing apple and citrus fruit, clean creamy texture, zingy hints of minerals in the finish, sensible screw cap closure, good value. **88**

BV Century Cellars 2003 Chardonnay – smooth, mellow, tasty ripe apple fruit, well-modulated acidity, decent balance in a sound, medium-bodied all-purpose, good-value dry white wine. **88**

Bonterra 2002 Mendocino Merlot – full-bodied, full-flavored, initially tannic, red dinner wine with a spicy cedar nose, lively cherry-cassis cranberry fruit and fragrances, hints of vanilla and oak, smooth tasty lingering finish. **87**

Pepi 2004 Sauvignon Blanc – crisp and clean, light-bodied and refreshing, with pleasant grapefruit and melon fruit, ideal for seafood, chicken, pasta, salads, or preprandial; handy screwcap, fine value. **87**

TwoTone Farm 2004 Chardonnay – rich entry, round, fairly full, all-purpose white wine with pleasant pineapple and pear fruit, slightly coarse finish. Good value. **87**

