

the Top 50 Wines of 2006

1. 2004 J. Rochioli Vineyards

Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley, Calif.)

2. 2001 Tenuta l'illuminata, Tebavio

Barolo, Italy

3. 1996 Coto de Imaz, Gran Reserva

Tempranillo, Rioja, Spain

4. 1995 Faustino de Autor, Reserva Especial

Tempranillo, Rioja, Spain

5. 2001 Ceretto, Bricco Roche, Prapó, Brunate

Barolo, Italy

6. 2003 Salentein, Reserve

Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina

7. 2001 Ceretto, Bricco Rocche

Barolo, Italy

8. 2001 Barossa Valley Estate, E & E Black Pepper

Shiraz (Barossa Valley, Australia)

9. 2003 Row Eleven

Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley, Calif.)

10. 2001 RODA I, Reserva

Tempranillo, Rioja, Spain

11. 2003 Groom

Shiraz (Barossa Valley, Australia)

12. 2000 Marchesi di Barolo, Sarmassa

Barolo, Italy

13. 2004 Jean-Baptiste Adam, Reserve

Gewürztraminer, Alsace, France

14. 2004 Arista Winery, Harper's Rest

Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley, Calif.)

15. 2004 Alderbrook Winery

Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley, Calif.)

16. 2000 Pio Cesare Ornato

Barolo, Italy

17. 2000 Katnook Estate, Prodigy

Shiraz (Coonawarra, Australia)

18. 2001 Conde de la Salceda, Reserva

Tempranillo, Rioja, Spain

19. 2004 Marquee Artisan Wines, Signature

Shiraz (McLaren Vale, Australia)

20. 2003 Chateau Ste. Michele, Canoe Ridge Estate

Merlot (Columbia Valley, Washington)

21. 2004 Domaine Schlumberger, Grand Cru

Riesling, Alsace, France

22. 2003 Vilafonté, Series C

(Paarl, South Africa)

23. 2004 Piatelli Vineyards

Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina

24. 2003 Gordon Brothers Cellars

Merlot (Columbia Valley, Washington)

25. 2000 McWilliam's of Coonawarra

Stentiford's Reserve, Old Vines Shiraz

27. 2004 Dutton-Goldfield Winery, Dutton Ranch,

Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley, Calif.)

28. 1994 Campillo, Gran Reserva

Tempranillo, Rioja, Spain

29. 2001 Penfolds Wines, St. Henri

Shiraz (South Australia)

30. 2001 Bruno Rocca Barbaresco

Barbaresco, Italy

31. 2003 Domaine de l'Espigouette, Plan de Dieu

Cotes du Rhone Villages, France

32. 2004 Terrazas de los Andes Winery, A fincado

Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina

33. 2005 Schug Carneros Estate Winery

Pinot Noir (Sonoma Coast, Calif.)

34. 2003 Green Point Shiraz

(Victoria, Australia)

35. 2003 Vilafonté, Series M

(Paarl, South Africa)

36. 2004 Schug Carneros, Heritage Reserve

Pinot Noir (Carneros, Calif.)

37. 2003 Emilio Moro

Tempranillo, Ribera del Deuro, Spain

38. 2003 Chateau Ste. Michelle

Merlot (Columbia Valley, Washington)

39. 2004 Flower's Vineyard & Winery

Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley, Calif.)

40. 2003 Northstar

Merlot (Columbia Valley, Washington)

41. 2003 Trivento, Golden Reserve

Malbec (Mendoza, Argentina)

42. 2001 Château Saint-Roch

Cotes du Rhone, France

43. 2004 Trapiche, Oak Cask

Mendoza, Argentina

44. 2001 Marchesi di Barolo

Barbaresco, Italy

45. 2002 Backsberg, Klein Babylons Toren

(Paarl, South Africa)

46. 2004 Barone, Fini

Pinot Grigio, Italy

47. 2005 Santa Rita, 120

Sauvignon Blanc (Lontué Valley, Chile)

48. 2005 Georges Duboeuf

Chateau de Nervers, Brouilly, France

49. 2001 Bruno Rocca, Rabaja

Barbaresco, Italy

50. 2003 Fritz Winery

Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley, Calif.)



2003 Vilafonté, Series C (Paarl, South Africa)

vilafonté

2003

series c

SUMMARY: This glass-coating ruby wine was slow to reveal its smoked cedar, toasted herbs, berry, fern and faint vanilla aromas. But flavors of dark cherries, dark chocolate, black olives and minerals arrived with a bang. Adding to the complexity, mint and licorice flavors lurked in the background. Though generally “smooth and integrated,” alcohol added a bit of heat. Panelists noted a drying mouthfeel and that “it could have a bit more weight” leading up to its long finish.

Top 50 Rank: #22

2003 Vilafonté, Series M (Paarl, South Africa)

vilafonté

2003

series m

SUMMARY: Like fine handblown crystal, the nose of this inky purple wine was “delicate without being simple.” Whiffs of blueberry, coffee, violet, red licorice and oak entranced panelists. Layered flavors of dark berries, dark chocolate, earth and tobacco ran deep. Though peppery, the mouthfeel was well-balanced. The shortish finish left a vaguely bitter aftertaste—“but blame it on its youth.” While good now, the wine needs time to reach its full potential.

Top 50 Rank: #35