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### Milbrandt Vineyards will not disappoint

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Most consumers think of California when they think of American wines, but there are other wine producing states that definitely deserve our attention. At the top of that list is Washington State. It's perhaps America's best-kept wine secret: Washington State wineries produce very nice wines that, considering their quality, are underpriced bargains. One such winery is Milbrandt Vineyards.

Located mid-way between Seattle and Spokane in the Columbia Valley, Milbrandt is a family-run operation, headed by two brothers, Butch and Jerry Milbrandt. They produce a full range of wines, which offer a very good introduction to the quality coming out of Washington State. Some are budget priced, others priced somewhat higher. But whichever you choose, you will not be disappointed.



Consider the **2008 Milbrandt Vineyards "Traditions" Pinot Gris**. If you like pinot grigio, you're going to love this pinot gris. (Both wines are made from the same grape; it's called "pinot grigio" in Italian and "pinot gris" in French.) This easy-to-like Washington State version is clean and crisp on the palate and delightfully refreshing. If you're into white, you'll also like the **2007 Milbrandt Vineyards "The Estates" Evergreen Chardonnay**. Produced from grapes grown in a single vineyard, this chardonnay shows delicious fruit, with no hint of oak in the taste, all ending in a long finish on the palate.

Prefer something in red? Opt for the **2007 Milbrandt Vineyards "Traditions" Merlot**, a quality red that should sell for much more than its asking price. I also like the winery's **2006 "The Estates" Cabernet Sauvignon** and their **2007 "Estates" Malbec**. The cab is rich and full-bodied, yet smooth on the palate, while the malbec is deliciously assertive yet ends in a silky finish on the palate.

**Serve with:** Enjoy the pino gris as an aperitif wine or with fried chicken or baked ham. The chardonnay can complement any seafood or poultry, and the merlot or cabernet sauvignon are best served with beef, including cube steak and pot roast. The malbec is the perfect wine to serve with grilled meats, including hamburgers, barbecue ribs and steak.

Availability/suggested retail: Sold in wine and some food stores, the pinot gris retails for \$13. The other "Traditions" wines are \$15 each, while "The Estate" wines are priced at \$25.

Wine of the week

Selection: Attention serious wine collectors:

The 2007 Far Niente Estate Bottled Cabernet Sauvignon

has been released and - as is consistently true with prior releases from this winery -the wine is superb.

Serve with: Cellar this winning red for 5 to 10 years. However, if you can't wait, serve it with richly flavored meats like prime rib or rack of lamb.

Availability/suggested retail: Sold in better wine shops for about \$115 a bottle

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