

## THE SAVVY SHOPPER

### California Sauvignon Blanc and Italian Whites

BY BRUCE SANDERSON

#### Summer Sipping

In this issue, we focus on well-priced summer whites, from the supple Sauvignon Blancs of California to the crisp whites of Italy, with a few zingy versions from New Zealand and Australia. For the strict Francophiles, there's an excellent selection of white Burgundies, though values are in short supply.

Our Napa tasting coordinator, MaryAnn Worobiec, guides you through a bevy of California Sauvignon Blancs in one tasting report; in the other, European bureau chief James Suckling offers his take on a variety of Italian whites. In this issue, you'll find three classic wines and more than 160 outstanding wines among reviews of more than 700 new releases.

#### Bravo Bianco

Welcome to the wonderful world of Italian whites. I gravitate to them on restaurant wine lists because they offer excellent value and are generally well made. Here's a small selection for your summer pleasure. **Antinori's Umbria White Cervaro della Sala 2006** (94, \$50), a blend of Chardonnay and Grechetto, offers apple, mineral and blanched nut flavors, with a creamy texture. It's Highly Recommended. The **S. Michael-Eppan Sauvignon Alto Adige Sanct Valentin 2007** (92, \$20) shows vivid grapefruit and apricot notes

on a full-bodied frame. **Smart Buy Attems Pinot Grigio Collio 2007** (90, \$19) displays peach and lemon flavors in a crisp style, while the **Cantina Giralan Sauvignon Alto Adige Indra 2007** (90, \$22) is bright and fruity with green apple and lemon undertones. **H. Lun's Sauvignon Alto Adige 2007** (90, \$18) combines mineral with lemon and piecrust notes in a refreshing quaff. The **Elena Walch Sauvignon Alto Adige Castel Ringberg 2007** (90, \$22) exhibits a riper pro-

file, with tropical fruit accents, peach and dried pineapple, yet it stays lively. From Piedmont, in the northwest, comes **Villa Sparina's Monferrato White Montej 2007** (89, \$15). Look for lemon, melon and mineral flavors from this blend of Chardonnay, Müller-Thurgau, Sauvignon and Cortese.

#### Sauvignon Time

Typically best enjoyed young and fresh, Sauvignon Blanc is an ideal summertime white. Let's start with California. The **Dry Stack Sauvignon Blanc Bennett Valley Rosemary's Block Dry Stack Vineyard 2007** (93, \$28) delivers vivid, juicy, tropical notes of pineapple, mango, tangerine and guava that linger nicely. It's Highly Recommended. **Sbragia Family's Sauvignon Blanc Dry Creek Valley Home Ranch 2007** (91, \$20), a Smart Buy, coaxes honeysuckle and jasmine as well as apple and citrus flavors from the grape. New Zealand is another source of tasty Sauvignon Blancs. The **Mills Reef Sauvignon Blanc Hawkes Bay Reserve 2007** (89, \$15) doesn't disappoint. It features lemon curd, mango and pink grapefruit notes mingling on a fleshy texture.

#### More Values

Let's consider reds for a moment. Though not exactly thirst-quenching, some are ideal for serving with grilled steaks and burgers. The **Altos Las Hormigas Malbec Mendoza Vineyard Selection Reserva 2006** (92, \$24) from Argentina is a Highly Recommended selection for its quality-to-price ratio. Dark and ripe, it shows vivid licorice, graphite and boysenberry flavors. From Oregon comes the **Patton Valley Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2006** (92, \$35), a mouthful of generous red plum, red cherry and rhubarb pie notes. The **Elisabeth & Brigitte Jeanjean Coteaux du Languedoc Devois des Agneaux d'Aumelas Red 2006** (89, \$15), with its red fruit and mineral flavors and muscular structure, should make a good match for grilled lamb. It's a Smart Buy.

For a value white, try the **Coldstream Hills Chardonnay Yarra Valley 2006** (90, \$19) with grilled fish for its pear, melon and cream notes and lively acidity. The **Benoit Gautier Vouvray Cuvée du 5 Novembre 2005** (90, \$17/500ml) exudes sweet fig, quince and candied citrus peel flavors. Enjoy it on its own for dessert, or with a fresh fruit tart.



#### Smart Buy

**FEUDI DI SAN GREGORIO Falanghina Sannio 2007** (90, \$20) Falanghina is an ancient grape that flourishes in the volcanic soils of the Campania region. It's a rich, full-bodied white, with banana, cream and mango aromas and flavors.

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Spectator Selections From This Issue's Buying Guide

Highly Recommended

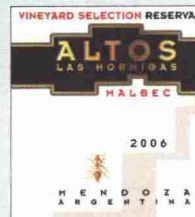
**96** Futo Oakville  
 2005 \$200

Smooth and rich Napa Valley Cabernet blend, with concentrated currant, blackberry and wild berry flavors accented by savory herb and mineral notes.



**92** Altos Las Hormigas Malbec  
 Mendoza Vineyard Selection  
 Reserva 2006 \$24

Dark and ripe red from Argentina, with powerful licorice, mineral and plum flavors that pump through the lengthy finish.



Collectibles

**96** Joseph Drouhin Montrachet  
 Marquis de Laguiche  
 2005 \$663

Elegant white Burgundy, with layers of honeysuckle, citrus, hazelnut and mineral flavors. Vibrant structure and a long finish.



**95** Pierre-Yves Colin-Morey  
 Chevalier-Montrachet  
 2006 \$330

A vibrant young white Burgundy, offering lemon, citronella, peach and mineral flavors. Rich finish, with toast and spice notes.



Smart Buys

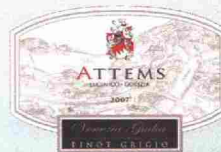
**91** Sbragia Family Sauvignon  
 Blanc Dry Creek Valley  
 Home Ranch 2007 \$20

Effusive in aroma, with honeysuckle, jasmine and peach blossom, plus bright apple, citrus and pineapple notes. Long, juicy finish.



**90** Attems Pinot Grigio Collio  
 2007 \$19

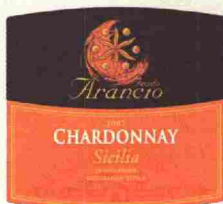
Full-bodied style with lots of character, from peach tart to lemon seed to mineral. Crisp and lively white from northern Italy.



Best Values

**88** Feudo Arancio Chardonnay  
 Sicilia 2007 \$70

Aromas of apple pie and cream follow through to a full-bodied palate. Plenty of ripe fruit. Finishes with lemon, vanilla and apple.



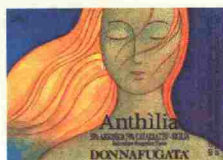
**87** Bulletin Place Shiraz South  
 Eastern Australia 2006 \$10

Firm in texture, with a swarm of fine tannins around a ripe core of blueberry and plum fruit, persisting on the finish.



**87** Donnafugata Ansonica-  
 Catarratto Sicilia Anthilia  
 2007 \$10

Full-bodied white from Sicily, with a citrusy aroma and lots of fresh grapefruit character.



**85** Alice White Shiraz South  
 Eastern Australia 2007 \$8

Fresh, juicy red, with appealingly ripe currant and plum flavors. A perennial value from Australia.



For reviews of these wines and hundreds of others, see the Buying Guide (page 195).

Scores are given on the Wine Spectator 100-point scale: 95-100, classic; 90-94, outstanding; 85-89, very good; 80-84, good; 75-79, mediocre; 50-74, not recommended.