

# SML-Uncorked

The Wine Newsletter of Supermarket Liquors  
Fort Collins, Colorado

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## Most Powerful Advertising?

According to data from the Wine Institute, research confirms that wine consumers look to personal recommendations as the most prized sources of information. Trusted friends and family, followed by the sommelier or server when in a restaurant setting, are mentioned as the top information sources. Nearly 40 percent of wine consumers report receiving wine information from publications including newspapers and magazines in the past three months. And, in a finding that reinforces the value of a winery's investment in a tasting room, visits to wineries are among the most powerful influences in a purchasing decision among the 25 percent who report receiving information this way. Winery websites were also found to be as popular as other wine and lifestyle websites among those interested in online information.

In addition, it is our strong recommendation that you seek guidance from a trusted retailer. Wine is what we do. The staff at a serious shop will easily taste between one and two thousand wines during the course of a year. We are wine professionals and in that function it is our goal to assist you in selecting wines that make you, and us, happy. (SK)



\* newsletter prices on all wines are in effect through April 31 and limited to stock on hand



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## April Wine of the Month

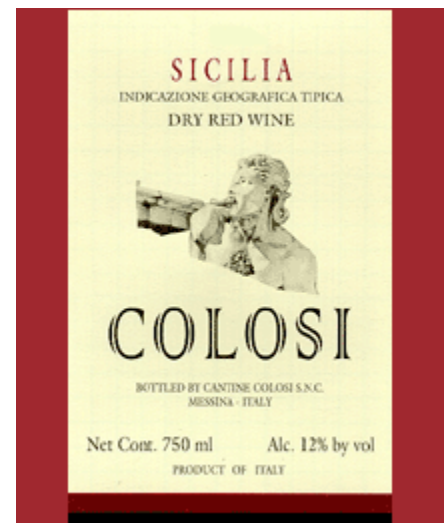
### **Colosi Rosso Sicilia IGT 2003**

**Reg. Price \$8.99**

**Sale \$7.99**

The savviest wine buyers resist the impulse toward familiar labels. Today's bargain-minded consumers extract every cent out of their buying dollar only if they include the myriad of unfamiliar wines on the market in their buying decisions. It's absolutely essential to look beyond the horizon to those wines produced from obscure grapes or from emerging areas. That advice applies to the retail shopper, as well as to me, the wholesale shopper. Distributor portfolios abound with choices unfamiliar to even the most informed professionals. We are seeing an avalanche of wines made from esoteric grapes grown in improbable locales. Tannat from Uruguay? Albarino from California? Torrontes from Argentina? Or, how about a familiar face like Chardonnay, grown in Croatia? Colorado wines? Montana? Italy alone has over one thousand grape varieties. Again, resist the impulse to buy only the familiar.

Our wine-of-the-month selections feature exceptional values, new and different, priced under \$10. Of course, if we find an exceptionally priced California Cabernet or Australian Shiraz, well, value is the trump card. This month's selection is a medium-bodied red, full of spice, smoke and leather, grown around Messina on the north-east coast of Sicily. Made from 100% Nero d'Avola, Sicily's premier red-wine grape, Colosi's medium-bodied 2003 treads the flavor boundary between red fruits like ripe plums and pomegranates, and darker fruits like blackberries. Tannins are friendly and soft, the flavors ripe and a bit raisiny, certainly not shy. Given the current price of even modest Italian wines, this is a solid value, loaded with Mediterranean warmth. Try pairing with grilled beef or sausage. (TD)



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## Rose & Sparkling Wines

**Miguel Torres**  
**Cabernet Sauvignon Rose 2005 (Chile)**  
Reg. price \$8.99  
Sale \$7.99

You can be fairly certain that if a grape makes great red wines, its roses are going to be pretty special, too. Few Cabernet Sauvignon roses are produced in the world, and the Torres bottling is consistently one of our favorites. Their 2005, in fact, is one of the juiciest, most lip-smacking pink wines you'll find. Roses are intended to be consumed in their youth, and this new vintage literally leaps out of the bottle with an exuberant personality of cherries, strawberries, candy apple, and even a touch of spice. Lively, bright, fresh, this is a lightly sweet rose that is guaranteed to bring a smile to your face. It's the perfect choice for picnics, your Easter table, or as a match for the lighter foods of the season. Sweeter-styled roses rarely get much better than this!

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**Chartogne-Taillet Cuvee St. Anne**  
**Champagne (multi-vintage)**  
Reg. price \$32.99  
Sale \$29.99

Elisabeth and Phillippe Chartogne produce just over 6000 cases of Champagne (talk about a micro-producer!) from their 30-acre estate in Merfy, just a 15-minute drive from the cathedral at Reims. Most of the production is shipped throughout Europe. This cuvee is a blend of several vintages, mostly '93 and '94, aged on the lees for three years, 45% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir, 15% Pinot Meunier. This is balanced and mannerly, with flavors of sweet hay, sautéed apple, with subtle nut hints and a bread doughy finish. This is fine bubbly that is thoroughly satisfying and incredibly inexpensive for the high quality offered here.

**Gruet Demi-Sec New Mexico**  
**Sparkling (multi-vintage)**  
Reg. price \$13.99  
Sale \$12.49

The grapes for this *lightly sweet* sparkling wine, a blend of 50% Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, are grown in Engle, New Mexico, near the town of Truth or Consequences, and then vinified 170 miles north at the Gruet winery in Albuquerque. From this incongruous setting in the great American southwest comes some of the finest values to be found among American sparkling wines. The Gruet's first vintage was 1987. Gilbert Gruet, who founded the French Champagne house of Gruet Fils in 1952, suspected that New Mexico's hot dry days and cool, high-desert nights could provide optimal conditions for the production of quality sparkling wine. In 1984 he established his son and daughter at the helm of this new venture. Production tops 80,000 cases a year and we currently stock four of their wines: the Demi-Sec, Brut, Blanc de Noirs, and the exceptional Blanc de Blancs, a 100% Chardonnay rivaling many bottlings from Champagne. This Demi-Sec is not quite as sweet as an Asti and shows an unexpected subtlety and beautiful creamy texture, along with a lightly toasty bouquet carrying apples and pears, and zippy acidity for balance. It's a great start to an Easter dinner, or to pair with fresh strawberries or a fruit tart to finish. Tres elegante!



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## White Wines & German Beauties

### **Cantina di Custoza Lugana 2004**

**Reg. price \$9.79**

**Sale \$8.99**

Cantina di Custoza is a 240-member cooperative, located just south of Lake Garda, whose members farm in the Veneto and Lombardia regions of northern Italy. Most of their 2400 acres of vineyards are located on gravelly, mineral rich soils sitting on glacial moraines, the debris pushed aside by advancing glaciers. (Rocky Mountain National Park has numerous moraines easily visible in places like Moraine Park, Bear Lake, and Wild Basin.) Lugana is made from a specific clone of Italy's ubiquitous Trebbiano grape called Trebbiano di Lugana, and this is certainly one of the best expressions of a variety that, up and down the country, makes wines of little distinction. (In Cognac, however, Trebbiano is called Ugni Blanc and provides the distillate base for that incomparable brandy.) We were quite impressed by the vivacity of this light-bodied white that shows the bright, fresh, light flavors of yellow plum, apple, and pear on a crisp, dry frame. Easy and lively, it is a wonderful match for lighter fish, shrimp or chicken salads, or as an all-purpose table white. An anti-Chardonnay for everyday enjoyment.

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### **Monchhof Estate Riesling Mosel-Saar-Ruwer 2004**

**Reg. price \$12.79**

**Sale \$11.49**

The 2004 vintage was another truly fine year within a string of exceptional vintages. Global warming? Who knows, but the weather in Germany over the past four or five vintages certainly was unusually warm. The 2004 wines, however, have the remarkable combination of ripe fruit *and* high acidity, whereas in previous vintages the staggering heat of mid-summer resulted in wines which are fatter, lush, and softer. Where this Estate Riesling in past years has leaned toward white peach, pear, and hints of cassis, this vintage carries livelier, zesty notes along with ripe concentrated fruit, and a pineapple-like brightness. This is very high quality QbA, with ripe citrus, mineral, and subtle spice hints. It has been a part of our German wine selection for many years, and this version is very proud. It comes with the Stelvin screw cap closure—no cork to pull. Serve as aperitif, with goat cheeses, shellfish, salads, chicken dishes, turkey, and soups. Beautiful, gulpable wine and a great value in everyday Riesling.

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### **Monchhof Mosel Slate Riesling Spatlese Mosel-Saar-Ruwer 2004**

**Reg. price \$15.99**

**Sale \$14.49**

This wine hails from the Erdener Treppchen site and underscores the blue slate soils of this steep slope area of the Mosel River Valley. This is proprietor Robert Eymael's effort to place a focus on Riesling originating in that Treppchen terroir. The wine shows pear, citrus fruits, and banana, with dusty minerality, and a rich, round texture, though ample acidity keeps it fresh, balanced, and elegant. Here is a superb value in very well-made Mosel Valley Riesling from a great year. I'd consider this with white fish filets in cream sauce, roast pork with fruit, roasted beets with goat cheese and ginger, roasted turkey, and ham. Lovely wine!



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## More Lovely & Versatile German Beauties

### **Strub Niersteiner Bruchen Riesling Kabinett Rheinhessen 2003**

**Reg. price \$13.99**

**Sale \$12.49**

Walter Strub is as likeable a human being as one can imagine. Quick to laugh, but also serious and philosophical when needed, he is an excellent vintner who constantly questions his approaches to wine production, ever searching for higher ground. This small family estate produces only about 8,000 cases a year. The 2003 vintage was warm and the wines are ripe, but here they are also brilliant, zesty, and dynamic. This one has pure white peach flavor along with salty mineral and chalk underpinnings, and hints of apple butter in the finish. Wow! This is interesting wine, just a slight sense of sweetness, not noticeable really under the explosion of ripe fruit flavors and thrilling zestiness. Serve with Asian cuisine, poultry of all kinds, pork dishes with fruit sauce, ham, salads dosed with cheeses. This is a wide-ranging, versatile food companion.

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### **Rudi Wiest Rhine River Riesling 2004**

**Reg. price \$9.29**

**Sale \$8.29**

This wine is made by one of Europe's finest winemakers, Fritz Hasselbach, of the Gunderloch estate in the Rheinhessen region of Germany. By way of introduction, three of his wines merited 100 points from the Wine Spectator over the last fifteen years, and he makes this particular selection for one of our favorite German-wine importers, Rudi Wiest. Here is an off-dry Riesling filled with the typical Rhine flavors of apricot, peach, and holiday spice, and the bright acidity that makes German Rieslings so very attractive and drinkable.

### **Weingart Bopparder Hamm Feuerlay Riesling Spatlese 2001**

**Reg. price \$17.99**

**Sale \$15.99**

Florian Weingart is a family farmer, and the wine production here is all about a small family-operated domaine. Their well-situated 20-acre estate on weathered slate in the Mittelrhein produces only about 7,000 cases of wines with a Mosel-like bent. They always have great clarity, green fruit sheen, and a slatey minerality. This wine has hints of red berries (cherries and red raspberries), which may sound strange in a white wine, but cherry, raspberry, and cassis are nuances that are not uncommon in some of Germany's finest Riesling wines. This has richness and power and a grippy, mineral-laden finish, with a slight sense of sweetness balancing its vibrant backbone of acidity. The 2001 vintage was a great one, creating wines with richness, depth, and a fine, complete knit. This wine will complement most white fish dishes, shell fish, turkey and chicken, Asian and Indian foods, and anywhere that a fruit sauce or coulee accompanies the dish. It is capable of improving for many years in cellar.



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## Red Wines

### **Bennett Lane Maximus 2003**

**Reg. price \$27.99**

**Sale \$24.99**

Once you get past the pretension of this Napa Valley wine's name, you're in for a treat! If you are looking for a special wine for an Easter repast featuring beef or lamb, this is a wine you might consider. Lushly textured, dense, rich and opulent, this blend of 63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Syrah, 11% Merlot, and 2% Petite Verdot attacks your palate with wave after wave of sumptuous flavors. Intended to drink now and into the short term, its tannins are very soft, providing just enough balance for the wine's lavish fruit, which may remind you of blueberries, blackberries, or pomegranate, with just a dash of sweet oak vanilla. An obvious fruit bomb with enough subtlety to make it well worth the money.

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### **Chateau Pichon Longueville**

**Baron Paulliac 2000**

**Reg. price \$89.00**

**Sale \$75.00**

Great estate, great vintage, and an extraordinarily fine effort. As good as the very great 1990 from this estate, commonly known as Chateau Pichon Baron. This is Paulliac in all its glory, showing dark, deep, inky color as well as scents and flavors of pencil lead, leather, concentrated cassis, barrel vanilla, sweet spices, all in a beautifully textured, seamless wine. Comparable Paulliac wines of this vintage run 2 to 3 times the price, and this one is commonly seen at \$100 to \$135 per bottle. Our standard price is \$89, but it is being offered here at \$75. Another *vin du garde* for the cellar, one that will be at the top of its game in another 8 to 16 years and will stand proudly with the greatest Paulliac wines of the 2000 vintage. 96 points, Robert Parker.

### **Chateau Calon Segur Saint Estephe 2000**

**Reg. price \$79.00**

**Sale \$65.00**

This is a Bordeaux estate that has had a very uneven history, but which has really found its stride since the early 90s. This is a remarkable effort, probably their best wine in decades, and certainly in the class of their superb '82 and '95 vintages. The cuvee includes 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, and 10% Cabernet Franc. The 2000 is a great Calon. It is full, dense, powerful, loaded with cassis and packed with ripe red fruit flavors, with firm, ripe, rich, well-integrated tannins in an intense and lengthy wine. This will reward patient cellaring for the next 6 to 12 years and is one of the few under-priced wines in a very highly heralded, highly sought-after, high-priced vintage. We see this wine being offered on the internet commonly at \$89 to \$100 a bottle. Our standard price is \$79, but it is available now to our newsletter customers for \$65. This is true *vin du garde* at a great price. Very limited. 94 points, Robert Parker; 93 points, *Wine Spectator*.



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## Red Wines & Big Things In Small Packages

### **Enrique Foster Malbec Ique 2004**

**Reg. price \$10.79**

**Sale \$9.99**

Argentine Malbecs are some of the hottest wines in the country today. In its native vineyards in France, Malbec serves primarily as a blending grape in wines like Bordeaux, Cahors, and in some others in the Loire Valley. Stylistically, it might remind you of a cross between Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, borrowing a little of Cabernet's firm structure and a little of Merlot's juiciness. It is the most important commercial red-wine varietal now grown in Argentina, whose winemakers embrace off-beat grapes like Malbec, Torrontes, and Bonarda. The Enrique Foster estate is a modern, gravity-flow winery devoted solely to the production of Malbec, and Ique is their introductory bottling, a wine seeing no oak ageing, yet lush with sweet red plum, black cherry, and raspberry flavors. A little fruit bomb, it delivers a softly textured mouthful of bright fruit that lasts into a respectable finish. It shows all its charm, however, after being opened for half an hour, or so.

### **Tait Shiraz Barossa Valley The Ballbuster 2004 (Australia)**

**Reg. price \$15.99**

**Sale \$14.49**

"As it has been in previous vintages, the value-priced 2004 The Ball Buster Proprietary Red is a classic Barossa Valley effort in terms of bigness, boldness, and a dramatic display of fruit and intensity. If you want something delicate, restrained, and understated, steer clear of this locomotive that crashes over the palate with a flamboyant display of blackberry and cassis fruit, licorice, tar, and spicy oak. Explosively rich with formidable intensity, this blend of 74% Shiraz, 14% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 12% Merlot is an amazing wine for the price. Readers should be forewarned that it possesses 15.5% alcohol, but carries it well. 93 points." Robert Parker, *The Wine Advocate*, issue 161.

### **Big Things In Small Packages**

Here we offer two fine Portos from the great 1997 vintage, and from two of the most respected of Port houses. Interestingly, the wines are quite different in style, to which the following notes will attest.

### **Taylor Porto 1997 (375 ml)**

**Reg. price \$45.00**

**Sale \$35.00**

Huge, dense, muscular, concentrated and powerful, this port can age for decades, but it is so well balanced, finely knit, and polished that it drinks well even now. It will, of course gain added complexity, definition and roundness, and a more intoxicating bouquet with cellar development. One of the true stars of the vintage, this is normally \$45 for the half bottle, available now at the remarkably low price of \$35. 96 points, Robert Parker.

### **Fonseca Porto 1997 (375 ml)**

**Reg. price \$45.00**

**Sale \$35.00**

Another great wine from the '97 vintage, but one with a much more charming, elegant presentation. There are softly expressed nut hints, sweet, ripe cherry and blackberry flavors, exotic spice box nuance, and bright, perky, flowery notes. This has a royal expression, queenly manner, superb balance, and velvety texture. It is a very stylish, floral, and charming Port, one that is difficult to keep from gulping—it can be the one to drink as the Taylor ages. Same price as the Taylor, at \$35. 93 points, Robert Parker.



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## Liqueur

### **Chartreuse V.E.P. (1.0 liter)**

**Reg. price \$124.99**

**Sale \$109.99**

Ten centuries of French history can be woven from the threads of the story of Chartreuse, one of the world's truly magnificent liqueurs. The Chartreuse order of monks—the Carthusians—date the founding of their charter house in the wilds of the French Alps to 1084. In 1605 they received a recipe for an "elixir of long life" whose complexities were only deciphered in 1737. The brew was so tasty that the monks in 1764 altered the recipe to produce the earliest version of the liqueur we know today as Green Chartreuse. To this day, the order entrusts the recipe to only two of the monks, who, like all members of the order, take a vow of silence. Nevertheless, they alone supervise production and ageing.

We do know that over 130 roots, herbs, leaves, barks, and other assorted products of forest and field are macerated in wine alcohol (crude brandy) before being distilled and sweetened with honey. The liqueur's classic green color—chartreuse—is entirely natural, and not the product of added colorings. The V.E.P. (Vieillessement Exceptionnellement Prolongé) bottling differs from the more familiar version in that it is aged for an extremely long period in oak casks before bottling and comes in at 108 proof. This extended ageing concentrates flavor, smoothes the inherent heat and bitterness of the liqueur, and seems to highlight its amazing subtleties, which unravel in an endless stream of flavor sensations on your palate.

Chartreuse V.E.P. is sweet, decidedly herbal, and presents a finish whose length defies belief. This is truly one of the most magnificent spirits you may ever taste.

**FOR ADULTS ONLY!!**

Editor – Tom DeLia

Contributing Editor – Steve Kershner

**To place an order, contact us at:**

#### **Supermarket Liquors**

1300 East Mulberry Street

Fort Collins, CO 80524

970-221-2428

[wine@sml-uncorked.com](mailto:wine@sml-uncorked.com)

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