

FOOD & WINE

OCTOBER 2010

the wine issue

ITALIAN-AMERICAN FAVORITES

*fast recipes, new classics,
top wine pairings*



MARIO BATALI'S
*mortadella & cheese
panini, great with a crisp
Italian white wine*

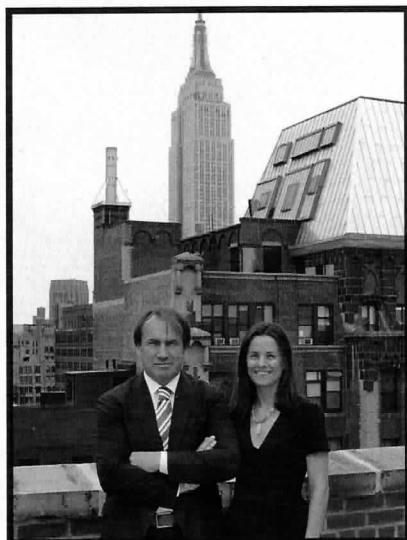
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ROME'S
MOST
AUTHENTIC
DISHES

american wine awards
winning bottles above & below \$20



WWW.FOODANDWINE.COM \$4.50



IMPORTERS OF THE YEAR

*Domaine Select
Wine Estates*

BACK IN 1999, husband-and-wife team Paolo and Allison Domeneghetti were working for rival New York wine and spirits wholesalers, but they shared the same frustration: The big companies didn't devote time to small brands with complicated backstories. Says Paolo, "The most fascinating producers, the ones who respect their traditions and where they came from—those personalities were just getting lost." That year, the newlyweds founded Domaine Select Wine Estates. Winemakers signed on almost immediately, such as iconoclast Ales Kristancic of Movia in Slovenia; other famous names followed later, like Josko Gravner of Italy's Friuli region and Nicolas Joly, the Loire's outspoken godfather of biodynamics. The Domeneghettis' rigorously chosen portfolio now ranges from a \$10 Barbera from Piedmont's Fontanafredda to a top Soldera Brunello that costs upward of \$400, primarily wines that keep to a philosophy of biodynamic and natural winemaking.



BEST BORDEAUX-STYLE BLEND

2007 Continuum (\$140) Robert Mondavi's children Tim and Marcia have moved on after the sale of the family winery. Their Cabernet Sauvignon-based, gorgeously fragrant red comes from Pritchard Hill and Oakville vineyards, two of Napa Valley's most sought-after Cabernet locations.

BEST REDS

UNDER **\$20** OVER

PINOT NOIR

2008 WALLACE BROOK (\$19) This Oregon red offers the lively, aromatic appeal of Willamette Valley Pinot Noirs costing twice as much. An affordable secondary brand made by the Willamette Valley's Adelsheim Vineyard, one of the pioneering producers of Oregon Pinot Noir, this Wallace Brook shows the ripeness of the great 2008 vintage.

2008 BREWER-CLIFTON, MOUNT CARMEL (\$63) There are easier places to grow grapes than this steep, ocean-cooled vineyard in Santa Barbara County, but Steve Clifton (also of Palmina) and Greg Brewer (Melville) started farming it themselves in 2004 anyway. Their 2008, an opulent Pinot with floral berry notes, makes it clear their work was worth it.

MERLOT

2007 COLUMBIA CREST H3 (\$15) This widely available Merlot comes from Washington's Horse Heaven Hills (hence H3), a promising region for complex, full-bodied reds. Its ripe blackberry fruit keeps some needed restraint thanks to the skill of winemaker Ray Einberger.

2007 PEPPER BRIDGE (\$50) In the excellent 2007 Washington vintage, Swiss-born winemaker Jean-François Pellet produced this cellar-worthy Merlot by combining fruit from the winery's two estate vineyards in the Walla Walla Valley—Pepper Bridge and Seven Hills.

ZINFANDEL

2007 FOUR VINES, OLD VINE CUVÉE (\$14) Founder-winemaker Christian Tietje scoured vineyards from California's top Zinfandel counties—from Amador to Paso Robles—to assemble the fruit for this streamlined red. It's sumptuous in style, full of blackberry and blueberry fruit.

2007 A. RAFANELLI (\$32) Because it sells exclusively from the winery rather than stores, this small, family-run Sonoma operation isn't broadly known (except to Zinfandel lovers). Winemaker Rashell Rafanelli-Fehlman holds to the family style here—bright, lifted and juicy.

SYRAH

2008 RED CAR, BOXCAR (\$20) Winemaker Carroll Kemp started Red Car back in 2000 in his Los Angeles driveway with two barrels of Syrah. His output has grown since then, but Syrah remains the focus, as in this highly polished red's array of classic, cool-climate Syrah flavors: plum, dark berries and black pepper.

2006 QUPÉ, BIEN NACIDO HILLSIDE ESTATE (\$40) Are cool temperatures the key to great California Syrah? This wine, from the chilly 2006 vintage, suggests so. Bob Lindquist is one of the greatest interpreters of Syrah from the famed Bien Nacido Vineyard, and his winemaking shows the grape's full potential.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

2007 LOUIS M. MARTINI, SONOMA COUNTY (\$17) Michael Martini's winemaking team used vineyards around the county for a straightforward red that also has considerable finesse. That deft touch isn't surprising, as Michael himself has been making wine for more than 30 years, and his family for more than 100.

2007 BUCCELLA (\$150) Overseen by Chris Justin and consultant Celia Welch (F&W's Winemaker of the Year in 2008), Buccella has swiftly become a top Napa Valley Cabernet producer. The great 2007 vintage played to Buccella's strengths, resulting in a cassis-inflected wine of extraordinary polish.