



tom's top ten for july/aug '10

Tom Caufield, *New Pi Wine Buyer*

1 RUBUS NAPA VALLEY OLD VINE CABERNET 2007

Given our current financial crisis, there are more and more high-end wines that just are not finding traction in the marketplace. What's a savvy wine merchant to do? Align with one of the best importers in the biz (Fran Kysela) and sell you a NINETY-FIVE DOLLAR bottle of wine for \$25. This is classic Napa Cab—gorgeous cassis and earth on the nose, ripe and full in the mouth, and sporting the kind of acidity so often lacking in today's ooze-monsters. I would be happy to sell this wine for \$50—and I would have a ton of takers. \$24.99/bottle.

2 PARDEVALLES ALBARIN 2008

Albarin is actually a grape that bears no relation to Albarino, as we initially thought (other than tasting somewhat like a shopping-cart collision of Albarino, Chenin Blanc, and Sauvignon Blanc). The winery is in Tierra de Leon along the River Bernesga. The taste? Really bright and driven by minerals—lemon, lime, and some zesty stone fruits—mouth watering acidity and a finish that just doesn't let up. If you like dry white wines of any sort you owe it to yourself to give this a try. I know I'll be quenching my thirst with it this summer. 15.99/bottle.

3 WINE BY JOE

We're featuring two: The **Pinot Noir** is classic—great berries and cola on the nose with just a hint of leather. Full and ripe in the mouth, and velvety, with more cherries and spice kicking in on the mid-palate. \$17.99/bottle. The **Pinot Gris** is all pear, apple, and citrus in the nose. It's a bit atypical in the mouth, with more cream and weight than one might expect, though it does kick in with some really vibrant and cleansing acidity on the finish. Just \$13.99/bottle.

4 VINA ACERED

I was riding around in the Rhone with Laurent (one of our contacts there) last spring when he asked me if I had any interest in an old vine Grenache that I could sell for \$12 ... you know where this is going, right? We have chosen three of his new Spanish wines for your drinking pleasure.



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5% discount.

Buy 12 wines, get a

10% discount.



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Vina Acered Garnacha Vinas Viejas: A deep, brooding cherry red in the glass. Violets abound on the nose along with cocoa, leather, and baking spices. Mouth-filling with a fair amount of minerals to balance out the big fruit presence and just a hint of roasted meat on the mildly tannic finish. Easily the best Grenache under \$15 that I've ever had. Drinking nicely now, but will really reward the savvy buyer who purchases several cases and enjoys this gem over the next 3-4 years.

Vina Acered Garnacha: Lighter and brighter in color with a huge blast of strawberries on the nose. It's fat and fruity in the mouth but doesn't lack in structure. Vinified entirely in stainless steel in order to retain its freshness and vivacity, then moved to underground concrete tanks for malolactic fermentation. It's difficult for me to think of a better \$10 Grenache on the market.

Vina Acered Garnacha/Tempranillo: The blend has all the fruit of the other Vina Acered wines but carries just a little bit less weight, making it oh so easy to drink. It's redolent of both strawberries and cherries on the nose and has a lovely citrus tang to the mid-palate. The tannins on the finish are mild and auger for drinking over the course of the next 18-24 months. Put a slight chill on this and you are good to go for your next bbq. If you can find a better Spanish sipper than this for \$7.99, do please alert me.

5 LES HAUTS DE LA BRUNE COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC 2007

This was the big hit at the Kysela Wine Dinner at Chef's Table a couple of months ago. It's a lovely blend of mostly Syrah with a bit of Grenache and Mourvedre to round out and bulk things up. It pours a lovely ruby/purple red with fresh berries on the nose. Just a slight bit brooding in the mouth with blackberries and hints of licorice and baking spices. It finishes with brisk acidity and a touch of tannin and chalkiness. I am pretty blown away that we can offer a wine of this quality for \$14.99/bottle.

6 LAUGHING DOG BREWERY

I see you scratching your head ... what the heck are these beers doing here? As you might know, Iowa can now sell high proof (above 6.2% alcohol) beer without having to purchase a liquor license. We were really taken with these two: **CSB** which is the brewery's take on a traditional ESB, has great malt, is nice and toasty on the nose with a rich mid-palate, and has a nice slightly bitter hoppy finish. Mighty tasty stuff.

We were also quite smitten with the **Dogzilla**—a black IPA. Yep, that was a first for us as well. Imagine your very favorite Porter or Stout ramped up with a really invigorating blast of fresh hops. This is one sample that for sure went home with this kid. One of a kind and utterly delicious. \$6.99 for a 22 ounce bottle of either.

7 YASA BLANCO OLD VINES MACABEO 2009

My new favorite white wine under \$15. We tasted this with Fran when he visited a couple of months ago and we all said something like, "Well, hmm, old vine Macabeo ... that should be an interesting one to sell ... not so sure anyone will get it." It's mostly Macabeo with just a bit of Grenache Blanc to round things out. Bright, lively, juicy, tart and citrusy—kinda like a grapefruit rolled up with a tangerine inside a mango. \$9.99 a bottle for July and August. Let's put Macabeo on the map in Iowa.

8 RIOJA. This one's a "two-fer". As in, two really cool new Riojas that we are super-psyched about.

Burgo Viejo Tinto Rioja 2008: This was done all in stainless steel to let the pure fruit come through and boy does it—the color is a brilliant violet; the nose is all berries and just a hint of earth and funk. In the mouth the berries repeat, as does the funk and earth. This really reminds me of an old school Rioja without all the overt wood that they can sometimes have. A real steal at just \$11.99/bottle.

Montebuena Rioja 2009: Bob Parker recently had this to say: "It is a great bargain that offers a sneak preview of the great 2009 vintage in Rioja." This wine is 100% Tempranillo and it's all juicy fruit, spice, and leather on the nose. In the mouth, the fruit really takes the drivers seat. It's certainly much more of an international style than the Burgo Viejo, but never veers too far in that direction and reins in the fruit without becoming overly sweet or sappy. Fans of new wave Rioja will lap this up. Just \$9.99/bottle for July and August.

9 AFTER BE FOR CHARDONNAY

This has been a great seller for New Pi over the course of the last two years so you can imagine our disappointment when we heard our importer is no longer stocking it. While we are sad to see the wine go, we are thrilled to be able to offer it to you at a great price. The wine is as always—crisp and inviting—hints of pear and apple on the nose, very bright and jazzy in the mouth—just a delight to drink. New Pi everyday low price is \$8.99, special pricing until we sell through our stocks just \$6.99/bottle!

10 MYSTERY WINE

