

CUTTING EDGE SELECTIONS

✧ HAND-CRAFTED WINES ✧



The Enthusiast 100 of 2008

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97 **San Vicente 2005 Rioja; \$65.** Talk about a wine that makes you take notice. This is simply great modern Rioja. The nose is creamy but honest, with black fruit, mocha and finely tanned leather. The palate gives the whole range of berry and tree fruits, with expansive tannins and just enough core acidity to make it stunning. Ultra stylish and delicious; another huge success for the Eguren family that owns San Vicente and other Rioja properties. Imported by Fine Estates From Spain.

57

93 **Finca Coronado 2004 Vino de la Tierra de Castilla; \$34.** Fans of Miguel Angel de Gregorio's Finca Allende wines from Rioja will want to snap up this excellent, lush-styled blend of Graciano, Merlot and Petit Verdot from La Mancha. This wine almost proves that talent is as important as terroir, because no other La Mancha wine features this grape blend, these rich and pure medicinal flavors, and a smooth-handed sense of balance that calls for drinking now through 2013. Imported by Jorge Ordoñez Selections.

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94 **Alma Rosa 2006 Chardonnay (Santa Barbara County); \$20.** Starts with an opulent, inviting aroma of smoky honey, vanilla, tangerines, Meyer lemons, yellow apricots, green apples and minerals. In the mouth, the flavors are very similar—an explosion of fruits, spices and toast. Just a tremendous wine, but for all the volume and complexity, it's completely balanced.

20

94 **Foxen 2007 Tinaquaic Vineyard Chardonnay (Santa Maria Valley); \$32.** This bottling by veteran Foxen offers one of the starkest, most appealing choices available in California Chardonnay. Far from a superripe buttery monster, it's a lean, elegant machine. With vibrant acidity and a mineral undergirding, it offers rich flavors of citrus fruits and rind and yeasty, Champagne-like lees. *Editors' Choice.*

94 Numanthia-Termes, S.L. 2005 Numanthia (Toro); \$60. Worn leather, hickory and earth scents accent the deep fruit that Numanthia is known for. But it's the polished mouthfeel and consistent delivery of flavor and texture on this '05 that distinguishes it from so many big bombers from Toro. By the time it's done you hardly feel the tannins on the finish, which lingers comfortably for minutes. Excellent wine to drink over the next six years. Imported by Jorge Ordoñez Selections.