



MARTIGNETTI Wine Review

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Wine Enthusiast

December 1, 2005

ITEM

- 29129 2002 NICKEL & NICKEL DRAGONFLY VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON, ST. HELENA**
Decadent, hedonistic, all those adjectives don't do credit to the fancy way this Cab hits the mouth. It's Renoir in a glass. Soft but firmly structured and well oaked, the complex flavors range from cassis and vanilla to mocha and gingerbread, and are totally dry. Pure Napa Cab, although it's probably not an ager because of the softness. **SCORE 94**
- 34910 2001 ARROWOOD CABERNET SAUVIGNON, SONOMA COUNTY**
Master vintner Dick Arrowood has crafted a sensational wine from a sensational vintage. A blend from throughout the county, it shows his discernment in the overall balance, harmony and charm. Black currants, chocolate, green olives, sweet sage and vanilla-scented oak flavors come together in a lush, smooth, intricately structured wine that will probably hold for 10 years, but is best in its flamboyant, exuberant youth. **EDITOR'S CHOICE. SCORE 93**
- 28218 2003 ETUDE PINOT NOIR, CARNEROS**
Tony Soter is at the top of his game, consistently turning out wines that outperform the competition. His '03 Pinot isn't quite as monumental as the '02 Heirloom, but is a fabulous wine, fresh and complex, utterly drinkable now but with a probable life ahead. It's dry and tart in beef bouillon, cherry tomato flavors, with a sweet cherry-raspberry and spicy oak edge, and a transparent, elegant quality. Best now through 2008. **EDITOR'S CHOICE. SCORE 93**
- 28233 2002 ETUDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, NAPA VALLEY**
The backbone of this wine is from Oakville and Rutherford. It's a classic Napa Cab from what has turned out to be a fine vintage. There's the velvety cassis and chocolate fruit ripeness you expect, and the lavish oak, but good tannins and acids prevent the decadent flavors from turning flabby. Still, the wine's approachability argues for early consumption. **SCORE 93**
- 39079 NV BRUNO PAILLARD BRUT PREMIERE CUVÉE, CHAMPAGNE**
Since he created his company in 1981, Bruno Paillard has become an important force in Champagne, owning a number of other brands. But his top wines are made under his own name; they go for finesse and elegance. This bottling also has a touch of mature, toasty acid flavors. The bottles carry the year of disgorgement-an excellent idea. **SCORE 92**
- 29135 2002 NICKEL & NICKEL STELLING VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON, OAKVILLE**
This is the most expensive of Nickel & Nickel's current Cab lineup and also a remarkably good wine. It combines flamboyantly ripe fruit with a fine, rich structure and balance, although it's a little soft. The complex flavors of blackberries, blueberries and cherries are well-oaked and the finish is long and spicy. **SCORE 92**

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- ITEM #**
- 57997 NV PIPER-HEIDSIECK NV BRUT, CHAMPAGNE**
Toasty aromas leap from the glass in this deliciously mature wine. It is soft but still very dry, with acidity tamed by both fine, mature fruit and a creamy texture that sits well in the mouth. This is a very fine, tasty wine. **EDITOR'S CHOICE. SCORE 92**
- 57968 NV PIPER-HEIDSIECK NV BRUT ROSE SAUVAGE, CHAMPAGNE**
With no dosage, this is a very dry wine that has benefited from some good bottle aging. It is also darker in color than some roses, which gives the wine considerable body and richness. **SCORE 92**
- 39075 NV BRUNO PAILLARD BRUT PREMIERE CUVEE ROSE, CHAMPAGNE**
With a touch of caramel aromas, this appears initially soft. But the palate is very dry and light, balanced with flavors of lychees and red fruits. Finishes with clean acidity. **SCORE 90**
- 29153 2002 NICKEL & NICKEL BRANDING IRON CABERNET SAUVIGNON, OAKVILLE**
Here's a bright, ripe and juicy Cabernet that impresses for its wealth of flavor and refined structure. It's bold in black currants, cassis and chocolate, with a rich layering of oak, yet maintains balance and elegance. Dry and soft, this is a wine to drink now and through 2006. **SCORE 90**
- 741943 2004 MONTEVINA PINOT GRIGIO, CALIFORNIA**
Slightly sweet, but clean and zesty, this pleasant wine will go well with a nice baked ham. The flavors suggest ripe peaches, lemons and limes. **BEST BUYS. SCORE 84**
- 750700 NV CHARLES HEIDSIECK NV BRUT RESERVE, CHAMPAGNE**
This four-year-old bottling (indicated on the back label) is a rich Champagne, with some toasty maturity but also flavors of almonds, white currants and citrus peel. It is an intense, full-bodied food wine. **SCORE 89**
- 57881 NV MOET & CHANDON NV BRUT IMPERIAL, CHAMPAGNE**
Probably the best selling Champagne brand in the world, with a production of over 30 million bottles a year. Moet's quality is consistent. It has a ripeness and richness, and in this bottle, some bottle age. This bottling is not hugely fruity, but it has more to offer than just fruit. **SCORE 89**
- 57962 NV BILLECART-SALMON NV BRUT ROSE, CHAMPAGNE**
A bone-dry but delicious wine, with red fruits and a beautiful onion-skin color that just hints at rose. Lovely acidity completes the serious and highly enjoyable wine. **EDITOR'S CHOICE. SCORE 92**
- 39075 NV BRUNO PAILLARD BRUT PREMIERE CUVEE ROSE, CHAMPAGNE**
With a touch of caramel aromas, this appears initially soft. But the palate is very dry and light, balanced with flavors of lychees and red fruits. Finishes with clean acidity. **SCORE 90**



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- 36297 2004 SEVEN TERRACES SAUVIGNON BLANC, MARLBOROUGH**
A bit reined in aromatically, with modest passion fruit scents. But this wine is very bold and assertive on the palate, combining bright citrus and tropical fruit with hints of bell pepper. Good value. **SCORE 88**
- 28226 2001 DUCKHORN MERLOT, HOWELL MOUNTAIN**
Wow, what a wine. Tremendous, focused and intense. This Merlot is massive in cassis and black currant flavor, and very well-oaked. Most notable are the tannins. They're powerful and insistent, yet so smooth, so finely knit that they're totally drinkable now, although you may want to give the wine until 2006 to settle down. **EDITOR'S CHOICE. SCORE 93**
- 28853 2003 GIRARD PETITE SIRAH, NAPA VALLEY**
Classic Petite Sirah, full-bodied, rich, totally dry, very tannic and fruity. So good now with something big, like short ribs, that it will be difficult to cellar, but this is a wine that will soften and sweeten over many years. And what a finish, long in ripe, wild blackberries, cherries and coffee. **CELLAR SELECTION. SCORE 92**

Wine Enthusiast

November 15, 2005

Buying Guide

- 52250 2003 BODEGA NORTON RESERVE MALBEC, MENDOZA**
Ripe and dense, with aromas of balsamic reduction, berry fruit and bread dough. The palate runs exceptionally sweet and rich, but it's not cloying or syrupy. Totally holes-free, with can't-miss flavors and solid tannins. Drink now or hold through 2007. **SCORE 89**
- 25025 2002 ROBERT MONDAVI CHARDONNAY, CARNEROS**
Here's a dry, stylish Chard, the kind that references minerals and steel rather than overt fruit, although you'll find green apples and persimmons, dusted with cinnamon. It has good acids and a firm finish. **SCORE 89**
- 31010 2004 VINIUM CHENIN BLANC, STELLENBOSCH**
Just a hint of wood from a small percentage of barrel aging gives this wine an open, buttery character. From vines on the slopes of the Helderberg mountain outside Stellenbosch, the wine lacks pure Chenin varietal character, but there are great, ripe flavors. **SCORE 89**
- 28701 2004 WILLAKENZIE PINOT GRIS, WILLAMETTE VALLEY**
Willakenzie pulls off a powerhouse Gris in this hot, ripe vintage. A chewy core of ripe pear is substantial, layered and texturally satisfying. Hints of vanilla custard are laced throughout, and the finishing kiss of lime and citrus zest is just about perfect. **SCORE 90**

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Wine Enthusiast

November 15, 2005

ITEM #

Best Buy Bonanza - Pinot Noir

- 265481 2003 MICHAEL POZZAN SPECIAL RESERVE PINOT NOIR, NAPA VALLEY**
Tasted against Pinots costing far more, this full-bodied, lush wine stood its ground. It's ripe and soft, in the manner of Napa Pinots, with delicious cherry pie, coffee, cocoa, cola and cinnamon flavors, yet retains elegance and delicacy. The brand, based in Oakville, has turned into a dependable value producer over the years. **SCORE 86**

Best Buy Bonanza - Cabernet Sauvignon

- 28611 2003 LIBERTY SCHOOL CABERNET SAUVIGNON, CALIFORNIA**
Liberty School has a long history of providing value wines. Now owned by the Hope family (which also owns Treana and Austin Hope), it continues that tradition with this dry, balanced and elegant Cab, based on Paso Robles fruit. It's not a blockbuster, but the way the cherry and blackberry flavors interact with smoky oak and dried Provencal herbs makes the wine charming, and even complex. **SCORE 87**

- 61813 2002 THREE THIEVES BANDIT CABERNET SAUVIGNON, CALIFORNIA**
The three thieves are industry veterans "with lots of friends with too much wine." as one of them says of the brand, launched in 2002. The concept is to elevate the wine in the negociant tradition, put it in a box, and practically give it away. This Cab, with most fruit from Sonoma County and Napa Valley, is deliciously fruity, and puts to shame many cabs costing far more. **SCORE 86**

Best Buy Bonanza - Other Red Wines

- 28843 2003 ARTEZIN ZINFANDEL, MENDOCINO-AMADOR-NAPA**
This is brand new from Hess Collection, and a very good wine. Wine-maker Randall Johnson calls it a field blend, with small amounts of Syrah and Petite Sirah. There are delicious blueberry and cherry flavors, along with the Zin's brambly, peppery notes. The wine is fully dry, balanced and harmonious despite. **SCORE 90**

- 35006 2003 BANFI CENTINE, TOSCANA**
A succulent, chewy Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon blend with intense aromas of coffee, tar, leather and toasted wood. The tannins are still a bit of raw and beg for hearty meat. Tightly packed cherry and blackberry linger over a long finish. Castello Banfi performs the extraordinary vintage after vintage: They produce almost 1 million cases per year and continue to offer excellent quality on their lowest-priced products. **SCORE 87**

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ITEM

Best Buy Bonanza - Other White Wines

- 233611 2004 HEDGES CMS WHITE, COLUMBIA VALLEY**
You may recognize the CMS label from the Cabernet/Merlot/Syrah-blended red. Now this Red Mountain winery has added a CMS white, replacing their Fume-Charonnay with a Chardonnay/Marsanne/Sauvignon Blanc (get it? Another CMS!) blend that has plump fruit and just a bare hint of sweetness. Clever and flavorful. **SCORE 88**
- 39652 2004 MARQUES DE CACERES BLANCO, RIOJA**
Always a solid Rioja white; the 2004, made from Viura grapes, is ripe and refreshing, with aromas of melon and canned fruit. Fresh on the palate, with notes of green herbs, cry melon, apple and white pepper. Zesty and clean, with dryness and pepper to the finish. This is your classic aperitif wine; it requires very little thought and it works with appetizers like crudite, oysters or shrimp canapes. **SCORE 86**

Best Buy Bonanza - Roses

- 745014 2004 FOLIE A DEUX MENAGE A TROIS ROSE TABLE WINE, CALIFORNIA**
This Napa Cab specialist jumps into the red-hot rose category with a non-traditional blend of Merlot, Syrah and Gewurztraminer. The grapes were cold-soaked and fermented in stainless steel at low temperatures, preserving vibrantly ripe red cherry, raspberry, strawberry, mocha and cinnamon flavors, finished with a lively spritz of citrus and spice. Alcohol is a modest 13%. Enjoy this Provençal-style charmer with a spicy Mediterranean fish stew. **SCORE 87**
- 36296 2005 ANGOVE'S NINE VINES ROSE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA**
Dark red-garnet in color, with aromas of meat, mineral and plum. I like this rose for its full body and dark berry-and-chalk flavor profile. It's 70% Grenache and 30% Shiraz, a grownup (read: dry and full) version of rose at an affordable price. Its modern, sleek packaging, too, belies its cost. **SCORE 86**
- 423140 NV SEGURA VIUDAS NV ARIA BRUT ROSE, CAVA**
Plump and nice, with watermelon aromas that match the wine's watermelon hue. Made from Pinot Noir, Aria carries a mild hint of sweetness along with drier berry and peach-pit flavors. And on the finish you get a clear smack of Pinot-driven cherry skin to offset its richness. Perfect for brunch, as an accompaniment to a mushroom-and-cheese omelet, while that noted touch of sweetness gives it the versatility to go with dessert. **SCORE 87**



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Wine Spectator

November 30, 2005

ITEM

- 39618 2004 CASA LAPOSTOLLE CUVÉE ALEXANDRE CHARDONNAY, CASABLANCA VALLEY**
Focused and elegant, with deceptive length and power, this lets lush apple, pear, fig and toast notes stretch along languidly, yet never becomes tiring to drink. Well done. Drink now through 2006. **SMART BUY. SCORE 90**
- 750721 1985 CHARLES HEIDSIECK BRUT CHAMPAGNE CHARLIE, CHAMPAGNE**
Intense and concentrated with flavors of coffee, candied berry, citrus and vanilla pastry, this is a hedonist's Champagne. Full, lush and firm, it saturates the palate and the finish goes on and on. Ideal to enjoy now. Drink now through 2012. **SCORE 96**
- 57853 1998 MOËT & CHANDON BRUT CHAMPAGNE CUVÉE DOM PERIGNON, CHAMPAGNE**
Broad and airy in texture with enticing candied berry, citrus and coffee aromas and flavors. It has bright acidity, keeping it well-defined through the lingering finish. Drink now through 2012. **SCORE 90**
- 57841 1995 MOËT & CHANDON BRUT ROSE CHAMPAGNE CUVÉE DOM PERIGNON, CHAMPAGNE**
Full-bodied and rich, this finely textured '95 reveals dried citrus, berry and tobacco notes on a muscular frame. It's well-balanced, yet needs some time to mellow. Ideal with light meat or poultry dishes, or lobster. Drink now through 2012. **SCORE 92**
- 36259 2003 PEREGRINE PINOT NOIR, CENTRAL OTAGO**
Crisp style is generous with its blackberry and herbal spice aromas and flavors, lingering on the fine-grained finish. Drink now through 2010. **SCORE 89**

Wine Spectator

December 15, 2005

- 230814 2004 BOGLE CHARDONNAY, CALIFORNIA**
Solid quaffer, with appealing tropical and spicy apricot flavors and a soft and creamy texture. **BEST VALUES. SCORE 85**
- 27896 NV MOËT & CHANDON BRUT ROSE CHAMPAGNE IMPERIAL NV, CHAMPAGNE**
Full of berry, earth and spice notes, this rose is delicate and smooth, with a tangy acidity and chalky sensation keeping it focused. Well-balanced and long. Drink now. **SCORE 88**

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Wine Spectator

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ITEM

- 28701 2004 WILLAKENZIE PINOT GRIS, WILLAMETTE VALLEY**
Soft, broad and aromatic, with lots of nectarine, grapefruit, honey and almond flavors mixing up enthusiastically as the finish persists. Drink now. **SCORE 89**
- 28846 2002 WILLAKENZIE PINOT NOIR ALIETTE, WILLAMETTE VALLEY**
Distinctive, firm, with chewy tannins around a plump, generous core of blackberry, cherry and tar flavors, lingering on the beautifully focused finished. Drink now through 2012. **SCORE 91**
- 265126 2003 ELK COVE PINOT NOIR ROOSEVELT, WILLAMETTE VALLEY**
Seamless, harmonious, with pure plum and blueberry fruit wrapped in a veil of fine tannins, shaded beautifully with hints of apricot, cream and dusky spice. This one exudes class. Best from 2007 through 2015. **SCORE 91**

California Grapevine

October - November 2005

- 28233 2002 ETUDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, NAPA VALLEY**
Medium-dark ruby; attractive, spicy, plummy, toasty, cassis and black cherry fruit aroma with notes of espresso and vanilla; full body; rich, textured, plummy, toasty, black fruit flavors with a hint of bitter-sweet chocolate; relatively soft, full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Approachable now though deserves several more years of bottle aging. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. SCORE 90**
- 25507 2002 OPUS ONE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, NAPA VALLEY**
Medium to medium-dark ruby; attractive, plummy, slightly herbaceous ripe blackberry fruit aroma with hints of mocha and cassis; full body; big, forward, rich, textured, black cherry fruit flavors with hints of cedar and olive and a velvety mouth feel; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Approachable now. Recent vintages have shown marked improvement. **VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. SCORE 90**
- 27764 2002 WHITEHALL LANE WINERY CABERNET SAUVIGNON RESERVE, NAPA VALLEY**
Medium-dark ruby with purplish tinges; attractive, forward, rich plummy, cassis and ripe black cherry fruit aroma with notes of green olive and overtones of creamy oak; full body; big, rich, textured, cedary, concentrated, black currant and blackberry fruit flavors; full tannin; rough, mouth-drying finish; lingering aftertaste. Needs some bottle aging. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED SCORE 89**

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California Grapevine

October - November 2005

- ITEM #**
- 266126 2003 TALLEY VINEYARDS PINOT NOIR "ROSEMARY'S VINEYARD", ARROYO GRANDE VALLEY**
Medium purplish ruby; attractive, rich, intense, complex, spicy, smoky, red cherry fruit aroma with overtones of toasty oak; full body; big, rich, concentrated, highly extracted, mouth-filling, very ripe cherry fruit flavors; well balanced and structured; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows intense fruit though a bit rough now, needing several more years of bottle aging to reach its potential. **VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. SCORE 93**
- 266086 2003 TALLEY VINEYARDS PINOT NOIR "RINCON VINEYARD", ARROYO GRANDE VALLEY**
Medium ruby with purplish tinges; attractive, forward, intense, spicy, plummy, ripe black cherry and black raspberry fruit aroma with good depth and intensity; full body; forward, rich, plush, ripe black cherry fruit flavors; well balanced and structured; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Developed some complexity with airing in the glass. Deserves several more years of bottle aging. **VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. SCORE 92**
- 28218 2003 ETUDE PINOT NOIR, CARNEROS**
Medium-light to medium ruby with purplish tinges; pleasant, floral, smoky, slightly stemmy, red cherry and strawberry fruit aroma with hints of cocoa and ginger; medium-full to full body; tight, elegant, cherry fruit flavors with good depth; well balanced; lingering aftertaste. Deserves several more years of bottle aging to develop. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. SCORE 87**
- 28843 2003 HESS COLLECTION ARTEZIN ZINFANDEL, MENDOCINO-AMADOR-NAPA COUNTIES**
Medium-dark ruby; herbal, jammy, black raspberry and cranberry fruit aroma with notes of green olive, black pepper, and tobacco; full body; big, forward, rich, very ripe, jammy, briary, mouth-filling, raspberry and wild berry fruit flavors; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. SCORE 89**
- 744546 2003 MONTEVINA "TERRA d'oro" ZINFANDEL, AMADOR COUNTY**
Medium to medium-dark ruby color; attractive, herbal, briary, red berry fruit aroma with a note of green olive; full body; big, forward, plush, jammy, briary, wild berry fruit flavors with a full, rounded mouth feel; full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very appealing to drink now. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. SCORE 88**
- 28639 2002 ZACA MESA "BLACK BEAR BLOCK" SYRAH, SANTA YNEZ VALLEY**
Medium to medium-dark ruby color; attractive, forward, rich, spicy, jammy, sweet cassis and blackberry fruit aroma with notes of vanilla and cola; full body; big, forward, rich, plush, concentrated, dark, berry fruit flavors with overtones of creamy oak; medium-full to full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows forward rich fruit and is approachable now, though deserving of several more years of bottle aging. **VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. SCORE 90**



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California Grapevine

October - November 2005

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- 262361 2002 SHAFER "RELENTLESS" SYRAH, NAPA VALLEY**
Medium-dark to dark purplish ruby; attractive, forward, intense, complex, spicy, cedary, ripe blackberry and blueberry fruit aroma with overtones of cocoa and sweet oak; full body; big, concentrated, highly extracted, cedary, dark currant and jammy blackberry fruit flavors with a creamy mouth feel; full tannin; rough, harsh finish; lingering aftertaste. Shows a lot of new oak that still needs to be resolved with the fruit, deserving of another three to five more years of bottle aging. **VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED SCORE 91**
- 28863 2002 HdV SYRAH, CARNEROS**
Medium-dark purplish ruby; attractive, forward, intense, toasty, blackberry jam aroma with overtones of charred oak; medium-full to full body; forward, very rich, spicy, blackberry and black raspberry fruit flavors with good depth; firmly structured; medium-full tannin; slightly tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Some tasters noted a threshold level of sulfur. **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. SCORE 89**

Saveur

November 2005

Tasting Notes

- 420766 2000 ALOIS LAGADER LAGREIN "LINDENBURG", ALTO ADIGE**
A vineyard-designated, old-vines wine from within the Bolzano city limits; impressive concentration and a typically high glycerin; earth, coffee and especially attractive oak; sweet, brambly and pretty.
- 43518 1999 ROYAL TOKAJI ASZU 5 PUTTONYOS**
Dark, woody and earthy, with plummy sweetness. Delicious.



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Connoisseur's Guide

October 2005

ITEM

- 28750 2003 BELLE GLOS TAYLOR LANE VINEYARD PINOT NOIR, SONOMA COAST**
It's brushy, leafy overlay, fruit focus and has an inviting velvety texture at entry that clearly brings it into the Pinot Noir camp. It's ripeness contributes to a bit of finishing heat and consigns the wine to service with rich beef or lamb roasts. **SCORE 88**
- 58831 2003 DOMAINE CHANDON PINOT NOIR, CARNEROS**
Layered, complex aromas of ripe cherries, dried spices and brown sugar may be a little restrained in volume but make up for that minor distraction with a supple, slightly velvety mouthfeel and a long, fairly firm finish. In between, the wine delivers ripe, fairly deep flavors that will open up further after a stay in the cellar of some two to five years. **SCORE 89**
- 28218 2003 ETUDE PINOT NOIR, CARNEROS**
Errant notes of earth and smoke make finding fruit a bit hard at first in the nose, but as concentrated smells of cherries evolve, so too does this wine deliver solid flavors of mineral-tinged fruit underscored by a touch of persistent earthiness. Firmly balanced and trimmed with an edge of puckery tanning that is brought to prominence by obvious acids, this is one for the cellar and will require a few years of patience. **SCORE 89**
- 262971 2002 SAINTSBURY PINOT NOIR RESERVE, CARNEROS**
There are times when Saintsbury Reserves are built along sturdy lines that limit an early look at Pinot's sensual side, and this wine represents a clear example of that approach. Still, its focus never wavers from Pinot's sweet cherry personality, and there is plenty of underlying richness. It is a wine that calls for keeping and may very well reward a bit of patience. **SCORE 89**

Best Buys in the Market

- 28244 2002 DUCKHORN PARADUXX**
Zinfandel-dominated, remarkably deep and accomplished wine that is bursting with berries and rich oak and wins Best Buy Recommendation... **THREE PUFFS.**

