

Anthony Dias BLUE *REVIEWS*

For this installment, I've selected some recent releases that are suitable for gift-giving this holiday season.

In each issue, Editor-in-Chief Anthony Dias Blue selects a wide range of the best wines and spirits from among the more than 500 he samples over the course of a month. The reviews are subjective editorial evaluations, made without regard to advertising, and products are scored on a 100-point scale:

85-89: VERY GOOD

90-94: OUTSTANDING

95-100: CLASSIC

Once products are selected for publication, producers and importers will be offered the option of having their review accompanied by an image (bottle photo or label art) for a nominal fee. There is no obligation to add an image, nor does the decision affect the review or score in any way.

☺ The "twisty" icon indicates wines sealed with a screwcap closure.

For additional Blue Reviews, go to www.tastingpanelmag.com.

Prices are for 750 ml. bottles unless otherwise noted.

DOMESTIC

90 Cornerstone Cellars 2011 Chardonnay, Willamette Valley (\$40)

Juicy and smooth with crisp citrus and lush, viscous texture; rich, dense and showing a racy finish.



90 Calera 2012 Viognier, Mt. Harlan (\$30)

Smooth, fresh and elegant with tangy acidity and spice; sophisticated and showing a long, refined finish.

90 Hunnicutt 2012 Chardonnay, Napa Valley (\$45)

Smooth and creamy with bright, juicy fruit and hints of oak; vibrant, lush and mouth-filling; long and balanced.

92 Patz & Hall 2011 Chardonnay, Hyde Vineyard, Carneros (\$58)

Another stunning wine from one of America's greatest vineyards; smooth and ripe with tangy, vibrant acidity and lovely texture; crisp and lively with elegance and great style.



88 Waterbrook Winery 2011 Syrah, Columbia Valley (\$15)

Fresh and spicy with ripe plum and juicy style with notes of pepper and tangy acidity; long and nervy. 92% Syrah, 4% Carmenere, 4% Viognier

PRECEPT BRANDS

92 R2 Wine Co 2012 Pinot Noir, S&B; Signature Series, Sta. Rita Hills (\$56)

Juicy, crisp and bright; racy and lively flavors with stylish elegance and a lovely finish; long and pure.



91 J. Lohr 2010 Hilltop Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles (\$35)

Lush, deep and smooth with dense plum, blackberry and spice; rich, lively and balanced with vivid flavors and a long, mellow finish. 99% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Syrah.

94 Three Sticks 2011 Pinot Noir, The James, Sta. Rita Hills (\$60)

Tangy and bright with racy acidity, cherry and lively plum; elegant, refined and impressive; built with firm structure and lovely flavors; long and quite impressive.

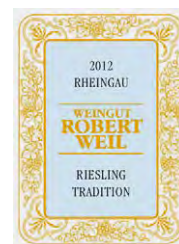
93 Black Kite Cellars 2010 Angel Hawk Pinot Noir, Kite's Rest Vineyard, Anderson Valley (\$80)

Smooth and lush with bright black cherry and raspberry fruit; lush and dense with lovely balance and depth; long, ripe and elegant.

IMPORTS

91 Robert Weil 2012 Tradition Riesling, Rheingau, Germany (\$20)

Clean, fresh and juicy with tangy citrus and bracing acidity; pure, focused and racy with a hint of sweetness; balanced and lovely.



LOUSEN BROS. USA

90 **Herdade do Esporão 2012 Verdelho, Alentejano, Portugal (\$13)** Clean and generous with juicy green lime fruit and some grassy and jasmine notes; distinctive, fresh and crisp; long and balanced.

AIDL WINES & LIQUORS



90 **Maximin Grünhäuser 2012 Feinherb Riesling, Mosel, Germany (\$22)** Racy

and pure with vivid citrus and minerals; medium dry and crisp with tangy flavors and good balance.

LOUSEN BROS. USA

90 **Tintara 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon, McLaren Vale, Australia (\$19)** Smooth and lush with dark color and velvety texture; juicy and bright with crisp acidity and rich plum and black raspberry; long and balanced.

ACCOLADE WINES



90 **Les Trois Couronnes 2010 Châteauneuf-du-Pape, France (\$40)** Bright and tangy with silky texture and well-integrated flavors of plum, raspberry and spice; balanced and pleasant with depth and subtle complexity; long and elegant. 60% Grenache, 20% Syrah, 20% Mourvèdre.

OWS/OTHER WINE AND SPIRITS

92 **Cave de Tain L'Hermitage 2010 Saint-Joseph Esprit de Granit, France (\$44)** Ripe and juicy with bright blackberry, boysenberry and spice; smooth, juicy and vibrant with great balance, generous flavors

and classic structure; long, mouth-filling and harmonious; stunning.

OWS/OTHER WINE AND SPIRITS



92 **Nino Negri 2009 5 Stelle, Sforzato di Valtellina, Italy (\$80)** Fragrant and complex with racy acidity and bright, tangy fruit; earth, spice and deep, ripe flavors; long, rich and layered.

FREDERICK WILDMAN & SONS



Coro Mendocino

TO HIGHLIGHT THE QUALITY AND

diversity of the fruit grown in Mendocino County, the Coro Mendocino series of wines has been created. This year ten local producers have participated, creating their own signature blends with a Zinfandel base. The wines, uniformly priced at \$40 each, are screened in a blind-tasting format by an expert panel before they can be granted the Coro Mendocino label. Each of the ten wines makes a positive individual statement and together they clearly demonstrate the character and depth that Mendocino can produce.



88 **Brutocao Cellars 2010 Coro Mendocino, Mendocino County (\$40)** Spicy, earthy nose; silky and smooth with spice, plum and black raspberry fruit; meaty, dense and long. 66% Zinfandel, 20% Barbera, 14% Primitivo.

90 **Claudia Springs Winery 2010 Coro Mendocino, Mendocino County (\$40)** Bright, tangy and juicy with generous flavors of plum, raspberry and spice; pure and balanced with crisp style; long and vibrant. 41% Zinfandel, 32% Primitivo, 10% Petite Sirah, 10% Grenache, 7% Carignane.

91 **Fetzer 2010 Coro Mendocino, Mendocino County (\$40)** Smooth and dense with ripe plum, blackberry and spice; rounded and polished with hints of vanilla oak; juicy and fresh with excellent acid structure; long and focused. 67% Zinfandel, 23% Syrah, 10% Petite Sirah.

90 **Golden Vineyards 2010 Coro Mendocino, Mendocino County (\$40)** Juicy and fresh with tangy plum and blackberry fruit; aromatic and racy with crisp acidity and spice; rich and dense with depth and style. Biodynamic. 50% Zinfandel, 27% Syrah, 23% Petite Sirah.

92 **McFadden Farms 2010 Coro Mendocino, Mendocino County (\$40)** Bright and fresh with juicy plum and raspberry; smooth and lush with elegant style and ripe flavors; generous and showing fine acid structure; long and stylish, balanced and delicious. 57% Zinfandel, 31% Syrah, 12% Petite Sirah.

89 **McNab Ridge Winery 2010 Coro Mendocino, Mendocino County (\$40)** Dense and concentrated with ripe plum and meaty flavors; fat, deep and rich; long and intense. 63% Zinfandel, 32% Petite Sirah, 5% Pinotage.

90 **Mendocino Vineyards 2010 Coro Mendocino, Mendocino County (\$40)** Smooth and lush with ripe plum and blackberry; juicy and rich, dense and mature; tangy and bright, long and stylish. 48% Zinfandel 39% Syrah, 13% Petite Sirah.

88 **Parducci 2010 Coro Mendocino, Mendocino County (\$40)** Smooth and meaty with dense flavors of plum and berry fruit; lush and balanced with a long, concentrated finish. 55% Zinfandel, 30% Petite Sirah, 10% Syrah, 5% Grenache.

91 **Philo Ridge Vineyards 2010 Coro Mendocino, Mendocino County (\$40)** Bright and juicy with fresh plum and cherry fruit; dense and rich with tangy acidity and lovely balance; vibrant, racy and long. 50% Zinfandel, 30% Syrah, 20% Petite Sirah.

90 **Ray's Station 2010 Coro Mendocino, Mendocino County (\$40)** Silky and juicy with tangy plum, raspberry and spice; fresh, vibrant and balanced; sleek and bright with good length and style. 59% Zinfandel, 33% Syrah, 8% Petite Sirah.