

THE WINE GUY

# Think globally when making winter wine selections

My last column identified several American wines priced for everyday drinking through the winter. This column covers imported wines.



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Wine is best as an aperitif for its sweet, fruity qualities. The muscat grape provides apricot and tropical fruits like mango.

**2003 Pinot Gris, Shiraz, Koona Hills** (\$18) at Australian Penfolds is a legendary name in Australia. It's a leader in nearly every category of Australian wine. It's a formidable share of the wine and some spice and lively red fruit but with an easygoing texture.

**2003 Tamar Malbec Reserva** (\$10), Argentina. Tamar is an indigenous term meaning "to do everything with passion." With its dark berry and plum flavors, slight earthiness, firm structure and attractive price, you just might find yourself drinking this wine with passion.

**2002 Premium Bordeaux** (\$12), France. Who says you can't find good Bordeaux priced for everyday drinking? A regional blend of merlot, cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc, this one offers good character, interesting red fruits, a cedary nose, decent weight and dusty tannins.

**Barossa Valley Estate Spires Shiraz** (\$12), Australia. This winery is fascinating to me as a joint venture between a growers' cooperative and the Hardy Wine Co. as for this typically peppery wine, with its forward cherry and plum wrapped in a supple texture.

**2003 Santa Carolina Barrica Selection Chardonnay** (\$13), Chile. This tasty selection from

a winery established in 1875 near Santiago has interesting lime and tropical fruit, with a little cream and spice, a crisp mouth feel and a tangy finish.

**2001 Campo Viejo Reserva**, (\$13) and **2000 Campo Viejo Gran Reserva**, (\$20), Spain. This Spanish winery generously has aged these for us. The Reserva spent 18 months in cask and 18 more in bottle, and the Gran Reserva spent two years in cask and three years in bottle. The Reserva offers red fruits and vanilla in a well-rounded frame; the Gran Reserva is more complex with cooked fruits and spice.

**2003 Michel Torino Cabernet Sauvignon "Don David"** (\$15), Argentina. From a 14-year-old winery with 5,500-foot high vineyards in Argentina, this wine offers nice black fruits and fresh wood aromas, flavors of plum and full but soft tannins.

**2004 Graffina Shiraz "G,"**

(\$16), Argentina. Another one of Argentina's oldest wineries has produced a shiraz to compare with the best in this price range. It has lots of raspberry and plum fruit, a fairly dense, yet smooth texture, and a minny note.

**2004 Boutari Moschofilero**, (\$16), Greece. This white wine, from one of Greece's most respected wineries, is new to the U.S. It is made from an indigenous grape (pronounced "nosko-FEEL-ero") that is quite refreshing, with lively lemon, orange, grapefruit and melon.

**2001 Wynns Coonawarra Estate Cabernet Sauvignon**, (\$16), Australia. The 50th vintage of Wynns' "Black Label" cab from the Coonawarra region of South Australia, this is a lot of wine for the money. Dusty, toasty, dark fruit aromas precede concentrated plum, a firm structure and chalky but smooth tannins. This is one of the few wines in this price

range that can age well. In fact, I recently tasted a wonderful 1976 vintage!

**2004 Aura "Verdejo" Rueda**, (\$18), Spain. Verdejo is the dominant grape in the Rueda region of northwestern Spain. It's known for making refreshing white wines like this one, with its toast and honey, herbs, pears and apples. It's perfect if you like racy sauvignon blancs but want to try something a little different.

**2002 Fra Guerau Montsant**, (\$18), Spain. Montsant borders the more-famous Priorat region near the Mediterranean in northeastern Spain. This estate has produced an interesting blend of garnacha, syrah, cabernet sauvignon, tempranillo, monastrell and carinena. A blast of creamy, spicy oak is complemented by cherry fruit and a certain elegance.

**2004 Pascal Jolivet Sancerre**, (\$24) and **Pouilly Fumé**, (\$24) France. Try some sauvignon

blanc from the so young, dynamic L producer (establishes makes only these Both are quite aromatic and herbal Pouilly displays a mineral character Sancerre has a slight palate.

**2004 Innikskillin Franc Icewine Niagara** (\$100, 375ml), Canada. Though not for everyone, intensely aromatic, citrus dessert wine of red fruits, with a green — would be bitter-sweet chocolate's Day. The rare attribute to the wine nature of make compounded by the low yields of cabernet

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