

COLLIN'S COLUMN

Top 10 of 2009

Collin's Top 10 for 2009 (Part 1: #10 - #6) by Collin Williams

It is always difficult to wrap up the hundreds of wines that we taste every year into 10 that were outstanding. While we diligently taste each wine and analyze them professionally, it is still a challenge to judge every example on a point scale. It has been my general practice when I try wines, they are judged on their initial impression of quality, their comparison to others in the same genre, and my personal preference. After all, wine tasting is very personal.

This year's list was based on my travels abroad, the new projects and brands we've built this year within Spec's, and my concentration for buying. I found that as I was creating this list many of these wines were the big, sumptuous type. This was interesting to me as it shows a person's "palate preference" when tasting. For some unknown reason, 2009 was a year in which I had a heightened awareness and tendency to prefer those wines that were bold and fruity.

Enjoy and let me know how these ranked on your Top 10 of 2009.



#10

Marques de la Concordia Crianza 2006
(Rioja, Spain)

\$11.40 cash

CW - "3.5 of 5"; EVD - One of the best selling wines at Specs!

*Having reviewed previously (2004) with similar notes on the current vintage, the 2006 Crianza is more dominant with oak and chocolate notes than its preceding years. Still true to its cherry fruit and densely packed berry notes, the complete package of acidity and fruit wraps up nicely with a smooth, cocoa-like finish. True "New World" style from Rioja.

#9

Louis de Sacy Champagne Grand Cru NV
(Champagne, France)

\$34.99 cash

CW - "4 of 5"; WW - with friends!

This is a great bottle of wine and one that can slip under the radar if you're not careful. Blended with 60% Pinot Noir, 35% Chardonnay, and 5% Meunier, this wine has been a favorite amongst our team at Spec's and has been a benchmark for new entrants into that price category. Toast, lemon, tree fruit, and soft berry fruit combine with a lush yet elegant body on the mid palate. Sure to impress - drink with friends!



#8

Arzuaga La Planta Ribera del Duero 2007
(Ribera del Duero, Spain)

\$12.75 cash

CW - "4 of 5"; EVD/WW - One of my favorite wines

Arzuaga has been producing fantastic wines for years and has hit a certain special sensor in my palate. I love these wines because they are bold, supple, and have a flavor that is similar to the juice you taste as you bite into a chocolate covered cherry. Black fruit and nutty chocolate spice dominate the mid palate while lovely, soft nuances linger a while after the finish.



#7

Mettler Old Vine Zinfandel "Epicenter" 2006
(Lodi, California)

\$17.99 cash

CW - "4 of 5"; WW - What a surprise! Hidden Gem.

I tried this wine in a blind tasting with Dale Robertson of the Houston Chronicle and was blown away. Huge and succulent with tons of hazelnut and blueberry. This wine showed layers of complex fruit and secondary flavors with brilliant acidity that was very refreshing on such a big wine. Very nutty throughout with a juicy finish. Hidden Gem for those Zin-lovers out there.



#6

Chateau Pontac Lynch Margaux 2003
(Bordeaux, France)

\$31.34 cash

CW - "4 of 5"; WW - Excellent finish.

A blend of 40% Merlot, 35% Cabernet, 20% Cabernet Franc, and 5% Petite Verdot. Aged 14 months in French Oak. This is one of the finer wines (worldwide) I have had in a while! Dried cherries and leather on the nose are combined with smooth notes of oak. Brilliant acidity with juicy fruit flavors remind me of biting into a dark chocolate covered cherry. Full bodied with an excellent finish.



Surprise of the Year!

Valde Sil Godello 2006

(DO Valdeorras, Spain)

\$17.42 cash

CW - "4 of 5"; WW - Unique and enjoyable

I really enjoyed this wine. Many people are finding wines from the northwestern region of Spain exciting and this wine proves it. The Godello gives off a wonderful nose of grapefruit, lemon and melon while the palate explodes with brilliant mineral driven citrus fruit notes. Crisp finish, perfect for shellfish.

