

Wine Down with Spec's Episode: Collin's Top 10 Wine Picks of 2011! (Part 2)

by Collin Williams

I hope all of you enjoyed my wine selections #10 - #6. I felt each of them were unique and prove to be great quality wines as well as correctly priced for their caliber. I highly encourage you to begin making your own "Top Wines of the Year" list. Through this exercise, you will hopefully discover more about your pallet, your tendencies towards certain flavors/profiles in the wine, and can ultimately increase your level of satisfaction in your wine consuming experience.

Following are my Top 5 Wines of the year. I was very surprised at the #1 pick as I usually will lean towards a Spaniard. But, this year was full of surprises, new wines, and new attitudes towards wine making throughout the world.

I truly hope you enjoy these articles and the other multimedia sources we have been bringing to your via our Spec's World. Your support for Spec's and all of our efforts to provide you with the best customer service is an integral part of our success. Thanks for a great year in 2011 and stay tuned for more to come in 2012!



#05 Juan Gil Tinto 2008 (Jumilla, Spain) \$12.19 cash

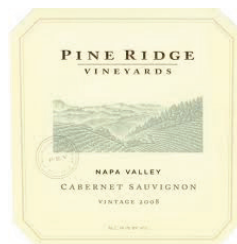
100% Monastrell from Jumilla, Spain, I have always loved this wine from my first experience with it nearly 7 years ago. The Gil Family continues to over-deliver with this wine year after year arriving at their best offering yet with the 2008. Perfectly

balanced on the palate highlighted with lush blackberries and subtle chocolate notes, the Juan Gil Tinto continues to develop in the mouth and long after the finish. Smooth and elegant, a winner for everyday or to impress.

#04 Paradigm Cabernet Sauvignon 2007 (Napa Valley, California) \$57.94 cash

One of the truly hidden gems from the Napa Valley, Ren and Marilyn Harris have really created something special with their wines.

Just off the beaten path of one of the main highways running through the valley, Paradigm likes to be inconspicuous and let the wines do all of the talking. Also, with a winemaker like Heidi Barret behind the production you know the wines will be stellar. Round, sumptuous, with loads of complexity, this Cabernet should be priced closer to the \$100 - 200's, but is a steal at its current level. Don't miss this one!



#03 Pine Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon 2008 (Napa Valley, California) \$37.89 cash

Pine Ridge has made a name for itself through its focus on Bordeaux varietals. This 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from the Napa Valley blew me away when I tried it this year. Surprising and incredible are two words that I use to describe the flavor. The winemakers for Pine Ridge really want to allow the "terroir" of the valley to show, and this example is no

exception. Seamless with just the right balance of oak, fruit, and spice, this is a perfect wine for those collectors and general Cabernet lovers alike.

#02 Contino Reserva 2005 (Rioja, Spain) \$43.49 cash

I was already a big fan of Rioja wine and those from Bodegas C.V.N.E., but when I visited this property over the summer and tried the wines my horizon for their quality was elevated. This wine made in the Reserva style is the Bodegas entry-tier. 85% Tempranillo, 10% Graciano, 5% Mazuelo, this beautiful blend from Rioja truly highlights the wonderful flavors that come from the region. Focused on a black cherry spice mix, this wine continues to develop as it opens up. Great for your Rioja fans, or to impress those collectors that are too heavy on over-oaked Cabs from Napa and are looking for a new wine experience.



#01 Dunham Cellars Baby Bear Syrah 2008 (Walla Walla, Washington) \$52.89 cash

Sometimes there are those wines that absolutely blow you away when you are unsuspecting. For me this was the Dunham Cellars Baby Bear Syrah from Washington. I tried this wine at a fancy Bush Library Dinner earlier this year and was stunned. Throughout the evening we were served fantastic wines, but once everyone in the room tasted the Syrah there became a understanding of which wine reigned supreme over all others. This wine is dense with seamless layers of complexity highlighted by the lush purple and blue fruit. Think of the cocoa powered chocolate truffle with a creamy, juicy blackberry filling and you will begin to approach the flavors

in this wine. In addition, I have always been a fan of wines from Washington State and this one reconfirmed my affection.

