

# COLLIN'S COLUMN

# Top 10 of 2009

## Collin's Top 10 for 2009 (Part 1: #5 - #1) by Collin Williams

Following are my Top 5 of 2009. All are available at our Smith store location and some you can find at other Spec's locations around Texas. Hopefully, there were some surprises in this list for you as well as some favorites. Enjoy!

### #5

**Bodegas La Rioja Alta Reserva "Alberdi" 2002**  
(Rioja, Spain)

\$23.99 cash

CW - "4 of 5"; EVD - Fantastic and complex.

I really enjoy these types of Rioja wines. My palate really adheres to the almost orange/cherry Kool Aid-like flavors that the wine brings out. 100% Tempranillo. Plenty of acidity makes this wine sing with beautiful berry and wild cherry flavors on the palate. On the finish, you can envision biting into a decadent chocolate covered cherry with its juices oozing out with each bite. Perfect now! Fantastic and complex. This particular line of wines from La Rioja Alta has gone more "colorful" in recent years.



### #4

**Marramiero Inferi Montepulciano 2005**  
(Abruzzo, Italy)

\$40.36 cash

CW - "4 of 5"; WW - Great label and palate!

This is a unique wine with a great label and palate. Big, beautiful notes of cedar planks and oak on the nose followed by sugar - glazed spice nuances, cardamom, red berry and lush strawberry on the front and mid palate. Well integrated tannins with balanced acidity to allow the flavors to be the stars of the show. A slight hazelnut component to the finish makes this wine very nice and complex.



### #3

**Chateau d'Yquem 2004**  
(Sauternes, France)

\$280.80 cash (750ml)

\$141.70 cash (375ml)

CW - "5 of 5!". WW - Liquid Gold

Have you ever tasted something so elegant that you swore you were drinking gold? The d'Yquem 2004 was this experience for me. Instantly mixing the brilliant acidity with the softness of the sugars when first hitting the palate. Notes of orange dreamsickle, sweet peach, mango puree, and vanilla scream out loud in this wine. Long lasting finish that you wish would not stop. Liquid Gold!



### #2

**Deerfield Ranch Merlot Cuvee 2004** (Sonoma, California)

\$25.18 cash (w. \$1 key discount)

CW - "4 of 5"; WW - Great structure and rich.

While this is technically a blended wine, the Merlot takes center stage on the palate. Here, you can really see Merlot's contribution to the flavors in a wine when it is pitted against others. Layers of mocha, rich strawberry and plum, followed by chocolate notes from the oak aging. Great structure and richness.



### #1 of 2☆☆9

**Bodegas Losada Mencia 2007**  
(Bierzo, Spain)

\$21.80 cash

CW - "4.5 of 5"; WW - Excellent and memorable!

My #1 for 2009 was one that was a new find, but one that has impressed everyone. I chose this one for a number of reasons: 1. Yes, its Spanish! 2. It's a unique region with very little wine produced and exported to the US (generating a "hidden find" aspect). 3. Flavors of the wine over-delivered for the price and would stand well with others in higher price points. 4. The Mencia grape and especially the DO Bierzo is producing fantastic wines that are turning heads in the global wine world. 5. Lastly, this was a wine that is within a moderate price range and one that I would feel comfortable purchasing again and again.

#### Technical Data:

Vineyards: Small parcels of old bush vines mainly around Losada influence area; from Cacabelos to Villafranca

Farming Practices: Practicing Organic - minimum intervention out of respect for tradition

Age of Vineyards: 50 year old vineyards

Soils: Smooth clay on slopes

Aging: 12 months in French and American oak

#### Tasting Notes:

On the nose, smooth oak and leather with rich mocha chocolate and soft chocolate truffle dust. Medium body with great structure. Chocolate covered cherries and strawberries appear on the mid palate with a soft finish and plenty of length showing a subtle strawberry juice nuance. Powerful while remaining seamless and smooth throughout. Excellent and memorable!

