

YEAR'S BEST AUSTRIAN WINES

Our blind panels tasted **208** new-release Austrian wines over the past 12 months.

Tara Q. Thomas, our critic for Austrian wines, rated **53** as exceptional (90+) and **16** as Best Buys.

Find a complete list of wines tasted and all reviews at wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

WHITE

CHARDONNAY



90 | Hannes Reeh \$22
2013 Burgenland Chardonnay Hannes Reeh has removed "Unplugged" from the name, but this chardonnay remains unoaked, un-enzymed, un-acidulated and otherwise unadorned. The result is a wine that's ripe enough to suggest citrus marmalade, yet has the bright, vibrant acidity to keep it feeling lively. *A.I. Selections, Long Island City, NY*

GELBER MUSKATELLER

90 | Neumeister \$23
2013 Südsteiermark Steirische Klassik Gelber Muskateller This is as bracingly dry as it is charmingly floral, with juicy grapefruit flavors and lime-pith acidity holding the wine to a long, lean line. It's unusually elegant for the variety, a restrained, structured wine to match fluke crudo. *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

GRÜNER VELTLINER

94 | Schloss Gobelsburg \$39
2012 Kamptal Renner Reserve Grüner Veltliner Renner was planted in the 1950s with an old clone of grüner veltliner; the site lies at the foot of the Gaisberg, where the soil has eroded to create a deep well of loess, sand and stone. That rich earth is reflected in the bodacious ripeness of this wine, but for every drop of sweet, fleshy fruit, there's an equally robust complement of minerality, saline and firm. The wine builds with gregarious energy, arms open wide, ready to meet a roast chicken and root vegetables tonight. Or cellar it, as it's certain to age well. *Terry Theise Selections/Michael Skurnik Wines, NY*

93 | Allram \$37
2012 Kamptal Hasel Alte Reben Reserve Grüner Veltliner Allram's parcel of this esteemed vineyard is right in the middle of this south-facing slope, a deep loess-filled spot. It's ripe and concentrated, with a ginger spice and a crushed-shell minerality that gives the wine tension and nerve. The pineapple fruit remains clean and lifted, finishing on fragrance rather than sweetness, with the grassy green scent. *Vias Imports, NY*

93 | Brunn \$22
2013 Kamptal Riede Stein Grüner Veltliner The Steinschadens of Weinschössel Steinschaden bottle their sustainably farmed wines under the Brunn label. This grüner comes off a plot of loess over primary rock (*stein* in German). It feels primordial in its rich swirl of peachy flavors, violet scents and a vegetal, mustard-green note, everything brought together by the wine's umami richness. It has the stuffing to pour with a beef-brothy *tafelspitz*, or to age for several years. *The Artisan Collection, NY*

93 | Hutter \$34
2012 Wachau Süssenberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd The "sweet hill" (*süssenberg*) produced a tropically lush, opulent wine in 2012, all passionfruit and honey in scent. On the palate, however, the wine does a 180, those floral nuances giving way to a hillside's worth of stony minerality. It ends lean and firm, the acidity driving it toward a clean, clear finish—or towards pork belly served with lemony pasta. *Morandell Imports, Gardena, CA*

93 | Schloss Gobelsburg \$29
2013 Kamptal Steinsetz Reserve Grüner Veltliner This relatively flat vineyard takes its name from the layer of large, round stones found under the loess topsoil. In 2013, the wine is as ripe as a muskmelon in the height of summer, fragrant in its honeyed sweetness and complex in all its shades of green. As rich as it is, it feels soft and delicate, the fruit padding a distinct saline minerality that gives the wine shape and mouthwatering drive. Pour it as you might a grand cru Chablis, from

a decanter with roast lobster or crab. *Terry Theise Selections/Michael Skurnik Wines, NY*

93 | Malat \$17
2013 Kremstal Crazy Creatures Grüner Veltliner (Best Buy) A new, entry-level wine from Michael Malat, this may not be the most complex grüner, but it hits every mark on point. It's lemony and limey, herbal and spicy, with notes of bay and horehound candy layered over the tart fruit. It feels tight and focused, a grüner with impressive clarity. *Circo Vino, Tucson, AZ*

93 | Malat \$27
2013 Kremstal Höhlgraben Grüner Veltliner The Höhlgraben vineyard dates to the 1700s, a slope of loess and primary rock below the Stift Göttweig monastery. Michael Malat vinifies the wines with indigenous yeast in stainless steel, then moves them into large casks. The 2013 comes on strong, sweetly floral and filled with peach, pear and lime fruit, then finds length and liveness with air. It seems to gain freshness, the acidity picking up like a cool breeze, whisking the wine along with uncanny ease. *Circo Vino, Tucson, AZ*

93 | Malat \$20
2013 Kremstal Göttweiger Berg Grüner Veltliner From vineyards surrounding the Stift Göttweig monastery, this is an earthy, savory grüner, its broad cashew richness peppered with notes of tarragon and other green herbs—sorrel is the closest it comes to anything actually fruity. That rich savor is warm and welcoming yet never heavy, the vinous equivalent of a cashmere throw, and just as versatile. *Circo Vino, Tucson, AZ*

92 | Ebner-Ebenauer \$26
2012 Weinviertel Hermansbachern Grüner Veltliner From a steep loess and limestone site, this is rich and tightly wound, its opulence reading in burnished tones of honey, barley and earth rather than overt fruit. The whiteness of the fruit combined with the wine's leesy richness brings Champagne to mind; the bay leaf notes and the build of the wine, however, are purely grüner. *Winemonger Imports, San Anselmo, CA*

92 | Schloss Gobelsburg \$18
2013 Kamptal Gobelsburger Grüner Veltliner (Best Buy) Michael Moosbrugger's entry-level grüner radiates freshness in 2013, from the green-gold color to the springy lemon-lime scent. The flavors follow juicy and crisp, with a yellow-bell-pepper crunch and lemony zestiness. It's friendly and high-spirited, the sort of wine that would be welcome at any dinner. *Terry Theise Selections/Michael Skurnik Wines, NY*

92 | Högl \$28
2013 Wachau Schön Grüner Veltliner Federspiel Schön is a steep, terraced slope of slate and gneiss rising up behind the Högl winery, at the far western end of the Wachau, where the climate is cool and crisp. That combination of soil and climate created a slim but powerful Federspiel in 2013, dense in its yellow-lentil flavors and firm in its minerality. What's remarkable is the brightness of its acidity, cleansing and refreshing. *Winemonger Imports, San Anselmo, CA*

92 | Hutter \$23
2012 Wachau Alte Point Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Fritz Hutter runs this 32-acre estate in Mautern, pulling this wine from a terraced vineyard of brown loess just west of town. It's richly sweet and nutty at first, feeling starved for air; then it seems to regain its youth with a few hours of air, the acidity bright, the fruit greener and leaner. The almond tones turn to a deep, loess-y minerality. It remains on the generous side of Wachau grüner, a match for weisswurst and sauerkraut. *Morandell Imports, Gardena, CA*

92 | Rabl \$27
2012 Kamptal Reserve Käferberg Grüner Veltliner The Rabl family farms nearly 200 acres in the Kamptal, having founded the estate in 1750. This wine comes from a high southeast-facing slope of primary rock above the Steinmassel, and seems to channel the hard stone in its flavor. It feels firm and reticent, dark, earthy tones flecked with brighter mica-like minerality, the fruit tropically ripe but quiet in its presentation. The length is impressive, and suggests there is more to come with another five or seven years in the cellar. *Morandell Imports, Gardena, CA*

91 | Rabl \$19
2012 Kamptal Reserve Vinum Optimum Grüner Veltliner (Best Buy) This is blended from an array of vineyards, all planted to mature vines (26 to 51 years old), mainly on loess, with some on slate and primary rock. It's intense stuff—apricot jam and kumquat

notes, with a peppery vegetal complement that brings to mind radishes and mustard oil. It settles in the finish, an earthy, umami grüner for roasted root vegetables and duck legs. *Morandell Imports, Gardena, CA*

90 | Allram \$25
2013 Kamptal Strassertaler Grüner Veltliner Selected from vineyards in the Strassertaler Valley, just east of Langenlois, this is elegant grüner, as crisp and peppery as a radish, acidity lending it the spritz of lime zest. It's wonderfully savory, with lasting perfume. *Vias Imports, NY*

90 | Högl \$63
2013 Wachau Schön Grüner Veltliner Smaragd In contrast to the Federspiel-level grüner from Schön (recommended here), this is a sumo wrestler of a wine, packed with lush levels of honeyed, floral fruit, and slightly sweaty in its earthy notes. Muscular acidity propels the wine through to a clean finish, palate whetting in its yin-yang balance. *Winemonger Imports, San Anselmo, CA*

90 | Holzapfel \$34
2013 Wachau Zehenthof Grüner Veltliner Federspiel Seven hundred years ago, this estate was the central winery for the area's monasteries. Zehenthof is a reference to the tenth (*zehntel*) of the vineyard that went to the monks. Karl Holzapfel blends it from parcels in Joching, some on chalk, others on loess and gravel. Vinified entirely in stainless steel, it's crystalline in its clarity, the bright floral scents and herbal flavors shot through with a sparkling minerality. It may not be complex, but it feels perfectly formed. *Winemonger Imports, San Anselmo, CA*

90 | Rudi Pichler \$32
2013 Wachau Grüner Veltliner Federspiel Pichler's entry-level wine is impressive in 2013. It has all of grüner's green charms—both herbal and fruity—but none of its pungency. Instead it's almost creamy, the flavors knit together with a fine, saline minerality. The intense acidity keeps it lithe, the wine finishing clean. *The Winebow Group, NY*

90 | Sohm & Kracher \$35
2013 Burgenland St. Georg Grüner Veltliner Instead of going to the Weinviertal as they have with past vintages, sommelier Aldo Sohm and vintner Gerard Kracher headed to Burgenland, finding a vineyard in St. Georgen am Leithaberge, just northeast of Eisenstadt, along the southern edge of the Leitha forest. The wine they made from it tastes like no other, a grassy, minty grüner with a cool,

wheaty richness. Reduced at first, it needs time and air to emerge, growing with a leesy richness that will make it an easy companion to cream-sauced seafood and other rich dishes. *Terlato Wines Int'l., Lake Bluff, IL*

90 | Weingut Stadt Krems \$16
2013 Kremstal Grüner Veltliner (Best Buy) Under the guidance of Fritz Meisbauer, this co-op continues to put out a grüner that ranks as one of the best values on the market. It's not just its succulent white peach and apricot notes and limey acidity; it's the wine's restraint and savor, the way the flavors fall along clean, precise lines. To buy by the pallet. *The Winebow Group, NY*

90 | Wimmer-Czerny \$25
2013 Wagram Weefel Alte Reben Grüner Veltliner Hans Czerny farms 37 acres biodynamically in Fels am Wagram, including these 40 years old vines planted in deep, sandy loess with some clay. The richness of the soil seems to come through in the character of the wine, a broad-textured grüner filled with flavors that range from hay to pink grapefruit. It's a firm white for rich foods, like seafood gratin. *M.S. Walker, Somerville, MA*

89 | Hutter \$19
2012 Wachau Süssenberg Grüner Veltliner Federspiel (Best Buy) Spicy, earthy and ripe, this feels like a big wine wrapped in a tight package. The acidity is sharp and angular, as if a protective barrier around the fruit; the mineral tones feel cold and hard, already taking on hints of petrol. It may just be in an awkward phase, needing time to relax. *Morandell Imports, Gardena, CA*

88 | Fred Loimer \$16
2013 Kamptal Lois Grüner Veltliner (Best Buy) This is juicy and fresh, with delicate jasmine notes on its lime and pear-skin flavors. Its airy texture makes for elegant everyday drinking. *The Winebow Group, NY*

87 | Fritsch \$12
2013 Niederösterreich Windspiel Grüner Veltliner (Best Buy) Karl Fritsch makes this wine from the first grapes to come in off his biodynamically farmed vineyards in the Wagram. It's zesty and bright, with clean mineral lines and lean lime and grapefruit flavor. It'd make a fine partner for fried squid or green salads this summer. *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

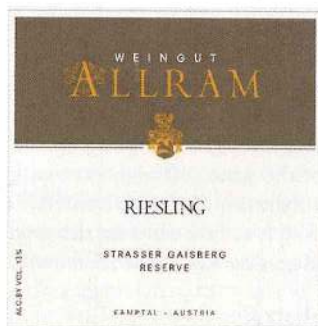
85 | Forstreiter \$12
2013 Niederösterreich Grooner Grüner Veltliner (Best Buy) A little spritzig, this is

refreshing in its sweet-tart green flavors, vegetal and limey at once. *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

MUSCAT

90 | Zantho \$15
2013 Burgenland Muskat (Best Buy) Gentle and pretty, this is a restrained muscat ottoneel, its floral notes balanced by firm peach flavor. It ends bright and clean with a mineral savor, radiating the feeling of spring. Zantho is a joint project between Josef Umathum and Wolfgang Peck from Winzerkeller Andau, a 50-member co-op where the wines are made. *Vin Divino, Chicago, IL*

RIESLING



95 | Weingut Allram \$41
2007 Kamptal Reserve Strasser Gaisberg Riesling This wine seems impossibly youthful for a seven-year-old riesling. There's only a hint of oxidation within the flavors, and it's seamlessly integrated with citrusy fruit. The wine feels lean and cool, its lime curd flavors driven by a bright beam of acid and mineral notes. This grows in the gneiss and mica-schist terraces of the Gaisberg, imparting a firm structure that has mellowed to creaminess with age, sumptuous in a quiet, restrained way. *Vias Imports, NY*

92 | Forstreiter \$20
2013 Kremstal Donau Riesling (Best Buy) Meinhard Forstreiter makes wines that reflect his personality—warm, gregarious and entirely unpretentious. His basic 2013 wins in all these ways, the wine sunny in its apricot-toned fruit, with a broad, earthy richness that reinforces it. The acidity keeps it lifted and lively, loosing apple blossom aromas and spice notes, a riesling with complexity as well as friendly appeal. *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

92 | Hermann Moser \$45
2012 Kremstal Kellerterrassen Gebeling Reserve Riesling From a vineyard of deep

loess soils, this is richly golden in scent and flavor: It smells of bright yellow acacia flowers, of honey and peaches; it tastes of all those things, plus some golden spice and almond notes. And yet rather than heavy, it feels Baroque, an Old World indulgence for a creamy, paprika-spiked fish stew. *Boutique Wine Collection, Philadelphia, PA*

91 | Weingut Allram \$47
2010 Kamptal 1 Heiligenstein Riesling From a parcel planted in 1999 on Heiligenstein's primary rock, this is fragrant riesling, redolent of white florals and herbal notes that give an immediate sense of freshness and lift. The flavors are substantially weightier, the fruit almost pineapple-ripe, with a wealth of mineral tones that keep it firm and savory. If you open it now, decant and serve with something rich, like a crown roast of pork. *Vias Imports, NY*

90 | Salomon-Undhof \$55
2011 Kremstal Pfaffenberg Erste Lage Riesling The vines in the Pfaffenberg have been hanging onto its steep granite and gneiss terraces for more than half a century. In 2011, they seem to have channeled that stone, the mineral notes giving the wine an almost oily intensity. With air, the fruit comes up, yellow plum and peach, oxidative almond notes holding it to the savory side. Firm and restrained, it could use cellar time to develop. *Fruit of the Vine, Long Island City, NY*

ROTER TRAMINER

94 | Neumeister \$34
2012 Südsteiermark Steintal Roter Traminer The Steintal cascades down a fully south-facing slope just below the town of Straden, the 3.5-acre parcel planted more than 40 years ago to roter traminer, a pink-skinned variant of savagnin. Planted in sandy loam mixed with limestone and gravel, the grape seems to flourish in the sunny warmth of the site, Neumeister's wine a regular reference point for the variety. The 2012 is no exception: Fermented spontaneously and aged 12 months in large, old wood casks, it's grandly proportioned, as rich in spicy red currant and rhubarb flavors as it is structured and firm. If you closed your eyes and tasted it, you might even mistake it for a red—especially if there's paprika-dusted pork belly on the table or a bowl of chanterelle-filled dumplings. *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

SAUVIGNON BLANC

93 | Neumeister \$37
2012 Südsteiermark Klausen Sauvignon Blanc The Styrian Terroir & Classic Wine Estates association classifies Klausen as a premier cru vineyard. The limestone-rich site faces east to southeast, at some points tilting at a 65 percent slope. Here, the grapes get ripe, but slowly, so that a wine like this 2012 accrues a prodigious amount of flavor, with the structure to match. It feels almost fierce, the acidity winding through the wine like sinewy muscles, a growl of skin tannins adding grip. While the flavors touch on woody herbs, orange and spice, the lasting impression is the umami of earth. Decant this before serving with something meaty and rich, or leave it in the cellar to unwind. *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

92 | Skoff \$50
2011 Styria Obegg Sauvignon Blanc The Obegg gets its grand cru status from its soil, the south-facing slope composed of Leitha limestone, remnants of a subtropical sea that covered the area some ten million years ago. The Skoffs ferment and age the wine off their estate parcel in oak, mostly large format. The result is an intense sauvignon with a cashmere feel, the flavors more gingery than directly fruity, burnished by light oak toast. The leesy richness gives a sense of opulence, and suggests pairing it with seared sea scallops in a beurre blanc. *Vin Divino, Chicago, IL*

90 | Erich & Walter Polz \$20
2012 Südsteiermark Stierische Klassik Sauvignon Blanc This is savory and restrained, a firm, mineral-driven sauvignon blanc with herbal highlights. Pour it with pike quenelles. *Morandell Imports, Gardena, CA*

90 | Skoff \$30
2012 Styria Classique Sauvignon Blanc Vinified in stainless steel tanks, this is sharp and angular, a lean sauvignon with a cool mineral tone taming its grassy, herbal flavors. It feels bright and austere, the clarity of flavor bringing to mind a match with freshwater fish. *Vin Divino, Chicago, IL*

WEISSBURGUNDER

90 | Judith Beck \$15
2013 Burgenland Weissburgunder Judith Beck farms 33 acres of vines in Gols, the warmest part of Burgenland. She's worked under biodynamics since 2007, and lets her wines ferment spontaneously in large wooden vats, leaving them on the fine lees

for months. They tend to need time to emerge, as does this 2013, a wine that feels grand in structure while slowly finding its voice. What's audible now is a low rumble of warm, sweet fruit flavor, of ripening pear flesh under bitter pear skin. Give it a day of air and a veal roast, or leave it in the cellar for another couple of years. *V.O.S. Selections, NY*

WHITE BLEND

90 | Mayer am Pfarrplatz \$22
2013 Wien Gemischter Satz From a winery and *heurige* in Vienna that dates to the 1600s, this gemischter satz offers more than simple refreshment. It's complex, with a savory component that curbs the citrus and passionfruit flavors, and a minerality that grows more saline with air. As salt does, it makes the wine feel even juicier, and magnifies the flavors over a long finish. It's built for *heurige* food—brown bread spread with pork fat and cracklings, or dumplings with sauerkraut. *M.S. Walker, Somerville, MA*

87 | Zahel \$19
2013 Wien Gemischter Satz (Best Buy) Ripe and spicy, this is a peppery white with green pea and yellow plum richness. Give it a chill to turn the heat down and bring the acid up. *Winemonger Imports, San Anselmo, CA*

ZIERFANDLER

92 | Stadlmann \$16
2013 Thermenregion Anninger Zierfandler Johann Stadlmann has cult status within Austria for this rare white variety native to Austria's Thermenregion. While he's best known for the single vineyard Mandel-Höh cuvée, this 2013 Anninger, an earlier release, is textbook zierfandler. It's big and earthy, the texture filled with a wealth of apricot, orange, chestnut and marzipan notes, a hint of petrol around the edges. Firm and savory, it's a white to stand up to rich fish and white meat dishes. *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

RED

BLAUFRANKISCH

95 | Anita & Hans Nittnaus \$45
2011 Leithaberg Alte Reben Blaufränkisch This comes off 30-year-old vines planted on the limestone and shale soils of the Leitha mountains. The Nittnauses farm under biodynamics and ferment with indigenous yeasts in large wooden casks, producing a fantastically rich yet balanced 2011,

from a warm, early vintage. The scent alone is so deeply satisfying in its spicy richness that the tasting panel unanimously refused to part with the glasses; the flavor follows in the same vein, dark and profound. Those flavors well up with an energy that brings an underground spring to mind. No one part sticks out more than the next; rather, the fruit, spice and earth meld seamlessly, feeling entirely natural and pretention-free. Delicious now, the flavors continually expand as they meet air, suggesting this should age well over the next decade as well. *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

92 | Anita & Hans Nittnaus \$20
2012 Burgenland Kalk und Schiefer Blaufränkisch Grown on limestone (*kalk*) and slate (*schiefer*) in the Leitha Mountains, this is a dark, almost sanguine blaufränkisch. With time in the glass, the wine's minerality and spice work their way through the fruit, as if creating space to let in light and air. As they do, the flavors feel cool and open, a virtual walk through a dark forest up to a high mountain peak. Those flavors last, going strong after nearly a week open, boding well for the wine's aging potential. *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

91 | Feiler-Artinger \$25
2012 Burgenland Umriss Blaufränkisch Pulled from a chalky vineyard outside of Rust and vinified in large, old oak casks, this is a tangy, spicy blaufränkisch. On the surface, it feels cool and herbal, like strawberries with their leaves; underneath, there's earthy richness, fruity in the way that great chocolate can be. Together with the bright, virile acidity, it's a wine that's substantial and readily drinkable, especially with mushroom risotto. *Winemonger Imports, San Anselmo, CA*

91 | Jagini \$56
2009 Burgenland Zagersdorf Blaufränkisch Roland Velich of Moric Winery makes this wine with Hannes Schuster of Rosi Schuster, in an effort to help preserve the old vineyards close to Schuster's home in Zagersdorf. Archeological evidence points to a winegrowing tradition in the town that reaches back some 3,000 years. As these vineyards are warmer, sunnier and less steep and stony than Moric's mountain sites, the wine is completely different from anything he produces under his own label, with a chocolaty richness and purple-black darkness to the fruit. Cocoa powder tannins keep it welded to the tongue, while a little heat adds spice. It's chewy and intense, a blaufränkisch for oxtail stew. *Winemonger Imports, San Anselmo, CA*

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90 | Prieler \$25
2011 Burgenland Johannesshöhe Blaufränkisch From a loamy vineyard high in iron, this is spicy and dark, with fennel sausage meatiness behind its dark fruit. The acidity draws the wine out into an elegant line, a quiet, brooding blaufränkisch for venison and other gamey dishes. *Terry Theise Selections/Michael Skurnik Wines, NY*

90 | Rosi Schuster \$24
2012 Burgenland Blaufränkisch (Best Buy) Hannes Schuster grows blaufränkisch on his 22-acre estate west of Rust, treating it gently, letting indigenous yeasts do their work in open-top fermenters and resting the wine in large, old casks. The result is wonderfully unfettered juice, sweet and spicy with red cherry flavors, with a hint of herbs and a slight funky tang. The tannins have just enough grip to take on a *käseknödeln*, rich dumplings made of bread and cheese, or to hold the wine a few more years in the cellar. *Winemonger Imports, San Anselmo, CA*

88 | Glatzer \$19
2013 Carnuntum Blaufränkisch (Best Buy) Super fresh in both violet hue and flavor, this is juicy and thirst quenching, with a wild berry flavor on the savory side of ripe. *T. Theise Selections/M. Skurnik Wines, NY*

87 | IBY \$14
2012 Burgenland Classic Blaufränkisch (Best Buy) This is lush and silky, the purple plum fruit burnished with coffee scented tannins. *M.S. Walker, Somerville, MA*

RED BLENDS

87 | Heinrich \$17
2012 Burgenland Red (Best Buy) A blend of blaufränkisch, zweigelt and St. Laurent, aged in oak for a year, this is cherry-sweet and bright, a simple red to chill for merguez sandwiches. *The Winebow Group, NY*

ST. LAURENT

93 | Umathum \$24
2012 Burgenland Sankt Laurent Josef Umathum farms nearly 90 acres spread out along the north and east sides of Lake Neusiedl, tended under biodynamics since 2005. In 2012, a warm, dry August brought the grapes to ripeness for his earliest harvest ever, and one he rates as great. The ripeness of the grapes is evident in this wine, a dark, purple-fruited red that's reduced at first. But given a couple of hours of air, there's a wealth of complexity here: It's the gravelly

tannins, the toasted mustard seed spice and the cool granite firmness of the wine that make it so compelling. Terrific Sankt Laurent. *Winemonger Imports, San Anselmo, CA*

91 | Umathum \$68
2009 Burgenland Frauenkirchner Vom Stein St. Laurent Umathum pulled this wine from a one-hectare patch of extremely gravelly soil (thus the vineyard name, *vom stein*, or "of stone"). In 2009, the drainage that soil afforded was key, as it rained quite a bit that summer; by September, however, the skies cleared and it stayed warm into October. Between the wine's age and its measured ripeness, it feels beautifully balanced, the scents richly woody and the flavor spicy, earthy and bright with still-vibrant acidity. It lasts with notes of cedar, rose and herbs, a gentle wine for a mushroom pasta. *Winemonger Imports, San Anselmo, CA*

90 | Johannesshof Reinisch \$18
2012 Thermenregion St. Laurent The Reinisch brothers, Hannes, Christian and Michael, specialize in St. Laurent, growing it in the limestone-rich alluvial soils around Tattendorf, 20 miles south of Vienna. The 2012 is juicy yet restrained, its fresh purple-fruit flavors lifted with floral notes while tethered by woody earthiness. It would be delicious with a fruit-stuffed pork tenderloin. *Circo Vino, Tucson, AZ*

ZWEIGELT

90 | Anita & Hans Nittnaus \$18
2012 Burgenland Blauer Zweigelt (Best Buy) A cross between blaufränkisch and Sankt Laurent, zweigelt isn't easy to make well. The Nittnaus family came out with the best one we tasted this year. Grown in the warm, loamy soils around Gols on the Neusiedlersee, it's dark and firm, scents of violets and notes of spice weaving in and out of its plummy fruit. A saline minerality adds definition and cut, the wine weighted for venison steaks this winter. *Monika Caha Selections/Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

DESSERT

97 | Kracher \$111/375ml
2012 Burgenland Zwischen Den Seen Nummer 3 Scheurebe Trockenbeerenauslese Stunning from the first whiff, this is scheurebe in all its glory. It's spicy more than green; it's creamy more than banana-rich; it's cool orange more than Carmen Miranda-fruit, never tilting over the edge into caricature. It's also as smooth as satin, lithe and

airy, propelled by something that feels more like energy than anything as tangible as acidity. With nearly 200 grams of sugar per liter, it's certainly sweet, but it doesn't feel ponderously so. Pour it with a soft, ripe washed-rind cheese. *Terlato Wines Int'l., Lake Bluff, IL*

94 | Kracher \$111/375ml
2012 Burgenland Kollektion Nouvelle Vague L2012A Nummer 1 TBA Time spent in oak barrels has calmed the floral aspects of rosenmuskateller and played up the spice. The result is complex and exotic, with layers of woody spice and heather-like herbals. The flavors are dense and firm, lasting with a sunset red glow. The bittersweet balance brings digestivo to mind, as well as matches with nut tarts. *Terlato Wines Int'l., Lake Bluff, IL*

93 | Rabi \$43
2008 Kamptal Traminer Trockenbeerenauslese As silky and rich as crème brûlée, with the toasty notes to match, this is fascinating traminer, the variety's bitter spice playing an integral role in balancing the plump, honeyed fruit. It tastes of burnt orange and lemon as well as fresh mushrooms and earth, a complex, mature TBA to serve with cheese. *Morandell Imports, Gardena, CA*

93 | Rabi \$36
2009 Kamptal Chardonnay Beerenauslese Toasty and rich, this tastes like baked apple compote topped with brown sugar, nuts and a spritz of lemon. It's intense but not too sweet, an impressive buzz of acidity keeping it feeling fresh and buoyant. *Morandell Imports, Gardena, CA*

93 | Kracher \$123/375ml
2012 Burgenland Nouvelle Vague Nummer 8 Chardonnay Trockenbeerenauslese You might ask who needs a late-harvest, oak-fermented-and-aged chardonnay. Anyone, I would say, who doubts the versatility of the variety. In Kracher's hands it turns into the vinous version of haute patisserie, with fine layers of spiced apples and fragrant quince paste bound together by warm, dark honey and lightly toasted nuts. It's lush and opulent, a wine that stands in for dessert on its own. *Terlato Wines Int'l., Lake Bluff, IL*

90 | Kracher \$112/375ml
2012 Burgenland Grande Cuvée Nouvelle Vague Nummer 6 Trockenbeerenauslese A blend of chardonnay and welschriesling, this is richly upholstered in apricot, peach and pear fruit. Despite the prodigious ripeness, the wine remains fresh and firm, ending clean. *Terlato Wines Int'l., Lake Bluff, IL* ■

YEAR'S BEST PORTUGUESE REDS

Our blind panels tasted **272** new-release Portuguese reds over the past 12 months. **Joshua Greene**, our critic for Portuguese wines, rated **46** as exceptional (90+) and **40** as Best Buys. Find a complete list of wines tasted and all reviews at wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

ALENTEJO

92 | Cortes de Cima \$35
2011 Alentejano Cortes de Cima Hans Kristian and Carrie Jorgensen settled in Vidigueira, where they took on a 925-acre farm in 1988. The area's soils are more acidic than most parts of Alentejo, producing wines with a perception of freshness, like this estate-grown blend of aragonez and syrah, with small amounts of touriga nacional, petit verdot, alicante bouschet and cabernet. The wine has more finesse than you might expect from the warm plains of the Alentejo: It's tight and floral, with pomegranate and black fruit flavors, substantial and persistent. *Tri-Vin Imports, Mount Vernon, NY*

92 | Susana Esteban \$20
2013 Alentejano Aventura (Best Buy) Susana Esteban made the wines at Quinta do Crasto in the Douro before moving to the Alentejo in 2007, where she now consults as well as makes her own wines. Aventura is an unoaked blend of aragonez and touriga nacional, along with a portion from local varieties in a field blend, from vineyards in central and northern Alentejo. The flavors are deep and ripe, the sweetness of the fruit checked by tannins that give it power without adding any excess weight. There's detail and complexity within the blackness of the tannins, the flavors unfolding as they linger. Great with the char on a steak. *USA Wine Imports, NY*



89 | Herdade do Esporão \$27
2011 Alentejo Reserva (Best Buy) A generous and honest expression of the warm Alentejo, this is round, supple and gracious in its red fruit flavors. There isn't a lot of depth or detail; instead, the wine is more about good clean richness. A touch of bitterness in the end will meld into the meatiness of a steak. *Aidil Wines & Liquors, Newark, NJ*

89 | Roquevale \$22
2009 Alentejo Reserva (Best Buy) Fresh and juicy black-cherry flavor infuses this tightly built wine. It's clean and elegant, with a touch of sweet, dimpled fruit in the finish. A blend of aragonez, syrah and touriga nacional, this is structured for a steak. *Vintage Imports, Bristol, PA*

87 | João Portugal Ramos \$15
2013 Alentejo Marques de Borba (Best Buy) Touriga nacional lends perfume to this blend of alicante bouschet, aragonez and trincadeira. It's earthy and structured, lasting on tobacco-scented high notes and fresh, dark, slightly waxy fruit. *The Winebow Group, NY*

86 | Carmim \$9
2013 Alentejano Terras d'el Rei (Best Buy) Don't come looking for a lot of character or depth, but if you want a round, smooth red for a party, this delivers a lot of gentle richness at a remarkable price. *Tri-Vin Imports, Mount Vernon, NY*

BAIRRADA

93 | Ataíde Semedo \$18
2011 Bairrada (Best Buy) Steal this wine. Pound it into a decanter. Leave it a few hours. The slight reduction and savage funk will begin to subside as the fruit begins to saturate its strawberry-leaf tannins. Bloody red, meaty, dark, savory and complex, it's just beautiful. Seriously, where do you find a wine like this for \$18? Semedo is a consultant who works closely with Alvaro Castro's team in the Dão as well as farming his own 12.5 acres of vines in Bairrada. He blends this from equal parts бага and touriga nacional, fermenting and aging it in stainless steel

without any oak. *Obrigado-Vinhos Portugal, New Rochelle, NY*

92 | Caves São João \$79
1990 Bairrada Reserva From a stash in their cellars in Bairrada, Caves São João has released several older vintages, including this elegant 1990. It's a classic taste of Portugal: delicate notes of strawberry, roasted fennel, dark, woody mushrooms and powerfully gripping tannins. Those tannins have the rasp of a sand dollar, the perfect counterpoint for *leitão*, the crisp-skinned roast suckling pig for which Bairrada is renowned. *Obrigado-Vinhos Portugal, New Rochelle, NY*

91 | Luis Pato \$26
2011 Bairrada Vinha Velhas Toward the end of August, Luis Pato harvests бага for sparkling wine, leaving about a third of the crop on these 40-year-old vines to ripen into September. It's a strategy that accelerates the maturation of the tannins in his red wine grapes, leaving him less vulnerable to the rain that often comes to Bairrada in the early fall. Even so, when you first pour this wine you might find it green, the meaty ripeness of the fruit hidden behind бага's austere tannins. Time in a decanter brings up the wine's complexity as the tannins and their greenness recede and the pure red-currant flavors build. Mouthwatering acidity points up the wine's minerality, along with scents of plums, cassis and mint. This should be at its best eight to ten years from the vintage. *Wine In-Motion USA, Union, NJ*

90 | Caves São João \$69
1980 Bairrada Frei João Fully mature, this wine came back to life a day after the bottle had been opened. It went from volatility and scents of mushroom stock to hints of red fruit, humus and forest floor. Glowing with complexity, this is a tightly focused, compelling wine. A satisfying pleasure to catch before it's gone. *Obrigado-Vinhos Portugal, New Rochelle, NY*