

# WINE PRESS N O R T H W E S T

## 2007 Platinum Judging Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

By Andy Perdue, editor-in-chief  
Wine Press Northwest

THE EIGHTH EDITION OF OUR ANNUAL Platinum Judging turned up many surprises and discoveries, as well as a return to the top for producers whose wines have made their way there before.

Our panel of international wine judges sorted through 258 wines that already have earned top medals at more than 30 competitions we monitor throughout the year.

The judges handed out eight Double Platinums, wines all could agree on. Four of these wines tied for the best wines of the competition. An additional 25 wines earned the Platinum award, 95 won Double Golds, and 100 garnered Golds.

At the top were four very different wines. Dunham Cellars' 2004 Syrah earned that spot for the second time in our competition's history (it also did it in 2003). Maryhill Winery's 2006 Rosé of Sangiovese wowed our panel with its superb fruit and balance. A Merlot from a new winery, Otis Kenyon in Walla Walla, Wash., was a stunner. And a Siegerrebe — a cool-climate wine grown on San Juan Island — also rose to the top.

As categories, the judges were especially appreciative of the Cabernet Sauvignon, Riesling and Syrah categories. Other trends we would like to point out:

🍷 Barnard Griffin of Richland, Wash., our 2006 Pacific Northwest Winery of the Year, earned a Double Platinum and Platinum for two reds under \$20.

🍷 Vin du Lac, a Chelan, Wash., winery, earned a Platinum for its Cabernet Franc for the third consecutive year.

🍷 Domaine Ste. Michelle of Paterson, Wash., won a Platinum for its Blanc de Noirs sparkling rosé for the third time in four years.

🍷 Saviah Cellars of Walla Walla won two Platinums, including one wine that won the award last year, too.

🍷 Gray Monk Estate Winery in Okanagan Centre, B.C., won two Platinums. The winery had never won a Platinum before.

🍷 Chateau Ste. Michelle won two Platinums, both for the wine it's now most famous for, Riesling.

🍷 Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate of Oliver, B.C., a perennial Platinum winner, won three more this year.

🍷 Thurston Wolfe, a boutique winery in Prosser, Wash., won two Platinums.

🍷 Young wineries that haven't earned Platinums until this year include: Sweet Cheeks, Gamache Vintners and Merry Cellars.

🍷 Ste. Chapelle, Idaho's largest producer, earned the Gem State's first Platinum with a Riesling Ice Wine.

Our judges for this competition were: Ken Robertson, Wine Press Northwest columnist and a longtime Northwest wine writer and newspaperman; Coke Roth, member of Wine Press Northwest's tasting panel, international wine judge and Washington grape grower; Dan Berger of Santa Rosa, Calif., an international wine judge, writer, author and Wine Press Northwest columnist; and Parks Redwine of Atlanta, Ga., owner of the Northwest Wine Summit competition and an international wine broker and collector.

Andy Perdue and Eric Degerman, editors of Wine Press Northwest, moderated the judging. Hank Sauer and Paul Sinclair facilitated and oversaw the process.

On to the results.

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#### THE JUDGING

##### HOW IT'S CONDUCTED

Wines are eligible for our Platinum Judging by winning a gold medal in any of about 30 competitions we track throughout the year. Wines that earn an "Outstanding" in any of our three peer-group judgments throughout the year also are eligible.

For the eighth annual Platinum, we received 258 wines, our most ever. More than 400 wines were eligible. Some wineries choose not to enter this competition for many reasons, the most common of which is they are out of the wine.

Because the wines already have won gold medals, they could be awarded a Platinum, Double Gold or Gold here. To earn a medal, a wine needs votes from three out of four judges. If all four judges deem a wine a Platinum, then it is awarded a Double Platinum.

The judging was moderated by Andy Perdue, editor-in-chief. It was conducted Oct. 25-26 at the Clover Island Inn in Kennewick, Wash.

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### ELIGIBLE WINE COMPETITIONS

These are the judgments we monitor for gold medals. The abbreviation is used throughout the reviews to indicate where the gold medal was won.

**ACWC:** All-Canadian Wine Competition. A national wine competition held each summer in Windsor, Ontario.

**CHRON:** The San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition is held each winter in Cloverdale, Calif. It is the largest competition of American wines.

**DALLAS:** The Dallas Morning News Wine Competition is held each winter in Texas and is one of the largest judgments in North America.

**FINGER LAKES:** Finger Lakes International Wine Competition: Held each spring in upstate New York.

**FLA:** The Florida State Fair International Wine & Grape Juice Competition is held each winter in Tampa.

**GHA:** The Grand Harvest Awards is an international competition conducted each winter by Vineyard & Winery Management magazine.

**IDAHO:** The Idaho Wine Festival competition is conducted each summer by the Treasure Valley Wine Society.

**IEWC:** International Eastern Wine Competition: Conducted by Vineyard & Winery Management magazine. Held in upstate New York.

**INDY:** The Indy International Wine Competition is held each summer at the Indiana State Fair. It is one of the largest wine competitions in North America.

**L.A.:** The Los Angeles International Wine & Spirits Competition is held each spring in Pomona, Calif. It is considered one of the most prestigious judgments in North America.

**LBGC:** The Long Beach Grand Cru international wine competition is conducted by Dan Berger each summer in Southern California.

**MONTEREY:** Monterey Wine Competition, an international wine competition held in King City, Calif.

**NWIWC:** New World International Wine Competition, held each winter in Southern California.

**NWS:** The Northwest Wine Summit, held each spring at Timberline Lodge on Mount Hood, is the largest judging of Northwest wine.

**OREGON:** The Oregon Wine Competition is held each August in Salem and is part of the Oregon State Fair. It is an Oregon-only judging.

**OWF:** The Okanagan Fall Wine Festival Judging is held each fall in Penticton, B.C. It is open to British Columbia wines.

**PR:** Pacific Rim International Wine Competition: Held each spring in San Bernardino, Calif., this is part of the National Orange Show.

**RIWC:** The Riverside International Wine Competition is conducted by Dan Berger each spring in Southern California.

**SEATTLE:** The Seattle Wine Society Competition is a Northwest wine judging held each summer.

**SD:** San Diego International Wine Competition, held each spring in Southern California.

**SFI:** San Francisco International Wine Competition. Held each summer in San Francisco.

**TC:** Tri-Cities Wine Festival. A Northwest wine competition held each November in Pasco, Wash.

**WASH:** The Washington State Wine Competition is held each June in Yakima. It is the only judging of Washington wines.

**WCWC:** The West Coast Wine Competition is conducted each spring by Vineyard & Winery Management in Santa Rosa, Calif.

**WINEFEST:** Hilton Head WineFest is an international wine competition held each winter in South Carolina.

**WOW:** The World of Wine competition is part of a festival in Medford, Ore.

**WPNW:** Wine Press Northwest conducts three peer-group judgments of Northwest wines each year. Those rated "Outstanding" are eligible for the Platinum. In 2007, we judged red blends (spring), Viognier (summer) and Merlot (fall).

**WWC:** The National Women's Wine Competition features many of the top female wine judges in North America.

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#### BEST OF THE BEST

**Dunham Cellars** \$45

**2004 Syrah, Columbia Valley** This should be no surprise to anyone who has followed the career of winemaker Eric Dunham. This is the third time in our eight best-of-the-best competitions that a Dunham Syrah has earned a Platinum — with two of them being unanimous Double Platinums. The grapes come from Dunham's favorite source, Lewis Vineyard in Washington's Rattlesnake Hills. The resulting wine reveals aromas of ripe plums, leather, chocolate, cola and a trace of dried herbs, followed by elegant, complex flavors of dark fruit and black pepper with beautiful balance. This has a bit of oak showing, but it's carried off with charm. **Gold (NWS)** — 1,686 cases

**Maryhill Winery** \$14

**2006 Rosé of Sangiovese, Columbia Valley** We're quickly coming to the conclusion that Sangiovese makes some of the best rosés in Washington, and this superb wine gives us no reason to doubt that thinking. Craig Larson is Maryhill's new winemaker, and he's nailed this wine perfectly in his first vintage with the destination winery in the Columbia Gorge. This offers bright aromas of fresh and baked cherries with a sweet spice component, followed by bold and harmonious flavors of raspberries and cherries. It's deliciously dry with plenty of acidity and utterly flawless. A textbook example of what rosé's potential is in the Pacific Northwest. **Gold (SFI)** — 1,375 cases

**Otis Kenyon Wine** \$40

**2005 Seven Hills Vineyard Reserve Merlot, Walla Walla Valley** This small producer in the Walla Walla Valley is off to a stunning start. This is just Otis Kenyon's second vintage — and its first release of Merlot. Yet it managed to earn its way into the competition by scoring high in our Merlot judging, then tied for our top spot with a wine that uses grapes from Seven Hills, a vineyard on the Oregon side of the Walla Walla Valley. It opens with rich, bright aromas of cherries, sweet spices, violets and blackberry jam, followed by robust flavors of ripe plums, huckleberries and a whisper of sweet herbs. The oak is substantial without overwhelming the fruit. An opulent wine to pair with a fine cut of meat. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 90 cases

**San Juan Vineyards** \$15

**2006 Siegerrebe, Puget Sound** This winery on San Juan Island often purchases grapes from Eastern Washington, but it also grows its own fruit on its estate vineyard. Siegerrebe, an Austrian variety that grows well in cooler climates, is nearly impossible to make as a dry wine, yet San Juan Vineyards has managed just that. The aromas of spicy pears, white peaches and apples intrigued our judges, and the deliciously fresh fruit flavors beguiled them. This wine delivers wonderful food-pairing potential, including seared scallops, crab cakes, pasta tossed with grilled vegetables and drizzled with olive oil or sautéed prawns. **Gold (Wash)** — 522 cases

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#### DOUBLE PLATINUM

#### **Barnard Griffin**

\$17

**2005 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** Annually, this wine is compelling in every sense of the word. It's superbly made, eminently approachable yet so nicely priced (and can be found for \$5 or \$6 less than this price if you know where to look). How does owner/winemaker Rob Griffin do it? He buys grapes from top vineyards he's discovered throughout the vast Columbia Valley during three decades of Washington winemaking. It opens with aromas of sweet herbs, black currants, black pepper and faint green herbs. The focused flavors include ripe plums, black olives and black currants. Its refined tannins offer youthful approachability, but cellaring for two years will pay further dividends. **Gold (RIWC, Chron)** — 5,269 cases

#### **Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate**

\$34 CDN

**2004 SunRock Vineyard Shiraz, Okanagan Valley** It should come as no surprise that our top wine from British Columbia is from Jackson-Triggs, a perennial Platinum winner the past several years. What might be more surprising is it isn't an ice wine. J-T and other Okanagan Valley wineries are proving Syrah can thrive north of the border, something unthinkable just a half-decade ago. This opens with aromas of ripe, dark fruit, white pepper and violets, followed by plentiful flavors of blackberries and plums. It's concentrated without being overripe and reveals fascinating notes of tarragon and is backed with ample tannins. A wine to enjoy now or tuck away for up to a half-decade. **Double Gold (SFI), Gold (ACWC)** — 500 cases

#### **Saviah Cellars**

\$30

**2005 Syrah, Red Mountain** Owner/winemaker Richard Funk is making a habit of showing up at the top of our blind competitions. This youthful Syrah comes from grapes from the Ranch at the End of the Road Vineyard on the Red Mountain bench, a source he has used since his inaugural 2000 vintage. No reason to mess with success. This shows off lush aromas of blackberry jam and molasses, followed by rich, jammy flavors of blackberries, black olives and Rainier cherries. Our judges loved the balance and thought this has the structure to cellar for at least a half-decade. **Gold (Wash.)** — 224 cases

#### **Spangler Vineyards**

\$30

**2004 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Southern Oregon** Since taking over the old La Garza Cellars a few years ago, Patrick and Loree Spangler have turned their Umpqua Valley operation into one of the best in Southern Oregon. It opens with aromas of spicy oak and ripe, dark fruit, followed by flavors of black cherries, raspberries and dark chocolate. The tannins are firm without being assertive, and the solid acidity offers balance through the ample finish. **Best of Show (WOW)** — 167 cases

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## PLATINUM

**Chateau Ste. Michelle** \$12

**2006 Dry Riesling, Columbia Valley** Washington's oldest winery not only makes more Riesling than any other winery in the world, but it also produces some of the finest. Known affectionately around the Woodinville, Wash., winery as "Baby Eroica," this Riesling uses grapes from some of the cooler regions of the Columbia Valley and is made in the "trocken" style. It opens with steely, minerally aromas, hints of limes and even hints of dried raspberries. On the palate, this Germanic-style Riesling offers flavors of green apples and is bold without being heavy. **Double Gold (IEWC)** — 25,000 cases

**Gray Monk Estate Winery** \$16 CDN

**2006 Gewürztraminer, Okanagan Valley** Some of the Northwest's finest Gewürztraminer comes from British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. In part, this is because the region's northerly climes are able to retain more natural acidity. Our judges were astonished by this wine's near perfection, thanks to beautiful aromas of rosewater and lychee and luscious flavors of grapefruits, lychee and a faint herbal note. This would pair beautifully with mild Thai dishes. **Gold (Indy)** — 2,300 cases

**Sweet Cheeks Winery** \$12

**2006 Riesling, Willamette Valley** This young winery in the southern Willamette Valley is off to a great start, thanks to this gorgeous Riesling made from Sweet Cheeks' estate vineyard. It offers spicy aromas of stone fruit, slate and hints of lime, along with opulent flavors of minerality and orchard fruit. Its mouth-filling flavors are balanced with bright acidity and make an easy-to-like, crowd-pleasing white wine to pair with a variety of Asian or Mexican dishes. **Gold (NWS, WCWC)** — 1,028 cases

**Chateau Ste. Michelle** \$14

**2006 Indian Wells Riesling, Columbia Valley** The warm climate of Washington's Wahluke Slope would not seem to provide the proper conditions for a grape normally associated with cooler regions of the world. Yet winemaker Bob Bertheau shows his talent with Riesling by crafting a wine that shows off more juicy, tropical notes than his other Rieslings. This offers aromas of sweet orange blossoms and spices, followed by flavors of ripe peaches, Mandarin oranges, ripe pears and sweet apples. Its 2.65% residual sugar is perceptible but is expertly balanced with ample acidity. A great wine to pair with chicken tikka masala. **Gold (NWS)** — 16,000 cases

**Covey Run Winery** \$22

**2005 Reserve Semillon Ice Wine, Yakima Valley** It should be considered an upset that the best ice wine in our competition did not come out of British Columbia. But the fact is Covey Run has been making superb ice wines in Washington's Yakima Valley for many years. Technically speaking, this wine was from the 2004 growing season. However, the grapes were harvested Jan. 5, 2005, so the U.S. government says it must be labeled as a 2005 wine. Semillon, a grape associated with the great Sauternes dessert wines of Bordeaux, has served Covey Run well here. It opens with fresh, clean aromas of apples, citrus and apricots with hints of limes and minerality. On the palate, this wine is plenty sweet at 21.4% residual sugar, but superb acidity balances this and allows the flavors of figs, limes, dates and orange zest to shine through. Serve with a plate of rich cheeses. **Best Ice Wine (NWS), Gold (Wash., PR)** — 920 cases

**Saviah Cellars** \$32

**2004 Une Vallée, Walla Walla Valley** For the second consecutive year, a wine has won consecutive Platinum medals. This Walla Walla Valley red blend earned a Platinum from our judges a year ago and repeated the feat this year. Kudos to owner/winemaker Richard Funk for crafting a wine that continues to offer greatness as it evolves. It's a Cab-dominated Bordeaux-style blend using grapes from four vineyards in Washington's Columbia Valley. It shows off spicy aromas of sweet oak, black olives and leather, followed by flavors of ripe dark fruit and black tea. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 229 cases

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**Wild Goose Vineyards** \$19 CDN

**2006 Autumn Gold, Okanagan Valley** The latest version of this white blend of Riesling, Gewürztraminer and Pinot Blanc is a hit once again with our judges, just as it is in the tasting room of this Okanagan Falls, B.C., winery. Winemaker Hagen Kruger proves his mettle once again with white wine varieties in this luscious blend. From the beginning, it beguiles the nose with aromas of sweet spices and rosewater, leading to flavors of oranges, grapefruits, lychee and rosewater. It tastes surprisingly dry and would pair well with pad Thai, grilled prawns or seared scallops. **Gold (OWF)** — 800 cases

**Barnard Griffin** \$17

**2005 Merlot, Columbia Valley** Rob Griffin was a young man when he showed up in 1977 to make wine in Washington's Columbia Valley. After realizing the potential of Washington wine country, the California native had no thoughts of returning south. Instead, he's built his reputation on producing stunning wines at fair prices. This brilliant Merlot is from his main "Tulip" line and is broadly distributed. It opens with rich aromas of cherries, spices and black tea, followed by elegant, well-structured flavors of ripe cherries. Gentle tannins provide enough backbone without getting in the way of the massive fruit. A complete wine that will pair with pasta dishes, grilled meats or sautéed mushrooms. **Gold (RIWC)** — 6,185 cases

**Gamache Vintners** \$28

**2004 Syrah, Columbia Valley** Brothers Bob and Roger Gamache have been growing wine grapes in the Columbia Basin for a quarter century, and they launched their eponymous winery with the 2002 vintage with longtime Washington winemaker Charlie Hoppes. Now, they've purchased land on Red Mountain to expand their acreage into one of the Northwest's most sought-after wine-growing regions. This is a luscious and sexy Syrah that opens with aromas of blackberries, spicy oak, a hint of tobacco and even black corinthian leather. On the palate are lush flavors of ripe dark fruit, chocolate and such spices as rosemary, thyme and mint. It's a complex red with an extensive finish. **Gold (GHA)** — 375 cases

**Gray Monk Estate Winery** \$17 CDN

**2006 Late Harvest Kerner, Okanagan Valley** This winery north of Kelowna, B.C., captured two Platinites in this judging. Kerner is an unusual variety, a white grape that is a cross between Trollinger (a red grape) and Riesling. Though this is a late-harvest wine, it's not overwhelmingly sweet at just 1.6% residual sugar. It offers aromas of ripe apples and peaches, followed by pretty, delicate flavors of green apples. "This is about as good as Kerner gets," noted one judge. **Gold (NWS, Indy)** — 1,064 cases

**Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate** \$42 CDN

**2005 Proprietors' Reserve Riesling Ice Wine, Okanagan Valley** This wine is a legacy to Bruce Nicholson, Jackson-Triggs' original winemaker, who returned to his native Ontario after the 2006 harvest. Quite simply, he developed into the finest producer of ice wines in the Pacific Northwest — and perhaps North America. This wine has his signature all over it, thanks to aromas of lush, bold honey and baked apples, followed by flavors of baked apricots sprinkled with cinnamon and drizzled with honey. Amid all the sweetness is amazing underlying acidity that forces all the goodness in this wine to rise up and not just taste like syrup. **Gold (NWS)** — 600 cases

**Merry Cellars** \$32

**2005 Carmenère, Walla Walla Valley** We love it when everything comes together. Such is the case with this unusual Bordeaux variety that is grown in small quantities in the Walla Walla Valley. Merry Cellars is in Pullman, home to Washington State University, and owner Patrick Merry plays up this connection to the Cougar faithful. We aren't sure whether he realizes "Carmenère" originates from the French word for "crimson," a fact that should play well with WSU fans who bleed crimson and gray. The wine is loaded with aromas of black cherries, black pepper and fresh Santa Rosa plums, while the flavors reveal bold, peppery flavors of ripe dark fruit and anise. **Double Gold (Wash.)** — 86 cases

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#### Ste. Chapelle

\$22

**2005 Skyline Vineyard Riesling Ice Wine, Idaho** Leave it to Chuck Devlin to craft a wine that earns the Gem State its first Platinum in our competition's eight-year history. Idaho's largest winery makes a whole lot of Riesling, though this ice wine from one of the Snake River Valley's signature vineyards is on the rare side. The judges were attracted to its fresh approach, with aromas of limes, oranges and apple pie and creamy flavors of peaches, apricots and poached pears. A trace of minerality and ample acidity provided complexity and balance. **Gold (SD)** — 4,000 cases

#### Vin du Lac Winery

\$30

**2005 Barrel Select Cabernet Franc, Columbia Valley** Owner/winemaker Larry Lehmbeker is making ridiculously good wines at his Lake Chelan, Wash., facility. He brings home a ton of awards each year, none more than for this Cabernet Franc. Two years ago, the 2003 vintage earned a Double Platinum and was our No. 1 wine. Last year, the 2004 repeated with another Platinum, and now this release has risen to the top again. A lot of folks probably want to know Larry's secret to consistency at an extremely high level. This wine opens with harmonious aromas of black currants and integrated oak, followed by broad flavors of black fruit and varietal greenness. Moderate tannins provide structure and ageability. **Gold (PR)** — 142 cases

#### Whidbey Island Winery

\$22

**2003 Composition, Yakima Valley** Greg and Elizabeth Osenbach have been quietly doing their own thing in Langley, Wash., since starting their boutique operation more than 15 years ago. They rely on grapes from their own vineyards on Whidbey Island, and they've purchased red grapes for half their wines from the Yakima Valley. This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Syrah is a superb red with generous aromas of black cherries, spices, violets and black pepper. The palate is rewarded with flavors of ripe dark plums, blackberries and boysenberries. Expertly balanced tannins and acidity will provide aging potential at least through the end of this decade. This is perhaps the finest wine yet from the Osenbachs. **Double Gold (Wash.)**— 300 cases

#### Domaine Ste. Michelle

\$12

**NV Blanc de Noirs, Columbia Valley** For the third time in the last four years, this rosé bubbly has earned a Platinum. This Pinot Noir-based sparkler is so delicious and so affordable — something definitely worth celebrating. This opens with aromas of roasted almonds and caramelized sugar, followed by full, bright, dry flavors of strawberries, citrus and pie cherries. It's deliciously crisp on the midpalate and has broad food applications. Might we suggest such pre-dinner appetizers as sushi, caviar or raw tuna with a drop of wasabi.

**Gold (RIWC, IEWC, TC)**— 20,081 cases

#### Best Buy!

#### Kiona Vineyards Winery

\$10

**2006 Chenin Blanc, Columbia Valley** In the New World — especially our West Coast — this classic French grape has been much maligned. Perhaps if more people tasted a Chenin Blanc this good, it could make a comeback. The Williams family has long championed this white wine, both in the form of a dry table wine and a dessert wine. This is an off-dry style with aromas of melons, apples, pears and peaches, followed by flavors of sweet herbs and fresh apples. It's a tasty crowd-pleaser with plenty of acidity. Pair it with sushi, seared scallops, fresh crab legs or a caesar salad. **Gold (Wash.)** — 700 cases

#### Best Buy!

#### Thurston Wolfe

\$15

**2005 Dr. Wolfe's Family Red, Washington** Entering its third decade, this small Yakima Valley winery is hitting its stride in a big way. Winemaker Wade Wolfe crafted this blend of Primitivo, Petite Sirah and Zinfandel into an eminently approachable red that reveals aromas of sweet herbs, spicy red fruit and hints of oak. Juicy flavors of ripe black fruit and black pepper are backed with ample acidity and modest tannins. This is built to drink now with grilled meats or a gourmet pizza. **Gold (WCWC)** — 750 cases

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**Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate** \$45 CDN

**2005 Grand Reserve Riesling Ice Wine, Okanagan Valley** Jackson-Triggs crafts two tiers of Riesling ice wine, the Proprietor's Reserve (black label) and Grand Reserve (gold label). This is the upper tier, and it offers aromas of baked apples topped with toasted almonds and honey, followed by luscious flavors of poached pears. All of the ample sweetness is backed up with amazing acidity to keep it from seeming too over the top. **Gold (NWS, ACWC)** — 450 cases

**Maryhill Winery** \$36

**2004 Proprietor's Reserve Zinfandel, Columbia Valley** A few years ago, Maryhill entered one of its first Zins in a wine competition in Sonoma County that included about 200 California Zinfandels. Much to the judges' chagrin — and our delight — the Maryhill wine was awarded the No. 1 Zin. The Goldendale, Wash., winery now makes two levels of Zinfandel, and the gold rush has not slowed one bit. This offers aromas of raspberries and black pepper, followed by flavors of sweet red and black fruit, loads of chocolate and a complex blend of spices. "It's as good as or better than a lot of California Zins," our Sonoma County judge declared. **Double Gold (GHA), Gold (RIWC, NWS)** — 800 cases

**Portteus Winery** \$24

**2005 Petite Sirah, Rattlesnake Hills** Paul Portteus has been making wines and growing grapes since the mid-'80s and has been a champion of this Rhône variety that is just starting to gain a foothold in Washington. It opens with lush, dense aromas of plum sauce and blackberries, followed by bold flavors of spicy plums and ripe dark fruit. Underlying herbal notes provide complexity and moderate tannins provide balance and structure. "This is about as good as P.S. gets," remarked one of our judges. **Gold (Wash.)** — 200 cases

**Thurston Wolfe** \$25

**2004 Destiny Ridge Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Washington** Weighing in with its second Platinum of the competition, this winery has crafted a superb Cab from a Horse Heaven Hills vineyard. It is loaded with aromas of black currants, blackberries and mint, followed by dark, dense and intense flavors of rich fruit and ample tannins. Despite its boldness, this red is polished and classy. Drink it now with a marbled steak or tuck it away for several years. **Gold (Dallas)** — 220 cases

**Helix by Reininger** \$22

**2004 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** It doesn't seem right to call a wine this good a "second label," but that's what it is. The Helix wines from Reininger Winery in Walla Walla are lower in price and rely on grapes from the broader Columbia Valley (while the Reininger wines focus on Walla Walla Valley fruit). We loved this wine's youthful exuberance and explosive nature. It opens with salivating aromas of black cherries and chocolate, followed by dense, bold flavors of black cherries, raspberries, chocolate and anise. Well-managed tannins provide structure without getting in the way of all the fruit. **Gold (Finger Lakes)** — 626 cases

**L'Ecole No 41** \$24

**2004 Syrah, Columbia Valley** Owner/winemaker Marty Clubb has made his reputation as a Bordeaux house, thanks to his superb Cabs, Merlots, blends and Semillons. Yet his Syrahs have gained serious fame in the past decade. This red from the broad Columbia Valley is no exception. It takes in grapes from six top vineyards: Milbrandt, Willard, Goose Ridge, Candy Mountain, Stone Tree and Bacchus, all of which were less affected by this vintage's rough winter than L'Ecole's native Walla Walla Valley. This is a classic Washington Syrah, exhibiting aromas of sizzling bacon alongside blackberries and ample oak. Its voluptuous flavors provide ripe plums, blackberry jam and black cherries. The alcohol (14.8%) shows up, but there's plenty of fruit to balance it. **Gold (NWS)** — 2,649 cases

**Tamarack Cellars** \$20

**2005 Firehouse Red, Columbia Valley** Owner Ron Coleman's signature red blend includes Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Sangiovese, Carmenère and Malbec. Its greatness regardless of vintage reveals the genius of blending to provide complexity and approachability. This offers aromas of smoky bacon, chocolate-covered cherries and mild oak, followed by dark-toned flavors of black cherries and espresso. Firm acidity and tannins wrapped in dark chocolate provide all the necessary balance. It's a beautiful blend that is stunning enough for Sunday prime rib yet humble enough for Tuesday night delivery. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 7,136 cases

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#### DOUBLE GOLD

**Three Rivers Winery** \$15

**2006 Biscuit Ridge Vineyard Late Harvest Gewürztraminer, Walla Walla Valley** Three Rivers co-owner Duane Wollmuth owns this vineyard on the eastern edge of the Walla Walla Valley, and the grapes go toward one of the Northwest's finest dessert wines. This offers refreshing aromas of apples, pears, lychee and grapefruits, followed by fresh flavors of apples, citrus and cloves. Late-harvest Gewürztraminer is one of the most difficult wines to get right, yet winemaker Holly Turner has it nailed. **Gold (Indy)** — 862 cases

**Wild Goose Vineyards** \$19 CDN

**2006 Riesling, Okanagan Valley** We've come to count on the Kruger family to make some of the Northwest's most superb Rieslings in their Okanagan Falls, B.C., facility. This is a beautifully balanced white that shows off bright aromas of citrus, vanilla and cloves, along with zesty flavors of lemons and juniper berries. Pair this with any number of dishes, including Thai, Vietnamese, Indian or Mexican. **Gold (ACWC)** — 1,000 cases

**Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate** \$34 CDN

**2004 SunRock Vineyard Meritage, Okanagan Valley** In the past two years, some of Jackson-Triggs' finest reds have come from this vineyard in the southern Okanagan Valley. This Bordeaux-style blend offers aromas of red currants, Bing cherries and a hint of oak, followed by flavors of bold, dark fruit and mint. This is a serious wine built on a delicate platform of oak that provides layers of complexity and plenty of aging potential. **Double Gold (SF)** — 250 cases

**Domaine Ste. Michelle** \$12

**NV Frizzante, Columbia Valley** Getting married? This is a perfect wedding wine because it's sweet enough to satisfy irregular wine drinkers yet plenty sophisticated for the snobs. This is DSM's sweetest sparkler at 4.3% residual sugar. The sweetness is propped up by the luscious bubbles, giving this wine an even more celebratory note. It opens with bright, slightly floral aromas that lead to delicious fresh fruit flavors. This could be dessert unto itself or could pair with any number of dishes. One inspired match could be nopalitos con huevos. **Gold (Dallas)** — 25,000 cases

**Maryhill Winery** \$20

**2004 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** A three-time winner of gold in 2007, this affordable Cab uses grapes from nearby Tudor Vineyard as well as fruit from the Wahluke Slope. It shows off refined aromas of ripe cherries and hints of oak, followed by rich, dark, delicious flavors of bold, intense fruit. It has the structure to age a few years, but it is oh so good right now. **Best of Show (Wash.) Gold (GHA, NWS)** — 1,000 cases

**Wild Goose Vineyards** \$23 CDN

**2006 Mystic River Gewürztraminer, Okanagan Valley** This vineyard near Oliver, B.C., is one of winemaker Hagen Kruger's favorites, especially for this variety. In fact, Wild Goose now makes three white wines under the Mystic River moniker. This is a classic Gewürztraminer, thanks to aromas of lychee, rosewater and fresh orchard fruit and flavors of grapefruits and tropical fruits, all balanced with surprisingly bright acidity and a dollop of sweetness. **Gold (NWS)** — 200 cases

**Zerba Cellars** \$28

**2005 Syrah, Columbia Valley** Zerba Cellars, the Oregon winery whose 2003 Syrah topped our Platinum Judging last year, continues to be a producer to be reckoned with. This Syrah uses grapes from estate vineyards on the Oregon side of the Walla Walla Valley, along with grapes purchased from the Yakima Valley. The resulting wine shows off beautiful spice aromas, along with notes of dark fruit, chocolate and hints of new leather. On the palate are lusciously deep flavors of jammy berries, plums, blueberries, black olives and molasses. **Gold (NWS)** — 887 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

**Best Buy!**

**Canoe Cove** \$13 CDN

**2005 North Bluff Red, Okanagan Valley** Canoe Cove, a second label for Domaine de Chaberton near Langley, B.C., uses grapes from the southern Okanagan Valley for this red blend. It offers aromas of chocolate, spices, black cherries and pomegranates, along with round, jammy flavors of black raspberries, blueberries and black currants. This wine takes advantage of its ripe fruit and is loaded with charm. **Gold (NWS)** — 900 cases

**Chateau Ste. Michelle** \$39

**2005 Ethos Late Harvest White Riesling, Columbia Valley** This reserve dessert wine is a sweetie with a whopping 22.4% residual sugar, but it has the acidity to prop up all the flavors. Winemaker Bob Bertheau used grapes from the Horse Heaven Vineyard, and the fruit was infected with botrytis (noble rot), giving it even more complexity. It offers luscious aromas of honeysuckle and apple pie and flavors of honey, flowers and poached pears sprinkled with sweet spices. **Best Riesling (Finger Lakes)** — 950 cases

**Dusted Valley Vintners** \$35

**2004 Reserve Syrah, Columbia Valley** The folks behind this Walla Walla Valley winery are proving to be some of the top Syrah producers in the Northwest, as they show with each release. This reserve-level red is a blend of three vineyards from three appellations: Horse Heaven Hills, Yakima Valley and Wahluke Slope. It opens with Côte-Rôtie-like aromas of sizzling bacon and molasses with hints of tar and ripe dark fruit, followed by focused flavors of blackberries and plums with a hint of rosemary. **Gold (Wash.)** — 125 cases

**Benton-Lane Winery** \$60

**2005 First Class Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley** The top Pinot Noir in our judging comes from one of the most respected producers in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Winemaker Tim Wilson expertly blended seven clones of Pinot Noir from Benton-Lane's estate vineyard to craft this complex red. The result is a wine with aromas of sweet spices, raspberries and cherries, followed by lush flavors of complex fruit, a hint of moist earth and a whisper of sweet herbs. Modest tannins provide balance without getting in the way of the fruit. **Gold (NWS)** — 1,334 cases

**Hawks View Winery** \$17

**2005 Cranberry, Coos County** If you don't think fruit wines can be serious, then take a long look — and taste — of this cranberry wine from the southern Oregon coast. Winemaker Terry Luce searched cranberry bogs along the coast for the sweetest fruit he could find, then crafted a wine that took our judges by surprise. The aromas are fresh, clean and loaded with cranberry notes. The flavors are sweet yet tart — just like a good cranberry. The purity of fruit is expertly balanced with bright acidity. "The varietal character goes beyond expectation," noted one judge. **Gold (NWS)** — 50 cases

**Morrison Lane** \$32

**2003 Syrah, Walla Walla Valley** This tiny producer in Walla Walla has quickly earned a reputation for top-quality red wines produced from estate grapes. This luscious red is co-fermented with 5% Viognier in the Côte-Rôtie style. The resulting wine offers aromas of sweet herbs, ripe plums and violets, followed by elegant and distinctive flavors of dark ripe fruit and beautifully balanced tannins and acids. **Gold (Wash.)** — 243 cases

**Best Buy!**

**Oak Knoll Winery** \$7

**NV Niagara, American** Niagara is a North American variety, known as "labrusca" in wine circles. It's often used for white grape juice but also is made into wine. This is a stunner that uses grapes from Oregon's Willamette Valley and Washington, thus the "American" designation. It is intense on the aromas with juicy grape notes and distinctive flavors. It's off-dry with 2.8% residual sugar and should be quite popular with picnics or brunches. **Best White Wine (PR)** — 10,000 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

**Reininger Winery** \$32

**2003 Cabernet Sauvignon, Walla Walla Valley** Former mountain-climbing guide Chuck Reininger now fulfills lofty expectations for his fans with each release. This Cab is a blend of two top Walla Walla Valley vineyards, Pepper Bridge and Seven Hills. The resulting wine offers charming aromas of oak, blackberries, chocolate and coffee, followed by flavors of black cherries, subtle oak and chocolate-covered tannins. Even under blind conditions, one judged pegged this as “Walla Walla style.” **Gold (NWS)** — 1,148 cases

**Revelry Vintners** \$20

**2005 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** This young Issaquah, Wash., winery has developed a stylish bag-in-a-box container for its wines. Thus, for this price, you get the equivalent of two bottles of Cab. This award-winner offers dark, smoky aromas of rich fruit and flavors of black currants, black olives, dark chocolate and black tea. **Gold (SD)** — 1,250 cases

**Cardwell Hill Cellars** \$28

**2005 Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley** This winery west of Corvallis, Ore., uses fruit from its estate vineyard to craft a luscious and elegant Pinot Noir, and owner Dan Chapel is serious about sustainable growing practices. This opens with charming aromas of violets, raspberries, strawberries and sweet spices, followed by flavors of ripe cherries dipped in chocolate. This wine manages to balance a gentle approach with plenty of complexity and length. **Gold (NWS)** — 2,475 cases

**CedarCreek Estate Winery** \$45 CDN

**2004 Platinum Reserve Meritage, Okanagan Valley** Longtime Washington winemaker Tom Di Bello headed north to this Kelowna, B.C., winery several years ago and has been turning out one award-winning wine after another since his arrival. This Merlot-dominated blend of Bordeaux varieties shows off aromas of spicy blueberries, cherries, leather and oak, followed by rich, dark flavors of blackberry jam, chocolate, black tea and anise. **Gold (SF)** — 422 cases

**Chateau Ste. Michelle** \$30

**2004 Orphelin Red Wine, Columbia Valley** If complexity can be found with blending, then there's no doubt winemaker Bob Bertheau has a winner on his hands. This red wine has no fewer than 10 grape varieties in it, from Syrah to Cinsault to Touriga to Cabernet Sauvignon. The result is a luscious wine with aromas of cherries, spices and mint, followed by delicious flavors of black cherries and hints of chocolate. Tannins provide structure while staying in check. **Gold (IEWC)** — 12,000 cases

**Col Solare** \$75

**2003 Red Table Wine, Columbia Valley** One of the most expensive wines in the Ste. Michelle universe also is one of its finest. This international collaboration between Ste. Michelle and Antinori is a Bordeaux-style blend dominated by 80% Cabernet Sauvignon. It shows off aromas of ripe cherries and even cranberries, followed by bold flavors of cherries and ripe plums. The tannins are still a bit assertive, so tuck this away for a couple of years. **Gold (Chron)** — 946 cases

**Best Buy!**

**Flying Fish** \$15

**2005 Merlot, Washington** Entrepreneur Peter Click of Seattle started Click Wine Group with wines from Australia and now produces this delicious Merlot from his own backyard. It's nicely priced, and the wine is darned good, too, thanks to aromas of blueberries and spices and flavors of blackberries, chocolate and blueberries. Supple tannins provide structure without interfering with anything. There's a lot to like about this Merlot. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 7,500 cases

**Gamache Vintners** \$28

**2004 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** The Gamache brothers grew the grapes for this gorgeous Cab at their estate vineyard near Basin City, Wash., then the wine was crafted by Ste. Michelle alum Charlie Hoppes. The result is a wine with aromas of dark fruit and toasted oak and intense flavors of black cherries and black olives. Sweet tannins and balanced acidity give this food-worthy structure. **Gold (NWS)** — 333 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

**Merry Cellars** \$30

**2005 Twilight Hills Red, Washington** Owner/winemaker Patrick Merry crafted this Bordeaux-style blend using grapes from top vineyards, including Stillwater Creek in the Frenchman Hills and Les Collines in the Walla Walla Valley. It's a Merlot-dominated red that reveals black and blue fruits on the aromas and loads of blackberries, black tea and black licorice on the palate. It's a complex wine with plenty to offer. **Gold (Indy)** — 103 cases

**Oak Knoll Winery** \$12

**2005 Pinot Gris, Willamette Valley** This northern Willamette Valley winery shows how Pinot Gris should be made, as it has crafted the top example in our judging. It provides complex aromas of fresh pears and limes along with grassy and floral notes, followed by bright, crisp flavors of pears, limes, star fruit and even a hint of clove. This has bold acidity to accompany all the flavors. No oak here, just pure, delicious Pinot Gris. **Gold (RIWC, Dallas)** — 2,425 cases

**Snake River Winery** \$26

**2005 Arena Valley Vineyard, Idaho** Owner Scott DeSeelhorst has crafted a wine in the style of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. His blend of Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre may be unusual in the Pacific Northwest, but it would be right at home in the southern Rhône Valley. It opens with aromas of dark fruit and moist earth, followed by balanced flavors of red fruit and a hint of oak. The tannins are seamlessly resolved, providing food-worthy structure. **Gold (Dallas)** — 225 cases

**Tamarack Cellars** \$28

**2005 Merlot, Columbia Valley** Ron Coleman launched his Walla Walla winery in 1997 with Merlot in mind. Through the years, he has branched into many varieties, yet his Merlot continues to be one of the state's finest. This is a great example, starting with aromas of bright cherries and chocolate, followed by nicely balanced flavors of Rainier cherries and ripe red plums. This is an easy wine to like — and even easier to drink. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 1,442 cases

**Three Rivers Winery** \$21

**2006 Riesling, Yakima Valley** This Walla Walla Valley winery is best known for its delicious reds and luscious dessert wine, but winemaker Holly Turner obviously is onto something with Riesling, as this was a three-time gold-medal winner in 2007. She produced a Germanic-style white with aromas of slate and limes and steely flavors of minerals and sweet lemons. The 4% residual sugar nicely rounds out the fruit but doesn't taste overly sweet, thanks to bright acidity. **Gold (Wash., LBGC, IEWC)** — 280 cases

**Whitestone Winery** \$28

**2002 Lake Roosevelt Shores Vineyard Merlot, Washington** Before the Grand Coulee Dam was built in the 1940s, grapes were grown in the area. Roosevelt Lake, created behind the dam, covered the region until the Haig family decided to plant vineyards on the lakeshore in 1994. By 2001, the family decided to launch Whitestone Winery in the nearby town of Wilbur. This wine, from the Haigs' second vintage, is a rich, spicy Merlot with aromas of dark fruit and a bit of oak. On the palate, the flavors are loaded with notes of blueberries and huckleberries. This is a substantial wine with tannins to match. It could be served well by tucking it into the cellar for a couple of years. **Gold (Indy)** — 170 cases

**Barnard Griffin** \$14

**2006 Semillon, Columbia Valley** Few Northwest wineries consistently make this noble white wine whose origins are in Bordeaux. Rob Griffin, however, is dedicated to the variety and crafts some of the best around. He gets the grapes from Caroway Vineyard east of the city of Kennewick. It opens with telltale aromas of fresh figs and citrus, followed by flavors of pears, apples, apricots, figs and lemon zest. This would pair beautifully with fresh crab, seared scallops or grilled chicken. **Gold (RIWC)** — 870 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

#### **Barnard Griffin**

\$11

**2006 Rosé of Sangiovese, Columbia Valley** Owner/winemaker Rob Griffin has become convinced that a rosé may be the best use of this variety in Washington. It's difficult to argue with success, since this may be the only rosé in the state that has a cult following. Its gorgeous aromas of cherries, vanilla and even a hint of almonds lead to clean, bright flavors of pomegranates, Rainier cherries and cranberries. Everything is propped up with food-friendly acidity to give this plenty of zip and length.

**Best rosé (RIWC, Monterey), Gold (Chron)** — 2,936 cases

#### **C. R. Sandidge Wines**

\$50

**2003 Tri\*Umph, Yakima Valley** Ray Sandidge has made wine around the world, and he gained his reputation with Washington wines while working for Kestrel Vintners in Prosser. Now on his own, Sandidge continues to craft beautiful wines, with a focus on blends and Syrahs. This Cab-dominated Bordeaux-style blend reveals aromas of black cherries, sweet spices and chocolate, followed by focused flavors of dark fruit. The tannins are in check, allowing the elegant fruit to shine.

**Gold (NWIWC)** — 256 cases

#### **DiStefano Winery**

\$28

**2003 Domenica, Washington** Owner Mark Newton and winemaker Hillary Sjolund have crafted a glorious Merlot-dominated blend that offers aromas of spicy dark fruit and flavors of black cherries and mint. Well-managed tannins don't add undue weight to the palate, making this a red to enjoy any time in the next three years with a fine cut of beef.

**Outstanding (WPNW)** — 467 cases

#### **Elkhorn Ridge Vineyards & Winery**

\$30

**2005 Pinot Noir 777, Willamette Valley** The "777" refers to the clone of Pinot Noir used in this particular wine. This is one of the so-called "Dijon" clones introduced to Oregon since the early '90s. It often is thought of as the best of these new clones, and that pedigree certainly shows here. This wine opens with aromas of darker-toned fruit, followed by rich, spicy flavors. This wine has some density while still retaining its delicate characteristics.

**Double Gold (SF)** — 300 cases

#### **Best Buy!**

#### **Harbinger Winery**

\$15

**NV Dynamo Red, Washington** After surviving a plane crash in the rugged Olympic National Park, Sara Gagnon decided she'd better get on with her dreams, which included launching her own winery. So she left nearby Olympic Cellars and started Harbinger. This fun blend offers aromas of red-toned fruit and sweet herbs, followed by fruit-driven flavors of cranberries, rhubarb and ripe cherries. This is made and priced to drink early and often.

**Gold (Wash.)** — 140 cases

#### **Helix by Reininger**

\$22

**2004 Merlot, Columbia Valley** Reininger's Helix line of wines must be a lot of fun for winemaker Chuck Reininger, as it allows him to stretch out across the vast Columbia Valley to use grapes that would never fit into his Walla Walla Valley program. Of course, it also means a lot more miles on his pickup because he ends up driving to the Frenchman Hills, Wahluke Slope and Horse Heaven Hills to keep an eye on grapes. This Merlot is a blend of four vineyards and offers aromas and flavors of blueberries and ripe cherries. Its elegant tannins provide just the right amount of structure.

**Gold (Dallas, Finger Lakes)** — 1,106 cases

#### **Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate**

\$42 CDN

**2006 Proprietors' Reserve Riesling Ice Wine, Okanagan Valley** This was the last wine Bruce Nicholson touched before he left this Oliver, B.C., winery for his native Ontario. It's a good legacy, thanks to intense aromas of honey and apricots and lush flavors of baked fruit, spices and tons of sweetness. There's just enough acidity to prop up all the residual sugar in this gorgeous dessert wine.

**Gold (NWS)** — 600 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

#### Best Buy!

#### **Kiona Vineyards Winery** \$12

**2004 Lemberger, Red Mountain** The Williams family pioneered grape growing on Red Mountain and also has championed this somewhat rare Austrian variety since the early 1980s, when it was dubbed “Washington’s Zinfandel” by various writers. This red wine opens with dark, dense, even brooding aromas that lead to bold flavors of ripe plums, blackberries and even blueberries. A whisper of mint offers intriguing complexity, and modest tannins give this youthful approachability. **Gold (Wash.)**  
— 1,800 cases

#### **Lake Breeze Vineyards** \$17 CDN

**2006 Gewürztraminer, Okanagan Valley** After several ownership changes in the past decade, this winery on B.C.’s Naramata Bench seems to now be steady and is making stunning wines, starting with this Gewürztraminer. It opens with classic aromas pink grapefruits, minerals and rosewater, followed by flavors of bright citrus and delicate stone fruits. This dry wine will pair well with turkey or duck. **Gold (NWS, ACWC)** — 450 cases

#### **Maryhill Winery** \$36

**2004 Proprietor’s Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** Owners Craig and Vicki Leuthold have done everything right since opening their winery in 2001. Between the views of the Columbia Gorge and Mount Hood, their amphitheater and their wines, the Leutholds have been on a roll. This highly regarded reserve Cab is a big wine with aromas of black currants, chocolate and leather, followed by dark flavors of ripe black fruit. The up-front tannins melt away by midpalate, ushering in a plush finish. **Double Gold (GHA), Gold (RIWC, NWS)** — 510 cases

#### **Robert Karl Cellars** \$20

**2004 Claret, Columbia Valley** Owner/winemaker Joe Gunselman has a tiger by the tail with this Cab-dominated blend. Each vintage for the past few years has garnered one top award after another, yet the wine remains blissfully affordable. This version is completely from Horse Heaven Hills fruit, a good choice considering the region’s reputation for growing Cabernet. This reveals aromas and flavors of black tea, black currants, blackberries and a slight herbal note. Firm tannins dictate opening this while a well-marbled steak is on the grill. **Gold (NWS)** — 1,600 cases

#### **San Juan Vineyards** \$14

**2006 Riesling, Yakima Valley** This Friday Harbor, Wash., winery’s first release of Riesling is a good one. Using grapes from the Smasne Brothers Vineyard, this relatively dry wine shows off aromas and flavors of sweet apples and hints of vanilla and even caramel. **Gold (Wash.)** — 608 cases

#### **Willamette Valley Vineyards** \$12

**2006 Riesling, Oregon** This Turner, Ore., winery is probably best known for its award-winning Pinot Noirs and Pinot Gris, but it’s also developing into one of Oregon’s largest producers of Riesling. This appealing white shows off aromas of fresh-cut apples and flavors of oranges, apples and nutmeg. It’s off-dry and hedonistically enjoyable.  
**Gold (LA, NWS)** — 21,000 cases

#### **Abacela Vineyards & Winery** \$25

**2004 Port, Southern Oregon** In the New World, most Port-style dessert wines are made with whatever grape happens to be available. Not so at Abacela, which prides itself in growing grapes that are rather obscure. Take this wine, for example, which is made with Bastardo and Tinta Roriz, two Portuguese varieties that aren’t planted in too many other places in Oregon besides the estate vineyard near Roseburg. The wine is superb, with rich aromas of raisins, plums, cherries, black pepper and chocolate, followed by well-integrated flavors of dark chocolate and black fruits. **Gold (NWS)** — 192 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

**Alexandria Nicole Cellars** \$18

**2006 Viognier, Columbia Valley** Jarrod Boyle has his fingers in every aspect of this Prosser, Wash., winery. He runs the winery, manages the estate vineyard in the nearby Horse Heaven Hills and makes the resulting wines. He crafted this luscious Viognier just as it should be, in stainless steel, allowing the fruit flavors and aromas to shine. This opens with elegant notes of orange Creamsicle and tropical fruits, followed by flavors of mangos, papayas, oranges and other exotic fruits. A terrific example of this northern Rhône white variety. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 1,203 cases

**Barrister Winery** \$25

**2004 Merlot, Columbia Valley** This Spokane winery is owned and operated by two local attorneys who are turning out some of Washington's most stunning red wines. This Merlot uses fruit from several Columbia Valley vineyards, and the complexity shows up immediately. Aromas of exotic spices and Rainier cherries give way to flavors of mint, spices and ripe red fruit. Graceful tannins do nothing more than offer balance to the layers of fruit, then build to a crescendo through the lengthy finish. **Gold (NWS)** — 258 cases

**Best Buy!**

**Columbia Crest** \$11

**2003 Grand Estates Shiraz, Columbia Valley** Ray Einberger oversees production of Washington's largest winery. How he and his staff manage to balance mass quantities with high quality is one of life's great mysteries. This Syrah opens with aromas that reminded us more of Côte-Rôtie than Barossa, thanks to notes of bacon and focused black fruit. On the palate, the fruit virtually explodes with flavors of plush cherries, black olives, molasses and blackberry jam. It comes off as much more complex than its price tag, no doubt. **Double Gold (Wash.)** — 24,000 cases

**DiStefano Winery** \$36

**2003 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** Mark Newton started his professional life as a nuclear engineer before his passion led him to begin making sparkling wine then moving on to Bordeaux- and Rhône-style wines he now focuses on. This boldly structured Cab opens with smoky aromas of black cherries, chocolate and even toasted walnuts, giving way to dense flavors of black fruit balanced with fairly assertive tannins that mellow toward the finish. A nicely balanced, well-crafted red. **Gold (SF)** — 890 cases

**DiStefano Winery** \$22

**2005 Viognier, Columbia Valley** In our Summer issue, we called this, "one of the finest Viogniers you'll likely come across." Six months later, that opinion hasn't changed. This white wine opens with aromas of sweet oranges, traces of limes and hints of starfruit, pineapples and mineral tones, followed by flavors of tropical and citrus fruits. Viognier is naturally soft in acidity, yet winemaker Hillary Sjolund manages to keep everything in balance here. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 169 cases

**Griffin Creek** \$35

**2004 Syrah, Rogue Valley** Willamette Valley Vineyards has championed the Rhône's most famous red from this Rogue Valley vineyard for several years, and winemaker Forrest Klaffke continues to make one of the state's finest. This starts off with aromas of coffee, tar, blackberry jam and even a hint of ripe strawberries. All of this gives way to juicy, opulent flavors of fresh raspberries, cinnamon and ripe plums. Enjoy with prime rib, duck or barbecued ribs. **Best Red (Oregon)** — 318 cases

**Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate** \$9 CDN

**2006 Proprietors' Reserve Dry Riesling, Okanagan Valley** Thanks to its northerly climes, British Columbia's Okanagan Valley is able to produce some of the Northwest's most steely Rieslings. This is from one of the province's largest wineries, and it shows off aromas of apples, starfruit and apricots. On the palate are flavors of spices, green apples and limes. This is a seriously good white wine that could be enjoyed with pork, chicken or shellfish. **Gold (OWF)** — 6,000 cases

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## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

**Joie Wines** \$19 CDN

**2006 Muscat, Okanagan Valley** The husband-wife team of Michael Dinn and Heidi Noble are former restaurateurs who decided early on to make wines they wanted to consume with fresh regional ingredients. As we judged this wine, we were led to think about what we might want to eat, and the ideas ranged from Thai to mild curries, thanks to this Muscat's beguiling aromas and flavors. It shows off notes of rosewater, spices and aromas on the nose and fresh orchard and citrus fruit on the palate. **Gold (ACWC)** — 669 cases

**Joie Wines** \$18 CDN

**2006 Un-Oaked Chardonnay, Okanagan Valley** We would be lying if we told you we didn't find the trend to make Chardonnay in stainless steel somewhat refreshing. It certainly is with this white wine from British Columbia's Naramata Bench. It opens with aromas of fresh pineapples and apples and flavors of pineapples, pears and apples. So that's what Chardonnay tastes like! **Gold (NWS)** — 160 cases

**LaVelle Vineyards** \$15

**2006 Riesling, Willamette Valley** In Germany, Rieslings tend to be high in acidity and fruit and low in alcohol. In the New World, we get a bit more sunlight than Germany, so our Rieslings can tend to be riper, fruitier and higher in alcohol. This Riesling from a longtime Elmira, Ore., producer offers some of the best of both worlds, with lower alcohol (10.7%) along with salivating aromas and flavors. It starts with notes of minerals, green apples and mowed grass on the nose, followed by flavors of pineapples and green apples with some sweetness around the edges. **Best White (NWS), Gold (LBGC, GHA)** — 513 cases

**Maryhill Winery** \$32

**2004 Proprietor's Reserve Sangiovese, Columbia Valley** This rising star on Washington's side of the Columbia Gorge stayed close to home with this wine, using grapes from the nearby Tudor and Gunkel vineyards to craft a wine worthy of Chianti Classico. This opens with big aromas of cranberries and Rainier cherries, followed by dense flavors of red plums, bright cherries and black raspberries. **Gold (NWS, Chron)** — 513 cases

**O•S Winery** \$38

**2004 BSH, Columbia Valley** The winery formerly known as Owen-Sullivan had to change its name a couple of years ago because a winery with a similar name protested. But that hasn't changed the winemaking or style of this Seattle producer. This is a Cab-dominated blend whose initials let you know it's as solid as a brick house. This is an intense wine with complex aromas of black cherries, walnuts and black currants, followed by focused flavors of ripe black cherries and black tea. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 525 cases

**Robert Karl Cellars** \$29

**2004 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** Joe Gunselman reaches into four vineyards in the Horse Heaven Hills for this big red wine that is mostly Cab (86%) but also blends in a bit of the four other main red Bordeaux grapes. It opens with complex aromas of sweet herbs, black olives, dark fruit and a whisper of smoke, followed by broad flavors of ripe plums, blackberries and a touch of toastiness. A well-balanced, well-crafted wine. **Gold (NWS)** — 725 cases

**Saint Laurent Winery** \$18

**2004 Merlot, Wahluke Slope** Frankly, we aren't sure winemaker Craig Mitrakul is old enough to drink — even after we checked his driver's license. But he's the fresh face of this new kid on the block, a winery downriver from Wenatchee, Wash., whose estate vineyards are on the venerable Wahluke Slope. This is a complete Merlot with aromas of Bing cherries and blueberries and easy-going flavors of cherries. The seamless tannins provide a velvety mouth feel, making this a wine that goes down easily. **Gold (LA, Wash.)** — 815 cases

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### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

**Saviah Cellars** \$35

**2004 Big Sky Cuvée, Columbia Valley** Eastern Washington's wide-open spaces perhaps inspired winemaker Richard Funk to name this red blend after his native Montana. The grapes come from two top Washington vineyards: Stillwater Creek and Champoux. It's a Merlot-dominated blend that reveals aromas of sweet spices and black cherries and complex flavors of blueberries, blackberries and cherries. Sweet tannins balance structure and finesse. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 318 cases

**Sweet Cheeks Winery** \$15

**2006 Pinot Gris, Willamette Valley** This winery near Eugene, Ore., relies on fruit from its 65-acre estate vineyard planted to four varieties, including Pinot Gris. This shows off fresh aromas of pears, apples and tropical fruit and bright flavors of ripe pears, fresh-cut apples and mouth-watering acidity.

**Gold (NWS)** — 1,378 cases

**Three Rivers Winery** \$21

**2004 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** Winemaker Holly Turner blended Cabernet Sauvignon from seven vineyards across the huge Columbia Valley. This complexity shows up in the glass with aromas of sweet herbs and dark fruit, followed by intense flavors of black currants and black cherries. Well-managed tannins provide structure without getting in the way of the wine. **Gold (Dallas)** — 2,067 cases

**Volcano Vineyards** \$28

**2004 Aguila Vineyard Syrah, Rogue Valley** This winery in downtown Bend, Ore., is run by Scott and Liz Radcliff, who also feature wines from other Northwest producers in their tasting room, an interesting and unique concept. This is a sturdy Syrah with aromas and flavors of blackberries, cola, molasses and ripe plums. It's a well-crafted, well-balanced wine. **Gold (Chron)** — 196 cases

**Arrowleaf Cellars** \$15 CDN

**2006 Bacchus, Okanagan Valley** This unusual white grape variety, a cross of Silvaner, Riesling and Müller-Thurgau and named for the Roman god of wine, can result in delicious wines when grown in cooler climates. Arrowleaf, which is located next to the much larger Gray Monk Estate Winery north of Kelowna, B.C., has turned out a delicious Bacchus. It offers aromas and flavors of flowers, sweet spices, pears and tropical fruits. An easy-drinking wine to enjoy with a picnic. **Gold (ACWC)** — 1,000 cases

**Blasted Church Vineyards** \$26 CDN

**2005 Merlot, Okanagan Valley** Named after a church in Okanagan Falls, B.C., that needed to be moved in 1929 and was literally blasted off its foundation, dismantled and moved 16 miles down the road, this winery is all about whimsical labels and serious wines. This Merlot is a class act, thanks to aromas and flavors of spicy oak, black cherries and black tea. Its gentle tannins lead to a lengthy farewell. **Outstanding (WPNW), Gold (ACWC)** — 650 cases

**Dunham & Froese Estate Winery** \$16 CDN

**2006 Night Hawk Pinot Blanc, Okanagan Valley** This new producer is off to a fast start with a Pinot Blanc that shows off aromas of ripe melons, fennel root and mild oak. On the palate are rich, clean flavors of honeydew and sweet spices. Enjoy with crab cakes or scallops. **Gold (OWF)** — 200 cases

**Eaton Hill Winery** \$32

**2003 Konnawac Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Yakima Valley** Tucked away in the Yakima Valley, Eaton Hill quietly is producing some superb wines that tend to fall well below most wine lovers' radars. Now is the time to discover what Eaton Hill is up to. This vineyard-designated Cab reveals aromas of sexy chocolate and opulent dark fruit, followed by flavors of black cherries, sweet spices and dark chocolate. This is a sensual, hedonistic wine. **Best of Class (PR), Gold (GHA)** — 238 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

#### Best Buy!

**Glenugie Winery** \$10 CDN  
**2005 Gamay Noir, Okanagan Valley**

Located just north of the border in Langley, B.C., Glenugie Winery gets some of its grapes from the Okanagan Valley. This Gamay is spot on, thanks to aromas and flavors of dark fruit, black pepper and a hint of oak, coffee and chocolate. **Gold (ACWC)** — 500 cases

**Helix by Reininger** \$22

**2004 Syrah, Columbia Valley** Winemaker Chuck Reininger relies upon Syrah grapes from three distinctive vineyards for this affordable red, including Clifton Hill and Stone Tree on the Wahluke Slope and Patina in the Walla Walla Valley. The wine opens with aromas of black cherries, leather and spicy oak, followed by deep flavors of blackberries and plums. A polished, well-made wine. **Gold (Chron)** — 672 cases

**Pend d'Oreille Winery** \$20

**2004 Merlot, Washington** Owner/winemaker Steve Meyer relies on grapes from Washington's Columbia Valley for this delicious Merlot in his Idaho Panhandle operation. This shows off aromas of dark fruit, black olives, a hint of sweet herbs and a good dose of oak, followed by flavors of bold black cherries. The moderate tannins give this a silky finish. **Best of Show (Idaho)** — 415 cases

**Portteus Winery** \$24

**2005 Malbec, Rattlesnake Hills** Count on Paul Portteus to continue pioneering different grape varieties in the western Yakima Valley. The longtime grape grower and winemaker has crafted a luscious Malbec in a somewhat cooler region. This red wine opens with aromas of black pepper, blackberry jam, plum sauce and spicy oak, followed by full flavors of black currants, black raspberries and blackberries. **Gold (Wash.)** — 220 cases

**Snake River Winery** \$18

**2005 Arena Valley Vineyard Barbera, Idaho** Best known in the northwest corner of Italy, Barbera is now having some success in the Pacific Northwest. This red wine from Idaho's Snake River Valley reveals aromas of dark fruit, black pepper, chocolate and coffee, followed by flavors of black plums, blackberries and black tea. After tasting this example, our judges thought more Barbera should be planted in this region. **Gold (Dallas)** — 235 cases

**Three Rivers Winery** \$39

**2003 Red Meritage, Columbia Valley** This particular Bordeaux-style blend from one of Walla Walla's showcase wineries has earned its way into our Platinum Judging for the second consecutive year. It continues to shine, thanks to aromas of sweet spices and dark fruit and flavors of broad, expressive blackberries and good structure for pairing with grilled meats. **Gold (Finger Lakes)** — 613 cases

**Vin du Lac Winery** \$18

**2006 Vie! Viognier, Columbia Valley** Vin du Lac has developed into one of Washington's top wineries in a short period of time, thanks to one great wine after another. This Viognier topped our judging of the variety last summer. Owner/winemaker Larry Lehmbecker used grapes from the Yakima Valley and Lake Chelan to craft a white wine with surprising acidity. It offers aromas and flavors of oranges, white peaches and pineapples. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 300 cases

**Vitis Ridge** \$12

**2006 Early Muscat, Willamette Valley** This Silverton, Ore., winery is making several delicious wines. This white variety is somewhat rare amid the various versions of Muscats, though it has a good following in Oregon. This opens with aromas of rosewater and melons, followed by flavors of lychee, passionfruit, rosewater and citrus. It's deliciously balanced. **Gold (Oregon)** — 103 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

**Wild Goose Vineyards** \$19 CDN

**2006 Gewürztraminer, Okanagan Valley** Winemaker Hagen Kruger continues his mastery of this German variety, crafting a white wine with distinctive aromas of lychee and sweet spices and flavors of Texas pink grapefruit, cloves, lychee and nutmeg. Bright acidity is the hallmark of Okanagan Valley Gewürztraminers, and this certainly has it. **Gold (ACWC)** — 800 cases

**Basel Cellars** \$32

**2004 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** Visitors to this winery south of Walla Walla tend to be amazed by the stunningly beautiful and castle-like facility. They are equally pleased with the winery's offerings. In a year when few grapes were available in the Walla Walla Valley, Basel was able to obtain grapes from Ste. Michelle's historic Cold Creek Vineyard for this Cab. This opens with aromas of black plums, berries and oak and dense flavors of black cherries, black pepper and dark chocolate. **Gold (LBGC)** — 580 cases

**Canoe Cove** \$25 CDN

**2003 Cab-Merlot, Okanagan Valley** Canoe Cove, a second label for Domaine de Chaberton Estate Winery in B.C.'s Fraser Valley, uses grapes obtained from the Okanagan Valley for this Bordeaux-style blend. It's an elegant wine with aromas of raspberries and blackberries and rich flavors of black cherries, dark chocolate and a hint of black tea. **Gold (NWS)** — 1,500 cases

**Best Buy!**

**Columbia Crest** \$11

**2004 Grand Estates Merlot, Columbia Valley** Washington's largest winery also is the state's largest producer of Merlot. Winemaker Ray Einberger relies on fruit primarily from the Horse Heaven Hills and Wahluke Slope for this supple red. It opens with perfumed aromas of cherries, raspberries and mocha, followed by rich flavors of bold black cherries and blackberries. It's a great wine at a stunning price. **Double Gold/Best Merlot (Wash.), Gold (RIWC)** — 140,000 cases

**Covey Run Winery** \$13

**2005 Winemaker's Collection Chardonnay, Columbia Valley** If you're looking for a big, round, boldly flavored Chardonnay, here you go. Winemaker Kerry Norton (who has since moved up the company ladder to Columbia Winery) crafted a wine that opens with aromas of butter and tropical fruits, followed by flavors of ripe apples, pineapples and a buttery midpalate and finish. **Best of Class (PR)** — 4,121 cases

**Gordon Brothers Family Vineyards** \$20

**2002 Tradition, Columbia Valley** Jeff Gordon has been growing wine grapes on cliffs above the Snake River in Eastern Washington for a quarter-century, and he relies on those estate grapes for all his wines. This New World blend of Cab, Merlot and Syrah reveals aromas and flavors of sweet black fruit, chocolate and sweet spices. Mild oak adds complexity without getting in the way of all the fruit. **Gold (SF)** — 470 cases

**Kermode Wild Berry Wines** \$28 CDN

**2006 Blackcap Raspberry Port, Fraser Valley** Fritz and Bob Sprieszl run this fruit winery in B.C.'s Fraser Valley, relying on many of the edible wild berries available in their area. One of several wines made by Kermode, this is a gorgeous fortified wine. It opens with rich aromas of raspberries, followed by flavors of raisins, plums, blackberries and chocolate-covered cherries. It's a well-made wine that will appeal to the most serious Port lovers. **Gold (ACWC)** — 102 cases

**Kestrel Vintners** \$20

**2005 Old Vine Estate Chardonnay, Yakima Valley** Kestrel's estate vineyard contains some of Washington's oldest vines, some dating back to 1972. This intriguing wine reveals aromas of Jonagold apples, pineapples and bananas, followed by ripe flavors with impressive acidity and a nice hint of sweet butter. Unlike many Chardonnays, this wine has broad food-pairing possibilities. **Gold (Chron)** — 322 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

**Lost Mountain Winery** \$23

**2005 Boushey Vineyards Sangiovese, Yakima Valley** Steve and Sue Conca craft some luscious reds high in the hills above Sequim, Wash. Their grapes come from some of Eastern Washington's finest vineyards, and they prefer to keep the sulfites in their wines low. This Sangiovese opens with aromas of bright red fruit, followed by youthful flavors of black cherries and black pepper. **Gold (NWS)** — 126 cases

**Tualatin Estate** \$16

**2006 Semi-Sparkling Muscat Frizzante, Willamette Valley** This is by far one of the the most fun styles of wine made. It's bright, thanks to the bright bubbles. It's sweet, thanks to the 12.3% residual sugar. And it's easy to drink, thanks to the low 6.4% alcohol. It shows off aromas and flavors of rosewater, citrus and apples and is deliciously light and refreshing. This is one of at least three such wines made in Oregon — and frankly, there should be more. **Gold (Oregon)** — 1,220 cases

**Tualatin Estate** \$28

**2005 Tualatin Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley** This Willamette Valley vineyard and producer owned by Willamette Valley Vineyards, has been a reliable producer of Pinot Noir since the '70s. Its distinctive style reveals aromas of darker fruit, such as black cherries, and its flavors include notes of dark, rich fruit and hints of mild chocolate. It's a medium-bodied wine that will pair well with veal or duck. **Gold (Oregon)** — 400 cases

**Waterbrook Winery** \$45

**2003 WB Primarius Meritage, Columbia Valley** Seattle's Precept Brands acquired this longtime Walla Walla winery a year ago, and it is one of the stars of Precept's portfolio. This is a high-end Bordeaux-style blend that is predominantly Cab but also includes big percentages of Malbec and Petit Verdot. It shows off aromas of blueberries and blackberries and flavors of dark cherries, blueberries and dark chocolate. It's beautifully balanced between acidity, tannin and oak and is delicious from beginning to end. **Outstanding (WPNW)** — 356 cases

**Cowan Vineyards** \$16

**2004 Cabernet Franc, Yakima Valley** This fairly young, family-owned vineyard and winery in Prosser, Wash., is crafting some silky red wines. This Cab Franc from estate grapes shows off notes of dark fruits and black olives, followed by flavors of dried cherries and leather. An underlying complexity provides a sexy characteristic that makes this wine especially enjoyable. **Gold (NWS)** — 311 cases

**Gehring Brothers Estate Winery** \$22 CDN

**2006 Optimum Pinot Gris, Okanagan Valley** Walter and Gordon Gehring began their family winemaking operation in 1985 after studying at Germany's top universities, and their hallmark has been superbly made white wines. This Pinot Gris reveals aromas and flavors of fresh orchard fruit and balanced acidity. **Gold (ACWC)** — 430 cases

**Best Buy!**

**Snoqualmie Vineyards** \$8

**2006 Winemaker's Select Riesling, Columbia Valley** Winemaker Joy Andersen has Riesling lovers talking with this beautiful white wine. It's pretty sweet at 5% residual sugar, and its modest alcohol and good acidities boost the aromas and flavors of minerals, pears, apples and sweet spices. **Double Gold/Best Riesling (SF)** — 34,000 cases

**Spangler Vineyards** \$24

**2005 Sundown Vineyard Cabernet Franc, Southern Oregon** This vineyard-designated Cab Franc shows off aromas and flavors of blackberries, green olives and black raspberries. This red has good density and plenty of ripe fruit. **Double Gold/Chairman's Award (RIWC)** — 320 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

**Three Rivers Winery** \$50

**2004 Champoux Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Horse Heaven Hills** Winemaker Holly Turner uses grapes from one of Washington's finest vineyards for this Cab that is superb now and will only get better with some cellar aging. It opens with aromas of classic black currants and plums, followed by flavors of harmonious black fruit and bittersweet chocolate. The tannins are on the muscular side, but the ample fruit more than keeps up with it. **Gold (NWS)** — 316 cases

**Best Buy!**

**Thurston Wolfe** \$15

**2005 Lemberger, Horse Heaven Hills** Wade Wolfe has championed this grape for a couple of decades, and he's been behind some of the best in the Yakima Valley during those years. This is a superb example, thanks to aromas and flavors of black cherries, plums and blackberries. The moderate oak is wonderfully integrated and the midpalate is bright and spicy. Pair with grilled meats or pasta dishes. **Gold (Dallas)** — 172 cases

**Vin du Lac Winery** \$20

**2005 Barrel Select Chardonnay, Columbia Valley** Owner/winemaker Larry Lehmbecker used grapes from historic Upland Vineyards in the Yakima Valley and his own estate Michaela's Vineyard in Lake Chelan for this luscious Chardonnay. It offers aromas and flavors of sweet oak, pineapples, butter and vanilla. **Gold (NWS, PR)** — 396 cases

**Columbia Gardens Vineyard & Winery** \$15 CDN

**2006 Garden Gold, Okanagan Valley** This proprietary white blend shows off bright and distinctive aromas and flavors of gooseberries, minerals, lychee, grapefruits and various orchard fruit notes, along with such spices and cloves and coriander. **Gold (ACWC)**

**Best Buy!**

**Covey Run Winery** \$9

**2004 Quail Series Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** Covey Run has developed into one of the Northwest's great bargain wineries, but it doesn't sacrifice quality, as is evidenced with this Cab. It offers aromas and flavors of black cherries, chocolate and black currants. The tannins do not overwhelm the fruit but rather provide superb balance. This is priced and crafted for everyday enjoyment. **Gold (NWS)** — 27,500 cases

**Best Buy!**

**Maryhill Winery** \$12

**2005 Winemaker's Blend, Columbia Valley** This Bordeaux-style red blend is nicely priced and also is beautifully made it shows off aromas and flavors of blueberries, black currants, black pepper and toasted walnuts. **Gold (GHA)** — 6,167 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

## GOLD

**Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate** \$45 CDN  
2006 Grand Reserve Riesling Ice Wine, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 450 cases

**Gehring Brothers Estate Winery** \$14 CDN  
2006 Classic Dry Riesling, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (ACWC) — 2,550 cases

**Spindrift Cellars** \$38  
2005 Reserve Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 108 cases

**Abacela Vineyards & Winery** \$23  
2006 Albariño, Southern Oregon  
Gold (NWS) — 633 cases

**Starling Lane Winery** \$23  
2005 Wild Blackberry Port, Vancouver Island  
Gold (NWS) — 110 cases

**Three Rivers Winery** \$19  
2006 White Meritage, Columbia Valley  
Gold (WCWC) — 884 cases

**Cathedral Ridge Winery** \$26  
2005 Bordeauxd Red, Columbia Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 425 cases

**Dunham Cellars** \$19  
2005 Four Legged White, Washington  
Gold (NWS) — 2,378 cases

**Lone Canary** \$30  
2003 Proprietor's Reserve, Yakima Valley  
Gold (Dallas) — 169 cases

**Sweet Cheeks Winery** \$20  
2006 Dry Riesling, Willamette Valley  
Gold (IEWC) — 693 cases

**Three Rivers Winery** \$39  
2004 Red Meritage, Columbia Valley  
Gold (WCWC) — 388 cases

**Vin du Lac Winery** \$35  
2004 Barrel Select Malbec, Yakima Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 100 cases

**Arrowleaf Cellars** \$16 CDN  
2006 The Snow Tropics Vidal, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (ACWC) — 500 cases

**Coeur d'Alene Cellars** \$28  
2003 Syrah, Washington  
Double Gold (GHA) — 1,330 cases

**Gray Monk Estate Winery** \$17 CDN  
2006 Pinot Blanc, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (Indy) — 2,900 cases

**Hawks View Winery** \$20  
NV Wild Blackberry, Oregon  
Gold/Best nongrape wine (NWS) — 150 cases

**Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate** \$33 CDN  
2004 Sunrock Vineyard Merlot, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (ACWC) — 500 cases

**Pentage Wines** \$18 CDN  
2006 Pinot Gris, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 875 cases

**Saint Laurent Winery** \$35  
2003 La Bohème, Wahluke Slope  
Gold (Chron, Indy) — 200 cases

**Saint Laurent Winery** \$18  
2005 Chardonnay, Wahluke Slope  
Gold (Indy) — 329 cases

**Saint Laurent Winery** \$28  
2004 Cabernet Sauvignon, Wahluke Slope  
Gold (NWS, Wash., GHA) — 223 cases

**Saviah Cellars** \$32  
2005 Une Vallée, Walla Walla Valley  
Double Gold (Wash.), Outstanding (WPNW) — 304 cases

**Terra Blanca Winery & Estate Vineyard** \$38  
2002 Block 8 Reserve Syrah, Red Mountain  
Gold (Chron, Dallas) — 645 cases

**Willamette Valley Vineyards** \$16  
2006 Pinot Gris, Willamette Valley  
Gold (RIWC) — 21,000 cases

**Barrister Winery** \$25  
2005 Cabernet Franc, Columbia Valley  
Double Gold (TC), Gold (NWS) — 825 cases

**Chateau Lorane** \$25  
2005 Late Harvest Gewürztraminer, Oregon  
Gold (NWS) — 62 cases

**Chateau Ste. Michelle** \$26  
2004 Canoe Ridge Estate Merlot, Horse Heaven Hills  
Gold (NWS, Wash.) — 12,000 cases

**Columbia Gardens Vineyard & Winery** \$15 CDN  
2006 Gewürztraminer, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (ACWC)

Best Buy!

**Covey Run Winery** \$8  
2005 Quail Series Morio Muscat, Columbia Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 3,000 cases

**Gray Monk Estate Winery** \$16 CDN  
2005 Chardonnay Unwooded, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (ACWC) — 4,600 cases

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## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

<b>Hoodsport Winery</b>	\$17	
2005 Merlot, Columbia Valley		
Outstanding (WPNW)	— 2,000 cases	
<b>L'Ecole No 41</b>	\$36	
2003 Cabernet Sauvignon, Walla Walla Valley		
Gold (NWS)	— 1,771 cases	
<b>Lang Vineyards</b>	\$25 CDN	
2006 Signature Series Optima, Okanagan Valley		
Gold (Indy)	— 278 cases	
<b>Merry Cellars</b>	\$30	
2005 Stillwater Creek Vineyard Merlot, Columbia Valley		
Gold (Indy)	— 127 cases	
<b>Sky River Mead</b>	\$14	
NV Semi-Sweet Mead, Washington		
Gold (LBGC)	— 2,000 cases	
<b>Willamette Valley Vineyards</b>	\$18	
2006 Whole Cluster Fermented Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley		
Gold (NWS)	— 16,000 cases	
<b>Baer Winery</b>	\$34	
2003 Arctos, Columbia Valley		
Outstanding (WPNW)	— 217 cases	
<b>Barrister Winery</b>	\$25	
2003 Cabernet Sauvignon, Walla Walla Valley		
Gold (WCWC)	— 395 cases	
<b>Bergevin Lane Vineyards</b>	\$25	
2006 Viognier, Columbia Valley		
Outstanding (WPNW)	— 206 cases	
<b>Erath Vineyards</b>	\$30	
2005 Estate Selection Pinot Noir, Dundee Hills		
Gold (Chron)	— 6,871 cases	
<b>Firesteed Cellars</b>	\$10	
2005 Pinot Gris, Oregon		
Gold (Oregon)		
<b>L'Ecole No 41</b>	\$37	
2004 Seven Hills Vineyard Estate Syrah, Walla Walla Valley		
Gold (NWS)	— 517 cases	
<b>Maryhill Winery</b>	\$20	
2004 Syrah, Columbia Valley		
Gold (INWC)	— 1,345 cases	
<b>Maryhill Winery</b>	\$16	
2006 Pinot Gris, Columbia Valley		
Best of Class (LBGC), Gold (Indy)	— 5,100 cases	
<b>Maryhill Winery</b>	\$18	
2006 Viognier, Columbia Valley		
Gold (LBGC)	— 3,700 cases	
<b>Saggi</b>	\$45	
2004 Red Wine, Columbia Valley		
Outstanding (WPNW)	— 633 cases	
<b>San Juan Vineyards</b>	\$19	
2004 Syrah, Yakima Valley		
Gold (Wash.)	— 560 cases	
Best Buy!		
<b>San Juan Vineyards</b>	\$15	
2004 Cab-Merlot, Yakima Valley		
Gold (NWS, Indy)	— 728 cases	
<b>Sawtooth Winery</b>	\$15	
2005 Reserve Chardonnay, Idaho		
Gold (Idaho)	— 150 cases	
<b>Starling Lane Winery</b>	\$24 CDN	
2005 Pinot Noir, Vancouver Island		
Gold (NWS)	— 50 cases	
<b>Abacela Vineyards &amp; Winery</b>	\$35	
2004 Claret, Southern Oregon		
Outstanding (WPNW)	— 243 cases	
<b>Anam Cara Cellars</b>	\$30	
2005 Nicholas Estate Pinot Noir, Chehalem Mountains		
Gold (NWS)	— 678 cases	
<b>CedarCreek Estate Winery</b>	\$40 CDN	
2004 Platinum Reserve Pinot Noir, Okanagan Valley		
Gold (ACWC)	— 704 cases	
<b>Chateau Ste. Michelle</b>	\$18	
2005 Indian Wells Chardonnay, Columbia Valley		
Gold (RIWC)	— 34,000 cases	
<b>E.B. Foote Winery</b>	\$24	
2004 Perfect a Trois, Columbia Valley		
Best Washington Wine (NWS), Outstanding (WPNW)	— 248 cases	
<b>Evergreen Vineyards</b>	\$32	
2004 Del-Mar Vineyards Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley		
Gold (Indy)	— 295 cases	
<b>Gehring Brothers Estate Winery</b>	\$16 CDN	
2005 Dry Rock Merlot, Okanagan Valley		
Gold (ACWC)	— 950 cases	
<b>Kermode Wild Berry Wines</b>	\$20 CDN	
2006 Himalaya Blackberry Port, Okanagan Valley		
Gold (ACWC)	— 845 cases	
<b>Northstar Cellars</b>	\$41	
2003 Merlot, Columbia Valley		
Gold (RIWC, SD, GHA)	— 9,137 cases	
Best Buy!		
<b>Pavin and Riley</b>	\$10	
2005 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley		
Double Gold (Chron)	— 2,500 cases	

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

**Sandhill Winery** \$20  
2002 Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Mountain  
Gold (NWS) — 1,550 cases

**Sonoran Estate Winery** \$25 CDN  
2004 Intimate Gamay Noir Ice Wine, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 95 cases

**Spring Valley Vineyard** \$50  
2004 Frederick, Walla Walla Valley  
Outstanding (WPNW) — 987 cases

**Tildio Winery** \$20  
2004 Zinfandel, Columbia Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 124 cases

**Volcano Vineyards** \$26  
2004 Aguila Vineyard Merlot, Rogue Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 128 cases

**Williamson Vineyards** \$18  
2004 Syrah, Idaho  
Gold (PR) — 195 cases

**Winter's Hill Vineyard** \$25  
2004 White Gold Pinot Blanc, Dundee Hills  
Double Gold (GHW), Gold (NWS, Dallas) — 142 cases

**Bergevin Lane Vineyards** \$45  
2004 Intuition, Columbia Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 175 cases

Best Buy!  
**Bridgeview Vineyards** \$10  
2003 Merlot, Southern Oregon  
Outstanding (WPNW) — 5,000 cases

**Chateau Ste. Michelle** \$24  
2004 Canoe Ridge Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Horse Heaven Hills  
Best of Class (LBGC) — 2,500 cases

**Claar Cellars** \$17  
2003 White Bluffs Merlot, Columbia Valley  
Double Gold (Chron), Gold (Wash.) — 252 cases

**Domaine Ste. Michelle** \$12  
NV Cuvée Brut, Columbia Valley  
Best Sparkling Wine (NWS) — 191,540 cases

**Rocky Creek Winery** \$20 CDN  
2005 Pinot Noir, Vancouver Island  
Gold (NWS) — 150 cases

**Snoqualmie Vineyards** \$23  
2004 Reserve Syrah, Columbia Valley  
Gold (Indy) — 600 cases

**Terra Blanca Winery & Estate Vineyard** \$20  
2002 Syrah, Red Mountain  
Gold (Finger Lakes) — 3,267 cases

**Vin du Lac Winery** \$28  
2003 Barrel Select Cabernet Sauvignon, Yakima Valley  
Gold (NWS, Wash.) — 205 cases

**Willamette Valley Vineyards** \$25  
2005 Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley  
Gold (PR) — 16,731 cases

**Chateau Ste Michelle** \$18  
2004 Indian Wells Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley  
Gold (NWS, Dallas) — 20,000 cases

**Del Rio Vineyards** \$28  
2004 Merlot, Rogue Valley  
Outstanding (WPNW) — 149 cases

**Gordon Brothers Family Vineyards** \$23  
2005 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley  
Best of Class (PR), Gold (Dallas, IEWC) — 5,700 cases

**Gray Monk Estate Winery** \$16 CDN  
2005 Pinot Noir, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (ACWC) — 5,100 cases

**Spangler Vineyards** \$16  
2006 Viognier, Southern Oregon  
Outstanding (WPNW) — 344 cases

**Three Rivers Winery** \$39  
2004 Ahler Vineyard Syrah, Walla Walla Valley  
Gold (Wine Fest) — 233 cases

**Troon Vineyard** \$18  
2006 River Guide White  
Gold (NWIWC) — 1,100 cases

**Whitestone Winery** \$20  
NV Pieces of Red, Columbia Valley  
Double Gold (Indy) — 412 cases

**Winter's Hill Vineyard** \$16  
2006 Dry Rosé, Dundee Hills  
Gold (NWS) — 340 cases

**Cliff Creek** \$35  
2004 Syrah, Rogue Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 685 cases

**DiStefano Winery** \$29  
2003 Sogno, Columbia Valley  
Gold (WWC) — 644 cases

**E.B. Foote Winery** \$18  
2003 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 218 cases

**Seven Stones Winery** \$25 CDN  
2005 Chardonnay, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (ACWC) — 150 cases

# WINE PRESS

## N O R T H W E S T

### 2007 Platinum Judging

#### Best of the Best in the Great Northwest

Best Buy!

**Ste. Chapelle** \$9  
2003 Winemaker's Series Syrah, Idaho  
Gold (NWIWC) — 2,000 cases

**Terra Blanca Winery & Estate Vineyard** \$15  
2005 Viognier, Yakima Valley  
Gold (Finger Lakes) — 1,506 cases

Best Buy!

**Afternoon Wine Co. (Snake River Winery)** \$10  
2005 Northwest White, American  
Gold (Dallas) — 540 cases

**Granite Creek Estate Wines** \$25 CDN  
2005 Gamay Noir, Okanagan Valley  
Gold (NWS) — 300 cases