



summer drinking

At *Wine & Spirits*, our blind panels tasted 1,433 wines for this issue's tastings report.

Those panels included some of the industry's best talent—Brian Smith of *Clo*, Scott Reiner from *Discovery Wines*, Lydia Tillman from *Casa Mono* and John Szabo, MS, from *Wine Access* in Toronto, were just a few of the panel members who joined us in New York. Our San Francisco panels included Barbara Haimes of *Café Rouge* in Berkeley, Jim Mead of *Ansley Wine Merchants* in Atlanta and Eric Vreede from *Absinthe*.

From those tastings, our critics chose the wines you'll find in the following pages. We've included all the exceptional bottlings (earning 90 points or more), as well as those that offer the best bang for the buck (Best Buys).

For notes on all recommended wines and a detailed description of our tasting process, go to wineandspirits-magazine.com. Subscribers can access our complete tastings database online.

Year's Best

- 38 **Pinot Gris**
tasted: 116 top wines: 8 best buys: 4
- 39 **Northeast Italy**
tasted: 233 top wines: 70 best buys: 40
- 46 **Prosecco/Cava**
tasted: 83 top wines: 15 best buys: 14
- 48 **Vinho Verde/Albariño**
tasted: 98 top wines: 20 best buys: 21
- 50 **Rosé**
tasted: 203 top wines: 13 best buys: 33
- 53 **Greece**
tasted: 191 top wines: 32 best buys: 31

New Releases

- 58 **American Wines**
tasted: 446 top wines: 49 best buys: 27
- 44 **Imported Wines**
tasted: 63 top wines: 17 best buys: 8

Total

tasted: 1,433 top wines: 224 best buys: 178

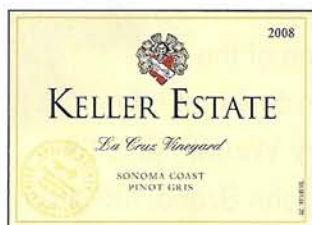
CALIFORNIA

92 | Swanson \$21

2007 Napa Valley Pinot Grigio Light and frisky, this wine's smoky flavors gain clarity and freshness with air. It smells like an autumn pear and has that same softness to the fruit, while pleasantly bitter leesiness builds a substantive structure. For grilled *unagi*. (W&S, 12/08) *Swanson Vyd., Rutherford, CA*

90 | J \$20

2007 Russian River Valley Pinot Gris A rich, sleek white with the gentleness of coastal rain, this has simple flavors of the grape and nutty lees. It ends on a tart lemon note. For prawns. (W&S, 10/08) *J Vyd. & Winery, Healdsburg, CA*



90 | Keller Estate \$30

2008 Sonoma Coast La Cruz Vineyard Pinot Gris The coastal cool of this vineyard in the Petaluma Gap created a gris with plenty of flavor intensity. There's a citrus pith flavor amidst all the juiciness, both of greener lime pith and redder ruby grapefruit. It ends on pointed acidity. For grilled mahi-mahi. (330 cases) *Keller Estate, Petaluma, CA*

89 | Swanson \$21

2008 Napa Valley Pinot Grigio (Best Buy) There's a warm toastiness to this pinot gris, lending the wine's mineral flavors a desert-green character. A match for barely seared albacore with green zebra tomato salsa. *Swanson Vineyards, Rutherford, CA*

OREGON



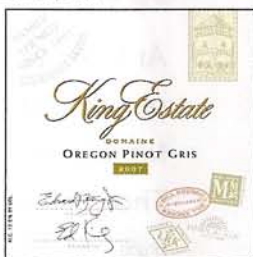
93 | Benton-Lane \$17

2008 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris This racy gris tastes like biting into a crisp apple.

Our blind panels tasted **116** new-release pinot gris over the past 12 months. Our critics, **Joshua Greene** (California) and **Patrick J. Comiskey** (Oregon and Washington) rated **8** as exceptional (90+) and **4** as Best Buys.

For a complete list of wines tasted and reviews for all recommended wines, go to wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

It leads with scents of camellia blossoms, elegant and cool. Its green apple flavors show impressive energy and drive, with a talc-like texture and a fine, dusty stone finish that lasts. Ideal with roast pork and herbed potatoes. (4,860 cases) *Benton-Lane Winery, Monroe, OR*



93 | King Estate \$25

2007 Oregon Domaine Pinot Gris A cool pinot gris, this has high-toned aromas of passionfruit with a hint of spearmint. Bright and mouthwatering, its citrus marmalade flavors are bolstered by leesy notes. It has the right cut for shrimp pasta with *crème fraîche*. *King Estate Winery, Eugene, OR*



92 | King Estate \$17

2007 Oregon Signature Collection Pinot Gris This elegant gris leads with a leesy pear scent, accented by a lilac aroma. Its flavors fall between pear and pear skin, with a hint of bitter almonds that gives it the firmness for pork loin. (W&S, 6/09) *King Estate Winery, Eugene, OR*

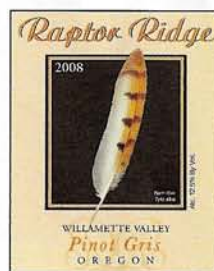
91 | Arcane Cellars \$20

2007 Willamette Valley Reserve Pinot Gris This youthful wine leads with hints of peach over its pear and wheat scents. It's terse and racy, with a pleasing note of Meyer lemon on the finish. A terrific aperitif, or chill it for pork loin. (190 cases; W&S, 2/09) *Wheatland Winery, Salem, OR*

90 | Ransom \$20

2008 Willamette Valley Selection Pinot Gris An organic wine crafted mostly from Temperance Hill Vineyard, this leads with

scents of brioche and orange blossom, along with crisp, juicy apple. The flavors are a little richer, falling somewhere between pear and pear skin, yet balanced by a fine, mouthwatering acidity. *Ransom Wine Co., McMinnville, OR*



89 | Raptor Ridge \$18

2008 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris (Best Buy) This racy gris opens with scents of peach blossoms and green apple. The palate is driven by pear flavors, its juicy texture dusted by a chalky stone element. It has the energy to match smoked trout and fennel. (955 cases) *Raptor Ridge Winery, Scholls, OR*

88 | A to Z \$13

2008 Oregon Pinot Gris (Best Buy) This appealing wine has a ripe tropical scent reminiscent of gewurztraminer, of ripe peach and spice. Its appley flavor is balanced by a firm mineral texture and tense acidity. For white sausages. *A to Z Wineworks, Newberg, OR*

WASHINGTON



88 | Chateau Ste. Michelle \$13

2008 Columbia Valley Pinot Gris (Best Buy) This white's tropical aromas suggest the heat of the Columbia Valley, while the flavors of white grapes, golden apple and lees take a leaner course. For grilled squid. *Chateau Ste. Michelle, Woodinville, WA* ■