

Publisher's PICKS



In each issue THE TASTING PANEL's Publisher and Executive Editor, Meridith May, selects her favorite wines and spirits of the month. Check here for the latest arrivals in our offices, the hottest new brands on the market and an occasional revisited classic.

Wine

90 Ancient Peaks 2008 Sauvignon Blanc, Paso Robles (\$12) A deep, rich creaminess permeates this startling white; lemon fragrance, banana bread and custard set a unique tone along with mandarin/lime freshness.



comes down to a focused flavor burst, a shade of graphite and a finish that brings you to the edge of the seashore.

JOSEPH PHELPS

88 Hahn Estates 2007 Merlot, Monterey (\$14) Ripe and juicy with a backdrop of dusty tannins. Its cranberry-rich fruit is inspired by a gracefulness, good acidity and, to end the equation, great value.

SMITH & HOOK



89 Vallformosa 2008 Syrah-Tempranillo, Penedés, Spain (\$15) More New World than Old, juicy and fresh, seamlessly modern; earth and white pepper are just a side note to rich Bing cherry and boysenberry pie.

ECO VALLEY

89+ Bianchi Winery 2006 Heritage Selection Cabernet Sauvignon, Lakeside Ranch, Paso Robles (\$24) Raspberry jam permeates this medium bodied spice rack of a wine; cinnamon, basil and a hint of black olive add depth, and it possesses a fine acidity and dry tannins.



93 Freestone 2007 Pinot Noir, Pastoral Vineyard, Sonoma Coast (\$100) The aromas are reminiscent

of walking into a coffee shop: caffè latte, almonds, hazelnut and jellied pastries. It all

Spirits

90 Ventura Limoncello Company Limoncello Crema, USA (\$25) Sun-drenched Ventura, CA lemons in a seamlessly satisfying cream base composes a rich but subtly arranged medley of texture, flavor and freshness.



92 Don Q Coco, USA (\$16) Pleasurable cocoa and coconut aromas lead to a full-bodied, tropical treat. The flavors are so pure and natural tasting: nuances of mango and brown sugar work wonders with the coconut in this 42-proof spirit based on Puerto Rican rum.

SERRALES USA



90 Tres Leches Triple Cream Liqueur, USA (\$22)

Inspired by the Mexican wedding cake, this triple-cream liqueur blended with Caribbean rum covers the palate with a satisfyingly rich and not-too-sweet texture. We experimented with its mixability, which raised its score even higher: More milky than any cream liqueur we've tasted, spiced with a tad of cinnamon and, ultimately, delicious.



WESTERN SPIRITS