

## **GOLD PACKAGE REVIEWS**

### **DOMINUS - ESTATE - 2012 - AG 100**

ANTONIO GALLONI - 98-100

"The 2012 Dominus is a real head-turner. Flashy, voluptuous and intense, but with tons of underlying concentration, the 2012 is simply magnificent. A towering, vertical Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2012 Dominus is one of the most concentrated wines of the vintage, yet it also maintains considerable freshness, the signature of a late-ripening vintage with no heat spikes. Sweet red cherry, raspberry and floral notes add lift on the perfumed, expressive finish. The blend is 93% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petit Verdot and 2% Cabernet Franc."

ROBERT PARKER - 98

The Wine Advocate - "The exuberance and drama in the stunning nose of the dense plum-colored 2012 Dominus offers up notes of Asian spice, ripe, black currants, kirsch, tobacco leaf and Christmas fruitcake. It is full-bodied and opulent, with no hard edges, a seamless integration of acidity, wood and tannin and a density and richness that are built to go on for 25-30 years. Rating: 98+"

JAMES SUCKLING - 98

James Suckling - "Fabulous purity and clarity of fruit. Blackcurrants, blackberries and violets. Full body, big soft tannins and a chocolate, hazelnut and dark fruit character. Some hot stones. Fruit at the finish. Ripe and velvety finish. Better in 2020 but delicious to drink now. Wonderful Dominus."

### **ORIN SWIFT - MERCURY HEAD - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - 2013 - RP 98**

ROBERT PARKER - 98

"The 100% Cabernet Sauvignon aged 18 months in 50% new French oak, is the 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Mercury Head. Certainly one of the more intriguing labels, with a real Mercury-head dime embedded in the glass bottle, this 4,500-case cuvée comes from blocks in Taplin, Morisoli and Atlas Peak vineyards. The final blend is a selection of their best barrels, bottled and aged another six months prior to release. This is a killer Cabernet Sauvignon, full-bodied and multilayered, with stunning blueberry and blackberry fruit, floral acacia notes, a hint of brioche and subtle toasty oak followed by a massive, full-bodied wine with sweet tannin and beautifully integrated acidity, alcohol and wood. This profound Cabernet Sauvignon should drink well now and for 25+ years. Dave Phinney may well be 2015's winemaker of the year for this wine taster."

### **MARQUES DE MURRIETA CASTILLO YGAY GRAN RESERVA ESPECIAL - RIOJA - 2007 - JS 98**

JAMES SUCKLING - 98

The aromas of this show an amazing freshness of flowers and herbs such as lavender, rosemary, and violet. Then it goes to raspberry, candy and currants. Black licorice too. A truly great wine on the nose. Full-bodied, racy and linear. So polished. It's like a red ruby. 86% tempranillo and 14% mazuelo in the blend. For release in September 2015. Great length and future. Give it three years or so. Or decant two hours in advance. (17-Jul-2015)

ROBERT PARKER - 95+

"A worthy follow-up of the 2007, the 2007 Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva Especial will be released in late 2015. This is a cuvée of mostly Tempranillo with the balance of Mazuelo (Cariñena), a very important grape for Castillo de Ygay in percentages that vary depending on the vintage, and it's almost 15% in 2007. 2007 was not an easy vintage and in Ygay they had a terrible mildew attack and they lost 50% of the bunches. It's a cold, rainy year, but because of that circumstance the wine is concentrated. This is still a baby, long and with depth and tannins that should melt in a couple of years. Compared with the 2005 it is fresher, perhaps not as concentrated, but for me the extra freshness compensates and puts it at a very similar quality level. And the rule of thumb is to wait at least ten years after the harvest to start uncorking any Castillo de Ygay. Cheap it is not, but very good value it is, for the quality it delivers. 110,000 bottles were produced. There will be no Castillo de Ygay in 2008, but there will be 2009, 2010 and 2011. That's something exceptional to have three vintages in a row."

## **JONATA - EL ALMA - 2009 - RP 97**

ROBERT PARKER - 97

The inky colored 2009 El Alma de Jonata, which was made from 70% Cabernet Franc, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot and 1% Petit Verdot, is no less impressive, exhibiting rich, full notes of cigar, chocolate, tobacco leaf and crushed rock notes to go with a massively built, structured profile on the palate. Very full-bodied and one big wine, it can be enjoyed now or cellared for a decade. Drink now-2023

## **VEGLA SICILIA - TINTO VALBUENA 5° - 2010 - RP 96**

ROBERT PARKER - 96

The Wine Advocate - "It has the Burgundian philosophy of terroir, with all plots fermented and aged separately, giving each vineyard what it needs in terms of vinification and elevage resulting in something like 40 separate lots to blend. This wine has gained in precision and sharpness, and is very pure with delineated aromas and flavors. It is a world-class wine, possibly the best Valbuena ever. "

## **HOURGLASS - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - 2012 - RP 95+**

ROBERT PARKER - 95+

"The most expensive offering, the 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon is fashioned from the estate's 22-year-old, 100% Cabernet Sauvignon vines, and is aged in 90% new French oak. It exhibits a dense purple color, sweet blackberry and cassis fruit intermixed with notions of licorice, camphor and toast. Full-bodied, dense, opulent and fleshy, it should drink well for 12-15 years. There is no reason to defer your gratification."

WINE ENTHUSIAST - 95

"A deep color and aromas of toasted baguette, wood smoke and black cherry signal a classic style. The flavors are like dark-chocolate-covered cherries and cranberries. The toasted character of new oak barrels persists from the aroma to the finish, but it's well complemented by ripe fruit, an impressively tannic texture and lingering finish. **Cellar Selection** "

WINE SPECTATOR - 94

"Puts the core fruitiness front and center, with a distinctive mix of wild berry, boysenberry and raspberry that gushes opulently, shaded by creamy, toasty, mocha-laced fruit. Ends with a cascade of flavor. Drink now through 2026."

ANTONIO GALLONI - 94

"The 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon Estate is just as fabulous from bottle as it was from barrel. Graphite, smoke, crushed rocks and black fruit emerge from a wine endowed with tremendous energy. Even with all of its richness, the 2012 has more than enough underlying acidity and structure to drink well for a number of years. the Estate Cabernet has really come along nicely over the last few years."

## **CARDINALE - CABERNET SAUVIGNON - 2009 – WE 95**

WINE ENTHUSIAST - 95

"The vintage was generally a good one in Napa Valley, and with this '09, Cardinale shows its usual sumptuousness. It's beautiful and elegant, with hard, chewy tannins framing intensely concentrated blackberries and cassis. Blended from various vineyards by winemaker Chris Carpenter, the wine is as stylish as Napa Cabernet gets. Full bodied and heady, it should provide good drinking over the next 12 years."

ROBERT PARKER - 93

"The 2009 Cardinale is a gorgeous, beautifully balanced wine endowed with gorgeous textural finesse and depth. Dark red fruit, spices and mint are woven together beautifully in this supple, engaging wine. Bright floral notes add lift, freshness and vibrancy on the finish. There is enough finesse to make the 2009 approachable early, but also enough richness to suggest the wine will drink early for a number of years. Winemaker Chris Carpenter creates the blend from a number of vineyards, including Veeder Peak, La Jota, Spring Mountain, Andrew-Geoffrey and Clem Cardinalli. In 2009 the final blend is 91% Cabernet Sauvignon and 9% Merlot, predominantly from hillside sites, aged in 100% new French oak barrels. This is a remarkable level of quality considering the 1,300-case production. Anticipated maturity: 2014-2029."

STEPHEN TANZER - 93

"Deep ruby-red. Musky, complex nose combines redcurrant, flowers, cocoa powder, sweet tobacco and spices. Then wonderfully intense and voluptuous, saturating the entire palate with dark fruit, spice and saline mineral flavors. Lovely definition here. Most impressive today on the brisk, very long, firmly built finish, where the ripe tannins are in perfect balance with the wine's fruit. This wine was neither fined nor filtered for the bottling. 93(+?) points"

### **TWO HANDS – BELLA'S GARDEN SHIRAZ 2012 – WS 95**

WINE SPECTATOR - 95 - #16 TOP 100 IN 2014

Utterly seamless, focused, powerful and elegant, layered with cherry, boysenberry and red plum fruit, revealing glints of coffee, jasmine and cardamom that add extra nuances. Delivers complexity without extra weight. The finish won't quit. Drink now through 2022.

ROBERT PARKER - 93+

"Deep garnet-purple in color, the 2012 Bella's Garden Shiraz has a nose of blackberry preserves and warm cassis with hints of menthol, dark chocolate, cardamom and cedar. Full-bodied and richly fruited in the mouth, the abundant fruit is well matched by firm, rounded tannins and refreshing acid before finishing with great length. Drink it now to 2024+."

### **FAUST – THE PACT CABERNET SAUVIGNON - 2012 – JS 95**

JAMES SUCKLING - 95

"Very focused with bright fruit such as dark berry and dried strawberry. Floral undertones too. Full body, hints of dried spice, dried meat and a long finish. Drink now."

### **QUPE – BIEN NACIDO HILLSIDE ESTATE SYRAH - 2008 – AG 94**

ANTONIO GALLONI - 94

"This is an outstanding vintage for this wine, I am a big fan of the 2008s. They are supple, typical of their place and very accessible already. Going back, this vintage reminds me a bit of the 2006 but not as structural, the 2002 but not as tannic, and the 1996 but not as gamey. Drink with pleasure over the next couple years and put some away to start looking at again around 2018! That's a weird date to write."

WINE ENTHUSIAST - 92

"Massive blackberry, cherry, currant and mocha flavors characterize this dry, potent Syrah. At the age of five, it's round and mellow in the mouth, with firm tannins and a gentle scour of acidity. Just beginning to show its stuff. Drink now–2018."

## **CHATEAU STE. JEAN – CINQ CEPAGES - 2009 – WE 94**

WINE ENTHUSIAST - 94

"Another superb Cinq Cépages. A blend of all five classic Bordeaux grape varieties, but based on Cabernet Sauvignon, it is both immediately pleasurable and intensely complex. Waves of black currants, dark chocolate, green olives, licorice and toasty oak roll across the palate, wrapped into firm, dusty tannins. Very good now but should develop further over the next 8–10 years. Easy to find, with 11,000 cases produced. Cellar Selection." (5/2013)

ROBERT PARKER - 92

"The estate's flagship 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Cinq Cepages is a wine mostly of promise at this stage. Mocha, espresso and savory herbs add nuance and complexity as this dark wine gradually unfurls in the glass. I see terrific depth and richness here, but readers will have to be patient. There is a lot going on here. A second bottle tasted in a complete vertical of Cinq Cepages came across as blend of 2007 and 2008, with a slight nod to the older vintage. The 2009 was impressive in that setting as well.

Anticipated maturity: 2014-2024."(4/2013)

## **ABADIA RETUERTA - SELECCION ESPECIAL - 2011 - WS 94**

WINE SPECTATOR - 94 - #15 ON 2015 TOP 100

"Alluring for its plush texture and impressive for its depth, this red delivers plum, currant, licorice, tar and mineral flavors that are rich and focused. The firm tannins are well-integrated, kept lively by fresh acidity. Smoke and floral notes mingle on the long finish. Drink now through 2031. 30,000 cases made."

ROBERT PARKER - 92

"Moving to the reds, the 2011 Seleccion Especial is a blend of Tempranillo with Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, bottled after 16 months maturation in oak. 2011 was a good vintage for all varieties and basically for all their different vineyards, which range from 740 (Negralada the lowest) to 820 (Valdebellon, the highest) meters altitude and produced a very balanced blend, with clean aromas, good harmony and integration of the oak. The palate is medium to full-bodied, with a lush texture, ripe and round, big-sized but balanced as all varieties ripened homogeneously. 460,000 bottles produced. Drink now-2018. "

JAMES SUCKLING - 90

"A firm and savory wine with sliced berry and light chocolate character. Medium body. Solid fruit. A blend of tempranillo, cabernet sauvignon and syrah. Very drinkable. Enjoy."