

Wine Spectator

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SAVVY SHOPPER

STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU
CHOOSE THE BEST WINES IN 2009



**PULL-OUT
VINTAGE CARD**
IS IT A GOOD YEAR?
THIS EASY-TO-USE GUIDE
WILL TELL YOU

PERFECT MATCH
CHOCOLATE AND WINE
PAIRINGS FOR
VALENTINE'S DAY

JAN. 31 - FEB. 28, 2009

89 Zeni Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Vigne Alte 2005 \$35 Displays pure aromas and flavors of currant and raisin, with notes of citrus peel and vibrant spices that keep everything fresh. Full- to medium-bodied, with a round, fruity palate, well-integrated tannins and a clean, spicy fruit finish. A new winery to watch. Drink now through 2012. 4,500 cases made.—J.C.

88 Lorenzo Begali Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 2004 \$55 Typical aromas of raisin, dried fig, spices and earth follow through to a full-bodied palate, with lots of spicy fruit coating the fine tannins. This is tasty, if a little hot on the finish. Drink now. 1,300 cases made.—J.C.

88 Giuseppe Campagnola Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Centenario 2005 \$41 This is full and firm, with aromas and flavors of date and polished oak. Full-bodied, with fine, firm tannins and a balanced finish of fruit and oak. Best after 2009. 7,500 cases made.—J.C.

88 Remo Farina Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 2005 \$50 A fruity Amarone, with well-balanced ripe forest fruits, vanilla and mineral on the nose and palate. Full, round and juicy. Easygoing. Why wait? Best after 2009. 5,000 cases made.—J.C.

88 Galtarossa Amarone della Valpolicella 2005 \$58 Aromas and flavors of ripe black fruit, raisin and flowers follow through to a full-bodied palate, with firm tannins and a clean finish of fruit and mineral. Bottle age should give this more breadth. Best after 2010. 1,000 cases made.—J.C.

88 Musella Amarone della Valpolicella Riserva 2004 \$50 Offers notes of raisin, with a pleasant coloring of ripe raspberry and vanilla. Full-bodied, with fine, fruit-coated tannins and a medium, spicy finish. Nicely done. Best after 2009. 2,400 cases made.—J.C.

86 Bertani Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 2000 \$136 A focused Amarone, with dried cherry and spicy tobacco character. Medium-bodied, with good acidity and a clean, tight finish. Pleasant, even refreshing now, but will age as well. Drink now through 2012. 5,500 cases made.—J.C.

85 Bolla Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 2005 \$40 The floral, nutty nose blends with raisin on the full- to medium-bodied palate, with firm tannins and rather simple, spicy fruit character that fails to prolong the finish. A bare-bones Amarone. Drink now. 16,000 cases made.—J.C.

ITALY

Veneto / Valpolicella

88 Stefano Accordini Valpolicella Classico Superiore Acinatico Ripasso 2006 \$39 Offers intense crushed black fruit, oak and creamy mineral on a medium-bodied palate, with fine, fruit-coated tannins. Nicely structured and enjoyable, with a sweet fruit and milk chocolate finish. Another good Ripasso from this producer. Drink now. 1,750 cases made.—J.C.

88 Tommaso Bussola Valpolicella Classico Superiore TB 2004 \$49 Aromas of raisin and black cherry, with hints of almond and oak, follow through to a full- to medium-bodied palate, with fine, velvety tannins. Good, but the overall character is a little raisiny and funky. Best after 2009. 2,500 cases made.—J.C.

88 Michele Castellani Valpolicella Classico Superiore San Michele Ripasso 2006 \$27 There's a nice combination of currant, prune, flowers and black cardamom on the nose and palate. Medium-bodied, with a silky texture and a persistent, spicy finish that has a hint of bitter fruit. Shows lots of character. A mini-Amarone. Drink now. 2,000 cases made.—J.C.

88 Zenato Valpolicella Superiore Ripassa 2006 \$30 Currant and plum, colored by a cappuccino note, follow through to a medium- to full-bodied palate, where the thick, fruity texture blends with lightly firm tannins to give a long, tasty finish. Drink now. 6,000 cases imported.—J.C.

87 Giuseppe Campagnola Valpolicella Classico Superiore Caterina Zardini 2006 \$21 This has a nice balance of ripe black fruit, milk chocolate and floral notes, which follow through to a medium-bodied palate, with a good core of fruit, fine, chocolate-coated tannins and a tasty finish. Drink now. 2,500 cases made.—J.C.

86 Allegrini Valpolicella 2007 \$18 This silky young red offers clean cherry and berry character, with lovely, pure fruit and texture. Drink now. 28,000 cases made.—J.C.

86 Bertani Valpolicella-Valpantena Secco-Bertani Ripasso 2006 \$20 Delicate, but there's a good core of cherry and berry, with a compact, silky underlay of light spice, vanilla and mineral that gives good length. Fresh, clean and easy to drink. Drink now. 40,000 cases made.—J.C.

86 Luigi Righetti Valpolicella Classico Superiore Campolietti Ripasso 2006 \$16 A delicate but focused red, with aromas and flavors of lightly spicy oak and fresh raspberry. Medium-bodied, with a good core of sweet fruit and fine tannins. A milk chocolate note emerges on the finish. Tight and delicious. Needs some air before serving. Drink now. 10,000 cases imported.—J.C.

86 Zenato Valpolicella Superiore 2006 \$15/500ml. Delivers superclean aromas and flavors of blackberry, with a hint of licorice. Medium-bodied, with a tight, crisp palate and a fresh, fruity finish. Drink now. 8,000 cases imported.—J.C.

85 Montresor Valpolicella Classico Capitel della Crosara Ripasso 2006 \$17 A compact Ripasso, with damson and chocolate on the nose and palate. Medium-bodied, with fine, tightly packed tannins. Drink now. 15,000 cases made.—J.C.

85 Santi Valpolicella Classico Superiore Solane Ripasso 2006 \$15 A clean red, with juicy currant and forest fruits. Medium-bodied. Straight through, but fun and fruity. Drink now. 23,700 cases made.—J.C.

85 Tommasi Valpolicella Classico Superiore Ripasso 2006 \$14 A rather earthy start, but wafting away with air to reveal some good ripe blackberry and mineral character. Medium-bodied, with a lightly firm texture that shows slightly rough edges. Needs food. Drink now. 13,800 cases made.—J.C.

84 Marchesi Fumanelli Valpolicella Classico Superiore Squarano 2003 \$27 —J.C.

84 Pasqua Valpolicella Superiore Villa Borghetti Ripasso 2006 \$18 —J.C.

84 Cantina Valpantena Valpolicella Torre del Falasco Ripasso 2006 \$15 —J.C.

83 Pasqua Valpolicella Classico Villa Borghetti 2007 \$15 —J.C.

83 Tommasi Valpolicella Classico Superiore Vigneto Rafael 2006 \$15 —J.C.

81 Bolla Valpolicella 2007 \$8 —J.C.

ITALY

Veneto / Other Red

89 Zeni Verona Costalago 2006 \$15 Aromas of raisin, with hints of sun-dried tomato and Indian spices, follow through to a silky, medium- to full-bodied palate, with very fine tannins and violet and chocolate notes coming through the finish. This offers a subtle framework, but it's densely packed. An interesting new winery to follow. Corvina, Corvinone, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now. 5,000 cases made.—J.C.

88 Allegrini Verona La Poja 2006 \$20 Currant and fresh mushroom on the nose, with concentrated fruit coating the finish. Medium-bodied, with a medium finish. This has a solid core, but it's a little understated. Best after 2010. 2,000 cases made.—J.C.

88 Allegrini Verona Palazzo del Principe 2006 \$25 Aromas of currant and forest fruits, with chocolaty notes, which follow through to a medium-bodied palate, with ripe, chocolate-coated tannins and a spicy, tasty finish. Best after 2010. 34,000 cases made.—J.C.

88 Tommaso Bussola Verona TB 2004 \$55 Displays aromatic, raisiny fruit, with a good core of fruit, mineral on the nose and palate. Medium-bodied, with fine tannins and a long, tasty and spicy finish. Semi-dried Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now. 650 cases made.—J.C.

88 Inama Veneto Carmenere 2006 \$18 Starts soft and fruity, with fleshy, plum-like fruit and spicy oak. This has a plump medium-bodied palate, with a balance of fruit and spice and an easygoing character. Very drinkable. Carmenère, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now. 1,000 cases made.—J.C.

86 Maculan Merlot-Cabernet Sauvignon Brentino 2006 \$22 Currant, mineral and bark on the nose turns to cocoa on the palate. Medium-bodied, with lightly firm tannins and a clean finish. Midpalate, but interesting. Drink now. 1,000 cases made.—J.C.

84 Bertani Pinot Nero-Corvina Verona 2006 \$18 —J.C.

NEW ZEALAND

89 Matahiwi Pinot Noir Wairarapa 2006 \$18 Very stylish, with fine transparency and a plump palate. Strawberry, red cherry and rose nuances and mineral accents weave through a supple texture. Drink now through 2010. 10,000 cases made.—J.C.

88 Eradus Sauvignon Blanc Aconcagua 2008 \$20 Lime, grapefruit and tangerine aromas are concentrated, with grass, oyster shell and thyme lingering on the finish. Drink now. 1,000 cases made.—D.S.

87 Mount Fishtail Sauvignon Blanc Aconcagua 2008 \$18 Fragrant and focused, with intensity to lime, grass, guava and sea salt. Drink now. 1,000 cases imported.—D.S.

87 Southbank Estate Sauvignon Blanc Aconcagua 2008 \$15 Vibrant, with fine tannins and oyster shell flavors. Herb tones linger on the finish. Drink now. 3,000 cases imported.—D.S.

86 3 Stones Sauvignon Blanc Aconcagua 2008 \$15 Lithe, with very good acidity and oyster shell and fresh thyme flavors. Drink now. 1,000 cases imported.—D.S.

86 Omaka Springs Pinot Gris Marlborough 2007 \$14 Blanched almond, tart quince and citrus flavors are lively, with a kiss of balancing acidity. Drink now. 2,200 cases made.—D.S.

85 Redcliffe Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough 2007 \$11 Lime, lemongrass and herb notes, with very good concentration. Drink now. 1,000 cases made.—D.S.

PORTUGAL

Douro

95 Quinta do Vale Meão Douro 2006 \$18 Highly Recommended, page 105.