

# SPECTATOR SELECTIONS

## Highly Recommended

The Issue's most impressive wines. Includes top-scorers and wines that represent optimal purchases based on their combination of score, price and availability.



**96 Pira Barolo Cannubi 2000 \$90** Beautifully silky and refined, with fantastic cherry, mineral and raspberry character. Full-bodied, with silky tannins and a long, amazing finish. Keeps going. Superfresh. Chiara Boschis took over the Pira winery in 1990 and this is her best wine to date. Best after 2010. 940 cases made.—J.S.



**95 Azelia Barolo Bricco Fiasco 2000 \$78** The nose of this wine evokes crushed Nebbiolo with hints of fresh flowers and Indian spices. Full-bodied, with incredibly round, soft tannins. Long, velvety finish. Voluptuous. Azelia has come into its own. Serve this to the nonbelievers. Best after 2008. 1,040 cases made.—J.S.



**95 Ello Grasso Barolo Ginestra Vigna Casa Maté 2000 \$58** Wonderful aromas of pressed flowers and blackberries with hints of cinnamon. Full-bodied, in a jammy, big, fruity style with a long, caressing finish. Chewy though. This shows splendid structure. As good as the 1997. Best after 2009. 1,080 cases made.—J.S.



**94 Betz Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley Père de Famille 2001 \$45** Rich, densely packed and powerful, a lively mouthful of plum, blueberry and exotic spice flavors that last and last on the aristocratic finish. Has power to burn and plenty of grace to balance the scales. Best from 2006 through 2015. 510 cases made.—H.S.



**93 Cabutto Barolo Vigna La Volta 2000 \$48** Loads of blackberry aromas, with undertones of tar and dried flowers, buttressed with hints of new wood. Full-bodied, supersoft, with soft tannins and loads of fresh fruit that turns to flowers on the finish. Best after 2008. 2,000 cases made.—J.S.



**93 Giovanni Manzone Barolo Le Gramolere 2000 \$40** Loads of spices, cinnamon and cloves on the nose follow through to a full-bodied palate, with silky tannins and a long, long finish. Beauty. Balanced. Manzone always makes harmonious wine. Best after 2009. 850 cases made.—J.S.



**92 Ca' Bianca Barolo 2000 \$36** Focused and dense plum and blackberry fruit on the nose. Full-bodied, jammy and rich. Soft tannins. Fruit-forward. Best after 2008. 5,000 cases made.—J.S.



**92 Soos Creek Artist Series #1 Columbia Valley 2001 \$27** Ripe and generous, with a gamy edge to the rich currant, plum and berry flavors, weaving a smoky note through the long, round finish. Impressive for its depth. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2006 through 2012. 600 cases made.—H.S.

## Collectibles

Wines that will improve most from additional bottle age and that show the greatest potential to gain in value.



**100 Gaja Langhe Costa Russi 2000 \$340** Fabulous aromas of rose petals and cherries with hints of raspberries. Full-bodied, with ultrafine tannins and an incredible finish. This is so fine and so long. A real beauty that grows and grows on the palate. Great Nebbiolo. Greatest Costa Russi ever, from 34-year-old vines. Best after 2010. 890 cases made.—J.S.

On the Buying Guide cover: Chardonnay in Meridian's Cat Canyon vineyard, Santa Barbara County. Photograph by Kirk Irwin/I&I Images.