

2008 St. Francis Chardonnay
Sonoma County, California USA (\$21)

Wine Enthusiast Review (rated 89)

The dryness and minerality of this wine, combined with its clean, brisk elegance, make it a very nice partner for shellfish. The flavours are lemons, lime and ripe, crisp white peaches.

Wine Tasting Notes: Fruit and pear aromas are offset on the palate by hints of oak and vanilla, Medium – to full – bodied, this Chardonnay has ripe fruit flavours, crisp acid in the mouth and a rich, lingering finish.

2006 Donnhoff Weissburgunder Trocken (Pinot Blanc)
Nahe, Germany (\$32)

Apple, Peach and Pineapple accompanied by a mineral bite with some herbaceousness. Full bodied and oily, with a crisp acidity, soil, peach kernels and chalk. Lovely clarity and precision.

The Mosel is the oldest center of wine production in Germany, and the Nahe is the youngest arriving somewhere around the 8th century. The Nahe river that crosses the valley flows to the Rhine and is southeast of the Mosel and west of the Rheingau and Rheinhessen vineyards.

2006 Zenato Amarone della Valpolicella
Veneto, Italy (\$50)

Wine Spectator, James Suckling (rated 94)

Wonderful aromas of black licorice and blueberry lead to a full body, with juicy, round tannins. Luscious and decadent. Wine Spectator's No. 36 ranked wine of the year for 2010.

Amarone is made from Corvina, Rondinella and Sangiovese grapes of the Valpolicella Classico zone. After being picked into small 2.5 kg trays the grapes are cleaned and placed on drying mats for four months in dry, well ventilated rooms. In January they are finally crushed, then very slowly fermented on the skins; the wine goes into 300 litre French barrels and Slavonian oak barrels for maturation, followed by a years ageing in bottle before release. A wine of superb richness and majestic flavours. The exceptional balance of all its components makes it ideal for lengthy cellaring. Corvina is one of the classic grapes of the Veneto region of Italy

and is usually the predominant grape in the blends used for Valpolicella. The grape tends to produce lightly colored wines with high acidity and moderate tannins.

2005 Pisano EtXe Oneko Licor de Tannat
Progreso, Uruguay (\$32)

Made from the Tannat grape, this unique dessert wine is savagely tannic. This wine was created through a combination of both Port and Amarone production. Most of the grapes were left on the vine for an extra month; after harvesting the berries were fermented down to 80 grams per litre of residual sugar and then topped off with grape alcohol to stop the fermentation. Afterwards, whole clusters of grapes (that had been left to ripen on the vine even longer) were immersed in the fermentation tanks for about six weeks. The wine was finished by barrel aging for six months.

Rich and complex, with flavours of milk chocolate, raspberry, black pepper, plum pudding, smoke and roasted coffee. It's quite well balanced and comes highly recommended.