

Review of the Industry



Hot Small Brands of 2010

IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES, we highlight our eighth annual **Hot Small Brands** list, which includes some of today's most exciting brands from small- and medium-sized producers—a select group.

When *WBM* published the first annual list of Hot Small Brands in 2003, we sought to identify and recognize small- or medium-sized wineries—the up-and-comers that had experienced the most growth in a short period of time. We measured growth in case sales, which was typically the result of smart marketing. Many of our early picks went on to new heights. Some were acquired by larger wine companies while nearly all continued to grow.

The list and the way we select these wines have evolved as well.

We gravitate toward wineries and brands that represent market trends or innovation, that take a leadership position in their regions, or that make unusual varietals or unexpected wines. There are some larger wineries on the list now, as well.

These are wines that winemakers will want to check out. This list also represents a collection of wines *Wine Business Monthly* editors would serve at a party. We do, in fact, serve them during a gathering we host during the annual **Unified Wine & Grape Symposium**.

Several of the wines and wineries listed below have much in common. Beyond their common passion, most are relatively new in a long-term business.

Hot Small Brands of 2010

1. **Cameron Hughes** NAPA VALLEY
2. **Crew Wine Company** DUNNIGAN HILLS
3. **Dusted Valley** WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON
4. **Twisted Oak** CALAVERAS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
5. **Black Ankle Vineyards** MARYLAND
6. **Salinia Wine Company** SONOMA COAST, CALIFORNIA
7. **Bella Vineyards and Wine Caves** DRY CREEK VALLEY, CALIFORNIA
8. **Persimmon Creek Vineyards** GEORGIA
9. **WillaKenzie Estate** WILLAMETTE VALLEY, WASHINGTON
10. **Gloria Ferrer Caves & Vineyards** SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

2009

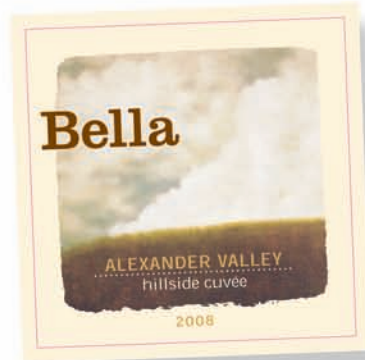
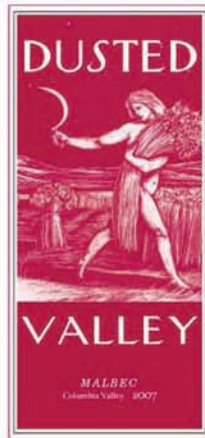
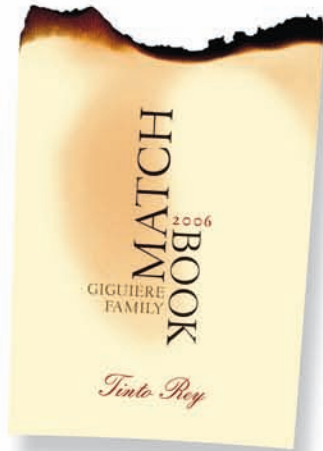
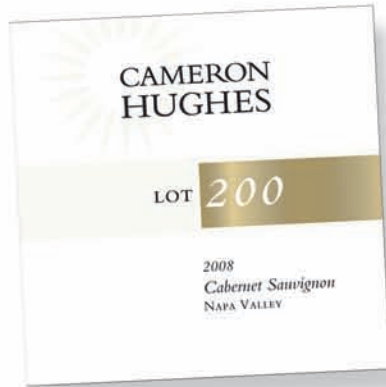
Hot Small Brands of 2009

1. **PACIFIC RIM**
(Washington)
2. **WINES OF SUBSTANCE**
(Washington)
3. **CAMBIATA**
(Monterey County, California)
4. **ABACELA**
(Southern Oregon)
5. **CINDER**
(Idaho)
6. **SWANSON VINEYARDS**
(Oakville (Napa Valley), California)
7. **L'AVENTURE**
(Paso Robles, California)
8. **MARYNISSEN ESTATES**
(Ontario, Canada)
9. **BARTHOLOMEW PARK WINERY**
(Sonoma Valley, California)
10. **RAFFALDINI VINEYARDS AND WINERY**
(North Carolina)

2008

Hot Small Brands of 2008

1. **GRAZIANO**
(Mendocino, California)
2. **FOUR VINES PEASANT**
(Paso Robles, California)
3. **BECKER VINEYARDS**
(Texas Hill Country, Texas)
4. **RED TAIL RIDGE**
(Seneca Lake, New York)
5. **SOJOURN CELLARS**
(Sonoma, California)
6. **DOMAINE DROUHIN**
(Dundee Hills, Oregon)
7. **JEFF RUNQUIST WINES**
(Clarksburg, California)
8. **MARILYN REMARK WINERY**
(Arroyo Seco, California)
9. **TRIO VINTNERS**
(Columbia Valley, Washington)
10. **PURPLE WINE COMPANY**
(Napa Valley, California)



2007

Hot Small Brands of 2007

1. **WILLAMETTE VALLEY VINEYARDS**
(Turner, Oregon)
2. **CEJA VINEYARDS**
(Carneros, California)
3. **TANGENT**
(San Luis Obispo, California)
4. **CLOS DU VAL**
(Napa, California)
5. **KUTCH WINES**
(Russian River, California)
6. **CORO MENDOCINO**
(Mendocino County, California)
7. **J.R. STOREY**
(Sausalito, California)
8. **L'ECOLE N° 41**
(Lowden, Washington)
9. **KING FAMILY VINEYARDS**
(Crozet, Virginia)
10. **GRUET WINERY**
(Albuquerque, New Mexico)

2006

Hot Small Brands of 2006

1. **A TO Z WINEWORKS**
(Dundee, Oregon)
2. **HOUSE WINE**
Magnificent Wine Company
(Walla Walla, Washington)
3. **LIBERTY SCHOOL**
Treana Winery (Paso Robles, California)
4. **SHANNON RIDGE**
High Valley (Lake County, California)
5. **TWENTY BENCH**
Nine North Wine Company
(Napa, California)
6. **CYCLES GLADIATOR**
Wimbledon Wine Company
(Napa, California)
7. **BEDELL CELLARS**
(Cutchogue, New York-Long Island)
8. **ARTESA VINEYARDS & WINERY**
(Napa, California)
9. **BLACK STAR FARMS**
(Suttons Bay, Michigan)
10. **BUENA VISTA CARNEROS**
(Sonoma, California)

2005

Hot Small Brands of 2005

1. **PARDUCCI WINE CELLARS**
Mendocino Wine Company
(Ukiah, California)
2. **SOLOSOSA**
SoloRosa Wines, (St. Helena, California)
3. **CHEAPSKATE**
WineSmith (Napa, California)
4. **VELVET RED**
St. James Winery (St. James, Missouri)
5. **INCREDIBLE RED**
Peachy Canyon Winery
(Paso Robles, California)
6. **HARD CORE**
Core Wine Company
(Santa Maria, California)
7. **KUNDE ESTATE**
Kunde Estate Winery & Vineyards
(Kenwood, California)
8. **HITCHING POST**
Hartley Ostini Hitching Post Winery
(Buellton, California)
9. **ANDRETTI WINERY**
Andretti Wine Group (Napa, California)
10. **ESSER VINEYARDS**
Esser Vineyards (Napa Valley, California)

2004

Hot Small Brands of 2004

1. **RED TRUCK**
Cline Cellars (Sonoma, California)
2. **CARTLIDGE & BROWNE**
Greenfield Wine Company
(American Canyon, California)
3. **SEVEN DEADLY ZINS**
Michael David Winery (Lodi, California)
4. **OLIVER WINERY**
Oliver Winery (Bloomington, Indiana)
5. **ANGELINE WINES**
Martin Ray Winery (Santa Rosa, California)
6. **ROCK RABBIT**
Purple Wine Company
(Graton, California)
7. **THREE THIEVES BANDIT**
Three Thieves (Lodi, California)
8. **SOFIA MINI**
Niebaum-Coppola (Rutherford, California)
9. **SCREW KAPPA NAPA**
Don Sebastiani & Sons
(Sonoma, California)
10. **GRACELAND CELLARS**
Signature Wines (Oakland, California)

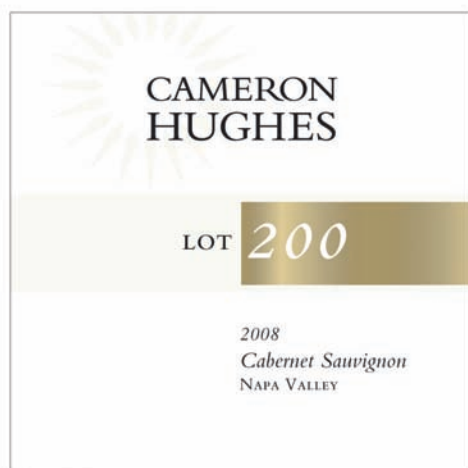
2003

Hot Small Brands of 2003

1. **HRM REX-GOLIATH**
Smith & Hook and Hahn Estates Winery
(Soledad, California)
2. **MCMANIS FAMILY VINEYARDS**
River Junction AVA (Ripon, California)
3. **SEBASTIANI VINEYARDS & WINERY**
(Sonoma, California)
4. **CASTLE ROCK WINERY**
(Palos Verdes Estates, California)
5. **BLACK OAK**
Chateau Diana (Healdsburg, California)
6. **JEWEL COLLECTION**
Jewel Wine Company (Lodi, California)
7. **TIN ROOF**
Murphy-Goode Winery
(Geyserville, California)
8. **THREE THIEVES**
(Lodi, California)
9. **JEST RED**
Hambrecht Vineyards and Winery
(Healdsburg, CA)
10. **J GARCIA WINES**
Allied Domecq (Geyserville, California)



1. CAMERON HUGHES: NEGOCIANT PAIRS VALUE WITH QUALITY 2008 LOT 200 CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY



It's a good time to be a negociant. There's plenty of wine out there and people are looking for a deal.

Cameron Hughes did stints with a large wine company and with a negociant before he was fired in 2000. "Best thing that ever happened to me," he says.

That's when the lot concept was born. Hughes and his wife **Jessica Kogan** started a company together, incorporating in October 2001. Cameron Hughes would purchase small lots, assign a number to each, and sell each lot until it sold out.

"We knew enough to be dangerous," he remembers. "We knew there were these small lots of high-end wine out there if we could just get someone to commit to buying the wine before we bought it."

At first, the concept didn't fly with the large grocery chains but a buyer at Costco took notice. Hughes says he was the right guy in the right place at the right time. Lot #1 was 1,800 cases of Syrah from Lodi made by **Sam Spencer**, now Hughes' winemaker. Cameron and Jessica then hand-sold the wine at **Costco**, and the model took off. By 2005, the company would sell 18,000 cases of wine.

Along the way, a financing deal with **Bacchus Capital** in 2007 fueled an expansion. Last year, Cameron Hughes produced more than 250,000 cases and continues to grow. Cameron Hughes wines are now also found in **Sam's Club** and **Safeway** as well. DTC sales via the web are growing and will likely reach 40,000 cases this year.

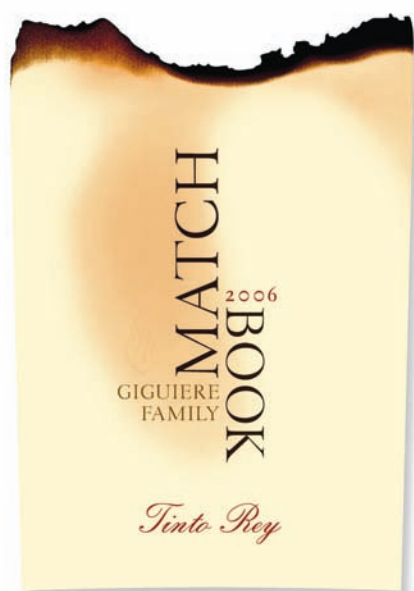
The business model continues to evolve and Hughes has been partnering with vineyard owners and wineries with excess capacity. Contracts pair Hughes with a grower and winery with wines made to specifications. Cameron Hughes' winemakers oversee the process. The concept is a fit for wineries with relatively healthy balance sheets that can take a percentage of their fruit portfolio and dedicate it to a program where payments are stretched out for a longer period of time. The upside for wineries is it helps them cover their overhead.

Cameron Huges made 80,000 gallons of Old Vine Lodi Zinfandel this year, as well as hundreds of thousands of gallons of Chardonnay from the Santa Maria area, with fruit and spot market buys in the Carneros region and elsewhere.

The Cameron Hughes Lot 200 Cabernet really opens up when you pour it, and as Hughes puts it, "is from an A-plus, plus, plus player in Napa." Ten years of business and 200 wines represent a benchmark. It's also Hughes' most expensive wine to date, with a purchase price just under \$30. Seven thousand cases were produced.

Price: \$28
Case Production: Approx. 8,200
Blend: 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petite Verdot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 3% Merlot, 2% Malbec
pH: 3.82
TA: 5.8 g/L
Brix: N/A
Residual Sugar: 2.5g/L
Alcohol: 14.9 %

2. CREW WINE COMPANY: STARTING OVER: PUTTING THE BAND BACK TOGETHER GIGUIERE FAMILY MATCHBOOK 2006 TINTO RAY - DUNNIGAN HILLS



John and Lane Giguiere are familiar names in the California wine industry. In 1984, along with John's brother **Karl**, they founded **R.H. Phillips** in Esparto, California. The winery was sold to Canada-based **Vincor International** in 2000, and John Giguiere was named president and CEO of **Vincor USA**. He retired from the company in August 2005 after Vincor was sold to **Constellation Brands**.

The Giguieres then started a new operation just a few miles away from the original R.H. Phillips Winery, joined by winemaker **Dan Cederquist**, who had previously worked at **DeLoach**. They began selling their first wines in June 2006 and have spent the last five years building the company: annual production of **Crew Wine Company's** four brands is at about 65,000 cases. It grew by 50 percent last year.

"All the horror stories you always hear about how hard it is in the marketplace—they're true," says John Giguiere. "By just staying in the game and keeping with it, eventually it started catching on. We've risen to a whole new level with our wholesalers. People are getting comfortable with it. They've had success. That starts to build on itself.

"There wasn't any magic bullet or anything that other people haven't done," he says of the company's swift growth. "It's just that we were able to execute."

Price: \$16.99
Case Production: 8,049
Blend: 40% Tempranillo, 35% Syrah, 17% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petite Sirah, 3% Graciano
pH: 3.85
TA: .65
Brix: Ranges from 24 to 25.5
Residual Sugar: .25



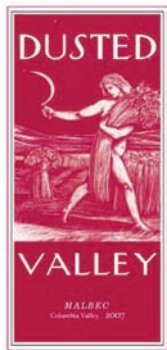
The winery has four brands. **Matchbook** consists of Chardonnay, Syrah and Tempranillo, largely produced with fruit from the Dunnigan Hills AVA. A second brand, **Mossback**, sourced with fruit from the Russian River area, is Chardonnay-focused though features a Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. A Mendocino Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon are sold under the brand name **Sawbuck**.

Additionally, the winery produces a Marlborough, New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris under the brand name **Chasing Venus**. During Giguere's run at Vincor, the company purchased **Hogue Cellars** in Washington, which had an import agreement with a tiny New Zealand brand as part of its portfolio: **Kim Crawford**, which was poised to grow. When Giguere started the Crew Wine Company, Kim and Erica Crawford helped get him get started again in New Zealand, hence the Chasing Venus brand.

Tinto Ray is intended as a fruit forward wine, one that uses native fermentations and partial inoculations. Wines are aged mostly in French oak. It's a Tempranillo-Syrah blend, with blenders added to support it, depending on the vintage. In a low tannin year, Cabernet is used to add structure. In a low color year, it is augmented with Gracciano. About 6,000 cases were made.

"You seldom get to start over," Giguere says. "We got a chance to start over."

3. DUSTED VALLEY: CHEESEHEADS LIVING THE DREAM IN WALLA WALLA 2008 MALBEC, WASHINGTON



Dusted Valley was founded by **Corey Braunel** and **Chad Johnson**. Braunel and Johnson, who had been friends since their college days (their wives are sisters), left behind their corporate jobs to chase their dream of creating a winery.

In 2003 they moved their families to Walla Walla and became the 52nd winery to "hang the shingle" in Walla Walla Valley. The winery is now a 4,500-case operation and farms four diverse vineyards in Walla Walla Valley.

"We wanted to go out here and be pioneers and to start something new and fresh," Johnson said. "There are definitely fewer barriers to entry out here (as opposed to California) in this business, and we're all from small-town-America back in Wisconsin."

Initially, Dusted Valley made wine at **Whitman Cellars**, then at other wineries. They've been making wine at their current location for five years.

In addition to Dusted Valley, Braunel and Johnson have a negociant project, **Boomtown**, producing about 10,000 cases. A second negociant project is called **Blind Boar Wine Company**.

Braunel and Johnson's corporate sales and marketing background have come in handy as has their hard work ethic.

We've been watching this winery with interest for a few years now. We're not alone. Dusted Valley has been getting plenty of press. *Wine Press Northwest*, for instance, named Dusted Valley "Washington Winery of the Year" in 2010.

Ironically, they're not so new anymore. About half of the wineries now located in the area got their start after Dusted Valley did.

"Now we're older than half the wineries in the state, and we're just getting started," Johnson said.

Just 150 cases of the Dusted Valley Malbec were produced: The team took a trip to Argentina to learn about how Malbec is grown and made. Several wineries produce Malbec in Washington but none in large amounts.

Dusted Valley was also the first Washington winery to use screw caps for 100 percent of its production starting in 2005. The winery is also known for a unique barrel project that uses extra-tight-grained Wisconsin Oak.

Price: \$42
Case Production: 200
Blend: 95% Malbec, 5% Syrah
pH: 3.82
TA: 0.60 grams/100ml
Brix: 26.2
Residual Sugar: 0g/l
Alcohol: 14.7%



4. TWISTED OAK: RHONE VARIETALS IN SIERRA FOOTHILLS WITH A SPLASH OF SOCIAL MEDIA

THE SPANIARD 2007 TEMPRANILLO, CALAVERAS COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Twisted Oak is another relatively new winery. It started quietly with the 2002 Vintage and ramped up to roughly 5,000 cases a year. The winery is in a wine region that isn't particularly well known by consumers, yet many people know about Twisted Oak.

Twisted Oak is known for its wines and irreverent style. Another reason the winery is well known is owner **Jeff Stai's** judicious use of social media. He spends a lot of time with it, and a lot of people have heard of his brand. The wines are sold direct, through the tasting room, and via a growing wine club.

"The thing you have to remember about social media is it's pretty much an extension of what you should be doing anyway," Stai says. "You still have to be out there pouring, and you have to be out there creating real human relationships with people and real connections, actually pouring wine. Social media can fan the flames once you've established that and pull people in. You have to have both."

Stai is an electronic engineer who "worked for the right startup" and then decided to do something else. He'd been exposed to wine by friends in the business and liked the marketing and the hospitality aspects. "When you work as an engineer, you don't necessarily have that human interaction—pouring wine for people is a whole lot more fun."

After spending summer vacations in nearby Lake Alpine, Stai relocated from Southern California and soon found the winery site in Calaveras County, which became available.

Stai decided to plant Tempranillo because a couple of other wineries in the area had done so successfully, and he didn't want to be yet another Foothill-Zinfandel specialist. He wanted to go in a different direction.

Twisted Oak has 11 acres of its own vineyards and buys grapes from other growers. The Spaniard, a Tempranillo-based wine, is the flagship wine and is made from estate fruit. Winemaking is straight forward with wines aged in French Oak.

The brand has developed a pretty nefarious fan base and many brand ambassadors. Stai has been sighted with rubber chickens during tastings. "Some people ask, 'What's the significance of a rubber chicken?'" says Stai, "I say, you need a spiritual advisor if you're looking for significance in a rubber chicken."



Price: \$49
Case Production: 900
Blend: 64% Tempranillo,
20% Graciano,
16% Garnacha
ABV: 14.4
pH: 3.69
TA: 0.59 g/100mL
Residual Sugar: 0.01%

5. BLACK ANKLE VINEYARDS: SURPRISING EVEN THEMSELVES, IN MARYLAND 2009 ESTATE ALBARINO

When **Ed Boyce** and **Sarah O'Herron** decided to look for an alternative to their careers in management consulting, their fascination with wine led them to making it their lives' work.

"We got this crazy idea that we could grow wine," Boyce remembers.

After traveling to wine regions throughout the world asking questions, the couple decided to go for it. "We eventually decided we can do this—we think we can make really good wine here—not just with the usual qualifier where people say, 'oh it's good—for Maryland.' We wanted to do something way beyond that. We thought we could do it but in a very different way than people have tried out here."

The wine is good. No qualifiers about it being from Maryland are necessary.

Boyce and O'Herron purchased property on Maryland's Eastern Shore in 2002 and opened for business in 2008.

The big challenge growing wine in Maryland is rain. "We have arguably more rain than any other wine region in the world, any other famous wine region anyway."

After considerable research, Boyce and O'Herron opted for dense planting: 2,000 vines per acre, which Boyce says "was radical in 2003."

"Now it's done more and more out here," says Boyce. "No one out here has gone meter by meter, but someday someone will try it."

They've been working with consulting viticulturist, **Lucie Morton**. They're very strict about canopy management, and if it weren't for black rot, they'd be organic or biodynamic.



Price: \$28
Case Production: 75
Blend: 94% Albariño,
3% Viognier,
1.5% Grüner Veltliner,
1.5% Chardonnay
pH*: 3.34
TA*: 7.8
Brix*: 21.5
Residual Sugar: 0g/l
Alcohol: 12.7%
* Note: Measurements are from the juice before fermentation



The fruit used by the winery is all grown on the estate, which is unusual in Maryland. The winery has 22 acres of vines and produces about 3,500 cases. It sells two-thirds of that in the tasting room with the rest going to restaurants.

"The wines have even surprised us, and we were the confident ones that we could make good wine here," Boyce said.

The Albariño is whole cluster pressed with a wild fermentation. There is no malolactic fermentation. It is lees stirred all winter and bottled in the spring. The blend is 94 percent Albariño, 3 percent Viognier, 1.5 percent Grüner Veltliner, and 1.5 percent Chardonnay.

So far, so good, after two years. Plans call for planting 19 more acres next year, doubling the size of the vineyards.

6. SALINIA WINE COMPANY: NPA "NATURAL WINE," IN REFILLABLE 750ML BOTTLES 2010 SAUVIGNON BLANC, SONOMA COUNTY



Salinia Wine Company is a small winery that was launched by **Kevin and Jennifer Kelley** in 2003 when they started making small quantities of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from vineyards on the Sonoma Coast. With an annual production of less than 300 cases, Salinia is only available through a mailing list available to a few select restaurants.

Kevin Kelley also makes wine for **Lioco**, a somewhat larger brand that produces Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and a red blend.

The **Natural Process Alliance (NPA)** is another project Kelley started in 2008 and total production is just 700 cases.

NPA says it's dedicated to "responsible farming, minimalistic winemaking and transparency for consumers." The wines are only available within 100 miles of the Santa Rosa, California, winery and the packaging is most unusual: wines are delivered in canteens and kegs only. This is also the first winery we are aware of to pour all of its wines in the tasting room via kegs—the wines are on tap.

NPA sources its grapes from organic and biodynamic vineyards with zero additions, and sulphites are added only if necessary. Customers include **Chez Panisse, Out The Door, Aziza, Arlequin, NOPA** and **SCOPA** restaurants.

The sales and marketing guy at NPA alliance wears many hats. It's a small company, so he helps out in the cellar too. His name is **Hardy Wallace**, and he's a wine blogger many of our readers have heard of.

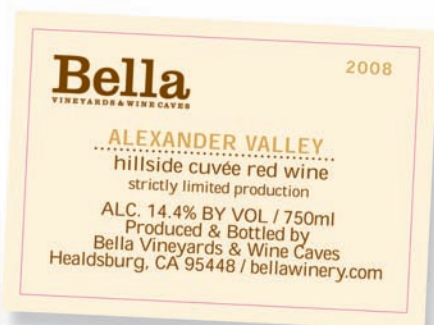
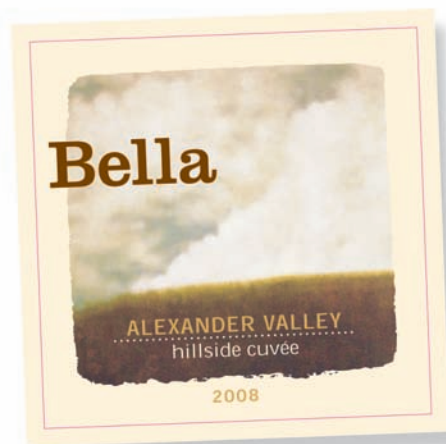
Wallace was the winner of a contest to win a dream job blogging about wine for **Murphy Goode** winery. When the Murphy Goode job wound down, Wallace joined NPA, though his relationship with Kevin Kelley pre-dates the Murphy Goode job.

"We want to provide unmessed-with wine that's delicious," says Wallace. "This is something that people don't have the ability to taste very often, young wines that really haven't gone through the rigors of winemaking but that also come from organic or biodynamic vineyards, with no additions in the winemaking process. The idea is to get something fresh that you can only have here."

Price: \$12
Case Production: 400
Blend: 100% Sauvignon Blanc
pH: 3.35
TA: 8.6g/L
Brix: 22.7
Residual Sugar: 0
Alcohol: 12.8%



7. BELLA VINEYARDS AND WINE CAVES: CREATIVE BLENDING IN DRY CREEK VALLEY 2008 HILLSIDE CUVÉE



In 1994, **Scott** and **Lynn Adams** were married in Napa Valley. They took a bus tour of Dry Creek Valley as part of the celebration and were attracted to the area. With a background in agriculture in Minnesota, Scott had visions of making wine.

In 1999, the husband-and-wife team established **Bella Vineyards and Wine Caves**, named for their daughters, producing their first three vineyard-designate wines. It capped a process that began in 1995, when they acquired the **Lily Hill Estate** in Dry Creek Valley.

While selecting this and two other properties, the Adams immersed themselves in the world of viticulture. They moved to Belle Canyon, tended the vines and learned about winegrowing from vineyard manager **John Clendenen**. They would later work with consulting winemaker **Mike Dashe**.

Price: \$30
Case Production: 600
Blend: 42% Syrah, 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Petite Sirah
pH: 3.85
TA: .61 g/100mL
Brix: 24.1 for Syrah;
23.5 for Cabernet Sauvignon;
24.6 for Petite Sirah
Residual Sugar: <2 g/l
Alcohol: 14.4 %

Since then, Bella has earned a reputation for quality wines, focusing mainly on Zinfandel.

In 2001, the winery started working with Rhône varietals and started dabbling with Cabernet.

The winery continues to grow and will probably make about 8,000 cases this year. Most of the wine is sold through the tasting room and to Bella's wine club.

The Bella Hillside Cuvée is what Scott Adams calls, "a winemaker's wine" because it's a blend for which "anything goes at the blending table." The wine always has a Cabernet component and typically includes Zinfandel, Syrah or Petite Sirah as well.

The wine is meant for early enjoyment. "Since we're mostly a Zinfandel house, it's a fun one to work with," Adams said. "It's a creative process at the blending table."

8. PERSIMMON CREEK VINEYARDS: NOBLE VARIETIES FROM THE NORTHEAST GEORGIA MOUNTAINS

2008 CABERNET FRANC



When **Mary Ann Hardman** first started selling her wines, she would routinely get the following reaction: "You're making wine where? You can't do that."

She admits it's been an uphill battle, but Hardman has sold her wines to all three **Ritz Carltons** in Georgia and to dozens of fine restaurants in Atlanta and in other cities. **Persimmon Creek Vineyards** released its first vintage in 2002.

The challenge for Hardman lies not just in selling the wine: She is working to demonstrate the viticultural veracity for wine in Georgia.

Persimmon Creek Vineyards sits at 2,100 feet elevation on 110 acres in Clayton, Georgia. It is owned by Mary Ann and her husband **William "Sonny" Hardman**, a dermatopathologist.

When the Hardmans began purchasing farmland in the North Georgia Mountains, they didn't expect they would be running a winery just a few years later.

Dr. Hardman had a long-standing passion for the beauty of vineyards and approached the task scientifically. He conducted soil analysis with **University of Georgia** researchers, climate analysis and studied grape varietals to determine what to plant, settling on Riesling, Seyval Blanc, Cabernet Franc and Merlot.

The Hardmans are tearing down stereotypes about Georgia wine. Each year, they have sold out of each variety—while they've increased production to 2,000 cases per year. The operation remains a boutique, family-run operation with planting, picking, crushing, bottling, corking and labeling all done by hand.

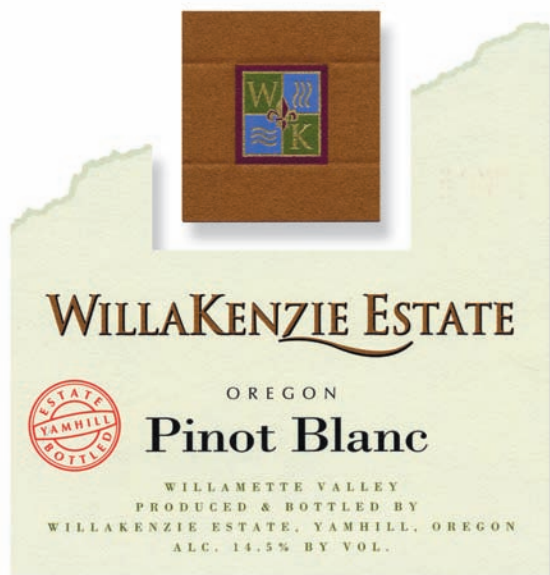
Persimmon Creek wines are served in more than 25 restaurants and hotels in Atlanta and the southeast including: **Bacchanalia**, **Restaurant Eugene**, **The Cloister at Sea Island**, **Bluepointe**, **Chops Lobster Bar**, **Old Edwards Inn** in Highlands, North Carolina and many more.

The Cab Franc is fermented in stainless steel and is then aged in French, American and Hungarian oak for a year and a half.

Price: \$23
Case Production: 250
Blend: 100% Cabernet Franc
pH: 3.65
TA: .653 g/100mL
Alcohol: 13%



9. WILLAKENZIE ESTATE: AUTHENTIC OREGON PINOT BLANC 2009 PINOT BLANC WILLAMETTE VALLEY



WillaKenzie Estate is located in Oregon's Willamette Valley on rolling hillsides in the Chehalem Mountains and was named after the WillaKenzie soil the vineyards are planted on.

Bernard and Ronni Lacroute are the co-owners. They met as graduate students and after living on the East Coast and in California, they bought the property that became WillaKenzie Estate in 1991. They are no longer married but continue their business partnership.

The winery is devoted to making Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Meunier and Gamay Noir.

Properly, Pinot Blanc is really just a single gene mutation of Pinot Noir. If the mutation had affected leaf morphology instead of berry color, Pinot Blanc might be considered just another clone of Pinot Noir. The varietal, although reasonably well known in Alsace, is fairly rare in the U.S. Due to source-block misidentifications in the 1970s and earlier, most "Pinot Blanc" vineyards were actually planted to different varietals. In California, with very few exceptions, all "Pinot Blanc" is either Chardonnay or Melon de Bourgogne (AKA Muscadet). The mix-up was codified in California when "Pinot Blanc" was declared an accepted synonym for Melon de Bourgogne. In Oregon, however, Melon has to be labeled as such thus almost guaranteeing that any wine labeled as Pinot Blanc actually *is* Pinot Blanc.

The WillaKenzie 2009 Pinot Blanc was pressed whole clusters, and after cold settling of the juice, inoculated with yeast from the Alsace region, chosen to enhance the fruit's aromatics. It was fermented in stainless steel tanks slowly and at low temperatures.

The fruit that went into the wine is Oregon Certified Sustainable and certified as Salmon-Safe as well.

Price: \$21
Case Production: Approx. 1,000
Blend: 100% Pinot Blanc
pH: 3.25
TA: 8.0
Brix: 23.5
Residual Sugar: 0.3%
Alcohol: 13.8 %

10. GLORIA FERRER CAVES & VINEYARDS: SPARKLING FROM SONOMA 2002 ROYAL CUVÉE



What's a party without bubbles? **Gloria Ferrer Caves & Vineyards** produces some of California's best sparklers—they've long been a *WBM* staff favorite—always a great choice.

We are breaking our own rules here. This winery isn't exactly up and coming: Gloria Ferrer is about to celebrate its 25th anniversary; its sparkling wines have plenty of visibility, have received numerous accolades, and are widely distributed. Gloria Ferrer, which annually produces roughly 140,000 cases of sparkling and still wines, is owned by a company in Spain that owns 18 wineries and makes millions of cases, **Freixenet**. As the first sparkling wine house in California's Sonoma Carneros region, Gloria Ferrer Caves & Vineyards was established in 1986.

Grapes used in The 2002 **Royal Cuvée** were whole-cluster pressed, the Cuvée was made exclusively with free-run juice and 16 base wines were blended to create the final Cuvée. The wine is 55 percent Pinot Noir and 45 percent Chardonnay. It was aged for more than five years on the yeast.

The first vintage of Royal Cuvée was 1984, released in honor of the King and Queen of Spain's 1987 tour of California. It's been poured at the White House too, and the glossy magazines have given it lots of points over the years. Cheers! **WBM**

Price: \$32
Case Production: 8,600
Blend: 67% Pinot Noir,
33% Chardonnay
pH: 3.16
TA: .68
Brix: NA
Residual Sugar: 13.7 g/L
Alcohol: 12.9%