

GREEN'S TOP TEN WINE VALUES for 2011

Save 15% off Green's Sale Price When Mixed in an Assorted or Solid Case.



It has been 21 years since we began this holiday special promotion, and our customers have responded enthusiastically over the decades, making this Green's most popular sale. A back of the envelope calculation suggests that we have sold more than 24,000 cases of our Top Ten Wines since its inception.

This year's lineup is spread pretty evenly around the world. There are three wines from France, four from California (including one sparkling wine), two from Italy, and one from Spain. There is one wine in Green's Top 10 that is sold under a fantasy name. You have seen us sell wines such as these many times this year (such as Angel's Landing and Rubus) because they can represent extraordinary value. As a condition of purchase, I can't tell you who really made this wine because it is sold well below the winery price.

We taste through hundreds of wines each year just to find ten that meet our criteria of best value for the money in their class. I hope you enjoy this year's version of the Green's Top10 as much as we do.

Have a safe and happy holiday season, and thank you for being a Green's customer. We know how important it is to get the most value for your dollar on any item. Finding a good bottle of wine is only half the battle to us. Finding one that tastes good and is at a good price is our goal. Happy Holidays!

Tasting notes by Michael Bishop unless otherwise noted.

#1 Simonnet-Febvre Chablis 2006

Green's Cash Sale Price: \$11.95

Bottle Cash Price With 15%

Case Discount: \$10.16 + Tax

I love Chablis. Many wine experts have said that Chablis is the purest expression of Chardonnay, which it is made from entirely. I agree. Grown at the very northern edge of where the Chardonnay vine can thrive, almost touching the southern fringes of Champagne vineyards (which Chablis was once considered part of), the cool continental climate of the area keeps the alcohol levels modest and imparts the racy acidity that is the hallmark of this wine. It is the most refreshing Chardonnay of all.



The Chardonnay grape has been called a "blank canvas" for either man or nature to fill in. For most of Chablis, nature is the painter. The soil is primarily Kimmeridgian (composed of limestone, clay, and

fossilized oyster shells) and marl, which imparts a distinctive flinty, mineral component to the wine. Sometimes you can pick up intriguing seashell and saline character too—no doubt a remnant from when the whole area was the bottom of a sea eons ago.

The producer of this wine, Simonnet-Febvre, is owned by Louis Latour, one of Burgundy's most respected producers of white Burgundy. Made entirely in stainless steel tank, there's no oak aging here to detract from Chablis' elegant style.

The 2006 vintage was superb. Wine maven reviews follow: "...there has never been a better time for consumers to explore this region's wines. The outstanding quality of so many generic Chablis...in vintage 2006 offers an especially fine opportunity for so-doing." -The Wine Advocate



#2 Sorrel Canyon Meritage North Coast 2008

Green's Cash Sale Price: \$12.95

Bottle Cash Price With 15% Case Discount: \$11.01 + Tax

Sorrel Canyon does not exist. This is one of those faux labels I've found recently, like Angel's Landing and Rubus, whose wines are from well-respected wineries. Due to the bad economy they want to move wine out quickly at a low price for immediate cash. The catch is that I can't reveal the source of the wine. I can tell you this—the wine would cost you around \$30 at this well-regarded Sonoma County winery.



Some of you may not be familiar with the term "Meritage." These wines can be red or white and must be blended from the "noble" Bordeaux grape varieties. The red Bordeaux varieties are Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Petit Verdot, and the rarer St. Macaire, Gros Verdot, and Carmenère.

Most wines are varietal wines, named after the grape variety that comprises at least 75% of that wine. For example, a "Cabernet Sauvignon" labeled as such must be made from 75%-100% Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. Many winemakers, however, believe the 75% varietal requirement does not necessarily result in the highest quality wine. And the generic name for wines with less than 75% of a grape varietal—"table wine"—does not convey quality. Thus, after an international competition in 1988, Meritage, an invented word that combines "merit" and "heritage," was created to reflect quality wines made from blends of two or more of these grapes. This wine is a blend of: 40% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Petite Verdot, and 4% Cabernet Franc.

The flavor and bouquet display the complexity a blend of grape varieties can bring to a wine. Dark fruit, oak, smoke, and a hint of balsamic (a good thing) greet you in the aroma. One gets a supple, round, clean fruit entry and mid-palate with a hint of coffee and chocolate. Nice long finish too; there is more going on in this \$13 bottle of wine than the law should allow!



#3 Château du Courneau Médoc 2009

Green's Cash Sale Price: \$12.95

Bottle Cash Price With 15% Case Discount: \$11.01 + Tax

From the monumental 2009 Bordeaux vintage, this value priced red wine over-delivers in quality for a wine that sells for under \$13. Located just north of St.-Estèphe in the northern Médoc, it is called a “petit château.” It bears no fancy Grand Cru or even Cru Bourgeois status; it is unclassified Bordeaux that happened to make a very good wine in a spectacular vintage. So how good a vintage is 2009? For starters, it's the highest quality, most consistent vintage I have seen in my 38 years of tasting Bordeaux of this rank. The quality of this year was made in the field, not through the extraordinary winemaking that the Great Growths can afford.



A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Petit Verdot, it possesses classic Médoc-like characteristics. Herbs and cassis on the bouquet, this wine has a good fruit entry and mid-palate, hints of tobacco, and modest tannins in the aftertaste. Delicious for drinking today, it will easily cellar an additional two to three years.

Let the wine critics speak on 2009 Bordeaux: 97-100 points: “...glorious reds, with beautiful polish. Cabernet Sauvignon shines.” - Wine Spectator

99 points: “I have never tasted such powerful and concentrated Médocs. This is where the Cabernet Sauvignons shine... Throughout the Médoc...the wines reveal an extraordinary freshness, vibrancy, and precision.” - Robert Parker



#4 Masseria Li Veli Passamante

Salice Salentino 2009

Green's Cash Sale Price: \$10.95

Bottle Cash Price With 15% Case Discount: \$9.31 + Tax

From Salice Salentino in Puglia, the “heel” of Italy, this flat, sun-baked region produces some of the best values in Italian red wines. Made entirely from a local grape variety, Negroamaro, it is a powerful, no holds barred red wine, full of character and flavor without being heavy.

This 128-acre estate dates back to the turn of the 20th century and contains old vineyards, which are perfect for making quality wine. It was purchased by the Falvo family of Avignonesi, the leader of the Vino Nobile di Montepulciano denomination in Tuscany. They brought their winemaking expertise here and have transformed and modernized the property.



The wine critics agree, this is a delicious wine: “Rustic yet refined, offering ripe cherry and plum fruit supported by a bright frame, with a touch of licorice lingering on the finish.” -Wine Spectator

“The estate's 2009 Negroamaro Passamante is another impeccably balanced offering. Dark red fruit, mint and flowers come through nicely with lovely richness and depth, all while avoiding heaviness.” - The Wine Advocate



#5 La Domeliere Rasteau 2009

Green's Cash Sale Price: \$12.95

Bottle Cash Price With 15% Case Discount: \$11.01 + Tax

Rasteau has been promoted! The French viticultural authorities have raised the status of Rasteau vineyards from Côtes du Rhône Villages to Cru. What does this mean? The wines from the area, beginning with the 2009 vintage, are now rated in the same league as the southern Rhône Valley aristocrats of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Gigondas, and Vacqueyras. It's now "high cotton" as we southerners might say.



I found this wine at the perfect time, in three ways. First, I tasted it in February 2010, right after it had finished malolactic fermentation, and was so smitten by its charms that I committed to buy a large quantity over a year and a half period. The promotion to Cru was not announced until July 2010, which was too late to change the label for the 2009 vintage from the old Côtes du Rhône Village appellation. So it was sold to Green's at the old pre-elevation price. Did the wine taste better after the announcement of its promotion in July 2010? No, but it still tastes great. Will the 2010 vintage cost more because of its new status? You bet!

Secondly, 2009 was a spectacular vintage for southern Rhone wines. I bow to the experts for their evaluations: "Rated 93 points" by Robert Parker * "Rated 93-96 points." - The Wine Spectator

Thirdly, I committed to buy this wine before The Wine Spectator proclaimed it as one of their "200 Great Values" in their September 31, 2010 edition and reviewed it as, "Ripe and well-focused, delivering a dark beam of plum, fig sauce and graphite, laced with hints of lavender and pastis. Very solid, with nice buried acidity holding the finish together...90 points." There was a run on this wine following this accolade, and there is no supply left other than those saved for Green's. We feel fortunate to have this wine to offer you as one of our Top Wine Values of 2011. There is none left in France!



#6 Grayson Chardonnay California Lot #11 2010

Green's Cash Sale Price: \$9.95

Bottle Cash Price With 15% Case Discount: \$8.46 + Tax

Grayson winery is able to pull off what few other California wineries are capable of: large production, superb wines, and low prices. What else can a wine lover ask for? Perhaps the key to this feat is their winemaker, Larry Levin. Larry spent seventeen years at Dry Creek Vineyard, where he made 15 varietal wines. He has since covered the globe by making wine in New Zealand, Chile, and Australia across all price points and styles. For the previous nine years, Mr. Levin was head of winemaking at Icon Estates where he oversaw the Franciscan, Mt. Veeder, Robert Mondavi, Estancia, Ravenswood, Quintessa, and Ruffino brands. He also consults for wineries in the prestigious Stag's Leap and Oakville districts in Napa Valley.



Grayson owns no vineyards or winery. They use a custom crush facility in Napa Valley to make their wine. This business model is absolutely essential in keeping Grayson's bottle price modest. With low overhead, this lean winemaking operation can rely on its winemaker's extensive experience. He knows where the good fruit is and how to make quality wine from it!

Famed wine writer and expert Robert Parker agrees: "This is a remarkable operation producing relatively large quantities of wines that offer sensational value."

Talk about consistency, the last five vintages of Grayson Chardonnay were rated 86-88 points in The Wine Advocate. While the 2010 vintage is too new to be rated by the wine press, I can tell you from tasting it myself that it's as good as its older brothers.

Pear and a hint of nutmeg in the bouquet, on the palate one senses a ripe, smooth fruit character and rich texture. Hints of oak and nice acidity in the aftertaste add complexity to the wine. I would love to throw this into a blind tasting of \$50 California Chardonnays. It would more than hold its own.



#7 Coltibuono Chianti Classico Selezione RS2009

Green's Cash Sale Price: \$12.95

Bottle Cash Price With 15% Case Discount: \$11.01 + Tax

Classico is the heart of the Chianti wine producing area, located in Tuscany bordered to the north by the suburbs of Florence, to the east by the Chianti Mountains, to the south by the city of Siena, and to the west by the valleys of the Pesa and Elsa Rivers. The boundaries of the Chianti wine-producing area were formally established in 1932 and have remained unchanged since. The Chianti Classico district within this region was recognized as "the oldest zone of origin," thereby recognizing its primacy and special identity. This distinguished Classico from other Chianti districts that were created later. The term "Classico" means, therefore, "the first" or "the original."



The estate responsible for this wine, Badia A Coltibuono, selects fruit from other quality vineyards located in the Classico zone, but outside their own property. It is given the same tender loving care and winemaking expertise from their own winemakers, Roberto Stucchi Prinetti and Maurizio Castelli. The "RS" is made entirely from Sangiovese, making it the purest expression of Tuscany's premier grape variety.

Dark cherry, cedar, tar, and a hint of licorice in the bouquet, this smooth, medium-bodied, ready-to-drink wine is delight for current drinking. Possessing a suave and elegant style, it ends with red fruit on the finish.

This wine is an excellent example of the superb 2009 vintage in Tuscany, hailed by The Wine Advocate as producing, "...warm, open wines with glorious fruit and expressive aromatics...It is a fabulous vintage for entry-level wines that are meant to be enjoyed upon release...soft, seductive wines that impress for the raciness of their fruit and accessible personalities."



#8 Cortijo III Rioja Tinto 2010

Green's Cash Sale Price: \$9.95

Bottle Cash Price With 15% Case Discount: \$8.46 + Tax

Spain offers some of the best values in red wine right now. I offer expert testimony: "Spain still manages to send a remarkable number of great values our way. It is clearly a buyer's market." -The Wine Advocate

"...for the vast majority of wine lovers who are looking for maximum value, especially when it comes to red wines...that's a game that Spain continues to pretty much own these days." - International Wine Cellar



Rioja is considered by many to be Spain's signature wine. Yes, you can find many fine wines from other regions of Spain, some from new up-and-coming areas, but Rioja remains the benchmark. And there is no better introduction, if one is necessary, to these delightful wines than those of Bodegas DSL.

Cortijo means "cottage" or "shack," which is a humorous reference by the emerging young winemaker David Sampedro that his shack can make competitive wine with most of the high-flown chateaux in Rioja. David improves the quality of his wines by doing expert work in his vineyards. He says, "If you want to make better wine, harvest better grapes." Rather than build a chateau or a beautiful tasting room, he'd rather pay to take extra care of the only meaningful ingredient, the grapes, and pass any savings onto the customer.

Cortijo is made entirely with estate-grown grapes. The goal is to show a naked, unadorned expression of Tempranillo (80%) and Garnacha (20%) from Rioja Alta with no interference of oak. Cortijo is David's way of introducing people to great wine from Rioja at a value price.

This exuberant young medium-bodied red wine is full of fruit and spice. Soft and oh-so-gulpable today, this is very versatile. Pairs well with white meats like pork and chicken, it's also a good match with red meats and stews.



#9 Talbott Kali Hart Pinot Noir Monterey Co. 2009
Green's Cash Sale Price: \$14.95
Bottle Cash Price With 15% Case Discount: \$12.71 + Tax

It is hard to get good Pinot Noir for \$14.99. The grape is notoriously fickle and is difficult to produce fine wine from, regardless of cost. It takes a real expert, with a lot of experience, who can source their fruit from the best microclimates to make good Pinot Noir. The family-run Talbott winery possesses all of these traits. The Kali Hart Pinot Noir is named after owner Robert Talbott's daughter. The fruit for this wine is sourced from two of Monterey County's finest vineyard sites: Diamond T (0.5%) and Sleepy Hollow (95.5%). It could have been labeled Talbott Sleepy Hollow Pinot Noir, a wine that sells for \$30 or more, if they had deleted the miniscule portion of fruit from Diamond T (which retails for \$52 plus!).



So why is Talbott selling this Pinot Noir for half price? After talking to their sales manager and winemaker, I have a general idea. Talbott's marketing scheme is to make an introductory level wine so delicious the consumer will be tempted to purchase their more expensive cuvees. There is little quality difference between the Pinot Noir fruit used for Kali Hart and Sleepy Hollow; instead the fruit in Kali Hart is selected to make a forward, easy-drinking style wine. I don't know about you, but I'm for forward easy-drinking at half the price and little quality difference any day. My mama didn't raise no fool! Plum, smoke, and meaty characteristics in the bouquet, there is a smooth, supple, dark fruit flavor on the entry and mid-palate. Leather and mild ripe tannins round out the delicious Pinot Noir.



#10 Piper Sonoma Brut Non-Vintage
Green's Cash Sale Price: \$9.95
Bottle Cash Price With 15% Case Discount: \$8.46 + Tax

This sparkling wine specialist, established by the famous French Champagne house Piper-Heidsieck in 1980, makes one of California's finest bubbly values. Made by the traditional methode champenoise, the same process from which French Champagne is made, all of the fruit for this wine is sourced from Sonoma County.

The comparison with French Champagne continues as it is produced from the same grape varieties they use: Chardonnay (60%), Pinot Noir (15%), and Pinot Meunier (25%). This awardwinning sparkler (a gold medal winner at the prestigious 2011 San Francisco International Wine Competition) is a spectacular



buy. Lemon and yeasty notes on the bouquet, it is dry, with hints of yeast on the palate. This bubbly is delightfully refreshing and the perfect accompaniment to your holiday festivities. Lots of quality here for the money!

Save 15% off Green's Sale Price When Mixed in an Assorted or Solid Case.

Not Responsible For Typographical errors.

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