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Best Washington wines of 2008

By Paul Gregutt
Special to The Seattle Times

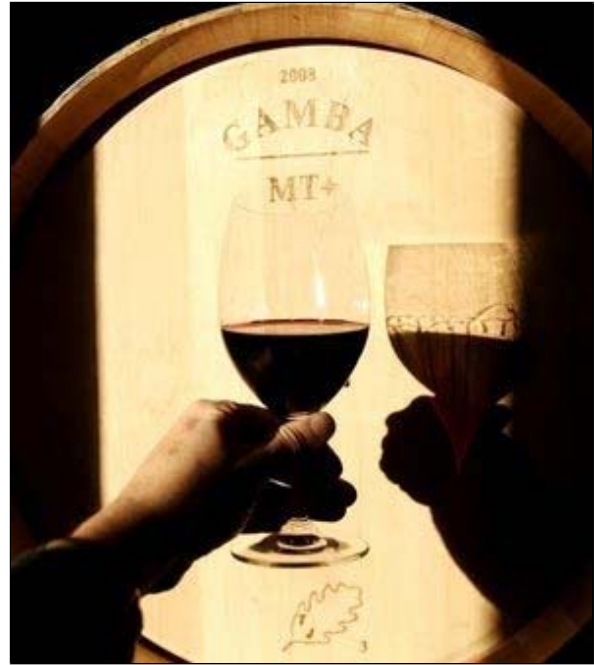
With each passing year, my list of the year's Top 100 Washington wines gets more competitive. We now have nearly 600 wineries in the state, so even limiting it to one listing per winery means that five out of six wineries won't even appear on the list.

Washington wines do well on other Top 100 lists, and though these are not inexpensive wines, they are far less expensive than most of the wines that show up elsewhere. This list is the only one that focuses exclusively on wines made with Washington grapes — and the only one compiled by a single individual living and working here.

Whether or not you always agree with my choices, I hope they will encourage you to explore many of the wineries (listed from 1 to 100 on page 10), and not just for the specific wine on the list, but for all of their wines. Quality is rarely an accident; if the winery made one great wine, they probably made quite a few really good ones.

Every wine on this list has been scored 90 points or higher by me on the standard 100-point wine-rating system. Within each scoring category, I have listed the wines from least to most expensive, awarding a higher slot to the cheaper wines, because they offer the most value. They have all been released within the 2008 calendar year, but be advised — some are already sold out. Your wine seller can guide you to what is still available, and in some instances he or she may have a newer vintage in stock. (See a list of wine shops on page 10.)

This special NW Ticket edition of the Wine Adviser column will close out the year. In 2009, Wine Adviser will move to Pacific Northwest Magazine, the Times' Sunday magazine, and will appear weekly beginning in February. I wish you all a holiday season filled with good friends and family, good health and, of course, good wine!



STEVE RINGMAN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

A glass of Betz Cabernet Sauvignon. The winery's 2005 Père de Famille Cabernet Sauvignon made the top 100 list.



STEVE RINGMAN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Number one on the Top Washington State Wines is Betz Family 2005 Pere de Famille Cabernet Sauvignon.

Wine events

Jake Kosseff Wine Class: "Introduction to Tasting Through the Great Wines of the World," 2-4 p.m. Saturday, Cellar 46, 7650 S.E. 27th St., Mercer Island; \$75 (206-407-3016)

Upcoming wine tastings: Find a complete list online at www.localwineevents.com/Seattle-Wine.

Washington Wine Commission

Paul Gregutt's Top 100 Washington State Wines For 2008

1. Betz Family 2005 Père de Famille Cabernet Sauvignon (\$55)
2. Leonetti Cellar 2005 Reserve Red (\$110)
3. Cayuse 2006 En Cerise Syrah (\$65)
4. Quilceda Creek 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$115)
5. Woodward Canyon 2006 Estate Red (\$60)
6. Poet's Leap 2007 Riesling (\$20)
7. Thurston Wolfe 2004 JTW Reserve Dessert Wine (\$20)
8. Stevens 2006 Black Tongue Syrah (\$32)
9. Rulo 2005 Silo Red (\$35)
10. Boudreaux Cellars 2005 Merlot (\$40)
11. Fielding Hills 2006 RiverBend Vineyard Syrah (\$40)
12. Owen Roe 2006 Lady Rosa Syrah (\$45)
13. Sparkman 2006 Darkness Syrah (\$50)
14. Château Rollat 2006 Edouard Cabernet Sauvignon (\$65)
15. Gramercy Cellars 2006 John Lewis Syrah (\$65)
16. DeLille Cellars 2005 Chaleur Estate Red (\$72)
17. Sheridan Vineyard 2005 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (\$75)
18. Dunham Cellars 2005 Lewis Vineyard Syrah (\$75)
19. Gramercy/Waters 21 Grams 2005 Red Wine (\$125)
20. Novelty Hill 2006 Stillwater Creek Viognier (\$20)
21. Januik 2006 Elerding Vineyard Chardonnay (\$25)
22. Pacific Rim 2007 Wallula Vineyard Biodynamic Riesling (\$32)
23. JM Cellars 2006 Chardonnay (\$32)
24. Buty 2006 Merlot-Cabernet Franc (\$35)
25. Syncline 2006 Cuvée Elena Red (\$35)

The wine commission has a Web site with information and links to Washington wineries at www.washingtonwine.org.

Shops

Wine shops and departments specializing in Washington wines:

Seattle

Esquin, 2700 Fourth Ave. S. (206-682-7374 or www.esquin.com)

Pete's Wine Shop (Seattle), 58 E. Lynn St. (206-322-2660 or <http://petes.cc>)

Pike & Western Wine Shop, 1934 Pike Place, in Pike Plac Market (206-441-1307 or www.pikeandwestern.com)

Eastside

Cellar 46, 7650 S.E. 27th St., Suite 120 (in the Mercer Building), Mercer Island (206-407-3016 or <http://cellar46.com>)

Fine Wine & Cigars, 16535 N.E. 76th St., Suite D-105 (in Redmond Town Center), Redmond (425-869-0869 or www.finewinesltd.com)

The Grape Choice, 7 Lakeshore Plaza, Kirkland (425-827-7551 or www.thegrapechoice.com)

Pete's Wine Shop (Bellevue), 134 105th N.E. (425-454-1100 or <http://petes.cc>)

Anacortes

Compass Wines, 1405 Commercial Ave., Anacortes (360-293-6500 or www.compasswines.com).

Other stores

You may find wines from the list at many area Thriftways, QFCs, Whole Foods, Metropolitan Markets (the best bet in Tacoma) and Town & Country markets (your go-to spot on Bainbridge Island).

26. Beresan 2005 Stone River Red (\$35)
27. Mark Ryan 2006 Chardonnay (\$35)
28. Gorman 2007 Big Sissy Chardonnay (\$38)
29. Soos Creek 2006 Ciel du Cheval Red (\$40)
30. Abeja 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$42)
31. Bunnell Family 2006 Clifton Hill Syrah (\$42)
32. Walla Walla Vintners 2005 Vineyard Select Cabernet Sauvignon (\$48)
33. Pepper Bridge 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$55)
34. K Vintners 2006 Phil Lane Syrah (\$70)
35. Doyenne 2005 Grand Ciel Syrah (\$75)
36. Canoe Ridge 2007 Snipes Vineyard Dry Riesling (\$17)
37. Andrew Rich 2006 Roussanne (\$20)
38. Ardenvoir 2007 Sémillon (\$22)
39. Dowsett Family 2007 Celilo Vineyard Gewürztraminer (\$22)
40. Brian Carter Cellars 2006 Oriana White (\$24)
41. Stephenson Cellars 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$30)
42. Reininger 2005 Helix Stillwater Creek Merlot (\$30)
43. Forgeron Cellars 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$30)
44. Dumas Station 2005 Estate Syrah (\$32)
45. JLC 2004 Spofford Station Estate Merlot (\$36)
46. Waters 2006 Loess Vineyard Syrah (\$40)
47. Chandler Reach 2004 Parris Estate Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (\$42)
48. Lachini 2005 Klipsun Vineyard La Bestia Cabernet Sauvignon (\$45)
49. Sineann 2006 Cold Creek Cabernet Sauvignon (\$48)
50. Browne Family Vineyards 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$50)
51. Cadence 2006 Cara Mia Vineyard Camerata Red (\$55)
52. Col Solare 2005 Red (\$75)

53. Chateau Ste. Michelle 2005 Canoe Ridge Estate Merlot (\$22)
54. O• S 2007 Champoux Vineyard Riesling (\$22)
55. Barrister 2006 Merlot (\$25)
56. McCrea Cellars 2007 Sirocco Blanc (\$28)
57. Saviah 2007 Stillwater Creek Vineyard Chardonnay (\$25)
58. Efesté 2005 Final-Final Cabernet-Syrah (\$25)
59. Nefarious Cellars 2006 Cabernet Franc (\$28)
60. Tamarack Cellars 2006 Cabernet Franc (\$28)
61. Columbia 2003 Otis Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (\$28)
62. Amavi 2006 Syrah (\$28)
63. Matthews Estate 2005 Claret (\$30)
64. SYZGY 2005 Syrah (\$30)
65. Adamant Cellars 2006 Winemaker's Select Red Blend (\$30)
66. Ross Andrew 2006 Boushey Vineyard Syrah (\$32)
67. Nota Bene 2005 Conner Lee Red (\$32)
68. Robert Karl 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$33)
69. L'Ecole No 41 2006 Seven Hills Estate Merlot (\$37)
70. Va Piano 2006 Syrah (\$38)
71. Balboa 2005 Mith Red (\$40)
72. Northstar 2005 Columbia Valley Merlot (\$41)
73. Dusted Valley 2006 Reserve Syrah (\$45)
74. Seven Hills 2005 Pentad Red (\$50)
75. Fidélitas 2005 Boushey Vineyard Red (\$50)
76. Spring Valley Vineyard 2005 Derby Cabernet Sauvignon (\$50)
77. Pedestal 2005 Merlot (\$55)
78. Feather 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$60)
79. Nicholas Cole Cellars 2004 Reserve Red (\$105)

80. Barnard Griffin 2007 White Riesling (\$8)
81. Milbrandt Vineyards 2006 Traditions Merlot (\$15)
82. Arbor Crest 2006 Merlot (\$15)
83. Zero One Vintners 2007 Golden Delicious Riesling (\$16)
84. Cadaretta 2007 sbs Sauvignon Blanc-Sémillon (\$22)
85. Walter Dacon 2007 Viognier (\$22)
86. Alexandria Nicole 2005 Destiny Ridge Merlot (\$24)
87. Hedges Family 2006 Three Vineyards Red (\$25)
88. Hestia 2006 Sémillon (\$25)
89. Isenhower 2006 Red Paintbrush Red (\$28)
90. Morrison Lane 2005 33 1/3 Red (\$33)
91. Columbia Crest 2005 Walter Clore Private Reserve Red (\$34)
92. Tertulia Cellars 2006 Tempranillo (\$35)
93. Tildio 2005 Profundo Red (\$35)
94. Camaraderie 2004 Grâce Red (\$35)
95. Guardian Cellars 2006 Chalk Line Red (\$25)
96. Watermill 2005 Reserve Syrah (\$35)
97. Three Rivers 2005 Meritage Red (\$39)
98. Alder Ridge 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$40)
99. Gordon Brothers 2003 Tradition Red (\$40)
100. Bergevin Lane 2005 Intuition Reserve Red (\$55)

Paul Gregutt is the author of "Washington Wines and Wineries The Essential Guide." His column, Wine Adviser, will begin appearing in Pacific Northwest Magazine on Feb. 1, 2009. He can be reached by e-mail at wine@seattletimes.com.

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