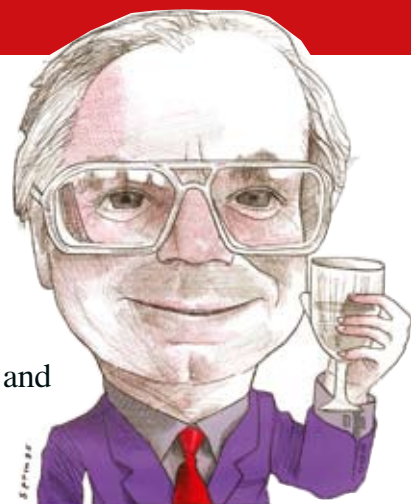


TASTING NOTES

SWIG WINES

CAPE CHAMONIX BLANC, FRANSCHHOEK, SOUTH AFRICA 2009

There's no escaping it, this is a cheap wine! We could put a positive spin on it and call it the inexpensive or the well-priced or we could dress it up in political correctness and call it differently-valued or price-impaired. The fact remains that people avoid cheap wines for fear of being tarred by association. Pity, because there's a lot of fun to be had with this perky blend of Sauvignon, Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay. It has a fresh crisp taste, which doesn't mean it tastes of fresh crisps, and offers a lively burst of apples, pears and chopped herbs. Personality is usually the first casualty of economically-challenged wines, but this one has plenty on offer.



CAPE CHAMONIX ROUGE, FRANSCHHOEK, SOUTH AFRICA 2007

The danger with buying an inexpensive wine speculatively is that you run the risk of it sitting at your dinner table like an unwelcome guest, enforcing awkward silences and bringing down the general mood like some cheerless killjoy. Avoid this problem by taking our word for this ingeniously inexpensive blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec and Petit Verdot from the brilliant young winemaker, Gottfried Mocke. It's wonderfully full-flavoured, with a suppleness rarely found in wines of this price. Loaded with ripe red, black and purple berry flavours plus a hint of spice, it delivers more pound for pound value than anything else we know.

ALCENO MONASTRELL '12 MESES' BODEGAS PEDRO LUIS MARTINEZ, JUMILLA, SPAIN 2006

If our wine list were a new toy box and you were our best friend, we'd pull everything out and show you this wine first. We're childishly proud of it and want you to share in the fun. It is made from seriously old Monastrell vines and those gnarled old beasts provide extraordinarily rich, swaggering fruit, making for a deep and wonderfully nuanced wine. The nose greets you warmly with plum and white chocolate, creamy dark berries and roasted spices. On the palate it amplifies after the initial sip, gaining in complexity and depth, with vanilla, sweet orange, cocoa, plum pudding and plush purple fruits.

GHIAIA DI MONTE, CA' BOFFENISIO 2004

An exceptionally fine Sauvignon/Riesling blend. It is the best white wine we have tried from Italy for a long time. It has exceptionally fine aromatics; Sauvignon prevails - but it is so fine - it's not like a punchy NZ or South African Sauvignon, this is all together a different kind of drink. It's very sophisticated, with a fine mineral spine that keeps it so fresh. The other ingredient is Riesling which is perhaps the back bone on which the Sauvignon is able to lie, which adds a delicious dimension, but you would never guess the grape. The beautiful and very delicate oak adds complexity, but you would not know it was there. It reminds me of the excitement I got when Silvio Jermann of Friuli was in his ascendancy, and his wines were considered the most exciting in Italy.