

EDITOR'S *picks*

ASSISTANT TASTING DIRECTOR LAUREN BUZZEO'S BEST BUYS FROM SOUTH AFRICA



There's no doubt that South Africa has established itself as a value-centric wine producer. Even at the high end of the retail market, the wines offer an exceptional quality-to-price ratio. With grapes from Cabernet Sauvignon to Pinotage faring well in the climate, South Africa has something to offer everyone.

- 90 Ken Forrester 2010 Reserve Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$15. Imported by Cape Classics.
- 90 Vinum Africa 2009 Chenin Blanc (Stellenbosch); \$15. Imported by World Premiere Wines LLC.
- 88 Excelsior 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (Robertson); \$10. Imported by Cape Classics.
- 88 Winery of Good Hope 2010 Bush Vine Pinotage (Stellenbosch); \$13. Imported by World Premiere Wines LLC.
- 88 Porcupine Ridge 2010 Sauvignon Blanc (Western Cape); \$13. Imported by Vineyard Brands.
- 87 Painted Wold 2010 The Den Pinotage (Coastal Region); \$12. Imported by Southern Starz.
- 87 Fleur du Cap 2009 Bergkelder Selection Cabernet Sauvignon (Western Cape); \$12. Imported by Maisons Marques & Domaines USA.
- 86 MAN Vintners 2010 Chenin Blanc (Coastal Region); \$10. Imported by Vineyard Brands.
- 86 Riebeek Cellars 2010 Collection Chardonnay (Swartland); \$9. Imported by Kysela Père et Fils.
- 85 Indaba 2010 Shiraz (Western Cape); \$10. Imported by Cape Classics.

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moscato goes mainstream

Craving for all things sweet finds a silky option in the wine aisle.

Like bees to honey, wine lovers are flocking to Moscato, the sweet wine known for white peach flavors and a silky mouthfeel. The growth of Moscato is phenomenal.

A.C. Nielsen data reveals a 153.6% increase in volume during 2010.

Sutter Home leads the Moscato pack in the U.S., mirroring the company's wild success with white Zinfandel in the '80s.

"An insider's view is that people talk about dry wines but (they) drink sweet," says Wendy Nyberg, senior director of marketing at Sutter Home. "In the last five years, Millennials have helped to demystify wine. They view 'sweet' as a positive attribute."

Another influence, she says, is pop culture. Hip-hop artists have popularized Moscato at nightclubs. According to Nielsen, many Hispanics favor sweet wine. Moscato's lower alcohol appeals to those who spurn stronger wines, such as mouth-puckering Cabernet Sauvignon. Though labeled as "dessert wine," Moscato is less expensive and not as sweet as many late-harvest dessert wines.

Moscato was the first wine Sutter Home produced over 50 years ago. The Trinchero family, owners of Sutter Home, hailed from Asti in Piedmont, Italy, the origin of Moscato d'Asti, the *frizzante*, or semisparkling, Moscato.

In the past five years, Moscato has evolved into a widely available beverage. At Fresh and Easy Neighborhood Markets, a chain in California, Arizona and Nevada, Moscato occupies the central shelf at the head of the wine aisle. And both imports and American production of Moscato are increasing. Sales of Italian producer Saracco are booming. Exclusiv Vodka recently launched a sparkling Rosé Moscato from Moldova, FishEye Moscato from Australia is broadly distributed and Yellow Tail debuted a frizzante Moscato in May. Francis Ford Coppola Winery in Sonoma recently released its first Rosso & Bianco Moscato in a blush style. Taking note, Sutter Home doubled down on their sweet reputation and released its Bubbly Moscato in July.

—DEBORAH GROSSMAN

