

# Anthony Dias Blue Reviews



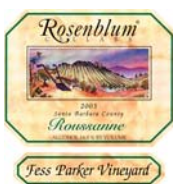
Every month I will be offering recommendations of currently available wines and spirits. These are my favorites from the more than 500 wines and 50 or so spirits I taste each month. The opinions are solely my own and in no way have any commercial considerations been brought to bear on my selections. I rate these products on the 100-point scale and nothing printed here will have scored less than 85.

Wines and spirits are rated as follows: 85-89 VERY GOOD; 90-94 OUTSTANDING; 95-100 CLASSIC. Although scores are a good guideline, these recommendations will more useful if you read the comments as well. - Anthony Dias Blue

## WINE RECOMMENDATIONS

(Prices listed are suggested retail)

### DOMESTIC



**90** **Rosenblum Cellars**  
**2003 Roussanne,**  
**Fess Parker Vineyard,**  
**Santa Barbara County**  
**(\$18)**

Rosenblum's quest for the California's best grapes continues into Santa Barbara County: bright, aromatic, pure and delicious.

AMERICAN WINE & SPIRITS

**92** **Matanzas Creek 2003 Chardon-**  
**nay, Sonoma Valley (\$30)** Fresh  
white peach and lively acidity with smooth,  
creamy texture and bright acidity; absolutely  
lovely.

REGAL WINE CO.

**90** **Tablas Creek 2003 Esprit de**  
**Beaucastel Blanc, Paso Robles**  
**(\$35)** A smooth, creamy white Rhône with  
minerals and spice; the vines come from plant  
material sourced at Beaucastel in Châteauneuf-  
du-Pape.

HENRY WINE GROUP

**92** **Stonestreet 2002**  
**Chardonnay, Upper**  
**Barn, Alexander Valley**  
**(\$40)** Generous peach flavors  
with lively acidity and lovely  
texture; a stunning effort.

REGAL WINE CO.

**90** **Chalone Vineyard**  
**2003 Pinot**  
**Blanc, Chalone (\$22)**

In spite of big changes  
afoot as Diageo acquires  
Chalone, this should re-  
main one of the state's  
best Pinot Blancs: dense  
and ripe with toasty oak  
and good, firm acid struc-  
ture.

PACIFIC WINE & SPIRITS

**90** **Dare 2003 Tem-**  
**pranillo, Napa**  
**Valley (\$41.50)** This  
limited-release spinoff of  
Viader explores varietals  
not common to California.

This  
one is dark, fresh and juicy with dense plum  
fruit; 20 percent Cab Franc.

DIRECT DISTRIBUTION

**91** **Voss 2001 Ocala Syrah, Napa Val-**  
**ley (\$45)** Gorgeous Napa Syrah with



velvety texture, concentrated blackberry fruit, great acid structure, lush finish.

HENRY WINE GROUP



**95 Argyle 2003 Reserve Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley (\$30)**

A killer Oregon Pinot from founder-winemaker Rollin Soles, with ripe pure Burgundian flavors of black-cherry fruit and firm acid structure; long, complex and elegant.

AMERICAN WINES & SPIRITS

**90 RDLR 2002 Syrah, Mendocino County (\$24)** The initials stand for Syrah-meister Richard de los Reyes; succulent, jammy blackberry fruit and spice; certified biodynamic.

DIRECT DISTRIBUTION 415-259-2770



**92 Kendall-Jackson 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon, Hawkeye Mountain Estate, Alexander Valley (\$45)** Part of KJ's Highland Estates tier; lush and plummy with rich overtones of chocolate and spice; made in limited supplies.

REGAL WINE CO.

## IMPORTS



**89 Castello delle Regine 2003 Bianco delle Regine, Umbria (\$19)**

A charming Italian white with lively acidity and bright peachy fruit; long, silky, balanced and complex.

AMERICAN WINES & SPIRITS



**88 Château de Cosse 2002 Sauternes (\$20)** Dried apricot, tangy acidity and nice toasty flavors in a surprisingly affordable Sauternes.

EPIC WINES



**90 The Foundry 2002 Syrah, Paarl, South Africa (\$40)** Distinctive coffee

and spice tones over fleshy berry fruit.

YOUNG'S MARKET

**88 Nobilo 2004 Icon Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$20)** Lifted and intense with characteristic gooseberry and citrus fruit.

AMERICAN WINES & SPIRITS

**89 Concha y Toro 2003 Amelia Chardonnay, Casablanca Valley, Chile (\$35)** Fresh and lush with ripe fruit and juicy acidity; long and dense, complex and balanced.

SOUTHERN WINE AND SPIRITS

**89 Moët & Chandon NV Nectar Impérial (\$37)**

An enticing demi-sec Champagne with lively raspberry and peach fruit; try it on ice for a summer refresher.



PACIFIC WINE AND SPIRITS

**88 Valentín Bianchi 2003 Particular Malbec, Mendoza, Argentina (\$30)** Particular is Bianchi's signature line; dark and rich with spice and bright plum.

THE ESTATES GROUP



**88 Mount Riley 2004 Pinot Noir, Marlborough, New Zealand (\$17)**

Fresh and bright with cherry fruit tempered by spice and plenty of depth.

YOUNG'S MARKET

**89 Bodegas Caro 2003 Amancaya, Mendoza, Argentina (\$18)** A 50-50 Cabernet-Malbec blend with edgy blackberry fruit, silky texture and a core of pure acidity. Caro is a joint venture between Catena and the Rothschilds of Lafite.

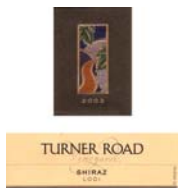
EPIC WINES

**88 Agricola Falset-Marça 2000 Castell de Falset, Montsant, Spain (\$20)** Marketed by Alegria, a consortium formed to promote new Spanish wines; a fleshy yet balanced Garnacha-driven blend.

SHIVERICK-JONES 213-483-5888

# WINE

BY THE GLASS & VALUE  
RECOMMENDATIONS



**87 Turner Road 2003 Shiraz, Lodi (\$11)** Dark and fresh with juicy blackberry fruit.

SOUTHERN WINE & SPIRITS

**88 Marqués de Cáceres 2004 Rosé, Rioja, Spain (\$7.50)** Beautiful pink color, fresh and attractive plum flavors; makes a nice sangria.

HENRY WINE GROUP



**89 Chateau Michelle 2004 Gewürztraminer, Columbia Valley (\$9)** Racy, juicy and crisp with spice, lively fruit and good balance.

SOUTHERN WINE AND SPIRITS

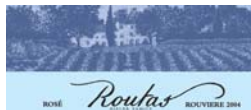
**86 The Little Penguin 2004 Shiraz, South Eastern Australia (\$8)** Chunky blackberry fruit and exotic spice tones.

YOUNG'S MARKET

**87 Oxford Landing 2004 Sauvignon Blanc, South Australia (\$9)** Long, balanced and showing racy lime and grapefruit; a Yalumba-owned label.

HENRY WINE GROUP

**87 Rutas 2004 Côteaux Varois, Rouvière Rosé, France (\$10)**



A summery, dry-style Provençal quaffer with charm and style; 40% Grenache, 30% Syrah, 30% Cinsault.

CHAMBERS & CHAMBERS

## Featured Winery Spanish Treasure

Spain seems nearly inexhaustible in its vinous riches. Nearly every week I discover a new or newly imported Spanish label, most often to my delight. Parés Baltà, located in Catalunya's Penedes region, is a case in point. Only recently introduced to the States, Parés Baltà has been around since 1790. The family-run operation is not only engaged in grape growing and wine production but also oversees related agricultural enterprises, including bee-keeping and sheep ranching. Related? Well, yes. The sheep are allowed to graze freely on the vineyard lands, acting as natural fertilizing agents and eliminating the need for artificial herbicides. (Fortunately, the woolly weed-killers haven't developed a taste for grapes). The bees are responsible for pollination. The company puts nature to work in a way that promotes sustainable viticulture.

The wide gamut of Parés Baltà wines includes cava, a lovely rosé, and white and red table wines ranging from the melony, modestly priced 2004 Blanc de Pacs (\$10, 87 points), a Xarello-Parellada-Macabeo blend, to the noble 2000 Absis (\$100, 91 points), a spicy, complex cuvée of Tempranillo, Merlot, Cabernet and Syrah with long plum tones. The 2004 Ros de Pacs (\$10) is a fresh, bright and slightly sweet rosado made from Cabernet and Merlot.

Bordelais-style blends are a specialty at Parés Baltà: the 2002 Mas Elena (\$15, 87 points) is ripe and fleshy and delivers lengthy cherry notes, while its pricier cousin, 1999 Mas Irene (\$30, 88 points) offers more structure and ageability. Fans of Grenache will love the intense, berry-laden 2003 Hisenda Miret (\$45, 90 points), which is made from 100 percent Garnacha. My personal favorite is the Marta de Baltà (\$100, 92 points), a vibrant, limited-production Syrah with clean, tangy tones and lovely complexity.

All the Parés Baltà wines carry a Penedés appellation, which leads me to speculate that we'll be seeing more exciting table wines from this part of Catalunya soon.

*Parés Baltà is distributed by Strange Wines.*



**8 8 Easton 2003 Zinfandel, Amador County (\$13)**

Ripe, rich and juicy with lively zinberry fruit; great barbecue wine.

CHAMBERS & CHAMBERS

**8 8 Salentein 2004 Sauvignon Blanc, Finca El Portillo, Mendoza, Argentina (\$9)**

Nice va-

rietal character and crisp citrus tones; another worthy Sauvignon from Mendoza.

SOUTHERN WINE AND SPIRITS

**8 7 Ecco Domani 2004 Pinot Grigio delle Venezie, Italy (\$11)**

Gallo-owned import with fresh

citrusy flavors and plenty of keen acidity.

WINE WAREHOUSE

**9 0 Blackstone Winery 2003 Chardonnay, Sonoma County (\$15)**

Great value in a Sonoma Chard; juicy, long and lovely.

WINE WAREHOUSE

# SPIRITS

**8 7 Malibu Pineapple Caribbean Rum (\$14)**

Simple pineapple flavor and decent length; sweet, balanced and clean.

SOUTHERN WINE & SPIRITS

Velvety texture with lovely, mellow angelica flavors topped with spice.

WINE WAREHOUSE



**8 8 Beachcomber Apple Rum Flavored Rum (\$13)**

Summery and delightful with creamy texture and rich, soft apple flavors.

SOUTHERN WINE & SPIRITS



**9 1 Absolut Apeach (\$27)**

Dry and racy with spicy peach flavors that are pure, real and long.

SOUTHERN WINE & SPIRITS

**9 2 Grand Marnier (\$36)**

The standard for the category: burnished orange and Cognac flavors with beautiful balance; great in margaritas.

PACIFIC WINE & SPIRITS

**8 8 Jose Cuervo Golden Margarita (\$12)**

This handy, pre-mixed margarita cocktail contains Grand Marnier; not overly sweet, with the zippy taste of fresh lime.

PACIFIC WINE & SPIRITS



**8 8 Martí Auténtico Coco Suave Licor de Ron (\$15)**

New companion product to Martí Mojito; creamy, sweet and bursting with coconut flavors.

SOUTHERN WINE & SPIRITS



**9 2 Gosling's Gold Bermuda Rum (\$18)**

This racy, lively and elegant release is the first new Gosling's rum in 108 years; smooth and spicy with rich tamarind and cherry notes; an instant classic.

SOUTHERN WINE & SPIRITS



**9 2 Starbucks Coffee Liqueur (\$23)**

Smooth and pleasantly sweet with strong, pure coffee flavors and a bitter-espresso finish.

SOUTHERN WINE & SPIRITS

**9 1 Martin Miller's London Dry Gin (\$28)**



**9 2 Chivas Regal 18 Year Old (\$65)**

Inviting aromas of smoke, hay and toasted oak with lovely, nuanced flavors; a superb blended Scotch.

YOUNG'S MARKET