



Sommelier's Choice

Top Releases of 2010

We at *Sommelier Journal* found last year's selection of the best releases from 2009 so intriguing that we invited even more of our editors and writers, along with other leading professionals from around the world, to submit their most memorable wines of 2010. Once again, they were not restricted by price, region, or variety, but their choices had to be 2010 releases that were currently available in the United States. To avoid any conflict of interest, selectors were

not allowed to pick wines that they represented commercially.

As in 2009, no two people picked the same wine. To me, the complete list of more than 50 bottlings, as indexed in a box at the end of the article, is amazing in its breadth and depth. We're delighted to present our 2010 Sommelier's Choice, with the producers arranged alphabetically within each category and region.

David Vogels, CWP
Editor



this year. Importer: Pasternak Wine Imports, www.pasternakwine.com.

Tylor Field III
Vice President of Wine and Spirits
Morton's The Steakhouse
Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

**Terrunyo Carménère Peumo Vineyard Block 27,
Cachapoal Valley, Chile 2007 \$40**

So what vino combines dusty 70% cacao chocolate, tobacco, espresso, and juicy blackcurrant in one package? A good Chilean Carménère—and no Carménère puts those attributes together better than this one. It packs a youthful punch right now, but there's a surprising sense of finesse on the back end. The finish is minutes long. It really wants a lamb shank or steak frites or a juicy burger, or let's just say it's gonna like red meat. The best Carménère I've ever tasted, and as the buyer for a major South American-style restaurant, I've tasted a few. Importer: Banfi Vintners, www.banfivintners.com.

Ken Collura
Wine Director/Sommelier/Floor Manager
Andina Restaurant
Portland, Ore.

Rhône Varieties

**Dussek Syrah Rattlesnake Hills,
Washington 2007 \$20**

Although pop-and-pour garners immediate attention, a splash decant of this wine epitomizes the term “fleshing out”—it goes from waif model to sumo wrestler in 15 minutes. It's jam-band-packed with a galactic amount of sweet purple fruit, and its cloaked tannins make it a total crowd pleaser. The plebeian price is capable of both titillating the frugal and raising the eyebrows of the richest Silver Oakers. Swat away the wine bug and consider the charming venom from this Dussek wine snake. www.thewoodhousewineestates.com.

Timothy O'Neal
Wine Director, Avenues Restaurant Group
Kansas City, Mo.

**Gramercy Cellars Grenache,
Columbia Valley, Washington 2007 \$40**

This makes the endless line of samples worth every sip (or spit). Little did I imagine on a humid St. Louis afternoon that I would taste this total deliciousness. An unexpectedly juicy Grenache totally blew off my sneakers and screamed for any type of four-legged protein on

our menu. The idea was to make a wine like the Pope's new house—no way! This is Lady Gaga singing with the Glenn Miller Orchestra. www.gramercycellars.com.

Glenn Bardgett, CSW
Wine Director
Annie Gunn's and Smoke House Market
Chesterfield, Mo.

**Alain Graillot Crozes-Hermitage La Guiraudé,
Rhône Valley, France 2007 \$55**

Probably because Syrah is one of my favorite grapes—or maybe because this wine lets you imbibe the essence of where it is grown—I enjoyed the never simple, but always surprising, La Guiraudé. A brilliant *vigneron*, Graillot makes wines with majestic energy. Focusing on Syrah, and clearly managing one of the best sites in Crozes-Hermitage, he produces only tiny quantities of this barrel selection in the best years. The winemaking involves whole-cluster fermentation and aging in used barriques from top Burgundian estates. This wine combines powerful, exuberant, smoky bacon-fat goodness with balanced structure. Importer: Michael Skurnik Wines, www.skurnikwines.com.

Fernando Betata, MS
Tenzing Wine & Spirits
Chicago

**Roucas Toumba Vacqueyras Les Restanques
de Cabassole, Rhône Valley, France 2007 \$36**

This wine, to me, highlights the tremendous leap in quality that the Châteauneuf-du-Pape “satellite” appellations have achieved. Mostly gone are the days of overcropped, overpressed, dry, astringent Vacqueyras and Cairanne. Here, Roucas Toumba showcases the hallmark kirsch, licorice, spicy black fruit, and spiny mineral acidity of classic Châteauneufs. While not exactly inexpensive, the wine still resides in a list-friendly price bracket, allowing sommeliers to introduce their guests to a less fashionable yet equally delicious alternative. Importer: Triage Wines, Inc., www.triagewines.com.

Cyril R. Frechier
Directeur des Vins et Spiriteaux
Campagne Restaurant & Cafe Campagne
Seattle

**Yann Chave Crozes-Hermitage Classique,
Rhône Valley, France 2007 \$25**

The first impression on the nose is smoke, savory and beautiful, followed by meat—like a grilled steak—then by black-pepper spice. Un-

