

# Wine Wisdom

## Interest In Value Wines Can Pay Dividends

(NAPSA)—Wine critic and lifestyle guru Anthony Dias Blue has some financial advice for us: A good glass of wine is still an affordable luxury. Blue hosted winemakers from three continents at an international wine summit recently to review the global status of “extreme value wines.”

### Hot Spanish Wines

“Argentina and Spain are producing some of the best values on the world market,” Blue says, “and they are expanding our choices for flavor and style, too.” U.S. sales of Spanish wine rose more than 15 percent in 2008, with Argentine wines seeing a whopping 36 percent increase.



Blue

Spain and Argentina are hot, even in a cool economy. Blue pointed to Alamos Malbec (red) from Argentina and Martin Codax Albarino (white) from northwest Spain as two examples.

### New Wine Varieties

“Malbec is looking like the next big thing in red wine, and Malbec has everything Americans like—lots of flavor, rich texture and no sharp edges. Albarino is another wine we should all know about. It fits between Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc in flavor and texture, but it beats both for being both food-friendly and a great ‘porch and patio wine.’”

If the economy is slow, Blue says, a good glass of wine provides a little “staycation” with international flair. “These wines are easy to find, easy to like and easy on the pocketbook,” Blue adds. The Martin Codax Albarino, for example, sells for about \$15. The Alamos

Malbec is about \$13. “This is the New Wave of quality and value on the shelf,” according to Blue.

### California Value Wines

Winemakers from California also showed Blue some of their wines they considered “extreme value.” “California Pinot Noir is still hot,” Blue says, “but for real value you have to go beyond the boutiques to find a reliable brand where you know what you get is good quality at a good price.”

Blue pointed to MacMurray Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir as a good value at just under \$25. “MacMurray Ranch has been around for 10 years, and it’s been very consistent every vintage. It’s in the ‘sweet spot’ of not so small you can’t find it, and not so big it’s lost focus. And it is priced well below similar wines.”

Blue also urges wine lovers to look into the “corners” of California wine country for great values. “The Central Coast is an up and coming region,” Blue says, “with relatively new wineries like Bridlewood putting out some exceptional values.” For the aficionado willing to spend a few dollars more,” Blue adds, “There are ‘sleepers’ coming out of the best growing areas of northern California, where the ‘cult’ wines come from.” A brand like Frei Brothers Reserve, with wines from the Russian River Valley, Alexander Valley, and Dry Creek Valley, is a cult wine in disguise, with surprisingly modest price tags in the \$20 range.

According to Blue, “All these wines are reliable and easy to find.” Just visit the wine section of your local food market or your neighborhood wine shop and “taste your way around the world.”