

that recall rubber or latex, but those don't distract. On the heels of that are thicker, more enticing notes of campfire, toasts and cedar that taste so good over the wine's toned, well-built structure. Imported by Chateau Ste. Michelle. —M.L.

**92 Mazzei 2003 Tenuta Belguardo (Maremma); \$60.** This is an expressive and lively blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Sangiovese that boasts dark, meaty concentration, an inky black appearance and big toasted notes of roasted nut, cedar, leather and spice. It is distinguished by polished tannins and outstanding intensity on the palate. Imported by Palm Bay International. —M.L.

**92 Montepeloso 2003 Nardo (Toscana); \$90.** Nardo is a big wine that boasts a New World style and an emphasis on oak aging. Penetrating aromas of black cherry, forest berry, chocolate and spice make a strong statement. There's a nice quality to the tannins and the wine's drying finish. Imported by Rare Wine Company. —M.L.

**92 Podere Brizio Roberto Bellini 2004 Pupà Pepu (Colli della Toscana Centrale); \$NA.** This is beautifully airy and buoyant, with thick, lush aromas of red fruit, toasted nut, almond paste, molasses and cola. These aromas emerge as one in a smooth, seamless manner and segue into menthol freshness on the finish. Imported by A.R. Pellegrini & Associates. —M.L.

**92 Podere Guado al Melo 2004 Bolgheri Superiore; \$55.** This is modern and plush, ripe and chewy with all kinds of playful renderings of chocolate fudge, coffee and sweet spice in between. Deep fruit renderings peel off layer after layer giving way to solid structure and a polished, dusty finish. Drink after 2012. Imported by Premium Brands. —M.L.

**92 Renieri 2004 Re di Renieri (Toscana); \$35.** Sweet cherry cola, root beer, leather, dried tobacco and toasted oak emerge from the nose of this blend of Cab Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. The wine has a powerful center and refreshing crispness on the lengthy finish. Imported by Winebow. —M.L.

**92 Ruffino 2004 Romitorio di Santedame (Toscana); \$70.** Romitorio di Santedame is Ruffino's top wine. It is a big, plump wine and is almost too thick and powerful in places, making it well suited to succulent cuts of red meat. But it's hard not to love its extraction, sophisticated mouthfeel and blockbuster tannins. Drink after 2010. Imported by Icon Estates. —M.L.

tuning has shaped a vibrant wine that is rich in complexity. Aromas include blackberry, cigar box, espresso bean and the wine ends with thick, chewy tannins. There is meat on this wine's bones yet it closes crisp and fresh, not heavy. Imported by Vos Vinum Importing Ltd. —M.L.

**91 Le Macchiole 2005 Bolgheri; \$35.** This Merlot, Sangiovese and Cabernet Franc blend lays on intense aromas of blackberry, black currant, creamy melted chocolate, buoyant cinnamon accents and beautiful, plush renderings of spice and wood. Together, these elements achieve wonderful harmony and elevate this wine in terms of aromatic intensity. It's ready to drink now. Imported by Domaine Select Wine Estates. —M.L.

**91 Petra 2004 Toscana; \$100.** Green aromas of bell pepper, cracked peppercorn and leafy spinach give the Cabernet component away but are rendered manageable and less pronounced thanks to the wine's softer Merlot side. The wine has good length with dusty tannins and loads of Mediterranean spice on the close. Imported by Sapphire Brands. —M.L.

**91 Podere Guado al Melo 2004 Gaudio al Melo Rosso (Bolgheri); \$26.** A smoky, masculine Cab-Merlot blend with deep highlights of cigar box, old spice, black cherry and leather. The wine is compact and firm in terms of its aromatic offering and is focused on sophisticated, tobacco-like notes. In the mouth it delivers bursting red fruit and tight, chewy tannins and makes a great, long-lasting impression on the finish. Drink after 2010. Imported by Premium Brands. —M.L.

**91 Poggio Antico 2004 Madre (Toscana); \$76.** Madre is a 50-50 blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet from one of Montalcino's best producers. It delivers a full rack of spicy aromas as well as fresh fruit and forest berry. However, in this vintage the emphasis is placed on the wine's solid structure. Imported by Empson (USA) Ltd. —M.L.

**91 Poggio Mandorlo 2004 Maremma; \$90.** This blend exhibits thick density and concentration and direct aromas of blackberry, black ink, cola and roasted chestnuts. The wood is well-integrated, and the wine is juicy and firm on the palate. Drink after 2010. Imported by Domaine Select Wine Estates. —M.L.

**91 Poggio Verrano 2005 Dròmos (Maremma); \$60.** This wine has a specific point of spice at its core that is dressed in more flowing tones of herbs, pipe tobacco, molasses, leather and cherry at its perimeter. In the mouth, this blend of five grape varieties has great structure and chewy tannins. Imported by Cape Wine Ven-

**86 Podere Guado al Melo 2004 Jassarte (Toscana); \$41.** A blend of 20 varieties from the Mediterranean and the Caucasus, the wine's aromas are muddled: There's a bit of blackberry, plum, horsehide, cow pasture, tar and old leather in here. But this primordial brew offers a fascinating glimpse at the roots of wine. Imported by Premium Brands. —M.L.

**86 Rocca di Frassinello 2005 Poggio alla Guardia (Maremma); \$18.** There's a lot of ripe berry that muddles the purity of fruit. For example, you'll get strawberry roll-up and sweet spice upfront. It tastes youthful and soft overall. Imported by Vias Imports. —M.L.

**86 Rocca di Frassinello 2004 Poggio alla Guardia (Maremma); \$24.** This Merlot, Cab Sauvignon and Sangiovese blend is a bit thorny and sharp because high notes of black peppercorn, cola and pine forest seem to rise above the wine's natural fruit. Imported by Vias Imports. —M.L.

**86 Tenuta di Biserno 2006 Insoglio del Cinghiale (Toscana); \$40.** There is good integrity of fruit, but there are also slight distractions in the form of stewy or earthy tones. Otherwise, it delivers blackberry, coffee grinds and smoked almond with rigid tannins. Imported by Wilson Daniels Ltd. —M.L.

**86 Tenuta di Ghizzano 2005 Il Ghizzano (Toscana); \$20.** This is a light and breezy blend of Sangiovese and Merlot that doesn't have huge intensity but that does have a nice focus on fruit. It's a no-fuss, easy wine with bursting cherry, almond blossom and ripe strawberry in the background. Imported by Henriot Inc. —M.L.

**86 Tommasi 2005 Poggio al Tufo Rompicollo (Maremma); \$16.** Amarone producer Tommasi has produced this approachable blend of Sangiovese and Cabernet. The aromas are simple but direct, including cherry, spice and vanilla. Imported by Rolar Imports Ltd. —M.L.

**86 Villa Vignamaggio 2003 Wine Obsession I Miti (Toscana); \$65.** The packaging is totally crazy but the wine is more subdued. A blend of Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet, it delivers raw strawberry, green leaf notes and loads of dried hay. It has a sharp, solid build and rigid tannins. Imported by Bedford International. —M.L.

**85 Gattamacco 2003 Bolgheri Superiore; \$110.** This blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (65%), Merlot and Sangiovese is tad jammy and cooked. The wine delivers tight, tart tannins with