

texture, though. Drink now with spicy-tapas style dishes. —S.H.

Price: \$30 **abv:** 14.4%

ZINFANDEL

92 Ottimino 2007 Ottimino Vineyard Little 8 Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). For full review see page 6. *Editors' Choice*.

92 Ottimino 2007 Von Weidlich Vineyard Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). Shows a delicate texture, almost Pinot Noir-like in lightness, yet offers a blast of berry, spice, tobacco, cola and bacon flavors that are lusty and ripe. The grapes come from the Green Valley, and the alcohol is low while acidity is high. Beautiful and classy, a Zin to drink with everything from salmon and steak to tuna and short ribs. —S.H.

Price: \$36 **abv:** 13.9%

92 V. Sattui 2008 Crow Ridge Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). A big, lusty, rich Zinfandel, packing wildly complex flavors of summer-ripe raspberries and cherries, anise, crushed pepper, dusty spices, sweet vanilla and smoky sandalwood. One of V. Sattui's best Zins of the vintage. —S.H.

Price: \$35 **abv:** 14.7%

92 V. Sattui 2008 Ramazzotti Vineyard Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). A really good Zinfandel, and despite hefty alcohol, it's dry and balanced. Really delivers those Zin flavors of wild berries, leather, anise, cocoa and cola, and the spices are a wild ride through Asia. With thick, velvety tannins and acidity, it's a lovely, classy Zin to drink now. —S.H.

Price: \$36 **abv:** 15%

90 Schulz 2008 Lampryidae Vineyard Zinfandel (Mount Veeder). Marked by substantial fruit, this Zin offers a burst of ripe blackberries, blueberries and black cherries, spiced with cinnamon and cloves, and clothed in smoky, sweetly toasted oak. Mountain tannins give it a thick, astringent mouthfeel. A very fine Zinfandel that's a little high in alcohol, but it doesn't feel hot. —S.H.

Price: \$36 **abv:** 15.2%

89 Armida 2009 Poizin Reserve Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). A hefty Zinfandel, full-bodied and front-loaded in raspberry, cherry and blackberry fruit, with delicious chocolate, anise liqueur and spice layers. It's very tannic, a wine to make your tongue stick to the gums. Tough now, but already throwing sediment crystals in the glass, and could develop in the bottle. —S.H.

Price: \$80 **abv:** 14.8%

89 Dashe Cellars 2008 Florence Vineyard Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). This 100% Zin shows classic spices and ripe berry fruit that veers into currants. It's bone dry, and the alcohol is relatively high but not hot. It's a lusty wine, subtly oaked, and a great partner to barbecue. —S.H.

Price: \$32 **abv:** 14.8%

89 Easton 2009 Zinfandel (Amador County). This is a tremendously inviting price for a wine

of this caliber, super structured and tight at first with chewy tannins and savory plum and chocolate on the palate. Concentrated, this Zin could stand a little time in the cellar, 3–5 years, or let it breathe awhile if you just have to drink it now. —V.B.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Bonterra 2009 Zinfandel (Mendocino County). Bonterra continues to make great wines at affordable prices, all from organically grown grapes. With blueberry pie and clove predominating, the wine is tannic, super-structured, with a spicy finish. A good deal for sure. —V.B.

Price: \$16 **abv:** 14.5%

88 Ottimino 2007 Rancho Bella Vineyard Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). High in alcohol, in the manner of a ripe Zin, but the wine wears it well. It's full-bodied and softly tannic, showing elaborate wild berry, cherry, licorice, currant, salty bacon and pepper spice flavors. —S.H.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 15.1%

88 Saracina 2009 Pick and Shovel Zinfandel (Mendocino County). Plenty of dark plum and blackberry going on here, from a Zin sourced from two organically farmed vineyards. Low berry weights from the dry vintage have contributed to a concentrated wine here, with soft tannins and some spiciness, an overall balanced wine. —V.B.

Price: \$28 **abv:** 14.9%

88 Sobon Estate 2009 Old Vines Zinfandel (Amador County). Impressive for a \$12 Old Vine Zin, this wine is spicy and full of pepper, much more savory than sweet with plenty of texture midpalate and decent length. Definitely full-bodied, it'll stand up to a plethora of rich foods and even age another couple of years. *Best Buy*. —V.B.

Price: \$12 **abv:** 14.9%

88 Summers 2008 Four Acre Zin Zinfandel (Calistoga). A very nice Zin with plenty of varietal flavor, though it finishes thin and quick. But it's lovely at first in wild raspberries and cherries, with lots of brown sugar and dusty baking spices. —S.H.

Price: \$34 **abv:** 14.2%

87 Armida 2009 Poizin Zinfandel (Sonoma County). Fairly simple in appeal, with candied, sweet and sour cherry flavors, like a cough drop. Tannic, too, hitting the palate with sandpapery astringency. But earns extra credit for dryness and a rich smoked meat note that makes it a partner for barbecue. —S.H.

Price: \$25 **abv:** 14.5%

87 Armida 2009 Tina's Block Maple Vineyards Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). Lusty, rich and tannic, this rustic-chic Zin trades elegance and subtlety for sheer dynamic power. Its wild blackberry, cola and mulberry flavors tread the fine line between dry and off-dry, exploding in the mouth, then finishing in a scour of astringency. —S.H.

Price: \$48 **abv:** 14.5%

87 Arzein 2009 Zinfandel (Mendocino County). Classic in style with raspberry and

spice dominating, the wine overall is supple and lush. —V.B.

Price: \$18 **abv:** 14.5%

87 Dashe Cellars 2009 Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). With a little Petite Sirah and Carignane blended in for depth and complexity, this is a nice Zinfandel for everyday drinking. It's dry and full-bodied, and while the tannins are strong, they're perfect for busting up rich barbecue. Shows all the fruity spiciness you expect from a lusty Zin. —S.H.

Price: \$24 **abv:** 14.5%

86 Armida 2009 Maple Vineyards Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). Ripe to the point of over-ripe, with dried blackberry, cherry and raisin flavors, this Zin also is hot in alcohol. Drink now with rich, fatty barbecue to soften its tough tannins. —S.H.

Price: \$39 **abv:** 14.9%

86 Gracianna 2009 Bacigalupi Vineyard Zinfandel (Russian River Valley). This is a strongly flavored Zinfandel, not particularly graceful or subtle. It kicks you in the head with ripe, jammy raspberry, cherry and blackberry fruit, with sweet overtones of chocolate and anise. The alcohol is very high and makes the wine feel hot. —S.H.

Price: \$42 **abv:** 15.9%

86 Pech Merle 2009 Zinfandel (Dry Creek Valley). Barbecue and lusty stews are what this wine wants. It's dryish to sweet in raisin, blackberry jam, chocolate, beef jerky and spice flavors, and the tannins are big and tough. —S.H.

Price: \$27 **abv:** 14.9%

84 Gnarly Head 2009 Old Vines Zinfandel (Lodi). A little too sweet on the finish to recommend it as a balanced wine, this Gnarly Head from Lodi's old vines has about 16% Petite Sirah in it, too. —V.B.

Price: \$11 **abv:** 14.5%

84 Grands Amis Winery 2008 Old Vine Zinfandel (Lodi). A sweet Lodi Zin with much chocolate and mint from beginning to end. —V.B.

Price: \$20 **abv:** NA

84 Horse & Plow 2009 Testa Vineyard Zinfandel (Mendocino). Horse & Plow turns out so many lovely wines it's heartbreaking not to include this one in the mix. It was sourced from one of the great organic Mendocino vineyards, old vines no less, but there just wasn't much there, the wine tasting tight without much fruit. —V.B.

Price: \$22 **abv:** 14.5%

84 The Industrial 2009 Zinfandel (Sonoma County). Soft, hot in alcohol and sweet, this simple wine tastes like melted raspberry and cherry jam. —S.H.

Price: \$40 **abv:** 15.2%

83 Seven Deadly Zins 2008 Old Vine Zinfandel (Lodi). Yes, there are notes of sweet plum and pepper, but otherwise the wine is soft,