

# THE WANDERING PALATE

Life is filling in time between meals... and a meal without wine could only be breakfast!

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## Must-Have Wines of the Lunar Drinking Year 2009

*These wines are the standouts of the 2009 lunar drinking year.*

### Why the lunar year?

Notwithstanding I reside in Asia, the nucleus of my ideologies revolve around a back to nature approach with wine, food and the environment – sustainable, organic and biodynamic principles that have evolved through Pagan farming to Chinese gardeners over the eons yet pivotal today. So not only do I care about the planet, I have gone lunar!

This digest is the distillation of all the wines The Wandering Palate has assessed at trade tastings around the world, some of them mammoth annual events, others more intimate tastings, retrospective vertical line-ups, professional workshops, new release luncheons and dinners.

Throw in the occasional wine judging appearance, regional wine celebrations or symposiums and assiduous assessing at the resident tasting bench as well as countless home dinners and frequenting of restaurants. Most importantly, the continuous vineyard visits, unquestionably the most enlightening, grassroots way of interpreting wine and its regional and cultural nexus.

Whilst these extraordinary wines are benchmarks of genuine artisan vigneron and highly expressive of terroir or 'sense of place' encompassing the unique qualities of their region and micro-climate, there is also an underlying message in adjudging beyond the merits of the individual wine – it is a proclamation of the winery and dedication to environmentally sustainable viticulture and perhaps most importantly, outstanding price/quality rapport.

Ultimately, the goal is to promote underappreciated wines or wine styles and to inspire further discovery and adventurism in your wine consumption.

A point of difference, this is a retrospective account, thus not conjecture or tarred by commercialism in trying to promote what is about to be released. That said many of these wines are quite likely to be current releases in Asia or available on the secondary market worldwide, if you look hard enough. More importantly, it is the winery itself that you should be directing your curiosity sampling the current vintage, or an older one for that matter.

This is an unashamedly subjective selection but motivated by objective goals and by no means intended to be definitive; besides, the more you know about wine, the more realize how little you know about wine!

All the wines that have made it this far have been tried over a meal, as you would normally enjoy them moreover, their intended purpose. There are no scores, a flawed and soulless methodology that I detest. At the end of the day, the most significant wine critic in the world is you, for my part is only to stimulate a thirst for real wine.

Tasting notes and extended articles on each wine/winery/region will be posted over the coming month, click on each heading accordingly.

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### Best Wine of the Year

Two Paddocks Pinot Noir 2006 - Central Otago, New Zealand  
[www.twopaddocks.com](http://www.twopaddocks.com)

### Best Red Wine of the Year

Conti Costanti Rosso di Montalcino 2005 - Tuscany, Italy  
[www.costanti.it](http://www.costanti.it)

### Best Rose of the Year

Riecine Rose 2008 - Lamole-Chianti, Tuscany, Italy  
[www.riecine.it](http://www.riecine.it)

### Best White Wine of the Year

Neudorf Moutere Chardonnay 2007 - Nelson, New Zealand  
[www.neudorf.co.nz](http://www.neudorf.co.nz)

### Best Sparkling Wine of the Year

Benoit Lahaye Rose de Maceration NV (2007) - Bouzy, Champagne, France  
[www.champagneguide.net](http://www.champagneguide.net)

### Best Sweet Wine of the Year

De Bortoli Noble One 2007 - Riverina, Australia  
[www.debortoli.com.au](http://www.debortoli.com.au)

### Best Fortified Wine of the Year

WJ Grahams - Douro, Portugal - 1977 - 1985 - 1994 - 2003 - 2007  
[www.symington.com](http://www.symington.com)

### Vigneron of the Year

Blair Walter - Felton Road, Central Otago, New Zealand  
[www.feltonroad.com](http://www.feltonroad.com)

### Biodynamic Property of the Year

Cullen Wines - Margaret River, Western Australia  
[www.cullenwines.com.au](http://www.cullenwines.com.au)

### Best Vineyard Accommodation

### Most Underappreciated Wine Region

### Best Wine of the Year from the Cellar

Chateau La Lagune - Bordeaux  
[www.chateau-lalagune.com](http://www.chateau-lalagune.com)

Mornington Peninsula - Victoria, Australia  
[www.mpva.com.au](http://www.mpva.com.au)

Fontodi Flaccianello IGT 2001 - Chianti,  
 Tuscany, Italy  
[www.fontodi.com](http://www.fontodi.com)

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### Best Discovery of the Year

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Azienda Agricola Forteto della Luja -  
 Loazzolo, Piedmont, Italy  
[www.fortetodellaluja.it](http://www.fortetodellaluja.it)

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### Best New Winery of the Year

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Peccavi - Margaret River, Western Australia  
[www.peccavi-wines.com](http://www.peccavi-wines.com)

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### Pinot Noir Fix of the Year - most affordable with

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requisite pinosity  
 Rabbit Ranch Pinot Noir 2008 (made by  
 Chard Farm) - Central Otago, New Zealand  
[www.chardfarm.co.nz](http://www.chardfarm.co.nz)

### Most Consistent Best Value Wine

Magpie Estate Call Bag Mourvedre  
 Grenache 2006 - Barossa Valley, South  
 Australia  
[www.rolfbinder.com](http://www.rolfbinder.com)

### New Zealand - Red Wine of the Year

Trio of 2007 Hawkes Bay Syrah Stonecroft -  
 Te Mata Estate Bullnose - Trinity Hills  
 Hawkes Bay  
[www.stonecroft.co.nz](http://www.stonecroft.co.nz)  
[www.temata.co.nz](http://www.temata.co.nz)  
[www.trinityhill.com](http://www.trinityhill.com)

### New Zealand - White Wine of the Year

Ostler Audrey Pinot Gris 2008 - Waitaki,  
 North Otago  
[www.ostlerwine.co.nz](http://www.ostlerwine.co.nz)

### Australia - White Wine of the Year

Cullen Kevin John Chardonnay 2007 -  
 Margaret River, Western Australia  
[www.cullenwines.com.au](http://www.cullenwines.com.au)

### Australia - Red Wine of the Year

Yabby Lake Pinot Noir 2006 - Mornington  
 Peninsula, Victoria  
[www.yabbylake.com](http://www.yabbylake.com)

### South Africa – Wine of the Year

Eban Sadie Family Palladius 2007 -  
 Swaartland, South Africa  
[www.thesadiefamily.com](http://www.thesadiefamily.com)

### USA - Red Wine of the Year

Calera Central Coast Pinot Noir 2007 &  
 1997 Calera Reed Vinyard - Mt Harlan  
 Pinot Noir - Central Coast, California  
[www.calerawine.com](http://www.calerawine.com)

### USA - White Wine of the Year

Littorai "Charles Heintz Chardonnay 2007 -  
 Sonoma Coast, California  
[www.littorai.com](http://www.littorai.com)

### Best Bordeaux of the Year

Château Malartic-Lagravière 2005 -  
 Pessac-Leognan  
[www.malartic-lagraviere.com](http://www.malartic-lagraviere.com)

### France - White Wine of the Year

Alex Gambal St. Aubin 1er Cru Les Murgers  
 des Dents Chien 2007 - Burgundy, France  
[www.alexgambal.com](http://www.alexgambal.com)

### France - Red Wine of the Year

Domaine Pierre Clavel La Copa Santa 2005 -  
 Coteaux du Languedoc  
[www.vins-clavel.fr](http://www.vins-clavel.fr)

### Austria - Wine of the Year

Jurtschitsch Gruner Veltliner Kaferberg  
 2007 - Kremstal, Austria  
[www.jurtschitsch.com](http://www.jurtschitsch.com)

### Germany - Wine of the Year

Georg Breuer Schlossberg Riesling Grand  
 Cru 2007 - Rheingau  
[www.georg-breuer.com](http://www.georg-breuer.com)

### Italy - Wine of the Year

Felsina Berradenga Chianti Rancia 2005 -  
 Tuscany  
[www.felsina.it](http://www.felsina.it)

### Spanish - Wine of the Year

Dits del Terra Priorat 2004  
[www.thesadiefamily.com](http://www.thesadiefamily.com)

### Wine Accessory of the Year

Winesave - user-friendly canister of 100%  
 Argon that keeps wine perfectly for months  
[www.winesave.com](http://www.winesave.com)

### Wine Bar of the Year

Gerald's Bar - Melbourne  
[www.twopaddocks.com](http://www.twopaddocks.com)

### Wine List of the Year

Frangipani - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
[www.frangipani.com.my](http://www.frangipani.com.my)

### Sommelier of the Year - Asia

Zachary Tay Jun Yang - Fifty Three,  
 Singapore  
[www.fiftythree.com.sg](http://www.fiftythree.com.sg)

### Asia region - Wine Merchant of the Year

Artisan Cellars - Singapore  
[www.artisan-cellars.com](http://www.artisan-cellars.com)

### Asia region - Specialist Importer of the Year

Magma - German Specialist  
[www.magmatc.com](http://www.magmatc.com)

### Asia region - Most Dynamic Wine Marketer of the Year

Michael Thurner - Austrian Fine Brands

### Best - Most Dynamic Wine Educator in Asia Region

Lim Hwee Peng - WineCraft Marketing

### Favourite Wine Website of the Year

Max Allen - Red White and Green -  
 Biodynamic wines  
[www.redwhiteandgreen.com.au](http://www.redwhiteandgreen.com.au)

[www.austriasfinebrands.com](http://www.austriasfinebrands.com)

[www.winecraftmktg.com](http://www.winecraftmktg.com)

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**Most Trusted Authority  
on Wine of the Year**

Allen Meadows - Burghound  
[www.burghound.com](http://www.burghound.com)

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**Best Wine Storage in Asia**

Crown Cellars - Hong Kong  
[www.crownwinecellars.com](http://www.crownwinecellars.com)

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**Best Service for Wine**

**Air-Freight in Asia**

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**Region**

DHL  
[www.dhl.com](http://www.dhl.com)

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