



BUYING GUIDE BEST OF YEAR / 2011

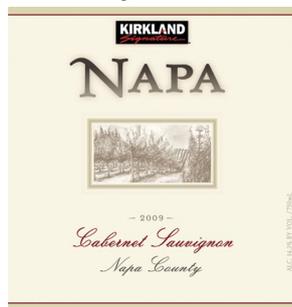
The cities of Oporto and Vila Nova de Gaia remain bastions of the port trade.

BUYING GUIDE

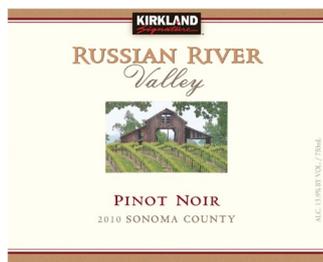
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86 Kirkland Signature 2009 Napa Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa County). All is proper and well done in this Cabernet, from the dryness and smooth tannins to the flavors of blackberries, currants and cedar. It's a little thin, but the price is pretty good. —S.H.
abv: 14.3% **Price:** \$13



85 Kirkland Signature 2010 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Soft and sweet in raspberries, cherries and anise liqueur, like a coffeehouse drink, sprinkled with brown sugar and cinnamon. —S.H.
abv: 13.9% **Price:** \$13

 **SPIRITS**



93 Paul Masson VSOP Grande Amber Brandy (USA; Constellation Brands, Canandaigua, NY). It's hard to say which is more surprising, the fact that this blend of American brandy and French Cognac yields such a Cognac taste-alike, or the remarkably gentle pricing. It has a copper penny color, boozy hazelnut fragrance and a dry flavor with a powerful finish of allspice, espresso and cigar tobacco. Good value.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$14



92 Laird's Applejack (USA; Laird & Company, Scobeyville, NJ). A Jack Rose cocktail wouldn't be the same without this historic "blended brandy" spirit, blended from 35% apple brandy and 65% neutral spirits. Smooth, warm and bright, with a rich, juicy apple flavor and caramel finish. Mouth-coating and very soft in texture.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$18



89 Paul Masson VS Grande Amber Brandy (USA; Constellation Brands, Canandaigua, NY) This amber spirit is sweet, silky and sippable. It emits a warm vanilla scent and honeyed flavor with hazelnut notes and a ginger zing. Aged three years.
abv: 40% **Price:** \$12

 **BEER**



90 Leinenkugel's Big Eddy Russian Imperial Stout (Russian Imperial Stout; Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company, WI). Despite the elevated alcohol content of this brew, it actually drinks remarkably well, exhibiting great balance between the boozy warmth and sweet roasty malt core. It pours a dark brown color with a frothy tan head that lingers. Dried date, cherry and raisin aromas mingle with more complex accents of toffee, molasses and a soft mocha character. With present but approachable hop bitterness, this is a nice alternative to

some of the RIS palate bombs out there.
abv: 9.5% **Price:** \$11/12 oz 4 pack

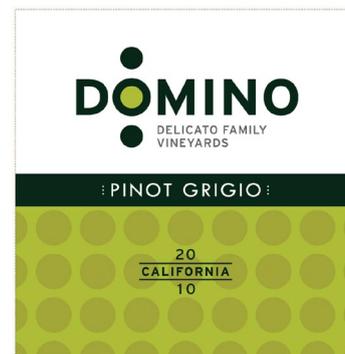
 **BEST BUYS**



90 Cameron Hughes 2009 Lot 271 Pinot Noir (Russian River Valley). Lots of sweet raspberry and cherry fruit in this easy-to-drink Pinot Noir. It's nice and silky, with a spicy finish. Nice with grilled tuna, lamb or beef, and a good value for the price. **Best Buy.** —S.H.
abv: 14.4% **Price:** \$14



90 Moon Eyes 2006 Lapis Luna Cabernet Sauvignon (Lodi). They packed a lot of flavor into this wine, then let it age for five years before releasing. It offers plenty of pleasure, at a great everyday price. Soft and round, its flavors are of blackberries, cherries, currants and cedar. Just delicious. **Best Buy.** —S.H.
abv: 14.1% **Price:** \$14



89 Domino 2010 Pinot Grigio (California). What a pretty Pinot Grigio, at a really great everyday price. Provides a crisp bite of acidity, brightening flavors of oranges, lemons, limes, green apples and honey. Super-drinkable with everything from little appetizers to broiled chicken and Asian food. From Delicato. **Best Buy.** —S.H.
abv: 13% **Price:** \$7