



Buying Guide



The beauty of cherry blossoms ushers in spring alongside Burgenland's vineyards.

Special Advance Release

Wines reviewed for the March 2010 issue,
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FOR ADDITIONAL RATINGS AND REVIEWS
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WINE ENTHUSIAST®

BEER

91 BarbaRoja Barrel-Aged Red Ale (Barrel-Aged Amber Ale; Barbaroja, Argentina); 9.0% abv, \$12/750 ml. With 480 cases produced and made using Patagonian hops and smoked malt, not to mention aged in barrels for two months prior to bottling, this is a different beast altogether. A fairly intense and sweet bouquet offers aromas of raisins, dried dates and apricots, hints of sour cherries and an oak-infused nutty malt sweetness. Medium-weight and solidly carbonated in the mouth, there are full, smoky flavors of roasty toasted malts and suggestions of wood supported by notes of chocolate and burnt espresso leading through to the finish. Sweet and dry at the same time, you can barely tell the alcohol is as high as it is. With so much complexity and depth of flavors matched by solid carbonation, this promises to be a terrific food companion.

90 Full Sail Amber (American Amber/Red Ale; Full Sail Brewing Co, OR); 5.5% abv, \$8/6 pack. Pours a beautiful rich amber color with a tan head. Aromas are soft with nice sweet, fruity esters, caramel malt and a touch of grassy citrus. The mouth is full and loaded with a good dose of Mt. Hood and Cascade hops. The balance between sweet malt and aggressive hop bitterness is superb, making this an intense, weighty and immensely enjoyable amber. The finish is clean and lingering with some peppery flecks of spice coming through on the back.

90 Napa Smith Brewery Amber Ale (American Amber/Red Ale; Napa Smith Brewery, CA); 5.75% abv, \$4/22 oz. Medium copper in color with a significant tan-colored head that leaves nice flecks of lacing after falling. The nose is medium-intense with some hop florals shining through among the toasty malt and fresh grass aromas. The mouth is smooth and creamy, with malty sweetness and hop bitterness dancing on the palate, neither achieving complete dominance. A grainy fleshiness lingers on the dry

finish, along with hints of shortbread cookie crumbs. Love the pairing suggestions on the bottle, which include barbecued meats, stews and dry-aged cheeses.

88 Napa Smith Brewery Lost Dog Red Ale (American Amber/Red Ale; Napa Smith Brewery, CA); 7.2% abv, \$5/22 oz. A lightly cloudy apricot color with an off-white head. The nose shows notes of sugar cane, vanilla pod and sweet hop oils. In the mouth it offers a medium body and significant carbonation with the flavor components all fighting for dominance through to the finish, moving from the caramel, malt-driven sweetness to more hop citrus character and then back again to hints of vanilla on the finish only to be absorbed by hop tannins on the end. An interesting beer that will be sure to raise discussion.

86 Roscoe's Hop House Amber Ale (American Amber/Red Ale; Roscoe's Hop House, NY); 5.5% abv, \$7/6 pack. Pours a nice toasted copper color with a soft white head. Aromas of sweet malt, subtle stone fruit and raw dough, and the palate is rather sweet but very lively and effervescent, loaded with of caramel, green apple and honey along with solid hop citrus on the finish. A decent session beer. **Best Buy.**

85 R.J. King Wingwalker Amber Ale (American Amber/Red Ale; R.J. King Wingwalker Brewing Company, NY); 5.7% abv, \$8/6 pack. Light hop aromatics on the nose are backed by hints of malt and lager skunk. The mouth is also low intensity with moderate carbonation, offering soft hints of malt sweetness, dried green apple and hay. The finish is sweet but clean; a very drinkable beer.

85 Trouble Brewing Amber Ale (American Amber/Red Ale; Trouble Brewing Co., NY); 4.7% abv; \$6/6 pack. Medium copper color with a significant white head leaving decent lacing. The bouquet is light with suggestions of lightly toasted malt and brown sugar. Mouth is clean and crisp with soft bread and cereal filling out the mouth with touches of hop bitterness on the finish. Again, very drinkable.

84 Cable Car Small Batch Amber Ale (American Amber/Red Ale; Cable Car Brewing Co, NY); 4.5% abv, \$7/6 pack. The packaging is cute, with what looks like authentic railroad ticket accents. The color is golden apricot, with a nice white head and some lacing. On the nose are moderate metallic notes with faint hints of grain while the mouth is light and simple with some light yeast flavors followed by a sweet malt finish. A good budget pick.

83 Tap Room No. 21 Brewing Co Moe's Backroom Amber Ale (American Amber/Red Ale; Tap Room Brewing Co., NY); 4.8% abv, \$7/6 pack. Pours a clear light amber color with little head. Aromas are almost nonexistent, with faint malt and stone fruit notes. Light carbonation and very crisp with minor sweet, fruity flavors. Simple and easy to drink. **M**

THE WINE ENTHUSIAST BEER BUYING GUIDE

The Beer Buying Guide is a summary of recent detailed evaluations and product ratings of a single reviewer, Assistant Tasting Director Lauren Buzzeo. Every tasting note is accompanied by a rating. Also noted are the full name of the product, beer style, alcoholic strength expressed as percent alcohol by volume, producer's name, and the suggested/average U.S. retail price. If price cannot be confirmed, an \$NA (not available) will be printed. Prices are for the bottle size or packaging indicated.

ABOUT THE SCORES

The numerical ratings correspond to quality in the following manner:

Classic (96–100) Highest Recommendation
Superb (90–95) Highly Recommended
Very Good (85–89) Recommended
Average (80–84)

SUBMITTING SPIRITS & BEERS FOR REVIEW

Beers should be submitted to Wine Enthusiast's headquarters at 333 North Bedford Road, Mt. Kisco, NY 10549. Inquiries and submissions should be addressed to Lauren Buzzeo at lbuzzeo@wineenthusiast.net. **There is no charge for submitting beers,** and *Wine Enthusiast* will make every effort to sample all beers submitted for review. There is, however, no guarantee that all submissions will be tasted, or that reviews will appear in the magazine. It is recommended that two bottles of each submission be sent; please include all pertinent information including suggested retail price, producer name and contact information.

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