



HOLIDAY REDS & festive fizz

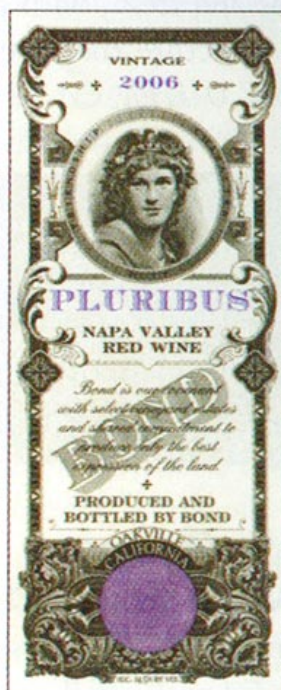
At *Wine & Spirits*, our blind panels tasted 1,845 wines for this issue's tastings report. Those panels included some of the industry's best talent—Belinda Chang of *The Modern*, Charles Curtis, MW, of Christie's and Vincent Seufert of *5 Ninth* were just a few of the panel members who joined us in New York. Our San Francisco panels included Chris Deegan of *Nopa* and Michael Engelmann of *Gary Danko*.

From those tastings, our critics chose the wines you'll find in the following pages. We've included all the exceptional bottlings (earning 90 points or more), as well as those that offer the best bang for the buck (Best Buys).

You'll find a detailed description of our tasting process on page 65. For notes on all recommended wines, go to wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

54	Year's Best Champagne tasted: 187 top wines: 68 best buys: 6
62	Cabernet tasted: 331 top wines: 48 best buys: 17
72	Bordeaux 2006 tasted: 135 top wines: 26 best buys: 15
75	Porto tasted: 30 top wines: 16 best buys: 2
77	Rioja 2001 & 2004 tasted: 50 top wines: 22 best buys: 8
80	Piedmont Reds tasted: 79 top wines: 34 best buys: 4
83	German Riesling tasted: 169 top wines: 67 best buys: 15
88	New Releases American tasted: 349 top wines: 21 best buys: 11
91	Imported tasted: 515 top wines: 55 best buys: 26
	Total tasted: 1845 top wines: 357 best buys: 104

Cabernet-based Blends



94 | Bond

\$275

2006 Napa Valley Pluribus Bill Harlan started the Bond project “to establish a stable of grand crus,” as he describes it. Paul Roberts, formerly of *The French Laundry*, is general manager, the counterpart of Don Weaver, who has worked with Harlan for the past 25 years. We tasted five single-vineyard wines from Bond for this issue, all made the same way, each expressing a different site in the Napa Valley. Pluribus grows at the Oberndorf Vineyard, 900 feet up Spring Mountain, the vines planted in 2000 on fractured volcanic soil. It’s a powerful, black and tannic wine in 2006 (Roberts describes it as the Château Montrose of Bond’s stable). With air, the masculine arrogance of the tannin slowly relents, turning from savory black olive toward cassis and currant. What’s remarkable about the wine is its penetrating depth, a deep well of flavor in the glass. Its richness is another compelling factor: It comes directly from the structure, so rather than feeling heavy, the wine feels complete and fresh. *Bond, Oakville, CA*

93 | Bond

\$275

2006 Napa Valley Vecina From a hillside block at Vine Hill, a vineyard south of the Harlan Estate in the western reaches of Oakville, this grows on what GM Paul Roberts describes as “hot clay—the soil smells like a kiln on a hot day.” The ’06 is a potent, meaty cabernet, immediately rich in the middle, needing plenty of air to extend out into a long finish. It’s tight and clearly defined, the wine’s structure and shape doesn’t feel manipulated. There’s an underlying energy that should continue to drive it as the tannins mature. *Bond, Oakville, CA*

92 | Bond

\$275

2006 Napa Valley St. Eden A venture capitalist, Dick Kramlich, planted this north-facing vineyard on site off the Oakville Crossroad, what Paul Roberts describes as a piece of the Vaca Range that sloughed off, forming a knoll (a sector of the Napa Valley that was marked on early maps as Eden). The most immediately luxurious of Bond’s 2006 wines, it’s not excessively extracted. The first impression is bright, high-acid fruit layered over savory, chocolatey tannins. With air, scents of violets, lavender, rosemary and other savory herbs develop in the finish. And though there is Napa Valley money written all over this wine, it’s not pushed too far. What lasts, in the end, is a sense of balance. *Bond, Oakville, CA*

91 | Bond

\$275

2006 Napa Valley Melbury From the Slosson Vineyard on the east side of Lake Hennessy, these vines are cooled by the lake and grow in dense clay. They produced a big, juicy red in 2006, a soft, luscious wine that feels dense and full. This comes across as warmer and riper than Bond’s other single-vineyard releases, a more immediate pleasure for drinking over the next several years. *Bond, Oakville, CA*