

SAVEUR

Savor a World of Authentic Cuisine

RECIPES, TIPS,
AND TECHNIQUES
FOR THE BIG MEAL

Festive
Fall
Desserts

PAGE 85

37 GREAT
AMERICAN
WINES

PAGE 29

32

Holiday Dishes

*Seasonal favorites old and new, from
herb-roasted turkey to luscious pumpkin cheesecake*

Pumpkin
Cheesecake
See page 68 for the
recipe

151
SAVEUR.COM

NOVEMBER 2012 US \$5.00



CELLAR



37 Great American Wines

Nowadays, our favorite bottles don't only come from the West Coast

BY BETSY ANDREWS

American wine is coming of age, far beyond Napa Valley. A few decades ago most vineyards outside California, Washington, and Oregon grew hardy but undistinguished native grapes and hybrids, but today *Vitis vinifera*, the European species that is the standard for serious winemaking, has taken hold across the country. Wine is made in all fifty states, but a few regions are revealing themselves to be extraordinarily well suited to specific *vinifera* varieties. In New York's Finger Lakes, at Hermann J. Wiemer Vineyard, the vine nursery—a barn full of infant plants blanketed in peat moss—feels like an incubator for the future of American wine. “In early March, vines go to North Carolina and Texas, and we release some to coastal Virginia,” says Wiemer winemaker and viticulturalist Fred Merwarth. “Virginia is planting like crazy, Pennsylvania is planting like crazy. Ohio, Michigan, Missouri...” Merwarth’s nursery clients number upwards of 1,500; less than two percent of them are located on the West Coast. Traveling to the wineries in up-and-coming regions is a fascinating way to experience the wide-ranging beauty of the American landscape. Even without leaving home, you can taste the different terrains, the particulars of soil and weather, in the wines themselves. On the following pages are some of our favorite bottles (in current vintages) from the best emerging regions—every one an apt choice for the Thanksgiving table and a tribute to America the beautiful.

A few outstanding bottles featured on the following pages, from left: Hermann J. Wiemer Dry Reserve Riesling 2010 (see page 36), Barbourville Octagon 2008 (page 30), Anthony Nappa Anomaly 2011 (page 34), and Sandstone Cellars VII 2009 (page 32).

TODD COLEMAN (4)

Virginia Mountains

The story of *vinifera* in Virginia begins—and, for a couple of centuries, ends—with Thomas Jefferson. A Francophilic wine buff, the third president planted imported vines that failed, blighted by the parasite phylloxera. Contemporary winemakers have been more successful, while retaining Jefferson's Continental bent. Indeed, it's surprising how many Europeans you meet at wineries in the Piedmont and other mountainous Virginia areas—until you check the weather report. “The difference between a good and a great year in Bordeaux is when and how much rain comes,” says Jay Youmans, head judge of the Virginia Governor's Cup wine competition. “Bringing over Europeans with experience with those conditions makes a lot of sense.” Where 30 years ago, red wines here had a vegetal quality, today trellising and other methods that help grapes ripen and inhibit mildew have resulted, in particular, in polished, food-friendly Bordeaux-style blends.



1 RdV Lost Mountain 2009 (\$88) The celebrated new kid on the block, this Northern Virginia winery has worked with a consultant from L'Université de Bordeaux to create stunning blends in the manner of that French region. This intense cabernet sauvignon-driven red smacks of liquorice and ruby port; it would be dynamite with a steak au poivre.

2 Trump Monticello Rosé 2011 (\$14) A blend of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, and merlot goes into this crisp, minerally rosé. An aroma of fallen leaves and underbrush along with a Bing-cherry, slightly floral flavor makes it a lovely bottle for Thanksgiving; it can pair successfully with the turkey and fixings as

well as the pumpkin pie that follows.

3 Potomac Point Richland Reserve Heritage 2009 (\$29) The winemaker is Italian, but the blend (nearly half merlot, with cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, and petit verdot) is all Bordeaux in this soulful red from the banks of the Potomac. Its bacony, meaty character makes it a great wine for barbecued meats.

4 Barboursville Malvaxia Passito 2007 (\$32) Modern Virginia winemaking started here in 1976 when an Italian wine scion, Gianni Zonin, established a vineyard (and, later, an inn) on an estate graced with the picturesque ruins of a Jefferson-designed stately home. This lush des-

sert wine is made with a white Mediterranean variety that is air-dried for four months to concentrate its richness. It tastes deliciously of ripe apricots.

5 Bluestone Cabernet Sauvignon 2010 (\$30) From the Shenandoah Valley on Virginia's western border comes this beautiful cabernet, whose character is in perfect poise between bright acidity and dark, oaky tannins; between velvety, stewed-fruit flavors and smoky spice. It would be wonderful with a slow-cooked winter stew, especially if you save a few sips to enjoy with a chocolate dessert.

6 Barboursville Octagon 2008 (\$50) Perhaps Virginia's most prominent bottle,



Barboursville's flagship wine deserves the attention it gets. A big but balanced Bordeaux blend in which the cabernet sauvignon really stands out, it's full of the energetic black fruit, chocolate, and coffee notes that pair so well with beef.

7 White Hall Gewürztraminer 2011 (\$20) Though it might surprise wine drinkers who think of gewürztraminer as a cold-climate grape, the aromatic white variety does well in temperate Virginia. This Charlottesville-area winery blends in petit manseng to lift the wine's acidity. It's less flinty than Alsatian-style gewürztraminers, but more versatile: Its subtle, lychee-flower sweetness and hints of sage and spice make it a match for many

dishes on the Thanksgiving table.

8 King Family Meritage 2010 (\$28) Having worked throughout his native France, winemaker Matthieu Finot makes Meritage, one of Virginia's signature Bordeaux-style blends, with an experienced hand. It shows in the bright, red berry flavors, toasty vanilla tannins, and delightful barnyard funk of this lithe red.

9 Ankida Ridge Pinot Noir 2010 (\$35) It's a tough grape to grow under wet conditions, but this vineyard pulls it off, creating a light-bodied pinot noir that strikes a balance between jammy California fruit and earthy Burgundian flavor. It's a great wine for pork.