



2006 Qupe Roussanne Santa Maria Valley in San Francisco, Calif., on November 17, 2009.

It's worth acknowledging that some of the most talented West Coast white winemaking has moved beyond Chardonnay and **Sauvignon Blanc**. Rhone-style whites like Roussanne are being grown and crafted with tremendous care, and even Viognier - long a problem child - is being made with depth and restraint. Aromatic Riesling and Gewurztraminer are showing the splendors of great vintages in 2007 and 2008. Serious and unorthodox blends are making their mark. Times have rarely been better for the adventurous white wine lover.

2008 Breggo Anderson Valley Gewurztraminer

(\$25) This increasingly high-profile Boonville property has dialed in a finessed Gewurz in a fine, lemony style with high-acid energy, mouthwatering tangerine fruit and a subtle sweetness.

2007 Calera Mt. Harlan Viognier

(\$28) Viognier may have been **Josh Jensen**'s white whale at times, but Calera's latest example is stellar. At just 13.8 percent alcohol, it offers the best of Viognier's aromatic charms, with intriguing white pepper and hyacinth, precise nectarine, Meyer lemon and a refreshing snap.

2006 Qupé Bien Nacido Hillside Estate Santa Maria Valley Roussanne

(\$40) Bob Lindquist's long-standing devotion to white Rhone varietals again paid off. This latest got the sort of barrel aging and lees usage that Chardonnay might see, giving it gravitas and a vibrant core of lemon oil, marjoram, golden apple and quince. Cellar time will make it even better.

2008 Efeste Evergreen Vineyard Columbia Valley Riesling

(\$16) Winemaker **Brennon Leighton** worked on Ste. Michelle's Eroica Riesling before decamping for this standout Woodinville label. This focused Riesling hails from near the Gorge amphitheater in central Washington. Lurking somewhere shy of fully dry and short of 12 percent alcohol, it bursts with racy energy and brilliant citrus highlights.

2008 Etude Carneros Pinot Noir Rosé

(\$20) Etude winemaker Jon Priest has again nailed a noteworthy pink wine, aged about four months in used barrels. Its creamy stone fruit and impressive strawberry depth add up to a serious, stylish effort.

2008 King Estate Signature Collection Oregon Pinot Gris

(\$17) A familiar Oregon name turns in a standout Gris from a standout vintage. Filigreed, bright green apple and pear flavors, with fenugreek and white-flower accents.

2008 Matthiasson Napa Valley White Wine

(\$33) Viticulturist Steve Matthiasson is setting a new standard for California white blends based on a template from Italy's Friuli region. This mix of Sauvignon Blanc, Ribolla Gialla, Semillon and Tocai Friulano is oak-driven (50 percent new) and too young right now, but it's as eye-opening as his gorgeous 2007. A high wire of texture and flavor, with warm almond and lemon oil character backed by ripe peach, paraffin and melon, plus clover-like high notes and fine mineral edge.

2008 McManis California Viognier

(\$11) The McManis family and their winemakers deserve credit for something so fresh and affordable, made mostly from their own vineyards in Manteca. Substantial peach nectar and wildflower, with a citrus kick, round out a bright, no-fat Viognier.

2007 Novelty Hill Stillwater Creek Vineyard Columbia Valley Roussanne

(\$22) Mike Januik, one of Washington's longtime talents, produced this steely example from the sun-basked Frenchman Hills area. Almost gulpable, and yet the Roussanne richness provides weight amid distinct peach skin and verbena accents.

2008 O'Shea Scarborough Visionnaire Klipsun Vineyard Red Mountain Semillon-Sauvignon Blanc

(\$20) **Darryn O'Shea** and **Travis Scarborough** have bet big on Semillon from an outstanding Washington site. Starts with fig and an oiled stone scent, filled out with pineapple, guava and green olive. It's lavish on the palate, an outstanding return to form for Semillon.

2008 Pine Ridge California Chenin Blanc-Viognier

(\$13.50) This latest release of Pine Ridge's popular blend was a standout. Fresh and clean, with subtle sweetness adding flesh to peach and Anjou pear flavors. The Chenin's piney accents make it pop.

2008 Poet's Leap Columbia Valley Riesling

(\$20) This joint project between Germany's **Armin Diel** and industry veteran **Allen Shoup** wraps talc, creamy peach and apple skin around a firm acid core, with a subtle sweetness appearing at the end and all the bright bite that Washington can offer.

2007 Saxon Brown Casa Santinamaria Vineyards Sonoma Valley Semillon

(\$30) **Jeff Gaffner**'s powerful dense wine from old head-trained vines. The flinty nose is rounded with nori, apple and fresh fig, and lemon-peel flavors offset deeper nectar. Bottle age will help shed its baby fat.

2007 Tablas Creek Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc Paso Robles

(\$40) It's hard to think of anyone taking Rhone-style whites more seriously than Tablas. Waxy and luscious, layered with buoyant peach, hay, tangerine peel and freesia. Nervy mineral intensity cuts through it all. Predominantly Roussanne, with Grenache Blanc and Picpoul.

2008 Tercero Camp 4 Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley Grenache Blanc

(\$18) **Larry Schaffer**'s knack with Rhone-style whites is underscored by this expression from Camp 4, part of the ranch at **Fess Parker** (where Schaffer also works). Its precise mineral edge underlines fresh-cut peach and apricot flavors, and its grip on the palate makes it food-friendly.

2007 Treana Central Coast White Blend

(\$25) The Hope family (**Liberty School**) are among Paso Robles' pioneers. But this blend hails from farther north, in the Santa Lucia Highlands. P
Ripe peach and honeysuckle richness meet wi

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