

# FOOD & WINE

## Buying Guide: Six Terrific French-Made American Wines

French expertise shines on American soil. Here are six great American wines by French winemakers.

By Richard Nalley

Plus: [How to Make Great American Wine: A Few Lessons From the French](#)

### Christophe Baron

#### 2005 Cayuse Cailloux Vineyard Syrah (\$65)

Made in a stony vineyard full of rocks that remind Baron of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, this is a tour de force of concentrated, complex flavors—cola, tobacco, cherries, pepper and smoke—integrated into a seamless, polished wine that seems delicate despite its hefty 14-plus-percent alcohol.

### Nicolas Morlet

#### 2006 Peter Michael Winery La Carrière Chardonnay (\$80)

Morlet credits this single-vineyard Chardonnay, formerly made by his brother Luc, for getting him hooked on California wine. Nicolas's own version has the bright minerality he loved in his brother's, with notes of peach, honey and vanilla.

### Luc Morlet

#### 2006 Morlet Family Vineyards En Famille Pinot Noir (\$85)

This is a special wine for Morlet, as some of the fruit was stomped by his children. It's a perfumed Pinot with a classically complex and Burgundian sweet-red-cherry fragrance. It's vibrant, concentrated and full-bodied.

### Stephan Asseo

#### 2006 L'Aventure Estate Cuvée (\$85)

From Asseo's home property in Paso Robles, California, comes this Syrah-Cabernet, a blend that joins Bordeaux and the Rhône. A dense, superrich (nearly 16 percent alcohol) wine with spicy aromas of vanilla, blueberry and raspberry candy, it's all brash New World in its flash and exuberance.

### Philippe Melka

#### 2004 Métisse Napa Valley (\$90)

Melka makes famous wines for clients (Hundred Acre and Vineyard 29 are just two from his extensive portfolio), but this 500-case bottling is all his. A Cabernet Sauvignon-based blend with portions of Merlot and Petit Verdot, it is as supple and as silky as a top-notch Pomerol.

### Pierre Seillan

**2005 Vérité Le Désir (\$200)**

Seillan's version of a Bordeaux blend—Cabernet Franc and Merlot—is what he calls a “micro cru,” made from select vines in three different Sonoma vineyards. Seillan has created a profound wine with deeply woven notes of blackberry liqueur, smoke and cassis.

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