GREATEST WINE PRODUCERS

1. Szepesy (Hungary)
2. Királyudvar (Hungary)
3. Domaine de Disznókó (Hungary)
4. Edi Simčič (Slovenia)
5. Marjan Simčič (Slovenia)
6. Malatinszky Kúria (Hungary)
7. Atila Gere (Hungary)
8. Weninger (Hungary)
9. Ivan Enjići (Croatia)
10. Château Belá (Slovakia)

FASTEST-IMPROVING PRODUCERS

1. Recaș Winery (Romania)
2. Carl Reh Winery (Romania)
3. Stork Nest Estates (Bulgaria)
4. Domaine Szeremley (Hungary)
5. Georgian Wines and Spirits Company (Georgia)
6. SERVE (Romania)
7. Cricova-Acorex (Moldova)
8. Belvedere Group (Domaine Menada, Domaine Sakar, Oriaiovita, Bulgaria)
9. AuriVn (Firebird, Moldova)
10. Murfatlar (Romania) (dry whites)

NEW UP-AND-COMING PRODUCERS

1. Dobogó (Tokaj, Hungary)
2. Maxxima (Bulgaria)
3. Sutor (Hungary)
4. Takler (Hungary)
5. Kupljen (Hungary)
6. Vylan (Hungary)
7. Sarta Sarah (Bulgaria)
8. Damiantza (Bulgaria)
9. Liszt Pincezet (Hungary)
10. Arvay (Hungary)

BEST BARGAINS

1. La Cetate Merlot 2003 Carl Reh Winery, Romania (ROL 190,000)
2. Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva 2002 Recaș Winery, Romania (ROL 300,000)
3. Crystal Dry 2000 Chateau Vincent, Hungary (HUF 2,100)
4. Pinot Noir 2003 Recaș Winery, Romania (ROL 100,000)
5. Szamaroding 2002 Zemplen Ridge, Hungary (HUF 4,900)
6. Tokaji Fumint 2003 Royal Tokaji Wine Company, Hungary (HUF 1,500)
7. Teodor Rdece Réserve 2000 Marjan Simčič, Slovenia (SIT 4,200)

MOST EXCITING OR UNUSUAL FINDS

1. Tokaji Furmint Szent Tamás 2003 Szepesy, Hungary (HUF 6,700) Furmint is best known for sweet wines. Tokaji's leading producer, István Szepesy, has produced his first dry wine under his own name. A superb example of Furmint's potential as a high-quality wine and its ability to reflect terroir. Arguably the finest dry Tokaji so far.
2. Graševina Kasna Berba 2002 Ivan Enjići, Croatia (HRK 76) Fantastic depth and complexity from a grape that is often just a workhorse across Eastern Europe. Enjići is passionate about the potential for this grape from what he believes is its true homeland in continental Croatia.
3. La Cetate Shiraz 2003 Carl Reh Winery, Romania (ROL 1,500,000 per 1.5-litre bottle, limited release) Shiraz is not as yet an authorized grape for Romania, but this ripe, harmonious wine from young vines demonstrates that it has real potential here on outcrops of Terra Rossa down in the far southwest.
4. Kékfrankos Selection 2000 Takler, Hungary (HUF 3,200) A revelation for the often-thin Kékfrankos, showing that careful selection, low yields, and good winemaking can make it a rich, velvety, blackberry-and-spice wine.
5. Teodor Rdece Réserve 2000 Marjan Simčič, Slovenia (SIT 4,200)

BEST-VALUE PRODUCERS

1. Recaș Winery (Romania)
2. Carl Reh Winery (Romania)
3. Château Vincent (Hungary)
4. Hilltop Nespemény Winery (Hungary)
5. Ats Cuvee 2003 Royal Tokaji Wine Company, Hungary (HUF 7,200)
6. Kékoportó 2003 Tiffán Éde és Zsolt, Hungary (HUF 1,400)
7. Pinot Grigio River Route 2004 Carl Reh Winery, Romania (ROL 113,000)
8. ZZ (Zenit/Zefir) 2003 Hunagriov, Hungary (HUF 1,000)
9. Rebula 2002 Sutor, Slovenia (SIT 3,800) Rebula is showing great potential in Slovenia for distinctive, high-quality wines. A lovely example from an upcoming producer, with lots of depth and complexity.
10. Soproni Frettner 2001 Weninger, Hungary (HUF 2,600) A harmonious blend of Kékfrankos, Merlot, and Shiraz that demonstrates a new level of winemaking in Sopron by Austrian Franz Weninger. The moderating effect of the lake nearby makes it possible to ripen red varieties like Shiraz in spite of its northerly location.

Based on Merlot with a touch of Cabernet. It is mainly grown in vineyards over the Italian border into Collio, but winemaking in Slovenia means value for money. Lovely complexity and elegance.