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WBM 30

Review of the Industry • Hot Small Brands



Hot Small Brands of 2011

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Hot Small Brands: 2003-2010

Hot Small Brands of 2010

1. **Cameron Hughes** (Napa Valley, California)
2. **Crew Wine Company** (Dunnigan Hills, California)
3. **Dusted Valley** (Walla Walla, Washington)
4. **Twisted Oak** (Calaveras County, California)
5. **Black Ankle Vineyards** (Maryland)
6. **Salinia Wine Company** (Sonoma Coast, California)
7. **Bella Vineyards and Wine Caves** (Dry Creek Valley, California)
8. **Persimmon Creek Vineyards** (Georgia)
9. **Willakenzie Estate** (Willamette Valley, Washington)
10. **Gloria Ferrer Caves & Vineyards** (Sonoma, California)

Hot Small Brands of 2009

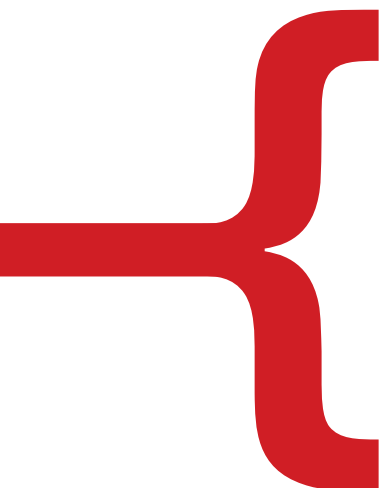
1. **Pacific Rim** (Washington)
2. **Wines Of Substance** (Washington)
3. **Cambiata** (Monterey County, California)
4. **Abacela** (Southern Oregon)
5. **Cinder** (Idaho)
6. **Swanson Vineyards** (Oakville, California)
7. **L'aventure** (Paso Robles, California)
8. **Marynissen Estates** (Ontario, Canada)
9. **Bartholomew Park Winery** (Sonoma Valley, California)
10. **Raffaldini Vineyards And Winery** (North Carolina)

Hot Small Brands of 2008

1. **Graziano** (Mendocino, California)
2. **Four Vines Peasant** (Paso Robles, California)
3. **Becker Vineyards** (Texas Hill Country, Texas)
4. **Red Tail Ridge** (Seneca Lake, New York)
5. **Sojourn Cellars** (Sonoma, California)
6. **Domaine Drouhin** (Dundee Hills, Oregon)
7. **Jeff Runquist Wines** (Clarksburg, California)
8. **Marilyn Remark Winery** (Arroyo Seco, California)
9. **Trio Vintners** (Columbia Valley, Washington)
10. **Purple Wine Company** (Napa Valley, California)

Hot Small Brands of 2007

1. **Willamette Valley Vineyards** (Turner, Oregon)
2. **Ceja Vineyards** (Carneros, California)
3. **Tangent** (San Luis Obispo, California)
4. **Clos Du Val** (Napa, California)
5. **Kutch Wines** (Russian River, California)
6. **Coro Mendocino** (Mendocino County, California)
7. **J.R. Storey** (Sausalito, California)
8. **L'ecole N° 41** (Lowden, Washington)
9. **King Family Vineyards** (Crozet, Virginia)
10. **Gruet Winery** (Albuquerque, New Mexico)



IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES, we highlight our ninth annual Hot Small Brands list, which includes some of today's most exciting brands from small- and medium-sized producers—as well as a couple of larger ones that merit recognition.

When *WBM* published the first annual list of Hot Small Brands in 2003, we sought to identify and recognize small- or medium-sized wineries—the up-and-comers that had experienced the most growth in a short period of time. We measured growth in case sales, which was typically the result of smart marketing. Many of our early picks went on to new heights. Some were acquired by larger wine companies while nearly all continued to grow.

The list and the way we select these wines have evolved as well.

We gravitate toward wineries and brands that represent market trends or innovation, that take a leadership position in their regions, or that make unusual varietals or unexpected wines. There are some larger wineries on the list now as well.

These are wines that winemakers will want to check out. This list also represents a collection of wines *Wine Business Monthly* editors would serve at a party. We do, in fact, serve them during a gathering we host during the annual Unified Wine & Grape Symposium.

1. **Wine by Joe**
(Dundee, Oregon)
2. **Cecchetti Wine Company**
(Sonoma, California)
3. **JC Cellars**
(Oakland, California)
4. **Truett Hurst**
(Dry Creek Valley, California)
5. **Barnard Griffin**
(Richland, Washington)
6. **Bennett Valley Cellars**
(Sonoma County, California)
7. **Talbott Vineyards**
(Monterey County, California)
8. **Veritas Vineyard & Winery**
(Afton, Virginia)
9. **Barrister Winery**
(Spokane, Washington)
10. **Lone Madrone**
(Paso Robles, California)

Hot Small Brands of 2006

1. **A to Z Wineworks** (Dundee, Oregon)
2. **House Wine** (Walla Walla, Washington)
3. **Liberty School** (Paso Robles, California)
4. **Shannon Ridge** (Lake County, California)
5. **Twenty Bench** (Napa, California)
6. **Cycles Gladiator** (Napa, California)
7. **Bedell Cellars** (Cutchogue, New York–Long Island)
8. **Artesa Vineyards & Winery** (Napa, California)
9. **Black Star Farms** (Suttons Bay, Michigan)
10. **Buena Vista Carneros** (Sonoma, California)

Hot Small Brands of 2005

1. **Parducci Wine Cellars** (Ukiah, California)
2. **Solorosa** (St. Helena, California)
3. **Cheapskate** (Napa, California)
4. **Velvet Red** (St. James, Missouri)
5. **Incredible Red** (Paso Robles, California)
6. **Hard Core** (Santa Maria, California)
7. **Kunde Estate** (Kenwood, California)
8. **Hitching Post** (Buellton, California)
9. **Andretti Winery** (Napa, California)
10. **Esser Vineyards** (Napa Valley, California)

Hot Small Brands of 2004

1. **Red Truck** (Sonoma, California)
2. **Cartlidge & Browne** (American Canyon, California)
3. **Seven Deadly Zins** (Lodi, California)
4. **Oliver Winery** (Bloomington, Indiana)
5. **Angeline Wines** (Santa Rosa, California)
6. **Rock Rabbit** (Graton, California)
7. **Three Thieves Bandit** (Lodi, California)
8. **Sofia Mini** (Rutherford, California)
9. **Screw Kappa Napa** (Sonoma, California)
10. **Graceland Cellars** (Oakland, California)

Hot Small Brands of 2003

1. **Hrm Rex-Goliath** (Soledad, California)
2. **McManis Family Vineyards** (Ripon, California)
3. **Sebastiani Vineyards & Winery** (Sonoma, California)
4. **Castle Rock Winery** (Palos Verdes Estates, California)
5. **Black Oak** (Healdsburg, California)
6. **Jewel Collection** (Lodi, California)
7. **Tin Roof** (Geyserville, California)
8. **Three Thieves** (Lodi, California)
9. **Jest Red** (Healdsburg, California)
10. **J Garcia Wines** (Geyserville, California)



2. Cecchetti Wine Company

Fast Growth from an Industry Veteran

2009 LINE 39 SAUVIGNON BLANC, LAKE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Ask **Roy Cecchetti** how he has doubled his company's business every year since launching it in 2007, and he will tell you about his father's strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit, his education in finance and his wife, **Rachael**, who co-founded the company with him. He'll also talk about the business model he believes in and the opportunities of a winegrowing region his winemaker **Bob Broman** calls "The Last Frontier."

With the motto that "good wine does not always come with a hefty price tag," Sonoma, California-based **Cecchetti Wine Company** started shipping wine in 2007. The company sold more than 260,000 cases in 2011. As for 2012, "The sky's the limit. We're going to just keep growing," Cecchetti said.



Of the company's three affordably-priced brands—Line 39 (\$10 to \$12), Redtree (\$7 to \$9) and Backhouse (\$6 to \$8)—Line 39 is becoming one of the top brands in the company's portfolio. It sold 86,000 cases in 2011 and is projected to reach 120,000 cases in 2012.

Line 39 Sauvignon Blanc is a lemony, crisp, affordable wine that showcases the main white grape variety grown in Lake County, and it represents a marketing success story. Although it's not a "small brand," we break *WBM* rules when there's a good story behind it.

Roy Cecchetti was co-owner of one of the fastest growing California wineries, **Cecchetti Sebastiani Cellar**, due largely to the success of its flagship brand Pepperwood Grove, a 500,000-case brand when he sold his share of the company in 2003. After that, he took a break and later served as president of **Guenoc Estate Vineyards & Winery**, which turned him on to the beauty and quality of Lake County wines—in particular, Sauvignon Blanc.

Now he's doing it all over again and has brought veteran winemaker Bob Broman along for the ride. They've worked together since the mid-1990s at Cecchetti Sebastiani Cellar and at Guenoc. While they were there, Broman called Lake County the Last Frontier because "it's the last bastion of appellations in California that has not been established, the last one we knew of that was not out there in a big way," Cecchetti explained. So they went for the volume, using the "oceans" of Sauvignon Blanc grapes grown in Lake County.

Line 39 Sauvignon Blanc is made by Broman at **The Ranch Winery** in St. Helena. "Our wine-making style is totally stainless steel, and it's kind of a twist between New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc and California/Lake County Sauvignon Blanc. Broman does the minimal oxidation process, which New Zealand winemakers do, and he also does it the traditional way, which gives it a twist," Cecchetti said.

"Every release, four vintages from 2007 on, has had Best Buy awards from *Wine Spectator* or *Wine Enthusiast*, so it's been very well received."

Cecchetti still handles the finances of the company and knows exactly where the business is positioned "every minute of every day." The business formula he has always believed in and learned the hard way is this: "You're not going to make any money in this business unless everybody else along the line makes money—so you have to price products accordingly, and that's why I'm in the volume and value game.

"I care about dollars, not percentages; and I want to make sure when you give a product to a wholesaler and retailer that it is value-priced and it sells. If wholesalers and retailers profit well from our brands and, at the same time, they sell in volume, game's over: you've won."

Price: \$10

Case Production: 20,000 cases

Blend: 100% Sauvignon Blanc

pH: 3.46

TA: 0.66

Brix: 23.1

Residual Sugar: 0.3

Alcohol: 13.5%