

[sign up](#) • [member login](#)[home](#) [about](#) [the gang](#) [membership](#) [reports](#) [search](#) [scoring](#) [news](#) [events](#)

## October 2010 Editorial

### The Loyalty Card, by Anthony Rose

If loyalty in life is underrated, is loyalty in wine the opposite? The fabric of family, social and business life is held together by invisible bonds of love, respect and loyalty. There are many who would argue that loyalty in wine is a virtue too and perhaps, commercially speaking, it is. Loyalty cards reward us for sticking with the company whose products we buy again and again. Brand loyalty is the sine qua non of producers from the great Champagne houses to the mass market enterprises of Europe and the New World. Stick with us, they intone, giving us all sorts of reasons why we shouldn't stray from the straight and narrow.

Why stick with the Moëts, the Blossom Hills and the Hardy's Stamps? In the case of champagne, a luxury brand, we stick with it because it says something about us that's flattering. Like driving a Porsche or wearing Jimmy Choos, it endows us with a veneer of sophistication we can present to the outside world as our own. In the case of Blossom Hill and Hardy's Stamps, it's more because we're creatures of habit, and loyalty to the brand amounts to little more than fear and inertia, not so much devil may care as better the devil you know. And wine snobbery still does exist. According to a recent survey undertaken for the Chef and Brewer pub chain, not only do customers not know what wine to pick, they don't even know how to pronounce it. Indeed 5% say that they had vigorously swilled the wine around in the glass only to spill it over themselves.



What happened to adventure? To taste? To discovery? To excitement? To complexity? 'People fear ambiguity and complexity', said the American wine writer Alice Feiring in a recent tweet, quoting one Paul Greenberg, talking to her about, yes, salmon. Wine at its best is not a brand-defined safe haven of names we revert to again and again like commuters scurrying home on the same train day in, day out. Good wine is a never-ending source of pleasure, delight and discovery, with all the highs, and the occasional lows. Good wine is about the inspiring people who've made it, the incredible places where it's made, the individuality of character and the many and varied occasions when wine makes a difference. The imagination that good wine stimulates has the power to transform our lives. As a glass-a-third-full sort of person, I believe the complex world of wine is continuing to change for the better and we are the fortunate beneficiaries.

At Vinopolis on Saturday 6 November, The Wine Gang is presenting more than 600 wines, some good, some great, none boring, from around the world, displayed by 56 exhibitors. Additionally this year there will be four fascinating masterclasses. Our exhibitors, our presenters, our wines and we ourselves will come together with a common purpose. To join with you in showing the quality, diversity and character of the authentic world of wine. We hope you'll come along and experience it for yourselves. If it makes your Christmas shopping that much easier, then so much the better. And we hope that you'll come up to each of us in the Wine Gang, and clink glasses. We don't exist just in cyberspace any more than you do. So let's press the flesh, let's taste and let's be merry together.

---

This month's roving Bunch of Five categories is inspired by the fact that 11-17 October is national Chocolate Week: five chocolaty wines. Please note: we couldn't put our hand on our hearts this

month and come up with five wines that deserve the ignomy of being named as a 'shocker' this month, but we do name and shame three offenders.

---

## top scoring wines for October 2010



The fabulous Syrah from Craggy Range is our highest scoring wine this month with 95 points and an affordable £40 price, but for less than a tenner we commend a terrific Syrah from the Languedoc too:

### **Craggy Range Le Sol Syrah 2008**

Huge, meaty, dense blue black quality. This has immediate finesse, a smooth berry richness but a graphite minerality too and beautiful, cedary refinement. Fabulous. Find on [wine-searcher.com](http://wine-searcher.com), Score: 95/100, £40.00 at Farr Vintners.

### **PH Wine Cuvée Balthazar 2007**

The sort of thing that should have people queueing round the block to secure a bottle, this is a superb Languedoc Syrah, showing sweet red fruits, vanilla spice and a herbal, savoury finish. Find on [wine-searcher.com](http://wine-searcher.com), Score: 92/100, £9.99 at Waitrose.

[Back to main report](#)

---

[home](#) • [terms & conditions](#) • [privacy policy](#) • [links](#) • [contact us](#) • [login problems?](#)

---