Tucked among the hills of Santa Barbara County’s Santa Ynez Valley is a 600-acre laboratory where fascinating oenological experiments are carried out by Matt Dees. An alumnus of the University of Vermont and a veteran of the very different growing conditions of New Zealand and Napa Valley, Dees now presides over the complex winemaking at Jonata. In a region not generally lauded for wines made from Bordeaux varietals, Dees produces a surprisingly stylish Cabernet; and he also defies convention with his Sangiovese, which, though weighty, is balanced by lively acids. His masterpiece, however, is certainly his Syrah. The Jonata 2010 La Sangre de Jonata (www.jonata.com, $125) is at once velvety and inky—a gorgeously saturated, epically structured infusion of liqueur-like cassis, black plum, chocolate, anise, and dried sage. —B.A.