

## THE SAVEUR LIST

## 12 Olive Oils

Move over, Italy, Spain, and Greece; make way for Texas, Turkey, and Tunisia

**E**UROPEAN WINEMAKERS had to learn years ago how to compete with comparative newcomers from California, South America, Australia, and elsewhere in the "New World". Now it's the turn of European—and Californian—olive oil producers to face new competition. Although the more southerly countries of the European Union still produce 77 percent of the world's olive oil (and oils from California's boutique producers are more and more common), oil of ever increasing quality is issuing forth from the Antipodes, South America, South Africa, and, of course,

the Middle East—where olive trees were first cultivated around 3000 B.C. and where the oil has had cultural and religious importance for millennia. We recently tasted dozens of non-European extra-virgin olive oils—even one from Texas. We didn't like them all; at least a few of the new "boutique" producers are better known for making oil in bulk quantity—and of bulk quality. But we did find a dozen oils, from eight different countries (Australia fared the best overall), that we'd gladly keep in our pantry alongside our Tuscan, Catalan, and Provençal favorites. (See THE PANTRY, page 103, for sources.)

**DOMAINE LACHAAL; TUNISIA (\$14/500 ML)** Mature, peppery, and smooth, with hints of artichoke and green apple; made from chemali and chetoui fruit.

**FIRST TEXAS OLIVE OIL COMPANY ALFRESCO; TEXAS (\$24/375 ML)** Bold, fresh, and fruity, with subtle flavors of melon and banana; made from mission and arbequina olives.

**ISRAELI GOLD BARNEA; ISRAEL (\$19/375 ML)** A single-varietal (barnea) oil; smooth, with a grassy aroma and a slightly bitter, peppery finish.

**ISRAELI GOLD MANZANILLA; ISRAEL (\$19/375 ML)** Another single varietal (manzanilla); well-balanced and fruity, with a hint of citrus and wildflowers.

**MORGENSTER; SOUTH AFRICA (\$25/500 ML)** Blended from frantoio, leccino, coratina, favolosa, and peranzana olives; full-bodied and earthy, with hints of hay.

**MOUTERE GROVE; NEW ZEALAND (\$35/500 ML)** An assertive mix of leccino, frantoio, pendolino, and moraiolo olives; peppery and herbaceous, with hints of artichoke and cut grass.



**MUSTAPHA'S; MOROCCO (\$16/375 ML)** From picholine olives; fresh and creamy, with aromas of ripe tomato. A favorite.

**NOLANS ROAD LIMITED RELEASE; AUSTRALIA (\$26/500 ML)** Frantoio, leccino, and pendolino olives; punchy hits of hay and nuts, followed by a grassy finish.

**NOLANS ROAD NOLANS RESERVE; AUSTRALIA (\$26/500 ML)** A gentle oil from bouquetier, verdale, and benito olives, with tropical notes and a sweet, buttery texture. Suave and sexy.

**OLIVE FARM VILLAGE; TURKEY (\$8/500 ML)** Mature, rustic oil from memecik olives; ripe, farmy flavors, with a musky finish.

**OLIVIERS & CO. BOUNDARY BEND ESTATE; AUSTRALIA (\$28/500 ML)** A light, slightly perfumy blend of picual, picholine, barnea, and leccino olives; fresh and sweet, with a smooth finish.

**YELLINGBO GOLD EXTRA; AUSTRALIA (\$32/500 ML)** A complex blend of manzanilla, frantoio, corregiola, and picual olives; apple and wood aromas, with hints of almond on the palate and a peppery kick. —*Camas Davis*