

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

CLASSIC QUALITY ABOUNDS ACROSS A RANGE OF COUNTRIES AND CATEGORIES in this week's *Wine Spectator Insider*, with top-scoring reds, whites and dessert wines from California, Chile, France, Italy and Portugal, up to 98 points. This is a report of the most exciting wines our editors have discovered in the tasting room in recent weeks.

Stupendous and cellar-worthy Barolos hail from Piedmont, while French releases from the Rhône and Burgundy display elegance and intrigue. New World wines from California and Chile reach the pinnacle of success, offering world-beating expressions of Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and more. But Port dating to 1967 leads the pack here, offering remarkable vibrancy and character after half a century. Turn to page 4 for the six Hot Wines.

CALIFORNIA

LEWIS

Syrah Napa Valley 2014

95 points | \$75 | 175 cases made | Red

Bold, polished and impeccably structured, with black raspberry and smoky mocha aromas and rich, complex flavors of blueberry, spiced cinnamon and licorice. Tannins ease in and frame the finish. Drink now through 2029.—*T.F.*

LAW

Mourvèdre Paso Robles Prima 2013

94 points | \$95 | 190 cases made | Red

Grabs your attention immediately. Minty plum and pomegranate aromas lead to complex, slightly gamy and altogether compelling flavors of dried cherry, licorice and fruitcake spices that linger on the finish. Drink now through 2028.—*T.F.*

PLUMPJACK

Syrah Napa Valley 2014

94 points | \$60 | 1,124 cases made | Red

Polished and impeccably structured, with blackberry and smoky meat aromas and layered, rich flavors of licorice and espresso that linger toward big but firm tannins. Drink now through 2027.—*T.F.*

RELIC

Ritual Napa Valley 2014

94 points | \$50 | 457 cases made | Red

Well-built, stylish and loaded with personality. Aromas of smoky peppered beef lead to complex, appealingly gamy flavors of boysenberry, grilled herb and espresso. The tannins are big but ripe on the finish. Mourvèdre, Grenache, Syrah, Carignane and Petite Sirah. Drink now through 2027.—*T.F.*

CALIZA

Azimuth Paso Robles Willow Creek District 2013

93 points | \$58 | 300 cases made | Red

Well-built and loaded with personality, offering smoky blackberry, dark Asian spice aromas and layered flavors of currant, licorice and fresh pepper that linger toward polished tannins. Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

FAVIA

Syrah Amador County Quarzo 2014

93 points | \$75 | 348 cases made | Red

Rich and powerfully built, with bold blueberry, crushed rock and licorice aromas leading to dense but polished flavors of wild berry, game and white pepper. The tannins are big but refined. Drink now through 2028.—*T.F.*

PRUETT

Lucky Lauren Red Sierra Foothills 2014
93 points | \$29 | 180 cases made | Red

A blend that's loaded with character. Aromas of floral blueberry, bitter orange and chocolate lead to well-structured flavors of smoky plum, licorice and grilled herb that linger toward big, plump tannins. Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2028.—*T.F.*

RIDGE

Monte Bello Santa Cruz Mountains 2013
91 points | \$185 | 5,000 cases made | Red

Well-constructed, with firm tannins and acidity framed by a tight core of dusty blackberry and wild berry, showing cedary oak and woody touches. Slowly eases into a dusty black licorice and anise center. Best to let this aerate or cellar. Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Best from 2021 through 2031.—*J.L.*

CHILE

CONCHA Y TORO

Cabernet Sauvignon Puente Alto Don Melchor 2013
93 points | \$125 | 1,800 cases imported | Red

An elegant and refined red, featuring concentrated dark plum and cherry flavors full of subtle savory notes. Offers mouthwatering acidity, with a rich finish delivering forest floor and mineral accents. Drink now through 2022.—*K.M.*

VIÑA CONO SUR

Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Silencio 2011
92 points | \$75 | 330 cases made | Red

A mature red, with notes of French roast coffee to the plum, dried cherry and mocha flavors. Intense dark chocolate and Asian spice accents linger on the ripe finish. Drink now through 2019.—*K.M.*

VIÑA MONTES

Syrah Colchagua Valley Alpha 2014
92 points | \$23 | 1,300 cases imported | Red

A lithe and concentrated red, with dark plum, currant and bramble flavors flanked by Asian spice and mocha notes. Dark chocolate details fill the creamy finish. Drink now through 2020.—*K.M.*

CONCHA Y TORO

Cabernet Sauvignon Maipo Valley Casillero del Diablo Reserva Privada 2015
90 points | \$18 | 3,076 cases imported | Red

A ripe and muscular red, with dense dark currant, dried blackberry and green olive flavors that lengthen out nicely with plenty of fresh acidity. Drink now through 2020.—*K.M.*

ODFJELL

Carignan Maule Valley Orzada 2014
90 points | \$21 | 100 cases imported | Red

Juicy, fresh and focused, with lively flavors of red berry, currant and plum tart. Lip-smacking raspberry cream notes linger into the spicy finish. Drink now through 2019.—*K.M.*

LOS VASCOS

Cabernet Sauvignon Colchagua Grande Reserve 2013
90 points | \$20 | 13,000 cases imported | Red

A plush and juicy red, with well-structured flavors of dark plum, forest floor, smoke and dark currant that are accented by savory notes. Firmly tannic finish. Drink now through 2021.—*K.M.*

FRANCE

CHANSON PÈRE & FILS

Chambertin-Clos de Bèze 2014
94 points | \$455 | 25 cases imported | Red

A mix of sweet, aromatic Eastern spices and toasted oak frame cherry, currant and tobacco flavors. The tannins are dense and the finish leans toward the rustic side, yet this should be fine in time. Shows plenty of sweet fruit. Best from 2021 through 2038.—*B.S.*

BENJAMIN & DAVID DUCLAUX

Condrieu Les Caillets 2015
94 points | \$70 | 50 cases imported | White

A fresh style, with makrut lime, verbena, chamomile and honey-suckle notes leading the way, followed by juicy peach, apricot and nectarine flavors. A light fennel thread underscores the finish. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE LA TOUR

Clos Vougeot Vieilles Vignes 2013
94 points | \$350 | 90 cases imported | Red

Perfumed, featuring cherry, rose, sandalwood and green olive notes. Currant, raspberry and spice flavors chime in as this builds to a lingering aftertaste. Shows fine balance and complexity, with finesse. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*B.S.*

DOMAINE DE BEAURENARD

Châteauneuf-du-Pape White Boisrenard 2015
93 points | \$78 | 50 cases imported | White

Ripe, with enticing star fruit, yellow apple and mirabelle plum notes coursing through, underscored by chamomile and verbena accents that lend this focus and cut. Judicious toast weaves through the background, letting the fruit play out beautifully on the finish. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape White 2015
92 points | \$65 | 826 cases imported | White

This is still tightly coiled, with mirabelle plum, yellow apple and verbena notes peeking out from the core, backed by a long quinine hint and a lingering echo of wet stone. Should be lovely when fully unfurled. Best from 2018 through 2022.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE LA TOUR

Clos Vougeot 2013
92 points | \$225 | 120 cases imported | Red

A bright, cherry- and black currant-flavored red, accented by sweet spice, sandalwood and an underlying savoriness. The tannins are firm. Best from 2019 through 2030.—*B.S.*

PASCAL & RICHARD JAUME

Vinsobres Domaine Courtois La Grange 2014
91 points | \$19 | 250 cases imported | Red

Crushed bitter plum and boysenberry fruit streams through, carried by a racy graphite spine and ending with a flicker of anise. Drink now through 2021.—*J.M.*

ITALY

MASSOLINO

Barolo Parafada 2012
95 points | \$97 | 100 cases imported | Red

A spicy version, with a core of cherry, strawberry, licorice and tar flavors that is well-defined on a lithe body. Sleek and racy, this resonates on the long finish. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*B.S.*

DAMILANO

Barolo Cannubi Riserva 1752 2009
94 points | \$283 | 500 cases made | Red

Sleek and savory, with a backbone of acidity driving the steeped cherry, strawberry, licorice, menthol, leather and tobacco flavors. Close to ready. Drink now through 2027.—*B.S.*

VIETTI

Barolo Ravera 2012
94 points | \$175 | 100 cases imported | Red

Offers ripe cherry, raspberry, spice and tobacco aromas and flavors. Elegant and harmonious, if a bit closed on the finish now. Everything is in the right place. Best from 2019 through 2033.—*B.S.*

MARCHESI DI BAROLO

Barolo Sarmassa 2012
93 points | \$107 | 150 cases imported | Red

This is opulent, boasting cherry, licorice, leather and spice flavors embraced by a fleshy texture. The sweet fruit carries through to the long finish. Best from 2020 through 2033.—*B.S.*

RENATO RATTI

Barolo Marcenasco 2012
93 points | \$50 | 1,600 cases imported | Red

Intense aromas of cherry, tar, wild herb and camphor signal this rich, fleshy red. Cherry fruit comes forward, while tobacco, licorice and iron notes support. Best from 2019 through 2032.—*B.S.*

LA SPINETTA

Barbaresco Staderi Vürsù 2013
93 points | \$125 | 1,300 cases made | Red

A rich style, exhibiting cherry, raspberry, eucalyptus, tobacco and tea flavors. Initially savory and tannic, with air this becomes more harmonious. Fine length. Best from 2018 through 2030.—*B.S.*

PORTUGAL

Port

POÇAS JUNIOR

Port Colheita 1997
94 points | \$75 | 200 cases imported | Dessert

A juicy edge allows this sweet wine to keep an energetic feel as ginger beer, Earl Grey tea, toffee, singed sesame and salted caramel notes streak through. There's a ripeness buried here as well. Drink now.—*J.M.*

GRAHAM

Vintage Port Quinta dos Malvedos 2014
92 points | \$60 | 350 cases made | Dessert

A bit reserved, with a solid core of plum, raspberry and blackberry compote notes, underscored by light, briary grip. A jolt of licorice snap adds verve to the finish. Best from 2021 through 2041.—*J.M.*

POÇAS JUNIOR

Port Colheita 1996
92 points | \$75 | 100 cases imported | Dessert

Ripe and broad in feel, with toasted sesame, hazelnut husk, toffee and warm caraway notes rolling through. A backdrop of blood orange coulis lends energy on the finish. Drink now.—*J.M.*

QUINTA DO VALLADO

Vintage Port Adelaide 2014
92 points | \$110 | 225 cases made | Dessert

Very expressive, with a strong note of anise pulling the core of warmed plum, açai and blueberry compote flavors along. A light graphite edge adds definition. Best from 2022 through 2038.—*J.M.*

CHURCHILL

Tawny Port 10 Years Old NV
91 points | \$34/500ml | 500 cases imported | Dessert

Warm fruitcake, brown bread and mulled raisin notes give this a broad, almost languid feel, but there are hints of singed walnut and clove in the background. Drink now.—*J.M.*

QUINTA DO PASSADOURO

Vintage Port 2014
91 points | \$70 | 10 cases imported | Dessert

This is well-formed already, with a lovely, caressing feel to the layers of boysenberry, açai and plum confiture that stream through-out. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

POÇAS JUNIOR

Tawny Port 10 Years Old NV
90 points | \$28 | 750 cases imported | Dessert

Enticing, with an open feel that draws you into the core of rum raisin, mulled cinnamon and toffee notes. A streak of caramel lines the finish. Drink now.—*J.M.*

HOT WINES

These are the most exciting discoveries from our editors' most recent tastings, published exclusively in *Wine Spectator Insider*. They are high-scoring wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

TAYLOR FLADGATE

Port Single Harvest Very Old 1967
98 points | \$300 | 580 cases made | Dessert

This draws you in, with aromas of warm halva and toasted pistachio giving way to a wide range of buckwheat, toasted sesame, walnut husk, menthol and licorice root notes that refuse to break down in the mouth. Exhibits remarkable length, with ample viscosity matched by steely tension, putting this in rarefied air. Drink now. *From Portugal.—J.M.*

CAVALLOTTO

Barolo Bricco Boschis Vigna San Giuseppe Riserva 2010
97 points | \$125 | 550 cases made | Red

An old-school style, this complex red features an array of cherry, berry, leather, tobacco and underbrush flavors, backed by a dense, beefy structure. Long and powerful, with a savory, saline aftertaste. Shows ample fruit up front, but should be better in two to three years. Best from 2019 through 2036. *From Italy.—B.S.*

WINE & SOUL

Tawny Port 5G NV
97 points | \$2,000 | 10 cases imported | Dessert

Intense, as black sesame, buckwheat, toffee and warmed walnut notes give this a steady bass line while accents of green tea, dried bergamot and bitter orange add racy elements for contrast. Shows terrific range and length, presenting a finish that hums like a tuning fork. Drink now. *From Portugal.—J.M.*

SAXUM

Booker Vineyard Paso Robles Willow Creek District 2013
97 points | \$98 | 380 cases made | Red

A powerful wine that reveals a distinctive sense of place. Dark blackberry and loamy earth aromas reveal a core of rich, structured fruit, with bitter chocolate, olive and smoky-spicy dried herb flavors. The tannins on the finish are bold but polished, suggesting time in the cellar is a must. Syrah and Mourvèdre. Best from 2018 through 2030. *From California.—T.F.*

SAXUM

Bone Rock James Berry Vineyard Paso Robles Willow Creek District 2013
96 points | \$98 | 450 cases made | Red

An imposing wine, rich and powerfully built, revealing a sense of personality and place. Distinctive aromas of crushed stone and floral blackberry combine with densely structured and complex flavors of black raspberry, bitter chocolate and smoked pepper. Finishes with burly but ripe tannins. Needs time to fully bloom. Syrah, Mourvèdre, Grenache and Roussanne. Best from 2019 through 2029. *From California.—T.F.*

CHÂTEAU DE LA TOUR

Clos Vougeot Hommage à Jean Morin 2013
95 points | \$800 | 10 cases imported | Red

Rich and concentrated, with a dense layer of tannins supporting black cherry, plum, black pepper, earth and mineral flavors. Shows depth and energy, fading with harmony and grace on the long finish of iron, fruit and spice. Best from 2020 through 2036. *From France.—B.S.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 16 tasters and tasting coordinators in two offices. They work together to review nearly 20,000 wines each year, more than any other publication. Together, our nine senior tasters count more than 140 years of tasting experience.

We always taste wine blind, in our offices in Napa and New York. This is your guarantee that our reviews are fair and objective, and that a wine's reputation or price does not influence its score. Each editor specializes in the wines of specific regions; initials appended to the review identify the taster of each wine. We score wines using the 100-point scale (see green box).

James Laube Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: California

Harvey Steiman Editor at large, San Francisco
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1984. Tasting beat: Australia, Oregon, Washington

Kim Marcus Managing editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Argentina, Austria, Chile, Germany, Portugal

Thomas Matthews Executive editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Spain

Bruce Sanderson Senior editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Burgundy, Italy

James Molesworth Senior editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: Bordeaux, Loire Valley, Rhône Valley, South Africa

MaryAnn Worobiec Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: Australia, California, New Zealand

Alison Napjus Senior editor and tasting director, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2000. Tasting beat: Alsace, Beaujolais, Champagne, Italy

Tim Fish Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2001. Tasting beat: California

Gillian Sciaretta Tasting coordinator, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2012. Tasting beat: France

Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale

95-100	Classic
90-94	Outstanding
85-89	Very good
80-84	Good
75-79	Mediocre
50-74	Not recommended