

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

THE FIRST WINE SPECTATOR INSIDER OF 2016 is out of the gate with a run of classic wines up to 98 points, with California, France and Spain each posting wines at 95-plus points. These are the bottlings that have most excited our editors in their recent tastings.

Whether you tilt more toward Pinot Noir or Zinfandel, California looks strong here, with Carlisle, Bedrock, A.P. Vin and Donum in the mix. In Bordeaux, the 2013 vintage flopped for some—but not in Sauternes and Barsac, where the high-flying dessert wines include Yquem, Climens, Doisy Daëne, Coutet and Guiraud, with one 96-pointer at just \$41. Diverse Spanish reds complete this report, which features nine wines at 90-plus points and \$40 or less. Find the six Hot Wines on page 4.

CALIFORNIA

BEDROCK

Oakville Farmhouse Oakville 2014
94 points | \$75 | 125 cases made | Red

Dynamic and potent, this field-style blend is loaded with personality. Aromas of black licorice, dried cherry and tar combine with dense, complex flavors of currant, tobacco and smoky cracked pepper. The tannins are ripe but muscular. Zinfandel, Mondeuse, Négrette, Petite Sirah and others. Best from 2018 through 2028.—*T.F.*

BEDROCK

Pagani Ranch Heritage Sonoma Valley 2014
94 points | \$48 | 500 cases made | Red

This red is impressive for the combination of richness, structure and personality, with aromas of smoky peppered beef and wild berry meeting complex flavors of blueberry and blackberry, orange zest and spice box. Zinfandel and others. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

A.P. VIN

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Garys' Vineyard 2014
93 points | \$52 | 275 cases made | Red

A rich, unctuous style, with layers of mocha, blackberry, wild berry, currant and boysenberry, yet for all the richness, this glides on the palate, ending with a long, lingering aftertaste that keeps repeating the dark berry themes. Drink now through 2022.—*J.L.*

A.P. VIN

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Kanzler Vineyard 2014
93 points | \$52 | 275 cases made | Red

A potent yet graceful and well-proportioned effort that combines power and finesse, with rich blackberry, anise, cedar, black licorice and mocha flavors that are deep and persistent. Drink now through 2022.—*J.L.*

ASTON

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2013
93 points | \$65 | 800 cases made | Red

Well-proportioned, with a mix of herb- and cedar-laced dark berry, anise and fresh, loamy earth, this could use a year or so to soften. The tannins are fine-grained, and the flavors push through with ease. Drink now through 2022.—*J.L.*

BEDROCK

Dolinsek Ranch Heritage Russian River Valley 2014
93 points | \$46 | 175 cases made | Red

Deeply structured and powerful, combining ripe fruit with brisk acidity. Loaded with notes of blueberry and raspberry, layered with bitter chocolate, licorice and minty mineral flavors. The tannins are big and burly. Hands-off for now. Zinfandel, Alicante Bouschet, Tempranillo, Petite Sirah and Teroldego. Best from 2018 through 2028.—*T.F.*

CROIX

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Old Manzanita Slope 2013
93 points | \$100 | 150 cases made | Red

Seductive mocha- and espresso-scented oak leads to a supple, graceful offering of blueberry and raspberry flavors that's rich without being weighty, gaining depth and revealing extra layers on a long, sustained finish. Drink now through 2022.—J.L.

DONUM

Pinot Noir Carneros Single Vineyard 2013
93 points | \$72 | 650 cases made | Red

While taut, the flavors fan out, extending the snappy wild berry and blackberry to touches of spice and light oak. Most impressive are the depth, density and length of the finish, keeping you coming back for another sip. Drink now through 2022.—J.L.

EXPRESSION

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 38° Gap's Crown Vineyard 2013
93 points | \$65 | 227 cases made | Red

Notably rich and focused, with tiers of mocha-laced dark berry, huckleberry and currant that are intense and persistent. Excellent now, better with a little bottle time. Drink now through 2023.—J.L.

TESTAROSSA

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Garys' Vineyard Single Vineyard Series 2013
93 points | \$66 | 552 cases made | Red

An impressive offering, quite rich and well-built, with tiers of raspberry, blackberry and spicy floral scents. The tannins are firm and muscular yet fully integrated into the wine, making for a rather seamless effort. Drink now through 2022.—J.L.

DONUM

Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Angel Camp Single Vineyard 2013
92 points | \$90 | 135 cases made | Red

Combines richness with elegance, restraint and finesse, delivering caressing blueberry and raspberry notes, and touches of spice, fresh earth, anise and light cedar. An altogether graceful style, with understated attributes. Drink now through 2022.—J.L.

TURLEY

Zinfandel Contra Costa County Salvador Vineyard 2013
92 points | \$38 | 700 cases made | Red

Sleek and jammy, but with a nicely structured core, this red combines bright cherry and toasty sage aromas with supple, ripe flavors of wild berry, anise and licorice. Drink now through 2024.—T.F.

FRANCE

Bordeaux

CHÂTEAU GUIRAUD

Sauternes 2013

96 points | \$47 | 4,165 cases made | Dessert

This is still really tight, with racy floral and green plum edges along the core flavors of white peach, mirabelle plum, melon and green fig, but this has stunning length, with a rapier of minerality that matches the sweetness step for step on the long, quinine-infused finish. Best from 2018 through 2038.—J.M.

CHÂTEAU LAFAURIE-PEYRAGUEY

Sauternes 2013

95 points | \$59 | 2,693 cases made | Dessert

This packs some power, with ginger, dried peach and matchstick hints leading the way, but as this moves along, it slowly shows creamier quince, mango and papaya notes, and an alluring chamomile gilding. Still rather backward, so forget this one in the cellar for a bit. Best from 2018 through 2038.—J.M.

CHÂTEAU DOISY DAËNE

Barsac 2013

94 points | \$46 | 2,208 cases made | Dessert

Plump and forward, this delivers peach, nectarine and candied lemon peel notes gilded with lots of honeysuckle and heather. A flash of bitter almond helps streamline everything through the racy finish. Best from 2017 through 2027.—J.M.

CHÂTEAU DOISY-VÉDRINES

Barsac 2013

94 points | \$35 | 3,000 cases made | Dessert

Still youthfully rambunctious, this is packed with pineapple, ginger, bitter almond and apricot flavors. Despite the heft and weight, this has a glistening acidity. Best from 2018 through 2035.—J.M.

CHÂTEAU DE RAYNE VIGNEAU

Sauternes 2013

94 points | \$45 | 2,750 cases made | Dessert

This is gorgeous from start to finish, with toasted macadamia nut and coconut notes leading off, followed by a range of orchard and tropical fruit flavors. Best from 2018 through 2033.—J.M.

CHÂTEAU SUDUIRAUT

Sauternes 2013

94 points | \$71 | 5,000 cases made | Dessert

This is on the exotic side of the ledger, with mouthfilling ginger, mango, quince and papaya flavors that course through, backed by a singed marshmallow note. Drink now through 2033.—J.M.

CHÂTEAU LA TOUR BLANCHE

Sauternes 2013

93 points | \$NA | 1,250 cases made | Dessert

A powerful, overt style, with bold apricot, nectarine and creamed peach flavors laced with bitter orange and a twinge of mirabelle plum before authoritative almond and maple notes emerge. Best from 2018 through 2033.—J.M.

CHÂTEAU DE MYRAT

Barsac 2013

92 points | \$31 | 1,665 cases made | Dessert

Plump and unctuous, this lacks the cut of the top 2013 Barsacs, but delivers maple, singed orange, bitter almond, and creamed peach and apricot notes. Best from 2017 through 2028.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU NAIRAC

Barsac 2013

92 points | \$43 | 833 cases made | Dessert

This has power and vigor, with a tightly wound core of intense apricot, tangerine and nectarine flavors that will need time to unwind. Strong showing. Best from 2017 through 2028.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU FILHOT

Sauternes 2013

91 points | \$NA | 2,083 cases made | Dessert

A lovely, flattering style, with glazed peach and mirabelle plum flavors lined with ample toasted phyllo dough notes, backed by a maple-tinged finish. Best from 2018 through 2028.—*J.M.*

SPAIN

BODEGAS MARQUÉS DE MURRIETA

Rioja Dalmáu 2011

93 points | \$69 | 129 cases imported | Red

Powerful yet balanced, this red shows density with freshness. The black cherry and currant flavors are ripe, while floral, mineral and toasty notes keep this lively. Drink now through 2026.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS ALTO MONCAYO

Garnacha Campo de Borja Aquilon 2013

92 points | \$168 | 100 cases made | Red

Blackberry and cassis flavors mingle with cocoa and licorice notes, which show good breadth. Well-integrated tannins and orange-peel acidity keep this focused. Drink now through 2018.—*T.M.*

ÁLVARO PALACIOS

Priorat Finca Dofí 2013

92 points | \$80 | 1,175 cases made | Red

Leafy and licorice notes frame black cherry, red plum and mineral flavors in this lively red. Light tannins and fresh acidity give energy and balance. Juicy and refreshing. Drink now through 2022.—*T.M.*

BERNARD MAGREZ

Toro Paciencia 2012

92 points | \$30 | 400 cases imported | Red

Firm and polished, this red delivers bright flavors of plum, currant, licorice, tar and loamy earth, with balance and energy. Lithe and expressive, with good depth. Drink now through 2022.—*T.M.*

DOMINIO DE PINGUS

Ribera del Duero Flor de Pingus 2013

92 points | \$95 | 2,500 cases made | Red

Firm tannins corset a plush texture in this generous red. Black cherry, plum, cedar, spice and mineral flavors mingle, kept lively by fresh acidity. Plenty of stuffing here. Drink now through 2023.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS LUIS ALEGRE

Rioja Finca La Reñana Reserva Selección Especial 2011

91 points | \$70 | 100 cases imported | Red

This solid red offers plum, currant and loamy earth flavors, with notes of baking spice and tobacco. Well-integrated tannins and balsamic acidity give structure. Drink now through 2025.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS BORSAO

Garnacha Campo de Borja Tres Picos 2014

91 points | \$18 | 6,000 cases imported | Red

A plush texture masks the firm structure, as blackberry and boysenberry flavors mingle with toast, menthol and mineral notes, backed by well-integrated tannins. Drink now through 2020.—*T.M.*

TESO LA MONJA

Toro Almirez 2013

91 points | \$28 | 3,000 cases made | Red

This lively red delivers bright flavors of tart cherry, cranberry, licorice and smoke, in a lean texture supported by firm tannins and racy acidity. Drink now through 2021.—*T.M.*

TOBELOS BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS

Garnacha Rioja 2009

91 points | \$25 | 120 cases imported | Red

This generous red is ripe and structured. Blackberry and plum flavors mingle with more savory notes of licorice, loamy earth and spice. Good intensity. Drink now through 2022.—*T.M.*

TOBELOS BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS

Rioja Leukade 2011

91 points | \$50 | 70 cases imported | Red

This inky red is dense and expressive, with lively, spiky flavors of cassis, kirsch, licorice and tar. Vibrant acidity keeps the ripe, nearly candied flavors fresh. Drink now through 2021.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS FARIÑA

Toro Dama de Toro Crianza 2008

90 points | \$25 | 7,500 cases made | Red

The black cherry and blackberry flavors are fresh and lively in this focused red, whose polished texture is supported by firm tannins and orange-peel acidity. Drink now through 2020.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS MONTECILLO

Rioja Reserva 2010

90 points | \$19 | 36,600 cases made | Red

Smoke, tar and gamy notes give a savory accent to this focused red, whose black cherry, toast and mineral flavors are supported by firm tannins and juicy acidity. Drink now through 2022.—*T.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.

CHÂTEAU D'YQUEM

Sauternes 2013

98 points | \$360 | 6,665 cases made | Dessert

Lightly toasted marshmallow and macadamia nut aromas lead the way, followed by incredibly juicy mirabelle plum, green fig, and glazed pear and peach flavors. As big as this is, there are still plenty of honeysuckle, quinine and chamomile notes kicking the finish into yet another gear. This has purity and length to burn, which it will for a couple of generations. Best from 2020 through 2050. *From France.—J.M.*

CHÂTEAU CLIMENS

Barsac 2013

97 points | \$68 | 1,417 cases made | Dessert

There's loads here, with apricot, nectarine and clementine flavors stitched with a racy orange zest note to give energy, along with tropical papaya and mango flavors that add a sublimely creamy edge. The finish sails on and on, coating the palate with a porcelain feel, while an echo of bitter almond hangs effortlessly. Best from 2018 through 2043. *From France.—J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DOISY DAËNE

Barsac L'Extravagant 2013

97 points | \$195/375 ml | 130 cases made | Dessert

Very bold pineapple and heather flavors leap to the fore, with a glistening core of peach, apricot and mirabelle plum kicking in soon thereafter. Vivid, pure finish, with lovely length and stunning cut. Gorgeous. Drink now through 2038. *From France.—J.M.*

CHÂTEAU COUTET

Barsac 2013

96 points | \$41 | 2,833 cases made | Dessert

Unctuous and ripe, with mouthfilling almond cream, ginger, heather honey and apricot flavors, this will need time to unwind fully, but when it does, expect more pineapple, maple and singed orange notes, as this has some depth and power in reserve, with more than enough cut for balance. A beauty in the making. Best from 2018 through 2038. *From France.—J.M.*

BODEGAS AALTO

Ribera del Duero PS 2012

95 points | \$115 | 40 cases imported | Red

The blackberry, licorice, cocoa and cola flavors are ripe and lean toward sweetness in this plush red, but a vein of mineral keeps this balanced. The thick texture is supported by well-integrated tannins. Drink now through 2027. *From Spain.—T.M.*

CARLISLE

Zinfandel Russian River Valley Carlisle Vineyard 2013

95 points | \$47 | 697 cases made | Red

What Sonoma Zinfandel is all about: capturing a distinctive vineyard in a glass. Aromas of black raspberry, fresh-cracked pepper and orange zest combine with complex, well-modulated flavors of licorice, blackberry and dried sage. Drink now through 2028. *From California.—T.F.*

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 1981. Tasting beat: California

Harvey Steiman Editor at large, San Francisco
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. 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 Tasting director, 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: California, New Zealand

Alison Napjus Senior editor, 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 Associate 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