

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

THIS WEEK'S *WINE SPECTATOR INSIDER* RANGES FROM CALIFORNIA CABERNET TO white Burgundy, highlighting Hot Wines from three regions: California, France and Italy. Tim Fish focuses on California sparkling wines from producers such as Schramsberg, Mumm and Iron Horse, while James Laube reviews California reds, including the only classic-rated wine in this report, a Syrah from Morlet in Sonoma. It can be found among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

Bruce Sanderson features a selection of six reds and eight whites from Burgundy, then continues with Barolo bottlings from Piedmont. Most are from the 2006 vintage, a difficult growing season in Northern Italy, but he reviews two from the outstanding 2004 vintage.

California

DARIOUSH

Shiraz Napa Valley Signature 2007

93 points | \$68 | 1,244 cases made | Red

Tightly wound, firm, intense and concentrated, with a mix of dark berry, roasted herb, espresso and pomegranate notes, gaining depth and complexity on the finish, where the mineral and black licorice flavors rise to the surface. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

ROBERT CRAIG

Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain 2007

92 points | \$80 | 1,488 cases made | Red

Bold, rich, intense and powerful, yet in a graceful, stylistic manner, with a taut mix of loamy earth, dried berry, black licorice, cranberry, dried herb and mineral flavors that coat the palate and retain their focus on a long, lingering aftertaste. Best from 2011 through 2019.—*J.L.*

ROBERT CRAIG

Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain District 2007

92 points | \$70 | 640 cases made | Red

Offers a taut, rich mix of blackberry, red cherry and wild berry flavors that are firm and full-bodied, spicy and complex, ending with ripe tannins that give the flavors traction. Drink now through 2022.—*J.L.*

IRON HORSE

Brut Green Valley of Russian River Valley Classic
Vintage 2005

92 points | \$33 | 2,225 cases made | Sparkling

Lovely floral aromas lead to a complex yet elegant wine, offering crisp apple and citrus fruit, with notes of pear, fresh almond and yeasty brown spices. Drink now through 2014.—*T.F.*

MUMM NAPA

DVX Napa Valley 2002

92 points | \$55 | 200 cases made | Sparkling

Sleek and complex, with yeasty citrus aromas and focused, crisp, yet luscious flavors of Asian pear, cinnamon roll and hazelnut that finish on a fresh mineral note. Drink now through 2013.—*T.F.*

RED STITCH

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2007

92 points | \$75 | 150 cases made | Red

Smooth, rich, generous and well-proportioned, with a touch of savory herb and tobacco leaf woven into ripe plum and dark berry flavors. Full-bodied, firm and structured, ending with a spicy floral scent that's delicate.— *Best from 2012 through 2022.*

RIBOLI FAMILY

Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford 2008

92 points | \$60 | 350 cases made | Red

Appealing for its plush, supple layers of ripe plum, blackberry, black licorice and kirschlike scents, this full-bodied red unfolds to reveal all kinds of flavor nuances and ends with a rich, fleshy aftertaste. Best from 2012 through 2020.—*J.L.*

RIDGE

Monte Bello Santa Cruz Mountains 2007
92 points | \$145 | 4,700 cases made | Red

About as close to Bordeaux in California as you get, from the classic cigar box, cedar, tobacco leaf and dill scents to the tight band of mineral, dried currant, sage, cedar and sandelwood notes. Full-bodied, elegant and persistent, this is most interesting on the finish, where the flavors are long and lingering. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2014 through 2024.—*J.L.*

SCHRAMSBERG

J. Schram North Coast 2003
92 points | \$100 | 1,500 cases made | Sparkling

A beautiful bubbly, boldly styled but retaining elegance, with aromas of fresh brioche and apple and layered flavors of spicy hazelnut, yeast and baked pear. Drink now through 2015.—*T.F.*

SHAFER

Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District Hillside Select 2006
92 points | \$215 | 2,400 cases made | Red

Complex and balanced, in a medium- to full-bodied and delicate manner, with floral, red berry and plum flavors shaded by a touch of mineral and graphite and ending with tannins that display a cedary, woody, charry roasted herb edge. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

GLORIA FERRER

Brut Carneros Carneros Cuvée Late Disgorged 1999
91 points | \$50 | 2,000 cases made | Sparkling

Luscious, rich and almost showy, with bold, mature aromas of baked Asian pear, almond and spicy yeast that lead to layered, succulent flavors of apple tart, cinnamon and caramel. Finishes with a hint of decadent sweetness. Drink now.—*T.F.*

IRON HORSE

Brut Rosé Green Valley of Russian River Valley 2005
91 points | \$50 | 968 cases made | Sparkling

Exotic and bold, yet retains an underlying elegance. Offers delicate strawberry and yeasty almond aromas and mature but lively cherry, red apple and spicy vanilla flavors. Drink now through 2013.—*T.F.*

J

Brut Russian River Valley Late Disgorged 1999
91 points | \$65 | 550 cases made | Sparkling

Crisp and elegant, with apple and yeast roll aromas and supple, layered baked pear, cinnamon and spice flavors that linger toward the succulent finish. Drink now through 2014.—*T.F.*

MARSTON

Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain District 2007
91 points | \$100 | 500 cases made | Red

Firm, intense and marked by loamy earth, dried currant, berry pie, black licorice and roasted herb flavors, giving this a complex range of flavors that are reined in and end with drying tannins. Needs time. Best from 2012 through 2013.—*J.L.*

SCHRAMSBERG

Brut Rosé North Coast 2007
91 points | \$41 | 7,419 cases made | Sparkling

Boldly structured, yet retains a sense of delicacy, with floral strawberry and spice aromas and full-bodied cherry, vanilla and caramel apple flavors that linger on a festive finish. Drink now through 2014.—*T.F.*

IRON HORSE

Brut Green Valley of Russian River Valley LD 2002
90 points | \$85 | 563 cases made | Sparkling

Sleek and creamy, with delicate vanilla and yeasty apple aromas and succulent lemon crème and baked spice notes that take on length and complexity. Drink now.—*T.F.*

J

Brut Russian River Valley 2001
90 points | \$50 | 1,050 cases made | Sparkling

Vibrant, with lively apple and citrus aromas and supple but crisp, layered baked pear and fresh almond flavors that linger with a yeasty finish. Drink now through 2012.—*T.F.*

France Burgundy

CHAMPY

Charmes-Chambertin 2008
93 points | \$200 | 50 cases made | Red

Aromas and flavors of pure cherry, licorice, tobacco and mineral mark this forceful red. There's a rigid coating of tannins surrounding a core of fruit, and this is balanced, needing time for all the components to integrate. Be patient. Best from 2014 through 2026.—*B.S.*

CHAMPY

Gevrey-Chambertin Les Cazetiers 2008
93 points | \$116 | 100 cases made | Red

Terrific aromas and flavors of macerated cherry, raspberry and spice combine with a juicy texture in this firm, beautifully integrated red. Though young, this also shows licorice, floral and mineral accents and leaves a lingering aftertaste. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*B.S.*

ANTONIN GUYON

Meursault Charmes Les Charmes Dessus 2008
92 points | \$99 | 60 cases imported | White

Firm and tightly wound, with loads of stone, oyster shell, lemon and pastry aromas and flavors. Complex and long, with fine balance and a lingering mineral and pastry aftertaste. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*B.S.*

DOMAINE ROULOT

Meursault Perrières 2008

92 points | \$200 | 10 cases imported | White

A harmonious white, whose apple, peach and hazelnut flavors are accented lightly with vanilla. A strong mineral undercurrent in tandem with the vibrant structure keeps this lively, with terrific length. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*B.S.*

CHAMPY

Meursault-Blagny 2008

91 points | \$105 | 75 cases made | White

The essence of mineral, along with lemon cake, apple and floral aromas and flavors. Balanced between richness and tension, with intensity and length. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*B.S.*

LOUIS LATOUR

Meursault Charmes 2008

91 points | \$69 | 350 cases made | White

Beeswax, lemon oil and baked apple notes are the hallmarks of this powerful white, which is rich and bright, with subtle oak accents interwoven. A little compact on the finish today. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*B.S.*

DOMAINE DES PERDRIX

Echézeaux 2008

91 points | \$228 | 50 cases imported | Red

Deep aromas and flavors of blackberry, black currant and violet highlight this succulent red, which is silky and harmonious, with everything well-integrated, ending in a lingering aftertaste of berry and mineral. Best from 2013 through 2024.—*B.S.*

CHAMPY

Charmes-Chambertin 2007

90 points | \$200 | 50 cases made | Red

Licorice and cherry are the main flavors, with tobacco and mineral accents adding complexity. A menthol note emerges as this ends in a barrage of tannins, yet there's a sweetness as well. Be patient. Best from 2013 through 2024.—*B.S.*

CHAMPY

Echézeaux 2007

90 points | \$200 | 50 cases made | Red

Very aromatic, offering floral and spice notes and black cherry character. Round and ample, with good acidity and a solid layer of tannins. Concentrated, if a bit chunky. Needs time to absorb the tannins. Best from 2014 through 2024.—*B.S.*

CHAMPY

Gevrey-Chambertin Vieilles Vignes 2008

90 points | \$75 | 750 cases made | Red

Pure and smooth, this red has a sinewy underpinning courtesy of its present, cohesive tannins. This frames the cherry, tobacco and spice flavors, with lively acidity driving the long finish. Best from 2012 through 2020.—*B.S.*

LOUIS LATOUR

Meursault Poruzots 2008

90 points | \$62 | 400 cases made | White

Supple and fresh, with a touch of spice complementing the apple, grapefruit and wax flavors. Picks up a mineral element on the finish, with a chalky feel. Best from 2012 through 2020.—*B.S.*

LOUIS LATOUR

Meursault-Blagny Château de Blagny 2008

90 points | \$62 | 2,000 cases made | White

Shows fine poise and balance, with lemon cake, apple and mineral flavors combining as this turns tight and stony on the finish. Ends with hints of butter and lemon. Best from 2011 through 2018.—*B.S.*

Italy Piedmont

MICHELE CHIARLO

Barolo Cannubi 2006

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

Black cherry, menthol, cocoa and mineral aromas and flavors abound in this taut, firmly structured red. There's plenty of grip on the long finish, with a lasting impression of sweet fruit. Needs time. Best from 2013 through 2028.—*B.S.*

GIORGIO SCARZELLO & FIGLI

Barolo Vigna Merenda 2004

92 points | \$75 | 100 cases imported | Red

Though firm, there's a sense of elegance in this red, from its cherry, sweet licorice, saline and mineral aromas and flavors to its supple texture and long aftertaste. Balanced overall, with a chalky feel on the finish. Best from 2012 through 2032.—*B.S.*

GIOVANNI ROSSO

Barolo Cerretta 2006

91 points | \$55 | 800 cases made | Red

There's a core of pure cherry at the center of this red, with a vibrant structure and fine tannins. A supple wine, with nuances of licorice, tobacco and spice that linger on the aftertaste. Best from 2012 through 2025.—*B.S.*

MICHELE CHIARLO

Barolo Cerequio 2006

90 points | \$100 | NA cases made | Red

Ripe cherry and plum flavors, with hints of raisin and licorice, highlight this Barolo. At its core is sweet fruit, with refined tannins and freshness for support. Fine balance and harmony make this approachable now with decanting. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*B.S.*

GIOVANNI ROSSO

Barolo La Serra 2006

90 points | \$55 | 800 cases made | Red

Cherry and licorice aromas and flavors, with hints of flowers, are matched to a glycerine texture balanced by drying tannins. It all comes together on the lingering finish. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*B.S.*

HOT WINES

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

MORLET

Syrah Bennett Valley Bouquet Garni 2008
95 points | \$85 | 125 cases made | Red

Beautifully crafted, this threads a complex tapestry of hot brick, roasted herb, ripe plum and blackberry flavors, with touches of cedar, graphite and mineral. Ends with a long, persistent finish that keeps the flavors vibrant and lively. Best from 2011 through 2020. *From California.—J.L.*

DOMAINE ROULOT

Meursault Charmes 2008
94 points | \$180 | 250 cases made | White

This taut, stretched white offers a fine interplay of elements. Lemon, apple, mineral and saline flavors evolve on the linear frame, remaining persistent on the long aftertaste. There's great texture and harmony, but this just needs time. Best from 2013 through 2025. *From France.—B.S.*

LA QUERCIOLA

Barolo Donna Bianca 2004
94 points | \$45 | 400 cases made | Red

Massive and chunky, yet concentrated, with cherry, tobacco, iron and mineral flavors. The sweet fruit and texture easily match the dense tannins, and the finish lingers gracefully with a hint of truffle. Best from 2012 through 2035. *From Italy.—B.S.*

CAYMUS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2008
93 points | \$70 | 56,000 cases made | Red

Open fruit, rich, lush and layered, serving up a complex mix of plum, blackberry, black licorice and spices. Full-bodied and supple-textured, ending with a long, persistent finish that keeps repeating the core flavor themes. Drink now through 2018. *From California.—J.L.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 12 people in two offices. They work together to review more than 18,000 wines each year, more than any other publication. Together, our six 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; their initials identify the taster of each wine reviewed. We score wines using the 100-point scale, explained below.

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

Kim Marcus Managing editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Austria, Greece, Port, Portugal, Southern France

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

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

Bruce Sanderson Tasting director, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Burgundy, Champagne, Germany, Italy

Harvey Steiman Editor at large, San Francisco
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: Australia, New Zealand, Oregon, Washington

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

Tasting staff:
Tim Fish (California),
Alison Napjus (Alsace),
MaryAnn Worobiec (California)