

Wine Spectator Insider

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A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

CLASSIC-RATED CALIFORNIA REDS AND BAROLOS highlight this week's *Wine Spectator Insider*, along with outstanding white Burgundies and Tempranillos from Spain. James Laube and Tim Fish focus on California reds in this issue, including a 96-point Napa Syrah from Lewis Cellars. Bruce Sanderson highlights Barolos from the 2006 vintage in Piedmont; one of the Nebbiolo-based reds earns 97 points. You'll find all four of this issue's classic-rated wines among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

Sanderson also reviews 13 Chardonnays from Meursault, in the Côte d'Or. Thomas Matthews completes this week's roundup with Tempranillos from Spain's Toro region, located near the country's border with Portugal.

California

BUONCRISTIANI

Syrah Napa Valley Artistico 2007

94 points | \$60 | 344 cases made | Red

Tight, firm and dense, deeply concentrated and extracted, with detailed mineral, graphite, dark berry, plum and cedar flavors. Full-bodied and slow to unfold, but gains depth and nuance at every turn. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*J.L.*

LEWIS

Alec's Blend Napa Valley 2008

94 points | \$60 | 1,000 cases made | Red

Tightly wound, with dried currant, blackberry, sage and mineral notes. Full-bodied and concentrated, this is slow to expand but as it does the flavors fan out, offering touches of cedar, spice, nutmeg and mocha. Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2012 through 2021.—*J.L.*

LEWIS

Syrah Napa Valley Hudson Vineyards 2008

94 points | \$60 | 90 cases made | Red

Amazingly complex, rich, ripe, dense and concentrated, offering a pure core of dark ripe berry fruit, with touches of blackberry, wild berry, mineral, spice and cedar. Ends with a long, persistent finish. Best from 2012 through 2021.—*J.L.*

SHAFER

Relentless Napa Valley 2007

94 points | \$60 | 3,800 cases made | Red

A gorgeous wine, ripe and juicy, with black cherry, plum and currant flavors joined by spicy cedar, graphite, tobacco and dried sage. Full-bodied and powerful, yet retrained and ageworthy. Syrah and Petite Sirah. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*J.L.*

HOURLASS

Merlot Napa Valley Blueline Vineyard 2008

93 points | \$75 | 408 cases made | Red

Sleek and plush, yet layered with delicate complexity. Aromas of black cherry and toasty vanilla oak lead to tempting flavors of plum, dusty mocha, espresso and tomato leaf. Finishes with ripe but firm tannins. Drink now through 2015.—*T.F.*

LEWIS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2008

93 points | \$85 | 2,000 cases made | Red

Supple and fleshy, with appealing ripe plum and black cherry fruit that's fleshy and layered. Rich, complex and elegant, gaining weight and persistence on the finish, where the flavors fan out nicely. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

France

Burgundy

ALBERT BICHOT

Meursault Les Charmes Domaine du Pavillon 2008
93 points | \$65 | 50 cases imported | White

This is fleshy and supple, yet also lively, framing its hazelnut, spiced apple, peach, citrus and honey flavors beautifully. This offers fine balance and harmony, making it approachable now, but will age nicely, too. Fine hazelnut and mineral aftertaste. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*B.S.*

DOMAINE ROULOT

Meursault Les Meix Chavaux 2008
92 points | \$70 | NA cases made | White

Though firmly structured and vibrant, there's richness in this white, along with lime blossom, hazelnut, apple and stone aromas and flavors. This has a tightly stitched profile, ending in a mouthwatering cascade of citrus and mineral. Drink now through 2018.—*B.S.*

RÉMI JOBARD

Meursault Les Charmes 2008
91 points | \$92 | 8 cases imported | White

There's a sharp edge to this white, but it serves to focus the lemon-lime, herb and Granny Smith apple flavors. This is linear in profile, and looks set to develop nicely over the next 10 years. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*B.S.*

RÉMI JOBARD

Meursault Les Chevalières 2008
91 points | \$70 | 20 cases imported | White

A lean, sharp white, offering waxy, leesy notes of lemon and mineral that join citrus fruit flavors. Firm finish, tight but long. Best from 2012 through 2023.—*B.S.*

RÉMI JOBARD

Meursault Les Genevrières 2008
91 points | \$90 | 25 cases imported | White

A creamy style, yet with '08's signature acidity lending cut and nerve. This turns racier as it crosses the palate, leaving a trail of lemon, apple, mineral and spice in its wake. Fine length. Best from 2012 through 2020.—*B.S.*

LOUIS LATOUR

Meursault Goutte d'Or 2008
91 points | \$69 | 350 cases made | White

A sleek, lemon verbena- and apple-scented white, sporting white peach and hazelnut flavors. This picks up some pastry and baking spice notes on the lingering aftertaste. Drink now through 2020.—*B.S.*

DOMAINE LEFLAIVE

Meursault Sous le Dos d'Ane 2008
91 points | \$156 | 190 cases imported | White

Lean and balanced on the tart side, this white offers citrus blossom, apple, lemon and hazelnut flavors. This needs time, with fine balance and freshness on the long finish. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*B.S.*

OLIVIER LEFLAIVE

Meursault 2008
91 points | \$52 | 500 cases imported | White

A lean, taut style, yet intense, delivering a stony undercurrent to its lime blossom, hazelnut and apple flavors. This is silky and harmonious, with a lingering mineral aftertaste. Drink now through 2018.—*B.S.*

DOMAINE ROULOT

Meursault Les Vireuils 2008
91 points | \$66 | NA cases made | White

This is focused and transparent, in the sense that it shimmers with a chalky, stony essence. Lime, apple and floral flavors add depth, building to a lingering aftertaste of citrus and mineral. Drink now through 2018.—*B.S.*

JOBARD-MOREY

Meursault 2008
90 points | \$47 | 50 cases imported | White

A clean, lemony white, with richness midplate and accents of apple and peach. This is balanced and approachable now, ending in a twist of spice and toast notes. Drink now through 2015.—*B.S.*

Italy

Barolo

DAMILANO

Barolo Cannubi 2006
94 points | \$76 | NA cases made | Red

Starts out supple, with the smooth texture framing black cherry, bitter almond and licorice notes. A firm base of tannins is offset by sweet fruit, as this glides to a lingering aftertaste of tobacco, spice and cherry. Best from 2013 through 2032.—*B.S.*

GIACOMO GRIMALDI

Barolo Sotto Castello di Novello 2006
93 points | \$59 | 100 cases imported | Red

A dose of new oak softens the impact of this red, whose licorice, bitter almond, cherry and iron flavors pack power and backbone, courtesy of the stiff tannins. This is well-proportioned, a bit cheesy, with enough sweetness to match the structure. Fine length. Best from 2013 through 2030.—*B.S.*

GIUSEPPE RINALDI

Barolo Brunate-Le Coste 2006

93 points | \$94 | 300 cases imported | Red

An elegant, supple style, despite its firm structure. Exhibits rose, cherry, menthol and licorice flavors underscored by mineral. This is taut and linear, with a long, sustained aftertaste. Best from 2013 through 2028.—*B.S.*

ELVIO COGNO

Barolo Cascina Nuova 2006

92 points | \$46 | 400 cases imported | Red

Salty licorice notes complement the cherry, menthol and spice flavors in this linear red. This is tightly wound, yet balanced, and in time should develop nicely. Fine, spice finish. Best from 2014 through 2032.—*B.S.*

DAMILANO

Barolo Brunate 2006

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

A wiry, angular red, awkward today, yet revealing a core of cherry, strawberry, rubber and tobacco flavors. This is vibrant, settling down on the lingering finish and echoing spice and leather accents. Best from 2014 through 2032.—*B.S.*

FRATELLI ALESSANDRIA

Barolo Monvigliero 2006

91 points | \$55 | 200 cases imported | Red

A saline, mineral current underlies the cherry, tar and tobacco flavors in this firm, sinewy red. This is concentrated, intense and long, despite its austerity. Be patient. Best from 2014 through 2030.—*B.S.*

FRATELLI ODDERO

Barolo 2006

91 points | \$39 | 800 cases imported | Red

Reticent, with a cloak of tannins descending upon the cherry, tar and menthol flavors. This is fresh and elegant, featuring everything in the right proportion, it just needs time to integrate and soften. Long, licorice-tinged finish. Best from 2014 through 2035.—*B.S.*

FRATELLI ALESSANDRIA

Barolo Gramolere 2006

90 points | \$55 | 170 cases imported | Red

Cherry, menthol, tar and spice aromas and flavors mark this lean, angular red. There's an element of sweetness, plus a glycerine component to the texture. Stays fresh and long on the finish. Best from 2013 through 2030.—*B.S.*

ELVIO COGNO

Barolo Ravera 2006

90 points | \$70 | 400 cases imported | Red

A muscular red, textured and dense, with black cherry, blackberry and leather flavors. All the fruit and sweetness is forward, the tannins and structure aft. Just a tad dry. Best from 2013 through 2032.—*B.S.*

Spain

J. & F. LURTON

Toro Campo Eliseo 2005

94 points | \$95 | 833 cases made | Red

Savory and sanguine notes add focus to the ripe, sweet fruit flavors of blackberry, fig and chocolate. The texture is broad, but smooth, with crisp acidity to keep this focused. This is plenty oaky, but still quite traditional in style, boasting earthy, gamy notes. Better than previously reviewed. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS MAUROS

Toro San Román 2006

93 points | \$70 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

Rich and deep, this plush red shows complex flavors of blackberry, blueberry, dried fig, dark chocolate and licorice. This has full, ripe tannins and a sweet finish. Modern and alluring. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

NUMANTHIA-TERMES

Toro Termes 2008

91 points | \$30 | 5,000 cases imported | Red

This bold red matches ripe blackberry and currant flavors with toast, dark chocolate and oak notes. The tannins are firm and well-integrated, and the smoky mineral note is alluring. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

TELMO RODRÍGUEZ

Toro G Pago La Jara 2006

91 points | \$71 | 50 cases imported | Red

Firm and focused, this rich red offers black cherry, licorice and espresso flavors, with notes of tobacco, mineral and tar. The tannins are firm. This shows good balance and length. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

CORAL DUERO

Toro Rompededas 2006

90 points | \$50 | 10,000 cases made | Red

This plush red brims with sweet, ripe flavors of raspberry jam, vanilla and piecrust. Medium-bodied, featuring soft tannins, bright acidity and spicy vanilla and floral notes on the finish. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

TESO LA MONJA

Toro Almiraz 2008

90 points | \$30 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

This modern-style red is supple but shows underlying structure. Blackberry, floral, toast, mineral and smoke flavors show depth and complexity. Drink now through 2014.—*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, low-production wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

GIUSEPPE RINALDI

Barolo Cannubi S. Lorenzo-Ravera 2006
97 points | \$94 | 200 cases imported | Red

Very tight and shy on the nose, featuring sweet cherry, plum, licorice and salty mineral flavors. Delivers fine sweetness and intensity, with elegance and a sense of harmony and grace. This is almost approachable now, yet should develop beautifully. Best from 2013 through 2030. *From Italy.—B.S.*

LEWIS

Syrah Napa Valley 2008
96 points | \$70 | 250 cases made | Red

A profound effort, dark, rich, dense and layered, with tiers of ripe plum, black cherry, blackberry and spicy floral scents. Full-blown, focused and persistent, with the flavors cascading on the long finish. Drink now through 2022. *From California.—J.L.*

JUSTIN

Focus Paso Robles 2008
95 points | \$95 | 291 cases made | Red

Combining power with finesse, this is dark, dense, intense and chewy, with layers of dark berry, mineral, spice, sage and cedar. The flavors are pure, focused, persistent and increasingly complex, ending with gritty black licorice, rye bread-laced tannins. Best Justin in some time. Syrah and Grenache. Best from 2012 through 2022. *From California.—J.L.*

GIACOMO GRIMALDI

Barolo Le Coste 2006
95 points | \$67 | 200 cases imported | Red

Round and caressing, this red oozes charm and character. Its cherry, floral, licorice, spice and earth flavors are sweet and persistent, with well-integrated tannins and bright acidity for support. This goes on and on, offering a licorice and woody aftertaste. Best from 2013 through 2030. *From Italy.—B.S.*

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),
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