

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

ENTICING STYLES FROM ACROSS THE WINE WORLD tempt the senses in this week's *Wine Spectator Insider*, with wines from Australia, California, France and Italy, up to 98 points. This is a report of the most exciting wines our editors have discovered in the tasting room in recent weeks.

Diverse red and white bottlings from Down Under show complexity and depth. Golden State Chardonnays from esteemed estates Peter Michael and Revana show harmony and finesse. Tuscan treasures from Fontodi, Tenuta Sette Ponti and Antinori delight with gorgeous fruit and grip. A group of reds from the Southern Rhône stand out for their beauty and ageability. Fourteen spectacular wines here scored a classic 95 points or above, including one 95-pointer at just \$43. Turn to page 4 for the six Hot Wines.

AUSTRALIA

TORBRECK

RunRig Barossa Valley 2014

94 points | \$225 | 158 cases imported | Red

Dark and dense, offering a toothsome mix of black licorice, loam, wild blackberry and black tea notes. The details start coming in on the finish, adding complexity and some momentum, with cigar box, Szechuan peppercorn and Turkish coffee elements lingering. Shiraz and Viognier. Drink now through 2030.—*M.W.*

GIANT STEPS

Pinot Noir Yarra Valley Applejack Vineyard 2016

93 points | \$42 | 400 cases imported | Red

Supple and elegant, this offers a seamless mix of blackberry, raspberry and green peppercorn accents. Generous and lush on the finish. Strikes the right balance between power and finesse. Drink now through 2027.—*M.W.*

CASELLA

Shiraz McLaren Vale 1919 2010

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

Very polished, with dense but velvety tannins supporting a complex blend of chai tea, mahogany, sarsaparilla and black walnut aromatics, blending seamlessly with a core of chocolate-covered cherry and plum compote flavors. Has tremendous presence on the finish. Drink now through 2030.—*M.W.*

GIANT STEPS

Chardonnay Yarra Valley Sexton Vineyard 2016

92 points | \$42 | 350 cases imported | White

Elegant, with quiet pear, green apple and quince flavors on a light and airy frame, showing details of mineral, pepper and toasted spice. Drink now through 2023.—*M.W.*

GIANT STEPS

Pinot Noir Yarra Valley Primavera Vineyard 2016

92 points | \$42 | 350 cases imported | Red

Effusive, with fresh notes of sage and forest floor that complement the snappy red fruit flavors, showing green tea, cedar and white pepper aromas. The intriguing details continue to linger on the long finish. Drink now through 2027.—*M.W.*

LAMBERT ESTATE

Cabernet Sauvignon Barossa Valley Silent Partner 2013

92 points | \$65 | 224 cases imported | Red

Generous, polished and oozing, with complex notes of sandalwood, black walnut liqueur, kirsch and raspberry. A hint of vanilla bean and plush tannins leave a lasting impression on the finish. Drink now through 2030.—*M.W.*

TORBRECK

Descendant Barossa Valley 2014

92 points | \$125 | 48 cases imported | Red

Distinctive and lively, with fresh-cracked black pepper, violet and dried apricot notes that jump out of the glass, balancing well with the blueberry and blackberry flavors at the core. Juicy, showing plenty of energy on the finish. Shiraz and Viognier. Drink now through 2030.—*M.W.*

VASSE FELIX

Chardonnay Margaret River 2015

92 points | \$43 | 50 cases imported | White

Intriguing, offering a fragrant mix of toast, saline and lemon curd flavors that are juicy and focused, with good intensity. Bracing acidity opens up the flavors on the finish, showing transparency and energy. Drink now through 2027.—*M.W.*

CALIFORNIA

Chardonnay

KNIGHTS BRIDGE

Chardonnay Knights Valley West Block 2015

94 points | \$65 | 152 cases made | White

A classy, Burgundian style, rich and creamy, with smoky oak framing the fig, melon, apricot and pear flavors. This is unified by a seamless texture that echoes butterscotch and roasted marshmallow notes. Drink now.—*J.L.*

PETER MICHAEL

Chardonnay Knights Valley Belle Côte 2015

94 points | \$95 | 1,900 cases made | White

Combines rich, lively fig, melon and apricot with smoky, toasty oak shadings, giving this a sense of harmony, finesse, depth and complexity without being weighty. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

PETER MICHAEL

Chardonnay Knights Valley Ma Belle-Fille 2015

93 points | \$105 | 2,320 cases made | White

Light oak, pear, apple, melon and spice notes gain weight while remaining nimble and refined. This tilts more toward delicacy and nuance than sheer power. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

ODETTE

Chardonnay Napa Valley Reserve 2015

93 points | \$66 | 400 cases made | White

A rich, seductive style, shaped by vibrant pear, melon, apple and fig flavors, shaded by oak that casts a smoky, buttery aftertaste. Drink now through 2021.—*J.L.*

REVANA

Chardonnay Napa Valley Carneros 2014

93 points | \$75 | 400 cases made | White

Exhibits a core of sweet fig, melon and honeyed apricot flavors, juicy and seductive. A charming style that will appeal to those who prize ripe Chardonnay. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

PETER MICHAEL

Chardonnay Knights Valley Cuvée Indigène 2014

92 points | \$150 | 490 cases made | White

Spicy, smoky, toasty oak gives this a roasted edge that adds dimension to the rich pear, fig and melon flavors, reverberating on the finish where this gains depth and dimension. Drink now.—*J.L.*

FRANCE

Southern Rhône / Châteauneuf-du-Pape & Gigondas

DOMAINE DE LA SOLITUDE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cornelia Constanza 2015

96 points | \$150 | 50 cases imported | Red

This has great energy from the start, with notes of bay leaf, warm brick and juniper leading the way, backed by a solid core of red currant, raspberry and plum coulis flavors. The long finish lets sanguine and iron accents flow through while still leaving plenty of room for the fruit. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DE LA SOLITUDE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Secrète Réserve 2015

96 points | \$150 | 50 cases imported | Red

This is packed with dark plum, blackberry and boysenberry preserve flavors at the core, enlivened with juniper, tobacco and licorice snap notes. Lovely roasted apple wood accents score the finish, with the fruit taking a long encore. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas Valbelle 2015

96 points | \$92 | 105 cases imported | Red

This is packed with rich, succulent flavors of fig, boysenberry and blackberry compote, layered with anise, ganache and toasted apple wood notes. The strong, grippy spine is well-embedded through the lengthy finish, while the fruit easily keeps pace. Best from 2019 through 2035.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DES BOSQUETS

Gigondas Le Lieu Dit... 2015

95 points | \$50 | 125 cases imported | Red

Intense raspberry and boysenberry fruit unwinds slowly here, with light bergamot, black tea and violet notes skittering throughout. The structure is ample but very fine-grained, and there's lilting perfume lingering on the mineral-edged finish. Approachable, but try to hold off a bit. Best from 2019 through 2030.—*J.M.*

CLOS ST.-JEAN

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Deus Ex Machina 2015

95 points | \$110 | 80 cases imported | Red

Rich but very fresh, with lovely tea and incense notes lifting the core of raspberry, plum and red currant preserve flavors. Light shiso leaf, sanguine and tobacco details on the finish add cut and length. Lovely. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

CLOS ST.-JEAN

Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Combe des Fous 2015
95 points | \$110 | 80 cases imported | Red

This pumps out dark currant, plum and raspberry pâte de fruit flavors along with notes of licorice root, ganache and warm fruitcake. Densely packed, but the details are still evident through the graphite-fueled finish. Impressive. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DE LA SOLITUDE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Barberini 2015
95 points | \$75 | 60 cases imported | Red

This drips with raspberry, cassis and plum fruit flavors, with a remarkably silky feel throughout. Alluring black tea and incense notes hang in the background, and there's an element of roasted apple wood as well. The fruit blazes through the finish. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas 2015
95 points | \$43 | 1,050 cases imported | Red

A textbook version of the brawny side of Gigondas, this offers a grippy alder bass line underneath layers of dark currant and fig fruit, while lots of tobacco, rosemary and bay fill in throughout. Muscular and energetic, this is built for the cellar. Best from 2019 through 2030.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE BRUSSET

Gigondas Les Secrets de Montmirail 2015
94 points | \$63 | 28 cases imported | Red

Brimms with plum, boysenberry and raspberry reduction flavors, all carried by a solid but polished structure. Lots of enticing notes fill in on the finish. Best from 2018 through 2030.—*J.M.*

CLOS DU MONT-OLIVET

Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Cuvée du Papet 2015
94 points | \$63 | 1,000 cases made | Red

Lush and inviting, with the ripe plum, blackberry and cassis profile typical of the vintage, all backed by polished structure and anise, black tea and fruitcake flavors. Drink now through 2030.—*J.M.*

ITALY

CAIAROSSA

Toscana 2012
94 points | \$65 | 400 cases imported | Red

Hitting a sweet spot now, this red exhibits cherry, leather and spice flavors aligned to a dense profile. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and others. Drink now through 2025.—*B.S.*

FONTODI

Colli della Toscana Centrale Flaccianello 2014
94 points | \$110 | 1,500 cases imported | Red

Well-marked by toasty, vanilla-scented oak, this red boasts a core of cherry, floral, tobacco and graphite. Pure and intense, with fine harmony. Sangiovese. Best from 2021 through 2040.—*B.S.*

GRATTAMACCO

Bolgheri Superiore 2013
94 points | \$108 | 6,000 cases made | Red

Impressive, offering ripe, fading cherry and plum fruit, salty licorice, leather, herb and spice aromas and flavors. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Sangiovese. Drink now through 2027.—*B.S.*

TENUTA SETTE PONTI

Toscana Oreno 2015
94 points | \$110 | 1,200 cases imported | Red

A swath of tannins coats the finish. Black cherry, black currant and mineral flavors hold court. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Best from 2019 through 2032.—*B.S.*

CASTELLO DI AMA

Toscana Haiku 2014
93 points | \$60 | 100 cases imported | Red

Raspberry, black currant and violet notes grace this red, picking up tobacco, iron and wild herb details as this evolves. Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2020 through 2033.—*B.S.*

ANTINORI

Toscana Tignanello 2014
93 points | \$110 | 5,000 cases imported | Red

A black currant thread winds through this dense red, with cherry, leather, earth, iron and mineral flavors. Sangiovese, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2020 through 2033.—*B.S.*

BINDELLA

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano Tenuta Vallocaia Riserva 2013
93 points | \$48 | 75 cases imported | Red

A modern style, with spicy oak wrapped around a core of cherry. Lively and long, showing balance and accents of iron, tobacco and earth. Best from 2019 through 2029.—*B.S.*

CAIAROSSA

Cabernet Franc Toscana Essenzia 2012
93 points | \$205 | 200 cases imported | Red

Sweet, ripe cherry, black currant and leather flavors are the hallmarks of this sleek, intense red. Picks up some oak spice and tar elements on the firm finish. Drink now through 2024.—*B.S.*

TOLAINI

Toscana Tenuta S. Giovanni Valdisanti 2014
93 points | \$39 | 6,500 cases imported | Red

Ripe, packed with black cherry, blackberry, violet, iron and spice aromas and flavors. Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2020 through 2028.—*B.S.*

TENUTA DI TRECCIANO

Toscana Daniello 2015
93 points | \$35 | 100 cases imported | Red

A lean style, with black currant and blackberry fruit augmented by spice, earth and mineral notes. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Syrah. Best from 2020 through 2032.—*B.S.*

CLOS DES PAPES

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2015

98 points | \$109 | 850 cases imported | Red

This has a drop-dead gorgeous core of cassis and raspberry pâte de fruit flavors that holds center stage but still allows notes of Lapsang souchong tea, anise, incense and shiso leaf to chime in. Very long, with a sublime feel through the mineral-tinged finish. So seductive already, but this will cruise in the cellar. Drink now through 2040. *From France.—J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas Le Poste 2015

98 points | \$115 | 23 cases imported | Red

This sports a core of dark fig, blackberry and red currant paste, along with notes of tar, lavender, roasted juniper and tobacco. Shows heft and drive, yet remains remarkably refined, offering a long, precise chalk spine that runs from start to finish. A deft combination of power and elegance. Best from 2020 through 2040. *From France.—J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas Hominis Fides 2015

97 points | \$115 | 36 cases imported | Red

This has a packed core of red and black currant preserves and crushed plum fruit, inlaid liberally with lavender, juniper, bay and tobacco notes. Lots of grippy bittersweet cocoa and licorice root accents score the finish, which is seriously long. A brick house. Best from 2020 through 2040. *From France.—J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas Le Claux 2015

97 points | \$115 | 96 cases imported | Red

Dark and dense, with a baker's chocolate frame around an immense core of crushed plum, warm fig and boysenberry reduction flavors, while the back end brims with roasted apple wood, warm tar and licorice root notes. Will take some time to fully meld. Best from 2020 through 2040. *From France.—J.M.*

TORBRECK

The Laird Barossa Valley 2012

97 points | \$700 | 25 cases imported | Red

Powerful, polished and smooth, with heady aromas of sandalwood, sarsaparilla, pepper and cigar box, giving way to a core of dark fruit flavors and a slice of toasted date nut bread. Intense and persistent on the epic finish, but never loses a sense of elegance, with grace notes of Earl Grey tea and dried violet that linger. Shiraz. Drink now through 2035. *From Australia.—M.W.*

DOMAINE DES BOSQUETS

Gigondas La Colline... 2015

96 points | \$65 | 60 cases imported | Red

This is brimming with dark plum, blueberry, raspberry and boysenberry fruit flavors, all moving seamlessly together while the finish picks up a fine inlay of anise, black tea and chalky minerality. Pure and very long. Best from 2019 through 2032. *From France.—J.M.*

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 10 tasters count more than 220 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:

At large

Kim Marcus Senior editor, Napa

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat:

Argentina, California, Chile

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Spain

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Austria, Burgundy, Germany, Italy

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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, Champagne, Italy

Tim Fish Senior editor, Napa

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2001. Tasting beat: California, Oregon, Washington

Gillian Sciarretta Tasting coordinator, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2012. Tasting beat: France, Portugal

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