

Wine Spectator Insider

A Members-Only, Biweekly Publication

Marvin R. Shanken, *Editor and Publisher*

FIRST LOOK AT OUR EDITORS' MOST EXCITING NEW WINES

Australia's Barossa Valley is the source of the most exciting finds in this edition of the *Wine Spectator Insider*. Located in South Australia, not far from Adelaide, Barossa is one of the country's warmest winegrowing regions and is well-suited for the heat-loving Syrah grape. Four Barossa Shiraz are featured here, and all are outstanding, or even better—you'll find Harvey Steiman's review of a 97-point Shiraz from Two Hands winery on page 4, among the Hot Wines.

Bruce Sanderson assesses seven red Burgundies in this report. Three are ripe, fruit-forward Pinot Noirs from the hot 2003 vintage; four are 2004s, a very good but difficult vintage (hail storms in July and August reduced yields but put grapes in danger of both rot and delayed maturation) in which vintners who sorted carefully made concentrated, structured reds.

Also in this issue of the *Insider*, James Laube reviews a nice selection of outstanding reds and whites from California, including two Napa Chardonnays and a 94-point Bordeaux-style blend, and James Molesworth rates seven wines from France's Loire Valley.

Australia

Glen Eldon

Shiraz Barossa Dry Bore 2003

93 points | \$26 | 700 cases imported | Red

Rich, dense and beautifully focused, a big wine that somehow remains graceful, offering ripe black cherry, dried blueberry and sweet plum aromas and flavors. The finish is wrapped in a silky sari of sweet oak. Best from 2009 through 2020.—*H.S.*

Cape Barren

Grenache-Shiraz-Mourvèdre McLaren Vale 2004

92 points | \$24 | 224 cases imported | Red

This has tremendous presence, pouring its blueberry, plum, vanilla and dark chocolate flavors into a plush stream that lets the flavors sail on and on. Tannins are submerged well, and the structure feels like it could easily carry the intense flavors for a long time. Best from 2007 through 2015.—*H.S.*

Charles Melton

Cabernet Sauvignon Barossa Valley 2003

91 points | \$40 | 600 cases imported | Red

Dense, ripe and generous, a sensuous mouthful of cherries and spice, with lingering sweet oak and wet earth notes adding interest to the long, round finish, which is balanced by refined acidity. Drink now through 2013.—*H.S.*

d'Arenberg

Grenache McLaren Vale The Derelict Vineyard 2004

91 points | \$40 | 250 cases imported | Red

This has extra layers of fruit and spice, offering earth-tinged blackberry, cherry and Asian five spice character at the core, lingering beautifully on the fine-grained finish. Best from 2008 through 2014.—*H.S.*

John Duval

Plexus Barossa Valley 2004

91 points | \$35 | 750 cases imported | Red

Smooth and round, with a gamy edge to the ripe blackberry and pomegranate flavors, balanced with lively acidity and a nice touch of licorice and floral character as the finish lingers. Shiraz, Grenache, Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

California

Caymus

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Special Selection 2003
93 points | \$136 | 9,800 cases made | Red

Supple and harmonious, with rich, fleshy currant, blackberry, herb, mocha and dill, it picks up momentum and holds onto a tight focus through a long and satisfying finish. The tannins are rich and intense on the finish, boding well for short- to mid-term cellaring. Best from 2007 through 2014.—*J.L.*

Chasseur

Chardonnay Russian River Valley 2004
93 points | \$35 | 201 cases made | White

Exceptional. A beam of acidity gives this wine a lively backbone, with layers of intense pear, citrus, nutmeg, hazelnut and orange blossom. Finishes with zesty acidity, then gives the fruit a burst of flavor and a mouthwatering aftertaste.—*J.L.*

The Hess Collection

Chardonnay Napa Valley 2004
93 points | \$20 | 28,000 cases made | White

Intense, concentrated and tightly focused, with a creamy mouthfeel to the lively layers of citrus, green apple, melon and herb scents. Shows a hint of mineral and spice on the aftertaste. Great length and persistence.—*J.L.*

Pride

Syrah Sonoma County 2004
93 points | \$57 | 600 cases made | Red

An amazing wine that keeps sprinkling out new flavors. Firm, dense and marked by grapey Syrah flavors built around wild berry, pepper, spice, anise, sage and espresso bean. The tannins tighten up on the finish, giving it excellent structure. Drink now through 2012.—*J.L.*

Pride

Cabernet Sauvignon Sonoma-Napa Counties Reserve 2003
92 points | \$120 | 1,206 cases made | Red

Spice, red currant and blackberry aromas, turning taut and firm on the palate with mouthcoating tannins. Hints of mocha and vanilla bean add a nice flavor dimension and on the finish the fruit and tannins shine through. Best from 2009 through 2014.—*J.L.*

Lewis

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Reserve 2003
91 points | \$110 | 800 cases made | Red

Wonderful richness and complexity, especially for the vintage, with tiers of spice, currant, wild berry, blackberry, mineral and sage. Firms up on the finish, where the tannins flex their muscles, yet the aftertaste is supple and harmonious. Best from 2007 through 2012.—*J.L.*

Merus

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2003
91 points | \$160 | 800 cases made | Red

Very complete and harmonious, with rich, extracted yet polished currant, wild berry and blackberry flavors that are supple and focused. Shows plenty of depth and concentration and the tannins need time to settle, but it's all there. Best from 2008 through 2013.—*J.L.*

Hollywood & Vine

Chardonnay Napa Valley 2480 2005
90 points | \$45 | 830 cases made | White

Sharply focused, with a beam of lemon-lime, green apple, spice, citrus and tropical fruit notes, it's vibrant and mouthwatering, with a refreshingly clean finish that highlights the mineral and fruit flavors.—*J.L.*

PlumpJack

Syrah Napa Valley 2004
90 points | \$38 | 1,096 cases made | Red

Loads of berry aromas, with intense, vibrant blueberry, huckleberry and boysenberry sharing center stage, it firms up and shows off its concentration and depth of flavor that's sharply focused and long and persistent on the finish. Decant. Best from 2007 through 2012.—*J.L.*

France / Burgundy

Albert Bichot

Corton Clos des Maréchaudes Domaine du Pavillon 2003
93 points | \$85 | 75 cases imported | Red

Ripe, jammy aromas introduce this opulent, concentrated red. Black cherry and cassis are the main themes, with dark chocolate and tobacco lurking in the background. The sweet fruit and tannins duke it out on the finish. Best from 2008 through 2022.—*B.S.*

Deux Montille

Corton Renardes 2004
92 points | \$NA | NA cases made | Red

This is powerful and fresh, with wild herbs, cherry and chocolate aromas and flavors, a juicy texture and well-integrated tannins. Though youthful, all the components are there and this should start to

sing in a year or two. Fine length. Best from 2008 through 2018.—*B.S.*

Bernard Dugat-Py

Pommard La Levrière Vieilles Vignes 2003
92 points | \$145 | 25 cases imported | Red

A gorgeous red, very modern, with blackberry, violet and vanilla notes displayed against a lush texture. It's concentrated and stains the palate with its intense fruit and tannins. Best from 2007 through 2018.—*B.S.*

Albert Bichot

Pommard Clos des Ursulines Domaine du Pavillon 2003
91 points | \$80 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

Rich and sturdy, with a hint of menthol in the aroma, along with black cherry and licorice. Very dense and bolstered by stiff tannins, yet it's balanced and long. Best from 2008 through 2018.—*B.S.*

Vincent Sauvestre

Corton Maréchaudes 2004
91 points | \$58 | 50 cases imported | Red

Suave and polished, this red offers mint, red cherry, raspberry and mineral flavors matched to a lush texture. It's supple yet firm, with the mineral component emerging on the finish. Best from 2008 through 2015.—*B.S.*

Jean-Claude Belland

Corton Clos de la Vigne au Saint 2004
90 points | \$65 | 200 cases made | Red

A wild ride, with herbs, animal and wild berry aromas and flavors. It's on the leaner side, with plenty of grip and a chewy texture. It's a little tough, but there's a lot here, so be patient. Best from 2008 through 2015.—*B.S.*

Jean-Marc Bouley

Volnay Clos des Chênes 2004
90 points | \$57 | 140 cases made | Red

A big Volnay, this is dense and structured, with cherry, black currant and violet flavors. It's a little jumbled now, with plenty of structure hiding the fruit. Fine cherry and spice finish reveals its potential. Best from 2008 through 2016.—*B.S.*

France / Loire

Couly-Dutheil

Chinon Clos de l'Echo Crescendo 2003
93 points | \$60 | 100 cases imported | Red

Packed, muscular Chinon, with lots of bramble, blackberry, cassis bush, tobacco and dark olive paste

notes. Long finish sports tannins, mineral and dark fruit. Should age wonderfully. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

Prince Poniatowski

Vouvray Clos de l'Avenir 1997
93 points | \$34 | 150 cases imported | White

Mature up front, with burnished notes of lemon cream, dried pineapple and mango that are pushed by brighter, livelier notes of citrus peel, acacia flower and mineral on the back end. Sweet but refreshing.—*J.M.*

N. Joly

Savennières-Coulée de Serrant Clos de la Coulée de Serrant 2004
92 points | \$79 | 450 cases imported | White

Restrained, but very pure and focused, with a beam of ginger, quince and persimmon flavors that then ripples through a mineral finish. Deceptively long. This is rather tight now, so cellar to let the precision blossom. Best from 2008 through 2021.—*J.M.*

Domaine Richou

Coteaux de l'Aubance La Sélection 2004
92 points | \$22 | 300 cases imported | Dessert

Nice, alluring notes of powdered ginger, cigar smoke and persimmon lead the way for fig, brioche and mineral stretching out on the very elegant finish. Lovely harmony and precision. Drink now through 2016.—*J.M.*

N. Joly

Savennières-Roche Aux Moines Clos de la Bergerie 2004
91 points | \$46 | 225 cases imported | White

Has a chewy intensity to the peach pit, green almond, ginger, persimmon and humus notes, followed by crunchy acidity on the rich finish. Very open now, but will age easily. Drink now through 2021.—*J.M.*

N. Joly

Savennières Le Clos Sacrés 2004
90 points | \$29 | 500 cases imported | White

Very solid, with notes of lanolin, peach, fig and cardamom that fan out on top, while the acidity stays firm underneath.—*J.M.*

Domaine de Chatenoy

Menetou-Salon 2005
88 points | \$17 | 1,000 cases imported | White

Pungent herb aromas lead the way for tangy lemon peel, mineral and floral notes. Nice crisp finish brings you back for more.—*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, low-production wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

Two Hands

Shiraz Barossa Valley Ares 2004

97 points | \$152 | 417 cases imported | Red

Two Hands, which makes a stunning series of appellation-specific Shiraz wines, has been flirting with true greatness with previous vintages of this wine. The 2004 achieves it. Rich and generous with its silky tannins and expressive black cherry, blackberry, huckleberry and meaty spice notes flitting through the long, round, oak-scented finish. This has great vibrancy and detail, the finish lingering for days. Drink now through 2020. *From Australia.—H.S.*

Schild

Shiraz Barossa 2004

96 points | \$24 | 1,500 cases imported | Red

This practically radiates a range of aromas and flavors, balancing ripe cherry, blackberry and plum fruit with hints of minerals and sweet spices that sing for days on the finish. Tempting to drink, but you should wait. Best from 2008 through 2020. *From Australia.—H.S.*

Glaetzer

Shiraz Barossa Valley Bishop 2004

94 points | \$47 | 1,200 cases imported | Red

Smooth and round, with a fine zing of acidity to balance the rich, classic cherry, blackberry and licorice flavors, hinting at Provençal herbs and black pepper as the finish sails on and on. Beautifully balanced and harmonious, this is built to grow with age. Best from 2010 through 2020. *From Australia.—H.S.*

Pride

Claret Reserve Sonoma-Napa Counties 2003

94 points | \$120 | 402 cases made | Red

A classy effort, rich and polished, focused and complex, it serves up tiers of ripe currant, mineral, black cherry and plum flavors that fan out evenly on the palate, gaining richness and depth on the finish. Lots of finesse, grace and elegance. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2013. *From California.—J.L.*

Wine Spectator's Tastings

Wine Spectator reviews more than 12,000 wines each year; our senior editors comprise the most experienced staff of professional wine tasters of any publication in the world. Each editor specializes in the wines of specific regions; their initials identify the taster of each wine reviewed.

We always taste wines blind, in our offices in San Francisco, Napa, New York and Tuscany, and in the vineyard regions of Europe. This is your guarantee that a wine's reputation or price does not influence its score. We score wines using our 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: Southern 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

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: Loire Valley, Rhône Valley, South Africa, South America

Bruce Sanderson Tasting director, New York

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

Harvey Steiman Editor at large, San Francisco

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: Australia, New Zealand, Oregon, Washington

James Suckling European bureau chief, Italy

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1981. Tasting beat: Bordeaux, Italy, Port

Tasting staff: **Jo Cooke** (Veneto), **Daniel Sogg**