

# Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

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**CALIFORNIA CLASSICS, ITALIAN REDS AND MORE UP TO 95 POINTS:** You'll find here a cornucopia of wines like Cabernet, Chardonnay, bubbles and more from the Golden State, including Shafer's Hillside Select and Ridge's Monte Bello. Expressive Nebbiolos exude refinement and power from Piedmont stars like Antoniolo and Aldo Conterno (pictured). Plus, stellar Oregon Chardonnays show the state's talent with the grape, and high-end Argentine Malbecs will defy your expectations of the category. *Turn to page 4 for the six Hot Wines.*



Courtesy of Aldo Conterno

## ARGENTINA Malbec

### ACHÁVAL-FERRER

Malbec Mendoza Finca Mirador 2015

**94 points | \$150 | 300 cases imported | Red**

Elegant, with flavors of hot stone, dried berry and crushed red plum, backed by medium-grained tannins. Chocolate and spice notes show on the rich, mineral finish. Drink now through 2022.—*K.M.*

### BODEGA NOEMÍA DE PATAGONIA

Malbec Río Negro Valley 2016

**94 points | \$136 | 100 cases imported | Red**

Suave and refined, with a seductive minerality to the rich red plum, dark currant and black olive flavors. The finish is loaded with luscious dark chocolate and spicy notes. Drink now through 2024.—*K.M.*

### ACHÁVAL-FERRER

Malbec Mendoza Finca Bella Vista 2015

**93 points | \$150 | 200 cases imported | Red**

Intense and rich-tasting, with mouthfilling flavors of plum tart, cherry, mocha and Asian spice that blend easily in this mineral style. The creamy finish is long and luscious. Drink now through 2023.—*K.M.*

### VIÑA DOÑA PAULA

Malbec Tupungato Alluvia Parcel 2014

**93 points | \$100 | 90 cases imported | Red**

Rich, ripe and filled with dark plum, blackberry and boysenberry flavors that are luscious and intensely spiced. Cassis and dark chocolate notes fill the decadent finish, which lingers with chocolate mousse notes and hints of pepper. Drink now through 2024.—*K.M.*

### FINCAS PATAGONICAS

Malbec Mendoza Black Tears Tapiz 2014

**93 points | \$65 | 1,100 cases imported | Red**

Big and ripe, featuring concentrated raspberry, red plum and spiced cherry flavors. Pastry notes show midpalate, with a finish filled to the brim with chocolate and cream details and hints of white pepper. Drink now through 2023.—*K.M.*

### FAMILIA ZUCCARDI

Aluvional Paraje Altamira Mendoza 2015

**93 points | \$90 | 125 cases imported | Red**

A big, rich and powerful red, featuring fine-grained flavors of red currant, dark olive and dried blackberry. Mineral midpalate, with a pure-tasting and vibrant finish. Malbec. Drink now through 2023.—*K.M.*

## ACHÁVAL-FERRER

Malbec Mendoza Finca Altamira 2015

**92 points | \$150 | 300 cases imported | Red**

Rich, ripe and powerful, with concentrated dark plum and dark cherry flavors that are matched to engaging minerality. Mocha and Asian spice notes show on the peppery finish. Drink now through 2023.—*K.M.*

# CALIFORNIA

## DAVIS ESTATES

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Phase V 2015

**93 points | \$215 | 364 cases made | Red**

A warm, lush, polished style, with alluring cassis and blackberry reduction notes underscored by loam and warm ganache flavors. A flash of tobacco on the finish adds texture and range. Very serious juice. Best from 2020 through 2028.—*J.M.*

## RIDGE

Chardonnay Santa Cruz Mountains Monte Bello 2015

**93 points | \$80 | 475 cases made | White**

Powerfully structured, with intense smoke and spice notes to the apple, citrus and ripe tart flavors. Finishes long and rich, with buttery accents that linger with enticing savory overtones. Drink now through 2023.—*K.M.*

## ROEDERER ESTATE

Brut Rosé Anderson Valley L'Ermitage 2011

**93 points | \$75 | 480 cases made | Sparkling**

Delicate and maturing beautifully, with rose petal, strawberry, roasted nut and brioche flavors that sail on the elegant finish. Drink now.—*T.F.*

## SHAFER

Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District Hillside Select 2014

**93 points | \$295 | 2,400 cases made | Red**

This shows the dark sage and tobacco edge of the vintage, with a core of gently steeped plum and blackberry fruit emerging slowly. Smoky details pervade the finish, which displays a serious bolt of graphite. Best from 2021 through 2036.—*J.M.*

## EL MOLINO

Chardonnay Rutherford 2016

**92 points | \$60 | 705 cases made | White**

Vibrant acidity backs the plush flavors of apple pastry, red peach and ripe pear that are generously spiced. The creamy finish is long and pure-tasting. Drink now through 2022.—*K.M.*

## GARY FARRELL

Chardonnay Russian River Valley Russian River Selection 2016

**92 points | \$35 | 5,203 cases made | White**

Powerful, with finely detailed dried apricot, apple and green pear flavors, supported by firm acidity. The broad finish offers buttery notes that are well-integrated with spicy accents. Best from 2020 through 2024.—*K.M.*

## KENEFICK RANCH

Merlot Calistoga 2015

**92 points | \$50 | 400 cases made | Red**

Elegant and rich-tasting, with focused cherry and raspberry flavors supported by medium-grained tannins. Luscious spicy accents fill the finish. Drink now through 2022.—*K.M.*

## KOSTA BROWNE

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Rosella's Vineyard 2016

**92 points | \$95 | 700 cases made | Red**

Focused and juicy, featuring effusive cherry, raspberry and red plum flavors, backed by sleek tannins and acidity. The luscious finish lingers with vibrant minerality. Drink now through 2023.—*K.M.*

## LEWIS

Chardonnay Russian River Valley Sonoma 2017

**92 points | \$55 | 1,200 cases made | White**

Lusciously rich, with concentrated spice and pastry notes to the ripe pear, apple and peach cobbler flavors. Features a juicy, finely textured finish. Drink now through 2021.—*K.M.*

## ROBERT MONDAVI

Fumé Blanc Oakville 2015

**92 points | \$40 | 2,815 cases made | White**

Complex, offering a mix of beeswax, honeysuckle and dried mango flavors up front, which give way to poached pear and apricot notes at the core, with spice, toast and almond butter edges mingling. Wonderful succulent acidity makes the finish just as powerful as the first aromatic sniff. Drink now.—*M.W.*

# ITALY Piedmont

## ANTONIOLO

Gattinara 2013

**94 points | \$47 | 525 cases imported | Red**

A smoky, vegetal element underscores the fading cherry, strawberry, wild herb and floral flavors in this vivid red. The racy structure drives the energetic finish, which echoes the mix of fruit and vegetal notes, adding a mineral accent. Drink now through 2033.—*B.S.*

## GIOVANNI ROSSO

Barolo Serra 2014

**94 points | \$89 | 150 cases imported | Red**

Hay and camphor aromas shade the core of cherry and berry fruit, along with loam, leather, tobacco and juniper accents. This is racy and tense, with energy and balance, followed by a long, resonant finish. Needs time. Best from 2023 through 2043.—*B.S.*

## ELIO ALTARE

Barolo Vigna Bricco Cerretta Riserva 2012

**93 points | \$130 | 160 cases imported | Red**

Expressive aromas of licorice, sweet spices, coffee and cherry mark this muscular red. The assertive tannins should fall into line in time. Excellent length. Best from 2022 through 2043.—*B.S.*

## GIACOMO BREZZA & FIGLI

Barolo 2014

**93 points | \$46 | 185 cases imported | Red**

Cherry, earth, leather and woody aromas and flavors denote this strict, solidly structured red. Shows energy and vividness, with hints of tar and licorice on the lingering aftertaste. Best from 2022 through 2036.—*B.S.*

## CASCINA BONGIOVANNI

Barolo Pernanno 2014

**93 points | \$76 | 150 cases imported | Red**

A tightly wound version, this red features cherry, plum, eucalyptus, iron and tobacco flavors on lockdown. The trim, compact finish isn't yielding much today. Shows a bit more volume and sweet fruit than many of its peers. Best from 2023 through 2042.—*B.S.*

## CERETTO

Barolo Prapò 2014

**93 points | \$170 | 50 cases imported | Red**

Though slim, this has everything in the right proportions: cherry and strawberry fruit, iron, tobacco, spice and tar flavors, refined tannins and an elegant frame. Harmonious finish. Best from 2022 through 2038.—*B.S.*

## GAJA

Barolo Conteisa 2014

**93 points | \$255 | 200 cases imported | Red**

Though young and still a bit rough around the edges, this is harmonious, featuring cherry, berry, herb and tar aromas and flavors. The finish is long and vibrant, with earth and mineral elements. Best from 2021 through 2035.—*B.S.*

## BARTOLO MASCARELLO

Barolo 2014

**93 points | \$150 | 899 cases made | Red**

Camphor, fresh earth, incense and tobacco notes swirl around the core of cherry, rendering this aromatic. Firm on the palate, yet balanced, with a lingering aftertaste of sweet fruit, hay and tobacco. Best from 2022 through 2035.—*B.S.*

## MASSOLINO

Barolo 2014

**93 points | \$53 | 2,500 cases imported | Red**

Plum, earth, hay, leather, licorice, tar and iron flavors are the hallmarks of this powerful red. Offers a dense matrix of tannins, but the finish is long and finds equilibrium in the end. Best from 2024 through 2043.—*B.S.*

## MASSOLINO

Barolo Vigna Rionda Riserva 2012

**93 points | \$151 | 100 cases imported | Red**

Emphasizes flavors of underbrush, wild herb and leather, yet offers a baseline of ripe fruit. Prominent dusty tannins tip the balance toward the dry side. In a difficult phase, but I would give this the benefit of the doubt. Best from 2023 through 2042.—*B.S.*

## OLIM BAUDA

Nizza 2015

**93 points | \$40 | 450 cases imported | Red**

A polished, fruit-focused red, exuding blackberry, black currant, violet and spice flavors. The tannins are present yet well-meshed, and the acidity keeps this in the groove through the lengthy finish. Drink now through 2025.—*B.S.*

## OREGON Chardonnay

### DOMAINE ROY & FILS

Chardonnay Dundee Hills Incline 2016

**94 points | \$48 | 122 cases made | White**

Expressive, elegant and sleekly layered, offering Meyer lemon, river stone and toasty spice flavors that take on richness toward the finish. Drink now through 2022.—*T.F.*

### ALEXANA

Chardonnay Willamette Valley Signature 2015

**93 points | \$65 | 269 cases made | White**

Polished and harmonious, with richly layered Asian pear, orange peel and spice flavors that glide on a long finish. Drink now through 2022.—*T.F.*

### LAVINEA

Chardonnay Yamhill-Carlton District Lazy River Vineyard 2016

**93 points | \$45 | 220 cases made | White**

Polished and supple, with delicately complex and alluring pear and star fruit flavors, accented by crushed stone and spice notes. Drink now through 2021.—*T.F.*

### DOMAINE SERENE

Chardonnay Dundee Hills Evenstad Reserve 2016

**92 points | \$65 | 1,938 cases made | White**

Sleek and graceful, with floral apple and Meyer lemon flavors accented by lively acidity and spice hints that linger on the finish. Drink now through 2023.—*T.F.*

### EVENING LAND

Chardonnay Eola-Amity Hills La Source Seven Springs Estate 2016

**92 points | \$75 | 468 cases made | White**

Sleek and vibrant, featuring a lively and focused structure that offers taut lemon and apple flavors, with exotic and spicy lees accents that linger on the finish. Drink now.—*T.F.*

### LAVINEA

Chardonnay Eola-Amity Hills Elton Vineyard 2016

**92 points | \$60 | 303 cases made | White**

Shows polish and precision, with expressive apple, crushed stone and toffee accents that build richness on the long finish. Drink now through 2022.—*T.F.*

# 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.

## ANTONIOLO

Gattinara Le Castelle 2013

**95 points | \$65 | 80 cases imported | Red**

Linear in profile, taut and racy. The cherry, berry, mineral, tar and tobacco notes are backed by a vibrant structure. This is all about purity and refinement, with intensity driving this to a long aftertaste. Best from 2020 through 2036. From Italy.—*B.S.*

## ALDO CONTERNO

Barolo Colonnello 2014

**95 points | \$175 | 100 cases imported | Red**

Notes of cinnamon, cherry, sandalwood and vanilla introduce this dense, brooding red. Darker fruit flavors of black cherry and plum mingle with leather, tobacco and spice details as this plays out on the palate. Powerful and complex, yet needs time to absorb the new oak. Best from 2023 through 2042. From Italy.—*B.S.*

## ALDO CONTERNO

Barolo Granbussia Riserva 2009

**95 points | \$600 | 50 cases imported | Red**

A haunting bouquet of incense, sandalwood, cedar, leather, mushroom and tar swirls around a core of ripe cherry and plum flavors. This is rich and sumptuous, yet still very solid and dense, with time to give. The finish goes on for what seems like minutes. Drink now through 2036. From Italy.—*B.S.*

## ROEDERER ESTATE

Brut Anderson Valley L'Ermitage 2012

**95 points | \$48 | 4,217 cases made | Sparkling**

Extravagant, yet balanced and refined, with lush, crisp brioche, fresh ginger and spice, roasted hazelnut and Asian pear flavors that fan out on the lengthy finish. Drink now through 2020. From California.—*T.F.*

## GIOVANNI ROSSO

Barolo Ester Canale Vigna Rionda 2014

**95 points | \$600 | 25 cases imported | Red**

Packed with sweet, ripe cherry, strawberry, floral and mineral aromas and flavors, this is shaded by accents of earth, woody underbrush and tobacco. Sleek and racy, this persists with energy through the resonant finish. A terrific expression of the vintage. Best from 2023 through 2043. From Italy.—*B.S.*

## VIETTI

Barolo Villero Riserva 2010

**95 points | \$450 | 58 cases imported | Red**

A harmonious red, this features expressive aromas of rose, cherry, licorice, tar and tobacco. The dense, refined tannins are beginning to mellow, and this is starting to reveal its potential. Still has a ways to go, so forget about it for another two to three years. Best from 2021 through 2043. From Italy.—*B.S.*

## 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 more than 16,000 wines each year; more than 380,000 reviews are available in our online database. Together, our 11 tasting editors count more than 250 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).

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#### 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