

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

Classic California Cabernet-based blends top this edition of *Wine Spectator's Insider*. Two Bordeaux-style blends from Napa Valley and one from Sonoma earn 95 points or more this week; you'll find all of them among the Hot Wines, on page 4. Also from California, James Laube reviews a pair of Russian River Pinot Noirs along with a dozen other Napa Cabernets, and Tim Fish finds an outstanding California sparkler.

From France's Northern Rhône Valley, James Molesworth covers eight Syrah-based reds from the 2007 and 2006 vintages in Cornas, including a classic. Harvey Steiman has new reviews from both Oregon and Washington as well this week: Six outstanding Oregon Pinot Noirs are here, and a grab bag of Washington reds features Cabernets, Sangioveses and a Merlot.

California

COLGIN

Cariad Napa Valley 2006

94 points | \$290 | 600 cases made | Red

Aromas of ripe, complex currant, plum and black cherry show a dry, loamy earth edge on the palate. Full-bodied, deep and focused, this is well-structured, with chewy tannins and a long, lingering finish. To be released early 2010. Best from 2011 through 2017.—J.L.

COLGIN

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Tychson Hill Vineyard 2006

93 points | \$290 | 250 cases made | Red

A rich, savory style, with complex currant, wild berry, cedar, herb and spice flavors, shaded by toasty oak. Full-bodied and tightly wound, structured and persistent, ending with firm tannins and a mineral edge. To be released early 2010. Best from 2010 through 2017.—J.L.

PAUL HOBBS

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Cuvée Agustina Lindsay Estate Vineyard 2007

93 points | \$125 | 243 cases made | Red

Ripe and complex, plush and full-bodied, this well-structured version shows supple, spicy plum, black cherry and wild berry fruit, picking up a pleasing earthy cola edge on the finish. Drink now through 2013.—J.L.

PAUL HOBBS

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Lindsay Estate Vineyard 2007

93 points | \$85 | 597 cases made | Red

Starts out smooth and spicy, with supple plum and black cherry fruit, before picking up a pleasant earthy cola flavor, gaining depth and structure and ending with a long, elegant finish. Drink now through 2013.—J.L.

MELKA

Métisse Napa Valley 2006

93 points | \$125 | 475 cases made | Red

Offers wonderful purity of flavor, exhibiting ripe plum, cherry and blackberry fruit shaded by light toasty oak. Elegant and concentrated, this ends with a delicate mix of fruit, oak and fine-grained tannins. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2016.—J.L.

BENNETT LANE

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Reserve 2006

92 points | \$95 | 850 cases made | Red

Tight, focused and well-structured, with a firm band of cedar- and mineral-laced currant, graphite, herb and cherry. Gains complexity and depth before ending with ripe, chewy tannins. Best from 2010 through 2017.—J.L.

GIRARD

Cabernet Sauvignon Diamond Mountain District 2006
92 points | \$79 | 781 cases made | Red

Big, ripe and flavorful, with intense currant, berry, spice, cedar and sage. At points, this full-bodied wine turns fleshy, but then just as quickly tightens, ending with a mix of berry and herb. Best from 2010 through 2018.—J.L.

HESTAN

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2006
92 points | \$120 | 443 cases made | Red

Dusty berry, savory herb, mineral and sage are full-bodied and concentrated, focused and balanced. A big yet juicy and expressive style that ends with firm, minerally tannins. Best from 2010 through 2016.—J.L.

JOHN ANTHONY

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2006
92 points | \$55 | 2,062 cases made | Red

Bold, rich and extracted, with dense, concentrated cherry, currant, fresh earth, mineral and sage. Full-blown and well-structured, ending with chewy tannins. Best from 2010 through 2016.—J.L.

MUMM NAPA

DVX Napa Valley 2001
92 points | \$55 | 7,330 cases made | Sparkling

Delicately complex at first, building power and richness. Aromas of Asian pear, toasty spice and loam lead to layered lemon curd, hazelnut and brioche flavors that balance crisp acidity with a luscious texture. Drink now through 2014.—T.F.

REALM

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley The Bard 2006
92 points | \$85 | 160 cases made | Red

Pure, rich, focused and concentrated, with a supple, graceful mix of ripe plum, currant and black cherry fruit that's both rich and elegant, graceful and balanced, ending with a long, persistent finish. Drink now through 2017.—J.L.

ROCCA

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2006
92 points | \$75 | 806 cases made | Red

Tightly wound, with a mix of savory herb, dried currant and berry, cedar, tobacco and spice. Full-bodied and balanced, if restrained, this is slow to unwind, but as it does it reveals depth and complexity. The tannins clamp down on the finish. Decant for now. Best from 2010 through 2016.—J.L.

SELENE

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Dead Fred Vineyard 2006
92 points | \$55 | 580 cases made | Red

Wonderful aromas and flavors are built around roasted herb, dried currant, sage, mineral and dusty berry, but it's the complex, harmonious mix of these flavors that makes this so compelling. Ends with drying tannins. Drink now through 2016.—J.L.

WINTER

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2006
92 points | \$150 | 582 cases made | Red

Firm, ripe, intense and concentrated, focused on a core of earthy currant, dried berry, mineral, sage and herb, which are woven together in an intricate way. Ends with chewy yet polished tannins. Best from 2011 through 2017.—J.L.

COLGIN

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Herb Lamb Vineyard 2006
91 points | \$290 | 160 cases made | Red

Tight and herbal, with gritty tannins, but also a deep, rich concentration of earthy currant, sage and savory berry flavors. Holds onto its tannic muscle through the finish. Needs aeration. To be released early 2010. Best from 2010 through 2017.—J.L.

France Rhône

DOMAINE DU COULET

Cornas Billes Noires 2007
94 points | \$85 | 383 cases made | Red

This moves between racy and muscular, with very invigorating acidity carrying the dark briar, tobacco, pastis and crushed plum flavors. Long and driven, with nearly crackling minerality stretching it all out, as hints of lavender, rosemary and iron echo on and on. Best from 2010 through 2020.—J.M.

THIERRY ALLEMAND

Cornas Chaillot 2006
93 points | \$65 | 500 cases made | Red

This is saturated with silky cassis, blackberry and plum fruit, while additional notes of lavender, iron and sweet tapenade fill in the background. Powerful, but fresh and superlong. A great, pure rendering of *terroir*. Best from 2010 through 2020.—J.M.

DOMAINE DU COULET

Cornas Les Terrasses du Serre 2007
93 points | \$60 | 350 cases made | Red

This is a whole other ball game—ripe and racy, with an extra dimension to the violet and bluebell aromas and layers of crushed plum, blackberry, fig, dark olive and iron, all coursing through the superfresh, driven finish. Drink now through 2018.—J.M.

ERIC & JOËL DURAND

Cornas Confidence 2007
93 points | \$59 | 30 cases imported | Red

This is driven by invigorating acidity, lending an almost crunchy feel to the pastis, crushed plum, blackberry and spice cake notes. Turns silkier as this moves through the finish, which is long and mineral-filled. Best from 2010 through 2019.—J.M.

ERIC & JOËL DURAND

Cornas Empreintes 2007

92 points | \$45 | 300 cases imported | Red

Dark and reserved, with mulled cherry and plum fruit held in check for now by sweet tapenade, licorice root and tobacco notes. The long, muscular finish has ample toasty grip. Best from 2010 through 2016.—*J.M.*

ERIC & JOËL DURAND

Cornas Prémices 2007

92 points | \$35 | 200 cases imported | Red

A very sleek, modern style, with gorgeous, silky, racy mouthfeel to the layers of pastis, plum, boysenberry and sweet spice notes. Plenty of iron-filled grip lurks in the background, while the finish is already stretched out nicely. Drink now through 2016.—*J.M.*

PHILIPPE & VINCENT JABOULET

Cornas 2007

91 points | \$80 | 75 cases imported | Red

A plump, juicy style, with ripe, enticing plum, blackberry, grilled herb and well-integrated toast notes backed by a rounded, lightly buttery edge on the finish. Drink now through 2016.—*J.M.*

Oregon

BERGSTRÖM

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Durant Vineyard Oregon Old Vine Series 2007

92 points | \$55 | 95 cases made | Red

This is rich and velvety, yet retains a smooth, open texture, letting the creamy, mocha-enhanced red berry and plum flavors emerge easily and ride the polished tannins to a long finish. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

BERGSTRÖM

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Bergström Vineyard 2007

91 points | \$75 | 1,055 cases made | Red

Smooth and velvety, offering a generous mouthful of cherry and raspberry fruit, shaded with hints of mocha and spice as the finish lingers effortlessly against lightly crisp tannins. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

BOEDECKER

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Cherry Grove Vineyard 2006

91 points | \$50 | 50 cases made | Red

Smooth and polished, this brims with raspberry and cherry fruit that's buffed and refined on the finish, letting the flavors soar. Drink now through 2013.—*H.S.*

DE LANCELLOTTI

Pinot Noir Chehalem Mountains 2007

91 points | \$65 | 250 cases made | Red

Firm in texture, with raspberry and strawberry flavors rolling easily over a bed of fine tannins, picking up floral and bay leaf notes as the finish lingers. Best from 2010 through 2015.—*H.S.*

ANDREW RICH

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Reserve 2006

91 points | \$45 | 70 cases made | Red

This lively Pinot is bright and juicy, brimming with blackberry fruit that's shaded with cardamom and cream as the finish lingers easily. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

BOEDECKER

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Momtazi Vineyard 2006

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

Polished and lively, this is bright with blackberry and raspberry fruit, hinting at mint as the finish lingers. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

Washington

GRAND RÊVE

Collaboration Series I Ciel Du Cheval Vineyard Red Mountain 2005

92 points | \$55 | 198 cases made | Red

Firm, focused and distinctive for the hot brick overtones to its cherry and tobacco flavors, packed nicely into a package tightly wrapped with a layer of prickly tannins. The fruit wins in the end, as the finish lingers elegantly. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2011 through 2015.—*H.S.*

LEONETTI

Sangiovese Walla Walla Valley 2006

92 points | \$60 | 961 cases made | Red

Polished, refined and open-textured, brimming with strawberry, raspberry and peppery floral flavors that flow easily through the long, expressive finish. Drink now through 2016.—*H.S.*

COVINGTON

Cabernet Sauvignon Red Mountain Artisan Series Klipsun Vineyard 2006

91 points | \$55 | 150 cases made | Red

Ripe and rich, this is distinctive for the red clay overtones that weave through the cherry and spice flavors, sailing easily through a veil of snappy tannins that envelop the refined, expressive finish. Best from 2010 through 2018.—*H.S.*

LEONETTI

Merlot Walla Walla Valley 2007

91 points | \$70 | 2,389 cases made | Red

Firm in texture, with a tight grip of tannins on the smoky blackberry and currant flavors, persisting on the finish. Needs time to soften. Best from 2011 through 2017.—*H.S.*

MANNINA

Sangiovese Walla Walla Valley Seven Hills Vineyard 2007

90 points | \$22 | 372 cases made | Red

Smooth and round, this is ripe with black cherry and floral flavors. Balances the tarry fruit against lively acidity, lingering well. Drink now through 2012.—*H.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.

COLGIN

IX Estate Napa Valley 2006

97 points | \$290 | 1,500 cases made | Red

A stunning effort that offers a rich, full-bodied, layered band of ripe currant and green and black olive, with hints of herb and spice. Expands into a long, deep, penetrating finish, echoing chocolate brownie. Best from 2010 through 2018. *From California.*—J.L.

THIERRY ALLEMAND

Cornas Reynard 2006

95 points | \$80 | 500 cases made | Red

This offers bright, almost piercing lavender and iron notes backed by racy plum, blackberry and boysenberry fruit flavors. Lots of underlying acidity extends the racy finish, with echoes of minerality, while the dark, muscular fruit expands effortlessly in the glass, showing a weight and dimension that sets this apart. Best from 2010 to 2022. *From France.*—J.M.

DALLA VALLE

Maya Napa Valley 2006

95 points | \$200 | 300 cases made | Red

Tight, firm and structured, with a rich, focused beam of blackberry, black cherry, currant, herb and anise. Full-bodied, intense and concentrated, this unfolds slowly and enticingly to reveal extra dimensions of complexity and nuance, getting better with every sip. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2010 through 2017. *From California.*—J.L.

PETER MICHAEL

Les Pavots Knights Valley 2006

95 points | \$175 | 2,730 cases made | Red

Supple and harmonious, with layers of ripe plum, currant, black licorice, cedar and cigar box that are evenly distributed. Rich and full-bodied without being heavy, this retains its focus and elegance, ending with a long, graceful finish and an espresso bean note. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2010 through 2016. *From California.*—J.L.

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

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Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 14 people in three offices. They work together to review more than 18,000 wines each year, more than any other publication. Together, our seven senior tasters count more than 140 years of tasting experience.

We always taste wine blind in our offices in Napa, New York and Tuscany. 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, 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, Chile, Loire Valley, Rhône Valley, South Africa

Bruce Sanderson Tasting director, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: 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:

Tim Fish (California),

Alison Napjus (Alsace),

MaryAnn Worobiec (California)

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