

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

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SOUTHERN RHÔNE REDS, OREGON PINOT NOIRS AND MORE UP TO 99 POINTS: Incredible gems from Rhône stars Domaine St.-Préfert, Henri Bonneau and Château de St.-Cosme steal the show here with rocketing reds from Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Gigondas. A whole lot of premium bubbly is hitting the shelves ahead of the holiday season, like these vintage-dated California and Champagne powerhouses. Plus, don't miss this selection of expressive Oregon Pinot favorites. A total of 18 wines here received 95 points or higher. *Turn to page 4 for the six Hot Wines.*



Isabel Ferrando of Domaine St.-Préfert

CALIFORNIA Sparkling

SCHRAMSBERG

J. Schram Late Disgorged North Coast 2000
94 points | \$185 | 300 cases made | Sparkling

Delicate yet rich, with luxurious and mature baked apple, roasted hazelnut and toasted brioche flavors that slowly unfurl on a lingering finish. Drink now.—*T.F.*

DOMAINE CARNEROS

Brut Carneros 2014
93 points | \$33 | 24,000 cases made | Sparkling

Dynamic yet elegantly refined, with expressive Asian pear, raspberry and toasted spice flavors that build vibrancy toward a long, steely finish. Drink now through 2019.—*T.F.*

DOMAINE CARNEROS

Brut Carneros Estate 2013
93 points | \$35 | 7,000 cases made | Sparkling

Impeccably balanced and sleek, with floral strawberry and red apple flavors laced with fresh ginger, steely mineral and blanched almond notes. Drink now.—*T.F.*

SCHRAMSBERG

J. Schram North Coast 2009
93 points | \$120 | 2,370 cases made | Sparkling

Dynamic and polished, with expressive Meyer lemon and cinnamon nut roll aromas and plush and luxurious baked apple and fresh ginger flavors that glide on a long finish. Drink now through 2019.—*T.F.*

SCHRAMSBERG

Reserve North Coast 2009
93 points | \$120 | 1,923 cases made | Sparkling

Rich and silky, with a core of supple apple, strawberry and nutty brioche flavors that build on a long, lingering finish. Drink now through 2019.—*T.F.*

FRANCE Champagne

SALON

Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne Le Mesnil 2007
94 points | \$672 | 1,100 cases imported | Sparkling

A fresh and elegant Champagne, with a light, pleasing plushness to the mousse. This weaves subtle notes of fleshy mirabelle plum and nectarine fruit, preserved lemon and pastry dough with a chalky, mineral underpinning that lingers on the finish. Drink now through 2028.—*A.N.*

HENRIOT

Brut Champagne Cuvée Hemera 2005

93 points | \$200 | 250 cases imported | Sparkling

Rich hints of baked plum and marzipan are enlivened by sleek, well-knit acidity in this harmonious Champagne. The fine, lively mousse carries flavors of poached quince, honeysuckle, smoked hazelnut and lemon pith. Drink now through 2028.—*A.N.*

PHILIPPONNAT

Extra Brut Champagne Grand Blanc 2008

93 points | \$106 | 1,000 cases imported | Sparkling

Rich minerality, accompanied by lots of saline and chalk notes, heralds this tightly knit Champagne. The powerful backbone of acidity is finely meshed with a range of delicate yellow plum, toast point, pickled ginger and preserved lemon notes. Offers a long, racy finish. Disgorged August 2017. Drink now through 2033.—*A.N.*

POL ROGER

Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne 2009

93 points | \$133 | 200 cases imported | Sparkling

Crisp and minerally, this tightly meshed, linear Champagne layers flavors of mirabelle plum, biscuit, smoke, white cherry and pickled ginger on the lacy mousse. Racy finish. Drink now through 2030.—*A.N.*

TAITTINGER

Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne Comtes de Champagne 2007

93 points | \$216 | 1,250 cases imported | Sparkling

Elegant and toasty, with a firm backbone of acidity structuring the brioche, lemon zest, poached apricot and spun honey flavors as they ride the lacy bead. Grated ginger and chalk notes detail the lively finish. Drink now through 2028.—*A.N.*

VILMART

Brut Champagne Cuvée Rubis NV

93 points | \$87 | 320 cases imported | Sparkling

A mouthwatering rosé Champagne, with a fine, lively mousse and a delicate skein of spice unraveling through the flavors of white peach, blood orange granita, saffron and almond biscotti. Offers a lingering, chalk-tinged finish. Disgorged November 2016. Drink now through 2022.—*A.N.*

FRANCE

Rhône / Châteauneuf-du-Pape & Gigondas

DOMAINE LA BARROCHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Pure 2015

96 points | \$100 | 50 cases imported | Red

This has the ripe profile of the vintage, pulling blood orange, damson plum, cherry and red currant preserve flavors together and supporting them with enticing apple wood, dried tobacco, savory and sanguine notes before letting them sail through the finish on a long iron accent. Built for the cellar. Best from 2020 through 2040.—*J.M.*

LUCIEN & ANDRÉ BRUNEL

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Cailloux Cuvée Centenaire 2015

96 points | \$230 | 50 cases imported | Red

Ripe and very solid, with a core of warm fig, fruitcake, mulled plum and roasted alder notes rolled together, carried by a lively mineral streak and backed by sanguine, bergamot and savory flashes on the finish. This has lots of character, showing excellent range and cut through the finish. Best from 2020 through 2040.—*J.M.*

LE CLOS DU CAILLOU

Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Réserve 2016

96 points | \$175 | 42 cases imported | Red

This has the ripe, pure and racy profile of the vintage, sporting a long beam of raspberry, plum and cherry pâte de fruit flavors scored with floral, incense and tea notes along the way. Fresh acidity lets the elements ripple nicely through the finish. A beauty. Best from 2020 through 2040.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE FERRANDO

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Colombis 2016

96 points | \$90 | 134 cases imported | Red

This is warm and very alluring, featuring steeped plum, blackberry and fig fruit flavors forming the core, underscored with ganache, roasted alder and smoldering tobacco notes. The alder edge pierces the finish, adding length and drive, while mouthwatering acidity ripples all around. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DE LA MORDORÉE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Reine des Bois 2016

96 points | \$140 | 90 cases imported | Red

A strapping, richly layered wine, teeming with blackberry, black currant and boysenberry paste flavors wrapped in a lively black licorice note. Stays juicy and energetic throughout, with light bramble and graphite nuances checking in on the very long and powerfully built finish. Best from 2020 through 2040.—*J.M.*

ROTEM & MOUNIR SAOUMA

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Omnia 2015

96 points | \$100 | 50 cases imported | Red

This is sublime, with beguiling rooibos tea, blood orange and sandalwood aromas out front followed by a long and silky display of lightly mulled cherry, damson plum and raspberry fruit flavors. Light shiso leaf and sanguine notes lace up the finish while the fruit echoes admirably. Best from 2020 through 2040.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE BRUSSET

Gigondas Les Hauts de Montmirail 2016

95 points | \$45 | 60 cases imported | Red

Very solid, with a focused beam of dark plum, blackberry and boysenberry pâte de fruit flavors supported by grippy bramble and tar notes and backed by a lingering mineral edge. A roasted apple wood accent frames all the elements. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DE CRISTIA

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes 2016

95 points | \$95 | 150 cases imported | Red

Ripe, but bright and fresh, with a lively mix of raspberry, red currant and bitter plum coulis flavors streaming in, pulling light tea, singed sandalwood and anise notes along. Shows lovely detail and well-embedded acidity through the finish. Drink now through 2035.—*J.M.*

ROTEM & MOUNIR SAOUMA

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Arioso 2014

95 points | \$200 | 12 cases imported | Red

Alluring, with blood orange, raspberry and bergamot notes that glide through on silky but persistent tannins, while black tea, dried anise and incense notes weave in and around them. A refined mineral echo pierces the otherwise very seductive finish, making for an intriguing contrast. An impressive effort for the vintage. Drink now through 2035.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU SIXTINE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2016

95 points | \$70 | 500 cases imported | Red

Sappy and intense, with a terrific beam of dark plum, boysenberry and blackberry fruit. The long finish shows a gorgeous graphite underpinning while flashes of Turkish coffee, licorice snap and roasted apple wood fill in. Great energy. Best from 2020 through 2040.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas 2016

95 points | \$58 | 900 cases imported | Red

Perfumed and stylish, with rooibos tea, blood orange and cherry aromas and flavors weaving through, infused with sandalwood, anise, bay leaf, sage and pepper notes along the way. A very fine and persistent chalky spine supports it all. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

LE VIEUX DONJON

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2016

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

This offers a blitz of bay leaf and juniper notes out front, followed by a racy and tightly coiled core of red and black currant, damson plum and cherry fruit flavors. Lots of brisk iron and *garrigue* accents rifle through the finish. Clear, precise and streamlined, this should age wonderfully. Best from 2020 through 2040.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE LA BARROCHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2015

94 points | \$60 | 500 cases imported | Red

Ripe and warm in feel, featuring steeped plum and red currant fruit wrapped with melted red licorice, apple wood and bay leaf notes. The focused finish has ample spine, with a strong bolt of iron at the end. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DE CRISTIA

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Renaissance 2016

94 points | \$75 | 150 cases imported | Red

Warm and inviting, with waves of dark plum, cassis and blackberry puree pouring forth, inlaid with light ganache and graphite threads. The plush and velvety feel through the finish puts this squarely in the hedonist camp. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

VIGNOBLES DIFFONTY

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée du Vatican 2016

94 points | \$40 | 130 cases imported | Red

Solid, with a core of steeped raspberry, blackberry and plum fruit, laced with lavender, tobacco and singed chestnut hints. The grippy finish lets the fruit pump through while showing a tug of tarry earth. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE SANTA DUC

Gigondas Les Hautes Garrigues 2015

94 points | \$75 | 200 cases imported | Red

Delightfully ripe, with a mélange of blackberry, black cherry and fig compote flavors melded together, backed by licorice root, roasted alder and bittersweet cocoa notes that add range through the finish. A hefty style, but has the detail to match. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU SIXTINE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2015

94 points | \$70 | 1,300 cases made | Red

This is in a slightly rugged style with bramble and tobacco notes framing a core of steeped cherry, plum and red currant fruit flavors. Lots of brick dust and singed cedar score the finish, while the fruit pumps through. Rock solid. Best from 2020 through 2040.—*J.M.*

ST.-COSME

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2015

94 points | \$55 | 680 cases imported | Red

A focused, slightly taut style, with a good dose of singed cedar and alder framing the core of red currant, plum and bitter cherry paste flavors. Lots of bay leaf, rosemary and sanguine accents fill in on the finish, which keeps a cedary edge. For fans of the old-school style. Best from 2020 through 2035.—*J.M.*

OREGON Pinot Noir

ZENA CROWN VINEYARD

Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills The Sum 2015

94 points | \$75 | 412 cases made | Red

Shows precision and expression, with refined black cherry and blueberry flavors accented by crushed stone and dark spice notes, building complexity toward polished tannins. Drink now through 2024.—*T.F.*

ALEXANA

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Revana Vineyard 2016

93 points | \$49 | 2,533 cases made | Red

Plush and expressive, with supple raspberry and cherry flavors accented by orange peel and spicy cinnamon details. Drink now through 2024.—*T.F.*

TRISAETUM

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Wichmann Dundee Estate 2016

93 points | \$49 | 525 cases made | Red

Bright and lively, with elegant complexity and vibrant cherry and raspberry flavors accented by orange zest and spiced tea details. The lingering finish leads to refined tannins. Drink now through 2023.—*T.F.*

KEN WRIGHT

Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Canary Hill Vineyard 2016

93 points | \$63 | 624 cases made | Red

Polished and elegantly complex, with expressive rose petal, raspberry and orange peel accents that glide on a long, supple finish. Drink now through 2024.—*T.F.*

DOMAINE ST.-PRÉFERT

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Collection Charles Giraud 2016
99 points | \$105 | 75 cases imported | Red

This has a large core of well-steeped plum, blackberry puree and warm cassis flavors, inlaid liberally with ganache, graphite and Turkish coffee notes. There's a wide swath of tobacco and roasted alder detail through the finish, matched by racy acidity for balancing focus. This is very deep and very long, capturing the intense yet fresh fruit feel of the vintage to a T. Best from 2020 through 2040. From France.—*J.M.*

HENRI BONNEAU & FILS

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Réserve des Célestins 2012
97 points | \$375 | 100 cases imported | Red

This defines old school, with savory detail and notes of roasted chestnut, fresh tobacco leaf, cedar and brick dust leading off, backed by a core of currant, cherry and plum fruit flavors that is lightly dried yet nonetheless fresh and racy in feel. Singed juniper and bay leaf hints score the finish. Likely to hold just like this for some time. Best from 2020 through 2040. From France.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas Hominis Fides 2016
97 points | \$143 | 36 cases imported | Red

Very expressive, with violet, fresh bay leaf and rosemary notes leading off, while the core of black cherry, black currant and fig fruit unfurls slowly. Seriously grippy, with mouthwatering cast iron and chalk details driving the finish, yet keeping a sense of refinement due to a perfumy black tea echo. Best from 2020 through 2040. From France.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE ST.-PRÉFERT

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Auguste Favier Réserve 2016
97 points | \$62 | 100 cases imported | Red

This is beautifully rendered, with a core of focused red currant, plum and raspberry coulis flavors that stretches out nicely while flecks of tobacco, bergamot, and singed sandalwood weave around. A bolt of iron detail shows through the finish, with a light echo of worn leather. Well-built, showing ample energy in reserve. From France. Best from 2020 through 2040.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DE BEAURENARD

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Boisrenard 2016
96 points | \$85 | 250 cases imported | Red

Solidly built, with a sappy core of kirsch, blackberry paste and red licorice flavors tightly coiled together and backed by roasted apple wood, warm stone and tobacco leaf notes through the finish. The beautiful fruit should develop nicely with extended cellaring, as this has serious grip and drive. Best from 2020 through 2040. From France.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE BRUSSET

Gigondas Les Secrets de Montmirail 2016
96 points | \$75 | 30 cases imported | Red

This has some showy violet and ganache aromas, followed by mouthfilling fig, blackberry and black currant paste flavors, all supported by the requisite bramble- and tar-edged structure for balance. Shows terrific energy from start to finish. Best from 2020 through 2035. 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 more than 16,000 wines each year; more than 360,000 reviews are available in our online database. Together, our 11 tasters count more than 235 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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 Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: California

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 Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1984. Tasting beat: At large

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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