

# Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

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**PINOT NOIR FROM CALIFORNIA AND OREGON, AND MORE UP TO 98 POINTS:** The two strongholds of American Pinot face off. California presents treasures from Sonoma County like Ferren, while Oregon highlights some of the best Willamette Valley reds from the 2016 vintage. A few top grapes from Australia come into the mix, including Cabernet and Shiraz from Hickinbotham and Two Hands. Last but not least, 2013 Brunellos are here and will not disappoint, leading the way with the highest scores of this edition. *Turn to page 4 for the six Hot Wines.*



Casanova di Neri in Brunello di Montalcino (Photo by Giovanni Neri)

## AUSTRALIA

### HICKINBOTHAM

**Cabernet Sauvignon McLaren Vale Trueman 2016**  
**94 points | \$75 | 1,209 cases imported | Red**

Juicy and vibrant, showing terrific purity to the raspberry and black cherry flavors at the polished and refined core, with supple tannins and details of Earl Grey tea, violet and toasted cumin. Impressive for the seamless harmony and the creamy texture, this shows a tug of grip from the tannins on the finish. Drink now through 2035.—*M.W.*

### HICKINBOTHAM

**Shiraz McLaren Vale Brooks Road 2016**  
**94 points | \$75 | 661 cases imported | Red**

There's a lovely sense of restraint here, with firm tannins reining in complex, detailed flavors of blueberry pie, kirsch and dark chocolate. Espresso, clove and caramel notes add even more complexity on the finish, where the flavors continue to unfold. Drink now through 2034.—*M.W.*

### BROKENWOOD

**Sémillon Hunter Valley Oakey Creek Vineyard Vineyard Selection 2011**  
**93 points | \$34 | 100 cases imported | White**

Wonderfully intense and brimming with personality, this offers a whiff of smoke and lanolin that melts away into lemon curd, spice and saline flavors on a bright, juicy frame. Drink now through 2035.—*M.W.*

### HICKINBOTHAM

**Cabernet-Shiraz McLaren Vale The Peake 2016**  
**93 points | \$150 | 358 cases imported | Red**

Precise, firm and focused, featuring a rich milk chocolate dimension that mingles with concentrated raspberry puree and blueberry flavors, showing dashes of dried rosemary and black tea. The finish is spectacular, revealing accents of sandalwood and spice. Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz. Drink now through 2034.—*M.W.*

### TWO HANDS

**Cabernet Sauvignon Barossa Valley Aphrodite 2015**  
**93 points | \$185 | 50 cases imported | Red**

Dense blackberry and blueberry flavors have a dose of black licorice and aniseed on a frame of dense, dusty tannins. Appealing details of bay leaf, cedar and cigar box add aromatic details, lingering on the long finish. Drink now through 2033.—*M.W.*

### TWO HANDS

**Shiraz Barossa Valley Holy Grail Single Vineyard Seppeltsfield Road 2016**  
**93 points | \$125 | 50 cases imported | Red**

Powerful, with plenty of structure from the tannic backbone, this expressive red delivers notes of date nut bread, kirsch, cigar, dried lavender, dark chocolate and chai tea. The complexity gains momentum on the long, velvety finish. Drink now through 2035.—*M.W.*

## TWO HANDS

Shiraz McLaren Vale Dave's Block Single Vineyard  
Blythmans Road Blewitt Springs 2016  
**93 points | \$125 | 50 cases imported | Red**

Rich and luscious, with plump blackberry, maraschino cherry and blueberry flavors and a touch of vanilla paste. Details of chai tea, dried apricot and nutmeg linger on the long, expressive finish. There's density but plenty of polish to the tannins. Drink now through 2036.—*M.W.*

# CALIFORNIA

## Pinot Noir

### ARGOT

Pinot Noir Sonoma Mountain Estate Vineyard 2016  
**94 points | \$75 | 200 cases made | Red**

Powerfully ripe, featuring minty and savory accents to the firm, well-fashioned flavors of dark cherry, damson plum and wild berry. Hints of juniper appear midpalate, with a finish of chocolate and spice. Drink now through 2024.—*K.M.*

### FERREN

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Silver Eagle Vineyard 2016  
**94 points | \$75 | 135 cases made | Red**

Pure and rich-tasting, featuring raspberry tart and cherry flavors midpalate that build in intensity, with sandalwood and cardamom accents. The lively finish is crunchy and minerally. Drink now through 2025.—*K.M.*

### HIRSCH

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Block 8 2016  
**94 points | \$95 | 466 cases made | Red**

A firm, elegant, pure-tasting style, with dark currant and plum tart flavors that are supported by crisp acidity. Hints of tangerine and dried sage show on the finish. Best from 2020 through 2023.—*K.M.*

### KERR

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2016  
**94 points | \$65 | 265 cases made | Red**

Opulent, with rich and plush flavors of dark cherry, plum tart and dark currant that feature fine-grained tannins and refined loamy notes. Taut acidity midpalate melts into a finish filled with raspberry ganache and chocolate elements. Drink now through 2024.—*K.M.*

### LA CREMA

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Shell Ridge 2016  
**94 points | \$60 | 1,552 cases made | Red**

Mouthfilling flavors of dark cherry, dried currant and raspberry tart are plush and loaded with spicy richness. Cream and white chocolate elements flood the long, rich finish, along with hints of forest floor and a subtle citrusy snap. Drink now through 2024.—*K.M.*

### SAXON BROWN

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Sangiacomo Roberts Road  
Vineyard 2016  
**94 points | \$60 | 110 cases made | Red**

Complex and fine-grained, featuring elegant and well-spiced flavors of rose petal, red currant, dried raspberry and damson plum, loaded with creamy richness. The long, plush finish offers cocoa powder accents. Drink now through 2024.—*K.M.*

## ARGOT

Pinot Noir Sonoma County Bastard Tongue 2016  
**93 points | \$75 | 225 cases made | Red**

Big, ripe and rich-tasting, with well-structured flavors of dark plum, dark cherry and kirsch. Crushed stone notes show midpalate, with a finish of dark chocolate and Asian spice. Drink now through 2024.—*K.M.*

## HIRSCH

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Raschen Ridge 2016  
**93 points | \$85 | 413 cases made | Red**

A tightly wrapped, minerally style, with hints of graphite to the dried red fruit and spice flavors. Crisp, showing savory snap and details of dried green herbs and underbrush. Best from 2020 through 2024.—*K.M.*

## JCB

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast No. 7 2016  
**93 points | \$60 | 320 cases made | Red**

Ripe and powerful, featuring flavors of dark plum, currant and black olive that are loaded with Asian spice notes. Hints of chocolate and cream emerge on the richly textured finish, with steeped tea details. Drink now through 2024.—*K.M.*

## WESTERHOLD

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2016  
**93 points | \$45 | 225 cases made | Red**

Big, featuring concentrated raspberry, dark currant and plum pudding flavors that are filled with spicy richness. The finish offers plenty of chocolate mousse accents. Drink now through 2023.—*K.M.*

## WILLIAMS SELYEM

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Terra De Promissio  
Vineyard 2017  
**93 points | \$65 | 611 cases made | Red**

Vibrant, with lively acidity backing the concentrated currant, cherry and raspberry flavors. Reveals chiseled minerality midpalate. The powerful finish is pure and focused. Drink now through 2025.—*K.M.*

# ITALY

## Tuscany / Brunello di Montalcino

### LA FORNACE

Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2013  
**94 points | \$65 | 80 cases made | Red**

The oak is well-integrated into this polished red, adding depth, as well as vanilla and toast accents, to the cherry, plum, leather and mineral flavors. Compact, with ripe fruit and spice notes lingering on the finish. Best from 2022 through 2040.—*B.S.*

### LA GERLA

Brunello di Montalcino Riserva gli Angeli 2013  
**94 points | \$110 | 250 cases imported | Red**

This is rich, with plum, cherry, spice, soy and iron flavors, supported by a spine of vibrant acidity and refined tannins. Firm yet fluid, fading gracefully on the long, fruit- and mineral-tinged aftertaste. Best from 2021 through 2040.—*B.S.*

## POGGIO SAN POLO

**Brunello di Montalcino Vignavecchia 2013**  
**94 points | \$250 | 30 cases imported | Red**

A rich, ripe version, offering black cherry, blackberry, plum, iron and tobacco aromas and flavors. Firm and dense, with a youthful impression on the lingering finish. Shows fine underlying power. Best from 2022 through 2040.—*B.S.*

## CASTELLO ROMITORIO

**Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2013**  
**94 points | \$150 | 20 cases imported | Red**

Appealing aromas and flavors of cherry, raspberry, tobacco and spice are the hallmarks of this elegant, firmly structured Brunello. Balanced, with dusty tannins gracing the aftertaste, where a hint of black pepper emerges. Best from 2022 through 2040.—*B.S.*

## ANTINORI

**Brunello di Montalcino Pian delle Vigne Vignaferruvia Riserva 2013**  
**93 points | \$125 | 100 cases imported | Red**

Cherry, plum and blackberry fruit flavors mix with leather, tobacco and bitter almond notes in this solid, balanced red. Intense, driven by lively acidity and muscular tannins. Finishes with an aftertaste of plum, savory almond and light cumin. Best from 2022 through 2040.—*B.S.*

## FATTORIA DEI BARBI

**Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2013**  
**93 points | \$113 | 250 cases imported | Red**

A dense, muscular red, this sports black cherry, plum, leather, tobacco and tar flavors. There is requisite fruit to offset the gruff tannins, with a long aftertaste of fruit, savory and mineral. Best from 2023 through 2042.—*B.S.*

## CAMIGLIANO

**Brunello di Montalcino Gualto Riserva 2013**  
**93 points | \$100 | 150 cases imported | Red**

Offers a clear expression of cherry flavors, with hints of plum and strawberry, augmented by leather, tobacco and almond hints. A dense matrix of acidity and tannins lifts all the elements, while the aftertaste lingers. Excellent harmony. Best from 2022 through 2040.—*B.S.*

## CAPANNA

**Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2013**  
**93 points | \$80 | 35 cases imported | Red**

Black cherry and plum flavors form the core in this powerful red, coated by a sheen of resinous oak. Dense and rich, picking up iron, leather and tobacco notes as the long finish plays out. Vibrant, yet the tannins are a bit dry. This will benefit from decanting now. Best from 2022 through 2038.—*B.S.*

## MASTROJANNI

**Brunello di Montalcino Vigna Schiena d'Asino 2013**  
**93 points | \$170 | 100 cases imported | Red**

Bright cherry, plum, leather and iron flavors mark this elegant red. Balanced and firm, with a lingering aftertaste of fruit, mineral and underbrush. Enjoyable now, but should be better in a year or two. Best from 2021 through 2035.—*B.S.*

## TALENTI

**Brunello di Montalcino Pian di Conte Riserva 2013**  
**93 points | \$80 | 250 cases imported | Red**

Aromas of eucalyptus and mint lead off, making way for cherry and strawberry flavors on the palate in this firm yet balanced red. Fresh, lingering with fruit, earth and underbrush accents. Best from 2022 through 2040.—*B.S.*

# OREGON

## Pinot Noir

### ALEXANA

**Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Single Clone Pommard Revana Vineyard 2016**  
**94 points | \$75 | 291 cases made | Red**

Expressive and richly constructed, yet graceful and polished, offering vibrant black cherry, orange peel and spicy cinnamon flavors that build intensity toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

### ALEXANA

**Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Signature 2016**  
**93 points | \$75 | 493 cases made | Red**

Expressive and polished, with poised layers of raspberry, violet and orange peel that build richness toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

### THE FOUR GRACES

**Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Reserve 2016**  
**93 points | \$45 | 2,596 cases made | Red**

Harmonious and pretty, with elegantly layered raspberry, rose petal and spicy cinnamon flavors that build richness and polish on the long finish. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

### RÉSONANCE

**Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Résonance Vineyard 2016**  
**93 points | \$65 | 1,500 cases made | Red**

Sleekly complex and steely, with lively minerality. This is not showing all its cards yet, but offers plenty of dark raspberry, cola and spice flavors. The tannins are fine and polished. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

### KEN WRIGHT

**Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Carter Vineyard 2016**  
**93 points | \$63 | 1,029 cases made | Red**

Impeccably structured and elegantly expressive, with refined black raspberry, licorice and toasted cinnamon flavors. Drink now through 2025.—*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.

## CASANOVA DI NERI

**Brunello di Montalcino Cerretalto 2013**  
**98 points | \$330 | 150 cases imported | Red**

This intense version is concentrated, with black cherry, blackberry, graphite, tobacco and spice flavors, yet remains light-footed due to the racy profile. Structured, yet beautifully balanced and youthful. Shows purity and length on the aftertaste, which introduces a floral component. Best from 2022 through 2045. From Italy.—*B.S.*

## ALTESINO

**Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2013**  
**97 points | \$130 | 500 cases imported | Red**

Aromas of juniper, rosemary, thyme and Szechuan peppercorn segue to strawberry, cherry and rose hip flavors in this elegant red. Intense and balanced, with the structure to develop over the next two decades. Shows excellent depth and length. Best from 2022 through 2043. From Italy.—*B.S.*

## SAN FILIPPO

**Brunello di Montalcino Le Lucére Riserva 2013**  
**97 points | \$175 | 150 cases imported | Red**

A lush, velvety texture signals this fruity red, featuring compelling cherry, strawberry and violet flavors. Lively and fresh, with dusty tannins melding with the vivid acidity and rich fruit on the lingering aftertaste. Very pure and alluring, this is enjoyable now with decanting. Drink now through 2038. From Italy.—*B.S.*

## CANALICCHIO DI SOPRA

**Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2013**  
**95 points | \$150 | 100 cases imported | Red**

This is harmonious, featuring cherry, strawberry, plum and earth flavors that mesh with the supple texture and firm structure. Elements of iron, leather and tobacco emerge as this red stretches out on the tangy finish. Best from 2021 through 2040. From Italy.—*B.S.*

## FERREN

**Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Frei Road Vineyard 2016**  
**95 points | \$75 | 135 cases made | Red**

Elegant and layered, offering concentrated cherry tart, dark plum and raspberry flavors, with ample sandalwood and Asian spice notes. The finely textured and lithe finish features lively minerality, revealing hints of cocoa powder. Drink now through 2025. From California.—*K.M.*

## LA FORTUNA

**Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2013**  
**95 points | \$125 | 200 cases imported | Red**

Fluid and fruity, supported by a matrix of dense tannins, this features a fine texture and structure, offsetting the saturated flavors of cherry, red berry, leather, iron and tar. Stays focused while cruising to a lingering finish. Really youthful, intense and long. Best from 2022 through 2045. From Italy.—*B.S.*

## WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

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*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 385,000 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