

# Wine Spectator Insider

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A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

THIS week's issue of the *Wine Spectator Insider* features exceptional wines from California, Oregon and France's Rhône Valley. You may have read about today's top-scoring wine in James Laube's Jan. 16 blog entry, in which he called it "probably the greatest Sauvignon Blanc I've ever had from anywhere." It's the Merry Edwards Sauvignon Blanc Russian River Valley 2007, and you'll find the review for this classic-rated new release among the Hot Wines, on page 4. For Thomas Matthews' notes on this exciting young white, check out his What We're Drinking Now entry later this week.

Also in this edition, James Molesworth reviews outstanding new Rhône reds, including the latest wines from Jean-Louis Chave and E. Guigal, and Harvey Steiman covers a half-dozen outstanding Oregon whites.

## California

### ALTAMURA

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2005  
**93 points | \$75 | 4,100 cases made | Red**

A ripe, juicy mix of black cherry, wild berry, plum and currant, this firms up midpalate and holds its focus, revealing greater depth and complexity and ending with a nice tight, tannic backbone. Drink now through 2016.—J.L.

### CARLISLE

Syrah Sonoma County 2006  
**93 points | \$25 | 404 cases made | Red**

Very rich and concentrated, this dark, potent and full-bodied, offering layers of blackberry, wild berry, currant and hints of cassis, ending with a blast of pepper, mineral and cedary oak. Drink now through 2015.—J.L.

### DUMOL

Chardonnay Carneros Clare 2006  
**93 points | \$60 | 270 cases made | White**

Ultrarich and ripe, with sweet fig, pear, melon and apple flavors that are full-bodied, intense, concentrated and exotic. Powerful yet elegant and persistent. Drink now through 2014.—J.L.

### LYNMAR

Chardonnay Russian River Valley Zephyr Farms 2006  
**93 points | \$70 | 147 cases made | White**

Offers rich, exotic tropical fruit, with guava, pineapple, fig and melon. Full-bodied, ripe and balanced, this is a big yet fleshy and complex wine that's long and persistent. Drink now through 2014.—J.L.

### ERNA SCHEIN

Everything But the Kitchen Sink California 2006  
**92 points | \$40 | 395 cases made | Red**

Enticing spice, wild berry and blackberry fruit is pure, crisp and layered, with touches of mineral, clean leather, tobacco and sage-herbal scents. Full-bodied, balanced, complex and elegant, with firm tannins. Syrah, Petite Sirah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Drink now through 2014.—J.L.

### JEMROSE

Syrah Bennett Valley Cardiac Hill Vineyard 2006  
**92 points | \$44 | 144 cases made | Red**

Tight and chewy, with a beefy black licorice, graphite, smoke, mineral and blackberry mix of flavors that are full-bodied, tightly focused and long and persistent on the finish. Drink now through 2015.—J.L.

## ARIETTA

H Block Hudson Vineyards Napa Valley 2006  
**91 points | \$150 | 450 cases made | Red**

Firm, gutsy and full-bodied, with tight cedar, tobacco, dried currant and spicy herbal elements that gain complexity, while maintaining a tight structure. Ends with mineral and herb notes and chewy tannins on a long finish. Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Drink now through 2016.—*J.L.*

## DUMOL

Chardonnay Russian River Valley 2006  
**91 points | \$50 | 2,550 cases made | White**

Smoky caramel aromas join ripe fig and melon fruit in this full-bodied, well-oaked wine, made in a style for those who enjoy a strong oak presence. Drink now through 2012.—*J.L.*

## LYNMAR

Chardonnay Russian River Valley La Sereinité 2007  
**91 points | \$70 | 415 cases made | White**

Offers a ripe, focused beam of juicy, vibrant fruit, with lemon-citrus, pear, apple and melon flavors that are rich, complex, elegant and balanced. Drink now through 2013.—*J.L.*

## ROAR

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Garys' Vineyard 2007  
**91 points | \$50 | 650 cases made | Red**

Rich, fleshy and full-bodied, with a tightly focused core of plum and black cherry fruit that fans out into wild berry and spice, ending with a touch of jam and ripe tannins. Drink now through 2014.—*J.L.*

## BARNETT

Chardonnay Carneros Sangiacomo Vineyard 2007  
**90 points | \$32 | 1,149 cases made | White**

Rich and viscous, full-bodied and layered, with ripe fig, melon, honeysuckle and pretty oak shadings, ending with a big yet balanced finish. Drink now through 2012.—*J.L.*

## CALERA

Pinot Noir Mount Harlan Mills Vineyard 2006  
**90 points | \$45 | 1,795 cases made | Red**

Elegant, with spicy candied apple cherry fruit that's delicate, with mineral, anise and sage notes that are intense without being heavy. Drink now through 2014.—*J.L.*

## JOELLE

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2007  
**90 points | \$45 | 150 cases made | Red**

Intense, firm and spicy, with appealing blackberry and wild berry fruit that grows on you, with touches of mint, herb and sage. Ends with structured tannins. Drink now through 2014.—*J.L.*

## LORING

Chardonnay Green Valley of Russian River Valley Keefer Ranch Vineyard 2007  
**90 points | \$50 | 70 cases made | White**

Rich, exotic tropical fruit, fig, melon and spice flavors are full-blown and complex, deftly balanced and shaded by toasty, smoky oak. Drink now through 2012.—*J.L.*

## RUSTON FAMILY

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2005  
**90 points | \$45 | 963 cases made | Red**

Intense and well-oaked, with spicy cedar and mocha flavors joining ripe currant and blackberry fruit that's well-centered and balanced, ending with firm ripe tannins and good length. Drink now through 2014.—*J.L.*

## SIDURI

Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills 2007  
**90 points | \$29 | 511 cases made | Red**

Intense and vibrant, with snappy blackberry, wild berry and black cherry fruit that's full-bodied, structured and pleasantly earthy, with mineral and sage. Drink now through 2013.—*J.L.*

# France Rhône

## E. GUIGAL

Côte-Rôtie Château d'Ampuis 2005  
**94 points | \$160 | 2,500 cases made | Red**

Rock-solid, with a great core of dark plum and fig fruit woven with incense, Turkish coffee, melted licorice and mineral notes. The long finish lets the mouthwatering acidity carry it all nicely. There's impressive drive and density. Best from 2010 through 2020.—*J.M.*

## JEAN-LOUIS CHAVE

St.-Joseph 2006  
**93 points | \$60 | 750 cases made | Red**

This is gorgeously pure, with extremely silky texture carrying violet, cassis and iron notes that blaze through the sanguine-tinged finish. Offers length and precision in a seamless package. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

## LAURENT BETTON

St.-Joseph 2006  
**92 points | \$30 | NA cases made | Red**

Very alluring aromas and flavors of crushed raspberry, mulled spice and black tea are allied to a silky texture and a long, iron-tinged finish. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

## DOMAINE LA BOUÏSSIÈRE

Gigondas La Font de Tonin 2006  
**92 points | \$50 | NA cases made | Red**

Gorgeous aromatics of black tea and sandalwood lead the way for this very silky-textured offering filled with blackberry and boysenberry fruit. Picks up steam on the finish, with a racy graphite underpinning to the licorice and fruitcake notes. Impressive. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

## TARDIEU-LAURENT

Gigondas Vieilles Vignes 2006

**92 points | \$44 | 25 cases imported | Red**

A very opulent style, with lots of fig bread and fruitcake aromatics, all backed by dense, fleshy plum, currant and boysenberry fruit laid over a mineral- and charcoal-filled finish. There's plenty in reserve. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

## TARDIEU-LAURENT

St.-Joseph Vieilles Vignes 2006

**92 points | \$42 | 375 cases made | Red**

Lovely aromas of violet and black tea lead the way for a super-silky palate of mineral, black cherry and macerated plum fruit. The long, fine finish lets the iron note play out against a spice and toast backdrop. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

## DOMAINE LA BOUÏSSIÈRE

Gigondas 2006

**91 points | \$33 | NA cases made | Red**

Very round and mouthfilling, with a large core of macerated currant and plum fruit pushed by dark but integrated toast, graphite and melted licorice notes. There's plenty of sweet spice and minerality buried on the finish. This has power and balance. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

## DOMAINE LA BOUÏSSIÈRE

Vacqueyras Bel Air 2006

**91 points | \$26 | NA cases made | Red**

Round and fleshy, with a surprisingly creamy mouthfeel for the appellation, this delivers very focused raspberry ganache, fig bread, black tea and hoisin sauce notes backed by well-integrated structure. Drink now through 2011.—*J.M.*

## DOMAINE LA BOUÏSSIÈRE

Vacqueyras La Ponche 2006

**91 points | \$30 | NA cases made | Red**

Ripe and silky, with a gorgeous beam of mulled raspberry and blackberry fruit laced with black tea, incense and Turkish coffee hints. The long finish really glides. Drink now through 2011.—*J.M.*

## JEAN-LOUIS CHAVE SÉLECTION

Côtes du Rhône Mon Cœur 2006

**91 points | \$23 | 6,000 cases made | Red**

Alluring, with dark cocoa, game, braised fig and roasted plum notes laced with hints of iron and *garrigue*. The nice solid, muscular finish lets a loamy edge echo on. Drink now through 2010.—*J.M.*

## E. GUIGAL

St.-Joseph Lieu-Dit St.-Joseph 2006

**91 points | \$48 | 800 cases made | Red**

Very solid, with ripe and nicely rounded plum, currant and blackberry fruit flavors that are backed by ample cocoa and espresso hints. The long, creamy finish lets toast and fig cake notes play out. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

## ÉRIC TEXIER

Côtes du Rhône Brézème 2006

**91 points | \$26 | 840 cases made | Red**

Dark and winey, with a great sanguine note piercing through the core of raspberry ganache, melted licorice and sweet spice notes. The long, juicy finish has nice underlying grip. Syrah. Drink now through 2010.—*J.M.*

## Oregon

### CHEHALEM

Chardonnay Dundee Hills Stoller Vineyards Ian's Reserve 2006

**93 points | \$34 | 458 cases made | White**

Lithe, with a tangy edge to the vibrant, tangerine-scented pear and almond flavors, lingering on the long, open, harmonious finish. Has tremendous presence without apparent weight. Drink now through 2013. *From Oregon.*—*H.S.*

### DOMAINE SERENE

Chardonnay Willamette Valley Clos du Soleil Vineyard 2006

**92 points | \$45 | 375 cases made | White**

Lithe and inviting, a supple style of Chardonnay that sports toasty pear, melon and nutmeg aromas and flavors, hovering gently as the finish sails on. Drink now through 2013.—*H.S.*

### DOMAINE SERENE

Chardonnay Willamette Valley Côte Sud 2006

**91 points | \$45 | 450 cases made | White**

Polished, creamy and nicely focused to show its pear, apple and hazelnut flavors, mingling easily against fine acidity on the long, expressive finish. Drink now through 2012.—*H.S.*

### CAPITELLO

Pinot Gris Willamette Valley 2007

**90 points | \$18 | 742 cases made | White**

A lively mouthful of creamy, mineral pear and lemon flavors that linger on the harmonious finish. Bright and juicy. Drink now through 2011.—*H.S.*

### CHEHALEM

Pinot Gris Willamette Valley Reserve 2007

**90 points | \$24 | 763 cases made | White**

Bright and lively, this juicy wine is fragrant with lemon, lemon blossom and melon flavors, lingering on the delicate finish. Drink now through 2011.—*H.S.*

### KING ESTATE

Pinot Gris Oregon Domaine 2007

**90 points | \$25 | 3,000 cases made | White**

Light, bright and silky, shining a vivid beam of lemon, melon and pear flavors through the persistent finish. Drink now through 2011.—*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.

## MERRY EDWARDS

Sauvignon Blanc Russian River Valley 2007  
**96 points | \$29 | 3,880 cases made | White**

A rocket beam of vibrancy, with effusive honeysuckle notes, ripe honeydew melon, citrus, pear and apricot flavors that have amazing structure, depth and body. Ripe flavors end with a mouthwatering finish, where the mineral and spice details echo on and on. Drink now through 2012. *From California.—M.W.*

## CARLISLE

Syrah Bennett Valley Cardiac Hill 2006  
**95 points | \$43 | 211 cases made | Red**

A gentle giant, dense, rich and chewy, with loads of firm, detailed smoke, black currant, black licorice, mineral, graphite and meaty, peppery scents. This is power with finesse, grace and balance. Ends with well-integrated tannins. Drink now through 2017. *From California.—J.L.*

## HOURLASS

Cabernet Franc Napa Valley Blueline Vineyard 2006  
**95 points | \$135 | 30 cases made | Red**

A sheer pleasure to drink. Seductive creamy mocha oak runs through the aroma and flavor, but this wows you with ripe, firm, vibrant layers of dried currant, plum, spice and black cherry fruit. Ends with firm, ripe tannins. Drink now through 2016. *From California.—J.L.*

## DOMAINE DE LA VIEILLE JULIENNE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2006  
**95 points | \$75 | NA cases made | Red**

Very rich and densely packed, with a huge core of raspberry ganache, macerated plum and hoisin sauce notes wrapped by dark licorice, Turkish coffee and charred applewood. The long finish ripples with tannins, but this is velvety and well-integrated. Needs some time. Rather serious juice. Best from 2011 through 2033. *From France.—J.M.*

## WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

### The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

*Wine Spectator's* tasting staff includes 14 people in four offices. They work together to review more than 15,000 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 San Francisco, Napa, New York and Tuscany, and in the vineyard regions of Europe. 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.

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: California

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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:  
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**James Molesworth** Senior editor, New York  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: Argentina, Chile,  
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**Bruce Sanderson** Tasting director, New York  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Burgundy,  
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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 |