

Wine Spectator Insider

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A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

THIS week's *Wine Spectator Insider* offers three dozen highlights (including six classic-rated wines) from California, Spain and France's Rhône Valley. Leading off, James Laube reviews 15 exciting new wines from California, including the newest Marcassin Pinot Noirs, two of which receive classic ratings, and a 97-point Chardonnay from Shibumi Knoll, a new winery which was the subject of Laube's June 3 blog entry. You'll find it among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

Also in this week's *Insider*, James Molesworth reviews 16 superb Rhône selections, from a trio of François Villard's bright, juicy Viogniers from Condrieu to a classic-rated Côte-Rôtie from brothers Jean-Luc and Jean-Paul Jamet. Rounding out this issue, Thomas Matthews focuses on a handful of outstanding ripe reds from Spain's 2005 and 2006 vintages.

California

MARCASSIN

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Three Sisters Vineyard 2003
93 points | \$75 | 185 cases made | Red

Supple, graceful and polished, with ripe plum, black cherry, smoky, toasty oak and subtle mineral and herbal scents that turn delicate and spicy, ending with a rich lift of the berry fruit and firm but integrated tannins. Drink now through 2011.—J.L.

TOR

Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard 2005
92 points | \$125 | 280 cases made | Red

Smooth, rich and fleshy, with layers of black cherry, plum and wild berry flavors that are shaded by a nice touch of toasty, cedary oak. Ends with a long, supple, elegant aftertaste. Drink now through 2013.—J.L.

AMPELOS

Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Ampelos Vineyards 2005
91 points | \$48 | 432 cases made | Red

Smooth and polished up front, showcasing ripe cherry, raspberry and blue berry fruit, yet gaining traction, with a nice presentation of firm, loamy tannins that gain complexity and depth. Drink now through 2011.—J.L.

CAVUS

Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District 2004
91 points | \$80 | 200 cases made | Red

A seductive style, smooth rich and creamy, with a medley of mocha-laced currant, blackberry, mint chocolate and hints of hazelnut and brownie. Ends with a measure of finesse and grace. Drink now through 2016.—J.L.

RHYS

Pinot Noir Santa Cruz Mountains Alpine Hillside 2006
91 points | \$59 | 200 cases made | Red

Serves up a tasty mix of red cherry and blackberry fruit that's sleek and refined, with spicy floral scents, dried berry and fine grain tannins that offer a mineral edge. Long, elegant and complex. Drink now through 2012.—J.L.

STEPHEN ROSS

Pinot Noir Edna Valley Stone Corral Vineyard 2006
91 points | \$50 | 225 cases made | Red

Intense, rich and complex, with loamy earth, wild berry, raspberry and subtle herb and mushroom notes. Smooth and polished, it's graceful and harmonious. Drink now through 2011.—J.L.

ARISTA

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Mononi Vineyard 2005
90 points | \$54 | 200 cases made | Red

Refreshing, clean and vibrant, with vivid black cherry, wild berry and raspberry fruit that's well-focused, balanced and ending with a long fruity finish, ending with a nice touch of loamy earthiness. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

DREW FAMILY

Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Gatekeepers 2006
90 points | \$40 | 429 cases made | Red

Clay and fresh earth give way to sweet ripe black cherry and red plum fruit that's supple and polished, with delicate blue and wild berry scents that are long and persistent. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

ERIC KENT

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Stiling Vineyard 2006
90 points | \$42 | 374 cases made | Red

Pure, rich and concentrated, with complex wild berry, blackberry, raspberry and black cherry, all well distributed and balanced, ending with a nice gush of dark berry fruit. Best of two bottles. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

LA ROCHELLE

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands 2005
90 points | \$38 | 364 cases made | Red

Supple textured, with ripe, vivid black cherry, raspberry and red plum fruit that's well defined, lean and vibrant, ending with an elegant pleasantly earthy aftertaste. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

RELIC

Syrah Mendocino County Alder Springs Vineyard 2006
90 points | \$54 | 165 cases made | Red

Rich, smooth and savory, with spicy, beefy wild berry, raspberry, sage and loamy earth flavors that are focused, ending with firm, ripe tannins and good berry-laced length. Drink now through 2013.—*J.L.*

SIDURI

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Parsons' Vineyard 2006
90 points | \$44 | 433 cases made | Red

Rich, with loamy wild berry, raspberry and blackberry fruit that's spicy, intense yet supple and polished, gaining depth, texture and length. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

France

Rhône

DOMAINE CLUSEL-ROCH

Côte-Rôtie Les Grandes Places 2005
95 points | \$105 | 215 cases made | Red

A modern, racy style with lots of dark fig, raspberry ganache and bittersweet cocoa aromas and flavors, all backed by a muscular, loam- and tar-driven finish. Superfresh acidity is buried deep, making the seriously long finish seem sleek in feel, even though it's loaded with grip. Best from 2011 through 2022.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS VILLARD

Condrieu DePoncins 2006
95 points | \$78 | 50 cases imported | White

Loaded, but still reserved for now, with a huge core of creamed peach, yellow apple and Cavaillon melon fruit backed by notes of crème fraîche, heather, quartz and honeysuckle. Serious depth and definition stretches out the finish. Drink now through 2016.—*J.M.*

ST.-COSME

Côte-Rôtie 2005
94 points | \$75 | 150 cases imported | Red

Really loaded, with plenty of cocoa powder and dark toast up front, followed by mouthwatering acidity that drives the dark plum, Turkish coffee, cassis bush and licorice snap flavors through the long, grippy finish. Still has some toast to shed, so cellar. Best from 2010 through 2020.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE CLUSEL-ROCH

Condrieu Verchery 2006
93 points | \$65 | 200 cases made | White

This is broad and open, with a long, creamy palate filled with honeysuckle, chamomile, yellow and green apple and pear notes. The juicy, lingering finish is persistent and well-defined. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE CLUSEL-ROCH

Côte-Rôtie 2005
93 points | \$62 | 1,000 cases made | Red

Very juicy, with an intense core of raspberry and blackberry fruit layered with dashes of sweet vanilla, iron, mocha, briar and spice. The long, juicy finish lets all the components take an encore, with plenty of grip in reserve. Best from 2009 through 2018.—*J.M.*

VINCENT PARIS

Cornas Granit 60 Vieilles Vignes 2006
93 points | \$55 | 330 cases made | Red

Really racy, with a terrific beam of raspberry ganache, blackberry and licorice flavors coursing over a bright mineral spine. The long finish really sings with purity and drive. Drink now through 2018.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS VILLARD

Condrieu Le Grand Vallon 2006

93 points | \$69 | 50 cases imported | White

Round and juicy, this is a bit compact for now, but the core of blanched almond, papaya, pear and Jona Gold apple is waiting in reserve. The long, juicy finish delivers another wave of fruit with buried minerality. Best from 2009 through 2015.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS VILLARD

Condrieu Les Terrasses du Palat 2006

93 points | \$67 | 50 cases imported | White

Very bright, with fresh-cut quince, melon and green almond flavors backed by a long, mineral- and floral-filled finish, which really sails on nicely. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS VILLARD

St.-Joseph Reflet 2005

93 points | \$65 | 50 cases imported | Red

Dark, sweet and spicy up front, with mouthfilling plum, licorice and fruitcake notes, all backed by a fleshy texture and a finish that's loaded with dark cocoa, fig and black licorice notes. Has great grip. Drink now through 2015.—*J.M.*

DELAS

St.-Joseph Ste.-Épine 2005

92 points | \$64 | 380 cases imported | Red

Grippy and taut for now, with a wall of cocoa and toast still covering the black cherry, plum and licorice notes. The long, smoke- and dark fruit-filled finish has a nice iron note hanging in the background. Best from 2009 through 2015.—*J.M.*

ALAIN GRAILLOT

St.-Joseph 2006

91 points | \$35 | 500 cases made | Red

Alluring, with cocoa and sanguine notes up front, followed by plush currant, black cherry, hoisin sauce and graphite notes. The finish is long and racy. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

VINCENT PARIS

Cornas Granit 30 2006

91 points | \$42 | 915 cases made | Red

Very juicy, with open raspberry, red plum and cherry fruit that's pushed by lively acidity. The long, floral- and mineral-tinged finish lets the fruit hang on nicely. Drink now through 2015.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS VILLARD

St.-Joseph White Mairlant 2006

91 points | \$45 | 25 cases imported | White

Very pure, with creamy-textured yellow apple, chamomile and quince notes backed by a long, minerally finish. Should age nicely. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

FERRATON PÈRE & FILS

St.-Joseph La Source 2006

90 points | \$33 | 600 cases imported | Red

Nice piercing violet and iron notes run through this medium-weight version. Raspberry and sanguine flavors fill out the back end, with a tangy, minerally finish. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

PHILIPPE & VINCENT JABOULET

Cornas 2006

90 points | \$76 | 200 cases imported | Red

Juicy and plump, with round blackberry and plum fruit backed by iron, black olive and briar notes that linger on the solid finish. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

Spain

BODEGAS EL NIDO

Jumilla El Nido 2005

94 points | \$154 | 283 cases made | Red

Muscular, intense and distinctive. Blueberry and blackberry flavors are jammy yet maintain focus, accented by mineral, espresso, game and tar notes that create depth and harmony. This is rich in texture and firm in structure, with a long, fresh, sweet, floral finish. Cabernet Sauvignon and Monastrell. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

TORRES

Priorat Perpetual Salmos 2005

92 points | \$52 | 60 cases imported | Red

Black cherry, licorice and smoky orange pekoe tea flavors are bright and harmonious in this distinctive red, which is structured yet remains elegant, with a juicy, floral finish. Cariñena and Garnacha. Drink now through 2015.—*T.M.*

CAN BLAU

Montsant Mas de 2005

91 points | \$45 | 375 cases made | Red

Mineral and *garrigue* notes frame rich blackberry and blueberry fruit in this lithe, firm red. Lively acidity gives it drive, while espresso and licorice flavors add depth. Mazuelo, Syrah and Garnacha. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

GENIUM CELLER

Priorat Costers Vi de Guarda 2005

90 points | \$65 | 125 cases imported | Red

Coffee and toasty oak flavors overshadow the Morello cherry fruit in this firm red, but it's structured and lively, with orange peel and floral accents that linger on the finish. Should harmonize with time. Cariñena, Garnacha, Merlot and Syrah. Best from 2009 through 2016.—*T.M.*

TORRES

Priorat Salmos 2006

90 points | \$34 | 1,200 cases imported | Red

Raspberry and Morello cherry flavors are ripe and vibrant in this lively red. Light chocolate and herbal notes add depth. Suave and polished, with an alluring floral finish. Garnacha, Syrah, Cariñena and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

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.

SHIBUMI KNOLL

Chardonnay Russian River Valley
Buena Tierra Vineyard 2005

97 points | \$45 | 172 cases made | White

Pure and delicious, a rich, elegant, layered expression of Chardonnay. Tightly focused, smooth and offering a wealth of flavor built around green apple, fig, melon, spice and a hint of lemon blossom. Ends with a long, lingering finish. Drink now through 2011. *From California.—J.L.*

JEAN-PAUL & JEAN-LUC JAMET

Côte-Rôtie 2005

96 points | \$100 | 2,000 cases made | Red

Intense, with warm roasted fig, currant confiture and melted licorice notes that almost gush forth, but the briar patch, sweet tobacco, mineral and incense notes lend both definition and refinement. The long, long finish shows terrific intensity and a lingering note of sweet macerated black olive. Best from 2010 through 2020. *From France.—J.M.*

MARCASSIN

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Blue-Slide Ridge Vineyard 2003
96 points | \$90 | 250 cases made | Red

Wonderful fruit purity, with rich, fleshy plum, wild berry and raspberry fruit that's supple and focused, picking up subtle hints of nutmeg and sage and ending with a long, sleek, polished finish. Drink now through 2012. *From California.—J.L.*

MARCASSIN

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Marcassin Vineyard 2003
95 points | \$120 | 450 cases made | Red

An immense wine that's rich and concentrated, with taut, supple, firmly structured blueberry, wild berry, and blackberry fruit that coats the palate. No shortage of tannins either yet it's very deep and persistent, ending with smoky oak touches. Drink now through 2013. *From California.—J.L.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 15 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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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