

Wine Spectator Insider

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WINE SPECTATOR takes a look at two French wine regions, as well as South Africa, in this week's *Insider*. James Molesworth reviews whites from the Loire Valley in France, including several from François Chidaïne. He also rates a selection of Rhône wines from Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Gigondas and Vacqueryras.

Moving south of the equator, Molesworth covers South Africa. He tastes 18 wines from the Cape this week, three of which appear among the Hot Wines, on page 4. With outstanding whites, reds and a dessert wine, this selection shows the quality and diversity of South African winemaking.

France Loire

FRANÇOIS CHIDAÏNE

Montlouis Sur Loire Les Choisilles 2007

93 points | \$38 | 1,500 cases made | White

This has great concentration, with dried pear and apple flavors laced with quince, persimmon, powdered ginger and green almond notes that stay pure and driven through the almost bracing finish, despite the 5.1 g/l residual sugar. From vines ranging from 30 to 90 years old. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS CHIDAÏNE

Vouvray Clos Baudoin 2007

93 points | \$32 | 475 cases made | White

This is loaded with ginger, warm brioche, white peach, chamomile flower, honeysuckle and quinine notes that all ripple through the long, concentrated finish. Ripe, but steely and dry. A beauty. Should age nicely. A three-hectare parcel of 70-year-old vines. Drink now through 2017.—

FRANÇOIS CHIDAÏNE

Montlouis Sur Loire Clos du Breuil 2007

92 points | \$30 | 1,415 cases made | White

Dry in style, with delicious green almond, fig and dried pear notes waiting in reserve, while hints of biscuit, heather honey and orange blossom flutter throughout. The finish is racy. Best from 2011 through 2013.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS CHIDAÏNE

Montlouis Sur Loire Les Bournais 2007

92 points | \$38 | 975 cases made | White

Rich, but remarkably detailed for the vintage, with a wide range of yellow and green apple, melon rind, dried fig, blanched almond and ginger notes all woven together with a floral note. The finish is long and mouthwatering. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS CHIDAÏNE

Montlouis Sur Loire Les Tuffeaux 2007

92 points | \$30 | 1,690 cases made | White

Still a touch tight, with a core of pure Bosc pear and Jonagold apple notes waiting in reserve. Hints of orange blossom, quince, cardamom and green almond chime in on the lengthy finish, which has latent depth. Should open nicely with brief cellaring. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS CHIDAÏNE

Vouvray Le Bouchet 2007

92 points | \$28 | 865 cases made | White

Very bright and floral, with lovely, racy honeysuckle, Jonagold apple and chamomile notes that course from start to finish. Long and mouthwatering, with the fruit offset wonderfully by riveting acidity that offset the 15.8 g/l of residual sugar wonderfully. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS CHIDAINE

Montlouis Sur Loire Clos Habert 2007

91 points | \$30 | 958 cases made | White

Lovely, focused pear and quince flavors glide along, while honeysuckle and mineral notes extend through the pure, medium-weight finish. Just off-dry in feel, with 12.1 g/l residual sugar. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS CHIDAINE

Vouvray Les Argiles 2007

91 points | \$30 | 1,680 cases made | White

Though broad, with a wide swath of blanched almond, brioche, dried lime peel and pear flavors, this white is also taut, with an underlying lanolin note that leaves a firm, dry feel on the finish. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS PINON

Vouvray Silex Noir 2008

91 points | \$27 | 800 cases imported | White

A delicious, bracing version, with a wide range of candied lime peel, pear, fig and quince flavors all laid over a tangy, mineral-driven finish. Lengthy and stylish. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DU CLOSEL

Savennières Clos du Papillon Château des Vaults 2006

90 points | \$35 | 250 cases imported | White

Very ripe and forward, with lush apple, pear and apricot notes backed by a ginger hint. The long, creamy finish lets a salted butter hint chime in. Showy but well-defined, with nice latent acidity. Drink now through 2011.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DU CLOSEL

Savennières La Jalousie Château des Vaults 2007

90 points | \$24 | 300 cases imported | White

Offers a mix of lanolin, fig paste, quince and salted butter notes that all weave together on the waxy, lengthy finish. Drink now through 2011.—*J.M.*

FRANÇOIS PINON

Vouvray Cuvée Tradition 2008

90 points | \$22 | 800 cases imported | White

Ripe pear and fig flavors lead the way, but the feel is nice and crunchy thanks to lively acidity. Hints of quinine, quince and fresh green melon chime in on the finish. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

France Rhône

CHÂTEAU DE BEUCASTEL

Châteauneuf-du-Pape White 2008

92 points | \$105 | 2,000 cases made | White

Gorgeous, with a creamy texture that belies the fresh, well-embedded acidity that allows the mango, papaya, macadamia nut, fresh butter and honeysuckle notes to play out on the long, beguiling finish. Roussanne, Grenache Blanc, Picardan, Bourboulenc and Clairette. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE LA MONARDIÈRE

Vacqueyras Les 2 Monardes 2007

92 points | \$27 | 2,500 cases made | Red

Ripe and lush, with very flattering fig paste, hoisin sauce and bittersweet ganache flavors that glide over dense but velvety structure. The long, suave finish lets the fruit and minerality meld nicely. Grenache and Syrah. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE LES PALLIÈRES

Gigondas Terrasse du Diable 2007

92 points | \$28 | 1327 cases imported | Red

Polished and pure, with delicious layers of plum sauce, braised fig and melted licorice that glide through the dense but silky textured finish. Hints of graphite and incense lurk in the background. Long, with buried minerality. Should age nicely. Grenache, Mourvèdre and Clairette. Long, with buried minerality. Grenache, Mourvèdre and Clairette. Drink now through 2015.—*J.M.*

TARDIEU-LAURENT

Châteauneuf-du-Pape White Vieilles Vignes 2008

92 points | \$65 | 250 cases made | White

Lovely butter and creamed peach notes lead the way, followed by a mix of green melon, yellow apple and heather. The long, floral- and butter-tinged finish glides along. Shows impressive weight for the vintage. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

PIERRE-HENRI MOREL

Gigondas 2008

91 points | \$NA | 400 cases made | Red

Very juicy, with damson plum, blackberry and black currant fruit mingling with mulled spice and black tea hints. The silky finish has fine definition and length. Not imported into the U.S. Debut release. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE LES PALLIÈRES

Gigondas Les Racines 2007

91 points | \$28 | 1,125 cases imported | Red

Very lush, with velvety-textured fig, currant paste and melted red licorice notes that glide along, while hints of Black Forest cake and hoisin sauce weave in and out. Not as dense as the Terrasse du Diable, but the range is there for cellaring. Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault and Clairette. Drink now through 2015.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE BEUCASTEL

Côtes du Rhône White Coudoulet de Beaucastel 2008

90 points | \$39 | 600 cases made | White

Very ripe and lush for the vintage, with delicious Jonagold apple and Cavaillon melon notes caressed by salted butter and macadamia nut notes on the long, creamy finish. Marsanne, Viognier, Bourboulenc and Clairette. Drink now.—*J.M.*

South Africa

KEN FORRESTER

The Gypsy Stellenbosch 2006

93 points | \$65 | 40 cases imported | Red

Rich but perfumy, with silky raspberry ganache and red cherry flavors laced with alluring spice, incense and black tea notes. The long finish lets additional red currant and mineral notes chime in. Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

VINS D'ORRANCE

Syrah Stellenbosch Cuvée Ameena 2006

93 points | \$40 | 60 cases imported | Red

This is packed with fig, ganache, roasted vanilla bean and espresso notes backed by currant paste and hoisin sauce. A twinge of cedar helps extend the muscular finish. This has plenty of fruit, but with a nice old school feel throughout. Shows lots of character. Transplanted Frenchman Christophe Durand runs this small operation; worth tracking down. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

DE TRAFFORD

Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch 2008

92 points | \$27 | 877 cases made | White

Lovely mango, buttered almond, quince and fig flavors glide along, while dried pineapple and orange blossom notes hang in the background. Well-embedded acidity carries it all easily on the lengthy finish. Should mellow and broaden nicely with moderate cellaring. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

DE TRAFFORD

Shiraz Stellenbosch Blueprint 2007

92 points | \$37 | 682 cases made | Red

Dark, with a still-brooding edge to the black currant, fig and blackberry fruit flavors laid over briar, bittersweet cocoa and melted licorice snap notes. Long and velvety, with toast and black fruit flavors coursing through the finish. Drink now through 2015.—*J.M.*

NEIL ELLIS

Sauvignon Blanc Jonkershoek Valley Vineyard Selection 2007

92 points | \$NA | 330 cases made | White

Very lively, with rich straw and lemon verbena notes offset by vibrant chive, mâche and honeysuckle hints. The long, tangy finish weaves between paraffin and sea salt notes. This has a really riveting feel. This winery just about does it all. Drink now.—*J.M.*

KEN FORRESTER

Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch The FMC 2008

92 points | \$65 | 200 cases imported | White

A very ripe, exotic style, with a toasted hazelnut aroma leading the way for almond tuile, fig and glazed pear notes. The lush finish lets additional papaya and creamed peach notes chime in. This has an off-dry hint, but stays balanced. A flashy style for sure, but pulls it off. Drink now through 2011.—*J.M.*

KANONKOP

Cabernet Sauvignon Simonsberg-Stellenbosch 2004

91 points | \$35 | 150 cases imported | Red

Ripe and full-bodied, with delicious black currant, fig and licorice snap flavors that glide through the polished finish. A dash of loam adds length. Bottle age has tamed this, but it still has plenty of life. Drink now through 2011.—*J.M.*

SCALI

Syrah Voor-Paardeberg 2006

91 points | \$40 | 100 cases imported | Red

A very juicy, ripe style, with blueberry, blackberry and raspberry flavors all rippling along, while fruitcake and spice notes play out on the finish. A dash of briar keeps it all honest. Drink now through 2011.—*J.M.*

BACKSBERG

Shiraz Paarl Pumphouse 2007

90 points | \$24 | 6,000 cases made | Red

Distinctive, with roasted mesquite, blackberry and black currant fruit racing along a mouthwatering graphite note. The long, smoky finish lets an espresso hint linger. Drink now.—*J.M.*

KANONKOP

Paul Sauer Stellenbosch 2004

90 points | \$35 | 150 cases imported | Red

Offers a structured mix of red and black currant, coffee, roasted vanilla and licorice notes that all weave together nicely on the polished, herb-tinged finish. Very youthful, despite the late release. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Drink now through 2011.—*J.M.*

MULDERBOSCH

Chardonnay Stellenbosch 2007

90 points | \$21 | 400 cases imported | White

A very juicy, friendly style, with tasty pear, melon and green plum notes backed by a judicious layer of butter. The long, fresh finish has a nice mouthwatering hint. Drink now.—*J.M.*

RUSTENBERG

Chardonnay Stellenbosch 2008

90 points | \$20 | 1,700 cases imported | White

Delicious, with gorgeous melon, Bosc pear and Jonagold apple flavors offset by a stylish streak of grilled hazelnut. The long, racy finish lets the toast and fruit play together nicely. Drink now.—*J.M.*

VINS D'ORRANCE

Chardonnay Western Cape Cuvée Anaïs 2008

90 points | \$27 | 60 cases imported | White

A superripe, flashy style, with butter, creamed peach, Cavaillon melon and grilled hazelnut notes that extend through the full-bodied finish. The buttery edge takes over in the end, but this has good drive. For fans of the style. Drink now.—*J.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.

DE TRAFFORD

Shiraz Stellenbosch 2007

95 points | \$80 | 354 cases made | Red

Still a bit chunky now, but there's a great core of braised fig, bitersweet cocoa, anise, blackberry and warm tar, all layered with graphite and black tea. The long, muscular finish has serious grip thanks to a mouthwatering iron hint, while the tobacco and black fruit notes show lots of persistence. This winery has the country's best track record for Syrah. Best from 2011 through 2016. *From South Africa.—J.M.*

SADIE FAMILY

Columella Swartland 2007

95 points | \$78 | 50 cases imported | Red

Captivating, with a stunning array of loganberry, raspberry, blackberry and boysenberry fruit, all kept racy and invigorating thanks to well-embedded acidity and a bright minerality. Long, velvety and pure, with the iron spine buried deep on the finish. Syrah and Mourvèdre. A gorgeous follow up to the break through 2005. Drink now through 2015. *From South Africa.—J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE BEAUCASTEL

Châteauneuf-du-Pape White Vieilles Vignes 2008

94 points | \$182 | 500 cases made | White

Creamy and lush, with lovely mango, peach, pineapple and macadamia nut notes that stay bright and defined throughout. Ripe and very stylish, with an alluring whiff of toasted almond on the finish. There's impressive mouthfeel for the vintage. Roussanne. Drink now through 2015. *From France.—J.M.*

DE TRAFFORD

Straw Wine Stellenbosch 2007

94 points | \$47/375ml | 47 cases made | Dessert

Maple, browned butter and roasted almond notes lead the way, with dried persimmon, mango, creamed peach and freshly baked tuile notes forming the core. The long, rich, unctuous finish lets date, clove and green tea hints mingle. Flattering for sure, but with good latent length and precision. Chenin Blanc. Drink now through 2019. *From South Africa.—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 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

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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: 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

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1981. Tasting beat: Bordeaux, Italy, Port

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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