

Wine Spectator Insider

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A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

THIS issue of the *Wine Spectator Insider* features classic-rated wines from Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Gigondas in France's Rhône Valley as well as outstanding reds from Australia and Chardonnays from California. James Molesworth reviews this week's top-scoring wines, all of which come from the Rhône; he gives 96 points to two wines each from Châteauneuf and Gigondas, where Grenache is the primary grape. All four of them are designated as this week's Hot Wines, which you'll find on page 4. In total there are six classic-rated Rhône reds featured here, all of which come from the exceptional 2007 vintage.

Harvey Steiman reviews 15 Aussie reds in this report, most of them the Land Down Under's signature Shiraz varietal, and James Laube balances things out with five full-bodied, rich California Chardonnays.

Australia

GROOM

Shiraz Barossa Valley 2007

93 points | \$38 | 1,766 cases made | Red

Polished, round and focused, shining its blackberry, cherry, chocolate and cream flavors through the fine tannins to let them glow on the long, vivid finish. Best from 2011 through 2020.—*H.S.*

HUNDRED ACRE

Shiraz Barossa Valley Ancient Way Vineyard Summer's Blocks 2005

93 points | \$250 | 400 cases imported | Red

Manages to be dense and elegant at the same time, playing its dark plum, fresh fig and spice flavors against superslick tannins, letting it all expand beautifully on the long, expressive finish. Drink now through 2017.—*H.S.*

TAPANAPPA

Whalebone Vineyard Wrattontully 2006

93 points | \$85 | 175 cases imported | Red

Polished, elegant and harmonious, this is silky, with lovely blueberry, currant, plum and spice flavors playing out with refinement and style, finishing with a meaty, savory note. Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2020.—*H.S.*

BETTS & SCHOLL

Shiraz Barossa Valley Black Betty 2007

92 points | \$79 | 350 cases imported | Red

Meaty, velvety and distinctive for its dried tomato overtones. The core of dark plum and blackberry fruit persists impressively through the long, chewy finish. Best from 2010 through 2015.—*H.S.*

HUNDRED ACRE

Shiraz Barossa Valley Ancient Way Vineyard Summer's Blocks 2006

92 points | \$250 | 400 cases imported | Red

Smooth and round, this is distinctive for its black olive, licorice and balsamic overtones around a core of dark, brooding blackberry and currant fruit. Lingers intensely. Drink now through 2017.—*H.S.*

TWO HANDS

Shiraz Barossa Valley Bad Impersonator Single Vineyard 2007

92 points | \$48 | 700 cases made | Red

This dense red is dark as night and chewy with tannins, boiling with black olive, licorice and dried black cherry flavors that steam-roll through the tannins on the meaty, expressive finish. Best from 2011 through 2020.—*H.S.*

ROLF BINDER

Shiraz Barossa Valley Hanisch 2006

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

Smooth, round and distinctly spicy, with cinnamon and nutmeg overtones to the nicely modulated blackberry and licorice flavors. Lingers easily. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

LEASINGHAM

Shiraz Clare Valley Bin 61 2006

91 points | \$24 | 1,200 cases imported | Red

Lithe, silky and open-textured, this beautifully fragrant Shiraz aims for elegance over power, yet delivers a deep vein of plum, olallieberry and sweet spice flavors that keep going over the fine tannins on the finish. Drink now through 2016.—*H.S.*

TAPANAPPA

Pinot Noir Fleurieu Peninsula Foggy Hill Vineyard 2008

91 points | \$48 | 100 cases imported | Red

Velvety and rich, not heavy but intense, with cherry, spice and wet earth aromas and flavors, with a distinct minerality on the finish that doesn't quit. The length is impressive. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

TWO HANDS

Shiraz Barossa Valley Gnarly Dudes 2008

91 points | \$27 | 11,500 cases made | Red

On the tart side, with bright berry and pomegranate flavors that zing across fine tannins and linger on the lively finish, hinting at tea at the end. Drink now through 2017.—*H.S.*

TWO HANDS

Shiraz-Cabernet Sauvignon Barossa Valley The Bull And The Bear 2007

91 points | \$48 | 550 cases made | Red

Ripe and velvety, with focused black currant, blackberry, licorice and smoke flavors that linger on the solidly packed finish. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

JACOB'S CREEK

Shiraz Barossa Valley Centenary Hill 2005

90 points | \$35 | 1,500 cases imported | Red

Dark and juicy, with a metallic edge to the rhubarb and spice flavors, turning toward plum and soy sauce on the long, expressive finish. Drink now through 2017.—*H.S.*

TORBRECK

Cuvée Juveniles Barossa Valley 2008

90 points | \$20 | 5,000 cases made | Red

Supple and silky, this is distinctive for an herbal edge to its dark cherry and chocolate flavors, lingering beautifully. Grenache, Shiraz and Mataro. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

TORBRECK

The Factor Barossa Valley 2006

90 points | \$105 | 1,000 cases made | Red

Dark, dense and velvety, with a supple feel to the black cherry, smoke and licorice flavors, softening on the finish. Shiraz. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

WYNDHAM ESTATE

Shiraz South Australia George Wyndham Founder's Reserve 2005

90 points | \$18 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

Polished and lively, with rhubarb and pomegranate notes that weave through plum and spice as this heads for the finish. The tannins are well-buffed. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

YERING STATION

Yarrabank Cuvée Victoria 2004

90 points | \$25 | 850 cases imported | Sparkling

Light and fragrant, a lively style that teems with peppery pear, lemon and spice flavors, lingering with delicate bubbles on the refreshing finish. Drink now.—*H.S.*

California

ERIC KENT

Chardonnay Sonoma Coast 2007

92 points | \$39 | 211 cases made | White

Deliciously complex, full-bodied and elegant, with a mix of lees, floral, citrus, green apple, honeydew melon and subtle vanilla-butterscotch notes that expand, ending with a long, lingering finish enlivened by crisp acidity. Drink now through 2013.—*J.L.*

WILLIAMS SELYEM

Chardonnay Russian River Valley Allen Vineyard 2006

92 points | \$50 | 226 cases made | White

Fresh floral, citrus, green apple and tangy lemon-lime notes taste as good as they smell. Full-bodied, elegant and balanced, with lively acidity and a long, clean finish, showing a hint of mineral and oak on the finish. Drink now through 2013.—*J.L.*

FOXEN

Chardonnay Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard Block UU 2008

91 points | \$32 | 1,000 cases made | White

Tangy citrus, pink grapefruit and green apple flavors give this a mouthwatering sensation, with floral aromas. Full-bodied, rich and layered, ending with a long, persistent finish. Drink now through 2014.—*J.L.*

FOXEN

Chardonnay Santa Maria Valley Tinaquaic Vineyard 2008

91 points | \$32 | 180 cases made | White

Rich and full-bodied, marked by pure, direct citrus, pear, melon, light toasty oak and butterscotch flavors that are full-bodied without being heavy. Ends with subtle, delicate notes. Drink now through 2013.—*J.L.*

PATZ & HALL

Chardonnay Carneros Hudson Vineyard 2007
90 points | \$55 | 845 cases made | White

Smooth, rich and creamy, this is full-bodied, focused and layered, offering ripe fig, melon and spicy, toasty oak. Ends with a complex, delicate mix of oak and fruit. Drink now through 2013.—*J.L.*

France Rhône

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas Hominis Fides 2007
95 points | \$73 | 215 cases made | Red

Dense and sappy, with intense kirsch, raspberry ganache and graphite notes that course through, while mineral, roasted fig and spice notes flash alongside. The tangy, invigorating finish just goes on and on. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DU VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Crau 2007
95 points | \$66 | 4100 cases imported | Red

Packed, in a brawny, muscular style atypical for this lush vintage, with a gravelly undertow to the currant paste, braised fig and dark licorice notes. Picks up even more steam on the finish, with grilled mesquite, mineral and *garrigue* notes and a long, hot stone-filled finish. Best from 2010 through 2030.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE LA ROQUÈTE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape L'Accent 2007
94 points | \$75 | 330 cases made | Red

Extremely dense, but silky in texture, with lush, velvety tannins carrying black tea, braised fig, mulled currant fruit, sandalwood and mineral notes, all backed by a twinge of shiso leaf on the dark, lengthy finish, which sports a nice encore of fruit and grip. Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. Best from 2010 through 2024.—*J.M.*

ST.-COSME

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2006
94 points | \$53 | 750 cases made | Red

A dense, chewy style, with a mix of red and black plum, fig and blackberry fruit laced with dark cocoa, beef and black licorice notes. The long, muscular finish has a tarry edge. Very powerful for the vintage. Best from 2010 through 2025.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas Valbelle 2007
94 points | \$58 | 665 cases made | Red

Still tight, but with a gorgeous core of raspberry and black Mission fig fruit in reserve, as well as black tea, chalky minerality and a long, perfumy finish that really stretches out nicely. Should blossom with cellaring. Best from 2010 through 2019.—*J.M.*

LA BASTIDE ST.-DOMINIQUE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Secrets de Pignan Vieilles Vignes 2007
93 points | \$55 | 400 cases made | Red

Dark and lush, with layers of raspberry ganache, crushed plum, melted fig and licorice all gliding over well-integrated structure. Long and fleshy, but well-defined, with buried minerality on the finish keeping all the fruit honest. Drink now through 2029.—*J.M.*

CLOS DU MONT-OLIVET

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2007
93 points | \$35 | 4,750 cases made | Red

A gorgeous, silky, perfumy style, with tea and incense leading the way for supple-textured raspberry, black fig and mulled currant fruit notes. A perfumy note weaves through the mineral finish, with very fine-grained structure. Stylish for the vintage. Drink now through 2029.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas 2007
93 points | \$39 | 3,330 cases made | Red

Ripe and very suave, with gorgeous toast and Black Forest cake aromas leading the way for mulled fig, boysenberry and kirsch flavors. The long, rich finish is well-detailed, with blazing minerality stretching it out. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU GIGOGNAN

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vigne du Régent 2007
92 points | \$40 | 2,500 cases made | Red

Bright and juicy, with delicious red currant, fig and raspberry ganache flavors backed by tangy licorice spice. Long and ripe through the finish, with nice cut. Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2021.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE LA ROQUÈTE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2007
92 points | \$40 | 7,500 cases made | Red

This has gorgeously silky mouthfeel, with layers of blackberry, black cherry and dark plum fruit seamlessly woven with black tea and perfumy pepper and spice notes. The long finish lets the fruit and minerality drip. Grenache and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DES SÉNÉCHAUX

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2007
92 points | \$40 | 500 cases imported | Red

Fresh, pure and well-defined, with a beam of dark currant, fig and boysenberry fruit kept honest by graphite and black tea notes. The seamless finish sails on. Drink now through 2022.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE CHANTE-PERDRIX

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2007
91 points | \$35 | 500 cases imported | Red

Round, solid, juicy and well-defined, with an ample core of red currant, crushed plum and boysenberry notes laced with spice, roasted vanilla and licorice. The long finish stays fresh and focused. Drink now through 2019.—*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.

CHÂTEAU DE BEAUCASTEL

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2007

96 points | \$120 | 15,000 cases made | Red

Extremely dense, with layer upon layer of melted fig, mulled boysenberry and black currant fruit, all laced with notes of charred mesquite, hoisin sauce and Kenya AA coffee. The long, silky mouthfeel belies the latent power in reserve—and there's a lot of it, with waves of grip driving the finish. Best from 2010 through 2030. *From France.—J.M.*

CLOS DU MONT-OLIVET

Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Cuvée du Papet 2007

96 points | \$60 | 1,000 cases made | Red

Remarkably dense, but silky at the same time, with captivating mouthfeel to the layer upon layer of roasted black Mission fig, sandalwood, black tea, macerated currant fruit and plum sauce, all held together by finely beaded acidity. Latent grip shows up at the very end, boding well for long-term cellaring. Best from 2010 through 2030. *From France.—J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas Le Claux 2007

96 points | \$65 | 365 cases made | Red

Smoky, with an exotic roasted fig edge, along with charred mesquite, sage and blackberry paste notes. Shows a bright floral note as well, with a racy underpinning that carries all the weight effortlessly and keeps bringing you back for more. Drink now through 2022. *From France.—J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE ST.-COSME

Gigondas Le Poste 2007

96 points | \$73 | 125 cases made | Red

Dense but racy, with a terrifically focused minerality that cuts like a laser through the layers of raspberry ganache, graphite, melted fig and black tea. Long and very precise on the finish, with great latent grip. A stunning combination of power and precision. Best from 2010 through 2022. *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 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

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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