

Wine Spectator Insider

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THIS WEEK'S WINE SPECTATOR INSIDER COVERS SYRAH from California and Australia, plus Oregon Pinot Noir and Loire Valley whites. Harvey Steiman reviews Australian Shiraz, most of them from the Barossa Valley's 2008 vintage. He also covers more Oregon Pinot Noir from the 2008 vintage in Willamette Valley.

James Laube and MaryAnn Worobiec highlight California reds, including three classic-rated wines. Two of the Hot Wines, which can be found on page 4, are from Edna Valley's Alban Vineyards, on the central coast. And finally, James Molesworth looks at France, with a selection of Sancerre, Vouvray and Pouilly-Fumé bottlings.

Australia

HENTLEY FARM

Shiraz Barossa Valley Clos Otto 2008

95 points | \$150 | 50 cases imported | Red

Rich, ripe, round and deep, delivering a complex mouthful of black cherry, plum, fig and licorice flavors, hinting at aromas of chocolate and wet sand as the finish lingers impressively. Drink now through 2020.—*H.S.*

HENTLEY FARM

Shiraz Barossa Valley The Beast 2008

93 points | \$75 | 75 cases imported | Red

Dense and spicy, this is a big wine, offering a distinctive mouthful of black cherry, dried blueberry, red pepper and chocolate flavors that come together nicely on the long, expressive finish. Drink now through 2020.—*H.S.*

HENTLEY FARM

Shiraz Barossa Valley The Beauty 2008

93 points | \$50 | 75 cases imported | Red

Broad and spicy, with a surprisingly open texture that lets the black cherry, smoke and licorice flavors explode over the palate, persisting on the ripe, powerful finish. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

PENFOLDS

Shiraz South Australia St. Henri 2006

93 points | \$65 | 925 cases imported | Red

Supple and generous, delivering a plush mouthful of vibrant blueberry, plum and wet earth flavors that play against a distinct minerality. The vivid finish hints at tea leaf. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

GROOM

Shiraz Barossa Valley 2008

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

Ripe and generous, with a streak of welcome minerality to the broad cherry, raspberry, beet and spice flavors, lingering easily with a hint of green tea as the finish lingers enticingly. Drink now through 2020.—*H.S.*

PENFOLDS

Shiraz Barossa Valley RWT 2007

92 points | \$150 | 215 cases imported | Red

Dense, fleshy and generous with its cherry and red berry flavors, wrapped in pepper and licorice, persisting impressively on the broad finish. Best from 2012 through 2017.—*H.S.*

CHÂTEAU TANUNDA

Shiraz Barossa Valley 100 Year Old Vines The Chateau 2008

91 points | \$100 | 46 cases imported | Red

Ripe and round, with a spicy, smoky character surrounding the black cherry, blackberry and beet leaf flavors that persist into the complex, inviting finish. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

LANGMEIL

Shiraz Barossa The Freedom 1843 2008

90 points | \$100 | 35 cases imported | Red

Polished, round and ripe, this is generous with its dried cherry, prune and spice flavors, finishing with richness and depth. Drink now through 2016.—*H.S.*

California

EPOCH

Syrah Paso Robles Authenticity Paderewski Vineyard 2008

95 points | \$55 | 242 cases made | Red

Offering aromas of fresh-cut flowers, plum and berry jam, with lots of dark berry fruit scents, this is big and concentrated, yet manages to be supple midpalate and dense and chewy on the finish, ending with cascading berry, mineral, mocha and espresso notes. Drink now through 2021.—*J.L.*

EPOCH

Syrah Paso Robles Block B Paderewski Vineyard 2008

95 points | \$55 | 181 cases made | Red

An extraordinary wine that serves up a gorgeous mix of dark berry fruit that's sleek, focused, intense and supple-textured. Full-bodied, unleashing tiers of blackberry and wild berry fruit, with floral scents and an amazingly long and detailed finish. Drink now through 2024.—*J.L.*

BOOKER

The Alchemist 24 Paso Robles 2008

94 points | \$50 | 150 cases made | Red

A classy mix of firm structure and rich flavors, with blueberry, wild berry and blackberry fruit and touches of licorice, sage, underbrush and mocha. This is full-blown, yet for all its size and chunky edges, it maintains a wonderful balance and is simply fun to drink. Syrah, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo and Grenache. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

JONATA

Syrah Santa Ynez Valley La Sangre de Jonata 2007

94 points | \$125 | 300 cases made | Red

Very tight, dense and concentrated, packed with dried berry, blackberry liqueur, mineral, graphite, black licorice and cedar flavors. Full-bodied, well-structured and focused, slowly unfolding to reveal an incredibly long and detailed finish. Best from 2012 through 2023.—*J.L.*

DERENONCOURT

Cabernet Franc Napa Valley Coombsville 2007

92 points | \$140 | 86 cases made | Red

Smooth, rich and layered, showing mocha, dried berry, espresso and roasted herb flavors, with touches of dusty, cedary oak. Full-bodied, intense and balanced, ending with firm, ripe tannins and good length. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

HALL

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Ellie's 2007

92 points | \$55 | 476 cases made | Red

Smooth, rich and savory, deep and concentrated, with polished currant, plum and blackberry flavors accented by black licorice. Full-bodied, fleshy and persistent, ending with an espresso after-taste. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

France Loire

S.A. HUËT

Vouvray Sec Le Haut-Lieu 2009

92 points | \$26 | 900 cases imported | White

This is chiseled and pure, with lovely precision to the quince, fig and honeysuckle notes all buttressed by mouthwatering acidity. Long finish. Drink now through 2016.—*J.M.*

S.A. HUËT

Vouvray Sec Le Mont 2009

92 points | \$32 | 200 cases imported | White

Juicy, with an off-dry feel (despite the sec designation) to the powdered ginger, tarte Tatin, quince and fig flavors, all held together with a note of heather honey that lingers through the wheat biscuit-tinged finish. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

PASCAL JOLIVET

Sancerre Les Caillottes 2009

92 points | \$35 | 150 cases imported | White

This has the vintage's rapier acidity, but it's embedded in a creamy, porcelainlike texture that carries verbena, lemon curd, white peach and gooseberry notes through the long, stylish, stone-tinged finish. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

YVES MARTIN

Sancerre Chavignol 2009

92 points | \$23 | 1,000 cases imported | White

Bony at first, with talcum powder and chive notes up front, turning richer as it moves along, letting lime zest and salted butter notes fill in, with a long, flinty finish. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

Oregon

S.A. HUËT

Vouvray Sec Clos du Bourg 2009

91 points | \$32 | 400 cases imported | White

Dry, but still flattering in feel, with friendly green almond, quince and fig notes carried by a lilting floral hint on the finish. Drink now through 2015.—*J.M.*

KARINE LAUVERJAT

Pouilly-Fumé 2009

91 points | \$23 | 100 cases imported | White

This superzesty white offers lemon and grapefruit notes laced with white peach, verbena and floral hints, with a long, minerally finish. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

KARINE LAUVERJAT

Sancerre 2009

91 points | \$23 | 3,000 cases imported | White

This has a lovely floral nose, with excellent cut to the tangy white peach, gooseberry and honeysuckle notes on the palate. The finish is long and finely tuned. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

VIGNEAU-CHEVREAU

Vouvray Abbaye de Marmoutier Clos de Rougemont 2008

91 points | \$24 | 200 cases imported | White

Ripe and juicy, with a medium-weight core of quince, pear and creamed green apple flavors laced with a ginger note. The long, minerally finish is very stylish. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

VINCENT CARÊME

Vouvray Le Peu Morier 2007

90 points | \$30 | 56 cases imported | White

Maturing, with ginger and McIntosh apple flavors woven with warm piecrust, quince paste and heather notes. Shows a twinge on lanolin on the finish. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

CLOS DE NOUYS

Vouvray Sec 2009

90 points | \$20 | 1,000 cases imported | White

A bracing, fresh style, with driven green apple, fig and green almond notes backed by a vibrant lime zest-filled finish. Very tangy.— *Drink now through 2013.*

SERGE DAGUENEAU

Pouilly-Fumé Les Pentes 2009

90 points | \$24 | 500 cases imported | White

Stylish, with straw and lemon curd notes carried by very fresh acidity. The long finish has nice precision, leaving a lingering verbena note. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

RÉGIS MINET

Pouilly-Fumé Vieilles Vignes 2009

90 points | \$21 | 3,300 cases made | White

Very pure, with finely tuned chive blossom, gooseberry and citrus notes that race along mouthwatering acidity, followed by a long, flint-tinged finish. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

KEN WRIGHT

Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Abbot Claim Vineyard 2008

94 points | \$55 | 1,187 cases made | Red

Light in weight and texture, with complex, mineral-accented blackberry, red cherry, whole grain and spice flavors that flow easily into the long, expressive finish. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

KEN WRIGHT

Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District McCrone Vineyard 2008

93 points | \$55 | 920 cases made | Red

Silky, supple and distinctive for the deep mineral flavors that weave through dark berry, cherry and currant fruit, sailing easily into a cloud of fine tannins on the long, expressive finish. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

KEN WRIGHT

Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Shea Vineyard 2008

93 points | \$55 | 834 cases made | Red

Vivid stuff, this is firm in texture and racy in flavor, offering mineral-accented currant, pomegranate and blackberry flavors that zing through the fine-grained finish. This has style and vitality. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

AUTEUR

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2008

92 points | \$60 | 225 cases made | Red

A bit chewy, but beautifully focused to show off its ripe cherry, black pepper, tobacco and floral aromas and flavors on an open texture, deftly knit with fine tannins. Lingers effortlessly on the finish. Best from 2012 through 2018.—*H.S.*

PONZI

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Abetina Vineyard 2008

92 points | \$100 | 100 cases made | Red

Light on its feet, with firm tannins around red berry, cinnamon and pepper flavors, lingering expansively on the finish against an intriguing roasted meat character. Best from 2012 through 2016.—*H.S.*

KEN WRIGHT

Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Savoya Vineyard 2008

92 points | \$55 | 1,790 cases made | Red

Supple, open-textured and inviting, letting its plum, currant and sweet spice flavors float easily through the refined texture, hovering over the long, delicate finish. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

BOEDECKER

Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Carlton Hill Vineyard 2008

91 points | \$50 | 75 cases made | Red

Light in texture and broad in flavor, with ripe currant and dark plum flavors on a supple frame, lingering easily on the generous finish. Drink now through 2018.—*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.

ALBAN

Syrah Edna Valley Lorraine 2006

97 points | \$145 | 450 cases made | Red

Combines dark, powerful blackberry, wild berry, plum and black licorice flavors on a seamless texture. Full-bodied, with floral, spicy, peppery aromas that end up gliding across the palate. Drink now through 2024. *From California.—J.L.*

ALBAN

Syrah Edna Valley Seymour's Vineyard 2006

96 points | \$145 | 350 cases made | Red

This wine exhibits a broad yet tightly reigned-in range of roasted herb, tobacco, mineral, graphite, pepper and road tar flavors. Full-blown, intense and chewy, with stewed plum and wild berry flavors supported by dense, extracted tannins. A baby. Best from 2012 through 2024. *From California.—J.L.*

DONUM

Pinot Noir Carneros West Slope 2008

96 points | \$80 | 170 cases made | Red

This harmonious red is bursting with wonderfully pure fruit flavors of raspberry, cherry and strawberry. Ripe and full-bodied, yet extremely sophisticated, with details of clove, fig jam, tobacco and mineral. The flavors continue to surge on the long finish. Drink now through 2020. *From California.—M.W.*

TWO HANDS

Ares Adelaide 2008

96 points | \$150 | 200 cases imported | Red

Dark and dense, but not heavy, offering a remarkable sense of freshness to its ripe cherry, raspberry, blackberry, tea leaf, dark chocolate and smoke flavors, which compete for attention and finish with astonishing depth. Shiraz. Drink now through 2020. *From Australia.—H.S.*

Correction:

The Keplinger SUMO Amador County 2007 was misidentified in the Nov. 3 issue.

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 12 people in two offices. They work together to review more than 18,000 wines each year, more than any other publication. Together, our six senior tasters count more than 140 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; 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

Kim Marcus Managing editor, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Austria, Greece, Port, 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, Bordeaux, Chile, Finger Lakes, Loire Valley, Rhône Valley, South Africa

Bruce Sanderson Tasting director, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Burgundy, Champagne, Germany, Italy

Harvey Steiman Editor at large, San Francisco

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: Australia, New Zealand, Oregon, Washington

Tasting staff:

Tim Fish (California),

Alison Napjus (Alsace),

MaryAnn Worobiec (California)

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