

Wine Spectator Insider

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A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

FROM the West Coast to Spain, this week's *Wine Spectator Insider* covers an amazing nine classic-rated wines from Sonoma and Napa Valley in the Golden State, Columbia Valley in Washington and Castilla y León and Rioja in Spain. James Laube reviews a selection of reds and whites from California, including three 97-point wines: a Chardonnay, a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Bordeaux-style blend, each of which you'll find among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

Thomas Matthews reviews 11 Spanish reds, mostly from Rioja, one of which earns 95 points. Finally, Harvey Steiman offers his latest tasting notes for Washington state wines, mostly Syrahs from the "near-perfect" 2007 vintage, including six of the latest releases from one of Washington's top names, Cayuse. Four of Cayuse's new reds earn classic ratings this week.

California

AUBERT

Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Ritchie Vineyard 2008
96 points | \$80 | 1,303 cases made | White

Bold, rich and expressive, layered and complex, offering tiers of ripe citrus and lemon peel, pear and melon, with touches of hazelnut and spice. Ends with a rich, smoky butterscotch flavor that gives this added dimension. Drink now through 2015.—J.L.

DUMOL

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Ryan 2007
94 points | \$76 | 850 cases made | Red

Strikes a wonderful balance between ripe, fleshy, complex wild berry, raspberry, sage and fresh earth, alluring for both its thrust of flavors and subtle mix of loamy earth and berry flavors. Ends with sage and anise touches that are teasing. Drink now through 2016.—J.L.

PAUL HOBBS

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2008
94 points | \$45 | 3,644 cases made | Red

A classy 2008 that rides the freeway of flavors, showing wonderful aromatics of wild raspberry, anise, black berry and spice, with touches of mineral and sage. Full-bodied, complex, vibrant, focused, intense and persistent. Drink now through 2016.—J.L.

AUBERT

Chardonnay Carneros Larry Hyde & Sons 2008
93 points | \$80 | 448 cases made | White

Fresh, rich, intense and vibrant, with a deep concentration of flavors built around firm apple, pear, honeysuckle and spice, fanning out nicely on the long, persistent finish. Drink now through 2015.—J.L.

AUBERT

Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Lauren 2008
93 points | \$90 | 722 cases made | White

Remarkable for its delicacy, finesse, grace and nuance, medium-to full-bodied, with complex pear, fig, hazelnut and melon flavors that gain depth, ending with a subtle mix of complex flavors. Drink now through 2014.—J.L.

BOYANCI

Napa Valley 2006
93 points | \$130 | 192 cases made | Red

Sleek and elegant, refined and polished, offering a tightly focused mix of spicy wild berry, black cherry, cedar and hazelnut flavors, with a dash of mocha. Remarkable for its delicate mix of flavors, balance and finesse. Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Petit Verdot, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2017.—J.L.

DUMOL

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Finn 2007
93 points | \$80 | 363 cases made | Red

Offers a complex mix of ripe, fleshy and subtle cherry, berry, spice and mineral flavors, with touches of lavender. Full-bodied, elegant and balanced, this glides through on the finish. Drink now through 2016.—*J.L.*

ERIC KENT

Chardonnay Russian River Valley 2008
93 points | \$39 | 377 cases made | White

Combines ripe, firm, complex fruit with subtle hints of cedar and spice. Full-bodied, with ripe pear, melon, honeysuckle and mineral notes, ending with a rich, fleshy finish. Drink now through 2014.—*J.L.*

PEIRSON MEYER

Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Charles Heintz Vineyard 2008
93 points | \$55 | 400 cases made | White

A fragrant, delicate style that slowly builds richness, depth and complexity. Full-bodied, elegant and refined, intense yet polished, with vivid pear, peach and nectarine that are long and lingering, ending with pretty honeysuckle notes. Drink now through 2015.—*J.L.*

BOYANCI

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley InSpire 2007
92 points | \$60 | 715 cases made | Red

Firm and tightly structured, with a focused band of cedar and anise-laced currant, blackberry, wild berry, sage and herb, gaining depth while remaining elegant and refined. Complex and concentrated, with the flavors lingering on. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

DUMOL

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Aidan 2007
92 points | \$76 | 380 cases made | Red

Firm, intense, fresh and vibrant, with a mineral baseline to the ripe cherry, blackberry, sage and cedar notes. Full-bodied and firm, this is in need of aeration. The finish impresses with a long, persistent push of concentrated flavors. Drink now through 2016.—*J.L.*

DUMOL

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Eoin 2007
92 points | \$76 | 375 cases made | Red

Intense, taut and grounded in a loamy, earthy minerality that gives a rich foundation for the firm, ripe wild berry, raspberry and mineral notes that are slow to develop. A bit stemmy, but persistent, teasing and tempting. Best from 2011 through 2017.—*J.L.*

GUARACHI

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2007
92 points | \$65 | 1,269 cases made | Red

Firm, intense and concentrated, presenting a complex mix of loamy earth, dried currant, cedar and blackberry fruit that's fresh and vibrant, picking up anise and blackberry flavors on the finish. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

PAUL HOBBS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2007
92 points | \$75 | 5,653 cases made | Red

Notable for its richness, intensity, focus and persistence, this full-bodied red shows spicy currant, black cherry and wild berry fruit that's supple and layered, yet light on its feet with gentle tannins. Drink now through 2016.—*J.L.*

KEEVER

Cabernet Sauvignon Yountville 2007
92 points | \$90 | 650 cases made | Red

Intense and concentrated, elegant and stylish, a wine of subtlety and finesse, with a layered mix of cedary currant, spice and anise that unfold gracefully, with a pleasing, lingering aftertaste. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

Spain

BODEGAS SIERRA CANTABRIA

Rioja Amancio 2006
95 points | \$180 | 67 cases imported | Red

This firm red shows an austere character, with mineral, sanguine and anise notes framing plum and fig flavors. Balanced and fresh, with plenty of depth and an impressive balance of power and grace. Best from 2011 through 2021.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS MUGA

Rioja Torre Muga 2006
94 points | \$100 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

Toast and cola notes frame rich plum and fig flavors in this concentrated red, which is bright and polished, though there's depth under the muscular tannins. Impressive in the modern style. Best from 2011 through 2021.—*T.M.*

SEÑORIO DE SAN VICENTE

Rioja 2006
93 points | \$67 | 750 cases imported | Red

This generous red offers cherry, currant and cranberry fruit, with accents of cola, licorice and spice. Full-bodied and firm, but not heavy, with lively acidity and a fresh, floral finish. Drink now through 2018.—*T.M.*

VIÑAS DEL CENIT

Tierra del Viño de Zamora Cenit 2005
92 points | \$125 | 25 cases imported | Red

It takes two hands to lift this bottle, but if you like reds in the plush, international style, it's worth the effort. A velvety texture carries bold flavors of black currant, fig pudding, spice and cocoa. So gentle yet so rich. Tempranillo. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS RODA

Rioja Cirсион 2006
92 points | \$300 | 40 cases imported | Red

Dense and polished, this red is powerful yet graceful, with black currant, espresso, licorice and mineral notes. A bit oaky now, but with the structure and balance to age. Best from 2011 through 2020.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS RODA

Rioja Reserva 2004

91 points | \$45 | 750 cases imported | Red

Plush yet focused, this round red shows plum, raisin, cinnamon, cedar and black pepper flavors. The tannins are still quite firm, balanced by fresh acidity. Maturing now, but still has plenty of life. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

VIÑAS DEL CENIT

Tempranillo Tierra del Viño de Zamora Demora 2006

90 points | \$30 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

A velvety texture carries ripe, spicy flavors of plum pudding, chocolate, cinnamon and raisin, yet remains firm and fresh, tender and long. A modern style. Drink now through 2013.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS LAN

Rioja Crianza 2006

90 points | \$12 | 20,000 cases imported | Red

Fresh and balanced, this red brims with cherry, spice and licorice, with light, firm tannins and vibrant acidity. The texture is generous yet delicate. Not heavy, but vivacious. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

ABADIA RETUERTA

Viño de la Tierra de Castilla y León Sardon de Duero Selección Especial 2007

90 points | \$20 | 2,000 cases imported | Red

Black cherry, wood smoke and bacon notes mingle in this firm, fresh red. Balanced and lively, not muscular but focused. A bit austere now, but should evolve well. Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Drink now through 2015.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS RODA

Rioja I Reserva 2004

90 points | \$75 | 500 cases imported | Red

Plum, tobacco, leather and licorice mingle in this thick red. A bit blunt, but the tannins are well-integrated. There's depth to the flavors, and the finish is fresh and long. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

VENTA LA OSSA

Viño de la Tierra de Castilla 2007

90 points | \$20 | 900 cases imported | Red

This polished red shows density and balance, with black cherry, currant, licorice and espresso notes. Well-structured, balanced and sleek. Restrained now, but should evolve well. Tempranillo. Drink now through 2017.—*T.M.*

Washington

CAYUSE

Syrah Walla Walla Valley Bionic Frog 2007

95 points | \$75 | 476 cases made | Red

This has tremendous presence, graceful but forceful, playing out its plum, currant, black pepper and licorice flavors against a background that hints at warm granite, cinnamon bark and bay leaf. Complex and harmonious. Drink now through 2020.—*H.S.*

CAYUSE

Syrah Walla Walla Valley Cailloux Vineyard 2007

95 points | \$65 | 792 cases made | Red

Strong notes of tar, hot stone and licorice weave through the rich, dark plum, mulberry and currant aromas and flavors. A complex, beautifully knit wine that lets its flavors sail through a long, compelling finish. Best from 2012 through 2020.—*H.S.*

CAYUSE

Syrah Walla Walla Valley En Cerise Vineyard 2007

95 points | \$65 | 382 cases made | Red

Focused like a laser, this beams oodles of fresh currant, plum and black olive flavors through a veil of refined tannins. This is fleshy, sneaking in wafts of pepper, licorice and tar on the finish. Drink now through 2020.—*H.S.*

CAYUSE

Syrah Walla Walla Valley En Chamberlin Vineyard 2007

94 points | \$65 | 407 cases made | Red

Supple, silky and tightly focused, offering a sleek mouthful of juicy plum, blackberry and licorice flavors, picking up mineral notes of wet slate and crushed brick as the finish sails on and on. This is almost delicate in its deft balance, but has great intensity. Drink now through 2020.—*H.S.*

REYNVAAN

Syrah Walla Walla Valley The Contender 2007

93 points | \$60 | 300 cases made | Red

Dense, a bit chewy, with a gravelly character both in texture and aroma to support the neatly balanced plum, currant and guava fruit. It's all wrapped in wafts of sandalwood, smoke and floral perfume, enough to be haunting. Drink now through 2020.—*H.S.*

SLEIGHT OF HAND

Syrah Columbia Valley Levitation 2007

93 points | \$40 | 340 cases made | Red

Rich and fleshy, not heavy but beautifully focused and deftly balanced to play its fresh boysenberry and currant flavors against fine tannins and hints of licorice and pepper on the finish. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

REYNVAAN

Syrah Walla Walla Valley In The Rocks 2007

92 points | \$50 | 350 cases made | Red

Dark and brooding, not heavy but packed with ruminating black cherry, licorice, dark plum and star anise flavors against a background of fine tannins and fleshy texture. Best from 2012 through 2020.—*H.S.*

CAYUSE

Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley The Widowmaker En Chamberlin Vineyard 2007

91 points | \$70 | 135 cases made | Red

Big and bracing, offering a plush mouthful of black olive-immersed blackberry, cherry, plum and spice flavors, finishing with savory herb character. Drink now through 2017.—*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.

AUBERT

Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Reuling Vineyard 2008
97 points | \$80 | 382 cases made | White

Rich and full-bodied, with ripe layers of fig, apricot and melon shaded by toasty, smoky roasted marshmallow flavors that are intense, vibrant and lively with acidity. Long and persistent on the finish. Drink now through 2014. *From California.—J.L.*

CAYUSE

Syrah Walla Walla Valley Armada Vineyard 2006
97 points | \$65 | 388 cases made | Red

Silky, supple and complex from the first sniff to the last echo on the long, expressive finish, this drips with character, offering black olive-accented blackberry, plum and cherry fruit mingling with hints of unsweetened chocolate, bacon-stewed greens and haunting spices. Drink now through 2020. *From Washington.—H.S.*

CONTINUUM

Napa Valley 2007
97 points | \$140 | 1,500 cases made | Red

A wonderful expression of Cabernet, sleek and polished, with a mix of rich, layered black cherry, currant, wild berry and plum fruit that's intense, concentrated, focused and stylish, turning spicy, with cedary anise and sage notes on a long, persistent finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2020. *From California.—J.L.*

PAUL HOBBS

Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Beckstoffer Dr. Crane Vineyard 2007
97 points | \$150 | 586 cases made | Red

Wonderfully exotic, with complex aromas of spice, cedar, currant, kirsch and blackberry that fold over to the rich, firm and full-bodied palate. Elegantly styled, layered and persistent. Simply a joy to drink. Drink now through 2012. *From California.—J.L.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

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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.

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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