

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

AN AVALANCHE OF PINOT NOIR EXCELLENCE leads the charge in this week's *Wine Spectator Insider*, with wines from California, France and Washington, up to 96 points. This is a report of the most exciting wines our editors have discovered in the tasting room in recent weeks.

California Pinot gems from the likes of Aubert and Brewer-Clifton face off against their Burgundian counterparts from Côte de Nuits, including both *grand cru* sites and under-the-radar value regions. In Washington, bold reds like Quilceda Creek's latest Cabernet offering add star power; one 92 pointer here costs just \$32. Turn to page 4 for the six Hot Wines.

CALIFORNIA Pinot Noir

BREWER-CLIFTON

Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Hapgood 2016
94 points | \$65 | 78 cases made | Red

Elegant, offering raspberry, pomegranate and cherry flavors that are well-structured. Notes of forest floor show midpalate, with an enveloping finish of spice and brick. Drink now through 2023.—*K.M.*

PAUL HOBBS

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Goldrock Estate 2016
94 points | \$95 | 239 cases made | Red

Dark and robust, centered on rich plum, blackberry, cherry and wild berry flavors that pick up a light touch of oak and fresh earth, ending with firm, ripe tannins. Best from 2019 through 2026.—*J.L.*

ARGOT

Pinot Noir Sonoma Mountain Estate Vineyard 2015
93 points | \$70 | 125 cases made | Red

The core of dark berry, cherry and plum flavors edges toward a pleasing jammy character without crossing the line, with anise and crushed rock notes. Pleasantly chewy. Drink now through 2024.—*J.L.*

AUBERT

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2015
93 points | \$65 | NA cases made | Red

Starts subtle and gains depth and a rich loamy earthiness that makes the wild berry and raspberry notes deeper and more refined, ending with fine-grained tannins that hold the flavors in place. Drink now through 2025.—*J.L.*

AUBERT

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast UV-SL Vineyard 2015
93 points | \$85 | 757 cases made | Red

Supple red plum and black cherry flavors are elegant and graceful, backed by fine-grained, tea-laced tannins that impart traction. Drink now through 2025.—*J.L.*

DOMAINE DELLA

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2016
93 points | \$65 | 200 cases made | Red

This keeps opening new flavor doors that are ripe and complex, offering layers of raspberry, anise and blueberry, with zesty acidity that lets the flavors glide to an elegant aftertaste. Drink now through 2025.—*J.L.*

PAUL HOBBS

Pinot Noir Napa Valley Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2016
93 points | \$85 | 662 cases made | Red

Dark, rich and concentrated, with tiers of blackberry, currant, raspberry and anise, backed by full-blown tannins that impart backbone but let the flavors glide through. Drink now through 2025.—*J.L.*

KANZLER

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2016
93 points | \$56 | 750 cases made | Red

Brimming with rich, juicy wild berry and blackberry fruit, shaded by spice and light oak notes. Sings and dances, maintaining balance and focus. Drink now through 2025.—*J.L.*

LUCIENNE

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Doctor's Vineyard 2016
93 points | \$50 | 777 cases made | Red

Rich and layered, with plump, juicy wild berry, raspberry, blackberry jam and cedar flavors. A full and complete style that touches all the bases. Drink now through 2025.—J.L.

LUTUM

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Gap's Crown Vineyard 2015
93 points | \$60 | 152 cases made | Red

A graceful, elegant style, refined and polished, with savory, juicy berry, light oak, anise and mineral flavors. This glides along on the finish. Drink now through 2024.—J.L.

PAPAPIETRO PERRY

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Pommard Clones 2015
93 points | \$74 | 572 cases made | Red

A seamless effort, graceful, juicy and charming, with vivid plum, wild berry, raspberry and spice flavors, ending with dashes of anise and cedar that linger. Drink now through 2024.—J.L.

ROAR

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Pisoni Vineyard 2016
93 points | \$70 | 228 cases made | Red

Pure, rich and layered, with extracted plum, blackberry, licorice, loamy, gravelly earth and cedary oak notes. Sails and sings, and merits room in the cellar. Drink now through 2025.—J.L.

SOJOURN

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Wohler Vineyard 2016
93 points | \$48 | 600 cases made | Red

A supple, generous expression of fleshy plum, blackberry, anise and wilted rose flavors. This glides along, distinctive for the grace, harmony and completeness. Drink now through 2024.—J.L.

SOJOURN

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Ridgetop Vineyard 2016
93 points | \$59 | 350 cases made | Red

Rich, plump and juicy, with full-bodied dark berry, cherry, raspberry, cola, spice and wilted rose flavors, gaining depth and ending with a dense, persistent aftertaste. Drink now through 2025.—J.L.

DUTTON-GOLDFIELD

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Redwood Ridge 2015
92 points | \$62 | 292 cases made | Red

Plump at points, with moderately rich plum and blueberry flavors that are broad in scope and tapered on the finish, ending with a gravelly, loamy earth aftertaste. Drink now through 2025.—J.L.

FRANCE

Burgundy / Côte de Nuits

DOMAINE CASTAGNIER

Clos de Vougeot 2015

95 points | \$225 | 5 cases imported | Red

This dark-hued red features violet, black cherry, raspberry, mineral and spice flavors. A base of dusty tannins provides structure as the fruit persists from start to finish. Very focused and linear. Best from 2023 through 2045.—B.S.

ALBERT BICHOT

Vosne-Romanée Les Malconsorts Domaine du Clos Frantin 2015

94 points | \$229 | 200 cases imported | Red

A lithe, tense version, whose taut profile is woven with cherry, strawberry and spice flavors. Firms up on the lingering finish, where the saturated fruit suggests fine potential for the future. Best from 2021 through 2034.—B.S.

DOMAINE CASTAGNIER

Morey-St.-Denis Aux Cheseaux 2015

94 points | \$135 | 5 cases imported | Red

Dark and smoky, revealing a good dose of new oak that shades the black currant, blackberry, violet, graphite and tar flavors. Spice and toasty oak details offset the fruit on the lingering finish. Stylish. Best from 2023 through 2042.—B.S.

DOMAINE ODOUL-COQUARD

Chambolle-Musigny 2015

94 points | \$74 | 20 cases imported | Red

Ripe and bordering on cherry jam, this is succulent and taut at once, with fruit, mineral and floral notes fused to the linear frame. Relaxes slowly, leaving a long, detailed aftertaste. Best from 2022 through 2038.—B.S.

DOMAINE ODOUL-COQUARD

Morey-St.-Denis Aux Chéseaux 2015

94 points | \$69 | 40 cases imported | Red

Very pure, with cherry, raspberry and violet aromas and flavors clinging to the vibrant acidity and refined tannins. Builds to a long, fruit-filled finish. The silky texture only gives way to firm tannins at the end. Best from 2021 through 2038.—B.S.

DOMAINE DE L'ARLOT

Nuits-St.-Georges Clos de l'Arlot 2015

93 points | \$125 | 194 cases made | Red

Effusive aromas and flavors of earth, cherry, licorice, mineral and spice burst from the glass here, while the dense tannins apply their grip on the finish. The contrast continues but the tannins win out for now. Best from 2022 through 2038.—B.S.

DOMAINE ODOUL-COQUARD

Gevrey-Chambertin Aux Combottes 2015
93 points | \$117 | 15 cases imported | Red

A powerful, concentrated red, with a deep color and expressive black cherry and blackberry fruit that's more than a match for the dense matrix of tannins. This is impressive, if a touch hot on the finish. Best from 2024 through 2039.—*B.S.*

ALBERT BICHOT

Fixin 2015
92 points | \$38 | 700 cases imported | Red

A smooth, polished style, offering black cherry, black currant, earth and mineral aromas and flavors. Dense and vibrant, with a lingering aftertaste of black fruit and mineral. Excellent length. Best from 2021 through 2033.—*B.S.*

WASHINGTON

LA RATA

Walla Walla Valley 2015
94 points | \$75 | 136 cases made | Red

Velvety, rich and impeccably built, with expressive raspberry, smoky peppered meat and orange zest flavors that take on depth toward polished tannins. Grenache, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Drink now through 2024.—*T.F.*

LEONETTI

Reserve Walla Walla Valley 2015
94 points | \$150 | 1,099 cases made | Red

Pairs great structure with richness and polish, offering expressive blackberry, allspice and bay leaf flavors that fan out and linger toward refined tannins. Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec and Merlot. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

QUILCEDA CREEK

Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2015
94 points | \$200 | 6,125 cases made | Red

Graceful, expressive and impeccably built, with precise dark berry, black olive and black tea flavors that broaden and expand on a lingering finish. Finishes with polished tannins. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

HORSEPOWER

Grenache Walla Walla Valley Sur Echelas Vineyard 2015
93 points | \$120 | 236 cases made | Red

Sleek and elegantly powerful, with expressive black raspberry, bacon fat and fresh pepper flavors that take on richness toward graceful tannins. Drink now through 2024.—*T.F.*

STEMILT CREEK

Syrah Columbia Valley Ascent 2015
93 points | \$45 | 168 cases made | Red

Precise and polished, with complex currant, crushed stone and smoky pepper flavors that linger toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

LEONETTI

Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2015
92 points | \$100 | 2,882 cases made | Red

Refined and impressively built, with blackberry, bay leaf and clove flavors that take on depth and richness toward polished tannins. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

LEONETTI

Merlot Walla Walla Valley 2016
92 points | \$80 | 1,881 cases made | Red

Combines a sense of sleek elegance with a refined structure, featuring expressive black cherry and smoky spice overtones that take on richness toward polished tannins. Drink now through 2024.—*T.F.*

MARK RYAN

Cabernet Sauvignon Red Mountain Dead Horse 2015
92 points | \$58 | 2,200 cases made | Red

Appealingly brooding, with blackberry, black olive and spice flavors that add richness and polish to a finish that's dense with refined tannins. Hands off for now. Best from 2020 through 2026.—*T.F.*

SPARKMAN

Grenache Columbia Valley Wonderland 2016
92 points | \$32 | 370 cases made | Red

Polished and elegantly complex, with floral raspberry aromas and supple cherry and smoky spiced cinnamon flavors that take on richness on the finish. Drink now through 2023.—*T.F.*

HOT WINES

These are the most exciting discoveries from our editors' most recent tastings, published exclusively in *Wine Spectator Insider*. They are high-scoring wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

DOMAINE CASTAGNIER

Charmes-Chambertin 2015

96 points | \$225 | 5 cases imported | Red

A wave of saturated blackberry, black currant and black cherry fruit is marshaled by the vivid acidity in this powerful red. Violet, graphite, earth and spice notes add complexity, and this remains balanced in an outsized way. The lingering finish of dark fruit stains the palate. Best from 2024 through 2045. From France.—*B.S.*

DOMAINE DE L'ARLOT

Romanée St.-Vivant 2015

95 points | \$550 | 95 cases made | Red

Despite the perfume, this is a dense, austere red, with mouthcoating tannins, packed with floral, cherry, mineral and spice flavors, wound tightly with the structure. Long and satisfying, but needs time. Best from 2023 through 2045. From France.—*B.S.*

AUBERT

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast UV Vineyard 2015

95 points | \$85 | 711 cases made | Red

Touches all the bases, presenting a mix of richness, flavor, complexity and length, with an overriding sense of completeness that begs for another taste. Drink now through 2026. From California.—*J.L.*

DOMAINE CASTAGNIER

Clos de la Roche 2015

95 points | \$225 | 5 cases imported | Red

Lean and taut, revealing saturated black cherry, blackberry, Asian spice and light vegetal flavors, this red is all about firm structure at this stage. Finishes with elements of mineral and oak spice. Patience is required. Best from 2023 through 2042. From France.—*B.S.*

DOMAINE CASTAGNIER

Clos St.-Denis 2015

95 points | \$225 | 5 cases imported | Red

Offers plenty of ripe, juicy black cherry and blackberry fruit, backed by dense, dusty tannins. All the components are there, but one gets the sense that this is holding back for now. The long finish emphasizes the structure. Best from 2023 through 2040. From France.—*B.S.*

DOMAINE ODOUL-COQUARD

Clos de Vougeot 2015

95 points | \$172 | 15 cases imported | Red

Lean and chewy, with a licorice note adding to the core of cherry, rose and spice flavors. Concentrated yet lively, with the finish leaving a promise of what's to come. Fine balance and terrific length echo a pure cherry component. Best from 2022 through 2042. From France.—*B.S.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 16 tasters and tasting coordinators in two offices. They work together to review more than 16,000 wines each year; more than 360,000 reviews are available in our online database. Together, our 11 tasters count more than 235 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; initials appended to the review identify the taster of each wine. We score wines using the 100-point scale (see green box).

James Laube Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: California

Harvey Steiman Editor at large, San Francisco
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1984. Tasting beat: At large

Kim Marcus Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Argentina, California, Chile

Thomas Matthews Executive editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Spain

Bruce Sanderson Senior editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Austria, Burgundy, Italy

James Molesworth Senior editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: Bordeaux, Loire Valley, Port, Rhône Valley, South Africa

MaryAnn Worobiec Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: Australia, California, New Zealand

Alison Napjus Senior editor and tasting director, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2000. Tasting beat: Alsace, Champagne, Italy

Tim Fish Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2001. Tasting beat: California, Oregon, Washington

Gillian Sciaretta Associate editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2012. Tasting beat: France, Portugal

Aleksandar Zecevic, Associate tasting coordinator, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2013. Tasting beat: Germany

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