

Wine Spectator Insider

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FIRST LOOK AT OUR EDITORS' MOST EXCITING NEW WINES

The world of wine gets bigger and more exciting every vintage. This issue features new reds from Argentina, classic whites from Germany and more proof that California can succeed with just about any wine style it chooses.

James Molesworth believes that Argentinean Malbec will deliver the next wave of cult big reds. They're not inexpensive, but prices are still well below their competitors from California, Italy or Australia. German Riesling was on top of the world a century ago, and Bruce Sanderson believe it's now reclaiming its rightful stardom. He highlights some of the stunning successes from the opulent 2003 vintage. Finally, James Laube points you to outstanding Syrah, Viognier and Cabernet Sauvignon from Napa Valley south to the Edna Valley. And don't miss our Hot Wines, on page 4.

Argentina

Achával-Ferrer

Malbec Mendoza Finca Mirador 2001
91 points | \$85 | 325 cases made

Subtle at first, with plum, blackberry and floral notes that gain in intensity through the finish, where more tar, mineral and graphite flavors emerge. Starts slow but has a lot in reserve, with vibrant acidity too. Let this flesh out in the cellar. From a 40-year-old vineyard in the Medrano area, this is the debut release for this cuvée; the winery will be expanding its portfolio slowly. Drink now through 2008.—*J.M.*

Fincas Don Martino

Malbec Mendoza Old Vine Reserve 2002
90 points | \$55 | NA cases made

Racy acidity is keeping this wine's core of boysenberry and raspberry fruit in check, while the toast, mineral and spice notes hint at its complexity. Cellar a touch to let it stretch out and you will be rewarded. Drink now through 2007.—*J.M.*

Bodegas Terrazas de los Andes

Malbec Mendoza Afincado 2001
90 points | \$38 | NA cases made

Lots of cocoa and toast up front, but there's a very solid core of black currant and blackberry fruit, with dark chocolate and tar notes on the chewy finish. A muscular style, but balanced too. The Afincado line is replacing the Gran line. Drink now through 2007.—*J.M.*

TriVento

Malbec Mendoza Golden Reserve 2002
90 points | \$20 | 400 cases imported

This is a Malbec in Cabernet clothing—powerful, with a wall of toast, dark cocoa and coffee protecting the core of dark currant and blackberry fruit. Dense and very broad-shouldered, with a structured finish that needs time to open. Debut release for this Concha y Toro-owned venture. Drink now through 2007.—*J.M.*

Pascual Toso

Malbec Mendoza Reserve 2003
88 points | \$18 | 1,500 cases imported

Fresh and bouncy, with lots of blackberry, blueberry and briar flavors. Fruit pumps through the juicy finish nicely. A textbook introduction to Malbec. Drink now.—*J.M.*

California

Alban

Syrah Edna Valley Reva 2002

93 points | \$56 | 1,500 cases made

Dark hued, with a rich core of meaty, beefy, peppery Syrah that shows a remarkable level of concentration and depth—sheer power if you will—finishing with an exotic mix of floral, berry, leather and beef scents. Best from 2006 through 2012.—*J.L.*

Barnett

Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain District

Rattlesnake Hill 2002

92 points | \$100 | 451 cases made

An immense, rich and concentrated style that packs in loads of fresh currant, plum, wild berry and mineral flavors offset by spicy, toasty, cedary oak, finishing with a long, complex, integrated aftertaste that's balanced and well-proportioned. Best from 2006 through 2012.—*J.L.*

Ramey

Diamond Mountain District 2002

92 points | \$65 | 1,330 cases made

Smooth, rich and fleshy. A notably complex and concentrated youngster with a tasty core of ripe currant, black cherry, cedar, olive and sage notes that are well-focused, ending with a complex aftertaste. Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Verdot, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Best from 2006 through 2012.—*J.L.*

Simi

Cabernet Sauvignon Alexander Valley Landslide 2001

92 points | \$33 | 7,175 cases made

A delicious Cabernet at a terrific price. Smooth, rich and juicy, with tiers of lively black cherry, wild berry and blackberry fruit that are deeply concentrated with a supple, elegant mouthfeel. The tannins show some grip on the finish and a nice dusty, cedary oak quality adds a note of complexity. Best from 2005 through 2011.—*J.L.*

Hill Climber

Syrah Napa Valley Pilgrimage 2002

91 points | \$40 | 240 cases made

This wine offers a bold beam of tightly focused blackberry, black currant, cola and plum-laced fruit. Pretty violet and mineral nuances float along a sup-

ple texture, with harmonious toasty oak and stylish tannins on the finish. Drink now through 2007.—*J.L.*

Ladera

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Lone Canyon Vineyard 2001

91 points | \$65 | 1,618 cases made

Scents of new leather, ripe currant and plum lead to a similar array of flavors. Well-structured, with a firm core of edgy tannins and lively acidity. Most impressive, though, is the long, rich, intense flavor, with a nice mineral edge. Best from 2006 through 2012.—*J.L.*

Ramey

Jericho Canyon Vineyard Napa Valley 2002

91 points | \$90 | 2,430 cases made

This wine starts with a dense, rich core of fleshy, mocha-laced currant, fresh earth, plum and blackberry fruit, then it firms up with rich, chewy tannins, but the flavors push through on the finish, revealing added facets of depth and concentration. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2007 through 2012.—*J.L.*

Martin Ray

Cabernet Sauvignon Diamond Mountain District 2001

91 points | \$70 | 850 cases made

A sturdy, muscular young wine, with dark chocolate, blackberry and currant flavors supported by a dense wall of oak and tannins. But given its size, it works, as the concentration and complexity keep the focus on the fruit, with a hint of vanilla bean on the finish. Best from 2006 through 2012.—*J.L.*

Alban

Viognier Edna Valley 2003

90 points | \$32 | 200 cases made

This rich, full-bodied Viognier hits lots of ripe, complex notes with tiers of citrus, pear, green apple, fig and spicy ginger and hazelnut notes, finishing with a smooth, creamy, buttery texture.—*J.L.*

Chappellet

Merlot Napa Valley 2002

90 points | \$30 | 3,000 cases made

Dark, plush, rich and concentrated, with layers of firm plum, black cherry, mocha and cedary oak. The tannins provide a solid backbone, yet are ripe and integrated, with the fruit pushing through on the finish. Impressive. Drink now through 2010.—*J.L.*

DuMol

Viognier Russian River Valley 2003
90 points | \$36 | 144 cases made

A wonderful Viognier that combines richness with complexity, serving up an elegant array of citrus, pear, honeysuckle and a touch of fig, finishing with a long, fruity aftertaste.—*J.L.*

Germany

Dr. F. Weins-Prüm

Riesling Auslese Gold Cap Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Wehlener Sonnenuhr 2003
97 points | \$89/375ml | NA cases made

There's definitely a sense of botrytis in this backward, concentrated auslese. Lush yet not thick, dense yet transparent and light, it seemingly defies gravity with its apricot, honey, citrus and licorice notes, all seamlessly flowing across the palate. Terrific Riesling. Drink now through 2030.—*B.S.*

Joh. Jos. Prüm

Riesling Auslese Gold Cap Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Graacher Himmelreich 2003
96 points | \$NA/375ml | NA cases made

This is really singing today. Floral, apricot and mineral notes burst from the glass. Silky and impeccably balanced. Very concentrated, yet lightweight and elegant, with a fresh aftertaste. Should be brilliant in about 20 years. Drink now through 2025.—*B.S.*

Bert Simon(Herrenberg)

Riesling Auslese Gold Cap Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Serrig Würtzberg 2003
96 points | \$45 | NA cases made

A nascent auslese, very fresh, concentrated and marked by honey, peach, licorice and mineral notes. It's intense and extremely young with terrific balance and a long, lingering aftertaste of fruit cocktail. Best from 2008 through 2025.—*B.S.*

August Kessler

Riesling Auslese Gold Cap Rheingau Rudesheim Bischofsberg 2003
95 points | \$200 | 15 cases imported

A stellar auslese, meting out caramel, apricot, lemon and mineral aromas and flavors on a gossamer frame. High strung and vibrant, it fades to a long conclusion. Drink now through 2025.—*B.S.*

Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler

Riesling Auslese Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Bernkasteler alte Badstube am Doctorberg 2003
95 points | \$50 | 50 cases imported

Superconcentrated, this tastes more like a gold cap with apricot, honey and vanilla notes all beautifully balanced and expressive. The honey theme continues in the long aftertaste. Drink now through 2025.—*B.S.*

Joh. Jos. Prüm

Riesling Auslese Gold Cap Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Wehlener Sonnenuhr 2003
95 points | \$NA/375ml | NA cases made

Very clean and focused, with an intensity that belies its delicate profile. Wonderful aromas and flavors of apricot, flowers and slate, with pinpoint balance and a long, almost salty aftertaste. This is deceptive and completely disarming in its appeal. Drink now through 2030.—*B.S.*

Schäfer-Fröhlich

Riesling Auslese Gold Cap Nahe Bockenauer Felseneck 2003
95 points | \$70/375ml | NA cases made

An element of botrytis lends concentration along with honey, orange peel and spice in this lively, defined auslese. Succulent, it ends with a mouthwatering tanginess. Drink now through 2020.—*B.S.*

Zilliken

Riesling Auslese Gold Cap Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Saarburger Rausch 2003
95 points | \$145/375ml | NA cases made

Wonderful clarity and expression of pear and apple flavors here, along with a seamless structure and texture. Honey and a touch of mineral on the finish round out the flavor profile. Fine length too. Drink now through 2020.—*B.S.*

H. Dönnhoff

Riesling Auslese Gold Cap Nahe Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle 2003
94 points | \$61/375ml | NA cases made

Excellent kaleidoscope of flavors. Very ripe, this shows loads of apricot and orange notes on a vivid structure. It's balanced, with a really vibrant impression. Picks up a licorice note on the finish. Drink now through 2020.—*B.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.

Georg Breuer

Riesling Auslese Gold Cap Rheingau Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg 2003
98 points | \$90/375ml | NA cases made

Sadly, Bernhard Breuer passed away in May of 2004. His legacy includes several magnificent sweet Rieslings from 2003, his last vintage. This is a superb auslese, dense and concentrated with apricot, honey and citrus aromas and flavors, all the while remaining delicate and ethereal. Precision balance, delineation and a very long melt-in-your-mouth finish make this a Riesling of beauty. Drink now through 2030. *From Germany.—B.S.*

Bert Simon (Herrenberg)

Riesling Auslese Gold Cap* Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Serrig Würtzberg 2003
97 points | \$55 | NA cases made

This "one star" offers a tad more intensity and concentration than the estate's Gold Cap, with fresh peach, kumquat and cinnamon notes. Unevolved, with fine clarity and integration, this has a long life ahead. Excellent length on the finish. Best from 2008 through 2030. *From Germany.—B.S.*

Lewis

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2002
96 points | \$65 | 1,400 cases made

Amazingly rich and complex, with flavor to burn, this wine stacks up a dense core of wild berry, currant and blackberry fruit and then fairly smothers it with intense smoky, toasty, chocolaty oak. While immense and concentrated, this wine is also very well-balanced and the finish echoes fruit and oak, on and on. In this style, few can rival it. Drink one now; cellar a few. Drink now through 2012. *From California.—J.L.*

Viña Cobos

Malbec Mendoza Marchiori Vineyard 2002
95 points | \$60 | 620 cases imported

The husband-and-wife team of Luis Barraud (winemaker) and Andrea Marchiori (viticulturist) joined with Paul Hobbs to set up this winery in 1998. This is their top wine, sourced from the Marchiori family's 60-year-old vineyard in the Perdriel area of Mendoza. This shows awesome purity, with lush, seamless layers of raspberry, blackberry and fig compote finely stitched with notes of plum sauce, mocha, graphite and violets. A memory-staining wine. Drink now through 2009. *From Argentina.—J.M.*

Wine Spectator's Tastings

Wine Spectator reviews more than 10,000 wines each year; our senior editors comprise the most experienced staff of professional wine tasters of any publication in the world. Each editor specializes in the wines of specific regions; their initials identify the taster of each wine reviewed.

We always taste wines blind, in our offices in San Francisco, Napa, New York and Tuscany, and in the vineyard regions of Europe. This is your guarantee that a wine's reputation or price does not influence its score. We score wines using our 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: Southern France, Portugal

Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale

95-100	Classic
90-94	Outstanding
85-89	Very Good
80-84	Good
70-79	Average
50-69	Not Recommended

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: Loire Valley, Rhône Valley, South Africa, South America

Bruce Sanderson Tasting director, New York

Joined Wine Spectator in 1993. Tasting beat: Alsace, Austria, Burgundy, Champagne, Germany

Harvey Steiman Editor at large, San Francisco

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

James Suckling European bureau chief, Italy

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

Daniel Sogg Tasting staff