

# Wine Spectator Insider

A Members Only, Biweekly Publication

Marvin R. Shanken, Editor and Publisher

## FIRST LOOK AT OUR EDITORS' MOST EXCITING NEW WINES

### The Top 100

#### Our annual roundup of the year's most exciting wines

This special issue of *Wine Spectator Insider* features our Top 100 wines for 2004. It's the first official release of this information on the Internet, exclusively for subscribers to *Wine Spectator Online*.

The Top 100 is not simply a list of the best wines we tasted this year, as measured by scores. It's our attempt to sum up the highlights of the past year in wine.

This year, *Wine Spectator* editors tasted more than 12,500 wines. Of these, more than 3,100 rated outstanding, scoring 90 points or higher on our 100-point scale. These were the initial candidates for our Top 100 list. We apply four criteria to determine the final selections: quality (represented by score); value (represented by release price); availability (measured by case production or, for international wines, the number of cases imported); and an X-factor we call excitement. The decisions are based on taste, knowledge and enthusiasm. These are the wines we believe deserve a place in the wine cellars of our readers, because of their quality, value, availability and sheer deliciousness.

Our Top 100 reflects the progress and quality of wine regions both emerging and traditional. Ten years ago, California and Bordeaux dominated our list. Now, Madiran and Priorat stand side by side with Napa and Pauillac.

A total of 12 countries are represented on this year's list. California earned about one-fifth of the spots, followed closely by France and Italy. There are exciting reds from Argentina, Chile, Portugal and Spain. Although wines from Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Syrah dominate, less familiar grapes, such as Falanghina, Insolia and Tannat deserve your attention too.

Because of the turbulent economy and weak dollar, we focused especially on value this year. A handful of wines on our list cost more than \$100, but nearly one-third are \$20 or less. While the average score reached almost 93 points, the average bottle price remains below \$40.

The toughest choice is always picking our Wine of the Year. We blind-taste the leading candidates and debate their merits. No mechanical equation can make the call. To become number one, a wine must not only be great in itself: Everything about it must be exceptional, from the producer to the place and growing season that made it possible. The price-value relationship is especially key in our decision.

The one that rose to the top satisfies all our requirements: The quality is extraordinary, the price is reasonable and the production is generous. For us, the X-factor of excitement comes from the fact that it represents a type of wine that has fallen from favor in recent years but has a long and impressive history that spotlights a unique corner of the wine world. We hope you agree it deserves this honor.

WINE	SCORE	PRICE	PRODUCTION	ISSUE DATE*
<b>1</b> Château Rieussec Sauternes 2001	100 points	\$80	12,500 cases made	9/15/2004
<b>2</b> Casa Lapostolle Clos Apalta Colchagua 2001	95 points	\$55	4,885 cases made	4/30/2004
<b>3</b> Numanthia-Termes Toro Termes 2002	93 points	\$24	2,000 cases made	12/15/2004
<b>4</b> Paolo Scavino Barolo Bric del Fiasc 2000	98 points	\$105	875 cases made	7/31/2004
<b>5</b> Peter Michael Les Pavots Knights Valley 2001	98 points	\$115	1,853 cases made	8/31/2004
<b>6</b> Tenuta dell'Ornellaia Toscana Masseto 2001	100 points	\$250	2,670 cases made	10/31/2004
<b>7</b> Château Lafite Rothschild Pauillac 2001	96 points	\$155	22,000 cases made	3/31/2004
<b>8</b> Greg Norman Estates Shiraz South Eastern Australia Reserve 1999	96 points	\$40	800 cases made	9/15/2004
<b>9</b> Château Suduiraut Sauternes 2001	98 points	\$65	6,665 cases made	9/15/2004
<b>10</b> Fontodi Colli della Toscana Centrale Flaccianello 2001	97 points	\$69	4,000 cases made	10/31/2004
<b>11</b> Seghesio Zinfandel Sonoma County Sonoma 2002	92 points	\$17	48,000 cases made	5/15/2004
<b>12</b> Lewis Alec's Blend Napa Valley 2002	96 points	\$48	1,000 cases made	12/31/2004
<b>13</b> Piper-Heidsieck Brut Champagne 1995	96 points	\$55	5,000 cases imported	11/15/2004
<b>14</b> Staglin Chardonnay Rutherford 2002	95 points	\$50	960 cases made	6/15/2004
<b>15</b> Marchesi de' Frescobaldi Brunello di Montalcino Castegiocondo 1999	95 points	\$56	21,660 cases made	5/15/2004
<b>16</b> Viña Almaviva Puente Alto 2001	95 points	\$85	15,000 cases made	4/30/2004
<b>17</b> Paul Hobbs Chardonnay Russian River Valley 2002	95 points	\$40	2,016 cases made	6/15/2004
<b>18</b> Chateau Souverain Chardonnay Sonoma County 2002	91 points	\$14	64,000 cases made	4/30/2004
<b>19</b> Ponzi Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2002	94 points	\$30	1,350 cases made	12/15/2004
<b>20</b> Quinta do Vale Meão Douro 2000	95 points	\$49	2,160 cases made	4/30/2004
<b>21</b> Glen Carlou Chardonnay Paarl 2002	91 points	\$14	15,000 cases made	3/31/2004
<b>22</b> Beringer Chardonnay Napa Valley Sbragia-Limited Release 2002	94 points	\$40	5,000 cases made	6/15/2004
<b>23</b> Château Guiraud Sauternes 2001	96 points	\$50	11,665 cases made	9/15/2004
<b>24</b> Leeuwin Chardonnay Margaret River Art Series 2001	98 points	\$65	4,500 cases made	9/30/2004
<b>25</b> Beaux Frères Pinot Noir Willamette Valley The Beaux Frères Vineyard 2002	95 points	\$75	2,599 cases made	5/31/2004
<b>26</b> Concha y Toro Cabernet Sauvignon Puente Alto Don Melchor 2000	94 points	\$41	15,200 cases made	4/30/2004
<b>27</b> Elderton Shiraz Barossa Command 2000	97 points	\$66	600 cases imported	9/15/2004
<b>28</b> Green Point Shiraz Victoria 2002	93 points	\$18	5,000 cases imported	11/30/2004
<b>29</b> Castello Banfi Brunello di Montalcino 1999	94 points	\$66	55,000 cases made	5/15/2004
<b>30</b> Columbia Crest Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley Reserve 2001	93 points	\$30	4,000 cases made	9/30/2004
<b>31</b> Domaine Charvin Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2001	96 points	\$70	2,350 cases made	5/31/2004
<b>32</b> Viticcio Chianti Classico Riserva 2001	94 points	\$22	2,055 cases made	10/31/2004
<b>33</b> Cougar Crest Syrah Walla Walla Valley 2002	94 points	\$26	1,360 cases made	11/30/2004
<b>34</b> Araujo Sauvignon Blanc Napa Valley Eisele Vineyard 2002	94 points	\$32	1,300 cases made	8/31/2004
<b>35</b> Henri Bourgeois Pouilly-Fumé La Porte de L'Abbaye 2002	92 points	\$17	12,500 cases made	8/31/2004
<b>36</b> Marqués de Griñon Syrah Viño de Mesa de Toledo Dominio de Valdepusa 2001	94 points	\$35	4,000 cases made	12/15/2004
<b>37</b> Château Cos-d'Estournel St.-Estèphe 2001	94 points	\$65	17,705 cases made	3/31/2004
<b>38</b> Torbreck The Struie Barossa Valley 2002	94 points	\$50	2,500 cases made	9/15/2004
<b>39</b> Siro Pacenti Brunello di Montalcino 1999	96 points	\$75	2,000 cases made	5/15/2004
<b>40</b> Azelia Barolo Bricco Fiasco 2000	95 points	\$78	1,040 cases made	7/31/2004
<b>41</b> Rosenblum Zinfandel Paso Robles Richard Sauret Vineyard 2002	92 points	\$19	2,858 cases made	11/30/2004

\* Issue date refers to the magazine in which the note first appeared.

WINE	SCORE	PRICE	PRODUCTION	ISSUE DATE*
<b>42</b> Worthy Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Sophia's Cuvee 2001	93 points	\$27	1,375 cases made	8/31/2004
<b>43</b> Pago de los Capellanes Ribera del Duero Crianza 2001	93 points	\$26	7,600 cases made	11/30/2004
<b>44</b> Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough 2004	91 points	\$17	60,000 cases made	10/15/2004
<b>45</b> Penfolds Shiraz Barossa Valley RWT 2001	94 points	\$70	8,000 cases made	9/30/2004
<b>46</b> Pride Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Reserve 2001	96 points	\$115	1,180 cases made	11/15/2004
<b>47</b> Alban Syrah Edna Valley Reva 2001	94 points	\$44	1,450 cases made	2/29/2004
<b>48</b> Falset-Marçà Montsant Castell de Falset 2000	92 points	\$17	1,500 cases imported	11/30/2004
<b>49</b> Domaine Tempier Bandol 2001	93 points	\$28	1,170 cases imported	10/31/2004
<b>50</b> Truchard Chardonnay Napa Valley Carneros 2002	92 points	\$28	2,937 cases made	6/15/2004
<b>51</b> Two Hands Shiraz McLaren Vale Angel's Share 2003	92 points	\$24	2,200 cases imported	11/30/2004
<b>52</b> Columbia Crest Merlot Columbia Valley Grand Estates 2001	90 points	\$11	310,000 cases made	10/15/2004
<b>53</b> Bodegas Terrazas de los Andes Malbec Mendoza Reserva 2002	91 points	\$15	3,500 cases imported	11/15/2004
<b>54</b> San Fabiano Calcinaia Chianti Classico Cellole Riserva 2001	95 points	\$45	2,500 cases made	10/15/2004
<b>55</b> Columbia Cabernet Sauvignon Yakima Valley Otis Vineyard David Lake Signature Series 1999	92 points	\$29	2,380 cases made	11/30/2004
<b>56</b> Paloma Merlot Spring Mountain District 2002	93 points	\$51	1,650 cases made	11/15/2004
<b>57</b> Chateau Dereszla Tokaji Aszú 5 Puttonyos 2000	95 points	\$35/500ml	1,250 cases made	6/15/2004
<b>58</b> Château Giscours Margaux 2001	92 points	\$30	26,665 cases made	3/31/2004
<b>59</b> Fairview Goat-Roti Western Cape 2002	91 points	\$18	7,000 cases imported	2/29/2004
<b>60</b> Ca' Bianca Barolo 2000	92 points	\$36	5,000 cases made	7/31/2004
<b>61</b> Tamarack Firehouse Red Columbia Valley 2002	91 points	\$18	4,312 cases made	8/31/2004
<b>62</b> Williams Selyem Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2002	92 points	\$39	3,275 cases made	8/31/2004
<b>63</b> Sea Smoke Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Southing 2002	93 points	\$45	1,000 cases made	8/31/2004
<b>64</b> Castello di Querceto Chianti Classico Riserva 2000	91 points	\$18	8,330 cases made	10/31/2004
<b>65</b> Allegrini Verona Palazzo della Torre 2000	91 points	\$19	22,500 cases made	11/15/2004
<b>66</b> Domaines Schlumberger Riesling Alsace Les Princes Abbés 2000	91 points	\$16	2,000 cases imported	7/31/2004
<b>67</b> Bodega Catena Zapata Malbec Mendoza 2002	91 points	\$22	33,000 cases made	11/15/2004
<b>68</b> Chateau Ste. Michelle-Dr. Loosen Riesling Columbia Valley Eroica 2003	91 points	\$20	18,000 cases made	9/15/2004
<b>69</b> Château Haut-Bages-Libéral Pauillac 2001	91 points	\$20	10,000 cases made	3/31/2004
<b>70</b> Van Duzer Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Estate 2002	91 points	\$22	4,500 cases made	5/31/2004
<b>71</b> Warwick Three Cape Ladies Simonsberg-Stellenbosch 2001	91 points	\$22	6,000 cases made	4/30/2004
<b>72</b> Château Montus Madiran 2001	91 points	\$24	20,950 cases made	9/15/2004
<b>73</b> Wolf Blass Shiraz Barossa Gold Label 2002	91 points	\$24	4,000 cases imported	9/15/2004
<b>74</b> Buehler Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2001	91 points	\$24	3,100 cases made	6/15/2004
<b>75</b> Joh. Jos. Prüm Riesling Kabinett Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Wehlener Sonnenuhr 2002	92 points	\$26	1,600 cases made	3/31/2004
<b>76</b> Sebastiani Chardonnay Sonoma County Appellation Selection 2001	90 points	\$13	26,500 cases made	6/15/2004
<b>77</b> Bodegas Palacio Rioja Cosme Palacio y Hermanos 2001	90 points	\$12	10,000 cases made	5/31/2004
<b>78</b> Valentín Bianchi Cabernet Sauvignon San Rafael Familia 2002	91 points	\$18	6,000 cases made	9/15/2004
<b>79</b> Château Langoa Barton St.-Julien 2001	92 points	\$30	8,000 cases made	3/31/2004
<b>80</b> Chalone Syrah Chalone 2002	91 points	\$25	2,310 cases made	12/15/2004
<b>81</b> Josef Leitz Riesling Spätlese Rheingau Rüdesheimer Magdalenenkreuz 2002	92 points	\$22	1,000 cases made	3/31/2004

WINE	SCORE	PRICE	PRODUCTION	ISSUE DATE*
<b>82</b> Scala Dei Priorat Cartoixa Reserva 2000	91 points	\$26	1,000 cases imported	11/30/2004
<b>83</b> La Chablisienne Chablis Premier Cru Grand Cuvée 2002	91 points	\$28	7,500 cases made	8/31/2004
<b>84</b> Waterbrook Mélange Columbia Valley 2003	90 points	\$13	19,000 cases made	11/30/2004
<b>85</b> Villa Mt. Eden Chardonnay Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard Grand Reserve 2001	90 points	\$13	13,000 cases made	4/30/2004
<b>86</b> La Valentina Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 2002	90 points	\$12	11,600 cases made	12/15/2004
<b>87</b> Michele Chiarlo Barolo Tortoniano 2000	91 points	\$40	5,000 cases made	7/31/2004
<b>88</b> Kanonkop Paul Sauer Simonsberg-Stellenbosch 2000	92 points	\$35	3,080 cases made	4/30/2004
<b>89</b> Inama Soave Classico 2002	90 points	\$13	13,000 cases made	6/30/2004
<b>90</b> Domaine des Baumard Savennières Clos du Papillon 2001	91 points	\$27	2,330 cases made	10/15/2004
<b>91</b> Lucien Crochet Sancerre Le Chêne 2002	91 points	\$28	1,250 cases imported	10/15/2004
<b>92</b> Domaine du Pégau Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Réservée 2001	92 points	\$50	5,500 cases made	8/31/200
<b>93</b> Rosemount Chardonnay Hunter Valley Show Reserve 2002	90 points	\$15	16,000 cases imported	5/15/2004
<b>94</b> Cusumano Insolia-Chardonnay Sicilia Angimbé 2002	90 points	\$13	8,500 cases made	2/29/2004
<b>95</b> Peter Lehmann Shiraz Barossa 2002	90 points	\$15	50,000 cases made	11/30/2004
<b>96</b> Feudi di San Gregorio Falanghina Sannio 2003	90 points	\$17	70,000 cases made	6/15/2004
<b>97</b> Gloria Ferrer Brut Sonoma County NV	90 points	\$18	65,000 cases made	11/30/2004
<b>98</b> Argyle Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2002	90 points	\$18	19,063 cases made	5/31/2004
<b>99</b> Georges Duboeuf Moulin-à-Vent Domaine des Rosiers 2003	90 points	\$14	9,000 cases made	10/15/2004
<b>100</b> Acacia Pinot Noir Napa Valley-Carneros 2002	90 points	\$20	20,400 cases made	4/30/2004

## 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

**Per-Henrik Mansson** *Senior editor, Switzerland*  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1987. Tasting beat:  
At large

**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*