

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

REDS AND WHITES OUT OF CALIFORNIA, ITALY AND FRANCE comprise this week's *Wine Spectator Insider*. Creative super Tuscan blends tasted by Bruce Sanderson represent 12 of the selections, while California reds largely outside the orbit of Cabernet Sauvignon, reviewed by James Laube and Tim Fish, make up another 15.

Tensley, Patz & Hall and Badia di Morrona all post strong releases, but leading this week's Hot Wines, on page 4, are the rich and creamy dry and off-dry Rieslings of Alsace, in France, led by venerable producers Albert Mann and Trimbach, reviewed by Alison Napjus.

CALIFORNIA

KENEFICK RANCH

Cabernet Franc Napa Valley Caitlin's Select 2007
92 points | \$52 | 747 cases made | Red

Serves up a rich, generous mix of dark berry fruit, with touches of spice, cedar, plum and blackberry. Well-proportioned, full-bodied and focused, ending with a lingering finish of dark berry, black licorice and spice. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

KRUPP BROTHERS

Merlot Napa Valley Stagecoach Vineyard 2006
92 points | \$60 | 380 cases made | Red

Elegant and well-structured, with appealing aromas of red currant, cedar and tomato leaf that lead to complex flavors of ripe plum, bittersweet chocolate and olive. Tannins ease in at the finish. Drink now through 2016.—*T.F.*

PATZ & HALL

Pinot Noir Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2008
92 points | \$65 | 628 cases made | Red

Fresh, intense and vibrant, with snappy wild berry and raspberry fruit. Full-bodied, tight and focused, ending with a long, persistent, berry-laced finish. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

CAROL SHELTON

Zinfandel Rockpile Rocky Reserve Florence Vineyard 2007
92 points | \$33 | 511 cases made | Red

Powerfully built, with fragrant black cherry and blueberry fruit that bursts out. Offers notes of fresh sage, licorice and cracked pepper, finishing with big but ripe tannins. Drink now through 2016.—*T.F.*

SONOMA-LOEB

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Loeb Family Selection 2009
92 points | \$35 | 125 cases made | Red

A rich, fleshy, forward style, with generous plum, raspberry and wild berry fruit that's intense and concentrated, finishing with a burst of ripe berry flavors that are captivating. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

TENSLEY

Syrah Santa Barbara County BMT 2009
92 points | \$85/1.5L | 197 cases made | Red

A rich, dense, extracted style, with loads of dried blackberry, wild berry, pepper, spice, sage and cedar that are compact and in need of cellaring. Slow to unfold, but as it does this reveals the tight mix of flavors and firm tannins. Best from 2012 through 2012.—*J.L.*

ZD WINES

Pinot Noir Carneros Founder's Reserve 2008
92 points | \$65 | 750 cases made | Red

Combines fresh earth, dried berry, cedar, tar and raspberry flavors that are intense, concentrated and firmly tannic, but the fruit pushes through in an impressive manner, ending with a long, persistent finish that should reward cellaring. Best from 2011 through 2019.—*J.L.*

B CELLARS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Dr. Crane 2007
91 points | \$115 | 110 cases made | Red

Notes of roasted coffee, mocha and dried berry provide a range of flavors that are complex and full-bodied. Graceful and harmonious on the finish. Drink now through 2019.—*J.L.*

ROBERT BIALE

Syrah Napa Valley E.B.A. 2007
91 points | \$75 | 352 cases made | Red

Spicy, earthy, trim and focused, showing herb-laced plum, wild berry, mineral and sage flavors, with a creamy note. Full-bodied, firm and structured, this slowly grows on you. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

FREEMAN

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2008
91 points | \$44 | 1,680 cases made | Red

Impressive for its finesse. Fragrant, delicate and elegant, with aromas of wilted rose, ripe cherry and plum, with hints of sage and mineral. Full-bodied, ending with the same elegant mix of flavors. Drink now through 2017.—*J.L.*

MIRAFLORES

Zinfandel El Dorado Herbert Vineyard 2008
91 points | \$25 | 182 cases made | Red

Deep and powerful, but retains a sense of sleek balance and style. Black cherry and licorice aromas lead to layered flavors of blackberry and briary sage, with lingering mineral notes. Best after 2012.—*T.F.*

NEYERS

Grenache Sonoma Valley Rossi Ranch 2009
91 points | \$35 | 190 cases made | Red

This pure Grenache, accessible and supple, is loaded with fresh plum, blackberry, pepper, spice and tar flavors. Full-bodied, focused and dense without being heavy. Drink now through 2017.—*J.L.*

PATZ & HALL

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Gap's Crown Vineyard 2008
91 points | \$70 | 124 cases made | Red

Serves up layers of cola, blackberry, wild berry, spice, mint and savory herb touches. Full-bodied, with good intensity and focus, starting to flesh out but still a touch tannic. Best from 2012 through 2019.—*J.L.*

TENSLEY

Syrah Santa Barbara County OGT 2009
91 points | \$85/1.5L | 195 cases made | Red

Rich, intense and complex, with a range of loamy earth, dried currant, wild berry and cranberry with a spicy black licorice edge. Ends with chewy tannins. Best from 2012 through 2020.—*J.L.*

TENSLEY

Syrah Santa Barbara County Turner Vineyard 2009
91 points | \$38 | 47 cases made | Red

Extremely young and dense, offering a wide range of pepper flavors that are complex and savory, with dried berry, chicory, cedar and earth notes that are full-bodied and compelling, ending with firm, dry tannins. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*J.L.*

FRANCE

Alsace

ALBERT MANN

Riesling Alsace Rosenberg 2008
92 points | \$32 | 25 cases imported | White

A well-integrated white, with a lacy texture and firm acidity enlivening the panoply of flavors—honey, ripe peach and apricot, green and yellow apple, smoke, anise and cardamom. There's power to this Riesling, but it remains fresh and elegant through to the lingering, mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2026.—*A.N.*

MEYER-FONNÉ

Riesling Alsace Pfoeller 2007
91 points | \$34 | 45 cases imported | White

A smoky Riesling that layers flavors of biscuit and salty minerality with lemon peel, fresh forest and just a hint of spring blossom. Subtle and refined, with vibrant acidity pulsing throughout. Drink now through 2017.—*A.N.*

FRANÇOIS BAUR

Riesling Alsace Grand Cru Brand 2005
90 points | \$25 | 80 cases imported | White

This broad white has dry, tangy acidity backing its ripe apple and star fruit flavors, with notes of black licorice, smoke and mineral. There's good intensity throughout, with a lingering, mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2018.—*A.N.*

MEYER-FONNÉ

Riesling Alsace Grand Cru Wineck-Schlossberg 2007
90 points | \$36 | 40 cases imported | White

Driven by lively acidity, this smoky white shows a subtle and elegant sense of style. It's layered with hints of white peach, chamomile, grapefruit zest and biscuit, with a lip-smacking finish. Drink now through 2020.—*A.N.*

ITALY

Tuscany

BADIA DI MORRONA

Toscana N'Antia 2007

92 points | \$50 | 100 cases imported | Red

Very Bordeaux-like in its aromas and flavors, with black currant, cherry, thyme and cedar elements. The tannins are quite stiff, but everything is in the right proportion, with a long aftertaste. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Best from 2013 through 2024.—*B.S.*

TENUTA MONTETI

Toscana Caburnio 2007

92 points | \$18 | 500 cases imported | Red

Fresh and focused flavors of black cherry, black currant and herbs that border on jammy, but never cross the line. Supple and smooth, offering ripe tannins and bright acidity for structure, with excellent length. Cabernet Sauvignon, Alicante and Merlot. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*B.S.*

NOTTOLA

Toscana Anterivo 2007

92 points | \$30 | 1,000 cases made | Red

Deeply colored and brooding, this red boasts plum and blackberry favors, stiff tannins and a spicy profile that builds nicely to the long finish. Both polished and muscular. Sangiovese and Merlot. Best from 2014 through 2025.—*B.S.*

LE PALAIE

Toscana Bulizio 2008

92 points | \$60 | 100 cases imported | Red

A round, supple red, this is rich with blackberry, black currant and vanilla aromas and flavors. Everything comes together nicely on the long, fruit- and spice-filled finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Best from 2013 through 2023.—*B.S.*

BADIA DI MORRONA

Toscana Taneto 2007

91 points | \$20 | 150 cases imported | Red

Inky and powerful, showing roasted meat, iron, black currant and mineral aromas and flavors. There's a hard edge to the tannins, but there's a lot going on in this red, which has fine length. Syrah, Sangiovese and Merlot. Best from 2013 through 2025.—*B.S.*

FATTORIA CORZANO E PATERNO

Toscana Il Corzano 2007

91 points | \$45 | 775 cases made | Red

A.N. elegant style, featuring red cherry, strawberry, black currant and spice aromas and flavors. Nicely integrated, though needs a few years to soften its tannins. Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2013 through 2024.—*B.S.*

TOMMASI

Cabernet Sauvignon Maremma Toscana Poggio al Tufo 2008

91 points | \$18 | 600 cases imported | Red

This opulent red is packed with coffee, black cherry, plum and sweet spice flavors. Though well-structured, this remains vibrant and full of sweet fruit on the finish, with a very long aftertaste. Best from 2013 through 2023.—*B.S.*

GIACOMO

Sangiovese Toscana 2007

90 points | \$11 | 2,500 cases imported | Red

There's purity to the cherry, berry and almond flavors, with oak spice for added dimension. Bright, with firm but ripe tannins showing up the finish. Best from 2013 through 2022.—*B.S.*

PERAZZETA

Toscana Sara 2008

90 points | \$13 | 800 cases imported | Red

Intense aromas of iron and graphite lead to raspberry and kirsch notes in this fruity yet intriguing red, which has grip and finishes with both fruit and mineral accents. Sangiovese and Cilieggiolo. Drink now through 2014.—*B.S.*

PETROLO

Toscana Torrione 2008

90 points | \$45 | 100 cases imported | Red

The blackberry flavor borders on jammy, with hints of tobacco, earth and mineral lurking underneath, along with pointed tannins. I like the balance to this, with a fresh finish of black currant and mineral. Sangiovese. Best from 2012 through 2018.—*B.S.*

PIEVE VECCHIA

Maremma Toscana Pieve dei Monaci 2007

90 points | \$22 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

A concentrated, inky red, featuring blackberry, boysenberry, black pepper and iron notes. Dense with tannins, yet bright and focused on the long finish. Syrah. Best from 2012 through 2021.—*B.S.*

POGGIOVERRANO

Maremma Toscana Chance 2005

90 points | \$35 | 200 cases imported | Red

Deep and rich, this red boasts black cherry, black currant, licorice and spice aromas and flavors. Polished and international in style, with some serious tannins providing grip. Offers nice balance and length. Sangiovese, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2018.—*B.S.*

LORENZO SASSETTI

Maremma Toscana La Querciolina Istriciaia 2007

90 points | \$25 | 336 cases imported | Red

Rich and polished, this ripe red offers hints of cocoa powder along with black cherry and licorice flavors. There's a firm structure, but this is balanced and still needs time. Sangiovese and Cilieggiolo. Best from 2012 through 2015.—*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.

ALBERT MANN

Riesling Alsace Grand Cru Schlossberg L'Épicentre 2008
94 points | \$120/375ml | 10 cases imported | White

A.N. off-dry white, with hints of toffee, crystallized honey and mushroom accenting ripe pineapple, papaya, yellow peach and clementine flavors. There's a lush creaminess to this, but it's partnered with firm, juicy acidity, resulting in a seamless and elegant expression, followed by a long, spice-driven finish. Drink now through 2031. *From France.*—A.N.

TRIMBACH

Riesling Alsace Clos Ste.-Hune 2005
94 points | \$200 | 650 cases made | White

A.N. aromatic Riesling, with flavors and aromas of fresh apple peel, crushed pine needle, petrol and sweet smoke weaving through layers of green pear, apple, hot stone and almond, with a touch of anise. There's a seamlessness to the integration of the laserlike acidity, resulting in a wine with a refined texture and elegance despite its intensity and range of flavor. Drink now through 2031. *From France.*—A.N.

SCHOFFIT

Riesling Alsace Grand Cru Sommerberg 2007
93 points | \$45 | 10 cases imported | White

A rich, creamy white, with hints of oak spice and vanilla winding through the quince, apricot, papaya and grapefruit peel notes. Deftly put together and elegant, with finely tuned acidity powering the wine and seamless integration throughout. Drink now through 2021. *From France.*—A.N.

CHIMNEY ROCK

Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District 2007
92 points | \$61 | 2,245 cases made | Red

Supple and harmonious, offering tapered plum, wild berry and cedar notes, with complex spices and touches of black licorice and nutmeg. Full-bodied and intense, yet elegant and stylish, ending with a subtle burst of sweet ripe plum. Drink now through 2021. *From California.*—J.L.

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, Oregon, Washington

Tasting staff:
Tim Fish (California)
Alison Napjus (Alsace, Italy)
Nathan Wesley (Italy)
MaryAnn Worobiec (California, New Zealand)

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