

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

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CALIFORNIA SYRAH, PINOT NOIR AND MORE UP TO 96 POINTS: Impressive and structured Rhône-style California reds from stars like Denner and Saxum show the growing appeal of Syrah in the Golden State. In the red Burgundy section this week, it's spotlight on Volnay, with elegant versions led by Marquis d'Angerville. Plus, dry Riesling from various winegrowing regions in Germany offer great range, and South Africa's cream of the crop delivers bottlings worth your attention. One 95-point Syrah costs just \$42. *Turn to page 4 for the six Hot Wines.*



Saxum winery (Photo by Casey Dunn)

CALIFORNIA Syrah & Blends

BEDROCK

Syrah Sonoma Coast Griffin's Lair Vineyard 2016
94 points | \$50 | 225 cases made | Red

Polished and expressive, with a brooding undercurrent of sinewy tannins wrapped in rich blueberry, smoky game and licorice flavors. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

DILÉCTA

The Tiller Rancho Boa Vineyards Central Coast 2016
94 points | \$48 | 146 cases made | Red

Expressive and well-built, with huckleberry, savory *garrigue* and black licorice flavors that take on dimension toward refined tannins. Syrah and Grenache. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

EISELE VINEYARD

Syrah Napa Valley 2015
94 points | \$180 | 270 cases made | Red

Rich, polished and densely complex, with expressive blackberry, bay leaf and smoky pepper flavors that take on intensity toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2027.—*T.F.*

KALE

Syrah Napa Valley Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2016
94 points | \$80 | 121 cases made | Red

Harmonious and effortlessly complex, with delicately expressive black cherry, cigar box and smoked pepper flavors that build richness toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

DUMOL

Syrah Russian River Valley Eddie's Patch Greywacke Vineyard 2016
93 points | \$79 | 300 cases made | Red

Polished yet intensely structured, with blueberry and huckleberry flavors accented by smoky meat, cracked pepper and sweet anise notes, finishing with big but refined tannins. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

FULLDRAW

Chopping Block Paso Robles 2016

93 points | \$85 | 290 cases made | Red

Intense and deeply structured, with distinctive river stone accents layered over baked blackberry, smoked pepper and licorice flavors, building toward broad-shouldered tannins. Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre. Best from 2020 through 2026.—*T.F.*

PROSPECT 772

Syrah-Viognier Sierra Foothills The Brawler 2016

93 points | \$39 | 99 cases made | Red

Floral aromas of violet and blackberry grab your attention and lead to deeply layered huckleberry, licorice and cracked pepper flavors that build toward broad-shouldered tannins. Syrah and Viognier. Drink now through 2027.—*T.F.*

SAXUM

Heart Stone Vineyard Adelaida District 2016

93 points | \$98 | 250 cases made | Red

A distinctive, eclectic style, offering a potpourri of aromas and flavors, from potent blackberry and licorice to fruitcake spices, black olive and crushed stone. Builds tension toward broad-shouldered tannins. Syrah, Grenache, Mataro, Petite Sirah and Touriga Nacional. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

TENSLEY

Syrah Santa Barbara County 2017

93 points | \$28 | 1,200 cases made | Red

Vibrant and layered, with expressive raspberry and blueberry flavors accented by *garrigue* notes, hints of mineral and smoked cracked pepper accents that take on richness toward polished tannins. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

TENSLEY

Syrah Santa Barbara County BMT 2017

93 points | \$90/1.5L | 250 cases made | Red

Brooding and muscular yet loaded with fruit, offering floral huckleberry, bacon and licorice flavors that intensify toward broad-shouldered tannins. Best from 2022 through 2028.—*T.F.*

TENSLEY

Syrah Santa Barbara County OGT 2017

93 points | \$90/1.5L | 250 cases made | Red

Boldly floral, with vibrant wildflower and *garrigue* aromas that open to well-built, dense blackberry, smoked meat and cracked pepper flavors, which take on power toward big but refined tannins. Best from 2021 through 2027.—*T.F.*

TH VINEYARDS

Syrah Paso Robles Willow Creek District The Hedge 2015

93 points | \$66 | 424 cases made | Red

Dynamic and harmonious, with expressive blackberry, bittersweet chocolate and grilled meat flavors that build richness toward polished tannins. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

FRANCE

Burgundy / Volnay

MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE

Volnay Caillerets 2016

94 points | \$150 | 40 cases imported | Red

Juicy and tangy, featuring a chorus of black cherry, black currant, violet and stony mineral aromas and flavors. Supple in texture, underscored by a firm structure. Sweet spice notes grace the long, resonant finish. Very energetic. Best from 2023 through 2040.—*B.S.*

MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE

Volnay Taillepieds 2016

94 points | \$150 | 22 cases imported | Red

Saturated black cherry and blackberry fruit takes center stage in this dense yet balanced and graceful red, which is supple and vibrant, leaving a mouthwatering feel on the long, spicy aftertaste. Best from 2022 through 2038.—*B.S.*

BLAIN-GAGNARD

Volnay Les Pitures 2016

94 points | \$75 | 40 cases imported | Red

Showing sweet spice and toasty oak aromas, this red boasts cherry, plum, tea and black pepper flavors. A bit monolithic today, with dense, dusty tannins on the long finish. Best from 2023 through 2043.—*B.S.*

BOUCHARD PÈRE & FILS

Volnay Les Caillerets Ancienne Cuvée Carnot Domaine 2016

94 points | \$100 | 150 cases imported | Red

A tightly wound style, featuring black cherry, blackberry, mineral and spice flavors fused to a solid spine of acidity and tannins. Dense and long, with vivid acidity focusing the lingering aftertaste. Best from 2023 through 2038.—*B.S.*

JOSEPH VOILLOT

Volnay Les Champans 2016

94 points | \$128 | 50 cases imported | Red

Sappy raspberry, cherry and spice flavors mark this supple red. Elegant and succulent, with floral and mineral hints adding depth. The firm structure meshes nicely as the finish lingers. Shows fine intensity and balance. Best from 2023 through 2040.—*B.S.*

XAVIER MONNOT

Volnay Clos des Chênes 2016

93 points | \$105 | 175 cases imported | Red

Intense aromas of black cherry, pomegranate and tamarind mark this juicy red. Smooth, with well-integrated tannins lending a dusty feel as the finish plays out. Already harmonious, this should develop well over the next two decades. Best from 2022 through 2036.—*B.S.*

GERMANY

Dry Riesling

PETER JAKOB KÜHN

Riesling Rheingau Trocken Doosberg GG 2015
95 points | \$70 | 20 cases imported | White

A rich-tasting, medium-bodied white, with lots of flesh, offset by prominent, powerful acidity that imparts energy. Notes of white chocolate, yellow plum, kumquat and jasmine give this charm, while hints of paraffin and lemon oil linger on the long, well-defined finish. Best from 2020 through 2031.—A.Z.

EVA FRICKE

Rheingau Krone Trocken 2017
94 points | \$65 | 18 cases imported | White

Powerful acidity fuels the dense, concentrated flavors of jellied citrus, ripe pear and kumquat that are laced with plenty of savory mineral notes in this white. Long and rich on the finish, which is filled with hints of ginger, cream and spice. Best from 2022 through 2031.—A.Z.

MÜLLER-CATOIR

Riesling Pfalz Bürgergarten Im Breumel GG 2017
94 points | \$65 | 90 cases imported | White

Extremely elegant and precisely crafted, with notes of star anise and lavender framing the core of crunchy pear and blood orange flavors. The acidity is appreciable, fueling the flavors and spice accents. Savory mineral details linger on the finish. Best from 2021 through 2031.—A.Z.

SPREITZER

Riesling Rheingau Wisselbrunnen GG 2017
94 points | \$49 | 51 cases imported | White

Ripe and complex, with flavors of baked apple, lemon verbena, nectarine and dried pear supported by a powerful structure. Shows elegance and finesse midpalate, with notes of dried guava, followed by unctuous spiciness on the finish. Best from 2021 through 2031.—A.Z.

H. DÖNNHOFF

Riesling Nahe Krötenpfuhl GG 2017
93 points | \$65 | 78 cases imported | White

Multilayered, featuring well-sculpted and concentrated flavors of baked apple, gooseberry, roasted pineapple and vanilla bean. Acidity cuts through, delivering freshness midpalate and presenting ripe melon and quinine notes on the finish. Best from 2022 through 2030.—A.Z.

SELBACH-OSTER

Riesling Spätlese Trocken Mosel Zeltinger Sonnenuhr 2017
93 points | \$30 | 51 cases imported | White

A gorgeous dry Riesling, floating gracefully across the palate, expressing notes of kiwifruit, white raspberry and kumquat. Beautifully textured and full of vibrancy, which comes from the well-integrated acidity and mineral details. Lots of finesse and good length. Drink now through 2028.—A.Z.

SPREITZER

Riesling Rheingau Trocken Hendelberg Alte Reben 2017
93 points | \$33 | 50 cases imported | White

A blockbuster, with gorgeous aromas and flavors of spice, grapefruit and passion fruit and hints of jasmine tea. Medium-bodied, with great acidity cutting through and a long, flavorful finish. Drink now or hold for more development. Drink now through 2028.—A.Z.

SOUTH AFRICA

SADIE FAMILY

Kokerboom Olifants River 2017
94 points | \$93 | 35 cases imported | White

Enticing, with tangerine, nectarine and orange notes forming a juicy, almost unctuous core, while bitter almond, acacia and citrus oil details fill in through the dense and lengthy finish. Offers lots of coiled energy. Intense. Sémillon. Best from 2021 through 2028.—J.M.

ASHBOURNE

Sandstone Hemel-en-Aarde Valley 2009
93 points | \$25 | 900 cases imported | White

Sweet pea, yellow apple, honeysuckle and verbena notes are seamlessly woven here, with streaks of quinine, savory and tarragon providing intriguing contrast in the background. Drink now through 2023.—J.M.

BOEKENHOUTSKLOOF

Sémillon Franschhoek 2016
93 points | \$49 | 100 cases imported | White

This is pure and very focused, with a mix of tangerine, white peach, persimmon and singed almond notes, carried by vibrant acidity. Shows steely cut on the finish for now. Best from 2021 through 2028.—J.M.

LEEU PASSANT

Chardonnay Stellenbosch 2016
93 points | \$75 | 50 cases imported | White

Bright yellow apple, peach and pear flavors mingle here, with a creamy texture and a finish that glistens with honeysuckle and quinine notes. Offers lovely purity and length. Best from 2021 through 2026.—J.M.

MULLINEUX

Syrah Swartland Iron 2016
93 points | \$125 | 10 cases imported | Red

This is intriguing, with white pepper followed by a notable sanguine streak and a range of red currant, bitter cherry, singed iron and cedar notes. The structure is evident through the pepper-tinged finish, giving this an old-school feel. Best from 2021 through 2026.—J.M.

MULLINEUX

Syrah Swartland Schist Roundstone 2016
93 points | \$125 | 25 cases imported | Red

Ripe, with a core of plum paste and raspberry preserve notes still coiled up. Lots of mouthwatering anise, apple wood and tobacco elements are milling around, giving this cut and energy. Best from 2022 through 2026.—J.M.

SADIE FAMILY

Palladius Swartland 2016
93 points | \$150 | 140 cases imported | White

Broad and lush in feel, featuring creamed melon, pear and yellow apple fruit flavors, framed by warm meringue, white ginger and brioche notes. The long finish flows nicely. Chenin Blanc. Drink now through 2022.—J.M.

SADIE FAMILY

Soldaat Piekenierskloof 2017
93 points | \$75 | 30 cases imported | Red

A fresh, unadorned style, with a piercing savory thread running through the core of blood orange and damson plum fruit. Light shiso leaf and iron notes chime in. Drink now through 2025.—J.M.

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.

MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE

Volnay Clos des Ducs 2016

96 points | \$240 | 132 cases imported | Red

Opens with spice and black pepper aromas, followed by pure cherry, black currant, violet, graphite and mineral flavors. Sleek and focused, this builds to a long, ripe finish of fruit and stone notes. Best from 2023 through 2043.

From France.—*B.S.*

DENNER

Dirt Worshipper Central Coast 2016

96 points | \$75 | 1,123 cases made | Red

Impressively combines concentrated and bold fruit with a polished, refined structure, offering spirited black plum, licorice and smoked pepper flavors, accented by crushed stone and fresh earth details. The tannins are broad but harmonious. Syrah, Roussanne and Viognier. Drink now through 2027. From California.—*T.F.*

SAXUM

Broken Stones Paso Robles Willow Creek District 2015

96 points | \$98 | 1,200 cases made | Red

Deeply structured, yet expressive and balanced, with bold blackberry, river stone, white pepper and grilled anise flavors that build power toward big but polished tannins. Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Roussanne and Petite Sirah.

Drink now through 2027. From California.—*T.F.*

MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE

Volnay Champans 2016

95 points | \$150 | 145 cases imported | Red

Pure and intense, featuring cherry, black currant and violet aromas and flavors, this red is seductive and approachable despite its youth. The solid structure is seamlessly integrated and bodes well for future development. Shows terrific harmony and expression. Best from 2023 through 2042. From France.—*B.S.*

MAXIMIN GRÜNHAUS

Riesling Mosel Abtsberg GG 2017

95 points | \$70 | 800 cases made | White

This gorgeous dry Riesling has an exotic character, with elderflower and tropical fruit notes allied to passion fruit flavors that are accented by grapefruit, vanilla, and spice and mineral elements, which display depth and complexity, supported by the supple texture and vibrant acidity. Best from 2021 through 2034. From Germany.—*A.Z.*

TENSLEY

Syrah Santa Barbara County Colson Canyon Vineyard 2017

95 points | \$42 | 1,950 cases made | Red

Deeply structured yet rich and polished, with smoked meat, huckleberry and *garrigue* notes that jaunt toward big but refined tannins on the finish. Drink now through 2028. From California.—*T.F.*

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 380,000 reviews are available in our online database. Together, our 11 tasting editors count more than 250 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).

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James Laube Senior editor, Napa

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1981. Tasting beat: California

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: At large

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Aleks Zecevic, Associate tasting coordinator, New York

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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 |