

Wine Spectator Insider

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CALIFORNIA PINOT NOIR AND SPARKLING WINE, OREGON CHARDONNAY, Napa Cabernet and a range of South African varietals and blends: This week's *Wine Spectator Insider* shows off the diversity of today's New World wines.

Belle Glos and Landmark together present five different outstanding expressions of single-vineyard Pinot Noir, and for bubbly fans, Domaine Carneros' Blanc de Blancs Le Rêve 2005 is luxurious and complex.

In Oregon, Ayoub, Domaine Serene and Bergström demonstrate the success of the state's Chardonnay. And finally, a wealth of bottlings, from Chenin Blanc to Bordeaux blends, are South Africa's contribution to this report. Many of the leading wineries in that country chip in here, including Ernie Els, Rust en Vrede, Glen Carlou and Boekenhoutskloof. On page 4, you'll find the best of this week, our Hot Wines.

CALIFORNIA

BELLE GLOS

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Las Alturas Vineyard 2009

92 points | \$44 | 2,852 cases made | Red

Bold, rich and layered, with dense dark berry fruit that shows touches of spice, wild berry and blackberry and attractive floral scents. Full-bodied, this expands on the finish, where the flavors fan out. Best from 2012 through 2020.—*J.L.*

BELLE GLOS

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Taylor Lane Vineyard 2009

92 points | \$44 | 908 cases made | Red

Notably oaky, yet very complex, extracted and deep, with rich dark berry fruit that shows touches of spice and mineral. Picks up a hint of mocha on the finish. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

BROOKMAN

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2007

92 points | \$50 | 328 cases made | Red

Exhibits a tight core of fleshy plum, currant, blackberry, cigar box, mineral and lead pencil notes. Full-bodied, ending with a taut, lingering finish. Drink now through 2022.—*J.L.*

DOMAINE CARNEROS

Blanc de Blancs Carneros Le Rêve 2005

92 points | \$85 | 4,450 cases made | Sparkling

Luxurious and complex, blending an opulent texture with lively acidity. Bold aromas of brioche, almond and lemon curd lead to layered flavors of Asian pear and cinnamon spice. Drink now through 2016.—*T.F.*

DUTTON-GOLDFIELD

Pinot Noir Green Valley of Russian River Valley Dutton Ranch Emerald Ridge Vineyard 2009

92 points | \$58 | 133 cases made | Red

Clean, fresh, vibrant and complex, with zesty wild berry, sour cherry and raspberry fruit that's lively, spicy and well-structured, ending with a refreshing aftertaste that offers delicacy and finesse. Best from 2012 through 2020.—*J.L.*

LANDMARK

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Kanzler 2009

92 points | \$65 | 350 cases made | Red

Pure, rich and focused, with complex tiers of cola, dried berry, wild berry and raspberry flavors. Full-bodied, deep and persistent, with lively acidity, ending with a loamy, earthy aftertaste. Drink now through 2019.—*J.L.*

LANDMARK

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Spring Hill 2009
92 points | \$50 | 150 cases made | Red

There's pure, complex dark berry and floral scents in this medium-bodied red, which is elegant, firm and focused, with a mix of spice, mineral, wild berry, blueberry and raspberry flavors, ending with a dash of tobacco. Drink now through 2019.—*J.L.*

LE MISTRAL

Red Monterey County 2008
92 points | \$45 | 1,003 cases made | Red

Rich and focused, with a complex array of roasted herb, espresso bean, supple berry, tar, spice and floral scents that are full-bodied, yet graceful and elegant, with the flavors fanning out nicely on the finish. Syrah, Grenache, Alicante Bouschet and Petite Sirah. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

O'BRIEN ESTATE

Romance of the Heart Napa Valley 2008
92 points | \$52 | 150 cases made | Red

Sleek and focused, with black currant and toasty bittersweet chocolate aromas and elegantly complex plum, mineral and cedar notes that finish with ripe but firm tannins. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2012 through 2017.—*T.F.*

OREGON BERGSTRÖM

Chardonnay Willamette Valley Sigrid Reserve 2009
92 points | \$78 | 444 cases made | White

Polished, round and refined, with a pretty honey note weaving through the pear and cream flavors, nicely balanced by lemony acidity on the elegant finish. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

DOMAINE SERENE

Chardonnay Dundee Hills Etoile Vineyard Dijon Clones 2008
92 points | \$45 | 250 cases made | White

Bright, vivid, focused and distinctive for its mineral accents around a silky core of pineapple, pear and citrus. This has the stuff to develop in the bottle. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

BRICK HOUSE

Chardonnay Ribbon Ridge Cascadia 2009
91 points | \$34 | 240 cases made | White

Light and satiny, weaving its tobacco-scented pear and Meyer lemon flavors through a refined structure that lets them float through the finish unhindered. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

LEMELSON

Chardonnay Willamette Valley Reserve 2008
91 points | \$25 | 336 cases made | White

Polished, with nicely modulated pear and spice flavors, gliding easily into a fine finish, hinting at fig and cream as this lingers. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

BRICK HOUSE

Chardonnay Ribbon Ridge 2009
90 points | \$25 | 450 cases made | White

Light and inviting, with a crisp feel to the apple and spice flavors, finishing with deft balance. Drink now through 2013.—*H.S.*

SOUTH AFRICA

BOEKENHOUTSKLOOF

Syrah Coastal Region 2008
92 points | \$43 | 100 cases imported | Red

Big, but relies more on tangy acidity and a mouthwatering mineral edge to support the core of red licorice, red currant and raspberry fruit. Tobacco and iron notes hang through the finish. Should age nicely. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

ERNIE ELS

Proprietor's Blend Stellenbosch 2008
92 points | \$35 | 1,400 cases made | Red

Dark and juicy, with a nice core of blackberry, black Mission fig and dark currant fruit woven deftly with mesquite, iron and black tea. A dark licorice edge hangs through the grippy finish. This has the length and poise for cellaring. Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

KEN FORRESTER

Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch The FMC 2009
92 points | \$65 | 200 cases imported | White

Ripe and lush, with delicious creamed pear, ginger, heather and fig kept honest by fresh acidity that's well-embedded on the toasty finish. This really stretches out in the glass too, with pear eau-de-vie and hazelnut oil notes lingering on the finish. Gorgeous. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

RUSTENBERG

Peter Barlow Simonsberg-Stellenbosch 2006
92 points | \$49 | 200 cases imported | Red

A dark, brawny style, with dense black currant paste and fig sauce notes liberally laced with roasted apple wood, chestnut and tobacco notes. The dark, smoldering finish has plenty of heft in reserve for a touch more cellaring. Best from 2012 through 2015.—*J.M.*

VINS D'ORRANCE

Syrah Western Cape Cuvée Ameena 2007
92 points | \$39 | 100 cases imported | Red

Distinctive, with black tea, white pepper and smoldering tobacco notes weaving through the silky, lush core of plum sauce and blackberry fruit. The lovely perfumy sanguine finish glides on, with a buried mineral edge. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

BOEKENHOUTSKLOOF

Sémillon Franschoek 2008

91 points | \$29 | 100 cases imported | White

Rich but subtle, with a lovely creamy feel to the notes of lanolin, white peach, clementine, heather and chamomile. The long, stylish finish has nice depth in reserve for cellaring. One of the most distinctive whites from South Africa. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

DE MORGENZON

Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch 2009

91 points | \$30 | 150 cases imported | Red

Ripe and concentrated, with brioche and toasted hazelnut notes leading the way for now, while the core of fig, quince and ginger waits in reserve. Pure and long, with the quince echoing on the finish. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

ERNIE ELS

Syrah Stellenbosch Proprietor's 2009

91 points | \$35 | 275 cases made | Red

Ripe and flashy, with bold blueberry, linzer torte and boysenberry fruit flavors, but they stay poised and fresh, with alluring spice and anise notes hanging through the creamy finish. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

RUST EN VREDE

Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch 2008

91 points | \$27 | 610 cases imported | Red

Dark, sleek and polished, with dense but pure black currant, licorice and roasted plum notes. Long and nicely detailed through the finish, with tobacco, black tea and roasted apple wood notes checking in. A rock-solid, lip-smacking good Cabernet. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

RUSTENBERG

Five Soldiers Stellenbosch 2008

91 points | \$38 | 100 cases imported | White

Mature and ripe, but well-defined, with nicely embedded acidity that lets the gorgeous quince, glazed pear, roasted hazelnut and dark fig notes all glide through together. Tropical and rich, but stays fresh. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

WARWICK

Three Cape Ladies Simonsberg-Stellenbosch 2008

91 points | \$25 | 1,500 cases imported | Red

Polished, with dense but rounded tannins framing the ample core of cassis, blackberry and fig paste. Lots of graphite and Lapsang souchong tea notes ripple through the lengthy finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinotage and Syrah. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

ATARAXIA MOUNTAIN

Sauvignon Blanc Western Cape 2009

90 points | \$22 | 5,500 cases imported | White

This has subtle weight, with lemon verbena, wet straw and chamomile notes offset by lingering gooseberry notes. Nice buried minerality stretches out the finish. Very solid. Drink now.—*J.M.*

GLEN CARLOU

Chardonnay Paarl Quartz Stone 2009

90 points | \$45 | 30 cases imported | White

A very bold, tropical style, with lots of ginger and graham cracker leading the way for dried pineapple, candied orange peel and mango fruit notes. There's also a liberally toasty finish, with a bitter almond edge adding some cut. Not shy at all. Will certainly have some fans. Drink now.—*J.M.*

RAATS FAMILY

Chenin Blanc Stellenbosch 2009

90 points | \$25 | 450 cases imported | White

A ripe, friendly style, with a light toasty almond edge to the peach, fig and pear fruit flavors. The rounded finish is pure and lengthy. Drink now.—*J.M.*

RUDERA

Platinum Stellenbosch 2007

90 points | \$43 | 75 cases made | Red

A big, broad-shouldered Cabernet, with lots of coffee, roasted fig, black currant paste and plum preserves framed by ample roasted vanilla and tobacco notes. Stays well-defined through the finish, with a slightly chewy edge. Drink now through 2012.—*J.M.*

SPICE ROUTE

Chakalaka Swartland 2009

90 points | \$20 | 6,000 cases made | Red

Dark and winey, with lots of sappy kirsch, blackberry and plum sauce notes supported by dark licorice and sweet spice through the finish. Shows nice range and character. Syrah, Mourvèdre, Carignane, Petite Sirah, Grenache and Tannat. Drink now.—*J.M.*

SPICE ROUTE

Sauvignon Blanc Darling 2010

90 points | \$15 | 2,500 cases made | White

Bracing, with a invigorating set of chive, lime, gooseberry and mineral flavors that drive nicely through the well-defined finish. Drink now.—*J.M.*

THELEMA

Cabernet Sauvignon Stellenbosch The Mint 2008

90 points | \$45 | 56 cases imported | Red

An unabashedly minty aroma lead the way for this suave, old-school style Cabernet, with additional tobacco and cocoa notes giving way to supple black currant and crushed plum fruit. The mint edge lingers through the finish gracefully. Shows the balance and grace to age nicely. Drink now through 2013.—*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, low-production wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

ASTON

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2009

94 points | \$65 | 450 cases made | Red

Ripe and juicy, with black cherry, wild berry, cola and raspberry character. Full-bodied, deep and complex, ending with a pretty burst of floral scents and a medley of berry flavors that firm up nicely. Best from 2012 through 2020. *From California.—J.L.*

AYOUB

Chardonnay Dundee Hills 2009

94 points | \$45 | 120 cases made | White

Silky, satiny, elegant and appealing for its superb balance. A light-bodied style that brims with flavor, offering pear, apple, quince and butter cookie notes that mingle enticingly on the long, expressive finish. This one can age. Drink now through 2016. *From Oregon.—H.S.*

BELLE GLOS

Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley Clark & Telephone Vineyard 2009

93 points | \$44 | 2,777 cases made | Red

A rich, extracted style that's dense but also very complex and detailed, with spicy berry flavors that fan out nicely while retaining their focus and detail, gaining depth on the finish. Best from 2012 through 2019. *From California.—J.L.*

ERNIE ELS

Stellenbosch Signature 2007

93 points | \$95 | 800 cases made | Red

Ripe and suave, with alluring blackberry, plum sauce and roasted fig notes laced with black tea, cocoa powder, Maduro tobacco and smoked apple wood notes. The long, grippy finish smolders nicely, with dense, dark fruit and lovely mouthfeel. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Malbec and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2014. *From South Africa.—J.M.*

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

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

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

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