

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

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CALIFORNIA CABERNET, ITALIAN REDS AND MORE UP TO 98 POINTS: Ageworthy bottlings from Napa powerhouses like Clif Family and Corison have structure and personality. Gems from Italy range from top cuvées like Antinori's Solaia (pictured) to exciting discoveries from Sicily, Piedmont and more. Washington's top two red varieties, Syrah and Cabernet, also offer impressive depth at great prices, including a 93-pointer for \$28 and a 95-pointer for \$45. *Turn to page 4 for the six Hot Wines.*



CALIFORNIA Cabernet Sauvignon

CLIF FAMILY

Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain Croquet Vineyard 2015

95 points | \$125 | 150 cases made | Red

Densely packed, with fig paste and blackberry compote flavors forming a core shrouded in bramble, cocoa powder and smoldering tobacco accents for now. Everything melds wonderfully through the finish, imparting a polished feel and leaving a strong graphite echo lingering at the end. Best from 2022 through 2040.—*J.M.*

CLIF FAMILY

Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain Kit's Killer Cab 2015

94 points | \$75 | 450 cases made | Red

Tight and backward now, this ripples with sage, saffron and bay leaf notes, while the core of black currant and blackberry paste flavors waits its turn to unfurl. Lots of bramble and tar notes score the finish, giving this ample grip, though there's more than enough fruit to keep pace. Needs cellaring. Best from 2023 through 2040.—*J.M.*

CORISON

Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena 2015

94 points | \$95 | 1,600 cases made | Red

A bright, high-pitched style, featuring damson plum, red currant and cherry fruit flavors, laced with rose petal and jasmine notes, giving this a distinctive profile, while bramble-edged grip and bright acidity let all the elements play out through the energetic finish. Poised to age well. Best from 2021 through 2035.—*J.M.*

IDEOLOGY

Cabernet Sauvignon Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley Estate 2015

94 points | \$85 | 185 cases made | Red

Intense cassis, crushed plum and blackberry puree flavors form the core, which picks up light sage, graphite and bittersweet cocoa notes as this unfurls. Reveals a pleasant tug of earth through the finish, showing muscle and drive. Best from 2022 through 2035.—*J.M.*

KRUPP BROTHERS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Veraison Stagecoach Vineyard 2014

94 points | \$100 | 359 cases made | Red

Broad and loamy in feel, with ganache, espresso, steeped currant and fig fruit flavors cruising through. A roasted alder edge adds a textural element through the dense finish. As weighty as this is, there's a latent juiciness that adds length and energy. Best from 2022 through 2040.—*J.M.*

SNOWDEN

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Brothers Vineyard 2016
94 points | \$90 | 639 cases made | Red

Offers a tasty core of plum and blackberry fruit, backed by lively anise and apple wood notes. Restrained overall, with an alluring freshness and a subtle charcoal hint lingering deftly at the end. Drink now through 2032.—*J.M.*

CORLEY FAMILY

Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Yewell Vineyard 2015
93 points | \$80 | 240 cases made | Red

Juicy and youthfully compact, with a core of enticing raspberry, blackberry and black currant fruit waiting to unwind. Features lively bramble, savory and floral notes throughout and a racy, mouthwatering feel at the very end. Tuck this away for a little bit. Best from 2022 through 2030.—*J.M.*

CORLEY FAMILY

Cabernet Sauvignon Yountville State Lane Vineyard 2015
93 points | \$80 | 400 cases made | Red

Grippy and tight, with a hefty dose of charcoal-tinged toast framing the core of steeped black currant and fig fruit flavors. Offers lots of tar and bramble accents through the finish, while the fruit and toast keep pace with each other. Muscular wine. Best from 2021 through 2032.—*J.M.*

GANDONA

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Encosta 2016
93 points | \$97 | 895 cases made | Red

There's lots to like here, from the steeped black currant and blackberry fruit flavors to the notes of licorice snap and bramble, all framed by singed alder accents. Displays ample juicy energy through the finish. Best from 2020 through 2030.—*J.M.*

JUDGE PALMER

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Stagecoach Vineyard 2015
93 points | \$115 | 150 cases made | Red

This has a dark and winey feel, with a strong lacing of bay leaf and savory through the core of well-steeped fig, black currant and blackberry fruit flavors. Smoldering charcoal notes score the finish. Very distinctive and not for the faint of heart. Best from 2022 through 2035.—*J.M.*

LEWIS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2016
93 points | \$100 | 1,800 cases made | Red

Solidly built, with loam and warm licorice notes melding into dark currant and blackberry compote flavors. Broad and fleshy through the finish. A bit stolid in personality, but the depth and definition is there. Best from 2020 through 2030.—*J.M.*

SNOWDEN

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Los Ricos Vineyard 2016
93 points | \$90 | 60 cases made | Red

Juicy and very fresh in feel, with a mix of pure raspberry and black currant fruit racing through, laced with subtle violet and vanilla accents. Fine-grained in feel and sneaky long. Drink now through 2032.—*J.M.*

ITALY

Tuscany

PETROLO

Val d'Arno di Sopra Galatrona 2016
95 points | \$130 | 75 cases imported | Red

This is full of enticing blackberry, blueberry and plum flavors, with a spine of acidity, iron accents and beefy tannins. Long and well-proportioned, this needs time to integrate. Tobacco and spice hints detail the finish. Best from 2022 through 2033.—*B.S.*

CAMPO ALLE COMETE

Bolgheri Superiore 2015
94 points | \$80 | 100 cases imported | Red

Rich and harmonious, featuring a core of black currant, blackberry and plum flavors shaded by rosemary, thyme and sage accents. A solid structure lends support as this plays out on the long finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2021 through 2035.—*B.S.*

DEGLI DEI

Toscana Cavalli 2015
94 points | \$45 | 450 cases imported | Red

Appealing for the polished, elegant presentation of black currant, blackberry and violet notes, embedded with graphite, tobacco and spice accents. Vibrant, very long and integrated even at this young stage. Best from 2021 through 2033.—*B.S.*

FATTORIA LE PUPILLE

Toscana Saffredi 2015
94 points | \$125 | 200 cases imported | Red

An enticing combination of black currant, plum, licorice, iron and tobacco aromas and flavors hits all the right notes. Firms up, showing density and a juicy texture before playing out gracefully on the finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2020 through 2028.—*B.S.*

TENUTA DI TRINORO

Toscana Palazzi 2016
94 points | \$225 | 35 cases imported | Red

Ripe and fruity, this expressive red boasts blackberry, black cherry and plum flavors, accented by graphite and tobacco notes. Features plenty of structure for support, and the finish is long, echoing ripe fruit and mineral elements. Best from 2021 through 2032.—*B.S.*

BINDI SERGARDI

Toscana Mocenni Numero 91 2015
93 points | \$60 | 120 cases imported | Red

Round, evoking plum, black cherry, leather, earth and sanguine flavors. The structure is well-integrated and the finish reveals earth, iron and sanguine notes. Best from 2020 through 2033.—*B.S.*

BRANCAIA

Toscana Ilatraia 2015
93 points | \$70 | 670 cases imported | Red

A beast, featuring plum, black currant, leather and earth flavors locked in a tight grip of tannins. A bit closed now, yet remains balanced and long on the iron-tinged finish. Best from 2022 through 2035.—*B.S.*

LISINI

Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2011
93 points | \$77 | 100 cases imported | Red

A big, rich style, this delivers concentrated plum, black cherry, leather, mineral and spice flavors. The finish today is dominated by dense tannins, but there is plenty of fruit here too. Shows complexity and length overall. Best from 2020 through 2033.—*B.S.*

MONTERAPONI

Toscana Baron' Ugo 2013
93 points | \$97 | 50 cases imported | Red

Offers a maturing bouquet of sweet berry, cherry, leather, tea and spice flavors. Elegant yet intense, with a firm structure and a tangy finish. Drink now through 2029.—*B.S.*

ITALY Other

PASSOPISCIARO

Terre Siciliane Contrada P 2016
94 points | \$85 | 100 cases imported | Red

Creamy tannins lend supple definition to the raspberry coulis, fig cake, rosemary and espresso flavors that ripple on the silky palate of this mouthwatering, medium-bodied red, firming on the lingering finish. Nerello Mascalese. Drink now through 2029.—*A.N.*

PASSOPISCIARO

Terre Siciliane Contrada R 2016
94 points | \$66 | 100 cases imported | Red

An enticing red, graceful and mouthwatering, weaving a skein of fragrant spice and fine-grained tannins with a lovely range of brambly raspberry and currant fruit, accented by hints of dried fig, herb and rose hip. Nerello Mascalese. Best from 2021 through 2030.—*A.N.*

ANTONIOLO

Gattinara San Francesco 2013
93 points | \$73 | 100 cases imported | Red

Sour cherry, strawberry, leather, earth and mineral aromas and flavors mark this intense and supple red. Elegant, with viscosity and a great structure providing support. Drink now through 2030.—*B.S.*

GROSJEAN

Fumin Valle d'Aosta Vigne Merletta 2010
93 points | \$35 | 119 cases imported | Red

Reminiscent of a Côte-Rôtie, this exhibits blackberry, plum and leafy tobacco aromas and flavors, tinged by graphite and stone elements. Complex and evocative, with a long aftertaste of fruity, herbal and mineral details. Drink now through 2024.—*B.S.*

PASSOPISCIARO

Terre Siciliane Contrada G 2016
93 points | \$70 | 100 cases imported | Red

An understated elegance details this vibrant, medium- to full-bodied red, with ripe raspberry and sun-dried cherry fruit, married to fine tannins and accents of dried thyme, fig cake, citrus and tobacco. A subtle streak of smoky mineral echoes on the finish. Nerello Mascalese. Drink now through 2029.—*A.N.*

WASHINGTON Cabernet & Syrah

FIGGINS

Walla Walla Valley 2015
94 points | \$85 | 2,470 cases made | Red

Combines a firm, complex structure with polish and finesse, offering dynamic blackberry, espresso and savory spice flavors that take on richness toward big but refined tannins. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2020 through 2026.—*T.F.*

ALEXANDRIA NICOLE

Syrah Horse Heaven Hills Jet Black Destiny Ridge Vineyard 2016
93 points | \$28 | 1,643 cases made | Red

A sophisticated Syrah, refined and tightly focused, yet expressive, with huckleberry, bay leaf and smoked pepper flavors that gain speed toward big but polished tannins. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

DESCENDANTS LIEGEOIS DUPONT

Marcel Dupont Les Gosses Vineyard Red Mountain 2014
93 points | \$30 | 1,620 cases made | Red

Deep, featuring an appealing earthy, gamy side that pairs with the complex black raspberry, licorice and *garrigue* flavors, finishing with polished tannins. Syrah. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

GORMAN

Cabernet Sauvignon Red Mountain The Bully 2015
93 points | \$50 | 750 cases made | Red

Burly yet polished, with well-built black cherry, crushed stone and bay leaf flavors that build momentum toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

GORMAN

Zachary's Ladder Red Mountain 2016
93 points | \$32 | 1,100 cases made | Red

Deeply structured yet showing plenty of finesse, offering blackberry, steely mineral and licorice flavors that build richness toward polished tannins. Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

ARMSTRONG FAMILY

Syrah Columbia Valley The Scotsman 2015
92 points | \$38 | 200 cases made | Red

Dark and potent, yet polished, with vibrant blackberry and espresso flavors that open to rich blueberry and smoky beef notes, finishing with refined tannins. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

GORMAN

The Devil You Don't Know Columbia Valley 2016
92 points | \$28 | 1,200 cases made | Red

Compact but loaded with personality, offering blueberry, smoky bacon and cracked pepper flavors that build depth toward broad-shouldered tannins. Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre. Best from 2020 through 2025.—*T.F.*

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.

ANTINORI

Toscana Solaia 2015

98 points | \$320 | 500 cases imported | Red

Floral, mint and medicinal herb aromas introduce this rich, black currant-infused red. Firm and compact, with vibrant structure, youthful harmony and a lingering, fruit-, herb- and spice-tinged finish. Shows terrific balance and length, with the best yet to come. Cabernet Sauvignon, Sangiovese and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2022 through 2038. From Italy.—*B.S.*

TENUTA DI TRINORO

Toscana 2016

96 points | \$250 | 55 cases imported | Red

Pure, ripe flavors of plum, blackberry and fruitcake are wrapped in toasty oak. This is dense, picking up earth and tobacco notes as the spice elements echo on the firm finish. The lasting impression is of saturated fruit. Everything is in proportion for a long life ahead. Best from 2022 through 2035. From Italy.—*B.S.*

ANTINORI

Bolgheri Superiore Guado al Tasso 2015

95 points | \$130 | 500 cases imported | Red

A thick, muscular red, featuring black currant, blackberry, licorice, mint, earth and leather aromas and flavors. Dense and builds to a lingering aftertaste, yet needs time to unpack all its facets. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2022 through 2035. From Italy.—*B.S.*

BRANCAIA

Toscana Il Blu 2015

95 points | \$85 | 290 cases imported | Red

This red is sleek and focused, with blackberry, black currant and tobacco aromas and flavors that cut like a laser through the linear frame. Delivers fine harmony and a long finish. Best from 2020 through 2033. From Italy.—*B.S.*

K

Syrah Walla Walla Valley Powerline 2015

95 points | \$45 | 1,011 cases made | Red

Bold and expressive, yet refined, with vibrant blackberry, bacon fat and licorice flavors that take on richness and depth on the long finish. The tannins are big but polished. Drink now through 2025. From Washington.—*T.F.*

SPRING MOUNTAIN

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2015

95 points | \$85 | 4,030 cases made | Red

Sports an intense and pure beam of raspberry and cassis flavors, flanked by sage, incense and black tea aromas and backed by mouthwatering licorice snap notes and a bramble-filled finish. A beautiful example of mountain fruit. Best from 2022 through 2040. From California.—*J.M.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

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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).

Marvin R. Shanken Editor and Publisher

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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