



JAMES SUCKLING & HIS TASTERS

JSI WINE RATINGS

**TOP 100**

**WINES**

**2021**

100+ BEST WINES OF THE YEAR

JAMESSUCKLING.COM 



# Preface

This guidebook is a collection of all of our Top 100 reports from 2021 posted on [JamesSuckling.com](https://www.jamesSuckling.com). We rated more than 25,000 wines to come up with our 11 country lists, and we are proud of all the work we did together to review all the wines, even amid the pandemic! It was a great effort by all my editors and tasters, including Jo Cooke, Kevin Davy, Andrii Stetsiuk, Claire Nesbitt, Stuart Pigott, Zekun Shuai, William McIlhenny, Nathan Slone and Nick Stock. We also had editorial and administrative help from Vincent Hung, Marie Kim-Suckling, Anne Krueger, Berenice Maulhardt, and Vince Morkri.

I am not sure many other wine media organizations found the time or the energy to rate so many wines in 2021, but we were up to the task, with most of the tastings taking place in Hong Kong. Thousands of other bottles were also tasted and rated on the road in Europe and the United States as well as a few thousand in South Australia.

It's impossible to generalize about the quality of the wines tasted in 2021, but 21,588 of the wines received scores of 90 points or more. It means that 86 percent of the wines were outstanding quality. This may seem high to some people, but it highlights that the quality of premium wines in the world is at an all-time high. It's also why I always say that it has never been a better time to be a wine lover. Excellent wines are available from just about everywhere, suiting every taste and budget.

When I think back to my beginnings as a taster and editor with the American magazine *The Wine Spectator* in 1981 in California, it's almost hard to believe how far the quality of wine has improved. I remember being elated to find a 90-point wine back then. Most were rated in the mid-80s. But today it's a different story. I have seen the betterment in viticulture and winemaking with my own eyes, with new winemakers and better methods utilized in every wine region in the world. It's a golden moment for quality wine production in the world.

Look at New Zealand as an example. I remember attending the first international professional tasting of New Zealand wines in London in the mid-1980s, and I remember marveling about the quality. The country was in a fledgling state of wine production with most going into massive bottlings for supermarkets, yet there was a sign of greatness from a handful of small producers, who were leading the way to the future. Fast forward to today, and the Kumeu River Chardonnay Kumeu Mate's Vineyard 2020 was our Wine of the Year in 2021. Plus, we rated it a perfect 100 points.

In fact, we rated no less than 35 wines 100 points in 2021. That's only 0.14 percent of all the wines we tasted, but it's still something. And we found 100-point wines in many countries, such as Australia, Germany and New Zealand, as well as in famous regions including Amarone della Valpolicella, Bordeaux, Brunello di Montalcino, Burgundy, Champagne, Chianti Classico, Napa Valley and Rioja. We believe in perfection in life and wine, which is why we are not afraid to rate a wine 100 points!

I am so proud of my team of veteran wine reviewers and young associate tasters. We share the enthusiasm and love of great wines, and we work hard together to find and rate the best wines in the world each year. We hope you enjoy our first JS Guidebook to the Top 100 Wines of 2021.

– *James Suckling, chairman and editor*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JS', with a stylized flourish at the end.



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# OUR TEAM OF TASTERS



## **JAMES SUCKLING** | Chairman / Editor

James Suckling is one of today's leading wine critics whose reviews are read and respected by wine lovers, serious wine collectors, and the wine trade worldwide. Dubbed as "one of the world's most powerful wine critics" by Forbes, he is now chairman and editor of JamesSuckling.com, the wine media platform and events company based in Hong Kong. Since starting his career, James estimates he has tasted and rated close to 250,000 wines. His website JS Wine Ratings provides more than 150,000 tasting notes and scores at the moment. James and his team of tasters currently rate more than 2,000 wines a month.

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## **JO COOKE** | Tasting Editor

English-born, but resident in Italy for 30 years, Jo rose through the ranks at Wine Spectator to become the magazine's taster of several regions in Italy. After pursuing avenues in education, Jo joined JS Wine Ratings full-time covering parts of Italy and overseeing all tasting notes for publication.

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## **STUART PIGOTT** | Senior Editor

Stuart's name is most associated with riesling and German wine, writing for several publications and publishing his own book "Best White Wine on Earth - The Riesling Story". But he also has extensive knowledge in contrasting wine regions like France, Thailand and the United States. In 2020 Stuart became the first winner of the Professor Müller-Thurgau-Prize.



### **ZEKUN SHUAI | Associate Editor**

Zekun was an international journalism student when he developed an interest in wine. Having been an independent wine consultant and freelance writer, he also has extensive wine judging experience at international wine competitions. Zekun holds an MSc in Wine Business and a WSET Diploma.

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### **NICK STOCK | Senior Editor**

Nick is one of Australia's most prolific wine commentators, stretching beyond writing to radio and television broadcasting, wine show judging, public speaking, educating and winemaking. Being one of the most popular voices in Australian wine, he was awarded "Best Drinks Journalist" in 2007 at the World Food Media Awards.

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### **WILLIAM MCILHENNY | Director**

William is an international affairs adviser to several U.S.-based foundations and companies, a passionate wine lover and a devoted world traveler. During his career as a U.S. diplomat spanning three decades, he was an indefatigable promoter of American wines in Europe and Latin America.

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### **NATHAN SLONE | Assistant Editor**

Nathan Slone was born and raised in New York City and Hong Kong. After graduating he went on to work for Zachys Wine Auctions where he oversaw documenting and organizing their highest value inventory and gained extensive knowledge of vintage wine and the collector market. He now resides in Brooklyn, NY and joined JamesSuckling.com as junior taster full-time.



### **CLAIRE NESBITT | Associate Editor**

Claire is an Oxford-educated Chemist and McKinsey & Co. alumnus who later decided to pursue her love of wine after studying at Le Cordon Bleu in London. Now based in Hong Kong, she is a junior taster on James' tasting team as well as manages the wine programme at his wife's restaurant & wine bar James Suckling Wine Central.

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### **KEVIN DAVY | Tasting Manager & Taster**

A French-born sommelier, Kevin has studied in North Carolina and China, holding an MSc in International Business. During his studies in Paris, he learned about wine, and later became a wine educator and private sommelier. Continuing to share his love for wine, Kevin joined JS Wine Ratings full-time as junior taster on James' tasting team; as well as manages all tastings.

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### **ANDRII STETSIUK | Taster**

A career sommelier and wine lover, Andrii ran the wine operations on hospitality venues such as the Kempinsky Hotel in St. Petersburg and at Oceania Cruises in Miami. Certified from the Court of Master Sommeliers, Andrii now is part of the tasting team, helping to taste thousands of wines each year.





# THE 100 BEST WINES OF 2021

It's been a great year for tasting wine at JamesSuckling.com. We rated almost 25,000 wines over the last 12 months, our record, and we found so many exciting wines, from 2018 Bordeaux and Napa reds to 2020 German and Austrian whites, not to mention all the other superb wines from Argentina, Australia, California, Italy, and New Zealand. Plus, we found a few gems from Chile, Hungary, Portugal, and South Africa.

Most of the wines were reviewed in our tasting office in Hong Kong. Wineries sent their samples directly to us, which was easy because Hong Kong has no duties or taxes on wine. We tasted. We Zoomed. We discussed all the top wines. In addition, editors Stuart Pigott, Nick Stock, William McIlhenny, and Nathan Slone were busy traveling in Europe, Australia and the United States interviewing and tasting with winemakers.

It was fulfilling to have at least some of our team in the field gathering information and rating wines after more than a year of no travel for myself and others.

We have been communicating all this through our social media channels, especially our Instagram account, which has one of the largest audiences in the wine world, with 300,000 followers. Plus, regular subscribers to our website and newsletters continue to grow.

The main criteria that went into selecting this year's list of the best 100 wines of the world was quality, which is why none scored less than 98 points. Another factor was that the wines must have had a minimum production of 4,000 bottles. Then we looked at pricing and finally what we call the "wow" factor. The latter are wines that excite us emotionally as well as technically as tasters.



## THE TOP 10

There is a lot to be emotional about this year! Our Top 10 wines of 2021 are all perfect wines, 100-pointers. It has been a great year for perfect wines – 38 in total. It's a combination of great terroir with incredible single-vineyard wines, winemaking such as superlative vintage Champagnes, and serious dedication in the vineyard like making tiny-production sweet wines.

However, it's been a long time coming for New Zealand to finally produce our Wine of the Year, the Kumeu River Chardonnay Kumeu Maté's Vineyard 2020. It's also the first time our Wine of the Year is a white wine. And while most people think the best wines of the island nation are pinot noir or even sauvignon blanc, we have long thought its chardonnays are truly world-class and easily compete with the best internationally, particularly France's Burgundy. I first went to New Zealand in October 2012, and I was in awe of the sheer natural beauty of the place. We traveled for about 10 days and saw all the key wine regions and many of the top producers. We tasted so many clean and well-crafted wines, but only a few showed the complexity and nature of great vineyards. One of those places was the Kumeu River estate of the Brajkovich family, who are some of the most gifted vineyardists and winemakers in the world.

Prior to the pandemic, Senior Editor Nick Stock traveled a few times a year to New Zealand to taste and visit producers. And we have all been big fans of Kumeu River chardonnays. Senior Editor Stuart Pigott attended a vertical tasting in London of 11 vintages from 2017 to



Tasting Coordinator Vincent Hung sets up a tasting session at the JamesSuckling.com Hong Kong Tasting Office. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

2006 of all the Kumeu single-vineyard chardonnays (they make three) and he was blown away over how well they aged.

The family has about 30 hectares (about 74 acres) of estate vineyards and 10 hectares worth of grapes supplied by local growers under long-term contracts in Kumeu River, which is situated just north of Auckland on the North Island.

The winery produces about 250,000 bottles per year. The single vineyard of Maté, named after their late father Maté, encompasses about 2.6 hectares. It's their oldest vineyard, dating back to the early 1990s.

The weather is very cool with most summer days not reaching 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit). The combination of bright and clear sunlight ripens the grapes slowly and beautifully most years. The heavy clay soils also add to the effect of the cool climate. It's much cooler than Burgundy in general, especially with global warming.

All the chardonnays at Kumeu River are whole-clus-

ter pressed, fermented with wild yeasts and spend close to a year on their lees. New oak is limited in use. This is why the wines have such a crisp yet ripe and complex character to them – and the Kumeu River Chardonnay Kumeu Maté's Vineyard 2020 shows unequalled power with complexity. I call it the "Montrachet of New Zealand." Plus, it sells for about \$50 a bottle!

Our No. 2 Wine of the Year is also a first for our Top 100. It's the first time a Chianti Classico has been in the Top 10 and it highlights the superb quality of the reds carrying the moniker of Gran Selezione – the Barone Ricasoli Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Ceniprimo 2018. This is a new appellation for the famous Tuscan region and highlights the best quality of single-vineyard wines from Chianti Classico. The single-vineyard wine of Ceniprimo is ethereal in its transparent and sleek structure and entices you with every sip. And it comes from the famous family of Ricasoli, who essentially invented Chianti Classico in the 1870s.

At No. 3, the Dönnhoff Riesling Nahe Hermannshöhle GG 2020 is a top single-vineyard riesling from undoubtedly one of the greatest producers of wine in Germany. The steep hillside vineyards of the Dönnhoff family produce some of the most compelling dry white wines

in the world. And the Dönnhoffs make some of the best wines of our tastings each year. Last year, the Dönnhoff Riesling Nahe Dellchen 2019 was our No. 7 wine in the Top 100. The Hermannshöhle GG 2020 is a ravishing white with its wonderful ripe fruit character of peaches and pears but a fascinating saline, mineral undertone.

## PITCH-PERFECT BALANCE

I still remember the day that Senior Editor Nick Stock sent me an email about the Mount Mary Yarra Valley Quintet 2019, our No. 4 wine. It read: "Oh man ... so so good." The Bordeaux blend is one of the greatest we have ever tasted from Australia and is clearly first-growth quality. Nick said it "was concentrated with pitch-perfect balance." It's a blend of 44 percent cabernet sauvignon, 30 percent merlot, 6 percent cabernet franc, 5 percent malbec and 5 percent petit verdot.

The phrase "pitch-perfect balance" could easily be applied to the Aubert Chardonnay Napa Valley Sugar Shack Estate Vineyard 2019 at No. 5. The handmade chardonnay shows incredible refinement and depth. Owner and winemaker Mark Aubert is the best chardonnay maker in the United States, and he has an immense eye for detail in both his viticulture and winemaking. He speaks with such knowledge and precision when he describes his production processes at every level. He reminds me of a Swiss timepiece maker.

The Continuum Napa Valley Sage Mountain Vineyard 2018 at No. 6 is a Bordeaux blend and highlights the greatness of Napa Valley's wonderfully harmonious and high-quality 2018 vintage. The mountain vineyard of Continuum produced incredible quality wine from organically grown grapes.



Our No. 6 wine, the Continuum Napa Valley Sage Mountain Vineyard 2018. "This is amazing wine and shows the greatness of the cool 2018 vintage in Napa Valley," James said of it after a tasting earlier this year. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)



Veteran winemaker and owner Tim Mondavi and his daughters Carissa and Chiara make fine-tuned and precise wines that have a unique way of expressing the Pritchard Hill sub-region, with the wines showing strength but also terrific clarity and length.

Taittinger Champagne Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs 2008 is the most structured bottling I have tasted of what I consider one of my favorite prestige cuvée blanc de blancs Champagnes. It's our No. 7 wine on the list. Thanks to the great 2008 vintage, the Champagne is so tight and dense, with fantastically fine phenolics that touch every centimeter of your palate in a caressing and energetic way. The Comtes de Champagne is fantastic to drink now but will age for decades ahead like a great chardonnay. The Romano Dal Forno Amarone della Valpolicella Monte Lodoletta 2015 at No. 8 is clearly the greatest young Amarone we have ever tasted, and it highlights the region's movement away from

big, high-octane Amarones to a style of precision and balance. Sure, it's still very rich, as it should be, but the tannins nicely frame the fruits – an array of aromas and flavors including tar, prune, date, currant fruit, bitter-orange liqueur, aged balsamic, fresh roasting herbs, cinnamon, roasted chestnuts, black tea and licorice. Did we miss a descriptor? Tasting Editor Jo Cooke said that the wine is “black as pitch and tarry as always, with superb concentration but it's also exquisitely balanced, though only a wine fiend would drink it now!”

## CHARACTER AND HARMONY

At No. 9, the Dominus Napa Valley 2018 is one of my personal favorite reds from the United States. Owner Christian Moueix, Winemaker Tod Mossero and the rest of the team at Dominus know how to subtly coax their vineyards in Yountville to deliver wines of real character and harmony, especially in an extended growing season like in the 2018 vintage. I compared tasting the wine to a magic carpet ride. It's weightless and velvety on the palate. Rounding off our Top 10, the Château Trochanoy Pomerol 2018 showcases the superb 2018 vintage for Bordeaux, and this perfect wine is a fraction of the cost of the other 100-pointers from the vintage, although it's still slightly more than \$300 a bottle (top Bordeaux can be expensive). The legendary Bordeaux shows the warmth and plushness of the best wines of the vintage but maintains an uncanny tension and focus with seamless depth and concentration.



James and his team do regular Zoom tastings with winemakers. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

## UPWARD PRICE PRESSURE

This year's Top 100 list reminds me how prices for the best wines of the world continue to increase at a fast pace due to the unbridled demand around the world. People have been drinking more fine wines, especially during the pandemic. Climate change at the same time is reducing quantities of many top wines, with all sorts of calamities from frosts and hail to droughts and fires. I expect upward price pressure on the best wines of the world to continue into the new year.

Luckily, some of the best wineries in several countries have held the line on pricing, particularly in such places as Argentina, Australia, Austria, Germany, and New Zealand. We will continue to allocate a lot of resources covering these places, and for good reasons.

This year the number one country represented in the Top 100 was France with 22 wines, mostly 2018 Bordeaux. The United States was second with 21 wines listed, mostly 2018 Napa reds. Italy followed with 15 and Germany with 12. Australia accounted for seven, Argentina had six, Spain five and Chile four. New Zealand had three wines on the list, Austria two, and Hungary, Portugal, and South Africa each had one. Stay tuned for Top 100 lists from Argentina, Austria, Australia, Chile, China, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, and the United States over the next month. There are thousands of amazing wines we want to tell you about from this year's tastings!

— James Suckling, chairman and editor





KUMEU, NEW ZEALAND



## KUMEU RIVER CHARDONNAY KUMEU MATE'S VINEYARD 2020

100 Pts.

*"This is such impressive chardonnay in terms of power and complexity, delivering so much with such poise. Aromas of lemons and peaches intersect with lightly spicy oak and brioche on the nose. The palate drops mouth-filling flavors of peach and lemon and winds tight, before exploding long on the finish with a long, nutty afterglow. Perfect chardonnay. Drink over the next decade or more. Screw cap."*

Maker of the JamesSuckling.com 2021 Wine of the Year, Kumeu River has long been a pioneering, family-owned producer of high-quality wine in New Zealand, dating back to 1944. Founded by first-generation Croatian immigrants, the Brajkovichs bought their original property after saving enough money from working at local orchards and vineyards in the West Auckland area. They realized how well suited the land was for grapes and expanded their plantings over the following years, but it wasn't until 1979 that the family moved away from hybrid varieties to grapes like chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, pinot noir and merlot, which were somewhat unheard of in New Zealand at the time. They changed the name of their winery from San Marino Vineyards to Kumeu River in 1986, and since then have become a staple in New Zealand's wine world. They now produce 360,000 bottles a year from 30 hectares of estate vineyards, 10 hectares from local growers and a recently purchased a 25-hectare vineyard in Hawkes Bay. The estate has consistently drawn acclaim for the Burgundian-inspired approach it takes in making its chardonnays. Maté's Vineyard is named after the late Maté Brajkovich, whose four children –Michael, Marijana, Milan and Paul – now run the estate. The Kumeu River Chardonnay Kumeu Maté's Vineyard 2020 was the first white to ever receive the honor of being named JamesSuckling.com's Wine of the Year and the first wine from New Zealand. It's such an impressive chardonnay in terms of power and complexity and delivers so much, with such great poise. The palate drops mouth-filling flavors of peach and lemon and winds tight, before exploding on the finish with a long, nutty afterglow. Perfect.





TUSCANY, ITALY



**BARONE RICASOLI CHIANTI CLASSICO  
GRAN SELEZIONE CENIPRIMO 2018**

**100 Pts.**

*"This is amazing Chianti Classico. Perhaps the greatest I have ever tasted. The aromas are so complex with crushed cherries, sour cherries, peaches, bark and hints of meat. Incredible finish with such intensity and beauty. Hard not to drink, but one for the cellar. Best after 2024."*

Ricasoli is arguably the greatest producer working in Chianti today, and part of the secret to the winery's success is its longstanding history with the region. The noble Ricasoli family has been making wine since 1141, and Bettino Ricasoli was credited in 1872 for creating the original formula for what is now known as Chianti Classico. Today, the estate has 240 hectares of some of the best vineyards in the heart of Chianti Classico, and Barone Ricasoli's traditions are kept alive by Bettino's direct descendant and current president/owner of the company, Francesco Ricasoli. Their wines are known the world over, and they even have historic documentation showing they began exports of their wine to England and the Netherlands in the 16th century. In 2021, JamesSuckling.com rated Barone Ricasoli's Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Ceniprimo 2018 a perfect 100 points and named it our Italian Wine of the Year and our top red wine in the world. Barone Ricasoli's Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Colledilà 2018 placed No. 13 in our Top 100 Wines of Italy as well. James said the single-vineyard Ceniprimo may very well be the best red he has ever had; he found it to be ethereal in its transparent and sleek structure and more enticing with every sip. Even with almost 900 years of wine production, Ricasoli's wines have never shown better.



DÖNNHOFF

NAHE, GERMANY



### DÖNNHOFF RIESLING NAHE HERMANNSHÖHLE GG 2020

100 Pts.



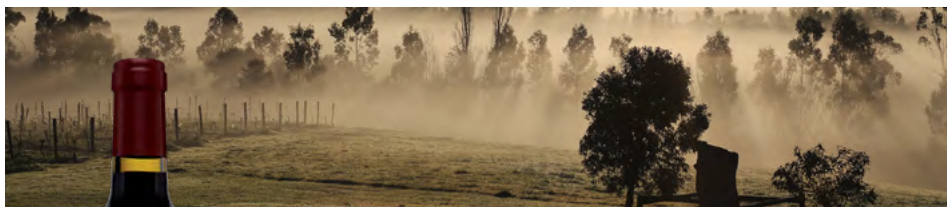
*"The greatest wines are clear right from the very beginning, because not only is there a super abundance of perfect ripeness, but everything fits so beautifully that you're instantly captivated. That's exactly the way this dry riesling masterpiece is. The most ravishing, peachy fruit and the most perfect balance. Then comes the totally compelling, salty finish that just doesn't want to stop. From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drink or hold."*

It is not an overstatement to say that Donnhoff is one of the world's great riesling producers. The Donnhoff family has been in the Nahe region for more than 250 years, with fourth-generation winemaker Cornelius Donnhoff running the family cellar. While they have gone from four to 30 hectares since seriously starting to produce wine in the 1920s, they have no plans for further expansion. By keeping their holdings relatively small and their quality levels high, Donnhoff is crafting some of the most coveted wines in all of Germany and the world. James and Senior Editor Stuart Pigott have written extensively on the greatness of this German powerhouse, and in 2021 Donnhoff's Riesling Nahe Hermannshöhle GG 2020 was given a perfect 100 Points and named our German Wine of the Year, finishing No. 3 on our list of Top 100 Wines of 2021. The world's greatest wines are clear right from the beginning, because not only is there a super abundance of perfect ripeness, but everything fits so beautifully that you're instantly captivated. That's exactly the way this dry riesling masterpiece is.

## MOUNT MARY

YARRA VALLEY EST 1971

VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

MOUNT MARY YARRA VALLEY  
QUINTET 2019

100 Pts.

*This is a great Quintet, one of the best in fact. Here's a wine that combines such elegance, power and polish to a level seen in the best wines of Bordeaux in the best vintages. Aromas of blueberries, cassis and mulberries are framed in cedar and fresh, leafy cabernet tones, as well as violets and forest wood. Some subtle oak spice here, too. The palate is so seamlessly layered with ultra-fine tannins that carry pristine blueberry, redcurrant and blackcurrant flavors. Concentrated, with pitch-perfect balance. Acidity imbues the finish with freshness and vitality. So elegant and unwavering. A Yarra Valley First Growth! Delicious now, but try from 2027 and for a decade after that.*

Established in 1971 by John and Marli Middleton, Mount Mary is a family-owned, single-vineyard estate located in the center of Australia's Yarra Valley. After falling in love with wines from France and making many visits to the best French winemaking regions, the Middletons decided to create their own commercial vineyard with Bordeaux and Burgundy as their inspiration. Realizing the climatic similarities parts of the Yarra Valley had to Burgundy and Bordeaux, the Middletons established their winery there. At the time, they were some of the only people planting in the region, as most wine production had stopped there as of the 1920s because of an economic downturn, changing domestic tastes and the need for land for wool production. Today, they have over 40 acres under vine, with 18 different varieties planted. Under the Mount Mary label, they make four wines: two fantastic Bordeaux-inspired blends named Quintet and Triolet, as well as two phenomenal, Burgundy-inspired bottlings of pinot noir and chardonnay. The Mount Mary Yarra Valley Quintet 2019 was rated 100 points by JamesSuckling.com and finished No. 4 in our Top 100 Wines of 2021, cementing Mount Mary's long legacy of quality and dedication as not only one of Australia's greatest producers, but also one of the world's best. It's one of the best Quintets ever, combining elegance, power and polish at a level seen in the best wines of Bordeaux.



CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



AUBERT CHARDONNAY NAPA VALLEY  
SUGAR SHACK ESTATE VINEYARD 2019

100 Pts.

*“Such an aromatic nose of fresh hay, meyer lemon, baked green apple and dried herbs. Full-bodied with such an incredible amount of refinement. Sleek and seamless. Nuanced is an understatement, as this wine carries multitudes, quietly expressing flavors of fennel seed, dried lily, honeysuckle, toasted almond and sage. Incredible. Drink or hold.”*

Teresa and Mark Aubert founded Aubert in the 1990s and since then have been producing some of California's boldest and most daring wines. Focused purely on pinot noir and chardonnay, Aubert is incredibly rigorous in only producing the highest quality wines from the best parcels possible in both Napa Valley and Sonoma County. Mark affectionally calls his wines “hedonistic” because of an unflinching proclivity for making his wines big and impressive in scope. Despite the expansiveness of Aubert's wines, they are never without nuance and finesse, thanks to Mark's obsessive cellar methods and laborious barrel management. In 2021, Aubert's Chardonnay Napa Valley Sugar Shack Estate Vineyard 2019 was named our American Wine of the Year and finished No. 5 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. It brings such an aromatic nose of fresh hay, meyer lemon, baked green apple and dried herbs, and is full-bodied with an incredible amount of refinement. If you want to go big with energy, you want Aubert.



CONTINUUM

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



### CONTINUUM NAPA VALLEY SAGE MOUNTAIN VINEYARD 2018

100 Pts.

*"This has incredible nuances and delicacy with power. It's full-bodied with lots of gentle tannins that spread across the palate. The character is full of blackberry, blackcurrant and lead pencil. Some conifer and pine needles. Sage at the end, too. Savory. So long-lasting and layered. Such purity. It's so complex and changes all the time in the glass. Goes on for minutes. 54% cabernet sauvignon, 31% cabernet franc, 9% petit verdot and 6% merlot. Organically grown grapes. So drinkable now, but will age beautifully."*

Tim Mondavi first set up Continuum in Napa Valley in 2005 in partnership with his sister Marcia and they have been making great wines ever since. The setting is extreme, with rocky, cooler-climate vineyards nestled high up on Pritchard Hill. Continuum is situated on the easternmost border of Napa, flanked by Oakville and Rutherford. Officially, this area is not yet a subregion, but it's home to some of the cult classics. Including Colgin and Bryant Family Vineyard. The valley gives a sense of majesty and grace, and it's reflected in the wines. Tim remains close in style to his father's lauded cabernets of the 1970s but has emerged as a new ambassador for Napa Valley in his own right. In 2021, the Continuum Napa Valley Sage Mountain Vineyard 2018 was awarded a perfect 100 points, named our Top Red Wine of the USA and finished at No. 6 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. It's a wine with incredible nuance and delicacy with power, and is also full-bodied with lots of gentle tannins that spread across the palate. So long-lasting and such purity. We expect it to age beautifully. And the grapes are organically farmed.





CHAMPAGNE  
**TAITTINGER**

*Reims*

CHAMPAGNE, FRANCE



TAITTINGER CHAMPAGNE COMTES DE  
CHAMPAGNE BLANC DE BLANCS 2008

**100 Pts.**

*“The perfect blanc de blancs. Full-bodied with a lovely framework of acidity and dry fruit, such as apples, pears and peaches. Opulent. Dense and muscular. Yet, it’s balanced and harmonious. Line of acidity at the end. Totally in tune. Superb. Deep and complete. Has everything. One for the cellar. It is the greatest Comte ever. It has everything. A perfect upgrade from two years ago. Drink or hold.”*

Taittinger dates to 1734 and is one of the few family-owned independent Champagne houses in Reims and one of the great Champagne names – synonymous with elegance and sophistication. Pierre Taittinger bought the business from the Fourneau family in 1932, converted the chateau into the company headquarters and set out to create great wines. Pierre-Emmanuel Taittinger brought the Champagne business back into family ownership after a brief corporate interlude. The house is now run by his children, Vitalie and Clovis Taittinger. The wines are chardonnay-driven and its most famous name, the prestige cuvée Comtes de Champagne, is 100 percent chardonnay. In 2021, Taittinger Champagne Comtes De Champagne Blanc De Blancs 2008 was awarded a perfect 100 points and named our French Wine of the Year as well as being ranked No. 7 on our list of the Top 100 Wines of the World. This is the perfect blanc de blancs: full-bodied with a lovely framework of acidity and dry fruit, such as apples, pears and peaches. Opulent, dense and muscular, yet balanced and harmonious. It is the greatest Comte ever.

# Dal Forno Romano

VENETO, ITALY



## ROMANO DAL FORNO AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA MONTE LODOLETTA 2015

100 Pts.

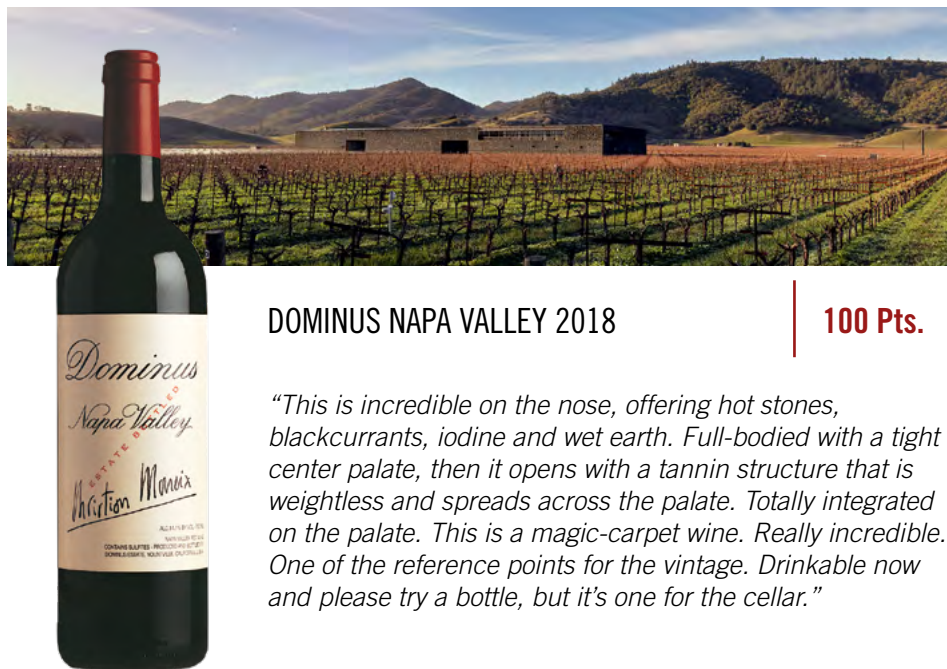
*"This is black as pitch in the glass and, yes, there's a light, tarry edge to the super-concentrated prune, date and currant fruit. But even more interesting are the complex notes of bitter-orange liqueur, aged balsamic, fresh roasting herbs, cinnamon, roasted chestnuts, black tea and licorice. The more you decant in advance, the more nuances will emerge. It's full-bodied with huge concentration and lots of chewy tannin that is managing to hold the fruit back for now. This needs plenty of time to develop in the bottle. Just superb. One of the greatest Dal Forno's ever."*

Far and away one of the top wineries in all of Veneto, Romano Dal Forno is a world-class wine estate that produces some of the greatest Valpolicella and Amarone each year. They are bold and ethereal wines that show an incredible transparency and personality that highlight the family's deft winemaking, although we notice in recent years a shift toward more balance and complexity from sheer richness and power. A family business started by founder and creator Romano Dal Forno and now run by his son Marco, under Romano's supervision. Meticulous attention to detail and respect for the land and nature are the hallmarks of their philosophy. In 2021, their 2015 Amarone della Valpolicella Monte Lodoletta came in at No. 2 on our list of the Top 100 Wines of Italy and No. 8 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. It is black as pitch in the glass and there's a light, tarry edge to the super-concentrated prune, date and currant fruits. The more you decant in advance, the more nuances will emerge. If you're looking to see what the top wines of the Veneto look like, Romano Dal Forno has it all. And we are impressed with their move toward more finesse and transparency in their wines.

# Dominus

DOMINUS ESTATE  
NAPA VALLEY

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



## DOMINUS NAPA VALLEY 2018

100 Pts.

*"This is incredible on the nose, offering hot stones, blackcurrants, iodine and wet earth. Full-bodied with a tight center palate, then it opens with a tannin structure that is weightless and spreads across the palate. Totally integrated on the palate. This is a magic-carpet wine. Really incredible. One of the reference points for the vintage. Drinkable now and please try a bottle, but it's one for the cellar."*

Dominus is one of Napa Valley's great estates. Started by Bordeaux legend Christian Moueix, the estate makes Bordeaux-style blends with the expertise and precision only someone with decades of experience owning and managing wine legends such as Lafleur Pétrus and Trotanoy can give. The land that Dominus is founded on is home to Napa Valley's first vineyard plantings, dating back to 1838 when George C. Yount first planted vines in what is modern day Yountville. Not only is the land as historic as any in Napa, but it has an ideal microclimate and natural underground water supply that unsurprisingly produce exceptional grapes. Today, director of viticulture and winemaking Tod Mostero continues the legacy in crafting some of Napa's most sought-after wines under Moueix's continued guidance. They are both big proponents of dry farming their vines. In 2021, the Dominus Napa Valley 2018 was No. 3 on our Top 100 Wines of the USA list and No. 9 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. It's incredible on the nose, offering hot stones, blackcurrants, iodine and wet earth. Full-bodied with a tight center palate, then it opens with a tannin structure that is weightless and spreads across the palate. With Dominus, Napa's first vines are still producing some of its best results.

# CHÂTEAU TROTANNOY

## POMEROL

BORDEAUX, FRANCE



CHÂTEAU TROTANNOY POMEROL 2018

100 Pts.

*“Super nose of dried blueberry, black plum, walnut, myrrh and sandalwood. Lavender, violet, and chocolate, too. Ripe with wood now, but fresh. It’s full-bodied with firm, ultra fine tannins. Lots of dark spice is interlaced with the ripe fruit, giving this complex, perfumed character. Muscular, long and seamless with incredible depth and concentration. Reminds me of the great 2009, but this is better with more structure. Amazing wine. This is 100% merlot. Try from 2027.”*

Chateau Trotanoy is one of the leading producers in Bordeaux today, crafting wines that exemplify the warmth and structure that this famed region is known for. Owned by the legendary Moueix family and operated today by Christian and his son Edouard Moueix, Trotanoy is making old-world wines with the context and precision that modern day technique and knowledge affords. They have some of the oldest vines still in use, with a base average of 35 years of age, which produces wines of great concentration and depth as well as finesse. Their soils are also unique – a mix of gravel, clay and black clay all atop an iron pan, which gives their wines enviable mineral lift and complexity. In 2021, Château Trotanoy Pomerol 2018 ranked No. 2 among our Top 100 Wines of France and was therefore the Top French Red Wine of 2021, as well as being No. 10 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. This is an amazing wine – muscular, long and seamless with incredible depth and concentration.

# TELMO RODRÍGUEZ

LA RIOJA, SPAIN



## COMPañIA DE VINOS TELMO RODRIGUEZ RIOJA LAS BEATAS 2018

100 Pts.

*“This is incredible on the nose with fresh flowers, spices, pure dark fruit and hints of stones. Full-bodied and so refined and polished with such intensity and length. Just goes on and on ... forever. A magical wine. From organically grown grapes. Please leave it for five or six years, if you can.”*

Telmo Rodríguez is a true superstar in the world of Spanish wine. After having studied viticulture and enology at France's University of Bordeaux and becoming the winemaker of his family's estate in Rioja, Telmo, with the help of his business partner Pablo Eguzkiza, went out in search of the greatest vineyard sites Spain had to offer. Telmo had the vision to revitalize lesser-known areas like Toro, Rueda, Valdeorras, Malaga, Alicante and Cigales and somewhat forgotten indigenous varieties like godello, verdejo, moscatel and monastrell. He has almost single-handedly started a wine revolution in Spain with an emphasis on what makes Spanish wine unique and vinifying native grapes to world-class standards. The results are incredible. Telmo's wine are nearly always on our annual Top 100 Wines of Spain list, but in 2021 he rose the ranks all the way to No. 1 with his 100-point single-vineyard Rioja, Las Beatas 2018. It was also No. 11 on our global list. It's a magical wine from organically grown grapes, and incredible on the nose with fresh flowers, spices, pure dark fruit and hints of stones. Now with 355 plots of vines, 80 hectares of vineyards, 43 different varieties planted and having the Spanish Wine of the Year, Telmo has cemented himself in the pantheon of great winemakers of not only Spain, but the world.





## Weingut Joh. Jos. Prüm

MOSEL, GERMANY



### JOH. JOS. PRÜM RIESLING MOSEL WEHLENER SONNENUHR AUSLESE GOLD CAP 2019

100 Pts.

*"Welcome to one of the most beautiful faces of the Mosel. Essence of yellow fruit, from peach through mango to papaya. So concentrated, yet so vibrant and so pristine with such a mind-boggling number of nuances that your nervous system is pushed to the limit, in the nicest possible way. The generous sweetness is already well integrated, but this is made for the many decades to come. Drinkable now, but better from 2025."*

When you think of great sweet wines you have tasted from Germany's famous Mosel region, you are probably imagining a wine from Joh. Jos. Prüm. While the Prüm family has lived in the Mosel since 1556, the winery was not as we know it today until Joh. Jos. Prüm was given a portion of the family's estate in 1911. Two generations later, Dr. Manfred Prüm and eldest daughter, Katharina, are keeping the family's namesake label alive and producing some of the best rieslings that the Mosel has to offer. A founding member of Germany's VDP, Joh. Jos. Prüm crafts exquisite wines from their 22 hectares of vines with a variety of ideal, mineral-rich soils that produce some of the most racy and energetic off-dry to sweet wines you will ever taste. In 2021, the Joh. Jos. Prüm Riesling Mosel Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese Gold Cap 2019 ranked No. 2 on our list of the Top 100 Wines of Germany and No. 12 on our world list. It's such a concentrated wine, yet so vibrant and so pristine with such a mind-boggling number of nuances that your nervous system is pushed to the limit, in the nicest possible way. This is made for the many decades to come – one for the cellar.

# YANGARRA

ESTATE VINEYARD

SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA



## YANGARRA GRENACHE MCLAREN VALE OVITELLI 2019

99 Pts.

*"Such attractive red-floral, stone and bracken aromas here with a red-plum and redcurrant edge, as well as pink grapefruit, blood orange and white pepper. The palate has a sleek and granular feel with a finely detailed style of tannin and a dried red-berry and cherry core. Leaf-like layers of tannin. Exquisite. Drink over the next eight years. Screw cap."*

Yangarra is one of Australia's most beloved producers of Southern Rhone varietals, crafting some of the nation's most dynamic grenache. First established in 1862, Yangarra is located on a particularly enviable estate in McLaren Vale with ideal elevation and marine influence, which delivers steady and even ripening while maintaining balanced acidity and mineral depth. Many of the estate's vines date back to 1946, when Bernard Smart and his father planted many of the unirrigated bush vine grenache that Yangarra is famous for. The estate was bought in 2001 by the late Jess Jackson and his wife, Barbara Banke of Jackson Family Wines, who saw the site and immediately understood its potential as one of the nation's greatest vineyards. Since then, winemaker Peter Fraser and viticulturist Michael Lane have been hard at work crafting some of Australia's most coveted bottles and leading the way in the nation's grenache revolution. In 2021, Yangarra's Grenache McLaren Vale Ovitelli 2019 ranked No. 2 on our Top 100 Wines of Australia list and No. 13 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. It comes with such attractive red-floral, stone and bracken aromas with a red-plum and redcurrant edge, as well as pink grapefruit, blood orange and white pepper. The palate has a sleek and granular feel with a finely detailed style of tannin and a dried red-berry and cherry core. Exquisite.



## SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERG

RHEINGAU, GERMANY



### SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERG RIESLING RHEINGAU GRÜNLACK SPÄTLESE 2020

99 Pts.

*"Very cool and reserved at the front, but this is an enormously deep and complex wine that has staggering mineral intensity. The lime and oolong-tea freshness effortlessly swallows up the unfermented grape sweetness, as if it didn't really exist. Some will criticize, saying that this is too radical, but that's what creates the great excitement! The herbal freshness at the finish is really astounding. Drinkable now, but best from 2023."*

Estates do not get more historic than Schloss Johannisberg in Germany's Rheingau. Founded in 1100 by Benedictine monks, Schloss Johannisberg is noted as the world's oldest riesling vineyard site and the first estate to craft spatlese, auslese and eiswein wines in all of Germany. Although always having been a staple of the Rheingau, Schloss Johannisberg has recently really stepped up its game, producing some of their best wines in years and of some the nation's most exciting. With this steady uptick in quality, they have become regulars at the upper end of our Top 100 lists and continue to impress us year after year. The Schloss Johannisberg's Riesling Rheingau Grünlack Spätlese 2020 was our No. 3 German wine and No. 14 in the world in 2021. This wine is very cool and reserved at the front, but it's also enormously deep and complex and has staggering mineral intensity. The lime and oolong-tea freshness effortlessly swallows up the unfermented grape sweetness, as if it didn't really exist. Even after over 900 years of history, Schloss Johannisberg remains a central touchstone in Germany's ever-growing wine world and continues to push the ceiling for quality even higher.



CRISTOM  
VINEYARDS

OREGON, UNITED STATES



CRISTOM PINOT NOIR WILLAMETTE  
VALLEY EOLA-AMITY HILLS JESSIE  
VINEYARD 2018

99 Pts.

*"This dramatically steep site delivers a wine of real personality and distinctiveness. The nose has a very layered mix of red cherries and berries with some plums, leaves, dry stones, forest wood and a wealth of sweetly fragrant spices. The palate holds such intensity and concentrated flavor with striking focus and drive. Mouthwateringly fresh red-cherry flavors are delivered in essence-like mode and hold long, on a super vibrant, explosive finish. The star of 2018 at Cristom and indeed for Willamette Valley pinot per se. Drink or hold."*

Founded in 1992 by the Gerrie family, Cristom has been a leading figure in Oregon's winemaking community since its inception and continues to push the boundaries for what is possible in the Willamette Valley. Specializing in pinot noir, Cristom has worked with winemaker Steve Doerner since its first vintage, and Doerner's Burgundian-style approach and tutelage under Jacques Seysses from Domaine Dujac has meant their wines are well composed and succulent every year. While they have built their reputation on pinot noir, they produce lovely chardonnay and were early pioneers in planting syrah as early as 2002, when everyone else was looking the other way. They are daring and capable and their wines prove it. In 2021, Cristom's Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Eola-Amity Hills Jessie Vineyard 2018 was No. 9 U.S. wine and finished at No. 15 globally. Clocking in at just \$65 dollars a bottle, it's hard to imagine a better value wine. The palate on this holds such intensity and concentrated flavor, with striking focus and drive, and the mouthwateringly fresh red-cherry flavors are delivered in essence-like mode and hold long on a super vibrant, explosive finish.



# THÖRLE

RHEINHESSEN, GERMANY



## THÖRLE SPÄTBURGUNDER RHEINHESSEN HÖLLE 2019

99 Pts.

*"This pinot noir masterpiece announces Rheinhessen's arrival on the list of wine regions where this grape variety is capable of the highest sophistication. So deep and finely nuanced with ravishing sweetness that sweeps you off your feet. Then comes the enormously complex finish where the fine tannins build to a breathtaking crescendo. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold."*

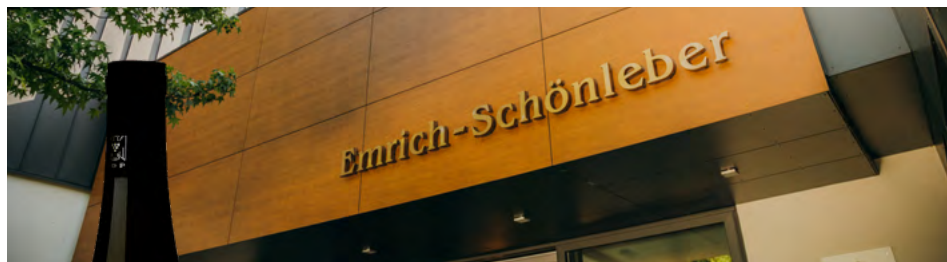
Since 2006, brothers Christoph and Johannes have taken the reins of their family's winery and made Thorle a leading figure of premiere quality winemaking in Rheinhessen, Germany, producing some of the region's and the country's best wines. Much of the groundwork that has allowed Thorle to be such a success was made by Christoph's and Johannes' parents, who invested heavily in the Rheinhessen area during the wine crisis of the 1980s with a focus on high-quality vineyards in difficult-to-harvest areas. That early investment paid off because Thorle now lays claim to 28 hectares of particularly desirable land with rich and dynamic soils ideal for everything from their flagship riesling and spatburgunder to local favorites like sylvaner and weissburgunder. What we adore about these wines is their concertation and depth of complexity while maintaining balance and energy. In 2021, the Thörle Spätburgunder Rheinhessen Hölle 2019 was our No. 4 German wine and ranked No. 16 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. This pinot noir masterpiece illustrates the Rheinhessen's fantastic capability to make incredibly sophisticated reds. So deep and finely nuanced with ravishing brightness it sweeps you off your feet. This is spatburgunder at its best.





# Emrich-Schönleber

NAHE, GERMANY



## EMRICH-SCHÖNLEBER RIESLING NAHE HALENBERG GG 2020

99 Pts.

*"Enormously fine and subtle nose. The ravishing but very delicate apricot aroma pulls you into the profound mineral depths of this dry-riesling masterpiece. The salty minerality at the finish just doesn't want to stop and gives you a great feeling of how the most dramatic landscapes of this region look. Drink or hold."*

Emrich-Schonleber is a leading producer of German riesling, crafting some of the country's best wines year after year. While the Schonlebers have owned and operated the winery since the early 19th century, it did not become the serious world-class wine estate it is today without the dedication of Wilhelm Schonleber and his son, Werner, who turned this tiny two-hectare winery into the nearly 20-hectare VDP member producer it is now. Currently spearheaded by Frank Schonleber, Emrich-Schonleber remains a family affair and has continued to produce better and better wines as the years progress. In 2021, the Emrich-Schönleber Riesling Nahe Halenberg GG 2020 was our No. 5 German wine and came in at No. 17 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. The ravishing but very delicate apricot aroma pulls you into the profound mineral depths of this dry-riesling masterpiece. The salty minerality at the finish just doesn't want to stop and gives you a great feeling of how the most dramatic landscapes of this region look.



## DANUBE, AUSTRIA


**F.X. PICHLER RIESLING WACHAU RIED  
KELLERBERG 2020**
**99 Pts.**

*"You need some time to wrap your head around this mineral masterpiece. So pristine and delicate, in spite of the enormous concentration and stony power behind it. Yes, there are a ton of citrus, white-peach and wild-rose aromas in there, and yes, there are intense wild herbs, too, but these things only scratch the surface of its soul. What's more, it only has 12.5% alcohol! Drink or hold."*

It's funny to think that F.X. Pichler has been around now for seven generations and began back in the 19th century because today, while the winery honors its legacy, it is also on the modern, cutting edge of style in the Wachau. Currently owned and operated by Lucas Franz Pichler and his wife, Johanna Elisabeth, F.X. Pichler makes a wide array of mostly bone-dry riesling and gruner veltliner from the most sought-after parcels in the Wachau. In the 80s and 90s Lucas' father, Franz Xaver, made a splash in the Austrian wine world by producing bold, exciting and higher alcohol wines, which was not at all the precedent for Wachau wines at the time. While Lucas has a bit more of a delicate hand than his father, he is no less distinctive in style with his explosive mineral pull and fine-tuned balance. The F.X. Pichler Riesling Wachau Ried Kellerberg 2020 was our Austrian Wine of the Year in 2021 and finished at No. 18 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. You need some time to wrap your head around this mineral masterpiece. So pristine and refined despite the enormous concentration and stony power behind it. F.X. Pichler has vision, and when you taste the wines they're making, you can't help but see things as they do.

# LOKOYA

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



## LOKOYA CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY MOUNT VEEDER 2018

100 Pts.

*“Blackberries, herbs, green pine needles, blackcurrants and lead pencil. Full-bodied with incredible structure and powerful tannins. It goes on for minutes. The structure is something else. Muscular, but the tannins give form and focus to the beautiful fruit. Mountain-grown Latour! Extraordinary. Try after 2026.”*

Founded in 1995, Lokoya specializes in producing top-quality cabernet sauvignon from Napa Valley's most sought-after mountain AVAs. Winemaker Chris Carpenter, who also works for Mt. Brave, Caladan, La Jota Vineyard and Cardinale, oversees translating the exceptional terroir that Lokoya has access to into deeply concentrated and ageable wines that impress us year after year. With the changing climate, higher elevations and more mountainous vineyards are increasingly the name of the game in California, Lokoya has been at the forefront in leading Napa winemaking through the transition. The chewiness and structure of the tannins from his sites are something special and allow for incredible aging potential. In 2021, Lokoya's Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Mount Veeder 2018 rated a perfect 100 points and was our No. 6 U.S. wine and ranked No. 19 in the world. The structure is something else on this wine, and it's muscular, although the tannins give form and focus to the beautiful fruit. This is a wine that is meant to age, so if you have the patience, you won't be sorry you waited.

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# FORADORI

NORTHEAST, ITALY

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## FORADORI MANZIONI BIANCO VIGNETI DELLE DOLOMITI FONTANASANTA 2020

98 Pts.

*"Maybe the greatest natural white wine I have ever tasted. Complex and strikingly original lemon-zest, smoke and dried-chamomile aromas pour from the glass. Then comes the concentrated but very refined palate, followed by a super-long finish that's a cascading waterfall of wet-stone minerality. Just doesn't want to stop! From biodynamically grown grapes with Demeter certification. Drink or hold."*

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Foradori Manzioni is one of Italy's most interesting modern producers, pioneering wines that for some would fall under the natural wine moniker but is really all about style and letting the grapes do all the talking. The Foradori family has been making wine for generations now, but the winery started to look like it does today when Elisabetta Foradori was thrust into a leadership position at a young age due to her father's untimely death in 1974. Elisabetta completely reinvented everything about how Foradori Manzioni makes wine, from slowly changing the canopy system used in the vineyards to becoming biodynamic to starting to produce single-vineyard expressions of Teroldego in amphora! Her children Emilio, Theo and Myrtha now run the winery, Elisabetta remains present and focused on her new cheese making project, while her new family traditions are kept and expanded on. We rated the Foradori Manzioni Bianco Vigneti Delle Dolomiti Fontanasanta 2020 our No. 4 Italian wine in 2021, and it finished at No. 20 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. If you picture Italian white wines as lacking character or as being somewhat ambiguous, let Foradori Manzioni completely flip that misconception on its head with some of the most delicious whites you can find anywhere. Plus, the wine is amazing value at about \$25 a bottle!

## MORIC

BURGENLAND, AUSTRIA


**MORIC BLAUFRÄNKISCH BURGENLAND  
LUTZMANNSBURG ALTE REBEN 2019**
**99 Pts.**

*“Although this is already fragrant, the bouquet only hints at the enormous depth of this super-elegant blaufränkisch red. So graceful and refined, it redefines what the red wines of this grape can be. The giant structure is buried underneath a mountain of ripeness. Then the finish hits you like a lightning strike. Enormous aging potential. Drink or hold.”*

From working as a casino croupier and buying grapes to vinify in his free time and becoming one of the best-regarded producers of blaufränkisch in all of Austria, Roland Velich has built his name and reputation from the ground up. Velich saw the potential that blaufränkisch had, if treated like a Grand Cru Burgundy. Slowly but surely, Velich has been able to build his holdings in Austria's Burgenland and has expanded his processing facility, to create wines that have opened a new frontier for this grape. For the past several years Moric's Blaufränkisch Burgenland Lutzmannsburg Alte Reben has made it onto our Top 100 Wines of Austria list, slowly moving up the list and culminating with the 2019 vintage being our No. 2 Austrian wine (and top red) in 2021 as well as placing No. 21 on our world list. Although this is already fragrant, the bouquet only hints at the enormous depth of this super-elegant offering. It is Roland Velich's years of hard work and diligence that has brought us a wine that is now the new benchmark for what blaufränkisch can be.





TUSCANY, ITALY



### TENUTA SETTE PONTI TOSCANA ORENO 2019

**99 Pts.**

*"Wow. Fantastic aromas of blackberries, currants, minerals, violets and graphite. Full-bodied with firm, silky tannins that are incredibly polished and intense, yet ever so refined and integrated in the wine. It goes on for minutes. This is one of the best modern-day Orenos so far. Best in 2025 and onwards."*

Given his passion for great wines, it was inevitable that fashion entrepreneur Antonio Moretti Cuseri would take over the family vineyards at Tenuta Sette Ponti, the Tuscan estate north of his native Arezzo – which he did in the late 1990s to craft two top-quality reds, Oreno and Crognolo. Most releases in the past decade have been world-class. The Oreno wine is a classic, underlining Moretti Cuseri's determination to make a red reminiscent of the first-growth Bordeaux legends in his cellar. His wine-estate collection has grown too, with Orma in Bolgheri, Poggio Al Lupo in Maremma and Sicily's Feudo Maccari and Contrada Santo Spirito di Passopisciaro. In 2021, the Tenuta Sette Ponti's Toscana Oreno 2019 was our No. 5 Italian wine and ranked No. 22 on our world list. It's definitely a "wow" wine, with fantastic aromas of blackberries, currants, minerals, violets and graphite. It's also full-bodied with firm, silky tannins that are incredibly polished and intense, yet ever so refined and integrated in the wine.



RHEINGAU, GERMANY



## KÜNSTLER RIESLING RHEINGAU HÖLLE GG 2020

98 Pts.

*"The deep, peach and apricot nose leads you into this enormously concentrated yet graceful dry riesling that's got the stature to stand next to almost any Grand Cru white Burgundy. Enormously long, beautifully balanced finish that pulls your hand magnetically back to the glass. Drink or hold."*

The Kunstler family has been in the Rheingau region for over 370 years, but it wasn't until 1965 that Franz Kunstler began to focus on producing only the highest-quality wines possible, and in doing so becoming one of the country's top producers. In 1982, Franz's son, Gunter Kunstler, joined the winery, continuing the legacy of uncompromising dedication to crafting the best wines possible. Kunstler has become biodynamic under his watch and is now a member of Germany's elite VDP. They now have an impressive 55 hectares under vine and eight VDP Grosse Lage sites (the highest quality of German vineyards) with a focus on riesling. In 2021, the Künstler Riesling Rheingau Hölle GG 2020 was our No. 6 German wine and ranked No. 23 on our world list. The deep, peach and apricot nose leads you into this enormously concentrated yet graceful dry riesling that's got the stature to stand next to almost any Grand Cru white Burgundy. Virtually coming out of nowhere, Kunstler is now one of Germany's most coveted producers and continues to push the boundaries toward making the best wines possible.

## FATTORIA LE PUPILLE



TUSCANY, ITALY

FATTORIA LE PUPILLE MAREMMA  
TOSCANA SAFFREDI 2019

99 Pts.

*"So much crushed stone, rosemary, lavender, mint and blackberry. Full-bodied and very structured with layers of powerful and polished tannins. It goes on for minutes. Ink, blackcurrants and blueberries. 60% cabernet sauvignon, 35% merlot and 5% petit verdot. Needs at least five or six years to open. Try after 2025."*

Thanks to the hard work of Elisabetta Geppetti, Fattoria Le Pupille put the Tuscan coastal region of Maremma on the fine-wine map. The estate produces a number of beautiful wines, from a juicy, value-for-money Morellino di Scansano to the majestic Super Tuscan Saffredi. The latter showed the world in the mid-1980s that fine reds with pedigree could be made in an isolated part of southern Tuscany. The cabernet sauvignon blend is a legend with the Tuscan wine cognoscenti. James has tasted every vintage of Le Pupille in Tuscany, and the quality has been amazingly consistent. Today, Elisabetta is supported in the management of the winery by two of her five children, Clara and Ettore, who are determined to embrace new dreams and projects. In 2021, the Fattoria Le Pupille Maremma Toscana Saffredi 2019 was our No. 6 Italian wine and No. 24 on our global list. It has so much crushed stone, rosemary, lavender, mint and blackberry. Full-bodied and very structured with layers of powerful and polished tannins. It goes on for minutes.



GRAND CRU CLASSÉ DE GRAVES

BORDEAUX, FRANCE



## DOMAINE DE CHEVALIER PESSAC-LÉOGNAN 2018

99 Pts.

*“The intensity and perfumes on the nose are extremely impressive, offering pure blackberries and violets, as well as bark, wild-mushroom and raw-tile notes. It’s full-bodied with creamy tannins that envelop the wine and a gorgeous, subtly complex center palate with all the flavors found on the nose. Endless finish. Love the finesse and length to this. Greatest ever. 65% cabernet sauvignon, 30% merlot and 5% petit verdot. Try after 2026.”*

Owned by the Bernard family since 1983, Domaine de Chevalier produces some of the best age-worthy wines in Bordeaux – both red and dry white. James has tasted some fabulous whites from this Pessac-Leognan estate, with bottle ages of 30 and 40 years. The reds from the 1950s and 1960s are excellent, too. The only problem is finding them. The wines of Domaine de Chevalier are highly sought by wine collectors, but very few are willing to part with these bottles. These wines have an incredible depth of fruit and a unique character from the story soils of the vineyards. The recent vintages hark back to the halcyon days of great winemaking from this estate. In fact, the wines of the last decade are its best vintages ever produced. In 2021, the Domaine De Chevalier Pessac-Léognan 2018 was our No. 3 French wine and ranked No. 25 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. The intensity and perfumes on the nose of this wine are extremely impressive, offering pure blackberries and violets, as well as bark, wild-mushroom and raw-tile notes. It’s full-bodied with creamy tannins that envelop the wine, and it comes with an endless finish.



## ADELINA

SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA



## ADELINA SHIRAZ CLARE VALLEY 2020

98 Pts.

*"From a low-yielding vintage that was warm enough, yet also cool enough, this is an exceptional release of what is fast becoming one of the great wines of not only the Clare Valley, but of South Australia. Some depth to the color and plenty of blueberry, red-plum and wild-raspberry aromas. The nose is so pure and attractive. With assertive tannin, as you'd expect here, the palate is framed up handsomely and the concentrated red-plum, raspberry, blueberry and blackberry flavors hold seamless and fresh. Vivid clarity here. Stunning. Try from 2026."*

Adelina represents a lot of what excites us nowadays in modern Australian wine. Started by the PhD-holding oenologists Jennie Gardner and Colin McBryde, Adelina is a small vineyard and winery in Clare Valley that specializes in shiraz, grenache and mataro. Shiraz is perhaps old hat for some in comparison with the new exciting frontier wines coming out of Australia (and Adelina does have many interesting varieties planted as well), but Adelina is producing some of the nation's best shiraz and showing how the country's most famous grape can live up to its reputation. From vines to soils to vinification, Gardner and McBryde are doing it right, making wines with balance and concentration that will stand the test of time in any collector's cellar. The Adelina Shiraz Clare Valley 2020 was our No. 3 Australian wine in 2021 and No. 26 on our global list, and Adelina's Shiraz Mataro Clare Valley 2020 came in at No. 79 on our Top 100 Wines of Australia list. This is an exceptional release of what is fast becoming one of the great wines of not only the Clare Valley, but of all South Australia. Vivid clarity here. If you want to taste provenance and terroir when it comes to Australian wines, Adelina is distilling some of the country's best examples.



*Casanova di Neri*

TUSCANY, ITALY



## CASANOVA DI NERI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO CERRETALTO 2016

**100 Pts.**

*"Wow. Incredible purity and transparency with cherries, bark, mushroom, flower and slate/stone on the nose. Full-bodied yet agile and fresh with a fine tannin structure that runs the length of the wine and goes on forever. The polish, elegance and grace is breathtaking. Power with agility. A revelation for the 2016 vintage in Brunello. Drink in 2024 and onwards but wonderful to taste now."*

Casanova di Neri is world renowned for its incredible Brunello di Montalcino, the super multi-vineyard blend Tenuta Nuova and the single-vineyard Cerretalto. Giacomo Neri took over the estate from his father in 1991 and today he is supported by his sons, Giovanni and Gianlorenzo. Giacomo has achieved multiple 100-point wines with both the Cerretalto and Tenuta Nuova labels, including the 2001, 2006, 2010 and 2015, and most recently with the spectacular 2016 vintage. Perhaps even more impressive is that he can craft top wines in challenging vintages. The Neri Brunellos in 2011, 2009 and 2008 were admirable in far from perfect grape-growing conditions. In 2021, we rated the Casanova di Neri Brunello di Montalcino Cerretalto 2016 a perfect 100 points, ranking it as our No. 3 Italian wine and No. 27 in the world. It has such incredible purity and transparency with cherries, bark, mushroom, flower and slate/stone on the nose. Full-bodied yet agile and fresh with a fine tannin structure that runs the length of the wine and goes on forever. In short, a revelation for the 2016 vintage in Brunello.

# Domaine Weinbach

*Colette, Catherine et Laurence Faller*

ALSACE, FRANCE



## DOMAINE WEINBACH RIESLING ALSACE GRAND CRU SCHLOSSBERG CUVÉE STE. CATHERINE 2019

99 Pts.

*“Enveloping, sensual bouquet of a thousand yellow fruits and some wild berries that’s just beginning to reveal its profundity. Gigantic concentration, but this remains as light on its feet as a prima ballerina. The gentle creaminess on the palate perfectly balances the mineral acidity that seems to blink like a star low in the sky. Enormously long and subtle finish. From biodynamically grown grapes with Demeter certification. Drinkable now, but better from 2023.”*

Led by the Faller family, Domaine Weinbach is an exceptional Alsatian producer that crafts some of our favorite wines from the region each year. Catherine Faller has been at the center of Domaine Weinbach’s success for many years, as she joined the company during the 1970s with her mother Colette and, a few years later, her younger sister Laurence. Under their astute direction, Domaine Weinbach became a name synonymous with quality and sustainability in the region and continues to produce some of Alsace’s most coveted wines. Sadly, Laurence and Colette have since passed, but Catherine has been joined at the winery by her two sons, Eddy and Theo, who are already proving to be adept and keen-minded individuals who will carry on the Weinbach tradition for another generation. In 2021, Domaine Weinbach’s Riesling Alsace Grand Cru Schlossberg Cuvée Ste. Catherine 2019 was our No. 4 French wine and landed at No. 28 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. Gigantic concentration, but this remains as light on its feet as a prima ballerina. The gentle creaminess on the palate perfectly balances the mineral acidity that seems to blink like a star low in the sky. Domaine Weinbach stands at the pinnacle of Alsatian wine and consistently makes great bottles.

R  
REALM  
CELLARS  
— M M I I —

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



REALM CELLARS NAPA VALLEY STAGS  
LEAP DISTRICT MOONRACER 2018

100 Pts.

*"A full-bodied, structured red with blackcurrant, violet, dark-chocolate and burnt-orange aromas. Walnut husk, too. Such precision and elegance. Firm, smooth tannins and a long finish. Really complex at the end. A stunning wine from Stags Leap District. Drink from 2023."*

Scott Becker is one of the smartest business guys we know in the California wine business, and he is at the helm of one of the coolest and relatively newest wineries in Napa Valley. Realm is now one of the new leading cult wine producers, as it has made some of the most linear and transparent reds in recent vintages and from big-name vineyards such as Beckstoffer To Kalon and Beckstoffer Dr. Crane as well as their own. These are bold yet dynamic reds that show you the class and excitement of Napa Valley. In 2021, we gave the Realm Cellars Napa Valley Stags Leap District Moonracer 2018 a perfect 100 points, ranking it as our No. 4 American wine as well as the No. 29 wine in the world. Such precision and elegance in this full-bodied, structured red, with blackcurrant, violet, dark-chocolate and burnt-orange aromas. It's a stunning wine from Stags Leap District.





## BOUCHARD PÈRE & FILS

FONDÉE EN 1731

BURGUNDY, FRANCE



### BOUCHARD PÈRE & FILS CHEVALIER-MONTRACHET GRAND CRU DOMAINE 2019

100 Pts.

*"It's really hard to imagine how a white Burgundy could be more flinty and minerally than this super-concentrated and super-vibrant Chevalier Montrachet. Lovely aromas of lemon blossom, jasmine, tangerine and nectarine, alongside all the stony stuff. Then comes the staggeringly long finish that is totally pure and precise. From Bouchard's 2.3-hectare holding, which comprises almost a third of the entire Grand Cru site. Drink or hold."*

Led today by the eighth-generation family member Gilles de Larouziere, Maisons & Domaines Henriot encompasses four wine brands united by family values and great quality, one of which is Bouchard Pere & Fils, one of Burgundy's great names and an icon since its founding in 1731. Owning parcels like Bonnes-Mares, Nuits Saint-Georges, Corton, Corton-Charlemagne, Batard-Montrachet and Montrachet, it is lucky to be able to make use of some of the region's great terroirs. In 2021, Bouchard Père & Fils Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru Domaine 2019 was rated 100 points by the JamesSuckling.com Tasting Team and ranked as our No. 5 French wine and No. 30 in the world. It's really hard to imagine how a white Burgundy could be flintier and more minerally than this super-concentrated and super-vibrant wine. Lovely aromas of lemon blossom, jasmine, tangerine and nectarine, alongside all the stony stuff.



# K R U G

CHAMPAGNE, FRANCE



## KRUG CHAMPAGNE BRUT 2008

100 Pts.

*"This is very structured and framed with an almost red sensibility. Very phenolic. Full-bodied in a tightly wound ball with so much going on. Very pinot like. Mineral and stone. Shell and stone. Iodine. Vinous. The bubbles just fade into the finish of the wine, which goes on for minutes. Turns to toffee and salted caramel with time in the glass. One for the cellar. Great length. Blend of 53% pinot noir, 25% pinot meunier, 22% chardonnay. Disgorged in beginning of 2020. Drink or hold."*

Krug is one of the most famous Champagne houses of all time. Founded by Joseph Krug in 1843, it is known for the undeniable elegance and refinement of its champagnes. From their Grande Cuvée to their most coveted single-vineyard bottlings like Clos du Mesnil, Krug is undeniably one of the most consistent producers of high-quality wines in the region. While Krug has been owned by LVMH since 1999, members of the Krug family keep a keen eye on the family's namesake, and their quality levels have only continued to impress us with each vintage release. In 2021, Krug Champagne Brut 2008 was awarded a perfect score of 100 points and ranked No. 6 on our Top 100 Wines of France list and No. 31 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. This is very structured and framed with an almost red sensibility. Very phenolic. Full-bodied in a tightly wound ball with so much going on. The bubbles just fade into the finish of the wine, which goes on for minutes. Our only question is if the 2008 is better than the 100-point 2002!

CIACCI PICCOLOMINI d'ARAGONA



TUSCANY, ITALY



CIACCI PICCOLOMINI D'ARAGONA  
BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO VIGNA DI  
PIANROSSO SANTA CATERINA D'ORO  
RISERVA 2016

99 Pts.

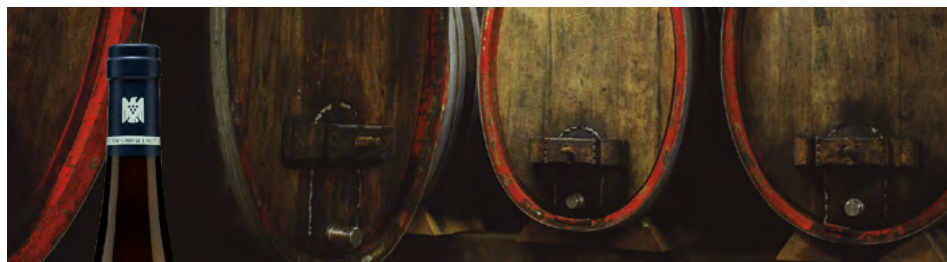
*"Glorious aromas of flowers, nutmeg, dark berries, earth and black cherries follow through to a full body with ultra-fine tannins that are long and extremely polished. They go on for minutes. Reserved and shy still, due to its excellence. Give this four or five years to come around. Try after 2024."*

This historic property, built by a 17th-century bishop of Montalcino, has been crafting balanced, precise, beautiful reds since the 1980s. Recent vintages of the estate show the most focus and intensity, though. Paolo and Lucia Bianchini, whose father Giuseppe was bequeathed Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona by its noble owners, primarily make two Brunellos: a regular bottling and a single-vineyard wine, Pianrosso. The latter is always a step up in terms of quality with more concentration and depth of fruit on the palate. Pianrosso Santa Caterina d'Oro Riserva is produced only in the best years. In 2021, Ciacci Piccolomini D'Aragona Brunello Di Montalcino Vigna Di Pianrosso Santa Caterina D'Oro Riserva 2016 ranked as our No. 9 Italian wine and No. 32 globally. It's reserved and shy still, due to its excellence, but has glorious aromas of flowers, nutmeg, dark berries, earth and black cherries following through to a full body with ultra-fine tannins that are long and extremely polished. It's a great wine for the cellar.

# LEITZ

## WEINGUT

RHEINGAU, GERMANY



### LEITZ RIESLING RHEINGAU BERG SCHLOSSBERG GG 2019

98 Pts.

*"A towering giant of peach, apricot and King Alfonso mango aromas that opens slowly like a rose. Great juiciness, but of the most refined kind. Stunning interplay of fruit and minerality right through the very long, pristine finish. Drink or hold."*

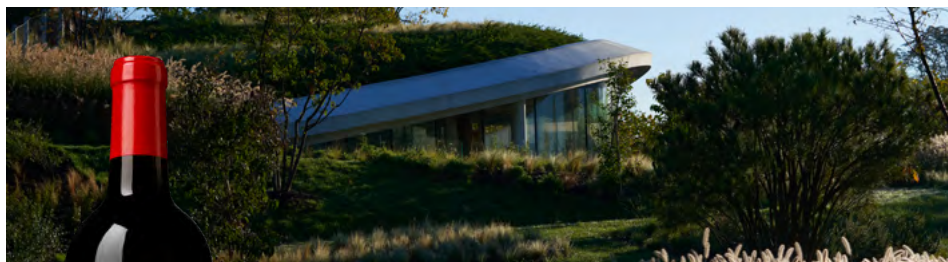
Under the leadership of Johannes Leitz, Weingut Josef Leitz is one of Germany's top producers and one of the gems of the Rheingau. Leitz has holdings entirely on the westernmost part of the Rheingau on the Rudesheimer Berg, which has amazingly steep slate and quartzite soiled slopes. This area was once prized for its incredible quality grapes but fell into disrepair after World War II. Johannes has made it his life's work to revitalize this area to its once legendary status, expanding his family's holdings here from just 2.6 hectares to more than 40. Today, Weingut Josef Leitz produces 100 percent riesling and has accomplished his goal and reinvigorated the Rudesheimer Berg by shining a light on this once forgotten subsection and creating some of the most explosive and exuberant wines in all of Germany. The Leitz Riesling Rheingau Berg Schlossberg GG 2019 was our No. 7 German wine and No. 33 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list in 2021. This is a towering giant of peach, apricot and King Alfonso mango aromas that opens slowly like a rose and has great juiciness, but of the most refined kind.



## CHATEAU HAUT-BAILLY

CRU CLASSÉ DE GRAVES

BORDEAUX, FRANCE

CHÂTEAU HAUT-BAILLY PESSAC-  
LÉOGNAN 2018

99 Pts.

*“Complex and expressive nose, offering red and dark fruit, spices and pepper with wood and mushroom undertones. Fresh mussel shell and a hint of ink, too. Full-bodied with a fine texture and great balance between the acidity and the controlled, tannic structure. Very long finish. Goes on and on. Tiny production, 21 hectoliters per hectare. Try after 2025.”*

You can trace vine cultivation at what we now know as Chateau Haut-Bailly as far back as 1461, but fast forward to 1998, and the late Robert G. Wilmers, a Harvard-educated American banker, along with his French wife, Elisabeth, became the owners, adding funding and determination to start creating world-class wines. In 2016, Chateau Haut-Bailly was awarded EPV status, a governmental recognition of the estate's vigneron skills and cultural heritage. With some of the oldest vines in Pessac Leognan, as well as in all of Bordeaux, Haut-Bailly is an estate that gets better each year. In 2012, the estate added to their holdings with the purchase of a neighboring Pessac Leognan estate, Chateau Le Pape. In 2021, Château Haut-Bailly Pessac-Léognan 2018 ranked as our No. 7 French wine and No. 34 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. We loved its complex and expressive nose, offering red and dark fruit, spices and pepper with wood and mushroom undertones. Fresh mussel shell and a hint of ink, too. A very long finish that goes on and on.

# RAEN

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



## RAEN PINOT NOIR SONOMA COAST FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW SEA FIELD VINEYARD 2019

99 Pts.

*"This is really refined with black tea, rose petals, orange and blue fruit. It's medium-bodied with wild-strawberry and forest-floor flavors. Medium-bodied with great vibrancy and beautiful tannins running through the center palate, which is stitched into the wine. Long and true. 100% whole-cluster fermentation. Subtle and energetic. Better after 2025."*

Descended from California's most famous winemaking family, Carlo and Dante Mondavi's RAEN is continuing the Mondavi winemaking legacy but this time with a focus on pinot noir. Their father is Tim Mondavi of Continuum in Napa Valley and their grandfather is the late Robert Mondavi, the legend of American wine. Both Carlo and Dante have prestigious degrees from educational institutions around the world, have worked at Robert Mondavi Winery, Opus One, as well as in Burgundy, France and Piemonte, Italy, and have helped their family found Continuum, so their credentials are as high-profile as they come. Carlo and Dante founded RAEN as a hyper-focused winery that only produces three site-specific pinot noirs and one chardonnay from the Sonoma Coast. They ooze with the charm and elegance like the great wines of Burgundy and have a distinct mineral and coastal influence that can only come from the Sonoma Coast. In 2021, the RAEN Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Fort Ross-Seaview Sea Field Vineyard 2019 was No. 10 on our Top 100 Wines of the USA list and No. 35 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. This is a really refined wine with black tea, rose petals, orange and blue fruit. It's medium-bodied with wild-strawberry and forest-floor flavors. Long and true. While the Mondavi's family history has helped define California wine, RAEN is helping to define its future.



## Chateau Mouton Rothschild

BORDEAUX, FRANCE



### CHÂTEAU MOUTON ROTHSCHILD PAUILLAC 2018

100 Pts.

*“Exquisite purity of blackcurrants, raspberries and some citrus. The aromas flow from the glass. Full-bodied with seamless tannins that coat the palate and then fall into the center, to deliver a thoroughly refined and harmonious young red. Endless finish. 86% cabernet sauvignon. This is the new 1959, one of the legendary vintages of Mouton. Try after 2026.”*

Along with Lafite and Latour, Chateau Mouton Rothschild is one of the “Princes of Vines,” dating back to the 18th century. The property was first owned by Marquis Nicolas-Alexandre de Segur, then by the Barons de Brane before taking its present name after it was acquired by Baron Nathaniel de Rothschild. The Medoc vineyard dates to Roman times and covers around 90 hectares, with the vines planted on a narrow strip of land close to the river, which moderates differences in temperature. The Medoc benefits from the mildness of the ocean climate while also being protected from its excesses. The thin and poor, gravely soil extends down several meters over a clay-limestone base. The vines give elegant, powerful, richly tannic and long-lived wines – among some of the finest in the world. In 2021, James rated Chateau Mouton Rothschild Pauillac 2018 a perfect 100 points, and it was our No. 10 French wine and No. 36 on our global list. It’s full-bodied with seamless tannins that coat the palate and then fall into the center, to deliver a thoroughly refined and harmonious young red.

# Littorai

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



## LITTORAI PINOT NOIR SONOMA COUNTY SONOMA COAST THE HAVEN VINEYARD 2019

99 Pts.

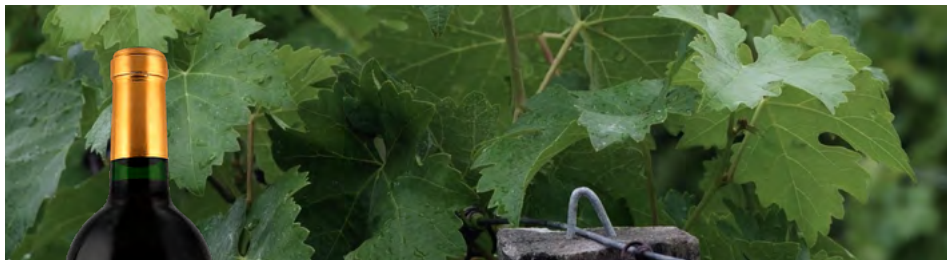
*"A mix of juicy red and black berries and earthy, woody spice on the nose. Medium-bodied with such depth, balance and precision. Succulent black fruit and ripe red berries are carried by fine tannins, along with fresh mint, pine and dried roses. Fine-tuned precision and refinement. Phenomenal wine. Drink or hold."*

Littorai Wines is one of the great California producers and arguably the greatest in Sonoma Coast. Started by Heidi and Ted Lemon, Littorai is directly influenced by Ted's training in Burgundy and Heidi's long career working in Napa Valley. Ted received his enology degree from the Université de Dijon in 1981 and afterward worked for everyone from Domaine Georges Roumier to Domaine Dujac, eventually becoming the first American to be hired as winemaker and vineyard manager of an estate in Burgundy at Domaine Roulot in Meursault. Today, Ted and Heidi continue the Burgundy tradition in their world-class production of pinot noir and chardonnay, as well as a very limited production of chenin blanc. Their pinot noir and chardonnay are not only top tier in the United States – they are as impressive as any in the world. In 2021, Littorai's Pinot Noir Sonoma County Sonoma Coast The Haven Vineyard 2019 was rated 99 points and ranked 11th among our Top 100 Wines of the USA and 37th In the world. Medium-bodied with such depth, balance and precision, and the succulent black fruit and ripe red berries are carried by fine tannins. Phenomenal.



CHÂTEAU  
**RAUZAN-SÉGLA**  
 GRAND CRU CLASSÉ 1855 - MARGAUX

BORDEAUX, FRANCE



CHÂTEAU RAUZAN-SÉGLA MARGAUX  
 2018

99 Pts.

*“Aromas of crushed blackberries and blueberries with dried flowers and bark, following through to a full body with a tight and powerful palate of beautiful fruit and chewy yet polished tannins that are compressed and impressive. Extremely linear and intense. Muscular, in a toned way. Yet it opens in the mouth at you taste it. 60% cabernet sauvignon and 40% merlot. Drink after 2025.”*

The pedigree of French winery Rauzan-Ségla is exceptional. James has drunk its wines from the late 1800s, which were still of phenomenal quality. In fact, the Margaux wine estate was considered at the same level as many of the first growths in the 19th century. Today, Rauzan-Ségla is again rivalling the best of Bordeaux, producing solid, finely crafted reds with wonderfully integrated fruit density and racy tannins. This is one of the most consistent-quality top producers in the Medoc at the moment. The owners of CHANEL control the property, along with Saint-Emilion's Chateau Canon. In 2021, the Château Rauzan-Ségla Margaux 2018 was our No. 9 French wine and ranked No. 38 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. It's extremely linear and intense, and also muscular, but in a toned way. Yet it opens in the mouth as you taste it.

Penfolds®

SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA



PENFOLDS SHIRAZ SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
ST HENRI 2018

99 Pts.

*"A great St. Henri and, although multi-regional, this is very much a wine that speaks of the Barossa Valley, with aromas of ripe blackberries and red plums that are so fresh, together with tobacco, young-leather, earth, chocolate, coal-smoke and tarry accents. Effortless depth on the palate with summer berries, framed in fine, alabaster-like tannins that are underscored with discreet power. So long and captivating. A blend of Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, Port Lincoln, Robe, Padthaway, Clare Valley and Adelaide Hills. Drink over the next decade or more. Screw cap."*

In 1844, Christopher Rawson Penfold, an English doctor, planted French vine cuttings near Adelaide right outside his old cottage, The Grange. More than a century later, Penfolds is one of the largest, oldest, most famous and best wine producers in Australia. Winemaker Max Schubert created Penfolds Grange, which today is Australia's most iconic wine. But Penfolds Grange has recently been equaled, if not surpassed, by several of the company's other wines, as it continues to play a pivotal role in the evolution and high quality of Australian wine. In 2021, the Penfolds Shiraz South Australia St Henri 2018 was our No. 4 Australian wine and finished No. 39 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. A great St. Henri and, although multi-regional, this is very much a wine that speaks of the Barossa Valley, with aromas of ripe blackberries and red plums that are so fresh, together with tobacco, young-leather, earth, chocolate, coal-smoke and tarry accents.

# QUINTESSA

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



## QUINTESSA NAPA VALLEY RUTHERFORD 2018

99 Pts.

*"This is beautifully polished with firm, dusty tannins to the blue fruit, as well as chocolate and cedar character. Some much earthier character, too, from mushrooms to bark. Forest flowers. Perfumed. It's full-bodied with round tannins and a soft, creamy finish. Some iron and iodine to this. So attractive at the finish. From biodynamically grown grapes. Better after 2023."*

Agustin Huneeus built up a number of key brands in Chile from nothing before buying and selling numerous estates in Napa Valley. He finally settled on unplanted land in Rutherford with his wife, Valeria, a biochemist who had also worked for a host of wineries and planted biodynamic vineyards and built a magnificent winery. This was the beginning of Quintessa, a Bordeaux-style blend which now must be counted among the best in the region. In 2021, the Quintessa Napa Valley Rutherford 2018 ranked No. 7 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the USA and No. 40 on our overall Top 100 list. This is beautifully polished with firm, dusty tannins to the blue fruit, as well as chocolate and cedar character. Some much earthier character, too, from mushrooms to bark.

*Susana Balbo*

W I N E S

MENDOZA, ARGENTINA



SUSANA BALBO WINES MALBEC  
AGRELO NOSOTROS SINGLE VINEYARD  
NÓMADE 2017

99 Pts.

*“Black plums, blueberries, dried herbs, cedar, vanilla and crushed stones on the nose. It’s medium-to full-bodied with ultra fine tannins and bright acidity. There’s vivacity and wild energy to this, with layers of bitter chocolate and berries interwoven with stones and minerals. So energetic and very driven with gorgeously integrated tannins. So long, too. Drink or hold.”*

You have to wonder where Argentina’s wine world would be without the dynamic Susana Balbo. She is the first female winemaker in Argentina to have received her degree in oenology, doing so in 1981, and since then has worked for a range of companies not only in Argentina but also in France, Italy, South Africa, Spain, Australia and California. Today, she is devoted to her state-of-the-art Mendoza winery, Susana Balbo, which she manages with her son and daughter, and which also houses a small but very popular restaurant. In 2021, Susana Balbo Wines Malbec Agrelo Nosotros Single Vineyard Nómade 2017 was ranked No. 3 on our Top 100 Wines of Argentina list and No. 41 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. What struck us most about the wine was its vivacity and wild energy, along with layers of bitter chocolate and berries interwoven with stones and minerals, making for an energetic pour.



# JOSEPH PHELPS

V I N E Y A R D S

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



## JOSEPH PHELPS NAPA VALLEY INSIGNIA 2018

**99 Pts.**

*“Blackberry and black chocolate with mint, conifer and clove. Sweet tobacco, violets and flowers, too. Some graphite. Cool and complex. Full-bodied with ultra fine, dusty tannins and a wonderful, extremely long finish. Savory and refined. A classic-styled 2018. This needs time, but is so approachable and gorgeous. One of the best Insignias ever. Alive and changing all the time. 40% Stags Leap AVA. 87% cabernet sauvignon, 8% petit verdot, 3% malbec and 2% cabernet franc. Leave this for five or six years, but so wonderful now.”*

Founded on a former cattle ranch in Napa Valley, Joseph Phelps vineyards has produced some of the most popular and age-worthy wines in California. The late founder Joe Phelps was also one of the first to produce vineyard-designated wines, such as from the famous Eisele vineyard. The estate's best and best-known wine, Insignia, was first produced in 1974 and is aged each year in new French oak for 24 months. Now with Joe's children and grand-children running the estate, the wines are getting better and better, with recent vintages such as 2016, 2017 and 2018 showing extremely well. In 2021, Joseph Phelps Napa Valley Insignia 2018 ranked as our No. 8 American wine and No. 42 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. It's a cool and complex wine, with a full body and ultra-fine, dusty tannins and wonderful, extremely long finish. All in all, it's a classic-styled 2018, but may need some time in bottle although it's wonderful now. It may be the greatest Insignia ever.



## CHÂTEAU LA FLEUR-PÉTRUS POMEROL

BORDEAUX, FRANCE



### CHÂTEAU LA FLEUR-PÉTRUS POMEROL 2018

99 Pts.

*"Ripe black fruit, clove, licorice, pine and walnut husk on the nose. Bitter chocolate and coffee, too. It's full-bodied with firm, tight tannins. Muscular and very formed. Energetic and precise with long, chewy layers and lots of depth, structure and polish. Superb. Needs time. Try from 2026."*

Chateau La Fleur- Petrus, owned by Christian Moueix family holdings in Bordeaux, produces exceptional wines year after year, and has become a standard-bearer for elegant, sensuous Bordeaux wines. Located across the road from Chateau Petrus and adjacent to Chateau Lafleur, today the estate encompasses a total of 18.7 hectares after an acquisition of land from Chateau Le Gay in 1994. The soils are an ideal mix of clay and gravel situated on a high plateau, which produces fantastic merlot with some cabernet franc and petit verdot as well. In 2021, Château La Fleur-Pétrus Pomerol 2018 ranked as our No. 13 French wine and No. 43 on our global list. We liked its ripe black fruit, clove, pine and walnut husk on the nose, plus it's also muscular and very formed, and comes with lots of depth, structure and polish.

## colgin

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES


**COLGIN CELLARS CABERNET  
SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY TYCHSON  
HILL 2018**
**100 Pts.**

*"Gorgeous dark-fruit aromas with blackcurrants, mushrooms, bark and flowers. Jasmine. Full-bodied with wonderfully fine tannins. Finishes so long and agile. Sort of cloud-like. Blackberry and dark chocolate at the end. Totally integrated tannins. You feel them, but you don't see them. Unique experience tasting this. A classic in the making. Cabernet sauvignon with a touch of petit verdot and cabernet franc. Try after 2027."*

Colgin Cellars was started by Ann Colgin in 1992 and since their first release in 1995, they have been trailblazers, quickly rising through Napa's ranks to be one of the most coveted producers in the region. Colgin started by sourcing grapes from the hillside, Herb Lamb vineyard on Howell Mountain, but soon bought a historic vineyard site of their own in 1996, the history of which dates back to 1860. This vineyard was owned by Josephine Tychson, the first woman to build a winery in the Napa Valley, and the site, Tychson Hill, was named in her honor. Colgin produces three Cabernet Sauvignon-based wines, Tychson Hill, Cariad, and IX Estate, in addition to a lovely Northern Rhone-inspired Syrah, also from IX Estate where the winery is located. We find their wines to be some of Napa's most exciting and boundary pushing each year. In 2017, Colgin became the first American wine label to ever become a part of LVMH's Vins d'Exception Group, joining the likes of Chateau Cheval Blanc, Chateau d'Yquem, and Domaine du Clos des Lambrays. In 2021, Colgin Cellars' Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Tychson Hill 2018 ranked No. 12 on our Top 100 Wines of the USA list and No. 44 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. James loved its gorgeous dark-fruit aromas and full body with wonderfully fine, integrated tannins. It's a unique experience tasting this and a classic in the making. Colgin has proven themselves to be one of Napa's great estates in under 30 years, and we are on the edge of our seat waiting to see where the next 30 years will take us.



BORDEAUX, FRANCE



## CHÂTEAU DUCRU-BEAUCAILLOU ST.-JULIEN 2018

99 Pts.

*“Aromas of blackberries, blackcurrants, new leather and bark follow through to a full body with a dense, deep palate that goes on and on, but is still shy and reserved. Large amount of ultra fine, cashmere-like tannins that are silky, sleek and wonderfully integrated. Extremely long and focused. Needs at least four to five years to start opening. A beautiful wine for the cellar. Try after 2027.”*

What owner Bruno Borie has done at this famous second-growth Saint-Julien estate in the past two decades is close to phenomenal. Sure, his family had made some excellent wines, particularly in 1959, 1961 and 1970, but from the mid-1990s onward, Ducru began competing with the top names of Bordeaux. His recent vintages show a fabulous clarity of character and strength but remain refined and polished. There's an impressive directness to the red wines from here. Ducru made one of James' few 100-point wines in the legendary 2010 vintage, but all of its wines from the 2000s are of outstanding quality and the recent vintages score high as well. Ducru competes with the best of Bordeaux now, including the first-growths. In 2021, the Château Ducru-Beaucaillou St-Julien 2018 ranked No. 14 on our list of Top 100 Wines of France and No. 45 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. This is an extremely long and focused wine that needs at least four to five years to start opening, and it would be beautiful for the cellar.





# Dr. Bürklin-Wolf

PFALZ, GERMANY



## DR. BÜRKLIN-WOLF RIESLING PFALZ PECHSTEIN GC 2020

99 Pts.

*"So stony, poised and pristine, in spite of all the concentration, this has staggering elegance and finesse for such a warm region. Mega minerality at the breathtakingly long and radical finish that defies any simple description. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold."*

Dr. Burklin-Wolf is one of Germany's most important and long-standing riesling producers. Established originally in 1597, the winery began to look more like we know it today after World War II, when Dr. Albert Burklin began to expand the winery and made it his mission to improve the agriculture and viticulture of the Pfalz. In 1990, Dr. Burklin's eldest daughter, Bettina Burklin-von Guradze, inherited the estate, and she has gone above and beyond in producing fantastic wines – even going so far as to make the entire 85-hectare estate biodynamic. That move in turn made Dr. Burklin-Wolf the first German producer to be a member of Biodyvin. Their wines are just what you want in high-quality riesling: balanced, energetic and refined. In 2021, Dr. Bürklin-Wolf's Riesling Pfalz Pechstein GC 2020 ranked No. 8 on our list of Top 100 Wines of Germany and No. 46 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. So stony, poised and pristine, in spite of all the concentration, this has staggering elegance and finesse for such a warm region, with mega-minerality at the breathtakingly long and radical finish.



BODEGA CATENA ZAPATA

*Since 1902*

MENDOZA, ARGENTINA



### CATENA ZAPATA MALBEC MENDOZA ARGENTINO 2019

99 Pts.

*"This is made from over 100-year-old vineyards and offers blackberries with blue fruit and dark chocolate. Shows bark and black truffle undertones, too. Tight and more focused than in past vintages. The quality of the tannins is more precise and fine. Blackberries and black truffles at the end. Drink or hold."*

Catena Zapata is one of Argentina's most historic estates and one of the country's leading wine names. The Catenas were the first to plant in the Gualtallary region, now recognized as one of Mendoza's top sites for both reds and whites. It was in the 1980s that Catena's grandson Nicolás Catena took the winery to the next level, and his work has been built upon by Nicolas Catena's daughter, Dr. Laura Catena, a Harvard- and Stanford-educated physician. Today, Laura combines her strong science background with a passion for the family winery, conducting groundbreaking studies on soil and climate, sustainable viticulture and high-altitude winemaking. In 2021, the Catena Zapata Malbec Mendoza Argentino 2019 ranked No. 47 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. Tight and more focused than in past vintages, the quality of the tannins is more precise and finer. It also shows blackberries and black truffles at the end.



TUSCANY, ITALY



## EREDI FULIGNI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA 2016

99 Pts.

*"The complexity and beauty of this wine is something else on the nose, offering perfume, cedar, dried flower, black cherry, blueberry and crushed stone. Orange peel, too. Full-bodied with incredible layers of ultra-fine tannins that give this wine horizontal depth that almost seems endless. Extremely long and lightly chewy at the end. This is one for the cellar. Try after 2026."*

Back in the 1980s, James had already fallen in love with the Brunello di Montalcino that Eredi Fuligni produces when the 1988 vintage first caught his attention. Situated on the northern slope of Montalcino, this small winery makes wines with incredible finesse and intensity. The estate has been in the Fuligni family for generations, with Maria Flora Fuligni currently at the helm. Fuligni wines are as complex and refined as the symphonic music enjoyed by Roberto Guerrini, one of the family partners; a man of impeccable taste who personifies the unique and subtle character of his wines. The wines here show perfect balance and exquisite complexity. In 2021, the Eredi Fuligni Brunello Di Montalcino Riserva 2016 ranked No. 10 on our Top 100 Wines of Italy list and No. 48 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. The wine is something else on the nose, offering perfume, cedar, dried flower, black cherry, blueberry and crushed stone that follows through to a structured yet balance palate with great length. It's one for the cellar.

# antica terra

OREGON, UNITED STATES



## ANTICA TERRA PINOT NOIR EOLA-AMITY HILLS ANTIKYTHERA 2018

99 Pts.

*"Wow. Aromas of blackberry, ripe strawberry, spice and smoke follow through to a full body with firm, minerally tannins that have a chalky, stony texture that gives it firmness and complexity. Very long and driven. Layered, too. Spice, cinnamon stick, chocolate and dried berries. Try after 2025, but already joyous to taste or drink. Only about 400 cases made."*

Located on 40 acres of stunning land in Willamette Valley's Eola-Amity Hills, Antica Terra is one of Oregon's best producers, specializing in pinot noir and chardonnay that look to Burgundy for inspiration but to Willamette Valley for character. It is a hilly, rocky mass of sandstone and alluvium sown with fossilized oyster shells all visible on their patch of dramatic hillside within the oak savannah. Founded in 2005, Antica Terra has always been under the capable helm of winemaker Maggie Harrison, who was a former assistant winemaker at California cult winery Sine Qua Non. She is now one of America's most gifted winemakers, making fantastic terroir-driven wines. We find an energy and incomparable personality in all her wines. Antikythera, which is one of their many fantastic single-vineyard pinots and regularly tops our Oregon reports year after year. In 2021, Antica Terra's Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Antikythera 2018 was our No. 13 American wine and ranked No. 49 among our Top Wines of the World. It's a real "wow" wine for us, coming with aromas of blackberry, ripe strawberry, spice and smoke following through to a full body with firm, minerally tannins. It's already joyous to taste or drink, but only about 400 cases were made.



CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



### DANA ESTATES NAPA VALLEY LOTUS VINEYARD 2018

**100 Pts.**

*“Seductive aromas of blackberries, blackcurrants, black olives, pine needles and violets follow through to a full body. The tannins are so poised and dynamic, while being extremely fine and focused. It goes on for minutes. Caresses every millimeter of your palate. A truly great 2018 that highlights the balance, finesse and refinement of the vintage. Needs time to come completely together. Try after 2026.”*

Korean tycoon and passionate wine drinker Hi Sang Lee came to Napa Valley in 2005 to create the best wine possible, and he did about a decade ago. A quiet and thoughtful man from Seoul, he built an ultra-modern winery in the Rutherford appellation that covers about 30,000 square feet but produces a minuscule number of bottles. Winemaker Chris Cooney makes marvelously pure, polished reds here that express their individual sites. From Helms Vineyard we get unspoiled fruit and dusty tannins. From Lotus Vineyard, an accessible structure. And from the cooler Hershey Vineyard magnificent tannic power and flare. Dana also makes a sauvignon blanc in concrete eggs and French oak that's most certainly the best the variety has to offer in Napa. Yet, in 2021 we rated the Dana Estates Napa Valley Lotus Vineyard 2018 a perfect 100 points and ranked it No. 50 on our Top Wines of the World list, and it also ranked as our No. 14 American wine. This is a wine that caresses every millimeter of your palate – a truly great 2018 that highlights the balance, finesse and refinement of the vintage, although it needs some time to come completely together.





BORDEAUX, FRANCE



## CHÂTEAU MARGAUX MARGAUX 2018

100 Pts.



*“So much ash, tobacco and earth to the bright blackberry and currant aromas. Flowers too. Fresh. Full-bodied with seamless tannins that spread across your palate and caress every square centimeter. It’s shows loads of ripe-berry, cherry, currant and chocolate character, as well as walnut and light cedar. Then the finish goes on for minutes. Extremely refined and elegant, despite the structure. 90% cabernet sauvignon, 4% cabernet franc, 4% merlot and 2% petit verdot. A joy to taste, but drink after 2025.”*

Chateau Margaux is one of the most famous wine estates of all time. Its winemaking history dates to the 16th century and its ideal terroir and microclimate has been noted throughout history, with the estate being deemed a Premier Grand Cru Classe Bordeaux in 1855. Since 1977 the estate has been owned by the Mentzelopoulos family, and it is now run by Corinne Mentzelopoulos. Chateau Margaux continues to be one of the benchmarks for red winemaking across the world. We love the structure and seamless tannins that Margaux effortlessly crafts into their wines. In 2021, Margaux 2018 was awarded a perfect 100 points and ranked No. 11 on our list of the Top 100 Wines of France as well as No. 51 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. We found so much ash, tobacco and earth to its bright blackberry and currant aromas, and flowers, too! It’s an extremely refined and elegant wine, with a finish that goes on for minutes. James has tasted Chateau Margaux for decades and believes the newest vintages are the best.



# ZUCCARDI

VALLE DE UCO

MENDOZA, ARGENTINA



ZUCCARDI MALBEC VALLE DE UCO  
PARAJE ALTAMIRA FINCA PIEDRA  
INFINITA 2018

99 Pts.

*“Aromas of crushed fruit with mushrooms, dried flowers, ash, charcoal, iodine and bark, following through to a full-bodied palate with superb depth of fruit and layers of polished, fine tannins. Extremely long and seamless. A beauty by all accounts. Complex. Juicy. Supple. Better after 2023, when it will give you all it has stored up in goodness, character and uniqueness.”*

The Zuccardi family has been making wine in Mendoza since the 1960s. The founder, Alberto Zuccardi, was an engineer who moved to the region from northern Argentina to design irrigation systems before wine production became a passion. Today, Zuccardi is managed by Sebastián, Jose Zuccardi's son and third generation of the family. He is the new-generation winemaker who is also playing a pivotal role in revolutionizing the Argentine winemaking panorama. At Zuccardi, the emphasis is on translating the characteristics of the soils into the wine, via a heavy focus on single-vineyard bottlings. With dozens of parcel-specific concrete vats, the family's new winery highlights the Zuccardis' precision in winemaking and producing transparent wines that communicate the uniqueness of the individual vineyard. We ranked the Zuccardi Malbec Valle De Uco Paraje Altamira Finca Piedra Infinita 2018 as our No. 4 Argentine wine in 2021 as well as placing it No. 52 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. It's extremely long and seamless, and has aromas of crushed fruit with mushrooms, dried flowers, ash, charcoal and bark. A beauty by all accounts, in our estimation.

# L'IF

## SAINT~EMILION

BORDEAUX, FRANCE



L'IF ST.-EMILION 2018

99 Pts.

*“Aromas of black cherries, blueberries, licorice, dried lavender, nutmeg and grated milk chocolate. Pure raspberries, walnut husks and crushed peppercorns as well. It’s full-bodied with firm, racy tannins that go on for minutes. So sleek and polished with a long finish. Really amazing and perhaps the best wine ever from here. Same ownership as the legendary Le Pin from Pomerol. Slightly more cabernet franc (30% instead of 20%) in the blend may have made the difference. The rest is merlot. Clearly the best wine ever from here, since the official first vintage 2011. Try from 2026.”*

L'If is one of Bordeaux's rising stars. Founded in 2010 by Jacques Thienpont, the creator of Le Pin, L'If is an eight-hectare estate in St. Emillion, located near Chateau-Troplong Mondot and on the estate formerly known as Chateau La Bouygue. As of now the estate is going through a transformation to replant some of their 14 different parcels and as such is only able to produce no more than 1,000 cases a year. This makes their already incredible wines even more desirable. L'if crafts powerful merlot-based wines with depth and concentration that will last for the long haul, just as any great Bordeaux should. In 2021, the L'If St.-Emilion 2018 was our No. 15 French wine and came in at No. 53 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. It's clearly their best wine ever – so sleek and polished with a long finish. It's full bodied with firm, racy tannins, and comes with aromas of black cherries, blueberries, licorice, dried lavender and nutmeg. Delicious. While L'If seems like a young brand now, do not be surprised if they become a hallowed name in the years to come.

# CHÂTEAU BEAUSÉJOUR

HÉRITIERS DUFFAU-LAGARROSSE

1<sup>re</sup> GRAND CRU CLASSÉ  
SAINT-ÉMILION

BORDEAUX, FRANCE



## CHÂTEAU BEAUSÉJOUR DUFFAU-LAGARROSSE ST.-EMILION 2018

99 Pts.

*“Aromas of blackcurrant, ripe blackberry, black olive, oyster shell and black tea. Some ash and dried flowers, too. It’s medium-to full-bodied with firm, tight-grained tannins. Sleek and compact with a savory, mineral finish. Great length and depth. Wonderful texture. Such precision. Try from 2026.”*

Chateau Beausejour Duffau-Lagarrosse has been a widely regarded estate since the 1990s and continues to impress with consistently high-quality merlot-dominated red blends each year. Chateau Beausejour Duffau-Lagarrosse has been family-run since 1847 and is now in the ninth generation of ownership, with the young and dynamic Josephine Duffau-Lagarrosse in charge. Their 1990 vintage was what propelled them into modern stardom, and they continue to produce well above their paygrade today. We adore the sleek and compact nature of their wines, which slowly unfurl from their tight tannic youth into beautiful multi-layered storybooks as they age. In 2021, Château Beauséjour Duffau-Lagarrosse St.-Emilion 2018 was our No. 16 French wine and ranked No. 54 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. It’s a sleek and compact wine with a savory, mineral finish, and also has great length and depth, not to mention a wonderful texture. You can feel confident that year after year Chateau Beausejour Duffau-Lagarrosse will make consistently ageable wines at a price point that means you can be investing in a case year after year.



OPUS ONE

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



## OPUS ONE NAPA VALLEY 2018

99 Pts.

*“Extremely perfumed and floral with lavender, lilacs and violets to the sweet, ripe berries, such as blackberries and blackcurrants. Some slate and graphite, too. It’s full-bodied, yet ever so balanced and refined, with super fine tannins that last for minutes. Fresh herbs, such as bay leaf and lemon grass highlight the dark fruit. The quality of tannin is exquisite with wonderful polish and refinement. Lasts for minutes. So wonderful to taste now, but better after 2026.”*

Baron Philippe de Rothschild (of first growth Mouton Rothschild) and Robert Mondavi first started this great estate in 1979, and it has since become an icon in Napa Valley. Indeed, James recently scored a number of perfect cabs, the best of them being the 2013 Opus One at 100 points; it was Wine of the Year in 2016. Everything is done to perfection at the winery, whether it’s maintaining some of the best vineyards in the world or combining French detail with American ingenuity and dedication in the winery. These are wines you simply can’t miss. In 2021, Opus One Napa Valley 2018 ranked No. 15 on our Top 100 Wines of the USA list and No. 55 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. We found it full-bodied, with balance and refinement, as well as having an exquisite tannin quality carrying wonderful polish and refinement.





BERNHARD HUBER  
MALTERDINGEN

BADEN, GERMANY



BERNHARD HUBER SPÄTBURGUNDER  
BADEN WILDENSTEIN GG 2019

99 Pts.

*"Pinot fans who haven't yet registered the recent developments in Germany are strongly advised to taste this masterpiece, The cornucopia of red berries, cherries and flowers on the nose of this extraordinary wine bowls you over. Gigantic concentration, yet it remains so bright and elegant, thanks to the stunning intensity of extremely fine tannins. Seamless finish that stretches out towards infinity. Drink or hold."*

Bernhard Huber is thought of as the godfather of Germany's pinot noir/spätburgunder scene. Leaving the regional Cooperative Malterdingen, Baden, in 1987, Huber looked to Burgundy for inspiration and began using Burgundian farming and vinification techniques to produce more nuanced and site-specific wines. His efforts were phenomenal and highly influential in Germany, where previously pinot noir was typically not treated with the same diligent care as riesling. Now with 28 hectares under vine, Huber's wines have only gotten better in quality as the carefully selected pinot noir clones that he bought from Jean Luc Pascal in Puligny have aged into proper maturity. Bernhard Huber sadly passed away from a battle with cancer in 2014 but the winery continues to be an icon under the guise of widow, Barbara, his son, Julian, and the team. While Bernard may have passed away, his wines continue to age and be enjoyed the world over, and his contributions to high-quality pinot noir in Germany will live on in the influence he had on others. In 2021, the Bernhard Huber Spätburgunder Baden Wildenstein GG 2019 was our No. 9 German wine and finished No. 56 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. What wins you over with this extraordinary wine is the cornucopia of red berries, cherries and flowers on the nose. It also has gigantic concentration yet remains bright and elegant.

## BOND

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



BOND NAPA VALLEY VECINA 2018

100 Pts.

*“Seductive aromas of blackcurrants, plums and flowers, including roses. Really incredible this year with such verticality, depth and brightness. Goes on and on and on. Superb fruit character with plums and currants. Love it. Drinkable now, but give it time. Try after 2025.”*

What if Napa Valley sites were thought of more like Grand Cru Burgundy sites? Each would have to be inherently different in exposure, microclimate and soil type and each would have to be distinct enough, and of high enough quality, for the specificity of Grand Cru style treatment to even be necessary. That was the concept H. William Harlan, of Harlan Estate, had in mind when he began Bond in 1996. With expert-level knowledge of Napa Valley, Harlan and many of his key Harlan Estate players, over the span of 40 years, found five sites that met their standards. Since then, Bond has been consistently producing some of Napa's boldest wines and some of our favorites year after year. We rated the Bond Napa Valley Vecina 2018 a perfect 100 points and ranked it as our No. 16 U.S. wine in 2021 as well as our No. 57 wine globally. This is a true Napa Valley wine born of a Burgundian mindset with some of the region's best hands at work behind it. Of course, it's going to be great – it's incredible this year with such verticality, depth and brightness, as well as superb fruit character with plums and currants. Love it.

## H A R L A N   E S T A T E

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



HARLAN ESTATE NAPA VALLEY 2018

100 Pts.

*“Classy earth, oak and bay-leaf character on the nose, together with dark fruit, such as currants and blackberries. Forest flowers, too. Full-to medium-bodied, linear and tight with coolness and freshness. Mint and spearmint to the dark fruit. Lasts a long time. Such balance and intensity. Tight now, but great energy and length this year. Incredibly sophisticated and seductive. A joy to taste now, but try in 2025.”*

Harlan Estate is one of the world's most sought-after producers, with wines that regularly are lauded and have such a following that getting even one bottle is a difficult and expensive task. Started in 1984 by H. William Harlan, this 240-acre forested estate was partially cleared so that 40 acres could be under vine at ideal points of elevation and exposure that make for inherently fantastic red wines. Founding winemaker Bob Levy - who has been in lockstep with Harlan Estate since the beginning - and winemaker Cory Empting produce the wines with a clear vision for style and character that has helped make this property so esteemed. James has loved their wines for years and in 2021, we rated Harlan Estate Napa Valley 2018 a perfect 100 Points, placing it 17th on our list of top American wines and No. 58 in the world. You'll like its classy earth, oak and bay-leaf character on the nose, as well as its incredible balance and intensity. If you can get your hands on a bottle of Harlan Estate, you will understand why they are known the world over and you'll soon be asking yourself how you can get yourself a second bottle.

## CHÂTEAU LAFLEUR

GUINAUDEAU VIGNERONS  
À POMEROL

BORDEAUX, FRANCE



## CHÂTEAU LAFLEUR POMEROL 2018

100 Pts.

*"So subtle and complex with blackberry, blueberry, fresh bark, fresh black truffles and light wet earth, as well as forest floor. Full-bodied, yet linear and so long with an amazingly polished and refined tannin structure and finesse that draws you deep and down in the palate. It opens incredibly in the glass. What a wine. Goes on for minutes. A real beauty. Something so true and ethereal here. Try after 2026."*

You get the feeling that you are in Burgundy when you visit the just more than four-and-a-half hectare estate of Pomerol's Chateau Lafleur. That's because the Guinaudeau family has created a unique aura at the legendary estate since the mid-1980s, when Jacques and Sylvie Guinaudeau began making wine there and finally took control of the property in 2002. Their great-great grandfather originally bought Lafleur in 1872. Their hands-on philosophy and family spirit make Lafleur one of the most unique wines in Bordeaux and, of course, in France. Their dynamic son, Baptiste, who now runs the property with his wife Julie, has taken Lafleur to another level. It now makes a perfect wine almost every vintage! We rated the Château Lafleur Pomerol 2018 a perfect 100 points and ranked it as the No. 12 wine on our list of Top 100 Wines of France as well as No. 59 in the world. It's so subtle and complex with blackberry, blueberry, fresh bark, fresh black truffles and light wet earth, as well as forest floor. Full-bodied, yet linear and so long with an amazingly polished and refined tannin structure and finesse that draws you deep and down in the palate.



WEINGUT SEIT 1798

PFALZ, GERMANY



## CHRISTMANN RIESLING PFALZ IDIG GG 2020

98 Pts.

*"So deep, it feels like it's pulling you in the direction of the center of the earth! Yet, another side of the wine seems to float above the world. Radically mineral finish that leaves you in no doubt about this great dry riesling's future! From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drinkable now, but best from 2023."*

What started out as a part-time hobby for Ludwig Hausser and his cousin Johann Martin in 1845 has turned into one of the Pfalz's most beloved producers of riesling and spatburgunder. Based in Gimmeldingen, Christmann is now run by seventh-generation Steffen Christmann, who was recently joined in 2017 by his daughter, Sophie. Their 20 hectares of vineyards have been biodynamic since 2004 and their reputation in the Pfalz is as good as it gets. Christmann's rieslings are textural and powerful, with many of the spatburgunders starting to really take shape under Sophie's direction. Christmann makes serious wines that overdeliver on flavor and price. We ranked the Christmann Riesling Pfalz Idig GG 2020 as our No. 10 German wine in 2021 as well as our No. 60 globally. It's so deep and feels like it's pulling you in a direction of the center of the earth, yet another side of the wine seems to float above the world!



# BIBI GRAETZ

TUSCANY, ITALY



BIBI GRAETZ TOSCANA COLORE 2019

99 Pts.

*“This is so perfumed and seductive, with blackberries, cherries, dried flowers and perfume. It’s full-bodied and tight with very fine tannins. Really structured and long. Superb tannin texture. So fine, yet so powerful. This is an incredible combination of fruit and structure. Old-vine magic. Drink after 2026.”*

In a little more than two decades since his first vintage release, Bibi Graetz has become one of the brightest lights in Tuscan winemaking. This is primarily thanks to the superb quality of his pure sangiovese Colore. Graetz draws on old vines, which give his best reds depth and soul. Red grapes are cultivated on the hillsides above Florence and sourced from prime sites in the Chianti Classico region, such as Montefili and Lamole. His whites from the island of Giglio are also an inspiration, proving that Tuscany can make great white wine, as well as red. In 2021, Bibi Graetz Toscana Colore 2019 ranked No. 11 on our list of Top 100 Wines of Italy and No. 61 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. The wine is so perfumed and seductive, with blackberries, cherries, dried flowers and perfume, and is also full-bodied and tight with very fine tannins – an incredible combination of fruit and structure.



## WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES


**K VINTNERS SYRAH YAKIMA VALLEY  
MOTOR CITY KITTY 2018**
**98 Pts.**

*"There's real purity of fruit to this with blackberry, blueberry and dark chocolate, as well as crushed-stone undertones. It's full and focused with structure and purity. Transparent energy to this. Needs a couple of years. Better in 2023 onwards."*

Few wineries have accomplished so much in as much time as K Vintners. Started in 1999 by founder Charles Smith, who was a former band manager, the first vintage was only 330 cases and was mostly sold out of Smith's 1987 Astro van. Since then, their trajectory has been exponential. In 2021, K Vintners Syrah Yakima Valley Motor City Kitty 2018 was our No. 18 American wine and placed 62nd on our global list. It's a full and focused wine with structure and purity, as well as transparent energy. K Vintners are making some of the most adventurous, delicious and well-priced wines in the world and are champions of Washington State's ever-growing wine scene. Their wines have place and style with purity and structure that only the great producers can distill. If their first 22 years is any indication of where they're headed, be prepared to see greatness continue to rock out of Walla Walla, Washington with K Vintners continuing to climb the charts.

# BRYANT

## ESTATE

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



### BRYANT FAMILY VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY 2018

100 Pts.

*“Aromas of blackberries and gun powder with some graphite and black licorice. Tile, too, with some conifer and cedar. Complex and enticing. Full-bodied with polished tannins that build on the palate and coat and caress every millimeter of your mouth. Encompassing and balanced mouth feel. A classic beauty. Really tells where it is from! Great estate red. 600 cases. Try after 2027, but already a joy to taste.”*

Bryant Estate is one of the icon cabernet sauvignon wines that emerged out of Napa Valley in the 1990s. Today the estate produces three top-quality wines that nearly always score in the range of 95-100 points. The Bryant Family Vineyard cabernet sauvignon is selected solely from organically grown grapes on the estate's 13-acre Pritchard Hill vineyard and has layers of fruit combining with savory notes and a dense, mineral texture, while the BETTINA wine is a Bordeaux blend of cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, merlot and petit verdot, giving an opulent, full-bodied wine. A third wine – DB4 – is less expensive and acts as an entry wine for this remarkable estate. In 2021, the 100-point Bryant Family Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2018 ranked No. 19 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the USA and No. 63 on our world list. It's a complex and enticing wine, with a full body and polished tannins that build on the palate and coat and caress every millimeter of your mouth. A classic beauty.



## BORDEAUX, FRANCE

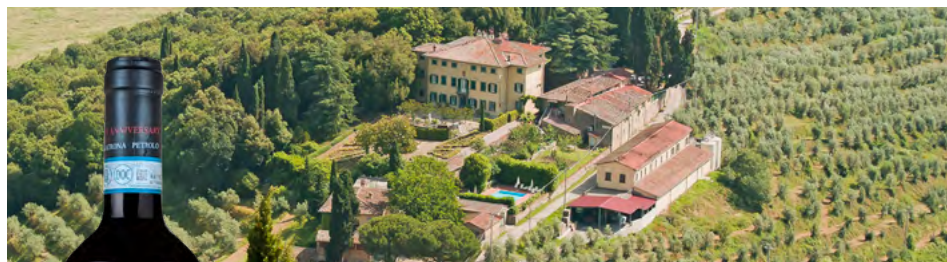

**CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE LAS CASES  
ST.-JULIEN 2018**
**99 Pts.**

*"An elegant, complex nose of blackberries, blueberries and herbal and spice notes with dark-chocolate and earthy undertones. Violets, flowers and graphite, too. It's full-bodied with firm, layered tannins and a crushed-stone undertone throughout the fresh, velvety and layered palate. Very complex, muscular and formed. The finish is endless. Lowest percentage of press wine ever in this. So deep. Try after 2027."*

James often describes Leoville Las Cases as a "first growth for wine drinkers." While technically a second growth, for a far more reasonable price tag the Chateau in St.-Julien can equal the first growths, some of which are a literal stone's throw away. In fact, Las Cases shares its top vineyard site, l'Enclos, with Latour, and those deep, gravelly soils near the Gironde help explain the wine's unmitigated minerality and ironclad tannins. The Delon family has owned Las Cases since the late 19th century. In 2021, the Château Léoville Las Cases St.-Julien 2018 ranked as our No. 17 French wine and No. 64 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. With a complex nose of blackberries, blueberries and herbal and spice notes, it's full-bodied and firm, and we loved the layered tannins and crushed-stone undertone throughout the fresh, velvety and layered palate. The finish is endless.



TUSCANY, ITALY



### PETROLO VALDARNO DI SOPRA GALATRONA 2019

99 Pts.

*“Blackberries and black cherries with lavender and violets on the nose. Full-bodied with velvety, chewy tannins, yet the fruit is very intense with vibrancy and energy. Muscular, yet agile. Pure and poised. A unique definition of merlot in Tuscany. Drink after 2025.”*

Artist Luca Sanjust gave up his studio in Rome in the mid-1990s in favor of a small estate in the hills of Tuscany, 50 kilometers southeast of Florence. Leaving his paintings behind, Sanjust began making precise, heartfelt wines at Petrolo. Today, his pure merlot, Galatrona, and blend of Torrone are among the region's coveted wines. Galatrona reflects Tuscany's distinctive style of merlot, very different from Bordeaux or anywhere else, while Torrone – a blend of all the vineyards of Petrolo, including sangiovese, merlot and cabernet sauvignon – is a perfect example of a balanced, clear and deep red. Everything this artist-turned-wine-maker does seems to be a work of art. We ranked the Petrolo Valdarno Di Sopra Galatrona 2019 our No. 8 Italian wine and No. 65 in the world in 2021, finding it full-bodied with velvety, chewy tannins, yet with very intense fruit. It's a pure and poised wine, and a unique definition of merlot in Tuscany.



# CHATEAU L'ÉGLISE-CLINET

BORDEAUX, FRANCE



## CHÂTEAU L'ÉGLISE CLINET POMEROL 2018

**99 Pts.**

*"Incredible purity of fruit here with blackberry, black olive, concrete, stone and violet in the nose. It's full-bodied with a powerful palate of fruit that shows a wet-earth and black-truffle undertone. The tannins are intense and chewy, yet wonderfully polished and poised. Superb length in the finish. One built for long cellaring. Try after 2027."*

Chateau L'Eglise Clinet is in the center of Pomerol and is a standby of the region. Young in comparison to the age of some of its neighbors, Chateau L'Eglise Clinet was founded in 1882 when Mr. Mauleon-Rouchut, an ancestor of the late Denis Durantou, brought together plots from his family estate of Clos L'Eglise and the neighboring Chateau Clinet to form a new vineyard. Just under five hectares, Chateau L'Eglise Clinet is mostly based on merlot and is supplemented by cabernet franc and is typically aged in at least 80 percent new oak. We have loved the aromatic profile and purity of fruit that their wines have shown in recent years and feel that they are a go to for long term cellaring vintage after vintage. In 2021, the Château L'Église Clinet Pomerol 2018 was ranked No. 18 on our Top 100 Wines of France list and No. 66 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. It's a fantastic and emblematic wine that highlights the ineffable inherent qualities Pomerol is so famous for, and it is built for long cellaring.



# VIÑA COBOS

MENDOZA, ARGENTINA



## VIÑA COBOS MALBEC LOS ARBOLES VALLE DE UCO CHAÑARES ESTATE 2018

**99 Pts.**

*“Blackberries, ink and blueberries with black-tea and bark undertones. Full-bodied with density and richness that is well framed with beautiful, round and polished tannins and a seamless texture. Goes on for minutes. Try after 2026, but already great.”*

Paul Hobbs is best known for his namesake winery in California, and for good reason – he produces some of the most collectable wines in America, not least the 2013 Paul Hobbs Beckstoffer To Kalon, which we rated 100 points. But the American winemaker has also been instrumental in securing Argentina's position as another New World source of world-class wine. Hobbs founded Viña Cobos in 1997, and his Marchiori Vineyard might just be the most desirable parcel of land in all of Argentina. Set in the Lujan de Cuyo subregion of Mendoza, it sits at an altitude of more than 3,000 feet and boasts 80-year-old vines that produce what recently vied for the title of Argentina's greatest malbec. We scored the 2011 Cobos a perfect 100 points, and it was our Wine of the Year in 2014. In 2021, Viña Cobos Malbec Los Arboles Valle De Uco Chañares Estate 2018 ranked No. 8 on our list of top 100 Wines of Argentina and No. 67 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. We loved its full body, density and richness, all framed by beautiful, round and polished tannins with a seamless texture.



F U T O

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES



**FUTO CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA  
VALLEY STAGS LEAP DISTRICT 5500  
ESTATE 2018**

**99 Pts.**

*"Aromas of stone, pine needle and bark with blackcurrant and blackberry. Full-bodied with wonderfully concentration, yet it remains so refined and beautiful. So long with incredible forest-floor, light chocolate and wet-earth complexity at the finish. Blend of 92% cabernet sauvignon and 8% merlot. Unfined and unfiltered. So attractive now, but better in 2026."*

Futo Wines began in 2002 when Tom and Kyle Futo purchased Oakford Vineyards. Oakford was established in the 1980s as a 40-acre property with seven acres of vineyards. In 2004, an adjoining 117-acre parcel was added to the property. The estate is located in the western foothills of the Oakville appellation. Six separate vineyard sites that span more than half a mile along the hillside have soils that consist mainly of decomposed sandstone and shale from an ancient, uplifted seabed. Cabernet sauvignon is the predominating varietal, with cabernet franc, petit verdot, and merlot also planted on several sites across the estate. In 2021, the Futo Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Stags Leap District 5500 Estate 2018 ranked No. 23 among our Top 100 Wines of the USA and No. 68 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. It's a blend of 92 percent cabernet sauvignon and 8 percent merlot, and has aromas of stone, pine needle, bark and blackcurrant. So long, with incredible forest floor, light chocolate and wet-earth complexity at the finish.

# R. López de Heredia

## VIÑA TONDONIA

LA RIOJA, SPAIN



### LÓPEZ DE HEREDIA RIOJA RESERVA VIÑA TONDONIA WHITE 2010

98 Pts.

*“Complex and evolved nose of candied citrus, fig, burnt orange, walnut, toast, dried tobacco and salted caramel. Medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity. Concentrated, layered and delicious with a nutty and saline finish. Phenolic and structured. Keeps going. Drink now or hold.”*

R. López de Heredia Viña Tondonia is the epitome of tradition. While the wine world has completely changed since López de Heredia was founded 1877, things at López de Heredia have changed very little. They only make wines from vineyards they own outright, making every wine they produce an estate wine, which is incredibly rare in Rioja. They only use native yeast and never filter their wines. While there are many laws about aging in Rioja at the different Reserva levels, López de Heredia prefers to age their wines even further, releasing their top wines well after the region's standard. By being so uniquely themselves for over a century, López de Heredia now stands out in a growing and crowded wine world. López de Heredia may be Spain's most emblematic wine with some of the best aging potential you can find anywhere. In 2021, López De Heredia's Rioja Reserva Viña Tondonia White 2010 was our Top White Wine of Spain and ranked No. 2 on our Top 100 Wines of Spain list and No. 69 globally. This is a concentrated, layered and delicious wine, with a nutty and saline finish that keeps going. If it ain't broke, don't fix it, and nothing is broken at López de Heredia.



# MANINCOR

NORTHEAST, ITALY



## MANINCOR SAUVIGNON ALTO ADIGE LIEBEN AICH 2019

98 Pts.

*"Breathtakingly refined nose with all the facets of the lemon, from the blossom to the candied fruit, the hint of oak effortlessly integrated on the incredibly silky palate that's as soft as a baby's skin. So concentrated, yet so delicate and so pure at the very long, crystalline finish. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold."*

The things that make Alto Adige such a fantastic winemaking region are also what make it such a difficult area to work in with its steep elevations, diverse soil types and dynamic climate. Manincor is a producer that rises to the occasion and can translate the region's unique character into vibrant and delicious wines year after year. The historical buildings date back to 1608 and were built by Hieronymus Manincor. For his services to Austria, the Emperor raised him to the nobility and endowed him with land on the shores of Lake Kaltern. Having supplied many of the co-ops in Caldaro and Terlano for many years, Count Michael Goëss-Enzenberg took over the estate from his uncle in 1991 and in 1996 began to produce wines under the estate's own label: Manincor. They make a wide range of wines but may make some of the best sauvignon blanc that we taste each year. In 2021, the Manincor Sauvignon Alto Adige Lieben Aich 2019 was our No. 12 wine in Italy and No. 70 in the world. It has a breathtakingly refined nose with all the facets of the lemon, from the blossom to the candied fruit, with the hint of oak effortlessly integrated on the incredibly silky palate. We promise that after tasting some of the incredible aromatic white wines from Manincor, you will not look at sauvignon blanc or petit manseng the same.



# ATA RANGI

## · MARTINBOROUGH ·

MARTINBOROUGH, NEW ZEALAND



### ATA RANGI PINOT NOIR MARTINBOROUGH 2019

98 Pts.

*"A complex wine from the outset with gently reductive notes and modern oak spice threading into fresh cherry, spiced bread, rose, forest wood and blood orange, as well as darker cherry notes. The palate tells the full story. This displays real power and definition with clear-cut and powerful tannins. The intensity of the red-cherry fruit is impressive and the way it occupies the finish with length and uplift is the thing that defines great pinot noir per se. Strong vintage. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap."*

Clive Paton couldn't afford to buy top-quality pinot noir, so he figured why not try to make some of his own. Little did he know he would become known as one of his country's best producers. Without much money, Paton sold a herd of cows he owned and bought a small sheep paddock he knew in the area. Martinborough was not known for grape growing at the time and his farming friends thought he was crazy for thinking he could plant vines. But Clive knew the property well, with its stony soils from scrapping his knees playing rugby on it, and he reckoned it would be the perfect site for a vineyard. Clive's sister, Ali, shared his vision and soon bought another five hectares of neighboring land. In 1987 they were joined by Phyll Pattie, a winemaker from Marlborough, who not only became Clive's wife but brought energy and talent to the team. Today, Ata Rangi is known the world over for its fantastic quality pinot noir, which we adore for its crystal-clear fruit and seemingly effortless depth. In 2021, the Ata Rangi Pinot Noir Martinborough 2019 was our Top Red Wine of New Zealand and ranked No. 2 on our Top 100 Wines of New Zealand list and No. 71 on our global list. It displays real power and definition, with clear-cut tannins and a real intensity of red-cherry fruit. Pioneers from the start, Ata Rangi has never stopped leading the way in innovation and quality and are the forefathers for the entire Martinborough region.



DOURO, PORTUGAL



## QUINTA DO VALE MEÃO DOURO 2018

99 Pts.

*"Aromas of plum, mulberry, blueberry, oyster shell, olive, cedar, mocha and oregano. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, velvety and chewy tannins. Layered and so supple with a beautiful, transparent and polished core of blue fruit. Racy. Very fine and long. A blend of 50% touriga nacional, 45% touriga franca, 3% tinta barroca and 2% tinta roriz. Delicious already, but better from 2022."*

Quinta Do Vale Meao is a relatively young label but as an estate it has been a top producer in the upper Douro valley of Portugal for more than 100 years. The 300-hectare estate was founded in 1877 by Antonia Adelaide Ferreira, who at the time was the owner of the largest winemaking estate in the Douro, with the hopes that the unused land could be developed into a new model for vineyard sites in the region. By 1895, the vineyard plantings were complete, and the fruit was sold to A.A. Ferreira until 1998, when the family reconsolidated the shares to produce wine under their own label. Since 1999, Quinta Do Vale Meao has been a star. Their fortified wines are dense and balanced with incredible aging potential that any collector would be happy to have in their cellar. But it's their table wines that really shine for us and we think they are some of the best in Portugal. We ranked the Quinta Do Vale Meão Douro 2018 at No. 72 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World in 2021, finding aromas of plum, mulberry, oyster shell and olive, among others, alongside a beautiful, transparent and polished core of blue fruit.

# Clonakilla

NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA



## CLONAKILLA SYRAH CANBERRA DISTRICT MURRUMBATEMAN 2019

98 Pts.

*“Stunning quality here. This elegant and spicy syrah smells of red cherry, pepper, plum, blueberry, orange zest and woody spice. The texture is sleek and velvety with long and fresh red-cherry and plum flavor and a silky texture that’s akin to top pinot. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.”*

Surprised that no one had planted vines in the cool southern table lands of Canberra despite the environment’s clear suitability, local research scientist John Kirk bought a 44-acre plot of land in 1971 and planted vines himself. Little did he know his wines would go on to be some of the country’s best. At first Kirk planted riesling and cabernet sauvignon, which proved positive results. While many producers in Australia look to Southern Rhone blends for inspiration, Kirk looked to the Northern Rhone. After a visit to legendary producer Guigal, chief winemaker Tim Kirk introduced co-fermenting a small amount of viognier with the shiraz to great success. Their wines across the board are always a delight and we feel their syrah is as stylish and refined as any we taste each year. In 2021, Clonakilla’s Syrah Canberra District Murrumbateman 2019 ranked as our No. 5 Australian wine and came in at No. 73 on our global list. It’s of stunning quality – elegant and spicy and smells of red cherry, pepper, plum, blueberry, orange zest and woody spice. It’s one to drink over the next decade.



## CENTRAL OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND


**RIPPON PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO  
MATURE VINE 2018**
**98 Pts.**

*“Dried strawberries, mushrooms, bark and flowers on the nose. It changes all the time! Full-bodied with intense yet refined tannins that drive the center palate to a long and almost endless finish. Great length. Great wine as always! Impressive to taste now, but this will be even better in three to five years. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.”*

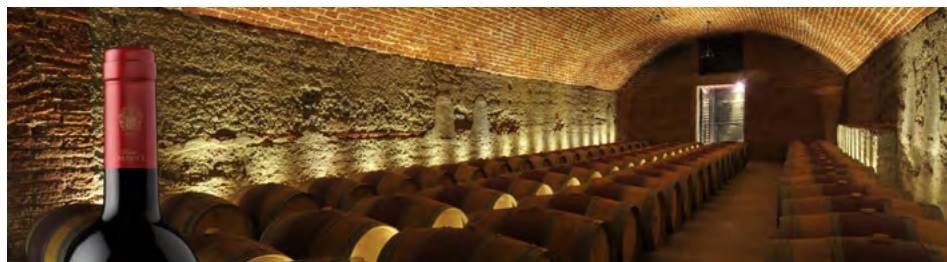
Located in New Zealand's Central Otago region, Rippon produces fantastic pinot noir that could easily compete with many of the greats from Burgundy. Originally founded by Rolfe and Lois Mills in 1974, Rippon has steadily grown their pinot noir program over the years and have zeroed in on a style that focuses on their unique terroir. Their grapes are grown on metamorphic mother rock, rich in foliated mica and quartzite with long daily exposure to the sun at 330 meters of elevation on the slopes of Lake Wanaka. James says it is one of the most beautiful vineyards in the world. Nick Mills, the son of Rolfe and Lois, studied from the greats in Burgundy at Domaine Jean-Jacques Confuron and Domaine de la Romanee-Conti as well as Alsace's Domaine Albert Mann. Rippon is in good hands. He is able to effortlessly translate their land into the wines while having incredibly structured tannins that allow for the fruit to carry on for minutes. In 2021, Rippon's Pinot Noir Central Otago Mature Vine 2018 ranked as our No. 3 New Zealand wine and No. 74 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. It presents with dried strawberries, mushrooms, bark and flowers, but changes all the time, and as always is a great wine.




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 VALLE CENTRAL, CHILE
 

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**VIÑEDO CHADWICK CABERNET  
SAUVIGNON VALLE DE MAIPO 2019**

**99 Pts.**

*“Subtle and very beautiful with currants, tarragon, basil and rose petals in the aromas. It’s full-bodied, yet agile and so fine-textured with superb tannins that provide multi-layers on the palate. It’s refined, yet powerful at the end. Suggests greatness and longevity. Lots of blackcurrants, stones and violets in the after taste. Cabernet sauvignon with a touch of petit verdot. This needs three or four years to show its true greatness.”*

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Viñedo Chadwick is one of the great small single-vineyard wines of the Andes that scored a perfect 100 points for its 2014 and 2017 wines. Owned by Eduardo Chadwick, Viñedo Chadwick represents the best of Chilean wine and is traded around the world like a Bordeaux first growth. The estate is right next door to Almaviva on the outskirts of the capital, Santiago, and has stone soils that James says reminds him of the great first growth of Bordeaux: Chateau Haut-Brion. The Viñedo Chadwick Cabernet Sauvignon Valle de Maipo 2019 finished in 75th place on our global list of the Top 100 Wines of 2021. It’s full-bodied, yet agile and so fine-textured with superb tannins that provide multi-layers on the palate. Refined, yet powerful at the end, suggesting greatness and longevity.



## REMELLURI



LA RIOJA, SPAIN



### GRANJA DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE REMELLURI RIOJA BLANCO 2018

98 Pts.

*"This is a fantastic white with tightness and freshness and such bright acidity. Sliced apple, pear, pineapple and lilac. Full-bodied yet tight and so fresh, Goes on for minutes. Great length. Precise and transparent. From organically grown grapes. Want to drink it now, but it's one of the cellar."*

Granja Nuestra Señora de Remelluri is one of the oldest wineries in Rioja, founded in the 14th century by Hieronymite monks and rediscovered in 1967 by Jaime Rodríguez Salis. The site was in disrepair and needed expert help, which Jaime devoted to revitalizing. By 1971 the estate was up and running and produced the first single-vineyard Rioja of the modern era. Being a single-vineyard estate, Remelluri is founded on the concept of terroir and trying to let the land speak through the wines it produces. Today, the winery is run by Jaime's children, Telmo Rodríguez (winemaker) and Amaia Rodríguez Hernandorena (administrator), who are legends in their own right and are committed to their father's vision of high-quality, site-specific wines. We adore the character and transparent nature of the wines Remelluri produces. And while most people think of Remelluri as a solid red wine producers, their whites can be stunning and some of the best in Spain. In 2021, Granja Nuestra Señora de Remelluri Rioja Blanco 2018 was our No. 5 Spanish wine and ranked No. 76 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. This is a fantastic white with tightness and freshness and such bright acidity. Sliced apple, pear, pineapple and lilac. Full-bodied yet tight and so fresh, Goes on for minutes.

CHÂTEAU  
BÉLAIR-MONANGE

PREMIER GRAND CRU CLASSÉ  
SAINT-ÉMILION

BORDEAUX, FRANCE



CHÂTEAU BÉLAIR-MONANGE  
ST.-EMILION 2018

99 Pts.

*“Very intense blackberries, black olives, blueberries and dried flowers. Stony minerality. Even some pine. Full-bodied with superb depth of fruit and ultra fine tannins that are intense and polished. The finish is so long and delivers so much flavor, from wet earth to blackberry again. Seamless palate. Try after 2026.”*

Chateau Belair-Monange is the latest addition to the Christian Moueix family holdings in Bordeaux, which also include such illustrious names as La Fleur-Petrus, Trotanoy and Hosanna in Pomerol, and Dominus Estate and Ulysses in Napa Valley. Located at the highest point of St.-Emilion's limestone plateau, Chateau Belair-Monange dates the origins of its vineyard to Roman times, but it was only established under its current identity after the 2011 vintage, when the family combined the vineyards of Chateau Belair and Chateau Magdelaine. This is an estate that marvels with its fantastic young wines, including the 100-point 2015. The Château Bélaïr-Monange St.-Emilion 2018 was the No. 77 wine on our list of Top 100 Wines of 2021. We loved its stony minerality. It is full-bodied with superb depth of fruit and ultra-fine tannins that are intense and polished, with a finish that delivers much flavor.

# EMILIANA

ORGANIC  VINEYARDS

VALLE CENTRAL, CHILE



## EMILIANA VALLE DE COLCHAGUA LOS ROBLES ESTATE GÊ 2018

98 Pts.

*"A complex nose of blackberry, plum, mocha, cigar box, graphite and spice. It's full-bodied with fine tannins. Creamy-textured and structured with a juicy core. Pure with a velvety texture on the palate, which is layered and balanced and leads to a flavorful finish that lasts over and over. Spicy on the finish with cloves and black pepper. Grilled meat, too. A blend of 52% syrah, 34% carmenere and 14% cabernet sauvignon. From biodynamically grown grapes. Vegan. Try in 2023."*

Focused on the creation of high-quality wines, over the past two decades Emiliana has become one of the world's largest organic and biodynamic wineries. It owns more than 1,000 hectares in Chile's most renowned winegrowing valleys, and the outstanding quality of its wines is an expression both of their origin and the respect and harmony Emiliana shows toward nature and humanity. The Emiliana Valle de Colchagua Los Robles Estate Gê 2018 was our Chilean Wine of the Year and No. 78 wine on our list of Top 100 Wines of 2021. A blend of 52 percent syrah, 34 percent carmenere and 14 percent cabernet sauvignon, it has a complex nose of blackberry, plum, mocha, cigar box, graphite and spice. It's also pure, with a velvety texture on the palate, which is layered and balanced and leads to a flavorful finish that lasts over and over.



## SCHÄFER-FRÖHLICH

MOSEL, GERMANY



### SCHÄFER-FRÖHLICH RIESLING NAHE FELSENECK GG 2020

98 Pts.

*"The very refined, flinty and slatey nose pulls you deep down into this astonishingly elegant riesling GG that's almost bone dry, yet glides gracefully over the palate. Then, life becomes very serious, with a long tunnel through this wild and wonderful, rocky hill country and finally you land in a pit of rock salt at the finish. From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drink or hold."*

A family-run business for more than 200 years, Schafer-Frohlich owns vineyards in the central Nahe region in Germany. All the vineyards are situated on steep slopes on barren, rocky soils, and produce wines with great finesse and elegance. Tim Frohlich has turned an unremarkable estate into one of Germany's best, producing exceptional riesling, mostly, but also pinot blanc and pinot noir, as well as a smattering of other varieties. In 2021, Schäfer-Fröhlich Riesling Nahe Felseneck GG 2020 was ranked No. 11 on our Top 100 Wines of Germany and No. 79 on our Top 100 Wines of the World. Its very refined, flinty and slatey nose pulls you deep down into this astonishingly elegant riesling GG that's almost bone dry yet glides gracefully over the palate.



ALSACE, FRANCE



## DOMAINE ZIND HUMBRECHT RIESLING ALSACE GRAND CRU BRAND 2019

98 Pts.

*"A giant of minerality with enormous structure, this also delights you with the stunningly ripe apricot and pineapple fruit that's wrapped around its dense core. This will surely only get better for many years to come, as it slowly reveals its deep riches. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drinkable now, but better from 2023."*

Domaine Zind Humbrecht is one of the leading producers in Alsace, with more than 40 hectares under vine at five Grands Crus and five different single-vineyard sites. Zind Humbrecht gets its name from the Zind and Humbrecht families, who both produced wine under separate names until 1959, when they came together to create Domaine Zind Humbrecht. It is currently operated by Olivier and Margaret Humbrecht, who took over from their parents in 1989, their son, Pierre-Emile, joined the domaine in 2019. Since that time, they have been leaders in sustainable farming, and they received the coveted Biodyvin biodynamic certification in 2002. They produce some of the most delicious, terroir-driven wines in all of Alsace with a keen eye toward following what each vintage calls for and producing the best wines possible no matter what the conditions. In 2021, Domaine Zind Humbrecht's Riesling Alsace Grand Cru Brand 2019 was our No. 20 French wine and rated No. 80 globally. A giant of minerality with enormous structure, this also delights you with the stunningly ripe apricot and pineapple fruit that's wrapped around its dense core.



CHATEAU  
TROTTE VIEILLE

BORDEAUX, FRANCE

CHÂTEAU TROTTEVIEILLE ST.-EMILION  
2018

98 Pts.

*"Aromas of ripe berry, mushroom, ash and smoke follow through to a full body with a ripe, juicy center palate and lots of creamy tannins that are balanced and refined. Generous and very intense. Tight palate now. Give it time. Try after 2025."*

Chateau Trottevieille has come into its own in the past decade, producing some top-quality reds with structure and finesse. This has all been thanks to the Casteja Family, which has put together a great team of winemakers at the property. You must appreciate the aromatic subtlety of these reds, which show pure, delicate berry-fruit character when young, but turn opulent and almost decadent with age. The 12-hectare property is located a short walk from the town of St.-Emilion, next door to such illustrious names as Troplong Mondot and Pavie Macquin. The quality is similar, the price more reasonable, making it one of the great value wines in top-class Bordeaux. The Chateau Trottevieille St.-Emilion 2018 finished in the No. 81 spot on our list of Top 100 Wines of 2021. It's a generous and intense wine, with aromas of ripe berry, mushroom, ash and smoke following through to a full body with a ripe, juicy center palate and lots of creamy tannins that are balanced and refined.

# RIDGE VINEYARDS

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

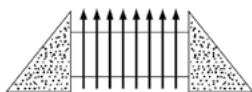


## RIDGE VINEYARDS SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS MONTE BELLO 2017

99 Pts.

*"This shows incredible intensity and depth of blackberries, pine needles, blackcurrants and black olives. Conifer, too. Love the nose. Full-bodied with so many layers of fruit and very fine, creamy tannins. It goes on for minutes. Impressive density with such weightlessness. Superb wine. Drink in 2026 and onwards."*

Ridge Vineyards is one of the most famous names in all of California wine, as they are one of the original producers to compete at the Judgment of Paris in 1976, when their 1971 Monte Bello Cabernet Sauvignon placed fifth overall. Ridge was founded by Stanford engineers David Bunnion, Charles Rosen, Hewitt Crane and Howard Zeidler, who purchased the 19th-century vineyard in 1959 with the idea to create fantastic Bordeaux-inspired wines. Even in the mid 1960s, Ridge was daring and expanded their holdings all over California with a particular interest in finding terroir-driven zinfandel, which was highly unusual at the time. They have continued to be reference points for quality and consistency over the years, with some of their older bottles going for hundreds of dollars on the vintage market. Monte Bello remains their flagship wine and continues to be one of the great Bordeaux-style wines produced in northern California each year, with the 2015 vintage given 100 points and deemed our American Wine of the Year in 2018. In 2021, Ridge Monte Bello was rated 99 points and ranked 26th on our list of Top 100 Wines of the USA and 82nd on our global Top 100 list. This wine shows incredible intensity and depth of blackberries, pine needles, blackcurrants and black olives. Full-bodied with so many layers of fruit and very fine, creamy tannins. It goes on for minutes.



# VIÑA EL PISON

LA RIOJA, SPAIN



ARTADI ALAVA VIÑA EL PISON 2018

99 Pts.

*“Crushed blackberries and blueberries with some flowers, such as violets and lavender. Bark, too. Medium-to full-bodied with layers of ripe, refined tannins with a cool undertone. Plenty of subtle blackberry and wet-earth undertones. From organically grown grapes. Drink after 2024.”*

Wine under the Viña El Pison label has been produced since 1991 but the vineyards for Viña El Pison were first planted by Jenaro San Pedro Carrera in 1945. Just 2.4 hectares in size, this special piece of prized land produces bold and rich wines from Laguardia from sandy limestone and clay soils. In style, Viña El Pison can best be described as pushing toward the future while paying homage to the great traditions of the region. They are incredibly meticulous in their wood management and using much less in recent vintages to preserve the character and beauty of their wines. The Artadi Alava Viña El Pison 2018 was our No. 3 Spanish wine in 2021 and ranked No 83 on our world list. It's got crushed blackberries and blueberries with some flowers, such as violets and lavender. Medium- to full-bodied with layers of ripe, refined tannins and a cool undertone. Whether you drink it now or hold, Viña El Pison makes some of the best wines of Alava and Spain each year, and you will not be disappointed whenever you choose to open a bottle.



## VALLE CENTRAL, CHILE



### MONTES CARMENERE PETIT VERDOT VALLE DE COLCHAGUA PURPLE ANGEL 2018

98 Pts.

*"Blackberry, blueberry, sage and five spice on the nose. Medium-to full-bodied with fine tannins. Balanced and creamy with a fresh, juicy character palate. Silky texture with great structure. Savory finish with length. Peppery and spicy aftertaste. A blend of 92% carmenere and 8% petit verdot. Try in 2023."*

Founded by Aurelio Montes, Douglas Murray, Alfredo Vidaurre and Pedro Grand in 1988, Chilean winery Montes set the benchmark for premium South American wine production. Today, most of its best wines are produced in Colchagua Valley, one of South America's most prestigious wine regions. It was Montes that first planted the relatively unknown syrah grape varietal in Colchagua, and many Chileans thought it was a crazy idea. Now, Montes produces what some believe is the best pure syrah in Chile with its Folly label. However, we nearly always prefer their superb carmenere blend, Purple Angel, with almost every vintage succeeding the previous as the best carmenere in Chile. The Montes Carmenera Petit Verdot Valle de Colchagua Purple Angel 2018 was the No. 84 wine on our list of Top 100 Wines of 2021. This is a balanced and creamy wine with a fresh, juicy character palate, as well as a silky texture with great structure.



VALDICAVA

TUSCANY, ITALY



### VALDICAVA BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO MADONNA DEL PIANO RISERVA 2016

99 Pts.

*"This is heavenly on the nose with fresh flowers such as violet and cherries with undertones of freshly shaved sandalwood. It's full-bodied with very fine tannins that are focused and intense with a polished nature. This is a complete wine that impresses at every level. Give it at least five to six years to come together and resolve the tannin structure. Better after 2027."*

There is something almost mystical about the Brunello di Montalcino from the wonderful estate of Valdicava. The mystique must emanate from the sublime vineyards on the north side of Montalcino, where the sangiovese grapes are exquisite, and, of course, the guru-like dedication of owner Vincenzo Abbruzzese, who hired the dream team of winemaker Attilio Pagli and agronomist Andrea Paoletti to enhance the property that had belonged to his grandparents. Vincenzo is one of the most capable winemakers in Montalcino and makes one of the most age-worthy Brunellos in the region. Valdicava makes a regular Brunello bottling, as well as a single-vineyard riserva, Madonna del Piano. The 2001, 2006, 2010 and 2015 Madonnas were all rated 100 points by JamesSuckling.com. In 2021, Valdicava Brunello Di Montalcino Madonna Del Piano Riserva 2016 was No. 17 on our Top 100 Wines of Italy list and No. 85 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. This is heavenly on the nose, with fresh flowers such as violet and cherries with undertones of freshly shaved sandalwood. This is a complete wine that impresses at every level.



## TYRRELL'S



NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA



### TYRRELL'S SEMILLON HUNTER VALLEY VAT 1 2021

**98 Pts.**

*"Vat 1 is always built for long-term aging, and this is certainly one set to age so well. Aromas of pure lemon juice and peel. The taut, lemon-drenched palate is a thrilling thing to taste now, but is really made for the cellar. Impressive! Drink over the next decade or more. Screw cap."*

While Edward Tyrrell first planted vines in Australia back in 1858, it was not until 1959 that Murray Tyrrell would start producing wines under the family label. They have been critically acclaimed ever since, with their wines selling well outside of Hunter Valley and across the globe. Today, Tyrrell's has 304 acres of dry farmed land in Hunter Valley and another 65 acres in Central Victoria/Heathcote, all overseen by fourth-generation family member Bruce Tyrrell. While they have some fantastic chardonnay and shiraz, we absolutely adore their semillon, which takes on a whole different layer of succulent complexity as it ages. In 2021, Tyrrell's Semillon Hunter Valley Vat 1 2021 was our Top Australian White Wine and ranked No. 6 among our Top 100 Wines of Australia and No. 86 on our list of the Top 100 Wines of the World. Vat 1 is always built for long-term aging, and this is certainly one set to age so well, with aromas of pure lemon juice and peel.



# TRAPICHE

ARGENTINA

MENDOZA, ARGENTINA



## TRAPICHE MALBEC CABERNET FRANC MENDOZA ISCAY 2017

98 Pts.

*"Spices, fresh herbs and dark fruit, such as blackcurrants and berries. So aromatic. Full-bodied with firm, tight tannins that give the wine form and texture. Flavorful and still tight. Superb structure and length. Malbec from Guallatary and cabernet franc La Consulta. Delicious now, but better in a year or two."*

One of the oldest wineries in Argentina, Trapiche has a global reputation for fine winemaking. Led by director of winemaking Daniel Pi, this beautiful winery in Maipu is among the most sophisticated in Mendoza. Trapiche makes a wide range of wines, from tiny-production, single-vineyard malbecs to large-production, great-value wines. All of the vineyards are in the Uco Valley, where the high altitude, low fertility and mineral content of the soils contribute to the wines' purity and minerality. Trapiche also pays tribute to the winegrowers from which the estate sources its fruit, with a range of single-vineyard malbecs named the Terroir Series. Recently, we have been equally impressed with Trapiche's whites, particularly the chardonnays from coastal regions as well as Mendoza. In 2021, the Trapiche Malbec Cabernet Franc Mendoza Iscay 2017 was our Argentine Wine of the Year and ranked at No. 87 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. It's such an aromatic wine, with a full body and firm, tight tannins that give it form and texture. Delicious now, but better in a year or two.



CASTILLA Y LEÓN, SPAIN



### VEGA SICILIA RIBERA DEL DUERO RESERVA ESPECIAL UNICO

99 Pts.

*"Sweet-berry, walnut, licorice and violet aromas that follow through to a full body with round, chewy tannins that are polished and beautiful. Notes of iron, too. The tannins are broad and mouth filling, giving a caressing and exciting texture on the palate. If you give this a year to two to soften, it will deliver even greater richness and flavor. A blend of 2008, 2010 and 2011. Great after 2023."*

Bodegas Vega Sicilia in northern Spain is the country's unofficial first growth and its most prestigious wine estate. The winery was founded in 1864 by Don Eloy Lecanda y Chaves, who planted various vines from Bordeaux, including cabernet sauvignon and merlot, which are still being used in the wines today. The Vega Sicilia estate covers around 1,000 hectares. The driveway to Vega Sicilia is flanked by its splendid Japanese garden, where visitors are welcomed by the wealth of bamboo, sequoias and maples. Their bottling facility is a climate-controlled building where the wines are left to rest years after aging in barrels. They make dense, complex red wines, principally from the tempranillo grape. They make a unique wine that is one of James' favorites from Spain – a blend of various vintages. In 2021, the Vega Sicilia Ribera Del Duero Reserva Especial Unico (a blend of 2008, 2010 and 2011) was ranked as our No. 4 Spanish wine and No. 88 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. Its tannins are broad and mouth-filling, giving a caressing and exciting texture on the palate. If you give this a year to two to soften, it will deliver even greater richness and flavor.




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 CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES
 

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 HYDE DE VILLAINES CHARDONNAY NAPA  
 VALLEY CARNEROS HYDE VINEYARD  
 2018

98 Pts.

*“Opulent aromas of cooked apple, lemon rind, light praline and stone. Full-bodied with linear and lively acidity that runs through the wine. Energetic and bright with tightness and structure. Steely. Drinkable now, but better in 2023.”*

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A family venture between Hyde Vineyards of Napa Valley and Aubert & Pamela de Villaine of Burgundy, France – also the co-owners of the famed Domaine de la Romanée-Conti – Hyde de Villaine, also known as HdV, has become renowned for its unique expression of the Carneros terroir. It produces precise single-vineyard wines from its Hyde Vineyard, which grows over shallow loamy soils and ancient streambeds to produce bright, flavorful and exquisitely pretty wines. The Hyde de Villaine Chardonnay Napa Valley Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2018 was the No. 89 wine on our Top 100 Wines of 2021 list. It has opulent aromas of cooked apple, lemon rind, light praline and stone, and is full-bodied with linear and lively acidity that runs through the wine.

## BERTANI

VENETO, ITALY

BERTANI AMARONE DELLA  
VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO 2012

98 Pts.



*“Wow. Such a complex nose, with a base of dried cherry, spruced up with hints of mild coffee and walnuts. Then there are dried flowers, wild herbs and spices, such as tarragon and cloves. Subtle hints of dried banana and apricot, too. The palate is full, super sleek, intense and well-balanced, with tight, spice-coated tannins that drive everything forward. Long, long finish. Lovely to taste now, but this already almost ten-year-old will sit comfortably in your cellar for a long while yet.”*

Bertani, which is synonymous with Amarone, has been a pioneering producer in Veneto and the Valpolicella region since 1857. After brothers Gaetano and Giovanni Battista Bertani visited Burgundy in the 1800s, they brought back techniques taught to them by agronomist Jules Guyot and were the first to produce Veronese wines like Valpolicella ripasso, recioto and Soave on a large scale. Today, Bertani applies the same philosophy of the two brothers, carrying on their legacy. It has been able to maintain the touchstone status of their winery with delicious, linear and complex wines year after year. In 2021, the Bertani Amarone Della Valpolicella Classico 2012 ranked No. 15 on our Top 100 Wines of Italy list and No. 90 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. This is another “wow” wine for us, with such a complex nose and a palate that is full, super sleek, intense and well-balanced. When you taste Bertani wines, you are tasting the greatness of Amarone as it was envisioned by some of its most dedicated pioneers.





TUSCANY, ITALY



### RENIERI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA 2016

98 Pts.

*“Enticing black truffle aromas with cherry and strawberry. The palate is full and tight with super polished tannins that are layered and refined. Great length. Goes on and on. Try after 2025 but already captivating.”*

Marco Bacci of the respected Chianti Classico estate Castello di Bossi bought this gorgeous Brunello vineyard in the late 1990s. However, it is only now that the Renieri vines have reached a good age to yield superlative grapes, and the wines are coming into their own. The Brunellos di Montalcino and Super Tuscans have been excellent since the 2006 vintage. The former show fabulous depth and fruit yet remain polished. Renieri's 100-point 2010 Riserva was a revelation, garnering second spot on James' list of the best Italian wines of 2016. Renieri's 2015 Brunello was also rated 100 points in 2019. Their Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2016 finished at No. 91 on our list of Top 100 Wines of 2021, and we noted it for its enticing black truffle aromas, with cherry and strawberry, with a palate that is full and tight with super-polished tannings that are layered and refined. This is a red-hot estate in Tuscany to watch. Don't miss it.



# T O R B R E C K

BAROSSA VALLEY

SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AUSTRALIA



## TORBRECK SHIRAZ BAROSSA VALLEY THE FACTOR 2018

98 Pts.

*"A pristine nose of ripe and intense blackberries, blueberries and redcurrants, as well as some sanguine, rust-like notes. This is an excellent edition of The Factor. I like the power and focus this wine delivers and, in 2018, it is a wine of great length and presence. Abundant ripe blackberries bathe the palate. Try from 2025."*

Situated on the western ridge of Marananga in the Barossa Valley, South Australia, Torbreck was established in 1994. Torbreck's focus on Rhone varietals like grenache, shiraz and mataro (more commonly known as mourvedre), has only sharpened with an expansion of other varietals in 2018 such as cunoise, carignane on their Hillside Vineyard estate. The vines are ancient, with some as old as 170 years, and the result is wines of phenomenal depth and texture. We applaud Torbreck's recent shift from the high-octane style of Barossa reds to an approach with more finesse and complexity. The wines get better every vintage. In 2021, Torbreck Shiraz Barossa Valley The Factor 2018 ranked No. 11 among our Top 100 Wines of Australia and No. 92 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. This is an excellent edition of The Factor. The power and focus of this wine really delivers and, in 2018, it is a wine of great length and presence.

# WEINGUT ROBERT WEIL

RHEINGAU, GERMANY



## ROBERT WEIL RIESLING RHEINGAU KIEDRICH GRÄFENBERG GG 2020

98 Pts.

*"This very youthful GG needs some aeration to open up, but with every swirl of the glass more wild herbs, red-fleshed vineyard peaches and exotic floral nuances emerge. Very concentrated, yet cool and focused, with a very precise interplay of tangerine fruit, wet-stone minerality and a hint of oak that echoes down the valleys. Drinkable now, but best from 2023."*

Despite being founded in the 19th century, Robert Weil is still considered one of the younger wineries in the Rheingau, but it is also one of the region's most beloved producers. With 90 hectares under vine, they only make rieslings, and they pride themselves on meticulous vineyard management, which can mean harvesting a single vineyard by hand up to 17 times to get it just right. Their wines range from bone dry to luscious, but all are made to the highest caliber. In 2021, Robert Weil's Riesling Rheingau Kiedrich Gräfenberg GG 2020 ranked No. 12 on our Top 100 Wines of Germany list and No. 93 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list, and the Robert Weil Riesling Rheingau Monte Vacano Trocken 2019 ranked No. 34 among our Top 100 Wines of Germany. This very youthful GG needs some aeration to open up, but with every swirl of the glass more wild herbs, red-fleshed vineyard peaches and exotic floral nuances emerge. One of the great things about Robert Weil is that they do produce quite a bit of wine, even at the top end, so there is no excuse not to go out and find some of their premier rieslings at a wine shop near you.

# DON MELCHOR

VALLE CENTRAL, CHILE



## VIÑA DON MELCHOR CABERNET SAUVIGNON PUENTE ALTO 2019

98 Pts.

*“Very perfumed and aromatic with blackcurrant, sweet-tobacco and Spanish-cedar character. Full-bodied with ultra fine tannins that build on the palate and take the fruit and other flavors to an endless finish. More refined than the perfect 2018 and almost as compelling. Drink in 2023 or after.”*

Viña Don Melchor is the standalone winery owned by Concha y Toro, South America’s largest wine company and one of the world’s top five global exporters. Founded in 1883, the group was one of the first producers to bring Bordeaux varietals to Chile, and offers a wide range of high-quality, attractively priced Chilean wines. Don Melchor is one of Chile’s “icon” wines – a beautifully dense, cabernet sauvignon-based wine with wonderful aromas of stones, mint and blackcurrants. Produced in the Alto Maipo Valley, the wine is made from grapes planted in the same vineyard used to make Almaviva, which is jointly owned by Concha y Toro and Château Mouton-Rothschild. In 2021, Viña Don Melchor Cabernet Sauvignon Puente Alto 2019 ranked No. 4 among our Chilean wines and No. 94 on our Top 100 Wines of the World list. It’s very perfumed and aromatic with blackcurrant, sweet-tobacco and Spanish-cedar character. Full-bodied with ultra-fine tannins that build on the palate and take the fruit and other flavors to an endless finish.

# Dom Pérignon®

CHAMPAGNE, FRANCE



## DOM PÉRIGNON CHAMPAGNE ROSÉ VINTAGE 2008

99 Pts.



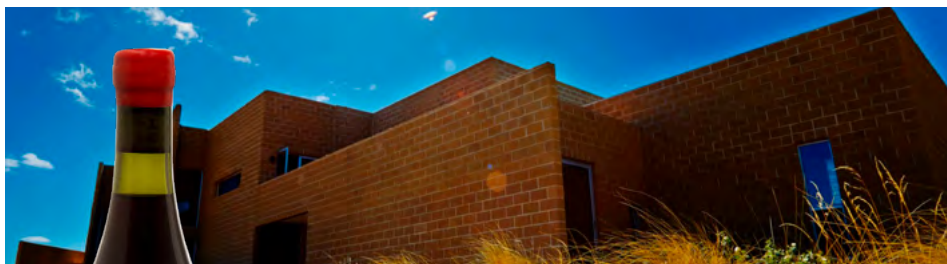
*“This shows incredible depth of fruit with strawberry, cherry and phenolics. Full-bodied and layered with an incredible, three-dimensional element to the wine. This is so transparent and dynamic with dark fruit, yet it remains vivid and bright. Refined and precise, it goes on and on. Really savory, fresh and incredibly pinot-noir-like. What a wine. 13 years of maturation in the bottle. So drinkable now, but it will age for many years ahead.”*

Moët & Chandon's Dom Pérignon Champagne is synonymous with quality and luxury, having grown into one of the most famous brands in the world. But the name comes from humble beginnings – Dom Pierre Pérignon was a cellar monk at the Benedictine abbey of Hautvillers in France. Pérignon is noted for his numerous contributions to the creation of the now titled “traditional method” of sparkling wine production as well as being the first person to blend grapes during the process, which in turn helped curtail many common winemaking defects of the era. Today, the Dom Pérignon label is only produced in exceptional years and therefore has only been produced 44 times since 1921. Dom Pérignon is often a benchmark for us at JamesSuckling.com in terms of quality and complexity in vintage Champagnes, with the 2008 vintage in particular a prime example. We rated the Dom Pérignon Champagne Rosé 2008 a solid 99 points and placed it in the No. 95 spot on our list of the Top 100 Wines of the World in 2021 and 24th among our Top 100 Wines of France. It's a Champagne with incredible depth of fruit with strawberry, cherry and phenolics, and is so transparent and dynamic with dark fruit, yet it remains vivid and bright. What a wine. So drinkable now, but it will age for many years ahead.



# CHACRA

PATAGONIA, ARGENTINA



## CHACRA PINOT NOIR PATAGONIA CINCUENTA Y CINCO 2020

98 Pts.

*“Extremely perfumed and beautiful with ripe strawberries and citrus fruit, as well as aromatic flowers. Full-bodied with plenty of fruit and creamy, chewy tannins that are polished and very impressive. Long and linear. One of the best of this bottling. Drink after 2023, but already a gorgeous bottle.”*

Chacra is unusual in Argentina in that rather than focusing on the ubiquitous malbec, their emphasis is on pinot noir. And what success they’ve had – their 2018 Pinot Noir Patagonia Treinta y Dos was our No. 1 wine of 2020. Chacra is noteworthy not only for the high quality of their wines but also for their environmentally sustainable production methods. Chacra was founded in 2004 by Piero Incisa della Rocchetta, whose family owns the famous Tuscan winery Tenuta San Guido, of Sassicaia fame. After a few trips to the region, he acquired an ancient, head-pruned vineyard planted in 1932, which still provides the name for the winery’s flagship wine Treinta y Dos (“32” in Spanish). Chacra now makes five high-quality pinots, all cultivated biodynamically. They also make fantastic chardonnays, with their flagship chard made in partnership with esteemed Burgundy producer Jean-Marc Roulot, who plays a hands-on role with Piero in Patagonia, helping with planting, farming and vinifying. In 2021, Chacra Pinot Noir Patagonia Cincuenta y Cinco 2020 was ranked No. 5 on our Top 100 Wines of Argentina and No. 96 on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World. This is one of the best of this bottling – long and linear, and extremely perfumed and beautiful with ripe strawberries and citrus fruit. Just a gorgeous bottle.



ALSACE, FRANCE



FAMILLE HUGEL RIESLING ALSACE  
GRAND CRU SCHOENENBOURG GROSSI  
LÂUE 2015

98 Pts.

*“What a stunningly fresh nose for a five-year-old Alsace dry riesling. Vibrant nose of fresh pineapple with a whole garden of fresh-herb aromas. Rich and concentrated, but also cool and delicate at the front, then comes stunning, racy power that drives across the palate with great mineral energy. Doesn’t want to stop at the finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.”*

Famille Hugel is one of the most influential producers in Alsace, with a long-standing tradition of quality that echoes around the world. Hugel is one of the producers who helped create Alsace’s classification system, and their Vendange Tardive (“late harvest”) wines are the basis for the lawful designation of the style. They make wonderful wines, from dry to sweet, and balance a style that acknowledges the traditions of the region while also pioneering its future. They are powerful and racy wines that burst with mineral energy. In 2021, Famille Hugel Riesling Alsace Grand Cru Schoenenbourg Grossi Lâue 2015 was ranked No. 25 on our list of the Top 100 Wines of France and No. 97 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. This is a rich and concentrated single-vineyard wine, but also cool and delicate at the front, then comes stunning, racy power that drives across the palate with great mineral energy. Famille Hugel has quite literally helped write the rulebook on Alsatian wine and they continue to innovate its future.

# KLEIN CONSTANTIA

— 1685 —

COASTAL REGION, SOUTH AFRICA



## KLEIN CONSTANTIA CONSTANTIA VIN DE CONSTANCE NATURAL SWEET WINE 2018

98 Pts.

*“Extraordinary aromas of white peaches, apricots, vanilla and flowers. Full-bodied and very sweet with so much sweet and dried fruit, such as apricots and tangerines, yet it maintains citrusy freshness and texture, with a long, very sweet finish. Always energetic and vivid. Great length to this. Goes on for minutes. It’s a sweet wine to drink when young, to marvel over the intensity and verve, yet also one to age for decades. Drink or hold.”*

Established in 1685 by Simon van der Stel, this scenic 146-hectare wine estate was the first wine farm in South Africa. A keen viticulturist, Van der Stel was the first to recognize the potential of the decomposed granite soil in the sheltered valley facing False Bay. Klein Constantia is noted particularly for its production of high-quality white wines, including sauvignon blanc, and is world-renowned for its revival of the famous 18th- and 19th-century Constantia sweet wine, known today as Vin de Constance. The Klein Constantia Constantia Vin de Constance Natural Sweet Wine 2018 was the No. 98 wine on our list of Top 100 Wines of the World in 2021. There are extraordinary aromas of white peaches, apricots, vanilla and flowers in this wine. Full-bodied with so much sweet and dried fruit, such as apricots and tangerines, yet it maintains citrusy freshness and texture, with a long, very sweet finish. Always energetic and vivid.



PIEDMONT, ITALY



## AZELIA BAROLO CERRETTA 2017

98 Pts.

*“Extremely aromatic with strawberries, flowers, and stones, following through to a full body with layers of fruit and round tannins that go on and on. Rich and opulent, yet polished and toned. A generous young Barolo. Drink in 2025.”*

Azelia has been producing in the Piemonte region of Italy for five generations now and continues to be one of our favorites each year. They produce three local varieties on their 16 hectares of land: dolcetto, barbera and nebbiolo. The wines are made by the father-and-son team Luigi and Lorenzo Scavino, who use the techniques handed down to them from their forefathers and are not afraid to use modern methods to craft the best wines possible. We adore their Barolos, which are full of life and come with excellent structure, allowing them to age for the long haul. In 2021, their Azelia Barolo Cerretta 2017, a special single-vineyard wine that is dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of the winery, finished at No. 22 on our Top 100 Wines of Italy list and No. 99 among our Top 100 Wines of the World. It's extremely aromatic with strawberries, flowers, and stones, following through to a full body with layers of fruit and round tannins that go on and on. Azelia has been seriously undervalued for years, and it quietly continues to make some of the world's best wines that don't even hit the \$100 mark a bottle.



TOKAJ, HUNGARY



### ROYAL TOKAJI TOKAJI ASZÚ 6 PUTTONYOS NYULÁSZÓ 2017

98 Pts.

*"Spicy and earthy notes of ginseng, dried pineapple, candied citrus, fig and toffee apple. The sweetness is balanced and complemented by earthy, complex layers. Lots of spicy botrytis character. Extremely long. Complex and thought-provoking with so much dried-fruit and spicy flavor at the end. Dense and tight, yet agile. Delicious now, but if you give it another five or six years, you will see even more. 5,541 bottles produced."*

Royal Tokaji is changing the world of Hungarian wines. Founded in 1990, Royal Tokaji produces white wines that range from dry to the sinisterly sweet style that it is famous for. Royal Tokaji goes above and beyond the norm for the region, pulling out dynamic spice and earthy complexity in a way we have rarely seen anywhere else in Hungary. The Royal Tokaji Tokaji Aszú 6 Puttonyos Nyulászó 2017 came in at No. 100 on our Top Wines of the World list in 2021, and our entire Hong Kong team believes it is the greatest wine from Hungary that we have ever tasted. The sweetness of this wine is balanced and complemented by earthy, complex layers. It's a thought-provoking pour, with so much dried-fruit and spicy flavor at the end. Royal Tokaji has set the benchmark for Hungarian wine, and we cannot wait to see what else their efforts bring.



# TOP 100 WINES OF ARGENTINA 2021



*Zekun Shuai,  
Associate Editor*

Don't be surprised that the malbec-cabernet franc blend Trapiche Malbec Cabernet Franc Mendoza Iscay 2017 came out ahead of all the other 1,800 wines we tasted from Argentina this year. The quality of this Mendoza winery's premium bottling has been incredibly consistent year after year, with each vintage scoring 95 points and above over the last decade. We decided to push it to center stage this year, with its sublime quality and superb value (about \$50 bottle) showcasing everything that is right with Argentine wines.

This deep, tight and textured red with spicy fruit and an herbal lift rightfully explains how the melange of malbec and cabernet franc has become so popular in the high-altitude vineyards of Mendoza. Intuitively, malbec unleashes color and flesh, and cabernet franc knits the rich components with fibrous tension and savory character.

Scroll down the list below to see Mendoza's success with the grape duo, including Abremundos Mendoza Octava Alta



Blend 2017 (No. 16), a joint project by Marcelo Pelleriti and the Argentine musician Pedro Aznar; Michelini i Mufatto Tupungato GY 2019 (No. 28); Susana Balbo's BenMarco Valle de Uco Gualtallary Expresivo 2019 (No. 52) and Matias Riccitelli Malbec Cabernet Franc Mendoza Riccitelli & Father 2018 (No. 55).

One of our favorite whites in the world comes from the Catena family, in the Andean foothills of Mendoza. The Catena Zapata Chardonnay Mendoza Adrianna Vineyard White Bones 2019 is the No. 2 wine on this Top 100 list.

It is a genuinely unique and terroir-transparent chardonnay that rivals the best from Burgundy, expressing an exotically ripe yet mineral character with a sensual texture, as if transmitting the tangy energy of the chalky, calcareous soils rich in marine deposits to the nose and the palate. A thin layer of flor, or yeast, also adds a unique saline smack to the wine during the aging process.

Catena winemaker Alejandro Vigil told us that Catena has been studying the terroir closely for 25 years in their Grand Cru-like Adrianna Vineyard in Gualtallary, seeking the unique expression of each block for their malbecs and chardonnays. One of their top malbecs, Catena Zapata Malbec Mendoza Adrianna Vineyard Fortuna Terrae 2019, ranks No. 6 on our list, with its fruit coming from a five-hectare Fortuna Terrae ("Land of Luck") parcel, where deeper alluvial and aeolian soil tops the limestone and rocks, rendering depth and freshness to the fruit. Around 60 percent of whole-cluster fermentation also helps add a tactile seduction to the wine.

While malbec continues to rule the world of Argentine reds, the country has

come a long way in making wines showing subtle nuances among different appellations, vineyards or even smaller blocks. Judicious winemakers also thrust refinement, delicate austerity and layers into the limelight, with many of them referring to it as the "Burgundy approach" to malbec – something feasible in cooler, higher appellations like Gualtallary, where making fine wine is only viable in a climate barely warm enough to fully ripen the grapes.

"The soil in Gualtallary doesn't want to make heavy malbec," Santiago Achaval of Matervini said during a zoom call interview this year. "Instead, it makes



One of the 11 white wines that made it onto our Top 100 Argentina list was the Altar Uco Valle de Uco Tupungato Edad Media Blanco 2019.

silky, cherry-driven malbec... [and] if the soil is suited to darker, denser malbec, we will also go with it, and the result will be good.”

## MORE FROM MALBEC

Achaval has good reason to believe that there is still more to come from malbec in his country. His Matervini Malbec Mendoza El Challao-Las Heras Piedras Viejas 2019 (No. 11), for example, comes from El Challao of Las Heras, which is a new hillside area near Mendoza city where vines thrive on the ancient, colluvial soils rich in limestone and weathered basalt. Despite a tiny volume of production, it's a wine that shows real character with unfathomable depth, intensity and austere minerality.

Other than Catena Zapata and Matervini, all our top malbecs this year are illustrations of various terroirs that have stood out in Mendoza. Susana Balbo Wines Malbec Agrelo Nosotros Single Vineyard Nómade 2017 (No. 3) is a stunning red from Agrelo of Lujan de Cuyo highlighted by its precision, ultra-fine tannins and energy. Zuccardi Malbec Valle de Uco Paraje

Altamira Finca Piedra Infinita 2018 (No. 4) speaks the same language as Zuccardi's other offerings and is consistently a cerebral malbec showing depth, layers, precision and polish.

Viña Cobos Malbec Los Arboles Valle de Uco Chañares Estate 2018 (No. 8) shows how Paul Hobbs and winemaker Andres Vignoni fine-tune their wines with more linearity and definition with their new vineyard in Los Arboles. “We are trying to make leaner wines, not as overpowering but at the same time very focused and working a lot in layers and length,” Vignoni said during a Zoom tasting earlier this year.

**Don't be surprised that the malbec-cabernet franc blend Trapiche Malbec Cabernet Franc Mendoza Iscay 2017 came out ahead of all the other 1,800 wines we tasted from Argentina this year.**

These wines all prove the point that Argentina is extremely serious about its iconic grape variety. Now that there is a broader spectrum of styles and terroir-expressive wines, malbec will continue to boom. The top players already make world-class wines, comparable with the finest reds from the rest of the world, and the increasing demand has been pushing up the price of malbecs, too.

That said, we feel that great value is still the calling card for Argentine wines, especially in such varieties as pinot noir, cabernet franc, semillon and the zesty and perfumed torrontes. It's why we put Chacra Pinot Noir Patagonia Cincuenta y Cinco 2020 in fifth place, given its



Two of Terrazas' single-vineyard malbecs that illustrate Argentina's greatness in terroir-driven reds. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)





Trapiche vineyard. (Photo courtesy of Trapiche)

soulful perfumes, tension, length and subtle complexity. Planted in 1955, we believe it is one of the best bottlings of this wine from Chacra's Piero Incisa della Rocchetta, who uses biodynamic farming in his vineyard and makes wine in a natural, non-interventionist way, as if, in his words, he was "making tea."

There are 11 white wines on the list this year, including three semillons. As in Chile, we have also noticed a comeback of semillon in Argentina, thanks to a few dedicated producers such as El Enemigo, Matias Riccitelli, Mendel and Michelini i Mufatto. In ninth place on our list is El Enemigo Semillon Mendoza 2019, one of Argentina's best whites and top value picks this year, retailing at around \$20 a bottle.

The 1,800 wines from Argentina we tasted this year made us recall our wonderful

trip to the Andes almost two years ago. It was our last international trip before the world was locked down because of the pandemic. While we don't know when we'll be able to travel again, what we do know is that there are always wines in Argentina that make us feel lucky to be living in a world with oodles of great choices.

We hope you enjoy exploring the list and end up uncorking high-quality, terroir-transparent wines that are also great deals.

## 1 TRAPICHE MALBEC CABERNET FRANC MENDOZA ISCAI 2017 98 Pts.

*Spices, fresh herbs and dark fruit, such as blackcurrants and berries. So aromatic. Full-bodied with firm, tight tannins that give the wine form and texture. Flavorful and still tight. Superb structure and length. Malbec from Gualtallary and cabernet franc La Consulta. Delicious now, but better in a year or two.*

## 2 CATENA ZAPATA CHARDONNAY MENDOZA ADRIANNA VINEYARD WHITE BONES 2019 99 Pts.

*Honeysuckle, ripe pear and some dried apple. So perfumed. Full-bodied with incredible intensity and length. So much green-apple character and lots of flowers. Dried mango, too. The touch of flor growth in the barrel gives this unique character. Goes on for minutes on the finish. Endless, vibrant acidity. Minerally texture. Drink now or hold.*

## 3 SUSANA BALBO WINES MALBEC AGRELO NOSOTROS SINGLE VINEYARD NÓMADE 2017 99 Pts.

*Black plums, blueberries, dried herbs, cedar, vanilla and crushed stones on the nose. It's medium-to full-bodied with ultra fine tannins and bright acidity. There's vivacity and wild energy to this, with layers of bitter chocolate and berries interwoven with stones and minerals. So energetic and very driven with gorgeously integrated tannins. So long, too. Drink or hold.*

## 4 ZUCCARDI MALBEC VALLE DE UCO PARAJE ALTAMIRA FINCA PIEDRA INFINITA 2018 99 Pts.

*Aromas of crushed fruit with mushrooms, dried flowers, ash, charcoal, iodine and bark, following through to a full-bodied palate with superb depth of fruit and layers of polished, fine tannins. Extremely long and seamless. A beauty by all accounts. Complex. Juicy. Supple. Better after 2023, when it will give you all it has stored up in goodness, character and uniqueness.*

## 5 CHACRA PINOT NOIR PATAGONIA CINCUENTA Y CINCO 2020 98 Pts.

*Extremely perfumed and beautiful with ripe strawberries and citrus fruit, as well as aromatic flowers. Full-bodied with plenty of fruit and creamy, chewy tannins that are polished and very impressive. Long and linear. One of the best of this bottling. Drink after 2023, but already a gorgeous bottle.*

## 6 CATENA ZAPATA MALBEC MENDOZA ADRIANNA VINEYARD FORTUNA TERRAE 2019 99 Pts.

*Blackberries with some black tea and perfumes. Full-bodied with fine, dusty tannins and seamless texture. So long and consistent. 60% whole cluster fermentation with 14 months in oak casks. Glorious, tactile wine. Drinkable now, but better in three or four years.*

## 7 TERRAZAS DE LOS ANDES MALBEC LOS CHACAYES VALLE DE UCO LICAN PARCEL N 12S 2018 98 Pts.

*Bramble fruit, blackcurrants, cassis, pine needles, wild herbs, anise, tar and tobacco on the nose. It's full-bodied with firm, finely knit tannins framing tight, powerful layers of forest fruit and herbs. Long and brimming with energy. Try from 2024.*



**8 VIÑA COBOS MALBEC LOS ARBOLES VALLE DE UCO CHAÑARES ESTATE 2018 99 Pts.**

*Blackberries, ink and blueberries with black-tea and bark undertones. Full-bodied with density and richness that is well framed with beautiful, round and polished tannins and a seamless texture. Goes on for minutes. Try after 2026, but already great.*

**9 EL ENEMIGO SEMILLON MENDOZA 2019 95 Pts.**

*Peach, dried-mango, lime-zest, clove and flint aromas. It's medium-to full-bodied with zesty acidity and a waxy texture. Complex and focused with evolving layers of citrus, stone fruit, almonds and minerals. The palate builds and delivers such interest and beauty. Long. One of the top whites of Argentina. Drink or hold.*

**10 EL ESTECO TORRONTÉS VALLE DE CAFAYATE OLD VINES 1945 2020 95 Pts.**

*Incredible aromas of limes and minerals on the nose. Full-bodied with Brazilian lime and minerals. Whole-cluster fermentation in concrete eggs. New wood. Zesty finish. From vines planted in 1945. Unique experience. Drink or hold.*

**11 MATERVINI MALBEC MENDOZA EL CHALLAO-LAS HERAS PIEDRAS VIEJAS 2019 98 Pts.**

*Deep-purple color and beautiful concentration with super depth of fruit. Linear and compressed palate of fine tannins with blackberry and raspberry flavors. Black licorice, too. Cloves. It's tight and layered and every so compressed. Mineral and lightly salted character in the aftertaste. Solid tannins but fine-grained. Better after 2025, but already very impressive.*

**12 TRAPICHE SYRAH VIOGNIER MENDOZA ISCAI 2018 97 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackberry, blueberry, green tobacco and meat follow through to a full body and firm, lightly chewy tannins with polish and focus. Umami. Always the best syrah in Argentina. Structured and needs time to open. Try after 2024.*

**13 BODEGA PIEDRA NEGRA VALLE DE UCO GRAN LURTON 2020 96 Pts.**

*Beautiful aromas of honeysuckle, ripe peach, apricot, vanilla cream and hazelnut. It's full-bodied with crisp acidity and a creamy, buttery texture. So smooth and concentrated with layers of ripe stone fruit and cream, leading to a long, flavorful finish. Fantastic. Drink now.*

**14 VIÑA COBOS MALBEC MENDOZA COBOS 2018 99 Pts.**

*Incredible purity of fruit in the nose, offering crushed, perfectly ripe blackberries and currants with raspberries and citrus. Some black licorice, too. It's full-bodied with density, precision and gorgeously fine tannins. Great length going on for minutes. A blend of mostly Chanares with some old-vine fruit from Marchiori and Sengeretti. Such precision to this. Tight now. Try after 2026.*

**15 MARCELO PELLERITI CABERNET FRANC VALLE DE UCO SIGNATURE 2019 95 Pts.**

*Aromas of currants, blackberries, violets, tobacco, wild herbs and fresh coriander. Spice box and dark chocolate, too. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, powdery tannins. Creamy, polished layers of ripe fruit, spice and herbs blend seamlessly together. Consistently outstanding. Beautiful now, but better from 2023.*

**16 ABREMUNDOS MENDOZA OCTAVA ALTA BLEND 2017 96 Pts.**

*Dark-cherry, clove, vanilla and toasted notes. It's full-bodied with firm tannins and structure. Rich, creamy and full on the palate. Tannic finish with length. Yet, it shows composure and polish. Try from 2023.*

**17 EL ENEMIGO MENDOZA GRAN ENEMIGO 2017 97 Pts.**

*A refined, medium-to full-bodied red with aromas of blackberry, bitter chocolate, violets, tar and tobacco. Ultra fine tannins, interwoven with silky and seamless layers of dark berries. So elegant and fine. Long. Serious and focused with fantastic depth and structure. Drink or hold.*

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**18 BODEGA PIEDRA NEGRA CABERNET SAUVIGNON VALLE DE UCO LOS CHACAYES GRAN LURTON GRAN RESERVE 2018 95 Pts.**

*A full-bodied red with savory aromas of stewed currants, salted plums, mushrooms and dried herbs. Some seaweed, too. Firm, fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity balance a concentrated core of black fruit with a savory edge. Dense and chewy. Very refined and polished. Gorgeous cabernet. Try from 2022.*

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**19 BEMBERG ESTATE WINES MALBEC VALLES CALCHAQUÍES CHAÑAR PUNCO LOS CHAÑARES PARCELA 73 LA LINTERNA 2016 97 Pts.**

*Intense aromas of blackberry, iron and blueberry with a full-bodied palate and firm, integrated tannins that give this wine form and beauty. Gorgeous to drink now, but can age incredibly well. Drink or hold.*

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**20 CHACRA CHARDONNAY PATAGONIA 2020 97 Pts.**

*There's real direction and clarity to this white with sliced dried apples, crushed stones and minerals on the nose, as well as hints of biscuit and praline. Some honeysuckle and lemon-grass undertones, too. It's full-bodied, yet very tight and lively with a line of fresh acidity running through the palate, providing energy and depth. From the owner of Chacra and Burgundy's Jean-Marc Roulot. Drinkable now, but much better in three to four years. Try after 2023.*

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**21 DOMAINE NICO PINOT NOIR VALLE DE UCO SOEUR ET FRERES GRAND MÈRE 2019 95 Pts.**

*Aromas of dried berries, currants, dried lemon zest, nutmeg, tobacco and earth. Cherries, too. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, tight-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Intensely flavorful with plenty of dark spice and a juicy finish. Beautiful, linear and bright character. Drink or hold.*

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**22 ALTA VISTA MALBEC VALLE DE UCO SINGLE VINEYARD TEMIS 2017 96 Pts.**

*Complex nose of plums and blackberries with dried-leaf and earthy undertones. Bay leaf and lavender, too. Full-bodied with tight, chewy tannins. Racy and fleshy. Persistent acidity and structure on the palate, leading to an energetic, flavorful finish. Linear and tight at the end. Give it a few more years. Try after 2024.*

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**23 SUSANA BALBO WINES MALBEC PARAJE ALTAMIRA VALLE DE UCO SIGNATURE LA DELFINA 2018 96 Pts.**

*Black-plum, blueberry, clove and sandalwood aromas. Lavender and lemon zest, too. It's full-bodied with firm, velvety tannins. Polished, intense and compact, balanced by fresh acidity. Lots to take in. Some whole-cluster. Try from 2023.*

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**24 KAIKEN MALBEC MENDOZA MAI 2018 96 Pts.**

*This has a fragrant, richly spiced nose of blackberries, violets, dried lavender, cloves, licorice, black olives and mocha. It's full-bodied with firm, creamy and powdery tannins. Fantastic concentration and depth here, with generous layers of ripe dark fruit. So polished and silky. Keeps going. From organically grown grapes. Delicious already, but even better from 2023.*

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**25 TERRAZAS DE LOS ANDES MALBEC PARAJE ALTAMIRA VALLE DE UCO LOS CASTAÑOS PARCEL N 2W 2018 97 Pts.**

*Blackberries, black raspberries, cedar, cola, crushed stones, thyme and dried violets on the nose. Some cloves, too. It's full-bodied, yet fresh and refined with firm, ultra fine tannins. Silky and polished with elegant layers of blue and black fruit. Wonderful fragrance and freshness. Try from 2022, but gorgeous now.*

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**26 TAPIZ MALBEC MENDOZA BLACK TEARS 2017 96 Pts.**

*Perfumed aromas of violets, lavender, blueberries, cassis and spiced cherries. Herbs and praline, too. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, powdery tannins and fresh acidity, despite the richness. Concentrated with a long, chewy finish. Such a beauty already, but better in 2024.*

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**27 DOMAINE NICO PINOT NOIR VALLE DE UCO SOEUR ET FRERES LA SAVANTE 2019 95 Pts.**

*Aromas of wild raspberries, mushrooms, white truffles, herbs and smoked meat. It's medium-to full-bodied with tight-grained, seamless tannins. So silky and mouthwateringly savory, with forest-floor notes turning to spices and herbs. Salty undertones, too. Some bottle age will soften this. Drink after 2023.*

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**28 MICHELINI I MUFATTO TUPUNGATO GY 2019 95 Pts.**

*Dark fruit, chocolate, chili and herbal undertones. Full-bodied with chewy tannins. Fleshy texture on the palate with structure and vivid acidity. Flavorful finish with length. Lots of spices on the finish. Exciting. A blend of 60% malbec, 40% cabernet franc. Try after 2023.*

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**29 MATIAS RICCITELLI SEMILLON RIO NEGRO OLD VINES FROM PATAGONIA 2020 95 Pts.**

*Aromas of jasmine, fresh pear, lemon zest, apricot stone and hay. It's medium-bodied with bright acidity. Delicately floral and mineral with creamy, seamless layers of fresh, tangy fruit. Some spice and tropical-fruit notes on the finish. Layered. Serious. Beautifully refreshing. Delicious now.*

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**30 ACHAVAL-FERRER MENDOZA QUIMERA 2018 95 Pts.**

*Blackberries with black truffles and violets on the nose. Full-bodied and very tight with firm, silky tannins that give this wine form and energy. Plenty of compressed and focused fruit at the end. Lots of blue fruit. Drink after 2024.*

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**31 DURIGUTTI FAMILY WINEMAKERS MALBEC LUJÁN DE CUYO PROYECTO LAS COMPUERTAS 2020 95 Pts.**

*Aromas of fresh plum, blueberry, citrus zest, sandalwood and walnut husk. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, fine-grained tannins. Focused and polished with lingering notes of dark chocolate on the long finish. A joy to drink. Drink or hold.*

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**32 LUCA MALBEC VALLE DE UCO OLD VINE 2019 95 Pts.**

*Amazing depth and intensity to this old-vine malbec with blackberry and black-licorice character to the wine. Violets, too. It's full and dense, yet remains energetic and long. Polished, refined tannins. A gorgeous, plush red. Drinkable now for its generosity, but let it mellow with a few years of bottle age. Better after 2024.*

### 33 MATERVINI LOS CHACAYES VALLE DE UCO BLANCO 2019 95 Pts.

*Fragrant aromas of honeysuckle, acacia honey, ripe stone fruit and lemon curd. Touch of beeswax and crushed chalk. It's full-bodied with gentle acidity and an oily texture. Luxuriously smooth and caressing. Moreish. 76% marsanne and 24% viognier. Delicious now.*

### 34 CUVELIER LOS ANDES VALLE DE UCO GRAND VIN 2018 95 Pts.

*This is really classy with deep blackberry, violet and blueberry aromas and flavors. It's full-bodied and super refined with integrated tannins that spread across the palate. So polished and refined. 69% malbec, 19% cabernet sauvignon, 5% petit verdot, 4% merlot and 3% syrah. Goes on for minutes. Drink or hold.*

### 35 MARCELO PELLERITI VALLE DE UCO SELECTION BLEND OF TERROIR 2017 95 Pts.

*This has a fragrant nose of ripe cherries, baked blueberries, lavender, violets, praline and cocoa butter. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, velvety tannins. Polished and luxuriously creamy with a long, rich finish. Delicious now, but even better from 2023.*

### 36 ALMA NEGRA MENDOZA GRAN ALMA NEGRA 2015 95 Pts.

*Aromas of dried currants, brambleberries, violets, thyme, lemon zest and chocolate. It's medium-to full-bodied with sleek, silky tannins. Seamless and polished with complex layers of savory herb, subtle cedar and spice. Long, flavorful and a joy to drink. Drink or hold.*

### 37 BODEGA MENDEL MALBEC CABERNET SAUVIGNON PETIT VERDOT MENDOZA UNUS 2018 95 Pts.

*Beautiful, complex aromas of blackberry, clove, spice and blueberry follow through to a full body with a super center-palate of ripe berries and hints of chocolate and vanilla. Perfectly manicured tannins. Plush and refined at the same time. 65% malbec, 25% cabernet sauvignon and 10% petit verdot. Best ever? So gorgeous to taste now, but better in 2025.*

### 38 BODEGAS CARO MENDOZA 2018 95 Pts.

*Beautiful, complete aromas of currants, sweet tobacco and iodine with some crushed cement, following through to a medium to full body with fine, linear tannins and a chewy finish that lasts a long time. Finesse with structure. Give it two or three years to soften. Try after 2022.*

### 39 MICHELINI I MUFATTO SEMILLON TUPUNGATO EL PERAL CERTEZAS 2018 95 Pts.

*This has a yellow-gold color with intense aromas of beeswax, dried lime, white pepper, dried chilli, pineapple and burnt toast. It's full-bodied with bright acidity and a waxy, dense texture. Concentrated and flavorful with firm layers of dried citrus, tropical fruit and spice. Salty, umami finish. Drink now, or hold for further intensity.*

### 40 BODEGA MENDEL MALBEC LUJÁN DE CUYO SINGLE VINEYARD 2019 97 Pts.

*Blueberry, blackberry and lavender with some cocoa and sandalwood. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm tannins and a juicy finish. Very linear and solid with chewy, polished tannins that grow across the palate. Long and persistent. Needs at least three or four years to soften. Drink after 2023.*



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**41 ACHAVAL-FERRER MALBEC MENDOZA FINCA ALTAMIRA 2018 97 Pts.**

*Beautiful purity of fruit here with blackberries, black cherries and violet undertones. Full-bodied with layers of fruit, fine tannins and a flavorful finish. Juicy and creamy at the same time. Delicious now, but better after 2023.*

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**42 BEMBERG ESTATE WINES MALBEC GUALTALLARY VALLE DE UCO EL TOMILLO PARCELA 5 LA LINTERNA 2016 97 Pts.**

*This is rich and savory with very soft tannins and fabulous, aged character of mushrooms, chocolate, bark and berries. Full, rich and dense, yet refined, agile and flavorful. Goes on for minutes. Aged four years in the bottle. Drink now.*

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**43 ZUCCARDI MALBEC VALLE DE UCO PARAJE ALTAMIRA FINCA PIEDRA INFINITA SUPERCAL 2018 97 Pts.**

*Rich, exotic aromas of rich berries and peaches with some flowers and hints of walnuts, following through to a full body with firm tannins and a juicy finish. Pretty, fine and dusty tannins. Juicy finish. Delicious now or hold.*

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**44 VAGLIO MALBEC VALLE DE UCO GUALTALLARY AGGIE 2019 94 Pts.**

*Such beautiful aromas of blackberries and minerals with chalk and salt. It's medium-bodied with fine, integrated tannins and a pretty finish. Refined, silky texture. Drink or hold.*

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**45 MASCOTA VINEYARDS MENDOZA UNÁNIME GRAN VINO TINTO 2018 94 Pts.**

*Aromas of black plum, stewed blackberry, clove, thyme and chocolate orange. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Juicy, vibrant and delicious. 60% cabernet sauvignon, 25% malbec and 15% cabernet franc. Drink now or hold.*

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**46 CLOS DE LOS SIETE VALLE DE UCO BY MICHEL ROLLAND 2018 94 Pts.**

*Ripe plum, black cherry, lavender and cocoa on the nose. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, creamy tannins. Polished and rounded with a plush, deep core of dark fruit. Lingering crushed-hazelnut notes on a long, concentrated finish. Drink or hold.*

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**47 TAPIZ CABERNET SAUVIGNON VALLE DE UCO SAN PABLO ALTA COLLECTION 2019 94 Pts.**

*Aromas of blueberry, ripe blackberry, graphite, cocoa and roasted coffee. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, powdery tannins, framing a core of cool blue and black fruit. Polished and intense with a long finish. Try from 2023.*

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**48 RUCA MALEN PETIT VERDOT VALLE DE UCO TERROIR SERIES 2019 94 Pts.**

*Really focused aromas of blackberries, black licorice and black tea with some bark. Full-bodied with chewy, intense tannins. Tar and dark chocolate. It really needs time, but will reward patience. Try after 2024.*

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**49 ALMA GEMELA GARNACHA VALLE DE UCO 2020 94 Pts.**

*Blueberry, raspberry, sage and mint on the nose. Medium-bodied with round tannins. Juicy, balanced and creamy on the palate with a savory finish. So pretty and refined. Drink or hold.*

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## 50 VAGLIO MALBEC LUJÁN DE CUYO AGRELO CHACRA 2019 94 Pts.

*Gorgeous sweet berries with fresh flowers and orange peel on the nose. Medium-bodied with really fine tannins and a compact, linear finish that shows lovely texture and composure. Better after 2023, but already beautiful.*

## 51 TRIVENTO MALBEC TUPUNGATO GAUDEO SINGLE VINEYARD 2018 94 Pts.

*Ripe black-plum, blueberry, lavender, mocha and walnut aromas. It's full-bodied with velvety tannins and a plush, creamy texture. So succulent and seamless with pure blue fruit and hints of vanilla. Juicy and rich at the end. Drink now or hold.*

## 52 BENMARCO VALLE DE UCO GUALTALLARY EXPRESIVO 2019 94 Pts.

*Blackberries, violets and chalk on the nose with hints of sea-salt flakes. Medium-bodied with tight, chewy tannins that are lively and fresh. Some savory character to the pretty fruit at the finish. Drink or hold.*

## 53 FINCA LAS MORAS SYRAH SAN JUAN GRAN SYRAH 2018 94 Pts.

*Black plums, currants, citrus zest and dried violets on the nose. Mocha and peppered-gravy notes, too. It's medium-to full-bodied with polished, rounded tannins. Caressing, supple and smooth with a plummy, subtly toasted finish. Delicious now, but better after 2023.*

## 54 PULENTA MALBEC VALLE DE UCO GRAN X 2018 95 Pts.

*This has an intense, polished nose of ripe black cherries, blueberries, lavender, hot stones and cocoa. It's full-bodied with firm, chalky tannins. Concentrated and creamy with a solid core of cool blue and black fruit. Well integrated wood. Drink from 2022.*

## 55 MATIAS RICCITELLI MALBEC CABERNET FRANC MENDOZA RICCITELLI & FATHER 2018 95 Pts.

*Blackberries with fresh herbs, such as basil and spearmint, as well as some citrus. Full-bodied with firm, chewy tannins and lots of intense fruit. Linear and compact on the palate. Drink in 2024 and onwards, but already impressive to taste.*

## 56 OTRONIA PATAGONIA RUGIENTES 45 CORTE DE BLANCAS 2018 94 Pts.

*Aromas of grilled pineapple, cooked pear, lime, lemon curd and chalk. It's medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity and a waxy, oily texture. Ripe citrus and tropical fruit turn to minerals and blanched almonds on the long, layered finish. Blend of 42% gewürztraminer, 32% chardonnay and 26% pinot gris. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

## 57 TRES14 MALBEC MENDOZA TINTO DE GARAGE 2018 94 Pts.

*Violets, blackcurrants, dried blueberries, cocoa and tobacco on the nose. It's full-bodied with firm, tight tannins. Concentrated and firmly structured with a tightly packed core of black fruit and dark chocolate. Some stem and tobacco undertones at the finish. Try from 2023.*

## 58 KAIKEN MALBEC VALLE DE CANOTA AVENTURA 2019 94 Pts.

*Unique aromas of cement, blackberry, sweet tobacco and basil follow through to a full body, together with black-olive and dried-flower flavors. Creamy, polished tannins and a pretty finish. Lovely texture. So unique. Vegan. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*



## **59** BENEGAS MALBEC MENDOZA FINCA LA ENCERRADA ESTATE SINGLE VINEYARD 2018 **94 Pts.**

*Sophisticated aromas of blackcurrants, blackberries and flowers follow through to a full body with integrated, polished tannins that are fine, yet layered, delivering a relatively long finish. Drink in 2023 and onwards.*

## **60** BODEGA DIAMANDES MALBEC CABERNET MENDOZA GRANDE RESERVE 2016 **94 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackcurrants, violets, dried leaves and cocoa. It's medium-bodied with firm, tight-grained tannins and bright acidity. Structured and serious, yet fresh, with a tight, focused finish. Vegan. Try from 2022.*

## **61** BODEGA ROLLAND MALBEC VALLE DE UCO VAL DE FLORES 2017 **95 Pts.**

*This has a concentrated and polished nose of blueberry, lavender, cedar, cocoa butter and toasted hazelnut. Fresh leather, too. It's full-bodied with firm, fine-grained tannins. Creamy, rounded and polished with a solid core of cool blue fruit. Rich and velvety. Even better from 2022.*

## **62** MASCOTA VINEYARDS CABERNET SAUVIGNON VALLE DE UCO LA CONSULTA MAGNÁMINE 2015 **95 Pts.**

*This is an old-vine wine with bark, mushrooms and spices. Dark fruit, too. It's full-bodied and structured with solid fruit and tannins. Goes on for a very long time. Savory. A late release that was just put on the market now. Drink or hold.*

## **63** BENEGAS MALBEC GUALTALLARY MENDOZA BENEGAS LYNCH LA ENCERRADA SINGLE VINEYARD 2018 **95 Pts.**

*Gorgeous aromas of blackberry, blueberry, violet and cedar follow through to a full body with tight, firm tannins and a flavorful finish. The tannins hold this together nicely. Better after 2023.*

## **64** TRES14 MENDOZA IMPERFECTO 2018 **95 Pts.**

*Plum, violet, hazelnut, bark and cocoa aromas. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, tightly knit tannins, framing a juicy core of purple fruit and praline. 97% malbec and 3% cabernet franc. Delicious already, but better from 2022.*

## **65** ABREMUNDOS MENDOZA PAGINA 1 AZNAR-PELLERITI 2018 **95 Pts.**

*Dark-fruit and earthy notes on the nose with some mocha undertones. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm tannins. Yet, the texture is fleshy with vivid acidity, bringing balance and a savory feel to it. Long, flavorful finish. Try from 2023.*

## **66** DOMAINE BOUSQUET GUALTALLARY VALLE DE UCO AMERI RED BLEND 2019 **94 Pts.**

*Plum, blueberry, sage and earthy notes on the nose with some spices, too. It's full-bodied with chewy yet polished tannins. Juicy with vivid acidity and some structure. Flavorful finish with attractive length. From organically grown grapes. Vegan. Try after 2023.*

## **67** LUCA PINOT NOIR MENDOZA G LOT 2019 **94 Pts.**

*Savory aromas of dried currants, tangerine zest, green tapenade, porcini mushroom and cedar. It's medium-to full-bodied with sleek tannins. Ripe, flavorful and juicy, yet focused and tight, too. Sun-kissed style. Drinkable now, but better in 2023 and thereafter.*

**68** DURIGUTTI FAMILY WINEMAKERS MALBEC LAS COMPUERTAS LUJÁN DE CUYO GUARDA CARMELA 2015 **94 Pts.**

*Aromas of stewed black cherries, cassis, tobacco, dried violets, dark chocolate and hazelnuts. It's full-bodied with firm, tight-grained tannins. Rich and concentrated with cedar notes on a chewy finish. Linear and focused at the finish. Serious wine. Delicious now, but better from 2022.*

**69** LUCA SYRAH VALLE DE UCO LABORDE DOUBLE SELECT 2019 **94 Pts.**

*Aromas of wild blackberry, tobacco leaf, peppercorn and asphalt. It's full-bodied with firm, tight tannins and fresh acidity. Structured and concentrated with a refreshingly cool, inky finish. Very fine tannins. Spicy clove and black pepper to the black fruit. Better from 2022.*

**70** FELIPE STAITI VALLE DE UCO VÉRTIGO 2018 **94 Pts.**

*Ripe-blueberry, spiced-cherry, violet, mocha and sweet-tobacco aromas. Hint of toffee, too. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, polished tannins. Smooth and rich with a concentrated, ripe core of spiced fruit. Long and enticing. Drink from 2022.*

**71** SOPHENIA TUPUNGATO VALLE DE UCO THE BLEND SYNTHESIS 2018 **94 Pts.**

*Refined and focused with fine tannins, dark berries and hints of dark chocolate and spices. It's medium-to full-bodied. Delicious finish. Very polished red. Malbec, cabernet sauvignon and merlot. Drink or hold.*

**72** LTU MALBEC LA CONSULTA VALLE DE UCO FINCA REBON 2018 **94 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackberries, dried citrus zest, licorice, chocolate and savory herbs. It's full-bodied with firm, powdery tannins. Deliciously creamy and velvety with a hint of cedar on the rounded finish. Drink or hold.*

**73** MONTEVIEJO VALLE DE UCO LINDAFLOR 2015 **94 Pts.**

*Intense aromas of blueberries, dried cherries, prunes, cedar and sandalwood. Dried citrus zest, too. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, chewy tannins. Structured and flavorful with wonderfully rich layers of dried fruit and spices. Drink or hold.*

**74** ALTOS LAS HORMIGAS MALBEC GUALTALLARY VALLE DE UCO APPELLATION 2018 **94 Pts.**

*Pretty, floral and crushed-fruit aromas with raspberry, blueberry, hibiscus and citrus zest. Olives, dried spices and gravel, too. Toasted oak. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, silky tannins and bright acidity. Wonderfully fresh and layered. Drink or hold.*

**75** ALTAR UCO VALLE DE UCO TUPUNGATO EDAD MEDIA BLANCO 2019 **94 Pts.**

*A straw-colored white with aromas of dried citrus, toasted almond, pineapple, dried apricot and herbs. It's medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity. Fantastic texture and concentration here, with a waxy, saline and pithy finish. Peaches at the end. Wild blend. 70% chardonnay, 20% chenin blanc and 10% sauvignon blanc. Drink now.*

**76** REVANCHA MENDOZA LA GRAN REVANCHA BLEND 2018 **94 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackberry, smoke and blueberry follow through to a full body with gorgeously integrated tannins that are creamy and refined. So much blackberry and hints of chocolate, walnut and hazelnut. Try in 2024, but already gorgeous.*

**77 ZAHA MALBEC PARAJE ALTAMIRA VALLE DE UCO TOKO VINEYARD 2019 93 Pts.**

*Lavender, blackberry, black cherry, cedar and walnut husk on the nose. It's full-bodied with polished tannins. Concentrated and creamy with a deep core of ripe black and blue fruit. Drink or hold.*

**78 DOMAINE BOUSQUET MALBEC VALLE DE UCO GUALTALLARY TUPUNGATO GRAN MALBEC 2019 93 Pts.**

*Violet essence, blueberry, cassis, lemon zest and sandalwood on the nose. It's medium-bodied with sleek, fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Layered, polished and flavorful with a saline undertone. From organically grown grapes. Vegan. Drink or hold.*

**79 ESTANCIA LOS CARDONES MALBEC SALTA TIGERSTONE 2019 93 Pts.**

*Stewed cherries, dried herbs, licorice and orange zest on the nose. It's medium-to full-bodied with velvety tannins. Ripe and flavorful with concentrated, silky layers and a savory, saline streak. Inky finish, yet not heavy. Drink now.*

**80 BODEGA NORTON CABERNET FRANC VALLE DE UCO ALTURA 2019 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of plum, cassis, dried citrus zest, dark chocolate and mocha. It's full-bodied with firm, velvety tannins. Rich and intense, yet balanced and fresh, with a caressing, polished finish. Drink or hold.*

**81 SALENTEIN MALBEC VALLE DE UCO FINCA SAN PABLO VIÑEDO LOS JABALÍES SINGLE VINEYARD 2017 94 Pts.**

*Deep nose of dark fruit, ink and spice. Full-bodied with firm, tight tannins. The palate is flavorful and structured. Nice acidity supports the long, savory finish. Dried fruit at the end. Try after 2022.*

**82 CASARENA LUJÁN DE CUYO DNA BLEND 2017 94 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackcurrants and fresh flowers with some dark cherries and blackberries. Enticing on the nose. Full-bodied and flavorful with velvety tannins that have a nice, dusty texture. Flavorful finish. Attractive now with grilled meat, but I would give it at least two or three years to come together. Try after 2024.*

**83 PULENTA AGRELO LUJÁN DE CUYO GRAN CORTE VII 2018 94 Pts.**

*Ripe-plum, black-cherry, pine-cone, black-tea and cocoa aromas. Lavender, too. It's full-bodied with silky, polished tannins and a smooth mouth feel. Long, opulent layers of dark fruit and spice here, yet it retains freshness. 43% malbec, 28% cabernet sauvignon and 15% merlot, the rest petit verdot and tannat. Drink or hold.*

**84 ALTA VISTA MALBEC MENDOZA ALIZARINE 2017 94 Pts.**

*Plenty of plums with some prune, nut and herb undertones. Iodine and graphite, too. It's full-bodied with chewy tannins. Creamy and round. Savory finish. Orange peel at the end. Drink or hold.*

**85 RUTINI MALBEC ALTAMIRA VALLE DE UCO SINGLE VINEYARD 2018 94 Pts.**

*Deep nose of plums with mineral and spice undertones. It's full-bodied with firm tannins. Full on the palate with volume and balance. Flavorful finish. Salt and white pepper at the end. Really juicy. Try after 2022.*

**86 CUVELIER LOS ANDES MALBEC VALLE DE UCO GRAND MALBEC 2017 94 Pts.**

*Dark berries with violets and cloves on the nose. Full-bodied with chewy tannins and a rich, juicy palate. Lots of depth to this. Needs another year or two to soften. Try after 2022.*

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**87 BIRA VALLE DE UCO BRUNETTO 2019 93 Pts.**

*This has a perfumed nose of hibiscus, currants, dried citrus zest, sandalwood and wild herbs. It's medium-bodied with refined, tight-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Layered, silky and precise with a long, deliciously savory finish. Drink or hold.*

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**88 WEINERT LUJÁN DE CUYO CARRASCAL CORTE TINTO 2018 93 Pts.**

*So perfumed and beautiful with dark fruit, toffee, black cherry and plum. Full-bodied, yet formed and framed with firm, polished tannins and a long, flavorful finish. Creamy, round tannins. Succulent and supple. Drink or hold.*

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**89 WAPISA SAUVIGNON BLANC RIO NEGRO SAN JAVIER 2020 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of green mango, pear skin, grapefruit zest, dried apple, wild herbs and flint. It's medium-bodied with bright acidity. Sleek and flavorful with a vivid, energetic finish. One of the best sauvignon in Argentina. Drink or hold.*

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**90 PIATTELLI VINEYARDS MALBEC CAFAYATE SALTA GRAND RESERVE 2019 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of ripe plum, blackberry, graphite, dark chocolate and cedar. It's full-bodied with firm, chalky tannins. Concentrated and creamy with a solid core of dark fruit, layered with mineral and oak notes. Try from 2023.*

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**91 DE MOÑO ROJO VALLE DE UCO GSM 2020 93 Pts.**

*An expressive nose with blackcurrants, blackberries, violets, smoke and herbs. Medium-bodied with firm tannins. Fleshy texture, yet still tight and compact. Tannic, and flavorful finish. A blend of grenache, syrah and mourvedre. Drinkable but better after 2022.*

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**92 FINCA AMBROSÍA CABERNET FRANC GUALTALLARY TUPUNGATO VIÑA UNICA 2019 93 Pts.**

*Fragrant aromas of currants, pine needles, basil, praline and sandalwood. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, velvety tannins. Concentrated, seamless layers of ripe fruit and spices lead to a long, silky finish. Reserved and not overdone. Drink or hold.*

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**93 TIKAL MALBEC BONARDA LA CONSULTA VALLE DE UCO PATRIOTA 2018 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of lavender, crushed blackberry, raspberry, dried herb and mocha. It's medium-bodied with firm, fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Wonderfully juicy with a fragrant, lightly meaty character. 60% Bonarda and 40% malbec. Delicious now.*

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**94 CASA DE UCO MALBEC LOS CHACAYES VALLE DE UCO EL SALVAJE ORGÁNICO 2020 93 Pts.**

*Blueberries, plums, poppy seeds and crushed stones on the nose. It's medium-bodied with succulent tannins and a focused, clean and mineral finish. Very pretty and refined. From organically grown grapes. Vegan. Drink or hold.*



**95** RUTINI MALBEC GUALTALLARY VALLE DE UCO SINGLE VINEYARD 2018**94 Pts.**

Blue fruit and dark cherries with ground nutmeg and cinnamon undertones. Medium body and chewy tannins. Fresh and juicy on the palate with plenty of fruit. Elegant finish with length. A salty, light vanilla undertone. Try after 2023.

**96** LORENZO MALBEC AGRELO LUJÁN DE CUYO FEDE 2017 **95 Pts.**

Wild blackberry, blackcurrant, citrus zest, clove, licorice, bark, pine cone and red tea all intermingle on the nose. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, tight-grained tannins and bright acidity. Wonderfully fresh and refined with elegant, silky layers of spiced fruit. Lots of mineral undertones to this. Long. Drink or hold.

**97** EL ESTECO VALLE CALCHAQUÍES ALTIMUS 2017 **94 Pts.**

Blackberry, rust, walnut and white-pepper aromas follow through to a medium body with fine, creamy tannins and an exceptionally long and intense finish. Lots of spice, such as cloves. 55% cabernet sauvignon, 30% malbec, 10% cabernet franc and 5% merlot. Drink or hold.

**98** ESTANCIA USPALLATA MALBEC MENDOZA 2019 **94 Pts.**

Blackberries, violets, pine and licorice on the nose. Tobacco and white pepper, too. It's medium-bodied with fine, powdery tannins. Fragrant and refined layers of bitter berries and spice lend complexity and wonderful freshness. Drink or hold.

**99** OTRONIA CHARDONNAY PATAGONIA BLOCK III&VI 2018 **94 Pts.**

Intense aromas of grilled mango, papaya, grapefruit and flint. It's full-bodied and concentrated, yet balanced by sharp, tangy acidity and a salty undertone. Textured and mineral with a long, focused and phenolic finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.

**100** DOÑA PAULA SAN CARLOS MENDOZA LOS INDIOS PARCEL 2018 **95 Pts.**

Aromas of blackberry, rosemary, licorice, walnut and cedar. It's medium-bodied with firm, tightly knit tannins and fresh acidity. Structured and focused with succulent layers of fresh dark fruit, spice and some vanilla notes. Long and refined. Try from 2022.



# TOP 100 WINES OF AUSTRALIA 2021



*Nick Stock,  
Senior Editor*

Our Australian Wine of the Year for 2021 is the elegantly polished Mount Mary Yarra Valley Quintet 2019, which rated a perfect 100 points on the back of a near-perfect 99-point rating for the 2018 vintage last year. Quintet has long been a highly regarded wine, a Bordeaux-esque red blend that has garnered immense respect over many years and one that played a big role in establishing the reputation of the Yarra Valley region.

Mount Mary Vineyard is a pioneer of the modern epoch of Yarra Valley wine and it is fitting that our choice of Quintet as our top Australian wine, out of the nearly 1,900 we rated this year, coincides with the 50th anniversary of the winery's establishment in 1971 by the late John Middleton. Current winemaker and third-generation family member Sam Middleton has managed to sensitively and intelligently refine the wines to their highest-ever level of quality, driven from the vineyard up.



Middleton's stated belief is that "great wines are always a function of many different factors all aligning," and he singled out the warm and dry conditions of the 2019 vintage as "perfectly suited to the Quintet varieties, producing beautiful fruit ripeness alongside fresh natural acidity." The wine has such strikingly rich fruit intensity, a perfectly seamless texture and a weave of tannin that is reminiscent of great St. Julien-like Leoville las Cases in a great vintage.

Quintet leads a strong component of cabernet-based wines in our top 100, with Margaret River delivering much in terms of concentration, such strong regional character and compelling drinkability, as well as the ability to age so reliably. The sheer intensity of fruit seen in the wines of Cullen, Vasse Felix, Juniper Estate, Deep Woods, Nocturne, Xanadu and Domaine Naturaliste is a highlight of our Australian tastings this past year.

The Yangarra Grenache McLaren Vale Ovitelli 2019 (No. 2) leads the way for this rapidly ascending star of Australian wine styles in terms of both quality and consumer popularity. There are nine grenache in this year's list and six of those feature in the top 50. The Ovitelli is a wine of unique texture and one that marries power so closely with elegance, focus and purity and stands in contrast to the more structured Yangarra Grenache McLaren Vale High Sands 2018 (No. 19), which also features in the list.

S.C. Pannell's dynamic duo of 2020 grenache wines also appear in our Top 100, with the front-and-center concentrated purity of Old McDonald (No. 25) nicely contrasted by the finer-boned Smart Vineyard bottling (No. 53). Clarendon Hills, Aphelion, Van-



Our No. 4 Aussie wine, the Penfolds Shiraz St Henri 2018, is a reminder of how great the vintage was for Australian shiraz. (Photo courtesy of Penfolds)

guardist, Thistledown and Yalumba are all represented with outstanding grenache here, too. There has been a consistent run of high-quality Aussie grenache spanning 2018, 2019 and 2020 vintages, and the early signs for 2021 McLaren Vale and Barossa indicate there will be high ratings to celebrate this time next year, too.

The Adelina Shiraz Clare Valley 2020 (No. 3) heads up a total of 21 inclusions for Australia's most famous red grape and a collection of outstanding examples from a diverse set of regions. Adelina is a project that defines much of what is great and exciting about the modern face of Australian wine. Vignerons Jennie Gardner and Colin McBryde are a highly educated and experienced duo who understand the importance and potency of provenance in the narrative of great Australian wine; their Adelina Shiraz Mataro



2020 also makes the list this year at No. 79. These are wines of subtlety and power and belong in every serious collector's cellar.

## STYLISH SHIRAZ

As expected, this Top 100 list includes a comprehensive range of shiraz styles, from the elegantly composed Hunter Valley (Mount Pleasant) to the cool and fragrant climes of the Canberra District (Clonakilla and Ravensworth) to the complex and composed Yarra Valley (Oakridge) and the spicy powerhouse of Great Western (Best's).

There's also a series of stylishly refined, modern and powerful shiraz wines from the Barossa (Sons of Eden, Spinifex, Standish, Torbreck, Hentley Farm, John Duval, Head and Elderton) as well as McLaren Vale's smoothly balanced and effortlessly plush Ox Hardy and Koomilya. It is a convincing showing of warmer-climate Australian shiraz wines that are as undeniably refined as much as they remain authentically regional.



The lineup of Cullen Vanya cabernets Nick tasted in Margaret River.

And the South Australian multi-regional Penfolds Shiraz St Henri 2018 (No. 4) reminds us again just how great the vintage was for shiraz in this part of the wine world. It is a wine that has logged consistently high ratings in recent years and, like the Adelina, should be a staple for Australian shiraz collectors. And, perhaps the ultimate collector's trophy, the third release of a multi-vintage Grange blend, the Penfolds South Australia g5 NV (No. 10) is rated 100 points and is just so uniquely creative, rich and powerful.

The top whites are the Tyrrell's Semillon Hunter Valley Vat 1 2021 (No. 6) and the Tolpuddle Chardonnay Tasmania 2020 (No. 7), with 13 chardonnay wines in total listed this year. Like shiraz, chardonnay is so widely planted in Australia we see regions as diverse as Margaret River, Adelaide Hills, Macedon Ranges, Yarra Valley and the Hunter Valley all represented with exceptional releases. Australian chardonnay continues to lead in a global style sense while being strongly shaped by characters of region and place.

But it is riesling that perhaps strikes deepest in terms of capturing the taste of place, and the 2021 vintage has delivered comprehensively high quality across Australia's most important regions for this style. There are 12 riesling wines on this year's list, led by the Pooley Riesling Tasmania Margaret Pooley Tribute 2021 (No. 17). Tasmania, Canberra District, Frankland River, Macedon Ranges, Clare Valley and Eden Valley are all represented with stunning examples made in a dry, thrillingly fresh and piercing range of styles. These are without a shade of a doubt the greatest value wines in this year's Australian Top 100.



## **1 MOUNT MARY YARRA VALLEY QUINTET 2019 100 Pts.**

*This is a great Quintet, one of the best in fact. Here's a wine that combines such elegance, power and polish to a level seen in the best wines of Bordeaux in the best vintages. Aromas of blueberries, cassis and mulberries are framed in cedar and fresh, leafy cabernet tones, as well as violets and forest wood. Some subtle oak spice here, too. The palate is so seamlessly layered with ultra-fine tannins that carry pristine blueberry, redcurrant and blackcurrant flavors. Concentrated, with pitch-perfect balance. Acidity imbues the finish with freshness and vitality. So elegant and unwavering. A Yarra Valley First Growth! Delicious now, but try from 2027 and for a decade after that.*

## **2 YANGARRA GRENACHE MCLAREN VALE OVITELLI 2019 99 Pts.**

*Such attractive red-floral, stone and bracken aromas here with a red-plum and redcurrant edge, as well as pink grapefruit, blood orange and white pepper. The palate has a sleek and granular feel with a finely detailed style of tannin and a dried red-berry and cherry core. Leaf-like layers of tannin. Exquisite. Drink over the next eight years. Screw cap.*

## **3 ADELINA SHIRAZ CLARE VALLEY 2020 98 Pts.**

*From a low-yielding vintage that was warm enough, yet also cool enough, this is an exceptional release of what is fast becoming one of the great wines of not only the Clare Valley, but of South Australia. Some depth to the color and plenty of blueberry, red-plum and wild-raspberry aromas. The nose is so pure and attractive. With assertive tannin, as you'd expect here, the palate is framed up handsomely and the concentrated red-plum, raspberry, blueberry and blackberry flavors hold seamless and fresh. Vivid clarity here. Stunning. Try from 2026.*

## **4 PENFOLDS SHIRAZ SOUTH AUSTRALIA ST HENRI 2018 99 Pts.**

*A great St. Henri and, although multi-regional, this is very much a wine that speaks of the Barossa Valley, with aromas of ripe blackberries and red plums that are so fresh, together with tobacco, young-leather, earth, chocolate, coal-smoke and tarry accents. Effortless depth on the palate with summer berries, framed in fine, alabaster-like tannins that are underscored with discreet power. So long and captivating. A blend of Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, Port Lincoln, Robe, Padthaway, Clare Valley and Adelaide Hills. Drink over the next decade or more. Screw cap.*

## **5 CLONAKILLA SYRAH CANBERRA DISTRICT MURRUMBATEMAN 2019 98 Pts.**

*Stunning quality here. This elegant and spicy syrah smells of red cherry, pepper, plum, blueberry, orange zest and woody spice. The texture is sleek and velvety with long and fresh red-cherry and plum flavor and a silky texture that's akin to top pinot. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*

## **6 TYRRELL'S SEMILLON HUNTER VALLEY VAT 1 2021 98 Pts.**

*Vat 1 is always built for long-term aging, and this is certainly one set to age so well. Aromas of pure lemon juice and peel. The taut, lemon-drenched palate is a thrilling thing to taste now, but is really made for the cellar. Impressive! Drink over the next decade or more. Screw cap.*

## **7 TOLPUDDLE CHARDONNAY TASMANIA 2020 99 Pts.**

*This really asserts itself at the top echelon of chardonnay, in a context that extends far beyond the shores of the tiny island state of Tasmania. Already in such a great place, with aromas of white peach, lemon, lemon curd and very precisely curated sulphides adding interest. There's wet chalk, lemon peel and gentle hazelnutty oak in play as well. The palate has seamless, layered and fresh citrus and peach flavors, as well as a stream of pithy grapefruit and peach on offer. Acidity holds the finish long and true. This is one of the most elegant vintages of this wine, reminiscent of the 2014. Oak chimes in so subtly on the finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*



## **8** THE STANDISH WINE COMPANY BAROSSA VALLEY THE SCHUBERT THEOREM 2019 99 Pts.

*Just incredible shiraz, this has the x-factor of purity and inherent complexity. So layered and so detailed. The aromas and flavors of intense blackberry, rich plum, blueberry and cherry fold over and over each other, together with plenty of spice and a flicker of dark stones. The palate is so saturated and so deeply set with dark fruit cascading long and lively on the finish. Stunning shiraz once again. Drink over the next decade.*

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## **9** KOOMILYA SHIRAZ MCLAREN VALE JC BLOCK 2018 99 Pts.

*This parcel is rich in limestone and ironstone and gives a bold delivery of ripe, glossy red and dark berry and plum fruit aromas and flavors. The plushness is so impressive, blooming with big flavors. Delicious and almost hedonistically fruited but precisely balanced. Concentrated and packed with fine, rich, smooth tannins. You can drink it now but try after 2025 to see more of what's inside. Screw cap.*

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## **10** PENFOLDS SOUTH AUSTRALIA G5 100 Pts.

*Glorious aromas of blackberry, spice, tile and toasted wood that move into sandalwood, violet and rose petal, then cloves and nutmeg, before revealing a cappuccino and cream undertone. Full-bodied yet very tight and compacted with a dense center palate that is still agile and energetic. Tightly wound and compressed. Great complexity. Waiting to open and unravel in the bottle. It builds on the palate with such fine tannins that perfectly integrate. 97% shiraz and 3% cabernet sauvignon, with 70% from Barossa Valley, the rest from McLaren Vale and Claire Valley with small percentages from other sources. Multi-vintage blend: 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018. 2,200 bottles produced. Drink this after 2021 and onwards but already an ethereal wine!*

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## **11** TORBRECK SHIRAZ BAROSSA VALLEY THE FACTOR 2018 98 Pts.

*A pristine nose of ripe and intense blackberries, blueberries and redcurrants, as well as some sanguine, rust-like notes. This is an excellent edition of The Factor. I like the power and focus this wine delivers and, in 2018, it is a wine of great length and presence. Abundant ripe blackberries bathe the palate. Try from 2025.*

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## **12** TOLPUDDLE PINOT NOIR TASMANIA 2020 99 Pts.

*This is a wine we have not yet seen from Tolpuddle. It has such well-curated complexity and whole-bunch influence (40%) sits in the sweet spot. It is concentrated, yet so elegant and the vivid freshness that pervades every aspect of the nose and palate is striking. Aromas of red fruit, such as raspberry, strawberry, red cherry and red plum are framed in spice and fragrance. The palate has such impressive definition and clarity and the tannins are so detailed, fine and clear-cut. Concentrated red and darker cherries are fleshy, yet elegantly focused, and the acidity laces it all up so clearly. So drinkable now and for a decade at least. Screw cap.*

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## **13** SEPPELTSFIELD VINTAGE TAWNY SOUTH AUSTRALIA PARA 100 YEAR OLD 1921 99 Pts.

*Having spent 100 years in barrel, this has immense concentration of sweetness and acidity piercing a tremendously long palate. The texture is dense, very viscous and sticky, and the aromas and flavors are so complex, from dried fig to treacle, burnt honey, caramel and toffee through to grilled nuts and toasted spices. The long, rancio-tinged finish is entrancing and lasts for minutes. Sold in various sizes from the winery. Needless to say, drink now.*



## 14 TORBRECK SHIRAZ BAROSSA VALLEY THE LAIRD 2016 99 Pts.

*A distinctive and very concentrated, single-parcel shiraz that offers a rich plum and raisin nose with plenty of tarry notes and a swathe of baking spices. The palate is packed with rich, dark-plum and black-fruit flavors and the long, strong hold on the finish lasts for minutes. So intense, this is their finest Laird to date. Best from 2028.*

## 15 MORRIS MUSCAT RUTHERGLEN OLD PREMIUM RARE LIQUEUR 99 Pts.

*Just wonderful complexity and depth here. This is a fortified wine, blended from very old material and shows a mustard-tinged edge in the glass. Toffee and sweet, old-woody aromas, as well as raisin and orange peel, malt and creme caramel. The palate is so intense, so concentrated and so richly flavored. Sweet, long and ultimately fresh dried-plum and toffee flavors here. Drink now. Screw cap.*

## 16 COBAW RIDGE CHARDONNAY MACEDON RANGES 2019 98 Pts.

*This sits in a sweet spot of complexity with a reductive edge and a pithy grapefruit edge. Sliced lime and peach, too. The complexity is wrapped in so deep here. The palate has such intensity with glimmering acidity and sleek, long-driven freshness. Such purity here with really concentrated fruit. Acidity is salient. One of Australia's great chardonnays has arrived. Drink or hold.*

## 17 POOLEY RIESLING TASMANIA MARGARET POOLEY TRIBUTE 2021 98 Pts.

*A commanding wine from the get-go with intense aromas and a wine that immediately gives a concentrated impression. There's entrancing fragrance with intense lemon, lime, nectarine, wet stone and pastry. The palate is so pure, long and unwavering and holds a long line of fresh flavor with a fierce and lively drive of acidity that runs deep and delivers pure citrus and white-fleshed stone-fruit flavors. So dry. Wrenchingly powerful. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## 18 CULLEN MARGARET RIVER VANYA FLOWER DAY 2018 98 Pts.

*Aromas of purple berries, blackcurrants, violets, forest wood, a little cedar and some leafy tones, as well as sweet roasting herbs. Iodine and sappy elements, too. Very complex and nuanced. The palate is so fleshy and full of flavor with bright and juicy red plums, mulberries and dark plums and something almost like dark peaches. Very fine powdery tannins carry long and gently drying. This has a lot of power, but it's so elegant. Very impressive. Velvety, yet dense. 640 bottles only. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

## 19 YANGARRA GRENACHE MCLAREN VALE HIGH SANDS 2018 98 Pts.

*So rich, complex and intense with a wealth of very ripe, powerful fruit on offer. Blood-orange and pomegranate notes, together with stony aromas, providing a very complex feel. The palate is super powerful and juicy. So very long, so rich and so well defined, showing mouthwatering tannins and a very sleek, long and juicy drive of red-fruit flavor. This has immense power and carries rich, ripe red and blue fruit. Wow. So intense. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## 20 MURDOCH HILL PINOT NOIR ADELAIDE HILLS APOLLO 2020 98 Pts.

*A new top-tier pinot from Murdoch Hill to sit alongside the Rocket chardonnay. This has a very pure red-cherry and raspberry nose with striking fragrance. Very focused palate with filigree tannins and vivid acidity. Superior concentration and elegance. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## 21 TYRRELL'S SEMILLON HUNTER VALLEY HVD VINEYARD 2021 98 Pts.

*Quiet striking, fragrant lemon and lime nose with a sense of intensity and freshness that really leaps from the glass. The palate is so long, so fine and concentrated. Elegantly piercing semiillon at its best here. Drink over the next decade or more. Screw cap.*



## **22** MOUNT PLEASANT SHIRAZ HUNTER VALLEY OLD PADDOCK & OLD HILL 2019 **98 Pts.**

*This very old-vine blend of two parcels is a classic of Hunter Valley elegance and power. The aromas of such pure red plums and berries are deeply intense and have a spicy thread, as well as some earthy tones. The palate has impressive depth and richness of darker-toned berries and delivers unwaveringly long, deeply powerful style. This still holds medium-bodied yet packs so much concentration. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*

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## **23** SONS OF EDEN SHIRAZ EDEN VALLEY REMUS OLD VINE 2018 **98 Pts.**

*This is so very complex and fragrant with such impressive Eden Valley spice and blueberry fruit, as well as dark-stone nuances. The blueberry flavors are so pure and essence-like and silky tannins carry the flavors so deep and vivid. Seamless. Drink over the next fifteen years. Screw cap.*

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## **24** CHATTO PINOT NOIR HUON VALLEY ISLE 2020 **98 Pts.**

*This is Chatto's selection of the best sections in his Huon Valley vineyard and represents a quartet of clones, being Abel, 667, 777 and 115. These are all earlier-ripening clones and deliver a more velvety, plush texture. It has the neat double-entendre of elegance and power that defines great pinot the world over. Aromas of violets, blueberries, red and dark cherries and fresh thyme, together with fine-ground baking spices, such as cinnamon and clove, as well as crushed stones and quality French oak. The palate has such velvety texture and elegantly precise shape, delivering red-cherry, strawberry and red-plum flavors in such a fresh and mouth-filling mode. The acidity is bright and combines seamlessly with the smooth tannin drive. Mesmerisingly detailed, long and fresh. This is exactly the wine Chatto set out to make, when he chose this part of Tasmania to make his mark on the world of pinot noir. Job done! Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*

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## **25** S.C. PANNELL GRENACHE MCLAREN VALE OLD MCDONALD 2020 **98 Pts.**

*A rich blueberry fruit nose with violet, dark nectarine and some exotic tamarillo and papaya too. Pungent and distinctive. The palate has a fleshy core of plush fruit with commanding tannins that have so much power and energy but are delivered with grace. The flavors are blood orange, pink grapefruit, goji and red currant and are concentrated to the very end. Refreshing and packed with interest. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*

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## **26** VASSE FELIX CABERNET SAUVIGNON MALBEC MARGARET RIVER TOM CULLITY 2018 **98 Pts.**

*A great edition of the top Cabernet blend from Vasse Felix, this has a lot of power and depth. The aromas run from red to blue and dark berries with a leafy edge and attractive, fresh florals. The palate has a core of blue-toned fruit flavor that drives so deep, with a helix-like interplay of acidity and tannin. Impressive. Drink over the next decade or more. Screw cap.*

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## **27** KOOMILYA SHIRAZ MCLAREN VALE DC BLOCK 2018 **98 Pts.**

*A blueberry and spiced bramble berry nose with red and dark plum and a sweet, fresh-turned earthy edge. This leads to a bold, rich and round palate that spoons out a big mouthful of ripe plum and blueberry fruit flavor. Boldly elemental for now with essence-like depth of blueberry fruit at the finish. Smooth long-form tannins. Holds very long. Drinkable now but better after 2024. Screw cap.*



## **28 FERMOY ESTATE CHARDONNAY MARGARET RIVER RESERVE 2019 98 Pts.**

*A very complex, fresh and fleetingly flinty chardonnay that has intense lemon-curd, as well as hints of mango, nicely toned hazelnut oak and some floral tones. Very bold, fruit-driven style here. Complex and layered. The palate has great intensity with a stony mineral cut, combined with rich, bright and flashy yellow fruit, peach nectar and mango. The citrus finish is mouthwatering, even lip-smacking. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **29 JUNIPER ESTATE CABERNET SAUVIGNON MARGARET RIVER THE TRIBUTE 2018 98 Pts.**

*Impressive, this has fresh-sawn cedary oak, ahead of iodine, licorice, blueberries, plums and blue cherries. The palate is powerful and the fine tannins are compressed, seamless and long. There's distinctive weight here. Long and plush blue-fruit finish. Impressive. Drink over the next decade or more. Screw cap.*

## **30 CLARENDON HILLS SYRAH MCLAREN VALE ASTRALIS 2018 98 Pts.**

*From a great vintage, this has aromas of violets and blueberries with cocoa powder and an array of fragrant spices that offer so much interest already. There's an earthy edge, as well as forest wood and blackberries. More to come. The powerfully defined tannins are commanding and composed and carry ripe blackberries and dark plums very long. The wine feels so complete already. Very drinkable now and for many years ahead. Try from 2026.*

## **31 THE STANDISH WINE COMPANY SHIRAZ BAROSSA VALLEY THE STANDISH 2019 98 Pts.**

*Such concentrated blueberry and cherry aromas, as well as violets and fresh-earth aromas. This delivers an immediate sense of richness with chocolate in the mix, too. Very pure. The palate has a very resolved feel with deep, essence-like fruit flavors that hold a rich, plum and blackberry line that drives long and very even. This is really something. Drink over the next decade.*

## **32 CLARENDON HILLS GRENACHE MCLAREN VALE BLEWITT SPRINGS ROMAS 2020 98 Pts.**

*This is the top of the grenache wines and has new livery, aligned with their top shiraz release, Astralis. The complexity is already evident and there's a gently flinty edge, as well as iodine and graphite, dry-roasted spices, blood orange, red berry, plum and that signature, rust-like ferrous edge. The palate has a very composed core of blueberry and plum fruit with fine yet intense tannin. Concentrated and mouthwateringly fresh, super fleshy and seamless. This is excellent. Drink over the next decade and more.*

## **33 RIESLINGFREAK RIESLING EDEN VALLEY NO. 4 2021 97 Pts.**

*This hits a new level in 2021, the finest release of this dry Eden Valley riesling to date. Aromas of sliced lemon and crushed stones with flickers of spice, too. The palate is finely detailed and has elegantly piercing lemon and ruby-grapefruit flavors that run so long and focused. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **34 MAIN RIDGE ESTATE PINOT NOIR MORNINGTON PENINSULA HALF-ACRE 2019 97 Pts.**

*This is a tiny selection of the Main Ridge Vineyard and has a superior quality of tannin. It holds all the hallmarks of The Acre with bright red cherries and nicely complex, savory aromas and flavors with a more concentrated palate. The tannins are so wonderfully precise and detailed here. Really exceptional. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*



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**35 HOWARD PARK CABERNET SAUVIGNON WESTERN AUSTRALIA ABERCROMBIE 2018 97 Pts.**

*This is really fine with such polished and manicured fruit and tannins that deliver a thoroughly refined and beautiful palate with sweet dark fruit, from currants to blackberries. Long, long finish. Hard not to drink now. But one for the cellar. Try after 2025.*

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**36 CHATTO PINOT NOIR TASMANIA HUON VALLEY ISLE 2018 97 Pts.**

*A very complex pinot that has excellent poise with aromas of sweetly spiced red and dark cherries and fresh, foresty tones. The palate is exceptionally smooth with red cherries holding long and lively. Compelling. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**37 PIKES RIESLING CLARE VALLEY THE MERLE 2021 97 Pts.**

*This has very intense aromas of lime and wet slate with some sweeter florals, as well as white nectarine. So fresh. The palate has intensity and drive, with the same fresh lime and white-nectarine flavors. Very long and vivid. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**38 OX HARDY SHIRAZ MCLAREN VALE UPPER TINTARA VINEYARD 1891 ANCESTOR VINES 2012 97 Pts.**

*A really striking style with intense and ripe dark-plum, dark-chocolate and rust notes to the nose, as well as spiced dark cherries, herbs and savory elements. The palate is bathed in rich and ripe dark-plum and berry flavors, the tannins are silky and the resolve is sanguine. Just 850 bottles produced. Drink or hold.*

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**39 DEEP WOODS ESTATE CABERNET SAUVIGNON MARGARET RIVER RESERVE 2018 97 Pts.**

*This is impressive, with ripe blackcurrant, blueberry, red and purple plum, as well as cedary oak, a little spice, sweet roasting herbs and some red-fruit pop. The palate holds a really fleshy and succulent stance with fine tannins developing a taut hold on the palate as it builds. The flavors remain pristinely fresh. This is tightly wound and made for aging. Try from 2024. Screw cap.*

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**40 HOUSE OF ARRAS TASMANIA E.J. CARR LATE DISGORGED 2006 97 Pts.**

*An intense nose of poached pears, spiced apples, dried papaya, preserved lemon, grilled nuts, biscuits, toast and kelp. Full-bodied with sharp acidity and a soft, caressing mousse. Layered and evolving, with delicious slate and toasty notes coming through. Unique. Keeps going. Drink now or hold.*

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**41 VANGUARDIST WINES GRENACHE MCLAREN VALE BLEWITT SPRINGS 2020 97 Pts.**

*Shows rich and complex aromas of raspberries, dark berries and plums with savory, earthy, terra cotta-like notes, pomegranate and blueberries. Very fresh and lively, the palate is detailed and powerful with taut, fine tannins a highlight. Drink over the next decade.*

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**42 RIESLINGFREAK RIESLING CLARE VALLEY EDEN VALLEY NO. 10 2021 97 Pts.**

*This best-of-vintage, cross-regional blend has aromas of dried meadow flowers with some waxy notes and plenty of ripe citrus fruit, flint and spice. The elegant palate holds peach, pear and lemon flavor and delivers impressive drive and richness through the finish. Complex. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*





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**43 HENSCHKE RIESLING EDEN VALLEY JULIUS 2021 97 Pts.**

*This is a stylishly refined riesling with a delicately fragrant nose that offers peach and lemon, as well as wet-stone and flinty edges. This is pristine. The palate has such a smooth delivery of very intense lemon and white nectarine. Some gently pithy grapefruit builds into the long, sleek finish. Impressive. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**44 THISTLEDOWN GRENACHE MCLAREN VALE THIS CHARMING MAN OLD VINE CLARENDON 2020 97 Pts.**

*This is grenache with real purity and focus, offering fragrant raspberry, wild-herb and sappy nuances on the nose. The palate strikes elegance with concentration and delivers such pure raspberry and red-plum flavors. The acidity chimes in neatly. This is just so polished. Drink over the next seven years.*

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**45 NOCTURNE CHARDONNAY MARGARET RIVER SINGLE VINEYARD 2019 97 Pts.**

*A complex, fresh and flinty chardonnay that is packed with lemon and peach aromas and flavors. There's a well-played, flinty and reductive edge to the nose and vibrant acidity that defines the powerfully long, fresh palate. Drink over the next five years. Screw cap.*

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**46 TAPANAPPA CHARDONNAY ADELAIDE HILLS PICCADILLY VALLEY TIERS VINEYARD 2020 97 Pts.**

*This parcel has performed so impressively in 2020, with trademark white-peach aromas and a subtle lemon-cream edge. The oak is so well integrated here. There's impressive seamlessness on the palate with citrus-nuanced stone fruit carrying so long and fresh. Thrilling chardonnay. Drink or hold.*

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**47 YALUMBA GRENACHE BAROSSA VALLEY TRI-CENTENARY 2019 97 Pts.**

*Very floral and quite striking aromas here, with fruit in the blueberry, pepper and spice zone, as well as a leafy edge. There's berry pastry and pomegranate on offer, together with orange zest and redcurrant. The palate has a very composed core of raspberries, redcurrants, blood orange, papaya and peach. So emulsified and seamless. Good concentration and length here. This vintage spent 249 days on skins and was bottled without any maturation in oak at all. Scintillatingly pure and fresh. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*

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**48 VASSE FELIX CHARDONNAY MARGARET RIVER HEYTESBURY 2019 97 Pts.**

*Complex, smoky nose of hawthorn, grilled pineapple, dried lemon, ash, flint and cedar. Full-bodied, but refined, with tight, elegant layers. Phenolic. Excellent backbone of acidity to balance the concentrated fruit and spice. Vivid and long. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**49 MOUNT PLEASANT SHIRAZ HUNTER VALLEY MAURICE O'SHEA 2018 97 Pts.**

*A selection of the best shiraz Mount Pleasant can muster, this has a very intense nose with red plums, blueberries and blackcurrants, as well as dried flowers and earthy tones. Some light chocolate, too. The palate is punchy and intense and there's a rich, concentrated core of red-plum and cherry flavors. Silky, long and elegant tannins here. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*



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**50 NOCTURNE CABERNET SAUVIGNON MARGARET RIVER SINGLE VINEYARD 2019 97 Pts.**

*From the Sheok Vineyard, this is a striking cabernet that offers such an astute take on classically styled cabernet. Complex nose with cedar, blueberry, cassis, violet, earth and chocolate. The palate has such an impressive concentration of dark-berry fruit. Long, regal tannins. Impressive drive. Try from 2024. Screw cap.*

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**51 HENTLEY FARM SHIRAZ BAROSSA VALLEY E BLOCK 2019 97 Pts.**

*So dark in the glass, so concentrated and intense, with an exotic edge of almost peach and mango, ahead of blackberry, dark plum, cola, plenty of spice and dark chocolate. The palate is so dense and layered, with rich and intense black cherry, blueberry and candied orange peel. The tannins just don't stop! Intense. Try from 2025.*

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**52 JIM BARRY RIESLING CLARE VALLEY THE LODGE HILL 2021 97 Pts.**

*Super-fresh and intense with lime peel, lime juice and sweetly floral fragrance on offer. This is impressively crisp in the mouth and has a taut, fine yet powerful stance, driving pure lime flavors long. Acidity is a feature. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**53 S.C. PANNELL GRENACHE CLARENDON SMART 2020 97 Pts.**

*From a low-yielding vintage, this wine has such a precise and fragrant style with fresh and lively red currant, cranberry, strawberry and raspberry fruit aromas. Berry pastry and Monte Carlo biscuit here too. Vibrant and succulent palate with elegant tension to the fine, long tannins and arrow-like acidity. Raspberry finish. Uplifting and delicious. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**54 XANADU CABERNET SAUVIGNON MARGARET RIVER RESERVE 2018 97 Pts.**

*Striking, deep red-purple in the glass, this is a seriously good cabernet. Aromas of violets, blueberries, blackcurrants, cedar, roasting herbs and red and dark plums, as well as dark chocolate. Stylishly youthful and complex. The palate delivers a rich array of ripe plums, blackcurrants and blueberries, cast amid smoothly refined, long tannins. So impressive. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**55 CULLEN CHARDONNAY MARGARET RIVER KEVIN JOHN 2020 97 Pts.**

*This has richness and concentration, with a stony edge to the ripe peach, pear and pineapple fruit. Lemon peel and some flint, too. The purity is exceptional. So concentrated and highly defined with fleshy richness. Pastry and toasted grains, as well as fresh and lively acidity. Pure peach flesh and pear. There's refinement, as well as raw power at play here. Crisp finish. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**56 CLONAKILLA RIESLING CANBERRA DISTRICT 2021 96 Pts.**

*A seriously good, young dry riesling with a striking mineral edge to the nose of fresh lime juice, wet stones and gentle herbal notes. The palate has real intensity and depth with a vivid citrus and white-peach fruit drive. Snaps dry and the flavors hold pure and long. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**57 TARRAWATTA EDEN VALLEY GODSWALK 2018 96 Pts.**

*This is rich and complex with beautifully polished tannins that give energy and form to this, otherwise juicy and fruity red. It's full and flavorful with plenty of fruit that shows plum, walnut and floral character with some black truffle. Very long. First release. About 1,800 bottles made. A blend of 75% shiraz and 25% cabernet sauvignon. Very drinkable now, but better in 2022.*



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**58 PEWSEY VALE RIESLING EDEN VALLEY 2021 96 Pts.**

*A very fresh, piercing nose of sliced lemon with plenty of sweet perfume, too. The palate is similarly intense and vibrant with white stone-fruit and lemon flavors, delivered in an impressively intense and balanced mode. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**59 APHELION GRENACHE MCLAREN VALE CONFLUENCE 2020 96 Pts.**

*A really strong edition of this grenache, packed with ripe raspberry and red-plum aromas, as well as toasted spices, berry pastry, some wild herbs and terra cotta. The palate has such impressive depth and purity of red-plum and raspberry flavor. Such ripeness and freshness with real depth and drive. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**60 OX HARDY SHIRAZ MCLAREN VALE SLATE 2019 96 Pts.**

*A great follow-up to the 2018, this has attractively ripe and fresh dark berries, as well as a dark graphite-like note, some pepper and cocoa powder. The palate has a resolved and finely textured quality. Quite fine-grained tannins here, very smoothly rendered and detailed. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**61 YARRA YERING YARRA VALLEY DRY RED WINE NO. 1 2019 96 Pts.**

*The nose speaks to cabernet, with aromas of leaves and fresh herbs, red fruit and blueberries, as well as some forest wood. The palate is concentrated and delivers the same mix of red and blue fruit with a double-act of focus and power. More medium-bodied than full. A blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot, malbec and petit verdot. Drink over the next decade or more. Screw cap.*

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**62 HURLEY VINEYARD PINOT NOIR MORNINGTON PENINSULA GARAMOND 2019 96 Pts.**

*The perfume here is almost Chambolle-like, with dry spices, fresh red cherries, forest floor and leaves. Handy layering on the palate with fine-cut tannins that deliver gently tart red-cherry flavors. Elegant pinot with real power. Drink over the next eight years.*

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**63 BANNOCKBURN PINOT NOIR GEELONG SERRE 2019 96 Pts.**

*Fermented as 20% whole bunches, this has a rich core of ripe, pinot-noir dark cherries, as well as an earthy, forest-like feel. There's a silky texture on the palate, showing good ripeness in the tannin department with a velvety, rich dark-cherry finish. Drink or hold.*

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**64 GENTLE FOLK CHARDONNAY ADELAIDE HILLS PICCADILLY 2020 96 Pts.**

*This has a very fresh nose with lemon and white peach, as well as a gently stony and flinty feel. The palate is so sleekly aligned with bright, fine acidity and intense white-peach flavor. So fresh and with such great clarity, this is a vivid, lively Chardonnay. So, so pure. Drink now.*

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**65 VANGUARDIST WINES GRENACHE MCLAREN VALE BLEWITT SPRINGS RENDE 2018 96 Pts.**

*A very fragrant and distinctive grenache that has aromas of dried roses, forest wood, redcurrants, raspberries and wild herbs. Some earthy nuances, too. The definition on the palate is striking, with a red cherry-plum core and fine, lightly weathered tannins that are nicely settled in. Pure and compelling with flavors that hold very long. Drink over the next decade.*

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**66** **CURLY FLAT PINOT NOIR MACEDON RANGES 2019 96 Pts.**

*An impressive 2019 from Curly Flat with a spectrum of ripe red and dark-cherry aromas and trademark, sappy and spicy notes, too. The palate is delivered as a succulent and velvety array of ripe tannin that carries concentrated cherry fruit flavor. Intense and mouth-filling finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**67** **OAKRIDGE CHARDONNAY YARRA VALLEY HENK 2019 96 Pts.**

*A powerfully poised style of chardonnay from one of the absolute masters in the Yarra Valley, this has bright citrus fruit, such as grapefruit and lemon, with peach and toasted hazelnut. Some minerally edges, too. The palate is strikingly intense and the acidity drives so long. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**68** **BROKENWOOD SEMILLON HUNTER VALLEY SUNSHINE VINEYARD 2014 96 Pts.**

*This aged-release parcel is the product of an exceptional vintage and shows such fresh lemon and peach with grassy nuances. The palate is poised for long aging and has gently toasty nuances to the intense lemon core. Lemon curd, too. Smooth. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**69** **RAVENSWORTH SHIRAZ VIOGNIER CANBERRA DISTRICT 2019 96 Pts.**

*Striking complexity here with aromas of fine-ground sweet spices, red cherries, pepper and intense red plums. Super-detailed palate, enticingly velvety, with flickers of dusty tannin and flavors of pure spiced red plums and cherries. So detailed. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*

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**70** **SPINIFEX SHIRAZ BAROSSA VALLEY DOMINION 2019 96 Pts.**

*A wine of real depth and power that also delivers real complexity. Dark-berry and plum aromas with plenty of spice and dark chocolate, as well as tarry accents. The palate is bold, powerful and packed with ripe dark-fruit flavors. Long, uncompromising finish. From vines planted in 1918. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*

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**71** **JOHN DUVAL WINES SHIRAZ BAROSSA ELIGO 2018 96 Pts.**

*The first Eden Valley dominant Eligo (70%) with the Barossa Valley parcel coming from Adrian Hoffmann's Ebenezer vineyard. From an excellent vintage, this has a very fragrant nose, with fresh roasted spices and a cedary-oak thread that opens to cocoa powder, redcurrants, peaches, pomegranates, blueberries and blackberries. So, so youthful. The palate is very plush, fleshy and long. Flavor-soaked with rich and fresh blackberry and red-plum flavors. Long cellaring life here. An excellent Eligo. Try from 2025.*

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**72** **MOUNT MARY CHARDONNAY YARRA VALLEY 2019 96 Pts.**

*Aromas of fresh cream, lemon and lime, as well as peach, pastry and toasted hazelnut. The palate is so zesty and intense, with driving acidity supporting ripe peach and lemon flavors that are melded together seamlessly. Long and polished. Grilled-hazelnut oak warms the gently pithy finish in stylish mode. Concentrated, long and complex. Their finest chardonnay of the modern era, this is among the Yarra's first division. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*

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**73** **NAKED RUN RIESLING CLARE VALLEY PLACE IN TIME 2021 96 Pts.**

*This has a fine-talc and lime-peel nose with some flinty wet-stone and mineral edges, too. The palate has a very taut, fresh and lip-smacking feel with bright, fresh apple and lime flavors. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*



## **74** CHERUBINO CHARDONNAY MARGARET RIVER GINGIN WILLOWS VINEYARD 2020 **96 Pts.**

*Powerful, modern chardonnay that offers striking intensity with power. This is youthfully intense and dynamic with aromas and flavors of lemon, peach, apricot and grilled hazelnut. Some grapefruit and tropical fruit, too. Very intense and tightly coiled with a smoothly honed finish. Thrilling. Drink over the next five years. Screw cap.*

## **75** DEVIL'S LAIR CABERNET SAUVIGNON MARGARET RIVER 2018 **96 Pts.**

*Ripe, brightly fruited cabernet that is firing on all cylinders. There's a thread of tar and iodine, as well as rich black cherries and berries. Some graphite-like notes, too. Complex already. The palate is poised and concentrated with impressive freshness and length of ripe berries. Fine, long tannins. Smooth-honed. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **76** CRITTENDEN ESTATE SAVAGNIN MORNINGTON PENINSULA CRI DE COEUR 2016 **96 Pts.**

*Rollo Crittenden is not afraid to play the long game, and so he nestled this wine under flor for three years in untopped barrels, a mode known as "sous-voile" in France's Jura region. The result is a wildly complex yet precise white that has clear, savory, flor-derived character with lemon peel and toasted almond. Fragrant dried brown spices, too. The palate rings clear with a fresh flush of acidity and briny, mineral tones to the zesty lemon flavors, ahead of a smoothly nutty twist to close. So much to like here. Drink now.*

## **77** MOSS WOOD CABERNET SAUVIGNON MARGARET RIVER 2018 **96 Pts.**

*Fragrant nose of lavender, blackberry leaves, blackcurrants, cloves, vanilla and mint chocolate. It's full-bodied with firm, seamless tannins and vibrant acidity. Excellent structure and balance. Delicious already, but excellent cellaring potential. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **78** USHER TINKLER WINES CHARDONNAY HUNTER VALLEY RESERVE 2019 **96 Pts.**

*As good a chardonnay as anyone has made in the Hunter Valley, this has fresh and intense lemon and peach aromas with flint and integrated oak. The palate is wound tight with tangy peach and citrus flavors. Long, zesty finish. Drink or hold.*

## **79** ADELINA SHIRAZ MATARO CLARE VALLEY 2020 **96 Pts.**

*A blend of organically grown estate mataro and Aberfeldy Vineyard shiraz (planted in 1904), this has a fusion of blueberries and raspberries with red plums and redcurrants, as well as deeply woven, herbal tones. The palate has such intense and deep flavors, with plenty of really rich yet vibrant blackberries, blueberries and red plums. Some chocolate here, too. Impressive release. Drink or hold for a decade or more. Screw cap.*

## **80** A. RODDA BEECHWORTH CUVÉE DE CHEZ 2018 **96 Pts.**

*This blend of Bordelais grapes is one of the most stylishly understated modern reds being made in Victoria right now. It has such charming aromas of red, blue and purple berries, gentle earth and bracken, as well as super-subtle oak spice and cedar. The palate is so smoothly curated and the velvety tannins carry fresh, pillowy blueberry, blackcurrant and red-berry flavors aloft. Great wine. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*



**81 LEO BURING RIESLING EDEN VALLEY LEONAY 2021 96 Pts.**

*Super-fresh and fragrant, with intense apple, lemon and lime aromas, as well as some wet stone and jasmine-like florals. The palate has a sleek and softly refined feel with fresh white-peach and lemon flavors, sitting pristine, long and even. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**82 PAULETT WINES RIESLING CLARE VALLEY POLISH HILL RIVER 2021 96 Pts.**

*Intense lime and flinty aromas here with pithy lime peel, too. Smells concentrated. The palate confirms that with explosive lime and apple flavors. Acidity is a feature and the flavors run so long. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**83 LYONS WILL ESTATE RIESLING MACEDON RANGES 2021 96 Pts.**

*So fresh and packed with white peach, lemon and lime, as well as sliced apricot and more. So expressive with plenty of perfume. The palate has big, flavorsome, fleshy presence that wraps long and fresh. So juicy, there's a lot to love about this. Drink or hold.*

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**84 JOSHUA COOPER PINOT NOIR MACEDON RANGES DOUG'S VINEYARD 2020 96 Pts.**

*Very fresh and also rich, this pinot offers blueberries and dark cherries, as well as complex violet-like florals and spicy notes. The palate offers crunchy and lightly granular tannin with red-cherry and tangy plum flavors. Acidity is a highlight. Best from 2024.*

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**85 BICKNELL FC CHARDONNAY YARRA VALLEY APPLECROSS 2018 96 Pts.**

*This is a layered, complex chardonnay, showing aromas of lemon and peach with such convincingly subjugated oak and astute, solids kick. Similarly poised palate, with very impressive tension between flavor, flesh and acidity. Holds so much interest. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**86 HEAD WINES SHIRAZ BAROSSA VALLEY THE BLONDE 2019 96 Pts.**

*Stonewell's limestone-base soils are the pricing influence behind this shiraz, with quite spicy blackberry and dark plum, as well as graphite and spiced chocolate. The palate holds a seamlessly glossy texture and manages to deliver ultra-luscious fruit in an elegantly contained mode. So long and smooth and bathed in blackberries and blueberries. Drink or hold for a decade or longer. Screw cap.*

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**87 ELDERTON SHIRAZ BAROSSA VALLEY COMMAND 2018 96 Pts.**

*A great release of Command, this carries the bold and deeply flavorful style of the vintage effortlessly, a vintage that played into the natural style of this rich Barossa Valley shiraz. There's so much to love about this wine, from the rich blackberry, red-plum and spice aromas and flavors to the silky, fine and long tannins. Floats long on the smooth finish. Drink over the next decade and more. Screw cap.*

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**88 SHAW + SMITH CHARDONNAY ADELAIDE HILLS M3 2020 96 Pts.**

*Ripe peach, lemon and plenty of toasted hazelnut oak, sitting on a mix of flint and wet stones. The palate has great density and depth with concentrated peach and lemon. A little pastry, too. Smooth, with bright acidity. Impressive depth and balance here. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*


**89 SONS OF EDEN SHIRAZ BAROSSA VALLEY ROMULUS OLD VINE 2018 96 Pts.**

*Abundant sweet spice and red fruit, as well as licorice and tar. There's impressive density here with deep blackberry and chocolate flavors and bold, smooth tannins. Some convincing density and length. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**90 DOMAINE NATURALISTE CABERNET SAUVIGNON MARGARET RIVER MORUS 2018 96 Pts.**

*The immediate intensity and purity here is striking. Aromas of violets and blueberries, as well as redcurrants, fresh herbs and cedar all intertwine seamlessly. The palate is impeccably elegant, yet deeply concentrated, with dark-plum, blueberry and blackcurrant flavors set in elegantly fine, layered tannins. Drink over the next decade.*

**91 FRANKLAND ESTATE RIESLING FRANKLAND RIVER POISON HILL 2020 96 Pts.**

*Impressively defined lime and lemon aromas with crushed stones and a floral edge, too. The palate has ripe, long and fresh fruit flavors of peach and lemon. Smoothly toned, defined and long. Impressive concentration here. Drink now. Screw cap.*

**92 OAKRIDGE SHIRAZ YARRA VALLEY OAKRIDGE VINEYARD CLOSE PLANTED 864 2019 96 Pts.**

*A peppery and spicy style with impressive definition and concentration. Complex, too. There are dark cherries and plums, spice and dark stony minerals on offer. There's a handy sense of concentration and it's very layered and long. Spicy finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**93 TOM FOOLERY RIESLING EDEN VALLEY CUT & RUN 2021 96 Pts.**

*A terrific follow-up to the excellent 2020, this has piercingly fresh aromas of lemon and lime. Very floral, with some white peach, too. There's such finesse and polished texture on the palate with grapefruit and lemon flavors wrapped in long and tight. Brilliant. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**94 HOUSE OF ARRAS TASMANIA GRAND VINTAGE 2013 96 Pts.**

*Complex autolysis with spicy red fruit, as well as lemon, peach, candied orchard fruit and dried cherry. The palate is layered and has impressively complex dried-berry, peach and toasted-nut flavors. Smoothly honed, dry finish. Drink over the next four years.*

**95 STARGAZER PINOT NOIR TASMANIA COAL RIVER VALLEY 2020 95 Pts.**

*Sam Connew's own Palisander Vineyard fruit has delivered this beauty, with a swathe of sweet spices and fresh red and dark cherries on the nose. There's a darker-cherry edge, too. The palate has a fleshy feel and folds smooth, ripe tannin around a velvety core of plush dark-cherry fruit. Supple and silky tannin texture. Drink over the next five years. Screw cap.*

**96 MAYER PINOT NOIR YARRA VALLEY DR. MAYER 2020 95 Pts.**

*Such wonderful subtlety to this with floral, watermelon, light strawberry and some citrus aromas that follow through to a light body with pristine tension and form, bright acidity and fine tannins. Lightly chewy. Succulent and delicious. Drink now.*

**97** DOMINIQUE PORTET CABERNET SAUVIGNON YARRA VALLEY FONTAINE  
2019 **95 Pts.**

*This has very attractive cassis and blueberry aromas with some violet-like notes, too. There's a very sleek and polished texture to the palate and such vivid blueberry flavors on offer. The tannins are seamless, even and polished and the acidity is pitched into the freshly balanced zone. Try from 2024. Screw cap.*

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**98** MARCO LUBIANA PINOT NOIR TASMANIA LUCILLE VINEYARD 2020  
**95 Pts.**

*This is a complex pinot with aromas of spicy red cherry, pomegranate and blood orange with forest leaves and violet-like florals. The palate delivers freshness and drive and there's sleek crispness to the tannins here. Balances neatly. Drink or hold.*

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**99** BEST'S SHIRAZ GREAT WESTERN BIN NO. 1 2019 **95 Pts.**

*A spicy and super-fragrant, cool-climate shiraz that is packed with red and dark plums, raspberries and dark chocolate. Plenty of complexity inherent here. The palate is elegant, yet flavor-packed, delivering punchy, mouthwatering summer berries and plums. Wow! Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*

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**100** BAY OF FIRES PINOT NOIR TASMANIA 2020 **95 Pts.**

*This has instantly appealing, fresh and brambly red to dark-cherry aromas with alluringly spicy oak and a hint of reductive tension. Some cranberry, too. The palate has supple and open-knit tannins that wrap the fresh raspberries and red cherries so neatly. Opens to a smooth and creamy texture. Impressive. Drink over the next five years. Screw cap.*

# TOP 100 WINES OF AUSTRIA 2021



*Stuart Pigott,  
Senior Editor*

Austrian winemakers who struggled with too much sun and heat before 2020 ran into a different problem that year when the weather flipped, with frequent rains and moderate temperatures the order of the day. Suddenly, the challenges they faced were the kind their parents also confronted: downy mildew, sluggish ripening of the grapes and ignoble rot. Parts of the Wachau were also hit by hail. Ouch! But the good news is the 2020 dry whites in the Top 100 Wines of Austria 2021 are exciting in spite of the conditions during the growing season and harvest, over which their makers triumphed.

2020 in Austria was a vintage in which the leading producers shone, thanks to an enormous amount of work in the vineyards doing canopy management, cutting out problematic fruit and sorting the better grapes at harvest. It was also a year in which more resilient grape varieties came out on top. Riesling proved itself to be a grape that copes with all the extremes of the new climatic situation: rain in 2020 and drought in years like 2018 and 2017.

Just look at the number of rieslings on this list, beginning with our No. 1 Austrian wine of 2021, the F.X. Pichler Riesling Wachau Ried Kellerberg 2020. This dry white masterpiece from Lucas Pichler has exactly the combination of power, complexity and wonderful balance that we expect from high-end Austrian dry whites.

Pichler's sister Elisabeth and her husband, Erich Krutzler, also broke into the top of our Austria list for the first time with their rich and succulent, late-released Pichler-Krutzler Riesling Kremstal Ried Pfaffenberg Alte Reben 2019. It landed in the 10th spot – a great achievement considering we tasted more than 830 Austrian wines in 2021.

Another grape that copes with the new climatic conditions remarkably well is the red blafrankisch, which was responsible for our No. 2 Austrian wine, the stunningly concentrated and elegant Moric Blafränkisch Burgenland Lutzmannsburg Alte Reben 2019. It has the highest rating we have ever given to an Austrian red.

Not far behind in ninth place is the Dorli Muhr Blafränkisch Carnuntum Spitzerberg-Sptizer EL 2019, a radically fresh and mineral expression of this grape from the little-known region of Carnuntum, which is close to the borders of Hungary and Slovakia. In total, blafrankisch accounted for almost 20 percent of the Austrian Top 100.

It's also exciting to see a sauvignon blanc among the Top 10 Austrian wines for the first time. For us, the Tement Sauvignon Blanc Südsteiermark Ried Zierreg GSTK 2019 (No. 6, below right) is a world-class example of this grape, with great aromatic complexity. Con-

gratulations are due to Armin Tement, because this is also arguably the best dry white made in the Styria (Steiermark) region in modern times. However, Tement isn't alone, being joined by the Wohlmuth and Lackner Tinnacher wineries from Styria in the Top 20, and a good handful of their Styrian colleagues follow further down the list.

## **ELEGANT CHARDONNAY**

International wine critics sometimes look down at Austrian chardonnay because this grape is planted globally and the wines often lack a clear regional character. But you certainly can't say that about the very elegant and mineral Kollwentz Chardonnay Burgenland Gloria 2019, which placed fifth. For us, it was seriously impressive tasting this alongside the perfectly matured 2009 vintage of the same wine. So many high-end white wines from chardonnay's homeland in Burgundy prematurely oxidize (the so-called premo problem) long before they reach this age.

Many experts would argue that with at least five years of aging in bottle, dry gruner veltliner often tastes remarkably like nicely matured chardonnay. 2020 yielded few high-end dry whites from Austria's signature grape variety because of the rain during the harvest period for this relatively early-ripening grape. For us, the Prager Grüner Veltliner Wachau Zwerithaler Kammergut Smaragd 2020 in 12th position is the star among them, closely followed by the Nigl Grüner Veltliner Kremstal Pellingen EL Privat 2020. Both have the vitality, depth and finesse that are rare in this challenging vintage.

Before Austria switched to varietal white wines during the second half





The Chardonnay barrel cellar at the Kollwentz winery in Burgenland. (Photo by Stuart Pigott)

of the 20th century, cuvees were the norm, often as field blends. This year we tasted the most spectacular and extraordinary wine of this kind we have ever encountered. The Schloss Gobelsburg Niederösterreich Tradition Heritage Cuvée 50 Years NV (No. 3) has a tremendously complexity of mature aromas and radically reinvents this category. The production was also a serious quantity!

Schloss Gobelsberg doesn't only produce non-vintage blends, though. The focus of the winery's production is varietal dry riesling and gruner veltliner wines, and on Oct. 19 in London, the owner of Schloss Gobelsberg, Michael Moosbrugger, staged a very impressive tasting of his dry rieslings from the Heiligenstein vineyard site going back to the excellent 1971 vintage. However, back vintage wines like the stunning Schloss Gobelsburg Riesling Kamptal Heiligenstein EL 2001 don't qualify for

this Top 100 list, as only current releases are eligible.

An important long-term trend in Austria is how most of the leading winemakers are placing ever more emphasis on their top vineyard sites. The process of vineyard classification, which is still unofficial, has moved more slowly in Austria than in neighboring Germany. However, the Austrians have been more systematic about this than their German colleagues. The next years will show who made the right call.

The news from Austria is that 2021 is a very exciting vintage for dry white wines, so expect a lot more gruner veltliners and rieslings in next year's Top 100!

## **1 F.X. PICHLER RIESLING WACHAU RIED KELLERBERG 2020 99 Pts.**

*You need some time to wrap your head around this mineral masterpiece. So pristine and delicate, in spite of the enormous concentration and stony power behind it. Yes, there are a ton of citrus, white-peach and wild-rose aromas in there, and yes, there are intense wild herbs, too, but these things only scratch the surface of its soul. What's more, it only has 12.5% alcohol! Drink or hold.*

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## **2 MORIC BLAUFRÄNKISCH BURGENLAND LUTZMANNSBURG ALTE REBEN 2019 99 Pts.**

*Although this is already fragrant, the bouquet only hints at the enormous depth of this super-elegant blaufränkisch red. So graceful and refined, it redefines what the red wines of this grape can be. The giant structure is buried underneath a mountain of ripeness. Then the finish hits you like a lightning strike. Enormous aging potential. Drink or hold.*

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## **3 SCHLOSS GOBELSBURG NIEDERÖSTERREICH TRADITION HERITAGE CUVÉE 50 YEARS 99 Pts.**

*Incredibly deep and complex, this has all the mystery of great white wines that have matured for decades in the bottle, but is still lively. Delicate candied-citrus, baked-apple and honeycomb aromas, but the more you smell this the more you find in it! Sensational concentration and finesse through the long, filigree finish. This limited-production blend includes wines from 31 vintages over five decades, going back to 1970. There are also 9 grape varieties in there, gruner veltliner and riesling forming the base. Drink or hold.*

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## **4 RUDI PICHLER RIESLING WACHAU RIED ACHLEITHEN SMARAGD 2020 99 Pts.**

*It's hard to imagine how any wine could have more wet-stone minerality than this mind-blowing dry riesling. But that's just the cool side. On the warm side are a slew of delicate spices, dried herbs and flowers. And then there's the white-peach fruit charm which makes this masterpiece fully three-dimensional. Structured for many decades of aging. Drink or hold.*

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## **5 KOLLWENTZ CHARDONNAY BURGENLAND GLORIA 2019 97 Pts.**

*The enveloping nose of lemon curd, grapefruit, thyme and jasmine pulls you irresistibly into this very concentrated and super-elegant wine that glides over the palate and off into the distance. Clove and nutmeg notes. And in spite of all the richness, there's wonderful spearmint freshness and chalky coolness at the super-long finish. Drink or hold.*

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## **6 TEMENT SAUVIGNON BLANC SÜDSTEIERMARK RIED ZIEREGG GSTK 2019 97 Pts.**

*Very dense and compact, this giant sauvignon blanc opens very slowly. The pronounced rosemary, thyme and sage character takes it light years from any of the stereotypes for this grape. Very tightly wound, with enormous wet-stone minerality, this is already stretching out towards infinity. From organically grown grapes. Drinkable now, but best from 2023. Glass stopper.*



## **7** EMMERICH KNOLL RIESLING WACHAU RIED SCHÜTT SMARAGD 2020

**98 Pts.**

*Smelling this beauty, you wouldn't dream that it came from a difficult vintage! The wide-screen nose is brimming with stone and citrus fruit, but also thyme, chamomile and dill. Enormous concentration and brilliance, the whole balanced on the point of a needle. The finish is still quite tightly wound, but the minerality is already very emphatic. Decades of aging potential. Drink or hold.*

## **8** KRACHER WELSCHRIESLING BURGENLAND TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE NUMMER 8 2018 **99 Pts.**

*Titanic concentration of tropical-fruit coulis with a surprisingly subtle caramelized-mango note make this giant botrytis wine extremely seductive. Thankfully, the acidity keeps it really bright through the luscious and imposing palate and the very long, dense finish, where it has the brilliance of a great firework display. Drink or hold.*

## **9** DORLI MUHR BLAUFRÄNKISCH CARNUNTUM RIED SPITZERBERG-SPITZER EL 2019 **98 Pts.**

*Extremely youthful with elderberry, juniper-berry and red-licorice aromas, plus delicate, warm and spicy notes. This is extremely complex. So concentrated and energetic that it knocks you back in your chair, yet in spite of the considerable power, this remains sleek and super-focused. Intense rosemary and thyme notes on the palate. Incredibly refined finish that extends out towards a distant horizon. Limited production. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

## **10** PICHLER-KRUTZLER RIESLING KREMSTAL RIED PFAFFENBERG ALTE REBEN 2019 **98 Pts.**

*So ripe, fragrant and delicate, this is a dry-riesling masterpiece that squares the circle of concentration and lightness, the palate a star-burst of stone and exotic-fruit aromas. And at the end, this pulls you straight back to the moment you discovered its ravishing beauty. Drink or hold.*

## **11** WOHLMUTH SAUVIGNON BLANC SÜDSTEIERMARK RIED EDELSCHUH GSTK 2018 **97 Pts.**

*The stunningly aromas of lilies, pink grapefruit and exotic fruit pull you into this succulent yet very bright sauvignon that has grace and poise, in spite of the exceptional ripeness and concentration. Then, just when you think that's it, the finish bowls you off your feet like a rogue wave. This one just doesn't want to stop at the very polished finish. Drink or hold.*

## **12** PRAGER GRÜNER VELTLINER WACHAU ZWERITHALER KAMMERGUT SMARAGD 2020 **97 Pts.**

*The nose of this extraordinary gruner veltliner flickers between white, green and golden aromas in a startling way, and there are not only fruity aspects of this, but also herbal and wild flower notes. Great concentration and every bit as much vitality. They're both backed up by deep, wet-stone minerality that cascades over the palate at the very long finish. From vines planted in 1907. Drink or hold.*

**13 NIGL GRÜNER VELTLINER KREMSTAL RIED PELLINGEN EL PRIVAT 2020****97 Pts.**

*A staggering gruner veltliner that breaks the mold of the 2020 vintage! Stunning exotic-fruit, chamomile and spice aromas envelop you. Great concentration and every bit as much mineral brilliance make this a breathtaking wine. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**14 ALZINGER RIESLING WACHAU RIED STEINERTAL SMARAGD 2020 96 Pts.**

*What a great range of aromas, from ferns dripping after rain to ripe stone fruit via fresh sage! Very precise and super-elegant on the palate, this starts very gently, but the saline-mineral and herbal delicacy build and build until they create a microcosm of these extreme vineyards on your palate. Excellent aging potential. Drink or hold.*

**15 FRANZ HIRTZBERGER RIESLING WACHAU RIED SINGERRIEDEL SMARAGD 2020 97 Pts.**

*Dry riesling is often very mineral, but this pushes the envelope of that side of the grape a long way. Stunning nectarine, bergamot, chamomile and jasmine aromas, then an extremely exciting interplay with the racy acidity that powers the very precise and refined finish. Very limited production. Drink or hold.*

**16 LACKNER TINNACHER MORILLON SÜDSTEIERMARK RIED FLAMBERG GSTK 2019 96 Pts.**

*A truly unique chardonnay. Enveloping nose of pear, mirabelle and bergamot that develops a fragrant note of roses. Exciting interplay of creamy-pear and vibrant-citrus character on the medium-bodied palate. Very long, powdered-chalk finish that pulls you inexorably back to the glass. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Glass stopper.*

**17 SCHUSTER BLAUFRÄNKISCH BURGENLAND ST. MARGARETHEN 2018 97 Pts.**

*A fantastic bouquet. It seems endless in its wafting aromas of dark berries and ripe black fruit. Chalk-like mineral character is immediately apparent on the palate. Its rich, yet light-footed. There is bright acidity, but it's grounded in brooding fruit and herbs. Simply superb. Drinkable now, but will age very well.*

**18 KRUTZLER BURGENLAND PERWOLFF 2018 97 Pts.**

*This has an entire fjord of elderberry aroma on the nose, but also notes of rose hips, wet earth and just a whiff of smoke from oak. Very concentrated, but also super straight and pure, the tannins building steadily as it flows over the palate, the subliminal acidity accelerating the mineral finish to warp speed. Must be the best vintage so far of this wine, which made its debut with the 1992 vintage. Drink or hold.*

**19 SCHIEFER KILGER PUR BLAUFRÄNKISCH EISENBERG RIED REIBURG 2017 96 Pts.**

*Deep and refined nose, spanning the range from violets to wet earth. This is now at the beginning of what will surely be a long phase of ideal maturity and the fine tannins are now beautifully integrated with the fruit and just a whisker of oak. Serious concentration at the very long, mineral finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*



## **20** WACHTER-WIESLER BLAUFRÄNKISCH EISENBERG RIED WEINBERG RESERVE 2018 **96 Pts.**

*Deep black cherries, violets and licorice on the very fresh nose. On the medium-bodied palate, stunning concentration is married to an exciting interplay of fresh-herb notes with intense minerality through the very long and super-focused finish. Supernova brilliance, in comparison to the rather chewy and slightly heavy norm of this vintage. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

## **21** MARKUS ALTENBERGER BLAUFRÄNKISCH LEITHABERG RIED JUNGENBERG 2018 **96 Pts.**

*Very delicate nose with striking sour-cherry and orange-peel aromas that expand with aeration. Daringly cool and sleek style, but there's not a hint of unripeness anywhere here! Instead, the cardamon and clove aromas cascade over the palate. The mineral acidity is so bright and invigorating at the very long, precise finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

## **22** NIKOLAIHOF RIESLING WACHAU VINOHEK 2014 **96 Pts.**

*Stunning quince-jelly, dried-apricot, and dried-spice character. Unctuous, yet miraculously light. Super-long, fine and complex finish that's so beautifully balanced, but barely sweet. From biodynamically grown grapes with Demeter certification. Drink or hold.*

## **23** PROIDL RIESLING NIEDERÖSTERREICH GENERATION X 2019 **96 Pts.**

*Enormously deep melon, dried-peach and nectarine nose with hints of wild herbs. Stunning ripeness and concentration with a touch of positive bitterness lifting the powerful but lithe body. Very long, warm and spicy finish that, paradoxically, is also very fresh. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **24** HIRSCH RIESLING KAMPTAL RIED GAISBERG EL 2020 **96 Pts.**

*This has been built for the long term, but the intensity of dried herbs and baking spices on the nose is already very impressive. Breathtaking energy and precision on the very mineral palate. Very long, tantalizing finish with stunning complexity. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **25** SALOMON UNDHOF RIESLING KREMSTAL STEIN A. D. DONAU 2020 **95 Pts.**

*What a beautiful peach, apricot and floral-honey nose. The suave and silky, medium-bodied palate marries ripeness and elegance effortlessly, then comes the very graceful finish that gently lifts you up into the air and lets you hang there for a long, long moment. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **26** HUBER GRÜNER VELTLINER TRAISENTAL RIED BERG EL 2020 **95 Pts.**

*A very rich and complete grüner veltliner that has excellent concentration and considerable textural complexity. Pronounced cardamon note. Very long finish, in which salty minerality and dried-herb flavors are beautifully interwoven. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*



**27 BIRGIT EICHINGER RIESLING KAMPTAL RIED GAISBERG EL 2020 95 Pts.**

*Lovely ripe nose with so much stone fruit, floral expression and delicate spice. Very good concentration and harmony on the generous and polished palate, Long, refined finish with a great interplay of ripe peach and wet-stone minerality. Drink or hold.*

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**28 EHN RIESLING KAMPTAL RIED HEILIGENSTEIN EL 2020 95 Pts.**

*Striking dill, white-pepper and blackcurrant nose that's still very youthful. Quite powerful, yet very sleek with diamond-bright acidity. Such a vibrant and exciting finish that shows a dangerous amount of energy. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**29 GEYERHOF RIESLING KREMSTAL RIED KIRCHENSTEIG EL 2020 95 Pts.**

*Anything but dramatic, this concentrated and refined dry riesling discreetly introduces itself with tobacco-leaf, wildflower and tangerine-rind aromas. Rather tightly wound on the medium-bodied palate with a long, dry and herbal-mineral finish. Only just beginning to reveal its treasures. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**30 JURTSCHITSCH RIESLING KAMPTAL RIED HEILIGENSTEIN EL 2020 95 Pts.**

*This 2020 dry riesling makes a bold statement with tons of citrus and basil aromas. Powerful and concentrated with stacks of minerality, this is already so expressive, but also so young. Very long finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**31 WIENINGER WIENER GEMISCHTER SATZ BISAMBERG 2019 95 Pts.**

*This smells like a whole meadow, filled with wild herbs and flowers! Very concentrated yet also very subtle, this has kaleidoscopic notes of yellow, red and white fruit on the finely etched palate. Very long finish, in which the mineral acidity, fine tannins and ripeness are tightly interwoven. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold. Glass closure.*

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**32 NEUMEISTER SAUVIGNON BLANC VULKANLAND STEIERMARK RIED MOAR-FEITL GSTK 2018 95 Pts.**

*Very complex interplay of lemon-curd, yellow-grapefruit, savory and flinty character. Very concentrated and rather powerful, yet sleek and pristine, the minerality about as intense as it can be. But the wine remains enticing, rather than tipping over into some kind of fundamentalism. The finish flutters as lightly as a flag in the breeze. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**33 POLZ SAUVIGNON BLANC SÜDSTEIERMARK RIED HOCHGRASSNITZBERG GSTK 2019 95 Pts.**

*A deep and concentrated sauvignon that hasn't lost any of the vegetal and spring-meadow freshness of the grape as a result of the high ripeness. Tons of grapefruit, white-cherry and complex herbal character on the powerful yet very focused palate. Stunning chalky and wet-stone minerality at the exciting finish. Drink or hold.*

**34 SOHM & KRACHER GRÜNER VELTLINER BURGENLAND ST. GEORG 2017****95 Pts.**

*With its pronounced persimmon and wild-herb nose, this is a very striking and structured gruner veltliner with a lot of chalky power packed into its full but very focused body. Plenty of drive at the long, fresh and mineral finish. Only just beginning to give its best. Drink or hold.*

**35 RUDI PICHLER GRÜNER VELTLINER WACHAU RIED ACHLEITHEN SMARAGD****2020 97 Pts.**

*Slightly funky nose (from a hint of reduction), but that only adds to the excitement of this extraordinarily expressive gruner with enormous wet-stone minerality. The very radical structure and gigantic energy bowl you over. As it aerates, notes of lemon grass, vanilla bean and resin come through. Very long, breathtakingly intense finish. From vines that are 60 to 80 years old. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

**36 PRAGER RIESLING WACHAU KLAUS SMARAGD 2020 97 Pts.**

*Superbly cool, restrained and refined, this austere, beautiful dry riesling is a slow-burn masterpiece that's only just beginning to reveal its complex white-peach, white-tea, wild-herb and dark-berry character. Super-long and mineral finish. Drink or hold.*

**37 F.X. PICHLER GRÜNER VELTLINER WACHAU RIED KELLERBERG 2020****97 Pts.**

*Very deep and complex nose of white chocolate, grilled green beans, yuzu and a touch of exotic fruit. Enormously concentrated on the full-bodied palate, but with enormous mineral character that lifts this bold structure and makes the wine glide over your palate. Great aging potential. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

**38 MORIC BLAUFRÄNKISCH BURGENLAND RIED MAISSNER 2019 97 Pts.**

*Enormously deep and complex wet-earth, wildflower and licorice nose. Very dense and ripe, but with so much mineral freshness that it jolts you in your chair. Stunning, deep tannin structure and enormous intensity at the super-clean finish, where the flowers blossom again. Drink or hold.*

**39 NIGL RIESLING KREMSTAL RIED HOCHÄCKER EL PRIVAT 2020 97 Pts.**

*Deep and enticing nose of stone fruit, nutmeg and wild flowers. Super elegant, refined and concentrated, yet sleek and seamless palate with an extremely long, superfine finish that will take take your breathe away. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**40 EMMERICH KNOLL GRÜNER VELTLINER WACHAU RIED SCHÜTT SMARAGD 2020 96 Pts.**

*Beautiful yellow fruit that ranges from mirabelle to grapefruit and mango, but also curry leaf, snow pea and thyme. Stunning ripeness and concentration, the interplay of fruit, acidity and minerality spot-on. Wonderful balance at the very long, refined mineral finish. Excellent aging potential. Drink or hold.*

**41 KOLLWENTZ CHARDONNAY BURGENLAND RIED TATSCHLER 2019 96 Pts.**

*Very complex and flinty with a hint of funk adding energy and excitement, but also enticing white-flower notes. This is a very sophisticated Chardonnay that has the structure for long aging, yet remains very elegant. Then comes the very long and intense mineral finish that sweeps you away. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**42 KRACHER BURGENLAND GRANDE CUVÉE TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE NUMMER 5 2018 97 Pts.**

*Intense dried mango and papaya with plenty of brulee character on the nose, providing imposing presence from the beginning. The luscious sweetness is matched by serious concentration and bright acidity that lifts the dense finish beautifully. Very long and exciting. Drink or hold.*

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**43 PICHLER-KRUTZLER RIESLING WACHAU RIED KELLERBERG 2020 96 Pts.**

*Stunning ripeness and concentration for the vintage are married to enormous mineral energy. Very compact finish that's also very subtle. With a little aeration the aromas of white and red-fleshed vineyard peach expand wonderfully. Then comes the pink and yellow-grapefruit character at the very long, pure finish. Drink or hold.*

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**44 FRITZ SALOMON ROTER VELTLINER AUSTRIA HALTERHAUS 2019 95 Pts.**

*What a nose of tropical fruit and flowers with just a touch of flint. Ravishing texture on the concentrated and very silky palate. Long, totally sensual finish with the most delicate hint of sweetness. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**45 DORLI MUHR BLAUFRÄNKISCH CARNUNTUM RIED SPITZERBERG-KOBELN EL LIEBKIND 2019 96 Pts.**

*Enormously vibrant with a slew of red beets, wild flowers and berries. Stunning concentration and laser-beam straightness make this a very exciting blaufränkisch and, behind all of this and providing the power for the wine's terrific drive, is a ton of fine, chalky tannins. Super-cool and fresh finish. Limited production. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**46 HIRSCH GRÜNER VELTLINER KAMPTAL RIED GAISBERG EL 2020 95 Pts.**

*Still some youthful funk on the nose, but with a little aeration a wide spectrum of baking spices (nutmeg!) emerge from this very elegant and graceful grüner veltliner. Extremely long, silky finish with complex herbal and citric notes. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drinkable now, but best from 2023. Patience will be richly rewarded! Screw cap.*

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**47 TEMENT SAUVIGNON BLANC SÜDSTEIERMARK RIED ZIEREGG VINOTHEK RESERVE 2018 96 Pts.**

*Very expansive nose with a lot of grapefruit, but also hints of exotic fruit and Mediterranean herbs. Very rich, with great textural complexity, but enough acidity that the imposing scale of the wine doesn't result in any hint of heaviness. Powerful finish with layers of citrus, minerals and wild herbs. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Glass stopper.*

**48 SCHIEFER KILGER PUR BLAUFRÄNKISCH EISENBERG RIED SZAPARY 2017****95 Pts.**

*I love the dark, balsamic and earthy nose with very black cherry and a touch of elderberry. Concentrated and dramatic, this makes a boldly original statement, the substantial fine tannins building to a real crescendo at the imposing finish. And, in spite of all this, it retains the signature brightness of the blaufränkisch grape. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**49 WOHLMUTH RIESLING SÜDSTEIERMARK RIED EDELSCHUH GSTK 2019****95 Pts.**

*Redefines what Styrian dry white can be! What a wide spectrum of ripe-citrus and stone-fruit aromas this remarkable dry riesling has! Sleek and exceptionally energetic, but also juicy and compelling, with pronounced rosemary character and very intense wet-stone minerality at the razor-sharp finish. Drink or hold.*

**50 OTT GRÜNER VELTLINER WAGRAM DER OTT 2019 94 Pts.**

*This is a real beauty with so much depth, yet such grace and precision. Very complex, sweet-vegetal notes and cool white and yellow-fruit notes, spiced up with some pepper of all three colors. Just beginning to show what it's made of! From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**51 STAGÅRD RIESLING KREMSTAL RIED STEINER HUND 2020 94 Pts.**

*The yellow-grapefruit aroma is striking, but the deep mineral core of this sleek and haughty beauty is what it's all about. This will need quite some time to show itself fully, but you need to wait many years for Château Margaux, too! Very long, pure and precise finish. From biodynamically grown grapes with Demeter certification. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

**52 FRITSCH GRÜNER VELTLINER WAGRAM RIED SCHLOSSBERG EL 2020****94 Pts.**

*A wonderfully light-footed dry gruner veltliner that has very good concentration and a wide spectrum of fresh-herb aromas that makes this as fascinating as it is refreshing. Just beginning to open up. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**53 JOHANN DONABAUM GRÜNER VELTLINER WACHAU RIED KIRCHWEG SMARAGD 2019 94 Pts.**

*This has a really beautiful balance of ripe-mirabelle and apricot aromas with generosity and elegance, the lively acidity lifting the full body and making this seem to hang in the air for a long moment. Then, the deep and very long finish pulls you back to earth. So much tension here, and it surely has many years ahead of it. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**54 GROSS SAUVIGNON BLANC SÜDSTEIERMARK EHRENHAUSEN STK 2019****94 Pts.**

*Deep and subtle nose with ripe-melon, grapefruit and floral aromas. Concentrated and powerful, but also beautifully balanced and graceful, this a standout wine for sauvignon from this region. Stunning, silky finish with so much grapefruit and chalky minerality, plus just a hint of toasty oak. Drink or hold.*

**55** ALZINGER GRÜNER VELTLINER WACHAU RIED LIEBENBERG SMARAGD  
2020 **94 Pts.**

*Delicate nose of exotic fruit, baked apple and sesame. The juicy and exotic first-impression on the palate leads you into a sleek and almost steely palate with dill and mineral at the long, tight finish. Drink or hold.*

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**56** ANITA & HANS NITTAUS BLAUFRÄNKISCH LEITHABERG RIED  
JUNGENBERG 2018 **94 Pts.**

*Deep and rich black-cherry fruit with touches of tobacco and herbs. Ripe and concentrated, but with uplifting freshness. Plenty of fine tannins that support this very nicely. Long, silky finish that pulls you back for more. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold.*

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**57** KOPFENSTEINER BLAUFRÄNKISCH EISENBERG RIED REIHBURG RESERVE  
2019 **94 Pts.**

*At once bold and fragrant, this is a serious blaufränkisch red that's still a bit closed on the powerful yet juicy palate. Lovely violet aroma and a long, suave finish. Drink or hold.*

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**58** MARKOWITSCH CARNUNTUM RIED ROSENBERG EL 2019 **94 Pts.**

*The deep nose of black fruit, toasty oak and savory notes pulls you into this rich and well-structured red that has impressive concentration and nice, chalky minerality at the long, polished finish. A blend of zweigelt, blaufränkisch and merlot. Drink or hold.*

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**59** MARTIN NETZL BLAUFRÄNKISCH CARNUNTUM RIED SPITZERBERG EL 2019  
**94 Pts.**

*A very complex and elegant expression of this grape with the mineral intensity and freshness that makes the best blaufränkisch reds so special. The sleek body is precisely delineated and the fine tannins give exactly the warmth needed to complement the cool acidity that drives the long, refined finish. Excellent aging potential. Drink or hold.*

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**60** SOMMER GRÜNER VELTLINER LEITHABERG RIED HALSER 2019 **94 Pts.**

*Although some aspects of this wine remind us of high-end, barrel-fermented chardonnay, it has a combination of flinty and burning-grass aromas that is unique. Concentrated, rich and finely nuanced with delicate herb and hay notes. Long, silky finish that the chalky minerality supports gently. Still a bit shy, but this surely has excellent aging potential. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**61** NEUMAYER RIESLING TRAISENTAL RIED ROTHENBART EL 2020 **94 Pts.**

*Diamond-bright nose with lemons, wild herbs and lemon grass. Good concentration for the vintage, plus a slew of salty minerality make this an exciting dry riesling for the 2020 vintage. Still very youthful with excellent aging potential. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*



**62 JOSEF & PHILIPP BRÜNDLMAYER GRÜNER VELTLINER KREMSTAL CREDO 2020 94 Pts.**

*Proves that a high-end gruner veltliner doesn't have to be big and brawny! Extremely bright and expressive on the nose with a kaleidoscopic range of yellow and citrus fruit, but also wild-berry, herb and white-pepper notes. Very pure and focused on the palate with eye-popping freshness, this has the vitality to age for decades. Limited production. Drink or hold.*

**63 PETRA UNGER RIESLING KREMSTAL STEINLEITHEN 2020 94 Pts.**

*Slightly funky nose at first, but this quickly turns in a flinty direction. Very concentrated, but still tightly wound. Tons of ripe-melon, floral and ripe-citrus aromas. Very impressive minerality at the long, velvety finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**64 GRITSCH RIESLING WACHAU RIED SETZBERG SMARAGD 2020 94 Pts.**

*Impressively vibrant and subtle peach and citrus character, married to minty freshness in this powerful yet sleek dry Wachau riesling. Graceful and precise, with considerable length, this is a sophisticated wine that's just beginning to open up and would age very well. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**65 ERWIN SABATHI CHARDONNAY SÜDSTEIERMARK RIED PÖSSNITZBERGER KAPELLE GSTK 2018 94 Pts.**

*Plenty of butterscotch richness is married to grapefruit-pith bitterness and mountain-air freshness. After a rather gentle start, the tannins build at the finish and, together with the touch of bitterness, make this a very impressive and complex but also idiosyncratic chardonnay. Drink or hold.*

**66 ANDREAS GSELLMANN BURGENLAND RIED GABARINZA 2017 94 Pts.**

*So fresh and fragrant, it makes you glad to be alive! Panoramic blackberry, floral and spicy aromas, the oak present, but not dominant at any point. Concentrated, yet so fresh and charming, the fine tannins building beautifully to a great crescendo at the finish. A blend of blaufränkisch, zweigelt and merlot. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold.*

**67 GROSZER WEIN BLAUFRÄNKISCH EISENBERG RIED SAYBRITZ RESERVE 2019 94 Pts.**

*Very fragrant with a lot of youthful vivacity on the nose. Lovely balance of forest berry, dried rose and pepper with generous, fine tannins that give the long finish a positively chalky texture. Very clean and excellent aging potential. Drink or hold.*

**68 ARTNER BLAUFRÄNKISCH CARNUNTUM RIED KIRCHWEINGARTEN EL 2019 94 Pts.**

*Youthful and vibrant aromas of ripe cranberries and mulberries pour from the glass of this concentrated and very well-structured blaufränkisch. Although this has clearly been made with decades of aging potential in mind, the balance of mineral acidity, velvety tannins and bright fruit is already stunning. Drink or hold.*

**69 HAJSZAN NEUMANN RIESLING WIEN RIED STEINBERG EL 2020 94 Pts.**

*Very lemon and lime zest, but also rather ripe and bold. Serious structure and minerality fill out the full body, and both the racy acidity and the touch of tannin lift the finish very nicely. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**70 LOIMER SEKT NIEDERÖSTERREICH GUMPOLDSKIRCHEN BLANC DE NOIRS GROSSE RESERVE BRUT NATURE 2016 94 Pts.**

*You could easily mistake this Austrian sparkler for a Blanc de Noirs Champagne, thanks to the combination of red-berry richness and chalky freshness. Fine mousse and a stunning balance of acidity, fruity and creamy sur-lie character. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold.*

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**71 SCHLOSS GOBELSBURG RIESLING KAMPTAL ZÖBING 2020 94 Pts.**

*A truly exceptional village wine! Forthright lemon-curd, parsley and chive aromas pull you into this ripe and concentrated dry riesling that's got excellent focus and clarity. Long, intensely mineral finish. Drink or hold.*

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**72 SKOFF ORIGINAL SAUVIGNON BLANC SÜDSTEIERMARK RIED OBEGG 2019 94 Pts.**

*Attractive spring-meadow and fresh-herb nose with very discreet fruit, but this is only just beginning to give its best. A concentrated and highly structured sauvignon blanc with a silky texture at the long, polished finish. The French oak it was matured in is barely perceptible. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**73 SATTLEHOF WEISSBURGUNDER SÜDSTEIERMARK GAMLITZ STK 2019 94 Pts.**

*A super elegant dry pinot blanc with stunning freshness and lots of fresh-nut, spring-meadow and white-fruit aromas. Precisely contoured, medium body with scintillating vitality. Very crisp, long finish that pulls you back for more. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Glass closure.*

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**74 STEININGER GRÜNER VELTLINER KAMPTAL RIED LOISIUM RESERVE 2019 94 Pts.**

*For a powerful gruner veltliner, this has a remarkably delicate, herbal nose. Stunning mineral freshness beautifully lifts the concentrated and focused palate. Very long, pristine finish for this grape. Although this is analytically properly dry, there's a lovely "sweet" note that gives this stunning wine yet more appeal. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**75 BRÜNDLMAYER RIESLING KAMPTAL RIED STEINMASSL EL 2020 94 Pts.**

*Lots of herbal and pine freshness animates this medium-bodied but compact dry riesling. Very good ripeness, but not voluminous or weighty. Serious minerality at the long, deep finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

## **76** WACHTER-WIESLER BLAUFRÄNKISCH EISENBERG RIED SAYBRITZ RESERVE 2018 **95 Pts.**

*Very fragrant, subtle nose with a wide spectrum of floral and spice notes. Concentrated and silky palate that's so lively, but has excellent richness on the mid-palate and a degree of silkiness that's rare in this vintage. Long, refined finish with restrained mineral power. Drink or hold.*

## **77** MACHHERNDL GRÜNER VELTLINER WACHAU FOR FRIENDS ONLY SMARAGD 2018 **94 Pts.**

*Super-ripe pear and a touch of caramelized-pear character exude from this rich, concentrated and creamy gruner veltliner, which remains dry and clean through the long, complete finish. You barely feel the 14% alcohol. Still has plenty of years ahead of it! Bottled in magnums. From organically grown grapes. Vegan. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **78** PRIMUS CHARDONNAY SÜDSTEIERMARK RIED ZIEREGG 2018 **94 Pts.**

*The deep, smoky and flinty nose is followed by a remarkably elegant and mineral palate for the very warm vintage, the balance of creaminess and freshness spot on. Then comes the stunning minerality at the long finish. And this is just beginning to go through its paces! Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **79** NEHRER CHARDONNAY LEITHABERG RIED KRAINER 2019 **94 Pts.**

*A whole garden of white flowers. Delicately honeyed with a wonderful balance of ripeness and silky acidity on the medium-bodied palate. Long, refined finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

## **80** FRANZ MICHAEL MAYER WIEN SCHÖNIN 1683 2019 **94 Pts.**

*This is so rich and lush that it tastes slightly sweet, although analytically it's dry. Plenty of exotic fruit aromas, but not overbearing or even slightly jammy, this wine keeps a cool head, in spite of 14.5% alcohol, the fine tannins (also from oak) giving it focus and a very clear line. A limited production blend of Mendoza-clone chardonnay, neuburger and gruner veltliner. Drink or hold.*

## **81** GUT OGGAU WEINLAND TIMOTHEUS WEISS 2018 **94 Pts.**

*A very pretty, layered white with sliced lemon rind, white pineapple and green apple. White pepper and some crushed stone, too. It's medium-bodied with delicious fruit and a flavorful finish. Pure fruit. Blend of gruner and weissburgunder. From biodynamically grown grapes. Demeter certified. Drink now.*

## **82** NEUMEISTER SAUVIGNON BLANC VULKANLAND STEIERMARK RIED MOARFEITL GSTK 2019 **94 Pts.**

*Fresh mint, apricot, yellow grapefruit and cassis pour from the glass. Concentrated and elegant, this has wonderful focus and clarity, the power very much underplayed. Long, very bright finish with plenty of rock-salt character and herbal freshness. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**83 ZEHETBAUER BLAUFRÄNKISCH LEITHABERG RIED RECKENSCHINK 2018****94 Pts.**

*Lovely black-raspberry and elderberry nose that's so fresh. Serious tannin structure, but this sits very neatly in the rather sleek body. So much energy, but also plenty of refinement. We love the long, chalky finish that says so much about this underrated region. Drink or hold.*

**84 HIEDLER RIESLING KAMPTAL RIED HEILIGENSTEIN EL 2020 93 Pts.**

*Very bright yellow-grapefruit, lavender and licorice nose. Concentrated and focused on the medium-bodied palate, the finish very straight and mineral with a hint of positive vegetal character. Drink or hold.*

**85 BRÜNDLMAYER GRÜNER VELTLINER KAMPTAL RIED LOISERBERG EL 2020****93 Pts.**

*Tons of mirabelle fruit, citrusy freshness and mineral energy here, also some real power for just 12.5% alcohol (modest for gruner veltliner). Good focus and elegance on the long finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**86 BRANDL RIESLING KAMPTAL RIED KOGELBERG EL 2020 93 Pts.**

*Ripe yet cool stone-fruit character on the nose, which fits exactly with the sleek and finely etched palate, the mineral acidity giving it a lot of personality on the long, polished finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**87 DOMAENE ROLAND CHAN RIESLING WACHAU RIED BACH SMARAGD 2019****93 Pts.**

*Smoky and toasty nose, plus fully ripe peach and nectarine character give this powerful dry Wachau riesling a lot of personality. And behind them is quite some structure, the minerality building and building at the impressively long finish. Drink or hold.*

**88 ALLRAM GRÜNER VELTLINER KAMPTAL RIED RENNER EL 2020 93 Pts.**

*The citrus-fruit and white-pepper character gives this juicy dry gruner veltliner plenty of appeal. Well balanced and focused, this also has the minerality to keep all of this firmly on track through the long, vibrant finish. Drink or hold.*

**89 BIRGIT BRAUNSTEIN BLAUFRÄNKISCH LEITHABERG RIED GAWARINZA 2018****93 Pts.**

*Quite a graceful blaufränkisch red with plenty of ripe red and black-cherry fruit, plus some smoke that fills out the rather generous palate nicely, the finish silky for this sometimes tart grape variety. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold.*

**90 HILLINGER BLAUFRÄNKISCH LEITHABERG RIED UMRIS 2017 93 Pts.**

*The pungent nose of rosemary, thyme and wild berries pulls you into this sleek and expressively fruity blaufränkisch red that's super-fresh for 4 years old. The intensity of the mineral and herbal character at the end might be too much for those seeking harmony, but we find it pretty exciting. The finish is energetic yet supple. Only 3,800 bottles produced. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*


**91** **PAYR BLAUFRÄNKISCH CARNUNTUM RIED SPITZERBERG EL 2019 93 Pts.**

*The expressive nose of red beets, violets and cloves pours from the glass of this youthful blaufrankisch. Very energetic and focused palate that matches its power with impressive mineral freshness. Substantial fine tannins at the bold and very crisp finish. Sustainable. Drink or hold.*

**92** **TINHOF BLAUFRÄNKISCH LEITHABERG RIED KIRCHBERG 2018 93 Pts.**

*Brimming with blackberries and a touch of baking spice, the nose slides you into this generous, succulent yet very lively blaufrankisch. Long, graceful finish, in which the fine tannins build gently. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**93** **PRIELER BLAUFRÄNKISCH LEITHABERG RIED MARIENTHAL 2018 93 Pts.**

*Ripe blackberry fruit is married to some chocolate and coffee. Quite an imposing tannin structure, but nothing is overbearing or drying. Tons of ground spice. Compact yet sleek finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**94** **GLOCK BLAUFRÄNKISCH CARNUNTUM RIED SPITZERBERG EL 2019 93 Pts.**

*This blaufrankisch is very striking, due to the intense savory and soy-sauce aromas. Plenty of elderberry fruit and generous powdery tannins behind this, then attractive lightness of touch at the long, savory and chalky finish. Drink or hold.*

**95** **MALAT CHARDONNAY NIEDERÖSTERREICH RIED HOCHRAIN 2019 93 Pts.**

*An elegant, cool-climate chardonnay you could mistake for Sonoma County or New Zealand. Lovely Amalfi-lemon, pear and fresh-nut aromas, plus very satisfying balance of fruit, acidity and discreet oak character. Long, polished and toasty finish with freshness that pulls you back for more. Drink or hold.*

**96** **LETH ROTER VELTLINER WAGRAM RIED FUMBERG 2020 93 Pts.**

*Proves that this rare and ancient grape variety has excellent potential for the future. The blood-orange and red-apple aromas leap out of the glass at you. Ripe and generous on the palate with a wonderful, creamy-silky texture. Long, supple and delicate finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**97** **KURT ANGERER GRÜNER VELTLINER KAMPTAL SPIES 2019 93 Pts.**

*Both the fragrant nose of yellow fruit and the full palate with impressive succulence make a serious statement. Long, richly textural, dry finish that's still really fresh, with a touch of salty minerality. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**98** **WINKLER-HEMADEN SAUVIGNON BLANC VULKANLAND STEIERMARK STK 2020 93 Pts.**

*Stunning nose of wild herbs with a whiff of durian adding excitement. For this basic category there's excellent ripeness and concentration, the balance spot on. Long, silky finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Glass closure.*



**99** STADLMANN ROTGIPFLER THERMENREGION ANNING 2020 **93 Pts.**

*Time to sit up and pay attention, because otherwise you might not pick up just how subtle and silky this floral dry white is. Discreet acidity, but the finish is long and very delicate. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**100** JURTSCHITSCH GRÜNER VELTLINER KAMPTAL RIED LAMM EL 2020

**93 Pts.**

*Lovely ripe-pear and lemon character with delicate pepper notes. Very good depth, the generous fruit nicely underlined by the fine tannins. Very positive harmony at the long, very well-balanced finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

# TOP 100 WINES OF CHINA 2021



*Zekun Shuai,  
Associate Editor*

In a country where consumers have long craved imported wines and where the domestic winemaking industry is mostly known for bulk production, high-quality Chinese wines have been a well-kept secret. But there has lately been a sea change in China, with more winemakers unmooring themselves from the mass market that has defined them and committing themselves to delivering outstanding bottles, with some clearly on the road to greatness.

This is our first year ranking the Top 100 wines from China, and we hope this list sends out the signal that the pursuit of quality wine is here to stay. We will also try to hammer home that point with our guide to Chinese wine, which comes out in early Spring.

The most coveted terroirs in the country's main winemaking regions, such as the cool, rugged and elevated vineyards in the northern reaches of Yunnan province, certainly have an edge in producing the finest and the most artisanal wines in the country. But it's the people behind the bottles who are the real heroes in driving up quality, accurately translating the terroirs into something special in the bottle.

Having tasted nearly 300 wines from China over the last 12 months, we decided to give the top laurels to Kanaan Winery Ningxia Crazy Fang 迦南美地魔方红葡萄酒 2019. It is consistently one of the best cabernet sauvignons from Ningxia, showing depth, complexity and refined concentration, and charged by seamlessly knit tannins with glossy yet fine-tuned oak. It also epitomizes how the most committed winemakers in Ningxia – which is in the country's north central region, bordering Inner Mongolia – are making a difference with cabernet sauvignon in a vintage that comes with plenty of ripeness and concentration.

Wang Fang, the second-generation owner of Kanaan Winery, said that “healthy fruit” and “concentration” were the terms that best defined the 2019 vintage, which had sufficient rain in June to set the stage for veraison and a warm summer, with little precipitation in July and August. It was generally considered a warm and slightly drier vintage for Ningxia.

“We only had a late frost in the early spring, which cut off the yield and gave loosely packed clusters,” Wang said. Her winemaker and consultant, Zhou Shuzhen, who works with six wineries in Ningxia, told me that almost all the grapes fared well in 2019.

The flagship wine “Crazy Fang” is a barrel selection that came from two of Kanaan's contract vineyards, both comprised of high clay content and gravel, according to Wang. Only about 4,000 bottles were made.

From a tasting point of view, it is one of the best and most consistent vintages from Ningxia, out of the 19 wines from the 2019 vintage we tried that scored 92 of more points. The only problem is the high alcohol, which is quite common in Ningxia these days. For some producers, there are also issues with overripe fruit, with some wines tasting a little too sweet, if not sugary. “If the residual sugar is around four grams per liter, that sweetness might come from the ripeness, high glycerol content and alcohol, which give a sweet taste,” Zhou said.

**In our first Top 100 list from China, a cabernet sauvignon from Ningxia rose to the No. 1 spot with its depth, complexity and refined concentration. We think it's a sign of similar wines to come in the Middle Kingdom.**

Interestingly, the law in China permits wines to be labelled as “dry” at a maximum level of nine grams per liter of residual sugar if the difference between total acid and

residual sugar is within two grams per liter. For regions like Ningxia and Xinjiang, acidification is very common, along with the higher alcohol content and glycerol. This explains why I often repeat the “sweet-and-sour” refrain in my tasting notes. In most cases, it is not a plus to the quality of the wine.

## THE PURPLE DREAM OF NINGXIA

Ningxia provides an arena for some of China's leading producers and dynamic winemakers to tease out the “purple dreams” of their imaginations in making some of the country's best cabernet sauvignons.

Kanaan's neighbor, the boutique winery Helan Qingxue, knows how to zero in on classic structure and restraint, in con-

trast to Kanaan's concentrated, broader and more muscular style. It delivered a wine that impressed us with a bit more class and refinement than most Ningxia cabernets with its flagship barrel selection Helan Qingxue Vineyard Ningxia Jiabeilan Grand Reserve 贺兰晴雪加贝兰特别珍藏 2017, which came in at No. 10 on our Top 100 list.

Helan Qingxue's winemaker and co-owner, Zhang Jing, told me that she had come to the realization of how important this human aspect is in Ningxia. "After all, it is the winemaker who is the interpreter of the terroir," Zhang said, adding that winemakers need to continuously broaden their horizons and stay attuned to what's happening in the rest of the world to make more compelling wines. "In other words, winemakers need to travel more, see more and taste more," she said.

Luckily in Ningxia, young, well-traveled winemakers are the driving force behind the many quality wines being produced there. Under-the-radar, independent winemakers like Deng Zhongxiang and Jiang Tao, as well as Liu Jianjun of Lingering Clouds, Zhang Xuan of Chateau Witch and Zheng Xin of Myst Vineyard, have contributed staggering wines to this list.

Deng, a Burgundy-trained winemaker who consults for several Ningxia producers, helped make our No. 6 wine, the Lansai Cabernet Sauvignon Ningxia Yu Jasmine 蓝赛酒庄余茉莉赤霞珠干红葡萄酒 2017; our No. 7 wine, Chateau Rong Yuan Mei Cabernet Gernischt Ningxia Hong Fang Yin 容园美酒庄红方印蛇龙珠 2018; and quite a few wines from Domaine Charme, one of the most exciting new wineries in Ningxia.

Through his own brand made in Ningxia's United Winery, he makes a unique and more demanding syrah. United Winery Syrah Ningxia Beyond Time Monopole 联合农科时光机单一园西拉 2020 (No. 80) is dense, concentrated, and powerful, highlighted by its high acidity in a more austere style. This is uncommon in Ningxia, where the mainstream still focuses on hedonistic richness with plush oak, sleek tannins and a certain level of fruit generosity.



The lineup of Helan Qingxue wines we rated, including the flagship barrel selection Helan Qingxue Vineyard Ningxia Jiabeilan Grand Reserve 2017 (No. 10), far right. (Photo by Zekun Shuai)

Another well-known winemaker in Ningxia is Ma Jie, who is a great example of how the dynamics of Chinese winemaking work. Ma sources grapes in both Ningxia and Yunnan province, where they make wines in "virtual wineries," fermenting them in someone else's tanks. His winemaker brand, Petit Mont, makes wines that carry the names of either Ningxia or Yunnan.

"The idea is that the winemaker is the terroir hunter, and the winery becomes mobile," Ma said in explaining his



methodology. He also admitted that his initial thought was to try out different terroirs rather than settling on just one location.

Petit Mont Shangri-La Baima Snow Mountain 寸山叶日村赤霞珠干红 2019 (No. 38) illustrates Ma's vision with the depth, power, and natural concentration that one could only expect from the top-quality cabernet sauvignon from northern Yunnan. And the wine they make with the Petit Mont label in Ningxia, the rare Dunkel-felder Ningxia Helan Mountain 寸山紫大夫干红葡萄酒 2020 (No. 11) is one of the freshest and most vibrant wines I have tasted this year from the region, showcasing the bright side of Ningxia's possibilities.

While most Ningxia winemakers with dunkelfelder planted in their vineyards use it as a blending component to add color and acidity, Ma has taken the less-traveled road to make a varietal wine. Saturated in a purple hue with fresh blue fruit and floral perfumes, it's a mouth-watering red – a unique and unworldly expression of the grape – not ambitious, but just right. And what is even better is that it is also one of the best values on the list, retailing at less than 200 renminbi, or about \$30.

Like Petit Mont, Myst Vineyard is another boutique operation that takes new-world winemaking to heart. The Myst Vineyard Ningxia MCM Plus 谜之庄园苍穹混酿干红 2019 (No. 12), a blend of cabernet sauvignon with a small amount of merlot and marselan, is an impressive success. It comes from a special parcel of vineyard, where the grapes are harvested late without the problem of having overripe fruit. In this way, the grapes can mature slowly and maintain balance, despite a final product that has 16 percent alcohol.

## THE TALE OF TERROIR

For producers in the southwest of China, it is the terroir that takes center stage in producing some of the country's top wines. Our No. 2 bottle, the cabernet sauvignon-based Ao Yun Shangri-La 敖云云南香格里拉2017, which is also one of the costliest wines in the country, is a unique blend born of high-elevation vineyards on the riverbanks of the Mekong River in the northwest stretches of Yunnan province.

Maxence Dulou, the winemaker and estate director of Ao Yun, said "there are 20-30 terroirs with different soils and orientations" for each of the 300-plus plots of vineyards (across 28 hectares and four villages) that went into the making of the Ao Yun Shangri-La. He described 2017 as a cool, challenging vintage with more rain than usual in the summer and a late harvest. The harvesting window for cabernet sauvignon alone spread across two months, from Sept. 19 to Nov. 22.

Because of the cooler growing season and mountain shade, it was a year where the Ao Yun team had to remove more leaves in the vineyards to give the grapes greater exposure to sunlight. They also let more weeds grow on the ground to absorb the excessive humidity. All the efforts paid off with a wine that takes a step up from the previous vintage with concentration and depth, seductive ripeness and zingy freshness.

Dulou said Ao Yun would release some single-village wines next year, which will be more terroir-specific and more Burgundy-like. "It's like a Burgundy premier cru, and for us, cru is an expression of unique identity," he said.





Also coming from the high-altitude vineyards of northern Yunnan is our No. 3 pick, the Xiao Ling Cizhong Shan-gri-La 霄岭 2018. This wine shows how soft-handed, artisanal winemaking can transmit drinkability and transparency into a cabernet-merlot blend. It's fermented in clay jars of 240 to 400 liters with gentle extraction, then aged in partially new French barrels, rendering

ty to age might have a different take on its appeal.

“For Ningxia, in my opinion, I don't think there is one single variety that is king, although everyone talks about marselan,” said Deng, the Ningxia winemaker. “Marselan often can be quite flashy on the nose with lots of flowers and black fruit, and the color



Chateau Nine Peaks made several of our Top 100 Chinese wines, including No. 25, Chateau Nine Peaks Chardonnay Tsingtao Qi 2019. (Photo courtesy of Chateau Nine Peaks)

a distinctively cerebral expression that comes with a vibrant style and a pinot sensibility, brimming with juicy, stemmy sour-cherry fruit.

You'll find out that marselans are faring well in China today – there are 13 varietal marselans in our Top 100! But it might not be a grape that pleases everyone. Winemakers like it because it is relatively easy to grow and thrives in most wine regions in China, giving different expressions according to the specific terroir. But those more skeptical about its exotic perfumes and abili-

ty of it in Ningxia can be very intrusive to a blend, too,” which explains why some wineries in Ningxia or Xinjiang use marselan only as an enhancer – for added color, exotic perfumes and flesh.

My experience is that the violet, peppery character of marselan, with red and blue fruit, some lychee and delicate spices, shine through in cooler climates and vintages or when it's picked early. When framed in the context of a warmer climate or picked late, the wine gets richer and more brooding, with darker fruit, iodine, dried lychee and tar.

One of marselan's more elegant and unassuming references in China comes from a cooler vintage, and it's highlighted by perfumes and a tangy lift of peppery, floral notes and lychee: the Domaine Franco Chinois Marselan Huailai Reserve 中法庄园珍藏马瑟兰 2015, our No. 15 wine. Domaine Franco Chinois is also known for its luscious, late-harvest petit manseng, and our No. 4 Chinese wine, the Domaine Franco Chinois Petit Manseng Huailai 中法庄园小芒森甜白葡萄酒 2015, is probably the best rendition of this sweet wine that we've tasted over the last few years, with an extra layer of complexity, vibrancy and brightness.

The only problem with the Ningxia marselans seems to be their high alcohol content, with some reaching a dangerous level of 16 percent. That said, the best marselans are still well balanced by new-world richness and fine concentration.

Jade Vineyard delivers an excellent rendition of pure, unoaked marselan in its Jade Vineyard Marselan Ningxia 嘉地酒园马瑟兰 2019 (No. 45). But most producers adhere to a certain amount of new barrels to match marselan's richness and the exotic perfumes. Chateau Huahao Marselan Ningxia Master Reserve Collection 华昊马瑟兰庄主珍藏干红 2018 (No. 17), Domaine Pu Shang Marselan Ningxia 蒲尚酒庄马瑟兰干红 2019 (No. 24) and Domaine Charme Marselan Ningxia 夏木庄园马瑟兰干红葡萄酒 2019 (No. 40) are among the top marselans we found this year from Ningxia.

## REGIONAL VARIETY

Regions like Xinjiang and Shanxi also delivered stunning marselans, such as Tiansai Skyline of Gobi Marselan Yanqi Grand Reserve 天塞酒庄特别珍藏马瑟兰 2017 (No. 41) and Grace Vineyard Marselan Shanxi Tasya's Reserve 怡园酒庄德熙珍藏马瑟兰干红葡萄酒 2019 (No. 16). As the leading producers in their respective regions, Tiansai and Grace Vineyard are known for making wines that combine the merits of value and consistency.

Grace Vineyard is one of the first boutique wineries in the country. It was established in 1997 and is now taking a step up by making wines in Ningxia, too, as well as a few cross-region blends. Their Tasya's Reserve lineup delivers some of the most exciting and variety-expressive wines that represent excellent value from both Shanxi and Ningxia. "The blend of Ningxia's richness and fullness with Shanxi's elegance and freshness can be exciting," Yean Lee, the chief winemaker of Grace Vineyard, said in an email.

From Shandong, leading producers such as Long Dai and Chateau Nine Peaks delivered wines that make us believe there is greatness in the east of China, too. DBR Lafite's Long Dai Qiushan 瓏岱丘山 2019 (No. 5) is a blend of 85 percent cabernet sauvignon, 9 percent cabernet franc and 6 percent marselan in a broad-shouldered tannin package with a slightly lower delivery of acidity, but it shows refinement with class and pedigree.

"2019 was a warm vintage and we had a hot summer. It was one of the warmest seasons we had over the last 50 years," said Long Dai technical director Denise Cosentino, who told me that it

was important to seek finesse, elegance and balance in a hot and dry year like 2019.

“2017 was cooler, 2019 was warmer and 2018 was like in between,” said Cosentino, who lowered the marselan in the blend for the “Grand Vin” of the vintage and left more of it for the second wine, “Hu Yue” – a fruitier, more drinkable delivery.

“Although coming from a different climate, 2019 seems to have the austerity of the 2017 at the beginning,” she added.

Several white wines also made our Top 100 list this year, mostly chardonnays. A few producers stood out, including Canaan Winery (Chapter and Verse Chardonnay Huailai Reserve 诗百篇珍藏霞多丽 2020, No. 27) from Hebei, Tiansai (Tiansai Skyline of Gobi Chardonnay Yanqi Reserve 天塞酒庄珍藏霞多丽 2020, No. 48) from Xinjiang, Chateau Nine Peaks (Chateau Nine Peaks Chardonnay Tsingtao Qi 九顶庄园氣霞多丽干白葡萄酒 2019, No. 25) and Longting Vineyard (Longting Vineyard Chardonnay Penglai Art Series 龙亭酒庄海风莱 2019, No. 50) from Shandong.

We have ranked this list of Top 100 Wines from China after weighing in on quality, the “wow” factor, value, availability and consistency, and no more than three wines were selected from each producer.

By and large, wine in China is still considered a niche drink that for the consumer reflects Western lifestyles and tastes, and wine prices often rocket into “luxury” territory based on market expectations and winery owners’ ambitions for their products. This is why we give more consideration to “wow factor”



Winemaker Ma Jie is a great example of how the dynamics of Chinese winemaking work. (Photo courtesy of Ma Jie)

and “value” in coming up with our Top 100 list and downplay the wine’s actual price.

“Don’t forget that most wineries in China are less than 15 years old, and the market expects that wine per se should be costly, or else people might ask you if your wine is adulterated,” said Zhao Wenyang, an outspoken viticulturist in Ningxia. In this early phase, many wineries are selling lifting the price in the hope to recover their investment and most importantly, meeting such an expectation from a market that is yet to become mature.

But we believe that the best and most reasonably priced Chinese wines are here to stay, and producers will awake to the realities when the market finally “ripens,” just like the grapes.

For now, we hope you enjoy exploring the list and staying attuned to China’s ever-evolving winemaking scene.

## **1 KANAAN WINERY NINGXIA CRAZY FANG 迦南美地魔方红葡萄酒 2019 95 Pts.**

*Such depth, complexity and freshness. A voluptuous nose, where the sweet red chili pepper and the sweet spices give a lift to the ripe blueberries, cigar box, crushed stones and tar. This is a concentrated and full-bodied wine, but the seamless tannin makes it taste effortless. Very compact, intense, and long. Already a delight to drink now, but you are advised to wait a little longer for it to open up a bit more.*

## **2 AO YUN SHANGRI-LA 敖云云南香格里拉 2017 97 Pts.**

*Another step up in quality from 2016. Lots of blackberry and blueberry aromas with plenty of richness and ripeness on the nose. Spicy notes, too with dried chili, sweet tobacco and some pine. Very aromatic. Full-bodied and round with creamy, ripe tannins and lots of ripe fruit. Yet, it remains fresh and vivid. A little bit of merlot in the blend for the first time. Mostly cabernet sauvignon with cabernet franc, syrah, petit verdot and merlot. Delicious now, but will age nicely. It's more approachable than the 2016 now. Superb length here. Give it time in the bottle. Better after 2025. 3,000 cases made.*

## **3 XIAO LING CIZHONG SHANGRI-LA 霄岭 2018 95 Pts.**

*This shows restrained sandalwood and spicy layers from the oak, together with stemmy cherries, plums and very tangy agave/white-pepper freshness. Nothing flattering nor creamy here. Elegant, nuanced and refined with polished, linear tannins wrapping up the juicy sour-berry fruit and radiant acidity highlighting its cool, bright aspect. Just medium-bodied, underlining transparency and vibrant fruit on the palate. A very intellectual, almost pinot style of cabernet sauvignon and merlot. Is this the pinnacle of Chinese red wine's drinkability? Fermented in amphora and aged in French barrels. Drinking effortlessly now, but best in 2022.*

## **4 DOMAINE FRANCO CHINOIS PETIT MANSENG HUAILAI 中法庄园小芒森甜白葡萄酒 2015 95 Pts.**

*This is intense, yet complex, subtle and layered. Not just the treacle-like dried fruit (dried apricot, pineapple and papaya) and hay that you always find with petit manseng. It shows honeyed, creamy finesse with a gingery, spicy edge to the dried tropical fruit. Luscious, but bright on the palate with lots of concentrated fruit and acidity. True nectar. Beautiful! Drink or hold.*

## **5 LONG DAI QIUSHAN 瓏岱丘山 2019 95 Pts.**

*A wine that you should decant properly if you decide to open now. Pretty red-berry fruit, fresh blueberries and black cherries, nuanced spices and understated sandalwood and fine, stemmy freshness, evolving to violets and minerals. The medium-to full-bodied palate is hit by a dollop of tight and fine-grained tannins that dissipate into the fruit. This is also a vintage in which I feel Long Dai shows less acidity, which renders a mellow and calm sensibility. It's quite dry, if not a little austere at first, but when you give it time to breathe, you will find more generosity on the palate with sweeter fruit. While it shows pedigree, power, and restraint, a little more depth on the palate would take it to the next level. A blend of 85% cabernet sauvignon, 9% cabernet franc and 6% marselan. Decant for 2-3 hours if you want to approach it now, but best give it two years to pull everything together. Try from 2024.*

## **6 LANSAI CABERNET SAUVIGNON NINGXIA YU JASMINE 蓝赛酒庄余茉莉赤霞珠干红葡萄酒 2017 94 Pts.**

*Cedary oak adorns the blackcurrants and tobacco leaf character, This is restrainedly creamy, but shows layers of complexity and refinement. Full-bodied and broad on the palate with powerful yet refined, precise tannins. Very long. Think Rioja. Lasting a minute! Drinking effortlessly now, but will hold.*

## 7 CHATEAU RONG YUAN MEI CABERNET GERNISCHT NINGXIA HONG FANG YIN 容园美酒庄红方印蛇龙珠 2018 **94 Pts.**

*Intense and racy with fresh herbs, tangerine peel, white pepper and savory dark plums. This is really juicy, tastes quite authentic and shows real character. Intense, but not heavy at all. Long and enticing. The best cabernet gernischt from Ningxia so far? So delicious and effortlessly drinkable now, so why wait?*

## 8 CHAPTER AND VERSE SYRAH HUAILAI RESERVE 诗百篇珍藏西拉 2015 **94 Pts.**

*Tangy black pepper and racy red and blue fruit. Very enticing! There is also a bit of orange-peel and meaty savoriness that follow through. A medium-bodied syrah with so much vibe and energy that ticks the drinkability box. Spicy and almost ethereal at the end. Long and silky. So seductive now. Why wait?*

## 9 GREAT WALL CHATEAU SUNGOD CABERNET SAUVIGNON SHACHENG CHIEF WINEMAKER'S SELECTION 长城桑干酒庄首席酿酒师甄酿 2015 **95 Pts.**

*Blackcurrants, together with a classy, composed cigar-box note, some mint, sandalwood, and just a hint of pleasant red pepper. A ripe but very deep and cool nose that shows impressive depth and class. A full-bodied cabernet here, balanced by fresh, juicy acidity and a mouthful of firm but velvety, ripe tannins. The tannin quality is superb! Classically structured, but polished and dimensional. Very focused, classy, and incredibly long. Decant if you want to drink now and this will get better on the second day. Will show its beauty when it picks up some age. Drink in the next 5-10 years.*

## 10 HELAN QINGXUE VINEYARD NINGXIA JIABEILAN GRAND RESERVE 贺兰晴雪 加贝兰特别珍藏 2017 **94 Pts.**

*A refined nose with cassis, dark chocolate, Earl Grey and cedar. A hint of truffle, too. Love the soft-spoken oak creaminess here. This is very elegant and contained on the palate, showing lots of finesse. Firm but polished tannins slip through the palate, but you can still feel the nicely chewy structure here. This is always one of Ningxia's finest reds, which shows its personality and reins in its alcohol. Drink or hold.*

## 11 PETIT MONT DUNKELFELDER NINGXIA HELAN MOUNTAIN 寸山紫大夫干红葡萄 酒 2020 **93 Pts.**

*Wow! This dunkelfelder shows the bright side of Ningxia's possibilities. Such a deep, inky color but on the nose, it is brooding, very perfumed and floral. Violets, morello cherries, fresh blueberries and geraniums. A linear, medium-bodied palate with crisp, high acidity, rendering so much drinkability that adheres to fresh flavors. A great example of the elegant, intellectual aspect of Ningxia wines. Even it is not the most complex red, nor very long, the authentic and mouthwatering attributes of this are inspiring. You need to try this. 6,688 bottles made. Great to drink now.*

## 12 MYST VINEYARD NINGXIA MCM PLUS 谜之庄园苍穹混酿干红 2019 **94 Pts.**

*A refreshing nose with sweet dark berries, black olives, sweet tobacco leaves and a note of fine cigar box. This is ripe, yet fresh and framed by a tight yet seamless tannin backbone. Rich, yet it also shows a level of juiciness, together with tension and precision. Long and polished. 16% alcohol, but nicely balanced. Marselan, cabernet sauvignon, and merlot. Drink from 2022.*



**13** TANGTING XIALU WINERY CABERNET SAUVIGNON XINJIANG BEI TING 唐庭霞露北庭赤霞珠干红葡萄酒 2019 **94 Pts.**

*Plush haw fruit, ripe dark cherries, grilled dark spices, dark chocolate and black olives. Medium-to full-bodied palate, charged with fine-grained tannins. Tight, spicy, and long with a lovely tension. A little more lifted, linear and polished than 2017 and 2018. Drinkable now, but shows potential for aging. Better from 2022.*

**14** KANAAN WINERY NINGXIA BLACK BEAUTY 迦南美地黑骏马红葡萄酒 2019 **94 Pts.**

*A wine that shows depth and subtle complexity. Sweet blackcurrants, blueberries, black olives, cocoa powder and hints of tar and roasted spices. Hedonistic and already drinkable, with a full swing of ripeness. Medium-to full-bodied palate that grows with lots of polished, powdery tannins. Juicy and drinkable now, but you should wait for 2-3 years when it will exhibit more savory complexity.*

**15** DOMAINE FRANCO CHINOIS MARSELAN HUAILAI RESERVE 中法庄园珍藏马瑟兰 2015 **94 Pts.**

*An exemplary marselan from Huailai. This is more elegant and confident compared with the previous vintages, showing the cool side of the marselan personality. Zingy, so peppery and fresh, with the depth of minty blueberry fruit you want, and the lifted dried-lychee and violet perfumes, which are what make marselan so distinct. A fresh, pure mid-palate with some licorice at the end. Long, characterful, and polished. Delicious now, but best from 2022.*

**16** GRACE VINEYARD MARSELAN SHANXI TASYA'S RESERVE 怡园酒庄德熙珍藏马瑟兰干红葡萄酒 2019 **93 Pts.**

*A spicy marselan with fennel and cinnamon. Blackberries, some cherry jam and iodine too. Violets on the palate with a very dense, chewy structure and bright acidity. Another outstanding marselan from China. Give it a year to settle. A little chewy now, drink from 2023.*

**17** CHATEAU HUAHAO MARSELAN NINGXIA MASTER RESERVE COLLECTION 华昊马瑟兰庄主珍藏干红 2018 **93 Pts.**

*A polished, fresh and deep marselan here with black and blue fruit, violets, smoked bacon, incense and lychees. Hints of roasted sesame, graphite and sprite, too. Full-bodied with fresh acidity and a coating of silky, fine tannins, which bolster the juicy palate and provide a lengthy finish. Very long and contained, despite the 15.5% alcohol. More peppery blue fruit and fresh lychee at the end. The oak and high alcohol are absorbed by the fruit. The competition in Chinese marselan is incredibly fierce, but this stands out for its depth, polish, succulence and length. Drink or hold.*

**18** LANSAI CABERNET SAUVIGNON NINGXIA MO RAN 蓝赛酒庄墨然赤霞珠干红葡萄酒 2017 **93 Pts.**

*Ripe cabernet character here with green olive, sweet tobacco leaf and a fine, spicy edge. This is a full-bodied red, but you won't find it hefty at all. There is generous fruit on the center-palate with beautiful, ripe-tannin tension. Bountiful, tight and juicy, but not sweet and sour. Lengthy and focused finish. Such a memorable surprise from Ningxia! Drink now or hold.*

## 19 CHATEAU MIHOPE NINGXIA LIMITED RESERVE DRY RED WINE 美贺庄园限量版干红葡萄酒 2019 **94 Pts.**

*Nicely integrated oak has found harmony with the cabernet and syrah character. Sweet currants, tobacco leaf, black pepper and cedar undertones here. A juicy, medium-to-full-bodied red that really invites you to drink. Firm and polished. More syrah spiciness coming through at the end. Very long, though just a little potent, which is a rather universal thing for Ningxia. A blend of cabernet sauvignon and syrah. Beautiful to drink now, but will hold.*

## 20 PETIT MONT NINGXIA M4 HELAN MOUNTAIN 寸山M4酿酒师混酿干红葡萄酒 2020 **93 Pts.**

*A racy, vibrant rendition of Ningxia red, swathed with red and blue fruit, fresh herbs, and a floral, spicy edge. Nice oak toast merely adorns it with another layer. This shows the tangy, fresh side of the region on the nose, with drinkability being underscored on the palate. The bright acidity gives a lift of freshness, but comes in with juiciness on the palate. A medium-bodied red with authentic, sweet fruit. A blend of 43% malbec, 34% marselan, 23% merlot (and 100% Ma Jie, which is the name of the winemaker. All the three varieties and the surname of winemaker start with "M", hence the wine name M4). Bright and delicious now. 6,658 bottles made. Try this if you think Ningxia is all about bold and high-octane wines.*

## 21 CHAPTER AND VERSE TEMPRANILLO HUAILAI MASTERY 诗百篇特选丹魄 2015 **93 Pts.**

*This is a very elegant rendition of tempranillo compared to the 2014. Slightly creamy and minty with red-fruit expressions, which evolve to some black-pepper and mushroom undertones. Medium-bodied with fresh, crunchy tannins. Juicy and very well-defined with lots of detail. Impressive and stylish! Delicious now.*

## 22 PUCHANG VINEYARD SAPERAVI TURPAN VIASERES 蒲昌酒庄精选纱布拉维 2016 **93 Pts.**

*This is really beautiful with crushed-blackberry, vanilla and cappuccino aromas and flavors. It's full, intense and flavorful with round tannins. Layered and opulent, but not heavy. Drink or hold.*

## 23 GRACE VINEYARD SYRAH CABERNET SAUVIGNON NINGXIA INTERVAL 怡园酒庄留白干红葡萄酒 2019 **93 Pts.**

*Ripe and spicy black cherries here, together with hints of black pepper, clove and cinnamon. A full-bodied syrah and cabernet sauvignon blend that's defined by its depth and concentration. The chalky, mealy tannins are filled with sappy fruit and acidity. Long, spicy finish. Give it a year to open up. Drink from 2023.*

## 24 DOMAINE PU SHANG MARSELAN NINGXIA 蒲尚酒庄马瑟兰干红 2019 **93 Pts.**

*Deep purple hue now. Very ripe blackberries. Something special about the meaty fruit character here. Also some dried or nicely baked fruit, just bordering jammy. This is brooding and layered, with nuances of blue flowers, iodine, some vanilla oak and oyster sauce that provide lots of intrigues. Shows natural concentration on the palate, coated by polished, fine tannins. Silky, long, and hedonistic. A very rich, classic marselan from Ningxia! 15.5% alcohol, but still composed. Drink in 2022 and onwards.*

**25 CHATEAU NINE PEAKS CHARDONNAY TSINGTAO QI 九顶庄园氣霞多丽干白葡萄酒 2019 93 Pts.**

*A textbook chardonnay nose, showing fresh yet ripe pineapples, sour cream, lemon and a hint of brioche and pastry. Very nuanced and delicate. Medium-to full-bodied, but very subtle on the palate. Certainly an elegant chardonnay with admirable style with freshness, nuance and purity. A hint of minerality on the palate, too. This would really hit the classic category with a bit more depth on the palate. So keep an eye on this for upcoming vintages. Beautiful to drink now.*

**26 MYST VINEYARD MARSELAN NINGXIA MOKA PLUS 谜之庄园超魔马瑟兰干红 2019 93 Pts.**

*Hot stones, blackberries, pine needles, iron and a hint of oyster shell. This is very primary and fresh. The oak is reaching integration. A fleshy, almost full-bodied marselan, showing rich black fruit and a plump center-palate. Fine, silky tannins melt into the fruit with a lengthy finish. An honest statement of 16% alcohol, but still composed, despite a slightly warming finish. Give it a year to settle. Best in 2023.*

**27 CHAPTER AND VERSE CHARDONNAY HUAILAI RESERVE 诗百篇珍藏霞多丽 2020 93 Pts.**

*This is just bottled. Vanilla toast, stony minerals, fresh lemons, pears, and nectarines give it lots of aromatic character and a sense of coolness. While this is full and rich on the palate, it is also fresh and bright. Laser beams of acidity cut through with a long, zippy finish. Mouthwatering and flavorful. This is a step up from the previous vintages. Give it a year to settle and integrate. Drink from 2022.*

**28 CHATEAU NINE PEAKS TSINGTAO QI RED 九顶庄园氣干红葡萄酒 2019 93 Pts.**

*Engaging complexity and freshness on the nose. Fresh herbs, black tea, fresh blueberries, mint, graphite and some violets. A medium-bodied red with sweet fruit and surprising drinkability. You can easily find harmony here, without drying out your palate. Smooth and very polished tannins with a long, spicy finish to close. With less sweetness on the palate, this would rate even higher. A blend of marselan, petit verdot and cabernet sauvignon. A real treat now, but better in 2022 or 2023.*

**29 CHATEAU MIHOPE NINGXIA 10TH ANNIVERSARY LIMITED RELEASE 美贺庄园十周年纪念干红 2019 94 Pts.**

*This shows depth, complexity and so much hedonism. Surprisingly, the oak is already showing integration. Incense, cassis and sweet blackberries with a savory, spicy edge. A full-bodied palate, but supple and round, with abundant and very sleek tannins to coat the fruit. Lengthy and so hedonistic. The velvety tannin is, however, a little overripe with a bit of warming alcohol at the end. Without that, this would score even higher. Just recently bottled. Best from 2022.*

**30 SILVER HEIGHTS PINOT NOIR NINGXIA JIAYUAN 银色高地家园黑皮诺 2019 93 Pts.**

*Pale ruby and slightly cloudy with a racy nose showing wild red berries. Bayberries, raspberries and a rose petal note muddle with a mossy accent. Juicy yet supple with tart red berries and cherries that unfold on the palate with a restrained, floral and herbal note in the finish. All about pretty, perfumed fruit and subtlety. This is a more natural, geekier expression of pinot compared with the 2017 vintage. Ethereal and long. A wonderful pinot from Ningxia. Drink from 2022.*

### 31 CHATEAU RONG YUAN MEI MERLOT NINGXIA HONG FANG YIN 容园美酒庄 红方印美乐 2018 **93 Pts.**

*Nicely plush and spicy nose that's brooding with ripe and tarry fruit. Some orange peel, too. A rather full-bodied merlot, but it shows energy and tension with a taut mid-palate and a long, racy finish. Very inviting now.*

### 32 LINGERING CLOUDS NINGXIA RED BEARD 停云红胡子 2019 **93 Pts.**

*Blackberries, creme de cassis with hints of mocha and marzipan from the new oak, which needs a year or two to integrate. The palate is dense and nicely plush with rich fruit that balances the superb tannin. Tightly structured, yet polished. 70% cabernet sauvignon, 25% marselan and 5% petit verdot. Drink in 2023.*

### 33 PUCHANG VINEYARD RKATSITELI XINJIANG TURPAN 蒲昌酒庄白羽新疆吐鲁番 2018 **92 Pts.**

*A medium-bodied wine with lemon, green-melon and honey character. Creamy and bright. Some white peach and lychee, too. 12 months in wood and stainless. From organically grown grapes. Low sulphur. Drink now.*

### 34 TIANSAI SKYLINE OF GOBI XINJIANG ROSÉ WINE 天塞桃红葡萄酒 2020 **92 Pts.**

*A serious rosé with cherry stones, fresh strawberries, red plums and a mineral edge. Dry and textured on the palate, giving tension and volume to the palate. Medium to full body, but still crisp and zesty. Drink now.*

### 35 GRACE VINEYARD AGLIANICO SHANXI TASYA'S RESERVE 怡园酒庄德熙珍藏阿里亚尼考干红葡萄酒 2018 **92 Pts.**

*An overlay of roasted sesame, dried meat and a hint of tar to the spicy and racy black cherries and black dates here. Very slightly jammy, but positive. Medium to full body with a good, spicy profile and fresh, flavorful palate. Showing typicity of Aglianico. Nice grip before the lengthy finish. 3,171 bottles made. Drink or hold.*

### 36 PUCHANG VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON XINJIANG TURPAN 蒲昌酒庄赤霞珠 2016 **92 Pts.**

*A firm, lightly chewy red with blackberry and currant character. Medium-bodied and fresh with pretty length and delicious drinkability. From organically grown grapes. Low sulphur. Drink now.*

### 37 DOMAINE FRANCO CHINOIS HUAILAI RESERVE 中法庄园珍藏 2015 **93 Pts.**

*Very impressive sweet fruit here with blackcurrants, dark plums and subtle layers of spices. There's a minty accent, too. Very well defined on the palate with the juiciness and fleshiness from the fruit and taut, polished tannins that provide the framework. A blend of merlot, cabernet sauvignon and some petit verdot. So balanced and drinkable now.*

### 38 PETIT MONT SHANGRI-LA BAIMA SNOW MOUNTAIN 寸山叶日村赤霞珠干红 2019 **93 Pts.**

*Intense, deep nose, featuring very ripe blackberries, creme de cassis, adorned by violet extract, graphite, some cedar and lots of cocoa beans. Abundant, densely packed tannin carries the fruit in a fine-grained mode. A very powerful and full-bodied cabernet sauvignon with a long, flavorful finish that shows a meaty accent. Drink from 2022.*

**39 AMETHYARD MARSELAN HUAILAI CLASSIC 紫晶庄园晶典马瑟兰 2019****93 Pts.**

*A nicely concentrated marselan, but still fresh and enticing. Rich dark fruit, minerals, violets and a hint of oyster sauce. Showing depth and voluptuous fruit. The real enjoyment here is the quality of its plentiful tannins. Smooth, silky and very long. The best of the trio (17,18 and 19). Needs a year or two to open up. Drink from 2023.*

**40 DOMAINE CHARME MARSELAN NINGXIA 夏木庄园马瑟兰干红葡萄酒 2019****93 Pts.**

*Brooding and naturally concentrated. Very ripe, but still fresh on the nose, drenched with blackberries on top of delicious meaty, spicy accents and hints of violets and flint. A full-bodied palate unleashes polished, mealy tannins with a filling of supple, fleshy fruit. Impressive! Drink or hold.*

**41 TIANSAI SKYLINE OF GOBI MARSELAN YANQI GRAND RESERVE 天塞酒庄特别珍藏马瑟兰 2017 93 Pts.**

*Deep, but also immediately rich and generous on the nose, with bountiful, ripe black and blue fruit. Blackberries, blueberries, cocoa powder and a grilled, spicy edge. Medium-to full-bodied with rich, generous flavors that grow on the mid-palate. Plush, sweet tannins with lots of fruit, before a long, savory finish. Densely packed, but polished. Modern, new-world style and very well made. Drink or hold.*

**42 LANSI MARSELAN NINGXIA 蓝赛酒庄马瑟兰干红葡萄酒 2019 93 Pts.**

*A rich yet cool and refreshing nose of blueberries, violets, chalk and roasted spices. This is very fresh and bright on the palate, showing lots of blue fruit and sleek, polished tannins. Incredible tannin texture, which is so ripe, mealy and tense. Also love the balance and the drinkability here! Delicious now, but best in 2022.*

**43 DOMAINE CHARME CABERNET SAUVIGNON NINGXIA RESERVE 夏木庄园甄藏赤霞珠 2019 93 Pts.**

*Such depth and concentration! This is spicy and tarry, with lots of sweet blackberries and hints of ink and crushed stones. Full and broad on the palate, coated by fine, powdery tannins. Silky and compact with a ripe, juicy mid-palate and a long, flavorful finish. A ripe and serious cabernet sauvignon from Ningxia! Voluptuous and delicious now, but drink from 2022.*

**44 AMETHYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON HUAILAI CLASSIC 紫晶庄园晶典赤霞珠 2018 93 Pts.**

*Ripe, lustrous and fresh with a hint of racy tomato leaf, creme de cassis and fine spices. Medium-to-full bodied with very nice acidity that gives it a lot of vibe and kick, followed by firm, sandy tannin and a long, spicy finish. A bit more generosity and richness than the 2017. This is very persistent. Drink or hold.*

**45 JADE VINEYARD MARSELAN NINGXIA 嘉地酒园马瑟兰 2019 93 Pts.**

*Intense, deep black and blue fruit here with blueberries, boysenberries, graphite and violet extract. Medium to full body with a solid mid-palate, rounded by polished tannin. Rich, saturated, fresh and authentic. Quite a vibrant and drinkable marselan, despite the very deep color. Drink now or hold.*



**46 TANGTING XIALU WINERY CABERNET SAUVIGNON XINJIANG BEI TING 唐庭霞****露北庭赤霞珠干红葡萄酒 2018 93 Pts.**

*Voluptuous nose with blackcurrants, black olives, racy tomato paste, currant leaf and some creamy, grilled spices from the oak. A medium-to full-bodied cabernet sauvignon, showing glossy fruit, spicy oak and a dense structure. Complex, long and assertive. More refined than the 2017 vintage and showing good potential. Reminds me of an outstanding Chilean cabernet. Drinkable now, but better in 2023.*

**47 CHATEAU AROMA XINJIANG GOLDEN RED BLEND 芳香庄园夜光金有机干红葡萄酒 2018 93 Pts.**

*Rich, plush fruit with blackberries, some figs and spicy, cedary oak, but not overripe. Hints of orange peel, tar and mint, too. Medium to full body on the palate with a supple mouth-feel, knit by polished and dissipating tannin. The very long, creamy finish unleashes a nice kick of acidity. A blend of cabernet sauvignon and merlot. Drinking effortlessly now, but will hold well.*

**48 TIANSAI SKYLINE OF GOBI CHARDONNAY YANQI RESERVE 天塞酒庄珍藏霞多丽 2020 92 Pts.**

*This is intense and engagingly complex with lemon curd, yellow nectarines, some brioche and sour cream. The fine minerals are intriguing. Hints of green fruit and hazelnuts, too. A complex, round and supple chardonnay with nice, creamy acidity. I like the length and the toasty minerality that come through in the finish. Quite long and delicious. Drink now.*

**49 CHATEAU WITCH CABERNET SAUVIGNON MERLOT NINGXIA LI GE 未迟酒庄骊歌赤霞珠美乐干红葡萄酒 2019 92 Pts.**

*Fresh nose with black and blue fruit, some olives, wet stones and a fine tobacco-leaf note in the spicy background. This is fresh, juicy and bright, showing immediate drinkability and refined opulence. Smooth, refined tannins. Not as rich and intense as their Chateau Witch Merlot 2019, but this is more elegant and layered. A blend of cabernet sauvignon and merlot. Irresistible now, so why wait?*

**50 LONGTING VINEYARD CHARDONNAY PENGLAI ART SERIES 龙亭酒庄海风莱 2019 92 Pts.**

*Nuanced and layered with green fruit and lemon peel, together with dialed-in toast and creaminess. There is a fine background of minerality. I like the tension on the palate, which is taut and chalky. Very fine and elegant. Think of good Chablis. Chardonnay with some petit manseng. Drink now.*

**51 CHATEAU MIHOPE MARSELAN NINGXIA ENJOY 美贺庄园尊享马瑟兰 2019 93 Pts.**

*A marselan that delivers lots of ripe black fruit, grilled spices, and some coffee, cocoa powder and graphite. A medium-to-full-bodied wine that's packed with lots of powdery tannins. Silky, long, and spicy. Drink or hold.*

**52 MARTIN VINEYARD CABERNET FRANC SHACHENG 马丁酒庄品丽珠干红葡萄酒 2016 93 Pts.**

*This is exciting! Very focused nose of minerals, savory orange peel, tar and spices. Intensely flavored, medium body, enveloped by broad-shouldered tannins. Juicy and long! This complex, savory cabernet franc somehow reminds me of an outstanding nebbiolo. Drink or hold.*

### 53 GREAT WALL CHATEAU SUNGOD SYRAH SHACHENG 长城桑干酒庄西拉 2015 93 Pts.

*A nice, meaty nose with lots of fresh blue fruit. Some bacon with a spicy twist, adorned with a hint of roasted sesame. Fine oak integration. Juicy mid-palate. Classy and tightly wound tannin with the firmness you want. Long, very well poised and discreetly spicy. Delicious now, but will hold. Best from 2022.*

### 54 HELAN QINGXUE VINEYARD NINGXIA JIABEILAN GRAND RESERVE 贺兰晴雪加贝兰特别珍藏 2018 93 Pts.

*Some coffee, sweet blackberries, cedar, a hint of cream and a fine note of roasted spices. High-grade oak here. A medium-to full-bodied red with a firm, structured tannin frame. Long, assertive and a little grippy now. Give it a year to settle. A classic from Ningxia and unlike most Ningxia reds, you won't notice the alcohol here. Drink in 2023.*

### 55 LONG DAI QIUSHAN HU YUE 瓏岱琉岳丘山 2018 93 Pts.

*Currants and berries with citrus and cream. Medium-bodied and so drinkable and long. Really creamy and textured. 57% cabernet sauvignon, 17% marselan, 15% syrah and 11% cabernet franc. Enjoy this now.*

### 56 DOMAINE PU SHANG NINGXIA CHUN HUA 蒲尚酒庄春华干红 2017 92 Pts.

*Such an attractive nose. The dialed-in, minty oak is well-integrated here, giving the wine subtle plushness and almost ethereal freshness. Blueberries, redcurrants, plums and meaty spices, too. This is a juicy, medium-bodied red with ripe, sweet fruit on the mid-palate and polished tannins. Just a tad sweet and sour in the end, but in a more subtle and pleasant way. 90% cabernet sauvignon and 10% marselan. Delicious now!*

### 57 CHATEAU NINE PEAKS PETIT MANSENG TSINGTAO COLLECTION 九顶庄园小芒森精选甜白葡萄酒 2020 92 Pts.

*Fruity, with apricot, pineapple, sea buckthorn and green mango. Sweet but refined palate with floral and honey notes and well-poised sweetness and acidity. Bordering on unctuous, but the acidity really gives it a crisp feel, making it really fresh and mouthwatering. Enjoy now.*

### 58 HELAN QINGXUE VINEYARD NINGXIA JIABEILAN RESERVE 贺兰晴雪酒庄加贝兰珍藏版 2018 92 Pts.

*Cassis, tree bark, roasted spices, black olives and hints of baked cherries. A medium to full body with plenty of fruit and backed up by a nicely chewy tannin structure. A wine that is about elegance and classic structure. A very good effort from a rainy vintage. Give it a year to let the tannin settle. Drink from 2022.*

### 59 CHATEAU AROMA MERLOT XINJIANG 芳香庄园夜光白有机干红葡萄酒 2018 92 Pts.

*Nice plums, dried herbs, spices and dried meat here. Medium-to full-bodied palate with tightly knit, polished tannins with a linear flow. I like the balance, concentration and the tannin quality here. More reticent than their cabernet sauvignon, which was tasted alongside, but showing very good potential. A little early to drink now. Better in 2023.*

**60 CHATEAU WITCH MERLOT NINGXIA 未迟美乐 2019 92 Pts.**

*This is opulent with rich, ripe black plums, haw fruit and a hint of licorice. Black dates and cocoa beans, too. A medium-to full-bodied red with lots of creamy, powdery tannins that are dissipated into the center-palate. Love the ripeness here (which is just right, not overripe) and the center-palate concentration. Enjoyable now, but better to wait a year or two for the oak to settle more. A benchmark, pure merlot from Ningxia. Drink or hold.*

**61 CHATEAU AROMA CABERNET SAUVIGNON XINJIANG 芳香庄园夜光红有机干红葡萄酒 2018 92 Pts.**

*Blackcurrant, tobacco leaf, bacon and a savory touch, together with sandalwood and cigar-box notes from the oak. Medium to full body with good volume and succulence. Intense and fresh. The lengthy finish mixes up the creamy, spicy oak with layers of fruit. Love the balance, the length and the firm structure here. Delicious now, but better in 2022.*

**62 SILVER HEIGHTS CHARDONNAY NINGXIA FAMILY RESERVE 银色高地家族珍藏霞多丽 2020 91 Pts.**

*Ripe apples, star fruit, sour cream, roasted white sesame and fine lees. A medium-bodied chardonnay that underscores balance and supple fruit with leesy richness and a streak of fine toast. Fresh and smoothly rendered. Drink now.*

**63 LEGACY PEAK CHARDONNAY NINGXIA JIN YU 留世霞多丽锦羽 2020 91 Pts.**

*Fresh pineapple, lemon curd and a bit of toast and pastry on the nose, as well as fine lees. A round and almost full-bodied chardonnay, showing yellow fruit and a mineral drive. Fresh and pure with vibrant acidity cutting through. A step up from the past vintages. Drink now.*

**64 XIGE ESTATE CHARDONNAY NINGXIA N.28 西鸽酒庄霞多丽N.28 2019 91 Pts.**

*Fresh pineapple, lemon curd and a hint of fine toast and creaminess. A round chardonnay with creamy acidity and a lengthy finish. Almost mineral aftertaste with dialed-in toast and fine lees. Balanced, very approachable style. A crowd-pleaser. Drink now.*

**65 KANAAN WINERY NINGXIA PRETTY PONY 迦南美地小马驹红葡萄酒 2019 91 Pts.**

*This shows a little more richness on the nose than the Wild Pony from the same vintage, with racier, sweet red fruit and a little more spicy toast that adds meaty savoriness, as well as a little more depth and complexity. There is minty freshness, too. A medium-bodied palate that unleashes juicy fruit and firm yet smoothly rendered tannin. Already enjoyable. Drink now.*

**66 LINGERING CLOUDS RIESLING NINGXIA PET-NAT 停云自然起泡酒·雷司令 2021 91 Pts.**

*Winemaker Liu Jianjun's first try-out of Pet-Nat. Cloudy with lots of creamy bubbles. This is very fun and clean with fresh pear, apricot, melon and a hint of pomelo skin. Creamy, cappuccino-like bubbles create a smooth mid-palate, lifted by fresh and vibrant acidity. Dry yet fruity with nice length. Pure fruit. So much fun here, also serious. Only around 3,000 bottles made. Put down your beer and drink this. 100% riesling. 11% alcohol. Behold, there is a new wave of styles in Ningxia. Drink now, while this is fresh.*

**67 CHATEAU CHANGYU MOSER XV NINGXIA GRAND VIN 张裕摩塞尔十五世酒庄 GRAND VIN 2017 92 Pts.**

*This is savory and complex with cassis, white pepper, blood orange, tobacco leaf and lots of spicy sandalwood. Medium to full body with seamless tannin framing the savory fruit profile. An old-world style with 15% alcohol, but it remains poised and textured. Very long, spicy oak-driven finish. Already very good, just needs a bit of succulence to really shine. Drink or hold.*

**68 SWEET DEW VINEYARD SYRAH NINGXIA LIMITED EDITION 甘麓酒庄西拉庄主私藏 2019 92 Pts.**

*A dense, full-bodied syrah showing tangy white pepper and tree bark to the rich, brambly fruit. Some lavender, too. The fruit has digested the oak, delivering smooth and polished fruit and ripe tannins with mild acidity and toned-up spiciness in the finish. Promising and more authentic than many. Too young now, though. Drink from 2023.*

**69 RUWEN CABERNET FRANC NINGXIA RESERVE 如闻珍藏品丽珠 2019 92 Pts.**

*Plush dark fruit and very classy new oak show the caliber here. Vanilla, sweet spices, ripe damsons, tangy black cherries and iodine. Very structured and chewy with medium acidity, giving a sleek mid-palate mouthfeel, prior to a very powerful grip at the end. A saline twist and bitter chocolate to finish. Lots of extraction, but properly done. Needs a year or two to settle down. Drink from 2023.*

**70 JADE VINEYARD MERLOT NINGXIA 嘉地酒园美乐 2019 92 Pts.**

*Deep purple hue. There is a good depth of fruit on the nose, showing lustrous and voluptuous dark cherries and black plums with black olive, roasted spices, cocoa powder, coffee, and a note of fine cigar box. Concentrated and plump center-palate, packed with tart fruit and fine-grained tannins. I can definitely taste the ambition here. A bit too early now. Give it a year or two for the acidity and tannins to settle down a bit. Drink from 2023.*

**71 MARTIN VINEYARD PETITE SIRAH SHACHENG 马丁酒庄小西拉干红葡萄酒 2016 92 Pts.**

*Quite a meaty nose with dense dark cherries, blackberries and graphite. Also spicy and delicately floral. The palate shows demanding tannins and bright acidity. Tight and dense, but hefty, though nothing overpowering here. Long and very well made. Keep an eye on this petite sirah! Better in 2022.*

**72 COPOWER JADE NINGXIA CHANG 长和翡翠“长”干红葡萄酒 2019 92 Pts.**

*A very youthful wine with Mediterranean sensibility. Hedgerow, meaty-spice, black-pepper and violet character to the sour black-cherry aromas and flavors. Spicy and savory. Medium-bodied with fine, polished tannins. Brooding, but also vibrant palate, ending with a nice, spicy finish. Lots of character here. A blend of marselan and syrah. Drink from 2022.*

**73 JADE VINEYARD NINGXIA ARIA RESERVE WHITE 嘉地酒园咏叹调干白 2019 92 Pts.**

*A creamy, mild nose with some cooked apples, nectarines and melon with lemon curd and brioche pastry. A creamy, almost full-bodied white with fresh, zesty acidity. Long and creamy finish with a mineral undertone and interwoven with fine toast. Consistent. Drink in 2022.*

**74** AMETHYARD MARSELAN HUAILAI CLASSIC 紫晶庄园晶典马瑟兰 2017**92 Pts.**

*This is an elegant expression of marselan with blue fruit, oyster shell and a savory edge. Some dried lychee, too. A medium-to-full-bodied wine, with a peppery mid-palate and sweet fruit and lots of firm, dissolved tannins. A little warming at the end. Drink or hold.*

**75** XIGE ESTATE NINGXIA RED WINE 西鸽酒庄 (藤上藤) 干红葡萄酒 2017**92 Pts.**

*This shows good complexity and development, with nuanced cedar to the minty fruit and sweet tobacco leaves. Sweet berries on the palate, which is rounded by smooth tannins. Very long, creamy and savory finish. Just a little too pleasing and generous in the end, but this is by far the most complex and savory offering from Xige this year. 95% cabernet sauvignon and 5% cabernet gernischt. 60,000 bottles made. Approaching its peak, so drink now through 2024.*

**76** DOMAINE CHARME NINGXIA GOLDEN HILL 夏木庄园金山晨光干红葡萄酒 2019**91 Pts.**

*Solid nose of blackberries, roasted dark spices and a drizzle of red fruit, jalapeno pepper, fennel and wet stones. Medium to full body, bounded by a tight tannin frame, which is ripe, juicy and mealy. Zealous in style, but not trying too hard to flatter. Well done. Drink or hold.*

**77** CHÂTEAU BOLONGBAO BEIJING FANGSHAN ORGANIC DRY WHITE 波龙堡有机干白葡萄酒 2019 **91 Pts.**

*Cooked lemon, roasted pineapple and a fine, creamy, leesy edge. There is a hint of minerality, too. A little more phenolic than the 2018, toned up by fresher, livelier acidity. Flavorful center-palate, wrapped by a fine gauze of mineral chalkiness. Showing good flavors on the mid-palate that are displayed in an elegant way. Organic. Drink now.*

**78** CHATEAU HUAHAO NINGXIA LIUMUGAO 华昊酒庄柳木高混酿干红 2018**91 Pts.**

*Lifted menthol and vanilla toast to the blackberries, licorice and black chocolate. A full-bodied red with rich black fruit and chewy tannins. Dense and powerful with a long, spicy finish. 52% cabernet sauvignon, 26% syrah and 22% merlot. Best from 2022.*

**79** JADE VALLEY CHARDONNAY LANTIAN 玉川酒庄清峪河干白葡萄酒 2019**91 Pts.**

*A nimble, elegant chardonnay showing crispness and crunch. Subtle nose with lemon, star fruit, fine lees and a chalky undertone. Cool and fresh. Crisp on the palate with succulent and bright fruit. Fresh and elegant. Slightly reminiscent of a Chablis with just a hint of creaminess. Drink now.*

**80** UNITED WINERY SYRAH NINGXIA BEYOND TIME MONOPOLE 联合农科时光机单一园西拉 2020 **90 Pts.**

*Very concentrated and brooding with a floral and seductive nose, showing fleshy dark cherries, violets, spices and sweet purple fruit. A dense, full-bodied syrah with mouthwatering, high-pitch acidity and a sinewy, powerful tannin frame. Ambitious and a little demanding at this embryonic stage. There is potential, but it would certainly show better now with a tad more center-palate flesh. Puristic? Hold for two years. Drink from 2023.*



**81 CHANDON NINGXIA BRUT 夏桐天然高泡葡萄酒 90 Pts.**

*Red apple, lemon rind and some brioche character. Smooth bubbles and pleasant, fresh acidity helps balance the generosity here, giving a vibrant feel. Not complex, but delightful. A blend of chardonnay and pinot noir. Bottled in March 2021. Drink now.*

**82 ZAXEE SICHUAN 2560 扎西酿酒师珍藏干红葡萄酒2560 2019 90 Pts.**

*A wine with some good depth and class on the nose, showing dark cherries, tar, cocoa powder and a meaty, red-pepper undertone. This is a full-bodied wine with dense tannins on the palate, giving a lot of power to the fruit and underscoring its grainy texture. A little drying in the end. Cabernet sauvignon. Drink from 2022.*

**83 CAPERNAUM MERLOT NINGXIA RESERVE 迦百农珍藏干红葡萄酒 2020 91 Pts.**

*Cherry liquor, black plums, bean paste, sweet oak spices and coffee. This is a full-bodied red with a dense center-palate. Just slightly potent. There is a lot of wood here, but the sweet fruit is loading it well, with tight, grippy tannin, concentration and good length. Ambitious. Give it a year or two to let the oak and tannin settle. Drink from 2023.*

**84 COPOWER JADE CABERNET SAUVIGNON NINGXIA FEI TSWEI 长和翡翠典藏赤霞珠 2019 91 Pts.**

*Lustrous but deep and focused fruit here. This shows roasted-spice, savory-meat, black-currant, tobacco-leaf and cigar-box character. I enjoy the oak spices here, which have just dialed in. Nicely concentrated, but not overdone. Medium-to-full-bodied with bright acidity and a solid, fine-grained tannin framework. Delicious and long! Drinkable now, but better in 2022.*

**85 LONGTING VINEYARD CABERNET FRANC PENGLAI RESERVE 龙亭酒庄珍藏品丽珠干红 2019 91 Pts.**

*There is a creamy oak underlay to the vibrant red fruit. Some ripe raspberries, strawberries and plums with hints of savory herbs, vanilla and white pepper. An elegant, medium-bodied cabernet franc with a crunchy mid-palate and fresh acidity. Showing plummy fruit and a fine wrap of firm, nicely chewy tannins. Long, creamy finish. A step up from the previous vintage. Really drinkable now, but best from 2022.*

**86 COPOWER JADE NINGXIA HE 长和翡翠“和”干红葡萄酒 2019 91 Pts.**

*Sweet spices from the new oak, together with redcurrants, cigar box and tobacco leaves. Vibrant and bright on the palate with silky tannins coating the fruit. Long, creamy finish. Very complete in style with toned-up acidity. A blend of cabernet sauvignon and merlot. Quite drinkable now, but better from 2022.*

**87 ROLAND MARGO CABERNET SAUVIGNON NINGXIA OAK BARREL RESERVE 罗兰马歌橡木桶珍藏赤霞珠 2019 91 Pts.**

*Concentrated, sweet blackberries with cocoa-powder, charcoal and tomato-leaf notes. Certainly showing more depth and ripeness than the 2018, with slightly higher alcohol on the nose. This is a full-bodied cabernet with a dense mid-palate, rounded by tight, smooth tannins, sweet fruit and a lengthy finish. Drink or hold.*

**88 UNITED WINERY NINGXIA RUO SHAN 联合农科丹麓酒庄若山 2017 91 Pts.**

*This shows nice cabernet freshness on the nose with green olive, mint and tobacco leaf. Vibrant, fresh and nothing green here. Both red and black fruit, with hints of roasted spices and a savory edge with some cedar. Medium to full body with nicely chewy tannins. Showing some good complexity. Drink now.*

**89 JOYFUL CABERNET SAUVIGNON NINGXIA RESERVE 拾悦橡木桶珍藏赤霞珠 2019 91 Pts.**

*Cedary oak and some walnut, red bean puree and coffee on top of dark cherries, showing some good depth and seriousness. Medium-to-full bodied with a smoothly rendered palate. The polished tannins spread out evenly with a long, creamy finish to close. Rich, generous and flattering, but not overdone. Drinkable now, but better from 2022.*

**90 CHATEAU VEGANI MARSELAN NINGXIA LANSHAN EARL FAMILY RESERVE****维加妮酒庄兰山伯爵家族珍藏马瑟兰 2019 91 Pts.**

*Rich yet fresh black and blue fruit with dried lychee, black tea and a lavender note. A hint of sweet spice, too. A fresh, full-bodied marselan wrapped by refined tannins. A rich wine, but still elegant on the palate. A solid reference for Ningxia marselan. A step up from 2018. Drink or hold.*

**91 LI HONG NINGXIA M24 RESERVE 骊红金酿M24私家珍藏干红 2019****91 Pts.**

*Spicy blue fruit with baked dark cherries, black pepper, fennel and iodine. A medium-to-full-bodied red, packed with firm tannins and succulent fruit. Crunchy and juicy mouth-feel gives it vibe and character. 75% marselan and 25% cabernet sauvignon. Very drinkable style.*

**92 YANG YANG INTERNATIONAL SYRAH NINGXIA HÈ 阳阳国际贺牌西拉 2018****91 Pts.**

*Lifted, creamy-oak layer over the blackberry fruit. Quite composed on the palate with a medium body and a firm, fine-grained tannin backbone. Long and creamy with some nice plushness at the end to please the crowd. A well-made, modern-style syrah. Delicious now.*

**93 HO-LAN SOUL CABERNET SAUVIGNON NINGXIA RESERVED ORGANIC DRY RED 贺兰神赤霞珠珍藏版有机干红 2017 91 Pts.**

*Classy tobacco leaf, blackcurrant with a savory edge featuring some orange peels and wet earth. Medium-bodied, rich and savory, showing a hint of sweet-and-sour character from the fruit profile, but not over the top. Ripe, smooth tannin coat to finish. Drink now.*

**94 CHATEAU GUCHENGRENJIA NINGXIA XIAFAN 古城人家酒庄夏梵蛇龙珠 2019 91 Pts.**

*Dense and concentrated with focused dried herbs and white pepper to the black fruit, as well as a twist of mineral. Full-bodied and dense, wrapped up in fine-grained tannins. A complete, nicely ripened cabernet gernischt from Ningxia. Better from 2022.*

**95 CHATEAU JIAHE MARSELAN HUAILAI SHANHE 家和酒庄山河马瑟兰 2018**

**91 Pts.**

*White pepper, strawberries and plums on the nose of this marselan, together with lots of bright bramble fruit. This is a tight and racy expression of the grape with a zippy finish. As is the case with Martin Vineyard, they used to sell bulk wines to Great Wall, but transformed to a small winery in 2004. Drink now.*

**96 CHÂTEAU BOLONGBAO MARSELAN BEIJING FANGSHAN 波龙堡马瑟兰干红**

**葡萄酒 2019 90 Pts.**

*A nicely refined, fruit-forward marselan with fresh blackberries and dark plums in a restrained set, as well as hints of black dates and coffee. This is a linear presentation of marselan, framed by a medium body and supple, silky tannins. Generous fruit with fresh, natural acidity. A harmonious, medium-length marselan that you want to drink now. Balance is the keyword here. Organic. Drink now.*

**97 JADE VALLEY PINOT NOIR LANTIAN 玉川酒庄黑比诺干红葡萄酒 2018**

**90 Pts.**

*Savory cranberries, coca-cola, orange peel and a decadent, mossy note here, as well as some wet earth. This is showing much more generosity and ripeness than the lean 2017 vintage. Savory and elegant with a firm tannin structure. Long, earthy finish with licorice and sweet spices. Drink now.*

**98 CHATEAU H.Y.R.H MALBEC NINGXIA MOUNTAIN WAVE 海悦仁和酒庄一山一**

**水珍藏马尔贝克 2019 90 Pts.**

*Cool blueberries, sour black cherries, blackberries, violet, fresh spices and lots of crushed stones. Medium to full body with ripe, supple tannins and a nice herbal note on the palate. Slightly meek in structure with medium length. More fleshy and fruity in style, rather than dimensional and structural. The nose falls somewhere between Portugal and Mendoza, but this is Ningxia! Drink in 2022.*

**99 SILVER HEIGHTS NINGXIA EMMA'S RESERVE 爱玛私家收藏红葡萄酒 2018**

**91 Pts.**

*Sweet berries, red and black plums, a hint of red apples, red dates and a cocoa-powder note. A rich, medium-bodied red with juicy fruit, showing a hint of herbaceous notes. Generous, supple and very approachable at such an early stage. Almost ethereal with sleek tannins. Mostly cabernet sauvignon. Drink now.*

**100 XIGE ESTATE CABERNET GERNISCHT NINGXIA X 西鸽酒庄X蛇龙珠 2019**

**91 Pts.**

*A vivid yet focused nose, lifted by engaging spicy peppercorn and dried herbs to the black and red fruit. Juicy and bright on the palate with polished tannins. Very generous, if not sweet-and-sour. Spicy finish. A selection of blocks from the cabernet gernischt vines over 20 years old. Drink or hold.*

# TOP 100 WINES OF CHILE 2021



*Claire Nesbitt,  
Associate Editor*

You probably expected our No. 1 wine from Chile this year to be one of the highly coveted icon wines, but we decided instead to honor the biodynamically produced Emiliana Valle de Colchagua Los Robles Estate Gê 2018, which highlights the country's growing interest in organic and biodynamic viticulture as well as Rhone-inspired wines. We rated 1,088 bottles from Chile this year, our biggest review ever from the South American nation.

A blend of syrah with carmenere and cabernet sauvignon, the Gê 2018 offers layer upon layer of black fruit with spicy, peppery and meaty notes, combined with an irresistibly velvety texture and prolonged finish. Like many of the wines on our list, it offers a high quality-to-price ratio, retailing at around \$55 – compared with an average of \$111 for the rest of our Top 10s. But out of our Top 100 Chilean wines, 32 cost \$20 or less.

Emiliana's rise to first place and its consistent excellence (the Gê 2017 took fourth place last year) is well-deserved recognition for Chile's biodynamic wine scene. Emiliana is the top producer of



organic and biodynamic wines in Chile and has been at it since 1998, with Gê becoming the first certified biodynamic wine in South America in 2003 – its inaugural vintage.

## ‘HERE TO STAY’

“The organic concept and especially the biodynamic concept, which was much more complex to understand, was something very new – and like all new things, it took time for people to understand it,” Alejandro Mitarakis, whose family is one of the key shareholders of Emiliana, said during a Zoom call I had with him. But he believes the biodynamic path is the right one for Emiliana “not only because of the quality we achieve today in our wines, but also because of the positive impact that this kind of agriculture has on the planet and the people.”

**You probably expected our No. 1 wine from Chile this year to be one of the highly coveted icon wines, but we decided instead to honor a wine that highlights the country’s growing interest in organic and biodynamic viticulture.**

“We really believe that it is something that is here to stay, and that we will only continue to evolve and incorporate more producers and followers around the world,” he added.

Other biodynamic wines in our Top 100 included Clos Apalta Valle de Apalta 2018 (No. 7), which is a cooler, more refined expression of the carmenere and Bordeaux varietal blend, Señal Valle de Aconcagua 2019 (No. 9), Emiliana

Pinot Noir Valle de Casablanca Signos de Origen El Rincon 2020 (No. 17) and wines from Hacienda Araucano, Francois Lurton and Viña Koyle.

Our No. 1 wine exemplifies the continued growth in both quality and volume of syrah and Rhone varietals or blends in Chile’s Mediterranean climate. Thirty-one of our Top 100 wines are Rhone-inspired wines, of which 20 are syrahs – an increase of three from 2020’s Top 100 Chile list. Syrah, capable of producing contrasting expressions based on terroir and climate, has found success along the length of Chile. We found stunning, dark-fruited examples from the Central Valley region, such as Polkura Syrah Valle de Colchagua Marchigue Block g+1 2018 (No. 10) and Montes Syrah Valle de Apalta Folly 2018 (No. 12). Wines from Matetic, Undurraga and Villard from the Aconcagua region also impressed, with Undurraga Syrah Valle de Leyda Terroir Hunter 2019 (No. 24) reminiscent of a top Cote-Rotie. And Santa Rita and Tabali made full-bodied, polished syrahs further north in the Limari Valley.

## DIVERSITY ON DISPLAY

At No. 2 on our Top 100 list is the Montes Carmenere Petit Verdot Valle de Colchagua Purple Angel 2018. A blend of 92 percent carmenere with 8 percent petit verdot, it’s a great example of Chile’s signature grape: polished and creamy, with a fantastic nose of sage and five spice underneath the blue and black fruit, culminating in a peppery and spicy finish.

For sterling models of Chilean cabernet sauvignon, Viñedo Chadwick Cabernet Sauvignon Valle de Maipo 2019 (No. 3), Viña Don Melchor Cabernet Sau-





vignon Puente Alto 2019 (No. 4) and Lapostolle Apalta La Parcelle 8 Vieilles Vignes 2015 (No. 5) are standouts. All three are perfumed and aromatic, full-bodied and structured yet refined and fresh. The Chadwick Valle de Maipo 2019, the only 99-point wine on our list, comes with a touch of petit verdot, and it is subtle and beautiful, infused with aromas of currants, tarragon, basil and rose petals.

Chile's diversity is reflected by the quality of its varietal wines from carignan, with six wines in the Top 100, coming in after syrah (20 wines), cabernet sauvignon (12 wines), pinot noir (nine) and carmenere (seven). Five wines from Vignadores de Carignan (VIGNO), a group of independent producers reviving carignan wines in the Maule region, featured on our list. Lapostolle, Odfjell, Gillmore and Viña Morandé all made vibrant, fragrant, structured and racy reds from dry-farmed old carignan vines, while Garage Wine & Co Cariñena Valle de Maule Empedrado Cru Truquilemu Field Blend 2018 (No. 58), was also produced from old-vine carignan co-fermented with syrah, and is a layered, silky red with firm and seamless tannins. Passionate, artisanal producers are pushing the boundaries with regards to terroir, varieties and winemaking – although still a drop in the ocean of Chile's mass-volume wine production.

## CHARDONNAY SHINES

Chilean chardonnay continued to shine this year, with four wines, all rated 94 or 95 points, ending up on our list. They all showed fantastic concentration and depth. But it is unfortunate that there were only six white wines in Chile's Top 100, plus one orange wine: Siegel Viognier Valle de Colchagua Naranjo 2019 (No. 80). Only one semillon featured



The Emiliana Valle de Colchagua Los Robles Estate Gê 2018. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

this year, Carmen Semillon Apalta Quijada 2019 (No. 75), compared with four last year. Here is a clear opportunity for wineries to take their portfolio of quality wines to the next level.

The main criteria for selecting this year's list of the top Chilean wines were quality and price, as well as what we call the "wow" factor: wines that excite us emotionally as well as technically as tasters. There were no perfect wines this year from Chile and only one wine



Chilean wineries like Leyda are making much more terroir-specific wines, playing with vine orientations. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

at 99 points. It is also somewhat disappointing that there were not more Chilean wines in this year's Top 100 wines of the world (the first four wines on this list).

This appears to be a continuing trend of many Chilean wineries content to make good wines at a high quality-to-price ratio, rather than striving for perfection. Neighboring Argentina also offers value wines, but with six wines in the world Top 100 and with a higher average score, its top tier seems to be surpassing that of Chile. We are also concerned with the ever-increasing prices for Chile's top wines taking away some of the luster for some wine drinkers.

Nonetheless, we are certainly impressed with Chile's ability to offer affordable wines. The overall average price of the Top 100 wines is \$43 per bottle, but there is a clear price gap, and polarisa-

tion continues to be an issue. The 12 wines at 97 points and above average \$115 per bottle, compared with \$23 for the 45 wines at 93 points on this list. There is certainly room for further investment in quality winemaking, and we would like to see more wines in the 95-plus range.

"I think winemakers must understand where they are, know their different soils in the vineyard, understand the climate in their specific region ... [and] try to go from a wider view to a more specific one," Mitarakis said. And with consumers demanding better quality wines, we hope that more winemakers continue to strive for greatness and demonstrate the full potential that Chile has to offer.



## **1 EMILIANA VALLE DE COLCHAGUA LOS ROBLES ESTATE GÉ 2018 98 Pts.**

*A complex nose of blackberry, plum, mocha, cigar box, graphite and spice. It's full-bodied with fine tannins. Creamy-textured and structured with a juicy core. Pure with a velvety texture on the palate, which is layered and balanced and leads to a flavorful finish that lasts over and over. Spicy on the finish with cloves and black pepper. Grilled meat, too. A blend of 52% syrah, 34% carmenere and 14% cabernet sauvignon. From biodynamically grown grapes. Vegan. Try in 2023.*

## **2 MONTES CARMENERE PETIT VERDOT VALLE DE COLCHAGUA PURPLE ANGEL 2018 98 Pts.**

*Blackberry, blueberry, sage and five spice on the nose. Medium-to full-bodied with fine tannins. Balanced and creamy with a fresh, juicy character palate. Silky texture with great structure. Savory finish with length. Peppery and spicy aftertaste. A blend of 92% carmenere and 8% petit verdot. Try in 2023.*

## **3 VIÑEDO CHADWICK CABERNET SAUVIGNON VALLE DE MAIPO 2019 99 Pts.**

*Subtle and very beautiful with currants, tarragon, basil and rose petals in the aromas. It's full-bodied, yet agile and so fine-textured with superb tannins that provide multi-layers on the palate. It's refined, yet powerful at the end. Suggests greatness and longevity. Lots of blackcurrants, stones and violets in the after taste. Cabernet sauvignon with a touch of petit verdot. This needs three or four years to show its true greatness.*

## **4 VIÑA DON MELCHOR CABERNET SAUVIGNON PUENTE ALTO 2019 98 Pts.**

*Very perfumed and aromatic with blackcurrant, sweet-tobacco and Spanish-cedar character. Full-bodied with ultra fine tannins that build on the palate and take the fruit and other flavors to an endless finish. More refined than the perfect 2018 and almost as compelling. Drink in 2023 or after.*

## **5 LAPOSTOLLE APALTA LA PARCELLE 8 VIEILLES VIGNES 2015 98 Pts.**

*Sweet blackberries, brambleberries and cigar tobacco with fresh flowers. Some cedar and mahogany, too. Full bodied with chewy tannins and chocolate, walnut and lightly toasted flavors. It's just starting to come around. First commercially released wine from old-vine cabernet sauvignon, grown on its own rootstock with the vast majority from 1910. Originally it was just for the owners to drink. Fantastic. 12,000 bottles made. Drink or hold.*

## **6 P. S. GARCIA MOURVEDRE VALLE DE ITATA PIEDRA LISA VINEYARD 2018 96 Pts.**

*This has a wild nose of blackcurrants, morello cherries, chocolate orange, hazelnuts, cinnamon, herbs and a hint of parmesan. It's full-bodied with firm, ultra fine and creamy tannins and bright acidity. Enveloping feel. Complex and expansive. Gorgeous texture and center palate. Try from 2023.*

## **7 CLOS APALTA VALLE DE APALTA 2018 98 Pts.**

*So aromatic and fresh with dried flowers, sweet tobacco and hints of straw. Red fruit, cloves and green peppercorns. Medium-to full-bodied with fine tannins that are very fresh and refined. Fine, silky and beautiful. Hints of minerals and granite to the dark fruit. Such gorgeous length and beauty. 64% carmenere, 18% cabernet franc and 18% merlot. Extremely long and poised. Cooler wine. From biodynamically grown grapes. Delicious to drink already, but another three to four years will make it even better.*

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**8 VIK VALLE DE CACHAPOAL VIK 2018 98 Pts.**

*Black-olive, white-truffle and currant aromas follow through to a full-bodied palate with a rich, round-textured palate and plenty of delicious fruit. Complex flavors entice you with every sip. So juicy and flavorful. A wine to drink now, or age for the future. Drink or hold.*

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**9 SEÑA VALLE DE ACONCAGUA 2019 98 Pts.**

*Such beautiful aromas of crushed berries, currants, walnuts, allspice and nutmeg follow through to a full body with tight, ultra fine tannins that provide length and intensity. A finish of slightly dried cherries with wet earth, slate and stone. Chewy and fine-grained. A wine with soul and length. From biodynamically grown grapes. Give it time. Drink after 2025.*

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**10 POLKURA SYRAH VALLE DE COLCHAGUA MARCHIGUE BLOCK G+1 2018 96 Pts.**

*A full-bodied, flavorful red with aromas of blackberry, black peppercorn, chocolate, smoke, chai and caramel. Some herb undertones. Iron, too. Velvety tannins frame a plush core of spiced dark fruit. Freshness and bright acidity on the finish. Long and full of energy. Spicy at the end. Drink now or hold.*

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**11 BARON PHILIPPE DE ROTHSCHILD CHILE VALLE DE MAIPO BARONESA P. 2019 97 Pts.**

*A full-bodied, polished red with aromas of ripe blue and black fruit, chocolate, walnut and cedar. Slate, too. Firm, velvety tannins and a plush texture. So creamy and seamless with a steady tannin support. Layered and deep. Great length. Mostly cabernet sauvignon with some carmenere, petit verdot, cabernet franc and syrah. Try this from 2023.*

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**12 MONTES SYRAH VALLE DE APALTA FOLLY 2018 97 Pts.**

*Blackberries, blueberries, violets and dried herbs on the nose. Full body with round, chewy tannins. Juicy palate with a chalky texture and savory character. Meaty notes on the finish, together with tea leaves and dark fruit. Lively acidity and some structure through to the end. Drink or hold.*

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**13 POLKURA SYRAH VALLE DE COLCHAGUA MARCHIGUE 2019 96 Pts.**

*Notes of blackberry, fig, violet and peppercorn on the nose. Slate, cocoa and plum, too. It's medium-bodied with firm, silky tannins. Juicy and fresh on the palate with persistent acidity and an ink-like feel. Pure, transparent and delicious. Energetic and vivid at the end. Drink or hold.*

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**14 ERRAZURIZ VALLE DE ACONCAGUA DON MAXIMIANO FOUNDER'S RESERVE 2019 96 Pts.**

*Currant, blackberry and ash aromas with some earth and dried flowers, following through to a full body with layers of beautifully ripe tannins that are firm and fresh. Long, fresh finish of currants and blackberries. Drink after 2024.*

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**15 NEYEN MALBEC VALLE DE COLCHAGUA ESPÍRITU DE APALTA LIMITED EDITION 2019 97 Pts.**

*A complex nose of raspberries, redcurrants, blueberries, spices and dried herbs. It's medium-bodied with elegant tannins. Round, juicy and layered on the palate, offering great harmony and balance. Fresh, yet complex with a savory finish. Old-vine character. The vines are more than a century old. Drink or hold.*

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## **16** HACIENDA ARAUCANO CARMENERE VALLE DE COLCHAGUA ALKA 2018 **96 Pts.**

*Blackberry, dark-plum, cedar and smoky notes on the nose. Full-bodied with round and elegant tannins. Juicy and creamy palate with texture and freshness. Round and balanced. Savory finish with length. Spicy aftertaste. Drink or hold.*

## **17** EMILIANA PINOT NOIR VALLE DE CASABLANCA SIGNOS DE ORIGEN EL RINCON 2020 **95 Pts.**

*Raspberry, redcurrant, thyme and floral undertones. Medium-to full-bodied with chewy tannins. Juicy and creamy with sour-cherry flavor and lively acidity that adds energy and freshness. Savory, ample finish with length. From biodynamically grown grapes. Vegan. Drink or hold.*

## **18** NEYEN VALLE DE COLCHAGUA ESPÍRITU DE APALTA 2018 **96 Pts.**

*Notes of plums and blackberries with chili and herbal undertones. Full-bodied with chewy tannins. Lively acidity for a juicy and structured mouth texture. Balanced and vibrant. A blend of 50% carmenere and 50% cabernet sauvignon. Savory finish with length. Drink after 2023.*

## **19** VIK VALLE DE CACHAPOAL LA PIU BELLE 2017 **96 Pts.**

*Aromas of ripe berries with some spice and dried fruit, such as figs or prunes, turning then to flowers. Full-bodied and round with layers of fruit and interspersed, fine tannins. It's very flavorful and intense. Big, but not overpowering. Drink or hold.*

## **20** ARISTOS VALLE DE CACHAPOAL DUQUE D'A 2014 **96 Pts.**

*This is linear and focused with a compact palate of ripe currants, berries and some flowers. It's full and intense with a gorgeous center palate of ripe fruit and a long, succulent finish. Racy and intense at the end. Better in 2023.*

## **21** ALMAVIVA PUENTE ALTO 2019 **97 Pts.**

*The aromas of iodine and blackcurrants with roses and lavender make the wine extremely perfumed. It's full-bodied with a tight, fine-tannined palate that shows linear flow through the center palate. It's vertical and integrated, adding depth and serious quality to the wine.*

## **22** P. S. GARCIA PINOT NOIR VALLE DE CASABLANCA 2018 **95 Pts.**

*This has a savory nose of sour cherries, dried cranberries, pickled mushrooms, licorice, herbs, balsamic and dried lemon. It's medium-bodied with intense, juicy layers of spiced and herbed fruit. Silky tannins and bright, zesty acidity. Earthy and delicious. Gorgeous fruit here. Drink now or hold.*

## **23** MATETIC SYRAH VALLE DE SAN ANTONIO CORRALILLO 2017 **95 Pts.**

*Notes of blackberries, dark cherries and blueberries on the nose with peppercorns, too. Full-bodied with chewy tannins. Crisp, fleshy and flavorful on the palate. Ample finish with length. Succulent and lively at the end. Drink or hold.*

## **24** UNDURRAGA SYRAH VALLE DE LEYDA TERROIR HUNTER 2019 **95 Pts.**

*A full-bodied red with aromas of blackcurrants, violets, green peppercorns, chili, stones and chocolate orange. Firm, chewy tannins frame concentrated layers of dark fruit and herbs. Rich, yet balanced, with a fresh finish. Extremely well done. Reminds me of a top Côte-Rôtie. Try from 2022.*



**25** MASSOC FRÈRES VALLE DE ITATA L'ASSEMBLAGE 2018 **95 Pts.**

*This is really soft and decadent, showing dried-berry, plum and orange-peel character with some walnut and dry earth. It's full-bodied with lovely, ripe tannins and a juicy finish. Crazy red from ancient vines of pais, ranging from 80 to 150 years old. Drink or hold.*

**26** MATETIC PINOT NOIR VALLE DE CASABLANCA EQ VALLE HERMOSO VINEYARD LIMITED EDITION 2018 **95 Pts.**

*Aromas of wild strawberries, cherries, nutmeg and mushrooms. It's medium-bodied with sleek tannins. Fresh and juicy in the mouth with vibrant acidity and a flavorful, spiced finish. Fantastic length. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**27** LAPOSTOLLE CARIGNAN VALLE DE MAULE VIGNO EMPEDRADO OLD VINES DRY-FARMED 2019 **95 Pts.**

*This has a fragrant, polished nose of red and black plums, violets, sandalwood and black peppercorn. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, silky and melting tannins. Juicy and succulent. Delicious. So long and layered. Succulent finish. Unfiltered. Drink or hold.*

**28** ODFJELL CARIGNAN VALLE DE MAULE VIGNO OLD VINES DRY FARMED 2016 **95 Pts.**

*A fragrant red with aromas of dried and sour cherries, cloves, potpourri and cinnamon stick. It's full-bodied with firm, fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Chewy texture with perfumed character and pretty layers of dark fruit and flowers. Still fresh. Drink now or hold.*

**29** CONO SUR SYRAH VALLE DE SAN ANTONIO LA PALMA BLOCK 25 SINGLE VINEYARD 2019 **94 Pts.**

*A full-bodied red with aromas of stewed blackberries, black cherries, tobacco smoke, violets and cloves. Fresh and structured with firm, fine tannins and bright acidity. Very fine and pure. Tobacco and licorice to the red fruit. Drink or hold.*

**30** RITUAL CHARDONNAY VALLE DE CASABLANCA SUPERTUGA BLOCK 2019 **95 Pts.**

*A full-bodied white with aromas of grilled pineapple, papaya, salted butter and praline. Fantastic concentration of ripe stone and tropical fruit, supported by tangy acidity and a tight texture. Long and focused. Needs time to come together. Better in 2022.*

**31** DE MARTINO MALBEC CARMENERE VALLE DE CACHAPOAL LAS CRUCES OLD VINE SERIES 2018 **95 Pts.**

*A full-bodied red with aromas of plum, peach pit, thyme, eucalyptus, charcoal, chocolate orange and walnut husk. Creamy, polished and seamless with velvety tannins and succulent layers of fragrant spice and fruit. So pure and transparent. 75% malbec and 25% carmenere. Drink now or hold.*

**32** RITUAL PINOT NOIR VALLE DE CASABLANCA MONSTER BLOCK 2019 **95 Pts.**

*A medium-bodied red with complex aromas of dark cherries, cloves, chocolate orange, slate, sandalwood and dried flowers. Tight and refined with firm, fine-grained tannins and bright acidity. Long and vibrant. From organically grown grapes. Better from 2022.*



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**33 LOS VASCOS VALLE DE COLCHAGUA LE DIX DE LOS VASCOS 2017 95 Pts.**

*Sweet berries, black olives and hints of thyme, tobacco and chocolate. Full-bodied with a dense, agile palate of pretty ripe fruit and spice, earth and cocoa undertones to the currant flavors. Drinkable now, but much better in 2024.*

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**34 ALMAVIVA PUENTE ALTO EPU 2018 95 Pts.**

*A red with lots of purple fruit, dried flowers and spices in both the nose and on the palate. Full-bodied with firm tannins and a tight, fresh finish. Solid tannins that are long and energetic. This needs time to soften. A blend of cabernet sauvignon and carmenere. Better in 2023.*

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**35 VIÑA TARAPACÁ CARMENERE VALLE DE MAIPO GRAN RESERVA 2019 94 Pts.**

*Black fruit, tomato leaf, graphite and spice. Medium-to full-bodied with chewy tannins. Fruity and energetic with the right amount of structure. Flavorful finish with length. This is an excellent, dry carmenere. Drink or hold.*

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**36 CONCHA Y TORO SYRAH BUIN GRAVAS DEL MAIPO 2019 95 Pts.**

*Blue fruit with slate and black tea on the nose, as well as violets and black licorice. Full-bodied with very intense flavors of blueberries and cloves and hints of black pepper. Spicy finish with just a hint of fresh thyme. A stylish, well thought-out wine from gravely soils in the Maipo. Drink or hold.*

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**37 HACIENDA ARAUCANO VALLE DE LOLOL CLOS DE LOLOL SINGLE VINEYARD 2019 94 Pts.**

*Notes of blackberries and blueberries with earthy undertones. Full-bodied with firm tannins. Tight, linear texture on the palate with structure, but freshness, too. Flavorful finish. A blend of carmenere, syrah, cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and petit verdot. From biodynamically grown grapes. Demeter certification. Drink in 2024 and onwards.*

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**38 VILLARD SYRAH VALLE DE CASABLANCA TANAGRA 2018 95 Pts.**

*Blueberry, blackcurrant, violet and peppercorn on the nose. Tobacco too. Full-bodied with firm tannins. Structured and juicy with a fresh character and a savory feel. Layered and balanced. Soft and tight tannins. Supple finish. Drink or hold.*

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**39 PANDOLFI PRICE CHARDONNAY VALLE DE ITATA LOS PATRICIOS 2018 94 Pts.**

*Dried apple, pineapple, hazelnut, white pepper and smoke on the nose with pastrami undertones. It's full-bodied with tangy acidity and a spicy, zesty, salty character. Intense, complex and flavorful. Long, too. Drink or hold.*

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**40 VILLARD SYRAH VALLE DE CASABLANCA GRAND VIN 2018 94 Pts.**

*A rich, full-bodied red with aromas of black fruit, peppercorn, marinated meat and five spice. Firm, chewy tannins and zesty acidity. Concentrated, spiced and expressive. Drink or hold.*

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**41 ODFJELL CARIGNAN CAUQUENES VIGNO 2016 94 Pts.**

*Focused blackcurrants, blackberries and sweet blueberries. Roast chestnut and sandalwood with some vanilla spice. Medium-bodied, but shows form and intensity with ripe, broad tannins coating the fruit, before ending with a long finish. Not a hefty wine. Will improve. Drink or hold.*

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**42 VIÑA GARCES SILVA SYRAH VALLE DE LEYDA AMAYNA 2018 94 Pts.**

*A medium-bodied, fragrant red with aromas of spiced cherry, rose hip, pink peppercorn, sage and sandalwood. Olives, too. Firm, powdery tannins and bright acidity with a chalky texture. Fresh and focused until the finish. Very pretty. Drink or hold.*

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**43 DE MARTINO CABERNET SAUVIGNON VALLE DE MAIPO LA CANCHA 2018 94 Pts.**

*A medium-to full-bodied red with aromas of baked blueberries, currants, chocolate, vanilla and dried leaves. Stones, flowers and porcini mushroom, too. Rich, smooth and creamy with firm, sleek tannins. Drink or hold.*

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**44 VIÑA TARAPACÁ VALLE DE MAIPO GRAN RESERVA ETIQUETA AZUL RED BLEND 2018 94 Pts.**

*Ripe blackberry, blackcurrant and blueberry jam with tobacco and cedar undertones. It's full-bodied with firm, chewy tannins. Structured with a fleshy texture on the mid-palate, leading to a firm, flavorful finish. A blend of 78% cabernet sauvignon, 10% cabernet franc, 7% petit verdot and 5% syrah. Drink or hold.*

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**45 GILLMORE CARIGNAN VALLE DE MAULE VIGNO OLD VINES DRY FARMED 2018 94 Pts.**

*A full-bodied, polished red with aromas of plums, blueberries, vanilla bean, black peppercorns and dried herbs. Succulent and rounded with firm, velvety tannins. Long and flavorful. Drink now or hold*

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**46 CLOS APALTA VALLE DE APALTA LE PETIT CLOS 2018 94 Pts.**

*A medium-bodied red with blackberry, red-berry and spice aromas and flavors. It's chewy and polished with a medium finish. Dried flowers to the fruit at the finish. Tight and reserved now. Drink in 2022 and onwards.*

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**47 SANTA CAROLINA CARMENERE PEUMO HERENCIA 2018 95 Pts.**

*Pine-needle, blackberry-leaf, brambleberry and cocoa aromas. It's medium-to full-bodied with a silky texture and firm, sleek tannins. Concentrated, yet fresh, with a polished, caressing finish. Beautiful expression. Drink or hold.*

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**48 CONCHA Y TORO CABERNET SAUVIGNON VALLE DE MAIPO GRAVAS DEL MAIPO 2019 95 Pts.**

*Attractive aromas of currants, sweet herbs, such as fresh basil, and blueberries. Medium-to full-bodied with berry and light vanilla flavors and medium round tannins that give nice character and texture to the finish. Better in 2022.*

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**49 ERRÁZURIZ VALLE DE ACONCAGUA VILLA DON MAXIMIANO 2019 94 Pts.**

*Blackcurrant, floral, ash and smoke aromas. Medium-to full-bodied with chewy tannins that are vivid and polished. This needs some time to soften and come together. Very bright red. Better after 2023.*

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**50 VIÑA CASABLANCA SYRAH VALLE DE CASABLANCA NEBLUS 2018 94 Pts.**

*Dark fruit, soya, smoke and meaty undertones. Full-bodied with tight, chewy tannins. Ink-like feel with freshness, but also power. The palate is focus and structured. Manicured tannins. Flavorful finish with length. Drink or hold.*

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**51 AROMO SYRAH VALLE DE MAULE RESERVA PRIVADA 2020 93 Pts.**

*Dark plum, blackberry, smoke and violet on the nose. Medium-bodied with tight and chewy tannins. Fleshy and juicy with persistent acidity. The smoky character and the structure lead to a racy, ample and savory finish. Drink or hold.*

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**52 BODEGAS TAGUA TAGUA CABERNET SAUVIGNON SYRAH NEBBIOLO VALLE DE MAULE GRAN RESERVA 2019 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of red plums, ripe blueberries, violets and spices. It's medium-bodied with dusty tannins. Round and creamy on the palate. Slightly tannic finish. A delicious blend of 60% cabernet sauvignon 35% syrah and 5% nebbiolo. Try after 2023.*

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**53 VIÑA DEL PEDREGAL SYRAH VALLE DE LONCOMILLA AVES DEL SUR RESERVA 2018 93 Pts.**

*Plum and sweet green-tobacco undertones with some rust on the nose. Medium-bodied with medium juicy tannins and a fascinating aftertaste of dried fruit, Indian spices and earth. Drink now.*

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**54 GARAGE WINE & CO SYRAH VALLE DE MAULE EMPEDRADO TRUQUILEMU VINEYARD LOT 84 2018 94 Pts.**

*A medium-bodied red with intense aromas of black fruit, grilled meat, tar, walnut husk and potpourri. Concentrated, smoky layers here with a delicious balance of dark fruit and savory notes, framed by firm, well-integrated tannins. Stays fresh. Only 1,007 bottles made. Drink or hold.*

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**55 LAGAR DE CODEGUA CABERNET SAUVIGNON ALTO CACHAPOAL 2018 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of currants, black tea and some thyme follow through to a full body with chewy tannins and intense fruit. A little austere now. Give it a year or two to soften and open up. Try after 2022.*

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**56 GILLMORE MERLOT VALLE DE LONCOMILLA DRY FARMED 2018 93 Pts.**

*Redcurrants, black fruit, herbs and some earthy undertones on the nose. It's full-bodied with firm tannins. Structured with vibrant acidity and juicy texture. Tannic, herbal and flavorful finish with length. Drink or hold.*

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**57 VIÑA REQUINGUA PINOT NOIR VALLE DE CASABLANCA TORO DE PIEDRA GRAN RESERVA 2019 93 Pts.**

*A rich, full-bodied pinot with aromas of stewed strawberries, grilled mushrooms, thyme, balsamic and burnt orange. Savory, intense and chewy with tight-grained tannins and plenty of dark spice. Drink or hold.*

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**58 GARAGE WINE & CO CARÍÑENA VALLE DE MAULE EMPEDRADO CRU TRUQUILEMU FIELD BLEND 2018 94 Pts.**

*A beautiful carignan with polished aromas of blue and black fruit, brambles, pine needles, mahogany and cloves. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, silky tannins and a caressing feel. Layered and seamless with youthful forest fruit. Co-fermented carignan and syrah. Delicious now, but better from 2022.*

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**59** WILLIAM FÈVRE CHARDONNAY VALLE DE MAIPO CHACAI 2018 **94 Pts.**

*A full-bodied, creamy white with aromas of cooked apple, peach, vanilla and butterscotch. Concentrated and smooth with ripe stone-fruit and sweet-praline notes. This is a very serious chardonnay. A top wine from here. Drink now.*

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**60** SANTA RITA SYRAH VALLE DE LIMARÍ MEDALLA REAL GRAN RESERVA 2019 **93 Pts.**

*A full-bodied red with aromas of dark plums, currants, violets, bitter chocolate and toasted walnuts. Firm, velvety tannins frame a rich core of dark fruit. Solid syrah. Drink or hold.*

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**61** UNDURRAGA GARNACHA CARIÑENA MONASTRELL VALLE DE MAULE TERROIR HUNTER RARITIES 2019 **93 Pts.**

*Red plums, blueberries, lemon zest, violets and herbs on the nose. Hint of volatility. It's full-bodied with firm, tight-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Nice floral and herb edge to the chewy fruit. 60% garnacha, 25% cariñena and 15% monastrell. Drink or hold.*

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**62** LEYDA SYRAH VALLE DE LEYDA SINGLE VINEYARD CANELO 2018 **93 Pts.**

*Blackberries, blueberries, violets, herbs and peppercorns on the nose. It's full-bodied with chewy tannins and vibrant acidity. Spicy and textured with a racy, energetic finish. Drink or hold.*

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**63** ALCHEMY CARMENERE VALLE DE CACHAPOAL 2019 **93 Pts.**

*A polished, spiced red with aromas of currants, peppercorn, sandalwood and toasted walnut. Firm, fine-grained tannins and smooth, concentrated layers of dark fruit and oak spice. Good length, too. Drink or hold.*

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**64** RAVANAL CABERNET SAUVIGNON VALLE DE COLCHAGUA GRAN RESERVA 2019 **93 Pts.**

*A medium-to full-bodied red with aromas of blackcurrant, cedar, walnut, mocha and herbs. Firm, fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity with concentrated layers of dark fruit and chocolate. Flavorful finish. Drink or hold.*

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**65** FRANÇOIS LURTON PINOT NOIR VALLE DE LOLOL HUMO BLANCO EDICIÓN LIMITADA ORGANIC 2020 **93 Pts.**

*Aromas of raspberries, cherries, dried roses and herbs. Full-bodied with chewy tannins. Tight and structured with a juicy feel in the mouth and crispy acidity. Give it time. From biodynamically grown grapes. Demeter certification. Try in 2023.*

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**66** PRIMUS CARMENERE VALLE DE COLCHAGUA APALTA 2019 **93 Pts.**

*Blackberry, blueberry, plum and sage on the nose. It's medium-to full-bodied with plush tannins. Creamy and round on the palate with plenty of fruit and crisp acidity. Flavorful finish. Slightly chewy at the end. From organically grown grapes. Drink after 2021.*

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**67** INDOMITA CABERNET SAUVIGNON CARMENERE VALLE DE MAIPO DUETTE PREMIUM 2019 **93 Pts.**

*Dark plums, cherries, rosemary and spices. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, creamy tannins. Smoky and textured on the palate with a juicy, ink-like feel. Flavorful finish with good length. Drink or hold.*




**68 ARBOLEDA CABERNET SAUVIGNON VALLE DE ACONCAGUA 2019 93 Pts.**

*A full-bodied red with aromas of blackcurrant, stewed blackberry, sandalwood and grilled herbs. Firm, tight-grained tannins and a spicy, flavorful palate. Juicy and savory at the end. Drink or hold.*

**69 LAGAR DE CODEGUA ALTO CACHAPOAL ALUVIÓN 2017 93 Pts.**

*Plums and blackberries with hints of fresh herbs on the nose. Spices, too. Medium-bodied with firm, slightly chewy tannins and a fresh, juicy finish. 65% cabernet sauvignon, 20% syrah, 10% petit verdot and 5% carmenere. Still needs time to soften, but very nicely done.*

**70 FLAHERTY CARMENERE VALLE DE ACONCAGUA OCOA VINEYARD 2018 93 Pts.**

*Raspberry, rose bush, green peppercorn, cocoa and clove on the nose with smoky undertones. It's medium-bodied with firm, fine tannins. Polished and flavorful with vanilla notes on the finish. Drink or hold.*

**71 SANTA RITA CABERNET SAUVIGNON VALLE DE MAIPO CASA REAL RESERVA ESPECIAL 2018 94 Pts.**

*Blackberry, blackcurrant, clove, peppercorn and tobacco-leaf aromas. It's medium-to full-bodied with rounded, well-integrated tannins. So smooth and creamy with polished spice and chocolate notes to close. Two to three years will really put this in place, but it's already very attractive.*

**72 ARISTOS CHARDONNAY VALLE DE CACHAPOAL DUQUESA D'A 2014 95 Pts.**

*This is a fantastic white with the depth and power of grand cru Burgundy, showing sliced cooked apple, crushed stone and hints of blanched almonds. Full-bodied and chewy with a compressed and powerful palate. So long and muscular. Best after 2022.*

**73 LOS VASCOS CARMENERE VALLE DE COLCHAGUA CROMAS GRAN RESERVA 2019 93 Pts.**

*Dark berries with sweet-tobacco and flower-stem undertones. Full-bodied with a tight, juicy and rather tannic palate. Flavorful finish. Just a hint of chocolate and cedar at the end. A more muscular style of carmenere. Better in a year or two, but already excellent.*

**74 BARON PHILIPPE DE ROTHSCHILD CHILE VALLE CENTRAL ESCUDO ROJO GRAN RESERVA 2019 93 Pts.**

*A complex nose of mulberries, plums, dark cherries, dried flowers and spices. It's full-bodied with firm, chewy tannins and a fleshy texture. Velvety and structured, leading to a flavorful finish with good length. A blend of cabernet sauvignon, syrah, cabernet franc and petit verdot. Drink or hold.*

**75 CARMEN SEMILLON APALTA QUIJADA 2019 93 Pts.**

*A full-bodied white with aromas of apple pie, dried mango, lemon cream and hazelnut. Bright acidity and a waxy texture with subtle spice and smokiness. Focused finish. Drink or hold.*

**76 SAN PEDRO PINOT NOIR VALLE DE MALLECO 1865 TAYU 2019 93 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of sour cherries, redcurrants, fresh flowers, peppermint and crushed stones. Medium-bodied with silky tannins and bright acidity. Bright and transparent with a juicy, vibrant finish. Drink now or hold.*

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**77 PANDOLFI PRICE PINOT NOIR VALLE DE ITATA LOS PATRICIOS 2018 93 Pts.**

*Dark cherries, plums, earth, dried herbs and cedar on the nose. Orange zest and flowers, too. It's medium-bodied with firm, fine-grained tannins. Chewy and compact in the mouth with crisp acidity. Focused with good length. Drink or hold.*

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**78 CARMEN VALLE DE COLCHAGUA WINEMAKER'S BLACK 2019 93 Pts.**

*Pine needles, mahogany, walnuts and blueberries. It's full-bodied with velvety tannins and a rich, polished core of blue fruit and spice. Rich, yet cool and balanced. Drink or hold.*

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**79 FLAHERTY PETITE SIRAH CAUQUENES TEQUEL VINEYARD 2017 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of black fruit, plums, cedar, smoke and minerals. It's full-bodied with firm, fine-grained tannins and a creamy texture. Bold, dense and rich with a warm, spicy finish. Drink or hold.*

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**80 SIEGEL VIOGNIER VALLE DE COLCHAGUA NARANJO 2019 93 Pts.**

*This has a rich gold color with aromas of pear skin, baked peach, chamomile and orange zest. It's full-bodied with medium acidity and a waxy texture. Some acetaldehyde character adding to smooth layers of flowers, oranges and stone fruit. Drink now.*

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**81 CHATEAU LOS BOLDOS CABERNET SAUVIGNON SYRAH VALLE DE CACHAPOAL ANDES VIEILLES VIGNES 2019 93 Pts.**

*Intense aromas of black plums, black cherries, smoke, walnuts, cloves and charcoal. It's full-bodied with firm, velvety tannins, framing a rich core of spices, chocolate and black fruit. Polished and generous. Lots of flavor and structure. Drink from 2022.*

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**82 MASSENEZ ALTO CACHAPOAL CHATEAU M GRAN RESERVA 2019 93 Pts.**

*A medium-to full-bodied red with aromas of lavender, blackberry, blueberry and plum stone. Some tar and bitter chocolate. Creamy and rounded with firm, velvety tannins and a long, polished finish. Cabernet sauvignon and merlot. Drink or hold.*

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**83 CASAS DEL BOSQUE SYRAH VALLE DE CASABLANCA PEQUENAS PRODUCCIONES 2018 93 Pts.**

*Black fruit, porcini, leather and dried flowers. It's full-bodied with firm, velvety tannins. Juicy and plush with a smoky, flavorful finish. Drink or hold.*

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**84 VIÑA KOYLE ALTO COLCHAGUA CERRO BASALTO LOS LINGUES VINEYARD CUARTEL G2 2019 93 Pts.**

*A medium-bodied red with aromas of brambleberries, white pepper, five spice, pine cone and green peppercorn. Fresh and pure with fine tannins and bright acidity. From biodynamically grown grapes. Vegan. Drink now or hold.*

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**85 ALCHEMY SYRAH VALLE DE CACHAPOAL PARRÓNE 2019 93 Pts.**

*A full-bodied, polished red with aromas of black cherries, dark chocolate, violets, walnuts and cedar. Rich, layered and deep with firm, rounded tannins. Muscular and seamless with a long finish. Drink or hold.*

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**86 MASSOC FRÈRES PAÍS VALLE DE ITATA GRAND PAÍS 2018 93 Pts.**

*Very linear and fine with tannins that are polished and tight. Bright acidity. It's medium-bodied with lovely length and a gorgeous finish. Serious pairs that shows energy and focus. Drink now.*

**87 VIÑA MORANDÉ VALLE DE MAULE VIGNO OLD VINES DRY FARMED 2018 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of black raspberry, sour cherry, chocolate orange, grilled herbs and smoked meat. It's medium-to full-bodied with fine-grained tannins and tangy acidity. Zesty and flavorful with a racy finish. Tastes of old vines with bark and mushroom undertones. 78% carignan, 18% syrah and 4% chardonnay. Drink or hold.*

**88 KINGSTON FAMILY VINEYARDS SAUVIGNON BLANC VALLE DE CASABLANCA CJ'S BARREL 2019 93 Pts.**

*A medium-bodied white with aromas of green apple, pineapple, waxed lemon and green herbs. Tight and textured with bright acidity. Flavorful and citrusy finish. Drink now. Screw cap.*

**89 BODEGA VOLCANES DE CHILE GRENACHE PETITE SIRAH MOURVEDRE CENTRAL VALLEY TECTONIA 2019 93 Pts.**

*Blackberry, dried-sage, lavender and earthy notes. It's medium-to full-bodied with chewy tannins. Ripe, round and dusty with a juicy, pretty finish. A blend of 45% grenache, 40% petite sirah and 15% mourvedre. Drink now or hold.*

**90 VIU MANENT VALLE DE COLCHAGUA CUVÉE INFINITO 8 2018 93 Pts.**

*Dark fruit, herbs, spices and earthy undertones on the nose. It's full-bodied with firm, fine-grained tannins. Fleshy and round with structure, but remains fresh. Flavorful finish. A blend of 61% cabernet sauvignon, 33% malbec and 6% cabernet franc. Drink or hold.*

**91 VIÑA KOYLE ALTO COLCHAGUA CERRO BASALTO LOS LINGUES VINEYARD 2019 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackberry, blackcurrant, grilled portobello, dried oregano and earth. It's full-bodied with firm, fine tannins. Plump and juicy with a wild, spiced edge. Monastrell, garnacha, syrah and carinena. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**92 SAN PEDRO VALLE DE CACHAPOAL SIDERAL 2019 93 Pts.**

*A full-bodied red with aromas of black plum, tobacco, chocolate orange, cedar and walnut. Firm, fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Polished and creamy. 64% cabernet sauvignon, 23% syrah, 6% carmenere, 6% petit verdot and 1% cabernet franc. Drink from 2022.*

**93 CHATEAU LOS BOLDOS CABERNET SAUVIGNON VALLE DE CACHAPOAL ANDES GRAND CLOS 2018 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackberries, currants, cocoa, lemon zest, tobacco, cedar and dried herbs. Lots of wood. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, tight and chewy tannins. Complex and layered with good structure and focus. Firm finish. Needs time to soften. Better from 2022.*

**94** IN SITU VALLE DE ACONCAGUA QV 2017 **93 Pts.**

*A full-bodied red with aromas of black fruit, grilled mushroom, charcoal and herbs. Some orange zest, too. Firm, fine-grained tannins frame a plush, rounded center palate. Savory and flavorful. 40% petit verdot, 30% cabernet sauvignon, 20% cabernet franc and 10% malbec. Drink now or hold.*

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**95** LEYDA PINOT NOIR VALLE DE LEYDA LOT 21 2019 **93 Pts.**

*A medium-bodied red with aromas of lavender, rose hip, raspberry, licorice and lemon zest. Sleek tannins and crisp acidity with bright floral and crunchy berry layers. Excellent freshness and energy. Drink now.*

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**96** DOS ALMAS VALLE DE COLCHAGUA APOGEO DE APALTA 2016 **93 Pts.**

*Black fruit with chocolate and woody undertones. It's full-bodied with chewy tannins. Round and velvety in the mouth with a spicy finish. Excellent balance and richness. 52% cabernet sauvignon with petit verdot and carmenere. Drink or hold.*

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**97** PANGEA SYRAH VALLE DE COLCHAGUA APALTA VINEYARD 2017 **93 Pts.**

*A medium-to full-bodied red with aromas of black plum, blueberry, cedar and chocolate orange. Firm, powdery tannins and fresh acidity. Concentrated, balanced and intensely flavorful with a fresh finish. Delicious. Drink or hold.*

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**98** TABALÍ VALLE DE LIMARÍ PAYEN 2018 **93 Pts.**

*Dark cherries, plums, violets and cocoa butter on the nose. It's full-bodied with creamy tannins. Supple and polished with a velvety texture. Very balanced and drinkable. A blend of 93% syrah and 7% cabernet franc. Drink or hold.*

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**99** VALDIVIESO VALLE CENTRAL CABALLO LOCO NUMBER EIGHTEEN **93 Pts.**

*Complex aromas of violets, blackberries, walnuts, mahogany, dried herbs and peppercorns. It's full-bodied and deep with firm, well-integrated tannins. Concentrated and polished with a wonderful silky texture. Long finish. Rich and delicious. Solera system. Drink or hold.*

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**100** VALLE SECRETO ALTO CACHAPOAL PROFUNDO 2018 **93 Pts.**

*A very Bordeaux-like nose of black fruit, cedar, herbal notes and hints of chili, too. Full-bodied with silky tannins. Juicy and round with a velvety texture. Creamy and balanced. Flavorful finish. A blend 38% cabernet sauvignon, 22% carmenere, 20% cabernet franc, 10% petit verdot and 10% malbec. Drinkable now, but better in two or three years.*

# TOP 100 WINES OF FRANCE 2021



*James Suckling,  
Chairman/Editor*

An incredible Champagne – Taittinger Champagne Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs 2008 – is our French Wine of the Year in 2021, and it highlights how we at JamesSuckling.com believe the appellation is making some of the most exciting wines in France and some of the best values in fine wine.

Granted, the best of Champagne is almost as expensive as the best of Burgundy, but provenance and process in making these great bottles are unequalled in the world of wine today. We have always believed that the best Champagnes are indeed great wines first and should be viewed and consumed as such!

Look at how one of the owners of Taittinger, Vitalie Taittinger, describes their winning 2008 prestige cuvée blanc de blancs: “It’s the expression of chardonnay that is super pure,” she said in a Zoom interview with me earlier this year. “In the beginning you feel the youth of the wine. And you are on the energy of the chardonnay. And you have something that is pure and precise. Then you feel it is a large wine but then very straight ... then you wait for the



second life of the wine in your glass. And the complexity and the years that are precious to the wine start appearing.”

What a wine! And there are no less than eight other incredible Champagnes on this list of the 100 best French wines we tasted in 2021, including Billecart-Salmon Champagne Cuvée Elisabeth Salmon Brut Rosé 2008, Bollinger Champagne R.D. Extra-Brut 2007, De Venoge Champagne Louis XV Brut Rosé 2012, Dom Pérignon Champagne Rosé Vintage 2008, Krug Champagne Brut 2008, Laurent-Perrier Champagne Grand Siècle Grande Cuvée N.23 NV, Laurent-Perrier Champagne Grand Siècle Grande Cuvée N.25 NV, Louis Roederer Champagne Cristal 2013, Louis Roederer Champagne Cristal Rosé 2013 and Pol Roger Champagne Cuvée Sir Winston Churchill Brut 2012.

## BOJO TO BURGUNDY

Beaujolais was another high point for us in 2021. It's because we love drinking it, especially the old guys including me and Senior Editors Stuart Pigott and Nick Stock. It's so versatile, satisfying and refreshing. And it's so evocative and makes us think of those amazing old head-pruned vines on the slopes of such places as Morgon or Moulin-a-Vent. Plus, they are so reasonably priced. Our No. 43 on this list is Domaine Anita Moulin-à-Vent La Rochelle 2019, and it sells for about \$25 a bottle. In addition, the region of Beaujolais has two great years on the market – 2018 and 2019 – and 2017 and 2020 are also very good. You can pretty much buy what is on the retail shelves at the moment for Bojo.

Alsace is another area that's close to my heart. The whites are so exciting

to drink, particularly riesling, and the reds are now coming into their own. So many vineyards are organically grown or biodynamic, so you feel good, and even better, when you drink the best of Alsace. And the tradition runs thick with such names as the No. 4 wine on this list spotlighting a long family history and dedication to fine winemaking: Domaine Weinbach Riesling Alsace Grand Cru Schlossberg Cuvée Ste. Catherine 2019.

**Incredible champagnes highlight our top wines from France in 2021, with Beaujolais, Alsace and Burgundy adding superlative bottles to the mix.**

We still managed to rate almost 500 Burgundies this year and most were from well-known names that are often misidentified as negociants even though they are some of the biggest vineyard owners in the region. All the wines in the French Top 100 from Burgundy are superlative bottles, especially the likes of the Bouchard Père & Fils Chevalier-Montrachet Grand Cru Domaine 2019 at No. 5 and the Louis Latour Romanée-Saint-Vivant Grand Cru Les Quatre Journaux 2019 at No. 8.

This said, we want you all to keep in mind that plenty of other wonderful Burgundies are available from lesser-known wineries and appellations. Take, for example, our No. 52 wine, the Domaine Charles Audoin Marsannay Les Favières 2019. It's a wonderful example of wines we are always searching for, with great quality from an underestimated appellation. With global warming, we believe that wines like these are an area to focus



James tastes blind 2018 Bordeaux while having a quick chat with producers in France earlier this year. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

on in the future, as great (and as expensive) as the prestige appellations are.

Bordeaux is certainly also excelling in the sunnier weather, with such a great year as 2018 accounting for the majority of the wines on this list. The 2018 vintage starts the great modern trilogy for Bordeaux – 2018, 2019 and 2020 – and it shows how today's Bordeaux can provide fruit and richness without being too alcoholic or out of balance. This is true across the board. And it's something rather unique to Bordeaux.

“The tannins [in 2018 reds] are perfectly ripe and there are no angles in the tannins,” said Edouard Moueix, whose family had two wines on this list – No. 2 Château Trotanoy Pomerol 2018 and No. 19 Château Bélair-Monange St.-Emilion 2018. “They are the perfect backbone [to the wine] because you don’t notice them.”

Bordeaux 2018 accounted for about 30 percent of the French wines we tasted this year. We rated slightly more than 4,500 French wines in total. Most of the wines were tasted in Hong Kong with interviews done over Zoom. We also covered Alsace and Champagne very well. We only wish we tasted more wines from Burgundy (we did manage to rate more than 500), the Rhone, the Loire and Languedoc. But we hope with the improvement in the pandemic we can travel more to France in 2022 and taste, rate and learn more. I have been traveling to France as a wine journalist since 1983 and she never ceases to amaze me.

## **1 TAITTINGER CHAMPAGNE COMTES DE CHAMPAGNE BLANC DE BLANCS 2008 100 Pts.**

*The perfect blanc de blancs. Full-bodied with a lovely framework of acidity and dry fruit, such as apples, pears and peaches. Opulent. Dense and muscular. Yet, it's balanced and harmonious. Line of acidity at the end. Totally in tune. Superb. Deep and complete. Has everything. One for the cellar. It is the greatest Comte ever. It has everything. A perfect upgrade from two years ago. Drink or hold.*

## **2 CHÂTEAU TROTANOY POMEROL 2018 100 Pts.**

*Super nose of dried blueberry, black plum, walnut, myrrh and sandalwood. Lavender, violet, and chocolate, too. Ripe with wood now, but fresh. It's full-bodied with firm, ultra fine tannins. Lots of dark spice is interlaced with the ripe fruit, giving this complex, perfumed character. Muscular, long and seamless with incredible depth and concentration. Reminds me of the great 2009, but this is better with more structure. Amazing wine. This is 100% merlot. Try from 2027.*

## **3 DOMAINE DE CHEVALIER PESSAC-LÉOGNAN 2018 99 Pts.**

*The intensity and perfumes on the nose are extremely impressive, offering pure blackberries and violets, as well as bark, wild-mushroom and raw-tile notes. It's full-bodied with creamy tannins that envelop the wine and a gorgeous, subtly complex center palate with all the flavors found on the nose. Endless finish. Love the finesse and length to this. Greatest ever. 65% cabernet sauvignon, 30% merlot and 5% petit verdot. Try after 2026.*

## **4 DOMAINE WEINBACH RIESLING ALSACE GRAND CRU SCHLOSSBERG CUVÉE STE. CATHERINE 2019 99 Pts.**

*Enveloping, sensual bouquet of a thousand yellow fruits and some wild berries that's just beginning to reveal its profundity. Gigantic concentration, but this remains as light on its feet as a prima ballerina. The gentle creaminess on the palate perfectly balances the mineral acidity that seems to blink like a star low in the sky. Enormously long and subtle finish. From biodynamically grown grapes with Demeter certification. Drinkable now, but better from 2023.*

## **5 BOUCHARD PÈRE & FILS CHEVALIER-MONTRACHET GRAND CRU DOMAINE 2019 100 Pts.**

*Its really hard to imagine how a white Burgundy could be more flinty and minerally than this super-concentrated and super-vibrant Chevalier Montrachet. Lovely aromas of lemon blossom, jasmine, tangerine and nectarine, alongside all the stony stuff. Then comes the staggeringly long finish that is totally pure and precise. From Bouchard's 2.3-hectare holding, which comprises almost a third of the entire Grand Cru site. Drink or hold.*

## **6 KRUG CHAMPAGNE BRUT 2008 100 Pts.**

*This is very structured and framed with an almost red sensibility. Very phenolic. Full-bodied in a tightly wound ball with so much going on. Very pinot like. Mineral and stone. Shell and stone. Iodine. Vinous. The bubbles just fade into the finish of the wine, which goes on for minutes. Turns to toffee and salted caramel with time in the glass. One for the cellar. Great length. Blend of 53% pinot noir, 25% pinot meunier, 22% chardonnay. Disgorged in beginning of 2020. Drink or hold.*

**7 CHÂTEAU HAUT-BAILLY PESSAC-LÉOGNAN 2018 99 Pts.**

*Complex and expressive nose, offering red and dark fruit, spices and pepper with wood and mushroom undertones. Fresh mussel shell and a hint of ink, too. Full-bodied with a fine texture and great balance between the acidity and the controlled, tannic structure. Very long finish. Goes on and on. Tiny production, 21 hectoliters per hectare. Try after 2025.*

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**8 LOUIS LATOUR ROMANÉE-SAINT-VIVANT GRAND CRU LES QUATRE JOUR-NAUX 2019 100 Pts.**

*This is like staring into an abyss, but being overwhelmed with joy. The essence of fine pinot noir and of Burgundy, which you don't need to be any kind of expert to appreciate. Enormously concentrated, but so graceful, this makes you want to forget everything else you are supposed to be doing. Lean back and let yourself be overwhelmed. Drink or hold.*

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**9 CHÂTEAU RAUZAN-SÉGLA MARGAUX 2018 99 Pts.**

*Aromas of crushed blackberries and blueberries with dried flowers and bark, following through to a full body with a tight and powerful palate of beautiful fruit and chewy yet polished tannins that are compressed and impressive. Extremely linear and intense. Muscular, in a toned way. Yet it opens in the mouth at you taste it. 60% cabernet sauvignon and 40% merlot. Drink after 2025.*

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**10 CHÂTEAU MOUTON ROTHSCHILD PAUILLAC 2018 100 Pts.**

*Exquisite purity of blackcurrants, raspberries and some citrus. The aromas flow from the glass. Full-bodied with seamless tannins that coat the palate and then fall into the center, to deliver a thoroughly refined and harmonious young red. Endless finish. 86% cabernet sauvignon. This is the new 1959, one of the legendary vintages of Mouton. Try after 2026.*

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**11 CHÂTEAU MARGAUX MARGAUX 2018 100 Pts.**

*So much ash, tobacco and earth to the bright blackberry and currant aromas. Flowers too. Fresh. Full-bodied with seamless tannins that spread across your palate and caress every square centimeter. It's shows loads of ripe-berry, cherry, currant and chocolate character, as well as walnut and light cedar. Then the finish goes on for minutes. Extremely refined and elegant, despite the structure. 90% cabernet sauvignon, 4% cabernet franc, 4% merlot and 2% petit verdot. A joy to taste, but drink after 2025.*

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**12 CHÂTEAU LAFLEUR POMEROL 2018 100 Pts.**

*So subtle and complex with blackberry, blueberry, fresh bark, fresh black truffles and light wet earth, as well as forest floor. Full-bodied, yet linear and so long with an amazingly polished and refined tannin structure and finesse that draws you deep and down in the palate. It opens incredibly in the glass. What a wine. Goes on for minutes. A real beauty. Something so true and ethereal here. Try after 2026.*

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**13 CHÂTEAU LA FLEUR-PÉTRUS POMEROL 2018 99 Pts.**

*Ripe black fruit, clove, licorice, pine and walnut husk on the nose. Bitter chocolate and coffee, too. It's full-bodied with firm, tight tannins. Muscular and very formed. Energetic and precise with long, chewy layers and lots of depth, structure and polish. Superb. Needs time. Try from 2026.*

**14 CHÂTEAU DUCRU-BEAUCAILLOU ST.-JULIEN 2018 99 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackberries, blackcurrants, new leather and bark follow through to a full body with a dense, deep palate that goes on and on, but is still shy and reserved. Large amount of ultra fine, cashmere-like tannins that are silky, sleek and wonderfully integrated. Extremely long and focused. Needs at least four to five years to start opening. A beautiful wine for the cellar. Try after 2027.*

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**15 L'IF ST.-EMILION 2018 99 Pts.**

*Aromas of black cherries, blueberries, licorice, dried lavender, nutmeg and grated milk chocolate. Pure raspberries, walnut husks and crushed peppercorns as well. It's full-bodied with firm, racy tannins that go on for minutes. So sleek and polished with a long finish. Really amazing and perhaps the best wine ever from here. Same ownership as the legendary Le Pin from Pomerol. Slightly more cabernet franc (30% instead of 20%) in the blend may have made the difference. The rest is merlot. Clearly the best wine ever from here, since the official first vintage 2011. Try from 2026.*

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**16 CHÂTEAU BEAUSÉJOUR DUFFAU-LAGARROSSE ST.-EMILION 2018 99 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackcurrant, ripe blackberry, black olive, oyster shell and black tea. Some ash and dried flowers, too. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, tight-grained tannins. Sleek and compact with a savory, mineral finish. Great length and depth. Wonderful texture. Such precision. Try from 2026.*

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**17 CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE LAS CASES ST.-JULIEN 2018 99 Pts.**

*An elegant, complex nose of blackberries, blueberries and herbal and spice notes with dark-chocolate and earthy undertones. Violets, flowers and graphite, too. It's full-bodied with firm, layered tannins and a crushed-stone undertone throughout the fresh, velvety and layered palate. Very complex, muscular and formed. The finish is endless. Lowest percentage of press wine ever in this. So deep. Try after 2027.*

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**18 CHÂTEAU L'ÉGLISE CLINET POMEROL 2018 99 Pts.**

*Incredible purity of fruit here with blackberry, black olive, concrete, stone and violet in the nose. It's full-bodied with a powerful palate of fruit that shows a wet-earth and black-truffle undertone. The tannins are intense and chewy, yet wonderfully polished and poised. Superb length in the finish. One built for long cellaring. Try after 2027.*

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**19 CHÂTEAU BÉLAIR-MONANGE ST.-EMILION 2018 99 Pts.**

*Very intense blackberries, black olives, blueberries and dried flowers. Stony minerality. Even some pine. Full-bodied with superb depth of fruit and ultra fine tannins that are intense and polished. The finish is so long and delivers so much flavor, from wet earth to blackberry again. Seamless palate. Try after 2026.*

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**20 DOMAINE ZIND HUMBRECHT RIESLING ALSACE GRAND CRU BRAND 2019 98 Pts.**

*A giant of minerality with enormous structure, this also delights you with the stunningly ripe apricot and pineapple fruit that's wrapped around its dense core. This will surely only get better for many years to come, as it slowly reveals its deep riches. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drinkable now, but better from 2023.*



**21 CHÂTEAU TROTTEVIEILLE ST.-EMILION 2018 98 Pts.**

Aromas of ripe berry, mushroom, ash and smoke follow through to a full body with a ripe, juicy center palate and lots of creamy tannins that are balanced and refined. Generous and very intense. Tight palate now. Give it time. Try after 2025.

**22 TAITTINGER CHAMPAGNE COMTES DE CHAMPAGNE BRUT ROSÉ 2007 99 Pts.**

The light rust and amber color is enticing. Aromas of dried rose petals, cinnamon and nutmeg. Hints of dried meat, smoke and sage. Orange peel, too. Full-bodied with a compact, creamy texture. So fine and delicious. Great, subtle and complex flavors. More like a lightly aged, premier-cru Volnay, but with the magic of Champagne. Drink now.

**23 LOUIS LATOUR CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU CUVÉE HÉRITIERS LATOUR 2019 99 Pts.**

This is what makes Burgundy so special – it's so easy to enjoy, with amazing black-cherry fruit, yet it's so deep and complex. Wonderful richness, below which lies a major tannin structure, then the minerality and lively acidity kick in and push this out in the direction of infinity. Makes you glad to be alive! Drink or hold.

**24 DOM PÉRIGNON CHAMPAGNE ROSÉ VINTAGE 2008 99 Pts.**

This shows incredible depth of fruit with strawberry, cherry and phenolics. Full-bodied and layered with an incredible, three-dimensional element to the wine. This is so transparent and dynamic with dark fruit, yet it remains vivid and bright. Refined and precise, it goes on and on. Really savory, fresh and incredibly pinot-noir-like. What a wine. 13 years of maturation in the bottle. So drinkable now, but it will age for many years ahead.

**25 FAMILLE HUGEL RIESLING ALSACE GRAND CRU SCHOENENBOURG GROSSI LAÛE 2015 98 Pts.**

What a stunningly fresh nose for a five-year-old Alsace dry riesling. Vibrant nose of fresh pineapple with a whole garden of fresh-herb aromas. Rich and concentrated, but also cool and delicate at the front, then comes stunning, racy power that drives across the palate with great mineral energy. Doesn't want to stop at the finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.

**26 LAURENT-PERRIER CHAMPAGNE GRAND SIÈCLE GRANDE CUVÉE N.25 99 Pts.**

Incredible aromas of apple skin, pie crust, praline and flowers. So young in the nose. Full-bodied with super-fine tannins. It's tight and refined, yet structured and intense. Really long and beautiful. Still shy. Wonderful finish. 12 years on its lees before disgorging. Three vintages in the blend – 2008 (65%), 2007 (25%) and 2006 (10%). 60% chardonnay and 40% pinot noir. It's the highest percentage of chardonnay ever. Available in December 2021.

**27 VIEUX CHÂTEAU CERTAN POMEROL 2018 99 Pts.**

Blackberry and hints of plum with intense wet-earth and black-olive undertones. Bark and some iodine. Full-bodied with superb depth of fruit and structure. The palate is so broad with super tannins. This is a powerful and very structured VCC with fantastic depth and muscle. Down-to-earth style. You can taste the soil. 70% merlot and 30% cabernet franc. One for long cellar aging. Old-vine character. Try after 2027.

**28 CHÂTEAU ANGÉLUS ST.-EMILION 2018 99 Pts.**

*The aromas are incredibly complex with dark berries, elderberries, bay leaves, cloves and tile, follow through to a full body with layers of creamy and lightly dusty tannins that deliver a lingering finish and great attention to detail. The flavors range from black fruit to earth and stones. It's reserved and poised with great intensity and power, in a toned and formed mode. One for the cellar. Try after 2026.*

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**29 CHÂTEAU PAVIE ST.-EMILION 2018 99 Pts.**

*Impressive aromas of pure, crushed blackberries and brambleberries with red and black licorice and black olives, as well as incense, following through to a full body with round, creamy tannins and lots of fruit. Yet, it's tight and reserved at the finish. Needs three or four years to open and start showing its true character. Powerful and linear. Cellar-bound. Try after 2026.*

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**30 CHÂTEAU HAUT-BRION PESSAC-LÉOGNAN 2018 99 Pts.**

*Aromas of currants, leaves, fresh mushrooms, oyster shell, tobacco, and dried flowers, following through to a full body, yet ever so refined and polished and it grows on the palate. Lovely, energetic finish. Subtle and driven at the end of the palate. Drink in 2026 and onwards.*

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**31 CHÂTEAU CHEVAL BLANC ST.-EMILION 2018 99 Pts.**

*Love the floral character to the aromas of dark fruit, such as blueberries and black cherries. Red and black licorice, too. The full-bodied palate starts slowly and then expands with super polished, searing tannins that lead you up the palate into a place of grandeur. Lightly chewy at the end. Such great purity and presence here. 6% cabernet sauvignon in the blend with franc and merlot. Try after 2028.*

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**32 CHÂTEAU AUSONE ST.-EMILION 2018 99 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackberry, black cherry, licorice, iodine and dried shitake mushroom. Opens and changes to violets and lavender. Full-bodied and tight with creamy and refined tannins that run the length of the wine and takes you down into the depth of the wine. Needs years to open yet it's already so gorgeous to taste. Try after 2027.*

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**33 CHÂTEAU HAUT-BRION PESSAC-LÉOGNAN BLANC 2018 99 Pts.**

*Opulent and perfumed for this great white in 2018, with lemon curd, cooked apple, lilac, lime flower, stone, rock and hints of sandalwood. It's full-bodied, yet tight and compressed with layers of fruit that are integrated and focused. Needs time to open and show its true greatness but stunning. Try after 2025.*

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**34 CHÂTEAU LAFITE ROTHSCHILD PAUILLAC 2018 99 Pts.**

*Wow. The aromas are so intense and refined at the same time, offering gorgeous blackcurrant, lead-pencil and orchid character. Such purity of fruit. Sleek and finely polished with a fine cut to the tannins that provide such grace and glamor. Yet, it's got the power and structure to age for decades. On and on. Try after 2029.*

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**35 JOSEPH DROUHIN MONTRACHET GRAND CRU MARQUIS DE LAGUICHE 2019 99 Pts.**

*So ripe, but also deep and delicate, this is a masterpiece of creamy sensuality, the considerable power and concentration underplayed, with the result that it has noble elegance. Yes, there is a hint of exotic fruit in the nose, but also minty freshness. The finish is very long and intense, but so finely nuanced. Drink or hold.*

**36 LAURENT-PERRIER CHAMPAGNE GRAND SIÈCLE GRANDE CUVÉE N.23****99 Pts.**

*Fabulous aromas of brioche, pie crust, lemon tart and fresh apple. Full-bodied, very dense and layered with freshness and energy that couples well with the palate. Powerful acidity gives great structure to this. Goes on for minutes. Extremely structured. Three vintages – 2006 (65%), 2004 (20%) and 2002 (15%). Blend of 58% chardonnay and 42% pinot noir. From 11 grand crus. Aged in magnums. One for the cellar. Available only magnum. In Europe from mid-October 2021. Drink or hold.*

**37 DOMAINE FL SAVENNIÈRES CHAMOUREAU 2018 98 Pts.**

*Stare into the abyss and it will stare back at you! This has such an incredible depth of dried-flower and fresh-herb notes that you could get lost in the bouquet, before reaching the sleek and enormously mineral palate. So pristine and dazzling at the super long finish. Drink or hold.*

**38 DOMAINE ZIND HUMBRECHT RIESLING ALSACE GRAND CRU RANGEN DE THANN CLOS SAINT URBAIN 2019 98 Pts.**

*This dry riesling masterpiece is full of seeming contradictions that give it a sense of mystery you very rarely find. So rich and concentrated, yet also astonishingly vivid and precise, the aromas range from smoke to roses, although the most obvious note is the peachy one up front. Breathtakingly long and complete finish with so much mineral complexity. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**39 DOMAINE DE CHEVALIER PESSAC-LÉOGNAN BLANC 2018 98 Pts.**

*This has a complex nose of dried apple, green mango, grapefruit zest, dried honey-suckle and crushed almonds. It's full-bodied with bright acidity and a dense, phenolic texture. Vivid and layered with fantastic precision. Very, very long. This needs time. Better from 2026.*

**40 WILLIAM FÈVRE CHABLIS GRAND CRU LES CLOS 2019 98 Pts.**

*Incredible wine here with cooked-apple, lemon-curd, vanilla-bean and praline aromas that follow through to a full body with layers of fruit and a long, flavorful finish. It shows aniseed, licorice and fennel seed.*

**41 CHÂTEAU TROPLONG MONDOT ST.-EMILION 2018 98 Pts.**

*This is a very linear red and layered at the same time, showing blackberry, blueberry, black-truffle, bark and stone character. Chalk and minerality, too. It's full-bodied and well framed with gorgeous intensity and freshness. Muscular with wonderful structure and brightness. Salty and savory notes on the finish. Try after 2024.*

**42 CHÂTEAU SMITH-HAUT-LAFITTE PESSAC-LÉOGNAN 2018 98 Pts.**

*Purity of fruit here with plum and cherry aromas, as well as wet earth and spice. Light stone. Very floral and vivid. Full-bodied with layers of ripe tannins that are balanced and polished. Savory finish. Incredibly polished and refined. Goes on for minutes. One of the finest Smith-Haut Lafittes I have tasted. Drink after 2024.*

### 43 **DOMAINE ANITA MOULIN-À-VENT LA ROCHELLE 2019 97 Pts.**

*You have to pinch yourself to remind yourself that this really is Beaujolais. Very deep wet-earth and black-fruit nose that's bewitching. Enormous concentration and finesse on the widescreen, velvety palate. With a little more drive at the finish, this would rate even higher, but it still blew our minds! Drink or hold.*

### 44 **CHÂTEAU PAVIE DECESSE ST.-EMILION 2018 98 Pts.**

*Aromas of reduced blackberry and blueberry with black licorice and dried flowers. It's full-bodied with chewy yet polished tannins and a long finish. A little tight and reserved now, but shows intensity and focus. Powerful. Merlot with 10% cabernet franc. Try after 2026.*

### 45 **YOHAN LARDY MOULIN-À-VENT VIEILLES VIGNES DE 1903 2019 97 Pts.**

*The gigantic nose envelopes you instantly in a cloud of expressive darkness. Wet-earth, smoked-bacon, elderberry and delicate spice aromas suck you into this Beaujolais black hole, where everything is densely packed, but somehow remains weightless, as if you were in outer space. Great tannins that are so beautifully integrated and drive the long, cool finish off towards the nearest star. Drink or hold.*

### 46 **CHÂTEAU SMITH-HAUT-LAFITTE PESSAC-LEOGNAN BLANC 2018 98 Pts.**

*Dried apple, apricot, grapefruit zest, flint and a hint of hay on the nose. It's full-bodied with crisp acidity and tight, concentrated layers of fresh and dried fruit. Incredible depth and focus. Even better from 2022.*

### 47 **JEAN-CLAUDE BOISSET CLOS DE LA ROCHE GRAND CRU 2019 98 Pts.**

*Beautiful violet and black-cherry nose. A gentle giant that has a radical mineral and tannin structure, but also wonderful elegance, the finishing washing over you in waves that echo down the valleys. Great aging potential. Drink or hold.*

### 48 **CHÂTEAU TOUR SAINT CHRISTOPHE ST.-EMILION 2018 97 Pts.**

*Currant, red-tea, chili, chocolate and lemon-zest aromas. Chalk and crushed gravel, too. It's medium-bodied with tight, fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Sleek and tight with crunchy berry, mineral and zesty notes on the finish. Complex. Pretty center palate to this. Extremely polished. Try from 2025.*

### 49 **CHÂTEAU PONTET-CANET PAUILLAC 2018 98 Pts.**

*A complex nose of blueberries, elderberries, dried fruit, spice and dark chocolate. It's full-bodied with a harmonious, balanced texture. The tannins are still firm and powerful, but there's balance and finesse to the whole thing. Tight and reserved, yet long and energetic. The tannins open slowly. Dusty texture. From biodynamically grown grapes. Try after 2024.*

### 50 **DOMAINE PFISTER RIESLING ALSACE GRAND CRU ENGELBERG 2018 97 Pts.**

*A masterpiece of cool elegance, in spite of this being the warmest vintage in living memory! Pristine with crystalline purity and a totally mineral personality, this also has great white-peach, fresh-pineapple and citrus-blossom character. So focused and energetic at the super-long finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**51 CHÂTEAU CANON ST.-EMILION 2018 98 Pts.**

*Blackberries and tar with wet-earth and dark-bark aromas. Dark-chocolate and brownie notes, too. It's full-bodied with creamy tannins and a round, caressing finish. Lovely focus and intensity, though dense and layered. Extremely creamy and polished. Really precise and bespoke. It already opens beautifully on the palate. Drink after 2025.*

**52 DOMAINE CHARLES AUDOIN MARSANNAY LES FAVIÈRES 2019 97 Pts.**

*What a discovery! The incredibly subtle red-fruit, orange and floral nose of this red Burgundy reminds me of Musigny Grand Cru, but the wine is from Marsannay, where there isn't a single 1er Cru, never mind a Grand Cru! As much finesse as concentration on the extremely precise palate, where the fine tannins are already beautifully integrated. Breathtakingly long and intense finish. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

**53 CHÂTEAU PAPE CLÉMENT PESSAC-LÉOGNAN BLANC 2018 98 Pts.**

*Beautiful aromas of lime curd, dried pear, grilled white peach and flint on the nose. So exotic on the nose. Some cream and honey, too. It's medium-bodied with bright, tangy acidity. Creamy and focused with lingering dried-citrus and crushed-gravel notes. Long. Drink or hold.*

**54 SCHOFFIT RIESLING ALSACE GRAND CRU RANGEN CLOS SAINT THÉOBALD 2018 97 Pts.**

*A truly staggering dry riesling, whose expansive frame is packed with fresh-pineapple, smoky and floral aromas. Gigantic mineral complexity in this simultaneously succulent and subtle package, with an intensely salty finale that focuses to a single point. Only just beginning to give its best! Drink or hold.*

**55 DOMAINE GROS FRÈRE & SOEUR CLOS DE VOUGEOT GRAND CRU 2017 98 Pts.**

*This is really spicy and intense with ripe strawberries and cherries, yet plenty of nutmeg and a touch of dried fruit, too. The palate is full and so layered, plush and structured. Lots of hazelnut character to the fruit. This really needs five or six years to soften. Try after 2026.*

**56 DOMAINE FAIVELEY CORTON GRAND CRU CLOS DES CORTONS FAIVELEY 2019 98 Pts.**

*A truly amazing Corton, thanks to the laser beam of sour-cherry aroma that shoots right through this sleek and vibrant wine. Great concentration, but remains light on its feet. The mineral finish extends and extends as you struggle to take it all in. Still very young with enormous aging potential. Drink or hold.*

**57 CHÂTEAU FAUGÈRES ST.-EMILION 2018 97 Pts.**

*An extremely polished Bordeaux with silky tannins that are integrated and creamy-textured. Lots of blueberry and blackberry character. Such pure fruit here. It's already long and delicious, but has plenty of structure and needs at least four or five years of bottle age. Try after 2024.*



**58 CHÂTEAU VALANDRAUD ST.-EMILION 2018 98 Pts.**

*This is really rich and intense with beautiful blackberry, violet and blueberry aromas that follow through to a full-bodied palate with extremely polished tannins that caress your palate. Love the texture and purity to the wine. Fantastic. Try after 2025.*

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**59 CHÂTEAU MONTROSE ST.-ESTÈPHE 2018 98 Pts.**

*Purity and beauty on the nose with blackberry, blueberry, raspberry, crushed-stone and violet character. A full-bodied red with masses of polished tannins and intense flavors of currants and blackberries. Juicy finish. Super depth to this. Goes on for minutes. Try after 2027.*

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**60 CHÂTEAU ROUGET POMEROL 2018 97 Pts.**

*Blueberries, blackberries, elderberries, mushrooms and earthy notes. Spices as well. It's full-bodied with an unctuous texture. Balanced and savory with a fine, chewy tannin structure. Flavorful finish with length. One of the best ever from here. Try after 2025.*

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**61 BILLECART-SALMON CHAMPAGNE CUVÉE ELISABETH SALMON BRUT ROSÉ 2008 98 Pts.**

*This is very vinous with aromas of iron, strawberries, old roses and geraniums. So aromatic. Full-bodied, really intense and layered with super dryness and depth. Lots of saline and spicy character at the end, such as clove and pepper, as well as hints of flowers and melted butter. Strawberry tart at the end. 17% in aged oak casks. Blend of 55% pinot noir from six villages (Mareuil sur Ay, Ay, Bouzy, Ambonnay, Verzenay and Verzy) and 45% chardonnay from three Grand Crus (Mesnil sur Oger, Cramant and Chouilly). 9% of the blend is red wine from a parcel in the village of Mareuil sur Ay. Bottled June 2009 and disgorged July 2019. Drink or hold.*

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**62 CHÂTEAU COS D'ESTOURNEL ST.-ESTÈPHE 2018 98 Pts.**

*The richness and beauty of this wine is impressive with blackcurrant, cherry, berry and fresh cloves. The fruit is so pure here. Full-bodied with tannins that are so integrated and refined that you don't feel them, yet they are there! Very creamy and layered with great length and beauty. It turns to tar and licorice at the finish. Tight now, but the texture is special. Try after 2027.*

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**63 POL ROGER CHAMPAGNE CUVÉE SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL BRUT 2012 98 Pts.**

*Intense aromas of strawberry and subtle apple with pie crust and some ash and stone. An almost smoky undertone to the aromas. Full-bodied and very layered with ultra fine tannins that give it a rough-cut, velvety texture. It's very flavorful, yet so checked and reserved at the same time. Compact, tight palate that is deep and powerful. Very vinous at the end and in the mouth feel. Spicy and biscuity at the finish. Mostly pinot noir with chardonnay and only grand cru. More density and complexity than the 2008. Seven years on the lees. Delicious and luxurious to drink now, but giving this some age will make it even better.*

**64 BOLLINGER CHAMPAGNE R.D. EXTRA-BRUT 2007 98 Pts.**

*What an amazing nose this has, like the smell of a rock pool on a rocky coast, but with so many candied-fruit, spicy and mushroom notes behind that. That fruit is way more expressive on the powerful and structured palate with lime freshness and chalky minerality at the super-long, bone-dry finish. Disgorged 28th May, 2021.*

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**65 LE PETIT CHEVAL BORDEAUX BLANC 2018 98 Pts.**

*A wonderful and rather exotic white with aromas of pears, lychees, lemons and some green apples that follow through to the palate and show layers of dreamy texture and a long, flavorful finish. The texture is more like a red than a white. Fermented and aged in slightly larger oak barrels. This is a special wine and the best release so far. Very intense. 74% sauvignon blanc and 26% semillon. One for the cellar.*

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**66 LOUIS ROEDERER CHAMPAGNE CRISTAL 2013 98 Pts.**

*This is quite chalky with firm phenolics that frame the wine beautifully. It's medium-to full-bodied with strawberries and earth. Dense, linear and intense. Hints of brioche and pie crust at the end. Very structured and gorgeous. Salty and lightly chewy. One third of the base wines fermented and aged in oak. Connoisseur Champagne. From organic vineyards of the Roederer domains. Smaller production than normal. Seven years on the lees. Give it two or three years to open.*

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**67 DOMAINE FAIVELEY MAZIS-CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU 2019 98 Pts.**

*Enormous structure here, the tannins resembling the perfectly toned muscles of a body builder, but this enormously dense wine also has excellent balance, the freshness at the widescreen finish lifting this huge mass effortlessly. Drinkable now, but better from 2023.*

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**68 LA MONDOTTE ST.-EMILION 2018 98 Pts.**

*Blackberry, plum, mushroom and wood undertones. It's full-bodied with firm, ripe tannins. Savory and fleshy texture on the palate. Well balanced. Flavorful finish with length. Such polish and composure for a young wine. So classy! Try after 2026.*

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**69 DE VENOGNE CHAMPAGNE LOUIS XV BRUT ROSÉ 2012 98 Pts.**

*Aromas of dried minerals with some iron and pie crust. Full-bodied, very structured and framed, thanks to the red-wine component. It's so flavorful, yet structured and intense with plenty of strawberry, light cherry and hints of earth. Chewy, too. This is really something. Drinkable now, but better with age. One for the cellar. 6,000 bottles made.*

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**70 CHÂTEAU SUDUIRAUT SAUTERNES 2018 97 Pts.**

*Intense aromas of dried mushrooms, dried apricots, hazelnuts and citrus skin. Medium to full body with density and beauty. Flows across the palate with beauty and interest. I like the salted caramel and dried fruit at the finish. Drink or hold.*

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**71 CHÂTEAU FIGEAC ST.-EMILION 2018 98 Pts.**

*A powerful, structured Figeac, offering loads of blackberry, blueberry, chocolate, walnut and mushroom with some tobacco. It's full-bodied with layered, chewy tannins that are polished and beautiful. So impressive and solid. Better than the great 2010? Time will tell. Goes on for a long time. Try after 2026.*

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**72 CHÂTEAU HAUT-BAGES-LIBÉRAL PAUILLAC 2018 97 Pts.**

*Pretty blackberries, blueberries and violets with some crushed-raspberry aromas follow through to a full body with wonderfully crafted and pure tannins that intertwine wonderfully with the blue fruit and blackberries. Long and endless. A triumph here. From biodynamically grown grapes. Try after 2026.*

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**73 CHÂTEAU L'EVANGILE POMEROL 2018 98 Pts.**

*So attractive on the nose with blackberry, black olive and a hint of brown sugar. It's full-bodied with layers of ripe tannins that flow across the palate. Rich, intense and flavorful finish with flavors similar to the aromas. Fleshy and toned at the end. From organically grown grapes. Try after 2025.*

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**74 PAVILLON BLANC DU CHÂTEAU MARGAUX BORDEAUX BLANC 2018 98 Pts.**

*A dynamic dry white with lemon rind, pears and sherbet, as well as vanilla and lilac character. It's full-bodied with a tight, focused palate of lovely ripe fruit and vivid acidity. Timid, yet classy at the finish. Energetic acidity. 1,000 cases made. Try after 2023.*

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**75 CHÂTEAU LA MISSION HAUT-BRION PESSAC-LÉOGNAN 2018 98 Pts.**

*Enticing aromas of currant, crushed stone, blueberry, lead pencil, iodine and graphite follow through to a full body with round, chewy tannins that are polished and powerful, yet balanced and beautiful. In the end, the tannins are compact and tight at the finish. But you want to drink it. Try after 2027, when it will open.*

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**76 LOUIS JADOT CHAMBERTIN GRAND CRU DOMAINE LOUIS JADOT CLOS DE BÈZE 2019 98 Pts.**

*Deep, dark and mysterious, this is a full-bodied but almost perfectly proportioned red Burgundy. So much forest-berry character with delicate bitter chocolate. Densely concentrated and structured, the overall impression is one of imposing stature, but there's nothing monumental about this wine. Very firm at the finish now, but this has been built for the long aging. Drinkable now, but best from 2024.*

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**77 DOMAINE WEINBACH RIESLING ALSACE GRAND CRU SCHLOSSBERG 2019 97 Pts.**

*This is so elegant and refined, with such a complex bouquet of aromas that range from bitter lemon, through red apple and quince to white peach. Then comes the finely etched palate that's simultaneously very nimble and intense. Breathtaking delicacy at the crystalline finish! From biodynamically grown grapes. Drinkable now, but better from 2022.*

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**78 CHÂTEAU PALMER MARGAUX 2018 98 Pts.**

*Complex nose of black cherries, blackberries, dark chocolate and floral undertones with perfume-like character. It's full-bodied with firm tannins. Elegant on the palate with structure. Savory and balanced, complex and layered. Long finish. Really lingers. This has really evolved into a beautiful white swan after a difficult debut from barrel! Tiny production. only 11 hectoliters per hectare. Try after 2024.*

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**79 LOUIS ROEDERER CHAMPAGNE CRISTAL ROSÉ 2013 98 Pts.**

*Aromas of strawberry, iron, orange peel and brioche follow through to a full body with gorgeous fruit and sweet tannins that layer the wine. Strawberry-pâtisserie undertones. Rather juicy and chewy with very round, fine tannins. Savory, flavorful and lightly spicy. Caressing finish with lots of fruity flavor and dryness. Drink now or hold.*

**80 JOSEPH DROUHIN BONNES MARES GRAND CRU 2019 98 Pts.**

*At once deep and fragrant, with a wonderful red-rose aroma. There's a major tannin structure, but it neither pushes nor pulls you in any direction, rather it sits serenely at the heart of this super-elegant wine. Very long, filigree finish. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**81 CHÂTEAU BRANAIRE-DUCRU ST.-JULIEN 2018 97 Pts.**

*Very attractive aromas of currants, tile and sandalwood with black and red currants. It's full-bodied with a tight, dense center-palate that remains closed in and tight. Yet there is underlying seriousness and length to this. Perhaps the greatest Branaire-Ducru ever made. Try after 2026.*

**82 BOUCHARD PÈRE & FILS MONTRACHET GRAND CRU DOMAINE 2019 98 Pts.**

*This is still a bit closed on the nose, but on the palate it is rippling with ripe-apricot and orange character. Dense and rich, almost to the point of being unctuous, although this is properly dry. Serious tannin structure behind the lavish exterior, which, together with the fresh acidity, keeps this on course through the very generous finish. Drink or hold.*

**83 CHÂTEAU LA MISSION HAUT-BRION PESSAC-LÉOGNAN BLANC 2018 98 Pts.**

*Dried green mango, kiwi, citrus and green apple on the nose. Essence of grapes. Some stone and flint undertones, too. It's full-bodied and very tight with layers of fruit and phenolics, yet so integrated and polished. It spreads across the palate. Elegance with power. Drink in 2025.*

**84 THIÉNOT CHAMPAGNE CUVÉE STANISLAS BLANC DE BLANCS 2008 97 Pts.**

*This is a very intense and powerful blanc de blancs with sliced cooked-apple, dried-lemon, pie-crust and stone aromas and flavors. So full and intense. Chewy texture. Rich and structured. A truly great blanc de blancs. Such intensity and power. Drink or hold.*

**85 CHÂTEAU MALESCOT-ST.-EXUPERY MARGAUX 2018 97 Pts.**

*A seductive Margaux with an intense nose of black fruit and red plums. Some herb and wood notes, too. It's full-bodied with pretty, pure-berry flavors with some crushed stones and cement. The texture is silky and fine-grained and the tannins melt into the wine. Precise, flavorful finish with length. Try after 2024.*

**86 CHÂTEAU DES BACHELARDS - COMTESSE DE VAZEILLES FLEURIE LE CLOS 2018 97 Pts.**

*The best Beaujolais I ever tasted? Not only that, but it redefines what the region is capable of. Stunning nose of red fruit and a whole florist store of flowers. So deep and so subtle, the major concentration of tannins on the palate wrapped in the finest velvet. Super long finish with some real mystery, pulling you back inexorably for more of this gamay elixir! From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**87 CHÂTEAU CROIX DE LABRIE ST.-EMILION 2018 97 Pts.**

*A rich, powerful red with so much fruit and intensity. It's full-bodied with masses of fruit with vanilla and coffee character and a long, warm finish. Layered and intense. Really needs time in the bottle to come together. Better after 2025.*

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**88 MICHEL GUIGNIER MORGON CANON 2019 96 Pts.**

*Great wines are often paradoxical and this has a deep, floral nose with such earthy subtlety, which might sound ridiculous, but is anything but that. On the palate, this is a masterpiece of racy and mineral elegance, the fine tannins building beautifully at the very long, filigree finish. Drink or hold.*

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**89 CHÂTEAU GISCOURS MARGAUX 2018 97 Pts.**

*Black currant, dried-blueberry, oyster-shell, black-olive, black truffle, and bitter-chocolate aromas. It's full-bodied with firm, fine-grained tannins and fresh acidity. Savory and mineral layers interplay with the black fruit. Powerful and chewy yet very polished and beautiful.. Try from 2024.*

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**90 JEAN-MARC BURGAUD MORGON CÔTE DU PY 2019 96 Pts.**

*The blackest cherries you can imagine here, but its startlingly fresh. Still very young, but with a fabulously silky texture and delicate minerality that underlines the ravishing fruit beautifully. Very long, cool and stony finish that is so inspiring. Drink or hold.*

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**91 CHÂTEAU NENIN POMEROL 2018 97 Pts.**

*Elegant, complex nose with dark and blue fruit, as well as spicy and earthy undertones. Sandalwood and cedar with dark chocolate, too. Full body with firm, ultra fine tannins. Structured, layered and flavorful on the palate. It's very polished with a lovely texture and a long finish. Pure and luscious. Merlot with 37% cabernet franc. Best ever. Try after 2024, but already very beautiful.*

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**92 CHÂTEAU PAVIE-MACQUIN ST.-EMILION 2018 97 Pts.**

*Violets, blackcurrants, cloves, tobacco, orange zest and dark chocolate on the nose. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, silky tannins and fresh acidity. Sleek and refined with elegant floral and spice notes on a long finish. Interesting hint of bitterness at the end. Try from 2025.*

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**93 JULIEN SUNIER MORGON 2019 96 Pts.**

*What a deep, complex nose this has! It's like looking into the abyss, yet it's also somehow delightful. The subtle red-fruit, mineral and earthy notes are beautifully interwoven. And after you've taken all that in, you realize how concentrated and precisely balanced this Morgon masterpiece is! From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**94 CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE BARTON ST.-JULIEN 2018 97 Pts.**

*Sweet berries, blackberries, raspberries and violets follow through to a full body with extremely creamy, polished tannins that caress the palate. It's really long and polished. Gorgeous finish. Drink after 2025.*

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**95 CHÂTEAU THIVIN CÔTE-DE-BROUILLY CUVÉE ZACCHARIE 2019 96 Pts.**

*Time seems to stop when you smell the ravishing violets and summer flowers offered by this great Côte de Brouilly. Breathtaking harmony and finesse, the power totally underplayed, in spite of the substantial fine tannins that anchor this wine. Super long, spicy and mineral finish. Great aging potential. Drink or hold.*



**96** **DOMAINE MEE GODARD MORGON PASSERELLE 577 2019 96 Pts.**

*Yes, there is a touch of toasty oak on the nose, but there's also stunning aromatic intensity and subtlety, matched by great concentration and a serious tannin-acidity structure that gives this concentrated Morgon great presence. Very long, crystalline finish. Drink or hold.*

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**97** **JEAN-MARC BURGAUD MORGON GRANDS CRAS 2019 96 Pts.**

*Very deep and complex, spicy and earthy nose, exerting a great gravitational pull that sucks you into this black hole of Beaujolais minerality. Stunning concentration, but still graceful, thanks to the super fine tannins and very elegant acidity that carry the staggeringly long finish. Drink or hold.*

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**98** **CHÂTEAU LARCIS DUCASSE ST.-EMILION 2018 97 Pts.**

*Polished aromas of lavender, plum, dried blueberry, clove, sandalwood and dark chocolate. Hints of praline. It's full-bodied with firm, tightly knit tannins. Supple, seamless layers with great length and precision. Still reserved and tight. A toned and textured red with great structure. Try from 2026.*

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**99** **CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE POYFERRÉ ST.-JULIEN 2018 97 Pts.**

*Dark cherry, plum, spice and cacao with earthy notes and wood undertones. Cloves, too. Full-bodied, yet in control and poised. Balanced, complex and flavorful. Firm tannins and a long, precise finish. It goes on and on. Structured is the word. Try after 2025.*

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**100** **CHÂTEAU ROCHEYRON ST.-EMILION 2018 97 Pts.**

*Blackberry, chocolate-powder and walnut aromas follow through to a full body with round, chewy tannins. Super structure and power. Turns tight and focused on the finish. Needs many years to soften. Try after 2026.*

# TOP 100 WINES OF GERMANY 2021



*Stuart Pigott,  
Senior Editor*

This year was one of surprises for German wines, the most important of them being how the 2020 vintage dry whites turned out far better than anyone dared to hope during the summer and harvest. If 2019 hadn't been even better, then 2020 might well have been celebrated as a great vintage!

Why? In almost 40 years of following the wines of Germany I have never seen anything like 2020: it was all charm and elegance, produced under conditions that theoretically made these things impossible. All the old wine books and many modern wine websites tell you Germany is one of the classic cool-climate winemaking locations, with rainfall spread throughout the year. However, the 2020 vintage was not only warmer than historic warm vintages like 1959 and 1976, but also exceptionally dry.

In fact, 2020 was the third drought year in a row and by the end of it the vineyards of Germany were short of rain by an average of 34 centimeters (or just over a foot). As a result, trees with scorched foliage were a common sight. Many wine lovers therefore assumed that the vines must also be badly stressed.



Riesling is more drought-sensitive than chardonnay and theoretically ill-suited to these conditions. However, in the summer of 2020 riesling proved it's not the sensitive flower that it's often assumed to be. Usually, as long as the vines were at least a decade old and soils were well managed, their roots could reach enough water to keep photosynthesis going and the grapes developing.

This year's No. 1 German wine, the dry Dönnhoff Riesling Nahe Hermannshöhle GG 2020, is the perfect example of what was possible. It has great concentration and structure but is also extremely precise and elegant.

The No. 2 German wine is a perfect example of a late-harvested riesling from nobly rotten grapes; a classic wine style with centuries of tradition. The Joh. Jos. Prüm Riesling Mosel Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese Gold Cap 2019 is spectacularly concentrated and succulent but has a fabulous brilliance rare in wines with natural grape sweetness.

2019 was a very great vintage for these wines, but they were very difficult to produce in 2020 because it was mostly so dry there was no Botrytis, or the grapes developed it very slowly. Even specialists like Egon Muller-Scharzhof in the Mosel and Robert Weil in the Rheingau could only produce miniscule quantities of such wines. Those tiny quantities are the reason that riesling BAs and TBAs are absent from this list, and even Auslese are rare.

The No. 3 German wine, the Schloss Johannisberg Riesling Rheingau Grönlack Spätlese 2020, belongs to the legal category below Auslese but is a tremendous achievement for this producer, almost matching the aromatic and filigree perfection of the previous vintage, which was our No. 1 German wine last year.

Why do we weigh the factors quantity and price when assembling the Top 100 hit lists, as well as the ratings that we've given? Well, those factors massively impact how accessible these wines are. In these lists it's important for us to avoid making a major recommendation for wines of which there are only a few hundred bottles, because you'll almost certainly be unable to buy them.

**This year was one of surprises for German wines, but our No. 1 pick perfectly exemplifies what was possible for the 2020 vintage amid challenging conditions.**

There are 35,000 bottles of the stunningly racy and super-mineral dry Robert Weil Riesling Kiedrich Gräfenberg GG

2020, making it the largest production wine in this Top 100. That, together with the stunning quality and moderate price, are the reasons it placed 12th. The smallest production wines lie somewhat below 10 percent of that and are nearly all in the last third of the list.

Unfortunately, these rules hit some of Germany's most exciting rising star winemakers. For example, Stefan Steinmetz of the Gunther Steinmetz winery in the Mosel barely gained a position on this list, and his Mosel colleague Julian Haart of the eponymous winery was locked out completely. In both cases, this means wines that scored 100 points are absent from our Top 100 list.



Schloss Johannisberg is arguably the most iconic riesling location in Germany, not least because the first Spätlese wine was produced here in 1775. Our No. 3 wine is the 2020 vintage of that wine. (Photo courtesy of Schloss Johannisberg)

## SPECTACULAR PINOTS

These vintners belong to a new group of producers whose uncompromising commitment to quality and acceptance of tiny yields often lead to extremely limited-edition wines. This situation is directly comparable to some small domains in the Burgundy wine region of France, where only one or two casks of wine from a particular Grand Cru vineyards are produced each vintage.

Also reminiscent of Burgundy is the spectacular quality of the 2019 German pinot noir, or spatburgunder, red wines. 2018 and 2019 are clearly the best vintages for these wines in Germany in modern times and perhaps ever. We rate the 2019s higher because they're more consistent than the 2018s.

Johannes and Christoph Thorle head this pack in the fourth spot on our Top 100 list for their Thörle Spätburgunder Rheinhessen Hölle 2019, a truly breathtaking pinot noir that's as concentrated as it is refined. The equally impressive but more expensive Bernhard Huber Spätburgunder Baden Wildenstein GG 2019 came in at No. 9 on the Top 100 list.

As important as these categories of high-end German wines are, the diversity of this year's Top 100 Germany is striking. The May Silvaner Franken Rothlauf GG 2020 (No. 13) is the most mineral and complex dry wine from this unfashionable grape variety we have ever encountered. Here's an example of what we call the "Wow Factor," meaning extraordinary wines.

Then there's the astonishingly subtle and deep Müller Catoir in 16th position – the Muskateller Pfalz Bürgergarten EL. The muskateller grape, or muscat à petits grains, as it is known in France, is very rare in Germany, with a fraction of one percent of vineyards devoted to it. Here is a new benchmark for dry wines from this grape.

Lastly, chardonnay is now challenging weissburgunder, aka pinot blanc, for the title of most important alternative grape to riesling for dry whites here. Germany is the world's largest producer of dry pinot blanc, but still a small fish when it comes to chardonnay. Scan down the list of our Top 100 German wines to find the results of this wonderful competition.





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**1 DÖNNHOFF RIESLING NAHE HERMANNSHÖHLE GG 2020 100 Pts.**

*The greatest wines are clear right from the very beginning, because not only is there a super abundance of perfect ripeness, but everything fits so beautifully that you're instantly captivated. That's exactly the way this dry riesling masterpiece is. The most ravishing, peachy fruit and the most perfect balance. Then comes the totally compelling, salty finish that just doesn't want to stop. From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drink or hold.*

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**2 JOH. JOS. PRUM RIESLING MOSEL WEHLENER SONNENUHR AUSLESE GOLD CAP 2019 100 Pts.**

*Welcome to one of the most beautiful faces of the Mosel. Essence of yellow fruit, from peach through mango to papaya. So concentrated, yet so vibrant and so pristine with such a mind-boggling number of nuances that your nervous system is pushed to the limit, in the nicest possible way. The generous sweetness is already well integrated, but this is made for the many decades to come. Drinkable now, but better from 2025.*

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**3 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERG RIESLING RHEINGAU GRÜNLACK SPÄTLESE 2020 99 Pts.**

*Very cool and reserved at the front, but this is an enormously deep and complex wine that has staggering mineral intensity. The lime and oolong-tea freshness effortlessly swallows up the unfermented grape sweetness, as if it didn't really exist. Some will criticize, saying that this is too radical, but that's what creates the great excitement! The herbal freshness at the finish is really astounding. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**4 THÖRLE SPÄTBURGUNDER RHEINHESSEN HÖLLE 2019 99 Pts.**

*This pinot noir masterpiece announces Rheinhessen's arrival on the list of wine regions where this grape variety is capable of the highest sophistication. So deep and finely nuanced with ravishing sweetness that sweeps you off your feet. Then comes the enormously complex finish where the fine tannins build to a breathtaking crescendo. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**5 EMRICH-SCHÖNLEBER RIESLING NAHE HELENBERG GG 2020 99 Pts.**

*Enormously fine and subtle nose. The ravishing but very delicate apricot aroma pulls you into the profound mineral depths of this dry-riesling masterpiece. The salty minerality at the finish just doesn't want to stop and gives you a great feeling of how the most dramatic landscapes of this region look. Drink or hold.*

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**6 KÜNSTLER RIESLING RHEINGAU HÖLLE GG 2020 98 Pts.**

*The deep, peach and apricot nose leads you into this enormously concentrated yet graceful dry riesling that's got the stature to stand next to almost any Grand Cru white Burgundy. Enormously long, beautifully balanced finish that pulls your hand magnetically back to the glass. Drink or hold.*

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**7 LEITZ RIESLING RHEINGAU BERG SCHLOSSBERG GG 2019 98 Pts.**

*A towering giant of peach, apricot and King Alfonso mango aromas that opens slowly like a rose. Great juiciness, but of the most refined kind. Stunning interplay of fruit and minerality right through the very long, pristine finish. Drink or hold.*

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**8 DR. BÜRKLIN-WOLF RIESLING PFALZ PECHSTEIN GC 2020 99 Pts.**

*So stony, poised and pristine, in spite of all the concentration, this has staggering elegance and finesse for such a warm region. Mega minerality at the breathtakingly long and radical finish that defies any simple description. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**9 BERNHARD HUBER SPÄTBURGUNDER BADEN WILDENSTEIN GG 2019****99 Pts.**

*Pinot fans who haven't yet registered the recent developments in Germany are strongly advised to taste this masterpiece, The cornucopia of red berries, cherries and flowers on the nose of this extraordinary wine bowls you over. Gigantic concentration, yet it remains so bright and elegant, thanks to the stunning intensity of extremely fine tannins. Seamless finish that stretches out towards infinity. Drink or hold.*

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**10 CHRISTMANN RIESLING PFALZ IDIG GG 2020 98 Pts.**

*So deep, it feels like it's pulling you in the direction of the center of the earth! Yet, another side of the wine seems to float above the world. Radically mineral finish that leaves you in no doubt about this great dry riesling's future! From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**11 SCHÄFER-FRÖHLICH RIESLING NAHE FELSENECK GG 2020 98 Pts.**

*The very refined, flinty and slatey nose pulls you deep down into this astonishingly elegant riesling GG that's almost bone dry, yet glides gracefully over the palate. Then, life becomes very serious, with a long tunnel through this wild and wonderful, rocky hill country and finally you land in a pit of rock salt at the finish. From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drink or hold.*

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**12 ROBERT WEIL RIESLING RHEINGAU KIEDRICH GRÄFENBERG GG 2020****98 Pts.**

*This very youthful GG needs some aeration to open up, but with every swirl of the glass more wild herbs, red-fleshed vineyard peaches and exotic floral nuances emerge. Very concentrated, yet cool and focused, with a very precise interplay of tangerine fruit, wet-stone minerality and a hint of oak that echoes down the valleys. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**13 KELLER RIESLING RHEINHESSEN BRÜNNENHÄUSCHEN ABTS E GG 2020****100 Pts.**

*This is only just beginning to open up, but already the peach, melon and mint nose is already incredibly deep and delicate. Breathtaking minerality and vibrant grapefruit character electrify the totally focused palate. Almost endless finish. Drink or hold.*

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**14 MAY SILVANER FRANKEN ROTHLAUF GG 2020 98 Pts.**

*A new dimension of dry silvaner! The enormously deep and complex nose of dried herbs and wild berries drags you into this incredibly concentrated and vibrant wine, which has a massive structure that gives it huge presence on the palate. All of this might be too much for you in this very youthful form, but we find it totally captivating. The dried-herb and stony finish doesn't want to stop! From organically grown grapes with Naturland certification. Drinkable now, but best from 2022. Screw cap.*



## 15 FRIEDRICH BECKER SPÄTBURGUNDER PFALZ HEYDENREICH GG 2018

**99 Pts.**

*Maybe the best pinot noir ever made in the Pfalz! Ravishing nose that's bursting with sour and black cherries, forest berries and delicate, rooty notes. The stunning sweetness of fruit on the full-bodied palate is matched by a near-perfect tannin structure and acidity that miraculously makes this super abundance feel delicate and restrained. The intensity builds and builds at the super-long, silky finish. Drink or hold.*

## 16 MÜLLER-CATOIR MUSKATELLER PFALZ BÜRGERGARTEN EL 2020 **99 Pts.**

*Welcome to the most beautiful rose garden there ever was! But, wait a minute, there are also hibiscus, jasmine and all kind of other floral aromas hanging in the air. The concentration and complexity of this totally exceptional dry muscat is off the scale! Breathtaking freshness at the almost endless finish. A dry muscat miracle! Drink or hold.*

## 17 GEORG BREUER RIESLING RHEINGAU BERG SCHLOSSBERG 2020 **98 Pts.**

*The subtle exotic-fruit bouquet is already something special. However, the extremely precise and filigree palate is more exciting. This is a very refined dry riesling with a very long, salty finish. From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

## 18 WITTMANN RIESLING RHEINHESSEN MORSTEIN GG 2020 **98 Pts.**

*If you have enough patience, this will turn into one of the greatest dry rieslings of the vintage. A tight rose bud in the nose and on the front palate, but then the wine expands in an almost supernatural fashion as it flows over the palate. Staggering minerality at the totally focused finish. From organically grown grapes. Drinkable now, but best from 2024.*

## 19 GÜNTHER STEINMETZ RIESLING MOSEL DHRONER GROSSER HENGELBERG MONOPOL 2020 **98 Pts.**

*Enormously concentrated, with a symphonic nose of exotic fruit and hibiscus that rolls over you in one great wave. Then comes the juicy, dense and extremely precise yet only medium-bodied palate. The deep minerality complements the rich fruit so beautifully. Drink or hold.*

## 20 DR. LOOSEN RIESLING MOSEL ERDENER PRÄLAT GG RESERVE 2015

**99 Pts.**

*This dry Mosel masterpiece is a sleeping giant, just beginning to awaken, but has decades of life ahead of it. Extremely deep and concentrated, but no less finely delineated, this is so complex you could spend hours studying all the spicy details. However, the ripe-mango note that dominates the foreground is also ravishing. The best wine of this category (long matured GGs) made so far in Germany! Drink or hold.*

## 21 WAGNER-STEMPEL RIESLING RHEINHESSEN HEERKRETZ GG 2020 **98 Pts.**

*This is so delightful in the nose, but there are so many dimensions to the aromas that it's not easy to grasp this, without sinking into this enormously complex wine. The aromas range from leaves and flowers, dripping after a tropical downpour, to ripe stone fruit, all the shades of citrus zest and delicate spice. Tightly wound on the very concentrated, silky palate with minerality that's almost off the scale. So saline and so mouthwatering at the super-long finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**22** AUGUST KESSELER RIESLING RHEINGAU BERG ROSENECK GG 2020**98 Pts.**

*The deep nose of candied citrus and dried flowers announces the serious intent of this remarkable GG. Enormous concentration and a stunning balance of fruit, racy acidity and minerality, all bundled tightly together at the super-focused finish. Surely the best wine I ever encountered from this underrated top site! Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**23** ÖKONOMIERAT REBHOLZ RIESLING PFALZ KASTANIENBUSCH GG 2020**98 Pts.**

*At once exotic, yet cool and delicately herbal, very concentrated but no less light-footed, this shows crystalline purity that's a wonder to behold! Moves on tiptoe through the super-long, filigree finish. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold.*

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**24** KÜHLING-GILLOT RIESLING RHEINHESSEN ROTHENBERG WURZELECHT GG 2020 **99 Pts.**

*A truly kaleidoscopic nose with a thousand shades of candied citrus, angelica, wild berries and flowers. Very concentrated and highly structured, this mineral masterpiece is so pure and straight. Only just beginning to slowly open up. Spectacularly complexity at the near-perfectly balanced finish. Made from non-grafted vines, planted in the 1930s. From organically grown grapes. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**25** SCHLOSSGUT DIELE RIESLING NAHE GOLDLOCH GG 2020 **98 Pts.**

*Very complex nose of apricot, pineapple and licorice with a slew of subtle, spicy notes. Powerful but precisely contoured body with super-mineral acidity that lights up the sky at the brilliant finish. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**26** EVA FRICKE RIESLING RHEINGAU KRONE TROCKEN 2020 **98 Pts.**

*Anyone who doubts the greatness of the best wines from the 2020 vintage in Germany should taste this extremely complex and pristine dry riesling. Enormous minerality and structure, in spite of only being medium-bodied. So finely nuanced. Very long finish, in which slatey and chalky elements are beautifully interwoven with the white-peach and Amalfi-lemon aromas. Enormous aging potential. From organically grown grapes. Vegan. Drink or hold.*

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**27** CLEMENS BUSCH RIESLING MOSEL MARIENBURG FALKENLAY GG 2020**98 Pts.**

*If you thought you knew what peaches smell and taste like, then think again. At first there's a touch of bready character from long sur-lie maturation, but then the most ravishing peach aroma develops, plus notes of wild rose, orange and jasmine. Super-elegant on the ripe yet extremely precise palate. The peachy beauty only expands and expands at the breathtaking finish. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold.*



## 28 ALBRECHT SCHWEGLER WÜRTTEMBERG GRANAT 2017 98 Pts.

*What a revelation! There's no way you could identify this as a German red from the enormously deep nose of dried cherries, graphite, cardamon and coffee beans. Great concentration and an imposing tannin structure on the compact and precisely contoured palate. The combination of plush tannins and healthy acidity drive the very long, powerful finish. A blend of 43% zweigelt, 33% cabernet sauvignon, 22% merlot and 2% cabertin. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

## 29 CARL LOEWEN RIESLING MOSEL RITSCH GG 2020 97 Pts.

*Welcome to the mountain peaks, where Alpine flowers blossom and wild herbs grow next to mountain streams. That's the personality of this cool, super-elegant dry riesling. Enormous Amalfi lemon-zest, bergamot and mineral freshness give the finish breathtaking brilliance. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

## 30 BERGDOLT WEISSBURGUNDER PFALZ MANDELBERG GG 2019 97 Pts.

*In spite of the very enticing nose of gardenia and super-ripe pear this super-concentrated dry pinot blanc is only just beginning to open up. Stunning balance of freshness and very intense minerality, the finish sweeping over you like a tidal wave! Great aging potential. From organically grown grapes. Drinkable now, but best from 2022.*

## 31 DÖNNHOFF RIESLING NAHE NIEDERHÄUSER HERMANNSHÖHLE SPÄTLESE 2020 100 Pts.

*Hit me with a flower! This starts very delicately with an incredibly subtle nose of fresh and dried flowers. Then comes the enormously concentrated yet totally filigree palate, which dazzles the senses with its thousand nuances and almost endless, super-silky finish. Decades of aging potential. From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drink or hold.*

## 32 JOH. JOS. PRUM RIESLING MOSEL WEHLENER SONNENUHR AUSLESE 2019 99 Pts.

*The most beautiful tropical flowers (so much hibiscus!) pour from the glass of this graceful giant. Stunning concentration and also some baby fat, but also a great structure and it needs all of those to age for many decades, as it surely will. Drink or hold.*

## 33 EMRICH-SCHÖNLEBER RIESLING NAHE HALENBERG SPÄTLESE 2020 98 Pts.

*A giant Spätlese that's packed to the gills with peach and berry fruit, salty minerality and supernaturally vibrant acidity. Such complexity that it's hard to express in such a string of adjectives. Breathtaking freshness at the finish. Decades of aging potential. Drink or hold.*

## 34 ROBERT WEIL RIESLING RHEINGAU MONTE VACANO TROCKEN 2019 99 Pts.

*This starts as discreetly as Ravel's Bolero, the peachy aromas of the Rheingau now just beginning to emerge from behind their veil of yeast from the long maturation in barrel. Then this wine, like Bolero, steadily climbs to a very exciting and expressive conclusion. Then you experience the mineral side of this grape and region in great purity. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**35 MÜLLER-CATOIR RIESLING PFALZ BÜRGERGARTEN IM BREUMEL GG 2020**  
**98 Pts.**

*Although the intensity of this very youthful dry riesling's bouquet knocks you back in your seat, the ripe white-peach, tangerine and passion-fruit aromas are accompanied by a slew of delicate, floral notes. Tightly focused with diamond brightness on the concentrated yet sleek palate, this ends in a finish of breathtaking purity. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**36 ÖKONOMIERAT REBHOLZ SPÄTBURGUNDER PFALZ IM SONNENSCHNITT GG**  
**2019 98 Pts.**

*Welcome to the dark side of the pinot force! The extremely complex, dark forest-berry and flinty nose pulls you deep into this remarkably elegant wine, with stacks of super-fine tannins warming it through the cool and concentrated palate. Massive depth, but almost no feeling of weight at the stunning finish. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**37 RIFFEL RIESLING RHEINHESSEN SCHARLACHBERG TROCKEN 2020 98 Pts.**

*The peach aroma on the nose of this imposing dry riesling is extremely ripe, as if it only ever bathed in sunshine. Yet, the wine remains cool and collected with a very precise palate and intense, stony minerality. Enormous power at the long, very compact finish. From organically grown grapes. Vegan. Drink or hold.*

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**38 BATTENFELD-SPANIER RIESLING RHEINHESSEN ZELLERWEG AM**  
**SCHWARZEN HERRGOTT GG 2020 97 Pts.**

*Plenty of yeasty and savory character here, but the ripe, peachy fruit wins out. In fact, there's wonderful succulence on the medium-to full-bodied palate that's hard to resist. Then the massive chalk and green-herb character kicks almost bowls you over. Great concentration and a finish that keeps pumping out the citrusy freshness and salty minerality. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**39 ALDINGER SEKT WÜRTTEMBERG BRUT NATURE 2014 97 Pts.**

*This has an amazing fragrance that reminds me of some of the greatest Prestige Cuvée Champagnes with an expansive spectrum of candied berry and citrus, brioche and patisserie aromas. So rich and yet so finely nuanced, this sparkling masterpiece flows very gracefully over the palate, the very fine mousse beautifully supporting the silky finish, which stretches a long way out. Drink or hold.*

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**40 GUT HERMANNSBERG RIESLING NAHE HERMANNSBERG GG RESERVE**  
**2016 97 Pts.**

*Sweet flowers, pie crust and peaches on the nose. So much depth and intensity on the palate. It starts in a bright and mineral place, but shifts and becomes more herbal as time goes on. Fresh mint and rosemary. Really rather stunning. This is ready to drink now, but will continue to age well.*





## 41 HEYMANN-LÖWENSTEIN RIESLING MOSEL UHLEN ROTH LAY GG 2019

**97 Pts.**

*Still quite closed, this is a brooding giant that shows aristocratic reserve. It's hard to imagine how any wine can be more mineral than this, and that may make it too austere for some in this youthful phase. Tons of wild-herb character at the super-stony finish. Great aging potential! From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drinkable now, but best from 2023. Screw cap.*

## 42 DR. WEHRHEIM WEISSBURGUNDER PFALZ MANDELBERG GG 2020 **97 Pts.**

*Perfectly ripe, golden fruit cascades over you. So much power and concentration that's rendered so gracefully, thanks to animating acidity that lifts and energizes the very considerable substance. Enormous depth at the breathtakingly pure and fresh finish. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

## 43 DR. BÜRKLIN-WOLF RIESLING PFALZ UNGERHEUER GC 2020 **98 Pts.**

*Ungeheuer means giant in German and this wine really is a giant. Dark and herbal on the rather closed nose, but on the palate there's no doubting the profound depth and ripeness of this wine, Radical finish with great dried-citrus and herbal intensity with so much vitality. From biodynamically grown grapes. The best dry wine Bürklin-Wolf ever from this site? Drink or hold.*

## 44 AUGUST KESSELER PINOT NOIR RHEINGAU HÖLLENBERG GG 2019 **97 Pts.**

*The imposing structure and stature of this youthful Rheingau pinot noir leave no doubt that it's been crafted for long-term aging. With plenty of aeration, the forest-berry and cassis fruit emerges from behind the toasty oak, slowly pushing it into the background. Stunning concentration and structure, with mineral acidity that gives this wonderful lightness and energy at the very long finish. Drinkable now, but best from 2024.*

## 45 KÜNSTLER RIESLING RHEINGAU HOCHHEIMER STIELWEG ALTE REBEN EL 2020 **97 Pts.**

*The flood of aromas washes you clear away with its enormous, peach and apricot power. Everything sits exactly where it should and the overall impression is of near-perfect harmony. Breathtakingly long and silky finish! From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## 46 WINTER RIESLING RHEINHESSEN KLOPPBERG GG 2020 **97 Pts.**

*Giant depth and complex with an enormous spectrum of yellow and citrus fruit, plus wild-herb and flower aromas. Fabulous balance of chalky minerality and citrusy freshness, plus lightning-strike energy that propels this over the palate at great speed. From organically grown grapes. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

## 47 FÜRST CHARDONNAY FRANKEN R TROCKEN 2019 **97 Pts.**

*Still slightly funky, but that only adds to the excitement of this tightly wound and extremely complex chardonnay. Stunning concentration and elegance on the medium-bodied palate that feels almost weightless. So focused and filigree at the super-long finish. Drink or hold.*

**48 LUCKERT SILVANER FRANKEN MAUSTAL GG 2019 97 Pts.**

*Very flinty and smoky, this is a really concentrated wine with an extremely precise balance between ripeness and mineral freshness. So much power, but every bit as much vitality. Super-flinty and focused finish that's pretty radical and may be too much so for some. Intensely salty finish. Closer to great Chablis than German wines! From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**49 MAXIMIN GRÜNHaus (VON SCHUBERT) RIESLING MOSEL ABTSBERG GG 2020 97 Pts.**

*Still very young and quite yeasty, but tasting this is like gazing down into a deep canyon from the edge. A radically mineral wine that packs staggering concentration into a sleek silhouette (just 12% alcohol). So much wild-herb character! Drinkable now, but better from 2023.*

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**50 WWE. DR. H. THANISCH, ERBEN THANISCH RIESLING MOSEL BERNCASLETER DOCTOR GG 2020 97 Pts.**

*This masterpiece of Mosel delicacy has an enormously wide spectrum of wild flowers, herbs, stone fruit and citrus, such that you can spend hours studying all these nuances. Stunning raciness with mineral freshness that makes the medium-bodied palate diamond-bright. The uplifting, salty finish doesn't want to stop. Drink or hold.*

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**51 KRUGER-RUMPF RIESLING NAHE ABTEI 1937 TROCKEN 2020 97 Pts.**

*A truly unique wine that has the most beautiful golden nose that is fruity, but so much more than that. So many wild herb and flower nuances. Stunning concentration, combined with a feeling of weightlessness. Super-mineral finish that dances over the palate and off into the far distance. Drink or hold.*

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**52 FÜRST SPÄTBURGUNDER FRANKEN HUNSRÜCK GG 2019 97 Pts.**

*In spite of the subtle red-fruit aromas, this wine has a dark, earthy and smoky core. Breathtaking combination of serious concentration, major fine tannins and lively acidity that lifts the long, very intense finish beautifully. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**53 WILLI SCHAEFER RIESLING MOSEL GRAACHER DOMPROBST SPÄTLESE 10 2020 97 Pts.**

*Mind-blowing nose of cassis and forest berries with white flowers and a hint of cedar. Staggering depth, packed into a very sleek silhouette, but the brilliant acidity and enormous wet-stone freshness are even more astonishing, because they completely distract you from the natural grape sweetness for a long while. So enjoyable now, but with such a great future ahead of it. Drink or hold.*

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**54 KELLER RIESLING RHEINHESSEN HUBACKER GG 2020 97 Pts.**

*A very wide spectrum of fruit aromas pour from the glass, from Asian pear to a hint of exotic fruit, via mandarin orange. However, as it aerates, the cool, herbal side to this seriously structured, but finely etched dry riesling shows itself. Very long, dark finish that's got so much tension. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*



## **55** KATHARINA WECHSLER RIESLING RHEINHESSEN KIRCHSPIEL TROCKEN 2020 **97 Pts.**

*Alone, the fragrant stone-fruit, citrus and delicately exotic aromas (fruits and flowers!) are compelling. However, this also has stunning concentration and near-perfect ripeness, but the salty minerality is the dominant side of this dry riesling masterpiece! Breathtakingly fresh finish that doesn't want to stop! Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **56** STAHL CHARDONNAY FRANKEN SONNENSTUHL GRAND RESERVE 2019 **97 Pts.**

*We don't often recommend this, but be sure to put this astonishing German chardonnay in a large, Burgundy-type glass if you want to experience its aromatic riches to the full. Very complex interplay of candied-fruit and dried-pear character with sea shell and leesy aromas, plus fine, toasty oak. Concentrated and succulent, but not a jot too bold on the palate. Extremely long, chalky finish that's very subtle. Drink or hold.*

## **57** FRITZ HAAG RIESLING MOSEL BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER SONNENUHR AU-LESE GOLD CAP 2020 **98 Pts.**

*Very fine floral-honey, dried-fig and sultana character from botrytis. Concentrated and creamy with extravagant dried-fruit flavors and a very long, vivid and intense finish. Very limited production. Drink or hold.*

## **58** BERNHARD HUBER SPÄTBURGUNDER BADEN SCHLOSSBERG GG 2019 **98 Pts.**

*A milestone of finesse for German pinot noir! Super-fresh and expressive nose of red cherries, red beets, delicate spices and summer flowers. Very concentrated, pure and focused palate with extremely fine tannins that feel like stroking the finest velvet. Astonishingly long and vibrant, mineral finish. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

## **59** PETER LAUER RIESLING MOSEL SCHONFELS GG NO. 11 2020 **98 Pts.**

*An amazing dry white that takes you very close to the edge of a precipice and gives you a breathtaking thrill along the way. I love the unique nose of curry powder and curry leaf. Great concentration and structure, the fine tannins exactly matching the profoundly mineral acidity. Wonderful, salty finish with enormous tension. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

## **60** IMMICH-BATTERIEBERG RIESLING MOSEL ELLERGRUB 2020 **96 Pts.**

*Such an enticing nose of dried and fresh flowers, under-laid by a slew of stone-fruit and passion-fruit aromas. All this is completely reflected on the juicy and vibrant palate that has tremendous finesse. Super-long and filigree finish! From very old non-grafted vines on blue slate. From organically grown grapes. Vegan. Drink or hold.*

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**61 DR. LOOSEN RIESLING MOSEL INDUTIOMARUS EDITION MARKUS LÜPERTZ**  
**1981 97 Pts.**

*A totally unique Mosel wine. A touch of wood in the nose, but there's also plenty of dried herbs and candied lemon peel. Then comes the huge surprise: although you can feel this wine is low in alcohol (10.5%) on the palate, it has the level of presence and structure of a modern riesling GG. The texture at the very long finish is unlike any riesling I can remember, at once creamy and velvety. This matured sur-lie in neutral oak for an incredible 27 years, but tastes as if it has many more years ahead of it! Very limited production. Drink or hold.*

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**62 VON OETINGER RIESLING RHEINGAU HOHENRAIN GG 2020 98 Pts.**

*Wonderful nose of mirabelles, aromatic pears and dried herbs that's just beginning to open up. Ripe and powerful with staggering concentration. Super-flinty on the boldly structured palate, but none of this drama seems a jot too much. Massive wet-stone minerality at the finish. Very limited quantity. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**63 VON OTHEGRAVEN (GÜNTHER JAUCH) RIESLING MOSEL ALTENBERG**  
**AUSLESE 1976 98 Pts.**

*Lovely, super ripe peach and apricot nose with hints of candied orange and creme brulee. Stunning concentration and focus for a vintage that often moves in a heavy and oily direction. Then comes the enormously long, filigree finish that takes your breath away. From the last top vintage of this estate's first golden age. Drink or hold.*

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**64 EGON MÜLLER-SCHARZHOF RIESLING MOSEL SCHARZHOFBERGER**  
**SPÄTLESE 2020 96 Pts.**

*Spring-blossom, honeysuckle and gardenia aromas pour from the glass of this Spätlese, which effortlessly marries mangosteen and passion-fruit ripeness with serious concentration and great finesse. Racy acidity drives the very long, precise finish. Drink or hold.*

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**65 VOLLENWEIDER RIESLING MOSEL SCHIMBOCK 2019 98 Pts.**

*Maybe I'm amazed! This smells like a whole Indian-spice market and you could spend hours just studying the nose. But then you'd miss the enormously concentrated, wide-screen palate that has every bit as much to offer. And somehow the ultra long and intense finish is enveloping rather than overwhelming. Very limited production, due to the tiny yield of 10 hectoliters per hectare. Drink or hold.*

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**66 DANIEL TWARDOWSKI SPÄTBURGUNDER MOSEL PINOT NOIX HOFBERG**  
**RÉSERVE 2019 97 Pts.**

*Smokey and earthy nose with lemon zest and paprika notes. Incredible interplay of dark minerality, concentrated fine tannins and delicate red-fruit character. Great brilliance at the very long finish. Almost supernatural vitality and fantastic aging potential. Drinkable now, but best from 2025.*



## **67** EGON MÜLLER-SCHARZHOF RIESLING MOSEL SCHARZHOFBERGER KABINETT ALTE REBEN (AUCTION WINE) 2020 **97 Pts.**

*A breathtaking and super-expressive Kabinett with enormous, racy energy, plus laser-beam purity and straightness. The very long, salty-mineral finish has Nordic freshness that makes this miniature masterpiece stand out from the Kabinett crowd! Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

## **68** SELBACH-OSTER RIESLING MOSEL ROTLAY 2020 **98 Pts.**

*It's hard to imagine that this essence of the peach actually started out as grapes! Titanic concentration and vitality, together with great mineral energy that drives all of this forward as inexorably as an ocean liner cutting through high seas in the North Atlantic. The intensity at the finish might be too much for some, but we are completely convinced! Drink or hold.*

## **69** MARTIN MÜLLEN RIESLING MOSEL NOSTEL TROCKEN \*\*\* 2019 **97 Pts.**

*Before you can take in all other dimensions of this unique dry riesling, the smell of gardenias almost bowls you over. However, then comes a wave of floral honey and oolong tea, followed by another wave of intensely mineral acidity at the super long and super silky finish. Such an uplifting wine! Drink or hold.*

## **70** WEISER-KÜNSTLER RIESLING MOSEL ELLERGRUB RÉSERVE TROCKEN 2018 **96 Pts.**

*A great dry Mosel riesling that's just beginning to spread its wide wings. The power and density of this very warm vintage is married to deep structure and enormous minerality that powers the super long, cool finish. And somehow the result is so poised! From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

## **71** FRITZ WASSMER CHARDONNAY BADEN KAISERBERG HERBOLZHEIM 2018 **96 Pts.**

*This stunning wine proves chardonnay has a great future in Germany. In spite of the exceptionally warm vintage, this remains bright, subtle and precise, with a complex interplay of flinty, smoky and chalky character on the concentrated, medium-bodied palate. Breathtaking intensity and mineral freshness at the super-long finish. Drink or hold.*

## **72** SCHLOSS LIESER RIESLING MOSEL NIEDERBERG-HELDEN GG 2020 **96 Pts.**

*Slightly funky, but brimming with blossom and berry aromas, this is concentrated, finely etched and super-mineral, with a breathtaking finish that makes you think you are drinking slate. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

## **73** SCHLOSSGUT DIEL RIESLING NAHE BURGBERG GG 2019 **97 Pts.**

*A very serious dry riesling! Deep nose of lemon curd and lime marmalade with hints of pie crust and lemon blossom. In spite of just 12.5% alcohol, this has an imposing structure and makes a bold statement on the palate. Very long, dark and mineral finish with a touch of candied lemon. Drink or hold.*



**74 EYMANN SPÄTBURGUNDER PFALZ PINOT NOIR R 2018 96 Pts.**

*So deep, dark and complex, this is a modern pinot noir masterpiece that matches concentration with an exactly equal amount of elegance and finesse. Tons of super fine tannins and breathtaking freshness at the very long finish. From biodynamically grown grapes with Demeter certification. Drink or hold.*

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**75 THÖRLE SPÄTBURGUNDER RHEINHESSEN PROBSTEY 2019 97 Pts.**

*The deep and complex nose of blackberry, forest berry, wet earth, bitter chocolate and smoke leads you into this powerful and highly structured pinot noir. So dark, yet so invigorating, thanks to the super-vibrant and mineral acidity. Then comes the astonishingly long finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**76 J.B. BECKER RIESLING RHEINGAU WALLUFER WALKENBERG SPÄTLESE ALTE REBEN TROCKEN 2019 96 Pts.**

*The stunning nose of ripe yellow grapefruit, green tea and a whole garden of fresh herbs leads you into this deep and very concentrated wine that has crystalline purity that takes your breath away. The diamond-bright finish expands and expands as the wine aerates. From organically grown grapes. Delicious now, but with decades of life ahead of it. Glass closure.*

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**77 KAUFMANN PINOT NOIR RHEINGAU HASSEL GG 2019 96 Pts.**

*Such enormous concentration and finesse that, tasting blind, you could easily mistake this for a top-quality red Burgundy with a large, three-figure US\$/Euro price tag. Super-fine tannins and perfectly integrated oak, but there's nothing loud or obvious about this at all. Very clean, long, mineral finish. From biodynamically grown grapes with Demeter certification. Drink or hold.*

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**78 FLICK RIESLING RHEINGAU NONNBERG VIER MORGEN GG 2020 96 Pts.**

*The stunning nose of wild herbs, ripe mirabelle and yellow grapefruit zest pulls you into this powerfully structured and tightly wound dry riesling that surely has enormous aging potential. At this stage, it has a dangerous amount of drive at the very long and bold, chalky finish. Drinkable now, but best from 2023. Screw cap.*

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**79 MATTHIAS MÜLLER RIESLING MITTEL RheIN FEUERLAY GG 2019 96 Pts.**

*Such fine white, yellow and red-fleshed peach aromas, but also delicate spicy notes make this very attractive. Then comes the concentrated and graceful palate that gives this a very seductive personality. The very long, intense finish is so caressing, deep and mineral. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**80 KNEWITZ RIESLING RHEINHESSEN HUNDERTGULDEN TROCKEN 2019 96 Pts.**

*This is such a complex wine and each swirl of the glass reveals a whole new range of aromas. Flinty notes lead on to candied citrus, then dried herbs, followed by apricot and mango. Serious concentration, but also super freshness with stony and salty character that explodes like a star-burst at the stunning finish. And all this with just 12.5% alcohol! Drink or hold.*



## **81 SCHLOSSGUT LIEBIG MOSEL HELDENSEKT BRUT 96 Pts.**

*This smells and tastes off great dry Mosel riesling – ripe peach and floral honey. Very deep and complex with enormous mineral freshness lifting the rich body. Breathtaking, super-clean, dry finish. A cuvee of 2016 and 2017 from the Held (German for Hero) vineyard site, hence the name. From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drink or hold.*

## **82 LUBENTIUSHOF RIESLING MOSEL GONDORFER GANS ALTE REBEN 2018 96 Pts.**

*Breathtaking balance of delicate white fruit and flowers with intense minerality on the palate that is simultaneously juicy and radical. Very long finish with the precision and grace of a prima ballerina. Still so young! From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drink or hold.*

## **83 RAINER SAUER SILVANER FRANKEN ESCHERNDORF AM LUMPEN 1655 GG 2019 96 Pts.**

*This extraordinary dry silvaner smells like a waterfall surrounded by rocks that are festooned with ferns and moss. Then, with a little aeration, Amalfi-lemon and lemon-blossom notes emerge. In spite of the stunning concentration, this remains so cool and precise. I love the long, sensual and fine-grained finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **84 SCHMITT'S KINDER RIESLING FRANKEN PFÜLBEN GG 2020 96 Pts.**

*So vibrant, expressive and elegant for a warm vintage, this dry riesling from the Franken region of Germany is a revelation. Stunning mineral expression and so much energy driving the very long and super-bright finish. Drink or hold.*

## **85 BICKEL-STUMPF SILVANER FRANKEN MÖNCHSHOF GG 2019 95 Pts.**

*So much gardenia and jasmine tea in the nose! Then, such a great balance of concentrated yellow fruit with a peachy note that's really unusual for the silvaner grape. Tons of minerality at the long, succulent finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

## **86 HANS WIRSCHING RIESLING FRANKEN IPHÖFER JULIUS-ECHTER-BERG GG 2019 95 Pts.**

*A stunning dry riesling from a region rarely associated with this grape. Intensely herbal nose with so much bergamot and mirabelle fruit that drags you onto the concentrated and tense palate where there's so much energy. Very long finish with so much mineral and herbal freshness. From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drink or hold.*

## **87 BARTH RIESLING RHEINGAU HASSEL VDP GROSSE LAGE BRUT NATURE 2014 95 Pts.**

*Completely blind, I'd never have guessed that this is a riesling sparkler, because with its potpourri of berry aromas (mostly raspberry and dried strawberry) plum and toasty notes, it reminds me of a high-end Blanc de Noirs champagne. Lots of structure, but its wrapped in wonderful creaminess. The mousse is fine and the acidity is discreet for the grape. Long, really complex finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**88 DR. CRUSIUS RIESLING NAHE FELSENBURG GG 2020 95 Pts.**

*I love the interplay of delicate smoke and ripe yellow grapefruit on the nose of this expressive Nahe GG. Stunning depth and drive on the sleek, concentrated and very focused palate. Very long and intense, spice and mineral finish. Drink or hold.*

**89 DR. CORVERS-KAUTER RIESLING RHEINGAU BAIKEN TROCKEN (GOLD TRIANGLE LABEL) 2019 95 Pts.**

*Finally, a really exciting wine from this famous site that's been off the radar screen for such a long time. Stunning nose of lime zest, wild flowers and herbs! Sleek, concentrated and compact, the mouthwatering acidity really lifting this and propelling it along at warp speed. Super crisp and super mineral finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**90 WAGNER-STEMPEL PINOT NOIR RHEINHESSEN HEERKRETZ GG 2019 96 Pts.**

*The most remarkable innovation in the field of German pinot noir in many years. Explosively vibrant nose that makes me think of cranberries, but it's so much riper than any cranberries I ever tasted. Plenty of wet-earth and rooty character emerges as it aerates, then spices in a hot, dry pan. The fruit then shifts in the sour-cherry direction. So much vitality that it leaps and bounds over your palate. Crisp acidity with so much minerality and spice at the extremely long finish. From organically grown grapes. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

**91 KARL HAIDLE LEMBERGER WÜRTTEMBERG BERGE GG 2019 95 Pts.**

*The blackest of wild-berry aromas and a slew of subtle spicy notes are married to a very elegant tannin structure, dynamic freshness and a level of finesse that this grape has very rarely achieved in Germany prior to the last few vintages. Super-long and breathtakingly fresh finish with so much finesse. From organically grown grapes. Great aging potential. Drink or hold.*

**92 BECKER LANDGRAF SPÄTBURGUNDER RHEINHESSEN HERRGOTTSPFAD 2018 95 Pts.**

*Very cool and discreet for the exceptionally warm vintage, this giant is just beginning to stir from its slumbers. So precise and silky, this has excellent concentration, yet feels almost weightless on the super-focused palate. Intense wet-stone minerality at the brilliant and energetic finish. From organically grown grapes with Fair'n Green certification. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

**93 GRAF NEIPPERG CABERNET SAUVIGNON WÜRTTEMBERG S.E. 2018 95 Pts.**

*Is this really from Germany? Yes, this is an extraordinarily ripe and plush cabernet sauvignon for so far north, but alongside the concentrated blackcurrant and fruit there's also some cool bell-pepper (red and yellow, as well as green) character on the nose. In spite of the major tannin structure, this has excellent balance and doesn't seem a jot too much. Very polished finish. Drink or hold.*

**94 WINZEREI LÜTTMER FRÜHBURGUNDER SAALE-UNSTRUT 2019 95 Pts.**

*What a seductive Pinot this is, from the ravishing red-fruit and floral nose through the totally silky palate that is so caressing. However, after some aeration, you feel the very solid base of fine-grained tannins that underpins this beautifully. Dreamy finish that's really hard to resist. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**95 ACHAM-MAGIN RIESLING PFALZ KIRCHENSTÜCK GG 2020 95 Pts.**

*A deep and complex wine with so much grace and finesse it stands head and shoulders above most in this category. Very fine, peachy fruit and delicate floral notes. Beautifully structured, rather silky palate that's so polished at the long finish. Drink or hold.*

**96 ANSGAR CLÜSSERATH RIESLING MOSEL TRITTENHEIMER APOTHEKE TROCKEN 2020 95 Pts.**

*An astonishing nose that spans the range from fresh basil to persimmon and bergamot. Very concentrated and precise, but this retains the Mosel lightness in every fiber of its sleek and lithe body. Super-clean, long finish. Drink or hold.*

**97 NIK WEIS RIESLING MOSEL GOLDTRÖPFCHEN GG 2020 95 Pts.**

*Stand back for the boss! Deep and concentrated with a ton of structure, this is rippling with golden-fruit aromas! The interplay of ripeness, fine tannins and elegant acidity is spot-on. Imposing, yet precisely crafted, long finish. Drink or hold.*

**98 VAN VOLXEM RIESLING MOSEL GOTTESFUSS GG 2020 95 Pts.**

*Very fine and fresh mandarin-orange and nectarine nose with subtle floral notes. Much tighter on the palate, where there is excellent concentration and a combination of drive and finesse that's rare in this vintage on the Saar. Very long, wet-stone finish. Drink or hold.*

**99 WEGELER RIESLING MOSEL SONNENUHR GG 2020 95 Pts.**

*This is the ideal introduction to the world of high-end dry Mosel, because this GG is already very succulent with a slew of peach (white and yellow) aromas, plus delicate floral notes. Very good concentration with a long, beautifully balanced finish. Drink or hold.*

**100 ZILLIKEN RIESLING MOSEL RAUSCH SPÄTLESE 2020 95 Pts.**

*The whole spectrum of tropical and citrus aromas with hints of jasmine and orchid. Excellent concentration and all the brilliance you expect from the Saar, the mineral acidity and delicate fruit character balanced on the point of a needle. Very long and pure finish. Drink or hold.*



# TOP 100 WINES OF ITALY 2021



*Jo Cooke,  
Tasting Editor*

For the first time ever at JamesSuckling.com, a Chianti Classico from Tuscany has taken the No. 1 spot on our list of Top 100 Italian wines – the Barone Ricasoli Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Ceniprimo 2018. James remarked back in May that it was “perhaps the greatest” Chianti Classico he had ever tasted, while noting the complex aromas of crushed cherries, sour cherries, peaches, bark and hints of meat.

This world-beating Chianti Classico red, which also took the No. 2 spot on our recently published Global Top 100 Wines of 2021, comes from one of the most historic producers in the Chianti Classico zone. In fact, the noble Ricasoli family started making wine in 1140 (no typo there!) and today farm around 240 hectares of vineyards in the heart of the Chianti Classico zone. It was current owner Francesco Ricasoli’s ancestor who, back in 1872, drew on the family’s experience to come up with the original formula for Chianti wine, and they have continued to lead the way for the area’s producers since then.

This wine, sporting the highest designation for Chianti Classico (Gran Selezione), is their crowning glory. What’s more, the





Our top wine from Italy, the Barone Ricasoli Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Ceniprimo 2018, set amid the Ricasoli family's Castello di Brolio estate. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

Barone Ricasoli Chianti Classico Gran Selezione Colledilà 2018 also appears on our list at No. 13.

Ricasoli is clearly championing the Gran Selezione moniker, which he believes may supersede the Chianti Classico Riserva category as producers take advantage of the new category's marketability. "Riserva was not enough anymore to describe the rising quality of a lot of Chianti Classico that were produced in the last 10 years," he said.

We tasted more than 6,000 Italian wines this year and that itself is an achievement, considering the conditions during the pandemic. The greatest number of wines on our Top 100 list

come from Tuscany (41), followed by Piedmont (19), the Northeast (15), Sicily (9), Veneto (8), Campania (6), and Sardinia and Umbria with one each.

On close scrutiny, our Top 100 Italy list may look a little different this year. In the past, it was filled with the latest-release Barolos and Brunellos. At the start of 2021, the big question among the JamesSuckling.com tasting team was how producers in Piedmont and Tuscany would have coped with the most recently released vintage – the very hot 2017. After tasting nearly 400 Barolo 2017s and over 170 Brunello 2017s, our list goes some way in answering the question.

Of the 12 Brunellos on our list, none

are from the 2017 vintage. They are all 2016 Riservas, and this is probably the last opportunity to snap up wines from that fantastic vintage on release. On the other hand, all 19 Barolos included in the list are from the challenging 2017 vintage. None appears among the top 10, but there are some fabulous Barolo 2017s to try, such as Roberto Voerzio Barolo Rocche dell'Annunziata 2017 (No. 16), Elio Grasso Barolo Ginestra Casa Maté 2017 (No. 18) and Azelia Barolo Cerretta 2017 (No. 22).

On the face of it, producers in the Langhe, the Barolo-producing zone in Piedmont, seem to have been better placed to deal with the extreme growing season in 2017 than their colleagues in the Tuscan hilltop town of Montalcino. This is sure to be an ongoing discussion.

And our tastings were full of surprises and delights. For example, tasting our No. 2 wine, the Romano Dal Forno Amarone della Valpolicella Monte Lodoletta 2015, was a mind-blowing moment. You hover over the glass with your nose and are transported into a sublime world of complex aromas and flavors to savor. But, when you put your glass down, what you are left with is a sense of exquisite balance, despite the well-known potency of this wine.

And this emphasis on elegance and balance is a trait that many Amarone producers seem to be following, and that's good news. As regards the Dal Forno, cellar it and bring it out for your next important anniversary, but not next year, nor the one after! Meanwhile, try the Bertani Amarone della Valpolicella Classico 2012 (No. 15 – intact, linear,

Bertani style), or Masi Amarone della Valpolicella Classico Costasera 2016 (No. 73 – exquisite, tight and focused).

## SICILY RISES

Other highlights this year include a summer tasting of Sicilian wine by Senior Editor Stuart Pigott and myself, in James Suckling's house in Tuscany, where we made the acquaintance of a number of excellent wines, especially from the headlining Etna volcanic area. There are seven Etna wines on our list, but for Stuart, the Benanti Etna Rosso Serra Della Contessa Particella No. 587 Alberello Centenario Riserva 2015 (No.

7) was, as he noted, “a new dimension in Etna red that belongs in the highest league of Italian and global wines.” It is made from over 100-year-old, pre-phylloxera nerello mascalese (85 percent) and nerello cappuccio (15 percent)

**We tasted more than 6,000 Italian wines this year, but it was a Chianti Classico Gran Selezione that clearly stood out as No. 1.**



The Benanti family in Etna is making fantastic wines, including our No. 7 pick (right), the Benanti Etna Rosso Della Serra Contessa Particella No. 587 Alberello Centenario Riserva 2015. (Photo by Stuart Pigott)

vines. Read the tasting note for this one. It's a very rare bird, with only 240 cases made, but with a price tag of under \$100 a bottle, it's well worth fighting for.

The top 10 wines on our list include a number that frequently claim their place at the top of the order. Consistent quality, year by year, mark these wines and their producers as standard-bearers of the level of quality that Italy can produce. They include Casanova di Neri Brunello di Montalcino Cerretalto 2016 (No. 3 – one of three perfect scores this year), as well as two other Brunello producers that made exceptional 2016 Brunello Riservas: Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona Brunello di Montalcino Vigna di Pianrosso Santa Caterina d'Oro Riserva 2016 (No. 9) and Eredi Fuligni Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 2016 (No. 10).

Then we have other Tuscan icons, such as Tenuta Sette Ponti Toscana Oreno 2019 (No. 5 – a worldwide super-Tuscan favorite), Petrolo Valdarno di Sopra Galatrona 2019 (No. 8 – the wine that changed the face of Tuscan merlot) and Fattoria Le Pupille Maremma Toscana Saffredi 2019 (No. 6 – a fabulous blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot and petit verdot from Tuscany's coastal region, Maremma).

In among the leaders is a white wine from Trentino, the Foradori Manzoni Bianco Vigneti delle Dolomiti Fontanasanta 2020 (No. 4), which Stuart described as "maybe the greatest natural white wine I have ever tasted." This must now be one of the best-value whites in the world. And it sells for about \$24 a bottle.

But quality exudes from every wine on our Top 100 list and, on top of that, there are some excellent bargains to be



James and Marie enjoying one of our highest-rated Italian wines, the Tenuta Sette Ponti Toscana Oreno 2019. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

had. Take, for example, the 95-point Brunelli Garganega Verona Carianum 2019 (No. 58), the 94-point Colli di Castelfranci Fiano di Avellino Pendino 2020 (No. 84), or the 94-point Montevetrano Campania Core 2018 (No. 97). Wines like these won't compromise a wine-lover's budget.

Since the troublesome, hot and dry 2017 vintage, things have gone well for producers in Italy, and our future Top 100 lists are going to be ever more crammed with top-quality wines from all over the peninsula. We're all looking forward to next year's Italy tastings.

## **1** BARONE RICASOLI CHIANTI CLASSICO GRAN SELEZIONE CENIPRIMO 2018 **100 Pts.**

*This is amazing Chianti Classico. Perhaps the greatest I have ever tasted. The aromas are so complex with crushed cherries, sour cherries, peaches, bark and hints of meat. Incredible finish with such intensity and beauty. Hard not to drink, but one for the cellar. Best after 2024.*

## **2** ROMANO DAL FORNO AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA MONTE LODOLETTA 2015 **100 Pts.**

*This is black as pitch in the glass and, yes, there's a light, tarry edge to the super-concentrated prune, date and currant fruit. But even more interesting are the complex notes of bitter-orange liqueur, aged balsamic, fresh roasting herbs, cinnamon, roasted chestnuts, black tea and licorice. The more you decant in advance, the more nuances will emerge. It's full-bodied with huge concentration and lots of chewy tannin that is managing to hold the fruit back for now. This needs plenty of time to develop in the bottle. Just superb. One of the greatest Dal Forno's ever.*

## **3** CASANOVA DI NERI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO CERRETALTO 2016 **100 Pts.**

*Wow. Incredible purity and transparency with cherries, bark, mushroom, flower and slate/stone on the nose. Full-bodied yet agile and fresh with a fine tannin structure that runs the length of the wine and goes on forever. The polish, elegance and grace is breathtaking. Power with agility. A revelation for the 2016 vintage in Brunello. Drink in 2024 and onwards but wonderful to taste now.*

## **4** FORADORI MANZONI BIANCO VIGNETI DELLE DOLOMITI FONTANASANTA 2020 **98 Pts.**

*Maybe the greatest natural white wine I have ever tasted. Complex and strikingly original lemon-zest, smoke and dried-chamomile aromas pour from the glass. Then comes the concentrated but very refined palate, followed by a super-long finish that's a cascading waterfall of wet-stone minerality. Just doesn't want to stop! From biodynamically grown grapes with Demeter certification. Drink or hold.*

## **5** TENUTA SETTE PONTI TOSCANA ORENO 2019 **99 Pts.**

*Wow. Fantastic aromas of blackberries, currants, minerals, violets and graphite. Full-bodied with firm, silky tannins that are incredibly polished and intense, yet ever so refined and integrated in the wine. It goes on for minutes. This is one of the best modern-day Orenos so far. Best in 2025 and onwards.*

## **6** FATTORIA LE PUPILLE MAREMMA TOSCANA SAFFREDI 2019 **99 Pts.**

*So much crushed stone, rosemary, lavender, mint and blackberry. Full-bodied and very structured with layers of powerful and polished tannins. It goes on for minutes. Ink, blackcurrants and blueberries. 60% cabernet sauvignon, 35% merlot and 5% petit verdot. Needs at least five or six years to open. Try after 2025.*



## **7** BENANTI ETNA ROSSO SERRA DELLA CONTESSA PARTICELLA NO. 587 ALBERELLO CENTENARIO RISERVA 2015 **99 Pts.**

*A new dimension in Etna red that belongs in the highest league of Italian and global wines. Enveloping floral, candied-orange and red-berry nose, but that's only the beginning of it. Extremely concentrated and seamless palate that's totally focused through the finish, which stretches out effortlessly towards infinity. The grapes come from over 100-year-old, pre-phylloxera nerello mascalese (85%) and nerello cappuccio (15%) vines. It was 24 months in French oak, but that's completely invisible. Limited quantity. Drink or hold.*

## **8** PETROLO VALDARNO DI SOPRA GALATRONA 2019 **99 Pts.**

*Blackberries and black cherries with lavender and violets on the nose. Full-bodied with velvety, chewy tannins, yet the fruit is very intense with vibrancy and energy. Muscular, yet agile. Pure and poised. A unique definition of merlot in Tuscany. Drink after 2025.*

## **9** CIACCI PICCOLOMINI D'ARAGONA BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO VIGNA DI PIANROSSO SANTA CATERINA D'ORO RISERVA 2016 **99 Pts.**

*Glorious aromas of flowers, nutmeg, dark berries, earth and black cherries follow through to a full body with ultra-fine tannins that are long and extremely polished. They go on for minutes. Reserved and shy still, due to its excellence. Give this four or five years to come around. Try after 2024.*

## **10** EREDI FULIGNI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA 2016 **99 Pts.**

*The complexity and beauty of this wine is something else on the nose, offering perfume, cedar, dried flower, black cherry, blueberry and crushed stone. Orange peel, too. Full-bodied with incredible layers of ultra-fine tannins that give this wine horizontal depth that almost seems endless. Extremely long and lightly chewy at the end. This is one for the cellar. Try after 2026.*

## **11** BIBI GRAETZ TOSCANA COLORE 2019 **99 Pts.**

*This is so perfumed and seductive, with blackberries, cherries, dried flowers and perfume. It's full-bodied and tight with very fine tannins. Really structured and long. Superb tannin texture. So fine, yet so powerful. This is an incredible combination of fruit and structure. Old-vine magic. Drink after 2026.*

## **12** MANINCOR SAUVIGNON ALTO ADIGE LIEBEN AICH 2019 **98 Pts.**

*Breathtakingly refined nose with all the facets of the lemon, from the blossom to the candied fruit, the hint of oak effortlessly integrated on the incredibly silky palate that's as soft as a baby's skin. So concentrated, yet so delicate and so pure at the very long, crystalline finish. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold.*

## **13** BARONE RICASOLI CHIANTI CLASSICO GRAN SELEZIONE COLLEDILÀ 2018 **98 Pts.**

*This is sensational, with ultra fine tannins that melt into the wine. Such intense and beautiful fruit with cherries, peaches and lightly candied cherries. Some citrus, too. Very soft and creamy with wonderful polish. Beautiful center palate and a lovely finish. A song in the bottle. A little tight now. Hard to wait, but give it two or three years to open.*



**14 RENIERI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA 2016 98 Pts.**

*Enticing black truffle aromas with cherry and strawberry. The palate is full and tight with super polished tannins that are layered and refined. Great length. Goes on and on. Try after 2025 but already captivating.*

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**15 BERTANI AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO 2012 98 Pts.**

*Wow. Such a complex nose, with a base of dried cherry, spruced up with hints of mild coffee and walnuts. Then there are dried flowers, wild herbs and spices, such as tarragon and cloves. Subtle hints of dried banana and apricot, too. The palate is full, super sleek, intense and well-balanced, with tight, spice-coated tannins that drive everything forward. Long, long finish. Lovely to taste now, but this already almost ten-year-old will sit comfortably in your cellar for a long while yet.*

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**16 ROBERTO VOERZIO BAROLO ROCHE DELL'ANNUNZIATA 2017 99 Pts.**

*Dried strawberry with some cherry, nutmeg and spice. Some dried meat, too. Full-bodied, chewy and rich with integration and focus. The tannins are really put together beautifully. Long and intense. Tight at the end. This needs at least four or five years to open. Try after 2025.*

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**17 VALDICAVA BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO MADONNA DEL PIANO RISERVA 2016 99 Pts.**

*This is heavenly on the nose with fresh flowers such as violet and cherries with undertones of freshly shaved sandalwood. It's full-bodied with very fine tannins that are focused and intense with a polished nature. This is a complete wine that impresses at every level. Give it at least five to six years to come together and resolve the tannin structure. Better after 2027.*

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**18 ELIO GRASSO BAROLO GINESTRA CASA MATE 2017 98 Pts.**

*This is really transparent with sweet strawberries, flowers and orange peel, as well as some conifer and pine-nut undertones. Full-bodied and layered with intense young tannins, intertwined with bright fruit. Great finish. This is really something else. Needs time to soften, of course. Try after 2025.*

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**19 MAZZEI TOSCANA SIEPI 2019 98 Pts.**

*This is a really racy and fine Siepi with currant, black-cherry and dark-chocolate character. It's medium-to full-bodied with very long, intense tannins that are linear and fine-textured. Really builds on the palate. Super structure. Finesse with power. Try after 2024 and onwards.*

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**20 CASTEL JUVAL RIESLING SÜDTIROL VINSCHGAU WINDBISCHEL 2018 97 Pts.**

*Hold on to your hat, because this Alto Adige dry riesling has enormous concentration and breathtaking elegance. Stunning peach and apricot fruit washes over you in wave after wave, yet it retains almost perfect poise through the astonishingly long finish. As fresh and pure as glacial water and it's almost impossible to believe it has 14% alcohol! Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**21 BENANTI ETNA ROSSO CONTRADA MONTE SERRA 2019 97 Pts.**

*It's time to taste the volcano! Although this is still very young, it has an amazingly refined nose that reminds us of top-class red Burgundy. Quite full-bodied, but super-elegant and transparent, with very fine tannins that build to a stunning crescendo at the mineral finish. Patience will be rewarded! Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**22 AZELIA BAROLO CERRETTA 2017 98 Pts.**

*Extremely aromatic with strawberries, flowers, and stones, following through to a full body with layers of fruit and round tannins that go on and on. Rich and opulent, yet polished and toned. A generous young Barolo. Drink in 2025.*

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**23 SAN POLINO BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA 2016 98 Pts.**

*The purity and polish here shows wonderfully the moment you stick your nose in the glass, with complex aromas of plums, berries, cedar and violets. It's full-bodied and ever so refined with elegant and intense tannins that take you deep into the wine. This is a thoughtful and finely crafted Brunello that needs time to show you its greatness. From organically grown grapes. Try after 2024.*

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**24 CONTERNO-FANTINO BAROLO MOSCONI VIGNA PED 2017 98 Pts.**

*Plenty of red fruit and tar here with bark and mushroom as well. It's full-bodied, yet tight and polished on the palate. Tight finish. Tar and burnt citrus to the fruit in the aftertaste. One of the best wines from here in years, this needs some bottle age to open and soften. Try after 2026.*

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**25 LIVIO SASSETTI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO RISERVA 2016 98 Pts.**

*Archetypal sangiovese with cherry and floral aromas as well as sandalwood. Medium- to full-bodied with firm, polished tannins. Tight and extremely structured yet there's an impressive finesse and craftsmanship here. Fine velvety texture. Give it three to four years. Try after 2024.*

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**26 MANINCOR PINOT NERO ALTO ADIGE MASON DI MASON 2018 97 Pts.**

*The nose of this incredibly deep and complex Alto Adige pinot noir is like an essence of raspberry and forest berries with overtones of truffles and forest floor. Great concentration, but thanks to the incredibly fine tannins, this is as graceful as a Grand Cru Musigny. The super long finish has stunning mineral freshness. From biodynamically grown grapes with Respekt certification. Drink or hold.*

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**27 SAN FILIPPO BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO LE LUCERE RISERVA 2016 98 Pts.**

*Complex and refined aromas of blackberries, flowers, sandalwood and a hint of vanilla follow through to a full body with dusty, polished tannins that are extremely long and flavorful. Muscular, yet agile at the same time. Try after 2025.*

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**28 PIO CESARE BAROLO ORNATO 2017 98 Pts.**

*Extremely perfumed with dark berries, cherries, strawberries and crushed stones. Full-bodied with chewy, polished tannins that are muscular. Fantastic structure to this young Barolo, as well as great length. It grows on the palate with ease. Truly impressive. Incredible. Try after 2025.*

**29 VIETTI BAROLO ROCCHIE DI CASTIGLIONE 2017 98 Pts.**

*There's clarity and energy to this, offering sweet strawberries and watermelon with fresh-rose and sandalwood undertones. Full-bodied with plenty of tannins, which are ultra-fine and polished for the vintage, giving the overall impression of elegance and finesse. Long. Classy. Try after 2025.*

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**30 PODERE POGGIO SCALETTE ALTA VALLE DELLA GREVE IL CARBONAIONE 2018 97 Pts.**

*Intense aromas of blue fruit, lavender and violets. Some sandalwood, too. Full-bodied with firm, silky tannins and beautiful fruit. Really racy and refined with excellent length. Drinkable now, but a few years of bottle age will make it even more beautiful. Try after 2023.*

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**31 SIRO PACENTI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO PS RISERVA 2016 98 Pts.**

*Enchanting hues of blue fruits, raspberries and black cherries with flowers such as rosemary flower and violets. Full-bodied with a dense and intense palate of ripe tannins that are fine and polished. So persistent and beautiful with focus and brightness. Goes on for minutes. Try after 2024.*

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**32 CASTELLO DI AMA TOSCANA L'APPARITA 2018 98 Pts.**

*Hard dark-chocolate aromas with blackberries and blue fruit. Pure and gorgeous. Full-bodied with gorgeous, polished tannins that are intense and powerful, yet ever so precise and together. It's so curated and real with a great finish. One of the best merlots from Ama in a long time. Drink after 2024 and onwards.*

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**33 TUA RITA TOSCANA REDIGAFFI 2019 98 Pts.**

*Aromas of violets, blackberries and black truffles follow through to a full body with firm, silky tannins with lots of texture that's caressing and enticing. Such polish and beauty. Very long and powerful. So much structure this year. 100% merlot. Best after 2024.*

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**34 LE MACCHIOLE BOLGHERI MESSORIO 2018 98 Pts.**

*This is very complex, offering tobacco, brown sugar, black olives and currants. It's full-bodied, yet tight and layered, with very fine tannins and a long, structured finish. Hints of new wood complement the long, cool fruit and phenolics. Give this three or four years to open. Try after 2025.*

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**35 TASSI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO FRANCI RISERVA 2016 98 Pts.**

*The purity of the sangiovese fruit is so beautiful here with cherry, orange peel and cherry blossom, following through to a full body with firm, chewy tannins that are polished and very long. The real deal. One for the cellar. Try after 2024.*

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**36 PODERI ALDO CONTERNO BAROLO ROMIRASCO 2017 98 Pts.**

*Lots of floral aromas, such as lilacs and roses, with crushed raspberries and strawberries. Sandalwood, too. Full-bodied and very powerful with incredible depth of fruit and chewy tannins. It goes on for minutes. Try after 2026.*

**37 ROBERTO VOERZIO BAROLO CEREQUIO 2017 98 Pts.**

*Extremely perfumed and beautiful, offering rose-petal and lavender aromas with some tar to the ripe cherries. Some spice, such as nutmeg, as well as light hazelnut. Fresh. Full-bodied, very tight and compact with firmness and wonderful length and focus. Consistent drive through the center of the wine. Better after 2025.*

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**38 CORDERO DI MONTEZEMOLO BAROLO MONFALLETTO 2017 97 Pts.**

*This shows a lot of tar and roses with dried strawberries as well. Full-bodied with very, very fine tannins that coat your mouth, yet they are so velvety and set up the overall, focused and pure-fruit impression of the wine. Fantastic young Barolo. From organically grown grapes. Better in 2026, when the tannins will be more resolved.*

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**39 GAJA BAROLO SPERSS 2017 98 Pts.**

*Very intense aromas of roasted hazelnuts with dried flowers, tar and fruit. Full-bodied and very tight with a solid core of chewy yet refined tannins, this is a classically proportioned Barolo that displays superb structure and length. A thoroughly great wine. Try after 2025.*

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**40 MARCHESI ANTINORI UMBRIA CERVARO DELLA SALA 2019 97 Pts.**

*A full-bodied white with complex aromas of hawthorn, ripe peach, apricot, mango, lime, flint, toast and some smoke. Layered, concentrated and persistent with bright acidity and a firm, phenolic texture. Hint of vanilla. Very long and refined. Beautiful as always. Very approachable, but better from 2022.*

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**41 VIE DI ROMANS SAUVIGNON BLANC FRIULI ISONZO PIERE 2019 96 Pts.**

*The purity of fruit in this is really something, offering salt, chalk, sliced mango and papaya. It's full and phenolic with layers of fruit and so much richness at the end. Yet, it's ever so long and intense. Lasts for minutes. Drink or hold.*

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**42 BRANCAIA TOSCANA ILATRAIA 2018 97 Pts.**

*Blackberries and currants with some violet and walnut undertones. Medium-to full-bodied with firm, polished tannins that show balance and focus. Stone and mahogany. Just a hint of chocolate. Racy and fine. 40% petit verdot, 40% cabernet sauvignon and 20% cabernet franc. Drink now or hold.*

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**43 GIACOMO FENOCCHIO BAROLO VILLERO 2017 97 Pts.**

*Such beautiful aromas with sweet-berry and floral character. Some cedar and sandalwood, too. Full-bodied with firm, round tannins. Lots of tar and asphalt to the pretty fruit. Very elegant at the end. Extremely attractive now, but will age beautifully. Such finesse and complexity. Try after 2023.*

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**44 JERMANN VENEZIA-GIULIA VINTAGE TUNINA 2019 97 Pts.**

*Such beautiful aromas of sliced pears, green apples, white peaches and lychee fruit. Full-bodied and very reserved, but the complexity and beauty here are so apparent. Give this wine time to show the complexity and allure. One of the great whites of Italy, as always. Try after 2023. Screw cap.*

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**45** PETROLO TREBBIANO TOSCANA BÒGGINA B 2019 **97 Pts.**

Gorgeous aromas of lemon rind, lemon cream, waxy dried apples and hints of cedar and vanilla. Full-bodied, with a round, lightly chewy palate and a long, intense finish. Fantastic fruit and complexity. Yet always sublime and subtle. From organically grown grapes. Delicious now, but will be even better in a year or two.

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**46** INAMA SOAVE CLASSICO FOSCARINO I PALCHI GRANDE CUVÉE 2019 **97 Pts.**

There's incredible mineral presence here, from the nose right through to the finish. A aromatic mix of flint, tufo and wet-stone aromas, as well as heather and floral notes. Then, the palate finally introduces ripe peach and pineapple to this mineral carnival. Full-bodied, super-silky and almost syrupy texture with dense, ripe fruit and light phenolics. The long finish mixes stone-fruit and enough acidity to handle the same, huge bundle of rich, silky minerals. This is a special old-vine selection from the historic, volcanic Monte Foscario vineyards. Quite unique in the Soave context, and showcasing one of the appellation's top vineyard sites. Fermentation in a mix of barrel and oak cask. First vintage. Drink or hold.

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**47** MARCARINI BAROLO LA SERRA 2017 **97 Pts.**

So much ash and dried-strawberry character. Burnt orange-peel undertones. Tar, too. It's full-bodied with chewy tannins and a flavorful finish. Lots of rose petals. This needs four or five years to open, but nicely integrated now. Try after 2024.

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**48** PAOLO SCAVINO BAROLO RAVERA 2017 **97 Pts.**

Wow. What incredible purity to this on the nose with blackberries and raspberries and dark wood, such as mahogany or bark. So perfumed, too. Full-bodied with such a solid core of tannins, yet they are layered and polished and come together nicely. A solid, fine wall of tannins, yet the wine is not aggressive. This is really top. Drink after 2024.

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**49** CASTELLO DI MONSANTO CHIANTI CLASSICO GRAN SELEZIONE VIGNETO IL POGGIO 2016 **97 Pts.**

Sweet berries with sliced cherries and mushrooms. Pungent flowers and fresh mushrooms, too. Full-bodied with layers of round, succulent tannins that are enveloped in ripe fruit. It's rich and lively at the finish. A rather plush and exciting Monsanto. Really excellent now, but even better in 2024.

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**50** ORMA TOSCANA 2019 **97 Pts.**

This is a tight and powerful Orma with solid tannins that beautifully frame the fruit in the wine. Full-bodied and focused with intense structure and fruit character. Perhaps the best Orma ever. Give this four or five years to open. Try after 2025.

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**51** CANTINA TERLAN PINOT BIANCO ALTO ADIGE VORBERG RISERVA 2007 **97 Pts.**

This is showing so well for a white wine with 14 years of age, displaying the real character of pinot bianco from Vorberg. Complex aromas of dried flowers, apricots, pineapples, lemons, crushed stones, flint, blanched almonds and hints of cardamom. Turns to orange peel and other citrus fruit. It's full-bodied with an incredible texture, almost oily, yet still so fresh with bright acidity. Long. Drink now.



**52 SCHIOPETTO FRIULANO COLLIO MARIO SCHIOPETTO M 2020 97 Pts.**

*Such clear mineral character here with peach-pit and dried-apple character. Very complex and subtle. It's full-bodied with a tight, refined palate feel and length. It's flinty and steely at the end with crushed stones. Drink or hold.*

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**53 FORADORI TEROLDEGO VIGNETI DELLE DOLOMITI GRANATO 2018 97 Pts.**

*Enormously deep and subtle wild-blackberry aromas with a thousand herbal nuances lead you into this concentrated and beautifully proportioned red that is so delightful and fascinating. Very long finish that's crisp and very mineral. From biodynamically grown grapes with Demeter certification. Drink or hold.*

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**54 DONNAFUGATA ETNA ROSSO CONTRADA MONTELAGUARDIA FRAGORE 2018 97 Pts.**

*I love the enveloping fragrance of this Etna red, as much as the breathtaking silkiness on the very concentrated palate. Starts with a blast of red berries, but as it flows over the palate, it slowly turns in a totally Mediterranean direction. Notes of capers and wild mountain herbs at the staggeringly long finish. Still slightly tight, so try to be patient. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

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**55 GALARDI CAMPANIA TERRA DI LAVORO 2019 97 Pts.**

*The polished oak hits the nose straight away, but then comes a fabulous array of black fruit with dark plums, blackcurrants and berries, as well as some coffee cream and chocolate. Full-bodied and intense with silky layers of fruit, dark chocolate and fine, grainy tannins that pick up a lot of the fruit and savory flavors, driving to a long finish. Delicious to taste now, even drink, but will continue to improve in the bottle. Best from 2023.*

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**56 INAMA SOAVE CLASSICO VIGNETI DI FOSCARINO 2019 96 Pts.**

*The nose is quite reserved, showing some melon, pear and lavender. Then, on the palate, the expansion starts on a base of silky almond cream and builds up slowly and steadily through the long, long finish. Aftertaste of lemon cream. Never ebullient, but medium-bodied, layered and silky, this is quiet refinement flexing its muscles. Total balance. Beautifully done. All in place. Best ever. Enjoy now or hold.*

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**57 GRATTAMACCO BOLGHERI SUPERIORE L'ALBERELLO 2018 97 Pts.**

*This is a really racy and linear red with blackberries, blackcurrants and hints of chocolate and cedar. It's full-bodied with long, firm tannins and an intense finish. Shows coolness and strength but is not overpowering. Nice touch of sage and mint at the end. First year with only cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc. No petit verdot now. From organically grown grapes. From just two hectares. Picked together and co-fermented. Drink after 2023.*

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**58 BRUNELLI GARGANEGA VERONA CARIANUM 2019 95 Pts.**

*A very exotic garganega here with aromas and flavors of ripe pineapple, mango, passion fruit and much more. Hints of coconut and vanilla go on to provide a smooth underlay to the vibrant fruit on the full, silky palate. The fruit intensity builds and builds, getting fresher and fresher and leaving a very long finish. This is a beautiful, potent white. The passion-fruit note is so well placed, keeping it all fresh from start to finish. Utterly delicious. Drink now.*

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**59** CASTELLO BANFI BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO POGGIO ALLE MURA RISERVA 2016 **97 Pts.**

*This is very tight and linear and long. It shows so much black truffle, dark cherry and wet earth character with some bark. Full-bodied yet tight and polished with firm tannins that persistently drive the length of the palate. Great aging potential here. Try after 2023.*

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**60** BIBI GRAETZ TOSCANA TESTAMATTA 2019 **97 Pts.**

*Very attractive combination of dried fruit and spices with black cherries and plums. Aromas of flowers and sandalwood, too. Full-bodied and very refined, yet intense, with plush, velvety tannins that are wonderfully integrated and intertwined with the fruit. Ripe center palate. Tight at the end, suggesting the need for some serious bottle age. Very structured. Try after 2025.*

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**61** SUAVIA SOAVE CLASSICO MONTE CARBONARE 2019 **96 Pts.**

*Incredible melange of fruit on the nose here. Fresh pear, melon, peach and more exotic notes of papaya and even banana. Add to that aromas of dried flowers and river stones. Medium-to full-bodied and layered with lip-smackingly fresh, exotic fruit up front and a dense bed of sweeter fruit and mineral underneath. The intensity doesn't let off for minutes. Best decanted. Drink or hold.*

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**62** LUCE DELLA VITE TOSCANA LUCE 2018 **97 Pts.**

*Very focused and classy on the nose with blackberries, currants, mushrooms and dark bark. It's full-bodied with a tight palate of chewy tannins that give structure and form to the wine. Beautiful center palate of dark fruit and mushrooms. Subtle and strong. Give this at least three or four years to resolve itself. Best after 2024.*

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**63** FEUDO MACCARI GRILLO TERRE SICILIANE FAMILY AND FRIENDS 2020 **96 Pts.**

*A seriously concentrated and very silky Sicilian dry white that is unashamedly inspired by Grand Cru white Burgundy. Wonderful bouquet of citrus blossoms with just a hint of vanilla. Mouth-filling yet graceful on the palate, the long and complex mineral finish beautifully supported by just a touch of oak tannin. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**64** CASTIGLION DEL BOSCO BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO MILLECENTO RISERVA 2016 **97 Pts.**

*Blueberries and cherries with hints of cedar and spice, as well as plenty of mixed dried flowers, including violets. Some graphite and stone, too. Medium-to full-bodied with racy tannins and a long, long finish. It's linear and complete, with lovely elegance and structure. Try after 2024.*

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**65** BRUNO GIACOSA FALLETTO BAROLO FALLETTO 2017 **97 Pts.**

*Sweet berries, smoke, cedar and olives on the nose. Floral. Full-bodied with firm, chewy tannins and a pretty background and ripe fruit. Flavorful finish. Hints of bitter citrus and smoke, too. Very complex. Powerful for Falletto. Drink after 2026.*

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**66 ORNELLAIA BOLGHERI SUPERIORE 2018 97 Pts.**

*So aromatic and complex with blackcurrants, blueberries, fresh violets and lavender on the nose. Some graphite and iodine, too. Medium to full body with firm, chewy tannins that are polished and refined, yet the palate is so long and refined. This is an Ornellaia with strength in elegance. Try after 2025.*

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**67 KUENHOF PETER PLIGER SÜDTIROL EISACKTAL KAITON 2019 96 Pts.**

*All the flowers and herbs of an Alpine meadow pour from the glass of this very elegant dry riesling, which toys with complete weightlessness, but then reveals that it has a deep bond with the volcanic mysteries of the soil in the super long, crystalline finale. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**68 MASSETO TOSCANA 2018 98 Pts.**

*This is extremely perfumed with flowers, cherries and blackberries, as well as hints of lavender. It's full-bodied, yet so refined, linear and racy. Pure silk. The texture is every so polished. Succulent and subtle fruit at the end. New wood showing now. A sophisticated Masseto that shows balance and harmony. Builds with tannins at the finish. Needs time to come completely together. Try after 2025.*

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**69 COLLAZZI TOSCANA 2018 96 Pts.**

*Lots of blackcurrant and mint on the nose with plums, too. It's full-bodied with very integrated tannins that are chewy but beautiful and give length to the wine. Racy and solid. Cabernet sauvignon, merlot, cabernet franc and petit verdot. Try after 2024.*

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**70 MASTROBERARDINO TAURASI RADICI RISERVA 2015 96 Pts.**

*Super-elegant but really tight aglianico here with lightly peppery black fruit, colored with inky and spicy notes. With aeration, you move into the herbal zone, with fresh bay-leaf, chai and light rosemary. The palate is medium-to full-bodied and you feel all the aromas pent-up, ready to burst out. The tension here is palpable and this will need several more years before the firm tannins soften, allowing the wine to open up and flood your palate. Still be patient. Try from 2024.*

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**71 TENUTA DI ARCENO CHIANTI CLASSICO GRAN SELEZIONE STRADA AL SASSO 2018 96 Pts.**

*Lots of licorice and blackberry aromas with violets and hints of fresh leather. Full-bodied with very fine-grained tannins that give the wine length and depth. So well crafted and long. Really excellent. Elegance with power. Drinkable now, but give it a year or three to show its really excellence. Best after 2023.*

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**72 PECCHENINO BAROLO LE COSTE DI MONFORTE 2017 96 Pts.**

*Loads of dried flowers on the nose with dark fruit, such as ripe strawberries and plums. It's full-bodied with super integrated tannins that give a dusty texture and creaminess. Flavorful finish of fruit and hazelnut with some smoke. Drink in 2025 and onwards.*

**73 MASI AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA CLASSICO COSTASERA 2016 96 Pts.**

*I love the semidried, cranberry-like fruit base to the aromas, decorated by notes of very dark chocolate and coffee bean. Medium-to full-bodied with a very silky, refined feel to the palate. Tight bead of super clean fruit and fine, polished tannins. Long yet tight, crystal-clear finish that lingers. Exquisite Amarone. The tight, focused and balanced nature to this makes you want to drink it now. But it will get even better with some bottle age. Try from 2023.*

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**74 IDDA ETNA ROSSO 2019 96 Pts.**

*This is really beautifully rich and opulent with aromas of ripe fruit, caramel and chocolate brioche. Some earth, too. Medium-to full-bodied with soft, integrated tannins that give a cashmere mouth feel. It's fresh and very long with gorgeous texture and a delicious finish. 98% nerello mascalese and 2% nerello cappuccio. A joint production from Graci and Gaja. So attractive to drink now, but better in 2023.*

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**75 PARUSSO BAROLO PERARMANDO 2017 96 Pts.**

*Very exotic Parusso Barolo as always, with dried fruit, strawberries and tangerines. Full-bodied with chewy tannins and a powerful, intense finish. This is really structured. Needs four or five years to soften. Try in 2025.*

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**76 CASTELLO DI AMA CHIANTI CLASSICO GRAN SELEZIONE SAN LORENZO 2018 96 Pts.**

*A tight, polished red with a very beautiful texture of firm, polished yet integrated tannins. Full-bodied with plenty of subtle dark-berry and chocolate character. Hints of walnuts, too. Flavorful finish. A little tight at the end, but already really delicious. Serious young Gran Selezione. Drink or hold.*

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**77 RENATO RATTI BAROLO MARCENASCO 2017 96 Pts.**

*This is so perfumed and beautiful with cherries, strawberries and dried flowers that follow through to a medium to full body with firm, fine tannins and a long, energetic finish. All about length and finesse. Drink in 2024.*

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**78 TEDESCHI AMARONE DELLA VALPOLICELLA MATERNIGO RISERVA 2016 96 Pts.**

*Shows a lot of reserve on the nose with a tight package of baked red-cherry aromas and some bright mineral, almost wet-stone character. Mediterranean herbs, too. Full-bodied palate that's again under control, but there's a dense package of firm, fine tannin, dried fruit and spice waiting to burst out. Hard to believe this is 17% alcohol, it's so well constructed. This will be superb in a year or two and onwards, if you can resist the temptation now. Best from 2023.*

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**79 CAIAROSSA TOSCANA 2018 96 Pts.**

*This is extremely perfumed with violets, sage, lavender, currants and berries. Fresh and vivid. Medium-to full-bodied with super refined tannins and fruit. So subtle and refined. This is really long and gorgeous. Goes on for minutes. A change in style from past vintages and I like it. 30% syrah, 30% cabernet franc, 16% cabernet sauvignon, 12% merlot 7% petit verdot and 5% sangiovese. From organically grown grapes. So hard not to drink now, but better after 2023.*

**80 LIVIO FELLUGA ROSAZZO ABBAZIA DI ROSAZZO 2017 96 Pts.**

Aromas of pear skin, waxed lemon, dried pineapple, yoghurt and sea salt. It's medium-to full-bodied with tangy acidity and a waxy texture. Fantastic concentration and phenolic texture. Beautifully layered with a mineral, saline finish. Long and complex. Blend of friulano, pinot bianco, sauvignon, malvasia and ribolla gialla. Drink or hold.

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**81 GIROLAMO RUSSO ETNA ROSSO SAN LORENZO 2019 96 Pts.**

This displays an amazing balance of power and grace, throwing in a shovel load of terroir, too. The aromas and flavors extend from ripe red fruit, through red licorice, tufo, orange rind and bright herbs. Medium-bodied with some firm tannin, but there's no stopping the complex fruit. This is top-class Etna rosso. Drinkable now, if you don't mind the firm tannin, or hold.

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**82 BOVIO BAROLO GATTERA 2017 96 Pts.**

This is very structured and long with depth of fruit and an excellent framework of firm, tight tannins. It's full-bodied and chewy with a flavorful finish. The tannins are very fine. Try after 2024.

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**83 PAOLO SCAVINO BAROLO CAROBRIC 2017 96 Pts.**

The plums, dried strawberries and crushed stones pop out of the glass. Full-bodied and very layered with intense tannins and a chewy finish. This is a tannic and powerful wine. Give this three to four years to soften and come together. The tannins need to resolve. Drink after 2024.

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**84 COLLI DI CASTELFRANCI FIANO DI AVELLINO PENDINO 2020 94 Pts.**

A complex Fiano with aromas and flavors of citrus and stone fruit, together with creamy wet-stone character that pervades both the nose and palate. Medium-to full-bodied with a smooth but intense mouth feel, full of balanced fruit and minerals. Long finish. Excellent Fiano here. Lovely to drink now, but may even take some aging.

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**85 ARGENTIERA BOLGHERI SUPERIORE 2018 96 Pts.**

Aromas of plums and berries with some chocolate and vanilla undertones. Full-bodied and layered with soft tannins that are bright at the end. Currants and blackberries. Currant bush, too. Love the tannin texture to this. Drink in 2025.

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**86 TASCA D'ALMERITA NERELLO MASCALESE ETNA ROSSO TASCANTE GHIAIA NERA 2019 95 Pts.**

Subtle aromas of orange peel, cherries, and dried flowers follow through to a medium body, fine tannins and a refined, subtle finish. Such beauty. So drinkable and fine. Drink now.

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**87 TOLAINI TOSCANA AL PASSO 2018 95 Pts.**

This is a fantastic red with so much cherry, currant, ash, tobacco, earth and walnut aromas. It's full and layered with firm tannins that provide form, texture and structure. Linear and long. Really excellent for the vintage. Give it two or three years to come together, but already a beauty. Try after 2024.



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**88 CASTEL JUVAL RIESLING SÜDTIROL VINSCHGAU GLETSCHERSCHLIFF 2019 95 Pts.**

*Explosively fresh white-fruit, spring-blossom and flinty nose. Very sleek and diamond-bright, this is a staggeringly refreshing dry white. Maybe some will claim the racy acidity is untypical for Italy, but for us this is simply a very successful expression of a unique Alpine terroir, 700 meters above sea level. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**89 CASTELLO DI MONSANTO CHIANTI CLASSICO RISERVA 2018 95 Pts.**

*Cedar, dried flowers, cherries and spices on the nose. Medium-to full-bodied with very polished, refined tannins and excellent length. This has gorgeous structure. Needs two or three years to soften. Excellent potential. Try after 2023.*

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**90 TORNATORE ETNA BIANCO ZOTTORINOTTO 2019 95 Pts.**

*So much heather and lavender on the nose, but there's also smoky intensity to this that makes it stand head and shoulders above the majority of Etna whites. This really takes you to the mighty volcanic mountain and let's you feel its primal power. Deep bass notes at the very long finish. Drinkable now, but best from 2022.*

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**91 VIE DI ROMANS SAUVIGNON BLANC FRIULI ISONZO VIERIS 2019 95 Pts.**

*A gorgeous, opulent sauvignon blanc with lots of ripe fruit that comes across as pineapple and mango. It's full and rather oily with lots of fruit and a long, long finish. Spicy and minerally at the end. One of the best sauvignon blancs from Italy. Drink or hold.*

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**92 PFITSCHER SAUVIGNON BLANC ALTO ADIGE MATHIAS KATHREINERFELDER RISERVA 2019 95 Pts.**

*The complex nose of wild herbs, gentian root, flint and white currants pulls you into this concentrated, elegant and precisely contoured sauvignon blanc. Super-long finish with literally breathtaking mineral freshness. Limited production. Sustainable. Drink or hold.*

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**93 FIRRIATO NERO D'AVOLA SICILIA CHIARAMONTE 2018 94 Pts.**

*Tons of red and black plums, plus delicate chocolate character make this full-bodied and silky nero d'avola very appealing. Quite some concentration, but in an undemonstrative form. Long, plush finish that I just want to sink into. Drink or hold.*

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**94 BINDI SERGARDI TOSCANA TENUTA I COLLI GOVERNO ALL'USO TOSCANO NICOLÒ 2019 94 Pts.**

*Lots of crushed blackberries and black cherries on the nose and palate, together with plenty of walnuts and more bitter walnut shells. Medium-to full-bodied with well-integrated tannins and a dense, fruit and nut finish that pushes on and on. Loads of character here. Something quite special. Enjoy now, or let it develop for a while in the bottle.*

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**95 FONZONE FIANO IRPINIA SEQUOIA 2019 94 Pts.**

*Very dense, savory nose, pushing out lots of nutty, spicy notes over the ripe citrus fruit with a lightly exotic edge. Full and layered with fruity and savory flavors that persist for a long time. Intense, spicy finish. This is classy fiano that reaches every corner of your mouth. Drink now.*

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**96 SCHIOPETTO MALVASIA COLLIO 2020 94 Pts.**

*Dried-apricot and pineapple aromas with some bitter lemon and smoky apricot. Medium to full body. Creamy texture and spice. Flavorful finish. Fantastic malvasia. Drink now.*

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**97 MONTEVETRANO CAMPANIA CORE 2018 94 Pts.**

*Super balance to this intense red with exquisite spice to the mixed berries on the nose, following through to a full body with fine, well-integrated tannins, succulent fruit and a long, elegant and flavorful finish. All in place and lovely to drink now, but best from 2023.*

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**98 DI MEO FIANO DI AVELLINO 2020 93 Pts.**

*A fragrant nose of white peach, lemon curd and dried thyme. Medium-to full-bodied with exacting acidity that articulates the citrus and stone-fruit palate wonderfully, keeping the overall experience bright and balanced. Silky texture and hints of nutmeg at the end. Drink now.*

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**99 SELLA & MOSCA CANNONAU DI SARDEGNA RISERVA 2019 93 Pts.**

*This is really delicious with berries, cherries, crushed stones, slate and dried rosemary. Subtle and flavorful at the same time. Medium tannins that are polished and pretty. Spices at the end. Grenache, as you may know already. Drink or hold.*

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**100 SELVAPIANA CHIANTI RUFINA 2019 93 Pts.**

*Black cherry, crushed stone and citrus fruit on the nose. Aromatic and pleasing. Medium-bodied with vivid fruit and a fresh finish. Very typical Chianti Rufina with subtle, clean fruit and bright acidity. Drink now.*



# TOP 100 WINES OF NEW ZEALAND 2021



*Nick Stock,  
Senior Editor*

The big news for New Zealand this year is the awarding of our global Wine of the Year for 2021 to Kumeu River Chardonnay Kumeu Maté's Vineyard 2020. As James said, "it has been a long time coming," and this not only marks a first for Kumeu River, but it's also the first time New Zealand has topped our annual global tastings and the first time a white wine from anywhere in the wine world has been awarded the top accolade.

There's a broader story around Kumeu River topping our New Zealand list and global Wine of the Year for 2021 – one that celebrates chardonnay as a true hero of New Zealand's wine repertoire. We have long reported on their wildly desirable pinot noir wines and the über-popular sauvignon blanc made mostly in Marlborough, but chardonnay has been ascending particularly rapidly in the past five or so years in our coverage.



The Kumeu River range of chardonnays is at a world-class level. (Photo by Nick Stock)

We rated about 650 New Zealand wines over the last 12 months in Hong Kong and Adelaide, Australia, and about 110 were chardonnay compared with 113 for sauvignon blanc and 204 for pinot noir. We are always on the lookout for top chardonnay.

Many of the country's best winemakers have turned their attention to the pursuit of great chardonnay, and the results show strongly here with 24 chards on this year's Top 100 list. Kumeu River winemaker Michael Brajkovich was chair of the major New Zealand wine show for five years, from 2012 to 2016, and saw chardonnay consistently rise to the top there. "The best white wines were always chardonnay," he said, "and now people have recognized the potential for New Zealand chardonnay. We have new clones with better areas planted to chardonnay and a much stronger focus on the pursuit of ultimate quality."

Similar to what has played out in other parts of the wine world like Australia, we have seen the pendulum swing from overtly oaked chardonnays to intensely reductive styles in New Zealand, to a point where complexity, purity and balance are aligned. "We have to get chardonnay ripe in Kumeu," Brajkovich said.

"Even though we are a maritime climate as opposed to continental, the feel of our cool climate is very much aligned with that of Burgundy."

And 2020 was an exceptional season for chardonnay at Kumeu, a dry year with moderate temperatures that only once broke the 30 degrees Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) barrier.

Maté's Vineyard (named after the late Maté Brajkovich, who established the family's vineyards and winery) is planted to the Mendoza clone, which is renowned for producing smaller berries among the normal-sized ones, a much-prized quality known as "hen and chicken," or "millerandage" in French. "Hand harvesting and whole bunch pressing are the two key aspects of harnessing the high extract, density and concentration," Brajkovich said. "A hallmark of Maté's Vineyard chardonnay is getting the right tannin into the wine. This gives the wine long aging potential and means it enriches as it ages."

James likened the 2020 Kumeu River Maté's Vineyard Chardonnay to great Burgundy, like Le Montrachet, for these hallmark qualities of structure, density and power.

## THE BEAUTY OF 2019

The work of two generations of the Brajkovich family in delivering truly world-class chardonnay has inspired many winemakers in New Zealand to pursue the highest quality of not only chardonnay but of wine per se. The 2020 vintage may have delivered perfect growing and ripening conditions, but it took several lifetimes worth of work within the Brajkovich family to make our 2021 Wine of the Year.





The Rippon winery vineyard in Wanaka, New Zealand, which produced our No. 3 wine, the Rippon Mature Vine 2018. (Photo by Nick Stock)

And while there are 24 chardonnays represented on our list of 2021 Top 100 New Zealand wines, pinot noir continues to dominate the numbers with 47 entries. These are led by none other than Ata Rangi, with their 2019 pinot noir at No. 2 (and No. 71 in the global Top 100), followed by Rippon Mature Vine 2018 (No. 74 in the global Top 100). Here we see two of the most authentic and dedicated producers right at the top of their game.

The 2019 vintage is one that has delivered many wines of very high quality and across many different regions and styles in New Zealand. In fact, this vintage is responsible for just over 60 percent of the wines in this year's New Zealand Top 100 list. Helen Masters, the winemaker at Ata Rangi, explained the experience of the 2019 vintage in Martinborough, which is at the southern end of New Zealand's

North Island, as one that presented the opportunity to make truly great wine. "We are always vulnerable to spring frosts here in Martinborough and these especially in Te Muna," Masters said, "but the township vineyards where we source our best pinot are earlier and much safer."

She also said that 2019 delivered low yields of pinot in open bunches with smaller than normal berries. "The weather from February to April was stunning, and we had the opportunity to harvest healthy pinot with ideal acid and

tannin balance," she explained. "The berry size was always going to deliver concentration, and tannins were the key. We deployed very gentle handling and a higher whole-bunch inclusion, looking to lower the peak fermentation temperatures to nail structure and balance."

**Our top Kiwi wine for 2021 is no longer a secret, but there was so much more to enjoy from the island nation over the past year.**



The resulting wine, the 2019 Ata Rangi Pinot Noir Martinborough, is stunning and one of the greatest editions of this consistently top-performing New Zealand pinot, with power set amid silky structure. The impression it gives is of effortlessness with immense depth and mesmerizing nuance – the kind of attributes that define the greatest pinot wines all round the world. James singled out the 2018 Rippon Mature Vine Pinot Noir for similar qualities, highlighting the intense yet refined tannins that give the wine such impressive length. The structural prowess of these two wines, combined with such attractive purity, really set them apart.

The list of pinot producers is dominated by Central Otago, with more than half the wines in this year's list, but there's a notable spread of great pinot makers covering Canterbury, Waipara,

Marlborough, Nelson and of course Martinborough. The tiny production of Bell Hill pinot noir in Waikari is also singled out for greatness (99 points), a tiny-production wine that is already on the radar of pinot noir collectors and well worth the effort to seek out.

Syrah continues its ascendance with nine entries on the list, and the Bilancia Syrah Hawks Bay La Collina 2019 (No. 5) leads the way with a brand of refinement and structural prowess driven by what I describe as long, tensile tannins. This wine presents a fulcrum of power and elegance. Then there are excellent examples of cabernet sauvignon, merlot and blends, as well as sauvignon blanc, pinot gris, gewurztraminer, chenin blanc and of course riesling on offer. Such a great representation of quality and diversity.

Enjoy our 2021 New Zealand Top 100.



James tasting another top New Zealand chardonnay, the 2017 Bell Hill Chardonnay Waikari. (Photo by Jack Hui)

**1 KUMEU RIVER CHARDONNAY KUMEU MATE'S VINEYARD 2020 100 Pts.**

*This is such impressive chardonnay in terms of power and complexity, delivering so much with such poise. Aromas of lemons and peaches intersect with lightly spicy oak and brioche on the nose. The palate drops mouth-filling flavors of peach and lemon and winds tight, before exploding long on the finish with a long, nutty afterglow. Perfect chardonnay. Drink over the next decade or more. Screw cap.*

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**2 ATA RANGI PINOT NOIR MARTINBOROUGH 2019 98 Pts.**

*A complex wine from the outset with gently reductive notes and modern oak spice threading into fresh cherry, spiced bread, rose, forest wood and blood orange, as well as darker cherry notes. The palate tells the full story. This displays real power and definition with clear-cut and powerful tannins. The intensity of the red-cherry fruit is impressive and the way it occupies the finish with length and uplift is the thing that defines great pinot noir per se. Strong vintage. Drink over the next decade. Screw cap.*

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**3 RIPPON PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO MATURE VINE 2018 98 Pts.**

*Dried strawberries, mushrooms, bark and flowers on the nose. It changes all the time! Full-bodied with intense yet refined tannins that drive the center palate to a long and almost endless finish. Great length. Great wine as always! Impressive to taste now, but this will be even better in three to five years. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**4 TRINITY HILL SYRAH HAWKES BAY HOMAGE 2018 98 Pts.**

*This is a complex and very intense syrah that offers a deeply ripe yet fresh and clear-cut impression of blackberry and pepper, with other layers of spice, graphite and gently meaty notes. The palate is silky yet powerful with really finely layered tannins that cast a long, evenly built finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**5 BILANCIA SYRAH HAWKES BAY LA COLLINA 2019 99 Pts.**

*An exceptional La Collina release with such impressive depth and power, yet elegant and detailed, too. Aromas of black tea, red cherry and plum, pomegranate, cola nut, white pepper, clove and graphite. The palate is defined by long, tensile tannins and holds such pure fresh-fruit flavor in an intense, deep and focused finish. Power with elegance and purity here. Excellent syrah. Their finest release to date. Try from 2024. Screw cap.*

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**6 BELL HILL PINOT NOIR WAIKARI 2017 99 Pts.**

*This has an impressive red and dark-cherry nose, integrated beautifully with sweetly fragrant spice and blueberries. The palate has such fine yet fleshy texture with intense, spicy red-cherry flavors and a very brightly defined, long and fresh finish. Love the purity here. This has such fine, vibrant texture and a stunning finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**7 PEGASUS BAY CHARDONNAY WAIPARA VALLEY VIRTUOSO 2019 98 Pts.**

*This has an impressive red and dark-cherry nose, integrated beautifully with sweetly fragrant spice and blueberries. The palate has such fine yet fleshy texture with intense, spicy red-cherry flavors and a very brightly defined, long and fresh finish. Love the purity here. This has such fine, vibrant texture and a stunning finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**8 ATA RANGI PINOT NOIR MARTINBOROUGH MCCRONE VINEYARD 2019****97 Pts.**

*Attractive, fresh red-cherry and blueberry aromas, as well as blood orange and orange zest. Some herbal notes too. This delivers a sense of purity as well as complexity. The palate has bright and vivid red-cherry flavor with quite a rich and well-defined core of intense red cherries and a fluid build through the finish. Nicely layered and concentrated with intense, compressed tannin at the finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**9 FELTON ROAD PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO BLOCK 5 2019 98 Pts.**

*Very fragrant nose here with deeply woven complexity. Earthy nuances, bracken, leaves and spiced red cherries abound with roses and violets, as well as blueberries. The palate has long tannins that extrude deep along a central spine. Lots of blueberry and red-cherry flavors. The contained, fleshy feel of the palate is really something and this always powerful wine is in such, supple and fluid form. Drink or hold.*

**10 STONYRIDGE WAIHEKE ISLAND LAROSE 2019 97 Pts.**

*One of the best Larose releases in the wine's history, this has a very attractive sense of depth, power and composure. The brand of refinement seen in the finest Bordeaux. Aromas of blackberry and blackcurrant, as well as plum and mulberry, are seasoned with oak spices, leaves and tobacco. The palate has such smoothly groomed tannins and concentrated, fresh, dark-toned berries. There's a lot to like here. Drink or hold.*

**11 NEUDORF PINOT NOIR NELSON HOME BLOCK 2019 97 Pts.**

*This has such attractively fleshy red and dark cherry. Sweetly earthy. The oak is spicy and nicely placed among intense ripe and vibrant cherries. There's plushness to the supple, fleshy palate. Smoothly rendered and juicy with rich dark cherry to close. The acidity is pitch perfect. Mouthwatering, delicious pinot. Drink or hold.*

**12 KUMEU RIVER CHARDONNAY KUMEU CODDINGTON 2020 97 Pts.**

*This is a wine of real purity and elegance with fresh sliced peaches and lemons, as well as some light pastry notes. The palate is fine, unwaveringly long and pure with enlivening acidity through the finish. Stunning. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**13 CRAGGY RANGE PINOT NOIR MARTINBOROUGH AROHA TE MUNA 2019****97 Pts.**

*This has hit an impressive trajectory with very well-curated, fresh blueberry, red-cherry and black-cherry aromas, swathed in sweet baking spices and fresh-tilled earth. The palate has sleekly defined tannins, carrying intense, ripe blueberry and red-cherry flavors, amid deeply buried spice. Impressive, this is the finest Aroha to date. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**14 DRY RIVER PINOT NOIR MARTINBOROUGH 2019 97 Pts.**

*Aromas of sweet strawberries, spice and dried flowers, as well as some spices, such as nutmeg and cinnamon. Full-bodied with firm, creamy tannins. Juicy and extremely long. Solid and polished. Goes on for minutes. Drink or hold.*

**15 FELTON ROAD PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO BLOCK 3 2020 97 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of sour cherries, wild strawberries, cranberries, dried flowers, orange rind and baking spices. Medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity and fine tannins. Layered and harmonious, with a velvety texture and vibrant, lively character on the palate. Pure and flavorful, long finish. Very long. Give this three or four years to show its true greatness. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**16 PEGASUS BAY PINOT NOIR WAIPARA VALLEY PRIMA DONNA 2017 97 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of cherries, raspberries, dark chocolate, earth, orange rind, violets and sweet spices. Full body with lively acidity. Rather chewy tannins. Bright and crunchy with a fleshy texture. Balanced and layered with a long, precise finish. Better after 2023. Screw cap.*

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**17 RIPPON PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO EMMA'S BLOCK 2018 97 Pts.**

*Complex aromas of cranberries, ripe strawberries, smoke and dried flowers with hints of mushrooms. Slate, too! Full-bodied with chewy tannins and a long, flavorful finish. This is powerful and structured, with seriousness all around. Give it three or four years to open. Try after 2023.*

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**18 BELL HILL CHARDONNAY WAIKARI 2017 97 Pts.**

*Intense, vivid aromas of lemon, peach and hazelnut with some crushed-stone notes, too. Smells ripe and needs some air to open up. The palate has a very intense, layered structure, building plenty of peach, lemon and yellow grapefruit, as well as some hazelnut and pastry. Acidity and minerals surge into the finish. Stunning. Drink over the next four years. Screw cap.*

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**19 SATO PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO L'INSOLITE 2018 97 Pts.**

*Beautiful ripe-fruit aromas with orange-peel and rose-petal undertones. Peaches, too. Full-bodied with very primary fruit, firm and chewy tannins and a flavorful finish. It's tight and focused. White-pepper undertones. Such beauty. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**20 TE MATA HAWKES BAY COLERAINE 2018 97 Pts.**

*A very concentrated nose with impressively rich blackberry, raspberry and dark-plum aromas. Dark chocolate, violet and cedary oak here, too. Very youthful. The palate has a very rich, intense and plush feel with fresh acidity and depth, amid long, fine and compressed tannins. Good freshness and concentration. Drink or hold.*

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**21 TE WHARE RA PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH CLAYVIN SV5096 2019 97 Pts.**

*Trademark violet-like florals and an earthy edge to the ripe cherries and blueberries. There's subtle complexity here, and this is a vintage of real fruit purity. The palate has a very impressively defined tannin weave with bright, gently tangy texture and a fresh, juicy core of red cherries and plums. The taut, fine tannin and crisp layering is a real feature. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**22 TRINITY HILL SYRAH HAWKES BAY L'ERITAGE 2018 97 Pts.**

*This is a bold, brassy expression, which takes its stylistic cues from a full embrace of whole-bunch fermentation. This delivers aromas of dark raspberry and plum essence, as well as spiced dark chocolate and pomegranate. The palate has a powerful surge and the tannins command some grip and weight. First release of this three-clone blend of syrah. Give this a little more time to resolve. Try from 2024. Screw cap.*

**23 TWO PADDOCKS PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO THE FUSILIER 777 2019****97 Pts.**

*A very punchy, modern edition of this single parcel on Bannockburn that needs some time in the glass to open up. There's blueberry, violet, red and dark cherry, sappy herbal notes and a spicy-oak thread, too. The palate has a very plush, intense and powerful core of rich, ripe red cherries, underscored by surging acidity that drives fresh and long. Impressive intensity and lovely tannin texture. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**24 CLOS HENRI SAUVIGNON BLANC MARLBOROUGH GREYWACKE RIVER STONES SINGLE VINEYARD 2019 96 Pts.**

*Pretty nose of bergamot, white pear, fresh pineapple, white lavender, clove, hawthorn, flint and some cedar. Medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity and a textured palate. Racy. Beautifully integrated. Drink now or hold.*

**25 FROMM PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH CLAYVIN VINEYARD 2019 96 Pts.**

*This is a richly fruited and flavor-soaked pinot with a wealth of spice, red and dark cherries, roses, violets and red plums. The fruit intensity and purity on the palate is really striking. The really well-defined tannins are so commanding. Long, fresh finish. Drink over the next decade.*

**26 GREYWACKE CHARDONNAY MARLBOROUGH 2017 96 Pts.**

*Complex aromas of pie crust, apple tart, stone and flint with some citrus. Full-bodied with a tight palate and fantastic fruit and structure. Great length. So impressive. A serious, world-class chardonnay. Drink now. Screw cap.*

**27 PROPHET'S ROCK PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO CUVÉE AUX ANTIPODES 2018 96 Pts.**

*A collaboration wine between Burgundian Francois Millet and Prophet's Rock's Paul Pujol. This makes a very harmonious impression on the nose with red cherries, spice, hazelnuts, red florals, fresh tobacco and light earthy nuances. The palate has a very neatly coiled and layered feel with tannins that unfurl and lift the finish. Red-cherry and pastry flavors are delivered in vibrant mode. Some blueberries, too. Drink or hold.*

**28 PURIRI HILLS CLEVELAND POPE 2010 96 Pts.**

*Dark berry and blackberry with dried oyster shell. Some mushroom, too. Medium-to full-bodied, fresh and vivid. Lots of dark fruit at the end. Lovely drinkability. Drink now.*

**29 QUARTZ REEF PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO SINGLE FERMENT 2018 96 Pts.**

*Impressive blueberry and dark-cherry aromas, cocoa powder, sweet spices and violet-like florals. The palate has a very smooth, spicy feel with such attractive tannin texture. So fine, very detailed and carrying dark cherry and cocoa flavors so long on the finish. This is intense, smooth and round with impressive tannin structure. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*



**30 SACRED HILL CHARDONNAY HAWKES BAY RIFLEMANS 2019 96 Pts.**

*Impressive, bold and rich style here, this is chardonnay with all elements dialed right up. Oak is assertive, but integrated and the ripe peaches are up to the task. Spicy and gently honeyed, savory elements, too. The palate is layered and suave with bold, fleshy peach that really coats the mouth in impressive style. Acidity ignites the finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**31 STONYRIDGE WAIHEKE ISLAND PILGRIM 2020 96 Pts.**

*A chewy and very intense red from syrah, mourvedre, grenache and viognier that delivers so much blackberry, licorice, tar and black-walnut character. Graphite, too. It's full and dry at the end, providing tension and focus. Drink or hold.*

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**32 PROPHET'S ROCK PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO RETROSPECT 2015 96 Pts.**

*Aromas of fresh tobacco, blueberry, violet and spice, as well as red cherry. This is very resolved and there's a nice balance between the savory and fruity notes. The palate has quite a bold, fleshy feel with impressive intensity of fruit and soft, layered tannins. Blueberry and damson flavors hold long and impressively fresh. Drink or hold.*

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**33 TWO PADDOCKS PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO THE LAST CHANCE 2019 96 Pts.**

*This parcel from Earnsclough is always elegant and fragrant and has performed well in 2020. There are light red florals of roses, some violets, wild red cherries, raspberries and a fine, spicy layer, as well as sappy elements. The palate has finely layered tannins that anchor in a central red-cherry core of flavor nicely. Fresh, elegant and drinkable, the flavors accumulate in impressive form, really moreish. Fresh acidity, too. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**34 BLACK ESTATE CHARDONNAY WAIPARA VALLEY HOME 2019 95 Pts.**

*This has a golden hue and is unfined, unfiltered and fermented with natural yeast in barrel. The result is a complex, fresh and savory chardonnay with aromas of apple pie, wet chalk, dried chamomile flowers, lemon peel and pastry. The palate has a smooth-honed feel with bright, fresh and fleshy peaches and pears, some lemon curd and gently creamy build into the finish. Rich, composed and concentrated. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**35 CHURCH ROAD CHARDONNAY HAWKES BAY TOM 2019 95 Pts.**

*This is impressive chardonnay with plenty of rich and deep grapefruit and lemon, as well as a flinty, stony and minerally edge. Complex. The palate has very intense fruit, expressed in ripe yet vibrant mode. Long and juicy. Very powerful chardonnay. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**36 CLOS HENRI SAUVIGNON BLANC MARLBOROUGH 2019 95 Pts.**

*This is so polished and concentrated. It has superbly fresh lime, passion fruit and guava, as well as some fresh herbs and wet stones. The palate has attractively detailed and focused flavors with a zesty, fresh line of acidity and plenty of intense, lively and refreshing lime and passion-fruit flavor. Sleek and polished. Drink over the next three years. Screw cap.*

**37 CRAGGY RANGE CHARDONNAY HAWKES BAY LES BEAUX CAILLOUX 2019****95 Pts.**

Aromas of honey and grilled peach, as well as gun flint and grapefruit. Some toasty oak and lemon, too. The palate has layered, concentrated and intense but fresh aromas of ripe peach, yellow grapefruit and lemon. Such power and poise is rare. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

**38 DOG POINT CHARDONNAY MARLBOROUGH 2019 95 Pts.**

Smoke, hay, dried mango, preserved lemon and buttered toast on the nose. Full-bodied with sharp acidity and a phenolic texture. Tight, concentrated and long. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

**39 FROMM PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH CUVÉE H 2019 95 Pts.**

Quite vividly spicy and a little savory, too, this has dried berries, earth, forest wood and roses, as well as subtle, meaty elements. Plenty of spice, too. The palate holds a fleshy core of concentrated red-cherry flavor, together with some raspberry and red plum. This is a silky pinot with savory-tinged flavors that builds weight and tannin through the finish. Drink or hold.

**40 ESCARPMENT PINOT NOIR MARTINBOROUGH KUPE 2019 95 Pts.**

Aromas of strawberries, black cherries and some white pepper follow through to a full body with a creamy texture and a dried-orange aftertaste. A little tight at the finish, but shows energy and focus. Drinkable now, but needs time to soften. Better after 2023. Screw cap.

**41 GIESEN PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH SINGLE VINEYARD SELECTION CLAYVIN 2016 95 Pts.**

This wine is in a savory place with earth and mushroom notes, as well as dried brown spices, laid across dried red cherries, leaves and flowers. Complex nose. The palate has plenty of firm tannin, tailored around pure red-cherry flavors. Very composed and sturdy. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

**42 GREYSTONE PINOT NOIR WAIPARA VALLEY THOMAS BROTHERS' 2018 95 Pts.**

The oak factor is dialed-up here and adds spicy, toasty aromas to the red-cherry, red-plum and blueberry aromas. It winds up and exudes such pure fruit with air. The palate has a very rich, intense and vividly defined feel with ripe red and dark-cherry flavors holding so pure at the finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

**43 MOUNT EDWARD PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO 2018 95 Pts.**

An impressively poised and detailed pinot that offers such expressive red cherry and blueberry. Really pure and vibrant aromas and flavors. The tannins are crisply cut and deliver an uplifting feel to the palate with intense and lively style. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

**44 MT. DIFFICULTY PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO BANNOCKBURN PIPECLAY TERRACE 2019 95 Pts.**

Dark cherries, orange zest, herbs and sweet spices. Medium-to full-bodied with fresh acidity. Balanced, with a creamy texture. Flavorful and fruity. Succulent finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

**45 PYRAMID VALLEY VINEYARDS PINOT NOIR CANTERBURY EARTH SMOKE 2019 95 Pts.**

*A fragrant pinot noir with aromas of redcurrants, sour cherries, baking spices, dried flowers, smoke and citrus zest. It's medium-bodied with fine tannins and fresh acidity. Velvety, balanced and layered. Fresh and complex with a long finish. Very fine tannins at the end. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**46 DOG POINT SAUVIGNON BLANC MARLBOROUGH SECTION 94 2019 95 Pts.**

*Flinty, reductive notes open up to lime zest, white grapefruit, dried pineapple, hay, white pepper and hints of praline. Medium-bodied with sharp acidity and a phenolic, tight and taut palate. Focused and long. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**47 PYRAMID VALLEY VINEYARDS PINOT NOIR CANTERBURY ANGEL FLOWER 2019 95 Pts.**

*A complex nose with aromas of red berries, raspberries, orange rind, dried flowers and sweet spices. Light-to medium-bodied with vivid acidity. Juicy and crunchy with fresh, mineral character. Transparent, elegant and delicate with a long, succulent finish. More open, with hints of cedar and wood that add complexity. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**48 SCOUT PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH SOUTHERN VALLEYS 2019 95 Pts.**

*A very fresh and lively style of pinot that has aromas of blood orange, ruby grapefruit, pomegranate, ripe peach and red cherry. The palate has a very fresh, crunchy and fluid feel with a build of smoothly layered tannins, bright red cherries and a vibrant, upbeat finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**49 TE AWANGA CHARDONNAY HAWKES BAY TRADEMARK 2018 95 Pts.**

*This has a rich, complex feel with attractive lemon, peach and pear aromas on offer, as well as nicely framed savory influences. The palate is punchy, bold and intense and has a vibrant peach and lemon core with a nutty twist through the finish. Formidable power here. Drink or hold.*

**50 SATO PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO PISA TERRACE 2018 95 Pts.**

*Ripe strawberries on the nose with some pie crust and dried flowers. Medium-bodied with beautifully integrated tannins that are ultra-fine and long. Such poise. Gorgeous. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**51 GIESEN CHARDONNAY MARLBOROUGH THE FUDER SINGLE VINEYARD CLAYVIN 2016 95 Pts.**

*A very composed, chiseled nose that has notes of wet stones, as well as lemons, peaches and pears that are all so smoothly integrated. This follows on the palate with a complete expression that offers impressive composure and layering. Holds grapefruit and peach flavors long and fresh. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**52 VALLI PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO BANNOCKBURN VINEYARD 2019****95 Pts.**

*This delivers generous, ripe red-cherry and berry aromas with berry pastry, bergamot, fresh herbs and some nicely dialed-in oak spice. The palate has swirling, fleshy cherry and peach flavors, carried in nicely pitched tannins and delivered into a fresh, juicy and open-knit finish. Seamless. Drink now. Screw cap.*

**53 MT. DIFFICULTY SYRAH CENTRAL OTAGO BENDIGO GHOST TOWN 2019****95 Pts.**

*A fragrant nose of blueberries, dark cherries, violets, peppercorns, smoke and vanilla. Medium-bodied with fine tannins. Round and velvety with smoky character and a succulent finish. This is dry, very real and exciting syrah. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**54 VILLA MARIA CHARDONNAY HAWKES BAY KELTERN VINEYARD 2019 95 Pts.**

*An always impressive and complex chardonnay that has impressive peach and grilled lemon and some hazelnut and gunflint, all framed in reductive, modern mode. The palate is ripe and packed with fleshy peach flavor, underscored by fresh lemon. Supple and smooth with plenty of punch. Impressive concentration. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**55 BILANCIA CHARDONNAY HAWKES BAY TIRATORE 2019 94 Pts.**

*A very composed and complex chardonnay with fresh peach and grapefruit, as well as almond and hazelnut. Complex and exuberant style. The palate has a very plush, fleshy and coolly composed style with ripe peach and pear and a spicy, nutty finish. Drink now. Screw cap.*

**56 BLACK ESTATE CHENIN BLANC WAIPARA VALLEY HOME 2019 94 Pts.**

*Beautifully pure aromas of chamomile, lemon peel and sliced apple with some light pie-crust notes, too. The palate has a very powerful and focused delivery of crisp apple and lemon flavors. Long lines of acidity enliven the finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**57 BURN COTTAGE PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO BURN COTTAGE VINEYARD 2019 94 Pts.**

*Cherries, flowers and sweet spices on the nose. Medium-bodied with fresh acidity. Round and creamy with a caressing texture and a fruity edge. Long finish. Fresh and very fine. Elegant is the word. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**58 VALLI PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO GIBBSTON VINEYARD 2019 95 Pts.**

*Such attractive, fragrant complexity here with bright strawberries, red cherries and spice, as well as a leafy edge and wild herbs. Some pepper, too. The palate has striking elegance with piercing acidity and flavors of yellow clingstone peach, nectarine and red plum. Smooth-honed, long and plush tannins. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**59 BURN COTTAGE PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO MOONLIGHT RACE 2019****94 Pts.**

*Aromas of blueberries, cherries, pomegranates, dried flowers and baking spices. It's medium-bodied with lively acidity. Vibrant and crunchy with plenty of fruit. Succulent finish with excellent length. Linear and tight at the finish. Drink now or hold. Screw cap.*

**60 DRY RIVER PINOT NOIR MARTINBOROUGH 2018 94 Pts.**

*A very complex nose with plenty of forest-floor and leafy aromas across red cherries, herbs and spiced-woody notes. The palate has a very plush and open-knit feel with fresh red cherries and bright, zesty acidity. Neat and fresh. Drink or hold.*

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**61 ELEPHANT HILL CABERNET SAUVIGNON HAWKES BAY BAY STONE 2018****94 Pts.**

*Blackberry, blueberry, chocolate and peppermint. Iodine, too. It's full-bodied and chewy with beautiful focus and intensity. Firm and velvety tannins. Really excellent structure here. This is a wine for the cellar. Try after 2023. Screw cap.*

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**62 ESCARPMENT PINOT NOIR MARTINBOROUGH TE REHUA 2019 94 Pts.**

*Dried-strawberry, citrus, cream and crushed-stone aromas follow through to a full body with firm, chewy tannins that are tight and long. Reserved at the end. Pure fruit, but shy. Drink after 2023. Screw cap.*

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**63 FOLIUM SAUVIGNON BLANC MARLBOROUGH RESERVE 2019 94 Pts.**

*Striking clarity with gently flinty and minerally accents, across fresh lime and lemon, as well as passion fruit and green mango. Some gently creamy nuances, too. The palate has a very plush, supple and fresh feel with elegantly focused style and shape, long flavors of lemon and lime and some attractive drive and tension. Impressive. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

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**64 LVCA HAWKES BAY LE CHARMANT 2018 94 Pts.**

*Attractive blackberries and blueberries on offer here with ripe cherries and nicely bedded oak spice and toast. The palate has a very intense and sleek feel with such fleshy plum flavors in the main. Nicely layered and good concentration, too. A blend of 77% merlot, 14% cabernet sauvignon, 7% franc and 2% malbec. Drink or hold.*

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**65 MAUDE PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO POISON CREEK 2019 94 Pts.**

*Aromas of cherries, raspberries, smoke and spice box. It's medium-to full-bodied with fresh acidity. Layered and textured with fruity character on the palate. Vibrant and succulent finish. Drinkable now, but another year or two of bottle age will soften it. Screw cap.*

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**66 ELEPHANT HILL CHARDONNAY HAWKES BAY SALOMÉ 2019 94 Pts.**

*A bold, rich style with peaches and pears, as well as clotted cream and lime curd. The palate is very composed and layered and has a handy splice of ripe fruit and fresh acidity. Long, fresh finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**67 MISSION ESTATE SYRAH HAWKES BAY GIMBLETT GRAVELS RESERVE 2019 94 Pts.**

*A fragrant nose with aromas of dark cherries, blueberries, bay leaves, smoke, stones and black pepper. Full-bodied with polished tannins. Round and creamy with a velvety texture and a spicy finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*



**68 NEUDORF CHARDONNAY NELSON MOUTERE 2019 94 Pts.**

*A very composed, complex chardonnay with aromas of peach, pear, lemon and hazelnut. Some honey and fresh bread dough, too. The palate is so powerful and tightly wound. Intense, vibrant peaches and lemons hold very long, ahead of the toasted-hazelnut finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink now. Screw cap.*

**69 PADDY BORTHWICK PINOT NOIR WAIRARAPA LEFT HAND 2019 94 Pts.**

*Aromas of strawberry pie, roses and lavender follow through to a medium to full body with firm tannins that are polished and refined. Give it a few years to come completely together, but already so attractive. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**70 QUARTZ REEF PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO BENDIGO ESTATE SINGLE VINEYARD 2018 94 Pts.**

*Always intense and ripe, this has a mix of red-cherry, dark-cherry, currant and black-tea aromas with a dusting of spice and earthy, sappy aromas, as well as violets. The palate has a super fresh, layered and succulent feel with such juicy, soft and supple tannins, wrapped into a smooth framework. Vibrant finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**71 SMITH & SHETH CHARDONNAY HAWKES BAY CRU HOWELL VINEYARD 2019 94 Pts.**

*A serious chardonnay with cooked apple, dried lemon, light cheese and a hint of yogurt. Full-bodied and creamy-textured with a long, flavorful finish. Lovely texture and length. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**72 FOLIUM PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH RESERVE 2019 94 Pts.**

*Cherries, redcurrants, wild strawberries, dried flowers and clay on the nose. Medium-bodied and fresh with juicy character. Mineral, fruity and silky. Vibrant finish with excellent length. Energetic! Drink now.*

**73 SMITH & SHETH SYRAH HAWKES BAY CRU OMAHU 2019 94 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of blueberry, violet, smoke, dried thyme and vanilla. Medium-bodied with chewy tannins and crisp acidity. Structured, yet extremely juicy and fruity on the center-palate. Pure, inky and flavorful finish. Drink or hold.*

**74 TE WHARE RA GEWÜRZTRAMINER MARLBOROUGH SV5182 2020 94 Pts.**

*Wow, this has so much rose perfume and lychee going on. Striking nose that's so, so perfumed and alluring. The palate has a super-luscious texture and bold ripe peach and mango, banana and lychee. A riot of flavor. Drink now. Screw cap.*

**75 TERRACE EDGE PINOT GRIS WAIPARA VALLEY 2014 94 Pts.**

*What a gorgeous pinot gris with sliced papaya, pineapple and hints of pear cream. Medium body. Dry and minerally with some chalk and stone undertones. Balanced and lively. Aniseed and licorice undertones. A real beauty. From organically grown grapes. Drink now. Screw cap.*

**76 VILLA MARIA CHARDONNAY HAWKES BAY KELTERN VINEYARD 2020 94 Pts.**

*Grilled pineapple, spiced pear, vanilla, almond, lemon curd and matchstick on the nose. Full-bodied, rich and opulent with bright acidity. Buttered pastries and sweet spices to close. Intense. Drink now. Screw cap.*

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**77 ZEPHYR PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH 2019 94 Pts.**

*This is a very smartly groomed edition with polish and poise at every step. Red cherries and blueberries, some violets and subtly spicy oak all lead to a palate with chiseled and seamless tannins that are well defined and carry fresh, brambly fruit long. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**78 BUTTERWORTH SAUVIGNON BLANC MARTINBOROUGH 2019 93 Pts.**

*Dried pineapple, sage, lemon zest, flint and some straw. Praline and hazelnut, too. Medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity and a layered, flavorful palate. Complex and delicious. Drink now. Screw cap.*

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**79 AKARUA PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO PISA 25 STEPS 2019 93 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of dark cherries, raspberries, dark chocolate, cloves and baking spices. Medium body with fresh acidity. Energetic and crunchy on the palate with pure, spicy character. Complete and fascinating. Needs three or four years to come together. Unfined. Screw cap.*

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**80 AUNTSFIELD PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH SOUTHERN VALLEYS SINGLE VINEYARD 2019 93 Pts.**

*A ripe, dark and bold style of pinot that has a rich, dark-plum and cocoa-powder nose with dark cherry and oak spice. The palate has juicy, crunchy and ripe tannins that are bedded into rich red and dark-cherry flavors. Drink now. Screw cap.*

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**81 VAVASOUR PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH PAPA 2019 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of dark cherries, raspberries, mocha and spice box. It's medium-to full-bodied with fine tannins. Round, layered and velvety. A rather opulent and savory pinot noir. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**82 AUNTSFIELD SAUVIGNON BLANC MARLBOROUGH SINGLE VINEYARD 2020 93 Pts.**

*Very attractive passion-fruit aromas, as well as ripe melon and lime cream. So much going on here. The palate has a big hit of fresh, ripe and juicy passion-fruit and peach flavors. Pleasingly bitter edge to the finish. Tonic-like twist. Drink now. Screw cap.*

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**83 BLANK CANVAS CHARDONNAY MARLBOROUGH REED VINEYARD 2020 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of dried mango, lime curd, coriander, honeysuckle and salted butter with some meaty and smoky undertones. Full-bodied with tangy acidity. Concentrated and rich, yet well structured, with a bright backbone of acidity and phenolic texture. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

**84 AKARUA PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO BANNOCKBURN 2020 93 Pts.**

*A pretty nose of cherries and cranberries with undertones of sweet spices and violets. It's medium-bodied with crisp acidity. Silky texture with juicy and crunchy character. Pure and fresh with a succulent finish. Drink now or hold. Screw cap.*

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**85 CABLE BAY CHARDONNAY WAIHEKE ISLAND RESERVE 2019 93 Pts.**

*This offers much the same tones of pears and peaches as seen in the regular, black-label Waiheke bottling, but oak and spice is dialed-up in the feed here. Good concentration. Ripe and impressively juicy at the finish. Drink now. Screw cap.*

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**86 CLEARVIEW ESTATE CHARDONNAY HAWKES BAY RESERVE 2019 93 Pts.**

*This is a bold, rich chardonnay with buttered-bread and honey aromas across ripe-peach and poached-pear notes. The palate has a full, creamy style with punchy flavors and long, honey-poached pear to close. Drink now. Screw cap.*

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**87 DELTA PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH HATTERS HILL 2019 93 Pts.**

*Essentially, this fits in the same stylistic range as the estate bottling of 2019 Pinot from Delta, but has greater dimension and depth. Rich cherry and blueberry aromas and flavors abound, as well as aromas of spices, forest wood and flowers. Composed and nicely layered on the palate. Drink now and for five years. Screw cap.*

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**88 FORREST WINES RIESLING MARLBOROUGH BOTRYTISED 2019 93 Pts.**

*Beautifully intense aromas and flavors of ripe apricot, dried peach and orange marmalade. The intensity is impressive. The palate is so flavorful, with a sweet build of fruit that drives on concentrated acidity. Finishes so long. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**89 FRAMINGHAM PINOT NOIR MARLBOROUGH F-SERIES 2020 93 Pts.**

*Complex aromas of blueberries, dried thyme, tea leaves, spices and some iodine. It's medium-to full-bodied with tight-grained tannins and bright acidity. Lots of tension and energy. Tight, mineral finish. Chunky. Try from 2022. Screw cap.*

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**90 CABLE BAY SYRAH WAIHEKE ISLAND 2019 93 Pts.**

*A modern style with plenty of white pepper and sweet baking spices across red plums and blackberries. The palate adds a thread of dark spiced chocolate to the dark-berry fruit mix. The tannins are focused and resolved. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**91 BLANK CANVAS CHARDONNAY MARLBOROUGH ESCAROTH 2019 93 Pts.**

*Very impressive complexity and purity here with struck-match, grapefruit and lemon-peel aromas, as well as peach and some gently creamy notes. The palate has vibrant peach and lemon-curd flavors and grilled hazelnut warming the finish. Drink now. Screw cap.*

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**92 FRAMINGHAM RIESLING MARLBOROUGH F-SERIES OLD VINE 2020 93 Pts.**

*Lime curd, green peach, apricot stone, flint and some ash on the nose. It's medium-bodied with bright acidity and a subtle yet concentrated palate. Nice balance between fruit and stones on the finish. Dry feel. Drink now or hold. Screw cap.*

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**93 GREYSTONE CHARDONNAY WAIPARA VALLEY 2019 93 Pts.**

*This has a rich, concentrated feel with aromas of sliced peaches, grilled lemons, melon, honey and gently flinty notes, as well as hazelnuts. Complex wine. The palate has a very long, juicy and layered feel with grilled-peach and hazelnut flavors. Smooth, fleshy and intensely fresh. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**94 MAIN DIVIDE PINOT NOIR WAIPARA VALLEY 2019 93 Pts.**

*A fragrant nose of dark cherries, berries, smoke, violets and baking spices. Medium-to full-bodied with fine tannins and bright acidity. Spicy and vivid with smoky character on the palate. Fruity and flavorful finish. Pleasantly firm, too. Drink now or hold. Screw cap.*

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**95 MAUDE PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO 2019 93 Pts.**

*A fragrant nose of sour cherries, cranberries, dried herbs and roses. It's medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity. Pure and balanced with juicy character and a silky texture. Succulent and lively with a long, flavorful finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**96 MOUNT EDWARD PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO TED 2019 93 Pts.**

*This is seductive and packed with rich dark cherry and plenty of spice with violet and blueberry too. Punchy and flavorful palate. Smooth tannins. Polished, dark-cherry finish. Drink over the next five years. Screw cap.*

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**97 PASK SYRAH HAWKES BAY GIMBLETT GRAVELS 2019 93 Pts.**

*Attractively fragrant white pepper and raspberry with blackberry, too. The palate has a smooth-honed and very velvety feel with bright red fruit, elegantly fine tannins and good balance. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**98 SCOUT CHARDONNAY MARLBOROUGH SOUTHERN VALLEYS 2019 93 Pts.**

*This has attractively modern, gunflint and lemon-pith aromas with fresh pears and peaches, too. The palate has a very assertive, dynamic feel with energetic, citrusy drive through fresh pears and peaches and a little hazelnut to close. Drink now. Screw cap.*

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**99 TE AWANGA SYRAH HAWKES BAY TRADEMARK 2016 93 Pts.**

*This has very fragrant red cherries and red plums with a sweetly spicy, fragrant white-pepper note, as well as orange zest and gently flinty nuances. The palate has neatly defined, fine tannins with fresh, spicy red-fruit flavors. Showcases the complex side of syrah. Long and velvety. Drink or hold. Screw cap.*

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**100 ZEPHYR SAUVIGNON BLANC MARLBOROUGH MKIII 2020 93 Pts.**

*Intense, reductive nose of lime, dried pineapple, smoke, flint and ash. Medium-bodied with sharp acidity. Lots of dried-lime and smoke character. Textured and vibrant. Drink or hold.*

# TOP 100 WINES OF SPAIN 2021



*Zekun Shuai,  
Associate Editor*

Just over a month ago, we finished our tasting of 1,500 Spanish wines, and from those we whittled our list down to the Top 100 for 2021. Above all, it shows that the country is currently at a crossroads of change, with innovative, young producers joining and sometimes surpassing their well-versed and traditional cohort in making superb wines in a mosaic of styles from revived vineyards, cooler terroirs and forgotten grapes.

If you still think Rioja is in a rut with its same old coconutty and uncreative wines, or that Ribera del Duero offerings are overly drenched in oak and extraction, or that Priorat goes a little overboard with brooding color, monolithic density and warming alcohol, then now is the time to embrace a whole new slew of wines that tick the boxes of purity, vibrancy, finesse, fluidity and drinkability.

Many of these wines reflect the individuality and unique character of single vineyards, some as small as a hectare or even less, transmitting their unique Spanish character and terroir.



## TERROIR AT THE TOP

At the top of our list is the only wine from the country that received a perfect score. The *Compañía de Vinos Telmo Rodríguez Rioja Las Beatas 2018* is a superb example of how a unique terroir can nudge winemaking sophistication aside, showing how the land and micro-climate of a specific site can gain the upper hand over the predictable, formulaic aspects of winemaking. This bottle captures the otherworldliness that a Spanish wine can exude and gives wine aficionados something they have been craving.

Telmo Rodríguez is just one of the innovative producers in the country that have revived the tradition of field blends – with the vineyard, not the winery, as the focus. The fruit of *Las Beatas* comes from an old, 1.9-hectare terraced vineyard, and the wine underscores the purity and precision of the land with its cool, refined aromatics and immaculate tannins, followed by a linear, endless finish.



JamesSuckling.com Associate Editor Claire Nesbitt during her tastings of a few of the 1,500 Spanish wines we tried this year. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

Despite the fact that 2018 was a cool vintage with abundant yields, Rodríguez believes it is probably the best his team has ever made because it shows the class of a “Grand Vin” and is even more interesting than the concentrated, seductive 2015 and the pure, delicate and lengthy 2016.

The fresh, cool and bumper crop of 2018 also delivered classy Atlantic whites. Telmo Rodríguez’s *Granja de Nuestra Señora de Remelluri Rioja Blanco 2018* (No. 5 on our list), a blend of nine varietals, is one of the greatest and the finest, and it illustrates a brighter, more contained side of the top whites from Rioja. Quality-wise, it is on par with the creamier and broader 2017 but shows more tautness and elegance.

Another otherworldly wine from the 2018 vintage is the *Artadi Alava Viña El Pison 2018* (No. 3), which has an ethereal, Burgundy-like character and offers layers of fruit, flowers, and refined tannins, reflecting winemaker and owner Carlos Lopez de Lacalle’s philosophy that wines need to be drinkable even when they’re young. We couldn’t agree more: while aging potential is essential for great wines, it should not be an excuse to break away from youthful balance and drinkability.

The generation of winemakers at Artadi, like many of their peers, have reduced the use of new oak in the maturation of their wines to almost nothing, as well as the duration of time. Lacalle told James in September over Zoom, “For us, a wine that ages needs to be drinkable when it’s young.” He said the 2018s will age, given their ripe tannins and higher acidity.

Like Las Beatas, El Pison shows the unique expressions of individual terroir, which is an organically farmed, 2.4-hectare parcel at 480 meters near Laguardia. The vineyard was planted in 1945, and the soil is rich in limestone clay, giving the tempranillo a subtle, chalky refinement to the fresh, focused fruit.

## THE REAL RIOJA

But the emphasis on vineyard specificity over winemaking doesn't mean Spain has compromised on tradition. There is a place for everyone, even the old-school stylists. And we are big fans of some of the uncompromising and consistent producers, such as R. López de Heredia Viña Tondonia, one of the oldest wineries in Rioja. Founded in 1877, it remains true to its roots, with very little changed in the winemaking process over the years. It is also one of the few wineries in the world where you can have a veritable sip of history at a friendly price. They produce wines consumers should collect in cases.

Rising above all their wines is our No. 2, the López de Heredia Rioja Reserva Viña Tondonia White 2010, which is made from viura and a small amount of malvasia. Having spent six years on average in wooden vessels and a few years in bottle, it is already complex, exotic and developed, but this deliberately oxidative style throws a gentle curve of aging into the mix, refusing to become a relic of good taste.

You will find many other Rioja traditionalists on our Top 100 list, but all are continuously trying to fine-tune their style, if not improve quality. They do whatever is necessary to make better wines while keeping tradition at heart but also by embracing current trends.



The R. López de Heredia Viña Tondonia winery had the No. 2 wine on our list, the Rioja Reserva Viña Tondonia White 2010, and the No. 11, the Rioja Viña Tondonia Reserva 2009, above. (Photo by James-Suckling.com)

Guillermo de Aranzabel, the president of La Rioja Alta winery, believes it is vital to differentiate positive winemaking trends from winemaking “fashion” – or chasing whatever is popular. For that reason, he said during a Zoom interview we had with him, “We don’t use grapes like cabernet sauvignon because we think that is just fashion, not a trend.”

For de Aranzabel and La Rioja Alta, making wines with vibrant colors is also part of a positive trend, which is why their bottles are showing a bit more brightness. La Rioja Alta Rioja Gran Reserva 904 2015 (No. 14) is a great reference point for the complex, traditional, creamy style found in the region,

and this offering comes with even more precision, brighter fruit and juicier acidity than usual.

Other classic winemaking names, such as Muga and CVNE, hew to both modern and traditional sides, making lengthy and complex wines that are more compatible with contemporary aesthetics. They set the parameters for well-rounded and eclectic Riojas, with dialed-in oak, racy fruit, and refined, polished tannins, which is why the CUNE Rioja Imperial Gran Reserva 2015 (one of their best for a long time) and the Muga Rioja Prado Enea Gran Reserva 2014 are ranked No. 8 and No. 9 on our list.

While Rioja has a number of wines in our Top 10, Spain's other wine regions produce equally cool, transparent and drinkable wines, with grapes like mencia, garnacha, albariño, and godello dominating. Such varieties are shaping the country's modern wine scene, adding energy, diversity, and a lithe, authentic taste. Varietal garnacha made by younger winemakers around Sierra de Gredos, Navarra, and Catalonia, for example, are increasingly arresting and drinkable. Once again, some of our favorite producers, such as Bodegas Jimenez-Landi, Comando G, and Terroir Al Limit, delivered great wines over the past year.

As friends and college classmates, Fernando Garcia and Daniel Landi of the family producer Bodegas Jimenez-Landi co-founded the Comando G project in 2008, and their Comando G Vinos de Madrid La Bruja de Rozas 2018 was our Spanish wine of the year in 2020, underscoring its unparalleled value and drinkability.

This year, their Comando G Vinos de Madrid 1er Rozas 2019, a garnacha sourced from different parcels around Rozas de Puerto Real and at the foot of Cerro de los Corzos, ranks No. 6 on our Top 100. It is a delicate, perfumed garnacha with spicy verve and a pure, elegant Burgundian overlay.

There are seven mencia wines on the Top 100 list this year, led by the Losada Vinos de Finca Mencía Bierzo Altos de Losada La Bienquerida 2018 at No. 7 – a wine defined by its incredible value for money and irresistible drinkability with fresh, crunchy fruit and ultra-fine tannins. If you have been craving a serious Beaujolais cru, then you should not miss old-vine mencia from Bierzo, Valdeorras and Ribeira Sacra.

The only wine from Ribera del Duero in the top 10 is the Vega Sicilia Ribera del Duero Reserva Especial Unico NV, which came in at No. 4. This iconic cross-vintage blend (2009, 2010 and 2011) is always an emblematic wine that will reward patience. That said, it shows how Ribera del Duero can be so delicious and drinkable at a relatively early stage, with plenty of polish in its mouth-filling tannins, as well as stunning length.

For this Top 100 list, we have mainly considered quality (as reflected in the ratings), value, availability and the “wow” factor. While Spain might not strike you as a bountiful source of super-premium wines, bottles that sell for well over \$300 are no longer news. But when it comes to fine wine overall, Spain will always rise to the top with its affordability, style and class.

**1 COMPAÑIA DE VINOS TELMO RODRIGUEZ RIOJA LAS BEATAS 2018 100 Pts.**

*This is incredible on the nose with fresh flowers, spices, pure dark fruit and hints of stones. Full-bodied and so refined and polished with such intensity and length. Just goes on and on ... forever. A magical wine. From organically grown grapes. Please leave it for five or six years, if you can.*

**2 LÓPEZ DE HEREDIA RIOJA RESERVA VIÑA TONDONIA WHITE 2010 98 Pts.**

*Complex and evolved nose of candied citrus, fig, burnt orange, walnut, toast, dried tobacco and salted caramel. Medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity. Concentrated, layered and delicious with a nutty and saline finish. Phenolic and structured. Keeps going. Drink now or hold.*

**3 ARTADI ALAVA VIÑA EL PISON 2018 99 Pts.**

*Crushed blackberries and blueberries with some flowers, such as violets and lavender. Bark, too. Medium-to full-bodied with layers of ripe, refined tannins with a cool undertone. Plenty of subtle blackberry and wet-earth undertones. From organically grown grapes. Drink after 2024.*

**4 VEGA SICILIA RIBERA DEL DUERO RESERVA ESPECIAL UNICO 99 Pts.**

*Sweet-berry, walnut, licorice and violet aromas that follow through to a full body with round, chewy tannins that are polished and beautiful. Notes of iron, too. The tannins are broad and mouth filling, giving a caressing and exciting texture on the palate. If you give this a year to two to soften, it will deliver even greater richness and flavor. A blend of 2008, 2010 and 2011. Great after 2023.*

**5 GRANJA DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE REMELLURI RIOJA BLANCO 2018 98 Pts.**

*This is a fantastic white with tightness and freshness and such bright acidity. Sliced apple, pear, pineapple and lilac. Full-bodied yet tight and so fresh, Goes on for minutes. Great length. Precise and transparent. From organically grown grapes. Want to drink it now, but it's one of the cellar.*

**6 COMANDO G VINOS DE MADRID LAS UMBRÍAS 2018 98 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of redcurrants, cranberries, roses, lemons and fresh herbs. Full-bodied with fine and firm tannins and fresh acidity. Racy and stony on the palate. Juicy and firm with orange undertones and a long, flavorful finish. Needs some time to soften a little. Try after 2023.*

**7 LOSADA VINOS DE FINCA MENCÍA BIERZO ALTOS DE LOSADA LA BIENQUERIDA 2018 97 Pts.**

*Pine-cone, wild-blackberry, blueberry, lavender, bark, clove and white-pepper aromas. It's medium-bodied with sleek, ultra fine tannins and fresh acidity. So elegant and refined with beautiful freshness. Silky layers carry you along. Tangerine and orange peel. Hard to resist. Drink or hold.*

**8 CUNE RIOJA IMPERIAL GRAN RESERVA 2015 97 Pts.**

*This is very ripe with blackberries, dried fruit, toasted oak and black licorice on the nose. Full-bodied with ultra-fine, linear tannins and a racy, refined finish. This has fantastic structure and length. It goes on for minutes. It needs time to open and refine even more. One of the best Imperiale Gran Reservas in a very long time. Drink after 2023.*

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**9 MUGA RIOJA PRADO ENEA GRAN RESERVA 2014 97 Pts.**

*Really beautiful aromas of crushed blackberry, brambleberry, hazelnut, walnut and light coffee, following through to a full yet so reserved and polished body with fine, creamy-textured tannins. Fresh and exquisite finish. This is a much more refined and harmonic rendition of their classic wine. Three years in French oak from their own production. Very enjoyable now, but this will improve with age for a long time.*

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**10 MARQUÉS DE MURRIETA RIOJA FINCA YGAY GRAN RESERVA 2015 98 Pts.**

*This is historical Rioja in the glass with dark-berry, Spanish-cedar, bark, mahogany and light earth aromas that follow through to a full body with firm, fine tannins that are layered and intense. It really is multilayered, with a citrus and cedar aftertaste. Wonderful length and composure. Try after 2023, but already fantastic.*

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**11 LÓPEZ DE HEREDIA RIOJA VIÑA TONDONIA RESERVA 2009 97 Pts.**

*Sweet berries, cherries, cedar and dried flowers on the nose. Some lemon and lime zest, too! Medium-to full-bodied with tight, integrated tannins that show wonderful length and reserve. So fresh and vivid. Lots of energy. A wonderful, classic wine. Drink or hold.*

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**12 COMPAÑIA DE VINOS TELMO RODRIGUEZ VALDEORRAS FALCOEIRA A CAPILLA 2018 98 Pts.**

*Unique aromas of blackberries, iron and cloves, even rust. Full-bodied with very fine tannins. Long and intense with so much spice. So complete and layered, yet ever so refined. Hard not to drink now, but will age beautifully.*

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**13 CONTINO RIOJA GRAN RESERVA 2015 97 Pts.**

*Plenty of sandalwood, cedar, black-fruit and walnut aromas. So perfumed. Just a hint of dried fruit to add complexity. Full-bodied and layered with firm tannins, yet the ripe fruit is layered in-between. Gorgeous, succulent finish. One for the cellar. Drink or hold.*

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**14 LA RIOJA ALTA RIOJA GRAN RESERVA 904 2015 97 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of plums, mulberries, mushrooms, caramel, sweet tobacco and sweet spices. Full-bodied with velvety, fine tannins and lively acidity. Balanced and supple with a creamy texture. Delicate and precise with a long, polished finish. 90% tempranillo and 10% graciano. Drink or hold.*

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**15 GRANJA DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE REMELLURI RIOJA GRAN RESERVA 2015 97 Pts.**

*This is very spicy and intense, yet with subtle toasted oak and gorgeous fruit. Perfumed. Full-bodied and very layered with incredible fruit and length. So much spice at the finish. Wonderful length. So typical of wines from 20 or 30 years ago, but made in a modern and precise way. Give this another three to five years. Try in 2024.*

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**16 BODEGA LANZAGA RIOJA EL VELADO 2018 98 Pts.**

*A red with stones, fresh berries and cherries and some orange-peel undertones. Hints of spice, too. Medium-bodied with fine tannins. So long and polished. Very classic-textured palate. Wonderful complexity. From organically grown grapes. So drinkable now, but even better in 2024.*

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**17 BODEGA NUMANTHIA TINTA DE TORO TORO TERMES 2018 96 Pts.**

*Blackberries and cherries with dark walnuts and graphite on the nose. Full-bodied with firm and creamy tannins and a long, caressing finish. The quality of the tannins is really impressive here. Fresh and curated texture to this wine. Step-up in quality here. 100% tinta de toro. Lovely to drink now, but will be even better in 2023.*

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**18 CUNE RIOJA VIÑA REAL GRAN RESERVA 2015 96 Pts.**

*Fantastic aromas of cappuccino and orange with dark berries. Full-bodied with ultra-fine tannins that are layered and wonderfully polished. The wine has wonderful depth and complexity, as well as super structure. Great Viña Real. Drinkable now, but better in two or three years. Will age beautifully.*

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**19 LA RIOJA ALTA RIOJA VIÑA ARDANZA RESERVA 2015 96 Pts.**

*A rich nose of raspberry, crushed strawberry, blueberry, coconut, cedar and sweet spice. It's medium-to full-bodied with fine tannins and fresh acidity. Creamy, balanced and layered with vibrant, spicy character. Long and polished. 80% tempranillo and 20% garnacha. Drink or hold.*

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**20 COMANDO G VINOS DE MADRID 1ER ROZAS 2019 96 Pts.**

*A perfumed garnacha with aromas of redcurrants, melon, pomegranate, lemon and rosemary. Medium-bodied with fine tannins and lively acidity. Bright and pure. Juicy and fleshy with soft power. Balanced and delicate with an infused character. Spicy and flavorful, long finish. Drinkable now, but a year or two in bottle will make it even better.*

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**21 ENVÍNATE RIBEIRA SACRA LOUSAS PARCELA CAMIÑO NOVO VINOS ATLÁNTICOS 2019 96 Pts.**

*Intense aromas of ripe plums and white pepper follow through to a medium body with round and fresh tannins that lead to a long, flavorful finish. Lots of character and style. Drink or hold.*

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**22 BODEGAS RODA RIOJA RODA I RESERVA 2016 96 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of plum, smoke, leather, dried flowers and cedar. Full-bodied with firm, fine tannins and lively acidity. So balanced and layered with a rich yet fresh feel. Long, spiced and delicious. Drink or hold.*

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**23 DANIEL LANDI MÉNTRIDA LAS UVAS DE LA IRA EL REAL DE SAN VICENTE 2019 95 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of raspberries, redcurrants, black tea, cloves and dried herbs. Full-bodied with chalky tannins and vivid acidity. Fleshy and crunchy on the palate. Firm, but balanced, with a long, flavorful finish. Drinkable now, but better in 2023 and onwards.*

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**24 ARTAZU GARNACHA NAVARRA SANTA CRUZ DE ARTAZU 2018 95 Pts.**

*Blackberries, licorice and hints of schist on the nose. Medium-bodied with firm, lightly chewy tannins that give an edge and focus to the wine. Blueberry and earth aftertaste. Really fantastic. Ancient vines. Drink now or hold.*

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**25** ATTIS BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS ALBARIÑO RÍAS BAIXAS NANA 2018 **95 Pts.**

*White lavender, lemon, apricot, white pepper, pear, clove and biscuit on the nose. It's medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity. Oily and textured with a subtle, smoky note. Long and energized! Drink now or hold.*

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**26** CUENTAVIÑAS GARNACHA RIOJA 2019 **96 Pts.**

*Very beautiful strawberry and blackberry aromas follow through to a full body with extremely fine tannins that spread across the palate. Poised and polished with wonderful intensity and purity. Needs time to come completely together, but already a beauty. Drink after 2023.*

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**27** ARTADI ALAVA SAN LAZARO 2018 **97 Pts.**

*The aromas of cloves, crushed stones, flint and dark berries are so enticing already. Full-bodied, very structured and powerful with a superb tannin background to the subtle and thought-provoking fruit. From organically grown grapes. Drink after 2024.*

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**28** MARQUÉS DE MURRIETA RIOJA DALMAU RESERVA 2017 **97 Pts.**

*Blackberry and ripe-fruit aromas with black licorice and dark chocolate. It's medium-to full-bodied with creamy-textured tannins and a long, flavorful finish that is so precise and polished. Great length. Best ever? Cabernet sauvignon, graciano and tempranillo. Drink or hold.*

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**29** ALVARO PALACIOS PRIORAT DOFÍ 2019 **96 Pts.**

*Cracked cloves and white pepper with dark fruit and iron. Perfumed and subtle. It's full-bodied with a vertical layer of very fine tannins that give a creamy and round texture that turns almost powdery. Flavorful finish, yet refined. Give this time to open. Try after 2023.*

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**30** DOMINIO DE ES RIBERA DEL DUERO VIÑAS VIEJAS DE SORIA 2019 **96 Pts.**

*Lots of blackberry and bark aromas with some forest-flower undertones. Full-bodied and chewy with very fine tannins that integrate beautifully in the wine. Bright and lively acidity gives the wine verve. Long, linear finish. Drink or hold.*

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**31** ATTIS BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS SPAIN SITTA DOLIOLA 2019 **95 Pts.**

*Straw color with aromas of dried lemon, grilled pineapple, grapefruit rind, roasted almond and beeswax. Textured, saline and nutty. Some tannin on the pleasantly pithy finish. Intense and full of character. Subtle orange wine. Drink now.*

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**32** ENVÍNATE RIBEIRA SACRA LOUSAS VIÑAS DE ALDEA VINOS ATLÁNTICOS 2019 **95 Pts.**

*Subtle aromas of ripe plums, cloves and black pepper with slate and stone, following through to a medium palate with firm, fine tannins and a flavorful finish. Subtle and complex. Drink now or hold.*

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**33** PINTIA TORO 2017 **95 Pts.**

*Lots of spices and bright fruit for such a ripe, hot vintage. Some orange-peel undertones. Full-bodied and layered with beautiful fruit and length. Really nicely done. Another two or three years will soften it.*

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**34 TORRES CONCA DE BARBERÀ MILMANDA 2018 95 Pts.**

*Dried chamomile, pomelo rind, dried apple, crushed stone, blanched almond and waxed lemon on the nose. Medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity and a creamy, lightly waxy texture. Excellent concentration and length with delicious almond and stone notes. Drink now or hold.*

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**35 TERROIR AL LÍMIT PRIORAT ARBOSSAR 2019 95 Pts.**

*This is very aromatic with crushed cloves, dried flowers, red fruit and black pepper. Medium-bodied, firm and fine-tannined with a delicious, persistent finish. Drink now or hold.*

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**36 TORRES PENEDES MAS LA PLANA 2017 95 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackcurrants, fresh herbs and sweet tobacco follow through to a medium to full body and firm, chewy tannins that are fine-textured, yet very evident, suggesting two to four years of bottle age will soften the wine. One of the best Mas La Planas in a while. Try after 2023.*

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**37 GRANBAZÁN ALBARIÑO RÍAS BAIXAS VEIGALOBOS 2018 95 Pts.**

*The enveloping peach, apricot and citrus-blossom nose of this Rias Baixas dry white is truly enveloping! Every nook and cranny of this wide-screen wine is packed with fruit and the velvety texture is ravishing. The very long finale is so silky and sensual. Drink or hold.*

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**38 YJAR RIOJA 2017 97 Pts.**

*Very ripe red with plums, figs, dark chocolate, walnuts and cloves. Full-bodied with round and layered tannins that show ripeness and intensity. Fruit-forward, but formed and powerful. Plush and high-toned. Savory finish. From 3.8 hectares of vineyards. It's a field blend of tempranillo, graciano, garnacha, granegro and rojal. Shows the ripeness of the vintage with structure and freshness. Crazy wine. Outstanding first bottling of this wine, with global distribution only through negotiations in Bordeaux. Better after 2025.*

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**39 OLIVIER RIVIÈRE RIOJA POZO ALTO 2018 97 Pts.**

*Wonderful aromas of very dark berries with orange peel and dark bark. Crushed black pepper, too. Full-bodied and slightly chewy, yet the tannins are polished and attractive. This has lots of structure. Give it time to soften and open. Try after 2023.*

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**40 DESCENDIENTES DE J. PALACIOS BIERZO LAS LAMAS 2018 97 Pts.**

*Wild raspberries, plum stones, nutmeg, licorice, cracked pepper and dried lemon on the nose. Medium-bodied with silky tannins and vibrant acidity. Layered and evolving, with a vibrant core of fresh-fruit, mineral and spicy-pepper notes. Long and delicious. Drink now or hold.*

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**41 DANIEL LANDI CASTILLA Y LEÓN EL REVENTÓN 2018 95 Pts.**

*A pretty nose of redcurrants, cranberries, sour cherries, orange zest, cinnamon and nutmeg. Medium-to full-bodied with creamy tannins and bright acidity. It has a velvety texture and spicy character. Pure and lively with a savory finish. Very drinkable now, but better after 2023.*

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**42 VEGA SICILIA RIBERA DEL DUERO VALBUENA 5 2017 96 Pts.**

*This shows wonderful aromas of blackberries, violets and sandalwood with vanilla undertones. Full-bodied with racy tannins and gorgeous fruit. Linear and very long. Slightly chewy. Needs time to come together, but already excellent quality. Drink after 2023.*

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**43 DESCENDIENTES DE J. PALACIOS BIERZO MONCERBAL 2018 96 Pts.**

*Complex nose of brambleberries, currants, dried flowers, raw mushrooms, bark, iron, orange zest and nutmeg. Medium-bodied with supple tannins and bright acidity. Wild and vibrant. Savory, long and exciting finish. Drink from 2022.*

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**44 DOMINIO DE PINGUS RIBERA DEL DUERO PINGUS 2019 99 Pts.**

*Ripe-berry, black-cherry, black-mushroom and violet aromas. Some stone and dry-earth undertones. Full-bodied and very long with and extremely fine, silky texture and a finish that goes on for minutes. The depth and texture of this wine is truly breathtaking. Another world-class Pingus. Try after 2025, when the tannins will have softened and the wine will be opening up.*

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**45 ABADIA RETUERTA SYRAH CASTILLA Y LEÓN PAGO GARDUÑA 2017 95 Pts.**

*Spicy nose of peppercorns, smoked meat, stewed tea leaves, blackcurrants and grilled herbs. It's medium-to full-bodied with silky tannins. Layered, supple and delicious. Concentrated, yet it remains elegant. Long. Hard to resist now. Drink now or hold.*

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**46 CONTINO RIOJA VIÑA DEL OLIVO 2018 95 Pts.**

*So pure and vivid aromas with dark berries and flowers, as well as hints of black olives. Full-bodied with a compact and very fine-grained palate. So much intensity to the balance in this wine. Give it three or four years to come together, but a beauty already. Try after 2024.*

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**47 SIERRA CANTABRÍA RIOJA FINCA EL BOSQUE 2019 95 Pts.**

*This has very fine tannins and is driven, with a long, linear finish. Subtle and complex aromas and flavors of dark berries, minerals, sage and lavender bush. Medium body. Fresh finish. A little tight at the end. Drink or hold.*

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**48 BODEGAS RODA RIOJA CIRSION 2018 96 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of blackberries, blueberries, cumin, porcini, olives and dried herbs. It's full-bodied with fine, creamy tannins. Layered. Such complexity, with savory, mineral character. Focused and long. Better in a year or two, when the vanilla character melts into the wine. Try after 2022.*

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**49 ALION RIBERA DEL DUERO 2018 96 Pts.**

*Fresh and very floral with violets and berries. Blackberries and orange peel, too. Medium-to full-bodied with firm, linear tannins. Excellent length and structure. Seriously structured, Better after 2024, but already beautiful.*

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**50 DOMINIO DEL ÁGUILA RIBERA DEL DUERO PEÑAS ALADAS GRAN RESERVA 2014 96 Pts.**

*Rich aromas of baked blueberries, dried violets, pine cone, clove, vanilla, chocolate and praline. It's full-bodied with firm, powdery tannins. Rich and polished with layers of spiced blue fruit and flowers. Yet, it remains vivid and elegant with juicy tannins. From organically grown grapes. Drink or hold.*

**51 DANIEL LANDI CASTILLA Y LEÓN LAS IRUELAS 2018 95 Pts.**

*A pretty garnacha with a light ruby color and aromas of dried strawberries and raspberries, sweet spices and dried flowers. Medium-bodied with creamy tannins and fresh acidity. Juicy and crunchy with a bright core of red fruit and a long finish. Spicy at the end. Drink or hold.*

**52 DOMINIO DE ES RIBERA DEL DUERO LA MATA 2019 97 Pts.**

*Blackberry, black-licorice, lemon-zest, lemon-flower and sandalwood aromas. Full-bodied with plush, fine-grained tannins that give a wonderful texture and length to this wine. Needs time to come together, but already a beauty. Try after 2023.*

**53 SIERRA CANTABRÍA RIOJA MÁGICO 2017 97 Pts.**

*Very subtle yet out-of-this-world aromas of dark fruit, orange peel, sandalwood and dried flowers. Full-bodied, yet with a fine-grained texture and polished, focused tannins that give this intensity and poise. Seductive finish that impresses both texturally and in terms of flavor. Will age beautifully. Co-vinification of 65% tempranillo, 20% grenache, 2.5% graciano, 1% petit bouschet, with 1.1% other red varieties, plus 10% white varieties. Drink or hold.*

**54 ALVARO PALACIOS PRIORAT L'ERMITA 2019 98 Pts.**

*Very subtle and complex aromas of blackberries, crushed stones, flint and cloves with some granite. Full-bodied, yet so tight and beautiful, with ultra-fine tannins that are stealth-like and flow across the palate. Such elegance and grace in this wine. It builds at the finish. Drink in 2024, but already a joy to taste.*

**55 GRANBAZÁN ALBARIÑO RÍAS BAIXAS ETIQUETA ÁMBAR 2019 94 Pts.**

*Ripe, yet youthful and pristine, this is a very impressive albarino. The stone-fruit and citrus-blossom aromas are just beginning to open up, but the balance of fruit, minerality and elegant acidity is already spot-on at the very long finish. Drink or hold.*

**56 MUGA RIOJA RESERVA 2018 94 Pts.**

*This was the only red that Muga made in 2018, and the wines from the best vineyards went into the blend. In other words, top vineyards were declassified. Medium-bodied with very fine tannins that are caressing and refined. Plenty of subtle berries, chocolate and walnuts. Tempranillo with garnacha, mazuelo and graciano. January 2021 release. Drink or hold.*

**57 LOSADA VINOS DE FINCA GODELLO BIERZO ALTOS DE LOSADA VILLA DE SAN LORENZO 2019 94 Pts.**

*Baked apples, jack fruit, lemon rind, smoked almonds and grilled herbs on the nose. Medium-to full-bodied with a phenolic, almost chewy texture. Concentrated, nutty and subtly smoky character. Long. Drink or hold.*



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**58** PITTACUM MENCÍA BIERZO 2018 **94 Pts.**

*This is very focused and sophisticated on the nose with mineral, slate, flint and iron character to the dark and black fruit. Full-bodied, with very fine, polished tannins and a linear and ultra-refined texture at the end. Drinkable now, but even better in two or three years.*

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**59** PALACIOS REMONDO RIOJA FINCA LA MONTESA 2019 **94 Pts.**

*A pretty nose of redcurrants, cherries, thyme and baking spices. It's medium-to full-bodied with fine tannins. Juicy and crunchy with a silky texture and bright acidity. Fresh and flavorful finish. Creamy and delicate. From organically grown grapes. Drink now or hold.*

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**60** BODEGAS LA HORRA RIBERA DEL DUERO CORIMBO 2016 **94 Pts.**

*A perfumed nose of dark cherries, dried herbs, tea leaves, smoke and wet earth. It's full-bodied with fine tannins and fresh acidity. Vibrant and balanced with a velvety texture. A beautiful red with tension and harmony. Long, flavorful long finish. Drink or hold.*

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**61** FRANÇOIS LURTON, DANY & MICHEL ROLLAND TORO CAMPO ELÍSEO CUVÉE ALEGRE 2018 **94 Pts.**

*This is really spicy with dried mushroom, bark, walnut and dark fruit. Medium to full body with chewy, polished tannins and a flavorful finish. Juicy and intense at the end. From organically grown grapes. Vegan. Very drinkable now, but will age nicely.*

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**62** DOMINIO DE PINGUS RIBERA DEL DUERO PSI 2019 **94 Pts.**

*Blackberry and black-cherry aromas with lavender, cedar and hints of cloves and white pepper, following through to a medium body with ultra-fine tannins and a beautiful, creamy finish. A little tight and reserved now. Another impressive PSI. Give it until 2022.*

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**63** VIRGEN DEL GALIR GODELLO VALDEORRAS REGUEIRÓN ÉNTOMA 2020 **94 Pts.**

*White peach, apple, pear, crushed stone, smoked almond, asphalt and dried spice on the nose. It's medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity and a spicy, creamy palate. Long and concentrated. Drink now.*

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**64** JOSEP GRAU MONTSANT LA FLORENS 2019 **94 Pts.**

*Floral and beautiful with blackberry and black-cherry aromas, as well as lemon rind and violets. Medium-bodied with ultra-fine tannins that are polished and so long. Such balance and finesse with strength. Garnatxa negra. Drink now.*

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**65** HEREDEROS DEL MARQUES DE RISCAL RIOJA XR RESERVA 2017 **94 Pts.**

*Aromas of flowers, cedar and blackberries follow through to a full body with ripe, firm tannins and a flavorful finish. This is a modern and focused Rioja with structure and sophistication. Drink or hold.*

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**66** COMPAÑIA DE VINOS DEL ATLÁNTICO TINTILLA CÁDIZ ATLÁNTIDA 2019 **94 Pts.**

*Very hot iron and cloves with green pepper to the dark fruit. Full-to medium-bodied with firm, silky tannins and a fresh, spicy finish. Lots going on, with lots of flavor and character. 100% tintilla. Drink now.*

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**67 ALTOS DE RIOJA RIOJA PIGEAGE 2018 94 Pts.**

*Blackberry, dried herb, vanilla, sweet tobacco and spice box on the nose. It's full-bodied with firm, chalky tannins, fresh acidity and a creamy, velvety texture. Flavorful, rich and concentrated with delicious spice notes. Long. Drink from 2022.*

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**68 MARQUÉS DE RISCAL RIOJA GRAN RESERVA 2015 94 Pts.**

*A rich and rather decadent Rioja with ripe berry, tobacco and bark aromas that follow through to a full body with layered, creamy tannins and a long, fresh finish with lemon peel and apple to the dark fruit. Touches of coconut and toffee. Drink or hold.*

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**69 ATLAN & ARTISAN MALLORCA 8 VENTS GRAN 2018 94 Pts.**

*Cherry and blackberry aromas with slate and spice, following through to full body with creamy tannins and a beautiful finish. This is a wine that shows real character from its area and terroir. You can taste the sea with the earth. Drink now.*

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**70 ORBEN RIOJA MALPUESTO 2019 94 Pts.**

*A fragrant nose of dark berries, plums, dried herbs, rosemary, cedar, dark chocolate and baking spices. It's full-bodied with firm tannins and fresh acidity. Structured and chewy with a fruity edge and a supple finish with excellent length. Drink from 2023.*

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**71 VIÑA POMAL RIOJA GRAN RESERVA 2014 94 Pts.**

*A pretty nose of cherries, dried flowers, cedar, sweet tobacco, baking spices and dried herbs. It's medium-to full-bodied with fine tannins and fresh acidity. Round and polished, with a silky texture and a long, flavorful finish. Drink or hold.*

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**72 PEGASO SIERRA DE GREDOS BARRANCOS DE PIZARRA 2018 94 Pts.**

*This is very cool and fine with slate and spice character. It's medium-bodied with fine tannins and a long, racy finish. Very compact. Lovely now, but will age beautifully. Drink or hold.*

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**73 VIÑA CORRALES JEREZ PAGO BALBAÍNA FINO 94 Pts.**

*This is so rich and intense with tangy, yeasty sour dough, briny iodine, lots of fresh cashew and a hint of red apple. Lots of saline, cracker yeastiness here that lingers persistently in the creamy palate. Goes on and on for quite a few minutes. Bottled in 2020. Drink now.*

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**74 TERROIR AL LIMIT PRIORAT LES MANYES 2018 95 Pts.**

*Intense orange peel and blueberry with white pepper and violet. Crushed stone, too. Medium-bodied with firm, silky tannins and a juicy finish. Some tarry undertones and a peppery finish to the subtle fruit. Drink now.*

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**75 CODORNÍU CAVA ARS COLLECTA 459 GRAN RESERVA BRUT 2010 95 Pts.**

*A flavorful sparkling with dried apples, lemon curd, honey, praline and almond pastries on the nose. Medium-to full-bodied with crisp acidity, sleek bubbles and rich, honeyed and nutty character. Excellent concentration. Very dry. Great with food. One of the best Cavas I have had in a while. Delicious now.*

**76 MILSETENTAYSEIS RIBERA DEL DUERO TINTO 2018 94 Pts.**

*Very fine-tannined Duero with berry, chocolate and walnut character. Medium body. Solid core of fruit. Linear and very long. Polished and thought-provoking. Drinkable now, but better in 2023.*

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**77 CONTADOR RIOJA LA CUEVA DEL CONTADOR 2019 94 Pts.**

*Blackberry and toasted oak with some chocolate and hazelnut aromas follow through to a full body with round, fine tannins and attractive fruit and vanilla-coffee character. Flavorful finish, yet refined and focused as the wine develops across the palate. A little shy at the end. Give it two or three years to come around. Drink after 2023.*

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**78 BODEGAS JIMÉNEZ-LANDI MÉNTRIDA SOTORRONDERO 2019 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of raspberries, plums, violets, peppercorns, bark, slate and cedar. It's full-bodied with firm, silky tannins and bright acidity. Velvety, layered and complex. Seamless and long. Drink or hold.*

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**79 BODEGAS VEGALFARO SYRAH PAGO DE LOS BALAGUESES 2019 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackberries, blueberries, dried herbs, peppercorns and baking spices. Full-bodied with fine, chalky tannins and bright acidity. Spicy and fleshy with a firm, peppery finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink now or hold.*

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**80 BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS PONCE BOBAL MANCHUELA P.F 2019 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of dark cherries, walnuts, earth, peppercorns and dried herbs. It's medium-bodied with fine-grained tannins and lively acidity. Chalky, textured and juicy with a long, succulent finish. Try from 2022.*

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**81 NEKEAS GARNACHA NAVARRA EL CHAPARRAL DE VEGA SINDOA OLD VINES 2019 93 Pts.**

*Very clear and aromatic with blackberry, strawberry and violet character, following through to the mid-palate with firm yet fine tannins and a vivid finish. This is really well done. Drink or hold.*

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**82 BODEGAS ALBAMAR ALBARIÑO RÍAS BAIXAS 2020 93 Pts.**

*Dried pineapple, salted lemon, roasted hazelnut, smoke and flint on the nose. It's medium-bodied with tangy acidity. Vibrant, flinty and textured. Dried lemon on the long finish. Drink now or hold.*

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**83 BODEGAS ORDOÑEZ VERDEJO RUEDA NISIA LAS SUERTES OLD VINES 2020 93 Pts.**

*Peaches, mangoes, cooked lemons, herbs and praline on the nose, as well as some beeswax and dough. It's full-bodied with bright acidity and a creamy, round and flavorful palate. Deliciously buttery, textured finish. Drink now.*

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**84 ANTÍDOTO RIBERA DEL DUERO LA HORMIGA 2019 93 Pts.**

*This is a solid red with blackberry and brambleberry with undertones of chocolate and coffee. It's medium-to full-bodied with chewy tannins and a structured finish. This needs two or three years to soften. Try after 2023.*

**85 FINCA VILLACRECES RIBERA DEL DUERO 2018 93 Pts.**

Mulberries, blueberries, plums, chocolate and cloves on the nose. Full-bodied with fine tannins. Round and creamy with a velvety texture and a supple finish with excellent length. Blend of 86% tempranillo, 10% cabernet sauvignon and 4% merlot. From organically grown grapes. Another year in the bottle will soften it out. Try after 2022.

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**86 SCALA DEI GARNATXA BLANCA XENIN PRIORAT MASSIPA 2019 93 Pts.**

Honeysuckle, pear, peach pit, almond, flint and praline on the nose. Medium-bodied, round and waxy with a ripe, textured and balanced palate. Seamless layers of stones and stone fruit. Nicely crafted. Drink now.

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**87 VALDERIZ RIBERA DEL DUERO 2018 93 Pts.**

Very clean and transparent Duero red with dark-berry, floral and dry-soil aromas that follow through to a medium body, fine tannins and a fresh finish. Nice energy. 95% tinta fino and 5% albillo. From organically grown grapes. Drink now.

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**88 BODEGA TESO LA MONJA TORO VICTORINO 2019 93 Pts.**

Gorgeous blackberries and blueberries with some violets. Medium to full body with firm, silky tannins and a long, polished finish. Focused and refined. Extremely silky for Toro. Drink or hold.

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**89 FAUSTINO RIOJA FAUSTINO I GRAN RESERVA 2011 93 Pts.**

A very pretty wine now with cedar, mushrooms and dried red fruit. Medium body, fine tannins and a subtle, polished finish. A wonderful old Rioja now. Magnum bottle. Drink now and enjoy.

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**90 BODEGAS EXOPTO RIOJA HORIZONTE DE EXOPTO 2019 93 Pts.**

Plums, stones, peppercorns, tobacco and grilled herbs on the nose. It's full-bodied with fine-grained tannins. Supple, peppery and racy finish. Tempranillo, graciano and garnacha. Drink or hold.

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**91 BODEGAS RIOJANAS RIOJA MONTE REAL GRAN RESERVA 2014 93 Pts.**

Plum and spice with walnut and earth undertones to the overall fruit on the nose. It's medium-to full-bodied with round, polished tannins and a flavorful finish. Still very structured, yet rather decadent and rich now, after long aging. Best gran reserva from here in a long time. Drink or hold.

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**92 ALBERTO ORTE MONASTRELL YECLA ELO 2017 93 Pts.**

Black cherries, flowers, crushed black pepper and cloves on the nose. Medium-bodied with firm, slightly chewy tannins and a flavorful finish. Long and driven at the finish. Drink or hold.

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**93 EDETÀRIA TERRA ALTA FINCA LA PERSONAL 2017 93 Pts.**

Pretty nose of violets, dark plums, wild raspberries, mulberries, sweet tobacco, thyme and cloves. It's full-bodied with polished tannins and a creamy, round and supple palate. Excellent palate of berry fruit and sweet spices. Some espresso after-notes. Garnatxa peluda and grenache. Drink or hold.

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**94 PUJANZA RIOJA NORTE 2018 93 Pts.**

*Really clear and beautiful on the nose with blackberries and blueberries, as well as some chocolate and lavender undertones. Medium body, firm and silky tannins and a fresh finish. Lovely texture at the end. Drink now or hold.*

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**95 ABADIA DE POBLET CONCA DE BARBERÀ LA FONT VOLTADA 2018 93 Pts.**

*Aromas of crushed dark fruit with black pepper and cloves. Medium-bodied with firm, silky tannins and an iron, dark-berry and dark-cherry finish. Linear and fine-tannined. Drink or hold.*

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**96 BODEGAS LAN RIOJA LAN A MANO 2018 93 Pts.**

*This shows a lot of polish and tension for this wine with creamy tannins, dense fruit in the center palate and a long, racy finish. Lots of blackberry, black-cherry and mushroom flavors. Drink or hold.*

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**97 DOMINIO DEL ÁGUILA ALBILLO CASTILLA Y LEÓN VIÑAS VIEJAS 2016 94 Pts.**

*Intense aromas of dried pineapple, salted lemon, dried herbs, smoke, hay, toasted almonds and white pepper. It's medium-bodied with tangy acidity and a waxy texture. Layered and concentrated with a long, saline finish. From organically grown grapes. Drink now.*

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**98 CLOS FIGUERES PRIORAT 2018 94 Pts.**

*Aromas of dark plums, lavender, dried thyme, cloves, black olives and chocolate. It's full-bodied with fine tannins and fresh acidity. Supple and velvety. Sweet spices and chocolate on the long, elegant finish. Try from 2022.*

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**99 CLOS D'AGON CATALUÑA 2019 93 Pts.**

*Clove, berry and some cracked pepper to the rich, dark fruit. It's medium-to full-bodied with creamy, polished tannins and a flavorful finish. Drink or hold.*

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**100 ALEJANDRO FERNÁNDEZ RIBERA DEL DUERO PESQUERA MILLENIUM GRAN RESERVA 2015 94 Pts.**

*A fragrant nose of dark cherries, dried flowers, figs, violets, rosemary, lavender and spice box. It's full-bodied with fine tannins and fresh acidity. Layered, rich and textured. Vibrant finish. Drink or hold.*



# TOP 100 WINES OF THE USA 2021



*Nathan Slone,  
Associate Editor*

Over the last 12 months we rated more than 4,500 American wines across six states on the Eastern Seaboard and West Coast, covering multiple regions and countless terroirs. They all confirmed one thing: modern U.S. wines have never shown better, coast to coast.

Our Top American wine of 2021 is Aubert Chardonnay Napa Valley Sugar Shack Estate Vineyard 2019. This is the second year in a row we have named a chardonnay as the top U.S. wine, which reinforces our belief that chardonnay is the most exciting grape in America, from California to Oregon to Virginia's Shenandoah. Cabernet sauvignon and pinot make incredible wines, but they're both focused mostly on the West Coast. Great chardonnay can be made just about anywhere in America, and more and more are being bottled.

You may remember Sugar Shack being our No. 2 pick in 2020, but this year it made the great leap forward into the top spot. Mark Aubert has crafted a perfect example of what is possible with patience, great fruit, and thoughtful winemaking, all expressed to the

highest degree. “Precision in viticulture and winemaking lets us do everything at just the right time,” Aubert explained during our sit-down tasting with him in October.

There are no compromises in Aubert’s winemaking process. The wines are exactly as he envisions them to be, and this year, Sugar Shack goes above and beyond. From unparalleled wood management to ripeness levels to acidity, Aubert dialed in exactly the best of his terroir and style. At just \$100 a bottle, it’s hard to imagine a better value.

Beyond our top wine of 2021, this year’s list really highlights the greatness of the 2018 vintage in Napa Valley. If you love the wines of the most famous American wine region, you won’t want to miss adding some of the best 2018 reds to your cellar. It is perhaps the greatest modern vintage, offering reds of unprecedented balance, harmony and structure.

Yes, the 2016s showcase structure, and the 2013s richness, yet the complexity and energy in the best 2018’s are really something special. Wine-makers are prioritizing a lively and harmonious style that simultaneously looks to the future of the region and reflects parts of the rich history of the most famous AVA in the United States. Many of the standouts remind James of Napa’s greatest wines from the 1960s and 70s.

Our top red wine of 2021 is Continuum Napa Valley Sage Mountain Vineyard 2018. James feels it exemplifies everything we adore about the 2018 vintage. There is so much depth, complexity and pure excitement, all coming together in a balanced and succinct package.



James during a tasting session of wines from Harlan Estate, Promontory, Carte Blanche, Keplinger and Bond, all of whose offerings made it onto our Top 100 U.S. list. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

Continuum continues to wow us year after year – the 2016 Continuum was our U.S. Wine of the Year in 2019. This producer has shown that it is now a touchstone for greatness in Napa Valley, and its 2018s illustrate this brilliantly. Plus, it’s from the family that arguably put Napa on the map, the Mondavis. Tim Mondavi and his daughters constantly set the standard for fine winemaking in the valley.

Sonoma County is another top AVA that is seeing unparalleled success in its world-class pinot noir and chardonnay. On the West Coast, cool growing conditions, a trend toward lower intervention and spot-on wood management are yielding some of the most elegant and exemplary pinot noirs and chardonnay you can find anywhere. Many of these will redefine your image of California wines.

## SONOMA, OREGON AND WASHINGTON

While 2018 is a clear standout for Napa, in Sonoma the differences between 2018 and 2019 are more a question of inherent attributes rather than quality. 2018 shows incredible concentration and power due to the warm, steady growing season, while 2019 shows more delicacy and nuance given overall cooler weather. RAEN Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Fort Ross-Seaview Sea Field Vineyard 2019 and Littorai Pinot Noir Sonoma County Sonoma Coast The Haven Vineyard 2019 are certainly lovely examples of the phenomenal quality that pinot noir can be taken to in Sonoma Coast, as well as the overall charm and finesse of the 2019 vintage. Needless to say they both make us excited for the future of the AVA. Expect to see more of our thoughts on the matter in an upcoming report on Sonoma wines.



Our No. 3 U.S. wine, the Dominus Napa Valley 2018, is part of perhaps the greatest modern vintage, offering reds of unprecedented balance, harmony and structure. In the background is Tod Mostero, the director of winemaking at Dominus. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

This upward trajectory is clear across Oregon and Washington AVAs too, with Cristom Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Eola-Amity Hills Jessie Vineyard 2018 being given the No. 9 slot. Coming in at \$65 a bottle, it is almost impossible to find a terroir-driven wine made to such high standards for a better price.

“People are not quite as daring or willing to take a risk as we are,” Tom Gerrie, the owner and winemaker of Cristom, said in explaining how they use knowledge of old-world techniques while remaining totally attuned to the time and place they are in and that dedication to their locale and personal style shows.

**Our tastings of more than 4,500 American wines over the past year reinforced our belief that chardonnay is the most exciting grape in America, from California to Oregon to Virginia’s Shenandoah.**

Not only has Oregon at large shown it is one of the world’s great pinot noir producing regions, but stellar chardonnays soon may be just as synonymous with the state, with names like OO Wines and Bergstrom helping lead the charge. Oregon was once known for pinot gris as the white of choice, but folks like Cristom have now long since grafted over to Chardonnay because of the exciting natural proclivity it has for excellence, particularly in the Willamette Valley.

Looking northward to Washington, their fantastic cabernet sauvignons are well documented and many appear on this year’s Top 100, but we have never seen such exciting syrahs being offered before. Christophe Baron of Cay-





The Grace Family Cabernet Sauvignon 2018, left, was our No. 5 U.S. wine, while the Rutherford Blank 2018 was No. 47. (Photo by JamesSuckling.com)

use Vineyards said regarding the bright future of syrah in Washington State: “It [syrah] wants to take terroir and turn it into wine... it breathes place.” We agree. Many top producers are listening closely to their land and letting the weather, the grape and the climate dictate the wine they end up creating. The results are wines with more purity of fruit and earnest energy, such as K Vintners Syrah Yakima Valley Motor City Kitty 2018, which expresses all of these traits and more. At \$35, it’s also a bonafide steal.

Over on the East Coast, 2019 and 2020 tended to be great years, allowing producers in Virginia and New York’s Finger Lakes and Long Island to make deliciously balanced wines.

These are regions that have made huge headway – and so many wonderful wines – in the last decade, as we have reported. Early Mountain Chardonnay Virginia Quaker Run Vineyard 2019 is the only East Coast wine on our Top 100 U.S. list this year. But lately we’ve tasted so many beautiful wines from New York’s Finger Lakes and other east coast regions, as well as from Texas and the Southwest, as we have detailed in recent reports. We are so bullish on the growing quality and focused winemaking beyond the West Coast that we are significantly expanding our tasting coverage of this in 2022.

American wine is an exciting story, and it is getting even better every vintage.

## **1** AUBERT CHARDONNAY NAPA VALLEY SUGAR SHACK ESTATE VINEYARD 2019 **100 Pts.**

*Such an aromatic nose of fresh hay, meyer lemon, baked green apple and dried herbs. Full-bodied with such an incredible amount of refinement. Sleek and seamless. Nuanced is an understatement, as this wine carries multitudes, quietly expressing flavors of fennel seed, dried lily, honeysuckle, toasted almond and sage. Incredible. Drink or hold.*

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## **2** CONTINUUM NAPA VALLEY SAGE MOUNTAIN VINEYARD 2018 **100 Pts.**

*This has incredible nuances and delicacy with power. It's full-bodied with lots of gentle tannins that spread across the palate. The character is full of blackberry, blackcurrant and lead pencil. Some conifer and pine needles. Sage at the end, too. Savory. So long-lasting and layered. Such purity. It's so complex and changes all the time in the glass. Goes on for minutes. 54% cabernet sauvignon, 31% cabernet franc, 9% petit verdot and 6% merlot. Organically grown grapes. So drinkable now, but will age beautifully.*

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## **3** DOMINUS NAPA VALLEY 2018 **100 Pts.**

*This is incredible on the nose, offering hot stones, blackcurrants, iodine and wet earth. Full-bodied with a tight center palate, then it opens with a tannin structure that is weightless and spreads across the palate. Totally integrated on the palate. This is a magic-carpet wine. Really incredible. One of the reference points for the vintage. Drinkable now and please try a bottle, but it's one for the cellar.*

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## **4** REALM CELLARS NAPA VALLEY STAGS LEAP DISTRICT MOONRACER 2018 **100 Pts.**

*A full-bodied, structured red with blackcurrant, violet, dark-chocolate and burnt-orange aromas. Walnut husk, too. Such precision and elegance. Firm, smooth tannins and a long finish. Really complex at the end. A stunning wine from Stags Leap District. Drink from 2023.*

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## **5** GRACE FAMILY VINEYARDS CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY 2018 **100 Pts.**

*Such beautiful aromas of blackcurrants, sage and flowers. Black raspberries and blackberries, too, as well as mineral undertones. Full-bodied with a superb, very fine and dusty tannin texture. The tannins are really fine and manicured. Very cool, with a long, long finish. 150 cases made and only from the upper part of the vineyard. Drink in 2025 and onwards.*

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## **6** LOKOYA CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY MOUNT VEEDER 2018 **100 Pts.**

*Blackberries, herbs, green pine needles, blackcurrants and lead pencil. Full-bodied with incredible structure and powerful tannins. It goes on for minutes. The structure is something else. Muscular, but the tannins give form and focus to the beautiful fruit. Mountain-grown Latour! Extraordinary. Try after 2026.*

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## **7** QUINTESSA NAPA VALLEY RUTHERFORD 2018 **99 Pts.**

*This is beautifully polished with firm, dusty tannins to the blue fruit, as well as chocolate and cedar character. Some much earthier character, too, from mushrooms to bark. Forest flowers. Perfumed. It's full-bodied with round tannins and a soft, creamy finish. Some iron and iodine to this. So attractive at the finish. From biodynamically grown grapes. Better after 2023.*



**8 JOSEPH PHELPS NAPA VALLEY INSIGNIA 2018 99 Pts.**

*Blackberry and black chocolate with mint, conifer and clove. Sweet tobacco, violets and flowers, too. Some graphite. Cool and complex. Full-bodied with ultra fine, dusty tannins and a wonderful, extremely long finish. Savory and refined. A classic-styled 2018. This needs time, but is so approachable and gorgeous. One of the best Insignias ever. Alive and changing all the time. 40% Stags Leap AVA. 87% cabernet sauvignon, 8% petit verdot, 3% malbec and 2% cabernet franc. Leave this for five or six years, but so wonderful now.*

**9 CRISTOM PINOT NOIR WILLAMETTE VALLEY EOLA-AMITY HILLS JESSIE VINEYARD 2018 99 Pts.**

*This dramatically steep site delivers a wine of real personality and distinctiveness. The nose has a very layered mix of red cherries and berries with some plums, leaves, dry stones, forest wood and a wealth of sweetly fragrant spices. The palate holds such intensity and concentrated flavor with striking focus and drive. Mouthwateringly fresh red-cherry flavors are delivered in essence-like mode and hold long, on a super vibrant, explosive finish. The star of 2018 at Cristom and indeed for Willamette Valley pinot per se. Drink or hold.*

**10 RAEN PINOT NOIR SONOMA COAST FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW SEA FIELD VINEYARD 2019 99 Pts.**

*This is really refined with black tea, rose petals, orange and blue fruit. It's medium-bodied with wild-strawberry and forest-floor flavors. Medium-bodied with great vibrancy and beautiful tannins running through the center palate, which is stitched into the wine. Long and true. 100% whole-cluster fermentation. Subtle and energetic. Better after 2025.*

**11 LITTORAI PINOT NOIR SONOMA COUNTY SONOMA COAST THE HAVEN VINEYARD 2019 99 Pts.**

*A mix of juicy red and black berries and earthy, woody spice on the nose. Medium-bodied with such depth, balance and precision. Succulent black fruit and ripe red berries are carried by fine tannins, along with fresh mint, pine and dried roses. Fine-tuned precision and refinement. Phenomenal wine. Drink or hold.*

**12 COLGIN CELLARS CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY TYCHSON HILL 2018 100 Pts.**

*Gorgeous dark-fruit aromas with blackcurrants, mushrooms, bark and flowers. Jasmine. Full-bodied with wonderfully fine tannins. Finishes so long and agile. Sort of cloud-like. Blackberry and dark chocolate at the end. Totally integrated tannins. You feel them, but you don't see them. Unique experience tasting this. A classic in the making. Cabernet sauvignon with a touch of petit verdot and cabernet franc. Try after 2027.*

**13 ANTICA TERRA PINOT NOIR EOLA-AMITY HILLS ANTIKYTHERA 2018 99 Pts.**

*Wow. Aromas of blackberry, ripe strawberry, spice and smoke follow through to a full body with firm, minerally tannins that have a chalky, stony texture that gives it firmness and complexity. Very long and driven. Layered, too. Spice, cinnamon stick, chocolate and dried berries. Try after 2025, but already joyous to taste or drink. Only about 400 cases made.*

**14 DANA ESTATES NAPA VALLEY LOTUS VINEYARD 2018 100 Pts.**

*Seductive aromas of blackberries, blackcurrants, black olives, pine needles and violets follow through to a full body. The tannins are so poised and dynamic, while being extremely fine and focused. It goes on for minutes. Caresses every millimeter of your palate. A truly great 2018 that highlights the balance, finesse and refinement of the vintage. Needs time to come completely together. Try after 2026.*

**15 OPUS ONE NAPA VALLEY 2018 99 Pts.**

*Extremely perfumed and floral with lavender, lilacs and violets to the sweet, ripe berries, such as blackberries and blackcurrants. Some slate and graphite, too. It's full-bodied, yet ever so balanced and refined, with super fine tannins that last for minutes. Fresh herbs, such as bay leaf and lemon grass highlight the dark fruit. The quality of tannin is exquisite with wonderful polish and refinement. Lasts for minutes. So wonderful to taste now, but better after 2026.*

**16 BOND NAPA VALLEY VECINA 2018 100 Pts.**

*Seductive aromas of blackcurrants, plums and flowers, including roses. Really incredible this year with such verticality, depth and brightness. Goes on and on and on. Superb fruit character with plums and currants. Love it. Drinkable now, but give it time. Try after 2025.*

**17 HARLAN ESTATE NAPA VALLEY 2018 100 Pts.**

*Classy earth, oak and bay-leaf character on the nose, together with dark fruit, such as currants and blackberries. Forest flowers, too. Full-to medium-bodied, linear and tight with coolness and freshness. Mint and spearmint to the dark fruit. Lasts a long time. Such balance and intensity. Tight now, but great energy and length this year. Incredibly sophisticated and seductive. A joy to taste now, but try in 2025.*

**18 K VINTNERS SYRAH YAKIMA VALLEY MOTOR CITY KITTY 2018 98 Pts.**

*There's real purity of fruit to this with blackberry, blueberry and dark chocolate, as well as crushed-stone undertones. It's full and focused with structure and purity. Transparent energy to this. Needs a couple of years. Better in 2023 onwards.*

**19 BRYANT FAMILY VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY 2018 100 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackberries and gun powder with some graphite and black licorice. Tile, too, with some conifer and cedar. Complex and enticing. Full-bodied with polished tannins that build on the palate and coat and caress every millimeter of your mouth. Encompassing and balanced mouth feel. A classic beauty. Really tells where it is from! Great estate red. 600 cases. Try after 2027, but already a joy to taste.*

**20 COLGIN CELLARS SYRAH NAPA VALLEY IX ESTATE 2018 99 Pts.**

*Amazing aromas of graphite, blackcurrant, black pepper, and blue fruit. Slate, too. Full-bodied, yet so agile and light, in a way that makes it irresistible to taste and drink. The palate is full of flavor with extraordinary mushroom, dried-meat, chocolate and black-fruit character. So long, with a creamy texture from the intense yet fine tannins. Great finish. Hard not to drink now, but will be better in 2025.*



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**21** LA JOTA VINEYARD CO. MERLOT NAPA VALLEY HOWELL MOUNTAIN W. S. KEYES VINEYARD 2018 **99 Pts.**

*The violet, blackberry and black-olive aromas are abundant. Full-bodied and superb, with great character and powerful tannins. It's a block of tannins with wonderful fruit. Only about 500 cases made. Unique merlot. Give it time to come together. Best after 2024.*

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**22** AUBERT CHARDONNAY SONOMA COUNTY SONOMA COAST LAUREN ESTATE 2019 **99 Pts.**

*Warm and toasted aromas of baked citrus, stone fruit, macadamia nut, crushed sage and dried flowers. Full-bodied. Supremely elegant and sleek. Suede, paprika, turmeric, rose water, lily and dried stone fruit wrap around structured tannins that effortlessly carry the flavors with vivid depth and intensity. Balanced, layered and long. Superb. Drink or hold.*

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**23** FUTO CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY STAGS LEAP DISTRICT 5500 ESTATE 2018 **99 Pts.**

*Aromas of stone, pine needle and bark with blackcurrant and blackberry. Full-bodied with wonderfully concentration, yet it remains so refined and beautiful. So long with incredible forest-floor, light chocolate and wet-earth complexity at the finish. Blend of 92% cabernet sauvignon and 8% merlot. Unfined and unfiltered. So attractive now, but better in 2026.*

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**24** HYDE DE VILLAIN CHARDONNAY NAPA VALLEY CARNEROS HYDE VINEYARD COMANDANTE 2019 **99 Pts.**

*Wonderfully exotic with dried apple, some tropical fruit, green mango and light salted caramel. White pepper, too. So much going on. Full-bodied with dried pineapple and phenolic tension, together with pear blossom, thyme and jasmine. Salinity. A six-barrel selection of only Wente clone from Hyde. 40-year-old vineyard. 2022 release. Drink or hold.*

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**25** EISELE VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY 2018 **99 Pts.**

*Blackberry, dried-blueberry, bitter-chocolate and some volcanic-ash and burnt-orange aromas. Crushed stone and subtle vanilla notes, too. It's full-bodied with firm, chewy tannins framing a deep core of dark fruit. Dense, muscular and firmly structured. So long. Goes on for minutes. Elegance with power. Really love the beautiful refinement and integrity to this. Captures the essence of the vintage. Try from 2025.*

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**26** RIDGE VINEYARDS SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS MONTE BELLO 2017 **99 Pts.**

*This shows incredible intensity and depth of blackberries, pine needles, blackcurrants and black olives. Conifer, too. Love the nose. Full-bodied with so many layers of fruit and very fine, creamy tannins. It goes on for minutes. Impressive density with such weightlessness. Superb wine. Drink in 2026 and onwards.*

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**27** PAUL HOBBS CHARDONNAY SONOMA COUNTY SONOMA COAST GOLDROCK ESTATE CUVÉE LOUISA 2019 **98 Pts.**

*Gorgeous aromas of meyer lemon, hay, dried white flowers and dried herbs. Medium-to full-bodied with real composure. Expansive expressions of citrus, spice and floral notes. Paprika, nutmeg and coriander, too. Very fresh acidity. Astute. Rather masterfully balanced and driven. Soft, earthy and grounded finish that leaves your palate buzzing with excitement. Drink or hold.*

**28 LOKOYA CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY HOWELL MOUNTAIN 2018****99 Pts.**

*Blackberry, blueberry, pine cone and pine needle with some mushroom. So complex. Full bodied with incredible depth and length. Layered. Super balance and strength, yet formed and not overdone. Harmony for Howell. Try in 2026.*

**29 SCHRADER CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY BECKSTOFFER TO KALON VINEYARD OLD SPARKY 2018 99 Pts.**

*A great expression of cabernet sauvignon. Full-bodied with notes of crushed berries and nuts. Well balanced, with great quality to the tannins and pleasant acidity. The structure and texture are in harmony, leading to a long, flavorful finish. Shows wonderful length and beauty. Goes on and on. Needs at least five years to mellow. Try after 2025.*

**30 DANA ESTATES NAPA VALLEY RUTHERFORD HELMS VINEYARD 2018 99 Pts.**

*Sweet white chocolate with currant, plum and subtle hazelnut on the nose. Some other spices, such as nutmeg and cloves. Floral. Full-bodied with extremely fine tannins that go on and on. Beautiful center plate that is dense yet polished and fine and continues on. Exceptional. Fantastic finish. Drinkable now, but needs four or five years to show it's true greatness.*

**31 FUTO NAPA VALLEY OAKVILLE 2018 99 Pts.**

*This is luxurious red for the vintage with velvety tannins that give it superb depth and richness. Lots of tile, dry earth, clay and chocolate. Full-bodied, but almost weightless in the sensibility of the wine. It goes on for minutes. Lovely dried oranges and savory, fruity and forest-floor character at the end. 80% cabernet sauvignon, 14% cabernet franc, 4% petit verdot and 2% merlot. Unfined and unfiltered. Drink in 2025.*

**32 HYDE DE VILLAIN CHARDONNAY NAPA VALLEY CARNEROS HYDE VINEYARD 2018 98 Pts.**

*Opulent aromas of cooked apple, lemon rind, light praline and stone. Full-bodied with linear and lively acidity that runs through the wine. Energetic and bright with tightness and structure. Steely. Drinkable now, but better in 2023.*

**33 BOND NAPA VALLEY ST. EDEN 2018 99 Pts.**

*Extremely aromatic and energetic with blackberries and essence of currants. Fresh and transparent. Full-bodied with dark fruit and some spice, inkwell and blood. Very structured and tannic, but balanced and polished. Undercurrent of acidity. Contrastive. Better after 2026.*

**34 RAEN CHARDONNAY SONOMA COAST FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW CHARLES RANCH 2019 98 Pts.**

*This is really something on the nose with dried fruit, such as pineapple, peach and some cooked apple. Hints of cream and crushed stone. Full-bodied, layered and intense with phenolic tension and beauty. It's so long and firm with ultra fine tannins that provide layers and a wonderful mouth feel. Superb. So gorgeous now, but will improve beautifully with age.*



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**35** PETER MICHAEL WINERY CHARDONNAY SONOMA COUNTY KNIGHTS VALLEY LA CARRIERE 2018 **98 Pts.**

*Aromas of honeysuckle, lemon curd, dried pineapple, matchstick and toasted hazelnut. It's medium-to full-bodied with crisp acidity and seamless layers of fruit and flint. Great energy and intensity here. Drink or hold.*

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**36** HEITZ CELLAR CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY MARTHA'S VINEYARD 2015 **98 Pts.**

*Structured and powerful with chewy and firm tannins with a light vanilla and currant undertone. Full bodied. Juicy and savory. Luscious and intense yet polished. Tension, energy and wonderful length and brightness. Drinkable but needs another three to four years to come around.*

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**37** OO WINES CHARDONNAY WILLAMETTE VALLEY EOLA-AMITY HILLS FREYA HERMANN CUVÉE 2018 **98 Pts.**

*Striking aromas of sliced nectarine and white peach with flinty and spicy elements. Mouthwatering. The palate is impressively rich and pithy with good extract, fresh acidity and a gently creamy thread of honey, as well as ripe peach and nectarine. Holds long and freshens to such exquisite purity of fruit at the finish. Drink or hold.*

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**38** ANTICA TERRA PINOT NOIR WILLAMETTE VALLEY BOTANICA 2018 **98 Pts.**

*This pinot proffers detail and textural nuance, as well as aromatic complexity and fresh flavor. The nose is packed with intense raspberry and dark cherry, as well as toasted baking spices and dark chocolate. On the palate it has a very sleekly defined feel with a central focus of flavor and acidity. Fresh yet ripe with fully resolved tannin maturity and seamless resolve. Drink or hold.*

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**39** BERINGER CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY PRIVATE RESERVE 2018 **98 Pts.**

*Wild blackberry, cassis, dark chocolate, tobacco and dark spice on the nose. Dried violets, too. It's medium-to full-bodied with firm, powdery tannins and a creamy texture. Intense, yet restrained and refined, with a solid core of dark berries and bitter chocolate. Really focused and crafted with exemplary Napa cabernet character. Try from 2024.*

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**40** SHAFER VINEYARDS CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY STAGS LEAP DISTRICT HILLSIDE SELECT 2017 **98 Pts.**

*Wild blackberries and brambleberries on the nose with raw cocoa, cloves and crushed gravel. Violets and orange peel, too. It's medium-bodied with wonderful purity and depth of fruit, interlaced with dark-chocolate flavors. Firm, well-integrated tannins. Complex and refined with fantastic energy. One of the finest Hillside Selects I have had. Better from 2024.*

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**41** KEPLINGER CARNEROS HANGMAN 2018 **98 Pts.**

*This is like Côte-Rôtie. It's full-bodied with amazingly seamless tannins. Lots of blackberry, roast-meat and walnut character. The texture is exceptional. One of the best ever from Keplinger. 95% syrah and 5% viognier. Drink or hold.*



**42 CHAPPELLET CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY PRITCHARD HILL 2019****98 Pts.**

*Blackberries, blueberries, black licorice, ink and flowers on the nose. Tar, too. Full-bodied with plush, integrated tannins that are intertwined to pure velvet. The finish goes on and on. Wonderful balance and harmony. 2022 release. So excellent to drink now, but will be even better in 2023 and onwards.*

**43 VÉRITÉ SONOMA COUNTY LA JOIE 2018 99 Pts.**

*Blackberries, black mushrooms, violets, flowers, and dark tobacco. Black truffle, too. Full-bodied, yet in check and pretty. The fine tannins frame the wine perfectly. Really long and focused. Seamless. Elegance with power. This will age incredibly well, but already so gorgeous to try. 76% cabernet sauvignon, 9% merlot, 7% cabernet franc, 5% petit verdot and 3% malbec. Try after 2026, but attractive now.*

**44 LARKMEAD CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY DR. OLMO 2018****98 Pts.**

*This is extremely perfumed with loads of sweet berries and flowers. Dark cherries, too. Full-bodied with ultra fine tannins and a long, long finish. It's polished and bold at the same time. Vertical and deep. Give this four to five years to come around. Pure cabernet sauvignon. Best ever. Try after 2024.*

**45 ULYSSES NAPA VALLEY 2018 98 Pts.**

*Aromas of terra cotta, chocolate and hazelnut with iron and ink. Dusty. Full-bodied and round. Layered. Flamboyant and juicy. Rather soft and gorgeous. Some walnut and chocolate at the end. Persistent. Always there. Drinkable now, but will age wonderfully.*

**46 PAUL HOBBS PINOT NOIR SONOMA COUNTY RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY****KATHERINE LINDSAY ESTATE CUVÉE AGUSTINA 2019 98 Pts.**

*Red and black fruit on the nose, together with hints of blueberries, tarragon and paprika. Full-bodied, sleek and refined. Succulent fruit and fresh floral notes. Fine tannins. Layered, earthy notes of smoke and ash. So nuanced and masterfully constructed with such intensity and dense. Superb. Best after 2023.*

**47 GRACE FAMILY VINEYARDS CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY RUTH-****ERFORD BLANK 2018 98 Pts.**

*So much graphite and dark fruit here with some iron and spice. Lead pencil, roses and light mint, too. Full-bodied and wonderfully seamless with dusty tannins and a lightly balsamic finish. Drinkable now, but better after 2025.*

**48 ALEJANDRO BULGHERONI CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY****BECKSTOFFER TO KALON VINEYARD LITHOLOGY 2018 98 Pts.**

*This is really fantastic with a terra-cotta and cement texture and flavor, as well as violets and other flowers. Full and very refined with great length. Hints of salinity. Better in a two or three years, but gorgeous even now. 350 cases made.*

**49 CAYUSE VINEYARDS SYRAH WALLA WALLA VALLEY BIONIC FROG 2018 98 Pts.**

*Beautiful aromas of raspberries, spiced plums, dried violets, tobacco, smoked meat, herbs and balsamic. It's full-bodied and so supple with melting tannins. Wonderful texture with a round, rich and savory finish. Drink or hold.*

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**50 DALLA VALLE NAPA VALLEY MAYA 2018 98 Pts.**

*A polished, full-bodied red with aromas and flavors of blueberry, black cherry, sandalwood and crushed praline. Superb flavor intensity and a creamy texture, supported by firm, velvety tannins. Lingering vanilla notes. Delicious already, but better from 2022.*

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**51 PETER MICHAEL WINERY NAPA VALLEY OAKVILLE AU PARADIS 2018 98 Pts.**

*Gorgeous aromas of currants, blackberries, sweet tobacco and violets follow through to a full body with round, finely chewy tannins and a gorgeous finish of fruit, iodine and graphite. But always pretty fruit there. 76% cabernet sauvignon, 13% merlot and 11% cabernet franc. Better after 2024.*

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**52 ALPHA OMEGA CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY ST. HELENA BECKSTOFFER LAS PIEDRAS VINEYARD 2018 98 Pts.**

*This has a polished nose of ripe black cherry, blackcurrant jam, cedar, chocolate and some walnut. It's full-bodied with firm, ultra fine tannins. Creamy texture and great depth of flavor here. Muscular and refined at the same time. Rather linear. Needs time to open. Be patient. Try from 2024.*

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**53 HEWITT VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY RUTHERFORD DOUBLE PLUS 2018 98 Pts.**

*There's transparency and brightness here with blackcurrants, violets and some black cherries. It's full-bodied, dense and layered with fine, firm tannins and a tight, linear finish. This is closed and agile. Structured without heaviness. Drink after 2025.*

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**54 BEAULIEU VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY GEORGES DE LATOUR PRIVATE RESERVE 2018 98 Pts.**

*Blackberry, blackcurrant and mint with some sage and crushed-stone undertones. Full-bodied with chewy tannins that are in-check and nicely polished. Smoke, toasted oak and bark at the end, complementing the fresh yet ripe fruit. Drink after 2024.*

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**55 DAVID ARTHUR CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY OLD VINE 2018 98 Pts.**

*So much going on here with ripe blackberries, black cherries, currants, cloves, vanilla, chocolate and licorice. Some walnut, too. It's full-bodied and beautifully smooth with ripe, velvety tannins. Concentrated and polished with finesse. From the oldest vines on Pritchard Hill with an average age of 40 years. Cabernet sauvignon with a dash of petit verdot. From organically grown grapes. Drink from 2023.*

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**56 FAVIA CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY OAKVILLE 2018 98 Pts.**

*The aromas of ripe currants and fresh flowers just pop out here. Black cherries and blackberries, too, as well as lavender and currant bush. Full-bodied with a solid core of fruit and intense tannins, yet it remains energetic and precise. Layered texture. Great finish. This is a very typical, top 2018. From organically grown grapes. Try after 2025.*



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**57 PAHLMAYER NAPA VALLEY PROPRIETARY RED 2018 98 Pts.**

*Blackberries and wild berries on the nose with hints of incense and ink, following through to a full body with super integrated tannins and a long, linear finish. It's structured, yet so polished and integrated, the tannins spreading beautifully across the palate. Caressing, like silk. This has a higher percentage of Stagecoach Vineyard. Drinkable now, but better in 2024 and onwards.*

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**58 QUILCEDA CREEK CABERNET SAUVIGNON COLUMBIA VALLEY 2018 98 Pts.**

*This is really gorgeous with crushed berries, currants and dark chocolate. Really aromatic. It's full-bodied and soft with precise tannins and great length. Such polish and balance. Plush and focused. Lovely freshness. Subtle and complex. Sophisticated. Beautiful center palate. Pure cabernet sauvignon. So drinkable now, but will age nicely.*

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**59 REALM CELLARS CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY COOMBSVILLE FARELLA VINEYARD 2018 98 Pts.**

*An intense nose of ripe blackberry, blueberry, vanilla, clove and sandalwood. It's full-bodied and so juicy with a wealth of ripe black fruit and layers of sweet spices. Ripe, velvety tannins and a long finish. Already impressive, but deserves a few years to develop. Drink from 2022.*

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**60 ARNOT-ROBERTS SYRAH SONOMA COAST QUE SYRAH VINEYARD 2019 97 Pts.**

*Such an inviting, peppered nose of black peppercorn, hot paprika and turmeric with notes of blackberries, black cherries and blackcurrants in the background. Medium-to full-bodied, this immediately pulls you in and does not let go. So much depth and flavor with concentration and consistent intensity. Sleek. There is such fine precision here that allows for nuance and delicacy in the floral and mineral notes, adding layers and layers of compelling complexity. One of the best examples of what syrah is capable of on the Sonoma Coast. Lovely now, but best after 2024.*

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**61 QUILCEDA CREEK CABERNET SAUVIGNON RED MOUNTAIN GALITZINE VINEYARD 2018 98 Pts.**

*Perfumed nose of currants, wild raspberries, incense, mocha, violets and lavender. It's full-bodied with firm, polished and seamless tannins. Muscular and velvety, yet so balanced and refined. Gorgeous texture. Long and seductive. Try in 2024.*

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**62 CRISTOM PINOT NOIR WILLAMETTE VALLEY EOLA-AMITY HILLS MT. JEFFERSON CUVÉE 2019 97 Pts.**

*This is very seductive on the nose with ripe strawberry, spice, flowers and hints of cloves. Full-bodied, but very reserved and tight with chewy, polished tannins and a long, long finish. Racy and structured. Try after 2024.*

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**63 TOR NAPA VALLEY PURE MAGIC VINE HILL RANCH VINEYARD 2018 98 Pts.**

*A seamless red from Tor with blackberry, blueberry, plum, graphite, and chocolate aromas and flavors. It's full and very round with ripe, polished tannins that are creamy and seductive. So much gorgeous fruit here. It's powerful and direct. Co-fermented cabernet sauvignon and petit verdot. Almost 40% PV. Needs at least three to four years to come together. Try after 2023.*

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**64 KOSTA BROWNE CHARDONNAY SONOMA COUNTY EL DIABLO VINEYARD 2018 97 Pts.**

*A delightful nose of yellow grapefruit, jasmine and sweet chamomile. Full-bodied with racy acidity and mineral character. Bright and rounded fruit with sweet herbs and white flowers. So lovely and layered with fine precision and balance. Fresh, exciting and totally delicious. Superb. Drink or hold.*

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**65 LITTORAI PINOT NOIR MENDOCINO ANDERSON VALLEY ONE ACRE 2019 97 Pts.**

*Dried-floral nose, accented by notes of black cherries and a hint of lime leaf. Medium-bodied with tight tannins. Lots of freshness and brightness on the palate. There is depth and complexity, but it's all in harmony. Paprika and allspice come through. Such a delightful wine, bridging intensity with freshness. Drink or hold.*

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**66 PYM-RAE NAPA VALLEY TESSERON ESTATE 2016 98 Pts.**

*This is the debut vintage of this wine from the esteemed Bordeaux owner, Alfred Tesseron, who bought the property in the Napa mountains in 2016. Aromas of plums, wet earth, fresh herbs and tobacco. Some green olives. Turns to blueberries and blackberries. Full-bodied, yet reserved and layered with chocolate, walnuts and plums. Firm yet polished tannins give a framed sense to the wine. Savory. Racy and beautifully structured, it's extremely drinkable already. Real wine.*

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**67 BRYANT FAMILY VINEYARD NAPA VALLEY BETTINA 2018 98 Pts.**

*Very precise, focused aromas of blackberry, blackcurrant and dark chocolate with violet and light tar undertones. Floral. Full-bodied, yet so manicured and refined with tannins that are polished and slightly dusty. Vibrant energy in the tannins, instead of just raw power. Some minerality. Very long finish. 65% cabernet sauvignon, 15% merlot, 13% petit verdot, and 4% cabernet franc. Try after 2027, but already such a beautiful young wine. 580 cases made.*

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**68 NICHOLAS ALLEN WINES CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY CARTE BLANCHE BECKSTOFFER MISSOURI HOPPER VINEYARD 2018 97 Pts.**

*This is very intense with spices, walnuts, herbs and plums, as well as blackcurrants. It's full-to medium-bodied with agility, freshness and ultra fine tannins that are juicy and flavorful. Lots of fruit, but it remains in-check and fresh. Drinkable now, but better in two or three years.*

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**69 JOSEPH PHELPS CHARDONNAY SONOMA COUNTY SONOMA COAST PASTORALE VINEYARD 2019 97 Pts.**

*This is a wild chardonnay with so much sliced cooked apple, tangy pineapple and some mango. Vivid acidity. Energized white. Really lively and intense at the finish. Hints of vanilla and toffee at the end. So much flavor and freshness. Drinkable now, but better in a year or two.*

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**70 AXR CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY AXR 2019 97 Pts.**

*This is a fresh red with notes of ripe plums and blueberries, baking spices and chocolate. Super polished and silky tannin structure with incredible balance and succulent fruit. Long finish with hints of crushed stones and spices. Very fine tannins at the end. Delicious now, but better from 2024.*

**71 WILLIAMS SELYEM PINOT NOIR SONOMA COUNTY RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY ALLEN VINEYARD 2019 97 Pts.**

*Lovely, perfumed aromas of fresh rose petals, red cherries, strawberries, oregano and thyme. Full-bodied with acidity that shoots outward, bright and strong, accentuating the floral and red-fruit notes with some nuanced spice as the palate develops. Well-integrated, refreshing tannins. The minerality and salinity here is profound and driving. Excitement in a bottle. This needs some time, but will age beautifully. Best after 2024.*

**72 DOMINUS NAPA VALLEY NAPANOOK 2018 97 Pts.**

*Gorgeous aromas of plums and currants with some wet earth, mushroom, bark and incense undertones. Woody. Medium-to full-bodied with such beautiful depth and length. So subtle and long. Fabulous harmony. One of the best I have ever tasted. Drink or hold.*

**73 BERGSTRÖM PINOT NOIR EOLA-AMITY HILLS TEMPERANCE HILL VINEYARD 2019 97 Pts.**

*A very spicy expression of pinot, this has so much to say on the nose. Aromas of forest wood, cinnamon, clove and mace, as well as star anise, are dusted across the boysenberries and blueberries, some herbal tones and a pink-citrus edge. Fascinating pinot. The palate has a taut structural edge that is really unique. Fine tannins are compressed into leaves and layers, the acidity shimmering bright and the long cherry flavors locked in precisely. A highlight of the Bergström 2019s. Good to age. Drink or hold.*

**74 HIRSCH VINEYARDS PINOT NOIR SONOMA COUNTY SONOMA COAST WEST RIDGE 2019 97 Pts.**

*Very transparent and fresh aromas of sliced strawberries, lemons and pomegranate. Medium to full body with firm, linear tannins that run through the wine, giving it energy and form. It's really long. I like the earth, lightly smoked meat and fruit at the end. Always sophisticated and fine. Drink in 2024, but already a beautiful bottle.*

**75 00 WINES PINOT NOIR WILLAMETTE VALLEY EOLA-AMITY HILLS RICHARD HERMANN CUVÉE 2018 97 Pts.**

*They set a high bar for pinot of substance, complexity and purity. The pristine aromas of red cherries and ripe strawberries are laced with quite fragrant oak spice and intense blueberry, as well as raspberry notes. The palate is powerful, yet delivered with elegant precision. Unwaveringly seamless finish, too. I like this a lot. Drink or hold.*

**76 DOMAINE DROUHIN PINOT NOIR EOLA-AMITY HILLS ROSEROCK ZÉPHIRINE 2019 97 Pts.**

*Redcurrant, sour cherry and smoke on the nose. Hibiscus, too. Medium-bodied with fine tannins and lively acidity. Vibrant and juicy on the palate with a bright core of redcurrants and dried herbs. Layered and balanced, with a long, savory finish. Very vertical and deep. Drinkable now, but best from 2023.*

**77 HOBEL CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY THE FIGURE 2018 97 Pts.**

*Aromas of blueberries, cherries and baking spices. Some cedar too. It's full-bodied with chewy tannins. Grained and juicy with fruity character, supported by an elegant structure and good acidity. Balanced and flavorful through the long finish. This needs three to four years to come together, but already juicy and attractive. Try after 2024.*



**78 SLOAN NAPA VALLEY RUTHERFORD 2018 98 Pts.**

*This red has an intense and complex nose with lots of ripe black and blue-fruit flavors, together with dark chocolate, vanilla, licorice and tobacco. It's full and intense, yet incredibly fresh and juicy and holds up beautifully on the palate. The complex and layered tannin structure will need some years to soften and show its best. Has a long and even finish. Rich, but not overdone. Try from 2024.*

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**79 TOR NAPA VALLEY BLACK MAGIC 2018 98 Pts.**

*This wonderful red shows poise and tension with blackberry, blackcurrant and chocolate aromas and flavors. It's full and very tight with beautiful fruit and a long, intense finish. All Vine Hill Ranch and To Kalon. Tight now, but already a joy to taste. About 300 cases made. Try after 2024.*

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**80 CAIN NAPA VALLEY SPRING MOUNTAIN DISTRICT FIVE 2016 97 Pts.**

*Exotic aromas of dried fruit, flowers, bark, sandalwood and dried flowers. Pine cone, too. Full-bodied with wonderful, refined tannins with riper tannins that show softness and pretty length. Harmonious. Just a hint of chocolate. A beautiful 1970s vibe to this. 57% cabernet sauvignon, 15% merlot, 14% cabernet franc, 9% malbec and 5% petit verdot. Drinkable now, but even better in a few years.*

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**81 WAYFARER PINOT NOIR SONOMA COUNTY FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW THE TRAVELER 2019 97 Pts.**

*A floral nose with aromas of red and black cherries, red licorice and anise. Full-bodied with bright and energetic acidity. Fine, integrated tannins. Supremely juicy and succulent with sweet dark fruit and white pepper washing over the palate. Superb. Well balanced, layered and long. Drink now or hold.*

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**82 ANTINORI FAMILY ANTICA CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY TOWNSEND 2019 97 Pts.**

*Blueberries, blackberries, dark plums, dark chocolate, stones and mahogany on the nose. Full-bodied with firm, chewy and chalky tannins. Compact and firm. Raw cocoa and tea leaves on the finish. Needs time. Try in 2024.*

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**83 DOMAINE SERENE CHARDONNAY DUNDEE HILLS RÉCOLTE GRAND CRU 2017 97 Pts.**

*The pinnacle of chardonnay for this producer, it outguns the rest of the stable for sheer concentration and power. Complex and vibrant all at once, the aromas run the gamut of apple, pear, nectarine, peach and more. There's a well-integrated, hazelnutty oak thread too. The palate has compelling intensity with such wonderful richness. Drink or hold.*

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**84 ARNOT-ROBERTS CABERNET SAUVIGNON SONOMA COUNTY CHALK HILL CLAJEUX VINEYARD 2018 96 Pts.**

*A perfumed and inviting nose of blackberries, blackcurrants and gravel. Medium-to full-bodied and so fresh and present on the palate. Well-structured tannins. There's purity to the expression of the ripe red and black fruit with bright minerality and great depth. Such a pleasure to drink now, but this will age wonderfully. Best after 2026.*



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**85 FREEMARK ABBEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY RUTHERFORD SYCAMORE VINEYARD 2017 97 Pts.**

*Mint, spearmint, dark-berry and blueberry aromas. Leaves and sage, too. Full-bodied and firm with fantastic depth. Cool fruit with menthol and mint. Spice. Refreshing. Firm tannins. Fantastic 2017. Drink or hold.*

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**86 HUDSON CHARDONNAY NAPA VALLEY CARNEROS SEASHELL 2019 97 Pts.**

*Dried pineapple, lemon, praline, salted almond and salted caramel on the nose. Croissant and crushed shells, too. Full-bodied, yet fresh, with flavorful, tight and textured layers. Complex, concentrated and refined. Lingering mineral notes. Flint, too. Drink or hold.*

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**87 INGLENOOK NAPA VALLEY RUTHERFORD RUBICON 2018 97 Pts.**

*Subtle and complex red with blackberry, black truffle, sweet tobacco and mahogany. Highlights of lavender and violets. Full-bodied and very tight with finesse and tension. Very polished, fine tannins. Long finish. Delicious already, but best after 2022.*

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**88 L'AVENTURE PASO ROBLES WILLOW CREEK DISTRICT ESTATE CUVÉE 2019 97 Pts.**

*The pure currant and blackberry aromas are so bright and vivid. Very aromatic. Lots of pure fruit. It's full-bodied with tension and focus, because the tannins are fine-grained and give form and energy to the wine. They are very long already. I think three or four years will really bring this red into its own. Blend of syrah, cabernet sauvignon and petit verdot. Try after 2024, but hard to not drink now.*

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**89 EARLY MOUNTAIN CHARDONNAY VIRGINIA QUAKER RUN VINEYARD 2019 96 Pts.**

*A lovely and inviting nose of sliced green apple, candied lemon and fresh garden herbs. Medium-bodied and so long and supple. There is excellent delicacy and nuance here, with subtle white-tea spice. Just so charming. Drink or hold.*

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**90 SMALL VINES PINOT NOIR SONOMA COUNTY SONOMA COAST TBH VINEYARD 2018 96 Pts.**

*A perfumed and layered nose of ripe red fruit, anise, fennel seeds and violets. Full-bodied with fine tannins. Expansive on the palate with juicy red and black fruit, dried herbs, ground spice and fresh flowers all melding together, without coming across as too dense or rich, but rather lifted and graceful. Structured, balanced and long. Seriously delicious. Showing exceptionally well now, but will continue to get better. Drink or hold.*

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**91 RIDGE VINEYARDS SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS MONTE BELLO 2018 97 Pts.**

*A bright and beautiful Monte Bello with dark and black fruit, such as blackcurrants, as well as walnuts and hints of vanilla. Full-bodied with creamy tannins that are there from start to finish. Turns lightly dusty. Beautiful length. Really pure and focused. Needs time to come together completely, but already a beauty. Drink after 2025.*

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**92 STAGS' LEAP WINERY PETITE SIRAH NAPA VALLEY STAGS LEAP DISTRICT 2018 97 Pts.**

*A solid red with deep berry, dark-chocolate and hazelnut character. Some clove and mahogany, too. It's full-bodied, dense and chewy with very polished, layered tannins. I like the energy and focus to this petite sirah. One of the best I have ever had. 125th Anniversary bottling. Only in magnum. Real old-vine character. Drink or hold.*

**93 FAVIA CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY COOMBSVILLE 2018 97 Pts.**

*Lots of violets, flowers, blackcurrants and lavender on the nose. It's full-bodied, yet tight and linear on the palate with beautiful length and balance. The tannins integrate beautifully into the wine. Fine-tanned finish. Drink in 2024 and onwards.*

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**94 CAIN NAPA VALLEY SPRING MOUNTAIN DISTRICT FIVE 2017 96 Pts.**

*This is really firm and long with a solid core of tannins, earthy fruit and firmness. Medium to full body. Serious structure and length. Juicy and savory. The tension and form to this is beautiful. Classic, traditional Napa. 45% cabernet sauvignon, 26% merlot, 21% cabernet franc, 5% malbec and 3% petit verdot. Drinkable now, but better in 2024.*

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**95 AMICI CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY MISSOURI HOPPER 2019 97 Pts.**

*Black plums, cassis, earth, tobacco, roasted espresso, chili chocolate and tomato leaves on the nose. Full-bodied, chewy and compact with firm tannins, yet elegant and cool. Pretty cabernet character with subtle leafiness to the dark fruit and chocolate. Classic Missouri Hopper flavors and nature. Try this from 2025.*

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**96 CALADAN NAPA VALLEY RED BLEND 2018 97 Pts.**

*This is a new blend that shows such complexity and focus with perfumes and brightness. Flowers, some iron and rust and dark fruit. Full-bodied with super fine tannins and balance and length. Berry, blackberry and blue fruit with hints of spices. Totally nuanced. Sexy oak underneath. 41% merlot, 25.5% cabernet franc, 25.5% cabernet sauvignon, 5% malbec and 3% petit verdot. Very approachable now, but better in 2023.*

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**97 CORISON CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY ST. HELENA KRONOS VINEYARD 2019 97 Pts.**

*Aromas of blueberries, cherries, stones, cedar, sage, oregano and cloves. It's medium-to full-bodied with fine tannins and fresh acidity. Seamless and silky with fragrant, fruity character. Polished and pure. Fantastic length and freshness. Hints of stones at the end. Delicious already, but better from 2023.*

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**98 CARDINALE CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY 2018 97 Pts.**

*Aromas of blackberries, plums and spice with some pine needles and fresh mushrooms. Full-bodied with very fine, round tannins and a juicy sophistication and flavorful profile. Dark and thought-provoking. So approachable. 90% cabernet sauvignon and 10% merlot. Drink or hold.*

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**99 HORS CATEGORIE SYRAH WALLA WALLA VALLEY 2018 97 Pts.**

*This has an intense, savory nose of barbecued meat, tar, grilled mushroom, dried herbs, burnt orange and black fruit. It's full-bodied with sleek, velvety tannins. Very silky and seamless. Smoky, spicy layers with bitter-herb and saline undertones on the long, flavorful finish. Some tobacco and iodine. Try from 2023.*

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**100 PEAY PINOT NOIR SONOMA COAST POMARIUM 2019 96 Pts.**

*Aromas of red fruit and berries, red apples and cinnamon. Medium-to full-bodied with fine, grippy tannins and good breadth on the palate. There is a degree of loftiness to the way this wine glides over the expansive and nuanced palate. Rather charming. Best after 2024.*



James Suckling, 63, is one of the world's foremost wine critics, having tasted more than 250,000 wines over four decades. His dedicated website, JamesSuckling.com, explores the best in wine through reports, ratings, videos, and podcasts. Founded in 2010, JamesSuckling.com now features more than 150,000 wine ratings, hundreds of tasting reports encompassing all the world's major wine regions, high-definition videos, and other wine-related articles. James and his team of nine tasters rate more than 2,000 wines a month. In 2021, they rated just over 25,000 wines. They tasted most of the wines in the JS tasting office in Hong Kong but also rate wines from venues in New York City, near Frankfurt, Adelaide, and near Florence, Italy, as well as on the road.

The company reaches approximately 4 million followers through its website, social media platforms, newsletters, and partnerships with luxury magazines such as Prestige in Asia and Noblesse in Korea. James Suckling is also one of the Top 10 wine influencers on Instagram, with over 300,000 followers. James and his wife, Marie Kim-Suckling, are permanent residents of Hong Kong but also live in Napa Valley and Tuscany.

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