

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

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CALIFORNIA RHÔNE STYLES, BAROLO AND MORE UP TO 97 POINTS: Syrah- and Grenache-based wines from California ally power and finesse, including Shafer's Relentless bottling. Two sides of Italian excellence are present here: age-worthy Barolos from big names like Giacomo Borgogno & Figli, as well as outstanding values from Tuscany. Plus, Oregon shows off some of its best Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. More than a dozen wines here are under \$50; one 95-pointer costs just \$30. *Turn to page 4 for the six Hot Wines.*



Barolo (Photo courtesy of Travel Langhe)

CALIFORNIA Rhône Varieties

LAGIER MEREDITH

Syrah Mount Veeder 2016

94 points | \$48 | 440 cases made | Red

Power meets finesse, with a core of dense complexity wrapped in dynamic blackberry, smoky meat, crushed stone and pepper flavors that build toward big but refined tannins. Best from 2020 through 2026.—*T.F.*

MARGERUM

Syrah Santa Barbara County Black Oak Vineyard 2016

94 points | \$45 | 205 cases made | Red

Polished and expressive, with an elegantly dynamic core of complexity, layered with rich raspberry and huckleberry flavors, accented by smoky beef, licorice and black pepper notes. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

RELIC

Ritual Napa Valley 2016

94 points | \$60 | 409 cases made | Red

Full-bodied, rich and deeply structured, with dark raspberry, smoky meat and cracked pepper flavors that build drama toward big but polished tannins. Grenache, Syrah, Carignane, Charbono and Petit Sirah. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

TOR

Syrah Napa Valley Rogers La Herradura Vineyard 2015

94 points | \$55 | 200 cases made | Red

Brooding and gutsy, but distinctive for the blackberry, bacon fat and cracked pepper flavors that build richness toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

MARGERUM

Grenache Santa Barbara County 2016

93 points | \$40 | 214 cases made | Red

Sleek and polished, with expressive cherry blossom and smoked pepper aromas and spirited yet elegantly complex raspberry, zesty cinnamon and sweet anise flavors. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

MARGERUM

M5 Reserve Santa Barbara County 2016

93 points | \$40 | 207 cases made | Red

Silky and well-built, with savory raspberry and peppered beef aromas and layered black cherry and licorice flavors that build richness toward refined tannins. Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Counoise and Cinsault. Drink now through 2026.—*T.F.*

RELIC

Syrah Napa Valley Scarpa 2016

93 points | \$60 | 115 cases made | Red

Bold, plush and polished, with vibrant blackberry, sweet anise and smoked pepper flavors that finish with refined tannins. Drink now through 2024.—*T.F.*

SHAFER

Relentless Napa Valley 2015

93 points | \$95 | 3,300 cases made | Red

Rich and deeply structured, with powerfully built blackberry, river stone and smoky pepper beef flavors that take on potency toward refined tannins.

Syrah and Petite Sirah. Drink now through 2024.—*T.F.*

ITALY

Piedmont / Barolo

GIACOMO BORGOGNO & FIGLI

Barolo Cannubi 2012

95 points | \$175 | 120 cases imported | Red

A beam of pure cherry acts as a beacon in this complex, elegant red. Flavors of floral, wild herbs, tar and tobacco play supporting roles. Firm and even a tad dry in the end, but this is headed in a good direction in terms of freshness and fruit. Best from 2021 through 2040.—*B.S.*

GIACOMO BORGOGNO & FIGLI

Barolo Liste 2013

94 points | \$125 | 90 cases imported | Red

A fragrant, elegant style, featuring floral, berry, eucalyptus and tobacco aromas and flavors. Shows fine intensity, with harmony and a long, fruit-, underbrush- and mineral-tinged aftertaste. Best from 2021 through 2043.—*B.S.*

GIACOMO BORGOGNO & FIGLI

Barolo Riserva 2011

94 points | \$120 | 20 cases imported | Red

Beginning to hit a sweet spot, this Barolo is supple and rich, revealing notes of cherry, white pepper and tobacco, with a hint of licorice. Firm tannins lend support as this fades gracefully on the long aftertaste. Best from 2020 through 2033.—*B.S.*

GIACOMO GRIMALDI

Barolo Le Coste 2014

94 points | \$67 | 200 cases imported | Red

A brilliant core of black cherry, black currant and plum flavors is accented by leather, cedar, eucalyptus, iron and tobacco elements. Rich and well-balanced, with a structure that should allow this red to develop over the next two decades. Shows terrific harmony and expression. Best from 2022 through 2042.—*B.S.*

ODDERO

Barolo Bussia Vigna Mondoca Riserva 2012

94 points | \$125 | 233 cases made | Red

Shows cherry and plum flavors, offering coconut, vanilla and toasty notes. Tar and leather accents peek through as this red settles into a long finish, with dusty tannins. An oaky style. Best from 2022 through 2036.—*B.S.*

ODDERO

Barolo Vigna Rionda Riserva 2008

94 points | \$160 | 167 cases made | Red

Now a decade old, this Barolo reveals hints of truffle, carob and burnished leather in the bouquet, with fading cherry and berry fruit and licorice and spice accents. Displays the tightly knit, Serralunga structure, along with a chalky, minerally sensation on the lingering finish. Drink now through 2036.—*B.S.*

SCHIAVENZA

Barolo Prapò 2014

94 points | \$67 | 65 cases imported | Red

A bright, open and fruity style, boasting cherry, strawberry, tobacco, iron and saline flavors. Firm and linear, with a tight cohesiveness and a long, detailed finish. Best from 2023 through 2042.—*B.S.*

VIETTI

Barolo Lazzarito 2014

94 points | \$175 | 159 cases imported | Red

Bright cherry and plum flavors are girded by chalky tannins in this red. Tar, tobacco, green tea and leafy elements add depth and the finish lingers. Best from 2023 through 2040.—*B.S.*

VIETTI

Barolo Rocche di Castiglione 2014

94 points | \$175 | 83 cases imported | Red

Plum and black cherry flavors are augmented by leather, underbrush and tobacco notes. Offers hints of chocolate and sweet spices, while the muscular structure keeps this under wraps. Delivers ample fruit and bright acidity, not to mention a lingering aftertaste. Turns silky and elegant with air. Best from 2023 through 2042.—*B.S.*

MARZIANO ABBONA

Barolo 2014

93 points | \$40 | 1,500 cases made | Red

A beautiful expression of cherry, strawberry, rose and light spice flavors is buoyed by dusty, linear tannins. Tense and energetic, with a long, resonant finish. Best from 2022 through 2040.—*B.S.*

LUIGI BAUDANA

Barolo del Comune di Serralunga d'Alba 2014

93 points | \$56 | 205 cases made | Red

A top note of blood orange in the aroma segues into cherry, kirsch, menthol and iron flavors. Muscular, compact and firm, with a linear finish. Best from 2023 through 2042.—*B.S.*

MIRAFIORE

Barolo Riserva 2010

93 points | \$140 | 30 cases imported | Red

Grainy and compressed, with cherry, plum, iron and tobacco flavors etched into the burly tannins. Difficult to predict where this is going, yet there is a core of sweet fruit that washes over the tannins in the end. Best from 2021 through 2040.—*B.S.*

PECCHENINO

Barolo San Giuseppe 2014

93 points | \$67 | 466 cases made | Red

Distinctive iron and graphite aromas lead off, followed by cherry, tar and licorice notes. Dense, dusty tannins line the finish, with underbrush and tobacco accents. Best from 2023 through 2042.—*B.S.*

PIRA CHIARA BOSCHIS

Barolo Mosconi 2014

93 points | \$110 | 110 cases imported | Red

A mix of cherry, eucalyptus, iron and tobacco aromas and flavors are gripped by dense, dusty tannins. On the darker side, with a kernel of sweet fruit on the finish. Fine intensity. Best from 2023 through 2038.—*B.S.*

GIOVANNI ROCCA

Barolo Mosconi 2013

93 points | \$50 | 50 cases imported | Red

Eucalyptus, cherry, iron and tobacco flavors mingle in this sinewy red. Tightly wound and intense, with a long finish of mentholated herb and mineral notes. Balanced, but needs time to come together. Best from 2023 through 2047.—*B.S.*

PAOLO SCAVINO

Barolo 2014

93 points | \$49 | 750 cases imported | Red

This starts out with plenty of cherry, plum and orange peel flavors, offset by iron, eucalyptus and tobacco accents. The finish is rustic, with the tannins flexing their muscles, yet this comes together in the end. A wine for the long haul. Best from 2023 through 2040.—*B.S.*

SCHIAVENZA

Barolo Broglio 2014

93 points | \$54 | 75 cases imported | Red

Ripe cherry flavors sit at the center of this Barolo, with a supple texture supporting leather, tar and underbrush elements. Shows no shortage of acidity and tannins. Fine length. Best from 2022 through 2040.—*B.S.*

ITALY

Tuscany

LUIANO

Toscana Lui 2015

94 points | \$40 | 250 cases imported | Red

Fine purity and expression are the hallmarks of this black currant-, black cherry- and violet-flavored red. The texture and balance make this compelling, with a long aftertaste. Iron and spice notes add depth. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Colorino. Best from 2023 through 2038.—*B.S.*

CASTELLO ROMITORIO

Toscana Il Toro 2015

94 points | \$25 | 500 cases imported | Red

A polished, sophisticated version, boasting violet, black currant, blackberry, graphite and toasty oak aromas and flavors. Impeccably balanced and approachable now, yet should develop for a decade or more. Petit Verdot and Syrah. Best from 2021 through 2035.—*B.S.*

CASTELLO DI VICCHIOMAGGIO

Chianti Classico Agostina Petri Riserva 2015

94 points | \$28 | 800 cases imported | Red

Starting to settle into a groove, this red delivers sweet cherry and plum fruit, mingling with leather, wild herb and spice flavors. Licorice notes chime in as this plays out on the salty finish. Displays fine balance and structure. Drink now through 2035.—*B.S.*

POGGIO AL TESORO

Toscana Mediterra 2015

93 points | \$27 | 2,000 cases imported | Red

Bright aromas and flavors of blackberry, black currant, black pepper and ink mark this intense red. Compact, with ripe fruit, a well-integrated structure and a lingering aftertaste. Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2020 through 2032.—*B.S.*

OREGON

EVENING LAND

Chardonnay Eola-Amity Hills Summum Seven Springs Estate 2016

94 points | \$100 | 179 cases made | White

Fragrant and seamlessly layered, with expressive apple skin, river stone and spicy lees accents that dance along the vibrant finish. Drink now through 2022.—*T.F.*

BETHEL HEIGHTS

Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills 2016

93 points | \$32 | 2,632 cases made | Red

Silky and vibrant, with spirited raspberry and violet aromas that open to effortlessly complex flavors of black cherry, black tea, cardamom and other dark spices. Drink now through 2024.—*T.F.*

BETHEL HEIGHTS

Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills West Block 2016

93 points | \$60 | 331 cases made | Red

Structured and dynamic, yet polished, with deep black raspberry flavors laced with dark tea, savory spice and mineral notes that build toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2025.—*T.F.*

EVENING LAND

Chardonnay Eola-Amity Hills Seven Springs 2016

93 points | \$35 | 1,019 cases made | White

Graceful and elegantly complex, with alluring Meyer lemon and green apple flavors accented by wet stone and sweet anise notes on a lingering finish. Drink now through 2021.—*T.F.*

EYRIE

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Original Vines 2015

93 points | \$80 | 300 cases made | Red

Lovely and delicate, with a hint of maturity, plus expressive strawberry blossom aromas and elegantly complex raspberry and spiced tea flavors that dance along the finish. Drink now through 2023.—*T.F.*

HOT WINES

These are the most exciting discoveries from our editors' most recent tastings, published exclusively in *Wine Spectator Insider*. They are high-scoring wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

GIACOMO BORGOGNO & FIGLI

Barolo Riserva 2010

97 points | \$120 | 20 cases imported | Red

This red is hard to beat, though it will be better in another 10 years. Deftly balanced, this delivers cherry, berry, eucalyptus, iron and tar aromas and flavors. The well-integrated structure drives the long, complex finish. Approachable now, yet the tannins are still assertive. A classic Barolo from a great vintage. Best from 2021 through 2046. From Italy.—*B.S.*

BETHEL HEIGHTS

Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Flat Block 2016

95 points | \$60 | 90 cases made | Red

Deeply structured, yet seamlessly rich and polished, with spirited cherry blossom and raspberry aromas that open to fervent rhubarb, savory tea and cardamom flavors, building toward refined tannins. Drink now through 2025. From Oregon.—*T.F.*

GIACOMO BORGOGNO & FIGLI

Barolo Fossati 2013

95 points | \$120 | 85 cases imported | Red

Marked by impeccable balance, this red offers cherry, floral and menthol flavors, with a silky texture leading to refined tannins as this plays out on the finish. Displays energy, refinement and terrific length. Best from 2021 through 2036. From Italy.—*B.S.*

LUIANO

Chianti Classico Ottantuno Gran Selezione 2015

95 points | \$56 | 150 cases imported | Red

Heady aromas of kirsch, black cherry, violet, tar and iron signal this firm, dense red. Creates fine tension between the ripe, sweet fruit and bitter, savory elements, finding balance as this plays out on the long finish. Best from 2021 through 2038. From Italy.—*B.S.*

LUIANO

Chianti Classico Riserva 2015

95 points | \$30 | 420 cases imported | Red

A fresh, detailed style, exhibiting cherry, black currant, licorice, leather and iron aromas and flavors. This firms up as the latent structure emerges on the finish, yet the lasting impression is of equilibrium and sweet, ripe fruit. Best from 2020 through 2038. From Italy.—*B.S.*

MONTEPELOSO

Costa Toscana Gabbro 2015

95 points | \$110 | 250 cases made | Red

Features a focused beam of black currant, black cherry, plum and spice flavors. Herbal and vanilla accents add complexity as this winds down on the lingering aftertaste, with elements of Mediterranean scrub. Displays an engaging texture and harmony despite the youthful exuberance. Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2023 through 2045. From Italy.—*B.S.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 16 tasters and tasting coordinators in two offices. They work together to review more than 16,000 wines each year; more than 380,000 reviews are available in our online database. Together, our 11 tasters count more than 250 years of tasting experience.

We always taste wine blind, in our offices in Napa and New York. This is your guarantee that our reviews are fair and objective, and that a wine's reputation or price does not influence its score. Each editor specializes in the wines of specific regions; initials appended to the review identify the taster of each wine. We score wines using the 100-point scale (see green box).

James Laube Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: California

Harvey Steiman Editor at large, San Francisco
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1984. Tasting beat: At large

Thomas Matthews Executive editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Spain

Kim Marcus Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: California Chardonnay, Merlot and Pinot Noir; Argentina; Chile

Bruce Sanderson Senior editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Piedmont, Tuscany, Burgundy

James Molesworth Senior editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: California Cabernet Sauvignon, Bordeaux, Rhône Valley, Loire Valley, Port, South Africa

MaryAnn Worobiec Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: California Sauvignon Blanc and other whites; Australia; New Zealand

Alison Napjus Senior editor and tasting director, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2000. Tasting beat: Italy, Champagne, Alsace

Tim Fish Senior editor, Napa
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2001. Tasting beat: California Zinfandel and other reds; Oregon; Washington; U.S. sparkling wines

Gillian Sciaretta Associate editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2012. Tasting beat: France, Portugal

Aleks Zecevic, Associate tasting coordinator, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2013. Tasting beat: Austria, Germany

Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale

95-100	Classic
90-94	Outstanding
85-89	Very good
80-84	Good
75-79	Mediocre
50-74	Not recommended