

# Wine Spectator Insider

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**THIS** week's *Wine Spectator Insider* features classic and outstanding wines from California and Spain. From the Golden State, James Laube reviews 17 Cabernets and Syrahs. Some of the top names in California Cabernet are featured here—Caymus and Shafer—but it's the Syrahs that earn the highest scores this week. California Rhône specialist John Alban has two 2005 Syrahs from Edna Valley in this report; you'll find both of them among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

Also in this issue, Thomas Matthews offers his latest tasting notes on Spanish reds from Ribera del Duero, Priorat and Bierzo. Two Tempranillo-based reds from the potentially outstanding 2006 vintage in Ribera del Duero earn 96 points each, this week's top score.

## California

### CHALK HILL

Syrah Chalk Hill 2006

**93 points | \$60 | 118 cases made | Red**

Fresh, intense and vibrant, with snappy black cherry and grapey blackberry fruit that offers floral and spicy nuances. Full-bodied, trim and focused, it gains depth and ends in a long, persistent finish. Drink now through 2015.—*J.L.*

### FAVIA

Cerro Sur Napa Valley 2006

**93 points | \$120 | 140 cases made | Red**

Bold, ripe, intense and concentrated, full-bodied and balanced, with a supple texture that lets the black cherry, plum, currant and black licorice flavors glide across the palate. Wonderful depth and purity of flavor, ending with minerally tannins. Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2017.—*J.L.*

### CAYMUS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2007

**92 points | \$70 | 37,800 cases made | Red**

Ripe and fleshy, with rich plum, wild berry, spice and savory herb notes that are complex, full-bodied and expansive on the palate, ending with firm tannins and a dash of espresso. Drink now through 2016.—*J.L.*

### NEYERS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley AME 2006

**92 points | \$75 | 550 cases made | Red**

Ripe and robust, intense and concentrated, with a full-bodied mix of black cherry, plum, dusty berry, mineral, anise and sage. Intense, focused and concentrated, with a long, layered finish. Best from 2011 through 2017.—*J.L.*

### ROAR

Syrah Santa Lucia Highlands Rosella's Vineyard 2007

**92 points | \$40 | 165 cases made | Red**

Beautifully crafted, rich and spicy, showing notable pepper, wild berry, plum and blueberry notes, with beefy, meaty character that extends its range of flavors. Full-bodied, balanced, focused and persistent, ending with a long, intricate finish. Drink now through 2016.—*J.L.*

### SHAHER

Hillside Select Stags Leap District 2005

**92 points | \$215 | 2,400 cases made | Red**

Generous ripe plum, black cherry and currant flavors are supple and focused, complex and balanced. Full-bodied and focused, ending with a long, layered finish that picks up anise, cedar and mineral notes. Cabernet Sauvignon. Tasted three times with consistent notes. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

## SHOWKET

Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville 2007  
**92 points | \$70 | 920 cases made | Red**

Rich and complex, full-bodied, with supple tiers of black cherry, plum and currant woven together with anise, spice and cedar-cigar box notes, ending in a smooth, graceful finish. Drink now through 2016.—*J.L.*

## TITUS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Reserve 2006  
**92 points | \$63 | 516 cases made | Red**

Rich, intense and focused on ripe, supple, peppery currant, plum and blackberry fruit that's both complex, concentrated and focused, ending with a long, persistent finish that reveals extra depth and flavor nuances. Ends with firm, dry tannins. Decant. Drink now through 2017.—*J.L.*

## CHALK HILL

Cabernet Sauvignon Chalk Hill 2006  
**91 points | \$65 | 4,326 cases made | Red**

Ripe, full-bodied and richly flavored, with tiers of black cherry, plum, anise and blueberry unfolding gracefully. Holds its focus and ends in a long persistent finish. Drink now through 2016.—*J.L.*

## FAVIA

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2006  
**91 points | \$120 | 70 cases made | Red**

A big, rich, intense and concentrated effort, with firm, bold, full-bodied currant, mineral, fresh earth, cedar, anise and tar flavors that turn firm and chewy on the finish, with dry, savory tannins. Best from 2011 through 2017.—*J.L.*

## FAVIA

La Magdalena Napa Valley 2006  
**91 points | \$120 | 178 cases made | Red**

Combines ripe plum, black cherry and raspberry fruit with earthy sage, mineral and pencil lead. The texture is smooth and fleshy, and the flavors run deep, ending with firm, fine-grained tannins. Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2016.—*J.L.*

## KEPLINGER

Red Slope Knights Valley 2006  
**91 points | \$58 | 162 cases made | Red**

Complex aromas of ripe plum, blackberry, pepper and spice turn supple and elegant on the palate. Rich without being heavy, this supple-textured red ends with a long, layered finish. Wows you with finesse. Grenache and Syrah. Drink now through 2014.—*J.L.*

## LAIL

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley J. Daniel Cuvée 2006  
**91 points | \$125 | 705 cases made | Red**

This intense red pushes ripeness to the edge of cherry and plum jam, providing plenty of flavor and complexity. Full-bodied and balanced, with a long, supple finish and fine-grained tannins. Drink now through 2016.—*J.L.*

## CHIARELLO FAMILY

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Eileen 2006  
**90 points | \$65 | 600 cases made | Red**

Firm, rich and savory, this full-bodied red starts smooth and creamy, tightening up and keeping the focus on loamy earth, currant, tobacco, red and black licorice and dried berry. Ends with chewy tannins. Best from 2010 through 2016.—*J.L.*

## PAHLMAYER

Napa Valley 2006  
**90 points | \$150 | 7,017 cases made | Red**

Firm and structured, with a taut mix of dried currant, anise, sage, dusty berry and cedary oak. Full-bodied, concentrated and marked by chewy tannins, this is closed and needs time. This was the better of two bottles. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec. Best from 2010 through 2016.—*J.L.*

## Spain

### CELLER MAS DOIX

Priorat Costers de Vinyes Velles 2006  
**93 points | \$125 | 175 cases imported | Red**

Alluring aromas of blackberry, licorice and lilac persist on the palate, where juicy acidity intensifies the fruit and spice notes, while mocha and mineral accents add complexity. A racy red, elegant and focused. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

### MAS MARTINET VITICULTORS

Priorat Camí Pesseroles 2006  
**93 points | \$95 | 200 cases made | Red**

Smoky, toasty oak aromas give way to lively fruit flavors of cherry and blackberry in this expressive red, which has a velvety texture, with firm underlying tannins. Kirsch and black pepper notes emerge on the long finish. Drink now through 2018.—*T.M.*

### BODEGAS EMILIO MORO

Ribera del Duero Malleolus de Valderramiro 2006  
**93 points | \$176 | 1,000 cases made | Red**

This expressive red delivers cherry, cinnamon, orange peel, fig pudding and smoke flavors, supported by full yet supple tannins and bright acidity. Floral and spice notes linger on the finish. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

### BODEGA Y VIÑEDOS CASTRO VENTOSA

Bierzo Valtuille Cepas Centenarias 2006  
**93 points | \$70 | 50 cases imported | Red**

Lavish oak layers toast, sandalwood and espresso flavors in this rich red, but don't overshadow ripe strawberry and blackberry fruit or accents of spice, mineral and lilac. An extreme style, but delivers serious concentration while remaining focused and expressive. Best from 2010 through 2018.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS AALTO

Ribera del Duero 2006

**92 points | \$50 | 500 cases imported | Red**

This juicy red is packed with blackberry, boysenberry and plum flavors. Licorice, chocolate and tobacco notes add interest. This is thick, with full tannins, but stays plush and lively through the finish. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

## DESCENDIENTES DE J. PALACIOS

Bierzo Villa de Corullón 2006

**92 points | \$45 | NA cases made | Red**

Distinctive and alluring, this sinuous red delivers cherry, cranberry, sandalwood, tobacco and mineral flavors over light, firm tannins that give way to a floral and licorice finish. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

## CELLER MAS DOIX

Priorat Salanques 2006

**92 points | \$40 | 1,000 cases imported | Red**

A plush texture carries rich flavors of brandied cherry, dark chocolate, cocoa and mountain herbs in this expressive red. The tannins are firm but well-integrated, and the finish is bright and juicy. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS PINORD

Priorat +7 2006

**92 points | \$40 | 4,000 cases made | Red**

Subtle but solid, this red shows cassis, kirsch and vanilla flavors that are fresh and balanced, with well-integrated tannins and a floral finish. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

## ABADIA RETUERTA

Cabernet Sauvignon Viño de la Tierra de Castilla y León  
Pago Valdebellón 2005

**92 points | \$110 | NA cases made | Red**

This polished red shows an alluring mix of smoke, licorice, tobacco and black currant flavors that are a bit austere yet complex and harmonious. Well-structured, but remains sleek and focused through the smoky finish. Drink now through 2015.—*T.M.*

## BODEGA Y VIÑEDOS CASTRO VENTOSA

Bierzo El Castro de Valtuille 2006

**92 points | \$35 | 200 cases imported | Red**

Boysenberry, licorice, espresso and mineral flavors are focused and well-integrated in this layered, balanced red, which has real density on an elegant frame. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS EMILIO MORO

Ribera del Duero 2006

**91 points | \$27 | 1,000 cases imported | Red**

Ripe cherry, fig pudding, vanilla and spice flavors mingle in this firm, lively red. There's plenty of structure, but the red fruit flavors are bright and expressive. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

## ÁLVARO PALACIOS

Priorat Finca Dofí 2006

**91 points | \$85 | NA cases made | Red**

Cherry and plum flavors are ripe and juicy in this lively red, which has firm tannins and light accents of tobacco and herbs. Balanced, fresh and clean. Tight now, but promising depth with age. Best from 2011 through 2018.—*T.M.*

## ÁLVARO PALACIOS

Priorat L'Ermita 2006

**91 points | \$680 | NA cases made | Red**

This firm red offers ripe, dark flavors of plum, espresso and dark chocolate, with a rich texture and solid tannins. Mineral and *sous-bois* notes add interest to the ripe fruit. Drink now through 2018.—*T.M.*

## ARDÈVOL

Priorat Terra d'Hom 2006

**90 points | \$70 | 50 cases imported | Red**

Espresso, licorice and dark chocolate flavors mingle in this smoky red, framing a core of black cherry and cassis. Firm tannins give structure and balance. Best from 2010 through 2016.—*T.M.*

## CLOS MOGADOR

Priorat 2006

**90 points | \$90 | 2,500 cases made | Red**

This sleek, firm red offers dark, alluring flavors of chocolate, mocha, licorice and plum. Oaky, but there's good density, and the assertive tannins melt on the spicy finish. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

## MERUM PRIORATI

Priorat Osmin 2006

**90 points | \$62 | 125 cases imported | Red**

Lithe and expressive, this red offers rich flavors of brandied cherry, cassis, licorice, espresso and mountain herbs. Balanced and focused, with a long, fresh finish. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS MONASTERIO

Ribera del Duero Hacienda Monasterio 2006

**90 points | \$55 | 1,000 cases imported | Red**

Plum and currant flavors are ripe and fresh in this round red. Accents of herbs, licorice and smoke add interest. Firm tannins and fresh acidity are well-balanced. Drink now through 2016.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS EMILIO MORO

Ribera del Duero Malleolus 2006

**90 points | \$70 | 400 cases imported | Red**

Fresh and vibrant, this red delivers spicy cherry pie flavors, with smoky and light herbal notes that add complexity. The tannins are well-integrated, and the finish is vibrant. Drink now through 2015.—*T.M.*

# HOT WINES

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

## ALBAN

Syrah Edna Valley Lorraine 2005

**96 points | \$145 | 630 cases made | Red**

Offers a bold, ripe, complex mix of mocha, spicy berry, beef and pepper scents. Rich and full-bodied, smooth, long and expansive on the finish, ending with supple tannins. For all its size and depth of flavor, it's elegant and polished, ending with tar and mineral notes. Drink now through 2016. *From California.—J.L.*

## BODEGAS EMILIO MORO

Ribera del Duero Malleolus de Sanchomartin 2006

**96 points | \$203 | 25 cases imported | Red**

Powerful and distinctive, this massive red builds a brick wall of tannins that shelters deep, complex cassis, cranberry, salted dark chocolate and sanguine flavors. Despite its concentration, this remains focused and expressive. Best after 2012. *From Spain.—T.M.*

## DOMINIO DE PINGUS

Ribera del Duero 2006

**96 points | \$750 | 100 cases imported | Red**

Ripe fruit and lavish oak find harmony in this rich red. Blackberry and cassis mingle with dark chocolate, mineral and toast flavors. Full, polished tannins give way to a spicy finish. Powerful and expressive. Drink now through 2020. *From Spain.—T.M.*

## ALBAN

Syrah Edna Valley Seymour's Vineyard 2005

**94 points | \$145 | 250 cases made | Red**

Intense, firm and structured, with spicy white pepper, sage, dried herb, mineral and dusty berry flavors that are compact, focused and full-bodied, ending in a tight, tannic finish. Best from 2010 through 2017. *From California.—J.L.*

## LAUREL

Priorat 2006

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

Lithe yet intense, this expressive red shows vibrant flavors of kirsch, raspberry, licorice, vanilla and mineral. A velvety texture is supported by ripe, well-integrated tannins. Fresh and alluring, in the modern style. Drink now through 2016. *From Spain.—T.M.*

## WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

### The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

*Wine Spectator's* tasting staff includes 14 people in three offices. They work together to review more than 18,000 wines each year, more than any other publication. Together, our seven senior tasters count more than 140 years of tasting experience.

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

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: California

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Austria, Greece, Portugal, southern France

**Thomas Matthews** Executive editor, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: New York, Spain

**James Molesworth** Senior editor, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: Argentina, Chile, Loire Valley, Rhône Valley, South Africa

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**James Suckling** European bureau chief, Italy

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**Tim Fish** (California),

**Alison Napjus** (Alsace),

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### Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale

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