

# Wine Spectator Insider

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**TWO VERY DIFFERENT BUT EQUALLY PRESTIGIOUS STYLES** of wine come together for a very enticing lineup in this week's *Wine Spectator Insider*, which features nine classic-rated wines up to 98 points.

With the holiday season on the horizon, it's not too early to start thinking about Champagne—vintage Champagne for the most special occasions. From growers to *grandes marques*, there is a fine spectrum of vintages here back to 1985. Krug's Clos du Mesnil and Clos d'Ambonnay cuvées shine, as do standouts from Charles Heidsieck, Veuve Clicquot, Ayala, de Venoge, Vilmart, Louis Roederer and Moët & Chandon. Down in Italy, bold Barolos of the Piedmont region hold their own as well; names to look for include Conterno Fantino, Elio Grasso and Roberto Voerzio. Six Hot Wines are on page 4.



## FRANCE Champagne

### KRUG

Brut Blanc de Noirs Champagne Clos d'Ambonnay 1998  
**95 points | \$2,399 | 400 cases made | Sparkling**

Rich and expressive, yet elegant overall, this offers aromatic notes of crystallized honey and iodine, with flavors of baked apple, toasted hazelnut, currant, chanterelle mushroom, chamomile and dried herbs. Lightly creamy and refined in texture, this is fresh and focused throughout. Drink now through 2025.—A.N.

### VEUVE CLICQUOT

Brut Rosé Champagne Cave Privée 1989  
**95 points | \$295 | 2,068 cases made | Sparkling**

Rich and creamy, this is aging gracefully. The finely tuned acidity and lightly beaded texture provide an elegant frame for the layers of coffee liqueur, toasted almond, cherry bon bon, iodine and orange peel flavors. The long finish is tinged subtly with smoky mineral. Disgorged October 2008. Drink now through 2022.—A.N.

### AYALA

Brut Nature Champagne Perle d'Ayala 2002  
**94 points | \$160 | 50 cases imported | Sparkling**

Clean-cut and focused, with a rich and smoky base note of toasted brioche supporting flavors of lemon meringue, kumquat, hazelnut and fleur de sel. Creamy and refined in texture, with a long, mineral-tinged finish. Drink now through 2024.—A.N.

### FLEURY PÈRE & FILS

Extra Brut Champagne Cépages Blancs 1990  
**94 points | \$170 | 15 cases made | Sparkling**

Firm, fresh and aging gracefully, this offers beautiful harmony between the pointillism-like texture, mouthwatering acidity and finely layered flavors of baked peach, oyster shell, candied orange zest, brioche and ground ginger, with a hint of maple syrup. Features a smoky, mineral-tinged finish. Drink now through 2022.—A.N.

### CHARLES HEIDSIECK

Brut Rosé Champagne 1999  
**94 points | \$125 | NA cases made | Sparkling**

Elegant, offering fine integration between a core of oyster shell-tinged minerality and appealing ripe black cherry, strawberry shortcake and toasted hazelnut notes. Shows refined texture and finely honed acidity. Drink now through 2024.—A.N.

### DE VENOGÉ

Extra Brut Champagne 1985  
**94 points | \$300 | 25 cases imported | Sparkling**

Showing a firm frame, yet open-knit and accessible, with hints of toasted coconut and vanilla accenting flavors of grilled peach, kumquat, dried porcini mushroom and smoked almond, accompanied by a note of chive flower. Well-balanced, with a mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2020.—A.N.

## VILMART

Champagne Coeur de Cuvée 2004

**94 points | \$148 | 26 cases imported | Sparkling**

Lovely texture here, showing fine balance between the wine's finesse and the rich layers of poached apple, pastry, black currant candy, spun honey and orange zest flavor. Silky and mouthwatering throughout, with a long, spiced finish. Drink now through 2027.—A.N.

## ALFRED GRATIEN

Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne 2007

**93 points | \$100 | 500 cases made | Sparkling**

Backed by intense and mouthwatering acidity, this firm version offers tightly knit flavors of lemon meringue, poached pear and pastry, with hints of hazelnut and coconut. Shows fine texture, and a smoky, mineral-driven base. Drink now through 2020.—A.N.

## MOËT & CHANDON

Brut Rosé Champagne Grand Vintage 2002

**93 points | \$NA | NA cases made | Sparkling**

A firm version that integrates racy acidity with a lively bead, yet showcases flavors of macerated cherry, whole-grain toast, dried currant, ground anise and clove, showing a smoky undertow of minerality. Features a rich, pastry-tinged finish. Drink now through 2027.—A.N.

## LOUIS ROEDERER

Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne 2006

**93 points | \$78 | 400 cases imported | Sparkling**

Well-meshed and aromatic, with an airy bead and delicate acidity enlivening the flavors of white peach, green plum and candied ginger, accompanied by a hint of brioche. The lovely texture and a mineral base note shine throughout. Drink now through 2022.—A.N.

## LOUIS ROEDERER

Brut Rosé Champagne 2007

**93 points | \$72 | 1,200 cases imported | Sparkling**

Finely knit, with a delicate bead and racy acidity framing subtle flavors of ripe cherry, spiced plum, pink grapefruit zest and hints of brioche and date. Very focused, yet elegant, with a mineral finish. Drink now through 2027.—A.N.

## RUINART

Brut Rosé Champagne 1998

**93 points | \$250 | NA cases made | Sparkling**

Very minerally, offering lots of smoke and roasted almond notes accenting the flavors of cherry purée, crème de cassis and macerated plum. Fresh and focused, with a fine, creamy bead and a lingering finish. Drink now through 2025.—A.N.

## DE VENOGÉ

Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne 2004

**93 points | \$80 | 375 cases imported | Sparkling**

Refined texture and well-knit acidity define this elegant version, which offers notes of dried apricot and papaya, tangerine, piecrust, orchard blossom and hazelnut. Mouthwatering, with a hint of sea salt on the finish. Drink now through 2024.—A.N.

# ITALY

## Piedmont

### GIUSEPPE RINALDI

Barolo Cannubi S. Lorenzo-Ravera 2008

**95 points | \$120 | 200 cases imported | Red**

A seductive red, drawing you in with its pure cherry and floral aromas and flavors, then capturing you with the silky texture and harmonious profile. Stays fresh and elegant, with a long, ethereal finish. Best from 2015 through 2030.—B.S.

### CORDERO DI MONTEZEMOLO

Barolo Enrico VI 2008

**94 points | \$80 | 70 cases imported | Red**

A seductive red, complex and layered, beginning with its eucalyptus and tobacco-scented cherry to the rose petal and raspberry notes that emerge along the way. Harmonious yet firm, with a long aftertaste of sweet fruit and spice. Best from 2014 through 2030.—B.S.

### ARMANDO PARUSSO

Barolo Bussia 2008

**94 points | \$96 | 200 cases imported | Red**

Distinctive sage, olive, macerated cherry, bilberry and licorice aromas and flavors highlight this complex, enthralling Barolo, which is intense yet light on its feet. Elegant and persistent, harmonious and long, with an aftertaste that's spicy and expansive. Best from 2015 through 2030.—B.S.

### AZELIA

Barolo 2008

**93 points | \$40 | 1,890 cases made | Red**

Sweet fruit is the overarching theme in this lush red. Cherry, raspberry, eucalyptus, iron and tea flavors combine with the well-integrated structure as this glides to an aftertaste of cherry and iron. Best from 2014 through 2026.—B.S.

### AZELIA

Barolo Bricco Fiasco 2008

**93 points | \$65 | 680 cases made | Red**

An intense red, saturated with blackberry, raspberry, rose and tobacco flavors, without being heavy or extracted. Pure and harmonious, with its structure buried until the lingering finish. Best from 2014 through 2027.—B.S.

### CASCINA ADELAIDE

Barolo Fossati 2008

**93 points | \$125 | 400 cases imported | Red**

A light kiss of new oak works in this red, whose aromas evoke vanilla, resin, cherry, plum and tobacco. Sweet fruit and a round profile add harmony, and the finish echoes fruit and spice. Terrific length. Best from 2014 through 2028.—B.S.

## CIABOT BERTON

Barolo Roggeri 2007

**93 points | \$85 | 300 cases imported | Red**

A warm red, exuding tar, tobacco, cherry, floral and sun-baked earth aromas and flavors, with a long, spicy finish. This still has the chewy texture courtesy of the tannins, but is developing nicely.

Best from 2014 through 2026.—*B.S.*

## CONTERNO FANTINO

Barolo Sorì Ginestra 2008

**93 points | \$102 | 2,500 cases made | Red**

Round, rich and succulent, featuring cherry, plum, eucalyptus and black tea notes, this boasts a solid spine of tannins, remaining fresh and lingering on the tea- and spice-filled finish. Best from 2014 through 2028.—*B.S.*

## CONTERNO FANTINO

Barolo Vigna del Gris 2008

**93 points | \$100 | 875 cases made | Red**

Bursting with cherry, raspberry and licorice aromas and flavors, this pretty red is not without density, with dusty tannins and bright acidity keeping it focused. Offers fine balance and length, with a licorice and spice aftertaste. Best from 2014 through 2027.—*B.S.*

## ELIO GRASSO

Barolo Ginestra Casa Maté 2008

**93 points | \$57 | 1,200 cases made | Red**

So graceful and harmonious, yet well-structured, with a lush texture covering the acidity and tannins. That provides the ideal foil for this red's cherry, plum, spice and tobacco flavors. Finishes long, with freshness and a mineral accent. Best from 2014 through 2027.—*B.S.*

## ELIO GRASSO

Barolo Rùncot Riserva 2006

**93 points | \$150 | 600 cases made | Red**

A graceful, floral-scented red, displaying flavors of cherry, strawberry and medicinal herbs. The structure peeks through as this evolves across the finish. Just a bit dry in the end, yet with plenty of sweet fruit. Best from 2015 through 2029.—*B.S.*

## ARMANDO PARUSSO

Barolo Le Coste Mosconi 2008

**93 points | \$84 | 100 cases imported | Red**

Rich with cherry, raspberry and floral flavors tinged by licorice and spice, this is accessible, despite its fine-grained tannins lurking in the background. Balanced and lively, with a lingering aftertaste of spice and mineral. Best from 2014 through 2028.—*B.S.*

## GIUSEPPE RINALDI

Barolo Brunate-Le Coste 2008

**93 points | \$120 | 500 cases imported | Red**

There is purity and perfume to the raspberry and cherry flavors in this Barolo, whose tannins are civilized and integrated into the elegant frame. This is intense and lingers with spice and tobacco notes. Best from 2014 through 2027.—*B.S.*

## CAVALIER BARTOLOMEO

Barolo Altenasso 2008

**92 points | \$60 | 400 cases imported | Red**

This red is pure, boasting cherry and currant flavors backed by a vivid structure. It's fleshy, with the structure embedded, yet balanced, and should develop beautifully. Just a tad dry on the finish. Best from 2014 through 2027.—*B.S.*

## CAVALIER BARTOLOMEO

Barolo Solanotto Altenasso 2007

**92 points | \$90 | 200 cases imported | Red**

Violet, black currant and raspberry aromas and flavors dominate this deep red, accented by tobacco and underbrush. Vibrant and assertive in a positive way, with energy and a fresh finish tinged with white pepper and tobacco. Best from 2015 through 2028.—*B.S.*

## G.B. BURLOTTO

Barolo Vigneto Cannubi 2008

**92 points | \$65 | 333 cases made | Red**

A juicy, cherry- and raspberry-flavored Barolo that's both elegant and svelte. This has the intensity to carry the flavors to a lingering conclusion, with a touch of licorice on the aftertaste. Best from 2014 through 2027.—*B.S.*

## CASCINA ADELAIDE

Barolo Preda 2008

**92 points | \$110 | 500 cases imported | Red**

A modern style, whose new oak notes of smoke, Bourbon and vanilla accent the plum and green olive flavors, with a spicy finish. Flashy, with more emphasis on style rather than place. Best from 2015 through 2025.—*B.S.*

## CASCINA BONGIOVANNI

Barolo Pernanno 2008

**92 points | \$77 | 1,000 cases made | Red**

There's fine integration between the floral, red berry, eucalyptus and tobacco aromas and flavors, with silky texture and firm, linear structure. It all comes together on the long, spice- and tobacco-tinged finish. Best from 2015 through 2027.—*B.S.*

## CERETTO

Barolo Bricco Rocche Brunate 2007

**92 points | \$99 | 4,000 cases made | Red**

Boasting menthol and eucalyptus-tinged cherry and plum aromas and flavors, this red is broad and well-balanced in its structure, with fine length. Approachable now, but better in a year or two. Best from 2014 through 2025.—*B.S.*

## FRATELLI GIACOSA

Barolo Bussia 2008

**92 points | \$55 | 375 cases imported | Red**

Menthol, medicinal herbs, cherry and raspberry flavors mingle in this rich, firmly structured red, which is long and balanced, but will require time to unlock all its secrets. Best from 2015 through 2030.—*B.S.*

# 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.

## KRUG

**Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne Clos du Mesnil 2000**  
**98 points | \$859 | 949 cases made | Sparkling**

A study on the interplay between finesse and power. Racy acidity and intense minerality drive this seamlessly meshed wine, while the finely detailed texture and layers of grilled white peach, hazelnut, kumquat and crystalized honey display overall elegance. Hints of fleur de sel and coffee liqueur echo on the finish. Drink now through 2027. *From France.—A.N.*

## KRUG

**Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne Clos du Mesnil 1998**  
**97 points | \$859 | 1,000 cases made | Sparkling**

A minerally vein and finely tuned acidity structure this elegant 1998, with expressive notes of orchard blossom, hazelnut, dried apricot, pastry, lemon cream and crystallized pineapple sitting on a texture of finely spun silk. Features a long, mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2028. *From France.—A.N.*

## CHARLES HEIDSIECK

**Brut Blanc de Blancs Champagne Blanc des Millénaires 1995**  
**96 points | \$185 | NA cases made | Sparkling**

Lovely and expressive, with the ethereal texture of fine silk, showing precise balance and integration and weaving together flavors of smoky toasted hazelnut, coffee liqueur, patisserie apple, candied ginger and a hint of white truffle. Fresh and vibrant, with a lasting finish. Drink now through 2027. *From France.—A.N.*

## CONTERNO FANTINO

**Barolo Mosconi 2008**  
**95 points | \$96 | 850 cases made | Red**

Blood and iron aromas morph into cherry and raspberry flavors as this delineated red unfolds on the palate. The mineral element persists, along with a tobacco note and a hint of eucalyptus. Offers terrific balance and intensity combined with fine length. Best from 2015 through 2030. *From Italy.—B.S.*

## ELIO GRASSO

**Barolo Gavarini Chiniera 2008**  
**95 points | \$57 | 300 cases imported | Red**

Hints of coffee and sandalwood mark this rich yet racy red, whose core flavors are cherry, strawberry and underbrush. This has some muscle and density, firming up on the finish. There's adequate sweet fruit for balance. Best from 2015 through 2030. *From Italy.—B.S.*

## ROBERTO VOERZIO

**Barolo Sarmassa di Barolo 2007**  
**95 points | \$700/1.5L | 55 cases made | Red**

Lovely sweet cherry and berry fruit is augmented by leather, tobacco and licorice in this complex red, which is sweet and harmonious, yet supported by well-integrated tannins. The long, tobacco- and spice-filled finish seals the deal. Best from 2014 through 2030. *From Italy.—B.S.*

## WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

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

*Wine Spectator's* tasting staff includes 12 people in two offices. They work together to review more than 18,000 wines each year, more than any other publication. Together, our six senior tasters count more than 140 years of tasting experience.

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

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

**Kim Marcus** Managing editor, New York  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Austria, Greece, Port, Portugal, Southern France

#### Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale

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

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

**James Molesworth** Senior editor, New York  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: Argentina, Bordeaux, Chile, Finger Lakes, Loire Valley, Rhône Valley, South Africa

**Bruce Sanderson** Tasting director, New York  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Burgundy, Champagne, Germany, Italy

**Harvey Steiman** Editor at large, San Francisco  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: Australia, Oregon, Washington

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