

# Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

THIS week's edition of the *Wine Spectator Insider* features 36 outstanding wines from Germany's (and probably the world's) top region for Riesling, the Mosel, Spain's Ribera del Duero and Toro zones, and Washington's Columbia Valley. Bruce Sanderson reviews an even dozen ageworthy Mosel Rieslings this week, including new arrivals from Joh. Jos. Christoffel Erben and Selbach-Oster. All of them come from the 2007 vintage, including a classic-rated auslese from Willi Schaefer, which you'll find among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

Also in this issue, Thomas Matthews reviews Spanish reds from the potentially outstanding 2005 vintage. And from Washington, Harvey Steiman covers 15 reds, many from the Columbia Valley's important Walla Walla and Red Mountain appellations.

## Germany Mosel Riesling

### JOH. JOS. CHRISTOFFEL ERBEN

Riesling Auslese\*\* Mosel Ürziger Würzgarten 2007  
**94 points | \$66 | 30 cases imported | White**

Fresh and delicate, like the morning sun illuminating a dew-coated spider's web. Orange Creamsicle, peach and mineral flavors course through the refined framework, culminating in a long, citrus and mineral-infused aftertaste. Drink now through 2035.—B.S.

### JOH. JOS. CHRISTOFFEL ERBEN

Riesling Auslese\*\*\* Mosel Ürziger Würzgarten 2007  
**94 points | \$78 | 40 cases imported | White**

Like a shiny, brilliant precious stone, this shines from within, radiating its apricot, lime, vanilla and slate flavors to all corners of the palate. Elegant, lightweight and filigree, it lingers beautifully, with a mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2038.—B.S.

### WILLI SCHAEFER

Riesling Auslese Mosel Graacher Domprobst (AP 10) 2007  
**94 points | \$111 | NA cases made | White**

Crystal clear and lush to boot, this auslese delivers apricot, honey, lime and slate flavors. They ride the vibrant structure through the finish, where they remain focused and persistent. Drink now through 2038.—B.S.

### SELBACH-OSTER

Riesling Auslese Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Graacher Domprobst 2007  
**94 points | \$42 | 130 cases made | White**

A spicy version, revealing orange, vanilla and loads of mineral. It's also racy and electric, with a structure that holds it all together like a steel coil. Terrific length on the aftertaste. Drink now through 2040.—B.S.

### JOH. JOS. CHRISTOFFEL ERBEN

Riesling Auslese\* Mosel Ürziger Würzgarten 2007  
**93 points | \$50 | 75 cases imported | White**

A lush white, with bright structure offsetting the lush texture. In between lie peach, nectarine, lime and stone flavors, all well integrated and ripe. So easy and open, you want to drink it now, but this will age well. Mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2033.—B.S.

### DR. HEIDEMANN'S-BERGWEILER

Riesling Auslese Mosel Graacher Himmelreich 2007  
**93 points | \$30 | 200 cases made | White**

Candied apricot and citrus fruit, along with lively acidity define this juicy Riesling. It's rich and elegant at once, with fine integration of all its elements. Nice long finish too. Drink now through 2035.—B.S.

## WILLI SCHAEFER

Riesling Auslese Mosel Graacher Domprobst (AP 17) 2007  
**93 points | \$87 | NA cases made | White**

Crisp and delicate, this Riesling evokes candied lime, vanilla and a hint of black currant backed by racy acidity. Score points for freshness and vivacity more than richness. Fine length, with a long aftertaste. Drink now through 2038.—*B.S.*

## JOH. JOS. CHRISTOFFEL ERBEN

Riesling Auslese\*\* Mosel Erdener Treppchen 2007  
**92 points | \$66 | 50 cases imported | White**

Rich and exotic, this Riesling exhibits touches of vanilla, orange Creamsicle and rose along with lime and mineral notes. It's round and plush for the vintage, with nice tangy finish. Drink now through 2030.—*B.S.*

## DR. PAULY-BERGWEILER

Riesling Auslese Mosel Wehlener Sonnenuhr 2007  
**92 points | \$45 | 120 cases made | White**

Luscious and honeyed, this features ripe apricot, vanilla and slate notes matched to a round, ample frame. There's plenty of acidity underneath, which gives the finish focus and length. This will improve with time. Drink now through 2030.—*B.S.*

## REICHSGRAF VON KESSELSTATT

Riesling Kabinett Mosel Scharzhofberger 2007  
**91 points | \$29 | 500 cases made | White**

A delicate white, with brisk acidity marshaling its lime, peach and mineral notes to the finish. Balanced and long, with textbook kabinett weight and profile. Drink now through 2022.—*B.S.*

## PETER NICOLAY

Riesling Auslese Mosel Erdener Prälat 2007  
**91 points | \$30 | 50 cases made | White**

An opulent 2007, with apricot and honey notes riding over the lively structure. It's concentrated, with fine length and a honeyed aftertaste. Drink now through 2032.—*B.S.*

# Spain

## BODEGAS ARROCAL

Ribera del Duero Christina 2005  
**93 points | \$68 | 200 cases imported | Red**

A polished mix of balance and power, this red offers blackberry, espresso, mineral and tobacco flavors on a firm, smooth structure. It has the dark, loamy notes typical of the region, with bright, juicy fruit and plenty of toasty oak. Drink now through 2015.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS Y VIÑAS DOS VICTORIAS

Toro 2V Premium 2005  
**93 points | \$143 | 70 cases imported | Red**

Austere now, this red shows depth and polish, with coffee, mineral and tarry notes framing a core of currant and roasted plum. Muscular tannins and plenty of concentration, with the balance to carry it through. Best after 2009.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS Y VIÑAS DOS VICTORIAS

Toro Elias Mora Crianza 2005  
**93 points | \$38 | 1,400 cases imported | Red**

Muscular tannins grip the palate of this concentrated red, but there's a dense core of cassis, currant, espresso and spice cake flavors that are focused and expressive. Impressive now, but should be more enjoyable with time. Best after 2010.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS BORSAO

Campo de Borja Crianza Selección 2005  
**92 points | \$16 | 3,000 cases imported | Red**

Dense and balanced, this polished red carries plum, blackberry, black pepper and tar flavors. Muscular tannins are well-integrated, and fresh acidity carries coffee, floral and mint notes through the finish. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS PEÑALBA LÓPEZ

Ribera del Duero Torre Albéniz Reserva 2004  
**92 points | \$49 | 750 cases imported | Red**

This smooth red delivers plum, raisin, espresso and licorice flavors over firm, well-integrated tannins. Tobacco and spice notes linger on the finish. Muscular, balanced and polished. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS MAUROS

Toro San Román 2005  
**91 points | \$62 | 2,400 cases imported | Red**

Black currant and cola flavors are open and sweet in this round, plush red. It has dense, well-integrated tannins and just enough acidity for balance. International style. Drink now through 2015.—*T.M.*

## J.C. CONDE DELGADO Y OTROS

Ribera del Duero Neo Christina 2005  
**90 points | \$72 | 200 cases imported | Red**

This alluring, modern-style red delivers a ripe core of plum and blackberry fruit, framed in chocolate and spicy oak notes. It's lively, with balanced tannins and juicy acidity. Drink now through 2015.—*T.M.*

# Washington

## MARK RYAN

Syrah Red Mountain Wild Eyed 2006  
**94 points | \$45 | 350 cases made | Red**

Supple, open-textured and spectacularly flavorful, with gorgeous plum, blackberry, wild flower and espresso flavors mingling effectively on a surprisingly well-behaved frame. This has terrific flavors and impressive length, and it doesn't go over the top. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

## DELILLE

Chaleur Estate Red Yakima Valley 2005  
**93 points | \$70 | 1,100 cases made | Red**

Smooth, round and harmonious, offering an elegant mouthful of creamy, spice-accented black cherry, black currant and plum flavors, nicely fashioned to breeze through a veil of fine tannins on the beautifully focused finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

## LEONETTI

Reserve Walla Walla Valley 2005  
**93 points | \$125 | 906 cases made | Red**

Rich and distinctive in flavor, offering raspberry, cherry and pomegranate fruit that keep floating effectively over the refined structure, which shapes the tannins and acidity beautifully to support, not overwhelm, the flavors. This is lovely. Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Merlot. Best from 2009 through 2015.—*H.S.*

## DELILLE

Syrah Red Mountain Doyenne Grand Ciel Vineyard 2005  
**92 points | \$75 | 450 cases made | Red**

Rich, ripe and generous, offering a huge mouthful of coffee-accented plum and blueberry flavors. Finishes spicy, with hints of licorice and cardamom. Needs time to soften a bit. Best from 2009 through 2015.—*H.S.*

## GORMAN

Syrah Red Mountain The Pixie 2006  
**92 points | \$40 | 250 cases made | Red**

Big, broad and generous, delivering a powerful mouthful of black cherry, plum and spice flavors that explode through the long, raucous finish. The tannins are nicely submerged, but this is a bit hot and needs time to settle into itself. Best from 2009 through 2015.—*H.S.*

## LEONETTI

Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2005  
**92 points | \$80 | 2,754 cases made | Red**

Ripe and generous, this isn't a big wine, but it's beautifully focused to show its currant, blueberry, black cherry and dusky spice flavors, with a dusty note wafting through the gorgeously fashioned finish. Tannins are present, but they don't get in the way. Drink now through 2017.—*H.S.*

## LACHINI

Cabernet Sauvignon Red Mountain Klipsun Vineyard La Bestia 2005  
**91 points | \$45 | 130 cases made | Red**

Firm in texture, but the tannins have a light touch around a lively core of raspberry, black cherry and dusky spice flavors, hinting at espresso as the finish lingers enticingly. Flavorsome and long. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

## LEONETTI

Merlot Columbia Valley 2006  
**91 points | \$65 | 2,723 cases made | Red**

Lean and crisp, almost delicate in its subtle, supple structure, with raspberry, blackberry, coffee and sage aromas and flavors that linger extensively and expressively on the fine-grained finish. Drink now through 2013.—*H.S.*

## MARK RYAN

The Dissident Columbia Valley 2006  
**91 points | \$28 | 750 cases made | Red**

Smooth and round, with a dynamic range of flavors, offering black cherry, black olive, sweet anise and mocha character that keeps hanging on the long, effective finish, where a tobacco note makes things even more interesting. Syrah, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2013.—*H.S.*

## MERCER

Cabernet Sauvignon Horse Heaven Hills 2006  
**91 points | \$24 | 694 cases made | Red**

Smooth and generous, this is nicely fashioned to balance fine tannins with lavish black cherry, black currant, violet and mocha aromas and flavors, lingering on the expressive finish. Drink now through 2014.—*H.S.*

## ARBOR CREST

Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2005  
**90 points | \$24 | 1,500 cases made | Red**

Lithe, supple and appealing for its green olive-shaded black currant and black cherry flavors, finishing with a hint of loam in the mix as the aftertaste lingers nicely. Drink now through 2013.—*H.S.*

## DI STEFANO

Ottimo 14th Anniversary Columbia Valley 2004  
**90 points | \$60 | 125 cases made | Red**

Lithe and spicy, with lots of licorice and black olive overtones to the blackberry and dark plum flavors, lingering against firm tannins on the generous finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2009 through 2014.—*H.S.*

## HOGUE

Cabernet Sauvignon Wahluke Slope Reserve 2005  
**90 points | \$30 | 1,413 cases made | Red**

Ripe, focused and beautifully balanced to showcase its black currant, blackberry and espresso flavors. The tannins are present but polished, and there's just enough acidity to let things flow impressively. Has length and presence. Drink now through 2015.—*H.S.*

## HOGUE

Merlot Wahluke Slope Reserve 2005  
**90 points | \$30 | 1,226 cases made | Red**

Broad and generous, offering a lively mouthful of cherry, milk chocolate and clove flavors that mingle effectively on the long, expressive finish against firm tannins. Best from 2009 through 2013.—*H.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.

## BODEGAS Y VIÑAS DOS VICTORIAS

Toro Gran Elias Mora 2005

**95 points | \$85 | 260 cases imported | Red**

This red has an iron grip now, but there's impressive concentration, and once the tannins release it shows rich cassis, coffee, anise and tar notes that unfold on the finish. Great density and balance. Best after 2009. *From Spain.—T.M.*

## WILLI SCHAEFER

Riesling Auslese Mosel Graacher Himmelreich 2007

**95 points | \$111 | NA cases made | White**

This auslese has an extra dimension. Round, yet balanced by bright acidity. Flavors of apricot and vanilla are at the core, with orange and stone dancing around them. There's an overall sense of harmony, with a creamy texture and mouthwatering finish. Drink now through 2035. *From Germany.—B.S.*

## 21 GRAMS

Walla Walla Valley 2005

**94 points | \$125 | 80 cases made | Red**

This is ripe, focused and distinctive for the way it plays its dark plum and black currant fruit against smooth tannins and hints of black olive and licorice. The finish rolls along for days. Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2015. *From Washington.—H.S.*

## BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS MAUROS

Toro San Román 2004

**94 points | \$62 | 2,100 cases imported | Red**

Alluring plum, blackberry, cola and spice cake flavors are rich and balanced in this expressive red. There's plenty of structure, but it doesn't get in the way of the flavors, and the spicy, floral finish is long and fresh. Best after 2009. *From Spain.—T.M.*

## WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

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

*Wine Spectator's* tasting staff includes 17 people in four offices. They work together to review more than 15,000 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 San Francisco, Napa, New York and Tuscany, and in the vineyard regions of Europe. 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, 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

**Bruce Sanderson** Tasting director, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Burgundy, Champagne, Germany

**Harvey Steiman** Editor at large, San Francisco

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: Australia, New Zealand, Oregon, Washington

**James Suckling** European bureau chief, Italy

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1981. Tasting beat: Bordeaux, Italy, Port

Tasting staff:

**Jo Cooke** (Veneto),

**Tim Fish** (California),

**Alison Napjus** (Alsace),

**Daniel Sogg** (New Zealand),

**MaryAnn Worobiec** (California)

### 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