

# Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Biweekly Publication

**SUPER TUSCANS AND SHERRIES BULK UP** a *Wine Spectator Insider* that flaunts the diversity of stylistic possibilities in Old World wine. Italian wines, up to 97 points, range from robust Tuscan Cabernet to elegant Chianti Classico to luscious dessert Vin Santo. Some boldface names to look for are the latest Fontodi Flaccianello, Tenuta San Guido Sassicaia and Rocca di Frassinello Maremma blend, though there are plenty of others.

Premium Sherries are seeing a resurgence of interest in export markets, and the set in this report shows plenty have the quality to back that up. Finos, amontillados, olorosos and more are here, from more familiar houses such as González Byass and Lustau to boutique operations like Equipo Navazos and Valdespino. Across all styles, there are 15 picks here at 90-plus points and \$40 or less.

## ITALY Tuscany

### DUEMANI

Cabernet Franc Toscana 2009

**93 points | \$120 | 50 cases imported | Red**

Aromatic, rich and very supple, this red delivers a plush texture on which the blackberry, black currant, tobacco and spice flavors luxuriate. The tannins are buried, and this stays fresh and long, with a fruit and spice aftertaste. Drink now through 2023.—*B.S.*

### FATTORIA DI FELSINA

Vin Santo del Chianti Classico 2004

**93 points | \$52/375ml | 1,666 cases made | Dessert**

Plenty of candied walnut, molasses and honey highlight this smooth and concentrated Vin Santo. There's an astringent streak on the finish that helps keep this light, along with moderate acidity. Drink now through 2020.—*B.S.*

### LE MACCHIOLE

Bolgheri 2011

**93 points | \$30 | 7,900 cases made | Red**

A pretty red, boasting black cherry, black currant, violet and mineral aromas and flavors. Supple and silky, with hints of herbs and spices. Though dense, the tannins are well-covered by sweet fruit and flesh, but provide ample support. Excellent length. Best from 2015 through 2025.—*B.S.*

### IL MOLINO DI GRACE

Toscana Gratus 2007

**93 points | \$65 | 1,000 cases made | Red**

Deep aromas of licorice, cherry, rosemary, juniper and fresh earth give way to sweet fruit, tobacco and spices in this dense, complex red, which is persistent and stays focused on the long, mineral-tinged finish. Sangiovese. Drink now through 2022.—*B.S.*

### POGGERINO

Chianti Classico 2010

**93 points | \$25 | 1,050 cases imported | Red**

Bright and well-endowed with pure cherry, raspberry and black currant fruit that's shaded by tobacco, licorice and mineral flavors. Elegant, intense and persistent, with a long aftertaste of fruit and mineral. This should age well, but a tradeoff to lose that beautiful fruit now. Best from 2015 through 2028.—*B.S.*

### PODERE POGGIO SCALETTE

Alta Valle della Greve Il Carbonaione 2010

**93 points | \$75 | 2,500 cases made | Red**

**A plush, textured red, featuring layers of pure cherry, raspberry, leather, briar and tobacco flavors. Concentrated and juicy, getting support from the dusty tannins on the finish. Needs air, so decant now, or cellar. Best from 2016 through 2026.—*B.S.***

### QUERCETO DI CASTELLINA

Toscana Podalirio 2010

**93 points | \$48 | 250 cases imported | Red**

This is nicely oaky, yet has the fruit to match, with black cherry, blackberry, vanilla, toast and mineral flavors permeating the smooth texture. Firm, refined tannins follow through as the aftertaste evokes iron and tar. Best from 2015 through 2028.—*B.S.*

### ROCCA DI CASTAGNOLI

Cabernet Sauvignon Toscana Buriano 2006

**93 points | \$46 | 100 cases imported | Red**

This is seductive for its complex aromas and flavors of black cherry, black currant and sweet spices, all matched to a supple texture, but there are firm tannins for support, and this shows balance and fine length. Drink now through 2020.—*B.S.*

### ROCCA DI FRASSINELLO

Maremma Toscana 2011

**93 points | \$50 | 6,670 cases made | Red**

Ripe and opulent, delivering blackberry, pomegranate, licorice and leather flavors, this harmonious and well-structured wine features a long, fruit- and spice-filled aftertaste. Very open, despite the firm tannins. Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2015 through 2029.—*B.S.*

### TENUTA DI TRECCIANO

Toscana Daniello 2009

**93 points | \$35 | 400 cases imported | Red**

This enticing red starts out with exuberant cherry, blackberry, tobacco and spice aromas and flavors. Well-built and balanced, with fine harmony and a lingering, fruit- and spice-filled aftertaste. Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2017 through 2028.—*B.S.*

### VILLA CALCINAIA

Colli della Toscana Centrale Casarsa 2008

**93 points | \$44 | 291 cases made | Red**

Enticing aromas and flavors of plum, black cherry, leather, spice, tobacco and mineral permeate this tightly wound red. Intense yet balanced, firm yet long, this expands on the savory finish. Best from 2015 through 2027.—*B.S.*

## SPAIN Jerez

### GONZALEZ BYASS

Pedro Ximénez Jerez Noe Viejo NV

**93 points | \$50/375ml | 30 cases imported | Dessert**

The prune, mocha, licorice root, date and toasted caraway seed notes are expansive and richly layered, with hints of green tea and chocolate-covered ginger on the finish. Shows power, length and cut through the intense finish. Drink now.—*J.M.*

### BODEGAS HIDALGO GITANA

Oloroso Jerez 30 Years Old Faraon NV

**93 points | \$100/500ml | 57 cases made | White**

The dried orange and persimmon flavors are backed by darker date, charred wood and buckwheat notes, while a green tea accents threads everything together on the finish. Exhibits lovely cut, with finely beaded acidity. Drink now.—*J.M.*

### EMILIO LUSTAU

Fino Jerez Almacenista del Puerto José Luis Gonzalez Obregón NV

**93 points | \$19/500ml | 100 cases made | White**

A bright, piercing style, with heather, chamomile and green almond notes up front, followed by fleur de sel, talc and blanched almond slivers and a long, very racy finish. Gorgeous. Drink now.—*J.M.*

### EMILIO LUSTAU

Palo Cortado Jerez Almacenista Vides NV

**93 points | \$30/500ml | 200 cases made | White**

This marries dry and creamy notes wonderfully, with toffee and clove, pecan and bitter almond, caramel and cardamom flavors all bouncing off one another. Buckwheat honey and anise notes line the lengthy finish. A beauty. Drink now.—*J.M.*

### VALDESPINO

Pedro Ximénez Jerez El Candado NV

**93 points | \$26 | 300 cases imported | Dessert**

Offers layers of macerated date, ganache, warm caraway, buckwheat honey and chocolate-covered orange peel notes, with a deep, intense finish that lets a wonderfully smoky hint curl through. The power is obvious, the range and definition more subtle. Drink now.—*J.M.*

### EQUIPO NAVAZOS

Manzanilla Jerez La Bota 42 NV

**92 points | \$80 | 200 cases imported | White**

Weighty for a Manzanilla, featuring charred walnut and Brazil nut aromas, complemented by singed orange peel, dried peach and persimmon notes, with a long, bracing, hazelnut husk-filled finish. Shows more oomph than most Manzanillas, exhibiting precision and balance. Drink now.—*J.M.*

### GONZALEZ BYASS

Amontillado Jerez Del Duque Vinum Optimum Rare Signature NV

**92 points | \$50/375ml | 50 cases imported | White**

A nervy, dry style, offering blood orange and dried persimmon notes, with terrific cut, backed by green tea, roasted ginger and salted caramel accents. The long, focused finish shows a great coil of acidity. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## BODEGAS HIDALGO GITANA

Amontillado Jerez 30 Years Old Napoleon NV  
**92 points | \$100/500ml | 57 cases made | White**

Floral and salty, featuring a pronounced *rancio* note, this lets date, clove and toasted Brazil nut elements unfurl steadily from the core. The salty, mouthwatering, very precise finish shows impressive length. High-toned for an amontillado. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## BODEGAS HIDALGO GITANA

Palo Cortado Jerez 30 Years Old Wellington NV  
**92 points | \$100/500ml | 57 cases made | White**

Almost breezy, featuring a racy core of persimmon, dried nectarine and blood orange, lined with roasted walnut and cardamom notes. Puts on weight with aeration, showing smoke and pecan accents through the bone-dry finish. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## EMILIO HIDALGO

Fino Jerez La Panesa Especial NV  
**92 points | \$66 | 1,660 cases made | White**

Shows lots of range, featuring singed persimmon, dried nectarine, walnut and green tea notes, with a long bitter almond note on the finish. A big fino with invigorating acidity. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## EMILIO LUSTAU

Manzanilla Amontillada Jerez Almacenista  
Manuel Cuevas Jurado NV  
**92 points | \$30/500ml | 50 cases made | White**

Salted caramel, date, pear eau-de-vie and charred sandalwood notes form the core of this intriguing Sherry, with a bone-dry finish that lets a hazelnut husk note linger. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## EMILIO LUSTAU

Manzanilla Pasada Sanlucar de Barrameda Almacenista  
Manuel Cuevas Jurado NV  
**92 points | \$30/500ml | 200 cases made | White**

Salted plantain chip, chamomile, Meyer lemon, blanched almond and talc notes are tightly woven, with a floral-tinged finish that has rapier cut. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## VALDESPINO

Amontillado Jerez Tio Diego Single Vineyard NV  
**92 points | \$25 | 200 cases imported | White**

Smoky and taut, featuring date, dried orange peel, clove, singed sandalwood and salted caramel notes. The dry, nervy finish has lots of tension. Begs for salted almonds. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## VALDESPINO

Fino Jerez Inocente NV  
**92 points | \$25 | 400 cases imported | White**

High-pitched, featuring talc, chamomile, chalk and jicama notes, followed by a pure, stone-tinged finish. Very graceful, lacy and long. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## EQUIPO NAVAZOS

Fino Jerez La Bota 35 NV  
**91 points | \$80 | 150 cases imported | White**

Juicy from the start, offering succulent dried orange, nectarine and persimmon notes lined with bitter almond and balsa hints. A light Brazil nut accent appears on the finish. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## GONZALEZ BYASS

Palo Cortado Jerez Apostoles Vinum Optimum Rare  
Signature NV  
**91 points | \$50/375ml | 70 cases imported | White**

Takes a flattering approach, featuring a lightly sweet, rounded edge to the date, blood orange, toasted pecan and fruitcake aromas and flavors, with toasted marshmallow and bourbon-glazed peach notes on the finish. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## BODEGAS HIDALGO GITANA

Manzanilla Jerez La Gitana NV  
**91 points | \$19/500ml | 66,666 cases made | White**

Bright, with saline, sunchoke and blanched almond notes backed by a piercing, chalk-framed finish. This is all precision and cut. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## BODEGAS HIDALGO GITANA

Manzanilla Pasada Jerez Pastrana NV  
**91 points | \$32 | 2,000 cases made | White**

Dried lemon peel, fennel seed, salted almond and citrus oil notes course along here, featuring crunchy acidity through the finish, with a briny energy. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## BODEGAS HIDALGO GITANA

Palo Cortado Jerez Wellington 20 Years V.O.S. NV  
**91 points | \$50/500ml | 84 cases made | White**

A clean, racy style, with almond and hazelnut husk notes backed by toasted corn, walnut and singed sandalwood accents. A touch of dried persimmon echoes on the very dry finish. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## EMILIO LUSTAU

Amontillado Jerez Almacenista del Puerto  
José Luis Gonzalez Obregón NV  
**91 points | \$30/500ml | 200 cases made | White**

Flirts with an off-dry note, but quickly turns taut and dry, with date, fig, blood orange, walnut and mincemeat flavors backed by a singed cedar accent on the elegant finish. Drink now.—*J.M.*

## EMILIO LUSTAU

Oloroso Jerez Almacenista Pata de Gallina  
Juan García Jarana NV  
**91 points | \$30/500ml | 200 cases made | White**

Offers a raisiny hint, along with notes of date, anise, fennel seed, cardamom and singed clove. There's an ever-so-slightly sweet feel through the nicely wiry finish, tinged with orange bitters. Drink now.—*J.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 wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

## ROCCA DI MONTEGROSSI

Vin Santo del Chianti Classico 2005  
**97 points | \$100/375ml | 25 cases imported | Dessert**

A thick, creamy dessert wine, exuding apricot, fig paste, caramel, roasted walnut and orange peel aromas and flavors. For all its mouthcoating intensity on the attack, this finishes clean and lingers with treacle, nut and spice notes. Drink now through 2020. *From Italy.—B.S.*

## CAPEZZANA

Vin Santo del Carmignano Riserva 2006  
**94 points | \$65/375ml | 200 cases imported | Dessert**

Caramel, burnt molasses, roasted almond and honey flavors mark this intense dessert white, which is balanced and vibrant, with a long finish of honey, apricot and smoke. Trebbiano and San Colombano. Drink now. *From Italy.—B.S.*

## FONTODI

Colli della Toscana Centrale Flaccianello 2010  
**94 points | \$110 | 2,000 cases imported | Red**

Aromatic, fresh and silky, this red offers violet, black currant, cherry, spice and mineral flavors. Vibrant, balanced and expressive, this just needs time to harmonize all the components. Shows terrific length and energy. Best from 2016 through 2030. *From Italy.—B.S.*

## FONTODI

Vin Santo del Chianti Classico 2004  
**94 points | \$100/375ml | 75 cases imported | Dessert**

A fruity dessert style, boasting strawberry, cherry, honey, spice and mineral flavors. Thick and slightly cloying, with honey and caramel on the finish. Made from red grapes. Drink now through 2017. *From Italy.—B.S.*

## TENUTA SAN GUIDO

Bolgheri-Sassicaia 2010  
**94 points | \$226 | 36,600 cases made | Red**

Cedar, sandalwood and spice notes lead off, with cherry, currant and rhubarb flavors underneath. Linear in profile, with a firm base of fine-grained tannins, this lingers beautifully on the finish. Persistent from beginning to end, this just needs time to expand. Best from 2016 through 2027. *From Italy.—B.S.*

## SELVAPIANA

Vin Santo del Chianti Rufina 2004  
**94 points | \$35/500ml | 125 cases imported | Dessert**

An elegantly wrought Vin Santo, with all the elements in harmony. Roasted walnut, molasses, dried apricot, mineral and smoke flavors combine with moderate sweetness and a tangy note. Fine length. Drink now through 2018. *From Italy.—B.S.*

## WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

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

*Wine Spectator's* tasting staff includes 17 tasters and tasting coordinators in two offices. They work together to review nearly 20,000 wines each year, more than any other publication. Together, our ten 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; 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 1981. Tasting beat: California

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

Kim Marcus Managing editor, New York  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Austria, Germany, Greece, 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: Spain

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

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

MaryAnn Worobiec Senior editor, Napa  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: California, New Zealand

Allison Napjus Senior editor, New York  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2000. Tasting beat: Alsace, Beaujolais, Champagne, Italy

Tim Fish Senior editor, Napa  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2001. Tasting beat: California

Nathan Wesley Senior editor, New York  
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 2005. Tasting beat: Argentina, Chile, Italy