

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

THIS issue of *Wine Spectator's Insider* newsletter features seven outstanding California Cabernets reviewed by James Laube and seven big reds from Portugal reviewed by Kim Marcus, but the lion's share of this week's wines come from Tuscany, more specifically, Bolgheri.

James Suckling reports that Bolgheri may have been the Tuscan region to produce the best wines in the 2005 vintage, which was spotty in September with intermittent rain showers. Serious producers dodged rainstorms while picking, but through selective harvesting, they brought in a very healthy and ripe crop. Bolgheri seems to be on a roll at the moment and might be taking over from Brunello di Montalcino as the most consistent fine winemaking area in Tuscany. There are plenty of very good to outstanding wines for relatively reasonable prices (\$20 to \$40 a bottle). Note that some are not bottled under the Bolgheri DOC because they are either pure varietal wines, not allowed under the rules, or bottled elsewhere in Tuscany, which results in the Toscana Indicazione Geografica Tipica (IGT). Four of this week's Italian selections earned classic scores. You'll find them among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

California

BOUNTY HUNTER

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Blind Justice Dr. Crane Beckstoffer Vineyard 2005

93 points | \$132 | 195 cases made | Red

A bold, ripe, fleshy and complex style, with layers of black cherry, currant, mocha and toasty oak flavors that are deep and persistent. Best from 2011 through 2017.—J.L.

CORRA

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2005

93 points | \$125 | 200 cases made | Red

Smooth, rich and polished, with layers of green and black olive, spice, currant, cedar and mineral flavors that are complex and deep while retaining an elegant mouthfeel. Ends with supple, graceful tannins that glide on the finish. Best from 2010 through 2017.—J.L.

LINDSTROM

Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District 2005

93 points | \$95 | 326 cases made | Red

Elegantly styled, smooth and complex, with dried currant, berry, creamy dill-laced oak and hints of anise, sage and wild berry, gaining depth, length and persistence on the finish, where the flavors stay lively, focused and tasty. Best from 2010 through 2018.—J.L.

SPOTTSWOODE

Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Family Estate Grown 2005

93 points | \$130 | 4,290 cases made | Red

Tight and well structured, with a firm, compact, dense mix of spicy currant, black cherry, plum and wild berry fruit that's pure and focused, revealing more subtle flavor nuances, depth and complexity as it unfolds. Best from 2010 through 2017.—J.L.

DETERT

Cabernet Franc Oakville 2005

92 points | \$60 | 296 cases made | Red

Bright currant, plum, and black cherry flavors have a lushness about them, with delicate spice, tobacco, sassafras cedar and herb notes. The detailed flavors sail on in the finish. Drink now through 2014.—*M.W.*

PEDEMONTE

Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford 2005

91 points | \$50 | 300 cases made | Red

Subtle herb, currant, black berry and wild berry scents fold over to the palate in a smooth, elegant style, gaining depth and complexity and ending with a long persistent finish. Best from 2010 through 2016.—*J.L.*

RAMEY

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Larkmead Vineyard 2005

90 points | \$80 | 3,300 cases made | Red

Firm, rich and concentrated, with ripe blue berry, currant and black cherry fruit that's fleshy and well centered, offering both subtle flavor nuances of nutmeg, anise and dried berry. Best from 2010 through 2016.—*J.L.*

Italy Tuscany

I GREPPI

Bolgheri Superiore Greppicaia 2005

93 points | \$70 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

Dark ruby in color, with beautiful aromas of currant, mint and crushed berries. Complex and subtle. Full-bodied, with ultrapolished tannins and gorgeous fruit. This goes on and on. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2012.—*J.S.*

LE MACCHIOLE

Toscana Paleo 2005

93 points | \$125 | 350 cases imported | Red

Decadent aromas of berries, meat and earth follow through to a full body, with velvety, rich tannins, a long, flavorful finish and a coconut and berry aftertaste. Impressive. Cabernet Franc. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

PODERE SAPAIO

Bolgheri Superiore Sapaio 2005

93 points | \$80 | 250 cases imported | Red

Dark-colored, with loads of ripe berry, vanilla, coffee and blackberry aromas that follow through to a full body, with big, juicy tannins and a long, rich finish. A very New World style. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

ARGENTIERA

Bolgheri Superiore 2005

92 points | \$84 | 500 cases imported | Red

Berry, tobacco and light coffee aromas follow through to a full body, with spice, chocolate and berry flavors. Chewy, yet polished and long. This has a solid core of fruit. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

CERALTI

Bolgheri Alfeo 2005

92 points | \$28 | 200 cases imported | Red

Displays gorgeous aromas of currant, mint and blackberry. Full-bodied, with wonderful, silky tannins and a long finish of fruit, light toasty oak and coffee. Structured. This is a new winery in Bolgheri. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2012.—*J.S.*

TENUTA SAN GUIDO

Toscana Guidalberto 2006

92 points | \$55 | 2,300 cases imported | Red

Aromas of toasty oak and ripe fruit follow through to a full body, with a solid core of fruit and a chewy finish. Needs some time to come around. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

ARGENTIERA

Bolgheri Villa Donoratico 2006

91 points | \$40 | 1,250 cases imported | Red

Blackberry and chocolate aromas and flavors follow through to a medium-to-full body, with soft tannins and a pretty finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

DONNA OLIMPIA 1898

Toscana Tageto 2006

91 points | \$20 | 1,500 cases imported | Red

Fresh, aromatic and very pretty, with currant, raspberry and lavender. Full-bodied, with silky tannins and a clean, fruity finish. This is balanced and rich, with lots going on. Needs time. A new super Tuscan winery to watch. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best after 2013.—*J.S.*

FORNACELLE

Cabernet Franc Toscana Foglio 38 2005

91 points | \$70 | 100 cases imported | Red

Dark ruby in color, with intense aromas of iodine, blackberry, black licorice and tar. Full-bodied, with soft, silky tannins and a long finish that shows plenty of fruit. Polished and full of character. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

I GREPPI

Bolgheri Greppicante 2006

91 points | \$28 | 1,800 cases imported | Red

Very pretty aromas of fresh herbs, currant and raspberry follow through to a full-bodied palate, with a very fine tannin structure and a long, caressing finish. Very solid. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

PODERE SAPAIO

Bolgheri Volpola 2006

91 points | \$48 | 550 cases imported | Red

Lots of currant, prune and spices on the nose follow through to a full body, with plenty of ripe fruit and silky tannins. The finish is long and rich. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

STROZZI

Bolgheri Superiore Vignarè 2005

91 points | \$75 | 800 cases imported | Red

Blueberry and blackberry character, with a hint of aniseed. Full-bodied, yet refined and silky, with a long, polished finish. Very pretty. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

ANTINORI

Bolgheri Tenuta Guado al Tasso Il Bruciato 2006

90 points | \$30 | 20,830 cases made | Red

Subtle and aromatic, with violet and berries on the nose. Full-bodied, with supersilky tannins and a long, clean, polished finish. The second wine of Guado al Tasso, with a bit more Merlot than the first wine. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and others. Best after 2009.—*J.S.*

ARGENTIERA

Bolgheri Poggio ai Ginepri 2006

90 points | \$27 | 2,500 cases imported | Red

The currant, fresh herb and raw meat character comes through clearly, then this turns even more fruity. Full-bodied, with fine tannins and a long finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

LE MACCHIOLE

Bolgheri 2006

90 points | \$40 | 500 cases imported | Red

Blackberry, flowers and hints of toasty oak on the nose follow through to a full body, with soft yet chewy tannins and a flavorful finish. Needs time to mellow. Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Sangiovese and Syrah. Best after 2010.—*J.S.*

TENUTA DELL'ORNELLAIA

Bolgheri Le Serre Nuove 2006

90 points | \$57 | 2,600 cases imported | Red

Fresh, focused aromas of blackberry and cherry follow through to a medium body, with silky tannins and a currant, berry and tobacco aftertaste. Subtle and delicious already. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best after 2011.—*J.S.*

Portugal

QUINTA DAS TECEDERAS

Douro Reserva 2004

93 points | \$32 | 300 cases imported | Red

Powerful, rich and robust, with concentrated flavors of dark chocolate, dark plum and mocha. Plenty of lift on the finish, with loads of spice, pepper, smoke and cream. Distinctive. Drink now through 2012.—*K.M.*

RAMOS-PINTO

Douro Duas Quintas Reserva 2006

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

Concentrated and vibrant red, with intense flavors of raspberry, blueberry and dark cherry. Long, rich finish oozes dark chocolate, spice and plenty of grip. Drink now through 2013.—*K.M.*

QUINTA DO VALLADO

Douro Adelaide 2005

92 points | \$250 | 167 cases made | Red

Taut and powerful, with plenty of meaty overtones to the dried cherry, red plum and smoky flavors. Long, long spice-filled finish, with notes of cigar box and mocha. Drink now through 2012.—*K.M.*

CASA DE SANTAR

Dão Reserva 2004

90 points | \$24 | 300 cases imported | Red

Powerful, with intense red plum, currant, raspberry and smoky flavors that are accented by notes of underbrush. Medium-grained tannins fill the spicy finish. Drink now through 2014.—*K.M.*

CHURCHILL

Douro Churchill Estates 2006

90 points | \$24 | 400 cases imported | Red

Well-focused, with lots of cinnamon notes and flavors of red pear, cream, raspberry and smoke. Plenty of structure to back it up, with an elegant finish that is long and lush. —*K.M.*

CHURCHILL

Douro Quinta da Gricha 2005

90 points | \$61 | 100 cases imported | Red

Rich, elegant red from Portugal, with flavors of dark plum, dark chocolate, mocha and smoke. Snappy finish of licorice and mineral. Balanced and elegant. Drink now through 2012.—*K.M.*

SOGRAPE

Dão Callabriga 2005

90 points | \$16 | 10,000 cases made | Red

Ripe, rich and powerful red, with concentrated flavors of blackberry, dark plum, smoke and spicy. Long finish of blueberry and dark chocolate. Drink now through 2012.—*K.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.

TENUTA DELL'ORNELLAIA

Toscana Masseto 2005

96 points | \$305 | 550 cases imported | Red

This smells like chocolate mousse, with crushed raspberry and hints of flowers. Full-bodied, with chewy tannins and a rich, fruity finish. This is powerful and structured, with layers and layers of everything. Needs time to come around. Merlot. Best after 2014.

From Italy.—J.S.

ANTINORI

Bolgheri Superiore Tenuta Guado al Tasso 2006

95 points | \$95 | 6,660 cases made | Red

Intense aromas of blackberry, currant and dried flowers follow through to a full body, with sleek, mineral undertones and super-polished tannins. This is racy and refined. Reminds me of the 1996 Léoville Las Cases or the estate's 2000. Made for aging. A more refined, new style of Guado. To be released early 2009. Best after 2012. *From Italy.—J.S.*

LE MACCHIOLE

Toscana Messorio 2005

95 points | \$320 | 85 cases imported | Red

Offers fresh herbs and berries on the nose, with hints of coffee and vanilla. Full-bodied, soft and fruity, with a green olive undertone and lots of new wood. Builds on the palate. Tannic. Merlot. Best after 2012. *From Italy.—J.S.*

TENUTA DELL'ORNELLAIA

Bolgheri Superiore Ornellaia 2005

95 points | \$185 | 2,440 cases imported | Red

Displays beautiful aromas of ripe fruit, with currant, plum and blackberry. Complex and full-bodied, with soft, polished tannins and a long, long finish. This shows a deft hand in the winemaking. Best after 2012. *From Italy.—J.S.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 15 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

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat:

New York, Spain

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

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

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

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Tasting staff:

Jo Cooke (Veneto),

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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