

# Wine Spectator Insider

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**PINOT NOIR TAKES CENTER STAGE IN THIS WEEK'S *WINE SPECTATOR INSIDER***, in two very different guises. It plays a role in the exceptional vintage Champagnes here, including bottles from major houses like Krug, Piper-Heidsieck, and Veuve Clicquot, as well as grower-producers like Vilmart, Fleury, Pierre Gimmonet and René Geoffroy. There are six classics here, up to 98 points.

In Oregon, the single-vineyard Pinots of the 2010 vintage excel, with reliable quality leaders like Evening Land, Ayoub and Bergström turning in top efforts. Check out the six Hot Wines on page 4.

## FRANCE Champagne

### FLEURY PÈRE & FILS

Brut Champagne Siècle d'Or 1990

**95 points | \$170 | 20 cases made | Sparkling**

Mouthwatering, with a lovely balance between intense focus and the finely woven blend of crystallized honey, toasted almond, dried pineapple, marmalade, brioche and fleur de sel flavor. A hint of oyster shell lingers on the finish. Drink now through 2022.—A.N.

### KRUG

Brut Champagne 2000

**95 points | \$259 | NA cases made | Sparkling**

Tightly knit, this is finely textured and expressive. Savory hints of fennel seed and cardamom accent dried apricot, bread dough, hazelnut, creamy espresso and grapefruit zest notes, remaining racy and focused through to the lasting, lightly briny finish. Drink now through 2027.—A.N.

### PIPER-HEIDSIECK

Brut Champagne Rare 2002

**95 points | \$175 | NA cases made | Sparkling**

Rich and smoky, this maintains a sense of finesse thanks to the finely detailed texture and skillfully meshed acidity framing layers of poached pear, toasted hazelnut and brioche, graphite, white cherry purée and kumquat. Offers a lasting finish of smoky minerality and a hint of crystallized honey. Drink now through 2030.—A.N.

### DUVAL-LEROY

Brut Champagne Femme 2000

**94 points | \$150 | 200 cases imported | Sparkling**

Firm and expressive, with well-cut acidity framing flavors of currant, licorice, bread dough and blanched almond. The mousse is soft and creamy, and this shows hints of mineral, apple and fennel seed that linger on the lasting finish. Drink now through 2022.—A.N.

### PIERRE GIMONNET & FILS

Brut Champagne Paradoxe 2006

**94 points | \$61 | 12 cases imported | Sparkling**

Toasted brioche and almond notes add a smoky richness to this minerally version, which offers a briny, oyster shell accent to the flavors of apple tarte Tatin, black currant, grated ginger and citrus zest. Refined and creamy in texture, with a long, mouthwatering finish. Disgorged June 2012. Drink now through 2030.—A.N.

### CHARLES HEIDSIECK

Brut Champagne 2000

**94 points | \$100 | NA cases made | Sparkling**

Rich and layered, this is tightly knit, with a fine, lively bead and flavors of glazed pear and peach, ground coffee, pastry cream and kumquat. A subtle note of minerality gains momentum on the fresh finish that echoes a hint of oyster shell. Drink now through 2022.—A.N.

## LOUIS ROEDERER

Brut Champagne Cristal 2005

**94 points | \$249 | 20,000 cases imported | Sparkling**

Vibrant and mouthwatering, this offers a range of patisserie pear and apple fruit, candied lemon zest, pastry dough and marzipan notes set on a finely detailed texture, which imparts a great deal of finesse. The lasting finish echoes a smoky mineral note. Drink now through 2025.—A.N.

## VEUVE CLICQUOT

Brut Champagne Cave Privée 1990

**94 points | \$175 | NA cases made | Sparkling**

Rich flavors and aromas of bread pudding and molasses mix with hints of baked peach, biscuit, ground ginger, fleur de sel and candied orange zest. Elegant, this shows lovely balance, a subtle bead and a delicate yet persistent freshness. Disgorged October 2008. Drink now through 2020.—A.N.

## VEUVE CLICQUOT

Brut Champagne La Grande Dame 2004

**94 points | \$165 | NA cases made | Sparkling**

Very elegant, this is all in the details: precise and silky texture, mouthwatering acidity and a smoky, mineral undertow that enriches flavors of patisserie pear, crystallized honey, kumquat and toasted almond. Offers a clean, citrus-tinged finish. Drink now through 2027.—A.N.

## VILMART

Brut Champagne Grand Cellier d'Or 2007

**94 points | \$94 | 52 cases imported | Sparkling**

Rich and layered, but focused by racy acidity that keeps this fresh and vibrant throughout. Flavors of patisserie apple and pear, dried apricot, smoked almond and black currant mix with a spicy undertow of ground ginger, anise and clove that echoes on the finish. Lovely. Drink now through 2027.—A.N.

## VRANKEN

Brut Champagne Diamant Bleu 1999

**94 points | \$130 | 50 cases imported | Sparkling**

Lovely texture here, with delicate yet vibrant acidity framing finely meshed layers of white peach, almond financier, oyster shell and candied lemon zest and ginger. Very elegant, with a long, creamy finish. Drink now through 2025.—A.N.

## CHARTOGNE-TAILLET

Brut Champagne 2004

**93 points | \$66 | 53 cases imported | Sparkling**

With a fine bead and well-meshed acidity, this is accessible and balanced, offering notes of fresh quince, persimmon, pastry, ground ginger and stony mineral. Features a creamy, lasting finish. Disgorged October 2011. Drink now through 2024.—A.N.

## CHARTOGNE-TAILLET

Brut Champagne Fiacre Tête de Cuvée 2006

**93 points | \$76 | 70 cases imported | Sparkling**

Bright and lively, with a creamy mousse and a sweet, smoky base note of toasted raisin bread. This offers flavors of black cherry, crystallized honey, kumquat and spice, leading to a fresh and lingering mineral-tinged finish. Disgorged April 2012. Drink now through 2026.—A.N.

## DRAPPIER

Brut Champagne Grande Sendrée 2004

**93 points | \$90 | 300 cases imported | Sparkling**

Firm and lightly chalky in texture, but well-balanced overall. This shows flavors of ripe apple, biscuit, black cherry, spun honey and citrus zest, and a zesty mineral base note that lingers on the finish. Drink now through 2024.—A.N.

## CHARLES ELLNER

Brut Champagne Séduction 2002

**93 points | \$65 | 200 cases imported | Sparkling**

Racy acidity frames the creamy bead and flavors of baked peach, Key lime pie, pastry dough and hints of marzipan and kumquat in this powerful version. Very expressive, with a fine bead and a zesty finish. Drink now through 2030.—A.N.

## FLEURY PÈRE & FILS

Brut Champagne Cépages Blancs 2004

**93 points | \$90 | 40 cases made | Sparkling**

Flavors of quince paste, green plum, biscuit and ground spice mix in this lively and accessible version, supported by a minerally undertow and verve acidity. Well-balanced and finely textured, with a spiced finish. Drink now through 2022.—A.N.

## RENÉ GEOFFROY

Brut Champagne Empreinte 2006

**93 points | \$61 | 70 cases imported | Sparkling**

A subtle version, given shine by fine balance and focus, with a minerally base note supporting hints of poached pear, citrus zest, apple blossom, blanched almond and a touch of brioche. Lively finish. Disgorged September 2011. Drink now through 2027.—A.N.

## MARC HÉBRART

Brut Champagne Spécial Club 2006

**93 points | \$77 | 80 cases imported | Sparkling**

There's power to this tightly knit version, which offers aromatic floral and spice accents to the flavors of poached pear, candied lemon zest, apple tarte Tatin and dried apricot. Finely textured and creamy, with a base note of smoky minerality that lingers on the finish. Disgorged November 8, 2011. Drink now through 2026.—A.N.

## MAILLY

Brut Champagne Exception Blanche 1999

**93 points | \$80 | 350 cases imported | Sparkling**

Fresh, with a lively bead and a detailed texture of raw silk, this offers finely knit flavors of fresh quince, tangerine, raw almond and crystallized almond. Offers a firm finish, with a hint of smoky mineral. Drink now through 2022.—A.N.

## RUINART

Brut Champagne Dom Ruinart 2002

**93 points | \$130 | 4,800 cases imported | Sparkling**

Smoky and aromatic, with a pleasant bounciness and a refined bead supporting juicy flavors of white peach, grated ginger, blanched almond and hints of grapefruit zest and cardamom. Offers a lasting, mineral-tinged finish. Drink now through 2027.—A.N.

## OREGON

### AYOUB

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Estate 2010

**93 points | \$55 | 190 cases made | Red**

Light, taut and appealing for its currant and distinctly floral flavors, remaining lively, stylish and focused through the finish. Gets better with each sip. Drink now through 2018.—H.S.

### BERGSTRÖM

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Bergström Vineyard 2010

**93 points | \$80 | 648 cases made | Red**

Fresh and open-textured, with lovely transparency characterizing the plum and currant fruit, layering in hints of mineral, floral and spice notes as the finish dances on. Drink now through 2020.—H.S.

### BERGSTRÖM

Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Gregory Ranch 2010

**93 points | \$50 | 470 cases made | Red**

Light and lively, brimming with personality, this plays its raspberry, rhubarb and bergamot tea aromas and flavors deftly, cruising through the long finish with style. Drink now through 2020.—H.S.

### EVENING LAND

Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Seven Springs Vineyard 2010

**93 points | \$45 | 1,158 cases made | Red**

Light and silky, this is beguiling for the way it deftly plays its polished red berry and black cherry fruit against glints of mineral and white pepper. The finish brings it all together seamlessly. Drink now through 2018.—H.S.

### ARGYLE

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Nuthouse 2010

**92 points | \$50 | 1,000 cases made | Red**

A taut, vibrant style, packing plenty of raspberry, tobacco, tea and spice flavors into a lean, focused beam, persisting into the extended finish. This should be lovely once it settles down. Best from 2014 through 2020.—H.S.

### BERGSTRÖM

Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Shea Vineyard 2010

**92 points | \$50 | 982 cases made | Red**

Sleek and polished, this is lively with raspberry and cherry flavors, persisting impressively on the finish with delicacy. This has depth and enough tannins to want cellaring for best results. Best from 2013 through 2018.—H.S.

### EVENING LAND

Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Red Queen Seven Springs Vineyard 2010

**92 points | \$75 | 311 cases made | Red**

Lots of ripe cherry and spice flavors play with deftness on an open frame. This is generous with its fruit and shows subtle hints of black pepper and licorice, finishing with intensity and impressive length. Drink now through 2018.—H.S.

### ARGYLE

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Spirithouse 2009

**91 points | \$75 | 630 cases made | Red**

Fresh and inviting, with juicy cherry and spice flavors pushing through a layer of firm tannins. The fruit prevails expressively on the finish. Should develop with cellaring. Drink now through 2017.—H.S.

### AYOUB

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Murto Vineyard 2010

**91 points | \$45 | 90 cases made | Red**

Supple, with a veil of firm tannins around juicy red berry and spice flavors, picking up a touch of wet slate as the finish persists. Drink now through 2018.—H.S.

### AYOUB

Pinot Noir McMinnville Brittan Vineyard 2010

**91 points | \$45 | 118 cases made | Red**

A zingy, tangy style, underlining the cherry, raspberry and wet pebble aromas and flavors with lively acidity. This trips lightly as the finish lingers gently. Drink now through 2018.—H.S.

### BERGSTRÖM

Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Temperance Hill Vineyard 2010

**91 points | \$60 | 210 cases made | Red**

Fresh, light and distinctive for its meaty overtones around an open-weave core of black cherry, squash blossom and warm spice flavors, lingering easily on the polished finish. Drink now through 2018.—H.S.

### BERGSTRÖM

Pinot Noir Ribbon Ridge Le Pré Du Col Vineyard 2010

**91 points | \$60 | 271 cases made | Red**

Smooth and velvety, with a lovely transparency letting the cherry and cinnamon flavors present themselves easily. The finish echoes nicely against refined tannins. Drink now through 2018.—H.S.

### ROCO

Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Marsh Estate Vineyard 2010

**91 points | \$50 | 200 cases made | Red**

Bright and tangy, this is juicy with raspberry, strawberry and lime flower aromas and flavors, dancing through the delicate finish and lingering well. Ends with real polish and pizzazz. Drink now through 2018.—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.

## KRUG

Brut Champagne 1998  
**98 points | \$269 | NA cases made | Sparkling**

This harmonious Champagne offers luxurious texture, aromatic accents of spring blossom, crushed thyme and *chai*, powerful, focused acidity and rich notes of lemon meringue, hazelnut, black currant and fresh porcini mushroom. The full package. Impressive. Drink now through 2028. *From France.—A.N.*

## KRUG

Brut Champagne Collection 1989  
**97 points | \$549 | NA cases made | Sparkling**

Very racy and tightly knit, this shows beautiful focus on the details, from the lacy texture to the vibrant acidity to the notes of cardamom and tea rose accenting finely meshed flavors of freshly ground coffee, honeycomb, kumquat, oyster shell and a hint of dried apricot. Lovely. Drink now through 2022. *From France.—A.N.*

## AYOUB

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills ??? Vineyards 2010  
**95 points | \$45 | 175 cases made | Red**

Vibrant, elegant and complex, with pinpoint focus to the currant, plum and mineral flavors. A nice layer of allspice and white chocolate adds smoothness to the long, vivid and gloriously transparent finish. Drink now through 2020. *From Oregon.—H.S.*

## EVENING LAND

Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Seven Springs Vineyard La Source 2010  
**95 points | \$60 | 971 cases made | Red**

Remarkable for its array of vivid flavors on a sleek, airy frame, shading its juicy raspberry and cherry fruit with a streak of wet rock, crushed rose petal and white pepper, all of it put together seamlessly. The finish just doesn't quit. Drink now through 2020. *From Oregon.—H.S.*

## ROCO

Pinot Noir Chehalem Mountains Private Stash No. 8 Wits' End Vineyard 2010  
**95 points | \$70 | 135 cases made | Red**

Packs a lot of layers into a tight frame, piling up tiers of raspberry, chocolate and cinnamon flavors on a remarkably transparent structure, with fine tannins underlining the very long, expressive finish. Best from 2014 through 2020. *From Oregon.—H.S.*

## VILMART

Brut Champagne Grand Cellier Rubis 2006  
**95 points | \$151 | 78 cases imported | Sparkling**

Very feminine, with aromatic spice, floral notes and overall finesse, all powered by firm, integrated acidity and a tightly knit structure. This rosé offers flavors of ripe black raspberry, apricot, pastry and tangerine, all set on a beautifully silky texture. Drink now through 2030. *From France.—A.N.*

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