



WINE SPECTATOR'S Advance

A SNEAK PREVIEW OF THE BUYING GUIDE FOR THE **JAN. 31 – FEB. 28, 2018** ISSUE,
FEATURING ALL OF THE SPECTATOR SELECTIONS

Wine Spectator's Jan. 31 – Feb. 28 issue includes a complete list of all 1,317 wines reviewed in 2017 that rated 90 points or higher and cost \$30 or less. Plus, our editors pick 60 wineries that consistently produce “Smart Buys,” affordably priced wines rated 88-plus. Finally, a tasting report on the Vintage Ports from the outstanding 2015 vintage.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

97

SCHIAVENZA Barolo Prapò 2013 • \$65

An aromatic style of Barolo, laced with cherry, plum, leather and cigar aromas and flavors. This has plenty of sweet fruit, flesh and a dense matrix of tannins, echoing tobacco notes and picking up a mineral edge on the long aftertaste. Very complex and fresh. Best from 2022 through 2040. 310 cases made.—*B.S.*

95

TENUTA CUCCO Barolo del Comune di Serralunga d'Alba 2013 • \$54

A fresh, iron- and sanguine-laced style, balanced by cherry and strawberry notes. Linear and tightly wound, with tar, spice and earth details lining the long aftertaste. Really saturated and vibrant, with a mineral accent echoing on the finish. Best from 2022 through 2038. 1,350 cases made.—*B.S.*

95

MAZZEI Toscana Siepi 2015 • \$123

This has depth and complexity, featuring black cherry, plum, leather, spice and mineral flavors. The dense texture exudes refined tannins as this stays fresh through the long, saturated finish. Fruit, spice and tobacco elements linger. Sangiovese and Merlot. Best from 2020 through 2035. 2,500 cases made.—*B.S.*

95

LUIGI PIRA Barolo Serralunga 2013 • \$39

This smooth red hangs together beautifully, framing flavors of cherry, raspberry, wild herbs, mineral and tobacco. There's plenty of structure, yet this is all about balance and texture, ending with layers of fruit, underbrush and mineral. Best from 2022 through 2040. 1,400 cases made.—*B.S.*

95

SADIE FAMILY Skerpioen Swartland 2016 • \$60

Intense and still youthfully tight, with verbena and white peach notes leading the way for yellow apple, chamomile, white ginger and jasmine flavors. A lovely quinine streak is well-embedded, giving this tension and vibrancy through the finish. Chenin Blanc and Palomino. Drink now through 2024. 406 cases made.—*J.M.*

94

BRICK HOUSE Pinot Noir Ribbon Ridge Les Dijonnais 2015 • \$52

This red offers a mouthful of lithe, supple fruit, with delicate yet expressive notes of raspberry, stony mineral and savory spice. The long, lingering finish is framed by refined tannins. Drink now through 2024. 575 cases made.—*T.F.*

94

DOMAINE DE CRISTIA Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2015 • \$43

Intense, with fig, blackberry and plum compote flavors rolling over one another, while worn leather, Turkish coffee and well-roasted mesquite notes form a ring around them. Overall this is rich and dense, yet there's definition throughout. Only needs time to knit fully before delivering its peak experience. Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. Best from 2020 through 2035. 3,000 cases made.—*J.M.*

COLLECTIBLES

97

CHÂTEAU DE BEAUCASTEL Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2015 • \$99

A stunner from the get-go, with waves of thoroughly seductive boysenberry, plum, blueberry and raspberry reduction forming the core, while roasted apple wood, rooibos tea, bergamot and anise notes flash throughout. This has plenty of bass, with a Turkish coffee accent and a hint of alder driving underneath. Everything moves in lockstep through the seriously long finish. Best from 2020 through 2045. 12,500 cases made.—*J.M.*

COLLECTIBLES (continued)

- 96** **MASSOLINO** Barolo Margheria 2013 • \$97
This red is packed with plum, cherry, leather and iron aromas and flavors. There's a solid base of tannins, but also freshness and balance. Just needs time for that core of ripe fruit to meld with the structure. Picks up tobacco and wild herb details on the finish, along with an echo of mineral. Best from 2022 through 2042. 550 cases made.—*B.S.*
- 95** **ALDO CONTERNO** Barolo Colonnello 2013 • \$140
Camphor and leather notes introduce this rich red, which transitions to cherry, licorice, spice and tobacco flavors. Firm and intense, with a lingering aftertaste of mineral, licorice and spice. Terrific now, but should be even better with time. Best from 2021 through 2042. 400 cases made.—*B.S.*
- 95** **ALDO CONTERNO** Barolo Romirasco 2013 • \$220
This packs some vanilla- and Bourbon-scented oak aromas, with a core of cherry, leather, tar, iron and tobacco flavors. Solidly built, with dusty tannins clinging to the long finish. A powerful example, this should gain finesse with age. Best from 2022 through 2040. 400 cases made.—*B.S.*
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SMART BUYS

- 93** **THE FOUR GRACES** Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2015 • \$32
An expressive and supple version, with a complex core of lively tannins and acidity, plus accents of black cherry, cinnamon and spice that linger toward the mineral finish. Drink now through 2024. 14,140 cases made.—*T.F.*
- 93** **TWO HANDS** Shiraz Barossa Valley Gnarly Dudes 2016 • \$29
Gorgeous purity and silky tannins set the stage for kirsch, blueberry syrup, white chocolate and espresso flavors. Complex and generous, with an epic finish, where the harmonious flavors linger. Drink now through 2030. 16,000 cases made.—*M.W.*
- 92** **CASCINA CHICCO** Barbera d'Alba Granera Alta 2016 • \$21
A paean of purity and freshness, boasting black currant, black cherry, violet and graphite aromas and flavors. Elegant and intense, with a lingering finish of fruit and mineral. Drink now through 2021. 5,500 cases made.—*B.S.*
- 91** **CASA EMMA** Chianti Classico 2015 • \$18
This is pure and expressive, offering black cherry, raspberry, leather and mineral flavors. Shows balance and depth, suggesting a fine evolution ahead. Excellent length. Best from 2019 through 2029. 5,000 cases made.—*B.S.*
- 91** **CUVELIER LOS ANDES** Colección Uco Valley 2013 • \$22
A ripe, muscular, full-bodied red, with concentrated dark fruit flavors that feature plenty of Asian spice and smoke notes. Mocha and dark chocolate accents fill the finish. Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2022. 6,740 cases made.—*K.M.*
- 91** **RENATO RATTI** Barbera d'Asti Battaglione 2015 • \$20
Starts out with earthy aromas, then eases into black cherry, plum, earth and spice flavors. This is muscular and backed by dense tannins, with ample fruit on the finish. Drink now through 2021. 4,460 cases imported.—*B.S.*
- 91** **NIK WEIS ST.-URBANS-HOF** Riesling Qualitätswein Mosel From Old Vines 2016 • \$19
A pure, well-sculpted, off-dry version, with persimmon, lime and slate flavors coating the palate. Hints of orchard blossom and herbs add to the complexity, making you reach for another sip. Drink now through 2024. 7,000 cases made.—*A.Z.*
- 90** **BASILICA CAFAGGIO** Chianti Classico Single Estate 2015 • \$19
A sleek, supple red, boasting cherry, strawberry, floral and spice aromas and flavors. Very pure and harmonious, persisting on the detailed aftertaste. Drink now through 2024. 30,000 cases made.—*B.S.*
- 90** **BODEGA EL ESTECO** Malbec Calchaquí Valley Don David Reserve 2016 • \$17
An elegant red that offers a lively and well-structured mix of juicy red fruit and savory spice flavors framed by silky tannins. Finishes with notes of chocolate and hints of cream. Drink now through 2021. 100,000 cases made.—*K.M.*
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SMART BUYS (continued)

- 90** **MUD HOUSE** Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough 2016 • \$16
Ruby grapefruit, peach and apricot notes are intense, fragrant and fleshy, with good focus on the finish, where the flavors linger and a hint of honeysuckle kicks in. Drink now. 87,880 cases made.—*M.W.*
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BEST VALUES

- 91** **BODEGAS VALDEMAR** Tempranillo Rioja Conde Valdemar Crianza 2013 • \$15
This bright red bursts with floral and spicy aromas, which frame cherry, cranberry and licorice notes on the lively palate. Light, well-integrated tannins and fresh acidity support the supple texture. Balanced and energetic. Drink now through 2023. 60,000 cases made.—*T.M.*
- 89** **ACROBAT** Pinot Gris Oregon 2016 • \$14
Floral cantaloupe aromas open to creamy, easygoing pear and spice flavors in this white. Drink now. 90,000 cases made.—*T.F.*
- 89** **CHATEAU STE. MICHELLE** Sauvignon Blanc Columbia Valley 2016 • \$10
This snappy white offers tropical fruit and spice flavors that finish on a bright, crisp note. Drink now. 273,000 cases made.—*T.F.*
- 89** **KEN FORRESTER** Chenin Blanc Western Cape Petit 2017 • \$12
This has a slightly rounded edge, offering meringue and lemon chiffon notes. Fresh and lively overall, with pretty yellow apple, fennel and green plum flavors holding sway through the finish. Drink now. 7,500 cases imported.—*J.M.*
- 89** **KIRKLAND SIGNATURE** Meritage Napa Valley 2014 • \$11
Rich dark plum and red berry flavors give this red a juicy character, with creamy accents. Chocolate and spice details show on the finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec. Drink now. 40,320 cases made.—*K.M.*
- 88** **RENZO MASI** Sangiovese Toscana Il Bastardo 2016 • \$9
A lush and fruity red, offering a mouthful of blackberry and pomegranate flavors. Firms up a bit on the finish, but enjoy this for the up-front fruit profile. Drink now through 2021. 25,000 cases made.—*B.S.*
- 87** **BLACK INK** California Red 2015 • \$9
Plump and jammy, with fruit-forward blueberry and licorice flavors. Syrah, Merlot, Zinfandel, Malbec and Petit Verdot. Drink now. 50,000 cases made.—*T.F.*
- 86** **CHÂTEAU DE SEGUIN** Bordeaux White 2016 • \$6
Offers brisk lemon peel and white peach flavors, with a flash of straw through the finish. Drink now. 25,000 cases made.—*J.M.*
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ABOUT THE SPECTATOR SELECTIONS

Highly Recommended: The issue's most impressive wines. Includes top-scorers and wines that represent optimal purchases based on their combination of score, price and availability.

Collectibles: Wines that will improve most from additional bottle age and that show the greatest potential to gain in value.

Smart Buys: Wines that deliver fine character at affordable prices and that are broadly available.

Best Values: Wines with solid scores, modest prices and wide distribution.

Initials at the end of each tasting note indicate the *Wine Spectator* editor who blind-tasted and scored the wine and wrote the review. The tasters are as follows: James Laube (*J.L.*); Kim Marcus (*K.M.*); Thomas Matthews (*T.M.*); James Molesworth (*J.M.*); Bruce Sanderson (*B.S.*); Harvey Steiman (*H.S.*); Tim Fish (*T.F.*); Alison Napjus (*A.N.*); MaryAnn Worobiec (*M.W.*); Gillian Sciaretta (*G.S.*); Aleksandar Zecevic (*A.Z.*).