

Wine Spectator Insider

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THIS issue of the *Wine Spectator Insider* features three classic-rated 2007 white Burgundies as well as outstanding California and Washington reds and 2008 German Rieslings. From Burgundy, more specifically the Montrachet and neighboring Bâtard-Montrachet *grands crus*, Bruce Sander-son reviews 14 Chardonnays this week. The outstanding 2007 vintage for Burgundy was a difficult one, but the region's vintners rose to the challenge, making pure and elegant whites. This week's top-scoring wine, earning 98 points, comes from one of Burgundy's top domaines, and you'll find it among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

Also in this issue, James Laube covers 2007 and 2006 California Cabernet and Rhône-style wines, including the latest releases from Lewis Cellars. Harvey Steiman reviews four powerful but focused Washington Syrahs from the potentially classic 2007 vintage here as well. And from Germany, 10 Riesling spätlesen continue to show that the 2008 vintage was ideal for producing these delicate, racy versions of the Mosel's premier grape. For more of Sanderson's 2008 German Riesling reviews, see the Nov. 11, Nov. 4 and Oct. 21 issues of the *Insider*.

California

RODNEY STRONG

Cabernet Sauvignon Alexander Valley Rockaway 2006
94 points | \$75 | 2,101 cases made | Red

Well-proportioned, intense, concentrated and richly flavored, with layers of loamy currant, anise, blackberry, mineral and sage that are full-blown and powerful, yet not without a measure of finesse and elegance. Best from 2011 through 2017.—*J.L.*

LEWIS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2007
93 points | \$85 | 2,000 cases made | Red

Offers wonderful complexity, richness, depth and finesse. Full-bodied, with creamy, mocha-laced oak, currant, mineral, tobacco and plum flavors that are bold yet elegant, focused and polished, ending with a long, lingering finish. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

RODNEY STRONG

Cabernet Sauvignon Alexander Valley
Brothers Ridge 2006
93 points | \$75 | 1,504 cases made | Red

Firm, intense and concentrated, rich and layered, this full-blown red shows dense, chewy currant, anise, mineral, sage and cedary tobacco flavors that gain weight, depth and dimension. Best from 2011 through 2015.—*J.L.*

KAENA

Grenache Santa Ynez Valley Lerner Vineyard 2007
90 points | \$35 | 150 cases made | Red

Rich and intense, with grapey wild berry, raspberry and huckle-berry providing the core flavors. Full-bodied and well-structured, gaining traction on the finish, with firm tannins. Drink now through 2014.—*J.L.*

MARTINELLI

Syrah Russian River Valley Lolita Ranch 2006
90 points | \$75 | 227 cases made | Red

Firm and leathery, this rustic, wild red is full-bodied, rich and intense, a boldly flavored wine showing vibrant wild berry, sage, herb, earth and spice. Big and powerful now. Needs time to settle down. Best from 2011 through 2017.—*J.L.*

MCPRICE MYERS

Grenache Santa Barbara County L'Ange Rouge 2007
90 points | \$36 | 575 cases made | Red

Smooth, fresh and vibrant, with rich, layered plum, blackberry and wild berry fruit that's supple and harmonious, gaining depth on the finish. Drink now through 2014.—*J.L.*

France Burgundy

GAGNARD-DELAGRANGE

Bâtard-Montrachet 2007
94 points | \$120 | 40 cases imported | White

A mix between the breadth and richness of the appellation and the strictness of the vintage. The creamy texture is penetrated by butterscotch, toast, Key lime pie and citrus flavors. Needs time to integrate, but the long finish shows its potential. Best from 2012 through 2027.—*B.S.*

LOUIS JADOT

Bâtard-Montrachet 2007
94 points | \$270 | 20 cases imported | White

Aromas and flavors of buttered pastry, pineapple, apricot, grapefruit and vanilla resound in this powerful white. It's rich and mouthfilling, with a juicy finish. The spice-filled aftertaste goes on and on. Best from 2012 through 2025.—*B.S.*

LOUIS LATOUR

Montrachet 2007
94 points | \$375 | 200 cases made | White

This is stripped down to the essence of place: Elegant, pure and precise expression of mineral, with hints of lime, apricot, flowers and a touch of spice flavors dancing around the edges. Fine, ethereal length. Best from 2012 through 2025.—*B.S.*

DOMAINE LEFLAIVE

Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet 2007
94 points | \$410 | 61 cases imported | White

Elegant and firmly structured, this white evokes hazelnut, stone and pastry aromas and flavors. It's bright and juicy, turning firmer and tighter on the finish. Spice and mineral flavors play out on the aftertaste. Best from 2012 through 2025.—*B.S.*

RAMONET

Bâtard-Montrachet 2007
94 points | \$150 | 48 cases imported | White

This is lively and quite restrained, showing more energy than muscle. Lime, grapefruit, apple and spice flavors build nicely on the palate to a long finish. Still a little raw, so give it at least a year or two to integrate. Best from 2012 through 2026.—*B.S.*

BLAIN-GAGNARD

Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet 2007
93 points | \$120 | 30 cases imported | White

Smells like the sea, or rather fresh shellfish, with butter, iodine and mineral aromas and flavors. It's rich, with vanilla and clove accents fleshing out the background. Best from 2011 through 2024.—*B.S.*

VINCENT GIRARDIN

Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet 2007
93 points | \$241 | 100 cases imported | White

Lean and taut, with lemon and grapefruit flavors accented by clove and butterscotch. It's pure and balanced, needing time to absorb its oak. Firm finish. Best from 2013 through 2024.—*B.S.*

OLIVIER LEFLAIVE

Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet 2007
93 points | \$280 | 65 cases imported | White

A refined, sophisticated style, offering lime blossom, peach, spiced apple and stone notes. It's balanced, with the long aftertaste evoking toast and butter accents. Best from 2011 through 2024.—*B.S.*

MICHEL NIELLON

Bâtard-Montrachet 2007
93 points | \$203 | 35 cases imported | White

A broad-shouldered, assertive white, boasting apple pie, grapefruit and oak flavors. It's a little disjointed now, yet should come together with a year or two of bottle age. Bright and long on the finish. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*B.S.*

BLAIN-GAGNARD

Bâtard-Montrachet 2007
92 points | \$120 | 60 cases imported | White

A strong mineral streak gives this white a sense of place and its oak is well integrated into the smooth texture, mingling with its seashore, lemon, apple and saline notes. Just lacks the length of its peers now, but needs time. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*B.S.*

VINCENT GIRARDIN

Bâtard-Montrachet 2007
92 points | \$271 | 50 cases imported | White

Smoke, mineral and lemon aromas and flavors mark this powerful white. It's balanced toward the acidity today, with a bracing structure keep it persistent and long on the finish. Finishes a bit sharp. Best from 2013 through 2025.—*B.S.*

Germany

MEULENHOF

Riesling Spätlese* Mosel Erdener Treppchen 2008
93 points | \$25 | NA cases made | White

Supple and focused, revealing lime, apple, and stone flavors, just hinting at peach in ripeness. Drier in style and elegant, with a crisp, savory finish. Very pretty overall. Drink now through 2025.—*B.S.*

JOH. JOS. PRÜM

Riesling Spätlese Mosel Wehlener Sonnenuhr 2008
93 points | \$NA | NA cases made | White

Pungent aromas of slate, violet and black currant are immediate and intense. The flavors show pure lime, peach and mineral salt, matched to a creamy texture and a vibrant structure. Fine length. Best from 2012 through 2027.—*B.S.*

SELBACH-OSTER

Riesling Spätlese Mosel Zeltinger
Schlossberg Schmitt 2008
93 points | \$49 | NA cases made | White

A rich, concentrated style, with vibrant acidity buoying its peach, nectarine, apple and slate notes. More fleshy than many of its peers, this stays fresh and long. Drink now through 2027.—*B.S.*

J. WEGELER ERBEN

Riesling Spätlese Mosel Wehlener Sonnenuhr 2008
93 points | \$35 | 500 cases made | White

A beam of lime, apple and mineral runs through this like a jolt of energy. Shows terrific definition coiled around a spine of acidity, with a fine, vanilla-tinged finish. Best from 2012 through 2025.—*B.S.*

HERIBERT KERPEN

Riesling Spätlese* Mosel Wehlener Sonnenuhr 2008
92 points | \$32 | NA cases made | White

Starts out round and peachy, yet with an underlying current of citrus, slate and spice. Builds nicely on the palate, to a long, stone- and mineral-filled aftertaste. Best from 2011 through 2023.—*B.S.*

MEULENHOF

Riesling Spätlese Mosel Erdener Treppchen
Alte Reben 2008
92 points | \$25 | NA cases made | White

Shows the cool slate, pear, apple and savory aromas and flavors typical of 2008, backed by vivid acidity. This is complex, with all the elements present, but just needs time to integrate. Best from 2012 through 2027.—*B.S.*

SELBACH-OSTER

Riesling Spätlese Mosel Zeltinger Himmelreich
Anrecht 2008
92 points | \$31 | NA cases made | White

Alluring aromas of slate, peach and mango are followed by savory, celery root and herb notes as this complex white develops across the palate. There's fine snap on the lingering peach and mineral aftertaste. Drink now through 2025.—*B.S.*

SELBACH-OSTER

Riesling Spätlese Mosel Zeltinger Schlossberg 2008
92 points | \$30 | NA cases made | White

A succulent style, with an open, lacy texture supporting its grapefruit, lime and apple flavors. Very delicate and fresh, with a cleans-ing finish. Fine length. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*B.S.*

DR. F. WEINS-PRÜM

Riesling Spätlese Mosel-Saar-Ruwer Wehlener
Sonnenuhr 2008
92 points | \$30 | 250 cases made | White

Rich, concentrated and waxy, with vanilla-tinged lime and apple flavors. Turns savory and stony, driving through the piquant after-taste. Light-weight and intense. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*B.S.*

JOH. JOS. PRÜM

Riesling Spätlese Mosel Graacher Himmelreich 2008
91 points | \$NA | NA cases made | White

Elegant, packed with slate, vanilla, lime and apple aromas and flavors. A touch reduced in aroma, but lively and intense, with a lip-smacking finish. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*B.S.*

Washington

MATTHEWS

Syrah Columbia Valley 2007
94 points | \$39 | 185 cases made | Red

Powerful, complex, deep and superbly focused, this one jumps from the glass with meaty, dusky spice and beautifully articulated blackberry and currant flavors, sailing over refined tannins and lingering on an expressive finish. Drink now through 2017.—*H.S.*

BETZ

Syrah Red Mountain La Côte Rousse 2007
93 points | \$55 | 490 cases made | Red

Velvety in texture and tight in structure, with a dense core of currant, plum, exotic spice and pepper flavors that shoot right through the tannins on the long, expressive finish. This has plenty of room to grow and deepen. Best from 2011 through 2017.—*H.S.*

BETZ

Syrah Yakima Valley La Côte Patriarche Red Willow
Vineyard 2007
93 points | \$55 | 197 cases made | Red

Aromatic, expressive and beautifully focused to show off its com-plex, red brick-accented black cherry, blackberry and tar flavors, keeping its impeccable balance through the long finish. Drink now through 2017.—*H.S.*

WOODINVILLE WINE CELLARS

Syrah Columbia Valley 2007
91 points | \$30 | 250 cases made | Red

Bright, vivid flavors bore through dense tannins, coming out the other side with a meaty edge to the dark berry and black olive notes. The finish remains lively and picks up a mineral tone. Best from 2011 through 2017.—*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.

RAMONET

Montrachet 2007

98 points | \$375 | 10 cases imported | White

A beauty, clean, sleek and effortless, with a creamy texture meshing seamlessly with its lime blossom, acacia, hazelnut and mineral flavors. All the elements are in total harmony, allowing the finish to linger and expand. Best from 2012 through 2030. *From France.—B.S.*

DOMAINE LEFLAIVE

Bâtard-Montrachet 2007

95 points | \$430 | 107 cases imported | White

Broad and nutty, with moderately firm structure and a hint of oak tannins shoring up its grapefruit, ripe apple and spice flavors. Intense, yet slightly angular at first and requiring air to show its creamy texture and richness. Fine length. Best from 2012 through 2026. *From France.—B.S.*

RAMONET

Bienvenues-Bâtard-Montrachet 2007

95 points | \$135 | 21 cases imported | White

This white is so seductive and supple, it's enjoyable now. But a few years of bottle age will add depth and character to its butter, peach, lime and mineral flavors. Fine savory length. Best from 2011 through 2025. *From France.—B.S.*

LEWIS

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Hillstone Vineyard 2007

94 points | \$125 | 240 cases made | Red

Firm and full-bodied, intense yet supple, with rich mocha, currant, herb, sage and mineral flavors that are complex, balanced and focused, slow to unfold but offering a little more nuance with each sip. Ends with fine-grained tannins. Drink now through 2018. *From California.—J.L.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 14 people in three offices. They work together to review more than 18,000 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 Napa, New York and Tuscany. 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.

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: California

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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