

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

THE first *Wine Spectator Insider* of 2010 features 37 outstanding red wines from France and Spain. Kicking off the new year, James Suckling reviews the 2007 releases from some of the biggest names in Bordeaux, including first-growths Haut-Brion, Lafite, Latour and Mouton-Rothschild, as well as notable second-growths Cos-d'Estournel, Ducru-Beaucaillou, Gruaud-Larose, Léoville Las Cases and Léoville Poyferré. The 2007 vintage was inconsistent in Bordeaux, but there are still outstanding wines to be found, and many may be had at what could be considered "value" prices when compared with the 2006 and 2005 vintages. You'll find tasting notes for both the 2007 Léoville Barton and Pétrus among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

Also this week, Thomas Matthews reviews nine reds from Spain, including two 2007s from Toro's Numanthia-Termes, which recently earned the No. 2 spot on *Wine Spectator's* 2009 Top 100 Wines of the Year. And of special interest in what should be a fiscally responsible 2010, five outstanding Spanish wines listed here are priced at just \$25 or less.

France Bordeaux

CHÂTEAU LAFLEUR

Pomerol 2007

92 points | \$706 | 1,000 cases made | Red

Perfumed, fruity and aromatic, with licorice and berry on the nose. Full-bodied, with a solid core of ripe fruit and a spicy, almost raisiny character on the palate. Long and very soft and silky, with a lovely core. A little austere, but with wonderful concentration for the vintage. Racy and sweet. Best after 2013.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU MOUTON-ROTHSCHILD

Pauillac 2007

92 points | \$420 | NA cases made | Red

Focused and rich, showing blueberry, blackberry and dark licorice aromas, with hints of mineral and flowers. Full-bodied, with a seamless core of fruit and tannins. Long and caressing on the finish. Best after 2013.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU L'EVANGILE

Pomerol 2007

91 points | \$143 | 3,235 cases made | Red

Fresh tobacco and blackberry aromas follow through to a medium- to full-bodied palate, with polished tannins and a pretty finish. Caressing and attractive, with a lot of new wood. Best after 2012.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU HAUT-BAILLY

Pessac-Léognan 2007

91 points | \$56 | 5,835 cases made | Red

Shows complex aromas of dark fruits, with bitter chocolate and floral notes. Full-bodied, with silky tannins. Very well-integrated and long. Builds on the palate. Best after 2013.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU HAUT-BRION

Pessac-Léognan 2007

91 points | \$427 | 8,750 cases made | Red

There's beautiful sweetness of fruit on the nose, with a floral and ripe plum undertone. Very aromatic and subtle. Medium- to full-bodied, with fine tannins and a delicate fruit finish. Refined. Best after 2013.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU LAFITE ROTHSCHILD

Pauillac 2007

91 points | \$434 | 20,085 cases made | Red

A big, juicy wine for the vintage, with spice, sweet tobacco and plum aromas and flavors. Full, long and rich, with a soft texture. A little tight, but should develop nicely in the bottle. Best after 2014.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE LAS CASES

St.-Julien 2007

91 points | \$166 | 15,000 cases made | Red

Offers mineral and berry aromas, with hints of dried fruits. Full-bodied, with chewy tannins and a long finish. Racy and refined. Very beautiful and polished. Best after 2012.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU LA MISSION-HAUT-BRION

Pessac-Léognan 2007

91 points | \$356 | 4,500 cases made | Red

Offers berry and coffee bean aromas, with hints of mahogany. Full-bodied, with a lovely silky texture and a vanilla, berry and chocolate aftertaste. Hard not to drink now. There's lots at the finish. Even a little chewy. Best after 2013.—J.S.

VIEUX-CHÂTEAU-CERTAN

Pomerol 2007

91 points | \$106 | 3,585 cases made | Red

Shows blackberry, fresh mushroom and Indian spices on the nose. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, glorious finish for the vintage. Well-crafted as usual. Best after 2013.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU D'AIGUILHE

Côtes de Castillon 2007

90 points | \$22 | 390 cases made | Red

Blackberry and black licorice aromas follow through to a full body, with velvety tannins and a long finish. Very rich for the vintage, with wonderful richness and depth. This is always excellent. One of the region's most consistently good values. Best after 2011.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU COS-D'ESTOURNEL

St.-Estèphe 2007

90 points | \$115 | 22,000 cases made | Red

Fresh mushroom on the nose, with dark fruits and berries. Full-bodied, with soft, velvety tannins and a rich, fruity finish. Balanced and pretty, with lovely length. Best after 2012.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU DUCRU-BEAUCAILLOU

St.-Julien 2007

90 points | \$93 | 10,500 cases made | Red

Offers sliced plum on the nose, with flowers and some oak. Medium-bodied, with polished, refined tannins that caress the palate. Builds on the finish. Racy for the vintage. Best after 2014.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU L'ÉGLISE CLINET

Pomerol 2007

90 points | \$134 | 1,575 cases made | Red

Shows gorgeous aromas of ripe blackberry, tobacco box and flowers. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a milk chocolate, toasty oak and berry aftertaste. So attractive now. Wonderfully crafted for the vintage. Best after 2012.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU LA FLEUR DE GAY

Pomerol 2007

90 points | \$77 | 415 cases made | Red

Offers smoky, toasty oak and meat aromas, with underlying fruit. Full-bodied, with decadent character and lovely velvety tannins that last for minutes on the palate. Such beauty for the vintage. Very well done. Best after 2013.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU GRUAUD-LAROSE

St.-Julien 2007

90 points | \$50 | 15,000 cases made | Red

Wonderful aromas of ripe berries, plum and spices follow through to a full body, with round, velvety tannins and a long finish. All there for the vintage. Well done. Best after 2013.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU HOSANNA

Pomerol 2007

90 points | \$108 | 1,085 cases made | Red

Aromas of chocolate, toasted almond and dark fruits follow through to a full body, with soft, silky tannins and a pretty finish. There's lots of delicate fruit, with outstanding length for the vintage. Best after 2013.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU LATOUR À POMEROL

Pomerol 2007

90 points | \$70 | 2,085 cases made | Red

Offers black olive and dark fruits on the nose. Subtle yet rich. Full-bodied, with lovely silky tannins that stay in balance with the fruit. Refined and delicious. Best after 2013.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU LATOUR

Pauillac 2007

90 points | \$434 | 0 cases made | Red

Offers floral and berries, with currant and licorice. Full-bodied, with a sweet core of fruit. There's silky tannins and a fresh, fruity finish. Reserved and balance. Best after 2012.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE POYFERRÉ

St.-Julien 2007

90 points | \$65 | 20,000 cases made | Red

Offers subtle aromas of smoky wood, fresh herbs and dark fruits. Full-bodied, with a solid core of fruit and soft, silky tannins. Very well-crafted and polished for the vintage. Much better than from barrel. Best after 2012.—J.S.

CHÂTEAU MALESCOT-ST.-EXUPÉRY

Margaux 2007

90 points | \$52 | 8,335 cases made | Red

Offers plum, milk chocolate and light toasty oak aromas. Full-bodied, with delicious fruit, soft, velvety tannins and a medium finish. Very balanced and nicely textured. Enjoy the softness. This seduces you. Best after 2013.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU PALMER

Margaux 2007

90 points | \$202 | 6,665 cases made | Red

An interesting combination of black licorice, light toasty oak and wet earth. Medium-bodied, with fine tannins and a delicately fruity finish, along with smoky wood. This has a very silky palate, with a lovely texture. Very polished. Best after 2012.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU PAPE CLÉMENT

Pessac-Léognan 2007

90 points | \$126 | 8,335 cases made | Red

Blackberry and mineral aromas, with hints of dried flowers, truffle and tobacco. Full-bodied, with a wonderful balance of cool fruit and fine tannins. This has lots of class for the vintage. Best after 2012.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU PONTET-CANET

Pauillac 2007

90 points | \$81 | 20,835 cases made | Red

Currant and dark licorice aromas follow through to a full body, with velvety tannins and a caressing finish. A beauty, as always. Best after 2013.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU PROVIDENCE

Pomerol 2007

90 points | \$70 | 1,165 cases made | Red

There's lots of milk chocolate and light coffee on the nose, as well as bright plum and blackberry. Full-bodied, with fine, slightly chewy tannins and a long finish. Best after 2013.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU SMITH-HAUT-LAFITTE

Pessac-Léognan 2007

90 points | \$58 | 10,000 cases made | Red

Offers wonderful aromas of currant, berries and cedar box. Full-bodied, with supersilky tannins and a long, classy finish. Balanced and fruity. Very racy and gorgeous. Best after 2012.—*J.S.*

CHÂTEAU TROTANOY

Pomerol 2007

90 points | \$110 | 1,915 cases made | Red

Very aromatic, with milk chocolate and red fruits. Full-bodied, with well-integrated tannins and a pretty fruity finish. Not a big Trotanoy, but thoroughly enjoyable already. Offers lovely fruit for the vintage. Best after 2013.—*J.S.*

Spain

NUMANTHIA-TERMES

Toro Numantia 2007

92 points | \$60 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

This rich red brims with ripe, fresh flavors of blackberry and cassis, backed by toasty chocolate and dried spice notes that caress the palate and linger on the finish. Plush yet structured, in the modern style. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS PITTACUM

Mencía Bierzo 2006

92 points | \$24 | 800 cases imported | Red

Toasty, smoky aromas give way to deep, focused flavors of black cherry, mineral, licorice and mountain herb in this expressive red. It's powerful yet focused, ripe yet fresh. Drink now through 2020.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS LUNA BEBERIDE

Bierzo Finca la Cuesta 2007

91 points | \$22 | 500 cases imported | Red

Balanced and harmonious, this elegant red shows black cherry, mineral, licorice and mountain herb flavors, supported by ripe tannins and fresh acidity. Drink now through 2013.—*T.M.*

BODEGAS MONTE LA REINA

Toro Vendimia Seleccionada 2005

91 points | \$20 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

Bold yet still balanced, this firm red shows vibrant wild cherry and cranberry flavors, with solid but well-integrated tannins and accents of chocolate, spice and licorice. Expressive. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

SCALA DEI

Priorat Cartoixa 2005

90 points | \$52 | 500 cases imported | Red

This austere red has muscular tannins that tamp down dark flavors of fig, cola, mushroom and licorice. It has good density, and a polished texture, and should bloom once the tannins relax. Best after 2010.—*T.M.*

VIÑOS DE LA TRIBU

Toro Auroch 2006

90 points | \$12 | 1,150 cases imported | Red

This sleek red delivers expressive cherry, red plum, toast and mineral flavors in a smooth, polished structure, with well-balanced tannins and acidity. Shows focus and verve. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

VINOLÉ

Bierzo Le Buena Suerte 2006

90 points | \$25 | 500 cases imported | Red

This rich red shows ripe boysenberry and blackberry flavors, backed by vanilla, licorice and cinnamon notes. It's syrupy in texture, but has enough acidity for balance. Drink now through 2014.—*T.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.

CLOS FIGUERES

Priorat Font de la Figuera 2007

93 points | \$39 | 720 cases made | Red

Lively and expressive, this red brims with wild berry, mountain herb, mineral, smoke and black pepper flavors. Though supple, it has a firm grip and juicy acidity, with a long, vibrant finish. Drink now through 2017. *From Spain.—T.M.*

NUMANTHIA-TERMES

Toro Termanthia 2007

93 points | \$200 | 500 cases imported | Red

This alluring red packs a lot of flavor into a plush texture, with boysenberry, floral, cinnamon, licorice and smoke notes. It's firm, fresh and balanced, with a long, focused finish. Drink now through 2017. *From Spain.—T.M.*

CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE BARTON

St.-Julien 2007

92 points | \$66 | 17,500 cases made | Red

This has a wonderful nose for the vintage, with blackberry, currant and cigar box. Complex and full-bodied, with layers of ripe, polished tannins and a very long finish. Juicy, yet refined and agile. Best after 2014. *From France.—J.S.*

CHÂTEAU PÉTRUS

Pomerol 2007

92 points | \$1,300 | 2,335 cases made | Red

This offers pure, subtle fruit, with blackberry, sliced mushroom and blueberry notes. Full-bodied and balanced, with silky tannins, a pretty finish and just the right amount of wood. Powerful for the vintage. Best after 2014. *From France.—J.S.*

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.

James Laube Senior editor, Napa

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

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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: Burgundy, Champagne, Germany

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1981. Tasting beat: Bordeaux, Italy, Port

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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