

# WINE News

We've packed the first issue of the year with highly-rated wines from the critics at Robert Parker's Wine Advocate, the Wine Spectator, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar and more! This time, it is all about the points.

A horse-drawn plow at 100-point wine producer, Pontet-Canet.



## JANUARY 6, 2014 FEATURES

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## 38 Januaries: Just the Points Ma'am

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

I can't believe we're celebrating our 38th January at K&L. It seems like just yesterday we were hoisting up the brand spanking new sign to mark the opening of "K&L Liquors" at 209 El Camino Real in Millbrae, in a former Ernie's Liquor Store. What a difference 38 Januaries makes! We had a crew of five to staff that first store, and on that first cold and rainy day of business, January 1, 1977, we managed to sell about \$250 worth of merchandise—mainly cigarettes at about 50 cents a pack.

There were no computers at the first K&L—heck, the first Apple computer had just been introduced to the world in 1976. There were no fax machines—just adding machines and cash registers. There was no Oracle in Redwood Shores, but rather Marine World Africa-USA on that property. Microsoft was just a tiny company in Seattle that had just opened for business. On the wine and liquor side, in January 1977 booze ruled. It was all about Ancient Age, Old Crow, Lejon Vermouth

and jug wines back then at K&L. Prices were regulated by "Fair-Trade" and wine publications and wine writers were few. There was Robert Lawrence Balzer's *Private Guide to Food and Wine*, *Vintage Magazine*, Michael Broadbent's *Great Vintage Wine Book*, Harry Waugh and Robert Finnegan. There was the 20-point UC Davis scoring system or Michael Broadbent's 5-star system.

Then along came Robert Parker and later the *Wine Spectator*, and the era of the 100-point wine scoring system. (As a side note, have you ever seen a score below 50 points from anyone?) Today, many consumers rely on scores to guide them in choosing between thousands of wines, so we decided to pack this issue with wines that have earned 90 or more points. Kind of reminds me of Jack Webb's famous saying on *Dragnet*: "Just the facts Ma'am." This time, it's just the points.

A 100-point wine was unheard of until the mid-1980s when Robert Parker awarded a few top Bordeaux and the 1985 Groth Reserve Cab perfect scores. Now there are a good number of 100-pointers out there. Most are extremely expensive, but some are semi-affordable. Here are a few from our inventory:

**2010 Pape Clément, Pessac-Léognan (\$249.99)** 100 points RP: "Its sublime elegance, the power, the medium to full-bodied texture, the silky tannins, the subtle

notes of smoke, lead pencil shavings, black currants, charcoal, camphor, blueberry and cassis fruit are all remarkable."

**2010 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$279.99)** 100 points RP: "An absolutely amazing wine... The wine has off-the-charts massiveness and intensity but never comes across as heavy, overbearing or astringent. The freshness, laser-like precision, and full-bodied, massive richness and extract are simply remarkable to behold and experience."

**2010 Ducru-Beaucaillou, St-Julien (\$279.99)** 100 points JS: "The nose is phenomenal with perfect aromas of Cabernet Sauvignon with currant bush, blackberries and minerals. A pure expression of Cab. The palate is perfect with a full body, but has perfectly integrated tannins with a texture like the finest cashmere. It's strong but noble with perfect form and beauty."

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# 100-Point Wines

(Continued from page 1)

**2010 Beauséjour (Duffau), St-Emilion (\$399.99)** 100 points RP: “It is full-bodied and massively endowed, with every component perfectly etched in this extraordinary wine, which should be drinkable after 7-8 years of bottle age and last for a half-century or more. This is brilliant stuff.”

**2010 Mouton Rothschild, Pauillac (Inquire)** Will this be the first 101-pointer? 100 points JS: “This is pure Cabernet Sauvignon magic with incredible aromas of currants, blackberries and light spices. Tiny hints of hazelnut. Wet earth. Full body, with super velvety tannins. The purity of fruit is breathtaking. It goes on for minutes.”

**2009 E. Guigal “La Mouline” and “La Turque” Côte-Rôtie (\$599.99)** 100 points each from RP. Enough said.

**2008 Penfold’s “Grange” Shiraz South Australia (PA \$699.99)** 100 points WS and RP: “...The 2008 Grange puts forward a very complex nose packed with aromas of mulberries, layers of baking spices, cloves and cinnamon with nuances of minced meat, anise, potpourri and whiffs of dried mint and chocolate... This is clearly a wonderfully opulent and a magic vintage for this label.”



## FRANCE & ITALY *Big Wines, Big Scores*

### Italian Wines

**2008 La Fortuna Brunello di Montalcino \* (\$39.99)** 93 points WS: “Tobacco and spice aromas give way to sweet, juicy cherry, raspberry and mineral in this elegant, well-defined red. The tannins are solid yet balanced, and the finish just keeps coming with sweet fruit and spice notes.”

**2007 Pietranera Brunello di Montalcino (\$29.99)** 94 points WE: “Opens with dark concentration and ripe berry fruit with layers of plum, blackberry, dark chocolate, pipe tobacco, cherry liqueur, cola and underbrush...A wonderful 360-degree portrait of Sangiovese Grosso. Tight structure, integration and loads of fruity intensity.”

**2009 La Massa “Giorgio Primo” Toscana (\$69.99)** 97 points JS: “Powerful aromas of dark fruits, minerals and hints of new wood. Super perfumed. Licorice too. Full bodied, with a seamless tannin texture and wonderful length. The wine is ultra-polished and long. Super structure yet full of finesse.”

### Bordeaux

The cream of the crop for those who have everything. Remember a 95-point Bordeaux equals a 110-point wine from anywhere else. ☺

**2010 Carbonnieux Blanc, Pessac-Léognan-(\$39.99)** 93-94 points JS: “Wow. Best wine ever from here. Superb with intense mineral character and loads of fruit too. Full and rich, with an ultra long finish.”

**2005 Guiraud, Sauternes (\$49.99)** 97 points and #4 on the Top 100 Wines of 2008, WS: “Delivers lots of botrytis spice, with lemon tart and cooked apple. Full-bodied, with loads of cream and vanilla and an intense tropical fruit and honey aftertaste. Long and viscous, with a layered and beautiful spicy finish.”

**2010 Malescot-St-Exupéry, Margaux (\$99.99)** 95 points RP: “Gorgeous, flowery, classic Margaux...impeccable balance and full-bodied, full-throttle style...Black raspberries, crème de cassis and spring floral notes intermixed with forest floor and a hint of charcoal are followed by an opulent, sexy, full-bodied wine...”

**2005 Les Forts de Latour, Pauillac (\$249.99)** 94 points JS and WS: “Shows blackberry, coffee, cedar, and raisin on the nose, turning to licorice and fresh flowers. Full-bodied, with refined, silky tannins and a long finish. Balanced and juicy. Builds on the palate, with currant, licorice and mineral character, followed by a powerful finish. An amazing second wine.”

**2010 Pichon-Baron, Pauillac (\$249.99)** 97 points RP: “...Loads of charcoal, licorice, incense and some exotic Asian spices along with abundant cassis liqueur, blackberry and hints of roasted coffee and spring flowers, it is full-bodied and opulent...sensational...”

**2010 Montrose, St-Estèphe (\$249.99)** 99 points RP: “The 2010 Montrose is a fabulous wine, and I was leaning toward giving it a three-digit score, which it may ultimately merit after it resolves some of its very sweet tannin...it is a great classic...”

**2009 Le Dôme, St-Emilion (\$219.99)** 99 points RP: “One of the most distinctive wines made in Bordeaux...the wine’s richness, length and lingering depth build incrementally in this exceptional St.-Emilion. It will be drinkable in 4-5 years and should age for two decades or more. This is Jonathan Malthus’ finest wine to date.”

### Rhône Valley

**2011 Domaine Calendal “Plan de Dieu” Côtes du Rhône-Villages (\$29.99)** 90 points WS: “Sleek, featuring pure black cherry and black currant fruit, with a lovely graphite frame and a lingering black tea note on the perfumy finish.”

**2008 St. Jean Barroux “L’Argile” Côtes du Ventoux (\$23.99)** 90 points WS: “Mature now, leading off with incense and black tea notes, with a still-fleshy core of blackberry and black cherry fruit. Features a graphite edge on the finish.”

**2011 Domaine de Marcoux Côtes du Rhône (\$26.99)** 90 points WS: “This red offers a core of plum, raspberry and red licorice notes, with juicy acidity supplying length on the finish. Extra perfumy spice and rooibos tea accents fill in the background.”

—Clyde Beffa Jr.

# Critics' Faves from Around the Globe

by Clyde Beffa Jr.

## Champagne

**Charles Heidsieck "Brut Reserve" Champagne (\$49.99)** 93 points and one of the Top 100 Wines of 2012, *WE*: "It's rare to find a non-vintage blend with such attractive bottle age; in most the fruitiness dominates. This has a toasty character, with an almond note and a ripe mouthfeel that balances its warm pear and yellow-fruit flavors. This demonstrates a full, rich style."

**Lallier Grande Reserve Grand Cru Brut Champagne (\$39.99)** 92 points *WE*: "With a fine sense of maturity, this is rich, toasty, full-bodied and concentrated. It is a Champagne with weight, showing pink grapefruit, melon and green plum flavors inside an intense texture. At the end, acidity combines with a fine toasty flourish."

**Fleury "Carte Rouge" Blanc de Noirs Brut Champagne\* (\$39.99)** 90 points Allen Meadows' *Burghound*: "A relatively deeply pitched nose that is heavy on the yeast with light notes of strawberry and raspberry and introduces rich, full and complex flavors that offer plenty of depth in a more rounded style on the crisp and dry but not racy finish. This will best please those who want a fuller style Champagne..."

## Spain

**2010 Bodegas J A Calvo Casajus Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera del Duero (\$29.99)** 94 points RP: "The palate has a sorbet-like freshness on the entry, which belies the firm backbone to this wine. It sets you up for a nicely structured, reserved almost aloof finish that displays fine precision. This has real character and class. Drink now-2018"

**2011 Bodegas y Viñedos Ponce "La Casilla" Manchuela (\$19.99)** 93 points RP: "...A glorious bouquet of black currant leaf, iodine and dark cherry that has a beguiling sense of 'animation.' The palate is packed full of crunchy black fruit...This is another outstanding wine from Bodegas Ponce."

**2009 Bodegas Casa Castillo "Las Gravas" Jumilla (\$25.99)** 94 points RP: "Another of my favorite treasure troves for value-priced Spanish wines is Jumilla...an amazing wine that must be tasted to be believed. Its intense dense purple color is accompanied by copious notes of kirsch, black raspberries, blueberries and underbrush intertwined with hints of truffles and graphite."

## Red Burgundy

**2011 Domaine Champy Beaune 1er Cru "Aux Cras"\* (\$46.99)** 90 points Allen Meadows' *Burghound*: "This is notably more refined with pretty and airy aromas of red berries, stone and soft floral nuances. There is good punch to the round and supple medium-bodied flavors that tighten up very fast on the mineral-driven, long, austere and serious finish."

**2011 Domaine Champy Volnay 1er Cru "Taillepieds"\* (\$69.95)** 90 points Allen Meadows' *Burghound*: "...Fine intensity and plenty of volume to the almost pungently mineral-inflected flavors that display excellent delineation on the austere, firmly structured and impressively persistent finish."

**2006 Domaine René Cacheux Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru "Les Suchots" (\$54.99)** 92 points *WS*: "Suave and supple, this red sports cherry, raspberry, bittersweet chocolate and spice flavors, all wrapped in a fleshy, succulent frame. The tannins are fine and ripe. Nice length."

## Southern Rhône

**2010 Château de Beaucastel Châteauneuf-du-Pape (PA \$99.99)** 96 points and #8 on the Top 100 Wines of 2013, *WS*: "Dark, dense and very closed now, this has a tremendous core of crushed plum, linzer torte and blackberry confiture waiting in reserve. Ample singed cedar and mesquite, warm paving stone and black tea notes lurk in the background and glide through the finish. Features serious grip, but wonderful integration."

**2010 Domaine Grand Veneur "Les Origines" Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$59.99)** 95 points RP: "Another blockbuster...it exhibits an opaque purple color as well as a sweet bouquet of blackberries, espresso roast, ink and graphite. While clearly a modern-styled Châteauneuf-du-Pape, it retains plenty of the region's typicity and authenticity."

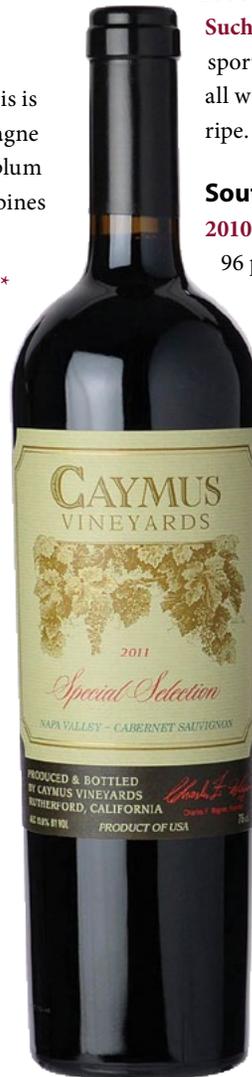
## California

**2010 Hewitt Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon (\$99.99)** 95 points and the #4 wine on *WS*'s Top 100 Wines of 2013: "Deliciously pure, rich and deep, featuring tiers of spicy red berry, blackberry and red and black licorice flavors, with pretty wilted rose scents and a long seamless finish that slowly reveals an underlying tannic grip."

**2011 Beringer "Private Reserve" Napa Valley Chardonnay (\$29.99)** 95 points RP: "...A knock-out wine...Beautiful buttery citrus and hints of white peaches, apricots and tropical fruit. Impressively textured, full-bodied, deep, fresh, pure and well-balanced..."

**2011 Caymus "Special Selection" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$119.99)** 95 points RP: "A brilliant wine, and one of the stars of the vintage...boasts aromas of blueberry pie, blackberries, cassis and white flowers. This full-bodied, velvety textured, delicious 2011 is already drinking well...It is a terrific success for the vintage."

**2011 Round Pond "Estate" Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon (\$49.99)** 94 points Antonio Galloni: "A gorgeous, savory and totally expressive wine, the 2011 impresses for its balance and pedigree. This is without question one of the most beautiful wines of the year."



## SETTLING THE SCORE *Highly-Rated Values*

If there's one complaint we hear often about critically-acclaimed wines it's that big scores too often go to hard-to-find, small-production, expensive wines. While this is true (and high scores can increase scarcity and drive up prices), there are also a surprising number of value wines that have earned 90 points (or more) from one or more of the many critics. Here are a dozen that all cost less than \$25 a bottle!

**Sherman & Hooker's Shebang! "Sixth Cuvée- Old Vine Cuvée" Red Blend (\$11.99)** 90 points and a Best Buy, RP: "Shebang! is the appealing project of Morgan Twain Peterson, son of the long-time Ravenswood winemaker Joel Peterson. His objective is to fashion innovative, old vine cuvees that satisfy the most demanding wine enthusiasts."

**2011 Suertes del Marqués "7 Fuentes" Valle de Orotava (\$15.99)** 92 points RP: "...Showing violets and rose petals, a touch of spices (white pepper), and red fruits: raspberries, strawberries and sour cherries. The palate shows great fruit and a tasty, almost salty, finish. This wine for thirst is a superb value and a perfect introduction to what the new wines from the Canary Islands could potentially be."

**2009 Mark Herold Wines "Collide" Red Blend (\$21.99)** 92 points RP: "The 2009 Collide is an unusual blend of 40% Petite Sirah, 35% Tempranillo, 20% Graciano and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. Provencal-like, it offers up notes of lavender, garrigue, pepper, roasted meats and black fruits in its rich, full-bodied personality. This consumer-friendly offering should drink well for a decade or more."

**2004 Bodegas Fernandez "Escudo de Plata" Gran Reserva Jumilla (\$16.99)** 90 points ST: "Complex, intriguing bouquet of dried red fruits, botanical herbs, spicecake and a touch of vanilla, with a sexy floral overtone. A sweet, sappy midweight that offers silky raspberry and cherry flavors and no rough edges. Finishes with lingering sweetness and an echo of dried flowers."

**2009 Valle dell'Acate Cerasuolo di Vittoria (\$22.99)** 90 points WE: "Valle dell'Acate delivers an elegant and feminine expression, with bright aromas of blue flower, forest fruit and almond paste. The wine's natural freshness would stand up nicely to ricotta ravioli."

**2009 Maison Blanche, Médoc (\$14.99)** 91 points WS: "Vibrant, with nicely packed raspberry, fig and blackberry fruit carried by mouthwatering acidity and well-embedded structure. Lots of anise, spice and tar frames the finish. Stéphane Derenoncourt consulting here."

**2010 Celler de Capcanes "Mas Donis" Barrica Montsant (\$9.99)** 92 points RP: "... Rose petals, raspberry jam, crushed rocks, spring flowers and kirsch. Stunningly rich and medium to full-bodied, with wonderful vibrancy, precision and minerality, this beauty could easily pass for a grand cru Burgundy—it's that complex and interesting. I am blown away by what's in the bottle..."

**2011 Ancient Peaks "Margarita Vineyard-Renegade" Paso Robles Red Blend (\$18.99)** 90 points and a Good Value, *Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine*: "...Leads with a mix of bright berries and slightly pungent, peppery spice in the nose and follows with lively flavors that are filled with fresh fruit and long on stamina. While sporting plenty of zesty acidity, it does not want for fruity stuffing, and it shows the kind of balance to suggest that it will age with great grace."



**2008 Masi "Oro" Brolo di Campofiorin (\$19.99)** 93 points RP: "This is a gorgeous wine that nails that difficult balance between power and elegance. The bouquet is chiseled and linear with etched notes of crushed granite and smoke that open to softer tones of ripe fruit, wet earth and porcino mushroom. The wine is densely textured and layered with soft tannins that wrap around the finish."

**2010 Beaumont, Haut-Médoc (\$16.99)** 90 points WE: "...A full-bodied, rich wine, which is weighty and packed with serious fruits and tannins. It shows an attractive, black-currant-driven side, but it remains a wine for aging."

**2011 The Royal Tokaji Wine Company Furmint Dry (\$15.99)** 94 points WS&S: "Don't be fooled by the price: this may be a fraction of the cost of one of Royal Tokaji's Aszu wines, but it's just as carefully made...This Furmint positively glows with flavor, moving from apricot into a red fruit realm, like great Riesling sometimes does."

**2007 Bodegas Poesia "Clos des Andes" Reserva Malbec, Mendoza (\$19.99)** 91 points RP: "...Offers up an alluring bouquet of pain grille, pencil lead, spice box, and black cherry. This leads to a wine with excellent density, layered fruit, and spicy black fruit flavors nicely concealing enough structure for 2-3 years of further development."

Leah Greenstein

### K&L REDWOOD CITY

3005 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061  
P (650) 364-8544 F (650) 364-4687  
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### KLWINES.COM

Toll Free (877) KLWINES (877) 559-4637  
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### K&L HOLLYWOOD

1400 Vine Street, Hollywood, CA 90028  
P (323) 464-WINE (9463) F (323) 836-0853  
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We host regular evening and Saturday tastings at each K&L store as well as many special events throughout the year. For the complete calendar go to [KLWines.com/Local-Events](http://KLWines.com/Local-Events).

### K&L SAN FRANCISCO

638 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA 94107  
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