

Wine Spectator Insider

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THE parade of outstanding- and classic-rated wines from the stellar 2005 vintage in France's Rhône Valley continues in this week's issue of the *Wine Spectator Insider*. James Molesworth reviews 20 more exceptional wines from Châteauneuf-du-Pape, a region which may have been the most successful of any of the Rhône's highly regarded appellations in 2005. This selection includes three classic-rated Grenache-based reds, which you'll find among the Hot Wines, on page 4. Also in this issue, Harvey Steiman covers more than a dozen of the latest releases from Washington state, including seven outstanding bottlings priced at \$30 or less.

France Rhône

DOMAINE BOIS DE BOURSAN

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée des Félix 2005
94 points | \$80 | 500 cases made | Red

Dense and chewy, but with ripe, well-rounded tannins carry the black currant, fig paste, coffee and black licorice notes. The finish shows nicely buried acidity and a long mineral streak. Always one of the appellation's most cellar-worthy wines. Best from 2009 through 2025.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DE FERRAND

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2005
94 points | \$52 | 300 cases imported | Red

Really sleek and focused, with a large core of plum and linzer torte fruit in reserve for now, while hints of mesquite, spice cake, black licorice and graphite flicker through on the finish. Dense and reserved, so cellar for maximum effect. Philippe Bravay is now in a groove here. Best from 2010 through 2025.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape White Clos de Beauvenir 2005
94 points | \$85 | 330 cases made | White

Gorgeous, with almond, buttered brioche and paraffin notes up front, backed by mango, persimmon and clementine flavors. Then it's all wrapped up by a lush toast- and grilled hazelnut-filled finish. An opulent beauty. Drink now through 2011.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE LA BARROCHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Réserve 2005
93 points | \$42 | 1,500 cases made | Red

Has a gorgeous mouthfeel, with a rich, velvety, mouthfilling texture that allows hoisin sauce, Turkish coffee, graphite and dark licorice notes to sail through the dense, lengthy finish. Excellent grip is well-embedded. 60 percent Grenache and 20 percent Mourvèdre along with Syrah and Cinsault. Best from 2010 through 2030.—*J.M.*

ERIC TEXIER

Châteauneuf-du-Pape White Vieilles Vignes 2005
93 points | \$52 | 100 cases made | White

Showy, with juicy layers of fig, yellow apple, persimmon, nectarine and melon all backed by a note of green almond on the long, rich finish. Nice buried acidity keeps this going. Not a household name, but worth tracking down. Drink now through 2011.—*J.M.*

RAYMOND USSEGLIO

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Girard 2005
93 points | \$42 | 450 cases imported | Red

This is rock solid, with a great core of raspberry, blackberry and loganberry fruit, all supported by dark licorice, Turkish coffee, fruitcake and a hint of mesquite. The long finish pumps out a nice tarry intensity. I like the poise on this better than the chewier Cuvée Impériale. Best from 2009 through 2025.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape White 2006

92 points | \$42 | 1,665 cases made | White

Juicy and rich, but precise, with a mix of fennel, white peach, melon and almond notes that carry through on the long, lush finish. Drink now through 2009.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DES PÈRES DE L'ÉGLISE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Le Calice de St.-Pierre

Heritage 2005

92 points | \$50 | 100 cases imported | Red

A bit compact now, but with a solid, juicy core of blackberry, briar, sweet toast and tobacco notes. The long finish shows a hint of raisiny grip, but stays pure and driven enough. Serge Gradassi is another young vigneron showing excellent potential. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

PERRIN & FILS

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Les Sinards 2005

92 points | \$41 | 5,000 cases imported | Red

Lovely kirsch and plum cake aromas and flavors lead the way, with a silky palate of currant and mineral that glides through the long finish. Not as densely structured as the top 2005s, but pure and wonderfully balanced. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

RAYMOND USSEGLIO

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée Impériale 2005

92 points | \$62 | 80 cases imported | Red

Concentrated but silky, with a core of raspberry and blackberry fruit woven with dark toast, licorice and plum sauce notes. The long finish shows nice depth. Has more grip than the Girard, but it's not as fresh. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE BOIS DE BOURSAN

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2005

91 points | \$49 | 4,000 cases made | Red

Well-built, with solid tarry grip running through the grilled beef, dark licorice, espresso, loam and mineral notes. The long, chewy finish has a slightly roasted edge, but this stays driven enough. Drink now through 2022.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape 2005

91 points | \$40 | 5,000 cases imported | Red

Elegant for the vintage, with a silky texture to the raspberry, boysenberry and plum fruit, all layered with sweet spice, mesquite and fruitcake notes. Has a long, supple finish. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

ERIC TEXIER

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Vieilles Vignes 2005

91 points | \$47 | 200 cases made | Red

Bright and juicy, with a forward personality and tasty red fruit, licorice, floral and mineral notes that stay tangy on the finish. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DU VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Télégramme 2005

91 points | \$35 | 1,630 cases imported | Red

Ripe, with nice kirsch and raspberry fruit backed by darker hints of applewood-smoked bacon, plum sauce and dark licorice. Juicy and long on the finish, this stretches out nicely. A great second wine (this was formerly labeled as Vieux Mas des Papes). Best from 2009 through 2025.—*J.M.*

FERRATON PÈRE & FILS

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Le Parvis 2005

90 points | \$40 | 1,300 cases made | Red

Nice *garrigue*-driven style, with tobacco, loam, mesquite and plum sauce flavors pushed by a ripe, tarry, mouthfilling finish. Owned by Michel Chapoutier, this separate domaine is quietly making some really nice stuff, thanks to winemaker Gregory Viennois' efforts. Drink now through 2016.—*J.M.*

DOMAINE DES PÈRES DE L'ÉGLISE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Le Calice de St.-Pierre 2005

90 points | \$35 | 500 cases imported | Red

Ripe and juicy, with a nice layer of *garrigue* and sage running through the dark plum, currant and tar notes. The long, smoky finish shows hints of braised chestnut and sweet tobacco. Drink now through 2020.—*J.M.*

Washington

Mark Ryan and Cadence are both small wineries based in the Seattle area with a particular dedication to Red Mountain, out at the farthest end of Washington's Yakima Valley. They even source their grapes from some of the same vineyards, including Ciel du Cheval, Tapteil and Klipsun.

How do they compare? Both wineries' Klipsun bottlings have the vineyard's signature raspy tannins, but plenty of intensity to suggest cellaring. As for Ciel, the Mark Ryan version is plush, round and generous with its fruit. Cadence's, which has Cabernet Sauvignon in it as well, glows brightly with its fruit under a layer of crisp tannins.

—*Harvey Steiman*

MARK RYAN

Dead Horse Ciel du Cheval Vineyard Red Mountain 2005

93 points | \$45 | 525 cases made | Red

Round and immensely generous. A lovely beam of sweet, spicy blackberry and plum fruit shines through a layer of velvety tannins, persisting impressively on the long, focused finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2009 through 2015.—*H.S.*

CADENCE

Bel Canto Red Mountain 2005

92 points | \$60 | 290 cases made | Red

Firm in texture, with a real sense of elegance behind the juicy blackberry, licorice and herb flavors, which mingle seamlessly on the focused finish. Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2010 through 2015.—*H.S.*

CADENCE

Ciel du Cheval Vineyard Red Mountain 2005

92 points | \$45 | 415 cases made | Red

This one glows like a high-watt bulb under a blanket of crisp tannins, emitting pulses of ripe currant, cherry and violet aromas and flavors that don't quit easily as the finish sails on. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Best from 2010 through 2015.—*H.S.*

MARK RYAN

Wild Eyed Red Mountain 2005

92 points | \$40 | 350 cases made | Red

Firm in texture, this glows with juicy blackberry and cherry fruit, hitting some floral and white pepper notes as the finish sails on gloriously. Delivers a blast of flavor without showing much weight. Syrah and Viognier. Drink now through 2012.—*H.S.*

BUNNELL

À Pic Stonetree Vineyard Wahluke Slope 2005

91 points | \$28 | 200 cases made | Red

Rich and savory. A mouthful of roasted meat, blackberry, dried blueberry and black pepper flavors, lingering on the spicy, focused finish. Not a big, fat wine, but sharply focused to show off its distinctive flavors. Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre and Cinsault. Drink now through 2013.—*H.S.*

CHATEAU STE. MICHELLE

Chardonnay Columbia Valley Ethos 2005

91 points | \$32 | 2,400 cases made | White

Smoky aromas surround a tangy mouthful of lime, tangerine and green apple flavors, persisting impressively on the lively, balanced finish. Drink now through 2011.—*H.S.*

COEUR D'ALENE

Switchback Red Washington 2005

91 points | \$25 | 225 cases made | Red

Smooth, velvety and beautifully focused, showing its ripe blackberry, cherry and root beer aromas and flavors intensely, but without excess weight. The tannins are already well-integrated. Syrah. Drink now through 2013.—*H.S.*

COLUMBIA CREST

Chardonnay Horse Heaven Hills Reserve 2005

91 points | \$30 | 600 cases made | White

Smooth and polished. Offers a creamy mouthful of pear and carambola fruit infused with smoke and white pepper notes as the finish lingers delicately.—*H.S.*

FORT WALLA WALLA

Merlot Walla Walla Valley 2005

91 points | \$30 | 549 cases made | Red

The supple, velvety texture caresses the mouth, while the cinnamon-scented red berry, red pepper and plum flavors ride through the long, generous finish. Nicely balanced and harmonious through the finish. Drink now through 2013.—*H.S.*

MARK RYAN

Long Haul Ciel Du Cheval Vineyard Red Mountain 2005

91 points | \$45 | 475 cases made | Red

Richly aromatic, with layers of cherry, currant, red pepper and spice leading into a surprisingly refined, open-textured mouthful that finishes elegant. There's a grip of tannins, but this doesn't dig in. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2009 through 2013.—*H.S.*

MARK RYAN

Water Witch Klipsun Vineyard Red Mountain 2005

91 points | \$45 | 300 cases made | Red

Velvety in texture, with a firm underpinning of acidity and refined tannins to the black olive-scented cherry and clove flavors, persisting gently on the long, focused finish. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2009 through 2015.—*H.S.*

CHATEAU FAIRE LE PONT

Provence Reserve Washington 2004

90 points | \$28 | 225 cases made | Red

Light for a Syrah-based red, with pretty plum and berry flavors on a lithe, open-textured frame, lingering on the welcoming finish. Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Drink now through 2012.—*H.S.*

DI STEFANO

Sauvignon Blanc Columbia Valley 2006

90 points | \$15 | 1,400 cases made | White

A juicy, mouthfilling style manages to hold itself together in a lively package, delivering lime, grapefruit and green olive flavors that linger effusively. Drink now.—*H.S.*

SAVIAH

Big Sky Cuvée Columbia Valley 2005

90 points | \$35 | 469 cases made | Red

Lithe, complex and generous with its cedar-accented blackberry and floral flavors, the fruit persisting nicely on the polished finish. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and others. Drink now through 2012.—*H.S.*

WHITMAN

Viognier Columbia Valley 2006

90 points | \$19 | 420 cases made | White

Feels subdued at first, but the fresh flavors of pear, carambola and flowers well up nicely at the finish and persist into the second and third sip. This Viognier has more elegance than most. Drink now.—*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.

DOMAINE DE LA MORDORÉE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape La Plume du Peintre Pur Grenache de la Crau 2005

97 points | \$360 | 16 cases imported | Red

A stunning combination of density and purity, with a nearly distilled essence of kirsch and blackberry fruit that's layered with exotic fig, graphite, licorice and spice cake notes. The long finish is full throttle, yet racy and balanced. Just the second vintage for this cuvée, this version is sourced from 100 percent Grenache old vines in the La Crau sector (the varietal makeup changes from year to year, the debut '03 was equal parts Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre). Christophe Delorme is making some rocking wines these days. Drink now through 2009. *From France.—J.M.*

DOMAINE LA BARROCHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Pure 2005

95 points | \$65 | 375 cases made | Red

Dark and brooding, with Turkish coffee and licorice root notes leading the way for bittersweet cocoa, mesquite and fig. The long, plush finish shows flashes of incense, as fruit and chestnut notes linger. 100 percent Grenache. Young Julien Barrot is off to an impressive start. Drink now through 2025. *From France.—J.M.*

CHÂTEAU LA NERTHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Cuvée des Cadettes 2005
95 points | \$100 | 1,500 cases made | Red

This delivers attention-grabbing mocha and cocoa aromas and offers a lush palate of juicy plum sauce, raspberry and boysenberry fruit, with licorice snap and graphite. The long, driven finish is really fine-grained, and this gains steam as it moves along. Best version since the super '01, though the price jump is conspicuous. Drink now through 2025. *From France.—J.M.*

DOMAINE LA BARROCHE

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Fiancée 2005

94 points | \$50 | 550 cases made | Red

This has really nice drive, with a racy beam of raspberry and linzer torte pushing through the sweet mocha-tinged structure up front, while pushed by a mouthwatering minerality on the back end. There's a lovely raspberry and black pepper encore on the finish. Equal parts Syrah and Grenache. Drink now through 2025. *From France.—J.M.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

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Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 15 people in four offices. They work together to review more than 15,000 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 San Francisco, Napa, New York and Tuscany, and in the vineyard regions of Europe. 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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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