

# Wine Spectator Insider

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THIS Week's *Wine Spectator Insider* includes outstanding wines from Austria, California and Spain. Kim Marcus reviews 15 Austrian Grüner Veltliners in this issue, all of them from the 2006 vintage. 2006 brought some extreme conditions to Austria's vineyards, including a very hot June, but weather during harvest was ideal, and the Grüns in particular are more full-bodied than in average years, with more ripeness and greater concentration. Also in this issue are 16 wines from California reviewed by James Laube, including the latest Cabernet and Chardonnay ratings for Martinelli, Gary Farrell and Shafer, as well as the first official rating for the Oakville red blend from Continuum, the new Tim Mondavi venture, which you'll find among the Hot Wines, on page 4. (For more on Mondavi and Continuum, see Laube's Jan. 16, 2007, blog entry.)

Wrapping up this week's edition, Thomas Matthews covers seven wines from Spain. They're led by a distinctive Garnacha-, Cabernet- and Syrah-based dessert wine from Priorat.

## Austria

### SIGHARDT DONABAUM

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Trocken  
Wachau Zornberg 2006

**93 points | \$37 | NA cases made | White**

Aroma is redolent of rose petal and peach, with rich, concentrated flavors of apricot, pear, smoke and spice. Finishes with golden raisin, cream and white pepper. Drink now through 2014.—*K.M.*

### FRANZ HIRTZBERGER

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Trocken Wachau Spitzer  
Honivogl 2006

**93 points | \$79 | 1,125 cases made | White**

Very rich and ripe, with layers of seductive peach cobbler flavors topped off by plenty of cream. Plenty of ripe pear and baked apple as well, with a long, smoky and spice-filled finish. Drink now through 2020.—*K.M.*

### HÖGL

Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Wachau Schön  
Reserve 2006

**93 points | \$42 | 83 cases made | White**

Very balanced, rich and powerful, with intense flavors of smoke, peach, apricot and spice. Long, extracted finish is redolent of mocha, with hints of tropical fruit and a lingering minerality. Drink now through 2015.—*K.M.*

### ALZINGER

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Trocken  
Wachau Steinertal 2006

**92 points | \$64 | 5 cases imported | White**

Very pure and fresh tasting, with an impressive clarity to the grapefruit, peach, melon and mineral flavors. Big structure, and a long, lush, cream-filled finish. Focused. Drink now through 2020.—*K.M.*

### BRÜNDLMAYER

Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Kamptal Ried  
Käferberg 2006

**92 points | \$NA | NA cases made | White**

Full-bodied and well-balanced Grüner, with a crisp yet rich cast to the lush peach, apricot, melon and spice flavors. Creamy notes linger on the ripe, peppery finish. Not imported into the U.S. Drink now through 2015.—*K.M.*

### SIGHARDT DONABAUM

Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken  
Wachau Atzberg 2006

**92 points | \$37 | NA cases made | White**

Creamy aroma, with flavors of ripe peach, baked apple, grapefruit, white pepper and smoke. There's a delicious streak of vanilla running through this as well, with a long finish of mineral, smoked almond and sea salt. Drink now through 2014.—*K.M.*

## STADT KREMS

Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Kremstal  
Weinzierlberg 2006  
**92 points | \$26 | 2,083 cases made | White**

Rich, ripe and creamy, with loads of apricot, pear and peach flavors. A vein of lush tropical fruit notes runs through this as well, including pineapple and mango. Long finish accents the spice and buttery notes. Drink now through 2014.—*K.M.*

## FRANZ MITTELBACH

Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Wachau  
Tegernseerhof Höhereck 2006  
**92 points | \$35 | 292 cases made | White**

Full-bodied, with turbo-charged flavors of ripe peach, baked apricot and spice. Lush, creamy finish is redolent of nutmeg and smoke. Try with smoked fish. Drink now through 2012.—*K.M.*

## SONNHOF

Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Kamptal Schenk-  
bichl 2006  
**92 points | \$71 | NA cases made | White**

Enticing aroma of lanolin and honey, with rich, full-bodied flavors of peach, melon, apricot and spice. Plenty of backbone, with a pineapple and white chocolate finish. Drink now through 2014.—*K.M.*

## ALZINGER

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Trocken Wachau  
Loibenberg 2006  
**91 points | \$60 | 5 cases imported | White**

Interesting mix of peach, mango and tangerine flavors, with lots of spice and smoke. Fresh and balanced, with a bright finish filled with mineral and white pepper. Drink now through 2014.—*K.M.*

## BRÜNDLMAYER

Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Kamptal Ried  
Loiser Berg 2006  
**91 points | \$32 | 25 cases imported | White**

Precise-tasting Grüner, with lots of mineral, citrus and apple flavors. Well-structured, with white pepper and apricot on the luscious, creamy finish. Drink now through 2014.—*K.M.*

## FRANZ HIRTZBERGER

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Trocken Wachau Spitzer  
Axpoint 2006  
**91 points | \$51 | 800 cases made | White**

Ripe, with a rush of concentrated grapefruit, Fuji apple, and tropical fruit flavors, most notably pineapple and mango. Finishes with cream and black pepper. Drink now through 2012.—*K.M.*

## KARL STIERSCHNEIDER

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Trocken Wachau Achleiten  
Kartäuserhof 2006  
**91 points | \$40 | 333 cases made | White**

Very lush, juicy and ripe tasting, with loads of coconut, lemon-lime, peach and gooseberry flavors. Well-focused mineral and smoke flavors fill the long, rich finish. Drink now through 2015.—*K.M.*

# California

## MARTINELLI

Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Three Sisters Vineyard Sea  
Ridge Meadow 2005  
**93 points | \$60 | 265 cases made | White**

Rich and smoky, with complex, detailed, bold flavors built around layers of ripe fig, apple, melon and floral scents, keeping a tight focus and then turning elegant and supple on the finish, with wonderful detail. Drink now through 2012.—*J.L.*

## CHAPPELLET

Chardonnay Napa Valley 2006  
**92 points | \$29 | 3,500 cases made | White**

A rich, creamy yet elegant wine, with a seamless mix of ripe pear, apple and creamy-toasty oak flavors that give it a nice balance between fruit and oak. Long and persistent finish. Drink now through 2012.—*J.L.*

## SHAHER

Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District  
One Point Five 2005  
**92 points | \$70 | 9,500 cases made | Red**

Rich, deep and complex, with a complex mix of fleshy currant, dried berry, anise, sage and mineral, framed by light cedary oak. Gains depth and complexity on the finish. Elegant and stylish. Best from 2009 through 2014.—*J.L.*

## SHAHER

Chardonnay Napa Valley Carneros Red Shoulder  
Ranch 2006  
**92 points | \$47 | 6,500 cases made | White**

Rich and creamy, both in flavor and texture, bold and extracted, with fleshy fig, apricot and light nutmeg shadings. Yet for all its power it offers a sense of elegance and balance. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

## TESTAROSSA

Chardonnay Santa Lucia Highlands Sleepy Hollow  
Vineyard 2006  
**92 points | \$39 | 524 cases made | White**

Enticing floral citrus and apple blossom scents, turn rich and layered on the palate, with sweet fig, applesauce, tropical fruit and citrus notes that are bold and distinctive, with a long persistent finish. Drink now through 2010.—*J.L.*

## BARNETT

Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain District 2005  
**91 points | \$65 | 2,050 cases made | Red**

Rich and intense, with a tight focus on supple currant, herb, anise, sage and cedary oak, all folding together on the finish, where the layers of flavors start to unfold and reveal their layers of complexity. Best from 2010 through 2016.—*J.L.*

## CHALK HILL

Chardonnay Chalk Hill Founder's Block 2005  
**91 points | \$88 | 200 cases made | White**

Ultra rich and creamy, with deep, complex, focused layers of fig, apricot and toasty-hazelnut laced oak, this is a big expressive and well done wine in this style. Drink now through 2010.—*J.L.*

## GARY FARRELL

Chardonnay Russian River Valley Rochioli Vineyards 2005  
**91 points | \$38 | 376 cases made | White**

Clean, with a flinty, subtle citrus, pear and mineral notes that make points with subtle, elegant pear, fig, honeydew melon and light touch of hazelnut-scented oak. Wonderful harmony, balance and finesse. Drink now through 2012.—*J.L.*

## GARY FARRELL

Chardonnay Russian River Valley Starr Ridge Vineyard 2005  
**91 points | \$38 | 376 cases made | White**

Floral, apple blossom and ripe pear and melon flavors give this immediate allure, offering richness, depth, complexity, elegance and finesse without being heavy. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

## GARY FARRELL

Chardonnay Russian River Valley Westside Farms 2005  
**91 points | \$38 | 659 cases made | White**

Fresh, snappy tangerine and nectarine flavors are juicy and vibrant, clean and refreshing, elegantly styled yet long and persistent on the finish. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

## TESTAROSSA

Chardonnay California Diana's Reserve 2006  
**91 points | \$55 | 342 cases made | White**

Rich with ripe, lively exotic tropical fruit flavors that are rich and creamy with subtle hazelnut and toasty oak flavors that expand the flavor profile. Drink now through 2010.—*J.L.*

## HANZELL

Chardonnay Sonoma Valley 2005  
**90 points | \$65 | 4,636 cases made | White**

A ripe, flashy style, with a burst of pear, apple, melon and citrus, with a dash of hazelnut and spice. Complex and well proportioned. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

## PAHLMeyer

Chardonnay Napa County Jayson 2006  
**90 points | \$39 | 1,898 cases made | White**

Elegant, complex, focused and concentrated, with smoky fig, hazelnut, nutmeg and cedary oak flavors that fold together nicely, holding a tight focus and ending with a long aftertaste. Drink now through 2011.—*J.L.*

## ST. CLEMENT

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Oroppas 2005  
**90 points | \$55 | 5,963 cases made | Red**

Rich and creamy up front, with lively currant, vanilla-scented oak, herb and blackberry notes that firm up nicely on the finish, giving it backbone and traction. Drink now through 2013.—*J.L.*

# Spain

## COSTERS DEL SIURANA

Priorat Dolç de L'Obac 2004  
**92 points | \$122/500ml | 50 cases imported | Dessert**

Expressive flavors of black cherry, kirsch, bitter chocolate and mineral mingle in this distinctive red. It has enough sweetness to be a dessert wine, but with the balance and verve of a table red. Garnacha, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

## JORGE ORDOÑEZ & CO.

Málaga Victoria 2005  
**91 points | \$47/375ml | 60 cases imported | Dessert**

Viscous and honeyed, this sweet white shows the spicy vanilla flavors of botrytis, but with fresh sweet notes of pear and honeydew. Lovely balance, with plenty of depth. Moscatel. Drink now.—*T.M.*

## FERNANDO DIÉGUEZ OTERO

Albariño Rias Baixas Aquis Celenis Cepas Vellas 2005  
**91 points | \$18 | 120 cases imported | White**

This expressive white delivers almond, chamomile, peach and tangerine flavors, vibrant and focused, intense but not heavy. Developing gracefully, it shows elegance and depth. Drink now.—*T.M.*

## LA GRANJA NUESTRA SEÑORA DE REMELLURI

Rioja White 2005  
**91 points | \$59 | 200 cases imported | White**

At once generous and firm, this rich white delivers flavors of pear, tangerine, tarragon and smoke. It has power, subtlety and complexity, yet remains clean, with more fruit than oak. Viognier, Chardonnay, Roussanne, Marsanne, Sauvignon Blanc, Garnacha Blanca and Moscatel del Pais. Drink now through 2010.—*T.M.*

## BODEGAS Y VIÑEDOS GANCEDO

Bierzo White Capricho Val de Paxariñas 2006  
**90 points | \$25 | 120 cases imported | White**

There's good cut in this expressive white, with firm, tangerine-scented acidity backing the orange peel, pineapple and pear flavors. Citrus and spice float on the long finish. Drink now.—*T.M.*

## MÄHLER-BESSE

Jumilla Excelencia 2005  
**90 points | \$23 | 300 cases imported | Red**

This brooding red is dense but not heavy, with iron, sanguine and anise notes backing the plum fruit. Muscular tannins are well-integrated. Solid and harmonious. Drink now through 2014.—*T.M.*

## PORTAL DEL MONTSANT

Montsant White Santbru 2006  
**90 points | \$45 | 210 cases imported | White**

Fragrant with jasmine and honeysuckle, this exotic white offers flavors of pine, pear, honey and licorice, finishing with a peaty note reminiscent of Scotch whiskey. Full-bodied, with just enough acidity for grip. Drink now.—*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.

## CONTINUUM

Oakville 2005

**93 points | \$130 | 1,500 cases made | Red**

Complex and savory, graceful and elegant, this unfolds to reveal spicy herb, dried currant, mineral, anise, mint, sage and tarry notes, then firms up nicely on the finish, giving this structure and traction. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2009 through 2016. *From California.—J.L.*

## JOHANN DONABAUM

Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Lieblich Wachau Loibner Reserve 2006

**93 points | \$33 | 33 cases imported | White**

Off-dry, ripe and lush, with an array of concentrated peach, apricot, baked apple and pear flavors. Long, smoke-filled finish is rich and redolent of tropical fruits and spice. Drink now through 2020. *From Austria.—K.M.*

## SCHLOSS GOBELSBURG

Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Kamptal Kammerner Grub 2006

**93 points | \$46 | 1 case imported | White**

Rich, ripe and concentrated, with intense flavors of baked peach, apple, pear and smoke. Plenty of structure to back it up, with a long, intense finish of prosciutto-wrapped melon. Drink now through 2015. *From Austria.—K.M.*

## HANZELL

Chardonnay Sonoma Valley Ambassador's 1953 Vineyard 2005

**93 points | \$180 | 93 cases made | White**

Beautifully defined Chardonnay. Fragrant fig, apricot and melon scents turn delicate and creamy on the palate, with a burst of flavor and a long, lingering finish that sails on and on. Drink now through 2013. *From California.—J.L.*

## WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

### The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

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

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Austria, Greece, Portugal, southern France

**Thomas Matthews** Executive editor, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: New York, Spain

**James Molesworth** Senior editor, New York

Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1997. Tasting beat: Argentina, Chile, Loire Valley, Rhône Valley, South Africa

**Bruce Sanderson** Tasting director, New York

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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