

Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Biweekly Publication

THE 2009 RELEASES FROM SAXUM ARE HERE, including the latest version of the James Berry Vineyard Paso Robles Rhône blend; the 2007 vintage of this was our Wine of the Year in 2010. All four Saxums in this report earn classic scores. Justin, Shafer, Bedrock and Pride are among the other California labels with triumphant reds this week, and a few late releases from the terrific 2008 vintage of Oregon Pinot Noir complete the domestic tally.

Elsewhere, find the impressive dry whites of top Bordeaux estates usually better known for Cabernet or sweet wines: Château Mouton-Rothschild, Château Pape Clément, Château Doisy Daëne and more. Five of this week's best, the Hot Wines, are on page 4.

CALIFORNIA

SAXUM

Booker Vineyard Paso Robles 2009
95 points | \$85 | 350 cases made | Red

Another rather muscular 2009 from Saxum, yet for all its firmness and density there's a purity of flavor, focus and persistence, gaining minerally yet driven by the tight boysenberry, black berry and wild berry fruit, ending with gripping tannins that make it all the more exciting. Syrah and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2024.—*J.L.*

BEDROCK

Zinfandel Sonoma Valley Monte Rosso 2010
94 points | \$40 | 300 cases made | Red

A knockout Zin, bold and ripe yet complex and distinctively of a place. Aromas of floral and brambly wild berry lead to rich and layered flavors blackberry, toasty vanilla and espresso. Balanced by a lively acidity and big but ripe tannins. Drink now through 2017.—*T.F.*

BLACK KITE

Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Redwoods' Edge 2009
94 points | \$52 | 170 cases made | Red

Deliciously elegant, supple, graceful and delicate, yet rich in wild berry, plum, raspberry and floral scents. Medium bodied and deceptively deep and persistent, with the perfumed flavors gaining all the way. Drink now through 2018.—*J.L.*

PRIDE

Claret Reserve Sonoma-Napa Counties 2008
94 points | \$130 | 518 cases made | Red

Rich and beautifully structured, with vivid aromas of red currant, fresh earth and toasty oak and intense yet still supple flavors of cherry and cedar. Tannins are dense but ripe. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2013 through 2017.—*T.F.*

BEDROCK

Papa's All-Blacks Sonoma Valley 2010
93 points | \$35 | 92 cases made | Red

A powerhouse and altogether distinctive. Deep aromas of briary blueberry and smoky tar lead to layered, appealingly rustic huckleberry, sage and white pepper flavors that are wrapped in muscular tannins. Zinfandel, Alicante Bouschet and Petite Sirah. Best from 2013 through 2017.—*T.F.*

BRIAN BENSON

Syrah Paso Robles Denner Vineyard 2008
93 points | \$45 | 120 cases made | Red

Rich and fleshy, with complex layers of raspberry, plum and wild berry, full bodied, and turning graceful and elegant on the finish, where it gains traction and subtle blueberry notes. Drink now through 2020.—*J.L.*

BOOKER

Alchemist Paso Robles 2009

93 points | \$60 | 545 cases made | Red

A berry soup of reds, Syrah-driven yet with Cabernet, Petit Verdot and Grenache, it is both intense and firm, more open knit than the other Booker 2009 reds, yet it tightens the noose on the finish. Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Grenache. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*J.L.*

BOOKER

Oublié Paso Robles 2009

93 points | \$60 | 322 cases made | Red

Very rich yet elegant and stylish, with supple, detailed mineral, fresh earth, black berry, black and red licorice, with touches of nutmeg and spice, full bodied yet ending with a measure of delicacy and restraint. Grenache, Counoise and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2022.—*J.L.*

BOOKER

Syrah Paso Robles Fracture 2009

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

Dense, intense and marked by a complex range of flavor accented by a minty edge, this too is a muscle bound youngster, with vivid black and wild berry, spice and tobacco, remaining tightly wound yet holding onto a tight focus. Best from 2013 through 2023.—*J.L.*

BOOKER

Vertigo Paso Robles 2009

93 points | \$60 | 425 cases made | Red

Presents a rustic, rough-hewn personality, firm, dense and chewy, with ripe dark berry, road tar, graphite, spice and fig paste that adds to its grainy, detailed texture. Well balanced for all its size and strength. Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2023.—*J.L.*

DENNER

The Ditch Digger Paso Robles 2009

93 points | \$55 | 1,055 cases made | Red

This Grenache-driven blend of five grapes weaves together a savory mix of ripe dark berry, black licorice, spice, mineral, sage and black tea, smooth textured yet firm on the finish, most impressive for its tapered finish, where the flavors linger on. Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Counoise and Cinsaut. Drink now through 2022.—*J.L.*

LEWIS

Syrah Napa Valley 2009

93 points | \$70 | 125 cases made | Red

A true to form Lewis Syrah, rich, extracted, wide in flavors yet tight and focused, a points supple yet firm, with boysenberry, wild berry and blue berry fruit that ends with a pleasing mineral edge. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*J.L.*

PROSPECT 772

Syrah Sonoma County The Instigator 2009

93 points | \$36 | 127 cases made | Red

Gorgeous pure, ripe, juicy plum, raspberry and pomegranate give it a delicious taste and it firms nicely at mid palate, with a scorched earth mix, well structured yet the flavors remain pure and persistent, ending with a long, long finish. Best from 2012 through 2024.—*J.L.*

DENNER

Syrah Paso Robles 2009

92 points | \$44 | 590 cases made | Red

Patience required. Dense, intense and chewy, with a mix of vivid black berry, wild berry and raspberry, spicy, firm, tannic yet charming, coming together nicely on the finish. Best from 2012 through 2022.—*J.L.*

DENNER

The Dirt Worshipper Central Coast 2009

92 points | \$55 | 535 cases made | Red

Both dense and concentrated, with a tart berry edge, firm, complex and concentrated, this being mostly Syrah, it's more linear than the blends yet its focus on mineral, game meat and smoke is alluring. Syrah and Viognier. Best from 2012 through 2020.—*J.L.*

FRANCE

Bordeaux / White

CHÂTEAU PAPE CLÉMENT

Pessac-Léognan White 2009

93 points | \$159 | NA cases made | White

This is gorgeous, with creamy-textured straw, brioche, persimmon, macadamia nut and slivered almond notes that glide beautifully through the long finish. Clearly toasty, but wonderfully integrated. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU BOUSCAUT

Pessac-Léognan White 2009

91 points | \$NA | NA cases made | White

This is deftly toasty, with macadamia nut and light brioche hints inlaid in the core of straw, yellow apple, gooseberry and white peach flavors. There's a lovely, gliding finish. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DOISY DAËNE

Bordeaux White 2009

91 points | \$NA | NA cases made | White

Very juicy and bright, with delicious clementine, white peach and straw notes backed by tangy quinine and honeysuckle hints. Very pure, with a long, racy finish. Sauvignon Blanc. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU DE FIEUZAL

Pessac-Léognan White 2009

91 points | \$41 | NA cases made | White

Still youthfully crunchy, with pear skin and green plum notes bouncing along, while the core of verbena, tarragon, white peach and heather waits in reserve. A light toasty edge should fill in nicely on the finish as this ages. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU MALARTIC-LAGRAVIÈRE

Pessac-Léognan White 2009

91 points | \$72 | NA cases made | White

Subtle toasted brioche and blanched almond notes hold a core of heather, white peach, and green plum at bay for now. This finish is long and suave, with nice buried cut. Should blossom with brief cellaring. Drink now through 2014.—*J.M.*

CLOS FLORIDÈNE

Graves White 2009

90 points | \$30 | 300 cases imported | White

Juicy, with green plum and pear notes that are slightly shy at first, but emerge more on the finish, along with enticing straw and blanched almond hints. Solid length. Let this emerge fully with brief cellaring. Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU MOUTON-ROTHSCHILD

Bordeaux White Aile d'Argent 2009

90 points | \$95 | 833 cases made | White

A showy style, with tangerine, white peach and heather aromas and flavors backed by a waxy, but long and stylish finish. Stretches out nicely with air in the glass. Drink now.—*J.M.*

CHÂTEAU OLIVIER

Pessac-Léognan White 2009

90 points | \$32 | 2,083 cases made | White

Ripe and focused, with good weight to the grapefruit peel, gooseberry, straw and salted butter core that's infused with chive and thyme notes. Drink now through 2013.—*J.M.*

OREGON

BOEDECKER

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Stoller Vineyard 2008

93 points | \$50 | 75 cases made | Red

Light and fragrant, this red is spicy with hints of clove and nutmeg around a lithe core of raspberry and cherry fruit, gliding serenely into the long, vivid finish. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

CHEHALEM

Pinot Noir Ribbon Ridge Statement Ridgecrest Vineyards 2008

93 points | \$99 | 95 cases made | Red

Light, almost delicate, with a haunting cherry and tropical core wafting through a veil of rose petal and jasmine. The finish lingers with almost imperceptible tannins and an undertone of dark chocolate. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

HAMACHER

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2008

92 points | \$45 | 578 cases made | Red

Taut and focused, wrapping its ripe currant and blueberry flavors in a veil of warm tannins, with the flavors taking off nicely as the meaty finish persists. Shows depth and distinction. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

MATZINGER DAVIES

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2008

92 points | \$36 | 165 cases made | Red

Rich, focused, tight and generous, deftly enhancing its structure with rich cherry, blackberry and floral flavors packed into the long, vivid finish. A smoky edge adds an interesting grace note. Best from 2013 through 2018.—*H.S.*

DOMAINE DROUHIN

Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Laurne 2008

91 points | \$65 | 2,950 cases made | Red

Floral, minty overtones add depth to the rich cherry and tobacco flavors in this medium-weight, focused and distinctive wine. The finish lingers appealingly. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

MATZINGER DAVIES

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2007

91 points | \$36 | 200 cases made | Red

Light and silky, with a slightly gritty wet gravel edge to the modest cherry and blackberry flavors. Shows elegance and persistence, but needs time to expand in the cellar. Drink now through 2015.—*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.

SAXUM

James Berry Vineyard Paso Robles 2009
97 points | \$85 | 820 cases made | Red

Strikingly complex, openly rich and fruity and beautifully proportioned, with an initial burst of red berry fruit that echoes red and black licorice. It quickly gains traction and depth, with firm, layered tannins that give the spicy berry flavors a perfect foundation. Grenache, Mourvèdre, and Syrah. Drink now through 2024. *From California.—J.L.*

JUSTIN

Focus Paso Robles 2009
96 points | \$95 | 350 cases made | Red

A delicious and graceful expression of ripe, elegant blue and wild berry fruit, with touches of spice, espresso and spices, full bodied, polished and refined, ending with a long tapered finish. Syrah and Grenache. Drink now through 2022. *From California.—J.L.*

SHAFER

Relentless Napa Valley 2008
96 points | \$60 | 3,300 cases made | Red

The best Relentless yet. Shows all the muscle, density, richness and range of flavor found in many Shafer reds, yet takes it to another level in this vintage. The aromatics are full and distinct, with loads of dark berry, charcoal, and then as it unfolds touches of black cherry, raspberry, red and black licorice, sailing along and then firming nicely on the finish. Syrah and Petite Sirah. Best from 2013 through 2023. *From California.—J.L.*

SAXUM

Bone Rock James Berry Vineyard Paso Robles 2008
95 points | \$85 | 550 cases made | Red

Syrah driven (83 percent), tight and muscular, with dense, chewy tar, black berry, mineral, cedar and sage, roasted herb and sage, full blown and intense, yet for all its size and stature, it is very compelling and complete, sure to benefit from cellaring. Syrah, Mourvèdre and Grenache. Drink now through 2024. *From California.—J.L.*

SAXUM

Broken Stones Paso Robles 2009
95 points | \$85 | 740 cases made | Red

The most intense and angular of the new Saxums, this muscle-bound red offers a firm backbone of mineral, loamy earth, spice and cedar, with black berry, licorice and berry pie flavors fold in behind. Syrah, Mourvèdre, Petite Sirah and Grenache. Drink now through 2022. *From California.—J.L.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

The Most Experienced Team of Wine Journalists in the World

Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 12 people in two offices. They work together to review more than 18,000 wines each year, more than any other publication. Together, our six senior tasters count more than 140 years of tasting experience.

We always taste wine blind in our offices in Napa and New York. 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

Kim Marcus Managing editor, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1988. Tasting beat: Austria, Greece, Port, Portugal, Southern France

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

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, Bordeaux, Chile, Finger Lakes, Loire Valley, Rhône Valley, South Africa

Bruce Sanderson Tasting director, New York
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Burgundy, Champagne, Germany, Italy

Harvey Steiman Editor at large, San Francisco
Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: Australia, Oregon, Washington

Tasting staff:
Tim Fish (California)
Alison Napjus (Alsace, Italy)
Nathan Wesley (Italy)
MaryAnn Worobiec (California, New Zealand)