

# WINE News

*Which wine to choose?  
Go with the points.*



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## I’m a 94+ Points on All These Wines

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

No matter how many times wine lovers say they “do not follow” the wine reviewers’ scores on wines, the points system is an important part of most wine collectors’ purchasing. We at K&L do not always score wines, preferring to just give our opinions of the wine’s ageability, food accompaniments, etc. We do often note certain writer’s scores—especially if we agree that the wine is something special.

In the 1980s and 1990s, when numerical scores became prevalent (and who can forget Robert Parker’s reviews of the spectacular 1982 Bordeaux wines), a score of 88 or 89 was considered quite good. Nowadays, any wine that scores below 90 points is usually shunned by

the wine-drinking public. It almost seems that today’s wine writers start scoring at 89 and above! In this four-page issue we will only include wines scoring 94 and above from the most famous of the wine writers. While the scores are all 94 or above, the prices are all over the board, from under \$50 to over \$700 a bottle.

Ryan Moses writes page 3, and I write pages 3 and 4, along with this page. While you can’t drink points, it is interesting to see the writers’ ideas on the quality of the wines they are tasting. The first wine below is *my super pick* for this issue—a must-buy, but it is pre-arrival and not in stock until February 2020. *Enjoy, and Happy Holidays.*

**2016 Léoville-Barton, St-Julien (Pre-Arrival \$174.99) 97 WS** and *Wine Spectator’s* wine of the year 2019: “This is so vivid as it brims with pastis-soaked plum, blackberry, black currant and blueberry paste flavors, all carried by a perfectly integrated brambly spine. Tar and ganache notes give the finish an extra kick while everything stays within the mouthwatering roasted apple wood frame. Both regal and rambunctious, this is St.-Julien to a T.” We love this wine, and think it is one of the best of the great 2016 Bordeaux, for sure. We have sold over 75 cases in the last few weeks! *A must-buy.*

**2006 Billecart-Salmon “Cuvée Nicolas François Billecart” Brut Champagne (\$129.99) 97 WE:** This beautiful tête de cuvée is always aged for at least 10 years on the lees before release, making this one of the better aged bottlings that we have in the category. It is composed of 60% Pinot Noir and 40% Chardonnay, all from Grand Cru vineyards, and is dosed at just four grams of sugar per liter. Fabulous quality here! **97 RP, 96 DC, 95 WE**



**2007 Suduiraut, Sauternes (375ml \$29.99; 750ml \$59.99) 97 WE:** “Powered by dry botrytis, this is a wine with immense potential. It has weight, complexity and richness, all under the cloak of botrytis. To leaven the power, there is acidity, but this is certainly for aging.” I love the 2007 Sauternes. They are better balanced than the highly rated 2009s. We just received a shipment direct from the property. Rich and round and totally delicious.



*(Continued on page 2)*

# Highly Pointed Collectibles for Now and the Years to Come

By Ryan Moses

The selections below represent wines of the highest caliber. They will age for years to come—great for the cellar!—and are bound to impress any serious or casual collector—great for gifts! They also count among the most dynamic and compelling wines you'll find from anywhere—perfect for any celebration.

**2009 and 2010 Pontet-Canet, Pauillac (\$289.99)** The back-to-back duo from Alfred Tesseron's Château Pontet-Canet are about as famous as any two wines get. This groundbreaking pair both nabbed 100-point scores from Robert Parker on release and have been revered ever since for their ability to deliver against elite Bordeaux at multiples of this price. These are, without a doubt, icons of modern Bordeaux. **100 RP**

**2010 Rioja Alta "904" Gran Reserva Rioja (\$59.99)** With press that ranks it among the finest in Rioja and beyond, it is stunning that a wine of this quality can be found at this kind of pricing. The only downside is that it will be nearly impossible to resist pulling corks, especially considering the bottle age already given to this wine before this year's release. One of the best buys in the wine world—one that every collector should go deep on. **98 JS**

**2016 Grand Napa Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon (\$49.95)** Cult caliber Cabernet from a great vintage with a big Wine Advocate score? Sign us up! At 60% below the original \$130 price? Back up the truck! This is a truly unique opportunity from a relatively unknown property. The wine itself is terrifically balanced, showing the precision of the 2016 vintage. And while there's no doubt of its Napa roots, it shows incredible refinement and definition. Hurry on this one. **94 RP**

**2016 Leeuwin Art Series Chardonnay Margaret River Western Australia (\$69.99)** When a producer makes dynamic and delicious reds, but their most prestigious release is their Chardonnay, it is usually a special wine worth its distinction. Such is the case with Leeuwin's "Art Series" Chardonnay, a ringer for Grand Cru Burgundy at a fraction of the price. The 2016 is rivaling some of the greatest releases under the iconic label, which is no small feat, especially at this price. **96 WS**



**2015 Canon, St-Emilion (\$329.99)** A triple 100-point, potentially legendary release, 2015 Canon is a singular wine of the highest order. Galloni calls it "a rare wine that is both hedonistic and intellectual," while Neal Martin calls it "a benchmark for this historic estate." Considering the quality of the Right Bank in 2015 and the lofty prices that their neighbors often fetch, it is a must-own for any collector of the world's finest wines. **100 VN, 100 RP, 100 JS**

**2016 Kapcsandy "Grand Vin State Lane Vineyard" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$465.00)**

If one were to consider the pedigreed vineyards and producers of Napa in terms of Bordeaux, there is no doubt that Kapcsandy has the pedigree, vineyard, and quality of a First Growth. Coming from the best lots of a historic vineyard in the heart of the valley, the 2016 Grand Vin attempts to rival great vintages of Haut-Brion and comes about as close as any wine you'll find from anybody outside of Pessac. **100 RP, 100 JD**

**2017 Château de Beaucastel Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$74.99)**

The reference-point wine for any great vintage in the southern Rhône, Beaucastel shows how compelling and dynamic the vintage is in 2017. The '17 vintage is full of sleepers at terrific prices, the best of which have the capacity to rival their 2015 and 2016 peers. This is another great example of why Beaucastel is so cherished. **95 DC, 95 JD, 95 WS**

**2008 Louis Roederer Cristal (\$269.99)** Rarely does a Champagne (or any wine, for that matter) receive the kind of acclaim of the 2008 Cristal, with two 100-point reviews and every other publication pushing right up against triple digits. Called "majestic, profound, legendary," it is a truly special wine that should line the cellars of any dedicated collector, as it is sure to be the centerpiece of any event where owners of this masterpiece have a bottle open. **100 JS, 100 JD**



(Continued from page 1)

**2013 La Fortuna Brunello di Montalcino Riserva (\$79.99)** **95 JS:** "Very attractive and intense aromas of ripe black cherries and plums, leading to a palate that has a quite firm tannin core and finishes with a convincing serving of rich, ripe darker plums and berries." One of the best from the fine 2013 vintage.



**2018 Tensley "Colson Canyon Vineyard" Santa Barbara County Syrah (\$39.95)** **96 JD:** "The deepest colored Syrah in the lineup, the 2018 Syrah Colson Canyon comes from a great vineyard located in the hills above the town of Los Olivos.



Awesome notes of blackberries, toasted spice (there's some new oak in this wine), ground herbs, peppered meat, and earth all flow to a full-bodied, concentrated, deep, layered wine that has plenty of tannins, good acidity, and a huge finish. It's a magical Syrah from Tensley, and my money is on it being the finest to date."



## Les “Point Getters” Français

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

### Bordeaux—Recent Vintages

**2016 Cantemerle, Haut-Medoc (\$35.99) 94 JS:** “Plenty of menthol, blackberry and blackcurrant aromas in this elegant, medium-weight Haut-Médoc that’s got as much freshness as ripeness and a long, clean, mineral and herbal finish. An incredibly food-flexible wine!” I love this property and their wines have been stunning since 2006!

**2016 Maillet, Pomerol (\$39.99) 95 JS:** “Decadent and attractive with blueberry and blackberry aromas that are abundant and clear. Full body, firm and chewy tannins and a long, flavorful finish. Very structured and poised.” On the modern side, but finely balanced.

**2015 Branaire-Ducru, St-Julien (\$64.99) 95 WE:** “This family-owned estate has produced a structured and dark wine with great concentration balanced by acidity and pure, creamy fruit. It is a wine with a good future. The aftertaste leaves juicy acidity and firm tannins.” A favorite of mine for many years—since drinking the great 1970, which sold for \$4.99 in 1974.

**2016 La Gaffelière, St-Emilion (\$74.99) 97 WE:** “A warm wine rich in tannins and with succulent berry fruits, this is both powerful and elegant. Its density doesn’t detract from the fruitiness that shines out of the wine and balances with the structured aging potential.”

**2015 Brane-Cantenac, Margaux (\$89.99; OWC 6-Pack \$489.00)**

Wow! How great is this wine! 2015 vintage wines from the Margaux region are the best from Bordeaux, and this is one of the best in Margaux. So elegant and refined. So Margaux! **96 VN, 96 WE**

**2015 d’Yquem, Sauternes (375ml \$199.99; 750ml \$399.99)** This is a perfect 100 points for Clyde and many wine lovers. Their best wine since 2001 and maybe even back to 1967! **100 RP:** “Truly, this is a legendary vintage for d’Yquem. I’ve been conservative with my drinking window here, and I would not be at all surprised if our descendants are drinking this vintage well into the next century.” For your best friends here.

**2015 Angelus, St-Emilion (1.5L \$799.99) 99 JS:** “A great wine with superb concentration and richness. Yet it’s ever so agile and polished. Spices, blueberries, cinnamon and dried flowers. Full body and polished and full tannins.” Another star for Hubert de Bouïard—he has had many since his first vintage in 1985.



### Champagne

**2008 Laurent-Perrier Brut Champagne (\$69.99)**

**96 WE:** “While still young, this Champagne has all the makings of greatness. Produced from grand cru vineyards, it already balances ripe white fruits with a firm structure that will age well. It’s relatively dry and has plenty of acidity, which will also aid in the longevity.”

**2008 Billecart-Salmon Brut Champagne (\$94.99)**

**97 DC:** “The flavour spectrum encompasses toast, oyster shell, citrus, cream and a flinty, mineral depth. There’s supreme balance and elegance here, combined with a hidden underlying power that will continue to emerge and broaden with time. The finish is dry and long.”

**2008 Dom Pérignon Brut Champagne (\$169.99)**

**98 JS:** “The 2008 Dom Pérignon is once again stunning. More than anything else, I am surprised by how well the 2008 drinks given all the tension and energy it holds. Then again, that is precisely what makes 2008 such a unique vintage—namely that the best wines are so chiseled and yet not at all austere.” **98 JD, 98 VN**

### Rhône Valley

**2016 Domaine La Bastide Saint Dominique “Les Hesperides” Châteauneuf-du-Pape (\$49.99)**

**95-97 JD:** “Les Hesperides reminds me a great vintage of Beaucastel’s Hommage A Jacques Perrin. A blend of equal parts Mourvèdre and Grenache, all from the les lieu-dit (this is all sandy soils), it offers sensational notes of blueberries, plums, peppery herbs, licorice, and violets. Full-bodied, decadent and layered.”

**2018 Bonpas “Croix de Bonpas” Côtes du Rhône-Villages (\$13.99)**

60% Grenache, 30% Syrah, and 10% Carignan. **96 DC:** “Licorice, spice and herbal aromas with a hint of reduction cede to a juicy, concentrated and layered palate with notes of spicy oak and blackberry. Classy, long and focused.” A steal, but it will sell out quickly.



# The Best of the Rest — Vinum Optimum Super XCIV

## Domestic Wines

**2017 Stolpman “Estate” Ballard Canyon Syrah (\$24.95) 94 WE:** “The Stolpmans play up the cool-climate aspects of Ballard Canyon in this bottling, offering crumbled violets, black-pepper and under-ripe boysenberry aromas on the nose. The palate sizzles with acidity, delivering fresh berry, pepper spice, thyme and fennel pollen flavors.”

**2016 Byron “Nielson Vineyard” Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay (\$29.99) 95 RP:** “Youthfully shy on the nose, the 2016 Chardonnay Nielson Vineyard opens very minerally with aromas of saline, crushed shell, gunflint and toast with ripe Golden Delicious apple, baked quince, warm Meyer lemon, pie crust and peach.” Harks back to Byron’s glory days in the ‘80s.

**2017 Lynmar Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$44.95) 97 WE:** “Tart red fruit and citrus flavors are drawn out by a tense line of crushed stone on the firm palate, with accents of warm spice and white pepper lingering on the finish.”

**2014 Mayacamas Mt. Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon (\$124.95) 97 JS:** “Aromas of blackcurrant, mushroom, wet earth and bark follow through to a full body, chewy tannins and a stone, berry, chili and spice aftertaste. Muscular and chunky. Very serious. Almost no new oak.” Reminds me of the great old Mayacamas Cabs from 1970 and 1974.

## Around the World

**2016 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Spätlese Mosel (\$24.99) 95 RP:** “Lush, round and very elegant on the palate, this is a beautifully mineral and complex Sonnenuhr with a long and intensely aromatic but always refined and refreshing mineral finish.”

**2018 Matt Connell “Rendition” Pinot Noir, Central Otago (\$29.99) 95 Bob Campbell:** “The wine has a lush, sumptuous texture. Delicious now but no rush.”



**2015 Fratelli Revello Barolo (\$34.99) 95 JS:** “The dark-berry, strawberry and charcoal aromas are impressive. Full bodied and totally integrated with wonderful presence and composure of fruit and tannin balance. Lovely finish. Lingers.”

**2018 Bodega Chacra “Cincuenta y Cinco” Pinot Noir Rio Negro Patagonia (\$49.99) 97 JS:** “Very attractive, complex Pinot that has plenty of rich red and dark cherries on offer and a palate that carries striking purity, freshness and detail. Superb Pinot that’s long and seamless. Finishes so fresh.” 98 RP

**2014 Baricci Brunello di Montalcino (\$54.99) 95 WE:** “Wild herb, perfumed berry and pressed rose aromas lift out of the glass along with a whiff of eucalyptus. Smooth, delicious and balanced, the lithe palate has great tension, doling out juicy red cherry, raspberry compote, star anise and baking spice backed up by vibrant acidity. Silky tannins give it extraordinary elegance and linear structure.”

## Old and Rare Wines

**2009 Guiraud, Sauternes (\$59.99) 97 VN:** “The 2009 Guiraud is one of the gems of Sauternes this vintage, one of the finest offerings in recent years. It has a wonderful, beautifully delineated bouquet with expressive scents of wild honey, orange pith, Seville orange marmalade and just a hint of pineapple.” Guiraud is K&L’s most popular Sauternes.

**2000 Clos du Marquis, St-Julien (\$99.99) 94 WS:** “The nose shows lots of plum, spice and meat aromas, as well as hints of licorice. It’s full-bodied, with firm, yet velvety textured tannins. It’s big and rounded. If you can’t afford Las Cases, try this.”

**2005 La Mission Haut-Brion, Pessac-Léognan (\$599.99) Another 100 points from Robert Parker:** “The 2005 La Mission Haut-Brion is pure perfection. It has an absolutely extraordinary nose of sweet blackberries, cassis and spring flowers with some underlying minerality, a full-bodied mouthfeel, gorgeously velvety tannins (which is unusual in this vintage) and a long, textured, multi-layered finish.”



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