

Wine & Spirits

SPECIAL ISSUE

26th Annual
BUYING GUIDE

Best Wines
Best Buys

TOP
WINERIES
OF 2012

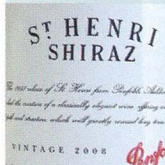


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26th Annual Wine & Spirits

22

AWARDS



PENFOLDS

'89, '91, '93, '94, '95, '96, '97, '98, '99, '00, '01, '02, '03, '04, '05, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13

18

AWARDS

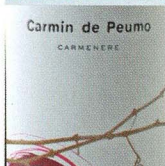


CHATEAU STE. MICHELLE

'88, '89, '90, '97, '99, '00, '02, '03, '04, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13

18

AWARDS

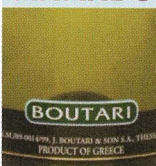


CONCHA Y TORO

'92, '97, '98, '99, '00, '01, '02, '03, '04, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13

16

AWARDS

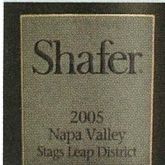


BOUTARI

'92, '94, '98, '00, '01, '02, '03, '04, '05, '06, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13

15

AWARDS



SHAFER

'91, '93, '94, '95, '99, '00, '01, '02, '03, '05, '06, '07, '08, '10, '11

15

AWARDS

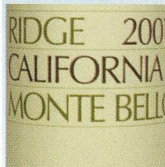


ANTINORI

'89, '90, '91, '92, '93, '95, '96, '97, '98, '99, '00, '01, '03, '04, '06

15

AWARDS

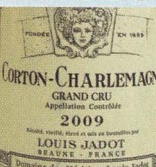


RIDGE VINEYARDS

'96, '99, '00, '01, '02, '03, '04, '05, '06, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13

14

AWARDS



LOUIS JADOT

'88, '92, '95, '96, '97, '99, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13

Hall of Fame

Here are the superstar performers, the wineries whose collections of wines have earned the most *Winery of the Year* awards in the past 26 years.

THIRTEEN AWARDS

BOUCHARD PERE & FILS '92, '93, '96, '98, '99, '01, '02, '03, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13

TWELVE AWARDS

M. CHAPOUTIER '93, '94, '95, '97, '98, '99, '00, '03, '04, '05, '06, '07
DELOACH '89, '90, '91, '93, '96, '98, '00, '01, '04, '10, '12, '13
FLOWERS '00, '01, '02, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13
IRON HORSE '97, '98, '99, '00, '01, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '12, '13
JOSEPH PHELPS '88, '89, '93, '94, '97, '98, '00, '02, '03, '04, '05, '06
QUPE '01, '03, '04, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13

ELEVEN AWARDS

AVELEDA '93, '01, '02, '03, '04, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '12
CASTELLO BANFI '89, '90, '91, '93, '94, '95, '96, '99, '00, '03, '05
BERINGER '88, '89, '90, '97, '98, '99, '01, '02, '06, '09, '10
GARY FARRELL '91, '93, '94, '96, '00, '01, '02, '05, '06, '07, '08
WILLIAMS SELYEM '00, '01, '03, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '13

TEN AWARDS

CUNE '88, '89, '92, '93, '94, '00, '01, '02, '04, '10
DIAMOND CREEK '01, '02, '03, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '12, '13
HENSCHKE '89, '01, '02, '04, '05, '06, '09, '10, '11, '13
KENDALL-JACKSON '88, '89, '90, '92, '95, '04, '07, '08, '09, '12
L'ECOLE N° 41 '03, '04, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '12, '13
ROBERT MONDAVI '90, '99, '00, '01, '03, '04, '05, '07, '08, '09
NIEPOORT '91, '99, '03, '04, '05, '07, '10, '11, '12, '13
LOUIS ROEDERER '03, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13
SANTA RITA '90, '92, '94, '95, '98, '00, '01, '04, '09, '11
C. VON SCHUBERT '98, '02, '03, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13
VON STRASSER '03, '04, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '12, '13

NINE AWARDS

ANDREW WILL '02, '03, '04, '05, '07, '09, '10, '12, '13
CATENA '98, '00, '01, '03, '04, '10, '11, '12, '13
CERETTO '92, '99, '01, '02, '04, '05, '08, '11, '12
GEYSER PEAK '93, '94, '95, '96, '98, '00, '01, '02, '07
CHAMPAGNE KRUG '93, '03, '04, '05, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10
MARQUES DE CACERES '91, '94, '97, '98, '99, '00, '04, '07, '08
ROSENBLUM '89, '94, '96, '98, '99, '00, '02, '05, '06
STORYBOOK MOUNTAIN '04, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13
VEUVE CLICQUOT PONSARDIN '89, '90, '03, '04, '05, '06, '08, '09, '11

EIGHT AWARDS

E. GUIGAL '93, '95, '96, '08, '09, '10, '11, '12
DR. LOOSEN '04, '06, '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '13
LUIS PATO '94, '95, '98, '99, '00, '02, '03, '04
MERRYVALE '94, '96, '00, '01, '03, '04, '05, '06
SEBASTIANI '88, '89, '90, '91, '95, '96, '97, '04

SEVEN AWARDS

BEAULIEU VINEYARD '91, '98, '99, '02, '07, '09, '10
BENZIGER '91, '92, '97, '98, '99, '00, '13
CARMEN '97, '98, '99, '00, '01, '03, '06
GRGICH HILLS '91, '93, '94, '95, '98, '03, '08
DOMAINE LEFLAIVE '98, '02, '03, '09, '11, '12, '13
KING ESTATE '03, '04, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13
MASI '92, '95, '98, '99, '04, '07, '08
NAVARRO '88, '89, '90, '02, '03, '04, '05
ROEDERER ESTATE '04, '05, '06, '08, '10, '11, '13
RUFFINO '88, '89, '91, '95, '96, '00, '08
YALUMBA '89, '03, '04, '05, '09, '10, '12

SIX AWARDS

BRUNDMAYER '01, '02, '03, '04, '05, '09
CLOS DU VAL '88, '99, '00, '03, '04, '11
D'ARENBERG '99, '00, '02, '10, '11, '13
MAISON JOSEPH DROUHIN '94, '95, '05, '07, '08, '10
DUCKHORN '01, '02, '04, '06, '07, '11
PAUL JABOULET AINE '89, '93, '95, '97, '11, '13
LEONETTI '02, '04, '07, '08, '11, '12
MOVIA '04, '09, '10, '11, '12, '13
PATZ & HALL '02, '03, '04, '05, '07, '08
PEAY '07, '08, '09, '10, '11, '13
PRIDE '01, '02, '03, '04, '05, '06
QUINTA DO NOVAL '04, '07, '09, '10, '11, '12
RAVENSWOOD '00, '07, '10, '11, '12, '13
ROSEMOUNT ESTATE '89, '00, '01, '02, '03, '04
TRUCHARD '96, '98, '99, '00, '02, '07
ROBERT WEIL '00, '01, '03, '04, '12, '13

American

WINERIES of the year

2013 WINERIES OF THE YEAR

Hirsch Vineyards on the far Sonoma coast



Here are 42 American wineries that share a commitment to great wine. Each stands out among its peers for its range of exceptional wines—wines that spoke to our tasting panels and our critics in some compelling way.

In the following pages, W&S editors **Patrick J. Comiskey**, **Lara Douglass**, **Joshua Greene** and **Luke Sykora** detail what sets each of these wineries apart. All of our *Wineries of the Year* received at least three strong recommendations from our critics over the past 12 months, and their batting averages were exceptional, with a high percentage of recommendations among the wines we tasted. You'll find the top three listed with each profile, accompanied by the date of the issue in which it first appeared.

We consider American wineries in four categories: **Estate** wineries that grow all of their own fruit; **Regional** wineries that grow or source their grapes within a single county appellation; **Multi-Source** producers that grow or purchase grapes from a number of regions; and **Artisans** who make fewer than 25,000 cases a year.

For other outstanding performances from wineries that release only a wine or two a year, see our *Best Wines of the Year* (p. 85). You can find all 4,500 American wines we tasted for these selections at

wineandspiritsmagazine.com

DELOACH



Brian Maloney

Founded: 1973
Winemaker: Brian Maloney
Viticulturist: Eric Pooler
Acres owned: 17.5
Annual production: 150,000 cases
Estate grown: 5%
Owner: Boisset Family Estates
Known for: Benchmark Russian River pinot noir and zinfandel.
Location: Santa Rosa, CA
Website: deloachvineyards.com

CECIL DELOACH FOUNDED HIS RUSSIAN RIVER Valley winery in 1973, focusing first on zinfandel and later adding pinot noir, which was emerging as one of the region's strong suits. In 2003, as the economy shuddered, DeLoach sold off the vast majority of its vineyards. Soon thereafter, Boisset Family Estates purchased the brand. Aside from a 17-acre vineyard that came with the winery property, Boisset had to rebuild DeLoach's fruit sources from the ground up.

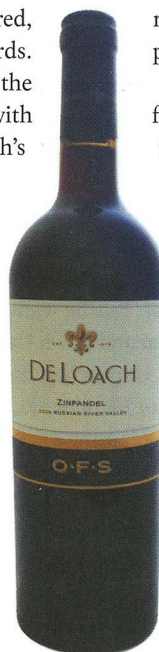
The Burgundian roots of new owner Jean-Charles Boisset didn't mean an end to zinfandel at DeLoach. The first "new" old-vine zinfandel fruit came from the Riebli Vineyard, an 1890s planting in the Sonoma foothills of the Mayacamas Range. Then came Von Weidlich, on a hilltop in Green Valley, and Boschetti and Rue right down the road from the winery.

The 2003 reset did, however, entail a shift in how the winery handles zinfandel. According to Maloney, who started at DeLoach right before the Boisset purchase and is now head winemaker, they used to treat zin more like cabernet, emphasizing skin extraction, tannic structure and a

solid dose of new oak. Now, they approach it more like their pinot noirs, using open-top fermenters, punching down by hand, draining off early to minimize hard tannins and generally limiting new oak for aging to 25 percent or less.

The 2009 Von Weidlich Zinfandel shows the benefits of that gentle treatment: it's an unadorned rendition of pure, delicious fruit from an old, dry-farmed hillside vineyard. The 2009 OFS, by contrast, blends several pre-Prohibition vineyards with younger-vine fruit from the cool Becnel Vineyard off of Westside Road. Dark in flavor and robust in structure, it needs some time and a rich cut of lamb to show its best.

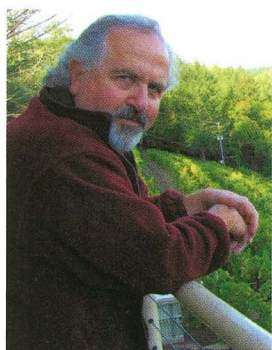
While DeLoach's zinfandels showed particularly well this year, most of the winery's production is pinot noir and chardonnay and those wines, too, are classic renditions of Russian River fruit. The 2009 Mabaroshi Pinot Noir, from a biodynamic vineyard in the Sebastopol Hills, shows the coolness of the site in its tight structure and energetic, herb-edged fruit tones. It's a wine with a clear sense of place. —L.S.



TOP-SCORING WINES

93	'09 Russian River Valley OFS Zinfandel \$30 (6/12)
93	'09 Green Valley Von Weidlich Vineyard Zinfandel \$34 (6/12)
92	'09 Russian River Valley Mabaroshi Vineyard Pinot Noir \$44 (6/12)

DIAMOND CREEK



Phil Steinschriber

Founded: 1968
Winemaker/viticulturist: Phil Steinschriber
Acres owned: 79; 25 planted
Annual production: 2,000 cases
Estate grown: 100%
Owner: Boots Brounstein
Known for: Site-expressive cabernets from a cool nook in the Napa Valley hills.
Location: Calistoga, CA
Website: diamondcreekvineyards.com

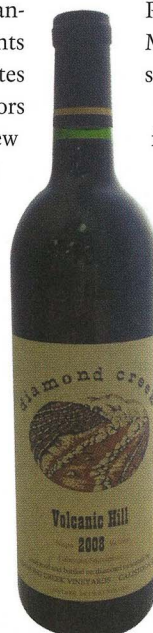
BEFORE AL BROUNSTEIN SET OUT TO PLANT VINES

at Diamond Creek in 1968, he spent time with vineyard workers in Bordeaux. He studied the way they managed the vines and it occurred to him that the plants themselves were as important as the soils and climates in which they grew. So he struck a deal with proprietors at two first-growth châteaux for vine cuttings, flew them to Mexico, then piloted them himself across the border to Napa Valley. Those smuggled vines are now in their second generation in the Diamond Creek Vineyards, producing some of the most coveted fruit in California.

Brounstein's wife, Boots, recalls how he would come in from clearing the brush on the south side of Diamond Creek covered in red dust; when he was working on the north side, he'd be covered in white. It was obvious to them that the iron-rich soils on one hillside were completely different from the volcanic tuff on the other, and from the beginning they farmed and produced them separately. Gravelly Meadow came next, on a wash of the creek just upstream, then a small block farther

upstream, which he bottled only in the best years as Lake Vineyard. The nights are coolest upstream, closer to the Pacific air that cuts over the Mayacamas at Diamond Mountain. The days are warmest on Volcanic Hill, the south-facing terraces closer to the Napa Valley floor.

Phil Steinschriber, who worked with Brounstein from 1991 until his death in 2006, has spent the past 20 years polishing what was initially a more tannic, strictly artisanal style. The wines from 2008 are, perhaps, the most luxurious on release; they meld a strong message from their individual sites with the stature and sophistication of first-growth Bordeaux. Volcanic Hill has the most energy of the Diamond Creek wines in 2008, with the scent of woodland cherries and a texture that's fat yet weightless. Red Rock Terrace is more about freshness, saturated with classic Napa Valley cabernet flavors along with cooler, fruity mushroom notes. Gravelly Meadow is less effusive on release. All three are complex and delicious cabernets that will evolve in bottle, showing more distinctions with ten years of age. —J.G.



TOP-SCORING WINES

96	'08 Diamond Mountain District Volcanic Hill Cabernet Sauvignon \$175 (12/11)
95	'08 Diamond Mountain District Red Rock Terrace Cabernet Sauvignon \$175 (12/11)
92	'08 Diamond Mountain District Gravelly Meadow Cabernet Sauvignon \$175 (12/11)