

# Wine Spectator Insider

Marvin R. Shanken *Editor and Publisher*

A Members-Only, Weekly Publication

## INSIDER SPECIAL REPORT: 2006 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

THE parade of 2006 Châteauneuf-du-Papes has begun. Here's a look at some of the highlights from the first major group (more than five dozen) to come through our tasting room.

The good news is that 2006 is a very consistent vintage, offering fresh, juicy wines that will provide excellent drinking over the next 10 to 15 years—perfect for waiting out the formidable grip on the dense, structured 2005s. The 2006s are bright, with raspberry and plum fruit in contrast to the darker Linzer or loam notes of the 2005s. There's also lots of perfume on the finishes, with notes of sage, mint or shiso leaf, a result of the rains during September that cooled off the vineyards.

The bad news is pricing. Though producers have for the most part held the line, other factors, including the exchange rate and the three-tier distribution system, continue to push prices up. As an added bonus, I've also just reviewed a classic-scoring late-release 2004. You'll find it among the Hot Wines, on page 4.

—James Molesworth

## France Châteauneuf-du-Pape

### ROGER SABON & FILS

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Réserve 2006  
**92 points | \$60 | 350 cases imported | Red**

This offers an ample core of dark fig and kirsch fruit, with toasted vanilla, charcoal, graphite and melted black licorice notes. Long and grippy through the finish, this will need a little time to come together fully. Best from 2009 through 2023.—*J.M.*

### ROGER SABON & FILS

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Prestige 2006  
**93 points | \$90 | 300 cases imported | Red**

This is very alluring, with warm raspberry confiture gliding over incense, spice bread and fig sauce notes. The long, silky finish has nice dark licorice and black tea notes. Really fine-grained and persistent. Drink now through 2028.—*J.M.*

### ROGER SABON & FILS

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Le Secret des Sabon 2006  
**94 points | \$280 | 300 cases made | Red**

Gorgeous kirsch and mocha aromas lead the way for this silky, alluring version, loaded with raspberry ganache, fruitcake, melted red licorice and graphite notes. The long, silky finish has nice latent grip and buried minerality. Best from 2009 through 2028.—*J.M.*

## 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.

**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, 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

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1993. Tasting beat: Alsace, Burgundy, Champagne, Germany

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Joined *Wine Spectator* in 1983. Tasting beat: Australia, New Zealand, Oregon, Washington

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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