

36TH ANNUAL BUYING GUIDE

SPECIAL ISSUE

# Wine & Spirits

TOP

# 100

WINES, WINERIES + BEST BUYS

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Wine & Spirits

# TOP 100

## WINERIES OF 2022

**L** OG WINES, LINE UP BOTTLES, NUMBER GLASSES...

Pop, pour, repeat.

Swirl, sniff, sip, savor, spit, scribble, repeat.

And again, and again, discussing each one of more than 10,000 wines tasted blind with our peers from the retail and restaurant worlds. What emerges from the chaos, signal from noise, is which wineries are consistently making the grade.

Submissions arrive in our New York and Los Angeles offices from all corners of the winemaking world before undergoing our rigorous

blind tasting process. Every year, we analyze 12 months' worth of data from hundreds of tastings to identify those 100 producers that have not just hit-it-out-of-the-park with one or two wines but have routinely wowed our panels. In the pages that follow, we profile each of the *Top 100 Wineries*, highlighting their top-scoring wines.

We present the US wineries first—this year, 23 from California, with another 15 from the Pacific Northwest and the Finger Lakes. Europe (+ Lebanon) comprise the next 53 entries, before we close out the list with 11 from countries in the New World.



PORTUGAL | PORTO

## Taylor Fladgate

Alongside its powerful, long-lived Vintage Ports, Taylor is building a growing range of luscious Tawnies.



DAVID GUIMARAENS

WHILE THE FLADGATE PARTNERSHIP TRACES its roots back to 1692, the modern incarnation of Taylor Fladgate begins with Frank Yeatman. He replanted the Quinta da Vargellas after the region was ravaged by phylloxera. The property centers on steep stone terraces rising up a north-facing canyon wall in the Douro Superior, where Yeatman planted vines by varietal blocks in the 1920s. Those vines, now farmed by António Magalhães, provide the Vinhas Velhas bottling in great years, and form the core of the blend for the Vargellas Single-Quinta Port in good years, like 2019. David Guimaraens, the sixth generation of his family in the Port trade, leads the winemaking and blending teams, while CEO Adrian Bridge works to expand the partnership's holdings, including stocks of old Tawnies. Since 1998, the Fladgate Partnership has purchased six Port companies, including their Tawny stocks, which, along with the wines Dick Yeatman had cellared, now exceed 10 million liters. With the expanded focus on age-designated Tawnies, those wines now account for nearly a quarter of the firm's sales—and most are blended and bottled for Taylor's. Mellowed with age, these wines provide a contrast to Taylor's muscular Vintage style. —J.G.



### 2019 Porto Vargellas Port (\$250, 95 points)

A cool end of season brought the fruit at Vargellas to ripeness, creating this fat and luscious wine, a Port with a plush velvet nap and mineral richness in the tannins—a softer expression of Vargellas fruit than might be considered classical. Instead, it's a completely modern beauty with floral black cherry flavors that last, balanced and bright. Like other young Vargellas Vintages, Taylor will hold this back for late release.

### Porto 30 Year Old Tawny Port (\$140, 93 points)

This wine starts with a burst of flavor, trumpeting preserved lemon, mincemeat and baking spice over a luscious, creamy texture. Then it mellows into the finish, clean and lasting, ending on the savor of roasted almonds. It would be a delicious match for sheep's milk cheeses from the mountains, like Queijo Serra da Estrela.

### Porto 40 Year Old Tawny Port (\$235, 92 points)

From almond croissant scents to sweet fresh raspberry flavors, this is a mouthwatering Tawny focused more on richness than complexity. It settles into salty dried-fig notes with air, ready to elevate a post-theater supper of cured meats and aged cheeses.

#### FOUNDED:

1692

#### WINEMAKER:

David Guimaraens

#### VITICULTURIST:

Antonio Magalhães

#### OWNERS:

Alistair Robertson;  
Adrian Bridge, CEO

#### IMPORTER:

Kobrand,  
Purchase, NY

SPAIN | CATALUNYA

## Can Sumoi

Pepe Raventós works with ancient vineyards to grow natural wines that express a purity of terroir.



PEPE RAVENTÓS

THE CAN SUMOI ESTATE IN BAIX PENEDES dates back to 1645. It had been abandoned for more than 20 years when, in 2017, winemaker Pepe Raventós and his long-time friend Francesc Escala saved it from becoming a chicken farm. Raventós, who makes sparkling wine at his family's estate, Raventós i Blanc, was intrigued by the altitude of the site, close to 2,000 feet, and the local varieties that had been planted in limestone soils. He and Escala believed they could farm the site to make natural wines with minimal intervention, as the altitude would help the grapes achieve a low pH. They set out to explore ancestral modes of farming, working under organics, harvesting the grapes by hand and relying on ambient yeasts to ferment them. Currently, they tend 74 acres of vines, including montonega and sumoll parcels that are more than 50 years old, using each in a single-variety *ancestral* sparkler. Raventós believes that the single fermentation creates a fresh, mineral wine representative of terroir. He's working to amplify that expression by protecting the 940 acres of forests on the estate, sustaining biodiversity at Can Sumoi. —A.B.; Tasting notes by J.G.



### 2018 Spain Serra de l'Home Ancestral

**Sumoll (\$23, 93 points)** Raventós considers sumoll to be "the Catalán nebbiolo, very rustic, with high tannins and high acidity." He works with it here as a pet-nat, letting the fermentation start in tank, then finish in bottle, without any additions to get in the way of its fresh pear, rich white peach and litchi flavors. With two years on the lees, it developed some toasty broadness, but the wine's acidity keeps it open and airy, focused on fruit.

### 2020 Penedès La Rosa (\$20, 92 points)

This blend of sumoll, parellada and xarello rests on its skins for four hours before it starts to ferment. The wine that results is bold and earthy, with a refreshing quality that will keep drawing you back for another taste. The smooth texture carries a clean savor of the smoky lees, lasting with natural beauty. Chill it for seafood paella.

### 2021 Penedès Ancestral Montonega (\$22, 91 points)

Raventós describes montonega as a pink-berried clone of parellada. Made without any additions, this is a dry and savory sparkler with flavors of pink peach flesh and loquat skin. Bubbles brighten the notes of chestnut and green almond in the finish.

#### FOUNDED:

2017

#### WINEMAKER:

Pepe Raventós

#### VITICULTURISTS:

Pepe Raventós,  
Joan Munné & Josep Tarrida

#### OWNER:

The Raventós family

#### ACRES OWNED:

988, 50 planted

#### ANNUAL PRODUCTION:

20,500 cases

#### ESTATE GROWN:

40%

#### IMPORTER:

Skurnik Wines, NY



## TOP 100 WINES

### PORTUGAL WHITE

#### BEST ALVARINHO

**94 | Reguengo de Melgaço** \$28  
**2020 Monção e Melgaço Alvarinho** The Cardadeiro family restored this estate in the 1990s, planting 22 acres of alvarinho along the Minho River on the border with Spain's Galicia, on a property believed to have been built by Rainha Dona Leonor and owned by the Portuguese royal family in the 1500s. In 2020, the site lived up to its heritage with a beautiful wine, a river of fruit, flowers, nuts and stones—the crisp detail of a peach just coming into ripeness, the breeziness of apple blossoms, the savor of raw hazelnut and jasmine tea. The crunch of granitic acidity gives all that flavor a mineral drive, lasting on the breath, suited to five, maybe ten years of age. —J.G. *Kysela Père & Fils, Winchester, VA*

### PORTUGAL RED

#### BEST DOURO RED



**95 | Prats + Symington** \$105  
**2019 Douro Chryseia** Sleek, plump and succulent, the first vintages of Chryseia captured attention for their quality, though in blind tastings, their regional identity was not always clear. One of our panelists thought the 2012 might have been a ringer in a flight of Douro wines, observing, "It's not very Portuguese; the blend feels more like a Bordeaux." By 2014, Chryseia began to taste more like a Douro wine and the dynamic 2016 took Douro fruit toward silkiness without shedding the schist distinction of its tannins or the dark flavors of the local varieties. The wine sees less than a year in new oak barrels, minimizing the graphite polish on the tannins, holding some delicacy in its powerful depths of fruit. For this critic, the partnership finally arrived with its 20th vintage, the 2019, which, after three days open, offers

the layered sense of schist, wild blueberries and dark plums. The luscious fruit and tannic integration feels completely grounded in an idealized Douro. —J.G. *Premium Port Wines, San Francisco, CA*

### PORTUGAL FORTIFIED

#### BEST 2019 VINTAGE PORTS

**95 | Wine & Soul** \$115  
**2019 Porto Pintas Vintage** Sandra Tavares and Jorge Serodio Borges bought their Pintas Vineyard in 2003, a parcel in the hills above Pinhão, in the Vale Mendiz, where the 80-year-old mixed planting includes more than 30 vine varieties. Making Vintage Port from a small parcel is a challenge, as the conditions must cooperate in that exact spot. It's why Noval's Nacional, on a hill across the road, often shines in vintages that famed Port producers don't declare. And it may be why this 2019 is the best Vintage Port from Pintas we've tasted on release. Its powerful tannic structure is completely wrapped in fat red currant and blackcurrant richness; the fruit seems oblivious to the fact that the tannins are unyielding, even as those two elements feel integrated and inseparable. A wine for the ages. —J.G. *Winebow, NY*

**95 | Taylor Fladgate** \$250  
**2019 Porto Vargellas** The schist terraces at the center of Vargellas face north, rising up the Douro canyon upriver from the Cachão da Valeira in the Douro Superior. Taylor Fladgate purchased the quinta in the 1890s and went on to restore the vineyards post phylloxera. Many of the vines Frank Yeatman planted in the 1920s are still bearing fruit, presented as Vargellas Vinhas Velhas in great years. In good years like 2019, a cool end of season brought the fruit of those old vines to ripeness, creating this fat and luscious wine, a Port with a plush velvet nap and mineral richness in the tannins—a softer expression of Vargellas fruit than might be considered classical. Instead, it's a completely modern beauty with floral black cherry flavors that last, balanced and bright. —J.G. *Kobrand, Purchase, NY*

#### BEST COLHEITA

**96 | Real Companhia Velha** \$200  
**1977 Porto Royal Oporto Colheita** Vintage years may not always be markers for great Tawnies, but this 1977 would give some of the declared 1977s a run for their money. At 44 years young, it pulses with energy, layering sun over schist, satin over golden peach

and fresh pear. As cool and intriguing as a breeze gliding up the warm Douro canyon, this is a vibrant, beautiful wine that could not have been grown anywhere else. And, unlike a declared Vintage, this bottle will stay fresh in your fridge for weeks (or months) after you open it. —J.G. *Metrowine, Northvale, NJ*

#### BEST MOSCATEL

**96 | José Maria da Fonseca** \$3,500  
**1919 Moscatel de Setúbal** The Soares Franco family tends one of the great fortified wine cellars in Portugal, theirs devoted to muscat grapes, local to their vineyards on the Setúbal Peninsula. This is a limited vintage release, one that shows off the beauty of their older stocks. It coats the glass in amber gold, even as its silken weave of pear, butter-scotch and white roses holds to a fine integration, remarkably fresh. The age is there in the savory nuttiness, in the length of flavors, elusive, then apparent, then elusive again. —J.G. *Tri-Vin, New Rochelle, NY*

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### BEST DESSERT WINE

**95 | Mullineux** \$50  
**2020 Swartland Chenin Blanc Straw Wine** Chris and Andrea Mullineux make this wine by harvesting the grapes at standard ripeness and drying them on a straw mat for about four weeks before pressing. The juice then ferments with ambient yeasts in old French oak barrels. The slow 2020 fermentation lasted for 11 months and resulted in a slow wine, oozing into your brain like a molasses flood, filling it with fruit that reaches a Platonic ideal. White peach; apricots three ways, fresh, dried and jammed; passion fruit and guava, cresting in waves. The acidity acts like a searchlight, pinging around your palate and highlighting one flavor at a time. The wine is satisfying enough to drink on its own, but there's also a touch of salinity to it that would pair well with a decadent meal: oysters, chicken liver mousse or foie gras. —C.W. *Skurnik Wines, NY*

### SPAIN SPARKLING

#### BEST PENEDES

**94 | Raventós i Blanc** \$28  
**2019 Conca del Riu Anoia De Nit Rosé** By adding monastrell from vines planted in 1974, Pepe Raventós turns this sparkling wine toward intriguing red fruit and roses. The pale ripeness of xarel-lo, parellada and