



Something for Everyone

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Wine Spectator TOP 100

I have been mulling over the wines that I may choose to enjoy this weekend as I will be celebrating the November day when I made the decision to be born. As I write on this Monday morning, I am cognizant that the Wine Spectator has just released their "Top 100 Wines of the Year" list. My birthday wish list may be more costly than some would consider, but amazingly I will offer top 100 wines that all of us can give a try.

This very popular and influential Wine Spectator list is selected from over eight thousand wines that their staff have blind tasted during 2022 and the wines earn a place based on a combination of quality, value, and availability. I do not think that you will ever see a \$1,000.00 bottle on it or a wine that only had one hundred cases produced.



San Felice Chianti Classico

Placed twenty fourth this year is a wine made by Leonardo Bellaccini, who has been our house guest and we have also stayed at his lovely winery. **2020 San Felice Chianti Classico** can be yours for \$24.95! I have often written about it as it is one of our home regular standbys and is consistently lovely and so reasonable in price. Produced entirely from native grapes, it is a typical, medium-bodied Chianti Classico, with a distinguished personality as well as its elegance and pleasantness.

The Wine Spectator has this to say about it. "This supple red shows a core of cherry and plum fruit allied to olive, juniper, and tobacco notes. Delivers well-integrated tannins and acidic structure, lingering nicely on the finish. Sangiovese, Colorino and Pugnitello. Drink now. 92/100". Stock #8974.

You may want to make it a "Top 100 Night" and start with a glass of the white that took 65th place honours. We can sell you a half bottle of **2020 Joseph Drouhin Pouilly Fuisse** for \$21.90 – stock #8164 or a full bottle - #8163 – for \$39.50. This, incidentally, is also in our household special treat category and whenever we enjoy a bottle, we have fond memories of Laurent Drouhin dining in our home. The family make such lovely red and white Burgundy and their Oregon wines are just beautiful.

Here is what Laurent's sister Véronique wrote long before they knew that their Pouilly Fuisse would be so honoured. "A seductive wine and a really nice expression of the Chardonnay grape! The colour is golden, with some green reflections. Among the floral and fruity aromas, almond and ripe grapes dominate. On the palate, the wine is refreshingly pleasant, ethereal in its lightness. Long and refreshing aftertaste."



Joseph Drouhin Pouilly Fuisse



Fattoria Le Pupille Saffredi

Quite a few of the wineries that Burrows Lightbourn represents made the list, but I will not go into detail as they were not from the same vintage, for instance two weeks ago I ended the Super Tuscan article with **2018 Fattoria Le Pupille Saffredi** that rated 97/100, but it is their 2019 that placed eighth overall this year with a Wine Spectator score of 96/100. May I respectfully suggest again the 2018! \$125.00. Stock #9203.



Masi Costasera Amarone della Valpolicella Classico

The Wine Enthusiast also comes out with their top 100 and we had a few wines on it, including one that we served to dinner guests last week (before we knew of its success). This was the **2016 Masi Costasera Amarone della Valpolicella Classico** that took 48th place with a score of 95/100 and this review. “Ripe, black-skinned fruit, blue flower and baking spice aromas form the nose of this full-bodied red along with a whiff of cedar. Concentrated but possessing a weightless elegance, the smooth, enveloping palate delivers prune marinated in spirits, black cherry, licorice and cocoa framed in velvety tannins. Drink through 2036”. \$58.90. Stock #9170.



Chateau Haut Batailley - Pauillac

Now I will mention two reds as I try to decide which to have with my birthday dinner, and I have not tasted either of them – yet. One is **2015 Chateau Haut Batailley** from **Pauillac** that the site Vinous rates 95 points and opines, “A wine of class, pedigree, and nuance, the 2015 Haut-Batailley is superb. Beams of supporting tannin give the dark purplish flavors striking energy and cut. Graphite, smoke, violet, mint, dark cherry and plum notes continue to open up in the glass. Haut-Batailley is a Pauillac with distinct Saint-Julien leanings, and that is exactly what comes across here. It is also one of the overachievers of the year. The 2015 was impressive each and every time I saw it. Tasted five times”.

Or there is James Suckling with, “there’s immediate appeal to the nose and palate. Both are bathed in blackberries and dark plums. The tannins are superbly cut and very long and fresh. The oak chimes in with spicy flavors and bolsters plush grape tannins in a harmonious finish. Try from 2022”. 94/100. \$95.00. Stock #9531.

Staying in Bordeaux, and as it is only a once-a-year occurrence, I am giving serious consideration to **2017 Chateau Palmer Alter Ego de Palmer** from Margaux. This is the second wine of **Palmer**, that was classified as a Third Growth back in 1855. A well-known saying is “the most expensive Third Growth, but the least expensive First Growth”. Or to put it another way, over the past one hundred and fifty plus years Palmer has risen to the quality of the five Great First Growths. You could say that Alter Ego is its’ baby, and like its’ parent it is farmed biodynamically today.

Should I be influenced by James Sucking with, “this is a delicious and savory wine with beautiful, ripe, and creamy tannins, as well as chocolate and plum character. Full body. The flavors turn to wet earth and mushrooms with some leather. A blend of 53% merlot, 41% cabernet sauvignon and 6% petit verdot. Lovely finish. Try now”.

Or maybe Decanter magazine with, “I love the bright perky fruit that we have here. They had to be careful with extraction to retain this delicacy but have been successful with it. Not enormously concentrated, at least compared to the first wine (Palmer), but it has lovely classicism, with fresh fruit and some gourmet swirls of cinnamon and chocolate”. \$125.00. Stock #9588.



Chateau Palmer Alter Ego de Palmer

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