

# Rotary



Wine Appreciation  
Fellowship



## December 2021

Dear Members,



### Wine Spectator Top 100 Wines

**Wine Spectator**  
THE  
**TOP 100**

One of the special things that happen now are all the “Best of the Year” lists that one sees published. This is also true in the wine business where the “experts” have been rating all the wines released during this year and now take a second look at them to come up with their “best”. As we have said before, a rating is simply some wine “expert’s” idea of how a particular wine scores relative to that person’s opinion of the characteristics of the ideal wine that would receive a perfect score in that wine category, using whatever scale they want to use.

Robert Parker, who publishes the “The Wine Advocate” and who is considered to be one of the most respected wine experts in the world, uses a 100-point scale that is widely used in the wine world and is sometimes called the “Parker Scale”. The “Wine Spectator” uses this 100-point scale in its ratings. They discuss their scale stating: “Ratings reflect how highly our editors regard each wine relative to other wines in its category and are based on potential quality-how good the wine will be when at its peak. The score summarizes a wine’s overall quality; the tasting note describes the wine’s style and character.” The wine scores reflect the following:

95-100 points	Classic: a great wine
90-94	Outstanding: a wine of superior character and style
85-89	Very Good: a wine with special qualities
80-84	Good: a solid, well-made wine
70-79	Average: a drinkable wine that may have minor flaws
60-69	Below average: drinkable but not recommended
50-59	Poor, undrinkable: not recommended

The main objective of looking at wine scores is to help us determine value. You want to find wines that are worth the price you pay for them, *in your opinion*. You would like to be able to find a wine to complement the food you are enjoying, at a reasonable price. You can find “deals” or at least value, if you know your wines.

The “Wine Spectator” just came out with their Top 100 Wines Of 2020. Their editors blind-tasted thousands of wines and those that received scores of 90 points or higher became candidates for their Top 100. They used four criteria to determine the final selections: “quality (as represented by score); value (as reflected by release price); availability (measured by case production, or, for international wines, the number of cases imported {into the US}); and an X-factor they call “excitement.” They used no equations but the selections reflected their “judgment and enthusiasm about the wines ---.” We might disagree as to what wines should have been listed in the Top 100, but I have always found these wines to be very good and certainly interesting. And, some of them are not all that expensive. Try them!

You can get the complete list on their web site: [www.winespectator.com](http://www.winespectator.com) Click on each wine and you can get the tasting notes. You can also purchase their December 31, 2020 issue of the “Wine Spectator” for tasting notes and a whole lot more information. (Note: The Wine Enthusiast also has a Top 100 List and James Suckling has published his Top 100 list for various countries, US, France, Italy, Germany, etc.)



Rating	Year	Name	Specific Designation	Type	WS	Cost
1	2018	Dominus Estate	Napa Valley, CA	Red Blend	97	\$269
2	2018	Château Pichon Longueville Lalande	Pauillac, Bordeaux, FR	Red Blend	99	\$198
3	2016	Heitz	Oakville Martha's Vineyard, CA	Cabernet Sauvignon	95	\$250
4	2018	Merum Priorati	Priorat Destí	Tempranillo	95	\$49
5	2016	Le Chiuse	Brunello di Montalcino, IT	Sangiovese	98	\$99
6	2018	Louis Latour	Corton-Charlemagne, Burgundy	Chardonnay	95	\$200
7	2018	Château Léoville Poyferré	St.-Julien, Bordeaux, FR	Red Blend	97	\$104
8	2016	Cavallotto	Barolo Bricco Boschis, Piedmont, IT	Nebiollo	95	\$90
9	2018	Salvestrin	St. Helena, Dr. Crane Vineyard, Napa Valley, CA	Cabernet Sauvignon	95	\$80
10	2018	Château de Nalys	Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Southern Rhone, FR	Red Blend	95	\$105



### Wine Myths

One of our RWAF Board members, Brian Moore, PDG, aka “Chief Grape”, has written a series of articles debunking common wine myths and we will continue to feature them in our newsletters. You can access the first seven in our previous newsletters on our website [www.rotarywine.net](http://www.rotarywine.net). Here is the eighth one:

## MYTH #8

### “Health wise; aged wine is better for the consumer than young wine”

To be honest, youthful red wines may be “better for you” than old red wines. Multiple studies have revealed that as much as 96 percent of several key antioxidants in red wines disappear as wine ages. We all have heard the accolades about antioxidants in wine because of their potential health benefits. But are we drinking wine that is too old?

Several studies on anthocyanin (anthocyanin is a polyphenol found in red wine, chocolate, and tea) offer some updates to the bioavailability of antioxidants in red wine. Young red wines have been found to have more antioxidants than old red wines. A research group in China tested Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Gamay, and Cabernet Franc. They found that 90 percent of the anthocyanin content in red wine disappears after a few months of aging. There are several reasons why this happens, but it’s mostly because antioxidant volatility.

Another research group in Australia performed an independent study of 16 wines from Australia and New Zealand and found levels of healthy antioxidants, existing mainly in red grapes, also decreased significantly over time. Researchers note the compound ‘Trans-resveratrol’ has been proven to possess cardiovascular, anti-inflammatory and anti-diabetic benefits. When comparing the younger bottled wines with mature red wines, it was discovered that as the wine ages the concentration of this important bioactive compound decreases by about 75 percent over a 16-month period. After the initial resveratrol levels were measured, the bottles were resealed and stored in darkness in their original packaging. Multiple bottles of a single varietal were tested over an extended period of time. Irrespective of where the red wine was grown, or which varietal it was, the loss was found to be the same. The results of another study published in the Australian Journal of Grape and Wine Research, found the concentration of the compound decreased in some wines by as much as 96 per cent. This is a substantial decrease in the concentration of this particularly health-benefitting compound.

Research has discovered that high acid wines stabilize antioxidants longer. A group of scientists studying Cabernet Sauvignon grapes in Brazil noted anthocyanins stabilize at low pH levels (high acidity). Stability occurred around 3.2 PH which is considerably acidic for red wine. Given this fact, it’s hard to know if drinking more acidic wines is actually beneficial. Studies on antioxidant absorbance in humans suggest that human body needs to be a slightly basic (aka alkaline or lower acid) in order to actually benefit from antioxidants like anthocyanins.

Another key fact, condensed tannins are at their highest concentrations in young full bodied red wines. Besides anthocyanin, another beneficial polyphenol found in red wine is called *proanthocyanidin*, or more commonly known as condensed tannin. Tannins in wine come from grape skins, grape seeds, and even oak barrels. There are 2 kinds of tannin commonly found in wine and the bitter/astringent-tasting condensed tannins are found mostly in grape seeds have incredible anti-inflammatory effects on the human body. Consuming such an anti-inflammatory commodity adds to a healthy diabetes diet.

Now you know. Perhaps you might want to forget about cellaring that young wine and enjoy it now. Furthermore, this might explain the popularity of younger wine consumption expanding dramatically in the past 10 years.



corkscrew or wine key that you vibe with can be difficult.

What's the difference between the two tools? A corkscrew has two arms that lift and a top pull that twists, allowing leverage to help pull up the cork. A wine key, sometimes called a waiter's corkscrew, has a small knife and uses a metal fulcrum positioned on the lip of the bottle to create leverage to lift the cork up and out.

A good wine key or corkscrew needs to be sharp enough to easily pierce through the cork, have a good grip and, above all, be easy to use. Often, poor quality corkscrews can damage corks, leaving little shards of wood in your glass, or can disintegrate your cork entirely, leaving you with little ability to open your wine. If you're in the market for a wine key or corkscrew, here are some that sommeliers swear by.

#### **Pulltex Pulltap Black Cordoba**

"I am completely loyal to the Pulltex Pulltap Black Cordoba, which in my opinion is the best corkscrew in the market if you are looking for a traditional waiter's corkscrew," says Yannick Benjamin, sommelier and cofounder of "**Wine On Wheels**", a group of wine professionals who raise money for charity.

This beautiful corkscrew has an elegant black horn handle that allows you to open up the wine in two steps because it has a double lever system that is made of stainless steel. It feels great in my hands, and I have never used any other corkscrew since I started using it in 2012.

#### **Pulltap Double-Hinged Corkscrew**

"We find Pulltap double-hinged corkscrews in our back pockets, the bottom of our bags [and] even in the cup holder of our car. Let us just say—one is always available," says Caitlin Frame, co-owner of "**Sunny's Natural Wine Shop**" in Amesbury, Massachusetts. For me, it also doubled as a fidget spinner when I had to talk to that particularly chatty customer."

#### **Coutale Waiter's Corkscrew**

"Our favorite wine key is a Coutale spring loaded, double lever waiter's corkscrew," says Rachel Pronovost, co-owner of "**Curio Coffee & Wine**", in Cambridge, Massachusetts. "We like that's it's fast, easy on the cork and gentle on the wrist. The foil cutter is fairly good, but we tend to just grip the bottle and yank off the capsule whenever we can."

#### **Laguiole W L'Essentiel Wine Key**

"I've worked with a lot of wine keys, some extremely expensive. One brand (the Laguiole World Sommelier Series), despite being beautiful and crafted with sustainable material with a long history of production, kept on breaking, and my wine keys from Code 38 kept on getting stolen," says Pascaline Lepeltier, partner at "**Racines**" restaurant in NY and winemaker at "**Chèpika Winery**" in the Finger Lakes region of New York.

"So I looked for a very affordable wine key with all the quality I needed. The Laguiole W L'Essentiel Wine Key has a barely serrated long sharp blade that does not need to be sharpened for years. It also has a long screw in titanium for long corks and dense corks, a double edge, and a good handle. It also has a great price and guarantee. We started to design some merchandising for "**Chèpika**, and this is the one we chose to customize. I would like it to be more sustainably made, though.



**"Houdini Waiter's Corkscrew** "When in service or while teaching a class, I flaunt some swag by grabbing our branded two step waiter's corkscrew by **Houdini**," says Brittany Galbraith, wine director at "**Dedalus Wine Bar**" in Vermont. "This key's lightweight frame, short knife and agile two-step

system makes it my easy-to grab, easy-to use tool to get to the important stuff: pouring delicious wines for our guests. Also, I love when my **Houdini** is broken in and the hinge gets a little loose. For more delicate corks, I reach for my beloved "**Ah So opener.**"

Photo above: Brittany Galbraith, wine director at Dedalus Wine Bar, opening a bottle with her Houdini corkscrew / Photo courtesy of Dedalus Wine Bar

**Zwilling Waiter's Corkscrew** "I've managed to collect wine keys during my wine career," says Margot Mazur, wine writer and educator at "**The Fizz**". "They're everywhere, in the bottom of each tote bag, in my jacket pockets, sometimes ripping a hole from the pocket in the back of my jeans. Some of these wine keys last and some don't. But when I want to use something special, I reach for the wine key I purchased on a trip to Bordeaux in 2018 in the **Bordeaux Tourist Office**. It is hefty with some good weight, and has a very sharp screw, which is really important for a good wine tool. I love it so much, I even got it tattooed. The closest thing I can find is the **Zwilling Waiter's Corkscrew**—a bit pricier than some other options, but it'll be the one you'll reach for when special bottles come around."

*Margot Mazur loves her wine key so much she had it tattooed on her arm / Photo courtesy of Wine of British Columbia / Photo by Margot Mazur*



## Wine Quote of the Month

***"Life without art is like dinner without wine. Why bother?" - Thomas Arvid***

## Calendar of Events:

In this section, we want to publicize any upcoming events that either the RWAF or local chapters are planning.

### June 4 – 8, 2022

Rotary International Convention in Houston, Texas, USA. Stan Galanski, VP, is planning our wine dinners, presently scheduled for:

**Friday: Junior League, 150 seats, about \$150 pp, all inclusive.**

**Sunday: Restaurant Porto, 125 seats, about \$130 pp, all inclusive.**

**Monday: Vic & Anthony's, Lifetime Member's Only, perhaps 50 seats, less than \$250 pp, all Inclusive.**

We are also planning a 2 or 3 day post-convention wine tour in and around Fredricksburg, Texas, the heart of the Texas Hill Country and wine industry and possibly a pre-convention tour in Paso Robles in California.

## Recommended Value Wines:

As we continue to do, we will list about ten value wines with each newsletter. These are wines from around the world that are readily available in many markets, are rated by some "expert" as being at least 88 points (out of 100) and which cost \$20 USD or less. We would appreciate any additions suggested by any member. We feel that no matter what type of wine you enjoy, you ought to be able to find a good one at a reasonable price.

Year	Name of Wine	Specific Designation	Type	Cost	Rating	Rater
2018	Daou	Paso Robles, CA	Cabernet Sauvignon	\$22	92	WA
2018	Tenuta Le Colonne	Bolgheri, IT	Red Blend	\$22	93	WE
2018	Beckman	Cuvee Le Bec	Red Blend	\$20	95	WE
2015	Bodegas Olarra Cerro Anon	Rioja, SP	Temperanillo	\$14	92	WS
2018	Chamisal	Central Coast, CA	Chardonnay	\$19	91	WA
2018	Raventos	Blanc de Blanc, Penedes, SP	Sparkling Wine	\$19	92	JS
NV	Kirkland	Brut, FR	Champagne	\$20	91	WS
NV	Shramsberg	Mirabelle, Brut Rose, No. Coast, CA	Sparkling Wine	\$20	93	WS
NV	Nino Franco	Rustico, IT	Proseco	\$17	94	WE
NV	Domaine Chandon	Brut, CA	Sparkling Wine	\$16	90	WE

## A Few Special Wines:

Year	Name of Wine	Specific Designation	Type	Cost	Rating	Rater
NV	Vielle France	Brut Rose	Champagne	\$27	92	WS
NV	Gaston Chiquot	Brut	Champagne	\$37	92	WS

WS = "Wine Spectator"; WA = "Wine Advocate" (Robert Parker); WE = "Wine Enthusiast";  
 V = "Vinous" (now including IWC, International Wine Cellar); D = Decanter; JS = James Suckling; W&S = Wine & Spirits; CCH = Not yet rated, my score

We will always appreciate your comments and suggestions. You are receiving these newsletters because you are members of the RWF and publishing a newsletter is one of the duties of a Rotary Fellowship. If you would like to discontinue receiving these newsletters, please so indicate by return email and you will be removed from our address list.

Thank you for the continued opportunity to serve.

