

# Wine & Spirits

SPECIAL ISSUE

31<sup>st</sup> Annual  
BUYING GUIDE

# 100 Best Wines

# TOP 100 WINERIES of 2017



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Five of our Top 100: Champagne Krug, Corison, González Byass, Domaine Marcel Deiss, Comm. G.B. Burlotto

# Domaine Zind-Humbrecht

Domaine Zind-Humbrecht scores a third *Top 100* honor in three years, thanks to exceptional 2014s from biodynamically farmed vines.

**Great Land:** Domaine Zind-Humbrecht was formed in 1959 through the union of the Humbrecht family vineyards in Guebreschwihr and the Zind family vineyards in Wintzenheim. Over the next 50 years, the family accumulated an impressive collection of hallowed vineyards—the Clos Jébsal, Clos Windsbuhl and Clos St-Urbain in Rangen de Thann, as well as parcels of Heimbouurg, Hangst, Brand and Sommerberg—expanding the estate to its current 100 acres. Olivier Humbrecht, MW, and his wife, Margaret, took over the domaine in 1989, converting the vineyards to organic farming, then to biodynamics (certified 2002).

**Formidable Pinot Gris:** Perhaps it's the biodynamic regime that allowed Humbrecht's vines to weather the cool, wet 2014 vintage—July saw almost twice the average rainfall, and August continued cool. Or maybe it's that he retains 24 farmers on his vineyard staff. Either way, the 2014 Roche Calcaire Pinot Gris—mostly from Clos Jébsal, blended with grapes from Clos Windsbuhl and Heimbouurg—is a formidable wine, meaty and saturated with golden apple flavor. Decant it if you open it now, or tuck it away for another decade.

**Dueling Rieslings:** Olivier Humbrecht also turned out two exceptional rieslings in 2014. The Clos Windsbuhl sits high up a slope of muschelkalk, a limestone rich in clay and broken seashells. Protected from the northern winds by the Vosges Mountains, it's one of the latest sites that Humbrecht harvests, and often gives him his most aromatic dry wines. The 2014 took 15 months to finish fermentation, producing a kaleidoscope of fruit in colors of lemongrass, yellow flowers, pink grapefruit and red berries. The tense, mineral-tinged structure is powerful, built to preserve the wine as it mellows for a few years in the cellar. It's a different sort of power than you'll find in the 2014 Clos Saint Urbain from the Rangen de Thann, a steep, south-facing volcanic outcropping at the southern end of the valley. Graceful and elegant, with a cool, clean purity of fruit, it's a glorious riesling, saturated in golden peach flavor and salty in its minerality. —D.G.



Olivier Humbrecht, MW



## DETAILS & TOP WINES

**Founded:** 1620 • **Winemaker/viticulturist:** Olivier Humbrecht, MW • **Owners:** Olivier & Margaret Humbrecht  
**Acres owned:** 100 • **Annual production:** 16,500 cases  
**Estate grown:** 100% • **Importer:** Kobrand, Purchase, NY  
**Website:** zindhumbrecht.fr

- 94** 2014 Alsace Rangen de Thann Grand Cru Clos Saint Urbain Riesling \$120 (12/16)
- 93** 2014 Alsace Clos Windsbuhl Riesling \$80 (12/16)
- 93** 2014 Alsace Roche Calcaire Pinot Gris \$55 (12/16)

FRANCE ALSACE

# Château du Moulin-à-Vent

New owners have revitalized the historic Château du Moulin-à-Vent and its vineyards, bringing the estate's wines to the forefront of Beaujolais.

**Three Owners in Three Centuries:** The Pommier family founded the Château de Thorins in Moulin-à-Vent, gaining international attention at the Universal Exhibition in London in 1862. Madame Pommier, at the age of 99, presented her family's 1854, '58 and '59 wines, ranked the best of the Mâcon at the exhibition. In 1911, the Pommiers sold the estate to the Damoy family, who owned a large department store in Paris. They renamed the property Château du Moulin-à-Vent, with ambitions to sell their wine at the store, but eventually lost interest and began selling the grapes to local co-ops. Jean-Jacques Parinet became the third owner in 2009. He had grown up with Moulin-à-Vent on the dinner table, and had made enough money in IT to finance the restoration of the estate. Working with his son, Edouard, and winemaker Brice Laffond, he set out to renovate the cellars and replant much of the vineyards at high density.

**Looking North to Burgundy:** Laffond began to implement organic and biodynamic practices in several of the parcels, working to restore the wines to the level they had achieved early on, when Madame Pommier was investigating the different characteristics of the estate parcels. Laffond is not making Beaujolais with carbonic maceration: He destems the bunches, cold soaks the fruit, pumps the juice over the skins before and after fermentation and ages the wines for 17 months or more in barrel.

**Standing Apart:** Most of the château's vines are planted on granite soils, some veined in pink. Champ de Cour, with its southeastern exposure, is the most clay-dominated terroir of their holdings. It produced a powerful 2014 with lush, dark fruit and high notes of violets and irises. The 2014 La Rochelle has unbridled energy, thanks to the 70-year-old vines and its warm, southern exposure at the top of the Moulin-à-Vent appellation. It sits directly in a wind corridor that helps keep disease at bay and helps the grapes retain brisk acidity. Pure and plummy, it's Beaujolais with the finesse of Burgundy, and it may make you think instinctively of country pâté, earthy terrines or roast rabbit. —S.L.



Brice Laffond



## DETAILS & TOP WINES

**Founded:** 1732 • **Winemaker/viticulturist:** Brice Laffond  
**Owners:** Edouard and Jean-Jacques Parinet • **Acres owned:** 91.4 • **Annual production:** 6,500 cases • **Estate grown:** 100% • **Importer:** Wilson Daniels, St. Helena, CA  
**Website:** chateaudumoulinavent.com

- 94** 2014 Moulin-à-Vent Champ de Cour \$54 (10/17)
- 93** 2014 Moulin-à-Vent \$39 (10/17)
- 93** 2014 Moulin-à-Vent La Rochelle \$59 (10/17)

FRANCE BEAUJOLAIS

Château du Moulin-à-Vent photos by Franck Juery

## 100 BEST WINES OF THE YEAR

summer vegetable risotto. (*W&S* 8/17) *Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA*

### BEST BEAUJOLAIS

**94 | Ch. du Moulin-à-Vent** \$54  
**2014 Moulin-à-Vent Champ de Cour** Jean-Jacques Parinet purchased this 18th-century domaine in 2009 and, working with his son, Edouard, set to renovating the winery and its 91.5 acres of vines. The property produced impressive 2014s, including this cool, racy, umami-driven red. This comes from an 8.4-acre parcel on a granite plateau; it was destemmed, cold-soaked with pre-fermentation pumpovers, and aged 17 months in French oak (20 percent new). It may not be traditional Beaujolais winemaking, but it created a beautiful wine, with scents of wild herbs, deep flavors of woodland berries and remarkable freshness. Complex and youthful, this will likely be at its best five or six years from the vintage, and may well last much longer. (*W&S* 10/17) *Wilson Daniels, St. Helena, CA*

### BEST BURGUNDY RED

**95 | Lignier-Michelot** \$66  
**2014 Morey-St-Denis Vieilles Vignes** This Morey was *the* find in our recent Côte de Nuits tastings. It may carry a humble village classification, but it delivers pure Burgundian bliss, a wine of powerful concentration and effortless charm. The dark fruit and velvet texture share depths of umami—associate editor Deanna Gonnella described it as “when you sear a steak in a cast-iron pan.” It builds from meaty black-cherry bass notes toward celery root and nori, cilantro and thyme. Sunny and cool, this is a beautiful wine to decant now, or to stash away for a few years in the cellar. (*W&S* 10/17) *Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY*

### BEST LANGUEDOC RED

**94 | Mas des Chimères** \$30  
**2013 Terrasses du Larzac Caminarèm** Guilhem Dardé has been tending his vineyards in Octon, near Lake Salagou, since 1974, and began to bottle his own wine in 1993. He’s always been organic in the vineyards (certified in 2008), and takes a low-intervention approach in the winery, relying on ambient yeasts for fermentation, old barrels for aging and a minimum of sulfur at bottling. This cuvée, blended from equal parts cinsault, carignan, mourvedre, grenache and syrah grown on basalt, bears no resemblance to the fire-breathing chimera on the label, except

in its magical feel and ability to morph completely. The wine starts out smelling like a damp eucalyptus forest, from the rich humus under the trees to their sap; it later turns inward, resolutely black and unyielding. Another day open reveals a well of cassis and plum flavor, with a dark minerality at its core; another day and all the elements come together, each sip offering something different to say. If you open it now, give it time, and save some for the next day. Otherwise tuck it in the cellar for ten years. (*W&S* 6/17) *Louis/Dressner Selections, NY*

### BEST PROVENCE RED

**94 | Domaine Tempier** \$46  
**2014 Bandol** Since Daniel Ravier took over winemaking at Tempier in 2000, he’s cleaned the old barrels and moved the winery from organic farming toward biodynamics, but otherwise his style holds firmly to the one Lucian Peyraud established after acquiring the estate in 1940. He blends Tempier’s basic Bandol from various terroirs within the estate’s 98 acres, adding a little grenache, cinsault and carignan to the mourvèdre that makes up three-quarters of the wine. The 2014 is dark and earthy, with chocolate density to the plummy fruit and pleasantly gravelly tannins. As it takes on air, notes of garigue and roasted meat appear, as well as an acidity that recalls plum skin in its firmness and crunch. If you open it now, decant it an hour before serving; it should age well over the next five to ten years. (*W&S* 8/17) *Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA*

### BEST RHONE RED

**95 | Clos des Papes** \$95  
**2014 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Terroir Castel Papal** Paul-Vincent Avril makes just one white and one red from his 80 acres in Châteauneuf-du-Pape. His parcels are scattered throughout the region, on both sand and clay, all farmed organically, the oldest vines in their eighties. The fruit for this red is fully destemmed, the parcels blended together and vinified without any new oak, coming together in a 2014 that’s exceptionally vivid. You might imagine that you can taste the cool nights at the northern end of the appellation in the briskness of the acidity and crisp tang of the red-berried fruit; you might also perceive the warmth in other quarters, as well as Avril’s love for mourvèdre, in the bass notes of earth and spice. Or you may just want to let the wine wash over you in all its intoxicating scent and silky texture, and

breathe in its energy. (*W&S* 2/17) *Wines of France, Mountainside, NJ*

**94 | Domaine Faury** \$38  
**2014 St-Joseph Vieilles Vignes** Lionel Faury makes this wine from about two acres of syrah, the oldest vines dating to 1937, the youngest to 1976. He vinifies it like he does his other St-Joseph, destemming about three-quarters of the fruit, leaving it to ferment in temperature-controlled vats for 15 to 20 days, then resting it for a year in a mix of large and small oak barrels, mostly old. It smells awesome, floral and spicy, with a freshness that’s invigorating; it tastes just as good, the sun-kissed ripeness of the black fruit melding with cold, hard mineral tones into a seamless expanse of dark flavor. For all its density, it feels agile and energetic, a youthful St-Joseph to enjoy now or cellar another five or ten years. (*W&S* 2/17) *Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA*

### BEST DESSERT

**95 | Dom. des Baumard** \$80  
**2012 Quarts de Chaume** If you love chenin, do yourself a favor and pour a glass of this wine. You’ll be welcomed into a gracious aristocratic pleasure of the Loire and, maybe, as the silken grace of this vinous bliss threatens to leave you but just keeps lasting for minutes, you’ll think to yourself, this golden beauty is one reason why it’s great to be alive. Or maybe you’ll think of the best peach you can remember tasting, concentrated in its sweetness yet so deft and elegant it simply won’t leave your memory. (*W&S* 4/17) *Vinthus, Pleasantville, NY*

### GERMANY

#### BEST MOSEL RIESLING

**94 | Heymann-Löwenstein** \$29  
**2014 Mosel Schieferterrassen Riesling QbA Dry** Sometimes you can hear the greatness of a wine, in the collective quiet it casts over a group of people. That’s how it was when we tasted this wine. The smell alone was spell-binding, like a direct whiff off the warm slate terraces that Reinhard Löwenstein farms in and around Wittengen. Then there’s the slow spread of firm, sparkling mineral flavor carried on a texture as smooth as glass. There’s fruit in there—roasted quince and green pear—but it’s not the main event; instead, it’s the architecture of the wine, the way it builds both outward and upward, the way it turns stone into liquid pleasure. (*W&S* 12/16) *Soilair Selection, NY*