

# Wine Spectator

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## GREAT WINES TO DISCOVER



**W**ineries stand out from the crowd for various reasons. Some are historical leaders in their region. Some produce large quantities of good-value wines. Still others create excitement by combining quality and rarity.

But many great wineries still fly under the radar of most wine lovers. We want to shine the spotlight on some of these underappreciated gems. **Think of them as wineries to trust, because these are producers that offer a broad range of wines that consistently deliver both excellence and affordability. That may be an even greater achievement than making a single iconic wine: It requires more nimbleness in the winery and more effort to stand out in the market.** However, this approach allows winemakers to drill deeper into the particularities of *terroir* and varietal character.

Some of these wineries' bottlings may be small in terms of production, and therefore a bit more difficult to find. But a winemaker's ability to succeed with multiple cuvées makes his or her bottlings safe bets no matter which of them you encounter.

For this story, we asked our senior tasters to recommend exemplary wineries to explore from the regions they cover. This package spotlights 30 wineries from around the world that produce broad portfolios of distinctive wines. **Some are well-established, while others are emerging stars; all consistently deliver high quality and relative value.** Almost all the wines referenced in the following pages scored 90 points or higher, or "outstanding," on our 100-point scale, and none are priced in the stratosphere.

These are wineries that deserve your attention, and we encourage you to discover all they have to offer.

# 30 WINERIES TO DISCOVER

JAN 31 - FEB 28, 2017 | WINE SPECTATOR

## Scherrer

### Common Sense and Science in Sonoma County

When you look at Fred Scherrer's résumé, you wonder: "How did I miss this guy?" A lover of German Riesling, he farms a family-owned Zinfandel vineyard in Alexander Valley dating to 1889. Working with him are his father, who is 89, and sister.

Scherrer learned winemaking nuances fresh out of high school in the 1980s, when he joined Alexander Valley's Field Stone winery at a time when André Tchelistcheff was a consultant there. His passion is Pinot Noir, and his seven or eight bottlings account for two-thirds of his 6,000-case annual production. His major wines are the Russian River Valley Pinot Noir and the Old & Mature Vines Zinfandel, from his Scherrer Vineyard, but he also makes small amounts of two terroir-specific Cabernets, a Chardonnay, two or three Syrahs, a Grenache and a Grenache-Syrah blend called Huntsman. He has a sense of humor as well, producing a non-vintage red catchall called Zinfandoodle.

"I am fortunate to work with growers who are on the same page as me," Scherrer says, referring to the fruit sources beyond his estate vineyard. "Our desire is to make each other deliriously happy."

A quick glance at Scherrer's hourly payroll, clocking in at around 1,000 hours per year, suggests that he does essentially all of the cellar work himself.



"This allows me to eat and drink about as much as I want without gaining weight," he says with a smile.

"Best of all, it gives me information about the state of every barrel of every wine every time something happens to it. This weaves itself into the tapestry of my sense of each wine and helps guide future decisions."

His winemaking philosophy is pretty simple: "I use peasant logic to balance doctor science," he says. —J.L.

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#### Scherrer Pinot Noir Sonoma County 2012 | 91 | \$36 | 700 cases made

Scherrer's Pinots favor delicacy and finesse over power and ripeness. A refreshing counterpart to weightier efforts.

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#### Scherrer Rosé Dry Sonoma County 2015 | 91 | \$22 | 220 cases made

Syrah- and Grenache-based, this rosé is supple in texture, with layered flavors of smoked pepper, watermelon and orange zest.

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#### Scherrer Pinot Noir Russian River Valley King Vineyard 2012 | 90 | \$34 | 340 cases made

Each sip offers another flavor nuance. The anise, dusty earth and sage notes are persistent.

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#### Scherrer Zinfandel Alexander Valley Scherrer Vineyard Old and Mature Vines 2013 | 90 | \$36 | 1,200 cases made

Old vines beget Old World character in this wine, tilting toward briary cherry, dill, plum, sweet anise and cracked pepper flavors.

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#### Scherrer Cabernet Sauvignon Alexander Valley Scherrer Vineyard 2012 | 89 | \$55 | 160 cases made

Restrained in style, deftly balanced and easy to drink, with a tight core of currant and dark berry.

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#### Scherrer Grenache Sonoma County Kick Ranch Vineyard 2013 | 88 | \$36 | 220 cases made

A spot-on Grenache, spicy and peppery. Some of this juice goes into the rosé.

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