

Wines of the Year 2024: The US

North America Regional Editor, Clive Pursehouse, puts forward 10 wines that showcase the best of the diversity and quality of modern American winemaking.



Clive Pursehouse

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Credit: Andrew Lipovsky / Getty Images

🔒 Exclusive Highlights Magazine: January 2025 Issue Wines of the Year 2024

Scroll down for notes and scores of the US Wines of the Year 2024

Napa Valley

In Napa, we're seeing shifts in styles. As climate change pushes ripeness, winemakers are moving towards fresher wine styles.

From Jonathan Cristaldi, two 100-point wines made the cut. He was bowled over by the Ad Vivum, Sleeping Lady Cabernet Sauvignon from longtime Napa Valley winemaker Chris Phelps, as well as the 2021 Ovid red.

Freshness and elegance carried the day in our selections, as Lokoya's Mount Veeder Cabernet showed great balance and vitality, with classic wild mountain fruits and a floral elegance framed in its aromatic intensity. A true wine of place.

One of my favourite Napa winemakers is Steve Matthiasson, and Cristaldi and I agreed on his Phoenix Vineyard Cabernet. Its purity and precision are worthy of the 99-points it was awarded in **Cristaldi's 2021 Napa Valley vintage report**.

Matthiasson skilfully frames the terroir of his dry-farmed, organic Cabernet vines in wines that are light, floral and evocative of Nebbiolo.

Finally, the 2021 Stony Hill Chardonnay, from the producer's timeless Spring Mountain estate, stood out among the **California Chardonnays** I featured in our August issue.

America's first cult winery has stood as a bulwark against passing fads and Chardonnays of oaky opulence. A wine of finesse and intricacy truly worthy of its wine of the year status.

US West Coast beyond Napa

American wine keeps getting better, in Napa and beyond.

With nearly 3,000 wines tasted and reviewed just since January 2024, there were many tough choices to be made. As the selection shows, there is quality up and down the West Coast.

The 2021 Due North Pinot Noir from Abbott Claim was the best wine that I tasted myself in 2024, meeting winemaker Alban Debeaulieu in the cave at the Oregon winery for **my feature in the May issue**. This shows the Willamette Valley's stripes, as one of the world's greatest Pinot Noir growing regions.

On a visit to Walla Walla, in Washington state, it was Corliss Estate – which actually has all of its estate vineyards on Red Mountain – that stunned me with its balanced blend. Cabernet Franc leads the way here and offers great bay leaf and eucalyptus elegance and a brilliant graphite minerality against the powerful fruit of Red Mountain.

A standout from my **Sonoma Coast 2021 vintage report** is one of my top wines of the year, Occidental’s Running Fence Cuvée Catherine: an elegant Pinot Noir from a vintage that played into the hands of some of Sonoma’s top winemakers.

Truthfully, a few wines from that report could easily have made the cut here. There are two top wines from California’s Central Coast regions as well: Pinot Noir from the classic producer Au Bon Climat and one of Edna Valley’s iconic Syrahs from Alban, each earning a 98-point score.

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Wines of the Year 2024: The US



Stony Hill, Chardonnay, Napa Valley, Spring Mountain, California 2021

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The Chardonnays from Stony Hill have been classic since – forever. Napa's first cult winery eschewed chasing style and went with a conviction and focus on site and purity of fruit. Only large, older barrels are used, and while the house styl...

Points 97

Ad Vivum, Sleeping Lady Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Yountville, Napa Valley, California, USA 2021



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An elegant, polished, and seamless Cabernet Sauvignon from longtime Napa Valley winemaker Chris Phelps. It possesses an ethereal quality, an almost weightlessness, but contains multitudes. I tasted it on three separate occasion...

Points 100



Ovid, Napa Valley, California, USA 2021

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Each year, the blend of Ovid wines varies depending on the vintage. Winemaker Austin Peterson prefers not to pre-plan the blend, instead approaching each vintage with a fresh perspective. Often, the wine needs more Cabernet...

Points 100

Abbott Claim, Due North Pinot Noir, Yamhill-Carlton, Willamette Valley, Oregon, USA 2021

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From Pommard clone vines on a north-facing block cooled by a wind that blows through the site; only about 7% whole-cluster fermentation in an oak vat, followed by 18 months in 70% new French oak barrels. Pungent aromatics of...

Points 99



Lokoya, Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California
2021

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Since 1995, Lokoya has produced Cabernet from the Veeder Peak Estate at 548m on the western ridges of the Mayacamas Mountains. This is a do-not-open wine for until at least 2026. Full-bodied with palate-arresting tannins that are supe...

Points 99

Matthiasson, Phoenix Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, California, USA
2021

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This is a single-vineyard expression of Cabernet Sauvignon from the Phoenix Vineyard surrounding the Matthiasson winery, situated on an east-facing steep hillside at the base of Mt. Veeder, on a promontory of rare ancient marine shal...

Points 99



Alban, Reva Syrah, Edna Valley, Central Coast, California, USA 2019

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Unabashedly powerful yet visceral and alluring, John Alban's Syrah is a benchmark expression of the sun-drenched intensity of the maritime Edna Valley in San Luis Obispo. Smoky, spicy swirls of raspberry preserve, leather...

Points 98

Au Bon Climat, Larmes De Grappe, Sta Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County, California, USA 2021

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Au Bon Climat's 'Larmes de Grappe' Pinot Noir is not made in every vintage. Production depends on simultaneous ripeness level at harvest and lignification of grape stems, which are then whole cluster fermented and aged for 20 mont...

Points 98



Occidental, Running Fence Vineyard Cuvée Catherine Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County, California, USA 2021

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Named for Stephen Kistler's daughter Catherine, who is the assistant winemaker. This wine was tasted from bottle #C1111. It's a soulful hedonism in the bottle. The aromas show a real pungency of forest scents and feral wildnes...

Points 98

Corliss Estate, Red Wine, Red Mountain, Washington, USA 2019

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A classic and timeless red blend from the Corliss estate sites on Red Mountain, this wine perfectly balances the power of Washington's hottest appellation with the elegance and finesse of varietal Cabernet Franc, which takes centre stage in this wine. 'We use a very reductive approach to the...



Points 97

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