



The 1976 Judgment of Paris is arguably the most important event in fine wine history. It proved that great wine can come from anywhere, not just France. May marks the 46th anniversary of this watershed event. In its honor, we're hosting our version of the Judgment of Paris. Our sommeliers have selected the best wine from Bordeaux and Napa Valley for this head-to-head matchup.

The only question is: which region will sell out first?



Karl RoskampHead of Content and Community

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The year is 1976. France isn't just the center of the fine wine universe. It is the universe. Centuries of winemaking tradition and unparalleled terroir have made estates like Mouton Rothschild, Haut-Brion, and Montrose world-famous. France has an untouchable reputation.





"Why not host an international wine tasting to promote my businesses?"

Enter Steven Spurrier. Spurrier is a British wine expert and merchant. He runs a wine shop and wine school in Paris. Both cater to primarily non-French-speaking customers. Spurrier also enjoys showcasing non-French wine at his shop and school.

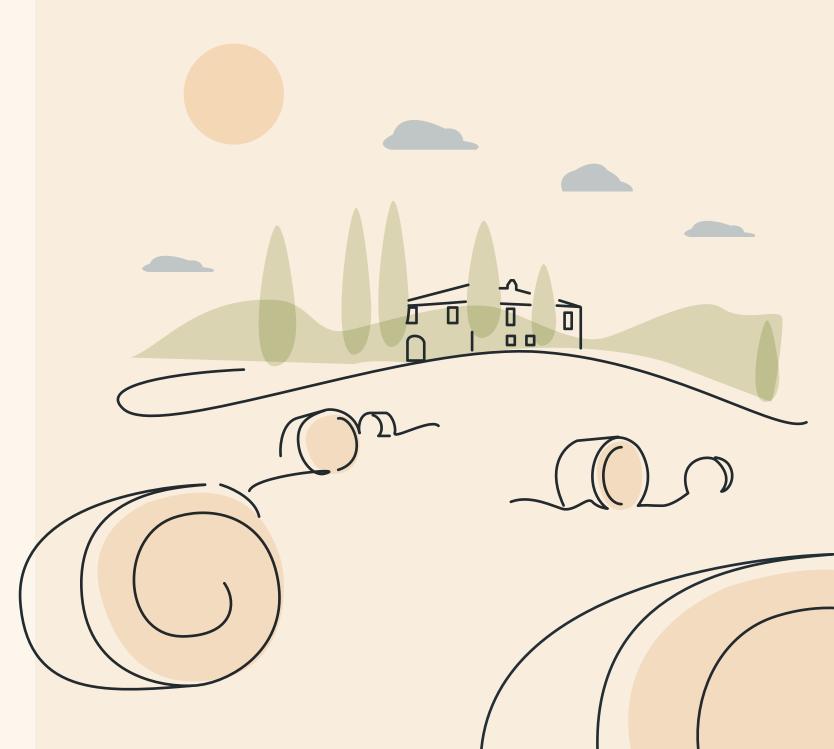
One day, Spurrier gets an idea.





France is an obvious choice. But what about its opponent? Patricia Gastaud-Gallagher, an American associate of Spurrier, suggests California. She had visited Napa Valley in 1975 and was impressed with its rising quality. Plus, the blind tasting would coincide with the US Bicentennial.

In early May 1976, Spurrier and his wife, Bella, fly from Paris to San Francisco. A week later, they return with some worthy California contenders.





Next, Spurrier assembles a panel of judges – 9 French, 1 American, and Spurrier himself. It features the biggest names in the industry including Aubert de Villaine of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti and Odette Kahn, the editor of La Revue du Vin de France. The outcome is all but determined. France will win. California will get some publicity. And, Spurrier's businesses will attract new customers.

At the last minute, Spurrier switches the event from an open tasting to a blind tasting.





The judges begin rating the different wines. However, because it is a blind tasting, they don't know which wines are from which region.

Red Wines	
CALIFORNIA CABERNET SAUVIGNON	BORDEAUX
1973 Stag's Leap	1970 Château Mouton Rothschild
1971 Ridge Monte Bello	1970 Château Montrose
1970 Heitz Martha's Vineyard	1970 Château Haut-Brion
1972 Clos Du Val	1971 Château Leoville Las Cases
1971 Mayacamas	
1969 Freemark Abbey	

White Wines	
CALIFORNIA CHARDONNAY	BORDEAUX
1973 Château Montelena	1973 Meursault Charmes Roulot
1974 Chalone	1973 Beaune Clos des Mouches Joseph Drouhin
1973 Spring Mountain	1973 Bâtard-Montrachet Ramonet-Prudhon
1972 Freemark Abbey	1972 Domaine Leflaive Puligny- Montrachet Les Pucelles
1972 Veedercrest	
1973 David Bruce	



In the crowd is reporter George M. Taber. He has a card with the names of the wine being served, so he knows what the judges are tasting. Quickly, he realizes this competition is getting spicy.

One judge says, "This is definitely California. It has no nose." In reality, the judge tried 1973 Batard-Montrachet, a world-renowned Burgundy chardonnay.





After the tasting, Spurrier tallies the results. He pauses. He re-runs the numbers. His pencil drops to the ground. The unthinkable has happened. California won.

		Red Wines	
RANK	GRADE	WINE	ORIGIN
1	127.5	1973 Stag's Leap	■ USA
2	126	1970 Château Mouton Rothschild	■ France
3	125.5	1970 Château Haut-Brion	□ France
4	122	1970 Château Montrose	□ France
5	105.5	1971 Ridge Monte Bello	■ USA
6	97	1971 Château Leoville Las Cases	□ France
7	89.5	1971 Mayacamas	■ USA
8	87.5	1972 Clos du Val	■ USA
9	84.5	1970 Heitz Martha's Vineyard	■ USA
10	78	1969 Freemark Abbey	■ USA

		White Wines	
RANK	GRADE	WINE	ORIGIN
1	132	1973 Château Montelena	■ USA
2	126.5	1973 Meursault Charmes Roulot	□ France
3	121	1974 Chalone	■ USA
4	104	1973 Spring Mountain	■ USA
5	101	1973 Beaune Clos des Mouches Joseph Drouhin	□ France
6	100	1969 Freemark Abbey	■ USA
7	94	1973 Bâtard-Montrachet Ramonet-Prudhon	☐ France
8	89	1972 Domaine Leflaive Puligny-Montrachet Les Pucelles	□ France
9	88	1972 Veedercrest	■ USA
10	42	1973 David Bruce	■ USA

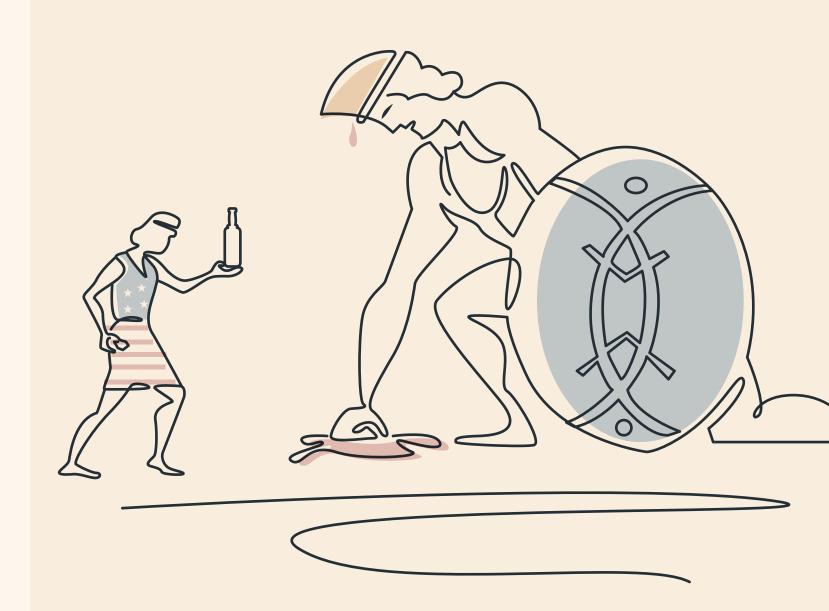


California's victory is bigger than David toppling Goliath.

Unsurprisingly, the French judges do not take the results well.

Odette Khan tries unsuccessfully to get her scorecard back. Aubert de Villaine calls the event "a kick in the rear for French wine." Horrified French wine officials even ban Spurrier from its winetasting tour for a year.

No French publication covers the event. It was only after George M. Taber publishes a story that the Judgment of Paris receives global attention.





Fast forward to today. The 1976 Judgment of Paris showed that not only were New World wines deserving of the global spotlight, but they were also preferred by French judges in a blind tasting. Sure, the wine selection and scoring raised some eyebrows, but the significance of the event remained unchanged.

Today, the fine wine market is more diverse than ever. Go to a restaurant or local wine store, and you'll find quality wine from California, Chile, and China. None of that would be possible without the seismic shift of the Judgment of Paris.



What would happen if the Judgment of Paris were held today?

We thought long and hard. Reusing the wines from 1976 was a non-starter since some were not investment-grade. Ultimately, we homed in on cult cabs from Napa Valley and first growths from Bordeaux. Without further ado, here is our lineup for the 2022 Judgment of Paris.





After weeks of thought and pacing around our offices, this is the lineup we came up with:

United States
NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNONS
2019 Screaming Eagle
2018 Dominus
2017 Dalla Valle Maya
2017 Continuum
2016 Stag's Leap Cask 23
2017 Spottswoode Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena

France
BORDEAUX RED BLENDS
2016 Château Mouton Rothschild
2016 Château Léoville-Las Cases
2016 Château Ausone
2016 Château Cos d'Estournel
2016 Château Bélair-Monange
2016 Château Montrose



Fine wine does not get rarer or more desirable than this. Screaming Eagle is the ultimate cult cab, with its mind-blowing finesse and unrivaled class. While the Judgment of Paris elevated California wine to the global consciousness, it was Screaming Eagle that took the region's reputation to stratospheric heights in the mid-90s. It's why an imperial bottle of the debut vintage sold for a world record \$500,000 at auction in 2000.

The 2019 Screaming Eagle marks another epic chapter in this wine's already storied history. Wine critic Antonio Galloni praised it as "simply magnificent from the very first taste," noting a panoply of red and purple fruits, wildflowers, orange zest, leather, tobacco, and graphite. Meanwhile, Jeb Dunnuck compared the grand vin to the 2016 vintage, which earned multiple perfect scores from critics. Anyone with the good fortune to encounter this wine shouldn't hesitate to invest.

THE FINAL SIP:

Screaming Eagle is the archetypal California cult cab and the 2019 vintage is a reminder why.

5-year returns:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
VINTAGE									
80.40%	46.40%	51%	66.90%	58.30%	84.60%	81.90%	88%	79.10%	



There is so much praise for 2018 Dominus that we couldn't fit it all here. For instance, the vintage earned two perfect scores from critics, a feat only matched twice in its 40-year history. Wine Spectator anointed 2018 Dominus the Top Wine of 2021. And, wine critic James Suckling called it, "a magic-carpet wine."

In the glass, 2018 Dominus has a rich garnet hue with an intense nose of black currants, ripe plums, cedar, graphite, earth, tobacco, wildflowers, and freshly cracked black pepper. The medium to full body showcases vibrant yet integrated acids with cushy tannins and a lingering tension. Add in a perfumed finish with a minerally touch, and it's hard to believe that 2018 Dominus has room to improve with age.

THE FINAL SIP:

Don't tell Jack Nicholson and Helen Hunt, but this is as good as it gets.

5-year returns:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
VINTAGE									
69.10%	60.00%	59.80%	41.30%	48.70%	51.70%	11%	36.80%	1.00%	32.50%



Dalle Valle Maya upholds Oakville's tradition of world-class wine. Accompanied by estates like Opus One, Screaming Eagle, and Promontory, this Bordeaux-style red blend has notched seven perfect scores since its debut. Even with a challenging vintage in 2017, this incarnation of 67% cabernet sauvignon and 33% cabernet franc demands a place in any wine cellar.

The terroir takes centerstage with earth, gravel, tar, and violets swirling amid a full body of black and blue fruits. Sensational freshness lifts the red blend as it floats across the palate. With bold flavors and immaculate balance, the essence of Oakville is on full display. But what makes 2017 Dalla Valle Maya truly special? The quantity. Normally, the estate releases 3,000 cases per year. However, wildfires in October limited production to a mere 800 cases.

THE FINAL SIP:

Even a challenging vintage couldn't stop Dalle Valle Maya from producing an awe-inspiring red blend in 2017.

5-year returns:

2002	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
VINTAGE									
-2.90%	37.10%	33%	13%	11.90%	6.70%	93%	2.50%	46.90%	21.80%



This Bordeaux-style red blend reflects Tim Mondavi's pursuit of the purest expression of Napa Valley. It utilizes fruit exclusively from his Pritchard Hill vineyard to ensure a singular focus. In the process, Continuum has amassed five perfect scores from critics, three more than contemporaries like Opus One.

The 2019 Continuum matches the grandeur of the momentous 2018 vintage. It features opulent waves of dark fruit, red berries, pine needles, graphite, cinnamon, and a splash of vanilla that evolves with time. With industry insiders declaring the 2019 vintage "excellent," everything has aligned just right for Continuum's continued success.

THE FINAL SIP:

Iconic producer. Iconic vineyard. Heaps of praise from critics. What more could you want from Continuum?

5-year returns:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
VINTAGE									
50.00%	-38.50%	58.30%	13.40%	-14.40%	38.80%	20.60%	13%	23.50%	



Stag's Leap Cask 23 hails from not one, but two revered Napa Valley vineyards. The cabernet sauvignon receives 56% of its fruit from Fay and 44% from Stag's Leap Vineyard. The result is a cohesive, refined wine that earned a place at the 1976 Judgment of Paris – a blind tasting in which California upset heavily favored France.

The 2016 Stag's Leap Cask 23 opens with black currants, blackberries, mocha, licorice, cherry liqueur, and hints of toasted nuts. Deep inside the garnet-purple body are polished tannins that play a supporting role to the concentrated fruit core. Note how the youthful and vibrant nose belies the subtle intensity of this cabernet sauvignon. Expect 2016 Stag's Leap Cask 23 to age well for three-plus decades.

THE FINAL SIP:

Stag's Leap is in peak form with this 2016 cabernet sauvignon. Don't just take our word for it. Only the legendary 2013 vintage has higher ratings from critics.

5-year returns:

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2012	2013
VINTAGE									
13.40%	161.30%	56.20%	56.30%	24%	1.00%	13%	-2%	16.10%	46.70%



4,000 CASES

2021 - 2051

 $\star\star\star$

The 2017 Napa Valley vintage was arduous, with wildfires appearing from early to mid-October. While the devastation impacted some wines, 2017 Spottswoode was not one of them. The team harvested all its fruit pre-fire. As a result, this red blend (89% cabernet sauvignon, 7% cabernet franc, and 4% petit verdot) showcases the qualities that have made St. Helena world famous.

This red wine is powerful yet soft-spoken. It has a rich, muscular body with decadent layers of crème de cassis, black currants, ripe plums, graphite, tobacco, cedar, and sage. The seamless ensemble strikes the palate with dazzling purity and glossy tannins, both hallmarks of the estate. Wine critic Jeb Dunnuck even compared its complexity and elegance to a Château Margaux.

THE FINAL SIP:

With comparisons to Château Margaux, 2017 Spottswoode belongs in the highest echelon of the investment-grade wine universe.

5-year returns:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
VINTAGE									
17%	140.40%	91.70%	37.50%	44.80%	48%	26.60%	17.90%	83%	122.50%



2016 Château Mouton Rothschild VINTAGE QUALITY ANNUAL RETURN ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 20,000 CASES AGING WINDOW CRITICAL ACCLAIM 100 Wine Advocate 100 Vinous 100 Jeb Dunnuck

Where do we even begin with 2016 Château Mouton Rothschild? This first-growth doesn't just come from an outstanding vintage. It is the standard by which all other Bordeaux was measured in 2016. It's powerful, concentrated, and utterly profound. With more magic than a Penn and Teller show, it should come as no surprise that 2016 Mouton Rothschild secured four perfect scores.

Even in youth, this colossus is goosebump-inducing. It contains a seamless blend of 83% cabernet sauvignon, 15% merlot, 1% petit verdot, and 1% cabernet franc. On the nose, 2016 Château Mouton Rothschild is explosive. Black and blue fruits, cocoa, anise, cherry liqueur, camphor, licorice, and violets form a towering structure along with a seductive mouthfeel and silky tannins. Blessed with classic construction, investors can expect this behemoth to age for two-thirds of a century.

THE FINAL SIP:

In the words of Jeb Dunnuck, "The 2016 Château Mouton Rothschild is the wine of the vintage from the Médoc and is a truly profound, magical, blockbuster wine in every sense."

5-year returns:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
VINTAGE									
20.50%	11.60%	18.70%	19.90%	19.30%	20.60%	35.00%	40.20%	34.90%	25.00%



Château Léoville-Las Cases has earned 12 perfect scores. Four of them come from the 2016 vintage alone. Glance at the reviews and it's easy to see why. Decanter's Jane Anson called it "the clear wine of the vintage." James Suckling posited that it's "probably better" than the historic 1986 vintage. And Jeb Dunnuck praised it as "a perfect example of the old saying 'an iron fist in a velvet glove.'"

The deep violet grand vin opens with alluring floral and spice notes that expand outward with time in the glass. The supremely silky body envelops the palate with integrated layers of blackberries, blueberries, black currants, cassis, licorice, graphite, tobacco, and herbs. Meanwhile, pinprick tannins and refreshing acids add roundness that crescendos into a monumental finish. For anyone wondering what makes Bordeaux the granddaddy of all wine regions, 2016 Château Léoville-Las Cases offers a resounding example.

THE FINAL SIP:

Four 100-point ratings. Decades of aging potential. Mind-blowing integration and purity. The 2016 Château Léoville-Las Cases screams investment-worthy.

5-year returns:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
VINTAGE									
10.60%	16.30%	20.40%	10.50%	11.20%	15.70%	12.30%	24.20%	31%	23.60%



Château Ausone is widely considered one of the finest producers in Saint-Émiltion and with good reason. Its flagship wine is stunning. The sand and clay on limestone soil contribute to a clear expression of terroir with concentrated fruit flavors, tangy acids, and forward mineral characteristics.

The 2016 Château Ausone features equal parts merlot and cabernet franc aged in 80% new oak barrels. The resulting grand vin leads with confidence, flaunting a full body of dark berries, spice, lavender, and wildflowers. While the red blend has a commanding presence with prominent muscularity, it manages to stay graceful and poised on the palate. Expect 2016 Château Ausone to hit its stride shortly and keep for a half-century.

THE FINAL SIP:

With only 2,000 cases made annually, the demand for the stunning 2016 Château Ausone is bound to exceed supply.

5-year returns:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
VINTAGE									
23.70%	12%	-4.10%	38.60%	13.80%	23.60%	-16.50%	0.00%	2.40%	15.90%





Pause everything because 2016 Château Cos d'Estournel is a true showstopper. The blend of 76% cabernet sauvignon, 23% merlot, and 1% cabernet franc displays seductive aromas, unbridled energy, and depth that rivals the Mariana Trench. The above-average amount of merlot contributes to impeccable fruity purity and a gorgeous structure that promises to reward investors for four to five decades.

The secret to success lies in Château Cos d'Estournel's name. Cos translates to a "hill of pebbles," a reference to the well-draining soils responsible for its ultra-ripe fruit. At the core, this red features blackberries, blueberries, cassis, graphite, lavender, tea, and cherry liqueur with a spice-laden finish that lingers for more than a minute. Lisa Perrotti-Brown was one of three critics to give 2016 Château Cos d'Estournel a perfect score. To end her review, she wrote simply, "Just. Magic."

THE FINAL SIP:

Not only is 2016 Château Cos d'Estournel one of the best wines of the vintage, but it's also distinct with more merlot than other Bordeaux red blends.

5-year returns:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
VINTAGE									
28.30%	29%	34.20%	33%	9.90%	28%	36.90%	30.70%	24.30%	21.80%



Is this the best Château Bélair-Monange to date? Wine critic Neal Martin thinks so. He lauded the red blend (92% merlot and 8% cabernet franc) as "an accomplished, riveting Saint-Émilion" en route to a 97-point rating. Martin isn't alone. Lisa Perrotti-Brown and Jane Anson gave it identical scores, while James Suckling awarded 2016 Château Bélair-Monange a 99-point rating.

Get ready to roll out the red carpet. From the beginning, 2016 Château Bélair-Monange parades around like a movie star. Dazzling aromas of red and black fruits, mocha, wildflowers, tea, cinnamon, tobacco, and camphor captivate the senses while juicy tannins lend balance to the blend. Meanwhile, the limestone of Saint-Émilion adds lift to a finish that resonances for eons. Hold this genie in the bottle for upward of four decades.

THE FINAL SIP:

The 2016 Château Bélair-Monange might be this red blend's finest iteration and a reason why the estate ranks among the top wineries of Saint-Émilion.

5-year returns:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
VINTAGE									
-9.50%	-6%	4.20%	38.90%	20.20%	23.80%	26.30%	11.80%	16%	-6.20%



If 2016 Château Mouton Rothschild is the highlight of the vintage, then 2016 Château Montrose is the runner-up. The Bordeaux red blend displays exquisite balance and enticing aromas of spice and freshly cut flowers. Don't let the elegant opening fool you, though. This red packs enough power that Kanye West wrote a song about it. (How Kanye wrote "Power" in 2010 before this wine was released is beyond us.)

The blend weaves together 68% cabernet sauvignon, 25% merlot, and 7% cabernet franc. After aging in 60% new French oak, it erupts with layers of black fruits, underbrush, graphite, crème de cassis, and smoke. A lean muscularity defines the body while a concentrated core and balletic grace lead into a magical finish. In his review, wine critic Jeb Dunnuck awarded it a 100-point rating, writing, "The 2016 Château Montrose is a monument in the making."

THE FINAL SIP:

Those searching for Bordeaux's from the 2016 vintage will want to put this magical red blend from Château Montrose on their shortlist.

5-year returns:

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
VINTAGE									
25.50%	21.10%	17.50%	14.70%	11%	-3.30%	28.30%	25.60%	19.70%	7.40%



Which region will sell out first? See for yourself.



Tuesday, May 17 1 PM EST / 10 AM PST

