

GLOBAL ICONS

Renowned and respected vintners—
from home and abroad—attend the Naples
Winter Wine Festival, celebrating and
contributing to its twenty-fifth year

By Larissa Hanson



SUGGESTED SIP

2019 *Chateau Montelena Estate* CABERNET SAUVIGNON, \$200

Perfume hits your nose as you first raise your glass, and the scent of plums and cherries is joined by fresh floral notes and lavender. With time, spicy, woody notes of sandalwood, vanilla, and even black pepper develop, always balanced by a core of deep black fruit.



The Naples Winter Wine Festival has always thought big, and with almost \$302 million raised supporting children's education and health care programs, the impact within our community has been beyond significant. A bonus for local oenophiles has been unprecedented access to a range of the world's finest—and most famous—wines and winemakers. Celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary this year, the festival continues to attract internationally acclaimed wineries, including three beloved vintners who will, once again, attend this year.

California Classic: CHATEAU MONTELENA

There is a bottle of 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay on display at the Smithsonian. Why? In the 1970s, Napa was not taken seriously as a wine-producing region until a fateful tasting, now known as the Judgement of Paris. In 1976 the top wine professionals in France—including sommeliers from the most famous Paris restaurants and even the

editor of *La Revue du vin de France* (the United States' version of *Wine Spectator*)—blind-tasted a series of wines. Nominally Napa took first place in both the red and white categories. Quel scandale for the French and the rest of the wine world, as America bested many revered names in Burgundy and Bordeaux.

This pivotal moment put Chateau Mon-

telena and the remainder of Napa on the world map of viticulture. Today, Chateau Montelena, which also makes excellent Cabernets, flies a bit under the radar compared to many of the "cult Cab" labels that have followed. It remains authentic and as old guard as it gets for this region.

In 2016, the winery donated a live auction lot to the Naples Winter Wine Festival to honor the fortieth anniversary of the famous Paris tasting. CEO Bo Barrett said they're back this year because he could not think of a better way

to kick off the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary. Montelena's live auction lot at the festival—in collaboration with Chopard—includes exclusive experiences in Napa and Los Angeles, as well as two coveted spots at the fiftieth anniversary celebration of The Judgement of Paris in Napa next year. "We're honored to be a part of one of the world's most prestigious wine auctions while supporting causes that make a big difference in the lives of children and families," says Barrett.





ALESSIA ANTINORI

Super Tuscany MARCHESI ANTINORI

The Antinori family can trace its history all the way back to 1385, and its influence on both the Italian and international wine communities has been both deep and wide. Even with this strong heritage, tradition has not stifled progression or innovation.

Marchesi Antinori played a large part in the Super Tuscan revolution of the 1970s, choosing to craft wines using international grapes, most notably Cabernet Sauvignon (versus historic Italian varieties), making it ineligible to carry classical origin-affirming indications, including DOC and DOCG, on their labels. Persistence paid off, however, and a wave of boldly modern wines proudly carrying the IGT (typical geographic indication) created an exciting new category of Italian wine.

Marchese Piero Antinori first participated in the Naples Winter Wine Festival

in 2004; today, the winery is enthusiastically represented by his daughter, Alessia Antinori, and her sisters. Alessia says the festival is important to her not only due to the wonderful time she has attending but also because she can feel the deep commitment to the community. "Being a family-owned business for 26 generations, we have been taught from a very young age to give back and not to take for granted what we have received," she says. Antinori digs deep into back vintages and works hard to craft distinctive offerings for the festival. In addition to rare selections from its wineries spanning the globe, Antinori's live auction lot will offer an eight-night exploration of its estates, which are closed to the public. Beginning in Florence, the winning bidders will make their way through Chianti Classico and Umbria before a grand finish in Rome.

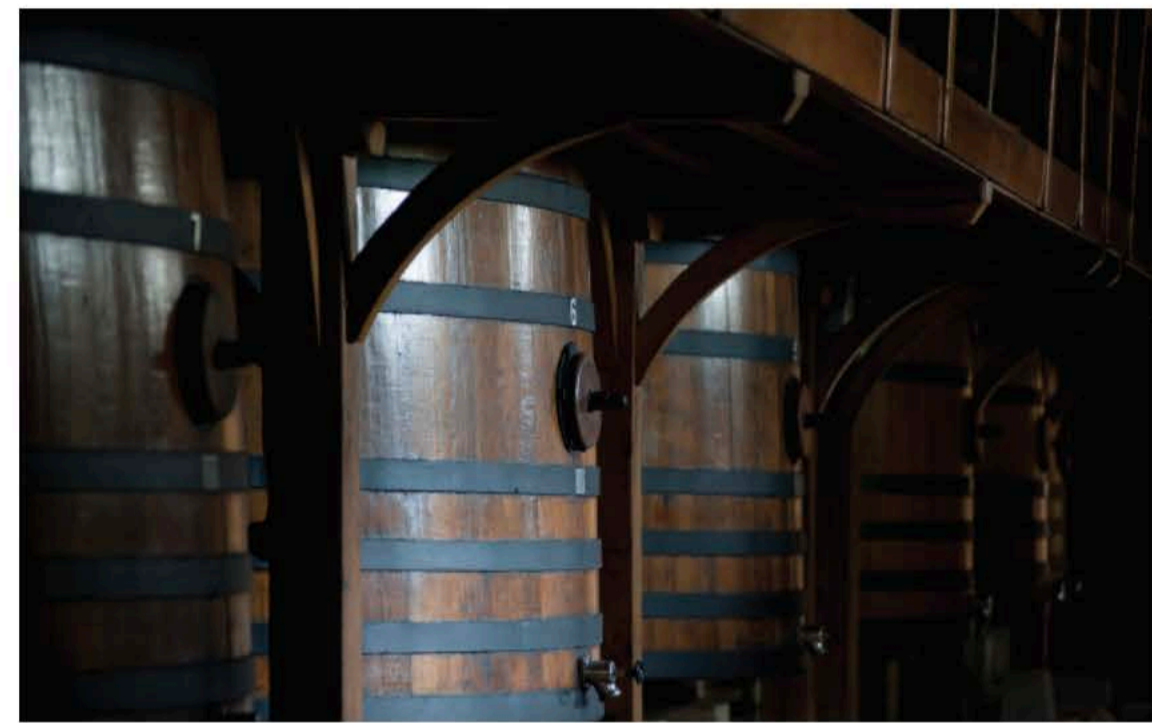
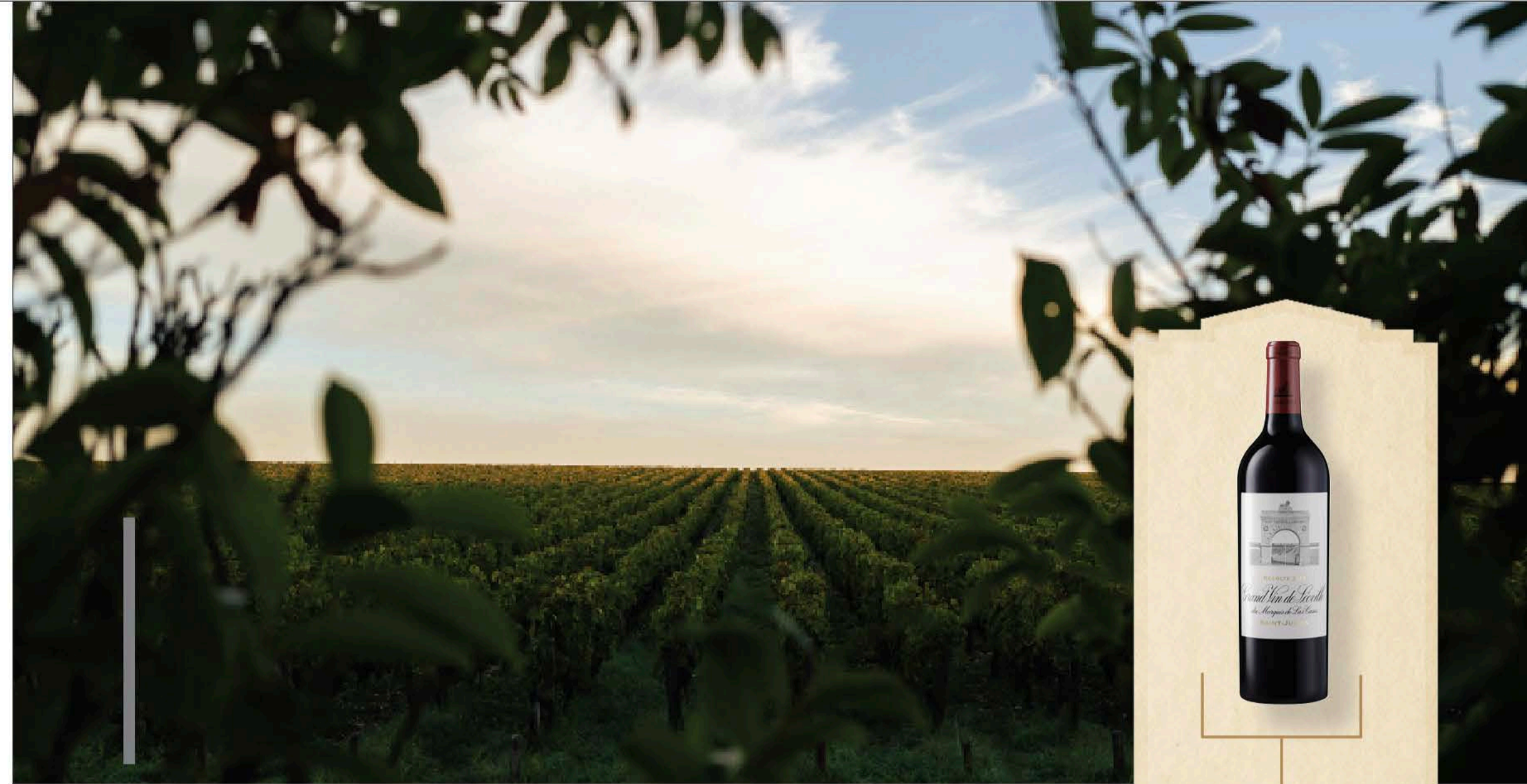


SUGGESTED SIP

2021 *Marchesi Antinori Tignanello*, \$180

The current release of this historic wine marks the fiftieth anniversary of its inception in 1971. Opening with fruit notes of blackberry and orange peel, rich, complex aromas of dark chocolate, sweet tobacco, caramel, and licorice unfold on the long finish.





Left Bank Bordeaux:
CHÂTEAU LÉOVILLE LAS CASES

When a conversation turns to Bordeaux, this question inevitably follows: “right or left?” Right refers to the area east of the Dordogne, while left signals land west of this river. In the time of Napoleon III, the left (west) bank was considered superior and the only one worth mentioning. In anticipation of his Universal Exposition in Paris the emperor charged his officials with ranking the wineries of France. The 1855 Bordeaux classification included just 58 wineries. Château Léoville Las Cases, located in the left region of course, landed near the top of that list, officially honoring it as one of the best wines in the country.

Though almost two centuries old, the 1855 classification continues to have tremendous influence on the perception and prices of Bordeaux wines. Founded in 1638, Château Léoville Las Cases in Saint-Julien has partnered with highly esteemed Acker Wines, the oldest wine merchant in the United States (dating back to the early 1800s), to create a luxurious inside-access trip to both Bordeaux and Rioja. However, the star attraction for collectors will likely be the big bottles. A five-liter jeroboam (vintage 1988) and several additional large formats of equally sought-after vintages are expected to make this a top lot this year. <<



SUGGESTED SIP

2015 *Château Léoville Las Cases*, \$290

This wine is dense, full-bodied, and focused. Elegant black currant and blueberry are balanced by licorice and mineral notes. Releases from top Bordeaux houses do sell out quickly, but this vintage can still be found online.

