

# WELCOME FROM THE PUBLISHER



To my subscribers and friends,

## TAKE NOTICE, I AM MISSING HUGE PARTIES TODAY

This is a special weekend in Napa Valley. The Winter Barrel Auction, **Premiere Napa Valley** as well as Meadowood **Wine Writers Symposium** are in full swing and I have missed the first couple days of activities not because I am sick or out of the country. No, it is solely because I am working on the assembly of what you are reading. To me, it is not a question of doing anything else; my commitment to subscribers needs to come first.

## GROWTH and FEEDBACK

With every volume that I publish I see more adoption of what I write. Recently the trend has been toward the print subscription and I am gratified that those subscribers appreciate the quality at that level. I guess the heavy pollination of PR copies got the message out there. Even for me, when I actually hold one in my hands after the printer sends them back, I'm pretty pleased. The time and expense of producing it is unquestionably worthwhile when I consider that nothing else out there comes close. One subscriber who has a background in advertising called it "**Gastronomica for Wine**". That is high praise indeed. I don't think I am quite there yet, but from the very first issue the intention was to make pdwr a state of the art experience from the online version where I use the issuu.com presentation software, to the hardcopy edition custom printed on 80# paper with 600 dpi images of the new wines I have been sampling. To look like everything else out there was a nonstarter. I still spend a couple hours a week researching publishing platforms ready to see where it will migrate next.

## BOOTS ON THE GROUND

With the influx of restaurant and retail buyers in the valley this week trying to maximize their contact time with wineries, I am confident that it won't be long until the valley settles back into its bucolic winter downtime and I can actually get some work done. There are several new producers I want to meet with soon and I know that to do it well takes time, which brings me to this volume.

## WHAT IS INSIDE?

In the following pages you will read about over 100 current and upcoming releases of wines primarily from the North Coast Appellation. In a lot of instances these will be the first reviews published on these wines, surely more of my fellow critics will weigh in soon but subscribers regularly tell me that they read me primarily because I am usually first to market with opinion. That settles it! **Arnot-Roberts, Bevan, Donum, Drew, Eric Kent, Kosta Browne, Ladd Cellars and Wren Hop** get their first new release looks here. On top of that, there are two producers that have never been talked about receiving their first reviews ever from purely domestic wine report; **Lüscher Ballard**, a tiny 100 case estate on Spring Mountain made by **John and Alex Kongsgaard**, and **Macdonald Vineyards**, a sub 100 case estate produced from nearly sixty year-old own-rooted vines grown in the original To-Kalon dirt. How good is it? They made the cover, didn't they?

Thank you again for your continued support of purely domestic wine report and most especially, your encouragement.

doug wilder | wine critic + publisher | pdwr

## ONE MORE THING

There is a very good chance that soon the subscriber experience will be migrating to Squarespace 6 [www.squarespace.com](http://www.squarespace.com) as they have finally built out some of the functionality I need, plus they now offer a seamlessly integrated pay portal that will allow one less step to subscribing to the only dedicated independent domestic wine review publication. I can't say enough good things about Squarespace. They have been an immense part of the first couple years as pdwr was in development and launch.

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about the images | all images shot with iphone 4 and post-processed with the camera+ application.  
[front cover] Macdonald Vineyard with Alex and Graeme Macdonald among the ancient block | Oakville 2013

# purely domestic wine report

## RATING SYSTEM + TASTING REGIMEN

The purely domestic wine report is built around a tasting note as well as a rating on a scale ranging from 80 – 100 points. It is important to consider both the review and the rating together. I believe there are wines that will score lower, however it is exceedingly rare that commercially produced domestic wine will rate lower than 80 points, and if it does, I will note the wine entry as <80. It is my intent to dedicate space to the wines I feel merit attention of my readers. Wines that are noticeably corked may be re-tasted, noted with NR (not reviewed). The remainder of the scale is interpreted as follows:

- 97 - 100** Extraordinary example showing the pinnacle of complexity, concentration and structure.
- 94 - 96** Excellent example showing concentration and complexity and structure.
- 89 - 93** Very good example showing solid character adding substantial interest
- 85 - 88** Good example I would be proud to serve with casual dining
- 80 - 84** Technical, well made example meeting the basic qualification for serviceable wines

As I use the 100-point scale, my basis is 50 points. Additional points will be assigned as follows:

- 0-5 points for color
- 0-15 points for aroma
- 0-15 points for palate
- 0-15 points for overall impression weighted on the other criteria

Wines tasted prior to release, not labeled, yet come with reasonable assurances that they represent either the final, or a close approximation to the final wine are reviewed over a fairly broad 3 point range, ex (91 - 93).

**(BT\*, \*\*, \*\*\*)** – for wines tasted in barrel, they rarely represent the final product and will be viewed broadly when discussed at all

**\$V** – shows value higher than its price – it may be a \$90 wine that tastes better than \$120 wine, as easily as a \$15 that tastes like a \$20.

A (+) added to the rating indicates my expectation the wine will continue to improve beyond the rating, ex: (92+)

**NR** – not rated (typically used for wines showing TCA) I will make attempts to re-taste, but serves to indicate that a wine in fact was opened.

As much as possible, wine will be tasted in either my Napa Valley or San Francisco offices. Generally, I do not taste blind preferring instead to experience the wine, as any consumer would reasonably expect. Unless stated otherwise, all wines reviewed were provided as professional samples. Below is an example of a tasting note and the breakdown of how to read it.

### 94 2008 De Sante White Wine, L'Atelier \$V

Napa Valley, 12.9% 400 cs., 70SB|30SM, \$24

Yellow-green in the glass with aromas of lemon peel, dry mineral, dried sweet hay, nectarine, vanilla and jasmine. Crisp and fresh palate entry, with a citrus-flecked backbone kicking in a little oiliness on the finish.

Consistently one of my favorite SB blends. Sourced from the certified organic Yountmill Vineyard, the Semillon is off a 45 year old, head-pruned block, with the Sauvignon from a 36 year-old, cane-pruned block.

Drink 2011 – 2013. [www.desantewines.com](http://www.desantewines.com)

#### Line 1 includes:

Rating (color coded for white, rose, red wine)  
Vintage Producer Type of Wine *Proprietary Name*  
Value wine designator (as applicable)

#### Line 2 includes

Appellation and sub-Appellation  
Vineyard  
Alcohol level %  
Case production in 9L equiv. usually abbreviated as (cs.)  
Varietal composition breakdown (using table to the right)  
Retail price in USD

#### Lines 3 - x

Tasting note, evaluation and comment  
Last line typically includes recommended drink dates as well as winery website for direct contact

AB – ALICANTE BOUSCHET  
AL – ALBARINO  
BH – BLACK HAMBURGH  
CS – CABERNET SAUVIGNON  
CF – CABERNET FRANC  
CG – CARIGNANE  
CH – CHARDONNAY  
CN – CINSULT  
CU – COUNOISE  
GO – GRACIANO  
GB – GRENACHE BLANC  
GR – GRENACHE  
GW – GEWURZTRAMINER  
MB – MALBEC  
MO – MONASTRELL  
MR – MERLOT  
MS – MARSANNE  
MU – MUSCAT (OR MUSCADELLE)  
MV – MOURVEDRE  
OM – ORANGE MUSCAT  
PB – PICPOUL BLANC  
PG – PINOT GRIS (GRIGIO)  
PN – PINOT NOIR  
PS – PETITE SIRAH  
PV – PETITE VERDOT  
RG – RIBOLLA GIALLA  
RS – ROUSSANNE  
SB – SAUVIGNON BLANC  
SG – SAGRANTINO  
SM – SEMILLON  
SN – SANGIOVESE  
SR – SYRAH  
SY – SYMPHONY  
TC – TINTO CAO  
TF – TOCAI FRULIANO  
TG – TOURIGA  
TN – TANNAT  
TO – TEMPRANILLO  
TR – TOURIGA FRANCA  
VE – VERDELHO  
VG – VIOGNIER  
WR – WHITE RIESLING  
ZN – ZINFANDEL

# MACDONALD VINEYARDS | PREMIERE RELEASE



OAKVILLE, February 2013 | What you are about to read is a story that began nearly two centuries ago and illustrates the rich farming heritage that makes Napa Valley one of the most unique places on earth. Ultimately it gets around to the two guys sitting on the porch, brothers, Alex (l) and Graeme (r) Macdonald.

THIS PROPERTY IS PART OF ONE OF THE MOST HISTORIC TRACTS IN AMERICAN WINE-GROWING HISTORY AND IS NOW NO LONGER A SECRET. – DOUG WILDER FEBRUARY 22, 2013

## THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

When George Yount established his land holdings of nearly 12000 acres at Rancho Caymus he did so as the first European settler in Napa Valley having arrived in 1831. Following his death in 1865, vineyards owned by his family caught the eye of winemaking neighbor, H.W. Crabb who originated To-Kalon as the name for his vineyard. The grapes from this site helped produce awards for Crabb at the 1899 Paris World's Fair, and the Bordeaux Viticultural Exposition in 1895. Crabb went on to develop a compound in Oakville covering over two acres producing wine and brandy to the tune of 800000 gallons.

## THE PROPERTY TRANSITIONS

The last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was not kind to Napa Valley or H.W. Crabb. The root louse, Phylloxera, infected the vines of the Yount property along with the rest of the valley. In 1910, the Yount heirs sold the vineyard to steel tycoon, D P Doak who ripped out the vines and planted what many considered to be the largest cherry orchard in the nation. He built his home just above the valley floor, what is now the Carmelite Monastery. In 1927, the property was offered to President Coolidge as the summer White House and was declined in favor of the Black Hills of South Dakota. Coolidge is reported to have confided to a friend when close to death "I feel I no longer fit in with these times." Perhaps he was kicking himself for passing up a summer in Napa Valley?

## THE COMPANY YOU KEEP

In 1954, the brothers' great grandparents purchased a portion of the former Doak property and planted the first post-prohibition vines in Oakville. Initially they had no intention to grow grapes, however, the seller, Caroline Stelling, insisted that they take the existing vineyard, planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Chenin Blanc and Johannisberg Riesling with the former farm worker house. They soon settled into an agreement with Charles Krug Winery's Bob Mondavi that continued into the mid sixties. Back then their great uncle wrote up the first three-year grape purchase contract at a set price, only to see prices nearly double the following vintage. Much to his surprise when the check arrived the next year, it accounted for the prevailing market price, as did the payment for the following year that also experienced higher prices. After the founding of Robert Mondavi winery in 1966, half of the fruit that had previously gone to Krug now went next door to Bob who eventually ended up getting most of it with the grapes going into the early vintages of Opus One, as well as the Reserve and To-Kalon bottlings. For half a century grape purchases were done with Bob Mondavi on a simple handshake. In 2004, Graeme Macdonald, former assistant to Abe Schoener's Scholium Project, made the first experimental wine from the family estate.

## PRESENT DAY

After the initial trial was successful, Graeme made a commercial level wine in 2008 and retained for personal consumption. Less than a barrel of the 2009 vintage was made and will be available to the earliest adopters to the mailing list. These vintages will be the first created exclusively from the estate, unblended. Working together with brother Alex Macdonald who manages the business and sales aspects, Graeme also controls the Vineyard Management side. Just over a half-acre of the original 1954 vines remain (see cover). Half of the 15-acre vineyard was planted in 1973 with an additional half-acre of dry farmed vines added in 1982. A little more than six acres of Clone 4 Cabernet Sauvignon went in during the mid – nineties. The clonal selection(s) of the older vines is not documented but would have been chosen by the Macdonald's grandfather, or great-grandparents. No herbicides have been used on the vineyard for over two decades and is essentially organically farmed with This property is part of one of the most historic tracts in American wine-growing history and is now no longer a secret. To get on the mailing list go to the winery website. [www.macdonaldvineyards.com](http://www.macdonaldvineyards.com) I spent an entire morning with Graeme and Alex at the estate recently walking the vineyards and tasting the wines at the kitchen table. From what I observed, learned and tasted, **I have no doubt that this brand will quickly establish itself as one of the most sought-after wines from Oakville.** One of the things Graeme mentioned to me about their philosophy on establishing relationships with their early adopters was something he learned from Schoener at Scholium who created a program simply called 53 to recognize the first fifty-three people to sign up to his mailing list. To this day, they have special status. It isn't lost on me that when Scholium Project launched, I wrote the first reviews. Now I find myself back in that same breach with his protégé doing it all over again. You read it here first.

## 95 2009 Macdonald Cabernet Sauvignon

Oakville, 22 cases produced, \$inquire  
All free run juice and underwent a 35-day maceration. Shows deep shadings of black currant and forest floor with fig and black walnut. It spent 24 months in a Darnajou puncheon and was racked once. Has a beautiful palate entry, pristine and focused showing initially bright red berry and stone fruit coating the mouth with currant, black walnut and cedar on the finish. Drink 2014 – 2028. Only available to first round of purchasers.

## 94 2010 Macdonald Cabernet Sauvignon

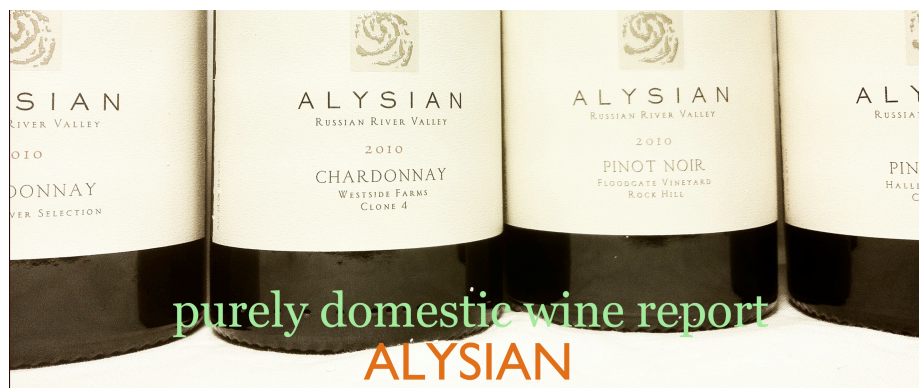
Oakville, 92 cases produced, \$inquire  
I tried two distinct samples, both decanted, but the last one had gone 18 hours. The following notes are a composite of these two examples. Blackberry verve, walnuts and menthol, taking on more carbon and blue fruit with air. Fine-grained tannins imbue the deeply saturated chocolate, menthol, carbon and blackberry flavors with a backbone worthy of at least a couple decades of cellaring. Drink 2014 – 2030. Fall 2013 release.

# CALIFORNIA NORTH COAST

I enjoy the challenge and discovery of sitting down and tasting through all of the regions I write about but arguably the most expansive and diverse AVA is California's North Coast. It covers six counties and nearly fifty other AVA are included within its boundaries covering three million acres. The region is home to more than 800 wineries stretching from Marin to Mendocino, and east from the Pacific all the way to Solano. Each area has something that can be considered a specialty yet even within that framework, wines of the same grape may be vastly different.

After volume 2.1 concentrated on Napa Valley, also part of the North Coast, you will find this issue heavily weighted to Sonoma and Mendocino, the source for some excellent Pinot Noir. Several are from what is called the "True Sonoma Coast" and exhibit an emerging philosophy to emphasize balance instead of overt extraction. Some excellent examples from throughout the state ranging from 12 – 13 percent alcohol are here, led by Drew, Siduri, Vellum and Arnot-Roberts. It is interesting to compare them with other wines of the same variety with alcohols over 14.5 percent. There are a couple prolific tastings inside, with the eagerly anticipated Kosta Browne and Novy + Siduri reviews. Lastly I am very excited to be the first critic to taste the vertical from Lüscher Ballard and of course, the cover story on Macdonald. Being first to review wines like this reminds me that a lot of what gets written about isn't really new.

Looking forward to volume 2.3, I am leaning heavily toward a comprehensive look at the Pacific Northwest including Walla Walla, Columbia Valley and Willamette Valley. It has been way too long.



## 89 2010 Alysian Chardonnay

Russian River Valley, 14.2%, 607 cs., \$36

The nose has aromas of lemon, pear, crushed rocks and salt. On the well-built palate is a supple, polished lemon and nut core finishing with a firm acid backbone. Drink 2013 – 2016. [www.alsianwines.com](http://www.alsianwines.com)

## 88 2010 Alysian Chardonnay

Russian River Valley, Westside Farms Clone 4, 14%, 158 cs., \$40

The nose is delicate *pain grilee* with lemon and mineral. On the palate there is dense, polished lemon, key lime, leas and grain. Drink 2013 – 2016.

## 93 2010 Alysian Pinot Noir

Russian River Valley, Floodgate Vineyard Rock Hill 13.3%, 158 cs., \$55

An alluring translucent color with a beautiful nose of lavender, violet, carbon and cherry. The palate is supple, delicate with violet and graphite leading to a beautifully textured finish. Drink 2013 – 2019.

## 94 2010 Alysian Pinot Noir

Russian River Valley, Hallberg Vineyard Crossroads 13.5%, 156 cs., \$55

Dense aromas of cherry and purple herbs. The palate reminds of cherry, spice box and carbon with a lean, delicate character yet full bodied. Drink 2013 – 2019.



2011	TROUSSEAU – LUCHSINGER VINEYARD	CLEAR LAKE	12.3%	300 cs.	92	\$30 \$V
2011	CHARDONNAY – WATSON RANCH	NAPA VALLEY	13.0%	250 cs.	95	\$30 \$V
2011	WHITE WINE – COMPAGNI-PORTIS VINEYARD, OLD VINE	SONOMA VALLEY	13.5%		92	\$30 \$V
2011	SYRAH	NORTH COAST	12.9%	475 cs.	91	\$35 \$V
2011	SYRAH – GRIFFIN'S LAIR VINEYARD	SONOMA COAST	13.2%	135 cs.	92	\$55 \$V
2010	CABERNET SAUVIGNON – BUGAY VINEYARD	SONOMA COUNTY	12.8%	145 cs.	93	\$85 \$V
2010	CABERNET SAUVIGNON – FELLOW RANCH	SANTA CRUZ MTN	14.2%	130 cs.	93	\$85 \$V

**2011 Trousseau, Luchsinger Vineyard** is a translucent, glowing strawberry-orange that reminds me of the glow of a sunset. The nose is delicate with hints of marzipan, salt and raspberry with faint blossoms. The palate is primarily texture-focused with subtle shadings of red fruit and well-balanced acidity with a whisper of lilac on the finish. This is my first experience with Trousseau and I couldn't stop going back to it. Beautiful wine. Drink 2013 – 2015. **2011 Chardonnay Watson Ranch** is a brilliant pale gold with a faint green hue. The nose is saline, lemon and pear. The palate is bright and balanced in a fresh yet understated way. What is on the finish comes off as refreshingly delicious, clean and light as a feather. Impeccably made. Drink 2013 – 2017. **2011 White Wine Compagni-Portis Vineyard** is sourced from a mixed white vineyard planted in 1954 and farmed by Phil Coturri, organically. Average tonnage of the Gewurztraminer, Riesling, Sylvaner, Trousseau Gris, and others is less than a ton per acre. The vineyard came to my attention with Morgan Twain Peterson's 2010 Bedrock Wine Company bottling. It shows an exotic nose of nuts, dried tree fruit, berry, sweet hay and honey. The palate is ripe and spicy with essences of dried fruit and an overall restrained elegance. Has a unique, thought-provoking profile. Drink 2013 – 2017. **2011 Syrah North Coast** is dark ruby-edged purple in color with solid aromatics of camphor, plum and blueberry. The mouth is initially tightly wound yet with airing develops a mouth-coating, tactile velvet-like quality with camphor, currant, plum and carbon. Let it rest and drink 2014 – 2019. **2011 Syrah Griffin's Lair** is sourced from one of the benchmark sites for Sonoma Coast Syrah. A dense, saturated purple in the glass, the nose reveals copiously deep black and blue fruits, carbon and black pepper. Following a thirty-minute decant the palate offers a supple entry to a well-textured mélange of smooth black fruits. However, the sturdy backbone informs that this wine is still in its infancy and patience is suggested. Drink 2015 – 2020.

**2010 Cabernet Sauvignon Bugay Vineyard** is very dark in color with a nose of pure blackberry along with hints of lavender and sandalwood. The palate is round with abundant ripe blackberry and beautifully formed balance. Like all of the wines in the Arnot-Roberts portfolio tasted here, they exhibit a fine understanding of how to achieve structure and balance. Drink 2013 – 2020. The **2010 Cabernet Sauvignon Fellow Ranch** is dark purple in color with a nose of spice box and warm, ripe blackberry and elderberry with a trace of carbon. In the mouth, the wine is round, ripe and polished blackberry, with traces of tobacco and currant within a finely wrought, elegant structure. Drink 2013 – 2021. [www.arnotroberts.com](http://www.arnotroberts.com)



## 9 | 2010 Beekeeper Zinfandel

Sonoma County, Rockpile, Madrone Springs Vineyard, 15.4%, 109 cs., \$64

The nose shows chocolate, ripe plum and blackberry tart, currant and savory tapenade. The palate gains with air to show some bright red fruit with smooth, sweet berry on the finish. Nicely put together, shows no apparent heat and a persistent, round fruitiness. Drink 2013 – 2018.

[www.beekeepercellars.com](http://www.beekeepercellars.com)



2010	RED WINE ONTOGENY
2010	RED WINE OSCAR SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN
2010	RED WINE THE IMPETUS DECRESZENZO / TENCH VINEYARD
2009	RED WINE EE SHOWKET VINEYARD, OAKVILLE

NAPA VALLEY	14.1%	265 cs.	<b>92</b>	\$64
NAPA VALLEY	14.4%	385 cs.	<b>93</b>	\$150
NORTH COAST	14.0%	40 cs.	<b>94</b>	\$150
NAPA VALLEY	14.7%	285 cs.	<b>93</b>	\$150

Serving as the warm up to the Russell Bevan portfolio is **2010 Red Wine Ontogeny** offering a nose of plump, ripe blackberry, brownie, cocoa powder with an overlay of beautiful blue fruit. The palate has firm entry yet is awash in an interesting amalgam of flavor impressions including carbon, hard cherry, tactile smooth plum and blueberry on the finish, with a flash of spice. Drink 2013 – 2019.

*Once you move up to the flagship wines, there is an immediate recognition that these wines are going to be very young and in need of significant decant time, or prolonged aging. When tasting with Russell and Victoria at the winery, Russell mentioned that he had double decanted the wines prior to my appointment. I took another set of fresh unopened bottles back to my studio for tasting privately. I didn't follow the express double decant protocol, however I left the wines open to air for 24 hours after I initially pulled corks. The notes below offer a composite of impressions at all three stages. doug wilder*

**2010 Proprietary Red Wine Oscar** offers up a bold, slightly sappy nose with shadings of cinnamon spice, chocolate and graphite. The palate delivers a firm entry of blackberry and carbon with a deep underlying structure of dense currant, plum and spice box accent to the pliable, smooth finish. Drink 2015 – 2025. **2010 Proprietary Red Wine Decrescenzo/Tench Vineyards The Impetus** combines Bennett Valley and Oakville fruit sources, respectively. It shows bright aromatics with underlying chocolate, salt and black cherry. The palate is full and accessible with a robust, youthful appeal. There is good grip on the mid-palate with saturated, fine-grained tannins accompanying a beautiful mélange of dark fruits on the palate creating a compelling complex wine. Still incredibly youthful. Drink 2015 – 2030. **2009 Red Wine Showket Vineyard EE** has a very dense nose of black plum, currant, and blueberry with bright highlights of crushed dark berries. The palate is balanced with a velvet-like structure. Firm and centered throughout the mid-palate, it is restrained and elegant in presentation. Should age for two decades. Drink 2015 – 2030.

[www.bevancellars.com](http://www.bevancellars.com)

## 92 2010 Calluna Red Wine CVC

Chalk Hill, 14.1%, 44MR|36CS|09CF|06MB|05PV, \$TBD

An herbal nose, with a firm, dark berry presence underneath. The palate has a youthful edge of carbon and some well-structured black fruits with some herbal nuances. Drink 2014 – 2022.

## 91 2010 Calluna Merlot Aux Raynauds

Chalk Hill, 14.2%, 83MR|17CF, \$TBD

Herb and cherry nose with a bit of menthol and dark fruits. The palate is dense and firm yet yields some polished, smoky blackberry and cherry emerging on the finish. Drink 2014 – 2019.

## 92 2009 Calluna Cabernet Sauvignon

**The Colonel's Vineyard**

Chalk Hill, 14.1%, 125 cs., \$TBD

The nose is fairly low key with olive, currant, some purple herbs and salt. The palate is also a little reticent yet shows a deep complex core of velvety black fruits, chocolate with fine-grained tannins. Drink 2014 – 2020.

## 91 2009 Calluna Red Wine Estate

Chalk Hill, 14.3%, 375 cs.

40CS|38MR|08CF|08PV|06MB, \$50

Nose has some round tobacco, camphor and black fruits. The palate is polished and bright on entry with a reticent mid-palate that slowly begins to pickup more depth with air. Nicely textured wine. Drink 2014 – 2019. [www.callunavineyards.com](http://www.callunavineyards.com)

## 91 2011 Castello di Amorosa Gioia

California, Rosato of Sangiovese, 13.1%, 1642 cs., \$24

Shows a bright, herbal nose with a sappy strong undercurrent of strawberry. The palate is nicely balanced with juicy raspberry along with soft dewy lilac and violet character. On the mid-palate, some crisp acidity and supple texture. Enjoyable at room temperature, chilling adds a little overall brightness. A beautiful wine for casual drinking virtually guaranteed to disappear. Drink 2013 – 2014. [www.castellodiamorosa.com](http://www.castellodiamorosa.com)

## 87 2009 Castello di Amorosa Sangiovese

Napa Valley, 14.5%, 3531 cs., \$30

Not much in the nose initially, grows with airing to show concentrated cherry, chocolate and espresso. The palate is a little flat on entry but provides some pretty deep mid-palate impressions with a fairly rustic mouth feel through the finish. Drink 2013 – 2017.

## 88 2008 Castello di Amorosa Red Wine La Castellana

Napa Valley, 14.6%, 1634 cs., 66CS|18MR|16SN, \$68  
Carbon and bright pomegranate and strawberry in the nose, the palate is smooth and polished blackberry and cherry with hints of cranberry on the finish. It is well put together as virtually every wine from this producer. Drink 2013 – 2017.

## 91 2009 Coho Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, Diamond Mountain District, Summit Vine Ranch, 14.8%, 678 cs. \$55

Carbon, brownies and blackberry nose with some sweet spice box elements. The palate is very full and rich with dense blackberry, plum and spice. Easily approachable now but has a substantial backbone of acidity. Decant six hours. Drink 2013 -2022. [www.cohowines.com](http://www.cohowines.com)

## 88 2009 Coho Merlot

Napa Valley, Michael Black Vineyard, 14.9%, 331 cs. \$55

Bright, centered cherry and red currant aromas with a backdrop of licorice. The palate is smooth cherry, loam and plum along with blackberry and lychee. This is another Coho that will benefit from a long decant or sliding into a rack for 16 – 24 months. Drink 2014 – 2018.

## 87 2009 Coho Red Wine Headwaters

Napa Valley, 14.7%, 2971 cs., 66CS|32MR|02PV, \$42  
Sappy notes of black/blue fruits in the nose with a palate showing some orange, and tangerine elements with firm tannins on the finish that overshadow the round fruit in the mid-palate. Drink 2014 – 2019.

## 87 2011 Conspire Sauvignon Blanc

Napa Valley, Rutherford, 13.4%, 267 cs. 50SB|50SM, \$28

An all-stainless fermentation, sur lies aged for five months. Shows classic, ripe dewy Musque clone nose backed by lime, salt and gravel. The palate is textured stone fruit with some earth and dried citrus. Drink 2013 – 2015. Made by Amy Aiken of Meander. [www.meanderwines.com](http://www.meanderwines.com)

## 94 2010 Donum Pinot Noir Reserve

Russian River Valley, Estate, 14.5%, tbd cs., \$TBD  
Dark purple color, the nose is complex, polished camphor, black plum, cola and graphite with an underscore of blue and black berries. The palate is quite complex with black plum, rich texture, smooth and supple cola and roasted blackberry. The finish is juicy blueberry with overtures of carbon and solid acidity. Drink 2013 – 2018.

[www.thedonumestate.com](http://www.thedonumestate.com)

## 93 2010 Donum Pinot Noir

Russian River Valley, Estate, 14.5%, tbd cs., \$TBD  
The nose has a rose petal, carbon and dark plum character. The mouth is velvety with a seamless impression of dark berries and dark stone fruits, cola bean, flower blossoms and herb. Showing beautifully integrated acidity. Drink 2013- 2018.

## 94 2010 Donum Pinot Noir

Carneros, Estate, 14.5%, tbd cs., \$TBD  
Offers a nose of herb, cherry and carbon with deep underlying structure. The palate is supple, ripe cherry with spicy blueberry, dried herbs with an overall smooth focus. It is a beautiful forward wine with a lot to like. Drink 2013 – 2017.







- 2011 PINOT NOIR GATEKEEPERS
- 2011 PINOT NOIR McDougall Ranch Vineyard
- 2011 PINOT NOIR Morning Dew Vineyard
- 2011 PINOT NOIR Weir Vineyard
- 2011 SYRAH Valenti Vineyard
- 2011 SYRAH Perli Vineyard

ANDERSON VALLEY	12.3%	370 cs.	\$28	91
SONOMA COAST	14.3%	50 cs.	\$50	92
ANDERSON VALLEY	12.6%	150 cs.	\$48	91
YORKVILLE HIGHLANDS	13.3%	99 cs.	\$42	93
MENDOCINO RIDGE	12.8%	100 cs.	\$40	88
MENDOCINO RIDGE	13.0%	120 cs.	\$40	89

**2011 Pinot Noir Gatekeepers** has a nose of mint, cherry followed by lilac blossoms and graphite. The palate is delicate and textured and holds flavors of red berries, rose hips and graphite through the core. The finish is bone dry with a fine silkiness to the acidity on the finish. Drink 2013 – 2018. **2011 Pinot Noir McDougall Vineyard** has hard aromas of carbon with underlying blue fruit and hint of salt. Has a broad palate impression, the palate is round and ripe dark fruits with a trace of honey and bright red raspberry on the finish. Drink 2013 – 2018. **2011 Pinot Noir Morning Dew Vineyard** has a somewhat softer nose of sassafras, cherry and spice box. The palate is bright, fresh and delicate offering raspberry, hard cherry, a little graphite and nectarine skin, with fine texture and length. Drink 2013 – 2018. **2011 Pinot Noir Weir Vineyard** is focused into a somewhat narrow nose of plum, cherry and graphite. The palate is a little closed at first opening to some crisp red fruit, graphite and mineral with lots of vitality. The finish is smoothly integrated and elegant, sneaky delicious. Drink 2014 – 2019. **2011 Syrah Valenti Vineyard** has a nose of black pepper and blossoms. The palate is smooth, lean and focused. The finish gets more complete with air offering firm black fruit and pepper. Drink 2014 – 2019. **2011 Syrah Perli Vineyard** has a nose of carbon, black pepper with some hints of sweet vanilla and blossoms; classic Syrah. It is full on the palate with round, mouth-coating flavors of grilled meats, black pepper and violets. The finish gets more integrated the longer the wine is exposed to air. Decant for a couple hours if opening over the next couple years. Drink 2015 – 2022. [www.drewwines.com](http://www.drewwines.com)

## 90 2010 Eric Kent Chardonnay

Sonoma Coast, 14.3%, 145 cs., \$40  
 Has a leesy, nutty, mineral and citrus nose with a good amount of length. The palate is fairly lean and shows a firm mid-palate texture of dried lemon and mineral. It gains with air, showing more rich pineapple. Drink 2013 – 2016. [www.eric Kentwines.com](http://www.eric Kentwines.com)

## 91 2010 Eric Kent Pinot Noir

Russian River Valley, Stiling Vineyard, 14.6%, 222 cs., \$48  
 The nose is boldly stroked sappy red currant and dried cherry aromas primarily with some underlying sassafras. The palate is medium weight with smooth flavors of cherry, currant and graphite. Tasted over several hours, the wine gains substantially. Drink 2013 – 2017.

## 91 2010 Eric Kent Syrah Kalen's Big Boy Blend

Sonoma County, 14.6%, 191 cs., \$42  
 Has a deep nose of blackberry and elderberry with traces of bright blue plum, pepper and camphor. The palate is full and rich on entry with deep black fruits on the mid palate getting a little dry on the finish. Needs time. Drink 2015 – 2021.

## 88 2010 Gamble Sauvignon Blanc

Yountville, Gamble Vineyard, 13.5%, 2350 cs., \$32  
Aromas of chalk, key lime, toasted vanilla bean and dried lemon. There is quite a bit of acid on the front of the palate coupled with a bit of round, licorice-kissed stone fruit. Chilling helps the wine express a little more centered acidity and focus. Drink 2013 – 2016.

[www.gamblefamilyvineyards.com](http://www.gamblefamilyvineyards.com)

## 89 2010 Gamble Sauvignon Blanc Heart

### **Block**

Yountville, Gamble Vineyard, 13.1%, 150 cs., \$60  
The nose is heady and very ripe going for the hyper dense, nutty oxidized style. Try it chilled to maximize the rich extraction on the palate. Drink 2013 – 2016.

## 89 2008 Gamble Red Wine Paramount

Napa Valley, 14.3%, 565 cs., 38MR|31CS|2CF|04PV, \$32

Warm, full-bodied fruit aromas of red currant, menthol and cherry. The palate entry is smooth, exuding ripeness. The texture is mouth coating with tactile acidity on the finish along with some pretty herbal impression. Benefits from some air, recommend 30 – 60 minute decant. Drink 2014 – 2019.

## 91 2008 Gamble Cabernet Sauvignon

Oakville, Family Home, 14.4%, 480 cs., \$75

A dense black fruit nose with a bit of spice box along with licorice and salt. The palate is deep and lush black and blue fruit on entry with hints of carbon, rounded, lush tannins and menthol. Drink 2013 – 2019.

## 88+ 2010 Gamble Cabernet Sauvignon

### **Cairo**

Oakville, 13.9%, 210 cs., \$115

Comprised of 100% clone 337. The nose is high-toned and primary black currant. On the mouth entry, I find brightness to the red-centered fruit and underneath, some firm black fruits that are going to take time to evolve. In the previous vintage, I noted many of the same characteristics when I gave the 2009 a somewhat higher score. Everything I know about this producer and the vintage suggests the wine will improve with time. Drink 2015 – 2022.

*The wines of Chateau Boswell are included below with Jacquelynn, both from Josh and Jacquelynn Peebles – doug*

## 91 2010 Chateau Boswell Chardonnay

Russian River Valley, Ritchie Vineyard, 14.3%, 336 cs. \$85

This is a gorgeous wine! The nose is lush with pineapple, citrus, pear and jasmine. The palate offers pear tart, dried lemon with well-integrated sweet oak and fairly low acidity. Drink 2013 – 2016.

[www.chateauboswellwinery.com](http://www.chateauboswellwinery.com)

## 93 2010 Chateau Boswell Chardonnay

Russian River Valley, Rued Vineyard, 14.3%, 168 cs. \$NA

From old vine cuttings, the nose is delicate chamomile, softly textured lemon and jasmine with lean and subtle aromas. On the palate the wine delivers a pure, elegant jasmine, pear and toasted grains. Drink 2013 – 2017.

## 90 2010 Jacquelynn White Wine Cuvee

### **Blanc**

Sonoma County, 14.5%, 465 cs., 50SB|50SM, \$45

Has a very aromatic, powerful nose of white peach, honey, grains and citrus oil. The palate has solid heft on entry with a mid-palate of salt, toasted grain and silky traces of peach and mineral. Drink 2013 – 2016.

## 89+ 2010 Jacquelynn Cabernet Sauvignon

Oakville, 15.4%, 190 cs., \$175

Sourced from To-Kalon and Missouri Hopper, the nose is elderberry and black currant with underlying smoke and mint. The palate is lush with nice texture of mocha, black currant and licorice. The mid palate leading to the finish gets a little tight and will likely improve with age. Drink 2015 – 2020.

## 90 2011 Jemrose Viognier

Bennett Valley, Egret Pond Vineyard, 13.5%, 270 cs., \$32

Beautiful white flowers in the nose with a little lemon and spice. The palate is soft and creamy with a smooth backbone of honey, stone fruit flesh and mineral. Crisp and refreshing on the finish. Drink 2013 – 2015.

[www.jemrosewines.com](http://www.jemrosewines.com)

## 90 2010 Kathryn Kennedy Red Wine Lateral

Napa Valley, 14.4%, 76MR|24CF, \$NA

A fragrant, herb-laced nose of lavender, sandalwood and spicy currant. The palate has some deep weight that makes a powerful impression of saturated berry, herb and earth. Drink 2013 – 2019. [www.kathrynkennedywinery.com](http://www.kathrynkennedywinery.com)



2011	CHARDONNAY ONE SIXTEEN	RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY	14.5%	2191 cs.	\$58	88
2010	PINOT NOIR	RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY	14.6%	4525 cs.	\$58	92
2010	PINOT NOIR	SONOMA COAST	14.4%	4940 cs.	\$58	92
2010	PINOT NOIR	SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS	14.5%	768 cs.	\$58	90
2010	PINOT NOIR KANZLER VINEYARD	SONOMA COAST	14.8%	458 cs.	\$78	93
2010	PINOT NOIR KEEFER VINEYARD	RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY	14.3%	1177 cs.	\$78	94
2010	PINOT NOIR KOPLER VINEYARD	RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY	14.4%	780 cs.	\$78	93
2010	PINOT NOIR GAP'S CROWN VINEYARD	SONOMA COAST	14.5%	1615 cs.	\$78	93
2010	PINOT NOIR GARYS' VINEYARD	SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS	14.7%	404 cs.	\$78	93
2010	PINOT NOIR PISONI VINEYARD	SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS	14.8%	154 cs.	\$78	94
2010	PINOT NOIR ROSELLA'S VINEYARD	SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS	14.7%	351 cs.	\$78	94
2010	PINOT NOIR 4 BARREL	CALIFORNIA	14.8%	98 cs.	\$78	94

**2011 Chardonnay One Sixteen** is sourced from six sites along the Highway 116 [Gravenstein] corridor near Sebastopol. It is green-yellow in color with fresh lemon, lime and mineral nose with some oily viscosity to the tropical, pineapple traces. It tastes of very straightforward lemon and other citrus on the palate with toasty oak [40% new] and a leesy vanilla backdrop on the finish. Drink 2013 – 2016.

**2010 Pinot Noir Russian River Valley** is sourced from eleven vineyards including Keefer and Koplen. It has a nose of ripe dark cherry, shadings of herb and graphite with some soft floral notes. The palate is smooth cherry and spice with well-rounded acidity and a long finish of spice and cola.

Drink 2013 – 2017. **2010 Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast** is comprised of three sites, including Gap's Crown. It has a flinty nose of cola, cherry and spice. The palate is firm, flinty up front with solid structure, blue fruit with cherry, graphite and spice on the mid palate. Finishes beautifully. Drink 2013 – 2018. **2010 Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands** comes from five sites including Garys', Rosella's and Pisoni, along with Sierra Mar and **Soberanes**, my nominee for the next SLH single vineyard wine - I loved this component out of barrel in 2012 with Shane Finley. It has a big, rich nose with black currant, cola and spice box. The palate is very smooth and offers immediate richly textured ripeness. The wine finishes with some bright red fruit, along with echoes of flowers and spice. Drink 2013 – 2018. **NOTE: THE FOLLOWING WINES ARE SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE IN FALL 2013**

**2010 Pinot Noir Kanzler Vineyard** is very richly focused nose of cherry, black pepper, cedar and flower blossoms. The palate is full-bodied and richly proportioned offering violet, fig and crunchy red apple. Excellent acidity throughout gives the wine an overall vitality. Drink 2013 – 2019. **2010 Pinot Noir Keefer Vineyard** has plenty of bright dark berry and black plum in the nose with supple entry and beautiful length to the palate of berry and sassafras. It is an impeccably pure example of Russian River Pinot Noir. Drink 2013 – 2019.

**2010 Pinot Noir Koplen Vineyard** has a nose of cedar, rose hips, cherry, pomegranate and lavender with a very clean impression. The palate seems initially tight yet the well-defined linear character of spice, berry and cherry along with licorice and cola tells me that all this wine needs is another twelve months. 2014 – 2019. **2010 Pinot Noir Gap's Crown Vineyard** has a nose of brilliant blue fruits, graphite, cherry and blackberry. The palate is beautifully vibrant and polished with plenty of graphite, and blackberry in the mid palate with a softer impression of blossoms and licorice on the finish. Drink 2013 – 2019.

**2010 Pinot Noir Garys' Vineyard** is comprised of 25% whole cluster fruit. A nose of spicy cherry and subtle shadings of fragrant red and black fruits. The palate is smooth and supple with a creamy mid-palate. This is a beautiful wine with excellent mouth feel through the finish. Drink 2014 – 2019. **2010 Pinot Noir Pisoni Vineyard** has a deeply polished nose of black cherry, carbon, salt and game. The palate is pretty robust with golden stone fruit peel on the entry. Has beautiful length and definition. Rich black fruit, carbon and sappy berry come across on the finish with whiffs of lilac and violet. Drink 2014 – 2020. **2010 Pinot Noir Rosella's Vineyard** has a nose of dark berry, cherry and creamy red berries, along with hints of blossoms. The palate is well balanced with a bit of delicate bright strawberry, pomegranate and cinnamon/clove on the finish. Drink 2014 – 2019. **2010 Pinot Noir 4 Barrel** is comprised of equal parts Gap's Crown 667, Kanzler 115, Garys' Pisoni and Keefer Pommard/115. It has a nose that opens with orange, plum, currant and spice. The palate is beautifully formed on entry with lush, smooth berry and fig. On the midpalate to the finish I find more carbon, blueberry and white pepper. Drink 2014 – 2019. [www.kostabrowne.com](http://www.kostabrowne.com)



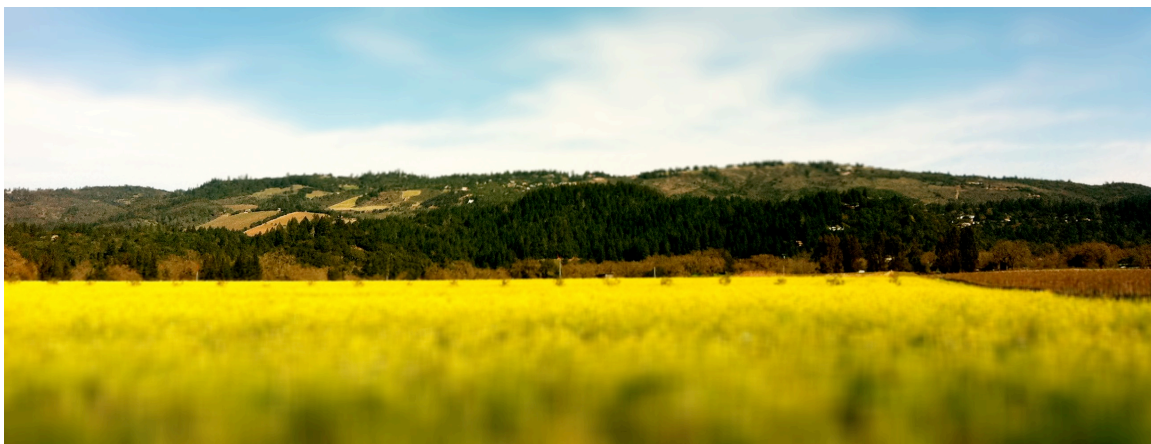
2008 PINOT NOIR  
 2009 PINOT NOIR ‡  
 2009 PINOT NOIR ‡  
 2009 PINOT NOIR ‡  
 2009 PINOT NOIR MOORE RANCH Δ  
 2009 PINOT NOIR CUVEÉ ABIGAIL Δ  
 ‡ SPRING 2013 RELEASE, Δ LATE SUMMER 2013 RELEASE

RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY	14.1%	180 cs	\$30	89
ANDERSON VALLEY	14.9%	110 cs.	\$31	89
SONOMA COAST	14.9%	130 cs.	\$31	89
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY	13.7%	160 cs.	\$31	90
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY	13.8%	115 cs.	\$38	91
SONOMA COUNTY	14.5%	110 cs.	\$38	90

**2008 Pinot Noir Russian River Valley** has a deep, bright and complex nose of herb and sassafras with tobacco and graphite. The palate of strawberry, cherry, and purple herbs has a solid structure. Nice balanced with some spicy mineral and graphite on the finish. Drink 2013 – 2018. **2009 Pinot Noir Anderson Valley** has surprisingly big, rich aromas of spiced plum, cherry and strawberry. The palate is solid and displays balanced ripeness with dark red fruits and spicy length. Drink 2013 – 2018. **2009 Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast** has a bright nose with well-focused intensity. Some earthiness comes through in the form of loam and forest floor along with some stone fruits, with good length. The expansive palate brings in rich blue fruits, supple texture and balance. Drink 2013 – 2017.

**2009 Pinot Noir Russian River Valley** has a well-balanced nose of black cherry, deep plum and graphite. The palate is firm and precise delivering well-formed currant, berry and stone fruit flavors. It shows excellent vitality and length with violet and lavender on the finish. Drink 2013 – 2017. **2009 Pinot Noir Moore Ranch** has pretty aromatics of herb, berry, plum and blueberry. The palate is lively and vibrant with polished berry, graphite and herb. It is a very easy wine to like, with good acidity and an overall vibrancy. Drink 2013 – 2018. **2009 Pinot Noir Cuvée Abigail** has a distinctive dark berry nose of old world fruits. The palate is pure, polished and extracted with berry, soft purple herb, graphite and slightly smoky sassafras. Nice mouth feel. Drink 2013 – 2018.

[www.laddcellars.com](http://www.laddcellars.com)



Late Winter Mustard, Napa Valley 2012



2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON ESTATE
2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON ESTATE {Fall 2013 release}
2009	CABERNET SAUVIGNON ESTATE [Fall 2014 release]
2010	CABERNET SAUVIGNON ESTATE [Fall 2015 release]

SPRING MOUNTAIN	14.1%	100 cs	\$75	93
SPRING MOUNTAIN	14.1%	100 cs.	\$80	90
SPRING MOUNTAIN	14.1%	100 cs.	\$80	93
SPRING MOUNTAIN	14.1%	100 cs.	\$80	94

I realize that the image above isn't what you normally expect to see when I feature a wine in pdwr. That is okay. I will show you the label shortly. The reason I chose *ivy gate, spring mountain 2013* is because after scheduling an appointment to visit a previously unknown estate and taste their wines, this is where the directions led me to, a dead end facing a massive ivy hedge. After closer inspection I realized it was simply a gate, a well-camouflaged portal to essentially the unknown on the other side.

First, let me explain how I came to be here in the first place then I will tell you why it is a story you should know about. Sometimes I meet new producers at larger tastings while others come to me by friends, or winemakers, research or just being in the right place. In November of last year I received an email from an importer called **Carl Studer** in Lucerne, Switzerland looking for new domestic producers. I went to their impressive, well designed website and quickly located the domestic list. What I found was quite unexpected; rather than names like Silver Oak, Opus One or Caymus, I find a complete unknown; **Lüscher Ballard**. A visit to the winery website revealed very little beyond the basics, but a couple things that caught my eye were the names of the winemakers, **John and Alex Kongsgaard**. The other was that the production was extremely small. That was enough to make me interested in arranging a visit. The directions brought me to the hedge/gate and the home and vineyard beyond where I met **Christina Ballard and her husband Carroll**. We sat at their kitchen table for three hours tasting the wines. The vineyard is primarily planted to clone 337 Cabernet Sauvignon and release customarily occurs following 20 – 24 months in barrel, followed by two years in bottle. There is extremely narrow distribution on this wine and I encourage you to become acquainted with their mailing list. [www.luscher-ballard.com](http://www.luscher-ballard.com)

### 93 2007 Lüscher Ballard Cabernet Sauvignon

Spring Mountain, Estate, 14.1%, 50 cs., \$75  
 A nose of spice box, currant, sweet dates and a bit of chocolate-mocha. The palate is beautifully polished fruit with an intense and focused vitality of blackberry and red currant. Drink 2013 – 2022. PREMIERE RELEASE **SOLDOUT**

### 90 2008 Lüscher Ballard Cabernet Sauvignon

Spring Mountain, Estate, 14.1%, 100 cs., \$80  
 The nose is soft and supple with hints of lilac and light wood smoke. On the palate, flavors are smooth and redolent of juicy blackberry with a good backbone of tannin. Although a little more firmness is evident, it is a fine example from the property. Drink 2014 – 2020.

### 93 2009 Lüscher Ballard Cabernet Sauvignon

Spring Mountain, Estate, 14.1%, 100 cs., \$80  
 The nose is dark currant and blackberry with some exciting undercurrent of red berry and herbs. The palate has beautiful balance and persistence in the mouth with an unusually smooth and precise feel. The tannins are supple and fine-grained. Drink 2015 – 2026

### 94 2010 Lüscher Ballard Cabernet Sauvignon

Spring Mountain, Estate, 14.1%, 100 cs., \$80  
 An enticing nose of herb and bramble with java and chocolate underneath along with spice box elements. The palate is powerfully built blackberry, herb and lavender with lush round richness. Drink 2016 – 2027.



## 83 2008 Madorom Merlot

Napa Valley, 14.7%, \$50

The nose is a dark mélange of elderberry and blackberry with traces of currant. The palate is very smooth and polished on entry yet the rough, prickly finish feels disconnected and obtuse. The supple core may attract some admirers, but even after opened for several hours, the finish didn't come together. [www.madorom.com](http://www.madorom.com)

## 93 2010 Maldonado Chardonnay

Napa Valley, Los Olivos Vineyard, 14.5%, 790 cs., \$42  
Maldonado is long a producer of one of my favorite Chardonnay, originally made by Abe Schoener of Scholium Project. Brilliant amber color, the nose is bright toasted lemon and pear with saline-flecked core grains. The palate is smooth and has a stony-mineral with hints of clove and warm baked pear tart and traces of mint. Solidly built with nice overall balance. Even better on the second day. Drink 2013 – 2016. [www.maldonadovineyards.com](http://www.maldonadovineyards.com)

## 90 2010 Maldonado Chardonnay

Sonoma County, Parr Vineyard, 14.4%, 645 cs., \$32  
Bright amber color with lemon, pear and toast in the nose. The palate is softer, heavier and a little sweeter than the Los Olivos yet provides a long and richly polished finish while retaining good acid structure. Drink 2013 – 2016.

## 85 2008 Maldonado Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, 14.5%, 900 cs., \$55

Shows an immediate plume of black currant and chocolate in the nose along with some ripe, spiced plum. The plum becomes a little pruny in the mouth and dominates the palate driving a dry streak through the otherwise plump and polished flavors. Shows a little simple and chewy on the finish with some green quality. I was hoping for a price closer to \$40. Drink 2013 – 2016.

## 88 2009 Maldonado Proprietary Red Wine

Napa Valley, 14.5%, 985 cs., \$38

Deep purple color in the glass with aromas of dark currant, berry and hints of herb. The palate is soft and ripe with a round flavor profile, finishing with smooth blackberry. Solid, yet seems a bit too ordinary. Well priced for more casual enjoyment. Drink 2013 – 2016.

## 90 2007 Meander Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, 14.7%, 333 cs., \$65

Sourced 50/50 from Morisoli and Lewelling Vineyards it has a nose of spicy cherry, red berry and mint with a backbone of firm graphite and shadings of sweet spices. There is some forward, ripe fruit on the palate that slides down effortlessly into smooth, broad expressions of spiced currant and plum with well-integrated texture and a mature character to the flavors. Drink 2013 – 2018. [www.meanderwines.com](http://www.meanderwines.com)

## 91 2008 Meander Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, 15.2%, 445 cs., \$65

Sourced 50/50 from Morisoli and Lewelling Vineyards, it has a sultry saturated nose of polished dark fruits with an edge of bright, extracted concentration. The palate is immediately smooth and forward showing off softly round black fruits with hints of menthol. Very nice wine. Drink 2013 – 2019.

## 93 2007 Meander Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, Morisoli Vineyard, 15.2%, 40 cs., \$120  
Has an alluring nose of lavender, chocolate and espresso with underlying vibrant black fruits. The palate delivers a powerful baked blackberry, mocha and spice box quality along with well-structured tannins. Beautiful wine. Drink 2014 – 2022.

## 92 2009 Patland Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, Stagecoach Vineyard, 14.8%, 375 cs., 90CS|10MB, \$90

Deep, smooth black fruits in the nose with plenty of tobacco, blackberry and lavender. The palate has some deep, sappy and spicy black currant and berry. Excellent texture with nice length and grip, very well put together. Cedar and tobacco on the finish. Drink 2013 – 2019. [www.patlandvineyards.com](http://www.patlandvineyards.com)

## 92 2009 Patland Red Wine Terra Del Cuore

Napa Valley, 14.8%, 255 cs., 65CS|20SR|15MB, \$60  
Has a pretty earthy nose with dark cherry, camphor and sweet underlying blackberry. The palate is quite forward and smooth with inviting lush shadings of mocha and tobacco on the back of the palate. The texture is a little rough but smoothes out with 30 minutes of air. Decant. Drink 2013 – 2019.

## 88 2010 Joseph Phelps Pinot Noir

Sonoma County, Freestone Vineyards, 13.5%, 2730 cs. \$55

High herbal content in the nose with graphite and cherry undertones, long and focused. It is a little lean and reticent on the palate through the finish. Improves overnight, but still leaves me wishing for more. Drink 2013 – 2016. [www.josephphelps.com](http://www.josephphelps.com)

## 89 2009 Phifer Pavitt Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, 14.5%, 513 cs. 98CS|02PV, \$80

'Date Night' has a nose of smooth, rich blackberry, spicy loam and warm dark tree fruits. The palate is dense with some hints of violet chocolate and plum, somewhat overshadowed by spicy oak. Drink 2014 – 2020. [www.phiferpavittwine.com](http://www.phiferpavittwine.com)

## 90 2011 Rudio Chardonnay

Carneros, Hyde Vineyard, 14.5%, 175 cs., \$50  
A nose of saline, lemon and rich gravel. The palate is creamy with refreshing lemon, toast and pear. Only 30% new oak, Drink 2013 – 2016. [www.rudiuswines.com](http://www.rudiuswines.com)

## 93 2009 Rudio Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, 14.8%, 398 cs., \$65  
Sourced from Panek and Boeschen Vineyards. Has pure blackberry, violet and plum in the nose. The palate is sumptuous blackberry, rich plum and well focused acidity. Drink 2014 – 2022.

## 93 2009 Rudio Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, Panek Vineyard 14.8%, 198 cs., \$85  
Black cherry and currant imbue the ripe and supple nose with plenty to like. The palate is a little firm on entry but with air gains a supple polish. Violets and mocha are found in the finish. Drink 2013 – 2022.

## 92 2009 Rudio Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, Oakville, 14.8%, 175 cs., \$65  
Dense, creamy and rich in the nose. The palate is spot on with a little herb and spice on the mid-palate. I like that it has a little earth in the core. Drink 2014 – 2022.

## 94 2009 Rudio Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, Panek Vineyard, 15.2%, 175 cs., \$85  
Has a very pretty nose of cherry, currant, carbon and juicy dark berries. The palate has a gorgeously polished core of violet, mocha and blackberry. Drink 2013 – 2024.

# NOVY+SIDURI

The wines of Adam and Dianna (Novy) Lee are reviewed here together. - Doug

## 89 2011 Novy Chardonnay

Russian River Valley, 13.5%, 427 cs., \$19  
A dry, leesy nose with a steely backbone. The palate is firm and fresh with a clean mid palate driven by direct yet low-key flavors. It is a very easy wine to enjoy on its own or pair with simple Spring or Summer menus. Drink 2013 – 2015. [www.siduri.com](http://www.siduri.com)

## 86 2011 Novy Red Wine Four Mile Creek

North Coast, 14.1%, 3691 cs., \$14  
Has a nice nose of blackberry tart along with a little sappiness and graphite. The palate is firmly packed dark fruit - berry, plum and fig. The finish shows nice length and grip, admirable for a wine of this price. Drink 2013 – 2015.

## 87 2011 Siduri Pinot Noir

Sonoma County, 13.1%, 1251 cs., \$22  
Has a very pretty floral lilac nose with delicate red fruits. The palate is very approachable and has soft acidity surrounding the flavors of hard cherries and salt through the mid palate, with the acidity becoming a little more prominent on the finish. Drink 2013 – 2015.

## 92 2011 Siduri Pinot Noir \$V

Sonoma Coast, 12.9%, 1252 cs., \$32  
Has a bright, floral blossom scented nose with deep red raspberry and crunchy cherry. The palate shows a lean understated mouth feel with floral and stem character. Good texture and light on its feet. Drink 2013 – 2018.

## 88 2011 Siduri Pinot Noir

Russian River Valley, 14.3%, 2434 cs., \$32  
The nose is soft flower blossoms and graphite with whiffs of white pepper. The palate is vivacious, clean and bright blue fruit, saline and soft, spice box cherry. Drink 2013 – 2015.

## 90 2011 Siduri Pinot Noir

Santa Lucia Highlands, 14.5%, 1333 cs., \$32  
Has a deeply polished nose of black fruits and raspberry. The palate is firm dark berries and well formed. Shows hints of salt and measured black fruits through the mid-palate, with solid texture. Drink 2013 – 2017.

## 91 2011 Siduri Pinot Noir

Sta. Rita Hills, 14.1%, 1070 cs., \$32  
Has a deep saturated nose of sappy cherry and lush berry with shadings of blossom. The palate is smooth black cherry with a velvet-like mouth-feel on the mid-palate. Nice flavors echo through the finish with dark stone fruits, herb, lavender and elderberry. Drink 2013 – 2018.

## 92 2011 Siduri Pinot Noir \$V

Russian River Valley, Parsons' Vineyard, 14.9%, 420 cs., \$49  
The nose is packed with cherry and raspberry with a dense, meaty quality. The palate is deeply textured and polished with black raspberry on the finish, abundantly smooth. Drink 2013 – 2018.

## 93 2011 Siduri Pinot Noir \$V

Russian River Valley, Ewald Vineyard, 14.9%, 149 cs., \$48  
Shows a nose of blue fruit and salt, along with faint blossoms. The palate shows a supple, velvet-like texture through the mid-palate to the finish. The wine is very well balanced and has an overall elegance to it. Drink 2013 – 2019.

## 92 2011 Siduri Pinot Noir

Sonoma Coast, Sonatera Vineyard, 13.2%, 307 cs., \$48

Has a nose of cherry, violet, mineral and faint whiffs of gardenia blossom. The palate is medium weight with solid cherry and blossoms. Nice texture on the mid-palate with a bit of cinnamon. It gains a lot in the glass that gives more floral and stem on the finish. I like this wine a lot. Drink 2013 – 2018.

## 92 2011 Siduri Pinot Noir

Santa Lucia Highlands, Sierra Mar Vineyard, 14.4%, 445 cs., \$52

A lush cherry and violet nose with a backbone of graphite and blackberry. The palate is smooth blossom and bright red fruits delivering a lot of mid-palate structure that continues to the finish. Drink 2013 – 2018.

## 88 2010 Novy Syrah

Napa Valley, 14.5%, 1256 cs., \$19

Black pepper, cherry and plum in the nose leads to a palate that is smooth and slightly waxy, yet delivers up sweet, supple blue fruits. A very solid wine. Drink 2013 – 2017.

## 90 2010 Novy Syrah

Santa Lucia Highlands, 13.9%, 901 cs., \$24

Has a deeply polished nose of black fruits and raspberry. The palate is firm dark berries and well formed. Shows hints of salt and measured black fruits through the mid-palate, with solid texture. Drink 2013 – 2017.

## 92 2011 Tor Chardonnay

Carneros, Hudson Vineyard, 14.8%, 140 cs., \$60  
All old Wente clone, the nose has a dense butter cream, lemon and mineral component. 70% new French oak imparts nicely integrated toast. The palate is beautifully formed with pristine mineral, blossom and lemon flavors. Drink 2013 – 2017.

## 92 2011 Tor Chardonnay Torchiana

Napa Valley, Beresini Vineyards, 14.7%, 200 cs., \$60  
All Hyde Vineyard Selection of Old Wente clone, 28 years old. A nose of delicate chamomile and honey along with a pristine palate of clean, persistent citrus and blossoms with well-integrated French oak. Drink 2013 – 2017.

## 94 2010 Tor Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, Yountville, Mast Vineyard, 14.6%, 275 cs., \$80

Has a nice nose of mint, violet and beautifully polished dark fruits and chocolate. Notably exotic. The palate is deftly balanced with well-saturated, polished black fruits. There is plenty concentration. Drink 2014 – 2022.

## 94 2010 Tor Cabernet Sauvignon

Oakville, Tierra Roja Vineyard, 14.7%, 300 cs., \$125

The nose is redolent of warm black fruits and spice/licorice. The palate follows with lush, polished blackberry, carbon and mineral. This vineyard has one of the most unique soil profiles around. Drink 2014 – 2025.

## 93 2010 Tor Cabernet Sauvignon

### Anniversary Cuvee

Oakville, To-Kalon Vineyard, 14.7%, 150 cs., \$150  
In recognition of winemaker Jeff Ames' 10th vintage at Tor, he had carte blanche to create a wine from any of the contracted vineyards. He chose Beckstoffer To-Kalon, split between Clone 6, and 337. The nose is densely packed chocolate and a myriad of black fruits including blackberry and plum. The palate offers waves of plum, currant and bittersweet chocolate with whiffs of blueberry and plum on the finish. Very well balanced and should evolve handsomely. Drink 2014 – 2025.

## 90 2010 Trombetta Pinot Noir

Sonoma Coast, Gap's Crown Vineyard, 14.8%, 600 cs., \$58

An opaque ruby purple in color, with a nose of strawberry, graphite and blue plum with underlying spice. The palate exudes sweet, extracted strawberry and blackberry with a firm backdrop of acidity, smooth texture on mid palate with spicy finish. Drink 2013 – 2018.

[www.trombettawines.com](http://www.trombettawines.com)

## 90 2011 Vellum White Wine White

Napa Valley, 12%, 125 cs., 80SB|20SM, \$38

There is quite a bit of gooseberry, bright and briary elements initially that turn more delicate and sublime with air. A core of bright, nicely textured lemon and mineral dominates the palate with clean acidity. Drink 2013 – 2015. [www.vellumwines.com](http://www.vellumwines.com)

## 92 2009 Vellum Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley, 13.8%, 1250 cs., \$65

Has a nicely defined nose of red currant and blackberry with velvety notes. The palate offers some very focused impressions of integrated and balanced black fruits, seamless acidity on the finish. A beautiful wine that is well worth seeking out. Give it an hour in a decanter. Drink 2013 – 2020.

## 89 2009 Vellum Red Wine Black

Napa Valley, 14.3%, 100 cs., 85PV|15CS, \$65

Dark berries and earth notes in the nose. The palate has a hard time emerging. Initially it is hard cherry and black currant until it softens up a bit. There are not many varietal Petite Verdot out there so it may deserve a little slack. Drink 2013 – 2020.





2010 CHARDONNAY TRIAL BY LIGHTNING  
 2010 CHARDONNAY REBELS & MARTYRS  
 2010 PINOT NOIR STOLEN CROWN  
 2010 PINOT NOIR SHRIVELED HAND  
 2010 PINOT NOIR THE FIRE MESSENGER

SONOMA COAST	14.4%	325 cs.	\$48	92
SONOMA COAST	14.5%	165 cs.	\$48	93
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY	14.6%	75 cs.	\$62	93
SONOMA COAST	14.8%	50 cs.	\$62	90
SONOMA COAST	14.6%	100 cs.	\$62	92

**2010 Chardonnay Trial by Lightning** is all Dijon 76 from Gap's Crown Vineyard aged in 100% new French oak. The color is yellow, with a slight green tint. The nose offers up lemon, gravel, beeswax and toasty oak. The palate is fresh and lean on entry, straightforward and delicate through the mid-palate and picks up smooth pear, clove and nicely textured oak. Give this wine another six months before trying. Even now it has a sixty-second finish. Drink 2013 – 2017. **2010 Chardonnay Rebels & Martyrs** is all Dijon 96 from Sun Chase Vineyard aged in 100% new French oak. The nose is round and sweet with hints of pear, jasmine and marzipan with undertones of flint and crisp lemon. The palate feels light at first yet with air fills out to a smooth, well balanced mid palate with restrained citrus and white/golden stone fruit. The oak in this wine is very hard to detect currently and may emerge later. I didn't miss it at all as the wine has fine, polished texture. Drink 2013 – 2017.

*A note about the above wines: Last year when tasting with winemaker Russell Bevan, he opted not to show them to me and was confident, even bullish that they would be worth the wait. I now agree with his decision. Doug*

**2010 Pinot Noir Stolen Crown** is all from Wren Hop Vineyard, and comprised of 667, 777, and 115 Dijon clones. The color is deeply extracted and the nose is exotic and scented with blueberry, jasmine, brown spices all leaning towards an opulent focus. The palate is saturated, polished ripeness with exotic fruit character. This is an intense experience throughout. Drink 2013 – 2018.

**2010 Pinot Noir Shriveled Hand** is once again showing dark, inky extraction for color. The nose is redolent of sandalwood, brown spice and blackberry tart. The palate is a bit lean on entry but picks up a smooth, smoky feel overall with hints of herb and supple currant. **2010 Pinot Noir The Fire Messenger** is Swan clone from Gap's Crown, and Wren Hop Vineyards. Along with Pommard and Wadesvil, this is one of my favorite clones for Pinot Noir. It is ruby-garnet in color, with a nose of cherry, sandalwood, spice box and licorice. The palate is round, focused and has plenty of cherry, violet, graphite and spice character to make the wine hard to put down. Drink 2013 – 2018. [www.wrenhop.com](http://www.wrenhop.com)

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# RESOURCE PAGE

As I started developing purely domestic wine report in Winter 2011 I knew that my focus of California, Oregon and Washington would be unique, yet I researched what else existed in the realm of wine criticism from independent writers. The following lists represents the best of what is out there with their specific specialties, in subscription bases, as well as free online journals.

## RECOMMENDED INDEPENDENT WINE CRITICS [SUBSCRIPTION-BASED] COVERING DOMESTIC WINE

NAME / HEADQUARTERS	OWNER / U.S. CRITICS	ISSUES PER YEAR	RATE	EXPERTISE	WEBSITE
PINOT REPORT / SONOMA	GREG WALTER (1)	12	\$75	CALIFORNIA PINOT NOIR	<a href="http://www.pinotreport.com">www.pinotreport.com</a>
RHONE REPORT / COLORADO	JEB DUNNICK (1)	6	\$60	RHONE VARIETIES - GLOBAL	<a href="http://www.therhonereport.com">www.therhonereport.com</a>
BURGHOUND / CALIFORNIA	ALLEN MEADOWS (1)	4	\$145	PINOT NOIR, MOSTLY FRANCE	<a href="http://www.burghound.com">www.burghound.com</a>
CONNOISSEURS' GUIDE / SF BAY	CHARLES OLKEN (2)	12	\$90	CALIFORNIA	<a href="http://www.cgw.com">www.cgw.com</a>
WINE ADVOCATE / MARYLAND	ROBERT PARKER (1)	6	\$99	GLOBAL	<a href="http://www.wineadvocate.com">www.wineadvocate.com</a>
ANTONIO GALLONI / NEW YORK	ANTONIO GALLONI (1)	?	?	GLOBAL	<a href="http://www.antoniojgalloni.com">www.antoniojgalloni.com</a>
INT'L WINE CELLAR / NEW YORK	STEPHEN TANZER (2)	6	\$95	GLOBAL	<a href="http://www.wineaccess.com">www.wineaccess.com</a>

## RECOMMENDED ONLINE WINE JOURNAL WRITERS WHO COVER DOMESTIC WINE

NAME	WRITER	ISSUES PER YEAR	RATE	EXPERTISE	WEBSITE
NEW YORK CORK REPORT	LENN THOMPSON	DAILY	FREE	NEW YORK WINES	<a href="http://www.newyorkcorkreport.com">www.newyorkcorkreport.com</a>
STEVE HEIMOFF	STEVE HEIMOFF	DAILY	FREE	CALIFORNIA WINES	<a href="http://www.steveheimoff.com">www.steveheimoff.com</a>
TERROIRIST	DAVID WHITE	DAILY	FREE	GLOBAL	<a href="http://www.terroirist.com">www.terroirist.com</a>
R J ON WINE	RICHARD JENNINGS	VARIES	FREE	GLOBAL	<a href="http://www.rjonwine.com">www.rjonwine.com</a>

I regularly get asked where I would recommend my readers to go when they are looking for specific services related to wine, whether it be purchasing, collection management, storage or authentication. I have always held these service providers in high regard.

## RECOMMENDED SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR WINE IN CALIFORNIA

NAME	LOCATION	EXPERTISE	WEBSITE
VINFOLIO	SAN FRANCISCO	RETAIL, STORAGE, CELLAR MANAGEMENT, AUCTION	<a href="http://www.vinfolio.com">www.vinfolio.com</a>
750 WINES	ST. HELENA	SPECIALTY RETAILER OF EMERGING DOMESTIC WINES + PRIVATE TASTING	<a href="http://www.750wines.com">www.750wines.com</a>
55 DEGREES	ST. HELENA	STORAGE AND SHIPPING	<a href="http://www.55degrees.com">www.55degrees.com</a>
CHAI CONSULTING	SAN FRANCISCO	WINE AUTHENTICATION, EDUCATION, APPRAISAL	<a href="http://www.chaiconsulting.com">www.chaiconsulting.com</a>

