

# Wine Spectator's

July 19, 2023

# Insider Weekly

A First Look at Our Editors' Most Exciting New Wines

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## California

Cabernet Sauvignon & Blends

### 34 Showstopping California Cabernets

There's a gap coming in the wine supply channel as many California Cabernet bottlings take a hiatus due to the wildfire-ravaged 2020 season. One simple way to work around that is to plumb the late-release 2019s and 2018s. These are two superb but distinctive vintages, as the 2019s offer pure, unadulterated fruit and 2018s tend to show a bit more tannic spine and deeper growls of *terroir*.

There are some real Insider wines in this batch of releases: Chris Phelps' day job is the in-house winemaker for Inglenook. But his Ad Vinum bottling, sourced from the Sleeping Lady vineyard in Yountville, Calif., is a throwback-styled Cabernet that rewards cellaring. And 2020 isn't a complete write-off: Pinot Noir specialist Etude offers a very overlooked Cabernet program headlined by its Oakville bottling, which is made using grapes from the famed Vine Hill Ranch vineyard.



Mayaca is one of California's Cabernet leaders. (Left: Ann Beverly/Bonafide Productions)

And don't forget to keep an eye out for our annual California Cabernet report in the upcoming Nov. 15, 2023, issue of *Wine Spectator*.—James Molesworth



**HALL**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Rainin Vineyard 2019**

95 points | \$350 | 310 cases made | Red

This is dripping with fruit compote flavors, including fig, boysenberry, black currant and plum, while warmed fruitcake and melted black licorice notes weave in and out. Cuts a wide swath on the finish, as tar and warm humus notes provide a dark backdrop. For fans of the power style. Best from 2025 through 2038. —*J.M.*



**HALL**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Sacrashe Vineyard 2019**

95 points | \$350 | 289 cases made | Red

This has showy, succulent ripeness, with crushed plum, boysenberry and blackberry flavors that meld with melted licorice, apple wood and a flash of saffras. Polished and long, with a nice iron twinge through the finish to keep things honest. Drink now through 2038. —*J.M.*



**LOUIS M. MARTINI**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain 2019**

95 points | \$150 | 540 cases made | Red

A broad, fruit- and toast-driven version, with waves of cassis, plum reduction and blackberry paste pushed by tarry grip and ample sweet toast and Black Forest cake notes. Everything knits together through the finish, with a sparkle of savory adding energy along the way. For fans of the big, modern style. Best from 2025 through 2038. —*J.M.*



**NEWTON**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain District 2018**

95 points | \$210 | 425 cases made | Red

A classic Spring Mountain Cabernet, this delivers a range of captivating boysenberry, loganberry and mulberry fruit flavors that are vivid and defined, while racy iron and tar streaks provide support. Packs singed anise, wood spice, apple wood and mesquite notes in the background, along with sweet bay leaf and a savory tickle. The finish pulls everything together and then just drives on steadily. Best from 2025 through 2040. —*J.M.*



**AD VIVUM**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Yountville Sleeping Lady Vineyard 2019**

94 points | \$200 | 350 cases made | Red

Dark, winey and a bit of a throwback, this rock-solid Cabernet offers a nice deep well of dark currant and boysenberry reduction notes mixed with warm paving stone, tobacco and freshly plowed humus for a rock-steady baseline, while violet and sweet bay leaf details add nuance in the background. A well-grounded version, with cut and drive that bodes well for cellaring. Best from 2025 through 2040. —*J.M.*



**CAYMUS**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Special Selection 2018**

94 points | \$225 | 22,226 cases made | Red

Lush and polished, with waves of cassis and blackberry compote pouring through, underscored by chocolate, espresso crema and roasted vanilla bean. Maintains a lush, velvety feel through the lengthy finish, where flashes of sweet tobacco and warm earth peek through. For the power Cabernet crowd. Best from 2024 through 2038. —*J.M.*

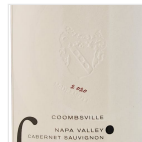


**ETUDE**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Coombsville 2020**

94 points | \$155 | 346 cases made | Red

Ripe and focused, with a vivid beam of plum puree and mulberry compote flavors pumping through, carried by a racy graphite-edged structure and layered with singed alder, tobacco, black tea and ganache accents. Very solid for the vintage. Best from 2024 through 2038. —*J.M.*

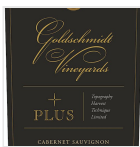


**FAVIA**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Coombsville 2020**

94 points | \$250 | 235 cases made | Red

Ripe and plush, with a broad wave of mulberry, loganberry and plum reduction notes, layered with melted licorice and blackberry ganache and backed by hints of hibiscus and violet. Shows solid structure underneath, with a cast iron feel providing nice contrast to the fleshy fruit. Drink now through 2038. —*J.M.*



### **GOLDSCHMIDT**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Plus Game Ranch 2019**

**94 points | \$175 | 100 cases made | Red**

This has a lovely beam of raspberry and boysenberry pâte de fruit backed by gently mulled plum and black cherry fruit, all laced with light anise, singed apple wood and black tea notes. Shows subtle sassafras and loam details, which add more range through the finish. A touch exotic in style, for which it will certainly have fans. Drink now through 2035. —*J.M.*

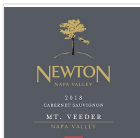


### **PAUL HOBBS**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Nathan Coombs Estate 2020**

**94 points | \$350 | 470 cases made | Red**

Juicy and focused, with a taut beam of dark plum and dark currant fruit laced with licorice root, sassafras and cast iron notes. Sneaky long and focused, with a finishing kick of mulberry and anise adding range. Drink now through 2038. —*J.M.*



### **NEWTON**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Mount Veeder 2018**

**94 points | \$210 | 490 cases made | Red**

This late release has a densely packed core of boysenberry and blackberry paste wrapped in roasted apple wood, bramble and sweet bay leaf notes. The finish is driven by heavy tarry grip. A textbook mountain Cabernet that needs a touch more cellaring to open fully. Best from 2024 through 2036. —*J.M.*



### **ANTHEM**

**Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Beckstoffer Las Piedras Vineyard 2019**

**93 points | \$175 | 315 cases made | Red**

Direct and polished, with cassis and black cherry compote notes gliding through, laced with cocoa, alder and black licorice. Nice steady, persistent finish. Drink now through 2036. —*J.M.*



### **HEROLD**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Coombsville 2019**

**94 points | \$115 | 680 cases made | Red**

Alluring, with lovely açai berry, plum and blackberry compote notes supported by a well-inlaid cast iron hint. Reveals a lovely backdrop of violet and black licorice through the finish, with the fruit keeping pace. Polished, but not overly so. Nicely done. Drink now through 2038. —*J.M.*

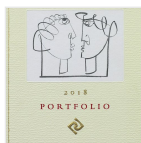


### **CHARLES KRUG**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain Family Reserve 2019**

**94 points | \$160 | 600 cases made | Red**

This marries black currant and blackberry reduction flavors with a sleek iron structure and a backdrop of warm earth, espresso and tar. Grippy and tight, but with serious coiled-up energy and a late flurry of violet, bay leaf and savory elements. For the cellar. Best from 2025 through 2036. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. —*J.M.*

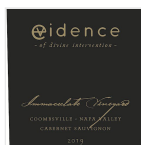


### **PORTFOLIO**

**Limited Edition Napa Valley 2018**

**94 points | \$165 | 200 cases made | Red**

A restrained style, with a large core of warmed cassis and plum puree moving slowly and steadily, letting in flashes of violet, smoldering tobacco and warm humus along the way. Reveals tobacco and warm paving stone notes that echo through the broad, yet fine-grained and well-defined finish, which has a lingering echo of purity. Lovely. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2024 through 2038. —*J.M.*

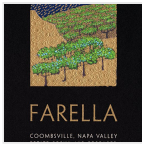


### **EVIDENCE**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Coombsville Of Divine Intervention Immaculate Vineyard 2019**

**93 points | \$125 | 185 cases made | Red**

A showy style, with plum, açai and blackberry compote notes taking the lead, imparting a lush, well-fruited feel, while sleek toast, spice and bramble hints fill in through the finish. Drink now through 2036. —*J.M.*



**FARELLA**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Coombsville 2019**

**93 points | \$72 | 414 cases made | Red**

Ripe and sleek in feel, with açai and blackberry pâte de fruit notes rippling along nicely, flecked with violet, sweet bay leaf and savory hints and supported by a cast iron note on the finish. Packs a nice sanguine echo at the very end. Drink now through 2036. —*J.M.*

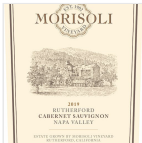


**GUNDLACH BUNDSCHU**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Sonoma Valley  
Vintage Reserve 2019**

**93 points | \$140 | 1,050 cases made | Red**

Richly fruited, with a broad, caressing wave of mulberry and blackberry preserves rolling through slowly, laced with black licorice and violet notes and coated with a warm, toasty edge on the finish, where an echo of warm earth keeps this honest. Drink now through 2035. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. —*J.M.*



**MORISOLI**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford 2019**

**93 points | \$205 | 140 cases made | Red**

This has a fresh, focused core of red currant and black cherry flavors laced with cedar, dusty earth and iron minerality along the way. Fresh, fine-grained and reserved through the finish. Very Rutherford in feel, with the minerality bringing nice precision. Best from 2024 through 2036. —*J.M.*



**PAHLMAYER**

**Napa Valley 2019**

**93 points | \$250 | 1,988 cases made | Red**

Offers lots of fun, juicy blackberry and dark plum compote flavors tossed with cocoa, licorice root and Black Forest cake. Fruit-driven and frankly toasted on the finish, but has the energy for balance. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2033. —*J.M.*

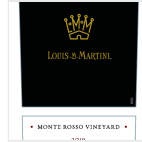


**FREEMARK ABBEY**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford Cabernet  
Bosché 2019**

**93 points | \$200 | 2,839 cases made | Red**

Shows the flashy ripeness of the vintage, with a mix of plum, boysenberry and blackberry compote flavors pumping through, inlaid with roasted mesquite and sweet tobacco accents. Packs a nice finishing kick of warm earth that keeps this just grounded enough. Drink now through 2035. —*J.M.*

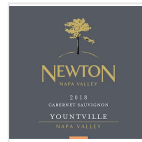


**LOUIS M. MARTINI**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Sonoma Valley  
Monte Rosso Vineyard 2019**

**93 points | \$140 | 1,150 cases made | Red**

This has mint, violet, cassis and plum puree aromas and flavors that spill forth, with a sleek, polished feel from start to graphite-tinged finish. Offers judicious toast that lets everything play out nicely. Drink now through 2036. —*J.M.*

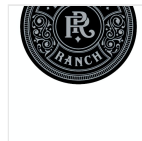


**NEWTON**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Yountville 2018**

**93 points | \$210 | 463 cases made | Red**

Fresh and polished, with a nice open-knit core of plum sauce and boysenberry preserves laced with alder and warm earth. The fruit keeps the upper hand on the finish, which shows nice underlying energy. Drink now through 2035. —*J.M.*



**PRIEST RANCH**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Snake  
Oil 2019**

**93 points | \$90 | 982 cases made | Red**

A solid, densely built version, with a core of cassis, plum reduction and blackberry paste flavors that meld nicely with warmed vanilla, singed tobacco and loam, with the latter really asserting itself through the broad finish. A bit amped up, but will have fans for sure. Best from 2024 through 2036. —*J.M.*



**ROMBAUER**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Atlas Peak Single Vineyard 2018**

**93 points | \$140 | 983 cases made | Red**

This dark, structured late release has settled in nicely, showing poise and focus with the core of mulled cassis and plum fruit offset by lively spice and chaparral notes in the background. The long, grippy finish is driven by a cast iron spine as the fruit keeps pace. Best from 2024 through 2036. —*J.M.*



**ROMBAUER**

**Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Stice Lane Single Vineyard 2018**

**93 points | \$140 | 867 cases made | Red**

This late release has a core of violet, cassis and blackberry backed by a graphite-edged structure. Shows ample sweet tobacco and toast shadings on the finish. Drink now through 2030. —*J.M.*

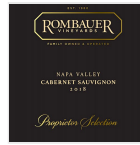


**STONY HILL**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain District 2018**

**93 points | \$270 | 336 cases made | Red**

Shows heavy sweet bay leaf and saffras accents amid a core of gently mulled red currant, raspberry and red cherry fruit. Reveals pretty red tea accents and bright iron notes that run throughout, adding lovely cut, freshness and drive. A very typical Spring Mountain Cabernet. Drink now through 2035. —*J.M.*

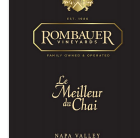


**ROMBAUER**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Proprietor Selection 2018**

**93 points | \$150 | 3,897 cases made | Red**

Hyperripe, with tiers of cassis, plum puree and blackberry paste supported by deftly inlaid mocha, tobacco and violet notes. The polished finish lets a subtle iron twinge creep in amid the lush fruit, giving this a needed counterpoint. Obvious in style, but will have fans for sure. Drink now through 2034. —*J.M.*



**ROMBAUER**

**Le Meilleur du Chai Napa Valley 2018**

**93 points | \$175 | 695 cases made | Red**

This has a gutsy profile, with a large core of cassis and blackberry fruit punctuated by sweet bay leaf, menthol and smoldering tobacco accents. Shows nice tar-tinged grip that supports the finish, but lets the fruit keep the upper hand. Enjoyable now for the overt fruit, but should gain some nuance in the cellar as well. Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2034. —*J.M.*



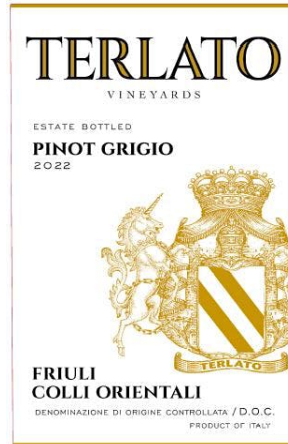
**THE VICE**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Double Oak Batch #85 2019**

**93 points | \$98 | 250 cases made | Red**

Alluring, with steeped boysenberry, mulberry and blackberry fruit flavors enlivened by heavy sweet spice, black tea and bramble hints. The juicy finish is framed by an applewood accent. Drink now through 2036. —*J.M.*

THE WEEK  
ITALY



**TERLATO**

**Pinot Grigio Friuli Colli Orientali 2022**

90 points | \$25 | 40,000 cases imported | White

**Tasting Note:**

Fresh and balanced, with a citrusy overtone of grapefruit pith and citronella, this shows flavors of crunchy white peach, chive blossoms and minerally saline and stone. Creamy finish. Drink now through 2026. —A.N.

## Hot Wines

These are the most exciting discoveries from our editors' most recent tastings, published exclusively in Wine Spectator Insider. They are high-scoring wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

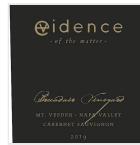


**DUNN**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain  
2019**

96 points | \$175 | 3,750 cases made | Red

Lushly fruited, this sends waves of crushed plum, boysenberry compote and blackberry paste out from the core, with a strong undercurrent of cast iron and smoldering tobacco to boot. Grippy and dense, but with a sense of polish and a note of purity in the guise of a pretty violet echo. Best from 2025 through 2040. From California.—J.M.



**EVIDENCE**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Mount Veeder Of The  
Matter Bruadair Vineyard 2019**

96 points | \$125 | 335 cases made | Red

Packs serious punch and drive, with vivid boysenberry and mulberry fruit laced liberally with hibiscus and iris notes, all carried by a racy bolt of iron. Sleek and focused, with an anise note amid the lingering fruit. A modern-styled Mount Veeder Cabernet. Best from 2025 through 2038. From California.—J.M.



### **MAYACAMAS**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Mount Veeder 2019**

**96 points | \$185 | 4,000 cases made | Red**

Loaded with character and energy, this reveals heavy notes of zesty sweet bay leaf and saffras, which infuse a core of steeped red currant and mulberry fruit, all carried by bright acidity and iron-laced tannins. The long finish pulls everything together, with the fruit, savory and mineral elements in harmony. Shows a touch of old school and has a long life ahead. Best from 2025 through 2045. From California.—*J.M.*



### **FRANK FAMILY**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford RHF 2018**

**95 points | \$110 | 2,300 cases made | Red**

A broad, well-structured version, with a serious core of cassis, plum reduction and blackberry paste flavors that meld steadily with melted black licorice, alder and warm earth hints. Reveals subtle violet and black tea nuances that hang in the background, staying fine-grained through the rich finish. A big wine, with nice poise. Best from 2024 through 2038. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. From California.—*J.M.*



## **The World's Most Authoritative Wine Publication. Founded 1976.**

Wine Spectator magazine is read by more than 3 million people around the world. Our digital publications, apps and events extend this global reach to more than 6 million wine lovers.

Our tasting staff includes 15 tasters and tasting coordinators, who work together to review more than 16,000 wines each year; more than 400,000 reviews are currently available in our online database.

We always review wines in independent blind tastings. This is your guarantee that our reviews are fair and objective, and that a wine's reputation and price do not influence its score. Each taster covers specific wines and regions; their initials are appended to their reviews. Our credibility is built on their expertise and independence.

### **Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale**

**95 - 100 Classic**

**80 - 84 Good**

**90 - 94 Outstanding**

**75 - 79 Mediocre**

**85 - 89 Very Good**

**50 - 74 Not Recommended**

### **Our Editorial Team**

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**Marvin R. Shanken** *Editor and Publisher*

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**Bruce Sanderson** *Senior editor, New York*

Joined Wine Spectator in 1993. Tasting beats: Burgundy, Piedmont, Tuscany

**James Molesworth** *Senior editor and special projects director, New York*

Joined Wine Spectator in 1997. Tasting beats: California Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir, Bordeaux, Port

**MaryAnn Worobiec** *Senior editor and bureau chief, Napa*

Joined Wine Spectator in 1997. Tasting beats: California Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, Australia, New Zealand

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Joined Wine Spectator in 2000. Tasting beats: Italy, Spain, Champagne, South Africa

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Joined Wine Spectator in 2001. Tasting beats: California Zinfandel and Merlot, Oregon, Washington, U.S. sparkling wines

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Joined Wine Spectator in 2012. Tasting beats: Argentina and Chile

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Joined Wine Spectator in 2021. Tasting beats: Rhône Valley and other France, Germany, Austria