

# Wine Spectator's

August 24, 2022

# Insider Weekly

A First Look at Our Editors' Most Exciting New Wines

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## California

### Napa Valley Cabernets & Blends

#### A New Batch of Napa Cabernets

This is part 1 of a 2-part Insider Weekly series spotlighting new California Cabernet reviews. Featured here are 2019 Napa reds from benchmark producers, including Abreu, Dalla Valle, Etude, Grace Family and Keplinger, along with relative values like the \$95, 93-point bottling from Dakota Shy. Stay tuned next week for even more classic- and outstanding-rated California Cabernets, as well as even more reviews in James Molesworth's annual tasting report in *Wine Spectator's* Nov. 15, 2022, issue.





### **CARTE BLANCHE**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley  
Beckstoffer Missouri Hopper Vineyard  
2019**

**96 points | \$175 | 500 cases made | Red**

Well-packed with dark currant, fig and boysenberry compote flavors, this rumbles along and is supported by hints of charcoal, roasted apple wood and warm earth. Muscular and grippy, with an espresso crema accent on the finish. For fans of the big, muscular style. Best from 2024 through 2038. —*J.M.*



### **FAVIA**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville 2019**

**96 points | \$250 | 359 cases made | Red**

Pure and focused, with a beam of cassis, red cherry and damson plum driving through, flanked with violet and anise and supported by a sleek, iron-tinged spine. This has a great encore of fruit, with subtle mint and loam echoes at the very end. Best from 2023 through 2038. —*J.M.*



### **KEPLINGER**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Oakville  
Ranch Vineyard 2019**

**96 points | \$185 | 175 cases made | Red**

Ripe and focused, with a loamy accent running along the edges of the core of cassis and bitter plum. This has loads of sweet bay leaf, charcoal and smoldering tobacco coursing underneath the fruit, giving this range and a touch of old-school character. More like an '18 in feel, with the *terroir* proudly on display. Best from 2024 through 2038. —*J.M.*

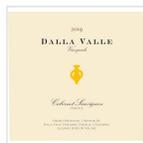


### **KEPLINGER**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Vine Hill  
Ranch Vineyard 2019**

**96 points | \$225 | 200 cases made | Red**

A nice dark, winy style, with waves of crushed black currant, steeped plum and blackberry fruit flavors inlaid with ample warm loam, sweet bay leaf and singed juniper. Everything knits well on the lengthy finish, while a violet echo lends a note of purity. Best from 2024 through 2040. —*J.M.*

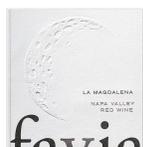


### **DALLA VALLE**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville 2019**

**96 points | \$250 | 1,200 cases made | Red**

This is very tightly packed, with cassis, bitter plum and loganberry notes compressed along with anise, apple wood, warm humus and sweet tobacco. The earth note echoes nicely through the finish, too. More like an '18 in profile, with a youthfully backward persona. Cellaring this will yield rewards. Best from 2024 through 2040. —*J.M.*



### **FAVIA**

**La Magdalena Napa Valley 2019**

**96 points | \$250 | 446 cases made | Red**

A rock-solid offering, with a mix of licorice root, blackberry paste, sweet tobacco and black currant preserves all held together nicely with a sleek iron spine. This is a lean-muscle version of the power style, with nice tension and energy to complement the heft of the fruit. Really gorgeous. Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2023 through 2036. —*J.M.*

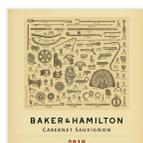


### **KEPLINGER**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville RBK Oakville  
Ranch Vineyard 2019**

**96 points | \$200 | 80 cases made | Red**

Rich and broad, with waves of dark mulled plum, fig and black currant fruit laced with singed juniper, cast iron and warm earth. The cast iron note really extends the finish, pulling the fruit along for the ride. This, with bottle age, is a winner. Best from 2024 through 2038. —*J.M.*

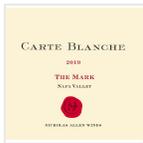


### **BAKER & HAMILTON**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville 2019**

**95 points | \$125 | 789 cases made | Red**

This is packed with vivid boysenberry, mulberry and black currant fruit that bursts forth with energy, while being held in check by graphite, anise and apple wood notes that lend good underlying tension. Features bramble and warm stone accents on the finish, as the fruit races through. Best from 2023 through 2038. —*J.M.*



### **CARTE BLANCHE**

The Mark Napa Valley 2019

95 points | \$175 | 250 cases made | Red

Really well-built, with lean muscle and great form, showing cassis, plum and blackberry fruit flavors nicely melded with a hint of melted black licorice, roasted alder, violet and cool, dark earth. Reveals a terrific sense of polish and refinement through the finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2023 through 2038. —*J.M.*



### **PAUL HOBBS**

Cabernet Sauvignon Coombsville Nathan Coombs Estate 2019

95 points | \$350 | 344 cases made | Red

This has a wisp of singed bay leaf weaving in and out of a core of steeped plum, açai and fig fruit, while smoldering cast iron and warm earth tones fill in through the finish, giving this a bit of an old-school bent. Best from 2023 through 2038. —*J.M.*

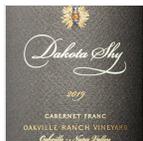


### **SCHRADER CELLARS**

Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District WH Wappo Hill Vineyard 2019

95 points | \$475 | 300 cases made | Red

Showy, with waves of cassis, plum *pâte de fruit* and blackberry preserves backed by licorice snap, roasted apple wood and cocoa. A nice, racy graphite spine provides necessary support. A hedonist's delight. Drink now through 2035. —*J.M.*



### **DAKOTA SHY**

Cabernet Franc Oakville Oakville Ranch Vineyard 2019

94 points | \$195 | 250 cases made | Red

Sports a cloak of warm tobacco leaf that drapes over the large-scaled core of crushed currant, blackberry and black cherry fruit, while a tarry swath drives the finish. A dark, winery and muscular version that needs a bit of cellaring, but all the components are there. Best from 2023 through 2034. —*J.M.*



### **FAVIA**

Cerro Sur Napa Valley 2019

95 points | \$250 | 250 cases made | Red

Superjuicy and vivid, with lots of up-front violet, cassis and plum *pâte de fruit* notes backed by tasty licorice and sweet spice. Toasted finish, but the fruit wins out easily, with a flash of sweet bay leaf adding nice range. Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2036. —*J.M.*

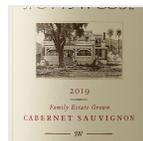


### **RIVERS-MARIE**

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Herb Lamb Vineyard 2019

95 points | \$150 | 370 cases made | Red

Ripe, but relying on purity rather than flash, this delivers a very enticing beam of cassis and violet laced gently with lightly singed apple wood, sweet bay leaf and licorice. The nicely focused finish has a subtle underlying hint of iron. A lengthy, poised wine. Drink now through 2038. —*J.M.*



### **SPOTTSWOODE**

Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena 2019

95 points | \$245 | 4,184 cases made | Red

Not shy, this throws a pretty lush and gorgeous wave of warmed cassis and mulberry puree at you, carried by very polished tannins as violet, red licorice and sweet tobacco hints fill in behind. Shows good energy through the finish, too, with a subtle mineral hint to keep everything honest. Lovely. Drink now through 2037. —*J.M.*

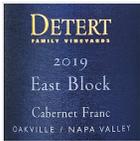


### **DAKOTA SHY**

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Social Currency 2019

94 points | \$495 / 1.5L | 300 cases made | Red

A plush, rich style, with waves of steeped blackberry, mulberry and black currant fruit rolling through, plus licorice root, singed alder and smoldering tobacco accents. On the showy side, but stays grounded on the finish, with the fruit and earth notes working together. Best from 2023 through 2038. —*J.M.*



**DETERT**

**Cabernet Franc Oakville East Block 2019**

**94 points | \$185 | 200 cases made | Red**

Seriously packed with warmed dark currant, steeped plum and blackberry compote notes allied to a mix of graphite, bramble and anise accents. The intense, sappy, fruit-coated finish has cut and drive, and there's a lingering iron echo as well. Best from 2023 through 2035. —*J.M.*



**HALL**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Kathryn Hall 2019**

**94 points | \$225 | 6,300 cases made | Red**

Rich and fleshy in feel, but with a nice juicy edge for balance, this lets creamed plum and blackberry fruit spill forth, laced liberally with mocha, singed alder, sweet tobacco and melted black licorice. For the hedonist crowd. Drink now through 2035. —*J.M.*

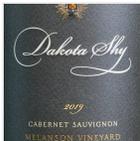


**RELIC**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley Moulds 2019**

**94 points | \$150 | 96 cases made | Red**

Open, juicy and inviting, with a range of savory, saffra, red currant, plum and anise notes working together and allied to a cast iron spine. Reveals a warm loamy echo through the finish. Very solid. Best from 2023 through 2037. —*J.M.*



**DAKOTA SHY**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Melanson Vineyard 2019**

**93 points | \$175 | 75 cases made | Red**

Dark and fruit-laden, but with juicy freshness, delivering plum and blackberry compote notes carried by cast iron. Shows good drive through the finish, with tobacco and wood spice notes filtering through. Best from 2023 through 2035. —*J.M.*

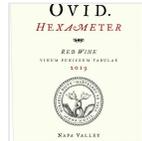


**ETUDE**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2019**

**94 points | \$100 | 2,589 cases made | Red**

Dark but fresh, with mulberry and black currant fruit laced with apple wood, anise and tobacco. Shows nice energy from start to finish, with a late cast iron accent giving this a solid feel through the finish. Best from 2023 through 2036. —*J.M.*

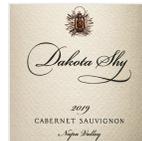


**OVID**

**Hexameter Napa Valley 2019**

**94 points | \$425 | 640 cases made | Red**

Delivers dark plum and blackberry fruit with a caressing edge, despite showing some depth and weight, while smoldering cast iron, tobacco and roasted alder hints peek through and emerge steadily through the finish. Shows the muscular shoulders of Cab Franc throughout. Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Best from 2023 through 2036. —*J.M.*

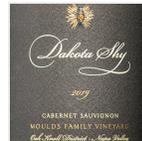


**DAKOTA SHY**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2019**

**93 points | \$95 | 2,500 cases made | Red**

Rock-solid, with plum, boysenberry and blackberry puree stitched seamlessly with light anise, apple wood and melted black licorice. Shows a suave, polished feel through the finish. Darn tasty. Drink now through 2036. —*J.M.*



**DAKOTA SHY**

**Cabernet Sauvignon Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley Moulds Family Vineyard 2019**

**93 points | \$150 | 450 cases made | Red**

This has dark, ripe fruit backed by a pronounced floral lift, with a violet note pulling a core of dark currant and blackberry preserves along. A nice plowed humus spine drives underneath on the finish. Best from 2023 through 2036. —*J.M.*



### **DAKOTA SHY**

Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Bale Mill Creek Vineyard Shy Series Volume II 2019

93 points | \$150 | 350 cases made | Red

A broad-shouldered wine, with warmed plum, fig and blackberry compote flavors rolling through, while licorice root, loam, sweet bay leaf and tar streak the finish. Hefty, yes, but also well-defined. Drink now through 2034. —*J.M.*

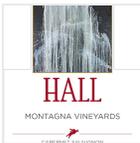


### **GRAPE CULTURE**

Cabernet Sauvignon Atlas Peak Lifted 2019

93 points | \$125 | 100 cases made | Red

Fresh and vivid, with açai and boysenberry pâte de fruit laced with graphite, anise and violet accents. A graphite edge adds extra cut and drive on the finish, pulling the fruit along with it. Best from 2023 through 2035. —*J.M.*



### **HALL**

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Montagna Vineyards 2019

93 points | \$275 | 450 cases made | Red

Ripe, well-built and approachable in feel, though no rush, with a round structure carrying a core of black currant, blackberry and black cherry preserves. Shows a solid licorice root spine, with a dusting of bittersweet cocoa on the finish. Best from 2023 through 2036. —*J.M.*



### **LIONS HEAD COLLECTION**

Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford Stalworth 2019

93 points | \$250 | 387 cases made | Red

Packed with winy cassis, cherry reduction and plum puree flavors, though they are well-defined and pure, with violet, light sweet bay leaf and licorice accents adding range in the background. The solidly built finish has a subtle loamy tug, while the fruit pours through. Best from 2023 through 2035. —*J.M.*

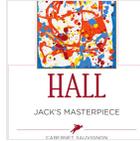


### **DETERT**

Cabernet Franc Oakville 2019

93 points | \$100 | 270 cases made | Red

Beautifully rendered, with a steadily rolling wave of cassis, plum puree and cherry reduction flavors laced with violet, sweet tobacco and dried anise. A subtle singed alder thread curls through the finish. Pure. Best from 2023 through 2034. —*J.M.*



### **HALL**

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Jack's Masterpiece 2019

93 points | \$175 | 3,600 cases made | Red

Dark, compact and slightly muscular in feel now, this has a core of dense black currant, açai and fig preserves laced liberally with singed cedar, bittersweet cocoa and warm earth. A flash of iron through the finish provides a nice counterpoint. Needs to unwind in the cellar. Best from 2024 through 2037. —*J.M.*

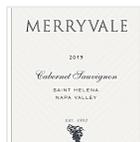


### **PAUL HOBBS**

Cabernet Sauvignon Coombsville 2019

93 points | \$120 | 6,083 cases made | Red

Ripe and vivid, revealing a long beam of açai, blueberry and blackberry puree flavors that are polished in feel, with subtle cast iron and savory accents through the finish. A light hand with the toast allows the fruit to sing in this version. Drink now through 2035. —*J.M.*



### **MERRYVALE**

Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena 2019

93 points | \$150 | 421 cases made | Red

This has a nice savory edge, which lends a cool menthol note to the core of dark currant and blackberry preserves. A cold cast iron spine holds the finish in place. Rather forthright in profile. Best from 2023 through 2036. —*J.M.*



## **MERRYVALE**

Profile Napa Valley 2019

93 points | \$225 | 823 cases made | Red

A lush, dark and slow-moving wine, offering a steady wave of mulled black currant and steeped blackberry flavors, with roasted vanilla, loam and tobacco leaf notes. The muscular finish is a touch stolid now, but there's depth. This is worth cellaring to let the Cab Franc component unwind a bit more. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2023 through 2036. —*J.M.*

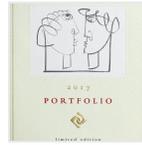


## **RELIC**

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley La Place  
2019

93 points | \$150 | 147 cases made | Red

A polished, ripe and driven Cabernet, with cassis and plum reduction flavors, which are laced with singed vanilla and sweet tobacco and carried by ample polished tannins. Shows a subtle sweet bay leaf hint on the finish, which echoes nicely amid the fruit. Drink now through 2032. —*J.M.*



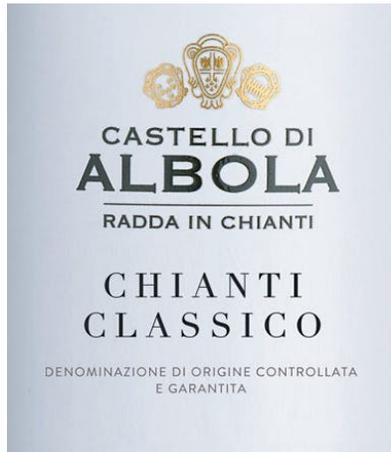
## **PORTFOLIO**

Limited Edition Napa Valley 2017

93 points | \$165 | Red

This is packed with vivid cassis, plum and boysenberry compote flavors that drive through nicely, flecked with violet, anise and apple wood along the way. Shows nice energy throughout. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2023 through 2036. —*J.M.*

VALUE PICK OF  
THE WEEK  
ITALY



**CASTELLO DI ALBOLA**

**Chianti Classico 2020**

90 points | \$18 | 15,000 cases imported | Red

**Tasting Note:**

Offers fine depth to the cherry, plum and woody aromas, with iron, tobacco and herb flavors. Shows solid structure and lingers nicely on the finish. Drink now through 2027. —B.S.

# 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.



## **ABREU**

Cappella St. Helena 2018

99 points | \$650 | 218 cases made | Red

Packed, but this also ripples with tension and energy, as bitter plum, black currant, fig and blackberry fruit flavors collide with sweet bay leaf, savory, tobacco, loam and licorice root notes. When the dust settles, this is an expansive display of power and refinement, with everything in proportion. And then a long, smoldering cast iron note echoes, adding more cut and drive. Wow. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Best from 2025 through 2045. From California.—*J.M.*



## **ABREU**

Madrona Ranch St. Helena 2018

98 points | \$650 | 418 cases made | Red

Gorgeous in every facet, this drips with dark cassis, steeped plum and blackberry reduction flavors while maintaining form and focus, thanks to seamlessly inlaid graphite and alder girders for support. The long finish cruises through slowly and authoritatively, with hints of loam, espresso crema and ganache, all without being brooding or heavy-handed. The alder hint extends prominently through the rich finish. A flat-out stunner. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Merlot. Best from 2025 through 2045. From California.—*J.M.*

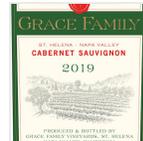


## **DALLA VALLE**

Maya Napa Valley 2019

96 points | \$475 | 800 cases made | Red

Shows smoldering intensity, with a mix of mulberry, blackberry and black currant preserves that meld steadily with cast iron notes. A late flurry of violet and açai adds more range, while the mineral aspect stays perfectly in its lane. Very long, with lovely flow. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2023 through 2040. From California.—*J.M.*



## **GRACE FAMILY**

Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena 2019

96 points | \$350 | 82 cases made | Red

Dark and winy, this has a tightly coiled core of red and black currant preserves mixed with licorice, alder, juniper and sweet bay leaf. Shows extra flickers of mulberry and warm earth through the finish, where a buried cast iron note peeks through. Some patience is needed here. Best from 2024 through 2040. 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

<b>95 - 100</b> Classic	<b>80 - 84</b> Good
<b>90 - 94</b> Outstanding	<b>75 - 79</b> Mediocre
<b>85 - 89</b> Very Good	<b>50 - 74</b> Not Recommended

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