

Varietal Focus: Cabernet Sauvignon

Lance Cutler



SANTA ALICIA WINERY

DIFFERENT PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT favorites when it comes to red wine. Whether you are most seduced by the feminine complexity of a fine Pinot Noir or best appreciate the brash spiciness of a good Zinfandel, you still have to give proper respect to Cabernet Sauvignon. Cabernet Sauvignon has an attitude, a kind of regal bearing that puts it above other varieties, insinuating that they are merely pretenders to the throne. It has come by this majestic presence because of centuries as one of the world's most respected red wine varieties.

Cabernet Sauvignon is planted all over the world, and its popularity grows steadily. California acreage has grown from a mere 600 acres in the 1960s to 79,290 acres in 2011. Cabernet Sauvignon is the most planted red grape in Washington and the most popular in Walla Walla Valley, accounting for 41 percent of total grape production. It is the second most planted variety in Australia, behind Shiraz; and while it follows Malbec as the prime grape in Argentina, its numbers are growing.

Recent DNA evidence shows that Cabernet Sauvignon developed from a crossing of Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Franc. It is a pretty easy variety to grow, with hardy vines that are resistant to most vineyard problems. The vines produce loose berry clusters with relatively small berries that have thick skins, making them less susceptible to rot. Cabernet Sauvignon is well-known for its high extraction and tannic levels, along with classic flavor profiles of cassis, black currant and some herbaceousness. Cabernet Sauvignon grapes tend to retain decent natural acidity, and the wine made from these grapes has a definite affinity for oak.

Young wines made from this varietal can be harsh with unforgiving tannins and an astringent mouth-feel. When grown in cool climates, Cabernet Sauvignon can show more herbaceous, bell pepper and pencil lead flavors. Many regions, particularly Bordeaux in France, ameliorate this propensity by blending the varietal with other grapes (most often Merlot and Cabernet Franc in France and with Shiraz in Australia), to round the flavors, aromas and mouth-feel of the wine. Warmer regions, like Napa Valley, California have had success getting the varietal fully ripe and will often produce 100 percent Cabernet Sauvignon wines, brimming with lush berry, currant and cassis flavors.

Perhaps the last piece of the puzzle that makes Cabernet Sauvignon so popular is that it has a long history of improving with age. While Bordeaux is the prime example, producers all over the world have produced some wines that have aged for decades. Brazen fruit flavors and aggressive tannic astringency give way over time to secondary complexities of fruit, along with tobacco and earthy notes. The mid-palate fills with lush flavors, and the finish develops into pure silk. More than anything else, it could be that an elusive, perfectly aged bottle of this noble variety is what makes it the king of red wine.

The featured winemakers and/or owners include: **Chris Figgins** of **Leonetti Cellar**, **Marty Clubb** of **L'Ecole N° 41**, **Tim Kerrigan** of **Pepper Bridge** winery, **Cathy Corison** of **Corison** winery, **Jeffrey Stambor** of **Beaulieu Vineyard**, **Aron Weinkauf** of **Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery**, **Phillip Corallo-Titus** of **Chappellet Winery**, **Steve Pride** of **Pride Mountain Vineyards** and **Bill and Dawnine Dyer** of **Dyer Vineyard**.

Washington

Walla Walla

Leonetti Cellar
L'Ecole N° 41
Pepper Bridge



Valley Floor/Rutherford Bench

Corison
Beaulieu Vineyard
Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery



Napa Valley

Mountain Vineyard Sites

Chappellet Winery
Pride Mountain Vineyards
Dyer Vineyard



Walla Walla, Washington

Although grape growing in Walla Walla can be traced back to the 1850s when immigrants began to cultivate vines, it really didn't elevate into serious winemaking until **Gary** and **Nancy Figgins** bonded **Leonetti Cellar** in 1977. Other pioneering wineries, like **L'Ecole N°41** and **Woodward Canyon**, got things rolling, and by 1984 Walla Walla was a recognized AVA. At that time, there were four wineries and about 60 acres of vines. Today, there are more than 100 wineries and more than 1,800 acres of planted grapevines.

The Walla Walla Valley is known primarily for red grape varieties and Cabernet Sauvignon is the most widely planted, accounting for 41 percent of the planted area. The soils of Walla Walla Valley are primarily wind-deposited silt known as loess. These soils, along with minimal rainfall (average of just 12.5 inches annually) and freezing winters prove inhospitable to most vineyard problems, like phylloxera or Pierce's disease.

The northerly latitude of Walla Walla Valley provides a long growing season with wide diurnal shifts in temperature. It also provides more daily sunlight (almost two hours per day in peak season) than vineyards in California. The freezing winters allow the vines to go fully dormant, thus conserving energy for the growing season. The unique conditions of Walla Walla Valley produce Cabernet Sauvignon with bright fruit flavors and crisp acidity.

L'Ecole ANDREA JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY



Leonetti Cellar

2005 Walla Walla Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
(14.6% alc.) \$100

Way back in 1977 Gary and Nancy Figgins created Leonetti Cellar, Walla Walla's first bonded winery. From the very beginning their wines were well received by critics and consumers alike. Their son, Chris Figgins, joined the venture in 1996, took over the winemaking chores in 2001 and just last year became president and winemaking director. His degree in horticulture led him to focus on soil biology in the vineyards, and using compost teas to improve vineyard soils helps define the aromatics and character of Leonetti Cellar's fruit.



ANDREA JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY

According to Chris Figgins:

"We are trying to achieve a unique expression of Walla Walla Valley terroir, striving toward balance, power with elegance, aromatic beauty and age-worthiness. I favor acid, power and freshness of fruit over ripeness.

"I think the most important factor in achieving our style is site selection for the vineyards. Each of our three sites gives something different to our wine. The Upland Vineyard has more power and tannin, with dark color and black fruit flavors. Seven Hills Vineyard is less aggressive, with more lush character. Loess Vineyard falls somewhere in between. We farm each of the sites differently, leafing the morning side and going for a low crop yield at Upland, working with a bit sloppier shoot positioning and more stress and wind at Seven Hills and making up to 12 passes through Loess, dropping leaves and clusters.

"Most of our grapes are the 7/8 Washington clone, which is almost a heritage clone. It gives a good set, large clusters and a good yield. We also have some clone 4, 6 and 191. Everything is on its own roots except one block in our Loess Vineyard. We use a combination of VSP, modified VSP and 'free form' trellis systems, whatever works best at each site to prevent sunburn and provide the dappled sunlight and air movement we are looking for. Vineyards are mostly drip-irrigated, and we focus on soil health and biological diversity above and below ground.

"To pick, we use a combination of chemistry and tasting. Flavor is important, but sugar fools the mouth. I look more for absence of bad flavors, especially greenness. We will also do mini-soaks of berries in plastic bags overnight to observe color and flavor just before picking. The numbers are different for



each site, but we usually pick between 24° to 25.5° Brix, with pH as low as 3.3 to 3.5 and acids from 0.65 to 0.9, depending on vineyard and vintage.

"We drop fruit several times and will even do a berry thinning for sunburn just prior to harvest. Grapes are hand-picked into half-ton bins early in the morning so we can work with cold fruit. Clusters are sorted then destemmed and lightly crushed. Usually we end up with less than 5 percent whole berries, but we rarely have tannin issues. We add 25 ppm SO₂ at the crusher and move the must to closed-top fermenters using a progressive cavity pump. Cold soak lasts 48 to 72 hours around 60° F.

"We usually inoculate with cultured yeast and wait for fermentation to begin before adding our own custom nutrient mix. I'm not afraid of heat, allowing most fermentations into the 90s with 95° F being my upper limit. We typically pump-over vigorously three times a day. If fermentations become reductive, we'll directly inject filtered air during pump-over.

"We press based on tannin profiles. Our more tannic grapes ferment for just a week from pitch to press and are pressed off around 6° to 7° Brix. We usually press off the Seven Hills fraction around 1° to 3° Brix. Some lots get extended maceration from 21 to 30 days. There are no rules to pressing. When it gets astringent, we stop, usually at no more than 0.6 bar. We'll centrifuge samples of juice to better determine astringency. Free run and press often go together, but we will separate about 25 percent.

"We allow the juice to settle overnight and then use gravity to go to barrel where spontaneous malolactic occurs. We use 70 percent new oak (97 percent French, 3 percent custom-coopered American). We top once a week if the wine has residual sugar and once every three weeks if it is done fermenting. We rack in December or January off the gross lees and then three or four more times over the 22 months of barrel aging.

"We make our blends just before bottling and usually fine 60 to 70 percent of the wine with egg whites. We think a gentle polish filtration respects the fruit and will typically use a 10 micron or 5 micron polish filtration. We bottle-age for eight months prior to release."

Winemakers' Tasting Notes

Figgins: *To me the 2005 vintage was really special. It was a perfect growing season. Aromatically there are a lot of red fruits with nice spice notes and some cinnamon. There are pure red fruits with florals. There is fresh acidity on the palate. The tannins are super fine, but this is still a very young wine.*

Kerrigan: *Fresh wine for an '05 with nice red fruit and good color. I like the mouth-feel which has good acidity and soft tannins. Very well-balanced wine.*



Clubb: I like the bright, jump-out-of-the-glass aromatics. There is a pretty balance between earth and mineral and floral character behind the red fruit. They've captured some pleasant dusty chalkiness, which is typical of Walla Walla fruit. Great job.

Stambor: What strikes me is the level of complexity without anything sticking out. There's great ripe fruit character. The barrel is in harmony with the wine. It has come to a really nice stage. The balance follows through to the palate with ripe, red cherry. The acid level is nice and doesn't accentuate the tannin. The wine finishes with great texture.

Corison: There are a lot of familiar things in the aromas. Peppermint and plum with hints of American oak. It is really rich and chocolatey and a bit sweet; but unlike the California wines, the acidity is a bit incongruous with the richness. The tannins are quite astringent. The finish is sweet and chocolatey, but also hot and long.

Weinkauf: There is cola and vanilla with nice wood that is well-supported by the fruit. It is showing tight and youthful. Nice sweetness in the palate.

Pride: My favorite of the flight. There is some berry intensity on the nose. It has a roundness on the palate that I like. It has plenty of density without being over-ripe at all. I like the texture and length. The tannins are soft but present.

Titus: This is a super concentrated wine. There is lots of dark fruit, berry pie and sweet oak, all of which are very intense but well intermingled. There are some woody, brushy aromas that fit in very well. There are all kinds of things going on, and it seems very ripe. I didn't like the texture as much as I thought I might. It didn't have the length. It seemed a bit abrupt and dry. I liked the aromas more so than the flavors.

Dyer: I get a lot of spice with secondary characteristics, like tar and tobacco. The fruit is vibrant but losing real fresh character and leaving great aromatics with interesting character of tar and some sage that jump out of the glass. I like the structure a lot. It is big with nice density and weight. My favorite of the three.

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L'Ecole N° 41

2009 Walla Walla Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
(14.5% alc.) \$36

Marty Clubb is managing winemaker and co-owner, alongside his wife **Megan**, of **L'Ecole N° 41**, Walla Walla's third oldest winery. Clubb has served as president and director of the **Washington Wine Institute** and helped found the **Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance** where he served as president for six years. He was one of the early viticultural pioneers of Walla Walla, developing more than 200 acres of vineyards.



According to Clubb:

"We want to make wines that scream Walla Walla. We want wines that are elegant with pretty aromatics, good structure and a seamless balance between earthy tannins and fruit. These wines age well. We accomplish this using minimal manipulation in the winery.

"This wine comes from a blend of five different vineyards with several different soil types and vine spacings. All of the vineyards range between 850 and 1,100 feet elevation. Vines are primarily VSP on moderate slopes, have good air drainage and mostly south and west exposures. We use clones 4 and 8 grown on natural rootstock, but I think the site is more important than the clone.

"Walla Walla is uniquely suited to producing fine fruit. We have harsh winters, so grapes go into dormancy early. Most of our vines are on their own rootstock. We have no phylloxera, Pierce's disease or glassy-winged sharpshooters. It's dry, so we have minor fungal issues. With healthy soils we can get the fruit ripe without overly extended hang times. We look for balance in the vineyard, attempt to get bloom to occur at the same time and usually do our first irrigation post-bloom. We want to maximize air-flow through the canopy while minimizing sunburn.

"To determine when to pick we run numbers but focus more on flavor and the color extraction we get from testing clusters in bags. We sort in the field then destem with light crushing into bins without pumps. We add 50 ppm SO₂. We'll add acid if necessary, which is rare, and we'll check nutrient needs and add modestly if required. We add a variety of yeasts and then punch-down, shooting for maximum temperatures between 86° and 90° F.

"Fermentations run nine to 15 days, and we press almost dry around -1° Brix although we use extended maceration on some strategic lots. We separate the free run and press fractions by taste, and the hard press goes into table wine. We add malolactic (ML) starter and then rack to French oak barrels with 40 percent new. The wine gets topped every two weeks during ML and then every three to four weeks post-ML. We rack four times over the 22 months the wine spends in barrel. The wine is unfinned but gets a polish filtration 2 to 5 microns before bottling."

Winemakers' Tasting Notes

Clubb: *There is a pretty floral tone with dark fruits and a fresh herbal note that we like. There is some cherry, cedar, followed by some minerality. I love the length of finish, full of dusty, chalky, but not overly aggressive, tannin. Really nice structure.*

Kerrigan: *Nice red fruit with some gravelly character and some earthiness. It has a nice mouth-feel with good tannins and a clean finish.*

Figgins: *This is different in style from the other two, a bit more focused and direct on the palate with a pronounced green tea leaf character that I really like. There are pure red fruits and a great finish. Lovely wine.*

Corison: *I like this wine a lot. There is some meat character with a floral perfume and really pretty plum and cassis fruit. Red and blue fruit flavors are very integrated with tart acidity. All of these wines have tart acidity compared to what we are used to in Napa, coupled with really ripe flavors and very astringent tannin.*

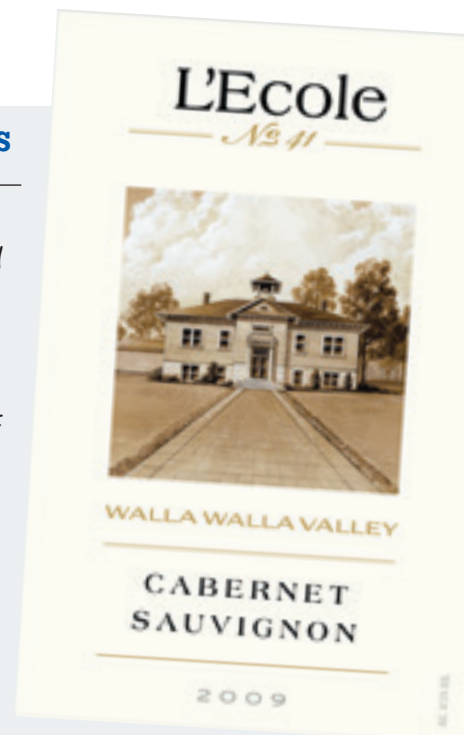
Weinkauf: *There is great density and some nice smokiness that comes across as youthful and eggy to me. The tannins sit more up-front. The wine seems to have a pretty nice acid core. I love the focus, strength and youthfulness of it, but there are less of the broad cherry aromatics found in the Napa wines.*

Stambor: *I like this wine. It's a bit tight aromatically, but you can sense a really pure core of ripe fruit. The initial attack is broad and rich and appropriately tannic for a young wine. I like the acidity.*

Titus: *The nose is kind of smoky, herbal and a little reduced. It has a lot of personality, but I'm not sure I like the nose by itself. In the mouth it comes alive: youthful and grapey with big, round tannins with a firm grip. The flavors were more pure in the mouth than the aromas.*

Pride: *There is a change in density from the Napa wines. Very elegant, pretty wine but with less up-front fruit density.*

Dyer: *There are chalky, licorice aromatics. It is carrying a lot of tannin. They are rich and well-structured, but the aroma is more mineral than fruit-driven.*



Pepper Bridge

2008 Estate Vineyards Walla Walla Cabernet Sauvignon (14.1% alc.) \$55

Pepper Bridge winery started up in 1999 when management hired Jean-François Pellet away from Heitz Cellar in Napa. By 2000, Pellet had hired Tim Kerrigan as cellar master, promoting him to assistant winemaker in 2004. Kerrigan was born and raised in Washington, earned a degree in geology at the University of Montana and worked at Edgefield Winery in Oregon before coming to Pepper Bridge.



LEFT: Jean-François Pellet, winemaker

RIGHT: Tim Kerrigan, assistant winemaker

According to Kerrigan:

“This wine is a combination of our two estate vineyards at Pepper Bridge and Seven Hills. We want to make an elegant wine that is well-balanced and complex with a sense of place. We want it to be fruit-forward with good structure and soft tannins. We want a wine that drinks well when young but also has longevity.

“We do a lot of crop management and thinning to keep our yields low—in the 2- to 3-ton per acre range. We green-thin and then thin again at veraison, but we have to be careful about sunburn. The majority of our vines are planted to 9x5 foot spacings in silt loam soils at elevations of 860 to 1,250 feet. Most of our grapes are clone 8, planted to their own roots.

Typically, our Seven Hills Vineyard gives us red fruit character with notes of minerality and is less tannic and more feminine. Our Pepper Bridge Vineyard is more masculine, darker and more structured. Both vineyards are irrigated and certified sustainable.

“We determine when to pick only by taste but back it up by checking numbers. We want no green flavors. We usually pick about 25.5° to 26.5° Brix, with pHs in the 3.7 to 3.8 range and acids around 0.6. Grapes are field-sorted and hand-picked early in the morning. We destem with no rollers, sort again using an optical sorter and add 50 ppm SO₂. Grapes go to open-top fermenters where they are cold soaked for two to four days at 50° F. We will add yeast to the tops of the tanks in the morning, warm the tanks up and then punch-down in the evening. We punch-down three times daily, less if we get too much extraction. We bubble some O₂ through the tanks if needed and will use the delestage method on some lots.

“Typically, different lots ferment for seven to 14 to 21 days, getting pressed around 0° to 4° Brix, but some lots get extended maceration up to 35 days. We press, combining free run and press juice; but as soon as we notice astringency, we stop. We will finish fermentation in tanks then rack, add malolactic starter and rack to barrels using 100 percent French oak with 45 percent new oak. We top weekly during ML and then twice monthly thereafter. There are two rackings: one after ML, one to make the final blend. We barrel-age a total of 18 to 22 months and then sterile filter to bottle. The wine gets six to eight months bottle-age before release.”



Winemakers' Tasting Notes

Kerrigan: *The first thing is dark fruit aromas followed by a hint of graphite and floral notes. There is a nice, even mouth-feel. Smooth tannins and a long finish.*

Clubb: *I see a lot of earthiness with concentrated dark fruit. There is some tea leaf. It has really nice body and weight. It is well-integrated on the palate.*

Figgins: *There is a purity of fruit both in the nose and mouth. It's red and then dark fruits. It is plush and lush with pure fruit with good length and fine grain tannins that I really like. It is a showy, beautiful wine.*

Titus: *A difficult wine to evaluate with lots of strong aromas and flavors. There is a bit of a yeasty, earthy character, almost leesy and coffee-like. The fruit is not coming through in a very defined way. It is muddled by those other strong aromas. Very dry in the mouth. Lots of tannin. Big up-front, chunky phenolic character.*

Dyer: *Very complex aroma with violet notes. There is a big berry presence, a full mix of ollalieberries, blackberries and cherries. This wine is a bit denser on the palate with very firm tannins. It is broad and rich.*

Pride: *The nose shows more fruit character, but it is fuller and has more tannin. There is less fruit in the mouth than the nose promised. There is some leafy, forest floor character.*

Corison: *It dips its toe into the greener end of Cabernet, which is perfectly varietal. There are hints of capsicum and green olives. There's not a lot of fruit but blacker flavors on the other end with lots of chocolate. Pretty aggressive tannins.*

Weinkauf: *This is a bit riper on the palate. I don't quite get the acid backbone in the mouth. It is a wine carried by the tannins. It carries very high on the palate right now. The mouth-feel hasn't pushed out and filled in. It needs more time.*

Stambor: *There is a fermented character to this wine without a lot of defined fruit. Then I got some graphite, pencil lead that might be from the oak treatment, as if the oak was too much for the wine intensity. That really came through in the palate where the initial attack was aggressive, the mid-palate was rough, and the finish was very astringent.*

Napa Valley, California

Valley Floor/Rutherford Bench & Mountain Vineyard Sites

Napa Valley was the first designated American Viticultural Area in 1981 and is easily the most famous wine growing region in the New World. The valley has the Mayacamas Mountains on the west and north and the Vaca Mountains to the east. The valley itself is more than 30 miles long and a few miles wide, narrowing as it goes north and splaying open into the San Pablo Bay to the south. There are 33 different soil types found in the Napa Valley with mostly sedimentary soils found to the south and more volcanic, lava and ash to the north. Many different microclimates exist in the valley, all influenced by the fog intrusion from the bay.

These diverse factors make a wide assortment of grape varieties viable in Napa Valley, but Cabernet Sauvignon is king with over 19,000 acres planted. Cabernet Sauvignon accounted for 56 percent of all the red wine produced in Napa Valley and totaled out at 51,000 tons in 2011. The variety of microclimates and soil types in Napa Valley allow individual vineyards to produce grapes in a wide range of style and character. Many attribute the main stylistic differences in Napa to valley floor versus mountain vineyard sites. Mountain sites, having thinner soils, might produce smaller berries with more intensity and tannin



PRIDE MOUNTAIN VINEYARDS

than vines from the more fertile valley floor. Cabernet Sauvignon grown on the relatively flat Rutherford Bench and Valley floor tends toward softer tannins and a slightly rounder feel on the palate. Mountain-grown fruit seems to have more tannin, with dark inky color and intense berry flavors.

For this tasting we selected three wineries from the Valley floor/Rutherford Bench area: **Corison, Beaulieu Vineyards** and **Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery**. The other three wineries produce wine from mountain vineyard sites: **Chappellet Winery, Pride Mountain Vineyards** and **Dyer Vineyard**.

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Valley Floor/Rutherford Bench

Corison

2002 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
(13.6% alc.) \$95

Cathy Corison has been making wine in California since the mid-1970s when she earned her degree in enology from **UC Davis**. For years, she made wine for prestigious wineries, including **Chappellet Winery**, **Staglin Family Vineyards** and **Long Meadow Ranch**. She made her first vintage of Corison wine in 1987, and 2011 marked her 25th vintage under the Corison label.

According to Corison:

"I'm looking to create a wine that is powerful yet elegant at the same time. I want it to speak of place—in this case, benchland between Rutherford and St. Helena—and I want it to enjoy a long, interesting life. More than anything else, this Rutherford benchland drives the style. I think it overrides clones and rootstocks, giving a more velvety wine than mountain fruit.

"The soil is primarily bale loam, which is alluvium with plenty of gravel, so it drains well. The vineyards are on the west side of the valley with an elevation of less than 300 feet and pretty flat. Vines are planted to 6x8 foot spacings. We farm traditionally, leaning toward the sustainable direction. We irrigate when necessary. The vineyards require little manipulation, but we will remove third clusters, remove laterals in the fruit zone and thin laggards at veraison.

"I am in the vineyards daily to determine when to harvest. I am looking for the skin color to be uniformly black and the seeds to lignify. The seeds should make a squeaky noise against my teeth, and the skins should be leathery in my mouth. When the grapes are ready, the taste changes and almost explodes in the mouth with flavor. All the green flavors are gone, replaced by raspberry/blackberry jammy flavors that are still bright. We tend to pick around 24° Brix and try to make our wines under 14 percent alcohol.

"We sort in the vineyard and pick when the grapes are cold, putting them into half-ton bins. We destem with a small Delta crusher, cracking the berries and minimizing jacks. We use no SO₂ before finishing malolactic. We pump to tanks and store cold for three days. We analyze the must and add nutrients as indicated. The next day we add ¼ portion yeast inoculum. It starts fermentation slowly. We'll splash the juice, and then we'll push it, looking to achieve 90° F by the time we reach 20° Brix. We pump-over with a sprinkler a lot before 15° Brix, less thereafter, and we'll start cooling the fermentation temperature. We typically finish dry around 65° to 70° F.

"We like evolved tannins but hate to lose fruit character, so half of the wine gets about a week of maceration, and half gets about three weeks. We press, combining free run juice with press, but only up to 1 bar pressure. We go into barrel as soon as possible with lees and inoculate for ML in barrel. We use all French oak with 50 percent new, using mixed toast levels and different coopers for maximum complexity. We rack post-ML, add SO₂ and then we maintain 25 ppm. We top weekly and rack quarterly the first year and, as needed, the second. We barrel-age about 22 months and bottle in August without filtering unless *Brettanomyces* gets out of hand."



Winemakers' Tasting Notes

Corison: 2002 was always fruit-driven. It's juicier than some vintages. There is black cherry, blueberry and plum. This wine has blossomed with 10 years of age with a lovely floral character. There is a firm backbone of acidity and lots of velvety tannin, which tells me it can age even longer.

Weinlauf: There is some eucalyptus, even bell pepper at times. I'm impressed with the balance. The aromatics make you think it was picked early, but it still has a great mid-sweetness and nice weight from front to back. It still has youthful, firm tannins.

Stambor: This aroma is familiar to our wine with the fruit characters I associate with the Rutherford bench vineyards. It has really come into balance. It is in perfect harmony and exhibits those tertiary flavors you get with bottle aging. There is great balance to this wine.

Dyer: Here you get some of the secondary characteristics from an '02. Aromas going toward eucalyptus and the fruits have some greener character, like pie cherries. There is a beautiful core of acidity, producing an attractive, elegant style of wine. Nicely balanced.

Titus: This is beautiful wine from a good vintage. There is a restrained mature character of leather and coffee with dried fruit and tar, much like Bordeaux with a background of cassis and some cherry. It's all very delicate, and the oak is still fresh and sweet. It is smooth and silky, plush and elegant.

Pride: The eucalyptus or minty character is pleasant because it is different. There is a lovely sweetness and glycerol character on the palate. It is pretty wine and nicely balanced. Much different from the mountain vineyards and without the explicit chalky tannins.

Clubb: Pretty aromatics with some earthy, mushroom, earth floor character. Nice blueberry fruit that is balanced and well-integrated.

Kerrigan: There is some morel mushroom with nice layers of fruit. Good mouth-feel and tannins holding up nicely for an '02.

Figgins: I positively love this wine. I love it for its restraint and its razor focus. It has essence of Napa Cabernet for me with a bit of eucalyptus and black olive. The perfume is sexy without being showy. It is enchanting wine for me.



Beaulieu Vineyard

**2008 BV Georges de Latour Private Reserve
Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (15.1% alc.)
\$125**

Jeffrey Stambor received his degree in plant sciences and viticulture from UC Davis in 1983. Two vintages at Cotes de Castillon in France and two years in Argentina with Bodega Navarro Correas kept him busy until he started working at Beaulieu Vineyard in 1989 as viticulturist/enologist. Working alongside legend André Tchelistcheff and winemaker Joel Aiken, Stambor took over day-to-day winemaking duties in 2005. He was named director of winemaking in 2009.



According to Stambor:

“We try to craft wines of elegance and balance with a sense of place, expressing Rutherford terroir. We want our wines to have affinity for food, and we’re conscious of the traditions and heritage of Beaulieu’s Georges de Latour.

“Our vineyards sit on the valley floor with Bale series soils that run from gravelly to clay. We have several different spacings, from 6x12 foot to 8x8 foot to 6x6 foot. We have multiple clones: UCD 4, UCD

6, UCD 7, INRA 5197 and 169. Rootstock is primarily 039-16 to combat fanleaf virus, which requires close attention to irrigation needs. Rows tend to be perpendicular to the highway, with a range of trellis systems.

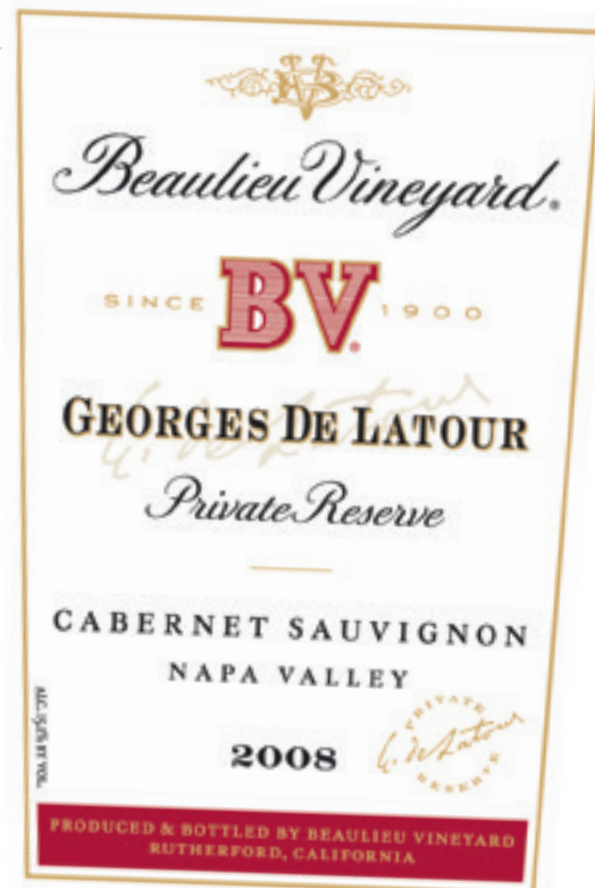
“We do a pre-bloom leafing to loosen up tight cluster clones. We leaf again later and remove laterals, as needed, to get dappled light exposure. We remove wings to improve fruit distribution, spacing and exposure. We cool vineyards with misters and solid set sprinklers. To determine when to pick we look at numbers, the weather and go by sensory. We look for mature seeds and skins and an absence of green character. The pulp should have no herbaceousness and show diminished acidity. I want skins to have black color and masticate to a puree when chewed. We also do not pick end vines or border vines of

a block because those vines tend to be more vegetative and carry larger crops due to lack of competition.

“We hand-pick starting at 3 a.m. into lug boxes. Processing starts by 7:30 a.m. Pumps are never used when moving the grapes. We sort at the winery, removing jacks and any pink berries. We add 30 to 50 ppm SO₂ after destemming and pop skins for tank fermentation. We cold soak at 50° F for up to five days. We aggressively pump-over at the beginning, seeking a more front-loaded extraction, and then we do about one tank volume a day, pumping over three to four minutes every two hours. We use a range of yeast, try to hit 85° F, before one-third of the sugar is depleted, although we allow some lots to spike at 90° F to achieve different texture and tannin levels.

“For our barrel fermentations, and we do 600 barrels like this: we destem with no popping of the berries, dropping the fruit directly from the conveyor to the barrels. We fill the barrels with 400 pounds of fruit, use dry ice for CO₂ and then replace the heads. Barrels are too small in volume to generate heat, so we heat the barrel room to 80° to 83° F. The barrels are on roller racks and get turned six times a day at the height of fermentation. Each treatment they get turned back and forth in different directions six times, and we burp the silicone bung to relieve pressure. We also sparge with air to maintain yeast health. The benefit of this barrel fermentation is getting a full extraction with early integration of oak and complexity. All barrel fermentations occur in new French oak.

“We press after dryness and varying lengths of extended maceration. We allow solids to settle out for two days and then go to barrel. Resident population carries out malolactic. We add SO₂ post-ML. We use 100 percent new French oak for 26 months. We top on an eight-week cycle. We rack, as needed, usually in early spring and then in the fall. We sterile filter prior to bottling and the wine is bottle-aged for one year before release.”



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Winemakers' Tasting Notes

Stambor: The fruit is a little shy right now. There is ripe blackberry fruit with roasted oak and high level complexity. It is fully extracted and hits all parts of the palate. It is ripe but not prune-y, almost a balsamic-like character. It has texture, length and persistence on the palate.

Corison: There is a lovely brightness of fruit, full of berries and jam, along with some typical Rutherford Bench floral character. It is warm and lush with good acid and oak integration. I'm surprised by how forward the wine is, considering there is so little racking.

Weinkauf: There's a lot of Christmas candy. The oak is really dominant but had all the sweetness, vanilla and chocolate through the mid-palate that carried it well. I found it a bit drying. The oak shows well on it right now, but there is an astringency and dryness to the tannins that may affect it down the line.

Figgins: The initial nose is dominated with wood lactones. Serious lumber with pretty vanilla and pine nut. There is a lot of fine-grained tannin. It's very sexy but a bit over the top and a bit too rich for me. It is well-made and highly stylized but not my cup of tea.

Kerrigan: It is a bit too oaky but has nice fruit backing up the oak that is fairly well-integrated. It is very rich with good thick tannin.

Clubb: It has dark, brooding aromas that can be appealing. There is some definite oak, but I don't find it to be overly dominant. I like the texture and mouth-feel, but this is definitely a ripe, fruit-driven wine and finishes with quite a bit of alcohol.

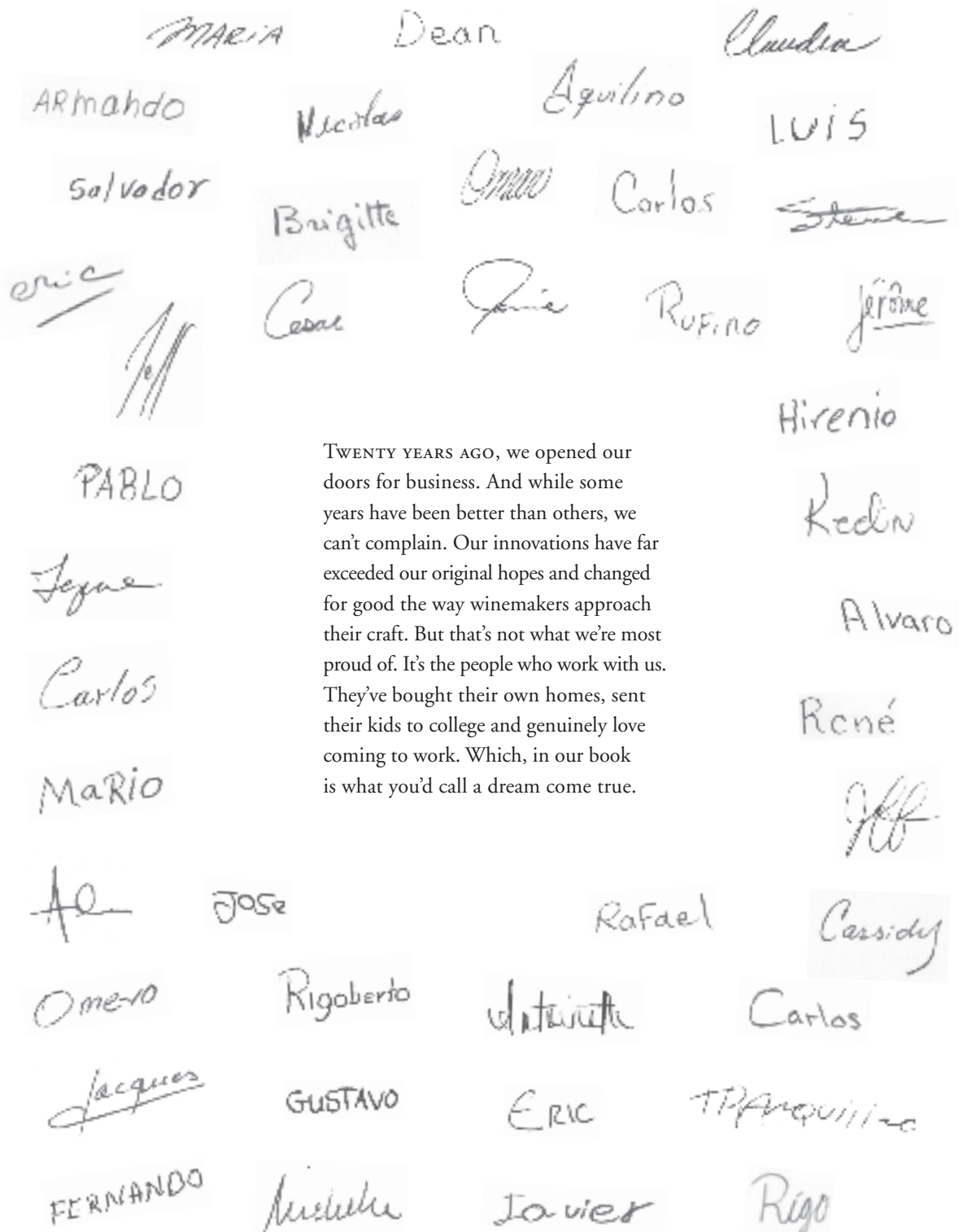
Titus: This is smooth, soft and round with blackberry, smoky oak and cedar notes. It is nice

and well-developed. There is warmth, chocolate and espresso in the mouth, and the wine is very supple.

Dyer: Real showy wine with ripe, round berry fruit and chocolate. There is a black olive, fennel direction to the aroma. Supple with fancy oak and well-integrated tannins. It is round and chewy with some tannin astringency. Pretty stylish.

Pride: Opulent and showy on the nose and palate. I like the tannic presence. It's a big mouthful of wine without being excessively drying. I like the thick, full character and fruit presence.

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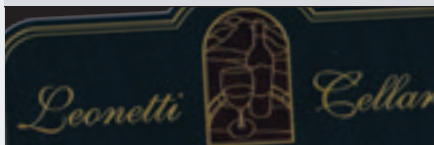
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Cabernet Sauvignon

Washington Walla Walla

DATA SHEET



Winery Vineyard	Leonetti Cellar Loess, Seven Hills, Upland, Mill Creek	L'Ecole N° 41 Several	Pepper Bridge 100% Estate, Pepper Bridge, Seven Hills
Wine	2005 Walla Walla Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (14.6% alc.) \$100	2009 Walla Walla Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (14.5% alc.) \$36	2008 Estate Vineyards Walla Walla Cabernet Sauvignon (14.1% alc.) \$55
Blend	63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Petit Verdot, 17% Merlot	100% Cabernet Sauvignon	80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 4% Cab Franc, 4% Malbec, 2% Petit Verdot
Winemaker Winemaker's Goal	Chris Figgins Express Walla Walla terroir with balance, power, elegance, aromatic purity and age-worthiness	Marty Clubb, Mike Sharon Produce elegant, varietally expressive Cabernet Sauvignon with a focus on balance and seamless integration of oak. Wants the wine to scream Walla Walla.	Jean-François Pellet Craft elegant, well balanced wines that showcase the unique terroir and reflect a sense of place.
County, State	Walla Walla, WA	Walla Walla, WA	Walla Walla, WA
AVA	Walla Walla Valley	Walla Walla Valley	Walla Walla Valley

VINEYARD DATA

Predominant Geology (soil type)	Loess wind deposit silt loam	Mixed	Silt loam Loess
Elevation	900 to 1,600 feet	850 to 1,100 feet	860 to 1,250 feet
Vine Spacing	850 to 2,000 ppa site dependent	4x8 feet, ranging to 6x9 feet	Majority 9x5 feet
Exposure	Seven Hills: North, Loess: East, Mill Creek & Upland: South	Mostly South and West	North slope
Clones	7/8 Washington clone 4,6,191	4, 8	Mostly clone 8
Irrigation or Dry Farmed	Mostly drip w/ some dry farm	Drip irrigation	Drip irrigation
Farming (organic, biodynamic, traditional)	VINEA-certified sustainable	Sustainable and certified sustainable	Certified sustainable
Vineyard Practices	Shoot thin, shoot position, leaf pull, multiple cluster thin, vine berry sort	Shoot thin, cluster thin, leaf strip, green thin, cleanup sunburn and green berries	Remove lateral, drop fruit, pull leaves if needed

WINEMAKING DATA

Cold Soak?	48 to 72 hours	No	48 to 96 hours
SO₂	25 ppm at crusher	50 ppm at crusher, maintain 20 ppm post ml	50 ppm at crusher, 28-30 post ML
Crush Format	Destem and lightly crush	Destem, light crush	Field sort, destem w/ no rollers then sort w/ optical sorter +50 ppm SO ₂
Fermentation Temperature	Not afraid of heat, go 90° to 95° F	Max 86° to 90° F	Max 78° to 82° F
Punch-down Methods	3x daily, vigorous pump-over	Punch-down, 15 to 30 days on skins	Mostly punch-down with delestage and some pump-over
Oak Program	97% French oak, 3% custom-coopered American oak, 70% new	100% French oak, 40% new	100% French oak, 40 to 45% new
Barrel Aging	22 months	22 months	18-20 months
Racking	Varies, 2 to 5 times in barrel life	Four	Twice or less
Filtration	Very coarse filtration, 5 to 10 micron	Unfined, polish filtration prior to bottling	Pads up to .45 micron

Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley Valley Floor/Rutherford Bench

DATA SHEET



Winery Vineyard	Corison Several, all on Rutherford Bench	Beaulieu Vineyard Estate	Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery Estate
Wine	2002 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (13.6% alc.) \$95	2008 BV Georges de Latour Private Reserve Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (15.1% alc.) \$125	2001 Estate Vineyard Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (14.1% alc.) \$150
Blend	100% Cabernet Sauvignon	95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petit Verdot, 2% Malbec	95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc
Winemaker Winemaker's Goal	Cathy Corison Powerful and elegant at the same time, structured to grace the table and enjoy a long, distinguished life.	Jeffrey Stambor Craft wines with elegance, balance and sense of place.	Aron Weinkauf Elegant, balanced, with multi-layered complexity. Want strong color, aromatics, integrated oak, refined tannins with longevity.
County, State	Napa, CA	Napa, CA	Napa, CA
AVA	Napa Valley	Rutherford	Napa/St. Helena
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Bale loam, alluvium	Bale series	Bale clay loam, Pleasanton loam
Elevation	300 feet	Valley floor	400 to 440 feet
Vine Spacing	6x8 feet	6x12 feet, 6x8 feet, 6x6 feet	6x8 feet
Exposure	Westside benchland	East/West perpendicular to Highway 29	Northeast to Southwest
Clones	Benchland vineyard characteristics override clonal considerations	UCD 4, UCD 6, UCD 7, 5197, 169	Spottswoode, Eisele, 337, Forman PV, Gertner. Caldwell CF
Irrigation or Dry Farmed	Irrigated	Irrigated	Drip irrigation
Farming (organic, biodynamic, traditional)	Traditional/sustainable	Traditional	Organic
Vineyard Practices	Remove third clusters, remove laterals in fruit zone, thin laggards at veraison	Prebloom leafing, misters to cool vineyard, remove laterals, wing removal	Drop leaves, laterals, fruit. Shoot tipping
WINEMAKING DATA			
Cold Soak?	Pick cold, inoculate with very small inoculum	50° F for 5 days in tank, natural warm up for barrel ferments	3 to 5 days
SO₂	None until ML completes, then 25 ppm free	30-50 ppm at destemmer	40 ppm
Crush Format	Crack berries, destem	Destem all. Pop berries for tanks, whole berries for barrels	Destem, no crusher
Fermentation Temperature	Get hot before 20° Brix, top out 88° to 89° F, then finish cool	Peak at 86° F	86° to 88° F
Punch-down Methods	Pump-over with sprinkler. More before 15° Brix, less after	Pump-over tanks, barrel roll 6x daily, air sparge for yeast health	2 pump-overs daily until 16° Brix, then 3x daily until 10° Brix, then back to 2x
Oak Program	100% French oak, 50% new	100% new French oak	100% French oak, 65% new
Barrel Aging	22 months	26 months	20 months
Racking	Quarterly first year then as needed	As needed, lot dependent	Four
Filtration	Only if Brett gets out of hand	Sterile filter prior to bottling	Sterile filter

Cabernet Sauvignon

Napa Valley Mountain Vineyard Sites

DATA SHEET



Winery Vineyard	Chappellet Winery Pritchard Hill	Pride Mountain Vineyards Pride Mountain Estate Vineyards	Dyer Vineyard Dyer Vineyard
Wine	2009 Pritchard Hill Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (15.1% alc.) \$135	2008 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (15.2% alc.) \$130	2008 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (13.9% alc.) \$70
Blend	75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Petit Verdot, 10% Merlot	97% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petit Verdot	76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot
Winemaker Winemaker's Goal	Phillip Titus Concentrated, dense wine that is still balanced. Fully extracted varietal character but not on an overly tannic framework.	Sally Johnson Intense varietally correct flavors, big bold structure with ripe, non-drying tannins. Looking for that "wow" factor.	Bill & Dawnine Dyer A restrained, balanced style that allows intrinsic fruit, structure and minerality to be the focus.
County, State	Napa, CA	Straddles Napa and Sonoma County, CA	Napa, CA
AVA	Napa Valley	Sonoma/Spring Mountain District	Diamond Mountain District
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Volcanic Sobrante loam	Deep volcanic with basalt and clay	Volcanic gravel
Elevation	800 to 1,700 feet	2,500 feet	500 to 600 feet
Vine Spacing	7x5 feet	5x7 feet with some 7x9 feet and 6x8 feet	2x2 meters
Exposure	Northwest, West	Southern exposure	Northeast facing
Clones	CS Clone 7,4,2,337,6,15 PV clone 400, MA 595	Joe Heitz clone 7 w/ clone 337, clone 15 and clone 4	Field selection
Irrigation or Dry Farmed	Irrigated	Mostly dry farm. Irrigate new blocks and when necessary	3-4 deep irrigations/season
Farming (organic, biodynamic, traditional)	Certified organic	Traditional	Sustainable
Vineyard Practices	Lots of thinning, de-clump	Stop canopy growth two weeks prior to veraison, two shoots per spur, two clusters per shoot	2 thinning passes pre-veraison, little leaf removal
WINEMAKING DATA			
Cold Soak?	5 days at 50° F	2 to 3 days at 45° F	3 to 5 days at 50° to 55° F
SO₂	50 ppm at crusher	15-30 ppm through elevelage	50 ppm
Crush Format	Sort and destem, no rollers	Destem, no rollers	Destem, no rollers
Fermentation Temperature	Peak at 88° to 92° F	Max 85° F	Maximum 85° to 88° F
Punch-down Methods	Pump-over 2x daily then less after 10° Brix	Pump-over 2x daily, splash through screen once daily	2 pump-overs daily, peak fermentation 3x daily
Oak Program	100% new French oak	100% French oak, 40% new	100% French oak, 33% new
Barrel Aging	22 months	22 months	20-22 months
Racking	2 to 3 times a year	Every 4 months	5 to 6 times over barrel life
Filtration	.65 for yeast	No	Generally no filtration

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Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery

2001 Estate Vineyard Napa Valley
Cabernet Sauvignon (14.1% alc.) \$150

Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery made its first Cabernet Sauvignon in 1982 under the watchful eyes of owner **Mary Weber Novak**. Two of Mary's daughters, **Beth** and **Lindy**, work with their mother to run things now. After **Aron Weinkauff** graduated from **Fresno State University** with a degree in viticulture and enology, they brought him in as assistant winemaker in 2006. He took over as vineyard manager in 2009 and formally became winemaker in 2011.

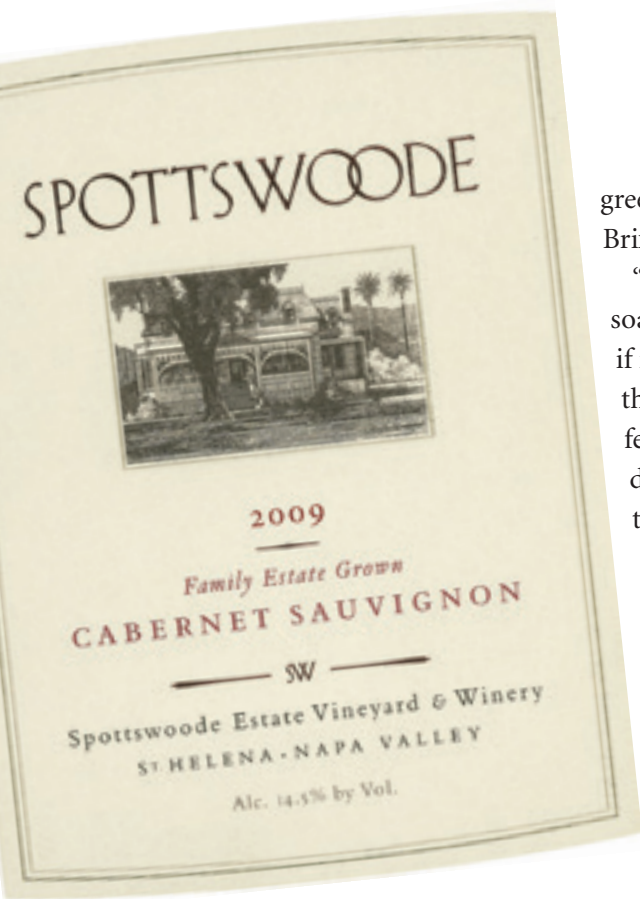


According to Weinkauff:

"We want to make an elegant, balanced wine that has multi-layered complexity with good acidity and texture. We are looking for strong color and aromatics of red and black fruit with integrated oak, refined tannins and the promise of longevity.

"Our vineyard is planted in Bale clay loam and Pleasanton loam between 260 and 300 feet. The spacings are 6x8 feet with a modified 'Y' trellis to provide good shade in the fruit zone. The vineyard has been organic since 1985. We have Spottswoode, Eisele and 337 Cabernet Sauvignon clones, along with Forman Petit Verdot and Geitner and Caldwell Cabernet Franc. We use drip irrigation but not until veraison. Then we prefer a few deep irrigations, about 10 gallons in 20 hours. We will drop fruit, tip clusters, pull leaves and tip laterals, trying to balance vertical vegetative growth with fruit load.

"We determine when to pick by taste and testing. We are looking for under-ripe character to give way to ripe flavors. We want to see



green flavors diminish, and we look for a certain ‘density’ of flavor. We usually pick between 25° to 25.5° Brix and around 3.8 pH. This 2001 was sorted in the vineyard. Now we sort in the vineyard and the winery.

“We harvest at night, destem with no crushing and then pump to tanks. We add 40 ppm SO₂ and cold soak three to five days. The 2001 was made half with native yeast and half inoculated. We will use nutrients if necessary but no DAP. We use a five-phase pump-over procedure that starts with one pump-over for just three minutes per ton, escalating to two to three pump-overs a day for 10 minutes per ton during peak fermentation before eventually slowing back down to just one per day as temperatures cool and sugar is depleted. We will run juice through tub screens during fermentation for aeration. Maximum fermentation temperature is 86° to 88° F.

“Fermentations last 11 to 15 days, but Cabernet Sauvignon often gets 10 to 30 days’ extended maceration. We will go to tank with free run but put the heavy press directly to barrels. After settling for one day, free run juice goes to barrels where we inoculate with ML bacteria. We use 100 percent French oak with about 65 percent new. Malolactic usually finishes by Christmas. We stir the lees post-ML depending on mid-palate texture and tannin. We rack between April and July and a total of three more times over the 20 to 22 months the wine spends in barrel. The wine is sterile filtered and receives one year of additional bottle aging.”

Winemakers’ Tasting Notes

Weinkauf: *I like the strength and focus it still shows for a 2001. There is a lot of nice ripe cherry, and the tannins are pretty seamless and smooth. I like the aromatics. There’s a subtle background of rose petal. There is nice weight from front to back with good overall weight and density.*

Stambor: *We’re not seeing a young wine obviously. There’s a lot more herb character; there’s a bit of aged balsamic to it. You can still see a core of dark fruit, but there is no real evidence of oak in the nose. It is fresher and younger in the palate than in the aroma, with really soft, supple tannins.*

Corison: *It is plummy and warm with alcohol in the aromas. There is a lovely, round mouth-feel. It is completely knit and integrated with nice development but back down to the brighter redder profile from these parts.*

Kerrigan: *This is a big, rich wine. Nice fruit with some spice. It has good color and is holding up nicely. Smooth tannins give it a nice finish.*

Figgins: *This is so youthful. It is drinking really well, rich with soft tannins and a lovely finish. Some of the primary fruit is gone, but there is pretty cassis, with eggplant parmesan that I really like. We rarely get that Napa cassis note.*

Clubb: *I get bright tone fruit that is very fragrant. I get hints of mint and eucalyptus. It has surprising crispness, and the acidity is carrying the wine, making it taste so youthful. It has some of those blackberry and mineral tones and a lot of length. Very pretty wine.*

Titus: *This will evolve quite a bit. I think the fruit will come out. Right now it has an earthy herbal, kind of brushy character. The fruit has composted into this coffee and leather and dried fruit. It is very pretty but might have peaked in terms of its age.*

Pride: *I love this wine. Great intensity on the nose. Perfect Napa Cabernet that is ripe, full and dense with a great finish that has a bit of chalkiness. Fully ripe without going over the top. Delicious.*

Dyer: *Nice development but still a baby. Beautiful with soft, fleshy tannins that aren’t drying out at all. On top of cherry and blackberry, there’s an overlay of orange peel aromatics. Appealing and different from hillside fruit. Not afraid to be Cabernet, which I like.*

Napa Valley Mountain Vineyard Sites

Chappellet Winery

2009 Pritchard Hill Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (15.1% alc.) \$135

Donn and Molly Chappellet have been crafting classic Cabernet Sauvignon from their beloved Pritchard Hill vineyard since 1967. Phillip Corallo-Titus worked as assistant winemaker at Chappellet Winery in 1981 before pursuing winemaking opportunities at Stratford and Cartlidge & Brown. He returned to Chappellet in 1990 and has been winemaker ever since.

According to Titus:

“We want a concentrated, full of color and balanced wine that is fully extracted but not on an overly tannic framework. We want to express the fully ripe character of Bordeaux varietals grown on Pritchard Hill.

“This wine comes from selected blocks on Pritchard Hill that are northwest/west facing. It is mostly volcanic, rocky soil called Sobrante loam that is 3 to 4 feet deep over Hambright outcrop. We sit between 800 and 1,700 feet, and vines are spaced at 7x5 feet. We’re planted to 110 R rootstock, which is self-regulating, allowing for riper fruit without the vines crashing. We use a lot of different clones for complexity: 7, 4, 2, 337, 6 and 15 for Cabernet. Petit Verdot is clone 400. We irrigate; but since becoming a certified organic vineyard, we find the vineyard needs less water.

“We have spent a lot of time focusing on row direction. Most rows go southwest to northeast. This keeps the sun even on both sides of the vine, necessitating less and less leaf pulling. It’s all on vertical trellis. We remove laterals, drop fruit and pull leaves as necessary. To determine picking we go

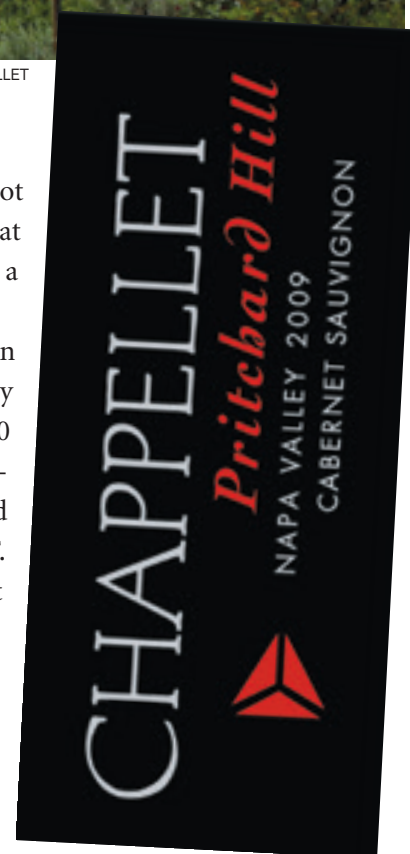


CHAPPELLET

primarily by taste but tend to overshoot sugar, so we’ll watch sugars. We look at seeds, skins, color and test for tannin. It’s a combination of all of that.

“We pick into ½-ton bins after sorting in the vineyard. We sort again at the winery and destem using no rollers. We add 50 ppm SO₂ at the crusher and use a peristaltic pump to move the must to closed tanks. We cold soak for five days at 50° F. Then we slowly warm the must, add yeast and nutrients to start fermentation. We like to hit 90° F at 20° Brix. We do lots of pump-overs, moving two tank volumes daily and using in-line sparging to get O₂ into the must. At about 10° to 12° Brix we cut back on pump-overs and temperature. On most lots, as fermentation slows, we check tannin levels and usually press off between 2° to 6° Brix. However, selected lots run about 60 days extended maceration to develop complexity and mouth-feel for the final blend.

“We make three press cuts: free run, up to 1 bar and 1 to 2 bar. In November we determine the blend of those cuts. We rack after fermentation, after malolactic and then every three to four months for the first year. We rack one time the second year. Wine ages in 100 percent new French oak barrels for 22 months. We filter ‘yeast sterile’ at 0.65 microns. We bottle in August and release in April.”



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Winemakers' Tasting Notes

Titus: There is lots of dark fruit: black cherry and berry with spicy oak and concentrated ripe fruit. There is flashy oak spice from both the wine and barrel with balanced tannins that fold into the wine. There is a rich texture supported by the tannin without dryness.

Pride: On the nose I get a darker character with a lot of chocolate and some tar. Not explicit, in-your-face red fruit, it is very round and pleasant in the mouth. For such a young wine, I'd expect more chalky presence on the finish. Very approachable.

Dyer: Chocolate aromas are present in lots of different forms. There is a bit of mint and cedar in the aromas, bringing it back to Cabernet. It's silky and texturally just a gorgeous wine. It is fleshy but not heavy with appropriate, bracing tannins.

Corison: This smells like plum pie with butter and cinnamon spice from the vineyards. It reminds me of my Grandma's cassis lozenges. It is rich and dense with a long finish.

Stambor: This is fresh with lively fruit and a density of aroma and texture. It retains a lot of fresh fruit character and has

great intensity and depth without astringent tannin. There is great length and persistence to the finish.

Weinkauf: What a big wine. Ripe fruits like cherry and blackberry pie. The aromatics just jump with chocolate. I'm really impressed with the density and focus. It's very big but compact, which I like. Tannins are tight and closed. There is a lot of wood, but it is really well-supported by the density of fruit.

Clubb: I like this a lot. It seems to speak to the site and tastes like Pritchard Hill. It has blueberry fruit with nice balance and good length. It is well-made and captures the vineyard site perfectly. This is a great expression of the location.

Kerrigan: It stands out a bit from the other two. It has nice high-tone fruit, a pretty nose and good balance with supple tannins. I like it a lot.

Figgins: I can't decide if I love it or hate it. It's well-made. I love the nose. It is so loaded with pure fruit and florals without being stuffed with oak. It is absolutely gorgeous, but on the palate, there isn't enough acid to cut the sweetness, which leaves it just a bit too cloying on the palate. Still, it is a stunning mouthful of wine.



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Pride Mountain Vineyards

2008 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon
(15.2% alc.) \$130

Steve Pride comes to the wine business by way of academia. His parents bought what is now **Pride Mountain Vineyards** in 1989. Pride got his Ph.D. in geophysics and became a professor at the **University of Paris** followed by a stint as a professor at the **University of Rennes**. He returned to the United States in 2003 and took over running Pride Mountain Vineyards after the death of his father in 2004. He is staff scientist at **Lawrence Berkeley Lab** and adjunct professor at **UC Berkeley**, splitting his time almost equally between Berkeley and the winery.



According to Pride:

“We are looking for intense, but varietally correct flavors, and a big, bold structure built from ripe tannins that don’t bite and aren’t drying. We are ripe—but not overripe—and unapologetically Californian. We want cassis, black cherry and currant flavors, along with cedar, tobacco and complex hints of licorice, smoke and tar.

“We have deep volcanic soils with some clay, which gives us plenty of vigor. Most of our rootstock is 101-14, and the vines grow at 2,100 feet. We have a variety of clones, but the dominant clone for our Reserve Cab is a variant of Clone 7 originally propagated by **Joe Heitz** for the Bella Oaks vineyard. Our 10 acre block with the Bella Oaks clone is 32 years old and is typically

dry-farmed. For the newer blocks contributing to the Reserve Cab, we will irrigate to maintain canopy once the shoots stop growing.

“We are mainly VSP and keep vines at two shoots per spur and two clusters per shoot. Sometimes we’ll leave extra canes to dry out soils and then drop those canes when the canopy stops growing.

Typically, our Cabernet blocks do not require leaf pulling although Merlot seems to benefit from early season leafing. Our vineyards tend to be above the inversion layer, giving us more moderate temperatures that result in even high pH fruit having a good acidic feel.

“We don’t check for sugars, going primarily by taste to determine when to pick. We want the fruit character to be cassis-like and the seeds to be brown and crunchy. We pick into half-ton bins doing some sorting, then destem, add 50 ppm SO₂ and pump into fermenters. We cold soak for just two to three days at 45° F and then inoculate with three different cultured yeasts, which are added at 55° F. Fermentation goes for two to three weeks with a maximum temperature of 85° F. We pump-over twice daily and splash through a screen once to remove CO₂ during the most vigorous days of fermentation.

“We press at dryness to tank for one to two days and then rack to barrels. We will separate press and free run if needed. We use a range of French barrels, and roughly 40 percent are new. Our reserve wines get 22 months of barrel aging and are raked every four months. We top regularly to control VA. We bottle unfiltered and age the wine eight to nine months before release.”



PRIDE MOUNTAIN VINEYARDS

Winemakers' Tasting Notes

Pride: On the nose I get that fruit dominated by cassis and berry. In the mouth some chalk emerges as you get into it, but the wine tends to be more forward than backward. Up front, in addition to the ripe fruit, you get flavors of underbrush and tobacco, and then you feel the weight of the wine, with a bit of chalkiness in the finish, which is appropriate for a 2008.

Titus: I am a sucker for wines like this. There is big fruit, chocolate and savory qualities. It is like a concentrated Cabernet milkshake. It is delicious and makes you want to suck it right down. It is a large-scale wine.

Dyer: I get nice, bright red fruit. Most impressive is the structure and quality of the tannins, which are round and chewy with a nice persistence. It is broad on the palate with a brightness on the finish. There is a bit of chocolate and cedar as well. Very pleasant.

Figgins: Really expressive fruit with lots of graham cracker. It is big wine, just a mouthful of wine, but there is a kind of sweetness that cuts through it. Very showy. I like the size of it, and it needs a lot of time.

Kerrigan: It is very expressive with a lot of fruit and interesting layers of complexity. It is very rich, but there is a bit too much sweetness on the finish.

Clubb: There are a lot of dark attributes with a bit of mintiness. It has rich mouth-feel that is right on the edge of having too much alcohol. It is a big extraction, robust flavored wine. Well done.

Stambor: This wine is much riper with black fruits and plum. There is a barrel warmth (not alcohol) in the mouth. I get a bit of forest floor and mushroom. It's big in the mouth and hits every point. It is fully extracted in that full-blown style.

Weinkauf: Pretty wine, maybe like most 2008s it is shutting down a bit right now. I don't get effusive fruits, but the tar and graphite keep building. It's ripe with a good acid core for backbone. There is cassis and tobacco with powdery tannins that sit well in the mouth.

Corison: I get black licorice, black plum, blackberry and brown sugar aromas. It is a confection with undeniable mountain tannins that are a bit aggressive but should mellow over time.

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Dyer Vineyard

2008 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
(13.9% alc.) \$70

Bill and Dawnine Dyer share decades of experience in the California wine industry. Bill worked for 20 years with **Sterling Vineyards** as cellarmaster and winemaker and helped develop single-vineyard wines from Diamond Mountain. Dawnine worked as winemaker for 25 years at **Domaine Chandon**. Both Dawnine and Bill work as consultants for various wineries, but their focus is on their own Diamond Mountain vineyard planted in 1993 where they make just one wine, a Cabernet Sauvignon blend.



According to Dyer:

“We favor a restrained, balanced style that allows intrinsic fruit, structure and minerality to be the focus. We achieve that by planting specific varieties in the vineyard, allowing them to ripen together and then co-fermenting those varieties. We want the vineyard to be the wine. Bordeaux is our model more than California.

“Our vineyard is 2 1/2 acres on Diamond Mountain planted on volcanic gravel with an elevation of 500 to 600 feet. The vines are deep-rooted, and the vineyard is north facing. Vine spacing is 2x2 meters on 1103 Paulson rootstock. Our vineyard blend is 78 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 17 percent Cab Franc and 5 percent Petit Verdot, and the cuttings are Heritage clones from three different sites, one for each variety.

“Structure is essential for us. We want ageability and try to avoid coarse tannins. To achieve that we use minimal irrigation: about three or four deep irrigations per season. We have some cordon and some VSP with cross-arms to spread the canopy. We make two thinning passes prior to veraison and relatively little leaf thinning. After fruit set, we will cut tips.

“Our grapes are slow to ripen, and we determine when to pick by taste, checking the seeds and watching the weather forecast. We generally pick in the 24° to 25° Brix range with pH between 3.7 and 3.8. We pick into lug boxes or half-ton bins. We use a small Delta de-stemmer with rollers removed. We add 50 ppm SO₂ and cold soak three to five days at 50° to 55° F, using dry ice to manage temperatures.

“We inoculate with Harmony yeast and co-ferment the varieties together. We pump-over twice daily, moving one tank volume and add a third pump-over during peak fermentation when maximum temperatures hit 80° to 85° F. We'll use nutrients if necessary and will aerate only if we develop H₂S. We press at dryness, usually after 15 to 16 days total on the skins. We separate free run and press fractions and usually only use free run for our wine. We add malolactic in tank and then go dirty to barrels which are all French with 30 to 40 percent new. We rack quarterly the first year then two to three times the second. Wine ages a total of 20 to 21 months in oak. Typically we bottle unfiltered.”

Winemakers' Tasting Notes

Dyer: There is black cherry and blueberry with a mineral steel note, along with some anise and fennel on the nose. A solid core. Black cherry follows all the way through with fine tannins and a good acid close.

Titus: The aromas are red fruited with cherry and plum with a bit of sage. The wine is restrained but not over-ripe. There is great definition to the fruit with firm tannins and a solid structure. There are rustic tannins, which should age well, making this wine smoother and exotic.

Pride: Honest Cabernet flavors with lots of black cherry and complex mineral nuance. A good level of chalky tannins, without overwhelming the palate at all. Nice and full with good weight.

Corison: I get lots of rhubarb and dried herbal aromas. There is an intense red cherry flavor that is savory. The wine has a snappy balance and a long finish and should get better with age.

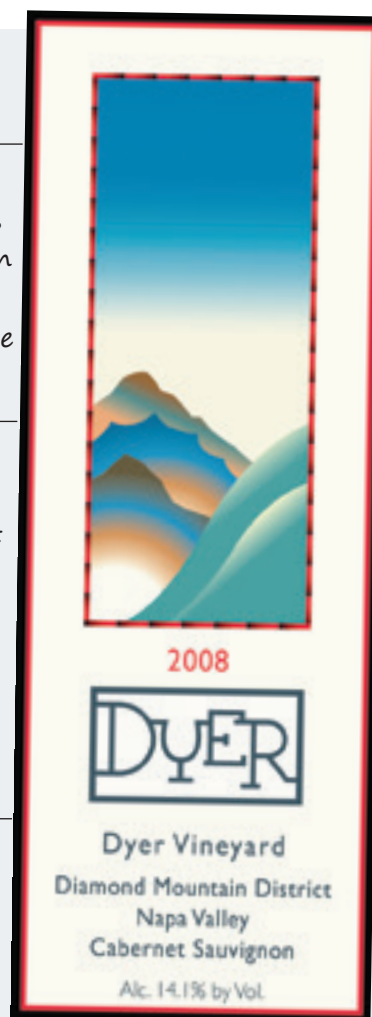
Stambor: Aromas of red fruit and sage that get more amplified with time in the glass. I like the balance and the well placed acidity. The red fruit continues all the way to the end. Right now, the wine is tight and closed. It needs time.

Weinkauf: There is a beautiful focus and strength to this wine. There's certainly red cherry but also green cherry, lending an acidic backbone and freshness to the wine. There is lovely minerality and soft, powdery, chalky tannins that will be awesome with time.

Clubb: This wine has beautiful balance in many ways. Elegant aromatics and bright aromas; it just has a prettiness to it. The integration, the mouth-feel, the length. It just hangs onto your palate. There are lots of subtle things going on all at the same time.

Kerrigan: It is elegant, well-balanced wine with lots of layers. There is nice fruit with some earthiness. It is rich without being over the top. Pretty wine.

Figgins: I echo all of those things. It's balanced but doesn't wow me. It's good, rich, delicious and not over-the-top. I like it, but I'd like a bit more verve and acidity.



Conclusion



DYER VINEYARD © LISA ERDBERG PHOTOGRAPHY

For winemakers, one of the best things about Cabernet Sauvignon is its dependable consistency. If it is planted in a warm enough area, it will get ripe with plenty of complex aromas and flavors, along with loads of tannins. In cooler areas, it can be blended with other varieties to tame the tannins and overcome some vegetal character. Once winemakers get a handle on their vineyards, Cabernet Sauvignon can be counted on to produce a wine that showcases terroir while expressing its own unique character year after year. Cabernet Sauvignon is a hearty grape. Its thick skin and reasonably open clusters lessen susceptibility to mold, and the clusters tend to ripen evenly. It handles warm fermentation temperatures, usually presenting strong phenolic structure and deep, dark color.

One of the key issues for winemakers is dealing with the brawny tannins common to the varietal. Winemakers have developed many different ways of modulating these tannins, from using extended cold soaks that encourage extraction in a non-alcoholic environment, to using forms of aeration, like delestage, pump-overs and barrel rackings, over the life of the wine to try to soften astringency. The varietal's affinity for oak adds layers of complexity to both the aroma and flavor profiles. Heavily extracted Cabernet Sauvignon can handle quite a bit of new oak without being overwhelmed, and several winemakers have been experimenting with fermenting Cabernet Sauvignon on the skins in barrels in search of softer tannins and an early integration of fruit and oak complexities.

The variety's ability to age gracefully in the bottle is a key factor in its popularity and value to collectors. Over time, great Cabernet Sauvignon can transform from a brash powerhouse with muscular tannins, into a layered, complex wine full of ripe fruit flavors accented by earthy notes that fill the mid-palate and entice, with a long silky finish. In this tasting, the Spottswoode, Corison and Leonetti all revealed delicious complexity, with opulent flavors and a lush finish. The younger wines in this tasting all give promise of developing similar palate-pleasing characteristics with more time.

Cabernet Sauvignon is a noble variety with regal bearing. Selecting a bottle from your cellar, decanting it with the proper respect and having it deliver on its promise is one of the true joys of drinking fine wine. Its ability to reflect a particular place with power and grace on a consistent basis vintage after vintage will keep Cabernet Sauvignon at the top of the heap for decades to come. [WBM](#)




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