

January / February 2004  
Issue 112



## New Releases From California



### Frazier Winery

**2000 Frazier Cabernet Sauvignon Memento Napa Valley:** Full ruby color. Superripe aromas of roasted berries, licorice and espresso, plus a hint of eucalyptus. Then tightly wound and slightly hard-edged, with an intense cassis flavor but also some intrusive greenness and elevated acids. A very young, stubbornly backward wine that finishes slightly dry, with a flavor of violet pastille. **87(+?) Points**

### Gary Farrell Wines

**2002 Gary Farrell Wines Sauvignon Blanc Redwood Ranch Sonoma County:** Lemon drop and grass on the nose. Bright, sharply delineated and varietally accurate, with a flavor of lime zest and a refreshing bitter edge of quinine. Further perked up by some unabsorbed CO2 Finishes penetrating and precise. **89 Points**

**2001 Gary Farrell Wines Chardonnay Rochioli and Allen Vineyards:** Clear pale yellow. Aromas of lemon drop and charred oak. Then dense, silky and juicy, with citrus and peach flavors nicely supported by ripe, well-integrated acids and solid backbone. Manages to be both velvety and bracing. Finishes with lingering flavors of pineapple, orange and vanillin oak. **89 Points**



### HDV

**2001 Hyde De Villaine (HDV) Chardonnay Carneros:** Aromas of piña colada and spearmint. Quite vibrant for California chardonnay, with taut pineapple, mineral and spice flavors reverberating in the middle palate. Youthfully unevolved but with excellent balance from the outset. Firm-edged finish offers terrific verve. **91 Points**

**2001 Hyde De Villaine (HDV) Meritage Carneros Napa Valley:** Bright red-ruby color. Smoky black fruit aromas complicated by notes of tobacco, leather, pepper and gunflint. Dense and sweet but youthful, with pliant flavors of roasted black fruits and smoky oak. Shows a slightly candied character. Finishes with big, sweet, chewy tannins and very good length. **88(+?) Points**

### Kuleto Estate Family Vineyards

**2001 Kuleto Estate Sangiovese:** Full red-ruby. Cassis, violet, licorice and sweet oak on the nose. Sappy, spicy flavors of fresh, slightly medicinal black fruits firmed by oak. At once plump and lively. Finishes with big, dusty tannins and very good length. **88 Points**

**2001 Kuleto Estate Syrah Napa Valley:** Medium ruby. Intriguing aromas of cassis, licorice, smoked meat and spicy oak. Juicy and intensely flavored, with cassis and blackberry fruit complicated by a gamey aspect. Moderately ripe, solidly structured syrah, finishing with light, slightly drying tannins. **87 Points**



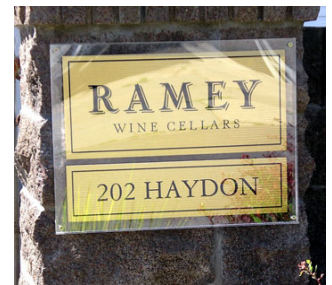
**2001 Kuleto Estate Zinfandel Napa Valley:** Dark red. Enticing aromas of dark plum, blackberry, violet pastille and chocolate. Fat, sweet and pliant; a dense fruit bomb of a zinfandel whose floral lift leavens its supersweet dark berry, mocha and chocolate flavors. Finishes with sweet tannins and very good persistence. **90 Points**

### Ramey Wine Cellars

**2001 Ramey Chardonnay Hyde Vineyard:** Soil-inflected aromas of minerals, iodine and nutmeg. Offers a rare combination of texture, breadth and verve for California chardonnay. Really expansive in the middle palate, with powerful fruit and spice character complicated by a peaty suggestion of Islay scotch. A major mouthful of chardonnay. **93 Points**

**2001 Ramey Chardonnay Hudson Vineyard Carneros:** Exotic aromas of apple, pineapple, coconut, iodine and baking spices. Powerful and penetrating, with a dusty impression of extract. This, too, offers superb inner-palate energy and precision and an even bigger finish than the Hyde wine, with real palate-staining persistence. **94 Points**

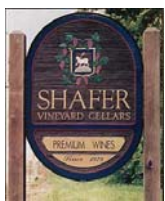
**2001 Ramey Claret Napa Valley:** Deep, saturated ruby-red. Superripe, expressive aromas of slightly stewed fruits, maple syrup and mocha. Sweet, lush and dense, with concentrated, slightly port-like flavors of baked fruits. A bit warm with alcohol. A huge, rather inelegant wine finishing with substantial tannins and a flavor of dark chocolate. **87-89 Points**



**2001 Ramey Red Wine Diamond Mountain District Napa Valley:** Opaque medium ruby. Sappy aromas of black raspberry, mocha and exotic spices. Much denser and sweeter than the Claret, with superb mouth feel. Flavors of black raspberry, currant and chocolate offer a penetrating sweetness. A huge wine with a boatload of tannins and a finishing flavor of bitter chocolate. **91-93 Points**

**2001 Ramey Red Wine Jericho Canyon Vineyard Napa Valley:** Full medium ruby. Superripe nose is distinctly porty yet bright. Then lush and deep in the mouth, with explosive, superripe flavors of blackberry, black raspberry, licorice and bitter chocolate. Boasts terrific sweetness and depth but distinctly bound-up today, even a bit medicinal. Finishes with powerful but thoroughly ripe tannins. **91(+?) Points**

### Shafer Vineyards



**2001 Shafer Vineyard Merlot Napa Valley:** Deep red-ruby. Red berries, exotic spices, violet, coffee, cola and smoky oak on the nose. Sweet, supple and nicely concentrated, with sappy raspberry flavor enlivened by ripe acids. Delicious, fruit-driven merlot. Finishes bright and persistent, with ripe tannins and a note of chocolate. **90 Points**

### Spottswode Vineyard

**2002 Spottswode Winery Sauvignon Blanc:** Bright, pale color. Restrained aromas of white plum, grapefruit pith and lemon drop. Dense and broad but also bright and dry, with brisk, deep citrus flavors carrying through to a long, ripe finish. **89 Points**

### Tablas Creek Vineyard

**2002 Tablas Creek Vineyard Roussanne:** Aromas of vineyard peach, curry powder, smoke and nut skin. Fat and dense but also nutty and dry; perked up by some CO2. Hints at dried flowers. **87 Points**

**2002 Tablas Creek Vineyard Cotes de Tablas:** Pale medium gold. Exotic yet bright aromas of peach, apricot and spicy oak. Sweet and fresh, with good lift and spice and noteworthy zingy cut leavening the wine's richness. Enticing flavors of underripe pineapple and pear are nicely lifted by subtle florals. **89 Points**



**2001 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc:** Pale gold color. Nose like a livelier version of the 2002 Cotes de Tablas, with good minty lift. Dense, chewy, fat and very dry. Large-scaled yet elegant blend, finishing with subtle hints of orange oil and almond. **89 Points**

**2000 Tablas Creek Vineyard Esprit de Beaucastel Paso Robles:** Good medium-deep red. Currant, mineral and animal aromas, along with a whiff of bandaid that dissipated with aeration. Firm, minerally and structured, with notes of currant, tree bark and black licorice. Saline, focused and gripping wine with strong acidity and firm tannic spine. **90 Points**

### Turnbull Wine Cellars



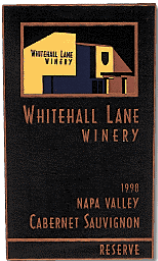
**2001 Turnbull Wine Cellars Syrah Napa Valley Oakville:** Deep ruby-red. Oaky aromas of black raspberry, cherry, mocha, bitter chocolate and spices. Supple and juicy, with flavors of bitter cherry, espresso and spicy oak. Solidly structured syrah, finishing with some obvious wood tannins. **87 Points**

### Volker Eisele Family Estate

**2000 Volker Eisele Family Estate Terzetto Napa Valley:** Red-ruby color. Exotic aromas of maple syrup, rose petal and pepper. Dense and rich in the mouth; slightly herbal but pliant and tactile, with good underlying sweetness. Finishes ripely tannic and persistent, with a slight dry edge. **88 Points**



### Whitehall Lane Winery



**2000 Whitehall Lane Winery Merlot Napa Valley:** Medium red. Aromas of redcurrant, plum, graphite, tobacco and smoky oak, with a vegetal, herbal aspect. Supple and pliant, with plum and tobacco flavors. Shows a distinctly leafy component yet there's attractive sweetness here as well. Finishes with fairly fine tannins and a bit of unabsorbed acidity. **86 Points**

**2000 Whitehall Lane Winery Cabernet Sauvignon:** Medium red. Redcurrant, brown spices, tobacco, licorice and a leafy note on the nose. Juicy, aromatic and nicely delineated, with modest ripeness but good shape and intensity. Cabernet-accurate notes of currant, licorice, tobacco and fresh herbs. Finishes with slightly dry but fairly even tannins and a faint green edge. **86 Points**

**2000 Whitehall Lane Winery Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve:** Bright ruby-red. Subdued but aromatic nose combines red cherry, bitter chocolate, carob and menthol. Supple and sweet, with red berry and spicy oak flavors offering good texture but modest complexity. Finishes with fine-grained tannins and an attractive perfumed quality. **88 Points**

### Zaca Mesa

**2002 Zaca Mesa Winery Viognier:** Bright, pale color. Subtle aromas of fresh peach, orange marmalade, cantaloupe and toasted nuts. Chewy and concentrated, with very ripe, sweet flavors of peach and melon. Nicely tactile Viognier whose brisk acids extend its finishing flavor of apricot and keep this plump wine from cloying. **88 Points**

**2001 Zaca Mesa Winery Cuvee Z:** Medium red. Red berries, cherry, smoke, pepper and a meaty nuance on the aromatic nose. Sweet, plump and ripe, with fat flavors of red berries and pepper. Not complex but layered and inviting. **87 Points**

