



Bacchus Importers Ltd.

The Wine Advocate | Issue 168
Review Round-Up

2005 Blankiet Cabernet Sauvignon Paradise Hills Vineyard (Napa)

Made from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, the 2005 combines the extraordinary power of this site with unbelievable elegance and definition. It exhibits a deep ruby/purple hue in addition to abundant aromas of smoky oak, blackberries, cassis, scorched earth, and coffee. This powerful, rich, super-pure, deep Cabernet's finish lasts 45-50 seconds.

96-98 Points

2004 Blankiet Cabernet Sauvignon Paradise Hills Vineyard (Napa)

Boasting delicious fudge-like aromas intermixed with blackberry, coffee bean, and *pain grille* scents, this super-rich, full-bodied effort displays a Graves-like, volcanic, scorched earth/hot stone element in its flavors. With moderately high tannin, it will benefit from 2-3 years of bottle age.

96 Points

2005 Blankiet Merlot Paradise Hills Vineyard Napa

More elegant, Bordeaux-styled effort than the more flamboyant 2004. This is primarily due to the vintage character as opposed to the change in winemakers. A deep ruby/purple color is followed by attractive aromas of coffee, black cherries, licorice, earth and hints of truffles and chocolate. Medium to full-bodied with good underlying acidity, opulence, purity, and delineation, this classic Merlot should drink well for 12-15 years.

92-94 Points

2004 Blankiet Merlot Paradise Hills Vineyard Napa

Includes a dollop of Cabernet Franc in the blend. It exhibits gorgeous notes of chocolate, espresso, plums, blackberries and cherries. Full-bodied with terrific intensity and opulence, it makes a dramatic statement about how great Napa Merlot can be.

94 Points

2005 DuMol Chardonnay Russian River

Offers a terrific introduction to this estate's Burgundian winemaking style, a 3,200-case blend of fruit from the Heintz, Ritchie, and Dutton vineyards, it boasts fabulous fruit along with hints of lemon oil, orange blossoms, tropical fruit, subtle smoky oak, and crushed rocs. This fresh, lively effort appears to be the finest Russian River Chardonnay DuMol has yet produced.

92-94 Points

2005 DuMol Chardonnay Chloe Russian River

Possessing superb purity, unbelievable depth and richness, vibrant acidity, and an incredibly delineated, zesty finish, it should drink well young, yet age for an unusually long time.

95-97 Points

2004 DuMol Chardonnay Chloe Russian River

Largely from the Ritchie Vineyard, is made from an old Mt. Eden clone of Chardonnay, and spends time in 62& new French barrels. There are 900 cases of this stunning white. An exceptional bouquet of wet stones, white currants, white peaches, and orange liqueur is followed by a wine with super acids, full body, a singular presence as well as fruit, and a stunningly long finish of over 30 seconds.

95 Points

2005 DuMol Chardonnay Clare Carneros

Crushed rocks, flint, cold steel, wet stones, leesy brioche, white currants, and nectarines make an appearance in this full-bodied, powerful Chardonnay that tastes tannic. Long and unevolved, it is presently more restrained and playing it closer to the vest than its siblings. All of these Chardonnays will spend 18-20 months in oak before being bottled unfiltered.

93-95+ Points

2004 DuMol Chardonnay Clare Carneros

With superb fruit, more tightness and minerality, but good smokiness, spiciness, and richness, it comes across as the most structured and backward of these Chardonnays. Andy Smith said there was more lees stirring in the 2005 vintage in order to generate more intensity as the wines had good natural acidities. This looks to be another fabulous year for the DuMol.

95+ Points

2005 DuMol Chardonnay Isobel Green Valley Russian River

Reveals more hazelnut, nectarine, gun flint, and lemon oil aromas in addition to full body, and savory, refreshing acidity. Long, rich, and pure, this blockbuster Chardonnay should age for a decade.

94-96 Points

2004 DuMol Chardonnay Isobel Green Valley Russian River

A 500-case cuvee aged 18 months in barrel. It reveals crisp acidity, a steely structure, and beautiful honeysuckle, orange blossom, and subtle smoky characteristics. This beautiful offering is capable of lasting 5-6 years.

94+ Points

2005 DuMol Pinot Noir Russian River

Had recently been moved to tank and was awaiting bottling when I tasted it. It is a medium-bodied effort displaying plenty of berry fruit, dried herbs, lavender, spicy oak, and roasted meat characteristics. Savory with good acidity, it is a strong Russian River cuvee to drink over the next decade.

90-92 Points

2005 DuMol Pinot Noir Finn Russian River

It possesses more richness, a deeper color, and more plum, black cherry, and berry characteristics along with underbrush, dried herb, and spice notes. Medium to full-bodied with good underlying acidity, it should easily last a decade.

90-93 Points

2004 DuMol Pinot Noir Finn Russian River

Reveals sweet black berry, forest floor, and subtle mint and subtle aromas, a meaty richness, and broad, savory, full-bodied flavors.

94 Points

2005 DuMol Pinot Noir Ryan Green Valley Russian River

Reveals a medium dark ruby color with purple nuances, good weight, and a sweet perfume of cola, sweet and sour cherries, a hint of strawberries, dried herbs, and forest floor. This fresh, vibrant, zesty Pinot faithfully translates the character of the vintage.

89-91+ Points

2004 DuMol Pinot Noir Ryan Green Valley Russian River

Offers wonderful sweet black cherry fruit intertwined with sassafras, Allspice, forest floor, and fresh mushrooms. This rich, medium to full-bodied Pinot should drink well for 7-8 years,

91 Points

2005 DuMol Syrah Russian River

There is some herbaceousness underneath the fruit, but the wine is full-bodied, rich, complex, and comes across like a Crozes-Hermitage on steroids.

90-93 Points

2005 DuMol Syrah Eddie's Patch Russian River

Offers full-bodied, tannic, meaty, blackberry and cassis flavors intermixed with notions of herbs, lavender, underbrush, and spice box. It is also slightly hard and rustic in the finish. I suspect that will be resolved by the time the wine is bottled.

90-93? Points

2004 DuMol Syrah Eddie's Patch Russian River

Shares a similar opaque purple color in addition to notes of incense, blackberries, truffles, and spicy wood. It is a huge, dense, cool climate Syrah with a Pinot Noir-like sassafras character.

93+ Points

2005 DuMol Syrah Jack Robert's Run Russian River

With excellent acidity, loads of tannin, and a more elegant style than the 2004, it is more French/European in its medium-bodied weight, crisp acidity, and lower pH.

90-92 Points

2004 DuMol Syrah Jack Robert's Run Russian River

A 200-case cuvee that spent 18 months in French oak. Notes of melted tar, roasted peppers, meat juices, blackberries, and cassis emerge from this full-bodied, rich, flavor-filled, intense effort.

95 Points

2005 DuMol Viognier Lia Russian River

One of the finest Viogniers I have tasted from California's North Coast. Aging on its lees for 11 months, and no malolactic fermentation have resulted in a bone dry, full-bodied white with loads of acidity as well as litchi nut, apricot, and other tropical fruit characteristics. Revealing restraint, complexity, and length, it should drink well for 2-4 years.

92 Points

2005 Fisher Cabernet Sauvignon Coach Insignia Napa

Includes 2% merlot, boasts a deep ruby/purple color in addition to pure aromas of *crème de cassis*, crushed rocks, and spring flowers. Medium to full-bodied and beautifully pure, with sweet tannin, decent acidity, and good texture as well as length.

90-92 Points

2004 Fisher Cabernet Sauvignon Coach Insignia Napa

Is softer and more up-front with oodles of black and red fruit intermixed with crushed rocks, flowers, and subtle spicy wood. The overall impression is one of elegance yet authoritative flavors.

90 Points

2005 Fisher Cabernet Sauvignon Wedding Vineyard Sonoma

This has always been a top-notch site, and the 2005 is terrific. It is deep ruby/purple color precedes a bouquet of licorice, blueberries, blackberries, crushed rocks, and acacia flowers. An elegant entry on the palate is followed by a medium to full-bodied wine with abundant fruit, a beautiful texture, and a symmetrical mouthfeel and finish.

91-93 Points

2005 Fisher Cameron Proprietary Red Napa

A proprietary blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, exhibits terrific balance, a Margaux-like finesse, a floral/berry-scented bouquet, medium body, sweet tannin, and a long finish.

90-92 Points

2004 Fisher Cameron Proprietary Red Napa

Possesses a dark ruby/purple color followed by scents of white chocolate, sweet red and black currants, mint, and spice. This medium-bodied 2004 is best consumed during its first decade of life.

89 Points

2005 Fisher Chardonnay Mountain Estate Vineyard Sonoma

Which was put through partial malolactic, exhibits notes of white currants, juicy lemons, honeysuckle, and a hint of minerals. The wine is crisp, medium to full-bodied, and long in the finish. It is another example of just how compelling the 2005 vintage can be for the top Chardonnay producers.

91-94 Points

2004 Fisher Chardonnay Mountain Estate Vineyard Sonoma

Reveals aromas of lemon oil, apricots, white peaches, and spring flowers in its elegant, medium-bodied, nicely concentrated personality.

89 Points

2005 Fisher Chardonnay Whitney's Vineyard Estate Sonoma

Possesses attractive notes of honeyed lemons, poached pears, white peaches, and spices. Medium-bodied and elegant with expressive aromas as well as flavors.

90-92 Points

2004 Fisher Chardonnay Whitney's Vineyard Estate Sonoma

Displays fine underlying acidity buttressing a hefty Chardonnay. Honeyed grapefruit, white currants, and subtle smoky hazelnuts are followed by a wine with beautiful texture and a long, heady finish.

93 Points

2005 Forman Cabernet Sauvignon Napa

May be one of the finest examples made at this estate in many years. His goal is to produce a California version of Haut-Brion or Ausone, or even better, a combination of those two renowned Bordeaux. A deep ruby/purple color is accompanied by a sumptuous bouquet of white flowers, black fruits, and crushed rocks. Full-bodied, rich, intense, super pure, and well-delineated.

92-94 Points

2004 Forman Cabernet Sauvignon Napa

Spent 20 months in barrels prior to bottling. Dark ruby/purple with a restrained but sweet nose of black currants, plums, damp earth, licorice, and white chocolate, it is an elegant, medium-bodied, opulent effort with sweet tannin and a long finish.

91 Points

2005 Forman Chardonnay Napa

Offers up a fragrant perfume of lemon blossom, orange as well as a steely/mineral-dominated personality.

93 Points

2005 Paul Hobbs Cabernet Sauvignon Napa

Reveals layered, full-bodied flavors of lead pencil shavings and black fruits along with refreshing acidity. This amply-styled wine will be impressive young.

90-93 Points

2004 Paul Hobbs Cabernet Sauvignon Napa

There are 3,640 cases of this dense ruby/purple tinged Cabernet. Its big, sweet bouquet of chocolate, cassis, and loamy soil scents is followed by a wine revealing an opulent texture as well as 10-12 years of longevity.

90 Points

2005 Paul Hobbs Cabernet Sauvignon Beckstoffer to-Kalon Vyd. Oakville

Exhibits a dense ruby/purple color in addition to aromas of graphite interwoven with blackberries, *crème de cassis*, licorice, and high-class cigar tobacco. The cooler vintage and a streamlined mouthfeel.

93-95+ Points

2004 Paul Hobbs Cabernet Sauvignon Beckstoffer to-Kalon Vyd. Oakville

Offers aromas of tobacco leaf, *crème de cassis*, graphite, flowers, and licorice in its full-bodied, powerful personality. There are layers of concentration, a multidimensional mouthfeel, and beautiful purity as well as nobility in this stunner.

95+ Points

2005 Paul Hobbs Cabernet Sauvignon Stagecoach Vineyard Napa

Smells like a pencil sharpener saturated with *crème de cassis*. A mineral element is also noted in this cuvee. Full-bodied with superb fruit, richness, and definition.

94-96 Points

2004 Paul Hobbs Cabernet Sauvignon Stagecoach Vineyard Napa

This broodingly backward, deep ruby/purple-hued effort gives up scents of crushed rocks, smoky oak, blackberries, and cassis. Powerful and rich with exceptional concentration and structure, it requires 2-3 years of cellaring, and should drink well over the next two decades or more.

94 Points

2005 Paul Hobbs Chardonnay Richard Dinner Vineyard Sonoma Mtn.

Offers elegant, buttery, spice box, honeysuckle, peach, and tropical fruit aromas, good underlying acidity, and abundant power as well as richness. There are 675 cases of cuvee.

92 Points

2005 Paul Hobbs Chardonnay Richard Dinner Vyd. Cuvee Augstina Sonoma Mtn.

Emerges from an exposed mountaintop vineyard. Although the color suggests ample evolution, the aromatics and flavors prove otherwise. Boldly-styled with abundant amounts of roasted nut, poached pear, oily tropical fruit, wood, and acidity, this dense, fresh, lively, intense 2005 can be enjoyed over the next 4-6 years.

93-95 Points

2005 Paul Hobbs Pinot Noir Russian River

A useful introduction of Hobbs' juicy, fruit-forward, up-front style. Its dark ruby/purple color hue is followed by scents of plums, raspberries, white chocolate, and earth.

90 Points

2005 Paul Hobbs Pinot Noir Hyde Vineyard Carneros

Exhibits plenty of cool climate raspberry notes intermixed with cherries, cranberries, earth spice, and a hint of licorice. Medium to full-bodied, and more complex than the Russian River bottling, but not as fleshy.

91 Points

2005 JC The First Date California

A blend of 75% Roussanne and 25% Marsanne, emphasizes fruit rather than wood. Rose petal, honeysuckle, and oily citrus aromas and flavors along with zesty underlying acidity and a bold style characterize this beauty.

90 Points

2004 JC Petite Syrah Frediani Vineyard Alexander Valley

Exhibits an opaque blue/purple color in addition to sweet aromas of blueberries, crushed rocks, and white flowers. Powerful, concentrated, and amazingly intense as well as rich, it should easily evolve for two decades or more. This grape remains the most underrated high quality varietal in California, especially for longevity.

93 Points

2004 JC Syrah Caldwell Vineyard Napa

Exhibits a scorched/volcanic earth-like character along with notions of roasted herbs, espresso, cassis, and blackberries. This heady, Hermitage-like effort is distinctive, but not nearly as sexy and opulent as the Fess Parker cuvee. It should benefit from another year or so of bottle age, and drink well for a decade or more.

91 Points

2004 JC Syrah California Cuvee California

A blend of 8% Petite Sirah and 92% Syrah from various vineyard sites, it offers plenty of meaty, peppery notes with hints of smoke and spice. Soft, fleshy, medium to full-bodied, and seductive, it should be enjoyed over the next several years.

89 Points

2004 JC Syrah Fess Parker Vineyard Santa Barbara

A blend of 90% Syrah and 10% Petite Sirah. Floral, blackberry, blueberry, crushed rock, and lavender notes, superb intensity, beautiful sweetness, full body, and a seamless constitution suggest this stunning Syrah will drink well for 5-7 years.

92 Points

2004 JC Zinfandel Arrowhead Vineyard Sonoma

Offers plenty of black raspberry, sweet cherry, spice box, and peppery notes, medium to full body, and some disjointed tannins and acids poking through.

87 Points

2005 Martinelli Chardonnay Road Russian River

Tangerine oil, lemon blossom, crushed rocks, white currants, and a hint of honeysuckle are present in this full-bodied, rich, pure, layered wine. It is gorgeously complex already.

93 Points

2005 Martinelli Pinot Noir Blue Slide Ridge Sonoma Coast

This is always the most Richebourg-like of the wines, with a classical floral, herbal, blueberry nose intermixed with crushed rocks, a deep ruby/purple-tinged color, full body, wonderful sweetness, and moderate tannin in the finish. Unfortunately, there are only 175 cases.

95 Points

2005 Martinelli Pinot Noir Bondi Home Ranch Water Trough Vyd. Green Valley

Shows loads of tannin, a greener, cooler character, with plenty of pomegranate, sour cherry, menthol, and forest floor. It tastes more like a Loire Valley wine than the typical Pinot Noir from Sonoma. Nevertheless, it has fine ripeness, medium body, and good underlying acidity.

90 Points

2005 Martinelli Pinot Noir Moonshine Ranch Russian River

This is a relatively bigger, more masculine style of Pinot Noir, with forest floor notes and loads of body and tannin. It will need time to round into shape.

89+ Points

2005 Martinelli Pinot Noir Zio Tony Ranch Russian River

Dark ruby with notes of pomegranate, sweet and sour cherries, a hint of spice, and a medium to full-bodied, concentrated palate. This wine (585 cases) should age nicely for up to a decade.

91 Points

2005 Martinelli Zinfandel Giuseppe & Luisa Russian River

A blockbuster, with deep ruby/purple color and a big, sweet nose of ripe figs, strawberry and cherry jam, mincemeat, and peppery spices. It is full-bodied, heady, opulent and ideal for drinking over the next 5-7 years, although I suspect it will last a lot longer.

94 Points

2005 Martinelli Zinfandel Jackass Vineyard Russian River

This tastes like a Zinfandel made by Henri Bonneau in Chateauneuf du Pape. Sweet kirch liqueur intermixed with roasted herbs, pepper, spice box, and gamey aged beef notes all combine for a wine with great fruit, huge glycerin and volume, as one might suspect from the alcohol level, but no sense of heat. This is a ripe, heady, individualistic/singular style of wine that you either love or hate. I simply love it. There are 572 cases of the Jackass Vineyard, which is relatively large production for this site. At 17.5% of alcohol, the achievement in this wine fermenting dry is remarkable.

95 Points

2005 Plumpjack Cabernet Sauvignon Estate Oakville

Plenty of creosote, black currant, and blackberry characteristics as well as notions of herbs, new oak, and spice emerge from this rich, elegant, stylish, gracefully constituted effort.

90-92 Points

2004 Plumpjack Cabernet Sauvignon Estate Oakville

Exhibits a dark ruby/purple hue along with a sweet bouquet of scorched earth, smoky new oak, black currants, roasted coffee beans, and a hint of leather. Blueberry and blackberry fruit characteristics also emerge from this full-bodied, supple-textured, opulent, flamboyant, sexy, seductive effort.

94 Points

2005 Plumpjack Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve Estate Oakville

Ratchets up the level of intensity, richness, and density. It boasts a deep purple color to the rim along with beautiful notes of blueberries, blackberries, crushed rocks, and white flowers. Deep and full-bodied with excellent underlying acidity as well as sweet tannin, it is not as powerful or intense as the 2004 or 2003, but is more restrained and elegant. This vintage has clearly produced alcohol.

92-94 Points

2004 Plumpjack Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve Estate Oakville

A blockbuster effort. This voluptuous, inky/purple-tinged offering boasts sweet aromas of blackberries, roasted coffee, chocolate, grapefruit, and subtle sweet oak. The color suggests a super-concentrated wine, but in the mouth, despite plenty of power, richness, and multidimensional Cabernet can be drunk now or cellared for two decades or more.

96 Points

2003 Plumpjack Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve Estate Oakville

Spent 29 months in 100% new French oak. This meaty, dense purple-colored wine offers up aromas of lead pencil shavings, *crème de cassis*, white flowers, and spice box. Rich, full-bodied, and powerful with superb purity as well as potential in longevity.

95 Points

2004 Pride Mountain Cabernet Franc Sonoma

Is somewhat green and light compared to other vintages, with austere tannin in the finish. Nevertheless, some attractive menthol, blueberry, white chocolate, and licorice notes are present. While it is very good, more texture and succulence would have resulted in a higher score.

88 Points

2004 Pride Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon Napa/Sonoma

Although lighter than previous efforts, it exhibits a dark ruby color, medium body, black currant and damp earth characteristics, and a lean finish

87 Points

2003 Pride Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve Napa

Offers abundant quantities of *crème de cassis* notes, medium to full body, a big, beefy, smoky character intermixed with scorched earth, coffee, and blackberries, and a rich, dense, smooth style.

93+ Points

2005 Pride Mountain Chardonnay Vintner's Select Mountaintop Vineyard Sonoma

Exhibits plenty of minerality in its lemon oil, orange blossom, apple skin, and brioche-filled perfume and flavors. Medium to full-bodied with excellent acidity as well as impressive depth.

91 Points

2004 Pride Mountain Merlot Napa/Sonoma

Reveals austere tannin in the finish, but it offers nice herbal undertones in the attractive berry and mocha fruit.

87 Points

2005 Pride Mountain Viognier Sonoma

It is best consumed during its first year of life to take advantage of the exuberant aromatics and freshness.

89 Points

2004 Ramey Cabernet Sauvignon Jericho Canyon Napa

Has an inky dark ruby/purple color, a wonderfully sweet nose of espresso roast, fudge, blackberry, and cassis with a hint of incense and smoke. The wine is full-bodied, broadly flavored, opulent, and voluptuous, and that in itself seems to give the wine its current appeal, although I think this is a candidate for at least two decades of cellaring.

92-95 Points

2005 Ramey Cabernet Sauvignon Larkmead Vineyard Napa

Very Bordeaux-like, with more elegance, not quite the weight, power, or richness of the 2004, but it is no wimpy wine. Deep ruby/purple, with notes of charcoal, black currants, white chocolate, and mineral, this is a beauty that should drink well for 10-15 years.

90-92 Points

2004 Ramey Cabernet Sauvignon Larkmead Vineyard Napa

Has that gorgeously pure crème de cassis that I notice consistently in Screaming Eagle. The wine is full-bodied, elegant, sexy and rich, and should easily last and evolve for 10-15 or more years.

95 Points

2004 Ramey Chardonnay Carneros

Shows crisp, elegant lemon oil notes with zesty underlying acidity, a hint of tropical fruit, and subtle wood. It is a pretty, medium to full-bodied Chardonnay to drink over the next 2-3 years.

89 Points

2004 Ramey Chardonnay Russian River

Which at first shows more toasty oak, but with air sweet orange, nectarine, quince, and white currant notes emerge. It is a beautiful wine, intense, rich, and classically Californian.

91 Points

2004 Ramey Chardonnay Sonoma Coast

Shows crisp, elegant lemon oil notes with zesty underlying acidity, a hint of tropical fruit, and subtle wood. It is a pretty, medium to full-bodied Chardonnay to drink over the next 2-3 years.

90 Points

2004 Ramey Chardonnay Hudson Vineyard Napa/Carneros

Seems to be evolutionary track than the other wines. Light gold in color with notes of marmalade, smoky hazelnuts, and topical fruit, and a lusty, rich full-bodied palate that offers delicious drinking now, it should age well for several more years.

91 Points

2004 Ramey Chardonnay Hyde Vineyard Napa

Always my favorite, this wine has extraordinary intensity, with wonderful tropical fruit interwoven with orange blossom, white peach, and some mixed tropical fruits, even a hint of litchi. The undeniable minerality and floral notes add to the complexity of this stunningly full-bodied, opulent, but well-delineated wine.

94 Points

2004 Ramey Chardonnay Ritchie Vineyard Russian River

Exhibits wonderfully sweet brioche, bee's wax, honeyed pineapple, and some hazelnut notes. It has crisp acidity, a rich, long full-bodied finish, and a style that seems to beautifully transpose a European allegiance to elegance with a California predilection for ripeness. That is what is so admirable about not only the Chardonnays from Ramey but the red wines as well.

93 Points

2005 Ramey Claret Napa

Has a dark/ruby purple color and notes of charcoal, smoked herbs, cedar, black cherries, and currants. It is another winner, but with slightly more acidity and restraint. The single vineyard wines are spectacular, and all of them are Cabernet Sauvignon –based. A vineyard that I have raved about as somewhat under the radar is the Larkmead Vineyard just north of St. Helena. This is the equivalent of Napa's Pauillac, and Ramey has clearly captured this wine in a brilliant manner.

88-90 Points

2004 Ramey Claret Napa

Shows soft, seductive notes of black fruits intermixed with bay leaf, white chocolate, and sweet subtle wood. It is soft, round, generous, and best drunk over 5-8 years, although I suspect it will keep longer.

89 Points

2005 Ramey Syrah Sonoma Coast

Like its predecessor, was co-fermented with 5% Viognier. The good news is that there are 540 cases. Ramey used around 20% whole stems in the winemaking, and aged it in one-year-old Francois Freres barrels except for a small percentage that were new. This black wine shows notes of tapenade, acacia flowers, wonderful, sweet, rich blackberry fruit, and a super finish. It is concentrated and has obvious but sweet tannins. This is a stunner that should drink well for a decade or more.

93-95 Points

2004 Ramey Syrah Sonoma Coast

Which is showing better than last year. Meaty, blackberry, and cassis notes interwoven with some smoke and underbrush arise from this inky purple-colored wine. It is peppery, full-bodied, with hints of tapenade and spice. It is very French, but the ripeness is clearly Californian.

90 Points

2004 Rudd Chardonnay Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River

Spent 18 months in French oak, of which 60% was new. The aromatics have diminished since I tasted this wine last year, but it reveals notions of crème brulee, honeyed citrus, lemon oil, and subtle spicy wood. This medium-bodied Chardonnay should drink well for 3-5 years.

91 Points

2004 Rudd Oakville Estate Proprietary Red Wine Napa

It exhibits a deep ruby/purple color followed by scents of licorice, black currants, underbrush, charcoal, and spice characteristics. With terrific fruit as well as an opulent texture, it should drink well for 12-15 years.

94 Points

2005 Rudd Sauvignon Blanc Napa

Exhibiting crisp minerality along with a hint of figs, melons, quince, and grapefruit, this fresh, lively, medium-bodied white is best consumed over the next several years. An experimental cuvee of Sauvignon Blanc from Leslie Rudd's Mt. Veeder vineyard was absolutely amazing. Hopefully they will expand production and make it commercially viable.

89 Points

2005 Schrader Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville

Comes from Clone 4, reveals notes of creosote, charcoal, blackberry cassis, incense, and *pain grille*. It is full-bodied, yet the cooler vintage provided a European-like elegance and tannic structure. It will need 2-3 years of cellaring, and should drink well for 20+ years. If you are wondering why no Old Sparky was tasted, this is essentially a barrel selection, usually four barrels culled out by Fred Schrader and Thomas Brown of what they think are the finest barrels in the cellar.

91-93 Points

2004 Schrader Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville

The wine has great purity, richness, and wonderful sweet, smoky, coffee bean, and black currant notes intermixed with some spring flowers and cedar. Very rich, full-bodied, and intense, with an almost Graves-like scorched earth/hot stone sort of character, this wine exhibits superb ripeness, purity, texture, and a multi-dimensional personality. In spite of its accessibility, I would still opt for cellaring it for 2-5 years, and drink it over the following 20-25 years.

96+ Points

2005 Schrader Cabernet Sauvignon RBS Oakville

Shows great fruit, plenty of *crème de cassis*, good underlying acidity, moderate tannin, and plenty of power, richness, and definition.

92-94 Points

2004 Schrader Cabernet Sauvignon RBS Oakville

Is a more structured, meaty, muscular wine with an inky purple color and powerful cassis flavors intermixed with some smoke, licorice, and graphite. This wine, which was so open-knit and opulent last year, has closed down, but it is bursting with potential and I am sure it will ultimately merit a score in the mid-90s when it hits its peak of maturity in 3-5 years.

93+ Points

2004 Schrader Cabernet Sauvignon Old Sparky Oakville

Essentially a different blend of clones, primarily Clone 6, is also dazzling. This wine is dense purple in color with a big, smoky, floral nose of blueberry, blackberry, creosote, and some pain grille. Its terrific texture, fabulous opulence, and power all augur for a wine that will last 20 or more years.

95+ Points

2005 Schrader Vieux-OS Zinfandel Old Vine Tofanelli Vineyard Napa

Possesses a dense ruby/purple color and notes of black raspberries, cherries, incense, underbrush, and spice. It is full-bodied, pure and, for a Zinfandel, surprisingly elegant in spite of its 15.7% natural alcohol.

90-92 Points

2004 Schrader Vieux-OS Zinfandel Old Vine Tofanelli Vineyard Napa

Aged completely in French oak of which 25% was new, has a dark ruby color and a big, spicy, cedary nose with Provencal herb, pepper, and loads of cherry cola and earthy notes. It is a big wine at 15.9%, but the alcohol is well-concealed by the lavish fruit.

89 Points

2004 Schrader Vieux-OS Zinfandel Old Vine Ira Carter Vineyard Napa

This is a superb Zinfandel exhibiting a smorgasbord of aromas ranging from ground pepper, roasted herbs, and meat juices to black cherry, underbrush, and incense. The wine is fruit-driven, full-bodied, opulent, and undeniably seductive.

92 Points

2003 Shafer Cabernet Sauvignon Napa

Includes tiny dollops of Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and bottling, it possesses a deep ruby/purple color, terrific fruit, a big, sweet finesse and richness, a medium to full-bodied texture, soft tannin, and decent acidity.

91 Points

2005 Shafer Cabernet Sauvignon Hillside Select Stags Leap

Which is significantly lower in alcohol, and possesses more acidity as well as wonderful vibrancy. Sweet black cherry fruit intertwined with toasty oak emerge from this lush, ripe red. Befitting the vintage, it is not as weighty, powerful, or New World-ish as wine from riper California vintages tend to be, but represents a lighter-styled yet rich, intense example of this cuvee. We finished the tasting with a bottle of the 1978 Cabernet Sauvignon, produced long before the Hillside Select came into being, and this 28-year old offering still merits a med-90 point rating. It was aged 18 months in a combination of French and American oak, and possesses an incredibly high pH. Performing like a brilliant Pauillac, it reveals notes of cedar, black currants, and spice box.

92-95 Points

2004 Shafer Cabernet Sauvignon Hillside Select Stags Leap

Offers attractive spicy cassis notes along with charcoal, new oak, and black currants in its flamboyant bouquet. Unusually evolved for a Hillside Select, it is a supple, fleshy, hussy of a wine filled with charm and seductiveness. Neither as powerful as the 2003 nor as layered and rich as the 2002, it is a beautiful effort that should drink gorgeously well for 15+ years.

92-94 Points

2003 Shafer Cabernet Sauvignon Hillside Select Stags Leap

Its dense purple color is followed by aromas of camphor, black currants, licorice, crushed rocks, and white flowers. While full-bodied, powerful, and enormously endowed, it is not as seamless as the 2002. Impeccable balance, purity, and length suggest it will drink well for 20-25 years.

95 Points

2002 Shafer Cabernet Sauvignon Hillside Select Stags Leap

A dark purple color is accompanied by a gorgeously powerful nose of pure *crème de cassis*, *pain grille*, flowers, licorice, and spice box. Full-bodied with multiple dimensions, superb purity, layers of fruit, and a blockbuster finish, it is an amazing offering.

100 Points

2005 Shafer Cabernet Sauvignon One Point Five Stags Leap

Displays crisp acidity, excellent balance and freshness, loads of fruit, and an expansive, fleshy texture. The overall impression is one of elegance and finesse.

91-93 Points

2004 Shafer Cabernet Sauvignon One Point Five Stags Leap

Is a combination of 98% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Petit Verdot. It reveals all the elegance and classicism one expects from a Stags Leap District along with beautifully sweet cherry and black currant fruit, flower, spice box, and mineral-like notes. Medium-bodied and pure with terrific intensity and a degree of opulence characteristic of the vintage.

90-92 Points

2005 Shafer Chardonnay Red Shoulder Ranch

Reflects this vintage's cooler growing and harvesting temperatures. There are some honeysuckle, tropical fruit notes, but more pear and citrus are evident, and the oak is even less noticeable than the 2004.

90-91 Points

2004 Shafer Chardonnay Red Shoulder Ranch.

Exhibits plenty of honeysuckle, and topical fruit, and citrus oil characteristics, a subtle touch of smoky oak, zesty acidity, and a full, fleshy palate.

92 Points

2005 Shafer Merlot

Includes 8% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Cabernet Franc, possesses crisp acidity as well as an elegant bouquet of berry fruit, menthol, sweet cherries, and spice. The tremendous aromatics are followed by abundant fruit.

88-90 Points

2004 Shafer Merlot

Reveals notes of berry fruit, herbs, coffee beans, and chocolate.

88 Points

2003 Shafer Merlot

Includes small amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, exhibits terrific mocha and berry fruit along with plenty of cherry, herb, and chocolate notes. Beautifully textured and deep, with attractive spice, sweet fruit, and beautiful ripeness as well as texture.

90 Points

2005 Shafer Relentless

Displays a more restrained, elegant style without the weight, power, and overall richness of its older siblings. Crisp and stylish, with medium body, beautiful fruit, and sweet tannin, it represents a downsized version of this typically big, mouth-staining cuvee.

90-93 Points

2004 Shafer Relentless

Exhibits aromas of blackberry pie intermixed with roasted meats and ground pepper. An expressive, full-bodied, smoky, flamboyant, intense effort that is more evolved and approachable than vintages such as 2003, and 2001, it is a stunningly aromatic, rich wine, to drink over the next 10-15 years.

92 Points

2003 Shafer Relentless

Heading into a more closed dormant stage. It reveals more oak than previously, and with coaxing, blueberry, blackberry, scorched earth, and spice aromas emerge from this young, full-bodied, dense, impressive red. This offering receives the same upbringing as the renowned Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon, i.e., 30-32 months in the 100% new French oak.

93 Points

2005 Spottswoode Cabernet Sauvignon Estate

A blend of 95% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc. This wine comes across Bordeaux-like and again seems to resemble a good vintage of Chateau Margaux. It is beautifully intense, while elegant at the same time, with substantial flavors and intensity, but never overwrought, coarse, or too extracted.

91-94 Points

2004 Spottswode Cabernet Sauvignon Estate

A much smaller crop at Spottswode and the wine is relatively open but does have the richness or mid-palate of the 2003 or their compelling 2002. Nevertheless, this is still a pretty wine with a deep ruby/purple color and a sweet nose of blueberries, black raspberries, and cassis with subtle oak and floral notes. The wine's purity, symmetry, and medium to full-bodied palate are supple and ideal for drinking now and over the next 15 years or so.

90+ Points

2003 Spottswode Cabernet Sauvignon Estate

Dense ruby/purple color and a beautiful nose of graphite intermixed with blueberry, *crème de cassis*, and acacia flower. The wine is full-bodied, has decent acidity, sweet, well-integrated tannin, and subtle wood. This is a beauty and certainly one of the more impressively constituted and elegant wines of the vintage.

94 Points

2004 Etude Cabernet Sauvignon

Medium to full-bodied and exhibits a saturated ruby/purple color and a classic nose of tobacco leaf, black currant, smoke, and *pain grille* as well as new saddle leather. It is spicy, rich, pure and, like the 2003, opulent, but at present not as approachable.

91 Points

2003 Etude Cabernet Sauvignon

Even more forward than the 2004, with a plump, heady, corpulent mouthfeel and loads of cassis, licorice, and *pain grille* notes and a hint of graphite. Deep, full-bodied, chewy, and supple-textured, this wine should drink well for 14 or so years.

91 Points

2004 Etude Pinot Noir

Reveals a dark plum/ruby color, sweet forest floor, pomegranate, plum, and cherry notes, medium to full body, superb integration of wood, acidity, and tannin, and an attractive, complex finish.

90 Points

2004 Etude Pinot Noir Heirloom

Gorgeously textured, rich, full-bodied Pinot Noir with sweet plum, forest floor, and gamey notes intermixed with plenty of sweet cherry and plum fruit. Beautiful texture, full body, terrific depth, and richness suggest this wine might even deserve a higher score with another several years of bottle age.

92 Points

2005 Kenward Chardonnay Two Rivers Ranch

This beauty should drink well for 5-7 years as well.

91-93 Points

2004 Kenward Chardonnay Two Rivers Ranch

Comes from a cool Yountville estate. This has deep mineral, fruit, orange blossom, marmalade, and honeysuckle notes, full body, beautiful purity, and a long, heady finish.

92 Points

2005 Mason Cellars Sauvignon Blanc

Possessing good minerality, crisp acidity, and nice texture as well as flavors. Enjoy it over the next 1-2 years.

89 Points

2004 Palazzo Proprietary Red

Offering wonderful sweet black cherry, cassis, lead pencil shavings, *pain grille*, and licorice aromas. Medium-bodied, elegant, and refined, it is accessible at present, but will be even better with another year or so of bottle age.

90 Points

2003 Pine Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville

Possesses an open-knit, cedary, spicy bouquet that brings to mind a Bordeaux Pauillac. Medium-bodied with attractive red and black fruits, and moderate tannin, but not the complexity and depth of its siblings, it is ideal for drinking over the next decade.

89+ Points

2002 Pine Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District

Boasts a dense ruby color as well as a terrific perfume of cedar, spice box, black currants, and sweet cherries. Medium to full-bodied, elegant, pure, and rich, it should drink beautifully for 10-15 years.

91 Points

2004 Selene Cabernet Sauvignon

A dark ruby/plum-tinged effort revealing sweet aromas of pepper, an Old Bay-like spice, and plenty of black cherry, currant, and mocha scents. Medium-bodied and spicy with an herbal edge, it will drink well for 5-7 years.

86 Points

2003 Selene Cabernet Sauvignon

Just as powerful as the 2002. It reveals more restrained aromas, not as open-knit, fleshy mouthfeel of its sibling, but abundant quantities of black fruits. Although not complex, it will offer satisfying drinking over the next 7-8 years.

88 Points

2002 Selene Cabernet Sauvignon

Offers projected, but simple aromas of plummy cassis in its full-bodied, opulent, fleshy personality. Consume it over the next 6-8 years.

88 Points

2002 Selene Chesler Proprietary Red Wine

Possesses the most nuanced aromatics in addition to medium body, elegant, stylish format, light to moderate tannin, sweet fruit, and an excellent mouthfeel as well as purity.

88 Points

2005 Selene Sauvignon Blanc Hyde Vineyards

Displays crisp, melony aromas intermixed with hints of quince and grapefruit. Medium-bodied, fresh, zesty, and elegant, it should be consumed over the next 1-2 years.

88 Points

2005 Siduri Pinot Noir

Exhibits a light ruby color as well as a sexy nose of Allspice, earth, clove, and sweet cherry and berry fruit. This soft, round Pinot is a dead-ringer for a premier cru Cotes de Beaune.

88 Points

2005 Siduri Pinot Noir Muirfield Vineyard

Exhibits a light ruby color along with notes of sassafras, strawberries, and earth. Somewhat superficial, it is the qualitative equivalent of a generic red Burgundy.

85 Points

2005 Siduri Pinot Noir Can Der Kamp Vineyard

Dark ruby-hued with hints of plums, autumn leaves, underbrush, and forest floor, this is one of the more masculine wines of this group, with more structure and acidity, but not the charm and seductiveness of its siblings.

87 Points

2004 Stuhlmuller Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon

Dark ruby color is followed by an earthy nose displaying hints of bay leaf, leather, spice, black cherries, and currants.

88 Points

2005 Stuhlmuller Vineyards Chardonnay Estate

Exhibits aromas of citrus blossom, oranges, and tropical fruits. Although not complex, it is a savory, medium to full-bodied, tasty white to enjoy over the next 1-2 years.

88 Points

2004 Collosorbo Rosso Di Montalcino

Fresh, vinous effort with attractive fruit, smoke and underbrush notes. It is an excellent choice for near-term drinking.

88 Points

2001 Cillosorbo Brunello Di Montalcino

Gorgeous effort, with an expressive, perfumed nose, and layers of super-ripe red fruit, licorice and mineral nuances that open on the palate with great length and freshness, framed by fine, silky tannins that round out the finish. This sexy, irresistibly appealing Brunello should drink well to age 15.

91 Points

1999 Cillosorbo Brunello Di Montalcino Riserva

Shows more advanced notes of earthiness and tobacco on the nose along with a distinctly brooding personality in its backward layers of concentrated dark fruit and big, potent tannins. Ideally a few years of cellaring are called for after which it should drink well to age 20.

91 Points

2003 Costanti Rosso Di Montalcino

Offers notes of over-ripe fruit and licorice flavors on a solid, classically-built frame with good length and a lingering note of minerality that provides a nice balance to the sweetness. The weighty style clearly reflects the heat of the vintage.

88 Points

2001 Costanti Brunello Di Montalcino

Cleanly articulated notes of cherries, tobacco and underbrush, is a textbook examples of Sangiovese from Montalcino. It shows excellent concentration, great length and nuanced transparency with fine, elegant tannin and a note of warmth from the alcohol on the finish.

93 Points

2001 Costanti Calbello Brunello Di Montalcino

From Costanti's second property, presents a less polished style of Brunello. It offers notes of herbs, cherries, minerals and earthiness on a medium-bodied, structured frame, with building, somewhat coarse tannins.

89 Points

2001 Brunello Di Montalcino Fuligni

Offers layers of ripe cherry fruit intermingled with subtle notes of sweet toasted oak, licorice and minerals, with excellent persistence and length in a poised style that captures the stylish, sophisticated qualities of the vintage.

91 Points

2004 Lisini Rosso Di Montalcino

Shows pretty notes of sweet cherry and tobacco in an elegant style with excellent length. It is an enjoyable wine for drinking over the next few years.

87 Points

2001 Lisini Brunello Di Montalcino

Deeply-colored, sleek and stylish effort showing expressive notes of flowers, spices, toasted oak, minerals and underbrush along with a lovely core of perfumed sweet cherry fruit that blossoms onto the palate with irresistible sensuality. Intensely flavored yet delicate, this Brunello offers outstanding length, precision and balance. While it is hard to resist today, it will be even better in a few years.

92 Points

2000 Lisini Brunello Di Montalcino Ugolaia

Rich, potent Brunello, with suggestions of earthiness, tar and super-ripe fruit on a big, concentrated frame. It offers notable structure although it comes across as somewhat heavy-handed and one-dimensional, lacking the finesse of the estate's best wines.

90 Points

2004 Le Macioche Rosso Di Montalcino

Offers delicate notes of plums, licorice and minerals on a medium-bodied frame with excellent length and firm supporting tannins. Though somewhat austere, it will benefit greatly from some air prior to drinking.

87 Points

2001 Le Macioche Brunello Di Montalcino

Shows an expressive nose along with vibrant layers of sweet fruit on a medium-bodied, firmly structured frame with excellent length, fine, elegant tannins and a lively note of minerality that provides freshness on the finish.

91 Points

2001 Il Palazzone Brunello Di Montalcino

Redolent of spice, sweet toasted oak and super-ripe dark fruit flavors. It offers excellent length and notable finesse in a decidedly contemporary, accessible style.

90 Points

2004 Poggio Antico Rosso Di Montalcino

Rich, heady wine to drink over the next few years. It shows just how good a Rosso from a serious producer can be in a top vintage. Made from the estate's younger vines, the wine is aged for two years in tonneaux.

90 Points

2001 Poggio Antico Brunello Di Montalcino Altero

Presents a very dark color along with more classic profile in its expressive nose and nuances of tobacco, sweet cherries, tar and minerals. Although it, too, shows excellent concentration and balance today, it comes across more austere and structured than the Altero. That said, my impression is that it will ultimately develop into a Brunello of greater complexity, depth and nuance.

91 Points

2001 Poggio Antico Brunello Di Montalcino

A saturated ruby, it offers expressive, perfumed nose along with nuances of scorched earth, toasted oak, licorice and sweet dark fruit in a richly concentrated, expansive style. This deeply-flavored Brunello will require a few years to integrate and should drink well for a least another decade.

92 Points

2000 Poggio Antico Brunello Di Montalcina Riserva

Another powerful wine from Poggio Antico. It opens with a dark, brooding nose followed by an intense core of ripe fruit along with tobacco and toasted oak nuances, following onto the palate with much concentration, length and overall balance.

91 Points

2004 Livio Sassetti –Pertilmali Rosso Di Montalcino

Offers a floral nose and red fruit, tobacco and underbrush flavors on a somewhat compact, medium-bodied frame.

86 Points

2001 Livio Sassetti – Pertilmali Brunello Di Montalcino

Deeply colored, big, powerful effort. It shows masses of vibrant sweet dark fruit, smoke, tar and earth flavors with notable concentration and length on the palate. Still quite primary today, it offers outstanding potential, but a few years of patience are required.

92 Points

1999 Livio Sassetti – Pertilmali Brunello Di Montalcino Riserva

It too features an intense, dark color and is packed with expressive layers of sweet dark fruit along with delicate nuances of tobacco, licorice and minerals. With some air it is utterly irresistible today.

93 Points

2004 Uccelliera Rosso Di Montalcino

Bursts from the glass showing expressive aromatics and plenty of sweet ripe fruit with excellent length and balance, clearly benefiting from the addition of run-off Brunello juice that was added during fermentation.

89 Points

2003 Uccelliera Rapace

A blend of 70% Sangiovese, 20% Merlot and 10% Cabernet, shows generous amounts of ripe dark fruit and toasted oak flavors with notable concentration. It is an excellent effort for a vintage where making first-class wines was a challenge.

88 Points

2001 Uccelliera Brunello Di Montalcino

Intense effort paced with super-ripe vibrant dark fruit in a rich, concentrated style with outstanding persistence on the palate and great overall balance, although it finishes a bit hot. Today the tannins are a bit prominent but a year years of cellaring should do the trick.

92 Points

1999 Uccelliera Brunello Di Montalcino Riserva

Made from the estate's oldest vines, offers deeply expressive layers of sweet cherry fruit along with mineral, tobacco and licorice nuances that gradually appear as it sits the glass. Soft and ample on the palate, yet supported by notable structure, this big, full-bodied Brunello will offer rewarding drinking for at least another decade.

92 Points

2003 Barnadown Run Shiraz/Cabernet/Malbec Henry Bennett's Voluptuary

Made in a meaty, opulent style, it offers aromas of roasted herbs, grilled meats, blackberries, cherries, and spice. This elegant, chewy, undeniably Australian red should be consumed over the next 5-6 years.

89 Points

2004 Bleasdale Vyds. Cabernet Sauvignon Mulberry Tree Vyd.

The kind of wine that makes consumers realize there is a lot of over-priced Cabernet in the marketplace. It boasts a deep ruby/purple color, an excellent texture, and notes of underbrush, black currants, tar, sweet cassis, and cedar. Full-bodied with light to moderate tannin, it can be drunk now or cellared for a decade.

91 Points

2004 Bleasdale Vyds. Frank Potts Proprietary Red

This cuvee spent 18 months in French and American wood, which is evident in the noticeable wood component. Nevertheless, it is an outstanding effort displaying notions of soy, vanillin, black currants, mint, and blackberries in its rich, full-bodied, tannic personality.

90 Points

2004 Bleasdale Vyds. Shiraz Bremerview Vineyard

A fabulous buy, offering classic Shiraz characteristics of blackberries, tar, and white flowers. Aged in neutral 300 liter American oak hogsheads for 12 months, it possesses abundant fruit, glycerin, alcohol, and texture along with a hint of earth.

90 Points

2004 Bleasdale Vyds. Shiraz Reserve

Displays more tar and oak characteristics in its muscular, tannic personality. Not as refined as its siblings, it will benefit from another year or so of bottle age, and should last longer than the other cuvees, but I am not sure it will ever be as tasty.

88+? Points

2004 Giaconda Chardonnay Estate Vineyard

It tastes like a grand cru from Puligny-Montrachet. Steely lemon oil, popcorn, buttered hazelnut, and subtle smoke scents emerge from the glass of this intense, full-bodied Chardonnay that is bursting with character and soul. This amazing effort must be tasted to be believed.

96 Points

2005 Giaconda Chardonnay Nantua Vineyard

The result is an exotic bouquet of rose water interwoven with tropical fruit, lemon oil, peach, and apricots. Rich with good acidity, well-integrated wood, and a blockbuster finish, this impressive Chardonnay should drink well for 2-3 years.

93 Points

2005 Giaconda Roussanne Aeolia

Stunning perfume smells like a flower garden in full bloom. The floral component is backed up by notes of honeysuckle and rich tropical fruit. Long, heady, intense, and juicy this succulent wine sees about 10-15% new oak, and spends 11 months in barrel before bottling.

93 Points

2004 Giaconda Shiraz Warner Vineyard

Exhibits beautiful blackberry fruit intermixed with hints of graphite, smoke herbs, tapenade, and spicy vanillin. Medium to full-bodied, elegant, and backward, this impressive offering spent 20 months in barrel, and should age nicely for 7-10 years.

93+ Points

2003 Gralyn Estate 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon

It offers up earthy, spicy, cedary, new saddle leather, black currant, and dried herb characteristics. Tannic and austere, it could easily be confused with a top Medoc from a moderately tannic vintage.

89+ Points

NV Jansz Brut Cuvee

Reveals hints of brioche, ripe apple skins, grapefruits, and Wheat Thins along with good effervescence and persistence.

89 Points

NV Jansz Rose

Framboise intermixed with notions of herbs, earth, and brioche offer a delicious introduction to this dry, medium-bodied rose, which has an average triage age of 29 months. The finish is long, and the bubbles are tiny, precise, and consistent.

90 Points

2005 Margan Family Semillon Botrytis

Boasts plenty of honeyed pineapple, crème brulee, buttered citrus, and figs in its beautiful, medium-bodied flavors. Stunningly complex and rich, but balanced by zesty acidity, it should drink well for 3-4 years, although it may last considerably longer.

93 Points

2006 Margan Family Shiraz Saignee Rose

This deeply-colored rose reveals excellent texture, wonderful ripeness, and a bone dry, heady finish.

87 Points

2004 Passing Clouds Shiraz Reserve

Aged completely in American oak, this beautiful Shiraz reveals a deep ruby/purple hue, sweet blackberry and blueberry fruit, a subtle note of wood, good opulence, and a steely backbone.

91 Points

2004 Strathewen Hills Shiraz Tribal Elder

Spent over two years in French oak. This complex, European-styled offering is not totally dissimilar from a top-notch Rhone Valley St.-Joseph or Crozes-Hermitage. It exhibits aromas of crushed rocks, mint, damp earth, black cherries, and berries. Medium to full-bodied with good acidity as well as abundant flavor, depth, and intensity, it is a complex, deep Shiraz to consume over the next decade.

90 Points

2005 Tatarra Shiraz Cambrian

Reveals more chocolate and scorched earth characteristics as well as fuller body, more abundant fruit, and huge tannin, muscle, and extract. Only connoisseurs with great cellars as well as abundant patience should consider purchasing this monster.

94+ Points

2004 Tatarra Shiraz Cambrian

Exhibits a distinctive *terroir*/earth/fresh mushroom/truffle-like component intermixed with graphite, camphor, blueberry, blackberry, and cassis. A wine of great intensity, structure, muscle, and firm tannin, this impressive effort should be at its finest between 2009-2025+.

93+ Points

2005 Tatarra Shiraz Pressing Caravan of Dreams

Offering plenty of toasty vanillin intermixed with *crème de cassis*, white chocolate, graphite, and spice, it is a Victorian fruit-bomb that possesses amazing structure and definition.

95-96 Points

2005 Vasse Felix Chardonnay Adams Road

Chablis-like white offering notes of green tea, apricots, crushed rocks, and white currants. It is a well-made, crisp, zingy Chardonnay with terrific fruit intensity, and no evidence of wood despite the fact that part of the cuvee spent time in French oak.

89 Points

2004 Vasse Felix Chardonnay Heytesbury

The result is a stunning Chardonnay boasting rich honeysuckle, tangerine oil, apple blossom, and white peach-like aromas and flavors. This deep, full-bodied, impressively endowed effort represents a synthesis in style between a crisp white Burgundy and a ripe, tropical fruit-filled New World Chardonnay.

92 Points

2003 Vasse Felix Heytesbury Red Blend

A combination of 84% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Shiraz, and 9% Malbec aged in 18 months in three-quarters French and one-quarter American oak. One of the finest reds I have tasted from Western Australia, it reveals a deep purple color in addition to a beautiful perfume of camphor, blueberry and blackberry liqueur, cedar, smoke, and background barbecue spices. Dense, rich, and full as well as elegant, pure, and sensationally well-balanced.

95+ Points

2004 Vasse Felix Shiraz Adams Road

Exhibits aromas of American oak interwoven with berry fruit, pepper, and spice. Supple and fleshy, with a sense of restraint that characterizes many Western Australian Shiraz cuvees.

89 Points

2005 Water Wheel Vineyards Memsie

It exhibits a dark ruby/purple color, a big, sweet perfume of blueberries and blackberries, soft, heady fruit flavors, a touch of wood, and a background earthy, spicy component.

90 Points

2005 Winner's Tank Shiraz

It is a sexy, delicious "winner" boasting amazing opulence, purity, and richness. A true southern Australian fruit bomb – and proud of it, it is the kind of wine that simply does not exist anywhere else in the world.

91 Points