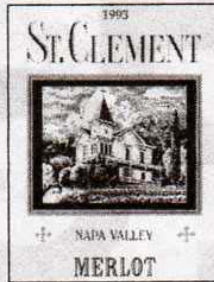


*The Press Democrat*  
 Wednesday, June 12, 1996

**TASTING ROOM**



**Wine of the week: St. Clement Vineyards**  
 1993 Merlot, Napa Valley (\$21)

☆☆☆1/2

The rich and deep fruit of this merlot make it ready for immediate drinking. It shows good balance and complexity, with elegant yet concentrated aromas and flavors of blackberry and chocolate.

**PREMIUM MERLOTS**

*One of the hottest red wines on the shelves, merlot shares some of the appeal and complexity of cabernet sauvignon. As these upscale wines demonstrate, not all merlots are soft and ready to drink.*

| Wines  | Rating | Price   | Comments  |
|--|--------|---------|---|
| Ferrari-Carano Vineyards & Winery<br>1993 Sonoma County      | ☆☆1/2  | \$22.50 | Shows some nice youthful fruit, but otherwise the aromas and flavors are closed. Firm tannins leave it a bit tart and sharp on the finish.    |
| Matanzas Creek Winery<br>1993 Sonoma Valley                  | ☆☆☆1/2 | \$38    | Top wine of the tasting, it shows rich aromas of plum cherry, paired with ripe and succulent fruit flavors. Shows mature, balanced tannins.   |
| Mill Creek Vineyards<br>1994 Dry Creek Valley                | ☆☆1/2  | \$16    | Has modest, almost simple aromas and flavors, with delicate fruit that shows a hint of asparagus and other green veggies. Lacks complexity.   |
| Murphy-Goode Estate Winery<br>1994 Alexander Valley          | ☆☆☆    | \$16    | Tannic, tightly wound, it has just enough rich, succulent fruit to pull it off. Shows chocolate, blackberry, plus a hint of earthy funkiness. |
| Robert Pecota Winery<br>1993 Steve Andre Vineyards, Napa Co. | ☆☆     | \$23    | The smoky oak is so intense in this wine that its modest blackberry fruit is overburdened, leaving it harsh and astringent. Lacks balance.    |
| Sterling Vineyards<br>1993 Three Palm Vineyards, Napa Co.    | ☆☆     | \$22    | The fruit seems underripe, leaving the wine so hard and tannic that it's almost chewy. There's also an unpleasant earthiness in the aroma.    |
| Stonestreet Winery<br>1993 Alexander Valley                  | ☆☆☆    | \$30    | Big, intense with substantial oak but enough rich fruit to keep it balanced. Has an understated minty, earthy side that adds complexity.      |
| Truchard Vineyards<br>1993 Carneros, Napa Valley             | ☆☆☆    | \$20    | Has distinct aromas of mint and vanilla, plus dried-candy fruit. Shows good depth and complexity, with a soft body and balanced tannins.      |

*Rating key: ☆☆☆☆☆ Classic ☆☆☆☆ Highly recommended ☆☆☆ Good ☆☆ Limited appeal ☆ Not recommended*

*This week's tasting panel: Tim Fish, Press Democrat food and wine writer; Richard Arrowood, winemaker of Arrowood Vineyards & Winery; Jeff Cox, Press Democrat restaurant critic; Grady Wann, winemaker of Quivira Vineyards; Bill Traverso, wine buyer for Traverso's; Dan Berman, chef of MIXX restaurant.*

*Criteria: The panel samples 8 to 12 wines a week in a blind tasting. Wine of the Week is based on quality, value and availability and is not necessarily the top wine of the tasting. Price is suggested retail; actual price is often lower.*