




Cabernet Sauvignon




TRINCHERO Mario's Reserve Napa Valley 1998

Not without its distinctive red fruit charms, this wine is always a little too narrow in focus and has a bit of green leaf edge hiding in the background. Its texture is supple at entry and then gets progressively firmer and slightly stiff across the palate. Rich oak works to fill things out a bit, but this wine never gets past the typical underfilled style of the vintage.    \$40.00






TRUCHARD VINEYARDS




91 TRUCHARD Reserve Carneros 1997

Napa Valley. From its dark and highly saturated color to its deep and succulent aromas and its broad, eminently attractive flavors, this rich Cabernet conveys a convincing sense of concentration that never relents. Laced with lovely oak from front to back and trimmed with touches of cream, coffee and sweet leather, it is a big, but never heavy, wine with plenty of substance and size, yet it steers neatly around any undue astringency or latter-palate toughness. Sufficiently supple to tempt early drinking, it will hit its stride in three to five years.    \$75.00




91 VIADER Red Wine Napa Valley 1999

61% Cabernet Sauvignon; 39% Cabernet Franc. Typically the first of the up-scale clarets to debut, this 1999 lives up to its own past performances but does not show the grandeur to make us get excited about the vintage as a whole. Still, its mix of cassis, plum, raspberry and cocoa is hard to resist, and the underlying structure seems to assure that this one will be enjoyable now and over the next four to seven years.    \$75.00

VILLA MT. EDEN Signature Series Napa Valley 1998

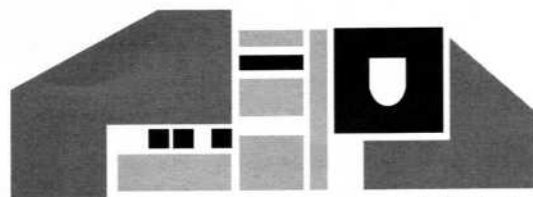
Always rich and fairly well-focused, this wine shows an edge of unevenness in its ripe but somehow narrow black cherry aromas and flavors. Supple, almost soft at entry, then tightening up as it crosses the palate, the wine ends with the tactile coarse, dry notes that affect so many of the vintage. A few years in bottle should soften it a bit.    \$54.00

VILLA MT. EDEN Grand Reserve Napa Valley 1998

Not unlike its big brother above in its mix of concentration and slight dilution, this one is a bit less well-filled but also carries less of its sibling's ending toughness. It is the more approachable of the two for current enjoyment but has less stuffing at its heart and less room to grow.    \$20.00

WELLINGTON Sonoma Valley 1999




Attractive notes of vanillin spice lend a bit of a lift to the otherwise simple, red-cherry aromas of this fairly forward Cabernet,






WHITEHALL LANE

and the low-keyed flavors that follow run from early richness to a slightly hot and somewhat dry finish that betrays a certain lack of real fruit filling.    \$20.00




91 WHITEHALL LANE Reserve Napa Valley 1998

The slightly preferred bottling of the Whitehall Lane brace, the "Reserve" is no less rich in tantalizing oak, but it carries more and deeper fruit that comes with a spark of juicy sweetness, and it is never quite so tough or dry as its slightly bigger sibling. It is nicely balanced with the first signs of suppleness beginning to appear on the palate, but its tannic superstructure reminds that longer cellaring rather than shorter is needed if this one is to be the best that it can be.    \$65.00




90 WHITEHALL LANE Leonardini Vineyard 1998

Napa Valley. Whitehall Lane's Cabernets are always among the riper and more outgoing to be found, and this latest version of the winery's standard-bearing bottling shows all the panache and full-bore ripeness that we expect. It piles splashy oak high upon its concentrated ripe-cherry fruit, but it pays for its early richness with a bit too much closing toughness. A bit at odds with itself in its ripe-dry finish, it still has plenty to chew on and will pair well with rich lamb stews.    \$85.00




WHITE OAK Mariposa Vineyard 1999

Napa Valley. Lightly herbal and carrying a subtle note of dusty earth to start, this open and easy-to-taste youngster keys on red cherries and berries as its major themes although oak and herbs are never far from center stage. It narrows noticeably at the finish as its obvious bent to herbaceousness and firming acidity becomes plainly apparent.    \$24.00

87 WHITE ROCK Claret Napa Valley 1998

8% Merlot; 2% Cabernet Franc; 1% Petit Verdot. Somewhat misleading in its dense, ripe, dark-coffee smelling aromas that seem all too light on central fruitiness, the wine surprises in the mouth by being not nearly so heavy and blocky as its aromas predict. Rather, it shows a decent measure of black cherry fruit and needs only a few years of aging to smooth out the puckery tannins in its mid-length finish.    \$40.00

89 Robert YOUNG Scion Alexander Valley 1997

58% Cabernet Sauvignon; 30% Merlot; 12% Cabernet Franc. At this point, poise and polish seem well beyond the reach of this big, brooding, positively bruising young wine, but, as long on muscle as the wine may be, it is also graced with solid fruit. Loaded with oak, heavy in tannin and all too high in alcohol, it manages to somehow keep itself under control and never spins away into the realm of mindless excess. It needs to be buried in a remote corner of the cellar and should not be looked at again for some eight to ten years.    \$50.00