

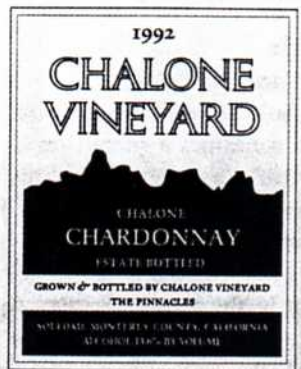
the palate, this zesty wine surely shows accurate varietal personality and eminent quaffability. \$7

Rutherford Ranch 75

1993 Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc

The stylistic direction here is toward the tropical-fruit part of the spectrum, light flavors being in the company of a gentle texture. It shows best when well-chilled. \$7

CHARDONNAY



Chalone Vineyard 97

1992 Chalone Estate Chardonnay

Here's a wine to sit back and think about, to bring up in taste memory together with the finest chardonnays you've ever had, from whichever side of the ocean. Burgundy is surely the direction here, and specifically the Pulignys of Leflaive. Sorry—can't help the reference. But it means a simultaneous attack of the purest chardonnay fruit and an undertone of oak just so perfectly managed. \$26



Robert Mondavi 95

1992 Napa Valley Unfiltered Reserve Chardonnay

Sometimes expensive chardonnays are actually worth the money, which is certainly the case in this example. The buttery impres-

sion of wines like this one works only when there is fruit to match, which here is amply rich and purely chardonnay. You'd want to think of this investment as you might something in the Montrachet range. \$28

Truchard 95

1992 Carneros/Napa Valley Chardonnay

This is just simply an extraordinary wine, with chardonnay fruit brought to the point of tropical ripeness, but without the least hint of clumsiness. There's a restrained scream for grilled swordfish, but you could also just look at a glass, look at it again, and say "Aren't I lucky." \$16

Kenwood 94

1992 Sonoma Valley Chardonnay

Here's what you want when you're thinking about a youthful, beautifully-made Mâcon. The fruit is sharp and clean, and even though the price is fair by the Burgundian standards against which this wine must be judged. \$14

Clos du Bois 93

1992 Alexander Valley "Calcaire" Chardonnay

Here's a really elegant example of how even warm-climate chardonnay can sing, when the grapes are not overly ripe and the oak not too lavishly applied. The Calcaire has clear chardonnay fruit predominant in the palate impression, and oak appearing as a grace note in the finish, which is where it should be. \$18



Far Niente 92

1992 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Elegant, stylish and Meursault-like, this gem might seem to some drinkers to be smaller-scaled along the spectrum of

California chardonnay, but its fruit-oak balance comes closer than most to reflecting the Burgundian ideal. \$30

Beaulieu Vineyards 89

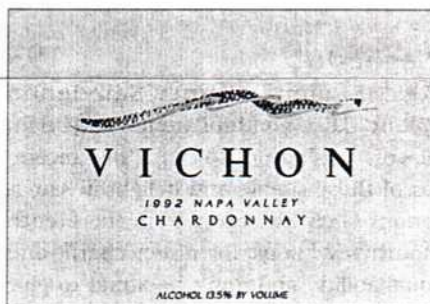
1991 Napa Valley Carneros Barrel Fermented Reserve Chardonnay

Complex nomenclature in fact introduces a wine which is simply what it should be, with citrusy Carneros chardonnay fruit exactly in balance with the proper touch of oak. Beaulieu's '91 Reserve deserves more accolades than it probably will receive around the tasting circles, just because it is so direct but not dramatic. \$16

Gloria Ferrer 88

1992 Carneros Chardonnay, Carneros

One would normally expect Carneros chardonnay to be lithe and racy—this one is rich and lush instead, with strong butterscotch elements in the flavors and the finish. Yet the note of fresh acidity typical of Carneros puts everything in balance. \$15



Vichon 88

1992 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Tropical fruit is the keynote in this wine which expresses that aspect of chardonnay with grace and with the all-important balancing acidity. The fascination here is that certain grace and lushness without weight or sweetness. \$14

Belvedere 82

1992 Sonoma County Preferred Stock Chardonnay

Loads and loads and loads of oak, on the nose and on the palate, which suggests that Belvedere's "Preferred Stock" is aged in heavily toasted barrels. \$18

Acacia 80

1992 Carneros/Napa Valley Chardonnay

Light and pleasant with