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Wine & Spirits

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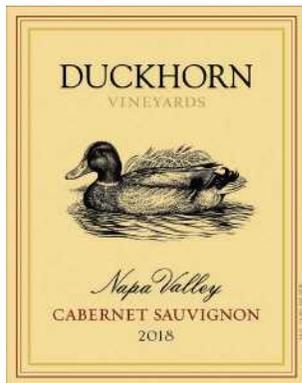
December 2021
WINEANDSPIRITSMAGAZINE.COM
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Year's Best Cabernet Sauvignon & Blends

takes a detour to Howell Mountain for cabernet franc before returning to Beaulieu's estate vineyards in Rutherford for petit verdot and malbec. It comes together in a savory wine with delicate flavor complexity and gentle Rutherford grandeur. There's something a little salty and sweaty in it that brings to mind cilantro, pointing the wine toward carne asada with salsa fresca. —J.G.

92 | Blackbird Vineyards \$135
2017 Napa Valley Paramour Aaron Potts and Kyle Mizuno weight Paramour toward cabernet franc (56 percent), the balance mostly cabernet sauvignon, with a small contribution from merlot. Immediately sweet and supple, this blend takes some time to show its savory side. It transforms over the course of several days, starting out with blackberry liqueur notes, turning toward pomegranate molasses, then a burst of fresh pomegranate, tight and firmly dry. Built to cellar. —J.G. (1,100 cases)

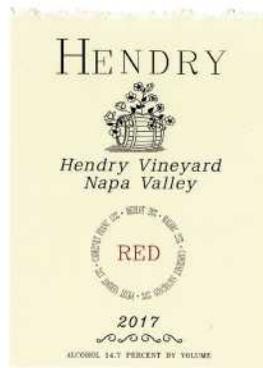


92 | Duckhorn \$78
2018 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon A burst of red-cherry flavor introduces this clean, fragrant cabernet. There's nothing superripe or hyperextracted about it. The wine feels fresh and friendly, the tannins expressed in floral hints of beebalm and savory conifer notes to gentle their ferrous structure. It tastes like well-grown cabernet and has the stamina to age. —J.G.

92 | Duckhorn \$105
2018 Napa Valley Monitor Ledge Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon Duckhorn planted this vineyard in 1992 at the base of Calistoga's eastern hills, where Selby Creek deposited riverstones, gravel and sandy loam. That rocky site grew a structured and firm cabernet in 2018, directed by winemaker Renée Ary toward freshness. The cool cherry fruit is savory, with hints of fig; the tannins carry a smoky chile note that brings to mind NativeAmerican fare. The wine turns open

and racy with air, focused on cherry drive. Enjoyable now with grilled lamb chops, this is well worth aging for four or five years. —J.G. (991 cases)

92 | Grand Napa \$110
2018 Napa Valley Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon Dwight Bonewell is the winemaker behind Grand Napa; in this 2018 Reserve, he achieved impressive clarity in its tannins and layers of berry flavor. There's strawberry and deeper blackberry in the scent, then a wilder note of huckleberry in the flavor. It's satisfying and clean, a happy wine to enliven a dinner party. —J.G. (2,882 cases)



92 | Hendry \$45
2017 Napa Valley Red Hendry Vineyard (BEST BUY) The Hendry family grows this cabernet at this vineyard west of the town of Napa, focused on blocks in the stony benchland soils at the base of Mount Veeder. It's a 2017 with purity to its fruit expression, the depths of its lasting red-plum flavors seem to reside within the tannins, bringing their red hue to the dark French roast-coffee scents of new oak. It's a supple wine with quiet restraint. —J.G. (592 cases)

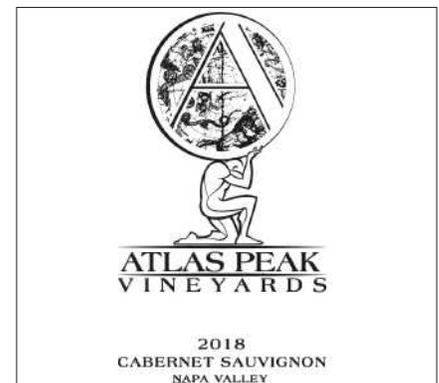
92 | Peju \$65
2019 Napa Valley Legacy Collection Cabernet Sauvignon Sara Fowler blends this wine from five of the Peju family's estate vineyards, based on 75 percent cabernet sauvignon with merlot, petit verdot and malbec. This is a gentle Napa Valley red, subtle in its scents of madrone and leather, brisk and bright in its cherry flavor. The tea-like tannins remain in the background, making this wine a complement to wood-grilled vegetables, from onions and peppers to eggplant and wild mushrooms. —J.G.

91 | Joseph Phelps \$90
2019 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Floral cherry and currant flavors burst from this wine's tannins, which feel chewy, tight-

ening around the fruit with their musky and smoky notes. Give it time for the fruit to fully emerge from the tannins, or coax it out with lamb burgers. —J.G.

91 | Merryvale \$210
2018 Napa Valley Profile Grown at Merryvale's Profile Estate in Conn Valley—25 acres of rocky hillsides rising to an elevation of 1,000 feet—this cabernet ferments without added yeasts and rests for close to two years in French oak barrels (80 percent new). For now, it's a master class in the riches of oak, from nutmeg spice to fine tannins with the dark roasted scent of espresso. There's energy behind those tannins, the wine youthfully reductive, its fruit hidden for now, waiting to reveal itself with bottle age. —J.G. (1,155 cases)

91 | The Vice \$33
2019 Napa Valley Batch #2019 "The House" Cabernet Sauvignon (BEST BUY) Fresh blackcurrant flavors meet savory black-olive and rose-hip notes in this generously textured cabernet. It's fresh, spicy and long, the tannins present providing a mellow sort of tension. For roast quail stuffed with wild mushrooms. —J.G.



90 | Atlas Peak \$50
2018 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Robert Pepi makes this brash and friendly cabernet, presenting red fruit packed with volatile esters that keep it high-toned and gentle. Pour it with burgers off the grill. —J.G. (2,449 cases)

90 | Addendum \$120
2018 Atlas Peak Napa Valley Stagecoach Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon An earthy wine, this starts with bright peppery spice, then settles into tart flavors of dried cranberries, cherries and sassafras. Its tannins will take on saucisson sec. —J.G. (301 cases)