

Wine Spectator

www.winespectator.com

California Cabernet 2009

The 4th Great Vintage
In a Row

250 at 90+ Points

Kendall-Jackson:
The Inside Story

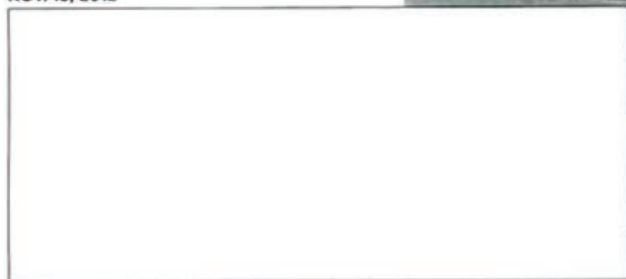
PRITCHARD HILL:
NAPA'S RODEO DRIVE

A Wine Lover's Guide
To **BOSTON**

**MORE THAN 1,350
WINES RATED**



NOV. 15, 2012



and graceful in a medium-weight style. Drink now through 2020. 3,300 cases made.—J.L.

88 Sterling Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2009 \$25 Smooth, refined and sophisticated, with ripe currant, blackberry, touches of mocha and cedar, and ending with fleshy, fine-grained tannins. Drink now through 2020. 62,000 cases made.—J.L.

88 Sterling Platinum Napa Valley 2009 \$55 A subdued style, with understated earth, licorice and dried berry. Not as assertive and complex as the best 2009s, but certainly appealing and easy to drink. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2020. 6,566 cases made.—J.L.

88 Vérité La Jolie Sonoma County 2008 \$450 Very dry and earthy, with a strong leathery edge to the crushed rock and dried berry flavors, maintaining a rugged personality on the finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec. Best from 2004 through 2014.—J.L.

88 Whitehall Lane Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2009 \$40 Firm, with a mix of dried herb, crushed rock, ripe currant and black cherry, veering to dryness on the finish. Drink now through 2020. 8,950 cases made.—J.L.

87 Chateau St. Jean Cabernet Sauvignon Sonoma County 2009 \$20 A bit muddled and murky, this offers earthy dried currant, loam, dried herb and sage notes, ending with the herb and cedar theme. Drink now through 2020. 10,819 cases made.—J.L.

87 Sequoia Grove Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2009 \$38 Complete and easy to enjoy, with fresh earth, crushed rock, dried berry and a dash of licorice and sage. Drink now through 2017. 23,830 cases made.—J.L.

87 St. Supéry Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2009 \$30 Intense and racy, with a spicy underbrush edge to the dried berry and fresh earth. Easy to enjoy. Drink now through 2017. 16,805 cases made.—J.L.

86 Grgich Hills Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2009 \$60 Exhibits a trim mix of cedar, cigar box and tobacco, woven in with dried berry and ending with chewy tannins. Very good in this style. Drink now through 2022. 15,500 cases made.—J.L.

CALIFORNIA Merlot & Blends

95 Carter Hossfeld Coliseum Napa Valley 2009 \$75 That rare wine with power, depth and finesse. Aromas of violet, currant and espresso lead to incredibly rich flavors of black cherry, bay leaf and mocha, with a finish wrapped in ripe, lush tannins. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2018. 195 cases made.—T.F.

93 O'Brien Estate Merlot Napa Valley 2009 \$48 This is an unabashedly ripe and supple red, but backs it up with richness and complexity. Aromas of black cherry and spiced cinnamon open to flavors of red currant, cedar and mocha. Drink now through 2017. 586 cases made.—T.F.



BART & BARB O'BRIEN
Owners

92 Carter Merlot Napa Valley Truchard Vineyards 2009 \$65 Rich, supple and beautifully layered, offering aromas of red currant and toasty vanilla that lead to ripe, complex flavors of black cherry and black tea, with a hint of Asian spice. Drink now through 2017. 25 cases made.—T.F.

92 Duckhorn Merlot Napa Valley Three Palms Vineyard 2009 \$85 Delicately balances a deep structure with rich and supple fruit, showing red currant and cedar aromas and layered flavors of black cherry, tomato leaf and mineral. Tannins suggest this will bloom further with time. Best from 2016 through 2019. 2,259 cases made.—T.F.

91 Calluna Merlot Chalk Hill Aux Raynauds 2009 \$40 Sleek and focused, with aromas of violet and red currant and balanced, layered flavors of cherry and cedar, with a hit of tomato leaf that leads to ripe tannins. Drink now through 2017. 100 cases made.—T.F.

90 Chimney Rock Elevage Stags Leap District 2009 \$79 Offers pure, rich, vivid and supple dark berry fruit that folds into black licorice, fresh earth, cedar and tobacco. Tannins flex their strength in a pleasing way. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2013 through 2024. 892 cases made.—J.L.

89 Pine Ridge Merlot Napa Valley Crimson Creek 2009 \$35 A soft, supple style, with floral black cherry and spicy herb aromas that lead to appealing red currant, caramel and toast flavors. Takes on depth on the finish. Drink now through 2017. 839 cases made.—T.F.

88 Alexander Valley Vineyards Merlot Alexander Valley Wetzel Family Estate 2009 \$20 This solid, well-focused Merlot shows good complexity, with dried cherry and herb aromas and appealing red currant and spice flavors. Drink now through 2016. 13,200 cases made.—T.F.

88 Frei Brothers Merlot Dry Creek Valley Reserve 2010 \$20 A Zin-lover's Merlot, with ripe red currant and spice aromas and zesty, jammy black cherry and toasty vanilla flavors. Drink now through 2017. 20,500 cases made.—T.F.

88 Miner Merlot Napa Valley Stagecoach Vineyard 2009 \$40 A supple texture conceals a zesty backbone, offering aromas of red currant and cola, with layered flavors of plum, tobacco and cedar. Drink now through 2016. 1,372 cases made.—T.F.

88 Murphy-Goode Merlot California 2010 \$20 Appealingly soft and supple, offering aromas of black cherry and toasty vanilla, with accents of spice and bay leaf. Drink now through 2016. 21,000 cases made.—T.F.

CALIFORNIA Zinfandel & Blends

92 Limerick Lane Zinfandel Russian River Valley Block 1910 2009 \$48 Elegant and classically styled, with a fragrant aroma of mixed berries and briary smoke. The flavors are sleek and layered, showing notes of plum, dried sage and licorice. Tannins sneak in on the finish. Drink now through 2018. 352 cases made.—T.F.



JAKE BILBRO
Owner

90 Adelaida Zinfandel Paso Robles Michael's Vineyard 2009 \$36 Dense and powerful, with bold black cherry and licorice aromas and ripe huckleberry, caramel and spice flavors that linger toward slightly rustic tannins. Drink now through 2018. 540 cases made.—T.F.

90 Lasseter Family Zinfandel Sonoma Valley L'Ame du Sage Old Vine 2010 \$40 Zesty and ripe, offering aromas of jammy raspberry and brown baking spices, with supple, briary cherry and herb flavors that take on depth and crisp tannins toward the finish. Drink now through 2018. 44 cases made.—T.F.