



Written by Jancis Robinson 25 Jul 2017

Three top-drawer Californians

Compared with our American counterparts, we Europeans get all too few chances to taste fine California wines. Fortunately we have Alder Yarrow and Elaine Chukan Brown (who is currently diligently tasting her way through a whole heap of Sonoma Cabernets for us) to keep our reportage on the subject up to speed.

But by coincidence, I happen to have had the chance to taste with three of the most respected northern California wine producers in London in the last few months. Perhaps it was the transatlantic travel season.

The 29 wines below are grouped by producer and then listed in the order tasted.

CHATEAU MONTELENA

Chateau Montelena is so famous (its Chardonnay 'won' the *Judgment of Paris* (<https://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/that-paris-judgment-40-years-on>) back in 1976) and the current incumbent Bo Barrett such a character, it's amazing that I had never met him before last May.

But fortunately for me I had a thoroughly enjoyable tête à tête over a tasting and lunch as he toured Europe with his sales and marketing director Brian Baker. Tall with a rolling gait and trademark bolo (cord) tie secured by massive turquoise stone set in silver, Bo could never be taken for a European.

The funny thing about Chateau Montelena's success in Paris back in 1976 is that they are not really a Chardonnay producer. Their real calling card is particularly refined Cabernet Sauvignon, with which 75 of their 100 acres (40 ha) are planted, although they also make a Mendocino Riesling. Their base is Calistoga, well to the supposedly hotter north of the hot spots of Oakville, Rutherford and Stags Leap, but their sites are so varied that it takes six weeks to pick all the parcels at optimum ripeness.

Acquiring the unusually solid, historic stone winery in 1972, Bo's father Jim started out very explicitly to make European-style wine – designed to age and never more than 14% alcohol. He had to begin by a major replanting programme. Bo's first wine-related job was helping clear vineyards in 1972. The winning Chardonnay, made by winemaker Mike Grgich, who in 1981 went on to establish his own eponymous winery, was a 1973 and was a blend of fruit from several different sources.

There are two other notable chapters in the Chateau Montelena saga. In 2008 came the proposed sale of the property to Swiss businessman Michel Reybier, owner of Ch Cos d'Estournel. This was announced with a flourish in 2008 but never actually went through – unlike the acquisition of another high-profile Calistoga property by another successful businessman with notable fingers in the Bordeaux pie, that of Araujo (now Eisele (<https://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/eisele-vineyard-pinaults-california-outpost>)) by François Pinaut, owner of Ch Latour.

The same year saw the release of the truly terrible film *Bottle Shock*, starring the usually brilliant Alan Rickman as Steven Spurrier, supposedly the story of the Judgment of Paris and based on the story of the Barretts.

I was impressed by how distinctive the Chateau Montelena wines were – much drier, more austere and apparently slower-burning than the Napa Valley norm. This works brilliantly well for Cabernet, but the Chardonnays seemed a little bit dour to me. 'Most other Chardonnays are pre-aged', Bo commented dismissively. 'But I believe in oenology, science and the importance of pH management.' A Fresno State graduate in viticulture and enology, he clearly takes a cosmopolitan interest in winemaking – has no truck with the *reverse osmosis* (<https://www.jancisrobinson.com/ocw/detail/reverse-osmosis>) that has become so popular with some of his peers – and has been a keen student of techniques in Burgundy.

Bo Barrett recognises a level of *brettanomyces* in a certain portion of barrels. 'I'm not ashamed of the brett in the '89', he said of the oldest wine we tried together, adding, 'and there is some in the '98. But we have been trying to reduce it. We let about 20 out of our 400 barrels get high in brett generally.' (Jim Laube of the *Wine Spectator* sounded the alarm re a TCA infection in the winery way back.)

I suspect part of the reason I was treated to a taste of so many mature vintages was not unconnected to the fact that this year Ch Montelena is launching an Estate Cabernet vertical from 2003 to 2010 in a special set to key accounts and club members. In the past you have had to turn up at the handsome winery to get your hands on these older vintages.

Bo took over as CEO of Ch Montelena on the demise of his father in 2013 and nowadays Bo's children are playing an increasingly active role in the business, and of course his wife Heidi Petersen Barrett has played a seminal role in the history of the Napa Valley via her work as an independent consultant oenologist. She has been described as Napa's most famous winemaker. So how does that work exactly, I asked Bo, who claimed with a smile that they keep their winemaking activities entirely separate.

- **Chateau Montelena, Potter Valley Riesling 2014 Mendocino**

(</tastings/view/603615>)

His only non-Napa wine. A Guinness McFadden vineyard grower. Certified organic. He's aiming for an Austrian style. Uses three different yeasts – two really anaemic ones (he doesn't believe in wild yeast). RS 4 g/l. One third goes into barrels for 60 days, one third for 30 days and one third is unoaked. Demand is 'very pockety' according to the sales guy.

Green and fresh, and lots of acidity and even slight TDN (<https://www.jancisrobinson.com/ocw/detail/tdn>) . Just dry.

13.5%

Drink 2016-2018

16 (</tastings/view/603615>)

- **Chateau Montelena Chardonnay 2014 Napa Valley** (</tastings/view/603616>)

100% Chardonnay from west Oak Knoll on clay benchland near Orchard Ave. 10 acres and some plants planted in 1972. 45% of the Paris-tasting Chardonnay 1973 came from here (the rest came from Russian River). Over the decades it became a single-vineyard wine. Winemaker Matt Crafton. Usually picked early September, sometimes the last week of August – they're usually making Chardonnay on Labor Day. 50% whole bunch, 50% destemmed. They start fermentation in tank at 55 °F (12 °C). 10 months in French oak. They rarely stir unless the alcohols are very high, and never do malolactic fermentation. 7% new oak. 'A handful of us make Chardonnay to age, such as Hanzell, Stony Hill and Ramey.' They currently have a six-vintage vertical on the market. No premo. 'It was difficult to sell this style in late 1980s and early 1990s when Kendall Jackson Chard was so popular.' Bottled between 27 July and 7 August 2015, released 1 October 2016.

Very little nose. Marked acidity. Pretty solid and chewy. Seems very youthful.

13.6%

Drink 2022-2038

\$58 RRP 16+ (</tastings/view/603616>)

- **Chateau Montelena Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 Calistoga**

(</tastings/view/603617>)

86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc. There are five vineyards here, of which they own three. Yields are 3-4 tons/acre (40-54 hl/ha). 16 months in French and Eastern European oak, 27% new. Calistoga is like mountain vineyards – colder at night. Bottled April 2016, released 1 March 2017. 13,000–15,000 cases.

Very nice claret! Fresh and lively. I'd hate to have this blind! Not at all typical Napa Valley. Appetising.

14.2%

Drink 2018-2023

\$58 RRP 16.5 (</tastings/view/603617>)

- **Chateau Montelena, The Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2013 Calistoga** (</tastings/view/603618>)

97% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1.5% Cabernet Franc, 1.5% Petit Verdot. Moderate vintage. 24 months in 100% French oak, 30% new. Bottled December 2015, released March 2017. Winemaker Matt Crafton. Very low-yielding vines.

Intense nose. Much denser and more opulent and oaky than the regular bottling. Dry and sinewy. Firm and dry and slightly tarry. Long. Fresh again but very long and powerful.

14.1%

Drink 2020-2036

\$160 RRP 17.5 (</tastings/view/603618>)

- **Chateau Montelena, The Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 Calistoga** (</tastings/view/603619>)

98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Cabernet Franc. Cool vintage. 18 months in 100% French oak, 28% new. Winemaker Cameron Parry. Bottled August 2008, released March 2010. Sweet and round. Polished tannins. Just right for now.

13.9%

Drink 2012-2025

\$175 RRP 18 (</tastings/view/603619>)

- **Chateau Montelena, The Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 Calistoga** (</tastings/view/603620>)

98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Cabernet Franc. Big drought, warm vintage. 23 months in 100% French oak, 30% new. Winemaker Bo Barrett. Bottled December 2006, released March 2008. Perfumed – almost Cabernet Franc on the nose. Just a little dry on the end.

14.2%

Drink 2012-2026

\$175 RRP 17.5 (</tastings/view/603620>)

- **Chateau Montelena, The Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 1998 Napa Valley** (</tastings/view/603625>)

Cool, decried vintage that's really come round. 98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Cabernet Franc. 18-20 months in French oak, 30% new. Winemaker Bo Barrett. Bottled August 2000 and released March 2002.

Lifted nose. Pure and polished. Bone dry. Really balsam and racy. Zesty. Almost ballerina-like. Really beautiful now. Very long. Great line.

14%

Drink 2012-2030

18 (</tastings/view/603625>)

- **Chateau Montelena, The Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 1989 Napa Valley** (</tastings/view/603626>)

Cool, rainy vintage. 98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Cabernet Franc. 24 months in French oak. Winemaker Bo Barrett. Bottled May 1992, released September 1993.

Big, sweeter than some. Just a little skinny on the end. Needs food. A bit inky rather than fun.

14.1%

Drink 2003-2022

17 (</tastings/view/603626>)

PETER MICHAEL

We Brits feel vicariously rather proud of the success of Sir Peter Michael's eponymous Knights Valley winery because he is one of us. A successful businessman – he founded Classic FM in 1992 inter alia

– he also had the foresight to establish the Peter Michael winery on high ground between Sonoma and Napa Valleys way back in 1983 and has never looked back. His wines have been widely admired from the start and have continued to show their own geographically dominated style rather than submitted to the whims of fashion.

Champenois Nick Morlet has made the wines since 2006, eschewing selected cultured yeast and acid adjustment. There is none of the alcohol reduction that has become so common in northern California (to compensate for extended [hang time](https://www.jancisrobinson.com/ocw/detail/hang-time) (<https://www.jancisrobinson.com/ocw/detail/hang-time>)). Instead Morlet attempts to optimise physiological ripeness by the way vines are farmed.

Throughout its existence, Peter Michael has been the only winery in Knights Valley, but Knightsbridge has recently been given a winery permit. There is also a vineyard near Peter Michael whose grapes go into the Jackson Verité Cabernet.

I had the pleasure of tasting the wines below with Sir Peter's son Paul, who is increasingly involved with the winery and with his parents' hotel and restaurant, The Vineyard at Stockcross in Berkshire, UK, and with James Hocking, who runs [The Vineyard Cellars](https://www.vineyardcellars.com/) (<https://www.vineyardcellars.com/>), one of the UK's few top California wine importers. I had a preview of the latest releases, the 2015s and 2014 Cabernets listed below that were released in May, a couple of 2014 Pinots because they are not releasing 2015 Pinots, and three library releases of Les Pavots, their famous Bordeaux blend, available from The Vineyard Cellars. I tasted these three Pavots from old to young so that the strength of the younger wines would not overpower the subtler older one. The prices cited are retail per bottle from The Vineyard Cellars. My apologies for not publishing these reviews earlier.

- **Peter Michael, L'Après-Midi Sauvignon Blanc 2015 Knights Valley**

(</tastings/view/602836>)

12% Sémillon, 88% Sauvignon Blanc grown in the 64-acre (26-ha) Les Pavots vineyard at 800-900 ft (244-274 m) elevation. Wild yeast, no acid adjustment. 20% new oak and aged for eight months.

Muted nose. Ripe and figgy. Quite a sweet start and with good acidity on the end. Big and very Californian rather than Sauvignon Blanc.

15%

Drink 2016-2019

£57.15 RRP 16.5 (</tastings/view/602836>)

- **Peter Michael, Belle Côte Chardonnay 2015 Knights Valley**

(</tastings/view/602837>)

Their first planted Chardonnay (small percentage of Wente) vineyard, in 1990. Faces east but on a plateau so quite rich soils. 1,700 ft (518 m) elevation. Some evening shade. Some rain just before flowering so poor set and not that great a yield. Wild yeast, no acid adjustment.

Hint of popcorn.

15%

Drink 2016-2018

£101.06 RRP 16 (</tastings/view/602837>)

- **Peter Michael, La Carrière Chardonnay 2015 Knights Valley**

(</tastings/view/602838>)

From 1,200 ft (366 m) on the beginning of the north–south ridge that looks down on bordeaux variety vineyards. Exposed to marine breeze that blows almost constantly. Rock and volcanic ash. 40% slope! Great drainage. Wild yeast, no acid adjustment.

Edgy and vital. With much more energy and acidity than Belle Côte. Lots to chew on. Long.

14.8%

Drink 2017-2022

£101.06 RRP 17 (</tastings/view/602838>)

- **Peter Michael, Mon Plaisir Chardonnay 2015 Knights Valley**

(</tastings/view/602839>)

Same elevation as Belle Côte but more uneven. Rich soil and 100% old Wente clone. This was the name of their first wine ever, made from 1987 onwards, originally out of bought-in grapes from Gauer in Alexander Valley, until their first estate vintage about five years ago. Wild yeast, no acid adjustment.

Sweet nose with some vegetal notes. Quite a bit of freshness and ageing potential.

14.6%

Drink 2017-2021

£101.06 RRP 16.5+ (</tastings/view/602839>)

- **Peter Michael, Ma Belle-Fille Chardonnay 2015 Knights Valley**

(</tastings/view/602840>)

Named after Paul Michael's wife Emily. At an elevation of 1,800-2,000 ft (549-610 m). Planted in 1996.

But inversion layer means it gets warmer because less fog. Wild yeast, no acid adjustment.

Sweet, floral nose. Quite solid and burgundian. Racy and transparent.

14.6%

Drink 2018-2024

£115.94 RRP 17+ (</tastings/view/602840>)

- **Peter Michael, L'Esprit de Pavots 2014 Knights Valley**

(</tastings/view/602841>)

53% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petit Verdot. Second wine of Les Pavots, born out of phylloxera problems of late 1980s. They planted Les Pavots in 1983 and

the young replanted vines go into Esprit. Wild yeast, no acid adjustment.

Quite a delicate touch. Very nice and satisfying and really rather gorgeous. Very fresh. Quite long. Lovely for now.

14.9%

Drink 2017-2021

£111.13 RRP 17 (</tastings/view/602841>)

- **Peter Michael, Les Pavots 2014 Knights Valley** (</tastings/view/602842>)

800-1400 ft (244-427 m). Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot are planted higher. Merlot at the bottom. 64 acres (26 ha) of vineyard in total. About 3,000 cases made. Very rocky, very white and some volcanic ash. Faces south in a bowl. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Cabernet Franc, 13% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot. Relatively low Cabernet Sauvignon this year. Wild yeast, no acid adjustment.

Deep crimson. Complex nose with some tobacco notes. Quite rich and beefy. Lots of potential. A little bit of heat. Bigger than the 2014.

15%

Drink 2020-2035

£221.81 RRP 17+ (</tastings/view/602842>)

- **Peter Michael, Au Paradis 2014 Oakville** (</tastings/view/602843>)

Vineyard bought in 2009 – the only one they bought. Used to be the Showket vineyard, belonging to Kal and Dorothy Showket and planted to Cabernets in mid to late 1980s, but has been renamed Au Paradis. On eastern hills of Oakville at 183 m, next to Dalle Valle and Vinecliff. Very red soil. 24% Cabernet Franc, 76% Cabernet Sauvignon (so it could be a NV Cabernet Sauvignon). Wild yeast, no acid adjustment. Their first vintage was 2011 and they had to improve drainage and canopy. They have Javier as vineyard manager and a pretty permanent team – under pressure now. Tom Prentice consults too.

Deep crimson. Big, rich nose! Massively round and rich in comparison with the Sonoma reds. But not too heavy. Stony and dry on the end. Not as refreshing as some of the Sonoma wines. Big and bold. Just a bit angular at present.

15.3%

Drink 2020-2035

£221.81 RRP 16.5++ (</tastings/view/602843>)

- **Peter Michael, Ma Danseuse Pinot Noir 2014 Fort Ross-Seaview**
(</tastings/view/602844>)

Paul Michael's parents met at dancing school in London, hence the name. 2015 was declassified. Uneven ripening and some underripe. Planted in 2006 – relatively early – and the property, near Marcassin, was bought in 1998. (Two more vineyards there concurrently bought and planted.) Vineyard faces inland, protected from the ocean. Wild yeast, no acid adjustment.

Light crimson. Bright garnet. Light, and rather stemmy to me although it's apparently all destemmed. Perfumed. Sweet start and not exactly delicate in flavour but clearly hands off in terms of texture. Lightly grainy end. Some violets.

14.2%

Drink 2017-2022

£100.29 RRP 16.5 (</tastings/view/602844>)

- **Peter Michael, Le Moulin Rouge Pinot Noir 2014 Santa Lucia Highlands** (</tastings/view/602872>)

100% Pinot Noir, Vosne-Romanée clone from the Pisoni Vineyard. Their only non-estate wine – they've worked with the Pisoni family for 20 years. Wild yeast, no acid adjustment. Released March 2016. Tiny production.

Deep crimson. Sweet, slightly heady nose. Jewelly and satisfying even if not at all burgundian. Very exuberant. Rather hot, bruising finish. Lots to chew on.

14.5%

Drink 2018-2023

£87.62 RRP 16 (</tastings/view/602872>)

- **Peter Michael, Les Pavots 2006 Knights Valley** (</tastings/view/602873>)

Wild yeast, no acid adjustment. Winemaker Nick Morlet's first vintage. Was extremely tannic initially. This has recently opened up, apparently.

Lots of tannins – pretty brutal! Still needs time! Bit of dustiness and lots of grip on the end.

16%

Drink 2020-2030

£77.12 per half RRP 16- (</tastings/view/602873>)

- **Peter Michael, Les Pavots 2010 Knights Valley** (</tastings/view/602874>)

Wild yeast, no acid adjustment. Lighter vintage than the norm. Dry farmed, unusually, with a heat spike just before harvest.

Bright crimson. Very light nose but aromatic, rather Cabernet Franc-like on the nose. Still pretty chewy and I suppose that's a mountain-vineyard thing. Lots to chew on.

15%

Drink 2018-2030

£167.28 RRP 16.5 (</tastings/view/602874>)

- **Peter Michael, Les Pavots 2013 Knights Valley** (</tastings/view/602875>)

Long growing season. Wild yeast, no acid adjustment.

Deep crimson. Very glowing crimson. Attractive layers and some vegetal notes. Much better

mastered tannins than in the 2010 and 2006. Lots of fruit overlay. Meaty and confident. Hint of mint. Long. Dry finish and appetising.

14.8%

Drink 2019-2030

£167.28 RRP 17.5 (</tastings/view/602875>)

RAMEY

I have long admired [David Ramey](http://www.rameywine.com) (<http://www.rameywine.com>)'s wines and know from personal experience how long his refined Chardonnays can continue to evolve. I caught up with him and Carla over a tasting and lunch in June when he came to London for the annual Fields Morris & Verdin tasting en route to Burgundy for a final Focus on Chardonnay winemakers' workshop in conjunction with Thierry Matrot and his two daughters.

He chose to show me pairs of wines. 'I want then and now to be theme', he explained, adding that he had no qualms about showing his Chardonnays at a ripe old age (for California), having enjoyed a 1999 Hyde bottling only the weekend before.

He makes a series of single-vineyard Chardonnays, mostly from the well-known classic Wente clone which has particularly tiny clusters that tend to imbue the resulting wines with concentrated flavour. He says that he requires vines to be at least seven years old before vinifying their produce for the Ramey label.

He uses about 25% new oak for an *élevage* (<https://www.jancisrobinson.com/ocw/detail/elevage>) on lees for about 20 months. 'I stir once a week until the end of the malolactic. I don't believe it tires the wine – it just keeps it fresh until any sulphur addition.' He fines but doesn't filter and deliberately retains some carbon dioxide, a technique learnt from Professor Alain Bertrand in Bordeaux. '800 ppm for whites, he said in the very early 1980s. Jacques Seysses [of Domaine Dujac] uses the same level for his reds.'

As for Pinot Noir, he claims to occupy the middle ground between 'at one end Russian River Valley sloopy juice and Sonoma Coast hair shirt stuff (12.5% whether you like it or not)', which I thought was rather a good description.

He gives his Pinot three weeks on skins. 'I'm not frightened of tannin; I'm interested in wines that develop.'

We discussed the question of modish *whole-bunch fermentation*

(<https://www.jancisrobinson.com/ocw/detail/whole-bunch-fermentation>) and Ramey told me, 'in 2006 a group of us toured France and asked Philippe Guigal how he decides when to use stems? He said when they are pink or brown – but Syrah stems are always bright green!'

Talking of his Syrah, I found his Rodgers Creek Vineyard 2013 Syrah absolutely stunning. See [Elaine's article about the Petaluma Gap](https://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/petaluma-gap-a-windy-ava-on-hold) (<https://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/petaluma-gap-a-windy-ava-on-hold>), the area it comes from, also published today.

When we got on to the Cabernets, it was inevitable that the question of price would come up. 'You have to bear in mind that some people are paying \$13,000 a tonne or more and are then able to sell direct to tourists. There are little brands selling for \$275 a bottle that are made in custom-crush

facilities [thus no investment in bricks and mortar]. So grape prices for Pinot Noir, for example, have gone from \$4,000 to almost \$7,000 a tonne in very few years, so that's got to be a \$70 bottle.'

In 2016 they made a Sonoma County Cabernet for the first time. 'We're shrinking our Napa Valley footprint because we don't want to compete with people who have a storefront in Napa.'

Ramey volunteered that he has become a big fan of the Diam cork, revelling in the uniform ageing process it seems to guarantee from bottle to bottle since they started using it in 2013.

- **Ramey Chardonnay 2013 Russian River Valley** (</tastings/view/605170>)

Several clones. From Martinelli, Dutton, Rochioli. 15% new oak. 12 months on lees. Ramey has always uses native yeasts since his Chalk Hill days in the early 1990s.

Echt and both green and lively with a certain richness. Some lime flavour and great length.

14.5%

Drink 2016-2024

16.5+ (</tastings/view/605170>)

- **Ramey, Hyde Vineyard Chardonnay 2013 Carneros** (</tastings/view/605171>)

Mostly planted in the late 1990s. The fruit comes from a specific block and you can see the difference between theirs and others', eg HdV. They are against stripping vines.

Mineral and stony and pretty chewy and introvert. Quite reticent with some mandarin elements. Long and opens out on the end.

14.5%

Drink 2017-2029

17+ (</tastings/view/605171>)

- **Ramey, Ritchie Vineyard Chardonnay 2013 Russian River Valley**

(</tastings/view/605172>)

From the oldest vines, planted in 1972. Mix of clones – back in the seventies they didn't know much about clones. Mark Aubert and Paul Hobbs used to make a Ritchie.

Rich and spicy nose. Racy and lively though – much less rich and sweet and heavy than the average Russian River Valley Chardonnay. Chewy end. Very long.

Drink 2017-2026

17+ (</tastings/view/605172>)

- **Ramey, Ritchie Vineyard Chardonnay 2007 Russian River Valley**

(</tastings/view/605173>)

Quite a deep straw gold. Mellow, even a little salty somehow on the nose. Round and a little sweet but not heavy. Citrus-peel notes. Quite throbbing still. Much more mellow than a white

burgundy but still with tension.

Drink 2011-2021

17 (</tastings/view/605173>)

- **Ramey Pinot Noir 2014 Russian River Valley** (</tastings/view/605174>)

30% new oak. 15 months in oak. A blend of their own grapes, grapes from a neighbour and 15% from Sonoma Coast. Bottled 18 months ago. They are using more and more whole bunch – about 25%.

A little sharp on the nose, polished texture and served possibly a tad too warm. Lots of potential but not there yet.

Drink 2020-2029

16.5+ (</tastings/view/605174>)

- **Ramey, Rodgers Creek Vineyard Syrah 2013 Sonoma Coast**

(</tastings/view/605175>)

At an elevation of 800 ft (245 m) on the south west of Sonoma Mountain – this will be the new Petaluma Gap AVA very soon. There will be 12 or more producers in the AVA plus those who buy fruit. First vintage was 2005.

Rich and lively and pure pleasure and pure Syrah. Really exciting!

Drink 2016-2024

18 (</tastings/view/605175>)

- **Ramey, Pedregal Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 2011 Oakville**

(</tastings/view/605176>)

With 15% co-fermented Petit Verdot. From a small vanity vineyard with house attached, three acres (1.2 ha) of Cabernet Sauvignon and each acre is worth \$500,000. Very very rocky. Just below Dalla Valle estate, on the Silverado Trail. Made since 2004, and leased and farmed since 2008. Never manipulated, and they are often picking before their neighbours. 2011 was a cold vintage.

Good to smell Napa Cabernet. Fresh. This works really well. Just a little astringent at present but awfully nice. Real lift.

14.5%

Drink 2017-2030

17 (</tastings/view/605176>)

- **Ramey, Pedregal Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 2005 Oakville**

(</tastings/view/605177>)

Very deep crimson. Sweet and rather menthol. Rich and cough medicine, not quite as fresh as the 2011. Bur certainly refreshing and not too heavy. Quite a chewy end.

Drink 2012-2023

16.5 (</tastings/view/605177>)