



2009 Blankiet Estate Rive Droite (Merlot)

A Proprietary Blend Dry Red Table wine from Napa, California

Review by Robert Parker

Wine Advocate # 209 (Oct 2013)

Rating: 98

One of the finest Merlot-based wines in all of California, the 2009 Rive Droite Paradise Hills Vineyard is a blend of 79.8% Merlot, 11.8% Cabernet Franc and the rest Cabernet Sauvignon. Unfortunately, there are only 200 cases compared to 510 cases of the 2009 Proprietary Red. It finished at 15.2% alcohol, and reminded me of the pre-1975 vintages of Petrus. Robust and full-bodied with abundant notes of kirsch, mocha, mulberry and plum fruit intertwined with grilled meat and charcuterie, new saddle leather and fudge characteristics. This superb, opulent, voluptuously textured 2009 can be drunk now or cellared for 20-25 years. The Blankiet Estate owned by Claude and Katherine Blankiet is beautifully situated on the lower hillsides of the Mayacamas Mountains, just behind the large Napanook estate of Dominus. An enviable group of talented people have provided assistance here, beginning with David Abreu, Helen Turley and John Wetlaufer, followed by Michel Rolland, Martha McClellan, and more recently Denis Malbec. Production remains between 1,800 and 2,500 cases with nearly half of that devoted to their second wine, the Prince of Hearts. The other cuvees include the Proprietary Red (Cabernet Sauvignon-dominated) and the Rive Droite (a Pomerol / St.-Emilion look-a-like wine), and in 2012, they added a tiny, 100% Cabernet Sauvignon cuvee called Mythicus. I could be wrong, but it seems to me these wines, which performed very well, and are among the finest of the so-called "cult" wines of Napa Valley, remain under-the-radar. Perhaps that is due to the small production. The 2009s are all stunning. In the challenging 2011 vintage, the Blankiets along with their winemaker Denis Malbec have fashioned very good examples, although they are much lighter and less concentrated and authoritative than the top vintages. The 2012s are among the finest wines Blankiet has yet made