



## **2010 Blankiet Estate Rive Droite (Merlot)**

A Proprietary Blend Dry Red Table wine from Napa, California.

Review by Robert Parker

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Rating: 95

Drink 2017 - 2047

The 2010 Rive Droite Paradise Hills Vineyard (89.4% Merlot, 10.4% Cabernet Franc and a dollop of Petit Verdot) is a 300-case blend that tips the scale at 14.8% alcohol. Unlike most California Merlots that are sort of wishy-washy, lacking any real core, strength or structure, the Rive Droite is a robust, pedal-to-the-metal, earthy, meaty, super-concentrated Merlot with lots of structure and minerality. Notes of chocolate, grilled meats, roasted herbs, and espresso beans are all present in this dense, thick, unctuously textured yet compelling wine that should hit its stride in 4-5 years, and last for 25-30. 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.

