



98 points

**BLANKIET ESTATE Rive Droite 2021
Paradise Hills Vineyard, Yountville, California**

The 2021 Rive Droite Paradise Hills Vineyard marries vertical intensity and elegance to a degree I have not seen before. Red cherry fruit, kirsch orange peel, spice, mint, rose petal and a kiss of French oak are all beautifully delineated in the glass. Subtle, nuanced and wonderfully vibrant, the 2021 is just sublime. The Merlot-based Rive Droite offers a bit more sensuality and early appeal than the Cabernet Sauvignon-based offerings in this range. Some readers may prefer it to those wines – I certainly would not argue with that view!

Blankiet was one of the highlights of my time in Napa Valley this fall. The 2021s are simply mind-blowing. Proprietors Katherine and Claude Blankiet richly deserve all the acclaim they will surely receive for these wines. The Blankiets have put in the time and money to realize their ambition of producing world-class wines. Along the way, they have made the mistakes that are typical of all new ventures but have always done what was needed to address those issues.

Winemaker Graeme MacDonald found a finely tuned machine when he took over for Denis and May-Britt Malbec and had the skill to make the necessary adjustments to reach the next level without drastically changing the wines. Yields were down about 15% in 2021. MacDonald gave the wines 40-50 days on the skins, which worked well.

I tasted the 2021s twice, once at the winery and a second time at home in New York, just to make sure I had not been overly seduced by the magic of Napa Valley during the fall. The wines were nothing short of thrilling on both occasions. This is the vintage that places Blankiet squarely among the most elite wineries in Napa Valley. Bravo!

From [The 2021 Napa Valley Cabernets, Part One \(Dec 2023\)](#) by Antonio Galloni