

THE WORLD'S LEADING FINE WINE MAGAZINES

No. 17
€30

Fine

THE WINE MAGAZINE



100 Best Champagnes • Ann Colgin • Vega Sicilia 1915-2008 • Cristal Champagne 1953-2009 • FINE Wine 200 Index • Ferrari

10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

A dramatic landscape photograph of a Napa Valley vineyard. The scene is captured in a low-key, moody style with a dark, stormy sky filled with heavy, textured clouds. A bright light source, possibly the sun, is breaking through the clouds, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the scene from above. In the foreground, a wooden fence runs diagonally across the frame. Behind it, a series of terraced vineyard rows are visible, sloping down a hillside. The vines are dark and silhouetted against the lighter sky. The overall atmosphere is one of mystery and elegance, typical of high-end wine branding.

NAPA

VINTAGES
OF
VICTORIES



A group of wine experts sits in Meadowood Resort's Wine Library in the Napa Valley. Among the experts, there are the most distinguished wine producers of the valley. They excitedly await the success of their wines in the blind tasting that is soon to begin. Several dozens of wine bottles wrapped in foil are waiting to be evaluated on the side table. A lively discussion is taking place in the room about the quality of the vintages. The wine producers are recounting their experiences of growing seasons. On the basis of their comments, the vintage quality assessments by the American wine medias, Wine Advocate and Wine Spectator, generate astonishment. Wine Advocate has classified the quality of the 2011 vintage as 78 points, while the 2010 got 95 points. Wine Spectator is a little more generous, giving the vintage 2011 vintage 86 points with 2010 getting 96 points. On the basis of these evaluations, there would be cause to avoid the wines of the 2011 vintage. In terms of the tasting, no great success in comparisons can be predicted either for the wines of the vintage. However, when listening to the comments of the wine producers, an impression arises that 2011 wasn't at all as poor as what the assessments may lead one to understand. However, the wine producers conclude that 2010 was more favorable for the wine producer than 2011 when Mother Nature put the ability and nerve of the wine producers to the true test.





THE VIRTUE OF PATIENCE

Growing conditions in 2010 and 2011 were, except for the fall, largely similar. In both years, the growing season of the vines was delayed because of the cool and rainy weather. The summer of 2010, and particularly July, was exceptionally cold – the second coldest in fifty years, while the summer of 2011 was chilly but also rainy. In 2011, the rainfall in June was a third higher than the average.

The chilly weather of the summer and the rains slowed down the ripening of the grapes in both years and added to mold problems at the vineyards. In order to prevent mold problems, the producers thinned out the foliage of the vines to keep the bunches as dry as possible and exposed to sunlight and heat. The thinning out of the foliage done in the summer of 2010 caused concern for the producers in August and September when the rain and clouds were chased away by the parching sun of California and the grapes became under risk of being scorched. The radical change in the weather continued in October when the vineyards were subjected to the fall storms that buffeted the area, as a result of which the producers feared that the crop would get diluted. With the storms, the weather condition declined quickly and this made the night-time temperatures fall below freezing. The producers had to time the moment of the harvest with great care.

There was no comparable thriller in 2011. The fall didn't bring a change from the summer. The chilly weather, extensive cloudiness and rains that had troubled the Napa Valley continued long into the fall. The crop was further wracked by heavy storms in the middle of October. However, patient producers were rewarded as Mother Nature offered relief after the long ordeal. Sunny, dry and warm weather spread into the Napa Valley before the end of October and rescued the crop. In the end, the yield was only ten percent smaller than in 2010. The quality of the crop was generally good, albeit different from normal because the sugar contents of the grapes were lower as a result of the long chilly growing season. Despite the lower sugar levels, the grapes attained their ideal physiological ripeness. As a result the wines are delicate and very aromatic. The phenomenon is rare in the Napa Valley.



THE BEST CABERNETS OF NAPA VALLEY 2010

I-25

Ranking		Points
1	SCREAMING EAGLE 2010	95.5
2	COLGIN IX ESTATE 2010	94.9
3	RELIC ARTEFACT CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2010	94.8
4	COLGIN CARIAD 2010	94.5
5	REALM CELLARS BECKSTOFFER DR CRANE VINEYARD 2010	94.4
6	BLANKIET ESTATE CABERNET SAUVIGNON PARADISE HILLS VINEYARD 2010	94.3
7	COLGIN TYCHSON HILL VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2010	93.5
8	GARGIULO VINEYARDS MONEY ROAD RANCH 2010	93.5
9	BRYANT FAMILY VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2010	93.4
10	GARGIULO VINEYARDS G MAJOR 7 2010	93.2
11	FARELLA CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2010	92.7
12	ROAM SLEEPING LADY VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2011	92.6
13	CAYMUS VINEYARDS SPECIAL SELECTION CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2010	92.3
14	BETTINA 2010	91.7
15	CONTINUUM 2010	91.5
16	SIGNORELLO ESTATE PADRONE 2010	91.2
17	LAIL VINEYARDS J. DANIEL CUVÉE CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2010	91.0
18	JOSEPH PHELPS INSIGNIA 2010	91.0
19	DARIOUSH NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2010	90.7
20	GARGIULO VINEYARDS 575 OVX 2010	90.6
21	PAHLMAYER PROPRIETARY RED 2010	90.3
22	DOMINUS 2010	90.0
23	HEITZ MARTHA'S VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2010	89.0
24	OPUS ONE 2010	89.0
25	DI CONSTANZO 2010	89.0

NAPA CABERNET TOP 10

2010

1

95.5p Screaming Eagle 2010

Average price € 3,064
(Wine-Searcher):

Colour: Deep, purple to ruby

Nose: Refined, intense, ripe black currants, violets, licorice, dark chocolate, lovely toastiness, hints of mint

Palate: Full-bodied yet delicate, satiny tannins, ripe intense black fruit, great concentration

Finish: Multilayered, harmonious and polished

In a nutshell: Wine of subtleties

Buy or not: Start queuing for Screaming Eagle mailing list, if you are lucky to get there the new vintages are "bargains" (€750-850)

Tasted: 2 times, last in 11/2015

Decanting time: 8 hours

Glass time: 3 hours

When to drink: 2025-2040

Food Pairing: Grilled venison fillet with red wine chocolate sauce

Fake factor: Very low risk, but with the wines of this price, there is always a risk of counterfeits

Inside information: The blend is 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 16% Merlot and 9% Cabernet Franc. Produced 610 cases.

Or try this: Pétrus 2010, Pomerol, Bordeaux, France

Final Verdict: A charming and gentle giant



2

95.0p Colgin IX Estate 2010

Average price € 507
(Wine-Searcher):

Colour: Deep, purple

Nose: Rich, spicy, blueberries, licorice, black truffles, complex

Palate: Full-bodied, refined, concentrated, polished tannins, dark chocolate, ripe brambles

Finish: Concentrated, broad, long-lasting

In a nutshell: Full of promise

Buy or not: Yes

Tasted: 2 times, last in 11/2015

Decanting time: 12 hours

Glass time: 6 hours

When to drink: 2030-2040

Food Pairing: Grilled sirloin with parmesan risotto

Fake factor: None

Inside information: The blend is 63% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 11% Cabernet Franc and 6% Petit Verdot

Or try this: Château La Mission Haut-Brion 2010, Pessac-Léognan, Bordeaux, France

Final Verdict: The queen of the hill



3

94.8p Relic Artefact Cabernet Sauvignon 2010

Average price € 82
(Wine-Searcher):

Colour: Deep, purple

Nose: Intense, ripe black fruit, blueberries, blackberries, dark chocolate, smoky, spicy

Palate: Full-bodied, rich in velvety tannins, round, ripe black fruit, lovely spiciness

Round, rich and caressing

Finish: Opulent and harmonious

In a nutshell: Absolutely yes!! The quality-price ratio is magnificent!

Buy or not: Yes

Tasted: 2 times, last in 11/2015

Decanting time: 3 hours

Glass time: 1.5 hours

When to drink: Now-2022

Food Pairing: Roasted beef fillet with grilled onions and mushrooms

Fake factor: None

Inside information: The 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from 3-acre vineyard plot located in western hills of Oakville.

Or try this: Alvaro Palacio Finca Dofi 2009, Priorat, Spain

Final Verdict: A wine with humble soul



4

94.5p Colgin Cariad 2010

Average price € 567
(Wine-Searcher):

Colour: Deep, purple

Nose: Bit reserved, refined, focused, aromatic, black fruits, spicy

Palate: Full-bodied, rich, roasted, blackberries and raspberries, mineral bite, violets

Finish: Concentrated, intense and very stylish

In a nutshell: Wine with focus and depth

Buy or not: Yes, if you want to taste one of the most esteemed Napa reds

Tasted: 4 times, last in 11/2015

Decanting time: 12 hours

Glass time: 3 hours

When to drink: 2025-2030

Food Pairing: Grilled wild boar ribs with grilled peppers

Fake factor: None

Inside information: The blend of 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot and 14% Cabernet Franc.

Or try this: Guigal Hermitage Ex-Voto 2009, Rhône, France

Final Verdict: A big wine with soul of poet



6

94.3p Blankiet Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Paradise Hills Vineyard 2010

Average price € 220
(Wine-Searcher):

Colour: Deep, purple

Nose: Refined, intense, perfumey, violets, licorice, black currants, toasty, fine touch of cedar

Palate: Full-bodied, satiny tannins, vivid acidity, intense cassis fruit, refined toastiness, broad

Finish: Extremely fine, concentrated and persistent

In a nutshell: Like a tailor made Cashmere suit

Buy or not: Yes, this wine will not let you down

Tasted: 4 times, last in 11/2015

Decanting time: 8 hours

Glass time: 3 hours

When to drink: 2025-2035

Food Pairing: Smoked venison fillet with roasted beetroots

Fake factor: None

Inside information: The blend is 84.1% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14.4% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc and 0.5% Petit Verdot.

Or try this: Château de Valandraud 2010, St-Emilion, Bordeaux, France

Final Verdict: One of the most seductive Napa Cabs



5

94.4p Realm Cellars Beckstoffer Dr Crane Vineyard 2010

Average price € 143
(Wine-Searcher):

Colour: Deep, purple

Nose: Opulent, loads of black fruits, blueberries, blackberries, cassis, touch of burnt wood

Palate: Full-bodied, broad and rich, weighty texture, supple tannins

Finish: Round, rich and generous

In a nutshell: Mouthfilling and tempting

Buy or not: Yes, among the best price-quality wines in the tasting

Tasted: 2 times, last in 11/2015

Decanting time: 6 hours

Glass time: 3 hours

When to drink: Now-2025

Food Pairing: Bistecca alla Fiorentina

Fake factor: None

Inside information: Produced 445 cases

Or try this: Monteverro 2009, Tuscany, Italy

Final Verdict: A wine with big and soft voice



7

93.5p Colgin Tychson Hill Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 2010

Average price € 394
(Wine-Searcher):

Colour: Deep, purple

Nose: Rich, complex, cassis, toasty, violets

Palate: Full-bodied, intense, sweet tannins, rich in black fruit, cedar, spices

Finish: Pure and powerful

In a nutshell: A noble wine

Buy or not: Yes, it's a bargain in Colgin portfolio

Tasted: 4 times, last in 11/2015

Decanting time: 12 hours

Glass time: 3 hours

When to drink: 2025-2035

Food Pairing: Tournedos Rossini

Fake factor: None

Inside information: The blend is 95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc and 2% Petit Verdot.

Or try this: Château Cos d'Estournel 2009, St-Estèphe, Bordeaux, France

Final Verdict: Grand Napa aristocrat



8

93.5p Gargiulo Vineyards Money Road Ranch 2010

Average price € 103
(Wine-Searcher):

Colour: Deep, purple

Nose: Intense, seductive, toasty, roasted coffee, cassis, dark chocolate

Palate: Full-bodied, vivid, refined tannins, round, rich black fruit, smoky, toasty

Finish: Long, round and seductive

In a nutshell: Harmonious and opulent

Buy or not: Yes, case loads - look at the price!

Tasted: 4 times, last in 11/2015

Decanting time: 6 hours

Glass time: 3 hours

When to drink: Now-2025

Food Pairing: Bavette Steak With Beurre Rouge & Roasted Potatoes

Fake factor: None

Inside information: A 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from a 40-acre vineyard located in the heart of Oakville.

Or try this: Château Troplong-Mondot 2003, St-Emilion, Bordeaux, France

Final Verdict: Smooth as velvet



9

93.4p Bryant Family Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 2010

Average price € 587
(Wine-Searcher):

Colour: Deep, ruby to purple

Nose: Complex, tempting, intense blackcurrant and blueberry aromas, new oak, toasty

Palate: Full-bodied, mouth-filling, very refined tannins, intense black fruit, dark chocolate, toasty

Finish: Profound, refined and lingering

In a nutshell: Solid and flawless

Buy or not: Yes, Bryant Family wines are like putting money in the bank

Tasted: 4 times, last in 11/2015

Decanting time: 12 hours

Glass time: 4 hours

When to drink: 2020-2040

Food Pairing: Elk Tournedos with blueberry butter sauce and Duschesse potatoes with truffles

Fake factor: None

Inside information: A 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from a 13-acre vineyard from top of Pritchard Hill.

Or try this: Château Haut-Brion 2005, Pessac-Léognan, Bordeaux, France

Final Verdict: The king of the hill



10

93.2p Gargiulo Vineyards G Major 7 2010

Average price € 206
(Wine-Searcher):

Colour: Deep, purple

Nose: Rich, spicy, toasty, roasted coffee, cassis, dark chocolate, hints of mint

Palate: Full-bodied, intense black fruit, firm refined tannic structure, toasty spiciness

Finish: Concentrated, intense and fleshy

In a nutshell: Like jazz music in the mouth

Buy or not: Yes, this charms every red wine lover

Tasted: 4 times, last in 11/2015

Decanting time: 8 hours

Glass time: 3 hours

When to drink: 2018-2028

Food Pairing: Herb-crusted rack of lamb with tomatoes and feta

Fake factor: None

Inside information: The blend is 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Cabernet Franc, 2% Petite Verdot, 1% Merlot.

Or try this: Ben Webster's Sophisticated Lady

Final Verdict: A jazzy wine

