

Napa Nobility

His tasting of 250 reds from the 2014 Napa Valley vintage in January confirmed for **James Suckling** that the region is entrenched in a new era of classicism, whereby wines expand on the linear definition of reds of the past while drawing on the precision and fruitiness of today. Napa Valley jam, most evident in the high-octane, overly fruity sweet wines of the 2000s, is a thing of the past, he declares. The 2014 reds show character driven by their respective terroirs and microclimates. Here are 10 you won't want to miss

COLGIN CELLARS CABERNET SAUVIGNON TYCHSON HILL VINEYARD

Fantastic aromas of sweet tobacco, rose petal, mushroom and dark fruit such as raspberry and currant. Citrus blossom, too. Full body, firm and velvety tannins, yet remains tight and polished. Very reserved and beautiful. Subtle texture. Savoury. You are going to want to drink this now! However, it's built for ageing. The purity of cabernet sauvignon (95%) is spellbinding. ● 100 points



BRYANT FAMILY VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Aromatic and vivid with blackberry, fresh mushroom, blackcurrant and flowers. Full-bodied, firm and very silky. Tightly wound ball of silk. Extremely long and linear. Fine-grained. Lasts for minutes. Reminiscent of the great Napa reds of the 1950s and '60s. Best in 2025 but superb now. Greatest Bryant ever. ● 100 points



PETER MICHAEL WINERY CABERNET SAUVIGNON OAKVILLE AU PARADIS

Extremely perfumed with iron, clay and currant character, copper pennies and hints of steak. Then this turns to flowers, iodine and oyster shell. Full body that's juicy and defined by hefty blackcurrant flavours and real meatiness. Dark chocolate and orange peel undertones. Extremely long and flavourful. About three-fourths cabernet sauvignon, the rest cabernet franc. Excellent follow-up to the 2013. ● 99 points



REALM CELLARS CABERNET SAUVIGNON FARELLA VINEYARD

Dark berries, sliced mushroom, wet earth and fascinating intensity. Iodine undertones. Full-bodied, velvety and layered. Incredible depth and length. Truly fantastic. Shows the Coombsville magic. Pure cabernet. Napa's answer to 1975 La Mission? Beautiful now but better in 2022. ● 99 points



DANA ESTATES CABERNET SAUVIGNON HOWELL MOUNTAIN HERSHEY VINEYARD

Enthrancing aromas of orange peel, sweet tobacco, mushroom, clay, espresso, chocolate and currant follow through to a medium to full body that builds on the finish with wonderful blackberry, wet earth and fresh mushroom character. Lasts for minutes. Exuberant and decadent at the same time. More tamed than in the past. Challenging. Unique. Better in 2022. Best Hershey ever? ● 99 points



EISELE VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Intensely scented dried flowers in the rose to lilac spectrum. Raspberry and blackberry undertones. It's full-bodied, yet everything's in finesse. Superfine tannins coat your palate and give you incredible length, and it all lasts for minutes on the palate. Great resonance. Not the power of 2013 but intellect and persistence prevails. A joy now but will improve for decades. ● 99 points



SCREAMING EAGLE CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Extremely perfumed with blackberry, currant and flowers. Rose petals, too. Seductive. Medium to full body. It grows on the palate with a finish that goes on for minutes. The tannins are ultra-fine and polished. Purity and essence to this. Feminine yet wild and unpredictable. Available in March. Better in 2021. ● 99 points



SCHRADER CABERNET SAUVIGNON BECKSTOFFER TO KALON VINEYARD

Seductive aromas of crushed berries, wet earth, leaves, mushroom and violets. Wow. Full body, ultra-fine tannins and a super depth of fruit and intensity. Shows power with finesse. This needs three to four years to show its true greatness. ● 99 points



CONTINUUM SAGE CABERNET SAUVIGNON MOUNTAIN VINEYARD

Fabulous aromas of blueberry, blackcurrant, sage and mint. Lead pencil and graphite, too. Full body and ultra-fine tannins that are slowly transformed to ripe and beautiful fruit. Super polished and textured. Great finish. Drink in 2022, but it's hard not to drink now. Harks back to the great Mondavi reserves of the 1970s. ● 99 points



PAUL HOBBS CABERNET SAUVIGNON OAKVILLE BECKSTOFFER TO KALON

Amazing aromas of Chinese spices, sweet tobacco, incense, anise and dark fruit. Full-bodied, yet tight and reserved. Great density and polish. An entrancing wine. Lasts for minutes on the palate. Already a dream to drink but will improve magnificently. ● 99 points



To see the full list of the Napa Valley's top 100 wines, visit jamesuckling.com