

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon - New Releases

Tom Hyland

Contributor

[Food & Drink](#)

I write about wine (and sometimes food) from around the world.



Leopoldina Vineyard of Turnbull, Oakville, Napa Valley

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Notes on new releases of Cabernet Sauvignon from Napa Valley, including wines from some veteran producers (Pine Ridge, Miner, Turnbull) as well as relative newcomers (Acumen, Somerston).

Pine Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon 2017 (Napa Valley) - Bright purple; aromas of black currant, black plum and mocha. Medium-full, this has ideal ripeness, good acidity, medium-weight, silky, sweet tannins, nicely managed wood notes, and notable complexity. This is a plush, delicious, textbook example of Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon that is a true crowd pleaser. Very enjoyable for dinner tonight with a t-bone or rib eye steak. Peak in 7-10 years. **Excellent** (93)



Dave Miner, proprietor, Miner Family Winery, Oakville, Napa Valley

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Miner Family Winery Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon 2017 - A blend of 92% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Cabernet Franc. Aromas of blackcurrant along with hints of tobacco, mocha and oregano. Medium-full, this has impressive ripeness, rich tannins, balanced acidity and well managed wood notes. The

finish offers notes of black and brown spice notes and there is good persistence. Give this two to three years to settle down. Peak in 7-10 years, perhaps longer. **Excellent** (92)



Somerston Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon LX

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Somerston Estate - Somerston Estate is a relatively new winery (first vintage 2007), situated in eastern Napa Valley in the Vaca Hills area. The winemaker is Craig Becker, who previously worked at Robert Mondavi and then as winemaker at Spring Mountain Vineyards; he has also served as a winemaking consultant. I asked Becker how is a Cabernet Sauvignon from the Vaca Hills different from a Cabernet Sauvignon from other Napa areas, such as Oakville or Stags Leap District?

“The Vaca Hills is quite a big mountain range, and it includes AVAs such as Howell Mountain, Stags Leap, and Atlas Peak,” he remarked. “For a wine to be designated under the Howell Mountain AVA, for example, it has to meet a certain elevation requirement. Somerston is different from all of these AVAs in that it has every possible exposure, and a range of elevations spanning 800 to 1650 feet on the property. I can’t speak for all of the Vaca Hills, but our particular area in the far east and midway up the valley has a shorter growing season than the valley floor, it stays cool longer earlier in the season and gets really cool in October. Our grapes can take that take longer to ripen.”

I tasted two of their estate Cabernet Sauvignons, each named for a specific vineyard block:

Somerston Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley “LX” 2016 - Bright purple; aromas of black raspberry, black plum and black mint. Medium-full with excellent concentration. Rich mid-palate with gobs of ripe black fruit backed by rich, round tannins, very good acidity, nicely managed wood notes and excellent persistence. Slightly forward, this has a bit of a hedonistic quality to it, but it is never over the top. Very impressive! So appealing now, but better in another 2-3 years, with peak in 12-15 years, perhaps longer. **Outstanding** (96)

Somerston Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley”XCVI” 2015 - Bright purple; aromas of black currant, medicinal herbs and china bark. Medium-full with excellent concentration, this displays ample oak notes, full-throttle tannins, balanced acidity and notable persistence. The finish is a bit astringent now, so give this 2-3 years to settle down, with peak in 10-12 years. **Excellent** (91)

Acumen Mountainside Red Wine 2018 (Napa Valley) - As this wine is not at least 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, it cannot be labeled as such; however this is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, with remainder a blend of Merlot, Petit Verdot and Zinfandel. Bright ruby red/light purple; aromas of blackberry, blueberry and lavender - very appealing! Medium-full with excellent ripeness - berry fruit, medium-weight tannins, good acidity and subdued wood notes. This is nicely styled to enjoy tonight with a range of foods from duck breast to porterhouse steak or it can be laid away for 5-7 years. Excellent (92)

Acumen Cabernet Sauvignon "Hillside" 2018 - Bright ruby red; aromas of black plum, black currant and thistle. Medium-full with excellent depth of fruit, good acidity, medium-full tannins and notable persistence. This is neither overly ripe or aggressive in its approach, and as such is approachable now with most red meats (especially a t-bone steak), while it will reveal more character in another year or two, with peak drinking in 7-10 years. **Excellent** (93)



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Turnbull Leopoldina Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon 2016, Oakville, Napa Valley

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Turnbull Cabernet Sauvignon Leopoldina Vineyard 2016 (Oakville) - Situated atop the Oakville Bench in one of Napa Valley's high rent districts (Dalla Valle and the Backus Vineyard of Phelps border this site), the Leopoldina Vineyard is the most prized of the portfolio at Turnbull.

98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Petit Verdot. Bright, deep purple; alluring aromas of ripe black plum, black raspberry and violets. Medium-full with excellent concentration, a rich, layered mid-palate, outstanding persistence, very good acidity; distinct, but well managed oak notes and rich, velvety

tannins. This is a formidable Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon that unlike many other examples offers notable harmony, as there is the proper acidity to balance the ripeness as well as impressive depth of fruit that can stand up to the small oak aging. This is hedonistic at present, yet this is not a showy wine, but rather one that has the proper structure for long term cellaring. If you can resist its lure at present, lay it away for a few years, with peak drinking in 15-20 years, as 2016 was an outstanding vintage in Napa Valley. The \$135 price tag is a relative bargain for this quality of Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. **Superb** (97)

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