

Wine tasting in Napa, Sonoma and Paso Robles

Asher Tishler

The winery tour in Napa, Sonoma and Paso Robles was conducted by Nurit and Asher Tishler and by Rachel Stull in June 2017. Napa was our main focus in this trip. We visited 18 wineries in Napa, 2 wineries in Sonoma and 2 wineries in Paso Robles. We tasted the wineries' current releases (sometimes from barrels) and some older ones.

High quality mature wines from Napa and Sonoma are usually unavailable for purchase in the wineries and should be purchased in professional wine stores or in other professional outlets (local importers, internet stores, auctions, etc.), since most of their production is pre-sold (sometimes several years) in advance. Wines from the last release and, sometimes, from the last 2-3 releases may be available in some, but not all, wineries.

There are numerous hotels, B&Bs, quality restaurants and wine stores in Napa Valley, Sonoma and Paso Robles. Booking rooms well in advance, particularly during holidays and annual wine events, is highly recommended. We stayed in Calistoga (Napa) and Tempelton (near Paso Robles). Both towns are surrounded by some of the region's most famous wineries and offer many interesting attractions.

This winery trip was planned several months in advance, and was focused on high to very high quality wineries. Thus, no wonder that we ranked many of the wines that we tasted as 'very good' or even 'excellent'. Almost all of the high quality wines that we tasted will age and continue to develop, many of them for 5-20 years.

Finally, there are numerous sources of information on Napa's, Sonoma's and Paso Robles' wines, wineries, history, climate and geography. Wikipedia and the references therein is a good place to start.

Wineries in Napa

Phelps

Chardonnay, Freestone Vineyards, Sonoma Coast, 2015. \$55. 100% Chardonnay. Close to full body. Fairly balanced. Too low acidity. Somewhat complex. Somewhat elegant. Simple wine. Drink now. Good wine.

Chardonnay, Pastorale Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, 2015. \$75. 100% Chardonnay. Full body. Fairly balanced. Low acidity. Complex. Somewhat elegant. Drink now. Good to very good wine.

Pinot Noir, Pastorale Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, 2013. \$75. Full body. Fairly balanced. Low acidity. Buttery. Somewhat complex. Drink now. Reasonably good wine.

Pinot Noir, Quarter Moon Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, 2014. \$75. Full body. Fairly balanced. Low acidity. Somewhat complex. Somewhat elegant. Buttery. Drink now. Reasonably good wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, 2014. \$75. 84% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot, 2% Malbec, 2% Cabernet Franc. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Somewhat fruity. Drink now up to 6-8 years. Good to very good wine.

Insignia, 2011. \$250. 14.5% alcohol. 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Petit Verdot, 4% Malbec, 2% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc. Full body (but not a powerful wine). Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Drink in 3-10 years. Very good wine.

Insignia, 2013. \$250. 14.5% alcohol. 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petit Verdot, 3% Malbec, 3% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Drink now, but will improve in 2-4 up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

A large winery. Very nice tasting facility. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area and produces good wines. Over the last several years, this winery has become somewhat "commercial". Visiting this winery (with appointment) is recommended.

Opus One

Opus One, 2013. \$295. 14.5% alcohol. 79% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc, 6% Petit Verdot, 2% Malbec. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Very smooth. Somewhat closed. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink now or, better, in 2-4 up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Overture, 2013. \$120. 14.5% alcohol. Full body. Fairly balanced. Fairly complex. Very smooth. Very soft tannins. Drink now up to 5-8 years. Good wine.

A mid-size winery. Very nice tasting room. Nice hospitality. Normally produces very good, sometimes excellent, wines. The 2011 Opus One was disappointing, but the 2012 and 2013 Opus One were very good. The 2010 Opus One was excellent. Over the last several years this winery has become somewhat "commercial". Visiting this winery (preferably with appointment) is recommended.

Odette

Cade Sauvignon Blanc, 2016. \$32. 95% Sauvignon Blanc, 2% Sauvignon Musque, 2% Semillon, 1% Viognier. Light. Balanced. Not complex. Simple. Floral aroma. Drink now. Good wine.

Adaptation Cabernet Sauvignon, 2014. \$54. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Young. Floral aroma. Drink now up to 5 years. Very good wine.

Cade Cabernet Sauvignon, 2014. \$80. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Smooth. Soft tannins. Young. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 5 years. Good to very good wine.

Odette Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap, 2014. \$126. 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 17% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 3% Malbec, 2% Petit Verdot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Somewhat fruity. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink in 2-3 up to 15 years. Very good wine.

Odette Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Stags Leap, 2013. \$126. Full body. Fairly powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 2-3 up to 15 years. Better than the 2014. Very good wine.

Cade Estate Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, 2014. \$200. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Smooth. Noticeable Soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 3-4 years up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

A high quality winery. The tasting room, at the Stag's Leap region of the Valley, represents three quality wineries: PlumpJack, Cade and Odette. These wineries produce high quality wines. Visiting this tasting room (preferably with appointment) is highly recommended.

Caymus

Mersoleil Reserved Chardonnay, 2015. \$32. 14.9% alcohol. Less than full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Fairly elegant. Simple. Drink now. Reasonable good wine.

Emmolo Sauvignon Blanc, 2015. \$22. 12.5% alcohol. Light simple wine. Balanced. Not complex. Nice acidity. Young. Drink now. Reasonably good wine.

Napa Valley Zinfandel, 2015. \$38. 15.4% alcohol. Less than full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Some sweetness. Simple. Drink now. Reasonably good wine.

Emmolo Merlot, 2015. \$60. 15.4% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Soft tannins. Somewhat Fruity. Drink now up to 5 years. Good wine.

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, 2014. \$72. 14.8% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Somewhat fruity. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Slight sweetness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very Good wine.

Special Selection Cabernet Sauvignon, 2014. \$180. 15.2% alcohol. Full body. Fairly balanced. Complex. Somewhat elegant. Closed. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Somewhat flat. Drink now up to 8 years. This wine was a disappointment to us. Last year's Special Selection Cabernet Sauvignon was much better. Good wine.

A mid-size to large winery. Very nice tasting facilities. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a nice area and produces some good wines. Over the last several years this winery has become somewhat "commercial". This year's visit was disappointing. Visiting this winery (with appointment) is recommended.

HDV

De La Guerra Viognier, 2014. \$45. 13.5% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Fairly complex. Fairly elegant. Round. On the light side. Drink now up to 5 years. Good to very good wine.

HDV Chardonnay, 2014. \$65. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Sharp. Nice and long finish. Drink now up to 7-8 years. Very good wine.

Californio Syrah, 2013. \$75. 14.5% alcohol. 100% Syrah. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Somewhat feminine. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 2-3 up to 10 years. One of the best Syrah in Napa. Very good to excellent wine.

Belle Cousine, 2013. \$75. 14.1% alcohol. 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 70% Merlot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Fairly elegant. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 2-3 years up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Vine Hill Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon, 2013. \$150. 14.5% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 12 years. Very good to excellent wine.

A small to mid-size winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting the winery (only by appointment) is highly recommended.

Lail

Blueprint Sauvignon Blanc, 2015. \$40. 14.1% alcohol. 100% Sauvignon Blanc. Close to full body. Balanced. Right acidity. Somewhat complex. Fairly elegant. Fresh. Drink now. Very good wine.

Blueprint Cabernet Sauvignon, 2014. \$80. 14.9% alcohol. 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Petit Verdot. Close to full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Good to very good wine.

Georgia Sauvignon Blanc, 2014. \$135. 14.4% alcohol. 100% Sauvignon Blanc. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Very fresh. Drink now up to 8-10 years. Very good to excellent wine.

J. Daniel Cuvee, 2014. \$250. 15.5% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 3-15 years. Excellent wine.

A small, high quality winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

Realm

The Bard, 2014. \$125. 14.6% alcohol. 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc, 7% Petit Verdot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Some floral aroma. Very promising wine. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 2-3 years up to 15 years. Very good wine.

The Bard, 2008. \$125. 14.9% alcohol. 81% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Malbec, 13% Petit Verdot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 5 years. Very good wine.

Moonracer, 2014. \$275. 14.6% alcohol. 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot. Full body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Very promising wine. Drink in 3-4 years up to 15 years. Excellent wine.

Beckstoffer To Kalon, 2009. \$225. 14.9% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 3-4 years up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

A small to mid-size, high quality winery. Just moved to a new location. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area in the center of Napa Valley. It produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

Melka

Majestique, 2014. \$95. 15.2% alcohol. 100% Syrah. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Finesse wine. Soft tannins. Smooth. Somewhat feminine. Some desired bitterness at the end. One of the best Syrah in Napa. Drink now up to 6-7 years. Very good wine.

Mekerra (proprietary red), 2013. \$165. 15.5% alcohol. 53% Cabernet Franc, 47% Merlot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Finesse wine. Soft tannins. Smooth. Somewhat feminine. Some desired bitterness at the end. Great finish. Drink now up to 10-15 years. Excellent wine.

Metisse, 2014. \$165. 15.1% alcohol. 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Petit Verdot, 3% Merlot. Full body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Finesse wine. Noticeable soft tannins. Smooth. Some desired bitterness at the end. Great finish. Drink now up to 15-20 years. Excellent wine.

Mekerra (proprietary white), 2014. \$145. 14.8% alcohol. 97% Sauvignon Blanc, 3% Muscadelle. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Very elegant. Finesse wine. Smooth. Great finish. One of the best Sauvignon Blanc in Napa. Drink now up to 7-10 years. Excellent wine.

A small, high quality winery. Just moved to a new location. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area. It produces very high quality (finesse) wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

Pride Mountain

Chardonnay, 2014. \$50. 14.3% alcohol. Fairly full Body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Light wine. Round. Good to very good wine.

Syrah, 2014. \$60. 14.8% alcohol. 95% Syrah, 5% Viognier. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Very good wine.

Merlot, 2013. \$60. 14.6% alcohol. 92% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Drink in 2-3 years up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon, 2013. \$70. 14.6% alcohol. 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Petit Verdot, 5% Merlot. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Drink in 2-3 years up to 12 years. Very good wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon, 2015 (from the barrel). \$70. 14.5% alcohol. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Better than the 2013. Drink in 2-3 years up to 12 years. Very good (in two years may become an excellent) wine.

Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, 2013. \$140. 14.8% alcohol. 99% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Petit Verdot. Full Body. Fairly powerful. Balanced. Complex. Fairly noticeable soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink in 2-3 years up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Reserve Claret, 2013. \$140. 14.8% alcohol. 62% Merlot, 37% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Petit Verdot. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Noticeable soft tannins. Closed. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink in 2-3 years up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

A mid-size winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces high quality wines. Visiting this winery (with appointment) is highly recommended.

Barnett

Chardonnay, Sangiacomo Vineyard, 2015. \$35. 14.7% alcohol. Some body. Balanced. Fairly complex. Simple. Light wine. Round. Good wine.

Pinot Noir, Savoy Vineyard, 2015. \$65. 13.4% alcohol. Less than full Body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Simple. Light. Reasonably good wine.

Merlot, Spring Mountain, 2015. \$65. 14.8% alcohol. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Very fruity. Soft tannins. Too sweet. Drink now up to 4 years. Reasonably good wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Spring Mountain, 2014. \$75. 14.7% alcohol. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Very fruity. Soft tannins. Too sweet. Drink now up to 5-7 years. Reasonably good wine.

A small winery. Nice hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area. This year's tasting was disappointing.

Peter Michael

Chardonnay, Bele Cote, 2012. \$95. 15.6% alcohol. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Round. Somewhat buttery. Too low acidity. Good to very good wine.

Sauvignon Blanc, L'Apres-Midi, 2014. \$58. 15.1% alcohol. About 95% Sauvignon Blanc, about 5% Semillon. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Smooth. Sharpe. Great finish. One of the best Sauvignon Blanc in Napa. Drink now up to 7-10 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon, L'Esprit des Pavots, 2012. \$205. 15.7% alcohol. 10-15 year old vines. About 2/3 Cabernet Sauvignon, about 1/3 Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Full body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Smooth. Somewhat young. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 3-15 years. Very promising wine. Very good wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Les Pavots, 2012. \$215. 15.8% alcohol. 25-year old vines. About 2/3 Cabernet Sauvignon, about 1/3 Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot. Full body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Soft tannins. Smooth. Some desired bitterness at the end. Great finish. Drink now or, better, in two up to 15-20 years. Very good to excellent wine.

A mid-size, high quality, interesting winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

Ovid

W2.5 (an experiment), 2015. \$85. 14.3% alcohol. 36.6% Roussanne, 28.2% Sauvignon Blanc, 20.6% Viognier, 14.6% Albarino. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Fresh. Young. Smooth. Dry. Great floral aroma. Drink now up to 5-6 years. Very good to excellent wine.

N1.4 (an experiment), 2014. \$165. 14.7% alcohol. Full body. Fairly powerful. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Young. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 3-5 up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Hexameter, 2013. \$285. 14.8% alcohol. 64% Cabernet Franc, 22% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Merlot, under 1% Petit Verdot. Full body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Noticeable soft tannins. Drink now or, better, in 3-4 up to 15 years. Excellent wine.

A small, high quality, interesting winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

Brand

Brio, 2014. \$150. 15.4% alcohol. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot. Full body. Fairly powerful. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Fresh. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Brand, 2014. \$250. 15.7% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Fresh. Some floral aroma. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 3-5 up to 15-20 years. Excellent wine.

A high quality winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

Promontory

Promontory, 2008. \$650, 14.5% alcohol. About 85% Cabernet Sauvignon. The rest: Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot. Full Body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10-15 years. Excellent wine.

Promontory, 2009. \$450, 14.5% alcohol. About 85% Cabernet Sauvignon. The rest: Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine

Promontory, 2012. \$450, 14.5% alcohol. About 85% Cabernet Sauvignon. The rest: Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot. Full Body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 2-3 up to 15-20 years. Excellent wine.

Promontory, 2015. (From a barrel). About 85% Cabernet Sauvignon. The rest: Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot. Full Body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Young. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink in 4-5 up to 20-25 years. Excellent wine.

A mid-size, high quality winery. Just moved into a new location. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

Futo

OV/SL 2014. \$170. 14.7% alcohol. About 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot. Full Body. Fairly powerful. Balanced. Complex. Very elegant. Soft tannins. Still closed. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 3-4 years up to 20 years. Excellent wine.

Futo, Gold 5500, 2013. \$350, 14.7% alcohol. 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Merlot. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 3-4 up to 20 years. Excellent wine.

Futo Oakville, 2013. \$350, 14.5% alcohol. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot. Full Body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 3-4 up to 20 years. Excellent wine.

A small, high quality winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

Fairchild

G•III Cabernet Sauvignon, 2014. \$200. 14.2% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Smooth. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 2-3 years up to 15 years. Very good wine.

Sigaro, 2010. \$225. 14.2% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Fairly powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Very soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now or, better, in 2-3 up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Stone No. 2, 2013. \$350. 14.3% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon (Pritchard Hill). Full body. Powerful. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Smooth. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 2-3 years up to 15-20 years. Excellent wine.

A small, high quality, interesting winery. Great hospitality. The tasting facility resides in a beautiful mountain area. The winery produces very high quality wines. Visiting this tasting room (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

Spottswoode

Sauvignon Blanc, 2016. \$38. 14.1% alcohol. 100% Sauvignon Blanc. Less than full body. Balanced. Not complex. Light. Elegant. Drink now up to 4 years. Reasonably good wine.

Spottswoode Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, 2014. \$190. 14.2% alcohol. 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Cabernet Franc, 4% Petit Verdot. Less than full body. Not balanced. Somewhat complex. Very fruity. Very soft (hardly noticeable) tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Very disappointing wine. (We rated the 2013 Spottswoode Estate Cabernet Sauvignon as "very good to excellent wine").

A medium-size winery in Santa Helena. This year's tasting was disappointing.

Pott

Viognier, 20M3, 2015. \$60. 13.5% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Fresh. Some floral aroma. Drink now up to 5-6 years. Very good wine.

Le Nouveau Western, 2012. \$125. 14.5% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Noticeable soft tannins. Drink in 2-3 up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Actaeon, Staggs Leap, 2012. \$125. 14.3% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Noticeable soft tannins. Very dry. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Drink in 2-3 up to 15 years. Very good wine.

Kaliholmanok, 2013. \$125. 14.3% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Fairly powerfull. Balanced. Complex. Dry. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 4-5 up to 15-20 years. Very good to excellent wine.

The Arsenal, 2013. \$125. 14.8% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Fairly powerful. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Dry. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 2-3 up to 15-20 years. Very good to excellent wine.

A small, high quality winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful and unusual building in a beautiful hilly area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

Wineries in Sonoma

Kistler

Les Noisetiers Chardonnay, 2014. \$70. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Fairly complex. Elegant. Somewhat too low acidity. Drink now up to 5-6 years. Very good wine.

Trenton Roadhouse Chardonnay, 2014. \$80. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Nice acidity. Elegant. Drink now up to 8-10 years. (Our preferred 2014 Chardonnay in this tasting). Very good wine.

Vine Hill Vineyard Chardonnay, 2014. \$80. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Nice acidity. Drink now up to 8-10 years. Very good wine.

Kistler Vineyard Chardonnay, 2012. \$90. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Nice acidity. Drink now up to 8-10 years. Very good wine.

Kistler Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2014. \$90. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Somewhat low acidity. Some floral aroma. Smooth. Drink now up to 10 years. Good to very good wine.

A mid-size winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is recommended.

Littorai

Vin Gris, Sonoma Coast Rose, 2013. \$30. 12.5% alcohol. Light. Balanced. Floral aroma. Drink now. Good to very good wine.

Mays Canyon Vineyard Chardonnay, 2014. \$80. 13.2% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Complex. Light. Nice acidity. Fairly elegant. Drink now up to 8-10 years. Good wine.

Sonoma Coast Chardonnay, 2015. \$60. 13.7% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Complex. Light. Nice acidity. Fairly elegant. Drink now up to 8-10 years. Good to very good wine.

The Pivot Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2014. \$90. 13.3% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Fairly complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Young. Drink now up to 10 years. Good wine.

Cerise Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2014. \$80. 12.9% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Fairly complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Young. Drink now up to 10 years. Good wine.

Haven Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2014. \$90. 13.3% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Young. Nice acidity. Drink now or, better, in two up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Savoy Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2010. \$125. 13.7% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Nice acidity. Drink now up to 8 years. Very good wine.

Haven Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2010. \$145. 13.3% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Nice acidity. Drink now up to 8 years. Very good wine.

A small winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces very good wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is recommended.

Wineries in Paso Robles

Tablas Creek

Esprit de Tablas Blanc, 2014. \$45. 13.5% alcohol. 73% Roussanne, 22% Grenache Blanc, 5% Picpoul. Close to full body. Complex. Balanced. Fairly elegant. Fresh. Young. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Esprit De Tablas Blanc, 2009. \$55. 13.5% alcohol. Close to full body. Complex. Balanced. Fairly elegant. Some minerality. Drink now up to 3-4 years. Very good wine.

Vermentino, 2016. \$27. 12.9% alcohol. 100% Vermentino. Light wine. Fairly complex. Balanced. Nice acidity. Fresh. Young. Drink now up to 2-4 years. Very good wine.

Dianthus, 2016. \$24. 14.4% alcohol. Mourvedre based dry rose. Light wine. Fresh. Balanced. Nice acidity. Young. Drink now up to 2-4 years. Good to very good wine.

Esprit De Tablas, 2015. (From a barrel). 14.5% alcohol. (Similar in structure to the 2014: 40% Mourvedre, 20% Syrah, 35% Grenache, 5% Counoise). Full body. Complex. Balanced. High, and nice, acidity. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Very noticeable soft tannins. Drink in two up to 10-12 years. Very good wine.

Esprit De Tablas, 2012. \$55. 14.5% alcohol. 40% Mourvedre, 30% Syrah, 21% Grenache, 9% Counoise. Full body. Complex. Balanced. Nice acidity. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Esprit De Beaucastel, 2009. \$75. 14.5% alcohol. 45% Mourvedre, 21% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 4% Counoise. Full (but not powerful) body. Complex. Balanced. Some bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 5 years. Very good wine.

Esprit De Beaucastel, 2008. \$75. 14.5% alcohol. 38% Mourvedre, 26% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 6% Counoise. Full body. Complex. Balanced. Nice acidity. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 5 years. Very good wine.

Tablas Creek Rouge (now called Esprit de Tablas), 1998. \$115. 13.8% alcohol. 44% Mourvedre, 21% Syrah, 24% Grenache, 11% Counoise. Full body. Somewhat complex. Balanced. Nice acidity. Somewhat flat. Should have been drunk 2-4 years ago. Very soft tannins. Drink now. Interesting (but too old) wine. Tasting this wine was a nice experience.

Panoplie, 2015. (From a barrel). \$95. 14.5% alcohol. Mourvedre, Syrah, Grenache. Full body. Complex. Balanced. Elegant. Some desirable bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink in 1-2 up to 15 years. Excellent wine.

A mid-size high quality winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area and produces some very high quality wines. We very much enjoyed the GSM (or, more precisely, the MGS) wines. Visiting the winery is highly recommended.

Daou

Daou Unbound, 2014. \$56. 15.2% alcohol. 80% Petit Sirah, 12% Tannat, 8% Tempranillo. Close to full body. Balanced. Complex. Very soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Very elegant. Smooth. Drink now up to 5-7 years. Very good wine.

Daou Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, 2014. \$85. 14.7% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some floral aroma. Smooth. Desirable bitterness at the end. Fairly elegant. Drink now up to 10-15 years. Very good wine.

Daou Estate Soul of a Lion, 2013. \$125. 14.7% alcohol. 83% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot. Full body. Fairly powerful. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Desirable bitterness at the end. Lingering finish. Drink now up to 15-20 years. Excellent wine.

A mid-size interesting winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful hilly area and produces some very high quality wines. We very much enjoyed the Cabernet Sauvignon wines. Visiting the winery is highly recommended.