

The Cork Report

REDS

Sterling Napa Valley Cab 2003 - Non-distinct aromas but very pronounced cherry and strawberry fruit flavors. Well made. **90**

J. Lohr Hilltop Cab 2001 - Rich cherry nose. Medium-bodied and slightly tannic. **89**

Château Grand-Duroc-Milon Pauillac 2003 - Very tannic and earthy. True to the French style. Let it open up and enjoy it. Really good. **89**

Chateau Greysac 1998 - First, let's make it clear that this vintage is probably not available; the current vintage is 2001. But we put this into the tasting to see how it fared, and it did very well. Proof that a dependable producer makes good wine almost all the time. **89**

Kendall-Jackson Cab 2003 - Deep ruby hue and inviting fruity aromas. Slightly medicinal flavors and a smooth finish. **88**

Lafite Barons de Rothschild Pauillac Reserve 2002 - Don't let the funky nose mislead you. This wine is big all over. Full of earth and lots of depth. **88**

Château La Fleur Plaisance Montagne-Saint-Emilion 2003 - Good Bordeaux style. Well-balanced, earthy and tannic. **88**

Louis Martini Sonoma Cab 2003 - Slightly earthy nose. Touch of medicinal flavors and lasting finish. Needs to open up. **88**

Chateau Peyre-Lebade Haut-Medoc 2002 - Fresh fruity nose. Good but this initially tastes too young or flat. Much better once it opens up. **87**

Napa Ridge Napa Valley Cab 2003 - Hints of oak and vanilla dominate. Very good. **87**

Gallo Family Sonoma Reserve Cab 2003 - Light- to medium-bodied. Easy to drink. Opens up well. **87**

Clos du Val Napa Valley Cab 2003 - Heady, fairly complex and quite delicious. **87**

Chateau Paradis Casseuil 2004 - Funky nose, but the strawberry and raspberry flavors make this a firm and enjoyable offering. **86**

Augey Bordeaux 2003 - Leggy but light. A simple and affordable offering. Might even consider chilling it a little for a summer's day. **85**



California v. France

*Put to the test,
which wines fared best?*



WHITES

Faiveley Montagny 2002 - This nose speaks volumes. Complex and inspiring. Good all the way through and makes you want another sip. **88**

Sebastiani Russian River Chardonnay 2004 - Fruity (mostly apple) that's very inviting. A lasting finish. **87**

Faiveley Mâcon-Prissé 2003 - Well-balanced fruit and light acidity. **87**

Mirassou Chardonnay 2004 - Fresh tropical flavors. Fairly light and refreshing. **87**

Louis Jadot Mâcon-Villages Chardonnay 2004 - Mineral nose. Slightly dry and tasty. **87**

Coastal Ridge Chardonnay 2004 - A good dependable Chard that screams California. Light- to medium-bodied. Just enough fruit to make it tasty. A crowd favorite. **87**

Beaulieu Vineyard Napa Valley Carneros Chardonnay 2004 - Well-developed with lots of butter and oak. Classic California style of Chard. **87**

Louis Jadot Mersault 2003 - Golden hue. Not too complex but not wimpy either. Gotta love it. **87**

John Breitlow's Picks



Geyser Peak Alexander Valley Meritage "Reserve Alexandre" 2002

Remarkably smooth, rich, full-flavored and complex super-premium Bordeaux blend, well-balanced mainly between Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon featuring berry fruit with cedar, spice, and minty notes. **96**

These are my tasting notes on some of the leading premium wines sampled at the 7th Annual "Winona Snowbird Wine Tasting" I conducted last March in Palm Desert, California. As usual, the wines have a 'California' appellation unless another is listed:

Duckhorn Napa Valley Estate-Bottled Merlot – rich, round, ripe and mellow, well-made all-purpose super-premium red wine with smooth texture, attractive bouquet, luxurious fruit, inviting St. Emilion styling and a long lush finish. **95**

Beckmen 2003 Purisima Vyd. "Cuvee Le Bec" – delightful, delicious Southern Rhône *Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape* styled blend of Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre and Cunoise grapes with mellow, mouth-filling, bright and spicy berry fruit, silky texture, appealing fragrances, and a long juicy finish: a fine premium value. **93**

Rosenblum 2004 Paso Robles Sauret Vyd. Zinfandel – impressive, highly-regarded, masterly-crafted super-premium red Zin from one of California's premier red-wine vintners: full-bodied, full-flavored, memorable and distinctive. **93**

Roederer Anderson Valley Estate Bottled Brut Rosé – elegantly styled, dry and delicious, vivid premium blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay: full-bodied, smooth-textured and well-crafted, with flavorful fruit and sustained effervescence. **92**

Fernleaf 2004 Marlborough NZ Sauvignon Blanc – a fine example of NZ vintners' skill with Sauvignon Blanc: just off-dry, medium-bodied, brisk and clean citrus and melon fruit, inviting and refreshing good-value cocktail or table wine, laudable hi-tech screwcap. **92**

J. Lohr 2002 Napa Valley Carol's Vyd. Cabernet Sauvignon- lightly spiced, unusually bright cherry and currant fruit in a supple, concentrated, full-flavored, intense premium red dinner wine of memorable length. **92**

Ch. Ste-Michelle 2004 Cold Creek Vyd. Columbia Valley Riesling – my candidate for the season's tastiest Riesling, offering superb balance, ripe citrus fruit, gently lively acidity, good value and just a hint of succulence, nummy! **92**

Geyser Peak 2004 Alexander Valley Chardonnay Reserve – exceptionally well crafted and balanced classic premium white dinner and aperitif, with vanilla-scented apple, pear, and tropical fruit, hints of smoke, and a clean satisfying finish that lingers. **91**

Domaine Carneros by Taittinger 2002 Carneros Brut – elegant premium 70/30 blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, crisp complex blossom and fruit fragrances and flavors, hints of spice, creamy finish, classic oyster wine also good with other seafood, and with poultry. **91**

Geyser Peak 2005 Sauvignon Blanc – lively grapefruit and gooseberry fruit, crisp clean, well-managed acidity, a lively aperitif ideal with raw oysters, grilled shellfish, or salads: the latest in a long line of champions. **91**

Korbel Brut Rosé – ripe red apple, cherry and strawberry fruit, rich smooth texture, mellow mouthfeel, nice depth, lively effervescence, lading award winner, good value, works well with poultry, finger food, grilled fleshy fish, good value, glowing color. **90**

Ch. St. Jean Sonoma Pinot Noir – 90 smooth-textured, nicely balanced, well-mannered dinner wine with smoky cherry plum and berry fruit, long clean finish, good with red meat or pink fish. **90**

Sterling 2003 Napa Valley Merlot – mellow black raspberry and blueberry fruit, alluring exotic fragrances in a stylish, pleasant, medium-bodied all-purpose red wine with hints of chocolate and cedar in the backtaste, good premium value. **90**

French rabbit

The Next French [R]evolution.

33% more:
Two extra glasses!

Reduces packaging
waste by 90%!

Easy to pour,
easy to store!

www.frenchrabbit.com • Imported by Boisset America • 800-878-1123
Paustis Wine Co • 763-550-9545

