Wine Spectator

James Laube's Recommended California Chardonnays

Nearly 350 wines were reviewed for this report. An alphabetical list begins on page 97 of this issue's Buying Guide. WineSpectator.com members can access complete reviews for all wines tasted using the online Wine Ratings search.

TOP WINES

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
MARCASSIN Chardonnay Sonoma Coast **Marcassin Vineyard 2006** Bold, rich and layered, with a measure of delicacy and finesse. Unfolds to tiers of fig, melon, bubble gum, spice and honeysuckle.	96	$125
PETER MICHAEL Chardonnay Sonoma County **Point Rouge 2008** A fascinating wine, brimming with ultrarich, concentrated flavors of fig, spice, apple pie, gingerbread, wet rock and cedar.	96	$175
MAYBACH Chardonnay Sonoma Coast **Eterium B. Thieriot Vineyard 2009** This striking white offers wonderful intensity, focus and purity of flavor.	95	$78
MOUNT EDEN VINEYARDS Chardonnay **Santa Cruz Mountains 2008** A very rich and intense version, deeply concentrated and perfumed.	95	$55
PAUL HOBBS Chardonnay Sonoma Mountain **Cuvée Agustina Richard Dinner Vineyard 2008** Combines mineral, citrus, apple and melon fruit with a supple texture.	94	$100
KISTLER Chardonnay Carneros Hudson Vineyard 2008 Exhibits great intensity and concentration, without weight.	94	$75
MARTINELLI Chardonnay Russian River Valley **Zio Tony Ranch 2008** Ripe and fleshy, with bubble gum, fig, honeydew and hazelnut flavors.	94	$50
TOR Chardonnay Napa Valley Torchiana Beresini Vineyard **Hyde Clone 2009** Impressive for its delicacy, with smoky oak, fig, pear and melon notes.	94	$60
AUTEUR Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Durell 2008 Tight and firm, with vivid flavors that are pure and concentrated.	93	$40
BERINGER Chardonnay Napa Valley Private Reserve 2009 Very classy, combines rich, layered fruit with a sense of finesse.	93	$37
CHASSEUR Chardonnay Russian River Valley Lorenzo 2008 A limey, earthy streak runs through this rich, sleek effort.	93	$55
FREESTONE Chardonnay Sonoma Coast 2008 A stylish cool-climate version, crisp, vibrant and concentrated.	93	$55
KOSTA BROWNE Chardonnay Russian River Valley **One Sixteen 2009** Intense, with lively pear, nectarine, citrus, peach and mineral notes.	93	$48
LEWIS Chardonnay Napa Valley Reserve 2009 A ripe, expressive, yet balanced effort, offering a subtle mix of flavors.	93	$65
MOONE-TSAI Chardonnay Napa Valley 2009 Beautifully crafted, rich and layered. Full-bodied and concentrated.	93	$48
MORLET Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Ma Douce 2009 Creamy, with fig, honeydew, light toasty oak, peach and floral notes.	93	$70
PAHLMEYER Chardonnay Napa Valley 2009 Intense and focused, this delivers an exciting mix of flavors.	93	$70
RAMEY Chardonnay Russian River Valley Ritchie Vineyard 2008 Lively acidity carries the apple, pineapple, citrus and honeydew notes.	93	$65
TALBOTT Chardonnay Santa Lucia Highlands **Cuvée Carlotta Sleepy Hollow Vineyard 2009** A very rich, but oakier and more complete Talbott for drinking now.	93	$52

TOP WINES (continued)

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
THREE STICKS Chardonnay Sonoma Valley **Durell Vineyard 2008** Offers a generous mix of ripe pear, fig, tangerine and melon flavors.	93	$45
VALDEZ FAMILY Chardonnay Russian River Valley **Silver Eagle Vineyard 2008** Rich and creamy, with notes of toasty oak, fig, melon and honeysuckle.	93	$50

TOP VALUES

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
CHALONE Chardonnay Chalone 2008 A rich, layered style that's very Burgundian and graceful.	92	$25
MACROSTIE Chardonnay Sonoma Coast 2008 An elegant style, with flavors of citrus, apple, spice and flowers.	92	$25
THE HESS COLLECTION Chardonnay Napa Valley **Su'skol Vineyard 2008** Rich and complex, elegant and balanced, gaining depth and nuance.	91	$22
MORGAN Chardonnay Monterey Metallico Un-Oaked 2009 Fresh, intense and vibrant, with lively pear and lemon-lime flavors.	91	$20
BERNARDUS Chardonnay Monterey County 2009 This young, pithy wine shows good intensity, focus and purity of flavor.	89	$22
RAYMOND Chardonnay Napa Valley Reserve Selection 2009 A fresh, zesty, lively style, with racy apple, pear, spice and citrus notes.	89	$18
BOGLE Chardonnay California 2009 Fresh and vibrant, with sweet pea, apple, melon and honeysuckle notes.	88	$10
FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA Chardonnay California **Votre Santé 2009** A lively expression of white peach, honeydew, flowers and mineral.	88	$14
FOUR VINES Chardonnay Santa Barbara County Naked 2009 Offers a citrus edge, with lemon-lime notes. Clean and refreshing.	88	$14
SEBASTIANI Chardonnay Sonoma County 2008 Appealing for its charming floral, honeysuckle, melon and fig notes.	88	$13
ARTESA Chardonnay Carneros 2009 Alluring for its creamy texture and complex flavors. Spicy and elegant.	87	$18
BONTERRA Chardonnay Mendocino County 2009 Apple, melon, spice and honeysuckle notes have a fruity aftertaste.	87	$14
BRIDLEWOOD Chardonnay Monterey County 2009 Fresh floral, citrus, peach and nectarine aromas are easy-drinking.	87	$15
CALERA Chardonnay Central Coast 2009 Racy, snappy tropical fruit is fresh and vibrant in this clean white.	87	$16
THE CRUSHER Chardonnay Clarksburg Wilson Vineyard 2009 A rich style, reliant on toasty wood, but also intense and vibrant.	87	$13
ESTANCIA Chardonnay Monterey County **Pinnacles Ranches 2009** Firm and intense, with fresh peach, pear and light citrus shadings.	87	$12
LAYER CAKE Chardonnay Central Coast Virgin 2009 This clean white shows a crisp grapefruit and lemony edge.	87	$13
SMOKING LOON Chardonnay California 2008 Notes of creamy oak, fig, melon and mineral are intense and vibrant.	86	$8

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