

Wine Spectator

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RHÔNE VALLEY 2010

Classic Quality for
North and South

THE BEST
CALIFORNIA
MERLOTS

Great Dining:
MIAMI BEACH

**MICHEL
CHAPOUTIER**
RHÔNE
POWERHOUSE

NOV. 30, 2012
\$5.95 US



Tim Fish's Recommended California Merlots

Approximately 175 wines were reviewed for this report. A free alphabetical list is available at www.winespectator.com/113012. WineSpectator.com members can access complete reviews for all wines tasted using the online Wine Ratings search.

TOP WINES

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
CARTER Hossfeld Coliseum Napa Valley 2009 Shows power, depth and finesse. Aromas of violet, currant and espresso lead to flavors of black cherry, bay leaf and mocha.	95	\$75
PAHLMAYER Merlot Napa Valley 2009 Plush and richly structured, with a dense core, offering aromas of red currant and mocha that lead to flavors of black cherry and Asian spice.	94	\$75
PRIDE Claret Reserve Sonoma-Napa Counties 2008 Rich and beautifully structured, with aromas of red currant, fresh earth and toasty oak and intense cherry and cedar flavors.	94	\$130
REALM The Tempest Napa Valley 2009 Offers power and finesse, with aromas of blackberry and spicy mocha opening to flavors of currant, espresso and olive.	94	\$75
SWITCHBACK RIDGE Merlot Napa Valley Peterson Family Vineyard 2009 Rich, layered and well-structured, with floral red currant aromas and complex flavors of black cherry, anise and toasty spice.	94	\$56
CARTE BLANCHE Proprietary Red Napa Valley 2009 Beautifully made, with complex layers of red and black fruits, with blackberry, wild berry and boysenberry flavors.	93	\$95
DERENONCOURT Merlot Napa Valley Stagecoach Vineyard 2008 Sleek and focused, with bold aromas of red currant, loam and cedar that lead to layered flavors of black cherry, mocha, espresso and herb.	93	\$140
O'BRIEN ESTATE Merlot Napa Valley 2009 A ripe, supple red, with richness and complexity. Aromas of black cherry and spiced cinnamon join red currant, cedar and mocha flavors.	93	\$48A r
PALOMA Merlot Spring Mountain District 2009 Sleek and richly structured, with red currant and loamy black olive aromas leading to plush flavors of ripe plum, mocha and toasty oak.	93	\$54
PRIDE Claret Reserve Sonoma-Napa Counties 2009 Shows finesse and power. Red currant, loamy earth and mocha aromas follow through to layered black cherry, dried herb and cedar flavors.	93	\$130

TOP VALUES

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
MARKHAM Cellar 1879 Blend Napa Valley 2010 Sleek and supple, offering appealing aromas of red currant and toasty vanilla, with layered flavors of black cherry, espresso and spice.	91	\$25
MARKHAM Merlot Napa Valley 2008 A solid Merlot, with floral cherry aromas and appealing flavors of plum, tomato leaf and cedar.	91	\$21
WHITEHALL LANE Merlot Napa Valley 2009 Rich and plush, but nicely structured, with black cherry and toasty vanilla aromas and soft red currant, cedar and spice notes.	91	\$28
HILL FAMILY The Barrel Blend Napa Valley 2009 Soft and supple and a touch eccentric, with plum, mocha and spice aromas and zesty cherry, licorice and roasted herb notes.	90	\$25
BUENA VISTA Merlot Carneros 2009 An elegant and supple red, exhibiting aromas of black raspberry and spice that lead to layered cherry and toasty caramel flavors.	89	\$20

TOP VALUES (continued)

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
NEWTON Claret Napa County 2009 Offers appealing red currant and cedar aromas and focused cherry and dried herb notes that finish with drying tannins.	89	\$25
ALEXANDER VALLEY VINEYARDS Merlot Alexander Valley Wetzel Family Estate 2009 This solid, well-focused Merlot shows good complexity, with dried cherry and herb aromas and appealing red currant and spice flavors.	88	\$20
BOGLE Merlot California 2009 This zesty Merlot features cherry and herb aromas, with easygoing red currant and spice flavors, finishing with focused tannins.	88	\$10
FREI BROTHERS Merlot Dry Creek Valley Reserve 2010 A Zin-lover's Merlot, with ripe red currant and spice aromas and zesty, jammy black cherry and toasty vanilla flavors.	88	\$20
GOLDSCHMIDT Merlot Dry Creek Valley Chelsea Goldschmidt 2010 Appealing for its black cherry and herb aromas. The flavors are young and zesty, with a touch of untamed tannins and acidity.	88	\$18
ROBERT MONDAVI Merlot Napa Valley 2009 A soft yet lively red, with black cherry and tomato leaf aromas, focused currant and spiced cedar flavors.	88	\$23
MURPHY-GOODE Merlot California 2010 Appealingly soft and supple, offering aromas of black cherry and toasty vanilla, with accents of spice and bay leaf.	88	\$20
NAPA CELLARS Merlot Napa Valley 2010 A solid Merlot, offering good balance and notes of black currant, cedar and spice.	88	\$18
TANGLEY OAKS Merlot Napa Valley Lot # 10 2009 Balanced and nicely focused, with a fresh beam of red currant, cedar and tomato leaf flavors that finish with sleek tannins.	88	\$15
FIELD STONE Convivio Alexander Valley 2009 Soft and easygoing, with appealing cherry, spicy herb and caramel notes.	87	\$14
GEYSER PEAK Merlot Alexander Valley 2007 Soft and elegant, with appealing red currant and herb notes.	87	\$18
PEDRONCELLI Merlot Dry Creek Valley Bench Vineyards 2010 Offers cherry and spice aromas, with raspberry, sage and herb flavors.	87	\$15
SEBASTIANI Merlot Sonoma County 2008 Modest in scale, with appealing notes of cherry, tomato leaf and mocha.	87	\$17
STEELE Merlot Clear Lake 2009 Offers floral cherry aromas and flavors of plum, tomato leaf and cedar.	87	\$17
ANCIENT PEAKS Merlot Paso Robles 2009 Aromas of red currant and mocha lead to flavors of plum and tomato leaf.	86	\$17
MCMANIS Merlot California 2010 Soft and juicy, with notes of red currant, tomato leaf and toasty oak.	86	\$10
TUSSOCK JUMPER Merlot California 2010 Soft and juicy, with appealing cherry, caramel and spice notes.	86	\$12