



Three stunning wines that offer a taste of excellence

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WINE BUYERS GUIDE

★★★★

Osprey's Dominion 2007 Reserve Merlot North Fork Long Island, New York \$35

This very attractive Merlot from Long Island delivers quite elegant fruit that's focused and complex and well-integrated into the fresh acidity. Dry and medium bodied, it has good structure and is showing soft, ripe tannins that allow you either to enjoy it now, or to cellar it a few years. (RP)

★★★★

Red Diamond 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Washington State \$14.25 (144022)

There are few bottles under \$15 that impress quite like this. As a very enjoyable Cab from Washington State that makes it across the border at that price, this has got to be even more rare. It's dark and mysterious with licorice and cherry dominant on the nose. Hints of vanilla and spice join in on the palate, with slightly chalky tannins. A solid, delicious wine for entertaining. (AA)

★★★★

Robert Mondavi Winery 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley, California \$34.95 (255513)

The addition of small amounts of Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Syrah and Petit Verdot add interest and complexity to this ripe and savoury Napa Valley Cabernet. Tobacco, chocolate and pepper notes accent the bright cassis fruit on the palate. It's drinking nicely now and promises to do so over the next four to six years. (CW)



★★★★

Rodney Strong 2009 Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Sonoma County, California \$30 (833376)

Here's a fragrant Sonoma Cabernet expressing black cherry, black raspberry and licorice aromas with chocolate, mint, pipe tobacco and spice notes. The palate is smooth and fresh with kirsch and brown spice flavours layered with chocolate. It's a delicious Cabernet with a lengthy finish. (DVM)

★★★☆☆

De Loach Vineyards 2009 California Heritage Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon California \$15 (089250)

If you're braving the barbecue this winter, this wine – and bundling up before firing up the grill – is sure to keep you warm at heart. Fairly priced, with red fruit and vanilla on the nose and juicy berries and hints of tobacco

on the palate, this is an appealingly spicy offering for steaks or burgers. (AA)

★★★☆☆

Don & Sons SKN 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley \$16.95 (218834)

SKN stands for Screw Kappa Napa, a pointed reference to the closure of this bottle, a screwcap. It's a quality wine for the price, with a juicy nature and lovely toasty notes. Yummy chocolate and cherries are found on the palate of this enjoyable wine. Would be a treat with lamb stew. (AA)



★★★☆☆

Montevina 2010 Pinot Grigio California \$14.95 (237750)

Though Montevina is better known for its robust reds like Zinfandel and Italian varietal wines like Sangiovese, its Pinot Grigio is also a standout in its own right. Light in colour, but powerful in fragrance and flavour, this has a lot more going on than most Pinot Grigios at this price. Floral and tropical fruit notes play nicely with a more spicy character. It offers the complete package for an easy-to-drink wine for entertaining. (AA)

★★★☆☆

Robert Mondavi Winery 2009 Fumé Blanc Napa Valley, California \$22.95 (221887)

Given its legacy as a wine that created a new marketing style and winemaking classification in California and beyond, Mondavi's Fumé Blanc will always be of interest. Winery founder Robert Mondavi's decision to barrel ferment Sauvignon Blanc created a new category. The current vintage makes the most of its peachy fruit aromas and bright citrusy flavours. The refreshing character makes this a great food wine, particularly with roast chicken or richer seafood entrées. (CW)

★★★☆☆

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2009 Estate Pinot Noir Russian River Valley, Sonoma County, California \$24.95 (984834)

Rick Sayre, who is profiled as one of the Cabernet makers in this issue, says he also happily makes Pinot Noir at Rodney Strong. The fruit comes from the cooler Russian River Valley region, which allows him and the winemaking team to produce a red with more finesse and fruit expression. Well-made Pinot Noir like this offers silky smooth texture, appealing fragrance