

Bitter Sweet

What's not to love about Cabernet, the bitterest of wines?

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The real language of the love of wine—point-of-sale data from retail, that is—tells us that Cabernet Sauvignon, which is bitter in youth and weedy with age, is the best-loved wine in the world.

Raymond Vineyards 2014 Reserve Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$40) This bottle has winning looks and offers tactile pleasure before it is even opened: Raymond's staid label design was gingered up with red velvet for the 40th anniversary edition, evoking the winery's plushly furnished Red Room (currently closed for renovation), and perhaps enhancing its utility as an accompaniment to a romantic dinner. Anyway, it's hard to resist just petting the bottle. Once in the glass, it's conventional and well-behaved, showing discreet aromas of dusty spice rack and the Cabernet suite of oak, graphite and cassis. Supple and velvety, with red Cabernet fruit and a slightly tangy finish, it's sure to add to a memorable meal.

★★★★