

Wine Spectator

JAMES MOLESWORTH'S RECOMMENDED CALIFORNIA CABERNET SAUVIGNONS

Nearly 725 wines were reviewed for this report. A free alphabetical list is available at [WineSpectator.com/CabernetAlpha111524](https://www.winespectator.com/CabernetAlpha111524).
WineSpectator.com members can access complete reviews for all wines tasted using the online Wine Ratings search.

Top-Scoring 2021s

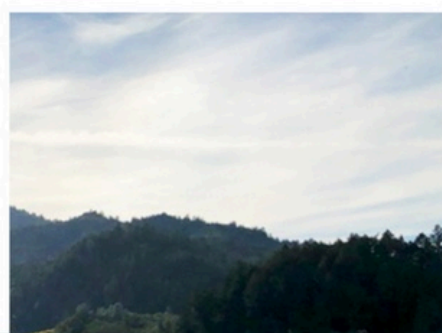
WINE	SCORE	PRICE	WINE	SCORE	PRICE
MACDONALD Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville 2021	99	\$225	GRACE FAMILY Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Cornelius Grove 2021	96	\$350
KINSMAN EADES Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Käännös 2021	98	\$295	KEPLINGER Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Vine Hill Ranch Vineyard 2021	96	\$225
SCHRADER CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley RBS Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard 2021	98	\$525	KINSMAN EADES Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Kodó 2021	96	\$295
SCHRADER CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Heritage Clone To Kalon Vineyard 2021	98	\$525	KINSMAN EADES Cabernet Sauvignon Yountville Anjea 2021	96	\$295
VHR Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville 2021	98	\$275	LOKOYA Cabernet Sauvignon Diamond Mountain District 2021	96	\$550
ACCENDO Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2021	97	\$395	LOKOYA Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain 2021	96	\$550
DALLA VALLE Maya Napa Valley 2021	97	\$500	LOKOYA Cabernet Sauvignon Mount Veeder 2021	96	\$550
KINSMAN EADES Cabernet Sauvignon Diamond Mountain District Rhadamanthus 2021	97	\$295	MEMENTO MORI Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Beckstoffer Las Piedras Vineyard 2021	96	\$350
LOKOYA Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain District 2021	97	\$550	OUTPOST Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain True Vineyard 2021	96	\$200
MEMENTO MORI Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Beckstoffer Dr. Crane Vineyard 2021	97	\$395	PAUL HOBBS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard 2021	96	\$500
MEMENTO MORI Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Vine Hill Ranch Vineyard 2021	97	\$350	PHILIP TOGNI Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2021	96	\$195
SCARECROW Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford 2021	97	\$600	RIVERS-MARIE Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville M-Bar Ranch 2021	96	\$165
SCHRADER CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard 2021	97	\$525	RIVERS-MARIE Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Panek Vineyard 2021	96	\$135
SCHRADER CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard MMXXI 2021	97	\$1,295 1.5L	SALVESTRIN Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Dr. Crane Vineyard 2021	96	\$95
SCHRADER CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley CCS Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard 2021	97	\$525	SCHRADER CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Colesworthy Beckstoffer Las Piedras Vineyard 2021	96	\$1,295 1.5L
SCHRADER CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley LPV Beckstoffer Las Piedras Vineyard 2021	97	\$525	SCHRADER CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford Gill Beckstoffer Georges III Vineyard 2021	96	\$525
SCHRADER CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Monastery Block To Kalon Vineyard 2021	97	\$525	STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District S.L.V. 2021	96	\$250
SCHRADER CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District WH Wappo Hill Vineyard 2021	97	\$525	STEWART Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Nomad Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard 2021	96	\$240
SPOTTSWOODE Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena 2021	97	\$285	TO KALON VINEYARD COMPANY Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville H.W.C 2021	96	\$250
STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District Cask 23 2021	97	\$375	TO KALON VINEYARD COMPANY Elizas's Oakville 2021	96	\$225
STEWART Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Nomad Beckstoffer Dr. Crane Vineyard 2021	97	\$240	BEAULIEU VINEYARD Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Georges de Latour Private Reserve 2021	95	\$170
STEWART Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Nomad Beckstoffer Las Piedras Vineyard 2021	97	\$240	CARDINALE Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2021	95	\$400
ANNULUS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Vine Hill Ranch Vineyard 2021	96	\$250	CONTINUUM Sage Mountain Vineyard Napa Valley 2021	95	\$340
COLGIN Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Tychson Hill 2021	96	\$750	CORISON Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena 2021	95	\$125
COLGIN Cariad Napa Valley 2021	96	\$750	DAKOTA SHY Cabernet Franc Oakville Oakville Ranch Vineyard 2021	95	\$195
COLGIN IX Estate Napa Valley 2021	96	\$750	DAKOTA SHY Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Melanson Vineyard 2021	95	\$185
DALLA VALLE Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville 2021	96	\$275	DAKOTA SHY Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District Steltzner Vineyard 2021	95	\$185
DIAMOND CREEK Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Volcanic Hill 2021	96	\$500	DIAMOND CREEK Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Red Rock Terrace 2021	95	\$500
DOMINUS ESTATE Napa Valley 2021	96	\$329	EVIDENCE Cabernet Sauvignon Coombsville Of Divine Intervention Immaculate Vineyard 2021	95	\$125
DVO Napa Valley 2021	96	\$275	FAR NIENTE Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Benson Vale 2021	95	\$500
FAVIA Cabernet Sauvignon Coombsville 2021	96	\$250	FAVIA Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville 2021	95	\$250
FUTO Oakville 2021	96	\$550			

NEW DIRECTIONS IN NAPA CABERNET

A ROUNDUP OF THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

BY JAMES MOLESWORTH
AND MARYANN WOROBIEC

The Napa Valley winemaking scene remains dynamic and forward-looking, with new projects emerging each year while established estates make notable shifts in their operations. Here are some of the most exciting investments, advances and revivals in the world of Napa Cabernet.



Annulus Cellars

Annulus is the ultimate limited-production, family-run Napa label. Founders Luke Evnin and Deann Wright first met as students at the University of California, San Francisco, in the 1980s, then got married in Napa in 1990 and purchased a home in Rutherford in 2000.

"We always had a special place in our heart for Napa," Evnin says. "I originally trained as a scientist and spent my professional career investing in startup biotech companies." Wright, who was an attorney for biotech startups, likewise has a background in science. But the couple were always enamored with their Napa neighbors and dreamed of launching a wine brand for their family to work on together.

They looked for a vineyard to purchase, but most of what they found on the market required replanting, which meant years of delay before their first wines could be released. Instead, they turned their focus to finding the right winemaker, who had access to the sort of grapes they would be excited to make wine from. That led them to Nigel Kinsman—winemaker for his own Kinsman Eades, along with Accendo and Bella Oaks, among others—who has quickly risen among the ranks of Napa's most sought-after winemakers.

The couple were new to the wine industry, but they weren't coming into this project blind. "We had been in Napa Valley for 20 years," Evnin says. "We collected Napa Valley Cabernet for most of that time, and we got to know a decent number of the vintners and sat at their tables and heard their stories and what they were trying to do."

The couple's background in startups was handy as well—they knew how to get talented people to work together to execute a vision and they weren't afraid to jump into a new business. There are currently two vineyard-designated wines from grower Andy Beckstoffer's Las Piedras and

Las Piedras vineyard in St. Helena is one of the top sites sourced by newcomer Annulus Cellars for its inaugural Cabernets, which are already achieving excellent scores.

Bruce and Heather Phillips' Vine Hill Ranch. A Napa Valley blend from those two sites and an additional vineyard on Diamond Mountain round out the portfolio. While the couple still hopes to find an estate vineyard that works for their project, they are gathering valuable experience by making wine with purchased grapes, which is sharpening their focus in terms of what they hope to accomplish with their own piece of land.

According to Wright, Annulus is derived from the Latin word for "ring": "The symbolism of the ring, the cycles of seasons and links to winemaking—particularly the circle of gathering people—is what really resonated with all of us." Daughters Alexandra and Elena are included in the family business.

96	ANNULUS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Vine Hill Ranch 2021	\$250
94	ANNULUS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Beckstoffer Las Piedras Vineyard 2021	\$250
92	ANNULUS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2021	\$175

96

2021 ANNULUS VINE HILL RANCH VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON

"This is rich and dense, offering steeped plum, black currant and boysenberry reduction notes welded together with graphite, licorice root and walnut husk accents. There's a broad feel and a deep tug of warm loam through the finish, with ample engery in reserve..." – J. Molesworth

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They looked for a vineyard to purchase, but most of what they found on the market was either too small or too expensive. Instead, they turned their focus to finding the right winemaker. "We wanted someone who was already achieving what we wanted to make wine from. That led them to Nigel Kinsman—winemaker for his own Kinsman Eades, along with Ricardo and Bella Oaks, among others—who has quickly become a local legend."

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94 ANNULUS Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley	\$250
Beckstoffer Las Piedras Vineyard 2021	\$175

"Lush, forward and seductive in feel, with creamy notes of mulberry, blackberry and plum sauce that glide over a polished, fine-grained structure. Offers melted licorice and fruitcake accents alongside a flash of iris on the finish..." – J. Molesworth