




fruit comes wrapped in a somewhat round and fleshy texture that accentuates its ripeness, and a firming tendency at the finish brings this handsome wine comfortably into balance. Likely to show improvement over the next several years, this one is nonetheless quite enjoyable in its present state of development.

   \$23.00

**MORGAN WINERY** 1991 Edna Valley MacGregor Vineyard. More toast and roasted grain in character than fruity, the aromas drift a little too much towards a slight dried bark tone as they air and show their minor fruit only as a nearly overlooked background note. And, while the fruit makes a brief pass at entry, the wine is similarly dominated in flavor by elements other than fruitiness. By the finish, it becomes slightly coarse and a little vegetal and, truth to be told, is a most awkward offering all in all.

   \$16.50

**NEWTON VINEYARD** 1991 Napa Valley. If green apple fruit is never quite a full partner to creamy oak, it still pushes through obvious elements of toast and spice in the nose and hangs on tenaciously throughout the flavors of this medium-full-bodied wine. Slight heat and a bit of finishing coarseness direct the wine away from service with delicate dishes, yet roast game birds or garlicky chicken entrees should fare well when matched with this rich and spicy offering.

   \$15.00

**PENARD CELLARS** 1991 Carmelos. Sweet and creamy in the nose with a nice interplay of youthful fruit and rich oak, this well-balanced, medium-bodied wine follows accordingly with flavors that feature lively fruit and nicely integrated oak. Its progression to coarseness notwithstanding, the wine already shows much to like, but the best is yet to come, and a few years of smoothing should bring both polish and added complexity.

   \$19.00

**JOSEPH PHELPS VINEYARDS** 1991 Napa Valley. Light and low-keyed in aroma, flavor and finish, this clean, young wine is directed almost entirely by simple elements of citrus and pear-like fruit. Medium-bodied and brightened by ample acids, it shows little to suggest that age will bring special range or complexity and should instead be tagged for early drinking with simple fish and poultry dishes.

   \$16.50

**SANFORD Barrel Select** 1991 Santa Barbara Co. This is not your everyday Chardonnay—either in style or in price, but for those who search for wines of strong personality, this one must be among your top choices. The charred wood smells of heavily toasted barrels waft from the glass and are joined in procession by pear, pineapple and ripe ap-

ple fruit and by hints of honey in the broad, always oak-oriented mix. Mouthfilling, almost to the point of heaviness, and glyceriney at the front, it shows all the depth and range presaged by the nose before turning in on itself somewhat in the slightly dry and coarse finish. This is the kind of white wine that goes with foods like veal limonata, gumbo or salmon with ancho chile butter. It may not age all that well, but it certainly is a big, dramatic bottling for the next several years.

   \$30.00

**SEQUOIA GROVE VINEYARDS** 1990 Carmelos Napa Valley. Ripe apples, oaky sweetness and the slightest hint of roasted nuts show in both the medium-deep aromas and developing flavors of this ready-to-drink offering. Its ample oak and medium-full body make this one a good choice for richer poultry entrees, and the slight coarseness that marks its finish is all but hidden by service with food.

   \$15.00

**STERLING VINEYARDS** 1991 Napa Valley Barrel Fermented. After an momentary note of pungency, the aromas settle down to focus on the same toasty-leesy qualities that generally dominate the otherwise low-fruit flavors of this bottling. Medium-bodied, slightly soft in balance and a little thin in overall feel, the wine gives in to heat and bitterness at the finish and nowhere finds a level of fruit to sustain more than passing interest.

   \$14.00

**STERLING VINEYARDS** 1989 Napa Valley Diamond Mountain Ranch. Bothersome suggestions of cardboard peek out here and there in a loosely fruited wine whose pace is largely set by oak and lees. Undermined by the all-too-familiar dryness of the 1989 vintage, this bottling loses its fruit and ultimately its way as it ends with a coarse, bitter, nearly brittle finish.

   \$18.00

**SWANSON VINEYARDS Reserve** 1990 Napa Valley. Sweet and slightly spicy oak sits comfortably atop well-formed varietal fruit in the mild aromas, while the attractive flavors of this balanced Chardonnay show a similar mix of traits delivered with a bit more intensity. If still a little ragged and stiff at the finish, the wine has the stuff for keeping and should achieve a more polished stance with but another year or so in bottle.

   \$20.00

**TRUCHARD VINEYARDS** 1991 Carmelos Napa Valley. The appealing mix of toast, lees, citrus and green apples that emerges in the well-focused aromas is repeated in the moderately deep, solidly fruited flavors of this nicely proportioned Chardonnay. The wine shows good weight and balance with early roundness slowly giving way to latter-palate firmness and a long, crisp-edged finish. Virtually certain to grow with age, this one has all the parts in place for a very handsome future.

   \$16.00