

1998 NAPA VALLEY RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNONS

A reserve wine is the best expression from a winemaker for that particular variety. Our panel found a handful of excellent 1998 Napa Valley Reserve Cabernet Sauvignons, including one 4-star wine, all from a vintage that has drawn less acclaim than the vaunted 1997.

Wine	Price	Rating	Body	Dryness	Comments and Food Suggestions
1998 Chimney Rock Napa Valley Stags Leap District Cab. Sauvignon	\$90	★★★★	Medium-Full	Dry	Big forward berry and spicy oak nose, subtle dusty note; deep concentrated berry flavors, bright and supple; long finish. Perfect match with cheese.
1998 Conn Creek Napa Valley/Limited Release Cab. Sauvignon	\$25	★★★	Full	Dry	Forward ripe berry nose, herbal backnote; more spicy oak in taste, layered fruit, medium texture and length. Try with grilled root vegetables.
1998 Folie a Deux Napa Valley/Private Reserve Cab. Sauvignon	\$36	★★★½	Medium-Full	Dry	Medium blackberry nose, spicy oak notes; deep, concentrated flavors, firm tannins, chocolate-berry notes; long finish. Good match with grilled steaks.
1998 Liparita Napa Valley/Vineyard Reserve Cab. Sauvignon	\$65	★★½	Medium-Full	Dry	Black currant and dusty-earthy aromas; medium texture, ripe berry notes, earthy accents; medium fruity finish. Try with grilled veal chops.
1998 Quail Ridge Napa Valley Reserve Cab. Sauvignon	\$45	★★½	Full	Dry	Deep inky color; complex berry nose, anise and spicy oak; medium fruit, concentrated, big tannins; little awkward now. Good with pan-fried flank steak.
1998 Sequoia Grove Napa Valley Reserve Cab. Sauvignon	\$55	★★★½	Medium	Dry	Deep blackberry and chocolate nose; richly textured flavors, layered ripe berry and oak; nicely focused with length. Try with lamb stew with barley.

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Vintage 1997 is one of the most highly regarded for red wines in years. The following Napa Valley Reserve Cabernet Sauvignons are complex and refined, although many are still tight and not yet showing their best.

Wine	Price	Rating	Body	Dryness	Comments and Food Suggestions
1997 Cosentino Winery Napa Valley Reserve Cab. Sauvignon	\$75	★★★	Medium-Full	Dry	Bright blackberry and spicy oak nose; good texture, concentrated fruit, firm tannins; long dense finish. Good match with beef stew.
1997 Fetzer Vineyards Napa Valley Reserve Cab. Sauvignon	\$30	★★★	Medium-Full	Dry	Big blackberry & vanilla nose, toasted-oak backnotes; textured flavors, refined tannins, great balance & length. Try with grilled veal chops.
1997 Napa Ridge Napa Valley Reserve Cab. Sauvignon	\$20	★★½	Medium-Full	Dry	Sweet blackberry and cassis aroma, spicy oak notes; medium fruit, full tannins and acidity; long fruity finish. Try with hamburgers.
1997 Truchard Napa Valley/Carneros Reserve Cab. Sauvignon	\$75	★★½	Medium	Dry	Forward blackberry and spice nose; medium texture and intensity, full tannins, anise accents; medium finish. Needs time. Try with steak sandwiches.
1997 Van Asperen Napa Valley/Signature Reserve Cab. Sauvignon	\$38	★★★	Medium-Full	Dry	Bright blackberry nose, hints of pepper and spicy oak; deep concentrated flavors, pepper and anise notes; good length. Good match with pepper steak.

Panelists were: Gerald D. Boyd, Chronicle staff wine writer; Larry Stone, wine director, Rubicon restaurant, San Francisco; Bill Traverso, co-owner, Traverso's, Santa Rosa.

RATING-KEY

★★★★ Extraordinary ★★★ Excellent ★★ Good ★ Fair
Wines listed above are generally available but may not be in all stores. To locate them, start with your local wine merchant, but also try larger stores and supermarkets.