

# BUYINGGUIDE

help this darkly colored and full-bodied Cabernet stand out. It layers mouth-coating tannins over ripe black cherry, black olive and light sage flavors. Should be a crowd pleaser for a special dinner. Best now through 2024. *Cellar Selection*. —J.G.

abv: 14.4% Price: \$30

**92 Mulvane Wine Co. 2011 Neal 3 Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** This small-production Cab is at first faint in subtle fruit but slowly works its magic, offering balanced layers of black currant and blackberry around soft, toasty mocha oak, picking up nuance and complexity on the way to a lingering finish. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$70

**92 Tobacco Road 2008 Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** This private reserve is 93% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Malbec and 2% Petit Verdot, aged considerably in bottle. Rich and full-bodied, it has a vanilla-kissed nose and earthy leather pedigree, the black cherry flavor concentrated and thick. —V.B.

abv: 14.8% Price: \$99

**91 Alta 2011 Vintners Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** Solid and full-bodied, this tightly structured Cabernet has a deep red-black color. Enticing aromas of cedar and cinnamon precede focused but not overly ripe fruit flavors that suggest black cherry and cranberry, plus a dark chocolate impression that suits it well. It's tight with tannins right now, so best to drink after 2016. —J.G.

abv: 14.2% Price: \$75

**91 Flora Springs 2011 Hillside Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (Rutherford).** From a tiny hillside block in Rutherford, this 100% Cab is soft in clove, black currant and olive, juicy yet restrained. It spent almost two years in 90% new French oak, but the presence of oak is subtle and the tannins well-managed, making the wine both enjoyable now and worth cellaring through 2020. *Cellar Selection*. —V.B.

abv: 14.2% Price: \$125

**91 Hall 2011 Jack's Masterpiece Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** For full review see page 9. *Cellar Selection*.

abv: 14.9% Price: \$125

**91 Le Vigne 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles).** For full review see page 9.

abv: 13.9% Price: \$35

**91 M by Michael Mondavi 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** Sourced from the family's Animo Vineyard atop Atlas Peak, this Cab comes from the highest-elevation blocks on the vineyard, some 1,350 feet up. Ripe plum fruit flavors surround savory elements of black tea, the structure well-honed and age-worthy through 2020–2025. *Cellar Selection*. —V.B.

abv: 14.3% Price: \$200

**91 Silverado 2011 SOLO Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District).** For full review see page 9.

abv: 13.3% Price: \$100

**90 Brandlin 2011 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** For full review see page 10.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$60

**90 Brandlin 2011 Henry's Keep Proprietary Red (Napa Valley).** Brandlin is Cuvaision's Mount Veeder-situated property devoted to Bordeaux grapes. This particular bottling is a blend of 81% Cabernet Sauvignon with 15% Malbec, 2% Petit Verdot and 2% Cabernet Franc. Juicy and woody, it opens with a rich, Cabernet Franc-like nose of herb and cassis and is balanced on the palate, with a ripeness of oak at the end. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$98

**90 Carnivor 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (California).** For full review see page 14. *Best Buy*.

abv: 13.8% Price: \$15

**90 Chimney Rock 2011 Ganymede Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District).** This is a rather classic Stags Leap Cabernet, savory in currant and clove with a toasty oak overlay. It's structured in sizable tannins that should give the wine plenty of time to develop in bottle, through 2020–2025. —V.B.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$125

**90 Clos du Val 2010 Joie du Vin Cabernet Sauvignon (Stags Leap District).** A 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from 20-plus-year-old vines, this wine is nearly black in color and balanced between rich dark cherry and blueberry fruit and more savory layers of tart cranberry and cherry. It's tightly wound and grippy, the oak providing structure and strength, with a finish of tobacco. Let age through 2020. *Cellar Selection*. —V.B.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$400

**90 Hall 2011 Ellie's Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** This wine is named for the mother of one of the owners, an artist and teacher who provided the inspired artwork found on the label. It blends mostly Cabernet Sauvignon with smaller handfuls of Cabernet Franc and Merlot and is soft in red currant with fully developed acidity. —V.B.

abv: 15.3% Price: \$80

**90 Jamieson Ranch 2012 Double Lariat Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** For full review see page 11.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$45

**90 McManis 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (California).** For full review see page 14. *Best Buy*.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$11

**90 Obsidian Ridge 2011 Obsidian Ridge Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (Red Hills Lake**

**County).** Big and rich, this needs time or a great steak to bring out its best. The color is very dark to the rim. Aromas are closed but the flavors compare to tart blackberry and black cherry with smoky accents. It has density, a layered texture that is tannic but not harsh, and a reserved power that should come out with time. Best after 2018. *Cellar Selection*. —J.G.

abv: 14.5% Price: \$29

**90 Pride Mountain 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma-Napa).** From 62% Sonoma fruit and 38% Napa, this 92% Cabernet Sauvignon is blended with small percentages of Merlot and Petit Verdot. A cassis-fragrant nose leads to deep, juicy layers of chocolate, black raspberry and soft tannins with a subtle suggestion of mint and restrained oak. —V.B.

abv: 14.2% Price: \$70

**90 Smith & Hook 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (Central Coast).** For full review see page 12.

abv: 14.8% Price: \$25

**89 Ancient Oak Cellars 2011 Tô Érgon Berger Vineyard (Sonoma Mountain).** Tannic and structured, this combines 85% Cabernet Sauvignon and 15% Merlot, with a leathery, earthy fist-print of black fruit imprinted on the wine. It's big boned but not out of balance and can stand some time lying down, through 2018. *Cellar Selection*. —V.B.

abv: 13.8% Price: \$75

**89 Herzog 2012 Variations Five Cabernet Sauvignon (California).** Pleasant richness and depth of fruit flavor accompany the deep color and nicely chewy tannins in this full-bodied Cabernet. It tastes dry and well balanced between acidity, tannins and fruitiness, and will be a great mealtime wine with all kinds of protein. —J.G.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$26

**89 Pennywise 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (California).** For full review see page 14. *Best Buy*.

abv: 13.5% Price: \$12

**89 Pomar Junction 2012 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles).** Minerals and earth lift the nose of this wine, with iron ore, rust and jet black soils alongside a touch of boysenberry fruit. The palate is sanguine as well, reflecting red volcanic dirt, with fruit trending toward violet and cranberry. —M.K.

abv: 14.6% Price: \$34

**89 RouteStock Cellars 2012 Route 29 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley).** Made by former Chandon and Louis Martini winemaker Wayne Donaldson, this well-constructed Cab offers herbal blackberry and dark raspberry fruit around a core of soft tannins. It has a touch of grip to the finish, which is accented in richly roasted coffee. The addi-