

# Top 100 Wines of the USA 2023

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Wednesday, December 13, 2023



James with Jasmine Hirsch of Hirsch Vineyards and their most recent releases. She is holding our U.S. Wine of the Year, the Hirsch Vineyards Pinot Noir Sonoma County Sonoma Coast Raschen Ridge 2021.

You won't be surprised to see so many California wines in this year's Top 100 Wines of the USA, but you might be slightly shocked to see so many pinot noirs and chardonnays on the list. In fact, the No. 1 wine of the list is an amazing young pinot noir from the Hirsch family, the [Hirsch Vineyards Pinot Noir Sonoma County Sonoma Coast Raschen Ridge 2021](#).

It's a high-altitude wine from vineyards on a ridge at 480 meters elevation that overlooks the Pacific Ocean, and the cool maritime climate makes the wine so linear and fresh as well as transparently fruity. It's made from heritage clones (Swan and Pommard) that were planted a little more than 20 years ago. It's a perfect 100-point wine.

"You have concentration, structure, detail, expressiveness, and terroir," said Jasmine Hirsch, whose family owns the winery where she makes the wine. "The wines we make express themselves. That makes it so special to us."

Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/WhNikH7KA1w>

The Raschen Ridge 2021 is one of 26 pinot noirs on the list below and they highlight the exceptional quality of so many pinots in California at the moment. Every top producer of Sonoma and Napa pinots noirs I spoke to this year said that demand for their wines was strong. And it all makes sense considering most of the top wines are still between \$60 and \$150 a bottle. It's almost impossible to find quality like that in Napa cabernet sauvignon, by comparison.

With 24 bottles on this list, Chardonnay is equally compelling, particularly ones made from old-vine heritage Wente clones. Great examples are the No. 2 and No. 3 wines, the [Haynes Vineyard Chardonnay Napa Valley Coombsville Corazon 2021](#) and [Kistler Chardonnay Sonoma County Sonoma Valley Kistler Vineyard Cuvée Cathleen 2021](#), respectively. The first comes from one of the oldest chardonnay vineyards in the United States with old Wente clones planted in the late 1960s. The Kistler Vineyard is young and planted in 1989. The bottling comes from one specific block.

"All the great wines that I have been [attracted] to are with a sense of structure," said Carlton McCoy, the CEO of Lawrence Wine Estates, which owns Haynes Vineyard as well as some other top names in Napa such as Heitz and Burgess. "They are all there in these white wines" from Haynes Vineyard, he added.



James loved being in Napa during his mid-November tasting trip this year.



Carlton McCoy of Lawrence Wine Estates in November before tasting wines with James.



James and Associate Editor Johann Kwon (right) taste at Beringer, with the No. 9 Beringer Chardonnay Napa Valley Private Reserve 2021 on the table.

It's unfortunate when I hear from wineries in the United States that some people still say that "they don't drink chardonnay," yet they are missing probably the greatest grape variety in the United States at the moment. And with the outrageously high prices for top white Burgundy at the moment, the best American chardonnay almost seems like a bargain.

Just take a look at the No. 9 wine in this list as an example. It's the \$40 [Beringer Chardonnay Napa Valley Private Reserve 2021](#). It's made from old Wente clone chardonnay, which delivered great depth and structure in 2021. It's built for cellaring. I am still shaking my head in near disbelief when I think of this wine and the price.



Left: James tasting with Chris Carpenter, who made the No. 5 Lokoya Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Mount Veeder 2021. | Center: Sunset on a cold evening atop Pritchard Hill in Napa last month shows such natural beauty. | Right: Tom Futo (right) and his winemaker, Jason Exposto, take a break from tasting with James in mid-November at the Futo winery.

Cabernet sauvignon and Bordeaux blends from Napa Valley still account for the lion's share of this list, with almost three dozen included. And almost all are from the terrific 2021 vintage, which was slightly smaller in volume on average because of the extended drought. The top wines show an excellent depth and structure and don't seem overly concentrated.

The four Napa cabs in the Top 10 on this list are superb examples of this, including the [Tor Napa Valley Black Magic 2021](#) at No. 4, [Lokoya Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Mount Veeder 2021](#) at No. 5, [Futo Napa Valley Oakville 2021](#) at No. 7 and [Favia Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Oakville 2021](#) at No. 8.



James last year with David Whiting of Red Newt Cellars during a visit to the winery.



Winemaker Brennon Leighton of K Vintners speaking last year about his wines.

The lone syrah in the Top 10 is a perennial favorite on our Top 100 USA list, because the [K Vintners Syrah Yakima Valley Motor City Kitty 2020](#), at No. 6, offers fantastic value for such a superlative red, at \$50 a bottle. And value also comes through clearly with the No. 10 [Red Newt Cellars Riesling Finger Lakes The Knoll Lahoma Vineyards 2020](#). I personally visited the winery last year and I was impressed with the viticulture and winemaking of owner David Whiting. He is one of America's wine stars on the East Coast.

Overall, California dominates this list with 80 wines, followed by eight from Washington and seven from Oregon. Plus, there's another five from New York, including the Red Newt riesling. I think this is one of the best-ever Top 100 lists for the United States and I hope you do as well.

Please keep in mind that this list includes many wines that were not considered for our Top 100 Wines of the World 2023 because I didn't taste them until mid-November, just after the list was posted on Nov. 12. I thought it was better to include the late tasted wines on this list to give you a heads-up on some great American wines to buy in the New Year.

– *James Suckling, Editor/Chairman*

**Note:** The list of wines below is comprised of bottles tasted and rated in 2023 by the tasters at JamesSuckling.com. You can sort the wines below by vintage, score and alphabetically by winery name. You can also search for specific wines in the search bar.

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## **1Hirsch Vineyards Pinot Noir Sonoma County Sonoma Coast Raschen Ridge 2021**

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## **2Haynes Vineyard Chardonnay Napa Valley Coombsville Corazon 2021**

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## **3Kistler Chardonnay Sonoma County Sonoma Valley Kistler Vineyard Cuvée Cathleen 2021**

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## **4Tor Napa Valley Black Magic 2021**

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## **5Lokoya Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Mount Veeder 2021**

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## **6K Vintners Syrah Yakima Valley Motor City Kitty 2020**

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## **7Futo Napa Valley Oakville 2021**

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## **8Favia Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Oakville 2021**

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**9Beringer Chardonnay Napa Valley Private Reserve 2021**

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**10Red Newt Cellars Riesling Finger Lakes The Knoll Lahoma Vineyards 2020**

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**11Joseph Phelps Pinot Noir Sonoma County Freestone Estate Proem No.2  
2021**

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**12Mt. Brave Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Mount Veeder 2021**

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**13Spottswoode Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley St. Helena Estate 2021**

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**14Quintessa Napa Valley Rutherford 2021**

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**15Dana Estates Sauvignon Blanc Napa Valley Howell Mountain Hershey  
Vineyard 2021**

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**16Paul Hobbs Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Coombsville Nathan  
Coombs Estate 2021**

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**17Realm Cellars Napa Valley Oakville Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard 2021**

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**18Domaine de la Côte Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Sous le Chêne 2021**

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**19Dana Estates Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Rutherford Helms Vineyard  
2021**

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**20K Vintners Grenache Walla Walla Valley The Boy 2020**

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**21Futo Sauvignon Blanc Napa Valley Stags Leap District 2022**

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**22Cardinale Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2021**

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**23Brooks Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Eola-Amity Hills Rastaban 2021**

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**24Kistler Chardonnay Napa Valley Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2021**

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**25BOND Napa Valley Vecina 2020**

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**26Patria Chardonnay Sonoma County Moon Mountain District Charlie Smith District 2021**

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**27Alma Rosa Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Radian 2021**

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**28Wayfarer Chardonnay Sonoma County Fort Ross-Seaview Wayfarer Vineyard 2021**

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**29Pahlmeyer Chardonnay Napa Valley 2021**

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**30Hirsch Vineyards Pinot Noir Sonoma County Sonoma Coast Reserve 2021**

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**31The Hilt Estate Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Radian Vineyard 2020**

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**32Mt. Brave Merlot Napa Valley Mount Veeder 2021**

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### **33Williams Selyem Pinot Noir Sonoma County Cohn Vineyard 2021**

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### **34RAEN Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Fort Ross-Seaview Sea Field Vineyard 2021**

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### **35Littorai Chardonnay Sonoma County Sonoma Coast Charles Heintz Vineyard 2021**

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### **36Château Boswell Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley At Anchor 2021**

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### **37Sea Smoke Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Ten 2019**

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### **38Donum Pinot Noir Sonoma County Carneros Pearl Single-Block Reserve 2021**

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### **39The Hilt Estate Chardonnay Santa Rita Hills Radian Vineyard 2020**

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### **40Calera Pinot Noir Mt. Harlan Selleck Vineyard 2020**

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United States

California

2020

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Score

98

Love the ripe strawberry, cedar and dried flower aromas. Baking spice like cinnamon. Full-bodied but so solid and firm that it reminds me of great Dujacs from the late 1980s. The candied fruit at the end is super. Yet fresh and firm with great consistency and length. From vines planted in 1975. 100 cases.

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### **41Haynes Vineyard Syrah Napa Valley Coombsville Forgeron 2022**

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**42Paul Hobbs Pinot Noir Sonoma County Russian River Valley Katherine Lindsay Estate Cuvee Agustina 2021**

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**43Pine Ridge Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Stags Leap District Circle Hill Vineyard 2021**

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**44Williams Selyem Pinot Noir Sonoma County Russian River Valley Rochioli Riverblock Vineyard 2021**

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**45Dragonette Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Black Label 2020**

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**46Littorai Pinot Noir Sonoma County Sonoma Coast The Haven Vineyard 2021**

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**47Ulysses Napa Valley 2020**

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**48Kosta Browne Chardonnay Sonoma County El Diablo Vineyard 2021**

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**49Cornell Cabernet Sauvignon Sonoma County Commitment 2019**

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**50Hors Categorie Syrah Walla Walla Valley 2020**

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**51Amici Chardonnay Sonoma County Russian River Valley Charles Heintz Vineyard 2021**

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**52Wayfarer Pinot Noir Sonoma County Fort Ross-Seaview The Traveler 2021**

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**53 Brewer-Clifton Chardonnay Santa Rita Hills 3-D 2020**

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**54 Inglenook Napa Valley Rutherford Rubicon 2021**

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**55 Domaine Serene Chardonnay Dundee Hills Récolte Grand Cru 2019**

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**56 Brooks Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Cahiers 2021**

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**57 Etude Chardonnay Carneros Grace Benoist Ranch Heirloom 2021**

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**58 Quilceda Creek Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2020**

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**59 La Jota Vineyard Co. Merlot Napa Valley Howell Mountain W. S. Keyes Vineyard 2021**

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**60 Cayuse Vineyards Syrah Walla Walla Valley Bionic Frog 2020**

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**61 Donum Chardonnay Sonoma County Carneros Single Vineyard Year of the Ox Reserve 2021**

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**62 Hermann J. Wiemer Riesling Seneca Lake Josef Vineyard 2022**

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**63 Vine Hill Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley VHR 2021**

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**64 Realm Cellars Napa Valley Farella Vineyard 2021**

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**65Domaine Drouhin Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Roserock Zéphirine 2021**

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**66Rose & Arrow Estate Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Eola-Amity Hills  
Stonecreek 2019**

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**67Aperture Cabernet Sauvignon Sonoma County Alexander Valley SJ Ranch  
2021**

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**68Dominus Napa Valley 2020**

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**69Brewer-Clifton Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Machado 2020**

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**70DuMOL Chardonnay Sonoma County Sonoma Coast Isobel Charles Heintz  
Vineyard 2021**

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**71Beringer Cabernet Sauvignon Sonoma County Knights Valley Reserve  
2021**

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**72Sandhi Chardonnay Santa Rita Hills Bentrack 2021**

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**73Ravines Riesling Finger Lakes White Springs Vineyard 2020**

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**74Hyde de Villaine Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Carrillo 2019**

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**75Amici Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Lytton Annapolis Vineyard 2021**

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**76Dragonette Chardonnay Santa Rita Hills Black Label 2020**

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**77DuMOL Chardonnay Sonoma County Sonoma Coast DuMOL Estate Vineyard 2021**

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**78Etude Pinot Noir Carneros Grace Benoist Ranch Heirloom 2021**

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**79Hillick & Hobbs Riesling Seneca Lake Estate Vineyard Dry 2020**

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**80Heitz Cellar Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Lot C-91 2019**

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**81Figgins Walla Walla Valley Estate Red 2020**

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**82Red Tail Ridge Pinot Noir Seneca Lake RTR Estate Vineyard 2020**

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**83Nickel & Nickel Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Atlas Peak Fog Break Vineyard 2021**

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**84Dolce Napa Valley Late Harvest Wine 2017**

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**85Calera Pinot Noir Mt. Harlan Selleck Vineyard 2019**

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United States

California

2019

[CHECK PRICE](#)

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Score

97

Wild aromas of dried strawberries, rose stem, hints of smoke, and rust. Full-bodied and beautifully textured with fine velvety tannins. Extremely long and juicy. So savory and fruity. But the tannins hold it in. So much going on. Drink or hold.

[Enlarge Tasting Note](#)

**86Col Solare Cabernet Sauvignon Red Mountain Tenuta 2019**

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**87Hudson Chardonnay Napa Valley Carneros Seashell 2021**

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**88Salty Goats Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Oakville 2020**

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**89Sixto Chardonnay Washington State Moxee 2020**

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**90Cristom Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Seven Springs Vineyard 2021**

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**91Soter Chardonnay Willamette Valley Estates 2020**

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**92L'Aventure Paso Robles Willow Creek District Estate Cuvée 2021**

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**93The Setting Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Coombsville Glass Slipper Vineyard 2021**

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**94Chappellet Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley Hideaway Vineyard 2021**

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**95Tyler Chardonnay Santa Rita Hills Mae Estate 2020**

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**96Vaso Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2021**

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**97Slamdance Koöperatieve Central Coast 2021**

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**98Terminim Syrah Mendocino County Alder Springs Vineyard 2019**

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**99Hourglass Napa Valley Blueline Estate 36 2019**

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**100Shafer Vineyards Chardonnay Napa Valley Red Shoulder Ranch 2022**

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