

28th Annual Best of The Best: California Cabernet Sauvignon

QRW Tasting Team

We've attempted to assemble the best possible list of available Cabernet Sauvignon for our 28th annual Best of The Best. Available is the operative word: at *Quarterly Review of Wines* it means "readily" available, either at retail or at restaurants or easily available through the winery, not "trophy wines" that can be purchased only by private subscription or wines that are heavily allocated. This year we blind tasted 70 Cabernet Sauvignon chiefly from Napa Valley and largely from the 2009 vintage, and found them generally quite fine and several outstanding. Initially, the word was that the 2009 Cabernet vintage was bountiful and that quality was good but not great. We've found this not to be true: the 2009s have quantity and quality, with good levels of alcohol averaging 14.5%. Consumers would be wise to buy and collect. It's also fortunate that we tasted later this year than usual because a

California Cabernet Sauvignon

2009 Parallel Black Diamond, Napa Valley, \$125. Softly sweet, rich blackberry and plum. Sumptuous, cedar-oak. Soft tannins, elegant texture, and delicious. **93 points**

its grace. And for us finish is the essence of any wine's poetry. It isn't easy and subjectivity obviously plays a major role. All the wines below have outstanding character, and are in a class by themselves. With medium tannins, they can be cellared for several years. If drinking now, it is important to decant. (Suggested retail prices below are provided by the wineries.)

— Richard L. Elia