



Bigger Than Your Head

eating & drinking: the good, the bad, and the rest of it

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Weekend Wine Notes: Five Wild Red Blends

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No holds are barred in California, unlike in the Old World, where government agencies determine where grapes can be grown and what grapes go into certain wines. Many wines, of course, are famous for their combinations of grapes, like Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape, which may contain any ratio of up to 13 grapes, red and white, or Bordeaux, where winemakers fashion cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc (primarily) into some of the world's most elegant, powerful and best-known red wines. No such customs or regulations abide in the Golden State, and today we look at five wines that offer some unusual blends of grapes, some more successfully than others. The trick is to create a blend that delivers distinctive, if not original, qualities rather than something that comes out smelling and tasting like a generic "red wine." These wines were samples for review. Enjoy!

Casey Flat Ranch Estate Red Wine 2012, Capay Valley, Yolo County.

14.8% alc. Cabernet sauvignon 56%, syrah 30%, cabernet franc 13% viognier 1%. Dense ruby-purple; cassis, black cherries and raspberries; hints of menthol, violets, hedge and heather, then graphite and underbrush, leather and mocha; bushy and brushy but succulent, balanced, integrated; a touch of the iodine-and-iron complex (sounds like a vitamin) under delicious black fruit flavors with a note of blue; wild berry notes, licorice and lavender lend some elevation to **a wine of true class, distinction and character.** Now through 2020 to '22 with steaks and braised meats. **Excellent.** About \$45.

