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## Wine

Resident wine expert Sandra Silfven on all things vino

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### Educated Guess producer hits on formula to sell wine

BY SANDRA SILFVEN 0 COMMENTS



**Sandra Silfven**  
Longtime  
Detroit News  
wine columnist

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These labels with doodled chemistry formulas, a brand name like Educated Guess made by a winery named Roots Run Deep might make you pick up a bottle and examine it.

Don't stop there; the wine is surprising: Napa quality at un-Napa prices.

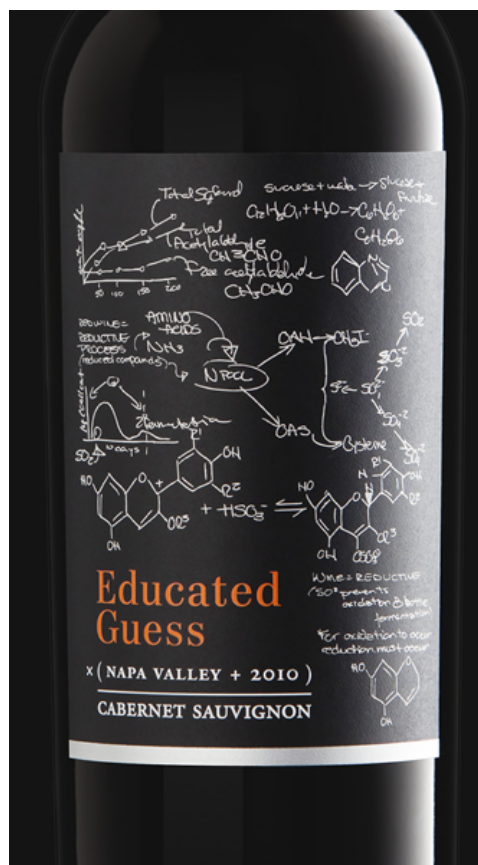
Getting marketing right is one thing, but getting the quality right is another. And Mark Albrecht, who founded Roots Run Deep in 2005, seems to have scored on both.

The theory: Sign contracts with great growers in Napa Valley, hire a terrific winemaker, don't invest a cent in a fancy cellar and sell those babies at affordable prices all over the country.

In the beginning, he sold off his house and most of his possessions to fund the project. The name Educated Guess seemed to fit the leap of faith he would take to create a new, delicious, affordable brand in Napa.

You can bet a bottle will stir up conversation at the table — especially if any chemistry majors are present. Those formulas, by the way, are winemaking chemistry formulas.

You can find this



The Educated Guess Cabernet label will give you an idea of the labels for the rest of the line. (Image courtesy of rootsrundeeep.com)

#### About Sandra Silfven

Sandra Silfven has written about wine for more than 25 years. She's a longtime copy editor at The Detroit News, as well as a former restaurant critic. Her advice to newbies: "If I can figure out this stuff, so can you!"



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brand at independent wine shops in Metro Detroit including Merchant's Fine Wine, Dearborn; Champagne's Wine Cellars, Warren; Holiday Market, Royal Oak; Kako's Market, Birmingham; Wilson's Market, Royal Oak.

#### **Educated Guess Napa Valley Chardonnay 2011, \$17**

This Chard is off the Oak Knoll and Napa Carneros appellations. It's fermented in both barrels and stainless steel and aged 10 months in French oak with a light toast. This wine is sooo Chardonnay — all the powerful flavors (green apple, pear, tart citrus) with a kiss of spicy French oak. It's a bright gold color and aromas resonate with tart fruit and a hint of oak. A portion goes through malolactic — just enough to give more nuances and texture on the palate. The acidity, however, is still on point. It's a \$17 wonder child.

#### **Educated Guess Carneros Pinot Noir 2012, \$25**

Dee-lish. You can taste this wine by holding the glass to your nose — intense cherry, strawberry, thimbleberry (are you from Michigan and know the Upper Peninsula berry?). Dusty tannins coat the palate. The fruit is balanced by good acidity. It has the finesse of a Burgundy Pinot on the palate. I really like this wine. It's from both Napa and Sonoma's Carneros district with some Napa Valley fruit as well. It is aged 12 months in French oak. It's an elegant Pinot packed with power.

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