

# Wine & Spirits

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 Oak Room, Victory 44  
 Picasso, Lotus of Siam, BARU  
 THE PARTISAN  
 Lacroix, Nick's Italian Cafe

## Top 50 Wines

in America's Best Restaurants

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# CABERNET SAUVIGNON

America's thirst for cabernet has remained remarkably consistent, while the demand for most other varieties has waxed and waned in the past two decades. This year cabernet accounted for 13.8 percent of the most popular restaurant wines, compared to 16.6 percent last year, an erosion likely due to a surge in imported wines in the poll responses. But anecdotally, wine buyers at numerous restaurants reported that the demand for cabernet remained strong.

The most popular cabernet this year was Jordan from Alexander Valley, a brand that regularly lands in the top spot, followed closely by Caymus, which shot to the top of the cabernet list last year as diners gravitated to that wine's rich, ample style.

For Bordeaux affordable enough to sell in any volume, wine buyers told us they found more success this year with merlot- and franc-dominant Right Bank wines, though Raj Vaidya at *Daniel* in NYC listed the 1997 Potensac from the Médoc (around 40 percent cabernet) as his biggest new success: "It's not a grand château, not a complex wine, but it's priced in a sweet spot. We picked up a ton of cases and blew through it."

Many wine buyers reported that the market for high-end California cabernet remains strong. At *Binkley's* in Phoenix, one of Rob Sargent's top ten wines was the 2012 Odette, a new single-vineyard project in

Stags Leap—he sold bottle after bottle at \$280. Ambitiously priced cabernets also moved by the glass, many sommeliers said. When Tonya Pitts of San Francisco's *One Market* served the '89 Caymus Special Selection at \$75 a glass, the bottle didn't last a week.

To a large extent, however, sommeliers report that high-octane cabernets are on the wane. "We try to have those iconic names on the higher end: Dunn, Araujo, producers that are making benchmark styles of wine. We're not offering that [overextracted] style anymore," says Haley Guild Moore of *Town Hall* in San Francisco. And Raphael Ginsburg of *Ai Fiori* in New York sold plenty of the 2012 Frog's Leap Rutherford Cabernet: "It's more herbaceous and restrained, and I was concerned it wouldn't have broad appeal, but I underestimated people's palates; they don't always need the richest thing."

Given cabernet's strong performance at so many restaurants, why did it have a somewhat weaker showing in this year's poll? Ben Teig of *Redbird* in Los Angeles offers a generational explanation: "The 'millennial' kids, they're coming in and asking, 'Do you have wine from Jura? Do you have grüner? Do you have any nebbiolo that I can afford?' They don't want to drink cabernet, especially from the New World. And definitely not Napa, because that's what their parents drink."

## MOST POPULAR CABERNET SAUVIGNONS

Rank	Brand	Bottling	Avg. Price
1	Jordan Vineyards	Alexander Valley	\$114
2	Caymus Vineyards	Napa Valley	\$159
3	Silver Oak Wine Cellars	Alexander Valley Napa Valley	\$155 \$197
4	Justin	Paso Robles Paso Robles Isosceles	\$67 \$110
5	Louis Martini Winery	Sonoma County Alexander Valley Reserve	\$52 \$62
6	Ladera Vineyards	Napa Valley	\$72
7	Stag's Leap Wine Cellars	Napa Valley Artemis Stags Leap District Fay	\$111 \$195
8	Columbia Crest	Horse Heaven Hills H3 Columbia Valley Grand Estates	\$34 \$30
9	Faust	Napa Valley	\$112
10	Heitz Wine Cellars	Napa Valley	\$108
11	Franciscan Estate	Napa Valley	\$62
12	Avalon	California Napa Valley	\$36 \$42
13	Stags' Leap Winery	Napa Valley Stags Leap District The Leap	\$79 \$115
14	Frog's Leap Winery	Napa Valley Rutherford Estate	\$78 \$115
15	Darioush	Napa Valley	\$181
16	Duckhorn Vineyards	Napa Valley	\$129
17	Honig	Napa Valley	\$84
18	Oberon	Napa Valley	\$66
19	Frank Family Hess Collection	Napa Valley California Hess Select	\$101 \$39
	J. Lohr	Paso Robles Seven Oaks	\$37
21	Pied à Terre	Napa Valley	\$52
	Joel Gott	Napa Valley Napa Valley Blend No. 815	\$39 \$33
24	Cakebread Cellars	Napa Valley	\$144
25	Chateau Ste. Michelle	Columbia Valley Indian Wells	\$42
26	Educated Guess	Napa Valley	\$58
27	Round Pond	Napa Valley Kith & Kin Napa Valley	\$68 \$123
28	Chappellet	Napa Valley Mountain Cuvée Napa Valley Signature	\$54 \$150
29	Chateau Montelena	Napa Valley Napa Valley Calstroga Cuvée	\$100 \$98
30	Robert Sinskey Vineyards	Carneros Napa POV	\$82
	Smith & Hook	Central Coast	\$57
32	Alexander Valley Vyds.	Alexander Valley	\$48
	Chiarello Family Vineyards	Napa Valley Bambino	\$75
33	Corison	Napa Valley	\$131
35	Nickel & Nickel	Oakville CC Ranch Rutherford Napa Valley Quicksilver Vineyard	\$200 \$140
36	Amapola Creek	Sonoma Valley	\$98
	Newton Vineyard	Sonoma County Red Label	\$80
37	Simi Winery	Sonoma County	\$56
	ZD Wines	Napa Valley	\$95
40	Fisher Vineyards	Napa Valley Unity	\$77