

Wine Spectator

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**NAPA'S
EMPIRE
BUILDER**



**ANNUAL CALIFORNIA
CABERNET REPORT**

**NEW YORK:
TOP NEW RESTAURANTS**

ARTISANAL DISTILLERS

**SLEEK WHITES
FROM ALSACE**

Sauvignon Stags Leap District 2012, a wine with exceptional depth and length, and the rich and pure 2012 Reserve, which echoes the regular estate bottling, but with more finesse. Just like its sister wineries, CADE and PlumpJack, Odette takes its name from literature, representing “femininity, strength and power,” the qualities the winery hopes to express in its wines.

—Aaron Romano

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| 94 | ODETTE ESTATE Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District Reserve 2012 | \$300 | 500 cases |
| 93 | ODETTE ESTATE Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District 2012 | \$98 | 4,450 cases |

Sinegal Estate

Retail magnate turns to wine

In 2013, former Costco CEO David Sinegal, 60, and his father Jim, 80, founder of the mega-retailer, bought the historic Inglewood Estate south of St. Helena, once owned by Bill and Lila Jaeger. Sinegal has taken a keen interest in learning the business from the ground up, with each row and vine planted in the vineyard assigned a number and letter. “Increasingly people aren’t buying trophies, they’re buying wine they like and appreciate the story,” Sinegal says.

Costco is known for quality products at reasonable prices, and that’s part of Sinegal’s thinking. With 2013, the winery debuts three Bordeaux-inspired reds, priced from \$90 to \$190, from its 9-acre vineyard. The Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena showcases the winery’s style of rich, full-bodied fruit and ample oak, with a measure of finesse, while the Reserve bottling, which comes from selected lots, is more “artisanal” in its assemblage, according to Sinegal. It is also richer and more massive in size, with greater depth. The winery permit is for 20,000 cases, a level that likely won’t be achieved by Sinegal in the near future, although he plans to expand by buying grapes from select sites. The 2014 vintage was produced at the estate winery.

—J.L.

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| 94 | SINEGAL Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena Reserve 2013 | \$195 | 300 cases |
| 93 | SINEGAL Cabernet Franc St. Helena 2013 | \$140 | 100 cases |
| 91 | SINEGAL Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena 2013 | \$90 | 650 cases |

Tanner DaFoe

Reviving Cabernet in Santa Ynez

Rob DaFoe and Jeff Tanner are making impressive gains with Cabernet Sauvignon grown in the eastern reaches of Santa Barbara County. It’s a new twist on an old story. In Santa Barbara’s modern winegrowing history, Cabernet has long been on the minds of vintners. But for many years the wines failed to inspire, often marked by vegetal flavors. Now a few bottlings from the warmer eastern end of Santa Ynez Valley are signaling a revival.

Since 2009, the Tanner DaFoe duo has been steadily producing outstanding wines, both a varietal Cabernet and a Cabernet blend called Rogue’s

Blend. The wines come from the rocky soil of Buona Terra Vineyard—“incredibly rocky,” according to Tanner. This mostly flat site rises in some parts to elevations ranging from 600 to 1,400 feet. Both wines reflect the quality of the grapes and the site, exhibiting taut, fleshy flavors and firm tannins, with loads of red and dark berry fruit. The 2011 Cabernet (91, \$110) shows a little more density and weight than the 2012, with more gravel and earth features. The winery has been increasing production every year as well, with 132 cases of the Cabernet in 2009, 141 in 2010, 167 in 2011 and 231 in 2012.

DaFoe, 45, a one-time professional snowboarder born in Santa Barbara, and Tanner, 51, who produces TV commercials, know of Santa Barbara’s history with Cabernet. Early pioneers held out hope that Cabernet would be a springboard for this emerging wine region. By the 1970s, Cabernet had the best reputation in California, and there were Bordeaux aficionados establishing vineyards in Santa Barbara to pursue it. Tanner and DaFoe are validating that vision. Each of their wines dating to 2009 has been exceptional.

—J.L.

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| 90 | TANNER DAFOE Cabernet Sauvignon Santa Ynez Valley 2012 | \$110 | 231 cases |
| 90 | TANNER DAFOE Rogue’s Blend Santa Ynez Valley 2012 | \$75 | 234 cases |



Jeff Tanner (left) and Rob DaFoe of Tanner DaFoe