

Sauvignon. One of the most spectacular wines in the portfolio at present, it is a candidate for wine of the vintage. It exhibits a beautiful nose of camphor, *crème de cassis* and spring flowers, tremendous concentration, sweet tannin and a long, well-proportioned, multilayered finish. This stunning effort may turn out to be the best Estate Cuvée made to date – rather remarkable! Closed, austere and less expressive, the **2009 Roberta's Reserve State Lane Vineyard** (96% Merlot and 4% Cabernet Franc) reveals a broodingly backward, tannic, angular style at present. Although loaded with potential, it is very tight, but in 12 months, it should be easier to evaluate. There is no problem getting a good sense of the **2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Vin State Lane Vineyard**. Composed of 96% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Merlot and 1% Cabernet Franc, it possesses that pure *crème de cassis* character that Kapcsandy routinely delivers as well as a stunningly layered, full-bodied mouthfeel, sweet tannin, an

expansive, velvety texture and flawlessly integrated acidity, wood, tannin and alcohol. Other than the Estate Cuvée, I don't think any of these 2009s will rival what this winery produced in 2007 and 2008, but they are very good efforts. Furthermore, they have the advantage of probably being drinkable at a much earlier age.

For readers on the mailing list and visitors to the winery, there are several other wines produced. The estate makes a very delicious, dry, deep colored rosé from Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, and the **2009 Rosé** is another noteworthy example. It possesses much more flavor and body than most rosés. Kapcsandy also produces a port-styled wine called **Vino del Sol**. Slightly lower in alcohol than most ports (17.6-18.1%), to date they have made a 2007, 2008 and 2009. They're good efforts, but hardly at the exhilarating level of quality of their dry estate wines made from Bordeaux varietals. Tel. (707) 948-3100; Fax (707) 948-3106

KAZMER BLAISE	2008	CHARDONNAY BOON FLY'S HILL	CARNEROS	(\$50.00)	WHITE	89
KAZMER BLAISE	2008	PINOT NOIR PRIMO'S HILL	NAPA	(\$55.00)	RED	91

Two limited production offerings from winemaker Michael Terrien include the light gold-colored **2008 Chardonnay Boon Fly's Hill**, which offers up aromas of nectarines, orange blossoms and white peaches. With fresh acids, medium to full body and an attractive, long, nicely textured finish, it should drink well for 1-2 years. Even

better is the outstanding **2008 Pinot Noir Primo's Hill**. Aromas of Asian soy sauce, background smoke, sweet cola, black cherries and a hint of plum sauce are followed by an attractive, round, generous, seductive wine that should be consumed over the next 2-4 years. Tel. (707) 255-4929

ROBERT KEENAN WINERY	2008	CABERNET FRANC	SPRING MOUNTAIN	(\$64.00)	RED	94
ROBERT KEENAN WINERY	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	SPRING MOUNTAIN	(\$48.00)	RED	94
ROBERT KEENAN WINERY	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON RESERVE	SPRING MOUNTAIN	(\$104.00)	RED	97
ROBERT KEENAN WINERY	2009	CHARDONNAY	SPRING MOUNTAIN	(\$30.00)	WHITE	89
ROBERT KEENAN WINERY	2008	MERLOT	NAPA	(\$38.00)	RED	88
ROBERT KEENAN WINERY	2008	MERLOT RESERVE MAILBOX VYD.	SPRING MOUNTAIN	(\$64.00)	RED	94
ROBERT KEENAN WINERY	2008	MERNET RESERVE PROPRIETARY RED	NAPA	(\$96.00)	RED	95

This delicious, non-malolactic **2009 Chardonnay** is one of the best of that style. The alcohol is low (under 14%) and the wine shows lots of poached pear, pineapple and citrus blossom characteristics. Medium-bodied and minimally oaked with good acidity and freshness, it is very Californian rather than Burgundian in style, and should be drunk over the next several years.

The **2008 Cabernet Franc** (100% Cabernet Sauvignon from estate vineyard planted at a 2000 foot elevation) now represents 524 cases. Cabernet Franc has performed brilliantly at this height, and this is another example of the potential of Spring Mountain. This dense purple-hued wine is richly fruity with a beautiful floral, blueberry, raspberry and black currant-scented nose, good underlying minerality and a gorgeous fruit intensity without any sense of heaviness (14.3% alcohol). Elegant, pure and well-textured, this is a stunning Cabernet Franc to drink over the next decade. The **2008 Merlot**, which is 80% estate Merlot blended with 20% Merlot from Carneros, possesses a dense ruby/purple color as well as attractive aromas of cocoa, coffee, licorice and spice. This seductive, medium-bodied Merlot is not terribly long, but it is ideal for drinking over the next 5-10 years. The opaque ruby/purple-hued **2008 Merlot Reserve Mailbox Vineyard** (100% Merlot) is a stunning 350-case cuvée that competes with some of the finest Merlots made in Napa Valley. Almost crunchy, this juicy wine has vivid minerality, lots of sweet boysenberry and berry fruit intermixed with flowers, white chocolate and spice characteristics. Medium to full-bodied, substantial, elegant and pure, this beauty should be enjoyed over the next 10-15 years.

The **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon** is a blend of 76% estate fruit and the rest from Napa's Pope Valley. Its black/purple color is followed by abundant aromas of cassis, licorice, underbrush and graphite. Full-bodied and impressively endowed with stunning concentration, this may be the biggest, richest regular Cabernet Sauvignon Keenan has yet made. It should age effortlessly for 15-20 years. A more limited production offering, the **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve** is composed of 80% estate Cabernet Sauvignon and 20% estate Cabernet Franc. Sadly, only 270 cases were produced. Possibly one of the finest wines Michael Keenan has yet made, it has just about everything one could desire in a Cabernet Sauvignon, including good minerality, floral, red, black and blue fruit notes, great equilibrium, stunning concentration and length, and an overall sense of purity and personality. In short, it possesses soul and delivers the goods. Approachable now, it should continue to drink well for 20-25 years. Lastly, the **2008 Mernet Reserve Proprietary Red** (350 cases produced) is composed of 50% Merlot and 50% Cabernet Sauvignon. I've never liked the name that much, but I sure love the wine. Another prodigious effort from Keenan, it boasts an inky/purple color as well as a sweet nose filled with blackberry, black currant and cherry fruit intermixed with mocha and chocolate. Full-bodied and rich with an enticing suppleness as well as admirable length and texture, it should drink well for 15 or more years. For those who haven't noticed, Michael Keenan appears to be ratcheting up the quality with every new vintage. Bravo! Tel. (707) 963-9177; Fax (707) 963-8209

KEEVER VINEYARDS	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	YOUNTVILLE	(\$90.00)	RED	91+
KEEVER VINEYARDS	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	YOUNTVILLE	(\$90.00)	RED	91

The high quality of the 2007 and 2008 vintages for Bordeaux varietals is clearly evidenced by these two offerings. Both wines demonstrate the personality of their particular vintage. The **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon** (650 cases; 100% Cabernet Sauvignon) is more supple, open-knit and flamboyant, revealing notes of espresso roast, chocolate, sweet red and black currants and loamy soil. This beautifully textured, opulent, showy Cabernet should drink well for 10-15 years. There are 500 cases of the **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon**

(again 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from the estate vineyards in Yountville). Slightly denser, more structured, tannic and backward than the 2007, it is a full-bodied effort with notes of black currants, heady glycerin levels, and more toasty oak in the background (even though the percentage of new French oak used is essentially the same in each cuvée). The 2008 requires patience as 2-3 years of cellaring will be beneficial. It should drink well over the following 15 or more years. Tel. (707) 944-0910

KENEFICK RANCH WINERY	2007	CABERNET FRANC CAITLIN'S SELECT	CALISTOGA	(\$52.00)	RED	91
KENEFICK RANCH WINERY	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON CHRIS'S CUVÉE ESTATE	NAPA	(\$60.00)	RED	87
KENEFICK RANCH WINERY	2007	MERLOT ESTATE	NAPA	(\$42.00)	RED	88
KENEFICK RANCH WINERY	2006	PICKETT ROAD PROPRIETARY RED	NAPA	(\$55.00)	RED	90

A blend of 91% Cabernet Franc, 6% Merlot and 3% Cabernet Sauvignon, the **2007 Cabernet Franc Caitlin's Select** reveals a dark ruby/purple color along with sweet blueberry, floral-infused aromatics, ripe tannin, medium body, a beautiful intensity and layered fruit without any heaviness or rusticity. This seamless red should drink well for a decade. The medium dark ruby/plum-tinged **2007 Merlot Estate** possesses silky cola, berry fruit and herb notes, not a great deal of concentration but enough for a satisfying glass of wine and soft tannins. Enjoy it over the next 3-4 years. Exhibiting a deeper ruby/plum/purple color, the **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Chris's Cuvée** offers notes of new saddle leather, earth, black currants and cherries.

The initial attack is impressive, but the wine falls off somewhat in the mouth, which is atypical for a 2007. This blend of 83% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12.5% Merlot and the rest Petit Verdot is a good, solidly made but uninspiring effort. Drink it over the next 10 years. Lastly, the **2006 Pickett Road Proprietary Red** is composed of 43% Merlot, 43% Petit Verdot, 7% Cabernet Franc and 7% Cabernet Sauvignon. It displays the deepest purple color of this quartet (explained by the Petit Verdot component) in addition to a round, generous texture, good body, depth, complexity and richness and overall more interest than all but the Cabernet Franc. It should drink well for a decade or more. Tel. (707) 942-6175; Fax (707) 942-6153

dollops of Malbec, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, the **2008 Merlot** exhibits smoky espresso roast notes intermixed with notions of cocoa, chocolate and berry fruit. A good Merlot by Napa standards, this fleshy, succulent wine should drink nicely for 7-8 years. The **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon St.-Helena** (82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Petit Verdot and 6% Malbec, all from hillside vineyards) boasts an inky/purple color as well as a boatload of *crème de cassis*, licorice, blackberry and floral aromas with a hint of wood in the background, and a full-bodied, voluptuously textured mouthfeel. This brilliant Cabernet should drink well for two decades or more. The **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa** (80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Merlot and the rest Malbec, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc) shares a similar dark ruby/purple color (not as opaque

as the St. Helena), a more muted nose revealing notions of graphite and red and black currants, and a leaner, shorter finish. Consume it over the next 4-8 years. The flagship red wine, the **2008 Profile**, is a blend of 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Petit Verdot, 6% Malbec and 1% Cabernet Franc. Dusty, loamy soil aromas intermixed with graphite, blueberry, blackberry, charcoal and camphor jump from the glass of this complex, inky/purple-colored offering. Full-bodied and backward with undeniable potential, this young red classic Napa blend of Bordeaux grapes should hit its stride in 4-5 years and last for three decades. A compelling wine, it is further evidence of the remarkable progress Merryvale has made over the last decade. Moreover, it is the finest wine they have ever produced. Tel. (707) 963-2225

MERUS	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	NAPA	(\$150.00)	RED	93+
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Patience, patience, and more patience is mandated by the 2008. A blend of 99% Cabernet Sauvignon, .5% Malbec and .5% Petit Verdot reveals an opaque blue/purple color in addition to abundant graphite, vanillin, blueberry and blackberry aromas. Built for the long haul, it is

a concentrated, dense, promising Cabernet along the lines of the great wines made at Merus since its founding by Mark Herold (who is now pursuing other projects). Give it 4-5 years of cellaring and drink it over the following 25-30 years. Tel. (707) 251-5551

METEOR VINEYARD	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON PERSEID	NAPA	(\$125.00)	RED	93
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METEOR VINEYARD	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON RESERVE	NAPA	(\$300.00)	RED	95+
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Meteor's cool climate, rocky vineyard in the Coombsville area of the southern Napa Valley is of volcanic origin. The **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Perseid** (100% Cabernet Sauvignon) exhibits abundant aromas of crushed rock, charcoal, *crème de cassis* and subtle smoke in a ripe, full-bodied, exuberant style with terrific intensity, texture and concentration. There is not a hard edge to be found in this pure, dramatic Cabernet. It should drink well for 15 or more years. While there is not

much made, the **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve** is an exceptional wine (100 cases produced from Clone 7). Aged 22 months in 100% new French oak, the wood component is completely concealed by the cascade of dense blackberry and cassis fruit intermixed with licorice, camphor and spice box. This full-bodied, powerful, opulent wine needs 2-3 years of cellaring and should last for 25+. Tel. (707) 258-2900; Fax (707) 258-0200

MIRROR WINE CO.	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	NAPA	(\$75.00)	RED	91
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MIRROR WINE CO.	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	NAPA	(\$75.00)	RED	91
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A blend of St. Helena and Oakville fruit aged 20 months in 50% new French oak casks, the **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon** displays sweet black cherry and black currant fruit intermixed with hints of herbs, underbrush and vanilla. Its opulence, full-bodied richness, endearing, layered texture and impressive purity as well as finish suggest this showy 2007 should keep for 10-15+ years. More closed and slightly

denser, the **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon** exhibits an impressively saturated ruby/plum/purple color as well as a heady concoction of licorice, tar, black currants, cedar and spice box aromas in the restrained but impressive aromatics. Full-bodied, deep and rich, 1-2 years of cellaring will be beneficial and the wine should keep for 15+ years. Tel. (707) 968-5052; Fax (707) 968-5154

MOLNAR FAMILY WINERY	2008	CHARDONNAY POSEIDON'S VYD.	CARNEROS	(\$30.00)	WHITE	87
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MOLNAR FAMILY WINERY	2008	PINOT NOIR POSEIDON'S VYD.	CARNEROS	(\$35.00)	RED	90
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The **2008 Chardonnay Poseidon's Vineyard** exhibits a hint of oak intermixed with exotic tropical fruit, candied grapefruit and nectarine notes. It is a crisp, fresh, medium-bodied Chardonnay to enjoy over the next 1-2 years. Produced primarily from Dijon clones, the **2008 Pinot**

Noir Poseidon's Vineyard exhibits a subtle note of wood spice intermixed with plum, cherry and cola characteristics, medium body, silky tannins and excellent length as well as overall equilibrium. This seductive, complex Pinot should drink well for 3-4 years. Tel. (707) 255-2929

ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	NAPA	(\$29.00)	RED	89
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ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	OAKVILLE	(\$45.00)	RED	89+
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ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	OAKVILLE	(\$45.00)	RED	91
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ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY	2008	CHARDONNAY	NAPA	(\$20.00)	WHITE	85
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ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY	2008	CHARDONNAY RESERVE	NAPA	(\$40.00)	WHITE	86
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ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY	2008	FUME BLANC	NAPA	(\$20.00)	WHITE	86
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Green, freshly mowed grass, herbs and a hint of melon are present in the **2008 Fumé Blanc**. The wine displays nice texture, medium body, and a crisp but short finish. It does represent a fair value, so drink it over the next year. The **2008 Chardonnay Napa** has a slightly shy nose, with hints of white currants, white peach, and some background pear followed by a medium-bodied, crisp, pleasant but uninspiring wine. The **2008 Chardonnay Reserve** exhibits hints of caramelized tropical fruits, a touch of clarified butter, and subtle oak. It is light gold in color, with a medium-bodied palate, tart acids, and a surprisingly short finish. These whites are a far cry from the classics that were made by the Mondavi family.

drinking over the next decade. The **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa**, Mondavi's least expensive Cabernet Sauvignon, is 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Merlot, and the rest Cabernet Franc and other grapes. It has a healthy deep ruby/purple color, with a pleasant nose of black fruits intermixed with hints of charcoal and spice, delicious, sweet fruit, medium body, and nice suppleness and flesh. Given that discounters will probably price this wine in the low twenties, this could be an outstanding bargain. It is no doubt a tribute to the talents of their director of winemaking, Genevieve Janssens. Drink it over the next decade. The **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville** (94% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Cabernet Franc) has deep black currant fruit as well as notes of lead pencil shavings, camphor, and spice. It is medium to full-bodied, elegant, and rich from beginning to end, with outstanding purity, depth, and texture. This beauty can be drunk now or cellared for 10-15 years. Tel. (888) RMONDAVI; www.robertmondavi.com

The dense ruby/purple **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville** has attractive black currant fruit as well as hints of chocolate and toast. This blend of 94% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Cabernet Franc is complex, elegant, and reassuring. Medium to full-bodied and pure, it is ideal for

CHATEAU MONTELENA	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	NAPA	(\$50.00)	RED	88
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CHATEAU MONTELENA	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	NAPA	(\$50.00)	RED	88
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CHATEAU MONTELENA	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON ESTATE	NAPA	(not yet released)	RED	(93-95)
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CHATEAU MONTELENA	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON ESTATE	NAPA	(\$125.00)	RED	94+
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CHATEAU MONTELENA	2006	CABERNET SAUVIGNON ESTATE	NAPA	(\$125.00-135.00)	RED	91+
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CHATEAU MONTELENA	2009	CHARDONNAY	NAPA	(\$35.00)	WHITE	89
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CHATEAU MONTELENA	2009	RIESLING	POTTER VALLEY	(\$22.00)	WHITE	87
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CHATEAU MONTELENA	2009	SAUVIGNON BLANC	NAPA	(\$24.00)	WHITE	87
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CHATEAU MONTELENA	2008	ZINFANDEL ESTATE	NAPA	(\$25.00-28.00)	RED	86
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CHATEAU MONTELENA	2007	ZINFANDEL ESTATE	NAPA	(\$25.00-28.00)	RED	87
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I suspect with its 5 grams of residual sugar, Montelena's **2009 Riesling** from **Potter Valley** is a very popular wine that undoubtedly flies out of their tasting room. Offering abundant peach and apricot notes, it is a seductive, fresh, lively white that is best drunk over the next 1-2 years. A new offering, the stainless steel-fermented and aged **2009 Sauvignon Blanc** offers up scents of gun flint and grapefruit in a crisp, lively, non-

malolactic style. Drink it over the next 1-2 years. Speaking of non-malolactic, the reserved **2009 Chardonnay** exhibits delicate pear and honeysuckle notes as well as crisp, fresh acidity, medium body and a steely purity. This is often referred to as the Ric Forman style, but Montelena has been doing it as long as Ric has (as have such legendary wineries as Stony Hill).

Drink it over the next decade. The **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville** plays it closer to the vest than either the Cabernet Franc or Zinfandel Field Blend. Locked and loaded, it possesses plenty of black currant fruit intermixed with hints of earth and oak as well as a juicy, full-bodied mouthfeel. This youthful, still grapy wine spent 19 months in French oak. It has lots of potential, but needs to be forgotten for 3-4 years and should age for 15-20 years thereafter. The **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville**

exhibits a similar opaque purple color and appears to be slightly richer than the 2007, as preposterous as that may sound. This thick, unctuously textured Cabernet is loaded with *crème de cassis*, charcoal, earth and spice characteristics and displays an explosively long finish. Both vintages are great, but the 2008 might nudge out the 2007. However, this will not be definitively decided for 10-15 years. This is another 20-year wine. Tel. (707) 944-9665; Fax (707) 944-9326

OAKVILLE TERRACES 2007 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

From hillside vineyards overlooking Oakville, this stylish, surprisingly evolved **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon** displays a plum/garnet color along with a big, sweet nose of roasted herbs, beet root, plum, anise and Asian

spices. The evolved, complex aromatics are followed by a fully mature wine with low acidity, silky tannins, medium to full body and an appealing style. Enjoy it over the next 7-8 years. www.oakvilliterraces.com

O'BRIEN ESTATE	2008	CHARDONNAY	OAK KNOLL	(\$35.00)	WHITE	88
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2008	CHARDONNAY RESERVE	OAK KNOLL	(\$60.00)	WHITE	90
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2008	MERLOT ESTATE	OAK KNOLL	(\$42.00)	RED	93
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2007	MERLOT ESTATE	OAK KNOLL	(\$42.00)	RED	92
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2008	MERLOT RESERVE	OAK KNOLL	(\$95.00)	RED	94
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2008	PASSION OF THE SOUL	OAK KNOLL DISTRICT	(\$65.00)	RED	91+
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2008	ROMANCE OF THE HEART PROPRIETARY RED	OAK KNOLL DISTRICT	(\$50.00)	RED	91
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2007	ROMANCE OF THE HEART PROPRIETARY RED	OAK KNOLL DISTRICT	(\$50.00)	RED	93
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2008	SEDUCTION PROPRIETARY RED	OAK KNOLL DISTRICT	(\$48.00)	RED	94
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2007	SEDUCTION PROPRIETARY RED	OAK KNOLL DISTRICT	(\$45.00)	RED	94
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2008	UNRESTRAINED RESERVE	OAK KNOLL DISTRICT	(\$125.00)	RED	93+
O'BRIEN ESTATE	2007	UNRESTRAINED RESERVE	OAK KNOLL DISTRICT	(\$125.00)	RED	94+

Two excellent whites have emerged from O'Brien Estate. The less expensive **2008 Chardonnay's** light green/gold color is followed by tropical fruit, peach, pear and lemon blossom aromas and flavors. Medium-bodied, refreshing and loaded with fruit, it can be enjoyed over the next 1-3 years. The **2008 Chardonnay Reserve** is a more steely, mineral-laced white revealing full body, good acidity, excellent concentration and fruit and a lighter color with a more greenish hue (always a good sign). It is one of the finest Napa Chardonnays I tasted on my recent trip.

flattering aromatics, an opulent mouthfeel, sweet tannins, and terrific purity and length. This should be drunk over the next decade.

This estate doesn't make things easy, with two more proprietary wines called **Seduction**. Another dense purple wine, the **2008 Seduction** displays blueberries, spring flowers, and *crème de cassis* in a beautifully scented style. Silky smooth, "seductive," rich, and opulent, this altogether hedonistic and intellectual turn-on should be drunk over the next decade. The **2007 Seduction** exhibits more graphite, licorice, black currant, and blackberry, with some floral underpinnings. I don't like it better or worse than the 2008. Slightly more restrained, this gorgeous, medium to full-bodied wine is another impressive example of Napa viticulture at an attractive price point.

All three Merlots come from the southern Oak Knoll section of Napa Valley and all three are brilliant efforts that are as good as Merlot can be. The **2008 Merlot** shocked me with its big, chocolaty, spicy nose with hints of Asian spices, chocolate-covered coffee beans, red and black fruits, and its heady, luxurious, full-bodied mouthfeel. This wine should drink well for a decade. The **2007 Merlot** plays it closer to the vest. It possesses terrific concentration, not quite the spice profile of the 2008, but a big, opulent, classic style that we rarely see these days from California. The limited production **2008 Merlot Reserve** is a bumped-up, richer version of the regular offering. It boasts a dense purple color, loads of fruit, concentration and opulence, and a heady, long finish. It's a stunning wine if you can find any.

Lastly, O'Brien's flagship wines (again from their holdings in the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley) are the 2007 and 2008 **Unrestrained Reserve**. The **2008** is a blend of 49% Cabernet Franc, 44% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 7% Merlot. Surprisingly, this wine seems more shy than any of the others in its aromatics, but I'm sure there's a lot under the surface. The color is a healthy dark ruby/purple, and the wine hints of black cherry liqueur, black currant, camphor and camphor. In the mouth, it is juicy, full-bodied, opulent, and impossible to resist. It is a layered, concentrated, big wine but extremely well-balanced and pure. It should drink well for up to 15 or 20 years. The **2007 Unrestrained Reserve** (with the same blend of Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot) shares a similarly restrained character with its younger sibling. I don't know what the explanation is. Inky purple, with hints of plum, Asian spice, black currants, jammy blackberries, and some licorice and graphite, the wine has fabulous richness, full-bodied power, and terrific intensity, purity and texture. All of these wines merit serious attention and are great examples of both vintages, demonstrating how close 2007 and 2008 can be in the hands of top winemakers with super *terroirs*. Tel. (707) 252-8463; www.obrienestate.com

The **2008 Passion of the Soul**, which is a Cabernet Sauvignon from the Napa Valley, boasts a dense ruby/purple color and oodles of cassis, licorice, and smoke. Full-bodied, concentrated and impressively built, it should drink nicely for another 15 or more years.

Two more winners from O'Brien are their proprietary reds called **Romance of The Heart**, both blends of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Cabernet Franc. The **2008** is dense ruby/purple, with an opulent, juicy mouthfeel and loads of purity, texture, and length. It is a sexy wine for drinking now and over the next 7-10 years. The deep purple **2007 Romance of the Heart** has more *crème de cassis* and even more

OBSIDIAN RIDGE	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON RED HILLS	LAKE COUNTY	(\$30.00)	RED	89+
OBSIDIAN RIDGE	2007	HALF MILE PROPRIETARY RED	LAKE COUNTY	(\$50.00)	RED	93

Well-known winemaker Michael Terrien is the force behind these two interesting offerings from Lake County. The **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Red Hills** exhibits minty, black currant fruit intermixed with hints of crushed rocks, spice and sweet tannin. It is an elegant, nicely-endowed, mid-weight Cabernet Sauvignon to drink over the next 7-8 years. A blockbuster effort is the **2007 Half Mile Proprietary**

Red, a blend of equal parts Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. Its inky/purple color is followed by notes of graphite, violets, blueberries, blackberries and espresso. This complex, full-bodied red is a terrific effort from Lake County. Hopefully, the Petit Verdot will remain as sweet as it is at present. Drink this serious wine over the next decade or more. No telephone number available.

O'SHAUGHNESSY	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	HOWELL MOUNTAIN	(\$75.00)	RED	94+
O'SHAUGHNESSY	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	MT. VEEDER	(\$95.00)	RED	98

This tiny estate has turned out a beautiful Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon and a phenomenal Mt. Veeder that I certainly underrated when I tasted it from barrel last year. The **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain** is comprised of 81% Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest six other grapes - Merlot, Malbec, St. Macaire (how often do you see that!), Petit Verdot, Carmener, and Cabernet Franc - and is aged 20 months in three-fourths French oak. It has a dense purple color, a wonderful, crystalline nose of crushed rock, camphor, *crème de cassis* and spring flowers, and a full-bodied mouthfeel. The tannins are moderately high, but they are soft and well-integrated. This is a wine of

tremendous intensity and plenty of up-side. Give this wine 2-3 years of bottle age and drink it over the following 20-25 years. Absolutely prodigious is the **2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Mt. Veeder** (500 cases of 100% Cabernet Sauvignon off a site west of Oakville). Dense bluish purple to the rim, with a sensational nose of forest, flowers, graphite, and blueberry liqueur intermixed with *crème de cassis* and burning embers/charcoal, this wine has fabulous fruit, a remarkably full-bodied texture, great purity, and a finish that goes on for close to 50+ seconds. This is an awesome 2008 and one of the great wines of the vintage. It should drink well for 25+ years. Tel. (707) 965-2898; Fax (707) 965-3010

OUTPOST	2009	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	HOWELL MTN.	(not yet released)	RED	(91-93)
OUTPOST	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	HOWELL MTN.	(\$65.00)	RED	94+
OUTPOST	2009	CABERNET SAUVIGNON TRUE VYD.	HOWELL MTN.	(not yet released)	RED	(94-96)
OUTPOST	2008	CABERNET SAUVIGNON TRUE VYD.	HOWELL MTN.	(\$85.00)	RED	96