

# Time to Get Serious with Robert Parker About *Staten Family Reserve Cabernets!*

Field Stone's "Staten Family Reserve" Cabernet Sauvignon Mistaken for Mouton-Rothschild in Recent Parker Tasting of Best California '85s:

## FIELD STONE 1985 CABERNET SAUVIGNON STATEN FAMILY RESERVE SONOMA 90

In this tasting I was aware that a 1985 Mouton-Rothschild has been inserted as a ringer, and I was convinced the 1985 Field Stone Staten Family Reserve was the Mouton given its cedary, sweet, vanillin, flamboyant style. Deep and full-bodied, display-

gobs of sweet, expansive fruit, light tannin, and a velvety texture, this wine is fully mature yet capable of lasting another decade. The underrated, often overlooked Field Stone winery has turned out a sleeper of the vintage! [\*Emphasis added.]

CHAPPELLET	1985	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	NAPA	76
This is a dark ruby-colored wine with no bouquet other than dusty, vague, red fruit scents. Clipped and eviscerated, with lean, tough, hard tannin, high acidity, and an angular, sharp personality, this wine is		devoid of charm, fruit, and flesh. While it will keep for decades, it will never provide any pleasure.		
CLOS DU VAL	1985	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	NAPA	87
Little bouquet emerges from this dark ruby-colored wine, but the attractive purity of black-cherry fruit intertwined with spicy oak is pleasing. The wine possesses fine balance and delineation, excellent richness, light to moderate tannin, and a fine finish. Although not the		most complex or aromatically profound Cabernet, it is a solidly made, fine effort from this vintage. It should continue to drink well for 7-8 years.		
B.R. COHN	1985	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	OLIVE HILL VINEYARD	92
This wine has been consistently impressive and my rating has never deviated by more than two points. In the March, 1995 tasting, the wine was still very youthful, with almost a barrel sample-like, saturated purple color, and a big, rich, jammy, cassis nose intertwined with scents of herbs and smoky oak. Full-bodied, sweet, pure, and		expansive, with well-integrated acidity and soft tannin, this large-scaled, rich wine can be drunk now, but it remains extremely young and unevolved. It will keep for another 15+ years. It is unquestionably one of the stars of the vintage.		
DIAMOND CREEK	1985	CABERNET SAUVIGNON GRAVELLY MEADOW	NAPA	76
DIAMOND CREEK	1985	CABERNET SAUVIGNON RED ROCK TERRACE	NAPA	74
DIAMOND CREEK	1985	CABERNET SAUVIGNON VOLCANIC HILL	NAPA	58
I have said before that 1984 was the last impressive vintage for Diamond Creek's Cabernet Sauvignons, but never would I have believed these three wines would show so miserably. Perfectly stored, with excellent fills and no signs of heat abuse, the 1985 Volcanic Hill was the worst wine of the entire tasting. It exhibited a medium purple color, a sour, oaky aroma with a noticeable vegetal character, painfully tannic, harsh flavors, and a hollow, fruitless personality. I remember stating that the barrel sample had "a hole in the middle, and may be in an awkward stage," but this is a disappointing, thin, harsh Cabernet Sauvignon with no future. The 1985 Red Rock Terrace possessed a slightly better color, some ripe fruit, an earthy, damp, woody nose, a lean, tart, angular personality, and astringent tannin in the finish. The		wine is attenuated, lacks concentration and ripeness, and will continue to dry out. The best of this trio (which is what I thought based on barrel tastings) is the 1985 Gravelly Meadow. Although there is a touch of sour milk and dirty wood in the nose, the wine possesses more fruit and ripeness, as well as an elegant, medium-bodied personality. The tannin is excessive, but it is better integrated than in either the Red Rock Terrace or Volcanic Hill. The hard, tough finish suggests the fruit will fade before the tannin melts away. For me, Diamond Creek's 1974s, 1976s, and 1978s remain among the most extraordinary Cabernet Sauvignons I have ever drunk, making these performances shocking.		
DOMINUS	1985	PROPRIETARY RED WINE	NAPA	91
The 1985 Dominus stands out for its smoky, ripe cassis, earthy nose, sweet, full-bodied, concentrated flavors, and opulently long, chewy finish. It was the most forward, precocious example of this wine I have yet tasted. Most recent tastings have suggested the wine needed		further aging. This bottling exhibited the plush, velvety texture that proprietor Christian Moueix achieves in top Pomerol vintages. The 1985 Dominus should continue to drink well for another 15-20 years.		
DUCKHORN	1985	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	NAPA	82
This compact, compressed Cabernet Sauvignon exhibited little bouquet (sterile filtered?). Some spice and vague red fruit notes in the background were all that could be detected. Medium-bodied, with		decent to above average concentration, the wine is well-made and correct, but lean, unexciting, and one-dimensional. Drink it over the next 5-8 years.		
DUNN VINEYARDS	1985	CABERNET SAUVIGNON	NAPA	88+?
DUNN VINEYARDS	1985	CABERNET SAUVIGNON HOWELL MOUNTAIN	NAPA	90+

## MOUTON ROTHSCHILD 1985 PAUILLAC FRANCE 85

Yes, I know, this wine cannot possibly merit a score this low. But the purpose of this report is to share in the most candid fashion as possible my impressions and raw tasting notes. As I indicated earlier I mistook the 1985 Field Stone Staten Family Reserve for the Mouton. I thought the Mouton was a relatively light, fully mature 1985 California Cabernet. My notes read, "herbal, spicy, ready

to drink, sweet, round, attractive, but straightforward and not very concentrated." I cannot believe this wine did not perform better, but it did not show well in this flight of ten 1985 California Cabernet Sauvignons. It was blown away by the likes of the Groth regular bottling, Spottswoode, Caymus Special Selection, Field Stone, and Joseph Phelps Eisele Vineyard. C'est la vie. [\*Emphasis added.]