

NOVEMBER WINES, 2007

All wines we taste and review are current releases and can be found and purchased locally

SENSATIONAL SYRAH

For November, the panel tasted through seven delightful Syrahs
The tasting took place Tuesday, October 16

GOT FOOD? PAIRINGS TO PLAY WITH

Syrahs are bold but comfortable wines to drink. They hold their own beautifully with big, flavorful foods.

- Stews of any sort – big, hearty ones or rich, flavorful ones
- Pastas with pesto or a nice rich marinara sauce
- Game meats, roasted lamb, anything cooked in red wine sauce, and yes, roast turkey!

THE WINES!

WINES LISTED IN THE ORDER TASTED – TASTING REVIEWS FOLLOW

Wine A	■	2004 KELLER ESTATE	Sonoma Coast	\$36
Wine B	■	2005 SUNCE WINERY	Dry Creek Valley	\$28
Wine C	■	2004 FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA	Dry Creek Valley	\$29
Wine D	■	2005 CLINE CELLARS “Cool Climate”	Sonoma Coast	\$16
Wine E	■	2003 ARMAGH VINEYARD	Sonoma Coast	\$25
Wine F	■	2004 CLINE CELLARS “Los Carneros”	Carneros	\$28
Wine G	■	2003 ADOBE ROAD	Dry Creek Valley	\$38

➤ *The prices listed are winery suggested retail prices.* ↵

“FAVORITE”

2 for Wine B ✧ 3 for Wine C ✧ 2 for Wine D ✧ 1 for Wine E ✧ 1 for Wine F

“BEST VALUE”

1 for Wine B ✧ 4 for Wine C ✧ 3 for Wine D ✧ 1 for Wine F

“Breaking the code” ❖ Terms used in the reviews that follow:

Balance ➤ Refers to Fruit, Acid and Tannin. When they are all perceivable in equal amounts and one doesn't appear to be excessive or lacking, the wine is in “balance”.

Hot ➤ refers to percentage of alcohol. If the alcohol is noticeable, it's not in “balance” and makes the wine unpleasant or “hot”. This can be perceived in both aroma (think Vodka), and taste. – a bitter, peppery and very fruity, often 'sweet', sensation – even in a 'dry' wine. It can also be more viscous – or 'full' bodied.

According to each individual taster's perception, every wine will have the following self-explanatory terms to describe the **Fruit, Acid** and **Tannin**.

Ideal (or “just right”)

'Slightly' excessive or 'Slightly' lacking,

Excessive or **Lacking** (more than 'slightly')

'Very' excessive or 'Very' lacking (definitely too much or too little)

Over The Top (“OTT”) (self-explanatory)

To make the Tasting Panel results more helpful and useful to you,
You'll find an (**F**) for **Favorite**, and a (**V**) for **Value pick** at the end of each Tasting Panelist's summary comments.

ENJOY THE REVIEWS – ENJOY THE JOURNEY!



WINE "A"

2004 KELLER ESTATE

Sonoma Coast

CA

\$36

14.9% alcohol

Keller Estate is the southernmost winery in the Sonoma Coast appellation. Wind and fog howl in from both San Pablo Bay and the ocean, through a gap in the coastal hills, making grape growing a major challenge. This syrah was aged for 15 months in 20% new French oak barrels, and only free-run, un-pressed wine was used for this bottling of 907 cases.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Long finish
"Impression of sweetness. This could be a dessert wine, nice with chocolate or a cream cheese."
- Cory** **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Long finish.
"I liked this wine, though I thought it was a bit 'hot' in the finish. Overall, the raspberry fruit and long, consistent finish won me over. Good with Asian Fusion type food."
- Donna** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
"I wasn't particularly impressed with this wine. I expect more flavor from a Syrah so didn't find this too appealing."
- James** **Fruit:** Excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-full body, Medium finish.
"I found this wine disappointing – hot, jammy and too fruity for my taste."
- Mary** **Fruit** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Med-light body, Long finish
"An easy to drink wine, but not spectacular. Flavor came out in the finish, though there was a slightly bitter aftertaste."
- Jim** **Fruit:** excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Long finish
"A touch of sweetness, but a mouth-filling wine, which then tended toward some bitterness in the finish."
- Rob** **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Med-full body, Med-long finish.
"Surprisingly, a lot of fruit, given the smoky aroma. Nice, solid selection. I like it. Makes me want to fire up the barbecue."
- Von** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Med-long finish
"Nice hints of raspberry and cherry, but found this wine a little too hot. Would hold its own with big sauces, stews, tomato dishes."

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit:** Lacking **Acid and Tannin:** Both ideal / Med-light body, Med-short finish
"It grew on me as I sipped, but the flavor was light and slightly bitter and the finish was too short. This wine isn't one I'd buy."



WINE "B"

2005 SUNCE WINERY *Pena Creek Vineyard* \$28
Dry Creek Valley CA 14.3% alcohol

Suncé, which means "sun" in Croatian, is a small production, family winery and vineyard, owned by Janae and Frane Franicevic. Frane is also the winemaker and bottles a surprisingly range of varietals. Only 360 cases of this warm-climate Syrah were produced, and this single vineyard wine spent 13 months aging in French oak barrels.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit:** Lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Excessive / Medium bodied, Long finish
"Hearty wine, very long finish, nice on the tongue. This is a barbecue wine!" (F, V)
- Cory** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-long finish.
"Aromas of raspberry, plum, black cherry. Elegant and subtle wine with hints of dark red fruit, cinnamon and clove. A wine that beckons you to sip some more."
- Donna** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Med-long finish
"Soft tannins. An impression of 'warmth'. Smooth, velvety and appealing."
- James** **Fruit:** slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Med-light body, Medium finish.
"Very slight bitterness in finish. To me it had insufficient body and flavor to support the alcohol level."
- Mary** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly lacking; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-full body, Long finish
"If you like a lot of pepper, then you'll enjoy this wine. Each sip was like a mouthful of pepper. Slight bitterness in the finish, but it could be good with heavily spiced meat."
- Jim** **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Long finish
"Aromas of sweet cherry. A pleasant wine, nice fruit and good for sipping. The fruit fades a little on the finish."
- Rob** **Fruit:** Lacking; **Acid:** Excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Short finish
(Rob had no comments on this wine. VH)
- Von** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-long finish
"I thoroughly enjoyed this wine. It was balanced, and each sip I took made me look forward to the next one. I'd serve this with pastas, light tomato sauces and veggie pot pies." (F)

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Med-light body, Med-long finish
"This is a pleasant wine, a touch of pepper, and nice flavors in the finish."



WINE “C”

2004 FRANCIS COPPOLA Reserve \$29
Dry Creek Valley CA 14.3% alcohol

Newly named Rosso & Bianco Winery, this is Francis Coppola's venture into Sonoma County. Grapes for this Syrah are a product of both the warmer Dry Creek Valley and the cooler, marine-influenced climate of the Russian River. The wine is co-fermented with a small percentage of Viognier, just as it is in the Rhone Valley and it has spent 18 months ageing in French oak barrels.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit:** Excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Lacking / Medium body, Medium finish
“An earthy, musty character to this wine. Definitely a wine to be served with autumn meats and smoked cheeses”
- Cory** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full bodied, Medium finish.
“Aromas of raspberry, pomegranate and pepper. As I drank more of the wine, it definitely grew on my. And yes, I would buy this wine.” (V)
- Donna** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Medium finish
“Soft, full, good amount of fruit with an initial 'hit' of jamminess.”
- James** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Med-long finish.
“Great nose – spice, clove, pepper, mahogany! Very nice wine except slightly hot and with a very slight bitterness in the finish.”
- Mary** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Med-long finish
“Nicely balanced fruity wine with a bit of pepper to make it more interesting. Soft, velvety texture, good body. Great as a barbecue wine and with duck ravioli. A little hot in the finish, but I really enjoyed it!” (F, V)
- Jim** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly lacking; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-short finish.
“Seems a bit flat at first, but improves as it coats the tongue with more tastes. A nice finish, but too brief.”
- Rob** **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly excessive; **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Full bodied, Long finish.
“Hard not to like this one if you like big wines that don't apologize for having lots of flavor, texture and mouthfeel.” (F, V)
- Von** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Med-long finish
“Ripe fruit aromas. Nice rich wine, but with slight bitter notes (alcohol heat?). Needs food.”

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Medium finish
“I like this wine. This is a big wine, and the richer fruit and fuller body make it a great drinking wine. Would be good with tomato dishes. (F, V)



WINE "D"

2005 CLINE CELLARS "Cool Climate"
Sonoma Coast CA

\$16
13.5% alcohol

In 1982, Fred Cline started Cline Cellars, and he owns and controls some of the oldest surviving vines in California. In 1991, Cline planted Syrah vines in the Carneros region and in 1997, he planted Syrah in an even cooler growing area in eastern Petaluma, resulting in a bottling of this "Cool Climate" Syrah. This wine as aged for 14 months in American oak

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All Excessive / Full body
"Fruity, strong flavor and acidic. Not my favorite – too hot."
- Cory** **Fruit and Tannin:** Excessive; **Acid:** Ideal / Medium body
"I didn't like this wine. I felt as though it was trying too hard. Too fruity, too much like cherry cola, and the balance was off. It fights with itself."
- Donna** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Medium finish
"I could almost 'chew' this wine -- so I loved it. Finish was reasonably long, but not as long as I expected from the big, dark fruit of this wine. I really liked the 'bigness', the chewiness along with the softness. Felt nicely decadent." (F,V)
- James** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-long finish.
"Pepper and eucalyptus aromas. A rugged wine, very slightly vegetal now, but great balance. give it 5 years. It's going to be great!" (F, V)
- Mary** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid:** slightly lacking; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Full bodied, Long finish.
"I like fuller, heavy wines sometimes, but this was over the top. 'Hot', some bitterness, strong tobacco, out of balance."
- Jim** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Medium finish
"Not-so-pleasant first impression. A little rough, dry and puckery."
- Rob** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Med-long finish.
"Earthy and a bit harsh, but would go well with lamb or something gamey."
- Von** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Long finish
"Aromas of forest fruit and raspberry. A big, flavorful, 'out there' wine – a better food than sipping wine. For food, I think of big stews, Italian dishes, barbecue ribs. Just a touch of bitter / pepper in the finish. " (V)

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Light bodied, Med-long finish
"Really ripe, raisiny fruit. Full yet soft, with a hint of smoke in the long finish. I might buy it."

WINE “E”



 **Armagh** VINEYARD

2003 ARMAGH VINEYARD

Sonoma Coast

CA

\$25

13.7% alcohol

Armagh Vineyard (ar-ma) is named after County Armagh, Ireland, and the name connects and carries on the family's ancestry through the current owners, Jim and Gayle Crayne. The, warm, southern exposure, 11-acre vineyard is located in Chileno Valley, between Petaluma and Tomales Bay. Only 1 acre is planted to Syrah, and produces 239 cases. This wine is aged for 18 months in French oak barrels and is bottled unfiltered.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All very excessive / Medium body, Short finish
“Aroma is off-putting – smoke and tobacco. Hard to enjoy this wine.”
- Cory** **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Med- full body, Med-long finish.
“A fuller bodied, well balanced, fruit forward wine with a very nice finish that welcomes you back for more. A very nice mouthfeel, with pomegranate fruit, that would go well with hearty foods.” (F)
- Donna** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
“Off odors, although the taste is surprisingly good – much better than it smells. It would go with autumn meats, like goose, lamb or duck.”
- James** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Medium finish.
“The flavors and balance are excellent, but the sulfur nose is overpowering. If the sulfur dissipates, this wine should become excellent.”
- Mary** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid:** excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish.
“Gorgeous color. It had a bell pepper, green bean nose, but it would be a good food wine. Perhaps something spicy like barbecue ribs, Chinese, Thai or Indian food.”
- Jim** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish
“Unfortunate nose, but acceptable taste – very dry and peppery. Long, delicious finish.”
- Rob** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Very full bodied, Long finish
“Very earthy nose, very good color. A bit hot, but try with big meat dishes or hard cheese.”
- Von** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
“Sulfur in the nose threw me off at first and influenced the taste elements of fruit, acid and tannin, making them disjointed. The wine became better with time and swirling.”

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Med-long finish
“Earthy not very inviting nose. Once past that, it's a fruity, full wine that could stand on its own. Has a nice, rich aftertaste and I'd buy it.”



WINE "F"

2004 CLINE CELLARS
Carneros

"Los Carneros"
CA

\$28
15.0% alcohol

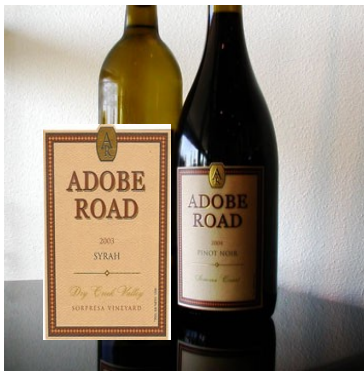
This wine from Cline Cellars, was selected to compare two wines from the same producer, made by the same winemaker, from grapes grown in different vineyards, with very similar cool growing conditions, but different exposures, elevations and soils (i.e. 'terroirs'). This wine ("F"), made from grapes grown in the Carneros, spent 18 months aging in French oak vs. 14 months in American oak for Wine "D"

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All very excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
"Ripe, jammy aromas. Wine is easy to drink – a nice picnic wine."
- Cory** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Long finish.
"I thought this wine to be very well balanced wine with great mouthfeel, good structure and fruit that lingers in the long finish. A very decent quaff. Good with butternut squash ravioli or stews. Needs a bit more time in bottle – drink after 2009."
- Donna** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Medium finish
"Too hot / high alcohol. Dark fruit – cherry, blackberry aromas. Not enough body for lamb, duck, etc, but good with meatloaf."
- James** **Fruit:** slightly excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Medium finish.
"Aromas of over-ripe fruit. Wine itself too ripe – hot. Slight bitterness in finish."
- Mary** **Fruit and Tannin:** Ideal; **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish.
"I thought this wine had potential. It had a silky texture and finish, some pepper and sweetness, but it was a bit too hot. Someone who enjoys a big wine would have reason to try this one."
- Jim** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Med-long finish
"A very nice wine – almost Cabernet-ish. I'd drink it regularly." (F. V)
- Rob** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
"Nose is a bit off and that carries into the flavors. It's a bit rustic, but not a bad wine, and would be better with food."
- Von** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish
"A mouthful – big wine! Got my attention with the first sip. Needs a hearty stew. Ripe fruit lingered on and on, but it had some hotness and slight bitterness."

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Med-light body, Medium finish
"This is a lovely wine. Sort of a chameleon. It starts with a peppery caramel and shifts from fruit to caramel. I'd buy it."



WINE "G"

2003 ADOBE ROAD
Sonoma Coast

"Sorpresa Vineyard"
CA

\$38.
15.3% alcohol

Adobe Road is a small, family winery owned by renowned sports car racer and team owner Kevin Buckler and his wife, Debra. Adobe Road bottled its first wines in 1999. A single vineyard is the source of grapes for this Syrah which aged for 30 months in both French and American oak. This wine is unfinned and unfiltered and only 300 cases were produced.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Ingrid** **Fruit:** Very excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Medium finish
"Nice – would work as a dinner wine. This would be my house wine. Excellent"
- Cory** **Fruit:** Excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Med- full body, Med-long finish.
"Fruit bomb – way too sweet and too much alcohol – hot. Aromas of popcorn and cherry cola. I would not buy this wine. "
- Donna** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Medium finish
"Wonderful nose – floral without being perfumy. Rose petals warmed in the sun on cedar planks with raspberry hints."
- James** **Fruit:** Excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Medium finish.
"Cedar and spice aromas. Over-ripe and hot. Doesn't come together."
- Mary** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish.
"Strange nose – string beans. Very nice wine, full flavor. Italian food, pork or other meat with mustard sauce. I keep getting a hot finish, but I like this wine."
- Jim** **Fruit and Tannin:** Excessive; **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish
"Aroma of lovely berries but wine is too sweet and puckery for me."
- Rob** **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly excessive; **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Med-full bodied
" This wine was a disappointment. Gorgeous color, fruit in the nose, but very earthy and a bit rough. Won't buy this one."
- Von** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Med-long finish
"Delicious and seductive. Good for sipping and with food. A mouth filling wine with a silky texture. Finish lingers and makes me want another sip. There's a hint of alcohol warmth in there, but the fruit is still fresh and doesn't have the overly-ripe sweetness and that I so much dislike." (F)

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Medium finish
"Smoky and Drinkable. I like it and would probably buy it. Could go with lots of foods."

AND FINALLY...

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO...

THE SUPPORTERS / ENABLERS, WHO HAVE GIVEN THE PANEL THE NECESSARY BOOST TO HELP IT FLY.

- Linda and Donna, owners of **PELICAN GALLERY**, Petaluma who continue to so graciously offer their beautiful gallery for our tastings. Linda is our much appreciated, ongoing guest panel member.

**SEE YOU NEXT MONTH FOR MORE
WINES TO EXPLORE,
MORE WINES TO ENJOY!**

