

# JUNE / JULY 2009 WINES

► All wines we taste and review are current releases and can be found and purchased locally, at the winery or on the web ◀

## CABERNET FRANC!

FRANC-LY SPEAKING, THIS IS ONE VARIETAL THAT'S DEFINITELY WORTH EXPLORING. WHILE OFTEN THOUGHT OF AS PART OF A BORDEAUX – OR “MERITAGE” – BLEND, IT'S STARTING TO BE APPRECIATED MORE AS A MAJOR, SINGLE-VARIETAL WINE, AND IT CAN BE WONDERFUL!

### GOT FOOD?

Anything you'd eat or serve with a Cabernet Sauvignon will be equally delicious with Cabernet Franc. However...since it has softer tannins than its more aggressive cousin, it can go with even *more* foods, and makes for a surprisingly wonderful wine to just sip on as well. Try it with burgers – meat or veggie, roasted chicken, pork and lamb. It's also great with pizza and sandwiches. Versatile? Oh yes!

## THE WINES!

LISTED IN THE ORDER TASTED – TASTING REVIEWS FOLLOW

|        |   |      |                                    |                      |      |
|--------|---|------|------------------------------------|----------------------|------|
| Wine A | ☐ | 2006 | LES PENSÉES DE PALLUS              | Chinon, France       | \$20 |
| Wine B | ☐ | 2005 | HANNA <i>Bismark Mtn. Vineyard</i> | Sonoma Valley        | \$45 |
| Wine C | ☐ | 2006 | TITUS                              | Napa Valley          | \$36 |
| Wine D | ☐ | 2007 | LANG & REED                        | North Coast          | \$22 |
| Wine E | ☐ | 2006 | STONEFLY                           | Napa Valley          | \$35 |
| Wine F | ☐ | 2005 | MERRIAM <i>Jones Vineyard</i>      | Dry Creek Valley     | \$45 |
| Wine G | ☐ | 2006 | ACORN <i>Alegria Vineyards</i>     | Russian River Valley | \$23 |

➤ When possible, prices listed are winery suggested retail ◀

### “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”.

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)

ENJOY THE REVIEWS – ENJOY THE JOURNEY!

## WINE "A"



### 2006 LES PENSÉES DE PALLUS

Chinon, France

\$20

13.0 % alcohol

Winemaker Bertrand Sourdis top cuvée is Les Pensées de Pallus. While making less expensive wines for the French market, he selects his oldest and best vines to produce Les Pensées. The grapes are grown biodynamically. This wine spends 18 months in one-year old French Bordeaux barrels. It is bottled without cold stabilization, fining, or filtration.

#### PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Floral aromas of rose and violets. Soft mouthfeel with red fruit, cherry flavors and pepper and spice on the finish. I'd pair it with prime rib.*
- Cory**      **Fruit and Acid:** Balanced    **Tannin:** slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*The nose on this wine is as pleasurable as the wine itself. Violets and cherry with a hint of chocolate. A little hot on the finish but worth it. Pair with lamb chops and leek risotto.*
- James H**    **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Delightful. Perfectly balanced, crisp acidity and best of all – not hot! Great food wine. Clean, slightly smoky finish.*
- Mary**      **Fruit and Tannin:** Ideal    **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*A little raspberry and minerality. Earthy and light with a long finish. The higher acidity will make it pair well with food.*
- Mark**      **Acid:** Ideal    **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Aromas of berry, herbs and earth. A lovely, bright, fruity wine with a nice long finish. The tannins will mellow with age. A good wine for cheese and crackers.*
- Ingrid**     **Fruit:** Slightly excessive    **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Light bodied, Med-long finish  
*Soft floral and cherry aromas. A dainty wine with a smooth finish. I'd serve it with a seafood quiche or as an appetizer or first course.*
- Jim A**      **Fruit Acid and Tannin:** All slightly lacking / Med-light body, Med-long finish  
*A very soft wine, light on fruit. Better for food than for sipping – foods like a pesto pizza.*
- Linda**      **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Yummy nose of dark berries. A nicely balanced wine. I'd like a little more fruit and a little less of the tart acidity.*
- Bill**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*Intense nose of fruit and herbs. Perfectly balanced wine and all the elements persisted to the finish.*
- Von**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*A yummy, balanced and delicious wine! Fresh aromas of raspberry, cherry and violets. More European style with soft tannins. Great with food and refreshing for sipping.*



## WINE "B"

2005 HANNA  
Sonoma Valley

Bismark Mountain Vineyard

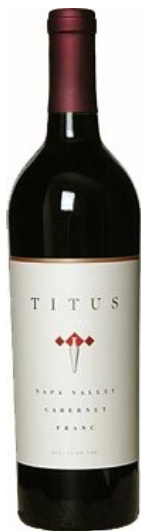
\$45  
14.8 % alcohol

Bismark mountain vineyard is located high in the Sonoma Mayacamas Mountains, above San Pablo Bay, with elevations from 1400-2600 feet. The Cabernet Franc vines were planted in 1993 and the winery produces only 295 cases. The blend on this wine is 82% Cabernet Franc, 17.5% Cabernet Sauvignon and 0.5% Merlot. It was barrel aged for 30 months in both French and American oak barrels.

### PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Easy to drink, balanced wine with soft tannins. Fruit, floral and herbal aromas.*
- Cory**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Long finish  
*An extremely well-balanced wine with a long finish that keeps calling you back for more! Raspberries dominate with a hint of herbs. Very food friendly.*
- James H**      **Fruit and Tannin:** Ideal      **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Ripe cherry and chocolate aromas. Pronounced cherry with a long, slightly woody finish. Fruit is slightly overripe and this shows up in the finish – along with the heat of too much alcohol.*
- Mary**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*I really enjoyed the black cherry and boldness of this Cab Franc. I would love this wine with rosemary lamb. The wine is a little hot, but it's forgivable. A really nice wine.*
- Mark**      **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal      **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Long finish  
*A tasty, fruity wine with a big nose of raspberry, a touch of pepper and herbs. I can see this with lamb shank and applesauce.*
- Ingrid**      **Fruit:** Slightly excessive      **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Medium finish  
*Deep fruit aromas of cherry and strawberry. A beautiful wine all by itself. Almost a dessert wine.*
- Jim A**      **Fruit:** Slightly lacking      **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Medium finish  
*A bit acidic, peppery and vegetative. Not a sipping wine. I think it might go well with salami.*
- Linda**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Medium finish  
*Lovely drinking wine. Soft and balanced. Aftertaste is soft and yet enjoyable.*
- Bill**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Full bodied, Long finish  
*Intense nose of spice and fruit. Perfectly balanced wine with a very pleasant, long finish. I very much like this wine.*
- Von**      **Fruit and Tannin:** Ideal      **Acid:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Long finish  
*Fabulous aromas – floral, herbs, dark cherries, tobacco, earth and leather. A very nice, full-flavored, fruity wine with some minerality. Some heat in the finish, but overall a nice wine.*

## WINE “C”



**2006 TITUS VINEYARDS**  
Napa Valley

\$36  
14.5 % alcohol

Titus is a second generation, family owned and run winery located just north of St. Helena. The blend for this wine is typical of a Right Bank Bordeaux – 75% Cabernet Franc, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Malbec and 4% Merlot. The wine was aged for 20 months in French oak barrels – 33% new. The winery produces only 385 cases of Cabernet Franc.

### PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna**      **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Red fruit aromas carry through in the flavor – luscious strawberry and raspberry. A very pleasant easy to drink wine. Well balanced with a soft mouthfeel.*
- Cory**      **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Excessive  
*This wine is too “hot” for my taste. The fruit is there, but the alcohol dominates and buries it.*
- James H**      **Fruit:** Slightly excessive    **Acid:** Slightly lacking    **Tannin:** Ideal / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*A toasty, smoky nose with cherry. The wine is hot – smoky flavors, lack of finesse in finish. Alcohol burns out the subtle flavors.*
- Mary**      **Fruit:** Slightly excessive    **Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*Great tart cherry aromas. This is a big Cab Franc, but it's hot. Lots of fruit there but I'm having a hard time getting past the alcohol.*
- Mark**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*Aromas of berry, earth and lilac. It's a bold and fruity wine with a smooth, velvet mouthfeel but it's a little hot. Some aging potential – maybe 4 years.*
- Ingrid**      **Fruit:** Ideal    **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-short finish  
*A tart, peppery, smoky wine – both aromas and flavors. I'd try it with grilled salmon or burgers.*
- Jim A**      **Fruit:** Ideal    **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Nice fruit and a nice long finish but a bit hot. I could pair it with a hamburger.*
- Linda**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*I love Cab Franc and this is a great, fresh wine that I would enjoy sip after sip. The lingering finish reminds me of eating a really crisp, green grape.*
- Von**      **Fruit:** Slightly excessive    **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*Super-ripe, jammy red berry and plum aromas. A big, flavorful wine with a slightly sweet character. Fruit and some hotness continue through the finish. With lower alcohol it would be a very nice wine.*

## WINE “D”



**2007 LANG & REED**  
North Coast

\$22  
13.9 % alcohol

For more than ten years, the family who owns Lang & Reed has had an ongoing love for Cabernet Franc, and that's the only varietal they produce. This single-varietal focus is very unique in California and since 1996, the goal of Lang & Reed is to “make the world safe for Cabernet Franc”. This 100% Cab Franc is one of three wines made by owner / winemaker John Skupney and comes from grapes in Lake and Napa County. It spent 9 months in French Oak barrels

### PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna**      **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Plum and red fruit aromas. A lighter, pleasant style of wine with a little spice on the finish.*
- Cory**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Violets, mint and herbs on the nose that carry through on your palate. Quite a lovely wine with an understated but long finish.*
- James H**    **Fruit:** Slightly lacking    **Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish  
*Soft cherry aromas, though in this wine the tannins dominate. Also a little hot.*
- Mary**      **Fruit:** Slightly lacking    **Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Light, almost overripe cherry aromas. A lightly fruited wine with nice minerality and acidity. It's a little hot and really needs food – cheese maybe, or a light meat dish.*
- Mark**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*Aroma of cherry and a hint of cut grass. A bright, medium fruity wine, though a little hot for a lighter wine. Good for pairing with cheese like Comte or Manchego.*
- Ingrid**      **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Full bodied, Medium finish  
*Cherry aromas with a hint of tobacco. A slightly sweet and smoky wine – and a little hot. Serve it with pizza or Thai food like Pad Thai.*
- Jim A**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-short finish  
*A very soft, simple, nicely fruity wine. Good wine for food – like a soft cheese*
- Von**      **Fruit:** Slightly excessive    **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Lots of sweet cherry aromas with a hint of tobacco. A mouthful of ripe fruit. A soft, pleasant, juicy wine with just the slightest hint of sweetness. Good with appetizers and lighter, summer fare.*



## WINE "E"

### 2006 STONEFLY VINEYARDS

Napa Valley

\$35

14.5 % alcohol

Founded by a couple who equally loved fly-fishing and winemaking, Stonefly is committed to both winegrowing and winemaking practices that are sensitive to the environment. The director of Stonefly refers to himself as the CFFO – Chief Fly-Fishing Officer, and is very active in raising funds for environmental causes. Five percent of Stonefly wine sales goes to restoring watersheds and fisheries. This 100% Cabernet Franc is barrel aged for 21 months in French Oak barrels

#### PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna**      **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Cherry, strawberry and floral aromas. Red fruit flavors are overpowered by noticeably high alcohol. I'd have it with lighter meats and pizza.*
- Cory**      **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish  
*Aromas of very sweet fruit which lead you to expect fruity flavors but it's quite high in alcohol and there are big tannins that come out in the finish.*
- James H**    **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Overripe cherry and mineral aromas. A very light wine with a tannic, smoky finish. Very slightly high alcohol shows late in the finish. It should be a pleasant food wine.*
- Mary**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Med-light body, Med-short finish  
*This Cab Franc is a light, enjoyable wine with some nice minerality, and fruit. It has some good crispness, making it a good food wine.*
- Mark**      **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Very nice nose of bright cherry, herbs and some earthiness. A nicely balanced wine with a velvety mouthfeel and a very pleasant finish.*
- Ingrid**     **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Long finish  
*Nice strawberry and raspberry aromas. Well-balanced and fruity, but not sweet. Try with spinach lasagna and a marinara sauce.*
- Linda**     **Fruit:** Slightly lacking    **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Med-full body, Med-short finish  
*Complex, full fruit and vegetal aromas. The nose set my expectation for fruit but it also has some nice vegetable characteristics. I'd like to have it with spicy food.*
- Von**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*A lovely, complex nose of cherry, violet, sage and thyme. A delightful wine – great for both food and sipping. Nice flavors throughout that lingered in the finish.*

## WINE "F"



**2005 MERRIAM VINEYARD**  
Dry Creek Valley

**Jones Vineyard**

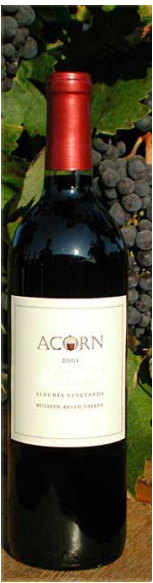
\$45  
14.8 % alcohol

The owners of Merriam began their love of wine in the Bordeaux region of France and decided to bring that traditional approach to winemaking into their wines. The grapes for this wine come from 15-year old vines which are some of Sonoma's oldest and rarest Cabernet Franc vines. This wine is their third bottling and is a blend of 95% Cabernet Franc from Jones Vineyard and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine was aged in French Oak barrels and only 140 cases were produced.

### PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna**      **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal    **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Aromas of red fruit, floral and alcohol. A little tannic, but a nice balance of fruit and acid. It's high in alcohol, which takes away from some of the other more pleasant aspects of this wine.*
- Cory**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Cherry, tobacco and wet earth aromas. Not an overly complex wine, but quite enjoyable except for the noticeable alcohol and sweetness.*
- James H**    **Fruit:** Slightly excessive    **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*Berry and vegetal aromas. Wine is overripe and hot, with a noticeable sweet sensation and a smoky, lingering finish. This is not a food wine.*
- Mary**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*A light nose with plums, pepper and green beans. Nice wine with good acidity, though a little hot. I think it would be great with some "strong" cheese, pate or olives.*
- Mark**      **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly lacking    **Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Med-short finish  
*Blackberry, mineral notes. A well-balanced wine with some age potential. Needs to be paired with complex flavored foods.*
- Ingrid**      **Fruit:** Ideal    **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Long finish  
*Bright raspberry aromas. A well-balanced wine that's good to serve with a hearty dish like chicken Cacciatore – rustic French or Italian*
- Linda**      **Fruit:** Slightly excessive    **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Med-light body, Medium finish  
*Full, rich, late harvest fruit aromas. I liked the wine but it was too hot and the finish was dominated by the alcohol. Too bad the alcohol was so high.*
- Bill**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Med-full bodied, Med-long finish  
*Nice spice and violets in the nose. A nice flavorful wine that carried through in the finish.*
- Von**      **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Ideal and balanced / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Aromas of raspberry and a hint of bell pepper. Nice fruit flavors, good acidity and fruit lingered in the finish, but it was hot. Would have been delightful with lower alcohol.*

## WINE "G"



**2006 ACORN** **Alegria vineyards** \$32  
Russian River Valley 13.5% alcohol

A strictly family winery, Acorn is owned by Bill and Betsy Nachbaur. They are passionate about traditional field-blended wines, inter-planting different varieties, to achieve complexity and more unique wines. Bill serves as winemaker and vineyard manager. The grapes for this Cabernet Franc come from a single vineyard – Alegria – meaning “joy”. The blend is 95% Cabernet Franc, 4% Merlot and 1% Petite Verdot. The wine aged 17 months in French, American and Hungarian Oak barrels.

### PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly excessive **Acid:** Ideal / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*Dark, ripe cherry flavors. Very tannic for me. Has 2 – 4 years aging potential.*
- James H** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Blackberry, vegetal and pleasantly dusty aromas. Soft fruit, berries and tannins dominate the finish and there's a smoky character that goes along with the fruit. It's also a little hot.*
- Mary** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-full body, Medium finish  
*Plum, herbaceous and toasty aromas. This wine really grew on me as I tasted. Nice fruit and acidity. Fruitiness lingers in finish. A nice food wine and has aging potential as well.*
- Mark** **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly excessive **Acid:** Ideal / Medium body, Medium finish  
*A nicely balanced, fruity wine with a big nose of raspberry and herbs. Velvety mouthfeel with big tannins in finish. Pair with pasta and a red sauce.*
- Ingrid** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Medium finish  
*Fresh fruit aromas with a slight vegetal character. Nice served with Blue cheese or a tangy Camembert or bruschetta.*
- Jim A** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*Some complexity and a nice finish, but a bit hot. Good for food – meat, pepperoni pizza. Good for sipping too.*
- Linda** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All slightly lacking / Medium body, Med-long finish  
*This is a spicier style of Cabernet Franc. I think it would be good with food.*
- Von** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish  
*Aromas of cherry, blackberry and tobacco. A nice wine with good balance and a pleasant, fruity finish. Good wine for food and just sipping. A little hot, but the wine handled it well.*

## **“Favorite” selections**

### **WINE “A”**

CORY  
JIM H  
MARK  
INGRID  
VON

### **WINE “B”**

MARY  
LINDA  
BILL

### **WINE “C”**

DONNA

### **WINE “F”**

JIM A

**“Best Value” selection by all is  
WINE “A” at \$20**

## **AND FINALLY...**

A VERY SPECIAL, AND ONGOING THANK YOU TO...

*Linda* and *Donna*, the delightful owners of **PELICAN ART GALLERY** in Petaluma who continue to so graciously offer their beautiful gallery for our tastings. We're surrounded by beautiful art while tasting exciting wines. Life is good.

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

