

TOP VALUES: DOMESTIC WINES

— August 31 2011

“While many would argue that much of my career and reputation has been based on the evaluation of high quality, expensive wines (which is true up to a point), I do not believe any other wine publication or writer has committed as much time, money and effort to ferret out top wine bargains from around the world. Two years ago, along with my *Wine Advocate* colleagues, I published a large pocketbook about wine bargains which today is the definitive source for the best estates and wine values in the world.

Following is a look at some of my favorites tasted over the last few months whose value is unmistakable.*

One thing that has been on a clear upward trajectory over the last three decades has been the increasing number of interesting wines that can be found for under \$25, some at remarkably low price points of \$8-\$15. Such bargains rarely existed years ago, but today they are abundantly available. If you want to prove their value, insert one in a blind tasting against wines made from the same grape or grapes that cost five to ten times more per bottle and see what the results are in your tasting group.”

* 10% of the 77 wines rated are from our Rutherford Wine Company portfolio.



88 POINTS

RUTHERFORD RANCH
2010 NAPA VALLEY
SAUVIGNON BLANC

“...Rutherford Ranch's 2010 Sauvignon Blanc is a good example of a delicious 100% Sauvignon from Napa Valley. Aged completely in stainless steel, it reveals attractive boneyed grapefruit, melon and white currant characteristics in a medium-bodied, crisp yet authoritative style. There is plenty of fresh acidity as well as flavor in this dry white.”



88 POINTS

SCOTT FAMILY ESTATE
2010 ARROYO SECO
CHARDONNAY

“There are 6,000 cases of the 2010 Chardonnay, which exhibits fresh melon and lemon butter notes intermixed with hints of popcorn and tropical fruits. This fruity, medium-bodied, fresh, well-made Chardonnay can be enjoyed over the next 1-2 years.”



87 POINTS

RUTHERFORD RANCH
2009 NAPA VALLEY
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

“...100% Cabernet Sauvignon, the dark ruby/purple-hued, medium-bodied, velvety-textured 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon (30,000 cases produced). It offers lots of cedar, black currant, cherry, loamy soil, and underbrush notes. Consume it over the next 2-4 years.”



87 POINTS

SCOTT FAMILY ESTATE
2009 ARROYO SECO
PINOT NOIR

“The 2009 Pinot Noir (100% Pinot Noir aged 13 months in French oak) reveals aromas of cranberries, pomegranates, earth and spice. Round, elegant and mid-weight, it is ideal for drinking over the next 2-3 years.”



85 POINTS

RUTHERFORD RANCH
2009 NAPA VALLEY
MERLOT

“The straightforward, fruity...2009 Merlot (100% Napa Merlot) is well-made...”



86 POINTS

ROUND HILL
2010 CALIFORNIA
OAK-FREE CHARDONNAY

“The 2010 Chardonnay Oak-Free is a straightforward, fruity effort displaying hints of orange skin and lemon butter in a fresh, light-bodied style. Consume it over the next 6-12 months.”



87 POINTS

LANDER-JENKINS
2009 CALIFORNIA
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

“A first-time entry in these pages, there are 10,000 cases of this 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. It offers up soft berry fruit, tobacco leaf and white chocolate aromas in a fruity, medium-bodied, luscious, sexy format. It should drink nicely for 2-3 years.”



85 POINTS

ROUND HILL
2010 CALIFORNIA
MERLOT

“The 2010 Merlot exhibits...berry fruit, elegant, medium-bodied flavors, good ripeness and surprising character... It is best drunk soon after purchase and will last for 6-12 months.”