

Wine Spectator's Insider Weekly

A First Look at Our Editors' Most Exciting New Wines | April 19, 2023

A Delicious Range from Napa Valley

With the 2020 vintage of California Cabernet notably reduced in both number of offerings and quality due to the wildfires that affected many vineyards near harvest time, the 2019s and 2018s continue to be your best bets right now. These two vintages offer dramatically contrasting styles with nearly equal quality. 2018 is the current benchmark vintage for the state. The wines are decidedly structured in feel, with a bit of a brooding persona. In contrast, the 2019s are generally more expressive and fruit-forward, offering delicious wines for drinking both now or after some cellaring.



Cathy Corison is one of California's most celebrated Cabernet winemakers. (Tia Gavin)

This selection of new releases shows off not only the stylistic differences between these two vintages, but the terrific diversity that California Cabernet now offers. There's a pair of densely structured and packed Abreu wines from winemaker Brad Grimes, alongside the lush, broad and classic Oakville style of Accendo from winemaker Nigel Kinsman. For those looking for a more streamlined and elegant version, winemaker Cathy Corison's Kronos Vineyard bottling is a compelling wine made from old vines planted on St. George rootstock. There's even the debut Fiadh Ruadh Cabernet from former Mondavi winemaker Nova Cadamatre, and relative values from Fess Parker and Reilly Family. —*James Molesworth*

ACCENDO

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2019
96 points | \$395 | 848 cases made | Red

Delivers a lush yet focused wave of gorgeous loganberry and black currant fruit laced subtly with warm loam, alder smoke and dried bay leaf details. Delivers a long cast-iron spine that drives underneath from start to finish, with the fruit taking an encore alongside a violet note at the very end. A touch more grip than your typical '19 as well. Impressive. Best from 2026 through 2040. —*J.M.*

