

# Wine Spectator's Insider Weekly

A First Look at Our Editors' Most Exciting New Wines | July 21, 2021

## California

Cabernet & Blends

### The Stars of 2018

Following last week's collection of 2018 California Cabernets, we're bringing you another bevy of top releases, all recently blind-tasted in our Napa office. These wines showcase the profile of the 2018 vintage: pure, vivid, yet remarkably restrained and focused fruit, with perfectly embedded structure. It's a very sleek and refined set of wines.

Highlighted here is the Oakville AVA, the filet mignon of Napa Cabernet growing areas. These wines always show a tug of warm loam and iron minerality, buried deep in a core of rich, plush cassis and plum fruit, often backed by flashes of menthol, licorice and tobacco. The heart of Oakville is the famed To Kalon vineyard (pictured); its fruit is on full display in the Schrader lineup, as well as in the MacDonald bottling, which comes from the vineyard but can't use the name because of its trademarked status.

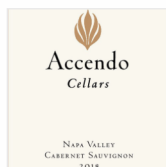


Photo by Greg Gorman

There's a smattering of other top wines from outside Oakville as well, including Dominus and Quintessa.—*James Molesworth*

### ACCENDO

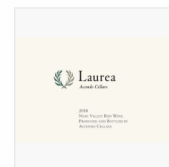
**Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley 2018**  
97 points | \$365 | 995 cases made | Red



A lush and inviting style, with gorgeous, velvety waves of cassis, steeped plum and warmed blackberry preserves rolling along, underscored with black licorice and roasted vanilla throughout. The finish is seriously deep and long, with a subtle tug of warm loam lingering with the fruit. Hard to lay off now for its fruit, but this has loads in reserve for the cellar. Drink now through 2040. —*J.M.*

### ACCENDO

**Laurea Napa Valley 2018**  
93 points | \$125 | 645 cases made | Red



Juicy and lively, with lots of enticing licorice snap, plum sauce and blackberry compote notes bouncing through, carried by gutsy grip through the violet-tinged finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2022 through 2032. —*J.M.*