

# Californian Cabernet 2013: Top five wines of the vintage

William Kelley | October 4, 2016

William Kelley investigates the quality of 2013, picking his top five wines from 18 that he scored over 90 points...



For many winemakers and vintners, California's 2013 **Cabernet Sauvignon** vintage is quite simply the finest of their careers. The best are wines for the ages.

As Eric Baugher of **Ridge Vineyards** reveals, 2013 is 'undoubtedly the most tannic vintage of the new millennium', but its structure is complemented by a remarkable wealth of fruit.

The hallmark of 2013 is a marriage of ripe fruit with the savoury qualities that modern Californian Cabernet Sauvignon so frequently lacks. That makes for striking complexity and sophistication in the glass.

# Top five 2013 California Cabernets:

## **Dunn Vineyards, Cabernet Sauvignon 2013**



Aromas of blackcurrant, blackberry, rich earth, spice and liquorice are followed by a palate of striking persistence and structural amplitude. In 2013 this is typically large-scaled, fresh and built for the long haul, but Mike Dunn's thoughtful changes to the estate's barrel programme have resulted in more refined tannins. Brettanomyces issues that plagued the Dunn wines about 15 years ago also seem long gone, so nothing should compromise their lovely evolution in the cellar.

**Alc 13.9%**

## **Harlan Estate, Oakville, Napa Valley 2013**



Alluring aromas of juicy mulberry, black raspberry, graphite, dried herbs and rich cigar tobacco introduce a large-scaled wine framed by an ample and refined tannic chassis. Once again, Harlan's perfectionist team has composed a compelling portrait of its hillside estate in Oakville.

**Alc 14.5%**

## Spottswoode, Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, St Helena, Napa Valley 2013



Nuances of clove, tar and graphite marry with aromas of crunchy dark fruit, introducing a firmly structured and intensely concentrated wine that displays striking cut and energy. This is one of the best young Spottswoodes of recent times, and one of the most vibrant, primary benchland Cabernet Sauvignons of the vintage – it's also likely to be one of the most long-lived.

**Alc 13.9%**

## Cain Five, Spring Mountain, Napa Valley 2013



A fragrant but savoury bouquet of perfumed blackberry, rich earth, fennel seed and cigar tobacco leads to a wine with lovely cut, vibrancy and concentration, structured around firm but refined 2013 tannins. Christopher Howell deserves more recognition for the amazing consistency, longevity and sophistication that his wines from this striking Spring Mountain site routinely achieve, as anyone with Cain bottlings in their cellar from the 1980s and 1990s can attest.

**Alc 13.9%**

## Corison, Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley 2013



Beautifully perfumed aromas of rose petal, violets, blackberry, dark chocolate and incipient cigar tobacco burst from the glass in a striking array, the prelude to a wine that's structured around refined, savoury tannins and juicy acidity. An ethereal and classically proportioned Cabernet which will age effortlessly thanks to its flawless balance, likely putting on weight with bottle age. Terrific stuff; not to be missed.

**Alc 13.5%**