



FROM KAREN MACNEIL

THE WINESPEED — BLOG —

NAPA VALLEY'S SUPER SAUVIGNONS SOAR EVEN HIGHER

THE TOP WINES TO BUY NOW

By Karen MacNeil
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Is there anyone left who doubts that—in sheer quality—Napa Valley's top whites are Sauvignon Blancs?

Maybe it sounds a little severe to say, but over the past five years, while Napa's Chardonnays have largely stood in place, the valley's Sauvignon Blancs have soared. These aren't just good Sauvignon Blancs; these are ravishingly complex white wines that have a kinship with the greatest white Bordeaux.

Napa's "Super Sauvignons" would be right at home in a blind tasting with, say, Domaine de Chevalier and Château Haut-Brion Blanc—two of the most treasured white wines in the world.

Here's what these Super Sauvignons are not: they are not simple. They taste nothing like New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs, for example, which are generally straightforward and unfussy.

No, these Napa Sauvignons are multi-layered and rich without being heavy or ponderous. They're full of beautiful botanical flavors and minerality that somersaults around with dizzying vitality.

Not surprisingly, the grapes are grown and the wines are made in ways not typical of an average Sauvignon Blanc.

- Most are made from grapes grown in top vineyards—vineyards that could easily be devoted to expensive Cabernet Sauvignon
- Most are made from more than one clone of Sauvignon Blanc
- Most are fermented and/or aged in multiple vessels—concrete eggs, stainless steel drums, used oak, and new oak casks and barrels
- Most are made in an artisanal manner, in very small quantities, and are expensive

After a series of blind tastings, here are my top picks for the wines you should consider buying now.

ACCENDO Sauvignon Blanc 2022 (Napa Valley, CA) \$80

Accendo exudes finesse. The complex flavors (white peach, lime, starfruit, minerals) create a beautiful tapestry, and the creamy supple texture is enthralling. This is an exotic, fresh, and very distinctive Sauvignon with great precision. 96 points KM