



Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard

Schrader Cellars

2012 Schrader Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard CCS

100 Points

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The 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon Beckstoffer to Kalon Vineyard CCS is Clone 4 from another block, and always seems to hit all the sweet spots on my palate. It's aged 20 months in 100% new Darnajou barrels. The good news is there are 520 cases of it. Just a prodigious wine, this spectacular Cabernet Sauvignon is inky bluish/purple with a gorgeous nose of spring flowers, blueberry, blackberry and cassis fruit, a touch of background toast and graphite. It has a very full-bodied, multidimensional mouthfeel and a skyscraper-like finish. It is fabulously open, sexy and a total thrill to smell and taste. This should continue to drink well for two decades.

The Schraders, working with well-known winemaking consultant Thomas Rivers Brown, continue to farm and produce some of the world's greatest Cabernet Sauvignons from three fabulous Beckstoffer-owned vineyards: the To Kalon Vineyard in Oakville, the Georges III Vineyard in Rutherford and the Las Piedras Vineyard in St. Helena. To Kalon is gravelly, eluvial, loamy soils; Georges III Vineyard is an old creek bed; and Las Piedras Vineyard in St. Helena is planted on old river rock and gravelly loam. All of these blocks utilized for Schrader's wines encompass over 25+ acres and are custom-farmed – as Fred Schrader likes to say, essentially “virtual vineyards,” even though they're not owned by the Schraders. Their initial focus, which has proven so successful, is essentially a microscopic study of different clones planted in different blocks with exactly the same philosophy of viticulture, harvesting, winemaking, élevage and bottling. Production of all the 2012s, which was a slightly more generous and later harvest

than 2013 with bigger berries, ranges from 200 cases for the Old Sparky and Georges III, to 520 for the CCS, 420 for the T6, 625 for the RBS, 370 for the Schrader, 620 for the LPV and 100 cases for the newest baby, the Colesworthy, which is a selection of the best barrels of their Las Piedras offering. Some of the other characteristics of these wines are that they all spend about 20 months in barrel, but the percentages of new Darnajou and new Taransaud varied from cuvée to cuvée, although the CCS is 100% new Darnajou, as are the Old Sparky and the Colesworthy. Finished alcohol on the 2012s is in line with other vintages, at 14.4%-14.6%. And in 2013, virtually identical numbers of 14.4%-14.6% were achieved. The consistency and the analytical aspects of the wines is mirrored in the incredible quality that Schrader has produced. *RP*