



Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard

Schrader Cellars

2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Old Sparky

100 Points

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The 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Old Sparky, which is essentially made from clone 4 from two separate blocks, clone 6 and clone 337, is another perfect wine from the Schraders. I suppose it's a little boring to say, and perhaps I can be accused of creating unrealistic expectations on the part of readers, but this is as great as Cabernet can be. Tasting like a first-growth Pauillac, the wine is opaque purple and has a fabulous nose of lead pencil, spring flowers, blueberry and blackberry and the telltale cassis. There is also some licorice and sweet oak, the tannins are ripe, and the wine full-bodied. Built like a skyscraper, with an incredible finish (like most of these wines) going on for 50 seconds to a minute, this amazing wine should still be drinking splendidly well at age 25 or 30.

After the remarkable performance of the 2012s, I would be hard-pressed to believe that Schrader could equal or eclipse that vintage, but they seem to have certainly equaled the quality of the 2012s. The 2013s are slightly more coiled and more tightly knit and with probably greater definition. That said, they all possess fabulous concentration and palate presence. Any of these will make a spectacular elixir/vinous treat to serve and consume over the next 25-30+ years. First-time readers may need to do a little research, but this is essentially a clonal study with micro-blends from the famous Oakville vineyard, the Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard, and more recently, a look at several other vineyards – the Beckstoffer George III Vineyard in Rutherford and the Beckstoffer Las Piedras Vineyard. Essentially, all of the wines are treated identically – aged in mostly Darnajou with some Taransaud barrels, they tend to always come in around 14.5%-14.7% natural alcohol, spend 20 months in all new oak and are bottled unfiltered. Since the beginning, they have been made by none other than the famed Napa consultant, Thomas Rivers Brown.

The wines are more similar than dissimilar, but I'll do my best to catalog the subtle differences that can be found. However, at this pinnacle of quality, they are few and far between. Production ranges from a low of 110 cases for the Colesworthy and 186 cases for the George III, to as much as 608 cases for the RBS and 650 cases for the LPV. -RP

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Napa Valley, Mendocino County and the Red Hills of Lake County