



Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard

Schrader Cellars

2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Old Sparky Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard

97 Points

Wine Advocate – December 2011

The 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Old Sparky Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard is remarkably finessed for such a big wine. Mint, mocha, violets, tar and licorice are some of the many notes that swirl around in the glass. The balance of fruit, structure and acidity is just breathtaking. A huge, kaleidoscopic finish rounds things out in style. Old Sparky is a blend of the estate's best barrels. The 2009 is 50% clone 6, 20% clone 337, 20% clone 4 from the C2 block and 10% clone 4 from the C1 block.

Anticipated maturity: 2019-2029.

I tasted the Schrader 2009s and 2010s twice this year, about five months apart, and that time has done wonders for the wines. The Schrader Cabernets are big, bold wines that nevertheless show remarkable detail and transparency to site, as is evidenced by the five separate bottlings from Andy Beckstoffer's To Kalon vineyard in Oakville. These are essentially single-clone (and often single-block) wines that seek to highlight the unique qualities of the various Cabernet clones planted within the vineyard. I tasted the 2009s from bottle and the 2010s from barrel. Readers should note that the 2010s I tasted were base blends for each of the wines, rather than fully finished blends. I have a slight preference for the 2010s, as they are more nuanced, perfumed and finessed, while the 2009s are just a bit more similar to each other throughout the range, reflecting the nature of the years themselves. Beyond that, it really comes down to personal preference when choosing one of these wines. The RBS is the most aromatic and detailed, and in my view, complete of the wines. Readers who prefer a more overt, opulent, fruit-driven style of Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon will gravitate to the Old Sparky or the Schrader. Either way, it is hard to go wrong with any of these Cabernets. The wines are made in a fairly non-interventionalist style, with no SO₂ added at crush, minimal rackings and no

fining or filtration prior to bottling. Everything starts in the vineyard, where Brown and his team leave one cluster (minus wings) per shoot. The 2009s were aged in 100% new French oak barrels, 80-90% Darnajou the rest Taransaud.