



Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard

Tor Kenward

2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard Clone 6

95 Points

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The brilliant 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard Clone 6 again reveals the first-growth-like nobility and complexity of this phenomenal site in Oakville. Subtle toast/barrique aromas intermixed with creme de cassis, licorice, incense and camphor are followed by a wine of tremendous intensity, full-bodied power, silky tannins and a long, rich, concentrated finish. Already approachable, it will be even better in 5-6 years and last for two decades or more.

The majority of Tor Kenward's production is from Napa Valley, but I have included one Sonoma cuvee. One of my long held beliefs is that in order to make truly world-class wine, one has to have tasted a lot of it and know how those wines were made. Tor Kenward is, at the very minimum, a longtime connoisseur who has had exposure to great wines from all over the world. That, plus his long career at Beringer, has put him a position to know some of the better vineyard sources in northern California. When combined with a thorough understanding of the world's finest wines, he is in a terrific position to translate that into top products, which he in fact has done. There are three 2009 Chardonnays that will be available in the marketplace in early 2011. 2009 appears to be a very fine vintage for Burgundy varietals in northern California (along the lines of 2005). Nearly all the fruit was harvested before the major deluge hit in mid-October. Tasting through the 2009s suggest that Tor Kenward must have picked virtually all

his fruit prior to the rains. I'll wait until they are in bottle to pass judgment, but certainly they all appear to be fabulous wines. The 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa and the 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Cimarossa Vineyard from Howell Mountain are both very good. However, his Beckstoffer To Kalon cuvees (there will be four in 2009) look to be mid to upper 90-point efforts that are slightly more front end-loaded with sweeter tannins and more precocious personalities than either the 2007s or 2008s. They will probably be charming, nearly irresistible when released, but I will report on them more fully next year. The 2007 Cabernet Sauvignons, which were reviewed last year, were terrific, and the 2008s appear to have equaled, perhaps eclipsed those cuvees. Moreover, barrel samples of the 2009s indicate they may be among the finest wines he has yet produced.