



November 2025 Session Report

Session Theme: California Wines

Voters: 23

Food Scoring: 8.8/10

Session team: Daniel Cassar Darien & Garreth Fenech


Date: 25/11/2025

Label	Wine	Producer	Vintage	Varietal	Country	Voting	Price	Supplier	Consumption
Aptf	Chardonnay	The Federalist	2023	Chardonnay	Mendocino County, California	16.30	€ 29.00	Mirachem	6
A	Pinot Noir	Sanford	2022	Pinot Noir	Sta Rita Hills, California	15.37	€ 55.00	Mirachem	6
B	Cabarnet Sauvignon	Freemark Abbey	2014	Cabarnet Sauvignon	Napa Valley, California	16.33	€ 50.00	Vini & Capricci	6
C	Pinot Noir Russian River Valley - The South slope vineyard	Walter Hansel	2019	Pinot Noir	Russian River, California	16.07	€ 50.06	FarsonsDirect	6
B	Cabarnet Sauvignon	Robert Mondavi	2018	Cabarnet Sauvignon	Napa Valley, California	16.13	€ 66.08	FarsonsDirect	6


Average
consumption
per person

1.30

Wine: Chardonnay 2023 – The Federalist	Region: Mendocino County, California, USA
Alcohol Content: 14.5%	Critics Avg rating: 90
Description <p>The Federalist Chardonnay is an exquisite wine that comes with a delicate and smooth texture. This wine has a pale straw color with a hint of green, which reflects its freshness and youthful personality. It is a well-balanced wine that offers aromas of crisp apple, lemon zest, and ripe pear. The palate is full of flavors and has a rich mouthfeel with a creamy texture. The oak aging process of this wine imparts subtle hints of vanilla, clove, and cinnamon, which offer a delightful finish. It is a perfect wine for any occasion, whether it is a dinner party, wedding, or a casual evening with friends.</p> <p>Malolactic fermentation occur post-primary fermentation. The lees are stirred through malolactic fermentation, and the wine is aged on the lees until blending. Aging: 35% new Oak is primarily American and Hungarian oak,with a little bit of French. The Hungarian oak mimics French with spicy character and the American rounds it out with a sweeter finish.</p> Tasting Notes <p>The Federalist Chardonnay is a symbol of American patriotism, prominently featuring the American Bald Eagle. We decided the Bald Eagle was the best symbol of our aspiration –she flies high, exposing drinkers to the full-bodied Mendocino Chardonnay featuring aroma’s of ripe apple, citrus and spiced pear. A great style of Chardonnay to enjoy on it’s own, but also perfect for light fare, deep conversation and declaring your independence.</p> Pairing <p>Poultry & Pork: Roasted chicken, turkey, or pork with creamy sauces.</p> <p>Seafood: Meaty fish, oily fish, and shellfish.</p> <p>Pasta & Cheese: Creamy pasta dishes, fresh, soft, nutty, or semi-firm cheeses.</p> <p>Other: Grilled foods, salads, and charcuterie</p>	




Wine: Pinot Noir 2022 – Sanford	Region: Santa Rita Hills, California, USA
Alcohol Content: 13.0%	Critics Avg rating: 90
Description <p>It was only when the Sanford Winery was established in 1971 that the wine-potential of the Santa Barbara County was known to the world. The cool climate and the soil quality of this county encouraged the founders of this winery to plant the first vines in the Sanford & Benedict vineyard here. Currently, this winery is owned and managed by the members of the Terlato family, who have planted vines in other neighbouring vineyards such as La Rinconada as well.</p> <p>The Sanford Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir is sourced entirely and exclusively from our two estate vineyards: the historic Sanford & Benedict Vineyard (42%) and La Rinconada (58%). These iconic vineyards are nestled in the heart of the Sta. Rita Hills appellation planted to a wide range of Pinot Noir selections from our marine deposited soil types.</p> Tasting Notes <p>This Pinot Noir is dark ruby in color and is very spice-driven on the nose with cloves, lavender, wild mushrooms, and forest floor. The palate delivers spice and savory, dark fruits, espresso, and leather with balanced acid and suave tannin structure, which carries the lovely finish. The wine was aged in French Oak barrels (25% new oak) for 11 months where it gained complexity and elegance.</p> Pairing <p>The Sanford Pinot Noir 2022, with its notes of cherry, raspberry, spice, and earthy undertones, pairs beautifully with roasted poultry (duck, chicken), grilled salmon, pork dishes, mushroom-based recipes like risotto, and even richer fish like tuna or swordfish, as well as cheese boards featuring brie or Gruyere.</p>	



Wine: Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 – Freemark Abbey	Region: Napa Valley, California, USA
Alcohol Content: 14.0%	Critics Avg rating: 95
Description The estate known today as Freemark Abbey was established in 1886 by one of the first female wine-growers in Napa. Today Ted Edwards is head winemaker, working for the past three decades to develop relationships with growers, allowing exclusive sourcing rights to specific plots, which is crucial to the winery’s success. This wine has been aged for 28 months in a mixture of French and American oak.	
Tasting Notes Opaque, dark ruby color introduces this wine that expresses dark fruit aroma and flavors. With spicy sweet oak complexity, the wine exudes dark fruit such as blackberry, black currant, blueberry and dark cherry. There are nuances of dark chocolate, chocolate berry truffle dusted with cocoa powder, cola, aromatic cedar, cinnamon, clove, graham crackers and a hint of tobacco. The body is very full with a soft entry, coupled with dark cherry/berry flavors that develop from start to finish. With great texture and mouth feel, this Cabernet is full-bodied, rich and opulent. In one word... delicious. Blend: 78.2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 6% Petit Verdot, 5.6% Malbec, 2.2% Cabernet Franc	
Pairing The 2014 Freemark Abbey Cabernet Sauvignon pairs beautifully with rich red meats like grilled steak (especially ribeye), beef stew, lamb, and game (venison), complementing its dark fruit, spice, and earthy notes with hearty flavors and fat. Its structured tannins and balanced acidity also stand up to aged, hard cheeses, while savory elements in the wine match well with herbs, cedar, and even dark chocolate.	



Wine: Pinot Noir Russian River Valley - The South slope vineyard 2019 – Walter Hansel	Region: Russian River Valley, California, USA
Alcohol Content: 14.6%	Critics Avg rating: 93
Description <p>Walter Hansel Winery is a wine producer based in the Russian River Valley region of Sonoma Country, California and was established in the late 1970s. Walter Hansel himself started with 257 Chardonnay vines planted in the Russian River Valley in the 1970s. The first commercially-available vintage was released in 1996, and today the estate's Sonoma County vineyards cover 80 hectares.</p> <p>The South Slope begins at the highest elevation and the furthest South of all of our Vineyards blocks. It slopes from South to North about 45 feet and it's soils are predominantly sandy loam. The berry size is medium with a high berry count giving cluster weight that has yields approaching 2 1/4 tons/acre (our highest yields). It is 100% French clone 777, and tends to show it's earthy side far more than our other clones. Although this wine definitely has a French origin, each year it becomes more and more new world.</p> Tasting Notes <p>Medium ruby-purple in color. The 2019 Walter Hansel Pinot Noir from Russian River Valley is known for its bright, complex profile, often blending red fruit (cherry, raspberry) with earthy notes (forest floor, mushroom, tobacco) and baking spices, offering elegance, silky texture, and good acidity, with specific bottlings like the Estate and South Slope showing distinct characteristics from different clones.</p> Pairing <p>Antipasto, Charcuterie, Roasted Duck, Wild Mushroom risotto and Grilled Salmon.</p>	



Wine: Cabernet Sauvignon 2018 – Robert Mondavi	Region: Napa Valley, California, USA
Alcohol Content: 14.5%	Critics Avg rating: 93
<p>Description</p> <p>Considered as the best winery in North America for quite a few years now, the Robert Mondavi Winery is the place that you need to appreciate the finest wine in this continent. It uses the grapes grown in the wine-rich area of Napa Valley to make scintillating wines, ever since it was established in 1966.</p> <p>Tasting Notes</p> <p>A beautiful nose redolent of fresh, ripe blackberry and black plum jam, gently framed by notes of dried thyme and toast. On the palate, the wine is full and juicy, brimming with more black fruit and touches of bittersweet chocolate, mint, and dried straw. Generous and harmonious, with velvety tannins and a long, smooth finish.</p> <p>Blend: 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 1% Malbec</p> <p>Pairing</p> <p>The 2018 Robert Mondavi Cabernet Sauvignon pairs beautifully with rich, protein-heavy dishes like grilled steak (ribeye, tomahawk), lamb, braised meats (beef brisket, Boeuf Bourguignon), hearty pasta, and gourmet burgers, thanks to its robust fruit (blackberry, plum, cassis) and oak notes that complement tannins. It also shines with savory, aged cheeses like aged cheddar and Parmesan, and can even stand up to BBQ or game.</p>	

