

WILFRED'S WINE GUIDE

90-POINT REDS



October 2009 Selections:

- Robert Mondavi Cabernet Sauvignon, Oakville '05 (United States)
- Franciscan Merlot, Napa Valley '05 (United States)

Dear Wine Lover,

Two classics make up this month's 90 point red wine clubs. From the storied Napa Valley, I selected the stylish, yet richly built ['05 Robert Mondavi Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon](#), a wine with a rich and seductive quality. For its cellarmate, I found the ['05 Franciscan Merlot](#) to be a ready and willing partner. While both wines drink well now, the Cabernet will see significant development over the next half-a-dozen years.

Rated 90 points by the *Wine Spectator*, and 91 points by Stephen Tanzer, the ['05](#), the [Robert Mondavi Oakville](#) represents one of the top wines in the prestigious Napa Valley. In my own dining experiences, I simply drank an extra glass or two just to make sure that the wine was as good as I had thought: it was!.

And what about the [Merlot](#)? Rated 90 points by the *Wine News*, the ['05 Franciscan](#) just showed me how consistent this producer is with this varietal; lots of pretty red fruits play nicely on the palate; drinks very well now. Napa Valley continues to star in a wine world of incredible and endless competition. Sometimes it is simply better to stay home and enjoy our own home grown products.

Cheers!

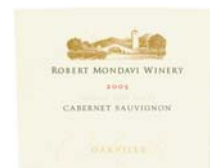
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Wilfred Wong'.

Wilfred Wong
Cellarmaster

WINERY NOTES

Robert Mondavi Cabernet Sauvignon, Oakville '05

Overall, 2005 was significantly cooler than usual. A wet spring and heavy May rains delivered more than twice the normal amount of rainfall in Napa Valley. The late storms delayed budbreak and bloom for all varieties, and once they got started, the vines grew quickly. Vineyard crews carefully thinned foliage, removing more leaves than ever before to bring the vines into balance and ensure ripening. May and June temperatures were cooler than usual, followed by a hot July and a return to the cooler pattern for the remainder of the growing season and through harvest, which started up to a full month later than average in most Napa Valley vineyards. We began picking Oakville Cabernet on October 4 and finished on October 28. The long hang time allowed the grapes to ripen slowly and evenly, fostering excellent development of aromatics and flavors and setting a relatively easy pace for the vineyard and winemaking teams.



Franciscan Merlot

From our earliest days, we have striven to bring out the full glory of this very noble grape. Merlot needs special attention, but it is worth it. We begin by growing our Merlot fruit in the cooler area of Napa Valley, primarily Yountville south. Cooler vineyards create deeper color, more vibrant flavors, and denser structure. Small lot winemaking is the rule: we keep each vineyard block separate through the winemaking process, like a collection of limited release wines. Each lot is crafted slowly, with extended cold soak and fermentation on the skins, and carefully matched to specific barrel types.

