

My tasting with Tor Kenward and Jeff Ames was one of the highlights of the four weeks I spent visiting with winemakers this year. Kenward and Ames source fruit from some of Napa Valley's very finest sites for these rich, sumptuous wines. In fact, in some cases, site is really what comes through most in the wines. I am thinking in particular of some of the wines from Vine Hill Ranch I saw this year. In short, the Tor wines have never been better. Don't miss them!

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98 pts

Tor 2016 Black Magic

Napa Valley, Napa Valley

Red wine from United States

Drinking window: 2022 - 2036

The 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Black Magic is sensational. A blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Petit Verdot, co-fermented, the 2016 Black Magic is a truly memorable wine. Unctuous, deep and beautifully layered in the glass, the 2016 simply has it all. The high percentage of Petit Verdot gives the wine savory energy and intensity in spades. Graphite, sage, lavender, menthol and licorice add the closing shades of nuance.

Antonio Galloni. Tasting date: September 2018

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96+ pts

Tor 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Melanson Vineyard

Pritchard Hill, Napa Valley

Red wine from United States

Drinking window: 2022 - 2036

The 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Melanson Vineyard is positively stunning. It is also one of the most refined wines I have tasted off this site. Floral aromatics, bright, red-toned fruit and silky tannins elevate the Melanson into the realm of the truly sublime. Every bit as profound as it was from barrel, the 2016 is all class.

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96 pts

Tor 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Hillside Tierra Roja Vineyard

Oakville, Napa Valley

Red wine from United States

Drinking window: 2022 - 2036

Tor's 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville Hillside Tierra Roja Vineyard emerges from the upper section of the vineyard. Poorer soils on this part of the property yield small berries a wine with a distinctly darker profile vis-à-vis the straight Tierra Roja Cabernet. Inky, plush and voluptuous, with terrific energy backing up the fruit, the 2016 is positively stellar. Don't miss it.

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96 pts

Tor 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Cimarossa Vineyard

Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

Red wine from United States

Drinking window: 2022 - 2036

The 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Cimarossa Vineyard captures all the magic of this site on Howell Mountain. Graphite, smoke, leather, incense, grilled herbs and menthol come alive in a powerful, vertical wine loaded with potential and class. A dollop of new oak influence from Darnajou barrels adds opulence and a sheen of raciness this wine may not need. Even so, the Cimarossa is striking. There is no doubt about that.

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94 pts

Tor 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Tierra Roja Vineyard

Oakville, Napa Valley

Red wine from United States

Drinking window: 2022 - 2034

The 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Tierra Roja Vineyard is dark, sumptuous and nuanced. Dark cherry, iron smoke, menthol and crushed flowers give the 2016 layers of perfume to play off the rich mid-palate. The 2016 is a terrific example of the resonant style of Cabernet Sauvignon that comes so easily in Oakville's Eastern Hills.

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94 pts

Tor 2016 Chardonnay Cuvée Susan Reserve Napa Valley

Napa Valley, Napa Valley

White wine from United States

Drinking window: 2019 - 2026

The 2016 Chardonnay Cuvée Susan Reserve Napa Valley is a blend of fruit from a core of Beresini with some Hyde and Durell that spent a total of 22 months in barrel, long by California standards these days. Powerful and deeply resonant in the glass, the 2016 possesses terrific textural depth. Orchard fruit, white flowers, mint and apricot give life to this Chardonnay. Specifically, the 2016 offers a super-intriguing combination of textural oiliness, phenolics and savory-driven freshness. I can only wonder what the other Chardonnays in the range might be like if they were aged along similar lines.

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vinous (94-97) pts

Tor 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon Vine Hill Ranch Vineyard

Oakville, Napa Valley

Red wine from United States

Drinking window:

The 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon Vine Hill Ranch Vineyard is shaping up to be a real stunner. Powerful, deep and explosive, the 2017 captures all the elements that make Vine Hill Ranch so special. Super-ripe black cherry, leather, smoke, tobacco incense and savory herb notes build into the huge, structured finish.

Antonio Galloni. Tasting date: September 2018

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96 pts

Tor 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Black Magic

Napa Valley, Napa Valley

White wine from United States

Drinking window: 2020 - 2030

The 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Black Magic captures all the richness and power of the vintage. Black cherry, plum, chocolate, leather, smoke and incense all inform this brooding, somber Cabernet Sauvignon. The 2013 possesses super richness and concentration, along with more than enough fruit to nearly cover the tannins. Readers should expect a bold, extroverted style. Surprisingly, the 2013 is more accessible than I would have expected given the personality of the year, but that is not a bad thing at all.

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94_{pts}

**Tor 2013 Petit Verdot Vine Hill Ranch
Vineyard**

Oakville, Napa Valley

Red wine from United States

Drinking window: 2018 - 2028

The 2013 Petit Verdot Vine Hill Ranch Vineyard is dense, powerful and structured. Sadly, I did not taste this wine when it was young, but I have tasted enough PV lots from Vine Hill Ranch to not be surprised Tor decided to bottle this wine on its own. Scorched earth, leather, licorice, tobacco and menthol all develop in the glass. Ultimately, though, the 2013 is a wine from Vine Hill Ranch first and Petit Verdot second. The signatures of this site are just so unbelievably strong that they come through pretty much no matter what.

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