

# Robb Report

---

## How to Get Your Hands on the Most Coveted Wines From Napa Valley's Stellar 2021 Vintage

We tasted through the region's very best at this year's Premiere Napa Valley.

By MIKE DESIMONE AND JEFF JENSSEN | MARCH 14, 2023



We are always on the lookout for exclusive access to rare wines for Robb Report readers, and this year's Premiere Napa Valley outdid itself in that regard. While its primary aim is to raise money for Napa Valley Vintners and the projects it supports, PNV, is also a one-of-a-kind glimpse into the most recent vintage from the valley, in this case the outstanding 2021. We tasted them all so that you don't have to. Our pick hits are below.

After several years of drought and 2020 wildfires that destroyed grape crops for many Napa Valley producers, the quality of 2021 is a welcome relief. A near-perfect growing season offered ideal conditions for ripening small berries with a high juice to skin ratio. The vintage is filled with luscious fruit flavors, polished tannins, and vivid acidity. In short, everything you want and expect from classic Cabernet Sauvignon and red blends but don't always get. Juan Pablo Salgado of Delizia Wine Boutique in Costa Rica stated, "The 2021 vintage is beyond perfection. Structure and finesse blend into marvelous juice that will definitely take your breath away. I'm thrilled and excited to have been able to get a sneak peak of it and can't wait to work it in our market."

Open only to winery staff, press, and the international wine trade, including importers, distributors, and buyers, PNV opened with a series of tastings, lunches and dinners held up and down the valley during the week. Friday's barrel tasting at Charles Krug Winery highlighted the finest not-yet-released wines the region has to offer, which were then auctioned off in micro lots of mostly 60 bottles, or five cases, on Saturday. One hundred thirty-seven lots were from 2021, offering a broad perspective of what is surely the best vintage in Napa Valley in recent memory.

Two hundred fifty bidders from 18 countries paid an average of \$307 per bottle including a handful of white and sparkling lots. The 144 lots of red wines sold for an average of \$315 per bottle; that includes 118 lots of Cabernet Sauvignon and 10 lots of Cabernet Franc plus some red blends and other single varieties. Eighty two percent of the lots fetched prices upwards of \$200 per bottle and 14 percent went for more than \$500 a bottle, with only three breaching the \$1,000 mark. Among those was Tor 2021 The Centennial Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, which at a bidding price of \$80,000, averages \$1,333 a bottle. Sold to Japan's Nakagawa Wine Co., it will be difficult to access for all but the most well-connected American consumers.

But don't worry, 76 percent of the wines were sold to US buyers, and with the exception of those that went to restaurants, many will be available through a variety of retailers after continued aging and bottling. Wines are set to be released over the course of the next two years as determined by each producer's winemaking team, with a special Napa Valley Vintner's label affixed to every bottle.