

Tom Simoneau's Wines of the Year

December 29, 2015 1:45 pm • [FOR THE STAR](#)



Tom Simoneau, left, John Skupny and Bill Dyer get ready to taste Napa Valley cabernet sauvignons during a November 2014 St. Helena Star/Napa Valley Vintners joint blind tasting in the Rudd Center at the Culinary Institute of America, Greystone.

Sonoma County vintner and KSRO radio host Tom Simoneau has created and released his “Wines of the Year” list for 2015. He will announce them on KSRO radio from 5 to 6 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 30.

In the past, Simoneau has joined the monthly tasting panel for the St. Helena Star and Napa Valley Vintners tasting panel, which is held in the Rudd Center at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone.

KSRO radio can be heard at 1350 AM and 103.5 FM.

Best Whites

Sparkling Wine:

Gosset Champagne Grand Reserve Brut NV, \$58. Gosset Champagne dates back 17 generations to 1270. This sparkling wine shows the tiniest of bubbles with an electric spritz. Taste of brown buttered apple, creamy, and sexy. wilsondaniels.com

Chardonnay:

MacRostie Winery & Vineyards 2013 Wildcat Mountain, Sonoma Coast, \$40. You've heard the expression, right grapes grown in the right place. No wine defines that phrase more than this MacRostie masterpiece. Planted in 1998 in The Petaluma Gap of the Sonoma Coast AVA, Wildcat Mountain Vineyard is Steve MacRostie's secret weapon. Stop by his new winery on Westside Road just outside of Healdsburg. macrostiewinery.com

Sauvignon Blanc:

Trione Vineyards & Winery 2014 River Road Ranch, Russian River Valley, \$23. The Sweepstake winning white wine at this year's Sonoma County Harvest Fair. Winemaker Scott Covington is finally getting his due as one of Sonoma County's best young winemakers. trionewinery.com

Off Dry White:

Mill Creek Vineyards & Winery 2014 Gewurztraminer, Dry Creek Valley, \$23. Year in and year out you can take it to the bank that this family owned winery will deliver the goods with their Gewurztraminer. All wildflower and spice. If you're looking for a Gewurztraminer, it doesn't get any better than this. millcreekwinery.com

Most Fun White:

Lips, Korbel Brut Rosé NV, \$12.99. Always promoting the many reasons you should pop the cork on a bottle of bubbly. Korbel has outdone itself with its Lips Brut Rosé. The bottle has a white sleeve cover with red lips. Look for next year's follow up called Lace. korbel.com

Alternative White:

Wattle Creek Winery 2014 Viognier, Alexander Valley, \$24. The Wattle is the national tree of Australia. Owners Chris and Kristine Williams are Australians. Long time fans know this Viognier as a perennial Sonoma County favorite. wattlecreek.com

Best Value White:

Kenwood Vineyards 2014 Chardonnay, Sonoma County, \$14. Proof you don't have to pay and arm and a leg for a good bottle of wine. Kenwood, long known for great wine at a fair price, made by master winemaker Pat Henderson. kenwoodvineyards.com

Rosé:

High Valley Vineyard 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon Rosé, Lake County, \$25. High Valley is one of the coolest appellations in Lake County. This wine is all raspberry, cranberry, and citrus.
highvalleyvineyards.com

Best Reds**Cabernet Sauvignon:**

Hawk & Horse Vineyards 2011 Red Hills, Lake County, \$70. Located in lower Lake County at the historic 900-acre El Roble Grande Ranch, Hawk & Horse Winery is family owned and a Demeter Certified Biodynamic Vineyard. Sales mostly direct at hawkandhorsevineyards.com

Zinfandel:

Dashe Cellars 2012 Louvau Vineyard Old Vines, Dry Creek Valley, \$35. Located just off Jack London Square in downtown Oakland, Dashe is recognized as one of the pioneers of the Bay Area's Urban Winemaking Movement. This 2012 is made from 91-year-old dry farmed vines. Full of flavor, all blackberry and spice. Check out their tasting room at Timber Crest Farms in Dry Creek Valley.
dashecellars.com

Merlot:

Grgich Hills Estate 2012 Merlot, Napa Valley, \$43. From famed Chardonnay winemaker Mike Grgich (Judgment of Paris) this is a Cabernet lover's Merlot, all plum, cherry, and mocha. Delicious!
grgich.com

Syrah:

Longboard Vineyards 2013 Ledbetter Family Vineyard, Russian River Valley, \$48. Oded Shakked, owner, winemaker, winegrower, and surfer ... hence the name Longboard, has done for Syrah what the rest of the world never could. If all Syrah tasted this good, it would have become the next Merlot. One of three stunning Syrahs from Longboard. longboardvineyards.com

Alternative Red:

Castello Di Volpaia 2013 Chianti Classico DOCG, \$21. From the hilltop village of Volpaia, this is one of the highest elevation wineries in Chianti. Vineyard is at 1,300 to 2,100 feet. First tasted with Michael Traverso who represents the winery in the U.S. wilsondaniels.com

Blended Red:

Clos du Bois 2012 Marlstone Meritage Red Wine, Alexander Valley \$60. One of California's first Meritage Wines. From the 1970s to today Marlstone continues to prove why Alexander Valley is considered one of California's finest Bordeaux varietal producing appellations. closdubois.com

Best Buy Red:

Tom Gore Vineyards 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon, California \$13. From a family of grapegrowers. Not sure how you can make a wine this good at that price. The perfect Thursday night wine.
tomgorevineyards.com

Most Fun Red:

Ca' Momi Winery, 2013 Do It For Love Red Wine, California \$18.99. The Do It For Love Foundation is a nonprofit wish granting organization that brings people with life-threatening illnesses, children with severe challenges, and wounded veterans to live concerts. 100% of the profits are donated. Click on
doitforlove.org

Luxury Wine:

Mazzocco Vineyards and Winery 2013 Zinfandel Antoine Philippe Reserve, Dry Creek Valley, \$150. Named after talented winemaker Antoine Favero, this is the first time in over 20 years that I named a Zinfandel as my Luxury Wine of the Year. One taste and you'll be won over. Very limited.
wilsonartisanwines.com

Pinot Noir:

Williams Selyem 2013 Burt Williams Morning Dew Ranch, Anderson Valley, \$78. From grapes grown at original owner Burt Williams' vineyard.

Winery of the Year:

Williams Selyem. One of the original cult wineries Williams Selyem has built a reputation as a world class producer of Pinot Noir. Now in the capable hands of winemaker Jeff Mangahas, the Williams Selyem wines show an almost unequaled finesse, elegance, and balance throughout its portfolio sourced from grapes grown up and down the California Coast. Sign up for their mailing list at
wiliamsselyem.com.

http://napavalleyregister.com/star/business/tom-simoneau-s-wines-of-the-year/article_dbb3196a-e66c-5e37-b61f-9d1abe49a44c.html