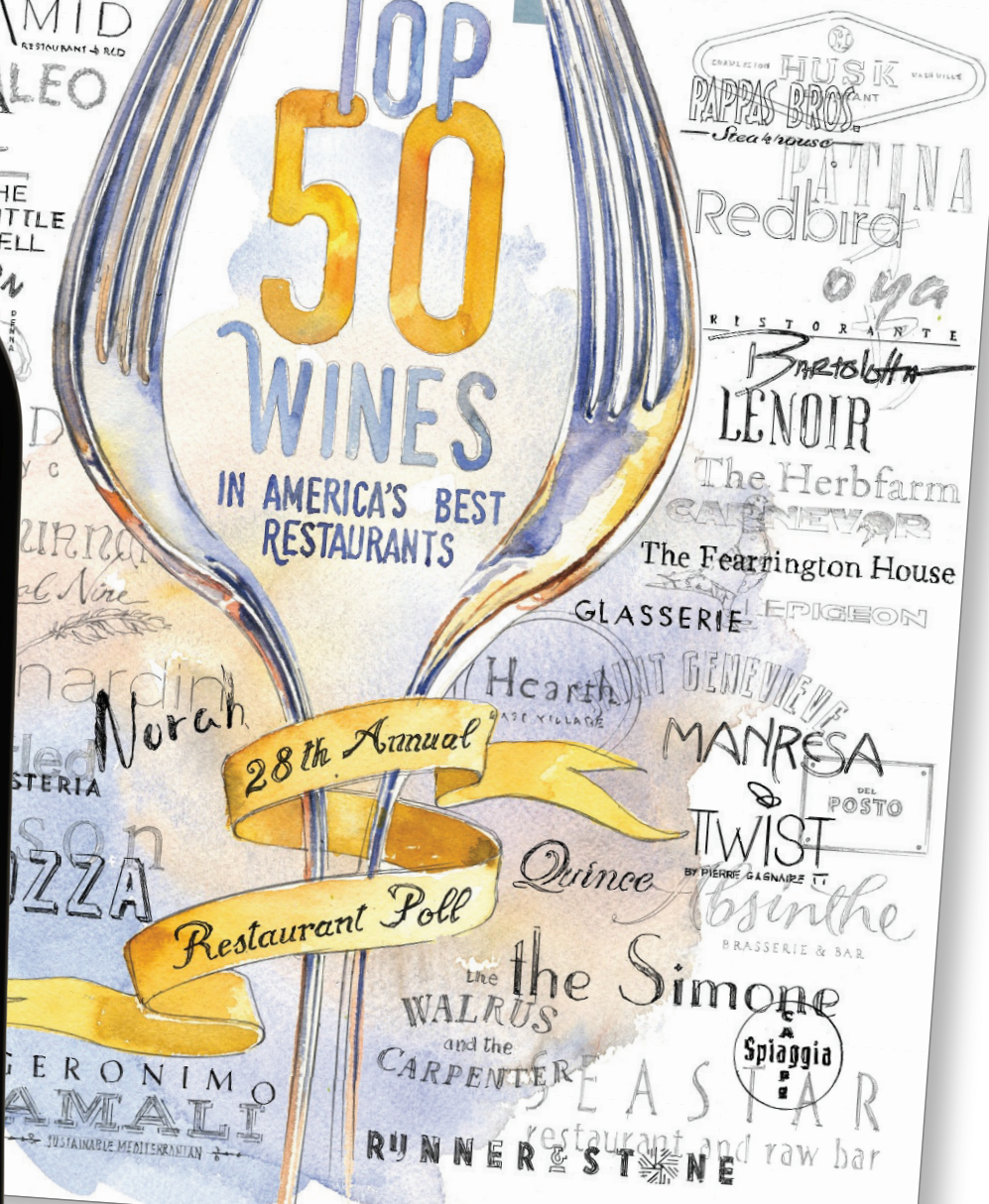


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# Wine & Spirits

## TOP 50 WINES

IN AMERICA'S BEST RESTAURANTS



28th Annual

Restaurant Poll



FRANK FAMILY VINEYARDS

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## CABERNET SAUVIGNON

**It's the ultimate popularity contest:** Sales of cabernet sauvignon (and cabernet blends) and pinot noir have been running neck and neck in US restaurants for the last decade, more or less swapping positions annually since 2006. This year, 2016, is a cabernet year: 14.1 percent of respondents' most popular wines were cabernets, less than in recent years and yet more than any other variety, holding a half-percentage-point edge over pinot. In fact, 12 of the nation's top 20 most popular brands are cabernet-centric, versus just four focused on pinot.

Without question, the Napa Valley still holds the country's diners in thrall. Of the top ten cabernet-centric brands, seven are from Napa, a centrifugal pull that sommeliers all over the country acknowledged. "It's a hot commodity," says Martin Sheehan-Stross of *Michael Mina* in San Francisco. "It's the neighborhood, being in the Financial District. I wish that more wineries had 2012s available, because it's more supple than 2013. But because Napa cabernet sells so well, we're already seeing the 2014s coming up."

Bordeaux was received with renewed enthusiasm as well, buoyed in part by a restaurant-friendly tier of well-priced reds from better-known châteaux. "I'm surprised by how much Bordeaux we are selling under \$100," says Kimberly Prokoshyn at *Rebelle* in NYC. "We had a couple standing at the bar that had friends in and out; they went through seven bottles of Bordeaux across different price points. We had another table that was doing the same thing that night."

Sommeliers reported an uptick in interest in Washington State cabernet: "It will be a while before Washington cabs sell like Napa cabs, but I did see an increase in interest," reports Sarah Trubnick of *The Barrel Room* in San Francisco. "I didn't even need to convince anyone to try them." Same for Brian Cousins of *Café del Rey*, down the coast in Marina del Rey. "The Washington State wines are selling really well," he reports. "We have Col Solare on the list; it drinks like a beautiful Bordeaux."

Cabernets and cabernet blends are also a place where by-the-glass programs get some of their steepest margins. "I kicked off a program with Cliff Lede from the Stags Leap District in late October," says Tonya Pitts of *One Market* in San Francisco. "It's a bit culty; it's one of the wines that Philippe Melka consults on. At \$25 a glass, it flies. But because of what it is—and they know what it is—guests are willing to pay the price."

We definitely have a good number of guests who are looking to Bordeaux. For a region that has been looked at as fallen out of fashion, we are selling a lot of it.

—Kimberly Prokoshyn, *Rebelle*, NYC



## MOST POPULAR CABERNET SAUVIGNON

| Rank | Brand                             | Bottling                                       | Avg. Price     |
|------|-----------------------------------|--|----------------|
| 1    | <b>Caymus Vineyards</b>           | Napa Valley                                    | \$162          |
| 2    | <b>Silver Oak Wine Cellars</b>    | Alexander Valley<br>Napa Valley                | \$164<br>\$170 |
| 3    | <b>Jordan</b>                     | Alexander Valley                               | \$113          |
| 4    | <b>Faust</b>                      | Napa Valley<br>Rutherford                      | \$103<br>\$125 |
| 5    | <b>Stag's Leap Wine Cellars</b>   | Napa Valley Artemis<br>Stags Leap District Fay | \$125<br>\$199 |
| 6    | <b>Frank Family</b>               | <b>Napa Valley</b>                             | <b>\$95</b>    |
| 7    | <b>Heitz Wine Cellars</b>         | Napa Valley<br>Napa Valley Martha's Vineyard   | \$128<br>\$350 |
| 8    | <b>Justin</b>                     | Paso Robles                                    | \$62           |
| 9    | <b>Duckhorn Vineyards</b>         | Napa Valley                                    | \$113          |
| 10   | <b>Hall</b>                       | Napa Valley                                    | \$98           |
| 11   | <b>Freemark Abbey</b>             | Napa Valley                                    | \$86           |
| 12   | <b>Ladera Vineyards</b>           | Napa Valley                                    | \$79           |
| 13   | <b>Honig</b>                      | Napa Valley<br>Rutherford Napa Valley          | \$81<br>\$90   |
| 14   | <b>Mt. Veeder Winery</b>          | Napa Valley                                    | \$107          |
| 15   | <b>Cain Cellars</b>               | Napa Valley Cain Cuvée                         | \$100          |
| 16   | <b>Alexander Valley Vineyards</b> | Alexander Valley                               | \$48           |
|      | <b>Beringer Vineyards</b>         | Knights Valley                                 | \$61           |
| 18   | <b>Shafer Vineyards</b>           | Stags Leap District One Point Five             | \$123          |
| 19   | <b>Beaulieu Vineyard</b>          | Rutherford<br>Rutherford Georges de Latour     | \$78<br>\$180  |
|      | <b>Château Margaux</b>            | Margaux de Château Margaux                     | \$158          |
| 20   | <b>Decoy</b>                      | Sonoma County<br>Napa Valley                   | \$57<br>\$124  |
|      | <b>Twenty Rows</b>                | Napa Valley                                    | \$52           |
| 23   | <b>Harlan</b>                     | Napa Valley The Mascot                         | \$212          |
| 24   | <b>Louis Martini Winery</b>       | North Coast<br>Sonoma County                   | \$40<br>\$41   |
|      | <b>Joseph Carr</b>                | Napa Valley                                    | \$57           |
| 26   | <b>Hogue Cellars</b>              | Washington<br>Washington Genesis               | \$26<br>\$36   |
|      | <b>J. Lohr</b>                    | Paso Robles Seven Oaks                         | \$38           |

"People see Caymus on the list and they're like 'Wow, you have that by the glass?' They don't even really consider the price; we have it at \$38. The name says it all. It's a ready-to-drink, big cabernet with chocolate-soft tannins."

—Shaun Adams, *Geronimo*, Santa Fe, NM

