



## 7 Napa Valley Whites for Holiday Feasts

November 18, 2013

Napa Valley has in recent years become synonymous with big, tannic cabernet sauvignons, but we shouldn't forget that it also is well-regarded for its white wines, particularly chardonnays and sauvignon blancs. Although these grapes are grown throughout the valley, they are usually planted in its cooler recesses, particularly the Carneros region.

Here are seven Napa whites, all but one either chardonnay or sauvignon blanc, worthy of your consideration for the upcoming holiday meals:

2011 Chateau Montelena Napa Valley chardonnay (\$50). A very good food wine, fruity but not sweet, with nice citrus and kiwi flavors.

2012 Franciscan Napa Valley chardonnay (\$18). Quite fruity with a touch of sweetness and mellow oak in the finish, with underlay flavors of ripe apple and creamy lemon.

2012 Frank Family Carneros chardonnay (\$30). This is a nice blend of voluble fruit and toasty oak, an example of "California-style chard" at its best.

2012 Phifer Pavitt Napa Valley "Date Night..." sauvignon blanc (\$30). This is a big wine with juicy, green-fruit flavors — grassy, but not tart. It's a touch fruity/sweet in the finish.

2011 Robert Mondavi Napa Valley chardonnay (\$26). There's lots of red grapefruit in this big wine, along with exotic fruit flavors, mild tannins, and good fruit-skin notes.

2011 Robert Mondavi Napa Valley "To Kalon" reserve fumé blanc (\$40). Mondavi's signature sauvignon blanc from its signature vineyard, the wine has grassiness tempered with blue-green citrus and tart apple flavors, nice skin tannins, and some chalkiness. It is a big wine, but not a heavy one.

2012 Truchard Carneros roussanne (\$21). Not many Rhône varieties make their way from their coastal hotbeds into the valley, which is a shame. This is a very nice example, however, of a Napa "Rhône," offering soft, creamy, tropical fruit flavors along with some apricot notes, barrel flavors, and a crisp finish.