



BLIND TASTING

with Deborah Parker Wong

Rutherford Dust 2010

We're kicking up the dust once again with the 2010 vintage presented by the Rutherford Dust Society at a blind tasting held at Beaulieu Vineyards' Rutherford House in July. According to President Davie Piña, the Society is in the last stages of their watershed restoration project which has lessened erosion and reduced disease pressure along the 4.5 miles of riverbank that bisect the AVA. "Rutherford growers have given up eight acres of vineyard to restore the river," said Piña who was met with a round of much-deserved applause for his pivotal role in managing the project.

Across the 18 red wines shown that morning, vintage events in 2010 including cool, grey La Niña conditions punctuated by a severe heat spike and untimely rain during harvest produced a narrower range of styles. The tasting was organized moving clockwise around the AVA from west to east and conditions at Rutherford House were ideal with the wines being given time to aerate prior to the tasting.

The result: An impressive effort on behalf of the majority of producers with wines showing a higher-than-average acidity, saturated color, pronounced aromatics and the promise of aging with grace. "Acid adds length to the finish and is a barometer of quality," observed Beaulieu's Jeffrey Stambor during his vintage recap. This is Napa Valley at its old school-best with almost all of the top performers coming in between 14 and 14.5 percent alcohol and showing heightened complexity.

1. Leather, hawthorn berry; savory, intense black fruit expression with a long, firm grip; \$120
2. Pronounced, varietal aromas; a riper example with cassis leaf and rich, deep flavors that build towards a long finish; \$250
3. Vanilla, red flowers, beeswax with fuller-bodied, ripe black fruit, anise and graphite apparent on the finish; \$125
4. Expressive red fruit, black pepper and umami; silky, rich red currant spiced with vanilla and leather—absolutely alive; \$45
5. Lean red fruit; medium-bodied and lighter, resolved tannins, vanilla and signs of oak on the finish that will integrate over time; \$45
6. Powdery and the best example of "dust" with rich, medium-weight blue fruit flavors and clean, lifted finish; \$150
7. Bright and rich with complex red fruits showing cranberry and pomegranate through the finish; \$145
8. Complex dried leaf, tobacco and red floral notes; medium-weight with blackberry leaf and a lean, grippy finish; \$65
9. Rich red fruit with notes of garrigue; more weight and structure than most but lifted on the mid-palate with a juicy finish; \$85 ■■

RUTHERFORD DUST SOCIETY

NAPA VALLEY

1. Freemark Abbey Sycamore Vineyard; 2. Staglin Family Vineyard I.N.E.O.; 3. Beaulieu Vineyard; 4. Georges de Latour Private Reserve; 5. Rutherford Grove Winery; 6. Flora Springs Hillside Reserve; 7. Quintessa; 8. Conn Creek; 9. Piña Napa Valley

The Reveal



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