

**TOP VALUE WINES**  
10 of the North Coast Wine Challenge's best that don't break the bank. **B3**

**GOLD MEDAL WINNERS**  
From Sparkling to Rosé Blends, Ports and Ciders, see the scores and the price. **B3**

# Feast & Wine

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2025 • THE PRESS DEMOCRAT • SECTION B

## Napa Valley cab gets top marks



‘It’s like winning the lottery,’ says owner of Fortunati Vineyards on wine’s best of show win

By **SARAH DOYLE**  
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Liz Accardo could hardly speak. It was a Wednesday afternoon in early April, and the hospitality manager at Fortunati Vineyards in Napa Valley had just phoned the winery’s owners — Ellen and Gary Luchtel — with some startling news.

“Ellen had to tell me to take a couple breaths,” said Accardo, who’d interrupted the couple on vacation in Italy. “I told them our Cabernet Sauvignon had just won best of show at the North Coast Wine Challenge. I was so excited — I had goose bumps!”

The Luchtels were stunned.

“We looked at each other and said, ‘seriously?’” recalled Ellen Luchtel. “We’re such a tiny little business. Does this really happen to small boutique wineries like us?”

“It was shocking,” said Gary Luchtel. “It’s like winning the lottery.”

On April 2, Fortunati Vineyard’s memorable 2021 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon from Napa Valley won “Best of the Best” at The Press Democrat’s 13th annual North Coast Wine Challenge, beating out 1,146 other wines to clinch the top spot.

Focusing exclusively on wines from the North Coast appellation, which encompasses Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, Marin

**THE WINNING PROFILE**

Fortunati Vineyard’s 2021 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon, Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley won Best of the Best, Best of Show Red Wine, Best of Napa County and Double Gold.

Priced at \$95, the wine is 80% Cabernet Sauvignon from Lamoreaux Vineyard, which is blended with 14% Cabernet Franc and 6% Malbec from Fortunati’s estate vineyard.

With a score of 99 points, the wine was a favorite among the judges who relished its “beautiful layers of dark fruit,” “rich earthiness,” and “notes of cassis and violet.”

“The 2021 vintage is extra special,” said winemaker Gary Luchtel. “The signature Cabernet is beautifully balanced with great fruit, acidity and length. It’s a well-built wine that will stand the test of time.”



**REMARKS ON GOLD MEDAL WINNERS**

*“Ferris wheel of fun. White strawberry, red apple skin, rose petals, hibiscus on the finish.”*

**DOT WINE**, 2024 Rosé of Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley. Double Gold, Best Rosé

*“Touch of strawberry and cherry. Elegant and well balanced. Pitch perfect aromas that jumps out at you. A poet’s wine that makes you think.”*

**BRICOLEUR VINEYARDS**, 2023 Founder’s Block Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast. Double Gold

*“Juicy watermelon, cherry, strawberry. Light and refreshing. Good enough to give a bottle to a friend.”*

**GUADAGNI FAMILY WINES**, 2024 Danielle Grenache Rosé, Dry Creek Valley. Double Gold

*“Aromatically awesome, great balance and lingering. Rock concert in mouth.”*

**LULA CELLARS**, 2022 Pinot Noir, Ferrington Vineyard, Anderson Valley. Double Gold

*“Picnic in a sundress with a glass of this Rosé. Serious, bright, fresh.”*

**SONOMA-CUTRER VINEYARDS**, 2024 Rosé of Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley. Double Gold

### INSIDE: SEE THE FULL LIST OF GOLD MEDAL WINNERS FOR THE NORTH COAST WINE CHALLENGE

**BEST OF SHOW SPARKLING**  
Chandon (NV) Brut, Los Carneros



**BEST OF SHOW DESSERT WINE**  
Sonoma-Cutrer 2023 Miel Late Harvest Chardonnay, Russian River Valley



**BEST OF SHOW ROSÉ**  
Dot 2024 Rosé of Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley



**BEST OF SHOW WHITE**  
Deodora Estate Vineyards 2019 Riesling, Sonoma Coast.



*“Lemon curd, notes of ginger. New Age style of Chardonnay. Yoga mat Chardonnay.”*

**RAYMOND VINEYARDS**, 2023 Reserve Selection Chardonnay, Napa Valley. Double Gold

*“Wet stone, crisp Gala apple lifted with notes of mangoes and citrus. Tasty, zippy, energetic and delicious.”*

**HANNA WINERY**, 2023 Chardonnay, Russian River Valley. Double Gold



## 2025 SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS

To make it to the final sweepstakes round, a wine must receive a double gold and be chosen as the best in its class. Only one wine from each entry category (i.e. Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Noir, Rhone Blend etc.) is chosen for the final sweepstakes taste-off. The following wines are all the competition’s cream of the crop.

- Bar None's Canyon:** 2021 Cabernet Franc, Moon Mountain District, 99 points, \$40
- Deodora Estate Vineyards:** 2019 Riesling, Sonoma Coast, 99 points, \$32
- Deodora Estate Vineyards:** 2018 Early Cask Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, 99 points, \$52
- Dot Wine:** 2024 Rosé of Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, 99 points, \$32
- Dot Wine:** 2024 Nalu Sauvignon Blanc, Russian River Valley, 99 points, \$32
- Fortunati Vineyards:** 2021 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon, Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley, 99 points, \$85
- Trentadue Winery:** 2022 La Storia Zinfandel, Alexander Valley, 99 points, \$26
- Truett-Hurst Winery:** 2023 Estate Petite Sirah, Dry Creek Valley, 99 points, \$62
- Bartholomew Estate Winery:** 2012 Marsanne and Roussanne, Fifth Hill Vineyard, Sonoma Valley, 98 points, \$38
- Bartholomew Estate Winery:** 2022 Press Release Red, Sonoma Valley, 98 points, \$75
- Chandon:** (NV) Étoile Brut Special Reserve, Los Carneros, 98 points, \$84
- Dot Wine:** 2024 Grenache, River Smoke Vineyard, Russian River Valley, 98 points, \$35
- Fortunati Vineyards:** 2021 Fortivo Proprietary Red Bordeaux Blend, Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley, 98 points, \$55
- Grey Stack Cellars:** 2024 Four Brothers Rosé, Sonoma Mountain, 98 points, \$25
- Pennyroyal Farm:** 2023 Anyhow Blanc, Anderson Valley, 98 points, \$29
- Raymond Vineyards:** 2022 Reserve Selection Merlot, Napa Valley, 98 points, \$39.99
- Villein:** 2022 Syrah, Walker Vine Hill, Russian River Valley, 98 points, \$50
- Balletto Vineyards:** 2019 Sparkling Brut Rosé, Russian River Valley, 97 points, \$42
- Bedarra Vineyards:** 2022 Malbec, Alexander Valley, 97 points, \$50
- Calluna Vineyards:** 2023 Calluna Estate Blanc, Chalk Hill, 97 points, \$28
- Carol Shelton Wines:** 2015 Tawny Sonoma Zinfandel Dessert Wine, Sonoma County, 97 points, \$45
- Davis Bynum:** 2023 Chardonnay, River West Vineyard, Russian River Valley, 97 points, \$30
- Gowan's Heirloom Cider:** NV Spiced Apple Cider, Anderson Valley, 97 points, \$11.99
- Graziano:** 2023 Chenin Blanc, Mendocino County, 97 points, \$18
- Imagery Estate Winery:** 2022 Sangiovese, Sonoma County, 97 points, \$58
- Peterson Winery:** 2022 Mendo Blendo, Tollini Vineyard, Mendocino County, 97 points, \$24
- R Vineyards:** 2023 Viognier, Lake County, 97 points, \$18
- Roche Winery:** 2023 Nouveau Pinot Noir, Los Carneros, 97 points, \$36
- Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards:** 2023 Miel Late Harvest Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, 97 points, \$36
- Trentadue Winery:** 2022 Old Orchard Montepulciano, Alexander Valley, 97 points, \$42
- D & L Carinalli Vineyards:** 2023 Estate Pinot Grigio, Russian River Valley, 95 points, \$15
- Ferrari-Carano Vineyards & Winery:** 2023 Siena, Sonoma County, 95 points, \$30
- Montse Reece Wines:** 2023 Tempranillo, Luchsinger Vineyards, Lake County, 95 points, \$42
- Portalupi Wine:** 2023 Barbera, Pauli Ranch Vineyard, Mendocino County, 95 points, \$48
- Carol Shelton Wines:** 2023 Black Magic Late Harvest Zinfandel, Sonoma County, 94 points, \$21.99
- Rock and Clay Wines:** 2021 Tannat, Alexander Valley, 94 points, \$42
- Thirty-Seven Wines:** 2023 Albariño, Petaluma Gap, 94 points, \$28
- Vezer Family Vineyard:** 2023 Franci Verdelho, Suisun Valley, 94 points, \$45

## BEST OF COUNTY WINNERS

BEST OF SONOMA COUNTY	BEST OF NAPA COUNTY	BEST OF MENDOCINO COUNTY	BEST OF LAKE COUNTY	BEST OF SOLANO COUNTY
<b>Deodora Estate Vineyards:</b> 2019 Riesling, Sonoma Coast, \$32	<b>Fortunati Vineyards:</b> 2021 Cabernet Sauvignon, Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley, \$85	<b>Graziano:</b> 2023 Chenin Blanc, Mendocino County, \$18	<b>R Vineyards:</b> 2023 Viognier, Lake County, \$18	<b>Vezér Family Vineyard:</b> 2023 Franci Verdelho, Suisun Valley, \$45



ERIK CASTRO / FOR THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Wine Educator Bronwen Hanes pours wines during a private tasting on April 12 at Fortunati Vineyards in Napa.

## CHALLENGE

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and Solano counties, it’s a competition that’s uniquely meaningful to the broad North Bay community.

A record number of wines was entered into this year’s competition, where 34 judges and three associate judges blind-tasted and assessed over 1,000 entries from a total of 223 wineries — including 98 that had never entered before.

This is the first time a Cabernet Sauvignon has won the Best of the Best award in the final sweepstakes round, which chief judge Daryl Groom called “tense and exciting.”

“The sweepstakes round had the most wines I can remember in recent years, with the judges only having one vote to decide which wine will win,” he said. “We’ve had Pinot Noirs, Chardonnay and Zinfandels win but never a Cabernet Sauvignon.”

Groom was also thrilled to see a dry Sonoma Coast Riesling from Deodora Estate Vineyards in the Petaluma Gap take home Best of Show White another competition first.

“It was really nice to see the judges jump out of their comfort zone and unanimously choose this orphan variety,” he said. “Riesling has been getting a lot of attention lately as consumers trend to crisper, lighter styles.”

Alexandria Sarovich, a sommelier and judge at this year’s competition, was particularly impressed by Dot Wine, a boutique producer in Healdsburg that had three wines in the final sweepstakes round.

“Lise Asimont is an incredible winemaker, so it was exciting to see her Sauvignon Blanc, Rosé and Grenache all make sweepstakes,” said Sarovich, owner of Own Rooted Hospitality. “I think the judges did a great job narrowing down the winners.”

Among the other judges was local celebrity winemaker Matt Duffy of Vaughn Duffy Wines, whose Pinot Noir from Bacigalupi Vineyard took home the top prize in 2023.

“Since we won the competi-

### NORTH COAST WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL

To sample this year’s double gold and gold-winning wines, don’t miss the North Coast Wine & Food Festival on June 14 at the Luther Burbank Center for the Arts in Santa Rosa.

Hosted by The Press Democrat, the event will offer plenty of food to accompany the winning wines, including plates from Lo & Behold, Goldfinch, Slanted Door, Arandas, Wit & Wisdom and other local restaurants.

**More information:**  
northcoastwineandfood.com

tion, I’ve been so curious to see how it works,” said Duffy, who was a first-time judge. “Lightning really does need to strike twice. Not only does your wine need to beat out all the others in its category, it needs to beat out all the other sweepstakes wines. I’ve always felt it’s a miracle we won.”

The Luchtels would likely agree with Duffy’s sentiment.

### A shared passion

Both born in the Midwest, Ellen and Gary Luchtel met in San Francisco while studying business at San Francisco State University.

“Gary was a wine geek from the moment I met him,” said Ellen. “He’d pick me up for a date with a wine bottle hidden in a paper bag, and I’d have to guess the varietal.”

“If I was going to date this woman, I had to get her up to speed,” added Gary, laughing.

After graduation, Gary moved into commercial real estate while Ellen pursued marketing.

In the early 1990s, Gary took up home winemaking as a hobby, focusing on reds like Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon, which he sourced from Sonoma and Napa counties.

“The Tedeschis used to drive down to San Francisco in their big truck and drop off tons of grapes to home winemakers,” said Gary. “It was really great fruit.”

While Gary wasn’t legally allowed to sell the wine, his friends and family donated to his “hobby gone wild,” with the



FORTUNATI VINEYARDS

**Gary and Ellen Luchtel, owners of Fortunati Vineyards.**

funds reinvested in upgraded winemaking equipment.

Ellen remembers feeling relieved her new husband’s wine was actually drinkable.

“It turned out he was really good at winemaking,” said Ellen. “Thank God the wine was good.”

**6 years**

One evening in the early 2000s, Ellen had just arrived home when Gary blurted out “OK! Six years!”

“I asked, ‘what do you mean ‘six years’?’ He told me that’s the ROI (return on investment) from when you plant a vineyard to when it becomes profitable,” she said. “I thought, oh my, here we go.”

In 2003, the Luchtels put an offer on a 10.2-acre property in what would soon become the Oak Knoll District, a cooler sub-appellation in Napa Valley. Initially, they had an investor on board to help with the purchase, but that person pulled out weeks before the sale closed.

In the end, the couple sold everything they owned, including their San Francisco home, to buy the “fixer-upper” property.

While Gary didn’t know how to grow grapes, he knew plenty of people who did. Among them was Doug Hill, a veteran vineyard manager in Napa Valley, who helped plant the new vineyard to Syrah and Viognier. After initially selling the fruit, the couple officially launched Fortunati Vineyards winery in 2008.

Today, Fortunati produces

about 3,000 cases of wine per year, such as Chardonnay, Viognier, Syrah rosé, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Port-style dessert wine.

A small production facility allows Gary to make some wine on-site, but the majority is produced at Materra Cunat Family Vineyards nearby. Ellen oversees sales, marketing and everything else.

“My job is to fill the warehouse with wine, and Ellen’s job is to empty it,” joked Gary. “She has the much harder job.”

### The winning wine

To produce this year’s top-winning wine at the North Coast Wine Challenge, Gary sourced his 2021 Cabernet Sauvignon from Lamoreaux Vineyard in the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley.

Here, the cooling marine influence of San Pablo Bay extends hang time for grapes on the vine, resulting in fruit with depth and complexity.

Luchtel has purchased Cabernet Sauvignon from the vineyard’s same two acres since 2013, which he blends with 14% Cabernet Franc and 6% Malbec from Fortunati’s estate vineyard.

“Lamoreaux Vineyard produces Cabernet Sauvignon with these beautiful rich plum flavors that aren’t overripe,” he said. “The 2021 vintage was extra special — the wines are beautifully balanced, with great fruit, acidity and length. It’s a well-built wine that will stand the test of time.”

The Luchtels are still astonished the judges chose their Cabernet as the best wine in the entire competition. And Gary was even more chuffed when he discovered who the judges were.

“Some of them are renowned winemakers I’ve aspired to be like,” he said. “I finally feel like I have a place at the table.”

To purchase Fortunati Vineyards award-winning 2021 Signature Cabernet Sauvignon from the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley (\$95), visit fortunativineyards.com.

*You can reach Staff Writer Sarah Doyle at 707-521-5478 or sarah.doyle@pressdemocrat.com. Follow Sarah on Instagram at @whiskymuse.*

## 10 TOP VALUE WINES FROM THE NORTH COAST WINE CHALLENGE

Here are 10 selections — from white to red — chosen from all the wines entered in this year’s North Coast Wine Challenge. These wines are not only exceptional but also offer great value for their price

### WHITE

- D & L Carinalli Vineyards:** 2023 Pinot Grigio, Russian River Valley, 95 points, \$15
- Elizabeth Spencer Winery:** 2023 Sauvignon Blanc, North Coast, 97 points, \$20
- Graziano:** 2023 Chenin Blanc, Mendocino County, 97 points, \$18
- Navarro Vineyards:** 2023 Chardonnay, Anderson Valley, 96 points, \$21
- R Vineyards:** 2023 Viognier, Lake County, 97 points, \$18

### ROSÉ

- Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards:** 2024 Rosé of Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, 96 points, \$20

### RED

- Peterson Winery:** 2022 Mendo Blendo, Tollini Vineyard, Mendocino County, 97 points, \$24
- Sonoma Cellars:** (NV) Syrah, Sonoma Valley, 93 points, \$14

- Sonoma Highway Winery:** 2022 Pinot Noir, Sonoma County, 92 points, \$20
- St. Francis Winery:** 2022 Cabernet Sauvignon, Sonoma County, 96 points, \$22

### BONUS VALUE

- Gowan's Heirloom Ciders:** Spiced Apple Cider, Anderson Valley, 97 points, \$11.99





Chris Sawyer, sommelier with Sonoma County Vintners, judges a wine during the first day of judging of the North Coast Wine Challenge on April 1 at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa.

# Gold medal winners for 2025

THE PRESS DEMOCRAT STAFF

## DOUBLE GOLD WINNERS

### SPARKLING

- Chandon:** (NV) Etoile Brut, Los Carneros, 98 points, \$84
- Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards:** 2018 Grand Cuvée Late Disgorged, Russian River Valley, 98 points, \$55
- Balletto Vineyards:** 2019 Sparkling Brut Rosé, Russian River Valley, 97 points, \$42
- Chandon:** 2017 Vintage Brut, Los Carneros, 97 points, \$63
- Roche Winery & Vineyards:** 2023 Brut Rosé, Sonoma Valley, 96 points, \$50

### SAUVIGNON BLANC

- Dot Wine:** 2024 Nalu Sauvignon Blanc, Russian River Valley, 99 points, \$32
- Brassfield Estate Winery:** 2024 Sauvignon Blanc, High Valley, 98 points, \$22
- Naked Wines:** 2024 Schroeter Sauvignon Blanc, Dry Creek Valley, 98 points, \$17
- Saini Vineyards:** 2024 Sauvignon Blanc, Dry Creek Valley, 98 points, \$27
- Balverne Wines:** 2024 Sauvignon Blanc, Chalk Hill, 97 points, \$27
- Elizabeth Spencer:** 2023 Sauvignon Blanc, North Coast, 97 points, \$20
- Grey Stack Cellars:** 2024 Four Brothers Sauvignon Blanc, Marlene's Block, Sonoma Mountain, 97 points, \$35
- Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards:** 2024 Sauvignon Blanc, Russian River Valley, 97 points, \$20
- Dry Creek Vineyard:** 2023 DCV3 Sauvignon Blanc, Dry Creek Valley, 96 points, \$33
- Dry Creek Vineyard:** 2023 Sauvignon Blanc, Taylor's Vineyard, Dry Creek Valley, 96 points, \$33
- Guadagni Family Wines:** 2024 Marble Cliffs Sauvignon Blanc, Dry Creek Valley, 96 points, \$26
- Wilson of Dry Creek:** 2024 Sauvignon Blanc, Rockpile, 96 points, \$29
- Balletto Vineyards:** 2024 Sauvignon Blanc, Russian River Valley, 95 points, \$25
- Coyote Sonoma:** 2023 Sauvignon Blanc, Sonoma County, 95 points, \$22

### PINOT GRIS/GRIGIO

- D & L Carinalli Vineyards:** 2023 Pinot Grigio, Carinalli Vineyards, Russian River Valley, 95 points, \$15

### RIESLING

- Deodora Estate Vineyards:** 2019 Riesling, Sonoma Coast, 99 points, \$32
- Furthermore Wines:** 2023 Riesling, Sonoma Coast, 96 points, \$40

### VIOGNIER

- R Vineyards:** 2023 Viognier, Lake County, 97 points, \$18
- J. Rickards Winery:** 2024 Viognier, Sea Rose Ranch, Dry Creek Valley, 96 points, \$34

### CHARDONNAY

- Chalk Hill Estate:** 2023 Estate Chardonnay, Chalk Hill, 98 points, \$52
- Ladera Vineyards:** 2022 Chardonnay, Green Valley of the Russian River Valley, 98 points, \$60



Volunteer Marv Mueller inspects glasses before filling them with wine during the first day of judging of the North Coast Wine Challenge on April 1 at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds.

- Sangiaco Family Wines:** 2022 Chardonnay, Green Acres Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, 98 points, \$68
- Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards:** 2023 Wicket Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, 98 points, \$34
- Davis Bynum Winery:** 2023 Chardonnay, River West Vineyard, Russian River Valley, 97 points, \$30
- Hanna Winery:** 2023 Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, 97 points, \$30
- Inman Family Wines:** 2022 Chardonnay, Pratt Vine Hill Vineyard, Russian River Valley, 97 points, \$73
- Orsi Family Vineyards:** 2022 Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, 97 points, \$42
- Raymond Vineyards:** 2023 Reserve Selection Chardonnay, Napa Valley, 97 points, \$27
- Deodora Estate Vineyards:** 2019 Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast, 96 points, \$48
- Rodney Strong Vineyards:** 2022 Chardonnay, Chalk Hill, 96 points, \$30
- Lula Cellars:** 2023 Chardonnay, Ferrington Vineyard, Anderson Valley, 95 points, \$55
- Navarro Vineyards:** 2023 Chardonnay, Anderson Valley, 95 points, \$21
- St. Francis Winery & Vineyards:** 2022 Chardonnay, Sonoma County, 95 points, \$17

### WHITE BORDEAUX TYPE BLENDS

- Calluna Vineyards:** 2023 Estate Blanc (80% Sauvignon Blanc, 20% Semillon), Chalk Hill, 97 points, \$28

### WHITE RHÔNE BLENDS

- Bartholomew Estate Winery:** 2023 Marsanne and Roussanne (70% Marsanne, 30% Roussanne), Fifth Hill Wines Vineyard, Sonoma Valley, 98 points, \$38

### OTHER WHITE BLENDS

- Pennyroyal Farm:** 2023 Anyhow Blanc (50% Chardonnay, 50% Sauvignon Blanc), Anderson Valley, 98 points, \$29
- Trefethen Family Vineyards:** 2024 Quandary (72% Riesling, 21% Chardonnay, 7% Sauvignon Blanc), Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley, 97 points, \$32
- Dutcher Crossing Winery:** 2023 Kupferschmid White Wine (79% Chardonnay, 12% Semillion, 9% Sauvignon Blanc), Dry Creek Valley, 96 points, \$46
- Villein Wines:** 2023 Marsanne and Roussanne, Russian River Valley, 95 points, \$38

### LATE HARVEST WHITE VARIETALS

- Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards:** 2023 Miel Late Harvest Chardonnay, Russian River Valley, 97 points, \$36
- Husch Vineyards:** 2024 Late Harvest Gewürztraminer, Anderson Valley, 95 points, \$30

### OTHER WHITE VARIETALS

- Graziano Family of Wines:** 2023 Chenin Blanc, Mendocino County, 97 points, \$18
- Saini Vineyards:** 2024 Chenin Blanc, Dry Creek Valley, 96 points, \$27

### ROSÉ

- Dot Wine:** 2024 Rosé of Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, 99 points, \$32
- The.Grenachista Wine Co.:** 2024 Rosé of Grenache, Sonoma Valley, 99 points, \$28
- Guadagni Family Wines:** 2024 Danielle Rosé of Grenache, Dry Creek Valley, 97 points, \$28
- Navarro Vineyards:** 2024 Rosé of Pinot Noir, Anderson Valley, 96 points, \$27
- Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards:** 2024 Rosé of Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, 96 points, \$20

### ROSÉ BLENDS

- Grey Stack Cellars:** 2024 Four Brothers Rosé (80% Pinot Noir, 20% Grenache), Sonoma Mountain, 98 points, \$25

### PINOT NOIR

- Deodora Estate Vineyards:** 2018 Early Cask Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, 99 points, \$52
- Balletto Vineyards:** 2021 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, 98 points, \$34
- Bricoleur Vineyards:** 2023 Founder's Block Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, 98 points, \$60
- Brooks Note Winery:** 2023 Pinot Noir, Petaluma Gap, 98 points, \$45
- Domaine Della:** 2022 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley, 98 points, \$72
- Furthermore Wines:** 2022 Pinot Noir, Gap's Crown Vineyard, Petaluma Gap, 98 points, \$65
- Gracianna Winery:** 2023 Estate Pinot Noir, Mercedes

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## 2025 JUDGES

- Daryl Groom:** Chief Judge North Coast Wine Challenge, owner/winemaker at Groom Wines, Healdsburg
- Debra Del Fiorentino:** Competition Director North Coast Wine Challenge, director of wine competitions at Wine Competitions Management + Productions, Sonoma County
- Kris Anderson:** Wine buyer at Wilbees Wines & Spirits, Sonoma County
- Heidi Barrett:** Winemaker at Barrett & Barrett Wines, Napa Valley
- Tim Bell:** Winemaker at Dry Creek Vineyard, Healdsburg
- Michael Beaulac:** Director of winemaking at Foley Family Wines, Santa Rosa
- Dan Berger:** Wine journalist, Sonoma County
- Harry Bryan:** General manager at Valette restaurant, Healdsburg
- Tom Capo:** Wine writer, Sonoma
- Tina Caputo:** Multimedia journalist and editor, Sonoma
- Olivia Christie:** Marketing specialist at Wine Industry Network, Healdsburg
- Kerry Damskey:** Wine consultant and winemaker, Geyserville
- Sarah Doyle:** Wine reporter at The Press Democrat, Santa Rosa
- Matt Duffy:** Owner and winemaker of Vaughn Duffy Wines and consulting winemaker, Sonoma County
- Traci Dutton:** Educator, sommelier, wine and beverage judge, The Culinary Institute of America, Napa Valley
- Ziggy Eschliman:** Wine and spirits broadcast, educator, consultant, writer, Sonoma County
- William (Bill) Guadagni:** Winemaker at Orsi Family Vineyards, Healdsburg
- Nick Goldschmidt:** Winemaker, consultant, Goldschmidt Vineyards, Healdsburg
- Richard Hummell:** Director of food and beverage, Montage, Healdsburg
- Amanda Johnson:** Food and beverage manager at Fountaingrove Club, Santa Rosa
- Jesse Katz:** Winemaker at Aperture and Devil Proof Vineyards, Healdsburg
- Jennifer (JB) Kelly:** President of sales and marketing at Luxury Wine Partners, Petaluma
- Josh Kirchhoff:** Corporate wine and spirits coordinator at Oliver's, Sonoma County
- Ellen Landis:** Certified Sommelier, Certified Specialist of Wine, wine writer, Sonoma Napa County
- Jordan Maine:** General manager and wine buyer at Willi's Seafood & Raw Bar, Healdsburg
- Peg Melnik:** Wine critic, writer and educator, Sonoma County
- Chris Munsell:** Director of winemaking at E&J Gallo Winery, Sonoma County
- Gianna Passalacqua:** Consumer engagement ambassador at Foley Family Wines and Spirits - Luxury Experiences, Santa Rosa
- Lindsey Rich, DipWSET:** Winemaker at Naked Wines and owner of L.Rich Wines, Napa Valley
- Laura Sanfilippo:** Certified sommelier, wine buyer and owner of Lo & Behold Bar + Kitchen, Healdsburg
- Alexandria Sarovich:** Founder and CEO of Own Rooted Hospitality, Healdsburg
- Christopher Sawyer:** Wine writer and "Sommelier to the Stars," Sonoma County
- Mick Schroeter:** Director of winemaking at Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards, Windsor
- Liz Thach:** Master of Wine, professor of wine and management, author, Sonoma County
- Larry Van Aalst:** Radio host of "The Sonoma Wine Report," CRN Digital Talk Radio, Santa Rosa
- Anthony Vilorio:** Hospitality and beverage director at Stark Reality Restaurants, Santa Rosa
- Elsie Wolfe:** Contributor at Connect the Dots Collective, Napa
- Debbie Zachareas:** Wine expert, international judge and lecturer, Napa County