Ramey

A Napa Valley Cabernet drawing breadth from valley-floor elegance and mountain intensity, uniting Oak Knoll freshness with Mount Veeder grip and Oakville polish for a poised, ageworthy, quietly luxurious expression.

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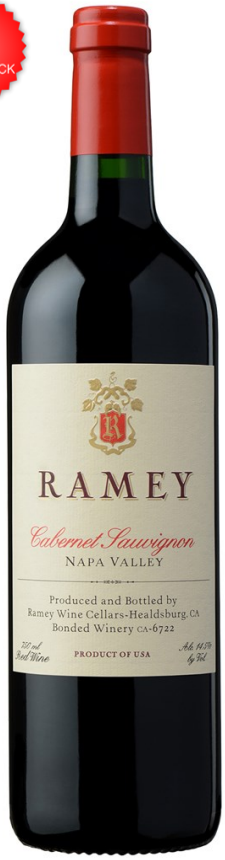
95
JEB DUNNUCK



Cabernet Sauvignon 2019

California, USA

Region and Vineyards

Napa Valley's south-north arc, flanked by the Mayacamas and Vaca ranges, delivers a marked **diurnal** shift and a patchwork of soils across 16 nested AVAs—conditions that temper ripeness and build freshness in Cabernet. Morning fogs, Mediterranean summers, and varied elevations create a spectrum from supple valley-floor wines to more sinewy mountain expressions.

This appellation bottling draws predominantly from **Oak Knoll** (70%) for cool-tilted poise, with mountain nerve from **Mount Veeder** (10%) and mid-valley polish via **Oakville** (5%); smaller portions come from Alexander Valley (11%) and Sonoma County (4%). The blend mirrors the valley's geology—decomposed rock from both ranges blending with silt, clay and gravel of the Napa River floodplain—yielding breadth and finely grained tannin. Mount Veeder's breezy, long-season slopes contribute ageworthy structure, while Oakville's alluvial fans underpin classic Cabernet depth.

Winemaking

The 2019 is **86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc**. Grapes were picked **September 23-October 16** at an average **25.6° Brix**, then fermented with native yeasts; malolactic was also indigenous. The house aim is to marry Bordelaise technique with California's natural amplitude, preserving site clarity while achieving harmony.

Élevage is notably long: **29 months** in **55% new French oak** (Taransaud, François Frères, Demptos), **sur lie** with bi-monthly bâtonnage to "coat" tannins and integrate wood, then bottled **unfiltered**. Release was **July 2024**—a patient approach that polishes texture and length.

Alcohol :14,50 %

Composition: 86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc

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Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Deep ruby with a purple core and narrow garnet rim.
- **Aroma**: Blackcurrant, ripe plum and dark cherry layered with cedar, graphite, cocoa, bay leaf, tobacco and a faint mountain-herb lift.
- **Palate**: Full-bodied yet poised; concentrated black fruit rides vibrant acidity. Fine, chalk-edged tannins build to a long, savoury finish with graphite, espresso bean and cool earth tones.

Did you know?

Ramey ages this Cabernet **sur lie** with periodic bâtonnage—an approach more commonly associated with fine white Burgundy—specifically to refine tannins and knit oak into the fruit. It's part of a philosophy shaped by David Ramey, a pioneer of native-yeast fermentations, barrel élevage and bottling without filtration in California.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Prime rib roast** — The wine's cassis and savory tobacco complement roasted Maillard notes; firm tannins thrive beside rich, marbled beef.
- **Grilled lamb chops with rosemary** — Herbal tones echo the wine's bay/graphite accents; lamb's sweetness softens the tannic frame.
- **Mature Comté or aged Gouda** — Umami and nutty depth bridge the oak-spice and cocoa elements while salt crystallization freshens the finish.
- **Porcini mushroom risotto** — Earth and umami mirror the wine's mineral-savory register; creaminess highlights its supple mid-palate.

95 JEB DUNNUCK

Jeb Dunnuck (JD) : 95 Points (2019)

A ripe red/purple color, the 2019 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley is fresh, minty, and ripe with cassis, tobacco, wet stone, and cedar. Full-bodied, it's plush and velvety in texture and elegant all the way through, and it has a great deal of levity without any austerity. Drink 2024-2045.

91 Wine Spectator

Wine Spectator (WS) : 91 Points (2019)

Supple and caressing in feel, with sneaky length to its reserved notes of cassis, bitter cherry and damson plum. Savory and cedar accents add range and texture on the finish. For fans of the elegant style. Drink now through 2032.