Joseph Phelps

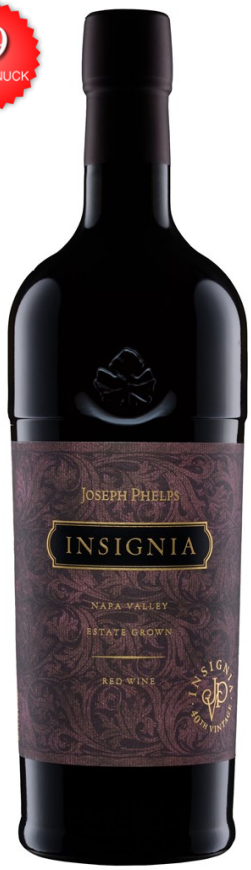
A commanding Napa Valley icon, the 2019 Insignia by Joseph Phelps blends site precision with plush, age-worthy elegance, revealing the soul of estate-grown Cabernet Sauvignon.

JOSEPH PHELPS
VINEYARDS

Insignia 2019

California, USA

99
JEB DUNNUCK



Region and Vineyards

The 2019 Joseph Phelps Insignia is a quintessential expression of **Napa Valley**, built from six estate vineyards strategically located across the region's finest sub-AVAs. Approximately 32% of the fruit comes from Yountville in the **Oak Knoll District**, known for its cooler mesoclimate that fosters freshness and elegance. The Banca Dorada vineyard in **Rutherford** contributes 23% of the blend, delivering the hallmark dustiness and depth associated with this famed appellation.

Further nuance is added through 14% from Suscol in the cooler **South Napa Valley**, and 14% from the **Home Ranch in St. Helena**, which adds opulence and plush fruit character. The **Stags Leap District** plays a subtle yet significant role via the Las Rocas (12%) and Barboza (3%) vineyards, bringing fine tannins and a graphite-like minerality. Finally, the new **El Venadito vineyard** in Oak Knoll, representing 2% of the final cuvée, makes its debut in this vintage, showcasing the estate's continuous evolution.

Winemaking

The 2019 Insignia is composed of **93% Cabernet Sauvignon**, **5% Petit Verdot**, and **2% Malbec**, all sourced from 100% estate-owned vineyards. Each lot was vinified separately before final blending. A hallmark of the Joseph Phelps style, precision and terroir expression are preserved through meticulous vinification, fermentation, and élevage techniques.

Aged for **24 months in 100% new French oak**, the wine was matured in barrels from five renowned coopers: Taransaud, Dargaud Jaegle, Demptos, Marcel Cadet, and Sylvain. This oak regimen imparts both texture and aromatic complexity without overwhelming the fruit, allowing seamless integration of power, finesse, and age-worthiness. The wine was bottled unfiltered to retain maximum character.

Alcohol :14,50 %

Composition: 93% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petit Verdot, 2% Malbec

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Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Deep garnet with violet hues, dense and opaque at the core with brilliant clarity at the rim.
- **Aroma**: Enticing aromatics of red fruit, crème de cassis, and leafy tobacco are layered with dried rose petals, cedarwood, and a hint of graphite.
- **Palate**: Intensely layered and vibrant, the palate showcases blackberry, raspberry, and black currant with undertones of dark chocolate, espresso, and finely sculpted tannins. A long, resonant finish carries mineral tension and elegant oak nuances.

Did you know?

The 2019 vintage marks the **first inclusion of fruit from El Venadito vineyard**, a new Joseph Phelps estate acquisition located just south of the Yountville vineyard. Its cooler location and gravelly soils are set to become a vital element in future Insignia vintages, reflecting the estate's **strategic focus on terroir diversity and legacy vineyard development**.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Dry-aged ribeye steak**: The structure and tannin of the wine beautifully match the marbling and umami richness of aged beef.
- **Porcini mushroom risotto**: Earthy depth and creamy texture echo the wine's dark fruit and oak tones.
- **Duck breast with cherry reduction**: The wine's cassis and red fruit character plays off the sweet-savory glaze of the duck.
- **Truffle and aged cheddar gougères**: A sophisticated appetizer that highlights the wine's aromatic intensity and texture.

99 JEB DUNNUCK

Jeb Dunnuck (JD) : 99 Points (2019)

Another beautiful wine from this team, the 2019 Insignia is mostly Cabernet Sauvignon but includes smaller amounts of Merlot and Malbec, brought up all in new barrels, sourced from seven estate vineyards. It has a classic varietal and incredibly complex nose of crème de cassis, freshly sharpened pencils, green tobacco, and damp earth, with a kiss of background sappy spring flowers. Seemingly from a cooler year with its freshness, vibrancy, and herbal, floral character on the nose, it's nevertheless full-bodied and beautifully concentrated on the palate, with ultra-fine tannins, a seamless, layered mouthfeel, and a gorgeous finish. Unquestionably up with the finest vintages of this cuvée, this is legit awesome juice that's going to offer incredible pleasure over the coming 20-25 years. Hats off to winemaker Ashley Hepworth.

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James Suckling (JS) : 98 Points (2019)

A very aromatic Insignia with pencil-shaving and graphite highlights to the dark fruit and blackberries. Full-bodied, yet tensioned and vertical, with very fine tannins that run deep and layered in the wine. Needs time to come together, but fantastic tension and structure.

Decanter (DCT) : 97 Points (2019)

Smells ripe and heady on the nose, expressive and seductive. This is rich and bold, it's edging on too much, with lots of wood on show in the slightly heavy texture, liquorice and coffee flavour and fullness in the mouth but there are such alluring and captivating aspects to this wine with striking details of rose, tobacco, blackberry, red berries and dark chocolate shavings on show. I like the fragranced aspects and the energetic acidity that gives lift and a sense of brightness but this is a strong, powerful and muscular wine that will need at least a decade to come around. Given enough time it will be beautiful. Ageing 24 months in 100% new French oak. (GH)

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