

# San Francisco Chronicle

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## THE CHRONICLE'S WINE SELECTIONS

### Cabernet Sauvignon Over \$50 — Napa Valley Subappellations

Last week's selections focused on wines that wear the Napa Valley name, either by choice or because they use grapes from across the valley. Napa's individual subdivisions tend to polarize Cabernet lovers. Some love the warmth of valley fruit from Oakville and Rutherford. Others opt for the refinements of rocky Stags Leap. The unyielding structures of fruit from the mountain appellations make for durable, long-lasting wines.

Needless to say, the smaller the appellation, the more scarce the wines. Many of the wines we tasted are available in limited release; a few already sold out. (Those aren't listed here.) The challenges of 2002 and 2003 seemed to be magnified in individual AVAs, but wines from well-managed vineyards were a pleasure indeed.



### 2002 Clos Du Val

#### Oak Vineyard Stags Leap District Cabernet Sauvignon

(\$62) The estate-bottled Stags Leap effort remains the winery's standout. A Bordeaux homage is clear here, with graphite, cigar box, dried herbs, tart currant and brambly fruit. Silky tannin and a fine, long finish.