



Napa's defining wines stick to their roots

Are the valley's most venerable properties still focused on quality? For Father's Day, Jon Bonné checks on the state of old-school Napa Cab

By Jon Bonné

MSNBC

Updated: 8:30 a.m. PT June 13, 2006



Clos du Val 2002 Stags' Leap Oak Vineyard (\$62):

The pricier of Clos du Val's bottlings harnesses the supple, wind-cooled fruit and loamy soils of the Stags Leap area. A heavy oak presence, despite just 50 percent in new barrels, but there are also scents of fresh dried branches and graphite (one taster wondered if there was cabernet franc in the mix; there isn't). A dense, complex structure overshadows any clear fruit flavors, but the style offers a big nod to left-bank Bordeaux, and shows great aging potential.



Clos du Val 2003 Napa Valley (\$30):

The winery's cheaper bottling was no slouch either. Rich, filled with herbal complexity (and, again, an unmistakable dose of oak), it finishes bright and long. Still wound a bit tight and coming together, but it's evolving into a beauty.