

## SPIRITS

# Stags Leap District Cabernet Sauvignon - An Appellation Collection

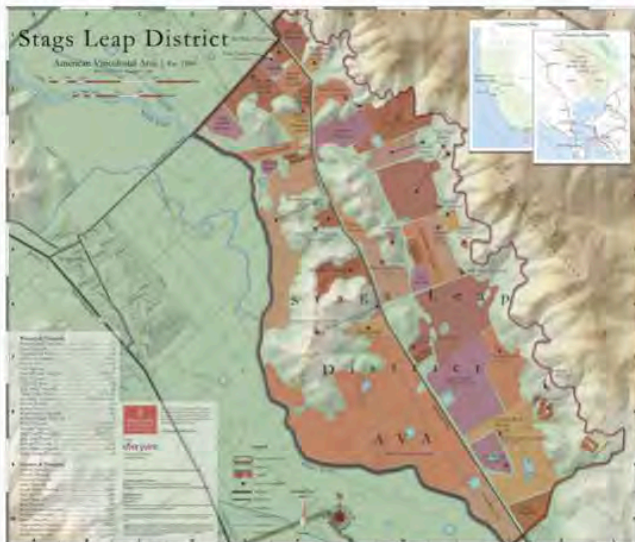
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*I write about wine (and sometimes food) from around the world.*



Cabernet Sauvignons from the Stags Leap District Appellation Collection. © 2022 ROBERT MCCLLENANIAN

The Stags Leap District may be the smallest sub-appellation in Napa Valley, but it's arguably the most famous, especially when we're discussing Cabernet Sauvignon. As this is one of the coolest zones in Napa Valley - fog rolls through the vineyards most days, limiting sunshine hours - the examples of Cabernet Sauvignon from Stags Leap District are among the most elegant and supple of all from Napa.

It's this harmony and approachability when the wines are young that are so appealing to consumers and critics alike; unlike other sub-appellations in the valley, the wines here don't need a decade before they settle down. Yet, the classic Stags Leap District Cabernet Sauvignon is structured for 15-25 years of aging in the best vintages, just as with the rest of Napa Valley.



Map of the Stags Leap District of Napa Valley. PHOTO COURTESY STAGS LEAP DISTRICT WINEGROWERS

Today, sixteen wineries comprise the Stags Leap District (along with some grower members and a few wineries from outside the district that own vineyards here), and a special assortment of one Cabernet Sauvignon from each of these producers is assembled in the Appellation Collection that is available for \$2250 (including ground shipping). The latest collection features the 2019 vintage and was initially offered for sale on October 15 and will be available until December 14 of this year; as you can imagine, this is a limited availability set of wines. Producers include some of the most famous names in all of Napa Valley, such as Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, Stag's Leap Winery (note the placement of the apostrophe in their names; the District itself is Stags Leap, with no apostrophe); Shafer, Clos du Val and Pine Ridge.

For consumers that want an even more in-depth look at the Stags Leap District, the annual Vineyard to Vintner weekend will be held at the member wineries from April 20-23, 2023. Events during these three days include special tastings and lunches as well as tours of specific vineyards as well as a session about the history and terroir of this remarkable area.

Tickets for this event went on sale November 1 and are priced at \$1250 per person. For more information on purchasing the Appellation Collection and/or the Vineyard to Vintner tour, [click here](#).

I was able to taste four of the wines from the 2019 Appellation Collection. Here are my tasting notes (each of these wines is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon):



Baldacci Family Winery, Stags Leap District. PHOTO BY ROCCO CESELIN

**Baldacci Family Vineyards "Black Label"** - Established in 1998, Baldacci is indeed a family estate, with Thomas and Brenda Baldacci as proprietors, and Michael Baldacci as the winemaker. Medium deep purple; aromas of black cherry, black plum and hints of bitter chocolate and black currant. Medium-full with excellent concentration, this has a layered mid-palate and a finish with great persistence; the tannins are quite rich, yet silky, and the wine finishes with notes of dark chocolate and a note of graphite. There is very good acidity and the oak notes are beautifully integrated. For Michael Baldacci, this wine is a classic "iron fist in a velvet glove" style of Cabernet Sauvignon the Stags Leap District is famous for. So appealing now paired with leg of lamb, but this will reveal greater elegance and character over the next several years; peak in 15-18 years. (95)