

Cristaldi's pick of 50 top 2023 Napa Cabernets to buy - and to keep

May 2026 - By Jonathan Cristaldi

This is a collector's vintage that can be enjoyed from the moment the wines arrive at your doorstep until some long-anticipated anniversary celebration, two, three, four or more decades from now. These are wines of purity and graceful flavors, backed by Napa power with balanced tension.

The 2023 wines are typically deep red-black in color, yet they retain a striking luminosity in the glass, rather than an opaque density. Many are black-fruited, with lifted red-fruit brightness and a savory, herbal framing, and they are concentrated without showing any sign of heaviness. Even the full-bodied wines, which possess excellent midcore density, boast remarkably pure and crisp fruit notes. There are no jammy, baked or stewed flavors. Even the most powerful 2023 wines emphasize control and tight-knit structure rather than brute extraction.

Textures reveal silk-satiny, juicy profiles underscored by ultrafine, velvety tannins that are often compact, mineral-laced and firmly in place, but rarely drying. The mineral character of the wines is most striking in its graphite-driven, iron-led quality, often marked by a welcome salinity on the palate framed by kinetic acids.

This isn't a plush, hedonistic vintage; 2023 is a classical, mineral-driven, architecturally precise Napa year that offers an abundance of wines that deliver loads of upfront drinking pleasure along with exceptional long-term ageing potential.



Baldacci Family Vineyards 2023 Ruppert Coombsville **94 points**

Incredibly fragrant, showing an ironstone mineral character layered with black-cherry fruit, fine tannins and a pop of black licorice, alongside deep, forest-floor aromatics, all carried through a finish marked by lingering mineral freshness.
Drink 2026-2036

Top 50 2023 Napa Cabernets.