

Rutherford Grove



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Tasting Highlights: California Cabernet

2004 Cabernets make a big splash

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Cabernet fans should be targeting the 2004 vintage, which in many markets is replacing 2003. 2004 is clearly the better of the two years. The wines are riper, fleshier, more complex, concentrated and better balanced. I don't expect price relief for Napa Valley Cabernets anytime soon, so finding outstanding wines in the \$50 to \$100 range is where you'll get the most for your money, odd as that may sound.

RUTHERFORD GROVE Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain Estate 90 \$65
Reserve 2004

Firm, ripe, rich and concentrated, with a mix of dried currant, black cherry, anise, sage and wild berry. The fruit is plush, deep and structured, ending with a touch of heat but also plush fruit. Firm but ripe tannins. Drink now through 2012. 560 cases made. —*J.L.*