

American new releases

104 wines recommended from 498 new releases tasted by blind panel;
California wines reviewed by **Joshua Greene**;
Idaho, Michigan, Oregon and Washington wines reviewed by **Patrick J. Comiskey**

CALIFORNIA SPARKLING

88 | Schramsberg \$33
2002 North Coast Blanc de Noirs Sparkling Full-on chardonnay flintiness keeps this wine dry and austere, while cocoa butter scents provide contrasting richness. Good length of leesy, mineral tones and cidery fruit set it up for tempura shrimp. *Schramsberg Vineyards, Calistoga, CA*

CALIFORNIA WHITE Blends

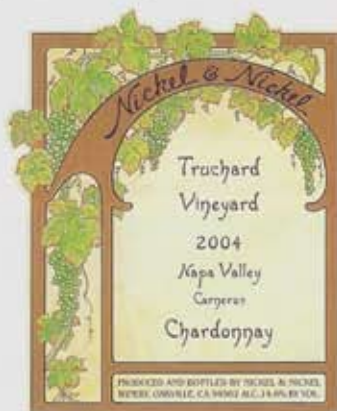


93 | Qupé \$18
2005 Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Cuvée Bob Lindquist's chardonnay-viognier blend is consistently one of the best white wines being grown in California, (and yes, he continues to sell it for \$18 a bottle). The 2005 builds from a core of white peach flavor, revealing delicate floral fruit scents and deeper minerality. Silky smooth and rich, the wine finishes with a mouthwatering freshness. Decant a bottle to serve with white sausages and roasted apples, or a breaded veal chop. (2,500 cases) *Qupé Wine Cellars, Santa Maria, CA*

91 | Au Bon Climat \$35
2002 Santa Maria Valley Hildegard This warm, silky blend of pinot gris, pinot blanc and aligoté has a broad feel and a savory complexity. The aromas develop from beeswax toward jasmine and fresh green peas. Smoky wood tones meld with the substantial alcohol, suggesting equally substantial foods such as boudin blanc or braised pork shoulder. (650 cases) *Jim Clendenen, Mind Behind, Santa Maria, CA*

Chardonnay

93 | J. Rochioli \$41
2004 Russian River Valley Chardonnay Tom Rochioli has a light touch with his white wines, allowing the coolness of his riverside vineyard to show through. This is beautifully made in a toasty style, lifted and fresh as a bite of sweet, ripe pear. As in Rochioli's Sauvignon Blanc, there's a sense of a cool breeze running through the wine. The lasting impression touches on fresh apples, honey and thyme, a rich pleasure with grilled *branzino*. (1,863 cases) *J. Rochioli Vineyards, Healdsburg, CA*



92 | Nickel & Nickel \$40
2004 Carneros Napa Valley Truchard Vineyard Chardonnay This elegant wine shares the textural values of fine Burgundy, its time in oak more a contributor to the firm feel of the wine than to the flavor. The fruit is ripe, in the range of white peach and orange, but it is not sweet. Its savory richness would be great with lime-rubbed grilled lobster. (1,802 cases) *Nickel & Nickel Winery, Oakville, CA*

90 | Daydream \$17
2004 Napa Valley Green Island Vineyard Chardonnay From a vineyard at the southern end of Napa, this chardonnay is fermented in stainless steel and aged on the lees in neutral oak. The shimmer of its high-toned lees reveals smoky, baked apple flavors; then it finishes firm, with a youthful

edge of malic acidity to balance the leesy richness. Chill it for grilled salmon. Daydream is made by Norman Kiken of Reverie and Marco DiGiulio. *Daydream Cellars, Oakville, CA*

89 | Foley \$30
2004 Santa Rita Hills Rancho Santa Rosa Chardonnay Exuberantly tropical with honeyed lemon, lime peel and candied tangerine scents filling out the flavors, this is weighty with sweet fruit and rich oak, while fresh acidity keeps it balanced. For pork loin roasted with apples. (2,746 cases) *Foley Estates Vineyard & Winery, Lompoc, CA*

89 | Nickel & Nickel \$40
2004 Russian River Valley Searby Vineyard Chardonnay A woodsmoke scent runs through this chardonnay, along with floral scents of the fruit. The silky texture lasts, along with a nutty lees flavor. It has the mellow richness to serve with veal stew. (1,515 cases) *Nickel & Nickel Winery, Oakville, CA*

88 | Flora Springs \$25
2004 Napa Valley Barrel Fermented Chardonnay Well made in an oak-oriented style, this wine's flavors are built on yeasty notes of oatmeal and minerals. Its scents of candied walnuts and butter brickle last. (3,800 cases) *Flora Springs, St. Helena, CA*



88 | Paraiso \$16
2004 Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay Baked apple scents meld with toasted oak in this buttery, robust chardonnay. It's big, with a nut meat flavor for seared scallops served over sautéed apples and leeks. (3,200 cases) *Paraiso Vineyards, San Luis Obispo, CA*