



The Independent Consumer's Bimonthly Guide to Fine Wine

NICKEL & NICKEL	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON BRANDING IRON VYD.	OAKVILLE	RED	93
NICKEL & NICKEL	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON JOHN C. SULLENGER VYD.	OAKVILLE	RED	91+
NICKEL & NICKEL	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON KELHAM VYD.	OAKVILLE	RED	94+
NICKEL & NICKEL	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON MARTIN STELLING VYD.	OAKVILLE	RED	95+
NICKEL & NICKEL	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON STATE RANCH	YOUNTVILLE	RED	90+
NICKEL & NICKEL	2007	CABERNET SAUVIGNON TENCH VYD.	OAKVILLE	RED	92+

An impressive group of 2007 Cabernet Sauvignons from the Gil Nickel family represents an Oakville *terroir* lesson with the exception of the State Ranch which comes from a vineyard further south in Yountville.

The **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Branding Iron Vineyard** exhibits a dense ruby/purple color as well as opulent black currant and cherry fruit judiciously touched by hints of oak and graphite. Elegant yet powerful, rich, supple and exuberant with sweet tannins, it should be enjoyed over the next 10-15 years.

Even more opaque ruby/purple-tinged (almost blue/purple) is the **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Kelham Vineyard**, which comes from a western hillside vineyard planted three decades ago. Like all the other wines, it is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Classic *crème de cassis*, vanillin and spice box aromas emerge from this full-bodied, dense, rich wine. Approachable now, it promises to be even better in 4-5 years and last for two decades or more.

From the red, rocky soils adjacent to the Silverado Trail on the eastern side of Oakville, the **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Tench Vineyard** reveals an opaque ruby/purple color similar to the Kelham cuvée, but it possesses more restrained aromatics of chocolate, cassis and spice box. As with all of these wines, the wood component is pushed well to the background. The wine is full-bodied, rich, pure, powerful and impressive. Abundant tannins are largely concealed by a cascade of deep, concentrated fruit. This 2007 should drink well for two decades or more.

From a valley floor vineyard, the opaque purple-hued **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon John C. Sullenger Vineyard** offers up restrained aromas of subtle smoke, graphite and black fruits. More narrowly constructed and tannic, it is among the most backward wines in this portfolio, possessing a Bordeaux-like structure and flavor profile. It requires 4-5 years of cellaring and should keep for 20-25 years.

The **Cabernet Sauvignon Martin Stelling Vineyard** has always been one of the cornerstones of the Far Niente cabernets. The dense purple-colored **2007** reveals an exceptionally poised nose of graphite, black currants, blackberries and subtle oak. It appears to be the most concentrated and richest of all these wines, which is saying something given the intensity level they all possess. Powerful as well as restrained and noble, this is a classic Napa Cabernet Sauvignon to drink over the next three decades or more.

Lastly, the **2007 Cabernet Sauvignon State Ranch** is from Yountville, a sector that is becoming populated with such high quality wineries as Cliff Lede and Kapcsandy. This deep ruby/purple effort is not so much austere as it is more narrowly constructed than its siblings. There is a lot going on in this outstanding Cabernet, but it is the least expressive of all these Nickel & Nickel Cabernet Sauvignons. It reveals some minerality along with white chocolate and black currant characteristics, but the structure dominates at present. Forget this wine for 3-4 years and drink it over the following 20 years.