



July 2015 Edition

✿✿ **91 MacLAREN Stagecoach Vineyards Napa Valley 2012**

Rich, ripe and refined with handsomely oaked, blackberry fruit leading the way, this exceptionally well-balanced bottling is at once both deep and continuous but exhibits a noteworthy sense of crafting and polish and never lapses into excess. It quietly hints at a bit of varietal pepper and roasted meats but pulls back from brash spiciness, and its combination of refinement, measured ripeness and fruity precision ensures upwards of six to ten years of promising development.

✿ **90 MacLAREN Bonnie Glen Bennett Valley 2012**

Refinement rather than raw power is very much MacLaren's way with Syrah, and this neatly tailored working manages to be rich and fairly temperate at one and the same time. It is a wine of lean muscle and never engages in sprawl, but it is incisively fruity with trim touches of peppery spice and caramelized meat deftly juxtaposed to insistent berry-like themes. It will age by virtue of its very fine balance and can be expected to improve for another five or six years.

✿ **89 MacLAREN Samantha's Vineyard 2012 Russian River Valley.**

Smelling of blackberries with accents of roasted meats and soft touches of pepper in its relatively refined aromas and following up with similarly composed flavors, this mid-sized Syrah is at once ripe, nicely fruited and fairly firm in construction and tilts just a bit to the brighter side of the varietal spectrum. It is not a big, meaty wine as Syrahs go, but neither is it at all underfilled, and it is balanced to grow for a good half-dozen years.

✿ **89 MacLAREN Drouthy Neebors Sonoma County 2012**

Ripeness may play a more obvious role here than in any of the MacLaren offerings, yet the wine is still not in the least overdone, and, if just a touch on the fleshy and fat side, it is deep, slightly juicy and solidly fruity as well. It is nominally tannic and sufficiently firm to encourage several years of forbearance, but it is singularly lacking in coarseness and its very clear message of ripe berries and gentle spice is easy to like now.

✿ **87 MacLAREN Atoosa's Vineyard 2012 Russian River Valley.**

Standing apart from the rest of its mates in several ways and curiously both lighter in substance and more intense when it comes to the pepper and gamy spice of Syrah, this mid-sized effort teases with a bit of early palatal roundness then tends to acidic stiffness as it goes. It is never less than keenly varietal but it pulls back in richness, and, while not particularly tannic, it is nervy, tight and a touch puckery and could do with a few years of softening.