



Age of vines: 33 years

Appellation: Napa Valley

Sub-Appellation: Spring Mountain District

Farming: dry-farmed mountain vineyard

Varietal Content: Cabernet Sauvignon 82%,
Merlot 8% & Cabernet franc 11%

Time in oak: 22 months in new American
oak barrels

Alcohol: 13.9% Unfined and unfiltered

Cases produced: 2,161

Winemakers & Winegrowers:

Charles Smith & Stuart Smith



WINEMAKER NOTES

One of our earliest harvests ever for Cabernet Sauvignon. We began on September 7 and picked for a week until cool weather and showers moved in. After a week of waiting we started up again on the 21st and finished on September 27. Maturity at harvest averaged 24.9° Brix. This wine is truly special. A very deep, very dark, almost a black red wine color, with crushed violets and cedar on the aroma. The wine is soft, silky and elegant – almost feminine in character, yet with a sturdy structure and long finish on the palate. Unfined and unfiltered, the wine may throw a small deposit as it ages.

At Smith-Madrone our goal is to make artisanal wines which are distinctive and are an expression of both the vintage and us, as vintners, but above all else, are wines which bring pleasure to the senses. Every year our wine is made from the same vineyards, pruned by the same people in the same way, cultivated in exactly the same manner and harvested at similar levels of maturity, yet Mother Nature stamps each vintage with a unique set of flavors, senses and character. Vintage dating is a celebration of that uniqueness and diversity.

Smith-Madrone's Cabernet Sauvignon is grown at the top of Spring Mountain (1,900-foot elevation), west of St. Helena in the Napa Valley. The vines are planted on very steep slopes (up to 35%) in red volcanic soil. Most of the vines receive only the rain that Mother Nature lets fall from the sky, forcing the vines to send their roots deep into the mountain soil in search of moisture. We believe that this centuries old method of farming wine grapes, known today as dry farming, creates a grape with intense flavor, structure, and finesse.

September 2009, The Wine Enthusiast

93 points. This is the opposite of those gooey, cult-style wines grown down on the Valley benches and floor. **It's pure mountain** in the tannins, acidity and dryness, with below 14% alcohol. It's a food wine, with cassis, cedar and mineral flavors. [Steve Heimoff]

August 2009, Wine & Spirits Magazine

90 points, Best Buy. Plump currant flavors give this cabernet a rich profile. Yet it seems to grow more impacted with air, becoming increasingly blunt with in-your-face mountain power.

July 2, 2009, St. Helena Star, Wine Of The Week by Stefan Blicher

"Old School." ...to a jaded old wine merchant it means big, chewy, back-in-the-day-styled red wines. Red wines that put hair on your chest and make you feel like going moose hunting or bungee jumping, anything potentially dangerous and somewhat foolhardy that makes your heart pound. From the first sip of Charlie and Stu Smith's 2004 Cabernet, this was what I was thinking. This gutsy, slightly wild Spring Mountain Cabernet from 33-year-old vines grabbed me right away and as I dug into it, it had me thinking about pepper steak. Dark and potent-looking in the glass, it has classic mountain cab aromas of black cherries, cassis, a little dried herb, crushed rocks — I know that sounds weird, but try to imagine the flavor of dust from crushed rocks in your mouth — and dark cocoa powder. And it follows through in the mouth as you hope: intense, powerful but not too grippy, with sturdy structure and good balance. Its finish is long and what I would call rich, broad, chewy and satisfying. Just good solid old school in the best way. And check this out: **this outperforming cab has a great price** and one that the Smiths should be commended for keeping realistic. Bonus: this sucker will age for decades, so put some away for your kids' cellar, too!

February 14, 2010, Sasha Smith's blog SpinTheBottleNY

Love the deep, ruby color and the intense aromas of black currants, cedar, blackberries and fresh bay leaves. The palate has some cool leather, almost meaty flavors, and the tannins are really well-integrated into the wine. **Lots of intensity and concentration of flavor + great balance, something you don't find everyday.** Somehow rugged and approachable at the same time — a very California combination. Given the quality of this wine, and overall crazy pricing you find in Napa, can't believe it's only \$45

February 2010, Joe Roberts' blog 1WineDude

A cadre of **awesome** players. Starring: Cassis & pencil lead. With Special Guest: Mr. Earth!

November 20, 2009, Mike Steinberger, Slate.com

DRINK: What To Drink on Thanksgiving: Glorious American cabernets

Smith-Madrone is **the best California winery that you've never heard of**, turning out exemplary cabernets, chardonnays and rieslings. With its purity of fruit and impeccable balance, the 2004 Smith-Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon is a radical and thoroughly toothsome

departure from your garden-variety Napa cab. It is also a bargain, a word not often heard along Highway 29.

July 24, 2009, NoseToGlass blog by Don Colman

Smith-Madrone is a quaint winery in Napa producing approximately 1000 cases of each of their different varietals. When looking at the wine it appears flawless. The wine is a very deep purple and is perfectly clear. It is also a **very aromatic** with plenty of dried fruit scents, combined with cherries and undertones of oak. It has a complex smell that keeps your nose active the entire bottle.

October 2009, Chris Oggenfuss, Vintuba podcast

Developing aromas of earth, dried herbs, tobacco leaves, black cherry, black olive, blackberry compote and some old world charm. The tannins are medium plus and gripping. Flavors of black cherry, milk chocolate, plums and creme de cassis are **elegantly balanced by very good acidity**. The finish is both very long and complex.

May 27, 2009, Wine Talk by Robert Whitley, Creators Syndicate, Price Is No Judge

As usual, the annual Critics Challenge International Wine spit out a fair number of surprises. I was pleased to see a few personal favorites emerge victorious, especially Smith-Madrone's 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon with a platinum. Smith-Madrone could easily fetch higher prices for its highly regarded mountain cabernet, but owner Stu and Charlie Smith are **sticklers about keeping their prices affordable** even though they live in the high-rent Napa Valley.

July 15, 2009, Annapolis Gazette: Wine, etc. by Tom Marquardt & Patrick Darr

Medium body, floral and cedar nose with forward dark berry flavors. **Very delicious** wine from Spring Mountain near St. Helena.

December 2008, Men's Journal December 2008

...So if you like your juice the way you like your peaks — **big, complex, and demanding**, filling you with a lust for life — look for these examples from upslope.

From high on Spring Mountain, overlooking Napa Valley, this California wine has a berry-briar complexity and a dark-chocolate finish.

May 26, 2009, San Jose Mercury News, by Laurie Daniel

A wine that's a good value isn't necessarily cheap. But it should offer quality that's equivalent to wines that are priced much higher. I've tasted several wines in recent weeks that offer just that. Even a run-of-the-mill Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon can easily cost \$75 or \$100. But there are well-made, even distinctive Napa cabs that cost much less than that. Case in point: Smith-Madrone Vineyards has been in business for 35 years atop Spring Mountain. The cabs have **tremendous depth and concentration**, but they don't hit you over the head with super-ripe fruit. The 2004 Smith-Madrone Cabernet Sauvignon is dense and dark, with rich black fruit, notes of mocha, cedar and spice, and firm but approachable tannins.

May 28, 2009, Dan Berger's Vintage Experiences: The Weekly Wine Commentary

Exceptional: A throwback to an earlier era when Cabernets smelled like the variety! With air, the wine shows an earthy, forest-y depth and the mid-palate and finish are what you expect in a wine made to lay down for a few years. May be missed by the scorers who are looking for more oak, extract and alcohol. This wine has only 13.9% alcohol.

July 29, 2009, OffTheVineMagazine.com

Had a chance to taste this **outstanding mountain Cabernet** from Charles and Stuart Smith. Powerful, and yet understated, the wine truly expresses its unique terroir. Great soft fruit with notes of wild black cherry, violets and cigar box. Fine grained sweet tannins lend to the appeal. The wine was aged for 22 months in new American oak cooperage and was bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. **It is a steal in today's marketplace.**

June 15, 2009, Slashfood blog, Great Grilling Wines - Wine of the Week

Try the 2004 Smith-Madrone Cabernet from Napa Valley's Spring Mountain, **a rich, powerful, balanced Cab** from Napa without the traditional Napa price tag or the high alcohol (the Smith-Madrone clocks in at just 13.9 percent).

August 13, 2009, ProfessorBainbridge.com

The wine offered up a sweet bouquet of dark berries, oak, and herbs, along with a whiff of bell pepper. The attack has good forward fruit, bracing acidity, and fairly firm tannins. Grade: A-

March 2010, DrinkBetterWine.com

Stu and Charles Smith have **struck gold** again atop Spring Mountain. 2004 is shaping up to be great year for Napa Cabernet, with many winemakers very impressed with their offerings. Smith Madrone is no different. All the tell tale signs of this Cabernet are present upon first contact - cassis and cherry aromas with a generous and full body supported by firm tannin and well integrated oak. The wine rounded out a bit more after the bottle was open for an hour and a longer, more pronounced finish was evident. More accessible at an early age than previous vintages, the 2004 Smith Madrone will still age gracefully for a minimum of 10 years, but who really wants to wait that long?

December 2009, Food & Wine Magazine, by Ray Isle

The oldest names in Napa produce some of its greatest Cabernet Sauvignons. Here are... **instant classics**. Smith-Madrone may be more well-known for its aromatic dry Riesling than its Cabernet, which is odd, since the Cabernet is so good. It's rich with currant and black cherry fruit, held together by savory, spicy tannins.