



WINE MONDAY: David's Wine of the Week

by David on MARCH 24, 2014 in [BLOG](#), [DRINK](#)

2010 Truchard Merlot, Carneros, Napa Valley (\$30)

I'm having quite a year with California wine! It is still true that pickin' unknown ones off wine lists is not a high-odds proposition for me (because I am Mr. Gentle & Balanced!)... but I have been directed to, and tasted, so many food-worthy California red wines in the last few months (The Big Easy from Fess Parker Winery, Heritage from Borra in Lodi, Hirsch Vineyards Pinot Noir, etc.). And now this. [The Truchard family](#) pioneered Carneros vine planting, and for many years only sold their varieties to excellent California producers (there's much Truchard Merlot, for example, in several decades of Duckhorn Merlot). They still sell 80% of their grapes, but just over 20 years ago they started producing their own bottlings of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon... and Merlot! Which brings me to the [2010](#) I tasted last week. Though I liked all the Truchard current releases—clearly, they make wine in a restrained, cool-climate style—the [Merlot](#) was tops for me. A pretty ruby garnet in the glass. Lovely nose, featuring a depth of ripe plum aromas... plus a touch of green, which I feel should be there in Bordeaux varieties (no matter what Parker says!) Elegant and balanced on the palate, in some happy land between Bordeaux and Napa Valley. The 14.2% alcohol is nicely covered by the plush fruit. Soft finish, with just a lick o' tannin; Truchard believe in LONG maceration of the skins (like a month) which, counter-intuitively, lowers the final impression of tannin. Between 1989 and 1993 the style for this wine was set by Michael Havens, who is indeed famous for his own Napa Valley Merlots.

