

11 Outstanding Rhône-Style Reds from California

New reviews of Syrah, Grenache and blends from the 2010 vintage

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Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

California offers plenty of choice when it comes to Rhône-style red wines. Here are 11 standout examples of this emerging category, all from the 2010 vintage.

Aaron Pott continues to do no wrong, this time with a Syrah from Mt. Veeder. Behrens Family is on point as well, offering an exceptional blend of Syrah, Tempranillo, Mourvèdre and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Law, a new label from Don and Susie Law, comes from their estate vineyard, located in the hills west of Paso Robles at an elevation of 1,950 feet. In 2008, the couple planted the site to Rhône varietals, rounding out the vineyard's plots of Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo and Petite Sirah. The 2010s are their first release. Scott Hawley, of Torrin Vineyard, makes the wines.

BEHRENS FAMILY Sainte Fumée California 2010 Score: 93 / \$55

Offers striking depth, power and lift, with loads of dark berry, dried herb, blackberry, loamy earth and melted licorice flavors, ending with gripping tannins and a strong push of fruit. Syrah, Tempranillo, Mourvèdre and Cabernet Sauvignon. Best from 2014 through 2024. 241 cases made. —J.L.

POTT Communication Block Lampyridae Vineyards Mount Veeder 2010 Score: 93 / \$50

Offers dense, chewy tiers of rich dark berry, dark chocolate, spice, licorice and dried herb notes, gaining momentum, depth and traction on the long, gripping, tannic finish. Syrah. Best from 2014 through 2025. 74 cases made. —J.L.

T-VINE Syrah Calistoga Fredani Vineyard 2010 Score: 93 / \$42

A muscular style, with a gutsy core of loamy earth, dried currant and berry notes, accented by hints of sage and espresso. The tannins slowly corral the mix of exotic berry flavors. Drink now through 2027. 295 cases made. —J.L.

CALCAREOUS Moose Paso Robles 2010 Score: 92 / \$45

The expansive flavors are rich and focused, with notes of dark berry, mocha, chocolate and cedary oak. This intriguing blend proves there are many ways to coax the most out of Syrah. Syrah and Petit Verdot. Drink now through 2023. 815 cases made. —J.L.

KELLER Rôtie Sonoma Coast 2010 Score: 92 / \$54

A stylish Rhône-style blend, offering classy aromas and flavors, with roasted dark berry, hot brick, gravelly earth, spice, dried herb, leather and tobacco notes. The finish sails on, picking up game and roasted herb nuances, ending with firm, fine-grained tannins. Syrah and Viognier. Drink now through 2022. 429 cases made. —J.L.

LAW Sagacious Paso Robles 2010 Score: 92 / \$62

Intense and complex, offering a potent mix of wild berry, blackberry and raspberry notes, with touches of pepper and spice, ending with a long, persistent finish that echoes the core berry flavors. Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre. Drink now through 2022. 351 cases made. —J.L.

NOVY Syrah Napa Valley Page Nord Vineyard 2010 Score: 92 / \$29

Rustic and roughhewn, with grainy, grippy tannins and a dense core focused on dark berry, dried herb, scorched earth and roasted herb flavors. Firms up, gaining depth and persistence. Drink now through 2024. 297 cases made. —J.L.

WHETSTONE Syrah Napa Valley Phoenix Ranch Vineyard 2010 Score: 92 / \$55

A rich, gusty expression of Syrah, with bells, whistles and chewy tannins. The core of dark berry, pepper, leather, espresso and mocha flavors smooth out on the finish. Should only get better with time. Best from 2015 through 2026. 158 cases made. —J.L.

LAW Beguiling Paso Robles 2010 Score: 91 / \$62

Pure, firm and rich, offering a wide range of dark berry, mocha, cedar, crushed rock and loamy earth flavors, with a gripping edge to the tannins, finishing with a full-bodied aftertaste. Grenache and Syrah. Drink now through 2021. 390 cases made. —J.L.

LAW Audacious Paso Robles 2010 Score: 90 / \$62

Appropriately rugged around the edges, with chewy, gripping tannins, offering a rich core of dark berry, mocha, espresso and cedary flavors. Holds focus through the long finish. Grenache, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Petite Sirah. Best from 2014 through 2024. 369 cases made. —J.L.

RAMEY Syrah Sonoma Coast Rodgers Creek Vineyard 2010 Score: 90 / \$60

Pleasantly rugged and rowdy, this is dense, concentrated and full of meaty dark berry, spice, crushed rock, fig and plum notes, with delicate floral scents. No rush here. Best from 2014 through 2026. 315 cases made. —J.L.