

Wine Spectator Magazine

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THE SAVVY SHOPPER

Golden State Gold

The 1999 Chardonnays from California come close in quality to the glory years of the mid-1990s (1994 through 1997), and the early returns on the 2000s look promising also. A pair from **Rudd Estate** sets the pace for the former vintage. Its **Russian River Valley Bacigalupi Vineyard 1999** (93, \$50) reveals a mineral element that augments the pear and hazelnut flavors, while the Highly Recom-

mended **Carneros 1999** (93, \$35) fills its sleek frame with pear and citrus notes. It's an impressive second vintage under a new regime (Rudd was formerly Girard Winery), with David Ramey overseeing the winemaking. **Kunde** also weighs in with a pair of single-vineyard Chardonnays. The **Sonoma Valley Kinneybrook Vineyard 1999** (91, \$22) is the richer of the two, with the **Sonoma Valley C.S. Ridge Vineyard 1999** (90, \$22) showing more elegance. Representing the 2000 vintage and also a fine value, **Chateau Souverain's Sonoma County**

United States

CALIFORNIA

Chardonnay

93 Rudd Estate Chardonnay Russian River Valley Bacigalupi Vineyard 1999 \$50 Beautiful, vivid fruit, earth and mineral aromas, with rich, deeply flavored succulent, pear, fig, mineral, hazelnut and creamy flavors. The texture is smooth and supple and the finish goes on and on. Drink now through 2007. 1,041 cases made.—J.L.