



The Wilder Side of California
 Discover the Best of California Wine with Doug Wilder

Three acts of brilliance: Lindstrom, Emerson Brown and Robert Foley | Issue 206

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Calistoga, California



This is one of those days when I had plenty of new wines to introduce but, even with the large number of impressive choices, this small handful stood out and I wanted to get them in front of you before they evaporated. For regular readers over the last year, the names will jump out as some of the hottest in Napa Valley. Yes, the title spelled it out; all of these wines are poised to impress. We get only one shot at them all year – don't pass them up!

Check the latest posting of my blog at [Free Run Juice](#).

2005 Lindstrom Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District (VF 98), Celia Masyczek's first vintage from **Greg and Carol Lindstrom**, appeared in our Fall catalog last week and nearly jumped off the page, the

demand was so high! From a four-acre vineyard situated between Shafer and Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, the site is divided into a dozen separate postage stamp-size blocks. The Lindstrom team set the quality bar very high with the premiere release of their Cabernet Sauvignon and, not surprisingly, they are sold out. We were pleased to be one of the first to unequivocally recommend Lindstrom, yet another stunner in Celia's growing legacy that already includes **Scarecrow, Corra, Rocca and Keever**. Lindstrom has the distinction of receiving the highest Vinfolio rating of any Celia-made premiere release and is currently limited to three bottles per order.

It was early January when I caught wind of a compelling new Cabernet Sauvignon producer from Oakville who, after further research, seemed to have all the necessary ingredients for success: A beautifully managed vineyard among the "grail" sites, small production, solid winemaking acumen, and a desire to "over-achieve". With all of these obvious markers I had to investigate further. My initial tasting with **Keith Emerson of Emerson Brown** confirmed I was on the right track. The premiere release 2005 Emerson Brown Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville, produced with partner **Brian Brown**, scored 97 points at Vinfolio and if you blinked, you missed it. Our allocation was gone in one day! Last week I had the pleasure of meeting with Keith and Brian in my Calistoga office to try the new vintage. It was good to see that even though tasted several months earlier in development, the 2006 is essentially the *doppelgänger* of the first release. The **2006 Emerson Brown Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville (VF 95+)** shows a dense core of beautifully structured fruit that some wines at twice the price have trouble achieving. The **III Michaels Vineyard**, owned by Brian's family, is nestled among Rudd, Plump Jack, Phelps-Backus and Beckstoffer George III vineyards. The partners met while working at Vineyard 29, where they now produce their 225 cases and continue with their original philosophy of offering the wine at an affordable price. Both Keith and Brian came from restaurant backgrounds and recognized the impact a wine of this quality would have on the list. It is likely to work its magic with our clients as well.

Shortly after making his first appearance in *The Wilder Side of California* in May with a dedicated solo offer of his 2005 wines, Bob Foley has released his 2006s. I got the chance to taste the **2006 Robert Foley Merlot Napa Valley (VF 93)** and **2006 Robert Foley Claret Napa Valley (VF 93+)** last week and found them to be beautifully made examples. Foley marks 2006 as his thirty-first year of producing Merlot, yet only his second under his own label (he helped make this variety a household word in the '80s with Markham). If you have followed Bob Foley for any time you will recognize the collateral he has built with his Claret (a wine that Robert Parker hasn't rated below 93 points...*ever*). Our allocations are very small on these wines.

Featured wine in this offer

2005	Lindstrom - Cabernet Sauvignon	325 cases	✓	750ml	\$95.00	VF 98
2006	Emerson Brown - Cabernet Sauvignon	225 cases	⌚	750ml	\$60.00	VF 95+
2006	Foley, Robert - Merlot	500 cases	⌚	750ml	\$52.00	VF 93
2006	Foley, Robert - Claret	1600 cases	⌚	750ml	\$110.00	VF 93+

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Reviews

Greg and Carol Lindstrom developed their 20-acre property, including a difficult, steep vineyard site in Stags Leap, over a number of years with Davie Pina putting in the vines. The brand, made by the inimitable Celia Welch Masyczek, debuted in 2008 with the 2005 vintage. Planted to a quartet of clones and divided into a dozen different blocks over a scant four acres, production will remain low, all but assuring the continued scarcity (and quality) of this new brand.



2005 Lindstrom - Cabernet Sauvignon

USA - California - Napa - Stags Leap District

✓ In stock

VF 98

\$95.00 [+ Add](#)

750ml

From Celia Masyczek's newest project in the rocky Stags's Leap District from Gregory and Carol Lindstrom's Nicali Vineyard comes this rarity with production of only 325 cases..

The nose is exquisitely concentrated with bottomless coffee, licorice, currant and assorted rich black fruits. The palate layers in concentrated, polished black and blue fruits with chocolate, currant and stunning smoothness. The vineyard is comprised of four clones; 337, 4, 6 and 7. Drink: 2008-2020.

- Doug Wilder , *Vinfolio 206*, September 2008

Keith Emerson and Brian Brown met while they were both at Vineyard 29 in Napa Valley working with Philippe Melka. They decided to create a Cabernet together that would be of the highest quality, but also affordable. Through a mutual friend they were introduced to Josh Clark, manager of Ill Michaels Estate vineyard on the eastern bench of the Oakville appellation. The vineyard had everything they wanted: slope, climate, and age.



2006 Emerson Brown - Cabernet Sauvignon

USA - California - Napa - Napa Valley

⌚ Prearrival

VF 95+

\$60.00 [+ Add](#)

750ml

Only the second vintage from Keith Emerson and Brian Brown is enough to show our impression of the 2005 premiere release

was no fluke. Harvested from the III Michaels Vineyard, owned by the Brown family, it is now as much of a "must-have" among the seekers of value-jammed wines as Drinkward-Peschon proved to be in the early years. The nose has cranberry, graphite, shaved dark chocolate, crushed blackberry and cassis. The palate is firm with black cherry, blackberry and creamy licorice and a velvet-like grip to the finish. Drink: 2009-2016.

- Doug Wilder , *Vinfolio 206*, September 2008

Winemaker Robert Foley began his winemaking career in 1977, working at Heitz Winery before becoming founding winemaker at Markham, where he developed the style of Merlot that helped make the varietal a mega-trend in the 1980s. Following his success at Markham, Foley is perhaps best known for his tenure with Pride and Paloma. He still keeps a coterie of clients including School House, Switchback Ridge and Hourglass. He founded Robert Foley Vineyards in 1999 and was named Food & Wine Magazine's Winemaker of the Year in 2007.



2006 Foley, Robert - Merlot
USA - California - Napa - Napa Valley

  Prearrival

VF 93

\$52.00 [+ Add](#)

750ml

Only the second vintage of this variety produced under the Robert Foley label, it is the latest example from a winemaker who likely has more experience making Merlot than just about anyone else in the Valley. Sourced mostly from Switchback Ridge Vineyard - it shows spicy plum and black currant aromas. The palate is very smooth with chocolate and polished plum essence. Drink: 2009-2014.

- Doug Wilder , *Vinfolio 206*, September 2008



2006 Foley, Robert - Claret
USA - California - Napa - Napa Valley

  Prearrival

VF 93+

\$110.00 [+ Add](#)

750ml

Claret is the fundamental benchmark wine from Foley, who ran off a string of 93+ point reviews from The Wine Advocate over the last eight vintages. Here is another winner - Polished and intense chocolate, caramel nose with very dense black fruit on the palate. The wine needs another few months to fully flesh together but already carries well formed length that needs just a bit more finishing. Drink: 2009-2014.

- Doug Wilder , *Vinfolio 206*, September 2008

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