

**Frog's Leap****2004 Rutherford
(Rutherford)**

John Williams, the head amphibian at Frog's Leap, is going to take a bigger jump when he releases his 2005 "Rutherford" red blend. It's not enough to leave the predominant variety – Cabernet Sauvignon – off the front label, but Williams tells me

he will eschew revealing the blend on the back label.

Naming the wine "Rutherford" is ballsy enough, but some consumers might balk when the label is released *sans* grape varieties. But Williams, an audacious kind of guy, thinks "Rutherford" is all that is required.

"If you're paying 75 bucks for a wine and you don't know that Rutherford makes the best Cabernet in the valley, bless you. Rutherford is more important than Cabernet and that's what we want you to think about. ... It's not about being a Cabernet. It's about being Rutherford and everything we do with this wine is about Rutherford-ness; it's meant to reveal the fineness of Rutherford, not the bigness of Cabernet Sauvignon."

Williams, to my mind, has mostly achieved his goal with the 2004 edition. One is immediately struck by the herbal tea notes or dried earth aromas, which come from the two vineyards that are located just south and north of Whitehall Lane off Highway 29. Most of the Cabernet comes from Rossi Ranch, which has been recently purchased by Frog's Leap. The Franc is from the Leeds/Chavez site to the south.

Williams goes for a more classical wine, and to me, that is the charm of it. It doesn't smack you upside the head. It's restrained and refined with dark fruit, ending with fine-grained tannins. The stated alcohol is 13.6 percent and there were less than 1,200 cases produced.

Reviewed December 7, 2007 by [Alan Goldfarb](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Frog's Leap](#)

Vintage: 2004

Wine: Rutherford

Appellation: [Rutherford](#)

Grapes: [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (92%), [Merlot](#) (8%)

Price: \$75.00

THE REVIEWER**Alan Goldfarb**

Alan Goldfarb has been writing about and reviewing wine for 17 years. His reviews have been published in the *St. Helena Star*, *San Jose Mercury*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Decanter*, and *Wine Enthusiast*, among others. Not once has he used a point system, star

system, or an iconic symbol to quantify a wine. What counts in Mr. Goldfarb's criteria when judging a wine is: how it tastes in the glass; is it well-constructed; its food compatibility; and presence of redeeming regional attributes.