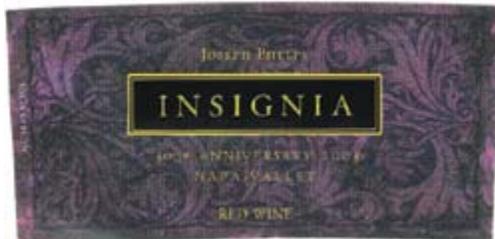


WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Joseph Phelps Vineyards****2003 Insignia
(Napa Valley)**

This is the 30th anniversary release of the Joseph Phelps Insignia. It's the signature wine of this venerable winery, and beginning with the 1974 vintage, the first proprietary wine in California. It's usually also, year-after-year, one of the better – and therefore, one of the most expensive – Cabernet-based wines in America.

This 2003 is no different. There's spearmint and gorgeous black fruit aromas. On the palate, the wine at first tastes a bit of sage but then it opens up to reveal a substantial backbone with balancing black fruit and a good tannin structure. It's a wine that will age for up to 15 years.

The fruit was harvested from Phelps' holdings in the Stags Leap District, Rutherford and St. Helena, with 13 percent of the blend outsourced. The wine was aged for two years in new oak barrels by a variety of French coopers. Interestingly, the grape weight at harvest was less than two tons per acre from many vineyards as a result of earlier crop removal to mitigate mildew due to earlier rains.

Reviewed January 16, 2007 by [Alan Goldfarb](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Joseph Phelps Vineyards](#)

Vintage: 2003

Wine: Insignia

Appellation: [Napa Valley](#)

Grapes: [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (84%), [Petit Verdot](#) (10%), [Merlot](#) (3%), [Malbec](#) (3%)

Price: \$165.00

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.