

Review Overview

Babcock Fathom (Bordeaux-styled Red Blend)

Page 1 of 3
(No 2003 or 2004 blends)

2002 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine Feb 2006

SCORE: 91

Babcock has wisely chosen to let Merlot dominate this blend, since it clearly performs better in the valley than Cabernet. The wine shows the herbaceousness that always accompanies Santa Barbara clarets, but achieves a new level for that county of ripe, satisfying fruity complexity. The flavor of cassis even shows up in the finish. A wine to watch.

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine March 2006

SCORE: 87 One Puff (out of three)

47% Merlot; 31% Cabernet Franc; 22% Cabernet Sauvignon. Well-ripened cherryish fruit of Merlot sets the early pace, but the slightly firmer feel and loamy aspects of Cabernet provide this one with some heft and welcomed complexity. The wine is nicely extracted and consistently fruity, and it will reward three to five years of cellaring

2001 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine Feb 2005

SCORE: 90

No problem getting the fruit ripe, to go by the delicious black currant, cassis, cherry and blueberry flavors that veer into chocolate. Compared to Napa tannins, this one's edgier, sharper. It doesn't have that luscious creaminess. But that may be unfair. It's a really good wine.

Santa Barbara News-Press

SCORE: Excellent Schaefer On Wine 3/6/03

Bryan Babcock thought the 2000 version of his Fathom blend was the best ever. He might be wrong; this 2001 barrel sample, to be released this fall, is full of serious raspberry fruit with a n underlying structure and complexity. At 30% Cabernet Franc, with the balance Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine is helping set a new paradigm for Bordeaux blends in Santa Barbara County.

Wine Spectator Dec. 15, 2004

Score: 87

Impressive for its core of spicy cherry and wild berry fruit and elegant framework, it shows off a dash of Cabernet Franc that gives the Merlot a stalky, herbal scent. Merlot Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon.

2000 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine December 2002

SCORE: 90

When Bryan calls this "the best [Bordeaux blend] I have made" you have to take him seriously. It is indeed excellent and seductive in its rich, ripe fruit and velvety tannins. Softer and plumper than Napa, but delicious and complex. Needs tinkering to develop greater finesse, but worth watching. —S.H.

2000 Vintage

Wine & Spirits Magazine December 2002

SCORE: 89

Plump in the middle with red, perfumed fruit that feels dynamic, this fades to gray. It's a little bland and bitter in the end, but it's firm, and the middle may lengthen out with age.

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine Oct. 2002

SCORE: 88 One Puff (out of three)

72% Merlot; 22% Cabernet Franc; 6% Cabernet Sauvignon. A complex wine to be sure, this one starts with aromas of cherry, raspberry and mocha tinged with a hint of dried leaf and is nicely supple at entry before firming up noticeably across the palate. Finishing toughness costs the wine its look at a second star, but it might just round out with half a dozen or more years in bottle and the gamble could pay off well.

Wine Spectator Dec. 15, 2002

Score: 87

Firm and complex, with appealing black cherry, currant and touches of herb and bell pepper, finishing with firm tannins. Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2007.

1999 Vintage

Bon Appetit Magazine Feb 02

"One of Best Wines of the Year 2001" list.

Wine Enthusiast Magazine Dec 01

SCORE: 93 - Editor's Choice

Mainly Cabernet Franc and Merlot with a little Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine advances the case for the South Coast claret. It's one of the best ever from Santa Barbara. Juicy, ripe, balanced, rich, elegant, fairly soft and covered with lush oak, it's a sheer pleasure now. — S.H.

Wine Spectator 9/15/01

SCORE: 87

Distinctive for its cedary oak and anise flavors, picking up wild berry, plum and spice notes, and finishing with firm, dry tannins. Cabernet Franc blend. Drink now through 2006. 883 cases made.— JL

1998 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine Feb 2001

SCORE: 89

Made largely of Cabernet Franc, this wine has all the elements of a first-rate Meritage: ripe blackberry fruit, accompanied by a blast of smoky oak. It tastes good too, with pure, sweet, supple berry flavors; yet, it's very dry, with ample acidity. It lacks the focus of North Coast claret-style wines, but is certainly among the best of the genre from the South Coast.— SH

Wine Spectator 3/31/01

SCORE: 89

Packs in lots of richness, depth and flavor, with spice, floral currant, black cherry and blackberry. Finishes with a smooth, tapered aftertaste and hints of lavender, mineral and anise. Drink now through 2007. Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.— JL

1998 Vintage

Restaurant Wine

SCORE: Four Stars+ (Excellent-Exceptional)

Medium rich and complex; a fine blend, with intense ripe fruit character and plenty of spicy, toasty oak. Long Finish. 41% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 24% Merlot.

Santa Barbara News-Press: Dennis Schaefer 6/15/01

SCORE: Excellent

The 1998 FATHOM, Babcock's Bordeaux-style varietal blend, is comprised of Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Toasty vanilla comes through the nose along with blueberry and cherry. A massive wave of flavors, including blueberry, blackberry and cherry, attacks the palate but is backed up by supporting layers of wood spice, cedar and a hint of chocolate. Rich and full bodied, it has a long, lingering finish and will age very well, if you can keep your hands off it now.

1997 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine Nov 1999

SCORE: 90

Predominantly Cabernet Franc, it shows none of the weediness Franc can exhibit. Slightly floral, it's filled to the brim with black fruit, anise, vanilla and chocolate aromas and flavors. Supple tannins make it drinkable now, but it should develop in the cellar.

1996 Vintage

The Wine News Oct/Nov 98

SCORE: 92

Brooding, intense purple. Powered by Cabernet Franc (72%) with a pinch of Cabernet and Merlot, this is a full-throttle bruiser of a wine packed with well extracted fruit and peppered with youthful tannins. Still somewhat raw and muscular; needs time to turn the corner.