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# *News Room*

## **A Tasting with Ray Signorello Jr., of Signorello Vineyards, Napa Valley - posted by John Szabo, wineaccess.com, May 16, 2009**

Ray Signorello is a wine guy who gets it. He's been in the business for over 20 years now, growing grapes and making wine in the Napa Valley, taking the reins fully after his father's untimely passing in 1997. But he's not your average NV vintner. His paradigms skew heavily to the old world. But not just any old traditional juice from the old world. I'm talking the serious kit. A quick peruse through his personal cellar uncovers the sorts of wines that make most serious sommeliers gush with enthusiasm: top class red Burgundy from Dugat Py, Mayer-Gilles, Roumier and Rousseau, Chablis from Dauvissat and Raveneau; Barolo Monfortino from Giacosa, Cannubi from Chiara Boschis and Luciano Sandrone, Rayas Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Chave Hermitage and top class German Rieslings, among hundreds of other rare insider's bottlings. Few are the overpriced cult wines that shake and rattle the auction markets around the world. Here, it's all about the wine, and the dedicated growers who make it, not the labels or the commercial hype. That this is Ray's point of departure for the wines he produces in the Napa Valley is a refreshing change from the usual commercially-driven philosophy of many. And Ray's personal preferences shine through clearly in his wines.

There is no smoke and mirrors at the Signorello Estate; all wines are made from estate-grown, mostly hillside fruit from poor rocky soils with absurdly low yields. As a result, little intervention is necessary in the winery. Neither acid adjustment nor alcohol reduction has been required for the last 10 years, as the vines have grown older and found their natural balance. The reds have never been filtered. On the whites, Ray has moved to less new oak and less malolactic fermentation, preferring to make tighter, more European style wines of great finesse and purity. Of course, we're still in the Napa Valley and the fruit is far more lush and ripe than most of the European benchmarks, but the beauty is in the relative restraint of these wines. At just 7,500 cases per year, most of the Signorello wines will remain collector's wines in their own right.

Below is a selection of wines tasted in Toronto on May 14th 2009, at Vertical restaurant in Toronto:

**\$40 2007 Signorello Vineyards 'Seta' Proprietary White Blend, Napa Valley, California, United States.** Inspired by Haut Brion Blanc, 60% Semillon and 40% Sauvignon Blanc, barrel fermented, with just 20% new wood. Delicate and elegant, with fine oak integration and ripe but fresh stone fruit, orange peel and orange blossom. The palate is silky, as the name of the cuvée suggests (seta is Italian for silk), with nicely balanced acid-alcohol and long finish. A very fine wine with unusual finesse **91 Points**.

**\$56.95 2007 Signorello Vineyards Chardonnay Vieilles Vignes, Napa Valley, California, USA** Chardonnay is sourced from some of the oldest Chardonnay in the region: 30 year old vines, 1.8 tons/aces. 25% new wood, 25% malolactic. A fragrant and delicate example of Napa Valley Chardonnay, with fine wood integration, ripe but not exaggerated tree fruit rich, full bodied palate, with generous alcohol and also a nice streak of minerality running through this. Balanced acid and long lingering finish. This should very age well. **92 points**.

**\$34.95 2006 Signorello Vineyards Fuse Cabernet Sauvignon, Valley, California, USA**

This Cabernet Sauvignon-Based Blend was inspired by Guado al Tasso from Tuscany, this is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, sourced from 4 different vineyards throughout the Valley. The nose is full of deep, dark fruit, abundant dark baking spice, black licorice, and sweet but not exaggerated wood spice. Dry, full, soft, plush tannins, moderate acidity and quite interesting earthy-mineral and floral-violet character on the palate. This is highly pleasant and ready-to-drink Napa wine at a very attractive price. **90 points**.

**\$67 2005 Signorello Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley**

Clean, open and fragrant, with almost delicate red and black fruit character. Underlying minerality alongside pure fruit expression. Dry, fullish, tasty, mouth-salivating acidity, generous alcohol, moderate finish. A fine elegant expression of Napa Cabernet. **92 points**.

**\$150 2005 Signorello Vineyards Padrone, Napa Valley**

A proprietary blend, based on the estates top parcels of Cabernet, with 7% Cabernet Franc and 4% Merlot. Only 1.4 tons per acre in this dense and concentrated red. Just starting to open on the nose, revealing ripe and concentrated, highly complex aromas. The palate is fully dry, firm, with significantly more structure and flavour intensity than the estate Cabernet. Long finish. Loads of depth and complexity. Superb wine. **95 points**.