

Cliffs Wine Picks – Jaffe Estate Winery

This is based on wines provided to me by the winery or organization acting on their behalf.

2008 Jaffe Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Metamorphosis

2009 Jaffe Estate Transformation



'It's comforting to know that if a giant meteor is ever headed our way, the Jaffes can not only warn us, they can pour us a nice glass of wine while we wait for impact '

Gary and Pam Jaffe

Gary Jaffe's wine journey started in 1980 when he took a vacation from the family's insurance business to visit St. Helena. During the visit, Gary came to a revelation, "I decided I'd live here one day," he said. Monthly visits to the area again opened his eyes; he could buy some land for what he was spending on hotels.

Gary eventually purchased 8 acres on Pritchard Hill above LakeHennessey. This gave Gary a place for a cabin and to set up a telescope to watch the stars. A few years later, he doubled his land holdings and looked to plant grapes. In 1991, reality set in when it was estimated it would cost \$100,000 per acre to plant grapes on the rocky site.

Around this same time, Gary took a class on the art of collecting at UCLA where he met his future wife, Pam. "I decided to collect her," he quipped. "She's my kind of art."

Gary and Pam moved to the valley in 1999, with the addition of twin girls into their lives, the distance to town began to diminish the appeal of living at the solitary mountain site.

This led Gary and Pam to fine a house on 3 acres of land at the southern edge of the St. Helena appellation, at the edge of the Rutherford Bench. The site was home to a vineyard with Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon that had been planted in the 1970s. After renovating the house and added an observatory that housed a 16-inch aperture optical telescope, it was time to start the next chapter in their lives...

The Winery

Jaffe Estate Winery produces two estate-grown, relatively low alcohol wines, Transformation is a Bordeaux style blend and Metamorphosis is a Cabernet Sauvignon. 2005 marked the first vintage to be released. The couple was proud when their wines were added to the highly selective list at Auberge du Soleil.

Jaffe Estate wines are on the wine list at several restaurants in the valley. The wines are also available direct from the winery [by clicking here](#).

The winery has a free newsletter and “The Celestial Set” Wine Club.

For more information on Jaffe Estate, you can visit [their website](#), or find them on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

The Line up

Here are the wines for this tasting:



2008 Jaffe Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Metamorphosis – SRP \$68

Metamorphosis is a 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from the estate vineyard in the St. Helena appellation.

The wine is 13.8% alcohol and is sealed with a natural cork.

My Tasting Note

The wine is a medium to deep ruby red color. The outstanding nose has cassis, baking spices, tobacco, cedar, licorice, cocoa powder, stony minerals, violets, dried herbs and a touch of dry earth. This has medium body, moderate to full tannins and very good acidity. On the palate this is a restrained and nicely nuanced wine with no over the top ripeness or layers of oak. The finish has nice length and balance but at this time the tannins get a bit chalky and course. Give this one another year or two in the cellar and enjoy over the next decade. This has great potential. (93 pts)



2008 Jaffe Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Metamorphosis

2009 Jaffe Estate Transformation – SRP \$68

Transformation is a blend 55% Cabernet Sauvignon and 45% Merlot from the estate's vineyard in St. Helena.

The wine has an alcohol level of 14.5%. The bottle is sealed with a natural cork.

My Tasting Note

The wine is a bright red to ruby color. With some air, the initially slightly shy nose has cherries, cassis, warm baking spices, cedar, stony minerals, licorice and scorched earth. This has medium body, moderate ripe tannins and good acidity. On the palate the up front fruit slowly adds spices, minerals and a touch of earthiness. The rich and smooth finish has nice length with a floral note

entering the picture. This has very nice balance and could age several years but is delicious today. (92 pts)



2009 Jaffe Estate Transformation

Closing thoughts

It was refreshing to sample a couple of wines from the Napa Valley with restrained levels of alcohol. If you missed it above, the 2008 Metamorphosis clocked in at 13.8%.

Even though the Transformation is a year younger, it was more open and ready for consumption. If I had both of these wines in my cellar, I'd consume the 2009 Transformation and save the 2008 Metamorphosis for down the road. That said, both wines would be outstanding even today, if served with a moist, juicy cut of beef.

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