



Wine Hi-Lo

## Hot Out of Napa

[Richard Nalley](#), 06.05.09, 12:00 PM EDT

### Two gems show Napa Valley's lighter side

Napa is becoming ever more Cabernet Sauvignon-centric, probably with good reason, but two recently tasted wines made me re-think my general prejudice against the Valley's whites. In different ways they both show a sophisticated touch too often missing for me in the oaky, buttery, alcohol-heated, tutti-fruttied wilderness of Napa

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Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

The beauties are out there, alright, but you've got to look.

**HI:** Far Niente 2007 Chardonnay, Napa Valley (\$56) Only a handful of other California wineries can equal Far Niente's knack for turning out flamboyant, big-bodied Chardonnays that actually have style and structure. I don't always love them, but this is a jewel; maybe my all-time favorite from the winery. It is no shrinking violet--it rolls in rich, silky waves across your tongue--but what is striking is the delicacy of the finish, the wine's liveliness and underlying minerality, and the classically pure quality of the peach/pear aromas wafting from the glass.

**LO:** Cade 2007 Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley (\$28) A new venture from the PlumpJack partners Gordon Getty and His Honor the Mayor of San Francisco Gavin Newsome, Cade has had wine on the market for two years, but just received approval to begin using its own sleek, gracefully designed, ultra-green winery high up on Howell Mountain ([www.cadewinery.com](http://www.cadewinery.com)) this spring. For a Cabernet-image label, Cade puts a lot of work into Sauvignon Blanc, fermenting and aging various lots in various ways and in various combinations of steel tanks, steel drums, oak barrels and, recently, concrete "eggs." This is a lively wine, with fine structural definition, a juicy complex of flavors highlighted by citrus-y lemon-lime and a surprise, filled-in, mid-palate richness that may owe something to its 14% blend of Semillon grapes.

