



Napa's Pritchard Hill

This wild and rocky terrain produces profound Cabernets

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Pritchard Hill is a rugged mass of compacted volcanic rock that forms the eastern ridge of central Napa Valley. Rising to heights of 1,800 feet, with striking iron-red and yellow-tinged soil, this unique locale is the source of some of Napa's most extraordinary Cabernet-based blends.

Big-ticket producers such as Chappellet, Bryant Family, Colgin, David Arthur, Continuum and Ovid call Pritchard Hill home. So do another dozen or so smaller properties; some are releasing their first wines with the 2009 vintage, while others are still in the formative stages. Hiking through a vineyard there, you can see the dust and breathe it in the air. Many of the sites offer breathtaking views of Pritchard Hill's large expanse, in shades of dark blue to slate gray, and of the shimmering waters of Lake Hennessey below.

Winemaker Celia Welch blends Rutherford and Pritchard Hill grapes in her Corra Cabernet. "The fruit from Pritchard Hill is much denser and chewier," she says, adding, "[Rutherford Cabernet] shows a broader, more diverse set of aromas, often cherries laced with a bit of sweet pipe tobacco and a hint of anise. Think of raspberries and blackberries on the vine on a hot summer day."

The region produces profoundly deep and flavorful wines that are rich and polished, fleshy yet restrained. Winemakers describe a dusty, loamy earth character that runs through the wines.