



Paula Kornell

Jonathan Cristaldi: My top Californian wines of 2023

After a year of innumerable tastings around his home state of California, Decanter's Napa Valley correspondent Jonathan Cristaldi reflects on standout wines from Napa, Sonoma and the Central Coast along with one unforgettable bottle from Tuscany...



Jonathan Cristaldi
December 18, 2023

My top picks of 2023 are a host of bottles that I found particularly rewarding and which are (mostly) available or will be in early 2024. Please read about them and why I chose them in the tasting notes below.

Jonathan Cristaldi's top wines of 2023:



Paula Kornell, Blanc de Noirs, Napa Valley, California, USA 2020

[+ Add to My Wines](#)

Paula Kornell debuted her namesake brand in 2017 in homage to her father, Hanns Kornell, who, in 1958, began producing Méthode Champenoise techniques on California grapes from his Larkmead...

Points 91

91

Tasted by: Jonathan Cristaldi
(at Novato, California, 11 Sep 2023)

Part of Jonathan Cristaldi: My top Californian wines of 2023
Drinking Window: 2024 - 2028

Paula Kornell debuted her namesake brand in 2017 in homage to her father, Hanns Kornell, who, in 1958, began producing Méthode Champenoise techniques on California grapes from his Larkmead Estate winery. Paula began working with her dad at Kornell Champagne Cellars in 1982, so her own label has been a long time coming. Scotland native Robin Akhurst, leveraging the Méthode Champenoise, is making some of the best sparkling wine that is Napa Valley appellation. The 2020 release of Paula Kornell is terrifically fresh with stark minerality and building in richness with French pastry, almond cream, and golden cherries. From the lively and persistent, rich and creamy mousse come notes of acacia, Granny Smith apple, and buttered brioche, finishing bone dry even at 8.0g/L, with crispy and zippy acid tension. Harvested between 17 and 31 August 2020, with tirage on 1 February 2021 and disgorged on 15 January 2023. Number nine of my top 10 wines of 2023.

Producer	Paula Kornell
Brand	Blanc de Noirs
Vintage	2020
Wine Type	Sparkling
Colour	White
Country	USA
Region	California
Appellation	Napa Valley
Sweetness	Brut
Closure	Natural Cork
Alcohol	12.50%
Body	Light
Oak	Lightly Oaked
Grapes	30% Chardonnay 70% Pinot Noir / Pinot Nero

Press Coverage