A YEAR AGO,
wildfires ripped through Sonoma County, destroying lives, homes, and businesses. Wine Country became Fire Country in the eyes of the world, yet paradoxically, flames did relatively little damage to local wineries and vineyards.

Paradise Ridge Winery, located in Santa Rosa’s Fountaingrove area, was demolished by the Tubbs fire, but this was the worst of it for Sonoma wineries. A few suffered structural damage, which they’ve since repaired. Backfires intentionally set protected many wineries, including Sonoma Valley’s Arrowood Winery, from the conflagration.

But the major savers of Sonoma wines are the grapevines themselves, living plants with moisture in their veins. They served as natural firebreaks, with flames moving on to easier targets such as trees, brush, and structures.

Paradise Ridge is rebuilding, with its LOVE art sculpture standing strong after the fires. We celebrate that, and all recovery efforts, with this Top 100 Wines list. It’s heavy in sparkling wines — to toast Sonoma’s resilient personality — and with plenty of Chardonnays, Sauvignon Blancs, Pinot Noirs, and Zinfandels to please all crowds.

Welcome to resurgent Sonoma.
Iron Horse Vineyards 2010 LD Green Valley of Russian River Valley Brut ($110)
LD stands for Late Disgorged, which means the wine was aged longer on the spent yeast cells than standard bottlings. It’s a costly move, holding a bubbly back for so long before it’s sold, but the payoff for consumers willing to pay more is more richness, creaminess, elegance, and precise bubbles. In the Champagne region of France, such a top-line wine is called tête de cuvée; from Iron Horse, it’s called darn good, with aromas and flavors of baked bread straight from the oven, hazelnut, spiced baked apple, mandarin, and Meyer lemon and with a long, crisp finish. Swirling this Sterling family bubbly in the glass awakens its long-dormant personality, a bit like releasing the genie from the bottle.

Clos du Bois 2014 Briarcrest Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon $60
Varietally true aromas of cedar, pepper, and blackcurrant lead to a mouthful of luscious black cherry, blackberry, mocha, and espresso, framed by toasty oak and grippy tannins. 95 points at NCWC.

Clos du Bois 2014 Alexander Valley Marlstone Red Blend $60
The majority of this proprietary blend is Cabernet Sauvignon, with splashes of Merlot, Petit Verdot, Malbec, and Cabernet Franc. Its intense blueberry and blackberry fruit, notes of cedar, mocha, and tobacco leaf, and juicy palate impressed NCWC judges so much that they awarded it 96 points.

deLorimier Winery 2014 Dry Creek Valley Cabernet Sauvignon $58
Bright and lively red fruits (cherry and berry) are kissed with subtle notes of espresso bean and spice, with orange rind on the long, generous finish. Scored 95 points at NCWC.

Jordan Winery 2015 Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon $56
Jordan always swims against the tide, eschewing overt oak and over-ripeness in the grapes. This wine is more elegant and Bordeaux-like than most from California, with reasonable alcohol (13.8 percent), subtle hints of herbs and spice, and fresh, pristine blackberry, black currant, and plum aromas and flavors. Stick it in the cellar for a decade or more.

Laurel Glen Vineyard 2014 Sonoma Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon $75
This is an iconic Sonoma wine with a track record of aging gloriously for decades. It offers classic Cabernet characteristics of forest floor, subtle leafy herbs, and concentrated dark berry and dark cherry fruit. It has admirable freshness and elegance for a mountain-grown wine.

Forefathers 2015 Lone Tree Vineyard Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon $65
Nick Goldschmidt produces an array of wines under several brands, and his Forefathers label is reserved for special sites. Lone Tree is one of them, located northeast of Geyserville, at 800 feet elevation. In 2015, it produced this bold, exuberantly fruity wine with violet aromatics, ripe blackberry and black cherry flavors, and youthful tannins.

Hawley Vineyards 2015 Hawley Vineyard Dry Creek Valley Cabernet Sauvignon $52
Made with organically grown grapes, it’s packed with dark fruit — blackberry, dark plum, and blueberry — yet 20 percent Cabernet Franc adds a floral note to the aromas and brightness to the palate. Low in oak influence and high-acid structure, it’s a baby certain to age nicely with cellaring.

Knights Bridge Estate 2015 Knights Valley Cabernet Sauvignon $120
A relative newcomer in the Knights Valley wine game, this producer takes advantage of an impressive array of soil types and row orientations to make this layered, distinctive wine with volcanic, loam, and alluvial character. Blackcurrant fruit, savory earth and oak, and firm yet pliant tannins make this one to watch.

Pedroncelli Winery 2015 Estate Block 007 Dry Creek Valley Cabernet Sauvignon $26
In an age when many California Cabs have had their savory character masked by oak and ripeness, this one is unabashedly earthy and slightly herbal, with accents of concentrated dark fruit and vibrant acidity. Excellent value.

Rodney Strong Vineyards 2015 Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon $20
Pure Cabernet pleasure comes at a darn good price with this approachable wine that’s usually discounted to $14–$15. Luscious blackberry and black cherry flavors, oak spice, bittersweet chocolate, and supple texture are the hallmarks of this medium-bodied, enjoy-now wine.

St. Francis Winery & Vineyards 2015 Lagomarsino Vineyard Russian River Valley Cabernet Sauvignon $68
Cab from Russian River Valley? You bet, when it’s from the warmest part of the AVA, near Healdsburg. There is a distinct red-cherry character to this wine, and that cherry is covered in melted dark chocolate. Fresh black raspberry, too. It’s a bright, juicy wine, medium-full-bodied, and with plenty of energy.

Trentadue Winery 2015 La Storia Block 500 Alexander Valley Merlot $28
NCWC judges loved this 99-point wine for its sweet vanillin oak wrapping around perfectly ripe plum and black cherry fruit. Firmly tannic and with crisp acidity, it’s youthful and a bit tight now, but six more months in the bottle will soften it a bit. For now, think grilled ribeye.