

Stephen Tanzer's  
**Winophilia**



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Winophilia Picks

**2007 Rustenberg John X Merriman**

*Stephen Tanzer*

**Why should you care?** With good classified growths from Bordeaux and distinctive cabernets from Napa Valley starting at \$40 a bottle these days, many wine lovers have come to believe that classy cabernet is now a luxury item. Rustenberg Wines, one of South Africa's oldest wineries, dating back to the 1680s, offers outstanding value at a range of price points, and their John X Merriman red wine, a Bordeaux blend based on cabernet sauvignon and merlot, consistently offers uncanny nuance and personality for its moderate price.

**What does it taste like?** The 2007's complex aromas of plum, raspberry, mocha, chocolate, pepper, smoke and cigar box are already worth more than the price of admission. But what I like most about this energetic midweight is its ineffable savory quality. This is hardly an overripe, overoaked, interchangeable New World fruit bomb. On the contrary, its sharply delineated, soil-driven flavors of red fruits, tobacco leaf, pepper, minerals and woodsmoke offer an exhilarating drinking experience right now and promise a slow and eventful evolution in bottle over the next decade or two.

**How much does it cost, and where can you find it?** \$30; capeclassics.com

