

**Bernardus Vineyards****2003 Marinus
(Carmel Valley)**

When Bernardus Marinus “Ben” Pon, a Dutchman who is a former race car driver, founded his eponymous winery in Carmel Valley, his aim was to make a red wine to rival the finest wines of Bordeaux. Although the winery has branched out to wines such as Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, the flagship wine is still a Bordeaux-style red blend called

Marinus. The blend varies with the vintage, but Cabernet Sauvignon always dominates.

The 2003 blend is made up of about three-quarters Cab, about 20 percent Merlot, and small amounts of Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec. The fruit comes from an estate vineyard in the upper Carmel Valley, an area known as the Cachagua Valley. Winemaker Dean DeKorth’s wines tend to favor elegance over sheer power, and that’s certainly the case with the 2003 Marinus. It displays bright black cherry and plum flavors, accented by some subtle herbal notes. Firm tannic structure leads to a very long finish. The wine is aged in French oak barrels, half of them new, and the oak adds some complexity without lending overt oak flavors.

In this era of \$200 Cabernets, it’s refreshing to find a wine of this quality for \$40. You could cellar the 2003 Marinus for a decade (maybe longer), but it’s also lovely to drink now with a grilled steak or braised short ribs.

Reviewed October 24, 2007 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Bernardus Vineyards](#)

Vintage: 2003

Wine: Marinus

Appellation: [Carmel Valley](#)

Grapes: [Cabernet Sauvignon \(73%\)](#), [Merlot \(20%\)](#), [Cabernet Franc](#), [Petit Verdot](#), [Malbec](#)

Price: \$40.00

THE REVIEWER**Laurie Daniel**

Laurie Daniel, wine columnist for the *San Jose Mercury News*, has been reviewing wine for more than 10 years. She doesn’t use numbers, preferring to describe her recommended wines and let consumers decide for themselves.

Laurie believes that bigger isn’t necessarily better; she’s partial to wines of balance, finesse and character. Her particular interests are Pinot Noir (versions that really taste like Pinot, that is) and aromatic whites like Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Gewürztraminer.