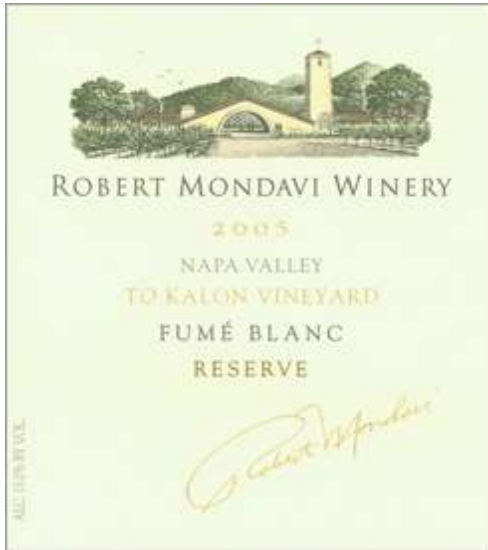


WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Robert Mondavi Winery****2005 Fume Blanc Reserve, To Kalon Vineyard
(Napa Valley)**

APPELLATION AMERICA has been fairly critical of high alcohol wines made from grapes with unnecessarily long hang times. So a brief glance on the label of Robert Mondavi Winery's 2005 Fumé Blanc Reserve with its 15 percent alcohol would ordinarily send us running. But that's nary the case for this extraordinary wine.

First off, 2005 was a particularly cooler growing season from a late spring to an unusually cooler Napa Valley summer. That, by nature, demanded longer hang time which let the grapes ripen slowly and develop rich aromas and flavors. This classic Fumé Blanc (Sauvignon Blanc) from the prized To Kalon Vineyard (where most of the vines are some 30 years old or more) was blended with 15 percent Semillon. This is the vineyard where Robert Mondavi pioneered growing Sauvignon Blanc in the early years of his winery. Other vintners said he was wasting his time. Wrong.

Mondavi pioneered fermenting his Sauvignon Blanc in French oak barrels which imparted a smoky character, hence "Fumé". But smoke is only one of the Reserve's complex characteristics. A marmalade-like orange zest and delicate white peach flavor grab you first. Although there is only a hint of residual sugar, an underlying sweetness combined with the natural acidity of the grapes adds a lip-smacking finish. The touch of Semillon provides a velvety mouthfeel. We know about comfort food. If there is such a thing as comfort wine, this is it.

Reviewed April 2, 2008 by [Michael Lasky](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Robert Mondavi Winery](#)

Vineyard: To Kalon Vineyard

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Fume Blanc Reserve

Appellation: [Napa Valley](#)

Grapes: Sauvignon Blanc (85%), Semillon (15%)

Price: \$40.00

THE REVIEWER**Michael Lasky**

APPELLATION AMERICA's Senior Editor, Michael Lasky, has been writing about food and wine for over 20 years. His work has appeared in national magazines such as *Playboy*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, and *Parade*, and newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *USA Today*,

Newsday, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. His wine reviews focus on the aroma, taste, and visual appeal of what's in the glass. He is decidedly not a wine snob and prefers to describe its virtues in conversational prose that speaks to everyone from wine neophytes to veteran connoisseurs. He only reviews delicious wines.