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**Connect the Rocks Cabernet Sauvignon Tasting**

**Notes and Instructions:** Connect the Rocks is a comparative tasting of Cabernet Sauvignon from different parts of the Napa Valley designed to showcase the diversity of wines grown and produced in Napa Valley. Therefore, ideal wines should all be the same vintage, all varietaly labeled as Cabernet Sauvignon and made from grapes sourced from specific sub-AVA or place in the valley (as opposed to a blend of grapes from around the valley).

**Time:** 60 Minutes (estimated)

**Set up**: Room should be set classroom style with all normal tasting items (dump buckets, spit cups, water, neutral crackers, napkin, etc.). Please set each spot with a tasting mat noting the wines and a tasting sheet (see below). Tasting notes for each wine are ideal.

**Wine** **Order**: The correct order of the wines will vary depending on the wines selected and preference of the instructor. Here are three considerations:

1. Taste valley floor before hillside because hillside wines are often more powerful and tannic.
2. Taste wines south to north because the northern part of the valley is generally warmer than the southern part and therefore produces more powerful wines.
3. Taste lower alcohol wines before higher alcohol wines.

**Optional Addition**: Use Google Earth (the Pro edition is best) to zoom in on each vineyard site as the wines are discussed.

**Topic: Connect the Rocks- Panel Discussion & Tasting**

Even though the wines of Napa Valley achieved international renown as early as the end of the 19th century, the true search for terroir in this world-renowned region is a fairly recent endeavor. Less than 30 wineries were trying to make a go of it by the time the Paris Tasting of 1976 launched Napa and California into the international spotlight, and it wasn’t until 1994 that Cabernet Sauvignon became the valley’s most planted variety.

Geology and geography combine in Napa Valley to create a virtual kaleidoscope of terroir. Soil differences can change within a few feet and climatic patterns vary widely depending on a vineyard’s proximity to San Pablo Bay, elevation, slope and directional aspect.

The purpose of this session is to show how terroir differences in Napa Valley show up in our Cabernet Sauvignon wines- ***to connect the rocks***, so to speak. Cabernet is our grape in NV and is the best vehicle for discussing terroir. You will each be responsible for speaking to the how the qualities of your vineyard site show up in the wine in addition to how it is representative of the AVA in which it is located.

During this session we will build a foundation of Napa terroir through a tasting and discussion of Cabernet Sauvignon wines as we explore the

* Geography, topography, climate and soil environments throughout Napa
* Characteristics of selected sub-AVAs
* How these factors affect the tasting profiles of the wines
* Compare Napa terroir to selected international regions

**Moderator-**

**Suggested Tasting order: 20XX Cabernet Sauvignon**

**Session Timing and Flow (suggested)**

Minutes 1 – 10: Overview of the Napa Valley and Cabernet Sauvignon (generally)

* See relevant slides from Napa Valley Rocks and Top Planted Varieties Education

Minutes 10 – 20: Silent tasting of all wines

Minutes 20 – 50: Discussion of wines

Minutes 50 – 60: Wrap up/Q&A

**Potential themes during discussion**

1. Where is the vineyard located in the valley and what are the general characteristics of vineyards in that area?
2. What are the characteristics (flavor profile, tannin structure, etc.) of the wine in the glass?
3. How does the vineyard's location in the valley affect the taste of the wine?
4. Are there any attributes of the vineyard site that show through in the wine?
5. Are there any attributes of the winemaking (assuming the winemaker notes are available) that show through in the wine?
6. What do you consider to be the terroir character of these wines?
	1. Aroma and flavors
	2. Structure (acid, tannin, phenolics)
7. How does this vintage compare to other recent vintages?
8. How would each wine pair with food?