

Les MARCHANDS
wine bar & merchant

presents



Santa Barbara County
WINE FUTURES TASTING

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131 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA
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ALMAROSA

To say Santa Barbara County owes a lot to Richard Sanford is an understatement. Planting a Pinot Noir vineyard in Santa Rita Hills today takes money. Planting a Pinot Noir vineyard in Santa Rita Hills circa 1970 took guts of steel and a crystal ball. Why? No one had done it before. And as Sashi Moorman said it best “He got it right the first time.” Richard got it right a second and third time with ‘Rancho El Jabalí and ‘La Encantada’. These two vineyards are the backbone of Alma Rosa. And the winery’s commitment to furthering the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grape is as welcome a vision today as it was over forty years ago.

2012 Alma Rosa Chardonnay ‘El Jabalí Vineyard’ Santa Rita Hills 256 cases

Welcome to a polished take on the rich, tropical side of Chardonnay that is the 2012 El Jabalí. Despite unctuous fruit character, this is not your ultra-buttery, creamy Chard. The palate is tense and crisp, with bright acid, thanks to stainless steel fermentation and minimal use of new French oak.

2012 Alma Rosa Pinot Noir ‘La Encantada Vineyard’ Santa Rita Hills

450 cases

The ‘La Encantada’ is a rich, fruit-forward Pinot Noir, representative of the more opulent vintage that 2012 was. Raspberry and cherry are still lingering on my tongue as I write these notes. It is made in traditional Burgundian fashion. Open top fermentation and a very restrained 20% new French oak showcase the purity of the fruit.

Thank you, Richard.



ANACAPA VINTNERS

There's an old Chinese proverb that reads "A good neighbor—a found treasure." No objections were raised the other day, sharing a few laughs and a growler of Chenin Blanc with the gregarious Seth Kunin. His newest tasting room, Anacapa Vintners, is just a stone's throw away from our very own Les Marchands. Tastefully outfitted from floor to ceiling, Seth's funky, cool-classroom aesthetic is set off by a stunning quasi chalkboard mural of our wine country and local history. The course curriculum calls for "exploring the wines of Santa Barbara, one microclimate at a time." As diligent pupils, we're happy to run up a tab anytime.

2010 Anacapa Vintners Chardonnay Los Alamos

124 cases

What a wonderfully pure and elegant Chardonnay in a very tricky 2010. '10 was a wild vintage where picking at the right time was crucial. It was fairly cool throughout the summer until a massive heat wave came at the end of the growing season. Seth definitely got it right. An extended elevage has softened the edges and added complexity to an already exciting wine. The Los Alamos Chardonnay is another rallying cry for the region.

2011 Anacapa Vintners Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills

93 cases

When your goal is to represent a grape, region, and vintage "as nature intended", what you're left with is a Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir from Anacapa Vintners. Medium bodied and endowed with that classic, Santa Rita dark fruit profile, this is a bright, fresh take on a cooler vintage for the region. Well done, Seth.



AUBONCLIMAT

The few times I've had the privilege of meeting Jim Clendenen he was telling stories—some hilarious, some insightful, and all of them entertaining. Jim is not short on entertainment value. And the story of Au Bon Climat is truly the story of him. It's a story that began on a trip to France in '74—a time Jim aptly dubbed “life beyond tacos”. There, in Burgundy and Champagne, a love of grape and vine was cemented. The rest is a slice of history and well worth telling too. But I'd be afraid to tell that story because I could never deliver it as well as Jim. I'd rather show you as he did when we came up to visit, in a place with good food, good company, and lots of wine.

2010 Au Bon Climat Chardonnay 'Bien Nacido' Santa Maria 436 cases

When you've been working a vineyard for the better part of 25 years, you're bound to pick up a thing or two. The 2010 'Historic Vineyard Series' is a tribute to a section of 'Bien Nacido' that Jim Clendenen has made Chardonnay from since 1989. Although rock music blares throughout the winery during our visits to ABC, this Chardonnay is a symphony—focused, balanced, and nuanced. Rounding out the orchestra are citrus, fresh yellow apple, and peach. As evidenced by a delicious '91 Chardonnay we shared at lunch, Jim's wines are enjoyable on their own, contemplative, food friendly, and built to age. This example was no exception. How many wines can you say that about at under \$25?

2011 Au Bon Climat Pinot Noir 'Sanford & Benedict' Santa Rita Hills

125 cases

When legendary vintner meets legendary vineyard, we have the

perfect storm of epic Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir. Laying this bad boy down for a few years wouldn't hurt, but if you're like me and can't wait, do yourself a favor: throw it in a decanter, sit back, and watch the lovely '11 'Sanford & Benedict' Pinot unfold over hours. In this example, we have a wonderfully elegant and fresh take on the grape with deep, brooding dark fruit and delicate floral aromatics. 2011 was a cooler vintage for Santa Rita Hills and produced expressions of serious structure. Bottom line: Pinot Noir is not the guy in the Corvette with gold chains, lathered in Aqua Velva. Pinot Noir is finesse. Pinot Noir is seductive and layered. Consider us putty in your hands, Jim...



BARDEN

If the name Barden looks familiar, it shouldn't. It's a new wine project that hasn't been released yet. If the Margerum name looks familiar, it should. His company has been producing exciting wines since 2001. On our recent trip to Doug's facility, we were fortunate enough to be among the first to taste some individual lots of top notch Santa Rita Hills Pinot, Chard, and Syrah. Stunning vineyard after stunning vineyard left us pining for the day when the parts would become the sum of Barden. That day has happened.

2012 Barden Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills

600 six packs

Barden Pinot Noir will be a blend of two vineyards, which we tasted in individual lots. 'La Encantada' can often be shy and subdued young, but this example was very open and rich today, showing dark fruit with great elegance and structure. The 'Sebastiano' showed a different fruit profile with more red cherry, but was similarly refined. This is a brilliant collaboration with winemaker Jason Barrette of Penfolds Winery in Australia.

BARRACK

SEE HAPPY CANYON VINEYARDS



BECKMEN

When Steve Beckmen and his father Tom stared out across a 365-acre hillside in Ballard Canyon, the mustard fields were head high. As one who vaguely knows the thrill of tasting your very own label from the time the grapes were picked, it must be doubly rewarding to, as Steve put it best, "...start with a raw piece of land...and end with a bottle of wine." That mustard field became Purisima Mountain Vineyard the day the first roots were laid down in '96 and it remains a beacon in the area for Rhone varieties such as Grenache, Syrah, and Viognier. Their picturesque winery resides in Los Olivos and comprises the second and final fruit source of Beckman Vineyards. Steve's eyes lit up as he generously ran us through the gauntlet during our visit. We were humbled to see a man as passionate and hungry now, as the day Beckman was conceived some twenty years ago.

2012 Beckmen Viognier 'Purissima Mountain' Santa Ynez Valley
200 cases

Purissima Mountain Vineyard is a special place that has been farmed 100% biodynamic since 2006. Steve's respect for nature and relentless attention to detail in the vineyard shines through in his wines. What struck me about the '12 'Purissima Mountain' Viognier is the expression of minerality that is so rarely exhibited outside the famous Condrieu of France's Rhone Valley. Tropical peach and white floral notes resonate with varietal character. This is a pure and noble expression of the grape. Bravo.

2012 Beckmen Grenache 'Purissima Mountain' Santa Ynez Valley
500 cases

Rhone varieties are Steve's specialty. He was one of the first to bottle the white version of this grape back in the mid 90's. The red version furthers the notion that experience is on his side. One of the few examples of 2012 Grenache at the tasting, this is a grape that thrives in warmer vintages. Gorgeous red fruit and black pepper attack the nose and palate. It is lush and ripe, but crafted with minimal intervention to showcase the purity and quality of the fruit from the vineyard.



BIEN NACIDO VINEYARDS

Viewing Santa Maria Valley in full regalia, there are few greater perches than Bien Nacido Vineyard. At the crest of an old Syrah block, we could peer out all the way to the ocean. From there, the winds funnel back toward the hills and cool down the vines. Hats off to guide Trey Fletcher. His blend of sound doctrine and witty repartee made for a first-rate tour of hallowed ground and his Rhodesian Ridgeback, Huxley, provided the physical comedy. As winemaker of a vineyard that supplies a formidable client list, Trey must relish the opportunity to cherry-pick the finest parcels for the estate. We're relishing the opportunity to be pouring them.

2012 Bien Nacido Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley 350 cases

Another day, another wicked block of grapes. We sampled this Pinot in its component parts back in March—each lot contributing its own complexity and textural elements from the various blocks within the vineyard. At over 800 acres planted, Bien Nacido should have its own area code. With that much ground covered, the vineyard is run like a well-oiled machine and the diversity of soil, climate, and aspect was highlighted by Trey in every little nook and cranny of our walking tour. In its blended form, the '12 Bien Nacido Pinot exhibits blackberry, fennel, and black tea notes, complemented by bright acid and minerality.

2012 Bien Nacido Pinot Noir ‘Solomon Hills’ Santa Maria Valley
350 cases

I love the smell of ‘Nacido’ in the morning. Welcome to the earthiest and most structured Santa Maria Pinot Noir we tried from Trey. This portion of Solomon Hills Vineyard sits predominantly on sandstone. With well draining soils and cool maritime winds battering the grapes, out of this struggle comes intense, concentrated grapes. 33% stem inclusion adds lovely spicy and savory aromatics and contributes to firmness and tension on the palate.

2012 Bien Nacido Grenache Santa Maria Valley
50 cases

This wine wouldn’t stop talking to me. Tasted out of barrel, we have on hand a very complex, cool-climate Grenache. While endowed with lush dark fruits, the earthy aspects of the vineyard come out...revealing notes of espresso, chocolate and crushed rocks lingering on the finish. In classic Rhone fashion, a very restrained use of oak demonstrates terroir is everything.



BONACCORSI

In 1999, Michael and Jenne Lee Bonaccorsi formed the Bonaccorsi Wine Company and set out to produce wine of their own with the love of Burgundy and the Rhone as a guiding principle. Since their first vintage in 1999, they’ve continued to strive for improvements not only in winemaking techniques, but to also improve the quality of the best vineyards in the Central Coast. Bonaccorsi’s objective is to produce wines that combine concentration with delicacy.

2011 Bonaccorsi Pinot Noir 'Fiddlestix Vineyard' Santa Rita Hills
200 cases

This is lush and generous Pinot Noir from 1 of 3 stunning vineyards in the Santa Rita Hills. It is a true art to make a riper style of Pinot Noir balanced and nuanced. But thanks to a deft hand and a pedigreed site, Jenne was able to achieve just that. The mouth feel is fleshy with earthy plum and a subtle blackberry presence on the finish.

2011 Bonaccorsi Pinot Noir 'Cargasacchi Vineyard' Santa Rita Hills

150 cases

Cargasacchi Vineyard is a Burgundy lover's gem—an extremely cool site with a unique soil mix of “argilo-calcaire”. I won't bore you with geology lessons, and I'm not qualified to teach them, but the only other time I've heard the term “argilo-calcaire” thrown around is in Burgundy, France's mecca for Pinot Noir. Where does the rubber meet the road? Grapes from this super-charged clay soil are able to produce rich, concentrated wines with tremendous structure and acidity. In Jenne Bonaccorsi's offering, power meets elegance.

2011 Bonaccorsi Pinot Noir 'Bentrock Vineyard' Santa Rita Hills
200 cases

Gnarly vineyards = delicious grapes. Located at the west end of Santa Rita hills, with a name like Bentrock, an extreme site is to be expected. With loamy, shale-rich soils, the frigid ocean winds pound Bentrock, keeping yields low and driving intensity and concentration into the berries. The result is a plush but structured expression of Pinot Noir with telltale Santa Rita aromatics—dark fruits, florals, and subtle forest floor notes.

BUONI ANNI

SEE CENT'ANNI

CARLSON



With twelve years between the release of his first Pinot Noir and the inaugural '12 Gewurztraminer blend, we asked Chuck Carlson why he waited so long to make a white. His reply? "I've been busy." As winegrower and General Manager of Curtis Winery for over 25 years, we feel he has a point. Being solely a winegrower is much like giving your children up for adoption every harvest. As a winemaker, Carlson is his baby, and our tasting together left no doubt that these wines are being crafted by a proud and loving father.

2012 Carlson Blanc Santa Ynez Valley

90 cases

Ah, Santa Barbara County... You continue to amaze me with the diversity of your portfolio. Who knew Gewurztraminer had such a wonderful home in the Santa Ynez Valley. What a great way for Chuck Carlson to usher a blanc into his arsenal of Pinot Noirs. This is a delicious summer wine. Peach, citrus, and bright white flowers, are hallmarks of Gewurz and, thanks to 25% Chenin Blanc and 25% Sauvignon Blanc, the palate receives freshness and cut. A bit of skin contact contributes a lovely textural component. Congrats to Chuck Carlson for making this gem and congrats to you for being the first to try it.

2012 Carlson Pinot Noir 'Sebastiano Vineyard' Santa Rita Hills

120 cases

There is a reason why John Sebastiano's vineyard is on Santa Rita Hill's most wanted list. The '12 Carlson Pinot is public enemy #1. This is a very open and lush expression with a subtle earthy/savory character thanks to 15% stem inclusion. Miniscule production should warrant the proclamation, "get it while it's hot."



CEBADA VINEYARD

The Sandra Newman story is the embodiment of the American dream. Growing up on a chicken farm in New Jersey, Sandra knew what it was to plant a vegetable garden at age two. The adult version saw potential in an empty Lompoc parcel back in 2002. Today Forbidden Fruit Orchards sells everything from organic blueberries to green tea. Adding wine grapes to a plot of land at the west end of the Santa Rita Hills seemed a logical enough progression. Cool temps and sandy soils called out for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Mother nature heard. These young estate vines are yielding wines that are both exciting and graceful.

2012 Cebada Vineyard Estate Chardonnay Santa Rita Hills 120 cases

Who is old enough to remember “Bo knows football” commercials? Just nod your head even if you don’t and repeat after me, “Sandra knows fruit”. And, if her blueberries are half as good as her grapes I’m spoiled for life. There is a focus and energy to younger vines that make this Chardonnay dance on the palate. This is a delicate and crisp expression of the grape, byproduct of an early pick and minimal oak influence.

2012 Cebada Vineyard Estate Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills 216 cases

Another delicate and precise wine, the lushness of the 2012 vintage shows through here. Red cherry and black raspberry mix with cola spice notes. There are accessible wines and there are wines built for the cellar. When both happen in one bottle, it’s pure joy. A lovely offering.



CENT'ANNI

VINEYARDS

LOS OLIVOS, CALIFORNIA

CENT'ANNI

Santa Barbara Sangiovese just jumped up a notch. That's right. We said Santa Barbara Sangiovese. Winemaker Doug Margerum walked us through barrel after barrel of delicious, transparent Sangiovese planted on Jamie and Julie Kellner's sprawling Los Olivos estate. The focus here takes numerous clones planted on the property, expressing them as openly and honestly as the very best traditional Tuscan producers. Now that we've got your mouth watering, the bad news is we'll have to wait a year before we can offer Cent'Anni. The good news is, today, we are able to offer their equally delicious sister label, BUONI ANNI, which sources Sangiovese and various Italian white varieties from top growers throughout the valley.

2012 Buoni Anni Bianco Santa Ynez Valley

490 six packs

Big fan of the Buoni Anni Bianco. Fresh and focused, it's perfect for the porch in summer but will prove incredibly versatile with food on the table. Grilled octopus, anyone? Nearly equal parts Pinot Bianco, Pinot Grigio, and Friulano, this unique blend of classic, Italian white varieties proves just how special Santa Barbara's diverse growing region is. Lovely apricot notes, presumably from the Friulano grape, come to the forefront.

2010 Buoni Anni Sangiovese Santa Ynez Valley

1700 six packs

Santa Barbara 'Sangio' is for real. Albeit made very traditionally and harmoniously earthy, this is a far more open expression compared with the Cent'Anni, whose tightly wound structure will be sorted out in barrel for another year and change. Classic tart cherry, cranberry, and pomegranate rise from the glass—hallmarks of the Tuscan versions of the Sangiovese grape.



CHANIN

As roots are central to the vine, so, in turn, are a winemaker's beginnings. For a kid straight out of high school, an apprenticeship with Jim Clendenen and Bob Lindquist is the stuff dreams are made of. But that's precisely how it went for Gavin Chanin. A college art major in every quarter but the fall, textbooks and term papers would be cast aside during the harvest. 2007 was not a bad year for the 21 year old. He managed to graduate UCLA Phi Beta Kappa and start his own winery Chanin. With a deft hand for Pinot and Chard, and as personified by his self-rendered labels, Gavin has ultimately achieved what he initially set out to be – an artist.

2012 Chanin Chardonnay 'Bien Nacido' Santa Maria Valley 350 cases

What location is to a real estate agent, balance is to Gavin Chanin. All the components are in perfect harmony here. His wines are approachable and exciting but finesse and elegance are paramount to the house style. This section of Bien Nacido Vineyard contains old vine Chardonnay dating back to 1973. In it's 39th harvest we are hard-pressed to find a more stunning rendition than this.

2012 Chanin Pinot Noir 'Bien Nacido' Santa Maria Valley 450 cases

Ahh, the youth—so much energy, so much angst. Vines are a lot like people. They're tense, stubborn, and vivacious in their youth and when they age well they're deep, rich, and very giving. Gavin's red offering from Bien Nacido is a mix of young vine and old vine Pinot Noir. Accompanied by dark, spice-laden fruit and elegant florals, we have a perfect balancing act of generosity and complexity with vibrancy and tension.

2012 Chanin Pinot Noir Los Alamos Santa Barbara County
375 cases

Refill my glass please. From one of the oldest vineyards planted in Santa Barbara County, we have yet another bona fide gem. Adding Los Alamos to Gavin's Rolodex of fruit sources, it is incredibly exciting to taste the same vintage, same grape, and same producer across multiple appellations. Especially, when the producer is as skilled as this. This is a thrilling expression of old vine Pinot Noir from a region that doesn't need AVA behind its name to be recognized as quality.

2012 Chanin Pinot Noir 'La Rinconada' Santa Rita Hills
150 cases

Two words: Dee. Licious. Setting up shop a stone's throw from the notorious Sanford & Benedict Vineyard, 'La Rinconada' shoulders up to pretty good company. Planted in '97 it doesn't have the miles of S&B, but the pedigree is undeniable. Santa Rita is noticeably different in character compared to Santa Maria. The wines tend to be more structured and tightly wound in their youth. Oh but so good.

Clendenen Family Vineyards

CLENDENEN FAMILY VINEYARDS

There's nothing like popping '03 Refosco at lunch with Jim Clendenen, only to hear him exclaim, "Damn, it's too young!" But such is the current arc of a bound-to-be ageless wine that spent the last 9 years in neutral barrel. That type of exploration with Northern Italian varietals grown on the estate, and various grapes outside of the Au Bon Climat Pinot and Chard umbrella, are the hallmarks of CFV.

2012 Clendenen Family Sauvignon Blanc 'Stallion' Santa Ynez Valley

296 cases

Whether we are dealing with more obscure Italian varietals or good old Sauvignon Blanc, the defining stamp on all Jim's wines is balance and finesse. The key to this formula begins with sourcing grapes from cool, pedigreed sites. Heading down highway 101 and over to the western edge of Happy Canyon, Stallion Vineyard fits the mold. Tasted out of tank in March, the result is fresh, bright, and utterly delicious.

2011 Clendenen Family Viognier 'Le Bon Climat' Santa Maria Valley

77 cases

After tasting the 2011 "Second Coming" Viognier, the Les Marchands team was caught up in the rapture. Generous and concentrated, thanks to tiny yields in '11, this is the noble side of Viognier. Ripe peach and golden delicious apple are backed by a velvety

mouth feel. A touch of vanilla from new oak integrates beautifully into the wine at this stage. At 77 cases, the “Second Coming” can only hope to retain a small flock of disciples, but no one will doubt their zeal and devotion.

2005 Clendenen Family Refosco Santa Maria Valley

50 cases

It’s a pretty good bet Jim Clendenen is involved when ’05 Refosco is a future. This wine is an impossible value at \$17. Nearly eight years in neutral barrel has mellowed this beautiful Northern Italian grape into an elegant, complex offering that should be on everyone’s dinner table at night. Dark plum, cherry, and cranberry, linger with cedar and elegant florals. At 50 cases, Les Marchands is happy to corner the market on this hidden gem if you don’t beat us to it.

2006 Clendenen Family Nebbiolo Bricco Buon Natale Santa Maria Valley

100 cases

What 2005 Bien Nacido was for Pinot, 2006 Bien Nacido was for Nebbiolo. But seriously, who sings the praises of Bien Nacido Nebbiolo vintages in everyday conversation? One man does. And he owns the only 100 cases in existence. Nebbiolo is a truly magical grape that makes the Northern Italian regions of Barolo and Barbaresco famous. Naturally endowed with beautiful, hi-toned aromatics—candied cherry, roses, and truffles—“Neb” possesses staggering structure. These are some of the most age-worthy reds on the planet. Jim’s example is a brilliant homage to the Piedmontese and a testament to how capable our terroir is.



CURTIS WINERY

With Chuck Carlson in the vineyard and Ernst Storm in the cellar, the Firestone family must sleep well at night. Curtis Winery is not short of curb appeal. The front yard screams picnic. An unabridged tour of the property by Ernst revealed the interior to be equally inspiring. The heirlooms and old photos that grace the winery walls are like a walk through time and speak to a bold heritage. Since 1995, the Firestone's pioneering legacy continues with quality Rhone varieties from target-rich Santa Ynez Valley.

2012 Curtis Rosé Santa Barbara County

1490 cases

Rosé season is upon us, my friends. Truth be told, I'll drink rosé any time, anywhere, but there's nothing like those summer days in Cali. Thank you Ernst Storm and thank you Curtis winery for quenching our thirst with this Provencal tribute. The three amigos of the Rhone Valley (Grenache-Syrah-Mourvedre) dominate the blend. A touch of Santa Barbara Cinsault adds tension and lift.

2011 Curtis Grenache Santa Ynez Valley

578 cases

Another tiny production, handcrafted, terroir-driven, sophisticated offering from Ernst Storm. Ho hum. He's making it look easy folks. This is yet another example of walking that fine line between ripe, generous fruit and delicate, soft texture. It's a line drawn by precision, experience, and a little touch of Syrah. Hi-toned raspberry, cherry, and fine herbs jump from the glass.

2011 Curtis Syrah 'Kingsley Vineyard' Santa Ynez Valley

240 cases

Hello, 12.8% alcohol Syrah. We commend you on your finesse and restraint and hereby exhort you to continue to drink well today, while evolving in bottle over the next several years. When traditionally made, Syrah takes on the elegance of Pinot Noir. This is 100% destemmed, although the wine is naturally savory and spicy due to grape and site. Tech sheet talk aside, this is honestly just flat out delicious.



GOODLAND

Dave Potter of Municipal Winemakers has done it again—this time with a little help from his friends. Matt Dees, Chris Snowden, and Ruben Solorzano unite with Dave to create “an honest expression of Santa Barbara County—a region that, in the scheme of the greater wine world, is still a baby and is still being explored.” Who better to chart the course than a group of friends who’ve grown up around wine and this region their whole lives. In their own words, Goodland is “not trying to reinvent the wheel, just trying to make honest wines from our backyard”. Happy hunting, gentlemen...

2011 Goodland Happy Canyon Red

48 cases

Are you “old school”? I’m “old school”. You know who else is “old school”? Goodland. The 2011 Happy Canyon Red is a throwback to the days when California Cabernet was earthy. This was a time before ripeness was jammyness. Back then, jammyness wasn’t even a word. Today, it still isn’t a word, yet it drips from the tongues of wine circles far and wide. Let Goodland help you remember that Cabernet has a minty, delicately herbal character that’s an honest and sincere extension of the grape within the context of ripe and complete fruit.

2011 Goodland Ballard Canyon Red

50 cases

If diurnal shifts in temperature were mood swings, Ballard Canyon could be undiagnosed bipolar. “Highs during the growing season around here are in the 90’s with lows in the 50’s.” What’s the take-away? 90’s = ripe fruit. 50’s = bright acidity. Ripe fruit + bright acidity = tasty. Don’t argue. It’s math. The grape in question is Syrah and the 2011 Ballard Canyon Red is dense and voluptuous while retaining the signature spicy/gamey elements of varietal character.



GRASSINI

I’ve met warm and inviting people. And I’ve met people whose wines rock. When I meet both, I put myself up for adoption. If one phrase encapsulates the Grassini family, it’s “planting roots”. Cabernet and Sauvignon Blanc vines hedge the road up to the winery doors. But it’s the concept of family and building a home for generations to share in that resonates with me most. I’ve seen how they treat each other and others firsthand at dinners and birthdays. Those that venture out to their Happy Canyon property can see it too. Happy Canyon is truly a special place—dirt roads, rolling hills, the obligatory hawk circling off in the distance. It is untamed beauty as far as the eye can see. Those that crave a more gentrified locale, however, can visit the Grassini’s at their tasting room in Santa Barbara next to the Wine Cask. Either way, prepare to be greeted with a smile and a great glass of wine.

2012 Grassini Sauvignon Blanc Happy Canyon

534 cases

This Sauvignon Blanc makes me want to be a Grassini. They own the vineyard. They own the wine. And Grassini is way less of a mouthful than McClintic. I'm just putting it out there, Katie and Mandy, because what you've got here is pure joy in a glass. Happy Canyon is another wild land of climatic extremes—it is not uncommon to see 50 degree swings in a 24-hour period between day and nighttime temperatures. What you end up with is a wine that is fully ripe and intense with mouthwatering acidity to balance it out. Grapefruit, apricot, and elderflower linger in my notes and my memory.

2011 Grassini Cabernet Sauvignon Happy Canyon

245 cases produced

Having walked this beautiful vineyard several times, and tasted this wine out of barrel, I'm convinced that Santa Barbara County Cabernet is for real. With this miniscule production let's keep it to ourselves shall we? This is a full-bodied, lush example with that classic Cabernet profile—black cherry, currant and cassis notes followed by sweet essences of caramel and mocha on the finish.

2011 Grassini Articondo Happy Canyon

460 cases

I give you the third release of Grassini's Bordeaux Blend. Articondo is named after Larry Grassini's grandfather—the first member of the Grassini family to leave Pisa, Italy and start a new life in America. Articondo Grassini loved to garden and cook. To honor him, this wine was crafted to compliment just about any meal. May I request the lamb osso bucco? Home run, Santa Barbara. Home run.



HABIT

If 'the world is a stage', then Jeff Fischer is well travelled. Successful actor by day, budding proprietor by night...or is it the other way around? The days and nights must blur into each other when you charge up from Hollywood to Los Olivos at 3am to bottle, only to turn right back around in time to make an L.A. audition. But an unparalleled work ethic proves that what would be dubious to many is quite possible in the eyes of Jeff Fischer. And when you meet Jeff, that's exactly what you see in his eyes – possibility. He is always positive and a joy to be around—qualities that have propelled his stunning Habit wines into restaurants across the country and made believers of us all.

2012 Habit Chenin Blanc 'Jurassic Park' Santa Ynez Valley 302 cases

He's not acting here, folks. This is the real McCoy. And despite the homage to big budget Spielberg flicks, 'Jurassic Park', a.k.a. Curtis Vineyard, contains some of the best Chenin Blanc holdings in the county. From years in the restaurant industry, Jeff understands that honest, elegant wines of low alcohol and bright acidity pair admirably with food. They also happen to be delicious on their own. Tasted out of tank in March, the '12 Habit Chenin Blanc was clean and delineated, with lemon and quince notes and beautiful stony minerality. Encore, Mr Fischer.

2012 Habit Sauvignon Blanc 'McGinley Vineyard' Happy Canyon 350 cases

Can I speak to your agent, Jeff? Because I think there are more winemaking gigs in your future if you want them. This is another

shining example of pristine, detailed Sauvignon Blanc from hal-
lowed McGinley Vineyard and the capable hands of Habit Winery.
Reductive winemaking techniques render a wine that is fresh and
vibrant. I could drink this all day.

2012 Habit Pinot Noir 'La Encantada Vineyard' Santa Rita Hills 175 cases

Have your people talk to my people. Okay, I pretty much beat the
old Hollywood clichés into the ground. But in all seriousness, the
winner goes to... 2012 Habit 'La Encantada'. Too easy. What's
not too easy, is crafting a wine this subtle and pretty. The oak has
integrated beautifully already. This was tasted out of barrel in
March. Hi-toned cranberry and cherry soar from the glass. You're
on fire, Jeff. Stick with me kid and you'll be a star. Now I'm done.



HAPPY CANYON VINEYARDS

Barrack. Piocho. Chukker. What do these names have in com-
mon? Everything. Think of it like the Mount Rushmore of Happy
Canyon—all faces cut from the same stone, but each bringing
something different to the table. And where Doug Margerum and
the Barrack family collide, ambition is not far away...

BARRACK – The Barrack label is quite simply the Barrack fam-
ily bottling the most prized lots in their vineyard. Mighty nice of
them to do so.

2012 Barrack Blanc Happy Canyon 500 six packs

This is a super-charged homage to white Bordeaux with the Sau-
vignon Blanc and Semillon grapes joining forces to create a rich,

unctuous blend. Taut and lean out of barrel today, the '12 Bar-rack Blanc will gain volume and intensity in the bottle and will no doubt outweigh the noble '11 vintage we shared at lunch.

PIOCHO – My Chumash is a little rusty but I'm pretty sure Piocho means “where the two rivers meet and go to heaven.” It's also a little place where Cabernet, Merlot, and Cab Franc meet, which is heaven to the lips of many.

2012 Piocho Sauvignon Blanc Happy Canyon

1000 cases

And here we go. Already setting the world ablaze with their reds, this is the inaugural release of Piocho Sauvignon Blanc. We felt fortunate to share in those lovely and all-too-familiar aromas we come to expect from Happy Canyon AVA—passion fruit, apricot, and grapefruit. This is a tasty offering out of barrel. Can't wait until it gets to bottle!



Wine Cellars

JAFFURS

Growing up on the east coast with jug wine on the table, Craig Jaffurs' decision to move out west long ago was hardly motivated by grape and vine. The attraction with California was surf bigger and better than the shores of Maryland. Today, those surfboards still adorn Jaffurs winery in the heart of Santa Barbara's Urban Wine Trail, but they are merely window dressing to a grander enterprise. During a mock Paris tasting at the Wine Cask in '88, local winemakers put their newly planted Syrahs up against the best of France's Cote Rotie and Hermitage. Jaffurs recalled the moment with vivid clarity. “After that tasting, we believed we could do this.” Nearly 25 years later, Craig has a dedicated following and

a stable of Rhone varieties led by his vineyard designate Syrahs, which speak to their Santa Barbara County origins. That he still finds time to get in the water argues only further to his commitment for a sense of place.

2011 Jaffurs Syrah ‘Thompson Vineyard’ Santa Barbara County 231 cases

Thompson Vineyard in Los Alamos proves that a very cool climate can produce ripe, concentrated Syrah. With plenty of maritime influence, this Jaffurs offering is impeccably balanced, maintaining excellent acidity for how intense the fruit character is. A mix of blueberry and red fruits are present up front, while classic Syrah markers of savory black pepper and olive reside underneath.

2011 Jaffurs Syrah ‘Verna’s Vineyard’ Santa Barbara County 367 cases

Another lovely Los Alamos location, the Jaffurs ‘Verna’s Vineyard’ Syrah couldn’t be more different than the ‘Thompson’. This is an earthier take on the grape, thanks to 30% stem inclusion. Stems contribute savory, forest floor notes as well as add tannin structure. Lying in wait today, this lovely wine will evolve for years to come.



KUNIN

The Godfather Part I or The Godfather Part II? Tough call. What I will say is you can’t have a sequel without the success of the original. And the first of two thriving wine labels and tasting rooms, Kunin Wines, is a shrine to winemaking “as nature intended”. Seth can take it from here: “If the weather was a bit warmer one year, and the wine from that vintage shows more ripe fruit and less acid, then this is an accurate representation of the fruit and its terroir. If

the next vintage is cooler, with more earthy flavors and tart acidity, then so be it. That is what Mother Nature intended for you to taste.” Rain or shine, we feel Mother Nature intends the Les Marchands team to join the masses at the tasting room as often as possible.

2012 Kunin Viognier ‘Stolpman Vineyard’ Santa Ynez Valley
79 cases

Seth, I am so glad your tasting room is so close to Les Marchands. Consider the goods pillaged, my friend. This is a lovely, voluptuous Viognier that is buffered by freshness and a beautiful, mineral finish. With its powerful tropical/floral fragrance and its ability to absorb oak and gain texture, Viognier can so often get flabby and heavy-handed. But as we know from Seth’s mantra, he is anything but heavy-handed. With enough trust in a beautiful Ballard Canyon vineyard site, Seth has allowed the exciting and vibrant aspects of the grape to shine through.

2009 Kunin Syrah ‘Larner Vineyard’ Santa Ynez Valley
87 cases

At 87 cases, Seth ruins the bell curve of what would be deemed “small production”. What he doesn’t ruin is great grapes. Larner Vineyard is a cooler site in the southern end of Ballard Canyon that produces epic Syrah grapes. After a long élevage in barrel, the 2009 Kunin Syrah is ready to take up residence in bottle. Dark berry and plum notes mingle with cracked pepper and fresh herbs. This is pure and refined.



LA FENÊTRE

La Fenêtre is French for ‘the window’. The defining characteristic of a window is relatively straightforward. With the wines of today, however, transparency is a rare commodity. But with sommelier-turned-winemaker Joshua Klapper, what you see is what you get. “As with great art, great wine begins with respect for tradition.” These are Josh’s words and he’s lived by them since his first vintage in 2005. In this year’s tasting, we were adamant to feature their À Côté (next door) line of La Fenêtre wines designed for everyday consumption. At this price point, the quality demonstrated here across multiple varietals takes the genre to another level.

2012 La Fenêtre À Côté Rosé Santa Barbara County 180 cases

So few cases, so much value. And in a season of firsts, La Fenêtre gives you their first ever 100% rosé of Pinot Noir. The original house style blended white and red grapes to achieve this desired effect. In 2012, Josh employs the “saignee” process, which as its name means, “bleeds” off juice from its skins. He leaves the skins in contact just long enough to forge that delicious pink elixir we all know and love. If aromas of fresh watermelon and strawberry don’t cry out summer rosé, I don’t know what does.

2012 La Fenêtre À Côté Pinot Gris Santa Barbara County 300 cases

Our futures tasting would not be complete without a tasty Pinot Gris. Who better to deliver than La Fenêtre? Citrus and floral tones weave together nicely here. Josh’s wines are pure, fresh, and clean. This beautiful white is no exception.

2012 La Fenêtre À Côté Chardonnay Santa Barbara County
700 cases

No, Chardonnay does not need to be buttery and oaky. Yes, it can be fresh and mineral-driven. No, the La Fenêtre À Côté Chardonnay will not be on the shelf long. Yes, you can have some. This is a refreshing take on the grape that makes me think of cool Chablis on a hot summer day with oysters on the half shell. Rough life.

2012 La Fenêtre À Côté Pinot Noir Central Coast
1500 cases

A delicious Pinot for under \$20? That just happened. The 2012 À Côté Pinot Noir is the Central Coast equivalent to Bourgogne rouge. Crafted with restrained alcohol levels and minimal oak influence, the À Côté Pinot is delicate and transparent. Simply put, this is just a pretty expression of a grape that's at its best when it's pretty. Well done, Josh.



LIEU DIT

There we go with the fancy French words again. What I've come to learn from friend and business partner Eric Railsback is that whatever road he travels down, Francophilia is bound to follow. We've all seen that word 'lieu': in lieu of, in place of. The 'dit' (pronounced DEE) means 'said'. Hence, Lieu Dit = said place or named place. All over France, lieu dits are specific pedigreed sites that are recognized for their distinctiveness of terroir. And while

the Lieu Dit project owes its varietals and inspiration to the Loire Valley, that distinction of place is found in the terroir of Santa Barbara County. This is the first of two projects with winemaker extraordinaire, Justin Willett, and it's bound not to be the last.

2012 Lieu Dit Chenin Blanc Santa Ynez Valley

330 cases

This is a laser beam of joy on the palate. Taut and mineral-driven, the '12 Lieu Dit Chenin Blanc is lean and mean at 12.8% alcohol, with lingering salty, savory notes thanks to the old vines of 'Jurassic Park Vineyard'. Planted in '81, 'Jurassic Park' is one of the sweet spots for Chenin in the valley. A notoriously age-worthy grape, Justin and Eric's offering is poised to stand the test of time.

2012 Lieu Dit Sauvignon Blanc "Vendange Seleccioné" Santa Ynez Valley

216 cases

Did Lieu Dit Sauvignon Blanc just up the ante? The first release of their "Vendange Seleccioné" is the culmination of the best Lieu Dit lots of Sauvignon Blanc. Three vineyards comprise the blend, but 'McGinley Vineyard' in Happy Canyon takes center stage. Like the best Sancerre's of the Loire Valley, this Sauvignon shows none of the green character that can define the grape. It is floral, high-toned and deliciously mineral.

2012 Lieu Dit Cabernet Franc Santa Ynez Valley

912 cases

The earthy side of Cab Franc is rarely seen outside of Chinon in France's Loire Valley. This is one of the exceptions. So often hidden in more extracted examples, it is a joy to smell and taste an expression of Cab Franc from Santa Ynez Valley with all the telltale markers of the grape—blackberry, violets, mint and savory earth. The palate is soft and generous thanks to some partial carbonic maceration, a common vinification method seen in the Loire that brightens aromatics and helps drive fruit character. Nicely done gentlemen.

MARGERUM

MARGERUM

And the question has to be asked. Would the Santa Barbara County Wine Futures Tasting exist without Doug Margerum and the Wine Cask? The answer is a resounding ‘no’. This was Doug’s creation and we pay homage to him and the Wine Cask for not only paving the way but for their continued presence in this community. Since founding Margerum Wine Company in 2001, Doug’s philosophy centers on “a return to winemaking in its previous form of production – hand crafted and personal.” And while he’s found his way into some of the finest winegrowing regions of the world, his hometown offerings continue to impress.

2012 Margerum Grenache Blanc Santa Ynez Valley

250 cases

It is so easy for New World expressions of Grenache Blanc to get big and clunky, but Doug is able to trim the fat and offer a refreshing take on the grape. Despite a warmer vintage in ’12, the nights in Happy Canyon were very cool to help retain marvelous acidity. The vintage shows through in the wine. It has plenty of weight and texture, while remaining bright and crisp thanks to an early pick. This is a gorgeous offering.

2012 Margerum M5 Santa Barbara County

2000 cases

Cue the crowd pleaser... I’d say the ’12 M5 is back by popular demand, but it’s back every year and it’s always by popular demand—and for good reason. This lovable red is driven by Grenache, and backed in full Chateauneuf Du Pape fashion, by (you guessed it) 5 traditional varieties—in large part the other two demigods of the Rhone trinity, Syrah and Mourvedre. The fruit sources Doug

employs are revealed in many of his stellar single vineyard bottlings that capture the best the valley has to offer. We tasted out of barrel in March. The M5 is a delicious amalgamation of black plum, raspberry and subtle spice notes. It is as complex as it is easy to understand and enjoy.



MELVILLE

“Wine production...maintains more kinship with the culinary world as both reach for the highest levels of their respective expression.” As people who dabble on both sides of this professional fence, we second the words of winemaker Greg Brewer. He also believes, as we do, that the most important component to a dish or a glass of wine is the strength of the “raw materials”. Melville Winery has been committed to gleaning as much as possible from the grape since Ron Melville first laid down Pinot and Chardonnay in the Santa Rita Hills back in '96.

2012 Melville Estate Chardonnay Santa Rita Hills

1221 cases

A Santa Barbara County Wine Futures Tasting is not complete without Melville. Since the mid 90's, they've set the world on fire and haven't slowed down with the 2012 Estate Chardonnay. Lush and giving with well-integrated oak influence, Greg stops at nothing to showcase the fine fruit of the Santa Rita Hills. This is a complex Chardonnay with a range of flavors from tropical melon to lemon cream to agave nectar. Normally, Tequila is my agave nectar of choice but this will suffice, admirably.

2011 Melville Estate Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills

4602 cases

Like the Chardonnay, the '11 Melville Pinot Noir is 100% from their Santa Rita Hills estate. There is nothing like a rich, concentrated Pinot Noir, crafted with elegance and harmony. Instant gratification meets thought provoking. We're smitten. '11 was a cooler vintage, with beautiful freshness, compared to '12. This displays signature raspberry, cherry, and black tea notes with classic Pinot earthy mushroom flavors. Greg would tell you chanterelles. I might say black trumpets. You might say stop talking and refill my glass. And then we'd all drink.

2012 Melville Estate Syrah Santa Rita Hills

2487 cases

Stems, glorious stems. The '12 Melville 'Verna's' Syrah comes from Ron Melville's ranch in Los Alamos. The name 'Verna' commemorates his mother and what a splendid commemoration indeed. I keep harping on this stem thing and to my delight so does Melville. Stem inclusion A.K.A whole cluster fermentation A.K.A. a process that adds structure and delicious spicy/savory/earthy complexities when done right, is tailor made for the Syrah grape. The percentage of whole cluster changes from vintage to vintage and site to site, but Greg is so adept at managing the process that his Syrahs combine the power and flesh of gorgeous Santa Rita Hills fruit with the earthier side of the grape. I'm hooked.



MUNICIPAL WINEMAKERS

The idea of going to a great coffee shop, giving a barista money, and saying “Thank you for making this delicious cup of coffee for me” is a scenario that appeals to, among many, Dave Potter. It’s no surprise that the wine version of this model would be equally

progressive. The proof is found strolling into the Municipal Winemakers tasting room in the Funk Zone as I did on a random Tuesday afternoon. The house was packed and there was Dave behind the counter, answering questions and talking passionately to patrons about the wines he himself fashioned. There is so often a huge disconnect between winemaker and consumer. Dave has bridged this gap admirably with Municipal Winemakers, proving in an era of Twitter and Instagram there is no substitute for human interaction.

2012 Municipal Riesling ‘Kick-on Ranch’ Santa Barbara County

75 cases

If you’ve ever had a neurotic friend, they can either be a disaster to be around or that nervous energy can be channeled into something exciting, fun, and spontaneous. The Riesling grape is equally neurotic, and when crafted well, it shines. As I drank Dave’s offering on my porch in May, I was reminded that I should be going to Municipal Winemakers more often. Crisp, fresh, intense, mineral, and a mere 12% alcohol, this is a fun and exciting dry version. A tip of the cap to Mr Potter.

2012 Municipal Grenache ‘Fox Family Vineyard’ Santa Ynez Valley

50 cases

Great wine should not amount to 50 cases. C’mon, Dave, this is torture—tell us you have more. From a fantastic organically farmed vineyard in Los Olivos, we have on our hands a serious example of the Grenache grape with fresh berry fruit, exotic spice, and a firm tannin structure. Good things do come in small packages, despite our innate compulsion to want more of a good thing.



MY ESSENTIAL RED

I first met Richard Betts years ago, as a waiter aspiring to be a wine professional. Already a Master Sommelier and to no benefit of his own, he gave his time freely with the same zeal that fuels all his endeavors. Following his Mezcal project Sombra, and now My Essential Red, it becomes apparent that what Richard devotes himself to he lives out. Chasing the “wine is a grocery, not a luxury” mantra, Richard has crafted a new Cabernet blend from California. Predominantly Sauvignon with a good dose of Franc, the idea is about grace, not girth. The fruit comes mainly from vineyards between Santa Ynez and Happy Canyon. Two years time in old French oak barrels promise a wine that is hi-toned and aromatic, while remaining very drinkable. Richard is dreaming of what a collision between Clos Rougeard and Trevallon would look like if it happened in Cali. And that is his essential red.

2011 My Essential Red Cabernet California

3500 cases

It's high time someone took the everyday, table wine category to another level. My Essential Red is elegant and balanced—a sensational value for wines in the respective price point. Syrah is such an underused partner to Cabernet family varietals. When executed well, as in the case here, it softens tannin and contributes its own inherent floral and spice complexities.



NATIVE 9

When you talk California history with James Ontiveros, the term ‘old school’ ascends (or perhaps descends) to another level. Nine generations to be exact. Native9 commemorates the Ontiveros family, whose roots trace back to 1781 when Josef Ontiveros inherited a 39,000-acre land grant. When it slipped through the family fingers in the mid nineteenth century, James’ parents worked for hourly wages to buy back a modest portion in Santa Maria Valley—8 acres of which were planted to Pinot Noir by James himself. Few stories are this powerful, and we are as excited to showcase these wines as we are to host the man we’ve come to know and admire.

2012 Native9 Pinot Noir ‘Rancho Ontiveros Vineyard’ Santa Maria Valley

450 cases

The 2012 Native9 Pinot Noir is where power and grace meet. A generous portion of whole cluster fermentation accentuates the savory/spicy character that is vintage Santa Maria Valley. The fruit is dark and lush, indicative of the fairly opulent vintage that ’12 is. A very persistent mid palate displayed here with a long finish. This is showing really well.



THE OJAI VINEYARD

It is unnerving to hear a man with a thick Parisian accent speak better English than me. That was my first impression of assistant winemaker Fabien Castel as he guided us through a memorable tasting. I was quickly set at ease by his thoughtful, deliberate pace and the idyllic surroundings of the Ojai Vineyard. At sunset you're likely to hear the serene buzzing of insects while sitting on an old rustic picnic table as we did. Pouring over 30 individual bottlings, Fabien gave as much attention to the first wine as he did the last. He spoke with passion and insight and with great respect for his mentor Adam Tolmach. Adam's storied career traces back to the earliest days of the County and 2013 marks the 30th anniversary of his founding The Ojai Vineyard.

2012 Ojai Vineyard Rosé California

480 cases

If you've never had a rosé of Syrah, this is about as good a place to start as any. Adam adds a little bit of Grenache to lend texture and 6% white grapes—Chardonnay, Viognier, and Riesling—that succeeds in lifting the aromatics. The nose is delicate and pretty with an elegant mouth feel.

2010 Ojai Vineyard Chardonnay 'Solomon Hills' Santa Maria Valley

140 cases

There is a noticeable weight to a wine that has been barrel fermented. A popular O.V. technique, the barrel enhances aromatic complexity and imparts a plush texture that makes us happy. The

trick is to counterbalance that richness with freshness. Picking at the right time in '10, Adam was able to craft a balanced, complete wine.

2011 Ojai Vineyard Pinot Noir 'Fe Ciega' Santa Rita Hills

250 cases

Spanish for 'blind faith', Fe Ciega is the last thing you need to run on to believe in this little gem. This is super serious Pinot, meant for the long haul. '11 was a cooler vintage than '12, which gives this wine a backbone and tension that only fresh acidity can lend. Dark-fruited, and floral, this is classic Santa Rita.

2011 Ojai Vineyard Syrah California

494 cases

Wow, this is your entry level Syrah? Really, Adam? A wine of this precision and complexity is rarely seen at \$26. There is a judicious amount of Santa Barbara County fruit here from extremely cool maritime vineyards. The harmony between fruit and the natural spice and earth tones of Syrah is signature O.V.

2011 Ojai Vineyard Syrah 'Sebastiano' Santa Rita Hills

42 cases

Get it while it's hot people. Production is miniscule. Quality is high. Textbook varietal character is found here with earthy elements of olive and smoked meat leaping from the glass. You want to drink this now? Good. I do too. You want to lay it down? Good. I do too. This is one of the most dynamic Syrahs in The County.



PIEDRASASSI

There are many Santa Barbara County producers who state they're not trying to make Northern Rhone Syrah. Winemaker Sashi Moorman has this to say about that, "Why the heck not?" Why not emulate a culture that's been doing it for centuries? Building a philosophy around wines that move a winemaker is always a noble pursuit. And with each subsequent vintage since 2003, the Piedrasassi template inches closer and closer to our Gallic friends across the pond.

2010 Piedrasassi Syrah Central Coast

220 cases

What an open and gorgeous expression of restrained, elegant Syrah. The '10 Piedrasassi Syrah has plenty of character, with cracked black pepper and olive notes lingering beneath a deep core of blackberry and dark plum. What strikes me is how much concentration and depth this wine has for being so light on its feet. 50% stem inclusion adds a lovely savory quality. Nicely done, Sashi.

2012 Piedrasassi P.S. Syrah Santa Barbara County 1000 cases

One of three syrah offerings from Piedrasassi, the P.S. Syrah is hardly an afterthought. In fact it's the first offering of the vintage. The Central Coast sees 3 more months in barrel and their single vineyard 'Rimrock' awaits a longer élevage. Soon to release, the P.S. receives some whole cluster fermentation to appeal to Syrah's earthy side but there is plenty of delicious Santa Barbara fruit shining through from vineyards in Santa Maria Valley and Ballard Canyon. Enjoy this now.

PIOCHO

SEE HAPPY CANYON VINEYARDS



QUPE

I keep talking about this 1991 Qupe Syrah I had. It surprised me and it shouldn't have. In a society that scratches and claws to stay current, how soon we forget that great, long-lived wines can come from California— not to mention a 22 year-old Syrah from our backyard. Santa Barbara County's first Syrah vineyard was planted only 13 years prior, thanks to Zaca Mesa Winery. Bob Lindquist knows this; he joined their winemaking team a year later before establishing Qupe in '82. Bob also knows that great Syrah is interesting, wonderful in its youth, and if built properly, able to go a long way. We'd all do well to take a page out of that book. And we are.

2011 Qupe Syrah Bien Nacido Hillside Estate

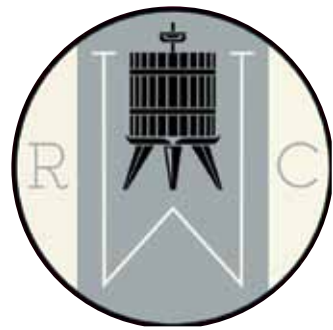
450 cases

I did some digging and it appears the name Lindquist is of Swedish etymology and means "linden tree" and "twig". I was certain Lindquist meant Syrah. To me it might as well. This is Bob's bread and butter, and a tasting of Santa Barbara County Syrah would not be complete without him. The Hillside Estate was custom planted for Bob in '92. The fruit is 100% destemmed and barrel fermented. The lack of stems emphasizes the purity of fruit character and fermentation in barrel adds weight and texture to the mouthfeel. We were sold on our barrel tasting in the spring. This is a true value for its pedigree.

2011 Qupe Syrah Bien Nacido Vineyard 'X-Block'

150 cases

In the flagship tier, this is the alpha dog of the pack. X-Block is the oldest block at Bien Nacido Vineyard, planted to Riesling in the early '70's and grafted to Syrah in '86. Low yielding, old vines produce berries of intense flavor. A judicious amount of stem inclusion is perfect for an earlier ripening vineyard. Where the Hillside is sexy, X-block is all man. Smoked meat, zesty black pepper, tar, leather, and a firm tannin structure underscore all the wild and burly aspects of the Syrah grape. This wine will age well for decades and we're honored to pour it for you.



ROARK

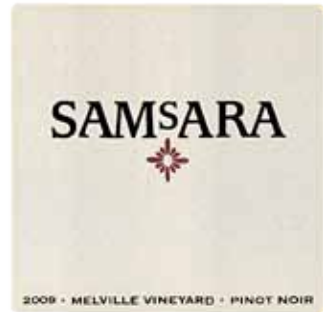
Ryan Roark's Buellton winery is a long way from his native Northeast Texas. But it's not the first time wine has lured him off the beaten path. A few months helping out a small, family chateau in the Loire Valley was all it took to get the wheels turning. There in Savennieres, Ryan was introduced to singular expressions of dry Chenin Blanc. He carries out that mission here in Santa Barbara County with a growing cavalry of varietals that are as unique as they are enjoyable and thoughtful. A strong proponent of the natural wine movement, his facility is comparably rustic. Alluding to Southern roots is a maverick skull nailed to a post and the obligatory pair of loyal winery dogs. Scribbled on the walls in chalk are famous literary passages and the Chinese Proverb "The man who says it can't be done should stay out of the way of the man doing it". His hometown has a similar proverb: "Don't mess with Texas".

2012 Roark Chenin Blanc ‘Curtis Vineyard’ Santa Ynez Valley
225 cases

How many single vineyard Chenin Blancs have you had? How many single vineyard Chenin Blancs from Santa Barbara County have you had? How many single vineyard Chenin Blancs from Santa Barbara County have you had for \$16? The defense rests. Ryan Roark has judge and jury sold at that price point. The raw beauty of Chenin is on full display here, proving his time in the Loire Valley was well spent. This is light bodied, fresh, and restrained. One might be tempted to call this a great summer wine. We’ll happily drink it in all seasons.

2012 Roark Cabernet Franc Santa Ynez Valley
60 cases

Cab Franc has another voice in Ryan Roark. This little gem is all natural and drinking great out of barrel. Medium bodied, elegant, and accessible, the ’12 Franc is sourced exclusively from Three Creek Vineyard in Happy Canyon. We tasted two individual lots, 1 with stems, 1 without. We’re excited for 8/10 when the two become one.



SAMSARA

Samsara is a Sanskrit word meaning the eternal cycle of life and is key to the philosophy of Chad and Mary Melville’s Samsara wines. “Farming teaches us that there are elements occurring in nature that are far beyond our control.” Chad and Mary strive to reconcile the power and unpredictability of nature with the desire for human perfection. I think about this every time I play Jenga. They think about it on a grander scale—that is, all of the important work done in the vineyard should warrant little handling or manipulation once

the fruit reaches the winery. With limited releases of Pinot Noir and Syrah from micro-sites within carefully selected vineyards, we are happy to know that the eternal cycle of life culminates in a delicious bottle of Samsara.

2012 Samsara Estate Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills

400 cases

Gather 'round, Pinot lovers. Samsara is back with a vengeance in 2012. I don't often use "restrained" and "intense" in the same sentence, but when I do it usually involves incarceration. In this case, it involves liquid joy. The majority of the fruit comes from Rita's Crown, a high elevation, sea-kissed vineyard that retains marvelous acidity even in riper vintages like '12. With ripeness and acid, the stem inclusion Chad loves to employ integrates beautifully into the wine, giving the palate vibrancy and the aromatics a lovely high-toned savory character. The fruit is dark and structured, hallmarks of the appellation. For an entry-level offering this is super serious. Well done, Chad.



SANDHI

As a young waiter who had very little direction in this profession, I decided to email Michael Mina Group wine director Rajat Parr out of the blue. This was some time ago and he didn't know me from a hole in the wall. But, I was invited up to the Westin Hotel in San Francisco, poured a flight of wine, and with his staff, including sommelier Tony Cha, was embraced like one of his own. The word 'Sandhi' literally means union. In the context of a serious Santa Rita Hills Chard and Pinot project, it means the tri-

fold “union essential to the production of wine: the collaboration between man, earth, and vine.” In the context of my entrance into this industry, however, Sandhi means much, much more.

2011 Sandhi Chardonnay ‘Sanford & Benedict’ Santa Rita Hills 140 cases

Raj and Sashi are proving that Santa Rita Hills has another level. And it’s tangible. You can smell and taste it in a glass of Sandhi. The ’11 ‘Sanford & Benedict’ Chardonnay is a tiny 140 cases of pure class. Elegant, detailed, mineral driven, pure, complex, what else can you want from 42 year-old vines and skillful hands? This was finishing up in barrel when we visited winemaker Sashi Moorman in March. Can’t wait to hoard as many bottles as we can when this gets released...

2011 Sandhi Pinot Noir ‘Sanford & Benedict’ Santa Rita Hills 240 cases

People with layers to their personality are intriguing. They don’t tip their hand early. They grow on us as the layers peel away. We like being around them. They make us feel. They make us think. Shouldn’t great wine be similar? From the same legendary vineyard as their Chardonnay offering, the ’11 Sandhi ‘S & B’ Pinot Noir is a revelation. It’s always a revelation when a wine this restrained has so much to offer underneath. In a rare moment of discipline, I opened a bottle with a friend and watched it all unfold over eight hours. Layer after layer, high-toned and delicate, lingered on a polished and seamless palate. This is the complete package.



SILLIX

At Beckmen Vineyards he fell in love with Rhone varieties. At Tyler Winery he fell in love with elegant Pinot. What was left for Blake Sillix in 2011 was a lot of love and two barrels each of exciting Grenache and Syrah. Away from the winery, Blake is one of the most fun guys on earth to be around, but inside the four walls he is all business. As we can only imagine what future vintages may come, I am proud to see today one of the rising stars of our industry.

2011 Sillix Grenache Santa Ynez Valley

50 cases

Sillix comes out of the gate swinging. Blake's wines are ripe and concentrated while still being elegant and pure. He uses neutral barrels only for both his Grenache and his Syrah. The Grenache is exclusively sourced from Camp 4 Vineyard in Happy Canyon. It is red fruit dominated with notes of zesty pepper and Provencal herbs.

2011 Sillix Syrah Santa Ynez Valley

62 cases

Yes, I'll have another. The '11 vintage did not nearly have the warmth of '12, which proves that Syrah thrives in cooler sites and cooler vintages. This is a beautiful offering, fully ripe and complete. Partial stem inclusion can account for a nice balance of earthy characteristics rearing their head—olive, cracked pepper, spiced meat, and dark fruit integrate well here. The two vineyard sources are Watch Hill in Los Alamos and Zotovich in Santa Rita Hills.

The logo for Stolpman Vineyards features the name "STOLPMAN" in a large, gold, serif font, with "VINEYARDS" in a smaller, gold, sans-serif font below it. The text is set against a dark background with a subtle, glowing blue circular graphic behind the letters.

STOLPMAN

Meeting Sashi Moorman for the first time is like meeting a friend you've known for years. He's open, accessible and full of exuberance and insight. His Stolpman wines echo sentiment. Generous and complex, Sashi give us an intimate glimpse into Ballard Canyon terroir and makes the compelling argument, "Why shouldn't great, age-worthy wine also be drinkable in its youth?" Not that a decidedly rhetorical question commands an answer. But, as with any estate-grown project, meticulous work in the vineyard is inherent to quality. And that's been Tom and Marilyn Stolpman's labor of love since 1990.

2011 Stolpman Estate Roussanne "l'Avion" Santa Ynez Valley

900 cases

Oh my. "L'Avion" is prepared for take off. The '11 Stolpman Roussanne is lush and opulent. A grape made famous in France's Northern Rhone Valley, its character is best typified by weight, density, and generosity. Think of a noble Viognier with less tropicality and more mandarin and stone fruit. Buffered by lovely acidity and a velvet texture, Sashi has built this gem to last. Big is beautiful.

2011 Stolpman Estate Syrah Santa Ynez Valley

5000 cases

The second of Stolpman's estate offerings is another crowd pleaser. Sashi has done it again. The '11 Syrah is a mix of young and old vines, allying freshness and tension with depth and concentration. This is a very polished take on a bigger style. The Stolpman Vineyard is dry-farmed and 100% organic. The quality of the fruit is tremendous and it shows through in the wine with ripe blueberry and black plum notes, olive and black pepper.



STORM

Cape native Ernst Storm is NOT trying to bring South Africa to Santa Barbara County. What he IS trying to do is bring Santa Barbara County to Santa Barbara County. And we applaud this—if not for terroir-minded implications, then for the efficient commute. I'm sure he finds the drive as lovely as the backyard he works. I know we did on our trek through Los Olivos and Curtis Winery. Laid back in sandals and jeans, Ernst shared a few laughs with us between glasses. But the passion meter rose as the subject turned to wine. Ernst believes “every vineyard, every cluster, every berry has a certain potential to develop into something actual...it is my job as winemaker to best represent this potential.” To us, the potential he represents bears witness to a young and growing crop of talent, steadily making waves throughout the valley.

2012 Storm Sauvignon Blanc Santa Ynez Valley

550 cases

As Santa Barbara County Sauvignon Blanc goes, you're hard pressed to find something this good for under \$20. Ernst is a master at coaxing the most he can out of the fruit in the vineyard while simultaneously safeguarding its purity and elegance. Small lots from four impressive vineyards were sampled out of barrel in March. These comprise the '12 Santa Ynez Valley Sauvignon—Curtis Vineyard accounting for the lion's share. Like most of the Storm wines we tried, this example is fresh, taut, and exciting, while speaking distinctly to a sense of place.

2012 Storm Pinot Noir 'Presqu'ile Vineyard' Santa Maria Valley 85 cases

It's always bittersweet when painfully delicious Pinot Noir comes down to 85 cases. At 13% alcohol, this is an offering that knows what it wants to be. The Murphy family has a growing client list of talented winemakers gunning for Presqu'ile Vineyard. The fruit coming off of this Santa Maria site is first rate. We sampled the '12 out of barrel and then Ernst cracked an '06 Santa Maria Valley Pinot that was nearly equally youthful in its evolution. Dark, spicy cherry and subtle forest floor notes defined the nose.

2012 Storm Pinot Noir 'John Sebastiano Vineyard' Santa Rita Hills

175 cases

Back to back home runs. This time we head down highway 101 from Santa Maria Valley to Santa Rita Hills. As the crow flies, the two appellations are about a marathon run away. Classic opportunity to try the regions side by side, and see just how different the two Pinot Noir expressions are. Normally Santa Rita is less overt and more structured. In March, however, the Sebastiano was the showy example of the two terroirs with red cherry and cola notes leading the charge.



TATOMER

Having spent time with Graham Tatomer, I don't believe his heart lies with revolution. The fact that no one in 2003 was making Santa Barbara County Riesling or Gruner Veltliner in an Austrian tradition was of little consequence to him. What was of consequence to him was that it made sense. So, the 23 year-old stocked up on lederhosen and packed his bags for the Wachau, where he

spent years studying under two of the most revered domaines, Knoll and Hirtzberger. A decade later, Graham is four vintages deep and sold out every year. I remember when Eric Railsback handed me my first glass of Tatomer Riesling at RN 74 in San Francisco years ago. It was unlike anything I'd ever had from California—tense, focused, mineral-driven, dare I say...revolutionary? I wouldn't dare, but I'd be thinking it.

2012 Tatomer Gruner Veltliner Meeresboden Santa Barbara County

300 cases

Gruner is here to stay, Santa Barbara. An impressive, noble white grape from the Austrian motherland, the most vivid examples of Gruner Veltliner are bright and savory with lemon and stone fruit mingling on the palate. Meeresboden means 'ocean soil' and represents Graham's cuvée of Gruner Veltliner vineyards throughout the County planted on 'ancient ocean deposit soils'.

2012 Tatomer Riesling 'Sisquoc' Santa Barbara County

75 cases

Riesling is a grape that loves the bitter cold. Rancho Sisquoc is the perfect storm—a wind-blown, maritime vineyard in Los Alamos with minimized sun exposure due to north-facing slopes of 40 year-old, vines. This vintage is bright and mineral driven, displaying lovely citrus, and stone fruit notes, with that classic Riesling petrol character.

2012 Tatomer Riesling 'Kick-on Ranch' Santa Barbara County

100 cases

And, this just keeps getting better each vintage. The most long-lived of his Riesling cuvée's, 'Kick-on Ranch' is pure class. Another Los Alamos vineyard, these are younger vines than 'Sisquoc', showing a little more freshness, citrus character, and tension on the palate. This offering is powerfully structured in full Austrian-style with some skin contact and aging in neutral wood. Lovely wine.



TYLER

It is apparent to me why rock climbing appeals to a man like Justin Willett. Outside of the obvious opportunity to represent Patagonia, we're talking about a sport tailor-made for the overachiever. Always reaching, always grasping, always innovating. There are few souls willing to be tested to such a degree, but those that are seem to live for it. Justin is one of those people. And who knew Chardonnay and Pinot Noir would ignite such a similar spark? But the pursuit of wine is endlessly fascinating. For Justin that means crafting his expressions with an eye on "delicacy and balance, where structure and nuance are favored above all else." And having walked vineyards with Justin and navigated his winery, having accompanied him on trips to France, and having sat at his dinner table, I can honestly say I've met no one who loves his craft more.

2012 Tyler Chardonnay Santa Barbara County 800 cases

It was an earlier pick this year due to warmer summer conditions, but the '12 Santa Barbara County Chardonnay is complete and delicious. This is not your heavy-handed, oak bomb. Justin's wines are more fresh and transparent with their low alcohol levels, high acidity, and emphasis on minerality. This is structured and flavorful with fresh yellow apple, chalk, and lemon.

2012 Tyler Chardonnay 'Sanford and Benedict' Santa Rita Hills 145 cases

Oh my! Hands down, this was wine of the day during our March tasting at Tyler Winery. The '12 Sanford & Benedict Chardonnay smelled like young, top-level white Burgundy from Puligny-Mon-

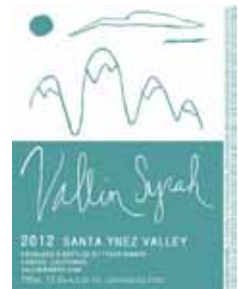
trachet. The terroir at Sanford & Benedict is about as good as it gets with old vines dating back to 1971. Small clusters of ultra intense berries helped Justin craft a wine of incredible complexity and length. Drink now and it will satisfy, but this is destined to get better and better for years to come.

2012 Tyler Pinot Noir Santa Barbara County 1200 cases

The '12 Santa Barbara County Pinot is sourced predominantly from younger Bien Nacido parcels in Santa Maria Valley and Bent Rock Vineyard in Santa Rita Hills. And excellent value for its class, this is a clear voice for the region's terroir. Softer than the 'Sanford and Benedict', Pinot Noir doesn't get much more elegant and seamless.

2012 Tyler Pinot Noir 'Sanford and Benedict' Santa Rita Hills 145 cases

And, welcome to the first vines of Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir ever planted. Throughout our tasting of Justin's various single vineyards, this offering stood out not only for its structure but its weight and intensity on the palate. I can still taste the black raspberry, red cherry, and spice. Gorgeous wine.



VALLIN

What happens when two Master Sommeliers join forces with a brilliant winemaker and Les Marchands mastermind, Eric Railsback? Trouble... And Vallin. As 2012 is our first vintage the story is really just unfolding. But essentially Vallin is "the collective passion of four friends, inspired by many late nights with Syrah on the table." We can't say enough about this grape and its Rhone counterparts. We admire the brilliant expressions in Cote Rotie

producers like Jamet, from whom the ‘Vallin’ name is derived. But as evidenced in older bottlings like the recently shared ’91 Qupe ‘Bien Nacido’, it is the place we call home that signals our reference point for dynamic and age-worthy Syrah.

2012 Vallin Vin Blanc Santa Ynez Valley

185 cases

And...we’re live. This is our homage to the fresher side of Viognier and Marsanne, as modeled by more mineral-driven white blends from France’s Rhone Valley. Nearly equal parts of both, the Viognier portion is from ‘McGinley Vineyard’ in Happy Canyon and the Marsanne from ‘Camp 4’ of the same appellation. Having tasted the Vin Blanc in various stages, I’m surprised at how generous and soft this wine was drinking upon my last visitation in April—the Viognier contributing high-toned floral, passion fruit, and peach aromatics, while the Marsanne adding textural weight.

2012 Vallin Rosé Santa Ynez Valley

235 cases

Our inaugural rosé is 100% Grenache from Happy Canyon’s ‘Camp 4 Vineyard’. The goal here is to quench your thirst heading into late summer. Crisp acidity was paramount to us and warranted an early pick. From the most recent tasting in March, the ’12 rosé has that patented Justin Willett focus and vibrancy. Hints of strawberries and florals linger on the finish.

2012 Vallin Syrah “Sans Soufre”

45 cases

Our first red release is ‘au naturel’ Syrah in all its naked splendor. “Sans Soufre” literally means “without sulfur”. The result is an open and accessible expression with very high-toned aromatics of blackberry, violets, cracked pepper and olive. This is the perfect pop and pour bottle while your waiting for our extended elevage bottling to release next year.



WENZLAU

The quintessential all-American family is supposed to be nice and do everything right. They're just not supposed to be this fun. But after dinners, holidays, and trips abroad with various members of the Wenzlau clan, two things are certain: 1) The Wenzlau's are a gracious people who know what a good time is. 2) The wine gene did not skip a generation. Eldest son Tommy collaborates with his parents Bill and Cindy, overseeing a young Santa Rita Hills estate that already yields compelling Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. 2011 marks their first vintage and we are excited to follow this amazing property for years to come.

2012 Wenzlau Estate Chardonnay Santa Rita Hills

260 cases

For such a young estate, the Chardonnay is incredibly complex. This is mineral-driven, tense, and very restrained with only 25% new oak. The result is a fresher and crisper style of Chardonnay here. Delicious.

2012 Wenzlau Estate Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills

1000 cases

Wow, I'm impressed. What an incredible couple lots we tasted—one of which was 100% stem inclusion. Bill and Cindy's eight acres of Wenzlau Pinot Noir clearly handle stem inclusion well. The result is a fascinating, earthy expression of Pinot with savory, spicy, and forest floor notes interplaying with that classic, Santa Rita dark fruit profile. Expect this wine to age incredibly well.



ZOTOVICH

Chatting with the straight-shooting Ryan Zotovich over some Lompoc Thai food is not a bad way to spend an afternoon. It was a fitting end to a great tasting at his nearby facility in ‘the Ghetto’. There you’ll find the usual barrels and vats with the added disco ball atop the warehouse ceiling. I can’t speak to his dancing shoes but his vineyard boots are well worn. The Zotovich motto is simple: “Great wine is established in the vineyard”. All estate and notably restrained, we couldn’t agree more upon sampling the evidence.

2012 Zotovich Cellars Estate Chardonnay Santa Rita Hills 300 cases

All estate. All Santa Rita. All heart. Ryan’s wines are crafted with pure passion from the moment the stakes were laid down until the time his wines are bottled. With each passing year, he seems to pull back the reins a little more. From the 2010’s that we sampled to the current vintage, Ryan is progressively building his house style around elegance and nuance. The ’12 Santa Rita Chard exemplifies this. The oak is restrained and the fruit is pure and intense.

2012 Zotovich Cellars Estate Viognier Santa Rita Hills 100 cases

Boom. That’s the first word that comes to mind when I smell a great Viognier. This was definitely a “boom” moment. Here we have a fresh and vibrant expression of Viognier from a warmer vintage. Stainless steel is the vessel of choice and succeeds in showcasing lovely apricot, melon, and floral notes... Nose in glass... Wait for it... Boom.

2012 Zotovich Cellars Estate Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills

350 cases

This is the silkier, seductive side of Pinot and I'm mesmerized. What I love about this wine is how subtle and detailed the fruit character is. Delicate is an underrated adjective in the wine world. And that's precisely what this is. The kiss of new oak adds a lovely sweetness to the fruit with soft vanilla and baking spices.

2012 Zotovich Cellars Estate Syrah Santa Rita Hills

350 cases

Now this is a man who gets that Syrah can be as elegant and finesse-driven as Pinot Noir. God bless him. The '12 Zotovich Syrah delivers on all levels and proves that even when made with restraint, the Syrah grape can't help but be intense and interesting. That zesty pepper just rises out of the glass and makes you feel alive. This is a gorgeous effort with blueberry and vanilla from a touch of new oak lending their voice.

TELEGRAPH



BREWING COMPANY

TELEGRAPH BREWING CO.

Early American brewers adapted traditional European brewing techniques to the unique ingredients, climates, and tastes of the New World. Telegraph Brewing Co. handcrafts beers in that same manner combining the creativity of the Belgian brewing tradition with the pioneering spirit of California's own brewing traditions, using exclusively West Coast-grown ingredients, and as many locally sourced ingredients as possible. Telegraph's beers embody their philosophy that a local brewery should reflect the traditions of its region. Their goal is to produce uniquely American beer styles that are imbued with a spirit of invention and creativity, but always with a nod toward history.

Brian Thompson founded Telegraph in 2006 after working as a brewer in New York City. To get into the beer business, Thompson left a career on Wall Street, pursuing his passion for finding the perfect craft beer. He chose Santa Barbara as Telegraph's home not only for the incredible natural beauty of this region, but also because the water profile in Santa Barbara closely mirrors the water profile of the Brabant region of Belgium, home to many world-class breweries and unique beer styles.

California Ale (Alcohol by volume: 6.2%)

Cerveza de Fiesta (Alcohol by volume: 5%)