

WINE News

Dynamic Domestic: Wines of Washington, Oregon and California.



JULY 16, 2018 FEATURES

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Washington's Power Play

By Ryan Woodhouse

Washington State wines keep going from strength to strength. Although it's a relatively young winegrowing region the progress being made here is nothing short of astounding. A collaborative and open-minded approach to grape growing and winemaking is allowing the region to accelerate to global renown at lightning speed. The number of talented winemakers and seemingly endless selection of high-quality vineyard sites is a dream scenario that is turning out some of the most consistently impressive wines of any region in the world. While lots of experimentation with varieties is still going on, Rhône and Bordeaux-based wines seem to have stolen the show in most key sub-regions. The concept of blending multiple varieties also has a strong tradition here, with winemakers seeking complexity and balance by seamlessly weaving components together, the results often proving the whole greater than the sum of its parts. A string of excellent vintages has only added to the remarkable things happening in the state, so if you haven't checked in on the progress of Washington wine recently, there has never been a better time. What follows is a selection of wines currently in stock that I hope will give an insight into the amazing things happening here.

2016 Wines Of Substance Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$14.99) What better place to start this Washington check-in than with one of the best values out there. The 2016 Substance from K Vintners is yet again an exemplary bottling showing how impressive even entry-level price point Washington Cabs can be. Packed with black and blue fruit, currant leaf, cigar box, dried



herbs and spice. Lovely varietal definition, refined tannins and plush texture. As Jeb Dunnuck suggests: "Just pretend you paid three times the price." **93 JD, 92 RP**

2015 K Vintners "Milbrandt" Wahluke Slope Syrah (\$29.95) From a winery that has elevated Washington Syrah to dizzying heights and global acclaim, this pure Syrah bottling offers potential drinkers the chance to taste just how brilliant these wines can be at a very reasonable price point. Lovely varietal elements of smoky spice, black pepper, violets and deep, brooding fruit. Medium-bodied with stony minerals interwoven with the dark fruit. A grip of grainy tannins and element of freshly turned earth are the perfect counterpoints to the rich fruit. Layered and complete. **93 JD, 92 RP, 92 VN**

2015 DeLille "Chaleur Blanc" Columbia Valley White Bordeaux Blend (\$29.95) One of my absolute favorite white wines in the world, this bottling marks 22 years of this cuvée and I highly recommend trying it. With just shy of 30% Sémillon and fermentation entirely in barrel, this is a richer, weightier expression of Sauv-Sém. The fruit profile dances between sharp, preserved citrus and fleshier papaya or passionfruit. Intense, flinty, mineral aromas and flavors pervade the wine from beginning to end. The oak is subtle in its flavor influence but key in building texture and weight on the palate. Delicious now but sure to only get more fascination with some time in bottle. **93 VN**



(Continued on page 7)

Cover: Enz Vineyard in Central California's Lime Kiln AVA (see article on page 8).



Chuy Ordaz walks the Montecillo Vineyard in Sonoma Valley.

Ordaz Family Wines: A Personal Terroir

By Ryan Woodhouse

Terroir is a complex concept. It's commonly translated as “a sense of place,” and most understandings of the term are largely dependant on how the vine's physical environment affects the expression of the resulting wine. Soil type, aspect, climate and farming regime all contribute to the raw material—grapes. Then it's over to the winemaker to preserve these distinctive markers of that particular place and encapsulate them in a bottle. Though it's quite difficult to measure or quantify, I'm convinced that terroir exists and that wines can convey a complex sense of place. I'm also interested in a broader concept of terroir that includes culture, people and emotion: the emotional input of a farmer or winemaker or team of people that become an integral part of the wine; the culture that exists in the place where the wine is grown and made. This dimension of terroir certainly defies empirical analysis and yet I'm equally as convinced that it affects the way in which wines express themselves and how we perceive them. Wine is inherently a human product. Nature produces grapes, humans make wine, so any concept of terroir without the inclusion of human input seems incomplete.

Very few times in my life has this concept of a more holistic definition of terroir made more sense than on a recent trip to visit Ordaz Family Wines in Sonoma. My visit with the Ordaz family was initiated a few months back with an email from Eppie Ordaz asking to schedule an appointment to taste me on his family's wines. A few weeks later we met in Redwood City and began talking as he opened the wines. Though I had vaguely recognized the name “Ordaz” it

wasn't until chatting with Eppie that something clicked...he is the son of legendary grape grower Jesus “Chuy” Ordaz. Chuy's name is known to many due to his namesake Chardonnay vineyard 1,400 feet up in Sonoma's Moon Mountain AVA, made famous by producers such as DuMol, Failla, Neyers and Bedrock. Chuy has farmed those vines for more than four decades. On the same rugged mountain Chuy also looks after legendary vineyards such as Fredericks Vineyard (a designate of Turley), Maus Vineyard, and perhaps the jewel in the crown, Montecillo Vineyard. Montecillo was planted back in the 1960s and is home to some of the oldest Cabernet Sauvignon in California. Chuy's vast experience and knowledge of this mountain is second to none. He has literally spent a lifetime establishing vineyards and growing grapes here. Eppie now works closely with his dad to buy very small parcels of fruit (normally a ton or less) from the best blocks on the property. They are minimally but thoughtfully crafted into wines that intricately reflect this rugged, rocky, mountain terroir. After buying some of the wines on the spot I invited myself to visit the vineyards and hopefully meet Eppie's dad.



The following week we all met at a tiny gas station in Kenwood, California, and headed for the vineyards. Parking at the foot of the mountain where the sealed road abruptly finished, Chuy playfully giped at his son for not wanting to get his truck dirty! We all climbed into Chuy's somewhat more "weathered" truck and snaked our way up a steep and rutted gravel road. As we rumbled along, historical commentary about the mountain and vineyards was interspersed with friendly banter and personal anecdotes. It was impossible not to be in awe as we stood on top of the mountain looking at these 50-plus-year-old dry-farmed vines with the man who had been their lifelong caretaker. Eppie and Chuy joked about who makes the call what exact parcels to select and when to pick them. They lamented about previous eras when the fruit was less sought after and cost one third of the price per ton that it commands today! When the conversation turned more toward the winemaking side of things Chuy drifted off and before we knew it he was down a nearby row, pulling sucker shoots and leaves off of the vines. "He doesn't like to stand still," Eppie laughed as his dad disappeared deeper and deeper into the vines. The sun was starting to set and we had to hit the road. Eppie called out to his dad, "You've got the keys to the truck, come back up here." Eppie was on the hook for cooking family dinner that night and knew how difficult it could be to get his father out of the vineyard. The connection between people and place is flourishing here. I feel truly lucky to have witnessed it first hand. The Ordaz wines represent the dedication of a lifetime's work, the love and respect between father and son—truly magical.



2017 Ordaz "Maus Vineyard" Sonoma Valley Rosé (\$21.99) Made from 70% Grenache, 15% Syrah and 15% Mourvèdre, a beautifully pure, refreshing, quaffable style of rosé with plenty of texture and layers to go with the crunchy acidity and zippy drive. Speaks distinctly of the incredibly shallow soils with fractured sandstone in which the vines struggle. A summer favorite for sure!

2013 Ordaz "Montecillo Vineyard" Sonoma Valley Zinfandel (\$34.99) Powerful yet fresh. Pure yet wild. This fascinating mountain fruit Zin is simply captivating. It's taken entirely from the older blocks of Zinfandel at Montecillo Vineyard, and there is an effortless concentration to the wine that seems to come from the quality of the fruit rather than extreme ripeness or extraction; more structured than your typical Russian River, Dry Creek or Lodi Zin, really expressing its mountain home. **91 WE**

2013 Ordaz "Montecillo Vineyard" Sonoma Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$54.99) From hand-selected parcels of old-vine Cabernet high on Moon Mountain in the famed Montecillo Vineyard. Planted in the late 1960s at 1,800 feet in elevation, this site produces some of the most distinctive and sought-after Cabernet in the state. Packed with briary dark fruit, graphite, cigar box, chicory and dry earth. Medium-bodied, with firm tannins and a linear shape. Quite savory and "old school" with plenty of traditional varietal character complementing the muscular mountain fruit.





Home on the Rhône range: Sonja Magdevski looks forward to the next vintage of summery reds for her Clementine Carter brand.

A Rhône Ranger by the Name Clementine Carter

By Christina Stanley

Here, in the domestic realm of K&L, we are fortunate enough to have several new selections of Clementine Carter Grenache and GSM blends. These wines are the Rhône expressions of Casa Dumetz, the Santa Barbara brainchild of brilliant winemaker and former newscaster Sonja Magdevski. Magdevski started the winery in 2004, but recently created the Clementine Carter label after making a decision to focus the Casa Dumetz brand on Pinot Noir, the varietal that started her love affair with wine.

Going forward, Magdevski's intention for Clementine Carter is to create wines that reflect the distinct terroirs of several premier vineyards of Santa Barbara County, specifically focusing on Grenache. She accomplishes this by creating minimal interference between the vineyard and the glass, sourcing fruit from single vineyards, using only neutral barrels and applying very gentle punch downs to preserve their respective unique aromatics.

We are currently carrying five selections under the Clementine Carter label: two single-vineyard Grenaches from Kimsey and Lerner vineyards, a Santa Rita Hills Grenache and a Santa Barbara Grenache Blanc, and a single-vineyard Mourvèdre from Curtis Vineyard. All of Magdevski's wines are exemplary, but the Kimsey and Lerner Grenaches and the Curtis Mourvèdre were standouts, showing clarity of place and terroir.

2016 Clementine Carter "Kimsey Vineyard" Ballard Canyon Grenache (\$29.99) Kimsey Vineyard is a 22-acre vineyard in the Ballard Canyon AVA of Santa Barbara, and is singular in its direct coastal influence and protective canyon barrier. The 2016 Clementine Carter Kimsey Grenache is sourced from an even smaller three-acre plot of Alban clone vines. With very densely planted vines and a continuously cool climate, Kimsey fruit tends to be concentrated and

spice dominated, and the wine demonstrates this beautifully. Bright fruit aromas of tart cranberry, ripe black cherry and raspberry are tempered by more elegant floral notes of hibiscus and violet. The palate is fruit-forward and juicy, with naturally balanced acidity and a defining stony minerality. **93 RP**

2016 Clementine Carter "Lerner Vineyard" Ballard Canyon Grenache (\$29.99) Lerner Vineyard, planted in 1999 and also located in Ballard Canyon, is organically farmed and sits at 680 feet elevation, on shallow, sandy soil above a layer of chalk and fragmented limestone. The wine takes on the delicate yet insistent minerality of the site, with a lighter palate than the Kimsey. Bright, mouthwatering notes of Bing cherry and raspberry coulis swirl in a wash of dried rose petal with wafts of underbrush.

2016 Clementine Carter "Curtis Vineyard" Santa Ynez Mourvèdre (\$29.99) The 2016 Curtis Mourvèdre was particularly enticing, as I haven't personally experienced many single-vineyard California Mourvèdres, and this one exceeded every expectation. Planted on a sun-soaked loamy mesa, Curtis is ideal for the cultivation of Mourvèdre, which thrives in a similar environment in the south-facing slopes of the Southern Rhône. Though the wine appears a bit lighter in color than the Kimsey Grenache, darker aromas of underbrush, black pepper and hoisin drift from the glass. Concentrated fruit and spice notes of macerated black cherry, ripe plum and anise are supported by mouthwatering acidity and a pervasive, saline minerality. **91 RP**

Given Magdevski's history of creating distinctive Rhône wines, both under the Casa Dumetz label and now, Clementine Carter, we are looking forward to the exciting evolution of the brand, and her future work with Pinot Noir, as well.



The Sweet Spot: 2015 Napa Cabernet for \$50(ish)

By Ryan Woodhouse

Napa Valley has long been established as one of the best places on earth to grow Cabernet Sauvignon. However, in recent years land prices and the cost of Napa fruit have gone through the roof. It's become pretty commonplace to see Napa Cab priced in the \$200–\$400 range. Adding to the pricing pressure has been years of drought since 2011. The lack of rain has forced growers to buy additional water and vine stress from the dry conditions has diminished yields. In 2015 these problems were further compounded by unsettled weather during bloom (or flowering), shrinking yields even further because of poor fruit set. Despite all this I recently identified a handful of wines from this highly regarded (and minuscule) vintage that I believe represent exceptional value for money, delivering exactly what made Napa famous in the first place. So here are a few Cabernet-based wines I think hit the sweet spot around the \$50 price point and in many cases deliver every bit as much quality as some of their much more expensive peers.

2015 Frog's Leap "Estate" Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon (\$49.95)

A perennial favorite at K&L and a longtime Napa stalwart, from Frog's Leap's beautifully situated Rutherford estate. The vines are dry farmed and certified organic. A more classic, traditional style that deliberately eschews over-ripeness or high extract. Bright, dusty fruit, plum, red currant, dried herbs, spice box, pencil shavings. Medium-bodied with fine but appropriate tannin. Lovely length and focus on the finish. As Galloni writes: "This is one of the very finest values in Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon...Don't miss it." **94 VN**

2015 Chateau Montelena Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$49.95)

A beautifully open and approachable 2015 release from this Napa Valley icon. Very expressive and drinkable on release with soft, supple fruit, exotic oak spice, elegant tannins and admirable freshness. History dictates this wine will age well but I can't see any reason to delay...this is drinking beautifully today. **92 JD, 92 VN**

2015 Faust Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$49.95) We have featured this Cabernet earlier in the year but it still represents one of the best values out there and has picked up another huge score since the last time we promoted it with a 95 point review from James Suckling. Most of you will know by now that Faust is a sister winery to Quintessa and a good chunk of fruit for this bottling is declassified, biodynamically grown estate Cab from that iconic Rutherford estate. This is backed up with concentrated, structural fruit from Veeder and Howell Mountains, plus some aromatic, elegant fruit from a cooler site in Coombsville. The complete package with power and finesse. **95 JS**

2015 Chappellet "Signature" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

(\$54.99) This wine possesses power, concentration and refinement that would not be out of place in a \$500 bottling from one of Chappellet's neighbors. The 2015 Signature, composed of exclusively Pritchard Hill estate fruit, might be one of the best deals ever in modern Napa Cabernet. Bold, brassy, saturated fruit, cassis, red and black currant, plum conserve, graphite, charred oak, cigar box and exotic spice. A rich, decadent mid-palate is balanced by classic varietal tannin and acidity that gives vitality and freshness to a concentrated and complex wine. Generosity of fruit to drink now but the stuffing to last a couple decades in the cellar. This is the real deal in Napa Cab. **96 JD, 93 RP**

2015 Orin Swift "Papillon" Napa Valley Bordeaux Blend (\$58.95)

From the big, bold, opulent end of the spectrum comes Orin Swift's Papillon. A Cabernet-driven Bordeaux-style blend that is simply overflowing with exotic cassis fruit, blackcurrant, scorched earth, bittersweet chocolate and charred oak. The tannins are ripe and silky, the palate full and mouth-coating. While this is an unapologetically hedonistic style, it is one that has been executed beautifully and offers a very similar flavor profile to many cult wines around the valley that sell for 10 times the price. Orin Swift just keepin' on doing what they do best. **94 RP, 93 WS**



Not Really That Surprising: Oregon Chardonnay

By Ryan Woodhouse

I recently spent a few days in the northern Willamette Valley, Oregon. I went mostly for the Pinot Noir and was certainly not disappointed in that regard. However, the thing that really had an impact on me during the trip was just how darn good the Chardonnay is up there! As I noted in the title of this article, it's really not that surprising that an area known globally as a world-class source of cool climate Pinot Noir would also yield some very classy Chardonnay. They grow side-by-side in Burgundy with spectacular results and the same can be said for the Willamette Valley. I saw a range of styles



Summer in Oregon: Great weather for bright, lean Chardonnay.

from big, rich and notably oak-influenced, to lean, crisp and entirely raised in stainless steel. The region has a wealth of mesoclimates, soil types, elevations and aspects, so the diversity of expressions is significant. However, after tasting maybe 100 or so of the best examples I certainly began to see a trend toward more restrained wines. Most wines typically had modest oak influence, medium-high acidity, pronounced minerality and often some savory, nutty lees influence. Many producers are making a style that sits

somewhere between the stereotypical richer, more buttery California style and the brighter, higher acid, more linear and focused expression so common with white Burgundy. While some winemakers debated among themselves how useful Burgundy was as a guide or inspiration for their own wines, most seemed comfortable that Oregon Chardonnay was finding its own course, a natural expression of the land and the people farming it. While only exposing the metaphorical tip of the iceberg, here are some of my favorites I implore you to check out.

2016 Chehalem “INOX” Willamette Valley Chardonnay (\$16.99) A beautiful example of unoaked Chardonnay. Chehalem's Inox has long been a go-to for me when recommending stainless steel Chardonnay to customers and the most recent release is no different. Bright, fresh, quaffable, good texture and purity. Orchard blossom, golden tree fruit, chamomile, citrus zest and preserved lemon. Ultimately refreshing and very versatile with food.



2016 Stoller “Estate” Dundee Hills Chardonnay (\$19.99)

Another entirely unoaked wine with beautiful, crisp fruit, bright acidity and stony minerals. Sourced from Stoller's estate at the base of the Dundee Hills, grown on volcanic Jory soils. A small, concentrated crop, warm summer and long, cool autumn provided great conditions for this Chardonnay to enjoy some extra hang time and develop complex flavors while retaining brisk acidity. Lovely wine and a great value. **90 VN**



2015 Lavinea “Lazy River Vineyard” Yamhill-Carlton Chardonnay (\$42.99)

A top-notch example of just how great Oregon Chardonnay can be. Lavinea is a tiny project from Greg Ralston (ex-Managing Director of Chateau Montelena, ex-President/CEO of Evening Land) and winemaker Isabelle Meunier (who worked with Pascal Marchand at Domaine de la Vougeraie in Burgundy, Blair Walter at Felton Road in New Zealand and made wines at Evening Land with Dominique Lafon). This wine has stunning drive and focus; piercing acidity and tension; quince, struck match, white flowers, wet stone; and is full of verve and intensity on the palate. **97 WE, 93 VN**

2014 Evening Land “Seven Springs Vineyard” Eola-Amity Hills Chardonnay (\$39.99)

From one of the most highly regarded vineyards in Oregon. Seven Springs was planted back in 1984 and still has lots of the original, own-rooted vines. Farmed biodynamically and made with very minimal intervention, these wines continue to impress. The 2014 is perhaps a bit of a decisive style—this wine flirts with some wild, reductive notes of flint and gunpowder. The fruit is crunchy and tangy with lovely acidity and intrigue. On the finish some hazelnut, stonemound flour, pie crust and baked pear. Layered, complex and distinctive. I loved it. **90 WS**



2015 Shea Wine Cellars “Shea Vineyard”

Willamette Valley Chardonnay (\$32.99) A wine I fell in love with the first time I tasted it and a perfect example of how Oregon Chardonnay can sometimes be overlooked. Just about anyone who knows anything about Oregon wine knows Shea Vineyard. It is the source for some of the state's most sought-after and celebrated vineyard-designate Pinot Noirs. The list of customers who buy fruit from Shea is a veritable who's who of A-list wineries in the region. Shea sells 75% of their fruit, only producing a small amount of wine themselves, and their Pinot Noir is known the world over. And yet until very recently I had never tasted Chardonnay from Shea Vineyard...a tragedy. This is a subtly powerful wine made from Dijon clones planted in 1998. Just 15% new French oak frames the yellow stone fruit, apricot pit, papaya and rye toast. Great weight on the palate but with energy and verve to spare. Simply delicious. **92 WE**

Russian River Valley Par Excellence, Excellently Priced

By Kaj Stromer



Russian River idyll: Hartford Family Winery on Martinelli Road.

The Russian River Valley region in Sonoma County has long been California's epicenter for great Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. No other region has contributed so much to the history and success of these wines in California. Early pioneers like Williams Selyem, Rochioli and Dehlinger championed and defined the best that this region could offer and firmly put it on the world's wine map.

For all the well-deserved praise showered on those old guard wineries, as well as the likes of Aubert, Kistler and Marcassin, their wines have not only been priced out of reach of most wine lovers, but can be extremely difficult to source, even with the cash in hand. Fortunately, there are also wineries like Hartford Court in the Russian River Valley, whose Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, I'd argue, can compete with the "grand crus" of the region, thus offering tremendous relative value and giving you the chance to enjoy world-class wine on a more regular basis.

Ever since their first release in 1996, Hartford Family Winery has received awards and critical acclaim, and their wines are now featured on some of the world's most prestigious wine lists. Located

in Forestville in the heart of the Russian River Valley, and part of the Jackson Family Wines collection, they specialize in the production of small-lot Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and old-vine Zinfandel. In fact, their old-vine Zinfandel vineyards, at 80–100 years old, are some of the oldest in California. Winery president Don Hartford and winemaker Jeff Stewart each have 25-plus years of experience with winemaking in Sonoma County.

Possessing everything the Chardonnay lover desires, the **2016 Hartford Court Russian River Valley Chardonnay (\$23.95)** shows hints of white flower, green apples and pear, followed by a mélange of exotic fruit notes framed by a touch a minerality and a faint hint of ginger on the finish. **93 VN, 91 JS**

The exceptional **2015 Hartford Court Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$29.99)** is a composite of several vineyard sites and acts as their "village-level" wine. This is a prototypical RRV Pinot Noir built in the style that reminds me of the Rochioli estate Pinots. **93 WE**

One of my highlights each vintage is the Land's Edge Pinot Noir. It is frequently one of the best-rated wines of the vintage and is one of my "go to" Pinots. The **2015 Hartford Court "Land's Edge" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (\$44.99)** is one brilliant effort and comes from a cool site located only four miles from the Pacific Ocean. **96 WE, 95 RP**

But it was their old-vine Zinfandel that first caught my attention when I tasted it so many years ago. The **2016 Hartford "Old Vine" Russian River Valley Zinfandel (\$34.99)** offers up bold red and black berry fruit that reminds of fresh preserves. The old-vine fruit gives the wine structure with just enough tannin to feel some grip. The complexity and depth of this Zinfandel put it head and shoulders above most of its peers. **93 WS, 92 RP**



(Continued from page 1)

2014 L'Ecole No. 41 "Ferguson Vineyard" Walla Walla Valley Bordeaux Blend (\$58.95) A complex and intricate Bordeaux-style blend capturing the effortless power Walla Walla exudes while remaining true to the blend components. Fresh, lifted blue and black fruits, minerals, shaved wood, thyme, cocoa powder and fennel. Medium-full-bodied with powerful tannins and big presence on the palate. Built for the long haul but still an expressive and young wine. **95 RP, 93 VN, 92 WE**



2015 B. Leighton "Olson Brothers Vineyard" Yakima Valley Syrah (\$44.99) As the personal side project of Brennon Leighton, K Vintners winemaker, it should come as no surprise that this is world-class Syrah. A bold powerful style with lashings of dark brooding fruit but also plenty of savory, gamy, smoky, umami characters. Quite structured but beautifully proportioned and balanced. Lovely layers and length on the palate. Again a nice blend of traditional and modern that seems to be Washington's forte. **97 JS, 94 RP**





Mourvèdre vines in their young nineties at the Enz Vineyard in San Benito County, California.

Scouting California Central Coast Backroads with I. Brand

By Ryan Woodhouse

Ian Brand is a busy guy. He has more labels and projects that I can keep track of, does custom crush for several clients, manages fruit allocations for several vineyards, and very importantly is a loving husband to Heather and a dedicated dad to 6-year-old twins! Despite this momentous juggling act he is producing some of the most interesting and compelling wines in the region. Ian fell in love with wine while working as a cellar rat in the storied winery at Bonny Doon Vineyards with the inimitable Randall Grahm, moving on to Big Basin and then striking out on his own in 2008. This coming harvest will mark 10 years of Le P'tit Paysan (Ian's jovial label based on mostly on Rhône varietals). Focused on Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito County, Ian has spent decades seeking out interesting vineyard sites. He drove back roads, listened to farmers and winemakers of eras gone by and through a lot of dedication and hard work has secured access to some of the most highly prized fruit in California.

Only recently has Ian started releasing what he considers his upper echelon of wines under the I. Brand & Family label, made from standout sites. The wines are beautifully refined, pure and, I believe, some of the most exciting wines on our shelves. I hope you will check them out.

2016 I. Brand & Family "Escolle Vineyard" Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay (\$29.99) Despite the fact that it does not go through malo, the wine has beautiful texture and density from the very sparsely irrigated vines and thick skins from this windy, exposed site. Exceptional length on the palate and saline minerality.

2016 I. Brand & Family "Enz Vineyard" Lime Kiln Valley Old Vine Mourvèdre (\$44.99) From one of the most incredible vineyards I have ever visited, with gnarled, basket-trained vines planted in 1922. The soils are decomposed granite and limestone from an ancient landslide. The fruit is beautifully fresh and aromatic yet deep and brooding at the same time. Floral notes, crushed red berries, sage, loamy earth, baking spice. Medium-bodied, silky, focused and linear. Awesome now but likely to expand and flourish further with a few years in bottle.

2015 I. Brand & Family "Bates Ranch" Santa Cruz Mountains Cabernet Franc (\$44.99) Planted back in 1978, these vines grow in red Franciscan volcanic soils. Cooled by breezes flowing over Hecker Pass, the fruit retains lovely varietal character of brassy red fruit, mulling spices, gentle herbal notes and warm earth. The texture is elegant with fine but grippy tannins and stimulating acidity. **91 WE**

2014 I. Brand & Family "Monte Bello Road" Santa Cruz Mountains Cabernet Sauvignon (\$64.99) Adjacent to Ridge Vineyard's more famous Monte Bello planting, Ian's wine is keen to show it's not to be trifled with. This is beautiful, elegant Cabernet. Plummy fruit, briary notes, cedar and freshly turned earth, pipe tobacco and chicory. Good warming fruit on the mid-palate and sinewy mountain tannins drawing it out on the finish. A Santa Cruz Mountain classic and very modestly priced, given the neighborhood. **92 WE**



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