

WINE News

*Drink in a new dawn
for Domestic wine.*



OCTOBER 4, 2021 FEATURES

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|----|------------------------|
| 2 | World's Best Pinot Noir Values | 8 | Paso's New "Patrimony" |
| 3 | Pursuing Perfection: Calera | 9 | "Summer" in SF? Rosé! |
| 6 | Busting Domestic Myths | 10 | Comfortable Companions |

Wines from the Land of Myth and Comfort

By Ryan Woodhouse

Welcome to another positively packed domestic edition of K&L's *Wine News*. This month, SoCal buyer Kaj Stromer and I have dug deep into our inventory to fill these pages with exciting new finds and plenty of old favorites that just keep getting better. One such perennial standout is the iconic Calera estate on Mt. Harlan, whose wines I've been raving about since we toured the property in June of this year. I'll also match up some of our best-selling and most recognizable brands with a few under-the-radar alternatives that just might become your new favorites — come explore with me! Kaj sings the praises of Pinot Noir from California and Oregon, making a compelling argument that the U.S. is producing some of the finest under-\$20 values you can find anywhere in the world

with this notoriously fickle but alluring variety. Next, he builds on our ongoing Instagram Live series where we seek to dispel some stubborn myths around Domestic wines. Kaj presents some eye-opening (and palate-satisfying) Zinfandels, then gives us some top Cabernet picks in a style that will have many of you feeling nostalgic for the wines of yesteryear (before the era of 200% new oak and 16% alcohol). Old school is the new school, and the wines are all the better for it. Finally, Kaj shines a light on the Patrimony wines from the Daou family. This ambitious new project seeks to create "first growth" California wines in the hills of Paso Robles' Adelaida District. If the enormous scores from their initial releases are anything to go by, it looks like they're on the right course!

2019 Kerr Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc

(\$29.95) We always enjoy new discoveries in this category. Unlike many "celebrity" brands, there's real substance behind golf superstar Cristie Kerr's wines. Crafted by a celebrity in her own right, renowned winemaker Helen Keplinger, this phenomenal wine is sourced from Stagecoach and Hyde vineyards and fermented entirely in oak barrels with a good chunk of Sémillon for complexity and texture. It's one of the best examples of the variety I've tasted in some time. **93 JS**



2018 Heir Apparent Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon

(\$59.95) Elsewhere \$150. One of our favorite wines of the year, the 2018 Heir Apparent is a beautiful, classically styled Rutherford Cab that hits all the right notes. As Jeb Dunnuck writes in his 95-point review, this is very reminiscent of top-flight Bordeaux. It combines fresh, pure cassis fruit with crushed mulberry, complex cedar notes, leather, and dusty earth. There's enough ripeness to drink young, but the wine is also a great prospect for the cellar. **95 JD**



2020 Scar of the Sea "Old Vine Lopez Valley" Cucamonga Valley Zinfandel

(\$28.99) This must be the most exciting Zinfandel we've come across in years. Besides the fact that the wine is flat-out delicious, we just love that it's sourced from one of the last holdout vineyards in Cucamonga Valley, just miles east of Los Angeles. Planted in 1918, this pre-Prohibition relic of a vineyard grows impervious to the highways and tract homes that surround it. Quite frankly, this is history in a glass. **94 WE**



Cover: Dawn breaks at Peter Martin Ray vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

U.S. Pinot Noir Values: Some of the World's Best!

By Kaj Stromer

At its apex, Pinot Noir is arguably the finest red wine on earth. Few grapes translate the land they're grown in quite as well. The wine's hallmark silky elegance and complex aromatics are hard to match. But such regal pedigree can come with a price. When we scour the market for the best-in-show Pinot Noirs, we're also looking to unearth the best values which retain all that characteristic Pinot charm.

As U.S. wine culture matures and evolves it becomes even more obvious that California and Oregon are producing some stunning Pinots of distinction that can please our palates as well as our pocket-books. So, with that in mind, here's a selection of fine Pinot Noir all under \$20. Grab a mixed case of these, and pull corks any night of the week without buyer's remorse.

Leading the charge is the **2018 Bloodroot Pinot Noir Sonoma County (\$19.95)**. The Bloodroot Pinot has become a staff favorite and one of our best-sellers in a rather short period. The wine is a composite from twelve different Sonoma County vineyards, most of which are used to produce wines that generally cost quite a bit more. The result is a cool-climate, coastal Pinot Noir with a little bit of heft—but just enough to make it slightly lusty. It's a screaming good deal for a mouthful of delicious Pinot Noir.



Kalinda is our own proprietary label. With Kalinda we're able to source wine from some of our favorite wineries and offer them to you for a fraction of their original cost. The **2019 Kalinda Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (\$16.99)** is North Coast fruit that would typically fetch much higher prices. There's ample red and black cherry fruit with a proper dusting of wood spice. This bottling comes from a renowned producer whose wines we already know you love. But, in return for such a great price, we've committed to keeping that a secret. It's a great trade-off!



The **2019 McKinlay Oregon Pinot Noir (\$17.95)** gets my award for the best Pinot Noir under \$20. We visited winemaker Matt Kinne on a trip through Oregon in January of last year. Matt and his wife hosted our group for an evening of wine, food, and a late-night jam session. It turned out to be one of my most memorable visits. Matt even went down to the cellar to break out a bottle of his very first release, the 1987 vintage, which was beautiful. Matt's wines are not widely distributed, and he spends no time promoting them. As such, he leads with the price—"Keep it cheap," he says. Most of his wine sells out locally, but dribs and drabs make it to California. We've been making fans with this wine for a few vintages now. It's pretty, elegant, sublime, and creeps up on you with its subtle charm.



The Pinot Project is the creation of renowned wine importer and distributor Michael Skurnik. His vast experience and connections in the business give him unprecedented access to fruit from top producers. The **2019 Pinot Project California Pinot Noir (\$11.95)** might be the best Pinot value that I know of. This budget-friendly wine competes in quality with others three times the price. The wine has become a store staple, and we regularly sell out of each vintage. This is classic, silky, straightforward Pinot Noir that harmoniously blends complex fruit components with elegance and captivating aromatics.



Our dear friend Xavier Arnaudin came to the U.S. years ago from France on a winemaker exchange program and just never left. His first love and sensibility is the wines of

Alsace, France. And yes, they do make Pinot Noir in Alsace. Now firmly rooted in Paso Robles, his style and approach to winemaking seem quite "un-Paso." His predilection is toward wines of great finesse and elegance; intense flavor without heaviness.

His **2019 Union Sacre Central Coast Pinot Noir (\$19.99)** is lighter-bodied than most but it still packs a punch of flavor. It's the kind of red that warrants



K&L's Kaj Stromer with Xavier Arnaudin.

a light chill, and odds are the bottle gets emptied rather quickly after opening. The Union Sacre wines have developed a bit of a cult following at the Hollywood store. Come see what the buzz is all about.

Twins Jim and Bob Varner may be the most successful winemakers you've never heard of. They are two of the most gifted winemakers we've worked with over the years, and their wines are highly touted by critics and sommeliers alike. Yet, they seem to maintain a level of anonymity. The **2015 Varner "Los Alamos Vineyard" Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir (\$17.95)** is screaming good deal. This single-vineyard Pinot is loaded with complexity and drinks with the grace of a much more expensive wine. At six years old it's had a chance to properly integrate all its components. This will be an exquisite choice for drinking through the holidays. But grab your bottles now, as I doubt our stocks will last that long.





Jensen Vineyard with Cienega Valley beyond.

Calera: Pursuing Perfection on the Central Coast for 50 Years

By Ryan Woodhouse

In 1971 Josh Jensen returned to California from Burgundy with a mission: to find a cool-climate site, with limestone soils, to grow world-class Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. After years of searching for the perfect parcel of land, Josh found Mt. Harlan, a rugged limestone outcropping perched at 2,200 feet above Monterey Bay. The property is isolated, wild, and spectacularly beautiful. Over the next few decades, Josh planted vines on the various aspects of the property. The plantings were largely focused on Pinot Noir, but he also experimented with Chardonnay, Viognier, and Aligoté. Original vines from 1975 at Selleck, Reed, and Jensen still produce to this day. Further sites developed in the early 1980s include a personal favorite of mine, Mills Vineyard, planted on its own roots on a particularly limestone-rich hillside.

The reputation of Calera's wines continued to grow in stature as the wines vividly expressed the magical properties of this unique terroir. The wines also aged beautifully, and, over time, Josh solidified his position as a true pioneer of California wine.

For many years I enjoyed the wines and held them in high regard. I frequently recommended them to customers, and tried to snatch up any older bottlings that came through our Old & Rare department. However, after more than 12 years working in the California wine business, and nine years at K&L, I hadn't ever made it to Calera in person. My decade-long wait pales in comparison to that of my colleague Ralph Sands, who has been enjoying and selling Calera's wines since the 1980s but had never visited the property. So in late June, with COVID restrictions relaxed (sadly only temporarily) we arranged a visit to Calera with Duckhorn Wine Company, the new owners of the iconic estate.

A quick note on the ownership change: At the age of 73, Josh sold Calera in August of 2017. He wanted a steward of the land that would continue his quest to produce top-quality wines from Mt. Harlan,

and the longstanding Napa Valley stalwart, Duckhorn, fit the bill. In practice, not much changed at Calera. The staff, including veteran winemaker, Mike Waller, remains at the helm, and the new owners, obviously recognizing the special qualities this place possesses, aren't interested in messing with an already proven formula—if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Joined by Redwood City store manager, Julio Santos, we set out for Cienega Valley, about an hour south of San Jose. The last 10 miles of



Wispy gray pine or "ghost pine" (P. sabiniana) looms over a long, winding, dirt road up Mt. Harlan. No sign of V. vinifera as yet.

the drive meanders through rolling hills studded with old oaks before finally you descend into the valley itself. This area is home to several iconic vineyards, including Wirz (known for old-vine Riesling and Carignan) and Enz (one of the most revered old-vine plantings of Mourvèdre, or Mataro, among other things, in the state). Eden Rift (previously Pietra Santa Winery) is a fascinating and ambitious project building on the area's reputation for top-notch Pinot and Chardonnay that should also be on everyone's radar.

We arrived at Calera's winery, which is in itself quite fascinating. The largely gravity-flow winery is built over the top of an old limestone processing plant. The steep hillside has various levels built into it, where the locally quarried rock was crushed and refined. Now fruit is brought into the top level, fermenters sit below that, with tanks and

barrels below them, and the finished wines enjoy their slow repose in deep caves carved into the limestone bedrock beneath. However, we weren't there to look at a winery, we were longing to see where the real magic resided—the soils of Mt. Harlan. Guided by winemaker Mike Waller and viticulturalist Mylène Hermier, we jumped into trucks and made the long and winding drive up the mountain to the vineyards themselves. All of us were immediately struck by the remoteness and inaccessibility of the site. Just the thought of trying to establish vineyards here was almost incomprehensible. Clearly Josh Jensen was driven beyond conventional wisdom to establish something truly special, because no one would choose this site for any other reason than an absolute obsession to seek perfection.

Mile after mile of steep, rutted, switchback dirt road finally led us to the peak of the mountain where chalk-white buttresses of limestone seem to erupt from the hillside. The multiple vineyard parcels are intricately draped across the undulating slopes, facing each and every point on the compass. One of my first observations, beyond the sheer rugged beauty of the place, was the very small canopy on the vines, and tiny grape clusters hanging from them. The vines really struggle here with the rocky soils, exposure to wind, and very limited water. The vines are largely dry-farmed. Some particularly water-stressed sections might get 24 hours of drip irrigation across the entire growing season, just to keep them alive! The property has been farmed organically since 2008, and Mylène continues to fine-tune the viticulture in ways such as switching the property to cane pruning and experimenting with kaolin clay as a type of sunscreen on vines to combat heat spikes.



Nina the vineyard dog rides with John Nolan, “the Water Guy,” at Calera.

After walking each individual block on the property to gain a better understanding of Calera’s distinctive, individual vineyard bottlings, we headed to check out the ancient lime kiln or “calera” that has adorned every label since the winery’s outset. The partially restored, 30-foot-high brick kiln is situated amid trees and native scrub, with chunks of limestone from the nearby quarry strewn across the ground. I found it fascinating that this rock, limestone, formed from ancient seabed, has brought humans to these remote hillsides over the centuries for numerous different exploits—in this case, because it seems to produce such delicious wine!



Julio, Ryan, and Ralph pose for a picture at the historic “calera,” or “lime kiln.”

Parched from walking the steep hillsides in the warming mid-day sun, we welcomed a trip through the cool underground caves next. As we had just learned, the vines at Calera are typically very low yielding, so what precious juice is extracted gets treated to the finest, three- or four-year-seasoned, French oak cooperage that line the walls of the cave. Finally, out to the foliage-covered pergola for lunch and a run-through of the wines. We were treated to a full lineup of all the single vineyard wines. It was fascinating to taste their nuances side-by-side with the experience of visiting each block so fresh in our minds. While all of us were in agreement that there wasn't a wine on the table that we wouldn't happily drink any day of the year, a few favorites did emerge.

2017 Calera Mt. Harlan Chardonnay (\$39.95)

Elsewhere \$50. While Calera may be best-known for Pinot Noir, their Chardonnay should never be overlooked. This powerful, mineral-infused wine, shows white floral notes, freshly baked apple pie, quince, subtle oak spice, and a saline, rocky undercurrent. Mostly from vines planted in 1984. **96 WE, 93 RP, 93 W&S**



A door of perception: Ralph Sands takes notes in Calera's wine cave, tunneled into the limestone bedrock.

2017 Calera "Mills" Mt. Harlan Pinot Noir (\$59.95) *Elsewhere*

\$80. The hands-down, unanimous favorite of the day among the Pinot Noirs was the 2017 Mills. This is from one of the most stressed, low-cropping blocks on the estate, from 37-year-old, own-rooted vines on a southeast-facing limestone escarpment. To me this wine perfectly illustrates why Calera and Mt. Harlan are so special. The wine has such a natural gravitas, an ethereal power and intensity without being heavy, extracted, or over-ripe. The structure is so fine and elegant. The balance of fruit purity and earthy, soil-driven minerality is exquisite. It's a Pinot Noir that to my mind can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the best of the best from anywhere on the planet. **97 JD, 94 VN**

2017 Calera "Reed" Mt. Harlan Pinot Noir (\$74.95) From a parcel of the oldest vines grown on the property. Reed was planted in 1975 to the Calera "clone," a selection of Pinot Noir of unknown but highly speculated upon Burgundian origin. The vines here are in clay-limestone and face due north, making this the coldest and latest-ripening block on the estate. A wonderfully complex juxtaposition of lifted floral high notes and sullen earthy, savory low tones. Energetic, tense, layered. **95 JD, 95 W&S, 94 VN, 94 WE**

2018 Calera "Jensen" Mt. Harlan Pinot Noir (\$99.95) Considered by many to be the "grand cru" parcel on the estate (though I think the entire property should be held in that regard.) Jensen is a multifaceted piece of land with four separate undulations, each with a different aspect and slope. The soils are rich in limestone and produce the most dense and brooding

wine on the mountain. Again, the vines here are original plantings from 1975. The wine is dark, deeply fruited, smoky, and powerful. Turned earth, leaf litter, perhaps even morel mushroom. Substantial structure promises a long life in the cellar. **95 WE**



A handful of dust: decomposed granite and pure limestone contribute to the terroir of Calera.



...And that's just part of the lineup of wines the team tasted.



Amador County: Where the grapevines meet the Ponderosa pines. Also, gray pines. (Photo courtesy of Terre Rouge and Easton Wines)

Myth-Busters of Domestic Wine

By Kaj Stromer

Contrary to some popular beliefs, wine styles from the U.S. have never been more dynamic and varied. Tasting across the spectrum you can find wines of every style and an ever-increasing surge in overall quality. The notion that domestic wines tend to be over-oaked and high in alcohol could not be further from the truth.

Over the past few months, my colleague Ryan Woodhouse and I have hosted a series of Instagram Live sessions titled “Myth Busters of Domestic Wine.” In each episode we featured specific wines that defy and debunk some of the dated stereotypes and generalizations.

As a buyer for K&L I enjoy an amazing level of exposure to so many wines. I am constantly in awe of how much has changed in the U.S. wine scene since I started at this 20 years ago.

So, in the spirit of myth busting, here are a few of my selections from two of our “Myth Buster” sessions. The hallmark U.S. red, Cabernet Sauvignon, continues its reign as king, while Zinfandel fell off the radar many years ago. It’s time to revisit both with a fresh set of eyes and a finely tuned palate.

Zinfandel: Resurrecting the Ancient Vine

Often considered America’s grape, Zinfandel captures the benefits of California weather and soil like few others. Fruity and spicy, Zinfandel became the darling of the barbecue crowd and was a dominant red throughout the ’90s and early ’00s. Its zesty fruit and assertive personality are a perfect match for ribs, tri tip, and other cuts of beef. These three selections epitomize how “old vine” vineyards can best be translated into your glass.

A former wine retailer in the Bay Area, Bill Easton turned his attention to the production of wine. His entry-level Zinfandel, the **2015 Easton Amador County Zinfandel (\$17.99)** is proof of what can be done in the hands of a master. This overachieving bottle will please the most discerning palates yet checks in at less than \$20. The 2015 vintage is the current release and, at nearly six years old, is now fully strutting its stuff. On the nose there’s a



co-mingling of subtle fruit aromas with a gorgeous streak of exotic spice. The wine is mellow and elegant on the palate and leaves the taster with a long, zesty, fruity finish. The savory and exotic nature of the Amador County bottling makes me think it’ll pair well with a spiced dish like Moroccan lamb tagine.

As the son of retired winemaker Daniel Baron (Dominus, Silver Oak), Sam Baron may be the scion of winemaking royalty, but he charted his own path. Once he learned all he could from his father and after he got his degree in enology and viticulture, Sam chose to step out from under the Cabernet-producing banner. He joined Kivelstadt Cellars in Sonoma in 2017. Founded by Jordan Kivelstadt, the winery embodies the most rustic and wild nature of Sonoma while sourcing fruit from organic and sustainably farmed vineyards to make restrained, elegant wines. The **2020 Kivelstadt “KC Labs” Mendocino County Zinfandel (\$24.99)** is a playful take on Zin. The wine is fermented carbonically in order to produce something reminiscent of Beaujolais. The result is bright, fresh fruit with the enticing aromatics of a fresh bowl of berries. Serve with a bit of a chill, and you’ve got the perfect red for late summer.



Finally, one of my favorite finds of the year is the **2020 Scar of the Sea “Old Vine Lopez Valley” Cucamonga Valley Zinfandel (\$28.99)**.

This must be the most exciting Zinfandel I’ve come across in years. Besides the fact that the wine is flat-out delicious, I just love that it’s sourced from one of the last holdout vineyards in Cucamonga Valley, just miles east of Los Angeles. This pre-Prohibition relic of a vineyard grows impervious to the highways and tract homes that surround it. Quite frankly, this is history in a glass. With 50% whole-cluster fermentation, you get a sexy, aromatically complex Zinfandel that beguiles the nose and the palate. There’s no excess weight and every component exists for a reason. Wildflowers, sassafras, wild mountain-grown berries, and forest floor all engage the taster. Thank you, Scar of the Sea, for making such a unique and category-defining wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon: What's Old Is New Again

Is Cabernet your father's wine? Indeed, for a new generation of wine drinkers, it may typify the kind of overwrought wine that the deep-pocket set elevated to status symbol in the past several decades. Yet today, there's an abundance of classically styled, terroir-driven Cabernet that bucks the trends, from producers who stayed true to their roots—perhaps, more like your grandfather's wine? Here are a few well-structured Cabs that remind us why America fell in love with the grape in the first place—I'd even suggest they offer a fair value!

Earlier in the year we secured a parcel of the **2017 Silenus "Tyros" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$19.99)** *Previously \$35*. As the first batch was a rather quick sell out, we've been reordering drops on a regular basis to meet demand. Truth be told, estate-grown Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon from a legit producer at \$20 can be a tall order to fill, but no, it's not a myth. The Tyros Cabernet is a plush, robust Cabernet, filled with bold fruit. The Silenus property in the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley was planted to vines back in 1968. The fruit has historically been sold to the likes of Silver Oak, Robert Mondavi, Inglenook, Clos du Val, and others. Their Tyros bottling includes both estate-grown fruit as well as purchased fruit from other select AVAs across the Valley. It's primarily Cabernet Sauvignon (77%), with Merlot (23%) rounding out the balance. The wine gets the same first-class treatment as their more expensive wines. It is aged for 22 months in 50% new French oak, 10% new American oak, and the rest in neutral barrels.



Vintner Tom Burgess was quietly making stylish, mountain-grown Cabs from the slopes of Howell Mountain for years. Long an unsung Napa hero, Tom Burgess was more concerned with making wine than selling it. As such, the wines frequently flew under the radar. But now there's a renewed interest and energy at the estate ever since it was purchased by the Lawrence family, also the new owners of Heitz Cellar. The **2015 Burgess "Hillside Estate" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$49.95)** is just starting to show its potential. There's plenty of bold fruit on the nose and the palate evokes a classic mountain Cab. There are proper mouth-gripping tannins that add structure and complexity. I served this with a bone-in ribeye which proved a perfect match. If you don't have a ribeye in your fridge, just pour yourself a tall glass and savor it in your favorite armchair. This remains one of my favorite Cab finds of the year.

Now celebrating their 50th anniversary, brothers Stuart and Charles Smith have quietly been crafting their singular wines on Spring Mountain all those decades, without much fanfare. The **2016 Smith-Madrone Spring Mountain District Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$49.99)** might possibly be one of the most distinctive Cabs in our inventory. The higher elevation of the hilltop vineyards results in a cooler climate perfect for elegant Cabernet Sauvignon. The first thing you notice about this wine is the intriguing blend of red and black fruit interlaced with aromas of dried herbs. It reminds me of some of the better Bordeaux from the Graves region. There's a distinct minerality that accompanies the palate. Each sip begs for another as the wine remains fresh and lively. But to be sure, this is no wilting flower. This is another example of hearty mountain Cabernet grown in the wilds of Spring Mountain. A perfect pairing might be an herb-crusted pork tenderloin.



Napa Valley and Vaca Mountains from way up at Smith-Madrone. (Photo: Matthew Denny)





The view from the ridge of Daou Mountain overlooking the winery.

Patrimony Estate: A “First Growth” in Paso Robles

By Kaj Stromer

Paso Robles’ rise to prominence has been noteworthy, to say the least. What once was a sleepy western town midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco is now one of the state’s preeminent wine-producing regions.



Daniel Daou explains the layout of his vineyard.

Most of the region’s claim to fame has been built on super-Rhône-style blends. However, one winery has bet the farm (winery?) that a world-class Bordeaux blend would be the region’s calling card.

Patrimony Estates is the dream fulfilled by brothers Daniel and George Daou. More famously associated with their Daou label, Patrimony is their statement to the wine world that the region can produce world-class Bordeaux-style reds.

In the words of the Daou brothers, Patrimony is “California first-growth wines fulfilling the Adelaida District’s destiny as the world’s benchmark for Bordeaux varieties.”

We took a drive earlier this year to visit with Daniel Daou and get an up-close look at the Patrimony estate. This stand-alone winery taps into the best of what Daou “mountain” can create. According to Daniel, it was their goal to create wines that compete head-to-head with the best of Napa Valley and possibly even the First Growths of Bordeaux. Anyone who’s ever spent time with Daniel knows that his drive and determination are peerless. It becomes quite obvious that when he sets a goal, he spares no effort in achieving it.

After our tour and tasting I had to admit that the wines were as good as many of the greatest wines I’d ever tasted. His ceaseless devotion to greatness has certainly put Paso Robles on the map of the world’s great Bordeaux blends. The wine press has lined up firmly behind these wines. Jeb Dunnuck wrote that the 2017 Patrimony “...is a magical wine and an incredible 2017. Bravo!”—ultimately awarding it 99 points. And William Kelly of Wine Advocate wrote, “This is a fabulous Cabernet Sauvignon from Paso Robles.”



The K&L team barrel tasting with the Patrimony team.

Availability is very limited. We currently have a small stash of the following wines in stock. For what it's worth, the wines are sold out at the winery and there is now a waiting list.

2017 Patrimony Adelaida District Cabernet Sauvignon (\$274.95)

This is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon aged for 30 months in new French oak. The wine is nothing short of a blockbuster and is as dark, dense, and powerful as they come. **99 JD:** "This rocking wine has a huge nose of deep black fruits, new leather, unsmoked tobacco, exotic spices, and chocolate. Full-bodied and stunningly concentrated, with awesome tannins, a stacked mid-palate, and just a gorgeous finish, it's a magical wine and an incredible 2017. Bravo!"



Daniel Daou in his new vineyard.

2018 Patrimony "Caves des Lions"

Adelaida District Bordeaux Blend

(\$274.95) This is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Cabernet Franc, aged in 100% new French oak. Much like the other bottling, the depth and power here transcend your expectations. Erin Brooks scores it **97-100** points in Wine Advocate: "Opaque purple-black in color, it has the most singular nose loaded with kaleidoscopic aromas: cigar ash, English breakfast tea, rooibos, hibiscus, iron, crushed stone, blackcurrant jam, blackberry pie, vanilla bean, Morello cherries, chocolate box, and cigar box. I've never smelled anything like this—it's like staring into a well of archetypal Cabernet Sauvignon. Medium to full-bodied, the satiny palate spreads its glorious flavor wings, with unbelievable melting tannins and seamless freshness, finishing very long and very layered. This is unreal!"



"Summer" in San Francisco? Yes, and Rosé Season Has Arrived!

By Ryan Woodhouse

With Halloween just around the corner, we're typically enjoying the best part of "summer" weather here in San Francisco and other parts of the Bay Area, at last! I personally drink rosé year-round, but it seems the fall is prime time for alfresco dining and day drinking around here, and we often see folks reaching for a nice, crisp, dry rosé right about now. The other great thing is that many of the 2020 rosés are really hitting their stride after a little more time settling in the bottle. So, here's a quick run-down of some of my go-to bottles to take you at least all the way to Thanksgiving—and even the holiday season.

2020 Tatomer Edna Valley Rosé of Pinot Noir (\$22.99) One of my favorites this year, packed with pronounced juicy red berry fruit, very flavorful, with a lovely mouthwatering tartness on the finish.



2020 Birichino "Vin Gris" California Rosé (\$14.95) Few wineries make a rosé as consistently delicious as Birichino. Mostly Grenache, Mourvèdre, Cinsault. Half of the fruit for this wine comes from vines more than 100 years old, including the 135-year-old Bechtold Vineyard.

2020 Gramercy "Olsen Vineyard" Columbia Valley Rosé (\$19.95) A new standout this year for me, this mostly Cinsault-based rosé has a wonderful combo of floral notes; ripe, soft, red fruit; and wet stone mineral. Absolutely delicious.

2019 Denman Ranch Sonoma Coast Rosé of Pinot Noir (\$14.95) Elsewhere \$25. As a value pick look no further. Early picked and direct pressed specifically for rosé, this dry, zesty, refreshing pink comes from a small vineyard in the cool Petaluma Gap. Husband-and-wife winemakers Colin (ex-Littorai) and Christina (ex-Flowers) crushed it with this pale, quaffable beauty!



Try Something New Without Leaving Your Comfort Zone!

By Ryan Woodhouse

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during shelter-in-place orders, we saw a marked shift in sales toward the biggest brands and most instantly recognizable wines. We could no longer welcome customers into the stores, or host public tastings to showcase our latest and greatest finds, and many folks opted to stay in their comfort zone and stick with known entities. So we pulled every string and deep connection we've built over the years to keep those staples in good supply.

With stores reopening earlier this spring and into summer, it has been so awesome to welcome in-store customers back again and to talk, in person, with real human beings about wine! Oftentimes when someone comes to me for a recommendation I start by asking them, "Is there a favorite wine or winery that you've consistently enjoyed?" It's typically easier for me to get an idea of someone's tastes by knowing a favorite wine versus them trying to describe the aromas, flavors, and textures they enjoy. As we all know, how a wine tastes is very subjective, and also quite difficult to put into words, especially if you're put on the spot! Generally, one word is enough to pinpoint someone's style—Caymus, Rombauer, Prisoner, Ridge. My favorite exercise then is to find something that is a little more unusual, less known, and often less expensive, for the customer to try without leaving their comfort zone, so to speak. So, since many customers are still shopping online or over the phone, I decided to try this same idea via *Wine News* and see if we can't find you folks some new favorites!

2020 Duckhorn Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc (\$23.95) Duckhorn is a perennial staple for us here at K&L. You'll typically find it floor-stacked in all our stores, and for good reason. It's one of the best and most consistent Napa Sauv Blancs out there. However, due to the fires and other challenges with the 2020 harvest, this wine is becoming increasingly scarce. But fear not! Check out this next wine...

2019 Kerr Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc (\$29.95) Just like Duckhorn's Sauv Blanc, Kerr's rendition includes a good chunk of Sémillon and a portion of barrel ferment to build texture and complexity. Fruit for this delicious bottling comes from none other than Stagecoach and Hyde Vineyards, some of the best sites in Napa. A perfect balance of ripe stone fruit, even slightly tropical passion fruit flavors, combine with mouthwatering acidity for a flavorful but refreshing wine. **93 JS**



2017 Silver Oak Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$83.95) Silver Oak is one of the most recognizable and best-loved brands in California. This Cabernet stalwart has been on our shelves from the very beginning in the 1970s and continues to be one of our top sellers in the category. However, if you want to try something new, or don't want to shell out \$80 or so, check out...

2018 Acclivity Vineyards Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$39.95) Here's a new label that I just tasted for the first time last month but was instantly impressed! A bold, powerful expression of Alexander Valley Cab, with wonderful varietal typicity and classic structure. Little surprise this wine impresses when you consider that winemaker and proprietor Kyle Kemp works his day job as the cellar master at renowned Staglin Cellars in Napa Valley, crafting \$300 bottles of Rutherford Cab! Very serious Cabernet for the money.

2019 Caymus Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$79.99)

Few wines in our inventory are as well known as Caymus Cabernet. It's an iconic, historic label with a long and storied past that helped put Napa Valley on the global stage. Famed for its rich, lush, mouth-filling fruit, this luxurious wine is a go-to for many folks. However, for 50% less you might consider the following selection... **92 WS**

2018 Cardano "1913" Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$39.95) Elsewhere \$50-plus. As Wine Advocate writes: "This is a hot newcomer to the Napa Cab scene and one worth jumping on board early!" This is a bold, fruit-forward Napa Cabernet that is lush, rich, and polished, and comes from a vineyard called Pritchard Ridge in the Atlas Peak AVA, which looks down on prestigious properties such as Chappellet, Continuum, Ovid, Bryant, and Colgin. Lots of rich, dark cherry, blackcurrant, boysenberry, and exotic vanilla oak tones, with a touch of crushed rock. Full-bodied, smooth and supple, this is drinking well from the get-go. It's an out-and-out crowd-pleaser that delivers a big, plush style without the typically inflated price tag! **92 RP, 92 JD**



A hush of fog falls over Husch Vineyards in Anderson Valley. (Photo courtesy of Husch Vineyards & Winery)

2020 Rombauer Carneros Chardonnay (\$36.95)

I'm hesitant to even recommend an alternative to the "Queen of Carneros," Rombauer Chardonnay, such is the fervency of her devoted subjects. However, even loyal Rombauer drinkers might like to try something else once in a while, right? OK, what if it's only \$20 and 94 points?

2019 Luna "Winemaker's Reserve" Napa Valley Chardonnay (\$19.99) *Previously \$45.*

Sourced from prime estate vineyards in Carneros, Napa's premier sub-region for Chardonnay, this wine is barrel-fermented in 40% new French oak and has wonderful richness and power, but is also well balanced and not over-the-top. Floral tones lead into aromas and flavors of lemon curd, peach cobbler, warm croissant, beautifully judged toasty oak spices, and some stony mineral hints. It has a round and satisfying texture but plenty of vivacity and freshness too. Jeb Dunnuck calls this "a terrific value" at the winery's suggested retail price of \$45. So, would he call our price of \$19.99? **94 JD**

2018 Goldeneye Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$39.95)

Duckhorn's Goldeneye winery in Anderson Valley continues to be one of our most consistently top-selling Pinot Noirs. Sourcing fruit from well-positioned vineyards the length and breadth of the valley, Goldeneye combines exotic, ripe, dark berry fruits with Anderson Valley's earthy, savory, forest floor elements. Folks who like this kind of silky fruit profile might want to check out the next wine...



2019 Husch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$19.99)

The late, great Jim Barr may have left us, but his love for Husch winery lives on among our staff at K&L. This longtime stalwart of Anderson Valley continues to produce some of the most impressive and exceptionally well-priced wines in the region. The 2019 Pinot is flat-out delicious. Elegant, silken fruit, lovely earthy spices, and soil tones that add complexity to the pure cherry and brambly fruit. A rocking value at \$19.99. **93 WE**

2018 Flowers Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (\$44.95)

Flowers is one of our favorites at K&L. Under the steady hand of winemaker Chantal Forthun, the wines here have never been better. A consistently elegant and nuanced expression of the Sonoma Coast, there are few wines I'm more comfortable recommending to people, as it's a proven crowd-pleaser. However, I was recently offered a parcel of a single vineyard, Sonoma Coast Pinot that I'd love to share with Flowers lovers out there... **93 JD**

2017 Ernest "The Wrangler" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (\$24.95)

Elsewhere \$50. Ernest is a small producer making some super cool wines from around Sonoma and Mendocino counties. "The Wrangler" Pinot Noir comes from Grand Vent Vineyard in the newly minted Petaluma Gap AVA (a sub-region of the Sonoma Coast AVA). The persistent cool winds in this area have produced a bright, juicy, energetic Pinot Noir with lifted spices and crunchy red fruit and leaf litter nuances. Did I mention it's 94 points and 50% off the original suggested retail price? **94 VN**





Namesake view from Westwood's Annadel Gap vineyard: Sonoma County's beloved Trione-Annadel State Park. (Photo courtesy of Westwood Wines.)

2019 Prisoner "The Prisoner" Napa Valley Red Blend (\$49.99)

Despite several ownership changes, and an increase in production and price point, The Prisoner continues to be a winning formula for folks who enjoy full-throttle red blends with bold flavors and a saturated, full-bodied palate. Many people have tried to create "the next Prisoner" and none have succeeded. However, might I suggest checking out...

2017 Westwood "Legend" Sonoma County Red Blend (\$29.99)

Elsewhere \$50. The aptly named Legend is rich, powerful, and positively packed with dense, dark, ripe fruit, exotic oak tones, bittersweet chocolate, and loamy earth. Ample and mouth-filling but also very polished and lush in texture. The blend (Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Mourvèdre, and Grenache) works beautifully on the palate, and the masterful skills of winemaker Philippe Melka are on full display. Apparently, Melka was very excited when making this wine as it really allowed him the freedom and flexibility to make the wine he wanted to make without being restrained or limited to a certain varietal composition. Jeb Dunnuck calls this a "delicious, plump, fruit-loaded beauty... a pleasure-bent, incredibly satisfying red blend." **92 JD, 91 WE**



2018 Opus One Napa Valley Bordeaux Blend (\$364.95) Pre-Arrival.

Few wines consistently garner the adoration of the critics as broadly as Opus One. And even fewer wines inspire such adoration among collectors. The new release of Opus One is highly anticipated every year as a benchmark wine on the quality and style of the vintage. Unfortunately, as nice as it would be, few of us can afford to drink \$360 Cabernet on a frequent basis. I'd love to suggest a similarly Bordeaux-inspired wine from just up the road in Rutherford that I believe will greatly resonate with Opus enthusiasts—and at a fraction of the price. **99 JS, 98 RP, 97 JD**

2018 Heir Apparent Rutherford Cabernet Sauvignon (\$59.95) Elsewhere \$150.

The 2018 Heir Apparent is one of my favorite wines of the year for the money. It's a beautiful, classically styled, Bordeaux-inspired Rutherford Cab that just hits all the right notes and is wonderfully balanced and complete. I've had three bottles over the last month or so and each one has impressed me to no end. It combines fresh, pure cassis fruit with crushed mulberry, complex cedar notes, leather, and dusty earth. In his glowing 95-point review, Jeb Dunnuck references the wine's "Pauillac-like bouquet," and I have to say, he's so right. This wine really smells, and to an extent tastes, like an elegant but powerful Left Bank Bordeaux wine from a great château. There's enough ripeness to the fruit and refinement of the tannins to drink young with great pleasure, but I suspect the wine's wonderful poise will make it a great long-term prospect for the cellar, as well. **95 JD**



K&L REDWOOD CITY

3005 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061
P (650) 364-8544 **F** (650) 364-4687
HOURS Tues-Sun 11am-7pm (Closed Mondays)
LOCKERS Daily 11am-6:30pm (Last Appt. 6pm)

KLWINES.COM

Toll Free (877) KLWINES (877) 559-4637
Email: customerservice@klwines.com

K&L HOLLYWOOD

1400 Vine Street, Hollywood, CA 90028
P (323) 464-WINE (9463) **F** (323) 836-0853
HOURS Tues-Sun 11am-7pm (Closed Mondays)

K&L EVENTS & TASTINGS

We host virtual events throughout the year. For the complete calendar go to KLWines.com/Local-Events.

K&L SAN FRANCISCO

855 Harrison Street, San Francisco, CA 94107
P (415) 896-1734 **F** (415) 896-1739
HOURS Tues-Sun 11am-7pm (Closed Mondays)
LOCKERS Daily 11am-6:30pm (Last Appt. 6pm)

CURBSIDE PICKUP

All locations daily, 11am-7pm

We accept American Express, Discover, Visa, Mastercard, and PayPal.



For Order Inquiries, Shipping Information, Local Events, Policies, and Up-to-the-Minute Inventory, visit KLWines.com

FOLLOW OUR BLOGS ON THE TRAIL AND SPIRITS JOURNAL FOR THE LATEST UPDATES FROM K&L