

Golden State, Silver Linings

By Ryan Woodhouse

As summer turns to autumn, 2020 continues to be a challenging year.

As I sit writing this newsletter, the Glass fire ravages Napa and Sonoma County wine country, and a pall of smoke overclouds the West Coast. The start to fire season this year has already been the worst on record for the region, and once again, people's lives and livelihoods hang in the balance. My heart goes out to those directly affected by the fires, and my eternal thanks goes to the firefighters who courageously battle those infernos. And, COVID-19, unfortunately, has not disappeared, and continues to impact all of our day-to-day lives. I want to say a personal thank-you to our staff and customers, who have both adapted to our new business model, heavily reliant on Local Delivery and Curbside Pickup.

I know I speak for my colleagues when I say we can't wait to welcome you back into our stores when the time is right, and thank you for your continued patronage during these unprecedented times. If 2020 has any silver lining, for us, it has to be the incredible breadth of offerings that have come our way during the past few months. As everyone scrambles to adapt to the "new normal," we've had some flat-out incredible deals and highly coveted allocations come our way to share with you all. Our entire buying team is continuously on the hunt for the next big hit or secret, under-the-radar find. To get this edition of Wine News kick-started, here are a few of the best Domestic deals you're likely to find anywhere:

2016 Black Kite "Kite's Rest Vineyard" Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (Price Hidden)

We just got another drop of this incredible Pinot Noir, already a top seller, direct from the winery! If you haven't tried this yet, I highly recommended you do to see what all the fuss is about! 50% off the regular price! 94WE



2018 Turnbull Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$39.95)

No scores on the 2018 yet, but I think it's set to be one of the wines of the vintage. Turnbull is making some of the very best wines in Napa Valley right now, and this bottling once again represents one of the finest values in Napa Cab.



2016 Matias "Rosella's Vineyard" Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay (Price Hidden)

Yes, you're seeing that correctly-Rosella's, at a price that's too low to show. Absolutely delicious Chard, with a beautiful balance of richness and restraint. from one of the most highly regarded (and expensive) vineyards in the Santa Lucia Highlands!



2015 Copain "Wendling" **Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** (\$39.95) Elsewhere \$60.

A real highlight for me, this truly magical bottle of Pinot Noir simply blew me away! And I wasn't the only one with Antonio Galloni of Vinous Media awarding 95 points and declaring it, "a total knock-out." 95 VN



Cover: Fall color comes to Pagani Ranch in the Sonoma Valley. (Photo: Ridge Vineyards)



Insider's Advantage: Hidden Price Gems!

By Ryan Woodhouse

Many of you will be familiar with our Insider's Advantage program, where we offer prices that are too low to show. We partner with wineries and distributors to sell through some wines, often at greatly reduced prices. They ask us to be discreet about the low prices, so we hide them from search tools like Google Shopping or Wine-Searcher. We also hide the prices on our own website, unless you're signed up for the Insider's Advantage mailing list and logged into your klwines.com account. This means amazing prices for you, and a bit of protection for the winery—it's a win-win! Here are few wines from the Domestic category that are currently featured with special hidden pricing:

2017 Calera Central Coast Pinot Noir (Price

Hidden) Sourced from some of the very best Pinot Noir vineyards in California (including Bien Nacido, Solomon Hills, and Garys'), Calera's Central Coast Pinot is a perennial favorite for me, and I think the 2017 release is their best effort ever. It's hard to believe they can make this wine for under \$30. Then factor in our extra special price that takes another 30-plus percent off that, and you have one of the finest value Pinot Noirs on the planet. And it's got the critical acclaim to prove it: 93 JD, 93 WE, 92 RP



2017 Chanin "Bien Nacido Vineyard" Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay (Price Hidden) For any of you who know me or have read my newsletter articles before, my obsession with this vineyard is no surprise. I just love Bien Nacido! For me, it is one of the most consistently high-quality sites in California. Seeing its name on a bottle is about as close to a guarantee of quality as you can get in the wine world. The best expressions of Bien Nacido are nothing short of world-class. Take this bottling from Gavin Chanin, for example. It's an absolutely stunning, complex, mineral-driven Chardonnay with incredible length and precision on

bring you their highly acclaimed wines at extra-sharp pricing that you have to see to believe! 96 WE, 94 JD, 94 VN, 93 RP

2016 Copain "Les Voisins" Yorkville Highlands Syrah (Price

the palate. We're working directly with Chanin to

Hidden) Now this one is just outrageous! Our winery-direct relationship allowed us to get the deal of the decade on this majestic 95-point Syrah from one of the region's most highly acclaimed producers and winemakers, Copain's Wells Guthrie. With other producers, such as

Halcón, the Yorkville Highlands AVA is quickly forging a reputation as one of the best terroirs in California for Syrah. The rugged hillsides and rocky schist soils produce wines of stunning concentration and depth. This has those classic Syrah qualities of purple flowers, peppercorn, smoky bacon fat, and wild forest berries. And the price—well, you'll just have to take a look. 95 W&S, 93 RP, 93 WE

2015 Lazy River "Estate" Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir (Price Hidden) Here's an under-the-radar wine that just knocked my socks off a while back. Lazy River is a family-owned estate that sells grapes to some of the most highly acclaimed wineries in Oregon. They also produce a small amount of their own wines. Winemaker Isabelle Meunier studied and trained in Burgundy and worked at top estates such as Domaine de la Vougeraie. She also worked in New Zealand for iconic producer, Felton Road. More recently she was the winemaker for Evening Land, and is a protege of winemaking legend, Dominique Lafon. This is a very classically styled, elegant, refined Pinot Noir. Red floral notes, dusty berry fruits, leaf litter, subtle spices, dry earth, hints of leather. Let it unfold in the glass and really savor this one. 90 RP





AVENNIA

2016 Avennia "Sestina" Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

(Price Hidden) We've had a string of incredible deals from Avennia in Washington State. One of the best is this 2016 Sestina Cabernet. This wine is clear evidence that Washington can produce Cab and Bordeaux-style blends that stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the best from the rest of the world. Winemaker Chris Peterson is a master of his craft, and these wines never fail to impress. They have a perfect blend of fruit purity and rich texture, balanced by beautifully managed tannin, and deft oak usage. Very classy stuff that should be on the radar of any serious Cabernet drinker.

95+JD, 94RP, 94JS, 93+VN



If you are already signed up for the Insider's Advantage list, you must be logged in to view the price



Best Buys Under \$30 from Santa Barbara County

By Kaj Stromer

There's just no doubt that Santa Barbara County, once a fledgling wine region, is now all grown up and producing some of the country's best wines.

Wine critic Jeb Dunnuck recently wrote a feature on the area, titled, "In Pursuit of Value: Top 24 Wines from Santa Barbara County for \$40 or Less." We've tasted extensively through many of these selections over the years, with countless winery visits, so we can attest to the incredible quality found across the price spectrum. There is no shortage of brilliant wine here, but we're going feature wines costing less than \$30 that over-deliver in quality. We're solidly stocked on some of the best wines we've tasted.

We've rounded up a list of our own top ten best buys for you to consider.

2018 Ojai Vineyard "McGinley Vineyard" Santa Ynez Valley Sauvignon Blanc (\$24.99) Adam Tolmach's Ojai Vineyards has been a quality leader for longer than I can remember. His single-vineyard Sauvignon Blanc straddles the line between top-flight Sancerre and white Bordeaux. The plentiful citrus and floral notes in this wine are rounded out by a touch of barrel aging. This is delicious upon release, and I trust it will hold nicely for a few years, only to get better. 93 VN, 92 JD



2017 Barden (Margerum) Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay

(\$24.99) Santa Barbara wine legend Doug Margerum is the man behind Barden—which happens to be his middle name. At Barden, Doug produces limited-quantity, boutique wines made from grapes solely sourced from the world-renowned Sta. Rita Hills. Stylistically, the wine nods at Chablis with a hint of zesty lime and orange scents. There's plenty of volume on the palate, all tempered by mouthwatering acidity. 94 WE, 92 JD

2017 Brewer-Clifton Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay

(\$24.99) Greg Brewer's wines have been turning heads as long as he's been making them. Few winemakers are as passionate and obsessed with building uniquely styled wines from this region. These are clean, singularly styled wines that intrigue both the palate and the mind. There's plenty of Golden Delicious apple, with a touch of flower and white peach. This is one of my favorite producers year in and year out. 95 JD



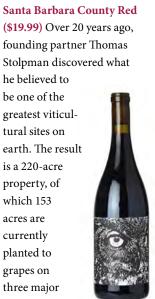
(\$29.95) No discussion of the Sta. Rita Hills is complete without the mention of Melville. They've been an anchor and a leader in driving the quality in this area. Also, they represent one of the best values in California winemaking. While determined to create world-class wine, they also strongly believe in offering it at a fair price. In a quote I once heard attributed to founder, Ron Melville, "I'd rather make a quick nickle than a slow dime." There's clean, bright fruit here—apple and pear—with crisp, bright acidity to keep the wine refreshing. 93 W&S

2018 Pence Ranch "Estate" Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (\$19.95) Say hello to a good buy! Owner Blair Pence has been developing this property over the years, and it's fair to say he's really turned this estate on the eastern edge of the Sta. Rita Hills into a significant player. A blend of nine clones yields a distinctive Pinot that is full of character. Crushed berries, licorice, mint, and a touch of whole-cluster savoriness. 92 VN

2018 Sandhi Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (\$29.99)

Local legend Sashi Moorman has a résumé few can compete with. He was the winemaker for Stolpman, created his own winery, Piedrasassi, and is co-owner in both Domaine de la Côte, Evening Land, and

Sandhi, with partner Raj Parr. The two of them have forgotten more about wine than most people know. Their entrylevel Pinot Noir drinks better than most others' top cuvées. The fruit is sourced from several prime vineyards throughout the area. The result is nothing short of sensational.



2017 Stolpman "Para Maria"

(Continued on page 5)

AVA Santa Barbara: The Lay of the Land

There's real rhyme and reason to the lay of the land here, which justifies the creation of several distinct AVAs (American Viticultural Areas). The western flank of Santa Barbara County is dominated by the cool Sta. Rita Hills. A cool climate with wide diurnal temperature shifts, along with a soil composite made up mostly of diatomaceous earth, combine to create some of the best land to plant Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Further inland and just east of the freeway, warmer temps and a splash of limestone offer auspicious sites for bold Syrahs and Rhône-style blends. Far to the east and closer to the San Rafael mountains, both the land the temps are suited to creating sleek Bordeaux-style reds and whites.

If you've been Santa Barbara wine curious, now is the time to take that deep dive. You'll be impressed by what you find in the bottle.

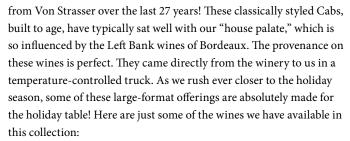


Mother Lode of Von Strasser Library Vintages

By Ryan Woodhouse

Earlier this year, I sent a note to the folks at Von Strasser inquiring about the possibility that any of their library wines might be available to us. The response I got surpassed even my wildest dreams! They sent a huge list of wines dating back to the late 1990s, in a variety of large formats (1.5L, 3L, 6L), and with very competitive pricing! For those of you not familiar with Von Strasser, here's a brief background before I list off some of the highlights of this treasure trove of wines.

Rudy Von Strasser founded his eponymous winery in 1990, but before that, he was already an accomplished and somewhat groundbreaking winemaker in his own right. Rudy was the first American intern to work at Château Lafite Rothschild in Bordeaux, for the 1985 vintage. After that, he worked in Napa for legendary winemaker John Kongsgaard at Newton Vineyards. In 1990, along with his wife, Rita, he purchased a property directly adjacent to the legendary Diamond Creek Vineyards, high in the Diamond Mountain AVA. There he set about crafting powerful, age-worthy, mountain fruit Cabernets that quickly gained a stellar reputation. The wines have long been favorites here at K&L—we've carried over 200 wines



Von Strasser Estate

These wines come from the original estate property. They're a more strict and age-worthy selection of barrels than the regular Von Strasser Cab that is bottled as a Diamond Mountain AVA wine.

2006 Von Strasser "Estate" Diamond Mountain District Cabernet Sauvignon (750ml \$49.99; 1.5L \$79.99) *Previously \$100 and \$200.* One of my favorites in the lineup, the 2006 still has tons of primary fruit. It's rich, full-bodied, and quite boisterous. Just starting to get some subtle bottle age character, and those mountain fruit tannins are beginning to relax a little. **93** *WE*

2007 Von Strasser "Estate" Diamond Mountain District Cabernet Sauvignon (1.5L \$79.95) *Previously \$200.* From a much-heralded vintage in Napa Valley, the 2007 Estate Cab is a forward, powerful wine packing tons of dark fruit, black currant, ripe plum, charred cedar, crushed rocks, leather, and cigar box notes. Ripe, soft tannins from this warm vintage mean this wine is drinking beautifully right now, but probably has at least another 10 years of prime drinking ahead of it. **94** *WE*

Von Strasser Reserve

Pretty obvious, really, this is the very best blocks and barrels from the estate, selected for the utmost power and longevity.

1995 Von Strasser "Reserve" Diamond Mountain District Bordeaux Blend (\$119.00) Previously \$200-plus. Robert Parker himself summed up this wine pretty well, upon its release in 1998: "This is an outstanding wine...formidably endowed, backward and tannic, but exceptionally dense, layered, and extremely rich...this superb Cabernet Sauvignon has a long, promising future." 92 RP

1997 Von Strasser "Reserve" Diamond Mountain District
Bordeaux Blend (6L \$999.99) Previously \$3,000. Yes, a six-liter
bottling (that's eight regular bottles of wine) of the legendary '97
vintage—Von Strasser's best and most age-worthy lots bottled in
this monster large format! What a bottle for a family gathering this
holiday season. And look at our price versus what the winery was
originally selling these super-rare limited edition bottles for!

Von Strasser Sori Bricco Vineyard

A single-vineyard bottling from a famed site at 900 feet in elevation. Very steep hillside blocks and rocky soils produce a powerful, complex Cabernet.

2008 Von Strasser "Sori Bricco Vineyard"
Diamond Mountain District Bordeaux Blend
(1.5L \$74.99) Previously \$200. This wine is showing great! Tons of black fruit, tobacco, crushed stone.
Full-bodied and lush, but with classic varietal structure. Try with roast lamb.

2007 Von Strasser "Sori Bricco Vineyard"
Diamond Mountain District Bordeaux Blend
(1.5L \$79.99; 6L \$299.99) Previously \$200
and \$1,000. Another gem of an '07 wine in its
prime. Soft, drinking well, plenty of primary
mountain fruit, but also some nice bottle
development characters, adding complexity.
An incredible deal at this price. 93 WE

2005 Von Strasser "Sori Bricco Vineyard" Diamond Mountain District Bordeaux Blend (1.5L \$99.99; 6L \$349.00) *Previously \$200*

and \$600-plus. If you're having a gathering this holiday season and you like to impress with a big bottle, the six-liter should be on your short list! From the absolutely stellar 2005 vintage, now with 13 years resting in bottle, this wine is rocking. OK, granted, I didn't taste it from a *Methuselah* (folks don't normally send 6L samples!) but I enjoyed the wine immensely. It's quite red-fruited compared with some of its kin; bold, pretty youthful still, full-flavored; with lots of dusty dry earth characters, leather, cigar box. Perfect tannins for a juicy piece of red meat—prime rib, anyone? 95 WE

Here's a link to all the **Von Strasser** wines we have in stock.



Ridge Vineyards: A Tradition Of Quality

By Ryan Woodhouse

In my opinion, Ridge is one of the most consistently high-quality producers in all of California, if not the world. I've been working in wine for a couple of decades, and almost nine years here at K&L, where we taste a *lot* of seriously good wine from around the globe. And in all those years, I've never been disappointed by a bottle bearing the instantly recognizable label of Ridge. Sure, there have been some highlights, like the five-decade retrospective of Monte Bello (all from large format) at Pebble Beach Food & Wine, or the private staff tasting with David Gates (Sr. VP of Vineyard Operations) here in our Redwood City store as part of our "After Dark" staff tasting series. But I have also enjoyed the wines at all kinds of casual events, tastings, barbecues, and parties, over the years. And whatever the occasion, whatever the wine (they make, like, a gazillion different wines), the consistency of quality is just about unparalleled in the industry.

Ridge has eschewed following fads or trends in winemaking, pursuing mass popularity, or whimsical critical acclaim. Instead, they have maintained pinpoint focus on what they believe produces the most authentic expressions of grape, place, and season from their wines.

Another thing to note is that, Monte Bello aside, almost all of their wines remain incredibly affordable— especially given their quality and pedigree. Even the great Monte Bello itself, with multiple 100-point scores for the 2017 release, remains significantly less expensive than many cult Napa Cabs that possess barely a fraction of the acclaim, history, longevity, and quite frankly, the quality the Monte Bello subtly exudes.

As I write this newsletter, we have just received many of the new 2018 releases from Ridge. They are simply spectacular across the board. The vintage provided almost perfect growing conditions across the state,

with a lack of dramatic weather anomalies or fire events that have plagued many vintages both before and after. The long, cool, end of summer and into fall allowed vintners to pick when they wanted, and grapes got physiologically ripe, while maintaining crucial natural acidity. I think that, especially for Zinfandel-based wines,



David Gates of Ridge Vineyards.

this is a benchmark vintage. Right as these wines hit our inventory, several top critics bestowed enormous scores on the wines, affirming what many of us had seen in the potential of the wines. Here are some Ridge wines currently in stock that I wholeheartedly recommend you check out from this stalwart producer for whom I have the greatest respect. Despite their reputation that precedes them, never do they rest on their laurels. Instead, they continue to put out wines that provide nostalgic relief to some, and newfound inspiration to others, with their timeless style and quality.

(Continued on page 6)

Santa Barbara Values (Continued from page 3)

limestone ridge lines. In 2009, Peter Stolpman took over the day-to-day management of the vineyards. He and his wife, Jessica, now run this highly respected estate in the heart of Santa Barbara County. The Para Maria bottling represents their 50-50 partnership with vineyard manager Ruben Solorzano. This forward, inviting wine is actually a blend of Syrah and Petit Verdot. It's surprisingly light on its feet, but possesses enough boldness to serve as a capable foil for all kinds of grilled meats. 91 RP

2018 Sans Liege "The Offering" Santa Barbara
County Rhône Blend (\$26.95) Sans Liege founder
and winemaker Curt Schalchlin, who also produces
wine under the Groundwork label, balances a
reverence for the traditions of the Rhône Valley
with the freedom of making wine in California's
Central Coast. The 2018 vintage of "The Offering"
is 39% Grenache, 36% Syrah, and 25% Mourvèdre. With a nod to
Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Curt ably pulls this one off. It's no wonder that
his wines are so popular around here.

2017 Beckmen "Estate" Santa Ynez Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

(\$21.99) Since the winery's founding in 1994, Beckmen wines have been made almost exclusively from two estate vineyards, the Thomas and Judith Beckmen Estate Vineyard in Los Olivos District AVA, and Purisima Mountain Vineyard in Ballard Canyon AVA. Their estate Cab is an eye-opening experience of just how good Cab from this area can be. This offering is dark, rich, and dense, and loaded with vanilla, spice, cherry, cassis, and black currant flavors and aromas. An eminently drinkable vintage, the 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon should continue to please your palate for another decade.

2015 The Paring (Jonata) Red Bordeaux Blend (\$24.99) Rounding out our "top ten" list, The Paring Red comes from Jonata, one of the premiere wineries in the country. Their top wines are labeled either as Jonata or The Hilt. Wines not bottled under those prestigious labels are bottled under The Paring label. The pedigree is first-rate, with top-tier estate fruit and winemaking. The result is some of the best value to be had in premiere California wine. 92 JD, 92 WE

PARING



Yesteryear's harvest is today's expressive, classic California vintage in a bottle—at a great price. (Photo: Ridge Vineyards)

Ridge Vineyards (Continued from page 5)

2018 Ridge Vineyards "Pagani Ranch" Sonoma Valley Zinfandel (\$29.95) Consistently one of my favorites from Ridge, this bottling tends to be a little more expressive and accessible in the early-going versus Geyserville and Lytton. From a stunning 100-plus-year-old vineyard whose fruit goes to some of the best Zinfandel producers on the planet. 95 VN, 95 JD

2018 Ridge Vineyards "Lytton Springs" Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel (\$37.95) An icon from Ridge, Lytton Springs is synonymous with Ridge, and one of their most loved and longest-running wines—first released with the 1972 vintage. The 2018 has incredible purity and poise. The old vine intensity of fruit is coiled and polished into a very focused wine with obvious aging potential, precise balance, and poise. Put this in your cellar while you drink the Pagani. 2018 Lytton is a 20-plus-year wine, for sure.

2018 Ridge Vineyards "Geyserville" Alexander Valley Zinfandel (\$37.95) Geyserville contains the oldest block of vines that Ridge farms—some blocks are 130-plus years old. Ridge has made a single-vineyard wine from here, every year, for the last 52 years. Ridge Geyserville is the epitome of classic, age-worthy, old-vine Zinfandel. Significant contributions from Carignane and Petite Sirah mean this is a formidable wine of power and structure. 95 JD, 94+VN

2018 Ridge Vineyards "Lytton Estate" Dry Creek Valley Petite Sirah (\$29.95) A wine that has a following here at K&L, this is a special

selection of Petite Sirah from Lytton Springs that gets its own bottling. From vines dating back as far as 1901, this wine is brooding and intense, with tons of black and blue fruit, scorched earth, and tobacco notes.

96 VN

2018 Ridge Vineyards "Three Valleys" Sonoma County Zinfandel (\$24.95) The most affordable wine in Ridge's stellar lineup of Zins is a blend of top vineyards sites across Sonoma County. Plenty of old vine fruit means this measures up well to its pricier siblings, and is specifically crafted to be approachable on release. This bottling never puts a foot wrong—and the 2018 is delicious. 93 JD, 92 WS

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2017 Ridge Vineyards "Estate" Santa Cruz Mountains Cabernet Sauvignon (\$59.95) This perennial sleeper wine is basically declassified Monte Bello, grown at Monte Bello estate, and produced with the same exacting farming and winemaking techniques as its big brother. Ridge's "Estate" Cab is simply barrel lots that are more approachable and fruit-forward than the lots selected for the flagship Monte Bello bottling—and it's almost four times less expensive! As Antonio Galloni writes: "Ridge's 2017 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon is a fabulous choice for readers who want a Monte Bello fix now, without having to wait."



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96 VN

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