

THE CALIFORNIA LIST

EDITION 1

FOREWARD

TO THE CALIFORNIA LIST

EDITION 1

The wine world is full of classifications. They may be hierarchical rankings of vineyards, or ratings of historic performance in the secondary market, but these classifications can help shape how consumers and the wine trade engage with a region.

When it comes to California, we wanted to create a list of our own. A list that did not focus on individual wines, but on the Producers that have been the most important in creating and driving the California wine category in the UK. A list of exceptional California Producers renowned for their quality and overall impact in the UK.

We could not create this list without a team of Judges with a profound depth of experience of California wine. This was not a wine competition, indeed there was no formal tasting as part of the judging process, but an exercise in bringing together a group of experts with diverse perspectives and opinions. The California List is intended to be a snapshot of California wine in the UK market at a single moment in time, so the inaugural List, this Edition 1, reflects the current state of play.

In the years to come, we will undertake this process again to discover new producers who the Judges believe are now worthy of a place on the List, and perhaps even some who no longer hold their spot.

Our thanks goes to the wonderful panel of Judges we assembled for Edition 1. Their enthusiasm and 'polite discourse' on the final make up of Producers was a great thrill for us to be a part of:

JANCIS ROBINSON MW, wine writer and founder of Jancis Robinson Purple Pages website.

STEPHEN BROOK, wine writer, Californian wine specialist and author of over 40 books on wine.

SARAH KNOWLES MW, wine buyer at The Wine Society.

MARK ANDREW MW, co-founder of Noble Rot restaurants.

RONAN SAYBURN MS, head of wine at 67 Pall Mall and Chief Executive of the Court of Master Sommeliers Europe.

ARNOT-ROBERTS

ARNOT-ROBERTS

Nathan Roberts and Duncan Arnot-Meyers helped reinvigorate interest in the cooler climate areas of California and get wine lovers excited in more restrained expressions of Chardonnay, and especially Syrah.

NOTABLE WINES

Trout Gulch Chardonnay Santa Cruz Mountains

Watson Ranch Chardonnay Napa Valley

Que Syrah Vineyard Syrah Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

Chiselled, refined, precise, elegant and always delicious, the Arnot-Roberts wines have been among my favourite Californian bottles since the moment I first tasted them. For my personal taste, the drinkability and finesse of their collection of wines puts them in my top 3 Californian wineries.

MARK ANDREW MW

Duncan Arnot Meyers and Nathan Lee Roberts virtually pioneered new wave California, seeking out unusual grape varieties and making delicate, truly 21st Century wines from them.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW



AU BON CLIMAT

Jim Clendenen proved the quality potential available from wines of Santa Barbara County, and helped the world recognize the balance, aging potential, and savoury depth possible from the region's Pinots and Chardonnays. He also served as mentor to many of the area's top producers.

NOTABLE WINES

Chardonnay and Pinot Noir Santa Barbara County

Sanford & Benedict Chardonnay and Pinot Noir
Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County

Bien Nacido Chardonnay and Pinot Noir
Santa Maria Valley, Santa Barbara County

Jim Clendenen did more than most winemakers to excite British drinkers about Californian wines, and his Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs rightly sit on the shelves of the UK's best wine shops.

MARK ANDREW MW

A true pioneer of Santa Barbara, with a sure-footed Burgundian approach and an effortless sense of balance.

STEPHEN BROOK

The wines from ABC always overdeliver offering fantastic quality, authenticity and balance at prices that don't break the bank, and with distribution that enables them to dominate as a natural global ambassador for Californian fine wine.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

BOND

BOND

Bond devotes itself to finding and showcasing premium hillside sites of Napa Valley, making wine only from what the team considers the region's Grand Cru for Cabernet Sauvignon.

NOTABLE WINES

Quella Napa Valley

Melbury Napa Valley

St. Eden Napa Valley

Vecina Napa Valley

Pluribus Napa Valley

Never easy to get hold of, but always a hedonistic pleasure to drink, the Bond wines represent a very Californian type of vibrant, silky red wine that always delivers.

MARK ANDREW MW

Meticulously made.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW



CAIN

Cain Five brings together the five Bordeaux varieties in a wine grown from the steep slopes of the Mayacamas Mountains. It has consistently demonstrated that Napa Valley red wines can deliver nuance and complexity beyond simple fruit.

NOTABLE WINE

Cain Five Cabernet Blend
Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley

Cain Cuvée Cabernet Blend
Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley

Cain Concept Cabernet Blend
Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley

*Followed loyally by Justerini & Brooks for many years.
Lovely wines from Napa's most thoughtful winemaker,
and they're consistent too.*

STEPHEN BROOK

CARDINALE

CARDINALE

The unique vision of Cardinale has been, since its founding, to make a single wine of Cabernet Sauvignon that showcases the best of Napa Valley. It brings together fruit from sites throughout the region to deliver one singular wine per vintage.

NOTABLE WINES

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Intrada Sauvignon Blanc Napa Valley

Part of the hugely successful Jackson Family Wines portfolio, Cardinale's winemaker Christopher Carpenter focuses his efforts on a single Cabernet each year. Often based on Mountain grown fruit, with a small proportion of merlot creating a cellar focused wine with great intensity, balance and minerality.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

An admired and consistent luxury brand.

STEPHEN BROOK

CAYMUS

VINEYARDS



CAYMUS

Caymus is known especially for their Special Selection Cabernet Sauvignon, made from a blend of what they consider their best barrel selections of the vintage with a focus on dark fruits, intensity, concentration, and impact.

NOTABLE WINES

Special Selection Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Dependably delicious, I'm always excited to find mature vintages of Caymus 'Special Selection', one of my favourite Californian reds.

MARK ANDREW MW



CHANIN

Chanin has devoted itself to single-vineyard wines of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grown in Santa Barbara County and made in a fresher, lighter, and textural style. They source fruit only from organic and sustainably farmed sites.

NOTABLE WINES

Los Alamos Chardonnay Santa Barbara County

Sanford & Benedict Chardonnay and Pinot Noir
Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County

Bien Nacido Chardonnay and Pinot Noir
Santa Maria Valley, Santa Barbara County

As a disciple of Jim Clendenen, for whom he worked, Chanin favours the same elegant and precise style. Fine quality here.

STEPHEN BROOK

Gavin Chanin is a thoughtful and extremely talented winemaker, whose ability for crafting harmonious, delicious wines is matched only by his flair for crating beautiful label art!

MARK ANDREW MW

CHATEAU MONTELENA

ESTABLISHED 1882

CHATEAU MONTELENA

Having made the award-winning Chardonnay that took top score at the Judgment of Paris in 1976, Chateau Montelena helped demonstrate California's potential for the variety, while also delivering quality Cabernet Sauvignon.

NOTABLE WINE

Chardonnay Napa Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Behind the fairy-tale ivy strewn castle façade is the home of one of Napa's oldest producers. Made famous at the now folklore-esq Judgement of Paris tasting where their Chardonnay came out top, nearly 50 years on and their Cabernet and Chardonnay continue to set a high benchmark for the region.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

colgin

COLGIN

Devoted to three rocky, hillside sites of Napa Valley, Colgin quickly became some of the most admired and coveted wines of the region, showcasing the power with seamless complexity possible from Cabernet Sauvignon.

NOTABLE WINES

Tychson Hill Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Cariad Cabernet blend Napa Valley

IX Estate Cabernet blend Napa Valley

Ann Colgin's cult status winery is rooted in her hillside vineyard sites, meticulous attention to detail and a commitment to achieving the highest possible quality.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Luxury, but not ripeness, taken to the limit. LVMH, who acquired 49% of this beautifully situated winery on Pritchard Hill recently, know a good thing when they see it.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW

CORISON

CORISON

Dedicated entirely to 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from the St Helena benchlands of Napa Valley, Cathy Corison celebrates the complexity possible in a fresher, more restrained style. She's been a long-time advocate of organic farming and preserving older vineyards as well.

NOTABLE WINES

Kronos Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena, Napa Valley

Sunbasket Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena, Napa Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Cathy is perhaps my favourite Californian winemaker. Humble, honest and ahead of her time, the Corison wines represent everything I believe Napa should aspire to. They are terroir-driven beacons of authenticity.

MARK ANDREW MW

Cathy Corison's Cabernets are some of the finest in Napa with restraint well balanced by pleasure with the ability to age beautifully for decades.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Greatly admired for being atypical wines of restraint rather than power. Stylistically consistent and can age well.

STEPHEN BROOK



DALLA VALLE

Grown on the eastern slopes of Napa Valley in the Oakville portion of the Vaca Mountains, Dalla Valle delivers age-worthy Cabernet Sauvignon. Their top-tier wine, the Maya, incorporates a healthy portion of Cabernet Franc as well for aromatic distinction unique from the region.

NOTABLE WINES

Maya Cabernet blend Oakville, Napa Valley

Napa Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville, Napa Valley

Collina Dalla Valle Cabernet blend Oakville, Napa Valley

Magnificent wines.

STEPHEN BROOK

This quality focused family estate has 20 acres in the eastern hillsides of Oakville. Farmed organically since 2007, and biodynamically since 2019, founder Naoko Dalla Valle describes herself as a farmer and is hands on in the vineyard while her daughter Maya has taken on the mantle of winemaker since 2017, with great critical acclaim.

SARAH KNOWLES MW



DIAMOND CREEK

Al and Boots Brounstein, who established Diamond Creek, were among the first in California to recognize the nuance possible from single-vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon grown in the mountains of Napa Valley. They helped lead the way in offering distinctive terroir-focused wine.

NOTABLE WINES

Lake Cabernet Sauvignon

Diamond Mountain, Napa Valley

Volcanic Hill Cabernet Sauvignon

Diamond Mountain, Napa Valley

Gravelly Meadow Cabernet Sauvignon

Diamond Mountain, Napa Valley

Red Rock Terrace Cabernet Sauvignon

Diamond Mountain, Napa Valley

Not only a stunningly beautiful and fascinating estate to visit, but also home to some of the most evocative and terroir reflective wines in the world. They age superbly and are my benchmark for great Californian red wines.

MARK ANDREW MW

On sadly rare, but notable occasions I have delighted in trying decades old cabernet from Diamond Creek cementing them in my mind as a benchmark for Napa Cabernet in all its layered complexity.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

DOMAINE DE LA CÔTE

DOMAINE DE LA CÔTE

Grown in the coldest portions of the Sta. Rita Hills in Santa Barbara County, Domaine de la Côte quickly established itself as one of California's best-known proponents of Pinot Noir. They have since also added very small volumes of one of California's most sought-after Chardonnays.

NOTABLE WINES

Bloom's Field Pinot Noir

Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County

La Côte Pinot Noir

Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County

Estate Pinot Noir

Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County

The wines of Raj Parr and Sashi Moorman at DDLC and Sandhi were exactly the antidote UK drinkers needed after years of being told Californian wine was about ripe fruit and big alcohol. Their vibrancy, precision and terroir-driven elegance still delight me every time I open a bottle. The 'La Côte' is a candidate for California's best Pinot Noir.

MARK ANDREW MW

Refreshing, savoury edged Pinots that are always a pleasure to drink and scream terroir.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Dominus

DOMINUS ESTATE

Dominus represents the unique combination of a signature site planted on a historically significant property that is stewarded by one of the world's pre-eminent winemakers. Christian Moueix has made Dominus on his Napanook site one of Napa Valley's most distinctive wines.

NOTABLE WINES

Dominus Cabernet Sauvignon Yountville, Napa Valley

Napanook Cabernet Sauvignon Yountville, Napa Valley

*Superbly polished, reassuringly elegant,
fine Napa Cabernet.*

SARAH KNOWLES MW

*Wines that age beautifully and so deftly tread the line
between elegance and vivid fruit.*

MARK ANDREW MW



DUNN VINEYARDS

Proving the power and aging potential of mountain tannin for Cabernet Sauvignon, Dunn and his work on Howell Mountain helped demonstrate how complex a single variety can be from the region. The wines show themselves best after at least fifteen years of age.

NOTABLE WINES

Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon

Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Randy Dunn crafted many of the best Napa wines I have drunk, and while the style has got riper in recent years, I'm still a sucker for the combination of density and freshness that is always present in the Howell Mountain bottling.

MARK ANDREW MW

Classic and long-lived. Old-school and balanced.

STEPHEN BROOK

EISELE VINEYARD

EISELE VINEYARD

A historic site on the eastern side of Calistoga, the Eisele Vineyard was one of the first in the region to be labelled and recognized as a single vineyard wine. Across various owners and winemakers, the site has demonstrated the finesse and longevity possible from rocky, benchland soils.

NOTABLE WINES

Eisele Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon
Calistoga, Napa Valley

Altagracia Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Eisele Vineyard Syrah Calistoga, Napa Valley

Purity and finesse are the hallmark of these wines, which I have always found to be among the most elegant examples of Napa.

MARK ANDREW MW

Francois Pinault's team has maintained the superb quality established by the Araujo family.

STEPHEN BROOK



FROG'S LEAP

An early advocate of organic farming, John Williams has also made a staunch commitment to dry farming in Napa Valley. Founded on Zinfandel, Frog's Leap showcases the lighter side of that cultivar, making wines of Cabernet and Merlot as well, all of which serve a meal and age impressively.

NOTABLE WINES

Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon
Rutherford, Napa Valley

Rachel Rossi Reserve Sauvignon Blanc
Rutherford, Napa Valley

Merlot Rutherford, Napa Valley

Zinfandel Napa Valley

On the site of an old frog farm, John Williams was an early adopter of organics, dry farming and modern sustainability technology creating some of Napa's best value and consistent wines. From his Zinfandel to his Cabernets his light touch and commitment to showcasing the purity of the variety means that these are always a personal favourite of mine.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Reliable and sensibly priced biodynamic winery, with well distributed Cabernet and Zin, especially in restaurants.

STEPHEN BROOK

Heitz Cellar

HEITZ CELLAR

Heitz Cellar's Martha's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon has long been one of Napa Valley's most famous wines. It and their other single-vineyard Cabernets demonstrate the age-worthiness possible with finesse from the region. They also make a rosé of Grignolino that has been made longer than any other rosé in California.

NOTABLE WINES

Martha's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon
Oakville, Napa Valley

Linda Falls Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon
Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

Trailside Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon
Rutherford, Napa Valley

Famed for being among the first in Napa to declare a single vineyard designation, it was a pleasure to taste older vintages of Martha's Vineyard at a visit in 2019 alongside various vintages of their other two single vineyard Cabernets from Howell Mountain and Rutherford all of which showed great class and individuality.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

A legendary winery. Older vintages of their Martha's Vineyard bottling certainly deserve the praise.

MARK ANDREW MW

HIRSCH VINEYARDS



HIRSCH VINEYARDS

One of the first to plant in the mountains of the far Sonoma Coast, Hirsch Vineyards grows Pinot Noir at high elevation on ridgetops within view of the Pacific Ocean. Hirsch has also shown biodynamic farming is possible in the region.

NOTABLE WINES

Estate Chardonnay Fort-Ross Seaview, Sonoma Coast

San Andreas Fault Pinot Noir
Fort-Ross Seaview, Sonoma Coast

Bohan-Dillon Pinot Noir
Fort-Ross Seaview, Sonoma Coast

Hirsch Vineyard is a spectacular site that proves beyond question the quality potential of the extreme Sonoma Coast, and their winery produces some of the state's finest Pinot Noir. Added to that, Jasmine Hirsch is a great communicator and wonderful ambassador for Californian wine.

MARK ANDREW MW

With incredible precision and finesse, Jasmine's Pinots are undoubtedly some of California's finest.

SARAH KNOWLES MW



HYDE DE VILLAINÉ

A partnership between famed Burgundy producer Aubert de Villaine, and long-time Napa grower Larry Hyde, the Hyde de Villaine wines offer a marriage of French elegance with California fruit.

NOTABLE WINES

HDV Chardonnay Los Carneros, Napa Valley

Belle Cousine Cabernet Blend

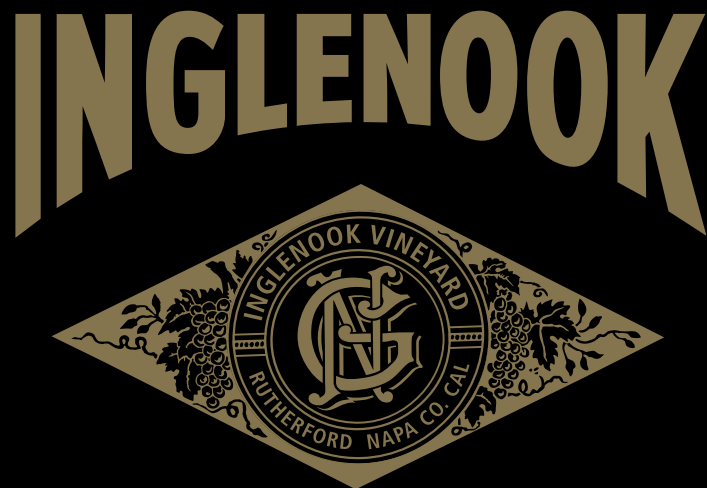
Los Carneros, Napa Valley

Burgundian legend, American wife, and her cousin Larry Hyde. A partnership that results in very stylish Chardonnays.

STEPHEN BROOK

Consistently delicious Chardonnay from a wonderful vineyard, that has long been available to UK drinkers.

MARK ANDREW MW



INGLENOOK

The history of Inglénook is almost unsurpassed in California. Its founder, Gustave Niebaum purchased the property in the late 1800s and helped uncover the best varieties for the region as well as advances in viticulture. Owner Francis Ford Coppola restored the property to its original name of Inglénook, today offering some of the region's most respected wines.

NOTABLE WINES

Rubicon Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford, Napa Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon Rutherford, Napa Valley

Blancaneaux Viognier, Marsanne, Roussanne
Rutherford, Napa Valley

Taste the fascinating conjunction of Rutherford dust and the techniques of the winemaker at Château Margaux in Bordeaux - with the little bit of Coppola dust sprinkled on the top.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW

A Rutherford classic.

STEPHEN BROOK

JOSEPH PHELPS

VINEYARDS

JOSEPH PHELPS

Founder Joseph Phelps was known for his innovative drive and ability. In the 1970s, he released the first commercial American bottling of Syrah helping to instigate broader curiosity for Rhone varieties. Even more impactfully, he also launched California's first Bordeaux blend bottled with a proprietary name, Insignia. The simple act of giving the wine its own name helped highlight the uniqueness of California wine.

NOTABLE WINES

Insignia Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Backus Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon
Oakville, Napa Valley

Freestone Vineyards Pinot Noir
Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

*Highly respected and iconic winery in Napa Valley
curating benchmark wines.*

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Kistler

KISTLER

Kistler established a celebrated expression of especially California Chardonnay, though also Pinot Noir. The wines also helped bring attention to distinctive clonal selections and more coastal, as well as high elevation vineyards of Sonoma County.

NOTABLE WINES

Durell Vineyard Chardonnay

Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

Laguna Ridge Vineyard Chardonnay

Russian River Valley, Sonoma County

Kistler Vineyard Chardonnay Sonoma County

A true pioneer of fine Sonoma Pinot Noir and, especially, Chardonnay. Kistler has now been joined by many others, some of whom have cooler sites, but Kistler lead the way.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW

Many years ago, the Kistler wines were what I'd pour to impress drinkers who were sceptical about the quality of California Chardonnay. Now they are justly revered around the world for their combination of hedonistic richness and energetic verve.

MARK ANDREW MW

K O N G S G A A R D

KONGSGAARD

When John Kongsgaard established his eponymous winery in the 1990s, he brought with him an already influential approach for Chardonnay. He is known for having bottled the first unfiltered, extended barrel-age example from the variety in the state.

NOTABLE WINES

The Judge Chardonnay Napa Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

For me, Kongsgaard produce California's finest and most authentic Chardonnays, marrying sunkissed ripeness and succulent texture with an exquisite sense of tension and detail. They are world class white wines that are befitting of the stunning location where they are made.

MARK ANDREW MW

These wines always have sunny ripeness that makes them great ambassadors for California wine, but grit and soul too. Nice labels too!

JANCIS ROBINSON MW



KUTCH

The first vintages of Kutch featured higher octane styles of Pinot Noir but over time he has shifted to a more restrained expression with a focus on freshness and has also added Chardonnay to his portfolio. He is especially known for his wines of Sonoma County.

NOTABLE WINES

McDougall Ranch Pinot Noir

Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

Falstaff Vineyard Pinot Noir

Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

Chardonnay Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

Jamie Kutch was the first of the new generation of Californian wineries to find their way to the UK, and he has built a strong following among our collectors, sommeliers and merchants for his beautifully crafted Pinot Noirs. The Kutch wines are always beautifully representative of their vineyard source, and few winemakers are more committed to honing their craft than Jamie.

MARK ANDREW MW

Jamie Kutch works extremely hard - all his own work - to produce textbook transparent Pinots and to let the world know about them.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW



Littorai

LITTORAI

Ted and Heidi Lemon helped change farming practices on Pinot Noir grown in cool climate regions of Sonoma and Mendocino counties. Their influence has helped shift more vineyards to organic and biodynamic farming, which they practice on their estate sites as well. Though they are known for Pinot Noir, Littorai also makes savoury Chardonnay and racy Chenin Blanc in small volumes.

NOTABLE WINES

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

The Pivot Vineyard Pinot Noir
Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

B.A. Thieriot Vineyard Chardonnay
Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

One of California's great winemakers, Ted Lemon has always brought a Burgundian sensibility to bear on his delicious wines, without them ever lacking in Californian joy and generosity. His commitment to biodynamic viticulture and artisanal winemaking have always endeared him to those of us that seek out authentic wines.

MARK ANDREW MW

Burgundy-trained, modest but deeply committed to biodynamic cool-climate wines. Very influential.

STEPHEN BROOK



MATTHIASSEN

With a focus on a lighter, more restrained style, Matthiasson makes wines only from sites where they also help lead the farming. With vineyards in both Napa and Sonoma Counties, they tend to focus on the cooler parts of Northern California.

NOTABLE WINES

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Linda Vista Chardonnay Napa Valley

White Blend Napa Valley

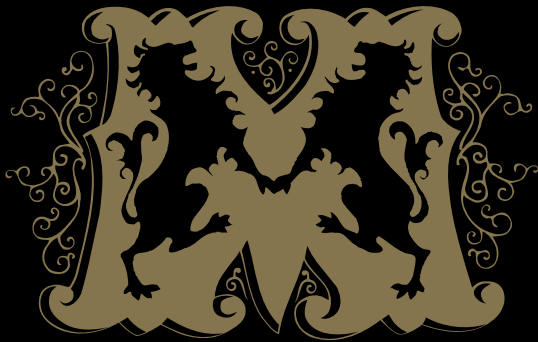
Steve and Jill Matthiasson are truly leaders of the younger generation of California wine producers, experimenting with the most sustainable techniques and Steve is a highly respected consultant viticulturist to boot.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW

Farmers first, Steve and Jill Matthiasson have grown an eclectic range of wines that showcase their skill and focusing on elegance and balance.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

MAYACAMAS



MAYACAMAS

Mayacamas established itself with a reputation for more old-world style Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay grown from the coolest stretch of the Mayacamas Mountains. It is a historic site planted at high elevation and is made in the celebrated wineries concrete tanks and aged in its hillside cave.

NOTABLE WINES

Cabernet Sauvignon Mt. Veeder, Napa Valley

Chardonnay Mt. Veeder, Napa Valley

One of the most venerable names in Californian wine has been lovingly restored to its former glory, and now the new releases are every bit as exciting as the great wines of Mayacamas' storied past. An absolute must for anybody building a cellar of Napa's finest wines.

MARK ANDREW MW

Housed in the original stone winery, this mountainside Napa estate continues to make some of California's most cellar worthy wines.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Mount Eden Vineyards

MOUNT EDEN VINEYARDS

One of the most renowned wineries of the Santa Cruz Mountains, Mount Eden Vineyards connects all the way back to some of the first Chardonnay and Pinot Noir ever brought to California in the 1800s. The wines are grown on ridgetops surrounded by conifer forest. Today they are also known for their Cabernet Sauvignon.

NOTABLE WINES

Estate Chardonnay Santa Cruz Mountains

Estate Pinot Noir Santa Cruz Mountains

Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Santa Cruz Mountains

A rival to Ridge's Santa Cruz Mountain Cabernets and Chardonnays in quality if not in style.

STEPHEN BROOK

Fantastic people, incredible place and delicious wines. It is rare that a winery produces top drawer examples of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon, but Mount Eden nails all three varieties every vintage.

MARK ANDREW MW



OPUS ONE

Opus One was founded as a celebrated collaboration between Baron Philippe de Rothschild of Château Mouton Rothschild and Robert Mondavi to make one wine, a Bordeaux Blend based on Napa Valley Cabernet. It was released as the most expensive wine of the region at the time and continues to be one of its most well-known and celebrated.

NOTABLE WINES

Cabernet Blend Oakville, Napa Valley

I'm sure I'm not the only wine lover for whom Opus One was their first 'super premium' Californian wine. To this day, a bottle of Opus is a treat, always striking the balance between Californian ripeness and the structure of Bordeaux. Opus is an iconic wine that represents an important chapter in the Californian wine story.

MARK ANDREW MW

A masterclass in superbly balanced Cabernets of admirable consistency, but also in large volumes.

STEPHEN BROOK

A partnership that has created a world class Californian wine with a perceptible French thumb print.

SARAH KNOWLES MW



PETER MICHAEL

Peter Michael helped reveal the quality possible from single-vineyard Sauvignon Blanc in California. Their age-worthy Cabernet-based cuvées grown on the slopes of Knights Valley have also demonstrated the prestige possible from the variety in Sonoma County. From the far Sonoma Coast, they also make Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

NOTABLE WINES

Ma Belle-Fille Chardonnay
Knights Valley, Sonoma County

L'Après-Midi Sauvignon Blanc
Knights Valley, Sonoma County

Ma Danseuse Pinot Noir
Fort Ross-Seaview, Sonoma County

Au Paradis Cabernet Blend Oakville, Napa Valley

Britain's ambassador to the California wine scene is the owner, Sir Peter Michael, who invested in this winery twixt Sonoma and Napa decades ago.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW

Undeniably rich and full-throttle, there are bottles of Peter Michael wines that couldn't taste any more stereotypical as the bombastic Californian fine wine. And yet, it's impossible not to be impressed by the density and power of their best wines.

MARK ANDREW MW

RADIO-COTEAU

RADIO-COTEAU

Radio-Coteau makes some of the most exciting and savoury Syrah in California. Their Pinot Noir focuses on dynamic, cooler-climate sites from Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. Both capture the more savoury and mouth-watering side of California wine.

NOTABLE WINES

La Neblina Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

Las Colinas Syrah Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

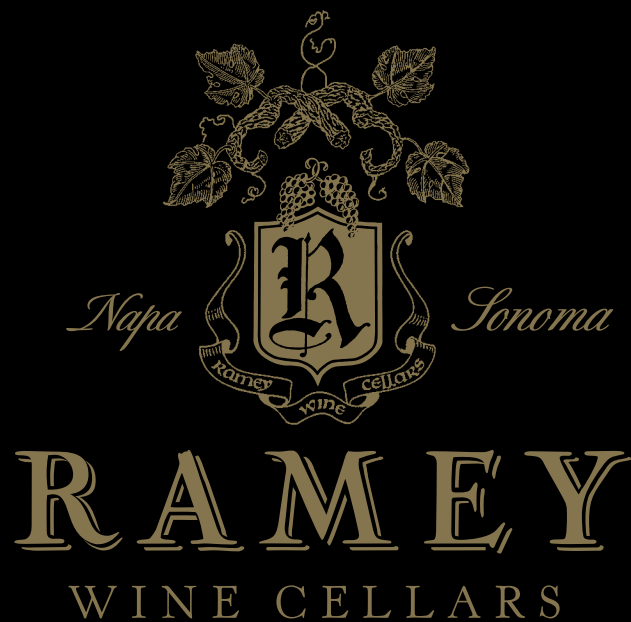
Savoy Vineyard Chardonnay
Anderson Valley, Mendocino

Proving yet again that with the right sites and skills delicately perfumed and elegant Pinots are a joy from Sonoma.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Lovely wines of elegance and balance, the Pinots in particular are delicious and well worth seeking out by fans of a more restrained style.

MARK ANDREW MW



RAMEY

Bringing more than 40-years of experience to the variety, David Ramey helped transform expectations for California Chardonnay by integrating techniques from the best of Burgundy into the character of California fruit. He works with iconic vineyards of both Napa and Sonoma counties.

NOTABLE WINES

Ritchie Vineyard Chardonnay
Russian River Valley, Sonoma County

Hyde Vineyard Chardonnay Los Carneros, Napa Valley
Chardonnay Russian River Valley, Sonoma County

Syrah Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County

David Ramey is one of California's most highly regarded winemakers who has pioneered viticultural and vinification techniques influencing others and creating a style for his wines that is entirely his own.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Best known for often glorious ripe Chardonnays, but fine reds too. Very influential.

STEPHEN BROOK

For many years the Ramey Chardonnays flew the Californian flag in the UK, but the red wines are excellent too.

MARK ANDREW MW

RIDGE VINEYARDS

RIDGE

Ridge holds a unique place in California wine. Monte Bello is considered one of the best wines of the world, showing what the state can do with mountain Cabernet. But they also elevated the perception of Zinfandel field blends, focusing on the quality of old vineyards especially in Sonoma.

NOTABLE WINES

Monte Bello Cabernet Blend Santa Cruz Mountains

Estate Chardonnay and Cabernet
Santa Cruz Mountains

Lytton Springs Zinfandel Blend
Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma County

Geyserville Zinfandel Blend
Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma County

California's first growth in every way - and via American oak too! I so admire Ridge's long-standing commitment to old vines and to exporting to the UK through thick and thin, as well as their non-rapacious pricing policy. Brilliant wines, brilliant winery.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW

A truly world class winery that is a reference point for consistency, value and wines that will thrill everyone from the beginner to the connoisseur. The winery that has done more than any other to convince the UK that California belongs at the wine world's top table.

MARK ANDREW MW

Ridge is the gold standard for high quality across a wide range of wines. A tasting with Eric and Paul at Monte Bello will always stand out as one of the most enlightening and gratifying tastings of my career.

SARAH KNOWLES MW



ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY

Founder Robert Mondavi helped put California wine on the world stage. His re-discovery of the To Kalon vineyard also elevated interest in wines grown on the Oakville benchlands of Napa Valley. And his Fumé Blanc demonstrated its worth taking white wine seriously.

NOTABLE WINES

To Kalon Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon

Oakville, Napa Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Fumé Blanc Napa Valley

What Robert Mondavi did for California wine is incalculable and it's always worth acknowledging this via one of this producer's dependable bottles.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW

It's impossible to deny the legacy of Robert Mondavi and the impact that he and his wines had on the wine world.

MARK ANDREW MW



ROEDERER ESTATE

ROEDERER ESTATE

Roederer Estate continues to be regarded as one of California's premier sparkling wines. They were one of the first instances of an established Champagne house investing in an estate designed for sparkling wine in California. Their effort also helped draw attention for the Anderson Valley of Mendocino, where they are located.

NOTABLE WINE

Brut Anderson Valley, Mendocino

Brut Rosé Anderson Valley, Mendocino

Stylish sparkling that sits alongside classic traditional method wines from around the world.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Together with Schramsberg, probably the best Californian fizz, as it has been for many years.

STEPHEN BROOK



Sandhi

SANDHI

Founded in 2010 by renowned sommelier Raj Parr and made in partnership with winemaker Sashi Moorman, Sandhi makes savoury and fresh Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from historic vineyards of Santa Barbara County.

NOTABLE WINES

Bentrock Chardonnay

Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County

Sanford & Benedict Chardonnay

Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County

Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay

Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara County

Santa Barbara Chardonnay Santa Barbara County

The 'Sanford & Benedict' Chardonnay from Sandhi was the first new generation white from California that grabbed my attention, and I was not alone. The electric energy of the Sandhi wines convinced a new generation of drinkers and sommeliers to approach California with fresh eyes (and palates), and they have been instrumental in changing the perception of Californian wine in the UK.

MARK ANDREW MW

These Chardonnays ably walk the tightrope of modern and traditional winemaking creating extremely fine, often saline edged Chardonnays.

SARAH KNOWLES MW



SCHRAMSBERG

Originally founded in the 1800s by Jacob Schram, Schramsberg has continued to be recognized as one of California's top sparkling wine houses. It is unique for offering some cuvées released only after extended tirage. It is regularly featured at state functions and poured for United States' presidents.

NOTABLE WINES

J Schram Vintage North Coast

Blanc de Blancs North Coast

Blanc de Noirs North Coast

Brut Rosé North Coast

Full-bodied fizz, reflecting their origin, but with power and finesse too.

STEPHEN BROOK

Lovely to see one of the early successes of modern Napa Valley being handed down successfully from one generation to the next.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW



SCREAMING EAGLE

Though Screaming Eagle remains a bit of an enigma, keeping its location largely secret and eschewing estate tours, the wines continue to be among California's most coveted. They focus on regenerative farming, and only commercially release the best of each vintage with their flagship Cabernet-based wine, as well as a Merlot-based blend known as The Flight.

NOTABLE WINES

Screaming Eagle Cabernet Sauvignon
Oakville, Napa Valley

The Flight – Merlot Blend Oakville, Napa Valley

Screaming Eagle Sauvignon Blanc
Oakville, Napa Valley

The benchmark ultra-high quality boutique winery that inspired a generation of imitators. Quintessentially Californian in the best possible way.

MARK ANDREW MW

EST. 1895

SEGHECIO

FAMILY VINEYARDS

SEGHECIO

Seghesio is known for both old vine field blends of Zinfandel, and their dedication to Italian varieties. Their wines include historic clonal selections brought from Italy in the late 1800s. The vineyards include some of the plantings of the original Italian-Swiss Colony of that time, as well as the oldest plantings of Sangiovese in the United States.

NOTABLE WINES

Old Vine Zinfandel Sonoma County

Home Ranch Zinfandel
Alexander Valley, Sonoma County

Championing arguably California's flagship variety - Seghesio focus on no holds barred, single-vineyard Zinfandels that carefully tread the line showing the much-loved power and character of this variety with surprising balance, which gets even better with age.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Producer of a set of forceful single-vineyard Zins that almost always show fine balance.

STEPHEN BROOK

Shafer

NAPA VALLEY WINES

SHAFER

Shafer established a noteworthy style of lush, generous, yet also age-worthy wine with their Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon. They also showed that it was possible to not only ripen the variety but make compelling wines in the area now known as the Stag's Leap District.

NOTABLE WINES

Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon

Stag's Leap District, Napa Valley

Red Shoulder Ranch Chardonnay

Los Carneros, Napa Valley

Relentless Syrah Napa Valley

With a distinct Shafer-style that runs through the range, this family winery produces wines with distinction and particularly well integrated velvety tannins on the reds, where the "Hillside Select" tops the set.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Plush and glossy, and therefore not always the first Californian wines I would reach for, they are nevertheless a benchmark for the style and 'Hillside Select' is an impressive wine.

MARK ANDREW MW



SILVER OAK

SILVER OAK

For more than forty years, Silver Oak has made one of America's most-loved Cabernet Sauvignon from both Napa Valley and Alexander Valley. More recently they created the first production facility to successfully earn the Living Building Challenge, one of the world's strictest sustainability certifications.

NOTABLE WINES

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon
Alexander Valley, Sonoma County

From their stunning state of the art winery this pair of hand-crafted polished cabernets showcases the unique styles from Napa and Alexander Valleys. These wines also tread the line with balance and youthful vibrancy on release yet also the ability to age well for decades.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

Very enjoyable crowd-pleasing Cabs from two counties.

STEPHEN BROOK



SINE QUA NON

The epitome of a cult winery, Sine Qua Non is known for its limited production wines made from a blend of Rhone varieties. The wines also inspire collectors for the ever-changing art pieces featured as labels and created by winemaker-artist-owner Manfred Krankl.

NOTABLE WINES

Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre and Blends
Santa Barbara County

Manfred Krankl's Sine Qua Non is the textbook example of a cult winery. Tiny volumes of limited edition (one time only) bottlings, strictly controlled mailing list distribution, prices that rocket on the secondary market after release, and wonderfully artistic packaging.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW

SPOTTSWOODE

A Family Wine Estate



SPOTTSWOODE

Spottswood is known for its forty-years of estate grown Cabernet Sauvignon. The winery has also made a strong commitment to climate action, social responsibility, and sustainability by ensuring their business, employee, and farming practices all support these efforts.

NOTABLE WINES

Estate Cabernet Sauvignon St. Helena, Napa Valley

Lydenhurst Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley

One of my absolute favourite producers anywhere, run with real care and integrity, an early adopted of organic viticulture and an early signup to the estimable International Wineries for Climate Action.

JANCIS ROBINSON MW



STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS

STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS

The famed red wine to win the Paris Tasting of 1976, Stag's Leap Wine Cellars showed the world Napa Valley could make outstanding Cabernet Sauvignon. Founder, Warren Winiarski has gone on to influence winegrowing in not only California but even Colorado and Australia. He continues to fund research initiatives to support both the history and future of the wine industry.

NOTABLE WINES

S.L.V. Cabernet Sauvignon
Stag's Leap District, Napa Valley

Fay Cabernet Sauvignon
Stag's Leap District, Napa Valley

Artemis Cabernet Sauvignon
Stag's Leap District, Napa Valley

Karia Chardonnay Napa Valley

Arguably one of Napa's most iconic wineries whose cabernet was so successful at the now legendary Judgment of Paris tasting yet nearly 50 years on are still crafting very classic collector worthy cabernets.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

The Judgement of Paris was obviously the start of this winery's fame, but for many years after that Winiarski proved that it wasn't a flash in the pan. Today the wines remain a welcome sight on wine merchant shelves and restaurant wine lists across the UK.

MARK ANDREW MW



TABLAS CREEK

Though Tablas Creek did not start the Rhone-wine movement in California, they've done more than any other producer to advance it. Tablas Creek now grows all 18-varieties of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, many of which they brought into California for the first time. Their investment in regenerative farming has also helped transform what others see as possible in Paso Robles.

NOTABLE WINES

Esprit de Tablas Adelaida District, Paso Robles

Cotes de Tablas Adelaida District, Paso Robles

Patelin de Tablas Adelaida District, Paso Robles

With one boot firmly in the vineyards of Château de Beaucastel in the Rhône valley Tablas Creek lead the way in championing the Rhône varieties, selecting Paso Robles as the ideal region. Curating a huge range of characterful and fascinating wines, Tablas are continuing to be a pioneer as the world's first regenerative organic winery.

SARAH KNOWLES MW

The right place at the right time for Rhone varieties. Charming wines, especially whites, expertly made.

STEPHEN BROOK



TURLEY

Turley's commitment to preserving older vineyards, to Zinfandel, and to organic farming helped build a movement in the state for each. Their investment in old vines extends to other varieties as well. Their Hayne Vineyard Petite Syrah, grown in the benchlands of St Helena, is considered by many to be one of the most important wines in the state for how it shows Napa can do more than just Cabernet.

NOTABLE WINES

Hayne Vineyard Petite Syrah St Helena, Napa Valley

Cedarman Zinfandel Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

Kirschenmann Vineyard Zinfandel
Mokelumne River, Lodi

Juvenile Zinfandel California

With total devotion to Zinfandel and especially old vines Larry Turley and Tegan Passalacqua now make more than 40 wines showcasing the nuances of this often-pigeonholed variety. Some of the most complex aromatic reds that develop incredibly over time.

SARAH KNOWLES MW



VÉRITÉ

Established by the late Jess Jackson, Vérité made a name for itself through its devotion to deliver three different Bordeaux blends – one Merlot-based, one primarily Cabernet Sauvignon, and the third focused on Cabernet Franc. The wines take inspiration from the famed French region to showcase the distinctiveness and diversity of Sonoma County.

NOTABLE WINES

La Muse Merlot Blend Sonoma County

La Joie Cabernet Blend Sonoma County

Le Désir Cabernet Franc Blend Sonoma County

California reinterpretations of classic Bordeaux regional styles. Much more California than Bordeaux, but impressive depth of fruit.

STEPHEN BROOK

WILLIAMS SELYEM



WILLIAMS SELYEM

Williams Selyem was among the first to make the world realize California could deliver outstanding Pinot Noir. Co-founder Burt Williams helped bring attention to some of Sonoma's preeminent vineyards and newer growing regions. Today they continue to make single-vineyard wines from an array of sites throughout the cooler, western-side of Sonoma.

NOTABLE WINES

Foss Vineyard Pinot Noir
Russian River Valley, Sonoma County

Russian River Valley Pinot Noir
Russian River Valley, Sonoma County

Estate Vineyard Chardonnay
Russian River Valley, Sonoma County

The estate that put Californian Pinot Noir on the map in the 80s and 90s.

STEPHEN BROOK

For a long time Williams Selyem made perhaps the best Pinot Noir in California. The winery's iconic label still turns heads and the 'Coastlands' or 'Estate' bottlings are worth seeking out.

MARK ANDREW MW



MENDOCINO

SONOMA
COUNTY

NAPA
VALLEY

LODI

SAN FRANCISCO

CENTRAL COAST

CALIFORNIA

SANTA
BARBARA

LOS ANGELES

PACIFIC OCEAN

