

# CALIFORNIA UNCORKED!

## **Pinot Noir, Brewer-Clifton, 2014 Sta. Rita Hills, California**

**Brewer-Clifton** is an award winning estate winery from the **Santa Rita Hills, CA**. Producing critically acclaimed **Pinot Noir** and Chardonnay since 1995. This bottling is comprised of 100% estate pinot noir from three vineyards within the AVA. The following vineyards, 3D, Machado and Acin, all contribute to the wine. Only neutral Sirugue barrels are used for 12-18 months. We strive for whole cluster fermentation. We farm with a focus of ripening the stems alongside the fruit, allowing the cluster to be in harmony. Working with the stems allows for wines that are structured, earthy and balanced with our beautiful SRH fruit.

All of the single vineyard wines are produced with the intention of aging and cellaring for at least 10 years and can easily be enjoyed after 15 years.

90 points

## **Meritage, Taken From Granite, 1996 Sierra Foothills, California**

Before founding Clos Saron in the late 90s, Gideon Beinstock took his first steps in winemaking at Renaissance Vineyards in the Sierra Foothills. The same vineyards that he helped plant in the 1970s, in the 1990s yielded very classic, structured but elegant wines with great aging potential. Twenty years later, Clos Saron established as a front-runner of the New California wave, Gideon was able to reclaim some of the Renaissance wines of the 90s, and release them under his new label, Taken From Granite. These wines were resting undisturbed in the Renaissance cellars for the past 20 years.

These 20-year-old bottles aren't "cult wines" in the traditional industry sense. Oenophiles generally use that term to indicate wine that is both highly sought-after and difficult to find, both of which often make said wine quite expensive. Taken from Granite is a cult wine in a literal sense.

90 points

## **Cabernet Sauvignon, Taken From Granite, 1997 Sierra Foothills, California**

Before founding Clos Saron in the late 90s, Gideon Beinstock took his first steps in winemaking at Renaissance Vineyards in the Sierra Foothills. The same vineyards that he helped plant in the 1970s, in the 1990s yielded very classic, structured but elegant wines with great aging potential. Twenty years later, Clos Saron established as a front-runner of the New California wave, Gideon was able to reclaim some of the Renaissance wines of the 90s, and release them under his new label, Taken From Granite. These wines were resting undisturbed in the Renaissance cellars for the past 20 years.

The 1997 Cabernet is in a beautiful spot right now, with the nose showing a core of dark fruit, cassis, blackberries and plums. There is a hint of sous-bois, dried violets, cedar, hay and a whiff of scattered pine needles on a craggy cliff side. The palate is very alive, with still-firm tannins and very fresh acidity. Red currants and raspberries intermingle with black fruit. The finish carries a slight menthol quality, along with more cedar and tobacco. Big, yet harmonious, this wine drinking beautifully now, but I wouldn't hesitate holding onto it

*So unique it's not rated!*

### **Syrah, Central Coast Group Effort 'Names', 2012 Santa Barbara, California**

Central Coast Group Project (CCPG) is a boutique producer of fine wines located in Santa Barbara County. Committed to excellence, we source only the highest quality fruit from local, world-class vineyards that farm organically and/or sustainably to our particular specifications. In the cellar, we take a natural approach, using modern means to enhance ancient techniques that gently build flavor, structure, texture and balance from the grapes themselves. Specializing in small lot, vigilantly handcrafted syrah and grenache based red wines, we endeavor to express the cooler climes, unique soils and exceptional vineyard sites of our Central Coast with super-cali typicity, purity & inimitable style.

Concentrated, powerful, structured and balanced with aromatic fruit, spice and savory elements. This is paradigm Central Coast Syrah, and our flagship wine.

94 points

### **Cabernet Sauvignon, Freemark Abbey '50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary' 2013, Napa Valley, California**

This very highly recommended wine is truly superb. Freemark Abbey, was selected to create a one-of-a-kind, limited release to honor the landmark NFL event. Fiftieth Reserve is a 2013 Napa Valley Bordeaux-style red wine, sourced from pedigreed single vineyard sites from the venerable Spring Mountain.

Beautifully aromatic with balanced aromas of Black cherry, blackberry, smoked cherry, plum, red currant, mixed spice, toasty oak, cocoa and cracked pepper. A balanced blitz of flavors on the palate, including Black cherry, blackberry preserve, black currant, licorice, cocoa, slate mineral, spice box, tobacco, toasty oak and cracked pepper.

92 points

### **Cabernet Sauvignon, La Jota, 2014 Napa Valley, California**

This captivating wine is deep and rich, yielding aromas of anise, blackberry, and a touch of sage. It is uncommonly smooth and well balanced, with richly textured tannins and flavors of blueberry and mocha toast. La Jota's signature line of bright minerality runs the length of this long, satisfying wine. The grapes

for this Cabernet Sauvignon come from La Jota's Howell Mountain vineyard and the historic W.S. Keyes vineyard nearby. The volcanic soils of this unique area, high on a mountain plateau, surrounded by whispering forest and bathed in a steady, gentle wind, have been the source of award-winning wines for over a century. This is the birthplace of La Jota terroir. On the palate, the 2014 La Jota Cabernet Sauvignon has dark chocolate, espresso, ripe blackberry, and a hint of Petit Verdot finishing with a great mid palate weight and earthy tannic structure, there is no doubt you are drinking a Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon.

95 points

### **Cabernet Sauvignon, Mount Peak 'Sentinel' 2014 Napa/Sonoma, California**

Our Sentinel Cabernet Sauvignon is named for the shield-shaped block that pays a watchful eye to the entrance to Monte Rosso Vineyard. It's a muscular and intense wine with rich, deep tannins and mouthfilling, concentrated fruit. Aromas of ripe dark currants mingle with hints of brown sugar and sweet mint. Flavors of blackberry and cherry are woven through anise and toasted cedar, echoing in a long finish that is framed with notes of sweet cream. This wine has tremendous aging potential.

Sourced primarily from the historically acclaimed Monte Rosso Vineyard in Sonoma County, the 2014 Mount Peak Sentinel Cabernet Sauvignon exhibits an outstanding aroma of bright blueberries and wild blackberries. The wine, accented with a beautiful mix of oak nuances, is greater than the sum of its parts. Pair it with a slice of rare roast beef and enjoy a complete food and wine experience.

95 points

### **Cinsault, Scholium Project '1MN', 2015 Lodi, California**

After walking away from a tenure-track teaching job and capturing the attention of the wine world soon after the release of his first vintage in 2000, Abe Schoener, the 54-year-old founder of the Northern California-based Scholium Project has become known as one of the industry's most prominent risk takers.

This wine is composed of 100% Cinsault from the amazing Bechtold Ranch vineyard, planted in 1870 on its own roots, in deep, sandy loam soil deposited by the Mokelumne River, flowing down from the Sierras. The vineyard is on the west side of Lodi in an area where the ground is often heavy, clay loam—but Bechtold is in the old flood plain of the Mokelumne, and its Sierra sand balances the heavy loam. The vineyard is so old and healthy that it has never been replanted, thus the fact the vines still grow on their own (ungrafted) roots.

A beautiful wine of great intensity and perfect lightness at once. 100% whole cluster; fermented in wooden puncheons with slight foot treading and then submerged cap for about 3 weeks; aged in neutral wood for 9 months.

95 points

## **Petite Sirah Blend, Scholium Project 'Gardens of Babylon, 2014 Lodi, California**

After walking away from a tenure-track teaching job and capturing the attention of the wine world soon after the release of his first vintage in 2000, Abe Schoener, the 54-year-old founder of the Northern California-based Scholium Project has become known as one of the industry's most prominent risk takers.

"This is FAR AND AWAY the best vintage of Gardens ever. It is so good that the wine has always had another name in the cellar, and we thought long and hard about whether to call it something else-- just to distinguish it for its excellence! But we opted in the end for simplicity and consistency, and thus, Gardens!" - Abe Schoener

It is a pure cofermentation of Petite Sirah and Cabernet farmed by Steve Tenbrink, and Syrah farmed by Lee Hudson. No post-fermentation blending. The wine is about 40% each PS and Cab, and 20% Syrah. And because of the cofermentation, it has been together its whole life. And the fruit could not have been better in 2014: so deep and complex. The wine reminds us of the Northern Rhone. We are happy and proud.

90 points

## **Merlot, Shafer 'TD-9', 2015, Napa Valley, California**

Doug Shafer, who, along with his father, John, established [Shafer Vineyards](#) in the [Stags Leap](#) District as one of California's most prestigious labels in 1973.

TD-9 is a proprietary blend that celebrates a bold move. In the space of a few months, John Shafer went from riding morning commuter trains in Chicago to teaching himself to drive a TD-9 tractor in our Napa Valley vineyard. He'd never grown grapes or made wine in his life. That spirit of risk-taking and adventure still guides Shafer today and inspired the creation of this new wine.

*"Vibrant, complex aromas of ripe red and black fruit, lavender, and herbs fill the glass followed by pure, energetic flavors of dried cherry, blackberry, strawberry, licorice, and cocoa all pulled together with wet slate minerality, clean acidity, and the ripe, seamless tannins that are the hallmarks of this vintage"*

— Shafer winemaker Elias Fernandez

94 points

## **Cabernet Sauvignon, Trefethen 2014, Napa Valley, California**

Just north of the town of Napa, where the valley's earliest vineyards were planted in the 1800s, is Trefethen Family Vineyards. Their historic wooden winery, built in 1886, stands sentinel over vast plantings of perfectly trellised grapevines. Gene and Katie Trefethen purchased this old winery and the surrounding vineyards in 1968. The winery was in a state of disrepair and their son John and his bride,

Janet, took the challenge of restoring the old winery to become one of Napa's foremost wine producers. In 1973, Trefethen released their first commercial wine.

Our Cabernet Sauvignon vines are planted in gravelly soils in the northwestern quadrant of our estate vineyard in the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley. These well-drained soils combined with limited yields produce Cabernet Sauvignon fruit with bright and complex flavors.

The beautiful nose features aromas of blackberry, red currant and dried fruit. The palate is round and luxurious with herbal tones and well-integrated oak. The elegant finish has complex flavors of cassis, cocoa and black pepper.

97 points

### **Pinot Noir, Sanguis 'Loner R12-a' 2012, Sta. Rita Hills, California**

Sanguis is a premier boutique winery that specializes in an eclectic style of white and red blends. *Latin* for blood, Sanguis was founded by the German-born Matthias Pippig. Pippig has previously worked as a wine importer for Marc DeGrazia Selections, and Estate Wines, as well as a brief stint at the famous Le Brea Bakery. He finally decided to start his own winery in the Santa Ynez Valley. If you haven't had the chance to try his wines, you are in for a serious treat.

The wines bottled under the new 'Loner' designation are as stripped down and minimalist as it gets - from how they are made right down to the labels. 'The Loners' are varietal and vineyard-specific wines fermented on their indigenous yeasts with ample inclusion of whole clusters; there is no use of new oak, no racking, and of course no fining or filtration – oh, and they are Burgundian by lineage.

93 points