

## Winter 2023 Wine Notes

### Featured Wines

#### **2017 Rapley Trail Vineyard Pinot Noir** – 425 cases produced

*Allocated for 6 & 12 bottle Members Only*

Rapley Trail produces some of the most complex and interesting wines that we make. The top of the vineyard is some of the darkest, richest soil on the property while the bottom is grey, lean and gravelly. While all the vintages of Rapley are distinct, they tend to have a common thread — an intoxicating, exotic spicy aroma.

*Roasted black cherry, cola spice, sandalwood, singed pine needle and a hint of earthy lanolin show on the nose of this excellent bottling from vines planted in 1983. The pine forest element is strong on the palate, giving minty depth to the tart pomegranate and richer red fruit flavors.*

94 pts, Matt Kettmann, Wine Enthusiast

#### **2018 Will's Cabin Vineyard Pinot Noir** – 325 cases produced

*Allocated to all Membership Levels*

The Will's Cabin Vineyard is less than half a mile away from the Gist Ranch Estate, where the Lexington Wine Co. grapes are grown. Will's Cabin is located on the fine, sandy soil known as Vaqueros Sandstone. However, this vineyard is north-facing and therefore much cooler than the nearby Gist Ranch. At Will's Cabin we've planted Swan and Mount Eden clones, which are widely used. Uniquely, however, we also have a clone called Mariafeld, which originated in Switzerland and tends to add a little more tannin and darken the color of the wine.

*Spicy aromas of mace meet with damp herbs and baked raspberry on the nose of this bottling from atop the appellation. Crispy red-plum flavors are woven through rose-petal potpourri and wild tarragon on the palate, which finishes with ample tension.*

93pts, Matt Kettmann, Wine Enthusiast

#### **2017 Lexington Wine Co. Gist Ranch Estate**

##### **Cabernet Sauvignon** – 1,058 cases produced

*Allocated to all Membership Levels*

The wines of Lexington Wine Co. are sourced from the spectacular Gist Ranch Estate, located in the heart of Santa Cruz Mountains. The vineyard was densely planted in the year 2000 at elevations reaching 2,300 feet above sea level, and 17 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean.

*Polished boysenberry aromas are ripe and accessible but pleasantly smooth on the nose of this bottling. The wine lands with more serious flavors of soy, pepper and light lavender, as that baked boysenberry tone lingers in the background.*

93pts, Matt Kettmann, Wine Enthusiast

#### **2020 Lexington Wine Co. Gist Ranch Estate**

##### **'Alma' White** – 261 cases produced

*Allocated to all Membership Levels*

The heavily fractured, Vaqueros Sandstone soils, and unique mountain microclimate, produce singular, deeply concentrated wines that demonstrate the power and elegance of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

*Reviews in progress.*

### 2020 Vintage Notes

A mostly mild but dry season was punctuated by dry lightning and wind on August 16th, igniting the CZU complex fire, which burned to within 10 miles of the winery. The smoke was being blown towards the coast for the first week of the fire, but that changed, and smoke enveloped the vineyards affecting the character of the fruit. We made the gut-wrenching decision that no red wine was to be bottled from the vintage, as the compounds contained within the skins and the wines were sure of damage displaying very characteristic smokey flavors and texture. We harvested some of the early lots and made some wines, but dumped it out when we realized it was tainted. In lieu of delayed analytical results across the state, we made micro fermentations (basically big buckets of fermenting grapes) of all the lots and performed sensory analysis and determined that red wines were not going to be viable. We did conclude that if we were careful in pressing (using lower pressure in the press and pressing the grapes immediately) we could make white wines that escaped the smokey characteristics found in the reds. While our losses in the vineyard pale in comparison to the loss of home and life from the fire, it was a heartbreaking year nonetheless.

### 2019 Vintage Notes

The 2019 vintage will go down as a classic year in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Some unsettled weather in the spring resulted in poor flowering, and lower yields in certain blocks. The summer was warm but not oppressively so — the lack of extreme heat was a very welcome change from other recent years. Harvest began in mid-September, finishing up in mid- to late- October, which is relatively late compared to the recent string of early harvests. The wines are concentrated with a fine balance of structure and fruit intensity. Site expression seems amplified; low yields and moderate temperatures often lead to some of our most singular and terroir-driven wines. The wines drive surprisingly well in their youth and have all of the components necessary for a long life ahead. The only downside to this year is the low yields; these wines will be sought after and rare.

Thomas Fogarty



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### Additional Bottles



#### **2019 Langley Hill Vineyard Chardonnay** – 250 cases produced

*Available to all Membership Levels*

Langley Hill Vineyard is our largest plot of Estate Chardonnay. It occupies a steep hillside, offering numerous exposures and soil depths. This complex arrangement leads to multiple picks often spread over weeks, rather than days. Langley Hill is often both the first and last of our Chardonnays to be picked. The vineyard's fractured sandstone over Lambert shale yields Chardonnay that is steely and structured with persistent citrus and mineral flavors.

*Tight aromas of crushed citrus leaf, chiseled stone and wet cement draw the nose into this bottling from mountaintop vines planted more than 40 years ago. Tense tannins contain the flavors at first behind a veil of stone, but then come more generous streaks of nectarine and sea salt, as acidity pumps into the finish.*

96pts, Matt Kettmann, Wine Enthusiast

#### **2019 La Vida Bella Vineyard Chardonnay** – 50 cases produced

*Allocated for Chardonnay & 12 bottle Members*

The La Vida Bella Vineyard is located above the floor of the Pleasant Valley area of Corralitos. Joe Quink and Pam Minnis' site features a large swale on the northern section of the vineyard with some of the steepest terrain in the area.

*Distinguished by its phenolic-like feel. As with the Pinot, the La Vida Bella Chardonnay has a bit of structure driving its overall feel. Strong mineral, savory and earthy tones are front and center in this mid-weight yet potent Chardonnay from Fogarty. I would give this a year or two in bottle. I very much like the weight and overall intensity.*

94pts, Antonio Galloni, Vinous

#### **2018 Mindego Ridge Vineyard Pinot Noir** – 400 cases produced

*Available to all Membership Levels*

Mindego Ridge Vineyard is located at the western end of Alpine Rd, near the town of La Honda. It is a perfectly exposed south facing hillside in a very cool spot. Planted in 2009, the nine acres of Pinot Noir are lovingly farmed by Dave and Stacey Gollnick. The clay loam over shale soils produces wines of great intensity. This is one of the more exciting new plantings in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

*The 2018 Pinot Noir Mindego Ridge Vineyard is one of the finest wines I have ever tasted from Fogarty. Rich, deep and explosive, the 2018 possesses remarkable depth and tons of sheer intensity. Black cherry, lavender, spice, rose petal and dried herbs infuse the profound 2018. This statuesque, layered Pinot is pure magic.*

96pts, Antonio Galloni, Vinous

#### **2018 Lexington Wine Co. Merlot** – 239 cases produced

*Available to all Membership Levels*

This Merlot was grown at Lexington's Gist Ranch Estate, which was planted in the year 2000 at 2300 feet above sea level. The heavily fractured, Vaqueros Sandstone soils and mountain microclimate produce singular wines that demonstrate the power of the Santa Cruz Mountains Appellation.

*Forward fruit with mountain structure. Crushed red berries, spice, new leather and mocha lend nuance to this mid-weight, understated Merlot. All the elements are very nicely balanced.*

92pts, Antonio Galloni, Vinous.

#### *2018 Vintage Notes*

2018 was another dry, but not particularly warm winter; this changed in early February. A system of high pressure brought daytime temperatures into the 70's, warming the dry soil and initiating bud break in the earlier sections of some of our vineyard sites. In March, an arctic cold front settled in and brought nighttime temperatures down to freezing, risking frost damage to the new shoot growth. These 'false' springs, with record high temperatures, have become much more common in recent years.

Summer was mostly mild, leading to a slightly later harvest than other recent vintages. These wines are poised and complex with depth and structure. Yields were low due to the early spring, but this concentrated the wines, which leads us to believe that they have a long life ahead.

#### *2017 Vintage Notes*

Record setting rains replenished our thirsty soils and gave our old vines a much needed reprieve from four drought stressed seasons. The 2017 vintage was another year of record setting heat, continuing our string of record setting temperatures. There was a torrid heat spike over the Labor Day weekend. Luckily, spring was mild and allowed us to set the best crop we have seen since 2012.