

Welcome to
The 2010 Santa Barbara County Wine
Futures Tasting

Thank you from
The Wine House and The Winehound:

- To you, our guests, for attending the 2010 program and taking on the daunting task of trying to taste ten dozen (or so) superlative Central Coast wines...hurry, you have about three hours!
- To the group of vintners joining us in this endeavor, for carrying on a tremendously worthy tradition and crafting an abundance of praise-worthy vino: your individual efforts are what make this event exceptional.
- In Santa Barbara, to the Parker Family and Doubletree management in helping us expand the tasting to the Fess Parker Hotel: we think that Fess would have been proud of this gathering to showcase the county's wines.
- To Dan Fredman for his proofreading and support; he's got an encyclopedic mind and an endlessly generous nature.
- To Larry Schaffer for his promotion of Santa Barbara County winemaking...his advice and exhortations have been invaluable.

In this blizzard of wines, no two are quite the same: clones, soils, sun exposure, yeasts, barrels, brix, phenolic ripeness, sites, philosophies, fermentation temperatures, cool weather, warm weather, rain, drought and hundreds of other variables co-exist and sometimes conflict in transforming grapes from fruit on the vine to treasures in a bottle...we're just glad to be near such a consistent region of fabled turf with notably emphatic winemakers. Enjoy the bounty...

Cheers, Jim Knight and Bob Wesley

Tasting note authorship is indicated in each winery introduction by "JK" (Jim Knight of The Wine House) or "BW" (Bob Wesley of The Winehound).

Please note that orders can be placed once the catalog order form appears on our respective websites: www.winehouse.com and www.thewinehound.com or when the printed catalog and order form are available in the store.

There is a three bottle minimum purchase requirement for each wine listed.

Please see Terms and Conditions on the last page.

Alma Rosa

Richard Sanford (aka, the Nostradamus of Santa Rita Hills) realized back in the '70's that the cool and breezy microclimates west of Buellton held promise, and so he drew a line in this ideal dirt and took a vine-based stand. His commitment there continues still, but he's got a lot more neighbors now, and "STA. Rita Hills" has established itself as a contender for best Pinot Noir, Syrah, Viognier and Chardonnay turf in the country. (Richard would add Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc to this list!) A lot of folks owe him a debt of gratitude for digging below the earthen surface and seeing potential. It's unsettling to think where the appellation would be now without his foresight. -BW

Alma Rosa 2008 Pinot Gris La Encantada Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$24.99 Release price: \$27.99 192 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

White pepper and flowers join ripe pears and minerality in this lush but on-point vineyard-designated Pinot Gris, the only one I can think of in California. Moderate acidity and fruit-driven persistence coupled with the side notes of spice rack and boutonnière served me well: I enjoyed the remaining portion of the bottle over several evenings with dinner, including one with my own bastardized variation of a Cobb salad, which included diced pasilla chiles and creamy jalapeno dressing...the vibrancy and ripeness of the Encantada confronted, assuaged and ultimately found cohesion even with such a spicy dish, so feel free to act adventurously in your pairings with this expressive, dry, ripe white.

Alma Rosa 2008 Pinot Blanc La Encantada Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$24.99 Release price: \$27.99 264 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Fleshy and melony but with a unmistakable wet stone piquancy, the texture on the Encantada Pinot Blanc approaches an almost Chardonnay-like fullness yet finishes with a zesty close, as ripe citrus and plush textures achieve congruity, seducing the palate without bombarding it. Like all the Alma Rosa wines, this is from 100% organically grown grapes.

Alma Rosa 2008 Pinot Noir La Encantada Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$38.99 Release price: \$42.99 591 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The woodsmoke and earthy notes reminded me of camping when I was a kid, enjoying the forest by firelight and stretched out in my sleeping bag on the dirt. The approachability of the red fruits in this Pinot (raspberry, red plum) and spicy barrel character round it out, and it startles me to think that back in 1970 when I was eleven and still being outdoorsy by hanging out with mom and dad during summers at Chautauqua Lake, Richard was planting his first vineyard on Santa Rosa Road. Forty years later, the Sanfords continue tending to the earth while making balanced and memorable wines from it.

Ampelos

You can always spot owner Peter Work in a crowd because he invariably wears a cowboy hat and is exhibiting his fabled sense of humor and hospitality. But he and his wife Rebecca also focus on the serious business of winemaking and viticulture, and do their part to preserve the estate vineyard in unsullied fashion, focusing on biodynamic farming and sustainable practices. As they like to say, "When you do something good for the land it also streams through to other aspects: like our everyday lives." It also extends to quality of their wines as you'll see in this year's offerings. –JK

Ampelos 2007 "rho" Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$38.99 Release Price: \$44.99 465 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Peter and Rebecca blind taste through all their Pinot Noir barrels and then pick out the best 25% to create rho. It's got a great, juicy texture, hints of cherry cola, raspberries, earth, and a kiss of oak. My tasting notes simply read "delicious," and I emphatically underlined the word twice. rho feels really good on the palate...it's lush without being overpowering and still has elegance. This wine will see about 27 months in barrel, one-third new oak.

Ampelos 2007 "gamma" Syrah Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$29.99 Release Price: \$34.99 655 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

There's a lot going on here: blackberries and raspberries are prominent, with hints of smoked bacon, spice, earth, leather and tar. It's very complex on the nose and palate with a great dark purple color, and the mouthfeel is lush and round, with fine, dusty tannins. Like their Pinot Noir, this is all about texture: it's not over the top, just full-bodied with a very silky, long finish. The vineyard produced only one ton per acre, which resulted in exceptional density of fruit.

Au Bon Climat

One of the great things about visiting at ABC with Jim Clendenen, besides tasting, is that there's always something tantalizing cooking on the stove. Jim, "the mind behind the wines" and one of the trailblazers of Santa Barbara County, has my utmost respect not only for his history in the valley, but for making high quality wines each year for nearly three decades now. Every vintage, he stays true to what he believes, never pushing the sugars in the vineyard, keeping alcohol levels low, and making true Burgundy-styled wines on the Central Coast. -JK

Au Bon Climat 2008 Estate Chardonnay Santa Maria Valley

Futures price: \$29.99 Release Price: \$35.00 500 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The '08 Estate mixes green apple, buttered popcorn, honey, citrus, melon and a splash of banana and pear, all peeking out from behind a lacy curtain of acidity. This is a "Jim wine" at its demure best, light but lovingly-textured, lengthy and detailed.

Au Bon Climat 2008 Pinot Noir "Knox Alexander" Santa Maria Valley

Futures price: \$39.99 Release Price: \$45.00 650 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is my style of Pinot Noir, exhibiting more French influence than Californian. Hints of cherry, raspberry, black truffle, leather, and green olive are soft and elegant, with fine acidity and balance. This shows well right out of the starting gate, but it will improve with three or four years in your cellar.

Au Bon Climat 2008 Pinot Noir "Isabelle" California

Futures price: \$44.99 Release Price: \$50.00 500 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Everything is more forward in the Isabelle bottling, with overt red fruits and boisterous barrel character. Raspberry, blackberry, a touch of earth, leather and spice all jump from the glass. The texture is dense with a good grip of ripe, silky tannins. The finish is long and lush, styled for the California Pinot Noir lover who prefers richness and fullness on the palate.

Autonom/Native9

Winemaker Paul Wilkins' partnership with James Ontiveros began officially in 2005, but their concurrent studies of viticulture at San Luis Obispo's Cal Poly in the late 90's are where the roots of this talented alliance began. Pinot Noir will continue to be made under the Alta Maria brand, while Autonom (i.e., autonomous, or self-governing) is the

new label for all Rhône varietals, which allows Paul and James to broaden their fruit sources beyond the Santa Maria Valley; Native9, however, will continue to be 100% Ontiveros estate fruit. –BW

Autonom 2007 Rhône Cuvée Central Coast

Futures price: \$22.99 Release price: \$25.99 130 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

At the time we went to press, there was no official proprietary name for this wine, but after tasting it, a few suggestions occurred to me: unfortunately, the TTB would probably arrest me for the salacious monikers that came to mind. (Come and get me, thought police!) The 55% Grenache, 36% Syrah and 9% Mourvèdre from disparate sites (Nielson, Hampton, Laetitia and Bien Nacido) converge in ambrosial harmony, caressing the nose and mouth with cocoa and smoky blueberry smooches. My notes (and glasses) got even steamier after that: “fleshy, sexy and fun” is what I jotted down, and I had to hide my notebook from the staff lest I be summoned to human resources for a rebuke. The Mourvèdre was picked AFTER Thanksgiving of '07, and maybe that's where the meaty, ripe perfume and unctuous palate feel came from.

Autonom 2007 Grenache Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$41.99 Release price: \$45.99 55 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Mostly Nielson Vineyard Grenache with 10% Laetitia Syrah and 100% new French oak, the '07 Autonom initially flaunts an abundance of new wood as would be expected, with toasty vanilla notes superseding the undertones of blackberry and raspberry. Like all of us, this just needs some time to unwind, and gradually in the glass, the tannin dam that keeps the fruit at bay eventually allows it to spill over, offering a broader view of the layered delights to come.

Autonom 2007 Syrah Central Coast

Futures price: \$41.99 Release price: \$45.99 80 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is arguably the most aromatically complicated Syrah of the day: it's 100% all the way...totally Syrah, completely destemmed and aged in brand spanking new oak barrels. The wood doesn't dominate here, however, as cool climate notes of black pepper and dried herbs combine with salami and *speck* (smoked Prosciutto) in a multi-level assault of all that is good and wondrous: your senses will be nonplussed but as intrigued as mine were, then you'll start to dissect this *wunderkind* and come to fully appreciate the cooperation between the secondary notes and the juicy, luscious, black-as-night fruits.

Native9 2009 Pinot Noir Rancho Ontiveros Vineyard Santa Maria Valley

Futures price: \$52.99 Release price: \$55.99 650 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Winter, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Tonnage was up in 2009, not that there's ever an ocean of fruit from the Ontiveros property. Last year, a meager eight tons was gathered from the eight planted acres; this year, James received a still minimal thirteen and a half tons. Picking occurred over the course of two weeks in mid-September, and the whole cluster inclusion that began with '08 was repeated in '09, as lignification (the ripening and browning of the stems and seeds) always develops early at ROV, offering softer tannins and spicy/herbal notes.

This refined and youthful Pinot will draw special attention from Burgophiles, as its moderate alcohol levels and *terroir*-driven identity reflect exactly what James and Paul are trying to emphasize from this plot of earth. "Gentlemanly understatement" typifies Native9 and the folks behind it.

Babcock

*Bryan Babcock is among the select group of local winemakers for whom I have tremendous respect: he helped put Santa Barbara County on the map as a great wine growing region, and his Pinot Noirs were among the first that I tasted and loved. Thanks to Bryan, we came up with a special barrel that he put together **exclusively** for The Wine House and The Winehound: it's a blend of his top cuvées available only for the Santa Barbara futures campaign. Thank you, Bryan, for making this happen! -JK*

Babcock 2009 Pinot Noir "Wine House and Winehound Cuvée"

Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$31.99 Release Price: \$42.00 24 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Winter, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The first words that I wrote down in my tasting notes were "smells great!" There are hints of lavender, roses, and a touch of roasted chestnuts, accompanied by slick textures, fresh cherry-like fruits and ginger root. The mid-palate has perfect weight and density, while the finish is silky, elegant, and long. I'm very pleased with the result and excited to have this Pinot in the tasting!

Beckmen

Steve Beckmen's dedication to biodynamic farming is reaping benefits, not only with healthier soils and grapevines but also in the resulting wines. A few years ago before Purisima was 100% 'BD,' Steve and I compared Syrah samples and agreed that the tannins were indeed rounder and suppler from the biodynamic section of the vineyard as opposed to a non-bio block. Steve is also finding greater clarity of fruit in the aromas and flavors throughout the vineyard as it responds to the new farming philosophy. -JK

Beckmen 2008 Grenache Purisima Mountain Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$39.99 Release Price: \$50.00 550 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

There is a weight to this wine represented by ripe flavors that seem to show off the vintage, with wet stone, strawberries, cherry, plum, ginger and cinnamon. The elegant and pure texture, with some power, shows off fresh fruit in a nice dense mid-palate and long, lingering finish.

Beckmen 2008 Syrah Purisima Mountain Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$38.99 Release Price: \$48.00 400 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The massive, ripe fruit flavors of raspberry, blackberry and plum mix with smoked bacon, dried figs, cured meat, coffee bean and a touch of vanilla and spice. There is a good grip of tannins holding the wine together, but they are soft and fine-grained. The heftiness and long, sappy finish keeps you coming back for more.

Brander

Fred Brander is another respected local “founding father” who has produced some of the best Sauvignon Blancs in California for more than thirty years. Two are featured today, but Glen and I were also awestruck when we tasted through his barrels of small lot Cabernet and Syrah, and we’re delighted to include them here. –JK

Brander 2009 Sauvignon Blanc Au Naturel Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$22.99 Release Price: \$32.00 250 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is hands-down my favorite Sauvignon Blanc in California. It’s 100% stainless steel fermented (the way I think Sauvignon Blanc should be made) and sees a little skin contact to add complexity and grip on the palate. Au Naturel has great texture and freshness, with hints of grapefruit, honey, minerals, and wet stones. It’s lush in the mid-palate and crisp and clean on the finish.

Brander 2009 Sauvignon Blanc Purisima Mountain Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$17.99 Release Price: \$24.00 160 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Made in the same style as Au Naturel, the Purisima juice undergoes twenty-four hour skin contact and is 100% stainless steel fermented. My brother Glen actually liked this better than the Au Natural. To each his own, I guess. We both agreed that this is another great effort by Fred, who’s earned his title as the “Sauvignon Blanc King.” There’s an expert balance of minerality, fruit, acidity and vigor.

Brander 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon Estate Reserve Santa Ynez Valley
Futures price: \$31.99 Release Price: \$45.00 460 cases produced
Scheduled release: Winter, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

There are few Cabernets from California that really agree with my palate, but Fred's 2009 is one of them. I believe that it rivals anything from Napa Valley at twice the price. Coming from thirty-five year-old vines, this wine delivers ripe fruits of blackberry and cassis with good sweetness in the mid-palate and soft, ripe, chewy tannins in the finish.

Brander 2009 Syrah Clover Creek Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley
Futures price: \$17.99 Release Price: \$26.00 100 cases produced
Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

One of the most stunning bargains in our program (with only 10 cases available), the Clover Creek Syrah will be in the new Los Olivos appellation when the TTB finally approves this AVA, probably later this year. The aromatics (raspberry, blueberry, and cured meat) jump from the glass. The fruit is very clean and fresh, with luscious textures and attack, good mid-palate weight and a long, juicy finish.

Ken Brown

Pioneering winemaker Ken Brown produces very small lots from some of the region's most highly acclaimed vineyards, including Cargasacchi, Clos Pepe and the historic Sanford & Benedict Vineyard. Most of Ken's career has been spent pursuing the elusive traits that make great Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. From his early days at Zaca Mesa Winery, to his 20-year tenure at Byron Vineyard and finally his small family operation at Ken Brown Wines, he has continued to experiment with clones, rootstocks, soils and winemaking techniques, exploring the tremendous potential for Burgundian varietals in Santa Barbara County. All of this shines through in these featured wines. -JK

Ken Brown 2008 Chardonnay Nielson Vineyard Santa Maria Valley
Futures price: \$24.99 Release Price: \$32.00 132 cases produced
Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Planted by Uriel Nielson in 1964, this property is Santa Barbara County's oldest vineyard. A portion of the fruit comes from the original vines, planted to the acclaimed Wente clone. These small, intensely flavored berries bring concentration and complexity to the wine. It's got classic apple and pineapple notes with touches of vanilla and butterscotch, and a buttery, rounded palate feel.

Ken Brown 2008 Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills
Futures price: \$31.99 Release Price: \$38.00 450 cases produced
Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

A very pretty Pinot Noir from Ken Brown, the 2008 SRH offers high-toned aromas of cherry, raspberry, and vanilla. The texture is elegant and soft with good lushness in the mid-palate. The wine's richness allows for excellent drinkability upon release, while its structure ensures great cellar potential.

Cargasacchi / Point Concepcion

Peter Cargasacchi's roster of clients speaks volumes about how well this man can craft a grape: Pinot Noirs produced with his vineyard designation have included folks like Brewer-Clifton, Ken Brown, Hitching Post, Loring and Siduri. He's also taken the vinification plunge and is producing his own (quite distinctive) wines. I exhort you, ask Peter questions when you taste with him: he will educate you about winegrowing, philosophy, history (not just about wine) and will almost certainly throw in a ribald quip with a straight face and a devious smile. –BW

Point Concepcion 2009 Chardonnay "Caponera" Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$16.99 Release price: \$19.99 625 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is Wente clone Chardonnay harvested from Sierra Madre Vineyard, fermented in an even split of stainless steel and one and two year old year barrels, without ML. It's representative of its vinification: wet stones, flowers and leesiness dance energetically around the tropical fruit core in this concentrated white, while beeswax notes and viscous textures add opulence. Zesty yin meets luscious yang...

Point Concepcion 2009 Pinot Grigio "Celestina" Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$13.99 Release price: \$17.99 725 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Spring, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This stuff is pink (like the grape it's squeezed from), so dismiss any thoughts of Santa Margherita from your expectations right now: the rosé-like qualities read like a schizophrenic laundry list of red and white wine characteristics. Cherries, pears and red apple skin are most prominent: they're ripe, just-short-of-sweet and are delivered on a persistent stream of oily textures and moderating acids. Peter destemmed the fruit, chilled it with dry ice and did a three day cold soak, picking up the color and flavors from the grape skins. Try Celestina before dinner, or sip it with fruit and cheese after an evening repast. Why don't more people make Pinot Grigio like this?! It's an anarchistic style that grabbed my attention.

Cargasacchi 2008 Pinot Noir Cargasacchi Vineyard Santa Rite Hills

Futures price: \$32.99 Release price: \$39.99 250 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

“Burgundian” is a meaningless term, though we all use it. It can refer to nearly anything you choose: depending on what you’re drinking, Burgundian can mean “disappointing, thin, absurdly overpriced regrettable swill that smells like a horse trailer,” or “transcendent, tear-inducing and unforgettable sensory landmark that redirects one’s path in life.” I prefer to use words like “elegant and refined” when discussing subtler versions of California Pinot, which is what most folks really mean when they utilize the term. Peter has turned down the volume on the (Clone 115) fruit in this wine, and includes earthy notes of graphite and tilled soil coupled with the sidebars of herb, dried flowers and toasted oak spice, and it’s all draped on a spine of serious but not oppressive tannin. This is moderately ripe, layered and non-garish...that’s what I believe the man was shooting for: Golden State atypicality!

Carhartt

(Santa Barbara Tasting only)

Mike and Brooke Carhartt own and farm a unique ten acre site that’s situated off of Alamo Pintado Road near Solvang on a mesa with perhaps the best sun exposure in the valley. Initially, they worked with only estate grown fruit, but have expanded the lineup by purchasing grapes from several of their other favorite local vineyards. You’d be surprised at how much wine they can sell out of the world’s smallest tasting room in Los Olivos. Make sure you visit it sometime, just don’t take any overweight friends or family with you. –BW

Carhartt 2009 Sauvignon Blanc Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$17.99 Release price: \$20.99 275 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

There’s a broad range of layered flavors in this latest release, and with half stainless steel fermentation and half in neutral barrel, there’s a combination of plucky acids and rounder, plumper notes: still, zestiness is the overlord here, and the leaner grapefruit, quince and lemony notes get a faint softening boost from a nearly Viognier-like peachiness. Ultra-aromatic and zippy, this vibrant, fresh white (25% estate fruit and 75% Faith Vineyard) is a shellfish lover’s dream wine.

Carhartt 2007 Syrah Estate Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$25.99 Release price: \$29.99 350 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is a more delicate, French-styled Syrah than most from the vintage, with a focus on red fruits (cherry, currant) and the hillside flower and herb notes that tempted me during my trip to Languedoc back in 2005. Violets, thyme and a wealth of aromatic greenery along with a roasted coffee character erupt out of the glass, and further development will occur in your cellar, with structural aspects becoming more pliant in a year or two.

Carr

Ryan Carr manages over 100 acres of vineyards across Santa Barbara County. Because the vineyards are operated under his supervision, the grapes are grown to exact specifications, insuring that only the best fruit arrives at his downtown Santa Barbara winery. (Some of these vineyard sites are also fruit sources for such well-known producers as Tensley Wine Co. and Kenneth-Crawford). Ryan is producing fantastic wines that should always be on your radar. -JK

Carr 2009 Pinot Gris Turner Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$14.99 Release Price: \$20.00 840 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Every red wine that I've tasted from Turner vineyard has been noteworthy, and the same holds true for this Pinot Gris: it was cold-fermented in stainless steel and aged only five months, resulting in flavors of crisp green apples, citrus zest, tropical fruit and mineral notes. Enjoy this full-bodied, fantastically-priced Pinot Gris for your summer sippin'.

Carr 2009 Pinot Noir Kessler-Haak Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$38.99 Release Price: \$50.00 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This was one of favorite Pinots in last year's event and the 2009 follows suit. The aromatics of violets, rose petals, cherries, and raspberries lead to a lush, round, powerful red that still retains finesse. Tannins are silky, coating the palate and finishing softly and sensuously. Great job, Ryan!

Carr 2008 Cabernet Franc Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$21.99 Release Price: \$30.00 200 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The Cabernet Franc grape often gets overlooked by consumers, and that's unfortunate.

Chinon wines from the Loire Valley are some of my favorite red sippers, and Carr's version reminds me of them with its aromas of dried herb, dusty vanilla spice, raspberry, and dark chocolate covered cherries. The texture is elegant but lush, with soft tannins and a smooth finish.

Cent' Anni

A trip to Tuscany with good friend Doug Margerum inspired Jamie Kellner and Julie Kellner to establish a brand dedicated to Sangiovese: sourced from impeccable sites (Stolpman, Oak-Savannah and 11 Oaks), the 2007 is only the second vintage.

Eventually, their own five acre site (Cent' Anni Vineyard) planted to four clones of the grape (including Brunello) will yield fruit, so plan on reserving tickets for the 2016 futures tasting to sample their first estate effort, which should reset the bar for Sangiovese in our county, and beyond. –BW

Buoni Anni 2007 Sangiovese Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$23.99 Release price: \$31.99 350 six packs produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

A little boost of Merlot and Cabernet (topping wine) may have beefed this medium-weight red up a bit, but the appealing spiciness and soil notes of Sangiovese and its varietal red fruits are in the forefront here, led by ripe, earthy currants and black cherry. The firm but benevolent framework means it's drinkworthy now, as acidity and smooth tannins never oppress the lush red fruits and complicating side-accent that glide in a civilized manner across your palate.

Cimarone

The Feds recently approved Happy Canyon as an appellation, but in our tastings over the past five years it had clearly established its own status as an overachiever, especially with Bordeaux varieties (of all things!), though Syrah has found contentment in this warmer climate subset of the Santa Ynez Valley. Cimarone's neighbors include Vogelzang, Grassini, Star Lane, McGinley and Happy Canyon Vineyards, and owners Roger and Priscilla Higgins wisely brought Doug Margerum on board to advise on making the wines. –BW

Cimarone 2009 Sauvignon Blanc Estate Happy Canyon Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$23.99 Release price: \$31.99 192 six packs produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Tiny production makes this a near-exclusive for our tasting, as only a single acre of Sauvignon Blanc (Clone 1) was harvested, and given the layers and levels of this concentrated white, it's like enjoying a game of Chutes and Ladders, both aromatically and flavor-wise. An adjectival relay team jaunts across your senses, starting with a sweet floral inference leading to a full-blown FTD greenhouse of white flowers, followed by honeysuckle and an intimation of wet stone; then, lemon, tart pear and apple grab the baton and fly onward, hightailing it towards the final volley of sweet grass and ripened white grapefruit. It's about as complex as SB gets, all the while keeping a crisp and flinty personality.

**Cimarone 2008 Syrah Estate Three Creek Vineyard Happy Canyon
Santa Barbara County**

Futures price: \$31.99 Release price: \$39.99 125 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This was mighty evolved for such a youthful red, showing minimal tannin, medium weight and plenty of aromatic dynamism: I thought someone had tossed a mini-Almond Joy bar in my tasting glass when I wasn't looking, as the cocoa and toasty coconut were easy to spot and immediately loveable, followed by ripe raspberry, blackberry, brown spice, vanilla, incense and smoke. Dense, supple and focused, this '08 is in (and from) a Happy place...sorry, couldn't resist.

Clos Pepe

If you want to learn about growing grapes, the establishment of AVA's, making wine in SRH and how to blog incessantly, Wes Hagen is your man: he's fueled by what we assume is a natural energy, and the vineyard site seems to inspire thought, opinion and the burning desire to write about it. Even his boss, owner Steve Pepe, just came out with a book about the venture. Their website alone is packed with a day's worth of reading, so we'll just stick to our impressions and direct you to www.clospepe.com for their philosophical specifics. -BW

Clos Pepe 2009 Chardonnay Estate Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$39.99 Release price: \$44.99 400 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is an acid trip from beginning to end, a Chablis-inspired lone (and lean) wolf in its preliminary stages of development, offering tart pear and Granny Smith apple aromas and flavors on the palate; light, ethereal and minerally, the '09 follows a consistent footpath with its forebears, and may age longer than a good many of the reds offered today.

Clos Pepe 2009 Pinot Noir Estate Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$54.99 Release price: \$58.99 1000 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This '09 took forever to open up once I popped the seal, but on day four, POOF! it appeared like Houdini and presented itself, offering complex notes of red apple skin, pomegranate, cranberry and cocoa, coupled with what I'd discerned from my initial tasting (vanilla bean, ginger/cinnamon and black cherry). The evolution was striking; all I'd needed to do was offer this Pinot some air and patience, and it emerged from its rigid manacles and showed me a glimpse of its future, I'd guess long about 2015 or so.

Cold Heaven

Morgan has become a close friend over the years, mainly because of her down-to-earth personality and great sense of humor; I also applaud her ability to make wonderful Viognier in a French style reminiscent of one of my favorites, Château-Grillet. Unlike some of the ripe, overtly perfumy styles from California, Cold Heaven offers more finesse

and minerality, similar to the Rhône Valley. Morgan uses only neutral French oak to preserve the freshness of fruit, and grapes for both wines were picked between 22.5 and 23.5 degrees brix, so the alcohol level is moderate. -JK

Cold Heaven 2009 Viognier Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$17.99 Release Price: \$22.00 450 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Aromatic hints of minerals and wet stones accompany apple and citrus, and on the palate, peaches and apricots readily appear. The texture is lush, yet the finish is crisp and clean. There's real bang-for-the buck in this offering.

Cold Heaven 2009 Viognier Le Bon Climat Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$23.99 Release Price: \$30.00 350 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This wine really sang to me; there are hints of pineapple, white flowers and minerals, with lavish texture, ideal weight, low alcohol and a crisp, zippy finish. It's a refreshing sipping wine with touches of exotic fruits on the palate mixed in with fine minerality, and it's not overpowering like most Viogniers. Beautifully balanced and with pronounced but deftly integrated acidity, it can age for four to six years.

Costa de Oro

*Gary Burk's family vineyard, Costa de Oro, was the launching pad for his career in wine, but Jim Clendenen factors in here, meeting and eventually hiring Gary to work in marketing and production at Au Bon Climat. He left there in 2002 to focus on his own wines, and the small production Pinot Noir and Chardonnay we're offering today are testaments to his talent, the vineyard and the vintage. On top of all this, Gary is one "bad a**" guitarist as well, so you can't help but love the guy. His wines speak for themselves, as you'll see. -JK*

**Costa de Oro 2008 Chardonnay Reserva Dorada Gold Coast Vineyard
Santa Maria Valley**

Futures price: \$29.99 Release Price: \$40.00 150 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This wine shows aromas of dried pineapple and lemon fruit, bread dough, sea salt, and a white flower perfume. It's full bodied with balanced acidity and flavors of citrus, vanilla cream, and toasty oak, and a long, smooth finish attained from sixteen months of barrel aging.

**Costa de Oro 2008 Pinot Noir Reserva Oro Rojo Gold Coast Vineyard
Santa Maria Valley**

Futures price: \$37.99 Release Price: \$50.00 150 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The Reserva displays delicate aromas of florality, Asian spices, orange rind, and dusty strawberry/cherry fruit. In the mouth, it builds subtly across the palate to a long and complex finish, with classic flavors of red berry fruit, hard spices, and cola notes. Finishing cleanly, it possesses enough structure for the next five-plus years of aging potential.

Demetria

This estate has a special place in my heart. Maybe it's because I had a wonderful weekend at their guesthouse with my friends, surrounded by the biodynamically farmed vineyards (the former Andrew Murray property)...or maybe it's because I have a love for Rhône wines and Demetria excels at making Viognier, Syrah and Grenache. Whatever it may be, you need to taste the magic that I found in these wines. Winemaker Mike Roth also shows sure-handedness with non-Rhône varieties from the Santa Rita Hills. –JK

Demetria 2007 Chardonnay “Eighteen” Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$32.99 Release Price: \$39.00 250 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The palate is rich and silky, yet balanced by the cool climate Santa Rita Hills acidity, and it offers aromas of brioche, vanilla, golden delicious apple and ripe pear: it's a tempting Chardonnay from beginning to end.

Demetria 2008 North Slope Syrah Blend Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$25.99 Release Price: \$32.00 350 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This blend of 86% Syrah and 14 % Grenache offers aromas of blueberry and pomegranate fruit with a smattering of meaty, bacon notes. The texture has wonderful balance of juicy fruit and acidity combined with silky, fine tannins.

Demetria 2008 Cuvee Constantine Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$29.99 Release Price: \$36.00 400 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Demetria's version of a Châteauneuf-du-Pape is always a pleasure to taste, with its engaging aromas of blackberry, black cherry and floral notes, joined by a mid-palate explosion of juicy fruit and a persistent finish.

Dragonette

I first met winemaker Brandon Sparks-Gillis when he was working crush at Sine Qua Non in Ventura. Not to play the Krankl card here, but his attention to detail at Dragonette borders on the fanatical, with harvesting of vineyard sites involving numerous passes to reflect the different ripening levels, even within single rows. A spice rack of different coopers is utilized, but other than well-thought out blending, the formula is simple: fruit triage to keep the finest berries, cold soak for extraction of flavor, and native yeasts to kick off fermentation, all of which essentially allow the grapes to speak in their own exuberant voices. –BW

Dragonette 2009 Sauvignon Blanc Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$23.99 Release price: \$27.99 800 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

I've always been a Sauvignon Blanc freak, marveling at its multiple personality "disorder": the list of descriptor's for any given SB can range from gun flint to cat piss, but this '09 Dragonette reflects the warmer climates of its outstanding vineyard sources (Grassini, Vogelzang and newcomer Refugio), and concentrates on arena-filling aromas of honey, spring flowers, melon, grapefruit, stone fruit, tropical fruit and nearly any other @#\$% white or pink produce filed in the lexicon *de fruta*. The second gear, mid-palate burst of apricot and citrus that erupts is like gunning the gas pedal on a Bugatti Veyron, and the finish is a series of layered flashbacks that linger indefinitely. It's as though you only need one sip, but there's no way: you WILL go back for more and more. So many layers, so little time...

Dragonette 2009 Pinot Noir Fiddlestix Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$38.99 Release price: \$44.99 200 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Cranberry, candy apple and coconut were the prominent descriptors I jotted down when I tasted the '08 Pinot: the inclusion of 10% whole clusters may have added a bit of backbone and some delicate spice notes, but the sexy ripe fruit shows the dominance of clone 777 over the more laid-back 113. The approximately one-third new barrel usage adds a faint smoke and caramel note lingering in this succulent but precise Pinot, and the Fiddlestix folks should be delighted that yet another standout bottling bears their name and trumpets the vineyard's SRH origins.

Dragonette 2008 Syrah Reserve Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$42.99 Release price: \$44.99 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This may be called "Elixir" when it comes out, unless the Feds view the name as though it offered a snake oil salesman's promise of healthiness and vigor, and thus 86 the idea. I know I felt better after tasting it, and while it didn't re-grow my hair or instantly turn me into Chuck Liddell, the thirty months of barrel aging has rounded out the wine's superstructure, with all the tannins polishing themselves into evolved, mouth-coating and

smooth little nuggets of pleasure. There's a dribble of Grenache and a pinch of Viognier supplementing the Syrah, and the plump blackberry fruits, smoked meat and cocoa are stitched together as seamlessly as a dark blue Armani suit for a fat guy.

Ethan

I know what it's like to follow in your father's footsteps when it comes to careers. There are some big shoes to fill and everyone judges you by what your father did or does. Luckily, for Ethan Lindquist, he is filling his father's shoes quite nicely and making a great name for himself as a young, upcoming winemaker. Ethan's focus is on producing small lots of premium wines from special single vineyard sites. He believes in old world techniques and traditional methods of winemaking. A huge part of making a great wine starts in the vineyard, and Ethan works closely with his site managers to produce the best possible fruit... it shows in all of these offerings. -JK

Ethan 2009 Grenache Blanc Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$17.99 Release Price: \$24.00 150 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is a blend of two vineyards in the heart of the Santa Ynez Valley (Camp 4 and Estelle) picked on the lower side of ripeness with high acid. Whole cluster pressed and barrel fermented in neutral French oak, it opens with aromas of melon, apple, and minerals. The palate has ideal fruit weight with a long finish and a nice, refreshing zip of acidity.

Ethan 2009 Grenache Sawyer-Lindquist Vineyard Edna Valley

Futures price: \$27.99 Release Price: \$36.00 150 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Ethan's first Grenache was made from their family estate with a combination of every Tablas clone of the grape. Fermented on its native yeast with 30% stem inclusion and aged all in neutral French oak barrels, this is a classic Grenache that has Rhône-like characteristics on the nose and Cali lushness on the palate: the best of both worlds. Ripe, but not overripe, the palate is round and soft, with hints of kirsch liqueur, raspberry and crushed pepper.

Ethan 2009 Syrah Sawyer-Lindquist Vineyard Edna Valley

Futures price: \$27.99 Release Price: \$36.00 150 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is the first Syrah Ethan has made from the family estate in Edna Valley, which is biodynamically farmed and planted to multiple clones with different exposures. A combination of Estrella and Clone 383 chosen from the rockiest, most stressed part of the vineyard that had large pockets of limestone, the grapes were fermented with native yeast

and 50% stem inclusion, and were aged in half new French oak barrels. Being a Rhône freak, I thought the result was awesome: raspberry, plum, cured meat, and pepper spice lead the forward attack on the palate and continue their journey across it with perseverance.

Ethan 2009 Sangiovese Alisos Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$23.99 Release Price: \$32.00 150 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

From the Alisos vineyard near Los Alamos, which is in-between Santa Maria Valley and Santa Ynez Valley, this small block of Sangiovese (less than three acres) is under the farming instruction of Steve Clifton. It was fermented with a Brunello strain of yeast with 30% stem inclusion and aged in neutral French oak barrels. It's varietally correct, actually smelling and tasting like Sangiovese, something hard to find in California. Aromas of bright cherry, strawberry and underbrush lead to juicy, fresh texture with loads of cherries and strawberries filling your palate. Very nice...

Flying Goat

I was fortunate to meet Norm Yost about six years ago. His table at the Wine Cask Santa Barbara Futures Event was right next to mine. Since I was there by myself, I couldn't leave my table to try other wines, so all I could taste, besides Jelly Roll, was Flying Goat Pinot Noir, and I was hooked from the start. It's my job to search the globe to find great wines for The Wine House, and that takes a lot of time and money, as well as having to sample a lot of mediocrities. This was the first time that luck played a factor into my buying decision. Norm's futures releases below are even better than the ones I had six years ago when I first became a fan of Flying Goat. -JK

Flying Goat 2008 Pinot Noir Dierberg Vineyard Santa Maria Valley

Futures price: \$34.99 Release Price: \$42.00 125 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

A dark garnet color with a complex bouquet of spicy clove/allspice, rose petal, raspberry, and ripe red apple intermingles with mocha and sour cherry. Lush flavors of ripe, concentrated berries dance across the palate in this wonderfully structured and integrated wine.

Flying Goat 2008 Pinot Noir Clone 2A Rio Vista Vyd. Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$34.99 Release Price: \$42.00 125 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This delicious and classic cool climate Pinot Noir has hints of cranberries, mulberries, sandalwood and subtle mocha notes jumping out of the glass. This is a pretty and sexy wine. The texture has excellent fresh fruit concentration with lively acidity as well.

Your mouth fills with lush black cherry and sweet fruit, hints of cola and concentrated blueberries: it's a wine that will keep you coming back for more.

Blair Fox

Santa Barbaran and U.C. Davis grad Blair Fox has traversed the globe to study winemaking, from Côte-Rôtie to McLaren Vale, and was honored as the André Tchelistcheff Winemaker of the Year at the 2008 San Francisco International Wine Competition. His day job as head winemaker at Fess Parker Winery also allows him to create small lots under his own label, where he focuses on a minimal fruit manipulation and use of older (neutral) oak barrels to give fruit the stage, front and center. He's also planted a crazy quilt of non-mainstream grape varieties on his family's property, so stay tuned in upcoming years for some obscure but fascinating bottlings. -BW

Blair Fox 2009 Vermentino Fox Family Vineyard Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$16.99 Release price: \$21.99 40 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is the only planting of Vermentino in Santa Barbara County, and while this grape is grown throughout Europe, from Sardinia to Provence (where it's called Rolle), it appears to have a bright future in California, given its slam-bang aromatics that conjure up "The Blancs": Sauvignon, Grenache and Chenin. Wet stones coated in lemon oil and grapefruit essence coupled with white flower petals sprinkled on top gives you a sense of the medley of adjectives that you'll encounter upon smelling it, and additional highlights appear with more airtime, like honey, pear and banana. A trace of nutty almond sneaks in on the zippy finish, and its complexity and easy compatibility with shellfish makes me yearn for the summer release when I can pair it with garlicky steamed clams.

Blair Fox 2007 Syrah Tierra Alta Vineyard

Futures price: \$26.99 Release price: \$34.99 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The black fruits of this Syrah are deeply submerged right now, like Red October cruising the Laurentian Abyss just east of the Tannic Straits. Oak char and vanilla command center stage initially, bursting up and out of your glass like the Alien fleeing John Hurt's chest. I guess this wine is cinematic in scope, because it keeps me thinking of movies...like a film that ages gracefully (*Citizen Kane*, *The Apartment*, *Robot Monster*), the Tierra Alta will actually benefit from more cellar time, and exhibit even more showiness in two to three years, though you get an exemplary preview today. Rated R (for relentless).

Blair Fox 2007 Syrah Purisima Mountain Vineyard

Futures price: \$29.99 Release price: \$38.99 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This has already been rated by *Wine Advocate* as a barrel sample, receiving a 91-93 range score, so my meager description may pale in the more experienced shadow of RP, but I'll try anyway. The smooth, rounded entry leads to an intriguing mixture of Starbucks-like mocha and vanilla, with blueberry, smoke and earth tiered and unrestrained across the palate, finishing with a tinge of softening tannins, alerting the tongue that this should be cellared for another year or so for maximum pleasure.

Harrison-Clarke

This small site in Ballard Canyon (a very good neighborhood) is planted to ten acres of Syrah and one and a half acres of Grenache, and owners Roger Harrison and Hilarie Clarke-Harrison wisely hired local Rhône specialist Sashi Moorman to consult. Last year they established their own winemaking facility onsite: Roger cares for the vineyard, Hilarie makes the wine. There's no doubt that this brand has developed a high level of quality very quickly, with 2007 the best vintage to date. –BW

Harrison-Clarke 2007 Syrah Estate Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$28.99 Release price: \$33.99 185 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The Latin phrase *penetranter infucatus* comes to mind: it sounds impolite but refers to the ominously obsidian/dark violet coloration that saturates glassware as well as palates once this Syrah is uncaged. This is a fruit projectile, BUT with a supremely honed sense of direction, a self-correcting gyroscope of structure that maintains focus and offers density as well as exotic smokiness accompanied by all fruits imaginable from the kingdom of Purpleberry. This is an assured wine, self-confident and serious, with a dark side big and bad enough to make Darth Vader cry like a little girl.

Harrison-Clarke 2007 Cuvee Charlotte Estate Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$51.99 Release price: \$51.99 55 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is a carnivore's dream, a truly meaty wine, with elements of smoked prosciutto and beef broth: its inky color foretells the fathomless depth of fruit, but the backbone keeps this light on its feet, more Fred Astaire than Michael Flatley. Chocolate and flowers arrive on the palate like a Valentine's Day delivery, and while its youthfulness will keep this a year or two away from prompting true nirvana, as a self-professed wine guru, I guarantee olfactory and palatal enlightenment today...you'll leave the event chanting a new multi-syllabic mantra: "Harrison-Clarke."

Happy Canyon Vineyard

Doug Margerum is in charge of producing Happy Canyon Vineyards' wines, where startling headway has been made growing Bordeaux grapes in the hotter climes of the eastern end of the Santa Ynez Valley, erasing the "greenery" that Santa Barbara has often been infamous for, and replacing it with pure, luxurious fruit. This appellation was officially designated last October by the TTB, and deservedly so, as the area is the source of some of the finest Sauvignon Blanc, Syrah, Cabernet and Merlot in the county. Owner Tom Barrack was prophetic and wise to incorporate the name when he did, and this year's efforts prove that every now and then, the government acts wisely, acknowledging uniqueness and rewarding it. -BW

Happy Canyon Vineyard 2008 Piocho Reserve Happy Canyon Santa Ynez Valley
Futures price: \$35.99 Release price: \$44.99 100 cases produced
Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Tobacco, earth, pepper, toasted herbs and sweet red fruits combine with utterly tamed tannins to give a perfectionist's example of a "Bordeaux meets California" style, utilizing an array of 35% Merlot, 60% Cabernet Franc and 5% Petit Verdot. A sprinkling of chocolate enters the fold, completing this affable mélange with an extra layer of interest, hedonism and delight.

Happy Canyon Vineyard 2007 Ten-Goal Happy Canyon Santa Ynez Valley
Futures price: \$47.99 Release price: \$59.99 250 six packs produced
Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This medium-full bodied blend prompted me to write "cushy," a first time use of that adjective and perhaps the last, but the fruits are so luscious and soft, I reverted to simplistic, primitive references. I also wrote that "this is measured and well-built," even though that sounds as though we're trying to sell you a three bedroom split-level in a subdivision. Perhaps I'll revert to an analogy: the Left Bank influences of earth, dried herb and sweet tobacco hide in the background, like a reticent, pipe-smoking Frenchman on his first visit to California. In summary: it's seamless, faintly herbal, sweet oak-accented and able to satiate every sensory receptor in your tasting repertoire.

Jaffurs

The term "urban winery" sounds vaguely forbidding and rust-belt industrial, as though visiting one involves a trip to a sinister part of town where life is cheap and even the cops flee for their lives at twilight's descent. Fortunately, Jaffurs Wine Cellars, while within the city limits, is in a happy little zone on the eastside of Santa Barbara, hardly pastoral (there are no rolling hills) but fully functional, and it's minus the street thugs one might envision. The trio that you'll encounter (Craig Jaffurs, Dave Yates and Matt Brady) may take your money, but you'll get superbly flavored wines in return. -BW

Jaffurs 2009 Grenache Blanc Thompson Vineyard Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$28.99 Release price: \$30.99 190 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

We sampled two different components for this white, one from a stainless steel wine barrel (a futuristic, gleaming metallic beastie which I'd never seen before) and the other from neutral oak. Their eventual union will produce a charismatic offspring, combining the honey, ripe pear, white pepper and floral notes of the steel-fermentation, and the viscous, glyceriny texture from wood barrel. Grenache Blanc is starting to shift my automatic predilection for Sauvignon Blanc: the pear/honey/subtle spiciness of the grape coupled with the mouthfeel and enlivening acidity is a seductive package, well-reflected in this wine.

Jaffurs 2008 Grenache Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$31.99 Release price: \$34.99 390 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

From 50% Thompson Vineyard and 50% Stolpman (all Alban and Tablas clones), this fruit was almost all destemmed, and focuses on the inherently chocolatey/raspberry/cherry fruit of the grape; with its lively acids and judicious ripeness, there's almost a sense of Pinot Noir-ness to this bottling.

Jaffurs 2008 Syrah Larner Vineyard Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$39.99 Release price: \$42.99 340 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

(This will never enter regular distribution channels, so it's a winery and futures-only exclusive.) Team Jaffurs' appreciation for Michael Larner's grape-growing abilities and devotional attachment to the family vineyard were clear when I visited the winery to sample, and Craig, Dave and Matt's ability to lure flavor and depth from these tiny berries complements the agricultural efforts made. This wine zapped me like a Tesla coil, with its über-decadent palate-feel and layers of *garrigue*, black pepper, chocolate, allspice and slick blackberry. Approximately half the fruit was foot stomped from whole clusters and the other half destemmed; there's also a bit of American oak utilized, though it would be hard for even a sneering Francophile to discern it, considering all the Rhône-omatic proclivities that this superlative Syrah expresses.

Jelly Roll/ Holus Bolus

Running The Wine House in Los Angeles is a substantial task, but curiosity got the best of me and I learned how to make the stuff, too, working at Santa Barbara Winery and eventually getting involved in not one, but two labels presented here. Jelly Roll is my own wine, sourced from the Stolpman and Larner vineyards and named in tribute to my

musical favorites. Holus Bolus started as a collaboration with Chad Melville, Sashi Moorman, Peter Hunken and me, blending Jelly Roll, Samsara and Piedrasassi Syrahs together; now Peter Hunken is really the man behind Holus Bolus, doing all the work and making the wine. Enjoy these two delicious futures offerings. –JK

Holus Bolus 2008 Syrah Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$21.99 Release Price: \$26.00 600 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This could be my favorite vintage of Holus Bolus to date: it's a blend of four vineyards, mostly Watch Hill and Whitehawk with a touch of Harrison-Clarke and Heartstone. High-toned blackberry, raspberry, figs and a hint of spice leap from the glass, leading to a fantastic texture with rounded tannins and acid structure. The texture is lush with good weight and a long finish. This is another not-to-miss bargain in this year's futures program.

Jelly Roll 2009 Syrah Larner and Stolpman Vineyards Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$28.99 Release Price: \$38.00 220 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

I believe that the 2009 is the best wine I've made to date. It has a dense purple color, with aromatics that are bright and filled with fresh blackberries, plums, and raspberries.

A hint of black olives, pepper, and bacon intertwine with the fruit on the nose. The texture shows off luscious fruit with velvety tannins, and a medium to full-bodied, plush finish.

Jonata/The Paring

Just about two years ago, I drove up to an industrial park in Buellton to meet and taste with Matt Dees, the affable winemaker for Jonata: sometimes the finest wines I taste are made in stark, utterly non-agricultural settings, and that paradox is certainly true for this enterprise. The sandy vineyard in Ballard Canyon (where all grapes except the Pinot Noir are grown) is where the scenic beauty lies, not in the stainless steel and concrete facility just off of 101, where they're transformed into cellar-worthy benchmarks for the area. New this year are two wines culled (pared) from the main barrel selection, offering attention-getting quality and outstanding value. –BW

The Paring 2008 Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$22.99 Release price: \$26.99 650 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring/Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The 2007 vintage of Paring was one of the top five best-selling Pinot Noirs at the Winehound last year, and the 2008 emulates its lush, smoky cranberry/cherry character and adds more French-fashioned influences. Red earth and sage sneak in and complicate the experience, like sub-plots in a psychological thriller, which Matt suggests should be

entitled “The Great Mushroom Hunt” due to the wine’s foresty notes. The vineyard composition here is 70% Sanford and Benedict, 20% La Encantada and 10% Bien Nacido Vineyards, for all you site-specific geeks out there.

The Paring 2006 Red Wine California

Futures price: \$22.99 Release price: \$26.99 1000 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring/Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The 2005 was BY FAR The Winehound’s best-selling meritage blend of last year, and it actually outsold the exceptional Paring ‘07 Pinot Noir, which is a Prometheus-sized task considering that we’re in the middle of freakin’ Pinotland (aka Santa Barbara County). The estate juice is bolstered by about five barrels from Napa, and they combine to offer up dense, luscious red cherry/currant/plummy fruit: Merlot (43%), Cabernet (52%) and a scintilla of Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc are commingled to give this hefty red mouthcoating palate presence, and dashes of barrel spice/vanilla emerge with a bit of swirling. This is a startling value (as is the Pinot) and I was delighted that Matt decided to let us feature both Paring reds this year.

Jonata 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Estate El Desafio de Jonata Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$95.00 Release price: \$125.00 500 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

It would be futile for me to try and describe this Cabernet more eloquently than Robert Parker, so I offer his ecstatic notes here instead of my own...

Wine Advocate rating: (95-97) “The profound 2007 El Desafio de Jonata (a 500-case blend of 95% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Petit Verdot, aged in 85% new French oak and 15% old wood) is the reference point for Cabernet Sauvignon in Santa Ynez. Blueberry liqueur, graphite, acacia flower, and creme de cassis aromas are followed by a wine with great stature, medium to full-bodied power, awesome layers of flavor, and a finish that lasts nearly 60 seconds. The tannins are substantial, but well-integrated and velvety, and the wine is impressively long and layered.”

Jonata 2007 Petit Verdot Estate La Fuerza de Jonata Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$55.00 Release price: \$70.00 160 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

I first tasted this in January, 2009 up at the vineyard, and feel as though that moment, the wine and I are all frozen in time, like a carbonited Han Solo from *Empire Strikes Back*. I can still remember standing there, glaciated as a lawn gnome in a Buffalo winter, intermittently mumbling profanities to myself, trying not to be impolite, but reduced to a combination of stunned silence and guttural street verbiage, all because this impenetrably dark, blackish purple barrel sample overwhelmed me with its formidability and full-throttle hedonism. This small lot red (only six barrels) is a thrill ride, a neck-snapper that, once you taste it, will infiltrate your DNA and create a “Holy @\$%!” response.

(We've already included that phrase as part of your notes below.) We'll set aside some extra chairs by the Jonata table so that you can sit down when you sample. "Purplification" is the only way to describe the impact of this Petit: it makes me want to form a cult...you will be absorbed.

Holy @\$%!

Jorian Hill

Mark Horvath and Joey Gummere, in addition to establishing the "semi-eponymous" Kenneth-Crawford label below, also make the wines for Gary and Jeanne Newman of LA, who found a part-time refuge in the hills of Ballard Canyon, away from their entertainment industry careers two hours south of Santa Ynez Valley. About a third of their twenty acre estate is planted to Syrah, Grenache and Viognier, and since I'm a devoted Rhône acolyte, I was intrigued when Mark and Joey suggested I try two of the wines. The result: both bottlings were instant additions to the program...-BW

Jorian Hill 2008 Viognier Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$23.99 Release price: \$29.99 45 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Floral honey, ripe melon, stony minerality and a faint Riesling-like petrol character all emerge with an easy confluence in the aromas and on the palate, where the wine is viscous without being ponderous, and the food-friendliness is immediately apparent. This succulently perfumed Viognier was fermented in both a stainless steel tank and neutral barrels, so there's a fine balance of viscosity and zest that inspires me to recommend it with a dish like diver scallops in blood orange sauce.

Jorian Hill 2007 Syrah Reserve Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$30.99 Release price: \$37.99 150 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The fruit for the reserve Syrah comes from the top of the hillside at the Jorian Hill property, where the soils are nutrient-deficient, the exposure to sunlight is lengthy and winds keep the crop level at bay. The result is a peppery, brooding red, which has been in bottle since September of 2008 and is destined for a life span lengthier than *The Simpsons* TV run. "Patience" is the last word in my tasting notes, but the authoritative aromas and initial impression of plump fruit, dried herbs and black pepper are the assuring road signs that indicate this powerhouse merely needs a friendly home in a quiet cellar to tame its lusty and dramatic self.

Kaena/

Shai

Winemaker Mikael Sigouin started out making only seventy-five cases of his own wine in 2001, but production these days has “exploded” to about five hundred cases. A native Hawaiian, Mikael’s given name is Kaena, which translates as “potential for greatness.” You’ll find that Mikael’s stints at Fess Parker and currently at Beckmen have given him the extensive, desirable “Rhône” experience that he sought 12 years ago when he arrived in Santa Barbara. A new addition to the Santa Barbara family and the futures program is Shai Cellars, a wine label that Mikael is consulting on for his friend, Shawn Halahmy. -JK

Kaena 2008 Grenache Lerner Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$25.99 Release Price: \$35.00 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

A delicious Grenache with classic notes of kirsch, white pepper spice, cranberry, and leather, the texture is very pleasing with good weight, standout juiciness of freshly crushed raspberries in the mid-palate, enticing lushness and fine, dusty tannins. There’s a long and juicy finish to boot...very nice.

Kaena 2008 Hapa Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$27.99 Release Price: \$37.00 200 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Hapa is a wonderful blend of 56% Syrah, 22% Grenache, 11% Mourvedre and 11% Cabernet. The Syrah and Grenache are from Tierra Alta and Camp 4 Vineyards, with Losson Vineyard providing the Cabernet. There are hints of blackberry, cedar, herbs, and clove, and the texture is lush and long with dense blackberry fruit. All of Mikael’s wines are high quality, but this is my favorite of the bunch because of its roundness, softness, and juiciness.

Kaena 2008 Look me in the Eye "Occasional Red" Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$23.99 Release Price: \$32.00 225 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

A blend of 73% Grenache (Tierra Alta and Watch Hill), 9% Cabernet (Losson), 9% Syrah (Tierra Alta) and 9% Mourvèdre (Camp 4), Occasional Red is produced by Mikael for a radio personality from Hawaii. Blackberry, blueberry, black currant and vanilla aromas segue to a medium weight, ripe attack on the palate. It’s easy to enjoy, goes down very smoothly, and shows elegance on the mid-palate and finish.

Shai Cellars 2008 Adome Syrah/Cabernet Blend Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$24.99 Release Price: \$33.00 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This debut offering is a crowd pleaser: it's fresh and juicy, with blueberry and raspberry fruit on the palate, and touches of cassis, blackberry, cedar, and vanilla. The softness and roundness on the palate make this wine very easy to consume as well.

Kenneth-Crawford

*There is no one named Ken Crawford creating this wine...it's actually a partnership (**Kenneth** "Joey" Gummere and Mark **Crawford** Horvath), alumni of Santa Barbara Winery and Babcock, respectively, who have been quietly but persistently crafting age-worthy reds for most of the last ten years under this label. Located in Buellton in a warehouse that I never would have found without precise directions (thank you, Mrs. Horvath), Joey and Mark may keep their lair a secret from the general public, but we're glad to "expose" this duo's wines, and are particularly happy that they suggested the small-production, futures exclusive that we have yet to name! -BW*

Kenneth-Crawford 2009 Pinot Noir Babcock Vineyard

Futures price: \$33.99 Release price: \$44.99 225 cases produced
Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Earth, leather and cherry aromas compete with the 40% new French oak used in this remarkably evolved and pleasurable '09, with the gingerbread cookie notes (baking spice and vanilla) eventually acquiescing to the core of concentrated red fruits. The frost of '08 actually had an effect on last year's harvest (it minimized yields), and fruit ripeness wound up appearing at a lower sugar level. The 25% stem inclusion added the earthy notes and a malleable backbone: half clone 115 and half Pommard were picked in mid-September before the rains, so Mother Nature's unpredictable timing wasn't an issue here, and the result is a well-defined glimpse into Pinot's success in Santa Barbara in 2009.

Kenneth-Crawford 2009 Rhone Blend The Larner Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$29.99 Release price: \$37.99 75 cases produced
Scheduled release: Fall, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Here's an exclusive to the program, a boisterous, young Grenache/Syrah blend from 100% Larner Vineyard fruit that Mark and Joey thought would tantalize me: it's jammy, thick and swarthy, with a penchant towards raspberry, cherry and plums augmented by espresso notes from its upbringing in one-year-old barrels. With aeration, The Blend fans out lasciviously across the palate, with Syrah's black fruit more apparent, hamming it up like a supporting player horning in on the lead actor's monologue. While the structure yields slowly, remember that just a few months ago, this was grapes hanging off a trellis, so swirl like hell or keep your hands off of it for awhile after release.

Paul Lato

A love of food and wine and a chance meeting with a local winemaker prompted Paul Lato to move to the central coast in 2002. A Polish native, he took a lengthy, meandering path west to get here, first with stops in Spain and eventually Canada, where he studied to become a trained sommelier in Toronto. One day at his restaurant job, he met and hit it off with ABC's Jim Clendenen, and was invited to work the 1996 harvest in Santa Maria. Six years later Paul moved here permanently and began making wine in tiny quantities under his own label. The results have been attention-getting, with a "mailing-list only" kind of popularity. We're glad that he has some to share for our program. **-BW**

Paul Lato 2009 Chardonnay "Le Souvenir" Sierra Madre Vineyard Santa Maria Valley

Futures price: \$44.99 Release price: \$54.99 175 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Paul was determined to find a plot of Wente clone Chardonnay at a worthy site in Santa Barbara County for this bottling; he'd researched its qualities and decided that this particular "version" of Chard could achieve ripeness without advanced sugar levels, if grown in an optimal location with tender farming. He found a low-yielding block at Sierra Madre, and the result is this deeply colored but zesty white, with ripe pear, apple and a pinch of vanilla from the use of two-thirds new oak. Moderate brix (23.7) but developed fruit flavors show that Paul's California style/European sensibility combine ideally, and this wine traditionally develops a firm but rich toastiness, with hazelnut and buttered popcorn countered by fruit precision and focus. Sierra Madre Montrachet? You decide...

Paul Lato 2009 Pinot Noir Zotovich Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$54.99 Release price: \$64.99 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The first ever Zotovich Pinot bottled by Paul is an attention-getting, daring red with particularly deep color and an exotic, wild nose of sage, thyme and other spices (almost peppery); it's front-loaded with plum and earth notes that slowly evolve and acquiesce to succulent, dark berry fruit. Minimal yields, 100% destemming and highly-selective triage make this a concentrated Pinot, farmed ideally, as Paul noted, by Ben Merz from Jeff Newton's winegrowing team.

Longoria

Richard (a.k.a. Rick) Longoria is a pioneer in Santa Barbara County and I have huge respect for him as a top winemaker. He's been involved in vineyard management and production here since 1976, and has the expertise that all of us up-and-coming

winemakers hope to achieve. Longoria wines are handcrafted in very small quantities ranging from 50 cases to 800 cases, and I always look forward to consuming them. –JK

Longoria 2008 Pinot Noir Fe Ciega Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$43.99 Release Price: \$54.00 650 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is always my favorite wine from Longoria. On the nose you get very pretty fruit of red cherry and raspberry with a touch of earth, spice, and orange pekoe tea-like flavors. The texture is a little less burly, more elegant than the previous vintages of Fe Ciega. It has ripe fruit sweetness, yet still shows the elegance of Pinot Noir. The tannins are fine, the finish is long, and the wine is exemplary.

Longoria 2008 Tempranillo Clover Creek Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$29.99 Release Price: \$36.00 265 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Besides Rick's extensive knowledge of Santa Barbara winegrowing, his familiarity with Spain is displayed in this muscular Tempranillo, though it's not exactly your traditional Rioja. This is a blend of 95% Tempranillo, with the balance split between Syrah and Merlot from Alisos Vineyard. Attractive cherry lollipop aromas and flavors are round on the palate, and accented with vanilla from the 100% American oak used in the twenty month barrel aging.

Longoria 2008 Evidence Red Bordeaux Blend Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$31.99 Release Price: \$38.00 64 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The production was tiny on this wine, so if you like it, grab it before it's gone. The delicious blend is composed of a higher percentage of Cab Franc this vintage as compared to last: it's 64%, with 19% Merlot (both from Alisos Vineyard), 10% Malbec from Rancho Sisquoc, and 7% Cabernet Sauvignon from Estelle Vineyard. It's dark in color, with rich, extracted cherry fruit and tobacco-like flavors.

Margerum Wine Company

Our second annual wine futures event is actually Doug Margerum's twenty-first, as he's the original founder and still-participating member of the tasting. Yes, with Doug in the program, this would appear to be an unlikelier alliance, a seemingly antithetical collaboration of three competing retailers (now that the Wine Cask shop has reopened)...yet, our oddball triad of Cask, House and 'hound somehow works, devoid of any disharmony. (Next, K-Mart, Target and Wal-mart will be announcing a friendly coalition...). Doug's involvement with multiple properties (Three Creek, Happy Canyon Vineyard, Cimarone, Cent' Anni) provides an impressive roster all represented today, but

amidst the ten dozen wines offered in this catalog, we urge you not to miss the exceptional Rhône-centric offerings from MWC. -BW

Margerum 2009 Grenache Alamo Creek Vineyard Santa Maria Valley

Futures price: \$28.99 Release price: \$35.99 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This late entry barrel sample was such a baby, I thought I was munching fresh grapes off of the vine during my initial tasting: the expression of fruit is overt and comically lovable, with grapey aromas taking shape and quickly gathering wine-like focus, with specific notes of ripe, red apple skin, cherry juice and cranberry. While youthfully gobby and gangly, it's getting its sea legs with the support of soft, fuzzy, tooth-coating tannins, and the development arc here should be relatively swift, as cohesion and integration occur with each passing minute.

Margerum 2008 M5 Reserve Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$23.99 Release price: \$31.99 150 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This Syrah-dominated blend (comprising 50% of the quintet that includes Grenache, Mourvèdre, Counoise and Cinsault) offers more red fruit than black, and the suppleness and unobtrusive structure augmented by a bit of oak spice is understated and surprisingly elegant and well-proportioned given its minimal time in bottle.

Margerum 2008 Syrah Alondra de los Prados Vineyard Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$31.99 Release price: \$39.99 250 six packs produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This two acre vineyard is a Margerum monopole, an apt word considering the French influences that permeate this smoky, blackberry-enriched Syrah: bacon, *garrigue*, and purple flowers all appear, but this property always delivers a purple avalanche of blueberry and black raspberry, a formidable fruit basket that coalesces easily (if conspicuously) with the meaty notes of a hearty breakfast made atop a campfire.

Melville

Greg Brewer and the crew at Melville were once again kind enough to plunder the barrel room this year and seek out three unique bottlings made in tiny quantities that we could tout, trumpet and get the masses fired up about, just like in '09. This Santa Rita Hills-based operation has seen thirteen vintages, but no-one is blasé about the endeavor or resting on their laurels, simply assuming that the constant deluge of ninety point (plus) ratings and ecstatic reviews will continue to fall into their laps automatically. The

endless tinkering, clonal experimentation, crafty blending and overall fervor stomp any sense of complacency straight into the STA. Rita Hills dust. -BW

Melville 2009 Chardonnay Donna's Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$29.99 Release price: \$31.99 48 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The decision was made to pick the Mount Eden clone Chardonnay from Donna's block at a relatively low sugar level (21.5 degrees brix), not in an attempt to suck up to France, but simply because, as Greg points out, "the flavors were right." The neutral oak fermentation left the fruit uncloaked, and while this is a delicate white, it's not nearly as austere as one might expect: there's a deep golden color, and the nose and initial palate impression is of honeyed viscosity: then the zingy, wet rock mineral tones and pear/citrus components kick in, abetted by a faint peachiness. It's a California Chardonnay meant for oysters on the half shell, a rarity indeed.

Melville 2009 Pinot Noir Sandy's Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$35.99 Release price: \$38.99 72 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Here's what I wrote in my notebook... "**Day one:** Ripe, strawberry jam nose with violets...juicy, almost blackberry/plum, bit of cocoa. **Day two:** Raspberry and chocolate most prominent, and then every other red fruit imaginable...pomegranate, cherry, strawberry...evolved, approachable, with luscious, soft tannins." Three clones (828, 114 and 459) were picked the same day and fermented with one-third whole clusters in neutral oak. (I think barrel salesmen have given up calling on Greg Brewer.) The vociferous nature of the 828 clone is hushed a bit, structurally, but the fruit is as operatic as ever, not heavy and doom-laden like Wagner, but more Rossini-like...playful, joyous, engaging. For you disco lovers, it's got greater similarity to "More, More, More" by the Andrea True Connection than "You Dropped A Bomb On Me" from The Gap Band.

Melville 2008 Syrah Donna's Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$35.99 Release price: \$38.99 300 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Bacon and lavender make an intriguing combo: they're common in Syrah, but I wish that Body Works or Chanel would start producing soap, bath salts or *eau de parfum* that mirror pork and flowers, perhaps with a dash of blackberry. A descriptor like "plums and smoke" may remind you of a produce stand in flames, but I don't mean to be quite so literal. The point is that there's varietal character aplenty in this wine: the Estrella clone brings the dark-as-a-starless evening-styled black fruit ripeness, and Clone 1 (mostly whole cluster) offers the spice, floral and meaty notes, as well as the staunch backbone that prompted Greg to state with conviction, "This baby will last forever."

Ojai

Adam Tolmach's wines were among the first that got me "fired up" on California's potential with Syrah and Pinot Noir. I have the utmost respect for what he does in the vineyard and the cellar; he can make great wine while keeping his alcohol levels low, and vintage after vintage he proves that he is one of the finest producers in the state. In my mind he is the J-L Chave of the Central Coast, the Frederic Mugnier of Santa Barbara, and the Jerry Garcia of Ojai. In short, these futures offerings truly bring a smile to my face when I taste them. When I grow up, I want to make wine like Adam Tolmach. -JK

Ojai 2009 Riesling Kick On Ranch Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$19.99 Release Price: \$24.00 150 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

A dry style Riesling that really quenches your thirst, the '09 Kick On has aromas of lemon peel, honeysuckle, and apple. The texture is round and lush but has a solid kick of acidity to balance it all out, making it refreshing. The well-defined minerality, on top of the fresh fruits, tempts your taste buds on the lingering finish.

Ojai 2007 Chardonnay Clos Pepe Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$28.99 Release Price: \$38.00 400 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Here's a wonderful Chardonnay with aromas of green apples, pears, hazelnuts, and orange rind. The texture is very balanced: this is not an over-the-top styled Chard full of oak and ripe fruit. It has layers of fresh fruit, minerals, and good acidity as well, which makes it more energizing on the palate and easy to enjoy.

Ojai 2007 Pinot Noir Fe Ciega Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$36.99 Release Price: \$45.00 220 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

I couldn't agree more with what Adam said about this wine, so I had to let you read it for yourself. "Wow! This wine has a fabulous aroma that is very showy right now. It reminds me of a walk in our hills just after a rain, with scents of damp earth, sage, and thyme. Unlike all of the earlier vintages that we produced from Fe Ciega, this one is easy going, with gentle, savory cranberry and blueberry flavors. When a bottle of this wine is left open for a few days, it remains fresh but tightens up a bit, and the wine shows its tannin more clearly, which tells me that, despite its precociousness, it has a long life ahead. As always, our best Pinot Noir."

Ojai 2007 Syrah Roll Ranch Vineyard California

Futures price: \$31.99 Release Price: \$40.00 350 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This single vineyard Syrah from Adam is always a standout for me. The wine is strutting its stuff with beautiful notes of espresso, black licorice, blackberries, and cassis. The texture is round and soft with nice silky tannins holding everything together. The black fruits have great length, width, and depth on the palate with a long, opulent finish.

Ojai 2007 Syrah Presidio Vineyard Santa Barbara County
Futures price: \$36.99 Release Price: \$45.00 115 cases produced
Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

I tasted the Roll Ranch Syrah first and then tasted this Presidio because I wanted to have my favorite Syrah of Adam's first. But, I may be leaning towards the Presidio this vintage: perhaps I'll have to buy both and see what happens from there. Regardless, this is just good ol' fine drinking juice with aromas of forest floor, blackberries, black cherries, earth and a campfire. The texture is elegant, like that of an Hermitage from France, with pure and fresh fruit.

Fess Parker/Epiphany

Fess Parker passed away on March 19th, and the day after, as I tried to finalize the futures catalog, it was time for me to create the introduction and notes on these wines. It was with a degree of sadness that I wrote, but it was also reaffirming to taste and promote the brands that he established: the quality in both '07 and '08 is exceptional, and so, with a solemn tip of the coonskin cap, here are the 2010 offerings... -BW

Fess Parker 2008 Pinot Noir Ashley's Santa Rita Hills
Futures price: \$32.99 Release price: \$49.99 1000 cases produced
Scheduled release: Late Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This Santa Rita Hills vineyard was originally planted by Fess Parker and named after his daughter Ashley, but was later sold and renamed Gaia, and then eventually acquired by William Foley and is now known as Rancho Las Hermanas. Fortunately, Ashley gets to keep her name on the label, just without the word "vineyard" after it. Farmed by central coast agro-expert Jeff Newton, the site's yields stay low (three-quarters of a ton to two tons per acre), and I was immediately taken by the agreeable nature it expressed, with graphite, smoke, cola and cherry characteristics energetically leading the melodious chorus.

Fess Parker 2008 Pinot Noir Pommard Clone Santa Barbara County
Futures price: \$32.99 Release price: \$49.99 150 cases produced
Scheduled release: Late Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This is 100% Pommard clone from Rancho Las Hermanas made from a minimal one and a half tons of fruit per acre, but it's remarkably different from the Ashley's and worthy of inclusion here. Only 150 cases were produced, and this small lot, hand punched-down, basket-pressed beauty is brimming with ripe cranberry fruit, chocolate and an autumnal spice, like taking a walk on an October evening and smelling wet earth, a pumpkin pie baking in a nearby house, and perhaps a bit of woodsmoke from a neighbor's chimney.

Fess Parker 2007 Syrah Rodney's Vineyard Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$26.99 Release price: \$44.99 900 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

"Grilled *foie gras*" is what I eventually dubbed the exotic aroma that I encountered; I know I've been making reference to meat a lot this year in my notes, but I assure you that it had nothing to do with a diet I was on or any cooking I did while compiling my notes. Syrah tends to be a meat-accented wine (like the bacon scents that are typical to it), but this was beyond pork or beef, and equally enticing. Smoke and allspice from the 60% new barrel usage (including a bit of American oak) add even greater interest, and winemaker Blair Fox pointed to background notes of tobacco and sage that he enjoyed in this bottling. A splash of Petite Sirah bolsters the blue fruits innate to the main grape, and this finishes with indefinite circularity, around and around, and on and on.

Epiphany 2007 Grenache Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$20.99 Release price: \$29.99 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Here's another small lot red from the Parkers, a four barrel blend of grapes that winemaker Blair Fox avoided crushing, preferring to jumpstart fermentation within the berries themselves. He notes that Grenache can have a lot of tannin, but not necessarily deep color, so he also destemmed the fruit and added 10% Syrah as equalizers. I noted red apple skin and cinnamon candy in my fruit-centric notes, with cocoa and ripe raspberry traipsing across the palate as well; the finish is mellow, with structural evolution readily apparent in an amiable wine that's ready to quaff.

Epiphany 2007 Syrah Paradise Road Vineyard Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$25.99 Release price: \$34.99 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Barrel time is still key to Paradise Syrah's development, as tiny berries also mean heavy tannins, at least from this vineyard located just north of Santa Barbara. My first written note was "pretty gorgeous," which is a good start to any tasting, and I found that this toasty, smoky, thick red will age effortlessly at least two year's beyond your most optimistic guess.

Epiphany 2007 Petite Sirah Santa Barbara County
Futures price: \$20.99 Release price: \$29.99 800 cases produced
Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

There's nothing blended into this, it's 100% PS and thus large-scaled, flashing raspberry and blackberry fruit with fleshy textures that lead to a big structured finale. The tannins sneak up on you (it's Petite, that's to be expected!), but the chocolaty notes and ripeness perform a public service and act like riot police, shielding you from the firmer aspects of this titan.

Qupé

Bob Lindquist, along with Adam Tolmach, is the reason why I make and drink Syrah. To me, Bob is the true "Lone Rhône Ranger" simply because he stood nearly solo in California for a long time as a Rhône varietal producer. He was one of the first to grow the grapes, produce the wines, and, most importantly, make them very well. He's responsible (though he may not know it or even ever own up to it) for putting Syrah on the map in California. So, as you can tell, I am a fan of the "Lone Rhône Ranger" not only because of his wines, but also because of his love for the L.A. Dodgers. Also, the selections presented today offer some of the biggest savings in the booklet! –JK

Qupé 2008 Roussanne Bien Nacido Vineyard Hillside Santa Maria Valley
Futures price: \$29.99 Release Price: \$40.00 460 cases produced
Scheduled release: Winter 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

A pleasant nose of roasted almonds, burnt cracker, honey, caramel, white flowers and a touch of toasty oak combine with a lush palate and fresh fruit and a hint of lychee nut on the finish. The expert balance and a perfect touch of acidity making this wine refreshing.

Qupé 2008 Syrah Bien Nacido Vineyard Hillside Santa Maria Valley
Futures price: \$29.99 Release Price: \$45.00 720 cases produced
Scheduled release: Winter 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The Hillside has hints of blackberry and green olive with a kiss of smoke, tar, spice, and leather. The palate is filled with lush black fruits with a fair amount of tannic structure to make it ageworthy. This is always a standout wine from Bob.

Qupé 2008 Syrah "Sonnie's" Sawyer- Lindquist Vineyard Edna Valley
Futures price: \$42.99 Release Price: \$55.00 230 cases produced
Scheduled release: Winter 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Sonnie's is just fantastic. It's hard to proclaim that with so many great Syrahs in this catalog, and I don't want to get in trouble with all the other producers... but I'll readily admit that it's better than mine. It reminds me of Crozes-Hermitage or Saint-Joseph with

its peppery, bacony, and raspberry goodness on the nose and palate. The texture is very Rhône-esque as well, making this an almost refreshing Syrah. Delicious!

**Qupé 2008 Syrah Bien Nacido Vineyard X Block “The Good Nacido”
Santa Maria Valley**

**Futures price: \$79.99 Release Price: \$100.00 140 cases produced
Scheduled release: Winter 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010**

This is the biggest of the three Syrahs, with hints of raspberry, tar, spice, soy sauce, smoked bacon, cured meat, and sweet vanilla oak. Big, lush texture and a long finish with good acidity keep it lively and fresh. It does reveal some Rhône-like characteristics like the Sonnie's, but with a kick of California ripeness and sweetness in it...a really nice wine and one of my favorites next to the Sonnie's.

Rey

Chris King (husband of ex -Winehound staff member, Deanna) has released his (their) latest wine under the Rey label. Chris' stints at Santa Barbara Winery, Longoria, Babcock, Lewis and Red Car were all valuable learning experiences, and he and Deanna make these standout wines in tiny quantities, hands-on. The 2006 Syrah was a big hit at the Wine House and The Winehound: we were the only two southern California retail outlets for it. Their Grenache and Mourvèdre were two of the best-selling wines in last year's futures program, offering astounding character for the buck. Chris and Deanna started in their tiny garage in Santa Maria and have since established themselves in the Lompoc wine ghetto working with friend, mentor and fellow Syrah-lover Sashi Moorman of Stolpman. -BW

Rey 2007 Syrah Central Coast

**Futures price: \$16.99 Release price: \$19.99 100 cases produced
Scheduled release: Spring, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010**

You'd never know it, but there's ten percent Grenache and even a splash of Cuyama Cabernet in this Syrah, but the thirty months in barrel have given this wine cohesion while still maintaining a defined backbone. Thick and substantial, with juicy plum, blackberry preserves, vanilla, cocoa and black pepper, this is a stunning value to purchase by the case (or at least three bottles...) Hell, I'm going to buy some!

Samsara

Chad Melville's Samsara bottlings have been on an astonishing, point-scoring fast break with all the major critics for the last several years:

- The International Wine Cellar: nothing but 90s (or higher) in the last three vintages, (including the rosé!)

- **Wine Spectator:** *The same A+ range scores hold true for all the '06's and '07's they've sampled.*
- **Wine Advocate:** *Over 80% of the Samsara wines (and Parker has reviewed them all) have earned 90 points or better, with a couple as high as 94.*
- **Wine Enthusiast** offers deity-like devotion to this brand, with the plethora of mid-90s reading like L.A.'s mid-July temperature forecast.

If I'd received grades like this in college, I'd be a helluva lot more successful than I am today. I'm not a points-monger, but when critical unanimity reaches this level, one must take notice. (I did a few years ago, just based on my own tasting with Chad...). In my job, I'm delightfully required to taste Samsara wines, and that's my directive to you today.

-BW

Samsara 2009 Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$27.99 Release price: \$29.99 250 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Sourced from the initial crop of the new Hilliard-Bruce Vineyard on the western edges of Santa Rita, this property was planted by Ryan Carr, is managed by Jeff Newton and farmed by Ben Merz, whose focus and efforts at this site were deeply applauded by Chad.

Three different pickings occurred (all in the low to mid-20 degree brix range) and then blended together in order to meld the varied ripeness levels and increase complexity. The depth of this first-year fruit is remarkable, awash in cranberry and cherry notes that are motivated and encouraged by bright acids, with only moderate structural traces of the one-third whole cluster fermentation. We can't help but praise its excellent QPR, and endorse this vineyard's freshman effort, guided by Professor Melville.

Samsara 2008 Pinot Noir Turner Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$39.99 Release price: \$45.99 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The proximity of the Turner Vineyard to the Melville property gives Chad easy familiarity with this turf, as it almost feels like an extension of the fabled Carrie's Block. Fermented with native yeast in 15% new wood with 40% whole clusters, the Turner has an advanced and agreeable nature right now, with a ripe entry, ultra-creamy textures and cocoa-abetted red fruits that persist and spread faster than frivolous predictions about Armageddon: just remember that the world isn't destined to end today, so please savor your taste of this Pinot for as long as you like.

Samsara 2008 Syrah Melville Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$35.99 Release price: \$39.99 120 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The term "half whole cluster" may seem odd, like "a constant variable," but that 50% stem inclusion is where I'd guess the alluring earthiness and smoky black peppercorn

character originates. To all strict *terroirists*, please note that the pleasing notes of soil, while obvious, are also unexpected, given that the vines are planted in sand...hey, maybe you don't need to grow them in dirt to get "a sense of place." (End of taunt...) An old clonal favorite, Estrella, grown on Melville's low-vigor rootstock in a cool climate, appears to be a brilliant equation, resulting in one of my favorite recipes for Syrah; just be patient with the wayward, reticent black fruit, as it ALWAYS catches up and joins its Cornas-like brethren in a touching and tasty display of Franco-American unity.

Samsara 2008 Syrah Ampelos Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$31.99 Release price: \$37.99 75 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Quite expansive (and also built like a brick house), this 100% whole cluster Syrah from chilly-climate fruit offers the ripe plum and blackberry typical of California, rounded out with *Français*-styled sweet herbs, black pepper and loam, as if an experienced Rhône expat landed in Santa Rita Hills and started making this stuff...but, no, it's just Chad, who channeled the spirits of Thierry Allemand and Alain Graillot (Google them, you should) while crafting this complex finale from Ampelos. I hate to see this bottling disappear, but it'll be drinkable for a decade, thus staying with us for a good, long time.

Sanguis

Winemaker Matthias Pippig has settled into a new encampment for his young label at a just-built facility in Happy Canyon, where he can keep close watch over his creatively blended and packaged Rhônes. He'll also oversee production at this site, the Grassini Vineyard, which has achieved pre-famous status via wines made by Foxen and Margerum. Matthias is particular about his fruit sources for Sanguis, scouring the central coast and including a panoramic array of vineyards and clones; he's also picky about names and art for the wines, creating and changing both with every new vintage. This year's selection may wind up in the crosshairs of the TTB, but we deeply hope it gets approved, especially for all the Bettys out there...-BW

Sanguis 2007 Syrah Backseat Betty California

Futures price: \$53.99 Release price: \$59.9 220 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

There's a fair amount of new oak in this Syrah-based blend, with smoke, licorice and sweet spices initially evoking the broad range of French barrels utilized; then, the low-yielding vineyards (Stolpman, Thompson, Vogelzang, Grassini and Los Tres Burros) are unleashed, with red and blackberry fruits expressing vocal ripeness and achieving equality with the toasty stave influences. Action-packed but unwinding at a glacial pace, Betty requires an extended stay in the cellar: leave her in the cool darkness for a two year hiatus from the light and she'll flesh out, soften up and become even chummier by then.

Stolpman

Sampling with winemaker Sashi Moorman involves more than just a simple visit to a tasting facility to try some beakers of unfinished vino along with a few minutes of chit chat. No, it's a half-day event that should have a soundtrack (maybe Steely Dan's Greatest Hits, the Long Version), and it requires his stamina (Cirque du Soleil-inspired climbing of racks, balancing between barrels armed with a wine thief), as well as my own palatal exertion (we tried two dozen wines during my late February visit). After tasting, Sashi made dinner at his house with an amazing oyster stew for starters and then the best veal I've ever enjoyed. I toddled home about midnight, driving through a vicious downpour on a desolate stretch of Highway 1 between Lompoc and 101, recalling how I'd arrived at the winery at 4 pm. The eight hour Stolpman experience was wholly worth it, and I'd snagged two exceptional wines to offer today: a special bottling just for this event, and a decadent old favorite from the Moorman repertoire. -BW

Stolpman 2008 L'Avion Estate Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$28.99 Release price: \$34.99 650 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This lavish Roussanne thrills me every year: it's as daringly full-throttle as a white can be, and would be an ideal breakfast wine given all the honey and marmalade character that oozes from its core. Citrusy (in the ripe tangerine/blood orange realm) and viscous (oily, slick, hedonistically textured), L'Avion is 100% Roussanne for the first time ever (no Viognier or Sauvignon Blanc was blended in this vintage). Besides enjoying it with French toast, I'd also suggest a pairing with lobster cakes and a side of grapefruit aioli, or an appetizer with even greater decadence, like pan-fried *foie gras* with sautéed apricots.

L'Avion promotes immorality, we just hope it's not condemned and banned by some indignant coalition before it gets released.

Stolpman 2009 Syrah Coferment Estate Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$29.99 Release price: \$35.99 24 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This futures exclusive is a special one barrel lot (24 cases) that Sashi suggested could be bottled early, and given its kindly nature and surprising number of layers, I readily agreed. It exudes an exotic nose of *garrigue* and ruby red grapefruit, like a Languedoc/Rhone blend that trumpets hillside herbs and citrus zest. The coupling of clone 877 with about 5% cofermented Viognier gives this steadfast, luscious Syrah lavish textures and enticing aromatics, coupled with a deluge of mouth-encompassing purple fruits. The tannins are remarkably humane even at this stage (probably due to the Viognier's intervention), and while thousands of grapes were harmed during the production of this wine, their sacrifice was worth it. Bow your head and thank them as you sip away...

Tensley / Lea

Joey Tensley, who we now call #22, is a very close friend of both the Wine House and me personally. His wines have been standouts every year at the SB Futures tasting and highly sought after since he started participating in this event eight years ago. It doesn't hurt that Tensley wines consistently obtain such great scores from wine journalists every year, either. We call him #22 because his 2007 Colson Syrah was #22 in the "WS Top 100". Joey is a down to earth, one of a kind, no B.S. guy, who is making some serious Rhône-style wines.

Jennifer Lea Tensley, Joey's wife (and much better half!), is also "strutting her stuff" in the winemaking world and making a beautiful Pinot Noir from the Santa Rita Hills. The wine is named Lea, and we are honored to offer this tiny production (8 barrels) at this tasting. -JK

Lea 2008 Pinot Noir Turner Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$29.99 Release Price: \$38.00 200 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

I truly enjoyed the '07 Turner last year and I like this vintage even better. It's made from the Pommard clone and receives the utmost care in the vineyard and cellar. Jennifer presses this wine in a small, gentle basket press into small buckets and then pours the wine into barrel: there is no pumping. The juice is then aged in 50% one-year-old barrels and 50% neutral barrels for one year, avoiding new oak in order to show off the hard work done in the vineyard. All this makes for a lush wine with pure, fresh, elegant fruit of strawberries and cherries, and a long, velvety, lingering finish with a touch of cinnamon spice.

Tensley 2009 Syrah Colson Canyon Vineyard Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$29.99 Release price: \$38.00 1300 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The Colson Syrah is 3D: Deep, Dark, Dense. It's always the "Big Kahuna" of Joey's wines: the highest scoring, top selling, and most heavily concentrated. We call it "the crowd pleaser". On the nose, there's blueberry, raspberry, plum, and cured meats, while the weighty texture and length include a sweet and lush mid-palate. The soft tannins and a touch of acidity balance out the sweetness, and while powerful, it's luscious and long.

Tensley 2009 Syrah Tierra Alta Vineyard Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$29.99 Release price: \$36.00 250 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This vintage is my favorite Tierra Alta that Joey has made to date, hands down: it expresses beautiful aromas of fresh, crushed raspberries with a bit of gingerbread. This is an easy drinking, more elegant Syrah, not as powerful as the Colson Canyon, but still a beauty of a wine. The texture is beautiful with hints of raspberry, kirsch liqueur, a touch of white pepper spice and a long, juicy finish.

tercero

Larry Schaffer's high energy and extreme goodwill are instantly palpable once you meet him: he's a relentless promoter of Santa Barbara County wines, and as you'll taste, there's a boatload of personality and exuberance in this year's tercero selections. Switching vocations after years in the publishing business, Larry returned to college and studied for a degree in the science of wine, and later became the enologist for Fess Parker, where he's currently assistant winemaker. Besides his day job, he and his wife Christie established the tercero label (2006 was the initial vintage), focusing exclusively on Rhône varietals, though he again snuck a Gewürz into the mix and I found it irresistible for the second straight year... -BW

tercero 2009 Gewürztraminer The Outlier Santa Barbara County
Futures price: \$16.99 Release price: \$19.99 160 cases produced
Scheduled release: June, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

I unabashedly enjoy full-tilt wines, except when they say Gewürztraminer on the label. Larry, however, always tames the overt floral notes that usually remind me of getting slapped in the face by Bridezilla's bouquet; he also includes just a pinch of varietal brown spice notes rather than egregious quantities that bludgeon one's olfactory senses (like being waterboarded with cinnamon extract and oil of clove). Fermented and aged in stainless steel with a small amount aged in oak to provide more roundness, Outlier shows a panoply of green apple, pear and melon fruit with a tinge of dried flowers and autumn potpourri, traversing the palate with a medium weight, deft acidity and length. My annual praise of Gewürz is now concluded...

tercero 2008 Cuvée Loco Larner Vineyard Santa Barbara County
Futures price: \$25.99 Release price: \$29.99 100 cases produced
Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Another creative commingling that erupted forth from the determined blendaholic Larry Schaffer is this all-Larner Vineyard blend, a 50/50 Grenache-Syrah combo that belts out some blackberry and cocoa bass notes, while the treble emerges in the form of raspberry and red plum. Fruit coats and commandeers the palate, and while the tannins maintain radio silence until the finish, that's where they kick in and speak in slightly guttural tones: "Keep your damn hands off me, sonny boy." Take heed and stock Loco in the

Vinotemp for at least a year of slumber. The chosen name, by the way, was a joint effort created by Larry and Christie's three children.

tercero 2008 Syrah Larner Vineyard Santa Barbara County
Futures price: \$25.99 Release price: \$29.99 50 cases produced
Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Michael Larner actually lives on his family's property, and that level of familiarity, proximity and dedication to the turf prompts Larry to completely trust this winegrower's knowledge and instincts when it comes to vineyard specifics. Mr. Schaffer also notes that the Larner site allows ripeness to be achieved at lower sugar levels; the two clones utilized (174 and 383) offer up a precise combination of strawberry, blackberry, leather, grilled beef and graphite. There's a mid-palate surge even in this youthful state, with the fruit fanning out and seamlessly linking the attack to the finish. (Surges and attacks are GOOD things in wine...)

tercero 2008 The Climb Santa Barbara County
Futures price: \$25.99 Release price: \$29.99 75 cases produced
Scheduled release: Fall, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

I learn something new nearly every time I talk to a winemaker. When I sat down and tasted with Larry, he explained that Petite Sirah, despite its reputation for making dark, powerful and intense wines, is actually a thin-skinned grape with surprising susceptibility to the elements. (That's like telling me that Mike Tyson cries at weddings). The 33% Petite in the blend is from Rodney's Vineyard's twenty year old vines, while the Syrah is split evenly between Larner and Thompson Vineyards, and the two sites combine to offer brazen aromatics that are detectable from a yardstick away. The essence of smoky black cherry harmonizes with a background chorus of Dylan's "Tangled Up In Blue(berry)," with cinnamon and vanilla adding interest during the crescendo.

tercero 2008 Petite Sirah Santa Barbara County
Futures price: \$25.99 Release price: \$29.99 50 cases produced
Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The twenty-year-old vineyard source for this 100% Petite was originally planted by Eli Parker from the Palisades clone, which I had never heard of before: even Google couldn't tell me much about it, though I did find an interesting website (<http://www.psychospath.com/>) which deals with Petite Sirah obsession, and is definitely worth a gander. The first note I jotted down after my initial sip was "civilized Petite," an oxymoron similar to "moderate bingeing." Frightfully deep black fruits sprinkled with a touch of cocoa lead the indefatigable charge, and while the tannins let their presence be known, they whisper rather than roar, so you won't have to wait till your grandkids come of age to drink this.

tercero 2008 Cuvee Christie Santa Barbara County
Futures price: \$25.99 Release price: \$29.99 175 cases produced
Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The unexpected creaminess and density completely counters what I would have presumed about a blend comprised of 70% Grenache: suppleness and heft (ably boosted by equal parts of Syrah and Mourvedre) give this red a sexy mouthfeel, and a complicating note of sweet herbal tea blends rousingly with the raspberry and blackberry fruit. This is well-built, a forward and expressive composite of fruit from the Lerner, Watch Hill and Camp 4 Vineyards.

Tyler

I was first introduced to Tyler through Ted Vance of Ojai Vineyards three years ago. He came into the store and said, "You need to check out my friend's wines!" Respecting Ted's palate, I did just that and am glad we brought Justin Willet into the fold. His 2008s are truly stunning: I like them even better than the 2007s (which was a great vintage).

His Pinot Noirs rank up there with some of the best in California. His passion is Burgundy and his approach to winemaking is very traditional, very French. He focuses on great terroir and lets that come out singing in the bottle. This is a very exciting Santa Barbara producer and somebody you will want to keep your eye (and palate) on.

Unfortunately, his production is minuscule, so act fast on these. -JK

Tyler 2008 Pinot Noir Dierberg Vineyard Block 5 Santa Maria Valley
Futures price: \$39.99 Release price: \$45.00 125 cases produced
Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This Pinot has bright aromatics of rose petals, flowers, red fruits of cherry and cranberry, with a hint of spice. The texture is soft and elegant with good sweetness and weight in the mid-palate. It's very pretty and sensuous with great balance.

Tyler 2008 Pinot Noir Presidio Vineyard Santa Barbara County
Futures price: \$45.99 Release price: \$52.00 75 cases produced
Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Sourced from the 115 clone and yielding about one ton to the acre, the Presidio boasts aromatic black cherry and blackberry fruits with hints of cinnamon, black truffles, and violets leaping from the glass. Fantastic richness, balance, and a long finish make this wine very easy to fall in love with.

Tyler 2008 Pinot Noir Clos Pepe Vineyard Santa Rita Hills

Futures price: \$54.99 Release price: \$60.00 36 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This wine is the most Burgundian of the three, reminding me of a Vosne-Romanée, with hints of cherry, white truffle, spice, leather, and earth. I'm partial to this as perhaps my favorite of the three Pinots, but the quality across the board is laudatory. Delicious and highly allocated, the '08 Clos Pepe offers superior texture, a long finish, lushness and balance, with bright, fresh fruit on the palate and a dash of spice, mineral and earth.

Verdad

Louisa Sawyer-Lindquist is the inspiration behind Verdad, and her passion for Spanish wines is expressed by producing Tempranillo and Albariño. When she went to Spain to work harvest and to immerse herself in the culture, she noticed that one of the favorite, oft-repeated phrases was "es la verdad" ("that's the truth"): it became her inspiration for naming the fledgling brand. These wonderful wines are produced at Qupé under her husband Bob Lindquist's direction. You'll taste a part of Spain in these Central Coast vineyards. -JK

Verdad 2008 Tempranillo Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$15.99 Release price: \$20.00 720 cases produced

Scheduled release: Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

A real bargain in this year's futures tasting (like a true Spanish value), the Tempranillo reveals a rustic nose with hints of raspberries, red roses, pepper spice, and earth. There's elegant texture with a medium weighted mid-palate and a touch of oak on the silky finish.

Verdad 2008 Tempranillo Sawyer- Lindquist Vineyard Edna Valley

Futures price: \$29.99 Release price: \$37.50 264 cases produced

Scheduled release: Late Winter, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Here's another delicious wine from the Sawyer-Lindquist vineyard, clearly a great piece of land with some good dirt. You'll note blackberry, raspberry, and vanilla on the nose; this is a lush wine with solid weight on the mid-palate, rounded, fruit driven texture and a soft, juicy finish.

VIE

Winemaker Bryan Kane and his partners established VIE in San Francisco in 2004 as one of the first urban wineries, originally located in the Potrero Hill/Mission district and now on Treasure Island. His background includes working with Scott Shapley (winemaker for Roessler Cellars) and time spent at Copain, Nicholson Ranch and Laird Family. His appreciation for the vineyards of Santa Barbara County whisked him into our program, based on a recommendation by tercero winemaker Larry Schaffer. VIE

received plenty of attention lately from the Bay area press, garnering medals for all eleven wines entered in this year's San Francisco Chronicle wine competition! These two vineyard designates from the outstanding 2007 vintage will be among your Santa Barbara favorites, even if they're facility is a bit north of the county line -BW

VIE 2007 Syrah White Hawk Vineyard Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$35.99 Release price: \$44.99 47 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

White Hawk usually shows an earthiness in it, a graphitey touch 'o dirt that can send *terroir*-mongers into a blissful fit, yammering "I told you so" and advancing their argument for site typicity till they're purple in the face. Bryan's captured that component in his own bottling, coupling it with blue- and blackberry, and roasted coffee notes that give the wine an espresso-like smokiness.

VIE 2007 Syrah Thompson Vineyard Santa Barbara County

Futures price: \$35.99 Release price: \$44.99 49 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Like White Hawk's stamp of singularity, Thompson Vineyard fruit invariably produces, in my experience, juicy and amiable reds, flush with red/ black plum and an easy, early drinkability: Bryan's nailed it here, adding notes of sweet tobacco, incense, smoke and vanilla, serving it up on a plush and supple framework that has enough tannic undertow to focus the jamminess and slick textures.

Vogelzang

I met Mary Beth and Jim Vogelzang a couple of years ago when they brought by their first release of Sauvignon Blanc, which I became an instant fan of and advocate for. The 2008 was one of the top five in California as judged by the Wine Spectator, with a 94 point rating. We have a little bit of the '09 to offer today at a special price, but we're also pleased to feature their first Viognier as well as two reds, one from their estate vineyard and another from the esteemed Fiddestix site. The small production and extreme vigilance regarding what actually goes in the bottle and gets released has made them somewhat of a stealth operation, but we think that will change during this tasting. -BW

Vogelzang 2009 Sauvignon Blanc Estate Happy Canyon Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$25.99 Release price: \$28.99 850 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The higher temperatures in this part of the valley give the resulting wine a stone fruit focus, along with enticing notes of ripe melon and honey, and light but luscious textures. A dash of lime is about as green as it gets, and the elegance of previous bottlings is

evident in this latest release. Creamy, but not heavy, and with exceptional length on the palate, this concentrated white can be savored with steamed clams, halibut with pistachio crust, or oysters Rockefeller spritzed with fresh lemon juice.

Vogelzang 2009 Viognier Estate Happy Canyon Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$20.99 Release price: \$23.99 200 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

There's only a handful of Viogniers in this year's book, so we're ecstatic to introduce the premier release from Jim and Mary Beth. It's a lingering, lavish effort that exudes near-decadent peach and dry pineapple fruit with viscosity and river rock minerality; it inspires temptation and an immediate desire for glass number two, as your first pour will have somehow magically disappeared in fleeting fashion.

Vogelzang 2008 Pinot Noir Fiddlestix Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills

Futures price: \$50.99 Release price: \$59.99 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Spring, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

This fruit (like the Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet) travels up to Calistoga each harvest where Napa-based winemaker Robbie Meyer puts his talented stamp on it. How a Pinot this youthful could be described as "polished" is beyond me, but that's what I encountered and that's what I wrote. Young wines can often be ragged and goofy, but this substantial and incredibly engaging red was upfront and showy, flaunting a bushel-full of pomegranate and raspberry with accents of toasted marshmallow, caramel and the crusty top of a crème brûlée. This is a big fella for 2008, with opulence that's startling.

Vogelzang 2007 Cabernet Estate Happy Canyon Santa Ynez Valley

Futures price: \$34.99 Release price: \$42.99 100 cases produced

Scheduled release: Fall, 2011 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

The technicalities first: this is made from Cabernet clone 337, with yields of two tons per acre from the Vogelzang's property in the warmer climate of the eastern Santa Ynez Valley, and utilizing 100% new Taransaud barrels. The oak is a major aromatic force now because of the wine's youth, offering smoky, anise notes, but then thick, red fruits predominate, picking up a faint background hint of leafy tobacco. This is the second release of Cabernet from the Vogelzangs, and it's another road sign that points to Happy Canyon as a perfect haven for Bordeaux grapes.

Whitcraft

Beginning with the 2006 vintage, founder Chris Whitcraft's son Drake took on full-time winemaker duties at the family facility on Santa Barbara's lower eastside near the beach, and the quality level has seamlessly transferred from one talented generation to the next. Meeting and tasting with Drake convinced me that he's gained insight into winemaking not only from his dad, but mentor Burt Williams: "Put it in the barrel and don't @#\$% with it" seems to be the essential philosophy, and though Drake's tinkering may vary a tad from his père and predecessor, it's the impeccable, established vineyard sources that maintain the brand's continuity...Melville, Aubaine and even the aforementioned Mr. Williams' Morning Dew Ranch in Mendocino are in the generously-flavored, exciting mix today. –BW

Whitcraft 2008 Pinor Noir Trois Terroirs California

Futures price: \$26.99 Release price: \$34.99 225 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Made mostly from Kick On fruit in Los Alamos, the "three *terroirs*" also include Aubaine Vineyard and Morning Dew from Mendocino County. This comes in just shy of a Santa Barbara County appellation, but offers a pleasingly priced introduction to the 2008 vintage as well as delicacy to the more Euro-centric palates tasting today: cinnamon, strawberry and smoke are delivered on a lighter but lusciously-textured framework, and the three separate counties from up and down the state offer ideal components for this well-balanced blend that's ready for king salmon or ahi straight off the grill.

Whitcraft 2007 Pinor Noir Melville Vineyard Santa Rite Hills

Futures price: \$34.99 Release price: \$44.99 180 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

It's hard to believe that this was fermented with 100% whole clusters (stems and all for those of you not used to wine geek speak), but the fruit concentration greets the inherent structure and spiciness of this particular winemaking practice and accepts it in a big, warm cocoa and raspberry embrace. Mid-weight, and luxurious and firm in equal measure, the inclusion of 60% new oak adds attractive barrel spice, augmenting the clone 115's fruitiness with an intriguing extra layer.

Whitcraft 2007 Aubaine Vineyard San Luis Obispo County

Futures price: \$44.99 Release price: \$59.99 110 cases produced

Scheduled release: Summer, 2010 Must purchase by May 31st, 2010

Probably the most deeply pigmented Pinot today, the '07 Aubaine was so expressive that we snuck outside of the SB County line one more time and included it in the program anyway. This large-scaled Pinot is a luxurious, bold, "take me in your arms and rock me, rock me, a little while" red: it will give you a sense of what a magician experiences when he/she pulls an endless series of silk scarves from their mouths, with ultra-luxurious

palate feel and plenty of varietal brown spice, succulence and raspberry/cranberry fruit. We're cheating on our Santa Barbara theme, but once you've sampled the Aubaine, we know you'll forgive us...

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