

# THE OTHER REDS OF CALIFORNIA



**Wine #1:** Cruse Wine Co. Saint-Laurent Pét-Nat "Ricci"

**Variety:** Saint-Laurent

**Region:** Carneros

**Grape Country/Region of Origin:** Austria

**Wine Notes:** A happy, pale peach colored wine with a nose initially of apricots and cream. The nose is the brightest and fruitiest we've ever seen in this wine and further inspection reveals Linzer torte, gummy candies, and Japanese sodas. The palate is a blast of fresh fruit with loads of character. Fresh basil and cantaloupe are the primary elements, but it continues to evolve to a fresh, clean finish. A lovely sparkler that is a great introduction to the primary fruit character of PetNats; perfect for the start or end of the meal.

**My Thoughts:** Pet Nat, like Orange Wine, is cool but not new. Method used for this wine is literally called Ancestral Method and has been around since before the days of Dom Perignon and the creation of Champagne. Using a cool climate grape is helpful as these are typically already set to produce high acid, low sugar grapes which is critical to create a sparkling wine. Additionally, Carneros is the most common region for cool climate Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in the Napa/Sonoma area and is known for producing award winning sparkling wines.

**Winery Story:** A small winery in Petaluma dedicated to making uniquely Californian wine for your table.

**My Notes:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# THE OTHER REDS OF CALIFORNIA



**Wine #2:** Whitcraft Winery Gamay "Pence Ranch"

**Variety:** Gamay

**Region:** Sta Rita Hills

**Grape Country/Region of Origin:** Beaujolais, France

**Wine Notes:** The Gamay Noir is hand-harvested from a parcel in the Pence Ranch vineyard, fermented without destemming, and the processes in the winery are all gravity-fed with low sulfur additions to allow for the most pure expression of the fruit. Keeping consistent with what you would expect with a hands-off approach, there is no fining nor filtering here. Crushed forest berry fruits, mulled spices, orange peel, and black tea character contort into a silky, perfumed and bright-toned Gamay that rivals the most serious Cru Beaujolais. So, as we kick back this summer under the blistering Texas sun, this crushable, but cerebral Gamay Noir is perfect to beat the heat!

**My Thoughts:** Gamay is a very popular grape among wine professionals, much like Pinot was BEFORE Sideways. A grape that cannot hide behind a whole lot of manipulation, it is "cool" to like Gamay these days. For years, if people read the notes, they associated Gamay and Beaujolais with DeBoeuf Beauj Nouveau. Nothing wrong with that but this is less bubble gummy and banana-like. and from Sta Rita Hills. SRH is a very popular spot in the Central Coast due to its proximity to the Pacific Ocean providing cooling breezes that will help moderate temperatures and allow the grapes to slowly ripen and rarely overripen.

**Winery Story:** All of the reds and most of the whites are never fined, filtered or pumped and the smallest amount possible of sulfur is used. This requires a much larger effort than most other wineries are willing to do. No electricity is used unless absolutely required. This is to bring you the purest rendition of the fruit possible. Whitcraft wines are living things and go through different stages of life at different times. Decanting is recommended on wines older than five years.

**My Notes:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# THE OTHER REDS OF CALIFORNIA



**Wine #3:** Grassi Wine Company Sangiovese

**Variety:** Sangiovese

**Region:** Napa Valley

**Grape Country/Region of Origin:** Tuscany, Italy

**Wine Notes:** The 2019 Grassi Sangiovese is showing classic aromatics of tart cherry, plum and dried roses. The palate has layers of red fruit, cranberry and a hint of earthiness and leather. The tannins are pronounced but well dissolved, the acidity carries the wine and gives it a nice long finish. Enjoy now and in the next 3-5 years.

**My Thoughts:** For years, Sangiovese was a distinctly Tuscan grape. Growers tried here and there to produce it outside of Italy but it felt flabby and overripe, lacking terroir and just being a cherry bomb. But there are now pockets of Napa Valley where growers and vintners are creating fantastic wines. NOTE: They only make 100 cases!

**Winery Story:** We are a family-run winery in Napa Valley's eastern benchlands. Located just south of the Stags Leap District AVA, our fourteen-acre property is planted with five acres of carefully tended Cabernet Sauvignon and Ribolla Gialla. But this beautiful piece of land is more than where we work, farm, and make wine—it has been a part of our family for over two decades and is the place that three generations of Grassis call home.

**My Notes:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# THE OTHER REDS OF CALIFORNIA



**Wine #4:** Peterson Winery Barbera "Tollini Vineyard"

**Variety:** Barbera

**Region:** Mendocino

**Grape Country/Region of Origin:** Piemonte, Italy

**Wine Notes:** The depth and intensity start with the nose as concentrated spicy aromatics of vine ripened blackberry and a brambly herbal quality appear. The focused intensity repeats on the palate where savory spices weave through black cherry, huckleberry, black raspberry, plum and pomegranate, while traces of dried sage and oolong tea enhance the wine's depth. Robust yet so drinkable, this brawny beast will soon be a go-to favorite.

**My Thoughts:** I LOVE BARBERA! It is big but also food friendly, but sadly gets lost behind two key things: Barolo/Barbaresco and the fact that a top producing region is Asti - is it sweet like Moscato d'Asti? NOPE. So getting it from a cool (personality, not temp) winery like Peterson out of Mendocino it gets a chance to do its thing unhindered. Both Mendo & Piemonte have cooling influences to moderate ripening but Mendo has the Pacific and Piemonte has the Alps. Piemonte has a narrower range of grapes it can grow as it gets a lot hotter in the summer but Barbera can thrive in Mendo because of the long ripening season.

**Winery Story:** Peterson Winery has been producing wine in Dry Creek Valley for 30 years and, like most wineries in the Valley, produces Zinfandel as well as other wines. Yet a closer look shows that is where the similarities end. Owner Fred Peterson is an iconoclast with an old world winemaking philosophy and a reverence for sustainable farming. The Peterson approach is to capture the essence of vintage and vineyard—a philosophy they call Zero Manipulation—with low tech, yet high touch, to produce wines of a place, wines with soul.

**My Notes:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# THE OTHER REDS OF CALIFORNIA



**Wine #5:** Shypoke Cellars Calistoga Charbono

**Variety:** Charbono

**Region:** Calistoga

**Grape Country/Region of Origin:** Savoie, France

**Wine Notes:** The heirloom Charbono variety, hailing from the Savoie and grown with pride on our Calistoga Ranch since 1904. Pomegranate and dark plum cut a groove amongst tart cherries and roasted sage.

**My Thoughts:** Charbono needs hot and dry weather, hence Calistoga. A softer red that is super food friendly, it will be a more savory but similar experience to many Malbecs especially as you note the blue and plum fruit coming through. This is an EASY drinking red. It is also the 2nd most planted red grape in Argentina. This is a perfect example of a castoff French grape only to end up thriving in the Americas (see: Malbec)

**Winery Story:** Shypoke calls the Calistoga AVA home. Our estate vineyard is located in the north-western corner of the world famous Napa Valley. Our dirt to bottle history began in 1904, when Peter Heitz' great grandparents immigrated from Alsace and literally planted roots and built bonded winery #130 for the production of fine wines. Through five generations of grape growers and winemakers, our family has continued the vision and efforts begun in 1904. Each wine honors the traditions of a family working together to farm heirloom vines and to hand craft the resulting fruit into uniquely elegant and honest wines of place and vintage.

**My Notes:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# THE OTHER REDS OF CALIFORNIA



**Wine #6:** Sandlands Red Table Wine 2020

**Varieties:** Carignane, Mataro

**Region:** Contra Costa

**Grape Country/Region of Origin:** Carinena, Spain

**Wine Notes:** Notes of salted plum, peach, violets and driftwood, and a fine, supple, acid-driven finish.

**My Thoughts:** Nerd moment but it was originally believed that this grape may have been introduced to Sardinia by the Phoenicians in the 9th century BCE. But nope. Spain. This was a jug wine grape for years in France but a resurgence of focusing on quality has led to greater success in Catalonia. Also known as Carinena or Samsó, this is now available in premium bottlings in Spain and California. It needs very warm regions as it is a late ripening grape. Raise your hand if you have heard of Mataro? Now raise your hand if you have heard of Mourvedre or Monastrell? Then yes to all. It is the same grape! These two grapes are great blending partners as the Mataro grape will be medium acid, robust high alcohol and tannic wine while the Carignane can have high acid and alcohol and its astringency can be subdued by the Mataro. I've always found this wine to be crunchy (good) and feature so many characteristics of each wine that it seems like it is more like 6 or 7 grapes vs. 2.

**Winery Story:** Sandlands is the personal project of Tegan Passalacqua. The line-up encompasses the forgotten classic California varieties, primarily grown in decomposed granite (sand), from regions and vineyards that have been farmed for many generations but have remained the outliers of California viticulture. Primarily head-trained, dry-farmed and own rooted, the vineyards we work with harken back to California's roots of exploration, wonder, and hard work.

**My Notes:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## THE OTHER REDS OF CALIFORNIA



**Wine #7:** Kokomo “Cuvée” Red Wine North Coast

**Varieties:** Grenache, Mourvedre, Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Syrah

**Region:** North Coast

**Grape Country/Region of Origin:** Oh so many places. Grenache - Spain, Mourvedre - France, Zin - Croatia, Petite Sirah - France (Durif), Syrah - France

**Wine Notes:** This Cuvée is a focused blend that is inspired by the wines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape but with a Dry Creek twist. The dark and lush cherry notes on the nose and palate are characteristic of Dry Creek Valley Grenache. The Mourvèdre contributes hints of blueberry pie while the Zinfandel and field blend varieties round out the palette with some earth and spice. It has a medium body and fully integrated tannins which contribute to a plush and polished mouthfeel and a lingering silky finish.

**My Thoughts:** This is a bold, tannic, rich, balanced wine that Eric and team coferment. They do bottle all of these grapes as single varietal wines so this is not just a blend production business. With the Zin not leading the way, you have a wine that grabs some pepper from Grenache, some bramble and savory from MOurvedre, the Zin then adds a level of jam and pepper without overdoing it and the petite sirah rebuilds the structure. The Syrah hanging in the back just adds a touch of smoke and game while further supporting the pepper found from the Grenache and Zin. Fun fact, the Zin, PS, and Syrah come from Tollini vineyard, just like the Barbera!

**Winery Story:** Kokomo Winery is perched on the East side of Dry Creek Valley amidst the 120 acres of prime benchland vineyards of Timber Crest Farms. Owner and Winemaker Erik Miller started the winery in 2004 naming it after his hometown of Kokomo, IN, and decided on a Coastal Cypress Tree as a logo to signify his move out west. Kokomo currently produces over a dozen different varietals and several single vineyard designates which are farmed by his partner in the winery, grower Randy Peters. Kokomo Winery focuses their terroir-driven wines on the three distinctive appellations of Sonoma County - Russian River, Dry Creek and Alexander Valleys. This dynamic partnership of a grower and a winemaker ensures the winery's ongoing commitment to quality and consistency for future vintages.

**My Notes:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---