



QUALITY MATTERS.

BARREL SELECT

Akash Winery

Navigating Social Media to Connect with Consumers

Vindemia Winery

The Pursuit of Labeling Transparency INSIDE

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Akash and Vindemia wines, as well as other top picks. INSIDE



VINTNERS RESERVE

Grenache

The world's most versatile grape finds a home in Temecula Valley. BACK

PROPRIETOR'S BLEND

Quarterly Top Picks  
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About the Quarterly



*"I think that they have so much of a reach that I don't have. Whether it's 5,000 followers or 200,000 followers... this is a place influencers want to post on the Internet. And people come in and ask to take a picture where that influencer took a photo."*

AKASH PATEL, OWNER

Even before COVID-19 social distancing necessitated an increase in digital marketing, Akash Winery owner Akash Patel had been far ahead of the curve. In these challenging times, his decade long use of influencers, collaborations, beautiful imagery, and friendly hospitality allows him to navigate social media to connect with consumers quickly. Direct sales are always the goal. But participation with the community and making them feel as if they have a sense of ownership and belonging rank just a high.

In the years before bottling his first wine, to drive enthusiasm, Akash posted everything from vineyard construction to vine growth to that first crush. For him, it's about showing consumers what other wineries gloss over in just presenting the finished, stylish product — the human aspect of hard work, frustration, failure, passion, and joy. "The community felt like they had a part in it. They genuinely felt, 'I'm with you on this.' We made them feel a part of the journey. That's brand loyalty."

Building a brand to last long into the future doesn't stop there. Akash has invited big and small social media influencers to expand his reach to new consumers. Friendliness, hospitality, and a beautiful, inviting space to taste wine is just as important as the quality of the wine. While it's challenging to capture an exact return, visitors often ask to take pictures where their favorite influencers have. Akash has set up dedicated photo-op spaces throughout the winery, highlighted by the popular 'Come Knock On Our Door' homage to his red blend, Three's Company. Recent collaborations with local companies such as Temecula Life, Grazing Theory, Tap's Tacos, and Hot Yoga Healthy You work to expand consumer visibility into new areas.

Whether it's pruning the vines, cleaning the tanks, pouring wine, or just greeting guests, the hard-working Akash is always hands-on. While exhausting, it does allow him to receive direct feedback on the winery and the selection, style, and quality of the wines. Its immediate feedback that helps him to, once again, stay ahead of the curve. He and winemaker Renato Sais realized there was an opportunity in the marketplace for lower-priced, vegan-friendly, high-quality wines with a fresh-fruit, low-oaked tasting profile. To meet this demand, Akash recently launched his Dreamville line of wine — Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, and Syrah. These grapes originate from a Warner Springs vineyard that Sais manages, but all production occurs at Akash's facility in Temecula. Though pleased with the first production vintage of Dreamville and bigger plans for it potentially on the horizon, the Estate wines will always be front and center of the Akash experience.

## TOP PICKS - RED

LAYERED - PERFUMED - BOYSENBERRY

### 2016 Hart “Volcanic Ridge” Syrah

Grown in the red, rocky volcanic soil at the top of the Santa Rosa Plateau, this Syrah displays perfumed aromas of savory herbal nuances backed by blueberry, lilac, toffee, and smoky bacon flavors. Juicy boysenberry and black currant fruit, ripe tannins, and a long, multi-layered finish of crushed stones, liquorice, black pepper, roasted plum, and star anise.

**OUTSTANDING**

VELVETY - TOBACCO - RIPE PLUM

### 2016 Renzoni Tempranillo

Winemaker Olivia Bue and Robert Renzoni should be commended not only for the quality of this wine but, also for its reasonable \$40 price tag. This Tempranillo captures all the wonderful aspects of the grape - ripe red and black plums, tobacco, leather - with integrated notes from winemaking - spicy oak, vanilla, cocoa. Well balanced with plush, velvety tannins. A no brainer.

**EXCELLENT+**

BROODING - SMOKY - BLACKBERRY

### 2016 Leoness Cellars “Eloquent”

Dark, brooding aromas of smashed berries, smoke, chocolate, and espresso ooze from the nose on this blend of Petite Sirah, Syrah, and Zinfandel. Richly textured with powerful, yet polished tannins, and lingering flavors of blackberry jam, baking spice, pie crust, and black pepper on the finish.

**EXCELLENT**

CHEWY - TOASTY - AÇAÍ BERRY

### 2016 Masia de la Vinya Malbec

Expansive red fruit and Açaí berry aromas and flavors complement the notes of violet, mineral, and potting soil. Accessible, ready to drink Malbec with chewy tannins and lingering toastiness.

**EXCELLENT**



## Vindemia Winery

Tartaric Adic. Sulfur Dioxide. Gum Arabic Concentration. Yeast Hull Mannoproteins. Bentonite. Grape Polysaccha-say-what? No, you're not dreaming about 11th Grade Chemistry class again. In 2019,

Vindemia Winery owner and winemaker David Bradley began his pursuit to provide ingredients, chemical additives, and production information on his *Guy Lemon* branded bottles. Rather than include a website URL or scannable QR Code, for anyone that wants to know what's in the wine they drink, the data is directly on the label. “Our label provokes you to ask more questions and understand why you may or may not like some wines.”

The *Guy Lemon* brand was established as a way to differentiate sourced grapes from David's Estate grown Vindemia offerings. To date, this brand has offered Grenache Blanc, Viognier, and Pinot Noir from the Santa Ynez Valley, and a Sauvignon Blanc from neighboring Temecula vineyards. The name and the chemistry-driven label is a tribute to David's Grandfather, Guy Lemon, who was also a chemist. All of these things converged into what David views as an opportunity to broaden horizons. “Wine has a magical image and property that makes each vintage unique. It also has a base side that is structured on known properties of reactive science.”

With each new bottle, the labels change to reflect varietal-specific winemaking techniques and vintage variation. Some even provide the measured totals and the final chemistry. So, what exactly do data points on the 2018 Grenache Blanc tell you? White wines usually have a pH level between 3.0-3.4. The closer the wine is to a pH of 3.0, it's often stylistically more acidic. A 3.41 pH level in the Grenache Blanc indicates that it will be less acidic and, potentially, medium-to-full-bodied with a higher alcohol percentage. Glucose+Fructose refers to the amount of residual sugar remaining in the wine after fermentation. At 5.1 grams/liter, the wine is considered dry and roughly equates to 3-4 sugar calories per glass. Important information for people with specific dietary needs. “Our idea was to make the wine more approachable to a consumer group who daily pushes to know what is the effect, structure, and an implication of their world.” Even though a few widely distributed brands have included Nutritional Information, currently, that information is not in the plans.

In the world of wine, nothing is as easy as it sounds. David had a challenging time working with the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB). “The TTB had a firm opinion on the word ‘additives.’ They did not want the word used to describe the contents of the wine or the effect of adding to the wine. Many of the additives are removed during filtrations. Or it's an organic compound already in the wine that needs to be modified. These additions complete winemaking.” After a five-month review, the TTB finally approved the labels for use.

The consumer response to these wines has so far been very positive and, in a way, neutral. “People like our wine.” David believes the additional information will play a role in the style and quality of his wines in the future. “As we improve and learn more information, we will modify and, if possible, reduce additives. It's a journey we take with our customers.”

“Our label provokes you to ask more questions and understand why you may or may not like some wines.”

DAVID BRADLEY, OWNER & WINEMAKER



## Akash Winery Reviews

The **2017 Dreamville Malbec (VG+)** is part of a series of sourced fruit bottlings from a Warner Springs vineyard managed by Akash's winemaker, Renato Sais. This bright and fresh wine balances velvety tannins with rich dark fruit flavors of plums, cherry, and fig. Nuanced notes of mocha, mineral, peppercorn, and a stalky, herbaceousness round out the palate. From the same Warner Springs vineyard is the **2018 Dreamville Syrah (G+)**. This full-bodied wine shows Syrah's signature flavors of brambly, black fruit, smoked game, violets, black licorice, and black pepper. The coarse tannins could use some time to mature and balance out the palate. An unpretentious nose of red currant, fire-roasted red peppers, cardamom, and cocoa powder sets the tone for the **2017 Cabernet Sauvignon (VG+)**. On the youthful palate, fresh red fruit flavors of currant, plum, and cherry give way to supple tannins and a savory finish of black tea, anise, earth, and clove. Drink now or hold for a special occasion. The high quality of my two favorite wines — the **2017 Zinfandel (EXC)** and the **2017 Petite Sirah (EXC)** — show how far Akash's Estate wines have developed in a relatively short time period. Clocking in at a restrained 13.9% abv, this Zinfandel seamlessly blends its warm cherries jubilee and cranberry flavors with smokey green peppercorns, potpourri, applewood, leather, sawdust, and nutmeg. Intensely concentrated dark berries and baking spices meet up with turned soil, graphite, roasted herbs, black tea, and lavender on the bold Petite Sirah. Akash's Estate wines gain complexity and balance every year.

## Vindemia Winery Reviews

Winemaker and Vindemia owner David Bradley's Santa Ynez Valley sourced Grenache Blanc-Viognier blend, **2018 Guy Lemon de Blanc (VG+)**, is a delightfully refreshing, zesty wine full of citrus, honeydew, tarragon, minerals, and orange blossoms. Perfect for Temecula's warm, sunny weather. Also originating from the same Santa Ynez Valley vineyards, the **2018 Guy Lemon Grenache Blanc (VG)** opens up to pan-seared apricots, melon, cut grass, and wildflower honey aromas. Fuller-bodied and high in alcohol for a white wine, this native Southern Rhone grape lacks some acidity but makes up for it with juicy pear and melon flavors, honey, salty minerals, dried mint leaf, and a hint of saffron lingering on the finish. The **2016 Grenache (VG)** is a charming, approachable version of Grenache that has more of a Pinot Noir feel than many other high alcohol, candied cherry takes on this grape. Restrained strawberry, cherry, and cranberry fruit backed by soft baking spices, smoke, clove, liquorice, dried herbal, and rose petal flavors. Adequate acidity and modest tannins would make this an excellent pairing with any roasted game meal. David's Bordeaux inspired blend, the **2015 Commonwealth (VG+)**, consists of estate grown Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petite Sirah. Those that want to drink it now (with a hearty decant) will find an understated nose of bittersweet chocolate, mint, smoke and violets. Ripe red plums and black currants greet the palate before firm, oakey tannins take hold. The finish has a savory, earthy quality of cedar, clove, bell pepper, and saline. When in doubt, always ask the winemaker what is drinking well. David strongly recommends the **2016 Merlot (EXC)**. Agreed. Ripe plums and smashed cherry aromas mix with cocoa, dusty gravel, and fresh violet scents. It's medium-to-full-bodied with dry, dusty tannins, more of those ripe plums and layered flavors of green peppercorn, bell pepper, tomato leaf, toasted vanilla, clove and spice box.

## WHITE & SPARKLING

RICH - BUTTERCREAM - BAKED PEAR

### 2017 Lorenzi Estate Chardonnay Dijon Clone 76

Effusive aromatics and lush flavors of biscuit, buttercream, baked pear, banana, spiced nuts, and sea salt, frame a palate carrying enough acidity to cut through the richness to keep the wine fresh and structured. It's an assertive, recognizable Californian style of Chardonnay that spurns those seeking restraint and nuance.

**EXCELLENT**

CREAMY - MARZIPAN - STRAWBERRY

### 2015 Carter Estate Blanc de Noir

80% Pinot Noir, 15% Chardonnay, 5% Pinot Gris — done in the Traditional Method. Pale peach colored (rather than pink) with delicate aromas of white peach, poached pear, stale beer, bread dough, and jasmine. Don't miss the creamy, rich mouthfeel and lingering finish of wild strawberry, mineral, light toast, and marzipan.

**VERY GOOD+**

## OTHER WINES

2017 Chapin Family Montepulciano (EXC)

2017 Chapin Family Aglianico (EXC)

2014 Monte de Oro Reserve Syrah (EXC)

2016 Robert Renzoni Brunello di Sangiovese (EXC)

2013 Mount Palomar Petite Sirah (VG+)

2018 Wiens Chardonnay (VG+)

2017 Wilson Creek GSM (VG+)

2017 Callaway "Wild Yeast" Viognier (VG)

2017 Carter Estate Viognier (VG)

2018 Wilson Creek Roussanne (VG)

FOR A LIST OF ALL WINES REVIEWED THIS QUARTER, VISIT [TEMECULA.WINE.QUARTERLY.COM](http://TEMECULA.WINE.QUARTERLY.COM)

# Grenache

Grenache is the second most planted *Vitis Vinifera* species in the world. You'll find it in the sun-kissed, arid areas of Australia, Sardinia, Southern California, Washington, and South Africa. And it blankets nearly all of Southern France and Northern Spain. Fermented as a dry red wine, Grenache is fruity, medium-to-full-bodied, with ripe tannins and a spicy, herbal profile.

When picked early, Grenache's versatility lends itself to many Provincial and Spanish rosés. Globally, you'll find the more structured Grenache blends labeled as a "GSM" (Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre) and in the Southern Rhone listed as Côtes-du-Rhône or by their Cru-level village (Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Llistrac, Gigondas, etc.). The rugged, arid areas of the Spanish region Priorat, produce some of the deepest colored, black fruit concentrated, high-alcohol Garnacha (Spanish for Grenache) in the world.

Fortunately, we don't have to travel too far to find solid Grenache and Garnacha. Temecula's warm Mediterranean climate is very well suited for the grape – dry, sunny, and warm. Our long growing season allows Southern California winemakers to keep the grapes on the vine to ripen fully, pick earlier when the acidity is higher, and just about anything in between. Temecula Valley boutique producers Michelle and Dirk Uys of Uys Family Vineyards, planting Grenache, was a bit of a no-brainer. Their research showed that it grew well here and was flexible enough to contribute to three of their signature wines — a rosé, a 100% Grenache dry red, and a "GSM" blend. Planted in a vertical cordon, they allow the plant to grow "naturally" — minimal irrigation, no canopy management, and no green harvesting (dropping unripe fruit). The Uys's believe that has kept vigor, or excessive growth, from being a problem in their vineyard.

Versatility provides winemakers a full range of techniques to showcase different styles of wine. Long periods of skin contact can give the wine a deeper color, flavor, and texture. Maturation in new or used oak barrels adds complex notes of toast, vanilla, or spice depending on the length of time, toast level, and the type of oak barrels. For newcomer Otra Cosa, experimenting with carbonic maceration offers a chance to be creative. Carbonic maceration, a technique in which whole grapes ferment in a carbon dioxide-rich environment before crushing, creates a simple, fruity, low-tannin, fresh, and natural drinking wine. Because the grapes are allowed to ferment on wild yeasts, the wines are susceptible to spoiling. It's an exciting yet risky technique avoided by many wineries that can't risk the financial setback from a spoiled batch.

Besides the following three reviews, I can highly recommend Grenache-based wines from just about every winery. GSM blends from Hart, Lorimar, Wiens, and Wilson Creek especially stand out as do single varietal bottles from Leoness, Lorenzi, and Vindemia.

**2019 Somerset Winery Grenache Rosé (\$28)** 12.0% alcohol. This bright salmon-colored fruity rosé offers up delightfully simple strawberry, watermelon, and white cherry and delicate flavors of rose petal, crushed stones, and green apple. Clean, balanced, with a crisp finish. **GOOD**

**2016 Europa Village "Bolero" Garnacha (\$36)** 14.2% alcohol. Don't let the pale ruby color on this wine fool you. The nose on this wine explodes with intense aromas of baked red berries, geranium, white pepper, and Angostura Bitters. Ready to enjoy now, the spicy fruitiness shows deep, layered flavors of savory earth, baking spices, eucalyptus, smoke, and cloves. **EXCELLENT**

**2014 Palumbo Family "Cellar Dweller" (\$48)** 14.9% alcohol. This 50/50 blend of Grenache and Mourvedre deftly balances fresh fruit and mature character to deliver a wine worthy of pulling from the Palumbo cellar. This has developed savory aromas of cedar, tilled earth, dried leaves, and leather to go with baked cherries, herbal, and rose petal. Easy to drink and smooth on the palate, the black cherries offer a juicy lift to the slightly bitter notes of clove, black licorice, mineral, spice, and pepper. Smoke, tobacco, and a hint of orange peel linger on a very satisfying finish. **EXCELLENT**

*Cheers! Vino Temecula*



## OUR RATING SYSTEM

### CLASSIC

97-100. The pinnacle of quality.

### OUTSTANDING

94-96. A great wine.

### EXC - Excellent

90-93. Exceptional style & quality.

### VG - Very Good

87-89. Special qualities.

### G - Good

84-86. Solid, well-made

### AVG - Average

80-83. Simple, drinkable

### NR - Not Rated

+ Signifies a wine of elevated quality within that rating tier

## ABOUT THE QUARTERLY

The *Temecula Wine Quarterly* is devoted to the independent discussion on the style and quality of Temecula Valley wines. Wine tastings occurred in a non-blind format between December 2019 and March 2020. TWQ hopes you have found our second edition educational, exciting, and enjoyable. Please contact me with any comments or suggestions.

Richard R. DeLucio, aka *Vino Temecula* (@vinotemecula), has been collecting and tasting wine for over two decades. He is currently holds WSET 3 with Merit and a WSET 2 with Distinction. Some of his greatest wine memories include tasting multiple vintages of old Barbaresco with Angelo Gaja, attending extensive Bordeaux horizontal tastings, and sharing amazing bottles of old Vintage Port with great friends. Over the past year, Richard has tasted nearly 900 bottles of Temecula wine. He is hopeful that vineyard improvements, climate management, winemaking, and consumer education will lead to an increase in quality.

**Quality matters.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR  
TO RECEIVE A PRINT COPY PLEASE

VISIT - TEMECULAWINEQUARTERLY.COM  
OR EMAIL - VINOTEMECULA@GMAIL.COM

## OUTSTANDING

2016 Hart “Volcanic Ridge” Syrah

## EXCELLENT

**2016 Robert Renzoni Tempranillo (EXC+)**  
2017 Akash Winery Petite Sirah  
2017 Akash Winery Zinfandel  
2017 Chapin Family Aglianico  
2017 Chapin Family Montepulciano  
2016 Doffo Mottodoffo Gran Tinto  
2016 Europa Village “Bolero” Garnacha  
2016 Europa Village Merlot  
2016 Falkner Amante  
2016 Fazeli Cellars Khayam  
2016 Fazeli Cellars Shiraz  
2016 Leoness Cellars “Eloquent”  
2017 Lorenzi Estate Chardonnay Dijon Clone 76  
2016 Lorenzi Estate French Twist  
2016 Lorenzi Estate Merlot  
2016 Masia de la Vinya Malbec  
2014 Monte de Oro Reserve Syrah  
2014 Palumbo Family “Cellar Dweller”  
2016 Robert Renzoni Brunello di Sangiovese  
2014 Robert Renzoni Fiore del Fano  
2016 Vindemia Winery Merlot

## VERY GOOD

**2017 Akash Winery Dreamville Malbec (VG+)**  
**2017 Akash Winery Cabernet Sauvignon (VG+)**  
**2015 Callaway Syrah Wild Yeast (VG+)**  
**2015 Carter Estate Blanc de Noir (VG+)**  
**2012 Carter Estate Malbec (VG+)**  
**2016 Chapin Family Eclipse (VG+)**  
**2014 Europa Village Cabernet Franc (VG+)**  
**2017 Europa Village Monastrell (VG+)**  
**2018 Falkner Sauvignon Blanc (VG+)**  
**2015 Fazeli Cellars Ruckus (VG+)**  
**2016 Leoness Cellars Syrah, Allesandro Vineyard (VG+)**  
**2016 Lorenzi Estate Rated R (VG+)**  
**2013 Mount Palomar Petite Sirah (VG+)**  
**2015 Palumbo Winery Tre Fratelli “Meritage” (VG+)**  
**2018 Wiens Chardonnay (VG+)**  
**2017 Wilson Creek GSM (VG+)**  
**2015 Vindemia Commonwealth (VG+)**  
**2018 Vindemia Guy Lemon de Blanc (VG+)**  
**2015 Vindemia Zinfandel (VG+)**  
2017 Avensole Gewurztraminer  
2016 Baily Cabernet Franc  
2017 Callaway Viognier - Wild Yeast  
2017 Carter Estate Viognier Estate  
2014 Carter Estate Syrah Private Reserve Carter Estate Vineyard  
2013 Carter Estate Malbec  
2015 Chapin Family Merlot

2016 Europa Village Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve  
2016 Europa Village Primitivo  
2016 Fazeli Cellars Montepulciano  
2015 Fazeli Cellars Meritage  
2015 Fazeli Cellars Mayhem  
2017 Hart Limited Release Estate Grown Syrah  
2017 Hart Grenache-Syrah  
2017 Leoness Cellars Signature Select Grand Melange  
2015 Leoness Cellars Cellar Selection Compilation  
2015 Leoness Cellars Cellar Selection Meritage  
2017 Leoness Cellars Vineyard Selection Zinfandel, Lopez Ranch  
NV Lorenzi Estate Bella Mia Sparkling Wine  
2016 Lorenzi Estate The Catalyst  
2016 Lorenzi Estate Syrah  
2015 Lorenzi Estate Heritage  
2015 Masia De La Vinya Tempranillo  
2016 Masia De La Vinya Cabernet Sauvignon  
2015 Masia De La Vinya Barbera  
2015 Monte de Oro Simplexity  
2015 Monte de Oro Zinfandel  
2015 Monte de Oro Cabernet Sauvignon  
2015 Mount Palomar Dolcetto Castelletto  
2013 Mount Palomar Carmenere  
2016 Mount Palomar Velluto sur lie  
2015 Mount Palomar Cortese Castelletto  
2015 Robert Renzoni Sangiovese Riserva

## VERY GOOD

2015 Robert Renzoni Fiore del Fano  
2015 Robert Renzoni Sonata  
2014 Robert Renzoni Vecchio Frate  
2015 Temeku Hills Estate Syrah  
2016 Vindemia Grenache  
2017 Vindemia Regatta de Blanc  
2017 Wiens Domestique GSM  
2017 Wiens Reserve Primitivo

2017 Wiens Reserve Tempranillo  
2017 Wiens Infinite Perspective  
2017 Wilson Creek Family Reserve Syrah  
2017 Wilson Creek Family Reserve Zinfandel  
2018 Wilson Creek Roussanne  
2017 Wilson Creek Double Dog Red  
2017 Wilson Creek Winemaker Select Cabernet Sauvignon  
2015 Wilson Creek Cellar Select Cabernet Franc

## GOOD

2017 Akash Three's Company (G+)  
2018 Akash Winery Syrah (G+)  
2016 Callaway Petite Sirah (G+)  
2015 Carter Estate Brut Champagne (G+)  
2017 Chapin Family Eclipse (G+)  
2016 Europa Village Tempranillo Reserve (G+)  
2016 Fallbrook Winery Syrah 33° N Gracie Hill Vineyard (G+)  
2018 Hart Vermentino (G+)  
2016 Lorenzi Estate It (G+)  
2018 Masia De La Vinya Verdelho (G+)  
NV Mount Palomar Cream Sherry Solera (G+)  
2019 Robert Renzoni Vermentino (G+)  
2014 Vindemia Zinfandel (G+)  
2018 Vindemia Sauvignon Blanc (G+)  
2018 Wiens Vermentino (G+)  
2017 Wilson Creek Family Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (G+)  
2017 Wilson Creek Family Reserve Cammi Ridge Syrah  
2014 Wilson Creek Zinfandel (G+)  
2017 Akash Rosé  
2018 Callaway Soleil Rosé  
2017 Carter Estate Pinot Gris Private Reserve Estate  
2016 Europa Village Merlot Reserve  
2018 Fazeli Cellars Boland Rooz  
2018 Fazeli Cellars Norooz  
2017 Hart Barbera  
2017 Hart Tempranillo  
2015 Hart Aleatico Port  
2015 Masia De La Vinya Garnacha  
2014 Mount Palomar Quartet  
2018 Robert Renzoni Syrah Anti Reserva  
2019 Somerset Winery Grenache Rosé  
2017 Wiens Sangiovese  
2017 Wiens Mourvedre  
2017 Wiens Barbera

## AVERAGE

2015 Callaway Grenache  
2017 Casa Tiene Vista Vineyard Pinot Grigio City Lights  
2018 Chapin Family Rosetta  
2018 Fazeli Cellars Dry Ruby Rose  
2016 Hart Cabernet Sauvignon - Volcanic Ridge  
2015 Masia De La Vinya Syrah