

# The Lusch List

UNIQUE WINE RECOMMENDATIONS & EXPERIENCES



## Chardonnay: A love hate relationship

I think everyone has an opinion about Chardonnay - and why not! It is the most popular white wine in the U.S. and the most widely planted white varietal in the world. This French native grape that hails from the Burgundy region of France offers a wide range of flavors and styles depending on where it is grown and how it is made. Chardonnay can be oaky and buttery, lean and minerally, or citrusy and fruit-forward. But what really defines the style is the use of oak in the winemaking process.

**The Wine:** [Sandhi Chardonnay, 2017, Santa Barbara, California](#)

**Where I Purchased:** [Pogo's Wine & Spirits](#)

**Cost:** \$22

When someone says, "I don't like chardonnay" or "ABC...Anything but Chardonnay," I immediately respond with challenge accepted. It really has nothing to do with the grape. You've got to find the producer that makes it in the

style that you like. It is very versatile, so try to find the right one rather than just writing the grape off completely. I prefer unoaked styles, Chablis is a favorite, but have enjoyed many oaked versions from California and of course from the motherland of Cotes du Beaune in Burgundy. The key component for me, and most, is balance. Plus, pairing the right style of Chardonnay with the perfect dish can be just heavenly. Try Chablis and oysters or lobster and a perfectly oak-aged Chardonnay – delicious!

Our featured chardonnay is from Santa Barbara, the Central Coast of California. Santa Maria and Santa Ynez make up the two AVA's (American Viticultural Areas – designated grape growing regions in the US) of Santa Barbara County. Known for its natural beauty and temperate climate, it funnels cool, Pacific Ocean air to the vineyards more inland, allowing grapes a longer hang time to ripen evenly and achieve full potential. The minimal rainfall, consistent warm sunshine, and well-drained soils create an ideal environment for growing grapes, especially Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Our particular wine is sourced from vineyards in the Santa Rita Hills, Santa Maria, and Santa Ynez appellations.

**And now some info about the producer:**

*Sandhi is a small production California winery focusing on select vineyards from the Sta. Rita Hills in Santa Barbara County. Sandhi was founded in 2010 by Rajat Parr, the wine director for Michael Mina Restaurants, and winemaker, Sashi Moorman. Sandhi represents a union essential to the production of wine: the collaboration between man, earth, and vine. The willing participation of all three elements is necessary to make great wine, and the winegrower must make this collaboration rich and nourishing for all involved. An understanding of these joint efforts informs Sandhi's exploration of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vines throughout the Santa Barbara County terroir.*

*The individual vineyards from which these grapes originate—some legendary, some new—have been exhaustively vetted for character, personality, and balance. Employing the wisdom and talents of people who know the vineyards, Sandhi is dedicated to making wines of finesse, minerality, acidity, structure and balance. Wine achieves power and beauty through the seamless integration of these qualities, and this is the inspiration for Sandhi.*

**Tasting Notes:**

**Style:** elegant, mineral-driven, creamy, complex

**Nose:** lemon, nuts, baked golden apple, spice, pie crust

**Palate:** savory layers of yellow stone fruits, apple, citrus, spice

**Finish:** lemon driven acidity, medium-bodied, fresh, balanced acidity

**Pairing:**

'White with white' is the perfect rule of thumb here. White "meats" paired with this style of white wine go together nicely. Butter and cream are your friends so feel free to keep it simple: chicken with sauteed mushrooms, scallops with lemon & butter, pork with a cream sauce, or try a butternut squash risotto. I'm drooling!

### **Where to buy:**

Sandhi has been a consistent purchase both for my house and on the wine list at The Grape since its inception. Every vintage has over delivered for both quality and price. Plus, it is one of the few California Chardonnays that I am happy drinking on its own, no food required. [Pogo's](#) has the best price in town at \$22.

Until next time!  
Courtney  
The Lusch List



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