

הביקור ביקבים ב-Napa, Sonoma and Paso Robles נערך ביוני 2015 על ידי נורית ואשר טישלר. בשלושת האזורים הללו נמצאים מאות יקבים בגדלים שונים וכן יקבים ביתיים קטנים נוספים. רצוי להתחיל ביקור כזה לאחר הכנה מתאימה - קריאת חומר מתאים, התייעצות עם חברים שגרים שם או שביקרו שם, ועוד. דרך האינטרנט ניתן להשיג מידע רב על אזורים אלה, ההיסטוריה שלהם, היקבים, והינות המיוצרים בהם.

אנחנו מודים ל-Maayan Koschitzky, Marshall Polk, ומספר ייננים וחובבי יין מקומיים אותם הכרנו בביקורים קודמים שלנו בקליפורניה על העזרה הרבה בבחירת היקבים בהם ביקרנו ובקביעת הפגישות בהם. בנסיעה זו ביקרנו בעשרים ושבעה יקבים (בחלק מהם ביקרנו גם בכרמים הרלבנטיים). כמו כן ערכנו בפאסו רובלס טעימה והערכת יינות של אחד עשר ייננים צעירים יחסית.

ברוב המכריע של היקבים באזורים בהם ביקרנו, ובוודאי ביקבים הבינוניים והקטנים, יש לתאם פגישה מראש. בחלק מן היקבים ניתן לרכוש יינות מהבצירים האחרונים (להוציא, לעתים, את היינות הבכירים של היקב שנועדו, בעיקר, לחברי מועדון הלקוחות שלו), ולעתים גם מבצירים קודמים. בארה"ב קל יחסית למצוא יינות מבצירים מוקדמים דרך האינטרנט ובחנויות מקצועיות שונות בארה"ב השולחות יין כמעט לכל מקום בארה"ב (ולעתים גם לחו"ל).

שלושת האזורים בהם ביקרנו בורכו בנופים שונים ומגוונים שהטילו בהם הוא מרתק. ניתן למצוא בהם מסעדות איכותיות, לטייל באתרים ותיקים וחדשים, לבקר בחנויות מסוגים שונים, ועוד. ככלל, יש באזורים אלה פעילויות מעניינות מסוגים שונים, כיף לטייל בהם, כולל בנסיעה בדרכים מפותלות בין היישובים והיקבים השונים.

#### Restaurants that we liked in Napa:

- Tra Vigne. 1050 Charter Oak Ave, St Helena, CA 94574. Phone: 707-963-4444. [www.travignerestaurant.com](http://www.travignerestaurant.com). Very good food. Reasonable prices.
- The French Laundry. 6640 Washington St, Yountville, CA 94599. Phone: 707-944-2380. [www.thomaskeller.com/tfl](http://www.thomaskeller.com/tfl). Reservations should be obtained several months in advance; see website. Excellent restaurant. Great service. Very expensive.
- Brix. 7377 St Helena Hwy, Napa, CA 94558. Phone: 707-944-2749. [www.brix.com](http://www.brix.com). Good food. Reasonable prices.
- Hurley's. 6518 Washington St, Yountville, CA 94599. [www.hurleysrestaurant.com](http://www.hurleysrestaurant.com). Phone: 707-944-2345. Very good food. Reasonable prices.
- Ad hoc, 6476 Washington St. Yountville, CA 94599. Phone: 707-944-2487. [www.adhocrestaurant.com](http://www.adhocrestaurant.com). Good food. Great service. Somewhat expensive.

## **Wineries in Napa**

### **W.H. Smith**

Little Billy Sauvignon Blanc, 2013. \$29. 14% alcohol. Lacking body. Balanced. Not complex. Simple. Fairly elegant. Drink now. Reasonably good wine.

W.H. Smith Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, 2012. \$32. 14% alcohol. Lacking body. Balanced. Not complex. Elegant. Very light. Somewhat spicy. Drink now. Reasonably good wine.

W.H. Smith Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, Hellenthal Vineyard, 2012. \$50. 14% alcohol. Some body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Elegant. Light. Somewhat spicy. Drink now. Good wine.

W.H. Smith Sonoma Coast Maritime Pinot Noir, 2011. \$54. 14.2% alcohol. Some body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Elegant. Light. Some tannins. Somewhat spicy. Drink now. Good wine.

W.H. Smith Sonoma Howell Mountain Cabernet Bronze Label, 2011. \$48. 14.5% alcohol. Less than full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Young. Some tannins. Drink now or up to 5 years. Good wine.

W.H. Smith Sonoma Howell Mountain Cabernet Purple Label, 2011. \$64. 14.5% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat elegant. Some desired bitterness at the end. Some tannins. Drink now up to eight years. Good to very good wine.

We visited the tasting room at Calistoga. The winery produces quality wines. The Pinot Noir are light and easy to drink. Visiting the tasting room is recommended.

### **Lail**

Blueprint Sauvignon Blanc, 2014. \$40. 14.5% alcohol. 100% Sauvignon Blanc. Close to full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat elegant. Fresh. Drink now. Very good wine.

Blueprint Cabernet Sauvignon, 2012. \$80. 15.5% alcohol. 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 4% Petit Verdot. Close to full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat elegant. Some tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Georgia Sauvignon Blanc, 2013. \$120. 14.8% alcohol. 100% Sauvignon Blanc. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Very fresh. Drink now up to 8-10 years. Excellent wine.

J. Daniel Cuvee, 2012. \$250. 15.5% alcohol. 97% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petit Verdot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 3-10 years. Excellent wine.

A small, interesting and somewhat unusual winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

### **Joseph Phelps**

Sauvignon Blanc, St. Helena, 2013. \$35. 13.5% alcohol. 100% Sauvignon Blanc. Less than full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Simple wine. Drink now. Good wine.

Chardonnay, Freestone Vineyards (cellar Selection), 2013. \$45. 13.5% alcohol. 100% Chardonnay. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat elegant. Simple wine. Drink now. Good wine.

Pinot Noir, Freestone Vineyards (cellar Selection), 2012. \$45. 14.5% alcohol. Less than full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Simple wine. Light. Drink now. Good wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley, 2012. \$70. 14.5% alcohol. 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Merlot, 1% Petit Verdot, 1% Malbec, 1% Cabernet Franc. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Closed wine. Some soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 6-8 years. Good to very good wine.

Insignia, 2011. \$225. 14.5% alcohol. 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Petit Verdot, 4% Malbec, 2% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc. Full body (but not a powerful wine). Balanced. Complex. Noticeable soft tannins. Drink in 3-10 years. Very good wine.

Insignia, 2008. \$240. 14.5% alcohol. About 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, the rest: Petit Verdot, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Noticeable soft tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine (better than the 2011).

Eisrebe, 2014. \$50 (375 ml). 8% alcohol. Dessert wine. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Very (too?) sweet (includes residual sugar). Drink now or later. Good to very good wine.

A large winery. Very nice (new) tasting facility. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area and produces quality wines. Over the last several years it seems to turn into a "too commercial" winery. Visiting this winery (with appointment) is recommended.

## **Shafer**

Red Shoulder Ranch Chardonnay, 2013. \$52. 15% alcohol. 100% Chardonnay. Less than body. Somewhat balanced. Somewhat complex. Simple wine. Drink now. Reasonably good wine.

Napa Valley Merlot, 2012. \$52. 15.2% alcohol. 87% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Malbec. Less than full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Some soft tannins. Somewhat flat at the end. Drink now up to 5 years. Reasonable good wine.

One Point Five, 2012. \$80. 15% alcohol. 95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Petit Verdot and Malbec. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Some soft tannins. Somewhat flat at the end. Drink now up to 5 years. Good wine.

Relentless, 2011. \$80. 15.8% alcohol. 91% Syrah, 9% Petit Sirah. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Noticeable soft tannins. Somewhat flat at the end. Drink now up to 5-10 years. Good to very good wine.

Hillside Select, 2010. \$250. 15.5% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full (but not powerful) body. Balanced. Complex. Closed. Some soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 3-15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

A large winery. Very nice tasting facility. Nice hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area and produces quality wines. Over the last several years it seems to turn into a "too commercial" winery. Visiting this winery (with appointment) is recommended.

## **Ovid**

L2.2 (an experiment), 2012. \$150. 14.7% alcohol. 73% Cabernet Sauvignon, 27% merlot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Some very soft tannins. (Is it missing 2%-5% Petit Verdot?). Drink now up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Hexameter, 2012. \$285. 14.8% alcohol. 60% Cabernet Franc, 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 15 years. Excellent wine.

A small, interesting and somewhat unusual winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

## **Araujo**

Syrah, 2012. \$100. 14.8% alcohol. 99% Syrah, 1% Viognier. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Very soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Altagracia, 2012. \$150. 14.8% alcohol. 71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Petit Verdot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 6% Merlot, 4% Malbec. Full body. Somewhat balanced. Somewhat too low acidity. The blend is missing something. Complex. Some soft tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Good to very good wine.

Araujo Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (Eisele Vineyard), 2012. \$350. 14.8% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full (and powerful) body. Balanced. Complex. Some soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 3-15 years. Excellent wine.

Araujo Estate Sauvignon Blanc (Eisele Vineyard), 2013. \$70. 14.3% alcohol. 100% Sauvignon Blanc. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Drink now up to 5 years. Very good wine.

A mid-size winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area and produces high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

## **Dunn**

Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon, 2011. \$100. 13.9% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat elegant. Some soft tannins. Drink in 3-15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon, 2000. \$155. 13.6% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Noticeable soft tannins. Unpleasant smell. "Old Bordeaux wine". Drink now. Very good wine.

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, 2011. \$75. 13.9% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat elegant. Somewhat too acidic. Some soft tannins. Drink in 2-10 years. Good to very good wine.

Retro – Howell Mountain Petite Sirah, 2009. \$45. 13.2% alcohol. 100% Petite Sirah. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Aggressive. Somewhat too acidic. Noticeable soft tannins. Drink in 2-6 years. Very good wine.

A small, interesting and somewhat unusual winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

### **Togni**

Phillip Togni Cabernet Sauvignon (free run, barrel), 2013. (Will be mixed with the pressed wine). \$105. 14% alcohol. 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Some soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Very good to excellent wine.

Phillip Togni Cabernet Sauvignon (pressed, barrel), 2013. (Will be mixed with the free run). \$105. 14% alcohol. 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. Full body (somewhat less than the free run). Balanced (more acidic than the free run). Complex. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Very good wine.

Phillip Togni Cabernet Sauvignon, 2011. \$105. 14% alcohol. 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc, 1% Petit Verdot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Some soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Very good to excellent wine.

Ca' Togni, 2009. Dessert Red. \$30 (375ml). 14% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Very sweet. Very good wine.

A small, interesting and somewhat unusual winery. Great hospitality. We believe that "Phillip Togni Cabernet Sauvignon" from the free run will be a superior wine than the current "Phillip Togni Cabernet Sauvignon" which is made from the free run and the pressed. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

### **Pride Mountain**

Viognier, 2014. \$42. 14.4% alcohol. Some Body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Good wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon, 2012. \$60. 14.6% alcohol. 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot, 2% Merlot. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Drink now – 10 years. Very good wine.

Merlot, 2012. \$70. 14.7% alcohol. 92% Merlot. 8% Cabernet Sauvignon. Close to full Body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Drink now – 10 years. Very good wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, 2011. \$135. 14.4% alcohol. 92% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, 3% Petite Sirah. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now – 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Claret, 2011. \$135. 14.3% alcohol. 66% Merlot, 34% Cabernet Sauvignon. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now – 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Vintner Select Merlot, 2013 (from a barrel). 14.9% alcohol. Full Body. Somewhat balanced. Somewhat complex. Too acidic. Soft tannins. Young. Good to very good wine.

Claret, 2012. \$135. 14.7% alcohol. About 66% Merlot, about 34% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petit Verdot. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now – 15 years. Very good wine.

Syrah, 2013. \$60. 14.3% alcohol. 98.5% Syrah, 1.5% Viognier. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Aggressive. Soft tannins. Very good wine.

A mid-size winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

### **Kongsgaard**

Kongsgaard Napa Valley Chardonnay, 2013 (from a barrel). \$85. 14.8% alcohol. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Crisp. Very good wine.

The Judge (Chardonnay), 2013 (from a barrel). \$175. 14.1% alcohol. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat high acidity. Fairly elegant. Very good to excellent wine.

The Judge (Chardonnay), 2011 (from a barrel). (Not for sale; an experiment). 14.1% alcohol. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Less fresh than the 2013 but with more complexity. Very good wine.

VioROUS, 2011 (from a barrel). \$85. 14.1% alcohol. 50% Roussanne, 50% Viognier. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Very good wine (for those who like Roussanne).

Kongsgaard Napa Valley Cabernet, 2013 (from a barrel). \$160. 14.5% alcohol. 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Very noticeable tannins. Elegant. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 5-10 years. Very good to excellent wine.

The FimaSaurus, 2013 (from a barrel). \$160. 14.5% alcohol. 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 50% Merlot. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Very noticeable tannins. Sharp. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 5-10 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Syrah (Hudson Vineyard), 2013 (from a barrel). \$160. 14.5% alcohol. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Very noticeable tannins. Drink in 5-10 years. Very good wine.

A small, interesting and unusual winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

### **Futo**

OV/SL 2012. \$150. 14.7% alcohol. 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 8% Petit Verdot. Full Body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Very soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now – up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Futo 5500 SLD, 2012. \$250. 14.8% alcohol. 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Merlot. Full and powerful Body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Very soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now – up to 15 years. Excellent wine.

A small, interesting and unusual winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

### **Harlan Promontory**

Promontory, 2013 (from the barrel). To be released in 2018. 14.5% alcohol. About 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Malbec and Petit Verdot. Full and powerful body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Slightly fruity. Better than the 2011 (see below). Very young. Will likely be as good as the 2010. Excellent wine.

Promontory, 2011. \$425. 14.5% alcohol. About 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Malbec and Petit Verdot. Full and powerful body (less than the 2010; see below). Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Feminine. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Excellent wine.

Promontory, 2010. \$425. 14.5% alcohol. About 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Malbec and Petit Verdot. Full and powerful body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Excellent wine (better than the 2011).

A small winery. Great hospitality. Produces very high quality wines. Visiting the winery is highly recommended.

### **Opus One**

Opus One, 2011. \$245. 14% alcohol. 71% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Merlot, 9% petite Sirah, 8% Cabernet Franc, 1% Malbec. Full body. Not balanced. Complex. Very closed wine. Too high acidity. Too much bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Disappointing wine.

A mid-size winery. Nice tasting room. Nice hospitality. Normally produces very good, sometimes excellent, wines. We were disappointed from this year's wine. Last year we tasted better wines in this winery (the 2010 Opus One was excellent).

### **Caymus**

Mersoleil Unoaked Chardonnay, 2013. \$30. 14.9% alcohol. Less than full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Simple. Good to very good wine.

Napa Valley Zinfandel, 2013. \$38. 14.6% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Some sweetness. Simple. Drink now. Reasonably good wine.

Emmolo Merlot, 2012. \$60. 14.9% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Soft tannins. Somewhat flat finish. Drink now up to 8 years. Good wine.

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, 2013. \$72. 14.9% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Somewhat fruity at the end. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very Good wine.

Special Selection Cabernet Sauvignon, 2012. \$160. 14.8% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat elegant. Closed. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 3-15 years. Very Good to excellent wine.

A mid-size winery. Very nice tasting facilities. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a nice area and produces high quality wines. Visiting the winery is highly recommended.

### **HDV**

De La Guerra Chardonnay, 2013. \$45. 13.8% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Complex. Round. Drink now up to 5 years. Good to very good wine.

HDV Chardonnay, 2012. \$65. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Crisp. Sharp. Nice and long finish. Drink now up to 7 years. Very pleasant wine. Very good wine.

Californio Syrah, 2011. \$75. 12.5% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat too acidic. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Good to very good wine.

Californio Syrah, 2012. \$75. 14.5% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Better than the 2011. Very good wine.

Belle Cousine, 2011. \$70. 14.1% alcohol. 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Belle Cousine, 2012. \$85. 14.1% alcohol. 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Better than the 2011. Very good wine.

Ygnacia Pinot Noir, 2013. \$85. 14.1% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Somewhat short finish. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Ysabel Pinot Noir, 2013. \$110. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Sharp. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

A small to mid-size winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area and produces high quality wines. Visiting the winery is highly recommended.

## **Wineries in Sonoma**

### **Lynmar Estate**

La Sereinite Chardonnay, 2012. \$70. 14.2% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Dry. Round. Somewhat simple. Drink now. Good wine.

Quail Hill Vineyard Chardonnay, 2012. \$55. 14.2% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Somewhat balanced. Somewhat complex. Too acidic. Good to very good wine.

Freestone Pinot Noir, 2012. \$60. 14.3% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Fairly elegant. Somewhat spicy at the end. Very good wine.

Monastery Pinot Noir, 2012. \$70. 14.4% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Good to very good wine.

Quail Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2012. \$60. 14.4% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Strong finish. Good to very good wine.

Quail Hill Vineyard Bliss Block Pinot Noir, 2012. \$70. 14.4% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Sharp. Strong finish. Very good wine.

A small to mid-size winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful hilly area and produces quality wines. Visiting this winery (with appointment) is recommended.

### **Littorai**

B.A. Thieriot Vineyard Chardonnay, 2013. \$75. 13.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Sharp. Crisp. Fairly elegant. Very good wine.

Charles Heintz Chardonnay, 2012. \$75. 13.5% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Very good wine.

Les Larmes Pinot Noir, 2013. \$46. 13.8% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Drink now. Good wine.

Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2013. \$70. 13.4% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Good to very good wine.

The Pivot Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2013. \$70. 13.1% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Complex. Good wine.

Mays Canyon Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2013. \$70. 12.3% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Not fully balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Long finish. Very good wine.

A small winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces quality wines. Most of the wines that we tasted were too young (not robust) for sufficient assessment and the Pinot Noirs were too closed. Last year's tasting was more satisfying than this year's. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is recommended.

### **Kistler**

Trenton Roadhouse Chardonnay, 2012. \$80. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat too acidic. Fairly elegant. Very good wine.

Vine Hill Vineyard Chardonnay, 2012. \$80. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat too acidic. Long finish. Very good wine.

McCrea Vineyard Chardonnay, 2012. \$80. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Long finish. Very good wine.

Kistler Vineyard Chardonnay, 2012. \$90. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Long finish. Very good wine.

Hyde Vineyard Chardonnay, 2012. \$80. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Lingering finish. Very good to excellent wine.

Kistler Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2012. \$90. 14.1% alcohol. Full (and powerful) body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Lingering finish. Very good to excellent wine.

Cuvee Natalie Pinot Noir, 2012. \$100. 14.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Feminine. Lingering finish. Excellent wine.

A mid-size winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful mountain area and produces very high quality wines. Visiting this winery (only with appointment) is highly recommended.

### **Macphail Family Wines**

Chardonnay Sonoma Coast, 2012. \$35. 14.5% alcohol. Less than full body. Balanced. Not complex. Somewhat elegant. Simple. Drink now. Good wine.

Gap's Crown Vineyard Chardonnay, 2009. \$60. 14.7% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Complex. Long finish. Good to very good wine.

Fratty Shams Pinot Noir, 2006. \$69. 14.5% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Fairly elegant. Very good wine.

Fratty Shams Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2009. \$65. 14.3% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Long finish. Very good wine.

Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2009. \$65. 14.3% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Very fruity. Very good wine.

Wightman House Pinot Noir, 2010. \$67. 14.9% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat fruity. Fairly elegant. Some desired bitterness at the end. Very good wine.

Toulouse Pinot Noir, 2012. \$49. 14.5% alcohol. Less than full body. Balanced. Not complex. Simple. Good wine.

Mardikian Estate Pinot Noir, 2012. \$85. 14.5% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat too acidic. Somewhat fruity. Fairly elegant. Long finish. Very good wine.

A small to mid-size winery. Great hospitality (in the tasting room). Produces quality wines. Visiting the tasting room of this winery is highly recommended.

### **Williams Selyem**

Vista Verde Vineyard San Benito County Chenin Blanc, 2013. \$35. 12.6% alcohol. Less than full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat too acidic. Simple. Drink now. Good wine.

Unoaked Russian River Chardonnay, 2013. \$39. 13.2% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat too acidic. Simple. Drink now. Good wine.

Eastside Road Neighbors Russian River Pinot Noir, 2012. \$52. 13.7% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat too acidic. Drink in 2-5 years. Good to very good wine.

Block 10 Mass Selection Estate Russian River Pinot Noir, 2012. \$85. 14.3% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat too acidic. Drink now or up to 7-10 years. Very good wine.

Luella's Garden Estate Russian River Pinot Noir, 2012. \$90. 13.6% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat too acidic. Drink now or up to 7-10 years. Very good wine.

Coastlands Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2012. \$75. 13.9% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat too acidic. A little fruity. Drink now or (better) in 3-10 years. Very good wine.

A mid-size winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area and produces quality wines. Visiting the winery is highly recommended.

### **Dehlinger**

Estate Chardonnay, 2012. \$40. 14.5% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat fruity. Drink now. Very good wine.

Goldridge Pinot Noir, 2012. \$48. 14.9% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat fruity. A spicy end. Drink now or (better) in 3-10 years. Very good wine.

Altamont Pinot Noir, 2012. \$60. 14.8% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. A spicy end. Sharp. Long finish. Drink now up to 10 years. Will improve. Very good wine.

Goldridge Syrah, 2012. \$45. 14.8% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Relatively simple wine. Very good wine.

Claret, 2012. \$40. 14.4% alcohol. 100% cabernet Sauvignon. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. A simple wine. Good wine.

A small and interesting winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful area and produces quality wines. We liked the Pinot Noirs. Visiting the winery is highly recommended.

### **Merry Edwards Winery**

Olivet Lane Chardonnay, 2012. \$60. 14.3% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Drink now up to 5 years. Very good wine.

Olivet Lane Pinot Noir, 2012. \$62. 14.4% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat too acidic. Strange aftertaste. Drink now up to 5 years. Reasonably good wine.

Meredith Estate Pinot Noir, 2012. \$57. 14.4% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat fruity. Drink now up to 5 years. Good wine.

Klopp ranch Pinot Noir, 2012. \$60. 14.3% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat too acidic. Drink now up to 5 years. Reasonably good wine.

Coopersmith Pinot Noir, 2012. \$63. 14.4% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat too acidic. Short finish. Some soft tannins. Drink now up to 5 years. Good wine.

Flax Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2012. \$54. 14.4% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat fruity. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 7 years. Good wine.

Flax Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2007. \$72. 14.4% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Long finish. Drink now up to 3 years. Reasonably good wine.

A mid-size winery. Great hospitality. Produces reasonably good wines. Last year we tasted better wines in this winery. Visiting the winery is recommended.

## Wineries in Paso Robles

### Daou

Reserve Chardonnay, 2013. \$46. 14.5% alcohol. Close to full body. Balanced. Complex. Dry. No feel of sweetness. Lingering finish. Drink now up to 6 years. Very good wine.

Chemin de Fleurs, 2013. \$36. 14.1% alcohol. 55% Grenache Blanc, 26% Viognier, 19% Roussanne. Close to full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Dry. The mix of the floral Viognier and the mineral Roussanne is particularly nice for those who like Roussanne. No feel of sweetness. Lingering finish. Drink now up to 6 years. Good to very good wine.

Pinot Noir, 2013. \$65. 14.4% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Smooth. Round. Some zest at the end. Nice finish. Drink now up to 6 years. Very good wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon, 2012. \$30. 14.3% alcohol. 78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot, 8% Cabernet Franc, 6% Petit Verdot. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Fairly Complex. Very soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Fairly elegant. Nice finish. Drink now up to 10 years. Good to very good wine.

Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, 2012. \$56. 14.2% alcohol. 77% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc, 3% Merlot, 9% Petit Verdot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Fairly elegant. Lingering finish. Drink now up to 15 years. Very good wine.

Estate Mayote, 2012. \$100. 14.7% alcohol. 45% Syrah, 43% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Petit Verdot. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Fairly elegant. Lingering finish. Drink now up to 15 years. Very good wine.

Estate Soul of a Lion, 2012. \$125. 14.5% alcohol. 97% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Petit Verdot. Full and powerful body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Noticeable soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Lingering finish. Drink in 3-15 years. Excellent wine.

Patrimony, 2013 (from a barrel). About \$350 (estimate). 14.3% alcohol. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. Will be available next year. Full and powerful body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Elegant. Will improve. Lingering finish. Drink now up to 20 years. Excellent wine.

A mid-size interesting and unusual winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful hilly area and produces high quality wines. We very much enjoyed the Cabernet Sauvignon wines. Visiting the winery is highly recommended.

## **Tablas Creek**

Marsanne, 2013. \$30. 12.2% alcohol. 100% Marsanne. Somewhat full body. Somewhat complex. Balanced. Elegant. Fresh. Not too mineral. Very good wine.

Esprit De Tablas Blanc, 2012. \$45. 13.5% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Somewhat complex. Balanced. Fairly elegant. Some desired bitterness at the end. Very good wine.

Esprit De Beaucastel Blanc, 2005. \$60. 14.5% alcohol. Almost full body. Fairly complex. Balanced. Somewhat too low acidity. Less fresh but more complex than Esprit De Tablas Blanc 2012. Very good wine.

Tannat, 2012. \$40. 14.1% alcohol. 100% Tannat. Somewhat full body. Somewhat complex. Balanced. Some desired bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 6 years. Good to very good wine.

En Gobelet, 2012. \$45. 14.1% alcohol. 63% Grenache, 12% Mourvedre, 11% Syrah, 8% Counoise, 6% Tannat. Somewhat full body. Somewhat complex. Balanced. Elegant. Some desired bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Light wine. Drink now up to 6 years. Very good wine.

Esprit De Tablas, 2012. \$55. 14.5% alcohol. 40% Mourvedre, 30% Syrah, 21% Grenache, 9% Counoise. Full body. Complex. Balanced. Somewhat flat aftertaste. Somewhat too high acidity. Some desired bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Esprit De Tablas, 2011. \$55. 14.5% alcohol. 40% Mourvedre, 21% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 9% Counoise. Full body. Complex. Balanced. Somewhat flat finish (less than in 2012). Some desired bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Esprit De Beaucastel, 2010. \$60. 14.5% alcohol. 45% Mourvedre, 21% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 4% Counoise. Full (but not powerful) body. Complex. Balanced. Some desired bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

Esprit De Beaucastel, 2006. \$75. 14.5% alcohol. 45% Mourvedre, 22% Syrah, 28% Grenache, 5% Counoise. Full body. Complex. Balanced. Somewhat too high acidity. Some desired bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 5 years. Very good wine.

Panoplie, 2011. \$95. 14.5% alcohol. 60% Mourvedre, 10% Syrah, 30% Grenache. Full body. Complex. Balanced. Somewhat too low acidity. Somewhat elegant. Some desired bitterness at the end. Soft tannins. Drink now up to 15 years. Very good to excellent wine.

Panoplie, 2012. \$95. 14.5% alcohol. 70% Mourvedre, 10% Syrah, 20% Grenache. Full body. Complex. Balanced. Elegant. Some desired bitterness at the end. Noticeable soft tannins. Drink now up to 15 years. Excellent wine.

A mid-size interesting and unusual winery. Great hospitality. The winery resides in a beautiful hilly area and produces high quality wines. We very much enjoyed the GSM (or, more precisely, the MGS) wines. Visiting the winery is highly recommended.

### **Clos Solene**

Hommage Blanc, 2014. \$60. 14.5% alcohol. 75% Roussanne, 25% Viognier. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Elegant. Very good wine.

Harmonie, 2013. \$85. 16% alcohol. 62% Grenache, 28% Syrah, 10% Mourvedre. Full body. Not fully balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 8 years. Good to very good wine.

La Petite Solene, 2013. \$65. 15.1% alcohol. 70% Syrah, 24% Grenache, 6% Mourvedre. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 8 years. Very good wine.

Sweet Clementine, 2013. \$60. 15.8% alcohol. 97% Grenache, 3% Syrah. Fortified. Sweet dessert wine. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Good to very good wine.

Hommage a nos Pairs reserve, 2013. \$85. 15.5% alcohol. 94% Syrah, 4% Grenache, 2% Roussanne. Full body. Not fully balanced. Complex. Aggressive and tough. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink in 2-10 years. Good to very good wine.

El Toro, 2013. \$85. 15.9% alcohol. 80% Grenache, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Syrah. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

A small and interesting winery. Great hospitality. The winery produces quality wines. Visiting the winery is highly recommended.

### **Guyomar**

Prioress Rose, 2014. \$20. 14% alcohol. 100% Grenache. Little body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Drink now. Good wine.

Oblate, 2010. \$42. 14.9% alcohol. 67% Zinfandel, 19% Petite Sirah, 9% Grenache, 5% Syrah. Less than full body. Somewhat balanced. Somewhat complex. Soft tannins. Some sweetness (from the Zinfandel) at the end. Drink now up to 2 years. Good wine.

Laity, 2010. \$42. 14.2% alcohol. 64% Syrah, 16% Grenache, 14% Petite Sirah, 6% Zinfandel. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Soft tannins. Some sweetness (from the Zinfandel) at the end. Drink now up to 4 years. Good wine.

Laity, 2011. \$42. 14.2% alcohol. 46% Syrah, 28% Petite Sirah, 17% Zinfandel, 9% Grenache. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Elegant. Some soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Some sweetness (from the Zinfandel) at the end. Drink now up to 4 years. Good to very good wine.

Monsignor, 2010. \$52. 14.7% alcohol. 56% Petite Sirah, 24% Zinfandel, 16% Syrah, 4% Grenache. Somewhat full body. Close to be balanced. Somewhat complex. Some very soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Some sweetness (from the Zinfandel) at the end. Drink now up to 4 years. Good to very good wine.

A small and interesting winery. Great hospitality. The winery produces quality wines. The sweetness of the Zinfandel is noticeable in all the red wines. The wines are interesting and well made, but using Zinfandel in all of them may not be an optimal strategy. Visiting the winery is recommended.

## **Ledge**

Ledge Zinfandel, 2012. \$45. 14.5%. Full body. Somewhat complex. Balanced. Soft (some green) tannins (Only about 40% destemming). Some desired bitterness at the end. Somewhat rough wine. Good to very good wine.

Ledge Syrah, 2012. \$55. 14.5%. Full body. Complex. Balanced. Noticeable Soft (some green) tannins (Only about 40% destemming). Fairly elegant. Some desired bitterness at the end. Do not drink now. Drink in 3-15 years. Very good wine.

Ledge Vineyard Drive, 2012. \$45. 15%. 48% Syrah, 25% Grenache, 25% Mourvedre, 2% Roussanne. Full body. Complex. Balanced. Soft (some green) tannins (Only about 40% destemming). Fairly elegant. Some desired bitterness at the end. Somewhat flat finish. Not as complex as the Syrah 2012. Drink now up to 10 years. Good to very good wine.

A small and interesting wine producer. Great hospitality. The winemaker (Mark Adams) produces quality wines. Tasting Ledges' wines is recommended.

### **Tin City – Paso Robles (Tasting with 11 winemakers)**

Tin City is a new complex in Paso Robles where many small boutique wineries make their wine and have tasting rooms. The wine makers are young, think out of the box and individually stylistic. All are “rising stars”. Tin City is a must visit, but be aware that hours vary and appointments are recommended. Our tasting used the following format. Each winemaker presented himself/herself and his/her wines. Then, all participants (eleven winemakers, or their representatives, and five other wine enthusiasts) tasted each wine (one or two wines by each winemaker) and discussed its characteristics. The wines that were chosen by each winemaker were intended to best represent him/her. The event lasted about two and a half hours. All the wines that were tasted in the event reflected high professional standards, imagination and good quality. The discussion was focused on the wines' body, complexity, balance, and blending. Part of the discussion centered on the potential benefits from cooperation among the young/small winemakers in various aspects of the wines' production and distribution, in order to facilitate higher wine quality, greater wine production, and larger net revenues. There was some consensus that such cooperation is likely to be of value to the small/young winemakers in the region.

The wine makers and the wines that we tasted at Tin City are as follows.

#### **Field Recording**

Jurassic Park Chardonnay, 2014. \$22. 13.5% alcohol. Less than full body. Fairly balanced. Somewhat complex. Simple but pleasant wine. Drink now. Good wine.

Field Recording Chenin Blanc, 2014. \$22. 11.9% alcohol. Less than full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Simple but pleasant wine. Drink now. Good to very good wine.

#### **Torrin**

Akasha, 2011. 15.1% alcohol. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Soft tannins. Nice and desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

#### **Onx**

Crux, 2012. \$45. 15% alcohol. 43% Syrah, 31% Mourvedre, 23% Grenache, 3% Alicante Bouschet. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat Complex. Somewhat flat at the end.

Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 8 years. Good to very good wine.

Reckoning, 2012. \$45. 15.5% alcohol. 62% Syrah, 16% Petite Sirah, 8% Tempranillo, 7% Grenache, 5% Zinfandel, 2% Malbec. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat spicy at the end. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

### **Caliza**

Azimuth, 2012. \$54. 15.2% alcohol. 36% Mourvedre, 34% Grenache, 30% Syrah. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Elegant. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

### **Jacob Toft**

Tessa's Cuvee, 2013. \$60. 16.2% alcohol. 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Petit Verdot, 24% Syrah. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Noticeable soft tannins. Nice finish. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

### **Giornata**

giornata Ramato, 2012. \$35. 13% alcohol. Pinot Grigio. Less than full body. Balanced. Not complex. Somewhat spicy. Simple. Pleasant wine. Drink now. Good to very good wine.

### **Clos Solene**

La Petite Solene, 2013. \$65. 15.1% alcohol. 70% Syrah, 24% Grenache, 6% Mourvedre. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 8 years. Very good wine.

### **Powell Mountain Cellars**

Pinnacle, 2010. \$36. 15.4% alcohol. 54% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc, 6.5% Petit Verdot, 6.5% Malbec. Less than full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Some very soft tannins. Light. Pleasant. Drink now up to 5 years. Good to very good wine.

Viognier, 2013. \$28. 14.2% alcohol. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Somewhat but not too fruity. Young. Light. Drink now up to 3 years. Good to very good wine.

### **Aaron Jackson**

Aequorea, 2013. \$46. 14.5% alcohol. Pinot Noir. Somewhat full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Very fine. Light. Very pleasant. Drink now up to 5 years. Good to very good wine.

Aaron, 2012. \$44. 15.6% alcohol. 90% Petite Sirah, 10% Syrah. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Fairly elegant. Noticeable tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

### **Brian Benson Cellars**

S&M, 2012. \$55. 15.9 alcohol. 67% Syrah, 33% Mourvedre. Full body. Balanced. Complex. Somewhat flat at the end. Young. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 10 years. Very good wine.

### **Clos Solene**

La Petite Solene, 2013. \$65. 15.1% alcohol. 70% Syrah, 24% Grenache, 6% Mourvedre. Full body. Balanced. Somewhat complex. Soft tannins. Some desired bitterness at the end. Drink now up to 8 years. Very good wine.