


VINEYARD FOCUS: CHARDONNAY

Lance Cutler

Lance Cutler has been a working winemaker in Sonoma County for 35 years. He has been a contributing editor for *Wine Business Monthly* for more than 10 years. His unique perspective on winemaking has led to our Industry Roundtable series and our Varietal Focus series. Lance is also the author of four books, including *The Tequila Lover's Guide to Mexico*.



CHARDONNAY IS GROWN IN nearly every wine-producing region in the world, with more than 520,000 acres planted worldwide. It is relatively easy to grow and can adapt to different conditions although it seems to do best in limestone, chalk, clay and sandy loam. Chardonnay vines can be vigorous, but the better wines are produced from smaller yields due to either soils, climate conditions or vineyard management techniques. The grape reflects both specific terroir character and the hand of the winemaker who makes it.

According to modern DNA research, Chardonnay was originally a cross of Pinot Noir and the nearly extinct Gouais Blanc grape varieties. There are 34 different “Dijon clones” of Chardonnay in France, and they have been exported all over the world. In California, **Wente Vineyards** developed a clone that was quickly adopted by many California growers and continues to be used today.

Chardonnay’s popularity peaked in the late 1980s when the style was ripe, rich, buttery and oaky, a style that often overwhelmed the subtle aromas and flavors of terroir. There was a backlash against those huge Chardonnays with movements like ABC (Anything But Chardonnay) and In Pursuit of Balance. Now, the pendulum has swung back in favor of Chardonnays that reflect their place of origin with the balanced influence of the winemakers who make them.

Deciding when to pick is the major choice winemakers have to make in determining style for Chardonnay. The key is to retain as much natural acidity as possible. Winemakers have shifted to more whole-cluster pressing in attempts to preserve terroir-influenced aromas and flavors. Wines are often barrel-fermented sur lie for added complexity. A major consideration is whether to allow the wines to undergo malolactic fermentation, which affects the mouthfeel, texture and crispness of the finished Chardonnay. Malolactic fermentation, especially in conjunction with newer oak barrels, tends to create richer, bigger wines with a definite creamy character. Winemakers that eschew malolactic and use less new oak seek crisper, more mineral-driven wines.

These days, winemakers are so conscious of different terroir influence that they often choose to produce several different Chardonnays, each from a different vineyard. For this Vineyard Focus on Chardonnay we wanted to examine how experienced winemakers preserved the unique character of individual vineyards while still allowing their winemaking techniques to shine through. We selected three renowned vineyards, each of which sells their Chardonnay to dozens of winemakers.

Hyde Vineyards in Napa Carneros has achieved legendary status. We included the family’s own **Hyde Estate Winery** with winemaker **Alberto Rodriguez**, along with **Dan Petroski** from **Massican Winery** and **James Hall** from **Patz and Hall**. From the **Durell Vineyard**, first planted in 1979, we have **Ryan Prichard** of **Three Sticks Wines** and **Kenneth Juhasz**, who makes wine for his own **Auteur Wine**, as well as **Dunstan Wines**. Finally, the **Sangiaco** family’s **Green Acres Vineyard** is represented by **Jim Gaffner** of **Saxon Brown Wines**, **Tim Colla** from **Saintsbury Winery** and **James MacPhail** for their own **Sangiaco Family Wines**.

HYDE VINEYARDS

Ever since **Larry Hyde** purchased the original 72 acres in Napa Carneros, it has been a family affair. The vineyard was located in a cool growing region that has shallow soils but showed itself to be a prime location for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Hyde was fascinated with farming and welcomed experimentation as he farmed. He sought out the best heritage clones, like Old Wente Chardonnay; and when he discovered there were four different selections of Old Wente, he focused on small cluster selections, supposing they would make the best wine.

The vineyard's shallow soils and cool climate seemed well-suited for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Hyde discovered he could grow wonderful grapes on his property, and he attracted some of the best winemakers in California for his fruit. Not only did he have success with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir; but through careful clonal selection, he was able to grow excellent Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot as well.

The vineyard is primarily VSP and cane-pruned. Minimum irrigation is used, often no more than two or three times a season. Leaves are pulled to encourage air flow through the canopy, along with filtered sunlight.

Dead leaves are removed. They can farm organically without high disease pressure. They rarely drop fruit because the clonal selections give smaller berries with lighter cluster weights, providing a more even ripening.

In 2009, the family established Hyde Estate Winery, and the next year they started planting a new vineyard at the winery site. The soil is Haire Clay Loam, and the vineyard sits about 100 feet above sea level. Vine spacing is 7x5.5 feet with a Southeast exposure. The new vineyard uses Wente F1V3 planted on 420 A rootstock. It is organically farmed with minimal irrigation. They will leaf inside of the canopy and fruit drop on short shoots if necessary. Production is 2.5 tons per acre.

Currently, Hyde Vineyards encompasses 200 acres, and more than 30 wineries purchase fruit from the site. Contracts are usually set, so clients purchase individual blocks or pay by the acre, and then those acres are farmed according to the specs of the winemaker. Chardonnay from Hyde Vineyards tends toward high acid and low pH, giving the wines a firm structural character without being sour or hard. There is an elegant and pure mouthfeel, along with green apple and pear character, with a good bit of mineral flavor.



HYDE ESTATE WINERY

Hyde Vineyard 2016 Estate Chardonnay, 300 cases, 14.2% alc., \$60

Alberto Rodriguez was working in vineyards as a teenager when he volunteered to help **James Hall**, who was working late pressing grapes that Rodriguez had helped pick. Hall taught him about winemaking, and Rodriguez learned so well that he was named assistant winemaker of **Patz & Hall** in 2012. After working with fruit from **Hyde Vineyards** for many years, Rodriguez was offered the winemaker job at **Hyde Estate Winery** in 2017.

ACCORDING TO RODRIGUEZ: We want our wine to show off the fruit and soil characteristics of our vineyard. That translates into texture and natural acidity. We do minimal manipulation, allowing the floral, peach and citrus notes of the vineyard to flourish and emphasizing the natural acidity, texture and complexity of the fruit.

We pick based on flavor and balance. Early on, the grapes are too acidic. We wait for that tartness to leave and for recognizable flavors of white peach, green apple and floral character to appear. We want our wine to show refinement and elegance with minimal oak.

Fruit is picked early in the morning at the coldest time of day. Grapes are sorted in the vineyard, arriving to the winery intact at 55° F. They are whole-cluster-pressed, stopping at 1 bar. We add 50 ppm SO₂ at the press, and then cold-settle for 48 hours at 55° F. We rack from tank to tank, adding nutrients if necessary. No acid additions are needed with this fruit. We rack to barrels where native yeast carries out the fermentation

between 58° F to 64° F. We use 100 percent French oak barrels with 20 to 25 percent new. We will stir lees about twice a month, waiting for some creamy characteristics to emerge. Once that happens, we stop stirring lees.

We top the barrels after primary fermentation. Typically, malolactic will go by itself; but if necessary, we can control the temperature of the cellar to encourage it to finish. We blend in early June and then add a bit of bentonite for some heat stability as we go back into barrels. We do not cold-stabilize the wines. The wine sits in barrels on the lees until bottling. The wine gets bottled using natural cork and receives two years of bottle-aging before release.



WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES:

RODRIGUEZ: There is a lot of complexity with floral notes, white peach, pear and green apples. It is refreshing and elegant with nice balance from the acid. There is good structure, along with some toasty, creamy minerality.

HALL: I get a distinct floral, carnation-spice quality with a touch of cardamom, candied ginger and a bit of grapefruit. There is some orange peel and a leesy, chalky note. The acidity has great flow and supports the palate without being harsh or sour. It is mouth-watering, cleansing and refreshing.

MACPHAIL: The nose is slightly reduced upon entry. I get that flinty character. The palate has a pretty warmed applespice. The finish has strong lemon, grapefruit notes, and I like the weight of this wine.

COLLA: It is honeyed and floral. I get the flintiness; but as it opened, it integrated with the oak and evolved into a character that I like in Chardonnay. There was baked fruit and lots of spice with weight and substance on the palate. It would feel flat if it didn't have that citrus backbone.

GAFFNER: I got that flint, slightly reduced character that went away, and I like that in my Chardonnays. There was some Musqué character and smells sort of like a bee hive. It tasted like it had a higher pH mouthfeel than the other two, which I like.

JUHASZ: This is closed with subdued fruit on the nose. The driving force is sort of dairy, diacetyl. On the palate it is very rich but a bit hot.

PRICHARD: Great balance between ripeness and acidity and it shows that chalkiness that the other wines share.



MASSICAN WINERY

2017 Hyde Vineyards Chardonnay, 188 cases, 13.9% alc., \$45

Dan Petroski grew up in Brooklyn, New York. He spent 10 years in magazine publishing and then took a flier to go to Sicily for a year where he became enchanted with wine as a way of life. Returning to the United States, he made his way to California, landing a harvest internship at **DuMol** winery in 2006 working with winemaker **Adam Smith**. After that harvest, Smith invited Petroski to join him at **Larkmead Vineyards** in Napa, and he was named winemaker in 2012. In 2009 he started making racy, crisp white wines for his own label called **Massican**. Petroski remains founder and winemaker for Massican as well as winemaker for Larkmead Vineyards. He was named the *San Francisco Chronicle's* winemaker of the year in 2017.

ACCORDING TO PETROSKI:

I spent time in Italy, and it was hot, so people drank white wine. It's hot in California, so people should drink white wine here too. Fresh, clean white wines, exuding floral and citrus character, are delightful in warm climates. Those are the wines I try to make. Hyde Vineyards is like a Grand Cru vineyard in California. The fruit is rich and powerful, but it retains freshness and acidity. I



decided to double down, seeking a crisp, acid focus, using these incredible grapes. I try to enhance bright flavors and fresh aromas by picking early to retain high acidity and then using no malolactic fermentation.

While I visit the vineyard often and I taste the fruit, I realize that grapevines are perennial plants. There is a long history at Hyde Vineyards and the vines are pretty set in their ways. So, mostly I pick on feeling, and I closely watch the phases of the moon. The moon exercises a gravitational pull on the grapevines, depending on whether it is in an ascending or descending phase. This helps me predict whether the grapes will be ripening at a faster or slower rate. Typically, grapes come in between 21° and 22.5° Brix and between 3.1 and 3.2 pH.

I will usually let **Chris Hyde** know when to pick a week or two out. I am not set up to take all the grapes at once, so we pick on two different dates, depending on logistics at the winery with my schedule. Grapes go directly to the press where they are whole-cluster pressed. Juice goes to a tank without separating the free run and press components. It gets mixed in the tank and racked immediately to barrels. Half of the wine uses native yeast; the other half gets DV-10. We make no acid additions, nor do we add nutrients. We do not heat- or cold-stabilize the wine.

Fermentation temperature gets up to 65° F to 70° F. Towards the end of primary fermentation, we use bâtonnage twice a week. After that, we shift to once a week. Fermentation and élevage occur in 100 percent new French oak in the form of 300-liter Hogs Heads. It will stay in those barrels for approximately six months. We rack for bottling and then sterile-filter because the wine does not go through malolactic. We bottle-age for two months before release.



WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES:

PETROSKI: Floral on the nose, with citrus and honey blossom. The palate carries the citrus theme with a lemon oil-like texture on the front of the palate that creates a medium to light mid-palate while the finish is fresh and structured due to the acidity at the core of the wine.

RODRIGUEZ: There is green tea, orange peel, lemons and herbs. There is a lemon tart character with minerality. It is lean bodied, but I like the complexity.

HALL: There is a leesy, chalky note that works well with the citrus peel pith. A touch of celery and fine herb tarragon that are interesting. There is plenty of Musqué tropical character. Love the acidity and focus, hanging on the palate. More like an Italian white wine with the precision of its forward palate acidity.

PRICHARD: This has racy acidity with lime, nutmeg and slate notes. Incredibly complex, almost like a Belgian white beer. It is stylistically bright with nice green apple flavors. It is lean and mean, a unique take on Hyde.

JUHASZ: Really complex nose: oily, orange peel, lemon curd, white peach, lime, fig and honey. It just keeps going and going. On the palate it has good focus and concentration with very juicy fruit and some zest.

COLLA: I like how fruit-centric this wine is. It has this salinity with this honeyed, floral character with white nectarine, melon and a lime zest character across the palate that gives it endless length, without it being lean or thin. This is a linear and long wine.

GAFFNER: I like the wine. I get that lemon zest flavor, and it keeps coming back. I wish there was a bit more weight because I know that Hyde has that power. Part of that might be because it is a 2017 and might still be coming together. It is pretty wine.

MACPHAIL: I found it to be more ruby grapefruit and lime than lemon for me. It had a real citrus zing. I agree that a little more weight in the wine would improve it. It has pretty peach and white rose. It is lean, and I like the length of the wine. Nicely done oak.

PATZ & HALL

2016 Hyde Vineyard Chardonnay, 1,388 cases, 14.2% alc., \$65

James Hall was attending enology and viticulture courses at **UC Davis** when he went to work at **Felton Empire** in 1981. He accepted a job at **Flora Springs Winery** as assistant winemaker in 1983. While there, he began a friendship with **Donald Patz**, who was the sales manager. In 1988, Hall and Patz, along with **Anne Moses** and **Heather Patz**, founded Patz & Hall Winery, where Hall has served as winemaker ever since. **Chateau St. Michelle** acquired the winery in 2016, retaining Hall as the head winemaker.



ACCORDING TO HALL: Chardonnay has been known as a variety that allows the winemaker to put his stamp on the finished wine. I prefer to make wines that service the vineyard rather than reflect a winemaker's philosophy. I want less winemaking technique to show and for vineyard characteristics to be foremost. Typically, Hyde Vineyard produces wines of elegance and precision, high acidity, minerality and complexity. Aromatically, the fruit is more floral and elusive than overtly fruity. I like hints of reduction and toasted nuts, and it is important to me that these wines reward patient collectors with many years of development.

To determine when to pick, I look at Brix, pH and weather. Sometimes waiting for fruit flavors can serve as a distraction. I wait for the green flavors of celery and cucumber to turn less vegetative and more floral. I look for a flavor of great minerality with cleansing acidity. I would prefer to pick early and keep the focus on acidity rather than certain flavors. Hyde is special in that you can get full maturity with plenty of natural acidity.

We hand-pick our three main vineyard sections more than once so that we receive grapes in five different lots over a period of days. Those lots are fermented separately. Grapes are field-sorted although we have the capability to sort at the winery if necessary. Grapes are 100 percent whole-cluster-pressed up to 1.2 bar. We add 40 ppm SO₂ to the free run juice and then cold-settle in a tank for 24 hours at 60° F overnight. Press juice is repurposed and not blended into the free run. We rack the settled tank to another tank to mix the lees evenly and then rack to 228 L barrels, filling them with 45 gallons of juice. All the barrels are French oak, three-year-seasoned staves, and 35 percent of those are new. We use tight grain wood to slow extraction and provide less "woody" flavor.

We use native yeast exclusively, and fermentation begins in barrel usually within five days. We make no acid additions to the free run juice. We will add SuperFood Export at 2 lbs. per 1,000 gallons at barrel down. We may add other nutrients at mid-ferment if necessary. Fermentation proceeds slowly and can take several weeks. The temperature range during fermentation is

between 65° F to 72° F. Barrels are stacked in a 58° F room, and we will stir if we add nutrients.

Upon reaching negative Brix, we will top the barrels and then continue to stir and top twice a month. We rack wine out of the barrels in January, assemble the five components to our liking and immediately return them to barrels on top of the gross lees to finish malolactic. Around July we perform a second clear rack to tank, adding a bit of bentonite and chilling



the wine to 30° F. After three to four days, it goes back to clean barrels. The day before bottling we bulldog the wine to a tank and bottle within 24 hours. We never, ever filter. We use 2-inch NDTech corks and bottle-age for one year before release.

WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES:

HALL: There is floral carnation/daffodil mixed with citrus, common to Hyde Vineyards. It has orange peel, and some oak spice with clove and cinnamon. It has focused acidity with a lot of cut and tension on the palate that drives strong minerality. There is a leesy, chalky component, along with hazelnut and roasted almonds. A touch hard and acidic but should age well for a long time.

RODRIGUEZ: This is expressive, pure, clean wine with green apple. It is complex with a nice mid-palate. It is juicy with elegance and well-integrated acidity.

PRICHARD: A step up in ripeness from the Massican but still in a lean style. There is some flinty reduction with a chalky texture and baked bread notes. A fun wine.

JUHASZ: It too is subdued. I get a mishmash of fruit and oak on the nose. There is a bit of fig, along with lemon and lemon curd. Pretty good balance with a bit of heat on the back. The oak is prevalent but not out of control. It is a viscous, impressive, big style of Chardonnay.

GAFFNER: I get apple, green apple and some golden delicious, along with honeydew melon. It is pretty wine with a high signature. Tastes like it comes from a warmer region but most likely due to vintage.

MACPHAIL: This has more weight. I get lemon rind, almost bordering on lemon curd, which I really like. There is a nice honeydew melon component that helps with the weight.

COLLA: The fruit profile was more about bright apple and melon character, but there was a definite lemon curd, ripe citrus, creamy character. The palate was plush and broad without being heavy-handed or tiresome. There is some nice spice character to it as well.

DURELL RANCH VINEYARD

Ed Durell planted his first vineyard in 1979, naming it **Sand Hill Vineyard**. Durell (and long-time vineyard manager **Steve Hill**) decided to plant Chardonnay and Pinot Noir after studying market trends. They developed a unique type of pre-plant contract, where they would talk to wineries to determine which grapes they needed and then plant those grapes for those wineries. Despite not having written contracts, it was understood that the wineries would purchase the blocks of grapes planted for them.

As it turned out, the sandy soils of Sand Hill Vineyard yielded a Chardonnay full of mineral and saline character, which winemakers found enticing. There was steady growth with ongoing vineyard plantings, especially after the property was purchased by **Bill and Ellie Price** in 1997. Currently, Durell Vineyard consists of 60 separate blocks that cover 160 acres. **Rob Harris** was brought in to manage the expansion and care of the vineyards.

The vineyard encompasses three separate appellations: Carneros, Sonoma Valley and Sonoma Coast, bringing warm heat in the day that is cooled by nightly breezes from San Pablo Bay and coastal fog. This allows for the grapes to ripen while maintaining good acid levels. Elevations at Durell range from sea level up to 500 feet. Soil types go from extremely rocky on the valley floor to sandy, Gouling and clay loam soils at more elevated sites. There is wide clonal diversity, but much of the Chardonnay is Old Wente clone. Vine

spacing is mixed as are rootstocks, but the majority is 3309, 420 A and 101-14. The vineyard is irrigated, traditionally farmed and certified sustainable.

Harris works with individual winemakers, but for the most part he is entrusted with the care of the vines. Vines are pruned, shoot-thinned and have leaves pulled to create dappled light in the fruit zone. Fruit drop is rarely needed because the low vigor vines yield crops well below 2 tons per acre in most instances. He stays in close communication with winemakers to decide when to pick in accordance with their desired wine styles.

There is historical significance for Durell Vineyard, which has been here for more than 30 years. Winemakers can put their individual stylistic stamp on the wine, but the terroir of Durell Chardonnay is still recognizable. It includes an intensity and a weight, along with big phenolic structure. Fruit profiles can vary, but there is a vein of similarity throughout all the wines. The vineyard stands up to winemaking but can still show its place. There is a stony opulence to all styles of Durell Chardonnay with great minerality but in a lush vibrant package.

In 2005, Ellie Price replanted the 8.5-acre Ranch House Block at Durell. The grapes are dedicated exclusively to producing wines for Dunstan Wines. She partnered with **Chris Towt** in 2008, and the two focused on direct-to-consumer and national sales for their Dunstan Wines.



AUTEUR WINE

Durell Vineyard 2016 Chardonnay, 450 cases, 13% alc., \$50

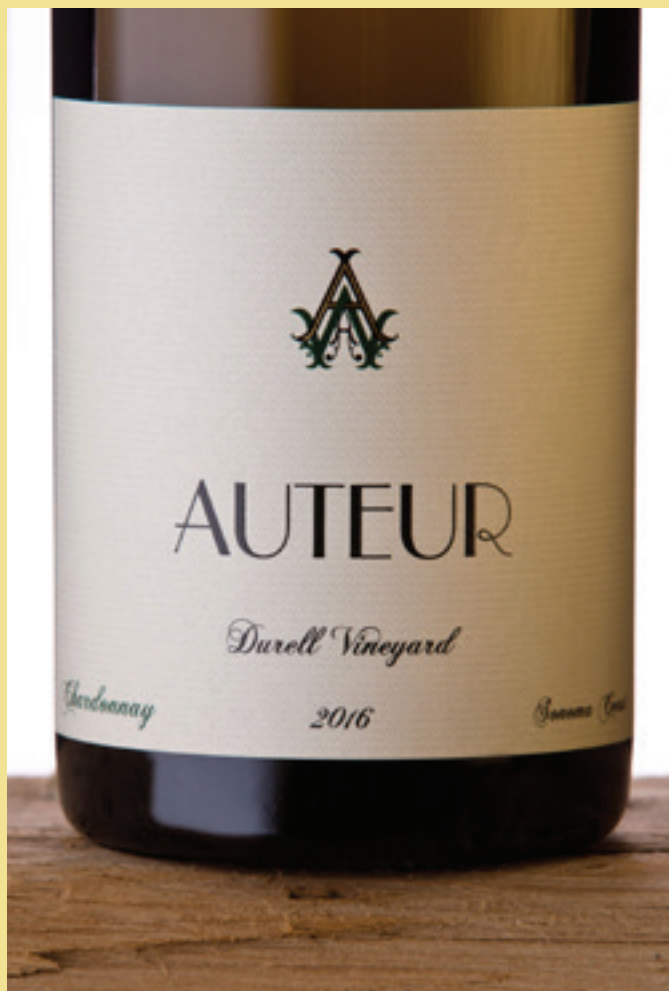
Kenneth Juhasz started working in wine shops and restaurants and developed a passion for wine. His experiences in Europe, especially Burgundy, led him to the Willamette Valley where he first began making Pinot Noir. He joined **Donum Estate Winery** in Sonoma Carneros before starting his own winery, **Auteur** in 2003. He also acts as consulting winemaker for several wineries, including **Dunstan Wines**, **Pali Wines** and **Attune**. For this story Juhasz is winemaker for both Auteur Wine and Dunstan Wines.

ACCORDING TO JUHASZ: Most of all I like the qualities of a particular site to shine through. With Durell I am aiming for a white Burgundy character that is still firmly rooted in California. I want citrus flavors of lemon and lime before they turn overly tropical, and a wine that is focused on minerality and acidity. I prefer loads of concentration that wallop the mid-palate.

This fruit comes from a parcel adjacent to Fowler Creek, an ancient stream bed that is incredibly rocky with piles of overturned stones, saturating the vineyard. The land is flat, only 50 feet elevation. Vine spacing is 8x4 feet planted to Old Wente Clone on 3309 rootstock. If necessary, we have irrigation. I like to keep the vines happy until it is time to focus energy into ripening. Then we use deficit irrigation just to maintain vine health. Vines are VSP. We shoot-thin and pull some leaves on the morning side, trying to maintain dappled light, but not enough sun to turn the grapes golden. Most years we are lucky to get 2 tons per acre, so we do not thin fruit.

Over the years I have gotten more and more focused on acidity in my wines. I check the color of the grapes and start tasting around 20° Brix. I look for hard green flavors to subside, turning to lemon with a bit of lime. Once I get some honeysuckle showing, I've got to get the grapes off the vine. That means watching Brix closely, willing to pick with less sugar if it means I get to keep acidity.

Grapes are picked at night and arrive to the winery around 5 a.m. We go straight to press whole-cluster. I go up to 1.8 atmospheres, looking to extract some phenolics for structure. Free run and press juice are mixed together, and we add 30 ppm SO₂ in the press pan. We settle juice in a tank overnight at 45° F to 50° F, adding acid if necessary. We mix juice in tank and then rack to barrels, using approximately equal amounts of



new, one-year and two-year-old French oak barrels. Fermentation is carried out by spontaneous yeast.

Post-primary fermentation, we add 50 ppm SO₂ and top up the barrels, trying to prevent malolactic. We stir lees once or twice a month until we like the mouthfeel and flavors. After that, we stop stirring lees and simply top the barrels. Wine stays in barrels for 14 months. We rack one to two weeks before bottling, use some bentonite if necessary and chill the wine down to 32° F or 33° F. The wine is crossflow-filtered and then sterile-filtered. Bottles are cork-finished and get three months bottle-aging before release.

WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES:

JUHASZ: I pick up honeydew and lime on the nose with a bit of blanched almonds. There is malic acid in a linear way on the palate, coming across as minerality. Lemon and lemon curd are the dominant characteristics on the palate. It has a deep core on the entry and mid-palate. It has texture, is viscous and fruit floats with an almost juicy characteristic.

PRICHARD: Nice golden color. I like the weight. It shows Durell's natural intensity. Keeping the malic in the wine mellows out some of that intensity. While there is some apple, lemon and lemon curd available, it's not a specific flavor, but rather a palate weight. The malic is a nice juxtaposition between ripeness, intensity and acidity.

MACPHAIL: I get that same grassiness but with a bit more stone fruit, like pear and white nectarine. It is very floral and pretty. There is some green apple from malic acid.

COLLA: There is pure stone fruit, white nectarine, white floral and some golden delicious, crisp apple. On the palate, I like the texture and sort of expanded nature, but it didn't have the length of the Green Acre wines for example.

GAFFNER: This seems the truest to the Durell site for me. It has that chalky minerality. There are some tropical tones with white peach, green apple and freshly cut hay. Very nice wine.

RODRIGUEZ: There is a ripe, peachy malic creaminess with butter and caramel. It is nice and soft with some toasty vanilla and savory notes. It is full-bodied and has a clean finish with a bit of astringency.

HALL: I like this wine. It has ripe peach, green apple and pineapple with a marzipan, toasted almond note. Oak is present, not overwhelming but supporting. Smooth, supple and mouth-filling but still has freshness. Rich, powerful style.

DUNSTAN WINES

2016 Durell Vineyard Chardonnay, 13% alc., \$50

ACCORDING TO JUHASZ: The style here is to have an intensity of fruit flavor with medium-plus acidity and gentle new oak influence. Non-malolactic fermentation is used to retain a brighter malic profile within the medium-plus body. We want a powerful Chardonnay without being too weighty.

Grapes come from the Ranch House Block planted in 2005. Soil is Goulding, cobble clay loam and less rocky than the soils for Auteur wine. The well-drained gravelly soil is densely planted, yielding smaller more concentrated berries. This is one of the coolest sites on the property. Elevation is 200 to 250 feet with 5x6 foot vine spacing. This is Massale selection Old Wente Clone from the original Durell block planted in 1979. Vines have VSP trellising, and leaves are pulled on the morning side. Vines in the Ranch Block are healthier than the Fowler Creek vines, sometimes requiring dropping of fruit. Yield is maintained around 2.5 tons per acre.

Dunstan Wines are made in a similar style as the Auteur wines. They are whole-cluster-pressed, settled overnight and then racked to barrels for fermentation. Only 20 percent are new. Fermentation is carried out at 55° F. After primary fermentation, the wine gets topped with an addition of 50 ppm SO₂ and continues aging in barrel with lees being stirred once a month. Wine is aged for 14 months then racked for minor cold-stabilization. Bentonite is sometimes used. Wine is cross-flow filtered and then sterile-filtered. It is cork-finished and receives six months bottle-aging before release.



WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES:

JUHASZ: This has more prevalent fruit than the Auteur with lemon, not lemon curd. It has honeysuckle going into honey, and it's flinty. There is lychee fruit. I pick up some white pepper character on the nose. There is some chalkiness in both flavor and texture. The nose is fruity, but there is more minerality on the palate, as if the wine veers in the direction of Chablis.

PRICHARD: I get green fruit focus, like green apple, kiwi and a nice mouth-watering juiciness. I get limestone and some weight. It is a bit chalky without over-ripe fruit. I think this would be a great food wine.

GAFFNER: I get that sweet honeydew with oyster shell. The oak seemed a little sweet and not as toasted. It is lean and not too phenolic. It is very pretty and elegant.

MACPHAIL: My first aromatic hit was grassiness, almost like hay. I like that and see it as a site-specific character. There is salinity and lemon zest. I got some pear and peach pit. It is very flavorful. Nice wine.

COLLA: The greenness of the fruit character is really interesting. Not only does it have that lemon zest, lemon curd character and crunchy pear, but even the pineapple is green to me in a fresh, high-toned way. The oak was sweeter and less impactful with spice character, and so it felt lighter and leaner.

HALL: Fresh and lean with green apple notes and high acidity. There is a mouth-watering freshness and a refreshing, bright, acidic quality. I like the style, and it is well done.

RODRIGUEZ: Bright with nutty caramel with anise and some chalk. Good tension and nice bright acid. There is a lot of minerality and some slight bitterness on the finish.

THREE STICKS WINES

Durell Vineyard 2016 Chardonnay, 675 cases, 14.3% alc., \$55

Ryan Prichard first got interested in wine by taking classes at **Cornell University**. After graduation, he worked for a management consulting firm that allowed him to travel some of the world's best wine regions. He worked several harvests at **Boulder Creek Winery** and completed the **UC Davis** certificate program in winemaking. He worked at **Williams Selyem** with **Bob Cabral** and then at **Copain Custom Crush** where he worked with dozens of winemakers. In 2015, he rejoined Bob Cabral as winemaker for **Three Sticks Wines**.



ACCORDING TO PRICHARD: Our goal is to produce a Chardonnay that has a wonderful balance of concentration and texture with enough vibrant acidity to keep the wine fresh as it ages in the bottle. We look for liveliness and weight with a Californian intensity. We carefully select different coopers for our oak program to enhance structure, mouthfeel and spice.

The grapes for this wine come from four separate blocks on the Durell Ranch. Soils are mostly sandy loam, gravelly clay loam, volcanic and cobbly clay loam. Elevations are as high as 400 feet down to 250 feet. Vine spacing is mixed. We use four different clones: Wente, Hyde, Mt. Eden and Dijon 76. Those clones are planted to 101-14, 3309 and 420 A rootstock. Everything is sustainably farmed using deficit irrigation. We pull leaves trying, to create a tunnel in the fruit zone, and we will additionally strip a few leaves on the morning side. There is little disease pressure and good air movement. Production is very low, rarely 2-tons per acre, so there is no fruit-thinning necessary.

To pick, we spend a lot of time in the vineyards, constantly tasting and watching the acids. We want to pick before we notice tropical flavors and before the fruit gets too delicious. We do want green flavors to transform to citrus or possibly mango, but definitely not banana. The key for us is maintaining natural acidity.

Grapes are picked at night and delivered to the winery early morning. We only sort if necessary but haven't needed to in recent years. We whole-cluster-press using no SO₂. We will press up to 1.5 bar and mix free run and press juices.

We settle overnight at 45 to 50° F, but often mix it up before racking to barrel for fermentation. Individual blocks are fermented separately. One-third of our French oak barrels

are new, and the wine stays in them for 15 months. Native yeast carries out fermentation, and we will use a complex yeast nutrient just after ferment kicks off with another hit around 15° Brix. Fermentations are in the mid-60s and take three to four weeks to finish.

We inoculate with malolactic around 5° Brix and move the barrels into a warmer room where we stir and top weekly during malolactic. When it finishes, we add 30 ppm SO₂ and then keep it around 25 ppm after that. We will continue to stir lees about twice a month until we work out our blend, sometime between February and April. Wine is returned to barrel after the blend is made, where it continues to sit on lees but with less stirring.

After 15 months, we will do a clean rack to tank, sometimes do a light bentonite fining and chill the tank for one to two weeks. We do not filter. The wine gets nine months of bottle age before release.

WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES:

PRICHARD: It is nice and bright with ripe lemon characteristics. There is good palate weight, but it remains light on its feet. I like how the oak is showing. It is well-integrated, showing some nice toast without overpowering the wine. It finishes with a lemon curd, with a creamy fatness underneath.

JUHASZ: Lychee nut is dominant on the nose. The palate is creamy with nice texture from diacetyl, but it is balanced by good acidity. It is wide on the palate and hits the finish nicely. The fruit has subdued lemon. The wine is balanced, but you do get the oak.

COLLA: It has that chalky mineral quality, but a lot of the aromatics are dominated by more savory, white pepper, earthy characteristics, which I couldn't quite wrap my head around. It is more overtly barrel-influenced. The palate had great density and nice length with sweet spice and baked apple character. It is a more stylized wine.

GAFFNER: I like the wine; however, this is more about winemaker than vineyard. There is a Francois Freres signature and a soapiness coming from the winemaking practice that runs over the Durell site signature. I like the wine and recognize the white peach and fresh-cut hay, lemon oil, the oyster shell and all the things that we know, but the heavyhandedness with oak overwhelms the subtle notes of the vineyard.

MACPHAIL: I agree, my first thought was brioche. There is an aggressive toasted quality that is the most impactful of the lineup. There is baked apple and spiced compote, like allspice.

RODRIGUEZ: I really like this one. There are a lot of floral notes, herb and green apple. There is some orange peel, mango. It is rich with good length and good acidity on the finish, with a nice touch of oak and vanilla.

HALL: Excellent ripeness, almost slightly bruised fruit character. Pear, green apple and surprising acidity, considering the ripeness in the nose. It is lifted with an oak or fermentation character that seems to add high-tone quality to the fruit. The oak is very present. Powerful, big wine with lots of drama.





SANGIACOMO GREEN ACRES VINEYARD

Green Acres Vineyard was first planted in 1969, using the original Wente Clone. We have replanted since then as needed. There are 163 acres planted on Zamora silty clay loam, and most of that is Chardonnay because it seemed a good varietal fit. The wines made from this fruit confirmed our observations, so we continued to plant this variety.

Elevation is just 30 feet, and the vineyard sits between three creeks. Trees grow along those creeks and help deflect the wind. There is ideal clay to loam to stone soil mixture, leading to optimum grape development. Clones are Wente, Robert Young, UCD 4, Hyde, 809 and 548 planted on 110R, 1103, St. George, 101-14 and 5C rootstocks. The vineyard is irrigated and certified sustainable. The vineyard has east-west row orientation with vine spacings of 5x8 feet, 6x8 feet and 8x12 feet.

Vines are pruned and suckered. Wires are lifted. Vines are leafed on the morning side. Weak shoots and damaged fruit are dropped. Production

averages between 2 to 3 tons per acre. Grapes are sold by row, with wineries taking ownership. We have developed a trusted partnership with our winemakers. Communication is key, and cell phones ease that communication. We relay our observations, along with Brix, pH, TA and fruit condition, but winemakers call their pick times. We do our best to accommodate them.

The unique characteristics of Green Acres Chardonnay are texture, along with a balanced citrus, tangerine, orange aroma component. Flavors include white peach, white flower, salinity and a gravel component. Skins can be relatively phenolic when young but soften with time.

We decided the time was right for us to start Sangiacomo Family Wines. Our vineyards were producing the best wines they ever had, and the evolution from grape growing to winemaking was a natural step for our family to take as we looked into the future. We wanted to honor the entrepreneurial spirit of our family while staying true to our roots.

SANGIACOMO FAMILY WINES

Green Acres Vineyard 2016 Chardonnay, 79 cases, 14.5% alc., \$65

James MacPhail became an accomplished classical pianist and bagpiper, as well as a competitive swimmer. He successfully swam the Golden Gate in 1983 when he was the youngest person to have completed the crossing. In the mid-1990s, MacPhail began working with wineries and growers in Sonoma County, focusing on the craft of winemaking and Pinot Noir in particular, launching his own brand: **MacPhail Family Wines** in 2002.

In 2011 MacPhail sold his brand to **Hess Collection**, but kept his winery in Healdsburg. Currently, he consults for several wine brands, including **Sangiaco Family Wines**. “My winemaking focus has always been to craft New World wines using Old World techniques.”

ACCORDING TO MACPHAIL:

We have no purposed style; rather the site and clone dictate the style. I do not manipulate outside of this. There is minimal intervention. Green Acres Vineyard is always naturally viscous with tangerine, white peach and white flower character.

We determine when to pick based on taste with a combination of Brix, pH, TA, malic and the weather forecast. We also take into consideration infrastructure at the crush facility and the availability of pickers. We look for the flavors to evolve from green and acidic to tangerine and citrus with a sense of sweetness.

Grapes are hand-picked and sorted in the field. They get sorted again on an incline on the way to the press where they are 100 percent-whole-cluster pressed. We use a long, slow press cycle, usually three to four hours with longer rotations, like Champagne cycles, trying for less phenolic extract. We add no SO₂ until after malolactic. Juice, which is very brown, goes straight to barrel, where fermentation is carried out by native yeast. We use all French oak barrels and 20 percent are new.

We add neither acid nor nutrients, and fermentation temperatures are kept below 72° F. We stir the lees once every two weeks during primary fermentation. Towards the end of fermentation, we will add malolactic starter and top the barrels. The wine will age sur lie for 15 months without stirring. We achieve cold-stability using **CelStab** and heat-stability using bentonite. The wine is cross-flow filtered and bottled using cork closures. We bottle-age for six months before release.



SANGIACOMO

Green Acres Vineyard

CHARDONNAY
SONOMA COAST

2016

WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES:

MACPHAIL: On the nose I get that tangerine, orange, citrus peel. There is a pretty white flower element with some slate, wet stone. There is some white peach on the palate with gravelly, wet-stone. There is nectarine peel and white flower flavor. The oak is well integrated. The wine is viscous with good weight on the mid-palate. Nice bright acidity.

COLLA: Tremendous wine. There is citrus zest, salinity, bright almost caramelized apple, bringing sweetness to the oak integration of the aromatics. I love the structure of the entry. It has nice phenolic architecture that allows the flashiness of the wine to not feel overbearing. It has great length and density. I love it.

GAFFNER: There is citrus oil and honeysuckle. It is almost like a young Montrachet. There is some melon. There is nice medium weight, along with pretty oak without being over-oaked. The palate is very long with more white peach. There was a bit of ripe apple that I really like, and it came through nicely.

HALL: There is a rich, very ripe peach, almost pineapple sweetness to the fruit. It is layered with tropical fruitiness. The palate has good acidity. There is an impression of sweetness without actually being sweet. It is clean with some cotton candy notes. Peachy, ripe and rich.

RODRIGUEZ: This is tropical with ripe fruit: mango, guava and passion fruit. There is a nice floral minerality and purity that give a sense of place. There is earthiness, and you can taste where the wine came from. Nice and smooth with refreshing acidity at the end.

PRICHARD: Some nice richness and fullness on the palate that showcases tropical notes. A hint of acidity balances it out nicely, and the oak integrates well.

JUHASZ: The nose seemed like it would be light and vibrant, but then shifted to butterscotch and Rainier cherry with some salinity, along with white peach. The palate is extremely concentrated and intense. Fruits include honey, honeysuckle and lychee. It is very fruit-driven. Impressive.

SAXON BROWN WINES

2016 Chardonnay Sangiacomo Green Acres Hills Vineyard,
220 cases, alc. 14.5%, \$60

Jeff Gaffner is a third-generation winegrower who began his career at **Chateau St. Jean** working with **Richard Arrowood**. He says Arrowood impressed upon him the importance of temperature on wine fermentations. Gaffner has become a highly sought-after consultant for many artisan labels and produces his own Saxon Brown wines of limited production, single-vineyard bottlings, which reflect his preference for elegantly structured, well-balanced, age-worthy wines.

ACCORDING TO GAFFNER: My target is to make a California Grand Cru, more like a Meursault or Puligny Montrachet than a California butterbomb. I like higher acid in my wines and don't mind some reduction and tightness when the wines are young. There can also be an early "latex" character that I recognize will evolve into the Grand Cru signature that I am after.

I rarely bother looking at Brix anymore. Instead, I look for lignification and a slight droopiness in the canopy. I want the green tones to move toward tropical and orange flavors, and I want the green tannins to soften before I pick. Then I look at the logistics of getting the grapes picked and processed at the winery.

Typically, we do not sort the grapes. We go straight to the press whole-cluster and run a very slow press cycle with more tumbling at the end in



hopes of getting my yield up above 135 gallons per ton. SO₂ is added and the juice cold-settles in a tank for three to four days, trying to get solids below 0.5 percent. The juice is racked off the lees to another tank and warmed up slightly. If it needs an acid adjustment, it is made at this time. A day later CY3079 yeast is added to help guarantee that primary fermentation will finish, and the wine is racked to barrel. The wine ferments between 58° F to 64° F for close to 50 days. At 0° Brix we top the barrels and move them to a cold cellar. We perform heavy *bâttonage* once a week until the primary fermentation finishes. Once we can smell the autolysis in the wine, we will dose with wine going through malolactic and continue to stir lees once a month until malolactic finishes. At that time, we add 30 to 40 ppm SO₂.

The wine ages sur lie in French oak barrels (40 percent new) for 16 to 18 months. We will rack off the lees to bottle. If the wine is cloudy, we will cross-flow-filter, but otherwise it is unfiltered. We bottle-age the wine 12 months before release.

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WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES:

GAFFNER: I get minerality with citrus oil. I get a little bit of almond and hazelnut, along with wet-stone slate, and crushed oyster shell. It has white blossom with a hint of clove. I like the phenolic texture and adore the structural component. It holds onto the acid nicely, and it has that acidic brightness that should help it age out. There are citrus elements coming across the palate again on the finish.

MACPHAIL: Beautiful wine, very reminiscent of Puligny. It is expressive, especially in the aromatics. I get some honeysuckle and a spun sugar sweetness that carries over to the palate that I love. Stylistically, it is beautifully balanced. I love the weight and viscosity. There is a stoniness and orange rind, but it maintains a beautiful balance between weight and acidity. I would drink this all day long.

COLLA: There is a flinty, matchstick character, which references Burgundian aromatics. I love the balancing of fruit and floral character that is part of the wine. I love the spice. The integration of the palate is oily and saline, but it has that reinforced structure from the phenolics that give it great length and concentration.



RODRIGUEZ: Ripe with a bit of caramel. The oak definitely comes through. It is rich and finishes with pretty tropical fruit flavors. Classic Jeff Gaffner. There is a sweet caramel, a touch of anise and good acidity. Some of the sweetness comes from oak. It has good structure.

HALL: Real ripe fruit quality with green apple and a peach compote, reminiscent of long, slow fermentations, which yield an aromatic signature that I see here. Palate is round with depth and the impression of sweetness. Long, big, mouth-coating expression of wine. A little sweet, but complex and delicious.

JUHASZ: There is honey and maybe some nice Botrytis along with lemon and star fruit. It is rich and fruit-driven. I get oak on the nose, but it is well-integrated, and I like the barrels he selected. Almost as concentrated as the Sangiacomo with great texture and weight. The alcohol and malolactic are in balance. It's a lot of wine. Impressive.

PRICHARD: Some smoky notes that lead into a full, rich palate. Butterscotch and crème brûlée make it wide and mouth-filling. The finish is flinty. It is a nice example of a richer style on this vineyard.



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GREEN ACRES VINEYARD

WINERY	SANGIACOMO FAMILY WINERY	SAINTSBURY WINERY	SAXON BROWN WINES
Wine	2016 Green Acres Chardonnay	2016 Green Acres Chardonnay	2016 Green Acres Chardonnay
Blend	100% Chardonnay	100% Chardonnay	100% Chardonnay
Winemaker	James MacPhail	Tim Colla	Jeff Gaffner
Style Goals	Allow the vineyard to speak for itself. Green Acres always shows viscosity and shines with aromas and flavors of tangerine, citrus, white flower with salinity.	We separately produce 6 different clones from Green Acres and then blend them, looking for the unique balance of citrus, salinity, and viscosity unique to the vineyard.	California Grand Cru in the style of Meursault or Puligny Montrachet. Prefer higher acid in wine and don't mind some reduction when young.
AVA	Sonoma Coast	Sonoma Coast	Sonoma Coast
Vineyard	Green Acres	Green Acres	Green Acres
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Zamora silty clay loam	Zamora silty clay loam	Zamora silty clay loam
Elevation	30 feet	30 feet	30 feet
Vine Spacing	8x5 feet	8x12 feet, 6x8 feet, 5x8 feet	8x5 feet
Rootstock	101-14, 110R	St. George, 5C, 101-14	101-14, 110R
Exposure	N/A	N/A	N/A
Clones	Old Wente, Hyde	Old Wente, Catarina, 809, 548	Old Wente
Irrigation or Dry-farmed	Irrigation	Irrigation	Irrigation
Farming (Organic, Biodynamic, Traditional)	Certified Sustainable	Certified Sustainable	Certified Sustainable
Production	2 to 3 tons per acre	1.5 to 4 tons per acre	2 to 3 tons per acre
Vineyard Practices	VSP trellis system; Pull leaves to allow for sunlight and air flow; Thin, shoot removal, drop fruit	VSP trellis system; Pull leaves, thin shoots, drop fruit	Pull leaves to open fruit zone
WINEMAKING DATA			
When to Pick	Combination of taste, Brix, TA, pH, malic and weather; Look for flavors to evolve from acidic to tangerine and citrus with a sense of sweetness	Each lot is picked based on a combination of flavor, acid levels, fruit integrity and Brix; Err on early ripening to maintain natural acidity	Taste and vineyard/vine appearance; Green tones move to orange flavors; Wait for green tannins to soften
Sort	Sort in field	Sort destemmed fruit, otherwise direct to press	Rarely
SO₂	None at press	None at press	None at press
Crush, Destem, Press	100% whole-cluster press	De-stem up to 40%, balance whole-cluster-pressed	Whole-cluster press
Settling	None, straight to barrel	24 hours at 45° F	3 to 4 days to settle solids
Yeast	Native	Native and CY3079	CY3079
Nutrients	None	At juice if needed	None
Acid Addition	None	None	Adjust to .7 TA
Fermentation Temperature	72° F max	65° F to 75° F peak temps	58° F to 64° F
Fermentation Manipulation	None	None	Aggressive battonage
Tank Types	Barrels	Barrels	Barrels
Barrel Fermentation	100% barrel-fermented; Aged sur lie for 15 months	60 and 128 gallon Francois Freres	100% barrel-fermented, aged sur lie 16 to 18 months
Barrels Used	Francois Freres 20% new	Francois Freres, 15% new	French oak, 40% new
Stir Lees	Once every couple of weeks through primary fermentation	Monthly through ML	Once a week during primary fermentation then once a month until ML finishes
Racking	Just to bottle	At blending	At bottling
Cold Stability	CelStab	Traditional cooling	N/A
Heat Stability	Bentonite	Bentonite	Bentonite
Filtration	Cross-flow	If ML finished, no filtration	Cross-flow
Closure	Cork	Cork	Cork
Bottle Age Before Release	6 months	6 to 8 months	12 to 14 months

HYDE VINEYARD

WINERY	HYDE ESTATE WINERY	PATZ & HALL WINES	MASSICAN WINERY
Wine	2016 Hyde Vineyards Chardonnay	2016 Hyde Vineyards Chardonnay	2017 Hyde Vineyards Chardonnay
Blend	100% Chardonnay	100% Chardonnay	100% Chardonnay
Winemaker	Alberto Rodriguez	James Hall	Dan Petroski
Style Goals		A wine of place, showing elegance and precision with high acidity, minerality and complexity. More floral than overtly fruity with hints of reduction and toasted nuts. Rewards collector who ages the wine.	A bright and fresh style with no malolactic.
AVA	Carneros, Napa Valley	Carneros, Napa Valley	Carneros, Napa Valley
Vineyard	Hyde Vineyards	Hyde Vineyard	Hyde Vineyards
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Haire clay loam	Haire clay loam	Haire clay loam
Elevation	100 feet	100 feet	100 feet
Vine Spacing	7x5.5 feet	7x5.5 feet	7x5.5 feet
Rootstock	420 A	3309	420 A
Exposure	Southeastern	Southeastern	Southeastern
Clones	Wente F1V3	Wente F1V3	Wente F1V3
Irrigation or Dry-farmed	Minimal irrigation	Minimal irrigation	Minimal irrigation
Farming (Organic, Biodynamic, Traditional)	Organic	Organic	Organic
Production	2.5 tons per acre	2.5 tons per acre	2.5 tons per acre
Vineyard Practices	Leaf inside of canopy, fruit drop on short shoots if necessary	Prune, shoot-thin, light leafing, short shoot-drop, adjust final crop as needed, pick at night	Leaf inside of canopy, fruit drop on short shoots
WINEMAKING DATA			
When to Pick	Strive for refinement and elegance through native yeast fermentation and minimal oak to showcase character and power of vineyard	I consult a voodoo witch doctor, specializing in reading entrails and Brix, pH, taste, condition of fruit and weather forecast	Looking to maintain a high level of acidity and end with moderate alcohol
Sort	Field-sort	Field-sorted; Again at winery if there are issues	None
SO₂	50 ppm at pressing	45 ppm at press	None at press
Crush, Destem, Press	Whole-cluster press	100% whole-cluster press with press cut at 1.2 Bar	Whole-cluster press
Settling	24 to 48 hours at 50° F	24 hours at 60° F	6 hours at 55° F
Yeast	Native	Native	50% Native, 50% DV-10
Nutrients	Superfood at fermentation	Superfood at barrel down	None
Acid Addition	None	None	None
Fermentation Temperature	58° F	65° F to 72° F	65° F to 70° F
Fermentation Manipulation	None	Stif if we add nutrients	Battonage near end of primary fermentation twice a week
Tank Types	Barrels	Barrels	300L Hogs Heads
Barrel Fermentation	N/A	100% barrel-fermented in 228 liter barrels containing 45 gallons of juice	Fermented in 100% new French oak Hogs Heads, 300 L
Barrels Used	1- to 5-year-old barrels for 10 months	Francois Freres and Sequin Moreau with 32% new and the rest 1 to 2 years old	100% New French oak
Stir Lees	Twice per month	2 to 3 times a month during malolactic, then once a month till May	End of primary then once per week for four weeks
Racking	Twice at blending and bottling	Rack at assembly in Jan., second rack in July, final rack at bottling	Once for bottling
Cold Stability	None	Marginal cooling	None
Heat Stability	Bentonite	Light bentonite	None
Filtration	None	None, ever	Sterile-filtered because we do not go through malolactic
Closure	Cork	Cork, tested for TCA	Cork
Bottle Age Before Release	2 years	1 year	2 months

DURELL VINEYARD

WINERY	THREE STICKS WINES	DUNSTON WINES	AUTEUR WINE
Wine	2016 Durell Vineyard Chardonnay	2016 Durell Vineyard Chardonnay	2016 Durell Vineyard Chardonnay
Blend	100% Chardonnay	100% Chardonnay	100% Chardonnay
Winemaker	Bob Cabral and Ryan Prichard	Kenneth Juhasz	Kenneth Juhasz
Style Goals	Balance of concentration and texture with vibrant acidity. Select proper coopers and toast levels to enhance structure and spice.	Want to make a powerful Chardonnay without being overly weighty. Looking for intensity of fruit flavor with medium-plus acidity and gentle new oak influence without malolactic fermentation.	Mineral- and acidity- focused
AVA	Sonoma Coast	Sonoma Coast	Sonoma Coast
Vineyard	Durrell Vineyard	Durell Vineyard	Durell Vineyard
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Sandy loam, gravelly clay loam, volcanic	Goulding, cobble clay loam	Goulding, cobble clay loam
Elevation	400 feet	200 feet	50 feet
Vine Spacing	4x8 feet, 4x9 feet and 5x8 feet	5x6 feet	8x5 feet
Rootstock	101-14, 3309, 420A	3309	3309
Exposure	N/A	N/A	N/A
Clones	Wente, Hyde, Mt. Eden, 76	Old Wente Massale selection	Old Wente
Irrigation or Dry-farmed	Irrigation	Deficit irrigation	Dry-farm deficit irrigation
Farming (Organic, Biodynamic, Traditional)	Sustainable	SIP Certified Sustainable CSWA	Sustainable CSWA
Production	1 to 1.75 tons per acre	2.5 tons per acre	2 tons per acre
Vineyard Practices	Drop fruit if necessary, pull internal and external leaves for dappled sunlight on cluster	VSP, shoot-thin, leaf-pull morning side, fruit-thin	VSP, shoot-thin, fruit-thin, leaf-pull morning side
WINEMAKING DATA			
When to Pick	Pick before tropical flavors but with enough natural acidity	Start tasting around 20° Brix; Looking for balance of acidity	Start tasting around 20° Brix; Looking for hard green flavors to subside, with some honeysuckle showing
Sort	Sometimes based on condition of fruit	None	None
SO₂	Not until after ML	30 ppm in juice pan	
Crush, Destem, Press	Whole-cluster press	Whole-cluster press	Whole-cluster press
Settling	Settle overnight then mix for lees inclusion	12 hours at 50° F	12 hours at 50° F
Yeast	Native	Native	Spontaneous
Nutrients	Add complex yeast nutrient just after ferment starts. Again at 15 Brix	Nitrogen when needed	Nitrogen when necessary
Acid Addition	If necessary in tank prior to barrel	None	None
Fermentation Temperature	Mid 60's F	55° F	55° F
Fermentation Manipulation	None	None	None
Tank Types	Barrels	Barrels	Barrels
Barrel Fermentation	French oak barrels	French oak, 30% new	French oak, 40% new
Barrels Used	French oak barrels, 33% new for 15 months	French oak, 30% new for 14 months	French oak, 40% new for 14 months
Stir Lees	Weekly during ML then back off based on individual lots post-ML	Once per month	Once per month
Racking	To blend in February with decently heavy solids then back to barrel until bottling	Prior to bottling	Prior to bottling
Cold Stability	Chill tanks for a couple of weeks	Chilling	Chilling
Heat Stability	Sometimes light bentonite fining	Bentonite	N/A
Filtration	Usually not; cross-flow if ML not finished	N/A	N/A
Closure	Cork	Cork	Cork
Bottle Age Before Release	9 months	6 months	3 months

SAINTSBURY WINERY

2016 Sangiacomo Green Acres Vineyard Chardonnay,
400 cases, 13.9% alc., \$45

Tim Colla took a motorcycle trip through South America after high school and first became acquainted with wine in Argentina. After getting a degree at **Columbia University**, he returned to Argentina and worked a harvest in Mendoza. He moved to Napa Valley and worked at **Chappellet** and **Seavey Vineyards** before getting his first experience with Pinot Noir at **Saintsbury** in 2010 as enologist. In 2013 he was promoted to associate winemaker and in 2015 became winemaker at Saintsbury.

ACCORDING TO COLLA: We approach Green Acres as an opportunity to explore the New World/Old World dichotomy of California Chardonnay. There are six different clones, and we make each of them separately and then blend for expression. Our foundational components are always the Old Wente and Catarina selections that provide a vibrant, mineral-driven core. We apply the younger Dijon plantings to provide New World fruit and weight. The goal is a wine that has the focus of traditional Chardonnay, with the unique fruit expression we find only in Green Acres.



Each lot is picked based on a combination of flavor, acid levels, fruit integrity and Brix. I err on the side of early ripening to maintain natural acidity and fresh, bright flavors. I look for the evolution of citrus to complex citrus, the weight and texture of the skins, logistics and weather.

Grapes are picked at night by hand. We sort if the fruit will be destemmed; otherwise, it goes direct to the press. We use no SO₂ at the press. We destem up to 40 percent of the fruit to gain more phenolics due to rupturing of the skins. We use a long, gentle press cycle, generating 140 to 145 gallons per ton.

We'll settle for 24 hours at 45° F and add acid if necessary. Nutrients are rarely necessary for Green Acre fruit. We rack to barrel with solids using both native and cultivated yeast for fermentation to give us additional avenues of exploration. Temperatures run between 65° F and 75° F. We use French oak barrels and puncheons with approximately 15 percent new. Fermentation usually takes two to three weeks. At 0° Brix we add malolactic and top the barrels. We stir lees monthly, through malolactic, to build body. Wine is aged in barrel for 10 months and then blended. We don't filter unless malolactic has not finished. We bottle-age for six to eight months before release.

WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES:

COLLA: The salinity, seashell, mineral components of the aromas are present. There is some spice character from both the wine and the barrel regime. I get white flower and some ripe citrus expression, whether it is orange or tangerine. On the palate it shows some rusticity, some phenolic character. There is stone fruit and ripe apple with citrus flavors. This wine always has a savoriness to it. It has good drive and less richness in our attempt to be ethereal and playful on the tongue. It has the weight of California Chardonnay but is still light on its feet.

GAFFNER: The wine has a nice golden color that I like. I get citrus and citrus oil with a pretty element of golden delicious apple. There is a yellow melon character, along with the oyster shell and white flower and stone fruit. There is a Champagne yeast-like component that I like a lot. Kudos for that.

MACPHAIL: I got some nougat, almost Champagne quality that was beautiful. I got crisp, green apple from the malic acid. I love the stone fruit, and the flavor is sort of like drinking the actual soil strata. You get that stone fruit and then the gravel and the alluvial flavors, which is kind of cool. Beautiful fruit.

RODRIGUEZ: I get some floral notes and a kind of nutty sweetness. There is some ripe fruit with pineapple and cantaloupe that is sweet, but there is also a savory component. It is refreshing with a nice mouthfeel and good acidity throughout.

HALL: It is ripe with peach, Almond Roca aromas. There is some tarragon, herbal mint that I associate with Carneros. It is rich, with smooth, flowing fine-grain acidity. I like the mid-palate and smooth finish.

PRICHARD: Nice bright acidity with salinity and minerality. There is baked pear and lemon on the finish with toasty wisps on the mid-palate that linger nicely.

JUHASZ: Initially a bit of sulfite on the nose, then some muddled fruit and oak notes. On the palate this is rich and silky without being cloying or fatiguing. One of the best textures of the day. It has a lemon focus, but the real plus of this wine is the texture.





CHARDONNAY REPRESENTS A BEAUTIFUL melding of the grape growing and winemaking arts. Dedicated growers can produce fruit that represents true terroir, and careful winemakers can preserve that unique expression as the foundation of any style wine they choose to make. Hyde Vineyards is in a cool growing region and has shallow soils. Carefully chosen clones yield small berries full of luscious flavors tempered with high acid and low pH, giving the wines firm structure and an elegant mouthfeel. Durell Vineyard occupies three distinctive AVAs with a wide variety of soils and elevations, yet all their Chardonnays show a stony magnificence full of great minerality with lush, lively fruit flavors. Green Acres Vineyard provides a textured Chardonnay full of citrus, like tangerine and orange, along with white flowers, salinity and gravel notes.

Chardonnay, as much as any other varietal, can be influenced by the stylistic decisions made by the winemaker, and each of these winemakers certainly has a distinctive style. However, they are all keen to showcase the individual characteristics of each vineyard. They do that by focusing on good acid balance as the primary building block. They often allow the wine to ferment on lees and then usually age the wine on those lees to extract every nuance left from the vineyard terroir while building mouthfeel and complexity. They use restraint when it comes to the French oak to not overpower the delicate aromas and flavors they have coaxed from the vineyard.

The mastery over technique shown by these winemakers to allow individual vineyard terroir to shine was impressive. The Hyde Vineyards Estate Chardonnay made by Alberto Rodriguez was refreshing and elegant while the acidity flowed across the palate with good weight. The Hyde Vineyards Chardonnay from Massican was fresh, racy and complex, but still spoke of Hyde's natural acidity and depth. Kenneth Juhasz was the winemaker for both Auteur Wine and Dunstan Wines from Durell Vineyard. The wines were made using similar techniques, but the wines showcased the differences between the Home Ranch Block and the Fowler Creek Block while reveling in the intensity and weight for which Durell is known. Sangiacomo's Green Acres Vineyard has a unique citrus orange character and natural viscosity, but the Saintsbury Winery Chardonnay shows salinity, mineral and citrus with the weight of California while still being light on its feet. Meanwhile, the Saxon Brown Green Acres Chardonnay takes those same elements and turns them into a California version of Montrachet.

Chardonnay is one of the world's true noble "grape" varieties. After a period of years where winemaking rode roughshod over the nuance and personality of terroir with this variety, it is exciting to see winemakers focused on preserving the unique terroir character and adorning it with their sense of style. Taking the personality of a specific vineyard site and then gently dressing that wine in your personal sense of style is surely what winemaking is about. At least it should be. The vineyards, wines and winemakers in this Vineyard Focus on Chardonnay have figured it out, and the wines are a great example of what is possible in contemporary winemaking. **WBM**