



CALIFORNIA WINE MERCHANT

"WINESTAR" WINE STORE & WINE BAR

CWM Wine Club Fourth Quarter 2016

The CWM Wine Club is all about discovery and we love nothing more than sharing our new favorites with you. These wines are truly exceptional, each in their own way, and are bursting with loads of personality. Each wine has its story to tell, which is also part of the fun... knowing the background of the people who make these handcrafted beauties. As we head into the cooler months of the year we decided to explore the warmth and generosity that three different variations of Syrah can provide.

Ian Brand takes the less traveled dirt roads to seek out Central Coast vineyards of unrealized potential. His Le P'tit Paysan 2014 Viognier has soaring honeysuckle aromas and flavors of pear and crushed stones.

Kirk WESley Hubbard and Denise MARY Selyem worked with Denise's father Ed at Williams Selyem for years and learned all his secrets to making delicious Russian River Valley Pinot Noir before launching WesMar.

The organically farmed Domaine Laurent Habrard 2014 Crozes Hermitage is our "wild card import" this quarter and is a stunningly beautiful French Syrah...only 75 cases were imported to California.

The Eric Kent 2013 Kalen's Big Boy Syrah is a "big boy" indeed, showcasing the fully ripe and meaty aspects of California Syrah.

Washington State's Columbia Valley is a fantastic growing area for both Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah...you can double your pleasure with Woodinville's "Double Vision" 50/50 blend.

Sutro 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon is a stunning wine from 40 year old vines in Alexander Valley which showcases the depth of flavor that dry farming can achieve.

To reorder any of these wines, please contact Greg O'Flynn at 415-567-0646
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Le P'tit Paysan 2014 Viognier 'L'Apiculteur' – Cedar Lane Vineyard, Arroyo Seco, Central Coast

Ian Brand is a Connecticut native whose path to winemaking was somewhat unpredictable. He majored in environmental science in college in Vermont. After graduation, he worked for the state's Fish & Game Department and also for the Peace Corps in Ecuador. A love of surfing and the ocean led him to the beaches of Santa Cruz in 2003. After basically running out of money, he was forced to get a job and ended up working as a 'cellar rat' for Randall Graham of Bonny Doon fame. At first more of a beer enthusiast, Ian fell in love with wine as he learned more about it and eventually went on to work for Big Basin, Nicholson, and Coastview Vineyards.

Named by Wine Enthusiast to its '40 and under 40: American Tastemakers' in 2012, Ian spent years honing his craft producing wines for other people. Now he and his wife Heather make their own wine in a warehouse winery in Salinas, a blue-collar town 15 miles inland from Monterey Bay. Le P'tit Paysan has a cheeky label which sports a portly French gentleman (Ian calls him Pierre) talking to a rooster. He admits the name and label are a tweak at the farming roots of many of his Monterey peers. This bottling is called 'L'Apiculteur' – French for 'the beekeeper' – and references the signature honeysuckle characteristic of the Viognier grape.

As a winemaker, Ian is drawn to underappreciated grapes and what he describes 'great vineyards at the edge of sensible farming' – remote vineyard sites with depleted marine-sediment and granitic soils, where intense sunlight shines but is tempered by coastal breezes. His vineyard sources are mostly obscure locations in Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties south of San Francisco.

The Arroyo Seco appellation, however, is more well-known and is comprised mainly of alluvial deposits from the Ventana mountain range. The Cedar Lane Vineyard, on a mesa overlooking the river, is well-protected from the Salinas Valley breezes, which is important for the shy-setting Viognier grape. Rhone whites from this region ripen late in the season and show river-stone minerality and focus, uncommon in the varieties, mostly due to the granitic soils that mimic the soils in the northern Rhone. Partial malolactic fermentation softens this particular bottling, lending a creamy texture but retaining acidity.

Tasting Notes: Soaring aromas of honeysuckle and orange blossom on the nose, with tasty notes of fresh pear on the palate. It is leaner than most California Viogniers, with lots of crushed-stone minerality. At its core, the palate exhibits varietal character of tropical fruits and honeyed vanilla, yet retains tart, tangerine-like acidity on the crisp finish.

420 cases produced

100% Viognier

Aged in a combination of stainless steel and neutral barrels

Alcohol: 14.1%



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WesMar Winery 2013 Pinot Noir – Russian River Valley

WesMar is a tiny garage-styled winery started by husband and wife team Kirk WESley Hubbard and Denise MARY Selyem. The name is a combination of the first halves of their middle names. Denise came to wine at an early age, being the daughter of Ed Selyem of the renowned Williams Selyem winery. A favorite family photograph shows an 8-year-old Denise happily stomping Pinot Noir grapes in a trash can when Ed was just a home wine-maker. Denise and Kirk worked harvest together at Williams Selyem for six years. Both agreed that the winery lost its 'family feel' when it was sold in 1997 and decided to start their own small, top quality, Pinot Noir winery just like Ed and Bart Williams did in the beginning of Williams Selyem. After cashing out their 401(k)'s and selling their condo, Kirk and Denise realized their dream in 2000 when the self-funded WesMar became a reality. They are a two-person operation - sharing all winemaking and winery management duties without any other employees. Following in her father Ed's footsteps, Denise has always ensured 'handshake agreements' over written contracts and pays for everything from grapes to winery equipment in cash rather than installments.

The winemaking at WesMar is very much an artisanal, hands-on operation that follows an old-world Burgundian model. The wines are crafted in an old apple-processing plant along Gravenstein Highway in Sebastopol, with neighbors including esteemed Pinot Noir producers like Flowers and LaFollette. Grapes are picked at an ideal level while there is still an abundance of acid so that the natural flavor of the fruit comes through. After hand sorting, fermentation is done in open-top stainless steel containers with punchdowns, also done by hand. Between 20-40 percent of the fruit is fermented whole-cluster, which maintains deep color and structured acidity. Once in the barrel, wines are allowed to settle naturally which eliminates the need for fining or filtering. Gentle treatment of the grapes and the barreled wine throughout the winemaking process allows the finished wines to show the nuanced 'house' style of WesMar Pinot Noir: aromatic, feminine, not overly ripe, with balanced acidity and subtle oak impressions that preserve the varietal integrity of the fruit.

All of the WesMar bottlings consciously reflect the terroir of the vineyards from which they are sourced, and none of the vineyards are further than 1.5 hours away from home base in Sebastopol. This particular release blends together fruit from three different vineyards throughout the Russian River Valley. Pinot Noir grapes from Oehlman Vineyard are Martini clone, which lends a floral cranberry quality. Balletto Vineyard is planted mostly to the Pommard clone, which provides spicy dark fruit. Salzgeber's clone 115 fruit contributes bright red fruit character and structure to the finish.

Tasting Notes: A medium-bodied Pinot Noir with a nice backbone of acidity. Red-fruited aromas of cherries and rhubarb with a zing of orange peel lead to a darker fruit core of plum and blackberry on the rich, refined palate. Subtle forest floor and sandalwood-spiced oak characteristics add depth to the satiny-smooth finish.

186 cases produced

100% Pinot Noir

Aged 11 months in 100% Francois Freres French Oak (60% new, 40% 1 year old)

Alcohol: 14.4%



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Domaine Laurent Habrard 2014 Crozes-Hermitage – Northern Rhone, France

Crozes-Hermitage is a French wine *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* (AOC) in the northern Rhone wine region of France. The region has a predominantly continental climate – winters are wet and marked by the infamously chilly *le mistral* winds that can last well into the spring. The appellation is the largest in the northern Rhone, and wines from the nearby appellations of Cote-Rotie, Saint-Joseph, and its near-namesake Hermitage are some of the most highly-regarded wines produced in France. Most of the wines produced in this area are red wines made from the Syrah grape, sometimes blended with small quantities of white Roussanne or Marsanne grapes.

The Habrard family has been making wine in this exalted region for five generations. Domaine Habrard is located in Gervans, a charming little village on the eastern side of the Rhone River in the heart of Crozes-Hermitage. In 1998, Laurent Habrard took over the Domaine from his mother Marie-Therese and has been making the wines since. Laurent developed the winery into what it is today, building a vinification cellar, a rainwater recovery system, and a bottle cellar for storage. In 2008, he also started the conversion of the Domain to organic farming, and the grapes are now all organically-grown. Additionally, the winery has transitioned to wind and solar energy production.

Some of the oldest vines of the Domaine are between 60 to 80 years old, and are planted over the three different appellation areas of Crozes-Hermitage, Hermitage, and Saint-Joseph. Vineyard work throughout the Domaine is carried out by machine, by hand, depending on the degree of slope and planting density. The harvest, however, are all carried out by hand and by horse, especially on the steep vineyard slopes where mechanical work is impossible. In this region, the soil is mostly rocks, sand, and clay so meticulous vineyard work is imperative. The 2014 vintage was subject to variable weather conditions, with a rainy early summer and even hail in September that prolonged the growing season. However, the later harvest results in an added dimension of richness and fruit expression to the finished wine.

Tasting Notes: Soft dark red fruit of cherry and plum greet the nose, mingling with signature white-pepper aromatics. Wild raspberries and crushed violets appear on the medium-bodied palate, with lifted acidity providing freshness of fruit on the finish.

Only 75 cases imported to California

100% Syrah

Aged in neutral French oak and concrete vats

Alcohol: 13%



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Eric Kent 2013 Syrah 'Kalen's Big Boy Blend' – Sonoma County

Owner and winemaker Kent Humphrey grew up in California around a family table that enjoyed wine, but he didn't enter the actual wine industry until his thirties. Kent started out in academia as a French major, then pursued an advertising career over a ten-year period where he met his wife Colleen and developed a joint passion for wine. The company eventually grew larger than Kent had wanted and he left the 'big business' world to seek a career in wine. Kent then embarked on hands-on harvest experience at two different wineries, Ballentine and Chasseur (Chasseur's Vrai Cote Chardonnay was featured last year in the CWM Wine Club.) Kent continued his viticultural studies under the supervision of mentors Bruce Devlin of Ballentine, Bill Hunter of Chasseur, and Mike Officer of Carlisle. In 2003 Kent landed some top-notch Pinot Noir fruit with which to craft his own wine. Kent released a mere 375 cases in his inaugural vintage, and has continued to produce limited quantities of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Syrah under the Eric Kent wine label.

For his label Kent inverted his first and middle names and his *nom de vin* came to be. 'Kalen's Big Boy Blend' is similarly named after Kent and Colleen's son. Kalen was born in 2004, which falls in the Year of the Monkey in the Chinese zodiac calendar therefore 'Kalen's Big Boy Blend' bottles feature a monkey on the label, created by artist Kevin Keul. In fact, all of the Eric Kent wine labels showcase undiscovered artists who bring a unique vision that compliments the spirit behind each of the wines. Colleen, a former art director and an accomplished artist herself, chooses the artwork that graces each bottle. With every vintage, a portion of the wine sales is donated to help support artists' work.

'Kalen's Big Boy Blend' draws from three key Syrah vineyards throughout Sonoma County – Steiner, Las Madres, and Atoosa's – each of which contributes its own special terroir to the finished wine. The Steiner vineyard on Sonoma Mountain is planted to the Alban clone of Syrah and provides structure, heft and depth. From Las Madres, located in a cool corner of Carneros, Kent gets Clone 300 of Syrah. This particular clone is considered to be the best in the northern Rhone, and contributes distinctive meaty notes to the wine along with olive tapenade. Finally the fruit from Atoosa's Vineyard in the southern Russian River Valley lends a classic black pepper character.

Tasting Notes: Inky purple in color, this Syrah is a fruit-forward crowd-pleaser. Leading with concentrated dark fruit of blackberries and boysenberries, the rich palate draws out cracked black pepper and savory spices. Dark and meaty with balanced acidity and freshness of fruit, the wine opens up in the glass to reveal extraordinary depth. It is dense but not overly tannic on the lengthy finish.

297 cases produced

100% Syrah

Aged 18 months in French Oak (32% New)

Alcohol: 15.1%



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Woodinville Wine Cellars 2012/2013 'Double Vision' – Columbia Valley, Washington

Woodinville Wine Cellars was established in 2003 by Stan Barrett, who took over the former Silverlake winery and its existing cellar on the outskirts of Woodinville just north of Seattle. Stan serves as president and CEO of Art Culinaire, which functions as the U.S. distributor for the custom made Burgundian kitchen range producer Lacanche. The Woodinville Wine Cellars tasting room is also the Lacanche showroom. The space is often home to tasting seminars, food and wine pairing events, and cooking classes on the working stoves. The adage of food and wine being perfect complements to one another was further realized with the addition of Sean Boyd as winemaker in 2005. Sean actually grew up around wine – his father, Gerald (Jerry) Boyd, was a wine writer and the first wine editor for Wine Spectator in the late 1970s. Sean's hands-on experience ranges from working for the legendary Miguel Torres in Spain to a harvest stint at Penfolds in Australia. Sean's overall vision for his winemaking is the production of generous, fruit-driven, food-friendly wines that are approachable in the short-term but also age-worthy in the long-term.

In addition to crafting wine for Woodinville Wine Cellars over the past ten years, Sean has also just started his own small-production label (Sightglass Cellars) that focuses on the diversity found in Washington State soils. Due to his experience with various grape-growing regions of the world, Sean is very selective when it comes to vineyard sources. Stillwater Creek Vineyard, the source for his blend's Cabernet Sauvignon, was planted in 2000 on a 235-acre site on a steep south-facing slope. The site's fractured rock and extreme southern exposure are ideal for red varieties, especially Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Planted with one of the most diverse clone selections in Washington State, Stillwater Creek has quickly earned a reputation as one of the top vineyards in the Columbia Valley appellation. Dineen Vineyards, located in the Yakima Valley sub-AVA of Columbia Valley, provides the Syrah fruit in the blend. Vineyard plantings began here in the spring of 2001, on a unique hill-top that is especially well-suited for growing premium wine grapes.

In a CWM first, we tasted two successive vintages of the Double Vision blend and were notably impressed with the consistency between the two vintages. Given the extremely limited production of the wine (only 120 cases each vintage,) we snapped up what was left of both vintages. This ensures that CWM Wine Club members can exclusively experience this delicious blend throughout the quarter.

Tasting Notes: Remarkably consistent through two vintages, this full-bodied blend displays aromas of fresh-roasted coffee, vanilla bean, and spicy dark fruit. Concentrated blackberry and boysenberry provide a voluptuous mouth-feel, baking spices and bittersweet chocolate linger on the rich finish.

120 cases produced of each vintage

50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 50% Syrah

Aged in 100% French oak barrels (new Sylvain; used Cadus and Vicard)

Alcohol 15%



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Sutro 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon 'Warnecke Ranch' – Alexander Valley, Sonoma County

Alice Warnecke Sutro and Eliot Sutro have created Sutro, a new brand that owes its creation to deep family roots in California history. The Sutro family name appears often in the early development of San Francisco from mining through the Prohibition era. Most notably former San Francisco mayor Adolph Sutro commissioned the Sutro baths public swimming pool project in 1896. Having burned down in 1966, the historical ruins of the baths are still a popular attraction off the coast of Lands' End. The Warnecke side of the family provides Warnecke Ranch, the **105-year-old family-owned and operated estate** from which all grapes are sourced for Sutro wines. The family has been in stewardship of the 245-acre estate near the Russian River since 1911. In 1973, a portion of the pastureland was planted to Bordeaux varietals, and an old dairy barn became vineyard headquarters.

Alice and Eliot have invested themselves in the management of the vineyards and surrounding land at the intersection of the Alexander Valley, Chalk Hill, and Russian River appellations. The vineyard soils on the slopes of the Russian River consist of well-drained clay-loam, veined with volcanic ash from Mt. St. Helena. The precision farming at Warnecke Ranch allows for finely tuned canopy management and vine balance in the fruiting zone, leading to excellent ripeness at harvest time. In addition, the Sutros farm the vineyard portion of the estate according to the Lodi Rules for Sustainable Winegrowing (California's original sustainable viticulture certification program) with plans to pursue future organic certification in order to cement their commitment to sustainable agriculture.

2012 marked Sutro's inaugural vintage using Cabernet Sauvignon fruit from younger vines. However the 2013 vintage is the first to be produced with fruit from the property's highly desirable low yielding (only two tons per acre), dry-farmed, old-vine block planted in 1973. The practice of dry farming – where natural rainfall, not irrigation, is used exclusively – is rooted in history. This was commonplace until the 1970's here in California. Dry farming causes the roots to go much deeper in search of water and delivers more intensity, complexity, and overall balance in the finished wine.

Tasting Notes: Deep garnet in color, this special wine opens with aromas of plum jam and dark cherry, followed by layers of chocolate, damp earth, and tobacco. Notes of rose petal and tea leaf reveal themselves in the glass. Mouthfeel is smooth and velvety, with well-proportioned acidity and round tannins.

260 cases produced

93% Cabernet Sauvignon and 7% Merlot younger block

Aged 29 months in neutral French and Hungarian oak (20% new *Kadar* barrels)

Alcohol: 14.7%