

*"Duncan Arnot Meyers, who assists Pax Mahle at Pax Wine Cellars, has teamed up with Nathan Roberts, a young barrel-maker whose family owns Roberts and Sons Cooperage, for this tiny start-up project. Roberts's father is a well-known cooper in Napa Valley who most recently headed the Beringer-Blass barrel-making program, so serious oak flows in Nathan's veins. This is **an extremely promising, albeit microscopic, enterprise**, with a production in 2004 of 4-1/2 barrels of cabernet sauvignon and 16 barrels of syrah (quantities will rise to about 1,000 cases with the 2006 vintage). The focus is on obtaining grapes from unique sites regardless of the amount available. "And of course we have the flexibility to make whatever size barrel out of whatever wood is required to handle a wine," said Roberts, with no small degree of satisfaction."*

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2005 Arnot Roberts Syrah Hudson Vineyard North Block Carneros **91**

(\$60) Dark purple. Intensely spiced bitter cherry aroma is deepened by cured meat and graphite. Supple and fine-grained, with sweet dark berry flavors, gentle acidity and a bright mineral lift. Spice notes build through the finish, lending lovely vivacity.

2005 Arnot Roberts Syrah Griffin's Lair Vineyard Sonoma Coast **92**

(\$60) Dense purple. Strong blackberry and blackcurrant aromas, with suave floral and Asian spices adding complexity. Silky and very fresh, with impressively deep dark berry flavors and a building note of floral pastille. The remarkably persistent finish emphatically repeats the dark berry notes. This is incredibly delicious.

2005 Arnot Roberts Syrah Alder Springs Vineyard Mendocino County **91**

(\$60) Deep ruby. Fresh, perfumed red and dark berry aromas are complemented by hints of woodsmoke, licorice and graphite. Lush and deep in dark berry flavors, with a bright jolt of minerality providing lift and focus. Very pure and elegant wine finishing with impressive persistence and seductive spice notes. This was 100% whole-cluster fermented.

2004 Arnot Roberts Cabernet Sauvignon Bugay Vineyard Sonoma Coast **93**

(\$80) Inky violet. Intensely perfumed nose offers powerful, flamboyantly spiced boysenberry and blackcurrant aromas that are positively room-filling. Dense and sweet, with deeply concentrated dark berry and cherry flavors verging on liqueur-like. But this has impressive energy and grip, giving it focus and helping to extend the flavors across the palate. Formidable stuff, with an uncanny balance of concentration and verve. And the bouquet is to die for. This site is on a volcanic ridge in the Mayacamas Range.

2004 Arnot Roberts Cabernet Sauvignon Wild Iris Vineyard Chalk Hill **92**

(\$80) Saturated ruby. Bitter cherry, cassis and blackberry aromas are pure and expansive. Intense, spicy and sweet, with deep dark fruit flavors, supple tannins and gentle acidity. Really explodes on the finish, displaying a powerful but elegant blackcurrant tone and outstanding length.

2005 Arnot Roberts Cabernet Sauvignon Wild Iris Vineyard Chalk Hill **92-94**

(\$80) Dark violet. Vibrant red- and blackcurrant on the nose, with a hint of candied licorice. Smoky dark berry flavors are deep and concentrated, with a spicy hint of white pepper on the back. Finishes expansive and ripe, with impressive lift and focus. This has more vibrancy than the 2004 as well as more depth and persistence. (JR)

