

# Arnot-Roberts

**By Josh Reynolds**

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The day that I tasted this set of wines with Duncan Meyers and Nathan Roberts was Meyers' last as assistant winemaker at Pax. Meyers and Roberts have set up shop in Forestville for their small, hands-on operation, with an eye toward gradual expansion. The focus here is on cool, rocky vineyards, often at high elevations, and on the production of wines that, says Meyers, "are fresh, structured, and built to age." The total production for this year's releases was just over 20 barrels.

## **2007 Arnot Roberts Chardonnay Green Island Vineyard Napa Valley**

(\$37) Hazy yellow. Mineral-dominated aromas evoke pear, apple, honeysuckle and sea spray, with a light kiss of lemon zest. Brisk, sharply focused citrus and orchard fruit flavors offer impressive clarity and grip, gaining weight with air. Closes with fresh orange and white peach notes. Quite complex, with very good finishing lift and thrust. Meyers told me that he loves dry, stony Italian white wines, which were his muse for this wine. A strong white debut for this winery.

**90**

## **2006 Arnot Roberts Syrah Clary Ranch Sonoma Coast**

(\$48) Inky ruby. Explosively aromatic, head-spinning bouquet of red and dark berries, Asian spices, violet, fennel and minerals; this is a dead ringer for a Cote-Rotie. Deeply concentrated and energetic, offering spicy raspberry, blackcurrant and bitter cherry flavors, and becoming gently tannic with air. Finishes with admirable snap and lift, with the floral and spicy qualities repeating. This very cool vineyard lies near Bodega Bay and these grapes were picked at a very low 21.50 Brix on November 3.

**93**

## **2006 Arnot Roberts Syrah Griffin's Lair Vineyard Sonoma Coast**

(\$66) Inky purple. Sexy raspberry and blackberry on the nose, along with smoky bacon, violet and graphite. Deep, round and supple, with sweet dark berry preserve flavors, velvety tannins and rising spiciness. More lush and creamy than the Clary Ranch example, displaying more finishing power but less vivacity. The finish clings impressively, echoing the graphite and floral qualities. This wine, which saw no new oak, plays Hermitage to that wine's take on Cote-Rotie.

**92**

**2006 Arnot Roberts Syrah Alder Springs Vineyard Mendocino County**

(\$66) Opaque purple. A huge, sexy bouquet offers cassis, blueberry, smoked meat, violet and musky herbs. Deep, sweet and pliant, showing remarkably pure, concentrated red and blue fruit flavors with great spicy lift. The finish refuses to end, echoing the sweet blueberry quality. The fruit here is simply stunning. This was fermented with 100% of its stems and has a very high pH, according to Meyers.

**94**

**2005 Arnot Roberts Cabernet Sauvignon Clajeaux Vineyard Chalk Hill**

(\$90) Inky violet color. Pungent bouquet of smoky blackcurrant, candied cherry, licorice, tobacco and mocha. Supple and pliant, offering sharply focused dark berry preserve and kirsch flavors, velvety tannins and good mineral snap. Combines richness and energy with a deft hand and finishes with outstanding clarity and grip. Give this suave youngster some cellar time.

**92(+?)**

**2005 Arnot Roberts Cabernet Sauvignon Bugay Vineyard Sonoma County**

(\$90; includes a dash of petit verdot) Saturated ruby. Spicy, vividly perfumed aromas of blackcurrant, cherry compote, cured tobacco and lavender. Spicy dark berry flavors offer impressive clarity and depth, with supple tannins adding structure. Fleshes out with air, finishing sweet, broad and long. The spiciness lingers impressively, as does the blackcurrant quality. I'd bet on this improving with a few years in the cellar. (JR)

**91(+?)**