

● Antonio Galloni VINOUS

Arnot-Roberts

From 2021 Sonoma Preview (January 2023) by Antonio Galloni

Duncan Arnot Meyers and Nathan Roberts presented an absolutely stellar collection of wines this year. The 2021s are simply magnificent from top to bottom. Some of the highlights include the Haynes and Trout Gulch Chardonnays, both of which are sublime. The highs get even higher in the Syrahs, all three of which are sublime. The Que Syrah Syrah might be the single most thrilling wine I have ever tasted from Arnot and Roberts. Readers will also want to check out the new Red Wine California, a special bottling that hopefully will become part of the permanent lineup. I can't think of too many winemakers who are equally skilled at making gorgeous wines from so many different varieties. This was an unforgettable tasting.

2021 Syrah Que Syrah Vineyard

The 2021 Syrah Que Syrah Vineyard is the greatest wine I have ever tasted from Duncan Arnot and Nathan Roberts. It emerges from Roberts' home vineyard in the Taylor Lane district that includes other notable vineyards such as Summa and Thieriot. The Que Syrah dazzles from the very first taste. Red/purplish fruit, blood orange, mint and rose petals all soar out of the glass. The purity of the flavors is simply captivating. At times, the 2021 has a Pinot-like finesse, but the Syrah aromatics and structure are there, buried underneath the fruit. The 2021 is totally dialed in. It's a magical wine that will thrill readers lucky enough to find it.

100 points Drinking Window: 2025 – 2041, tasted January 2023.

2021 Syrah Clary Ranch

The 2021 Syrah Clary Ranch captures all the coastal, cool-climate savoriness of the Petaluma Gap. Game, scorched earth, tobacco and black pepper are all woven into a core of dark red-fleshed fruit. Huge tannins, a combination of site and a vintage with low juice yields wrap it all together. This dense, concentrated Syrah needs a few years in bottle, although it is already stunning in its beauty.

97 points Drinking Window: 2025 – 2041, tasted January 2023.

2021 Red Wine California

The 2021 Red Wine California is a new Bordeaux-based red wine that Duncan Arnot Meyers and Nathan Roberts made initially to take the place of the 2020 Cabernets that would have been released around this time but were compromised by smoke. The Red Wine was initially intended to be a fun project, but Arnot and Roberts may have stumbled into what is really a pretty serious red with real potential. The 2021 is 60% Cabernet Sauvignon (Massa, Bedrock and Gordenker), 20% Cabernet Franc (Persia) and 20% Merlot (Massa). A powerful, old-school wine, the 2021 is going to need a few years to shed some tannin. I loved it.

95+ points Drinking Window: 2025 – 2041, tasted January 2023.

2021 Ribolla Gialla Vare Vineyard

The Ribolla Gialla Vare Vineyard is especially fine in 2021. Bold, punchy and savory, the Ribolla offers gorgeous complexity in its layered orchard fruit, herbs, almond and floral notes. I can't say the Vare Ribolla is super expressive of variety, but it does have a ton of character. Bright mineral and savory accents punctuate the finish.

93 points Drinking Window: 2023 – 2029, tasted January 2023.

2021 Sauvignon Blanc Randle Hill Vineyard

The 2021 Sauvignon Blanc Randle Hill Vineyard, from a site in the Yorkville Highlands, is terrific. Lemon/lime fruit, green pear, jasmine and mint are all finely cut. This mid-weight, nervy Sauvignon is loaded with character.

92 points Drinking Window: 2023 – 2029, tasted January 2023.

2021 Chardonnay Watson Ranch

The 2021 Chardonnay Watson Ranch is broad, creamy and super-expressive. Dried pear, apricot, chamomile, dried flowers, mint and herbs are nicely laced together in this savory, expressive Chardonnay. Give it a few years in bottle to soften.

93 points Drinking Window: 2024 - 2031, tasted January 2023.

2021 Chardonnay Trout Gulch Vineyard

The 2021 Chardonnay Trout Gulch Vineyard is a model of precision and class. Pure and crystalline, the 2021 is superb. I would give it a few years to settle down, but all the elements are in place. Lemon peel, chalk, mint, white flowers, sage and crushed rocks abound in this striking, riveting Chardonnay. The 2021 is just pristine. This is what Trout Gulch Chardonnay is all about.

96 points Drinking Window: 2024 – 2031, tasted January 2023.

2021 Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict

The 2021 Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict is gorgeous, but it is also very tightly wound. In a sense, it is a wine that reflects more of the Arnot-Roberts style than a true expression of place. Lemon confit, white flowers, mint and light tropical notes meld into the creamy, expressive finish. Time brings out additional layers of dimension. As good as this is, and it is very good, I would like to see more S&B character.

93 points Drinking Window: 2024 – 2031, tasted January 2023.

2021 Chardonnay Haynes Vineyard

The 2021 Chardonnay Haynes Vineyard is superb. That's the good news. The bad news is that there is just a single barrel of it to go around. That's it. Readers who can find it should be thrilled. Creamy and ample, the 2021 captures all the pedigree of this site in the southern portion of Coombsville. I loved it.

95 points Drinking Window: 2024 – 2031, tasted January 2023.

2021 Falanghina

The 2021 Falanghina is another gorgeous, compelling white from Arnot-Roberts. Apricot, pear and tangerine oil all open nicely in the glass. Readers will find an unusually creamy, ample Falanghina endowed with notable textural resonance. This is a terrific showing.

93 points Drinking Window: 2023 – 2027, tasted January 2023.

2021 Trousseau + Pinot Noir

The 2021 Trousseau + Pinot Noir takes the place of the Trousseau in this vintage. Duncan Arnot and Nathan Roberts felt the Trousseau was too light on its own, so they blended in some Pinot from Fox Creek to complement the Luchsinger Trousseau. The wine turned out beautifully. Sweet red cherry fruit, cedar, tobacco, spice, dried flowers and rose petal are all nicely lifted, with gorgeous aromatic presence from the 100% whole clusters. This translucent, wonderfully expressive red is all class. I have to say, the blend of Trousseau and Pinot Noir works so well. I would not be unhappy to see this wine again in future vintages.

92 points Drinking Window: 2023 – 2028, tasted January 2023.

2021 Pinot Noir Peter Martin Ray Vineyard

The 2021 Pinot Noir Peter Martin Ray Vineyard is dense, almost shockingly so for Arnot-Roberts. Dark cherry, cedar, tobacco, menthol and licorice are all turned up in a Pinot that captures all the natural intensity of this exposed hillside site at 1,400 feet in elevation. The 100% whole clusters are pretty much buried by the sheer intensity of the fruit. The 2021 is fabulous, but it is going to require at least several years of cellaring.

95 points Drinking Window: 2026 – 2036, tasted January 2023.

2021 Pinot Noir Fox Creek Vineyard

The 2021 Pinot Noir Fox Creek Vineyard is bright and finely sculpted. Crushed red berry fruit, orange peel, mint, crushed rocks and intense veins of minerality all come through in this vivid, beautifully nuanced Pinot. The vibrant, transparent style that emerges from this site at 1,100 feet in elevation is so alluring.

94 points Drinking Window: 2025 – 2036, tasted January 2023.

2021 Pinot Noir Heaven and Earth Vineyard

The 2021 Pinot Noir Heaven and Earth Vineyard is sensational. Black cherry, mocha, licorice, sage and lavender are all amplified in this potent, ample Pinot Noir. There's palpable density to the 2021, and yet the vibrant energy that is such an Arnot-Roberts signature comes through loud and clear. The 2021 is marked by a feeling of explosive vibrancy that is compelling.

96 points Drinking Window: 2025 – 2036, tasted January 2023.

2021 Zinfandel Kirschenmann Vineyard

The 2021 Zinfandel Kirschenmann Vineyard is a beautiful, vivid wine. Red-toned Zinfandel fruit, orange peel, spice and crushed flowers are all delineated. The 100% whole clusters, not usually seen in Zinfandel, add notable vibrancy and savoriness, while avoiding the vegetal qualities I have found distracting in some previous releases. tasted January 2023

94 points Drinking Window: 2024 – 2033, tasted January 2023.

2021 Syrah (Sonoma Coast)

The 2021 Syrah (Sonoma Coast) is fabulous. Dark, rich and resonant, the 2021 offers up an exotic mix of red/purplish fruit, lavender and dried flowers. Today the fruit is quite forward. I imagine Syrah aromatics will develop more fully with time in the bottle. Readers will find a Syrah of real power and substance. The 2021 is a blend from Solas, Baker Lane and Que Syrah, done with 100% stems.

94 points Drinking Window: 2024 – 2033, tasted January 2023.

2021 Cabernet Franc Watson Ranch

The 2021 Cabernet Franc Watson Ranch emerges from a site in the southern reaches of Napa Valley, the same site where Arnot-Roberts has sourced Chardonnay for many years. The combination of vintage, vineyard and variety yield a decidedly powerful, at times rustic, wine. Dried herbs, tobacco, spice, cedar and dried fruit all run through this savory, cool-climate Franc.

92 points Drinking Window: 2025 – 2036, tasted January 2023.