

Decanter

Arnot-Roberts

Montecillo Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

Sonoma County, Moon Mountain District

2022

97

Tasted by: Clive Pursehouse
(at Seattle, Washington, 31 Dec 2024)

Part of Montecillo Vineyard: Mountain magic in Sonoma

Drinking Window: 2024 - 2040

This glorious mountain wine comes from old, dry-farmed Cabernet planted on its roots in 1967. With a beautiful ruby hue and a diminutive 12%abv, this Mountain Cabernet is pure and brisk, with wild alpine herbs, eucalyptus, chopped mint, evergreen tips evocative of the deep forest and piquant notes of salted blood orange. The palate of this youthful Cabernet is effusive, with bramble fruits and a feral elegance marked by anise, chicory root tart red currant and streaks of minerality marked by graphite and smoked sea salt—a soaring example of what is possible from modern Cabernet Sauvignon, purity, light and fresh.

96

Tasted by: Ana Carolina Quintela
(at Arnot-Roberts, Healdsburg, California, 29 Jan 2025)

Drinking Window: 2025 - 2035

This Cabernet Sauvignon is light and fresh—not what you'd usually expect from this variety. Coming from vines planted in 1969 and dry-farmed above the fog line in the Montecillo vineyard, it showcases a herbal quality with notes of fresh mint and eucalyptus, along with a distinctive saline character. On the mid-palate, the wine reminds you of a bite of a salty slice of a lean salami, delivering a pleasing balance of salt, pepper, and spices. Picked right before the heat spikes during Labor Day in 2022, it leans toward crunchy red fruits like cherries, bramble berries, and tart pomegranate rather than the heavier black fruit flavours typically found in Cabernets. This restrained, pleasantly 'low-alcohol' Cabernet finishes with an iron minerality touch accentuated by its bone-dry acidity. It's an elegant wine with a promising future in the bottle.

Arnot-Roberts

Que Syrah Vineyard Syrah

West Sonoma Coast

2023

96

Tasted by: Ana Carolina Quintela
(at Arnot-Roberts, Healdsburg, California, 29 Jan 2025)

Drinking Window: 2025 - 2035

The Que Syrah has become a classic and a standout in the Arnot-Roberts lineup. The vineyard is one of the oldest Syrah plantings on the Sonoma Coast, a gem of a site for cool-climate Syrah in California. Planted in 1993, it's located 800 feet above sea level, just 4 miles from the Pacific Ocean. The Arnot Roberts team began farming the vineyard in 2013 and purchased it in 2016. The 2023 vintage is exceptional, with slightly higher residual sugar than previous releases, adding richness to the palate. You'll get that classic black pepper note and a lovely salty, coastal freshness. On the palate, a savoury, almost meaty character mixes well with the spices. The finish is long and smooth. With only six barrels made from this 2.5-acre vineyard, it's a limited and expressive wine, balancing elegance and intensity beautifully.

Arnot-Roberts

Clajeux Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

Sonoma County, Chalk Hill

2022

94

Tasted by: Ana Carolina Quintela
(at Arnot-Roberts, Healdsburg, California, 29 Jan 2025)

Drinking Window: 2025 - 2035

Arnot-Roberts' longest-standing vineyard partner since 2003, Clajeux, is a hillside site in Chalk Hill, just above the Russian River Valley. The 2022 Cabernet is basket pressed to neutral French oak barrels for 22 months. It showcases a powerful blend of sweet and tart blue and blackberries, complemented by a hint of tangy marmalade. On the nose, it offers aromas of violets, dried spices, and a bouquet garni. The well-drained, rocky volcanic soils in the vineyard impart a chalky minerality that supports the young tannins in the wine. With an inviting 12% ABV, this well-rounded Cabernet has a bright future if you allow it a few years in the bottle. Only four barrels were produced.

Arnot-Roberts

California Red Wine

2023

94

Tasted by: Ana Carolina Quintela
(at Arnot-Roberts, Healdsburg, California, 29 Jan 2025)

Drinking Window: 2025 - 2035

Arnot-Roberts began making this wine in 2021, using grapes from various sites in California that resonated with them, including the historic Massa vineyard in Carmel Valley. By 2023, the wine is now exclusively made from Sonoma County fruit, prompting Duncan and Nathan to discontinue the California Red Wine label starting with the next vintage. This Bordeaux blend of 57% Cabernet Sauvignon, 26% Merlot, and 17% Cabernet Franc is a surprisingly delicious find. All grapes are destemmed, and each varietal is vinified separately, blended, and aged half in concrete and half in neutral oak for 10 months (plus a year in bottle before release). The result is a beautiful bright purple colour in the glass that leads to fresh perfumed notes of violets, complemented by aromas of dark herbs and flavours of dark berries, plums, tobacco leaves, and fresh mint on the palate. The lively acidity is a nice vehicle for carrying the chalky tannins well for a 'ready-to-drink' feeling. It's a lot of wine for its price point.

Arnot-Roberts

Syrah

Sonoma County, Sonoma Coast

2023

94

Tasted by: Ana Carolina Quintela

Drinking Window: 2025 - 2030

This Arnot Roberts Syrah blends three distinct coastal sites: Solas, Baker Lane, and their flagship vineyard, Que Syrah. The wine makes a bold statement from the start, showcasing a deep purple colour in the glass that fits its powerful aromas and flavours like a glove. Expect rich black and blue fruit notes of blackberries, currants, and plums, with floral aromas of violets and lavender and a classic fresh grind of pepper with a slightly herbal, savoury finish. The tannins are a bit grippy, but it's a delicious wine overall.

Arnot-Roberts

Heaven and Earth Vineyard Pinot Noir

Sonoma Coast

2023

94

Tasted by: Ana Carolina Quintela
(at Arnot-Roberts, Healdsburg, California, 29 Jan 2025)

Drinking Window: 2025 - 2033

A pleasant expression from the Sonoma Coast by Arnot Roberts, sourced from a site on the western side of Sonoma near Occidental, at the border of the Green Valley and West Sonoma Coast AVAs. The Heaven and Earth Pinot first reveals dark fruit notes, including blueberries and wild blackberries, complemented by hints of sweet and tart red currants. The nose showcases classic aromas of fresh mint and forest floor, finishing with a touch of dry spices. Using 100% whole clusters creates a pleasing texture without distracting your palate. Quite delicious.

Arnot-Roberts

Sandford & Benedict Chardonnay

Santa Barbara County, Sta Rita Hills

2023

93

Tasted by: Ana Carolina Quintela
(at Arnot-Roberts, Healdsburg, California, 29 Jan 2025)

Drinking Window: 2025 - 2030

This Chardonnay comes from the original blocks of the Sandford & Benedict Vineyard, planted in 1971 on the California Central Coast. It shows classic aromas of pear, honey, and citrus, enhanced by briny salinity and flavours of dried seaweed that lead to a slightly savoury finish on the palate. A medium-bodied wine with a polished yet noticeable texture resulting from the directly pressed whole cluster, spontaneous malolactic fermentation, and 10 months in neutral French oak before bottling. The outcome is a refreshing and pleasant wine with exciting prospects for developing over the next few years, thanks to its quality and nice acidity.

Arnot-Roberts

Clary Ranch Syrah

Sonoma County, Petaluma Gap

2023

93

Tasted by: Ana Carolina Quintela
(at Arnot-Roberts, Healdsburg, California, 29 Jan 2025)

Drinking Window: 2025 - 2030

This wine is incredibly energetic—uniquely electric. It starts with vibrant notes of tingly Szechuan peppercorns that grab your attention. The mid-palate is a delightful mix of citrusy and earthy flavours with a warm, savoury twist. You'll notice a talc-like mineral quality that lingers. It's a unique, light-bodied, light alcohol that is almost too easy to drink in a cool-climate Syrah.

Arnot-Roberts

Old Vine White Farmer Family Vineyard

Sonoma County, Sonoma Valley

2023

92

Tasted by: Ana Carolina Quintela
(at Arnot-Roberts, Healdsburg, California, 29 Jan 2025)

Drinking Window: 2025 - 2028

A unique wine from an equally unique vineyard (known as The Farmer Family vineyard or Compagni-Portis): six acres planted back in 1954 with this wild white field blend, featuring aromatic varieties from Gewürztraminer, Grüner Veltliner, Riesling, Trousseau Gris, to other whites like Chardonnay, along with approximately 6% of other unidentified varieties - a historic dry-farmed site in Sonoma. This vintage of Arnot Roberts' Old Vine White is roughly 85% Riesling, with the addition of a bit of everything else. You get a vibrant floral and fruity wine with notes of jasmine, honey, and passion fruit juices, complemented by a citrusy grapefruit and candied ginger finish. It's an easy, light, and quite delicious 'white table' wine. Only 3 barrels were produced.

Arnot-Roberts

Las Cimas Vineyard Falanghina

Sonoma County, Russian River Valley

2023

92

Tasted by: Ana Carolina Quintela

Drinking Window: 2025 - 2026

It's hard not to be impacted by the deep golden colour of this wine in your glass - despite seeing no skin contact. After that first impression, refreshingly bright acidity with a light mouthfeel will take the lead, allowing notes of citrus peel and stone fruit to shine through, complemented by slightly sweet floral aromas like jasmine and orange blossom. This Falanghina comes from the organically farmed Las Cimas vineyard in the warm Russian River Valley, a site historically dedicated to Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel. A recent revival has introduced Falanghina and other Italian and French varieties to the vineyard. With an elevation of 800 feet on a steep slope in the western hills, the vines enjoy ample sunlight while being cooled by breezes from the Russian River and the Pacific Ocean just 15 miles away. The wine shows that Falanghina is a varietal exceptionally well-suited to the site.