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p r e s e n t s

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e x p l o r e a l l t h i n g s w i n e

Arnot Roberts – February 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Ribolla Gialla Vare Vineyard - The 2014 Ribolla Gialla Vare Vineyard is pretty and intense, with plenty of the phenolic intensity that is typical of this variety native to Italy's Friuli. Creamy, expressive and layered through to the finish, the 2014 offers plenty of early appeal, but it also has enough depth to develop nicely in bottle for years to come. The 2014 was fermented in steel and aged in neutral oak. After years of experimenting with terra cotta amphorae, Duncan Arnot and Nathan Roberts did not see enough of a difference between their terracotta and barrel aged Ribolla over time, so going forward they have decided to focus on one Ribolla bottling.

92 2016-2022 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Grüner Veltliner - The 2014 Grüner Veltliner Alfaro Family Vineyard is super exotic, with soaring aromatics that are grounded by intense, resonant fruit. Dried pear, lime, hard candy and earthiness are some of the signatures. The 2014 has a real phenolic feel to it. This is the first vintage for the Grüner in the Arnot-Roberts portfolio. Alfaro is a vineyard in Corralitos, in the southern edge of the Santa Cruz Mountains that is best known for the wines Bradley Brown makes for his Big Basin label.

90 2016-2019 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Old Vine White Heistein Vineyard - The 2014 Old Vine White Wine Heistein Vineyard (formerly Campagni Portis) is one of the most distinctive white wines I tasted on my most recent trip to Sonoma. Jasmine, pear, lime and crushed rocks are all beautifully delineated in this crystalline, focused field blend from 60+ year-old dry-farmed vines. The 2014, a blend of mostly Sylvaner and Riesling, is a bit drier than some other vintages have been. At \$30 a bottle, the Old Vine White Wine is one of the very finest California whites readers will come across.

94 2016-2022 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Chardonnay Watson Ranch - The 2014 Chardonnay Watson Ranch is deep and intense, with distinctive floral and savory notes that flesh out as the wine shows off its ample frame. Dried apricot and chamomile add further shades of dimension. These vines, planted on clay over limestone yield an especially generous style of Chardonnay within the Arnot-Roberts style.

92 2016-2022 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Chardonnay Trout Gulch - Candied lemon, crushed rocks, sage, dried flowers and a host of mineral-inflected notes open up. Distinctly tense and vibrant, the 2014 offers superb intensity yet also captures the phenolic intensity that makes Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnays so unique. The Trout Gulch remains one of the most distinctive, pedigreed Chardonnays being made in the United States.

94 2017-2024 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Trousseau - The 2014 Trousseau is a pretty wine, but not as open or giving in its youth than has been the case in the past. Today, the structure and overall tannin is dominant, while the fruit is quite shy. This is an especially classically austere wine, so readers should be prepared to cellar bottles for another 6-12 months. Blood orange, crushed flowers, spice, dried rose petal and anise add the final shades of nuance. The Trousseau is a blend of fruit from three sites; Luchsinger, Bohan Ranch and Bartolomei.

90+ 2017-2020 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Legan Vineyard Pinot Noir - The 2014 Pinot Noir Legan Vineyard exudes purity, density and richness, all supported by beams of acidity and minerality that give the wine its sense of proportion. Pomegranate, plum, lavender, dried herbs, rose petal and exotic spices punctuate the bold finish. The 2014 is a wine with a bright future, but readers will have to be patient. That is not so bad, though. Far more serious is a loss of 60% of the crop that was caused by the careful sorting that was required after heavy fog accelerated the development of rot as harvest approached. Then again, those sacrifices are what separates world-class producers from the rest. Readers who can find a few bottles will be totally knocked out by this superb Pinot Noir. The 2014 was done with 100% whole clusters, but today, it comes across as quite dense for an Arnot-Roberts Pinot Noir.

94+ 2018-2024 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Peter Martin Ray Vineyard Pinot Noir - Crushed flowers, sweet red berries, mint and white pepper grace the palate in the 2014 Pinot Noir Peter Martin Ray Vineyard. Here, the whole clusters are more evident. This aromatic, perfumed Pinot is super expressive today, but like all of the 2014s, it is going to need time. The only question is how much. This is another super-distinctive Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir from Arnot-Roberts.

94 2018 - 2026 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Trout Gulch Vineyard Pinot Noir - The 2014 Pinot Noir Trout Gulch Vineyard is the most complete of these three Pinots from Arnot-Roberts. Creamy, sensual and beautifully layered in the glass, the 2014 is graced with exquisite finesse, depth and nuance. Because of its textural finesse, the Trout Gulch will likely provide readers with a wide drinking window of pure pleasure once the wine softens a bit further. Like all of the Arnot-Roberts Pinots, the Trout Gulch was done with 100% whole clusters.

95 2018 - 2026 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Sonoma Coast Syrah - The 2014 Syrah North Coast is quite possibly the single best wine in the Arnot-Roberts range this year when it comes to quality and price. Pliant, expressive and giving, the 2014 possesses notable depth and intensity. Lavender, sage, menthol, blue/purplish fruit, licorice and graphite meld into the rich, textured finish. The 2014 was done with 100% whole clusters, but that does not take away from the wine's immediacy and sheer deliciousness, even at this early stage. Duncan Arnot and Nathan Roberts have chosen to focus on Sonoma Coast sites, many of which are bottled separately by many other producers, including Solas, Baker Lane, Clary Ranch, Que Syrah and Griffin's Lair, which is why this wine is now labeled Sonoma Coast (previously it was North Coast).

92 2016-2024 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Clary Ranch Syrah - The Syrah Clary Ranch is, as it often is, one of the truly great, iconic Syrahs of California. Deep, powerful and explosive, the 2014 boasts magnificent depth and intensity accentuated by the use of 100% whole clusters. Black pepper, smoke, graphite, lavender, cloves and licorice open up in a wine with breathtaking aromatic presence, fabulous complexity and exceptional overall balance. Clary Ranch, a windy site that is often fogged in, is capable of yielding wines with real pedigree. This is what cold-climate California Syrah is supposed to be. In a word: epic.

96+ 2018-2026 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Griffin's Lair Vineyard Syrah - The 2014 Syrah Griffin's Lair Vineyard comes across as a bit subdued in this context. Dried flowers, herbs, dried red fruits and anise are all laced together. The thick skins that are the norm here produced a hearty, powerful style of Syrah with plenty of depth, but less in the way of elegance. Today, the 2014 comes across as a bit burly and rough around the edges. I was not at all surprised to learn that 2014 is the last vintage of the Griffin's Lair Syrah at Arnot-Roberts.

91 2016-2024 Feb 2016

2014 Arnot Roberts Que Syrah Vineyard Syrah - The 2014 Que Syrah Vineyard is another deep, super-intense Syrah. Specifically, the interplay of varietal aromatics and deep, pliant fruit - rare to see in the same site - play off each other in a wine that dazzles from start to finish. Inky blue/purplish fruit, spices, mint, lavender and dark spices add shades of nuance on the long, beautifully persistent finish. Like all the Arnot-Roberts Syrahs, the Que Syrah was done with 100% whole clusters and aged in neutral oak.

95 2018-2026 Feb 2016

2013 Arnot Roberts Cabernet Sauvignon Montecillo Vineyard - One of the highlights in this range, the 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Montecillo Vineyard is utterly magnificent. Deep, pliant and explosive, the Montecillo shows just how magical this vintage is for Cabernet Sauvignon. The 2013 boasts striking inner sweetness, power and richness, all in a super-classic style built for cellaring. Lavender, plums, gravel, smoke, sage, graphite, licorice, inky fruit and dark spices add the closing shades of nuance. This dark, masculine Cabernet Sauvignon is going to need time, but it is an absolute jewel of a wine. Montecillo, which is one of the Sonoma side of Mount Veeder, has emerged in recent years as a top Cabernet Sauvignon site as a new generation of young producers are showing just what is capable here. The Arnot-Roberts 2013 Cabernets were all done with 30% whole clusters and aged in 30% new oak.

97 Feb 2016

2013 Arnot Roberts Cabernet Sauvignon Fellom Ranch - The 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Fellom Ranch, from a site in the Santa Cruz Mountains, is rich, deep and beautifully textured. Pomegranate, sweet red plum and exotic spices are all pushed forward in a sensual Cabernet Sauvignon loaded with pure appeal. I expect the Fellom Ranch will be the first of these 2013 Cabernets to open up. Even at this early stage, it is very, very pretty. The Arnot-Roberts 2013 Cabernets were all done with 30% whole clusters and aged in 30% new oak.

96 Feb 2016

2013 Arnot Roberts Cabernet Sauvignon Clajeux Vineyard - The 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Clajeux Vineyard is a superb example of the Chalk Hill appellation. Graphite, smoke, grilled herbs, black fruit, game and savory herbs meld together in a dense, powerful, intensely mineral-driven Cabernet Sauvignon. A very slight touch of brett gives the Clajeux much of its distinctive Old World personality. As long as readers know what to expect, the Clajeux is a wine full of personality. The Arnot-Roberts 2013 Cabernets were all done with 30% whole clusters and aged in 30% new oak.

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