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Arnot Roberts – January 2020

2018 Arnot-Roberts Chardonnay Watson Ranch - The 2018 Chardonnay Watson Ranch is creamy, open-knit and expressive, and also the most approachable of the Chardonnays in the range. Orchard fruit, chamomile, almonds and dried flowers all meld together seamlessly. This is a very pretty Chardonnay from a cool site at the southern end of Napa Valley.

92 2020-2028 Jan 2020

2018 Arnot-Roberts Chardonnay Trout Gulch - The 2018 Chardonnay Trout Gulch is loaded with personality and class. Citrus, dried flowers, mint and sage are some of the many nuances that grace this Chardonnay from the southern reaches of the Santa Cruz Mountains. In 2018, the Trout Gulch has more overt body and less of the sizzling cut it has had in some previous editions, which means it will drink nicely with just another year or two in bottle. There is still plenty of energy, but more mid-palate depth and less austerity than in some years.

93 2020-2028 Jan 2020

2018 Arnot-Roberts Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict - Duncan Arnot and Nathan Roberts have been adamant about their desire to work only with sites they can reach within a few hours of their Healdsburg winery, but when the opportunity arose to work with Sanford & Benedict fruit, they made an exception. I can't say I blame them. These own-rooted vines in Santa Barbara are among the oldest and most pedigreed in the United States. The debut 2018 Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict is outrageously beautiful. Orchard fruit, mint, white pepper and floral notes lend brightness to this creamy, wonderfully nuanced Chardonnay. I can't wait to see what Arnot and Roberts do in future vintages as they gain familiarity with this site.

93 2020-2028 Jan 2020

2018 Arnot-Roberts Old Vine White - The 2018 White Wine Old Vine Heinstein Vineyard, a field blend from a site in Sonoma Valley, is loaded with all of the flavor and textural complexity that California's heritage sites offer. Exotic, floral and light on its feet, the 2018 is pure class. This is one of the more refined editions I can remember tasting.

93 2020-2028 Jan 2020

2018 Arnot-Roberts Ribolla Gialla - The 2018 Ribolla Gialla Vare Vineyard is so expressive and so distinctive. Dried pear, hazelnut, orange peel, sage and spice all develop in the glass, but it is the wine's phenolic intensity that stands out most. Then again, the feeling of structure is exactly what Ribolla Gialla is all about. The Arnot Roberts Ribolla is a serious white that will offer its finest drinking at the dinner table.

92 2020-2026 Jan 20

2018 Arnot-Roberts Legan Vineyard Pinot Noir - The 2018 Pinot Noir Legan Vineyard is a wine of exquisite beauty and precision. Bright red fruit, wild flowers, mint and blood orange all pulse through this taut, beautifully precise Pinot from Duncan Arnot and Nathan Roberts. All the elements are impeccably balanced throughout. Gracious and perfumed, the 2018 will drink well for a number of years. I would prefer to cellar it a bit first, although that will clearly require a bit of willpower.

94 2020-2033 Jan 20

2018 Arnot-Roberts Peter Martin Ray Vineyard Pinot Noir - The 2018 Pinot Noir Peter Martin Ray Vineyard is an incredibly intriguing wine. Irregular ripening might actually be a plus in giving the Pinot myriad shades of complexity. Floral, savory and bright, the Peter Martin Ray Pinot is so expressive and full of character. On the palate, the 2018 is perhaps a bit rustic, and yet it has so much to say.

95 2020 – 2033 Jan 20

2018 Arnot-Roberts Coastlands Vineyard Pinot Noir - One of the highlights in this range, the 2018 Pinot Noir Coastlands Vineyard dazzles from the very first taste. In the glass, the 2018 is deep, inky and yet also light on its feet. Sweet red fruit, red plum, mint, spice, licorice infuse the Coastlands with tremendous intensity, and yet the 2018 remains light on its feet, in the way the best Pinots from this site magically can. This is a fabulous showing and a textbook example of what Coastlands is all about. Readers who can find it should absolutely not hesitate.

96 2020 – 2033 Jan 20

2018 Arnot-Roberts Sonoma Coast Syrah - The 2018 Syrah (Sonoma Coast) is fabulous. Inky, peppery and savory, the Syrah Sonoma Coast is just tremendous. I especially like the interplay of fruit density and energy. The 2018 is somehow rich and yet also light on its feet. A rush of blueberry, black pepper, sage and mint builds in a racy, super-expressive Syrah that hits all the right notes. Bright floral-infused top notes punctuate the finish. The Sonoma Coast Syrah is a blend from Que Syrah, Clary Ranch, Baker Lane and Solas.

93 2020-2023 Jan 20

2018 Arnot-Roberts Clary Ranch Syrah -The 2018 Syrah Clary Ranch is one of the most distinctive wines in this lineup. A rush of sweet red plum, pomegranate, blood orange, iron, mint and sage builds as this powerful, intensely savory Syrah builds in the glass. The 2018 is a wild, cool-climate Syrah loaded with savory varietal character. Its freshness and overall energy should ensure many years of fine drinking.

96 2023-2033 Jan 20

2018 Arnot-Roberts Que Vineyard Syrah - The 2018 Syrah Que Syrah Vineyard is yet another outrageously beautiful wine in this range. A wine of magnificent depth and towering structure, the Que Syrah is magical in 2018. Rich dark red/blueish fruits, black pepper, chocolate, licorice, game, cedar and tobacco flesh out in a rich, vivid Syrah endowed with tremendous textural resonance. The Que Syrah is not exactly subtle, but it will thrill Syrah lovers.

98 2023-2033 Jan 20

2017 Arnot-Roberts Fellom Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon - In 2017, the Cabernet Sauvignon Fellom Ranch melds together racy fruit from the warm growing season with the hillside savoriness that is such a calling card of this Santa Cruz Mountains site. The resulting wine is ample and exotically rich, but also tightly wound and in need of cellaring. Some of the finer nuances are perhaps a bit obscured by the fruit, but that in no way detracts from the wine's considerable allure. The 2017 should be a fascinating Cabernet to follow over the next two decades, perhaps more.

95 2024-2042 Jan 20

2017 Arnot-Roberts Montecillo Cabernet Sauvignon - A captivating wine, the 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon Montecillo Vineyard shows just how magical this Sonoma site is. A whole range of floral, savory and earthy notes gives the Montecillo that trademark aromatic profile that is such a signature. Big tannins add energy as well as shape to a classically built Cabernet that delivers the goods, and then some. What a wine!

95+ 2024-2042 Jan 20

2017 Arnot-Roberts Clajeux Cabernet Sauvignon - The 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon Clajeux Vineyard is a dense, potent wine with all of the signatures amped up in this vintage. Chocolate, licorice, scorched earth and grilled herbs all race out of the glass. As always, the Clajeux is intensely earthy and savory, but in 2017 it has an extra kick of fruit richness that works so well here.

94 2024-2042 Jan 20

2018 Arnot-Roberts Trousseau - The 2018 Trousseau (North Coast) is floral, savory and wonderfully gracious. Dried flowers, mint, sage and dried cherry are all beautifully lifted, with an extra kick of aromatic intensity from the 100% whole clusters. Ethereal, and so expressive, the Trousseau is a gem in this range.

90 2020-2026 Jan 20

2018 Arnot-Roberts Gamay - The 2018 Gamay Noir El Dorado is bold, punchy and super-delicious. Sweet red cherry fruit, dried herbs tobacco, licorice and cedar convey boisterous energy to this wonderfully fleshy, inviting wine. This is such a gorgeous wine.

90 2020-2026 Jan 20

2018 Arnot-Roberts Cabernet Franc - The 2018 Cabernet Franc Watson Ranch is an attractive, fruity wine. I would give the 2018 at least a year in bottle, as it comes across as disjointed and not fully put together today. There is plenty of richness and exuberance, but the elements aren't fully melded together just yet.

88 2020-2025 Jan 20