



## Parr and Moorman's light Burgundian touch

Written by Elaine Chukan Brown – 2/8/2017

Rajat Parr and Sashi Moorman of Domaine de la Côte and Sandhi wines in Santa Barbara County, and Evening Land Vineyards in Willamette Valley, have become two of the strongest proponents of good quality Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from the west coast United States. They are also two of the more controversial. In California, their work is strongly associated with the now-retired provocative organisation In Pursuit of Balance (IPOB). Parr was, of course, one of its founders while Moorman made several of the brands poured in its tastings. Before starting IPOB, Parr also famously founded the RN74 restaurant wine list with the promise of no wines over 14% alcohol. While IPOB itself never made such claims, Parr's association with both it and the under-14% cause inextricably linked the two. The idea led to anger from the California wine establishment attached to defending balance in bigger-bodied wines.

In Oregon, the controversy appears differently. There Evening Land Vineyards (ELV) in its original inception stood as an example of an earlier wave of outside influence in the still mildly insular Willamette Valley. The difficulty there, in its origin, was that the organisation secured a long-term lease on one of the region's heritage vineyards, Seven Springs, thus reducing the availability of its fruit for long-time locals. After purchasing Willamette Valley's portion of Evening Land Vineyards in 2014, Parr and Moorman undertook a complete renovation of the project design and winemaking. Most of the previous team left as the original project was dissolving, and the rest departed just after new ownership took hold. The rapid change led to some further dismay on the part of locals. Even so, together Parr and Moorman make some of the finest examples of the varieties in the two states.

What is unique about Parr and Moorman's wines is not as simple as just making wine under 14% alcohol, nor simply picking earlier, although they do both. The two of them work well together because of their shared vision. While both are attracted to wines of finesse, informed primarily by the great classics of France, they have sought to achieve such style through truly marginal vineyard sites. Moorman's work with the original Evening Land project in Sta Rita

Hills led them to plant what was and continues to be one of the most marginal sites in the region. With the dissolution of the Evening Land project in Sta Rita Hills, Parr and Moorman purchased the site for their Domaine de la Côte estate property. It sits against the far western edge of the Sta Rita Hills appellation seven miles from the ocean in not only a marginal climate but also uniquely impoverished soils. Sta Rita Hills proves to be one of the few regions in the world that grows vines from diatomaceous earth. The top portions of Domaine de la Côte are all diatomaceous, with schist and chert, iron-rich clay and siliceous soils mottling the remainder of the slope sides. To take advantage of such diversity, the site is divided into six distinct vineyards spread across 40 acres (16 ha) of slope reaching an elevation of 700 ft (213 m). (Their distinctions are described further in the tasting notes below.) Even more, the vineyards are planted at densities of 4,000 to 7,000 vines per acre. Such an extreme planting style is unparalleled in the state. The result is some of the most invigorating, while somehow still delicate, Pinots made in California.

Though Parr and Moorman share a common vision, their distinct talents make the three labels possible. Parr and Moorman became friends by recognising a love for many of the same wines of France. While Moorman had the winemaking experience, leading winemaking for Stolpman as well as his own Piedrasassi at the time, Parr's tasting experience was more extensive. Over time that also helped change Moorman's approach. At the onset of their friendship, in the early 2000s, Moorman's winemaking style matched that common through California at the time, resulting in relatively big-bodied wines with a focus on extraction. As Moorman explains, the wines he made didn't resemble the wines he drank. The pressure of being surrounded by the dominant California style made it difficult to imagine how to do things differently. But Parr saw the disjunct and pushed Moorman to see how he could change his approach. Moorman shifted to reducing extraction, and over time also picking earlier. Other unique aspects of their approach, such as a reliance on whole-cluster fermentation or low-sulfur regimes, came soon after. Most of all, the change cemented Moorman's clarity of vision towards the importance of vineyard selection.

Parr was also beginning to get curious about making his own wines. Parr says, 'I was fortunate to meet Sashi. From the start, we tasted together at the table and in the cellar. I want wine [without excess] extraction, with finesse and acidity, like the kinds of wine I like to drink. Sashi helped me see it was about the place.'

While Moorman happened to get his start making wine in the Santa Barbara region, Parr went through a more complex search to settle on an appellation. He wanted to be on the West Coast of the United States making wines that resembled those he likes to drink. He explored Willamette Valley, and through his own label, Parr Selections, he also made Syrah and Chardonnay from Santa Barbara County, and eventually Pinot from Sonoma. In the end he

chose the Sta Rita Hills for the finesse and marked acidity its best sites offer, founding Sandhi wines in 2010 on the idea of combining his winemaking vision with the iconic sites of the Sta Rita Hills. While Sandhi was Parr's conception, he needed a winemaker to translate his vision in the cellar. Their winemaking partnership, then, took hold when Moorman became the winemaker for Sandhi.

It is Parr's extensive tasting experience that guides their practices in the cellar. His choices come partially from his knowledge of the winemaking of those he calls not only friends and mentors but even idols. People such as Jean-Marc Roulot and Jeremy Seysses of Dujac in Burgundy, as well as Jim Clendenen of Au Bon Climat and Burt Williams of Williams Selyem in California have been winemaking influences for Parr. Once he and Moorman started working together, Moorman's experience helped ground Parr's vision. For example, Parr has been adamant that they will not use sulfur at all at crushing or during elevage to optimise the wines' evolution. Instead sulfur is added only at bottling (as an increasing number of Burgundians are doing). To alleviate bacterial development during fermentation and ageing, Moorman implemented a pied de cuve process. They do a cool fermentation on one ton of fruit picked seven to ten days earlier than the rest from that site, then add it to the bottom of the tank once the rest of the fruit comes in. The effect is twofold. By harvesting a ton from throughout the vineyard they get an accurate understanding of crop load and grape chemistry before the actual harvest, which helps them better manage space in the cellar. Also, by having a small lot of cleanly fermenting grapes to put at the bottom of the cement tank when the full harvest arrives, the newly picked grapes immediately start fermentation with a higher proportion of yeast, thus considerably outnumbering any bacteria. The technique has successfully alleviated any need for sulfur at harvest by greatly reducing potential bacterial activity. Through the course of fermentation, Parr tastes tanks to decide when to press.

In the Evening Land Vineyards Willamette Valley project at Seven Springs, the duo have the opportunity to work with some of the oldest vines in the region while channelling their winemaking commitments through yet another cool-climate region. The winemaking practices in their two estate projects – Domaine de la Côte and Seven Springs – are largely parallel, so it offers a unique opportunity to see how conditions in the two regions compare. Where wines from Sta Rita Hills are about power and sun-bright bursts of flavour, Willamette Valley most centrally offers subtlety and a constellation of pinpoint flavours that together create comparable amplitude across the palate. Since taking over the Willamette Valley Evening Land Vineyards project, Parr and Moorman have redesigned the approach. Previously wines were bottled as barrel selections. In the new rendition they are instead vineyard selections from special blocks across the property, most focused on older vines. The winemaking has also shifted to earlier picking times, more whole cluster for the Pinots, and the no-sulfur-till-bottling practices mentioned previously.

I have followed each of the three labels essentially since their inception both through tastings and interviews. Most of all, the wines from each label have improved incrementally in each of the last several vintages, with the wines of 2014 generally outshining previous vintages in quality. The quality, finesse, and ageability of the Domaine de la Côte Pinots truly stands out. For Sandhi it is the Chardonnays that stand out. They are Chardonnays of ambition that do an impressive job at smelling exactly like the vineyards from which they're made. In 2016, the ownership of Sandhi wines shifted. Previously Charles Banks had served as founding investor for the project, helping Parr start it. In 2016, Parr and Moorman instead consolidated ownership, purchasing it from Banks along with the investors they have for their two other labels. As a result, as of the 2016 vintage the Sandhi Pinot Noirs will move from the focus on whole cluster they have had previously (and still are in the 2014 wines reviewed below) to fully destemmed wines to help further distinguish them from the Domaine de la Côte Pinots.

In harvest 2016, at their invitation, I decided to take a journalistic deep dive with Parr and Moorman to better understand how they translate their winemaking philosophies in the vineyard and cellar. In the end I spent nine days shadowing them through harvest – the first seven were spent in the vineyards and winery in Sta Rita Hills (seen above from the Siren's Call vineyard) with both Parr and Moorman and their winemaking team; the last two Moorman and I flew to Oregon to see their vineyard and winery team there. Beginning several weeks later, I then reviewed all of their 2014 wines from across the three labels by tasting them in sets over three days accompanied by outside tasters. Sets were made up of each of the wines of a single variety from one label at a time. So, for example, the Chardonnays from Evening Land were tasted over three days as a set, but the Pinots from Evening Land were tasted on their own separately, as were each of the other sets of Chardonnay or Pinot. The idea was to wait several weeks after the harvest experience to begin tasting the wines, and to do so with outside wine experts also tasting in order to ensure credible distance; and to taste over several days to see how the wines developed with air. Tasting in this way over several days offers a kind of glimpse into how the wine can develop with age.

<http://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/parr-and-moorman-light-burgundian-touch>

The 23 tasting notes below are grouped by label.

# DOMAINE DE LA CÔTE

## *Domaine de la Côte, Siren's Call Pinot Noir 2014 Sta Rita Hills*

Very limited release. Mostly de-stemmed, all by hand, due to the very small cluster and berry size produced by this site. The low-nutrient, diatomaceous earth soils and the abundant wind exposure through Siren's Call mean consistently small growth and production. Aged in Ermitage barrels for almost two years, around 20% new.

Star-bright, transparent ruby red. Beautiful colour. Savoury aromatics with light hints of smoky reduction following to the mouth. The palate is ignited with a savoury sapidity – lots of palate stimulation carrying long through the finish – with flavours of broken rosemary, a sprinkle of rock salt, integrated camphor or smoky herbs, and just a kiss of lightly grilled cherry, that evolve into notes of pure red fruit – cranberry, cherry – with air. Deft integration of oak – it offers a frame to the flavour that brings attention to the wine rather than itself. This wine is intriguing for its ability to deliver a sense of power and concentration while remaining light across the palate. At the same time it drinks as if it is a wine from a quite rugged site – there are very lightly tactile, slightly dry, tannins that transform with exposure to air. This wine easily drinks over several days gaining greater elegance, unison and complexity as it remains open, which speaks well to its future in bottle. (ECB) 12.5%

*Drink 2019-2026*

*\$120 RRP 17.5+*

## *Domaine de la Côte, La Côte Pinot Noir 2014 Sta Rita Hills*

The star of the Domaine de la Côte property, the La Côte vineyard shows good quality consistently vintage to vintage. Planted mid slope, the site is less exposed to wind than Siren's Call. This portion of the vineyard primarily grows in soils full of diatomaceous earth, schist and chert mixed into clay loam. The clusters and berries show the effects of the soil, with clusters generally coming in small enough to fit inside the palm though fuller and more consistent than Siren's Call. The wine is vinified 100% whole cluster and aged in Ermitage barrel for almost two years, around 20% new.

Star-bright, transparent ruby. Perfumed and floral aromatics with notes of rose and cherry blossom are pretty upon opening. The palate carries dusty rose and alpine cherry through a long savoury band with light hints of smoke, a dusting of baking spices and a faint note of camphor. There is plenty of power here carried on a light-bodied wine and the finish is extended and ample thanks to tons of palate-stimulating sapidity. The La Côte offers more integrated and supple tannins with a silky mouthfeel compared with the lightly dry and firm, tactile tannins of the Siren's Call. Nicely balanced acidity and an ultra-long finish. The La Côte Pinot has an investment in elegance with still a sense of lush generosity – not of size but of flavour and presence. There is a nice integration of elements – rose petal, pure red fruits, with

a touch of almost chalky character, all well wed to the tannins and carried by fresh acidity – through a very long finish. The La Côte is the most harmonious and balanced of the single-vineyard designates currently. Charming, beautiful and delicious with a silken texture. Allow to evolve in the glass with air and enjoy even over several days as it becomes more savoury and sophisticated with air. The purity of the wine also increases with air. This wine will continue to develop in bottle for a long time. (ECB) 12.5%

*Drink 2018-2026*

*\$90 RRP18.5*

### ***Domaine de la Côte, Bloom's Field Pinot Noir 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

Also planted mid slope, the Bloom's Field vineyard grows adjacent to La Côte but in iron-rich clay loam spotted with schist and chert. The site also has just a bit more wind exposure than the La Côte. Vinified 100% whole cluster and aged in Ermitage barrels for almost two years, around 20% new.

Star-bright, transparent ruby colour. Giving aromatics of sweet spice and red fruit – a dusting of cinnamon, a sprinkle of nutmeg, and almost hints of ginger – with an underlying meaty note. The palate continues spice notes with dusty red cherry and flavours of fresh wintergreen - almost drinks like a wintery Christmas. With air these flavours shift to orange zest, rose petal and hints of nasturtium with an underlying meaty-savoury quality. This wine has an ample presence with a lower centre of gravity – deeper tones and more allusion of weight in the mouth, though not literally a heavier palate – than the La Côte or Siren's Call. A feeling of a softer, more lush presence on the palate compared with the La Côte (which is not to call this wine either soft or overly lush) though air reveals plenty of tannins through the finish while remaining approachable and supple. The wine is intriguing in that it almost opens simply yet gains interest, attractiveness and integration with air. There is a lot of complexity here that will no doubt continue to integrate and evolve in bottle to also gain further elegance. (ECB)12.5%

*Drink 2018-2024*

*\$70 RRP18*

### ***Domaine de la Côte, Memorious Vineyard Pinot Noir 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

Adjacent though at lower elevation to the Bloom's Field vineyard, the Memorious site grows from clay loam. The site receives regular wind exposure and sits at a less steep slope than the other single-vineyard sites. Vinified with around 50% whole cluster and aged for almost two years in Ermitage barrels. No new oak. This is also the youngest of the single-vineyard releases from 2014 with the previous 2013 vintage being the first release from this vineyard. Star-bright, translucent ruby colour, though very slightly darker than the other three vineyard-designate Pinot Noirs. Perfumed aromatics carrying rose petal and evergreen then shift to notes of cherry with air. The palate carries a strong mid-palate focus offering pure red-cherry

fruits, a rub of ginger and just a hint of clove with an evergreen note appearing through the finish. Supple tannins and balanced acidity with a very faintly peppery accent throughout. Finishes with a light flavour of Christmas cake – a pop of cherry, mix of sweet spice, and just a hint of almond. This wine is very young and wants a bit more time in bottle to integrate, as there is just a touch of dry oak tannins framing the wine currently. The Memorious is the simplest of the single-vineyard wines. More than the other single-vineyard wines it also carries the sense of being from a warmer vintage. Open over several days it becomes more silky and integrated. The Memorious has more complexity than the Sta Rita Hills bottling but the Sta Rita Hills bottling is more harmonious. (ECB) 13%

*Drink 2018-2023*

*\$60 RRP17*

### ***Domaine de la Côte Pinot Noir 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

A blend of each of the Domaine de la Côte estate vineyards, vinified with 50% whole cluster and no new oak. Aged for almost two years in barrel.

Star-bright ruby colour. Light aromatics. Savoury, red-fruit palate integrated through with sweet spice and plenty of savour, with a sour-cherry finish that opens to notes of strawberry and dark chocolate. Approachable and drinkable now. Rather simple compared with the single-vineyard wines with a much shorter finish but it gains complexity with air after opening and offers good harmony and balance. GV (ECB) 12.5%

*Drink 2016-2023*

*\$45 RRP17*

# Sandhi

## ***Sandhi, Mt Carmel Chardonnay 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

Site on the northern side of the cool Santa Rosa Rd portion of the Sta. Rita Hills but it sits at high elevation with a southern-facing slope so while it gets more sun exposure because of its aspect, it is also very wind exposed and relatively cool, growing from impoverished soils. The vines here genuinely struggle and have been slowly dying leading to smaller crops and clusters. Recent farming changes have helped improve their condition.

Fermented and aged in new puncheons for 11 months then in tank for six months. Flinty notes mix with citrus curd on the nose alongside scents of wind-exposed rock and dry earth. This wine smells of the dusty, crushed rocks, not quite chalky, not-quite herbal slope from which it grows. Its ability to capture the aromatics of its place is impressive. A finely honed and mouth-watering palate that offers a feeling of power with delicate vestments.

There is a sinewy strength at the core and through the finish here but the wine is lithe with a silken mouthfeel, mouth-stimulating tension, and long, delicious, flinty finish. The presence, complexity, flavour of this wine at such low alcohol is impressive – the acidity is deftly housed in that silken mouthfeel and the alcohol is carried seamlessly. (ECB) 12%

*Drink 2017-2025*

*\$55 RRP17.5*

## ***Sandhi, Bentrack Chardonnay 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

A vineyard in the southwestern corner of the appellation, with a north-facing aspect sitting at 250-500 ft elevation, which means this site still receives daily fog influence. It is the closest to the ocean of the Sandhi sites, not including the La Côte. Fermented and aged in new puncheons for 11 months then in tank for six.

Flinty, moving into matchstick-reductive nose with underlying hints of citrus. The palate is full of density and concentration while also focused, lean and flinty with citrus freshness washing through on wave after wave of mouth-watering acidity. A chiselled mouthfeel offers saline accents and a savoury underbelly carries through an ultra-long finish. It's hard to get enough of this wine. The Bentrack offers more power and density than the Mt Carmel and will surely develop beautifully with age. As it is rather reductive now, it will do best with a bit of time in



bottle before opening but with the substance this wine has to offer it will surely just keep getting more beautiful. (ECB) 12.5%

*Drink 2019-2025*

*\$90 RRP18+*

### ***Sandhi, Sanford & Benedict Chardonnay 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

This wine comes from the oldest block of the original vines still intact from the original 1971 planting of its vineyard. A gravelly site full of silica and at an elevation to receive both some wind and daily fog, while also facing north so staying rather cool most of the day. Fermented and aged in new puncheons for 11 months, then in tank for six.

The notes in both the aromatics and palate carry a deeper tone, hitting at a lower register, compared with the Mt Carmel and Bentrack. There is also a broader presence across the palate. Mixed citrus notes marry to savoury flavours and the salty-savoury flavour of aged meats carry through a long finish. There is a bit more phenolic cut to this wine - especially compared to the Mt Carmel, which is almost lacy in comparison, while the Bentrack is more taut and compact currently - and a feeling of more concentration as well, which makes sense considering the age of the vines. Delicious. Matchstick on the nose and palate. Long, juicy finish. (ECB)13%

*Drink 2017-2025*

*\$55 RRP 17.5*

### ***Sandhi, Rita's Crown Chardonnay 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

Sitting at 600-1,000ft elevation, this site grows almost entirely above the daily fog line while receiving some wind from the ocean still. Facing south it gets a bit more sun exposure. With these challenging soils, the site grows consistently small clusters, though the aspect means there is enough sun exposure to ripen. Fermented and aged in new puncheons for 11 months, then in tank for six months.

Floral and citrus aromatics carry into a savoury, lively, saline and citrus palate that leaves even the tactile effect of saline on the palate through the long finish. Flinty accents also persist throughout. While the aromatics are pretty and lifted, they transform into a palate of power. There is initially less complexity here than the other Sta Rita Hills wines but more power of presence. This wine is the most palate-filling as well. It wants a bit of time in bottle to integrate and gain finesse, which it certainly has, but it is showing as restrained exuberance currently instead. Allow it some time in the cellar before opening. (ECB) 13.5%

*Drink 2018-2025*

*\$55 RRP17+*

### ***Sandhi, Bien Nacido Chardonnay 2014 Santa Maria Valley***

One of the iconic sites of the county but sitting at its northern edge in the Santa Maria Valley appellation. The region is even cooler than Sta Rita Hills with denser soils and lower elevation. The wines throughout the region, as a result, tends towards dense concentration and plenty of savoury character. Fermented and aged in new puncheons for 11 months, then in tank for six months.

Just a hint of reductive funk on the nose with citrus blossoms and citrus savoury flavours underneath. Much more mid-range tones on the nose compared with the Sta Rita Hills wines, with notes of stone fruit – a touch of white-peach pit and nectarine skin – with passion fruit and loam on the nose followed by loam, quinine and even a bit of green olive alongside a fresh saline savour on the palate, carrying plenty of fresh acidity throughout. A very different wine than the Sta Rita Hills. While the Sta Rita Hills wines are finessed and energetically wound, the Bien Nacido, in comparison, is savoury and earthy with more breadth across the palate while still made in a restrained style. It is clearly just a different site and soil type. Lots of flavour and power of presence for such a low-alcohol wine. The quinine note nips tight the edges to bring more tension to an otherwise broader palate expression.

Lots of length. (ECB) 12%

*Drink 2017-2023*

\$45 RRP17.5

### ***Sandhi Chardonnay 2014 Santa Barbara County***

A blend of the various iconic vineyards otherwise bottled as single vineyards. Fermented and aged entirely in neutral barrel. No new oak.

Delicious. Approachable. Refreshing. Very easy to drink without lacking interest, and well done. Mineral length through the palate. Focused restraint with plenty of concentration and dry extract. Just a bit of clementine on the nose with a wash of citrus, savoury saline, and lengthy minerality through the palate. Such an impressive first-tier wine (versus the higher level single-vineyard bottlings) - it really speaks to the level of quality that the house is driving as their baseline. Nicely done and delicious. Most of all it has pleasing completeness – aromatics, flavour, structure, minerality, acidity and length are cohesive, complete, and nicely balanced. Well done. VGV (ECB) 12.5%

*Drink 2016-2023*

\$29 RRP17.5+

### ***Sandhi, La Côte Pinot Noir 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

The heart of the vineyards owned by Domaine de la Côte, at the far western edge of the Sta Rita Hills. This site is currently the closest to the ocean within the appellation grown in

diatomaceous soils and clay. It stays persistently cool and receives daily exposure to fog. While the rest of the Domaine de la Côte estate is planted entirely to California heritage clones – Mt Eden, Calera, Swan – one block in the La Côte vineyard is planted to Pinot Noir cuttings from Burgundy. The Sandhi La Côte is made entirely from the burgundian block. 100% whole cluster with less extraction (only pump overs, no punch downs) than the Domaine de la Côte La Côte. Aged for 14 months in puncheon.

Savoury aromatics of dark cherry and mixed berries mixed through with a dusty-chalky earthiness. The palate shows nice concentration while still carrying a light frame and bright, lifted red fruit flavours. Nicely lithe spine of supple tannins washed with persistent acidity and a refreshing saline snap throughout. The La Côte Pinot from Sandhi is the lightest colour, and lightest touch of the Sandhi Pinots while at the same time offering impressive finesse and freshness. It also shows the contrast of the La Côte site to the other older, heritage vineyards of the appellation. They carry a bigger footprint across the palate and while also savoury and full of acidity do not have quite the same elegance of the La Côte. Compared with the Domaine de la Côte La Côte Pinot Noir, the Sandhi La Côte offers a bit more breadth across the palate as well as (in comparison) more of a focus on pure fruit where the DDLC La Côte shows more complex layering of fine-tuned flavours including more earthy and herbal elements. (ECB) 12.5%

*Drink 2017-2026*

*\$90 RRP17.5*

### ***Sandhi, Rinconada Pinot Noir 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

Planted in the late 1990s on a north-facing slope with shallow, silica-based soils.

Deeper toned aromatics and more savoury than the bright, lifted La Côte. Deliciously meaty with mushroom reduction and just enough fruit spun through to complete the wine nicely. Delicious and satisfying with lightly tactile tannins well carried by the wash of acidity and mineral elements throughout. Crystalline and stimulating mineral length through the long finish. The Rinconada does well with air as the flavours open further, gaining complexity, and the tannin weds to the acidity. (ECB) 13%

*Drink 2017-2026*

*\$55 RRP17*

### ***Sandhi, Mt Carmel Pinot Noir 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

Grown in very shallow diatomaceous soils. Sitting below Rita's Crown in a southern-facing exposure, this site receives very little daily fog though still some cool ocean wind.

Cherry powder and porcini-reduction aromatics. Deep-toned and earthy palate. More gravitas and weight than the La Côte and Rinconada but also less bright flavour in comparison. Still plenty of mouth-washing acidity here carrying fine, lightly tactile tannins and loads of umami

savoury length. Savoury minerality and lots of mouth-stimulating sapidity here through a long finish. (ECB) 13.5%

*Drink 2017-2026*

*\$55 RRP17+*

***Sandhi, Mt Carmel Old Vines Pinot Noir 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

From own-rooted vines planted on the site in 1991, versus newer, grafted vines in the standard Mt Carmel bottling.

Savoury aromatics with just a hint of cherry. The palate carries forward with notes of cherry bark and a light sprinkling of baking spice. Loads of concentration here. Notes of cedar and cherry bark through a long, spiced finish. More apparent oak showing here though it suits the intensity of the wine and integrates well. Nice, balanced structure and a long mouth-watering finish. (ECB) 13.5%

*Drink 2017-2027*

*\$90 RRP17.5*

***Sandhi, Sanford & Benedict Pinot Noir 2014 Sta Rita Hills***

The oldest Pinot Noir planting in all of Santa Barbara County, the site was first planted in 1971. This wine comes from the oldest block of the original vines still intact from the 1971 planting. A gravelly site full of silica and at an elevation to receive both some wind and daily fog, while also facing north so staying rather cool most of the day.

Savoury aromatics with earthy depth and a lightly floral, forest lift. The palate offers a nice sense of gravitas and completeness, as well as the most overall concentration of the Sandhi Pinots. This wine wants some air upon opening and will appreciate time left in cellar to show its layers of complexity. Crystalline, stimulating minerality here with lightly tactile tannins well carried by its balanced acidity through a long, spiced finish. (ECB) 13.5%

*Drink 2018-2028*

*\$65 RRP17.5*

# EVENING LAND

## *Evening Land, Seven Springs Vineyard Summum Chardonnay 2014 Eola-Amity Hills*

From a mid-slope section of the historic Seven Springs vineyard. Fermented and aged in 100% new puncheons for 10 months, then in tank for six months.

While the Evening Land Summum is closed and taut currently it opens with air over several days to reveal a lovely wine that will continue to develop with time in cellar. A bit of evergreen, fresh citrus and matchstick on the nose transform into white grapefruit on the palate with just a hint of spice and plenty of mouth-watering length. The mid palate offers nice concentration framed by a light phenolic cut that adds depth and shape to the wine through a long, savoury finish. Give this wine a few years in the cellar before opening as I believe it will show more of the depth it has to offer with time in bottle. While the Sandhi wines are about power, the Evening Land Chardonnays are built by subtlety and a wealth of tiny little flavours that form a constellation of interest and nuance. Carries its oak seamlessly.

(ECB) 12.9%

*Drink 2018-2024*

\$100 RRP17.5+

## *Evening Land, Seven Springs Vineyard La Source Chardonnay 2014 Eola-Amity Hills*

Fermented and aged for 10 months in 75% new barrels.

Full of savoury, citrus complexity with more gravitas and concentration than the Summum while also deeper toned and more savoury. The wine opens with notes of bruised orange and flint leading into green olive and sage with underlying touches of mixed citrus. With plenty of air the wine lifts, gaining top notes of jasmine and hints of toasted biscuit. The focus and structure is here for further development with age. Allow some time in cellar before opening this wine to take advantage of all it has to offer. Carries its oak seamlessly. (ECB) 13.2%

*Drink 2018-2024*

\$75 RRP18

## *Evening Land, Seven Springs Vineyard Chardonnay 2014 Eola-Amity Hills*

Fermented and aged for 10 months in 30% new barrels.

Though this wine is taut and reticent currently, air over a couple of days reveals more. The aromatics open with citrus and flint with hints of toasted biscuit followed on the palate by grapefruit pith and accents of evergreen. A pleasing wash of acidity through a long finish, with

nice approachability and plenty of length. Give this wine a bit of time in the cellar. (ECB)  
13.1%

*Drink 2018-2023*

*\$45 RRP17*

### ***Evening Land, Seven Springs Vineyard Gamay 2015 Eola-Amity Hills***

No new oak. Day-bright ruby. This wine is all about purity – lovely bright acidity carrying freshness throughout into a long finish. Fresh-picked alpine berries mixed through with a savoury sapidity and crystalline structure make this a quaffable wine that still offers gravitas and the mouth-washing acidity to pair easily with food. This wine offers the spry joyfulness in its youth that Gamay can deliver at its best. With air, on subsequent days, it develops more earthy-savoury, meaty and mushroom, notes that shows it has the potential to develop into greater depth with age. (ECB) 12.3%

*Drink 2016-2023*

*\$35 RRP17.5*

### ***Evening Land, Seven Springs Vineyard Pinot Noir 2014 Eola-Amity Hills***

Aged in 30% new Ermitage barrels for 16 months.

Aromatics of mixed ripe berries still full of bramble and a savoury core carry into the palate. The mid palate is mouth-filling and bright with a long mouth-watering finish. With air the berry flavours develop a bit of creaminess verging into kirsch notes and the wine overall becomes more savoury. I will be curious to taste this wine again in a few years as it is approachable and pleasant now but is a good candidate for developing with a couple of years in bottle. (ECB)  
13.1%

*Drink 2016-2023*

*\$45 RRP17+*

### ***Evening Land, Anden Pinot Noir 2014 Eola-Amity Hills***

Made entirely from own-rooted and phylloxera-affected vines planted in 1984 on the lower portion of the historic Seven Springs Vineyard. Aged for 16 months in 100% new Ermitage barrels.

Opening with a lightly smoky, match-strike reductive nose that continues into the palate, this wine transforms with air into meaty, savoury notes with hints of graphite that are delicious. At its core are dark berries with fresh-cut bramble and loads of sapidity. The tannins are fine and resolved alongside glittering acidity and plenty of length. This wine continues to evolve and drink well, long into day five after opening, which speaks very well to its ageing potential. While still well balanced with fruit, this is the most savoury of the Evening Land Vineyard

Pinots in a way that is very pleasing. Carries the oak seamlessly. I am impressed with this wine.

(ECB) 13.5%

*Drink 2019-2025*

*\$75 RRP18+*

***Evening Land, Seven Springs Vineyard La Source Pinot Noir 2014 Eola-Amity Hills***

From the upper portion of the historic Seven Springs vineyard. Aged in 30% new Ermitage barrels for 16 months.

Opening with aromatics of mushroom reduction and fresh berries, the palate evolves into bright bursts of cranberry and a persistent wash of mineral sapidity. The tannins are pleasantly fine and resolved here coupled with mouth-watering acidity carrying through a long finish.

Nice cohesiveness and completeness. This wine becomes more savoury with air also gaining accents of powdery birch bark, while still retaining a bright fruit lift. Drink now for a focus on freshness or hold it in the cellar to gain additional depth and complexity. Will evolve well with time in the cellar. (ECB) 13.1%

*Drink 2018-2025*

*\$75 RRP*

<http://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/parr-and-moorman-light-burgundian-touch>