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CALIFORNIA'S GREATEST CHARDONNAY VINEYARDS

THE STORIES BEHIND DURELL • EL DIABLO • HEINTZ • HUDSON
HYDE • RITCHIE • SANGIACOMO • AND OTHER LEGENDARY SITES



BIEN NACIDO VINEYARD

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CALIFORNIA'S BEST CHARDONNAY VINEYARDS



Chris and Larry Hyde of Hyde Vineyards in Carneros supply grapes to Kistler, Aubert and other leading wineries in addition to their own brands.

DEVOTED GRAPEGROWERS ARE THE ESSENTIAL
SOURCE FOR THE STATE'S MOST EXPRESSIVE
BOTTLES. WE PROFILE 11 SITES THAT SET THE
QUALITY BENCHMARK

BY MARYANN WOROBIEC



PHOTOGRAPH BY
ALANNA HALE

The saying “great wine starts in the vineyard” holds plenty of truth, particularly when it comes to Chardonnay. The grape can be wonderfully transparent, with the imprint of the vineyard often as significant as the fingerprint of the winemaker’s choices.

What makes a great Chardonnay vineyard? Winemaker James Hall of Patz & Hall sums it up succinctly: “Well, all of the objective details: soil type, aspect, rootstock, clone and farming. Then there’s the intangibles that are more elusive—it has to be *terroir*-driven. I want my wines to make people search for adjectives.”

For this story, I focus on vineyards that sell grapes to multiple clients (versus estate vineyards, of which there are also plenty to celebrate). I took into account track records of scores from our blind tastings, and interviewed dozens of California Chardonnay winemakers and growers. Of course, there are many vineyards in the state that deliver quality. But the 11 profiled here are the vineyards every Chardonnay fan needs to know. Their names are often the smallest text on the wine label—Hyde, Hudson, Bien Nacido, Ritchie and so forth. But they have an outsized impact on the wine in the bottle.

All are family-run properties, most of them backed by generations of experience. Consider these vineyards stamps of approval for an excellent bottle of Chardonnay. If you’re looking at a wine list and don’t recognize the producers’ names, you can feel confident that wines with these vineyard designations are likely terrific.

To be sure, quality can come at a price. The grapes from these sites often command a premium, and the resulting price tags on the bottles will reflect that. But those extra costs allow for more precision viticulture, which raises the tide of Chardonnay quality in the Golden State.

“The Burgundians as such have done a good job—and deservedly so—featuring their vineyards,” says California vintner Alan Ramey. “I don’t think we have as much history, particularly because the focus was so much on wineries.” He wonders if we’re ready to increase the emphasis on vineyard *terroir* within our domestic Chardonnay narrative.

Also looking at Burgundy—where

the vineyard name can be more prominent on labels than the vintner—is Kistler winemaker Jason Kesner. “It’s an interesting thing for us to think about in this business,” he says. “In particular, as we map out our future, I wonder when do we start making the vineyard [designate] bigger? And when does [the winery name] get smaller? Do we move [the winery name] down to the bottom? Isn’t that the ultimate goal?”

AT THE END OF THE DAY, the relationship between grower and winemaker is essential for quality wines. “The best vineyard man-

agers are typically easier to work with because they have to be open-minded and flexible to an extent,” explains vintner Claire Ramey. “Because if you are not, then you are not keeping up to date.” She adds that good growers have to love their vineyards and have to pay attention. “If you don’t love it, you’re not going to make quality decisions ... [growers] can’t be greedy. They have to be measured and patient.”

“In every instance [of the vineyards I work with], it feels like it’s about the relationships as much as it is the land; that of the farmer to the land, but too, that of the grower to the winery,” Kistler’s Kesner adds. “Or maybe put a different way, because of those relationships, it feels like we get more from the land ... our relationships run deep with each.”

Most of the growers profiled in this story pride themselves on growing grapes specific to their winemaking clients’ desires. Various soils, clones, trellising, exposures, let alone individual picking decisions, mean that these vineyards aren’t making cookie-cutter wines.

After visiting Chardonnay vineyards up and down California, spending hours in the vines and talking to farmers, I suggest another relationship to nurture here—that between wine lovers and these special sites.



El Diablo

It's not anything spooky," says CJ Perez, property manager at El Diablo Vineyard, about the vineyard name. "It's named after the previous owner."

There's definitely nothing spooky about this vineyard, tucked away in the Russian River Valley, but there is something wonderfully still and serene here, a fitting spot to honor the spirit of two people who loved this land. The first is Ulises Valdez, who emigrated from Mexico and became one of the most renowned vineyard managers (and a winery owner) in California. (He died in 2015.) Ulises helped plant and managed the vineyard, but didn't get along with the former owner, hence the "El Diablo" nickname.

The other is Margie Mejia, the former tribal chairperson for the Lytton Rancheria of California. Her youngest son, Andy Mejia, is the new tribal chair, following Margie's death in 2022. "This was my mom's vision. My mom was elected tribal chairperson in 1995. We were a very poverty-, drug- and alcohol-stricken tribe," Andy says. "And when my mom was elected tribal chair, she promised this tribe three things: self-sufficiency, housing and land."

The Lytton Tribe is a band of Pomo Native Americans from the Bay Area. The California Rancheria Termination Act of 1958 meant that the relationship with the federal government was formally terminated in 1961. But in 1991, there was a federal court stipulation in which the federal courts agreed with the tribe that the termination was illegal, and they are currently considered a sovereign nation. They are also good neighbors, operating their vineyards on a fish-friendly and sustainable basis and donating generously to local charities.

The tribe owns a casino in San Pablo that they opened in 2005, but lately the focus is on land and vineyards, as the elder Mejia promised. In 2012, they purchased 269 acres, including 110 acres of vineyards from Jordan Winery, the same year they purchased El Diablo. Currently the tribe owns seven vineyards, with 505 acres planted.

"The reason the tribe started buying vineyards was diversification," explains Mejia. "The tribe has a revenue allocation plan that encourages economic development."

Valdez' vision is currently managed by Matt Vogensen of Bevill Vineyard Management. "The vineyard was laid out by Ulises [Valdez] perfectly," explains Vogensen. "The rootstocks, the clones are handpicked to produce high quality fruit."

ABOUT EL DIABLO VINEYARD

County: Sonoma

Appellation: Russian River Valley

Year first planted: 2008

Total acres planted: 25.26

Chardonnay acres: 16.7

Primary Chardonnay clones: Wente-Hyde; Robert Young; Montrachet

Soil types: Spreckels loam; Arbuckle gravelly sandy loam; felta gravelly loam

Sonoma County Sustainable



Lytton tribal chairperson Andy Mejia and vineyard manager CJ Perez

But that doesn't mean his job is easy. "This ranch and a few others keep me up at night," he admits. "I was sitting there one night just thinking is there still Pinot Noir left in block seven? Or did it all get picked? It really is pretty crazy trying to keep track of." Vogensen explains that this diverse patchwork of a vineyard with rolling hills is trickier to manage than a vineyard on the valley floor: "If you had 20 acres of Chardonnay on the valley floor, there's almost a 100% chance you're going to pick it all on the same night. There would be equal ripeness to all the fruit." But, he explains, "If you simply say, we're going to pick all the Chardonnay [at El Diablo] over the next two days, well, you'd have maybe 25% of the fruit that was ripe. You might have 25% overripe. We have so many different pick days—from the different wineries, different clients, different aspects of layouts and soils. But that's what it takes for the high quality for this ranch. And it's why a ranch like this is so unique that it can produce high quality fruit."

Winemaker Matt Courtney of Arista and Ferren is a fan of the site, which he believes is in a unique part of Russian River Valley. He points off in one direction, "If you're looking that way, you're looking out toward Alexander Valley—basically Cabernet country." He turns around. "If you go far enough [in the other direction], we are basically dead center of Russian River Valley. So the air temperature is significantly cooler but we are exposed to a heated valley. But with the east-facing aspect, we're also getting early morning sunshine on the vines, while we're also protected from the afternoon sun."

Lytton Rancheria is further investing in the area. They are building a new home base for the tribe next door to El Diablo, including housing for their members and a community center. Mejia dismisses worries about more casinos; legislation that created the trust land specifically prohibits gaming.

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM EL DIABLO VINEYARD

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
94	ARISTA Russian River Valley El Diablo Vineyard 2020	\$90
93	RAM'S GATE Russian River Valley El Diablo Vineyard 2020	\$74
92	KOSTA BROWNE Russian River Valley El Diablo 2020	\$165



Heintz Vineyard

I own this ranch—but I don't really own it," says Charlie Heintz. "I'm more of a caretaker, because I'm here for my little moment, and that's it. I don't care about big sacks of money. I just feel very honored to be here. I really do. To find family farming operations that are still in business after 100-plus years? It's rare. And it's becoming rarer."

Two mountain ridges in from the Pacific Ocean is the Heintz homestead and vineyard. It's a cool area where the Sonoma Coast, Russian River Valley and Green Valley appellations overlap. Heintz's grandparents settled on this piece of land in 1912. His grandfather was originally from Germany, his grandmother from Holland. They lived in Missouri, and then South Dakota, but the farming there was so difficult they set their sights on California.

"My grandmother's name is Helena. And she saw 'St. Helena' on a map and that's where she wanted to go," explains Heintz. From there, they discovered Santa Rosa, and finally settled on this piece of land. They planted Zinfandel prior to Prohibition, which went into homemade wine.

After that, Heintz says his family was one of the largest apple growers in the area for more than 50 years; primarily Gravenstein, Golden Delicious and Jonathan apples. But the apple business fell on hard times. "[The state of] Washington was planting a lot of acres of apples and they were irrigating them. Everything over here was pretty much dry farmed. You could get about 30, 40 tons an acre up there. Here you get about eight," explains Heintz.

"We started getting our butts kicked, and along with a recession or two, it was really hard," he continues. "A lot of people went out of business. If you did not convert, you had to get out of the apple business, to survive as a farmer, so that's when we planted our first Chardonnay block, in 1982." He thought he'd be able to sell grapes to Korbel for sparkling wine production, but instead sold grapes to various wineries, including Sebastiani and Kendall-Jackson.

"That leads me to Ted [Lemon, of Littorail]," says Heintz. "Because when Ted showed up here 30 years ago, he said, 'We're



Karen and Charlie Heintz

ABOUT HEINTZ VINEYARD

County: Sonoma	Total acres planted: 58	Soil types: Goldridge; sandy loam
Appellations: Russian River Valley; Green Valley; Sonoma Coast	Chardonnay acres: 25	All sustainable; 14 acres using organic method
Year first planted: 1913	Primary Chardonnay clone: Clone 4	

going to do things different.' So today, his seven rows are the same seven rows from 30 years ago. Ted taught me—taught us—my crew, how to manage a canopy, how to leaf pull, how to sucker, how to remove short shoots, how to do just about everything that was needed to manicure the crop."

Heintz explains how his relationship with Lemon was the beginning of establishing quality grapes. He says that as a small outfit, he's able to be more flexible than larger operations. "We're very unique," he points out. "Because we have the higher-end clientele, and we're willing to work with producers on smaller lots—some of them are very small. I think it's also important for a grower like me to work with new producers."

Jeff Mangahas, winemaker at Williams Selyem, describes Heintz as being in a banana belt. "It's a warm site in a cool area," he explains. "But because of its elevation at about 1,000 feet, it's kind of right at the transition of the fog. It has a late start to the season, it can be late to pick. It can be a slower-ripening site." He adds that he gets tropical notes in his Heintz Chardonnays.

Heintz hopes to keep the land in his family. "I have three older girls, and then three younger kids. The opportunity is always here," he says. "This is the house I grew up in right down there. And this is where we live today. When a family farm has been farmed for multigenerations, and for decades, and is over 100 years old, if we weren't farming in a sustainable way, we wouldn't be here. You automatically have to take care of your soil, and we always aim to do better."

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM HEINTZ VINEYARD

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
93	WILLIAMS SELYEM Russian River Valley Heintz Vineyard 2021	\$65
92	LANDO Russian River Valley Heintz Vineyard 2021	\$55
90	BRULIAM Sonoma Coast Bu Heintz Vineyard 2021	\$55



Ritchie Vineyard

Kent Ritchie, a Michigan native, is a former semi-pro hockey player with a self-described beer palate. But since 1972, he's been farming one of the top vineyards in the heart of Russian River Valley.

Originally Ritchie partnered with a friend and an investor who took advantage of a tax write-off for limited partnerships. "I'd worked at my grandpa's farm in Canada," explains Ritchie. "I thought vineyards were pretty sexy."

At the time, Ritchie was working for 3M in Southern California, but when his vineyard partner got transferred to Delaware, Ritchie was on his own. "I would catch a plane up here on Friday night," he explains. "I had a motorcycle at the airport at a car rental place. I bought an old trailer and kept my boots and my jeans there."

He knew he had a lot to learn, so he would go to industry meetings and nearby trade shows: "I'd just be a sponge. I didn't have to have all the book learning. I absorbed everything I could and then I'd catch the red-eye back to Los Angeles."

"That's when you're young," Ritchie adds. "You don't need a lot of sleep. I need a little more sleep now."

Ritchie moved to Sonoma full time in 1996, buying out his partners along the way. His vineyard is bit quirky and as charming as its owner. Hand-painted signs by Ritchie identify which wineries get which thick, gnarled rows of vineyards. It might take a moment to notice another distinguishing feature—some of the vineyard is planted to double rows.

Why? Ritchie explains that phylloxera—a louse that attacks the roots of vines—was decimating Napa in the 1970s: "I figured the clock was ticking. So what do I do? I put another row [of resistant rootstock] down in the center, 3 feet off. I figured when the original vines die, I'll have another row in place ready to go."

But while phylloxera affected Napa vineyards in clay soils, the lighter soils of Russian River avoided infestation by the pest. "So we dodged the bullet," says Ritchie, adding, "And I got stuck with two rows."

The Goldridge soils that make up the Ritchie Vineyard are light and fluffy, known for being well-draining. Ritchie points to a hill on the property. "That's a volcanic cinder cone there. So we have this light, sandy soil on top and volcanic pumice underneath." Ritchie keeps some samples in an old plastic peanut butter jar

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM RITCHIE VINEYARD

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
96	RAMEY Russian River Valley Ritchie Vineyard 2020	\$85
94	ARISTA Russian River Valley Ritchie Vineyard 2020	\$90
93	RUBIA Russian River Valley Ritchie Vineyard 2020	\$65
92	DOMAINE DELLA Russian River Valley Ritchie Vineyard 2021	\$85



Kent Ritchie

ABOUT RITCHIE VINEYARD

County: Sonoma	Chardonnay acres: 45
Appellation: Russian River Valley	Primary Chardonnay clone: Wente
Year first planted: 1972	Soil type: Goldridge
Total acres planted: 65	Sustainably farmed

in the back of his truck. He hands over a volcanic rock from the site: It is so light it feels as if it's made out of foam.

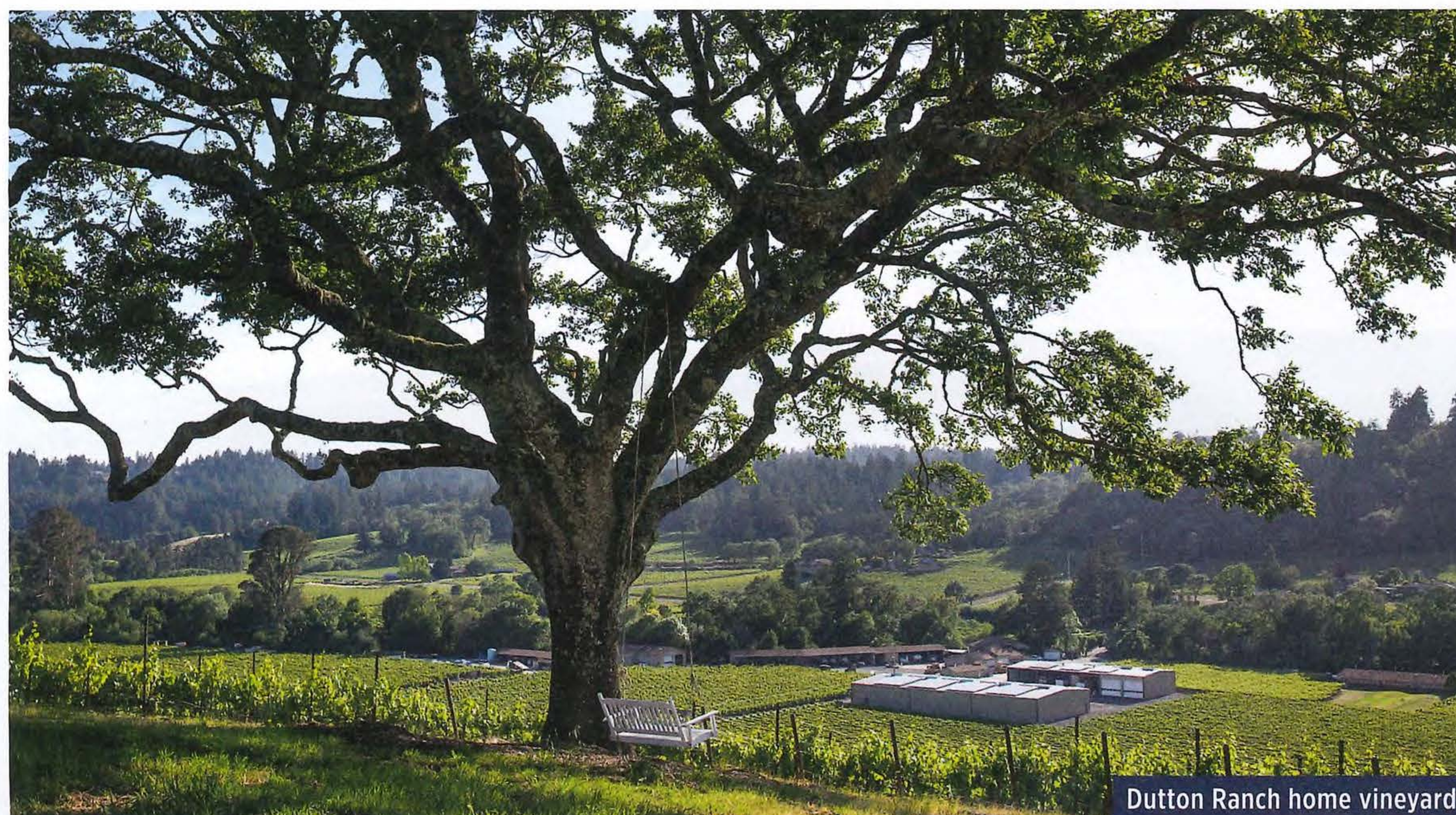
James Hall of Patz & Hall gets grapes from the more

newly planted rows, and describes the wines from them as elegant. "It's not a powerhouse [wine]," Hall explains. "It's not the sort of wine that dominates the palate and flavors ricochet around. It's elegant. I keep coming back to that word, which is really overused ... but it makes a wonderful wine."

At first Ritchie focused on selling grapes to bigger winery operations, which he knew could pay the bills. But then a winemaker friend—the late David Hastings at Kendall-Jackson—told him that the grapes from his property were making special wines. Ritchie started working with smaller, more boutique brands such as Patz & Hall, Ramey and Aubert. Now Ritchie enjoys working with a mix of clients, including smaller brands with young vintners trying to get started.

Explains master Chardonnay vintner Mark Aubert, "Ritchie is *grand cru* from top to bottom, with good genetic material. There is a synergy that happens—we helped lift the property up and he helped give us a start."





Dutton Ranch home vineyard

Dutton Ranch

At Dutton Ranch's headquarters, Steve Dutton's office is filled with family photos and sports memorabilia. A one-eyed black cat named Jet lays on his desk. Steve begins his family's story: "My parents, Warren and Gail, bought this property that we're on in 1964. My father is a fourth-generation farmer, so he grew up on farms and ranches that his father and his grandfather managed in the Santa Rosa area."

Warren talked to area wine pioneers Robert Young and Rodney Strong, who recommended planting Chardonnay. The Duttons took

ABOUT DUTTON RANCH

County: Sonoma	Chardonnay acres: 490	Certified Sustainable by California Sustainable Winegrowing Program and Fish Friendly Farming
Appellation: Russian River Valley	Primary Chardonnay clones: Wente; Clone 17; Clone 4	
Year first planted: 1967	Soil types: Goldridge; fine sandy loam	
Total acres planted: 930		

the advice, while continuing to grow walnuts, pears, plums and acres of apples as well. It wasn't until the 1980s that grapes became a main focus.

As a kid, Steve Dutton's least favorite chore was packing apples. "But as soon as I could touch the pedals, I wanted to drive," he says, dreaming about driving delivery trucks and tractors. He recalls a big change in the apple market in the 1980s. "Apples became a worldwide commodity. We really saw the price of apples fall dramatically. Here in western Sonoma, at one time there were 14,000 acres of apples. People often think that grapes drove the apples out. But in reality, apples became nonprofitable, and drove themselves out. So if you were a progressive, diversified farmer—and my father was—you can see that this was coming. We converted a lot of orchards to vineyards."

But he adds that it wasn't just because apples couldn't pay the bills. The Duttons, it turned out, were really good at growing grapes and adept at working with winery customers. At

first, Dutton grapes were sold to Korbel for sparkling wine, then they "rode the white Zinfandel boom" with Sutter Home and others. Burgess Vineyards was the first to mention Dutton Ranch on a bottle of wine. But the most defining relationship is with Kistler.

"We've been working with the Dutton family since our first vintage in 1979," says Kistler winemaker Jason Kesner. "Steve [Kistler] and Mark [Bixler, of Kistler] worked with Warren Dutton, and now me with Warren's sons Joe and Steve. The Duttons represent the best of Sonoma agriculture; family, embracing the seasons and the rhythms of it all, respecting the land, good old-fashioned hard work."

Steve and Joe went to work with their father in their 20s (the next generation is also entering the business). Their vineyard grew to more than 1,200 acres across more than 80 different sites, most of them within the Sonoma Coast appellation, Russian River and Green Valley. They sell grapes to more than 40 wineries. Importantly, the growth of vineyard holdings hasn't diluted the prestige of the Dutton name on a bottle of wine.

"Dutton Ranch" is a registered trademark, which is important not just to make sure the name is not misused on bottles of wine, but also because the popular Kevin Costner show *Yellowstone* takes place on a fictional Montana cattle ranch called "Yellowstone Dutton Ranch."

Steve and Joe were prepared to carry on the family business when in 2021, Warren Dutton died of a heart attack at age 58. Both sons also started their own wine labels; Joe and his wife, Tracy, started Dutton Estate in 1994. Steve founded Dutton-Goldfield Winery in 1998 with winemaker Dan Goldfield. "Starting the winery was great for us," says Joe. "It opened up my eyes a little bit to see what [winemakers] are looking for."



Founder Warren Dutton (center) with sons Steve (left) and Joe, circa 1991

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM DUTTON RANCH

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
95	KISTLER Russian River Valley Dutton Ranch 2020	\$95
93	PATZ & HALL Russian River Valley Dutton Ranch 2020	\$50
92	THE CALLING Russian River Valley Dutton Ranch 2021	\$33
90	DUTTON ESTATE Russian River Valley Warren's Collection Dutton Ranch 2021	\$57
90	DUTTON-GOLDFIELD Green Valley of Russian River Valley Dutton Ranch Walker Hill Vineyard 2020	\$50
90	DUTTON-GOLDFIELD Russian River Valley Dutton Ranch 2020	\$39



Durell

“Vineyards are my love,” admits Durell owner Bill Price. “I didn’t expect that. But after I bought Durell, I found that the seasonality of vineyards resonates with me.”

Price is a wine lover with a background as a financial investor and experience in business consulting, but these interests didn’t align until 1996. In 1992, he co-founded Texas Pacific Group (now known as TPG Capital), which would grow into one of the largest private equity firms in the world. When Nestlé was looking to sell off its wine division, Wine World Estates (which it had built after buying Beringer in 1971), TPG purchased Wine World Estates from Nestlé for \$350 million in 1996, renaming it Beringer Wine Estates. TPG acquired Chateau St. Jean, Stags’ Leap Winery and St. Clement before selling the group of wineries to Foster’s for a reported \$2.5 billion in 2000.

Durell was Price’s first personal investment in wine, in 1997, an established vineyard in southern Sonoma Valley where it overlaps with Carneros and the Sonoma Coast. He’s since started his own label, Three Sticks, expanded his vineyard holdings to six, including Gap’s Crown in the Sonoma Coast, and is an investor in several boutique brands. (His former wife, Ellie Phipps Price, also owns a percentage of Durell, which goes into her Dunstan Wines brand.)

One of the draws of Durell is the complexity of the soils. “When I think about Durell, I think about the soils,” says Price. “It’s got the most diverse soils of any vineyards I know; there’s cobblestone river rock, and as you go up the hill, there’s more volcanic rock than I’ve ever seen in Sonoma. There’s tufa and classic volcanic rock—it’s almost like diatomaceous earth. The variations are remarkable.”

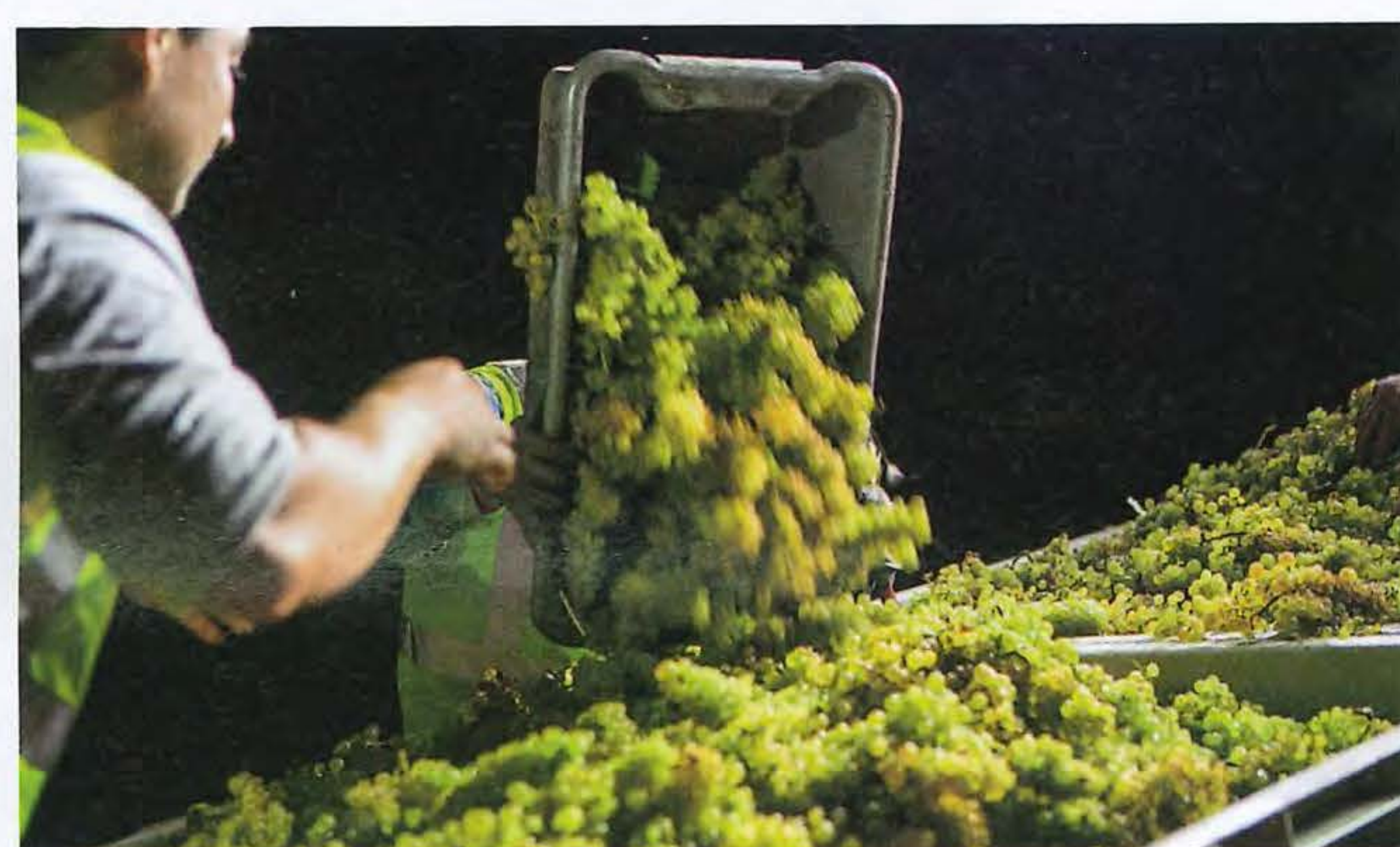
Price explains that the intricacy of the soils helps winemakers

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM DURELL VINEYARD

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
97	KISTLER Sonoma Valley Durell Vineyard 2020	\$95
93	MACROSTIE Sonoma Coast Durell Vineyard 2021	\$56
93	THREE STICKS Sonoma Coast Origin Durell Vineyard 2021	\$70
92	SOJOURN Sonoma Coast Durell Vineyard 2021	\$54
90	DUNSTAN Sonoma Coast Durell Vineyard 2020	\$55
90	SAXON BROWN Sonoma Coast Durell Vineyard 2018	\$78



The vines and grapes of Durell Vineyard



ABOUT DURELL

County: Sonoma	Total acres planted: 152	clay loam; Goulding cobbly clay loam; Tuscan cobbly clay loam; Clear Lake clay
Appellations: Sonoma Coast and Sonoma Valley apply to 100% of property; Sonoma Carneros applies to roughly half	Chardonnay acres: 74	
Year first planted: 1977	Primary Chardonnay clones: Old Wente; Hyde; 95; 76	Certified by California Sustainable Wine-growing Alliance and Fish Friendly Farming
	Soil types: Los Robles gravelly	

make their own version of the “perfect” Durell bottling. “[Vintners] can choose specific soils and exposures that work best with their winemaking styles,” says Price. Kistler winemaker Jason Kesner agrees: “[Durell] has some of the more interesting soils in the area without a doubt. We’re lucky to have vines planted in them for us.”

Rob Harris is director of vineyard operations at Durell. He says that diversity appeals to the vintners he works with. “They don’t want the same grapes to start with. They want grapes tailored to the wines they want to make,” he says, adding that the vineyard stands at a point of transition, from the flats of a riverbed to the coastal hills, which end right at the edge of the vineyard, providing a tunnel for the wind influences from the Pacific Ocean.

“We’re at this confluence of very different effects, which allows us to grow Chardonnay and such meaningfully different styles, but with a consistent quality,” explains Harris. “Producers have embraced Durell because it can fit so many different styles, so many different winemaking protocols.”

Harris adds that there’s been a greater focus on environmental responsibility, as well as a “refocus” on the present and the future, and fine-tuning practices, rather than just doing the same thing forever. “You know, ‘If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,’ is a powerful idea. But it’s one that I personally won’t accept here. I believe in moving forward, not standing still—in pushing boundaries, pushing forward, forging our own kind of path,” he says.

Price is proud to see the Durell name on bottles of wine: “I love the grapegrowing part [of the wine industry]. I love seeing what different winemakers can make from a single vineyard, all of the different expressions.”

Sangiacomo

Vittorio Sangiacomo emigrated from Genova, Italy, in 1913 and was working in the garbage business in San Francisco when he discovered Sonoma—he would come up on the weekends to get away from the foggy weather. He longed for the family farm back in Italy. So in 1927, he bought a 55-acre parcel in Sonoma, known now as the Home Ranch.

At first, he planted apples and cherries and pear trees, becoming one of the largest pear growers in Northern California, packing and sending the fruit to canneries. The Sangiacomo grandchildren—Mike, Steve and Mia—recall eating plenty of canned pears growing up. “Canned pears and Cheddar cheese was a favorite snack,” says Mia.

Vittorio’s four children—Angelo, Bob, Buck and Lorraine—wanted to diversify to other agricultural crops, especially as the pear business was declining. They first planted grapes in the Green Acres site in 1969. Angelo and his siblings would encourage wine-makers to try making wine from a small quantity of their grapes before committing to purchasing larger quantities.

“They learned that pears were unfortunately a commodity crop, as much as they tried to distinguish themselves,” explains Steve. “So it was important when they made the transition to grapes to really create this sense of exclusivity of these vineyards and the specialness of each site.” He adds that Napa already had a reputation for fine wine. “Sonoma was right behind them as this world-renowned area to grow wine grapes. The light bulb went on, that we could really distinguish ourselves among peers.”

Nearly 100 years later, the third generation of Sangiacomos farm 14 vineyards all over Sonoma County, encompassing more than 1,600 acres of grapes, making them one of the largest family-owned winegrowing businesses in Sonoma. Some of the most well-known sites include the Home Ranch, Green Acres Vineyard and Roberts Road Vineyard. Gundlach Bundschu was the first winery to use the Sangiacomo designation, in 1979.

They launched their own wine brand, Sangiacomo Family Wines, with the 2016 vintage. “You know, timing is everything,” points out Steve. “We’re excited to have consumers really see our interpretation of wine through our eyes.” James MacPhail is the winemaker.



Vineyards at Sangiacomo



Three generations of the Sangiacomo family, circa 1985: (from left) Founders Vittorio and Maria; their children Bob, Buck, Lorraine and Angelo; Angelo’s children Mike, Steve and Mia



Siblings Mike, Mia and Steve



ABOUT SANGIACOMO

County: Sonoma
Appellation: Carneros; Sonoma Coast; Petaluma Gap; Sonoma Valley
Year first planted: 1969
Total acres planted: 1,659
Chardonnay acres: 1,095
Primary Chardonnay

clones planted: Old Wente; 17; Dijon 95; UCD 4
Primary soil types: Zamora; Haire series; Huichicha series
Certified sustainable by Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing and Fish Friendly Farming

They use only about 2% of the grapes for themselves; the rest are sold to more than 80 different wineries, half of which use Sangiacomo (or one of their vineyards) as a designation. The family trademarked the Sangiacomo name in 1989 to protect its use on wine labels.

“When I started working with Chardonnay, it was even more transparent that you’ve got to let the site speak,” says MacPhail. “I know that’s a common phrase among winemakers, but I don’t think there’s really another variety that is as transparent—it just shows the site. And with the Sangiacomo array of vineyards and sites, I was like a kid in a candy store.”

One of the features of having grown grapes for so long is the variety of material to work with. “Wine is about layers,” explains Steve. “Having different ages of vines is really important. We have 50-year-old vines, 40-year-old vines, as well as 30 and 20. So while it’s definitely important to reinvest in the vineyards and redevelop them, it’s equally important to reinvigorate some of the older vineyards to create that complexity.”

Like many multigenerational farming families, their take on sustainability is intuitive. “Sonoma County, as you know, is one of the most sustainable wine regions in the world: 99% of our vineyards are certified sustainable. But the formula has

been the same back to our grandfather. Take care of the land. You take care of the people that farm the land, and you take care of how you farm, and all the practices we do, and the commitments,” says Steve. “That’s the form [of sustainability] that we’ve taken for 95 years. That’s what we’ve done in this generation, and hopefully the next generation will follow.”

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM SANGIACOMO VINEYARDS

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
93	SANGIACOMO Petaluma Gap Roberts Road Vineyard 2020	\$68
93	SANGIACOMO Sonoma Coast 2021	\$58
93	SANGIACOMO Sonoma Coast Four Siblings 2021	\$70
93	WALT Sonoma Coast Sangiacomo Vineyard 2021	\$55
92	MACROSTIE Carneros Sangiacomo Vineyard 2021	\$48
92	SAINTSBURY Carneros Sangiacomo Green Acres Heritage Block Old Wente 2020	\$72
92	SANGIACOMO Carneros Catarina Vineyard 2020	\$68
92	SANGIACOMO Carneros Home Ranch 2020	\$68
92	SANGIACOMO Sonoma Coast Green Acres Vineyard 2020	\$68
92	SOJOURN Sonoma Coast Sangiacomo Vineyard 2021	\$45



Hudson Ranch

It's easy to spot Hudson Ranch while driving along Carneros Highway—just look for the Texas flag north of the highway. Lee Hudson is a proud Texas native who purchased his ranch in 1981, now grown to about 2,000 acres. Only 200 acres are planted, surround by steep hills filled with native oaks and plenty of wildlife. But what is planted to grapes has made it one of the most lauded vineyards in California. Ask Hudson what makes a vineyard great, and he says with a hint of Texan twang, “Ultimately, it comes down to longevity, reputation and deliverability.”

Hudson has been delivering terrific grapes since he first started working with then-Newton winemaker John Kongsgaard in 1983. He's also grown grapes for other powerhouse wineries, including Ramey, Rombauer, Aubert and Duckhorn.

“When I started, my whole intention was just to grow grapes,” explains Hudson. “I was really interested in getting clients expressing the site, and having clients stay in the same site, year in, year out, since we only get one shot a year, right? To understand the site, you need to have the same interpretation.”

Hudson interprets with the bigger picture in mind. “Row directions were defined by the fewest number of tracks—and it works perfectly fine,” says Hudson. “Think about the 14 passes on the tractor. No matter what we do, no matter how kind or considerate we do it, we have impacts. So what we do is try to mitigate our impact, like reduce the passes of the tractors, reduce the turns, reduce the total amount of time it takes to do the work.”

That mindset is important to Hudson when making any decision: “That, to me, is the greatest thing we can do. You hear all these things about agriculture; regenerative, organic, or biodynamic, or traditional. To me, it's important to understand them all, and then interpret the way it makes sense for your operations.”

Reputation is also important to Hudson, who has a licensing program: “I developed this licensing agreement that you bought



Cristina Salas-Porras Hudson and Lee Hudson

ABOUT HUDSON

County: Napa
Appellations: Carneros; Napa
Year first planted: 1984
Total acres planted: 195
Chardonnay acres: 100

Primary Chardonnay clone: Old Shot Wente
Soil types: Sandy loam; Riverine clay; gravelly clay loam
Sustainable farming

for \$1. So you could use my name [on a bottle of wine] if you had the license. But if you didn't, you couldn't use the name. What I didn't want was vineyards that didn't have true distinction being vineyard-designated. Our brand became as powerful as their brands.”

To that point, there's been a shift lately as the Hudson Ranch wine brand expands its own Chardonnay lineup. The brand started with the 2004 vintage. Clayton Kirschhoff is the current winemaker. The move feels personal; in addition to Sea Shell and an estate bottling that blends four different blocks of Chardonnay, there's the Little Bit (named for a granddaughter) and Ladybug (Hudson's nickname for his wife, Cristina Salas-Porras Hudson). “Things evolve. Businesses evolve. Business models change,” says Lee Hudson. “We're not growing a commodity here. We're not even growing grapes, we're growing wine.”

James Hall of Patz & Hall was one of the winemakers who did not get to renew his Chardonnay contract with Hudson, but he harbors no ill will: “Many of our best growers have their own wineries. A lot of people were like, ‘That's a conflict. They're going to take your grapes away.’ I see it differently. One of my jobs as a winemaker is to help them grow better grapes. When they get to see the benefits of superior viticulture on their wines, that's when I'm no longer buying grapes from a grape-grower—I'm buying grapes from a winemaker and a grape-grower. That's a level of expertise and knowledge that builds the relationship.”



Hudson Vineyards

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM HUDSON VINEYARDS

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
95	HUDSON VINEYARDS Napa Valley Carneros Seashell 2020	\$110
95	KISTLER Carneros Hudson Vineyard 2020	\$95
94	HUDSON VINEYARDS Napa Valley Carneros 2021	\$75
94	HUDSON VINEYARDS Napa Valley Carneros Ladybug 2020	\$110
93	HUDSON VINEYARDS Napa Valley Carneros Little Bit 2020	\$110

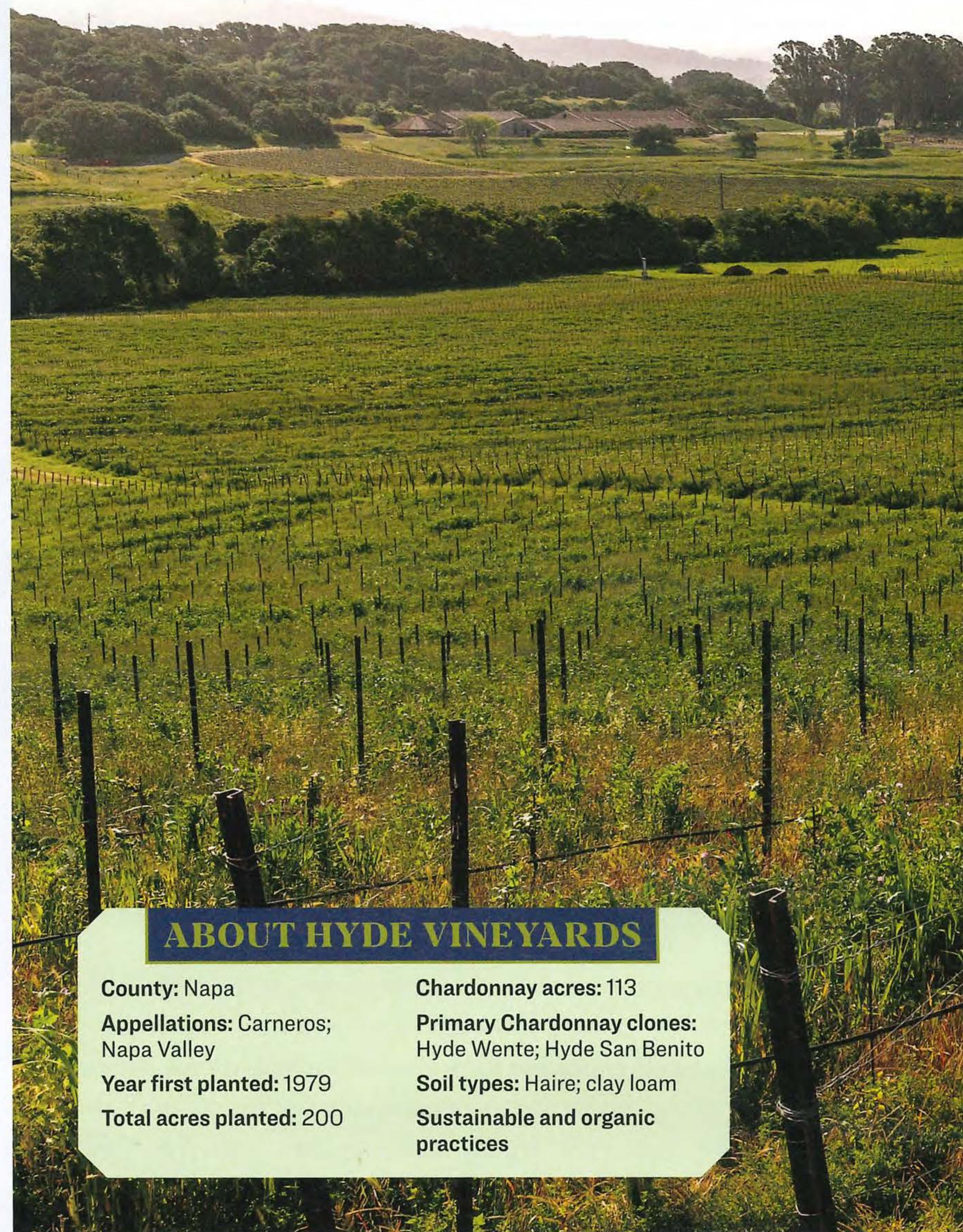
Hyde Vineyards

It's a typical Carneros morning and the fog is lingering in Hyde Vineyards Home Ranch, one of the most hallowed sites for grapegrowing in all of California. "This is true Carneros," points out HdV winemaker Guillaume Boudet. "You can see the [San Pablo] bay from here," he says, pointing south.

Few vineyards in California have the reputation of Hyde. In 1979, when Carneros was not yet an appellation, the Hyde family purchased this breezy piece of land with gentle hills. Since then, Larry Hyde and his son Chris have mastered this and all of their properties, establishing the standard for top vineyards. "To my mind, Larry is one of the greats in the California wine business," says winemaker James Hall of Patz & Hall.

These highly sought-after grapes—in particular the Hyde Wente and Hyde version of Calera—took years to develop. Plants with desirable traits (namely petite berries and tiny clusters with distinct flavors) were identified and propagated to new blocks. Then the vines were treated at Foundation Plant Services to be "cleaned up" to be resistant to viruses, which takes years. The Hydes have made a handful of their clones available to the public. They are found planted up and down the Golden State.

These clones are particularly important to Kistler; winemaker Jason Kesner points out that Kistler is a "single-clone" winemaking house: "Our relationship with the Hydes has been not just about growing fruit, but isolating plant material, our internal clone of Chardonnay that we use everywhere is a subset of one of the Hyde clones, and Steve [Kistler] and Larry spent a lot of time working on that together."



ABOUT HYDE VINEYARDS

County: Napa
Appellations: Carneros; Napa Valley
Year first planted: 1979
Total acres planted: 200

Chardonnay acres: 113
Primary Chardonnay clones: Hyde Wente; Hyde San Benito
Soil types: Haire; clay loam
Sustainable and organic practices



Chris Hyde and his father, founder Larry Hyde



Larry Hyde plants his first vines, 1979

But that's just the beginning of Hyde's collaborative nature. They are known to work closely with their winemaking clients, exchanging information back and forth. "I love the interactions I have with Larry Hyde," says winemaker Mark Aubert. "All that geeking out about mealybugs, rootstocks and clones ... the great thing about the Hydes is they have so much experience."

Hall agrees: "We talk about crop levels, leafing, did we make the



Vineyards at Hyde

right picking decision? What barrels seem to match up better? What kind of vintage variation adjustments did we make during the year and were they successful? And then Larry used a lot of that information to inform his planting decisions.”

“Dad’s been very serious about growing,” explains son Chris Hyde, who is general manager at Hyde Vineyards. “Rather than being a commodity farmer, he’s paying attention to the details. What do you think we can do better? We already have tiny berries, tiny clusters, great acidity. But every time we replant a section, we adapt to the site better.”

One of the biggest adjustments has been the placement of the vineyard rows. When he first planted the vineyard, Larry mimicked the east-west orientation of his neighbors. Since then, replacing blocks has been an opportunity for the Hydes to plant them northeast by southwest. “It’s the same direction of the prevailing winds. Why fight them?” Chris explains.

“My job is to take the work my father did and improve upon it,” he adds. “This has been in the family for almost 45 years. We want to keep it that way.”

From the Home Ranch, Hyde Vineyards has expanded to more than 200 acres of grapes planted on a few different sites in Carneros. A Hyde Vineyards Estate brand began with the 2009 vintage, and HdV was founded in 2000, a joint venture

between the Hydes and the de Villaines of Burgundy, whose families are connected by marriage.

HdV winemaker Boudet loves working with the estate fruit, and he says of the supertiny clusters of grapes, “I melt when I see them as a winemaker.” He adds, “What I put in the bottle is a time capsule. I want to tell the story of that vintage.”

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM HYDE VINEYARDS

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
96	AUBERT Carneros Larry Hyde & Sons 2020	\$90
96	HDV Napa Valley Hyde Vineyard 2020	\$85
96	KISTLER Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2020	\$95
95	RAMEY Napa Valley Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2020	\$85
93	MIRA Napa Valley Hyde Vineyard 2018	\$93
93	PATZ & HALL Napa Valley Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2020	\$65
93	RAM’S GATE Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2019	\$70
93	SAXON BROWN Napa Valley Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2018	\$78
92	BOUCHAINE Napa Valley Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2021	\$70
92	MASSICAN Napa Valley Hyde 2021	\$55
90	MIRA Napa Valley Hyde Vineyard 2017	\$95





Soberanes proprietors Gary Franscioni (left) and Gary Pisoni



founded Pisoni Vineyards in 1982 and is behind two wine labels, Pisoni and Lucia. Gary Franscioni planted Rosella's in 1996 and Sierra Mar Vineyard in 2007; his family's label is called Roar. Together, the Garys (and their sons, Adam and Nick Franscioni and Steve and Jeff Pisoni) co-farm two vineyards: Garys' and Soberanes. All of these names are worth keeping an eye out for on wine bottles.

It's easy to understand what makes Santa Lucia ideal for Chardonnay. All the vineyards face east, where they get the gentle morning sun. Then the sun goes down behind the mountain range, and the vineyards don't get any afternoon heat. "The winds are one of the most interesting features during the growing season, just because of how intense they are," points out

Gary Franscioni. He adds that while the winds don't make sitting on a porch too pleasant, they do extend the growing season for the grapevines. Even though the Monterey Bay isn't visible from behind the mountains, the bay's influence is definitely felt. The bay goes deep—2 miles down—and the cold bay air is funneled through to the Santa Lucia Highlands and Salinas Valley.

It's also a dry region. The good news is that means harvest-time rains are rarely a concern. But the region gets about a third of the rain that Sonoma typically gets. "It's like a desert here—like a desert next to the ocean," points out Mark Pisoni.

In an earlier sign that the region had potential, Richard Talbott planted Sleepy Hollow Vineyard in 1972, selling grapes to Chardonnay producers around the state. "I was driven by perfection," admits Talbott. "That vineyard was a huge part of my life. It was part of my soul." But over time the vineyard needed investment to keep it going. In 2015, the Talbott vineyards and winery were sold to Gallo, who are in the process of major vineyard renovations.

Soberanes vineyard is farmed with precision. "We are real true farmers," says Steve Pisoni. "I pride myself in that we're out here all the time. We're noticing things and we're observing things, we're taking care of things. I think that makes a difference."

There may never be hordes of tourists flocking past the artichokes and romaine lettuce to search out the special vineyards in Santa Lucia. "We are a hard appellation to find because we're kind of off the beaten path," adds Pisoni. "I kind of like it like that. I like being a secret."

ABOUT SOBERANES

County:
Monterey

Appellation:
Santa Lucia
Highlands

**Year first
planted:** 2008

**Total acres
planted:** 39

**Chardonnay
acres:** 12
**Primary Char-
donnay clones:**
Combination of
Heritage and
suitcase
clones; five dif-
ferent selec-
tions of Old
Wente

**Primary soil
types:** Dense
layers of gran-
ite river rock
layered over
Arroyo Seco
sandy loam
**Certified sus-
tainable by
Sustainable in
Practice**

Soberanes

Monterey's Salinas Valley has been called the "Salad Bowl of the World" for its bounty of lettuce, broccoli and other vegetable crops. But the area's status as a wine region is less distinct. Monterey County is vast, with nine sub-American Viticultural Areas where grapes are grown, and the style and quality of the wines can range wildly. It's remote enough that there is no tourism culture to complement the wine region (but there are plenty of restaurants and tasting rooms in the nearby city of Carmel).

While driving down Highway 101 through Monterey's farmlands, it's easy to miss one of the best spots for Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah in the state. Tucked against the Santa Lucia Mountains is the Santa Lucia Highlands, a region 18 miles long and 2 miles wide in the benchlands. In the center of the appellation is Soberanes, a vineyard managed by the Pisoni and Franscioni families, multigenerational farmers who have defined the fine wines that the region is capable of.

"Gary [Pisoni]'s grandfather and my grandfather came around the same time," explains Gary Franscioni. "Our parents knew each other; they went to high school together. Gary's father and my father went to same high school as we did. They went in 1937. We went in 1972. So our families have known each other forever."

The two Garys and their families are leaders here. Gary Pisoni

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM SOBERANES VINEYARD

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
93	LUCIA Santa Lucia Highlands Soberanes Vineyard 2021	\$65
93	ROAR Santa Lucia Highlands Soberanes Vineyard 2021	\$65
92	TESTAROSSA Santa Lucia Highlands Soberanes Vineyard Single Vineyard Series 2021	\$55



Bien Nacido

Nicholas Miller stands on a steep slope of the renowned Bien Nacido Vineyard, in the heart of the Santa Maria Valley, as the afternoon winds whip around. Miller, chief sales and marketing officer and executive vice president of Miller Family Wine Company, explains the gusts.

“This valley opens to this ocean in one of the few places in the world that has transverse mountain ranges running to the ocean,” says Miller. “So in the spring and summer, when the afternoons warm up [in this interior valley of California], the hot air rises. It creates a vacuum that basically turns this valley into a giant fan. Usually by 2 or 3 o’clock in the afternoon, you can be hunkered down and trying to stay warm. It’s not just cold—it’s *cold* cold.”

Bien Nacido Vineyard has been an acclaimed source of grapes and estate wines since brothers Stephen and Bob Miller purchased the land in 1969 and planted the original vineyards in 1973. But the history of this property (and the Miller family’s farming) reaches back much further.

Bien Nacido means “well born” in Spanish. The vineyard lies on part of the historic Rancho Tepusquet Spanish land grant, given to Tomás Olivera in 1837. At the time, California was still part of Mexico. The family’s adobe—built in 1857—still stands and is the inspiration for the estate’s first ever on-site tasting room: the Gatehouse at Bien Nacido, which opened this summer.

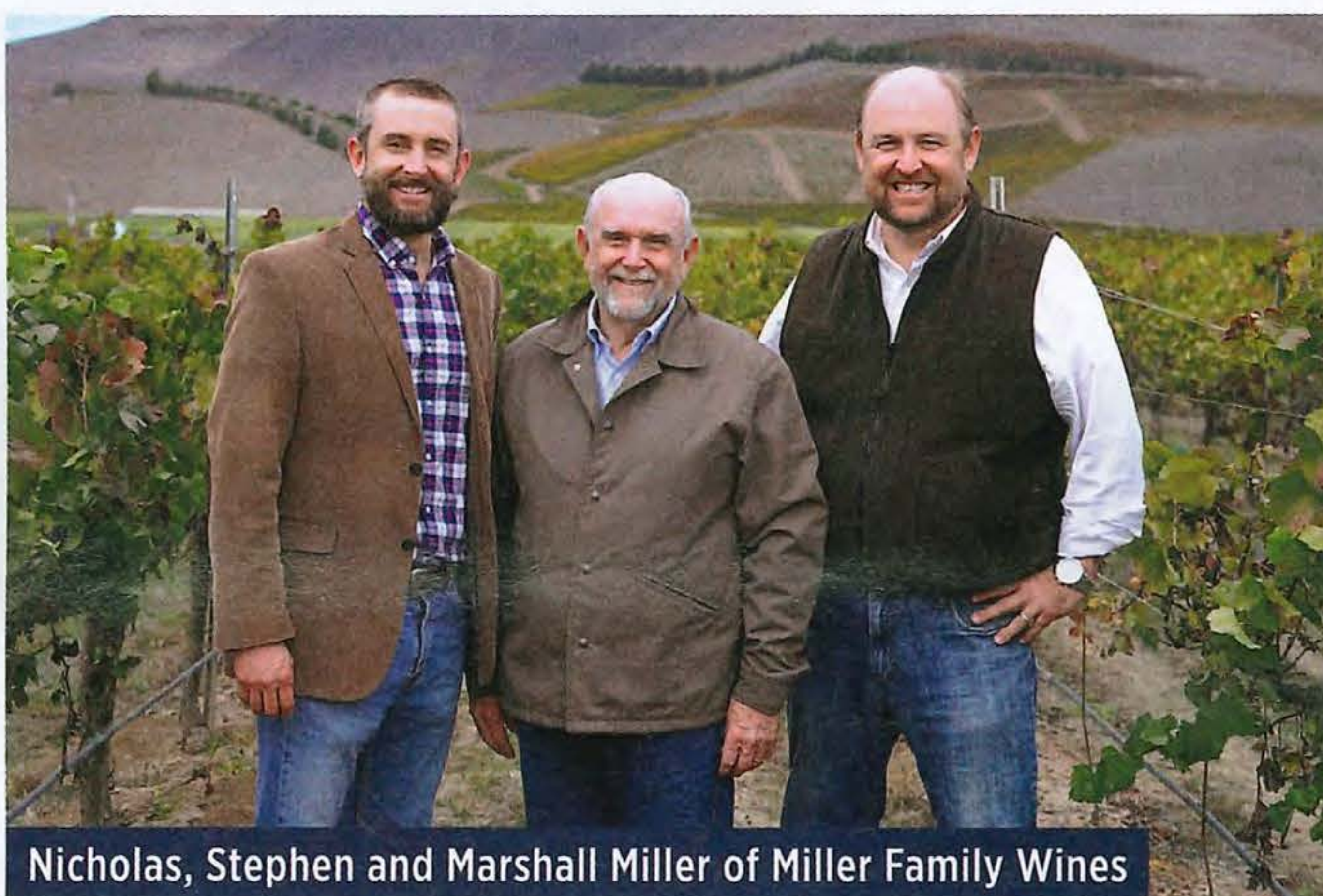
Over the years, the property was divided, until the Millers reconnected two of the largest parcels to create the dramatic vineyard. Miller, representing the family’s fifth generation in farming, says his father and uncle were at the time growing commodity crops such as lemons and avocados, and they liked the idea of a specialty crop: “That way, they could have a little more control, and they can market further downstream and control their destiny.” The key was to focus on excellence from the beginning.

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM BIEN NACIDO VINEYARD

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
93	BIEN NACIDO ESTATE Santa Maria Valley 2020	\$50
92	LA PELLE Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Block I 2020	\$65
90	EMERCY Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard 2020	\$65



Vines of Bien Nacido



Nicholas, Stephen and Marshall Miller of Miller Family Wines

ABOUT BIEN NACIDO

County:	Chardonnay	loam; sandy
Santa Barbara	acres: 236	clay loam;
	Primary	shaly loam
Appellation:	Chardonnay	Certified
Santa Maria Valley	clone: Clone 4	Sustainable
Year first	Soil types:	by California
planted: 1973	Sand; loamy	Sustainable
Total acres	sand; loam;	Winegrowing
planted: 560	clay loam;	Program
	silty clay	

“They took this environment of intense interest and instead of trying to expand

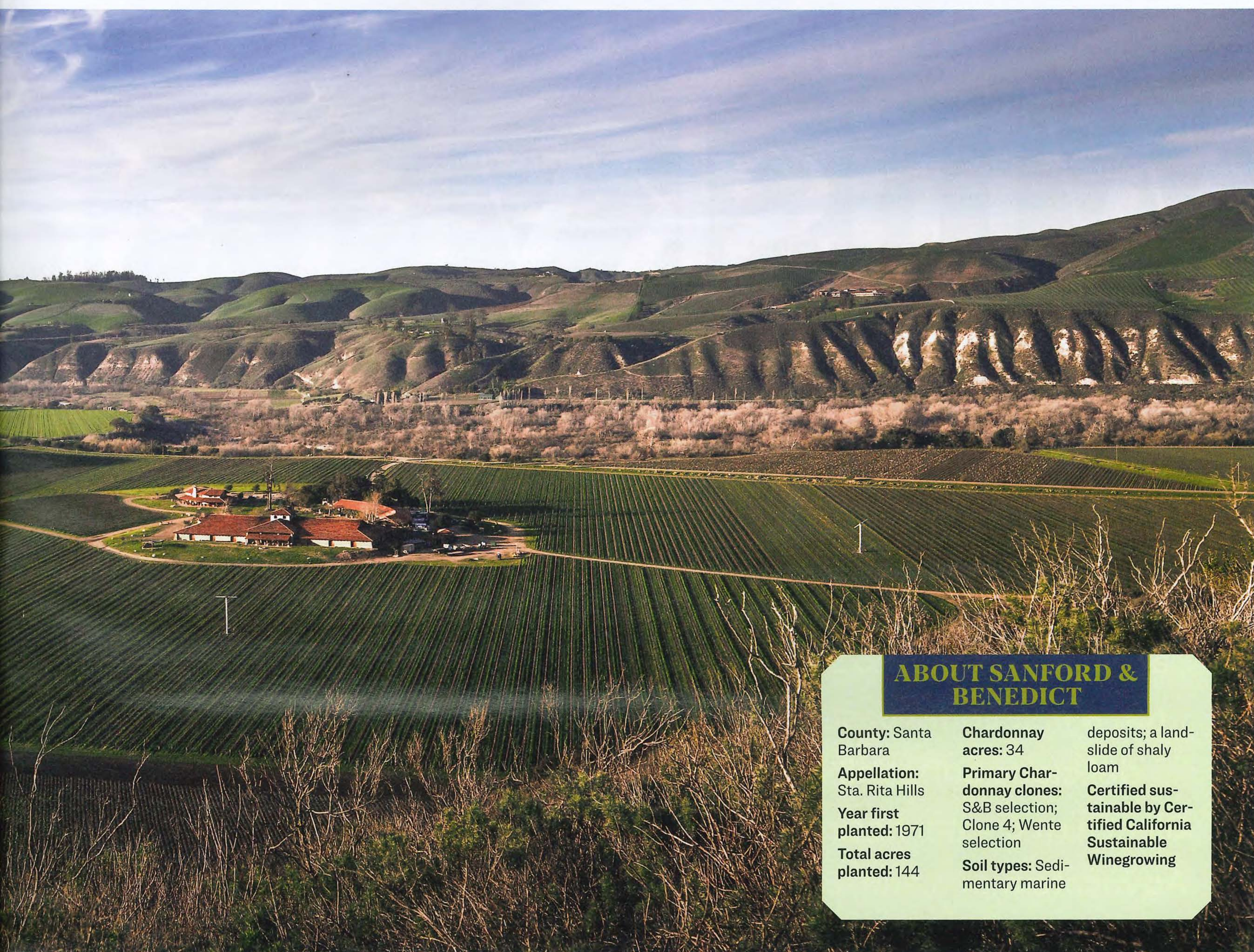
quantity, they really want to focus on quality,” says Miller.

Miller explains that he didn’t grow up in a wine household. “I grew up in an agricultural household,” he says. “Vineyard households seemed to have a big distinction—you hear stories of families in Europe when a 2-year-old gets spoonfed wine. That wasn’t our house.” The family continues to farm avocados and lemons, and leases plots of land to local farmers as a way to rotate the crops; a former vineyard plot might go fallow or might be planted to flowers or vegetables for a couple of years for the soil’s health.

After decades of selling grapes, in 2007 the Millers decided to produce wines for themselves under the name Bien Nacido Estate. “The story [of Bien Nacido] has always been told through the lens of other wineries,” says Miller. “There was this big gap of the story coming straight from the source. We felt the final connection point is to make something that’s a window to the vineyard, not a thumbprint in the cellar.” They estimate they still use less than 5% of the grapes for the Bien Nacido Estate program, under the direction of winemaker Anthony Avila.

The Bien Nacido property is just one the Millers’ investments. They also own the Solomon Hills Vineyard in a more western spot of Santa Maria Valley, and the French Camp Vineyard in Paso Robles.

The late Jim Clendenen, founder of Au Bon Climat, was among the early promoters of Bien Nacido. Today, the 560-acre site is one of the most-used vineyard designates in California wine history. “I can’t think of another model that operates at this size and scale,” explains Miller. “Yet the attention we have to detail—it’s like a small little vineyard in this region.”



ABOUT SANFORD & BENEDICT

County: Santa Barbara

Appellation: Sta. Rita Hills

Year first planted: 1971

Total acres planted: 144

Chardonnay acres: 34

Primary Chardonnay clones: S&B selection; Clone 4; Wente selection

Soil types: Sedimentary marine

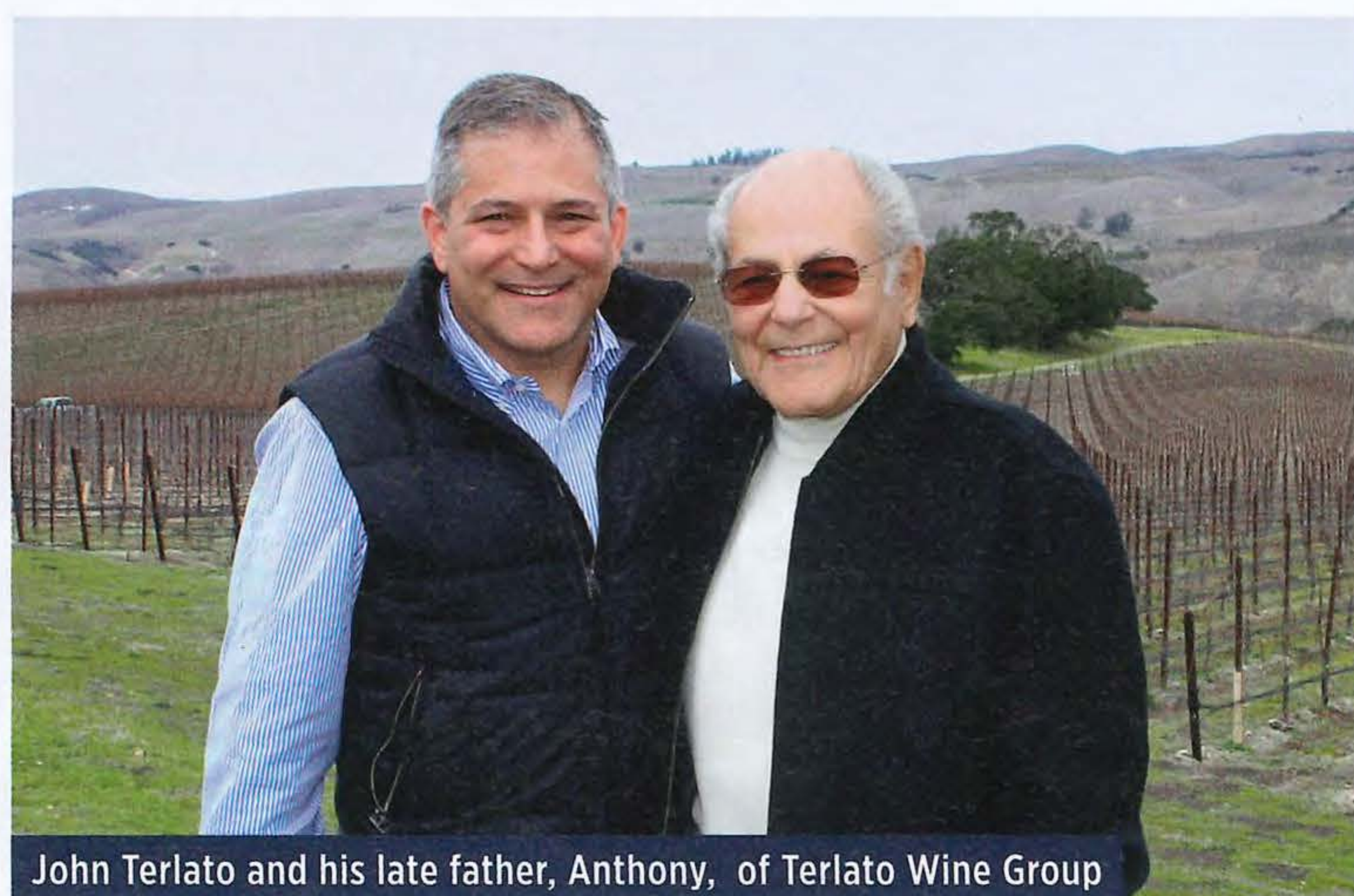
deposits; a landslide of shaly loam

Certified sustainable by: Certified California Sustainable Winegrowing

were recognized as examples of what the region is capable of. The pair worked together for a decade before parting ways. Winemaker Richard Sanford would open his namesake vineyard in 1981, and launched Alma Rosa Winery in 2005, cementing his importance in the region.

The vineyard is currently owned by Terlato Wine Group (which also owns Sanford Winery), and John Terlato is particularly passionate about the site. He says he was inspired by tasting Sanford & Benedict wines from the 1970s. “The soil composition here is Monterey shale, pretty much from top to bottom, as a result of a landslide maybe 10,000 years ago,” explains Terlato. The deep, jagged, loosely compacted shards forces vines to grow downward to look for hydration and nutrition.

Some of the original, own-rooted vines are still in production. Sanford winemaker Trey Fletcher points out, “We’re in a challenging climate and challenging environment. You can see that in the wines—the wines have tension to them.” He refers to the original wines from the 1970s as “classic,” and says he aspires to make “neoclassical” wines. “We know what can be done, and what will age really well, as opposed to caricature-driven wines by personality and stylistic ego concerns,” he explains. □



John Terlato and his late father, Anthony, of Terlato Wine Group

RECENT CHARDONNAYS FROM SANFORD & BENEDICT VINEYARD

SCORE	WINE	PRICE
93	SANDHI Sta. Rita Hills Sanford & Benedict 2021	\$65
90	FESS PARKER Sta. Rita Hills Sanford & Benedict 2020	\$44
89	SANFORD Sta. Rita Hills Sanford & Benedict Vineyard 2019	\$60
89	SANFORD Sta. Rita Hills Founders' Vines 2019	\$75

Sanford & Benedict

The story starts with sailing,” says Michael Benedict. It was on a sailboat in the late 1960s that he met his future vineyard partner, geologist Richard Sanford. It was also on a boat where Benedict and Sanford were presented with a proposition: “If you guys want to start a vineyard, I will finance your startup.”

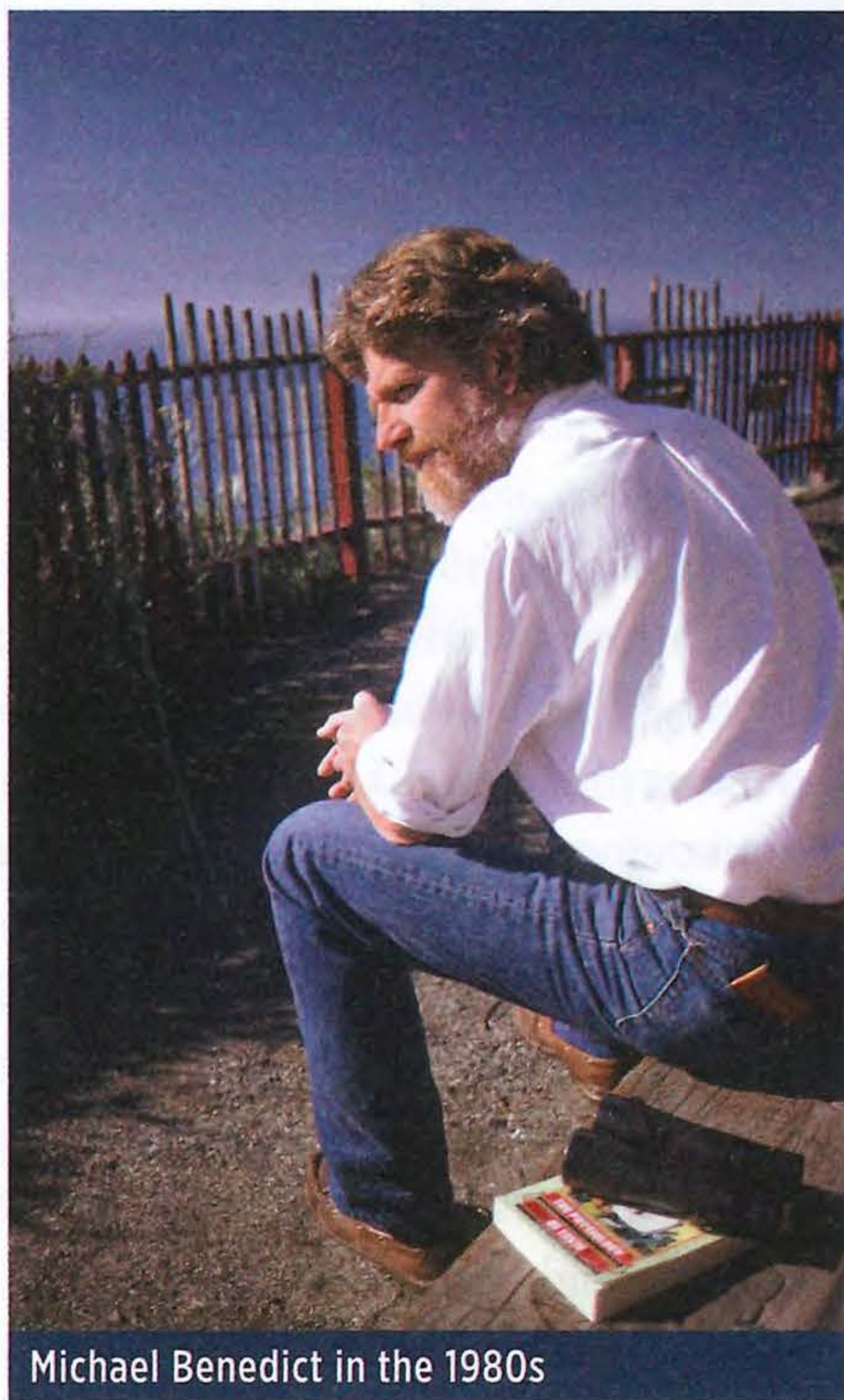
The investor—one of the biggest lettuce growers in California—described a coming boom for vineyards and wine in California; experts were predicting that America’s growing thirst for wine would quickly outpace supply.

At the time, Benedict was working as a botanist with the University of California, Santa Barbara, but he dreamed of being a farmer and had a love of fine wine. He looked for suitable land up and down the West Coast, going as far north as Vancouver, keeping his eye on a thermometer in his car.

In particular, Benedict was worried about daytime high temperatures. His understanding of grapevine physiology is that once the temperature gets over 90° F, vines stop ripening and shut down development. Luckily, Santa Barbara County gets influence from the nearby Pacific Ocean not just from the west, but also from the south, and temperatures typically don’t get that high. The wind can also be bitterly cold, moderating temperatures, along with a dramatic fog influence. The east-west orientation of the Santa Ynez Valley provides an easy path for the cooling maritime influence—the ocean is just 10 miles away.

Santa Barbara County was already in Benedict’s sights—he ran a research station on the Santa Cruz Islands off the coast and knew there were pre-Prohibition vineyards and a winery industry there. “I did a lot of homework, sniffing around. It wasn’t an assignment, it was a thrilling endeavor,” Benedict, now 83, recalls.

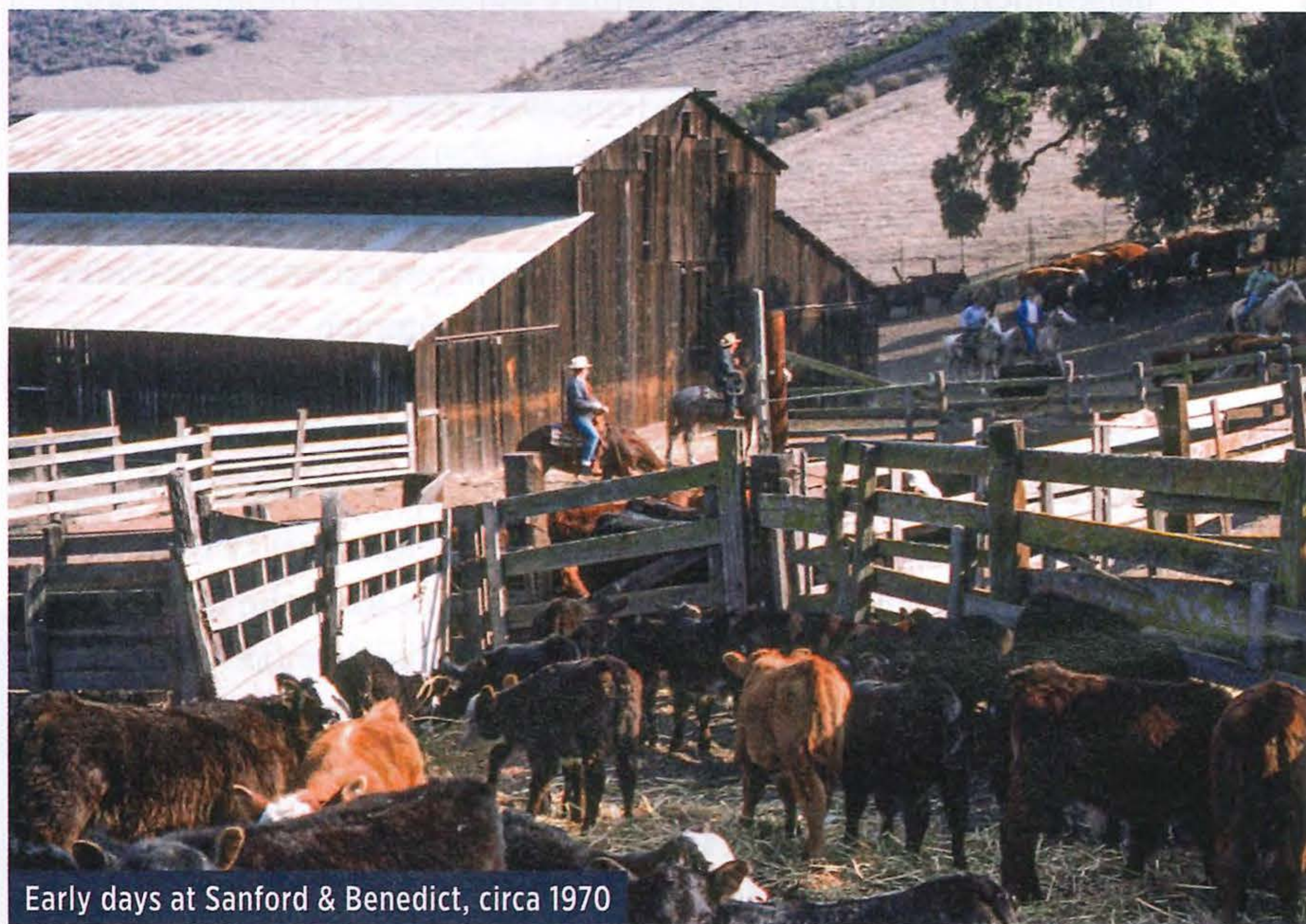
While the impression of Santa Barbara might be of the sunny, palm tree-lined, posh city an hour’s drive south of the Sta. Rita Hills appellation, the winegrowing regions of Santa Barbara County are much different, both culturally and temperaturewise. The chilly, windswept region has a deep history of agriculture, cowboy culture and cattle ranches. This isn’t the Santa Barbara where Oprah lives, rather this is where Santa Maria-style barbeque was invented. Fields of strawberries and broccoli, not spas



Michael Benedict in the 1980s



Sanford & Benedict vineyard aerial



Early days at Sanford & Benedict, circa 1970

or resorts, can be found interspersed between vineyards.

Sanford and Benedict first planted vines in 1971, hand-drilling 50,000 holes with a two-man auger so the rooted vines would have a head start in establishing roots. The first wines the duo made in the mid-1970s captured the attention of wine lovers and