

Santa Barbara Urban Wine Trail Part 2

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The serene courtyard dining scene of Arts & Letters Cafe, along the Santa Barbara Urban Wine Trail.
Patricia Decker

Time to pause from [wine tasting](#). Lunch at **Arts & Letters Café**, located in the interior courtyard of an art gallery, was a great way to recharge my taste buds. Their Riviera Seafood Salad, a combo of sweet sea scallops, grilled shrimp with sea salt, and crab tossed with market greens, was fresh and intensely flavorful. Dedicated to sustainable and organic, with an emphasis on local seafood, the quality of their California cuisine was amazing. Open only for lunch every day of the week, it's an oasis, time well spent on the urban wine trail.

Kunin Wines offers Rhône-style wines, with an emphasis on Syrah. The Syrah Geek tasting, three wines for \$12, explores two different vintages from the Alisos vineyard, and offers one wine from biodynamic grapes. The **2006 Kunin/Gangloff Santa Barbarine Syrah**, a collaboration between Seth Kunin and Domaine Gangloff of the Northern Rhône Valley in France, is a Côte-Rôtie style wine. It's intense nose of black pepper, dried plum, and earth flow into a palate of smooth tannins, cassis and red



currant fruit, oak vanilla nuances, with hints of bacon on *Patricia Decker*

the finish. The **2010 Kunin Pape Star** is a GSM blend (Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre) in the French Chateauneuf-du-Pape tradition, big black cherry and plum fruit with a raspberry edge, dark earth, spice, cocoa, jammy quality, a high alcohol wine aged in neutral oak.

Pali Wines, known for their artisan Pinot Noir, offers 6 tastes for \$10, Most of these “Appellation Cuvée” wines, blends from specific regions in California and Oregon, offer good flavor for great value. The **2010 Charm Acres Chardonnay Sonoma Coast** is delicious, rich with aromas of melon, lime, and peach and flavors of pineapple, apricot, and lemon, with mineral notes, and nice acidity. The **2011 Tower 15 Sunset Rosé** is a perfect summer thirst quencher, with nice acidity, watermelon, strawberry and pomegranate fruit, orange peel, and rose petals, with a streak of minerality and good balance. The **2010 “Bluffs” Pinot Noir Russian River Valley** is juicy, with black cherry, raspberry, and blueberry fruit, damp forest floor (a classic Pinot Noir characteristic from cool climates), spice, with a vibrant body and alcohol kick (it is 15.3% ABV). A good value buy is the **2010 “Alphabets” Pinot Noir Willamette Valley**, cherry, damp earth, graphite, and toasty oak, with a hint of tobacco.

Time for a mid-afternoon snack, an ethereal almond croissant from **Renaud’s Patisserie & Bistro**. I truly heard the angels sing, with one bite into the flaky, buttery crust, that simultaneously shattered and melted in my mouth, and the flavor persisted with a rich almond finish. Holy smokes! This dreamy delight was worth the trip alone! The almond croissant is only one of their beautiful pastries, and they serve breakfast and lunch bistro food as well. Renaud’s has two locations, with Uptown open later in the day, and easier parking in Loreto Plaza than the Downtown location on State Street.

Part 3



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