

## The diverse and divine wines of Santa Barbara County Part 2

May 1, 2015

2:21 AM MST



View all  
15 photos

LA Wine Writers are treated to a study in Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir.  
*Patricia Decker*

At a separate event, Morgen McLaughlin, Executive Director of the [Santa Barbara Vintners Association](#), spoke with the LA Wine Writers over lunch at [West Restaurant](#) in the Hotel Angeleno, bringing what she felt were the best representatives of the region's diversity. The "undiscovered potential for Santa Barbara County wine" is what drew her to the area, but notes that 50% of the fruit grown locally is taken out of the County, often blended into lower priced Napa/Sonoma wines. Morgen observed that it's hard for the small producer to compete, with flat fees and fixed costs, and some have banded together into wine collectives, like European cooperatives, to market their wines, while others have embraced the "Garagiste" philosophy, buying fruit and producing wines in a storage facility. And she feels that, although trends and varietals change every decade, in the future, Santa Barbara needs to position itself as a wine region, a center for wine tourism, and not be a darling for today's wine trends. Morgen says Pinot is still red hot with consumers, while Merlot hasn't fully recovered from its "Sideways" bashing. Red wine blends are growing in popularity, yet [Syrah](#) still hasn't fulfilled its destiny, "needing better PR".

She brought 10 wines to demonstrate the AVA styles and their ability to pair with food. West Restaurant Executive Chef Laura Scollan designed four small plates to accompany the wines, an excellent food and wine pairing.

First, the **2013 Star Lane Sauvignon Blanc Happy Canyon** was medium bodied, with great acidity, well balanced, grassy, with powerful aromas of guava, passion fruit, and citrus, a vein of minerality, round and textured on the palate. Very well priced for the quality at \$22, it was paired with a Lobster Truffle Mac and Cheese, delicious.



*Patricia Decker*

A study in [Chardonnay](#) was next, with three wines:

**2013 Foxen Chardonnay Bien Nacido Block UU, Santa Maria Valley**

**2013 Melville Chardonnay Clone 76 - Inox, Sta. Rita Hills**

**2011 Hilliard Bruce Chardonnay, Sta. Rita Hills**

The Hilliard Bruce was a standout, elegant, balanced, round, with integrated oak, citrus, green apple, mineral, a very good pair with the Honey-Glazed Salmon, Forbidden Rice, and Roasted Cauliflower. This Burgundian style Chardonnay is produced in the first LEED Silver certified winery in Santa Barbara County (green building rating).

Next, a study in [Pinot Noir](#), with three wines:

**2012 Longoria Pinot Noir Fe Ciega Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills**

**2012 Au Bon Climat Pinot Noir Bien Nacido Vineyard, Santa Maria Valley**

**2010 LaFond Pinot Noir Pommard Clone, Sta. Rita Hills**

The Au Bon Climat Pinot was deep and fragrant, complex with cherry and berry fruit, clove, and rose petal notes, paired with a Maple-Bourbon Pork Loin, Garnet Yam, Tasso Ham and Apple Hash, Brussel Sprouts with a Cider Demi-glace.

Finally, two Syrahs and a red blend:

**2012 Brander Syrah Colson Canyon Vineyard, Santa Barbara County**

**2012 Demetria Estate Syrah, Santa Ynez Valley**

**2012 Margerum M5, Santa Barbara County**

The Margerum M5 red blend was elegant and well balanced, a blend of Syrah, Grenache, Mourvedre, Counoise, and Cinsault, complex palate of red and black fruit, dried herbs, cedar notes, black olive, licorice, dark chocolate, paired with Ginger Snap Lamb Rack, Lavender Grits, Rainbow Chard, and Lamb Jus, excellent.

[Santa Barbara County wines](#), a cornucopia of varietals, distinctive terroirs, small production, and big wines, it's a winemaker's dream and a wine drinker's fantasy. Check out all that this region has to offer!



**Patricia Decker**  
Burbank Wine Shopping Examiner