

12 Diverse Sonoma Chardonnays

New reviews of rich whites from the Sonoma Coast and Russian River Valley



Williams Selyem's outstanding 2013 Allen Vineyard Chardonnay is impressively long.

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Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

Tax season is peeking around the corner, so **now is a good time to take stock of your wine budget**. We'll help you stretch your dollar further with six exciting Chardonnays for \$30 or less.

Take MacRostie's Sonoma Coast bottling for example. At \$25, it offers plenty of zesty, citrus-kissed fruit and mouthwatering acidity, making it a welcome guest at the dinner table. The grapes were whole-cluster pressed, with some of the lots fermented in stainless steel to emphasize the bright fruit and aromatics.

Food Network chef Tyler Florence has been putting his kitchen in order at his eponymous wine label. After producing a single barrel of Zinfandel in 2006, he partnered with Michael Mondavi and his family. More widely available is Girard's elegantly styled effort.

For a few dollars more, try Maldonado's Parr Vineyard. Mexican native Lupe Maldonado has been growing grapes in California since the 1960s. He spent more than two decades at Newton, where he studied under John Kongsgaard. After retiring, Maldonado and his son Hugo started their own winery, focusing on a 10-acre Chardonnay vineyard in Carneros. This wine is barrel-fermented and comes from a vineyard they work with in Knights Valley.

KUNDE ESTATE Chardonnay Sonoma Valley C.S. Ridge Vineyard 2014 *Score: 90 | \$30*
Strikes a nice balance between spicy, citrus-laced pear, peach and nectarine flavors and delicate floral scents, finishing clean and vibrant. Drink now. 660 cases made.—*J.L.*

LORING Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Parmelee-Hill Vineyard 2014 *Score: 90 | \$40*
Creamy, oak-driven butterscotch notes set the tone, giving this a broad, rich, expansive mouthfeel. The wood adds to the vibrant apple and pear flavors. Fresh and snappy. Drink now. 125 cases made.—*J.L.*

MACROSTIE Chardonnay Sonoma Coast 2014 *Score: 90 | \$25*
Presents a delicious core of vibrant grapefruit and lemon-laced tangerine and white peach notes. Those who value zesty acidity will love this, as the acidity keeps the flavors fresh and jumping. Drink now. 25,000 cases made.—*J.L.*

MALDONADO Chardonnay Sonoma County Parr Vineyard 2012 *Score: 90 | \$32*
Shows off a creamy, smoky oak edge that tilts toward butterscotch. Firm, with a mix of honeysuckle, melon, vibrant pear and nectarine, ending with a juicy aftertaste. Drink now through 2020. 900 cases made.—*J.L.*

PATZ & HALL Chardonnay Russian River Valley Zio Tony Ranch 2013 *Score: 90 | \$65*
Exhibits a rich mix of honeydew, butterscotch, tangerine and smoky oak flavors, made in a style that's broad and mouthcoating. Gains depth and richness on the finish. Drink now. 380 cases made.—*J.L.*

SAXON BROWN Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Durell Vineyard 2013 *Score: 90 | \$68*
The oak lends a spicy, peppery attribute to this rich, trim effort. Wood is evident throughout, but the fruit remains prominent, with melon, fig and baked apple notes. Drink now. 290 cases made.—*J.L.*

WILLIAMS SELYEM Chardonnay Russian River Valley Allen Vineyard 2013 *Score: 90 | \$58*
Offers a pleasing mix of rich, assertive peach, anise and savory herb notes, touching on butterscotch. Most impressive is the long finish, which gains depth and length. Drink now. 322 cases made.—*J.L.*

DAVID BRUCE Chardonnay Russian River Valley Anniversary Selection 2013 *Score: 88 | \$28*

Fresh and lively, with a zesty core of pithy tangerine, nectarine, white peach and citrus, ending with a long aftertaste. Drink now. 1,260 cases made.—*J.L.*

TYLER FLORENCE Chardonnay Sonoma County Blending Sessions Blend No.3
2014 Score: 88 | \$20

A harmonious effort that's tight and rich, with a core of vanilla-laced green apple, white peach, honeydew and light oak. Drink now. 500 cases made.—*J.L.*

GIRARD Chardonnay Russian River Valley 2014 Score: 88 | \$25

Complex on a modest scale, with lively tangerine, white peach and honeydew in an elegant style, ending clean and simple. Drink now. 9,000 cases made.—*J.L.*

LA FOLLETTE Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Sangiacomo Vineyard 2013 Score: 88 | \$38

Delivers a mix of green apple, floral, white peach and nectarine flavors. Fresh, rich and vibrant, if somewhat less focused on the finish. Drink now. 890 cases made.—*J.L.*

TERLATO Chardonnay Russian River Valley 2014 Score: 88 | \$30

Clean, pure and balanced, with a range of smooth white peach, butterscotch, anise and cedar notes. A little edgy in texture, ending with a strong aftertaste. Drink now. 5,500 cases made.—*J.L.*

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