

# Forbes

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## New Releases From California And Oregon - MacRostie, Far Niente, Abbot's Passage And Argyle



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[Food & Drink](#)

*I write about wine (and sometimes food) from around the world.*



**Steve MacRostie, founder and proprietor, MacRostie Winery, Sonoma**

PHOTO COURTESY MACROSTIE WINERY

**MacRostie** - This winery in Carneros Sonoma was founded in 1987 by Steve MacRostie, one of the early proponents of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in Sonoma County. The winery today offers numerous examples of these two varietals from single vineyards located in several AVA in Sonoma, such as Russian River Valley, Petaluma Gap and Sonoma Coast, as well as other regions in California. Heidi Bridenhagen is the winemaker, and is involved with MacRostie in finding the best vineyards from which they can source outstanding fruit each season.

**Pinot Noir Rosé 2019 (Russian River Valley)** - Deep orange/coral hue; aromas of orange jelly and watermelon. Medium-bodied, this has impressive texture and a dry finish with notable persistence. I love the complexity and character of this rosé! Enjoy over the next two years. **Excellent**

**Chardonnay Sangiacomo Vineyard 2018 (Carneros)** - Light yellow; aromas of vanilla, golden apples, mango and pineapple. Medium-full, with good concentration, this offers good freshness and pleasant tropical fruit, but lacks complexity. Good acidity, moderate wood notes. Enjoy over the next 2-3 years. **Very Good**

**Chardonnay Mirabelle Vineyard 2018 (Russian River Valley)** - Bright, light yellow; inviting aromas of lemon zest, red apples, and saffron with a subtle note of honey. Medium-full with very good concentration. Lengthy finish, very good acidity, excellent varietal purity, impressive complexity and balance. The wood notes are nicely integrated and the overall wine is very appealing and delicious. Lengthy finish with subtle notes of almond in the finish. Enjoy over the next 3-5 years. **Outstanding**

**Pinot Noir Hellenthal Vineyard 2017 (Fort Ross - Seaview)** - Delicate garnet; red cherry, strawberry, beet, delicate wood. Medium-full with very

good concentration. Subdued style, nicely balanced, but I'd prefer a bit more fruit definition. 3-5 years. **Very Good**

**Pinot Noir Rodgers Creek 2017 (Petaluma Gap)** - Delicate garnet; cola, Bing cherry, marjoram. Medium-full, impressive complexity, medium-weight tannins, excellent persistence, good acidity and a nice sense of finesse. Enjoy over the next 5-7 years. **Excellent**

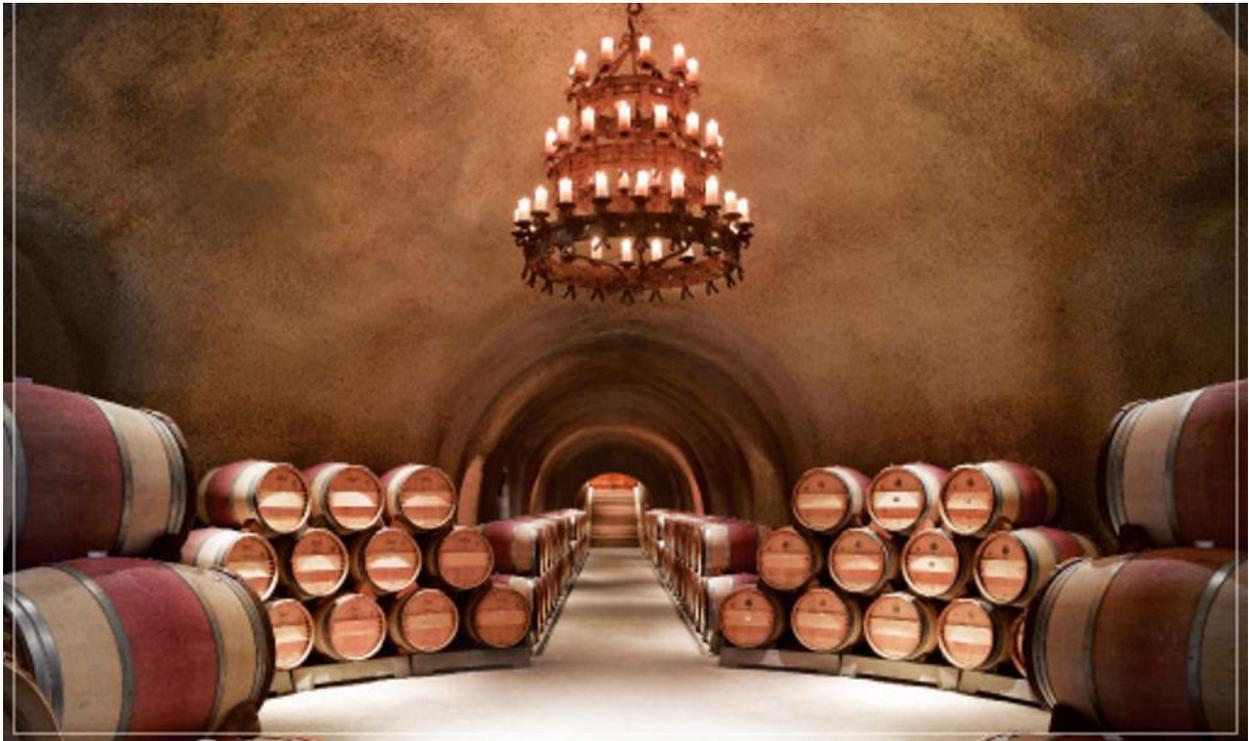
**Abbot's Passage** - Abbot's Passage is a line of small-lot wines from the Gundlach Bundschu winery of Sonoma, specifically from sixth-generation family member Katie Bundschu.

**Sightline 2018 (Clarksburg)** - Sightline is a blend of 80% Chenin Blanc and 20% Verdejo; Verdejo is most famously known as the leading white variety of Spain's Rueda region. The fruit is sourced from the Heringer Estates Vineyard in Clarksburg. Light yellow; aromas of green apple, green melon and a hint of mustard seed. Medium-bodied, this is fresh and nicely balanced with very good acidity and a clean, elegant finish. Straightforward and a bit light on the palate, this nonetheless is a well made white meant for tapas or lighter shellfish preparations. Enjoy over the next 1-2 years. The \$35 price tag reflects the limited production of 180 cases. **Very Good**

**Tri-Point 2018 (Fenaughty Vineyard, El Dorado County)** - A co-fermented blend of Viognier (54%) and Syrah (46%); this technique has been made famous by producers of Côte-Rotie in France's Rhone Valley. Deep young garnet; aromas of black plum, anise and molasses. Medium-full, this has ideal ripeness, a lovely texture, moderate tannins, good acidity and low-

key wood notes. Excellent complexity, lovely harmony and notable persistence; this is a wine of charm and finesse. This is very enjoyable now – I would love to pair this with duck breast – and will drink well for 3-5 years. You see this blend from time to time in California; this is among the best versions I have ever tasted. Only 80 cases released. (\$42) **Outstanding**

**Points + Unknown 2016 (Steel Plow Vineyard, Sonoma County)** - A blend of three Rhone varieties: Grenache (48%), Mourvedre (27%) and Syrah (25%). Bright purple; aromas of blackberry, mace and black peppercorn. Medium-full, this is quite ripe with ample wood notes and a rich, moderately tannic finish of very good persistence. This offers impressive complexity, but is a bit over the top, and disjointed now. Try it in 2-3 years. Only 250 cases released (\$60) **Very Good**



Caves at Far Niente Winery, Oakville, Napa Valley

PHOTO COURTESY FAR NIENTE WINERY

**Far Niente** - While Far Niente was founded as a winery in the Napa Valley in the 19th century, it had gone out of business during Prohibition. In 1979, Gil Nickel purchased the property, and began to make wine again here from the 1982 vintage, with releases of Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay. The winery has become one of the most highly acclaimed of all Napa estates over the past three decades. Far Niente also has sister wineries: Nickel and Nickel, that produces single vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, and En Route, a producer of Pinot Noir from the Russian River Valley.

**Far Niente “Bella Union” Cabernet Sauvignon 2017 (Napa Valley)** - Bright, deep ruby red; aromas of black currant, black plum, anise and purple iris. Medium-full, this offers ripe, forward black fruit, rich, round tannins, good acidity and very good persistence and a clean finish. While this will offer more complexity in another 2 or 3 years, this is elegant enough to enjoy now with prime rib or filet mignon. **Very Good**

**Far Niente Cabernet Sauvignon 2017 (Napa Valley)** Deep ruby red; light purple; aromas of blackcurrant and baking spices. Medium-full with very good concentration. Refined tannins, balanced acidity, well integrated wood notes and very good complexity. This is a bit forward, which is understandable given the very warm temperatures of the 2017 growing season, but the wine is nicely balanced, even if it lacks some persistence. Best in another 3-5 years, with peak drinking in 7-10 years. **Very Good**

**Nickel and Nickel Cabernet Sauvignon John C. Sullenger Vineyard 2017 (Oakville, Napa Valley)** - Bright ruby red; aromas of red currant,

wild cherry and a hint of milk chocolate. Medium-full with excellent depth of fruit, this is ripe and forward with ample wood notes. There is impressive structure, well balanced tannins, balanced acidity and very good persistence. This will certainly be better in another 3-5 years, and while it is not as harmonious as with previous vintages, this is an impressive wine. Peak in 10-12 years. **Excellent**

**Far Niente “En Route” Pinot Noir “Les Pommiers” 2017 (Russian River Valley)** Beautiful, bright young garnet; aromas of Bing cherry, a hint of cola, marjoram and carnation. Medium-full, this is a richly flavored Pinot Noir with impressive varietal character and a distinct sense of place. Medium-weight tannins and good acidity along with ample wood notes and a touch of heat in the finish. The subtleties of this wine are somewhat diminished by the excessive wood notes and slightly high alcohol (14.5%). Enjoy over the next 3-7 years. **Very Good**



Harvest for Argyle in the Willamette Valley

PHOTO COURTESY ARGYLE WINERY

**Argyle** - Located in the cool Willamette Valley, Argyle produced their first wines - sparkling wines in 1987. They have received excellent press for their bubbly, as well as their various examples of Pinot Noir from various wine zones in Oregon.

**Argyle Pinot Noir Rosé 2019 (Willamette Valley)** - Bright, orange/blush color; aromas of watermelon, orange hard candy and orange roses. Medium-full, this offers tasty orange and pink grapefruit flavors with very good acidity and finishes dry. Very well made, and quite appealing, enjoy over the next 1-2 years. **Very Good**

**Argyle Riesling “Nuthouse” 2018 (Eola-Amity Hills)** - Light yellow with a hint of copper; aromas of melon, apricot and peony. Medium-ful with very good concentration. Very good balancing acidity, notable persistence and varietal purity. Impressive harmony, with a round, elegant mid-palate. Enjoy over the next 4-6 years. **Excellent**

**Argyle Pinot Noir 2018 (Willamette Valley)** - Bright, deep young garnet; aromas of sour cherry, oregano and marjoram. Medium-bodied with good depth of fruit and ripeness, Moderate wood notes, good acidity and distinct brown spice notes in the finish. Enjoy over the next 3-5 years. Good Value at \$27. **Very Good**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomhyland/2020/05/27/new-releases-from-california-and-oregonmacrostie-far-niente-abbots-passage-and-argyle/#251e67947e2e>