

**2013 Melville Chardonnay Estate
Verna's Vineyard**

The 2013 Chardonnay Estate Verna's Vineyard is another outstanding release of this cuvee that represents a terrific value. Giving up classic apple tart, melon, spice and a touch of honey, it's medium to full-bodied, rounded and nicely textured, with lots to like. Barrel fermented and aged six months in neutral oak, drink it over the coming 2-3 years.

Greg Brewer is the genius behind these brilliant wines from the Sta. Rita Hills in California's Santa Barbara County. I am continually blown away by what they are able to put in bottle, and if you factor in price, these are no-brainer purchases. Looking at their Chardonnays, they release two cuvees; the stainless-steel aged Clone 76 Inox - which is their top cuvee - and the Estate Verna's (this site is located just north of the Sta. Rita Hills). The idea with the Inox release is the top grapes don't need any makeup, hence it sees no wood whatsoever and is raised completely in stainless steel (Inox means stainless steel in French). Nevertheless, I always prefer the Verna's Vineyard, which is barrel fermented and aged in neutral oak. They release a number of single-vineyard Pinot Noirs, which in 2013 were harvested between mid to late September and early October. Most see a healthy ...

- Jeb Dunnuck (August, 2015)

**2014 Melville Chardonnay Clone
76 Inox**

Brought up all in stainless steel, the 2014 Chardonnay Clone 76 Inox is the estate's top Chardonnay that's a vineyard selection that sees no new oak or wood of any kind. It sports a racy bouquet of mint, citrus rind, green tea and hints of lemon to go with a medium-bodied, balance and nicely texture feel on the palate. The nose cuts like a razor blade, but the palate is more rounded than you'd think. I still prefer the straight Verna's cuvee, but this is a solid and certainly interesting Chardonnay.

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**2013 Melville Pinot Noir Estate
Verna's Vineyard**

Coming from the estate Verna's Vineyard in the Sta. Rita Hills and 60% destemmed, the 2013 Pinot Noir Estate Verna's Vineyard was fermented in 1.5 ton open-top stainless-steel fermenters before aging 11 months all in neutral oak. It offers pretty and complex notes of strawberries, raspberry, crushed flowers and damp underbrush on the nose. Medium-bodied, elegant and nicely fruited, it has solid precision and focus. In short, this is a terrific Pinot Noir that has lots of character and will drink nicely for 4-5 years.

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2013 Melville Syrah Verna's

Another blockbuster is the 2013 Syrah Verna's, which comes from a vineyard located north of the Sta. Rita Hills, near Los Alamos. It was 70% destemmed and aged 10 months in neutral oak. It reveals terrific notes of cassis, peppered meats, blackberries, licorice and wood smoke to go with a full-bodied, ripe, yet beautifully balanced and layered feel on the palate. Given all the Syrahs and Pinot Noirs from Santa Barbara going for three times the price, the quality here is remarkable. In short, it's a no-brainer that will drink nicely for at least another 4-6 years. Unfortunately, this will be the last vintage from this vineyard for Melville.

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2013 Melville Pinot Noir Block M

A very complete, balanced red, the 2013 Pinot Noir Block M was just partially destemmed (20%) and aged 14 months in neutral oak. It has a darker slant to its fruit with lots of black cherry, licorice, pepper/stem and forest floor emerging from the glass. These flow to a rich, masculine Pinot that has brilliant mid-palate depth, a seamless texture and building tannin that emerges on the finish. Give it a year or two and enjoy bottles through 2025.

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2013 Melville Pinot Noir Clone 115 Indigene

More pure and energetic than the straight Sta. Rita Hills release, the 2013 Pinot Noir Clone 115 Indigene offers a medium-bodied, elegant and beautifully balanced style to go with classic Sta. Rita Hills spice, savory herbs, dusty soil and sweet black cherry fruits. About as classic as it gets from the region, with nicely integrated acidity and a great finish, it's hard to resist already, but should cruise for 7-8 years in the cellar.

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2013 Melville Pinot Noir Estate

One of the best values in Pinot Noir out there is Melville's 2013 Pinot Noir Estate and it overdelivers in just about every vintage. Firing on all cylinders on this occasion, with complex red fruits, rose petal and sous bois aromas and flavors all soaring from the glass, it's medium-bodied, ripe and expansive, with lots of Sta. Rita character, integrated acidity and a clean, nicely focused finish. Mostly destemmed (60%) and aged 11 months in neutral oak, it's a beauty to buy by the case and enjoy over the coming 4-5 years.

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2013 Melville Pinot Noir Sandy's

I think one of the top two wines in Melville's Pinot Noir lineup, the 2013 Pinot Noir Sandy's is drop-dead gorgeous. Similar to the Terraces, with its sweet bouquet of raspberry and black raspberry fruits, toasted bread, spice-box and licorice, it hits the palate with lots of fruit and texture, yet is always elegant, seamless and incredibly layered, with sweet tannin lending length and cut to the finish. Mostly destemmed and aged 14 months in neutral oak, this is a big, fruit-filled Pinot that will be better this time next year and knock your socks off through 2025.

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2013 Melville Pinot Noir Terraces

Still slightly closed, with a focused, streamlined feel on the palate, the 2013 Pinot Noir Terraces offers a pretty and lively bouquet of sweet berry fruits, spring flowers, mint and sappy herbs. Medium-bodied, elegant and pretty, with a core of sweet fruit, it never really expands on the palate, but finished with superb length. Reminding me of a Solomon Hills release given its vibrant fruit profile, it certainly gives up plenty of pleasure, but it will benefit from a year or so in the cellar.

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2013 Melville Syrah Estate

Another wine that represents one of the top values around, the 2013 Syrah Estate offers incredible notes of liquid smoke, ground pepper, olive tapenade and tons of black fruits. Medium to full-bodied, ripe, textured and concentrated, it still has remarkable purity and precision. Coming from the Sta. Rita Hills and aged 10 months in neutral oak, it's a gorgeous wine that readers shouldn't miss.

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2013 Melville Syrah Donna's

The top Syrah is the 2013 Syrah Donna's. Made from 100% Syrah, 60% destemmed and aged 12 months in neutral oak, it's a full-bore, decadent, low acid and unctuously textured beauty that knocks it out of the park with its salty, bloody, peppery, black olive, violet and dark fruit-driven bouquet. Complex, layered and decadent, with no hard edges and a massive amount of texture and raw material, it's a heavenly Syrah to enjoy anytime over the coming 6-7 years.

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