



Whitcraft Winery

as reviewed by Matt Kettmann

February and April 2018

2016 Presqu'ile Vineyard Chardonnay (Santa Maria Valley)

Fresh Asian pear, lemon blossoms and honeysuckle make for an enjoyable nose on this bottling from a very coastally influenced vineyard just east of Santa Maria. The acidity on the palate is super racy and vibrant, carrying flavors of chalk and lime pith that sizzle long and deep. **(94 points)**

2016 Pence Ranch Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills)

Very chalky on the nose in a Chablis-like style, this bottling, which is made in a warehouse just blocks from the beach in Santa Barbara, shows aromas of lemon blossom and Gravenstein apple. It's extremely tightly wound on the sip, with a savory salt character as well as lemon balm flavors. It's texturally intriguing and compelling. **(93 points)**

2016 The Mind Behind's Vineyard Le Bon Climat Chardonnay (Santa Maria Valley)

Broad aromas of Asian pear, yellow flowers, Stargazer lily and wet stone show on the nose of this bottling. The palate offers nectarine and Pink Lady apple, and it remains very tightly wound long after opening, which indicates a long life ahead. **(92 points)**

2016 Zotovich Vineyard Chardonnay (Sta. Rita Hills)

Crisp and light aromas of squeezed lemon, Pink Lady apple and Rainier cherry prove soft and supple on the nose. The palate is almost effervescent in acidity and crispness, showing lime peel flavors and a chalky backbone. **(91 points)**

2016 Pence Ranch Gamay (Sta. Rita Hills)

This wine, which sold out via Instagram before it was even released, is a fascinating conveyer of soil flavors. Extremely herbal on the nose, it smells like a freshly dug, muddy hole surrounded by towering pines and mossy ground, with exotic berries in the background. The palate is woody, full of dank mushrooms, wild berries and green peppercorns. **(Editors' Choice, 94 points)**

2016 Pence Ranch Mt. Eden Clone Monopole Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills)

Second-generation vintner Drake Whitcraft is diligently honing a delicate, fresh style of Pinot Noir, which shows expertly in this bottling. Aromas of crushed violet, under-ripe cherry, tarragon and spearmint decorate the nose. The palate combines raspberry with crushed mint, proving extremely soft and feminine. It would be easy to drink the whole bottle. **(Editors' Choice, 94 points)**

2016 Pence Ranch Clone 115 Pinot Noir (Sta. Rita Hills)

Mulberry, forest floor, moss, thyme, incense and rainbow peppercorns show on the dynamic nose of this bottling by second-generation vintner Drake Whitcraft. Rounded boysenberry fruit meets with herbal freshness on the palate, which is slightly richer than many of his bottlings but still very much in the lighter house style. The tannins are sturdy. **(93 points)**

2016 Stolpman Vineyard Grenache (Ballard Canyon)

Drake Whitcraft is becoming a master at weaving a wide array of sensory experiences into very light wines. This starts with candied pomegranate, fennel bulb and cracked white pepper on the nose, then hits the palate with bright snappy red fruits, heavy peppery spice and a penetratingly bright acid profile. It goes down easy, but with complexity. **(93 points)**

2016 My Friend Matts Vineyard Syrah (Los Olivos District)

Lilacs and plump blackberry fruit meet with dried sage, fennel and a hint of green peppercorn on the lively fresh nose of this bottling by second generation vintner Drake Whitcraft. The palate is peppery, fresh and light, with cracked black pepper, rounded purple fruits and a strong acidity proving easy to quaff. **(92 points)**

