

The Undiscovered California – 2016 Edition

The pace at which new projects pop up in California remains nearly impossible to keep up with. Once again, I was deeply impressed with a number of new projects I tasted over the last year. Most of the wineries in this article have only released a few vintages, while some are literally just getting started. This year's Undiscovered has something for every palate; from cutting edge sparkling wines, to cool-climate Chardonnays, Pinot and Syrahs, all the way to Napa Valley Cabernets.

Michael Cruse is pushing the limit of what is possible with sparkling wine in California. The same is true of Morgan Twain-Peterson and Chris Cottrell of Bedrock with their new project, Under the Wire. Ferren, Lombardi, Chamboulé, Model Farm and Raen are all Sonoma-based wineries that have just released or are about to release their first vintage. Trail Marker makes distinctive wines from sites in Mendocino County and the Santa Cruz Mountains.



Christian Moueix's Ulysses Vineyard, Oakville

In Napa Valley, MacDonald, Dakota Shy, Ulysses and Di Costanzo have gotten off to a strong start. All four have deep roots in Napa Valley. The MacDonald family has been farming grapes in To-Kalon for decades. Right across the road, Tom Garrett makes the wines for Detert, his family's estate, as well as his new project, Dakota Shy. Garrett and brothers Alex and Graeme MacDonald are second cousins and their vineyards were once a single property. Christian Moueix has been making superb wines at Dominus for many years. Ulysses, a small vineyard on the southern edge of Oakville next to Vine Hill Ranch and Missouri Hopper, is his latest project. Massimo Di Costanzo hasn't had the head start some of his colleagues have had, but he is massively talented and deeply passionate about his craft. And his resumé couldn't be any better.



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Dakota Shy

Dakota Shy is one of the most exciting young projects I have tasted in some time. Getting something new started in Napa Valley is not at all easy considering the cost of fruit, intense competition and increasingly strict regulatory environment, all of which is a testament to what Todd Newman and Tom Garrett have achieved thus far. Newman acquired his love of Napa Valley working in restaurants, including the iconic, now-closed Martini House. Newman brings passion, work ethic and humility - a pretty good mix in my book - to Dakota Shy. Newman was selling wine out of the tasting room at Revana where he met Garrett. In 2008, Newman cobbled together his savings, bought some fruit and founded Dakota Shy. Garrett's family owns the famed Detert Vineyard, which old maps show lie within the boundaries of To-Kalon. Garrett honed his craft at a number of stops, including Turley (where he met Thomas Brown), Phelps, Mondavi and Revana. Today, Garrett makes the Detert wines, which, as Vinous readers know, are terrific. General Manager Ryan Clark, whom I first met at Kelly Fleming a few years back, rounds out the team. These new releases are impressive, to say the least. The Napa Valley Cabernet is joined by bottlings from the Moulds Vineyard in Oak Knoll and the Social Currency, which is a blend of fruit from two sites in Mt. Veeder and Saint Helena. A third as yet unnamed Cabernet from a site on Howell Mountain joins the range in 2014. Stylistically, the wines are what I would describe as contemporary Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignons that offer a compelling interplay of richness and structure, with perhaps a slight leaning towards the more extroverted end of the spectrum. Imagine the Detert wines with a little more kick. Readers who have a chance won't want to miss these fabulous Cabernets.

From The Undiscovered California – 2016 Edition (Feb 2016) by Antonio Galloni

⚙	Vintage	(Hover for Commentary)		Tasting		Author	Drinking Window	Release Price	Review Date
		Producer	Name	Notes	Score				
2013	Dakota Shy	Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley)	The 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley) is a blend of sources throughout the valley. Dark cherry, plum, mocha, spice and menthol are some of the signatures. Drink this forward, open-knit Cabernet Sauvignon over the next few years. This is an especially approachable Cabernet Sauvignon with plenty of near and medium-term drinking. -- Antonio Galloni	90	Antonio Galloni	2016 - 2024	\$85.00	Feb 2016	
2013	Dakota Shy	Cabernet Sauvignon Moulds Family Vineyard	Dakota Shy's 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Moulds Vineyard, from an increasingly well-known site in the Oak Knoll District, is striking. Lavender, cloves, menthol, spices and new leather are all pushed forward. The flavors are dark and powerful in this voluptuous Cabernet Sauvignon. Here too, the soft contours make the 2013 quite approachable. For a wine of its size, the 2013 possesses remarkable freshness and finesse. There is so much to like here. -- Antonio Galloni	94	Antonio Galloni	2019 - 2033	\$125.00	Feb 2016	
2013	Dakota Shy	Cabernet Sauvignon Social Currency	The 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Social Currency is the biggest and richest of these three Cabernets. Raspberry jam, cherry confit, spice and new leather meld together in a pliant, sweet Cabernet Sauvignon. Floral, savory and mineral-drenched notes appear over time, adding complexity and nuance, but this is a big boy Cabernet that will appeal most to readers who like intense, extroverted Napa Valley wines. Layers of spice and torrefaction round out the sumptuous finish. The Social Currency is a blend of Mt. Veeder and Saint Helena fruit. Bottled only in magnum. -- Antonio Galloni	95	Antonio Galloni	2020 - 2033	\$425.00	Feb 2016	
2014	Dakota Shy	Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley)	The 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley) is a rare wine that may be better than its 2013 sibling. Violets, lavender, mint, crème de cassis, blueberry jam and	(90-92)	Antonio Galloni		\$95.00	Feb 2016	

graphite notes give the wine its sense of vibrancy and energy. Plush yet also delineated and pulsating with energy, the 2014 is shaping up to be a real beauty.

-- Antonio Galloni

2014	Dakota Shy	<u>Cabernet Sauvignon Moulds Family Vineyard</u>	The 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon Moulds Vineyard is deep, inky and concentrated, but as always, there is a good measure of freshness. Crème de cassis, mint, violets, lavender and blueberry jam saturate the palate as this heady, exotic Cabernet Sauvignon shows off its inviting personality.	(91-94)	Antonio Galloni	\$125.00	Feb 2016
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-- Antonio Galloni

2014	Dakota Shy	<u>Cabernet Sauvignon Social Currency</u>	One of the more open wines in this range, the 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon Social Currency wraps around the palate with striking depth and nuance. Softer contours and a supple feel contrast the more structured style of the Moulds, while the fruit tends towards the end of the spectrum. The 2014 is a blend of fruit from sites in Saint Helena and Mt. Veeder.	(91-94)	Antonio Galloni	\$495.00	Feb 2016
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-- Antonio Galloni

2014	Dakota Shy	<u>Cabernet Sauvignon (Name TBD)</u>	An addition to the lineup, the 2014 Cabernet Sauvignon (Name TBD) emerges from a well-known site on Howell Mountain. It is also the ripest and most concentrated of these wines. Graphite, smoke, lavender and layers of inky purplish fruit hit the palate as this relentless, tannic Cabernet Sauvignon shows off its Howell Mountain DNA. Today, the tannins are imposing. I imagine this dark, brooding Cabernet will require considerable patience. Today, it is pretty impressive, especially considering it is Dakota Shy's first wine off this vineyard.	(90-93)	Antonio Galloni	\$195.00	Feb 2016
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-- Antonio Galloni