

# BARRA

*of* MENDOCINO

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<b>Proprietors:</b>	Martha Barra
<b>Winery Address/Phone:</b>	7051 N. State Street Redwood Valley, CA 95470 Ph: 707.485.0322 Fx: 707.485.6784
<b>Head Winemaker:</b>	Randy Meyer
<b>Sales &amp; Marketing Contact:</b>	Shelley Maly (Martha's daughter)
<b>Finance &amp; Operations:</b>	Shawn Harmon (Martha's son)
<b>Vineyards/Certifications:</b>	Redwood Valley Vineyards-175 acres (CCOF certified in 1989) Bella Collina Vineyards-27 acres (CCOF certified in 2001) Vineyards At BARRA of Mendocino Winery-50 acres (CCOF certified 2007) Redwood Valley Vineyards II -50 acres purchased in 2014 (CCOF certified 1994)
<b>Custom Crush Facility:</b>	<b>Redwood Valley Cellars</b> 2.8 million gallon crushing and storage facility servicing the North Coast
<b>Winery:</b>	<b>BARRA of Mendocino Winery</b> Set on 50 acres of beautiful vineyard surroundings planted with Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel, the BARRA of Mendocino Winery & Event Center is an architectural phenomenon that dates back to the 1970's when it was built as the tasting room for Weibel Champagne Cellars (the building itself resembles an upside down champagne glass!). The sprawling 5,000 square foot tasting room highlights 40 foot ceilings, a circular tasting bar, indoor fountain and gift shop.
<b>Brands:</b>	BARRA of Mendocino, Girasole Vineyards, CORO Mendocino
<b>Varietals:</b>	Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Muscat Canelli, Pinot Noir, Sangiovese, Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petite Sirah



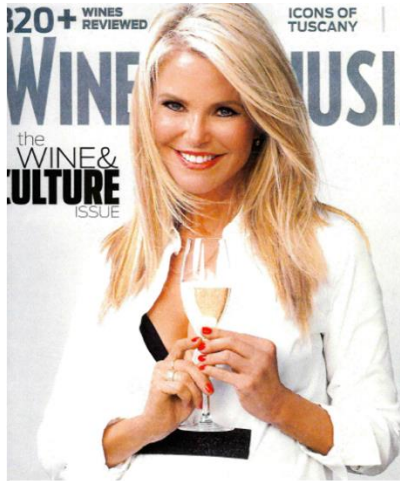
## CHARLIE BARRA LEGACY TIMELINE

- 1926** Charles Barra born in Calpella, California to first generation Italian immigrants Antonio Barra and Marie Rovera
- 1946** Senior year in high school, Charlie farmed wine grapes which earned him \$10,000.00 (3 x as much as the principal!)
- 1952** Served in U. S. Army from 1952-1954
- 1955** Planted 175 acres of prime wine grape vineyards in Redwood Valley (Redwood Valley Vineyards)
- 1960** One of first wine grape growers to use sprinkler system water for frost protection in vineyards. Constructed five water reservoirs for storing winter water runoff to use for frost protection and irrigation. Pioneered the use of grape gondolas for in-field harvesting of grapes, making the use of wooden boxes in the field obsolete.
- 1963** Founder and past president of California North Coast Grape Growers Association and board member for 41 years. Lobbied for a variety of grower causes, including varietal percentage change in wines from 51% to 75%, the first appellation designation in the U.S, and for pricing regulations that said a grower and winery had to agree on prices before grapes were crushed
- 1965** Appointed to Mendocino County Planning Commission
- 1968** Appointed by then Governor Reagan to the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
- 1969** Founder and chairman first two years of St. Mary's Mardi Gras fundraiser
- 1974** Planted 300 acres of vineyard in Potter Valley and Ukiah Valley
- 1975** Again appointed to Mendocino County Planning Commission
- 1976** Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Limited Partnership which owned Souverain Winery through 1985
- 1980** Acted as advisor to Bank of America on agricultural lending. Married Martha Barra
- 1988** Founded St. Mary's School Foundation, serving as its president for 21 years
- 1989** Officially converted all vineyards to organic farming, following the practice of using no pesticides, insecticides or herbicides. Certified and inspected each year by California Certified Organic Farmers
- 1992** Invented radio-controlled fishing bobber, patented by U. S. Patent Office
- 1996** Purchased 50% interest in Redwood Valley Cellars, a 2.5 million gallon custom crush and storage facility located in Redwood Valley, California
- 1997** Began producing premium wines and marketing under the label of *BARRA of Mendocino*
- 2000** Planted 20 acres of Petite Sirah and Zinfandel vineyards on eastern hills near Lake Mendocino (Bella Collina)
- 2003** Developed other wine labels called *Girasole Vineyards* and *59<sup>th</sup> Harvest* and developed national as well as international wine sales channels
- 2006** Charlie Barra turns 80 and completes his 61<sup>st</sup> harvest!
- 2007** Purchased remaining 50% interest in Redwood Valley Cellars to become sole owner of 2.5 million gallon crushing and storage facility servicing the North Coast
- 2009** *Girasole Vineyards* Pinot Noir wins Wine & Spirits "100 Best Buys of the Year" award
- 2011** Charlie Barra honored by Slow Foods San Francisco as a pioneer for organic grape farming in the United States
- 2012** Launched redesign of *Girasole Vineyards* label and released first Rosé under *BARRA of Mendocino* brand
- 2013** Charlie Barra celebrates his 68<sup>th</sup> Harvest in Mendocino County, and is honored in story by Tim Fish of Wine Spectator
- 2014** Barra family purchases 50 acres of certified organic vineyard adjacent to home ranch in Redwood Valley
- 2016** Planted 5,900 vines of Pinot Blanc and 14,000 vines of Cabernet Sauvignon
- 2017** *Girasole Vineyards* named a Wine Enthusiast "Value Brand Of The Year"
- 2018** Mendocino County Fair Wine Competition establishes the "Charlie Barra Best of Show White Wine" designation
- 2019** Charlie Barra passes away, June 29, 2019 at the age of 92

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# WINE ENTHUSIAST

the WINE & CULTURE ISSUE



CHRISTIE BRINKLEY DISHES ON HER PROSECCO PROJECT  
JOHN MALKOVICH IN

## Petite Sirah's Grand Arrival

BY JIM GORDON  
PHOTOS BY JESSICA CHOU

Five California winemakers coax ever-better varietal wines from the never-shy grape.

**P**etite Sirah is the black sheep of California wines that never broke out into mass popularity on its own. Simultaneously, it's well loved by winemakers and food eaters for its unusually dark color, its plump blueberry and dark chocolate flavors, and its notoriously slick texture. Botanist François Durif created the grape in France during the late 18th century with seeds from Malbec and joined from an unknown source. It became known as Durif in his honor. California growers began planting it in the 1980s and used the name Petite Sirah to refer to Durif and other dark-skinned grape varieties including Syrah and Zinfandel. The distinctive was cut off the mark, as it turned out. DNA fingerprinting at the University of California, Davis, during the 1990s confirmed that Durif had been derived from Malbecs pollinated by Syrah. California winemakers have long respected the grape as a blending partner with Zinfandel—where it provides a framework of firm, dense tannins to support the Zin's rich fruit notes—as well as other red varieties. While not at all a petite wine, Petite Sirah isn't always a favorite summer, either. The few winemakers featured here have proven this point in recent vintages with rich but comfortably polished wines.

### Martha Barra Barra of Mendocino

Petite Sirah flourished in Mendocino long before the Barres began to grow it, but what this Italian-American family is able to capture in its wines is a near-perfect match between grape and terroir.

"Mendocino does Petite Sirah really well, and I really believe our Petite Sirah is our best wine," says Martha Barra.

As the owner, manager and approver of final blends for the label, Barra continues the work begun by her late husband, Charlie Barra. In 1955, he bought 175 acres of grapes, which has since expanded to more than 300 acres.

For their first vintage as a winery in 1997, Mendocino pioneer John Panducci made the wines. Barra recalls his advice:

"He talked about mouthfeel and balance, how it comes down to those two things," she says. "No one likes to taste or drink a Petite Sirah that sets your teeth on edge. That's where the barrel aging in 30% new French oak comes in, and not releasing the wine before its time."

The Barra of Mendocino Petite Sirah earned high scores for its 2016 and 2017 vintages with deep, dark fruit flavors and creamy texture. Barra credits the Bella Collina Vineyard, perched 1,000 feet above the Ukiah Valley floor with a south-to-southwest exposure. It stays warm enough in the cold winters for orange trees to share the site.

Staff tastings identify the Bella Collina lots as the best Petite Sirah from their properties, says Barra. It's separated out to make a few hundred precious cases of the estate-grown varietal wine. The vineyard has been certified as organic for almost 20 years. It's irrigated lightly and able to provide good ripeness without extreme alcohol. The family also grows Petite Sirah in other sites, but winemaker Randy Meyer uses those



"Mendocino does Petite Sirah really well, and I really believe our Petite Sirah is our best wine."

# 12 California Red Wines Perfect for Grilling

BY [WINE ENTHUSIAST](#)



**Barra of Mendocino 2017 Estate Grown Petite Sirah (Mendocino); \$22, 93 points.**

Smooth and sophisticated, this wine shows great polish and suppleness despite the firm tannins that come with the variety. Dense flavors of blueberry and blackberry are lightly accented by vanilla and cinnamon, while a creamy mouthfeel soothes the palate. Best through 2029. **Editors' Choice.** -Jim Gordon

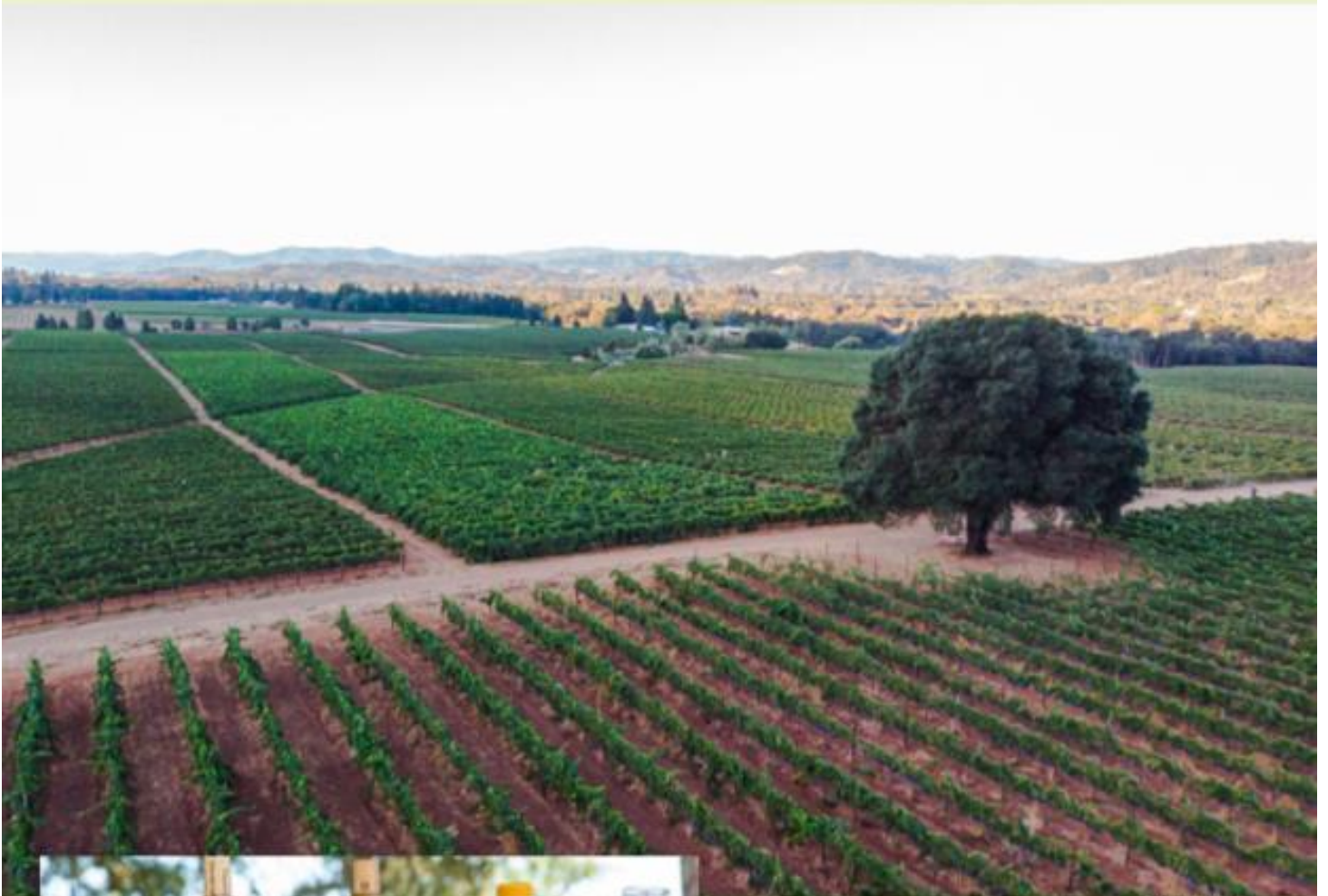
Getty

VARIETAL FOCUS:

# PINOT BLANC

## MENDOCINO COUNTY

Thirty years ago, little Pinot Blanc was grown in California, just 2,500 acres. Since then, things have gotten much worse: Currently, only 425 acres are remain throughout the state, and Mendocino County has just 25 total acres of Pinot Blanc.



GIRASOLE VINEYARDS

Barra Girasole of Mendocino Redwood Valley Vineyards

VARIETAL FOCUS:

## PINOT BLANC

### GIRASOLE VINEYARDS

2018 Girasole Pinot Blanc

Randy Meyer is responsible for making wine from more than 9,000 tons of grapes annually at Barra Redwood Valley Cellars. A graduate of UC Davis with a degree in fermentation science, he worked at Korbel Champagne Cellars for 23 years. He served as senior winemaker with Draxton Wines for eight years. In June 2019, Meyer started as director of winemaking and operations for BARRA of Mendocino/Girasole Vineyards, as well as the Barra Redwood Valley Cellars' custom crush facility.



and cultivation is performed with a hoe plow. No pesticides, herbicides or non-organic fertilizers are used in the vineyard. Pomace is turned to compost and returned to the vineyards. We irrigate to keep the vines healthy and green, cut canes late to facilitate picking and harvest yields about 4 tons per acre.

"We pick based on the sugar balance but watch TA, pH and Brix progression during ripening. We look for a viscous pulp and the ease of berry removal from pedicel. We prefer a riper style and wait for flavors to develop, knowing full well that we will need to make acid additions, especially to the Melon Clone grapes.

"Grapes are hand-picked and field-sorted. We destem straight to the press without crushing but add 20 ppm SO<sub>2</sub>. Juice is cold-settled for 48 hours at 50° F and then racked. Bentonite is added at 2 pounds per 1,000 gallons after racking. Low solids are very important because we can't afford problems with H<sub>2</sub>S due to being organic. We make our acid additions as much as 3 grams per liter if necessary. We use Maurivin AWRI 350 yeast for its high ester character. Fermalid 2133 organic nutrient is added at 20° Brix. We use Laffort Freshatom to help lower our SO<sub>2</sub> usage. Wine ferments at 60° F to 62° F. These higher temperatures give us better mouthfeel.

"Wine is fermented in stainless steel tanks. No oak is used in the process. Post primary fermentation, the wine is racked off heavy lees.



#### ACCORDING TO MEYER:

"Our goal for Girasole is to produce a fresh, crisp, brightly balanced version of Pinot Blanc at a reasonable price point. We get flavors of apple, melon and citrus by picking a bit riper. There is no oak influence, and we strive for good mouthfeel and balance—a wine that is neither too sweet nor too dry and finishes with a crisp, dry finish.

"Girasole comes from a vineyard that has Pinole and Redvine soil. It sits at an elevation of 824 feet. Rows are planted using 6 foot by 10 foot spacing; all vines are on St. George rootstock. The old vines are unknown clones but believed to be the very aromatic Melon Clone (which is not a true Pinot Blanc). The 8 acres planted in 2015 use Clone 54 or 55. The vineyard is irrigated and certified by the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF).

"There is a tremendous amount of hand work done on the vines, including crown-suckering, shoot-thinning, shoot-positioning, fruit-dropping and leaf-pulling. Vines are vertically trellised. Cover crops are planted in the fall,

We shoot for a residual sugar in the range of 2 to 3 grams per liter. Cold stability is achieved by chilling the wine with an addition of KHT. Heat stability is achieved using more bentonite. Wine is cross-flow- and sterile-filtered. Bottles are sealed by screw cap and aged for two weeks before release."

#### TASTING NOTES

**MEYER:** There is a considerable amount of stone fruit with that minerality, which defines Pinot Blanc. It has unripe apricot, some pear notes and almond husk. There is not a lot of stone fruit or tropical character, but there is some pear. The acidity is firm, and the RS adds mouthfeel and weight.

**MCCONNELL:** I get more orange and lemon on this. This has less acid than the Navarro, and that ends the finish more quickly. There is some green pear and some stone fruit. It has higher alcohol. It is clean and refreshing.

**ELLEN:** It is a riper style. We've moved into dry pear and orange zest. It is not cloying, but there is a definite sweetness that helps the wine finish with a punchy juiciness rather than crisp acidity.

**DUMAYNE:** High SO<sub>2</sub> on the nose. A bit lactic and cheesy. The length is great, and the texture is superb. Some deeper brown apple characters but without oxidative notes. Juicy and mouthwatering with great balance.

**PIERSON:** Bright citrus, mostly lime with apple. Nice acidity. Lovely citrus on the palate with a fresh, bright, acid finish.

**LEHR:** Pale lemon color. Sweet ripe stone fruit aromas with fresh peach, sweet lemon, pear and a hint of fresh herbs. Nice intensity, medium body. Slight astringency on the finish with nectarine lingering on the palate.

**VOIT:** Extremely aromatic and terpene-driven. I would be shocked if this was 100 percent Pinot Blanc. It is citrusy and grapefruity on the palate, but I can taste those terpene characters through on the palate, I think there is Muscat or Gewürztraminer in here. It is bright and acidic, but the fruit is so generous that it presents as sweet, even if the wine is not.

**HOUSEMAN:** I wrote Muscat twice. It has that Juicy Fruit gum thing and fruit cocktail. It tastes like there is some Muscat in here, and it is phenolic as well. It is fruit-forward. It reminds me of a white Alsace blend. It's pretty, and I like it. It has lots of melon with nice acidity, very generous fruit and a tiny bit of heat.

**REBATCH:** It is nicely done, but it is more an aromatic white wine than Pinot Blanc. I enjoyed the wine. It was fresh and clean with pear, peach, white floral and a little apricot. Lots of aromatics that popped. Very clean on the palate with white peach, apricot, jasmine and great citrus. It is well-balanced, a little off-dry, very clean and focused.