

Knights Bridge



Robb Report

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7 Stellar Sonoma Chardonnays to Buy Right Now

This Burgundy varietal thrives in this region and these bottles show it.

By MIKE DESIMONE AND JEFF JENSSEN

A native of Burgundy, Chardonnay thrives in Sonoma County, whose reputation as a U.S. wine region is second only to its nearby neighbor, Napa Valley. An American Viticultural Area in its own right, Sonoma is home to 19 sub-AVAs, 62,000 acres of grapes, 1,800 grape growers, and more than 425 wineries ranging from boutique family-run operations to gigantic corporate operations. Situated to the west of Napa Valley and just a bit larger than Rhode Island, Sonoma's position alongside the Pacific Ocean provides cooling conditions favorable for the cultivation of Chardonnay.

While many interpretations of Chardonnay from Sonoma are the creamy, barrel-aged expressions that wine lovers enjoy and have come to expect, many producers have toned things down a bit and are using a much lighter touch of oak. There seems to be a quite a bit of Sonoma Chardonnay that is labeled as "unfined and unfiltered," two processes that help to remove small particles from wine. Often used in large-production wines, these practices may also remove some delicate aromas or flavors and are less prevalent in small-batch, artisan wines.

Ranging from full bodied and oaky to lean and racy, Sonoma Chardonnay pairs well with a wide variety of foods, from roasted chicken or grilled pork chops to creamy or seafood-based pastas and risottos to chilled raw bar platters. Here are seven Sonoma Chardonnays to drink now.

Knights Bridge 2020 West Block Chardonnay Knights Valley Sonoma California

The 2020 growing season at Knights Bridge started with a warmer January and February which kicked off the cycle a bit earlier than usual. Summer was somewhat mild until a hotter-than-normal August accelerated ripening and allowed for an earlier harvest. Brilliant straw colored in the glass, this elegant Chard has aromas of lemon grass, acacia honey, freshly cut hay, and white citrus blossoms followed by flavors of Meyer lemon, crystalized ginger, and dried Mediterranean herbs.

