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CAROLINAS™

ALMA ROSA WINES ARRIVE IN THE CAROLINAS

by Michael J. Solender

Pioneering winemaker and Santa Barbara wine ambassador, Richard Sanford was in Charlotte this week hosting several wine dinners, tastings and information sessions with retailers, restaurant wine-buyers and local fans of the small – but mighty – California Sta. Rita Hills AVA.

Sanford earned legendary contrarian status when he selected California's south-central Santa Ynez Valley just north of Santa Barbara in the early 70's as the "perfect spot" for pinot noir and chardonnay. Sanford recognized the geographic anomaly of the area's transverse mountain range (east/west facing) that provided "refrigerated sunshine" and made for exceptionally bright and persistent wines.

His vision of the region's potential coupled with more than four decades of premium wine production, landed him in the Vintner's Hall of Fame in Napa Valley, the only Santa Barbara winemaker in its ranks.

"We have a pinot of place," says Sanford, referring to the Santa Rita Hills, "The positioning of the valley hosts onshore winds off the Pacific Ocean, routine almost daily fog during the growing season, and temperatures that peak surprisingly enough at noon rather than later in the day – all yielding special wines."



Sanford is bringing Alma Rosa Vineyards premium wines to the Carolinas with several recent vintages that he notes consumers will find fruit friendly, bright and earthy.

Chardonnay's featured in recent tastings include the 2016 Alma Rosa Sta. Rita Hills El Jabali that wine critic Jeb Dunnuck celebrated with a 93-point rating commenting on the wine's "beautiful perfume of white flowers, white peach and hints of pineapple cream."

Wine Spectator gave Alama Rosa's 2016 Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Bentrack Vineyard 92 points, noting the vintages "powerful structure with plenty of concentrated red currant and berry flavors on the palate."

"Pinot Noir has an elegance about it that many Cab and Merlot drinkers discover after time," says Sanford. "There's a subtlety and length to these wines, that's what I'm hoping people discover."

With small case productions in the 600-1000 range, these vintages are true find on local shelves making a spot on your table or in your cellar a special addition. Alma Rosa's direct to consumer wine club and online purchase options can be explored here: <http://www.almarosawinery.com/>.