

Alma Rosa Winery – Tasting Winemaker Samra Morris’s First New Releases

April 18, 2021



Samra Morris is a young, up-and-coming winemaker in Santa Barbara County. She is also the first woman Bosnia winemaker in the United States. Samra is taking the California wine industry by storm with her first new release of Alma Rosa wines.

Alma Rosa Winery

Alma Rosa Winery produces small production vineyard-designated wines. The vineyards are situated in the Santa Rita Hills of Santa Barbara County. With north-facing slopes and unique terroir, the vineyards benefit from the cool Pacific Ocean breezes that funnel through the mountain range. The estate is comprised of 5 non-contiguous vineyards of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay with a few plots of Syrah and Grenache. The vineyards are farmed sustainably with a total of 38 acres planted on their 628-acre ranch.

The story of Alma Rosa begins in 2005 with founders, Richard and Thekla Sanford. Richard Sanford is a pioneer and legend. In 1970 he was the first to plant Pinot Noir vines in the cool-climate Santa Rita Hills. Today, with Richard's foresight and dedication, the Santa Rita Hills is recognized as one of the greatest terroirs for Pinot Noir in the United States.

Bob and Barb Zorich purchased [Alma Rosa Winery](#) in 2014, making significant investments to elevate the

property. Soon after acquiring Alma Rosa, Bob invested in an additional 38 acres. They have also built a stunning tasting room in Buellton and also have plans to build a winery on the ranch. The Zorich's are committed to creating wines of quality and distinction that express the special terroir of the Sta. Rita Hills.



Samra Morris – Winemaker

Samra Morris is the first woman from Bosnia to produce wines in the United States. Originally from Sarajevo, Samra studied Food Science at The University of Sarajevo, College of Agricultural and Food Sciences from where she holds her Bachelor's and Master's degree. It was during her Master's degree program where she worked closely with her professor in enology and fell in love with wine. She felt a strong passion for wine and realized that she wanted to become a winemaker.



Her opportunity to come to the United States came in 2012 when her husband was transferred to Travis Air Force Base. Luck would have it that the air force base was a 30-minute car ride from Napa Valley. Samra got her first job at Heston Vineyards in their tasting room and later an internship at St. Supery where she spent three harvests and intern for esteemed winemaker Thomas Rivers Brown. Samra says he was an influential figure in her life and played an integral role in the type of wines she wanted to make.

In 2017 Samra joined Free Flow Wines, where learned about wines in kegs and cans and in 2019 Debra Eagle (General Manager) asked her to join Alma Rosa. Samra says she came to beautiful Santa Rita Hills and immediately fell in love with the vineyards and the beautiful beaches of Santa Barbara. She joined Alma Rosa in 2019 and was quickly promoted to winemaker during harvest.

Alma Rosa Wines – Samra Morris’s Newest Releases

Samra stresses that their east-west vineyards benefit from the cool breeze of the Pacific Ocean, which founder Richard Sanford calls “refrigerated sunshine”. The soils are clay loam which preserves the acidity and delivers full-bodied Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

It is very exciting for Samra to share the first release of her wines. With enthusiasm, she says, “her hard

work, knowledge, and passion are now in the bottle and to share these wines with people is one of the most amazing moments in her life”.



The first two wines we tasted were the **2020 Alma Rosa Vin Gris of Pinot Noir** and the **2020 Alma Rosa Grenache Rosé**. The Grenache Rosé has a beautiful apricot color in comparison to the Vin Gris which is pale pink color. Notes of passion fruit and guava are prominent on the Grenache Rosé, which has a touch of salinity that is distinct and pronounced. The Vin Gris has grapefruit and wild strawberries and just a hint of salinity. Both wines were elegant and fresh with great texture and energy.

Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc from Alma Rosa’s La Encantada Vineyards were next in the lineup. La Encantada Vineyards were planted by their founder Richard Sanford in 2000. Both wines are fermented and aged in stainless steel with a bit of new French oak. The **2019 Alma Rosa La Encantada Pinot Blanc** is 70% stainless steel and 30% new French oak compared to **2019 Alma Rosa La Encantada Pinot Gris** which is 74% stainless steel and 26% new French oak. Samra has really captured the beauty and uniqueness of each variety in the bottle. The Pinot Blanc offers notes of lemon and lime. It has bright acidity and a long finish with minerality and salinity. The Pinot Gris has notes of white nectar and white peach note with pronounced acidity.

These four wines are Samra’s first release and are available on the wineries website or in their stunning tasting room. This fall she will release her first Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs. Samra’s goal is to capture the identity, essence, and beauty of Santa Rita Hills in her wines.

Visit Alma Rosa Winery

Be sure to make Alma Rosa Winery your wine destination when in Santa Barbara. With a stunning and modern tasting room in Buellton, you will be able to enjoy their wines in a welcoming tasting room that is comfortably and stylishly furnished.

If an estate visit is more to your tastes, then be sure to visit their historic Ranch House and indulge in a seated tasting. The tasting and tour offer you insight into Alma Rosa's history and winemaking practices.