

Kunin, Cunoise Camp Four Vineyard, Santa Ynez Valley

- Rare monovarietal bottling of traditional Rhone blending grape
- Sourced from the excellent Camp Four vineyard in Los Olivos
- Juicy delicious alternative red that works with a variety of summer fare

The Producer

Seth Kunin embodies all of the aspects we look for in a producer—small production, hand crafted, site specific wines that naturally find their place at the table and consistently outperform their pricepoints. The wines also are a perfect embodiment of him as a winemaker, as they present noted Central Coast vineyards through the prism of the wines of Rhone and Loire valleys that inspired him as a sommelier. It's no wonder that Kunin's Syrahs, Grenache, Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc are found on the best winelists in America.

Owner and winemaker Seth Kunin developed his passion for great wine while working in the restaurant business at Santa Barbara's legendary Wine Cask. The international scope of the wine program led him to fall in love with the food friendly style of French wines and his proximity to the vineyards of Santa Barbara drove him to attempt to make similar wines on his own. Pursuing his dream to make wine he apprenticed at Gainey Vineyard in Santa Ynez Valley. Here he learned the art of winemaking and became intimately familiar with Santa Barbara's terroir. He started Kunin Wines in 1998 with a vision to make authentic expressions of Santa Barbara terroir—with a focus on varietals of the Loire and Rhone valleys. Through his many connections in the wine community, he established partnerships with growers of choice sites for each varietal, allowing him to quickly distinguish his wines for their quality.

The East-West valleys of Santa Barbara provide tremendous diversity of sites. While Pinot and Chardonnay thrive in the coastal areas and Bordeaux varieties flourish in the East, Syrah and Grenache have found their home in the center. Within this center region, Kunin primarily focuses on famous sites including Lerner vineyard in the new Ballard Canyon AVA, Alisos Vineyard in Los Alamos and Jurassic Park and McGinley in Santa Ynez Valley. This area is the sweet spot that is warm enough for Rhone and Loire varieties without losing the crisp acidity that defines his style.

Meticulous farming of great vineyard sites allows Kunin to strike a balance of ripeness and acidity to produce wines of exceptional elegance that will age gracefully and pair well with food. In the cellar, intervention is minimal with oak use rare and mostly used. Kunin believes that the vineyards can tell their own story without much assistance from the winemaker.

While allowing vintages to be uniquely expressed, quality is always paramount, and Kunin lets vintage quality dictate production levels. Annual production is around 5800 cases.

The Wine

You may know that there are 13 authorized varieties in the Chateaneuf du Pape blend but generally most of the attention goes to the big three: Grenache, Syrah and Mourvedre. One of the grapes that plays a key role in the blend is Cunoise. On its own, Cunoise appears unassuming. It is light and delicately flavored compared to its stablemates. In the blend is where this little grape shines. A dash of Cunoise dramatically alters the acid and tannin structure of the blend. Initially, that was the role of this wine, to beef up the blend of the Pape Star red. Sometimes things don't go as planned and the effect was a bit too dramatic so Seth put the wine aside and came back to it after a while to find that it was delicious on its own. This is a juicy delicious red with sneaky structure that is a great patio wine with a slight chill.



Region: Santa Barbara

Appellation: Santa Ynez Valley AVA

Vineyards: Camp Four

Soil: Loam soils

Alcohol: 14.1%

Varietals: 100% Cunoise

Vine age: 2005

Planting system: VSP, cane trained Cordon

Vine density: 1560-4150 vines per acre

Production: 120 cs

Vinification: 100% destemmed into 1-ton open top bins, punched down by hand 2-3 times per day. Pressed and racked into barrel for aging.

Agging: 14 months in neutral (6+ years) French barrels

Tasting Notes: Strawberry and raspberry dominate the palate of this licorice and anise-scented charmer. A pleasant but funky, earthy note rounds out the finish. It is superfriendly with all manner of foods. This is definitely a summer-weight red, and can certainly be enjoyed slightly chilled.

We provide great restaurants and retailers with wines they are proud to serve and keep their guests coming back for more.