

Kunin Pape Star Blonde, Santa Ynez Valley

- New white counterpart to the popular Pape Star blend
 - Sourced from top vineyards in Santa Ynez valley
- Full bodied but refreshingly balanced offering many options with food

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

A new Pape Star is born. In Hollywood when a movie is a big hit you can count the days until the sequel is in the works. This is finally the case with the new Pape Star Blonde, a new take on the wildly popular Pape Star Rhone blend. This wine again follows the lead of the Southern Rhone icon, Chateauneuf du Pape, featuring Grenache in the starring role. In addition to the white Grenache, Roussanne is added to give the wine extra depth and richness. Unlike in France, where white Rhones can often be oily and brooding, the cool coastal breezes of Santa Barbara keep the wine crisp and balanced. This allows the new Pape Star Blonde to shine with a wide array of foods from roast poultry to shellfish and seafood.



Region: Santa Barbara

Appellation: Santa Ynez Valley AVA

Vineyards: Coghlan, Mesa Verde, McGinley

Alcohol: 13.7%

Varietals: 73% Grenache Blanc, 27% Roussanne

Production: 295 cs

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

Aging: 5 months sur lie before racking, filtering and bottling in neutral oak (>6 years)

Tasting Notes: This wine has a bouquet of gardenias and white pepper. On the palate, it has ample weight (thanks to the Roussanne), but does not feel heavy or cloying and finishes cleanly with a hint of spice.

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