

A photograph of three dark glass wine bottles with white labels featuring a floral design and the word 'TYLER' in a stylized font. The bottles are resting on a light-colored wooden surface. The background is dark and out of focus.

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Wine  
source.

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TYLER 2015 VINTAGE RELEASE  
WINE SOURCE EXCLUSIVE

*"Justin Willett made some of the most memorable wines of the 2015 vintage. His Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs are exceptional. It's hard to know where to start with this range, as quality is so high across the board... Willett's style is one of grace and understatement"*

*- Antonio Galloni*

# VINEYARDS

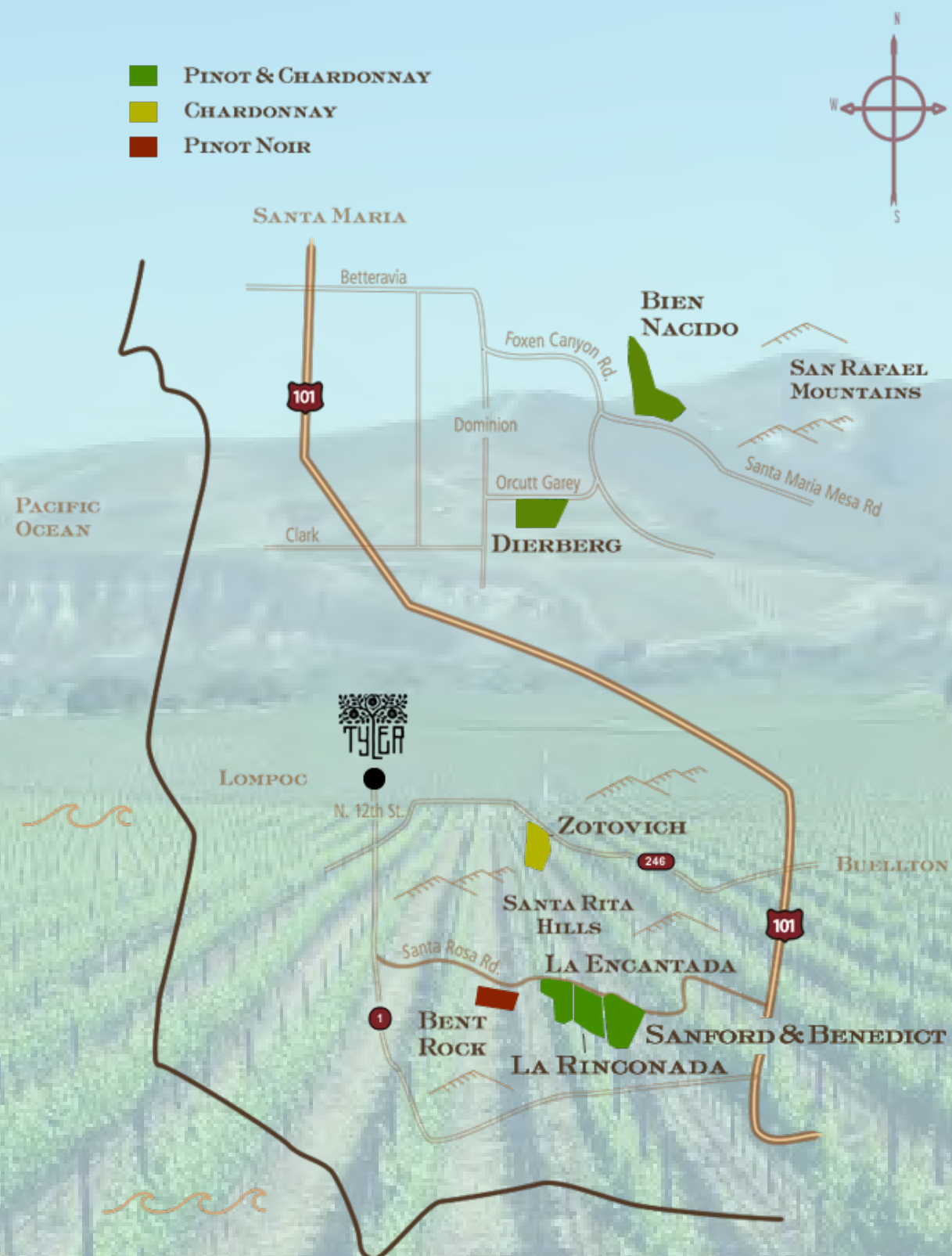
Justin Willett is crafting superb, Burgundian Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays from some of the finest vineyards in California. His first vintage was 2005, since then, his wines have become a reference for the new wave of restrained winemaking in the region.

When we discovered Justin Willett and his Tyler wines (Tyler is Willett's middle name), we knew we had found something extraordinary. The vineyards he is working with are of exceptional pedigree – rare and special sites throughout the Santa Rita Hills and Santa Maria Valley within Santa Barbara County, one of the most promising appellations in California. The distinct terroir here, of marine-based soils, transverse ranges and valleys, and cool climate derived from the terrain's proximity to the Pacific and its fog line makes it the ideal home for pinot noir and chardonnay.

Willett has sought out the oldest vineyard blocks in the County. Many of the original 1970s plantings of Santa Barbara have been grubbed up as yields dropped and the vines became less financially viable, meaning there is huge competition for the remaining old vine fruit. As with Burgundy's Grands Crus, tenacious winemakers dedicated to working with these rare lands count their allocations in rows rather than acres.

Santa Rita Hills is a remote, fringe appellation of Santa Barbara, and the site of one of the county's most important early plantings, the Sanford & Benedict Vineyard, which was established in the early 1970s. In the mid-1990s, more vineyards were planted in the Santa Rita Hills as newcomers came to realise the potential of this seemingly inhospitable, windswept, foggy land. Sanford & Benedict and Bien Nacido are "own-rooted", old vine vineyards, capable of withstanding heat and giving beautiful acids and density of flavour, thanks to the deeper root structure. Along with these old vine plots, Willett works with a handful of younger vineyards, such as Zotovich and Dierberg, which are 1990s plantings.

Willett currently produces 15 different bottlings under the Tyler label, from 23 parcels within 8 different vineyard sites, with a total annual production of approximately 5000 cases.







## JUSTIN WILLETT AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

Willett was born and bred in Santa Barbara and has spent much time in the vineyards of France. The influences of his birthplace and travels are evident in the generosity of fruit, energy and graceful purity that characterise his wines. He takes his inspiration from other Californian winemakers, and favourite Burgundy producers such as Roulot, Bonneau du Martray, Dujac, Bachelet and Rousseau.

His aim is to work with specific Santa Barbara terroirs and climats to produce wines of delicacy and balance, structure and nuance made only from pinot noir and chardonnay. He selects and leases his vines but farms each block himself, according to its particular needs and his exacting specifications.

He picks earlier for savoury flavours, freshness and vibrancy, for “long-term drama” in his words. “If the wines are not long term what is the point of making a single vineyard?”, he says. Early picking also means lower sugars and less alcohol. In the cellar, native yeasts begin

the fermentations, and Justin practises much less extraction than his peers. His wines are aged in a modest amount of new wood, just 20-30% new French oak. He prefers to work with older wood, to give texture, weight and suppleness whilst allowing the wines to express themselves. After the wines are made, Justin then selects different wines to blend. This may result in as many as four different bottlings from grapes grown on one vineyard plot.

Willett’s first vintage was just eight barrels in 2005, following his tenure as assistant winemaker at Arcadian Winery. At the time, the dominant style for California pinot noir was opulent, powerful and sweet, but Willett was firmly committed to his preference for lighter-bodied pinot noir and chardonnay. He said “When I first started doing it, everyone said “You’re nuts.”” Yet after the initial resistance, buyers and critics alike have woken up to the compelling nuance, grace, soaring aromatics and exceptional purity of these superb Tyler wines.



# THE WINES

All prices in bond per 12 bottles



## *2015 Tyler Chardonnay (Santa Barbara County) £276*

The 2015 Chardonnay (Santa Barbara County) is a terrific entry-level wine. Orchard fruit, baked apple, white flowers and mint are nicely delineated, but it is the wine's energy and pure, saline character that give tension and pedigree. What a gorgeous wine this is!

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking :2017-2022

*Score 91*

## *2015 Tyler Chardonnay Dierberg Vineyard. £396*

Tyler's 2015 Chardonnay Dierberg Vineyard is brilliant and precise, with all the energy that is such a signature of Santa Maria Chardonnays. Creamy and pliant, but also wonderfully chiseled, the Dierberg is an exceptional wine in every way. A burst of lemon oil and white flowers on the finish leaves a lasting impression.

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking : 2017-2023

*Score 94*

## *2015 Tyler Chardonnay Zotovich Family Vineyard. £360*

The 2015 Chardonnay Zotovich Family Vineyard is another very pretty wine from Tyler. Here, the richness and radiance of the year seems to dominate over site character, but the wine is quite delicious if taken on its own terms. Readers should expect a juicy yet midweight Chardonnay that will drink well upon release

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking : 2017-2023

*Score 91*

## *2015 Tyler Chardonnay La Rinconada Vineyard. £468*

The 2015 Chardonnay La Rinconada Vineyard is similar in style to the Sanford & Benedict (which is right next door), but it is a little more available. Creamy and expressive on the palate, the 2015 offers striking depth of fruit and exceptional balance. Lemon confit, chamomile and lightly honeyed tones grace this very pretty and expressive Chardonnay from Tyler.

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking : 2017-2023

*Score 93+*

## *2015 Tyler Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict Vineyard. £468*

The 2015 Chardonnay Sanford & Benedict Vineyard emerges from the oldest vines on the site, planted in 1971. Not surprisingly, the 2015 is a phenolic wine that plays more on structure than fruit. Intensely mineral and slate-driven notes punctuate the finish. Readers should plan to cellar the 2015 for at least a few years, as it needs time to unwind. This is another superb wine from Tyler.

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking : 2017-2023

*Score 94*

## *2015 Tyler Chardonnay Bien Nacido Vineyard - W Block. £480*

Tyler's 2015 Chardonnay Bien Nacido Vineyard - W Block is just as compelling from bottle as it was from tank last year. Soaring aromatics and intense fruit are two of the signatures, but it is the wine's overall balance that elevates it to the realm of the finest wines of the year. Weightless and yet intensely saline, the 2015 is superb. Don't miss it.

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking : 2019-2025

*Score 95*

*All wines to be shipped Spring 2018*

# THE WINES

All prices in bond per 12 bottles



## *2015 Tyler Pinot Noir (Santa Barbara County). £330*

The 2015 Pinot Noir (Santa Barbara County) will give readers an idea of what to expect in this vintage. Powerful and deep in every way, the 2015 exudes richness. Succulent black cherry, plum, spice and new leather are pushed forward. Far from an easygoing appellation-level Pinot, the 2015 is going to need to shed tannin and come into its own.

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking :2020-2030

*Score 92*

## *2015 Tyler Pinot Noir Dierberg Vineyard - Block 5. £396*

The 2015 Pinot Noir Dierberg Vineyard - Block 5 is another drop-dead gorgeous beauty from Tyler. Dark and mysterious, containing a multitude of layers that are just waiting to emerge, the 2015 is fabulous. Readers should expect a virile, imposing Pinot that needs time to come together. Even with all of its intensity, the 2015 preserves remarkable focus as it captures the pedigree of this site.

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking :2020-2030

*Score 94*

## *2015 Tyler Pinot Noir La Encantada Vineyard. £432*

The 2015 Pinot Noir La Encantada Vineyard is one of the more ethereal of the wines in the range, largely because of the large quantity of stems (50-plus %) included in fermentation. Bright red stone fruit and mint are given an extra kick of aromatic lift from the whole clusters. Readers who find some of the 2015 Pinots too intense will admire the restrained style of the Rinconada.

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking :2020-2030

*Score 94*

## *2015 Tyler Pinot Noir Bentrack Vineyard. £504*

The 2015 Pinot Noir Bentrack Vineyard is exceptionally vivid. Deep and richly textured, yet also translucent, the 2015 has a lot to offer. Bright red cherry, raspberry, rose petal, mint and chalk develop nicely in the glass. The flavors are wonderfully delineated throughout. Sadly, this is the last vintage of Bentrack from Tyler, which is a shame, as the wine is magically pure and one of the very finest expressions of this site in recent years.

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking :2020-2030

*Score 95*

## *2015 Tyler Pinot Noir Bien Nacido Vineyard - Old Vines. £492*

The 2015 Pinot Noir Bien Nacido Vineyard - Old Vines is bold, pungent and super-expressive. It also has huge tannins that are going to need time to soften. The aromatics are beautifully lifted, but this is a virile, potent wine with real muscle behind its powerful, dense personality.

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking :2020-2030

*Score 94*

## *2015 Tyler Pinot Noir La Rinconada Vineyard. £540*

The 2015 Pinot Noir La Rinconada Vineyard offers striking purity in its fruit and exceptional pedigree. Super-ripe red cherry, lavender, rose petal, hard candy, spice and floral notes race from this expressive, open-knit wine. The Rinconada is exuberant but also light on its feet. It will be virtually impossible to resist upon release, as it is the sexiest wine in this range.

-- Antonio Galloni

Drinking :2020-2030

*Score 95*