

100 Best Wines of 2014

95 MacLaren (Wine & Spirits Oct. '14)

2011 Russian River Valley Atoosa's Vineyard Syrah

Scotland native Steve Law fell in love with syrah from the Northern Rhone while he was living in France. He was working in the electronics business in California when he decided to make the jump to winemaking, focusing his label on syrah. This wine comes from a vineyard planted in the plains just west of Santa Rosa, a warmer side of the Russian River, though still subject to regular coastal fog incursions through the valley. The wine's brambly ripeness might seem over the top at first, but give it a minute. It's actually more firm than fat, delivering the mouth-coating character that makes many a Russian River pinot noir so appealing. Yet it's completely dry, avoiding excess, holding its power in reserve. The wine's length is impressive and radiant, an intense and aromatic pulse that goes on and on, until you're lost in a riverside blackberry patch at the moment the sun breaks through the fog. Its fulsome energy feels pure and Californian and it's irresistibly delicious. (147 cases) *MacLaren Wine Co. Healdsburg, CA*

92 MacLaren (Wine & Spirits Oct. '14)

2011 Sonoma County Drouthy Neebors Syrah

This Sonoma County wine includes some fruit from Napa's rocky, hillside Stagecoach Vineyard, along with two Russian River vineyards. It's a rich wine, edged by charr oak bitterness, but bright and crisp in the end, with aromas of conifer needles and peppercorn lending it the North Coast's equivalent of *garrigue*. Decant it for a plate of salumi. (160 cases) *MacLaren Wine Co. Healdsburg, CA*