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Get to Know The Central Coast of California

By Stu Nudelman aka Stu The Wine Guru, WSET Level 2 Global Wine Enthusiast



Gruvians, it's been a while since I have reviewed a wine book that I feel is a must-read for the wine enthusiast with a thirst for knowledge, so in this article I introduce you to: *Exploring Wine Regions: The Central Coast of California* by Michael C. Higgins

THE AUTHOR: MICHAEL C. HIGGINS

Michael C. Higgins brings a wealth of passion and expertise to his work. A photographer, explorer, and wine aficionado, Higgins has a knack for capturing the essence of wine regions. *Exploring Wine Regions: The Central Coast of California* is his third book in a series of three, following *Exploring Wine Regions: Argentina* and *Exploring Wine Regions: Napa & Sonoma*. His signature style combines travel photography with educational insights, making his books perfect for those who want to learn about wine while planning their next adventure.

WHY THIS BOOK STANDS OUT

Higgins' book is more than just a guide; it's an experience. The vivid photography immerses readers in the landscapes, wineries, and vineyards, while detailed profiles provide insider knowledge of the Central Coast's hidden gems. From boutique producers to iconic labels, Higgins captures the soul of the region.

The tasting notes and pairing suggestions make this book practical for wine enthusiasts, while the travel tips inspire exploration. Whether you're planning a visit to the Central Coast or simply want to deepen your wine knowledge, this book is a must-have.

THE CENTRAL COAST

Often regarded as one of the state's hidden gems, the Central Coast

of California has long been recognized for its diverse landscapes, rich agricultural history, and emerging prominence in the world of wine. *Exploring Wine Regions: The Central Coast of California* serves as an excellent introduction to this vital wine-producing region, offering readers both an informative and visually captivating experience. It delves deeply into the unique geography, climate, and culture that make the Central Coast a key player in California's wine industry.

UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CENTRAL COAST WINE REGION

One of the first things that sets the Central Coast apart from other California wine regions is its geographic location. Stretching from Santa Barbara in the south to Monterey in the north, the Central Coast encompasses a diverse array of terroirs, ranging from coastal climates influenced by the Pacific Ocean to inland regions with warmer, sun-drenched valleys. The influence of the ocean is critical to the region's wine production, as the cool breezes and fog provide a respite from the hot inland temperatures, allowing for slow, consistent

ripening of grapes.

This variability in climate and soil types means the Central Coast can produce a wide variety of wine styles and varietals. The region is particularly well-known for its Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Syrah, though other varietals such as Zinfandel, Grenache, and Cabernet Sauvignon are also prominent.

Higgins does an excellent job of illustrating the central role the region plays in California's wine history, including its burgeoning reputation for world-class wines. By highlighting the characteristics that make the Central Coast so unique, it brings the region to

life, showcasing why it's so special to the broader California Wine Country.

APPELLATIONS OF THE CENTRAL COAST

The Central Coast is home to multiple American Viticultural Areas (AVAs), each with its distinct personality. The book dedicates significant attention to each of these AVAs, providing insight into their unique terroirs, history, and notable wineries. Some of the key appellations featured in the book include:

1. MONTEREY COUNTY



Santa Lucia Highlands AVA
2021 Odonata Escolle Vineyard Pinot Noir
Tasting Notes: Wild strawberry, baking spices, and a velvety texture.
Price: Around \$42.
Where to Buy: odonatawines.com

Arroyo Seco AVA

2022 Shield Vineyards Chardonnay
Tasting Notes: Meyer lemon, toasted almond, and creamy vanilla.
Price: Around \$32.
Where to Buy: shieldsvineyards.com



2. SAN LOUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Paso Robles AVA

2021 Opolo Mountain Zinfandel
Tasting Notes: blueberry, cherry, earthy minerality, and a silky finish.
Price: Around \$35.
Where to Buy: opolo.com



SLO Coast AVA

Laetitia Vineyards Non Vintage Brut Cuvée
Tasting Notes: lemon, pear and bread with persistent small bubbles.
Price: Around \$35.
Where to Buy: laetitiawine.com



3. SANTA BARBARA COUNTY



Santa Ynez AVA
2021 Fess Parker Rodney's Vineyard Syrah
Tasting Notes: savory and earthy black fruits
Price: Around \$70.
Where to Buy: fessparker.com

Santa Maria AVA

2021 Bien Nacido Viegnier
Tasting Notes: key lime, vanilla, citrus and sandalwood
Price: Around \$30
Where to Buy: biennacidoestate.com



I truly believe that the Central Coast represents the future of California wine. Its diversity, innovation, and dedication to quality are second to none. With appellations that cater to every palate and wineries that blend tradition with modernity, the Central Coast is a paradise for wine lovers. I urge you to travel to the Central Coast, and before you do, pick up a copy of this book. It will be an invaluable guide. But, if you don't get to go there, you at least have some wines to try to transport you there through the glass.

Follow Stu on Instagram and Twitter @stuthewineguru. Visit him online at stuthewineguru.com and check back often for live and virtual tasting event schedules. Listen to Stu's radio podcast: *Wine Talk with Stu The Wine Guru* on iTunes or wherever you enjoy podcasts. And, as he always says:



"If it's time to pour the wine, it's time for Stu The Wine Guru. Drink up!" and "Wine evolves in your mind as well as in your glass." **stb**