



VISIT WHITCRAFT WINERY FOR WHAT'S PERHAPS SANTA BARBARA'S BEST WINE

Visit this hidden gem to sample wines from second-generation winemaker Drake Whitcraft

By Geneva Ivas, January 12, 2015

Looking for the best wine in Santa Barbara? Well, you could spend a week or two visiting the many wineries and wine tasting rooms in town (at last count, there were more than two dozen). And that does sound fun, but it also sounds time-consuming and expensive and perhaps not so good for your health.

Or you could skip all that nonsense and head straight to Whitcraft Winery for the good stuff — for the bottles of Pinot Noir, Syrah and Chardonnay that will impress even the snobbiest of wine snobs, we promise.



Whitcraft Winery is helmed by second-generation winemaker Drake Whitcraft. Started by his father, Chris Whitcraft, in 1985, the winery specializes in small-batch local wines that celebrate the unique characteristics of the grapes and the regions from which they come, with minimal human interference.

Varietals are sourced from both legendary and up-and-coming Central Coast vineyards, picked and sorted by hand, foot stomped and bottled without electricity or additives. This dedication to Old World-

style winemaking means that Whitcraft produces less than 2,000 cases of wine a year.

The surest way to get your hands on a few of those bottles is to visit the tasting room, where you can sample wines from their current selection for a small fee. And the surest way to get your hands on a few *more* of those bottles is to join their wine club.

Club members receive complimentary wine tastings, a 15% discount, access to library wines and invitations to super fun wine pick-up parties three times a year.



The Whitcraft tasting room is open Friday through Monday, from noon until 4 p.m. You can visit Tuesday through Thursday by appointment only and, owing to the intimate size of the tasting room, an appointment is also needed for parties of eight or more.

This is not one of those tasting rooms that is more about ambiance than wine, however, so if you're in the mood for magical lights and live music and that sort of thing, then head straight to the Funk Zone. While Whitcraft is not necessarily within easy walking distance of other wineries on the Santa Barbara Urban Wine Trail, many other tasting rooms are just a quick drive or cab ride away.

If you have the opportunity to try any of the Mes Amis wines during your visit to Whitcraft, your next logical move would be to go to Jaffurs Wine Cellars. Mes Amis is a side project of wines that Drake Whitcraft makes with his friend Matt Brady, who is a co-winemaker at Jaffurs.

Jaffurs focuses on Rhone-style varietals like Syrah, Grenache, Petite Sirah, Viognier and Roussanne. Production there is also limited, resulting in about 3,500 cases a year.

Can't make it to the Whitcraft tasting room? Don't worry. Whitcraft wines pair wonderfully with food, so you'll find them on the wine lists of some of the best restaurants in town, including Arigato, Stonehouse and Opal. Cheers!