



# SANDAR & HEM PRESS KIT



PRESS KIT

SANDAR & HEM

*Santa Cruz Mountains*



CHARDONNAY  
INDEGO RIDGE VINEYARD



SANDAR & HEM

PRESS KIT



INTRODUCING

# SANDAR & HEM WINES

Sandar & Hem Wines, founded in 2018, explores the centuries-old agricultural and winemaking heritage of the Santa Cruz Mountains through the lens of its most historically important and promising contemporary vineyards.

With every vintage, Sandar & Hem founders Robert and Recha Bergstrom strive to develop evocative expressions of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Grenache, and Bordeaux varieties, and foster deeper connections between people and this frontier region, tamed only in part by the agricultural pioneers who came before. The Bergstroms strongly believe that these idyllic, highly site-specific vineyards can produce some of the world's greatest wines and are committed to spending a lifetime of work deeply understanding each one.

Intentional sustainability and low-input farming —crucial for both great wine and the planet— are core to Sandar & Hem's philosophy, as are maintaining connections and community with an eye to stewarding these significant sites. Long-term, the Bergstroms plan to help transition these parcels to being tended exclusively by sustainable methods for future winemaking generations.

“At Sandar & Hem, we strive to tell the story of the Santa Cruz Mountains and its unique vineyard sites through transparently made wines. We particularly want to showcase Chardonnay because we believe this grape can best express these terroirs and help us to interpret this rugged, complex, and endlessly beautiful place.”

—ROBERT BERGSTROM,  
WINEMAKER



# SANDAR & HEM'S ROOTS: THE SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS

Founders Robert and Recha Bergstrom—both life-long lovers of restaurants, food culture and dining—came to the winemaking industry later in their professional journeys. As the couple studied and connected delicious wines with the places in which they were produced, both Robert and Recha were instantly charmed by the rustic, storybook appeal of the Santa Cruz Mountains. While not as slick, modern, or monied as Napa or Sonoma, the Santa Cruz Mountains has a celebrated history of wine production which dates to the late 19th century, yet the region has been dramatically less explored by both consumers and the commercial viticultural establishment.

Robert and Recha believe Santa Cruz held tremendous unplumbed depth, with powerful potential for true excellence in wine. While highly-regarded, extremely successful wineries such as Ridge, Mount Eden and Rhys have put the region on the map, it's still not as widely-known unless you're "in the know". Sandar & Hem hopes to push the limit on creating the very highest quality examples of Santa Cruz wines, especially Chardonnay, by exploring the lost history of formerly-cherished vineyard sites and stewarding newer plantings through conscientious, sustainability-focused farming. Long term, Sandar and Hem hopes to help define and delineate the Santa Cruz Mountain's diverse terroirs as some of the world's greatest parcels for wine production.





## SANDAR & HEM'S INSPIRATION

Relentless curiosity is at the heart of Sandar & Hem: Robert and Recha have connected, tasted and traveled with world-class wine producers in the Santa Cruz Mountains and around the globe to develop their innate style.

Around the same time the Bergstroms decided to establish the winery in 2018 with a few handshake agreements for fruit,

Robert learned about his ancestry in the Sandar region of Norway, where the Hem family have been agriculturalists for hundreds of years. After a pre-harvest visit to Scandinavia to travel with his newfound extended family members, the couple decided to honor and continue this heritage by incorporating it into their winery's name and approach in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Robert and Recha are looking to build on the legacy of pioneering Santa Cruz winemakers, both historic and contemporary: Paul Masson, Martin Ray, Emmett Rixford, Chaffee Hall, Kathryn Kennedy and Paul Draper—both their careers and wines—stand as chief inspirations. Wine expert Taylor Smith—whom Robert met while they were both working at Ridge Vineyards—has been an invaluable friend and consultant on the couple’s journey to establishing Sandar & Hem.



Robert and Recha craft Sandar & Hem under their own bond in a custom crush facility on Treasure Island in the San Francisco Bay, bridging heritage winemaking with a nimble, modern, detail-oriented, high-touch approach to wine production. Robert and Recha—who both have a background in the medical sciences and academia—love to explore how the deeply analytical, scientific elements of winemaking are complemented by decisions made by instinct and organic insight to create wines which transparently express the distinctive terroirs and epic diversity of the Santa Cruz Mountains.



# MEET THE PARTNERS

## ROBERT BERGSTROM WINEMAKER & PARTNER

Robert's first exposure to the world of wine making came during his childhood in 1970s northern California, when he'd spend weekends visiting Napa Valley's then-modest local wineries with his mother Eva and father Don, a chemistry professor at UC Davis, the top enology school in the U.S.. Food was another focus during his upbringing: holiday banquets at his grandparent's Chinese restaurant taught Robert the importance of thoughtfully sourced and crafted food as a cultural touchpoint, and a way of bringing people together.

A love for the natural world and a curious mind led Robert to various destinations and experiences. Well before the days of TV show *Deadliest Catch*, Robert spent a season commercially fishing for salmon in Alaska where he learned the Herculean risks and rewards involved with delivering such a pristine, delicious food source to delighted chefs and diners.

After earning an undergraduate degree in Biochemistry and a Ph.D. in Biophysics, Robert returned to California to undertake a postdoctoral fellowship in cancer research at University of California San Francisco (UCSF), where he soon met his future wife, Recha, at a wine tasting she was hosting.

After years as a research academic, Robert joined the management strategy consulting firm McKinsey & Company where he served clients in the global pharmaceutical, healthcare, and alternative energy sectors. Robert then went on to work at Bay Area startup companies, accepting roles as Director of Business Development at Vietnamese craft food company Red Boat and the technology flash sales company Touch of Modern.

In 2013, Robert began to further explore his passion for wine, working part-time in local wineries and vineyards before enrolling in the UC Davis Winemaking Certificate Program in 2016. He completed the course two years later while working his first full-time harvest position at Rhys Vineyards, and subsequently worked a year in the vineyard and cellar at legendary Mount Eden winery, learning invaluable philosophy and craft from winemaker Jeffrey Patterson. In 2018, Robert and Recha officially founded the Sandar & Hem label.



## RECHA BERGSTROM CEO & PARTNER

A California native, Recha spent many years living on both U.S. coasts, as well as several years abroad. At every opportunity, she traveled as much as possible, exploring destinations in Turkey, Bhutan, Madagascar and Zimbabwe through the lens of how food, wine and local culture intersect. Recha also worked a season in the commercial Alaskan fishery, but not at the same time as Robert. Along her journey, she cultivated her love of food, wine and community by frequently visiting wineries, and spending time learning with and hosting local wine tasting groups.

Following so many years of adventure—and more than a decade of intense training for her medical degree and radiology specialization—Recha was ready to return to California and now is very happy to be living in the Bay Area with Robert and their three young children. Recha continues to practice radiology and is passionate about contributing to community, both regionally and internationally, and has been a long-time supporter of several philanthropic organizations, primarily focused on education, safety and opportunities for women and children, as well as environmental conservation.

Recha will donate a portion of profits from Sandar & Hem to local groups in the Santa Cruz Mountains and looks forward to continuing to share her passion for food and wine as a tool for connection between human beings.





OUR REGION

# SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS



The Santa Cruz Mountains has a rich history of winemaking dating to the late 19th century and which continues to thrive today. Sandar & Hem looks to the accomplishments of pioneering agricultural figures, such as as well as the living legends who began their careers in the 60s and 70s, as foundational to their approach and legacy.

## - VINEYARDS IN THE SKY -

When local winemakers discuss wines of the Santa Cruz Mountains, they talk in detail of the yet-to-be-formalized subregions of the AVA, and Robert and Recha have been dedicated students of this movement as they work to develop an understanding of this diverse place. These subregions encompass the warmer, sandy-loam Aptos-Corralitos region in the far south, the white Zayante sands and decomposed granites of Ben Lomond above Santa Cruz and the steep, rocky shale sites of the North Skyline region, characterized by brisk ocean breezes and cool evening fog. In the 2018 vintage, Sandar & Hem explored two of these subregions. For the 2019 vintage, Robert crafted six Chardonnays from four subregions.



# OUR VINEYARDS

Unlike an Estate, Sandar & Hem leverages deep local connections to focus on sourcing the best fruit from the most special vineyards from the region, including many revived heritage sites which were planted to vine more than a century ago. The terroirs in the Santa Cruz Mountains are so influenced by diverse microclimates that Robert constantly tailors his approach to “make and break rules”, site-by-site. The result: a collection of incredibly site-specific wines produced using fruit grown in a small geographical area which offer vividly different expressions and characteristics.



## BATES RANCH

Perched high in the southeast corner of the Santa Cruz Mountains AVA at elevations of up to 1000 feet, the steep slopes and shallow, gravelly soils of Bates Ranch have yielded stunning wines of great complexity for more than four decades. The old-vine grenache vineyard sits on a mid-mountain dome and the south-facing Cabernet vineyard includes an upper block planted in 1974 on St. George rootstock.

## MINDEGO RIDGE

This vineyard lies eight miles inland from the Pacific Ocean atop a ridge of fractured Purisima Shale. Its steep, southern facing slopes benefit from a heavily marine-influenced climate ideal for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay which produce wines of intense minerality, complexity, and character.

## LE BOEUF

Surrounded by towering redwoods and bordering the pristine Wilder Ranch State Park, this idyllic old California site was planted in 1974 by Dr. Burney Le Boeuf, an Emeritus UC Santa Cruz professor (who also happens to be the world's foremost authority on elephant seals). Blocks of heritage-clone Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grafted to St. George rootstock are planted on gently-sloping, decomposed granite soil. Strong maritime influence, rocky soil, and old vines drive extremely low yields, resulting in wines of immense concentration, acidity, and character.

Sandar & Hem is thrilled to be taking over stewardship of this vineyard from the Le Boeuf family. With an eye to preserving this incredible site, Robert and Recha have converted to organic viticulture, and budded the 1.5-acre Pinot Noir block, originally planted to Chardonnay, back to heritage clones of Chardonnay during the spring of 2020.

## BALD MOUNTAIN

This site, at approximately 1000 feet of elevation, comprises south-sloping white sand Zayante soil—the only vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountain AVA on this rare soil series. In a bold move, Clone 4 Chardonnay has been planted using its own roots, rather than grafting it to American rootstock. Just two miles from the Pacific Ocean, the sandy soils and marine influence lead to racy, acid-driven and mineral wines of singular character.

## PLEASANT VALLEY

Set in a steep amphitheater-like bowl with sandy loam soil, this site was planted in 1996 to Dijon clone Chardonnay and Pommard clone Pinot Noir by Cathy and Craig Handley, and became the Estate Vineyard for their Pleasant Valley Vineyards winery. This highly regarded site recently changed hands and Sandar & Hem is excited to be producing Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from this vineyard for the 2019 vintage.

## BRUZZONE

Located in Scotts Valley, just four miles from Santa Cruz Bay, this alluvial site receives marine deposit sediment from the surrounding slopes. Planted in 1998, and currently managed by the Bruzzone family, this site produces grapes with citrus notes, vibrant acidity and floral aromatics.

# SANDAR & HEM WINES

	PRICE	CLUB PRICE
<b>ROSÉ</b>		
'BATES RANCH' ROSÉ OF GRENACHE, 2020 Notes of Alpine strawberry, peach blossom, dried herb, and wet stones. The palate is dry and crisp with mouthwatering structure with luxurious weight and texture. <b>90 Points, Wine Enthusiast</b>	\$24	\$21.60
<b>WHITE</b>		
'FRANCES J VINEYARD' CHARDONNAY 2019 Notes of Asian pear, lime, green apple, pineapple, jasmine, and toasted brioche. The palate is zesty with fresh acidity and a mineral mouthfeel balances the richness of the fruit <b>94 Points, Wine Enthusiast</b>	\$38	\$34.20
'LE BOEUF' CHARDONNAY 2019 Notes of orange blossom, and lightly wooded aromas, ginger root, and jasmine. The palate has a beautiful mineral impression is leads to a powerful and refreshing finish. <b>92 Points, Wine Enthusiast</b>	\$52	\$46.80
'BALD MOUNTAIN' CHARDONNAY 2019 Aromas of white citrus flower, stone fruit, citrus with mouthwatering acidity and a long mineral finish. This structured wine has great focus and a satisfying length on the palate. <b>95 Points, Wine Enthusiast</b>	\$44	\$39.60
'BRUZZONE' CHARDONNAY 2018 Aromas of citrus zest, flint, Gravenstein apple, meyer lemon curd, and almond blossom. The palate is focused, taught, slightly saline, with intense mineral structure and a long finish. <b>94 Points &amp; Editors' Choice award, Wine Enthusiast</b>	\$40	\$36
'MINDEGO RIDGE' CHARDONNAY 2018 A striking nose with fresh citrus and just-ripe pineapple, opening up to notes of green almond, hazelnut, and fennel. The wine is deep, complex, bracing, and beautifully elegant. <b>94 Points &amp; Editors' Choice award, Wine Enthusiast</b>	\$40	\$26
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS CHARDONNAY, 2019 Vibrant high-tone aromatics including notes of lime peel, Asian pear, and flint with a refreshing spine of zingy acidity on the palate typical of these cool climate sites.	\$34	\$30.60
<b>RED</b>		
'BATES RANCH' CABERNET SAUVIGNON, 2018 Notes of currants, plum, evergreen, chaparral, and spring flowers. Complex and layered, the fine tannins, vibrant red fruit, and refreshing acidity yield a wine of balance and length. <b>92 Points, Wine Enthusiast</b>	\$62	\$55.80
'MINDEGO RIDGE' PINOT NOIR, 2019 A magical combination of opulence and vibrancy -rich aromas of violet, black raspberry, clove, and mace. The palate is crisp, with red plum, orange rind, sage and nutmeg with an energetic mouthfeel. <b>95 Points &amp; Editors' Choice Award, Wine Enthusiast</b>	\$48	\$43.20

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