

JEB DUNNUCK

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but California Chardonnay doesn’t get much better.” – June 2019

MORLET *Family Vineyards* BURGUNDY & RHÔNE VARIETALS

2017 'COUP DE CŒUR' CHARDONNAY

99 POINTS

The borderline perfect 2017 'Coup De Cœur' comes from a selection of the best barrels and there are only 150 cases of this elixir. Aged in 40% new French oak, this exotic, powerful Chardonnay offers a heavenly bouquet of honeyed citrus, toasted brioche exotic flowers, and orange blossom. It's rich, voluptuous, and thrillingly textured, yet has good acidity, remarkable purity, a stacked mid-palate and a finish that won't quit. Count me impressed; California Chardonnay doesn't get much better.

2017 'MA PRINCESSE' CHARDONNAY

97 POINTS

Sourced from the Ritchie Vineyard in the Russian River Valley (unquestionably a Grand Cru site) and all old Wente Clones aged in one-third new French oak, the 2017 'Ma Princesse' is a richer, more powerful Chardonnay and has awesome notes of honeysuckle, brioche, orange blossom, hazelnuts, and citrus. This beauty shows some obvious minerality on the palate, with bright, racy acidity, tons of fruit, and a great finish. It's up there with the crème de la crème of the vintage.

2017 'MA DOUCE' CHARDONNAY

96 POINTS

Named for winemaker Luc Morlet's wife, the 2017 'Ma Douce' shows the fresh, focused style of the vintage as well as complex notes of orange blossom, caramelized citrus, brioche, and white flowers. With beautiful acidity as well as plenty of sexy fruit and texture, it's a brilliant 2017 Chardonnay that does everything right. This cuvée is brought up in just 20-25% new French oak.

2017 'JOLI CŒUR' PINOT NOIR

98 POINTS

From thinner, shale, east-facing slopes, 2017 'Joli Cœur' is wonderfully complete and balanced, with complexity, elegance, and power all present in this thrilling bottle of wine. Black raspberries, graphite, sandalwood, and crushed rock nuances all flow to a medium to full-bodied effort that has nothing out of place, polished tannins, and integrated acidity. This is one of those wines that builds and grows on you with time in the glass, and it's a remarkable effort in 2017. Drink it over the coming decade.

2017 'EN FAMILLE' PINOT NOIR

98 POINTS

More black fruits, smoked earth, baking spices, and earthy, saddle leather notes emerge from the 2017 'En Famille,' which comes from a warmer, south-facing vineyard in the Fort Ross-Seaview region. This ripe, powerful, full-bodied Pinot Noir has an incredible texture and a huge core of fruit, yet it stays balanced, pure, and elegant, with plenty of tannic structure. Give bottles a year or two.

2017 'CÔTEAUX NOBLES' PINOT NOIR

96 POINTS

The 2017 Pinot Noir 'Côteaux Nobles' is one of the more complex, nuanced wines in the lineup. Classic notes of kirsch, blueberries, incense, candied violets, and kisses of cola and cedary spice all flow to a medium to full-bodied, beautifully balanced Pinot Noir that has fine tannins and integrated acidity. Drink it over the coming decade.

2017 'BOUQUET GARNI' SYRAH

(94-96) POINTS

Not yet bottled, the 2017 'Bouquet Garni' comes all from Bennett Valley and is 100% Syrah that will be bottled in May of this year. It has an attractive bouquet of blue and red fruits, violets, lavender, and gamey, pan dripping-like characteristics. (I actually wrote mint covered lamb in my notes.) These carry to a medium to full-bodied, seamless Syrah that has beautiful fruit and considerable elegance, yet still with plenty of classic cool climate Syrah wildness. It's going to be a beautiful wine that will drink nicely in its youth yet also evolve for 10-12 years or more.