



RAJAT PARR Sommelier



Partner/Proprietor, Sandhi
Partner/Proprietor, Domaine de la Côte
Partner/Proprietor, Evening Land Vineyards

Co-founder of Domaine de la Côte, Rajat Parr is a two-time James Beard Award winner and internationally regarded as one of the world's foremost experts on wine.

A trained chef, Rajat Parr grew up in Calcutta, India, before journeying to the United States where he graduated from the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park. It was during training at the CIA where his interest in wine took hold. After graduation, Parr chose to pursue the cellar instead of the kitchen, venturing to San Francisco to join the staff of Rubicon, the renowned wine-focused restaurant of Master Sommelier Larry

Stone. Parr quickly rose in the ranks, becoming a protégé of Stone. Here he honed his wine knowledge and tasting skills, while beginning a career that would see him become one of the world's most celebrated sommeliers.

Parr eventually left Rubicon to take over the wine program at San Francisco's landmark Fifth Floor restaurant before moving to join chef Michael Mina as wine director of that chef's eponymous restaurant. The Mina Group would eventually spawn to almost 30 restaurants across the country, wine programs all overseen by Parr. It was during this period that winemaking began to evermore capture Parr's imagination.

Eternally fascinated not just with the taste of wine, but the question of why it tastes the way it does, Parr not only frequently traveled abroad to European wine regions; he also made use of his proximity to California wine country, becoming close with several of California's top winemakers. This ultimately translated into bottling his own wines. At first these were blends selected from wines produced by others, but in short time Parr became more deeply involved—calling picking times, overseeing fermentations, etc. As vineyards and winemaking became ever more an obsession, Parr made the transition from sommelier to producer.

During this period, he became closer to Santa Barbara County winemaker Sashi Moorman, as they found mutual interest in pushing the boundaries of California wine, every vintage seeing how much earlier they could harvest to achieve more balanced alcohols, racier acidity, and purer flavors. In 2011, Parr launched Sandhi, a partnership with Charles Banks and Sashi Moorman, to produce Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from select vineyards in the Sta. Rita Hills. In 2013, he released wines from his new estate vineyard, Domaine de la Côte, located on the westernmost edge of the Sta. Rita Hills. Most recently, in early 2014, Parr (along with partner Sashi Moorman) took over the historic and acclaimed Seven Springs Vineyard in the Eola-Amity Hills of Oregon

Beyond his wineries, today Parr remains partners with Michael Mina in his two RN74 restaurants (San Francisco and Seattle) and continues to oversee the wine program for MINA Group. He also co-authored the James-Beard-Award winning book *Secrets of the Sommeliers* (with Jordan Mackay), and co-founded the trend-setting California non-profit wine group, In Pursuit of Balance. He lives in Santa Barbara with his wife Jessica, though he can still be found frequently traveling the world speaking, educating, tasting, and obsessively learning.