

# Ep 46 Central Coast of Cali and a calmer mind with Aidy Smit...

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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## SPEAKERS

Janina Doyle, Aidy Smith

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Janina Doyle 00:07

Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving wonderful world of wine. And wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you.



**J** Janina Doyle 00:31

Hello to all my lovely wine lovers. So I have a really wonderful guest on this episode. You may know already if you've watched *The Three Drinkers* on Amazon Prime. TV presenter and Drinks writer Aidy Smith is going to be joining me and you're going to hear a little why California has a very special place in his heart but also how he's pushing for more equality, diversity and happiness in the drinks industry. So hopefully after this you're going to find yourself a few minutes of bliss and feel overcome with motivation to raise the vibrations in whatever industry you work in too. But before I welcome Aidy, it is time for my winery of the week.

**J** Janina Doyle 01:14

So my winery of the week is Brewer-Clifton, who without a doubt are one of the top producers in Sta. Rita Hills. So this is in the most western part of the bigger AVA Santa Ynez Valley and this is within the bigger Santa Barbara County - always good to have a look at a wine map if you can. Now I'll talk about the region in a moment but first let's talk about this amazing winery. So the founders Steven Clifton and Greg Brewer, they met in 1995 and knew instantly that they wanted to start a winery together. So working hard for the first year they managed to save \$12,000 which was enough to set up Brewer-Clifton in 1996 producing an inaugural 240 cases of wine. Now this was made in the Santa Barbara Winery where Greg Brewer was assistant winemaker at the time. Now after working out of other wineries for several years in 2000 they set up shop in Lompoc. Now you're going to hear me mention this area later in the podcast, so listen out, it's also known as the wine ghetto and it has its own wine trail so really well worth visiting. Now in 2001 Robert Parker named them his single greatest revelation of his 2001 tastings. At this point they were still sourcing grapes rather than from their own land but in 2005 they took the plunge and established their own farming team, planting vineyards which now totals over 24

hectares. It was in 2012 that they completed the full transition to 100% estate fruit and it was in fact a few years later that the 2012 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir was ranked number eight in the wine spectator's top 100 wines of the world. I'm quite excited to say I have the 2015 of this wine to taste in a moment. Now since 2017 they've joined Jackson Family Wines, so they are a family owned and operated winery group whose list of quality wineries is pretty impressive. By joining Jackson Family Wines, this is allowed winemaker Greg Brewer to dedicate himself entirely to the Brewer-Clifton wines as opposed to before where he was doing consultant work for many other wineries, so I can only see these wines getting better and better. Now you definitely want to get your hands on some of this wine. Greg Brewer himself was named winemaker of the year, last year by Wine Enthusiast. Now if you're going to get some of the wines there are many Pinots and Chardonnays to try from his 3D vineyard, Hapgood vineyard and Machado vineyard. He also has a whole range of Chardonnays called Diatom and even one sexy little Syrah known as Ex Post Facto. Now as I said, I have the 2015 Brewer-Clifton Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir to try. This is £58.95 from The Wine Treasury. So you are understanding now we are talking about premium wines when we talk about the portfolio of Brewer-Clifton. It's worth noting The Wine Treasury is an amazing wine site to go to in the UK if you after premium californian wine, as if that is their speciality.



Janina Doyle 04:11

Now this Pinot: 100% Pinot Noir from the 3D and Machado vineyards. They age the wine for 12 to 18 months in neutral Sirugue barrels. These are the top barrels that come from a cooperage in Nuits-St-Georges, Burgundy it's all about whole cluster fermentation and they work with the stems which helps structure the wines and gives a bit more of an earthiness which balances the very very ripe Sta. Rita Hills fruit. Okay so let's try this beautiful little Pinot and see how it tastes.



Janina Doyle 04:48

So on the nose it's beautifully beautifully aromatic, it's got a medium plus intensity but it's like highly lifted with loads and loads of perfumed, musky notes even. Kind of dried roses and potpourri but lots of sweet red fruits. The red fruits are more like a pomegranate style, a bit of the fresh raspberries but there's a lovely sweet earthiness almost like freshly sawn wood and actually like a little bit of rhubarb as well. Now there's a little tiny hint of mocha. God, actually it's an incredibly layered, complex wine. Still super pretty, but kind of a little flinty minerality to it and some, even some tea leaves. Gosh, I think, this is the kind of wine I'm definitely gonna come back to this once I stop recording. I think there's loads to find in this glass. And I haven't decanted this. I've just poured it now. So it's, it's a real wonder. Gosh, it's it's incredibly weightless. It's a medium body wine. Super elegant, but yet it just

feels so light and fresh in the mouth. Loads of juicy fresh strawberries with like a real sharpness of red currant and some red cherry. So all those red fruits come through onto the palate, but there's some gorgeously soft, silky tannins and really nice, like a chalky mineral texture. A little bit of star anise on the finish, but gorgeous, lively acidity to go with it. This is still so fresh, and really, really youthful. And this is actually, it's a 2015, so six years old, and none of that real mushroomy earthy character, that evolution that comes with Pinot Noir has even started, so this is a wine that you could really hold back. I would cellar it for, gosh, at least 10 years, if you wanted to taste it with those tertiary aromas, it will definitely still have the concentration. Wow, I'm more impressed. This is a pricey Pinot Noir, but for what it offers. Yeah, it is worth the price. Now what makes Sta. Rita hills so special, let's just touch on this region very quickly.



Janina Doyle 07:07

So firstly, when you see written down Sta. Rita hills, you'll find the Santa part is actually spelled STA and a full stop. I've heard this was actually down to a slightly dramatic story with Chilean winery Santa Rita. So this spelling change is to avoid confusion between the two. So the first vineyards of Sta. Rita hills were planted in 1971. And this incredible vineyard is known as Sanford and Benedict. So do look out for that on certain wine labels. But it wasn't actually until 2001 that Sta. Rita hills received its AVA status. Now the region is planted to its superstars, Pinot Noir and then Chardonnay but you are going to find a little bit of Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc and Viognier. Now the region is about 10 miles away from the Pacific Coast, making it the most western AVA in Santa Barbara County. And because the valley runs east to west, so the mountain ranges run that direction, it acts as wind tunnels and this sucks in the freezing cold winds and loads of fog. So this means the temperatures stay cool and allows for a much longer growing season. With rain only coming in the winter really and loads of sunshine. This is a perfect grape growing area for cold climate grape varieties. Now the soil types are actually a real patchwork of many different types. We may see some sub-AVAs in the future, but in general, they tend to be very poor with lots of marine deposits and lots of calcium. Right? Well, we will be talking through the episode about many of our favourite wine regions of California and in fact listen out for some of Adi's best value California wines. So without further ado, let's go over to the chat now.



Janina Doyle 08:58

Aidy, thank you so much for joining me. How are you today?



Aidy Smith 09:01

Thank you for having me. I'm good I'm looking outside I see the sun is shining down on the ships of Tobacco Dock outside of my apartment. It looks like a good day and I'm looking forward to doing a little bit of a walk later and feeding the ducks because that is my new form of entertainment.

**J** Janina Doyle 09:15

Oh I love that okay, but to remember you got to feed them with brown bread.

**A** Aidy Smith 09:19

Seeds. Well if you are going to feed them bread, it should be brown yes, but they say don't do bread don't they... seeds or peas, defrosted peas but the ducks don't like my defrosted peas.

**J** Janina Doyle 09:31

What do you want to name and shame a brand?

**A** Aidy Smith 09:34

No they get bloody Waitrose, they're picky little shits, these ducks, you know they're getting good quality peas!

**J** Janina Doyle 09:39

They don't like their Waitrose peas? Well it looks like you need to go and find another duck pond. Shame them! They can starve!

**A** Aidy Smith 09:46

Walk to the other side of London! Well do you know what, I like feeding them by hand as well, always kind of right there put it in my hand and see how close they come. There's always the confident ducks and then there's always the quiet shy ducks but as soon as a confident one comes up, it empowers the others to come forth. The swan doesn't care, the swan will go straight in like, yeah that's mine everyone else get out of my way look at my big beautiful burly feathers, I'm in!

- J** Janina Doyle 10:08  
I did say to you earlier before we started recording I feel like a bit of a swan and now now I feel like i'm even more of a swan. I go right in there and I attack. Okay interesting.
- A** Aidy Smith 10:16  
There you go. I can try and feed you peas from my hand but it might not have the same effect.
- J** Janina Doyle 10:23  
It could be interesting, so when we when we do see each other face to face let's let's give it a go and somebody can just record it and we'll just see what happens. We'll put it out on the internet, maybe it'll go viral.
- A** Aidy Smith 10:32  
There you go. We can feed each other bits of wholemeal bread, peas and seeds. Yeah maybe maybe we can find the ideal wine pairing for them all as well.
- J** Janina Doyle 10:42  
Oh my god, well let's, maybe we'll talk about that later. Anyway fun times. Adi - let's get onto some wine. Step away from the bread. I always think actually it's pretty impressive all the stuff that you've done. I know that you wanted to be an actor when you were little right?
- A** Aidy Smith 10:58  
Yes!
- J** Janina Doyle 10:58  
Then you went and did some marketing management in uni?
- A** Aidy Smith 11:01  
That's right did a degree in marketing management and ended up going over to California and then lived there for a number of years before coming back over here.



Janina Doyle 11:10

Ahhh and did that give you that little wine itch living in California?



Aidy Smith 11:11

Do you know what. My wine journey was very interesting. Well yes it did, but not in the way that you might think. So when I was at university I was necking back bottles of Yellowtail. Yellowtail Shiraz Cab Blend was my favourite wine when I was 18 - 21. You know did its job, it got me out there on the nights. When I was 20 years old I went over to California and I ended up working in an ad agency as part of my degree and the journey to get over to California, to San Francisco had taken about 60 hours. The first plane had been cancelled, there were delays, there was all this nonsense going on, and when I got off the plane finally after this tiresome journey, I had to go straight to a networking event because my university had done one for the first time in about six years, and they told me I could not miss it because it could be invaluable, I could meet some cool people. So there I am in this hotel walking to this kind of boardroom where this event is and it suddenly dawns on me, oh my god I'm 20 I can't drink for another four months, what am I going to do, and I'm like oh no! So I open the doors and this chap looks right at me, walks up and goes Hi I'm Steve, you need a drink! Grabs a glass of red wine, shoves it into me and turns out, Steve Smith: he's got the same last name as me, went to the same university, studied the same course, was in the same halls of residence 20 years prior, but even more so, he grew up four miles down the road from where I grew up, so we instantly hit it off, and he and his wife had the only urban garagist winery in Silicon valley, and they did it as a hobby. So I got embraced by them and and yeah I was making wine at the age of 20 without knowing what on earth I was doing, volunteering with them.



Janina Doyle 12:19

You were making wine. Oh fabulous. And you say it was an urban winery?



Aidy Smith 12:53

I was assisting. I was assisting making wine yeah. I probably probably shouldn't shouldn't go as far to say that it was my wine, but I definitely did have an impact I stirred that a couple of times you know when it was in those old those plastic vats, I did my part.



Janina Doyle 13:10

So you were the ultimate wine stirrer they ever had right?

A Aidy Smith 13:13  
Yeah that or a cellar rat without a cellar.

J Janina Doyle 13:16  
Yeah an urban cellar rat. No I tell you what, people may or may not know who you are. If they don't, they absolutely need to. Now the way I like to see you, I feel like now, probably very different to 20 year old Adi, you are like the James Bond of the wine world! What do you think of that? But instead of a gun, with a coravin.

A Aidy Smith 13:35  
Oh I like that. I like that. I like that.

J Janina Doyle 13:37  
You know you look fabulous in a suit, for anybody, please go across to Adi's instagram @sypped you'll see many, in fact you're there often with a martini, possibly shaken and not stirred. I mean who knows, you have got photos of you exactly doing that.

A Aidy Smith 13:52  
I've got a little story for you.

J Janina Doyle 13:53  
Oh tell me the story. Love a story. Go for it.

A Aidy Smith 13:55  
So my soulmate, my best friend, my co presenter, co director Helena Nicklin, who I love and adore, she is my work wife. We have not been able to see each other for a very long time because of the different lockdowns that we've had and at christmas Helena was reached out to buy a particular wine brand who wanted to do some fun thing with her and they want it to create a cardboard cutout of her and she said, hmmm an idea here. Because Helena and I couldn't work together, she thought I'm going to send Adi the cardboard cutout of me, and I'm going to get one of him and send it to myself so we can pretend to do videos with each other. However it all got mixed up a little bit and we ended up sending our own cardboard cutouts to ourselves. For the past two to three months I've



had a cardboard cutout of me holding a coravin in the window of my apartment for everyone who walks past to see, just right there and every time I look out someone sees it and has a big smile on their face and that makes me so happy.



Janina Doyle 14:52

Ah well that's important, right this muck up and you're helping the world to smile.



Aidy Smith 14:56

And at one point at christmas there was a blow up sex doll next week but we were asked to remove that from it.



Janina Doyle 15:03

I don't, I don't understand why they would ask you.



Aidy Smith 15:05

I won't go into that story.



Janina Doyle 15:06

Oh yeah I suppose, in theory, this isn't that kind of podcast. But anyway this is how I see you, right? Beautifully dressed, great suit, coravin in one hand, martini in the other. But you mentioned Helena. How did you start The Three Drinkers television series because it's pretty special it's not just with Helena, it's also with Colin isn't it.



Aidy Smith 15:25

Colin, that's the one!



Janina Doyle 15:26

So the three of you, am I right, you funded and organised and then directed everything as well as being the three in front of the camera?



Aidy Smith 15:35

Exactly that is spot on so, you know I've known Helena, I've known Colin for a number of years just throughout the journalism world in wine and spirits and you know prior to that I'd said to Helena, we both had in our histories and our past some form of TV career. Helena was an actress for years, I was a child actor and we both really knew that we wanted to be back on screen, and it was in march 2018 that Helena, Colin and myself got together at Milroys in soho and it dawned on us that at the time, there was absolutely nothing on tv that went beyond the swirling of glass and talking, tasting notes education of wine and spirits versus the actual journey, the entertainment, the fun, the beauty, the lifestyle. And so with no one else having done it we thought to ourselves, let's make a tv show and you know one thing with myself. I was a kid, my symptoms and my tics and tourette syndrome weren't pronounced, they were still fairly dormant but if you take someone who has something like tourette syndrome now and put them in a screening process that instantly going to get declined because someone is going to assume that they'll start swearing on camera. Now 6% of people who have Tourette syndrome swear, it's known as Coprolalia, and it's the act of doing inappropriate things, but there is so much awareness to that which maybe we'll go into that a bit later sure but the point is we thought let's make our own tv series and so we got it funded having had loads of great relationships with different wine and spirits brands, having worked in journalism for nearly 30 years collectively and we made it happen. Produced it, directed it and it's been on amazon prime, part one and part two since 2018 - 2019. Part two came out in december.

**J** Janina Doyle 17:14  
And aired in I think 172 territories, am I correct?

**A** Aidy Smith 17:19  
That's the one, that is the one.

**J** Janina Doyle 17:21  
And X amount of different languages, that figure I can't remember off the top of my head. So you can tell me, who knows. And you're going to do Series 2 soon right?

**A** Aidy Smith 17:29  
Well we can't talk about that. I'm not have spoke about that, but there will be things coming there will be things coming but I'm not allowed to mention them just yet otherwise I'll get in a lot of trouble.

J Janina Doyle 17:37  
Ohhhh well you know, i don't know getting in trouble is not so bad but fine i won't press, I will not press. So people need to go, amazon, for everyone can access it on amazon can't they?

A Aidy Smith 17:46  
As long as you've got an amazon account you can certainly and if this is aired before the 31st of march then you have a couple of days left to watch it for free on our website because as part of a little thank you to the world, we wanted to launch it for free, stream for free through our website, just to support people who might not have the financial means to have amazon prime right now as well.

J Janina Doyle 18:06  
Okay fabulous, I don't know my dates it may well be, we shall see. But anybody who has not seen this it's so much fun. Adi is definitely a superstar, do you agree?

A Aidy Smith 18:19  
Always. Always my middle name.

J Janina Doyle 18:21  
Good. I mean, I just remember one of the clips of you running off leaving behind Helena and Colin and just falling, well I wouldn't say flat on your face, but in my head it was just like a big massive fall down a hill, you're making everyone laugh constantly I think that's fair to say.

A Aidy Smith 18:35  
As long as I can put a smile on people's faces that's all that matters.

J Janina Doyle 18:38  
And they will learn things as well as watching you fall down. Were there any disasters, anything that went completely wrong whilst filming the first series?

A

Aidy Smith 18:46

I remember one scene when we were on Islay, and we were at Ardbeg and Helena had thought, do you know what, I'm going to get this beautiful bottle of Ardbeg and I'm gonna just put it down here, by this this nice little rock pool with the ocean just coming in and sweeping up on the side of the shore and I'm going to take a really nice picture of it. So she went, she put it there, the bottom was fine, it bottle was fine, which is people first think, oh god did it go off into the ocean. No no it was fine she got a beautiful picture and then she went down to get it and a swan had decided to protect the bottle and would not let her have it back.

J

Janina Doyle 19:17

Those swans!

A

Aidy Smith 19:17

She was she was angrily chased. Yeah. The topic of today. It was hissing, it was spitting at her, it would not let her have that bottle back, bless her. There was one night when, again on Islay, now Islay is a very small island and you know there's not a massive population there, therefore there's not many places to eat and we arrived quite late and we managed to find like the last remaining restaurant which was this cute little indian restaurant at the furthest point of the island and they didn't serve alcohol so throughout the evening we kept walking to the pub next store, getting nice large pints or glass or a dram of whiskey and just walking across the street with the glassware because that was their arrangement. You just go get your drink come back over vice they delivered takeout to the one next door, it was rather bizarre but great evening I have to say.

J

Janina Doyle 19:18

A nice little setup, there we go. I always like it little tips when people can travel again now they know what to expect to think go up up north into Scotland. I dream actually, I'm thinking this summer to go on a trip to Scotland, take a van, do some wild camping, again hopefully that will be allowed and also some good weather if I cross my fingers that that's, it just rains all the time when you're up in scotland right?

A

Aidy Smith 20:26

Well you say that, but throughout the series, it's a bit of a lie because in our series they had a massive heatwave and so it's sunny in nearly every single episode but you're quite right the weather there is absolutely dismal so take a brolly and some wellies.

J

Janina Doyle 20:37

Yeah both! Anyway we talked about The Three Drinkers but with Helena you've also done some really lovely things for people during these lockdowns. You've been recording these life hacks for a calmer mind. How did you get to do that?

A

Aidy Smith 20:51

So that was a beautiful little project it got to December, the end of December, because we knew that there was another impending doom lockdown now coming along. Now we've both been quite upfront and open about how we have both faced anxiety through various different means and how we've both suffered from it in the past and you know my front with having been diagnosed with tourette syndrome from the age of seven and all the effects that that has had on me I've had to create certain coping mechanisms in order to be able to reduce anxiety that I will get from the tics and just make myself feel calmer. So we both decided to put out a little teaser on social media to say that we were going to do a little series of videos and we were just going to basically help people have a calmer and more collected 2021, and our friends over at McGuigan saw that, got in touch and said look, can we help you push this further afield to help more people? Let us know what we can do to help. And so with backing from them we were able to get this campaign quite far out there and I'd like to say based on the feedback it's had and the number of people who've gotten in touch, it's had quite a good impact and you know we look at things like how light can affect your senses and your mood and anxiety, how green from trees, like the scientific properties within nature and how that can help you. How writing can be so therapeutic. What different sounds can do and beyond just listening to meditation music, but there's so many different forms of sounds. Scent and the impact that has as we know with wine. Different coping mechanisms you can utilise to make yourself happier to improve your mood. Connecting with other people, the gut, breathing, cbd but essentially 12 different topics which we have six minute videos roughly for each one and offers about four or five tips that you can instil within your life at home to be calmer, happier and reduce your anxiety.

J

Janina Doyle 22:40

I love it honestly just listening to your voice and listening to you just describe all these things it just made me take a really deep breath. I just feel really, really grounded so I'm not even drinking any wine which is normally my go to, so thank you for everyone you put up those clips on The Three Drinkers website.



Aidy Smith 22:59

Exactly: thethreedrinkers.com and at the very top of the website it just says life hacks for a calmer 2021.



Janina Doyle 23:06

Ummm and may it long continue, we need it, yeah. And breathe. So you know let's cover, you have been an amazing ambassador, I think in the wine industry for diversity, for the black and asian and minority ethnics, for people with conditions, as yourself with tourette's and speaking openly about things so I've read that you believe tourette's is your superpower, which is fantastic. Do you want to show me a little bit more about that?



Aidy Smith 23:35

Absolutely, so people who suffer from tourette syndrome, we essentially have a surge of excess energy that goes into our tics and for anyone who doesn't know what tourette syndrome is, it's vocal tics and mobile tics, so either something that is voice generated or something that is movement generated. Now you've got to have two of each for a prolonged period of time in order to be diagnosed and have tourette syndrome. But there are so many different tic disorders in general out there, we all know a lot of kids when they're younger have a tic, sometimes it sticks with them sometimes it goes away but I think you know, what is really important is raising awareness on the fact that there's 300,000 people in the uk who have this and one out of every 100 kids has this. Despite that there's just three centres, specialist centres across the UK for people with it and you know those numbers i'm talking about, the same numbers as those who suffer from autism in the UK as well. And so I think it's just it's something that has been very much, not researched as much as it should do and there's actually a petition with the government right now in order to try and get more money and more funding on the official parliament petition website and so if anyone's feeling that they've got one or two minutes to spare and want to help the tourette community they can just go to the parliament petition website type in tourette and sign it. (<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/575370>) That'd be amazing, thank you.



Janina Doyle 24:54

I certainly will.



Aidy Smith 24:55

But but in general, oh thank you, thank you. So people with tourette's have this excess energy that presents itself in the form of tics. And if we are able to foster that energy and re divert it into something that we truly enjoy doing, then our tics don't exist in that moment. And we absolutely surge in terms of creativity, and productivity. So when I put my love for what I do in terms of acting, and the community driven exercise I do and creating videos, and you know, everything that encompasses the company that Helena and I have built, it really, really helps my tics calm down, and just makes me an absolute, you know, surge of energy and empowerment within that particular area. And you know, so that that would be the the superpower that I described. In terms of diversity within the industry, I think that, you know, it's something that is quite taboo for people to talk about, because they feel like they're just window dressing. If they say I've helped the BAME community, or I'm doing something for female empowerment, I'm doing something with LGBTQIA or those with disabilities, a lot of people start to think, Oh, God, if I say that, then I'm just preaching and it looks like, but actually, if we don't start having those conversations, then nothing is going to change. Because if we have those conversations, more people will feel compelled to have them as well. And so it's like ripping the band aid off, it's gonna feel really uncomfortable. But you know, we need to talk about and I'm going to be doing, I'm on a panel with Brown-Forman for one of their female empowerment groups, as a female ally. And I'll you know, be talking on the street, about what it means to be a man and how we can help the female world. Because, you know, if you look at it females right now, we're told, you shouldn't go out after dark. It's too dangerous. Why? Why should it be dangerous? The problem isn't with the female going out. The problem is with the people who are creating the danger in the first place. And it's education, that side of things that needs to be met first. It's like saying to someone who's you know, part of the LGBTQIA community, you shouldn't go out after dark, because if you wear colourful clothing, or you wear makeup, it's dangerous. But why why should it be dangerous? So, so yeah, conversations need to be heard. And I will always be there to have those difficult conversations to help spread that word. So others feel confident to do so as well.



Janina Doyle 27:12

And you're not just doing that you're also doing some mentorship as well. You're mentoring is it Sara of the @pursuit\_of\_grapeness who is a black Asian wine communicator, and this is all kind of come down with a bit of help from Jancis Robinson, who's helped create a new website, the bamewineprofessionals.co.uk for people to go and find more of our minority ethnics. And I think it's all really quite interesting that there's a little bit more of a focus. So what are you doing with this mentorship?

A

Aidy Smith 27:40

So that's going to be really exciting, we've not kicked off just yet, because this whole year has just been an explosion of so many different things for everyone. But then very shortly, we will be discussing how and what we can do with that mentorship. I think at the very beginning of this year, you're quite right. And from what I was alluding to earlier, we have to start doing things rather than just talking about them. And one of the things that we have done in our podcast is have on, there's a trio of amazing guys, they're called the glassmates, they're three black dudes who are just so knowledgeable about the world of spirits on this particular side. And we've had them into the podcast, you know, eight out of 10 episodes on the last series to just discuss topics that are close to their heart. And in a similar vein, you know, we're going to work with Sara to see exactly what she wants to do, and what she wants to get out of the wine world, and then use our platform to promote her, and help in whatever way we can help her reach her goals. And you know, I think continuing onwards with this mission, I want to be able to do more for the LGBTQ community. I'm actively looking into people within our industry who have disabilities who we can, you know, help foster and push out there a bit more. It's about people using their platforms to help others.

J

Janina Doyle 28:49

And absolutely just being more inclusive, looking to see who wants to get involved, the perhaps doesn't feel like they can or maybe doesn't have a voice? I suppose it's our responsibility always to be looking to bring bright, intelligent, amazing passionate minds, no matter who you are, where you are, what you look like. So it's just it's exciting. And it's I think you should be very proud of yourself, the things that you're doing and putting in place and hopefully, motivating other people to follow, which I think is the most important thing.

A

Aidy Smith 29:19

Thank you. And thank you for promoting, you know, my disability and awareness surrounding it by having me on as a guest as well. It's all little steps like this, which really helped the bigger picture.

J

Janina Doyle 29:28

It is the more we talk about these things, the more people feel more open to talk about these things, rather than either being embarrassed or ashamed or feeling I might offend somebody feelings. We need to openly say things with kindness, but with honesty and with integrity, and hopefully we can raise the vibration for everybody and just have an



industry that's far more inclusive. Right?

A

Aidy Smith 29:49

Amen. I say yes to that.

J

Janina Doyle 29:51

Amen, brother. So anybody who wants to listen to your podcast as well, let's point out they need to search, it's called "Bring a bottle".

A

Aidy Smith 29:58

That's the one, Bring a Bottle.

J

Janina Doyle 29:59

And then you can have a little listen to adi some more, which I'm sure you all will after listening to this one. Absolutley! So, okay. Now, you said that you got into the wine industry when you met your buddy from the other side of the pond in California who was making wine in Silicon Valley. So is California wine region that is close to your heart?

A

Aidy Smith 30:22

It absolutely is. And I think that there's a big stigma out there that the California wines people can get are all total price bombs. But there are so many different wines out there that are at that lower and mid tier, that are just fantastic wines for people at all points of their journey and discovery. And you know, I say no to the naysayers, because there's a lot of people who, you know, just because you don't like a wine as an individual doesn't mean that someone else will not. And I think that for example, Gallo get a hell of a lot of stick, but they are producing some fantastic wines at various different price points. And you know, Apothic Cab is a fantastic wine, in my opinion, for getting people to buy something around £10, and figuring out you know what, this is a Cabernet Sauvignon from California. I like this. So I'm now going to go out there and explore a wine. You know, I've had this one quite a bit. I'm going to go out there and find something for maybe £2 more expensive, and see what else I can find. Then you get all the way to that £20 there's a wonderful Cab called slingshot you can get. And you know, just keep elevating that journey of discovery from all points of California. It's not just Napa. There's Sonoma. There's Paso Robles. There's Santa Barbara. There's oh my gosh, so many different areas of California that you can...

J

Janina Doyle 31:38

I mentioned this to you already. I love the Central Coast, Paso Robles, or just to point out you said Paso Robles. I have only just started saying Paso Robles. I used to say Paso Robles is everywhere everyone does. So apparently I looked this up I was like, this should be Paso Robles. But of course here I am a British person trying to tell what California people to say Paso Robles apparently it was Spanish came there first and it was originally called, this town was called El Paso del Robles. And then it got shortened down to Paso Robles, but of course they call it Paso oh, okay, now I've got confused, paso, wait, paso, ro..... Oh my god. Now I've said that too many times.

A

Aidy Smith 32:17

Robles, roblay.

J

Janina Doyle 32:18

Oh my gosh, I've said it too many times. I've lost it. Paso Robles. Oh my god, anyway, yeah. So now they call it Paso Robles. There we go. But apparently, if you find it confusing, you can just call it Paso.

A

Aidy Smith 32:31

Oh totally, yeah. Oh my god, yeah. It's like everything else, isn't it? There's so many different terms in the wine world that people have absolutely no idea. It's like Bourgogne. Nah just say Burgundy.

J

Janina Doyle 32:43

Find whatever is most simple. But going back to Paso, I have to say, Paso Robles. It's such an awesome region. Obviously, Cabernet Sauvignon still does really, really well there but it's the Rhone varieties and stuff that I find super, super exciting. And then you mentioned Santa Barbara, I mean, down there. It's like the coolest part of California. The Pinots and the Chardonnays coming out of that region are fantastic. Again, people think of just Los Carneros, or the Russian River, so basically Sonoma/Napa, and they're forgetting that further down south, there are such special wines to try. Although I have to say I'm not very good at finding the cheaper wine. I'm glad you mentioned about some of the Gallos wines because typically the wines that I think are really fantastic in the UK, you can generally get them for about £20, so I still don't think they're super expensive, but I wouldn't say that they're just to quickly grab off the shelf. Don't even think about it wines. I've got to say if

anyone is happy to pay that kind of £20 mark - Bonny Doon, uhhhh, his wines....

A Aidy Smith 33:46  
Oh yes!

J Janina Doyle 33:47  
I think my favourite Rhone Rangers, if I can think off the top of my head, Bonny Doon Alban, again, he's not that cheap, Alban vineyards is also fantastic. Oh, well. Tablas Creek.

A Aidy Smith 34:00  
Oh yes!

J Janina Doyle 34:01  
I think they probably would be my favourite three which all of them if you're not going for their top top wines around the £20 pound, you can get some really cracking stuff that's for sure.

A Aidy Smith 34:14  
You absolutely can. There's there's Talbott as well. There's Cambria which have a great Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. I tell you what I absolutely adore and what I think Paso - Paso Robles - Robles and in Santa Barbara have around that area and oh my gosh, San Luis Obispo. So Paso and San Luis Obispo, they have in my mind the best Zinfandel in the world. That is my favourite grape variety, Zinfandel. I fell in love with it.

J Janina Doyle 34:41  
Rather than Lodi?

A Aidy Smith 34:43  
Rather than Lodi. I really like the Paso Robles and the San Luis Obispo, like variations and just whatever they're doing down there, whether it's the soil, whether it's the terroir, whether it's the climate, winemaking, whatever it might be, there is some phenomenal examples of Zinfandel over that way and Turley, we are graced with having a few of the

SKU's, a few of the bottles that Turley produce in the UK - Juvenile and Atlas peak. Now it's not the cheapest wine you are going to get. But to be able to you know, it's not extortionately priced, I think it's fairly priced but Zinfandel from Paso Robles and San Luis Obispo is out of this world.

J

Janina Doyle 35:22

Okay, okay. What kind of price point roughly are they at? Because I think they're probably more hitting the £25/30 mark, aren't they?

A

Aidy Smith 35:29

Yeah. £30 for Turley Juvenile. Yes. So that is a bit more expensive. But then, so what, hold on, there is one, okay, so there is another zin. It's £24. It's called Bear Flag Zinfandel. And that is absolutely fantastic.

J

Janina Doyle 35:44

Where does that come from?

A

Aidy Smith 35:45

So I believe it is a blend of multiple different areas. Oh do you know what, I'm lying, it's from Sonoma.

J

Janina Doyle 35:55

Okay, fine. So we've got up slightly up north again. No you're supposed to be staying in by Central Coast, which I think is exciting. But you know, it's interesting. I have to say I think you're right. Definitely Paso Robles. San Luis Obispo are making some cracking varieties, but I do think you can get some really good value in Lodi. They have such incredible old vines and actually a lot of their wines I find for about £15. I know Cline Cellars, who I think are located in Sonoma, but they make a Lodi Zinfandel. And that's about £15. And also, just one of the first wines I ever encountered from California was the Brazin Old Vine Zinfandel, which they've done in Waitrose literally for 15 years. It's always been there, and it's still there now £15 and again, if people like that concentrated, kind of jammy big bold, luscious, a little bit raisin like, a little bit chocolatey Zin, I mean, that one's a perfect one to go for and actually start the exploration of of Zinfandel. But yes, if you can afford Turley, I used to sell that as a Sommelier, I can definitely vouch for Turley. Yum.

A Aidy Smith 36:59  
And then there's Gnarly head, which is a great one as well, which is on that affordable stamp. I think it's about £12 I think.

J Janina Doyle 37:05  
Is it £12. You say I think. Google it.

A Aidy Smith 37:11  
Ah no, It's £18. Nevermind.

J Janina Doyle 37:13  
Well, you know, there we go, you don't need to remortgage, but yeah, the thing is a lot of the California wines when you actually have a look on line, and you see them in America, there's so much cheaper but they almost double in price.

A Aidy Smith 37:26  
Yea. It's the export tax, isn't it? Which just makes it so much more expensive. I mean, there, I think there are, there are definitely some that you can find within that cheaper standpoint. But you just got to look for them. Stonebarn does an okay job. You got Decoy as well.

J Janina Doyle 37:43  
Oh Decoy. Yeah, I mean, again, not the cheapest but Duckhorn as just a California producer are fantastic with all of their either blends or whether it's the Merlots, the Zinfandel or the single varietal Cab. Yeah, definitely look out for Duckhorn. And actually, I think what I like about Duckhorn is that they have such incredible quality and yet they're very well known, a good history, but they haven't kind of sold out to the price point. They haven't gone too expensive.

A Aidy Smith 38:09  
100%

J

Janina Doyle 38:10

Where I think where people have been around for such a long time. The prices just seem to keep on going up. But Duckhorn has maintained a certain level of integrity?!

A

Aidy Smith 38:19

Yeah, no, I'd say that's definitely true. And there's also, I know you were mentioning Lodi: Scotto family, they have a Zinfandel that I think is about £10 and that's pretty damn good. And Cline, you mentioned, I have to agree with you. They produce some phenomenal wines. And I remember that when I was working at the Garage East, I used to get a case of their wine. And then I go up to wine country in Sonoma or Napa or wherever with a case of this wine. And the wineries were always extremely receptive to doing bottle swaps, because they wanted to see what else was going on there in the world. So I take this case of wine up, and then we would do swapsies.

J

Janina Doyle 38:53

That's brilliant.

A

Aidy Smith 38:54

They say all right, so what is the value of that wine? I tell them you know, this is 20, 40, 50 whatever it was, they said, okay, here are three of ours, which one do you want? And I go, I'll go for that one. And they also offer a trade discount of up to it's usually 20 to 50%. But you know, if you get all pally with them, they give you 50, so I'd leave every time I went up with about six cases of wine. Going up talking the talk, do my thing, spreading the love of wine. And that was a good time. Yeah, I got very merry when I lived in San Francisco, I can tell you that.

J

Janina Doyle 39:22

I can imagine. It's interesting you were talking about California is not just Napa, and it really isn't. And I think the Pacific Coast, so I obviously work for a Chilean winery during the daytime. And that Pacific Coast is bloody freezing and really impacts the vineyards that are planted near the coast. And so it's exact same thing up in California and as an example, where we mentioned Santa Barbara, so I suppose it's worth pointing out where some of these are so San Francisco is obviously in the middle part of California and then going down all the way down to Los Angeles, you've basically got vineyards. And Santa Barbara is that lower part, right at the bottom closest to Los Angeles and it's the coldest and that's because the coastal mountains unusually they don't go north to south they go

east to west and so these freezing cold winds and fog and everything just come hence why you could have these amazing Chardonnays and Pinots from down there which apparently have the same amount of kind of acidity levels as Burgundy which I think a lot of people probably just don't think of when they think of California, they think just warm and hot.

A Aidy Smith 39:57  
100% 100%

J Janina Doyle 40:25  
I just wish more of it came to the UK actually. As i said to you I think for me Pasa Robles and Santa Maria Valley, these are the places that people should be exploring a little bit more because I think you do get a slight better value just because also they haven't got the Napa name on there, but at the same time they're doing a lot more interesting varieties and the white rhone varieties: Roussanne and Grenache Blanc... your reaction - are you thirsty?

A Aidy Smith 40:59  
I am a bit thirsty, i'm looking at my wine shelf now in my bedroom. There is one in every room now but yea, I'm eyeing up some things up here that's for sure.

J Janina Doyle 41:06  
Did you visit many of the wineries down in the San Luis Obispo area or down in Santa Barbara?

A Aidy Smith 41:12  
I was able to make two trips down there in the entirety of my time there which is tragic but you know I tried to explore as many other states as I possibly could. But I remember one called Tobin James and they don't have wine over here but it's quite readily available across the US, and it's essentially like an old cowboy shack. You go in it's like an old saloon and you know there's a piano in the middle of this bar going all around, they've got some massive giant format bottles and it's very speakeasy vibe and I have to say you know they did such a great job of making it such an inviting experience and the wines are phenomenal. Again San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles Zinfandel, wow.



Janina Doyle 41:51

I think we're doing a good job promoting this area. I think people are going to go and investigate after this right?



Aidy Smith 41:55

I think, I hope so and I think that, you know this, support some of the smaller online retailers and the independents that are out there for this as well because I know that a lot of the big retailers will have those staples Sonoma/Napa wines but it's the smaller peeps who have gone out there and explored the nooks and crannies of these regions and brought some real treats over and you know if you like California wines is definitely worth spending a couple of extra pounds to experience something off the beaten track.



Janina Doyle 42:21

Well it's funny actually I think as well just I'm going back to Pinot Noir because you know it's a classic but to kind of also showcase how good this area is that people often don't know about have you seen Somm 3?



Aidy Smith 42:34

Not yet but I can't wait to, and I need to very soon.



Janina Doyle 42:38

So in Somm 3 it was really cool, so just like the Judgement of Paris of 1976, they kind of decided to create another like blind tasting, but this time with Pinot Noir instead of Chardonnay. And so they did a whole load of different Pinots and there were obviously mostly lots of Burgundy's thrown in there but a few others. In first place, I'm ruining it for you now, but still to prove a point, first place was a Volnay. It was by Marquis d'Angerville. So it was very much like yeah okay cool yeah that makes sense this came in first place in the blind tasting. But in second place was the Bloom's Field, Domaine de la Côte which is made by the Sommelier turned winemaker Raj Parr and it was just, I think that's another amazing feat for California wines and especially this wine is from the Sta. Rita Hills which is a smaller AVA within the Santa Barbara County and it just goes to show, okay this came in second place and beating other top Burgundian wines and it keeps on happening, you know. If we keep on doing these kind of blind tastings of certain areas in the new world versus the traditional you know your Bordeaux and your your Burgundy people will start realising that there's some of the best wines in the world are coming from



outside of France these days so we can't all afford that wine though unfortunately. I'm not sure how much that is, but it's not it's not an everyday wine.

A

Aidy Smith 44:04

I think that you know what's really exciting is much like you said before the Judgement of Paris and how before no one thought of California as a place of producing wine you know there's areas like in Switzerland where they drink 95 or more percent of the wines over there and we get such a small fraction of it delivered over to the UK. But what we do find is incredible and it's similar to these regions because these wines are so amazing they get bought up by the local areas straightaway and it only after you know several years when they can expand that distribution a bit but keep the quality, maintain it, do we start finding over here because of specialist importers. Much like the wonderful Steven Spurrier did in Paris, importing very small quantities of these amazing wines, you know God rest his soul, and it's that mentality that hopefully we can keep seeing that and that will support and promote more wines from the smaller and lesser well known but still exceptional quality areas of California.

J

Janina Doyle 45:00

Yeah absolutely. Well, I have to say the chances of most people just getting their hands on the Bloom's Field Domaine de la Côte is quite hard. But they do do a different project, the Sandhi project where you get some Pinot Noir and Chardonnays at a much more affordable price. They kind of buy in some fruits and stuff, but one of their wines is from the Sanford and Benedict vineyard, which has some pretty old Pinot I think it's the oldest Pinot in the Sta Rita Hills. And so you can actually get the slightly more affordable Pinot from there, should anybody want to actually kind of taste some of wines from Raj Parr, and you can't quite afford the Bloom's Field. There are options. I think that's the nice thing to find out the producers that are doing side projects or doing their second level. If you find a good producer, you don't need to always get their top wine. And actually, we mentioned Bonny Doon. His major wine Le Cigare Volant, I think it's called Le Cigare Volant. Typically it was selling for about £50. It was a again, a Rhone blend. And then he decided, I think this is really interesting. He's such a quirky winemaker, he kind of decided, do you know, what, we've had a time and a place for this. It's a wine that needs to be held back before it can be enjoyed. It's a really intense wine. It's very, very powerful. That's not what people want these days. And so he's since the 2018 vintage that it still exists, but it's like a new wine, still Rhone varietals. But instead of like the Mourvedre, he's putting in I think Cinsault. And I've seen, that wine, so kind of same name, I selling for just over £20. So a much more approachable, younger, more youthful, more fun version. So ironically, he's changed his big, strong, powerful main wine to something much more young and fun and

affordable, which is quite interesting.

A

Aidy Smith 46:39

We love that. Means more people can get their hands on it. So we like that.

J

Janina Doyle 46:42

Yeah absolutely. So anyway, it's about finding those kinds of producers that are either making changes or doing lower levels, but check out Central Coast. And also actually I say Central Coast. You talk about the Silicon Valley, but just to the east of Silicon Valley is the Livermore Valley.

A

Aidy Smith 46:59

Yeah. And isn't that Wente is? Are they over in Livermore?

J

Janina Doyle 47:02

Yes they are. And they are, I think this is quite cool and they're not too expensive. Their standard Chardonnay, obviously not their top stuff, 80% of all Chardonnay in California is the Wente clone, which they brought across from France, and they brought it across there now. Yeah, 80% of all of the Chardonnay in California are the Wente clone. In fact, in the Livermore Valley, I don't know if they're using it or not. They also, the Sauvignon Blanc does really, really well in Livermore, very gravelly soils, it's a region that's not as well known. So I think the pricing is a little bit better. And the Sauvignon Blanc clones came over, maybe around the same time, definitely in the 1800s from Château d'Yquem.

A

Aidy Smith 47:10

Château d'Yquem!

J

Janina Doyle 47:37

Yes absolutely, it's quite cool when you start seeing the connections and then you go, Okay, yeah, you know what, fine, I'm gonna start investigating wines from that region. It's very, very cool. But I have to say, I haven't had any Sauvignon Blanc from Livermore ever, only Chardonnay. So I actually cannot personally say what I think of it. Have you had Sauvignon Blanc from Livermore Valley?

A

Aidy Smith 48:06

Do you know what I cannot remember? I'm sure at some point on my journey there. I did. And I'm sure it's absolutely amazing. But at this point in time, after having had so many bottles of wine in my lifetime, I do not remember.

J

Janina Doyle 48:20

It happens, doesn't it, the drinking? Well, if anybody aswell if you go on to the other side, so this is why I'm like definitely explore Central Coast because I think a lot of people probably have heard of some of the names but they don't realise where it is. The Santa Cruz Mountains, as the mountains would probably suggests we're talking kind of up to 800 metres and that's where the Ridge Montebello comes from, which I have to say in terms of a Cabernet Sauvignon that actually really is, it's kind of savoury and it has that slight earthiness and cigar box. It's not just it's nowhere near like juicy, big black bold Cabernet Sauvignon. It really can stand up against the top Bordeaux's of the world. Ridge Montebello is there, so I mean, if anyone's got some cash to to drop, I would definitely recommend going there.

A

Aidy Smith 48:20

And if you if you want to go the opposite direction, all the way down to the very bottom, the Temecula Valley or Temecula Valley. I can't exactly remember which one it is now, how it's pronounced but they have 50 wineries down there now.

J

Janina Doyle 48:25

Since when?

A

Aidy Smith 48:46

It's a quickly growing region. Since now! Since right now there's 50 wineries in Temecula or Temecula Valley.

J

Janina Doyle 49:29

To be honest, I cannot keep up with that whole area. I mean, just west of Sta. Rita hills is a region that's not gotten AVA but they're calling it like the Wine Ghetto. I think they're calling it the Lompoc Highlands, like they're doing lots of experimenting, and they've got like this industrial space and where these people are making wines. It's the wine ghetto. So

quite clearly, we all need to get really really far down south in California because it sounds to me like there's some pretty exciting stuff going on down there.

A

Aidy Smith 49:58

It does. I'm definitely going to be doing a bit was searching this evening as well. And I've got another bottle or two added to the collection. I think.

J

Janina Doyle 50:04

Uhhh Me too. So anyway, hopefully that has kind of inspired people listening that California is far more than just Cabernet Sauvignon. And far more than Napa Valley. I mean, we've only just touched the surface. Maybe I'll be a little bit more wine geeky soon about the California wine regions so people can understand. But um, thank you so much Aidy.

A

Aidy Smith 50:24

Thank you. Thank you very much for having me. This has been a wonderful hour of my life. I have to say, a lot of fun.

J

Janina Doyle 50:29

Oh I appreciate it. Now probably you can get back to your, and I think you are the one that name it this way, your shitty latte art.

A

Aidy Smith 50:38

My shitty latte art. Yes. The hopeless art of attempting to create lattes using a latte machine. And I'm getting better. But you know, I don't want to become an expert. I think it's quite funny how I fail nearly every single day.

J

Janina Doyle 50:55

I have to agree with you. Yeah, I laugh. They bring me joy seeing your creations and they are creative, but artistic, perhaps not.

A

Aidy Smith 51:07

I'll take that. Again. As I said in the beginning, as long as it puts a smile on people's face.

**J** Janina Doyle 51:11  
Oh, that's all you need to do. Well, hopefully everyone listening you all have smiled a little bit. Aidy, I shall leave you to do whatever you need to do to be happy today. And we'll speak a little bit later on.

**A** Aidy Smith 51:22  
Thank you and chin chin.

**J** Janina Doyle 51:24  
Chin chin to you.

**J** Janina Doyle 51:30  
So I hope after that chat, you feel a little bit more like exploring some new regions in the Central Coast. If you want to know a little bit more about Paso Robles, go across to [patreon.com/eatsleepwinerepeat](https://patreon.com/eatsleepwinerepeat) where I've done a little focus episode because I do have a little bit of a soft spot for that AVA. But for now, I shall end this episode as I always do with a wine quote, from Benjamin Franklin. Now, when he was writing a letter to a friend he said:

**J** Janina Doyle 52:01  
"Behold the rain which descends from heaven upon our vineyards. There it enters the roots of the vines to be changed into wine, a constant proof that God loves us and loves to see us happy."

**J** Janina Doyle 52:15  
It seems rather apt when this episode does have a bit of a focus on being happy. So to all of you. Thank you for listening. Hopefully this episode has put a smile on your face and your hand reaching for a glass of Californian wine. Please do like, share and subscribe to this podcast if you haven't already. And leave me a review if you find yourself a moment spare. Have a great week and guys. Cheers to you.