

## Winemaker Matt Brady

*Perfecting his coastal-inspired craft*

BY HANA-LEE SEDGWICK

**A**s winemaker for SAMsARA, Matt Brady has excelled in crafting wines from the Sta. Rita Hills AVA, including pinot noir, syrah, grenache, and chardonnay — each noted for expressing the region's unique coastal influences.

A graduate of UC Santa Barbara, Brady's passion for wine ignited during his college years as he explored the wineries of Santa Barbara County. Although he hadn't envisioned a career in winemaking initially, his growing fascination with wine led him to a pivotal part-time job at Jaffurs Winery in 2005, during his final year at UCSB. What started as an opportunity to work a harvest and delve deeper into the world of wine quickly sparked a deeper passion, leading him to take a full-time job with Jaffurs. There, Brady's enthusiasm for winemaking grew, and he progressed from roles in the tasting room and cellar to becoming the assistant winemaker, then head winemaker, over a span of 12 vintages.

In 2016, Brady embarked on a new journey with SAMsARA, which at the time was undergoing a change in ownership. As Joan and Dave Szkutak stepped into their new roles as owners, Brady took the helm as winemaker, quickly establishing strong relationships with top vineyards and upholding the winery's reputation by crafting wines of elegance and finesse. Although SAMsARA primarily specialized in red varietals, Brady initiated a new chardonnay program shortly after joining, which now accounts for some 25 percent of the winery's 3,500-case production. "Chardonnay has become my favorite wine to make," says Brady. "The





## FIRSTS

chardonnays from the Sta. Rita Hills are, in my opinion, the shining stars of this region — high in acid, mineral-driven, refreshing, and incredibly food-friendly.” More recently, he further expanded SAMsARA’s offerings with the addition of its first sparkling wine: a 2022 Blanc de Blancs, set to be released this fall.

When asked about his favorite aspect of winemaking in Santa Barbara County, Brady cites the region’s proximity to the ocean. “I love the elegant, complex wines that this coastal area produces — wines with a true sense of place — and I’m thrilled to make such wines at SAMsARA,” he says. “My role is to have a minimal thumbprint on the wines, allowing the distinct, coastal-influenced terroir to shine through, which is what really sets this region apart.” —RB

*You can find SAMsARA wines at their tasting room in Los Olivos, at 2446 Alamo Pintado Ave., and at their tasting room/production facility in Goleta, located at 6485 Calle Real, Suite E. [www.samsarawine.com](http://www.samsarawine.com)*



Photo by Carly Otness

## The perfect bite...

**S**carlett Begonia founder Crista Fleming opened her restaurant 13 years ago, and shrimp and grits is one of the original dishes that’s lasted to the present day. It’s composed with Bob’s Red Mill stone white grits that are finished with cream and Beemster cheese, sautéed shrimp, Papa Cantella’s andouille sausage, caramelized onion, roasted red peppers, mustard seed chow chow relish, and all finished with two perfectly poached organic eggs, olive oil, and a handful of arugula. Add another of the originals, the lemon ricotta pancakes with fresh blueberry compote, and pair it all with a house organic bloody mary or Brander Sauvignon Blanc, and you have the perfect bite. —RB