

Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S MONTHLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY

COMING EVENTS

Every Fridays Wine Bar

A Taste of Monterey
5:00pm-8:00pm*
Join us every Friday evening from 5pm to 8pm. Start your weekend off with a relaxing view, live music, great food and a glass of Monterey's finest.



Store Hours

A Taste of Monterey
Cannery Row
Sun-Wed 11am-7pm
Thu-Sat 11am-8pm

*No new member tastings after 6:00pm

JANUARY REFERRALS



Refer a friend to the Monterey Wine Club, and after they join, you get a \$20.00 Gift Card!



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Pinot Blanc

IT'S NOT CHARDONNAY!



Monterey County produces so many outstanding red wine varietals, which admittedly leads to less attention devoted to our County's white wines. And, it is attention that is well-deserved. Monterey County produces equally outstanding whites as it does red wines.

You know this is true for our Chardonnays. Throughout California, the country, and even globally, Monterey County Chardonnays are recognized. Our wonderful Pinot Noirs often receive the flashy headlines, but our Chardonnays may be arguably easier to find in wine stores. In fact, at the same time that wine region northeast of the Bay Area became famous for its Cabernet Sauvignons, Monterey County's Chardonnay potential was revealed to the world.

Just as Monterey County's unique climate and growing conditions offer a wide diversity in agricultural produce, the same is true for grape varietals. And we have more than Chardonnay. In previous articles we've discussed how Riesling has long been considered one of the County's top other white varietals, and we've spent time with Sauvignon Blanc and the growing popularity of white Rhône varietals. Now it's time to take a look at yet another white varietal we have the pleasure of offering: Pinot Blanc.



True, Pinot Blanc is not one of our most popular white varietals. However, growers and winemakers have been producing top-notch Pinot Blanc wines for years in Monterey County. Chalone Vineyards was likely the first winery to produce Monterey County Pinot Blanc wines as they have some of the oldest grape vines in the County in the Chalone AVA, including Pinot Blanc vines. To this day, Chalone continues to produce excellent Monterey County Pinot Blanc wines, but they are not alone. J. Lohr, Chock Rock, Bargetto, La Rochelle, Silvestri, and Cima Collina all offer premium Monterey County Pinot Blancs as well. We've included an excellent example of Monterey County's Pinot Blanc potential

with the Cima Collina Pinot Blanc we've included in this month's Wine Club selection.

Now that you know the background, let's take a closer look at this lesser-known white varietal. To answer that initial question – yes, the varietal is related to Pinot Noir. It's actually a genetic mutation of Pinot Noir, and an infamously unstable mutation. So unstable in fact that at times an entire vine can unexpectedly turn from a light green color to a dark blue.

In addition to the potential for a complete fruit color transformation to occur, Pinot Blanc is not the easiest varietal to grow, similar to its red varietal cousin. It is not a varietal which can be grown, much less grown well, anywhere and requires stringent climate and soil conditions to truly present its best characteristics.

Pinot Blanc is made into primarily dry wines here in California and is also produced as dry whites in France's Alsace region (where it is also used for sparkling wine as well), Germany, Italy (where it is known as Pinot Bianco), and Hungary. In Canada the varietal is used for ice wine production.

Here in Monterey County, expect the best of dry Pinot Blanc whites wines to be fully showcased. These are full-bodied white wines, with deep aromas of stone fruits, light citrus, and floral characteristics. Pinot Blanc wines often have a creamy texture, but our Pinot Blancs tend to be more rich in minerality, producing crisper wines.

Pinot Blanc wines tend to be high in acidity, so keep this in mind when considering potential food pairings. The varietal's characteristics make it a good option for cheese pairing or to match with light chicken or fish pasta dishes. Pinot Blanc's origins are murky, but it's accepted as having found its place in the viticultural world in France's Alsace region. Escargots (snails) are popular in this region of France, and not so surprisingly Pinot Blanc-based wines are favorites to accompany these land crawling mollusks.



Continued Inside

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

MONTOYA - 2013 Merlot



The Montoya Merlot is made from grapes grown on their family vineyards and other select Monterey County appellations. The subtle influences of these different microclimates add depth and complexity to the final blend.

The Montoya Arroyo Seco Merlot has been skillfully blended from several of their vineyards located in the diverse terroirs of Monterey County. The Montoya Merlot is blended to deliver the dark cherry and berry flavors Monterey is known for. These are framed in cedary oak with tones of tea and spice. This is a supple wine that a red wine lover will enjoy with or without food.

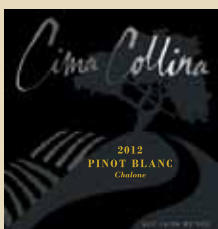
100% Merlot

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2018

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

CIMA COLLINA - 2012 Chalone Pinot Blanc



The grapes for this wine were sourced from the Antle Vineyard (aka Pinnaclacitos Chalone), which was originally planted by Dick Graff in 1989. This historic vineyard is a pleasure to behold: it sits in a protected southwestfacing dell overlooking the Salinas Valley. The gnarly old vines surrounded by the striking rock outcroppings of the Pinnacles area makes for a tremendous scene that reminds one of days gone by in California.

This vintage was perfect in every way in California and Chalone – although known for its sometimes intense heat in the summer – did not escape the trend. As a result, this wine is a wonderful example of what Pinot Blanc can be -- light and fruity with notes of pear and apple; slightly smoky with a crisp acidity, minerality and long finish. Enjoy on its own or with crab cakes, seafood bisque, chicken cordon bleu or a spring vegetable stew.

100% Pinot Blanc

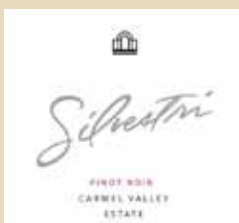
320 Cases Produced

14.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2016

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

SILVESTRI - 2009 "RISING TIDE" PINOT NOIR (Club Red)



The Pinot Noir is cold soaked on its skins for five to seven days in small open top tanks. It is fermented for a further 10 to 15 days at warm temperatures to enhance the extraction of color and texture. After draining and pressing the young wine completes malolactic fermentation in one half new and one half one year old French oak barrels. Aging occurs without any racking until the wine is ready to be bottled in August before the next harvest.

The typical Silvestri Pinot Noir dark color foretells the deep blackberry and plum aromas. These are followed by smoky notes and hints of clove and cinnamon. The flavors are a strong reinforcement of the aromas with a medium full mouthfeel and a great midpalate. The finish is long and smooth with silky tannins. This wine is drinking wonderfully right now and should continue

to do so for at least another 5 years.

100% Pinot Noir

1,420 Cases Produced

18.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2015

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

NOBEL VINES - 2013 446 Chardonnay (Club Blanc)



Clones perform at their best when they are put to work in the type of soil and climate from where they originated. Chardonnay favors cool conditions, and Monterey's coastal climate—with afternoon breezes, evening fog and a long growing season—is perfect for growing excellent Chardonnay grapes. Clone 4 does especially well in Block 46 of their San Bernabe Vineyard, which is in one of the coolest growing regions in California

446 Chardonnay exhibits appealing aromas of ripe pear, pineapple and melon. Medium-bodied with a creamy mid-palate, this delightful wine offers flavors of peach and coconut, with hints of lemon and toasty vanilla spice. Enjoy it on its own, or with soft cheeses, roast fowl and baked yams.

100% Chardonnay

1,200 Cases Produced

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2016

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued

In years past, Pinot Blanc was referred to by some as the “poor man’s Chardonnay.” Why this was the case – I honestly have no idea. When I think of Pinot Blanc compared to Chardonnay wines all I see as similar is that they are both dry white wines which somehow originated in France. It is true, however, that the two varieties do often share similar wine-making styles including barrel aging, use of oak, and malolactic fermentation...but the similarities really stop there. And the reference to a “poor man’s wine” would seemingly indicate a lesser quality wine, which is definitely not true.

As with most white wines, Pinot Blanc wines are not meant for aging. So whether you open your new Monterey County Pinot Blanc bottle with snails or not, we recommend you open it soon to discover yourself this varietal’s uniqueness and difference from Chardonnay.

Bryce Ternet - contributing editor and author of the recently released: “*The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula.*” See <http://www.mbryceter.net.com/> for more.



\$5 WINE CLUB
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Special



*Roasted Beet, Arugula,
Goat Cheese & Honey
Crostini*

This delicious crostini is topped with slow roasted beets. The goat cheese provides a savory and creamy contrast to the natural sweetness of the beets. The arugula is a peppery surprise. While, the honey drizzle brings all the flavors together in a tasty wine-friendly snack. For wine, crisp whites and young, fruit-driven reds seem to pair best. Definitely a fun farmer’s market delight!

Every month A Taste of Monterey will be featuring a special menu item, at a great price, exclusively offered to our wine club members. Enjoy with one of your favorite Monterey wines (or beer!) at our tasting room on Cannery Row.

RECIPE

BUTTERNUT SQUASH RAVIOLI

with brown butter sage sauce & walnuts

Ingredients

1 1/4 pound	butternut squash
1 package	wonton wrappers
1 cup	ricotta cheese
1/2 cup	walnuts
1 lg	shallot
1/2 stick	butter
1 tbsp	sage leaves
1 tsp	nutmeg
2 tbsp	olive oil
1 cup	romano or parmesan cheese



Directions

- 1.) Boil 2 quarts of water over high heat. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Roughly chop sage and walnuts, and dice shallot.
- 2.) Cut squash into wedges, scooping out pulp and seeds. Sprinkle with salt and drizzle with olive oil. Place on a baking sheet and roast 25 minutes or until soft.
- 3.) When cool, add squash, ricotta cheese, nutmeg and fresh ground pepper to taste into a blender and process until smooth.
- 4.) Take wonton wrapper and add 1 tbsp of squash mixture to the center. Lightly moisten edges of wonton wrapper with water, fold into a triangle. Press edges down with a fork on all sides to seal.
- 5.) To prepare the sauce, heat butter in a small saucepan over medium heat to melt. Add sage, walnuts and shallots and cook for 5 minutes. Stir frequently to allow butter to brown without burning. Remove from heat, and add parmesan.
- 6.) Add finished raviolis to water and let boil until they rise, then remove and let cool.
- 7.) Plate raviolis and top with sauce to serve!



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PLEASE NOTIFY US BY CALLING
(888) 646-5446

Any information received after the 20th of each month will not take effect until the following month. Change of address updates, for the upcoming shipment, called in after the 20th, may be subject to a special handling fee.

PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS TO:

A Taste of Monterey
Attn: Elaine Hewett
700 Cannery Row, Ste. KK
Monterey, CA 93940
(888) 646-5446 ext. 13
club@tastemonterey.com

CLUB SAVINGS

Remember, as a Club Member, you receive a 15% discount on all purchases (20% for Quattro and Cellar members) and complimentary tastings.

NEWSLETTER STAFF
















Robyn Rauh - Executive Editor
Ken Rauh - Creative Director
Bryce Ternet - Contributing Editor
Elaine Hewett - Club Manager

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JANUARY SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 3/31/2015		
	Montoya 2013 Merlot	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$12.80
	Cima Colina 2012 Chalone Pinot Blanc	\$24.00	\$18.00	\$19.20
	Silvestri 2009 "Rising Tide" Pinot Noir	\$32.00	\$24.00	\$25.60
	Nobel Vines 2013 446 Chardonnay	\$14.00	\$10.50	\$11.20
DECEMBER SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 2/28/2015		
	Craftwork 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Cru 2011 SLH Chardonnay	\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
	PotBelly Vintners NV Port	\$50.00	\$37.50	\$40.00
	Craftwork 2012 Sauvignon Blanc	\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
NOVEMBER SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 1/31/2015		
	Ryder 2012 Pinot Noir	\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
	Holman Ranch 2013 "Blushing Bride" Rosé of Pinot Noir	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Fieldfare 2012 Syrah	\$24.00	\$18.00	\$19.20
	Ryder 2012 Sauvignon Blanc	\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB		PRICES EXPIRE 2/28/2015		
	Galante 2010 Malbec	\$27.00	\$21.25	\$21.60
	Silvestri 2011 Bella Sandra Chardonnay	\$30.00	\$22.50	\$24.00
	Chima Collina 2007 Reserve Pinot Noir	\$60.00	\$45.00	\$48.00

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