

Tasting Monterey

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

STORE HOURS



A Taste of Monterey
Cannery Row
Sun-Thu 11am-6pm
Fri-Sat 11am-8pm*

Food service begins at
11:30am daily

*No new member tastings
after 6pm

FEBRUARY REFERRALS



Refer a friend to the
Monterey Wine Club, and
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\$20.00 Gift Card!



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Cima Collina

On Top of the Hill

Cima Collina roughly translates as “hill top,” and there’s really no better way to describe the quality Cima Collina winery produces.

Here at A Taste of Monterey, we are excited to have Cima Collina represented as one of Monterey County’s top wineries. A quote from winemaker, Annette Hoff, truly reflects the character and approach of the winery.

“Local flavors are as diverse as the Monterey County landscape. From the rugged Big Sur coastline to the prairie lands of Arroyo Seco, every vineyard develops its own set of diverse flavors. It is our passion to discover these local flavors and produce unfined, unfiltered wines that reflect a sense of place. Our meticulous, artisan approach preserves and enhances these local flavors from the finest Monterey County vineyards.”

Cima Collina’s tasting room is located in Carmel Valley Village in a building originally constructed in the 1880s as a creamery owned by a Carmel Valley pioneer, William Hatton (locals will recognize the name’s legacy in the name of a particular canyon). This creamery produced our very own Monterey Jack cheese. Yes, it really was first produced here in Monterey County.

After its creamery days were through, the building served as Carmel Valley’s first post office. You can’t get much more grounded in Monterey County than housing your tasting room in a building tied so delicately to the area’s history. Or maybe you can?

How about if your vineyard manager is a descendent of an Esselin Native American who helped Father Junipero Serra construct the original Carmel Mission? Cima Collina has that in their vineyard manager, Tom Nason.

Cima Collina’s own estate vineyard is located roughly a half-mile east of the Village on part of a historic ranch. The vineyard was planted, on a hill top, in 2002, with an initial harvest following in 2005. The vineyard is planted with 4 acres of Pinot Noir and about a half-acre of Pinot Gris.

And this brings us to another element of mindset of the winery – the drive to make wines from areas of Monterey County which produce new and exciting characteristics. After all, planting Pinot Noir fruit in Carmel Valley, which has traditionally been Bordeaux varietal land, is bold in itself. But Cima Collina also carefully selects grapes from exceptional growers in the County. This includes from traditional proven enclaves, such as Pinot Noir from the Santa Lucia Highlands, Chardonnay from the Salinas Valley, and Bordeaux and Rhône varietals from the San Antonio Valley AVA.



But how about taking that sense of boldness a step further? Everyone knows the western slopes of the Salinas Valley produce amazing Pinot Noir grapes (Santa Lucia Highlands), but how about the eastern slopes? Along with a couple of other adventurous wineries, Cima Collina sees great potential for this area to produce outstanding Pinot Noir and Chardonnay as well, reflected in their choice to source grapes from the Chula Vina vineyard in the foothills of the Gavilan Mountains.

And location sourcing isn’t all of it. Varietal choice is another interesting facet of Cima Collina’s style. Toss in some Pinot Blanc and Mourvedre from the Chalone AVA, some Sauvignon Blanc from the Cedar Lane vineyard, and the always avant-garde Riesling from the Santa Lucia Highlands...

these all add up to firmly displaying a winery willing to take risks.

And that risk continues through their winemaking process. Most wineries would be hesitant to produce

Continued Inside

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

MUIRWOOD - 2014 *Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon*



Muirwood is a line of limited production, reserve wines grown, produced and bottled from their vineyards along California's Central Coast. Located in the premium grape-growing appellations of Monterey and Arroyo Seco, their vineyards yield intense, full-flavored fruit of exceptional quality. For the Muirwood collection, their winemaker selects the finest fruit, and then handcrafts the wine with extraordinary attention and care to produce distinctive wines with great nuance and depth. The fines Muirwood company has to offer.

Produced from the Vaquero Vineyard on their Wiley Ranch, the Muirwood Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon showcases aromas and flavors of chocolate, mint and vanilla. Ripe, supple tannins extend through the finish.

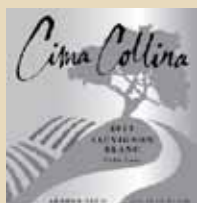
100% Cabernet Sauvignon

13.4% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

CIMA COLLINA - 2013 *Cedar Lane Sauvignon Blanc*



The Cedar Lane Vineyard in Monterey's Arroyo Seco appellation offers a perfect example of why it is usually not a good idea to paint all appellations with the same brush. Arroyo Seco tends to be known as a warmer region of Monterey. But, if you find yourself in the mouth of the Arroyo Seco Valley, where Cedar Lane Vineyard resides, you will find yourself in a place that is an island of constant, relative "cool" in the otherwise sunny growing region.

For this vintage, 100% of the juice was fermented in a small stainless steel tank at cool temperatures. As a result of this handling, it is characterized by aromas and flavors of freshly cut grass, lychee, starfruit, grapefruit and offers a refreshing mouthfeel while maintaining cool, food-friendly acidity.

100% Sauvignon Blanc

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

CIMA COLLINA - 2012 *Chalone Pinot Noir* (Club Red)



It is a rare opportunity these days in California to make wine with an "old" Pinot Noir clone. At one time much of California Pinot Noir was produced from "old" clones that had made their way into California via suitcases owned by enthusiastic winemakers and vineyardists. These clones have been replaced over the past 15 years by newer clones that have been very widely planted across the state and with that replanting perhaps we've lost a little history and diversity. So it is a great privilege (not to mention fun!) to offer this wine – made from a blend of "Swan" and "Chalone" clones – both suitcase clones brought from France by Dick Graff.

This wine is only now starting to open up upon its release and we anticipate further "blossoming" as it bottle ages. It is rich and spicy with notes of strawberry, cocoa and leather. Enjoy now or lay this wine down for at least 7 more years. Pair with wild mushroom ragout and beef tenderloin, coffee encrusted lamb chops or shitake bread pudding.

100% Pinot Noir

14.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

MUIRWOOD - 2014 *Reserve Chardonnay* (Club Blanc)



The Muirwood Chardonnay is handcrafted from grapes grown on their Zanetta Vineyard located in the Arroyo Seco appellation of Monterey County. Unique vineyard conditions, which extend the growing season, result in wines with bright acidity and generous tropical and citrus fruit flavors. Barrel fermentation and ten months sur lie aging enhance the complexity and depth of this memorable Chardonnay.

Grown, produced and bottled from Muirwood's Zanetta Vineyard, the Muirwood Reserve Chardonnay has tropical fruit flavors of pear and peach with a creamy oak mouth feel. Vanilla and spice extends through the lingering, viscous finish.

100% Chardonnay

13.6% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued

unfiltered and unfinned wines – but not Cima Collina and their winemaker, Annette, who may be described as obsessive in her quest for quality. And Annette's past adds another layer of intrigue to the Cima Collina story.

Annette has been involved in wine production since 1994, initially gaining experience in Napa County's Klein Family Vintners, Sterling, and Saintsbury. And it was while at Saintsbury that the mystique of the Pinot Noir grape enraptured her. This led to a Pinot Noir vision quest taking her to wineries of New Zealand and then to a return to Monterey County to become the Pinot Noir winemaker at Estancia.

Eventually, Annette followed her dream to be involved in the creation of a new winery showcasing high quality wines from our diverse and emerging wine region. The result is Cima Collina, and Monterey County is very pleased to have this winery as one of our best. Annette's own words regarding her appreciation for wine best sum up this article.

"I remain captivated by wine because it reflects life. It has an innate ability to convey a sense of place, the people involved in its creation, and the sensory attributes of the world around us."

We couldn't have said it better.

Bryce Ternet - is a contributing editor and is the author of: *"The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula."*



Visiting Varietals



UNOAKED CHARDONNAY

Pronunciation:

shar doh nay

Imagine a Chardonnay with no butter, no vanilla and no cream. Forget lattes, cappuccinos and all the creamy business... we just want black coffee. For those who've elevated their wine tasting chops to something beyond milk fat, unoaked Chardonnay sounds pretty compelling. There's a couple of other things that make unoaked Chardonnay delicious, sustainable and even technically more affordable than the oaked version.

Unoaked Chardonnay was popularized by Chablis, a region about 80 miles Northwest of Dijon, France in Burgundy. Since the wines from Chablis traditionally are made with stainless steel, concrete or neutral oak, they do not have the buttercream style. Chablis popularized this style and soon everyone around the world started labeling their no-oak Chardonnays with the word "Chablis" until France complained. Unoaked Chardonnay tastes only of the varietal characteristics of Chardonnay which are green apple, lemon and sometimes pineapple with a long tingly finish.

What is MLF and how does it affect Chardonnay? Sometimes wine producers put Chardonnay through malolactic fermentation (happens in tank after the first fermentation) which alters the acids in the wine from the harsher malic acid (same acids found in green apples) to olier lactic acid (a bacteria that is more common in sour cream). What's important to note is that not all unoaked Chardonnays go through MLF whereas most oaked chardonnays do, so it's hard to tell the difference between the oily texture of malo versus the buttery-vanilla flavor of oak.

Unoaked Chardonnay is cheaper to produce. Yep. It's true. Take out the cost of paying for and shipping new oak barrels all over the world, year in and year out, and winemakers have a cheaper long-term solution. Thus, a lot of unoaked wines tend to fly into the marketplace at a much more affordable price point (and more sustainable).

RECIPE

Swedish Meatballs

Ingredients

Meatballs	
2 slices	bread, cut up into cubes
1/4 cup	milk
2 tbsp	butter
1 medium	onion, chopped
1 lb	ground chicken
1 lb	ground beef
2	egg yolks
1/4 tsp	ground allspice
1/4 tsp	ground nutmeg
	salt and pepper to taste
	vegetable oil for frying meatballs
Gravy	
6 tbsp	butter
1/3 cup	all purpose flour
4 cups	chicken or beef broth
3/4 cup	sour cream
	salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Add the bread to a large mixing bowl along with the milk and toss. Set aside to let the bread soak up the milk.

Melt the butter in a skillet, then add the onions and a bit of salt. Cook the onions until soft, about 3 minutes.

Add the ground chicken, ground beef, onions, egg yolks, salt, pepper, nutmeg and allspice to the bowl with the bread. Mix the meat mixture well using your clean hands. Shape the meat into 1 inch meatballs.

In a skillet heat some vegetable oil. Add the meatballs and fry until golden all around, about 7 minutes. Repeat with all meatballs.

To make the gravy, melt the butter in a clean skillet. Add the flour to the pan and whisk well. Add the broth and continue whisking. Season with salt and pepper and other spices if preferred. As the flour cooks the gravy should thicken. Whisk in the sour cream. Bring the gravy to a boil then add the meatballs to it and cook for another 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally to ensure meatballs don't stick to bottom of pan.

Garnish with parsley. Serve warm over mashed potatoes or noodles



CHEESE

Varietals



FETA

Pronunciation: FEH-tuh

Feta is undoubtedly one of the most famous Greek cheeses. In fact, Feta occupies 70% stake in Greek cheese consumption. The cheese is protected by EU legislations and only those cheeses manufactured in Macedonia, Thrace, Thessaly, Central Mainland Greece, the Peloponnese and Lesvos can be called 'Feta'. Similar cheeses produced elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean and around the Black Sea, outside the EU, are often called 'white cheese'.

To create traditional Feta, 30 percent goat's milk is mixed with sheep's milk of animals grazing on pastures in the specific appellation of origin regions. Now a days, many stores sell goat and cow's milk feta as well. The firmness, texture and flavour differ from region to region, but in general, cheese from Macedonia and Thrace is mild, softer and creamier, less salty with fewer holes. Feta made in Thessaly and Central Greece has a more intense, robust flavour. Peloponnese Feta is dryer in texture, full flavoured and more open. Local environment, animal breeds, cultures all have an impact on the texture, flavor and aroma of Feta.
















On the whole, Feta is a pickled curd cheese that has a salty and tangy taste enhanced by the brine solution. The texture depends on the age which can be extremely creamy, or crumbly dry. Upon maturation of 2 months, Feta is sold in blocks submerged in brine. The cheese can be used as a table cheese or melted on a traditional Greek salad, spanakopita, pizza or pie. It tastes delicious with olive oil, roasted red peppers and nuts. If required, it can be washed under water to remove the extra saltiness. The salty flavor of Feta pairs well with beer, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc and Zinfandel.

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FEBRUARY SELECTIONS		REGULAR PRICE*	12-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*	6-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*
	Muirwood 2014 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon	\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
	Cima Collina 2013 Cedar Lane Sauvignon Blanc	\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
	Cima Collina 2012 Chalone Pinot Noir	\$37.00	\$27.75	\$29.60
	Muirwood 2014 Reserve Chardonnay	\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
JANUARY SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 3/31/2017		
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	Blair 2012 Pinot Noir	\$45.00	\$33.75	\$36.00
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