

Tasting Monterey

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



STORE HOURS

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

Food service begins at
11:30am daily

*No new member tastings
after 6pm

JUNE REFERRALS



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How Well Do You Know Pinot?

When you think of Monterey County, you probably think golf and hiking excursions, breathtaking coastal views, and of course, great wine. But, you haven't fully enjoyed the best of Monterey County until you've sampled the Pinot Noir. The second most produced grape in the region, this earthy, light red thrives in the diverse climates of Monterey County.



Although debates about its origin remain, Pinot Noir is one of the oldest wine making grape varieties dating back to the first century AD. The varietal is best known for its success in the Cote d'Or ("Slope of Gold") region of Burgundy, France, where vineyards planted on hillsides are exposed to long periods of sunshine but avoid afternoon heat. Similar to conditions of Burgundy, Pinot Noir vines flourish in northern Monterey County where they take advantage of the morning sunshine and the cooling afternoon breezes off the Bay. The Pinnacles and Santa Lucia Highlands in Monterey County are among the nominees for best Pinot producing appellations in California. Dramatic temperature swings from summertime highs near 100°F to lows in the 30's and 40's prolong the growing season. This leads to a longer hang time on the vine and results in rich fruit flavors and complexity.



So, what's so special about Pinot Noir? More than any other varietal, Pinot Noir grapes reflect the compositions and flavors of the terrain in which they are planted, making vineyard selection critical. These dark, purple berries typically thrive in warm, calcareous and well-drained soils. Parent vines often produce offspring that bear fruit of very different berry or cluster size and shape, and frequently

even have different aromas, flavors and levels of productivity. Generally, Pinot Noir vines produce low yields. Overall, it is one of the most difficult varietals to grow and produce into wine.

Pinot Noir grapes are thin-skinned, sensitive to light and often have inadequate leaf protection from sun and birds. Although quite tolerant of cold climates, because it is among the earliest-leafing varieties, Pinot grapes are particularly susceptible to spring frosts. When exposed to too much sun these thin-skinned and tender berries shrivel and dry out rapidly resulting in a raisiny aroma and neutral flavor. Pinot Noir is also one of the more difficult wines to ferment. The presence of 18 naturally balanced amino acids can cause violent fermentation and low color retention is common. Prone to acetification, as soon as it is bottled, Pinot Noir often loses the aromas and flavors it displays through fermentation and aging.

So, with all of these factors, it's a wonder Pinot Noir is readily produced at all, never mind one of the most popular varietals in the world. Over the past twenty years, California vintners have been improving vineyard and clonal selections, viticultural methods and vinification techniques to increase the success of their Pinots. And, there's good news for you health-conscious wine lovers out there! Pinot Noir seems to naturally be three to four times richer than other varietals in resveratrol, a compound thought to boost the immune system and potentially guard against heart disease, cancer and other illnesses.

Continued Inside

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

NOBLE VINES - 2016 667 Pinot Noir



The vine selection 667 is one of the prestigious “Dijon clones” brought back to California from the Cote d’Or in Burgundy, France. This vine stock forms tight, compact clusters that generate deeper color and more layers of tannins than other Pinot Noirs previously grown in California. Noble Vines grows nearly half of their 667 Pinot Noir grapes in Monterey’s Santa Lucia Highlands, with the remainder sourced from the gentle slopes of their family-owned San Bernabe Vineyard and in nearby Arroyo Seco. These sites offer heavy, dark soils reminiscent of 667’s ancestral home. They crush at their winery right in their San Bernabe Vineyard to better preserve the great flavors and textures of these time-tested vine stocks.

2016 Noble Vines 667 Pinot Noir opens with aromas of black cherry, blackberry and bittersweet cocoa. Velvety tannins and bright, balanced acidity support core flavors of ripe plum, cherry preserves and delicate hints of vanilla and oak. The pedigree of the grapes makes 667 Pinot Noir a wine to be enjoyed on its own or with a wide range of cuisine, particularly salmon, roast lamb or cheeses and nuts.

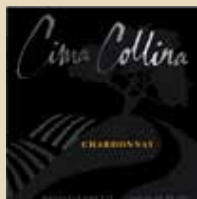
100% Pinot Noir

14.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2022

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

CIMA COLLINA - 2016 Tondre Grapefield Chardonnay



Located on the eastern side of River Road, this site has well-drained sandy loam soil with southwestern exposure (not to mention a resplendent view of the Salinas Valley below). The region receives plentiful sunshine during the day but is cooled in the afternoon by ocean breezes that sweep through the Salinas Valley from Monterey Bay. All of these characteristics make this one of the country’s premier grape growing regions. Tondre Alarid, the patriarch of the Alarid family & lifelong farmer, planted 6-1/2 acres of wine grapes in 1997 – naming it a “Grapefield” to reflect his family’s farming heritage – but the vineyard has since grown to just over 100 acres under the management of Joe, Tondre’s son.

An opulent, concentrated and complex Chardonnay yet still retains a nice balanced acidity. Flavors and aromas of toasty oak, vanilla, butterscotch, melon with a long lengthy finish. It is wonderful slightly chilled with herb-roasted chicken or Dungeness crab cakes.

100% Chardonnay

14.6% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2022

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

SCHEID - 2016 50/50 (Club Red)



The 2016 50/50 blend is comprised of grapes from two vineyards. San Lucas Vineyard, a primo spot in the southern part of the Monterey County AVA, is home to both Cabernet and Syrah. Here, the long, warm days and cool, breezy evenings produce lively reds that burst with ripe, fleshy fruit. For the 2016 vintage, all of the Cabernet and a portion of the Syrah are from their San Lucas estate. The balance of the Syrah is from Mesa del Rio, a cool climate site that is Syrah heaven, producing a wine with subtle spiciness, intensity and concentration. Two varietals and two vineyards that come together to produce one great wine.

The 2016 50/50 possesses the structure and dark fruit flavors of Cabernet Sauvignon and the softness and jammy fruit of Syrah. Aromas of blackberry preserves and ripe plum accented with notes of pepper and toasty spices will convince you that soul mates really do exist.

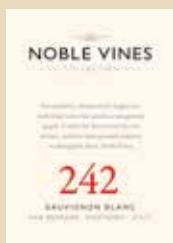
50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 50% Syrah

14.8% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2024

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

NOBLE VINES - 2017 242 Sauvignon Blanc (Club Blanc)



Noble Vines Sauvignon Blanc is named for block 242 of their home vineyard in the San Bernabe AVA of Monterey. This cool location along the California Central Coast – similar to the climate of Marlborough, New Zealand – produces the bright citrus notes found in this wine. The loamy hillside soils of block 242 are heavy and vigorous, allowing the vines to grow protective canopies to shade the fruit from the afternoon sun, resulting in Sauvignon Blanc with brilliant aromatics and balanced acidity. The vine stock in this wine is Sauvignon Blanc 1, which originated in Bordeaux, France, and has adapted well to California. They match each of these treasured vines to their best vineyard sites to ensure their dedication to quality.

The 2017 vintage of 242 Sauvignon Blanc exhibits vivid aromas of lemon and lime zest, white nectarine and green apple. Medium-bodied with a weighty mid-palate and crisp acidity, this refreshing wine offers flavors of ripe peach, honeydew melon and kiwi before extending into a zesty, lingering finish.

100% Sauvignon Blanc

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2021

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued



When successful, great Pinot Noir creates a lasting impression on the palate. Its aroma is often complex and intense with ripe-grape or black cherry accented by spices of cinnamon, saffras or mint. Ripe tomato, bacon, mushroom and barnyard are also common descriptors for identifying this multilayered full-flavored red. Rich but not heavy, the most appealing quality of Pinot Noir may be its soft, velvety texture. Light to medium bodied, high in alcohol but not acidic, Pinot Noir is known for its delicate yet complex flavors and aromas of black cherry, plum, currant, raspberry, spice and earth. Although usually made into dry table wines, Pinot Noir grapes are also used to make Champagnes and rosé wines.

The rich, softness of Pinot Noir makes it a great pair with salmon and other meaty fish, lamb, duck and any dish featuring mushrooms. Go easy on the spices though, as they can mask the delicate flavors of the wine and accentuate the hot taste of alcohol. Pinot Noir does not have the longevity of heavier/darker reds and ideally should be enjoyed young, five to eight years past vintage.

RECIPE

GRILLED LAMB CHOPS WITH PORCINI MUSTARD*

INGREDIENTS:

2 ounces	dried porcini mushrooms
2 cups	boiling-hot water
2 tablespoons	Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon	unsalted butter
3 tablespoons	chopped parsley
2 tablespoons	rosemary leaves
1 tablespoon	salt
7 large	garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons	extra-virgin olive oil
	pepper
24 rib	lamb chops (about ¾ inch thick; 4 ½ to 5 pounds total), frenched if desired

METHOD:

Prepare grill for direct-heat cooking over medium-hot charcoal or medium-high heat for gas. Soak mushrooms in boiling-hot water until softened, about 20 minutes. Lift mushrooms out of water and strain liquid through a paper towel-lined sieve set over a small saucepan. Coarsely chop mushrooms. Boil mushroom liquid in saucepan until reduced to about ¼ cup, 13 to 15 minutes. Whisk in mustard, butter and 1/8 teaspoon pepper and simmer until slightly thickened, about 2 minutes. Stir in mushrooms. Transfer to a small bowl and cool slightly. Stir in 2 tablespoons parsley. Meanwhile, pulse rosemary, salt, garlic and ½ teaspoon pepper in a food processor to form a course paste. Rub oil all over chops, then coat evenly with rosemary mixture. Oil grill rack, then grill chops in 2 batches, covered only if using a gas grill, turning once, 4-6 minutes per batch for medium-rare. Sprinkle porcini mustard with remaining tablespoon parsley and serve with lamb.

Cooking Note: Porcini mustard, without parsley, can be made one day ahead and chilled. Bring to room temperature, then stir in 2 tablespoons parsley and sprinkle with remainder. Rosemary mixture can be made 8 hours ahead and chilled.



VISITING Varietals



Pronunciation: SOH-vihn-yohn BLAHN

Sauvignon Blanc is one of the most popular white wines in the U.S. Often referred to as "grassy," it is known for its refreshing crispness, which is due to its high levels of acidity and low amounts of sugar.

The Sauvignon Blanc grape originated in the same region as America's two most popular red grapes, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, the Bordeaux region of France. In Bordeaux, it is believed that the grape was given the name Sauvignon Blanc from the French word *sauvage*, which means wild, because the grape grew like a weed throughout the region. Instead of being fermented and bottled on its own, winemakers in Bordeaux chose to use Sauvignon Blanc in their white blends and to make the desert wine Sauterne.

From Bordeaux the grape traveled north to the appellation of Sancerre in the Loire Valley region of France. In Sancerre, Sauvignon Blanc was planted and cultivated in order to make a wine for which it would be the only ingredient. However, instead of naming the new wine Sauvignon Blanc, after the grape the wine had come from, the French chose to name the wine Sancerre ("San-SER"), after the region where it was born. In the twentieth century, Sancerre became incredibly popular in Paris bistros and bars because of its ability to go extremely well with or without food. Sancerre wines were easy to drink and the public fell in love.

From the nightlife of Paris, Sauvignon Blanc traveled around the globe and found another champion in New Zealand, who would finally make the grape's name known worldwide. In the 1980s, few had still heard the actual name Sauvignon Blanc, even though many were drinking it regularly every time they drank Sancerre. It was then that New Zealand wines hit the international market, debuting wines that were bright, crisp, refreshing and, best of all, incredibly affordable.

Whether called Sancerre or Sauvignon Blanc, it is known as a refreshing dry wine that has a great minerality, aromas and tastes of herbs and grasses and a nice crisp pucker. Across the world, including in France, the wine is hardly ever aged in oak, with the winemakers preferring to exhibit the bright and fruity characteristics of the grape.

CHEESE

Varietals



RACLETTE

Raclette is part of the culinary heritage of both the French and Swiss Alps with references dating as far back as the 1200s. Traditionally, the French and Swiss cow herders carried the Raclette with them when they moved their cows to and from the mountain pastures. In the evenings they would place their Raclette next to the camp fire, often times on a large rock, and once it had reached the perfect softness, the herders would then scrape the Raclette onto their bread or potatoes.

These days, unless you're really into roughing it, no campfires or rocks are needed! Raclette can be melted and served more handily with modern appliances designed specifically for gathering friends around to enjoy Raclette.

A modern way of serving raclette involves an electric table-top grill with small pans, known as coupelles, in which to melt slices of raclette cheese. Generally the grill is surmounted by a hot plate or griddle. The cheese is brought to the table sliced, accompanied by platters of boiled or steamed potatoes, other vegetables and charcuterie. These are then mixed with potatoes and topped with cheese in the small, wedge-shaped coupelles that are placed under the grill to melt and brown the cheese. Alternatively, slices of cheese may be melted and simply poured over food on the plate. The emphasis in raclette dining is on relaxed and sociable eating and drinking, the meal often running to several hours.

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In order to better serve our members, we need to receive any new info and changes regarding your status (i.e., change of address, new credit card number, etc.) by the 20th of each month.

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.

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	Cima Collina 2016 Tondre Grapefield Chardonnay	\$28.00	\$21.00	\$22.40
	Scheid 2016 Scheid 50/50	\$30.00	\$21.00	\$22.40
	Noble Vines 2017 242 Sauvignon Blanc	\$14.00	\$13.50	\$11.20
MAY SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 07/31/2019		
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	Craftwork 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon	\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
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