

Tasting Monterey

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

COMING EVENTS

Friday, Sept 2, 2011
First Fridays Art Walk
 A Taste of Monterey
 Old Town Salinas
 5:00pm-8:00pm*
 Stop by A Taste of Monterey in Old Town Salinas on your journey through the First Fridays Art Walk. Enjoy art from a featured local artist, while we stay open later!

Friday, Sept 16, 2011
Pinotfest Monterey
 Monterey Beach Party
 Del Monte Beach House
 6:00pm-10:00pm
 With a new exciting venue, fun theme and the opportunity to taste world-class Pinot Noirs (white and rose' will be available as well), this will prove to be a spectacular event. Come enjoy a classic California style beach party on the beautiful Del Monte Beach, in Monterey, complete with great wine, food and entertainment!

Thursday, Sept 29, 2011
Thirsty Thursdays
 A Taste of Monterey
 Old Town Salinas
 5:00pm-7:00pm*
 Join us on the last Thursday of every month from 5pm to 7pm. A Taste of Monterey, Oldtown Salinas is keeping its doors open later and offering special wine by the glass prices. Featured Winemaker and 30% off wine and gifts (discount for club members only).

Friday, Sept 30, 2011
Last Fridays Wine Bar
 A Taste of Monterey
 Cannery Row
 6:00pm-9:00pm*
 Join us on the last Friday of every month from 6pm to 9pm. A Taste of Monterey, Cannery Row is keeping its doors open later and offering special wine by the glass prices. Start your weekend off with a relaxing view and a glass of Monterey's finest.

* No new tastings after 5:45pm

SEPTEMBER REFERRALS



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

Elegance & Earth: THIS IS PINOT NOIR



If Cabernet Sauvignon is the king of wines, Pinot Noir is the prince who is overlooked by some and adamantly adored by others. An esteemed wine critic claims: "When it's great, Pinot Noir produces the most complex, hedonistic and remarkably thrilling red wine in the world." Another wine connoisseur had this to say about Pinots: "Its flavors- they're just the most haunting and brilliant and thrilling and subtle and ancient on the planet."

Those who are not crazy about Pinot claim that its wines are an acquired taste; the varietal's fans would not disagree. Pinot Noir is a complex subject and certainly merits a discussion. Monterey County is fortunate to be one of the premier Pinot-producing wine regions in the world, and we invite our members to confirm this for themselves at our Pinotfest event taking place this month (more on this later, but reserve your tickets now, as it's quickly selling out and you don't want to miss this sure-to-be memorable day!).

But for now, let's return to our Pinot overview. First off, it should be mentioned that while many of us refer to Pinot Noir wines as simply Pinot, it's not entirely fair to some other grape varietals, namely Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris. In fact, the three varietals are actually related and fall under a broad "Pinot" family.

The grape is thought to have been given its French name, which translates as "pine" and "black," based on the dark color of its grapes and that Pinot grapes are tightly clustered together resembling a pine cone. The varietal's traditional home is the Burgundy region of France, which continues to produce what many consider to be the finest Pinot Noir wines in the world.

Many people in the States that are just getting into wine are unfamiliar with Pinot Noir, as it has only surged in popularity here within the last decade and is not as recognizable as the classic red varietals of Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot. However, Pinot Noir is no new-comer and is believed to have been cultivated into wine since the time of the Roman Empire.

The grape is grown in many various places of the world, but that doesn't mean it should be. Pinot Noir is a fickle, complex, needy varietal that only showcases its elegant characteristics in the perfect micro-climatic and soil conditions. Such tucked-away corners of the world include Burgundy, a few growing areas in New Zealand, Oregon's Willamette Valley and select AVAs in Monterey, Sonoma and Santa Barbara counties. We're happy to report that Monterey's Santa Lucia Highlands is considered a world-class area for Pinot Noir and that we have some top shelf Pinot winemakers here in Monterey County.

Pinot Noir is not a survivor varietal like Cabernet Sauvignon, which can thrive almost anywhere with minimal attention. Pinots, on the other hand, are like a high-maintenance spouse that is only happy in certain places and requires constant attention. It's sensitive, thin-skinned, temperamental and ripens early. Optimal climatic conditions for Pinot Noir are warm days followed by cool evenings; this explains why California growing areas that receive coastal evening effects are so ideal for the varietal.

Pinot Noir's reputation for being a difficult grape doesn't stop with climate conditions though. Soil conditions must also be ideal as well, and, even then the vines need to be very closely monitored as the vine and grape clusters are notorious for being highly susceptible to a host of potential problems. Making it through the growing season successfully isn't enough either as Pinots are also regarded by winemakers as being one of, if not the, most difficult to coax into a quality wine, as it is extremely sensitive to various stages in the wine-making processes.

As mentioned earlier, Pinot Noir can be an acquired taste based on its characteristic complexity of aromas, bouquet and textures. However, common themes in Pinot wines tend to be flavors of rich red or black berries, plums and hints of earth. Pinot Noir wines can also be highly affected by terroir conditions, so there is always a chance of differing regional influences.

You'll often see reference to a particular clone type in any discussion of Pinot Noir wines, and this is due to the fact that there are hundreds of different Pinot clones in vineyards around the *Continued Inside*

Pinotfest MONTEREY
 WHERE GREAT WINE AND GREAT PEOPLE MEET!
 SEPTEMBER 16, 2011

- 20+ PINOT NOIR VINTNERS
- DELICIOUS TRI-TIP / CHICKEN BBQ
- BEACH PARTY FESTIVITIES
- MUSIC & DANCING
- SILENT AUCTION BENEFITTING AG AGAINST HUNGER

DEL MONTE BEACH HOUSE
 Friday, Sept. 16, 2011 • 6:00pm - 10:00pm
 \$25 pp in advance • \$40 pp at the door
 \$50 for Monterey Wine Club Members
 All prices are inclusive • Sorry, no refunds
 Website: www.pinotfest.com
 Tel: 831-449-9444

AG AGAINST HUNGER

MONTEREY BEACH PARTY

Yelp **MONTEREY COUNTY WEEKLY**

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

GRAFF FAMILY VINEYARDS - 2008 *Mourvèdre*



Made from 100% Mourvèdre grapes grown on the Head and Graff Vineyards on the Chalone bench in Monterey County. This grape, rare in California, comes from the warmer regions of the south of France and is the primary grape in the wonderful wines of the Bandol region of Provence. Aged 18 months in French and American oak barrels, the wine is soft with bright fruit character. This is a wine that is easy to like and goes well with lamb, pizza and most cheeses.

A portion of the profits from the sale of this wine benefits the Woodward/Graff Wine Foundation's Richard H. Graff Scholarship Fund for wine, food and hospitality.

100% Mourvèdre

14.9% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2013

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

CARMICHAEL VINTNERS - 2010 *Grigio e Bianco*



The Grigio e Bianco was made in a crisp and clean style, with great aromatics and subtle complexity. In 2008 we deviated from our previous formula by changing the blend to 80% Pinot Grigio with 20% Albariño. The two varietals suit each other perfectly with both bringing racy acidity and complimentary flavor profiles. The Pinot Grigio hails from the ultra-premium 'Arroyo Seco' appellation, and delivers the wines lovely floral character while the Albariño was sourced from Santa Ynez AVA and lend the blend more weight on the palate.

Pale straw-gold in color with an exotic bouquet, one would be hard pressed to identify the components of our 2008 Grigio e Bianco. But each new sniff and taste presents another layer of complexity and nuance, with individual varietal characteristics peeking out at different times. Notes of lavender and lanolin come from the Pinot Grigio, with pear and gravenstein apple coming from the cool-site

Albariño. Contrary to its fresh and delicate aromas, the 2008 'GeB' has a depth and presence about it once tasted. There is a lightness up front, which yields to a rich finish and a distinct lemon peel tang. Floral and exotic, while at the same time carrying good weight and balance, this unusual (and delicious) blend is a very versatile wine, well-suited to patio sipping or simple, lighter pasta, fish and chicken dishes.

80% Pinot Grigio, 20% Albariño

13.9% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2013

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

GRAFF FAMILY VINEYARDS - 2008 *Pinot Blanc* (Club Blanc)



Made from 100% Pinot Blanc grapes grown on the Graff and Head Vineyards on the Chalone bench in Monterey County. This wine is both fermented and aged in French oak barrels. The wine shows aromas of ripe melons and peaches that are complemented by flavors of toasted hazelnuts and the minerals from the limestone soils. This wine will pair beautifully with chicken, pork and shellfish.

100% Pinot Blanc

14.7% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2011

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

CARMICHAEL VINTNERS - 2008 *Sur Le Pont* (Club Red)



Southeastern France is famous for impressionist art, exclusive beaches and hearty red wines. The Carmichael Vintners Sur le Pont is a tribute to the latter. The name of this wine was taken from a song title celebrating the town of Avignon, from whence similarly composed red blends are created. Such a wine is consistent with Carmichael's mission of making proprietary blends from the Mediterranean varieties that thrive in Monterey County. Making such wines well-serves the 'artiste' in their winemaker and helps this little brand stand apart from the crowd. 'Voilà'

Warm and inviting on the nose, initial impressions of their Sur le Pont are of spice and chocolate, with plum and black cherry fruit also prominent in the aroma. Once in the mouth, the tactile impression broadens considerably with a warm, roasted chestnut quality across the mid-palate, which then translates seamlessly into a full finish, with plenty of soft, chalky tannins. Dark red and black fruit flavors predominate in this rich and flavorful blend. This wine goes well with grilled meats and robust tomato-based pastas. It is also wonderful with a big, juicy steak.

76% Syrah, 10% Grenache, 7% Mourvèdre, 7% Durif

14.3% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2013

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued

globe. Having a connection through mutation to a particular clone can greatly enhance a particular wine's reputation.

It's interesting to note that while Pinots offer all of this potential complexity, they are normally much lighter in color and body than other red wines. This garnet colored wine often catches the unsuspecting taster off guard.

New world style Pinot Noirs from California and New Zealand are more fruit-forward and powerful in their presentation, often more reminiscent of Syrah wines than their old world French-style cousins. But, Pinot Noir grapes are not solely used to produce red wines- they are also used to make rosé and sparkling white wines. And in some areas where lighter-style red Pinot Noir wines are produced, it is even traditionally served slightly chilled. However, no matter what style it comes in, Pinot Noir is persistently considered to be one of the most versatile wines out there to pair with food based on its unique characteristics.

Now let's get to addressing why Pinot Noir wines tend to have high price tags. We hope that after this discussion of how difficult it is to grow and produce quality Pinot Noir wines you're seeing a partial explanation already. On top of this, let us add that Pinot Noir vines are forced to yield much smaller quantities of grapes than with other varietals, resulting in a further boosting of the eventual price of a bottle.

We'll close our chat with another quote that I just love: "Pinot Noir is a minx of a vine." Minx or not, we are truly fortunate to have so many spectacular Pinot Noir wines to showcase here at A Taste of Monterey.

So, we're all excited about Pinot Noir now, right? Let's talk Pinotfest! Our Pinotfest is less than two weeks away, as you'll see on the insert in this newsletter, so there's no time to lose in reserving your tickets. Trust us- this is an event you are not going to want to miss. Our last Pinotfest was a huge success, and this year's event is expected to be even more of a crowd pleaser. We've combined an outstanding opportunity to sample some of Monterey County's best Pinot Noir wines with a spectacular setting on the beach accompanied by delicious food offerings. We're expecting a wonderful second-summer here on the Monterey Peninsula this year, so we hope you will join us at the beach for Pinotfest!

-Bryce Ternet

(Bryce Ternet is a contributing editor and is the author of three books. See www.facebook.com/pages/M-Bryce-Ternet for more.)



A YEAR
In the Vineyard



Returning to the vineyards, let's see what late summer brings. As we discussed previously, depending on the year, the ripening of grapes (called "veraison") can begin earlier in a growing season. However, even with a late-ripening season, veraison is in full-force in the months of August and September.

Following the fruit set stage of the process, the grape berries are firm and green. With the onset of the veraison stage, within a week the berries exponentially grow and become softer as they build up sugars while acids begin to diminish.

This is also the time when the grape berries change color, depending on the grape variety, from green to reddish/black or to yellowish/green. The color change in the skin of the berries is based on the evolving chemical process occurring in the grapes.

As a general rule, vineyard managers would like to see the grapes begin to ripen as early as possible; this is especially true for any grapes intended to be produced and presented as a high quality wine. However, veraison does not occur simultaneously or evenly for all of the grape clusters on a vine, and vineyard managers will try and encourage ripening and its uniformity in many cases through techniques such as canopy management and controlling water stress on a vine.

Next month we're going to move into the harvest...cheers until then!

RECIPE

Prawns Sambuca

Serves: 4

Ingredients:



- 16 fresh Monterey Bay prawns
- 3 oz. Chardonnay or dry white wine
- 1 T. fresh shallots, chopped
- 4 oz. sweet butter
- 1 T. fresh garlic, chopped
- 4 oz. olive oil
- ¼ cup fresh tomato, diced
- 16 oz. angel hair pasta
- 1 T. fresh tarragon, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. salt and pepper
- 2 oz. Sambuca liqueur
- 2 chives

Method:

- Heat oil in sautee pan, add garlic, shallots and prawns. Cook for 1 or 2 min.
- Add wine and Sambuca. Flambe.
- Add tomatoes, tarragon, salt and pepper, then cook for 2 more min.
- Add butter and reduce.
- Place over individual servings of pasta.
- Garnish with tarragon leaves and chives.



No Corkage Fee
Program Participant!



Bert Cutino, C.E.C., A.A.C., H.O.F.
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American Culinary Federation
Co-Founder/C.O.O., The Sardine Factory
Monterey, CA 93940

PRIVATE RESERVE
Monterey Wine Club

3 Reserve Wines / Quarterly
For More Info, Call:
(888) 646-5446

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

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.

PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS TO:

A Taste of Monterey
Attn: Elaine Hewett
127 Main Street
Salinas, CA 93901
(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 a weekly complimentary tasting.

NEWSLETTER STAFF

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

VISIT US ONLINE

WWW.TASTEMONTEREY.COM

MIX & MATCH

ANY OF THE CURRENT OR PREVIOUS CLUB WINES TO RECEIVE **25% OFF 12 BOTTLES** OR **20% OFF 6**

SEPTEMBER SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 11/30/2011	REGULAR PRICE*	12-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*	6-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*
 Graft Family Vineyards 2008 <i>Mourvèdre</i>		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
 Carmichael Vintners 2010 <i>Grigio e Bianco</i>		\$16.00	\$12.00	\$12.80
 Graft Family Vineyards 2008 <i>Pinot Blanc</i>		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
 Carmichael Vintners 2008 <i>Sur Le Pont</i>		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
AUGUST SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 10/31/2011			
 Estancia Winery 2010 <i>Sauvignon Blanc</i>		\$15.00	\$11.25	\$12.00
 Pierce Ranch Vineyards 2008 <i>Cabernet Sauvignon</i>		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
 Pierce Ranch Vineyards 2010 <i>Albariño</i>		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
 Parsonage Snosrap Cyrano 2009 <i>Pinot Noir</i>		\$24.00	\$18.00	\$19.20
JULY SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 09/30/2011			
 Paraiso Vineyards 2008 <i>Chardonnay</i>		\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
 Sycamore Cellars 2008 <i>Pinot Noir</i>		\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
 Chesebro Wines 2009 <i>Sauvignon Blanc</i>		\$16.00	\$12.00	\$12.80
 Paraiso Vineyards 2008 <i>Syrah</i>		\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB	PRICES EXPIRE 11/30/2011			
 Michaud 2005 <i>Chardonnay</i>		\$38.00	\$28.50	\$30.40
 Estancia 2006 <i>Reserve Pinot Noir</i>		\$36.00	\$27.00	\$28.80
 Galante Vineyards 2005 <i>Blackjack Cabernet Sauvignon</i>		\$50.00	\$37.50	\$40.00
TO ORDER, CALL TOLL-FREE: 888-646-5446				
*PRICES LISTED REFLECT PRICE PER BOTTLE. NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY.				