

# Tasting Monterey

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



**STORE HOURS**

A Taste of Monterey  
Cannery Row  
Sun-Thu 11am-7pm  
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Food service begins at  
11:30am daily

\*No new member tastings  
after 6pm

**SEPTEMBER REFERRALS**



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## 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.

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 places in 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 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. *Continued Inside*

# MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

## PACIFIC VALLEY - 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon



South Monterey County Vineyard Manager and Winemaker Paul Martinez crafted this wine with grapes from the San Antonio Valley AVA. Known as the "Napa Valley" of Monterey County, its climate consists of warm daytime temperatures, and cool temperatures at night, often with a 50 degree variance. This yields Cabernet Sauvignon grapes with intense characteristics.

The flavors and the wine is balanced. This Ruby red wine has cherry and mocha notes on the nose, and offers a range of flavors centering on cloves and spices with a hint of pepper and vanilla oak spice on the finish. It is void of green characteristics and has very soft tannins and a smooth taste. Enjoy with red meats, wild game or ripe cheeses.

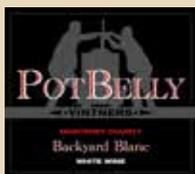
100% Cabernet Sauvignon

14.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2022

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

## POT BELLY VINTNERS - NV Backyard Blanc



Forged from grapes grown in the outer reaches of the Arroyo Seco, where summer temperatures often exceed 100 degrees, this unique proprietary blend is a perfect remedy for warm weather thirst. With a July release, they realized that this wine will be perfect for summertime enjoyment.

The base of this wine is a small barrel lot of 2017 and 2018 Chardonnay. A tropical fruit bomb is fresh and exuberant with an ever so slight and pleasant sweet fruit-driven finish. Lacking depth the base wine was enhanced with the addition of fragrant Muscat Canelli.

The tropical and pear characteristics of the Chardonnay were taken to another wonderful new layer of fruit with this addition. The finished wine is a refreshing and crowd-pleasing wine. Light-Medium body with distinctive lush tropical fruit, white peach, hint of kiwi and honeydew melon and a long citrus -filled finish. This wine has great acid balance and is made to be enjoyed now.

75% Chardonnay, 25% Muscat Canelli

110 Cases Produces

13.1% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

## CRU - 2016 Montage Pinot Noir (Club Red)



The 2016 CRU Vineyard Montage Pinot Noir was sourced primarily from the marine-influenced Sarmiento Vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands. Multiple clones were used in the production of this Pinot Noir including 667, 115 and Pommard 5. By utilizing various clones from multiple elevations, the winemaker creates depth, complexity in aroma, and balance to the final blend.

The final blend was aged in 15% new French Oak barrels composed of Damy and Billon with both medium and medium+ toast levels for 9 months. This aging process creates a nose of freshly picked cherries, blackberries, black pepper and cocoa. The complexity of multiple clones and elevations shows flavors of cherry, pomegranate, olive, spice, cocoa and infused tea that is nicely balanced with hints of toasted oak. This showcase wine is a true homage to classic Burgundian Pinot Noirs.

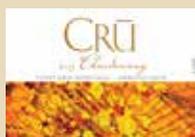
100% Pinot Noir

13.8% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2022

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

## CRU - 2015 Montage Chardonnay (Club Blanc)



The 2015 CRU Vineyard Montage Chardonnay was sourced exclusively from marine influenced vineyards throughout Arroyo Seco. These vineyards include Cobblestone (clone 809) and Marks Vineyard (clone CH76). Utilizing various clones and terroirs created complexity in aroma, flavor and balance to the final blend.

The final blend was aged 9 months on the stirred lees in 15% new French Oak barrels. The wines were then inoculated for malolactic fermentation at the end of primary fermentation. The MLF softened the natural acidity and cultivated aromas of white peach, nectarine and citrus. Fruit forward, yet full bodied with elegant cream (not butter) and apricots, this stylish Chardonnay is a truly handcrafted wine that can be enjoyed with many food pairings or delightfully on its own.

100% Chardonnay

14.1% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

*Cover Article Continued*

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 varieties, resulting in a further boosting of the eventual price of a bottle.

We'll close our chat with another quote that we 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.



## VISITING Varietals



### BLENDS

Blends are some of the most complex and interesting types of wine.

1. Difference between varieties and blends: A standard variety like Malbec, Chardonnay etc., is made from the same type of grape. Sometimes winemakers will use grapes from different plots of a vineyard or different regions for a variety, but they are all the same type of grapes. In the U.S. a variety needs to be 75 percent of one type of grape. Blends are what their name suggests. They typically consist of at least 40-50 percent of one type of grape and a smaller mix of two or more other grapes.

2. Blending makes wines more complex: Blending is used to maximize the expression of a wine. It can enhance aromas, color, texture, body and finish, making it a more well-rounded and complex wine. If a wine doesn't have a strong scent, for example, a winemaker can add five percent of a more potent smelling grape and can experiment with different types of varieties coming from other vineyards.

3. Some single varieties are made for blending: Winemakers will often make a barrel of Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot or other wines solely for the purpose of blending. As the grapes are being harvested, a winemaker determines what they think will be the best formula for a blend.

4. The timeline for mixing wines varies: Winemakers mix blends in a steel tank. Lower cost blends are rarely aged in oak and higher cost blends are generally aged in oak. Some winemakers put blended wines into an oak barrel half way through the aging process, while others put the wines together one to two weeks before bottling. Some try letting the wines ferment together from start to finish.

5. Some grapes aren't used for blending: White wines tend to be pure varieties. However, there are some excellent exceptions. Pinot Noir is a type of grape that is rarely blended. That is why when you are having a Burgundy it will likely be a 100 percent Pinot Noir.

## RECIPE

# GRILLED SHRIMP WITH CHARRED PEPPERS WITH QUESO BLANCO

### INGREDIENTS:

2 lb.	poblano peppers (about 5)
1/2 lb.	mini sweet peppers
2	bell peppers (yellow and orange)
2	jalapeños
2 1/2 tbsp.	olive oil, divided
1 3/4 lb.	extra-large shrimp, peeled and deveined
	Kosher salt and pepper
1	lime
1/2 c.	tortilla chips, finely crushed
1 tbsp.	cilantro, finely chopped
1/2 c.	half-and-half
6 oz.	Monterey jack cheese, coarsely grated
3	slices white American cheese



### METHOD:

Heat grill to medium-high. Brush peppers all over with 1 tablespoon oil and grill, turning occasionally, until charred on all sides, 5 to 9 minutes depending on pepper size; transfer to cutting board.

Meanwhile, thread shrimp onto skewers, brush with remaining 1 1/2 tablespoons oil and season with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Finely grate zest of lime into small bowl, then add chips and cilantro and toss to combine.

Using knife, gently scrape charred skin from poblano, bell and jalapeño peppers and discard. Cut all but mini peppers into pieces. Grill shrimp until opaque throughout, about 2 minutes per side.

In small pot, bring half-and-half to a simmer. Add cheese and whisk constantly until cheese is melted and sauce is thickened. Remove from heat, then spread on large platter.

Transfer peppers to platter on top of cheese and squeeze juice of lime over top, then sprinkle with tortilla mixture. Serve with grilled shrimp.

CHEESE

*Varietals*



**COTTAGE CHEESE**

Cottage cheese is a fresh cheese curd product with a mild flavor. In the past, it was known as "curds and whey." It is not aged. It is made not by pressing the cheese but by draining it, which allows some of the whey to stay which keeps the curds loose. An important step in the manufacturing process distinguishing cottage cheese from other fresh cheeses is the adding of a "dressing", usually cream, to the curd grains, which is responsible for most of the taste of the product.

Cheese is thought to have originated in the Middle East around 5,000 BC. Evidence of cheese can be found in a band of carvings on the walls of an ancient Mesopotamian temple that date back to 3,000 BC. The ancient carvings show the process in which the civilization created a cheese-like substance, using salt and milk to create a salty sour curd mixture believed to be somewhat similar to today's cottage cheese. As Rome expanded its empire, they spread the knowledge of cheese and discovered many new forms of it. The Spanish brought cows and the knowledge of how to craft cheese to the Americas by 1493. In Jamestown, Virginia, in the early 17th century, cheese was known as the "cheapest milk you can eat".

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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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	Pacific Valley 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon		\$23.00	\$17.25	\$18.40
	Pot Belly NV Backyard Blanc		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	CRU 2016 Montage Pinot Noir		\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
	CRU 2015 Montage Chardonnay		\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
AUGUST SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 10/31/2019			
	Garnet 2017 Pinot Noir		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Sea Otter Sanctuary 2017 Rosé		\$24.00	\$18.00	\$19.20
	Pierce Ranch Vineyards 2014 Petite Sirah		\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
	Garnet 2016 Chardonnay		\$19.00	\$14.25	\$15.20
JULY SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 09/30/2019			
	Ranch 32 2016 Vintner's Reserve Meritage		\$28.00	\$21.00	\$22.40
	DIVUM 2016 Chardonnay		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	DIVUM 2015 Pinot Noir		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Ranch 32 2018 Sauvignon Blanc		\$22.00	\$16.50	\$17.60
PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB		PRICES EXPIRE 11/30/2019			
	Wrath 2015 Fermata Chardonnay		\$35.00	\$26.25	\$28.00
	De Tierra 2016 Syrah		\$39.00	\$29.25	\$31.20
	Le Mistral 2017 Joseph's Blend		\$50.00	\$37.50	\$40.00

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\*PRICES LISTED REFLECT PRICE PER BOTTLE. NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY.