

Tasting Monterey

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

COMING EVENTS

Last Fridays Wine Bar

March 27
5:00pm-8:00pm*
Join us 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

SPRING REFERRALS



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



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MONTEREY COUNTY'S PREMIER AVA THE SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS



Seeing "Santa Lucia Highlands" on the label of a bottle of wine you are about to open is a special moment. Not only are you about to open a bottle which you already know is going to be excellent as it's a Monterey County wine (of course!), but you're also opening a bottle from Monterey County's



premier wine-growing appellation. If we had an AVA rock star here in Monterey County, the Santa Lucia Highlands would be it.

But it's wrong to limit our label of "premier" AVA to just our County, as the SLH, as it is also known, is considered to be the entire state of California's premier cool-climate wine-growing appellation. And therefore, it's no great leap to claim it to be the premier of its kind for the entire country, and why not...for the continent. After all, the SLH set the standard and continues to exemplify the absolute highest quality New World Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines.

As a brief Wine 101 refresher, AVA stands for American Viticultural Area. AVAs are wine-growing regions (appellations) which have been recognized as geographically distinct areas with territorial boundaries. Wine-growing countries around the world have similar regional designation labeling systems. Monterey County has 9 AVAs: Santa Lucia Highlands, Arroyo Seco, Carmel Valley, Chalone, San Antonio Valley, Hames Valley, San Lucas, San Bernarbe, and a general Monterey County AVA.

Geographically in the County, SLH is located east of Carmel Valley, west of Chalone, and north of the Arroyo Seco AVAs. It is generally located southwest of Salinas along a 12 mile long stretch straddling River Road between Highway 68 and Arroyo Seco Road. The area is a raised benchland above the Salinas River which mounts in elevation from the Salinas Valley floor into the slopes of the Santa Lucia Mountains.



The fertile soils and excellent drainage of the lands of this area have long been a favorite for agriculture. John Steinbeck no doubt included the area in his general view of the Salinas Valley in East of Eden, and sugar beet production at the one-time largest sugar refinery in the country in nearby Spreckles boomed until the 1960s. But in the early 1970s, planted fields, ranch, and grazing lands began slowly to be converted into vineyards, with the first commercial plantings occurring in 1973.

The wine pioneers of this transition included Paraiso's Rich and Claudia Smith, Hahn's Nicky Hahn, Smith and Hook's Jerry McFarland, and Lockwood's Phil Johnson. After the initial success of these game-changers, a second round of new vineyards followed in the 1980s and 90s. This second group included new players representing wineries from outside the County or from within with vineyards elsewhere, such as Robert Talbott (Talbott), the Wagner Family (Mer Soleil, by way of Caymus), Dan Lee (Morgan), and Steve McIntyre (McIntyre). They were joined by well-established Salinas Valley agricultural families such as Pisoni, Francioni, Manzoni, and Boekenooogen. This conversion of property to vineyards is estimated to have tripled the amount of planted acreage in the SLH. AVA-status for the growing region was granted in 1991.

So what makes the SLH so special? The answer is location. The entire Salinas Valley is unique for the funnel-like climate it experiences based on the valley's mouth at Monterey Bay and being bound by the Santa Lucia range *Continued Inside*

RESERVE WINE SELECTIONS

SCOTT - 2013 Chardonnay



Winery: Ultra-premium Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are produced from family farmed Dijon clonal selections in the prestigious Arroyo Seco appellation in Monterey County. Low yields result in limited production wines which exemplify the ideal matching of terroir and varietal fruit.

Vineyard: Arroyo Seco ("Dry Creek"), a sub-appellation of the Monterey AVA, is one of the coolest coastal regions, with an extended growing season (sometimes 2 to 4 weeks longer than Napa Valley).

The Estate's vineyards, inland from Big Sur, have deep, gravelly soils ideal for premium Chardonnay cultivation. The unique combination of soil and climate produces relatively small berries with intense and concentrated flavors. The summer of 2013 was particularly cool with heavy fog and cloud cover. This delayed fruit ripening and harvest. The cool vintage results in higher acid levels, giving the wine a lovely structure and focus.

Tasting Notes: Scott's 2013 vintage has opulent aromas and rich flavors of dried apricot, tangerine, crisp Golden Delicious apples, crème brûlée and roasted macadamia nut. Partial malolactic and 50% barrel fermentation impart body and enhance complexity of aromas and flavors. The wine has crisp acidity, a full mouth-feel and a long, silky finish.

Scott
2013 Chardonnay

Alcohol
13.5%

AVA
Arroyo Seco

Composition
100% Chardonnay

Aging Potential
4-5 years

FAITE - 2010 Pinot Noir



Winery: Faite by Paraiso Vineyards is owned and operated by the Smith family, one of the pioneering winegrape growers of the Santa Lucia Highlands in Monterey County. They have built Paraiso, and continue to evolve all aspects of the business. In Burgundy, the word Faite suggests a summit or mountaintop. At Paraiso, Faite represents the pinnacle of four decades experience growing world-class Pinot Noir.

Winemaking: The 2010 Faite Pinot Noir highlights the true potential of Paraiso's estate vineyard. It is made entirely of fruit from Block 7, chosen for its optimum sunlight/shade ratio. Paraiso then dials it down even further and allow only perfectly ripened clusters from particular rows to be sorted for this wine. Rows 35 through 42 delivered the goods this vintage. There are two Dijon clones in these rows, 115 and 667. The 115 is massive and masculine, with notes of black cherry, currants and spice. The 667 brings power but with finesse, along with flavors of cherry and raspberry. The two meld together nicely, creating an intensely powerful wine with deep, complex layers. Each clone fermentation was managed in separate small tanks, then the wine was blended to six French Oak barrels, each based on cooperage experience.

Tasting Notes: Flavors of Cherry and raspberry with notes of black cherry, currants and spice.

Faite
2010 Pinot Noir

Alcohol
13.5%

AVA
Santa Lucia Highlands

Cases Produced
148

Composition
100% Pinot Noir

Aging Potential
5-7 years

BOETE - 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon



Vineyard: The first step in achieving wines of interest and excellence is finding a site that can produce them. The Boëté Vineyard in Carmel Valley is planted mainly with Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grown on decomposed granite and limestone. Warm sunny days and crisp cool nights combine to produce a long growing season that yields intense and concentrated fruit flavors and preserves firm and balanced natural acidity. The sparse soil provides for a naturally limited crop and imbues the wines with a profound minerality and sense of place: the elusive terroir.

Winemaking: The Cabernet Sauvignon was picked in late November after a long and beautiful growing season. Patience was rewarded with perfect ripeness that was extracted into the wine during two week small lot fermentations that were punched down by hand three times per day. No cold soaking or extended maceration was used, as they wanted to express the natural balance of the vineyard site. This wine was aged

in 60% new French oak in the finest Francois Frere, Seguin Moreau and Mercier cooperage for 20 months. The wine was racked twice prior to bottling to achieve excellent clarity while still retaining intensity of fruit concentration.

Tasting Notes: Aromas of cherry, blackberries and currants on the nose leap to a burst of fruit flavors on the palate, tempered by soft expressive tannins forming into a long pleasant finish.

Boete
2007 Reserve
Cabernet Sauvignon

Alcohol
14.5%

AVA
Carmel Valley

Cases Produced
233

Composition
100% Cabernet Sauvignon

Aging Potential
6-10 years

Cover Article Continued

on one side and the Gabilan range on the other. Cool fogs and breezes (winds, actually...as anyone who has been in the Salinas Valley on a typical afternoon will tell you) blow in from the Bay and cool down ripening grapes on a near-daily basis during the growing season. And the elevated location of the vineyards on the benchlands leading up into the mountainous ridgeline allows the grapes to take full advantage of morning sunshine and heat. Combined with the normal afternoon cool-down, this allows for a gentle ripening process. These factors combined with a minimum of fall rains lead to an exceptionally long growing season. Quite simply, these conditions are hard to find anywhere else in the world.



There are over 6,000 acres under wine grape cultivation in the SLH. There are over 45 individually designated vineyards here, containing many of the County's most renowned. Just a sampling of these outstanding vineyards include: Gary's, Boekengoogen, Mer Soleil, Paraiso, Pisoni, Rosella, McIntyre, Doctor's, Double L, and Tondre.

Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are clearly the dominant planted varieties in the SLH, accounting for approximately 85% of the grapes. However, the growing popularity of off-dry Rieslings is notable as it is the next most-planted variety in the appellation, and Syrah plantings have shown dramatic increases in recent years. But whatever bottle you open, if it's a Santa Lucia Highlands designated wine, we're sure you're going to enjoy it.

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.

RECIPE

Flambéed Chicken with asparagus

Ingredients

4	boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 tbsp	seasoned plain flour
2 tbsp	olive oil
	knob of butter
4	shallots, finely chopped
4 tbsp	brandy or cognac
300ml	chicken stock
16	asparagus spears, halved
4 rounded tbsp	crème fraîche
1 tbsp	chopped tarragon



Directions

Dust the chicken with the flour. Heat the oil and butter in a large, wide pan with a lid, add the chicken, then fry on all sides until nicely browned. Add the shallots, then fry for about 2 mins until they start to soften, but not colour. Pour in the brandy, carefully ignite, then stand well back until the flames have died down. Stir in the stock and bring to the boil. Reduce heat, cover, then cook for 15 mins until the chicken is just tender.

Add the asparagus to the sauce. Cover, then cook for 5 mins more until tender. Stir in the crème fraîche and tarragon and warm through. Season to taste.

VISITING Varietals



GRENACHE

Pronunciation: Gren-ash

Definition: Grenache (called Garnacha in Spain) is a red grape that originates in the Rhone Valley of southern France. In its prime it produces a deep colored red wine with ripe red fruit flavors, often raspberry dominates the palate.

Flavor Profile: The characteristic notes of Grenache are berry fruit such as raspberries and strawberries. When yields are kept in check, Grenache based wines can develop complex and intense notes of black currants, black cherries, black olives, coffee, gingerbread, honey, leather, black pepper, tar, spices and roasted nuts. When yields are increased, more overtly earthy and herbal notes emerge that tend to quickly fade on the palate.

Food Pairing: Because of its light sweetness and being a dry wine, Grenache is a good match for grilled red meats. The heavier the wine, the heartier the meat it can be paired with. Try it with kebabs, fillets, beef stroganoff, prime rib, lamb chops or even a cheeseburger.

CHEESE

Varietals



BURRATA

Definition: Burrata is a fresh Italian cheese made from mozzarella and cream. The outer shell is solid mozzarella, while the inside contains both mozzarella and cream, giving it an unusual, soft texture. It is also defined by some sources as an outer shell of mozzarella filled with butter or a mixture of butter and sugar. It is usually served fresh and at room temperature. The name "burrata" means "buttered" in Italian.

Burrata starts out much like mozzarella and many other cheeses, with rennet used to curdle the warm milk. But then, unlike other cheeses, fresh mozzarella curds are plunged into hot whey or lightly salted water, kneaded, and pulled to develop the familiar stretchy strings (pasta filata), then shaped in whatever form is desired.

When making burrata, the still-hot cheese is formed into a pouch, which is then filled with scraps of leftover mozzarella and topped off with fresh cream before closing. The finished burrata is traditionally wrapped in the leaves of asphodel, tied to form a little brioche-like topknot, and moistened with a little whey. The asphodel leaves should still be green when the cheese is served to indicate the cheese's freshness.[3] More recently, the cheese is often sold in a plastic bag or container



On Our Menu: Di Stefano - Burrata

The family owned Di Stefano dairy is based in Southern California. On the plate this pure, sweet fresh cheese resembles nothing more than a ball of cow's milk mozzarella with a topknot. Once the cheese has been cut open the soft and creamy center slowly runs onto the plate. A luscious filling of stracciatella blended with Italian style panna is encased in a sheet of fresh mozzarella. Like jewels in a drawstring pouch—a little ball with a big surprise inside—delicate, delicious and very decadent!"

MIX & MATCH

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

PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB	PRICES EXPIRE 5/31/2015	REGULAR PRICE*	12-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*	6-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*
Scott 2013 Chardonnay		\$26.00	\$19.50	\$20.80
Faite 2010 Pinot Noir		\$50.00	\$37.50	\$40.00
Boete 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon		\$50.00	\$37.50	\$40.00
MARCH SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 5/31/2015		
Line Shack 2012 Merlot		\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
Chesebro 2010 Chardonnay		\$19.00	\$14.25	\$15.20
Bernardus 2010 SLH Pinot Noir		\$35.00	\$26.25	\$28.00
Manzoni 2012 "Sweetheart" Pinot Grigio		\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
FEBRUARY SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 4/30/2015		
Indigené 2009 Philanthropist		\$21.00	\$15.75	\$16.80
District 7 2013 Sauvignon Blanc		\$16.00	\$12.00	\$12.80
District 7 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
Marin's Vineyard 2013 "Sweetheart" Viognier		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
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

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