

Tasting Monterey

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



STORE HOURS

A Taste of Monterey
Cannery Row
Sun-Thu 11am-7pm
Fri-Sat 11am-8pm*

Food service begins at
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*No new member tastings
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EXPLAINING BORDEAUX

UNDERSTANDING THE DISTINGUISHED BANKS



Left Bank, Right Bank, Pomerol, Médoc, Saint-Emilion, Margaux, Château Latour...if you're a wine lover, you've heard all of these before. But have you been able to connect these wine dots together? If not, don't worry, as most people, even self-proclaimed wine aficionados, cannot always fully or properly explain the intricate relationships between these terms. They may just know that they are all related to the wines of Bordeaux... and they would not be wrong. And for we Monterey County aficionados, some of our distinguished own varietals originated in Bordeaux.

Understanding Bordeaux begins with understanding its geography. The Bordeaux region, located in southwest France, is named after its largest city. The area is divided by the estuary of the Gironde River into a Left and Right Bank, with another called the Entre-Deux Mers sub-region between them (which also includes the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers). There are around fifty Bordeaux AOCs (roughly equivalent to our AVAs) and it can get confusing as AOCs are further sectionalized.

Both red and white wines are produced in Bordeaux, even noted sparkling wines, although Bordeaux's claim to fame is undisputedly its red wines. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, and Petit Verdot are the primary red varietals. (Yup, we have them all in Monterey County.) Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, and Muscadelle are the three main Bordeaux white varietals. (Although we don't grow Muscadelle, we do have various Muscat varietals, which are similar.) A general rule is that the Left Bank is dominated by plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon and the Right Bank is Merlot based.

It's easiest to picture the Left Bank as being composed of two primary sub-areas: the Médoc and the Graves. Both are their own AOCs and have individual AOCs within them. The Médoc itself is further divided into two: a northern/downstream area known as the Bas-Médoc (lower Médoc) and the southern/up-stream portion of Haut-Médoc (upper Médoc).

The Left Bank's Haut-Médoc is home to six AOC's, including its famed four: Margaux, Pauillac, Saint-Julien, and Saint-Estephe. Of these, Pauillac is exceptional as it contains some of the most well-known estates, including Château Latour, Château Mouton Rothschild, and Château Lafite-Rothschild.

The Left Bank's other sub-region of the Graves is unique as it is one of the region's areas known for exceptional white wine production as well as red. Fantastic white wines in the Graves are found in the Sauternes and Barsac AOCs. Here you will find sweet, white late harvest wines. Château d'Yquem is a producer that is firmly established in the Sauternes AOC.

The Right Bank can be divided between what are known as the Libournais appellations and the Blayais-Bourgeois appellations. The Libournais is named for its historical capital and includes seven AOCs. Saint-Emilion and Pomerol are the two most distinguished AOCs here, both exhibiting deep colored reds that are lower in tannins than other Bordeaux reds and can be savored much younger than most. Well known producers include Château Pétrus (Pomerol) and Château Cheval Blanc (Saint-Emilion). The Bourg and Blaye appellations include three AOCs; their significance is that they contain sizeable plantings of Sauvignon Blanc.

Lastly, there's the largest of the Bordeaux growing subregions, the Entre-Deux-Mers. This literally means "between two seas," but just think of it as in between the three rivers. There are ten different AOCs found in this area, but the most important to know is the actual Entre-Deux-Mers AOC itself. This area is

Continued Inside

RESERVE WINE SELECTIONS

2012 SCHEID RESERVE CLARET - 2012 *Scheid Reserve Claret*



Winery: Although Scheid loves all the wines they craft, they hold a special place in their hearts for the Scheid Claret Reserve. Their Bordeaux blend receives an inordinate amount of attention, from the specially selected vineyard rows to the careful sorting of the hand-harvested fruit to the finest oak barrels. It is an opportunity for Winemaker Dave Nagengast to use the tools of a vintage to craft a full-bodied, richly flavored wine that is integrated in perfect harmony. Using the five noble Bordeaux varieties, Dave has total freedom to choose and blend the best of the best, influenced only by the unique characteristics of the vintage.

Vineyard: The vineyard rows for each of the five varieties are chosen and marked at the beginning of the farm year, but they hedge their bets by designating far more for the Claret program than they actually need. These rows are given first-class attention throughout the growing season. Each variety is handpicked at optimum ripeness and maturity and several different lots of each variety are made, often from different vineyards. This gives Scheid a range of options and the luxury of choosing only the very best for inclusion in the final Reserve Claret.

Tasting Notes: The 2012 Claret is distinguished by concentrated aromas of blackberries and black currants with notes of tobacco, dark chocolate and bacon smoke. The dense, dark fruit flavors and balanced tannins of this full-bodied wine integrate beautifully for a long, layered finish.

Scheid
2012 Reserve Claret

Alcohol
14.0%

AVA
Monterey

Composition
50% Cabernet
Sauvignon, 23% Petit
Verdot, 22% Malbec, 5%
Cabernet Franc

Cases Produced
315

Aging Potential
10-15 years

MER SOLEIL - 2016 SLH Reserve Chardonnay



Winery: Mer Soleil planted their first grapes in the Santa Lucia Highlands in 1988 in pursuit of the best conditions for producing Chardonnay. A few vines gradually became a few acres, as they increased their vineyard little by little to achieve the highest quality. They took the name Mer Soleil from the two forces of nature, the sea and sun, that leave their imprint on this wine. The sea is nearby Monterey Bay, which delivers daily breezes off the Pacific Ocean that cool down the sun-drenched afternoons.

Vineyard: As John Steinbeck wrote, "I've lived in good climate, and it bores the hell out of me. I like weather rather than climate." The dramatic weather of the Santa Lucia Highlands – bright sun coupled with cooling breezes that turn into wild gusts of wind – protects the vines from heat spikes that can be devastating for Chardonnay. These conditions also have a "slow ripening" effect on the grapes, allowing us to harvest them later than northern appellations and achieve an intense concentration of character and flavor in the wine.

Tasting Notes: A sunny yellow hue, the 2016 vintage opens with the vibrant scents of lemon blossom and honeysuckle, infused by the warmth of vanilla. The whiff of a sea breeze can be detected on the nose, adding a bright freshness. Rich and lush, the palate features flavors of ripe peach and lemon meringue pie. Lively acidity balances this wine's creamy roundness. Notes of toasted bread combine with final kick of acidity to create an evocative, harmonious and refreshing finish.

Mer Soleil
2016 SLH Reserve
Chardonnay

Alcohol
14.3%

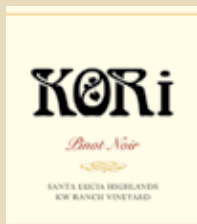
AVA
Santa Lucia Highlands

Composition
100% Chardonnay

Cases Produced
900

Aging Potential
8-10 years

KORI - 2013 SLH Pinot Noir



Winery: A partnership, since 2007, between grower Kirk Williams and step-daughter Kori Violini, KORi Wine is firmly rooted in its sense of family and place. It is a pure, delicious expression of the SL Highlands' character and terroir coupled with the expertise of winemaker Sabine Rodems since 2010. KORi Wines are made in limited quantities.

Vineyard: The KW Ranch & Highlands vineyards occupy 14 & 36 terraced acres in the Santa Lucia Highlands appellation. The "KW" is one of the most respected vineyards in the Santa Lucia Highlands, selling grapes to several well-known vintners like Wrath, Scratch, Morgan & Eno wineries. The vineyards are perfectly situated in the heart of the SLH, surrounded by many well-known estates including Garys' Vineyard, Sleepy Hollow, and Rosella's.

Tasting Notes: Red Cherry. Black Raspberry. Plum. Violet. French Oak. Classic Santa Lucia Highlands with a silky finish.

Kori
2013 SLH Pinot Noir

Alcohol
14.5%

AVA
Santa Lucia Highlands

Composition
100% Pinot Noir

Cases Produced
150

Aging Potential
5-6 years

Cover Article Continued

also where three-quarters of red wine labeled under the more generalized Bordeaux or Bordeaux Supérieur AOCs originate from.

Varietals native to Bordeaux are grown around the world, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. And Bordeaux-style red wine blending is also emulated around the globe (e.g. Meritage blends) with similar results. Bordeaux's growing climate is maritime-based, with hot summers and wet winters (but not overly cold winters).

Our microclimates in Monterey County offer superb Bordeaux-like conditions; however, they are more difficult for growers and winemakers to identify than in other growing regions. Areas well known for presenting Bordeaux-like results are Carmel Valley and Cachagua. Some of our prominent wineries who showcase fantastic red Bordeaux varietals from these areas include: Georis, Boëté, Heller, Joullian, and Galante.

Although Carmel Valley and Cachagua are Cabernet varietal favored destinations, our dedicated growers and winemakers have shown that red Bordeaux varietals can be sourced very successfully from other growing areas, such as Arroyo Seco (Muirwood), San Antonio Valley (Pierce), South County (Pianetta), and by sourcing from around the County (Scheid).

Our plantings of Sauvignon Blanc are more dispersed. For example, Sauvignon Blanc is sourced from areas such as the Santa Lucia Highlands (Morgan), Arroyo Seco (Cima Collina, Ventana, Chesebro, Holman Ranch), and Carmel Valley (Bernardus).

How do our Bordeaux wines compare to those of their motherland? A shared characteristic between both red and whites in Bordeaux is that they will typically be blended with different varietals...as we do a lot more straight varietal wines in the States in general, there's always this to consider when comparing.

However, for reds, as is often the case, normally our wines are more fruit-forward and higher in alcohol content than their Bordeaux relatives, but this is not always the case. Semillion is not an overly popular varietal in Monterey (not yet anyway), but we do have quite a lot of Sauvignon Blanc. Our SB's tend to be more floral in presentation than Bordeaux's dry white wines.

Once again Monterey County's wine diversity is proudly displayed, yet it's always good to know where our grapes originated. Having a clear understanding of the history and flavor profiles of varietals adds to the overall appreciation of the wine in our glasses.

Bryce Ternet - contributing editor and is the author of three books. See <http://www.mbryceternet.com/> for more.

RECIPE

Parmesan Heirloom Cherry Tomatoes

Ingredients

2 pints	heirloom cherry tomatoes, red and yellow
1/2 cup	panko bread crumbs
1/4 cup	coarsely grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup	chopped herbs, any combination of basil, parsley, and chives
2 Tbsp	oil to drizzle
	cracked black pepper
	sea salt

Directions

1. Cut the cherry tomatoes in half lengthwise
 2. In a bowl, toss with the panko, Parmesan, herbs, cracked pepper and salt
 3. Spoon in 6 ramekins
 4. Drizzle with Oil
 5. Bake at 375F until a slight brown shows on some of the tomatoes, about 15 min
 6. Serve hot
- Servings: 6 - Serve with crisp, dry or off-dry white



VISITING Varietals



CHARDONNAY

Pronunciation: Shar-doh-nay

You don't have to be a Chanel-clad clubhouse member to love Chardonnay. Why? Because Chardonnay is the most diverse – and most planted – white wine grape in the world. It's used for everything from rich Sonoma Chardonnay to the light-and-zesty 'Blanc de Blancs' Champagne. Get to know the wide variety of styles of Chardonnay and pinpoint the one that's perfect for you.

Flavor Profile: If you like the idea of butter in your glass, you'll love the classic style of oak-aged Chardonnay wine. On the other hand, if words like "Pinot Grigio" make you feel woozy with love, then your perfect Chardonnay is the unoaked kind. How can a single grape offer such a variety of flavors? Well, in addition to the difference in wine-making (oak vs. no oak), ripeness has a lot to do with flavor. A very ripe Chardonnay will have flavors more towards tropical fruits like pineapple, guava and mango. A barely ripe Chardonnay will have green apple and lemon flavors.

Food Pairing: Pair Chardonnays in the leaner lighter style with roasted chicken or seafood; the more voluptuous heavily oaked Chardonnays pair well with pasta dishes made with cream or cheese, with lobster or other rich seafood and with Asian dishes that include coconut milk.

CHEESE

Varietals



COMTÉ

Pronunciation: kohm-TAY

Here's one that is perhaps new to you: Comté cheese. This creamy, nutty-tasting French cheese absolutely deserves a spot in your fridge. Here's why!

Comté is a great snacking cheese, whether we're talking an afternoon snack with crackers or as part of a fancy dinner party cheese plate. It has this nutty, earthy flavor and a creamy texture — it's one of those cheeses that will always have you coming back for more.

But I've also found that Comté is a great cheese for cooking. Those same nutty flavors work well in a bowl of mac and cheese, sprinkled over veggies, or folded into a plate of eggs. It's a fairly firm cheese, so it can be sliced, cubed, or grated as needed.

Comté gets bonus points for being long-lasting — a characteristic desirable in any kitchen.
















Comté is a raw milk cheese made from the milk of pasture-fed cows, and the milk for each round of cheese can only come from within a few miles of the cheese maker. This means that each round of cheese has a very distinct terroir — that certain stamp of flavors and aromas that marks it as coming from a very particular place. Furthermore, the milk is delivered to the cheese maker daily and has to be used immediately, so cheeses also get a seasonal stamp. Summer Comté and winter Comté, Comté from the mountains and Comté from the plains — each will be different and no two wedges will be quite the same.

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 Mer Soleil 2016 SLH Reserve Chardonnay	COMTÉ	\$32.00	\$24.00	\$25.60
 Kori 2013 SLH Pinot Noir		\$40.00	\$30.00	\$32.00
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