

Wine Spectator



WineSpectator.com

Tastes of Italy

SIGNATURE WINES AND
FOODS FROM EVERY REGION

California Pinot Noir

THE 2023 VINTAGE:
A 96-POINT STUNNER

SEPT. 30, 2025

Assisi, in Italy's
Umbria region



PINOT NOIR

BY JAMES MOLESWORTH



PHOTOGRAPH BY
JAMES RANSOM

ASCENDANT

THE LATE-RUNNING 2023 VINTAGE DELIVERS
AGEWORTHY WINES AT THE HEIGHT OF QUALITY

TOP 2023s

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
Sonoma Coast (continued)		
SOJOURN Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Rodgers Creek Vineyard 2023	94	\$59
STEPHENS FAMILY Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Collateral Silver Eagle Vineyard 2023	94	\$68
WILLIAMS SELYEM Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Terra de Promissio Vineyard 2023	94	\$78
ASTON Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023	93	\$45
BOARS' VIEW Pinot Noir Fort Ross-Seaview The Coast 2023	93	\$125
EMERITUS Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Pinot Hill Cruz 2023	93	\$120
FAILLA Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023	93	\$36
LYNMAR Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Susanna's Vineyard 2023	93	\$78
MERRYVALE Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023	93	\$48
PAUL HOBBS Pinot Noir West Sonoma Coast 2023	93	\$80
PETER MICHAEL Pinot Noir Fort Ross-Seaview Le Caprice 2023	93	\$145
PLATT VINEYARD Pinot Noir West Sonoma Coast 2023	93	\$68
SENSES Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Day One 2023	93	\$135
SOJOURN Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023	93	\$48
SOJOURN Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Gap's Crown Vineyard 2023	93	\$85
SOJOURN Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast UV Lucky Well Vineyard 2023	93	\$85
SOJOURN Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Walala Vineyard 2023	93	\$75
STEWART Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Nomad Thornton Vineyard 2023	93	\$95
WILLIAMS SELYEM Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023	93	\$70

Santa Barbara

BREWER-CLIFTON Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills 459 2023	96	\$75
BREWER-CLIFTON Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Machado 2023	96	\$85
DOMAINE DE LA CÔTE Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills La Côte 2023	96	\$155
DOMAINE DE LA CÔTE Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Sous Le Chêne 2023	96	\$165

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
BREWER-CLIFTON Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills 3D 2023	95	\$75
DOMAINE DE LA CÔTE Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Bloom's Field 2023	95	\$105
MELVILLE Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Block M 2023	95	\$78
MELVILLE Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Sandy's Block 2023	95	\$74
BREWER-CLIFTON Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Perilune 2023	94	\$85
DOMAINE DE LA CÔTE Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Memorious 2023	94	\$100
MELVILLE Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Anna's Block 2023	94	\$74
MELVILLE Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Terraces 2023	94	\$78
BREWER-CLIFTON Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Hapgood 2023	93	\$75
FREQUENCY Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills DiPalermo Radian Vineyard 2023	93	\$75
TESTAROSSA Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Rancho La Vinã Single Vineyard Series 2023	93	\$82

Other Regions

HANZELL Pinot Noir Moon Mountain District Hanzell Farm The Sessions Selection 2023	95	\$78
BOUCHAINE Pinot Noir Napa Valley Carneros Dijon Clone Estate Selection 2023	94	\$70
BOUCHAINE Pinot Noir Napa Valley Carneros Calera Clone Estate Selection 2023	93	\$95
BOUCHAINE Pinot Noir Napa Valley Carneros Gee Vineyard 2023	93	\$88
BOUCHAINE Pinot Noir Napa Valley Carneros Mt. Eden Clone Estate Selection 2023	93	\$95
BOUCHAINE Pinot Noir Napa Valley Carneros Pommard Clone Estate Selection 2023	93	\$70
BOUCHAINE Pinot Noir Napa Valley Carneros Terraces Estate Selection 2023	93	\$85
FAILLA Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Ferrington Vineyard 2023	93	\$58
FAILLA Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Savoy Vineyard 2023	93	\$65
SIGNAL RIDGE Pinot Noir Mendocino Ridge 2023	93	\$85

TOP LATE-RELEASE 2022s

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
KISTLER Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Laguna Ridge Vineyard 2022	95	\$110
OCCIDENTAL Pinot Noir West Sonoma Coast Bodega Headlands Vineyard Cuvée Elizabeth 2022	95	\$125
OCCIDENTAL Pinot Noir West Sonoma Coast Bodega Ridge Vineyard 2022	95	\$125

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
OCCIDENTAL Pinot Noir West Sonoma Coast Running Fence Vineyard Cuvée Catherine 2022	95	\$125
OCCIDENTAL Pinot Noir West Sonoma Coast SWK Vineyard 2022	95	\$125
RACINES Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills La Rinconada Vineyard 2022	95	\$100

SMART BUYS

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
RIVERS-MARIE Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023	94	\$40
FAILLA Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023	93	\$36
ALMA DE CATTLEYA Pinot Noir Sonoma County 2023	92	\$35
CROSSBARN Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023	92	\$45
DOMAINE EDEN Pinot Noir Santa Cruz Mountains 2021	92	\$40
HAHN Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands SLH 2022	92	\$24
HANZELL Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Sebella 2023	92	\$45
SEAN MINOR Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Signature Series 2023	92	\$28
LINCOURT Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Rancho Santa Rosa 2022	91	\$45

WINE	SCORE	PRICE
MORGAN Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Twelve Clones 2023	91	\$39
TRUCHARD Pinot Noir Napa Valley Carneros 2023	91	\$38
FESS PARKER Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills 2022	90	\$35
MELVILLE Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills 2023	90	\$44
PATZ & HALL Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2022	90	\$45
ACACIA Pinot Noir Carneros 2023	89	\$20
ROOTS RUN DEEP Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Educated Guess 2023	89	\$30
THE CALLING Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2023	89	\$37
BÖEN Pinot Noir Sonoma-Monterey-Santa Barbara Counties 2023	88	\$25

93 Domaine Della Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Earl Stephens Vineyard 2023 \$85

A generous style, offering a mix of gently steeped cherry, raspberry and boysenberry fruit flavors that are laced with notes of singed red tea, sandalwood and rose petal. A crowd-pleaser. Best from 2026 through 2036. 400 cases made.—J.M.



DAVID HEJL
Owner & Winemaker

93 Domaine Della Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Graham Family Vineyard 2023 \$85 This is a ripe, open and expressive style, with blood orange and cherry pâte de fruit notes taking the lead. Laced with sandalwood, red tea and potpourri details through the deliciously juicy finish. Drink now through 2032. 400 cases made.—J.M.

93 DuMOL Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Highland Divide 2023 \$80 A plump, juicy, fruit-filled version, with friendly flavors of mulberry, cherry and boysenberry preserves that stay focused and fresh through the focused, anise- and violet-tinged finish. Drink now through 2032. 1,550 cases made.—J.M.

93 Failla Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Ferrington Vineyard 2023 \$58 Juicy and fresh, with a zesty mix of mulberry and boysenberry coulis flavors that are nicely allied with singed anise, red tea and wet pine accents on the finish. A textbook example of Anderson Valley Pinot Noir. Drink now through 2031. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 353 cases made.—J.M.

93 Failla Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Savoy Vineyard 2023 \$65 This is filled with flavors of mulberry and boysenberry preserves gently infused with rose hip and iris hints. Sweet spices and a hint of warm earth peek in on the generous finish. Drink now through 2033. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 256 cases made.—J.M.

93 Failla Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Olivet Ranch 2023 \$58 An enticingly aromatic version, with warmed raspberry compote, rooibos tea and potpourri notes backed by a singed sandalwood edge that lengthens the finish. Tilts hedonistic in the end, but there's acidity for balance. Drink now through 2032. 341 cases made.—J.M.

93 Failla Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023 \$36 See Smart Buys, page 80.

93 Ferren Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Silver Eagle Vineyard 2022 \$90 Offers the showy boysenberry and mulberry fruit of the vintage, but with the benefit of freshness and cut, as hibiscus and blood orange zest notes help this stretch out on the racy finish. That length, clarity and cut are atypical for the vintage and help set this apart. Best from 2026 through 2031. 60 cases made.—J.M.

93 Frequency Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills DiPalermo Radian Vineyard 2023 \$75 This red embraces a rich, toasty profile, sporting notes of blackberry and mulberry pâte de fruit laced with violet, licorice and bramble hints, all backed by a darkly roasted apple wood note on the finish. Shows the energy for balance. Nice length. Drink now through 2030. 150 cases made.—J.M.

93 Kanzler Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Mes Filles 2023 \$90 Lively acidity races underneath a mix of red and black cherry, mulberry and boysenberry coulis flavors in this version, while flashes of hibiscus, iris and rose hip add their own sparkly

energy. The lightly toasty finish completes the flattering presentation. Drink now through 2034. 350 cases made.—J.M.

93 Lynmar Pinot Noir Russian River Valley AMDG 2023 \$85 Fresh and lively, with a tangy edge to its mix of boysenberry and mulberry fruit flavors, backed by iris, potpourri and sassafras hints. Briary energy drives the finish. Drink now through 2034. 573 cases made.—J.M.

93 Lynmar Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Hawk Hill Vineyard 2023 \$92 A fresh version, with rose petal and savory nuances leading off, backed by tangy damson plum, bitter cherry and white raspberry fruit flavors that are carried by a tangy zip of blood orange zest through the sandalwood-framed finish. Best from 2026 through 2032. 208 cases made.—J.M.

93 Lynmar Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Susanna's Vineyard 2023 \$78 Lush in feel up front, with crushed raspberry and cherry notes cruising through, lined liberally with singed mesquite, dried rose petal and red tea hints. A light, briary tilt on the finish lends textural contrast and energy as this keeps a fresh pitch. Best from 2026 through 2031. 627 cases made.—J.M.

93 Merryvale Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023 \$48 Stylish and focused, delivering a steady beam of raspberry and blood orange pâte de fruit supported by red tea, wood spice and sassafras hints. The finish is juicy but restrained. Drink now through 2031. 1,540 cases made.—J.M.

93 Peter Michael Pinot Noir Fort Ross-Seaview Le Caprice 2023 \$145 Shows a fresh edge, with a mix of cherry, pomegranate and blood orange compote notes laced with red tea and a flash of sandalwood. There's a pretty rose water echo on the polished finish. Drink now through 2030. 979 cases made.—J.M.

93 Papapietro Perry Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 777 Clones 2022 \$83 Raspberry coulis and damson plum pâte de fruit notes show energy and freshness as they build a tensile matrix for structure. Red tea, sassafras and potpourri accents are sprinkled liberally through the juicy finish. Best from 2026 through 2032. 557 cases made.—J.M.

93 Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir West Sonoma Coast 2023 \$80 Lovely accents of singed alder and apple wood frame a generous core of mulberry and black cherry fruit, while iris and anise notes flitter through. A graphite spine drives the finish. Rock solid. Drink now through 2029. 614 cases made.—J.M.

93 Racines Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Sainte Rose 2022 \$75 A stylish red, offering raspberry coulis, rooibos tea and potpourri notes that are finely stitched together, while flashes of chaparral and dried hibiscus permeate the finish for added range. Drink now through 2033. 506 cases made.—J.M.

93 Racines Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Sanford & Benedict Vineyard 2022 \$100 Offers an alluring profile of smoldering black tea and gently mulled cherry and raspberry fruit, plus a flash of dried blood orange, all backed by the gently toasty finish, which lets a savory edge play out. Drink now through 2031. 380 cases made.—J.M.

93 Rochioli Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2023 \$72 A polished, silky, pretty and streamlined version, redolent of blood orange, warmed peach, bitter cherry and damson plum fruit. Offers light accents of savory and rose petal for perfume, with a lingering sandalwood edge on the tail end. Drink now through 2030. 2,995 cases made.—J.M.

93 Saxon Brown Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Ferrington Vineyard 2022 \$75 This is deliciously fruited, with enticing mulberry and boysenberry pâte de fruit notes entwined with anise, apple wood and hibiscus. Offers a toasty backdrop, but with excellent energy through the finish. Drink now through 2030. 190 cases made.—J.M.

93 Senses Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Day One 2023 \$135 Delivers frankly ripe and lush flavors of blackberry and boysenberry puree laced with licorice and apple wood through the toasty finish. A fleshy, hedonistic style that will be a crowd-pleaser for sure. Drink now through 2032. 295 cases made.—J.M.

93 Signal Ridge Pinot Noir Mendocino Ridge 2023 \$85 An elegant and pure version of Pinot Noir that relies on subtle notes of cherry and raspberry coulis carried by pinpoint acidity and dusted with savory, pine and sandalwood hints through the sneakily long finish. As unadorned as you can get. Drink now through 2031. 225 cases made.—J.M.

93 Sojourn Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023 \$48 This version leads off with a fresh, juicy burst of raspberry and boysenberry fruit that cruises through, pulling in dried anise and rose hip notes along the way. A lightly singed balsam wood frame holds the finish. Drink now through 2031. 2,550 cases made.—J.M.

93 Sojourn Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Gap's Crown Vineyard 2023 \$85 Plump and juicy, with kirsch and cherry compote flavors laced with red licorice. Delivers a gently singed vanilla accent on the finish to complete its hedonistic profile. Drink now through 2029. 1,175 cases made.—J.M.

93 Sojourn Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast UV Lucky Well Vineyard 2023 \$85 Lushly fruited, with boysenberry and blackberry preserves coursing through alongside apple wood, bramble and dried anise accents. Plump but with good energy and a nice sheen to the finish. Drink now through 2029. 350 cases made.—J.M.

93 Sojourn Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Walala Vineyard 2023 \$75 An alluring style, with gently mulled raspberry and blood orange pâte de fruit notes that stream through in lockstep with flashes of rooibos tea, savory and rose hip. Light cedar and mineral accents chime on the finish as the fruit lingers prettily. Drink now through 2031. 700 cases made.—J.M.

93 Solomon Hills Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley 2022 \$90 Offers a smoky, dark frame of earth and walnut husk around a dense core of lightly mulled red and black cherry fruit. A flash of warm cast iron peeks in on the finish. A burly expression of Pinot. Best from 2026 through 2031. 426 cases made.—J.M.

93 Stewart Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Nomad Thornton Vineyard 2023 \$95 Packed with zesty, lively flavors of boysenberry, black cherry and blackberry compote that hold center court, while sassafras, anise and violet notes dart along the edges. Vivid finish. Best from 2026 through 2033. 125 cases made.—J.M.

93 Testarossa Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Rancho La Vinã Single Vineyard Series 2023 \$82 This frankly ripe red pushes flattering boysenberry and mulberry compote flavors to the fore and backs them up with flashes of apple wood, fruitcake and mesquite. A briar edge throughout gives this energy. A hedonist's delight. Drink now through 2029. 125 cases made.—J.M.

93 Williams Selyem Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2023 \$70 A frankly ripe red, with succulent mulberry and boysenberry pâte de fruit notes pumping along, while red licorice, fruitcake and bramble details fill in throughout. Shows a floral flash in the background for a touch of lift. Will have many fans for sure. Drink now through 2031. 2,884 cases made.—J.M.