

ROAR Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir USA 2021

Selected by: Master Sommelier Evan Goldstein, Master Sommelier Madeline Triffon, and Master Sommelier Tim Gaiser



Final Deductions

VINTAGE 2021
GRAPE Pinot Noir
GEOGRAPHY Not Europe
COUNTRY USA
LARGER REGION California
SMALLER REGION Central Coast
SUB REGION Santa Lucia Highlands

Rationale

What do many of the most well-regarded Pinot Noir producers in Sonoma and Napa have in common? Almost all make bottlings from fruit from Santa Lucia Highlands. SLH is Pinot Noirs' best-kept secret in California. It is a long, narrow AVA that runs down the western side of the Salinas Valley in Monterey. Here, oceanic influences from the cold Monterey Bay are perfect for cool-climate wines and the AVA has earned a reputation for Pinot Noir. The Highland's elevated slopes are subject to bright morning sunshine, and coastal breezes that sweep down the Salinas Valley from Monterey Bay to provide a counter to this in the afternoon delaying ripening and forcing grapes to develop a thicker skin = higher tannins and ample flavors (flavors are in the skins!).

SLH Pinots are praised for their richness, silky texture, vibrant red fruit flavors, subtle earthiness, and warm spice. They have a savory herbal element reminiscent of their neighbors to the south in San Barbara and a fruit character akin to Mendocino's Anderson Valley while the smooth and, at times creamy, texture echoes the Russian River's Middle Reach. A perfect assemblage of the state's best Pinot spots!

Both a winery and desired source for so many wineries, the ROAR winery and its celebrated vineyards including Rosella's and Gary's are owned by the Francioni family. Gary, Rosella, Adam and Nick Francioni are an iconic family in this spectacular region. This wine is quintessentially SLH Pinot!

Sight

BRIGHTNESS Day Bright
CLARITY Clear
COLOR DEPTH Light
COLOR Ruby
RIM VARIATION Pink
Stained Tears: None

Structure

RESIDUAL SUGAR Dry
ACID Med+
ALCOHOL High
TANNIN Medium
TEXTURE Round / Smooth
FINISH Long
COMPLEXITY High

Aroma & Taste

RED FRUIT Red Raspberry • Red / Sour Cherry • Cranberry *Condition: Ripe, Fresh, Jammy / Candied*
BLACK FRUIT Black Raspberry • Black Cherry • Mulberry • Blackberry
Condition: Fresh, Ripe, Jammy / Candied
CITRUS FRUIT Orange • Tangerine *Condition: Fresh, Raisinated / Dried* *Part: Peel / Zest*
FLORAL Rose • Lavender • Jasmine • Violet *Condition: Fresh*
OTHER VEGETABLE Mushrooms (Brown) • Fennel / Anise • Cola Nut
HERBAL Laurel / Bay Leaf • Thyme • Mint / Eucalyptus
OTHER SPICES Sassafras • Licorice (Red) • Paprika / Pimenton • Sarsaparilla
ORGANIC EARTH Turned Dirt / Potting Soil • Forest Floor
OAK AGING Yes *Oak Intensity: Medium*
OAK INFLUENCE Cinnamon • Sandalwood • Baking Spice • Caramel / Toffee
OXIDATION/NUITNESS Almond / Marzipan • Pistachio
PERCEIVED WINEMAKING CHOICES Partial / Whole Cluster