

Wine Spectator

10 Distinctive California Pinot Noirs

New reviews of 2013 reds from Russian River Valley, Sonoma Coast and beyond



Chasseur's 2013 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir spent 15 months in oak, 50 percent new barrels.

Augustus Weed

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Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

The hits keep coming with the 2013 Pinots. Many wines are elegant, with the best offering concentration and depth. This week's selection is a mix of old and new faces; these Pinots hail from the Sonoma Coast in the north to Sta. Rita Hills in the south.

Sam Lando is a natural with Pinot. He spent five years at Kosta Browne, where he studied all aspects of the business as the director of sales. In 2012, Lando and his wife, Jennifer, decided to take the plunge, borrowing against their savings to launch their own winery. They make two wines: The 2013 Russian River bottling is tight and focused, gaining depth and nuance, while the Sonoma Coast version is both fruity and taut.

Few growers have had as big an impact on the Santa Lucia Highlands as Gary Pisoni. He planted his namesake vineyard in the early 1980s, helping to establish the region's reputation for powerful Pinot Noir. New releases from his Lucia label include the Soberanes and Garys' bottlings, which come from vineyards Pisoni co-farms with his friend, local vintner Gary Francioni. The intensely fruited Santa Lucia Highlands is a blend of the two wines with grapes from Pisoni Vineyards. Pisoni's youngest son, Jeff, is the winemaker, while his eldest son, Mark, manages the vineyards and the business.

LANDO Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2013 *Score: 92 | \$42*

Presents a tight, focused beam of vivid red and dark berry, spice and licorice notes that slowly expands,

gaining depth and nuance. Holds tight to the core flavors throughout. Drink now through 2022. 390 cases made.—*J.L.*

LUCIA Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Soberanes Vineyard 2013 Score: 92 | \$60

Smoky, toasty oak notes offer a good overlay to the intense mix of gravelly earth, licorice, dried berry, sage and cedar flavors. The tannic presence of fruit and oak notes holds this back, but the density, concentration and persistence demands attention. Drink now through 2022. 285 cases made.—*J.L.*

CHASSEUR Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2013 Score: 91 | \$40

Offering aromas of wilted rose and fresh-crushed berry, this is firm and taut on the palate, with a vivid core of wild raspberry, anise, licorice and subtle earth shadings. Gains depth and persistence. Drink now through 2022. 350 cases made.—*J.L.*

LANDO Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2013 Score: 91 | \$42

Fruity and charming, taut and firm, with a well-centered core of red and dark berry, loamy, dusty earth, dried herb, light cedar and anise notes, ending with a push of raspberry flavors. Drink now through 2020. 390 cases made.—*J.L.*

LUCIA Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Garys' Vineyard 2013 Score: 91 | \$60

Well-centered on a rich core of black licorice, dusty raspberry and dried herb flavors, this is complete, balanced, graceful and persistent on the finish, maintaining the core earthiness. Drink now through 2021. 690 cases made.—*J.L.*

CHASSEUR Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2013 Score: 90 | \$40

A sleek, restrained style, centered on cherry and wild berry flavors, with edgy tannins throughout. Finishes with a burst of snappy berry fruit. Drink now through 2022. 350 cases made.—*J.L.*

ENROUTE Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Les Pommiers 2013 Score: 90 | \$65

Focused on pure, rich, vivid raspberry, blackberry, anise and loamy earth flavors. This is pleasantly persistent on the finish, losing some fruit velocity. Drink now through 2020. 15,000 cases made.—*J.L.*

LUCIA Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands 2013 Score: 90 | \$45

Intensely fruity, with a mix of watermelon, black cherry and red plum flavors. A note of dusty, loamy earth folds in on the finish, keeping the fruit reverberating. Drink now. 740 cases made.—*J.L.*

SIDURI Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Pisoni Vineyard 2013 Score: 90 | \$60

The aromas of blueberry and wild berry are taut and firm, with snappy acidity and vibrant tannins that sustain the flavors, ending crisp and lively. Drink now through 2022. 450 cases made.—*J.L.*

A.P. VIN Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills Turner Vineyard 2013 Score: 89 | \$52

There's plenty to admire in this taut, firm, pleasantly fruity effort, built around dark berry, spice and licorice flavors, framed by chewy tannins. Should only get better. Drink now through 2022. 100 cases made.—*J.L.*
