

The Art of Pinot

Wine Spectator

California Pinot Noir producers refine large crops in 2013 and 2012 into high quality reds

• BY JAMES LAUBE

These are exciting times for California Pinot Noir. With the newly released 2013s joining the now-harmonizing 2012s, Golden State winemakers are offering a pair of vintages that deliver the style and substance Pinot fans hope for, not to mention the quantity, with both years bringing larger-than-average yields into the wineries. Deciding which of the two vintages to buy is a matter of nuance—they're that similar in quality.

“Both 2012 and 2013 delivered Pinot Noir of exceptional quality throughout Sonoma County,” says **Steve MacRostie**, of **MacRostie**. “While the two vintages are quite similar, we are seeing a little more intensity and concentration in our 2013s.”

Looking at the top wines from both years demonstrates not only the high level and evenness of quality, but also how the market is evolving. The grape continues to inspire vintners both new and old, and efforts to identify and plant promising sites throughout the state are ongoing. Styles are shifting, too. Riper, expressive Pinots are still widespread, yet there's been a steady march of vineyards planted nearer to the ocean, moderating ripeness and leading to wines with more vibrant acidity and tighter structures.

The epilogue to this report is that 2014 is the successor drought year, one that winemakers believe will be every bit as good as 2012 or 2013. It might be time to draw up a budget so you'll have a chance at all three.



KATHRYN MACDONALD

MacRostie, based in Russian River Valley, makes Pinot Noir from vineyards there and in the Sonoma Coast appellation. Founder Steve MacRostie acknowledges similarities between 2012 and 2013, but finds his 2013s slightly more concentrated.