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# 10 Stunning Sonoma Pinot Noirs

New reviews of 2013 reds from Russian River and Sonoma Coast



Photo by: Rocco Ceselin

Ram's Gate's single-vineyard Pinot Noirs showcase Sonoma's diversity.

*Augustus Weed*

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

Sonoma's 2013 Pinots are hitting their stride. They are structured and graceful, as evidenced by this selection of single-vineyard wines. Pinot devotees will recognize many of the vineyards and producers here.

Lynmar makes over a dozen Pinots from its Quail Hill estate vineyard in the Russian River Valley, as well as a handful of other sites. Here is an initial look at how its wines fared in 2013. The Kanzler Vineyard bottling expresses the richness of the vintage, while the Terre de Promissio shows the depth of this 50-acre site. Shane Finley is finding his pace after taking the reins from former winemaker Bibiana Gonzalez Rave in 2012.

Ram's Gate expanded its lineup of Pinots, adding Gap's Crown in the western foothills of Sonoma Mountain to its roster of vineyard-designated wines. Jeff Gaffner directs the winemaking team, producing bottlings that express the individuality of each site. Leading this pack is the dense yet

elegant version from El Diablo Vineyard on the eastern border of the Russian River Valley.

The Pellegrini family has been growing grapes in the Russian River since 1975, when they replanted an apple and plum orchard to Pinot and Chardonnay. After a brief hiatus, the family is bottling grapes from their 60-acre Olivet Lane Vineyard under their own label. This is Lynn Krausman's first vintage as winemaker.

**LYNMAR Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Kanzler Vineyard 2013 Score: 92 | \$70**

Provides a rich, extracted core of earth- and cedar-laced blackberry flavors, with pleasant forest floor nuances and tight, tobacco-scented tannins. In the end the fruit drives through. Impressive and should gain. Drink now through 2022. 246 cases made.—J.L.

**RAM'S GATE Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Ulises Valdez Diablo Vineyard 2013 Score: 91 | \$70**

Firm acidity and tannins combine with generous plum and blueberry fruit. Beautifully crafted, tightly focused and dense, showing elegance and good detail. Finishes with a mix of berry, cherry, anise and crushed rock themes. Drink now through 2023. 337 cases made.—J.L.

**ROBERT STEMMLER Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Winside Vineyard 2013 Score: 91 | \$44**

Lots of little flavor doors open here, with prominent plum, blackberry and blueberry notes, supported by ripe, earth- and mineral-tinged tannins. Ends long and complete, gaining depth and length. Drink now through 2021. 1,277 cases made.—J.L.

**GARY FARRELL Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Gap's Crown Vineyard 2013 Score: 90 | \$70**

Exhibits a baked berry flavor, with plum, blueberry and wild berry notes. Turns fleshy in texture and ends with a long, juicy aftertaste. Drink now through 2020. 495 cases made.—J.L.

**LYNMAR Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Terra de Promissio Vineyard 2013 Score: 90 | \$70**

An expressive style, with a complex mix of cherry, raspberry and strawberry notes. Well-structured, offering firm earth- and cedar-laced tannins. Drink now through 2021. 142 cases made.—J.L.

**RAM'S GATE Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Ulises Valdez Silver Eagle Vineyard 2013 Score: 90 | \$70**

The flavors build gracefully, offering a subtle mix of mineral, red berry, raspberry, spice and cedar notes, tightly structured and fanning out on the finish, with boysenberry details. Drink now through 2020. 351 cases made.—J.L.

**RAM'S GATE Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Gap's Crown Vineyard 2013 Score: 90 | \$70**

Delivers a pure, rich, fruit-driven core of raspberry and blackberry flavors, with touches of cherry and spice. Supple up front and firming midpalate on, this ends with a long, persistent push. Drink now through 2020. 498 cases made.—J.L.

**RAM'S GATE Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Sangiacomo Vineyards Roberts Road 2013 Score: 90 | \$70**

Strikes a balance between a tight, structured frame and a core of generous plum, blueberry and raspberry flavors, maintaining a zesty, lively persistence. Drink now through 2020. 298 cases made.—J.L.

**PELLEGRINI Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Olivet Lane Vineyard 2013 Score: 89 | \$65**

Pleasantly balanced, with a mix of vibrant acidity, fine tannins, tense wild berry and blackberry flavors, and spicy, earthy licorice touches on the finish that slowly fan out. Drink now through 2020. 390 cases made.—J.L.

**ROBERT STEMMLER Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2013 Score: 88 | \$28**

Appealing, offering plump, up-front plum and blueberry flavors. Firms midpalate on and ends with a dusty, loamy, cedary edge on the finish. Drink now. 1,052 cases made.—J.L.

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