

9 Engaging Pinot Noirs - Wine Spectator

New reviews from the 2013 vintage in Sonoma's Russian River Valley



Photo by: Anthony Laurino
Donum's Russian River vineyards yielded an outstanding 2013 Pinot Noir.

Augustus Weed Posted: December 7, 2015

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

We rarely find fashion models turned winemakers, but Wonderment's Stephanie Cook isn't afraid to get her hands dirty. When she was growing up in South Carolina, her father made wine from Muscadine in the family's laundry room. Channeling his passion, and a culinary degree, Cook decided to pursue her interest in wine. A conversation with Robert Biale led to a job in Napa, followed by stints at Spottswoode in St. Helena and Spy Valley in New Zealand. She bought her first grapes in 2011 and produces Pinot, Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Sémillon from vineyards in Napa, Sonoma, Lake County and Russian River Valley.

Benovia makes a **return to the Tasting Highlights** this week. The winery is quietly finding its groove with Mike Sullivan at the helm. Founders Joe Anderson and Mary Dewane purchased the Cohn Vineyard, west of Healdsburg, in 2003 and now own 71 acres spread between three vineyards. This is the first vintage in which La Pommeraie underwent partial whole-cluster fermentation.

Pinot fans will find new releases from familiar names such as Merry Edwards, Williams Selyem and Emeritus.

WONDERMENT Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Dutton - Campbell Vineyard 2013

Score: 91 | \$40

A bold, well-proportioned expression of fruit and wood, from spicy, toasty oak to delicate plum and raspberry, all folding together gracefully. Pleasantly persistent aftertaste. Drink now through 2022. 261 cases made. —J.L.

BENOVIA Pinot Noir Russian River Valley La Pommeraie 2013

Score: 90 | \$56

Pure, rich and focused on a core of dusty plum and black cherry flavors, offering depth and nuances that gain persistence, with a lingering, detailed finish. Drink now through 2020. 300 cases made. —J.L.

DONUM Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Ten Oaks Single Vineyard 2013

Score: 90 | \$72

This red merges smoky, toasty, cedary oak with fresh turned earth and dry berry, making for a restrained, compact presentation that is best served by cellaring. The finish shows strength of personality. Best from 2017 through 2022. 158 cases made. —J.L.

MERRY EDWARDS Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Georganne 2013

Score: 90 | \$60

Anchored by ripe, aromatic blackberry, wild berry and loamy black licorice notes, with floral scents and flavors, this combines density, richness and persistence. Ends with power and finesse. Drink now. 553 cases made. —J.L.

WILLIAMS SELYEM Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Bucher Vineyard 2013

Score: 89 | \$59

Delivers an intense mix of blueberry and wild berry, anise and toasty oak notes in a direct manner, supported by firm, earthy tannins and a nice hint of what lies ahead. Drink now through 2021. 549 cases made. —J.L.

WILLIAMS SELYEM Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Eastside Road Neighbors 2013 **Score: 89 | \$55**

Complex and engaging, this red delivers an elegant, expansive mix of cherry, plum, raspberry and floral scents, adding a kiss of anise and black licorice on the finish. Drink now. 988 cases made. —J.L.

BUENA VISTA Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Bela's Selection 2013

Score: 88 | \$48

A mix of crushed rock and graphite with earth- and gravel-laced plum and blueberry gives this savory style a combination of density and elegance. Drink now. 800 cases made. —J.L.

MERRY EDWARDS Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2013

Score: 88 | \$48

Well-structured and built around a core of loamy, dusty earth, dark berry, herb and cedar, this has much to offer and should only get better in a year. Drink now. 4,815 cases made. —J.L.

EMERITUS Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Hallberg Ranch 2013

Score: 88 | \$42

Tight and compact, with a dense core of crushed rock, plum and cherry, and touches of herb, spice and tobacco, this is both complex and restrained, and a good candidate for short-term cellaring. Drink now through 2020. 8,500 cases made. —J.L.