

## Alder Yarrow

21 Oct 2024

# Anderson Valley Pinots soar

*Is this hidden region the best location for Pinot Noir in California? Aerial photo of Anderson Valley vineyards by Fabian Jauregui.*

I'm not entirely clear whether I'm doing readers a service, or risking great confusion by writing about Mendocino's Anderson Valley Pinot Noir the month after I wrote about Sonoma's Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon.

'I tell people I'm from Anderson Valley, and they often say, "Oh yes!" – and then they start raving about Healdsburg and Cabernet Sauvignon', says Courtney DeGraff, executive director of the Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association. 'But really, we're all about the cool-climate Pinot Noir here, not palm trees and desert heat.'

Aside from the accident of two very different wine regions sharing similar names, Anderson Valley has long taken a certain amount of pride in people not exactly knowing where it is. You might even go so far as to say this little community, tucked into the redwood-filled Coast Ranges, trades in obscurity. For decades it has been a haven for those who want to be left alone, or at the very least, for those who value peace and quiet.

Famous for its confounding local language (really an argot) called Boontling, which dates from the 1890s and is named after the local town of Boonville, Anderson Valley possesses a unique and somewhat insular local culture that is part idyllic agrarian, part counter-culture, and part 'get-off-my-lawn' eccentric.

The valley offers fewer than 150 hotel rooms and only 10 restaurants spread across its several small towns (villages, really). A combination of local sentiments, the town regulations those sentiments provoke and the extreme limitations of civic infrastructure seem all but designed to keep things that way.

## Pinot Noir paradise

Nestled deep into the hills, and accessible from the east only by narrow, serpentine roads, Anderson Valley might be the very definition of an off-the-beaten track wine region. This small valley, carved by the Navarro River, was settled in the 1850s and was populated primarily by homesteaders and farmers until the hippies started arriving in the 1960s.

The first real commercial vineyards were planted starting in 1964, with more added in the next 15 years as small roadside tasting rooms sprouted, selling wines to the occasional tourists that made it over the hills from Sonoma County in search of redwood trees, weed or both. Some of those pioneering producers, such as Husch and Navarro Vineyards, are still making wine today.

The seismic change in the local wine scene came with the establishment of Roederer Estate in 1982 by Champagne Louis Roederer who purchased 340 acres (138 ha), having decided the climate was perfect for making sparkling wine from Pinot Noir. Up until that point, much of the tiny local industry (with a few exceptions) had emphasised the promise of aromatic white wines. Roederer's entry shone a spotlight on the region and convinced many to begin working with Pinot Noir.

An aerial view of vineyards in Anderson Valley (credit: Fabien Jauregui)

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One mile across and roughly 15 miles long (1.6 x 24 km), Anderson Valley is hemmed in by heavily forested ridges that, climatologically speaking, qualify as coastal rain forest due to rainfall averaging 80 inches (2,032 mm) annually. The valley floor, on the other hand, receives half as much rain in a good year, and considerably less during drought years.

Opening to the Pacific Ocean at its north-west end (see [this \*World Atlas of Wine\* map](#)) as the Navarro River draws chilly ocean air inland through the redwoods, Anderson Valley's climate ranges from downright frigid in the west to moderately cool at its easternmost end. Its combination of alluvial and fractured sedimentary soils and hillside exposures (often surrounded by trees), in conjunction with the climate, have resulted in one of the best locations for growing Pinot Noir in California.

## Small is beautiful

With the exception of a few larger landholders such as Roederer and Jackson Family Wines (who bought into the valley in 2011), the vast majority of growers are working smaller plots of land from which the vast majority of winemakers are making smaller quantities of wine. Of the 44 wines included in this report, only nine were made in quantities exceeding 500 cases.

This more artisan scale combined with the somewhat isolated nature of the valley has resulted in a particularly collaborative and neighbourly group of winemakers.

‘This is *the* most collaborative winemaking community I’ve ever been a part of’, says Waits-Mast Cellars winemaker Shalini Sekhar, who consults for various clients across northern California in addition to making her own wines under the brand Ottavino. ‘It’s pretty spectacular to see everyone get together, check their egos at the door, and have these kind of in-depth critical conversations about each other’s wines. It’s a special thing.’

It’s clear that this regular, open collaboration has played a key role in the evolution of the region’s wines. As recently as a decade ago, a vast gulf of quality separated most of the wines made in Anderson Valley by local producers from those wines made by outside (often more prominent) producers using purchased grapes. This gap has been closing rapidly and may soon cease to exist.

‘We’re on this journey towards the peak expression of the place’, says winemaker Phil Baxter of Baxter Winery. ‘Even though there are stylistic differences, and still even some outliers, these days there’s a tying together. If you pick up a bottle regardless of style, it’s hard to confuse these wines with Pinot grown anywhere else in California. You’re getting an Anderson Valley expression.’

Winemaker Shalini Sekhar of Waits-Mast Cellars and Ottavino Wines

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I have not yet done a comparative blind tasting that would prove Baxter’s point definitively, but I tend to agree with him. The wines of Anderson Valley have been (rather rapidly) converging towards an exceptional and distinctive expression of place. Overt new-oak usage is dropping; picking decisions generally seem to be focused on the preservation of acidity; and cellar hygiene is now almost universally excellent.

Today it’s almost impossible to find a poorly made wine from Anderson Valley, and many of the wines are excellent. A growing number are truly exceptional, and can easily hold their own against the finest examples of Pinot Noir grown in California.

## An extreme(ly good) vintage

I’ve made no secret about the fact that I’m a fan of the 2021 vintage in just about every region of California. It’s my favourite vintage since 2013, with which it shares key characteristics, namely the remarkable lack of extreme heat events through the growing season combined with

significant drought. In fact, it was one of the driest years on record, after an unusually warm winter with very low precipitation.

‘2021 was ferocious’, says Doug Stewart, proprietor of Breggo Cellars and Lichen Estate. Stewart bought the property that now houses his Lichen Estate winery in 2000, making him an early entrant in the second wave of resident winemakers in the valley after the quiet decades of the early pioneers.

‘I think our annual rainfall hit 15 inches [381 mm] in 2021, which is less than half of normal’, says Stewart. ‘We normally get a lot of rain in the winter, and that year we got nothing. It’s the least amount of rain I’ve ever seen in Anderson Valley.’

Anderson Valley vineyards in the autumn (credit: Jeffrey Woods)

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Despite the lack of water in the valley, the fruit quality remained extremely high, and disease pressure was very low.

‘We ended up with just these tiny berries, with tons of skins, and it ended up being a really small, concentrated vintage’, says Stewart.

‘I think these are some of the best wines we’ve made in a decade’, says Sekhar of the Pinot Noirs she made for Waits-Mast Cellars. ‘Early on they felt quiet, but now they’re taut and structured, with concentration and longevity. I think they’re incredibly expressive.’

My own tasting suggests agreement with Sekhar. I generally find the 2021 vintage of Pinot Noir from Anderson Valley a wonderful balance of fine tannic structure, vibrant acidity, gorgeous red fruits and beautiful, savoury herbal notes. The best wines have soaring aromas that approach floral in their perfume, and evoke something of the arboreal quality that suffuses the Anderson Valley landscape. It’s a special place, especially for lovers of Pinot Noir.

Once upon a time, early in the rise of California Pinot Noir’s popularity, Anderson Valley was somewhere you could find a truly excellent bottle of Pinot for \$30. I fear, however, the era of well-priced bottles from Anderson Valley is over. Between word having gotten out about these wines and the ever-escalating costs of farming in a climate crisis, Anderson Valley Pinot Noir is now priced similarly to other good-quality bottlings from around California. That said, these wines are half the price of most Napa Cabernets, and just as fine.

While the 2022 wines have begun hitting the market, many wineries are still selling their 2021 vintage, so it is my hope that (small production quantities aside) these wines will be relatively

easy to locate for those readers who seek them out.

See also *Anderson Valley – not to be overlooked*.

The 44 tasting notes below are ordered alphabetically by producer (sur)name, but you can reorder them to suit.

Select sorting option ▼

## Baxter, Langley Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17.5

*Boonville neighbourhood. Organically and dry-farmed 42-year-old vines of Roederer clone 32. Ambient-yeast fermentation with 30% whole cluster, hand punchdowns, gentle basket press and extra-long barrel ageing of 24 months in 100% neutral French oak. 125 cases produced.*

Smells of citrus peel, raspberries and dried herbs. Bright and juicy flavours of raspberry and citrus peel mix with redcurrant and dried herbs. Faintly dusty tannins linger with citrus-peel notes in the finish. Excellent acidity and lovely persistence on the palate. Elegant and refined. (AY) 13.7%

Drink 2023 – 2033

\$60 RRP

## Black Kite, Wendling Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17

*A mix of clones 777, 828, 2A, 943 and DRC. Aged for 17 months in 50% new French oak. 197 cases produced.*

Smells of sweet cherries and a touch of oak. Bright flavours of cherry mix with raspberry and dried herbs. Light powdery tannins coat the mouth as hints of dried flowers and orange peel linger in the finish. Pretty. Very good acidity and balance.

(AY) 13.8%

Drink 2023 – 2030

\$75 RRP

## Black Kite, Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17

*A mix of clones 828, 777 and Pommard. Aged for 17 months in 33% new French oak. 410 cases produced.*

Aromas of brown sugar and sweet cherry pie. Flavours of cherry fruit are shot through with faint dried herbs and citrus peel. Sweet oak notes linger in the finish along with the cherry and sour-cherry fruit. Very good acidity. A little on the polished, ripe side of things, but still quite tasty. (AY) 14.2%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$75 RRP

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## **Brashley Vineyards, Bevel Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley**

**17**

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*A mix of clones 777, Pommard and 115 each fermented separately. Aged for 8 months in 25% new oak. 290 cases produced.*

Aromas of cherry, cranberry and herbs. Fleecy tannins wrap around a core of cherry and dried herbs as notes of citrus peel linger in the finish with the hint of fresh herbs. Very good acidity, nice balance. (AY) 13.8%

Drink 2023 – 2030

\$68 RRP

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## **Brashley Vineyards, Hacienda Sequoia Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley**

**17**

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*Deep End neighbourhood. Pommard clone fermented 40% whole cluster. Aged in 35% new and 65% neutral French oak for 7 months. 195 cases produced.*

Smells of cherry and cranberry. Flavours of cherry and cranberry are wrapped in fleecy tannins as hints of red-apple skin and oak linger in the finish. The tannins get grippy over time. There's a nice freshness to this wine, likely thanks to the 40% whole-cluster fermentation. Excellent acidity. (AY) 13.8%

Drink 2023 – 2030

\$70 RRP

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## **Calstar Cellars, Nelson Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley**

**15.5**

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*Philo neighbourhood. A mix of clones 114, 777 and clone 4 fully destemmed and fermented with punchdowns. Aged in a mix of French and Hungarian oak, 30% new,*



*30% second use and 40% neutral for 10 months. Sterile filtered. 80 cases produced.*

Smells of sweet-cherry compote and blueberries. Sweetish flavours of blueberry and cherry have a light sandpapery tannic texture and very good acidity. Notes of herbs and citrus peel linger in the finish but are slowly overwhelmed by the scent of sweet oak. A bit candied. (AY) 14.3%

Drink 2023 – 2027

\$55 RRP

## **Cobb, Wendling Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley**

**18**

*Navarro neighbourhood. A mass selection plus clones 667, 943 and 828. Fermented 50% whole cluster and then aged for 22 months in 30% new French oak. 200 cases produced.*

Gorgeous aromas of sweet raspberry and flowers. Fantastically bright flavours of raspberry have a glinting, crystalline quality as notes of fresh flowers and citrus peel soar through a very long finish. Outstanding silky texture and fantastic acidity. Faint gauzy tannins add texture and depth. Poised, elegant and stunningly aromatic. (AY) 13.7%

Drink 2023 – 2035

\$80 RRP

## **Davies Vineyards, Goorgian Vineyards Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley**

**15.5**

*A blend of clones 115, 2A, 667, Pommard and 943. Fully destemmed. Aged for 15 months in 40% new, 30% second-use and 30% neutral French oak. Sterile filtered. An additional 7 months' bottle ageing prior to release. 200 cases produced.*

Medium to dark garnet. Smells of sweet oak and raspberry jam. Flavours of raspberry jam and cherry are tinged with sweet oak and a touch of herbs. Good acidity, but comes across as faintly sweet in a way I don't prefer. Decent acidity. (AY) 14.3%

Drink 2023 – 2027

\$80 RRP

## **Davies Vineyards, Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir 2022 Anderson Valley**

**16.5**

*A blend of Pommard clone and clones 828, 667, 777 and 115. Fully destemmed. Aged for 15 months in 22% new, 45% once-used and 33% neutral French oak barrels. Sterile filtered. An additional 6 months' bottle ageing prior to release. 475 cases produced.*

Smells of sweet brown sugar and cherry compote. Tangy flavours of cherry and sour cherry mix with citrus peel and dried herbs. Bright and juicy with lightly fleecy tannins. Very good acidity. Comes across as very ripe. (AY) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$85 RRP

## **Domaine Anderson, Estate Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley**

**17.5**

*83% of the fruit comes from the estate's Dach Vineyard, with the remaining 17% from the estate's Walraven Vineyard. Small lots allowed to spontaneously ferment with ambient yeast using a combination of punchdowns, foot treading and pumpovers during an average of 10 days in tank on skins before pressing. 2% whole cluster usage. Aged in 7% second-use and 93% neutral French oak. 710 cases produced.*

Aromas of cranberry and raspberry fruit tinged with hints of citrus. Tangy, citrusy flavours mix with raspberry and a touch of cedar. Fantastic acidity and faint gauzy tannins. Notes of citrus peel and herbs linger in the finish. An excellent wine with great appeal. (AY) 13.9%

Drink 2023 – 2033

\$55 RRP

## **Domaine Anderson, Dach Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley**

**17.5**

*Philo neighbourhood. Destemmed then fermented in stainless, open-top tank with ambient yeasts using a combination of punchdowns and gentle pumpovers during an 11-day fermentation before pressing. Malolactic fermentation in 60-gallon French oak barrel. Aged for 15 months in a 60-gallon neutral oak barrel. 140 cases produced.*

Aromas of raspberries and orange peel. Flavours of raspberry and redcurrant mix with orange peel and dried herbs. Excellent acidity and light fleecy tannins. Notes of herbs and orange peel linger in the finish. Nicely balanced and lithe in quality. (AY) 13.8%

Drink 2023 – 2033

\$75 RRP



## Donum, The Observer Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

16

*Philo neighbourhood. A mix of the David Bruce and Dijon 828 clones. Aged for 16 months in French oak. 147 cases produced.*

Aromas of sweet cherry and smoky cedar. Rich black-cherry and sweet oak flavours have a darker, sweeter complexion. Fleecy tannins get dry and thick on the palate as notes of oak linger in the finish. Decent acidity. (AY) 13.5%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$125 RRP

## Donum, Angel Camp Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

16.5

*Philo neighbourhood. A blend of clones Dijon 115, Dijon 667, Dijon 777, Pommard, Wädenswil 2A, Swan and Martini. Aged for 16 months in 75% new French oak. 196 cases produced.*

Dark garnet. Smells of sweet oak and black-raspberry fruit. Juicy raspberry and cherry flavours are shot through with sweet oak and hints of citrus peel. Fleecy tannins coat the mouth and gradually stiffen with time, drying the mouth. Rich, but really nicely balanced. Just too much wood influence here. (AY) 14.6%

Drink 2023 – 2028

\$175 RRP

## Fathers + Daughters Cellars, Ferrington Vineyard Ella's Reserve Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17

*Boonville neighbourhood. A mix of clones 828 and Pommard hand-picked and then fermented with ambient yeasts and 25% whole clusters. Aged for 23 months in 100% neutral French oak. 104 cases produced.*

Smells of sweet cherry and candied raspberry. Flavours of raspberry pastilles mix with bright, juicy acidity and hints of dried herbs. Powdery tannins. High-toned but quite pretty. Skips across the palate gaily. (AY) 13.6%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$55 RRP

## Foursight, Charles Vineyard Clone 5 Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17.5

*Boonville neighbourhood. 100% Pommard clone fermented with ambient yeast and malolactic bacteria strains with 30% whole clusters. Aged for 10 months in 50% new French oak. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. 250 cases produced.*

Light garnet. Smells of lavender and aromatic herbs layered over raspberry and dried flowers. Zingy and bright flavours of raspberry and raspberry leaf mix with citrus peel and aromatic herbs. Wonderfully bright and juicy. With great length and balance.

Gauzy tannins add a diaphanous structure and texture. Very elegant. (AY) 13.6%

Drink 2023 – 2030

\$60 RRP

## Goldeneye, Gowan Creek Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17

*Aged in 50% new, 50% neutral French oak for 16 months. 1,200 cases produced.*

Smells of cherry and black-cherry fruit. Juicy flavours of cherry and black-cherry fruit mix with raspberries and a hint of citrus peel. There's a faint sweetness here that is charming, as notes of citrus peel and sweet raspberry linger in the finish. Pretty. (AY)

14.2%

Drink 2023 – 2030

\$90 RRP

## Goldeneye, Ten Degrees Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17.5

*Aged in 47% new, 53% neutral French oak for 16 months. 750 cases produced.*

Smells of cherry and cranberry fruit. Very polished and delicious flavours of cherry and cranberry mix with citrus peel and faint dried herbs. Excellent acidity and faint fleecy tannins that gradually stiffen with time. Citrus peel lingers in the finish. Very

tasty. (AY) 14.2%

Drink 2023 – 2030

\$135 RRP

## Grant Vineyards, Emery-Grant Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

18

*Deep End neighbourhood. A mix of clones Dijon 667, 777 and 115. Farmed organically, certification pending. Destemmed. Aged for 11 months in 30% new French oak. 150 cases produced.*

Aromas of dried flowers, earth and raspberries. Bright raspberry and cranberry flavours are shot through with earth and forest floor. Gorgeous, fleecy tannins hang in the background while excellent acidity lingers with citrus peel and floral notes in the finish. Outstanding, with a commanding presence. On the riper, darker side, but without a trace of heaviness. On the contrary, this wine is remarkably sensual and appealing. (AY) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

\$50 RRP

## Handley Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17

*A mix of clones Dijon 115, Dijon 777, Pommard, Martini and Wädenswil. Aged for 10 months in 25% new French oak. 500 cases produced.*

Medium garnet with purple highlights. Smells of cherry and cranberry fruit. Powdery tannins wrap around a core of cherry and black raspberry as flavours of dried herbs and flowers emerge on the finish with a hint of orange peel. Lovely, lithe and balanced. **GV** (AY) 13.2%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$40 RRP

## Husch, Reserve Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

15.5

*A blend of clones 115, 113, Pommard 5 and Martini. Hand-picked at night, hand-sorted and crushed into T-Bins with 14% whole cluster and yeast inoculation. The fermenting wine received three punchdowns per day, was pressed and inoculated with malolactic bacteria and put into barrel. Topped but otherwise left undisturbed for 10 months in 50% new French oak. 417 cases produced.*

Smells of sweet stewed cherries and cranberries. Soft suede-like tannins wrap around a core of sweet raspberry and cherry fruit flavours. Softer acidity here results in a flabby quality. (AY) 14.2%

Drink 2023 – 2026

\$45 RRP

## Kosta Browne Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17.5

*Clones 2A, Swan, Calera, 23, 37, 38, 97 and 828. Fermented in a combination of stainless steel, oak and concrete with 6% whole clusters. Aged for 18 months in oak, with 46% new French, 5% new Austrian and the remainder neutral French. 900 cases produced.*

Smells of raspberry and cherry fruit. Juicy raspberry and cherry flavours have a lovely brightness and excellent acidity. Faint, fleecy tannins with just a hint of wood lingering in the finish. One of the better bottlings from this producer I've had and certainly the lowest in alcohol. A marked change in style from what I remember and much the better for it. (AY) 13.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

\$120 RRP

## Kosta Browne, Cerise Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17

*East Ridge neighbourhood. Clones 23, 37, 115, 777, Pommard and Martini. Fermented in a combination of stainless steel, oak and concrete with 6% whole clusters. Aged for 18 months in oak, with 46% new French, 5% new Austrian and the remainder neutral French. 1,100 cases produced.*

Aromas of sweet oak and brown sugar. Juicy raspberry and cherry flavours have faint gauzy tannins and excellent acidity and freshness. Notes of fresh and dried herbs linger in the finish, as the tannins get slightly grippy. There's a nice stoniness here underneath the ripe fruit. (AY) 14.2%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$210 RRP

## Lichen Estate Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17

*A blend of the Martini, Pommard, 2A and 667 clones. Fermented in open-top puncheons, then 16 months in oak. 385 cases produced.*

Aromas of cherry and cranberry. Earthy notes underlie flavours of cherry and cranberry as hints of citrus peel and earth linger with dried herbs in the finish. The fleecy tannins coat the mouth and gently squeeze the palate. Excellent acidity and nice balance. **GV** (AY) 14.1%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$49 RRP

## Lichen Estate, Moonglow Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17

*A blend of the Martini, Pommard, 2A and 667 clones destemmed and fermented in 33% new French puncheons. Aged for 16 months in oak. No fining. Sterile filtered. 196 cases produced.*

Aromas of sweet cranberry and raspberry. Bright raspberry and cherry flavours have a citrus-peel brightness and excellent acidity to match. Lightly gauzy tannins hang in the background, letting the mouth-watering acidity drive another gulp. Excellent.

(AY) 13.8%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$75 RRP

## Lioco, La Selva Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17.5

*Deep End neighbourhood. Clones 115, 777 and Swan fermented with 15% whole clusters. Aged for 10 months in second-use barrels. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. 200 cases produced.*

Aromas of dried herbs, raspberries and raspberry leaf. Flavours of raspberry and raspberry leaf have a wonderful stony brightness and excellent acidity. Powdery, stony tannins coat the mouth as bright raspberry and redcurrant flavours mix with dried herbs and flowers. Dried herbs and the tannins linger in the finish. Gorgeous. **GV**

(AY) 13.1%

Drink 2023 – 2033

\$50 RRP

## Lioco, Edmeades Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17

*40% whole-cluster fermented and then aged for 10 months in 18% new French oak. No fining or filtration.*

Smells of wet earth, raspberries and flowers. Stony flavours of raspberry and redcurrant are shot through with dried herbs as muscular tannins grip the palate and hints of bitter orange linger in the finish. Deeply stony, with great minerality.

Excellent acidity. (AY) 13.2%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$68 RRP

## Lula, Rescue Block Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

16

*A blend of clones 115, 777, Pommard and 667 aged in French oak. 150 cases produced.*

Medium purple. Smells of blueberry, cherry and sweet oak. Flavours of cherry and raspberry are wrapped in a fleecy blanket of tannins. Good acidity with herbs lingering in the finish. (AY) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2028

\$70 RRP

## Lussier, Roma's Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17.5

*East Ridge neighbourhood. 100% Pommard clone fermented 100% whole cluster and then aged in 25% new French oak. 100 cases produced.*

Light to medium garnet with ruby highlights. Smells of dried herbs and raspberries. In the mouth, the wine is quite fresh, with a herbal brightness mixed with stony raspberry and redcurrant flavours. Notes of dried and fresh herbs linger in the finish for an exquisite balance between fruit and savoury qualities. There's even a little salinity here. Gauzy tannins add structure. A really lovely wine with an incredible expression of flavours given its extremely low alcohol. **GV** (AY) 12.7%

Drink 2023 – 2033

\$50 RRP

## Lussier, Golden Fleece Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17.5

*A mix of Calera, 667 and 115 clones fermented 50% whole cluster. Aged 16 months in 50% new French oak. 50 cases produced.*

Smells of chopped green herbs and raspberries. Mouth-coating, powdery tannins wrap around a core of ethereal raspberry, dried flowers and dried herbs. Excellent acidity and length. Wonderfully balanced and expressive. (AY) 13.4%

Drink 2023 – 2033

\$56 RRP



## Maggy Hawk, Unforgettable Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17

*Aged for 16 months in 38% new French oak. Finished unfinned and unfiltered. 154 cases produced.*

Aromas of bright cherries, raspberries and a hint of sweet oak. Bright and juicy flavours of cherry and raspberry have a nice citrus backbone and barely perceptible tannins. Excellent acidity and balance. (AY) 14.2%

Drink 2023 – 2030

\$75 RRP

## Meyer Family, Monument Tree Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

16

*Destemmed then given a week-long cold soak, with twice-daily punchdowns. Inoculated fermentation pressed into barrel with the fine lees stirred until malolactic conversion completed naturally. No fining. Aged 16 months in 66% new French oak.*

Aromas of cherry and raspberry. Thick fleecy tannins wrap around a core of raspberry and cherry tinged with sweet oak. Slightly hollow on the mid palate. Notes of oak linger in the finish. (AY) 13.5%

Drink 2023 – 2028

\$58 RRP

## Navarro, South Hill Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

16.5

*Philo neighbourhood. 100% clone 777. Fined with organic egg whites from estate chickens. Aged for 16 months in 35% new barrels. Bottled unfiltered. 102 cases produced.*

Smells of dried flowers, cranberry and raspberry tinged with oak. Silky flavours of cranberry and raspberry fruit are shot through with orange peel and dried herbs. Excellent acidity and faint tannins, with just a hint of oak showing through on the palate. (AY) 13.6%

Drink 2023 – 2028

\$49 RRP

## Pangloss Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

17.5

*A mix of Pommard, 115, 667 and 777 clones destemmed and fermented in open-top fermenters. Basket-pressed into 40% new French oak for 10 months. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. 249 cases produced.*

Medium garnet with purple highlights. Smells of flowers and black raspberries. Juicy flavours of raspberry mix with a nice freshness of dried herbs and sour-cherry fruit. Faint fleecy tannins coat the mouth. Excellent acidity and depth. Darker in quality but with elegance to match. **GV (AY) 14.2%**

Drink 2023 – 2033

\$48 RRP

## **Pangloss, Charles Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley**

**17.5**

*100% Pommard clones destemmed and fermented in open-top fermenters. Basket-pressed into 30% new French oak for 10 months. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. 297 cases produced.*

Smells of fresh herbs and flowers with cherry and raspberry layered underneath. Very pretty flavours of raspberry and cherry are shot through with green herbs and a lovely, fresh, stony brightness. Faint gauzy tannins coat the mouth. Delicious. (AY) 14.2%

Drink 2023 – 2033

\$65 RRP

## **Pennyroyal Farm, Jeansheep Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley**

**17**

*Boonville neighbourhood. 100% 667 clone. Fined with egg whites. Aged for 18 months in 33% new oak. Bottled unfiltered. 196 cases produced.*

Smells of herbs and cherries. Flavours of cherry and cranberry mix with a hint of sweet oak as well as dried and fresh herbs. Bright citrus peel lingers in the finish with hints of aromatic herbs. Very pretty. (AY) 13.7%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$63 RRP

## **Texture, Wendling Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley**

**17**

*A mix of clones 943, Pommard and 2A destemmed and fermented in open-top fermenters. Basket-pressed into 70% new French oak for 11 months. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. 50 cases produced.*

Aromas of raspberries and blueberries. Fleecy tannins wrap around a core of black raspberry, dried herbs and citrus peel. Very good acidity and length. Darker in quality, with some bluish character that makes it quite distinctive. Dried herbs linger in the finish. (AY) 13.7%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$85 RRP

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## **Thomas T Thomas, Buster's Hill Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley** **16.5**

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*Roughly 60% Pommard clone 4 and 40% Dijon clone 115 fermented with 30% whole clusters. Spends 18 months in 40% new oak. Light filtration. 125 cases produced.*

Smells of cherry and cedar. Flavours of cherry and cedar mix with raspberry and faint fleecy tannins. Very good acidity and restrained oak. (AY) 13.4%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$90 RRP

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## **Toulouse Vineyards, Estate Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley** **15.5**

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*Aged for 11 months in 35% new barrels. Cross-flow filtered. 750 cases produced.*

Smells of brown sugar, cherry compote and cranberries. Flavours of cherry and cranberry fruit mix with brown sugar and sweet oak. Sweet oak dominates the finish and the fine tannins are faintly drying. Too much wood. (AY) 14.3%

Drink 2023 – 2027

\$58 RRP

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## **Toulouse Vineyards Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley** **15.5**

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*Aged for 11 months in 35% new Hungarian barrels. Cross-flow filtered. 450 cases produced.*

Smells of oak, brown sugar and cherries. Flavours of brown sugar and cherry are shot through with sweet oak and dried herbs as oak dominates the finish. Faint, muscular tannins gain strength over time. Good acidity. Just too much wood here and perhaps too much ripeness. (AY) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2027

\$65 RRP

## Waits-Mast, Nash Mill Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

16.5

*A mix of clones 115 and 667 farmed organically and fermented destemmed but uncrushed with ambient yeasts. Aged for 16 months in 28% new oak. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. 86 cases produced.*

Light to medium garnet with ruby highlights. Smells of dried herbs, dried flowers and redcurrant fruit. Tangy flavours of raspberry and redcurrant have a distinctly savoury cast with dried herbs and pine duff. There's an earthy note that lingers in the finish with dried herbs and citrus peel, with faint, cottony tannins and very good acidity.

(AY) 13.7%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$55 RRP

## Walt, Blue Jay Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

16

*Boonville neighbourhood. A mix of clones 667, 777, Pommard and 115 fermented with a mix of destemmed, whole-cluster and roasted-stem inclusion in stainless steel. Aged for 10 months in 35% new French oak. Bottled without fining or filtration. 6,300 cases produced.*

Aromas of cherry and black cherry. Rich flavours of black cherry and Bing cherry have a nice brightness thanks to very good acidity. Darker in complexion, with a sweet ripeness but also with enough acidity to pull it off. A hint of citrus peel lingers in the finish. (AY) 14.4%

Drink 2023 – 2028

\$50 RRP

## Walt, The Corners Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley

16

*Boonville neighbourhood. A mix of clones 667, 777 and 115 fermented with a mix of destemmed, whole-cluster and roasted-stem inclusion in stainless steel. Aged for 10 months in 35% new French oak. Bottled without fining or filtration. 1,290 cases produced.*

Dark garnet. Smells of sweet-cherry compote. Rich cherry flavours mix with candied citrus peel. Ripe and sweet but with citrus peel and enough acidity to avoid being ponderous. But make no mistake, this wine is very ripe. Leans towards the high-toned

but I wouldn't have guessed at the 14.9% alcohol. Ultimately, perhaps a bit overdone.

(AY) 14.9%

Drink 2023 – 2028

\$90 RRP

## Wentworth, Nash Mill Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley 16.5

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*A mix of clones 115, 667, 943 and a little Pommard 5 fermented with ambient yeasts and 35% whole clusters. Aged for 11 months in 45% new, 27.5% second-fill and 27.5% neutral barrels. Racked twice. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. 183 cases produced.*

Smells of brown sugar, cranberries and cherries. Flavours of cranberry and raspberry mix with dried herbs and dried citrus peel. Powdery, fleecy tannins coat the mouth as dried herbs and dried flowers linger in the finish. Excellent acidity. (AY) 13%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$78 RRP

## Williams Selyem, Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir 2021 Anderson Valley 17

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*Boonville neighbourhood. A mix of clones: Pommard (UCD4), 115, 777, 667, 943 and 'Romanée-Conti selection'. Aged for 16 months in 60% new, 40% second-use barrels. 1,000 cases produced.*

Smells of brown sugar and cherry fruit. Flavours of cherry and raspberry mix with sour cherry and dried herbs. Fresh herbal notes emerge on the palate as faintly fleecy tannins coat the mouth. Excellent acidity and a nice freshness linger in the finish.

Pretty and very tasty. (AY) 14.1%

Drink 2023 – 2029

\$75 RRP