

International Pinot Noir Tasting

Every year at the Winewise Small Vigneron Awards, we conduct an international tasting. This year it was pinot noir's turn. As usual, all the wines were poured blind for the ten Small Vigneron Awards judges. When all the scores were in, this was the order of preference.

2016 Charteris Central Otago Pinot Noir Although there are four ★★★★★ wines listed, this one was irresistible to most judges, with eight out of ten awarding gold medal scores. It's complex and perfumed, showing red fruits aromas and flavours, and hinting at rhubarb and violets. The oak is beautifully handled and the tannins are delightfully silky. (No longer available) ★★★★★

2016 Felton Road Calvert Central Otago Pinot Noir Stems input adds subtle complexity to the vibrant dark cherry, spicy nose. The tannins are firm but fine, supporting flavour of considerable length. Well worth cellaring. (\$80.00) ★★★★★

<https://www.boccaccio.com.au/buy/felton-rd-calvert-pinot-noir-2016/1629>

2016 Bindi Block 5 Pinot Noir The fragrant strawberry nose offers hints of cinnamon and tilled earth. Very fine tannins feature on a long, supple, satisfying palate. (\$110.00) ★★★★★

<http://www.bottegasca.com.au/prod1045.htm>

2016 Ata Rangi Martinborough Pinot Noir A silky-textured pinot with red berry/redcurrant characteristics and positive herbal overtones. Excellent oak handling reflects the skilful crafting of this wine. Cellar five years and more. (\$80.00) ★★★★★

<https://www.winestar.com.au/mycart?ts=1575940188451991>

2016 Moorooduc Estate Garden Vineyard Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir This is a very seductive pinot in which the perfumed red berry fruit is enhanced by subtle whole-bunch herbal notes and hints of Indian spices. The tannins are firm, but fine and balanced. Give it time. (\$60.00) ★★★★★☆

<https://www.moorooducestate.com.au/product/2016-garden-pinot-noir/>

2016 Echezeaux grand cru (Domaine des Perdrix) The first of the French wines, from an illustrious vineyard, is no slouch. But for the obvious oak, it would have been even further up the list. The palate is powerful and of prodigious length, but it's quite firm, and needs several years to show its best. (\$462.00) ★★★★★☆

<https://www.winesquare.com.au/2016-dm-des-perdrix-echezeaux-grand-cru-cote-de-nuits-burgundy.html>

2015 Nautilus Southern Valleys Pinot Noir The dark cherry characteristics are greatly enhanced by hints of dried and green herbs, spices and even bacon/meaty overtones. Although quite firm, the tannins are integrated and balanced. (\$37.00) ★★★★★☆

<https://www.winesquare.com.au/2015-nautilus-estate-southern-valley-pinot-noir-marlborough.html>

2016 Latricieres-Chambertin grand cru (Joseph Faiveley) Another one where the oak is very much to the fore. The varietal aroma and flavour are fresh and powerful, but the firmness of the palate holds this wine back at the moment. Cellar. (\$386.00) ★★★★★

2016 Burn Cottage Central Otago Pinot Noir This fragrantly aromatic wine seduces by scent. Although the palate is appealingly silky, it just tapers off a little. (\$80.00) ★★★★★

2015 Gevrey Chambertin Cazetiers (Domaine Louis Jadot) A wine of substance, with abundant dark cherry aroma and flavour. It's quite unevolved and needs time for the firm structure to soften. (\$230.00) ★★★★★

2015 Gevrey Chambertin 1er Cru (Denis Mortet) A substantial wine in which meaty overtones add complexity to the red fruits. The palate is quite tannic, but plush and balanced. (\$324.00) ★★★★★

2016 Littorai Wendling Vineyard Block E Anderson Valley Pinot Noir This Californian pinot is very perfumed and bright. The attractive fruit doesn't quite run the full length of the palate, but still offers considerable drinking pleasure. (\$169.00) ★★★★★

2016 Ashton Hills Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir The colour is light and there's some early development, but this wine offers complexity and floral prettiness. The palate is balanced but lacks a little in substance. (\$50.00) ★★★★★

2016 Onannon Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir There's plenty of varietal intensity here, but also a hint of mintiness. The toasty oak is quite prominent but there's no shortage of intensity. (\$40.00) ★★★★★

2016 Mount Mary Yarra Valley Pinot Noir A firm, but richly flavoured, pinot with spearmint overtones and oak which is prominent at this stage. (\$149.00) ★★★★★☆

2016 Volnay Champans 1er cru (Marquis d'Angerville) Comparatively deep colour. A solid, flavoursome wine with chewy tannins. (\$280.00) ★★★★★☆

2015 Le Corton (Bouchard Père) Shows medicinal/animal Brettanomyces and is very hard on the palate. (\$230.00) ★☆

2016 Bass Phillip Premium Pinot Noir Cloudy and volatile. (\$199.00) ★☆

2016 Pommard Rugiens (Heitz Lochardet) Strong "horsey" Brettanomyces. (\$197.00) ★

Game, set and match to the kiwis this time.

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