

13 Exciting Oregon Pinot Noirs

New reviews of Willamette Valley Pinots from the stellar 2012 vintage



Print this page

Mike Haverkate

Photo by: Mike Haverkate

Stoller capitalized on the tremendous 2012 vintage with an outstanding Dundee Hills Reserve.

Augustus Weed

Posted: January 9, 2015

◀ 22

◀ 17



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

The 2012 Pinot Noirs are some of the most compelling wines to come out of Oregon, rivaling the outstanding 2008s for overall quality. The vintage began with a cool spring that reduced yields, and temperatures remained consistently warm throughout the summer, producing Pinots that are dark in color, with rich fruit flavors. The ripeness of the grapes was balanced by ample natural acidity, giving the wines depth and presence without losing Pinot's characteristic finesse.

This selection includes Pinots from multiple subappellations in the Willamette Valley, showing how successful the vintage was across the board.

A recent addition to the Yamhill-Carlton AVA is Angela Estate, founded by Kentucky horse breeder Antony Beck, whose family started Graham Beck in South Africa. Beck established the winery in 2006 and produces single-vineyard Pinot Noirs from his Angela Estate and Abbot Claim vineyards in Yamhill-Carlton. Winemaker Ken Wright originally planted Abbott Claim in 2001 on an east-west oriented ridgeline of sedimentary rock called Savannah Ridge. Wright produces the wines for Angela Estate.

There are plenty of other enticing options here, including a duo from Omero, located in the Ribbon Ridge appellation. Saffron Fields makes a strong showing, and Napa's Cornerstone launched its Oregon project in 2008 as a collaboration between owner Craig Camp and winemaker Tony Rynders.

BENTON-LANE Pinot Noir Willamette Valley First Class 2012 Score: 92 | \$60

Light and vibrant, offering effusive flavors of currant and plum on a polished frame. Remains focused and expressive, with a touch of mineral as the finish lingers. Drink now through 2020. 727 cases made.—H.S.

ANGELA Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Abbott Claim 2012 Score: 91 | \$60

This earthy style plays a woody, coffee and spice character against a core of black cherry, lingonberry and licorice flavors. The finish lingers against firm yet unobtrusive tannins. Best from 2017 through 2022. 1,300 cases made.—H.S.

ATTICUS Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Atticus Vineyard 2012 Score: 91 | \$46

Polished and expressive, on a light, lithe frame, offering ripe cherry and spice flavors, plus hints of mint and mineral as the finish lingers gently. Drink now through 2022. 125 cases made.—H.S.

CORNERSTONE Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Stepping Stone Cuvée 2012 Score: 91 | \$30

Ripe and velvety, with toast and root beer overtones to the blackberry and dried cherry flavors, lingering against refined tannins. Should benefit from cellaring. Best from 2016 through 2022. 500 cases made.—H.S.

OMERO Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills 2012 Score: 91 | \$38

Lively, fresh and inviting, brimming with blackberry, plum and loamy earth flavors. This finishes with hints of white chocolate and sweet spices. Shows depth and harmony on a taut frame. Best from 2016 through 2022. 150 cases made.—H.S.

OMERO Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2012 Score: 91 | \$28

A firm grip of fine tannins holds the dark berry fruit, but the flavors bounce back and sail merrily into the long finish, showing presence and intensity. Best from 2017 through 2022. 1,600 cases made.—H.S.

ANDREW RICH Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Prelude 2012 Score: 91 | \$23

Fresh and expressive, with pretty plum and currant fruit at the core, shaded by hints of cream and spice as the finish lingers delicately. This has presence and delicacy. Drink now through 2022. 1,450 cases made.—H.S.

SAFFRON FIELDS Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District 2012 Score: 91 | \$55

Gritty tannins underlie generous ripe cherry and floral flavors, turning toward black tea and rose petal notes as the finish lingers. Will benefit from time in the cellar. Best from 2017 through 2022. 365 cases made.—H.S.

SAFFRON FIELDS Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District Dijon Clones 2012 Score: 91 | \$48

Ripe, round and inviting, with fine tannins around a plush core of black cherry, licorice and smoke. The finish comes together harmoniously, with length and presence. Drink now through 2020. 196 cases made.—H.S.

TWELVE Pinot Noir Yamhill-Carlton District 2012 Score: 91 | \$30

Crisp and spicy, sharply focused and balanced, with lively acidity under a core of cherry, fresh leather and white pepper flavors, lingering against refined tannins. Best from 2016 through 2020. 650 cases made.—H.S.

Z'IVO Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills 2012 Score: 91 | \$40

Sleek and vibrant, with floral and beet overtones to red berry and plum notes. Shows presence and pretty flavors that linger. Drink now through 2020. 990 cases made.—H.S.

LANGE Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2012 Score: 90 | \$24

A lovely halo of spicy plum and boysenberry fruit floats around a light, focused structure of fine

tannins and lively acidity, dancing deftly through a juicy finish. Best from 2016 through 2020. 4,036 cases made.—*H.S.*

STOLLER Pinot Noir Dundee Hills Reserve 2012 Score: 90 | \$45

Focused, ripe and generous, with black cherry, licorice and spice flavors wrapped in a thick layer of gentle tannins. The flavors push through on the long finish. Best from 2016 through 2020. 2,300 cases made.—*H.S.*



See Also



December 22, 2016

13 Impressive South Australia Rhône Reds

December 19, 2016

8 International Bubbliies

December 15, 2016

8 White Burgundy Finds Under \$50

December 12, 2016

11 Rhône-Style California Reds

December 8, 2016

12 Red and White Value Wines from Chile

See all from Tasting Highlights