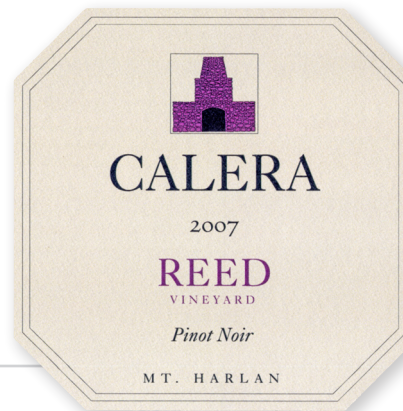
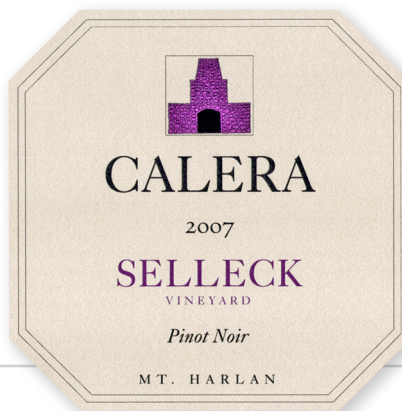


# Ranked 1 & 2 Out of 835 Pinot Noirs!



YEAR'S BEST PINOT NOIR

## YEAR'S BEST PINOT NOIR

Our blind panels tasted **835** new-release North American pinot noirs over the past 12 months. Our critics rated **119** as exceptional (90+) and **63** as Best Buys. **Joshua Greene** reviews California wines and **Patrick J. Comiskey** reviews New York and Oregon wines. Find a complete list of wines tasted and all reviews at [wineandspiritsmagazine.com](http://wineandspiritsmagazine.com).

# 96

CALIFORNIA

**96 | Calera** \$75  
**2007 Mt. Harlan Selleck Vineyard Pinot Noir** In 1975, Josh Jensen planted the Selleck Vineyard on Mt. Harlan, a rocky, south-to southwest-facing slope where he found more limestone in the soil than in his other vineyard sites. The exposition lends this wine more concentration than Reed (recommended below), shown in the depth of color, darker fruit tone and grip of the mineral-inflected tannins. Transparent and vinous rather than directly fruity, this hints at woodland cherries and *fraises des bois*. There's a purity and honesty to the flavors that are rare in the New World and increasingly difficult to find in the Old. Both the Selleck and Reed '07s are magnificent California wines, suited to long aging. (411 cases) *Calera Wine Company, Hollister, CA*

rose adds to the fragrance of the fruit and to the essence of the wine overall. The flavors clear, lively and delicious, particularly salad of duck confit. (W&S, 6/10; 510 cases) *Keller Estate, Petaluma, CA*

**Baxter** \$45  
**Anderson Valley Run Dog Vineyard Pinot Noir** Rose and spice scents brighten the wine's delicate forest berry flavors. It is natural and finely ripe, a point at which the fruit has freshness, structure and grip power. This is classic Anderson Valley Pinot, from an acre of Pommard clone on an east-facing hillside. A delicious companion to roast duck. (W&S, 12/10; 75 cases) *Baxter Winery, Elk, CA*

**Bjornstad** \$40  
**Sonoma Coast Hellenthal Vineyard Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Gard Hellenthal originally planted his vineyard near Fort Ross in the early 1980s. Greg Bjornstad convinced him when he planted an additional five acres in 2000. Later, Bjornstad launched his own label in 2005, focused on far-pinot noir, including Hellenthal's new vineyard, where the coastal winds seem to blow any weight off the bright red and sour cherry flavors of this wine: They're transparent and ethereal. A resinous character grounds the tannins and a floral flavor lasts. Serve this with grilled steak and roasted hedgehog mushrooms. (W&S, 6/10; 152 cases) *Bjornstad Cellars, Rosa, CA*

Maria bench. The mix of clonal selections yields layers of meaty flavor, the tannin complex and dynamic, the ripe cherry fruit intermingling with the structure and lending transparency to the finish. There's a gloss to the flavors, a graceful finesse that belies the wine's power. The structure is substantial enough to match *rogons de veau* with mushrooms. (165 cases) *Cambria Winery & Vineyard, Santa Maria, CA*



**93 | Drew** \$40  
**2009 Anderson Valley Fog-Eater Pinot Noir (Best Buy)** Jason Drew blended this '09 from Balo and Monument Tree, two vineyards near Philo. The fruit provides cool, direct flavors as well as veils of complexity, like the coastal fog referenced in the name. This is a fresh, fragrant pinot from the Deep End of the Anderson Valley, an elegant wine with the feel of quilted silk. The finish grows with earthiness and tickles with high-toned scents of rose. Decant it for roast duck. (370 cases) *Drew Family Cellars, Elk, CA*

# 95

**95 | Calera** \$50  
**2007 Mt. Harlan Reed Vineyard Pinot Noir** Pinot noir vines like limestone and they've found it on Mt. Harlan, the site of a 19th century limestone quarry. The vines at Reed, a 4.4-acre vineyard planted in 1975, grow on a north- to northeast-facing hillside and are among the last to ripen at Calera. That soil and exposition create a wine of delicate power, its complex aroma touching on fennel seed, tarragon and wild raspberries. The fresh herbal character smells like the hillsides of Mt. Harlan, while the tannic structure is marked by the limestone soils. A trumpet blare of terroir, this is an awesome wine. (190 cases) *Calera Wine Company, Hollister, CA*



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**93 | Hanzell** \$95  
**2007 Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir** Savory woodland mushroom scents lend a sense of mystery to this wine, its flavors ranging from meat to minerals. There's nothing directly fruity about it. Dark in tone but not dense.

# Wine & Spirits

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