

James Laube Unfined

A Back Label That Fills in the Facts

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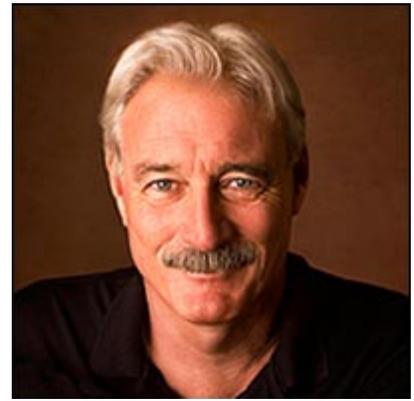


Photo By: Greg Gorman

Last night for dinner, I opened a bottle of 2003 **Calera Pinot Noir Mills Vineyard (92 points, \$45)**. As I poured a glass, a couple of thoughts crossed my mind.

Calera used to make one of the ripest styles of Pinot Noir in California, so much so that I once described them as ultraripe bordering on jammy. No more. There are far riper, darker, fuller-bodied Pinots made these days, but **Calera's 03 is delightfully elegant and stylish. It's one of the best wines from Calera I've had in a while.** (Owner Josh Jensen, a francophile who began planting this site in the 1970s, bottles four other single-vineyard Pinots from his San Benito property—Jensen, Selleck, Reed and Ryan.)



CALERA

As I held the bottle, I noticed the back label, and **Calera's back labels are the most informative I can think of.** Aside from the obvious (vintage, appellation, vineyard), there's a map of Calera's Mount Harlan vineyard, with its size (14.4 acres). Then it gets into greater detail, with the predominate geology (limestone), average elevation (2,200 feet) and exact location from San Francisco (90 miles).

It lists the total number of vines (10,575), spacing (6 feet by 10 feet), vines per acre (726), year planted (1984), rootstock (own-rooted), 17-year average crop yield, 1987 through 2003, (1.30 tons per acre) and then hectoliters of wine per hectare of vineyard (19.5), so you don't have to calculate the translation.

Next, time of harvest (Sept. 22-30), tons harvested (12.26), tons per acre (.80), average ripeness (27.1 sugar), followed by fermentation info (native yeasts), barrel aging (16 months in 60-gallon French barrels, 30 percent new), malolactic fermentation (100 percent) and filtration (none).

Last, Jensen provides the bottling date (Feb. 24, 2005), quantities bottled in 750 ml. (9,312 bottles), half-bottles (1,200), magnums (42) and jeroboams (7), which all add up to 835 full cases (12 times 750 ml bottles).

Informative? Yes. Excessive? At points. Useful? Definitely. Missing anything? Yes, pH ...

American wine drinkers may be geekier when it comes to this kind of numerical/statistical data. You don't see this depth of information on the back labels of most imported wines, though I would like to see some of this data, especially varietal breakdowns for wines that are blends, whether they're super Tuscan or Bordeaux. —J.L.

2003
MILLS VINEYARD
MT. HARLAN
PINOT NOIR

The wine in this bottle is exclusively from Pinot Noir grapes grown in Calera's 14.4 acre Mills Vineyard in 2003.



PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY
CALERA WINE COMPANY
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American Viticultural Area (AVA): Mt. Harlan Mountain Range: Gavilan Mountain
County: San Benito
Region: California's Central Coast
Predominant geology: Limestone
Average Elevation: 2,200 feet above sea level
Vineyard location: 9 miles south of Hollister, 90 miles south of San Francisco, 25 miles east (inland) of Monterey / Carmel

Owned by: Calera Wine Company
Number of vines: 10,575 (100% Pinot Noir)
Vine spacing: 6' x 10'
Vines per acre: 726
Exposure of slope: South/Southwest
Year planted: 1984
Rootstock: Own-rooted (Pinot Noir)
17-year average crop yield (1987 through 2003)
1.30 tons per acre (19.5 hectolitres of wine per hectare of vineyard)

2003 Mills Vineyard Harvest Data
Dates of harvest: September 22-30
Tons harvested: 12.26
Tons per acre: 0.80
Average ripeness: 27.1% sugar

2003 Mills Vineyard Winemaking Data
Fermentation: Native yeasts
Barrel Aging: 16 months in 60-gallon French barrels (30% new)
Malolactic fermentation: 100%
Filtration: None

Date of bottling: February 24, 2005
Quantities bottled:
9,312 bottles (750ml)
1,200 half-bottles (375ml)
42 magnums (1.5L)
7 jeroboams (3L)
= 835 full-case (12x750ml) equivalents

ALC. BY VOL. 14.5% 750 ML