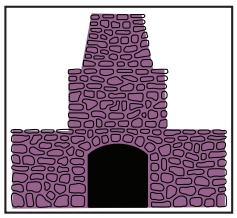
JOHN TILSON • 9/15/14

Calera Is On A Roll!

I recently visited Calera Vineyards where I tasted a range of wines including all the estate Pinot Noirs from 2011 (which were bottled in April-May of last year with some released now and the others to be released later in the year), 2012 (which were bottled in April-May of this year and will be released beginning in January of next year through September), and 2013 (which are in barrel and not yet blended and will be bottled in April-May of next year). The 2011 vintage was characterized by a cool year and a small crop. The 2012 year produced an above average crop. The 2013 year was the third year of the drought and produced a crop about 30% less than 2012 with lots of sun and perfectly ripe grapes. The three vintages were all quite different, but the one common denominator is that they all produced gorgeous wines. Make no mistake, *Calera is on a roll!*

Below are notes on the 2011, 2012, and 2013 Mt. Harlan Pinot Noirs as well as the 2013 Mt. Harlan Chardonnay and Viognier. I tasted with winemaker Mike Waller who had told me on my last visit that 2011 was his favorite vintage. Now he is in a bit of a quandary as the 2012s are evolving beautifully and the 2013s may prove to be even better. What a dilemma! No question, these are great vintages for Calera and these are wines to buy!



CALERA

~ BOTTLE ~

2011

These 2011s were tasted from barrel on my last visit. The Ryan Vineyard was the only one that was blended at that time. It was beautiful and has lived up to expectations. The same is true of all the 2011s. These 2011s are very expressive and pure wines with a lot of character and style. They will age beautifully.

2011 Calera Pinot Noir de Villiers Vineyard Mt. Harlan

Deep color with a gorgeous floral perfume this is a Pinot Noir of great style and breed. It has lovely pure fruit and is finesseful and elegant with great balance and a lot of charm. OUTSTANDING

2011 Calera Pinot Noir Ryan Vineyard Mt. Harlan

With a deep color this Pinot Noir has a lovely floral tinged berry perfume. It has lots of bright fruit and is very pure with a nice structure showing an underlying crispness. This is very attractive now and will soften and evolve with time. OUTSTANDING

2011 Calera Pinot Noir Mills Vineyard Mt. Harlan

This wine has a deep color and a lovely perfume with berry fruit and a touch of spice. It has very good definition and very pure fruit that is balanced by a nice crispness. This is a wine that should age beautifully. OUTSTANDING

2011 Calera Pinot Noir Reed Vineyard Mt. Harlan

With a deep color this wine has a gorgeous spice tinged perfume and lots of supple fruit showing a faint exotic nuance. It is very elegant and flavorful with beautiful balance and lots of depth. OUTSTANDING PLUS

2011 Calera Pinot Noir Jensen Vineyard Mt. Harlan

This is a really gorgeous Pinot Noir that is very forward and open. There is a stunning floral perfume with hints of cherry and the wine has lots of very supple fruit with a floral nuance. It is voluptuous and seductive with a lot of charm and early appeal, yet it will age beautifully for many years. OUTSTANDING PLUS

2011 Calera Pinot Noir Selleck Vineyard Mt. Harlan

This is a really gorgeous Pinot Noir that is destined for a very long life. It has a deep color and a great floral tinged berry perfume. Well structured with lots of depth, fruit, and flavor, this is a wine of great purity and style. OUTSTANDING PLUS

2012

The production in 2012 was up from reduced levels of 2011. The wines are characterized by intense and beautifully rounded fruit. Tasted from barrel last year along with the 2011s the wines showed tremendous potential. The 2012s were bottled in April-May and are already very expressive, but they also have the structure and balance to age for an extended period of time. They will be released over the course of next year from January through September. This is clearly an exceptional vintage.

2012 Calera Pinot Noir de Villiers Vineyard Mt. Harlan

Dark in color this Pinot Noir exhibits a deep perfume of spice tinged plums and berries. It has great fruit and is supple and rounded with good underlying structure and a lovely finish. OUTSTANDING

2012 Calera Pinot Noir Ryan Vineyard Mt. Harlan

Dark in color this wine has a deep berry perfume with a tinge of floral spice. It has lots of rich supple fruit and is rounded and very flavorful. Already very appealing, this is a wine that should age beautifully. OUTSTANDING

2012 Calera Pinot Noir Mills Vineyard Mt. Harlan

Deep in color with a lovely floral tinged perfume this wine has a lot of charm. It is supple and rounded with lots of fruit and is beautifully balanced. OUTSTANDING

2012 Calera Pinot Noir Reed Vineyard Mt. Harlan

Deep in color with a lovely berry tinged floral perfume this Pinot Noir is loaded with lush supple fruit and is very forward. A wine of great style and balance this should drink beautifully for many years. OUTSTANDING

2012 Calera Pinot Noir Jensen Vineyard Mt. Harlan

Voluptuous is the best single adjective for this wine. It is deep in color and has a stunning perfume showing berry fruit intermingled with floral spice. It has great fruit and is supple and rounded with a lot of depth and richness. Beautifully balanced, this is really delicious. EXTRAORDINARY

2012 Calera Pinot Noir Selleck Vineyard Mt. Harlan

Wow! Dark in color this wine has a stunningly complex perfume showing a myriad of fruits with floral spice notes and a faint exotic tinge. It has great intensity with lots of rich supple fruit and is balanced with a good underlying structure. This should age effortlessly for many years. EXTRAORDINARY

~ BARREL ~

The year 2013 had lower yields than 2012 and was characterized by lots of sun and perfectly ripe grapes. None of the Pinot Noirs were blended at the time of my visit. What I tasted was a blend of what is most likely to represent the final blend. And, like the previous vintages, the wines were most impressive and very much along the lines of the 2012s. They should be very special. I also tasted the Mt. Harlan Chardonnay and Viognier. Both were in holding tanks and ready to be bottled. They are both gorgeous wines.

2013 Calera Pinot Noir de Villiers Vineyard Mt. Harlan
Dark in color. Deep perfume. Brimming with fruit and has great structure and intensity.

2013 Calera Pinot Noir Ryan Vineyard Mt. Harlan
Dark in color. Lovely berry perfume. Bright fruit with a nice crispness. Flavorful with good structure.

2013 Calera Pinot Noir Mills Vineyard Mt. Harlan
Dark color. Deep floral berry perfume. Great fruit and intensity. Long finish. Very impressive.

2013 Calera Pinot Noir Reed Vineyard Mt. Harlan
Dark color. Lovely spice tinged perfume. Very seductive and beautifully balanced. Lots of flavor. Delicious.

2013 Calera Pinot Noir Jensen Vineyard Mt. Harlan
Deep color. Great floral perfume. Rounded. Lots of rich fruit. Firm underlying structure. Great style.

2013 Calera Pinot Noir Selleck Vineyard Mt. Harlan
Dark color. Stunning perfume. Packed with fruit and flavor. Beautifully balanced. Very impressive.

2013 Calera Chardonnay Mt. Harlan
Light yellow gold in color with a floral perfume showing hints of citrus, peach, and faint hints of exotic fruit, this is an impressive Chardonnay. It has lots of fruit with citrus tinges and a very faint exotic nuance and is balanced and very flavorful.
OUTSTANDING PLUS POTENTIAL

2013 Calera Viognier Mt. Harlan
Light yellow in color this Viognier has a lot of character. The perfume is subtle with floral nuances and hints of melon and the wine is bright and crisp with very pure floral tinged fruit. Everything is in perfect harmony here. This is a delicious Viognier with a lot of class.
OUTSTANDING POTENTIAL

What a line up! As I said earlier, Calera is on a roll!! Many of these wines will be going into my cellar and I advise you to put some in your cellar as well. The limited production Calera Mt. Harlan wines are in selected retail outlets and available from the winery.