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California Pinot Noir An Appellation Adventure

Our May tasting asks the question "what is all the fuss about?" Pursuant to the "Sideways" phenomenon, "we don't want no Merlot," we are hunting for a clear expression of California Pinot. We've avoided the 15%+ alcohol fruit bombs that dominate warmer climate expressions and collected some cooler appellation wines that show various winemaking styles. We'll sniff around the Russian River, Mendocino, Sonoma Coast, Calera, Santa Maria Valley, the Santa Lucia Highlands and nearby Mount Harlan. Though the Pinot model of Burgundy is only partly maritime driven (most of the cool climate nature is latitude driven) California Pinots are truly maritime influenced. They are planted in valleys that are shrouded in the morning by cool Pacific fog. The long frost-free growing seasons allow for full physiological ripeness and ripe complex fruit flavours with a spine of fine acidity.

From north to south, our featured wines are the 2007 Belle Glos Weir Vineyard, Mendocino, 2007 Siduri Sonoma Coast Keefer Ranch, Russian River, 2007 Siduri Pinot Noir, Santa Lucia Highlands, 2007 Testarossa "Palazzio", 2005 Calera Jensen and Mills Vineyards in Mount Harlan AVA, Sanctuary, Bien Nacido Vineyard from Santa Maria Valley and a blend, the 2007 Belle Glos, Meiomi.

The Burgundy model is held in great esteem by Calera winery whose limestone terroir is a sometimes mirror of the soils of the Cote d' Or. An old limestone quarry near Mount Harlan in San Benito County at 650 meters above sea level is the cool climate site for Calaera vineyards. Calera use the usual Dijon Pinot Noir Clones 667, 777, 114 and some Pommard 2a. This clonal mix is typical of all our California Pinots with the exception of the Pommard that is used sparingly. Despite the usual signature profile that can be best described as cherry- red berry and spice driven, the 2005 Calera Jensen and Mills vineyards wines from this winery are considered the most Burgundian in structure. Nearby are the famous vineyards of the Santa Lucia highlands on the west slope of the Salinas Valley whose pinots are known for rich black cherry fruit flavours. The winemakers of Siduri, (Diana and Adam Lee), Testarossa and Belle Glos (James Wagner from Caymus) exploit these attributes to create luscious, rich, dense black-fruit flavoured Pinot Noir. Further south near Santa Barbara lies the famous Bien Nacido Vineyard is the Santa Maria highlands appellation. This is a terroir best described as a maritime influenced desert whose ripe fruit retains acidity while exhibiting ripe, plummy- berry flavours. The 2006 Sanctuary, Bien Nacido Vineyard Pinot is a rare private label wine vinted in Hopland by Fetzer winemaker Dennis Martin. The wines closest geographically to Hopland are the Belle Glos Weir Vineyard, Mendocino and the, 2007 Siduri Keefer Ranch, Russian River. Elegant Pinot flavours are the signatures of both these wine that are dramatically influenced by the cool Pacific fogs that blanket the valleys every morning in the growing season. A more universal (aka yummy) style is exhibited by the Belle Glos, Meiomi that uses fruit from many California appellations..

As always with our tastings, this event will be strictly non-smoking, and we request your cooperation in not wearing any scented after-shave or perfume.

Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2010
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Limit: 122 people

North York Memorial Community Hall
5110 Yonge St. (under library)
North York Centre Subway

Cancellations accepted up to May 7, 2010 —David Hutchison (416-690-0281 evenings). **No reservations by phone, please.** No confirmations will be issued—you will be contacted only if we are sold out. First come basis. Non-members may attend at guest rates, but preference will be given to members.

You can register online with a credit card at www.winetasters.ca, or send in this form, with a check:

Tear and Enclose _____

Cheque payable to:
Winetasters of Toronto
c/o Dave Hutchison
270 Glen Manor Drive West
Toronto, Ontario
M4E 2Y2

Names: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ W (_____) _____

Cheque Enclosed for:

Members @ 41.00 each _____
Guests @ 50.00 each _____

Yes, I wish to sit at a New Members Table
with an expert to answer my questions.

Total _____

