

a trace of sulfur; medium-full body; slightly tart, earthy, toasty, muted cherry fruit flavors that are rough and fall a bit flat on the finish; medium-full tannin; slightly lingering aftertaste. *13.5% alcohol; 5,000 cases; blended with 3% Syrah; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 15.4, 0/0/0; My Score: 16 [82/100], twelfth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6] [7, 8, 9, 10, 11] [12]

## PINOT NOIR More New Releases



1. **2008 Patz & Hall**, "Gap's Crown," Sonoma Coast (\$70) – Medium-light to medium ruby color; attractive, intense, complex, cranberry and red cherry aroma with notes of clove, cinnamon, and mocha; medium-full to full body; forward, rich plummy, elegant, spicy, cherry and berry fruit flavors with a touch of clove and hints of nutmeg and saffras; well balanced and structured; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows distinctive varietal character. Very highly recommended. *14.2% alcohol; 124 cases; 100% Pinot Noir (PN); released April 2010.* (Group Score: 16.5 of 20 points, 3 of 13 first-place votes/2 seconds/4 thirds; My Score: 17 [91 of 100 points], second place)

2. **2008 Patz & Hall**, "Pisoni Vineyard," Santa Lucia Highlands (\$80) – Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, intense, plummy, cherry and red berry fruit aroma with spicy notes and a trace of charred oak; medium-full to full body; forward, plush, plummy, ripe cherry and strawberry fruit flavors with notable richness, and overtones of sweet oak; nicely balanced with firm acidity; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.9% alcohol; 589 cases; 100% PN; released September 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4, 3/2/1; My Score: 17 [91/100], first place)

3. **2008 Ken Brown**, Sta. Rita Hills (\$38) – Light to medium-light ruby; attractive, earthy, slightly stemmy, cherry fruit aroma with toasty notes and a hint of cocoa; medium-full body; initially plush, forward, ripe black cherry and blackberry fruit flavors that are nicely balanced and have a hint of cola and a velvety mouthfeel; medium to medium-full tannin; a bit drying on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; 363 cases; 100% PN; released March 2011.* (Group Score: 16.2, 3/2/2; My Score: 17 [90/100], third place)

4. **2008 Ortman Family Vineyards**, "Turner Vineyard," Sta. Rita Hills (\$40) – Medium-light ruby; attractive, spicy, herbal, black cherry and raspberry fruit aroma with overtones of vanilla; medium-full body; sharp, spicy, red berry fruit flavors with hints of cinnamon and saffras; medium to medium-full tannin; tight, slightly tart finish; lingering aftertaste. Shows some complexity though could use a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.5% alcohol; only 85 cases; 100% PN; released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 2/2/1; My Score: 17 [90/100], fourth place)

5. **2008 Robert Mondavi Winery**, "Reserve," Napa Valley (\$60) – Medium-light ruby; attractive, medium-light, spicy, toasty, candied cherry fruit aroma with touches of clove and sandalwood; medium to medium-full body; forward, well balanced, raspberry and cherry fruit flavors that are rather elegant though appearing a bit simple; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. 60% of grapes from Rancho Carneros Vineyard and 40% from Hyde Vineyard. Highly recommended. *15.2% alcohol; 1,300 cases; 100% PN; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.2, 0/3/4; My Score: 16.5 [88/100], seventh place)

6. **2008 Inception**, Santa Barbara County (\$25) – Medium-light brickish ruby; pleasant, restrained, spicy, sweet cherry fruit aroma; medium-full body; plush, elegant, well balanced, raspberry and cherry fruit flavors; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Good value. Highly recommended. *14.8% alcohol; 1,000 cases; 100% PN; released April 2010.* (Group Score: 16.1, 0/2/1; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], fifth place)

7. **2008 Patz & Hall**, "Hyde Vineyard," Carneros (\$55) – Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, spicy, Bing cherry and red berry fruit aroma with a hint of cola; medium-full body; plush, plummy, ripe cherry fruit flavors with undertones of creamy oak; medium-full tannin; slightly tart on the finish; lingering aftertaste. Highly recommended. *15.2% alcohol; 628 cases; 100% PN; released October 2010.* (Group Score: 16.0, 2/0/0; My Score: 16.5 [89/100], sixth place)

8. **2008 Davis Bynum**, Russian River Valley (\$35) – Medium-light to medium ruby; oaky, stemmy, cherry fruit aroma; medium-full body; tight, rough, cranberry and cherry fruit flavors with an astringent, hard edge on the finish; lingering aftertaste. *14.9% alcohol; 3,785 cases; 100% PN; released August 2010.* (Group Score: 15.6, 0/0/0; My Score: 16 [82/100], eighth place)

True Ranking: [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7] [8]

## PINOT NOIR More New Releases



1. **2008 Eric Kent Wine Cellars**, "Stiling Vineyard," Russian River Valley (\$42) – Medium-light to medium ruby color; attractive, spicy, elegant, slightly stemmy, red berry fruit aroma with hints of clove, rhubarb, and vanilla; medium-full to full body; forward, rich, plush, plummy, strawberry and cherry fruit flavors; well balanced and structured with bright acidity; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very appealing to taste now though deserving a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. *14.7% alcohol; 351 cases; 100% Pinot Noir (PN); released Fall 2010.* (Group Score: 16.4 of 20 points, 4 of 12 first-place votes/2 seconds/4 thirds; My Score: 17 [91 of 100 points], first place)

2. **2008 Williams Selyem**, "Vista Verde Vineyard," San Benito County (\$54) – Medium-light ruby; attractive, floral, sweet Bing cherry and red berry fruit aroma with hints of rhubarb, cinnamon, and vanilla; medium-full body; initially plush, herbal, cherry and red berry fruit flavors with a silky