

# PINOTREPORT

PASSIONATE ABOUT WESTERN PINOT NOIR

ISSUE NO. 104

www.pinotreport.com

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**WINNER**

James Beard Award For  
Newsletter Writing

## When Should I Drink This?...

**THE DAYS OF BUYING A CASE OF WINE AND PUTTING IT AWAY FOR 10 YEARS ARE OVER.** This is especially true with Pinot Noir. Your wine collection is a living thing, and the wines are changing all the time. You need to keep track of those wines. Here are some of my notes on recent vintages.

**The 2013 vintage.** A lot of these wines have been released and are available now. Most of them are a little leaner and more angular than the 2012s but for those 2013s you do have now, I would try a bottle and see where they are now. This will give you a benchmark for where they will go and I think that they will be really good.

**The 2012 vintage.** There were many really great wines here in this vintage, but many of them have changed since their release. A lot of them have since gone into a “dumb” phase where their flavors seem suppressed and not so great. If you have wines like this, don’t panic, but try them in six months or so and see where they are.

**The 2011 vintage.** These were really lean, pretty and aromatic wines. but there really wasn’t much in the way of stuffing or structure in them. If you have a lot of these wines, I would taste through them and drink those up that are ready.

**The 2010 and earlier vintages.** If you have a lot of these wines, again I would be looking at drinking them (other than really special wines) up sooner rather than later.

### A Note To My Winery Readers

Effective immediately I have changed the shipping address for samples to PinotReport, as I have had to move my offices. Any shipments in the future must be first authorized by email from PinotReport and you will receive the new shipping address in my response email. Please do not use any previous shipping addresses you might have as I will not receive the wine.

### In This Issue

This issue features new releases from producers including **Lenne Estate, Pali Wine Company, Sojourn Cellars, Tessier Winery and Testarossa Winery.**

As always, thank you for your support and I hope you enjoy this latest issue.

-- Greg Walter, editor and publisher

## IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

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### THIS ISSUE'S TASTING NOTES

All wines were tasted blind and scored before knowing anything other than that the general region they were from. My notes and comments follow.

#### Lenne Estate

Ken and Karen Lutz started Lenne in 2000 when they found the estate site near Yamhill in the Yamhill-Carlton District of the Willamette Valley. The soil was not the best, according to Steve. But the site itself was perfect in orientation and temperature and they went for it. Lenne is named for Karen's father Len who raised her on a chicken farm west of London. Len passed away in 1999 just before Steve and Karen started Lenne and prior to that helped them get started. Pinots bottled are produced under two labels: the LeNez label, and then an estate bottling as well as Jill's 115 and Karen's Pommard bottlings under the Lenne Estate label.

#### Lenne Estate

##### ***Pinot Noir Yamhil-Carlton District Karen's Pommard 2012***

Medium ruby color; shy aromas of black cherry, earth, spice and cola; full, rich, expressive black cherry and plum flavors with dark chocolate notes; velvety texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Full bodied and rich Pinot with nice, supporting tannins.

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**125 cases made      \$55      Score: 94**

#### Lenne Estate

##### ***Pinot Noir Yamhil-Carlton District Jill's 115 2012***

Medium ruby color; ripe red cherry and strawberry aromas; rich, delicious ripe red fruits with herbal and mint notes; very fine tannins; lush and silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Smooth, effortless Pinot with nice structure to match.

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**125 cases made      \$55      Score: 92**

### MAKE ROOM IN THE CELLAR!

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*"Rich and velvety..."*

#### Sojourn Cellars

##### ***Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Wohler Vineyard 2013***

Medium ruby color; deep, red cherry and strawberry aromas with light spice overtones; rich, lush cherry, plum and strawberry flavors with oak, spice and cola notes; velvety texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Rich, velvety Pinot that's about as much an example of Russian River Valley as you can get.

---

**525 cases made      \$48      Score: 95**

#### Lenne Estate

##### ***Pinot Noir Yamhil-Carlton District Estate 2012***

Medium ruby color; intriguing wild blackberry, black cherry and underbrush aromas; full, deep black cherry flavors with cocoa and herbal notes; lush texture with fine tannins; good structure and balance; long finish. Lush texture and fine tannins mark this Pinot.

---

**586 cases made      \$55      Score: 94**

#### Pali Wine Company

Tim Perr and Scott Knight, partners in an insurance and actuary consulting firm, founded Pali Wine Co. in 2005 with a group of their friends and colleagues. The winery name came from a popular nickname for Pacific Palisades, where their day jobs were based. Pali Wine Co. got off to a fast start, hiring Brian Loring as their consulting winemaker and making a string of terrific Pinots from vineyards up and down the West Coast. Pali's focus has always been on finding the best vineyard sites and representing those vineyards through vineyard-designated bottlings, including Shea Vineyard in the Willamette Valley, Windsor Oaks Vineyard in Russian River Valley, Durell Vineyard in the Sonoma Valley, Cargasacchi and Fiddlestix vineyards in Santa Rita Hills. In 2008, Pali hired Kenneth Juhasz (Auteur, The Donum Estate) to take over the winemaking reins and finished construction of a new winery facility in Lompoc, California, in the Santa Rita Hills. Kenneth is now in a consulting role and Aaron Walker is the day-to-day winemaker and has helped develop a very successful series of appellation blends priced very reasonably. Having followed the Pinots for several vintages now, Pali continues to be a winery to watch.

#### Pali Wine Company

##### ***Pinot Noir Santa Barbara County Huntington 2013***

Please see "Smart Buy!" on page 2.

### SMART BUY!

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*"Forward and ripe..."*

#### Pali Wine Company

##### ***Pinot Noir Santa Barbara County Huntington 2013***

Medium ruby color; ripe, raspberry and plum aromas with cranberry and spice notes; forward, ripe, savory raspberry, black cherry and plum flavors; lush and silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Forward and ripe Pinot with a lot of bright flavors.

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**3,861 cases made      \$22      Score: 91**

## IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

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### Pali Wine Company

#### *Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Bluffs 2013*

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Medium ruby color; deep, bright cherry aromas with earthy notes; rich cherry and raspberry flavors with earth and savory notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Earthy and savory Pinot with forward flavors.

---

**1,977 cases made     \$22     Score: 90**

### Pali Wine Company

#### *Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Summit 2013*

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Medium ruby color; rich, expressive candied Bing cherry aromas; forward spicy cherry and plum flavors, with cola and spice notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Bright, rich Pinot with expressive flavors.

---

**2,460 cases made     \$29     Score: 91**

### Sojourn Cellars

When Craig Haserot and Erich Bradley met on the tennis courts of the town of Sonoma, both were really from different worlds. Craig was a dot-com boomer and Erich was the winemaker at Audelssa Winery high in the mountains above Sonoma. Both had a passion for tennis and, they soon discovered, for great wines as well. The duo launched Sojourn Cellars to create, at first, handcrafted Cabernet Sauvignon from the mountains high above Sonoma. And while their Cabernets are terrific, their lush, deep, texture-driven Pinot Noirs are truly the big attraction for this venture and really Erich's sweet spot as a winemaker. The trio of Craig, Erich and assistant winemaker Randy Bennett really have these wines dialed in. It seems that each year I like these Pinots a little more. Sojourn Pinot bottlings include blends from Sonoma Coast and Russian River Valley, as well as vineyard designates from terrific vineyards such as Rodgers Creek Vineyard, Gap's Crown Vineyard and the Sangiacomo Vineyard. The Sojourn Cabernet Sauvignon is also a winner as is the winery's killer Chardonnay. These are amazing wines, year in and year out.

### Sojourn Cellars

#### *Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2013*

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Medium ruby color; spice-laden, wild cherry, raspberry and strawberry aromas; ripe cherry and strawberry flavors with spice notes; silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Silky and mouthfilling Pinot with complex, delicate flavors.

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**500 cases made     \$42     Score: 92**

### Sojourn Cellars

#### *Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Wohler Vineyard 2013*

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Please see "Make Room In The Cellar!" on page 2.

### Sojourn Cellars

#### *Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Campbell Ranch Vineyard 2013*

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Medium ruby color; complex, earthy cherry and plum aromas with oak notes; rich, medium bodied cherry and plum flavors with spice and oak; good structure and balance; long finish. Complex and silky Pinot with really nice structure for some age.

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**300 cases made     \$59     Score: 92**

### Sojourn Cellars

#### *Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Ridgetop Vineyard 2013*

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Medium ruby color; earthy, spiced cherry and raspberry aromas; bright, firm flavors of cherry and plum with notes of cinnamon and sandalwood; some heat and oak; good structure and balance; long finish. Structured and more intense Pinot that has nice complexity but needs some time.

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**425 cases made     \$59     Score: 91**

### Sojourn Cellars

#### *Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Silver Eagle Vineyard 2013*

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Medium ruby color; pure, red fruit aromas with spice and floral notes; well integrated flavors of plum, strawberry and cherry with floral notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Lean and well integrated Pinot with complex flavors.

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**325 cases made     \$59     Score: 93**

### Tessier Winery

Biotechnology. Protein pathways. Central nervous system diseases. These were the things that drove Kristie Tacey prior to being introduced to the world of wine and winemaking. Once that introduction had taken place, Kristie knew she'd found what she really wanted to do. Prior to launching Tessier Winery in 2009, Kristie had considerable success making Pinot Noir with Lost Canyon Winery. With Tessier she is focused on small-lot Pinot and her early bottlings have been good signs of things to come.

### Tessier Winery

#### *Pinot Noir California After Hours 2013*

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Please see "Smart Buy!" on page 4.

### Tessier Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Green Valley Morelli Lane Vineyard 2013*

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Medium-light ruby color; expressive stewed strawberry and red raspberry aromas with spicy oak, cola and cocoa notes; rich red cherry, raspberry and plum flavors with cinnamon and oak spice notes; silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Complex, spicy Pinot with nice layered flavors.

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**170 cases made     \$38     Score: 92**

## IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

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### Tessier Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Santa Cruz Mountains Saveria Vineyard 2013*

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Medium ruby color; earthy aromas of raspberry and pomegranate, with cola and spicy oak notes; rich black cherry and raspberry flavors dominate with earthy underbrush notes; good structure and balance; long finish. This Pinot has a really nice purity of flavor and earthy complexity.

---

**100 cases made      \$38      Score: 91**

### Testarossa Winery

Rob and Diana Jensen founded Testarossa in 1993 and quite literally have not looked back. Their passion for wine in general and Pinot Noir in particular has driven them to find and secure some of the best Pinot vineyard sources California has to offer and then deliver wines scoring among the highest anywhere. Neither Rob nor Diana have a winemaking or industry background. In fact, both have worked mainly in high-tech sales and marketing jobs in Silicon Valley. Rob developed his love of wine in his university days in Italy. Years later, he and Diana started Testarossa as a small weekend project. Today, they run the winery full time. Testarossa's winemaker is Bill Brosseau and the Pinot bottlings are sourced from vineyards up and down the West Coast. The Pinots are wonderful expressions of both the individual character of their vineyard sources and the Jensens' vision for what Pinot should be.

### Testarossa Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Arroyo Grande Valley Rincon Vineyard 2013*

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Medium-deep ruby color; gentle red fruit aromas with floral and oak spice notes; elegant, layered red fruit flavors laced with spice notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Elegant, layered Pinot on a delicate frame.

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**216 cases made      \$64      Score: 90**

### Testarossa Winery

#### *Pinot Noir California Cuvee Niclaire 2013*

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Medium ruby color; deep, spiced black cherry and blackberry aromas with cassis and earth notes; rich, ripe flavors of black cherry, dark plum with floral and forest floor notes; elegant, silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Full-bodied Pinot but also elegant and seamless on the palate.

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**325 cases made      \$85      Score: 94**

### Testarossa Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Chalone Brosseau Vineyard 2013*

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Medium ruby color; earthy black cherry and raspberry aromas with notes of forest floor and mint; firm black cherry, dark plum and raspberry flavors with notes of earth and cedar; good structure and balance; long finish. Big, tannic Pinot that needs time to develop.

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**480 cases made      \$64      Score: 93**

### Testarossa Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Monterey County Cuvee Los Gatos 2013*

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Medium ruby color; spicy black cherry and plum aromas; ripe, savory black cherry and raspberry flavors with oak notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Spicy Pinot that will work with a lot of dishes.

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**500 cases made      \$27      Score: 89**

### Testarossa Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2013*

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Medium ruby color; spicy cherry and plum aromas with strawberry notes; ripe, layered flavors of cherry and plum with subtle earth notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Subtle-flavored Pinot; good middle-of-the-road wine for the table.

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**175 cases made      \$45      Score: 90**

## MAKE ROOM IN THE CELLAR!

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*"Deep and structured..."*

### Testarossa Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Pisoni Vineyard 2013*

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Medium ruby color; big dark cherry and black raspberry aromas with earth overtones; complex, rich, dark cherry, plum and raspberry flavors with notes of cola and cranberry; some tannin and yet elegant; good structure and balance; long finish. Deep and structured Pinot with great depth of flavor.

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**192 cases made      \$75      Score: 94**

## SMART BUY!

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*"Complex and flavorful..."*

### Tessier Winery

#### *Pinot Noir California After Hours 2013*

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Medium ruby color; bright strawberry and red cherry aromas; rich, red cherry flavors with earth and forest floor undertones; good structure and balance; long finish. Complex, flavorful Pinot with fine tannins and structure.

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**50 cases made      \$30      Score: 90**

## IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

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### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Graham Family Vineyard 2013***

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Medium ruby color; subtle cherry, blueberry aromas with spice notes; rich with cherry, plum and huckleberry flavors; smooth and juicy texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Smooth, subtle Pinot with layers of flavor.

---

**480 cases made      \$64      Score: 89**

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands 2013***

---

Medium ruby color; bright, brambly nose of early picked cherries and raspberries with spicy oak notes; ripe, focused, spicy flavors of cherry and blueberries with cranberry and spicy oak highlights; good structure and balance; long finish. Pure, focused flavors shine through this delicious wine.

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**3,633 cases made      \$45      Score: 91**

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Cuvee 107 2013***

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Medium-light ruby color; bright strawberry and cherry aromas with light spice notes; rich cherry and strawberry flavors with a delicate frame; good structure and balance; long finish. Bright flavors and good structure mark this Pinot.

---

**2,072 cases made      \$20      Score: 88**

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Doctor's Vineyard 2013***

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Medium ruby color; deep, dark cherry and plum aromas with spicy oak notes; ripe, expansive, cherry and plum flavors with spice highlights; smooth and silky; good structure and balance; long finish. Expansive and smooth Pinot with lots of layered flavors.

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**1,320 cases made      \$66      Score: 93**

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Don Rubio Vineyard 2013***

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Medium ruby color; spicy, ripe red cherry and raspberry aromas with oak notes; deep, ripe red cherry, blueberry and plum flavors; fine tannins; good structure and balance; long finish. Full bodied Pinot with good structure for age.

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**912 cases made      \$64      Score: 93**

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Fogstone Vineyard 2013***

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Medium ruby color; subtle, dark nose of black cherry and raspberry with spice notes; deep black cherry flavors with cola

and oak notes; some tannins; good structure and balance; long finish. Shy, big Pinot that really needs some time to develop.

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**792 cases made      \$64      Score: 91**

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Guidotti Vineyard 2013***

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Medium ruby color; bright, deep aromas of spiced cherry and raspberry; lively flavors of plum, cherry and raspberry; elegant and generous on the palate; good structure and balance; long finish. Elegant and generous Pinot with lots of flavor.

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**432 cases made      \$64      Score: 92**

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Garys' Vineyard 2013***

---

Medium ruby color; deep aromas of cherry and plum with notes of spice, cola and earth; rich, complex and silky with delicious cherry, raspberry and plum flavors laced with spice; good structure and balance; long finish. Deep, rich and silky Pinot from a great vineyard.

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**552 cases made      \$66      Score: 93**

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Pisoni Vineyard 2013***

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Please see "Make Room In The Cellar!" on page 4.

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Rosella's Vineyard 2013***

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Medium ruby color; spicy cherry, and plum aromas with earthy, oak notes; ripe, bright cherry and plum flavors with complex earthy notes; silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Earthy, well balanced Pinot that has good structure for age.

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**288 cases made      \$64      Score: 93**

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Tondre Grapefield 2013***

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Medium-light ruby color; forward, cherry, strawberry aromas; rich light cherry and cranberry flavors with spice notes; silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Spicy, lighter bodied Pinot with bright flavors.

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**432 cases made      \$64      Score: 91**

### Testarossa Winery

***Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley Sierra Madre Vineyard 2013***

---

Medium ruby color; spicy kirsch and raspberry aromas with light floral notes; rich, delicate cherry, raspberry and spiced plum flavors; good structure and balance; long finish. Delicate, floral Pinot with bright notes.

---

**576 cases made      \$64      Score: 90**

## IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

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### Testarossa Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills 2013*

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Medium ruby color; earthy aromas of stewed cherry with herbal notes; firm, lively round cherry and plum flavors with spicy oak notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Deep, round flavors mark this Pinot.

---

**525 cases made      \$45      Score: 91**

### Testarossa Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills La Encantada Vineyard 2013*

---

Medium ruby color; focused, complex, cherry and plum aromas with saddle leather notes; ripe, finely layered flavors of cherry, plum and raspberry with earthy, leathery notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Complex, earthy Pinot with great structure. Worth waiting for.

---

**168 cases made      \$64      Score: 93**

### Testarossa Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills La Rinconada Vineyard 2013*

---

Medium ruby color; spicy cherry and black raspberry aromas with oak and floral notes; deep cherry and raspberry flavors with oak, tannin and some heat; good structure and balance; long finish. Spicy and oaky Pinot with good structure and a little bit of heat.

---

**216 cases made      \$64      Score: 91**

### Testarossa Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Sanford and Benedict Vineyard 2013*

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Medium ruby color; deep, spiced cherry aromas with herbal and spice notes; full spicy cherry and plum flavors; moderate tannin and oak; good structure and balance; long finish. Full and complex Pinot from a great vineyard that really needs time to develop to its best.

---

**264 cases made      \$64      Score: 92**

### Contacting The Winery

Below is contact information for wines discussed in this issue.

#### **Lenne Estate**

[www.lenneestate.com](http://www.lenneestate.com)

#### **Pali Wine Company**

805.736.7200, [www.paliwineco.com](http://www.paliwineco.com)

#### **Sojourn Cellars**

707.933.9753, [www.sojourncellars.com](http://www.sojourncellars.com)

#### **Tessier Winery**

[www.tessierwinery.com](http://www.tessierwinery.com)

#### **Testarossa Winery**

408.354.6150, [www.testarossa.com](http://www.testarossa.com)

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## PINOTREPORT

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## PINOTREPORT

PASSIONATE ABOUT WESTERN PINOT NOIR

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### Editorial Philosophy

**PinotReport** is an independent newsletter owned, written and published by Greg Walter. All tastings unless otherwise noted are done blind by the Editor. Any and all opinions and analysis expressed in these pages unless otherwise noted belong to Greg Walter, who has no financial involvement or connection whatsoever in the production, distribution or sales of wine.

### Wine Samples

**PinotReport** accepts wine samples for use in its general "In The Market" new releases tastings as well as its special tasting reports. Please follow these guidelines for submitting wine samples for review.

1. All samples should be fully finished bottles ready for market.
2. Please submit one bottle of each wine.
3. Each wine submitted should include a data sheet with at minimum the suggested retail price, case production and distribution data.

To submit samples, please visit the PinotReport website for details.

### About Our Tastings

Generally, there are two types of tastings that appear in each issue of **PinotReport**. The first are our regular "In The Market" tastings of Pinot Noirs new on the market. The second are our special "Tasting Reports" where we from time to time focus on a particular appellation, producer or style.

### How We Taste

We taste wine in small flights with no more than 12 wines in a tasting session and one tasting session in a day. While all scores are finalized before the wines are revealed, wines are usually kept open for a day or more to see how the wines develop. Additional commentary may be added based on this, but scores are not changed.

**All tasting unless otherwise noted is done blind by the Editor.** Other tasters may participate, but their scores and comments are not part of the official tasting record. The tasting coordinator (who does not taste) arranges and bags all wines, which are then scored and comments recorded before bags are removed. Duplicate wines are inserted in tastings to measure consistency.

Our tastings are done under controlled, consistent conditions. We do not under any circumstances use tasting notes from large tasting events or other sub-optimal tasting venues in our published, scored tasting reports.

### Wine Prices and Sourcing

Wine prices vary all around the country and can often vary significantly within the same city. We make every effort to only publish a winery's suggested retail price. This price in some cases will be higher than those you can find in your local markets. The wines we taste either come from the wineries in the form of tasting samples (always finished bottles ready for market) or wines we purchase at retail or at the winery.

### Our Wine Ratings

The wines we taste are rated using a 100-point rating system. We fully understand the ongoing debate over the use of the 100-point system and while we respect the right of those who simply despise the system to continue to do so, we believe that the scale has value when used with the accompanying tasting notes as a **relative guide** to wine quality that has the added benefit of **being familiar** and **truly intuitive** for most consumers.

### PinotReport's 100-Point Scale

<b>96-100</b>	<b>SUPERIOR;</b> it doesn't get better.
<b>90-95</b>	<b>OUTSTANDING;</b> approaching the best
<b>86-89</b>	<b>ABOVE AVERAGE;</b> a very good Pinot.
<b>80-85</b>	<b>AVERAGE;</b> OK if it's all you have.
<b>60-79</b>	<b>BELOW AVERAGE;</b> not recommended.
<b>50-59</b>	<b>UNDRINKABLE.</b>

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## 3. TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

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