

[HOME](#) > [WINE](#)

Sonoma Coast Wineries Need Your Love Now More Than Ever

Here are 29 excellent bottles of Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir to look for.

By [Brian Freedman](#) | Updated March 17, 2020



Despite the way that wineries are often portrayed in the movies, many of them are small family businesses that exist just a single bad harvest or ill-timed hail storm away from financial disaster. As [restaurants close](#) and in-person tastings have been greatly diminished, this is a good time to support your favorite wineries by stocking up on their bottles. [The pandemic is impacting businesses](#) across the entire swath of the economy, and wine producers are no different. Stocking your cellar is arguably the best way to support them right now, and it has the ancillary effect of making these strange, terrifying days seem a little less fraught. Wine has always been a source of sunshine in dark times, and we could all use that now more than ever.

Sonoma Coast has become one of the most popular, important sources of Pinot Noir in the United States. Due to its large size, however, and the range of sub-AVAs, or American Viticultural Areas, within it, you can't discuss Sonoma Coast in terms of any sort of consistent style.

Andy Peay, one of the legends of Sonoma Pinot who has been at the forefront of the movement for the West Sonoma Coast to gain AVA status, says that painting the entire Sonoma Coast AVA with a broad brush is just as inaccurate as saying that you do or don't like *all* California wines.

"I'm in the very northwest corner of the West Sonoma Coast," he told me. "We don't get out of the low-70s at the hottest time of the day in July or August." Fog from the Pacific Ocean comes through the Petaluma Gap, and while it warms up during the day, it gets a lot warmer in Russian River Valley and inland because the fog burns off, he said. Those differences throughout Sonoma Coast, and from pocket to pocket, can be felt and tasted in the wines.

"The term 'Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir' means nothing and everything at the same time, simply because there is so much diversity in the region as far as microclimates and soil types," said Vanessa Wong, the owner of Fishtown Social, a wine bar in Philadelphia.

The wines are, in general, absolutely delicious, and the overall quality is very impressive across the board. Below are 29 wines from throughout Sonoma Coast worth looking out for. They come from boutique producers and famously large ones, and run the gamut in terms of price and the number of bottles that were made. Some are more lean and mineral in character and others are riper and more generous. What they lack in consistent style, however, they more than make up for in exemplifying why the diversity of Sonoma Coast and the ambition and vision of its top producers are so outrageously exciting right now.

...

2016 Red Car Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir Fort Ross - Seaview (\$75)

Lifted and taut aromatics at the same time, with tiny wild strawberries and scrubby herbs setting the stage for a palate vibrating with spice and tart cherries, red licorice, and the suggestion of candied rose petals. Those strawberries follow through to the palate and are joined by purple plums, pomegranate juice, and blood oranges. The spicy finish rings on the tongue for nearly a minute.

<https://www.foodandwine.com/wine/sonoma-coast-wineries-need-your-love-now-more-than-ever>