

Au Bon Climat



2023

Pinot Noir, “Knox Alexander”

Named after Jim Clendenen’s son Knox, this wine represents the finest lots of Pinot Noir from the Santa Maria Valley appellation; primarily from Bien Nacido where the winery is located, as well as inclusions from Solomon Hills, Rancho Real, and North Canyon. Though close to each other, these four vineyards produce outstanding Pinot Noirs that are distinctly different. Blended together the wine showcases the signature Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir character of cherry, cranberry, red currant, rose hip and sage that is so well displayed in Knox Alexander Pinots. It is a well structured, complex Pinot Noir of depth that becomes even more remarkable as the wine ages and integrates.

AT A GLANCE

APPELLATION:
Santa Maria Valley

HARVEST: Multiple pickings throughout September 2023

VINEYARD:
Bien Nacido, Solomon Hills, Rancho Real, North Canyon

ALCOHOL: 13.5%

ACIDITY: 5.5 g/L

VARIETAL:
100% Pinot Noir

pH: 3.69

RESIDUAL SUGAR: <0

COOPERAGE:
20 months, 100% new François Frères French oak barrels

SUGGESTED RETAIL: \$65

Tasting Notes

Aromas of wild mushroom, red pepper, and hibiscus introduce this premium blend. On the palate, herbal tones of sage mingle with cranberry and fig, supported by lively acidity and smooth, chalky tannins that create a lasting impression. With time in bottle, deeper notes of cherrywood and tobacco will emerge, adding further complexity.

Food Pairings

Pair with slow-braised short ribs with rosemary polenta, grilled quail with a cherry glaze, or wood-fired pizza topped with wild mushrooms and pancetta. With Knox’s savory complexity, it also shines alongside venison medallions, truffle risotto, or herb-roasted pork loin with caramelized onions.

From The Winemaker

Each distinct vineyard lot was maintained separately during fermentation and aging, with a thorough evaluation of each barrel’s contribution to the final blend. Notably, this vintage marks the inclusion of fruit from Solomon Hills, Rancho Real, and North Canyon.

The 2023 growing season in Santa Maria featured a cool, slow pace with extended hangtime, delivering vibrant flavors, balanced acids, and wines with elegant structure. As with all our Pinot Noirs, we are “hands-on” starting with hand harvesting in the vineyard. Every Pinot Noir is fermented in 5-ton open-top fermenters and punched down twice a day. These punch downs breakup the cap of skins that rises to the surface during fermentation back into the juice to extract the best part of the Pinot grapes. The wine is pressed to complete dryness and goes to barrel with moderate lees where it aged for 20 months in new François Frères French oak barrels. There was a regimented barrel selection to identify the best lots for the Knox bottling.

Au Bon Climat & Clendenen Family Vineyards

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