



94 CHARDONNAY RESERVE 2004 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

At the age of four years, this Chardonnay is losing its primary fruit character and picking up rich, complex aged notes of glazed cashews, baked pineapple and dried peaches and apricots. It's also very spicy. Really fascinates the palate, offering a different experience each second, and should continue to interest for several more years. DEC, 2008

92 CHARDONNAY 2006 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

A truly succulent, opulent Chardonnay. Tastes quite oaky with char and butterscotch flavors, but not too oaky. The barrel regimen is precisely in keeping with the ripe tropical fruit and honeysuckle flower flavors. Feels rich and dramatic. DEC, 2008

92 PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Seems well worth the price differential from the regular bottling, for while the flavors are similarly complex, ranging from cola to black cherries to mushrooms and earth, this wine adds more floral character and a lush, velvety mouthfeel. EDITORS' CHOICE. NOV, 2006

93 CHARDONNAY RESERVE 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

What a wine! **2002'S TOP CHARDONNAYS**

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90 PINOTAGE 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

90 PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

If cast in the same, slightly restrained model as its sibling, [2005 Fort Ross Pinot Noir] the Fort Ross Reserve [has] more richness and depth. It firms up at the finish....after its supple beginnings, but its precise, well-defined fruit sustains nicely and encourages three or four years of further patience. Very limited availability. Medium Red. Balanced, good depth, medium tannin. Beef and lamb. Drinkable now. Further bottle aging can improve this wine. OCT, 2008

90 CHARDONNAY RESERVE 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Slightly hazy in appearance and youthfully alive in its pulpy apple and pear aromas, this rich and fairly open wine holds little back in either nose or mouth. It is fleshy in feel with a viscous front end and a rounded finish that is lengthy, flavorful and layered. Bottle age is not required here, yet the wine's depth will hold it in good stead for a while. OCT, 2008

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CHARDONNAY 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

A slight waxiness and lush, mineral-backed texture help underscore apple, grapefruit, honeycomb and richer, nutty undertones. DECEMBER 7, 2008

TOP 100 WINES 2008

CHARDONNAY RESERVE 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Outstanding Chardonnay, elegant and with a silky texture. Light herb, toast, lemon and spice aromas plus pear apricot and caramel flavors. **OUTSTANDING; THE PANEL FAVORITE**

TOP 100 WINES 2005

CHARDONNAY 2004 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

BEST NEW CALIFORNIA CHARDONNAYS, BEST 18 BOTTLES, Ray Isle

A string of tiny vineyard parcels only a mile from the ocean—and anywhere from 1,200 to 1,700 feet above it—produced this vivid white. Its intense pear fruit gains complexity from hints of hazelnut and smoky lees.

90 PINOTAGE 2003 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast: **Might just be the best Pinotage anywhere.**

Dense and spicy with deep, ripe and fleshy plum and berry flavors. PATTERSON'S BEV JOURNAL OCT, 2006

PINOTAGE 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

A true revelation, with deep, sensuous flavors, mouthfilling dark fruit, and a supple, velvety finish. A superb effort with a grape that could deserve a second look from American vintners. SEPTEMBER 3-9, 2006

WINE OF THE WEEK

CHARDONNAY 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

★★★★ EXCELLENT

PINOTAGE 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

★★★★★ EXCEPTIONAL

PINOT NOIR 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

★★★★ EXCELLENT

PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

★★★★★ EXCEPTIONAL

PINOT NOIR 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

EXCEPTIONAL

SYMPOSIUM 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

DECANTER: In Focus Sonoma Producers such as...Fort Ross Vineyards, however are taking the coastal risk and making it pay off, with vines planted within sight of the Pacific surf. The results have been highly impressive, to say the least. MARCH, 2006

WINEMAKING IN A HOSTILE CLIMATE ON SONOMA'S COAST

Among the newcomers are small, idealistic operations like...Fort Ross Vineyards near Cazadero.

The Sonoma coast pinot noirs have...shown themselves to be among California's best and most distinctive wines, dense and concentrated without being heavy, full of dark fruit and earth flavors and a singular structure of tightly wound acidity. The best chardonnays are simultaneously rich yet taut, with lively acidity and citrus and mineral flavors. JAN 18, 2006



92 PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast - CURRENT RELEASE

Spicy cola, raspberry, cranberry and savory herb and dried cherry fruit give this an intriguing range of complex flavors. Balanced, elegant and structured. Drink now through 2012. 513 cases made. —J.L., SEPT 15, 2008

92 PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2004 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Deep and complex, with wonderful earth, clay, spice and earthy berry flavors that turn more expansive, with dense, chewy currant, mineral and anise. Ends with ample tannins and a long finish. Drink now through 2012. —J.L., MAY 31, 2007

90 PINOT NOIR 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast - CURRENT RELEASE

Fragrant plum, wild berry and raspberry, with spice, mineral, sage and cedary oak give this depth and firmness and a savory pleasant earthiness. Best from 2009 through 2012. 745 cases made. —J.L., SEPT 15, 2008

91 PINOT NOIR 2004 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Shows fragrant notes of spice, wild berry, black cherry and flowers. Intense yet supple, this is polished and elegant, ending with a delicate, fruity aftertaste that lingers. Drink now through 2011. —J.L., MAY 31, 2007

91 PINOT NOIR 2003 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Supple, rich and polished, with smooth blackberry and black cherry fruit that's focused and long on the finish. Drink now through 2011. 600 cases made. —J.L. ONLINE: MARCH 23, 2007

92 PINOT NOIR - SYMPOSIUM 2003 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Ripe, plush and deep, with complex plum, blackberry and wild berry fruit that's supple and polished. Finishing with a long, intense aftertaste that keeps the fruit at the forefront. Drink now through 2011. —J.L., MAY 31, 2007

90 PINOTAGE 2004 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast - CURRENT RELEASE

Ripe, juicy sour cherry and wild berry fruit teeters on tart, but is supple, fleshy and balanced, ending with a long, persistent finish. A rarity in California for this grape. Drink now through 2012. 170 cases made. —J.L. SEPT 15, 2008

91 PINOTAGE 2003 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Pure and delicious, with a core of ripe blackberry, wild berry and cherry fruit that's supported by lively acidity and firm yet ripe tannins. Ends with a nice spicy, earthy quality. Drink now through 2011. —J.L., MAY 31, 2007

90 CHARDONNAY 2004 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Smoky marshmallow, fig and toasty oak aromas give this a big initial impression. Yet for all of its size and richness this holds together nicely, finishing with a rich aftertaste of fruit and wood. Drink now through 2011. —J.L. MAY 31, 2007

93 CHARDONNAY 2003 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

A classy wine that's sleek and stylish. Ripe, intense and fleshy, with lively green apple, pear, butterscotch and cream notes leading to a smooth, silky texture and a long, integrated finish. Drink now through 2011. —J.L. ONLINE: JAN 2007

90 CHARDONNAY RESERVE 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Smooth and polished, with a delicate mix of ripe pear, apple and fig flavors, with a light toasty oak overlay and a dash of nutmeg. Finishes with a long, elegant aftertaste. 157 cases made. —J.L.

TASTING HIGHLIGHTS: CALIFORNIA PINOT NOIR: James Laube

15 new California Pinot Noirs from some of the state's TOP PRODUCERS, and a rare outstanding California Pinotage. Fort Ross made two EXCELLENT true Sonoma Coast 2005 Pinots.

I also liked Fort Ross's rare (for California) Pinotage, a grape from South Africa that is a cross between Pinot Noir and Cinsault; it has a little more tannic backbone than Pinot Noir, perhaps because these grapes are among the closest vines to the Pacific Ocean.

Online September 15, 2008 : <http://www.winespectator.com/Wine/Features/Premium/0,1197,4594,00.html>

A DISCOVERY ON THE SONOMA COAST: James Laube

Fort Ross Vineyard has found a groove. Wine lovers should pay serious attention.

I tried the new wines last week, informally during a visit with Linda and in blind tastings for formal reviews. The new wines are **excellent**, and the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are both modestly priced. The **2003 CHARDONNAY** is intense, vibrant, clean and structured, with lively acidity and a mix of lemon, butterscotch and green apple flavors turning rich and creamy. The **2004 CHARDONNAY** follows suit, with intense, vibrant, focused fruit. The **2004 RESERVE CHARDONNAY** is a shade richer, very good, but I liked it less than the regular 2004.

Both the **2003 PINOT NOIR** and **2003 PINOT NOIR SYMPOSIUM** are rich, complex and impeccably balanced. The latter wine includes four percent Pinotage. The **2004 PINOT NOIR Sonoma Coast** is fragrant and delicate, while the **2004 RESERVE PINOT** offers complex earth, spice and berry flavors that are expansive and chewy. The **2003 PINOTAGE** is deep and flavorful and shows a touch more tannin than the Pinot Noir Symposium.

Fort Ross' lineup is impressive. The quality is terrific, the prices are more than fair and the case volume means the wines will be available, though I wouldn't wait too long. Online February 20, 2007 : http://www.winespectator.com/Wine/Blogs/Blog_Detail/0,4211,937,00.html