

# FORT ROSS IN THE NEWS

**WINE ENTHUSIAST**  
MAGAZINE

**95 CHARDONNAY 2009 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast - Editors' Choice - CURRENT**

**TOP 100 WINES for 2011 • Ranked #28** DEC, 2011

A brilliant Chardonnay. Almost nothing quite like it out there. Great, zesty acidity makes the mouth water, and oak is strongly there but perfectly vindicated by the power of the underlying flavors. They suggest ripe pineapples and tropical fruits, peaches, honeysuckle and a firm, stony minerality that has to come from the soil. For all the richness, the wine is terrifically dry. OCT, 2011

**95 PINOT NOIR 2007 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast - Editors' Choice - SOLD OUT**

**93 CHARDONNAY 2008 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast - SOLD OUT**

**94 PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2007 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, - CURRENT RELEASE**

A very beautiful wine that shows the exotic, feral quality of the greatest Pinot Noirs from the Fort Ross area. It's explosive in wild raspberry and cherry flavors, with hints of pine, cola, wintergreen, anise, bacon and smoky, sweet vanillins from oak barrels. A wine of great pedigree, it's showing well now, and should hold for the next six years. OCT, 2011

**93 PINOT NOIR "SYMPOSIUM" 2007 Fort Ross Vineyard, SC - Editors' Choice - SOLD OUT**

**92 PINOT NOIR 2008 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, - CURRENT RELEASE**

Elaborately ripe, this polished Pinot explodes with fresh flavors of raspberries and cherries that taste pie-baked, with the smoky, sweet, toasty crust. It's just delicious, and also obviously fruity-sweet, with a jammy attractiveness. What it lacks in subtlety it more than makes up for in richness. OCT, 2011

**91 CHARDONNAY RESERVE 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast - LIBRARY**

It's developing a toasted cashew and hazelnut character, and the pineapples are transmogrifying to chewy dried fruits and even Christmas fruitcake. Meanwhile the sweet, caramelized oak is fully integrated. Bravo to the winery for holding this back and letting us see what an older Sonoma Coast Chardonnay does. AUG, 2010

**90 PINOT NOIR "SEA SLOPES" 2009 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast - CURRENT**

Fruit is the star of this wine. It's gigantic and forward in sweet raspberry and cherry flavors that taste wild, picked under a hot summer sun. Fortunately, there's a lot of acidity, and firm tannins provide additional structure. The finish is thoroughly dry. A bit in your face now, but could do interesting things over the years. OCT, 2011

**91 PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2007 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast**

Although the richest of the several Fort Ross Pinots reviewed in this month's issue, the 2007 Reserve is also the most mannerly and refined of the bunch as well. Its inviting cherry and pastry-crust smells are followed up with like-minded flavors that show a certain measured refinement, and its extra time in the bottle is in part responsible for its polish. It makes for thoroughly satisfying drinking right now, but it still has room left for a bit of additional growth. FEB, 2012

**90 PINOT NOIR 2009 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast**

Despite being located within splashing distance of the Pacific, the vineyards at Fort Ross sit high enough up in the coastal hills that they are able to give off wines that are both ripe and balanced. Here, the black cherry nature of the fruit is filled out by invitingly spicy nuances and hints of dried flowers. FEB, 2012

**90 PINOT NOIR "SYMPOSIUM" 2009 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast**

Nicely focused varietal fruit is the mainstay of this composed and carefully crafted offering... We are especially pleased with its continuity and its exceptional finishing length. FEB, 2012

**90 PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast - LIBRARY**

Fort Ross Reserve [has] richness and depth. Its precise, well-defined fruit sustains nicely. Very limited availability. Medium Red. Balanced, good depth, medium tannin. OCT, 2008

**90 CHARDONNAY RESERVE 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast - LIBRARY**

**PINOT NOIR "SYMPOSIUM" 2009 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast: EXCEPTIONAL - CURRENT**

Classy aroma of cherry, tea, very faint note of pepper, and a weight that's a bit Burgundian. A wine that needs aeration; will be lot more complex in 2-3 years. DEC, 2011

**PINOTAGE 2007 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast: EXCEPTIONAL - CURRENT**

This thick skinned South African grape often makes an odd wine, but here special clonal material personally cleared through official channels makes a dark, blackberry/plum scented wine with weight in the mid-palate and graceful structure. Faintly rustic finish; a great wine to serve blind to a wine snob. DEC, 2011

**90 CHARDONNAY 2008 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast BEST BUY - SOLD OUT**

Plump in the middle with candied citrus flavors, this broadens out in toasty richness. SEPT, 2010

**PINOTAGE 2006 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast : ★★★★★ EXCEPTIONAL**

A supple, distinct, relatively refined Pinotage, with excellent balance and length. It is velvety in texture, finely flavored (black cherry, black licorice, roasted nut, vanilla, spicy oak), and very long on the finish. Exceptional.

**PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast: ★★★★★+ EXCELLENT**

Burgundy-like, in the best sense: supple, complex in character, and long and persistent on the finish; very fine quality. It tastes of plum, orange peel, baked cherry, clove, and spicy oak.

**BEST NEW CALIFORNIA CHARDONNAYS, BEST 18 BOTTLES, Ray Isle:**

**CHARDONNAY 2004 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast**

**WINEMAKING IN A HOSTILE CLIMATE ON SONOMA'S COAST:** Small, idealistic operations...Fort Ross Vineyards. 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, 2006



**Dan Berger's**  
Vintage Experiences

**Wine & Spirits**

**RONN WIEGAND**  
RESTAURANT  
**WINE**  
The Full Service Guide to On-Sale Beverage Profits

**FOOD & WINE**

**The**  
**New York**  
**Times**

## 92 PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

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

## 91 PINOT NOIR 2007 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

A rich, layered style, with firm, intense black cherry, plum and wild berry flavors that are full-bodied, intense and complex, ending with a long, persistent finish. Drink now through 2017. —J.L. JUNE 14, 2010

## 90 PINOT NOIR RESERVE 2007 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

Offers deep, complex, focused plum, mineral and black cherry fruit that's supple and delicate. Full-bodied, ending with a subtle mix of flavors laced with sassafras. Drink now through 2016. 344 cases made. —J.L. OCT 15, 2011

## 90 PINOT NOIR 2005 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

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

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

## 90 PINOTAGE 2004 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

## 91 PINOTAGE 2003 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

## 90 CHARDONNAY 2004 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

## 93 CHARDONNAY 2003 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

## 90 CHARDONNAY RESERVE 2002 Fort Ross Vineyard, Sonoma Coast

## 18 EXCITING CALIFORNIA REDS: James Laube

New reviews of Napa Cabernet, Sonoma Pinot and more, each for \$50 or less.

The best values include a \$37 Fort Ross Pinot Noir 2007 (91 POINTS:), from the true Sonoma Coast, a 2007 Domaine Chandon Carneros Pinot and a \$30 Landmark McDowell Valley Grenache.

Online June 14, 2010 <http://www.winespectator.com/webfeature/show/id/42934>

## 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](http://www.winespectator.com/Wine/Blogs/Blog_Detail/0,4211,937,00.html)