

Wine Guy: These New World wines features Old World soul

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New World wines, Old World soul

Something about my nature draws me to “the road less traveled,” and in wine that often means an interest in lesser-known, underappreciated wine regions.

I had been aware of Santa Cruz Mountains wine since first getting into wine 45 years ago, but had limited exposure to its wines. So I was excited recently

to have an opportunity to taste several representative samples.

The Santa Cruz Mountains area played a key role in the history of commercial winemaking in California, with roots dating to the late 1870s that included pioneering winemakers such as Paul Masson, Martin Ray and David Bruce, who recognized its potential for pinot noir.

Even as the region has grown, it is still mostly characterized by those dedicated to preserving the tradition of smaller, family-owned vineyards and wineries. The limestone, clay and loam soils coupled with a cool climate, especially closer to the coast, are ideally suited to produce some of the best pinot noirs in California. They generally exhibit dramatic aromatics, amazing purity of red and dark fruits, inviting freshness, a mineral character and lingering finish – often leading to descriptions as “New World wines with Old World soul.”

- 2021 Alfaro Family Lindsay Paige Vineyard (\$48): Former restaurateurs/bakery owners converted a former apple farm into a family-owned vineyard producing estate grown wines; vibrant, fresh juicy red fruit, baking spice.
- 2019 Big Basin Old Corral



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Vineyard (\$65): Mountain vineyards, organic farming, minimal intervention winemaking, including fermentation using natural indigenous yeasts; enticing lighter style, brisk red fruit, hint of orange, touch of mushroom.

- 2021 Madson Wines Ascona Vineyard (\$60): Leases and farms vineyards (instead of just instead of buying fruit) using organic and regenerative agriculture practices; also follows practices and ferments with natural yeast; deep berry, forest floor, herbal, firm.

• 2021 Sante Arcangeli “Split Rail” (\$59): Very small, family-owned, sources grapes from mountain vineyards, made with minimal intervention or use of new oak; juicy red berries, savory notes, suggestions of orange and anise, silky.

- 2019 Thomas Fogarty Will’s Cabin Vineyard (\$85):

One of the region’s modern pioneers having founded the winery in 1976, produces estate wines farmed organically while maintaining an open space preserve; lively red fruits, herb, forest floor, some spice, lingers.

- 2018 Windy Oaks Special Release Estate (\$85): Family-owned using grapes from estate and managed vineyards farmed sustainably using organic and biodynamic practices and made with minimal intervention, including using gravity throughout; from a single special barrel, unfiltered and unfined, delightfully rich fruit, luscious texture.

One caveat: These limited-production wines may not be readily available in wine shops, though online options help. Even better, next time you plan a wine country trip, skip Napa and Sonoma and head straight for Santa Cruz Mountains.

View the full article here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_TgE-iKKguS7WEiTmqb8x8BGi-Edpbt2/view