

# PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

*"If You Drink  
No Noir  
You Pinot Noir!"*

## PinotFile

THE CURRENT ISSUE

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FEATURED IN THIS WEEK'S PinotFile, VOL 7 ISSUE 14  
Santa Cruz Pinot Noirz

## Tasting Santa Cruz Pinot Noirz

The quality of Pinot Noir grapes grown in the Santa Cruz Mountains is unquestioned, but the challenges of growing grapes in this mountainous terrain with its harsh climate are numerous. The vineyard sites are remote, steep and rugged, land is expensive, irrigation water is limited or nonexistent, and pests such as birds, deer and gophers are ever present. Skilled vineyard labor is hard to find, top soil is poor and limited in many sites and yields are typically less than two tons-per-acre, making Pinot Noir production economically a challenge. ...Despite these obstacles, a hardy brotherhood of dedicated and passionate winegrowers empowered with mountain spirit have persisted.

The Santa Cruz Mountains is a marriage of fog and sun. The grapes ripen in cool temperatures as the daily fog rolls in, with the sun burning the fog off as the day progresses. The growing season is extended, creating grapes with complex and intense flavors and lively acidity. Santa Cruz Mountains wines are characterized by an earthy, mineral quality and a complexity and balanced acidity that helps them age well. The Pinot Noirs are pure in expression with lovely aromatics, luscious fruit flavors, soft tannins, all packaged in a light to medium bodied wine so juicy you can 'nibble' at it.... Today, the Pinot Noirs are modern in style with very commendable value-to-price ratios. I am an advocate of the appeal of the Pinot Noirs from these mountains and firmly believe the wines are worth the serious interest of every pinotophile.

Recently, six subregions have been identified in the Santa Cruz Mountains all defined by their unique microclimates. ... Only the most dedicated Pinot geek will be able to get a handle on the emerging subregion concept, but I believe this idea will evolve in time with increasing clarity and create very useful information that Pinot lovers can use to navigate and understand this vast region.

**Muns Vineyard** Ed Muns and Mary Lindsay are the team behind Muns Vineyard wines. Ed was formerly a technology manager at Hewlett-Packard and Mary was a public relations consultant for technology start ups. Ed found an abandoned vineyard that brushes the sky on the Loma Prieta Ridge above Monterey Bay at 2,600 feet while looking for a high elevation home for his ham radio antennas. Together the pair cleared the land and replanted the 12-acre vineyard to Pinot Noir. It is now the highest Pinot Noir vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The site enjoys maximum sunlight yet it is exposed to gentle and cooling breezes during the summer from the fog intrusion below. The vineyard is planted to Dijon clones 114, 115, 667 and 777 and is pristinely farmed. The wines since 2005 have been crafted by Tony Craig (Sonnet, Silver Mountain). The grapes are 100% de-stemmed. A few day cold soak is followed by inoculated whole berry fermentation with cap management achieved by pulsed air. Barrel aging is carried out uniquely in 30% to 40% very tight grain new Eastern European oak for 14 to 17 months depending on the vintage. The aim is for oak to be supportive but not assertive. Eastern European barrels add notes of ground spices, such as cumin, clove, white pepper and coriander not seen from French barrels. The lees are stirred to maintain color and fill out the palate. The wines are not racked. The winery dog is a Jack Russell terrier named “Pinot,” who is an accomplished hunter of gophers, lizards and occasionally rattlesnakes. The Muns Vineyard Pinot Noirs (and a dry Rosé) are available through the website at [www.munsvineyard.com](http://www.munsvineyard.com). 408-515-2663. Mary Lindsay is the President of the Viticultural Association of the Santa Cruz Mountains ([www.vascm.com](http://www.vascm.com)) and is an excellent source for information on the region (408-984-7242). A few of Mary’s beautiful photographs of Muns Vineyard are included here with her permission. The reviewed wines were tasted at Silver Mountain Vineyards in early February 2009 and at the World of Pinot Noir in early March 2009.



### **2004 Muns Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir**

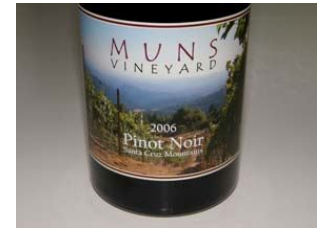
13.9% alc., 120 cases, \$40. Crafted by Soquel Vineyards. Aged 10 months in 50% new French loose grain French oak. Racked several times. • Spiced red fruits on the nose, primarily strawberry, with oak notes that become more evident with time in the glass. Huge attack of strawberry fruit gloved in oak spice. Supple tannins, grippy acidity and a dry and persistent finish showing a touch of citrus.

### **2005 Muns Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir**

13.8% alc., 180 cases, \$40. • Intense reddish-violet color. The nose is a bit floral, perfumed with wildflowers, and also revealing a fragrance of cherries and ripe grape fruit trending toward, but not reaching, raisin. A big-boned wine that is plush on the palate with a healthy tannic backbone and plenty of acidity to balance out the structure.

### **2006 Muns Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir**

14.5% alc., 380 cases, \$40. 17 months in 33% Hungarian oak. • Lighter in color and body than the 2005 vintage, despite the higher alcohol. Darker red fruits including cherries, strawberries and raspberries are featured enlivened by a touch of minerality, savory herbs and oak spice. A hint of alcohol peaks out on the nose. There are moderate ripe fruit tannins that give the wine substance. A pleasurable wine that is easy to drink.



### **2007 Muns Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir**

13.9% alc., 380 cases, \$40. 17 months in 33% new Hungarian oak. Tasted out of barrel at the winery and from a barrel sample at World of Pinot Noir. • A consistent Muns Vineyard style is beginning to evolve with this wine which shows similarities in structure and character to the 2006 vintage. This wine exhibits admirable complexity with nicely spiced red and black fruits, herbs, forest floor and mocha. There are still tannins to shed, but these are ripe and fine and will integrate nicely with a little more bottle age. The acidity is spot on. This should prove to be a very stellar wine. (Note: this wine can be purchased now at the futures price of \$32 which makes it a good value).





To read the full article, use the link from our website at [www.MunsVineyard.com](http://www.MunsVineyard.com), which will give you a free “Pinot Pass” to the PinotFile. The PinotFile newsletter is published 2x/month and is available at <http://www.princeofpinot.com/> .

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