

Review Overview

Babcock Pinot Noir, Grand Cuvee

2004 Vintage

PinotReport 4/15/06

SCORE: 92/Smart Buy!

Medium ruby color; deep aromas of stewed cherry, spice and earthy notes; rich, deep and complex flavors of stewed black cherry, lush spices, earthy notes in the background; just the right touch of sweet oak; good structure and balance; long finish. Very interesting and well balanced style of Pinot — deep, lush fruit with so many interesting flavors I want to just sip it by itself.

Decanter Magazine May 2006

Score: Norm's Best Red of the Month (Norm Roby)

Winemaker Bryan Babcock has been one of the driving forces behind Santa Barbara Pinot Noir. The 2004 season in the Santa Rita Hills was cool enough until the Pinot Noir was about to be harvested, at which point an intense heat wave sent sugar levels soaring. Although even Babcock describes this Pinot Noir as huge, it stays reasonably well within boundaries. It offers ripe, concentrated (but not jammy) black cherry fruit, with scents of herbs and light oak. The palate impression is fantastic — luxuriously rich, velvety and expansive. With plenty of cherry fruit and spicy flavours, this mouth-coating wine holds together well and has some grip in the finish. Enjoy this one over the near-term (2-3 years), but it might surprise by hanging in there until 2011-12.

2002 Vintage

Wine & Spirits Magazine Feb 2005

SCORE: 92 points

A tight fist of extraction, this opens to reveal a lot of depth and intensity.

2001 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine April 2004

SCORE: 92 points

This is a big, dark, rich, interesting Pinot Noir. Flavorwise, it shows black cherries, blueberries, pomegranates, and sweet rhubarb, and a nudge of coffee, with an earthy, slightly bitter acidity. In the mouth it is soft and lush yet firm and assertive. — S.H.

Wine Spectator March 31, 2004

Score: 88 points

Weaves together a complex band of spicy red cherry and wild berry flavors, with a smooth texture and long, delicate finish that offers richness and depth

2000 Vintage

Robert M. Parker's The Wine Advocate 6-29-02

SCORE: 89+

The ambitiously made, (wine) possesses significantly more new oak than its siblings. It has plenty of layers, but considerable grip, structure, and tannin. Although it enjoys the finest raw materials of this trio, it is the least accessible and friendly at present.

1998 Vintage

Robert M. Parker's The Wine Advocate 2/28/00

SCORE: 91

Two of the finest Babcock Pinot Noirs produced to date are the 1998 Pinot Noir Mt. Carmel Vineyard and the 1998 Pinot Noir Grand Cuvée. More similar than dissimilar, they both exhibit deep ruby/purple colors, dense, concentrated personalities, ripe, jammy black cherry and raspberry fruit, and a judicious use of toasty new oak. The Mt. Carmel Vineyard may be less intense and powerful in the mouth, but both are top flight. They will offer delicious drinking for 5-7 years. The Grand Cuvée will outlive its sibling.

Wine Spectator 6/30/00

SCORE: 88

Rich and concentrated, with a pretty array of dried black cherry, herb, tea and sage notes, turning dusty. Drink now through 2006.— JL

The Wine News 12/00-1/01

“California’s Best Wines of the Year 2000” list.

(Outstanding Limited-Production Wines)

Connoisseurs’ Guide to California Wine

SCORE: 1 Puff (out of 3)

Winning recommendation more for richness than for precision, this ripe, mildly herbal effort displays good palatal substance and size. Helped along by very evident oak, it firms up a little in the latter going and needs three or four years of seasoning.

1997 Vintage

Wine Enthusiast Magazine Oct. 1999

WORLD SERIES OF PINOT NOIR - SCORE: 93

GRAND SLAM (3RD OF 9)

Opens with a dark, rich nose with deep black fruits, cassis, bacon and spice. Very dense Pinot Noir, almost Rhone-like. Deep, inky and tight right now. Great finish, with broad, mouth-coating tannins. Try in 2-4 years.

Wine Spectator 9/15/99

SCORE: 90

Dark and deceptively vibrant, with rich, complex, earthy cherry, berry and spice, a touch of leather and firm, tight tannins. Best to cellar short-term, try 2000-2007. — JL

The Wine News Aug/Sept 1999

SCORE: 91

Gorgeous, deep scents of pepper, opulent black fruit, wood and coffee. Full Flavors of ripe blackberry, black pepper and oak tannins combine with cherry acids. A bold, youthful Pinot.

1996 Vintage

The Wine Spectator 2/28/98

SCORE: 90

Smooth, rich and polished, with a well-focused center of black cherry, spice, wild berry, picking up toasty oak, coffee and vanilla notes. Turns expansive on the finish. Drink now.

1996 Vintage

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine

SCORE: 1 Puff (out of 3)

Perhaps somewhat favoring ripe rich aspects rather than bright fruit, this bottling blends aromas of dried black cherries and hints of blackberries with underlying gamy and spicy notations. Supple and slightly viscous on the palate, it is fairly mouth filling and carries through to a lasting finish. There is a fair bit of "Pinot Noir goes to the Rhone" here--in the positive sense of that comparison.

California Grapevine April/May 1998

SCORE: Rated #1- OUTSTANDING

Medium ruby color; attractive, rich, spicy, cedary, intense cherry fruit aroma with distinct varietal character; medium-full to full body; rich, lush, spicy, cedary, ripe black cherry fruit flavors with good extract; well balanced; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Superior quality. A very impressive showing for this wine. Enjoyable to drink now, though deserves another year or two of bottle aging.

1995 Vintage

Wine Spectator 3/31/97

SCORE: 91

Young, tight and well focused, with intense black cherry, plum and anise flavors, a wild berry note. The texture is smooth and polished up front, before the tannins weigh in. Tempting now, but sure to be better from 1998 to 2002. 330 cases made. -JL