



International Wine Cellar

the consumer's passport to fine wine

LANDMARK

2008 Overlook Chardonnay 88

Sonoma, Monterey, and Santa Barbara Counties
Yellow-gold. Musky aromas of ripe pear, peach, and pineapple; a real fruit cocktail on the nose. Round but dry, with lush pit fruit and melon flavors and a touch of sweetness. Fairly straightforward chardonnay with good finishing breadth and gently sweet persistence.

2008 Damaris Reserve Chardonnay 90

Sonoma County
Bright gold, with a hint of green. Tangerine, poached pear and honey on the nose, along with sexy oak notes of vanilla and baking spices. Plump, sweet and seamless, with round flavors of exotic fruits, vanilla and smoke. This has real weight and palate presence but finishes with very good delineation and sneaky minerality. Give it some air.

2008 Rodgers Creek Chardonnay 90

Sonoma Coast
Greenish gold. Reticent aroma of crystallized lemon peel, pear skin and melon, plus a whiff of honey. In a supple style but slightly closed and slow to unfold, offering notes of minerals and candied flowers and building acidity on the back end. This is better with some aeration.

2008 Bien Nacido Chardonnay 89

Santa Maria Valley
Hazy gold. Ripe pear and peach on the nose, with notes of sweet butter, lemon rind and marzipan adding complexity. Lush, sappy orchard fruit flavors spread out on the back and show a slight warmth, picking up a floral note with air. Repeats the lemon rind note on the finish, which is surprisingly brisk and nervy for this wine's size.

2008 Lorenzo Vineyard Chardonnay 92

Russian River Valley
Yellow-gold. Orange peel, guava and gingery spices on the nose, with honey and smoky lees qualities adding complexity. Nicely concentrated and energetic as well, with bracing acidity adding cut to the wine's rich tropical and pit fruit flavors. Becomes livelier with air and picks up an intriguing note of saffron on the spicy, clinging finish. This is complex enough to drink now.

2008 Grand Detour Pinot Noir 89

Sonoma Coast
Medium red. Raspberry, cherry and cola aromas are complicated by smoky herbs and dried rose. Palate-numbing red fruit flavors are lifted by tangy acidity and pick up a hint of tarragon with air. A bit wound-up today, but finishes with good cut and a lingering note of white pepper. This gained sweetness over a couple of hours, suggesting that I caught it at a youthfully closed point.

2008 Kanzler Vineyard Pinot Noir 90

Sonoma Coast
Deep, vivid red. Black raspberry and candied cherry aromas are complicated by smoky Indian spices, minerals and a touch of black tea. Impressively fresh dark berry flavors manage to be both deep and lively, picking up an exotic floral pastille quality with air. "Tannins creep in on the finish, adding grip to the fleshy black fruit.

2008 Solomon Hills Pinot Noir 90

Sonoma Coast
Bright medium red. Spicy red berry, spice and floral aromas, with a bright note of blood orange adding energy. Racy and focused, with nervy redcurrant and bitter rhubarb flavors putting on weight in the mid-palate and taking a turn to darker cherry and licorice. The spice note repeats on the clear, persistent finish.

2008 Saltonstall Pinot Noir 91

Sonoma Coast
Medium red. Spicy red berries, potpourri and sandalwood on the nose. Light-bodied, faintly bitter strawberry and cherry flavors are fine-grained and delicate. This rather refined pinot finishes with gentle sweetness and sneaky, smoky persistence. I like this wine's understated personality and its finesse.

2008 Steel Plow Syrah 89

Sonoma Valley
(\$30) Opaque purple. Smoky boysenberry and cherry-cola aromas display good clarity and subtle spice and mineral character. Lush, creamy dark berry flavors tighten up in the mid-palate, with the smoky note repeating. Finishes smooth and sweet but slightly taut, with firming dusty tannins and a note of tangy berry skin. Give this some air.