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8 Producers You Should Know to Get Into Sonoma Pinot Noir

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Shana Clarke | November 6, 2025



Sonoma made its mark in the U.S. winescape with Pinot Noir. In the 1970s, winemakers noticed that the region's cooler pockets were ideal for growing the thin-skinned, delicate grape. Over time, growers moved away from [Cabernet](#) and [Zinfandel](#) to explore the potential of [Pinot Noir](#) and found it very suitable for the climate.

From there, it was off to the races. Sonoma County is roughly double the size of Napa Valley, but only a little larger in planted acres: 60,000 to Napa's 46,000. That means vineyards are much farther spread out and subject to a wide range of climatic conditions. So while "Sonoma Pinot Noir" is often used as a catchall phrase, it doesn't do justice to the range of styles produced.

The Pacific Ocean has an outsized influence on the Sonoma Coast AVA. The cold body of water brings chilling winds and fog to vineyards. The result is high-acid, structured wines with minerality and complexity. The nearby Russian River Valley AVA creates wines with bright fruit, florals, and spice. The Carneros AVA is uniquely situated to encapsulate both Napa and Sonoma. Within these regions, neighborhoods and sub-AVAs have emerged, further carving out microclimates within the larger appellations. For example, the historical Russian River Valley now contains six neighborhoods. And after a longstanding petition, the West Sonoma Coast AVA became official in 2022.

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If you're curious about Sonoma Pinot Noir, here are eight producers to know. Some provide historical insight into the region, while others offer a glimpse into the diversity of wine styles.

Failla



Cool-climate wines have always warmed Ehren Jordan's heart. In 1999, he got his hands on Pinot Noir from Keefer Ranch Vineyard in the Russian River Valley, which coincided with the beginning of his estate vineyard plantings. Intrigued by the expression of Pinot coming from this cooler area of Sonoma, he set out to find more sites that offered a counterpoint to the exuberant California wines coming from warmer appellations. It also inspired the varieties for his vineyard. Today, Failla sources from a collection of vineyards throughout Sonoma, as well as the estate vineyard in the oceanfront Fort Ross-Seaview AVA. The winery's Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir is an amalgamation of sites, but distinctly cool climate. Bright red fruits, along with spice, sing in this approachable, value-driven (about \$36) Pinot Noir.

Flowers Vineyard and Winery



Established over 30 years ago, Flowers was one of the first producers to venture out to the rugged Sonoma Coast. Camp Meeting Ridge, now mostly Chardonnay, was the original site, planted in 1991, followed a few years later by Sea View Ridge, dedicated to Pinot Noir. The 43-acre vineyard is located less than two miles from the Pacific Ocean and perched between 1,400 and 1,800 feet above sea level. It sits above the fog line, and this access to sunshine ensures full ripening, while cold air coming off the ocean causes the grapes to ripen slowly and retain bright acidity. To better understand the property, winemaker Chantal Forthun partnered with consultants — soil expert Pedro Parra and geologist Brenna Quigley — to identify differences in the soils and define various plots. With this knowledge, they can farm according to each block's specific needs. Sea View Ridge Pinot Noir exhibits lots of red fruit on the nose and palate, along with savory umami notes and bright acidity. It retails for around \$100 per bottle.

Freeman Winery



Akiko and Brian Freeman have been pursuing their perfect expression of cool-climate Pinot Noir since founding their eponymous winery in 2001. Their first estate vineyard, Gloria, sits in the westernmost part of the Russian River Valley, about 11 miles from the Pacific Ocean. Although a sunny spot, temperatures remain cool due to the daily fog that blankets the vines. Akiko, whose only training was under their first consulting winemaker, didn't want to push the limits of ripeness like her peers. The Gloria Vineyard Pinot Noir shows high-toned red fruit and floral notes on the nose. With its silky texture and long finish, it is a polished and refined Pinot Noir available for \$74. Freeman isn't just known for its elegant wines; as a longtime proponent of organic farming, Akiko received the Green & White Medal for Agricultural Excellence from her native country of Japan.

Hirsch Vineyards



In 1980, David Hirsch transformed an old sheep farm into a vineyard, and set the stage for the far Sonoma Coast as the epicenter of quality Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. For decades, the Hirsch family sold fruit to producers like Littorai and Williams Selyem, and Hirsch Vineyard found an identity through others' vineyard-designate bottlings. In 2002, Hirsch built a winery, more as a lab to test grapes and better understand farming decisions, but Hirsch wines garnered acclaim, leading to a new side of the business. Jasmine, the second generation, now serves as the head winemaker and general manager. She, along with other producers, pushed for a new appellation designation — West Sonoma Coast — to further differentiate their terroir from the broader Sonoma Coast. The winery offers a deep portfolio of site-specific wines well worth exploring, but the Hirsches consider the San Andreas Fault Pinot Noir to be their flagship wine. Nervy and energetic, with dense fruit on the palate, it's an exemplary West Sonoma Coast Pinot. At \$70 per bottle, it's also one of the best values out there.

Littorai



Ted Lemon's experience making wine in Burgundy led him and his wife, Heidi, also a winemaker, to seek out cool-climate sites that created nuanced Pinot Noir. The craggy, fog-shrouded coast, dominated by the ocean's influence, held potential, and they produced their first vintage in 1993. This year marks the release of their 30th vintage, which has grown to include a constellation of vineyards, both estate and leased, in Sonoma and the Anderson Valley. [Littorai's](#) wines are highly allocated, but it's worth the \$90 to try its Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, one of the few appellation-labeled wines in the vineyard-specific portfolio. There's a lot of fruit up front, plus minerality and spice in this structured Pinot.

Peay Vineyards



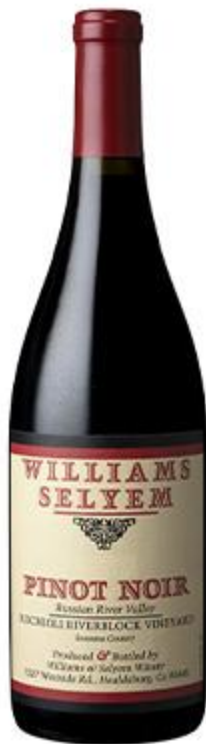
[Peay's](#) owners, Nick Peay, Andy Peay, and Vanessa Wong, are considered pioneers of West Sonoma Coast viticulture. The restrained, terroir-expressive style they sought couldn't be achieved in warm and sunny vineyard sites, so they looked toward the coast. Their remote 53-acre vineyard, planted by the trio in 1998, resides in the far northwest of the region, about four miles from the Pacific Ocean. Due to the cold temperatures, wind, and fog, the property tests the limits of viticulture. The growing season is long and often challenging, but results in small-quantity production wines with abundant acidity and structure. Certified organic, Peay follows a number of farming practices to minimize soil disturbance and ensure the health of its land. The Scallop Shelf Pinot (\$80) is nervy with lots of bright acidity and tension, plus elegant red fruits and a saline thread that hints at the ocean.

RAEN Winery



Fourth-generation vintners Carlo and Dante Mondavi turned to Pinot Noir for their first venture beyond Napa Cabernet. With winemaker Melanie McIntyre, the trio set their sights on the Sonoma Coast and sourced from various sub-appellations for their [RAEN](#) wines. McIntyre describes the Freestone-Occidental Bodega Vineyard as “forest meets meadow,” and the surrounding woodland does indeed seem to influence the wine. Wild herbs and forest floor aromas jump out on the nose. Fruit flavors of red cherries, blackberries, and blueberries concentrate on the palate. The vineyard is mere miles from Bodega Bay, and fog from the large body of water sits on the vines every morning, keeping them cool and bringing a freshness to the Pinot. At \$150, this is a Pinot for those who want to take a deeper dive into the nuances of the Sonoma Coast.

Williams Selyem



[Williams Selyem](#) started as a garage project for two friends, Burt Williams and Ed Selyem, in the late 1970s. Liking the results of their experiments, they went all-in on winemaking a short time later. They sourced fruit from many well-known vineyards, such as Hirsch and Rochioli, and emphasized vineyard-designated wines. In 1998, the winery, now under new ownership, planted its first estate vineyard. Over the years, the wines earned accolades and awards from critics and in competitions, and demand rose accordingly. An eager customer would have to wait two or three years on a waiting list to obtain bottles. Last year, Burgundy's Faiveley family bought a majority stake in the winery, signifying a new chapter. But exploring these wines still showcases a piece of Sonoma Pinot history. Williams Selyem's expertise with the Rochioli Vineyard shows in its lithe but densely fruited wine (\$110). Fine-grained tannins give way to a long finish.