

MACPHAIL FAMILY WINES: NEW 2012 PINOT NOIR RELEASES



These new releases from James MacPhail are outstanding examples of California (and Oregon) single vineyard Pinot Noirs. They are from among California's finest vineyards such as the Sangiacomo, Dutton, Pratt and Rita's Crown. These vineyards are located in ideal growing areas for Pinot Noir, especially along the Sonoma Coast and Green Valley. They produce ripe and elegant wines with good acidity and freshness and reveal distinctive characteristics.

One of the rewarding experiences tasting James MacPhail's wines is that he practices winemaking techniques that let each vineyard express itself in the wine. The Pinot Noirs are all crafted following rather similar winemaking regimes consisting of five to seven days of cold maceration and 11 to 14 days total cuvaision, the use of natural yeast, 100% destemming, native malo, and no fining or filtering.

The grapes, however, are blends from many different Pinot Noir clones: Dijon clones 115, 667, 828, and 777, as well as Pommard, Calera, Dehlinger, Swan, and others.

Although these wines are from different vineyards, they share certain characteristics in common, and they bear the stamp of James McPhail's winemaking. They are generally quite elegant tasting with dark cherry fruit and rich floral, earth, minerals and cedar nuances. They also share a velvet texture, roundness in the mouth, and have soft polished tannins. The wines of the 2012 vintage seems to be riper than we remember, but the wines are all beautifully balanced and have their own distinctive features, which makes tasting them so interesting and satisfying. All the wines are made in very limited quantities, usually around 300 cases or less. We also review a stunning new release of the Pinot Noir Mardikian Estate wine.



Visitors to Sonoma County are encouraged to stop by MacPhail's new tasting room in Sebastopol (shown here).

(Visit the winery's website at www.macphailwine.com)

Tasting Notes and Ratings

Macphail Family Wines

2012 Pinot Noir The Flyer Green Valley of the Russian River Valley (\$59) 92

This is a ripe and full flavored wine offering delicious raspberry, black cherry and plum fruit flavors. Aged 11 months *sur lie* in French oak, 50% new, it is full-bodied with spicy notes on the finish. Surprisingly ripe for Green Valley but nicely balanced.

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2012 Pinot Noir Dutton Ranch Green Valley of the Russian River Valley (\$49) 93

A beautifully balanced elegant wine sourced from one of the finest vineyards in Sonoma County. Aged 11 months *sur lie* in French oak it displays ripe and luscious red cherry fruit, lively acidity and excellent balance. It is a truly gorgeous wine of great purity of flavor and shows firm round tannins on the finish.



Winemaker James MacPhail

Macphail Family Wines

2012 Pinot Noir Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast (\$49) 92

The Pinot Noir Gap's Crown Vineyard is an elegant and refined wine on the palate showing exceptional elegance and purity of fruit. Aged *sur lie* 14 months. It is dry and mineral-like with firm round tannins on the finish.

Macphail Family Wines

2012 Pinot Noir Pratt Vineyard Sonoma Coast (\$49) 91

The Pinot Noir Pratt Vineyard has darker riper fruit than many of the other wines reviewed here. It is full-bodied with rich dark cherry fruit flavors, and a soft texture. Aged 11 months *sur lie* in French oak, 35% new, it is beautifully balanced with firm round tannins and a persistent finish.

Macphail Family Wines

2012 Pinot Noir Sundawg Ridge Green Valley of the Russian River Valley (\$49) 90+

Dark ruby in color, the Pinot Noir Sundawg Ridge exhibits an earthy nose of ripe dark fruit. It is rich, full-bodied and persistent on the palate with a lush mouth feel and high acidity on the finish.

Macphail Family Wines

2012 Pinot Noir Mardikian Estate Vineyard Sonoma Coast (\$85) 93

A gorgeous wine from the far reaches of the Sonoma Coast, revealing a medium ruby color, bold fruit flavors of black cherry pomegranate and strawberry. Beautifully balanced with dense fruit flavors and firm round tannins on the palate. A profound wine with lots of spice, good acidity and a long finish. Aged 16 months *sur lie* in used French oak. Inaugural Release.

Macphail Family Wines

2012 Pinot Noir Rose Rock Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills (\$49) 92

The Pinot Noir Rose Rock Vineyard displays a dark ruby color and aromas of ripe cherry flavors. Aged 11 months *sur lie*, it is soft and lush on the palate with good acidity and freshness and firm round tannins on the finish.

Macphail Family Wines

2012 Pinot Noir Sangiacomo Vineyard Sonoma Coast (\$49) 92

Like the Pinot Noir Pratt Vineyard, this Pinot Noir from the Sangiacomo Vineyard is big and earthy in style. It has lovely plum and black cherry flavors and is soft and round on the palate. Aged 11 months in 57% new French oak, it has densely concentrated flavors with considerable purity and refinement.



BY MIKE POTASHNIK & DON WINKLER

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2012 Pinot Noir Rita's Crown Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills (\$49) 91

This Pinot Noir from Rita's Crown Vineyard is surprisingly Syrah-like in character with lush dark plum fruit on the nose and soft and textured fruit on the palate. Aged 11 months *sur lie* in French oak, 40% new, it is big flavored and dense on the finish.

Macphail Family Wines

2012 Pinot Noir Anderson Creek Vineyard Anderson Valley (\$49) 92

The Pinot Noir Anderson Creek exhibits purity and elegance in a dark red berry fruit format. Like the Dutton Ranch Pinot Noir, it is perfectly balanced with fresh acidity and a bright color.

Mike Potashnik and Don Winkler
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