

Wine Spectator

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13 Sonoma Stars

New reviews from California's Sonoma County, where a wide range of grapes make outstanding wines

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This week we're looking at wines from our recent tastings that all hail from Sonoma. Because the region is so big (more than 30 million gallons of Sonoma County wine are produced each year), with so many different microclimates, Sonoma is known not just for one type of wine, but several—Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet, Zinfandel and Syrah all do well.

Dry Creek Valley is known for its Zinfandels, and here we have three examples: Collier Falls, Dark Horse and Wilson. There's also a Syrah from Dry Creek Valley, the Adobe Road Kemp Vineyard bottling, from a vineyard just west of Healdsburg, a rocky ridgeline property.

Pinot Noir and Chardonnay both do well in the cooler climates of Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast. This week's picks include Pinot Noirs from Freestone (a second label of Napa's Joseph Phelps Vineyards), A.P. Vin, Mueller, Athair and Clouds Rest. Clouds Rest is a new brand to us, from a vineyard situated in a region known as the Petaluma Gap, a valley that pulls in the coastal air, where the foggy clouds "rest."

Finally, here's our first look at Phillippe Melka's La Mekerra bottling, named after a river in Algeria near the childhood home of Melka's father. Melka owns this 8-acre vineyard, planted to Cabernet Franc and Merlot.

MELKA Métisse La Mekerra Vineyard Knights Valley 2007 Score: 92 / \$125

Firm, intense and vibrant, with chewy, chunky tannins wrapped around a core of dried currant, herb, mineral, sage and cedary oak notes. Full-bodied, ending with chewy tannins. Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Best from 2012 through 2022. 150 cases made. —
J.L.