



Wine Tasting Kit - From where does this Pinot grow?

In this fun and engaging wine tasting, the focus will be on identifying where each of four Pinot Noirs hails from. Guests will have the advantage of knowing that each wine will be made from Pinot Noir but will be given six different wine regions where Pinot Noir is produced to choose from. With four wines being poured, it will not be a simple process of elimination. The Tasting Guide will have a brief description of each regions style and a place to record tasting notes.

Preparation

1. Wine tasting should be done in a well lit room, free of cooking or other aromas. Make sure each guest has a location to taste the wine, and write down any tasting notes they might wish.
2. Print as many copies of the [Tasting Guide](#) (PDF) as you have guests and place one at each location.
3. Have a pair of sharp scissors ready and available.
4. Have a pen or pencil for each guest.
5. Wrap each bottle using a dark tissue paper (you can read the label through the paper is you use light paper). Using a magic marker or peel off sticker from your local party or office supply store number each bottle, 1-4.

Tasting Process

1. Introduce the theme and goal of the wine tasting by using the introductory section of the attached Tasting Guide.
2. Carefully open each wine. If you are the host and playing along as well, you will need to be careful to not examine the foil or the cork as it may give an indication of the wine.
3. Emphasize that the goal is to match the wine with the region where it is produced.
4. Pour each guest a two ounce pour of wine and allow them time to taste and record notes if they wish.
5. After all four wines have been tasted you can either require guests to write down their guesses, or optionally you may allow them to re-taste one or as many as they would like of the wines a second time.
6. If you want to award a prize to the person who has the most correct guesses, you can announce the prize. Make sure you have a plan of attack for ties!

7. As always, remind tasters that the real goal is to have fun, and to hopefully learn about the differences in Pinot Noir around the world.

Wines to Purchase

Purchasing wines for this tasting should not be very difficult with the help of a good local wine shop. Share the theme for your wine tasting and ask for suggestions. You can expect to pay around \$100 for four bottles of wine with the most expensive likely being the French Burgundy.

The key to a Pinot Noir wine tasting is selecting wines that are significantly different in style. If possible it is always a good idea to do a little homework. If you can, purchase and taste the wines in advance and convince yourself that the style differences are pronounced.

Burgundy- The emulated originator of Pinot, this wine is the standard bearer for the varietal. Layered with complex aromas and flavors, Burgundy is home to some of the worlds' most expensive and sought after wines. You can certainly get carried away with spending a small fortune on bottles (Domaine Romanee de Conti, DRC for short, runs around \$10,000) but you should be able to find nice value around \$20.

Willamette Valley- For the last 30-odd years this Oregonian AVA has built a reputation on world class Pinot Noir. This New World offering is typically more fruit forward than Burgundy but still offers the body of its French counterpart. Prices are not as astronomical as Burgundy but the top level still fetches high prices. Yet, there are plenty of reasonable options from \$10-\$30.

Erath 2009 Pinot Noir Estate Selection \$30
Adelsheim 2009 Pinot Noir \$22
A to Z 2010 Pinot Noir \$15

Russian River Valley- This Californian AVA offers another New World look at the varietal in the cool vineyards just north of the San Francisco Bay. These tend to emphasize the fruit a Pinot can produce, and offer lush, juicy versions. Similar to Willamette Valley, you can spend a fair amount on a bottle but values are to be had in the \$10-\$30 range.

Belle Glos Meomi 2009 Pinot Noir \$25
Chateau St. Jean 2008 Pinot Noir \$20
Castle Rock 2009 Pinot Noir \$13

Marlborough- In New Zealand, several regions are staking their claim as top Pinot producers. Marlborough may make the best case in this regard and can strike a nice balance between Burgundy's earthy components and New World fruitiness. Kiwi Pinot is still evolving, with many small producers participating, which makes it a bit trickier to nail down broad characteristics. Its youth also allows for some very good values.

Cloudy Bay 2008 Pinot Noir \$30
Kim Crawford 2011 Pinot Noir \$20
Matua Valley 2010 Pinot Noir \$13

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