

2021 VINTAGE NOTES

BY WINEMAKER MATT COURTNEY

The 2021 vintage felt like a generous gift from Mother Nature: The season was warm, steady, and chaos-free. Overall, consistent temperatures and favorable weather allowed us and our partners to focus on growing exceptional grapes, rather than mitigating unfavorable circumstances, resulting in wines that we are happy to share today.

The winter of 2021 was relatively dry in California, leading to an early bud break - the moment grapes wake up from their winter hibernation - and small yields. Beautiful warm weather during the summer and the absence of extreme heat spikes in the latter half of the season allowed for excellent fruit quality at the time of harvest. As the season progressed, the theme of "early" continued, leading to a prompt harvest in advance of fall rains.

With nearly ideal growing conditions such as these, it should come as no surprise that the wines are incredible. The Pinot Noirs offered in this release are without a doubt the most deeply and vibrantly colored wines we have ever produced at Arista. Their flavors and aromas are as dynamic as their deep ruby color, with a beautiful and unique array of fruit-derived perfumes on display in each of the wines.




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While the exceptionally high quality of these wines can be attributed to the specialness of the vintage, I also believe that constant improvements in the cellar over the last decade have played a pivotal role in elevating our wines.



As we fine-tune our farming practices site by site, we're able to achieve near-perfect levels of concentration and ripeness without excessive alcohol, allowing us to produce balanced and multidimensional wines. We've also tailored our use of whole cluster fermentation - the practice of using some whole, intact grape clusters in a red wine fermentation - has been tailored specifically for each block of every vineyard. Across our estate and in collaboration with our grower-partners, these improvements have given our wines an added level of vivacious fruit aromas and flavors, as well as an increased finesse and complexity.

I believe these wines represent a new high-water mark for wine quality at Arista. I hope you enjoy drinking the 2021 wines as much as we've enjoyed making them, they're true reflections of a wonderful season at Arista and across California.

Cheers,
Matt Courtney



2021 RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY CHARDONNAY



Our Russian River Valley Chardonnay bottling is a blend of barrels from five Russian River Valley vineyards: Flora Marie, El Diablo, Ritchie, Banfield, and our Westside Road Estate. It's always an exceptional introduction to the character of Russian River Valley Chardonnay in any vintage. Combining the best elements of our favorite vineyards with slightly less new oak, this cuvée is wonderfully easy-drinking in its youth, yet maintains an extraordinary degree of quality and age-ability.

The 2021 Arista Russian River Valley Chardonnay boasts brilliant clarity and a gorgeous greenish hue that catches the eye. On the nose, it offers aromas of lemon-lime soda, wet stones, lemon drop, and white flowers that give it a vibrant and refreshing character. The palate shows a firm and zippy texture that is beautifully balanced by a subtle mineral tone, adding a degree of complexity to the wine. The finish is crisp and clean, leaving a mouthwatering sensation that lingers pleasantly. This Chardonnay is a testament to the exceptional quality of the Russian River Valley. It's a perfect wine for any occasion, from casual gatherings to elegant dinner parties.

Peak drinking window: 2023 - 2029.

2021 BANFIELD VINEYARD CHARDONNAY



Banfield Vineyard is one of the oldest vineyards in Sonoma County, whose original Zinfandel vines were planted by the Banfield family in 1880 and remain in production today. The Chardonnay block was planted 100 years later, but still enjoys the status of being one of the oldest Chardonnay vineyards in California. These nearly 50-year-old vines continue to produce a tiny crop of the most intensely flavored and aromatic Chardonnay in the Arista portfolio.

The 2021 Banfield Vineyard Chardonnay is open and delicious right out of the bottle. Classic Banfield notes of bright citrus and Granny Smith apple are accented by hints of freshly cut tropical fruits. As always, the wine was fermented and aged in traditional Burgundian barrels, but the oak influence is subtle and contributes a nuanced toasty note and hints of caramelized sugar. A citrus-inflected minerality gives the finish a tangy lift while keeping the palate lively and balanced.

Peak drinking window: 2024 - 2034.

2021 EL DIABLO VINEYARD CHARDONNAY

El Diablo Vineyard is a steep, east-facing site on Windsor Ridge in the eastern reaches of the Russian River Valley appellation. This orientation allows the vines to benefit from the warming rays of the morning sun, while being protected from the direct impact of mid-summer afternoon heat. The result is a wine made from grapes that are fully ripe, but never lacking in bright acidity. In fact, the El Diablo Vineyard bottling is consistently one of our most focused and linear Chardonnays.

The 2021 Arista El Diablo Vineyard Chardonnay is a beautifully balanced wine that showcases the exceptionality of the vintage. On the nose, the wine offers an incredible bouquet of toasted marshmallow, white pepper, ripe pear, and lime zest that gives way to bursts of mango and grilled pineapple. On the palate, the wine boasts perfectly judged acid that provides a refreshing zing without being overtly tart. Subtle oak notes give this Chardonnay wine a creamy, caramelized sugar without weighing down the bright, vibrant wine. This is El Diablo Vineyard at its absolute best.

Peak drinking window: 2023 - 2031.

2021 RITCHIE VINEYARD CHARDONNAY

Ritchie Vineyard is without a doubt one of California's Grand Cru Chardonnay sites. For nearly 50 years, Kent Ritchie has been farming this special slope in the heart of the Russian River Valley, and the resulting wines are legendary. We feel incredibly fortunate to work with the oldest and highest block in the vineyard, which is one of the oldest plantings of Chardonnay in the Russian River Valley. These ancient vines produce a small crop of small-berried clusters every year, and the wines are consistently impressive for their balance, intensity, and poise.

The 2021 Ritchie Vineyard Chardonnay is packed with energy and tightly wound. Made exclusively from the "Old Wente" selection of Chardonnay grown on textbook Goldridge soils, the wine is citrus-driven and buoyed by persistent, refreshing acidity. At first, lemon-lime notes drive the aromatics, and the wine is racy and lean on the palate. With time in the glass, a procession of hidden flavors emerges: grilled pineapple, lemon tart, and creme brûlée all add to the incredible complexity of this bright and aromatic expression of New World Chardonnay. The 2021 season yielded spectacular wines built for aging, and the Ritchie Chardonnay is a prime example.

Peak drinking window: 2025 - 2035.





2021 PERLI VINEYARD CHARDONNAY



The Perli Vineyard Chardonnay is surprisingly opulent in 2021, especially for a vineyard that is so far north. Typically one of the racier wines in the Arista Chardonnay line up, this release fuses tropical fruit notes like banana, grilled pineapple, and the linear citrus and mineral components we traditionally find in Perli Vineyard Chardonnays. The entry is plush and mouth-filling, followed by a pleasant tanginess and a lovely lingering finish.

Peak drinking window: 2023 - 2028.

2021 RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY PINOT NOIR



The 2021 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir blends several vineyards from across the storied Russian River appellation, which makes it a prime snapshot of our home region as a whole in each vintage. In 2021, conditions for Pinot Noir in the Russian River Valley were exceptional, leading to deeply colored, intensely aromatic, wonderfully vibrant wines.

This ruby-hued wine shows classic Pinot Noir aromas of black plum, tart cherry, and cola. Across the palate, similar ripe fruit notes are abundant and buttressed by the tangy acidity. The firm tannins, which are a hallmark of the 2021 vintage, round out the long finish on this quintessential Sonoma Pinot Noir.

Peak drinking window: 2023 - 2028.



2021 FERRINGTON PINOT NOIR

Ferrington Vineyard rests on a gently sloping bench overlooking the town of Boonville in the heart of Anderson Valley. One of the earliest sites to have been planted in this historic appellation, Ferrington boasts some of the oldest Pinot Noir vines in the region. These old vines produce wines with wonderful complexity and effortless balance.

The Anderson Valley in general, and Ferrington Vineyard in particular, are famous for fusing depth and density with electric acidity, and the 2021 Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir is a perfect example: A hint of earthiness blows off to reveal layers of tangy red cherry, cinnamon candy, pomegranate, cranberry, and roasted chestnut. In true Anderson Valley fashion, elegance and vibrancy define the feel of this wine, with snappy, just-picked red fruit and a subtle cola note carrying the long, smooth finish.

Peak drinking window: 2024 - 2034.



2021 JOSEPH SWAN TRENTON PINOT NOIR

The Joseph Swan Vineyard is a special piece of Russian River Valley history. One of the first sites in the appellation planted to Pinot Noir, this vineyard is a centerpiece of Sonoma County winemaking. Over the past half-century, its reputation has risen to legendary status, and the highly coveted cuttings taken from these vines are now known as the "Swan" clone - possibly the most sought-after clone for Pinot Noir in California. Adding to the mystique, in all this time no winery has ever been given access to this vineyard - until now. Arista now has the privilege of working with a small amount of Pinot Noir from this historic site, and the results have been extraordinary. The wines have an uncanny capacity to be some of the most concentrated and explosive in the entire cellar, while also being among the most weightless, aromatic, and ethereal.

The 2021 is a bright ruby in color, with a range of aromas including candied violets, barely ripe wild raspberries, and crunchy red fruit. These flavors continue on the palate, combining with a beautiful sous bois forest floor element. The mouthfeel is exceptional, matching firm tannins with a bright, vibrant feel.

Peak drinking window: 2025 through 2033



2021 KANZLER VINEYARD PINOT NOIR



Kanzler Vineyard is one of the more recent additions to the Arista portfolio. On paper, this vineyard has always had incredible potential, combining 25-year-old vines and coveted Goldridge soils with organic farming at the hands of Eric Neil. Eric is a guru of the Russian River Valley, and the wines from the Kanzler Vineyard more than live up to the hype. The combination of the light, sandy Goldridge soils paired with the decidedly cooler climate of this corner of the Russian River Valley appellation south of Sebastopol yields an especially vibrant Pinot Noir.

Crushed wild berry and tart plum flavors match perfectly with the bouquet of violets and exotic spices evident in the 2021. The wine is packed with aromatic and flavor intensity yet feels nearly weightless across the palate. The 2021 Kanzler is arguably the most precise, crystalline, and exquisitely balanced Arista Pinot Noir of the vintage.

Peak drinking window: 2024 - 2034.

2021 MONONI VINEYARD PINOT NOIR



The Mononi Vineyard has been a part of the Arista portfolio since Al and Janis McWilliams founded the winery in 2002. The site's current owner Paul Mononi grew up within a few hundred yards of this vineyard on Olivet Lane, and has been a grape grower his entire life - and it shows in his impeccable, deeply flavored Pinot Noir. Planted in 1998, the Pinot on this three-acre plot is mature and, as a result, produces a remarkably consistent wine vintage after vintage. We are honored to be the sole recipient of the Mononi family's stellar grapes.

The 2021 Mononi Vineyard Pinot Noir is, as always, the most ethereal of our vineyard-designate wines. Yet, this silken wine still maintains the vibrant purple hue that characterizes all of our 2021 Pinot Noirs. Aromatically, the wine is delicate and shy at first but reveals the trademark Mononi perfume of crushed cherries and roses with time in the glass. On the palate, the experience intensifies with vibrant red and blue fruits; crisp just-picked raspberries; and white pepper. Firm tannins and vibrant acidity define this wine, which should evolve beautifully over time.

Peak drinking window: 2024 - 2034.

2021 PERLI VINEYARD PINOT NOIR



Perched high above the Pacific Ocean on the Mendocino Coast at an elevation of 1,800 feet, Perli Vineyard is easily the most visually spectacular site that we work with at Arista. The steep, 60% slopes face south, and provide expansive views of the Sonoma Coast and Pacific Ocean just a few miles away.

This proximity to the famous vineyards that dot the ridge tops just over the county line is immediately evident in the glass with the 2021 Perli: exotic notes of forest floor, blue fruit, and wild berry are hallmarks of these coastal vineyards. Yet, the grippy tannins and firm acidity that appear on the palate speak to the slightly cooler climate of Perli's more northerly location. Notes of pencil lead, plum preserves, candied ginger, and sassafras emerge over time in this expansive yet impeccably balanced Pinot noir.

Peak drinking window: 2023 - 2030.

2021 REULING VINEYARD PINOT NOIR



The 2021 vintage marks the Arista debut with the Reuling vineyard, and we are thrilled with the results. We have long admired the Reuling Vineyard wines from the likes of Peter Michael and Mark Aubert, and we are honored to be working with this site ourselves. The vineyard lies just south of the town of Forestville in the much-lauded Laguna Ridge neighborhood of the Russian River Valley. The soils are a beautiful example of the famous Russian River Valley Goldridge soil series that seems to give Pinot Noir a perfect balance of depth and vivacity.

This 2021 Reuling opens with explosive aromas of crushed wild blackberry, candied grapefruit, cola, and violets. The palate shows classic Russian River Valley attributes including polished tannins and broad, mouth-coating blue-fruit flavors. The use of 20% whole clusters during fermentation adds balance to the wine, in addition to a spicy, savory note on the palate. These underlying hints plus an edge of minerality contribute to the wine's abundant and concentrated ripe-fruit character. Fine, and persistent tannins add interest to the long finish of this wine, which has the stuffing to age for a decade or more.

Peak drinking window: 2023 - 2033.



2021 UV LUCKY WELL VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

Lucky Well Vineyard is perched at the very top of Stoetz Ridge, the landmass that divides the Sonoma Coast from the Russian River Valley. As such, wines made from this site always express the qualities of both regions: the lifted wild berry fruit and earthiness of the Coast, and the power, richness, and complexity of the Russian River Valley.

The 2021 Lucky Well Vineyard Pinot Noir is back with a vengeance at its traditional place at the top of the Arista lineup. This is easily the best Lucky Well we've ever made, which is saying a lot for a wine that was selected as one of the Top 100 wines in the world by Wine Spectator last year. But the 2021 vintage is just that special. This wine has it all: a shockingly vibrant ruby color, incredible aromatics, density, intensity, a seamless texture, and perfect weight and balance. A strong contender for the best wine ever made at Arista, full stop. This is Pinot perfection.

Peak drinking window: 2024 through 2036



2021 UV VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

UV Vineyard sits at the top of a low-lying ridge in the heart of the Russian River Valley AVA. This is truly the tenderloin of the appellation - to the east lie the warmer lowlands of the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and to the west lie the exposed ridges of the Sonoma coast. The UV Vineyard lies in the "Goldilocks" zone in between these two extremes. There are many famous Russian River Valley vineyards in this narrow corridor, but maybe none with such a pure example of Goldridge soil, the almost white powdery soil series that gives Russian River Valley wines their renowned energy and elegance.

Firm tannins frame crisp red fruit flavors on the bright and lively palate of the 2021 UV Vineyard Pinot Noir. Aromatically, the wine has a lot of range with earthy black truffle notes morphing into high-toned crushed raspberry, rose petals, and fresh alpine strawberries. This is a serious, tightly wound Pinot Noir that needs time to open up. Better yet, stash a bottle in the back of your cellar - this wine is poised to blossom dramatically in the next 3 to 5 years.

Peak drinking window: 2026 - 2036.



2021 ESTATE PINOT NOIR

Our Estate Pinot Noir bottling is the centerpiece of the Arista portfolio. This wine is made exclusively from sustainably farmed vines, which are nurtured by our team across ten acres of our Westside Road estate. Of all the neighborhoods of the Russian River Valley, Middle Reach subzone - where we are located - has risen to fame as host to the oldest vineyards in the appellation, and also as the source of its most prodigious wines. We planted our vineyard here in 2006 using 100% heritage selections of Pinot Noir under the direction of the legendary vineyard manager Ulises Valdez.



The 2021 Estate Pinot Noir is a textbook example of what is possible in this celebrated appellation. Concentrated yet balanced, the wine melds notes of boysenberry, raspberry, black cherry, violets, and toasted brioche. This wine falls in line with traditional Pinot Noirs from the area with its fine-grained tannins and well-integrated acidity.

In the glass, its highly polished tannin profile and explosive blue fruit flavors offer undiluted luxury on the palate. A sublime juxtaposition of decadence and gravitas, the 2021 Estate Pinot Noir represents the purest expression of our ethos as grape growers and winemakers at Arista.

Peak drinking window: 2026 - 2040.