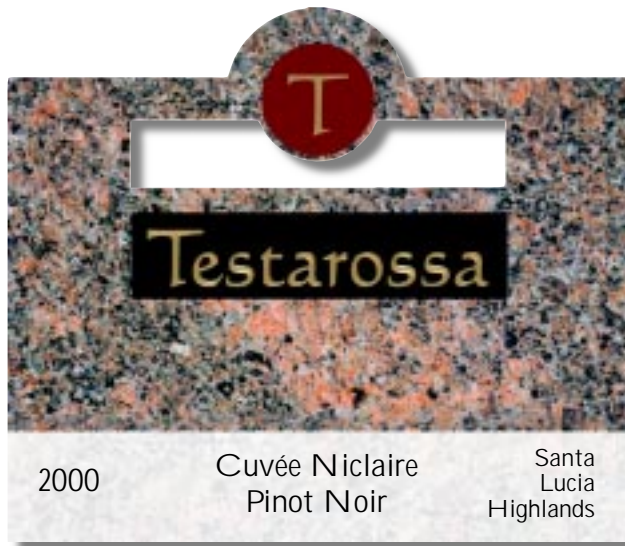


# 2000 Cuvée Niclaire Pinot Noir



California Central Coast

## 1999 Vintage

**92 points**

The 1999 Pinot Noir Cuvée Niclaire is a selection from the finest barrels in Testarossa's cellars. According to the back label, it predominantly came from the Pisoni and Sleepy Hollow vineyards. The nose reveals an exotic, earthy, gamy quality along with plenty of black cherry and plum fruit reminiscent of some Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Grand Cru red Burgundies. The color is a healthy dark plum/ruby. In the mouth, it is full, expansive, and savory. This stunningly complex, rich Pinot Noir could easily take its place in a tasting of some of Burgundy's finest Grand Crus. It possesses impressive style, glycerin, richness, aromatics, and flavor.

*Robert Parker's Wine Advocate - June 2002*

## 91 points - #2 TOP-SCORING PINOT OF 2002

A smooth, rich, seamless effort, dark, concentrated and complex, with layers of plum, black cherry, blackberry and spicy flavors framed by smoky, toasty oak. Finishes with a long, mouth-coating finish.

*Wine Spectator - Annual Pinot Review  
September 2002*

## 1998 Vintage

**94 points - Cellar selection**

This wine is profoundly satisfying to smell, with its refined, sappy blackberry, spice and smoke aromas. If that isn't enough, it's a dream in the mouth—raspberry nectar with piquant spices and good acidity to give it balance. Minted tannins provide velvety grip.

*The Wine Enthusiast - December 2001*

**91 points**

The superb 1998 Pinot Noir Cuvée Niclaire exhibits the most saturated ruby color as well as earthy, animal scents intermixed with notions of spice and rich black cherry fruit. Burgundian-like in the mouth, with full body, layers of fruit and ripeness, an opulent texture, and a dense, chewy finish, this is an outrageously delicious, complex Pinot Noir.

*Robert Parker's Wine Advocate - June 2002*

## 1997 Vintage

**91 points**

Deep, rich and spicy, and with a vineyard-driven flavor that shouldn't be taken lightly (it's from the well-regarded Sleepy Hollow and Pisoni vineyards). This is a full-bodied, full-force Pinot that maintains balance. Cinnamon and nutmeg nuances add to the vibrant core of first-class raspberry/cherry fruit.

*The Wine Enthusiast - October 2000*

# 2000 CUVÉE NICLAIRE PINOT NOIR

The 2000 release of the Cuvée Niclaire Pinot Noir combines four unique vineyards from two of the best Pinot Noir appellations in California. The first three vineyards are located in the Santa Lucia Highlands Appellation of Monterey County. Listed from north to south they are: Sleepy Hollow, Garys', and Pisoni. The only vineyard represented in this wine that lies outside the Santa Lucias is the Bien Nacido Vineyard, located in the Santa Maria Valley of Santa Barbara County. The 2000 vintage marks the first time that fruit from the Garys' and Bien Nacido vineyards has made it into the Cuvée Niclaire. Prior to this vintage the blend had always been comprised of various percentages of Pisoni and Sleepy Hollow Pinot Noir. We have designated our 2000 Cuvée Niclaire with a Santa Lucia Highlands Appellation because only 14 percent of the wine comes from the Santa Maria Valley, while the remaining 86 percent is from within the Santa Lucias.

We selected our 2000 Cuvée Niclaire barrels as we always do: by tasting lots and lots of individual barrels. The first step in the selection process was to taste every barrel of Pinot in the Testarossa cellars no matter which vineyard it came from. We rated each barrel on a scale from zero to three, with three being a potential Niclaire barrel and zero being something we sell out in bulk. Luckily we didn't have any zero barrels in our cellars! Then we took the top ten or twelve scoring barrels from our large tasting and put together different cuvées of these barrels, based on overall scores. Out of all the cuvées tasted the favorite turned out to be made from one barrel of Bien Nacido, one barrel of Sleepy Hollow, two barrels of Garys' and three barrels of Pisoni Pinot Noir. These seven barrels were then blended in a small tank shortly before being bottled on January 10, 2002.

Because of the forwardness of the fruit from the 2000 vintage, the 2000 Cuvée Niclaire may be enjoyed at a younger age than one might typically expect. But it is also a very balanced expression of Pinot Noir and I predict that it will not only drink well young but will also age gracefully for many years to come. (EK)

## VINEYARDS:

Bien Nacido Vineyard, Garys' Vineyard, Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, Pisoni Vineyard

**Appellation:** Santa Lucia Highlands  
(Monterey County)

**First Testarossa Vintage:** 1997

## HARVEST:

**Average Sugar:** 25.2° Brix

**Average Total acidity:** 7.9 g/L

**Average pH:** 3.41

**Date harvested:** September 12-21, 2000

## BOTTLE:

**Alcohol:** 14.5%

**Total acidity:** 6.0 g/L

**pH:** 3.59

**Bottling date:** January 10, 2002

**Time in oak:** 15 months

**Percent new oak:** 50%

**Production:** 305 six-bottle cases, 750mL

**Release date:** September 1, 2002

**Suggested Retail Price:** \$68.00 bottle

**Optimum time for consumption:** 2002-2009