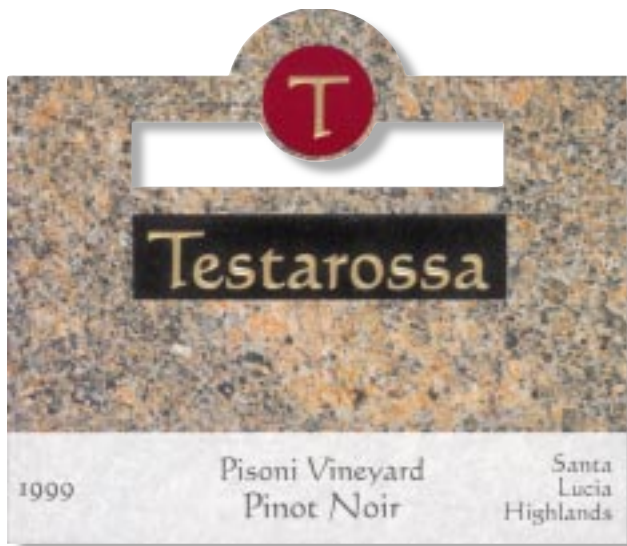


Pisoni Vineyard Pinot Noir



New York Times

"Balanced, juicy, pretty, vibrant"

Steve Tanzer

"Supple, sweet and easygoing"

Wine Spectator

"Flavors that turn quite rich and elegant."

Wine Advocate

"A spicy, Burgundian-like Pinot Noir"

1998 Vintage

3 puffs

Arguably the best wine we have ever tasted to date from the highly regarded Pisoni Vineyard, this deeply stuffed bottling is long on fruit and carries complexing hints of terroir that show up as dried leaf and quietly loamy notes. A bit of cocoa-like richness is aligned to the wine's fleshy, full-bodied texture, and its mouthfilling, succulent, intense, keenly focused flavors seemingly linger forever.

Connoisseur's Guide - February 2001

92 points

Big, ripe, fleshy, especially for the vintage, rich with plum, black cherry and berryish notes framed by pretty smoky, toasty oak.

The Wine Spectator - February 2001

1997 Vintage

92 points

Testarossa went for a plush, rich style in their '97 Pisoni, a wine robed in berry fruit and silken as the texture of melting chocolate. It's almost as weighty as a syrah, with a complex scent of smoky lapsang souchong tea over dark berries and plums. Where California puts on the velvet gloves.

Wine & Spirits - April 2000



California Central Coast

1999 PISONI VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

The Santa Lucia Highlands have been garnering world-wide recognition lately for the high quality of the Pinot Noirs coming out of this relatively new appellation. That praise is due in part to the great wines made from fruit grown by Gary Pisoni at his 38-acre ranch which sits in a secluded area overlooking the Salinas River Valley, at about 1,200 feet in elevation. Gary discovered this piece of property in the early 1980s and he thought it would be ideal for growing Pinot Noir. His goal was to produce grapes capable of rivaling the quality of red Burgundy, Gary's passion in life. The climate is slightly warmer than most of the Santa Lucia Highlands, with less wind and much shallower soil. Each vine's growth is limited by this soil and the lack of water found there, and this assures a very low yield of extremely concentrated fruit.

1999 was Testarossa's third vintage of Pisoni Pinot, and from the day we brought the grapes into the winery we knew it was going to be the ripest, most extracted Pisoni we had made yet. Rob tasted some of the berries before they went into the open-top fermenter and is remembered as saying, "This is some of the most special fruit I've ever tasted!" The 1999 growing season at the Pisoni Vineyard was a mirror image of the cool summer of 1998. The harvest dates were a mere three days apart, October 8 in 1998 and October 11 in 1999. The crop size was slightly higher in 1999 but the concentration of flavors in each grape was also more intense. We destemmed the Pinot entirely and gently dumped the grapes into a single 5-ton fermenter. After a 4-day cold soak we inoculated the tank with Assmannshausen yeast. The fermentation started slowly, but in its fifth day it proceeded to take off like a rocket. With three punchdowns a day and some fairly high fermentation temperatures, we managed to get maximum extraction from the fruit. The press wine was added to the free run, then after two weeks of settling in tank we sent the wine to barrel in early November. The wine was raked only once, in the spring of 2000, then continued to age in a mixture of new and used French oak until December 2000, when we knew it was time to bottle. Because of the weight of this wine, it should age well for a longer period of time than is normal for a California Pinot Noir, at least 10 years, but probably more. (EK)

Color: Dark ruby
Nose: Dark, jammy fruits. Black cherries, plums, ripe raspberries. Smokey and spicy. Rose petals.
Palate: Firm tannins and tightly focused fruit flavors. Dusty. cinnamon, spice, cocoa. Extremely long, fruity finish. Best set aside for a few more months, this wine will develop into one of our best Pinots. Drink over the next three to six years.

VINEYARD

Appellation: Santa Lucia Highlands
(Monterey County)

Owner: Gary Pisoni

Vine Age: 7 years

Acreage (for Testarossa only):

Chardonnay, 3 acres, planted in 1982

Pinot Noir, 2.1 acres, planted in 1992

Yield: 2.75 tons per acre

Soil Composition: Decomposed granite & clay

Elevation: 1,200 feet

Exposure: Southeasterly facing slopes

Climate: Summer temperatures ranging from 75° to 85°
in the afternoon, and between 50° to 55° at night

First Testarossa vintage: 1997

HARVEST

Sugar: 25.5° Brix

Total acidity: 7.6 g/L

pH: 3.44

Date harvested: October 11, 1999

BOTTLE

Alcohol: 14.9%

Total acidity: 5.8 g/L

pH: 3.65

Bottling date: December 12, 2000

Time in oak: 14 months

Percent new oak: 60%

Production: 456 6-bottle cases, 750mL
50 cases, 375mL

Release date: June 1, 2001

Suggested Retail Price: 750mL, \$ 55.00
375mL, \$ 27.50

Optimum time for consumption: 2003-2007