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Tasting Highlights: California Pinot Noir

Today, this sometimes maddening grape is winning more hearts than breaking them

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California Pinot Noir has never been more popular, and with good reason. Not only have producers found their rhythm growing the so-called "heartbreak grape," a recent string of solid vintages means that quality is better than ever. This group of Pinot Noirs demonstrates the diversity of appellations best suited to the grape, from the Sonoma Coast to the central coast's Edna and Arroyo Grande valleys.



R & K Muschenetz/Cephas

Talley's tasting room sits at the feet of the Santa Lucia Range, in the Arroyo Grande region.

Wine	Score	Price
KANZLER Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2004	93	\$42
Wonderful intensity, richness, depth and concentration, without being heavy. The range of flavors is fascinating, with spice, earth, plum, hazelnut, nutmeg and raspberry, ending with a long, elegant, complex aftertaste that picks up a hint of anise and floral notes. Drink now through 2009. 257 cases made. —J.L.		