

Winemaker Scott Rich is just now releasing his 2011 vintage wines. He crafts his Pinot Noirs for structure, richness, depth and graceful aging. As a result, they benefit from extra time before release. The wines are held in bottle for a year or longer. The 2011 wines were bottled in July 2013.

Scott sources fruit from a number of exotic vineyard sites that are often

on the edge and challenging to farm. The remainder of the 2012 Talisman Pinot Noirs will be reviewed in this issue elsewhere.

Visit the website at www.talismanwines.com. A tasting room is located in Glen Ellen in a historic building that is over 110 years old. Hours are 12:00 to 5:00 Thursday through Monday, but appointments are encouraged.

2011 Talisman Gunsalus Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., 172 cases, \$50. Released October 2014. Pamela and Glen Gunsalus carefully farm this Green Valley of Russian River Valley vineyard planted in Goldridge soil. · *Moderately light ruby color in the glass. Intensely perfumed with aromas of Bing cherry, sandalwood and spice. Charming and elegant in style, with middleweight flavors of cherry and baking spice rounded out with supple tannins. Very juicy on the finish with some persistence. A typical cherry-driven wine from this vineyard, showing a slightly more demure character in this cool vintage.*

Score:

91



2011 Talisman Red Dog Vineyard Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., \$52. Released October 2014. This vineyard is located high above Bennett Valley at 800 feet elevation on the northwestern side of Sonoma Mountain. A very low yield site. · *Moderately light reddish-purple color in the glass. The nose is captivating, with hi-tone aromas of red plum, red currant, suis-bois, red hots and peppery spice. Light to mid weight flavors of dark red fruits accented with hints of spice and toast. The balance is impeccable, with soft, supportive tannins and bright acidity. The wine develops more interest over time in the glass and was clearly better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.*

Score:

92



2011 Talisman Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 220 cases, \$65. Released October 2014. From a unique site at 850-1,000 feet elevation which has very cold night time temperatures. · *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose is shy but pleasant with aromas of red and black berries with a hint of cola. The tasty core of blueberry, boysenberry, sarsaparilla and spice flavors is framed by firm tannins that add a touch of astringency to the finish. The wine has good brightness and a seductively soft texture, finishing with good length. It definitely becomes more appealing over time in the glass, but seems disjointed at this juncture. Alcohol warmth peaks out and oak lingers on the aftertaste, especially the following day from a previously opened bottle.*

Score:

89



2011 Talisman Huckleberry's Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 73 cases, \$60. Release January 2015. From a 1/2-acre vineyard in West Sonoma County owned and hand-tended by Bill and Lauren Hipp. The vineyard is named after their dog Huckleberry. · *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas leap out of the glass upon opening and fill the room with scents of black cherry sauce, raspberry jam and nutmeg. The attack of black cherry fruit on the mid palate is stunning, but there is much more to discover in this special wine. Look for Moroccan spices, savory herbs, red licorice, and earthiness. Mid to fullbodied with a suave texture and a finish that makes you shake your head in wonderment. The wine was still pumping the aromatic and flavor goodness the following day from a previous opened and re-corked bottle. As good as this wine is now, it will reward further cellaring because the balance is spot-on.*

Score:

93



2011 Talisman Aadastra Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 189 cases, \$56. Release April 2015. From a certified organic vineyard tended by Chris Thorpe and son-in-law Edwin Richards. Clones are 2A, 113, Pommard and Swan selection. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine is showing a pretty good whack of oak that should integrate by the time it is released in the spring. The aromas and mid weight flavors of ripe, dark cherry and raspberry show promise, and are enhanced by nuances of spice, dark chocolate and anise. The charge of fruit often experienced from this vineyard is more modest in this vintage, but the wine has more charm than usual.*

Score:

90



2011 Talisman Wildcat Mountain Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 121 cases, \$52. Release April 2015. This is from the highest elevation vineyard in the Los Carneros AVA. Soils are decomposed volcanic basalt. The site is very cool with exposure to maritime breezes from San Pablo Bay. Clones 115, 667, 777 and Swan selection. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The deep, earthy nose features black raspberry, blackberry and black cherry fruit in abundance. This wine really wows the palate upon entry with layers of luscious dark cherry and raspberry flavors. Very silky in texture, with tame tannins and a persistent, extremely long and intense berry-driven finish. Beautifully balanced for age ability. Still stunning the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Superlatives do little justice to this special wine.*

Score:

94

