

## Talisman Continues to Excel

Last year I wrote a feature on Scott and Marta Rich and the outstanding age worthy Pinot Noirs they have been producing since 1993. I have tasted Scott's wines dating back to the 1997 vintage and have had nothing but high praise for every release I have sampled. The three 2007 wines reviewed below are no exception.

Scott is a lover of unique Pinot Noir terroirs and searches for sites that are challenging but expressive. He says, "I like to express terroir - that is the beauty of Pinot Noir - and that comes through in the more extreme vineyard sites."

Scott believes his wines best express their terroir after some aging so he directs his winemaking toward producing wines with potential for longevity. He notes, "I make my wines to age, even if on one gives them a chance." Because of his insistence on age ability, his wines are not flashy when young. Aware of this, he carefully barrel and bottle ages his wines before offering them so they are approachable upon release. His current releases reviewed below are from the 2007 vintage and have been released at a time when some producers are already releasing their 2009 vintage wines.



Scott's refined winemaking style leads to consistently classic Pinot Noir that is pure, nuanced and balanced. You won't find any jelly jar blockbusters, but the wines are not wimpy by any means. As you read through the reviews below, you will find a consistency of quality combined with a distinctiveness that reflects each wine's unique site of origin. The 2007 Pinot Noirs show a more gentle touch and are more approachable than usual. That said, all the wines will age very well. I suggest buying several bottles of your favorites, lay them down in your cellar, and follow their progress over the next 10 to 15 years. It could be a revelation.

Talisman small production Pinot Noirs are sold online at [www.talismanwine.com](http://www.talismanwine.com) and through a mailing list. The wines are reasonably priced considering the high quality. The small winery is in the town of Sonoma in a somewhat hidden enclave of artisan wineries (Eighth Street Wineries - [www.eighthstreetwineries.com](http://www.eighthstreetwineries.com)).

Tasting is by appointment (707-258-5722). Scott and Marta are very gracious and you will thoroughly enjoy a visit to their humble winery.

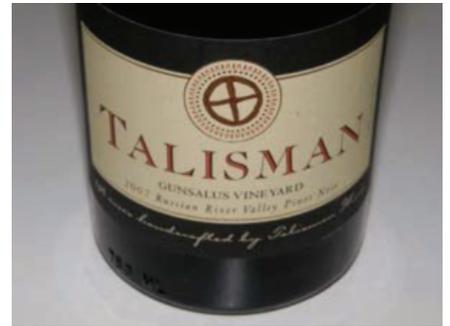


**2007 Talisman Gunsalus Vineyard  
Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**

14.5% alc., pH 3.71, 296 cases, \$36. Pamela and Glen Gunsalus farm this vineyard located in Green Valley.

Dijon clones 114, 115, 667 and 777 are planted in Sebastopol loam and Goldridge sand loam soils. All clones co-fermented with 25% whole cluster inclusion and indigenous yeasts. Aged 20 months in 71% new French oak barrels.

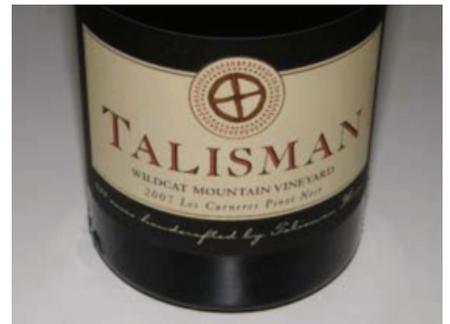
*Impressive fruit expression on the nose and in the mouth with a seamless texture. Spiced Bing cherries, cherry cola and nutmeg fill out the aromatic and flavor profile. The oak is perfectly integrated, the tannins are ripe and silky, and the finish is long and memorable. I could drink this all night long. Still great the next day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.*



**2007 Talisman Wildcat Mountain Vineyard  
Los Carneros Pinot Noir**

14.5% alc., pH 3.78, 230 cases, \$45. This vineyard is located on the southern flank of the mountain range defining the western edge of Sonoma Valley. It is the highest vineyard in the Los Carneros appellation, sitting on well drained soils of volcanic origin and exposed to the full brunt of fog and cold winds that streams off San Pablo Bay. The vineyard was established in 1998 by Nancy and Tony Lilly with their partner Steve MacRostie. Clones are Swan, Pommard, Dijon 115 and 777. 25% whole cluster. Indigenous yeast fermentation with an extended maceration after fermentation was complete.

*A very unique wine that I find challenging to describe. The nose offers appealing aromas of wild dark berries, underbrush, pine and oak, with the fruit coming to the forefront over time in the glass. More savory than fruity on the palate with substantial tannins and a hint of grapefruit on the smooth finish. The combination of clones and distinctive terroir create a wine that stands apart. Very good.*



**2007 Talisman Hawk Hill Vineyard  
Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**

14.5% alc., pH 3.65, 169 cases, \$46. This vineyard sits in a foggy slot in far west Sonoma County near Freestone. The soils are classic Goldridge series. Clones are Pommard and Dijon 115. 25% whole cluster. Indigenous yeast fermentation. Aged 20 months in 70% new French oak barrels and received an additional year of bottle age before release.

*Flashy aroma of ripe black cherries with a kiss of oak. Delicious array of dark red and black cherry and berry flavors with a perfect compliment of oak spice. The generous finish wows you. Lip-smacking good. Still fine the next two days from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.*

