

Au Bon Climat

Au Bon Climat Santa Barbara Pinot Noir 2023 captures the charm of coastal California with lifted red fruit, gentle spice, and an earthy undercurrent, offering immediate pleasure in a poised, distinctly Burgundian register.



Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 100% Pinot Noir

Santa Barbara Pinot Noir 2023

California, USA

Region and Vineyards

Santa Barbara County is one of California's most compelling regions for Pinot Noir, thanks to a strong maritime influence and a rare east-west valley orientation that channels cold Pacific air deep inland. Across the county, conditions shift from chilly, foggy western sectors ideal for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay to warmer inland zones, giving producers a wide palette of fruit sources. The Santa Maria Valley, which supplies the majority of this blend, is especially prized for its long, cool growing season and its ability to preserve acidity while building aromatic precision and detail.

For this 2023 bottling, Au Bon Climat draws principally from **Bien Nacido, North Canyon, and Rancho Real** in Santa Maria Valley, with a smaller share from **Kick On and Los Alamos** in the Los Alamos area. That combination gives the wine both brightness and breadth: Santa Maria contributes freshness, perfume, and structure, while the broader county blend adds flesh and easy charm. The result is a Pinot Noir that reflects Santa Barbara's coastal identity while remaining faithful to Au Bon Climat's house style of balance, finesse, and food-friendly drinkability.

Winemaking

This wine is made from **100% Pinot Noir** harvested in September 2023 over multiple pickings. Au Bon Climat describes it as a handcrafted blend from premier Santa Barbara County vineyards, produced with the same traditional, small-lot philosophy the winery has followed for more than four decades. The fruit is hand harvested, fermented in small lots, and managed with daily manual punch-downs, a regimen that favors gentle extraction and a more refined expression of Pinot Noir rather than excessive weight.

The wine is then aged for **8 months in François Frères French oak barrels**, a choice that adds depth and complexity without obscuring varietal character. At **13.5% alcohol** , with **5.4 g/L acidity** and a **pH of 3.63**, the structure is calibrated toward supple drinkability while retaining enough tension to keep the palate lively. This is very much in keeping with the estate's Burgundian inspiration: old-world minded in technique, restrained in oak handling, and focused on building a Pinot Noir of texture, freshness, and graceful persistence rather than overt power.

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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Bright ruby to light garnet, clear and vibrant, with the translucent sheen that signals a fresh, finely built coastal Pinot Noir.
- **Aroma:** Red currant, blueberry, and blood orange lead the nose, followed by subtle hints of bay leaf, white pepper, and wet stone, giving the wine both fruit clarity and earthy depth.
- **Palate:** Medium-bodied and well-balanced, with fine tannin, lively acidity, and a polished mouthfeel. The fruit stays bright and juicy, while the savory, mineral accents add shape and persistence through the finish.

Did you know?

Au Bon Climat was founded with the 1982 harvest by Jim Clendenen and Adam Tolmach, with the express aim of making Burgundian-styled wines in Santa Barbara County. That vision remained central to the estate even when richer, more heavily oaked California styles were fashionable, and it is a major reason the winery became so influential in shaping the county's reputation for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Tri-tip sandwiches with salsa:** The wine's juicy red fruit and moderate structure suit grilled beef beautifully, while its freshness keeps pace with the brightness of the salsa.
- **Smash burgers:** Pinot Noir's supple texture and gentle spice work especially well with caramelized beef, toasted buns, and savory toppings without overwhelming the dish.
- **Duck breast with cherry glaze:** The wine's red-fruited profile and earthy nuance mirror duck's richness and echo the sweetness and tang of a cherry-based sauce.
- **Strawberry and mint salad:** A surprisingly apt match, because the wine's bright fruit, blood-orange lift, and refreshing acidity can meet the dish on delicate, aromatic terms.