

Au Bon Climat

A classic Burgundian-style Pinot Noir from California's Santa Maria Valley, offering refined structure, elegance, and food-friendly versatility.

La Bauge Au-Dessus Estate Pinot Noir 2021

California, USA

88 Decanter



Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 100% Pinot Noir

Region and Vineyards

Santa Maria Valley, located in California's Central Coast, is **renowned for its cool-climate conditions and long growing season**, allowing Pinot Noir to develop **exceptional aromatics and depth**. The vineyards benefit from **ocean breezes and fog**, preserving the grape's natural acidity and balance.

This wine is primarily sourced from **Bien Nacido Vineyard**, one of the most **prestigious Pinot Noir sites in California**, with additional fruit from **Le Bon Climat Vineyard**. These vineyards, planted on **well-draining sandy soils**, contribute to the wine's **purity, elegance, and distinct minerality**.

Winemaking

The winemaking process follows a **hands-on, traditional approach** to preserve the purity of the fruit. **Fermentation occurs in five-ton open-top fermenters**, with **daily punch-downs** to maximize extraction and enhance structure.

The wine is **aged for 24 months in French oak barrels (50% new)** from François Frères, a renowned Burgundian cooper. After aging, it is **lightly fined using egg whites** and bottled **unfiltered**, allowing for greater complexity and textural finesse.

Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Bright ruby with garnet reflections.
- **Aroma:** Expressive bouquet of cranberry, red berries, rose petals, and subtle baking spice.
- **Palate:** Elegant and layered, featuring vibrant red fruit, floral notes, and a delicate touch of oak. The silky tannins and fresh acidity create a beautifully balanced and lingering finish.

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Did You Know?

Au Bon Climat is **one of the pioneering wineries in Santa Barbara County**, founded by **Jim Clendenen**, a winemaker celebrated for **bringing Burgundian finesse to California Pinot Noir**. His wines are known for their **ageability and Old-World sensibility**, making them favorites among collectors and sommeliers.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Porcini mushroom risotto** - The wine's earthy undertones complement the depth and umami of the dish.
- **Onion and bacon tart** - The acidity and fruitiness of the Pinot Noir balance the richness of the bacon and caramelized onions.
- **Pork tenderloin with cranberry sauce** - The wine's red berry notes enhance the sweet-savory profile of the dish.
- **Duck breast with cherry reduction** - A natural pairing that brings out the wine's complexity and structure.

88 Decanter

Decanter (DCT) : 88 Points (2021)

Among the more oak-inflected wines in the portfolio, the 2022 Pinot Noir la Bauge Au Dessus opens with a powerful nose of black tea, orange peels, turned earth and smoky overtones. The palate is soft and lavish, transitioning into a rustic, meaty finish that lingers with a generous helping of new-oak flavors. While I appreciate the unabashedly old-school nature here, the combination of oak dominance and pronounced earthiness leaves little room for any fruit character to shine.