

California Wine of The Quarter

2006 Scott Family Estate Pinot Noir

QRW STAFF



Patriarch Raymond Scott



Winemaker Steve Rued

As we always do, we blind tasted late arriving varietals for Best of The Best in California. Of the 23 Pinot Noir tasted, only one warranted recognition: the **2006 Scott Family Estate Pinot Noir (Arroyo Seco, Monterey), \$39.**

Scott Family Estate is relatively new to us, and it's the first time we've had the chance to taste their

Pinot Noir (their first release) from the Arroyo Seco, which is in the Central Coast region; it's midway between Salinas to the north and Paso Robles to the south. For Pinot Noir, one of the hardest varietals to grow well anywhere in the wine world, the Arroyo Seco is about as ideal as it gets. Some refer to it as the "Eden of Pinot Noir." The days are warm — often very hot — and the nights are cool, and the environment — the terroir — is assisted by a welcoming fog from the Pacific Ocean, exactly the weather Pinot Noir demands. Welcome to Monterey.

The breed, taste, and texture of Scott Family Pinot Noir speak to its quality. First, the 2006 vintage is a very good one. Second, the wine's composition is 95% Pinot Noir with enough Grenache and Syrah to give it more character. Third, it's produced from their estate grown Dijon clones, which suggest the wine is alive with intensity of flavors. Thus, in the aroma, you have cherry, raspberry, strawberry, spice and vanilla, all integrating and commingling nicely. In the taste, there is richness of raspberry, cherry, and spice. The French oak is just right — it lightly embraces the wine, and doesn't mask flaws. The alcohol level is also right at 13.9%. The wine, moreover, has perfect weight — medium body yet with a spirited lightness indicative of fine Pinot Noir. There's a simple and delicious purity here. It's one of the nicest surprises of the summer blind tasting. It's one of the California Pinot Noirs worth the money. So much of this varietal has gone up in price, largely, we feel, to the still resonant effects of the movie "Sideways." There's a lot of expensive Pinot plonk out there. Scott isn't one of them.

As to what to serve with Pinot Noir, the answer is anything. Like Champagne, it is the most versatile of wines, and pairs easily with many foods. It can be used as an aperitif (we give ours just a slight chill). For dinner, we especially like it with grilled salmon, baked scallops, or grilled lamb. It also pairs beautifully with one of the hardest of foods — pork. Try it grilled and experience the flavors and marriage of Pinot Noir and pork. Chicken or tenderloin, of course, in any style works wonderfully as well.

For more information on Scott Family Estate visit them at scottfamilyestate.com ☞

