

Forbes

Must-Try Chardonnay And Pinot Noir From Three Artisan California Wineries

There are hundreds of wine producers in California that excel at producing wines with an artisan approach. Crafting small lots of wines such as Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, two Burgundian varietals that at their best are made to display not only ideal balance and true character that represent their particular varietal, but also offer a sense of place, wines that reveal the identity of where the grapes are grown.

In this article, I will focus on three producers in northern California that brilliantly capture their specific area's character and personality regarding Pinot Noir and Chardonnay...

Gary Farrell Winery, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County - Gary Farrell started producing Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from several of Russian River Valley's finest vineyards in 1982, and over the next several years, he became a living legend and a bit of a hero to lovers of these wines throughout the state. His wines were deeply concentrated and structured to age beautifully for anywhere up to a dozen years, even longer with a few examples of Pinot Noir.

Farrell sold the winery several years ago, but his legacy continues through the winemaking of Theresa Heredia, who is able to source fruit from some of these same sites, as well as others in Russian River Valley, the nearby Sonoma Coast and a few other districts in California. Both the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Farrell, as crafted by Heredia, offer textbook Russian River character, and always have a backbone of lively acidity, and perhaps most importantly, display terrific overall harmony.

Gary Farrell Chardonnay Olivet Lane Vineyard 2018 (Russian River Valley) - Bright yellow; aromas of lemon oil, dried peach and hints of honey and butter. Medium-full with ripe, slightly lush fruit, good acidity, ample wood notes and a complex finish with good length. This is a bit of an old-fashioned Chardonnay with a ripe and lush feel. Enjoy with very rich seafood over the next 2-4 years. (90)

Gary Farrell Pinot Noir Hallberg Vineyard 2017 (Russian River Valley) - Rich young garnet; textbook aromas of Bing cherry, wild strawberry and turmeric, with a hint of black tea. Medium-full with very good depth of fruit, well-integrated wood notes, medium-weight tannins, good acidity, and notes of black cherry and nutmeg in the finish. Impressive length and complexity; this would be ideal paired with duck breast, game birds or roast chicken. Enjoy over the next 3-6 years. (92)

