

Wine Spectator

16 Tempting Oregon Pinot Noirs

New reviews of wallet-friendly Pinots from the Willamette Valley



Oregon's Willamette Valley is booming, with deep-pocketed players and mom-and-pop startups alike flocking to the region, lured by its distinctive Pinots and affordable acreage. Here are a handful of emerging producers to watch, some offering enticing values.

Brianne Day worked harvests in New Zealand, Argentina, France and Oregon before starting her namesake label in 2012. Day's Johan Vineyard bottling is impressive for its generosity and depth. Another name that stood out in tastings is Clay Pigeon. Owner and winemaker Michael Claypool produced a dense and focused effort in 2013, a vintage that yielded many lighter-textured wines.

You may recognize Gothic's Josh Nadel from his role in the [TV series *Uncorked*](#). He and restaurateur William Tiggert launched their label in 2009. Meanwhile, Amity is finding success under a new regime. The winery has tightened its lineup since founder Byron Redford sold it to Union Wine Co. in 2014.

The warm 2014 vintage produced ripe and opulent Pinots, with many lower-priced wines, such as Boedecker's deftly balanced version, offering good bang for the buck. Apolloni stepped up its game with a dark and spicy effort. And at \$19, Wine by Joe hits above its weight.

DAY Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Johan Vineyards 2014 Score: 92 | \$35

Broad, deep and generous, with blackberry and plum flavors. Glints of savory spice and tomato leaf add depth as the finish dances and lingers with presence. Drink now through 2022. 575 cases made.—*H.S.*

AMITY Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2014 Score: 91 | \$25

Ripe and focused, with firm, fine tannins providing structure around a core of licorice-accented blackberry and floral flavors, persisting on the expressive finish. Best from 2018 through 2024. 3,000 cases made.—*H.S.*

BOEDECKER Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2014 Score: 91 | \$22

Firm and focused, this is deftly balanced, letting plum, blueberry and hibiscus flavors push through the layer of fine tannins that veils the finish. Lingers pleasantly. Drink now through 2022. 1,800 cases made.—*H.S.*

CLAY PIGEON Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2013 Score: 91 | \$28

Dark, dense and focused, with a light layer of chewy tannins around a core of cherry, licorice and pepper flavors. The elements keep humming on the finish, revealing a savory edge. Best from 2018 through 2021. 200 cases made.—*H.S.*

HOLMES GAP Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2014 Score: 91 | \$44

Bright and lively, with raspberry and cherry flavors on a taut frame. The fruit and hints of tomato leaf expand on the persistent finish. Best from 2018 through 2022. 350 cases made.—*H.S.*

LUMOS Pinot Noir Eola-Amity Hills Temperance Hill 2014 Score: 91 | \$45

Firm and focused, with a spicy edge to the licorice-accented blackberry and floral flavors. The finish is wrapped in fine tannins, revealing fruit and savory notes. Best from 2018 through 2024. 190 cases made.—*H.S.*

PONZI Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Classico 2014 Score: 91 | \$43

Fresh and vital, focusing the black cherry, lime and spice flavors into a spotlight that glows through the generous, expressive finish. Drink now through 2021. 7,400 cases made.—*H.S.*

ALCHEMIST Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2014 Score: 90 | \$28

Firm and focused, dancing deftly and showing off rose petal-accented cherry flavors that glide into a long finish against fine, structured tannins. Best from 2018 through 2024. 1,800 cases made.—*H.S.*

APOLLONI Pinot Noir Willamette Valley L Cuvée 2014 Score: 90 | \$22

Dark and spicy, with a white pepper edge to the blackberry, black currant and floral flavors, coming together harmoniously on the extended finish. Drink now through 2024. 988 cases made.—*H.S.*

CHILD'S PLAY Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2014 Score: 90 | \$28

Taut and focused, with refreshing, lively, pomegranate-infused cherry flavors, dressed with a light sprinkling of tannins on the extended finish. Drink now through 2022. 550 cases made.—*H.S.*

GOTHIC Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Nevermore 2014 Score: 90 | \$24

Firm and sleek, with velvety tannins around a taut core of cherry, red plum, floral and spice flavors, lingering effortlessly on the focused finish. Best from 2018 through 2022. 5,900 cases made.—*H.S.*

LOVE & SQUALOR Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2013 Score: 90 | \$28

Lithe and crisp, with juicy cherry and floral flavors at the core, hinting at tea as the finish lingers deftly. Drink now through 2020. 1,100 cases made.—*H.S.*

ROCO Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Gravel Road 2014 Score: 90 | \$30

Light and expressive, with an open texture and a pretty range of raspberry, strawberry and peppermint flavors that glide into a refined finish. Drink now through 2020. 4,400 cases made.—*H.S.*

BESADIEN Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2014 Score: 89 | \$29

Firm, focused and juicy, with herb-accented blueberry and toast flavors, lingering on the refined finish. Best after 2017. 530 cases made.—*H.S.*

WINE BY JOE Pinot Noir Oregon 2014 Score: 89 | \$19

Bright and tangy, with lively flavors of pear-accented raspberry and spice, lingering gently. Drink now through 2020. 37,561 cases made.—*H.S.*

ANNE AMIE Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Winemaker's Selection 2014 Score: 88 | \$28

Light and tangy, with firm tannins around a juicy core of raspberry and pomegranate, singing on the lively finish. Drink now through 2021. 3,629 cases made.—*H.S.*