



Allen Meadows'

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The ultimate Burgundy reference

Burghound Reviews October 2018

2016 Pinot Noir Block 43 – Bien Nacido Vineyard – 91 Points

There is a bit more menthol character present on the cool and airy yet ripe aromas that combine notes of black cherry and raspberry with those of anise, sandalwood and violet. The exceptionally rich and sappy fuller-bodied flavors possess a bit more mid-palate density and the abundant dry extract imparts a lush mouth feel yet the youthfully austere and ever-so-mildly warm finish immediately tightens up. This is also very good and while I slightly prefer the Block 8, it will be most interesting to revisit both of these in 8 to 10 years.

2016 Pinot Noir Block 8 – Bien Nacido Vineyard – 92 Points

Here the oak influence is dialed up with notes of menthol that sit atop the essence of plum, dark cherry and violet scents. There is more volume and richness to the solidly concentrated medium-bodied flavors that possess a mouth feel that is at once generous and suave, all wrapped in a sappy, firm and beautifully complex finale. I very much like the balance and this beauty should amply reward mid to even longer-term cellaring, indeed it's going to require at least some.

2016 Pinot Noir – Fe Ciega Vineyard – 91 Points

2016 Pinot Noir – Julia's Vineyard – 90 Points

Temperate amounts of wood and menthol again frame the relatively high-toned aromas of cranberry, raspberry and cherry. The suave and velvet-textured broad-shouldered flavors are rich to the point of opulence thanks to the abundant amount of sappy dry extract that helps to buffer the moderately firm finish that possesses reasonable depth and length on the ever-so-slightly warm finale.

2016 Pinot Noir – La Encantada Vineyard – 90 Points

A higher-toned and airier nose features notes of essence of raspberry and cherry where top notes of cranberry, spice and Asian-style tea add breadth. The mouth feel of the medium weight flavors is sleeker if less concentrated thanks primarily to the relatively fine-grained tannins shaping the dusty and bitter pit fruit-inflected finish. This is certainly very pretty and I very much like the delivery but it doesn't possess, at least not yet, the same fine complexity as the best in the range.

2016 Pinot Noir – Meleville Vineyard – 91 Points

More discreet but not invisible wood and menthol influences set off the very ripe array of cassis, spiced plum and pretty violet nuances. Here too the mouth feel of the full-bodied flavors is exceptionally rich thanks once again to the abundant dry extract that imparts a sappy texture to the lingering, firm and well-balanced finish. This needs to develop more depth but the underlying material appears to be up to the task and my rating implicitly assumes that greater complexity will arrive with time in bottle.

2016 Pinot Noir – Solomon Hills Vineyard – 91 Points

Burghound Reviews April 2017

2015 Pinot Noir Block 43 – Bien Nacido Vineyard – 91 Points

There is just enough reduction to reduce the expressiveness and nuances present on the dark berry fruit and poached plum aromas; as such I would recommend giving this a quick aeration. Otherwise there is good verve, volume and richness to the concentrated and serious medium weight plus flavors that coat the palate with dry extract, all wrapped in a robust, muscular and sneaky long finish. Good stuff fashioned in a built-to-age package and worth your interest.

2015 Pinot Noir Block 8 - Bien Nacido Vineyard – 90 Points

A slightly riper nose features notes of both red and dark pinot fruit that are well laced with spice and similar lavender nuances. There is more volume and mid-palate density to the delicious, caressing yet vibrant medium-bodied flavors that deliver better depth and persistence in a moderately structured package that is presently just a bit youthfully austere.

2015 Pinot Noir Fe Ciega Vineyard – 91 points

Here the equally cool and airy nose is almost a blend of the Block 43 and the Encantada as there are both upper and lower register aromas that remain mostly on the red side of the fruit spectrum along with ample spice elements. There is a lovely sense of underlying tension to the powerful yet caressing medium-bodied flavors that possess very good mid-palate density where the dry extract serves to buffer the moderate firm tannins shaping the complex, serious and youthfully austere finish. This is at once refined but built-to-age and I would recommend buying this only if you intend to cellar it as it's a bit taciturn at present.

2015 Pinot Noir John Sebastiano Vineyard – 91 points

There is a whiff of menthol to the attractively cool, pure and once again fresh and airy essence of red berry fruit and spice aromas. I like the sense of energy and detail to the appealingly textured medium weight flavors that possess a sleek mouth feel, all wrapped in a linear and focused bitter cherry pit-inflected finish which is also ever-so-slightly youthfully austere. This moderately firmly structured effort will also need a few years to flesh out but it should ultimately be lovely.

2015 Pinot Noir Julia's Vineyard – 92 Points

A spicy and more deeply pitched nose combines notes of dark cherry, plum and violets. There is good volume and richness to the round, velvet-textured and seductive medium weight flavors that possess fine depth and length on the moderately robust finale. While there is a trace of austerity, what impresses me here is that there is already very good depth, which isn't something that I typically find with Julia's when it's young. Worth checking out.

2015 Pinot Noir La Encantada Vineyard – 90 Points

A much more high-toned nose offers up cool and admirably pure aromas of spiced red cherry along with wisps of raspberry and a top note of cranberry. The sleek, focused and well-delineated middle weight flavors possess a really lovely mouth feel that is less muscular but notably finer that continues onto the dusty, sappy and linear finish. This is quite firm and even a bit youthfully austere and a wine that will need at least a few years of cellaring first.

2015 Pinot Noir Melville Vineyard – 92 Points

This is aromatically similar to the Julia's but with even more spice influence. The succulent, round and once again seductively textured medium weight flavors possess a caressing mouth feel thanks to the plenitude of dry extract that imparts a velvety aspect to the firm, serious and slightly austere finale. There is really good underlying material and this walks a fine line between being robust but not rustic. Good stuff in a built-to-age package. This too is well-worth your interest.

2014 Pinot Noir Block 43 – Bien Nacido Vineyard – 90 Points

A more deeply pitched and slightly riper nose speaks of plum and dark berry liqueur scents together with hints of anise and mocha. There is good richness to the suave, round and supple medium-bodied flavors that coat the palate with dry extract on the lingering finish where a trace of warmth appears. This is a bit better balanced than the Block 8 but without quite the same vibrancy. A qualitative choice.

2014 Pinot Noir Block 8 - Bien Nacido Vineyard – 90 Points

Here the nose is compositionally similar to the Santa Maria Valley cuvée but with more evident spice and better complexity as well. There is good volume but also good detail to the supple, round and polished middle weight flavors that culminate in a dusty, sappy and equally complex finale where the only nit is a very mild acid tang. It's possible that with a few years of bottle age, as the tannins resolve, that the tang will dissipate and even today I suspect that with a well-chosen dish it would largely be a non-issue.

2014 Pinot Noir Fe Ciega Vineyard – 91 points

This is also quite deeply pitched yet attractively cool with its admirably pure aromas of plum, violet and dark cherry where an interesting note of dried tangerine peel can

be found. The energetic medium weight flavors possess a highly sophisticated mouth feel thanks primarily to the notably fine-grained tannins shaping the delicious, dusty and complex finale. This should benefit from a few years of bottle age yet it's not so tightly wound that it couldn't be enjoyed on the younger side if that's your preference.

2014 Pinot Noir Julia's Vineyard – 90 Points

Coincidence or otherwise this also reflects a minty hint that runs more toward menthol on the restrained and pretty nose that presents an assortment of both red and dark fruit elements along with hints of briar and tea. There is fine richness and volume to the round and velvety middle weight flavors that possess good power and punch on the dusty and borderline robust finale that also displays a hint of warmth. This is a big if not refined wine with plenty of character.

2014 Pinot Noir La Encantada Vineyard – 90 Points

This is also somewhat aromatically restrained as it combines notes of dark cherry and plum with those of anise and slightly exotic Asian-style tea nuances. There is excellent richness to the velvety, round and supple medium-bodied flavors that possess a seductive mouth feel before concluding in a dusty, powerful and vibrant finish. This moderately structured effort isn't especially complex at present though the underlying material appears to ensure that more will almost certainly develop if allowed a few years of bottle age.

2014 Pinot Noir Melville Vineyard – 92 Points

This is aromatically quite cool and restrained with distinct notes of spiced green tea to the essence of red cherry and dark raspberry-scented nose. I very much like the mouth feel of the satin-textured middle weight flavors that possess fine delineation on the complex, balanced and sneaky long finish. This is lovely stuff and worth checking out plus it could easily be enjoyed young if desired.

Burghound Reviews January 2016

93 Points - 2013 Pinot Noir Melville Vineyard

93 Points - 2013 Pinot Noir Fe Ciega Vineyard

92 Points - 2013 Pinot Noir Block 8 - Bien Nacido Vineyard

92 Points - 2013 Pinot Noir Solomon Hill's Vineyard

91 Points - 2013 Pinot Noir Block 43 - Bien Nacido Vineyard

91 Points - 2013 Pinot Noir John Sebastiano Vineyard

91 Points - 2013 Pinot Noir La Encantada Vineyard

90 Points - 2013 Pinot Noir Julia's Vineyard

Burghound Reviews April 2015

91 Points - 2012 Pinot Noir Melville Vineyard

91 Points - 2012 Pinot Noir Fe Ciega Vineyard

91 Points - 2011 Pinot Noir Fe Ciega Vineyard
90 Points - 2012 Pinot Noir John Sebastiano Vineyard
90 Points - 2012 Pinot Noir Julia's Vineyard

Burghound Reviews June 2014

90 Points - 2011 Pinot Noir Melville Vineyard
Burghound Reviews January 2013

90 Points - 2010 Pinot Noir Block 8 - Bien Nacido Vineyard

Burghound Reviews October 2009

90 Points - 2007 Pinot Noir Block 8 - Bien Nacido Vineyard

Burghound Reviews October 2008

91 Points - 2006 Pinot Noir Block 8 - Bien Nacido Vineyard

Burghound Reviews July 2005

91 Points - 2003 Pinot Noir Block 8 - Bien Nacido Vineyard