

# Patty's Pinot Closet Newsletter

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Santa Barbara County

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Patty's Pinot Closet publishes this newsletter on the enjoyment and appreciation of Pinot Noir. We welcome you to enjoy the newsletters and to share them with others. This, my fifth newsletter, covers Santa Barbara County Pinot Noirs. Tasting was done at wineries, wine festivals, and during very lovely dinners and lunches. Subsequent newsletters cover other pinot noir growing areas.

## Santa Barbara County Food and Wine

**Food** The most famous food in Santa Barbara County has to be Santa Maria Barbecue. It consists of Top Sirloin Top Block, tossed green salad, Piquito beans, salsa, toasted french bread with sweet butter, macaroni and cheese, a simple dessert (strawberry shortcake), and of course, a bottle of Santa Maria Valley wine. The Santa Maria Chamber of Commerce copyrighted the menu in 1978 to insure that restaurants advertising Santa Maria Barbecue served the "real thing". Santa Mariaites often replace the Top Sirloin Top Block with a Tri-Tip roast. They traditionally cook the roasts over red oak logs, or charcoal and oak chips. As far as I can ascertain, the pink piquito beans, smaller than pinto beans, are grown only on the central coast of California.

For Santa Maria BBQ recipes [click here](#)

Places to obtain Santa Maria Seasonings and Piquito Beans:

- Susie Q's Santa Maria Style Seasoning and Piquito Beans [click here](#)
- F. McLintock's BBQ Chef Seasoning [click here](#)

Julia Child, who now lives in Santa Barbara, donated her Cambridge, Mass kitchen to the Smithsonian Museum in 2001. There's a great Smithsonian [web site](#) on her kitchen.

### Recipes

- [Santa Maria Style Tri-tip](#)
- [Ranch-Style Piquito Beans](#)
- [Tomato Salsa](#)

**Restaurants** I'd like to be up front and say that I love In-N-Out Burgers. I feel that I can do that now that the Associated Press reported that Julia Child, ate In-N-Out burgers while in the hospital recovering from knee surgery. Their new Double-Double® Burger (protein style) contains two 100% pure beef patties, hand-leafed lettuce, tomato, sauce, two slices of American cheese, and onions stacked high on leaves of lettuce (no bun). It's absolutely delicious



Wine Cellar and Bar at the Historic Santa Maria Inn

– a double-double without the bun! The In-N-Out Burger in Santa Barbara County is just North of Santa Barbara on Hwy 101.

**The Hitching Post** The [Hitching Post](#) in Buellton, CA serves really good BBQed beef cooked in the Santa Maria Style. You can eat there if you're lucky enough to be in this truly beautiful area or they'll ship to you using Second Day UPS.

**Alisal River Grill** The [River Grill](#) at The Alisal River Course in Solvang. I especially enjoyed a Caesar Salad with Grilled Marinated Lemon Chicken Breast at the River Grill. This informal golf course grill serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner; and local wines.

**Hotels** I'd like to recommend the Historic [Santa Maria Inn](#) built in 1917. We had a lovely corner room with wrap around windows and window seat. It's also one of the few historic California hotels that's pet friendly with over an acre of grounds and lush garden areas to walk your pet. Besides the lovely Garden Room Restaurant and Olde English Tap Room, in the cellar they have a Wine Cellar & Bar that serves a large selection of local wines by the glass. You can also get good Santa Maria BBQ here. One last plus for this hotel – it's reasonably priced!

On the not so reasonably priced but oh so very nice is the [Alisal Guest Ranch](#) in Solvang. Set on a 10,000-acre working cattle ranch, this one-of-a-kind resort blends the best of nature with exceptional golf, horseback riding, tennis, fishing, team-building facilities, conference rooms, first-class accommodations and fine dining. The restaurant at the ranch is open only to the guests but the Alisal River Grill is open to the public and a great place for lunch if you bring your own wine – their wine list is very limited. Both the Alisal Guest Ranch and the Alisal River Grill are located between the Santa Ynez Valley and Santa Rita Hills for easy touring of both those wine areas.

## Wine Festivals

### [Santa Barbara Wine Festivals](#)

- May 15th, 2004 Vintners' Festival at Firestone Meadow
- October (2nd weekend) Celebration of Harvest Festival

### Other Central Coast Wine Festivals:

- March 5 & 6 2004 [4th Annual World of Pinot Noir](#)
- 29 April - 1 May [28th Annual Monterey Wine Festival](#)
- April 29 - May 1, 2004 [The Fourth Annual World Wine Market Exhibition and Conference](#), Fort Mason Center, San Francisco



2003 SBC Celebration of Harvest Festival

## Tasting

- [Los Olivos Tasting Room](#), a cute little place to taste many Santa Barbara County wines in the quaint town of Los Olivos – right on Grand Avenue
- [Santa Barbara County Winery Touring Map](#) – Every year, the Santa Barbara County Vintners' Association publishes a map of the area that shows where the wines of many of Association's member wineries can be tasted and purchased. The maps are available at most tasting rooms or you can have them send you one.

## Santa Barbara County Pinot Noirs

### Santa Barbara County Wine History

Grape growing and wine production go back more than 200 years in Santa Barbara County to when Father Junipero Sierra brought grape vine cuttings from Mexico in 1782. Located in the San Jose Creek area, the largest mission

vineyard contained 25 acres of grape vines. A mission winery built in 1804 still stands in Goleta just north of Santa Barbara.

A hundred years after Father Junipero Sierra brought grape vines from Mexico, Justinian Caire imported grape slips from France and planted a 150-acre vineyard on Santa Cruz Island just off the coast of Santa Barbara County.

Santa Barbara legend has it that the trunk of a grapevine planted in 1842 on a farm in Carpinteria grew to nine feet around. It's arbor covered two acres and it had an annual yield of ten tons of grapes! The report doesn't say if it was pinot noir!

Present day wine growing in Santa Barbara County began with grape planting in the Santa Maria Valley in the early 1960s. Santa Ynez Valley followed close behind.

I first became aware of Santa Barbara County wines in the late 1970's through the beautiful Sauvignon Blancs made by Fred Brander at Santa Ynez Winery. Fred now has his own winery, The Brander Vineyard, and he's still producing those wonderful Sauvignon Blancs.

In the early 1970s Richard Sanford searched California looking for the perfect place to grow pinot noir and believed they had found it in what's now the Santa Rita Hills AVA. The only problem was it was owned by a farmer who didn't want to sell. After several years the farmer finally capitulated and sold him the land and he planted pinot noir grape vines and built a winery. In 1975 he produced a Sanford & Benedict Pinot Noir that took the wine drinking community by storm. When I visited his winery around 1980 he had no electricity and cooled his winery by bringing cold water from a stream above them and running it over the roof.

Today more than 100 wineries reside in Santa Barbara County and more than a million cases of wine are produced annually. In 2002 Santa Barbara County harvested 16,667 acres of grapes for a value of \$73 million.

## **Santa Barbara County American Viticultural Areas (AVAs)**

Santa Barbara County contains three American Viticultural Areas (AVAs). The first two established were Santa Inez Valley and Santa Maria Valley. The third and most promising AVA for pinot noir is the Santa Rita Hills contained within the Santa Ynez Valley AVA. A fourth area, The Los Alamos Valley, is not yet an AVA. Santa Barbara County shares the Central Coast AVA with six other counties, Alameda, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Clara, and Santa Cruz. Contents of bottles labeled with an AVA must contain 85 percent of grapes grown from that federally designated region.

**Santa Maria Valley:** Fog and wind-swept Santa Maria Valley claims to have the longest grape growing season in California. This is the home of the well known pinot noir vineyards such as Bien Nacido and Dierberg. Some of the Wineries in this AVA (well known for their pinot noir) are Au Bon Climat, Brophy Clark Cellars, Brucher, Byron, Cambria, Cold Heaven, Costa de Oro, Cottonwood Canyon, Dierberg, Foxen, J. Kerr, McKeon-Phillips, Qupé, Rancho Sisquoc and Tantara.

**Santa Ynez Valley:** Considerably warmer, this AVA excels in growing Syrah, other Rhône varietals, Bordeaux and Italian varietals. Wineries based in Santa Ynez Valley include Andrew Murray, Arthur Earl, Beckmen, Bernat, Blackjack Ranch, Brander, Bridlewood, Buttonwood Farm, Carhartt, Curtis, Domaine Santa Barbara,



Santa Barbara AVAs

Epiphany, Fess Parker, Firestone, Gainey, Hitching Post, Kahn, Kalyra, Koehler, LinCourt, Los Olivos Vintners, Mosby, Presidio, Rideau, Royal Oaks, Rusack, Star Lane, Stolpman, Sunstone, Vandale, Verdad and Zaca Mesa.

**Santa Rita Hills:** The sedimentary soils with patches of limestone combined with a maritime influence convinced Sanford & Benedict decades ago that this was the perfect place to grow pinot noir. Time and some great wines are proving them right. They became an AVA in 2001 contained within the Santa Ynez Valley AVA. Wineries are planting the newer clones of pinot noir such as 667, 115 and 2A. Some believe these new clones produce wine with better structure and complexity. Here you'll see grape vines planted on steep wind swept hillsides. Wineries known for their pinot noir in this AVA include Casa Cassara, Clos Pepe, Fiddlehead, Flying Goat, Foley Estates, Gypsy Canyon, Huber Cellars, Lafond, Longoria, Melville, Sanford, Santa Barbara Winery, and Sea Smoke.



Santa Rita Hills

**Los Alamos Valley:** This wine region, south of Santa Maria and west of Santa Ynez, is cooler than the Santa Ynez Valley and warmer than the Santa Maria Valley. Currently two wineries - Bedford-Thompson and Chimère - are based in the Los Alamos area.

All of the wines listed in the newsletters are listed on the [website](#). Previous reviews did not contain links to the wineries, which have been added, if available. Where possible, prices listed below have been taken from the winery website or other retail sources and are included for relative comparison only. Your price may be different.

Winery	Year	Price	Rank	Description
<a href="#">Daniel Gehrs Wines</a> Santa Maria Valley Lake Marie	2000	\$25	93	Medium intensity garnet color with a very Burgundian nose. Well balanced with dark fruit flavors and good body. Long lingering aftertaste
<a href="#">Flying Goat Cellars</a> Santa Maria Valley Dierberg	2001	\$32	92	Medium intensity ruby-garnet wine with black cherry, earthy mushroom bouquets. Great flavor with a medium aftertaste.
<a href="#">Sea Smoke Cellars</a> Santa Rita Hills Southing Vineyard	2000	\$45	92	Dark, full-bodied wine with aromas of black cherry. Soft in the mouth with a long Asian spice finish.
<a href="#">Arcadian Winery</a> Santa Ynez Valley Jill's Cuvee	1999	\$45	91	Dense with spicy dark red fruit aromas. Well balanced with enough oak accompanied by a long finish.
<a href="#">Au Bon Climat</a> Santa Maria Valley Knox Alexander	2001	\$45	91	Ruby-garnet color with earthy bouquet. Well balanced with good body.
<a href="#">Brucher</a> Santa Maria Valley	2000	\$27	91	Deep ruby color with aromas and flavors of cranberry and cherry. Good body, well balanced and velvety in the mouth and finish.

<a href="#">Byron Vineyard &amp; Winery</a> Santa Maria Valley Sierra Madre	1999	\$40	91	Medium intensity with black currant Burgundian style wine. Well balanced with great velvety body and extremely long aftertaste
<a href="#">Dierberg Vineyard</a> Santa Maria Valley Estate	2001	\$32	91	Medium ruby color with earthy black raspberry aromas. Well balanced with good body and dark fruit flavors. Long aftertaste
<a href="#">Dierberg Vineyard</a> Santa Maria Valley Three Saints	2002	\$17	91	Medium ruby color with black currant, vanilla and spice in bouquet. Creamy in the mouth with a long lingering aftertaste.
<a href="#">Fiddlehead Cellars</a> Santa Ynez Valley Seven Twenty Eight Fiddlestix	2001	\$50	91	Medium intensity, ruby-garnet color with black currant, cinnamon, and earthy bouquet. Well balanced, velvety in mouth with an extremely long beautiful finish.
<a href="#">Flying Goat Cellars</a> Santa Maria Valley Santa Maria Hills Vineyard	2000		91	Medium intensity ruby-garnet wine with a bouquet of plums and spice.
<a href="#">Foley Estates Vineyard &amp; Winery</a> Santa Maria Valley Santa Maria Hills Vineyard	2000	\$38	91	Medium intensity with aromas of cranberry, cherry, smoke and spice. Well balanced with good body and nice long aftertaste.
<a href="#">Foley Estates Vineyard &amp; Winery</a> Santa Rita Hills Barrell Select	2000	\$50	91	Medium intensity with cranberry aromas. Good balance and structure with a velvety feel in the mouth.
<a href="#">Kynsi Winery</a> Santa Maria Valley Julia's Vineyard	1999	\$35	91	Dense ruby-garnet wine with aromas of black cherries and spice. Silky, anise, and black cherry in the mouth with a lovely finish.
<a href="#">Longoria</a> Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard	2001	\$32	91	Medium intensity with black cherry and spice. Well balanced, creamy full-flavored wine with a long aftertaste.
<a href="#">Tantara Winery</a> Santa Maria Valley Dierberg Vineyard	2001	\$42	91	Medium intensity with a ruby-garnet color. Black currants, mushrooms, and earthy bouquets. Great flavors and body in this well-balanced wine that should age very nicely. Long aftertaste.
<a href="#">Tantara Winery</a> Santa Maria Valley	2001	\$30	90.5	Medium intensity with a ruby-garnet color. Black cherries in the bouquet. Well balanced with good body and flavor. Nice aftertaste
<a href="#">Babcock Vineyards</a> Santa Rita Hills Cargasacchi Vineyard	2001	\$40	90	Dense blackberry and spice aromas. Velvety black fruit and toasty oak in the mouth. Nice long finish.
<a href="#">Bernardus</a> Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard	2000	\$50	90	Intense dark color with blueberry and black currant aromas and a well-balanced taste with lovely vanilla oak and a very long finish.
<a href="#">Bernardus</a> Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard	1999	\$50	90	Dark intensity color with wonderful dark red fruit and earthy aromas and flavors. Beautifully balanced with a long finish.
<a href="#">Brophy Clark</a> Santa Barbara County	2000	\$20	90	Medium Intensity with aromas of cherry and strawberry. Complex silky wine with a long lovely finish.

<a href="#">Dierberg Vineyard</a> Santa Maria Valley Estate	2002		90	Medium dark ruby with earthy, smokey, black cherry aromas. Full bodied, velvety with a long lovely aftertaste.
Foxen Vineyard Santa Maria Valley	2001	\$24	90	Medium intensity ruby color with bouquet of cherries and cinnamon. Well balanced with good body.
<a href="#">Hitching Post Wines</a> Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard	2000	\$30	90	Medium density ruby wine with cranberry aromas. Well balanced.
<a href="#">Meridian Vineyards</a> Santa Barbara County Reserve	1999	\$25	90	Dark intensity with dark red fruit aromas. Big in the mouth with a very long finish.
<a href="#">Presidio Winery</a> Santa Barbara County	2000	\$17	90	Light intensity ruby colored wine with strawberry, earthy nose. A lovely complex wine.
<a href="#">Sanford Winery &amp; Vineyards</a> Santa Rita Hills La Rinconada Vineyard	2001	\$50	90	Light intensity ruby colored wine with black cherry, lavender, and spice aromas.
<a href="#">Lafond Winery &amp; Vineyards</a> Santa Barbara County Lafond	2000	\$28	90	Medium intensity with raspberry and earthy bouquets. Creamy and velvety in mouth with a nice aftertaste.
<a href="#">Byron Vineyard &amp; Winery</a> Santa Maria Valley	2001	\$25	90	Medium intensity with blackberry bouquet. Well balanced with nice body and nice aftertaste.
<a href="#">Hitching Post Wines</a> Highliner	2000	\$40	90	Medium density ruby-garnet wine with bouquet of cherries and spice. Well balanced with good body and long aftertaste
<a href="#">Au Bon Climat</a> Santa Maria Valley	2002	\$18	89	Medium density ruby color with bouquet of black currants, spice and earth. Well balanced with good body and long long aftertaste.
<a href="#">Cheval Sauvage by Wild Horse</a> Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard	2001	\$50	89	Medium intensity with aromas of black cherries, oak and spice. Silky in the taste with flavors of cherries and a nice finish.
<a href="#">Cold Haven (Au bon Climat)</a> Santa Barbara County	2000	\$25	89	Medium density ruby-garnet color with bouquet of raspberries, mushrooms, and earth. Well balanced with good body and long aftertaste.
<a href="#">Costa de Oro</a> Santa Maria Valley Oro Rojo Gold Coast	2001	\$35	89	Dark wine with aromas of cherries, smoke, and spice. Soft in the mouth with a lingering finish.
<a href="#">Meridian Vineyards</a> Santa Barbara County	1999		89	Intense ruby-garnet wine. Well balanced with nice body and long aftertaste.
<a href="#">Presidio Winery</a> Santa Barbara County	2001	\$20	89	Medium intensity ruby color with black currant and earthy bouquet. Well-balanced with good body. Nice long aftertaste.
<a href="#">Sanford Winery &amp; Vineyards</a> Santa Rita Hills Sanford & Benedict Vineyard	2001	\$43	89	Light intensity ruby colored wine with black cherry & mushroom aromas. Light bodied with black cherry flavors and a long aftertaste.

<a href="#">The Ojai Vineyard</a> Bien Nacido Vineyard	2001	\$45	89	Dark tightly structured wine with blackberry bouquet. Nice aftertaste.
<a href="#">Clos Pepe Vineyards</a> Santa Barbara County Estate	2001	\$35	88	Medium intensity with gamey aromas of black cherry with velvety mouth feel and nice finish.
<a href="#">Melville Vineyards &amp; Winery</a> Santa Rita Hills Estate	2002	\$26	88	Medium density ruby wine. Velvety in the mouth.
<a href="#">Ortman Family Vineyards</a> Santa Barbara County	2001	\$34	88	Medium intensity with cherry, earth and spice. Nice finish.
<a href="#">Sanford Winery &amp; Vineyards</a> Santa Rita Hills	2001	\$26	88	Light intensity ruby colored wine with cherry aromas in the nose.
<a href="#">Stephen Ross</a> Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard	2001	\$35	88	Dark wine with aromas of black cherry and pepper. Velvety in the mouth with a nice finish.
<a href="#">Fetzer Vineyards</a> Santa Maria Valley Five Rivers Ranch	2000	\$14	87	Medium intensity, ruby-garnet color with aromas of red cherries. Nice balance.
<a href="#">Gainey Vineyard</a> Santa Rita Hills Limited Selection	2001	\$39	87	Medium intensity with ruby color.
<a href="#">Hitching Post Wines</a> Santa Rita Hills Sanford & Benedict	2000	\$30	87	Medium density ruby-garnet wine with a bouquet of flowers.
<a href="#">Wild Horse Winery</a> Central Coast	2001	\$22	87	Medium intensity with ruby-garnet color. Aromas of blackberry, spice, and earth. Cherry flavors and a medium finish.
<a href="#">LinCourt Vineyards</a> Santa Maria Valley Santa Maria Hills Vineyard and Dierberg Vineyard	2000	\$22	87	Medium intensity wine with aromas of cranberries, cherries, spice, and pepper. This velvety, complex wine has a long finish.
<a href="#">Taz Vineyards</a> Santa Barbara County	2001	\$25	87	Medium intensity ruby colored with closed nose. Good balance and body. Medium length aftertaste.
<a href="#">Fess Parker Winery</a> Santa Barbara County	2000	\$22	86	Medium intensity ruby-garnet wine with strawberry raspberry bouquet. Light bodied with short aftertaste.
<a href="#">Fetzer Vineyards</a> Santa Barbara County Five Rivers Ranch	2001	\$14	86	Medium intensity, ruby-garnet color with aromas of red cherries.
<a href="#">Fetzer Vineyards</a> Central Coast Five Rivers Ranch	2000	\$14	85	Medium intensity, ruby-garnet color with aromas of red cherries.

**Subsequent Newsletters:** will cover Australia; Mendocino, Sonoma, Napa, and San Luis Obispo County; Burgundy; and other Pinot Noir growing areas.

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