

# 9 California Pinot Noir Bargains

New Pinots from Santa Barbara County, Sonoma, Monterey and beyond that deliver the goods at down-to-earth prices



La Crema's Monterey vineyards get abundant sunshine, tempered by fog and cool air from the nearby Pacific. (Courtesy of La Crema)

**By Augustus Weed**  
**Jul 29, 2019**

*Tasting Highlights' wine reviews are fresh out of the tasting room, offering a sneak peek of our editors' most recent scores and notes to WineSpectator.com members.*

Finding affordable Pinot Noir from California is no easy task, so we take special note when a wine over delivers on quality for the price. This week, we've rounded up some of the best bargains from recent blind tastings, with nine Golden State Pinot Noirs for \$35 or less.

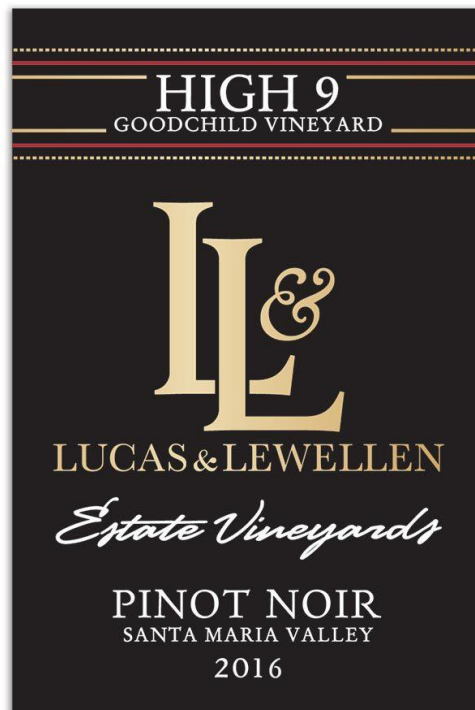
Siduri should be a familiar name to Pinot fans. Its 2017 from the cool Sta. Rita Hills appellation in Santa Barbara County is rich and concentrated. Farther north, **Lucas & Lewellen's 2016 High 9 Goodchild Vineyard**, from Santa Barbara County's foggy, windswept Santa Maria Valley, is textured and creamy.

Another Central Coast appellation to watch is Santa Clara Valley, home to Sarah's Vineyard. The valley has a long winemaking history that dates to the 18th century, but

much of the farmland has given way to Silicon Valley. Sarah's mineraly Pinot comes from a 24-acre estate vineyard situated on a low mountain pass across the Santa Cruz Mountains. Wind and fog funnels through the pass from the nearby Pacific Ocean, creating a cool climate with an extended growing season, ideal for Pinot Noir.

And in the \$15 or less category, consider The Pinot Project, Heron and The Crusher, all at buy-by-the-case prices, perfect for a weeknight meal or a picnic.

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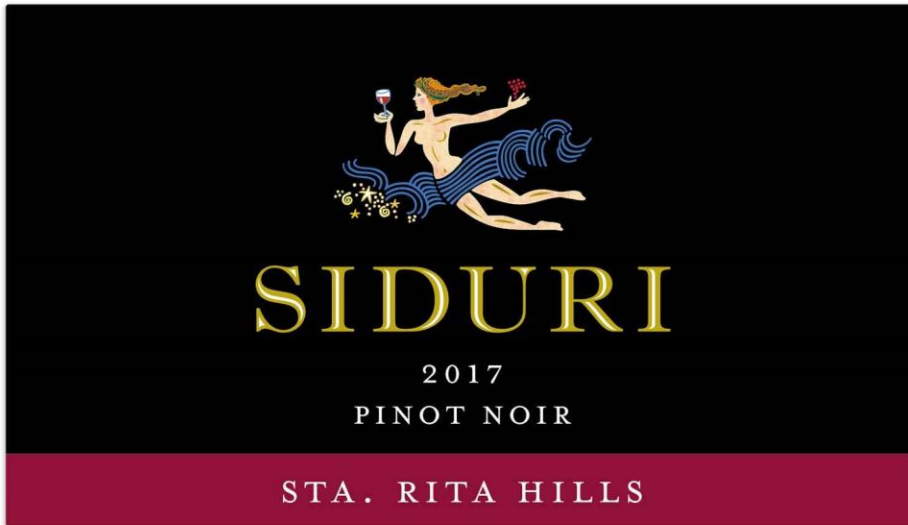


## LUCAS & LEWELLEN

Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley High 9 Goodchild Vineyard 2016

Score: 90 | \$35

**WS review:** Inky accents enrich the savory mix of forest floor and dried red fruit and berry flavors. Cedar and cigar box notes lead into a creamy and finely textured finish. Drink now through 2023. 646 cases made.—*Kim Marcus*

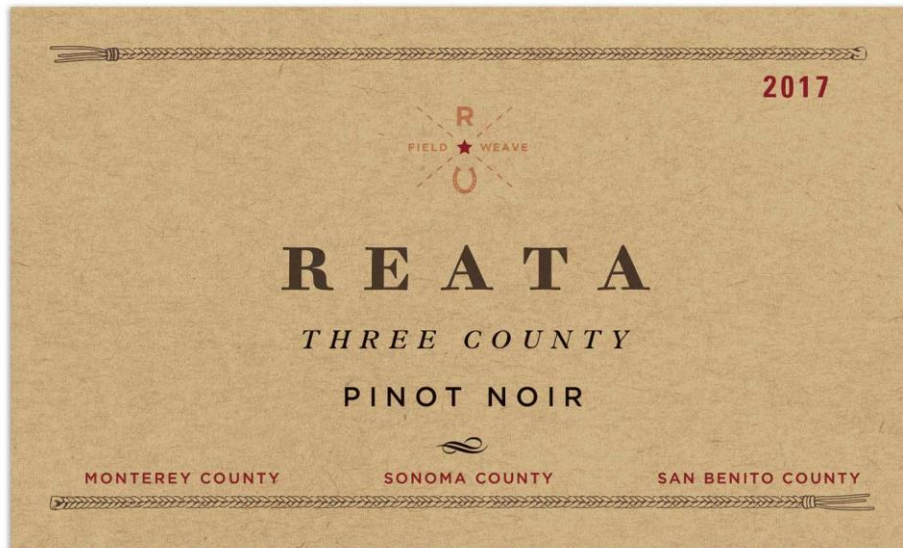


## SIDURI

Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills 2017

Score: 90 | \$35

**WS review:** Hints of dried rose petal accent the concentrated roasted plum and dried cherry flavors. Tea and cola notes extend on the rich, savory finish. drink now through 2023. 403 cases made.—*K.M.*

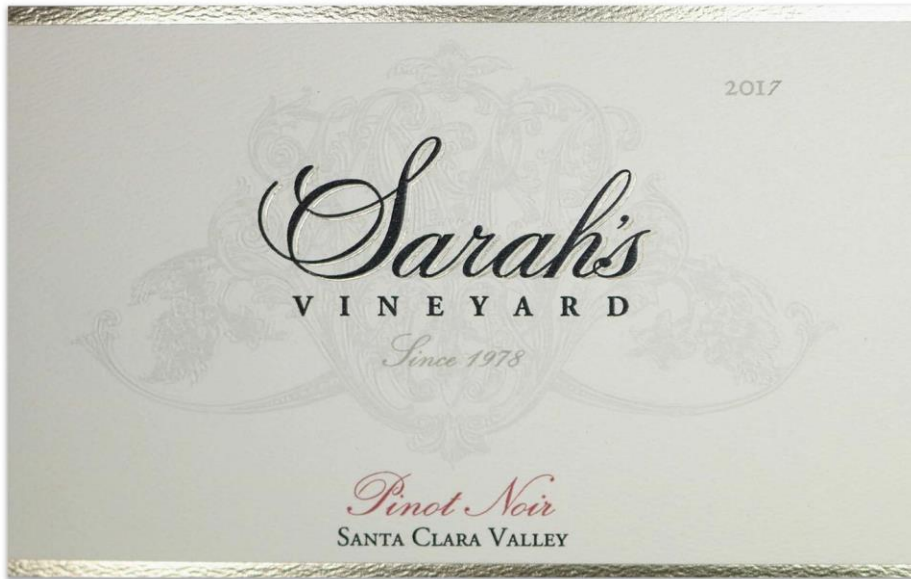


## REATA

Pinot Noir Sonoma-Monterey-San Benito Counties Three Counties 2017

Score: 89 | \$22

**WS review:** Hints of red licorice and cedar accent the snappy red fruit and spice flavors. Notes of dried meat show on the finely textured finish. Drink now through 2021. 3,500 cases made.—*K.M.*

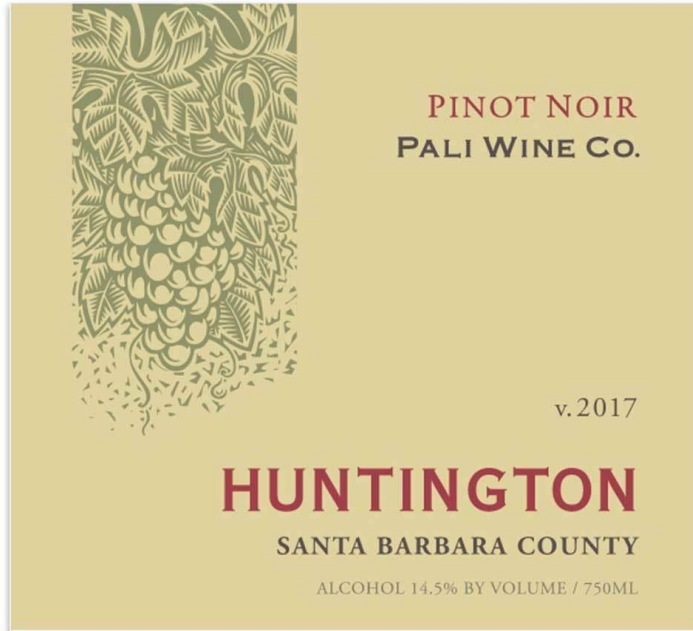


## SARAH'S VINEYARD

Pinot Noir Santa Clara Valley 2017

Score: 89 | \$30

**WS review:** Offers focused minerality, with saline hints to the dried red fruit and berry flavors. Chestnut and maple nuances emerge midpalate, leading to a finish of savory spice. Drink now through 2022. 1,790 cases made.—*K.M.*

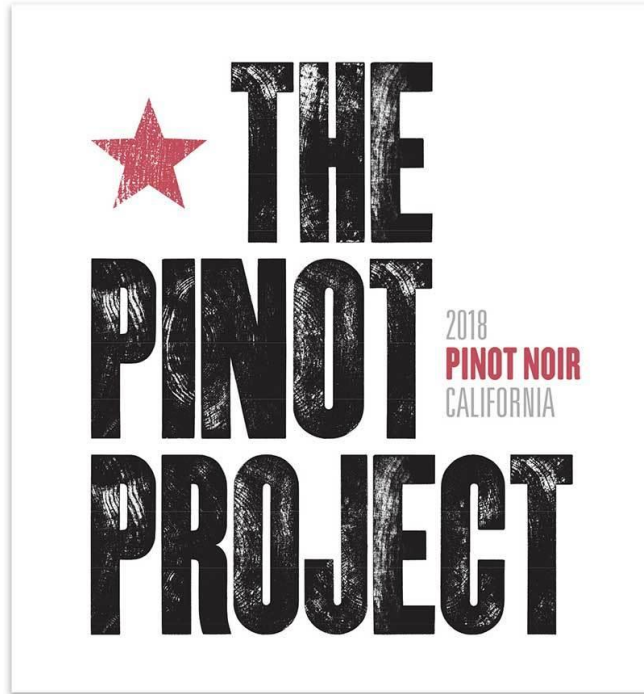


**PALI WINE CO.**

Pinot Noir Santa Barbara County Huntington 2017

Score: 88 | \$25

**WS review:** A mineral-driven style, with hints of citrus peel to the dried red fruit and cherry flavors. Savory and leathery notes show on the finish. Drink now. 8,586 cases made.—*K.M.*

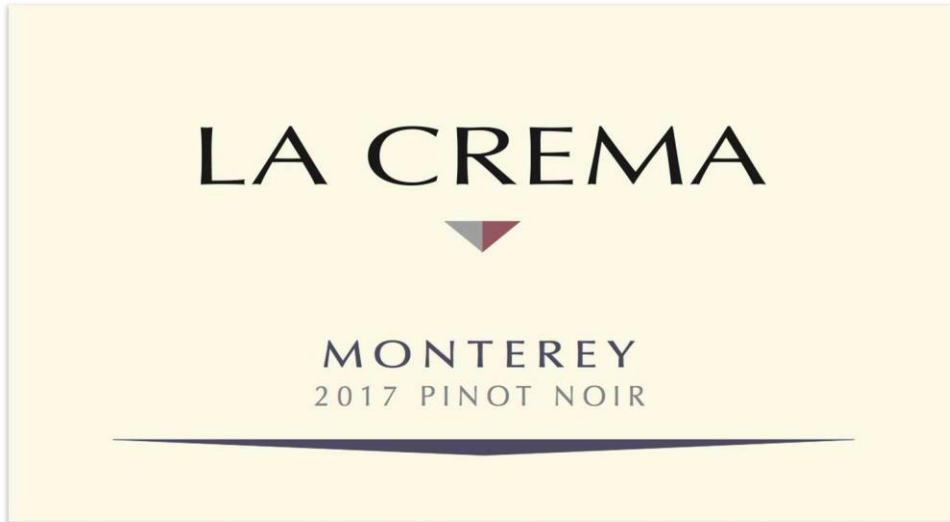


## THE PINOT PROJECT

Pinot Noir California 2018

Score: 88 | \$13

**WS review:** Snappy, filled with zesty raspberry and red cherry flavors that feature notes of black licorice. Vibrant acidity powers the spicy finish. Drink now through 2022. 75,000 cases made.—*K.M.*



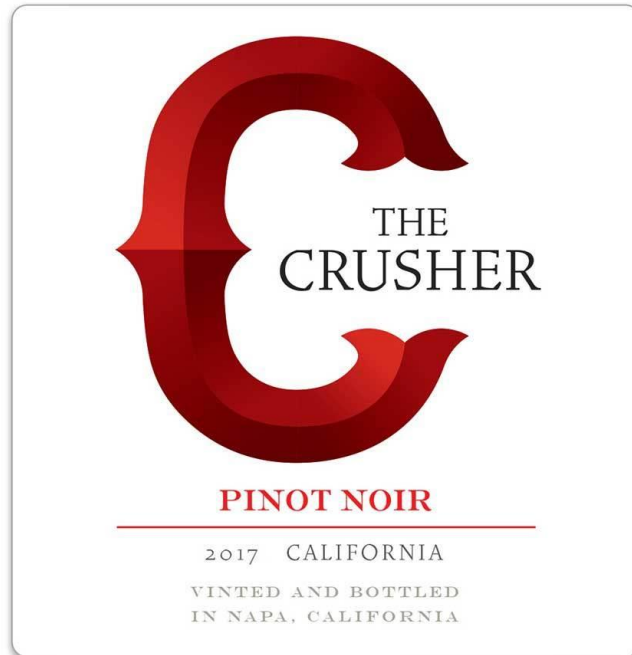
## LA CREMA

Pinot Noir Monterey 2017

Score: 87 | \$23

**WS review:** Dried cherry and berry flavors blend easily in this moderately fruity style. Notes of cedar and spice show on the finish. Drink now. 100,000 cases made.—*K.M.*





## THE CRUSHER

Pinot Noir California 2017

Score: 87 | \$13

**WS review:** Dried cherry, currant and berry flavors mix easily in this moderately fruity style. Citrus peel hints show on the finish. Drink now. 28,000 cases made.—*K.M.*



## HERON

Pinot Noir California 2018

Score: 86 | \$15

**WS review:** Offers a spicy aroma, with roasted beet and dried cherry flavors. Dried savory accents show on finish. Drink now. 10,800 cases made.—*K.M.*