

ERIN BROOKS

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Sonoma County is synonymous with high-quality Pinot Noir, but it can be hard to pinpoint style across this vast area—the Sonoma Coast appellation itself encompasses half a million acres—not to mention differences in style across producers. Cobb Wines, located in Occidental just four miles from the Pacific Ocean, consistently produces authentic coastal expressions from mature vines first planted 1989. These Pinot Noirs are light-bodied and lifted, shimmering and ethereal, and the 2018s are no exception. A cooler, leisurely vintage resulted in wines of exceptional purity, detail and site expression, each cuvée offering singular personality reflective of place.

The 2018s will age gracefully in the cellar over the next decade, although it will be hard to resist the upfront charm of these young wines. To read about how the Cobb wines mature in bottle, see [USA, California, Sonoma Coast: Cobb Wines Retrospective 2008-2017](#). Cheers!

2018 Diane Cobb Coastlands Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

97 Points

The 2018 Pinot Noir Diane Cobb Coastlands Vineyard comes from vines planted in 1989. Pale ruby, the 2018 offers both power and delicacy. The nose takes time to evolve from tobacco leaves and dusty earth to wild blackberries and cranberries, citrus peel, rose petal and saline. The palate surprises with its fruit intensity and notably silty, seamless frame, finishing uplifted and very spicy.

2018 Doc's Ranch Vineyard Swan & Calera Selection Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

97 Points

The 2018 Pinot Noir Doc's Ranch Swan & Calera Selection is scented of red cherries and cranberries with tones of bitter citrus, tobacco leaves, dried flowers and Angostura bitters. Light-bodied, silty and incredibly fresh, its slim frame holds a surprising amount of pure, crunchy fruits, and it finishes with tremendous length and spicy layers. The Swan clone fruit included in this cuvée comes from vines planted in 1995, and the Calera clones were planted in 2011. It's another 2018 from the Cobb portfolio that offers both ageability and immediate appeal.

2018 Coastlands Vineyard Old Firs Block Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

95+ Points

The 2018 Pinot Noir Coastlands Vineyard Old Firs Block comes from vines planted in 1989. Various clones are planted on AXR1 rootstock, including Wadenswil, Pommard and Martini. Despite the rootstock, Ross Cobb notes that the vines are unaffected by phylloxera. "We are very isolated out here, and those old clones are doing fine." The vines produced a singular rendition in 2018, with alluring scents of pipe tobacco, dried orange peel and dusty earth and a core of pretty raspberry and blueberry fruit. The palate is bright and saline-focused at this early stage, expertly structured with shimmering acidity, silty tannins and an ethereal, spice-laced finish. It's shy but hints at more to come, so give it 2-3 years in bottle.

2018 Doc's Ranch Vineyard Pommard & 114 Selection Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

96 Points

The 2018 Pinot Noir Doc's Ranch Pommard & 114 Selection has a pale ruby color and alluring aromas of raspberries, blueberries, mushrooms and dried blue flowers. The youthful delicacy on the nose is foiled by intense, juicy flavors on the palate, which offers silty tannins and exceptional length. This 2018 offers upfront pleasure but will age gracefully in the cellar if you enjoy a Pinot Noir with some bottle age.

2018 Doc's Ranch Vineyard Calera Selection Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

95 Points

Cobb usually bottles two versions of the Doc's Ranch vineyard from its four clones, a Pommard/114 blend and a Swan/Calera blend. In 2018, Ross Cobb decided to bottle two additional cuvées, single-clone versions of the Calera and Pommard clone fruit (I did not taste the Pommard in this particular tasting). This 2018 Pinot Noir Doc's Ranch Calera Selection offers expressive raspberries and blueberries with notes of tangerine peel, lilac and stone, gaining more nuance with time in the glass. The palate is pure and layered, with alluring floral perfume and ethereal lift on the finish.

2018 Wendling Vineyard Pinot Noir, Anderson Valley

96 Points

The second vintage of this cuvée, the 2018 Pinot Noir Wendling Vineyard is powerful and broody, offering dark cherries, iron, violet and forest floor aromas. The palate manages tremendous flavor intensity, the earthy fruits supported by an abundance of ripe, grainy tannins, finishing with both power and freshness. It's an ideal candidate for the cellar.

2018 Emmaline Ann Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

94 Points

The 2018 Pinot Noir Emmaline Ann Vineyard comes from vines planted in 1998 and is usually made with a higher proportion of whole cluster than other wines in the Cobb portfolio, around 40% to 60% depending on vintage. Pale, vibrant ruby in color, its scents of ripe cranberries and blood orange peel are pure and intense, with tones of earth and Angostura bitters. The palate is grainy and fresh with full, spicy flavors and a long, layered finish. It's a very pure, detailed expression of Emmaline Ann.

2018 Rice Spivak Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

96 Points

The 2018 Pinot Noir Rice Spivak Vineyard is pure and expressive this vintage, with layered scents of red cherries, orange peel, saline and earth. The palate is soft, fresh and super spicy, its charming, juicy red berry fruits calling you in again and again for another sip. It's a detailed supple version of this cuvée with immediate drinking appeal.

2018 Monticue Vineyard Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

95 Points

Vibrant ruby in color, the 2018 Pinot Noir Monticue Vineyard is deeply scented of cranberries, black cherries, bergamot and forest floor, opening to alluringly broody pipe tobacco and mushroom with time in the glass. The palate is flush with spiced, dark fruits supported by silty tannins, and it finishes with ethereal lift and very pretty layering.