

BARFLY

In West Marin, pinot noir is king

For those of us who live in East Marin (if there is a West Marin there must be an East



Jeff Burkhardt

Marin, right?) we don't get to see many acres under vine. In fact, the only two vineyards along the Highway 101 corridor in Marin County are both cabernet sauvignon

—Quail Ridge and Pacheco Ranch. Which might give the casual observer the impression that cabernet sauvignon is king in Marin.

It isn't. Of the approximately 125 acres of vineyards in Marin, 75 percent are dedicated to pinot noir. Because of its longer growing season, coastal cooling fog and hotter inland areas, West Marin would seem to be more similar to coastal Bordeaux than inland Burgundy. But, in truth it is the opposite, at least climate-wise. West Marin's climate is also much like coastal Sonoma County and both are included in the North Coast AVA (technically only half of Marin is in the AVA, but that is almost all of its wine-producing area) an area that produces some of the best pinot noirs in the world.

We have recently covered the pinot noir from Stubbs Vineyard and Sean Thackrey's Andromeda, but here are four more offerings, all from West Marin.

▪ Pey-Marin Vineyards 2015 "Trois Filles," Marin County \$44

Named in honor of the Pey's three daughters: "trois filles"

is sourced from a 25-year-old eight-acre site, eight miles from the Pacific Ocean. This lean muscular pinot is all brightly acidic red fruit, with a violet nose and soft loamy undertones. Burgundian in every sense except for the price. Susan Pey died two years ago, but her legacy lives on in Pey-Marin's wines. Only 190 cases produced; scenicrootwinegrowers.com.

▪ Brooks Note 2015 Marin County Pinot Noir \$36

Following stints at Acacia, Ravenswood and Kosta Browne, winemaker Gary Brooks now produces his own wine at the Trek winemaking facility in Novato. This pinot noir is sourced from two West Marin vineyards: Chileno Valley Vineyards and Azaya Ranch Vineyards, producing a deep-fruited wine, redolent of blackberry, blueberry and dark cherry, complimented with a little earthiness, wild sage and

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leather. Only 250 cases produced; brooksnotewinery.com.

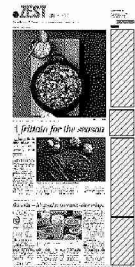
▪ DeLoach 2014 Stubbs Vineyard Marin County Pinot Noir \$55

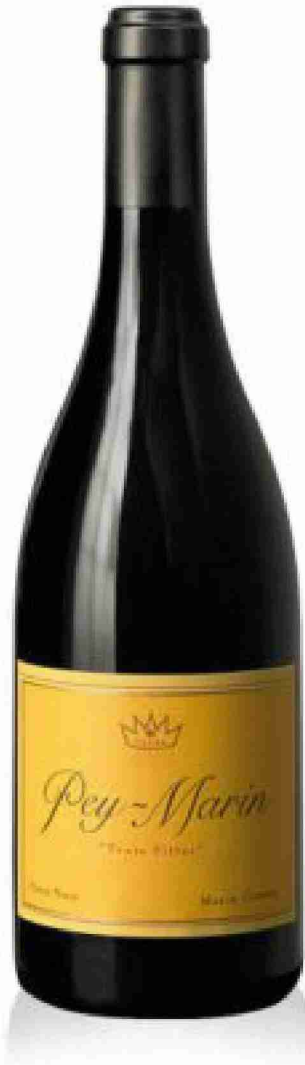
Mary and Tom Stubbs grow grapes on their property in West Marin and produce their own wine under their own label. Their wine is produced at the DeLoach Winery facility in Santa Rosa. Part of the deal is that DeLoach gets to produce their own wine from Stubbs' fruit. The result is a wine with complex minerality, earthiness, and black raspberry. Different yet similar to Stubbs own offering. DeLoach also makes a "Marin County" pinot sourced from several Marin County vineyards as well (\$45); deloachvineyards.com.

▪ Hartford Court Marin 2014 Pinot Noir \$70

Forestville's Hartford Family Winery entry on this list is both unfiltered and unfiltered, giving you

real honest to goodness terroir in the wine. This Dijon-cloned West Marin offering shows its Burgundian side with softly vegetal notes accented by pomegranate, smoke and strawberry. Winemaker Jeff Stewart's cool climate pinots often score in the mid to high 90s, and this one is right there with the rest. Not cheap, but that is what happens when you have a recognizable name; hartfordwines.com *Jeff Burkhardt is the author of "Twenty Years Behind Bars: The Spirited Adventures of a Real Bartender" and an award-winning bartender at a local restaurant. Follow him at jeffbarkhart.net and contact him at jeff@thebarflyonline.com.*





COURTESY OF PEY-MARIN VINEYARDS

Pey-Marin Vineyards' 2015 "Trois Filles" is Burgundian in every sense except for the price.