
THE CHRONICLE WINE SELECTIONS

South Central Coast Pinot Noir

The southern portion of the Central Coast has become prime territory for Pinot Noir as well as for Syrah (see Chronicle Wine Selections, Oct. 5, on sfgate.com/wine).

Edna Valley — in southwest San Luis Obispo County — has a high humidity and oft-occurring fog. Under these conditions, Pinot Noir takes its sweet time to ripen then expresses its red fruit character.

Santa Maria Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area), on the north edge of Santa Barbara County, is located “above” the Santa Ynez Valley AVA, which runs just north of the Santa Ynez Mountains. The western-most portions of these AVAs capitalize on the ocean’s proximity, which provides ocean breezes, fog and moderate temperatures. Pinot Noirs from these regions have deep, ripe, concentrated flavors, bright aromas and acidity, and are midpoint between the often lighter, tarter, red-fruited Anderson Valley and Mendocino County Pinot Noirs and riper, fuller-bodied, powerhouses from regions like the Santa Lucia Highlands.

— Lynne Char Bennett