

are non-producing (i.e., young vines), barely enough to meet replacement needs.

Of considerably more importance than continued growth in acreage is the sustained improvement in viticulture over the past decade. The original plantings of the 1970s have been slowly replaced by new varietals, new clones, and new rootstock as growers become more familiar with local growing conditions. In some cases the pace of change has been rapid. As an example, the purchase of Prudential's huge San Bernabe estate by the Indelicato family in 1988 resulted in a massive replanting and modernization of the vineyards. Improvements in viticulture were accompanied by improvements in winemaking. Scheid, for example, moved from producing jug wines under contract to other producers to making and marketing its own wines, including a line of upscale reserve wines made from estate fruit.

Monterey's Future: The New Winemakers. With better plant material and improved viticulture, Monterey fruit is today highly sought out by winemakers. About 70 percent of all grapes are, in fact, sold or transported to wineries outside Monterey, reflecting both high demand for Monterey fruit and the difficulty in establishing new wineries due to Monterey County's environmental restrictions.

Despite the regulatory obstacles, the number of wineries and of world class enologists making wine in Monterey continues to grow. The number of wineries has more than quadrupled over the past decade. They vary in size from the tiny to the very large, including Delicato's two million gallon winery in San Bernabe and Scheid's 4.5 million gallon winery in Arroyo Seco. Annex I provides a listing of innovative, young winemakers who are making wine in Monterey today. It includes such outstanding talent as Annette Hoff of Cima Colina, Ian Brand of Coastview and De Tierra, Peter Figge of Figge Cellars, and Paul Clifton of Hahn Estates.

In addition to talented winemakers, Monterey has added to its list of premiere wineries over the past decade: Coastview (established in 2007), Cima Colina (2004), Pelerin (2002), Figge Cellars (2004), Pierce Ranch (2005), Chualar Canyon (2010) and Caraccioli Cellars (2006). These wineries source their fruit from throughout Monterey County and its AVAs.



Caraccioli Cellars Enters the Scene

Caraccioli is one of the most exciting new winemaking ventures in Monterey. It was launched in 2006 when native-born Gary Caraccioli enticed his Uncle Jim and

Phil to expand into the wine business with the goal of making an exclusive and original wine not made anywhere in the Santa Lucia Highlands. This turned out to be a sparkling wine, and to produce one that was sophisticated and complex Gary recruited a first-class wine making team consisting of Joe Rawitzer, a Monterey County native, and Michel Salgues, who was born and raised in France and is reputedly the finest sparkling wine maker in California. They are an extraordinary team with rich professional backgrounds and experience in still and sparkling wine. Michel, who heads up the winemaking, spent 20 years producing the wines at Roederer Estate in Anderson Valley. Caraccioli's first releases of sparkling wines, a 2006 Brut and a 2006 Brut Rosé reviewed in this report, are outstanding and we expect they will get even better in the coming years. The Pinot Noir and Chardonnay they produce are also very well done.

Monterey: The Region



(Map courtesy of Ernest & Julio Gallo Winery)

Monterey is a large, diverse wine growing region. It is diverse in terms of altitude, temperature, wind and soils. This diversity is reflected in its nine AVAs, but like most appellations, there is as much variation within the AVAs as between them. The huge San Bernabe Vineyard alone has 22 different microclimates and 13 soil types.

Altitude. Most vineyards are planted on the low benchlands overlooking the Salinas River, where the valley floor lies about 120 feet above sea level, but altitudes increase as one moves away from the river. Thus,

Bernardus 2010 Sauvignon Blanc Monterey (\$15) 88

This basic Sauvignon Blanc is mainly fermented in stainless steel and includes 5% Semillon. Some 60% of the fruit is from the Griva Vineyard in Arroyo Seco and consists of the Musque clone. It is fruit forward, soft and round and approachable with aromas of citrus and melon. A good value.

Bernardus 2010 Sauvignon Blanc Griva Vineyard Arroyo Seco (\$20) 90

The Sauvignon Blanc Griva Vineyard is also produced from the Musque clone. It is 100% cold fermented in stainless steel and is pungent and grassy like a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc with grapefruit and asparagus notes on the palate and prominent minerality. It has 5% Semillon that is barrel fermented in neutral oak. After fermentation the wine rests in large neutral oak tanks before bottling. A delicious wine.

Bernardus 2009 Chardonnay Sierra Mar Santa Lucia Highlands (\$40) 91

This Chardonnay is produced from fruit of a new vineyard in the Highlands owned by Gary Francioni, co-owner of Garys' Vineyard and Rosella's. It is starbright yellow straw and offers aromas of flint with hints of butterscotch and honeysuckle on the nose. Richer in flavor than the Monterey County Chardonnay, it is full and round on the palate with flavors of ripe orchard fruit and smoky oak. Aged in 40% new oak for 9 months, with full malolactic fermentation, the wine has a rich mouth feel and a very long finish.

Bernardus 2007 Pinot Noir Ingrid's Vineyard Monterey (\$80) 91+

The Pinot Noir Ingrid's Vineyard is a fruit rich, complex wine offering aromas of black cherry, caramelized oak and cigar box. It is light and elegant on the palate yet concentrated with dark Syrah-like flavors, high acidity and round gripping tannins. This is a wine with layers of earth and fruit finishing long.

Bernardus 2007 Pinot Noir Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands (\$75) 92

The Pinot Noir Rosella's Vineyard is a beautifully focused wine with a core of dark cherry fruit, earth and toasted oak. It is soft on the attack with a velvet smooth mouth feel, ripe round tannins and a long persistent finish. An outstanding wine.

Bernardus 2007 Marinus Monterey County (\$28) 93

Marinus is a first-class vineyard-designated Bordeaux blend from the upper Carmel Valley. It consists of 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot and other grapes. It is a beautifully knit wine of small thick-skinned grapes offering pure aromas and flavors of blackberry, cedar and cigar box with density on the palate. The high quality of this wine is the result of many improvements in the vineyard that have taken place since 2007.

Other Wines Tasted

Bernardus 2008 Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc Griva Vineyard Arroyo Seco (\$50) 88, Bernardus 2009 Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands (\$20) 88, Bernardus 2009 Chardonnay Monterey (\$22) 89



Caraccioli Cellars

This is a relatively new winemaking venture of Monterey County native Gary

Caraccioli, Joe Rawitzer and Michel Salgues. They are an extraordinary team with rich professional backgrounds and experience in still and sparkling wine. Michel, who heads up the winemaking, is originally from France and spent 20 years producing the wines at Roederer Estate in Anderson Valley. Caraccioli's first releases of sparkling wines reviewed here are outstanding, and we expect they will get even better in the coming years. The still wines are also very well done.

Caraccioli Cellars 2006 Brut Santa Lucia Highlands (\$52) 93+

This lovely Brut is Caraccioli Cellar's first release, and it is a winner. Produced by the Méthode Champenoise, it is bright, crisp and elegant with a rich mousse and attractive subtle apple and pear flavors and leesy notes. Overall, the wine is beautifully balanced, combining power and elegance. A blend of 60% Pinot Noir and 40% Chardonnay, the grapes for this sparkler were sourced from lots of Talbot's Sleepy Hollow Vineyard.

Caraccioli Cellars 2006 Brut Rosé Santa Lucia Highlands (\$52) 91

The Brut Rosé displays a light salmon hue and is a blend of 60% Pinot Noir and 40% Chardonnay. It is bright and crisp with excellent acidity, fresh bold flavors and hints of light toast on a long and very satisfying finish.

Caraccioli Cellars 2007 Chardonnay Santa Lucia Highlands (\$29) 91

The 2007 Chardonnay exhibits ripe melon and pear fruit aromas with light smoke and toasted oak. Aged for only 3 months in oak, it reveals a creamy mouth feel, good crisp acidity and freshness, and a firm, satisfying finish.

Caraccioli Cellars 2008 Chardonnay Santa Lucia Highlands (\$29) 90

The newly released 2008 Chardonnay exhibits light melon fruit aromas and flavors with a hint of charred oak. Still young and evolving at this stage, it appears to be less ripe and more tightly wound overall than the 2007.

Caraccioli Cellars 2007 Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands (\$47) 91

The medium ruby 2007 Pinot Noir delivers pure delicate cherry and pomegranate fruit aromas with nuances of toasted oak. On the palate, it reveals delicious fruit flavors, excellent balance, and nicely rounded tannins, allowing for early drinking.

Caraccioli Cellars 2008 Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands (\$47) 91

The newly released 2008 Pinot Noir delivers bigger and spicier flavors than the 2007. It is a young wine with great potential, already revealing elegance and balance. It offers delicious red berry fruit with layers of flavor, round silky tannins and a long finish.

Carmel Hills Winery

Carmel Hills Winery is a modest winery in Carmel Valley owned and operated by Paul and Lynn Stokes since 1996. The wines are handcrafted from 16-acres of estate vineyards situated at 600-800 ft. in the Carmel Hills and from purchased fruit. Lynn Sakasegawa Stokes who has a degree in biology, produces the wines in small lots totaling 150 cases. Tel. 831-659-0750

Carmel Hills 2009 Unfiltered Chardonnay Carmel Valley (\$29) 89

This Chardonnay offers aromas of tropical fruit, toast and hazelnut. Fermented in stainless steel, it goes through 30% malolactic fermentation and spends three months in French oak. It reveals good acidity and freshness with excellent mouth feel and a crisp finish.

Carmel Hills 2009 Pinot Noir Carmel Valley 89+

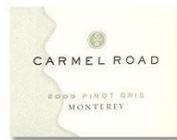
This Pinot Noir is sourced from the Carmel Valley and Santa Lucia Highlands. Medium ruby in color, it offers medium cherry/raspberry fruit and spicy stem notes on the nose. Aged for six months in French oak, it is quite elegant, fresh and flavorful. Only 75 cases.

Carmel Hills 2009 Pinot Noir Hidden Hills Vineyard Carmel Valley (\$35) 87+

The Hidden Hills single vineyard Pinot Noir exhibits a light red ruby hue and has aromas of light cherry. While sweet on the palate, it is lightly concentrated and rosé-like in character. It might best be served chilled.

Carmel Hills 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon Phoenix Red Monterey (\$23) 87

This Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot blend. boasts a raspberry dark chocolate truffle nose with mint edge. It has nice weight on the palate with assertive, unusual flavors of chocolate, mint, and cedar. It has a long finish, but is quite hot.



Carmel Road

Founded in 1997, Carmel Road is part of the Artisans and Estates portfolio of Jackson Family Wines. The winery produces excellent wines sourced from high quality vineyards in the Monterey and Arroyo Seco AVAs: Rincon, Hacienda, and Clark Ranch. The winemaker at Carmel Road is the talented Ivan Gitenov of Bulgaria. The Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are first-class. Tel 800-273-8558

Carmel Road 2009 Pinot Gris Monterey (\$16) 89

This is Carmel Road's first release of Pinot Gris and it is a very good one. Blended with Chardonnay, Riesling and other grapes, it offers fresh orchard fruit on the nose with a touch of lime citrus. Fermented in stainless steel and neutral French oak, it reveals a fragrant fresh character with a round creamy mouth feel and a chalky finish.

Carmel Road 2009 Riesling Monterey (\$14) 88

The light gold-colored Riesling reveals notes of diesel and stone fruit. It is rich and round in the mouth with green apple and ripe apricot fruit flavors. It reveals a light sweetness from residual sugar and good acidity. Fermented in stainless steel and oak barrels.

Carmel Road 2009 Chardonnay Monterey (\$18) 90+

This lovely medium-gold Chardonnay offers aromas of melon, stone fruit and vanilla that are mirrored on a full lush palate. Fermented in stainless steel and oak, with 80% malolactic fermentation, it is very nicely balanced with good acidity and a crisp finish. The grapes come mainly from Clark Ranch near Soledad. Mostly clone 4, some 15, 17, and Dijon clones.

Carmel Road 2007 Chardonnay Arroyo Seco (\$35) 91

The 2007 Chardonnay reveals a yellow gold color and aromas of stone fruit, flint and a touch of honeysuckle on the nose. On the palate it offers assertive spiced peach and tangerine flavors with spicy oak. Aged in French oak, 35% new, and with 100% malolactic fermentation, it boasts a rich round mouth feel and a long finish. A lovely exotic wine mainly sourced from the outstanding Clark Ranch, which is set in the shadows of the Santa Lucia Mountain range.

Carmel Road 2009 Pinot Noir Monterey (\$20) 90

Medium light ruby red in color, the 2009 Pinot Noir is nicely flavored with medium cherry, earth and spice on the palate. It is soft on the attack and has good acidity and fine tannins on the finish. The grapes are sourced primarily from low yielding young vines of the Panorama Vineyard and Clark Ranch.