

Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar

By Josh Reynolds, Nov/Dec 2012

Brian Talley has moved completely to night harvesting in order to bring in fruit at its coolest, and the last two vintages here have been conducive to the Talley style. "The only issue was the short crops," said Talley." He added that the 2011s are richer and a bit less tight than the 2010s and that he personally gives an edge to the 2010s "because even though they might be more concentrated and dense than the '11s, the '10s have an energy and focus to them that's special." He is convinced that 2010 is a highly ageworthy vintage: "the pinots should go on for a really long time."

2011 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Bishop's Peak Central Coast—89 Points

(\$16) Green-tinged yellow. Bright, high-pitched aromas and flavors of Meyer lemon and green apple. Gains depth with air, picking up peach pit and melon nuances and finishing smooth and clinging. Talley told me that this wine was essentially the young vines from Oliver's Vineyard, with the malo blocked.

2010 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Edna Valley—91 Points

(\$24) Bright straw. Sexy aromas of fresh citrus and orchard fruits, jasmine and honey, with a minerally overtone. Very bright and energetic on the palate, offering juicy pear and tangerine flavors underscored by dusty minerality. Finishes with excellent clarity and cut, leaving floral and bitter citrus pith notes behind.

2010 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Arroyo Grande Valley—92 Points

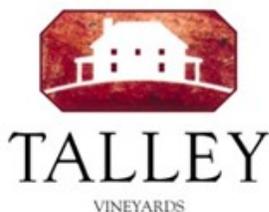
(\$26) Pale yellow. Expansive, highly perfumed bouquet of tangerine, honeysuckle and chamomile, with a spicy topnote. Deeply pitched orchard and pit fruit flavors are energized by juicy acidity, with notes of citrus zest and minerals emerging with air. A lively citrus pith note adds definition and a bitter edge to the long, sappy finish.

2010 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Oliver's Vineyard Edna Valley—92 Points

(\$32) Light gold. Potent aromas of poached pear, honey and lees, with a suave undercurrent of anise and iodine; smells like a really good white Burgundy. Chewy, tightly focused orchard fruit flavors are braced by a tangy lemon zest quality and become spicier with air. Finishes with excellent clarity, focus and lingering smokiness.

2010 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Rincon Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley—94 Points

(\$42) Light green-gold. Pungent aromas of pear skin, orange, smoky lees and iodine, plus a suave floral overtone. Sappy orchard fruit flavors show serious depth and power, with tangy minerality adding lift. Completely stains the palate and finishes on intense mineral, floral and orchard fruit notes, with superb length and lingering smokiness.



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2010 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Rosemary's Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley—94 Points

(\$46) Light, bright gold. Explosive aromas of orange, hazelnut and chamomile, with a spicy overtone. At once energetic and deep, offering vibrant citrus and orchard fruit flavors that gain flesh and weight with air. Wonderfully seamless and silky in texture, finishing with strong punch, distinct minerality and striking clarity.

2011 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Bishop's Peak San Luis Obispo County—90 Points

(\$20) Bright red. Sexy aromas and flavors of raspberry, potpourri and Asian spices. Suave on entry, then juicy and energetic in the mid-palate. An intensely flavored, lithe, seamless pinot with very good finishing focus and cling.

2010 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Edna Valley—92 Points

(\$34) Dark red. Seductive, highly perfumed aromas of blackberry, cherry cola, and violet. Lush and creamy but lively, offering sappy dark berry flavors and a hint of fruitcake. Spherical and approachable now. Smoothly blends richness and vivacity and finishes very long and seamless, with lingering sweetness and an echo of candied flowers. The fruit for this wine came entirely from the Stone Corral vineyard.

2010 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Arroyo Grande Valley—92 Points

(\$36) (90% of this fruit came from the Rincon vineyard). Vivid red. Heady, exotic bouquet evokes candied red fruits, potpourri and spicecake, with a mineral topnote. Fresh, penetrating raspberry and bitter cherry flavors show impressive clarity and put on weight with air. Fine-grained tannins give shape to the finish, which leaves sweet red berry and rose pastille notes behind. This must be the best version of this bottling I've yet tasted from Talley.

2010 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Stone Corral Vineyard Edna Valley—93 Points

(\$50) Bright ruby-red. Heady, stunningly aromatic bouquet displays pungent red berries, Indian spices, incense and vanilla. Deep raspberry and cherry vanilla flavors convey an impression of power, with zesty blood orange and rhubarb notes adding bite and focus. Finishes with excellent clarity and cut, leaving a suave spicecake quality behind. Talley told me that the yield from this vineyard in 2010 was only 1.5 tons per acre, "which is too low from a financial standpoint."

2010 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Rincon Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley—94 Points

(\$58) Deep red. Ripe raspberry and cherry on the intensely perfumed nose. Lush and expansive on the palate, offering densely packed yet lively red fruit compote and floral flavors that become brighter and spicier with air. The spicy quality carries through a very long, clinging finish, which shows a seamless, sappy character. Quite elegant but highly concentrated as well; I'd bet on this pinot rewarding at least a decade of cellaring.



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2010 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Rosemary's Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley—94 Points

(\$70) Bright ruby-red. Seductive, highly nuanced bouquet evokes black raspberry, candied rose, underbrush and sandalwood. Supple, broad and sweet, with impressive concentration to its dark fruit, spice and floral flavors. Shows a very suave blend of richness and vivacity and finishes with superb clarity, power and length, leaving floral and blackberry notes behind. Talley told me that the yield from this vineyard was barely a ton and a half per acre in 2010.

2010 Talley Vineyards Bishop's Peak Cabernet Sauvignon Paso Robles—90? Points

(\$20) (includes 8% merlot, 7% cabernet franc and 4% malbec): Deep ruby. Ripe plum and cherry on the nose, with suggestions of pipe tobacco and licorice candy. Seamless and sweet, showing a velvety texture to its sappy cherry and dark berry flavors. Closes smooth and long, with very good energy and gentle tannins. The grapes for this stylish cabernet were sourced from vineyards east of Templeton, according to Brian Talley, who added? that most cabernets from such a warm area lack this wine's vivacity.
