

Steve Tanzer's International Wine Cellar

By Josh Reynolds, Oct/Nov 2013

2012 Talley Vineyards Bishop's Peak Chardonnay Central Coast—90 Points

(\$16) (made from grapes grown in Talley's Oliver's Vineyard; no malo): Light yellow. Fresh orange, apple and ginger on the perfumed nose. Juicy and precise on the palate, offering lively floral- and herb-inflected citrus and orchard fruit flavors and a touch of licorice. Finishes lively and long, with resonating spiciness and very good length.

2011 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Edna Valley—91 Points

(\$24) (made entirely from estate-grown fruit in the Oliver's vineyard; 20% new oak): Pale yellow. Musky, perfumed aromas of pear skin, anise, orange pith and white flowers. Supple and broad but surprisingly dry, offering chewy orchard and pit fruit flavors brightened by a bitter citrus pith nuance. Finishes quite long, with very good focus and grip, the orange and anise notes repeating.

2011 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Arroyo Grande Valley—92 Points

(\$27) (75% of this fruit is from the Rincon vineyard and the rest from the Rosemary's vineyard; 23% new oak): Pale gold. Fresh pear and lemon curd aromas are complemented by notes of chalky minerals and gingery spices. Fresh and focused on the palate, with very good lift and cut to its zesty citrus and orchard fruit flavors. Spreads out nicely on the finish, repeating the pear note and showing very good vivacity and persistence.

Chardonnay Monte Sereno Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley 2011 - 91 points

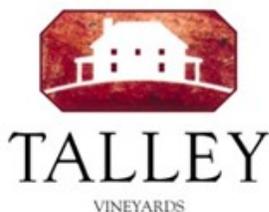
(\$32) (no new oak): Light yellow. Mineral-accented aromas of orange, poached pear, ginger and anise, with a leesy undertone. Juicy, penetrating orchard fruit and citrus zest flavors gain flesh and spiciness with air and pick up a hint of sweet butter. Packs a solid punch but shows no excess weight and finishes with very good clarity and mineral-driven persistence.

2011 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Oliver's Vineyard Edna Valley—93 Points

(\$36) 20% new oak): Bright yellow. Potent, smoke- and ginger-accented aromas of poached pear, tangerine and white flowers. Round and seamless on the palate, offering sappy orchard and citrus fruit flavors and a touch of buttered toast. Shows excellent focus and lift on the finish, which leaves notes of anise and iodine behind.

2011 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Rincon Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley—93 Points

(\$44) (made from a yield of .94 tons per acre; 20% new oak and aging for 15 months on its lees): Pale, vaguely hazy yellow (because of the fact that the wine wasn't filtered, no doubt). Powerful, expressive aromas of ripe pear and orange pith, with a bright mineral nuance gaining strength in the glass. Sappy, incisive and pure, offering vibrant citrus fruit and underripe orchard fruit flavors plus a touch of anise. The mineral quality comes back strong on the finish, which shows excellent focus and drive. I like the tension here. Brian Talley told me that he has no doubt this wine is built for the cellar.



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2011 Talley Vineyards Chardonnay Rosemary's Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley—93 Points

(\$48) Pale yellow. Ripe peach, smoky minerals, white flowers and a touch of honey on the nose, lifted by spicy and peppery nuances. Concentrated and densely packed, offering intense Meyer lemon and pear flavors framed and sharpened by minerals and gingery spice. Finishes with noteworthy aromatic lift and excellent clarity, leaving iodine and citrus fruit notes behind. Fans of serious Puligny-Montrachet (and who isn't, really?) owe it to themselves to check this one out.

2012 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Bishop's Peak San Luis Obispo County—90 Points

(\$20) (20% new French oak): Bright red. Fresh red fruits, flowers and spicecake on the highly perfumed nose. Juicy and precise, offering vibrant raspberry and bitter cherry flavors and a hint of blood orange. Finishes long and sweet, with gentle tannins and lingering floral and spice notes. This pinot delivers very good value and makes a gently priced introduction to the Talley style.

2011 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Edna Valley—91 Points

(\$34) (made from fruit grown in the Stone Corral vineyard): Bright ruby. Black raspberry, cherry and musky beetroot on the pungent nose. Fleishy and expansive, offering deep red and dark berry flavors and a hint of candied rose. Picks up spiciness with air and finishes on a smoky note, with very good thrust and length. This pinot has the heft to handle richer foods.

2011 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Arroyo Grande Valley—92 Points

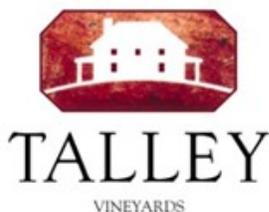
(\$36) Vivid ruby-red. Fresh red berry and rose scents show impressive clarity and energy. Sweet, pure and elegant in style, offering lively raspberry and spicecake flavors and a seamless, silky texture. Shows excellent focus and alluring spiciness on the finish, with fine-grained tannins adding shape and gentle grip. This graceful pinot is already delicious.

2011 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Stone Corral Vineyard Edna Valley—92 Points

(\$58) Vivid ruby-red. Vibrant raspberry and cherry-cola aromas are complicated by Asian spice and candied floral nuances. Offers sweet red berry compote and bitter cherry flavors that are enlivened by white pepper and lavender. The long, silky finish features fine-grained tannins and a suave floral pastille kick. There's 30% new French oak here but I barely notice it.

2011 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Rincon Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley—93 Points

(\$60) Bright ruby. Black raspberry, cherry, woodsmoke and rose oil on the seductively perfumed nose. Fleishy and expansive, offering polished red and dark berry flavors and a suave note of candied flowers. Picks up spiciness and weight with air and finishes on a juicy red berry note, with very good thrust, length and harmonious tannins.



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2011 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir East Rincon Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley—93 Points

(\$60) Dark ruby color. Dark berries, cherry and Indian spices on the deeply scented nose. In a distinctly more broad-shouldered, masculine style than I expect from Talley, but in no way heavy or brooding. Spicy blackberry and bitter cherry flavors are enlivened by a juicy blood orange quality and a hint of cracked pepper. Finishes with building sweetness, subtle tannins and excellent persistence.

2011 Talley Vineyards Pinot Noir Rosemary's Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley—93 Points

(\$70) Vivid ruby-red. Lively red berries and cherry on the intensely perfumed nose, with notes of pungent flowers, Asian spices and blood orange adding complexity. Bright, racy strawberry and raspberry flavors give way to a deeper bitter cherry quality in the mid-palate, with a tangy citrus pith quality adding lift. The penetrating, gently tannic finish is alluringly sweet and floral, leaving a hint of smoky minerality behind, eventually.

2010 Talley Vineyards Syrah Rincon Vineyard Bishop's Peak Arroyo Grande Valley—91 Points

(\$28) (aged in 30% new French oak for 21 months): Inky ruby. Black and blue fruits on the perfumed nose, with notes of licorice, violet and cracked pepper adding complexity. Offers spice-driven blackberry and bitter cherry flavors, picking up sweetness and floral pastille nuances with air. Supple tannins give shape and grip to a long, focused finish that leaves a smoky note on the aftertaste.

2011 Talley Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Bishop's Peak Paso Robles—90 Points

(\$20) (80% cabernet sauvignon, 14% petit verdot, 4% malbec and 2% merlot; aged in a 50/50 combination of French and American oak, 30% of it new): Inky ruby. A fragrant bouquet displays scents of ripe cherry and blackberry, with an exotic lavender note in the background. Silky and open-knit, offering sweet dark fruit flavors braced by juicy acidity. The finish, shaped by smooth and fully integrated tannins, repeats the floral note. Delicious right now, but this wine has the structure to age positively for at least a few more years.

Sauvignon Blanc Bishop's Peak Edna Valley 2012—89 Points

(\$18) Bright straw. Fresh citrus fruits, fig and white flowers on the nose. Dry and racy, with good lift and clarity to its orange zest and honeysuckle flavors. Finishes dry and focused with good back-end snap and length.
