

World of Pinot Noir in Your Glass

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Jeremy Ball

Arroyo Grande Valley vintner Brian Talley celebrates his family's more than half century of farming along the Central Coast in a new book called 'Our California Table.' He'll be selling and signing copies at the World of Pinot Noir event March 3 and 4.

Annual Celebration of the 'Heartbreak Grape' Comes to Bacara Resort

Thursday, February 23, 2017

By [Matt Kettmann](#) ([Contact](#))

Though it took the Hollywood help of *Sideways* — let's just get that mandatory nod out of the way — pinot noir was always primed for the spotlight. Not only does this grape originally from France's famed Burgundy region present an unparalleled array of aromas and flavors ranging from fruit to flower to forest, but the fickle variety also tends to be grown in the most dramatic of landscapes by the most interesting of people. Behind every great pinot is a unique combination of geography, geology, and human ingenuity, making the wines merely windows into much deeper sagas of people and place.

On the first weekend of March each year, the World of Pinot Noir celebrates this so-called "heartbreak grape," bringing hundreds of pinot-philes to the Bacara Resort for two jam-packed days of tasting and talking. There's way too many producers, panels, and dinners to mention at once, but here's a cheat sheet for those seeking guidance next weekend, Thursday-Saturday, March 2-4.

See worldofpinotnoir.com for the full schedule and tickets.

Talley Book @ Grand Tastings

The Talley family started farming in the Arroyo Grande Valley in 1948, but it wasn't until they started making pinot and chardonnay in the early 1980s that their name became known across the Central Coast. Today, Brian and Johnine Talley lead the vineyard and winery operations and remain involved with their extended family in Talley Farms, which wholesales vegetables all around the country as well as through their popular CSA (community-supported agriculture) program. "That's been such an incredible shot in the arm for our business," said Brian of this direct-to-consumer option they now offer to fans from San Luis Obispo to northern Santa Barbara County.

This year, the Talleys are releasing a beautiful book of family lore and recipes called *Our California Table: Celebrating the Seasons with the Talley Family*. Featuring photographs by Lompoc's own Jeremy Ball, the book, which was written by Brian, discusses the value of family, profiles various vegetables and fruits that they grow, and gives a very halcyon tint to the present, enough to make any Central Coast resident proud.

Brian will sign copies of *Our California Table* during the main tastings on Friday and Saturday, as guests sip on wine from more than 200 combined producers and nibble bites from C'est Cheese.

See talleyvineyards.com.

Wineries to Watch

Each month, I review more than 150 Central Coast wines for *Wine Enthusiast*, so I know many of these wines and winemakers quite well. Here are a few producers from around the region (and a little beyond!) you may not yet know:

Clos de la Tech: This estate winery, owned by tech moguls T.J. and Valeta Rodgers, combines cutting-edge technology with old-school methods to produce incredibly earthy wines from the steep hillsides in San Mateo County. closdelatech.com

Dolin: Former music executive Elliott Dolin is one of the Malibu Coast's loudest cheerleaders but also makes great pinots from Bien Nacido, Solomon Hills, and Rincon vineyards. dolinestate.com

Kynsi: Don Othman invented the Bulldog Pup, which gently racks wine from container to container using inert gas, and then started his own winery in the Edna Valley, surrounded by the Stone Corral Vineyard. kynsi.com

Last Light: Jared Lee and David Sartain source grapes from the most coastal vineyards they can find — the ones that see the last light of the setting sun — which for now is Derbyshire in San Simeon and Spanish Springs behind Pismo. lastlightwine.com

Lutum: Onetime wonderboy Gavin Chanin is growing up, still making light but flavorful wines under his eponymous label but also focusing on the soils in this Sonoma-S.B. partnership with Bill Price. lutumwines.com

New Zealand Winegrowers: Last year, I found the New Zealand table one of the most fascinating. They always bring a variety of wines from their distinct appellations, opening eyes to a wild array of scents and tastes that this one grape allows. nzwine.com

Peake Ranch: John Wagner is the John in John Sebastiano Vineyard, one of the Sta. Rita Hills' finest. This is his new venture, on the southeastern side of the appellation, with Paul Lato as winemaker. peakeranch.com

Ryan Cochrane: The former advertising executive from San Francisco now makes stunningly bright and delicate wines from Solomon Hills and Fiddlestix vineyards. ryancochranewines.com

Serious Eats

Good food is a critical part of enjoying pinot. Here are some highlights:

Kosta Browne “Great Sites” Lunch: The Wine Cask hosts this lunch seminar, with Fred Dame moderating Dan Kosta, Michael Browne, and winemaker Nico Cueva about such vineyards as Cerise, Gap's Crown, and Pisoni. *Thu., Mar. 2, 10:30am-2pm @ Wine Cask*

Edna Valley Collective Dinner: Chef Brian Collins of the much-lauded Ember in Arroyo Grande will pair his meal with wines from Baileyana, Center of Effort, Tolosa, Claiborne & Churchill, Stephen Ross, and Niner. *Fri., Mar. 3, 7:30pm*

Hitching Post Retrospective: Sip Hitching Post wines all the way back to 1991 as Chef Frank Ostini fires up the grill. *Sat., Mar. 4, 7:30pm*

Smart Panels

Around the World with Pinot Noir: Try pinots from France, Italy, Chile, New Zealand, the Santa Lucia Highlands, Australia, and Anderson Valley. *Fri., Mar. 3, 1pm*

Pinot & Pâté: San Luis Obispo cheesemongers Sophie Boban-Doering and Paul Doering will join winemakers from Davis Bynum, Walt, and Landmark to pair charcuterie and cheese from around the world. Moderated by yours truly. *Sat., Mar. 4, 1pm*

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