

**Salamandre Wine Cellars****2004 Pinot Noir Dijon Clones
(Arroyo Seco)**

Winemaker Wells Shoemaker has been making wines from Arroyo Seco for nearly two decades. He loves the intense fruit that comes from this sparsely watered sandy land. His Chardonnays have always been high on my list for their great fruit and subtle minerality. Several years ago, Wells began sourcing Pinot fruit from this beautiful place as well.

The Arroyo Seco ("dry creek" in Spanish) region of Monterey County commonly harbors fog in the early morning, yielding to intense heat in the midday. As the sun dips lower, a maritime wind pushes through the Salinas River mouth on the Monterey Bay and roars down the Salinas Valley. The howling wind is a blessing for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir vines, enabling them to slowly ripen the fruit without huge diurnal temperature swings. Pioneers like Doug Meador of Ventana Vineyard discovered this area's potential back in the 1970s, and an increasing number of Pinot Vineyards are going in here.

Made entirely from Dijon clones, this is a remarkably fruity, lip-smacking example of Pinot Noir. There's nothing to study here: you just drink the Kool-aid and you love it. The nose is bright and seducing with cranberries, rhubarb, cedar, forest floor, and lilacs. Everything about this wine is to love: strawberry fruit leather, dried cherries, red licorice, gummy bear, and a distinctive vanilla and toffee flavoring from the toasty oak that reminds me of a Lowlands Scotch (Dalwhinnie).

Reviewed June 19, 2008 by [Laura Ness](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Salamandre Wine Cellars](#)

Vintage: 2004

Wine: Pinot Noir Dijon Clones

Appellation: [Arroyo Seco](#)

Grape: [Pinot Noir](#)

Price: \$32.00

THE REVIEWER**Laura Ness**

A wine writer and wine judge for major publications and competitions around the country, Laura Ness likens wine to the experience of music. She is always looking for that ubiquitous marriage of rhythm, melody, and flawless execution. What is good music? You

know it when you get lost in it. What is good wine? It is music in your mouth.